

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

April 7, 2020

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

Dearly loved Friends,

Abundant reports are reaching us telling the story of the creativity and courage with which, in every part of the country, you are responding to the coronavirus pandemic despite its continued spread. Mindful of the necessary restrictions in place, careful of your own health and that of others, you are nevertheless finding ways to reach out—not only to your fellow believers, but to neighbors and fellow citizens alike—to provide personal connection, spiritual comfort, and whatever practical assistance you can. Core activities are being pursued with unabated energy and enthusiasm, demonstrating the strength and effectiveness of the capacities to attend to the needs of our communities we have with patience and perseverance been building for decades. Perhaps the many hardships and privations now being faced throughout the world, difficult and painful as they are, will awaken humanity to a greater realization of its fundamental oneness, and to the need we all have to form bonds of love and service with others.

Recognized public health authorities are projecting that, in the coming weeks, the spread of the pandemic may reach a high point. We hope that on the occasion of this Feast, and in the ensuing days, we will all offer special prayers for the protection and well being of those who are bravely serving on the front lines in the fight against the virus. We are thinking especially of those engaged in the provision of healthcare, but also of those who render other essential services, often at personal risk—such as the people who ensure us all a continuing supply of food and those who maintain utilities and other basic necessities of life. We should further pray for teachers and for those who, in response to this unprecedented situation, are providing their vital services through inventive adaptations. Let us also pray for the mitigation of the pandemic's severity and for the safety and health of those at greatest risk—the elderly, the infirm, the poor, and the homeless.

Finally, let us all remember the connection between prayer and service. Of all the many forms of assistance we might give at such a time to our dismayed sisters and brothers across the land, nothing could be more important than offering them hope, by doing all in our power to share with them the healing message of Bahá'u'lláh. As the beloved Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, advises:

O ye friends of God! True friends are even as skilled physicians, and the Teachings of God are as healing balm, a medicine for the conscience of man. They clear the head, so that a man can breathe them in and delight in their sweet fragrance. They waken those who sleep. They bring awareness to the unheeding, and a portion to the outcast, and to the hopeless, hope.

If in this day a soul shall act according to the precepts and the counsels of God, he will serve as a divine physician to mankind, and like the trump of Isráfil, he will call the dead of this contingent world to life; for the confirmations of the Abhá Realm are never interrupted, and such a virtuous soul hath, to befriend him, the unfailing help of the Company on high. Thus shall a sorry gnat become an eagle in the fullness of his strength, and a feeble sparrow change to a royal falcon in the heights of ancient glory.

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Wherefore, look not on the degree of your capacity, ask not if you are worthy of the task: rest ye your hopes on the help and loving-kindness, the favors and bestowals of Bahá'u'lláh—may my soul be offered up for His friends! Urge on the steed of high endeavor over the field of sacrifice, and carry away from this wide arena the prize of divine grace.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kenneth E. Bowers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "K".

Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary