

10 February 1980

To the dear Iranian believers resident in other countries throughout the world

In these tumultuous days when the lovers of the Best Beloved are remote from their homeland, associated with their fellow-believers in other lands, and participating in the services of the loyal supporters throughout the world, we felt it necessary to convey our thoughts to those distinguished friends, with absolute sincerity and affection, and invite them to that which we believe can guarantee their tranquillity and happiness, as well as their eternal salvation and redemption, so that with firm steps and sure hearts they may, God willing, withstand the onslaughts which have and will afflict all the countries of the globe. Thus they may fix their gaze on the dawn of the fulfillment of the soul-vitalizing promises of God and remain certain that behind these dark clouds the Sun of the Will of God is shining resplendent from its height of glory and might. Before long these dark clouds of contention, negligence, fanaticism, and rebellion shall disperse, the day of victory shall dawn above the horizon, and a new age shall illumine the world. It should not be surmised that the events which have taken place in all corners of the globe, including the sacred land of Iran, have occurred as isolated incidents without any aim and purpose. According to the words of our beloved Guardian, "The invisible hand is at work and the convulsions taking place on earth are a prelude to the proclamation of the Cause of God." This is but one of the mysterious forces of this supreme Revelation which is causing the limbs of mankind to quake and those who are drunk with pride and negligence to be thunderstruck and shaken. To the truth of this testifies the sacred verse: "The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order," and the repeated warnings of the Pen of the Most High, such as:

The world is encircled with calamities. Even if at times some good may be evident, it is inevitable that a great calamity followeth—and yet no one on earth hath perceived its origin.

The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight, that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue. And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then and only then will the Divine Standard be unfurled, and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody.

Similarly, the Pen of the Center of the Covenant has repeatedly prophesied the intolerable calamities which must beset this wayward humanity ere it heeds the life-giving Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Chaos and confusion are daily increasing in the world. They will attain such intensity as to render the frame of mankind unable to bear them. Then will men be awakened and become aware that religion is the impregnable stronghold and the manifest light of the world, and its laws, exhortations and teachings, the source of life on earth.

Every discerning eye clearly sees that the early stages of this chaos have daily manifestations affecting the structure of human society; its destructive forces are uprooting time-honored institutions which were a haven and refuge for the inhabitants of the earth in bygone days and centuries, and around which revolved all human affairs. The same destructive forces are also deranging the political, economic, scientific, literary, and moral equilibrium of the world and are destroying the fairest fruits of the present civilization. Political machinations of those in authority have placed the seal of obsolescence upon the root principles of the world's order. Greed and passion, deceit, hypocrisy, tyranny, and pride are dominating features afflicting human relations. Discoveries and inventions, which are the fruit of scientific and technological advancements, have become the means and tools of mass extermination and destruction and are in the hands of the

ungodly. Even music, art, and literature, which are to represent and inspire the noblest sentiments and highest aspirations and should be a source of comfort and tranquillity for troubled souls, have strayed from the straight path and are now the mirrors of the soiled hearts of this confused, unprincipled, and disordered age. Perversions such as these shall result in the ordeals which have been prophesied by the Blessed Beauty in the following words: "... the earth will be tormented by a fresh calamity every day and unprecedented commotions will break out." "The day is approaching when its [civilization's] flame will devour the cities."

In such an afflicted time, when mankind is bewildered and the wisest of men are perplexed as to the remedy, the people of Bahá, who have confidence in His unfailing grace and divine guidance, are assured that each of these tormenting trials has a cause, a purpose, and a definite result, and all are essential instruments for the establishment of the immutable Will of God on earth. In other words, on the one hand humanity is struck by the scourge of His chastisement which will inevitably bring together the scattered and vanquished tribes of the earth; and on the other, the weak few whom He has nurtured under the protection of His loving guidance are, in this Formative Age and period of transition, continuing to build amidst these tumultuous waves an impregnable stronghold which will be the sole remaining refuge for those lost multitudes. Therefore, the dear friends of God who have such a broad and clear vision before them are not perturbed by such events, nor are they panic-stricken by such thundering sounds, nor will they face such convulsions with fear and trepidation, nor will they be deterred, even for a moment, from fulfilling their sacred responsibilities.

One of their sacred responsibilities is to exemplify in their lives those attributes which are acceptable at His Sacred Threshold. Others must inhale from them the holy fragrances of the homeland of Bahá'u'lláh, the land which is the birthplace of self-sacrificing martyrs and devoted lovers of the Omnipotent Lord. They must not forget that Bahá'ís throughout the world expect much from the Iranian believers. They should hearken to the life-giving clarion call which their Peerless Beloved has given to the friends in Iran:

The wish of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, that which attracts His good pleasure, and, indeed, His binding command, is that Bahá'ís, in all matters, even in small daily transactions and dealings with others, should act in accordance with the divine Teachings. He has commanded us not to be content with lowliness, humility and meekness, but rather to become manifestations of selflessness and utter nothingness. Of old, all have been exhorted to loyalty and fidelity, compassion and love; in this supreme Dispensation, the people of Bahá are called upon to sacrifice their very lives. Notice the extent to which the friends have been required in the Sacred Epistles and Tablets, as well as in our Beloved's Testament, to be righteous, well-wishing, forbearing, sanctified, pure, detached from all else save God, severed from the trappings of this world and adorned with the mantle of a goodly character and godly attributes.

First and foremost, one should use every possible means to purge one's heart and motives, otherwise, engaging in any form of enterprise would be futile. It is also essential to abstain from hypocrisy and blind imitation, inasmuch as their foul odor is soon detected by every man of understanding and wisdom. Moreover, the friends must observe the specific times for the remembrance of God, meditation, devotion and prayer, as it is highly unlikely, nay impossible, for any enterprise to prosper and develop when deprived of divine bestowals and confirmation. One can hardly imagine what a great influence genuine love, truthfulness and purity of motives exert on the souls of men. But these traits cannot be acquired by any believer unless he makes a daily effort to gain them. Let not the stranger, the envious and the enemy have cause to attribute the sublimity of the Faith in the past and in its early days to the appearance of outstanding and sanctified souls and the perseverance of martyrs whose absence today implies the necessary decline, weakening, scattering and annihilation of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

We beseech God to aid and assist them daily to center their attentions on these divine admonitions and to tread the path of faithfulness so as to secure abiding happiness.

Another of the sacred responsibilities of the believers is their spiritual commitment to serve God's Sacred Threshold at all times and under all conditions so that they may dedicate the few, fleeting days of their lives—particularly in this age of transition—to the Cause of God, unmindful of the vicissitudes of fortune, trusting in Providence, and relieved of worries and anxieties. Witness what joyful tidings the Pen of the Most High has given to such blessed souls:

Whatsoever occurreth in the world of being is light for His loved ones and fire for the people of sedition and strife. Even if all the losses of the world were to be sustained by one of the friends of God, he would still profit thereby, whereas true loss would be borne by such as are wayward, ignorant and contemptuous. Although the author of the following saying had intended it otherwise, yet We find it pertinent to the operation of God's immutable Will: "Even or odd, thou shalt win the wager." The friends of God shall win and profit under all conditions, and shall attain true wealth. In fire they remain cold, and from water they emerge dry. Their affairs are at variance with the affairs of men. Gain is their lot, whatever the deal. To this testifieth every wise one with a discerning eye, and every fair-minded one with a hearing ear.

Yet another sacred duty is that of clinging to the cord of moderation in all things, lest they who are to be the essence of detachment and moderation be deluded by the trappings of this nether world or set their hearts on its adornments and waste their lives. If they are wealthy, they should make these bestowals a means of drawing nigh unto God's Threshold, rather than being so attached to them that they forget the admonitions of the Pen of the Most High. The Voice of Truth has said, "Having attained the stage of fulfillment and reached his maturity, man standeth in need of wealth, and such wealth as he acquireth through crafts or professions is commendable and praiseworthy in the estimation of men of wisdom." If wealth and prosperity become the means of service at God's Threshold, it is highly meritorious; otherwise it would be better to avoid them. Turn to the Book of the Covenant, the Hidden Words, and other Tablets, lest the cord of your salvation become a rope of woe which will lead to your own destruction. How numerous are those negligent souls, particularly from among your own compatriots, who have been deprived of the blessings of faith and true understanding. Witness how, no sooner had they attained their newly amassed wealth and status, than they became so bewitched by them as to forget the virtues and true perfections of man's station. They clung to their empty and fruitless lifestyle. They had naught else but their homes, their commercial success, and their ornamental trappings of which to be proud. Behold their ultimate fate. Many a triumphal arch was reduced to a ruin, many an imperial palace was converted into a barn. Many a day of deceit turned into a night of despair. Vast treasures changed hands and, at the end of their lives, they were left only with tears of loss and regret. "... all that perisheth and changeth is not, and hath never been, worthy of attention, except to a recognized measure." Therefore the people of Bahá must not fall prey to the corruption of the ruthless, but rather cling to contentment and moderation. They must make their homes havens for the believers, folds for their gatherings and centers for the promulgation of His Cause and the diffusion of His love, so that people of all strata, whether high or low, may feel at home and be able to consort in an atmosphere of love and fellowship.

Another sacred responsibility of those dear Iranian friends now living abroad is to consult with the Assemblies and Bahá'í Institutions so that their settlement in needy areas may help the establishment and consolidation of the Faith. They must serve on the pioneer front wherever they reside. They must not allow themselves to be drawn to and congregate in areas where their relatives or friends reside, unaware of the pioneering needs of the Faith. Praised be God that, through the blessings of the Greatest Name, the believers have been imbued with a love and unity which transcends the ties of kinship and friendship and overcomes the barriers of language and culture. Therefore there is no need for the Iranian friends to congregate in one place. Often such a

congregation creates problems. For example, should the number of Iranians exceed the number of native believers in a community, they would inadvertently bring about such difficulties as might hamper the progress of the Cause of God, and the world-conquering religion of the Abhá Beauty might appear to others as a religion which is limited and peculiar to Iranians. This could but lead to a waste of time and the disenchantment of both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís. Under such circumstances the dear Iranian friends would neither enjoy their stay in that place nor would they be able to serve the Faith in a befitting manner. It is our ardent hope that, wherever possible, the Iranian friends may settle in those towns or villages which are pioneering goals, so that through their stay the foundation of the Cause may be strengthened. They must encourage each other to pioneer and disperse in accordance with the teaching plans wherever they reside, and sacrifice the happiness and joy which they may otherwise obtain from companionship with each other for the sake of the vital interests of the Cause.

Another of the sacred duties incumbent upon the believers is that of avoiding participation in political discussions and intrigues which have become popular nowadays. What have the people of Bahá to do with political contention and controversy? With absolute certainty they must prove to the world that Bahá'ís, by virtue of their beliefs, are loyal citizens of whatever country they reside in and are far removed from the machinations of conspirators and the perpetrators of destruction and chaos. Their ideal is the happiness of all the peoples of the world and sincere and wholehearted service to them. In administrative positions they are obedient to their governments and carry out their duties with the utmost honesty and trustworthiness. They regard no faction as superior to another and prefer no individual above another. They oppose no one, for the Divine Pen has prohibited sedition and corruption and enjoined peace and harmony upon us. For more than a century Bahá'ís have proven by their deeds that they regard servitude and service to their fellowman as being more worthy than the privileges of power which can be gained from politics. In administering their own affairs, they rely on God rather than on the influence of those in power and authority. Particularly in these days when the enemies of the Faith have afflicted the Cause in the sacred land of Iran with the darts of calumny and slander on every side, the dear Iranian friends should be vigilant, both in their contact with other Iranians abroad and with people in general, and behave in such a way as to leave no doubt as to the independence and nonalignment of the Bahá'ís and their good will to all people, whether in Iran or elsewhere. They must not give a new excuse to cause trouble to those mischief-makers who have always sought to further their own unworthy ends by making the Bahá'í community a target for their malicious accusations.

O beloved of God, and compatriots of the Abhá Beauty! Your relationship to the Blessed Perfection merits befitting gratitude. Having appreciated the true value of so inestimable a bounty, your forefathers regarded the offering of their lives in the path of their kind Beloved as easy to make. They were put in chains, became captives of the sword, lost their homes and belongings, yet no sound was heard from their lacerated throats but the cry of “Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá” and “Yá ‘Alíyyu'l-A‘lá.” The vibration of the sound of that same soul-burning cry gradually noised abroad the call of this world-illuminating Great Announcement and the ringing notes of that call resounded in all regions of the world, and, now too, the beloved friends in Iran, who are the devoted dwellers in the courtyard of the Beloved, stand firm in the same Covenant and Testament. Behold the courage, firmness, detachment, unity, cooperation, zeal and enthusiasm with which these loyal lovers of the Beloved daily face their tests and prove and demonstrate to the world, with radiant and shining faces, their purity, their heritage, their quality, and their virtue. With the utmost meekness, truthfulness, wisdom, and courage they meet the challenges presented to them, the challenge of defying the enemies, dispelling misunderstandings which are a result of the proliferation of calumnies and false accusations. They have met their fate with acquiescence, have bowed their heads in the valley of submission and resignation, and have borne every tribulation with radiance, for they know with absolute certainty that the fulfillment of divine prophecies will coincide with dire events and the bearing of innumerable afflictions. The beloved Guardian says: “If in the days to come, adversities of various kinds should encircle that land and national upheavals should further aggravate the present calamities, and intensify the repeated afflictions,”

the dear friends in that country should not feel “sorrowful and grieved” and must not be deflected “from their straight path and chosen highway.” He then continues to address the dear friends in these words:

The liberation of this meek and innocent band of His followers from the fetters of its bondage and the talons of the people of tyranny and enmity must needs be preceded by the clamor and agitation of the masses. The realization of glory, of tranquillity, and of true security for the people of Bahá will necessitate opposition, aggression and commotion on the part of the people of malevolence and iniquity. Therefore, should the buffeting waves of the sea of tribulation intensify and the storms of trials and tribulations assail that meek congregation from all six sides, know of a certainty and without a moment’s hesitation that the time for their deliverance has drawn nigh, that the age-old promise of their assured glory will soon be fulfilled, and that at long last the means are provided for the persecuted people of Bahá in that land to attain salvation and supreme triumph. A firm step and an unshakable resolve are essential so that the remaining stages may come to pass and the cherished ideals of the people of Bahá may be realized on the loftiest summits, and be made manifest in astounding brilliance. “Such is God’s method, and no change shalt thou find in His method.”

That is why those royal falcons who soar in the firmament of God’s love have arisen with such joy, tranquillity, and dignity that their serenity has become a magnet for the attraction of the confirmations of the Concourse on High and has brought such a resounding success to them as has astonished and startled the people of Bahá throughout the world. Others have been inspired by the example of those treasured brethren to renew their pledge to their All-Glorious Beloved and to serve His Sacred Threshold with high endeavor. Thus they endeavor, as far as possible, to make good the temporary disability of the believers in Iran. Inspired by the courage, constancy, sincerity, and devotion of those enamored friends in the path of their Beloved, they are increasing their services and renewing and strengthening their resolve so that they may arise in the arena of the love of God as it beseems true lovers. That is why in these days the followers of the Greatest Name in different parts of the world have undertaken to win new victories in remembrance and on behalf of their dear friends in Iran. They have made new plans and their efforts have been confirmed with resounding success, which they attribute to the influences of the high endeavors and the constancy of the friends in the Cradle of the Faith. What then will you do, dear friends who come from that sacred land of Iran? You are the birds of that rose garden. You should sing such a song that the hearts of others will rejoice with gladness. You are the candles of that Divine Sanctuary. You should shed such a light that it will illumine the eyes of the intimates of God’s mysteries. Our eager hearts in these days are expectant to see the rays of loyalty and integrity from amidst these dark and threatening clouds, so that your blessed names, like those of your self-sacrificing compatriots, may be recorded in gold upon the Tablet of Honor. This is dependent upon your own high endeavor.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]