

24 October 2019

To the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the sacred land of Iran

The Bahá'í world is astir and the lovers of God are in a state of joy and excitement. As we draw nearer to the commemoration of the Twin Birthdays of the Manifestations of God, the signs of the unprecedented flourishing of that blessed tree which those two Sacred Beings planted in the world become daily more evident, and the people of the world benefit more and more from its limitless fruits. Hearts are being transformed, thoughts are being illumined, children are learning the lessons of unity and equality, adults are walking the path of service, morals are being refined, deeds are becoming purified, societies are progressing, material life is advancing under the influence of spiritual principles, souls are becoming a new creation, and the call of divine civilization resounds louder at every turn.

Although by now you will have read the message we recently addressed to all those throughout the world who have a share in the celebration of the bicentenary of the Birth of the Báb, we considered this an opportune moment to also address His compatriots and to remind you of the bounty that is yours, for that Sun of Truth dawned in the city of Shiraz, promising the world new illumination, and its morn first stirred up your land, preparing the world for the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh.

The light which the Manifestations of God in every age shed upon the material and spiritual life of humanity discloses truths, whose very conception is impossible before the appearance of those Manifestations. Those Teachers illumine the essential relationships on which the progress of the world and its inhabitants depends and create the instruments for the attainment of that progress. Their appearance makes manifest the treasures hidden in the world of being, and Their teachings bring with them the precious gift of a new stage of unity. They encourage humankind once again to acquire spiritual qualities and to attain human perfections, so that through the confirmations of God and its own endeavours, it can lay the foundations of its own felicity.

The appearance of the Exalted One was an invitation to knowledge and rationality, to generosity and compassion, to truthfulness and social justice. The concepts and ideas that He brought breathed a new spirit into the tired body of the world. He fulfilled the prophecies of old and gave new form to the practices of the past. He discarded superstition and nurtured reason. He began a new stage in the progress and transformation of the world of humanity and, in the first instance, invited His own compatriots to participate in the process of renewal. The gentleness of His Being and the heavenly power of His words instantly attracted those who associated with Him, and the truth of His utterances and the appeal of His teachings led, with miraculous speed, to the awakening and consciousness of the people. In a short while, His Cause spread throughout Iran and the fire of the love of God was kindled within diverse strata of that society. A great many souls from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds—men and women, young and old, rich and poor, merchants and traders, thinkers and writers, clerics and even royalty, in cities and in villages—joined the company of His followers and took to heart His call to build a society founded on justice and free from tyranny and oppression. The number of sincere leaders of religion and divines who accepted His Cause and embraced His truth is astounding, and included Vahíd, who was among the most learned men of the country and the confidant and representative of the King commissioned to investigate the truth about the new Revelation. According to the scholars and orientalists of the time, large multitudes among the people of Iran became the Báb's followers and devotees and evinced matchless valour in their commitment to their newfound faith.

The tumult caused by the new Faith shook the pillars of the old order, aroused consternation and envy among the wielders of position and power, and led them to nurse the idle hope that by

creating terror they would negate the Báb's Word and extinguish His light, and so they mercilessly opposed Him. Influential fanatics, one and all, raised aloft the standard of denial and urged the authorities and the populace to commit acts of cruelty on an unprecedented scale. Truly, contemporary history has seldom witnessed the like of the bloodshed and pillage that, at the hands of the rulers or at their instigation, befell the Báb and His followers. Yet, such atrocities, which were often carried out in public, in the street and in the marketplace, so as to become object lessons for others, would time and again, as a result of the steadfastness of those innocent souls, become the cause of the awakening of a new wave of pure-hearted people. In a few instances, when surrounded by the forces of the malevolent and subjected to their ceaseless cruelty, those wronged ones defended themselves valiantly, but they ultimately fell victim to deception and were brutally massacred. The antagonists then endeavoured to obliterate the traces of the new Faith and tried systematically to eradicate from the hearts and minds of Iranians the memory of the astonishing influence of the Báb's appearance. For a time they banned any mention of Him in the land of His birth, and when that approach proved ineffective, they loosed their tongues in curse and abuse, and began fabricating stories, falsifying history, and denying the truth. The friend they called an enemy, and they depicted events in distorted fashion. The sublime gift they called "the sedition of the Báb", and they relegated the Exalted Beloved to the lowest depths of silent darkness, thus committing a great injustice against future generations. But they were heedless of the fact that countless Iranian families were in some way related to His movement, and numberless spots in that vast country were reddened by the blood of His persecuted followers. The traces of that spiritual renaissance will forever endure in that land, and its mystic effects will become evident at last.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Cause of the Báb was the prominent role of the youth who in an astonishing way entered its vanguard, who demonstrated a profound understanding of the implications of the new era, and who taught everyone the lessons of courage and valour. The Báb Himself was twenty-five when He declared His mission. Quddús was twenty-two when he became adorned with the mantle of faith; Ṭáhirih was in her twenties when she accepted the Cause of her Lord; and Anís was a young man of tender age when he became a believer. Recall the fearless Zaynab, who in the prime of youth became a legend, a heroine in both this world and the next. The names of the Iranian heroes of this new movement are today immortalized throughout the world, and the courage of those deathless souls is an example for all. The young standard-bearers of the community of the Greatest Name in every land serve humanity in memory of those courageous souls and make sacrificial efforts for the betterment of the world and the progress of society, endeavouring to acquire spiritual characteristics and engaging in the education of children and junior youth. In Iran too, despite countless hardships, the apple of our eyes are, with pure hearts free from resentment or enmity, valiantly arising in the discharge of their spiritual obligations, acquiring knowledge and the sciences and arts, earning a livelihood, establishing families, laying the foundations of future society upon the strong pillars of faith, and placing service to humanity at the centre of their lives.

Briefly, after the setting of that resplendent Daystar, His prophecies were eventually fulfilled and the dawn of a new Sun became visible. Bahá'u'lláh appeared and renewed the law of God. He gathered together that scattered and oppressed company and prepared for them—and for all of humanity—the means of everlasting glory. He taught them principles to elevate the government and uplift the people, He categorically forbade conflict and contention, and He raised a new creation throughout the world, drawn from every population and speaking in every tongue, that they might serve humanity with sincerity and love, strengthen the unity of the world, lay the foundations of fellowship, and through collaboration with others in their own society, propagate divine civilization.

Beloved friends: At this moment in time, when the followers of the Greatest Name throughout the world are welcoming friends, acquaintances, neighbours, co-workers, and like-minded souls to the celebration of the Twin Birthdays and are inviting them to consider the

meaning of the marvellous anniversary of the Herald and Summoner of this illumined cycle, you must know of a truth that for the people of Iran, the significance and auspiciousness of this occasion is two hundredfold. Assure everyone that the time for the fulfilment of the unfailing promises of those Twin Lights shall come, the turmoil in the world will be eased, permanent peace and harmony among the peoples of the earth will appear, and the unity of humankind will be manifested.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]