

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

July 31, 2018

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

Dearly loved Friends,

In January of this year, we published the third in a series of letters exploring the situation in our country—especially the continuing struggle against racial injustice—and the nature of our response as Bahá'ís. These three letters aimed at “understanding our teaching work and the quest for justice as interrelated elements of a single all-encompassing process set in motion by the Blessed Beauty, to be realized through our prosecution of the successive Plans formulated by the Universal House of Justice.”

In our message for the Feast of Kalimát, we joyfully shared stories of a handful of the hundreds who have arisen to serve as homefront pioneers in the course of the current Plan, most having elected to serve among populations of historic significance—such as American Indians and African Americans—or among those who have recently arrived on our shores. These intrepid souls have, in addition to an abiding faith in Bahá'u'lláh, taken along with them resources and understandings that will increasingly empower the noble peoples they have chosen to befriend to take full charge of their own spiritual advancement and to make their destined contributions to the creation of an all-embracing, unifying world order based on principles of divine justice.

We have observed with pleasure that an increasing number of Bahá'ís are becoming conscious of the connection between social justice and their efforts to further the Plan. In a recently conducted survey, the friends reported on some 2,000 efforts with an explicit bearing on racial unity. These ranged from work with children and junior youth, to hosting devotional gatherings centered on the theme, to participation in varying forms of social action, to engagement with others in discussions about race. We have no doubt, moreover, that there are many more such activities that were not reported.

These friends, as might be expected, manifest great differences in experience, and the impact of their efforts as a result varies widely. Even if this were not the case, we are simply too few in numbers at present to effect a transformation national in scope. But our community's potential for focused effort remains far from having been fully tapped. The enthusiasm of many believers for such service and their readiness to engage in such a challenging and vitally important task in a manner coherent with the framework for action presents us with an unparalleled opportunity to learn how to become more and more effective at it in the years ahead.

Willingness to learn is fundamental to our progress. As the Universal House of Justice reminded us in a letter addressed to an individual believer:

Among the important lessons garnered over the past two decades is that, by focusing on insights derived from the most advanced and successful activities rather than by focusing on shortcomings and weaknesses, the community can come to understand what constitutes effective action and learn to disseminate the knowledge gained.

Another lesson is how to approach the development of human resources in a manner that can efficiently multiply efforts and empower those who were previously left on

the margins, or were otherwise unengaged, to become protagonists of a process of community building and social change. . . . Consider, for example, the development of the junior youth spiritual empowerment program. Years ago, it was a mere concept; today it reaches hundreds of thousands and is having a profound impact on the villages, neighborhoods, islands, and schools where it is being vigorously implemented. This capacity for social transformation, increasingly being realized in the most advanced clusters, encompasses not just the work of community building but also the engagement of the believers, both in the discourses of society in all accessible social spaces as well as in projects of social and economic development.

As the Supreme Body emphasized in its counsel to that same individual, the American Bahá'í community is committed to "a path of systematic action and learning, involving community building, social action, and participation in the discourses of society, from which the community will never withdraw until the problems of race are completely resolved, no matter how long and difficult the path may be."

We look forward with eager anticipation to the discoveries and wondrous learning your continuing efforts to "*safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men*" will yield. Be assured of our warm and abiding love and unceasing prayers for your guidance, confirmation, and great success.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

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



Kenneth E. Bowers  
Secretary