



# SARAWAK BAHÁ'Í NEWSLETTER

BE 168 Qawl / Speech

Issue 12

23 November 2011

## Message from the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sarawak

To the Baha'is of Sarawak

Dearly loved Friends,

As we celebrate this Nineteen Day Feast of Qawl, which means Speech in Arabic, two Special Days in our Baha'i calendar, both related to Abdu'l-Baha, are just days away. These are, as mentioned in our previous message to the friends, the Day of the Covenant on 26 November and the Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha on 28 November.

Abdul-Baha, the Master, was born on 23 May 1844, the midnight of the same evening that the Bab revealed His Mission to the young Mulla Husayn, the first person to believe in Him. Abdu'l-Baha told the Baha'is that this day was not, under any circumstances, to be celebrated as His day of birth because it was the day of the Declaration of the Bab, exclusively associated with the Bab. But as the Baha'is begged for a day to be celebrated as His, Abdu'l-Baha gave them 26 November, to be observed as the day of the appointment of the Center of the Covenant. This day came to be known as the Day of the Covenant. In a special document which He designated as "the Book of My Covenant", Bahá'u'lláh appointed Abdu'l-Baha as His Successor and the Center of His Covenant. It is this Covenant that has conserved the oneness of the Baha'i world. Without such a Covenant, "differences like unto a most great tempest" would have encompassed our Faith and broken it into many different and diverse sects.

Let us take to heart the following affirmations by Abdu'l-Baha on the greatness of the Covenant :

"So firm and mighty is this Covenant that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like."

"It is indubitably clear that the pivot of the oneness of

mankind is nothing else but the power of the Covenant."

As the friends celebrate the Day of the Covenant, do bear in mind the following passage from the Guardian's writing on the fate of those who opposed the Covenant:

"As for those enemies who have sedulously sought to extinguish the light of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, the condign punishment they have been made to suffer is no less conspicuous than the doom which overtook those who, in an earlier period, had so basely endeavored to crush the hopes of a rising Faith and destroy its foundations."

The Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant passed away in the early hours of 28 November, 1921. The passing of Abdu'l-Baha marked the end of "the Heroic, the Apostolic Age" of the Baha'i Faith, whose inception had synchronized with His birth. His passing also marked the inception of its "Formative Age".

Many events marked the closing stage of Abdu'l-Baha's ministry which, as worded by the Guardian, "sealed the triumph of the Heroic Age of the Baha'i Dispensation, and which will go down in history as one of the most glorious and fruitful periods of the first Baha'i century."

As the friends commemorate the Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha on 28 November and recalled the many momentous events of the Master, we urge them to remember it as the passing of "One Whose mission", as attested by the Guardian, "may be regarded as the link binding the Age in which the seed of the newborn Message had been incubating and those which are destined to witness its afflorescence and ultimate fruition."

Let the friends also call to remembrance His position as attested by the Guardian in the following passage: "He is, and should for all time be regarded, first and foremost, as the Center and the Pivot of Bahá'u'lláh's

peerless and all-enfolding Covenant, His most exalted handiwork, the stainless Mirror of His light, the perfect Exemplar of His teachings, the unerring Interpreter of His Word, the embodiment of every Baha'i ideal, the incarnation of every Baha'i virtue, the Most Mighty Branch sprung forth from the Ancient Root, the Limb of the Law of God, the Being 'round Whom all names revolve', the Mainspring of the Oneness of Humanity, the Ensign of the Most Great Peace, the Moon of the Central Orb of this most holy Dispensation – styles and titles that are implicit and find their truest, their highest and fairest expression in the magic name Abdu'l-Baha. ”

Have a spiritually uplifting Nineteen Day Feast.

With loving greetings,  
Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Sarawak

### Auxiliary Board Members for 2011-2016 Term

We would like to congratulate the newly appointed Auxiliary Board Members for Sarawak effective 26 November 2011 and ending 25 November 2016. They are:

Dr. Shehab Phung	Protection	Southern Region
Mr. Kalong ak Katik	Propagation	Southern Region
Ms. Geriti ak Katik	Propagation	Central Region
Miss Kong Ing	Protection	Central Region
Miss Leandra Alfred	Protection	Northern Region
Mr. Mail ak Ingkai	Propagation	Northern Region

We are confident that these distinguished believers will arise and dedicate themselves to discharge the high duties assigned to them, with steadfastness and unwavering faith.

### Huqu'qu'llah representative

Ms. Marilyn Madu is now the receipting representative for Huqu'qu'llah for Southern Sarawak. Dr. John Fozdar have asked to retire when his term expires this November. Mr. Tay Yang Huang had also asked to be relieved as representative of Huqu'qu'llah for Sarawak.

### Congratulatory message

We would like to congratulate our dear friend, Mr. Sulang Benta and his wife, Mdm Julianah Ebin as proud parents of their first child, a bubbly baby girl, Martha Izzalya.



### Course on Baha'i Marriage Laws

A course of Baha'i marriage laws was held in Kampung Belimbing Besi, Sebuyau on 4-6 November 2011. It was organized with the aim of increasing the awareness of the parties involved and the relevant Baha'i institutions regarding the importance of abiding by the revealed laws on marriage.

Topics covered during the two-day course include "Preparation by the prospective bride and groom", "Role of the Local Spiritual Assemblies in sanctioning the marriage", and the "Role of the Assistant Registrar of Marriage".

The participants were mainly members of the Local Spiritual Assemblies of the host community, Kampung Bulan, Sungai Nibong, Sungai Pedada, Sampun and members of the Area Growth Committee and parents.

### Conference in Sibü

The Sibü Cluster conference was successfully held on the 5 -6 Nov 2011. The programme started at 8 pm on Saturday and closed on Sunday at 4.30 pm. There were 21 participants from mainly Sibü and Sibü Jaya and comprising members of the Regional Council, Area Growth Committee and the Local Spiritual Assembly. The National Assembly was represented by Mr. Chin Chia Chau and Mr. Neilson Narong.



# Celebrating 25 wonderful years of the Lotus Temple

NEW DELHI — On the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Baha'i House of Worship here, Delhi's Chief Minister has praised the impact the temple has made on Indian society, and beyond.

"This is a very iconic building of India. There's nothing like this anywhere else," Sheila Dikshit told the crowd attending the temple's silver jubilee festivities. "It is thanks to this temple that Delhi has also found a way to reach the hearts of millions of people all over the world."

The Chief Minister's remarks came as she paid a special visit on the final morning of a weekend-long celebratory program, at which more than 5,000 visitors from throughout the sub-continent – as well as almost 60 other countries – gathered at the temple's grounds.

"I wish I could express in words my joy," Mrs. Dikshit told the celebration. "Your message is the message for the world of today. The Baha'i Faith is the faith that teaches us all are equal. It rises above any narrow consideration of humanity."

In its message to mark the occasion, the Universal House of Justice noted the temple's "power to harmonize the manifest diversity of its visitors, to awaken nobility in hearts, and to strengthen hope for peace."

"Under the shadow of this magnificent edifice, millions who seek God have found tranquillity and been uplifted by the songs of praise and exaltation that rise from its inner sanctum," wrote the Universal House of Justice.

Greetings were also received from the President of India, Mrs. Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil, and former President, Dr. A.P.J. Kalam.

"The House of Worship with its beautiful environment transmits a message on how to celebrate the differences existing in the society," Dr. Kalam wrote. "This culture of celebrating the differences in the society is the greatest contribution made by [the] Baha'i Faith to humanity."

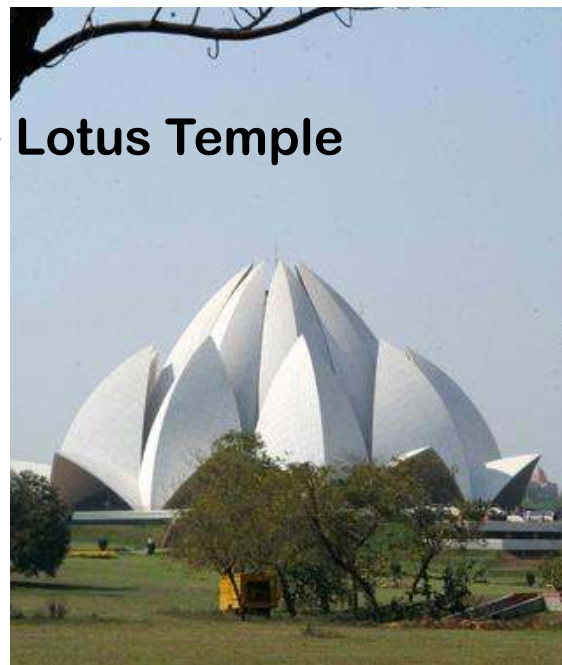
The Baha'i House of Worship, popularly referred to as the "Lotus Temple" – because of its award-winning design inspired by a lotus flower – is one of the most visited buildings in the world. Over the past quarter of a century, it has received an average of 4.3 million visitors every year – from all nations, religions and walks of life. Open to all people, the purpose of Baha'i Houses of Worship is to provide a central gathering place for prayer and meditation as well as, in time, a range of facilities to serve the social and educational needs of the population.

The temple in New Delhi – observed the Universal House of Justice – "has not only given expression to humanity's deep-felt longing to worship God but also demonstrated its efficacy in translating and transfusing that worship into a dynamic and dispassionate service for the betterment of humankind."

The growing contribution made by the House of Worship to Indian society was noted by India's Minister for Tourism, Subodh Kant Sahai, who wrote how it "serves as a venue for non-denominational activities such as the spiritual and moral education for children and young people, as well as gatherings where adults systematically study spiritual principles and their application in daily life."

The message that "worship is not complete unless it is translated into service," was reiterated throughout the weekend's presentations, on such themes as communal harmony, social transformation, the education of children, and the empowerment of youth.

The contribution of young people was evident in the devotional programs, artistic presentations and talks, which included addresses by a number of individuals and representatives of organizations who received "Champions of Social Transformation" awards.



## The Baha'i House of Worship in New Delhi, India

*An estimated 70 million people have been welcomed through its doors since its opening 25 years ago, making it one of the world's most visited buildings. The temple is currently highlighted in the "Incredible India" campaign, the Indian government's international strategy to showcase the cultural diversity and special achievements of the country.*

## Temple's builders honored

Concluding her remarks, the Chief Minister of Delhi paid tribute to the House of Worship's architect, Fariborz Sahba of Canada – who was also in attendance – and those who maintain the temple today.

"Above all, I'd like to bow my head in front of those who keep this building looking as it did on the first day," said Mrs. Dikshit.

Six members of the building's original construction team were presented with a special commemorative gift. Among them was Anumolu Ramakrishna, former president and deputy managing director of Larsen & Toubro Ltd. – the engineering firm which built the temple.

"A construction project needs unity," said Mr. Ramakrishna. "Unless all work unitedly, it doesn't work."

"This temple could not be built today," he added, "That type of committed workman, that craftsmanship, is not there anymore. This building is a jewel."