

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

June 17, 2021

To the participants of the
ARISE Conference

Dearly loved Friends,

A full year has passed since you last assembled to explore the special role that people of African descent, compared by the Blessed Beauty to the “pupil of the eye,” are destined to play in advancing the divine civilization that is the fulfillment of God’s ancient covenant with humanity. You have come together for a time of healing, through music, stories, memories, and conversation—all inspired by the Word of God for today—to uplift your souls and to fortify your hearts in the face of the forces of prejudice and injustice that continually assail you. In the coming days, you will derive inspiration and strength from each other as you reflect on what you are learning and achieving in your services to the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh. And above all, you will emerge with high resolve and fresh insights that illuminate your path forward as you go on to make your indispensable contributions to the building of His new world order.

It is astonishing to think what has happened in the world since your last gathering! You are undoubtedly aware of the assessment presented to us by the Universal House of Justice in its magnificent Ridván message. Tragically, the forces of materialism, factionalism, and racism continue to wreak havoc in society. Yet, by contrast, the community of the Most Great Name, rapidly gaining in strength, finds itself possessed of wondrous new capacities. Taken together, these realities surely indicate that we are now entering a critical period in the life of humanity, one with profound implications for every sincere and consecrated follower of Bahá’u’lláh. Over the coming years, we can—if we are true to our sacred mission—build on the foundation now well established to welcome and nurture multitudes of devoted and capable souls into the embrace of the Cause.

It was with these thoughts in mind that your National Spiritual Assembly published its letter of June 3 to the American Bahá’í community, in which there was a particular call to the African American and Indigenous friends to arise to take your rightful place at the vanguard of the teaching work. We know in our hearts that your services, as stated in that letter, “will be instrumental to the growth and development of a truly just, inclusive and unified society in this land.” Your spiritual insights will be critical in assisting us all to embody and fulfill the admonition of our beloved House of Justice in its message of July 22 last year:

Ultimately, the power to transform the world is effected by love, love originating from the relationship with the divine, love ablaze among members of a community, love extended without restriction to every human being... You are channels for this divine love; let it flow through you to all who cross your path. Infuse it into every neighborhood and social space in which you move to build capacity to canalize the society-building power of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation. There can be no rest until the destined outcome is achieved.

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As you convene in these special days, our deepest affection, profound gratitude, and unwavering confidence surround and support you. Each one of you is a jewel, infinitely precious and brilliant. We ardently pray that our Almighty Father will protect, guide, and confirm you such that your light will become more beautiful and powerful with every passing day.

With warmest Bahá'í love,

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