

Letter of April 12, 1927.

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada:

Dearly-beloved friends:

Your recent communications, dated February 17 and March 2, 17 and 21, have been received, and their perusal has served to heighten my admiration for the unflinching determination which characterizes the concerted efforts which you are exerting for the spread and consolidation of the Bahá'í Faith.

Inter-racial Amity

I have also received and read with the keenest interest and appreciation a copy of that splendid document formulated by the National Committee on inter-racial amity and addressed to all the Spiritual Assemblies throughout the United States and Canada. This moving appeal, so admirable in its conception, so sound and sober in its language, has struck a responsive chord in my heart. Sent forth at a highly opportune moment in the evolution of our sacred Faith, it has served as a potent reminder of these challenging issues which still confront in a peculiar manner the American believers.

As this problem, in the inevitable course of events, grows in acuteness and complexity, and as the number of the faithful from both races multiplies, it will become increasingly evident that the future growth and prestige of the Cause are bound to be influenced to a very considerable degree by the manner in which the adherents of the Bahá'í Faith carry out, first among themselves and in their relations with their fellow-men, those high standards of inter-racial amity so widely proclaimed and so fearlessly exemplified to the American people by our Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

I direct my appeal with all the earnestness and urgency that this pressing problem calls for to every conscientious upholder of the universal principles of Bahá'u'lláh to face this extremely delicate situation with the boldness, the decisiveness and wisdom it demands. I cannot believe that those whose hearts have been touched by the regenerating influence of God's creative Faith in His day will find it difficult to cleanse their souls from every lingering trace of racial animosity so subversive of the Faith they profess.

How can hearts that throb with the love of God fail to respond to all the implications of this supreme injunction of Bahá'u'lláh, the unreserved acceptance of which, under the circumstances now prevailing in America, constitutes the **hall-mark** of a **true** Bahá'í character? Let every believer, desirous to witness the swift and healthy progress of the Cause of God, realize the **twofold nature** of his task.

Let him first turn his eyes inwardly and search his own heart and satisfy himself that in his relations with his fellow-believers, irrespective of color and class, he is proving himself increasingly loyal to the spirit of his beloved Faith.

Assured and content that he is exerting his utmost in a conscious effort to approach nearer every day the lofty station to which his gracious Master summons him, let him turn to his second task, and, with befitting confidence and vigor, assail the devastating power of those forces which in his own heart he has already succeeded in subduing.

Fully alive to the unfailing efficacy of the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and armed with the essential weapons of wise restraint and inflexible resolve, let him wage a constant fight against the inherited tendencies, the corruptive instincts, the fluctuating fashions, the false pretenses of the society in which he lives and moves.

In their relations amongst themselves as fellow-believers, let them not be content with the mere exchange of cold and empty formalities often connected with the organizing of banquets, receptions, consultative assemblies, and lecture-halls. Let them rather, as equal co-sharers in the spiritual benefits conferred upon them by Bahá'u'lláh, arise and, with the aid and counsel of their local and national representatives, supplement these official functions with those opportunities which only a close and intimate social intercourse can adequately provide.

In their homes, in their hours of relaxation and leisure, in the daily contact of business transactions, in the association of their children, whether in their study-classes, their playgrounds, and club-rooms, in short under all possible circumstances, however insignificant they appear, the community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh should satisfy themselves that in the eyes of the world at large and in the sight of their vigilant Master they are the living witnesses of those truths which He fondly cherished and tirelessly championed to the very end of His days.

If we relax in our purpose, if we falter in our faith, if we neglect the varied opportunities given us from time to time by an all-wise and gracious Master, we are not merely failing in what is our most vital and conspicuous obligation, but are thereby insensibly retarding the flow of those quickening energies which can alone insure the vigorous and speedy development of God's struggling Faith.

I would particularly address my appeal to you, as the Trustees of God's sacred Faith, to reaffirm by word and deed the spirit and character of the insistent admonitions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, so solemnly and so explicitly uttered in the course of His journeys through your land—a trust which it is your privilege and function to preserve and fortify.

May the varied opportunities presented by the forthcoming assembly of the friends at Green Acre this summer—a place so admirably suited to the realization of such a noble ideal—be fully utilized to further this noble end. May it, on one hand, serve to banish once and for all every misgiving and mistrust as to the attitude that should characterize the conduct of the members of the Bahá'í family, and, on the other, serve to familiarize the invited public with that aspect of our Faith which, owing to the pressure of circumstances, a few have inclined to belittle or ignore.

Green Acre—a Testing Ground

It is my earnest hope and prayer that the forthcoming gathering at Green Acre, the program for which has been so carefully and judiciously prepared, may serve as a testing ground for the application of those ideals and standards that are the distinguishing features of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. May the assembled believers—now but a tiny nucleus of the Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future—so exemplify that spirit of universal love and fellowship as to evoke in the minds of their associates the vision of that future City of God which the almighty arm of Bahá'u'lláh can alone establish.

Not by merely imitating the excesses and laxity of the extravagant age they live in; not by the idle neglect of the sacred responsibilities it is their privilege to shoulder; not by the silent compromise of the principles dearly cherished by 'Abdu'l-Bahá; not by their fear or unpopularity or their dread of censure can they hope to rouse society from its spiritual lethargy, and serve as a model to a civilization the foundations of which the corrosion of prejudice has well-nigh undermined. By the sublimity of their principles, the warmth of their love, the spotless purity of their character, and the depth of their devoutness and piety, let them demonstrate to their fellow-countrymen the ennobling reality of a power that shall weld a disrupted world.

We can prove ourselves worthy of our Cause only if in our individual conduct and corporate life we sedulously imitate the example of our beloved Master, Whom the terrors of tyranny, the storms of incessant abuse, the oppressiveness of humiliation, never caused to deviate a hair's breadth from the revealed Law of Bahá'u'lláh.

Such is the path of servitude, such is the way of holiness He chose to tread to the very end of His life. Nothing short of the strictest adherence to His glorious example can safely steer our course amid the pitfalls of this perilous age, and lead us on to fulfill our high destiny.

Your true brother, Shoghi.

Haifa, Palestine,
April 12, 1927.