

Regional Bahá'í Council of the State of California

7 Kalimát 174

July 18, 2017

To: Spiritual Assemblies and Registered Groups in the State of California

Dearly loved coworkers in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh,

As we approach the glorious celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh there is a new sense of joy and eagerness in the Bahá'í community throughout the State. The friends, whether during the consultations of Local Spiritual Assemblies or indeed during the celebrations of Nineteen Day Feasts and other occasions, are sharing their preparations, their thoughts and plans with each other. In particular the Assemblies in communities large and small have been wondering what can they do to befittingly assist their community members and their circles of friends, families, neighbors, co-workers and acquaintances to celebrate the 200th birthday of Bahá'u'lláh with a special emphasis on the theme of the unity of humanity. The most inspiring element of these consultations revolves around a sound understanding of the letter of May 18, 2016 of the Universal House of Justice explaining the nature and purpose of these celebrations.

The celebrations start at sunset on the evening of Friday October 20th and conclude at sunset on Sunday 22nd October providing ample opportunity for multiple activities and gatherings at neighborhood and local levels. Far from being isolated events, these celebrations are part of the overall scheme of the Five Year Plan. Our aim is to “reach out to the widest possible cross-section of society”, men, women, and children, including people of all ethnicities and backgrounds, high and low alike. As we strike up meaningful conversations and form lasting friendships, all are invited to celebrate with us. In particular the families whose children are in Bahá'í classes, whose junior youth participate in spiritual empowerment program, whose youth and adults attend study circles, and all those who come to devotionals are encouraged and assisted to invite their own friends and acquaintances to these Festivals. In this way many more people will be able to participate, well beyond those who are known directly by the believers. What plans have your Assembly made in this regard? What strategies and actions have been effective in reaching out to larger numbers? We would love to hear from you so we can all share and learn together.

Many Assemblies and friends are also thinking about the effects these celebrations will have in November, and the months beyond, on the multiplication of core activities, with increased participation, as well as on firesides, and other occasions, many imbued with artistic endeavors, incorporating the Words of God in songs, skits, and other uplifting forms. Since the House of Justice has written “the focus of activity for the bicentenaries is to be at the local level” many communities are hosting their own celebrations in multiple locations, large and small, making them accessible to the invitees, connecting them with community building efforts, even if a larger gathering may also exist in nearby localities. If your Assembly has taken assessment of current levels of activities and participants, and have drawn up plans to increase these, please also include these in your response back to the Council.

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Efforts to teach the Faith are increasing in multiple ways. Some invite their acquaintances to participate in core activities and firesides. Others teach the Faith more directly, speaking with ease about the person of Bahá'u'lláh, as they elaborate on the Central Figure of these celebrations. Still others find creative ways to introduce their listeners to the myriad opportunities for worship and meaningful service both individually and collectively. As the cluster agencies announce the pattern of the cluster activities, these teaching efforts can find a harmonious place within it, and the Assemblies are also able to encourage and support the efforts of all the members of their community, young and old, veteran or newly familiar with the Faith. Auxiliary Board members and their assistants also assist the friends to better appreciate the principles that animate these celebrations, and “kindle a spirit of faithful endeavor” in the friends everywhere. If you have consulted with them on this topic, please share the outcomes in your reply.

Your thoughts and deliberations will prepare the friends not only for these celebrations in October, and will lay the foundations for the subsequent celebrations in two years, or 8 cycles, after that, helping cement the ongoing process of building a civilization envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh that will be a fitting response to the confusion and chaos of the present defective World Order. We eagerly look forward to whatever you may wish to share with us, including photographs, showing your journey in this Plan. You are always in our prayers and supplications, that your noble undertakings may be blessed and confirmed.

With loving Bahá'í greetings



Farzin Aghdasi
Secretary
Regional Bahá'í Council of the State of California