

REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL
OF THE NORTHEASTERN STATES

April 14, 2020

To the Bahá'ís of the Northeastern states

Dearly loved Friends,

In the months leading up to the Bicentenary of the Birth of the Báb, the Bahá'ís of the Northeast engaged in a Devotional Campaign that called for 995 devotional gatherings. The region united in an effort that transformed its spiritual life. We surpassed the goal, and now 55 % of the Bahá'ís in the region participate in devotional gatherings.

Beloved friends, with the collaboration of our Counselor, Auxiliary Board members, and Regional Training Institute Board, the Regional Bahá'í Council is writing to you to announce the next regional goal. It is part of an unfolding process involving nurturing groups of people with the spirit of collective worship while addressing the spiritual and emotional well-being of the friends and the needs of the communities to which they belong. The goal is to have at least 999 more devotional gatherings by the Day of the Covenant, November 25, 2020.

There are many kinds of devotional gatherings, and all will contribute toward winning the goal. However, because of the current conditions due to the health crisis, family devotionals require some extra emphasis.

What do we mean by "family devotionals"? A family devotional is an opportunity for a family to experience the bounty of regular devotions in the home, and a family, as we are conceptualizing it, can be many things. For example, it can consist of parents and children, a husband and wife, siblings, multiple generations or extended family members, roommates, or a friend with one or more friends. We are asking every Bahá'í family in the region to have regularly held, sustained devotionals with those living in the same home. However, we also realize that not everyone lives with a family, so for many devotionals the use of technology will be necessary, and in that way, all can be involved in achieving the goal.

Why is it necessary to emphasize family devotionals? The family is the basic unit of society. What can be better for that unit than its immersion in the Word of God? What can strengthen it, enhance its unity, cultivate its reliance on God, and multiply its joy more than prayer and reflection on that which is sacred? In a world where "fear and trembling have agitated the planet," and "the world stands more and more in need of the hope and the strength of spirit that faith imparts," isn't this the right time to focus on family devotional gatherings?

As you reflect on what you will do to help enhance the devotional spirit in your community, especially in your own home, please consider these words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

"We hear that thou hast in mind to embellish thy house from time to time with a meeting of Bahá'ís where some among them will engage in glorifying the All-Glorious Lord...Know that shouldst thou bring this about, that house of earth will become a house of heaven, and that fabric of stone a congress of the spirit."

With deepest love,

Regional Bahá'í Council of the Northeastern States