

## The Universal House of Justice

31 August 1987

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world

Beloved Friends,

Nigh on one hundred years ago, Bahá'u'lláh walked on God's Holy Mountain and revealed the Tablet of Carmel, the Charter of the World Center of His Faith, calling into being the metropolis of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Through decades of oppression and expansion, persecution and emancipation, His followers have successfully labored to carry His message to the remotest regions of the earth, to erect the structure of His Administrative Order, and to proclaim to mankind the divinely prescribed cure for all its ills. In the past eight years the agonies suffered by His lovers in Iran have awakened the interest of a slumbering world and have brought His Faith to the center of human attention.

On this same Mount Carmel 'Abdu'l-Bahá, with infinite pains, raised the Mausoleum of the Báb on the spot chosen by His Father, and laid to rest within its heart the sacred remains of the Prophet Herald of the Faith, establishing a Spiritual Center of immeasurable significance. In accordance with the same divine command, Shoghi Effendi embellished the Shrine with an exquisite shell and then, under its protecting wing, began the construction of the Administrative Center of the Faith, to comprise five buildings in a harmonious style of architecture, standing on a far-flung Arc centering on the Monuments of the Greatest Holy Leaf, her Mother and Brother. The first of these five buildings, the International Archives, was completed in the beloved Guardian's lifetime. The second, the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, now stands at the apex of the Arc. Plans for the remaining three were prepared in fulfillment of a goal of the Seven Year Plan, and are now being detailed.

As indicated in our letter of 30 April 1987, the way is now open for the Bahá'í world to erect the remaining buildings of its Administrative Center, and we must without delay stride forward resolutely on this path.

Five closely related projects demand our attention: the erection of the three remaining buildings on the Arc and, added now to these, the construction of the terraces of the Shrine of the Báb and the extension of the International Archives Building. A brief description of each of these will convey an impression of their significance for the Faith.

- **The Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb.** In His plans for the development of Mount Carmel, 'Abdu'l-Bahá envisaged nineteen monumental terraces from the foot of the mountain to its crest, nine leading to the terrace on which the Shrine of the Báb itself stands, and nine above it. These plans were often referred to by Shoghi Effendi, and he completed in preliminary form the nine terraces constituting the approach to the Shrine from the central avenue of the former German Templar Colony.
- **The International Teaching Centre** will be the seat of that institution which is specifically invested with the twin functions of the protection and propagation of the Cause of God. The institution itself, referred to by the beloved Guardian in his writings, was established in June 1973, bringing to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land and providing for the extension into the future of functions with which that body had been endowed.

- **The Center for the Study of the Texts.** This building will be the seat of an institution of Bahá'í scholars, the efflorescence of the present Research Department of the World Center, which will assist the Universal House of Justice in consulting the Sacred Writings, and will prepare translations of and commentaries on the authoritative texts of the Faith.
- **The International Archives Building.** We have decided to construct, westwards, an extension to the basement of the present Archives Building to provide accommodation for the central office of the ever-growing Archives at the World Center. This institution is charged with responsibility for the preservation of the Sacred Texts and Relics and the historic documents of the Cause of God.
- **The International Bahá'í Library.** This Library is the central depository of all literature published on the Faith, and is an essential source of information for the institutions of the World Center on all subjects relating to the Cause of God and the conditions of mankind. In future decades its functions must grow, it will serve as an active center for knowledge in all fields, and it will become the kernel of great institutions of scientific investigation and discovery.

It is impossible at this stage to give an accurate estimate of the cost of these projects. All that we can now say is that in the immediate future two objectives have to be met: to accumulate rapidly a reserve of fifty million dollars on which plans for the construction can realistically begin to be implemented, and to provide an income of between twenty and twenty-five million dollars for the Bahá'í International Fund for each of the next ten years. As the work proceeds, contracts are signed and costs can be accurately determined, further information will be announced.

The great work of constructing the terraces, landscaping their surroundings, and erecting the remaining buildings of the Arc will bring into being a vastly augmented World Center structure which will be capable of meeting the challenges of coming centuries and of the tremendous growth of the Bahá'í community which the beloved Guardian has told us to expect. Already we see the effect of the spiritual energies which the completion of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice has released, and the new impulse this has given to the advancement of the Faith. Who can gauge what transformations will be effected as a result of the completion of each successive stage of this great enterprise? The Faith advances, not at a uniform rate of growth, but in vast surges, precipitated by the alternation of crisis and victory. In a passage written on 18 July 1953, in the early months of the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi, referring to the vital need to ensure through the teaching work a "steady flow" of "fresh recruits to the slowly yet steadily advancing army of the Lord of Hosts," stated that this flow would "presage and hasten the advent of the day which, as prophesied by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, will witness the entry by troops of peoples of divers nations and races into the Bahá'í world." This day the Bahá'í world has already seen in Africa, the Pacific, in Asia and in Latin America, and this process of entry by troops must, in the present plan, be augmented and spread to other countries for, as the Guardian stated in this same letter, it "will be the prelude to that long-awaited hour when a mass conversion on the part of these same nations and races, and as a direct result of a chain of events, momentous and possibly catastrophic in nature and which cannot as yet be even dimly visualized, will suddenly revolutionize the fortunes of the Faith, derange the equilibrium of the world, and reinforce a thousandfold the numerical strength as well as the material power and the spiritual authority of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh." This is the time for which we must now prepare ourselves; this is the hour whose coming it is our task to hasten.

At this climactic of human history, we are called upon to rise up in sacrificial endeavor, our eyes on the awe-inspiring responsibilities which such developments will place upon Bahá'í institutions and

individual believers in every land, and our hearts filled with unshakeable confidence in the guiding Hand of the Founder of our Faith. That our Beloved Lord will arouse His followers in every land to a mighty united effort is our ardent prayer at the Sacred Threshold.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]