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**Article on the
Badí' Calendar by
Mr Ali Nakhjavani**

**Message from the
Universal House of Justice
to Iran- translation**



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Universal House of Justice letter to Bahá'ís in Iran - Ridván reflections

13 May 2015 / 16 Jamál 172 B.E.

[AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

8 May 2015

To the Bahá'ís of Iran

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

During the blessed days of Ridván and in the company of a large contingent of the followers of the Blessed Beauty—pilgrims, visitors, and the friends serving at the Bahá'í World Centre—we circumambulated the Holy Shrines, expressing in our hearts profound gratitude for the unceasing divine confirmations that have led to significant advances for the Cause of God in nearly five thousand clusters across all continents, advances that have arisen out of the humble efforts of the friends, in collaboration with fair-minded people of goodwill throughout the world, to work for the prosperity and betterment of society. In our prayers and meditations, we called you to mind and not only remembered the anniversaries of the arrests of the former Yárán and some of the distinguished friends who served the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education, but also recalled, with heavy hearts, the persecution that thousands of Bahá'ís in Iran continue to face each day because of their religious beliefs and the more than one hundred believers that remain unjustly imprisoned. In our supplications at the Holy Threshold, we beseeched Him to bestow justice upon the rulers and fairness upon the clerics so that this oppression and tyranny might be brought to an end and that you and the other noble citizens of your ancient and sacred land may see the dawning light of peace and prosperity.

What the events of the past year have demonstrated ever more clearly to the people of Iran and others from around the world who promote peace and concord is the stark contrast between the peaceful intentions and selfless service of the Bahá'í community and the lamentable and inhuman acts of those who, under the influence of ignorant religious prejudice, continue to perpetrate injustices against you. The support of Iranians of goodwill, whether living inside or outside Iran, offered in defence of the civil rights of their Bahá'í compatriots was also much in evidence. Whether it was students placing on an empty chair the name of a Bahá'í who had been barred from attending university; shop owners offering work to a Bahá'í, a fellow businessman whose trade permit had been revoked; or a number of friends and neighbours signing a petition consenting to the burial of a deceased Bahá'í whose interment had been prevented because of the alleged objections of the public—these are a few of the many examples that demonstrate the support, in cities and villages, of the generality of the people of Iran. There is also ample evidence to show that high-minded Iranians from every segment of society—be they defenders of human rights; insightful and open-minded clerics; political and social activists; writers, journalists, artists, producers of television programmes, and historians who, for the benefit of future generations, have endeavoured to collect documents and records related to the countless acts of oppression against the Bahá'ís and present an unbiased view of Bahá'í aims and beliefs in their work; those who in their articles and personal blogs express their sympathy and To the Bahá'ís of Iran 28 May 2015 understanding; individuals who, by signing petitions, demand the restoration of your rights; or those who carry out extensive campaigns that protest against both the denial of higher education to Bahá'í youth and the general persecution of the Bahá'ís—share the conviction that all those living in that land, as concerned fellow citizens, can serve shoulder to shoulder to bring about progress in their beloved country. The support of humanitarian organizations, scientific institutions, Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, and representatives of various governments, as well as resolutions passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, is evidence of how the people of the world abhor the ongoing persecutions that you and other Iranians endure.

Your faith and certitude in the Manifestation of God for this resplendent age, your detachment from worldly affairs and attentiveness to spiritual life, your adherence to the principles of this great Faith, your iron will and legendary patience in enduring the difficulties you face in His path, the wisdom and constructive resilience you manifest in the face of the appalling conditions that currently beset you, and your determined endeavours in service to your beloved country and to the world—all these call to mind this passage revealed by the Supreme Pen where, after describing the zeal and overflowing love of His followers and recounting the sacrifices they make in fulfilment of the Divine Will, He states: “I swear by Thy glory, O my God! I am astonished at them and at that which they have manifested in the path of Thy love. Blessings and joy be upon them!... Methinks Thou didst fashion them for Thy love and didst single them out for attraction to Thee; Thou didst infuse into them the spirit of Thy Cause and didst reveal unto them the beauty of Thy oneness.”

Rejoice, therefore, valiant knights in the arena of fidelity who tread the path of sacrifice, for you are the embodiments of this blessed statement of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “O ye beloved of the Lord! Regard ye not the tyranny and iniquity of the ignorant. Resist oppression with justice, oppose tyranny with equity, and respond to bloodthirstiness with loving-kindness. Be the well-wishers of the advancement of Persia and its people and strive to promote civilization for all humanity.”

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]



The ninth cycle of the Bahá'í calendar

Its relationship to the teaching work

By 'Alí Nakhjavání

The letter of the Universal House of Justice dated July 10, 2014, with its attachment about the Bahá'í calendar, was a great surprise to many of the friends in the Bahá'í world. To clarify several technical issues involved and to appreciate the timing and understand the implications of this message, this article is offered to the readership of this eminent journal. (The American Bahá'í)

In this epoch-making message that launches a unified Bahá'í calendar, the Universal House of Justice pointed out to us: "The adoption of a new calendar in each dispensation is a symbol of the power of Divine Revelation to reshape human perception of material, social, and spiritual reality. Through it, sacred moments are distinguished, humanity's place in time and space reimagined, and the rhythm of life recast." The same message drew attention to the fact that the launching of the new calendar will further "unite" the Bahá'í world.

Why is the Bahá'í calendar associated with a lunar calendar?

The friends in the West had always known, through books such as *God Passes By* and *The Dawn-Breakers*, that many Bahá'í historical dates were recorded and mentioned based on the lunar calendar of Islam. They had been also aware that a few Bahá'í anniversaries were being observed in some countries in the East in accordance with the lunar calendar, while the rest adhered to the dates of the solar calendar.

To provide for resolving this disparity, the Bahá'í texts stipulated that the Universal House of Justice had to determine the locality in the world that should be used as the Bahá'í meridian and the manner in which the Bahá'í calendar could be adjusted to enable the Birthdays of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb to occur on two consecutive days, as indicated in Bahá'í texts attributed to Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

In its letter of July 10, 2014, the Universal House of Justice gave its answers to these two questions. As of Naw-Rúz 2015, the Bahá'í meridian will be the city of Tehran, where the spring

'Alí Nakhjavání, now a resident of France, served for 40 years as a member of the Universal House of Justice.

equinox will determine the first day of the Bahá'í year. From that year onward the two Birthdays will be internationally observed according to a lunar reckoning within the solar calendar, the dates of which will be announced in good time by the Universal House of Justice.

The Writings and Utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, such as those published in *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, clearly stipulate that Tehran was indeed the "mother of the world," "the source of the joy of all mankind," "the holy and shining city" and "the land of resplendent glory." What other city had been so praised by the Blessed Beauty? It seems Tehran was destined to be the meridian of the future World Order. To an Oriental pilgrim Shoghi Effendi once said that the Prophet Muḥammad had called Mecca "the mother of villages," but Bahá'u'lláh had conferred the title "mother of the world" to His native city.

As to the question of the observances of the Twin Birthdays, as indicated in Note 138 of *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (pages 224–225), what Bahá'u'lláh meant by the two birthdays being as one day (in Questions and Answers #2) was that they should fall on two consecutive days. This is confirmed in a letter written on behalf of the Guardian. To explain fully this provision in the Aqdas, I will quote the following passage from Note 138 mentioned above:

"In the Muslim lunar calendar these [i.e. the anniversaries of the Births of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb] fall on consecutive days, the birth of Bahá'u'lláh on the second day of the month of Muḥarram 1233 A.H. (12 November 1817), and the birth of the Báb on the first day of the same month 1235 A.H. (20 October 1819), respectively. They are thus referred to as the 'Twin Birthdays' and Bahá'u'lláh states that these two days are accounted as one in the sight of God (Q&A 2)."

Thus, as we can clearly see, the dates of these Twin Festivals, which have a lunar character, will be moving constantly with respect to the solar calendar. The July 10, 2014, message has set their movement to correspond with a fixed number of lunar cycles after Naw-Rúz, so in any given year they will fall in October or November.

The Bahá'í world has enlarged its membership over the years, has become well known to the general public as well as governments of the world, and has openly established branches of its Administrative Order wherever it was legally possible. The Bahá'í International Community has been duly recognized as a nongovernmental organization by the offices of the United Nations.

There is no doubt that the eyes of the world will be watching with keen interest the forthcoming planetary celebrations by the Bahá'ís of the two-hundredth anniversaries of the Births of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, in 2017 and 2019 respectively, and the



commemoration in 2021 of the hundredth anniversary of the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which had signalized the inception of the Formative Age of the Faith. Thanks to the action of the Universal House of Justice, they will not see a Bahá'í world divided between East and West in its calendar dates, but will witness one unified world community, as the Universal House of Justice indicated in its message of July 10, 2014.

Other features of the Bahá'í calendar

It should first be remembered that each Bahá'í day begins at sunset, and not at midnight as it is now commonly reckoned. For the coming year, the Universal House of Justice has fixed important dates—such as those for Nineteen Day Feasts, Bahá'í Holy Days, Ayyám-i-Há and the fasting period—and apprised all National Spiritual Assemblies of them. These dates will be available from the national Bahá'í offices of every country, and in some countries they have already been shared with the friends.

In an authentic statement published in *The Bahá'í World* series from Volume IV to Volume XX, titled "Bahá'í Calendar and Festivals," there is an entry in the last section, described as "Additional Material Gleaned from Nabil's Narrative," that is substantial and of great importance. Toward the end of this section it is stated that the Báb divided the years following the date of His Revelation "into cycles of nineteen years each" and had given a name to each year. The ninth cycle began in 1996 and is due to end just before Naw-Rúz in 2015. We are now in 171 B.E., the last year of the ninth cycle.

The training institute: A new institution is born

Riḍván 1996 was not only the start of the ninth cycle, it was also the beginning of the Four Year Plan of the Universal House of Justice. The House's message on that occasion called upon every National Spiritual Assembly in the world to consult with the Counselors on their continents, then to establish training institutes in each country to undertake core activities aimed at promoting the teaching and consolidation work. A few years later, in its message of Riḍván 2004, the Universal House of Justice stated that this new institution had proved to be an "engine of growth" for the community wherever it was established.

In a letter on behalf of our beloved House, written to an individual believer and dated March 15, 2009, its Secretariat wrote: "All men,' Bahá'u'lláh asserts, 'have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.' ... The central purpose of the training institute process is to raise up human resources who can contribute to this objective." And we then read, in its Riḍván 2010 message, the following: "[T]he Bahá'í world has succeeded in developing a culture which promotes a way of thinking, studying,

and acting, in which all consider themselves as treading a common path of service."

Indeed 1996 proved a turning point in the destinies of our beloved Faith. It is interesting to see how the unity reflected in the worldwide implementation of the Bahá'í calendar corresponds with an unprecedented unity of thought and action that has gradually, over these 19 years, surrounded the emerging framework of the current series of Plans.

Immediately after the decision to establish training institutes, the Universal House of Justice announced in its Riḍván 1997 message that another new institution should complement the work of these institutes. This marked the creation of Regional Bahá'í Councils, to function under the supervision of each National Assembly and become an added link to support the

activities of Local Spiritual Assemblies. The ninth cycle was steadily evolving and rapidly unfolding.

It was clear that in addition to establishment of training institutes and Regional Councils, other detailed measures had to be initiated to systematize the work of these two pivotal new institutions. Gradually and patiently the Universal House of Justice had to formulate new courses of action.

Among the most important was the need for each National Assembly, in consultation with the Counselors, to divide its

country or territory into workable and sensible clusters, taking into consideration means of communication in use in each cluster.

Further steps were clearly necessary. Thus guidelines were provided for initiating core activities, forming study circles, holding devotional meetings, undertaking home visits as seemed appropriate, organizing children's and junior youth activities with the energetic and vital support of Bahá'í youth, conducting reflection meetings to evaluate progress with the welcome participation of interested seekers and inquirers, planning the expansion and consolidation work in cycles of activity, and establishing regular programs of growth to sustain the developments accomplished.

A survey of activities such as those described above will amply demonstrate that since the inception of the ninth cycle in the Bahá'í calendar, the majority of communities throughout the Bahá'í world have developed a new culture of free and open association with the general public and the social environment around them, and that they are for the most part—especially among the precious Bahá'í youth—vigilant, alert, wide awake, and determined to push forward in their efforts to carry out enthusiastically and in their varied aspects the wishes and hopes of the Supreme Body.



We are moving forward deliberately

Progress on major projects calls for processes, and by its very nature has to be gradual. We see how the development of the gardens in Bahjí, in the Ḥaram-i-Aqdas and in the other three quadrants of the large wheel of gardens that surround the Most Great Shrine, has been a gradual process.

Similarly we see how the construction of the Shrine of the Báb, with its golden dome and the beautiful terraces that adorn it, has also been a process extending over several decades.

It is quite evident that our increasing discourse with the society around us, on the one hand, and the significant publicity we have received through the surge in the oppression and persecution of the Bahá'í community in the land of its birth, on the other, have given rise to a great eager interest on the part of the peoples, governments and media of the world to be informed of our status, our activities and our plans worldwide.

It would be appropriate to seize this opportunity to look at the standing and position of the Bahá'í community in the world today:

- Three National Assemblies have been re-formed in recent years in the Muslim world: those of Egypt, Indonesia and Iraq.
- More than 5 million Bahá'ís reside in virtually every country and territory around the world, in well over 100,000 localities.
- There are 182 National Spiritual Assemblies operating around the world. Over 40 percent of the membership of these national councils are women.
- National Spiritual Assemblies in countries with extended areas of jurisdiction have all established Regional Bahá'í Councils.
- The number of Continental Counselors has reached 81, with 990 Auxiliary Board members serving under them.
- The number of countries where Bahá'í marriage certificates are recognized has reached 60.
- Bahá'í literature is available in 802 languages.
- Over 27,000 classes for the spiritual and moral education of children and junior youth, open to children of Bahá'ís and those belonging to other denominations or groups, are conducted by Bahá'í communities on a regular basis.
- More than 600 Bahá'í elementary schools, mostly in rural areas where formal schools do not exist, are operating throughout the world.
- Seven continental Bahá'í Houses of Worship have been established in virtually all the continents of the globe—all open for prayers and readings for the spiritual upliftment of Bahá'ís and interested friends. The eighth and last continental Temple is being built in Santiago, Chile.
- Plans for the construction of two national and five local Bahá'í Houses of Worship have been set in motion.

- Countless devotional gatherings all over the world are held regularly in Bahá'í centers and in Bahá'í homes. These are open to the believers and to the public as well.
 - In all such meetings, whether in Bahá'í Temples or in informal devotional gatherings, Bahá'í prayers and readings are offered as well as appropriate extracts of scriptures of other revealed religions.
- Most of the above data were kindly shared with me by the Statistics Department of the Bahá'í World Center.

The role of the individual believer in the community

The progress of the Bahá'í world as noted above was achieved through the systematic prosecution of a series of Plans initiated by Shoghi Effendi, the stages of the Divine Plan authored by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. These Plans, which unite the entire Bahá'í world in a common vision and mission, are now set forth and directed by the Universal House of Justice.

As we carry these Plans out, individual effort and community activities reinforce and complement each other. They never cancel each other out. They are like two rails of a train track that need and supplement each other. In one letter, written in English and dated July 28, 1954, Shoghi Effendi gives us three analogies to enable us to comprehend the ef-

forts of the individual believer in the community. He likens the individual believers to “the warp and woof” that determine the quality of the “whole fabric” and to the “countless links” of the “mighty chain” of God’s Holy Cause, and each one of the friends to “one of the multitude of bricks” that support the structure of His Faith.

In another letter, written in Persian and dated Naw-Rúz of 111 B.E. (i.e. in 1954), Shoghi Effendi likens the individual isolated believer to a point, a group of fewer than nine to a letter of the alphabet, a Local Spiritual Assembly to a word, a National Spiritual Assembly to a sentence, and the Universal House of Justice to a Book. What an inspiring concept this is, indicating that although each one of us is just a point, yet this point is not only associated with, but is part of, one of the pages of His glorious Book!

In one of His Tablets Bahá'u'lláh praises the believer who considers himself or herself to be the sole and only believer in His Cause. In other words, He is calling on each of us to consider oneself to be a Mullá Ḥusayn.

Shouldn't we, then, each endeavor prayerfully and persistently to become an instrument in the hands of our Lord's heavenly Faith?

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NEED AND SUPPLEMENT EACH OTHER.



TEACH YE THE CAUSE OF GOD,
O PEOPLE OF BAHÁ, FOR GOD HATH
PRESCRIBED UNTO EVERY ONE THE
DUTY OF PROCLAIMING HIS MESSAGE, AND
REGARDETH IT AS THE MOST MERITORIOUS OF
ALL DEEDS.

— Bahá'u'lláh



The teaching work: the dominating passion of our lives

We need to read and meditate on the implications of the passages reproduced below, extracted from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and statements of the Master, the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice on this theme:

“Consort with all men, O people of Bahá, in a spirit of
friendliness and fellowship.” —*Gleanings*, section 132

“Be unrestrained as the wind while carrying the Message
of Him Who hath caused the Dawn of Divine Guidance to
break.” —*Gleanings*, section 161

“Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath
prescribed unto every one the duty of proclaiming His Mes-
sage, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds.”
—*Gleanings*, section 128

“To assist Me is to teach My Cause.” —*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh
Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, page 196

“Verily, God hath made it incumbent upon every soul to
deliver His Cause according to his ability.” —*Bahá'í World
Faith*, page 206

Let us hearken to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s celestial voice on this subject:

“When the friends do not endeavour to spread the message,
they ... will not witness the tokens of assistance ... nor com-
prehend the divine mysteries.” —*Selections from the Writings of
‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, section 211

“In this Day every believer must concentrate his thoughts on
teaching the Faith. ... O loved ones of God! Each one of the
friends must teach at least one soul every year. This is ever-
lasting glory! This is eternal grace.” —from “The Individual
and Teaching,” section 30, in *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 2

EACH ONE OF THE FRIENDS MUST TEACH
AT LEAST ONE SOUL EVERY YEAR.

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá



Shoghi Effendi invites us to listen to his ringing voice:

“... let us arise to teach His Cause with righteousness, con-
viction, understanding and vigour. Let this be the para-
mount and most urgent duty of every Bahá'í. Let us make
it the dominating passion of our life.”—from a letter dated
Nov. 24, 1924, by Shoghi Effendi, in *Bahá'í Administration*

“All must participate, however humble their origin,
however limited their experience, however restricted their
means, however deficient their education, however press-
ing their cares and pre-occupations, however unfavourable
the environment in which they live.” —*The Advent of Divine
Justice*, 2006 ed., para. 66

“Let him ... attempt to devise such methods as association
with clubs ... and societies [interested in] subjects akin to
the teachings and ideals of his Cause. ...” —*The Advent of
Divine Justice*, 2006 ed., para. 78

“Never must they let a day pass without teaching some
soul, trusting to Bahá'u'lláh that the seed will grow.”
—from a letter dated May 30, 1956, on behalf of Shoghi Effendi,
in *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 2

“The successful carrying out of our various plans is the
greatest sign we can give of our faith and inner assurance,
and the best way we can help our fellow-men out of their
confusion and difficulties.” —from a letter dated April 9,
1949, on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Unfolding Destiny*

“[You must] ... make a special point of praying ardently
not only for success in general, but that God may send to
you the souls that are ready. There are such souls in every
city.” —from a letter dated March 18, 1950, on behalf of
Shoghi Effendi, in *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 2



The friends must realize their individual responsibility. Each must hold a Fireside in his or her home, where new people are invited, and where some phase of the Faith is mentioned and discussed. If this is done with the intent of showing Bahá'í hospitality and love, then there will be results.” —from a letter dated March 6, 1957, on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Lights of Guidance*



THE SUCCESSFUL CARRYING OUT OF
OUR VARIOUS PLANS IS THE GREATEST
SIGN WE CAN GIVE OF OUR FAITH AND
INNER ASSURANCE, AND THE BEST WAY WE CAN
HELP OUR FELLOW-MEN OUT OF THEIR CONFUSION
AND DIFFICULTIES. — Shoghi Effendi



And the Universal House of Justice lends its unerring guidance:

“It is the individual who manifests the vitality of faith upon which the success of the teaching work and the development of the community depend. Bahá'u'lláh's command to each believer to teach His Faith confers an inescapable responsibility which cannot be transferred to, or assumed by, any institution of the Cause.”—Riḍván 1996 message

“Most noteworthy in this regard is the spirit of initiative shown by believers who extend the range of their endeavors to assist others also striving to tread a path of service.” —Riḍván 2005 message

“What all must acknowledge, irrespective of circumstance, are both the crying need of a humanity that, bereft of spiritual sustenance, is sinking deeper into despair and the urgency of the responsibility to teach with which we each have been entrusted as members of the community of the Greatest Name.”—Riḍván 2007 message

“... we have observed [a rise] in the capacity of the friends to converse with others on spiritual matters and to speak with ease about the Person of Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation. They have understood well that teaching is a basic requirement of a life of generous giving.” —Riḍván 2010 message

“Now, therefore, it is our sacred duty to make the utmost use of our freedom, wherever it exists, to promote the Cause of God while we may. The surest way to do this and to win the good-pleasure of Bahá'u'lláh is to pursue, with dedication and unrelenting vigor, the goals of whatever Plan is in force, for Bahá'u'lláh has stated ‘*To assist Me is to teach My Cause.*’” —from a letter dated Naw-Rúz 1980 by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'is of the World



IT IS THE INDIVIDUAL WHO MANIFESTS
THE VITALITY OF FAITH UPON WHICH
THE SUCCESS OF THE TEACHING WORK
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY
DEPEND. BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S COMMAND TO EACH
BELIEVER TO TEACH HIS FAITH CONFERS AN
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BY, ANY INSTITUTION OF THE CAUSE.”

— Universal House of Justice



May the strengthening grace of the Blessed Beauty reinforce the work of the institutions of the Faith in the United States and abundantly sustain the noble efforts of the precious members of this distinguished community, which has been singled out for unique victories to be won under the shadow of His Most Great Name.



Badí' calendar Video

4 Kalimát 172 B.E.

To all the believers in the United Kingdom

Dearly loved Friends,

One year has passed since the Universal House of Justice addressed its momentous message to the Bahá'is of the World, announcing some highly significant developments in the worldwide, common implementation of the Badí' calendar, inaugurated by His Holiness the Báb.

In its message of 10 July 2014, the Supreme Body informed us of the resolution of certain matters pertaining to the calendar including: the means for the determination of Naw-Rúz; the accommodation of the lunar character of the Twin Holy Birthdays of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh within the solar year; and the fixing of the dates of other Holy Days.

The “adoption of a new calendar in each dispensation,” the Universal House of Justice wrote, “is a symbol of the power of Divine Revelation to reshape human perception of material, social, and spiritual reality. Through it, sacred moments are distinguished, humanity’s place in time and space reimagined, and the rhythm of life recast.”

At Naw-Rúz this year, with the universal implementation of this unique and wondrous calendar, “yet another historic step” was marked “in the manifestation of the unity of the people of Bahá and the unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order.”

The National Spiritual Assembly is delighted to inform you that a video, lasting some 15 minutes, which was commissioned to assist us in our understanding and appreciation of the Badí' calendar, has recently been completed and is now available.

The film can be streamed or downloaded using the following links:

High Definition (2GB): <https://goo.gl/OFm147>
Standard (553MB): <https://goo.gl/IAio8Q>

Should you require a copy of the film on DVD, please send a request to nsa@bahai.org.uk in order that one may be posted to you.

The friends may wish to include a screening of this video at a forthcoming Nineteen Day Feast, or indeed organise a special gathering to watch it and study related materials pertaining to the calendar which are available on the UK Bahá'í Downloads site: <http://admin.bahai.org.uk/badi-calendar/>.

The National Assembly would like to express its profound gratitude to the numerous friends who contributed to the production of this video. We hope that it will serve as an informative and inspiring tool for deepening our knowledge, as well as strengthening our sense of identity and unity as the people of Bahá.

From the Board of Trustees for Huqúqu'lláh

Huqúqu'lláh "is a law and a command within which, in the words of the Blessed Beauty, "there are benefits and wisdoms beyond the ken of anyone but God, the Omniscient, the All-Informed."

Clearly, we cannot fathom all the benefits and wisdoms embodied in this law but we do know that the payment of the Right of God is conducive to prosperity, to blessing, to honour and to progress in both the material and spiritual realms. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes this in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas: "...he, however, who acteth in accordance with God's bidding shall receive a blessing from the heaven of the bounty of his Lord, the Gracious, the Bestower, the Generous, the Ancient of Days.""

From a letter of The International Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh to all Boards of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh, dated 27 January, 2015



Meeting of Representatives of Huqúqu'lláh.



The Arts

O people of Bahá ! The source of crafts, sciences and arts is the power of reflection. Make ye every effort that out of this ideal mine there may gleam forth such pearls of wisdom and utterance as will promote the well-being and harmony of all the kindreds of the earth. - Bahá'u'lláh.

Artistic Expression and my Spiritual Journey

Visual artwork has always been my passion but when I came across the Bahá'í Writings I discovered that they were able to imbue my creativity with a new level of significance. Being encouraged to relate my outlet of self-expression to my own unique path of service, within the Faith, inspired me to become a Bahá'í and has sustained my spiritual journey ever since.

Sometimes I start with a quote and illustrate it but usually the visual image comes first and then I am able to find a quote that it relates to. This is easy because the sacred scriptures are so rich in metaphorical imagery but, also, because the original image is a reflection of my own inner being, which is sustained by the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh. We can read the same piece of holy text on different occasions and find that it accesses numerous levels of meaning and resonance within our souls depending on our state of mind at the time. This is particularly prevalent within the vast realms of the sacred writings revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá that use poetic imagery. The viewer becomes an active participant in the creative process by bridging the gaps between the words and images, within their imagination.

The pieces of artwork need to stand in their own right within their own realm but making compilations of the writings alongside artwork provides me with a natural way to promote the Word of God. The most recent series of books I compiled Essential Insights, published by Intellect, grew out of quotes I selected for my friends to study after

my devotionals. I based each one around a universal psychological topic whereby spirituality could be linked to mental and physical health and well-being.

After completing these books I went on pilgrimage for the first time. The gardens provided a resource of outer visual imagery whilst meditating in the shrines revealed abstract colour compositions within my mind's eye. I could see fields of pure colours which blended at their edges into intricate patterns, as if a minute speck of the unseen world was seeping through the veils. We can't use words to communicate how it feels to commune with the beloved or to meditate within a holy shrine. In The Seven Valleys Bahá'u'lláh references a quote by Hafíz – “Only heart to heart can speak the bliss of mystic knowers; No messenger can tell it and no missive bear it.”ⁱ

I use colour to try to communicate the ineffable. Colour is the most vital element of the visual realm – you can't describe a colour apart from its temperature or the frequency of its wavelength. When colour sings and resonates with its own existential qualities it seems to point beyond itself to other hidden layers of meaning which lie wrapped up within this contingent world. This poem by Rumi also seems to describe how it is important to leave space within artwork, to allow the physicality of the materials to speak of their own essential nature: “I told the secret of union with the Friend to the east wind alone. Then, through the purity of its own mystery the east wind whispered, “Like this”.ⁱⁱ

The element of chance is also an important factor. In my sunlight paintings I scrunch the paper up, put it in water and then lift it out of the water so that the thickly applied rays of paint dissolve and diffuse over the landscape. This creates textures, which

seem to reflect the free randomness of nature which operates within the formality of the physical laws. My landscapes are also often bathed in a spectrum of hue relating to the time of day. Studying textile design inspired a love for infinitely repeating patterns which focus the mind like a mantra. Movement within the stillness is also an important aspect of painting. Bahá'u'lláh says that the soul “is still, and yet it soareth; it moveth, and yet it is still”.ⁱⁱⁱ Movement can be captured within mark making gestures or the journey of the viewer's gaze around the composition. Some of my artwork is as simple as one sweep of a squeegee pulling the paint across the canvas whilst others use detailed brushwork to build up a scene that you can step into.

During the later stages of the painting process, after methodically building up the composition, I switch to another part of my brain where I am improvising spontaneously and not consciously thinking about what I am doing. It is during this stage that you realise that you alone are nothing and that you can only function with what feels like assistance. Maybe it is just using the right side of your brain but it also feels as if you are being directed by more experienced souls in the next world and relates to the prayer attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, “Oh, God, make me a hollow reed, from which the pith of self hath been blown so that I may become as a clear channel through which Thy love may flow to others”.^{iv} Maybe this will be the equivalent of painting which I will be able to do in the next life?

In order to see the invisible realms which the mind of man cannot conceive we are told that we must cleanse “the channel of the spiritual sense from the pollution of this worldly life”.^v It feels a hopeless task to paint that which is invisible and can only be glimpsed briefly within the inner





eye. The desire nevertheless sustains the creative process as each new work never quite says enough and the striving continues. Despite the futility we continue to express the fire of our longing or the tears of separation. Maybe the beauty lies in the incompleteness which inspires the next work to be seen in the imagination where it again becomes full of hope and potentiality.

Just as with music which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá beseeches us to try to bring “into harmony with the celestial melody”^{vi}, sometimes painting just falls into place effortlessly but at other times it is a desperate struggle to find resolution and the place where it looks uncontrived. ‘Abdul-Bahá describes what I am striving for when he says that “all things that have in themselves grace or beauty and are pleasing to the heart and spirit...have in themselves an organisation, and are constructed on natural law. Therefore, they correspond to the order of existence like something which would fit into a mould”^{vii}. It often happens that the areas you find the most difficult are the ones which give the most satisfaction and meaning when they are finally resolved.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that work is worship and when “a man engageth with all his power in the acquisition of a science or in the perfection of an art, it is as if he has been worshipping God in churches and temples.”^{viii} Bahá’u’lláh says that every soul “will advance and develop until he attaineth the station at which he can manifest all the potential forces with which his inmost true self hath been endowed.”^{ix} I believe that we need to spend more energy understanding how the Word of God relates to diverse aspects

i Hafiz. Cited by Bahá’u’lláh in *The Seven Valleys. The Valley of Contentment*.
ii Rumi, William C. Chittick, *Sufism, A short introduction*, One World. P.73
iii Gleanings from the *Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* LXXXII
iv No original source has been found for this prayer, which has been attributed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and its authenticity cannot be established.
v Selections from the *Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá* p185.
vi ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, From a Tablet to an individual believer, translated from the Persian. Published in *Compilation of Compilations*. Volume 2, pages 73-82.
vii ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words to Mrs. Mary L. Lucas, as quoted in “A Brief Account of My Visit to Acca”, pp 11-14.
viii Selections from the *Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*. p.144
ix Gleanings from the *Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, XXVIII

of knowledge within the wider society so that each one of us can explore the implications of the writings on our own reality or field of speciality. We are all created with something unique to offer, that no one else can, and as we come closer to this true self we find ways to demonstrate our faith in action. This will create portals whereby we can communicate the significance of the teachings on a level of relevance to others.

I remember as a child waking up in a strange place and seeing the light shining behind the curtain and feeling ecstasy because of the promise of the future that light seemed to symbolise. Now I am further along my spiritual journey I can look back and see how all the times when I was deeply inspired by beauty or the arts were imbued with significance because they were moments of guidance pointing me towards my own unique field of self-expression. I pray for assistance, so that I may give a glimpse of the fragrance of the robe of the Blessed Beauty to those souls who, like me, are more receptive to spiritual teachings when they are presented through the arts.

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Arts Day in Portishead

Following the message in March from the National Spiritual Assembly about the ‘unique and special role that the arts have to play in enriching community life’, we wonder if we could share with you our recent meeting to celebrate the Twelfth Day of Riqvân. We have always felt that inviting people to a welcoming, interested and encouraging group of friends, to take part in some creative activities, can only help build a more enriching community life. In a relaxed atmosphere it may encourage people to talk and to share ideas about matters where there is little opportunity elsewhere to do so.

The Portishead Bahá’í group is small, but our activities are supported by Bahá’ís in areas near by. We sent out invitations to non- Bahá’ís whom we felt might enjoy the meeting. We explained why we were doing this on this particular day, but emphasised the creative aspect rather than the Bahá’í aspect. We felt confident

that anyone who came, even if they knew very little of the Bahá’í Faith, would enjoy the activities without feeling they were pressurised into further commitment they may not feel ready for.

We chose making collages and flower arranging so that we would be able to split into two groups. Each group could do one activity in the morning; we could share a pot luck lunch and then each do the other activity in the afternoon. We are very fortunate as one of our Portishead group is able to host such meetings in her home, and another has knowledge and experience in flower arranging, not to mention being able to provide us with armfuls of greenery and flowers from her garden, and an enormous number of pairs of scissors, raffia, and even pots and jars so that everyone could take home their creation.

Twenty people came, of all ages. We all had the most enjoyable and satisfying time. Our host’s home was full of soft music of beautifully sung Bahá’í scriptures. The quotation displayed beside the flower arranging table, beginning “Consider the flowers of the

rose garden...” offered inspiration to our guests for their arrangement, if they needed any. And there was a collection of Bahá’í quotes on the collage table, which again, people could choose to use as the inspiration for their collage. And, of course, piles of magazines, mainly of the National Geographic Magazine for people to cut up and steadily become stickier and stickier with the many tubes of glue provided.

Throughout the two rooms, the music and quotations reflected the Bahá’í teachings. There was a lot of laughter, talk, encouragement and praise as everyone produced something that, often to their amazement, looked far better than they had expected it to.

It was light hearted, fun and everyone enjoyed themselves, surrounded by gentle words which, although perhaps as background, provided guidance for living. Our hope, of course, is that this background element may well encourage some souls to go further. We’re not sure where else you could spend a Saturday like this!

The Birth of a Summer School

How a convention feedback meeting transformed into a weekend school

For at least 3 decades, Bahá’í classes for children have been held on a regular basis on the Isle of Lewis – the most northerly island of the Outer Hebrides. For the first 10 years at home with children from Bahá’í families and for the past 20 years in public places with children from all backgrounds.

The warm relationships that have been fostered with families who are interested in the Faith through weekly visits meant that many responded positively to the invitation to a Bahá’í weekend at the Scaladale outdoor activity centre.

Last year, the North Highlands and Western Isles unit decided, given the long distances between each other, to spend a weekend together to hear the delegate feedback. It was a very enjoyable time for everyone and the decision was made to do the same again this year. The local friends realised that



they should make the most of a weekend filled with Bahá’í spirit and invited the families from the children’s class and friends of the Faith of all ages and backgrounds.

One invitee called to ask if her brother could also come. ‘Yes, but does he like Bahá’í Writings?’ She asked him and then replied back, ‘Yes, he says he does like the spiritual nature of the Faith.’ ‘Yes, of course, he is most welcome to come.’ He enjoyed studying Reflections on the Life of Spirit and the rest of the programme.

Around 40 people came. Whilst convention feedback happened in one room, Reflections on the Life of the Spirit

happened with 15 people in another, 2 people started Arising to Serve, one youth animated the 10 or so junior youth for the first time, and another two other people got to learn about teaching 7 children. One participant described the occasion beautifully:

"It is a place and time that shows it is possible to bring together humans who otherwise would not necessarily meet, young, old and all points in between, no matter what faith, happiness and understanding became the undisputed theme, but don’t forget the fun, music and food!! Truly not long enough."



8 June 2015 / 4 Núr 172 B.E.

To all believers in the United Kingdom

Dearly loved Co-workers,

Since the National Spiritual Assembly announced the goal of doubling the number of core activities during the final year of the Plan there has been a wonderful response at all levels in the community. Individuals are looking at their personal circumstances to see in what way they can respond, and institutions are consulting together to see how they can encourage and support individual and collective efforts to contribute to the goal. We are delighted to share some brief examples:

A young professional was faced with a change in her work situation. Whilst filling job applications she remembered the need for a neighbouring cluster to launch a programme of growth and the call for greater support from visiting teachers or home-front pioneers, which she longed to contribute to. She consulted with the relevant institutions and realised the opportunity this circumstance opened for her to apply for work in the goal cluster. She

prayed and waited to see how God will guide her next steps, and before long she was confirmed with a new job in the goal cluster, giving her a wonderful opportunity to serve in this way.

Within a few days after the announcement of the goal, the Council in Northern Ireland was looking at each of the clusters in its region to see how the friends in Northern Ireland can contribute their share to the overall goal. Together with one of the Auxiliary Board members and Regional Coordinator, plans were made to consult with cluster agencies, Spiritual Assemblies, groups of friends in neighbourhoods and individual believers, with the aim of developing a common vision for how the goal can be achieved. Given the shortness of time, it was felt that locations for establishing new activities and timelines for their establishment needed to be set, with accompaniment offered as necessary.

The largest cluster in Europe, London, has also responded swiftly. Already Local Spiritual Assemblies have been written to by the cluster agencies, who have offered to consult with them to see how each can move forward in

playing their part in winning the goals of the Plan. Consultations are already taking place!

In consultation with an Auxiliary Board member, a Local Assembly was able to reflect on the Riḍván 2015 message and identify its 'present position' before thinking about what would characterise a 'stronger one'. Having considered its resources and its possibilities, the Assembly pledged to support the friends to triple the number of core activities in the town - from five to fifteen by the end of the Plan! This will involve opening devotional gatherings and children's classes where currently there are none, and multiplying the number of junior youth groups and study circles. The Assembly also identified a number of questions that it would have to begin learning about such as 'why have certain activities started but not been sustained?', 'what does it mean for the Institution to support the friends in their efforts?' and 'what does it mean to multiply the core activities in one or more neighbourhoods?'

We hope these stories will serve as an inspiration to you—please share your stories with us for next month's update!



What in the World Can We Do About the State of the World

Commissioned by the National Spiritual Assembly. The programmes for UK Summer Schools 2015 were based around this article.

The atrocities occurring in the world today – to children, to women, to ordinary people in so many lands, including our brethren in Iran, and to the planet itself – and the sheer scale of suffering and injustice sadden us, depress us, anger us, outrage us. Every day, it seems, there are more problems and crises. Surely in this day we can do *something*, we inwardly rage. Surely in this day, when we have eradicated smallpox, sent a spacecraft outside the solar system, walked on the moon, sequenced the human genome, when we are instantly in touch with our family and friends wherever they are, we have the ability to rid the world of all these injustices!

Our friends might join a political party and run for office, trying to change the way the government addresses these issues. Others become social activists, lobbying and advocating for social improvement in particular areas – climate change, human rights, refugees, access to education. Many support good causes and charities that work nobly to relieve suffering, to end poverty, to provide medical assistance and education, to eradicate violence against women and child abuse, to develop alternative forms of energy. Some just despair at the state of the world and, feeling anxious and helpless, wonder what can possibly be done.

These same friends might ask us to explain what we are

doing in a practical way to realise Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a just, peaceful, united, prosperous and sustainable world. They ask us to explain what we are doing to address all of these issues of world-embracing concern. They might urge us to join them on a march or in a protest, to sign a petition or join a movement. How might we respond to this? What are we doing? Why are we doing it? And why are we doing it the way we are?

Unity: a prerequisite for peace and security
Bahá'u'lláh says, 'We can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed with great, with incalculable afflictions. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore-tried and disillusioned.'¹ So Bahá'ís recognise and acknowledge the world's problems. We are alert to its condition. Indeed, we have an understanding as to why the world is in this state. 'The well-being of mankind,' Bahá'u'lláh writes, 'its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established'² So until unity is established through the application of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the world will remain in turmoil.

During His lifetime Bahá'u'lláh offered the world's leaders the opportunity to turn to His teachings, to establish the Most Great Peace and thus achieve the longed for time when peace, security and prosperity would reign. But they rejected this. He gave them an alternative, the Lesser Peace, which will in time be more fully established by the world's leaders and expressed through the political unification of the world: 'Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace, hold ye fast unto this, the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents.'³

Sadly, then, what we see in the world today is that the



UKBAHÁ'Í - Our Spiritual Heritage



First Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Oxford

Back row: Philip Hainsworth, Marion Hofman, Madame Charlot, Connie Langdon-Davies, David Hofman.

Front row: Lizzie Hainsworth, Margaret Jenkerson, Cyril Jenkerson, Jean Campbell.



‘Divine and infallible Physician’, Bahá’u’lláh, ‘is debarred from administering the remedy, whilst unskilled practitioners are regarded with favor, and are accorded full freedom to act.’⁴

In 1931 Shoghi Effendi explained that ‘Humanity ... has, alas, strayed too far and suffered too great a decline to be redeemed through the unaided efforts of the best among its recognized rulers and statesmen.’ ‘No scheme,’ he tells us, ‘which the calculations of the highest statesmanship may yet devise; no doctrine which the most distinguished exponents of economic theory may hope to advance; no principle which the most ardent of moralists may strive to inculcate, can provide in the last resort adequate foundations upon which the future of a distracted world can be built.’ He saw that any efforts good and well-intentioned people made were insufficient by themselves to ‘succeed in removing the root cause of the evil that has so rudely upset the equilibrium of present-day society’, to provide ‘the antidote against the poison that is steadily undermining the vigour of organized peoples and nations’. As Bahá’ís we understand that the remedy the world needs is the ‘the unreserved acceptance of the Divine Program enunciated . . . by Bahá’u’lláh, embodying in its essentials God’s divinely appointed scheme for the unification of mankind in this age, coupled with an indomitable conviction in the unfailing efficacy of each and all of its provisions . . .’⁵

Of course, humanity has made great efforts to make the world a better place for numbers of people. We can point to some truly amazing developments that have lifted millions out of poverty, have brought fresh water to whole communities, and have enabled girls to become educated and women to participate in social and economic processes. Yet fundamentally we know that the root cause of humanity’s challenges has not been addressed and we see the world’s problems getting worse and worse, day by day.

The efforts of the Bahá’í community to contribute to the advancement of civilisation

So how is the Bahá’í community today working towards the unification of mankind, the remedy for the worlds ills? If we look back briefly over the past hundred or so years, we see that during the first two decades of the 20th century, at the time of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the spiritual and administrative foundations necessary to Bahá’u’lláh’s purpose were established. On this foundation, during the thirty-six years of the Guardian’s ministry and the subsequent six year period leading up to the formation of the Universal House of Justice, ‘Shoghi Effendi devoted himself to refining the administrative instruments needed to carry forward the Divine Plan’. And then, ‘With the successful establishment in 1963 of the Universal House of Justice, the Bahá’ís of the world set out on the first stage of a mission of long duration: the spiritual empowerment of the whole body of humankind as the protagonists of their own advancement. By the time the century ended, this immense effort had brought into existence a community representative of the diversity of the entire human race, unified in its beliefs and allegiance, and committed to building a global society that will reflect

on earth the spiritual and moral vision of its Founder.’⁶ This brought the Bahá’í community to a new stage in its development, the current stage in its effort to build the World Order envisaged by Bahá’u’lláh.

In a masterly letter dated 2 March 2013 to the Bahá’ís in Iran, addressing the question as to how the worldwide Bahá’í community ‘can best contribute to the civilization-building process as its resources increase’, the Universal House of Justice explained that there were two dimensions to the community’s contribution: ‘The first is related to its own growth and development, and the second to its involvement in society at large.’ They describe the first of these dimensions in the following way:

... Bahá’ís across the globe, in the most unassuming settings, are striving to establish a pattern of activity and the corresponding administrative structures that embody the principle of the oneness of humankind and the convictions underpinning it, only a few of which are mentioned here as a means of illustration: that the rational soul has no gender, race, ethnicity or class, a fact that renders intolerable all forms of prejudice, not the least of which are those that prevent women from fulfilling their potential and engaging in various fields of endeavour shoulder to shoulder with men; that the root cause of prejudice is ignorance, which can be erased through educational processes that make knowledge accessible to the entire human race, ensuring it does not become the property of a privileged few; that science and religion are two complementary systems of knowledge and practice by which human beings come to understand the world around them and through which civilization advances; that religion without science soon degenerates into superstition and fanaticism, while science without religion becomes the tool of crude materialism; that true prosperity, the fruit of a dynamic coherence between the material and spiritual requirements of life, will recede further and further out of reach as long as consumerism continues to act as opium to the human soul; that justice, as a faculty of the soul, enables the individual to distinguish truth from falsehood and guides the investigation of reality, so essential if superstitious beliefs and outworn traditions that impede unity are to be eliminated; that, when appropriately brought to bear on social issues, justice is the single most important instrument for the establishment of unity; that work performed in the spirit of service to one’s fellow human beings is a form of prayer, a means of worshipping God. Translating ideals such as these into reality, effecting a transformation at the level of the individual and laying the foundations of suitable social structures, is no small task, to be sure. Yet the Bahá’í community is dedicated to the long-term process of learning that this task entails, an enterprise in which increasing numbers from all walks of life, from every human group, are invited to take part.

Numerous, of course, are the questions that the process of learning, now under way in all regions of the



world, must address: how to bring people of different backgrounds together in an environment which, devoid of the constant threat of conflict and distinguished by its devotional character, encourages them to put aside the divisive ways of a partisan mindset, fosters higher degrees of unity of thought and action, and elicits wholehearted participation; how to administer the affairs of a community in which there is no ruling class with priestly functions that can lay claim to distinction or privilege; how to enable contingents of men and women to break free from the confines of passivity and the chains of oppression in order to engage in activities conducive to their spiritual, social and intellectual development; how to help youth navigate through a crucial stage of their lives and become empowered to direct their energies towards the advancement of civilization; how to create dynamics within the family unit that lead to material and spiritual prosperity without instilling in the rising generations feelings of estrangement towards an illusory "other" or nurturing any instinct to exploit those relegated to this category; how to make it possible for decision making to benefit from a diversity of perspectives through a consultative process which, understood as the collective investigation of reality, promotes detachment from personal views, gives due importance to valid empirical information, does not raise mere opinion to the status of fact or define truth as the compromise between opposing interest groups. To explore questions such as these and the many others certain to arise, the Bahá’í community has adopted a mode of operation characterized by action, reflection, consultation and study—study which involves not only constant reference to the writings of the Faith but also the scientific analysis of patterns unfolding. Indeed, how to maintain such a mode of learning in action, how to ensure that growing numbers participate in the generation and application of relevant knowledge, and how to devise structures for the systemization of an expanding worldwide experience and for the equitable distribution of the lessons learned—these are, themselves, the object of regular examination.

The overall direction of the process of learning that the Bahá’í community is pursuing is guided by a series of global plans, the provisions of which are established by the Universal House of Justice. Capacity building is the watchword of these plans: they aim at enabling the protagonists of collective effort to strengthen the spiritual foundations of villages and neighbourhoods, to address certain of their social and economic needs, and to contribute to the discourses prevalent in society, all while maintaining the necessary coherence in methods and approaches.⁷

This is the work which we are currently engaged in world-wide, together with others who wish to walk this path with us to effect lasting change. We can recognize this effort in our humble efforts to strive to learn, along with friends and neighbours, how to translate the teaching of Bahá’u’lláh into reality such that the culture and nature of society around us begins to resemble that envisioned by Him. Through

our study circles, devotionals, children’s classes and junior youth activities, we are learning about building capacity and spiritually empowering participants to become agents of enduring change in their communities. We do not pretend to know the answers to all the above questions and the path to discovering them is no easy one to walk; we have a long way to go and much to learn!

The second of these dimensions of the Bahá’í community’s current contribution to the advancement of civilisation is through its involvement in society at large. In this respect the House of Justice, in this same letter, tells us, ‘Clearly what Bahá’ís see as one aspect of their contribution cannot contradict the other. They cannot be seeking to establish patterns of thought and action that give expression to the principle of oneness within their community, yet engage in activities in another context which, to whatever extent, reinforce an entirely different set of assumptions about social existence.’⁸ And so it is that Bahá’ís seek to associate with all peoples in those spaces which promote unity, attraction, love, fellowship and solidarity, while avoiding those spaces where contention, division and enmity are present. ‘In choosing areas of collaboration, Bahá’ís are to bear in mind the principle, enshrined in their teachings, that means should be consistent with ends; noble goals cannot be achieved through unworthy means. Specifically, it is not possible to build enduring unity through endeavours that require contention or assume that an inherent conflict of interests underlies all human interactions, however subtle.’⁹

Maintaining our focus

So this is our work. Rather than ‘combatting every apparent evil’, the ‘whole energy’ of the Bahá’ís ‘is directed towards the building of the good, a good which has such a positive strength that in the face of it the multitude of evils – which are in essence negative – will fade away and be no more’. A Bahá’í’s ‘whole life is directed towards proclaiming the Message of Bahá’u’lláh, reviving the spiritual life of his fellowmen, uniting them in a divinely created World Order, and then, as the Order grows in strength and influence, he will see the power of that Message transforming the whole human society and progressively solving the problems and removing the injustices which have so long bedevilled the world’¹⁰

‘The heart of a believer,’ the Universal House of Justice has written,

cannot but be distressed when contemplating the state of global affairs. During times of political upheaval and when there are looming threats of war, passions are aroused and people are easily drawn into a rising tide of nationalism fuelled by fear or even hatred of a perceived enemy. The Bahá’ís, with their firm conviction in the oneness of humanity, must be resolute and not allow their views to be influenced by such prevalent attitudes that are at odds with this cardinal principle. The friends must also remember that the horrendous troubles afflicting humankind are indicative of the death pangs of an old order and birth pangs of the new order being



ushered in by the Manifestation of God for this Day.¹¹

‘Bahá’ís should not allow themselves’ the Universal House of Justice warns us,

‘to be drawn into the disputes of the many conflicting elements of the society around them ... The aim of Bahá’ís is to reconcile, to heal divisions, to bring about tolerance and mutual respect among men, and this aim is undermined if we allow ourselves to be swept along by the ephemeral passions of others. As the beloved Guardian has stated: “Let them refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or by deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the policies of their governments and the schemes and programs of parties and factions. In such controversies they should assign no blame, take no side, further no design, and identify themselves with no system prejudicial to the best interests of that worldwide Fellowship which it is their aim to guard and foster.” For Bahá’ís to be drawn into such conflicts would be futile and would only perpetuate the culture of contest deranging human affairs; it would also divide the community and prevent it from making any significant contribution to the betterment of the world.’¹²

The mission of Bahá’u’lláh, in which the Bahá’ís today are among the few who can directly play a part, is to bring about the spiritual unity of humanity. It is, Shoghi Effendi tells us, not merely ‘another spiritual revival’ nor just ‘a further stage in the chain of progressive Revelations’. Rather it marks ‘the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man’s collective life on this planet’,¹³ calling for a ‘complete reconceptualization of the relationships that sustain society’.¹⁴

Where can I find out more about Bahá’u’lláh’s remedy for the world’s problems?

A good place to start is *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s treatise explaining how 19th-century Iran could develop and modernize. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá outlines the general principles of social and economic development, demonstrates the value of good governance and statesmanship, advocates both the scientific and spiritual education of all people, and calls for the creation of political institutions whose members are free from corruption and political intrigue.

The marvellous letters of Shoghi Effendi penned between 1929 and 1936 and collected into *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh* are also a ‘must study’ for anyone who wants to obtain what Hand of the Cause Horace Holley called ‘a clear vision of the relation between the Bahá’í community and the entire process of social evolution under the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh’.

Deepening on *The Advent of Divine Justice*, Shoghi Effendi’s book-length letter to the American Bahá’ís in 1938 provides insights into ‘the basic ills of society’ and ‘the human and social relationships which must be cultivated and made an integral part of the daily life of every Bahá’í’,¹⁵.

Century of Light, prepared under the supervision of the Universal House of Justice, provides an overview and analysis of the profound social changes that took place during the 20th century in parallel with the emergence from obscurity of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh. The House of Justice commends it ‘to the thoughtful study of the friends, in the confidence that the perspectives it opens up will prove both spiritually enriching and of practical help in sharing with others the challenging implications of the Revelation brought by Bahá’u’lláh’.

At Ridván 2002 the Universal House of Justice addressed an open letter to the world’s religious leaders, pointing out that ‘sectarian hatreds, if not decisively checked’ would threaten the peace of the whole world and that if the religious crisis were to be addressed seriously, organised religion must ‘find within itself . . . courage to rise above fixed conceptions inherited from a distant past’. A companion document, *One Common Faith*, commissioned by the House of Justice, ‘reviews relevant passages from both the writings of Bahá’u’lláh and the scriptures of other faiths against the background of the contemporary crisis’. Through its study ‘Bahá’ís will come increasingly to appreciate that the Cause they serve represents the arrowhead of an awakening taking place among people everywhere, regardless of religious background and indeed among many with no religious leaning’.¹⁶

On 2 March 2013 the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to the Bahá’ís of Iran on non-involvement in partisan politics and the ‘Bahá’í conception of history, its course and direction’. The letter explains the two processes that are simultaneously affecting the world, one destructive, the other integrative. It provides a breath-taking answer to the ‘question that occupies the worldwide Bahá’í community’: ‘how it can best contribute to the civilization- building process as its resources increase’, describing the two dimensions that the Faith can contribute, the first related ‘to its own growth and development, and the second to its involvement in society at large’. Studying this letter will bring us a deeper understanding of the present initiatives of the worldwide Bahá’í community and how they relate to the evolution of the new civilization envisaged by Bahá’u’lláh. It is quoted extensively in this article.

For a reading list contact: nsa@bahai.co.uk

1. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 213.
2. *ibid.*, p. 286.
3. *ibid.*, p. 254.
4. *ibid.*, p. 39.
5. *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, pages 33-34
6. *Century of Light*, page 140
7. From a letter of the Universal House of Justice dated 2 March 2013 to the Bahá’ís in Iran.
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*
10. From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Italy, 19 November 1974).
11. Universal House of Justice dated 20 August 2014 to a National Spiritual Assembly.
12. *ibid.*
13. *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 163.
14. Universal House of Justice dated 2 March 2013 to the Bahá’ís in Iran.
15. Hand of the Cause Paul Haney.
16. Universal House of Justice.

National Spiritual Assembly

From the Table of the National Spiritual Assembly

04 June 2015 / 19 ‘Azamat 172 B.E.

Visit to the Guardian’s Resting Place

At least once a year, and usually during the first meeting after its election, the National Assembly visits the Resting Place of Shoghi Effendi for prayers. With great joy the Assembly visited the Resting Place during its May meeting and remembered in its prayers each and every believer, the teaching work and the achievement of the goals of the Plan.

Ridván 2015 Message of the Universal House of Justice

No doubt you have studied this joyous and encouraging message. At the first opportunity during its May meeting the National Assembly studied it together with Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi. The lens through which it was studied was to try to understand and reflect on its implications for the functioning of the National Assembly, how it might impact upon its work, and how it guides and directs the community. This effort was richly rewarding, as it will surely be for all individuals, communities and institutions that study it, through the lens from which they are operating.

Universal House of Justice letter dated 29 April 2015 regarding progress of the construction of the House of Worship in Chile

Studying this letter was also deeply inspiring and resulted in the National Assembly deciding to contribute £9,000 to the Chile Temple Fund on behalf of the UK Bahá’í community. Inspired by the House of Justice’s comment on “the swiftly advancing construction”, the National Assembly also decided to commission an article paralleling the various stages of the construction of the Temple with the processes of growth.

Many, many subjects consulted upon

The National Assembly meets every 5 to 6 weeks and consults for about 17 hours on each occasion. It covers many subjects and these vary from meeting to meeting. Here is a short selection:

- A considerable amount of time was spent consulting with Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi on the goals of the Plan leading to the announcement of the goal of doubling the number of core activities during the last year of the Plan.

- All of the recommendations of the delegates to National Convention were considered at the first meeting following National Convention.

- The support of Bahá’í Institute for Higher Education students in their relations with UK universities.

- Identifying plenary speakers for Summer Schools.

- Matters pertaining to the loving care and support of individual believers and Local Spiritual Assemblies.

- A number of committee and agency appointments were made.

- Initial plans for National Convention 2016 were considered.

- The delegates’ training events, which were held earlier this year, were reflected upon and, in light of this, some changes were made to ensure better planning for next year.

- A number of employment matters were considered.

- An ongoing review of the vision of Summer Schools, including the role of plenary sessions and speakers.

- Practical arrangements for the Assembly’s forthcoming meetings, including number and timing of meetings.

Plans for a weekend of special consultation and study

The National Assembly decided with the Counsellor to put aside a special weekend to consult and learn together about the subjects of protection and the spiritual health of the community.

This will take place in September.

Intensive Training

The National Assembly greatly values the gatherings for intensive training in the sequence of Ruhi courses that take place each summer. They add a wonderful impetus to the work of the Plan, infusing the community with new energies and capacities, and we are delighted to note that intensive training at the national level is open to adults this year. The friends are warmly encouraged to register here: <http://www.bahaievents.org.uk/wp/welcome/intensive-training-summer-2015/>

Such is the significance of intensive training, the National Assembly decided that three of its members (a third of the Assembly!) should be excused from its next meeting in order to attend, both for personal progress through the sequence and to accompany others, particularly from the community of interest.

Studying the letters of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá’ís in Iran

At the past two meetings, a further two letters in this series were read and consulted upon:

1. Letter dated 2 April 2010 on the subject of social justice and wealth.

2. A Naw-Rúz 2015 letter, which was recently shared with the community on NEWS.

Studying this series of letters as an Assembly is a joy and assists in developing a common vision for the work of the Faith within the Assembly. Words are inadequate to express how rich this experience is, so we encourage you to delve into them yourselves!

Burial Locations

19 May 2015 / 3 ‘Azamat 172 B.E.

In 2007, the National Spiritual Assembly carried out a survey of Bahá’í grave sites in all parts of the UK, in order to set up a permanent register of these. The register contains information on individual plots as well as those areas designated as Bahá’í



plots in which two or more Bahá'ís are known to be buried. Where possible to ascertain, some of the earliest graves have been identified which are part of our historical heritage.

One of the main reasons for setting up the register was so that we can ensure, as far as possible, that all grave sites are maintained in a manner befitting these stalwart ancestors of the Faith in this country.

As some eight years have gone by since the last survey, the National Assembly is sending out a new request for research into these sites, specifically to add information on any burials which have taken place in the interim. The National Assembly has asked Mr. Shidan and Mrs. Susan Kouchek-Zadeh to oversee the ongoing project, and they may be in touch with your Assembly or Group in this regard.

In order to help them gather details efficiently, questionnaire forms have been prepared and these are enclosed. They are also available upon request by writing to nsa@bahai.org.uk.

The forms may be duplicated by the friends as required. One type of form is for single grave locations, the other for lists where there are multiple graves, overseen by a Local Spiritual Assembly, for example in a special section of a cemetery.

The information required for each grave plot is detailed on the form and we would be grateful if much information as possible could be included. Kindly send the completed forms to the National Assembly by email (nsa@bahai.org.uk) or post (27 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD).

Please note: If you have already sent full information on the grave plots in your area to this project in the past, there is no need to re-send it – only to add any burials which have taken place since 2007, or any old burials which have just been re-discovered.

Please also note that the grave-plots in New Southgate Cemetery are recorded separately and should not be included.

Your assistance in this project is most warmly appreciated.

Regional Bahá'í Councils

Bahá'í Council for England membership

28 April 2015 / 1 Jamál 172 B.E.

As was recently announced, Mr. Rob Weinberg has now been elected on to the National Spiritual Assembly and is therefore relieved of his services as a member of the Bahá'í Council for England.

At the election of the Bahá'í Council in November 2014, Mr. Marco Milone received the next highest number of votes and has kindly accepted to replace Mr. Weinberg on the Council.

The National Assembly prays for the Almighty to guide and sustain the high endeavours of the Bahá'í Councils in striving to advance the processes of growth.

Training Institute

Training Institute

14 May 2015 / 17 Jamál 172 B.E.

With our warmest love, the National Spiritual Assembly writes to announce a significant development that is being implemented in the structure of the training institute.

Operating at a strategic level, the Training Institute Board for the United Kingdom has, for a number of years, overseen the implementation of the training institute process as a whole across the UK. It has played an essential role in helping the process advance in this country, and the National Assembly keenly appreciates all that it has accomplished and is grateful to all those who have served on the Board for their devoted efforts.

However, in light of the development of the community as a whole, the

individuals within it, and the emerging strength to be found in the institutions, the National Assembly has decided, in consultation with Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi, that it is now timely to re-establish separate training institute boards in each of the four regions of the United Kingdom – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. These will work closely with the Institution of the Counsellors and will be under the guidance of the Regional Bahá'í Councils. The Councils will announce further details about the membership and contact details of the training institute boards in their regions in due course. In the meantime, correspondence concerning training institute matters should be directed to the relevant Regional Council.

The National Assembly is excited by this development and believes it will serve to accelerate both the flow of individuals through the sequence of courses and the movement of clusters from one stage of growth to the next, as the number of activities and those engaged in them multiply.

Our prayers are offered that all who participate in and assist in the growth of the training institute process may be reinforced with divine confirmations.

Regional Training Institute Boards

24 June 2015 / 1 Rahmat 172 B.E.

In a message of 14 May 2015 the National Spiritual Assembly was delighted to announce the re-establishment of separate training institute boards in each of the four regions of the United Kingdom – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Following their appointment by the Regional Councils, we can now confirm the membership of the Boards and contact details, which are as follows:

Training Institute Board for England
tiben@bahai.org.uk

Dr. Steven Cleasby – Chairman
Ms. Christine Boyett – Secretary
Mr. Adel Hinrichs – Treasurer
Miss Carmel Khavari



Mr. Christopher Lee

Training Institute Board for Northern Ireland
tibni@bahai.org.uk

Mrs. Susan Agahi-Esfahani – Secretary
Mr. Darragh Graham – Treasurer
Mrs. Farahnaz Khavari

Training Institute Board for Scotland
tibsc@bahai.org.uk

Ms. Maria Patricia Jansson
Dr. Howard Moshtael-Oskui
Mr. Andrea Reischl

(The officers will be announced in due course.)

Training Institute Board for Wales
tibwa@bahai.org.uk

Ms. Rachael Murray – Chairman
Mr. Joe Pearce – Secretary
Mrs. Amy Behi – Treasurer

Please note that, as the Training Institute Board for the United Kingdom has been disbanded, its email address (tibuk@bahai.org.uk) is no longer in use.

The National Assembly prays for the Almighty to guide and sustain the high endeavours of these fledgling Boards.

29 June 2015 / 6 Rahmat 172 B.E.

Further to the National Spiritual Assembly's announcement of 24 June 2015 regarding the membership of the newly formed Regional Training Institute Boards, we can now confirm the officers for the Training Institute Board for Scotland as follows:

Training Institute Board for Scotland
tibsc@bahai.org.uk

Dr. Howard Moshtael-Oskui – Chairman
Ms. Maria Patricia Jansson – Secretary
Mr. Andrea Reischl – Treasurer

Message from Training Institute Board for the UK - Ruhi Book 9 released

07 May 2015 / 10 Jamál 172 B.E.

We have recently been informed that the first unit of Book 9 of the main sequence of courses is now ready in pre-publication format! In a message to Training Institutes worldwide the Ruhi Institute explains,

“Following naturally on the content of Book 8, Book 9 is entitled Gaining an Historical Perspective. This first unit explores the concept of the Eternal Covenant of God as described in the Bahá'í Writings. The second unit, which we hope to make available in the next few months, is entitled “Passage to Maturity” and will examine the mission of the Faith in light of this historical moment, while the third unit will focus on the unfoldment of the Divine Plan and the activities associated with it.

They also gave further detail on what is to follow,

“As presently conceived, Book 10 will consider some of the implications of building vibrant communities, while Book 11 will address the coherence between the material and the spiritual and will, in this connection, look at the question of family life, material means, and prosperity.”

Please contact the coordinator for your area to find out opportunities for studying Book 8 and 9, or email tibuk@bahai.org.uk to find out who is the coordinator for your cluster.

Pre-publication materials can be ordered by emailing materials.tibuk@bahai.org.uk.

Web Channel 9

26 June 2015 / 3 Rahmat 172 B.E.

The web channel 9 team are delighted to let you know of the following new contents that are now available on webchannel9.com.

New talks, music, performances and interviews recently published on the

Bahá'í inspired video service, www.webchannel9.com

Hooper Dunbar delivers the challenge

These latest video items include six talks delivered by former Universal House of Justice member Mr Hooper Dunbar dealing with “A Fourfold Challenge” “Prayer” “Meditation” “Study” and “Action”. Mr Dunbar also delivers a fascinating talk about his experiences with the Hands of the Cause. These valuable and informative talks were recorded at the 2014 summer school at Wellington College.

Standing room only for Sarah's performance

Welcome sponsorship from the Bahá'ís of Kensington and Chelsea enabled the web channel 9 team to capture a truly outstanding storytelling performance of “The Gate” delivered to a packed house by professional Bahá'í storyteller Sarah Percival and her talented group. You can see it now on Webchannel9.com.

Singing Spiritual Songs Together – The Bahá'í Choir of the UK visits Hebden Bridge

The web channel 9 video crew caught up with the Bahá'í choir of the UK when they visited the West Yorkshire town of Hebden Bridge recently. The resulting short documentary captures the love, devotion, energy and talent of this remarkable group and provides an insight as to how a national choir can be made to work and how you can join in the fun.

Telling Spiritual Stories

After another outstanding performance of The Gate – “Persian stories of the lover and the beloved” at Wellington College, the web channel 9 crew were able to capture audience reaction and short interviews from storyteller, Sarah Percival and musician, Louai Alhenawi about their innovative work.

Please visit [web channel 9.com](http://webchannel9.com) which is a voluntary not for profit service endorsed by the National spiritual assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom.



The Falkland Islands

Opportunity to live and work in the Falkland Islands

16 June 2015 / 12 Núr 172 B.E.

It has been some time since we sent a message about job opportunities available in the Falkland Islands. We hope once more you are able to pass this information on to your communities. Our small, dedicated Bahá'í community is hoping to encourage Bahá'ís who may be interested in an international challenge while assisting the Faith at the same time.

We are a remote Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom located in the South Atlantic Ocean. The main income of the Islands is presently the sale of deep-sea fishing licences, followed by tourism and agriculture (mostly sheep farming for wool) with a growing contribution from licensing for oil exploration.

All sectors of the economy have done very well in the past few years and both Government and private employers are having trouble filling the number of positions available. Although jobs are most always first advertised in the local newspaper, there is no comprehensive jobs listing available in the Islands that shows all jobs, their overseas application deadlines or whether or not positions advertised have actually been filled.

The Government Human Resources Department has a link here:

<http://www.fig.gov.fk/>

to click through to a Government jobs list.

The Chamber of Commerce does not have a 'jobs' page for its members, but individuals may contact their office:

<http://www.falklandislandschamberofcommerce.com/contact.php>

for information about private sector jobs.

The job classifieds in the local newspaper - Penguin News - are inside the back pages of the paper. The paper is available on-line by subscription:

<http://www.penguin-news.com/index.php/subscribe>

Or, please get in touch as we can send the details of relevant local listings.

Job qualifications especially for professionals can be different than might be the norm outside the Islands. Being small and isolated it is usually very important for successful candidates to have extensive and broad experience in order to cope with a variety of demands where they may be the only professional in their field in the Islands.

Any Bahá'ís interested in job opportunities in the Falkland Islands - whether they see a job listing in their profession or not - may contact us for more information as some employers are always looking for staff.

Interested Bahá'ís may also wish contact us for information about our community and Bahá'í activities before deciding whether to approach a prospective employer or apply for a position. Please see our website www.bahai.fk, or our Facebook page

www.facebook.com/pages/Falkland-Island-Bahai-Community/543583405764707

Contact the Spiritual Assembly at email: secretary@bahai.fk or contact Montana Short on FACEBOOK [montana.short@facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/montana.short) or <https://www.facebook.com/montana.short>

Progress of the construction of the House of Worship in Chile

13 May 2015 / 16 Jamál 172 B.E.

We are pleased to share that an update, including pictures, on the progress of the construction of the House of Worship in Chile is available on the Bahá'í World News Service: <http://news.bahai.org/story/1051>

In addition, a series of newsreels charting the construction of the House of Worship, and the pattern of service and worship with which it is associated, can be found at: http://templo.bahai.cl/noticiario_eng.htm

We are sure that these will be a source of joy and inspiration to the friends. Please do share these materials with those believers who may not have access to NEWS.



Calendar of National Events 2015

National Spiritual Assembly Meeting	26 - 27 Sept
National Spiritual Assembly Meeting	31 Oct - 1 Nov
Birth of the Báb	13 November
Birth of the Bahá'u'lláh	14 November
Day of the Covenant	26 November
Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	28 November
National Spiritual Assembly Meeting	12 - 13 Dec

National Spiritual Assembly meeting dates

13 May 2015 / 16 Jamál 172 B.E.

Dates of National Spiritual Assembly Meetings in 2016.

2016
16-17 January
20-21 February
2-3 April
22-24 April or 30 April – 2 May (National Convention 2016)
14-15 May
18-19 June
30-31 July
17-18 September
29-30 October
3-4 December

2017
21-23 April or 29 April - 1 May (National Convention 2017)

As always, the National Assembly invites the dear friends to forward the names of individuals and institutions, as well as projects and activities, to the Assembly to be remembered in its prayers. These names will be included on the Assembly's prayer list and will be specifically remembered prior to its regular Sunday morning devotional held at each of its meetings.

The loving supplications of the friends for confirmations and blessings to attend the consultations of the National Assembly throughout the year are most deeply appreciated by the Assembly.

Holy Days

27 May 2015 / 11 'Aẓamat 172 B.E.

To all believers in the United Kingdom

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We are pleased to provide you with the following information concerning the correct time of day for the commemoration of Bahá'í Holy Days in the United Kingdom, bearing in mind the necessary adjustment for UK summer time. Please keep this information to hand. The dates noted are relevant to the year 2015 as these might change from year to year depending on the date that Naw-Rúz falls. We apologise for not getting these details to you earlier this year.

If feasible, the friends should commemorate the below Holy Days at the following time:

The anniversary of the declaration of the Báb on May 23rd, at about two hours after sunset;

The first day of Riqdván, at about 4 p.m. on the 21st of April;

The anniversary of the martyrdom of the Báb on July 10th, at about 1.00 p.m.;

The anniversary of the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, on May 29th, at 4 a.m.;

The ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on November 28th, at 1 a.m.

On other anniversaries the believers are free to gather at any time during the day which they find convenient.

Tablets of Visitation

Some of the friends have also asked if there is a specific time at which the Tablets of Visitation should be recited during Holy Day meetings. This has been clarified by the Universal House of Justice as follows:

Nothing has been found in the Writings to indicate that reciting the Tablets of Visitation is mandatory at commemorations of the anniversaries associated with the Central Figures of the Faith, nor has any Text been found concerning the timing of the recitation of these Tablets during Holy Day observances. Although, as an act of reverence, the friends generally stand and face the Sacred Threshold when reciting the Tablet of Visitation in, or within the precincts of, one of the Holy Shrines, nothing has been found in the Writings requiring the friends to stand and face the Qiblih whenever the Tablets of Visitation are read on other occasions. All questions concerning such secondary matters are left to the discretion of the relevant National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, which are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that Holy Day observances are conducted in the proper spirit. The friends should safeguard the unity of the community and not allow any of these points to become a cause of argument and disagreement. Certainly no issue should be made about such matters while a Holy Day programme is being held.

From a letter dated 8 February 2012 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual

We trust that the above information is helpful.



گلچینی از مقاله جناب نجخوانی (ترجمه کیومرث مظلوم) مقتبس از پیام بهائی شماره ۲۶

ظهور "مؤسسه آموزشی"

نوروز سال ۱۹۹۶ نه تنها آغاز نهمین دوره تاریخ دیانت بهائی بود، بلکه در رضوان همان سال نقشه چهار ساله بیت العدل اعظم آغاز گردید. معهد اعلی در پیام خود در همان موقع از همه محافل روحانی ملّی در سراسر جهان خواستند که پس از مشورت با مشاوران قاره ای به تأسیس مؤسسات آموزشی برای به عهده گرفتن فعالیت های اساسی به منظور گسترش امر تبلیغ و تحکیم جامعه های بهائی اقدام نمایند. چند سال بعد معهد اعلی در پیام رضوان ۲۰۰۴ مرقوم فرمودند که این مؤسسه جدید در هر جایی که برپا گردیده "محركی برای رشد" جامعه بوده است.

در مرقومه ای که در تاریخ ۱۵ مارس ۲۰۰۹ توسط دارالانشاء معهد اعلی به یکی از بهائیان نگاشته شده، چنین آمده است: "حضرت بهاءالله می فرمایند: جمیع از برای اصلاح عالم خلق شده اند. مقصود اصلی از فرایند مؤسسه آموزشی بسیج منابعی انسانی است که بتوانند در وصول به این مقصود شرکت جویند." و بعد در پیام رضوان ۲۰۱۰ چنین می خوانیم: "اینکه عالم بهائی موفق به ایجاد فرهنگی شده است که شیوه ای از تفکر، مطالعه و عمل را ترویج می دهد و همگان خود را رهروان یک مسیر خدمت می دانند... موفقیتی است بس عظیم و در آن تحرک یک نهضت توقف نا پذیر به چشم می خورد".

در حقیقت سال ۱۹۹۶ در سرنوشت آیین محبوب ما نقطه عطفی محسوب می گردد. جالب توجه است که مشاهده کنیم، چگونه وحدت منعکس در به کار بستن جهانی تقویم بهائی قرینه وحدت بی سابقه و بی نظیر دیگری است که در اندیشه و اقدام جامعه جهانی بهائی به وجود آمده و به تدریج در ظرف این ۱۹ سال اصول و اساس نقشه های بیت العدل اعظم را تشکیل داده است.

بلا فاصله پس از تصمیم در باره تأسیس مؤسسات آموزشی، بیت العدل اعظم در پیام رضوان ۱۹۹۷ اعلام فرمودند که باید تأسیس جدید دیگری برای تکمیل اقدامات مؤسسات آموزشی به وجود آید. این تأسیس جدید شوراهای منطقه ای بهائی بود که زیر نظر محفل ملّی هر کشور فعالیت می کنند و مانند حلقه ارتباط دیگری برای کمک به محافل روحانی محلی در پیشبرد اقداماتشان عمل می نمایند. به این ترتیب دوره نهم به تدریج تحول می یافت و سریعاً گسترش پیدا می کرد.

واضح بود که علاوه بر مؤسسات آموزشی و شوراهای منطقه ای، بیت العدل اعظم می بایستی به تدریج با صبر و حوصله اقدامات دیگری را برای منظم و مرتب کردن فعالیت های این دو مؤسسه جدید به عمل آورند. از جمله این اقدامات ضروری این بود که هر محفل ملّی با مشورت مشاوران قاره ای، همه کشور یا سرزمین زیر فعالیت های خود را با در نظر گرفتن موقعیت جغرافیایی و وسایل ارتباطی به تعدادی از محدوده های جغرافیایی شامل مردمی هم سنخ و هم گن که امکان همکاری بین آنان بیشتر باشد، تقسیم نمایند.

در این مرحله روشن بود که می بایستی قدم های دیگری برداشته شود. به این ترتیب بود که رهنمودها و دستور العمل هایی برای اینگونه اقدامات جدید واصل گردید. این اقدامات عبارت بودند از آغاز فعالیت های اساسی، تشکیل جرگه های مطالعه، برگزاری جلسه های دعا و مناجات، دیدار منزل به منزل هر جا که مناسب و جایز باشد، سازمان دهی فعالیت های کودکان و نوجوانان با همکاری پرشور جوانان بهائی، برگزاری و اداره جلسات تأمل و تفکر برای ارزیابی پیشرفت های حاصل همراه با استقبال از علاقمندان و جویندگان اطلاعات برای شرکت در اینگونه گرد هم آیی ها، برنامه ریزی برای اقدامات ترویج و تحکیم در دوره های زمانی مشخص و برقراری برنامه های منظم برای رشد به منظور حفظ و پی گیری پیشرفت های بدست آمده.

بررسی این اقدامات و فعالیت ها، مانند آنچه که در بالا ذکر گردید، به خوبی نشان می دهد که از هنگام آغاز نهمین دور در تقویم بهائی، در بیشتر جامعه های جهان بهائی فرهنگ جدیدی از همکاری های آزاد و باز با عموم مردم و محیط اجتماعی اطراف آنان به وجود آمده، و اینکه بهائیان بیشتری - بویژه جوانان عزیز بهائی - مترصد، آماده و مصممند که با نهایت شور و شوق از جنبه های مختلف امیدهای معهد اعلی را برآورند.



پیشرفت های آگاهانه و همراه با ژرف اندیشی

در بیشتر طرح ها، پیشرفت های حاصله تدریجی و مستلزم اقداماتی مرحله به مرحله است. بطور مثال به یاد می آوریم که چگونه توسعه باغ های بهجی، حرم اقدس و در سه ربع دایره ای که در حول روضه مبارکه قرار گرفته اند دارای روندهای تدریجی بوده اند.

همچنین در خاطر داریم که چگونه بنای ساختمان مقام مقدّس اعلی، گنبد زرّین و طبقاتی که در بالا و پایین آن قرار گرفته و به آن جلوه داده اند همگی مرحله به مرحله و در ظرف چندین دهه انجام گرفته است.

کاملاً واضح است که گفت و شنود و مبادله اندیشه ها بین ما و جامعه اطراف ما از طرفی، و از طرف دیگر شهرتی که برای امر مبارک در اثر خیزش امواج خروشان ستم و آزار برای جامعه بهائی در مهد امرالله پیش آمده، موجب شده است که در مردم دنیا و دولت های کشورهای مختلف و رسانه ها علاقه شدیدی برای کسب اطلاعات از وضعیت ما و فعالیت ها و نقشه های ما در دنیا به وجود آید.

در اینجا بجا است نگاهی به وضع و موقعیت جامعه بهائی در دنیا بیفکنیم.

- در سال های اخیر در جهان اسلام سه محفل ملّی مصر، اندونزی و عراق برای بار دیگر تشکیل شده اند.
- بیش از ۵ میلیون نفر بهائی تقریباً در همه کشورها و سرزمین های دنیا در بیش از یکصد هزار محلّ ساکن هستند.
- ۱۸۲ محفل ملّی در سراسر دنیا به فعالیت مشغولند. بیش از ۴۰ درصد از اعضای این محافل را بانوان تشکیل می دهند.
- تمام محافل ملّی در کشورهایی که حوزه اختیارات آنها وسیع بوده، شوراهای منطقه ای تشکیل داده اند.
- تعداد مشاوران قاره ای به ۸۱ و کسانی که با عنوان اعضای هیئت معاونت در خدمت با آن همکاری می کنند به ۹۹۰ رسیده است.
- در ۶۰ کشور جهان ازدواج بهائی به رسمیت شناخته شده است.
- آثار بهائی به ۸۰۲ زبان ترجمه گردیده.
- بیش از ۲۷۰۰۰ کلاس برای تربیت روحانی و اخلاقی کودکان و نوجوانان توسط جامعه های بهائی تشکیل و بطور منظم اداره می شوند. درب این کلاس ها علاوه بر اطفال بهائی بر روی کودکان غیر بهائی نیز باز است.
- در سراسر جهان بیش از ۶۰۰ مدرسه ابتدایی که توسط بهائیان اداره می شوند؛ دایر گردیده است. بیشتر این مدرسه ها در روستاها و در نقاطی به وجود آمده اند که در آنجا مدرسه رسمی دولتی وجود ندارد.
- هفت مشرق الاذکار (معبد بهائی) در تقریباً همه قاره های دنیا بنا گردیده که در آنها هم بهائیان و هم دوستانشان برای تعالی روحانی خود می توانند به نیایش و راز و نیاز بپردازند. هشتمین و آخرین مشرق الاذکار قاره ای در سانتیاگو، پایتخت کشور شیلی، در دست ساختمان است. طرح هایی برای بنای دو مشرق الاذکار ملّی و پنج مشرق الاذکار محلی در دست اجرا است.
- گرد هم آیی های بی شماری برای تلاوت دعا و مناجات در همه جهان بطور مرتب در مرکز اداری بهائیان هر محلّ یا در خانه های بهائیان دایر است که در آنها علاوه بر بهائیان عموم مردم هم می توانند شرکت نمایند. در تمام این گونه جلسه ها چه در مشرق الاذکارها و چه در گرد هم آیی های غیر رسمی، هم از مناجات ها و آثار بهائی و هم از آثار مناسب سایر دیانت ها خوانده می شود. بسیاری از اطلاعات و ارقام مذکور در بالا به لطف مرکز جهانی بهائی در اختیار اینجانب قرار گرفته است.



ترجمه ای از پیام بیت العدل اعظم الهی خطاب به بهائیان عالم (از: مرکز جهانی بهائی)

۲۹ آوریل ۲۰۱۵ خطاب به بهائیان عالم احبای عزیز الهی،

کار ساختمان آخرین مشرق الاذکار قاره ای که به سرعت پیش می رود امروز توقّف مختصری داشت تا با گرد هم آمدن اعضای محفل روحانی ملّی شیلی و عده معدودی از احبّاء، لحظه نمادین مهمّی را گرامی داشته ارج نهند. جعبه نقره ای و تزیینی کوچکی که به شیلی حمل شده و حاوی خاکی بود که امة البهاء روحیه خانم ده ها سال قبل با عشق و علاقه فراوان از محوطه مرکزی مقام اعلی جمع نموده بودند، طیّ مراسمی در درون قطعه اسم اعظم مثبت کاری شده ای که به منظور تزیین قسمت فوقانی قبه مشرق الذکار طرح شده جاگذاری گردید. این قطعه خطّاطی درشت و در عین حال ظریف که توسط یک هنرمند محلی از چوب روبل پلین (roble pellin) درخت بومی کشور شیلی تهیه شده، هم اکنون به جایگاه دائمی خود در ارتفاع بیست و نه متر از سطح زمین در قابی پشت بر آسمان در نقطه مرکزی معبد مرتفع شده است.

[امضا: بیت العدل اعظم]

ترجمه غیر رسمی از نامه محفل ملّی بریتانیا

۲۶ مه ۲۰۱۵ - ۱۰ عظمت ۱۷۲ بدیع دوستان عزیز و محبوب،

با کمال خوشوقتی اطلاعات ذیل را در ارتباط با ساعات صحیح برگزاری ایام متبرکه در بریتانیا در اختیارتان میگذاریم، که البته با در نظر گرفتن تغییر ساعت در تابستان تنظیم شده است. لطفاً این اطلاعات را برای مراجعه حفظ کنید. از اینکه قادر نبودیم این اطلاعات را زودتر به دست شما برسانیم پوزش میطلبیم.

اگر مقدور باشد، احبای الهی باید ایام متبرکه ذیل را در اوقات ذکر شده برگزار نمایند:

بعثت حضرت اعلی روز ۲۳ مه، دو ساعت پس از غروب آفتاب؛

روز اوّل رضوان، ساعت ۴ بعد از ظهر روز ۲۱ آوریل؛

شهادت حضرت اعلی روز ۱۰ ژوئیه، ساعت ۱ بعد از ظهر؛

صعود حضرت بهاءالله، روز ۲۹ مه، ساعت ۴ صبح؛

صعود حضرت عبدالبهاء روز ۲۸ نوامبر ساعت ۱ صبح

احبای عزیز مختارند سایر ایام متبرکه را در روزهای مقتضی، در هر ساعتی که برایشان مناسب باشد برگزار کنند.

تلاوت زیارت نامه ها

برخی از دوستان عزیز در مورد ساعت تلاوت زیارت نامه ها طیّ ایام متبرکه سؤال نموده اند. بیت العدل اعظم الهی این مسئله را در نامه ای مورخ ۸ فوریه ۲۰۱۲ که از طرف معهد اعلی به یکی از احبّاء مرقوم شده، روشن نموده اند:

در الواح الهی هیچگونه اشاره ای به الزام تلاوت زیارت نامه ها طی جلسات یادبود ایام متبرکه مرتبط با هیاکل قدسی یافته نشده است، همچنین هیچگونه اشاره ای به وقت تلاوت این الواح طی ایام متبرکه در دست نیست. البته احبای عزیز به منظور حفظ حرمت، وقتی در جوار مقامات مقدسه هستند، به سمت آستان مبارکه ایستاده و به تلاوت زیارتنامه می پردازند، و لیکن هیچ نصّی پیدا نشده که در آن احبای الهی مستلزم باشند، در اوقات دیگر، هر بار زیارتنامه تلاوت میکنند، به سوی قبله بایستند. کلیه سوالات مربوط به اینچنین مسائل ثانوی باید با صلاحدید محافل روحانی ملّی و یا محلی صورت گیرد، زیرا مسئولیت برگزاری ایام متبرکه به آنها واگذار شده است. احبای عزیز باید اتحاد جامعه بهائی را مدّ نظر قرار دهند و اجازه ندهند چنین مسائلی موجب بحث و اختلاف نظر گردد. البته ضمن اجرای برنامه ایام متبرکه، نباید به هیچ وجه بحثی در اینمورد صورت گیرد.

امیدواریم اطلاعات فوق مفید باشد. با عرض تهیات ابدع بهائی، محفل روحانی ملّی

۱۱ شهرالجمال ۱۷۲ ۱۸ اردیبهشت ۱۳۹۴

پیروان باوفای حضرت بهاءالله در کشور مقدّس ایران ملاحظه فرمایند

در ایام فرخنده رضوان این مشتاقان به اتّفاق جمّ غفیری از پیروان جمال اقدس ابهی، خادمین مرکز جهانی بهائی و زائرین و مسافرین در ارض مقصود، با طواف مقامات متبرکه علیا مراتب قدردانی و سپاس خود را از نزول تأییدات متتابعه ربّانی که سبب حصول موقّیّت‌های مهمّی برای امر مبارک در قریب به پنج‌هزار محدوده جغرافیایی در جمیع قارّات عالم گردیده به لسان جان به ساخت قدس الهی ابراز داشتیم، موقّیّت‌هایی که نتیجه سعی و کوشش خاضعانه دوستان در راه بهبود اوضاع و رفاه اجتماع با همکاری دیگر مردم آزاده و خیراندیش جهان است. در راز و نیاز با خالق بی‌انبار به یاد شما عزیزان بودیم و نه تنها فرارسیدن سال‌روز دستگیری هفت نفر اعضای سابق هیئت جلیله یاران و برخی از خادمین برانزده مؤسسه علمی آزاد را به خاطر آوردیم بلکه این غم و اندوه را نیز به دل داشتیم که هنوز هزاران نفر از بهائیان ایران همچنان به خاطر تمسّک به باورهای دینی خود در تضییقات شدید به سر می‌برند و بیش از صد نفر از آن عزیزان اسیر بند و زندان می‌باشند. از آستان مقدّسش رجا نمودیم که امرا را عدل و علما را انصاف عنایت فرماید تا این ظلم و ستم به پایان رسد و ابواب رخا و آسایش بر وجه آن خادمان امر حضرت کبریا و دیگر شهروندان شریف آن سرزمین مقدّس و باستانی گشوده گردد.

آنچه را که وقایع سال گذشته بیش از پیش در مقابل دیدگان مردم اصیل و پاک‌نژاد آن مرز و بوم و دیگر مروّجین صلح و سلام در سراسر جهان آشکار نمود تضادّ شدید موجود بین عقاید صلح‌جویانه و سلوک خیرخواهانه جامعه بهائی و اعمال اسفبار و غیر انسانی کسانی است که تحت تأثیر تعصّبات جاهلانه مذهبی همچنان به بی‌عدالتی‌های خود در حقّ شما ادامه می‌دهند. دفاع ایرانیان نیک‌اندیش و روشن‌ضمیر، چه در داخل و چه در خارج از ایران، از حقوق شهروندی هموطنان بهائی خود به وضوح نمایان بود. خالی گذاشتن یک صندلی از طرف هم‌کلاسان به نام و به یاد یک دانشجوی بهائی محروم از تحصیلات دانشگاهی، دعوت به همکاری از سوی هم‌صنفان یک کاسب بهائی محروم از جواز کسب، و یا اعلام رضایت کتبی جمعی از همسایگان و آشنایان برای به خاکسپاری یکی از متصاعدین بهائی که به دستور مسئولین و به بهانه مخالفت مردم از آن ممانعت به عمل آمده بود از جمله موارد بی‌شمار حمایت عامه مردم چه در شهرها و چه در روستاهای آن کشور بود. شواهد و قراین بسیار زیاد دیگری نیز بیان‌گر این معنا است که ایرانیان برومند از هر طبقه و قشری — اعم از مدافعان حقوق بشر، روحانیون نیک‌اندیش و باдрایت، فعّالان سیاسی و مدنی، نویسندگان و روزنامه‌نگاران، هنرمندان و تهیه‌کنندگان برنامه‌های تلویزیونی و مورّخینی که برای استفاده آیندگان به تهیه فیلم و جمع‌آوری اسناد در ارتباط با مظالم بی‌شمار وارده بر پیروان این آیین اقدام نموده و برنامه‌هایی مستند و بی‌طرفانه راجع به عقاید و اهداف‌شان ارائه می‌دهند، افرادی که در مقالات و وبلاگ‌های شخصی ابراز هم‌دردی و همدلی می‌نمایند، کسانی که با امضای تظلم‌نامه‌های مختلف خواهان احقاق حقوق مسلوبه شما عزیزان هستند، و برگزارکنندگان برنامه‌های وسیع و گسترده علیه محرومیّت جوانان بهائی از تحصیلات عالیّه و آزار و اذیّت بهائیان — همگی آرزو دارند تا آحاد مردم مملکت از جمله بهائیان بتوانند در مقام شهروندانی دل‌سوز دوش به دوش یکدیگر در راه آبادانی و سربلندی ایران عزیز کوشا باشند. از طرف دیگر حمایت سازمان‌های غیر انتفاعی، مؤسسات علمی، شخصیت‌های برجسته چون برندگان جایزه صلح نوبل، نمایندگان دول مختلف و قطع‌نامه‌های مصوّب مجمع عمومی سازمان ملل متحد نیز نشان‌دهنده انزجار مردم جهان از ادامه ظلم و ستم بر شما و دیگر ایرانیان است.

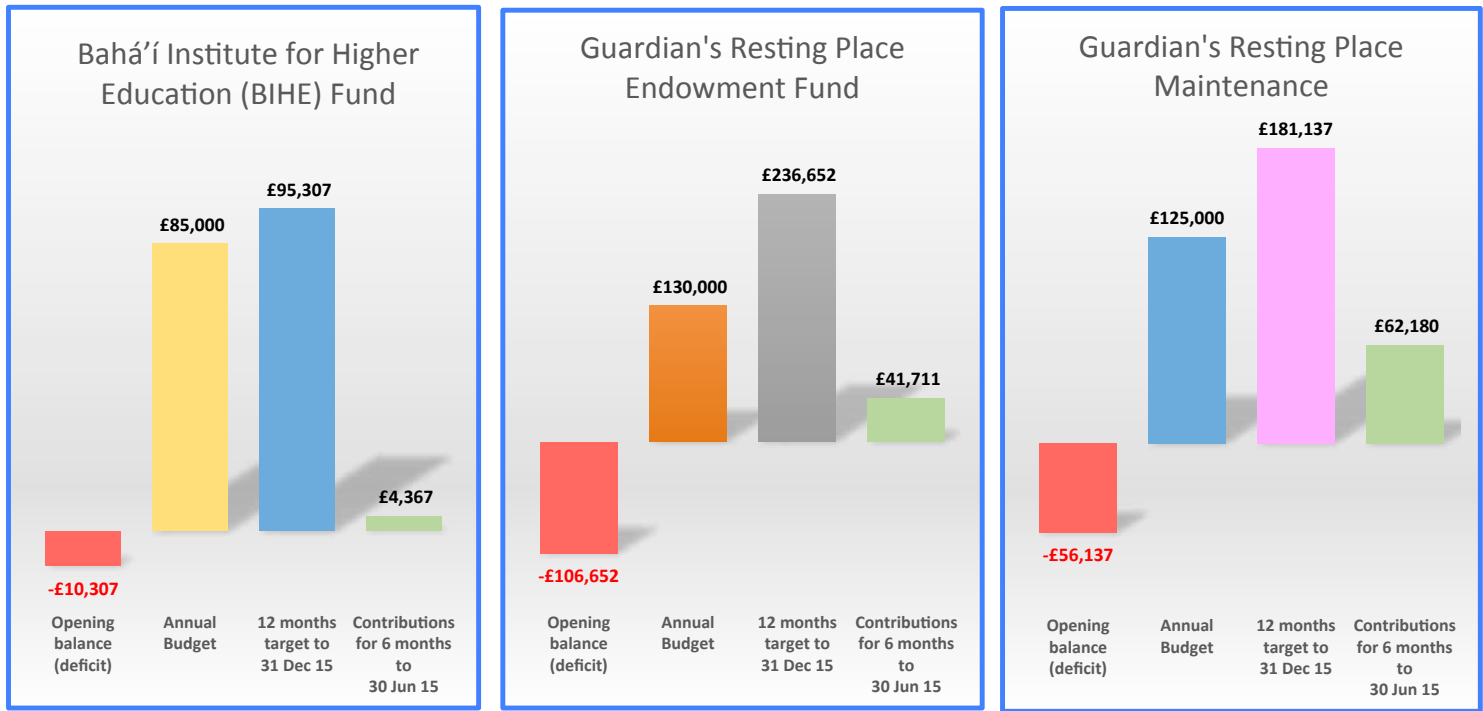
ایقان و ایمان شما به مقام مظهر ظهور الهی در این عصر نورانی، انقطاع شما از امور دنیوی و توجّه‌تان به حیات معنوی، تشبّث‌تان به تعالیم این امر عظیم، اراده آهنین و بردباری حماسه‌آفرین شما در تحمّل شدايد در سبیل محبّت حضرت یزدان، درایت و استقامت سازنده شما در شرایط مصیبت‌بار کنونی، و اقدامات مجدّانه شما در راه خدمت به وطن مألوف و به عالم انسانی یادآور این بیان احلی از قلم اعلی است که بعد از توصیف شوق و شور و عشق موفور پیروان خود و مراتب از خودگذشتگی‌ها و جان‌بازی‌های آنان در راه تحقّق اراده الهی می‌فرمایند "فوعزّتک یا الهی ائی متحیر فیهم و ما ظهر منهم فی سبیل محبّتک فطوبی لهم ثمّ روحا لهم...کأنتک صنعتهم لحبّک و اصطفتیهم لجذبک و القیت فیهم روح امرک و اظهرت لهم جمال احدیّتک". پس ای فارسان میدان وفا و ای سالکان سبیل هدی سرافراز و مفتخر باشید که مصداق این بیان مبارک حضرت عبدالبهاء هستید که می‌فرمایند "ای احبای الهی نظر به اعتساف و بی‌انصافی نادانان ننمایید. ظلم را به عدل مقاومت کنید و اعتساف را به انصاف مقابلی نمایید و خونخواری را به مهربانی معامله نمایید. در ترقّی ایران و ایرانیان خیرخواه باشید و در مدنیت عمومیه بکوشید."

[امضا: بیت العدل اعظم]



The Gift

The finance Office would like to highlight three funds in the UK



The Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) Fund - The National Assembly has accepted the bounty of contributing to the education of Baha'i youth through the BIHE Fund. We need another £90,940 to meet this goal.

Guardian's Resting Place Endowment Fund - The purpose of this Endowment fund is to build up enough capital to meet the maintenance expenses of this most precious gift and responsibility of our national community. We need to raise £194,941 this year.

Guardian's Resting Place Maintenance Fund - for now the necessary expenses and ongoing annual maintenance for the Resting Place of the Beloved Guardian must be met from this fund. We lack £118, 957 to meet this goal.



UKBAHÁ'Í - Service Opportunities

Bahá'í World Centre Staffing Needs

There is an ongoing need at the Baha'i World Centre for individuals who possess the relevant training and experience to fill the following positions:

- Administrative Assistant
- Assistant in Document and Records Handling
- Bookbinder/ Book Conservator
- Comptroller's Assistant
- Database Administrator
- Department Interface/Business Analyst
- Executive Assistant
- Librarian
- Mechanical and Electrical Engineers
- Move Crew
- Nurse, Health Services

- Pilgrim Guide
- Project Manager
- Senior Manager for Construction Projects
- Treasurer

- Temporary position: Painter and Plasterer

To find out about other needs for staff, or if you would like to find out how to offer service, visit the Offering to Serve website or contact the Office of Personnel via email serve@bwc.org

Opportunities for service at the National Centre

- IT Projects Officer.
- Custodian of the National Hazíratu'l-Quds.



Notices

Iranian Bahá'ís

If you are a Bahá'í adult or youth who resides in Iran and are deciding whether to stay in Iran or leave that country, or if you are an Iranian Bahá'í residing outside of Iran and are considering visiting that country or moving to or returning permanently to that country, the National Assembly asks that you contact the National Office so that we can share with you some important guidance that you need to be aware of.

Please email: nsa@bahai.org.uk or telephone: +44 (0) 207 5842566.

قابل توجه احبای عزیز ایرانی،

اگر شما از اعضای ذی رأی جامعه بهائی و یا یک جوان بهائی هستید که در ایران ساکن میباشید و میخواهید در مورد اینکه آیا در ایران بمانید و یا اینکه آن کشور را ترک کنید تصمیم بگیرید، و یا اگر شما از بهائیان ایرانی هستید که در خارج از ایران ساکن میباشید و قصد بازدید از ایران را دارید و یا اینکه در نظر دارید که به آن کشور نقل مکان نموده و در آنجا بطور دائم اقامت نمایید، محفل ملی از شما میخواهد که با دفتر محفل ملی تماس حاصل فرمایید تا ما بتوانیم هدایات مهمی را با شما در میان گذاریم که لازم است شما از آنها اطلاع داشته باشید. لطفاً با آدرس ایمیل ذیل و یا این شماره تلفن تماس حاصل فرمایید:

Visiting or Relocating to an Arab Country?

Bahá'ís who plan to visit or relocate to an Arab country of the Middle East or North Africa should contact the National Office for guidance regarding travel to the Arab region.

Wedding Plans?

Please contact your nearest Local Spiritual Assembly for guidance and assistance well in advance of your wedding date.

Disclosure and Barring Service information (formerly the CRB)

For guidance on how to renew or apply for a DBS Disclosure and subscribe to the online DBS Update Service please contact: osc@bahai.org.uk

Any person who intends working with under-18's in a position of authority as, for example, a tutor/teacher/animator/project coordinator must have either a valid CRB or DBS certificate and their name on the National Spiritual Assembly's Accredited Children's Tutor (ACT) list BEFORE taking up a role that gives them 'substantial access' to a child or children. Any person serving in any of these positions of authority without a valid CRB or DBS certificate must stop immediately until they have obtained a DBS certificate and have their name on the ACT list.

Please note that the last CRB Disclosure certificates issued November 2012 will expire February 2016. From March 2016 onwards only DBS certificates are valid. (This applies to England and Wales only. If you live elsewhere in the UK please check with your Council to determine whether or not comparable changes have been made to the system under its jurisdiction.)

Information

National Office

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK

27 Rutland Gate, LONDON, SW7 1PD

Tel: 020 7584 2566
Fax: 020 7584 9402
Email: nsa@bahai.org.uk

Secretary,
Mr Patrick O'Mara
Email: nsa@bahai.org.uk

Treasurer,
Dr Vafa Ram
Email: treasurer@bahai.org.uk

Office of Public Affairs

Mrs. Padideh Sabeti, convenor

Tel: 020 7019 7780
Email: opa@bahai.org.uk

Membership/Records

Email: records@bahai.org.uk

Office Hours

0930 - 1730 hrs week days.
Bookshop closes at 16.30

NEWS

is the official channel for electronic communications between the National Spiritual Assembly, its offices and agencies, and the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom.

To subscribe to NEWS please email: news.admin@bahai.org.uk

UK Bahá'í Downloads website:
<http://admin.bahai.org.uk>

National and International Funds of the Faith

All donations for national and international funds and enquiries:

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK,
Finance Department,
27 Rutland Gate,
London, SW7 1PD

Tel: 020 3051 5733
Fax: 020 3051 5734
Email: finance@bahai.org.uk

Cheques should be made payable to "NSA of the Bahá'ís of the UK"

Huqúq'ulláh Payments

Enquiries concerning payments can be directed to the Finance Office as above.

Cheques should be made payable to "NSA of the Bahá'ís –Huqúq"



Regional Board of Trustees of Huqúq'ulláh for Ireland and the UK

Parvin Morrissey
Email: parvin@pmorrissey.co.uk
Tel: 0178 647 4498
Mobile: 0796 643 5474

Regional Bahá'í Councils and their Training Institute Boards

Bahá'í Council for England

Secretary: Olinga Tahzib
Email: bce@bahai.org.uk

Training Institute Board

Secretary: Christine Boyett
Email: tiben@bahai.org.uk

Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland

Secretary: Orang Agahi
Email: bcni@bahai.org.uk
Website: www.bahaicouncil-ni.org.uk

Training Institute Board

Secretary: Susan Agahi
Email: tibni@bahai.org.uk

Bahá'í Council for Scotland

Secretary: Allan Forsyth
Email: bcs@bahai.org.uk

Training Institute Board

Secretary: Maria Patricia Jansson
Email: tibsc@bahai.org.uk

Bahá'í Council for Wales

Secretary: Bill Jenkins
Email: bcw@bahai.org.uk

Training Institute Board

Secretary: Rachel Murray
Email: tibwa@bahai.org.uk

Visits to Special Places

Pilgrimage and Other Visits to the Holy Land

To apply for a full pilgrimage or a 3 day visit, please either write directly to Office of Pilgrimage, Bahá'í World Centre, PO Box 155, 31001 Haifa,

Israel or email: pilgrimage@bwc.org.

You can also apply online at: www.pilgrimage.bahai.org.

For visits to Israel for other purposes, Bahá'ís should write for permission to the Universal House of Justice at the above address or email: secretariat@bwc.org

It is preferred that you apply at least one month ahead, giving the names of all Bahá'ís travelling, postal and email address as well as detailing the purpose and expected date of the visit.

Resting Place of Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith

New Southgate Cemetery, Brunswick Park Road, London N11 1JJ.

Opening Hours: 09.00 – 17.00.
Nearest Tube station: Arnos Grove on the Piccadilly line – about 40 minutes from Central London and a 25 minute walk.

European Bahá'í House of Worship, Germany

European Bahá'í House of Worship – Germany

Bahá'í-Haus Der Andacht, Eppsteiner Str. 95, D-65719, Hofheim-Langenhain, Germany.

Tel: +49 6192 901677
Fax: +49 6192 901678
Email: biz@bahai.de

For travel details visit: www.bahai.de/haus-derandacht/wegbeschreibung/

The Sunday devotionals take place at 3pm in the National Hazíratu'l-Quds



and the Visitors and Information Centre and Book Store are open as usual.

Visits to the Houses of Bahá'u'lláh in Turkey

How to visit Houses of Baha'u'llah in Turkey?

The Holy Places in Turkey Web Site hp.bahaitr.org offers detailed information about how to visit the Holy Places in Edirne and Istanbul.

We encourage all prospective visitors who come to Turkey to visit the Bahá'í Holy Places in Istanbul/Fatih and in Edirne to look into the Bahá'í Official website of Turkey which may be reached by entering the website: hp.bahaitr.org

This website gives info on the visiting time and days, rules required to make the Holy visit, and how Baha'i Friends may travel in most convenient manner.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Turkey.

Stamps for International Fund

Please send stamps with SAE envelope in an envelope that will fit through a normal size letter box to Dr Diana Howlett 15 Shaftesbury Avenue, Bath, BA1 3DT.

The editorial committee of UKBahá'í wishes, in line with the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly, to encourage the readership to access this publication online, and to unsubscribe from receiving the hard copy. Website address: admin.bahai.org.uk



Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Newly Arrived

Title	First Name	Last Name	Locality Name
Miss	Hanna	Shahabi	Lightwater
Miss	Tiba	Basubi	Sheffield
Mstr	Kian	Kazemi	Leeds

Those who have Joined Their Lives Together

Bride	Groom	Location
Olivia Carroll	Michael Peter Ridge	Stockport
Talieh Mann	Salil Kapoor	Haringey
Kathy Gilman	Kevin Lane	Billericay
Farida Ciotti	Badi Aiff	Gibraltar
Poliana Placesi Sepulveda	Andre von Borries	Manchester
Mona Shahrezaey	Bernhardt Roeland Caselin	Guildford

Those Who Have Passed Away

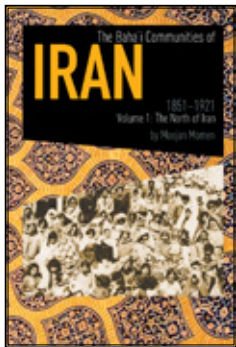
Title	First Name	Last Name	Locality Name
Mr	Farshid	Youssefi-Rad	Newport
Mr	Khosro	Deihim	Kirklees
Mr	Edward	Sinclair	Motherwell
Mrs	Jaleh	Aliee-Rastani	Kingston Upon Thames
Dr	Abiola	Ogunsola	Southwark
Mrs	Aghdass	Taghdiri	Bexley
Mrs	Mehrnoush	Majidi	Amersham
Mr	Aubyn	Begent	Pyefleet
Mrs	Patricia	Wright	Lincoln
Dr	Sally	Liya	Newtonabbey
Mrs	Zarintaj	Sabet	Nottingham
Mr	Kenneth	Bunton	Staplegrave
Mr	Conrad	Brown	Tywyn
Mrs	Habibeh	Atlassi	City Of Westminster
Mrs	Mary	Hayes	Sanday
Mrs	Moir	Delaney	Inverness



Above | Two believers invited to attend the centenary celebration of the signing of the Magna Carta.



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www.grbooks.com



THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES OF IRAN

1851-1921

Volume 1: The North of Iran

by Moojan Momen

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SPECIFICATIONS

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£24.95/\$49.95

ALSO BY MOOJAN MOMEN

THE BABI AND BAHÁ'Í RELIGIONS
1844-1944: SOME CONTEMPORARY
WESTERN ACCOUNTS
ISLAM AND THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH: AN
INTRODUCTION TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH
FOR MUSLIMS
BUDDHISM AND THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH:
A COMPARISON OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH WITH
BUDDHISM

The early histories of all the Baha'i communities of northern Iran are narrated here for the first time.

Drawing on original sources including manuscript histories, letters, family records and material previously published only in Persian, Dr Moojan Momen provides a panoramic yet detailed account of the largest and the smallest Baha'i communities during the period 1851 to 1921. During this time they acquired characteristics that differentiated them from the rest of the population – their ethos and outlook, their system of administration and social institutions – and the persecution they faced as a result.

The study of the religious minorities in Iran is still at an early stage. In particular, the Baha'i community has received relatively little attention, despite being the largest non-Muslim minority in Iran. Moojan Momen sets out to remedy this situation. Using a narrative style, he presents an account of the Baha'i communities in the northern half of Iran, province by province, during the early years of their formation and development. The starting point is the execution of the Bab in 1850 and the holocaust of 1852 when the shah gave orders for the extermination of the Babi community and thousands of Babis were killed. Set against the background of the turmoil in the social and economic conditions in Iran, the book stretches across the period of the leadership of the Baha'i community by Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha.

The book traces the developments in the Iranian Baha'i community as it emerged from the Babi community and, under the guidance of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha, became less parochial and more global in its outlook, seeking education and raising the position of women in its local communities. By the period of the leadership of 'Abdu'l-Baha, these communities were making a notable difference, with the establishment of modern schools, the promotion of the education and social role of women, the development of health facilities and the building of modern public baths. In all these areas the Baha'is were at the forefront of modernity and development in Iran. However, each upsurge in the activities of the Baha'i community resulted in an upsurge of persecution.

This book is an important contribution to the knowledge of the early days of the Baha'i Faith, the development of the largest non-Muslim minority in Iran and the emergence of modernity in the Middle East.

Dr Moojan Momen was born in Iran but was raised and educated in England, attending the University of Cambridge. He has a special interest in the study of Shi'i Islam and the Baha'i Faith, both from the viewpoint of their history and their doctrines. In recent years, his interests have extended to the study of the phenomenon of religion. His principal publications in these fields include: *The Babi and Baha'i Religions, 1844-1944: Some Contemporary Western Accounts* (George Ronald, 1981); *Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (George Ronald and Yale University Press, 1985); and *The Phenomenon of Religion* (OneWorld, Oxford, 1999, republished as *Understanding Religion*, 2008). He has contributed articles to encyclopaedias such as *Encyclopaedia Iranica* and *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* as well as papers to academic journals such as *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Past and Present*, *Religion*, *Baha'i Studies Review*, and *Iranian Studies*. He is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society.



Front Cover Photo | Leaf Sounds by Corinne Randall

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