

Excerpts from a letter from Ruhyyih Khanum and distributed by the National Teaching Committee with her permission.

"Dated July 31, 1943- rec'd Sept. 1, 1943.

"I am so rushed these days I never have time to collect my thoughts. I keep wondering about this tremendous pressure we are all living under and I come to the conclusion always that just these days are very special days unlike any other ones in our lives or other generations' lives. They are, I always visualize them so, anyway, days of mad shifting; all the world, and we Bahá'is too, are being sifted to the last ounce. Will we be chaff or prove wheat? That seems to me to be the whole point and I would not care if I were you if the house died of dust; of course I don't mean you should throw up cleanliness and whatnot, I just mean I would get it in perspective as much as possible. 'Abdu'l-Baha used to always say we must give up the unimportant things for the most important ones. Each one has to judge for himself how to do that.

"The whole world needs a new life, including most of us, and the life we will have to find is inside ourselves. I am groping for words, but I believe very strongly that the Bahá'is must learn to live the life inside their own selves. That is what the great Bahá'is like Marthe Root and mother and many others learned to do. They fixed their inner compass, the rest was easy, once they had done that. Mother used to always tell me that the Bab told Q'urrat'l-Ayn to attain to the invariability of the inner state.'

"I don't think that mind, in the sense of a load of well-ordered facts, is as important as spirit. No matter how much any Bahá'í studies he is never going to know it all- the Cause is too great for that, its implications too vast. But if each one of us could only learn how to be Bahá'is in relation to Baha'u'llah, how to become changed through the power of His Faith- that is to me what we need most.

"Another of my thoughts these days is that we cannot possibly imagine the atmosphere in which we are living, and the tremendous pressure it exerts on us without our knowing it. The whole world is a veritable cesspool of evil and corruption, that is why it is suffering so, and it seems to me sheer sentimentality to go around pretending people are good but conditions are bad. People are mostly bad and have produced in consequence bad conditions and this is the day of winnowing, all are being flayed and have to be sifted, we Bahá'is along with the rest, but we have the priceless advantage of understanding the why and wherefore and being (able) to cling to the truth. If we could see with the eye of truth, we probably would be astonished to see what we Bahá'is represent in this darkness. The fact that we are firm, clinging to our faith and serving it is a vast spiritual victory. So I don't think we should be discouraged by either our personal condition or community condition. The weight we carry is heavier than we realize.

"I have come to the conclusion that amongst the Bahá'is there are not many who are in a condition to give out, they need to receive. They are not yet self-supporting spiritually and I think that consequently all those who can should try and strengthen themselves so as

to be able to give out to their fellow Bahá'is. So often one sees in-harmony in a community caused by the weakness and the immaturity of some members, and it could be removed in a moment by a believer of large spirit, one who would be able to quietly draw from the friends their higher reactions, recall them to both themselves and the Teachings. It seems to me this is the most precious gift and the greatest need at the present. I am simply astounded sometimes when I see the finest Bahá'í teachers, devoted, sacrificing everything, but without power of either creating or maintaining unity.

" The Guardian Himself is so very busy He is almost unable to keep abreast with His work. These are crisis years. If we all stand firm and see them thru, we will witness better days. Sooner or later they must come for the whole world."

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