

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

June 19, 2024

To the friends gathered for the
Pupil of the Eye Juneteenth event

Dearly loved Friends,

With warmth and affection, we are delighted to greet you as you gather virtually on this day of particular historical significance. Well known to you all, Juneteenth holds special meaning: the acknowledgment that none could truly be free in our country until all were free. Of course, we know that the highest expression of our freedom is to submit to the Will of God and to dedicate oneself to the service of mankind and the realization of the oneness of humanity. How fitting, then, that you have come together with joyful hearts and resolute purpose to reflect on past initiatives and to look ahead to the contributions that can be made to the advancement of the cause of oneness.

As you enjoy the presentations of speakers this evening and opportunities to consult together, we hope you will be inspired to continue the vital work of community building in the places where you reside—particularly as your contributions are critical in assisting all of us to achieve the goal of releasing the society-building power of the Faith for the transformation of our country. As you reflect on these efforts, we call to mind the clear path laid out for us by our beloved Universal House of Justice:

The principles and exhortations that guide your steps are well known to you from the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. The concepts and approaches for social transformation developed in the current series of Plans that can be utilized to promote race unity in the context of community building, social action, and involvement in the discourses of society have been set out in our messages. Every believer, as the promulgator of Bahá’u’lláh’s central principle of the oneness of humanity, should deeply meditate upon it and weigh its demanding implications for the profound alteration of thought and action required at this time. “The American Bahá’í Community, the leaven destined to leaven the whole,” the Guardian admonished, cannot hope “to either escape the trials with which this nation is confronted, nor claim to be wholly immune from the evils that stain its character.” “A tremendous effort is required by both races if their outlook, their manners, and conduct are to reflect, in this darkened age, the spirit and teachings of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh,” he also stated. “Let neither think that the solution of so vast a problem is a matter that exclusively concerns the other. Let neither think that such a problem can either easily or immediately be resolved.” “Each one should endeavor to develop and assist the other toward mutual advancement,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained. “Love and unity will be fostered between you, thereby bringing about the oneness of mankind.”

As you are well aware, the issues elucidated above are of deep importance to your National Spiritual Assembly, which, in repeated communications to the friends and the institutions in this country, has sought to explore the implications of our historic mission and to embark upon a sustained and systematic process of learning. An important step it recently took in this regard was the establishment in January of this year of a national Race Unity Desk, about which you will be learning more over the course of your gathering. We have also taken steps to help imbue other settings with both the intellectual and spiritual qualities necessary for open and meaningful reflection in light of the guidance of the House of Justice. An example of this is the most recent Bahá'í National Convention, which featured the issue of race as the very first thematic topic of consultation and resulted in a memorable, loving, and helpful exchange on the part of the assembled delegates. No doubt you will also have an opportunity to hear about this from some of those who were present.

To this we add our confidence in the victories that you will certainly achieve as you serve together with your fellow believers throughout the country. You have been created by Him to be the “pupil of the eye” —to receive and to spread His light. You have been chosen by Him at a moment of great peril, as well as of great opportunity. You have been invested with the strength, nobility, and fortitude required to render unique contributions to the creation of a divine civilization. We ardently supplicate the Beloved of the worlds to bless and guide you in fulfilling this sacred mission.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,



Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary