

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Riḍván 1985

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

As we enter the final year of the Seven Year Plan, confidence of victory and a growing sense of the opening of a new stage in the onward march of the Faith must arouse in every Bahá'í heart feelings of gratitude and eager expectation. Victory in the Plan is now within sight, and at its completion the summation of its achievements may well astonish us all. But the great, the historic feature of this period is the emergence of the Faith from obscurity, promoted by the steadfast heroism of the renowned, the indefatigable, dearly loved Bahá'í community of Bahá'u'lláh's and the Báb's native land.

This dramatic change in the status of the Faith of God, occurring at so chaotic a moment in the world's history when statesmen and leaders and governors of human institutions are witnessing, with increasing despair, the bankruptcy and utter ineffectiveness of their best efforts to stay the tide of disruption, forces upon us, the Bahá'ís, the obligation to consider anew and ponder deeply the beloved Guardian's statement that "The principle of the Oneness of Mankind—the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve— ... implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced."

Intimations in the non-Bahá'í world of a rapidly growing realization that mankind is indeed entering a new stage in its evolution present us with unprecedented opportunities to show that the Bahá'í world community is not only "the nucleus but the very pattern" of that world society which it is the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh to establish and towards which a harassed humanity, albeit largely unconsciously, is striving.

The time has come for the Bahá'í community to become more involved in the life of the society around it, without in the least supporting any of the world's moribund and divisive concepts, or slackening its direct teaching efforts, but rather, by association, exerting its influence towards unity, demonstrating its ability to settle differences by consultation rather than by confrontation, violence or schism, and declaring its faith in the divine purpose of human existence.

Bahá'í Youth are taking advantage of the United Nations' designation of 1985 as the Year of Youth to launch their own campaign of active cooperation with other youth groups, sharing with them Bahá'í ideals and a vision of what they intend to make of the world. The Bahá'í community will be strongly represented at the culminating event of the United Nations' Decade of Women in this same year. 1986 has been named the Year of Peace, and the Faith will be far from silent or obscure on that issue. Even now the House of Justice is making plans for the presentation of the Bahá'í concepts on peace to the governments and leaders of the world and, through the Bahá'í world community, to its national and local authorities and to all sections of the variegated world society. But it is in the local Bahá'í communities that the most widespread presentation of the Faith can take place. It is here that the real pattern of Bahá'í life can be seen. It is here that the power of Bahá'u'lláh to organize human affairs on a basis of spiritual unity can be most apparent. Every Local Spiritual Assembly which unitedly strives to grow in maturity and efficiency and encourages its community to fulfill its destiny as a foundation stone of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order can add to a growing ground swell of interest in and eventual recognition of the Cause of God as the sole hope for mankind.

Such considerations as these are now occupying the earnest attention of the Universal House of Justice. Their specific implementation will form a large part of the next Plan which will follow immediately on the completion of the present one and will be of six years' duration. By winning

the Seven Year Plan, by consolidating our local communities, and above all by strengthening and deepening our understanding of the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation we shall be preparing ourselves to play our part in bringing about that transformation of human life on this planet which must take place ere it becomes fit to receive the bounties and blessings of God's own Kingdom.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]