

## **Excerpts from messages of the Universal House of Justice concerning the bicentenary celebrations**

### **From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, 18 May 2016:**

... these Holy Days should be viewed as special opportunities for the friends to reach out to the widest possible cross-section of society and to all those with whom they share a connection—whether through a family tie or common interest, an occupation or field of study, neighbourly relations or merely chance acquaintance—so that all may rejoice in the appearance, exactly two hundred years before, of One Who was to be the Bearer of a new Message for humankind.

The locus of activity for the bicentenaries is to be at the local level. The House of Justice anticipates that in countless places across the world, both rural settings and urban centres, the friends will find creative ways to honour the Twin Manifestations Whose lives and sacred missions will be recalled on Their anniversaries. ... the most distinguishing feature of these bicentenaries will be a tremendous flourishing of activity by Bahá'ís and their friends in local communities. ...

At the heart of these festivities must be a concerted effort to convey a sense of what it means for humanity that these two Luminaries rose successively above the horizon of the world. Of course, this will take different forms in different contexts, extending to a myriad artistic and cultural expressions, including songs, audio-visual presentations, publications and books. Such initiatives, coupled with widespread celebrations that are both uplifting and reverent, are also sure to spark the curiosity and wonder of many who may as yet be unfamiliar with the names of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. However, the real transformative power of the Faith is likely to be perceived more readily still if people experience how worship and meaningful service are being woven into the fabric of the lives of Bahá'ís everywhere. Indeed, from the community-building activities of the Five Year Plan emerges a pattern of collective life within which anyone can discern the vivifying influence of the divine teachings brought by God's Manifestations. Each bicentenary will doubtless kindle a spirit of faithful endeavour that will permeate all the noble undertakings of the friends.

### **From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, 31 October 2017:**

... We urge you to see in each person who responded to your invitation a potential protagonist in the community-building process. Consider how conditions may be created that would enable many to walk this path together. Connected to the transformative power of the Revelation, every soul can draw closer to Bahá'u'lláh, grow in capacity, find joy in service, and learn to assist others. ...

### **2018 Ridván Message to the Bahá'ís of the World:**

... This is a period in which to recall the extraordinary heroism of the Martyr-Herald of our Faith, Whose dramatic ministry thrust humanity into a new era of history. Though separated from our own time by two centuries, the society in which the Báb appeared resembles the present-day world for the sense of oppression and for the longing of so many to find answers to slake the soul's thirst to know. In considering how this two-hundred-year anniversary might befittingly be marked, we recognize

that these festivities will have a special character of their own. Nevertheless, we anticipate a flourishing of activity no less rich and no less inclusive than that which accompanied the bicentenary just passed. It is an occasion to which every community, every household, every heart will undoubtedly look forward with eager expectation.

The months ahead will also be a time for calling to mind the lives of the Báb's intrepid followers—heroines and heroes whose faith was expressed in matchless, sacrificial acts that will forever adorn the annals of the Cause. Their qualities of fearlessness, consecration, and detachment from all save God impress themselves upon everyone who learns of their ventures. How striking, too, is the young age at which so many of those lionhearts made their indelible mark on history. During the coming period, may their example give courage to the entire company of the faithful—not least to the youth, who are once more summoned to the vanguard of a movement aimed at nothing less than the transformation of the world.

This, then, is our bright, bright hope. In the six cycles that lie between this Ridván and the next bicentenary—indeed, throughout the remaining three years of the current Plan—let the same all-consuming, all-surpassing love that spurred the Báb's disciples to the diffusion of the divine light inspire you to great deeds. ...

### **2019 Ridván Message to the Bahá'ís of the World:**

The prospects for advancing this spiritual enterprise are made the more thrilling by the approach of the bicentenary of the Birth of the Báb. Like the bicentenary that preceded it, this anniversary is a moment incalculably precious. ... The measure of what might be possible in the coming two cycles is known to all from the experience of the bicentenary two years ago, and all that was learned on that occasion must be channelled into the plans for the Twin Holy Birthdays this year. As the two-hundred-year anniversary draws near, we will offer frequent supplications on your behalf in the Sacred Shrines, praying that your efforts to befittingly honour the Báb will succeed in advancing the Cause He foretold.