

Bahai Nest

Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria

March 18th 1914

Dear friends!

Consultation in all the affairs pertaining to the Cause is the inalienable right of every Bahai Assembly. It is a right granted by Baha-ollah and will never be abrogated. It is unchangeable and the bed-rock upon ^{which} our spiritual and institutional life is reared. It is the Magna charta of a Bahai organization. Without it the body will remain lifeless, the ^{fountain} will be dried up, the eyes will grow dim, the hands limp, the feet halting and all the active members of the constitution fettered and chained. Consultation is the vital force of the Bahai work. Without it this tiny seed will not become a mighty, overshadowing tree. It is the sun of this Day and Dispensation. Its penetrating rays have dispelled the gloomy darkness of the long night of ignorance and iron-clad rule. Through its heavenly effulgence the world of humanity is illumined, the minds purified, the hearts begemmed

with the stars of wisdom, the slaves are liberated, the
 potentialities unfolded and unlimited progress in all the
 directions made possible. Consultation is the sea and we
 are all ^{the} divers; without diving to its bottom we
 will not gather the pearls of ripe judgment and
 the corals of sound decision. It is a broad highway
 prepared for us by the Lord of mankind. Surely
 this is much preferable to the extremely crooked trail
 through the dense jungle of human opinions which
 is filled with thorny undergrowths and poisonous
 shrubs. Consultation is the spiritual electricity of this
 ultra modern age. Today if the useful service of
 electricity is withheld from a civilized city all the
 activities of life will not only be impeded but
 stopped. We will not be able to talk with our
 friends through ^{the} telephone or send them messages over
 the wire. Electric cars ^{will stop} and inter-urban communi-
 cation suspended. The well-ordered systems of the
 people ^{communication & illumination} will be thrown into utter confusion and by
 night darkness spreads its wing over the city. Things

robbers and assassins will come out of their hiding-places to plunder and kill, spreading a reign of terror everywhere. In a similar way if the light of consultation is restrained from a Bahai Assembly, spiritual oligarchy will in the long run raise its ominous head; moral despotism will enforce its will; theocratic assumptions and graded priestly titles will come into use, thus threatening the simple, loving people into obedience; spiritual autocracy with ^{its} Prime Minister Absolutism will stalk abroad, ^{naked} unabashed, cold, heartless, prying around for its innocent victims and stamping under their feet the common, basic laws of humanity. Consultation is the 'Strong Rope,' let us hold fast to it. Consultation is the fundamental principle of a Bahai Constitution, let us protect it. Consultation is the Celestial gift conferred upon us by Abdul Baha and he will never take it back. Consultation is the palace of welfare and Prosperity, let us abide in it for ever and never leave its majestic portals. Consultation is the Ark of Salvation, let us sail on it.

till we reach the haven of safety. Consultation is one of the effulgences of the Holy Spirit, let us not deprive ourselves from its bounties. Consultation is the solvent for the solution of all our human and spiritual difficulties, let us apply it. Consultation is the panacea for the healing of all our social and moral diseases, let us employ it. Consultation is the universal energy which is feeding daily all the institutions and organizations, let us avail ourselves of its inexhaustible supply. Through Consultation the Cause will be promoted, the Glad-tidings of the Kingdom will be declared, the Fragrances of the rose-garden of Paradise will be diffused, the banners of the Army of God will be hoisted, the hidden Mysteries of Truth will be disclosed and the army of the Lord of mankind reinforced. Through Consultation unity of purpose is obtained, *Esprit de Corps* is realized, the aims of the divine society are manifested, the Countenance of the beloved of the Covenant is unveiled and the good-pleasure

of the ~~Lord~~ gained.

In a Tablet published in Cairo several yrs ago the Master gives the following general view concerning the principle of Consultation:—

"You have asked concerning Consultation to the practice of which we are all commanded. The cardinal idea of consultation is based upon the principle that the ^{unanimous} ~~the~~ Counsel of several persons is weightier than the ~~opinion~~ of a single individual. The combined force of a ^{numerous} army is unquestionably greater than a single man. Consequently Consultation is beloved at the Threshold of the Almighty and is one of the Commandments. Consultation is necessary in all the common, human affairs as well as in the most important, general matters. For example, should a person desire to undertake a work, if he ^{will} consults ~~about~~ it with a number of his brethren, undoubtedly, through deliberation, careful discussion and investigation, the acceptable course will become clear and the real situation manifest and evident.

To go a step further: If the inhabitants of a village consult together about their own affairs, it is certain that the path of Right will be disclosed to them. Similarly the members of every guild and profession. For example the members of the Arts' Club hold meetings to discuss artistic problems and further the idea of civic beauty and proportion. Likewise the merchants consult together about their own concerns.

"Now 'Spiritual Assembly' (i.e. Board of Consultation or Committee meeting or any name you might give to such a Consultative body of men ^{and women}. The Master calls it 'Spiritual Assembly'.) are organized in various parts, the members of which consult together about matters pertaining to the Cause, such as the education of the children, taking care of the orphans, helping the incapacitated and diffusing the Fragrances of God etc. The members of such an 'Spiritual Assembly' are elected according to the rule of majority"

Today a large number of European Jews called on the Beloved. He spoke ^{to them} at length on the Principles of the Cause and the abandonment of prejudices. Mr and Mrs Holback were present and took down the notes. It was a most instructive talk and they were very pleased with it. When they left the room they were most impressed with the lofty ideals and divine conceptions of the Master. Afterwards he dictated several Tablets till noon, when I left his presence joyful and happy. In the afternoon we were again privileged to listen to his words of Truth and then again he revealed a number of Tablets for the Persian believers.

Mirza Ali Akbar received a letter from Russia telling us how the drama of Baha-ollah composed by a Russian poetess is staged in St Petersburg before a crowded audience of nobles and important personages. The press has received the drama with unspeakable praise and commendation and the critics have given excellent reviews.

There was no meeting for the evening and the Beloved spent the early part of the evening with Abdul Ma-hy, an Indian scholar of unusual intelligence. He asked many questions on religion, prayer, pilgrimage and other topics of interest to the Islamic world. He has come especially from India to meet the Master and ask a set of questions and so for the next few days he will be a frequented caller.

One of the ^{Bahais} ~~believers~~ from Yazd told me of the supreme steadfastness of Mirza Mohamad Reza who was arrested by the government. As he was taken to the prison he was bastinadoed before a large crowd at every turn of the streets. At one of these places while they were inflicting upon him the punishment he ~~had~~ covered his face with his coat. The executioners thought he is weeping and when they came around and uncovered his face they saw to their astonishment he is cleaning his teeth with a brush. "What art thou doing at this time?" he asked. "Oh! I am cleaning my teeth. One of the commandments of our religion is the cleanliness of teeth. Realizing that I have nothing ^{else} to do at this time I am cleaning my teeth."