

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

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When replying please

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Dearly loved Friends,

The next Five Year Plan

Following the National Institutional meeting held in January, the details of which we have shared with you earlier, a brief account of this seminal event was sent to the Universal House of Justice. A loving response was received from the Supreme Body, dated 22 February 2016, which included the following passage:

The friends in your community may be assured of the prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold that Bahá'u'lláh may strengthen and confirm them as they strive to bring the present Plan to a successful conclusion and prepare for the next global endeavour.

Meanwhile the National Assembly has continued to deepen on the 29 December 2015 message to the Conference of the Counsellors and has been eagerly following the efforts of Regional Bahá'í Councils to bring the study of this message closer to the grassroots by organising gatherings of institutions and other friends across the UK, some of which have already taken place.

Rectitude of conduct

As mentioned previously, at the beginning of each meeting the National Assembly spends time reflecting on guidance relevant to the functioning of the Institution and its members. At its most recent meeting it reflected on passages from the 28 December 2010 message of the House of Justice, and was particularly struck by the guidance it contained as to what the Guardian described as “the spiritual prerequisites for the success of all Bahá'í undertakings”. The letter states that “of these, three, he [the Guardian] indicated, ‘stand out as preeminent and vital’: rectitude of conduct, a chaste and holy life, and freedom from prejudice.” The House of Justice continue by telling us that “you would do well to reflect on the implications of his observations for the global effort of the Bahá'í community to infuse cluster after cluster with the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.” The House of Justice then proceeds to describe what is meant by “rectitude of conduct”. These paragraphs are replete with astonishing guidance; each phrase raises the vision and heightens an awareness of the standard required of those who serve the Cause. But these paragraphs are specifically addressed to members of Bahá'í institutions, and the National Assembly felt moved to highlight these for you, and to urge institutions to take the time together to study these passages:

Let the coordinators of every training institute, the members of every Area Teaching Committee, every Auxiliary Board member and every one of his or her assistants, and all

members of every local, regional and national Bahá'í body, whether elected or appointed, appreciate the significance of the Guardian's plea to ponder in their hearts the implications of the moral rectitude which he described with such clarity. May their actions serve as a reminder to a beleaguered and weary humanity of its high destiny and its inherent nobility.

(Universal House of Justice, 28 December 2010 message to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellor.)

We hope you can make the time to respond to the Guardian's plea.

Staff meeting

With much joy, the National Assembly meets annually with full-time and part-time staff and volunteers who serve at the National Ḥazíratu'l-Quds, with the main purpose of sharing its love and thanks for the outstanding services which the friends render to the community and the National Assembly. It seemed that the friends were particularly impressed with the ability of the National Assembly to sing in harmony – an activity that it engages in with great regularity, but usually in private!

Spiritual health of the community – supporting individuals

In recent months the National Assembly has given considerable time to consulting on aspects of the spiritual health of the Bahá'í community and has set a course for learning how to foster this. This includes supporting individuals going through challenging situations. In such cases, the Assembly has been striving to learn how to more effectively apply spiritual principles and approaches through a process of consultation, action and reflection, all informed by relevant guidance. In doing this, it hopes to build the capacity of the Institution and its agencies to provide greater support to individuals in the community.

Intellectual life of the community

Following the seminars held last Autumn, the National Assembly is having ongoing consultations on this subject, together with Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi. The final direction that this important aspect of community life will take has not yet crystallised but will no doubt become clear as consultations and reflection on the guidance of the Universal House of Justice continue.

External affairs events

The National Assembly is frequently represented at events, mainly in London, either by its members or appointed representatives. In the past couple of months, invitations have been received for two notable events. The first is a City of London dinner event at the Mansion House, with the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. Many prominent people, from a cross-section of society, attended this dinner at which two members of the National Assembly were present. And the second is the Commonwealth Service which is held every year at Westminster Abbey. This service, which will be televised live by the BBC, will take place on 14 March and is attended by Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. A member of the National Assembly will also be present.

We wish you all a blessed fasting season.

With warmest Bahá'í greetings,

National Spiritual Assembly

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM