THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

21 March 2009

To the Bahá'ís of the World

This Naw-Rúz marks the centenary of one of the outstanding events in the Apostolic Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation, the interment by 'Abdu'l-Bahá of the sacred remains of the Báb in their permanent resting place on God's holy mountain. In the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The most joyful tidings is this, that the holy, the luminous body of the Báb ... after having for sixty years been transferred from place to place, by reason of the ascendancy of the enemy, and from fear of the malevolent, and having known neither rest nor tranquillity has, through the mercy of the Abhá Beauty, been ceremoniously deposited, on the day of Naw-Rúz, within the sacred casket, in the exalted Shrine on Mt. Carmel."

In commemoration of that triumph of the Cause, the members of the Universal House of Justice, accompanied by the members of the International Teaching Centre, have today offered prayers of thanksgiving in the Shrine of the Báb on behalf of the worldwide Bahá'í community, expressing gratitude for the unfailing divine protection vouchsafed to the Cause of God. In their solemn contemplation, their hearts were stirred as they recalled the indelible image of the Master left to posterity when, on this day a hundred years ago, having with His own hands laid that peerless Trust in its final place of repose, He rested His head upon the edge of the blessed casket of the Báb, and "sobbing aloud, wept with such a weeping that all those who were present wept with Him". They remembered, too, the manifold obstacles with which He had been confronted in constructing this sacred edifice and His unbounded relief at having accomplished one of the principal objectives of His Ministry.

A century ago, the Faith was emerging from a period of severe crisis during which the incarceration of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by His inveterate antagonists in the Ottoman Empire had been renewed, a grievous assault on the unity of the Cause had been launched by the Covenant-breakers, and an upsurge in the persecution of the heroic Persian believers had produced a fresh wave of sacrifice. In the immediate future there lay dazzling victories. The strenuous and fate-laden journeys of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the western world would release incalculable spiritual powers destined to give rise to unprecedented progress of the Faith in the American and European continents He visited. The Tablets of the Divine Plan would set in motion processes designed to bring about, in due course, the spiritual transformation of the planet. The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá would establish the basis for a future world order.

Today the Cause of God is again confronted by cruel and relentless opponents seeking in vain to eradicate it in the land of its birth. However, this is occurring in a world far different from that of a hundred years ago, when the Faith was largely unknown and its defenders were few. From all parts of the world the followers of Bahá'u'lláh appeal for justice, while providing, in the example of their lives, compelling evidence of the absurdity of the accusations levelled against their Iranian brethren. In this appeal they are joined by fair-minded people of all backgrounds, including thousands of Iranians who express their concern at the denial of the human rights of their Bahá'í compatriots.

The sacrifices of the Báb and the dawn-breakers of the Cause are yielding abundant fruit. Energized and confident, the followers of the Greatest Name throughout the world have mobilized their resources in a vast and concerted endeavour to offer the healing balm of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings to the multitudes of humanity. The magnificent progress achieved over the past century demonstrates the invincible power with which the Cause is endowed. It is but a portent of the ultimate realization of the oneness of humankind.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

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