

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

June 3, 2017

To the American Bahá'í community
for the Feast of Núr

Dearly loved Friends,

As this auspicious year of the 200th anniversary of the Blessed Beauty's Birth continues its rapid progress, we felt it timely to remind you of valuable resources currently available to you in the planning of your bicentenary observances, and to share our joy in the exciting news recently received from the Universal House of Justice of some additional resources that are forthcoming.

In February, as many of you will recall, we launched a special website dedicated to the bicentenary (accessible at www.bahai.us/bicentenary-resources). At last report, the site had already hosted nearly 6,200 "unique" visitors and 11,500 sessions, a testimony to the alacrity with which the friends are responding to the Supreme Body's call to benefit to the full from this "single greatest worldwide opportunity . . . for connecting hearts to Bahá'u'lláh."

In addition to downloading various resources, some of the friends are also writing directly (to bicentenary@bahai.us) to report on their plans and ideas and to ask questions. Among the dozens of creative responses to the bicentenary being shared on the site are ideas such as:

- Donating ornamental trees to one's village or city, as the Bahá'ís of Fort Wayne, Indiana, have undertaken to do. In their case, two trees will be planted beside each other—one in October 2017, and the other in 2019 (for the bicentenary of the Báb's Birth)—with bronze plaques identifying the special occasions for their donation. Both the city's mayor and the public are being invited to the tree-planting ceremony.
- Approaching your city's mayor with a request for a formal proclamation of the day and its significance. A sample Mayoral Proclamation is posted in the "Promotional and Media Materials" section of the website.
- Hosting a special dinner party to share the life and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with friends, neighbors, and other guests.

The friends also have the option of receiving an email notification when updates are made to the site; consider signing up for this service on the site's home page. Further, you may find it helpful to visit a Bahá'í Facebook Group established for the bicentenary (accessible at facebook.com/groups/bahauallahbicentenaryus/).

Finally, we share your joy in news recently received from the Supreme Body that—to support your efforts to mark the bicentenary—it has commissioned the production of a film on the life and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. In its letter announcing this development, the House of Justice expressed the hope that the friends, "will put on screenings that stimulate conversations about the Person of Bahá'u'lláh, about how He was willing to bear extraordinary hardship so that humankind might be rescued from its confusion and

suffering, and about how He now inspires the efforts of millions of people who derive from His teachings inner strength and spiritual direction for their lives.”

Expected to be about 60 minutes in length, the completed film—including subtitled versions being prepared at the Bahá'í World Center in a variety of languages, among them both Persian and Spanish—will be made available online for National Spiritual Assemblies to download by mid-September 2017. Though the exact manner in which you choose to utilize the film will differ, of course, depending on local circumstances, this wondrous gift is sure to greatly enhance the quality of our observances, whether in homes, Bahá'í Centers, or other venues. In due course, we will provide details on how you may access it.

Be assured of our prayers that abundant blessings and confirmations may attend your efforts to befittingly celebrate this historic occasion and to seize “to its fullest extent” the unparalleled teaching opportunities it presents!

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

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Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary