

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

March 20, 2019

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

Dearest Bahá'í Friends,

With deepest love, we offer you our most joyous greetings on the occasion of Naw-Rúz! As we begin a new Bahá'í year filled with wondrous possibilities, be assured our prayers for your happiness and well-being remain unceasing, our gratitude for your efforts in the path of service to the Beloved of the World profound.

This will be a year of special spiritual potency. At its midpoint, the Bahá'í world will, with great festivity, commemorate the second of the two bicentenaries we have had the unique privilege of celebrating in the course of this historic Five Year Plan. With the 200th anniversary of the Blessed Báb's Birth now just six months away, it is fitting that we call to mind guidance from the Universal House of Justice received in its message of June 1 last year. Noting the two-year interval between the two bicentenaries, the Supreme Body advised that:

Preparations for the bicentenary of the Birth of the Báb should be undertaken with a recognition that the festivities marking this anniversary have a special context. They will occur just two years after the bicentenary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, and the Báb was of course the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh. Before and after the first bicentenary, the believers engaged family, friends, and acquaintances of all kinds in conversations about the life and teachings of the Blessed Beauty, and the conversations which occur in connection with the upcoming anniversary will in many ways be an extension of these, centering on both of the Faith's Twin Founders. For the greatness of this Day, this "matchless Day" extolled by Bahá'u'lláh, is evident from the fact that its advent was announced by two divine Manifestations, Whose Birthdays are "accounted as one in the sight of God."

To aid your continuing preparations for this sacred event, the Bicentenary Resources website (at www.bahai.us/bicentenary-resources), launched two years ago in advance of the first bicentenary, has been brought up to date with new guidance and the addition of resources pertaining to the Birth of the Báb. The site brings together in one place relevant guidance from the Universal House of Justice, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to media and arts resources. Throughout the spring and summer, it will be regularly updated with stories from communities with creative plans to commemorate this historic occasion in ways that reinforce and advance community-building efforts underway in localities everywhere. We invite you to submit your plans and ideas through the Resource site or by emailing us (at bicentenary@bahai.us). On the site, you can also subscribe to receive alerts when new material is posted.

We are also delighted to share with you a compilation on prayer and the devotional life, specially prepared at the request of the Universal House of Justice. In a letter introducing the compilation to all National Spiritual Assemblies, the Supreme Body noted the many signs of the enrichment of the devotional life of the community apparent throughout the Bahá'í world. The House of Justice expressed its hope the compilation would "add further

stimulus to this signal development” and “help the friends take full advantage of the period of special potency during which the bicentennial anniversaries of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb are commemorated,” and that it would also “be of assistance to individuals, families, and communities as they strive to evoke the spirit of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the creation of occasions where any soul may inhale the divine fragrances, experience the elevating power of prayer, and be drawn together with others in fellowship and common cause.”

The compilation will be available from the Bahá'í Distribution Service as a 54-page bound book within a few days; meanwhile it can be downloaded [by accessing this link](#).

May the year ahead bring new light and joy to all whose hearts are afire with love for the Promised One Whose coming was heralded by the Báb. May all whose souls are receptive be given the chance to hear of His advent and be attracted to His Word. May all who join together to create a new world founded on His teachings be blessed and confirmed.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

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Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary