

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets.]

[Personal information has been **redacted**.]

[The excerpt below is from the section of the article that pertains to the Baha'i Faith]

[Adapted from website:] Kayhan Newspaper

[Date:] 28 Shahrivar 1393 [19 September 2014]

12-Year-Old Rouha's Letter to the President of the Islamic Republic on the Rights of Iranian Baha'is

Kayhan Online – 28 Shahrivar 1393 [19 September 2014] – Iranian Baha'is are among the citizens whose rights are systematically violated by the Islamic regime of Iran. Thousands of Baha'is have been forced to flee their homeland over the past thirty-six years. Thousands of them have lost their jobs, homes and dwelling places and been deprived of social status. Meanwhile, Baha'i youth are deprived of any opportunity to continue their education, including in the country's universities. Baha'is are asked to either renounce their faith and belief or forget the same negligible citizenship rights that other Iranians enjoy. In recent days, the deprivation of Shadan Shirazi, a young Baha'i girl who ranked very high in the university entrance exams of the country, has been widely reported in the Iranian and world media.

Below is a letter from a young girl to President Hassan Rouhani, asking him to explain, what is the difference between Baha'i Iranians as citizens of this country and the likes of the president.

Dear President of the country, Greetings

I hope you are not tired of the constant work.

I am a 12-year-old girl and an Iranian Baha'i citizen, and want to talk to you with utmost politeness and respect as a citizen. Certainly, you are aware of the recent matters of the entrance exam and university acceptance, and I have also been a witness to the efforts of my sister and her friends for the National University Entrance Exam in recent years. As her sister, I have observed the hardships she has endured to study and pass the National University Entrance Exam this year, and I very much hoped that you would let us enter universities this year. Unfortunately, not only I but also my co-religionists have again lost hope for this year. I visualized the future of my sister in Iran as a prominent doctor, but it seems that she cannot serve her beloved Iran.

How are we really different from you? Aren't we human beings?! Do you think it is easy to get a rank above 1000 in science and a rank of 113 in mathematics? Do not we have the right to study and serve Iran?! Why should more than half of the university seats remain vacant and you not let us go to study, because we are Baha'is? Is not it our right to study? What is the difference if one is a Christian or a Jew? What is the difference between being a Muslim and being a Baha'i? Is not the message of all religions the same?! Is not the God of all religions the same God?! Have you ever thought that every person living in Iran desires a glorious Iran? So why do you prevent this honour?! Do you think that if

we leave Iran, Iran will be prosperous? We stay in Iran because we love Iran, and we hope that one day we can make our Iran glorious.

We Baha'is have been deprived of university for more than three generations. I would really like to know what you would do if such a thing happened to you. Would you stay indifferent and look at the injustices or would you try to fight for your rights?! Is it really a cause of happiness or sadness that this oppression and deprivation of going to university has continued for 36 years, from our grandmother's generation till today?!

Please, as the president, put yourself in our place and respond to this letter.

Thanking you,

Rouha Sabet