

[AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

18 March 2009

To the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith

Dearly loved Friends,

In this sacred period of the Fast, our hearts are filled with sorrow at the increased oppression that afflicts your sorely tried community. Yet the resilience of your spirit is an inspiration to witness, and we are encouraged by the rise in spiritual susceptibility everywhere apparent in the world, not least in your homeland, and by the accumulating achievements of the Cause of God in all parts of the globe. The growing support among the general populace in defence of your rights is equally heartening. In accepting to bring to a close the collective functioning of the Yárán and the Khádímín, you have demonstrated to the authorities once again that yours are not the ways of conflict and contention. It is only the freedom to serve your country and humankind, at the prompting of the principles and teachings of your Faith, that you seek. Your willingness to accept this most recent restriction imposed on your community does not imply, of course, that you will refrain in any way from discharging your spiritual and social responsibilities.

Reflect for a moment on the religions of the past, how in every age the Cause of God has withstood the storms of enmity and opposition that have raged against it, no matter how severe. Consider, as well, how every attempt in this Dispensation to suppress the development of the Faith has spurred its further progress and released untold potentialities in its avowed supporters. Divine Will has ever been thus, for the appearance of spring is conditioned upon the bitter winds of winter. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has stated: “The weeping of the cloud giveth rise to the smile of the rose, and the crash of thunder maketh way for the warbling of the nightingale. The intensity of the cold bringeth on the beauty of the bloom and the chilling rain adorneth the garden with blossoms of every hue.”

It is fitting, indeed, that in these tumultuous times the believers would band together ever more closely in support of one another. As you set out on the new path now open to you, it will be important to bear two points in mind. On the one hand, you should respect the decision of the Yárán and the Khádímín to cease their collective functioning. On the other, drawing on the creative power of the Covenant, animated by your infinite love for Bahá’u’lláh, and following the illustrious example set by the heroes of the Faith over the past one hundred and sixty-five years, you should strive to conduct your spiritual and social affairs and pursue endeavours in service to your fellow citizens. Our confidence in this regard, expressed in our message dated 5 March 2009, has been redoubled upon reading the recent letters written by the Bahá’í youth of Iran and by the former Khádímín of Kirmán.

Beloved friends: On the path that you must now tread, patience and forbearance will be the steed that carries you forward; reliance on God and steadfastness in His Covenant will be the spiritual sustenance that nourishes you; unity and mutual support will be the standard that you hold aloft; confirmations from the Kingdom will be the shield that protects you; a land wherein peace and concord prevail will be the destiny that you strive to attain; and nearness unto God and eternal happiness and honour will be the reward that you seek. Steel your resolve then, and don the mantle of valour and wisdom. Press forward with renewed fervour and zeal that you may achieve life's true purpose and may shelter in the divine nest that abides on the celestial tree.

It is gratifying to learn that consultation among Bahá'í families on how best to manage their individual and social affairs is becoming more widespread. Consultation, so central to all aspects of Bahá'í life, is a fundamental principle of the Faith. Its application is not confined to the work of Bahá'í institutions. Families and individuals are also enjoined to employ it in all matters. You should be confident that the promotion of the principle of consultation among Bahá'í families will go far in raising your community's level of maturity and enhancing its effectiveness, enabling you to render an ever-widening range of services. Be a source of encouragement and support to one another, and strive to ensure that as many decisions as possible are made among families. Persevere in the spiritual and moral education of your children and in your study of the Sacred Writings. Such must be the strength of your solidarity that the malevolent will be powerless to create the least dissension among you. Remain current with news of the activities of your spiritual brothers and sisters across the globe, and let not the cessation of the functioning of the Yárán and the Khádímín give rise to a sense of isolation. Further, you should not hesitate to contact us, if necessary, drawing on the assistance of Bahá'í institutions in other parts of the world or friends and family outside of Iran.

We remember you, valiant knights in the arena of fidelity, in the Holy Shrines and pray that the angels of Heaven may rush to your aid.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]