



SARAWAK BAHÁ'Í NEWSLETTER

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MESSAGE FROM THE SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF SARAWAK

To the Bahá'ís of Sarawak

Dearly loved Friends,

Abdu'l-Bahá, the Master, in *Foundations of World Unity*, said:

“The greatest bounties of God in this phenomenal world are His Manifestations. This is the greatest postulate. These Manifestations are the Suns of Reality. For it is through the Manifestation that the reality becomes known and established for man.”

In this Feast of Asma, which means “Names” in Arabic, let us note that, throughout the ages, these Manifestations of God had appeared in different names. It is a fundamental Bahá'í belief that Bahá'u'lláh is the latest one and that, despite such differences in names, these Manifestations are, as attested by Bahá'u'lláh, “without exception, the bearers of His names, and the embodiments of His attributes.” In *The Book of Certitude*, Bahá'u'lláh explained:

“Consider the sun. Were it to say now, “I am the sun of yesterday,” it would speak the truth. And should it, bearing the sequence of time in mind, claim to be other than that sun, it still would speak the truth. In like manner, if it be said that all the days are but one and the same, it is correct and true. And if it be said, with respect to their particular names and designations, that they differ, that again is true. For though they are the same, yet one doth recognize in each a separate designation, a specific attribute, a particular character.”

We are sure that the friends would, guided by the above explanation, know the answer as to “*why the everlasting Beauty should have, at sundry times, called Himself by different names and titles.*”

In this feast, we would also like to share with the friends on the requisite of service to the Faith. As we embark on achieving the goals set forth in the current 5 Year Plan, which was launched by the Supreme Body last Ridvan, many friends are being called to serve in various capacities. Whether serving on full time basis or otherwise, as coordinators, tutors, assistants, etc, the motivating factor that drives each and everyone of us should be nothing but the word “SACRIFICE”.

It is the “fuel” that moves the people of Bahá. It is what the Báb did in choosing the path of martyrdom over a normal life as a merchant. It is what the Blessed Beauty did in choosing a life of suffering over as a prestigious one as a government minister. It is what the Master did in choosing the path of servitude over a worldly life. It is what the Guardian did in choosing a life of total service to the Cause of God over leisure pursuits.

Yes, it is the SACRIFICE of all those valiant and dedicated followers of Bahá'u'lláh, either serving in the World Centre, or living as pioneers in far flung places, or serving as coordinators, tutors, junior

youth animators, children's class teachers, etc in their respective localities that help in spreading our Faith's healing Message, the divinely-given remedy for the ills presently afflicting humanity, for the betterment of the world.

Therefore, the allowance or stipend received in the field of service should be taken in the right spirit of treating it as a means to remove financial obstacles in the path of service and not as an income per se. An element of sacrifice must be there for one to serve effectively.

In this regard, we also seek the sacrifice of those not able to serve directly to deputize someone on their behalf by contributing to the Deputization Fund.

On that note, we wish you all a happy feast.

With loving greetings,
Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sarawak

The purpose of core activities

Excerpt from a talk by a member of the Universal House of Justice, Dr. Payman Mohajer

In the course of consultations, Dr. Mohajer posed a thought-provoking question to the participants "What is the purpose of our core activities?"

Dr. Mohajer then went on to share an explanation, by giving the example of a glass. He said that while it is not inaccurate to say that the glass is transparent, it is evident that transparency is not the purpose of the glass. Transparency is one of the attributes of the glass, but its purpose is to hold liquid. Similarly, one of the attributes of our core activities is that they become portals of entry by troops or instruments for teaching—but that is not their purpose. Dr. Mohajer stressed that the purpose of our core activities is to enable us to serve society and help ***"translate that which hath been written into reality and action"***.

How many of us have looked at core activities as a way of building an ever advancing civilization, of creating a new race of men, as a way for the betterment of society? Perhaps for a lot of us, core activities are simply about teaching the Faith and getting new declarations. But the primary purpose of our core activities is to raise our capacity to serve society, such that these activities become instruments for developing communities, and not merely instruments for teaching the Faith.

Dr. Mohajer encouraged the participants present at the seminar to re-look at the Ruhi Institute books from 1—7 with the eye of society and to reflect on how the concepts embedded in them could be used for social action and not just for the sake of expansion and consolidation. For instance, the very first quotation in Ruhi Book 1 talks about the betterment of the world through pure and goodly deeds. Did we ever think about `Abdu'l-Baha's quotation "Let your hearts burn with loving-kindness for all who may cross your path" as applicable to the removal of prejudice? Do we remind ourselves that the reason for becoming more truthful is to contribute as much to a better society as it is for the sake of our own spiritual progress? It is clear that we need to imbue participants engaged in our core activities with a vision of social transformation as well as personal transformation.

Now if someone were to ask us whether the purpose of our inviting them to join study circles is to make them Baha'is, we can confidently say "no" and tell them that the purpose of our core activities is to assist in the transformation and betterment of society.