

Bicentennial Celebrations

Please reflect on the following quotations from the 1 June 2018 letter from our beloved Universal House of Justice. We hope these selections and questions inspire lively consultation about the upcoming celebration!
Warmest love from the Townsville Bicentenary taskforce

The tremendous stimulus given to the work of the Five Year Plan by the celebration of the bicentenary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh is apparent in all parts of the world. Thoughts are naturally turning to the two hundredth anniversary of the Birth of the Báb and what must be accomplished before this second bicentenary, so that "every seed so lovingly sown at the first" may be "nurtured patiently towards fruition".

1. Who are the friends who attended the first Bicentennial and what plans are underway to continue nurturing these friends to attend the next?

...the locus of activity was to be at the local level. It also described the eight cycles between the two anniversaries as the period during which the greatest share of the effort needed to fulfil the objectives of the Five Year Plan would be required. This, therefore, must be the main focus of the believers in their clusters."

1. In how many localities/homes can the Bicentennial be celebrated in your sector?
2. How will these celebrations be linked with the core activities of the Five Year Plan?
3. How can we intensify our existing efforts towards activities of the Five Year Plan?

Preparations for the bicentenary of the Birth of the Báb should be undertaken with a recognition that the festivities marking this anniversary have a special context. They will occur just two years after the bicentenary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, and the Báb was of course the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh. Before and after the first bicentenary, the believers engaged family, friends, and acquaintances of all kinds in conversations about the life and teachings of the Blessed Beauty, and the conversations which occur in connection with the upcoming anniversary will in many ways be an extension of these, centring on both of the Faith's Twin Founders. For the greatness of this Day, this "matchless Day" extolled by Bahá'u'lláh, is evident from the fact that its advent was announced by two divine Manifestations, whose Birthdays are "accounted as one in the sight of God". In Himself, and in the break from the prevailing order which His Revelation brought about, the sacred figure of the Báb was an answer to the prayers and entreaties of the generations that awaited the One foretold by all the Holy Scriptures. With His coming, the eternal Faith of God was renewed and revitalized with extraordinary swiftness. Yet, in the very title He chose for Himself, He signalled that He was the portal to a superior Revelation of which, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, "He considered Himself to be the humble Precursor." The endeavours of the Bahá'ís throughout the world to labour for the promotion of the Cause call to mind the exhortation of the Báb explicitly set down in the Bayan: "Well is it with him who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and rendereth thanks unto his Lord."

1. How familiar and confident do we feel to share about the person of the Bab and Baha'u'llah to our friends, neighbours and colleagues?
2. What could help build your confidence and capacity to share about the Bab and Baha'u'llah?
3. What support, skills or resources will assist you in your goals and efforts?

In this year's Riqdán message, the House of Justice referred to the heroism of the Báb and His followers, the stirring accounts of whose lives are sure to be revisited and retold in the coming months. In keeping with the overall approach to this bicentenary, it will be important to reflect on the purpose of calling to mind these remarkable narratives, which possess a merit far beyond an exploration of history. They enable the friends, who are occupied with responding to the needs of the Cause in this day, to draw inspiration and courage from the sacrifices of the dawn-breakers. They assist the company of believers to realize that, by consecrating themselves to the acts of service required in this age, they are emulating the noble qualities of their spiritual forebears.

1. In what ways does reflecting on these stories helps us realise that by consecrating ourselves to the acts of service required in this age, we are emulating the noble qualities of our spiritual forebears?
2. How might the use of artistic expression enhance the celebrations?
3. If you could to attend a workshop to assist in your Bicentennial preparation, what would like it to include?

Please save the following dates 27th of July and 7th of September 2019 at 9am-12pm for gatherings focused on preparing for the Bicentenary and twin Holy Day Celebrations.