

To the protectors of the Cause of God
and the standard-bearers of the Law
of God in the Cradle of His Faith

Dear long-standing friends of the Abhá Beauty,

On the occasion of the blessed festival of Naw-Rúz, we extend our warm greetings to you, cherished sisters and brothers in that land, and convey from the depths of our hearts our love and affection, our appreciation and admiration, to those dearly beloved souls. It is our hope that you, helpers of the Cause of the Lord, may receive during this delightful season your share of the bounties of the spiritual springtime; perfume your senses with the fragrance of the love of the Ancient Beauty; chant sweet melodies, like unto songbirds, in the rose garden of your homeland; and acquire warmth, light, and a new confidence and strength from the rays of the sun of divine love.

At this time, faithful friends, when the earth is caught in the grip of chaos, confusion, and instability, and its political, economic, and social order is ever more volatile and out of control; when the peoples of the world are seized by various ordeals and hardships and are struggling against incurable ills; when despair and hopelessness and a lack of confidence about the future and the erosion of the bonds of trust have led to a widespread crisis, particularly among many young people in the world—at this time, the people of Bahá across the globe, though themselves exposed to some of the same ordeals and hardships, are laying, with determination and firm resolve, the basis of a new society. They direct their efforts and endeavours towards releasing in ever-greater measures the mighty society-building power that exists in the inmost reality of the Faith; they pursue the glorious process of learning in which all the peoples and nations of the world have a share; and they are ready to collaborate with everyone and encourage them to participate in this process and assist it. Since the institution of the family is even as a bedrock and cornerstone for society, we have taken the advent of Naw-Rúz as an opportunity to address the followers of the Greatest Name throughout the world in a message on this subject. In that message, we have emphasized certain topics relating to the importance of living a Bahá'í life, family relations, and Bahá'í marriage, and have encouraged the friends to reflect on the influence of the divine teachings on the progress of the family as an institution and the significant consequences that such progress has for the advancement and upliftment of society. We hope that in the sacred country of Iran, too, this matter may receive the attention of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and become the object of their deliberations.

The Bahá'ís of Iran have a brilliant record of strengthening Bahá'í family life within their community. In the course of 180 years of exertion and labour for the ever more complete implementation of Bahá'u'lláh's counsels in the lives of individuals, families, and society, the members of that venerated community have gained highly valuable—nay, unparalleled—experience. Undoubtedly, much time must pass before the heavenly teachings can become manifest in a perfect degree in human society, but what is important is that the efforts of the followers of the Cause in that land have from the outset been undertaken with courage and persistence, and with complete earnestness despite the adverse social environment. You who are the loved ones of the Ancient Beauty have, from the inception of this mighty Cause, striven diligently to achieve equality between women and men in the context of Bahá'í marriage and the marital life that results from it. You have sought to implement the principle of consultation in the Bahá'í family and have endeavoured to strengthen the foundation of virtues and morals within that focal centre of unity, becoming thereby renowned throughout the world for your spirituality and trustworthiness. You have raised successive generations of devoted believers, constant and

firm as the mountain, who have trodden the path of sacrificial service to humanity and remained steadfast thereupon. You have brought up your children so that, despite the tyranny of the oppressors and ceaseless injustices, they may throughout their lives regard all as the leaves of one branch and not allow the dust of estrangement in relation to “the other” to stain their hearts. And you have exerted effort in nurturing the spiritual qualities of youth and junior youth and in enabling their moral empowerment, and have encouraged girls and boys to study sciences, crafts, arts, agriculture, commerce, and industry, so that they may achieve progress both materially and spiritually and contribute to the prosperity of the world of humanity and of their beloved homeland. At a time when society is beset by numerous maladies and afflictions, when destructive forces have penetrated human institutions including the institution of the family, weakening its cohesion and undermining its stability, profound reflection on how the teachings of God and the experience of the Bahá’í community can today not only protect the institution of the family from the darts of destruction but make it a space for acquiring perfections and a haven from harm—ultimately turning it into a constructive and potent instrument for social transformation—is of immense value and importance.

In this connection, we were pleased to learn that the followers of the Greatest Name in that land have been engaged in studying and discussing the themes contained in our recent messages, and especially that they have been consulting about the principles of oneness and concord and the propagation of a culture of peace and unity, as well as about the precious and historic experience that those wayfarers on the path of the Beloved have over the years gained in relation to the progress of Iran. How befitting it is that you continue to pursue your efforts to present these insights and experience to your fellow citizens and participate in constructive and important social discourses—which, of course, include the discourse related to the family—so that you may, in this way too, assist in the material development and spiritual advancement of society and respond to your compatriots’ desire to see their individual and collective capacities flourish.

We always remember you, helpers of the Almighty Lord, in the Sacred Shrines, and beseech His Holy Court for your health and well-being, your success and steadfastness. We supplicate at the Divine Threshold that He may rain down His mercy upon each one of you and upon all the noble people of Iran, and we wish for you happiness in both worlds and liberty everlasting.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]