

UKBAHÁ'Í

Published by the United Kingdom Bahá'í Community

Issue 11

'Izzat 170 B.E. - September 2013



**Destruction of the House of
Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad**
**Message from the Universal
House of Justice**

.....

Youth Conferences
**Message from the Universal
House of Justice**
News from Youth Conferences around the world

.....



Baghdad in the 19th century

Universal House of Justice Messages	2	From the Bahá'í Councils	19
House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad	2	The Gift	20
Reflections from Youth Conferences	7	Persian Pages	21
National Convention	8	Service Opportunities	26
Stories	10	Book Review	27
News	15	Notices	28
From the Universal House of Justice	15	Information	28
From the National Spiritual Assembly	15	Visits to Special Places	29
		Calendar of Events	30



House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad

To All National Spiritual Assemblies

27 June 2013

With shattered hearts, we have received news of the destruction of the Most Great House—the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. While the precise circumstances attending this outrageous violation are as yet unclear, its immediate consequence is without doubt, and must be emphatically stated: The peoples of the world have been robbed of a sanctuary of incalculable sacredness.

So deplorable an act, coming on the eve of the unprecedented worldwide convocation of Bahá'u'lláh's young followers and their friends, calls to mind that mysterious interplay of crisis and victory through which His indestructible, irrepressible, inexorable purpose will finally be consummated.

We supplicate the Blessed Beauty to confer upon His faithful followers throughout the world fortitude and resolve in the face of this grievous blow. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

The Universal House of Justice

To the Bahá'ís of the World

17 July 2013

Dearly loved Friends,

A century and a half ago, Bahá'u'lláh departed His House in Baghdad for the Najíbiyyih Garden, where He would, for the first time, openly disclose His prophetic mission. He left behind Him an edifice of surpassing sacredness that had sheltered Him for seven years. This sanctified residence, to which the Blessed Beauty would never return, was styled by Him the "Most Great House"; designated, along with the House of the Báb in Shiraz, as the place of Bahá'í pilgrimage; and addressed, by the Supreme Pen, in these stirring words:

I testify that thou art the scene of His transcendent glory,
His most holy habitation. Out of thee hath gone forth the Breath of
the All-Glorious, a Breath that hath breathed over all created
things, and filled with joy the breasts of the devout that dwell in
the mansions of Paradise.

Yet, in His own lifetime, the House in Baghdad was subjected to mistreatment, and ownership of the building was temporarily wrested from His followers. Bahá'u'lláh foretold, in poignant terms, the further degradation that would befall His House.

This is not the first humiliation inflicted upon My House. In days
gone by the hand of the oppressor hath heaped indignities upon it.
Verily, it shall be so abased in the days to come as to cause tears
to flow from every discerning eye. Thus have We unfolded to thee
things hidden beyond the veil, inscrutable to all save God, the
Almighty, the All-Praised.

Events over the last one hundred and fifty years have borne out that to which Bahá'u'lláh had thus alluded. The House in Baghdad was acquired for His use about twenty-five years after its construction, which is thought to have occurred in 1830. By the early 1900s, it had fallen into total disrepair. When conditions were propitious, 'Abdu'l-Bahá arranged for it to be fully rebuilt, from the foundation upwards. As this work was nearing completion, efforts to seize the building by those opposing the Faith intensified, culminating in a wholly spurious claim to ownership that was unjustly endorsed by the courts. Again, the Most Great House was taken from the Bahá'ís.

Over the years that followed, successive attempts were made by the believers, under the direction of Shoghi Effendi, to regain control of the property. The case was eventually taken up by the League of Nations, which plainly condemned the



injustice done to the Bahá'í community, but even this brought about no redress. However, the confiscation of the Blessed House and the response of the friends did lead to another significant development, as Shoghi Effendi recounts in "God Passes By":

Suffice it to say that, despite these interminable delays, protests and evasions, and the manifest failure of the Authorities concerned to implement the recommendations made by both the Council of the League and the Permanent Mandates Commission, the publicity achieved for the Faith by this memorable litigation, and the defence of its cause--the cause of truth and justice--by the world's highest tribunal, have been such as to excite the wonder of its friends and to fill with consternation its enemies.

Now is not the occasion to delve into the details of this "memorable litigation", but an extensive description has been set down by the Guardian in his peerless account of the first Bahá'í century. We add only that, since that time, the Most Great House has not been in the possession of the Bahá'ís, having been turned into a Shí'ah religious endowment instead.

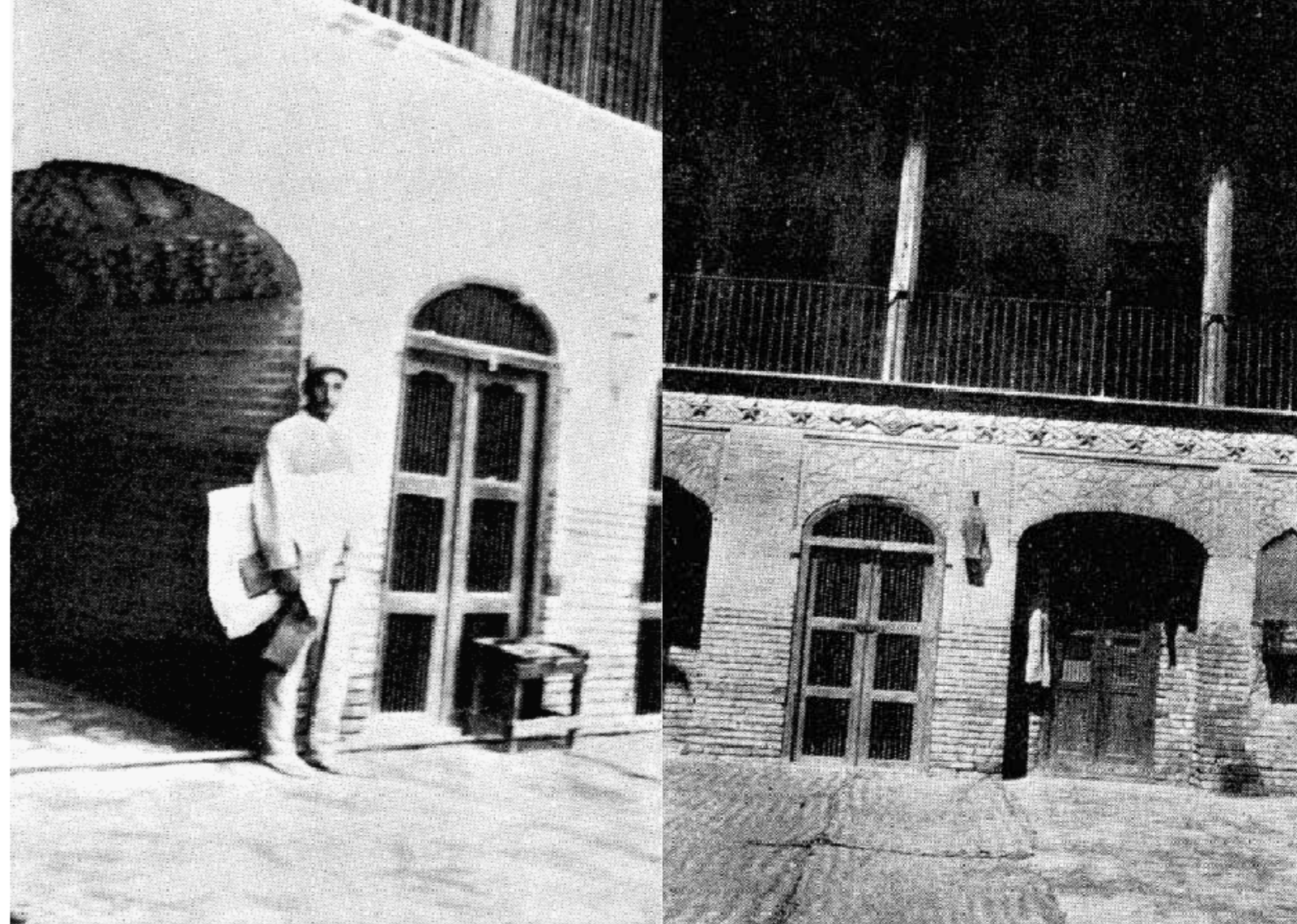
Owing to the highly delicate situation in Iraq over the last tumultuous decade, it was not possible for the friends to press their claim to this sacred property. Nevertheless, the institutions of the Faith in that country and individual believers remained vigilant regarding any developments bearing on the security of the Most Great House and took whatever measures were open to them to promote its protection and preservation. Iraqis themselves, although not generally aware of the special significance with which the property had been invested by Bahá'u'lláh, were not oblivious to its historical and architectural value. Only a year ago, the Department of Antiquities had published, in the official gazette of the government, a decree intended to guarantee the building against any action that might damage it, a decree that carried with it the force of the law. Indeed, as far back as the early 1980s the authorities had recognized the House to be a fine example of period architecture in Iraq, still in good condition, and had designated it as a heritage site.

Thus, it was with utter shock and desolating grief that the Bahá'ís in Baghdad discovered on 26 June that the "most holy habitation" of Bahá'u'lláh had been razed almost to the ground to make way for the construction of a mosque. It has now been confirmed that the work was undertaken without a legal permit. The destruction of the property, it emerges, had been planned for some time, but the largest part of the operation was carried out over just three days and nights, from 24 to 26 June, using heavy machinery. We understand that the Department of Antiquities, which had previously been preparing to renovate the property, is already taking steps to establish precisely what led to the demolition, to attempt to halt any construction on the same spot, and to bring to account those responsible.

In the world at large, it has become all too familiar for a blow of this severity, dealt to a hallowed site, to provoke an aggressive response. The Bahá'ís of Iraq, trained by the hand of the Abhá Beauty, will of course remain the embodiments of kindness and forbearance, hopeful of a just outcome. They are under no illusion as to the magnitude of the loss which they, on behalf of the worldwide Bahá'í community and beyond, are being forced to bear. But their eagerness to render service to their society will not be diminished by this calamity, nor will they be any less conscious of the pressing need for the whole of humanity to be acquainted with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. On the contrary. To gain insight into what the Most Great House truly stands for-- indeed, to understand better the transcendent meaning of pilgrimage to that holy edifice--one need only observe the response of Bahá'u'lláh's followers throughout the world to its destruction: high-mindedness, serenity, trust in God. Their primary focus is on opening the hearts to the implications of the message of the Blessed Beauty; events in Baghdad will only serve to heighten the sense of urgency with which this work is undertaken. At this time when the series of youth conferences, now commencing, is about to propel forward the current stage in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan, we beseech the Almighty to graciously bestow upon the friends everywhere fortified resolve.

Bahá'u'lláh foresaw that the Most Great House would be subjected to terrible indignities, but He also stated that, no matter what adversities might arise, the Cause was divinely protected. Let every believer take heart. In a moving apostrophe addressed to that House, the Ancient Beauty asserted: "God hath, in the world of creation, adorned thee with the jewel of His remembrance. Such an ornament no man can, at any time, profane." He gave a promise, too, that, notwithstanding all that would befall the Blessed House, the future glory of that sanctified place was assured: "In the fullness of time, the Lord shall, by the power of truth, exalt it in the eyes of all men. He shall cause it to become the Standard of His Kingdom, the Shrine round which will circle the concourse of the faithful."

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]



Right | Bahá'u'lláh's house in Baghdad



Youth Conferences

1 July 2013

To the participants in the forthcoming 114 youth conferences throughout the world

Dearly loved Friends,

When the exalted figure of the Bab, aged just twenty-five, arose to deliver His revolutionizing message to the world, many among those who accepted and spread His teachings were young, even younger than the Báb Himself. Their heroism, immortalized in all its dazzling intensity in *The Dawn-Breakers*, will illumine the annals of human history for centuries to come. Thus began a pattern in which every generation of youth, drawing inspiration from the same divine impulse to cast the world anew, has seized the opportunity to contribute to the latest stage in the unfolding process that is to transform the life of humankind. It is a pattern that has suffered no interruption from the time of the Báb to this present hour.

The lifelong exertion and sacrifice of your spiritual forebears did much to establish the Faith in diverse lands and to hasten the appearance of a global community of purpose. Though the tasks that lie before you are not the same as theirs, the responsibilities with which you are entrusted are no less vital. After many a decade, the world-embracing labours of this far-flung community to obtain a more adequate understanding of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and to apply the principles it enshrines have culminated in the emergence of a potent framework for action, refined through experience. You are fortunate to be familiar with its methods and approaches now so well established. Through perseverance in their implementation, many of you will already have seen for yourselves signs of the society-building power of the divine teachings. At the conference you attend, you are being invited to consider the contribution that can be made by any young person who wishes to answer Bahá'u'lláh's summons and help to release that power. To assist you, a number of themes have been identified for you to explore, beginning with looking at your current time of life.

Across the world are to be gathered, in scores of youth conferences sharing the same aim, tens of thousands who have much in common. Although your realities are shaped by a broad diversity of circumstances, yet a desire to bring about constructive change and a capacity for meaningful service, both characteristic of your stage of life, are neither limited to any race or nationality, nor dependent upon material means. This bright period of youth you share is experienced by all—but it is brief, and buffeted by numerous social forces. How important it is, then, to strive to be among those who, in the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "plucked the fruit of life".

With this in mind, we are delighted that so many of you are already engaged in service by conducting community-building activities, as well as by organizing, coordinating, or otherwise administering the efforts of others; in all of these endeavours you are taking an increasing level of responsibility upon your shoulders. Not surprisingly, it is your age group that is gaining the most experience at aiding junior youth, and children too, with their moral and spiritual development, fostering in them capacity for collective service and true friendship. After all, aware of the world which these young souls will need to navigate, with its pitfalls and also its opportunities, you readily appreciate the importance of spiritual strengthening and preparation. Conscious, as you are, that Bahá'u'lláh came to transform both the inner life and external conditions of humanity, you are assisting those younger than yourselves to refine their characters and prepare to assume responsibility for the well-being of their communities. As they enter adolescence, you are helping them to enhance their power of expression, as well as enabling a strong moral sensibility to take root within them. In so doing, your own sense of purpose is becoming more clearly defined as you heed Bahá'u'lláh's injunction: "Let deeds, not words, be your adorning."

To follow a path of service, whatever form one's activity assumes, requires faith and tenacity. In this connection, the benefit of walking that path in the company of others is immense. Loving fellowship, mutual encouragement, and willingness to learn together are natural properties of any group of youth sincerely striving for the same ends, and should also characterize those essential relationships that bind together the components of society. Given this, we hope the bonds you develop through association with other conference participants will prove abiding. Indeed, long after the gatherings close, may these ties of friendship and common calling help keep your feet firm.

The possibilities presented by collective action are especially evident in the work of community building, a process that is gaining momentum in many a cluster and in neighbourhoods and villages throughout the world that have become centres of intense activity. Youth are often at the forefront of the work in these settings—not only Bahá'í youth, but those of like mind who can see the positive effects of what the Bahá'ís have initiated and grasp the underlying vision of unity and spiritual transformation. In such places, the imperative to share the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh with receptive hearts and explore the implications of His message for today's world is keenly felt. When so much of society invites passivity and apathy or, worse still, encourages behaviour harmful to oneself and others, a conspicuous contrast is offered by those who are enhancing the capacity of a population to cultivate and sustain a spiritually enriching pattern of community life.



Yet, although many admire your dynamism and ideals, the true significance of these endeavours is less apparent to the world at large. You, however, are aware of your part in a mighty, transforming process that will yield, in time, a global civilization reflecting the oneness of humankind. You know well that the habits of mind and spirit that you are nurturing in yourselves and others will endure, influencing decisions of consequence that relate to marriage, family, study, work, even where to live. Consciousness of this broad context helps to shatter the distorting looking glass in which everyday tests, difficulties, setbacks, and misunderstandings can seem insurmountable. And in the struggles that are common to each individual's spiritual growth, the will required to make progress is more easily summoned when one's energies are being channelled towards a higher goal—the more so when one belongs to a community that is united in that goal.

All these thoughts are openings to an inclusive and ever-expanding conversation that will extend through the conferences and well beyond them as you engage many others in earnest discussions that lift the heart and awaken the mind to the possibilities of what could be. Drawing upon your collective experience will further enrich your deliberations. At this propitious time, our hearts will be with you, and as each conference concludes, we will eagerly look to see what will follow. For every gathering we will entreat the Almighty to bestow upon its participants a measure of His boundless grace, knowing, as you do, that divine assistance is promised to all those who arise to serve humankind in response to the galvanizing call of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Universal House of Justice

The National Assembly in a covering letter commented "we commend it [this message] for study by all, and ask that the friends everywhere consider this message and its implications for their own services to the Cause."



Regional Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh for Ireland and the United Kingdom

.. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's assertion that the 'basic principle on which the institution of Huqúqu'lláh is established' lies within the combined vision of 'cooperation, mutual aid and reciprocity' offers a glimpse of the oceans of wisdom and the fountains of hope implicit in this

profound portrayal of the advancement of the common good through collaborative endeavours. Motivated by a genuine concern for the welfare of others which derives from the love of Bahá'u'lláh, observance of the law of Huqúqu'lláh provides the means to hasten the realization of this universal aspiration to ensure the well-being of all mankind.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the International Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh to a National Spiritual Assembly)



Reflections on Youth Conferences

"Understanding the power of collective action in contributing to change in a community
"The more people that you have, the stronger you are. The more hands you have, the lighter the work is." - Boston, USA

"I feel so blessed to respond to the call of the Universal House of Justice... I am so happy to be able to attend [this conference]." - Papua New Guinea



"I had thought before about how friendship assists me or the other person, but I had never thought about how friendship impacts the community around us and contributes to society." - Toronto

"A lot of our efforts are about unity. Our group in the Bahamas has some Bahá'ís and some Christians, but if you didn't point them out you wouldn't see the difference. As we go around offering service we bring more people in. I guess the service is bringing unity."

"A lot of people here may now think, 'Oh, pity that the conference is over, I wish it could last longer.' On the contrary, it is not over. I think that it is the beginning of the path of service to be walked. It is beautiful to see this! Such a large group of youth, with the same purpose, and thirsty for change." - Canoas Brazil



"When I return home, I'm going to share what I've learnt here with my friends and tell them that they can contribute to change. I'm going to encourage them to move forward with their noble goals." - Madrid

"I have done service projects before, so I thought I had seen it all. I wondered, 'What's in it for me?' But I learned the meaning of service for the first time—it's not about the act but about building a new civilization." - Boston, USA



"We are not alone; there are plenty of friends who can help and a very beautiful community that is like a family, ready to help us." - Paris



A youth shared a rap that he wrote which conveyed his love and gratitude for the spiritual empowerment program and for those serving as animators throughout the world, was accompanied by guitar and energized and rejuvenated the entire room. The words that made up his chorus were on everyone's mind and could be heard on the lips of virtually every participant during break and meal-time.

"They were animators, they were excellent motivators. They showed humility and radiated energy!" - Durham NC, USA



"we have the necessary maturity to understand the vision of Bahá'u'lláh of a spiritually and materially prosperous world, and to understand that serving humanity is serving God. When we work for the well-being of society we grow as individuals." - Costa Rica

"Being here has been one of the best decisions I have ever made. Listening to how much people want to make a change in the world has inspired me to do my part and start my journey towards serving younger youth in my neighbourhood." - Auckland

"Let us hold hands with the other youth and show them that there is light at the end of the tunnel." - Aguascalientes Mexico



From The Universal House of Justice

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

14 June 2013

The sentiments of faith and devotion expressed in the message from your National Convention touched our hearts. May the insights absorbed by the delegates during that gathering give impetus to the teaching work in your country over the coming months. And, as you mark the passing of a full century since the Master's final departure from your shores, may His shining example of unconditional love and benevolence continue to inspire every action rendered in service. You may be assured that we will beseech Bahá'u'lláh to cast the glances of His divine favour upon the believers in every part of the United Kingdom.

The Universal House of Justice

Glimpses from National Convention

Convention flowed beautifully and was permeated with a sense of love and joy among the friends who gathered from all corners of the UK to witness the election of the National Spiritual Assembly. Serious consultation including insightful stories shared from international convention and valuable contributions from Counsellor Shirin Fozdar Forudi were occasionally punctured with light hearted humour from the able chairman. Outside the hall where convention took place, there were lots of socializing and laughter, informal meetings and consultations, stalls and many volunteers serving in different capacities.

As an observer attending national convention one of my most memorable moments was my brief but touching encounters with some of the youth who attended - just passing by to say hello and catch up or asking a question and getting such helpful and polite responses made me feel



very confident that the future of our Faith lies in such capable and exemplary hands. Alongside delegate consultations children, junior youth and youth had their own programmes and they were able to show case this at the end of Convention clearly demonstrating the efficacy of the training institute process.

One of the highlights of the consultations was the upcoming youth conference and the recognition that everyone has a role to play to enable youth to attend, even in communities where there are few or no youth, yet.

Inspired by viewing the DVD Frontiers of Learning giving a vision of what growth looks like in clusters in Canada, Colombia, India and Democratic Republic of Congo, consultations were focused on applying the learning to our own clusters in the UK.

The UK National Convention was such a precious moment for us personally as it brought back memories of significant international events that we, as former volunteers at the Bahá'í World Centre, were privileged to witness. As my husband and I stepped into the lobby of the hotel to register, those memories started to envelop us as we witnessed diverse people coming in, so connected and united in their thoughts and vision, and with

genuine love emanating from each one of them. We never expected to experience this feeling again after leaving the Bahá'í World Centre. The consultations were indeed moving and as the delegates discuss the affairs of the Faith at a high level, I thought to myself that it was indeed a "serious business". Another highlight was the election that was done in a very spiritual atmosphere as delegates reverently and prayerfully cast their ballots. The moment was a complete silence, a manifestation of the respect the friends place on the sacredness of the Bahá'í election. One can only wonder in amazement, how is it possible that an election in such a spirit of humility, non-partisanship, and with no electioneering can actually exist in this world?

The dedication of the volunteers and the participation of the children, junior youth and youth were truly admirable. How sweet was it for the children to prepare the ballot box.

Every moment of the event was impressive and we look forward to the next one!





Delegate Story

As a delegate, the Convention feels almost like the culmination of several months of reflection, preparation and prayer. Not long after the Unit Convention, messages from the National Spiritual Assembly arrive, including an invitation to delegate training. Training that is both truly beneficial and a great blessing, for it is here that you have the opportunity to meet with some of the other delegates for the first time and really learn, or refresh your learning together, regarding the responsibilities inherent in the role ahead. A role that includes both the responsibility of the election, and also of consulting together with the outgoing NSA and Counsellor

about various important topics including, the process of the Five Year Plan and its remaining years ahead. Then as the convention moves closer we receive and read the Annual Report, Ridván Message and this year we were also blessed with a message from the Universal House of Justice addressed to delegates to National Conventions. Once here, it is such a joy to have this opportunity to learn together with those from all over the country and to put local activities into a more national and International context. The election itself is truly inspiring. As the voting occurs, not only do you feel the benefit of the initial prayers said, but also those being said around you from all the silent observers in the room, reminding me of the sacredness of a seemingly administrative process.



Mothers in Mumbai



Above | Mothers in Mumbai

We moved to Mumbai, India some months ago, and like all moves involving a new culture, it has been an exhilarating process with a great deal of learning. Mumbai, perhaps more so than most modern cosmopolitan cities, suffers from extremes of wealth and poverty. The world's most expensive home - Antilla - a 27 story high-rise built for a family of four and which cost \$1.8 billion to construct sits alongside South East Asia's largest Slum - Dharavi - where 1 million people live in 1 square mile. Strikingly in this city of contrasts there appears to be a general sense of indifference and apathy towards the many obvious injustices people face in their daily lives.

This experience has opened up a space for me to try and understand what the Supreme Body means by "veritable friendships." As we've enrolled our son Sean in a reputable play school, I've had the opportunity to meet other mothers and children

...the Bahá'í Faith does not discriminate against any religion or people. All are welcome to join in and embrace the Faith. The Bahá'í Faith teaches you how to walk on a spiritual path in a practical way.

I feel that the Bahá'í teachings help in the cleansing of ones soul and guide the person to live their lives to the fullest.

and form new friendships. As I meet and converse with these new friends, I regularly reflect on whether my conversations have been a proclamation of the Faith or a more meaningful dialogue. What seems to be most important is that hearts become connected through joyous reciprocal communication.

While the kids are at playschool, the mums have time to grab a coffee. After the first couple of weeks of coffee and chit chat, I did wonder, if there were more constructive ways to spend our time together. I was keen not to be the first to suggest this as I was still very new to the city and wanted to learn about the general culture and interests of my new friends.

I asked a few dear friends in London to pray for me to have spiritual strength and courage. One friend prayed so sincerely that she had a spiritual dream about me on the very morning that all 4 of the mothers I had invited, responded positively to participate in a spiritual parenting course called "Reflections on the life of the Spirit." The purpose of the course would be to develop our inner qualities and spiritual habits so that we can contribute constructively to the spiritual development of our children and families. We have begun book 1 and occasionally learn relevant songs from book 3.

This is just the beginning of a process which I hope will lead to enduring friendships, as well as drawing closer to Bahá'u'lláh.

Below are some of the experiences from the participants of our book 1:

From my study of "Reflections on the Life of the Spirit" I have understood that the Bahá'í Faith does not discriminate against any religion or people. All are welcome to join in and embrace the Faith. The Bahá'í Faith teaches you how to walk on a

spiritual path in a practical way. The interesting question and answer format in the work-book helps a participatory learning process in which our entire group is developing its understanding of how our daily actions impact us and society. Our tutor is not a teacher in the traditional sense, she assists the group to come to their own understanding and gain their own perspectives. I am really thankful to her for introducing me to this beautiful spiritual path of life. And last but not least, when I heard the prayer, "O God refresh and gladden my spirit"... "Hey Ishwar mari atama koh"... in Hindi, I was transported to another realm, where I felt calmness descend over me. Every word of the prayer seemed to make the cells in my body vibrate with blissful energy. There was a unique feeling within me of being completely connected to a powerful Divine energy, which cradled me in a secure cocoon of love. I felt close to God! My plan is to memorize the prayer. - Dimple

In the last couple of months I have been taking part in an informal group that is focusing on an induction to Bahá'í Writings. The group is made up of 5 friends from different religious backgrounds. During these informal gatherings we discuss the true meanings of statements from the book and their impact on our lives. Everyone is encouraged to express their own views on the statements. I found the teachings inspirational and motivational at the same time. My favourite quote "Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues" will stay in my memory for a long time. I believe we cannot grow as individuals or as a society if we are not truthful. I find these gatherings spiritually and morally enriching. - Isobella

The Bahá'í Faith was introduced to me more than a month ago. What I really liked about the Bahá'í teachings is that it focuses on simple everyday aspects



of our lives and guides us to the path of redemption and salvation. It is more spiritual and believable. It focuses on ones virtues and teaches one to be a better person by encouraging us to have stronger thoughts of love than hate, to be honest, to not back bite and not think bad of others. I feel that the Bahá'í teachings help in the cleansing of ones soul and guide the person to live their lives to the fullest. - Rakhi

Having begun the study of this book, it has made my life more simple. There is so much cut-throat competition in our day to day lives and this prevents us from stepping back and analyzing what one must and must not do. It is easy to get caught up thinking about how unfair and complicated life is. However after studying this book one realizes that the key to happiness and salvation is simple. It requires courage to reflect on and analyze our wrong doings and then refuse to repeat them. I am grateful to have been introduced to such a meaningful and thoughtful way of life. - Alka

Youth in Latvia

Greetings from Latvia! In 2011, the Universal House of Justice approved a 'special' and 'historic' initiative in the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). The focus is to strengthen the institute process with a particular emphasis on developing the junior youth programme.

What an amazing two years it has been! Full of crisis and victory. We are constantly reminded of the spiritual forces that are aiding our efforts as well as the constant need to refine our characters. Our team has been eager to learn how to begin book one with our friends and one story comes to mind especially.

Dinner is a great way to connect friends we have discovered. One evening we had invited friends to come and cook and eat together. We had planned to start book one later in the evening with two friends. Starting book one was a goal our team had made for the month and we were very excited. As the evening went on, we realised



we had doubled booked. Five friends with plates of spaghetti sat in the living room with smiles on their faces while we thought about how to introduce the institute process. We had only planned to have a small study circle with two friends! When dinner was over we decided to introduce to the idea of starting book one. All agreed to start that very evening. We joyfully went through section one in Russian and English while the participants mostly aged around 18, shared their understanding of the quotes. After the session, all hearts were on fire.

"What are you doing next week?" asked one friend excitedly.

"We're attending an institute camp in a different country. We'll be away."

"Can I come?" she asked immediately.

"Of course!" we replied.

"But, I only want to come if I can help in some way," she added.

A week later, our friend, who had heard about the Faith just weeks before was fully participating in consultations and planning for the seminar. She was helping with the children's programme and preparing a big hall for our Naw-Rúz celebrations.

"Let's set up a children's class or junior

youth class." she said before she left the seminar.

It reminds me of this passage from the February 8 Message of the Universal House of Justice.

"We are struck, too, by the number of youth who, after only a brief association with the Bahá'í community, commit themselves to meaningful acts of service and quickly discover their affinity with the Faith's community-building endeavour."

Why I became a Bahá'í

I first heard about the Bahá'í Faith about two years ago from a very good friend. I was a little wary when invited to come along to a meeting but finally agreed to go to an evening at her home where I understood there were going to be some young people, with the possibility of some music.

Having been brought up in a Church of England household I had become a little disillusioned, but was still searching. It seemed to me that all faiths were essentially saying the same thing. Why could they not agree?

I started going to weekly devotional meetings, and I count myself very blessed indeed, as these meetings

"The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord"

were held at the home of a long established Bahá'í family, with plenty of knowledge to satisfy my curiosity about the Faith.

What I saw was a place where everyone was accepted and valued, where there was unconditional acceptance and where one was encouraged to bring out one's own unique talents within the framework of the faith. I saw this in the young people on that first evening when they produced a roll of wall paper and simply and effectively told about the progressive revelations of the manifestation's of God, the latest being Bahá'u'lláh. How it all slotted into place and made so much sense. I was also so impressed at how the young people were able to make the presentation with confidence and respect, but with no evidence of ego. I remember thinking that night: if all the people in the world were like these young people, then I would have no fear of getting old.

At my first Summer school in Wales this year I got out of the car and people who I had never seen before welcomed me with such generosity. I again felt such love. When I learned there were Bahá'í communities all over the world, I felt I could go anywhere and find a friend.

Before committing to the faith I wanted to know the implications. All the basic principals made sense – all people living in peace, equality of all, being encouraged to question and think for oneself, education for everybody. It all seemed right.

I committed to this path as I had no doubt it was right to do so, and it seemed a very natural progression to become a Bahá'í. I am not sure where the path will lead me. Loving music, I would like the last words to come from 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

"The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord".*

*Taken from Horizon of the Unseen. Visual Reflections on Spiritual Themes. 2nd edition. Compiled by Corinne Randall. Intellect

Bahá'í Classes in Norfolk Prison

A hundred years after 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited Wandsworth prison and wrote, "the greatest prison is the prison of self" in their visitors book, inmates in a Norfolk prison have begun studying the Writings of the Faith. This opportunity came about following the appointment of David Burgess as a chaplain within the jail. With no model to work from David decided to hold a weekly multi-faith group with a small group of inmates. Together they looked at virtues and discussed the various ideas that people related to them. Over the following weeks interest grew in hearing about the Bahá'í Faith and, using Anna's presentation as a starting point, David was able to explain and inform inmates about Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Faith. When another inmate who became a member of the Faith whilst in custody over a decade ago, transferred to the prison, it was felt that a separate class to study the Writings of the Faith would be beneficial to those inmates who had declared an interest.

It is still early days and the group is small but there are plans to work through Book 1 as a means of progressing. As there are no hard and fast rules for promoting the Faith within a custodial setting the coming period will be a very interesting and exciting time.

This is just the latest activity used to

promote the Faith amongst those within custody in the UK. There is still plenty of scope to develop activities that share the Faith with offenders across the country. If you have any ideas that you feel would bring the Faith into your local prison, now would be a good time to bring them to the fore.

"Is it ever possible' they ask 'for copper to be transmuted into gold?' Say, Yes, by My Lord, it is possible." (Gleanings XCVII)



Above | Bure Prison, Norwich

Stories Relating to Children's Classes

Barnes – A Children's Class Dedicated to Serving their Neighbourhood

Our 'Riverview Rangers' children's class is a fledgling group of four children aged ten, and the current manifestation of an on-going effort to offer my son Tom and his friends from school, a regular spiritual and moral Bahá'í class held in our home, a flat in a quiet street in north Barnes, London. Children have come and gone, and the current group of four have been together for about a year, two of them having covered most of Grade 1, some of Grade 2 and 3 of the Ruhi children's programme.

Having completed a lesson on each of the Manifestations of God, and developed some understanding of the purpose of these Messengers, we then revisited the lessons of Grade 2



1 that will aid them to deepen their friendships. It is perhaps a glimpse of how the young in a community, by studying together and reflecting upon words that ennoble and empower, can take steps so naturally to build friendship and unity in a neighbourhood.

For more information, please contact Julia at juliahaviland@yahoo.com

Camberwell – A Children’s Class Starts in a Neighbourhood

The children's class started in Camberwell in October 2012. It was an exciting time, those involved reached out to the local area by knocking on doors and inviting children to join a class on virtues organised by the Bahá'í community. Following this outreach, the teachers established a fortnightly children's class with nine children from the local area regularly attending.

The challenges faced by the teachers was to deliver the classes in an effective manner so the children truly understood what was being shared and that they were engaging in the lessons. By reflecting on the structure and the delivery of the lessons, the teachers have been learning about effectively planning and teaching the classes.

Seven months on, the teachers are developing beautiful relationships with the children. They see each child as unique individuals who are sweet, affectionate and are responding well to the classes. Now the teachers are thinking about exploring with the children how they are applying the virtues in their daily life.

The next step is to visit the parents with elevated conversations to discuss the classes, the virtues their children are showing and how this is transforming their lives. It is also an opportunity to see how the families wish to be involved in the activities.

It is an exciting time in this neighbourhood and the children are

enthusiastic and committed to the class.

For more information, please contact Claudius at dinhobahai@hotmail.com or Mara at mara.luciano9@gmail.com

Barnet – Two Young Men Build Confidence for Service as Children’s Class Teachers

Michael and I started the children's class in autumn last year with two kids - neither of us had really taught children's classes over a sustained period before, so we went into it not really knowing what to expect. It was daunting in many respects - I lost sleep over questions of "how do you explain the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to a five year old child?", "who am I to teach children - surely someone who is actually good with kids should be doing this?" and "who on earth is 'Pepper Pig' - and what have you done with Pingu?"

Once the palm-shaped mark on my forehead had faded, I realised the purpose of the class – to help each child develop their spiritual qualities and their capacities for serving humanity- and if they couldn't repeat what we had memorised weeks ago, that's not to be taken as a sign of failure.

The second thing I learned is that these kids are like little sponges - they soak up everything Mike and I may do - from what we say to the way Michael styles his hair. Teaching children, therefore, is as much the way you behave as what you say. Realising this was like passing my driving test - it helped us develop a rapport with the kids, for me to let them know where the boundaries are, and even - dare I say it - to get them to do what we wanted them to do.

Without the patience of our children’s class coordinator who accompanied us through this process, it wouldn't have been possible to learn any of the above. Gaining confidence requires endless patience from the person who is helping you - the person accompanying may not realise what you need to learn to gain confidence - but the fact they're

with a renewed sense of purpose of how we can put them in practise. It seemed a natural step to look for ways in which to serve the neighbourhood. We began by taking a walk outside to see what was needed, noticing the rubbish scattered by the foxes opening rubbish bags, the first job was clear. Then we visited neighbours, offering to take their recycling out. Walking dogs, picking up cigarette butts, helping to clear an alleyway, cleaning and polishing shoes and furniture, weeding a garden, inviting neighbours to tea and making home-made cakes, sharing memorised poems and songs, are some of the small tasks they have enthusiastically done. Through these little jobs and activities they have made friends and other opportunities have come to light.

After finishing the lessons on friendship, we thought of a way to deepen bonds of friendship with younger children in the neighbourhood, through sharing books and reading. Knowing the neighbourhood a little by now they identified little ones, that they could visit and spend a half hour after their class to share a book and read to them. This has enabled us to reflect upon the sort of stories they want to share and the qualities of Grade

I realised the purpose of the class – to help each child develop their spiritual qualities and their capacities for serving humanity

always there supporting is reassuring. Our coordinator was also able to see capacity within Mike and I, and was not put off by our slightly ad-hoc and disorganised approach to the classes. Now we're focusing on growing the class and developing new relationships with parents.

One final point - the boys learn best when quotes are put to music.

For more information, please contact Ramez at: ramez.krishnan@gmail.com

Hackney – Outreach for a Junior Youth Group Results in a Children’s Class

During the initial phase of our efforts to start a junior youth group in one of the estates in Hackney, we were fortunate to meet a number of junior youth and children in a short space of time. We were joyfully amazed by their excitement and enthusiasm at the prospect of a group which would assist them in becoming spiritually empowered to contribute to the betterment of their community.

As we began to hold a junior youth group in a community hall in the estate, our hearts broke a little every time we had to tell one of the eager 10 year olds - who we had met and become friends with during that time - that they couldn't join the group as it was only for 11-14 year olds. We tried to soften the blow by always inviting them to join in the service projects which the junior youth organised. As much as we wanted to hold children's classes for these dear little souls, the two of us running the group already felt our energies stretched to capacity.

As time went on, one of the 17-year-old brothers of the junior youth became more and more involved with co-animating the group and began the process of training to become an animator himself! This was remarkable for a number reasons, as you can imagine, but I feel it was particularly special for the future of the children of this neighbourhood. After just a few months of starting the junior youth group, the three of us who were 'animating' were able to honestly reflect and learn how to best move forward. With Sami as a new animator, I was now free to put my energies elsewhere. While my heart longed to be an animator and to start another junior youth group, we could not help but recognize the glaring need of that neighbourhood to have a children's class for the group of 10 year olds who were already so committed and excited about this process underway.

Holding a class for this group at the same time and in the same (large!) room as the junior youth group emerged out of prayer and consultation as a beautiful resolution to our challenge of using human resources effectively. We knew we had to seize the opportunity and channel the energy of these children. Once this realisation began to take shape and we met with the parents and children to let them know that we were now able to offer a class, other questions gradually began to emerge: What would be the purpose of this class? How would it continue to be organic and coherent with the other activities in the neighbourhood? What materials should be used? I realised that I didn't know where to start and so consulted agencies and individuals in the cluster who had some experience in this field. It became apparent that the months which followed were to be a wonderful opportunity to spiritually prepare these children for when they would turn 11 and become junior youth themselves. For example, in our first class we began by talking about the word 'empowerment' and thinking about what we needed to become 'spiritually empowered'. Through this conversation we talked about how we needed to develop certain virtues and spiritual qualities to become spiritually

stronger and serve society, and in this way the first few lessons of Grade 1 fell into a context. I have found that by using the materials in Grade 1, a clear vision is given to this group as to where they are going and what they are working towards.

Having the class in the same space and at the same time as the junior youth group has meant that the children are already involved in service projects and have developed friendships with the junior youth, and a mutual exchange of what they have learned in their respective groups often takes place. We know that there is still much to do and learn, but through prayer for these young souls and a consistent pattern of action, reflection and consultation both with the animator of the junior youth and the parents of the children, as well as the support and encouragement of the cluster agencies, we are sure that the spiritual roots of this neighbourhood will continue to be strengthened.

For more information, please contact Shirin at sbeheshti19@gmail.com

“Among the greatest of all services that can possibly be rendered by man to Almighty God is the education and training of children, young plants of the Abhá Paradise, so that these children, fostered by grace in the way of salvation, growing like pearls of divine bounty in the shell of education, will one day bejewel the crown of abiding glory.”

Selections of the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Pp 133-4



From the Universal House of Justice

Membership of Continental Board of Counsellors

24 June 2013 / 1 Rahmat 170 B.E.

We joyfully announce the appointment of the following Continental Counsellors to fill the vacancies created by the recent appointments to the International Teaching Centre: in Africa Mrs. Iharinirina Rakotomavo, in the Americas Mrs. Sonlla Heern, in Asia Dr. Nibras Sarmad Moqbel, and in Europe Mrs. Raffaella Capozzi Gubinelli and Miss Yevgeniya Poluektova.

We are also happy to announce the appointment of Mrs. Musonda Emily Kapusa- Linsel to the membership of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa, filling a vacancy that was created by the relocation of Mrs. Kini Musalo Geoghegan to Europe. Mrs. Geoghegan has earned our warm gratitude for the contribution she has made to the work of the Faith as a Counsellor, and we pray for divine confirmations to surround her as she continues her valuable labours in other fields of service to the Cause.

The Universal House of Justice

International Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh Membership

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

To All National Spiritual Assemblies

2 June 2013

We are happy to inform you of the names of those who are to serve as members of the International Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh for a three-year term commencing in June 2013: Dr. Ramin Khadem, Mrs. Marzia

Rowhani-Dalal, and Mr. Rodrigo Tomás. We are profoundly grateful to Mrs. Sally Foo, who was among those appointed to the International Board when it was first established, for the devoted service she has rendered in her capacity as a Trustee.

The Universal House of Justice



The Guardian's Resting Place

From the National Spiritual Assembly

Guardian's Resting Place

28 May 2013 / 12 Azamat 170 B.E.

Further to the National Spiritual Assembly's letter dated 13 December 2012 detailing the work to be carried out to restore and enhance the beauty of the Guardian's Resting Place, we are delighted to announce that a contractor has been selected and that work is set to commence on the refurbishment of the monument and surrounding enclosure in the coming days. As described in the above mentioned letter, this work will also include the further beautification of the Resting Place, including the gardens, with the aim of increasing its splendour. The cost of this first phase of the work to beautify and restore the entire site is £150,000.

Please note that, whilst the friends will still be able to visit the cemetery

and areas surrounding the Resting Place, access to the monument will not be possible throughout the summer months until the project is completed. Your patience and understanding in this respect are most deeply appreciated.

The restoration and beautification of this Sacred Spot is a most precious privilege and responsibility for our community to shoulder. The National Assembly is deeply grateful for the support that the community has already offered-materially, financially, and in effort and prayer-and we humbly request your continued assistance to ensure the successful completion of this endeavour.

National Convention 2013

28 May 2013

In an environment permeated with love and joy, more than 600 friends gathered to participate in and observe the National Convention over the past weekend of 25-27 May in Chorley, near Wigan. The consultations were enriched this year not only by the

fresh release of infallible guidance contained in the Ridván message of the Universal House of Justice, but also by the inspirational film "Frontiers of Learning", and consideration of the implications that the insights exhibited therein have for the work of the friends in clusters across the UK. Moreover, all gathered had the great bounty to partake of the guidance of Dr. Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi, who attended as a representative from the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe. Her wise counsel greatly fortified the deliberations and was deeply valued.

In a prayerful and reverent atmosphere, the delegates fulfilled their sacred duty to elect the National Spiritual Assembly, the results of which are as follows:

Kishan Manocha	75 votes
Shirin Tahzib	67 votes
Patrick O'Mara	63 votes
Barney Leith	59 votes
Fidelma Meehan	59 votes
Sara Talai	58 votes
Peter Hulme	48 votes
Vivien Craig	48 votes
Vafa Ram	37 votes

After the election, the National Spiritual Assembly proceeded to elect its officers for the coming year with the following result: Chairman, Shirin Tahzib; Secretary, Patrick O'Mara; Treasurer, Vafa Ram; and Vice-Chairman, Peter Hulme.

The deliberations of the Convention were primarily focussed on the means to advance clusters along the continuum and how to establish programmes of growth in those 20 clusters that are yet to reach that stage. Great attention was also paid to youth and how to help ensure the success of the upcoming London youth conference through encouraging and accompanying young people, both before and after the conference, as they endeavour to develop their capacities for meaningful service to humanity.

The National Spiritual Assembly wishes to take this opportunity to extend to the friends in the UK its warmest love,

and assures you that it will, at its first meeting, offer its fervent supplications on behalf of the entire community at the Resting Place of the beloved Guardian.

Annual Report for the year 2012-13

4 June 2013 / 19 Azamat 170 B.E.

The National Spiritual Assembly is pleased to inform you of the availability of its Annual Report for the year 2012-13, which can be downloaded from the website www.admin.bahai.org.uk.

The Annual Report reviews the achievements and learning of the Bahá'í Community of the United Kingdom during the last year. The following are the main contents:

- Expansion and consolidation
 - o Introduction - advancing the process of entry by troops
 - o The educational process
 - o Increasing the numbers of fresh recruits into the Faith and those engaged in the activities of the Plan
 - o Miscellaneous
 - o Challenges, learning and looking ahead
- Social action
 - Participation in the discourses of society
 - Diplomatic relations
 - Other areas of endeavour and highlights for the year
 - o Centenary celebrations for the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
 - o Universal House of Justice
 - o The Institution of the Counsellors
 - o National Spiritual Assembly
 - o Guardian's Resting Place
 - o Huqúqu'lláh
 - o Communications: UKBahá'í magazine and the administrative website
 - o The individual, the institutions and the community - evolving relationships

- o Changes in Unit Convention boundaries
- o Pastoral care and chaplaincy
- o National Library
- Financial report
- Concluding remarks

The National Assembly hopes that a reading of this report will be informative, encouraging and inspiring to the efforts of all who labour throughout the United Kingdom with such love and diligence in the path of service to Bahá'u'lláh.

National Spiritual Assembly Meeting Dates

10 June 2013 / 6 Nur 170 B.E.

The National Assembly is pleased to share with you its updated schedule of meetings for the remainder of 2013 and 2014.

2013

- 20 - 22 September
- 25 - 27 October
- 29 November - 1 December

2014

- 10 - 12 January
- 21 - 23 February
- 28 - 30 March
- 9 - 11 May
- 13 - 15 June
- 25 - 27 July
- 12 - 14 September
- 31 October - 2 November
- 12 - 14 December

In addition to the above, please note that the next National Convention is scheduled to take place from 25 - 27 April, and Unit Conventions in 2014 will take place over the weekend of 6 - 7 December. As you may already be aware, Unit Convention this year will take place over the weekend of 7-8 December.

As always, the National Spiritual 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.

In Memoriam 2013

10 June 2013 / 6 Nur 170 B.E.

The booklet "In Memoriam", which recalls our beloved friends and fellow-believers who passed to the Abhá Kingdom during the year 169, can be downloaded from the website www.admin.bahai.org.uk. In addition, a very limited number of printed copies are available to the friends on a 'first come, first served' basis. If you would like a printed copy, please write to the National Bahá'í Centre at nsa@bahai.org.uk or 27 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1PD.

From the Table of the National Spiritual Assembly

19 June 2013 / 15 Nur 170 B.E.

Contents

Ridván message and Frontiers of Learning

London youth conference

Letter of the Universal House of Justice on the subject of non-involvement in partisan politics

Committees and Agency appointments

Unit Convention Resolutions

Registration of Bahá'í Groups

Office of Public Affairs

Ridván message and Frontiers of Learning

The National Spiritual Assembly was

delighted to be joined by Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi, the Bahá'í Council for England and the Training Institute Board for the United Kingdom for an extensive study of the abundant guidance that was recently released from the Bahá'í World Centre. This included the 2013 Ridván message of the Universal House of Justice and a document entitled "Insights into Frontiers of Learning" that was prepared by the International Teaching Centre.

Our vision of the Plan was greatly enriched through this consultation, as we saw with even greater clarity how the methods and instruments of the Plan foster a potent "community-building" process that leads us, step-by-step, towards the New World Order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh. In this context, fresh attention was given to the ways and means to advance the processes of growth in clusters at various stages of development. With eager anticipation, the National Assembly is now also making plans to consult in a similar vein with the Regional Bahá'í Councils of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales about advancing the clusters in their respective regions.

London youth conference

Preparations for the London youth conference, which holds a special importance for the unfoldment of the Plan in this part of Europe, are continuing apace in consultation with the Counsellors. Under the guidance of the House of Justice, the Assembly is considering such matters as the training of the facilitators of the workshops, the collection of media material, the graceful integration of the arts into the programme, and a range of logistical matters. In this connection, the Assembly is grateful for the dedicated services of the London Youth Conference Committee, which is doing its utmost to bring the House of Justice's vision of the youth conferences into reality.

Letter of the Universal House of Justice on the subject of non-involvement in partisan politics

The House of Justice released a highly significant letter, dated 2 March, which

sets forth and contextualises the Bahá'í attitude towards politics. It is addressed to the Bahá'ís of Iran, but its content is relevant to the friends everywhere. The National Assembly benefited greatly from studying this letter in session, and recommends that all the friends, including those working with the Iranian diaspora, should study it in their cluster schools, deepenings and other gatherings.

Copies of the letter were previously distributed on NEWS in both English and Persian, and they are also available on the UK Bahá'í Downloads website (admin.bahai.org.uk). If you are not able to access the letter for any reason, please feel free to write to nsa@bahai.org.uk so that a copy can be emailed to you.

Committees and Agency appointments

As is the National Assembly's annual practice, it considered in April the membership of all the committees and agencies that serve the various needs of the UK Bahá'í community and made appointments accordingly. In considering these appointments, the National Assembly is mindful of the exemplary services rendered in so many fields of endeavour by so many souls, and that it is the sacrificial outpouring of time, energy and commitment, which are profound expressions of love for Bahá'u'lláh, that attract abundant confirmations to the work of the Faith. The National Assembly is deeply grateful to all those who have, and who continue, to offer their valuable services on the Assembly's committees and agencies.

Unit Convention Resolutions

The National Assembly receives a great many Unit Convention Resolutions each year, and appreciates the thoughtfulness and care that are invested in each one. The resolutions from December 2012 are currently being considered by the Assembly, and this process will continue over the coming months. As done in recent years, once a response or line of action has been devised for each resolution they will be announced altogether to the community.

This same process is also used for those resolutions that were passed at National Convention.

Registration of Bahá'í Groups

In accordance with the guidance of the beloved Guardian, communities with 2-8 believers are considered to be a Bahá'í group. However, most of the groups that exist in the UK are not presently registered with the National Assembly. Amongst other things, registering as a group will enable communities to receive communications that are sent from time to time to Local Spiritual Assemblies and groups. For this reason, the National Assembly decided to warmly encourage as many groups as possible to register, and recently sent guidance on how to do so to all those to whom this matter would apply.

Office of Public Affairs

Together with Dr. Fozdar-Foroudi, the Assembly had a fruitful consultation with the Core Team of the Office of Public Affairs, which is the consultative body that guides the strategy and oversees the work of that Office.

Among the areas considered was the campaign to mark the fifth anniversary of the incarceration of the former Yárán. The Assembly was delighted to hear of the multi-faceted approach that had been devised for this significant anniversary, which included the public presentation of an open letter to Ministers of Government; parliamentary and media outreach; efforts to secure support from other religious leaders; and an event to launch the volume Prison Poems by Mahvash Sabet, one of the former Yárán members.

The Office's efforts to learn about contributing to discourses at the national level also received much attention, and new strategies were devised based on the experiences and lessons garnered to date.

These are but a sample of the many and diverse matters that the National Assembly consults upon at its meetings. It is a source of great joy to serve such a dynamic, purposeful and blessed community!

Feast Letter Kalimat 2013

13 July 2013 / 1 Kalimat 170 B.E.

To all believers in the United Kingdom

Dearly loved Co-workers,

We are passing through days of special importance for the advancement of the spiritual and social well-being of the people of the United Kingdom, as friends everywhere are engaged in reaching out to young people between the ages of 15 to 30 and inviting them to join in a "movement" that, using the "potent" "methods and instruments of the Plan", is working "towards a better society". The upcoming Youth Conference-taking place at Warwick University from 30 August to 1 September-is a pivotal moment in the efflorescence of this movement, as many hundreds of youth will gather there "to reflect, to commit, to steel themselves for a life of service". Registration for the conference is due to open imminently and, such is the importance of the days and weeks to come, we wish to share with you a few thoughts on the nature and purpose of this movement and to describe some of its features.

A three-day gathering recently took place in Frankfurt under the auspices of the Counsellors in Europe in order to train a number of facilitators, 14 of whom will participate in the Youth Conference in the UK. These facilitators have now returned to their homelands where they will each in turn train four other youth from their area as additional facilitators. Each of these four additional facilitators will aim to gather around them some 20 or so youth of all ages. The intention is that this group of 20 youth will prepare for the conference together, register for it together and perhaps even travel to it together. At the conference these groups will be together, consult, study and reflect together and, after the event, they will serve together in their clusters and neighbourhoods. Naturally, bonds of fellowship, love and unity will build between the participants in each group such that they will be able to support each other, care for each other and accompany each other in every way. The aim is this:

"If a small number of people gather lovingly together, with absolute purity and sanctity, with their hearts free of the world, experiencing the emotions of the Kingdom and the powerful magnetic forces of the Divine, and being at one in their happy fellowship, that gathering will exert its influence over all the earth. The nature of that band of people, the words they speak, the deeds they do, will unleash the bestowals of Heaven, and provide a foretaste of eternal bliss. The hosts of the Company on high will defend them, and the angels of the Abhá Paradise, in continuous succession, will come down to their aid." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 80)

Thus, to begin arranging themselves in groups of youth as described above, we ask the youth, and those working with them, to be in touch with their Auxiliary Board members without delay, as they will be able to connect anyone attending with their nearest facilitator. A list of Auxiliary Board members, their area of service and their contact details, is enclosed. Please note that those attending are encouraged to register together as a group, if this is possible.

We take this opportunity to assure parents that vigilant attention is being given to assure the care and well-being of the participants throughout this process and at the conference itself. In this regard, special care is being given to those attending who are under 18. The youth will of course take responsibility for their own care and well-being but, in addition, parents and guardians should feel assured that every effort is being made to ensure the availability of appropriate supervision so that all are safeguarded during the conference.

The National Spiritual Assembly has been deeply touched by the manner in which



the world- embracing series of 114 youth conference has been guided by the Universal House of Justice, every feature of which has been directed by that infallible Institution. The content and timing of the programme itself, as well as the workshop materials that will be central to the event, have been prepared under its guidance and approval. Ours is now the task of taking whatever steps we can, during the remaining fleeting days that proceed this momentous occasion, to reach out to as many youth as possible in our neighbourhoods and wider circle of contacts, converse with them and find those souls who wish to join with the Bahá'í community in actively working towards the betterment of society. That your efforts should be divinely confirmed and rendered victorious is our ardent supplication to the Blessed Beauty.

Unit Convention Dates 2013 – Reminder

16 July 2013 / 4 Kalimat 170 B.E.

The National Spiritual Assembly wishes to remind the friends that this year's Unit Convention will be held in all parts of the country over the weekend of 7-8 December 2013.

Please do ensure you have these dates in your diary and keep this weekend free. Institutions and individuals are kindly requested not to plan any Bahá'í activities during this weekend, until the specific date of the Unit Convention in your area has been selected later on this year. This will facilitate as many friends as possible having the bounty of participating in this important event in the rhythm of Bahá'í community life.

Further details regarding your Convention will be sent to you by your Unit's host community in due course.

Bahá'í involvement in local inter faith activities

24 July 2013 / 12 Kalimat 170 B.E.

The Office of Public Affairs is keen to learn more about the contribution that Bahá'ís can make to local inter faith activities in the United Kingdom and to support, where possible, efforts in this area. To this end, the Office would be most grateful if those communities which currently contribute to local inter faith initiatives could submit a brief report outlining the history, nature and pattern of their involvement and send this by email to opa@bahai.org.uk or by hard copy to the address below.

Your kind assistance in this matter is deeply appreciated.

From the Bahá'í Councils

Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland – membership

1 August 2013 / 1 Kamál 170 B.E.

The National Spiritual Assembly wishes to inform you that, for personal reasons, Mr. Denis Coyle has requested to be relieved of service on the Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland. The National Assembly has accepted his request, and wishes to express deep appreciation to Denis for his years of devoted service on the Council.

Miss Kathleen Holmlund will fill the vacancy on the Council, and is warmly welcomed into this role.

The National Assembly asks the friends everywhere to remember the Regional Bahá'í Councils and their efforts to advance the work of the Cause in their prayers.

Message from Bahá'í Council for Scotland

1 July 2013 / 8 Rahmat 170 B.E.

The Bahá'í Council for Scotland is delighted to announce the launch of a new website www.scottishbahais.org as the new official website for the Scottish Bahá'í Community. The website has been setup as part of the National Assembly's programme to develop our web presence in the UK and is intended to provide an informative and attractive site which

encourages visitors to investigate further and to make contact with their local Bahá'í community. Please feel free to refer any contacts to visit the site as appropriate. You will see that under the Contact Us page there is a map of Scotland with links to contact details for a range of communities.

The Council would like to thank everyone involved in setting up the website and the Web Presence Task Force of the National Assembly for their loving guidance and support in the process.

Update from Bahá'í Council for Wales

4 June 2013 / 19 Azamat 170 B.E.

The Council for Wales sends its love and best wishes to all of you and wishes to share some recent news from its consultations.

At the last full Council meeting Counsellor Shirin Fozdar, a representative from the NSA, the Regional Institute Coordinator and Auxiliary Board Members, consulted with the Council on the progress of the Cause in Wales. Since the Regional Festival in January at least 38 people have signed up to study Ruhi book 5, the animator training for junior youth groups and there are plans to start these groups in several clusters.

Goals for the next twelve months

The council is currently in the process of making plans for the next year and has set the following goals:-

. To ensure that the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Programme is firmly established in Wales and that there are at least three groups.

. That there are at least two neighbourhoods with 'intense activity' in Wales

. That the West Wales Cluster is past the first 'milestone'

These are goals that are seen to be both achievable and challenging.

The Council is regularly consulting on how it can best support and empower the friends to enable these goals to be reached and also on how best to support all the friends in Wales in their teaching work.

95 (+19) youth conferences

The Council has been consulting about the forthcoming Youth Conference, which is now confirmed to be held in Warwick University, from 30th August - 1st September. It is the Council's hope that all the friends will be able to respond to this call of the House of Justice to find ways to invite those young souls who already recognise "in the methods and instruments of the Plan potent means for movement towards a better society". The Council is also consulting about how to help those youth who are already committed to attending the conference to reach out to youth in their wider communities and to invite to contribute to the Faith's community building endeavour.

The Gift

At this year's national convention there were some questions regarding insurance cover for local or regional Baha'i activities; normally Bahá'í activities and events are covered by an insurance policy held by the National Spiritual Assembly. The following information regarding insurance cover is provided for the friends who might be responsible for a Bahá'í activity or event:

The business of the policy holder (the NSA) is listed as the Promotion of the Bahá'í Faith in the United Kingdom. Normal Bahá'í activities are listed, including 19 Day Feasts,



Above | Early stages of the restoration and renovation work in progress at the Resting Place of Shoghi Effendi.

Holy Day meetings, community gatherings, study circles, children's classes, devotional meetings, junior youth activities, residential schools and devotional or prayer meetings. Exhibitions, Conference and Concert providers and facilitators are covered, as are school, property and land owners.

If a community or committee or an individual hires a hall or other facility they may be asked for proof of Public Liability cover. A certificate of this cover can be forwarded on request from finance@bahai.org.uk.

If you are holding an event that involves a potentially high risk activity please contact the Finance Department in good time so that the insurers can be notified and guidance sought as to whether particular precautions should be taken or whether the event may be considered too risky.

The National Assembly's policy has a Public Liability section which covers against negligence at Bahá'í

events. This is not accident cover; if someone falls and is hurt there is no coverage unless negligence can be proven.

Local Assemblies that own their centres have their property insured within the National Spiritual Assembly's policy covering building and contents.

Should any major alterations or purchases be made that are likely to affect the sums insured, the Finance Department should be contacted to ensure adequate cover is maintained at all times. In the event of a claim, whether it be damage to property or contents the Finance Office will arrange for claim forms and guidance about how to proceed. The Insurers need to be kept informed of all times about any changes in circumstances affecting the property, i.e. taking a tenant, or the property being left empty for a period of time, etc.

This is an example of an expense that is met by the national fund.



عنوان مثال در مهد امر الله علی‌رغم موانع سهم‌گینی که ستم‌گران بر سر راه جامعهٔ بهائی قرار داده‌اند، بهائیان به خاطر مقتضیات و تأثیرات عمیقی که پیام حضرت بهاء‌الله برای آیندهٔ کشورشان در بر دارد بیش از پیش پذیرفته شده و به دلیل عزمِ سرخ‌شان برای کمک به پیشرفت وطن عزیزشان مورد احترام می‌باشند.

مصائب احبّای ثابت‌قدم ایران به خصوص در چند دهه‌ای که از آغاز موج اخیر تضییقات می‌گذرد برادران و خواهران روحانی آنان را در سایر کشورها بر آن داشته تا به دفاع از حقوق آن مظلومان برخیزند. از جمله مواهب گران‌بهایی که به برکت این استقامت سازنده نصیب جامعهٔ جهانی بهائی شده، تأسیس شبکه‌ای چشم‌گیر از دفاتر مخصوص در سطح مملی می‌باشد که به طور سیستماتیک با دولت‌ها و سازمان‌های جامعهٔ مدنی رابطه برقرار ساخته است. به موازات توسعهٔ این دفاتر، فرایندهای نقشه‌های متوالی توانایی جامعه را برای مشارکت در گفتمان‌های رایج در فضاهای گوناگون، از مکالمات شخصی تا اجتماعات بین‌المللی، افزایش داده است. در سطح مردمی، این کار از طریق همان رویکرد ارگانیک که موجب ازدیاد تدریجی اشتغال احبّا به اقدام اجتماعی می‌شود به طور طبیعی گسترش می‌یابد و هیچ‌گونه تلاش خاصی برای تحرّک بخشیدن به آن لازم نیست. اما در سطح مملی، شرکت در گفتمان‌های رایج اکثراً مطمح نظر این دفاتر است که هم‌اکنون در ده‌ها جامعهٔ مملی مشغول فعالیت هستند و بر طبق الگوی مؤثر و آشنای عمل، تأمل، مشورت و مطالعه به کار خود ادامه می‌دهند. به منظور افزایش این گونه مجهودات و با هدف تسهیل یادگیری در این عرصه، و برای تضمین انسجام این اقدامات با سایر مساعی جامعهٔ بهائی، اخیراً در مرکز جهانی بهائی "دفتر گفتمان‌های عمومی" را تأسیس نموده‌ایم تا با پیشبرد تدریجی و هماهنگ‌سازی فعالیت‌ها و تنظیم تجارب، محافل روحانی مملی را در این میدان کمک نماید.

پیشرفت‌های امیدوارکننده‌ای در میادین دیگر نیز دیده می‌شود. در سانتیاگو در کشور شیلی، کار ساختمان ام‌المعابد امریکای جنوبی با سرعت ادامه دارد. بتون‌ریزی شالوده، زیر زمین و تونل خدمات و همچنین ستون‌های بنای اصلی تکمیل شده است. شور و اشتیاق نسبت به ساختمان مشرق‌الاذکار سانتیاگو رو به فزونی است و احساس مشابهی در هفت کشوری که قرار است مشرق‌الاذکار‌های مملی یا محلی در آنها بنا گردد نیز در حال افزایش است. در هر یک از این ممالک با استفاده از تیر‌عاتی که احبّا به صندوق مشرق‌الاذکار تقدیم می‌دارند هم‌اکنون تمهیدات لازم آغاز گردیده اما ملاحظات عملی از قبیل خریداری زمین، تهیهٔ طرح ساختمان و تأمین منابع مالی فقط یک جنبه از مشغلهٔ احبّا است. این عزیزان اساساً وظیفه‌های روحانی در پیش دارند که تمامی جامعه در آن مشارکت می‌کند. حضرت عبدالبهاء از مشرق‌الاذکار به عنوان "مغناطیس تأیید پروردگار"، "اساس عظیم حضرت آمرزگار" و "رکن رکن آیین کردگار" نام می‌برند. این بنیاد عظیم در هر کجا که تأسیس گردد طبیعتاً جزء لاینفک فرایند جامعه‌سازی محیط اطرافش خواهد بود. آگاهی نسبت به این واقعیت در بین آحاد مؤمنین در شهرهایی که قرار است مشرق‌الاذکار در آنها تأسیس گردد در حال افزایش است و یاران الهی در این نقاط به خوبی درک می‌کنند که حیات جمعی‌شان باید به نحو فزاینده‌ای بازتاب تلفیق عبادت و خدمت باشد، تلفیقی که مشرق‌الاذکار به آن تجسد می‌بخشد.

بدین ترتیب مشاهده می‌کنیم که جامعهٔ جهانی بهائی در هر یک از میادین مختلف مستمراً به پیش می‌رود، ادراکش گسترش می‌یابد، مشتاق کسب بصیرت از تجارب می‌باشد، آماده است تا هرگاه منابعش اجازه دهد وظایف جدیدی را به عهده گیرد، در پاسخگویی به ضروریات تازه چالاک است، از لزوم انسجام در بین عرصه‌های مختلف فعالیتی که به آن اشتغال دارد آگاه بوده و خود را کاملاً وقف ایفای مأموریت خویش نموده است. اشتیاق و اشتعال جامعه در شور و هیجان عظیم حاصله از دعوت به برگزاری نود و پنج کنفرانس جوانان نمایان است. سرور و شادی این جمع نه تنها از استقبال جوانان عزیز از این کنفرانس‌ها بلکه همچنین از اعلام حمایتی است که دیگر احبّای الهی ابراز نموده‌اند، احبّایی که نقش حیاتی پیروان جوان‌تر حضرت بهاء‌الله را برای ایجاد تحرّک و پویایی در تمامی هیكل امر الله درک می‌کنند و ارج می‌نهند.

قلوب این مشتاقان از مشاهدهٔ شواهد پی در پی انتشار پیام شفابخش حضرت بهاء‌الله و گسترش دامنهٔ آگاهی از منویات عالی‌ه‌اش مشحون از امیدواری است. در این ایام پرمیمنت جشن و سرور، آن "یوم فرح اکبر"، عید اعظم رضوان یک قرن و نیم پیش را به خاطر می‌آوریم که جمال اقدس ابهی امر اعظمش را برای اولین بار به ملازمین حضورش در باغ نجیبیهٔ اعلان فرمود. از آن مکان مقدّس کلام الهی به هر شهر و دیار و هر برّ و بحر منتشر شده و نوع انسان را به لقای پروردگارش فرا می‌خواند و از آن نخستین سرمستان بادهٔ عشق الهی جامعه‌های متنوّع و هدف‌مند ظاهر و چون گل‌هایی رنگارنگ در بوستان پروردهٔ بد عنایتش شکوفا گردیده است. با گذشت هر روز تعداد بیشتری از نوآگاهان غیور دست دعا و مناجات به سوی روضهٔ مبارک‌اش بلند می‌کنند و این مستمندان نیز در همان مقام اطهر به یاد آن یوم فرخنده و به شکرانهٔ جمیع مواهبی که حضرتش به جامعهٔ اسم اعظم عطا فرموده، در نهایت تصرّح و تبئّل سر تعظیم به عتبهٔ مقدّسش فرو می‌آوریم.

[امضا: بیت العدل اعظم]

محفل روحانی ملی بهائیان بریتانیا 28 مه 2013

یاران عزیز در سراسر بریتانیا ملاحظه فرمایند

دوستان عزیز و محبوب،

در طی تعطیلات آخر هفته از 25 تا 27 ماه مه، در ناحیه کورلی در نزدیکی ویگن، بیش از 600 تن از احباء گرد هم آمدند تا در محیطی سرشار از عشق و مملو از شادی، در کانوشن ملی شرکت کرده و نظاره گر آن باشند. شور و مشورت امسال نه تنها با دریافت هدایات لاریبیه مذکور در پیام رضوان بیت العدل اعظم الهی، بلکه با الهام از فیلم «مرزهای آموزش» و با ملاحظه تلویحات و اشاراتی که بینش های عرضه شده در آن برای فعالیت های احباء در محدوده های جغرافیایی سراسر بریتانیا در بر داشت، غنی شده بود. علاوه بر آن، تمامی شرکت کنندگان از این موهبت بزرگ برخوردار گردیدند که از راهنمایی های دکتر شیرین فوزدار فرودی که به عنوان نماینده هیئت مشاورین قاره ای اروپا در این جمع شرکت داشت، بهره و نصیب برند. مشاورات حکیمانه وی سبب تقویت مذاکرات و تبادل نظرات دوستان گردیده و بسیار ارزشمند بود.

نمایندگان در فضائی مشحون از احترام و توجه، وظیفه مقدس خود را که همانا انتخاب اعضاء محفل روحانی ملی بود، به انجام رساندند، که نتایج آن به شرح زیر می باشد: کیشان منوچا 75 رای، شیرین تهذیب 67 رای، پاتریک اومارا 63 رای، بارنی لیث 59 رای، فیدلما میهن 59 رای، سارا طلائی 58 رای، پیتر هیوم 48 رای، ویویان کریگ 48 رای، وفا رام 37 رای. پس از انتخابات، محفل مقدس روحانی ملی به انجام انتخاب هیئت عامله محفل برای سال آتی پرداخت که نتایج آن به قرار ذیل می باشد: رئیس محفل: شیرین تهذیب؛ منشی: پاتریک اومارا؛ صندوقدار: وفا رام؛ و نائب رئیس: پیتر هیوم.



مذاکرات کانوشن بیشتر بر روی اسباب پیشرفت و ترقی مداوم محدوده های جغرافیائی و چگونگی پایه ریزی برنامه های رشد در 20 محدوده جغرافیائی که هنوز باید به مرحله مورد نظر برسند، متمرکز شده بود. همچنین به موضوع جوانان و چگونگی کمک برای حصول اطمینان از موفقیت کنفرانس آتی جوانان لندن، از طریق تشویق و همراهی جوانان در تلاش برای ترقی استعداد و توان شان در انجام خدمات هدفمند به نوع بشر، چه پیش از برگزاری کنفرانس و چه پس از آن، توجه فراوانی مبذول گردید.

محفل روحانی مملی مایل است از این فرصت استفاده کرده و صمیمانه ترین اشواق قلبیه خود را به احبای بریتانیا ابراز نماید و ایشان را اطمینان بخشد که در نخستین جلسه خود در مرقد مبارک ولی محبوب امرالله از جانب جامعه بهائی بریتانیا، در نهایت تصرع و ابتهال به دعا و مناجات خواهد پرداخت. با تحیات بهائی، محفل روحانی ملی، پاتریک اومارا، منشی

محفل روحانی ملی بهائیان بریتانیا 28 مه 2013

یاران عزیز در سراسر بریتانیا ملاحظه فرمایند

دوستان عزیز و محبوب،

به دنبال نامه مورخ 13 دسامبر 2012 محفل روحانی ملی که در آن جزئیات کارهایی که باید برای بازسازی و زیباسازی مرقد مبارک حضرت ولی عزیز امرالله صورت گیرد، شرح داده شده بود، خوشحالیم به اطلاع یاران برسائیم پیمانکاری برای انجام این کار انتخاب شده و قرار است کار مرمت این بنای تاریخی و محوطه محصور اطراف آن، در روزهای آتی آغاز گردد. همانطور که در نامه فوق ذکر گردید، این کار همچنین شامل زیباسازی هرچه بیشتر مرقد مبارک، از جمله باغ های اطراف آن به منظور افزایش شکوه و جلال این مکان خواهد بود. هزینه مرحله اول کار زیباسازی و مرمت کامل این محل 150,000 پوند خواهد بود. لطفاً توجه داشته باشید در حالی که کلیه دوستان قادر خواهند بود از این گورستان و مناطق اطراف مرقد مبارک بازدید نمایند، دسترسی به محل بنای یادبود در طی ماه های تابستان تا زمان اتمام این پروژه، امکانپذیر نخواهد بود. از شما برای بردباری و همراهی تان در ارتباط با این موضوع صمیمانه سپاسگذاریم.

مرمت و زیبا سازی بقعه مبارکه، مسئولیت و موهبتی بسیار با ارزش است که بر عهده جامعه ما گذاشته شده است. محفل ملی از حمایتی که جامعه بهائی بریتانیا تا کنون تقدیم نموده – چه مادی و مالی و چه با بذل مساعی و ادعیه و اذکار- مراتب امتنان عمیق خود را ابراز می نماید و خاضعانه استدعا دارد به همکاری های مداوم خود برای تکمیل موفقیت آمیز این مجهود ادامه دهید.

با تحیات بهائی، محفل روحانی ملی، پاتریک اومارا، منشی





در این راه با آن رو به رو هستند، با سهولت بیشتری انجام گردد و تعلق فرد به جامعه‌ای که در آن اهداف مَحَد است این سهولت را چندین برابر می‌سازد.

جمعِ این افکار سر آغاز یک گفتگوی فراگیر و در حال گسترش است که در طول همهٔ این کنفرانس‌ها در جریان خواهد بود و با مساعی شما برای وارد ساختن دیگران در گفتگو‌هایی سودمند قطعاً منّت‌ها بعد نیز ادامه خواهد داشت، گفتگو‌هایی که قلوب را اهتزاز می‌بخشد و اذهان را نسبت به امکاناتی که می‌تواند در پیش باشد می‌گشاید. استفاده از تجربیّات جمعی نیز مذاکرات شما را غنی‌تر خواهد ساخت. در این اوقات خجسته و مغتّم با تمام وجود به یاد شما عزیزان هستیم و با پایان یافتن هر کنفرانس مشتاقانه مترصد نتایج آن خواهیم بود. با اطمینان کامل به وعده‌های حتمیّهٔ الهیّه در مورد نزول تأییدات لاریبیّهٔ ربّانیّه بر تمام کسانی که در پاسخ به ندای حیات‌بخش حضرت بهاءالله به خدمت عالم انسانی قیام می‌نمایند، و عده‌ای که شما نیز به آن ایمان دارید، در اعتاب مقدّسهٔ علیا برای هر یک از این کنفرانس‌ها دعا می‌کنیم و از درگاه خداوند توانا مسئلت می‌نماییم که به شرکت‌کنندگان تصییی موفور از الطاف لانهایّهٔ خود میبذول فرماید.

[امضا: بیت العدل اعظم]

ترجمه‌ای از پیام بیت العدل اعظم الهی خطاب به محافل روحانی ملّی (از :مرکز جهانی بهائی) تاریخ :۲۷ ژونن ۲۰۱۳

با قلبوی پرسوز و گداز خیر تخریب بیت اعظم، بیت مبارک حضرت بهاءالله در بغداد را به اطلاع شما می‌رسانیم. جزئیّات این عمل شنیع هنوز روشن نیست ولی پیامد آنی و وخیم آن آشکار است. مردم جهان از موهبت وجود حریمی مبارک با تقدّسی لاتحصی محروم گشته‌اند.

عملی چنین اسفناک در آستانهٔ کنفرانس‌های بی‌سابقهٔ پیروان جوان حضرت بهاءالله و دوستان آنان در سراسر عالم، ارتباط غیبی بین بحران و پیروزی را به یاد می‌آورد که از طریق آن، ارادهٔ محیطهٔ غالبهٔ محتومهٔ حضرتش نهایتاً تحقّق خواهد یافت.

از آستان جمال اقدس ابهی رجا می‌نماییم که به بندگان باوفایش استقامت و قدرت تحمّل این ضربهٔ شدیده را عطا فرماید. اطلاعات بیشتر به محض وصول ابلاغ خواهد شد.
[بیت العدل اعظم]

ترجمه‌ای از پیام بیت العدل اعظم الهی خطاب به بهائیان جهان رضوان 2013 میلادی (170 بدیع) (از: مرکز جهانی بهائی)

ستاینندگان اسم اعظم در سراسر عالم ملاحظه فرمایند
دوستان عزیز،

قلم اعلی با این بیانات روح‌افزا ظهور یوم لقا و یوم حصاد را توصیف می‌نماید: "کتاب الهی ظاهر و کلمه ناطق" و در ادامه می‌فرماید: "ای دوستان الهی بشنوید ندای مظلوم را و به آنچه سبب ارتفاع امر الهی است تمسّک نمایید." حضرت بهاءالله سپس خطاب به پیروان خود می‌فرمایند: "به کمال روح و ریحان به مشورت تمسک نمایند و به اصلاح عالم و انتشار امر مالک قدم عمر گران‌مایه را مصروف دارید."

همکاران محبوب: مشاهدهٔ مساعی فداکارانهٔ شما عزیزان در قبال دعوت جمال اقدس ابهی، بیانات شورانگیز فوق را بی‌اختیار به خاطر می‌آورد. پاسخ شوکو همند مردم به ندای آن منجی امم از هر طرف به گوش می‌رسد و نفوسی که در پیشرفت نقشهٔ ملکوئی تفکر و تأمل می‌نمایند نمی‌توانند اثرات قوّهٔ غالبهٔ کلام الهی را بر قلوب زنان و مردان، کودکان و جوانان هر کشور و هر محدودهٔ جغرافیایی نادیده بگیرند.

جامعه‌ای که در سراسر گیتی استقرار یافته، توانایی خود را پرورش می‌دهد تا فرانتی دقیق از اطراف خود به دست آورد، امکانات موجود را بسنجد و روش‌ها و ابزار نقشهٔ پنج‌ساله را مدنبرانه به کار برد. همان طور که پیش‌بینی می‌شد، در محدوده‌هایی که مرزهای یادگیری آگاهانه گسترش داده می‌شود کسب تجربه با سرعت بیشتری صورت می‌گیرد. در چنین محدوده‌هایی اهمّیّت و کارآیی ابزار موجود برای توان‌مندسازی تعداد فزاینده‌ای از افراد برای خدمت به خوبی درک شده است. یک مؤسسهٔ آموزشی پویا و فعّال به منزلهٔ محور اصلی اقدامات جامعه برای پیشبرد نقشه انجام وظیفه می‌نماید و مهارت‌ها و قابلیت‌های حاصله از طریق شرکت در دوره‌های مؤسسه در اولین فرصت در میادین خدمت به کار برده می‌شود. برخی در تعاملات روزانهٔ خود نفوسی را ملاقات می‌کنند که آمادهٔ کاوش مطالب روحانی در محیط‌های مختلف هستند؛ عده‌ای می‌توانند پاسخگوی آمادگی روحانی افراد در دهکده‌ها و یا محلّه‌ها باشند و شاید به آن نقاط نقل مکان کنند. بسیاری برای به عهده گرفتن مسئولیت‌های مختلف قیام نموده و به صف خادمانی چون راهنمایان حلقه‌های مطالعه، مشوقین گروه‌های نوجوانان، و معلمین کودکان و یا افرادی که به اداره و هماهنگ‌سازی امور مشغول‌اند و یا به طرق دیگر فعّالیت‌های جامعه را حمایت می‌کنند می‌پیوندند. تعهّد احبّاً به یادگیری از طریق تداوم مجهودات خود و اشتیاق به همراهی کردن دیگران ابراز می‌گردد. به علاوه آنان دو چشم‌انداز مکمل از الگوی عملی را که در محدودهٔ جغرافیایی در حال شکل‌گیری است قویّاً مدّ نظر دارند: یکی ادوار سه‌ماههٔ فعّالیت یعنی نبض منظم برنامهٔ رشد است و دیگری مراحل متمایز فرایند آموزش برای کودکان، برای نوجوانان، و برای جوانان و بزرگسالان. احبّاً با درکی روشن از روابطی که این سه مرحله را با هم مرتبط می‌سازد از این نکته نیز مطلع‌اند که هر مرحله‌ای خصوصیات، مقتضیات و امتیازات ذاتی خود را دارد. بالاتر از این، همگی واقف بر تصرّفات قوای عظیم روحانیّه‌ای هستند که اثراتش را هم در آمار کمّی پیشرفت جامعه و هم در شرح توقیقات و انتصارات حاصله می‌توان ملاحظه نمود. آنچه مخصوصاً مایهٔ امیدواری است اینست که بسیاری از این ویژگی‌های متمایز و برجسته که از خصوصیات پیشرفته‌ترین محدوده‌های جغرافیایی می‌باشد در جوامعی که مراحل بسیار ابتدایی‌تری از رشد را می‌گذرانند نیز دیده می‌شود.

با عمیق‌تر شدن تجارب دوستان، توان‌مندی آنان نیز برای ترویج یک الگوی غنی و زیبایی زندگی در یک محدودهٔ جغرافیایی افزایش یافته است، الگویی که صدها یا حتی هزاران نفر را در بر می‌گیرد. بینش‌های متعدّدی که این خادمین عزیز امر الله از مساعی خود کسب می‌نمایند موجب خرسندی فراوان است، از جمله آنکه: پیشرفت تدریجی نقشه در سطح محدودهٔ جغرافیایی فرایندی است پویا با ماهیّتی الزاماً پنججیده که نمی‌توان آن را پدیده‌ای ساده انگاشت؛ این فرایند با افزایش توانایی در پرورش منابع انسانی و در هماهنگ نمودن و سازمان دادن اقدامات قائمین به خدمت به پیش می‌رود؛ با ازدیاد این توانایی‌ها، تلفیق طیف وسیع‌تری از ابتکارات امکان‌پذیر می‌شود؛ عنصر جدیدی که به نقشه اضافه می‌شود

تا مدتی نیاز به توجّه خاصّ دارد ولی این توجّه به هیچ وجه از اهمّیّت سایر جوانب فعّالیت‌های جامعه‌ساز ی نمی‌کاهد چه اگر قرار است یادگیری شیوهٔ عمل جامعه باشد باید مترصد امکانات بالقوّه‌ای بود که هر یک از ابزار نقشه در یک مقطع زمانی خاصّ ارائه می‌دهد و در صورت لزوم می‌بایست انرژی بیشتری صرف توسعهٔ آن نمود اما این بدان معنا نیست که همهٔ افراد باید در همان جنبهٔ نقشه مشغول خدمت باشند؛ تمرکز عمدۀ قسمت ترویج در هر دورهٔ برنامهٔ رشد نباید لزوماً معطوف به یک هدف باشد بدین معنی که مثلاً در یک دوره ممکن است شرایط ایجاب کند که دعوت نفوس به اقبال به امر مبارک از طریق مجهودات فشردهٔ تبلیغی افرادی یا جمعی مورد توجّه قرار گیرد و در دوره‌ای دیگر این توجّه می‌تواند به ازدیاد یک فعّالیت اصلی خاصّ معطوف گردد.

به علاوه، احبّای عزیز آگاهند که سرعت پیشرفت امور امری که در هر حال پدیده‌ای ارگانیک است، در نقاط مختلف به دلایل منطقی متفاوت است و در نتیجهٔ مشاهدهٔ هر موفقیّتی موجب سرور و دل‌گرمی آنان می‌گردد. در واقع نفعی را که از کمک هر فرد عاید پیشرفت کل می‌شود قدر می‌دانند و بدین ترتیب خدمت هر فرد به فراخور امکانات شخصی او مورد استقبال همگان قرار می‌گیرد. گردهمایی‌های منعقده برای تأمل و تفکر بیش از پیش فرصتی انگاشته می‌شود که در آن تمامی فعّالیت‌های جامعه موضوع شور و مشورتی جدّی و روح‌افزا می‌باشند. شرکت‌کنندگان از همهٔ دست‌آوردهای حاصله مطلع می‌شوند و در پرتو آن، مفهوم مساعی خود را بیشتر درک می‌کنند و با برداشت بهتری از توصیه‌های مؤسسات و بهره‌گیری از تجارب دیگران، دانش خود را در بارهٔ فرایند رشد افزایش می‌دهند. این گونه تبادل فکر و تجربه، در فضاهای متعدّد دیگری برای مشورت در بین کسانی که به مساعی خاصی مشغول‌اند، اعمّ از اینکه خطّ مشی مشترکی را دنبال می‌نمایند یا در بخشی از محدودهٔ جغرافیایی خدمت می‌کنند نیز انجام می‌شود. همهٔ این بیش‌ها جزئی از درک وسیع‌تری از این واقعیت است که پیشرفت به آسان‌ترین وجه در محیطی حاصل می‌گردد که سرشار از عشق و محبّت است، کاستی‌ها با بردباری نادیده گرفته می‌شود، موانع با شکیبایی برطرف می‌گردد، و رویکردهای آزمون شده با اشتیاق پذیرفته می‌شود. بدین ترتیب با هدایت مؤسسات و نهادهای امری که در سطوح مختلف انجام وظیفه می‌کنند، کوشش احبّاً، هر چند در سطح فردی مختصر باشد، در یک کوشش جمعی ادغام می‌گردد تا استعداد روحانی برای پذیرش ندای جمال مبارک به سرعت شناسایی شود و به نحوی مؤثر پرورش یابد. بدیهی است یک محدودهٔ جغرافیایی که دارای این شرایط باشد، محلی است که در آن روابط بین فرد، مؤسسات و جامعه — سه اجر اکندۀ نقشه — به نحوی مطلوب در حال تکامل است.

با ملاحظهٔ این اقدامات موفقیّت‌آمیز، یک نکتهٔ درخور توجّه خاصّ است. در پیام رضوان سه سال قبل اظهار امیدواری نمودیم که در محدوده‌های جغرافیایی با برنامهٔ فشردهٔ رشد، احبّاً بتوانند با ایجاد مراکز فعّالیت فشرده در محلّه‌ها و دهکده‌ها، یادگیری خود را در بارهٔ راه‌های جامعه‌سازی افزایش دهند. توقیقات حاصله از انتظارات این جمع فراتر رفته است زیرا حتّی در محدوده‌هایی که برنامهٔ رشد از تحرّک لازم برخوردار نیست، مساعی چند نفر به منظور شروع فعّالیت‌های اصلی نقشه در بین ساکنان یک ناحیهٔ کوچک، کارآیی خود را مکزراً به ثبوت رسانده است. این رویکرد در اصل بر استقبال مردم از تعالیم حضرت بهاءالله تمرکز می‌یابد، مردمی که برای تقلیب روحانی منبعث از ظهور حضرتش آمادگی دارند و مشتاق‌اند که از طریق شرکت در فرایند آموزشی ارائه شده توسط مؤسسهٔ آموزشی، رخوت و بی‌تفاوتی حاصله از نیروی‌های اجتماع را کنار گذاشته به جای آن الگوهایی از عمل را که باعث ایجاد تحوّل در زندگی می‌شود دنبال کنند. در هر محلّه یا هر دهکده‌ای که این رویکرد چند سالی توسعه یافته و احبّاً تمرکز خود را حفظ کرده‌اند، نتایج قابل ملاحظه‌ای به تدریج ولی قاطعانه آشکار می‌گردد. توان‌دهی به جوانان موجب می‌شود تا مسئولیت پیشرفت اطرافیان جوان‌تر از خود را به عهده بگیرند. بزرگسالان از مشارکت جوانان در گفتگوهای پرمتنوا و سودمند راجع به امور تمامی جامعه استقبال می‌کنند. دست‌آوردهای حاصله از طریق فرایند آموزشی جامعه، توان‌مندی برای مشورت را در پیر و جوان به طور یکسان ایجاد می‌کند و فضاهای تازه‌ای برای مکالمات هدف‌مند پدیدار می‌شود. با این حال، تغییر و تحوّل صرفاً به بهائیان و افراد دیگری که در فعّالیت‌های اصلی نقشه شرکت می‌کنند و قاعدتاً ممکن است انتظار رود که زمانی طرز فکر جدیدی اتخاذ کنند منحصر نمی‌گردد. جوّ محیط کلاً تحت تأثیر قرار می‌گیرد. گرایش به ستایش خداوند در بین گسترهٔ وسیعی از جمعیت ایجاد می‌شود. تساوی زن و مرد با جلوه‌های چشمگیرتری ابراز می‌گردد. تعلیم و تربیت کودکان اعمّ از پسر و دختر، مورد توجّه بیشتری قرار می‌گیرد. خصوصیات روابط درون خانواده که در قالب تصوّرات کهنهٔ قرون و اعصار شکل گرفته به نحو محسوسی تغییر می‌یابد. حسنّ مسئولیت نسبت به جامعهٔ محلّی و محیط اطراف خود فراگیر می‌شود. حتّی بلاّی تعصّب که سایهٔ شوم خود را بر هر اجتماعی افکنده به تدریج تسلیم قوای غالبهٔ یگانگی می‌گردد. نهایتاً مساعی جامعه‌سازی احبّاً بر جوانب مختلف فرهنگ تأثیر می‌گذارد.

با پیشرفت مستمرّ ترویج و تحکیم در سال گذشته، کوشش در سایر عرصه‌های مهم نیز غالباً به موازات آنها پیش رفته است. یکی از بارزترین نمونه‌ها آنست که پیشرفت‌هایی که در سطح فرهنگ برخی از دهکده‌ها و محلّه‌ها مشاهده می‌گردد تا حدّی منبون آموخته‌های ناشی از مشارکت بهائیان در اقدام اجتماعی است. دفتر توسعهٔ اجتماعی و اقتصادی بیت العدل اعظم اخیراً سندی در این زمینه تهیهٔ نموده که حاوی عصارهٔ تجربهٔ سی‌ساله، یعنی از ابتدای تأسیس آن دفتر در مرکز جهانی بهائی تا امروز است. از جمله نکات مذکور در این سند این است که فرایند مؤسسهٔ آموزشی تا چه حدّ به مشارکت در اقدام اجتماعی نیز تحرّک می‌بخشد. این امر به تنهایی در اثر افزایش منابع انسانی صورت نمی‌پذیرد بلکه تجربه نشان داده است که بینش‌های روحانی و خصایص و توانایی‌های منبعث از فرایند مؤسسهٔ آموزشی به همان اندازه که برای کمک به فرایند رشد ضروری است برای مشارکت در اقدام اجتماعی نیز حائز اهمّیّت می‌باشد. نکتهٔ دیگری که در این سند توضیح داده شده این است که چگونه یک چارچوب ذهنی مشترک در حال تکامل و متشکل از عناصری که متقابلاً یکدیگر را تقویت می‌کنند، بر تمامی فعّالیت‌های جامعهٔ بهائی حکم‌فرما است هر چند این عناصر در عرصه‌های متمایز عمل جلوه‌های متفاوتی به خود می‌گیرند. سند مذکور اخیراً به محافل روحانی ملّی ارسال شده است. حال از آن محافل دعوت می‌نماییم که در مشورت با مشاورین این مسئله را مورد بررسی قرار دهند که چگونه مفاہیم مندرج در آن می‌تواند به پیشبرد مساعی جاری در عرصهٔ اقدام اجتماعی در مناطق تحت اشراق آنها کمک کند و آگاهی از این بُعد مهمّ مجهودات بهائی را افزایش دهد. این دعوت نباید به عنوان فراخوانی عمومی برای تلاش‌های گسترده در این زمینه تعبیر گردد زیرا در یک جامعهٔ در حال رشد شروع اقدام اجتماعی به طور طبیعی صورت می‌پذیرد ولی بجاست که احبّاً در بارهٔ نتایج و مقتضیات مساعی خود در جهت تقلیب اجتماع عمیق‌تر به تفکر و تأمل پردازند. از دیاد یادگیری در اقدام اجتماعی مشغلهٔ بیشتری برای دفتر توسعهٔ اجتماعی و اقتصادی ایجاد می‌نماید و تمهیداتی در دست تهیهٔ است تا عملیات این دفتر به نحو متناسبی بسط و تکامل یابد.

یکی از ویژگی‌های بارز دوازده ماه گذشته ذکر مکرّر نام جامعهٔ بهائی در رابطه با فعّالیت در زمینه‌هایی بسیار متنوّع و هم‌کاری با گروه‌های هم‌فکر برای بهبود اجتماع بوده است. رهبران فکری در سطوح مختلف اجتماع، از دوایر بین‌المللی گرفته تا جوامع روستاتشین، این نکته را اذعان کرده‌اند که بهائیان نه تنها قلباً خواهان رفاه عالم انسانی هستند بلکه در بارهٔ آنچه باید انجام شود درکی روشن دارند و از ابزاری مؤثر برای تحقّق آمال خود برخوردارند. این قدرشناسی‌ها و حمایت‌ها همچنین از جانب گروه‌هایی ابراز شده است که در گذشته انتظار نمی‌رفت. به



ترجمه‌ای از پیام بیت العدل اعظم الهی خطاب به کنفرانس جوانان (از: مرکز جهانی بهائی) ۱ ژوئیه ۲۰۱۳

پیام بیت العدل اعظم خطاب به شرکت کنندگان در ۱۱۴ کنفرانس جوانان در سراسر جهان دوستان عزیز و محبوب،

هنگامی که حضرت ربّ اعلی در سنّ بیست و پنج سالگی قیام نموده و پیام تحوّل‌آفرین خویش را به جهانیان ابلاغ فرمودند بسیاری از نفوسی که تعالیم حضرتش را پذیرفتند و به انتشار آن پرداختند جوان و حتّی جوان‌تر از خود وجود مبارک بودند. شرح پرشور دلاوری و شجاعت این نفوس در "مطالع الانوار" جاودانی گشته و تا قرن‌های متمادی روشنی‌بخش صفحات تاریخ بشر خواهد بود. بدین ترتیب روند نوینی آغاز شد که بر طبق آن نسل‌های جوان هر کدام با الهام از همان انگیزه الهی برای نوسازی عالم، فرصت را غنیمت شمرده تا به پیشرفت فرایند تقلیب حیات نوع بشر کمک کند، روندی که از زمان ظهور حضرت نقطه اولی تا به حال بدون وقفه ادامه داشته است.

زحمات و فداکاری‌های مادام العمر نیاکان روحانی شما سهم عظیمی در استقرار آیین بهائی در سراسر عالم و در تسریع پیدایش یک جامعه جهانی هدفمند ادا نموده است. اگرچه وظایف پیش روی شما با وظایف آن مؤمنین فداکار متفاوت است اما اهمّیت مسئولیت‌هایی که بر عهده شما واگذار شده از آنچه آن طلایه‌داران امر حضرت یزدان به جا آوردند کمتر نیست. تلاش این جامعه در طی دهه‌های متعدّد در سراسر گیتی، برای درکی کامل‌تر از ظهور حضرت بهاءالله و برای به کارگیری اصول مندمج در آن، موجب پیدایش یک چارچوب عمل مؤثر گردیده که از طریق تجربه اصلاح و اكمال می‌یابد. شما سعادت آشنایی با روش‌ها و رویکردهای این چارچوب را دارید و بسیاری از شما با پشت‌کار در به کار بردن آن، هم‌اکنون نشانه‌هایی از قدرت جامعه‌سازی تعالیم الهی را به چشم خود مشاهده نموده‌اید. حال در کنفرانسی که در آن حضور دارید از شما دعوت می‌شود تا در باره سهمی بیاندیشید که هر جوان آرزومند پاس‌خگویی به دعوت حضرت بهاءالله و مشتاق مساعدت به متجلی ساختن قدرت حضرتش می‌تواند ادا نماید. به منظور کمک به مطالعه و تفحص شما، چند موضوع، از جمله نگاهی به دوران حاضر زندگی خود، در نظر گرفته شده است.

ده‌ها هزار جوان که با شما عزیزان وجه مشترک زیادی دارند در سراسر جهان در کنفرانس‌های متعدّد با هدفی مشترک گرد هم خواهند آمد. واقعیات زندگی هر یک از شما عزیزان در شرایط بسیار متفاوتی شکل گرفته است اما آرزوی ایجاد تغییری سازنده و داشتن توانایی ارائه خدمات هدفمند که هر دو از ویژگی‌های این مرحله از زندگی شما است، نه منحصر به نژاد یا ملیت و نه وابسته به موقعیت مالی و مادی است. ایام درخشان جوانی را که شما اکنون می‌گذرانید همگان تجربه کرده‌اند؛ اما دورانی است کوتاه و در معرض ضربات نیر وهای اجتماعی فراوان. بنا بر این چقدر مهم است که نهایت کوشش را مبذول دارید تا از جمله نفوسی باشید که به فرموده حضرت عبدالیهاب در ایام حیات "از وجود بهره‌مندی گرفتند و ثمره‌ی بردند".

موجب مسرت این جمع است که بسیاری از شما عزیزان هم‌اکنون با شرکت در فعالیت‌های جامعه‌سازی و همچنین با سازمان‌دهی و هماهنگ‌سازی و یا با اداره کردن مساعی دیگران به خدمت مشغولید و در همه این امور مسئولیت‌های فزاینده‌ای را بر عهده می‌گیرید. جای تعجب نیست که گروه سنی شما است که بیشترین تجربه را در مساعدت به رشد روحانی و اخلاقی نوجوانان و کودکان کسب می‌کند و قابلیت‌شان را برای انجام خدمات جمعی و دوستی حقیقی تقویت می‌نمایند. البته شما با آگاهی از وضعیت دنیایی که این نوجوانان باید در آن راه زندگی خود را بیابند، دنیایی که هم دارای خطرات غیر منتظره و هم امکانات فراوان است، اهمّیت آماده‌سازی و تقویت روحانی آنان را به آسانی درک می‌کنید. همچنین با وقوف بر اینکه حضرت بهاءالله هم برای تقلیب معنوی و هم برای ترقی مادی بشر ظهور فرموده‌اند به افراد جوان‌تر از خود کمک می‌کنید تا به تهذیب اخلاق خود پردازند و آماده قبول مسئولیت برای رفاه جوامع خود شوند. هنگامی که این نوجوانان به سن بلوغ می‌رسند آنها را یاری می‌دهید تا قدرت بیان‌شان افزایش یابد و همچنین یک حس قوی اخلاقی در آنان به وجود آید. در این راستا، با پیروی از این حکم حضرت بهاءالله که می‌فرمایند "به اعمال خود را بیارایید نه به احوال"، هدف‌مندی خود شما نیز مشخص‌تر می‌گردد.

حرکت در مسیر هر نوع خدمت مستلزم ایمان و استقامت است و البته پیمودن این راه در معیت دیگران مزیت‌های فراوانی دارد. دوستی و رفاقت سرشار از محبت، تشویق متقابل و میل به یادگیری با همدیگر که از خصوصیات طبیعی هر گروه از جوانانی است که صمیمانه به سوی یک هدف مشترک تلاش می‌کنند، باید همچنین شاخص آن روابط ضروری‌های باشد که اجزاء اجتماع را به هم متصل می‌سازد. با توجه به این مطلب، امیدواریم روابط دوستانه‌ای که با سایر شرکت‌کنندگان کنفرانس برقرار می‌کنید پایدار بماند و این پیوندهای دوستی و حسن رسالت مشترک تا مدت‌ها پس از پایان این گردهمایی‌ها نیز شما را بر خدمت ثابت و مستقیم بدارد.

امکاناتی که از طریق اقدام جمعی به وجود می‌آید به ویژه در فرایند جامعه‌سازی مشهود است، فرایندی که در بسیاری از محدوده‌های جغرافیایی، محله‌ها و دهکده‌های سراسر دنیا که مراکز فعالیت فشرده شده‌اند سرعت می‌گیرد. جوانان اغلب در صف اول این فرایند قرار دارند - نه تنها جوانان بهائی بلکه همچنین بسیاری از دوستان هم‌فکرشان که می‌توانند تأثیرات مثبت اقدامات بهائیان را مشاهده کنند و دید وحدت و تقلیب روحانی را که اساس این اقدامات است درک نمایند. در چنین نقاطی لزوم معرفی امر حضرت بهاءالله به نفوس مستعد و کاوش در پیام‌های پیام آن حضرت برای دنیای امروز به خوبی احساس می‌شود. در زمانی که بخش وسیعی از اجتماع مشوق رخت و بی‌تفاوتی است و یا حتّی از این نیز فراتر رفته رفتارهای مضر به حال خود و دیگران را تشویق می‌نماید، تفاوت کار کسانی که توان‌مندی مردم را برای ایجاد و تداوم الگویی برای یک زندگی اجتماعی سرشار از غنای معنوی افزایش می‌دهند بسی آشکار است.

اگرچه بسیاری از افراد روحیه شما را تحسین می‌کنند اما اهمّیت واقعی مهورات جمعی شما برای جهانیان چندان مشهود نیست لکن شما به خوبی به نقش خود در یک فرایند تقلیب‌کننده و نیرومند که منجر به ظهور مدنیتی جهانی مبتنی بر وحدت عالم انسانی خواهد شد توجه دارید. شما و عقاید روحی و ذهنی که در خود و دیگران پرورش می‌دهید پایدار خواهد ماند و بر بسیاری از تصمیمات مهم و اساسی زندگی مانند ازدواج، خانواده، تحصیل، کار، و حتّی تعیین محل زندگی تأثیر خواهد گذاشت. آگاهی از این مفاهیم گسترده، به در هم شکستن منشور کژنمایی که در آن ناملامت‌ها، مشکلات، موانع و سوء تفاهم‌های روزمره گه‌گاه چیرگی‌ناپذیر به نظر می‌آید کمک می‌کند. تمرکز انرژی در نبل به اهدافی متعالی‌تر سبب می‌شود که بذل کوشش لازم برای پیشرفت در مسیر رشد روحانی فردی، حتّی با در نظر گرفتن چالش‌هایی که همگان

Bahá'í World Centre Staffing Needs

17 May 2013 / 1 Azamat 170 B.E.

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

- Painter and Plasterer
- Welder/Metal Fabricator
- Accountant/Auditor
- Assistant to the Senior Staff
- Residential Property Liaison
- Information Analyst
- Carpenter
- Maintenance Technician
- Recruiter
- Translators (Persian, French, English, Arabic)
- Systems Architect
- Solution Architect
- Project Manager
- Portfolio Manager
- Department Interface/Business Analyst
- Data Centre Analyst
- Systems Administrator
- Service Desk Analyst
- Service Desk Support



- Network Engineer
- Database Administrator
- Applications Analyst
- Applications Engineer
- Information Security Specialist

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



Custodian of the National Hazratu'l-Quds

8 August 2013 / 8 Kamál 170 B.E.

To all believers in the United Kingdom

Custodian of the National Hazratu'l-Quds:

The custodian is responsible for maintaining high standards of cleanliness and beauty in the premises and for assisting with the operations of the facilities within the building. The custodian is also responsible for fostering a warm, courteous and hospitable atmosphere for those serving and for those visiting. As such the role requires one to have a caring and loving attitude combined with the ability to take initiative in the day-to-day maintenance of the building. The role also requires proven skills in the management and maintenance of property. Good communication skills and an ability to work with people are essential in order to train and co-ordinate the services of volunteers. It would be highly advantageous if the post-holder has the ability to carry out

minor repair and maintenance work.

Dear friends, as you are aware, the primary function of the National Hazratu'l-Quds is to serve as the seat of the National Spiritual Assembly and the administrative centre of the Faith in the United Kingdom. The Universal House of Justice have told us that for this community its function also includes serving "as the central spiritual home of the British Bahá'í community" and "as a rallying point for the friends and a centre of unity." Further, they advise that it is a "point towards which the friends would naturally gravitate when they visit London, both British Bahá'ís and those from overseas." With London having a position as an important international centre, the premises have a vital additional dimension as "a place in which eminent visitors, representatives of the medial and the general public can be received." The building, therefore, plays an important part in the life of the community and the role of the custodian is central to this.

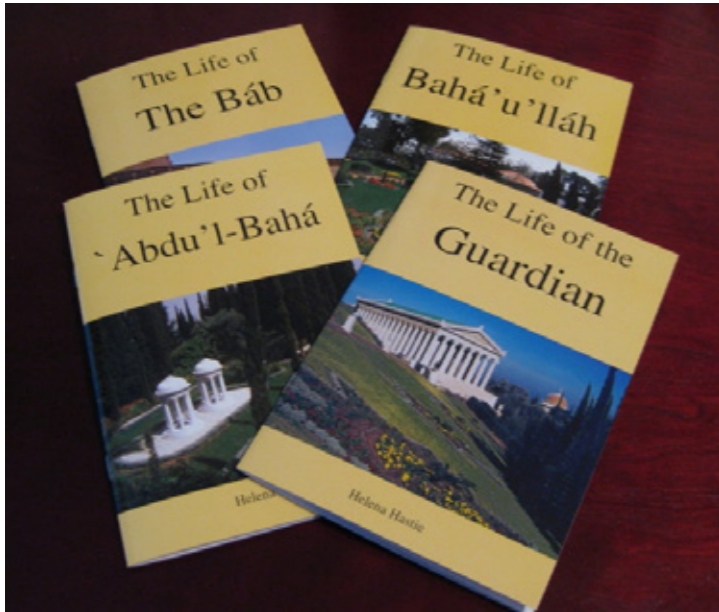
This is a 3-days a week, part time position. This is a paid position and a salary is being offered by the National Assembly to enable the successful candidate to carry out this service. However, as with all service to the Faith, it may be done on a voluntary or part-voluntary basis also. The initial service period is two-years, subject to review at the end of the period.

Individuals who would like to apply for this post are asked to kindly submit a copy of their Curriculum Vitae, together with a letter sharing their reason for applying for this service to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK, 27 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD, or by email to nsa@bahai.org.uk

The National Assembly ardently hopes that Bahá'ís from far and wide will offer to take up this important service position. Please share this communication with those who may not have access to NEWS.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Patrick O'Mara
Secretary



A Useful Quartet

The Life of the Báb

The Life of Bahá'u'lláh

The Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The Life of the Guardian

By Helena Hastie

Published by Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop

It is easy to forget in this world of Internet access, wireless connectivity, and e-books that print on paper remains a key way of both spreading the Faith to seekers and deepening it in the Believers. This is true not just in less technically advanced parts of the world but here also. Electronics, economics, falling standards of functional literacy, and changes in popular culture have not yet killed off the written word - as with Mark Twain, reports of its death are greatly exaggerated.

So what about these four little titles?

Each of the four little books – booklets, really - in the set packs in quite a lot of information in simple reading style as well as a number of illustrations that help to set their subject in the appropriate time and place and so bring them more alive. They're not a substitute for more detailed and larger accounts nor are they meant to be, but they have a number of niches into which they can fit, ways in which they can be put to use to enhance the knowledge of the Friends and hence their ability to teach. Indeed they can be put to direct use in this. These ideas are offered in the spirit of practical suggestion (always better than mere exhortation):

- Although the target readership is adults, especially those who would not normally pick up a large book, younger readers can also benefit. I have no doubt they can also be used with older children.
- Enquirers who want to know more about the Faith and its Central Figures but are not ready to sit down with more substantial histories will gain a lot and hopefully be motivated to want to learn more.
- They can be useful not just for non-habitual readers but for those for whom English is not their first language.
- They make a useful source of crib-notes for those who have been asked to say a few words at something like a holy day event.

In other words they're a handy set of little books to own, and would also make a nice but useful potential gift to other Bahá'ís.

IP

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.

قبل 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.

CRB Information

To obtain or renew a CRB/DBS Disclosure please contact: osc@bahai.org.uk

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

Secretary of External Affairs,
Dr Kishan Manocha
Email: kishan.manocha@bahai.org.uk

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

Office of Public Affairs
Tel: 020 7590 8786
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

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

Bahá'í Councils

Bahá'í Council for England

Secretary,
David Smith
Email: bce@bahai.org.uk

Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland

Secretary,
Soha Graham
Email: bcni@bahai.org.uk
Website: www.bahaicouncil-ni.org.uk

Bahá'í Council for Scotland

Secretary,
Wendy Borrill
Email: bcs@bahai.org.uk



Bahá'í Council for Wales
Secretary,
Tracey Roberts-Jones
Email: bcw@bahai.org.uk

Training Institute Board for the UK
Secretary,
Sahar Tahzib
Email: tibuk@bahai.org.uk

Below | Resting Place of Shoghi Effendi, London



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.

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.



European Bahá'í House of Worship, Germany

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



Calendar of National Events 2013

National Spiritual Assembly Meeting	20 - 22 September
Birthday of the Báb	20 October
National Spiritual Assembly Meeting	25 - 27 October
Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh	12 November
Day of the Covenant	26 November
Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	28 November
National Spiritual Assembly Meeting	29 November - 1 December
Unit Convention	7 - 8 December

Subscribing to NEWS

The National Spiritual Assembly is looking at ways to improve its communication with the friends and, in particular, how best to share information with the whole community quickly and reliably. To assist in this process, the Assembly would like to warmly encourage those believers who have not already done so to make use of its electronic mail NEWS service by subscribing to it.

Currently, less than half of the adult believers in the United Kingdom subscribe to NEWS, and the National Assembly

hopes that the number of subscriptions can be significantly increased. If you have email access and would like to subscribe to NEWS, please send an email quoting your UK Bahá'í ID number to: news.admin@bahai.org.uk

It is hoped in this way that many more of the friends will be able to receive in a timely fashion urgent news items, guidance on the Five Year Plan, the electronic copy of UKBahá'í, information on events, schools and pioneering opportunities and other matters of national interest which the National Assembly and its agencies regularly post on NEWS.

Elements of a Cluster's Intensive Program of Growth

What is a Reflection Meeting?

'Key to the progress of an intensive program of growth is the phase dedicated to reflection, in which the lessons learned in action are articulated and incorporated into plans for the next cycle of activity. Its principal feature is the reflection meeting - as much a time of joyous celebration as it is of serious consultation.. Meetings of reflection will have to be held periodically in order to monitor progress, maintain unity of thought and mobilize the energies of the friends.' (The Universal House of Justice, letter dated 27 Dec 2005)

What is an Expansion Phase?

'The expansion phase, often a period of two weeks, demands the highest level of intensity. Its objective is to widen the circle of those interested in the Faith, to find receptive souls and to teach them. Although this phase might include some element of proclamation, it should not be seen as a time to hold a few events for this purpose or to undertake a set of activities that merely convey information. Experience suggests that the more closely teaching approaches and methods are aligned with the capacity acquired from the study of the institute courses the more rewarding the results.' - (The Universal House of Justice, 27 Dec 2005)

What is the Consolidation Phase?

'One of the primary objectives of this next phase is to bring a percentage of the new believers into the institute process so that an adequate pool of human resources will be available in future cycles to sustain growth. Those not participating in study circles are nurtured through a series of home visits, and all are invited to devotional meetings, to the celebration of the Nineteen Day Feast and to Holy Day observances and are gradually introduced to the patterns of community life. Not infrequently, the consolidation phase gives rise to further enrolments as the family members and friends of new declarants accept the Faith.

In other clusters, enrolments during the expansion phase may not be high, especially in the first few cycles, and the goal is to augment the number of those willing to participate in core activities. This, then, defines the nature of the consolidation phase, which largely involves nurturing the interest of seekers and accompanying them in their spiritual search until they are confirmed in their faith. To the extent that these measures are vigorously followed, this phase can generate a considerable number of enrolments. It should be noted, however, that as learning advances and experience is gained, the ability not only to teach responsive souls, but also to identify segments of the general population with heightened receptivity, develops, and the totality of new believers increases from cycle to cycle.' (The Universal House of Justice, 27 Dec 2005)



Front Cover Photo | Facilitators for the Youth Conference preparing for their joyous tasks.

Print: FingerprintFo+

To contact the Editorial Team please email: UKBahai@ bahai.org.uk

Published by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom.

Registered in England – Company limited by guarantee No.355737, Registered Charity (1967) 250851.

Registered with the Scottish Charity Regulators (SC041673).

The Assembly also represents the Bahá'í communities of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.