

TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN

(Department of the Secretariat)

29 June 2006

Transmitted electronically

Mr. ...

...

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

..., the Universal House of Justice has requested us to ask you to convey the following to the believers in the Cradle of the Faith through the Friends in Iran.

Faithful and chosen friends of God,

The community of the Most Great Name the world over is filled with excitement and joy as a result of the launching of the new Five Year Plan. The loving messages of the delegates of the various National Conventions to the Bahá'í World Centre speak of the determination of the Bahá'ís everywhere to accelerate the process of entry by troops through the launching of intensive programmes of growth in no less than 1,500 clusters around the world. Many of these messages contained the joyful and soul-stirring news that the account of the steadfastness of the believers in Iran in the face of the current oppression and their faithfulness to the divine Teachings have assisted in creating a spiritual atmosphere in those gatherings. The messages received also indicate that your self-sacrifices in promoting the interests of the Faith under the current difficult conditions are a shining example of sacrifice, a source of spiritual strength and an effective means of encouragement for other lovers of Bahá'u'lláh in the uttermost corners of the world, making them more determined in their efforts to teach the Faith and serve the Cause. Note how the forces emanating from the forbearance of the dear Bahá'ís in Iran in these calamitous days have further clarified the meaning of the statement "Should they attempt to conceal its light on the continent it will assuredly rear its head in the midmost heart of the ocean and, raising its voice, proclaim: "I am the life-giver of the world!" and prepared the means for its material advancement. In this regard, recalling the divine promise made by the pen of the Blessed Beauty in reference to the persecutions inflicted on the Manifestation of God Himself is a source of upliftment to the soul. He states,

For now, however, they have hidden Me behind a veil of darkness, whose fabric they have woven with the hands of idle fancy and vain imagination. Erelong shall the snow-white hand of God rend an opening through the darkness of this night and unlock a mighty portal unto His City. On that Day shall the people enter therein by troops, uttering what the blamers aforesaid exclaimed, that there shall be made manifest in the end that which appeared in the beginning. The House of Justice assures you that your steadfastness, courage and perseverance are continually called to mind with love and appreciation. "These woes, afflictions, sufferings, imprisonment and toil are recorded

in the divine court, and their recompense is abundant and irrevocable decreed. He, verily, rewardest without measure those who are patient”. [provisional translation] The divine blessings and spiritual forces released from the shedding of the pure blood of martyrs and the sacrifices and self-effacements in enduring oppressive conditions on the part of the people of Bahá in that land have prepared and will continue to prepare the means for the fulfilment of the divine promises one after the other. In Bahá’u’lláh’s words, “...such adversity is the oil that feedeth the flame of this Lamp! Such is God’s transforming power. He changeth whatsoever He willeth; He verily hath power over all things.

Shoghi Effendi, a few years after the start of his ministry, addressing the Central Spiritual Assembly of Iran, wrote the following:

The release of this innocent and wronged community from the bonds of captivity, and its deliverance from the clutches of the enemy and oppressor, cannot but be accompanied by general commotions and disturbances; likewise the attainment by the people of Bahá to a position in which they will enjoy true honour, comfort and tranquillity must inevitably encounter the hostility and resistance, the clamorous opposition and tumultuous protests of all those who harbour enmity and rancour towards them. If, therefore, the troubled waters of the sea of adversity should grow yet more turbulent, if the storm of tribulation should increase in vehemence and assail that sore-tried community from all six sides with fresh disasters, then know unhesitatingly and with unwavering conviction, that the hour of deliverance, the appointed time when the promises of old are to reach their glorious fulfilment, has drawn nigh, and that the means for the accomplishment of supreme and overwhelming victory by the hard-pressed followers of the Greatest Name in that land have all been readied and prepared. Fixity of purpose and unfaltering resolution are the qualities that must needs be manifested by the people of Bahá if they are successfully to traverse these last remaining stages, and witness, at the highest levels, and in a manner that will fill them with astonishment, the realization of their profoundest hopes and of their most deeply cherished desires. Such is the way of God—“and no change canst thou find in the way of God”.

These sacred and powerful statements are, of course, the provisions of every faithful lover in the path of enduring difficulties and striving to attain the presence of the Well-Beloved; however, it is often difficult to recognise in times of trial the signs of the victory of spiritual forces and the continuous consolidation of the foundation of the Cause of God. Study the message of the House of Justice dated 27 December 2005 addressed to the Counsellors gathered in the Holy Land and the Ridván message of 2006 addressed to the Bahá’is of the world, and notice to what extent the victories mentioned therein, each of which is considered a significant stride in establishing the foundation of the Cause of God, including the success of the community in developing the framework of action for the advancement of the process of entry by troops, have been attained after the revolution in Iran in 1357 and as a result of the divine blessings of your self-sacrifices and self-effacements.

Consider the recent happenings in Egypt and how the steadfastness of the dear Bahá’ís in that land finally led to an unparalleled public proclamation of the Faith in the Arab world. In May 2006 alone, more than 20,000 people from Egypt visited the Arabic

Bahá'í Web site to obtain information about the Faith and, in different parts of the world, those interested downloaded thousands of copies of Holy Writings in the Arabic language from the Bahá'í Reference Library. Millions of people became familiar with the Teachings and Principles of the Faith and the injustice of the enemies by watching a weekly programme on one of the well-known television stations in that country. A group of intellectuals and human rights activists have publicly defended the right of the Bahá'ís to obtain identity cards, of which they are currently deprived. International Arabic newspapers around the world and different Internet sites in the Arabic language have given special consideration to the situation of the Bahá'ís in Egypt, which has led to giving publicity to the Faith and promoting the word of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá has stated the following in one of His Tablets: "And the amazing thing is this, that the most effective means whereby this light of truth is safeguarded and protected is the onslaught of the enemies, grievous ordeals and manifold hardships. The globe of this lamp is the tempestuous winds and the safety of this ship lieth in the violence of tumultuous waves." Therefore, constant patience and the full preparation of the community to accept the increasing responsibilities resulting from the removal of obstacles and restrictions are required, so that at the appointed time and at the Will of the Blessed Beauty the doors of ease may be opened to the friends, the face of the Beloved may be seen and the day of victory appear.

While reflecting and meditating on the situation existing in Iran and the difficulties facing the Bahá'í community, it is befitting for the dear believers, as they turn towards God, to keep in mind another important point: Because the enemies of the Faith in these days see themselves for various reasons restricted to increasingly and publicly assail the Bahá'í community, they do all in their power—from creating financial constraints to limiting social advancements, from creating fear and anxiety to spreading lies and calumnies, from forbidding Bahá'í students to enter university to making it easy to obtain passports and to leave the country—so as to encourage, or even force, the dear Bahá'ís to leave their homeland and thus to weaken and eventually eradicate, in their opinion, the Bahá'í community in Iran. In the light of the above points, it will become clear that leaving Iran under the present circumstances is a source of discouragement to those who are clinging to the cord of steadfastness and, no doubt, emboldens the enemies of the Faith and encourages them to pursue their inhumane goals in a more determined manner.

One of the most valuable fruits of these sacrifices and of enduring the sorrows inflicted on you in the recent years is the notable increase in the receptivity of the peoples of the world and of Iran to accept the Faith. This precious asset, which is considered a foundation for new victories in the Formative Age and which has been obtained through the sacrifice of life, wealth, comfort and material and earthly advancements on the part of the dear believers, both young and old, should be utilized in the best possible manner. Your spiritual brothers and sisters around the world, with the support of the Bahá'í institutions, have focused their efforts on carrying out this task, and the Bahá'í community in Iran, whether individuals or Bahá'í institutions, should ever strive to ensure that they are intellectually and psychologically prepared and are equipped with Bahá'í knowledge and necessary skills to face this historic challenge. No doubt, you are aware of your duties in this critical moment regarding personal teaching which is the most important aspect of this preparation. Some time ago, after reviewing the situation in the Cradle of the Faith and the interests of the Cause in that country, the House of Justice advised the Friends in Iran to dissolve the training institute as a formal national

system administered under their care, and from then onwards, they and the local Friends were not to be responsible for the matter of personal teaching on the part of the believers. This decision of the House of Justice was made as a matter of protection to the Friends in Iran, the local Friends and the Bahá'í community and in consideration of certain national issues, and as an expression of the desire of the Bahá'í community to collaborate with government officials. However, the implication of this decision is that individual believers should make added efforts in carrying out the important task of teaching, which is one of the spiritual and inviolable duties of every individual Bahá'í. They should not lose any opportunities, and by observing wisdom and through personal initiative, they should engage in this all-important task, utilizing to the extent possible the knowledge and spiritual insights gained in the institute process, and they should also assist and support each other in this path. Consider what 'Abdu'l-Bahá states regarding the importance of teaching,

O ye servants of the Blessed Beauty!... It is clear that in this day, confirmations from the unseen world are encompassing all those who deliver the divine Message. Should the work of teaching lapse, these confirmations would be entirely cut off, since it is impossible for the loved ones of God to receive assistance unless they teach.

Under all conditions, the teaching must be carried forward, but with wisdom. If the work cannot proceed openly, then let them teach in private, and thus engender spirituality and fellowship among the children of men...

Therefore, O ye bearers of the trust of God, in these days when calamities, afflictions and woes have surrounded you on every side, raise your hands in gratitude to His Holy Threshold that, praised be God, you are considered among His faithful army, are clinging to the cord of His Covenant, are privileged to obey His Teachings, are robed in the garment of His steadfastness and are engaged in service and promoting the interests of the Cause. Share these points with your family members and your dear children and youth, and assure them of the deep appreciation of the House of Justice that thankfully their sacrifices too are inscribed in clear letters upon the divine Tablet and they are the source of pride to the Bahá'í community and to generations to come.

The House of Justice gives assurance that it will offer prayers in the Holy Shrines for the sorely-tested believers in Iran and will beseech their protection and success from the His Holy Threshold.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

For Department of the Secretariat