

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

January 17, 2021

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

Dearly loved Friends,

Recent disturbing events in our nation's capital have captured the attention of people across the globe. In a time of escalating pandemic, dangerous political division, and violent social unrest, a new year has begun in an atmosphere clouded by profound anxiety and uncertainty about the future. We, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the United States, wholeheartedly add our ardent prayers for divine assistance in these troubled times to those of our fellow citizens, and earnestly join forces with people of good will everywhere in efforts to heal the country's wounds.

We cannot help but call to mind, in a year that marks the centenary of His passing from this life, the beloved Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's, clear assessment of the spiritual health of America, and His unequivocal forecast of the difficulties the country would inevitably suffer as a consequence of its rampant materialism, its moral decay, and—not least—its corrosive and deeply ingrained racial prejudice. Nor did He fail to warn members of the community of the Greatest Name of the severe tests they themselves would face in their twofold endeavor to spiritually transform their own lives and the life of society. Above all was His call upon us to apply to the nation's ills the remedy that can only be found in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. In a letter written on his behalf, Shoghi Effendi counsels us:

And yet, how often we seem to forget the clear and repeated warnings of our beloved Master, who, in particular during the concluding years of His Mission on earth, laid stress on the "severe mental tests" that would inevitably sweep over His loved ones of the West—tests that would purge, purify and prepare them for their noble mission in life. . . .

Ours then is the duty and privilege to labor, by day and by night, amidst the storm and stress of these troublous days, that we may quicken the zeal of our fellow-men, rekindle their hopes, stimulate their interest, open their eyes to the true Faith of God and enlist their active support in the carrying out of our common task for the peace and regeneration of the world.

In another letter, written on behalf of the beloved Guardian to this National Spiritual Assembly, we are reminded of our particular duty as American believers:

The Bahá'ís are the leaven of God, which must leaven the lump of their nation. In direct ratio to their success will be the protection vouchsafed, not only to them but to their country. These are the immutable laws of God, from which there is no escape: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."

They cannot be the chosen people of God—the ones who have received the bounty of accepting Him in His Day, the recipients of the Master's Divine Plan—and do nothing about it. The obligation to teach is the obligation of every

Bahá'í, and particularly, the obligations of the American Bahá'ís towards humanity are great and inescapable. To the degree to which they discharge them will they be blessed and protected, happy and satisfied.

It is clear from these and countless other statements in our Faith's authoritative guidance that—if we are truly concerned about the welfare of humanity, if our passion for justice is sincere, and if our belief in the power of Bahá'u'lláh to transform the world is genuine—the only course of action is unremitting, sacrificial, and united effort to further His Cause.

As sudden and unexpected as this recent series of events might seem, none who are familiar with the warning words of the Master and the Guardian can be completely surprised by them. In them, we can see evidences of the forces set in motion by the Hand of Bahá'u'lláh Himself to prepare humanity for the acceptance of His Revelation.

Addressing the body of believers in North America in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes:

The full measure of your success is as yet unrevealed, its significance still unapprehended. Erelong ye will, with your own eyes, witness how brilliantly every one of you, even as a shining star, will radiate, in the firmament of your country the light of divine Guidance.

And, finally, our beloved Shoghi Effendi addresses us in these stirring words:

The champion builders of Bahá'u'lláh's rising World Order must scale nobler heights of heroism as humanity plunges into greater depths of despair, degradation, dissension and distress. Let them forge ahead into the future serenely confident that the hour of their mightiest exertions and the supreme opportunity for their greatest exploits must coincide with the apocalyptic upheaval marking the lowest ebb in mankind's fast-declining fortunes.

Our confidence in the capacity of this abundantly blessed Bahá'í community to rise to the challenges of the hour is boundless, as is our assurance you will achieve victories in the coming year that will bring great joy to the heart of the beloved Master. Be assured of our abiding love and constant prayers on your behalf.

With deepest Bahá'í love,

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



Kenneth E. Bowers  
Secretary