

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

December 11, 2015

To the American Bahá'í community
for the Feast of Masá'il

Dearly loved Friends,

As we join you in eager anticipation of the unveiling of a new Five Year Plan in a few weeks' time, we are delighted to share with you news of the progress of the current Plan, now speeding to conclusion at Ridván. Central to that Plan has been the establishment of programs of growth in at least 600 clusters throughout the country. At this writing, there are 549 such programs in operation, representing an addition of 99 since May and a rate of increase of one new program of growth practically every other day! We thus have every reason for confidence that this goal will be achieved by Plan's end.

Growth and development in these nearly 600 clusters ranges along a wide continuum. On one end are clusters where programs of growth are new, where Bahá'ís and their friends are not only making their way through the sequence of Ruhi courses but have together initiated core activities and invited others to join. On the other end are clusters where significant progress is being made to enable "an ever-rising number of individuals to strengthen their capacity for service," where hundreds of Bahá'ís and friends from the larger community are engaged in a rich and mutually reinforcing array of activities—including classes for children and junior youth, devotional gatherings, home visits, collective and individual teaching initiatives, service projects, and more—in localities throughout the clusters, and in neighborhoods within them where receptivity has been found.

The Universal House of Justice reminded us last Ridván that each forward step in our work rests upon the relationship between the Beloved of the World and His followers, who are everywhere striving to translate His transformative teachings into action:

Where a programme of growth has been established in a previously unopened cluster, we see how the initial stirrings of activity arise out of the love for Bahá'u'lláh held in the heart of a committed believer. Notwithstanding the orders of complexity that must eventually be accommodated as a community grows in size, all activity begins with this simple strand of love. It is the vital thread from which is woven a pattern of patient and concentrated effort, cycle after cycle, to introduce children, youth, and adults to spiritual ideas; to foster a feeling for worship through gatherings for prayer and devotion; to stimulate conversations that illuminate understanding; to start ever-growing numbers on a lifetime of study of the Creative Word and its translation into deeds; to develop, along with others, capacity for service; and to accompany one another in the exercise of what has been learned.

With grateful and hopeful hearts, we pray that each one of you will, through your own services to the Divine Plan, fulfill the call of our beloved Master to "*[r]ead, in the school of God, the lessons of the spirit, and learn from love's Teacher the innermost truths,*" and to "*[s]eek out the secrets of Heaven, and tell of the overflowing grace and favour of God.*"

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES



Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary