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Design unveiled for national Bahá'í House of Worship

From the Writings

Man must consult on all matters, whether major or minor, so that he may become cognizant of what is good. Consultation giveth him insight into things and enableth him to delve into questions which are unknown. The light of truth shineth from the faces of those who engage in consultation. Such consultation causeth the living waters to flow in the meadows of man's reality, the rays of ancient glory to shine upon him, and the tree of his being to be adorned with wondrous fruit. The members who are consulting, however, should behave in the utmost love, harmony and sincerity towards each other. The principle of consultation is one of the most fundamental elements of the divine edifice. Even in their ordinary affairs the individual members of society should consult.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá – *from a Tablet, translated from the Persian.*

We have already in the foregoing pages assigned two stations unto each of the Luminaries arising from the Daysprings of eternal holiness. One of these stations, the station of essential unity, We have already explained. "No distinction do We make between any of them." The other is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestined Revelation, and specially designated limitations. Each one of them is known by a different name, is characterized by a special attribute, fulfils a definite Mission, and is entrusted with a particular Revelation. Even as He saith: "Some of the Apostles We have caused to excel the others. To some God hath spoken, some He hath raised and exalted. And to Jesus, Son of Mary, We gave manifest signs, and We strengthened Him with the Holy Spirit."

- Bahá'u'lláh, *Bahá'í Sacred Writings*, 13.3.

Center your attention unceasingly upon that which will cause the Word of God to be exalted. In this Most Great Revelation goodly deeds and a praiseworthy character are regarded as the hosts of God, likewise is His blessed and holy Word. These hosts are the lodestone of the hearts of men and the effective means for unlocking doors. Of all the weapons in the world this is the keenest.

Beseech thou God to graciously assist all men to observe that which His all-glorious Pen hath recorded in the sacred Books and Tablets.

– Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh,* p. 256.

O servant of Bahá! Music is regarded as a praiseworthy science at the Threshold of the Almighty, so that thou mayest chant verses at large gatherings and congregations in a most wondrous melody and raise such hymns of praise at the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar to enrapture the Concourse on High. By virtue of this, consider how much the art of music is admired and praised. Try, if thou canst, to use spiritual melodies, songs and tunes, and to bring the earthly music into harmony with the celestial melody. Then thou wilt notice what a great influence music hath and what heavenly joy and life it conferreth. Strike up such a melody and tune as to cause the nightingales of divine mysteries to be filled with joy and ecstasy.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, no. 32.

O ye beloved of the Lord! In this sacred Dispensation, conflict and contention are in no wise permitted. Every aggressor depriveth himself of God's grace. It is incumbent upon everyone to show the utmost love, rectitude of conduct, straightforwardness and sincere kindliness unto all the peoples and kindreds of the world, be they friends or strangers. So intense must be the spirit of love and loving-kindness, that the stranger may find himself a friend, the enemy a true brother, no difference whatsoever existing between them. For universality is of God and all limitations earthly. Thus man must strive that his reality may manifest virtues and perfections, the light whereof may shine upon everyone. The light of the sun shineth upon all the world and the merciful showers of Divine Providence fall upon all peoples. The vivifying breeze reviveth every living creature and all beings endued with life obtain their share and portion at His heavenly board. In like manner, the affections and loving-kindness of the servants of the One True God must be bountifully and universally extended to all mankind. Regarding this, restrictions and limitations are in no wise permitted.

– 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,* para. 24.

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Letter to the community

To the builders of community, and of Canada's House of Worship, in Canada, 6 November 2026

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

With what joy and gratitude we greet you! Those who witnessed the unveiling of the design for Canada's national Bahá'í House of Worship, or participated in the open house the following day, described the experience in many ways: thrilling, soul-stirring, transformative, magical. All agreed that they had witnessed a defining moment in the life of the Canadian community.

It is tempting to dwell on the flood of confirmations that attended the weekend's gatherings, but we hope that, through the recording of the ceremony or the account published by the Bahá'í World News Service, you will have had an opportunity to glimpse these for yourselves. It suffices to say that this milestone on a long journey brought to mind the beautiful words of Bahá'u'lláh: "The sea of joy yearneth to attain your presence, for every good thing hath been created for you, and will, according to the needs of the times, be revealed unto you."

Our gratitude draws us back to the search for a property between 1953 and 1958, and to the remarkable circumstances that led, in 1968, to the acquisition of the present site in exchange for the land originally purchased—almost fifty-eight years to the day before the unveiling ceremony. How extraordinary to reflect on the unfolding of a divine purpose across the decades, and the circumstances that have brought us to this moment.

In 2012, as the completion of the last continental House of Worship in Santiago, Chile, approached, the Universal House of Justice announced that national Houses of Worship would be established in countries where the process of entry by troops had sufficiently advanced, "another gratifying evidence of the penetration of the Faith of God into the soil of society." In that same message, recalling the moment when 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself broke the ground for the House of Worship in Grosse Pointe, north of Chicago, the House of Justice reflected upon the transformation of humanity:

> The state of the world reflects a distortion of the human spirit, not its essential nature. The purpose of every Manifestation of God is to effect a transformation in both the inner life and external conditions of humanity. And this transformation naturally occurs as a growing body of people, united by the divine precepts, collectively seeks to develop spiritual capacities to contribute to a process of societal change…
>
> We yield thanks to God that, through the potency of His Word, you—the community of His Greatest Name—are cultivating environments wherein true understanding can blossom.[1]

Against the backdrop of a world in fast decline, over the next eleven years the friends in Canada intensified their efforts to learn the lessons of community building, cultivating environments that attract the heart, quicken the soul, foster true understanding, and create lasting bonds of friendship. While such environments often take shape most readily in the intimate settings of neighbourhoods and villages, the capacities developed through the training institute, particularly the capacity to engage in meaningful and transformative conversation, are increasingly finding expression in every setting. By 2023, participation in educational activities and devotional gatherings had reached 30,000. How confirming that, in that very year, the Universal House of Justice called upon us to raise up Canada's House of Worship!

In just three years, that number has grown to over 38,000. More importantly, signs of transformation abound as the training institute unfolds as an educational process in the life of populations. Youth are arising in unprecedented numbers to teach and nurture their younger peers. Mothers are creating spaces for meaningful conversations about family life. The materials of the training institute, rooted in the Word of God, are being shared in flexible ways responsive to the needs of the population. Devotional gatherings of every kind are fanning the flame of love in heart after heart—a family gathering for morning prayers, neighbours pausing to pray together during a walk, a soccer team offering devotions before a game, or a regular gathering eagerly anticipated as a highlight of the week.

Other dimensions of this rich pattern of community life are also advancing. Through the seminars of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, young people are supported to navigate their undergraduate years, refine their hopes and plans in light of humanity's needs, and consider a life of service. The Association for Bahá'í Studies is creating spaces in which individuals, including the young, develop their capacity to contribute to the discourses of their professions and academic fields, enriching the intellectual life of society. Firesides, deepenings, summer schools, festivals, family camps, and teaching campaigns all contribute to a vibrant and increasingly interconnected pattern of activity. Whatever stage of development a community has reached, there are abundant opportunities to extend the circle of participation and friendship.

1 Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Riḍván 2012

As we reflect upon these developments alongside the unfolding story of the House of Worship, we are struck by the profound truth expressed in a letter dated 26 May 2024, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly:

The friends must come to regard these two endeavours as mutual elements of one divine project that is now in their hands. By adequately equipping both, the friends reinforce the powerful spiritual enterprise gaining momentum across their nation.

These words invite us to see with new eyes the work before us. The raising of the House of Worship and the building of communities throughout the country are not separate enterprises, each making its own demands upon the friends. They are mutually reinforcing expressions of a single divine project, whose purpose is the spiritual and material transformation of society. As the House of Worship rises, it will give visible expression to the spirit of worship and service increasingly animating the life of the community; and as that life grows richer, the House of Worship will become a focal point for an ever-widening circle of souls drawn together in devotion to God and service to humanity.

The advancement of this great enterprise calls for both human and material resources on a scale commensurate with its expanding possibilities. The National Assembly has been increasingly conscious that the material requirements of growth are outstripping the community's historical pattern of contributions to the funds of the Faith. In the correspondence that elicited the guidance quoted above, we shared this concern with the Universal House of Justice. Its response offered both reassurance and a deeper understanding of how the community's capacity to meet these needs will develop.

Concerning the costs associated with the expansion of the training institute, the House of Justice stated: "The current arrangements should evolve over time and, as the learning process advances, you will find that the cost in case after case will become lower than you are currently projecting." It continued:

> It is also vital to understand that the view of the training institute as an educational organization goes hand in hand with the fundamental idea of the institute as a process that unfolds in the life of the community for which the friends and the local institutions bear a shared responsibility. As they cultivate a strong sense of collective ownership of the educational activities, they are able to respond in creative and effective ways to the needs and challenges that arise. The mobilization of some of the needed resources then occurs as a natural aspect of an increasingly rich pattern of community life. No doubt, the experience in your most advanced clusters illustrates this point. In this light, in addition to clarifying the nature of the work before them, the gatherings you indicate you are currently organizing in the regions should also assist the friends and the



institutions to identify the associated material needs and to explore which ones they are able to meet as a community.

What a hopeful perspective this guidance offers! As an ever-deeper sense of collective ownership of the work develops, so too does the capacity to identify and mobilize the resources it requires. The provision of material means becomes not simply a matter of meeting financial obligations, but an integral part of the process of building community itself.

Over the next six months, the Counsellors and members of the National Spiritual Assembly will be visiting communities across the country to consult with the friends about how, together, we can respond to the many needs of this hour. Alongside the substantial resources required to construct the House of Worship are the growing needs of the community-building process: youth eager to devote periods of service who require support in place of the summer employment they forego; educational facilities through which learning acquired over several years can be rapidly disseminated; friends arising to devote time to support increasing numbers of children's class teachers, junior youth animators, and tutors; and pioneers ready to arise to meet Canada's overseas goals and strengthen clusters on the home front. This year's contribution goals, representing a minimum needed for this one divine project to advance, and for Canada to contribute towards other needs in the world, are attached.

These needs are not burdens incidental to the work; they are the natural requirements of its advancement. The same spirit of sacrifice that moves a soul to arise in service finds expression in the generous contribution of material means. Both are indispensable. Each of us has the privilege of raising the House of Worship and weaving the fabric of community life that will welcome multitudes into havens of peace.

In its Riḍván message this year, the Universal House of Justice wrote:

> When the world's horizons darken, hope becomes a scarce and precious resource—but one with which the community of the Greatest Name has been richly blessed because of its conviction about the future of humanity and because of what it has learned from its own experience. Multitudes yearn for the hope you can bring to their hearts.

The approaching Twin Holy Days offer a precious opportunity to share this hope with those around us, inviting them to experience something of the joy and promise of a world being transformed. And over the next four and a half years, as the House of Worship rises and the community grows, our ardent prayers will be offered that these multitudes will increasingly become part of the "we" who are building something new and wondrous together.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF CANADA

Karen McKye, Secretary

Contribution Goals 2026/2027

The following are the National Spiritual Assembly's contribution goals for 2026/2027 for the various funds.

Funds	Contribution Goals
National Fund	7,000,000
Deputization Fund	500,000
Canadian Temple Fund	7,500,000
International Fund	200,000
International Collaboration Fund	400,000
World Centre Endowment Fund	200,000
Continental Fund	400,000
Humanitarian Relief Fund (international)	100,000
North American House of Worship	100,000
Community Properties Fund (national)	400,000
Total	16,800,000

Date for unveiling the design of Canada's House of Worship

To the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in Canada,
8 September 2026.

Dearly loved Friends,

It brings us the greatest joy to share with you the long-awaited news: an architect and a design for Canada's national Mashriqu'l-Adhkár have been chosen.

This moment concludes an extended, inspiring process in which many dedicated and talented architects offered their creative ideas for this undertaking. Each submission was rendered in the ink of love for Bahá'u'lláh and with a profound consciousness of the historic and sacred nature of the project. To all who participated in this remarkable endeavour, we offer our deepest gratitude.

The National Spiritual Assembly's choice was submitted to the Universal House of Justice for its review, and we have now received its approval to proceed. It is therefore with great happiness that we announce that the design will be unveiled on 17 October 2026, on the grounds of the Bahá'í National Centre, in the presence of invited dignitaries, representatives of the Canadian Bahá'í community, and other guests.

A glimpse of the significance of the process that is unfolding is offered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who says that so momentous is this undertaking that even the act of "laying but one brick for [it] or one of its dependencies is like unto building a lofty edifice". The beloved Guardian refers to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár as a "symbol and harbinger of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh", while the Universal House of Justice describes it as a beacon of light "against the gloom of hatred and inequity"[i]. How fitting, then, to recall the summons addressed by the beloved Master to the peoples of Canada in the Tablets of the Divine Plan:

> "Consequently, rest ye not, seek ye no composure, attach not yourselves to the luxuries of this ephemeral world, free yourselves from every attachment, and strive with heart and soul to become fully established in the Kingdom of God. Gain ye the heavenly treasures. Day by day become ye more illumined. Draw ye nearer and nearer unto the threshold of oneness. Become ye the manifestors of spiritual favours and the dawning-places of infinite lights!"

Beloved friends, how can we thank Bahá'u'lláh enough for the privilege bestowed upon our generation? We have been given not only the joy of raising up Canada's national Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, but the gift of contributing to all that it represents: worship and service woven together, communities becoming havens of peace, and the light of unity shining ever more brightly amid the gathering darkness of the world. Let us redouble our prayers that, as this sacred edifice rises amid the turmoil of our age and we labour to strengthen vibrant patterns of life in community after community, haven after haven, the light of this Dawning-place of the Praise of God may be increasingly reflected in our collective life as we become, in the words of the Master, "the dawning-places of infinite lights", illumining the path to the threshold of oneness.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF CANADA

Karen McKye, Secretary

i https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/compilations/institution-mashriqul-adhkar/1#250953299



About this issue

In its 8 September 2026 message, the National Spiritual Assembly wrote: "Beloved friends, how can we thank Bahá'u'lláh enough for the privilege bestowed upon our generation?"

It continues, "We have been given not only the joy of raising up Canada's national Mashriqu'l-Adhkár but also the gift of contributing to all that it represents: worship and service woven together, communities becoming havens of peace, and the light of unity shining ever more brightly amid the gathering darkness of the world."

This issue of Bahá'í Canada marks a milestone in this privileged undertaking: the unveiling of the design for the House of Worship for Canada. Our feature article explores the inspiration and process behind the design, introduces the project's principal architect, James Jing Yi Jiang, and highlights key moments from the livestreamed unveiling. How joyful it was to receive photographs from friends in St. John's, Nfld.; Grand Manan Island, N.B.; Saskatoon, Sask.; and Abbotsford and Vancouver, B.C. (among many others), who gathered for this occasion! It was truly a moment for Canada.

On the path ahead, we will no doubt encounter challenges and can call to mind those souls who were among the first to establish a Bahá'í temple. In the From the History section, we share a story about Hand of the Cause of God Corinne Knight True, known as "Mother of the Temple," from the book *Corinne True: Faithful Handmaid of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, by Nathan Rutstein. For over five decades, Corinne True dedicated herself to erecting the Continental House of Worship for North America, which was completed in 1953. This story focuses on the first of these decades as she is guided by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to take on an increasingly larger role in this enterprise.

A defining feature of the Bahá'í Temple is that its doors are open to all, regardless of religious belief or unbelief. The theme of doors resonates in the new memoir *Open Wide the Doors* by Mahvash Sabet, one of the seven members of the now-disbanded Yárán, who was imprisoned for over 10 years for her role in overseeing the spiritual and social needs of the Bahá'í community of Iran. Her doors are both physical and locked from the outside, and metaphorical, as she challenges barriers such as prejudice and ignorance. Before its release, Bahá'í Canada had the opportunity to interview one of the book's translators and editors to learn more about how the memoir came to be.

This puts into perspective the blessing we have now to build havens of peace in our communities—the other element of "one divine project."[1] In this issue, we share stories from summer activities that flourished across Canada, especially among the youth. These stories highlight the conversations happening at the grassroots—conversations that unlock capacity for action.

Stories about the Sacred Charge Campaign in Ontario and the youth movement in the Central Okanagan cluster in British Columbia show how youth are increasingly seeing themselves as capable of making a positive difference. As they are introduced to concepts embedded in the training institute, young people become empowered to apply spiritual concepts to every aspect of their lives.

In this issue, we also hear from the Regional Schools Coordinating Committee in British Columbia. Over the past few years, it has cultivated a system for creating spaces open to all, focused on fostering the spiritual health of families and communities. This year, five schools across the province brought together hundreds of friends of all ages to engage in the arts, pray together, and participate in a variety of educational workshops.

This issue also takes us internationally. In the story "Planting roses of love in the Leeward Islands," a Canadian pioneer family shares how the Word of God is effecting transformation on the playground, creating unity in children's day-to-day lives.

This past May, a historic gathering was held, built on recent efforts to translate the Bahá'í Writings into Indigenous languages. The consultation among the friends gathered highlighted the spiritual aspirations of Indigenous Peoples, including the well-being of children and youth, strengthening extended families, and fostering hope for the future.

In another development, we are pleased to share that the Bahá'í Canada website (bahaicanada@bahai.ca) has been redesigned. We hope this redesign will further connect the print and online versions of Bahá'í Canada and better serve online readers. Going forward, nearly all articles will be published as individual stories on the website. We will then compile a collection of these stories for the print magazine. A PDF version of the print magazine will continue to be published online.

Going forward, we look forward to sharing more about how communities across the country are taking these two endeavours—cultivating a rich pattern of community life and raising up a House of Worship—into their own hands.

1 From the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 26 May 2024.

Corinne Knight True: Mother of the Temple

Despite personal tragedy, self-doubt, and the community's initial difficulty accepting female leadership, Corinne True commits herself to establishing the first Bahá'í House of Worship in the West.

Corinne Knight True became a Bahá'í in Chicago, Illinois, in 1899. Her story is one of tragedy and faith, as the deaths of two of her children set her on a quest for the meaning of suffering that led her to embrace the Bahá'í Faith. Shockingly, she would lose three more of her eight children. Despite this—or perhaps because of it—and her insistence that women be more involved in administering the affairs of the Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructed her to take an active role in bringing the first House of Worship in the West into being. Later in her life, Shoghi Effendi designated her a Hand of the Cause of God, and Bahá'ís came to know her as "Mother of the Temple".

The following story relies on excerpts from the book Corinne True: *Faithful Handmaid of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,* by Nathan Rutstein.

An astonishing letter

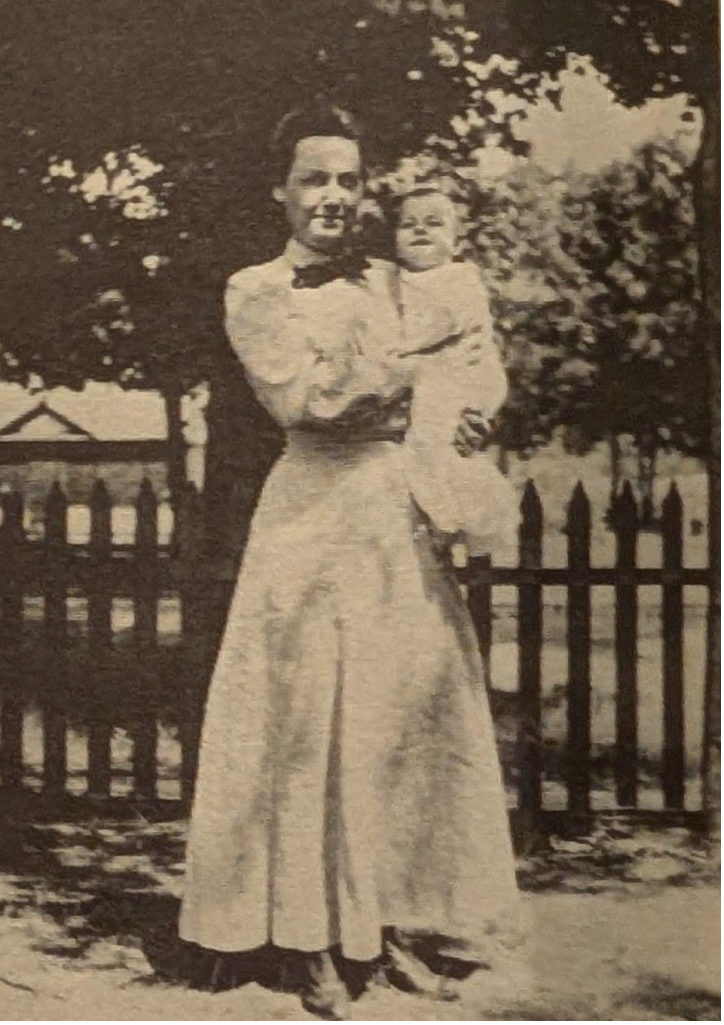
"In 1903, with the early disunity stabilized and the Faith being taught vigorously, the House of Spirituality, inspired by news of the 'Ishqábád Temple project, felt ready to build a house of worship. They asked the Master for permission. He sent them two Tablets, approving the idea. Eight days after the second Tablet arrived, Corinne True also received one about the Temple to be erected in America."[1]

The House of Spirituality was an early Bahá'í administrative structure in the United States that evolved into the institution of the Local Spiritual



Corinne Knight True (1861-1961).
Photo: Bahá'í International Community

1 Rutstein, Nathan. Corinne True: *Faithful Handmaid of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.* Oxford: George Ronald, 1987.



Corinne and Nathanael True in Fruitport, Michigan.
Photo: www.findagrave.com

Assembly. Although women were initially ineligible for election, when Corinne True received guidance from 'Abdu'l-Bahá—the Head of the Bahá'í Faith—on the construction of the House of Worship, she became essential to the process.

The contents of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablet startled Corinne:

> "Indeed the day hath come whereon the divine edifice, the merciful sanctuary and the spiritual Temple must be raised in America.
>
> I ask God to strengthen His faithful friends in a great service and enable them to exert endeavours adequate to the erection of this great edifice, for which there will be a resounding call in all countries. By it shall the Lord grant confirmation to His loved ones in that land. How great is the endeavour! How sublime the undertaking! For this is the first House of Worship that shall be established in those regions for the commemoration of His praise—a praise which shall reach the Kingdom of divine mysteries. And from that Temple shall be heard the anthems of glorification throughout all regions.
>
> Of those who arise in the service of this edifice there shall be no soul but shall be imbued by God with a power emanating from His mighty Kingdom, and upon him shall rain such spiritual, heavenly blessings as shall fill his heart with a wondrous light and illumine his eyes to behold the glory of the Ancient of Days." [2]

Rutstein describes her reaction to this Tablet in his book:

> "Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá had not singled her out from 'the faithful friends', it was clear to Corinne that He wanted her to become involved in 'the service of this edifice'[3] '…He wrote me instructions about the Temple to my utter astonishment that placed a great responsibility on my shoulders,' she wrote to a friend. But how? she wondered. She wasn't an architect or a builder. Men dominated the real estate business. What could a housewife and mother of five children[4] do to construct a temple? The fact that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had chosen to write to her required her to become involved. Nothing else could have persuaded her to accept the challenge. But what to do first? As president of the Women's Assembly of Teaching, she took the problem to the group. They raised a small amount of money, banked it and named a treasurer."[5]

A Bahá'í home

In those first few years, the Temple project made little progress, although Corinne thought about it almost daily. There was also some confusion regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's messages, with a strong minority of Bahá'ís "who felt that 'Abdu'l-Bahá wanted a spiritual temple built in each Bahá'í's heart, and that He wasn't calling for the construction of a physical house of worship." Rutstein continues, "At that time, [the believers] weren't aware of the significance of the House of Worship to the American community. In 1903, how could they be? Corinne, like many others, viewed it simply as a gathering center for prayer, a place where the local friends could meet. The fact that it would rise as a mighty teaching and unifying instrument in America wasn't envisioned."[6]

During this time, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent Corinne True a series of Tablets that became "a code for living the rest of her life," and "[S]he grew like a flower that's fed by rain."[7] And even during periods when she did not hear from Him, she intensified her teaching efforts.

Rutstein writes: "During the two years Corinne didn't hear directly from 'Abdu'l-Bahá she intensified her teaching, although she shied away from giving public talks. The thought of facing a large crowd frightened her.[8] Most of the teaching was done in her home, whether in Chicago or on vacation in Fruitport, Michigan. There were times when she would visit cities in Wisconsin to share the Message with gatherings in local homes. Her

2 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Additional Tablets, Extracts, and Talks.

3 This text has been updated to reflect a new official translation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablet.

4 Her son Kenneth died at the age of seven in 1901, leaving her with five children at this time.

5 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, p. 42.

6 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, p. 42.

7 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, p. 43.

8 Later in life, with the encouragement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, she overcame this fear.



All the children at the True Family home in Chicago, 711 West Adams Street, 1896.
Photo: www.findagrave.com

children remembered that almost every afternoon their mother would be in the parlor telling someone about the Faith, or waiting for the natural opportunity to share the message of Bahá'u'lláh with the guest. She did it calmly, using her knowledge of the Bible and stressing the 'Latter Day' theme.[9] There was nothing she enjoyed more, for she was immersed in the Faith. She wanted to talk about it all the time.

Her children helped her to control her yearning and she appreciated their requests to restrain herself among their friends and among strangers. Though she did this, it wasn't easy. For knowing Who Bahá'u'lláh was, what His message could do for a failing society, she wanted to share the 'good news' with everyone. There was so much unhappiness, so much aimlessness, so much fear all around her, everywhere. She wanted so to help.

In time, Corinne True would master control. But that didn't prevent her dynamic personality from creating the atmosphere in their home. It was a Bahá'í home, where Bahá'í standards were upheld. Whenever a principle was circumvented by the children, Corinne would lovingly remind them of it. When emphasis was needed she would tap her forefinger on the palm of her hand. To the children that was a sign to heed what was being said.

Corinne surrendered her home to Bahá'u'lláh. And it didn't matter where she was living. To the children, especially the daughters, their home was like a Bahá'í hotel. People from different parts of the world would spend time with them, and for various reasons. Some were traveling teachers; some needed a place to recuperate after surgery; others couldn't afford a hotel. At times, the children had to give up their beds to accommodate the guests. That usually meant Katherine and Arna sharing Edna's bed with her, with Katherine sandwiched between her older sisters. Despite the inconvenience, the girls found a house full of people—many of whom they didn't know—exciting. It widened their experience and helped them break out of the social mold their mother had been brought up in. They knew they were living in a Bahá'í home, because unlike most other Bahá'ís in the early 1900s Corinne had severed all connections with the church. Edna, Arna and Katherine grew up in a home where it was understood that Christ had returned."[10]

A shocking tragedy

"While deeply involved in the affairs of the Faith locally and nationally, Corinne True found some time for her family. In fact, 1906 looked like a good year. She was thrilled at the prospect of her eldest son's college graduation and marriage. Laurence had transferred from Stanford to the University of Michigan and was engaged to a young lady from Chicago. Because he had a job waiting for him in the fall, he decided to go to summer school so he could start work immediately after graduation. Laurence was the apple of his mother's eye.

9 In the Bible, the phrase "latter days" generally refers to a future marked by both divine judgment and the ultimate fulfillment of God's plans, aka the second coming of Christ.

10 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, pp. 44-5.

He was healthy, considerate and a devoted son. His father adored him. That summer Laurence would try to be with the family at their summer home whenever possible. Ann Arbor was some distance from Fruitport, but it wasn't his studies that kept him from being with the family every weekend. A strong athlete, he was part of a sailing team that competed on weekends.

But Lawrence found time to go to Fruitport on 4 August, a Saturday, so that he could celebrate his fiancée's and sister Edna's birthdays. Leaving his family that day was difficult, but he had to be at Saginaw Bay, the site of the biggest race of the season next day; he couldn't disappoint his teammates.

Laurence was never seen again. Halfway through the race, he moved forward on the deck to adjust the sailboat's jib. A sudden gust whipped the sail across the deck, knocking Lawrence into the water, apparently unconscious. His teammates tried valiantly to find him. The fierce winds and rough water hampered the rescue effort."[11]

A life-changing pilgrimage

This tragedy, with her son at the prime of his life, affected Corinne and her husband, Moses True, deeply. She turned to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who wrote: "This separation is temporal; this remoteness and sorrow is counted only by days. Thou shalt find him in the Kingdom of God and thou wilt attain to the everlasting union."[12]

As Rutstein states, "Once again, Corinne drew the family together, trying to provide some perspective, some insight into the latest tragedy. It wasn't what she said to her husband and children, but her attitude and faith that helped them recover from Laurence's sudden death."[13]

Rutstein writes, "Laurence's death sparked an inescapable urge in Corinne True to see the Master. It didn't matter that He was 6,000 miles away, in a strange land and still a prisoner of the Ottoman Empire; and that she feared travel. With encouragement from her husband, she wrote for permission to visit Akká, with daughter Arna."[14] After her pilgrimage, Corinne and her husband Moses decided that they would leave Chicago and retreat to the quieter Grand Rapids, Michigan. Moses was understandably distressed from the loss of Laurence, and Corinne worried about his health, especially his weak heart.[15]

However, Corinne True's pilgrimage further reoriented her life's purpose. On this trip, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave her additional instructions on the establishment of the House of Worship and deepened her understanding of the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the life of the community.

Shortly after Corinne True's pilgrimage, another group of American Bahá'ís, including Thornton Chase, Carl Scheffler and Arthur and Mary Agnews, undertook a pilgrimage. The three men were members of Chicago's House of Spirituality, and during their pilgrimage asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá questions about the Temple. 'Abdu'l-Bahá told the group, "When you return consult with Mrs True—I have given her complete instructions."[16]

Rutstein relays, "Mr Chase was startled. He simply wasn't prepared for what 'Abdu'l-Bahá had said. The Master had upset his notions about the role of women in the Faith. Had the Master doubted Thornton Chase's firmness in the Faith, He wouldn't have been so direct with him." Now, in its deliberations the House of Spirituality "would have to take into account Corinne True's connection with the project."[17] It seems all parties involved were reorienting during this time to make way for the path ahead.

Rutstein continues: "When she returned home, her husband sensed that the pilgrimage had greatly reinforced Corinne's commitment to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Moving to Grand Rapids, and whatever that represented to him, was out of the question. Moses True agreed to look for a bigger house. It had to be bigger, even though most of the children were grown, because Corinne's involvement with the Faith, especially her work on the Temple, would grow. Two years after her pilgrimage, 5338 Kenmore Avenue became the Trues' new address, a house where a number of historic events would take place.[18]

'Devote yourself to this project—make a beginning, and all will come right.'

Corinne attacked the challenge of building the Temple with a vigor that seemed endless. She had understood and completely accepted what the Master had told her while on pilgrimage: 'Devote yourself to this project—make a beginning, and all will come right.'

Now she knew that the Temple was not going to house simply a Chicago Bahá'í congregation. It would be, in a sense, a national cathedral, a sign of God's latest revelation on earth, a force uniting the American believers, and a mighty teacher."[19]

11 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, pp. 48-9.

12 *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas*, vol. 1 p. 99.

13 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, p. 50.

14 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, p. 51.

15 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, p. 50.

16 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, p. 70.

17 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, p. 70.

18 Among many historic events linked with early Bahá'í administration, 'Abdu'l-Bahá delivered a talk here on 16 September 1912 during his travels to North America.

19 Rutstein, *Corinne True*, pp. 71-2.

Design unveiled for the national Bahá'í House of Worship for Canada



On October 17, a gathering and program were held near the Temple site in Markham, Ontario, to formally announce and present the design of the National House of Worship for Canada.

The path to the Bahá'í Temple site in Markham, Ontario invites a process of preparation. Once one turns off the busy main road, a narrow drive around a bend requires the visitor to slow down. The sights and sounds of the city recede into the background. As one approaches the temple site on foot, a brief climb up a few stairs leads into the woods: a haven in the city.

The journey toward building Canada's national Bahá'í House of Worship has reached a new milestone with the unveiling of the temple's design.

On October 17, a gathering and program were held near the temple site to formally announce and present the design of the temple. The gathering of some 115 people included special guests from the City of Markham, a member of provincial parliament for Don Valley North in Toronto, youth and families from







the neighbourhoods surrounding the temple site, and representatives from communities across Canada.

Suited to its unique environment amidst the trees, the edifice will be modest, incorporating transparent elements and integrated into the surrounding woods. The design is inspired by the idea of unity in diversity, a principle central to the Bahá'í teachings and to the context of Canada.

The architect, James Jing Yi Jiang from Vancouver, B.C., describes the design as follows: "Nine identical panels, arranged in an asymmetrical order, create a varied yet cohesive composition, expressing the idea that differences do not need to disappear for a greater whole to emerge. Beneath the panels, a symmetrical structural rhythm provides an underlying order, allowing individual elements to come together as one."

The temple site has been a place of prayer and meditation for decades.



In 1958, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada acquired land in Toronto as an endowment to build a temple. It later sold that land and, in 1968, secured the current property just outside Toronto in Markham, Ontario.

The program for the unveiling highlighted this history, recognizing that stewardship for the land goes back generations. Bob Watts, a Bahá'í of the Mohawk and Ojibway Nations—whose grandmother was the first Indigenous Bahá'í in Canada—shared reflections on the significance of the land, in conversation with his grandson, Nico Diaz. They recalled the sacred responsibility of those who have cared for this land over time, and how fitting it is that a House of Worship rises from it as a source of healing in this time of growing divisions.

The architect described how the design acknowledges the land as an active, living presence. He explained,

























"Through its openness and natural wood tones, the temple aims to blend into the forest, creating a place of prayer and reflection that feels as though it has always been there."

He continues, "The form of the curvatures is an impression of the wind—like traces and ripples left by the breeze on the temple."

As part of the design process, Mr. Jiang met with local youth, many of whom regularly pray at the temple site. He shared, "When the youth described their idea of the future temple, it was as if it had a personality. They said the temple is like a mother, it's like a friend, it's like someone who can support you when you run into difficulties." After these conversations, he adjusted the temple's colouring to be warmer and more welcoming.

Chief Margaret Sault of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who provided a written statement for the occasion, observed: "A place of worship is more than a building. It can be a place where people come together, find peace, reflect on their responsibilities to each other and strengthen their connection to community."

The Bahá'í House of Worship comes from the Arabic word Mashriqu'l-Adhkár: "the Dawning-place of the Remembrance of God." Karen McKye, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, remarked, "It is a place to draw inspiration and strength to serve our community, our families, our professions, and thus brings together two essential, inseparable aspects of human life and purpose: worship and service."

Although the site was purchased over 50 years ago, this has not been a period of waiting, but one of community flourishing. In small settings across the country, children and youth, adults and elders, have drawn on an educational process that affirms community life as a vital sphere of social transformation.

Ms. McKye reflected on this period: "We needed to build our own capac-

ity to raise up vibrant communities that would be mirrors to the same process of building a House of Worship." Then, in 2023, the Universal House of Justice joyfully announced that it was time to build the temple.

Preparations at the site have now been gaining pace. This past summer, five youth drove over eight hours from various parts of Québec to serve at the temple site, diligently removing invasive plant species. One of these youth, Yohann Lamorie, shared, "Since we are helping to make the place better for the construction of the temple, it helps us to have a sense of ownership…" Alif Nakhostine, another youth, confirmed, "It feels like it's our temple."

Mayor Frank Scarpitti of Markham, Ontario, the locality where the temple will be constructed, commented: "At the core of your beliefs are the oneness of God, of religions and humanity. Here at Canada's Bahá'í House of Worship, it is oneness with the natural land, which will be an incredible canvas for those who come here."

Jonathan Tsao, member of provincial parliament for Don Valley North in Toronto, spoke about his family's history with the Bahá'í Faith as the great-great-nephew of Dr. Y.S. Tsao, a prominent early Bahá'í in China. He shared, "You do not walk alone in your goal of a more equal society. The belief in the oneness of humanity is one that we fundamentally share together, not just as Bahá'ís, not just as Christians or Muslims, not just as people without faith. It's something that, as humans, we all share."

Since the announcement last month that a temple design and architect had been chosen, a spirit of anticipation has grown. Over 3,000 Bahá'ís and their friends across the country and beyond watched the unveiling via a livestream broadcast.

When completed, the Bahá'í House of Worship will be the first constructed in Canada. Around it, the Don Valley Education Centre serves as a facility for the training institute, offering educational programmes for children, youth and their families.

Ms. McKye stated, "The temple is a gift to Canada as a nation. It is a place of acceptance, of oneness, and belonging."

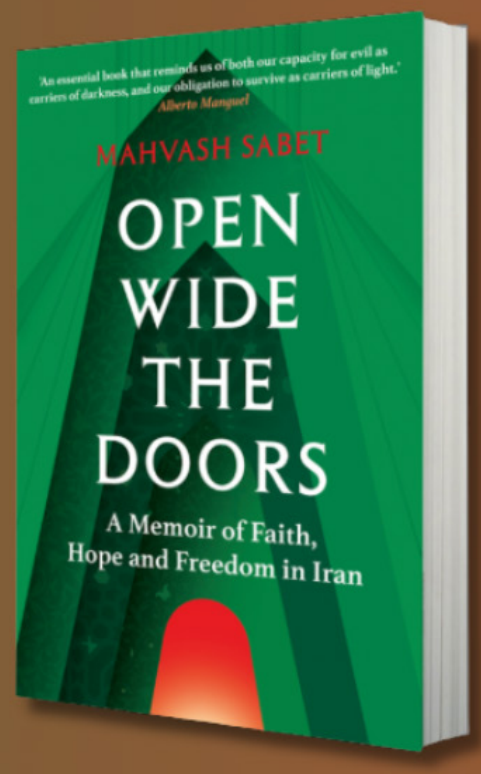
Photos: Romin Agahzadeh and Louis Brunet







Open Wide the Doors, a new memoir by Mahvash Sabet



Bahá'í Canada recently sat down with Bahiyyih Nakhjavani, one of the translators of the work, to discuss the circumstances in which it was written and its themes of faith, hope and freedom.

Mahvash Sabet was a member of the Yárán, an ad hoc group of seven Bahá'ís, caretakers of the persecuted Iranian Bahá'í community, who were imprisoned from 2008 to 2017. Five years after their release, in 2022, she and Fariba Kamalabadi were sentenced to 10 more years in prison; Afif Naimi, a third member of the disbanded Yárán, was condemned to seven. Mahvash Sabet wrote a great deal of poetry in Tehran's Evin Prison. A first collection, smuggled out in 2011, was adapted from the original Persian by B. Nakhjavani with the help of her parents, and published as *Prison Poems,* by George Ronald in 2013. A second collection, *A Tale of Love: More Prison Poems,* followed in 2024, translated by Sandra Lynn Hutchinson and Shahin Mowzoon. In 2017, Mahvash Sabet was recognized as Writer of Courage by the Irish poet, Michael Longley, winner of the Pinter Poetry Award. Now, her memoirs, written in prison and translated and edited by A. Mottahedeh and B. Nakhjavani, are soon to be released. This book, entitled *Open Wide the Doors*, is published by Oneworld, in the UK, and will be available in North America from August 18, 2026.

The following interview has been edited for clarity and length.

BAHÁ'Í CANADA: Thank you so much for joining me today. It's a privilege to get to talk about this book, which I am looking forward to reading!

BAHIYYIH NAKHJAVANI: Absolutely, thank you for having me. It is an honour to be an ambassador for Mahvash, who unfortunately cannot speak on her own behalf at this time. God willing, she will, one day, and meanwhile I hope there will be many readers who will share their thoughts after reading her wonderful book.

BC: *Open Wide the Doors* focuses on the first 10 months of Mahvash Sabet's imprisonment. Do you have insights about the significance of this period and why it is the focus?

BN: Mahvash was not able to write when she was first arrested. In the detention centre in Mashhad from March to May 2008, she was mostly in solitary confinement, being interrogated day after day, and the questions she was obliged to answer were all that she could write. These brutal conditions continued after she was incarcerated in Evin Prison from May to August of that same year. It was only after the upheavals of the Green Revolution in 2009, after the Yárán were finally sentenced in 2010, after Mahvash and Fariba endured almost a year in the terrible provincial prison of Rajai Shahr[1], and then the even more dreadful female penitentiary of Qarchak—only after they finally returned to Section 209 of Evin

1 Also commonly known as Gohardasht Prison, in Karaj, some 20 kilometres west of the Iranian capital.

Prison in 2011, did Mahvash begin to write her memoirs.

By the time she finished and had come to the end of her 10-year sentence, she had been writing for seven full years. And by the time Azita completed a word-for-word translation of the Persian text into English, she had typed 750 pages. It's hard to create a book that length. It's even harder to find a publisher for such a tome. And if you try to edit 750 pages down to 200, you become a ghostwriter, which I am not. Mahvash has her own voice, and I wanted to be sure we kept it.

So that is why we focused on this initial period, about which Mahvash was able to write with a certain distance and objectivity. She is looking back over her shoulder, recalling what had happened to her three years earlier, writing in retrospect, as it were. And so she uses a real narrative style, telling the events like a story. If Azita and I chose to concentrate on this portion of her memoirs to create this book, it is quite simply because Mahvash wrote it like a story rather than a diary. Also, she was alone most of the time, so it was natural to keep a single point of view and to construct a book that followed a natural arc, beginning with her arrest, continuing through her solitary confinement, and ending when Mahvash was finally reunited with Fariba. Spoiler alert!

BC: You mentioned the story of how Mahvash finally got hold of a pen. How did she manage to write these memoirs, given the circumstances?

BN: The short answer is "slowly." It took Mahvash seven years. Page after page she scribbled, scrap after scrap she smuggled out of prison, month after month and year after year. And in what conditions! So it is hardly surprising that it took us just as long to translate and edit her work. She asked us to prepare this book when she was free, and although we began in 2018, we only finished the actual translation in 2022. Then it took me another two years to edit and finalize the book in 2024. We weren't in prison, but we had to imagine ourselves with her to do this work.

Imagine the circumstances in which she wrote. Imagine you're sitting in that cell with Mahvash—a concrete box of roughly one-and-a-half by two metres, or two by three metres, depending on which ward you're in. You're sitting on the floor. You are squeezed in there with Fariba, and sometimes two or three other people. In the larger cells of the isolation ward of Section 209 in Evin Prison, there are two doors; this is because the wall between smaller cells (just two by four feet) was broken down when there was overcrowding. So you're sitting opposite two peepholes in those doors. And you know very well that the guards can check on you at any time. And now you want to write. You must hide the fact that you have a pen. You must hide the fact that you have paper. Mahvash said she used to sit directly opposite the door to keep an eye on the peepholes, and wrote in such a way that it looked as if she was reading. She scribbled on tissue paper, then had to hide the tissues in her clothes, in her bedding. She sat on them, slept on them, did everything possible to keep them from being discovered. Sometimes she was able to fold them up in plastic tablecloths when the prisoners were allowed to eat with family members in the visitors' hall. And so she managed bit by bit to smuggle 750 pages out to her husband, along with the leftovers!

BC: Quite a few women have written about Section 209 of Evin Prison, probably Iran's most notorious ward. Can you speak about how this book relates to or provides another vantage point to this discussion?

BN: Mahvash does two things that I have never encountered in any of the other prison memoirs. And they are closely related. The first and most impressive trait of her memoir is her compassion, her empathy, her extraordinary ability to put herself in the place of others, to feel what they are feeling, to understand their dilemmas, without a trace of judgement—just with love. The other trait is that she invites the reader to do the same. She asks you to feel what she is feeling, experience what she is enduring, understand her situation. She takes you with her.

For example, when she wants to describe the prison of Evin, she starts by using that colloquial voice. "When you approach Evin," she says, "you go through that gate, and you walk up that slope, and you turn to the right, and you see that door…" It gives you the goose bumps, to be honest.

But this section was not easy to translate or edit. Readers need descriptions that make them feel they are "there," in real time and space. And how can a prisoner be exact and visually precise wearing a blindfold? Mahvash herself often did not know where she was and had to use her other senses—sound and smell—to orient herself. It took 10 years to reconstruct the place. And yet I've never ever seen a description of the interior of Evin as precise as the one Mahvash has written.

Persian is a very approximate language. It hits the target on a slant, as it were. Mahvash's description of Evin in the original was sometimes like a Piranesi sketch[2], with steps going up into the empty air and corridors intersecting in Mobius strip fashion. English, on the other hand, demands precision; it is a very blunt and concrete language by comparison. I needed to know whether doors were on the right or the left of corridors, whether corridors were two flights up or down the steps. And so I had to ask Mahvash many questions before I could ensure that her description was "visible" to the reader. I was lucky enough to be able to do so, because she was still free at that time.

But it wasn't enough to give the reader only a concrete experience of entering the prison. To be true to the original, it was also necessary

2 Piranesi was a classical Italian artist famous for his etchings of imaginary prisons that explored themes of subterranean confusion and isolation.



Mahvash Sabet. Photo permission granted by Sabet's family

to capture that strange, surreal nightmare world, that Piranesi prison she describes as a prisoner in a blindfold. So the chapter on Evin is divided into two parts. The first part is when she takes you in there with her and you "see" it in real time and space. The second part is the internal prison, the psychological prison, which comes from other parts in Mahvash's memoir where she writes on psychological isolation, on being free in prison, on the art of developing that spiritual freedom. So imprisonment that begins in horror, terror and fear, gradually evolves into a place of self-knowledge and true freedom. And Mahvash has taken you there.

BC: The website for the book, mahvashsabet.com, is a treasure trove, featuring excerpts. In one, Mahvash describes how she meticulously cleaned their shared cell daily, using a cloth to pick up every hair. For me, it became a metaphor for doing the good we can in the circumstances we are in. Can you shed light on the message of hope in the book?

BN: The greatest hope Mahvash offers in this book is honesty. She brings herself to account each day, each hour, and is honest with herself and with all that she witnesses and endures. Without such grounding, I don't think hope can grow. It would be a fake flower; it wouldn't be rooted.

Her self-scrutiny and analysis can sometimes be harrowing. She comes back to her cell after these gruelling interrogations, and asks herself, "What did I say? Was I right? Or did I say the wrong thing? Will I put somebody else in danger? Have I been true to the spirit of the Faith?" There's a moment when the interrogator gives her pieces of paper to sign, and she suddenly notices some are blank. And she panics and thinks, "What? Is he making me sign a blank piece of paper so he can then put a false confession on it?" That is enough to plunge her into despair.

She is alone and has no one to consult. Her only recourse is to analyze herself, to do her homework, as it were, which brings us back to your hair-cleaning analogy. She realizes that she can either be a victim or take command of where she is and choose to accept it. She can either feel rage and fury, which will only increase her sense of impotence, or resolve it by deepening her faith and clinging ever more firmly to the Covenant. So she interprets her condition as a responsibility. She tells herself that she is representing the Bahá'í community, representing the Yárán of Iran. And with that role, that job to do, she keeps her dignity and sense of purpose.

These interrogations sometimes go on for 18 hours. And so, another way Mahvash maintains her inner strength is by following an outer routine, by exercising a strict discipline, like a Samurai warrior. It's very physical. When she's alone in her cell, she does exercises, she paces about. And when she's in the presence of the interrogator, she keeps her back upright and very straight, her head level and her chin high. Just as she maintains physical standards of hygiene and health, she also maintains her emotional and psychological stamina. And she does this by keeping a tone of courtesy and respect when she answers the interrogator even when he is flinging insults at her. She never (except once!) raises her voice. She retains her dignity this way and can therefore avoid being objectified and victimized.

Another way that she retains hope is by a growing consciousness of spiritual support, over and above her deserving. She is literally alone for most of the time in this story and certainly suffers from the isolation, but she never feels alone. She lives in different dimensions simultaneously. On the one hand, she's very conscious of where she is—watching the ants marching across the floor, negotiating with the cockroaches—but at the same time she's in another dimension entirely, because of her love for others and her faith, because of her acute awareness of the impact of her imprisonment on her family and the Bahá'í community. When she has to endure horrors and manages not to break down, she realizes that she is not alone after all. She is not the only one beseeching aid from the Almighty: the whole Bahá'í world is resonating with prayers for the Yárán!

Finally, she keeps hope and faith through her humour. Oh, Mahvash has such a wicked sense of humour, such a wonderful command of irony! She pinches so hard it hurts sometimes. She mocks herself, even when she's starving; she satirizes the stupidity of tyranny, even when she's at its mercy; she even ridicules the "gentlemen of the Ministry of Intelligence" for their lack of it. As we read her story, we gradually become aware that someone in circumstances of unbearable difficulty is doing all in her power to help us cope with our own little insignificant problems. She's the one who is free in spite of being in prison. And we're the ones in the prison of self and self-indulgence, the prison of self-righteous entitlement and freedom, the prison of intellectual and spiritual poverty.

BC: The 'Our Story is One' campaign launched by the Bahá'í International Community, which honours the ten Bahá'í women executed in Iran in 1983, highlights the shared aspirations of Bahá'ís and the people of Iran regarding freedom and equality. Is there a connection between this campaign and the book?

BN: Mahvash's book fits perfectly into the framework of the 'Our Story is One' campaign. It is one of many such stories, and Mahvash is not alone in telling it. She was with Fariba Kamalabadi all through those terrible 10 years and again since her second arrest. She may have scribbled the words down, but precious Fariba's silence can be heard throughout this story. And beyond Fariba is the growing circle of the Bahá'ís in prison, 63 more in July alone this year. And beyond the circle of Bahá'ís, there are all the other people suffering in these prisons, perfectly innocent people facing injustice all over the world. Mahvash never says, look at me. Her focus is on everyone else.

BC: Did any of these women's stories stand out to you in particular?

BN: Well, let me start with the guards. Mahvash describes several types. Some are utterly ruthless, completely dismissive, cold, and inhuman. They leave her and the reader breathless and in shock. Others she is able to befriend, and they turn out to be compassionate and kind. One of the latter, an old woman serving in a temporary capacity in the detention centre of Mashhad, stoutly denies that she even is a guard and becomes very fond of Mahvash. So we are introduced to both extremes.

Then there are the women prisoners. Here too we encounter the extremes: those who are violent and those who are passive; those who take advantage of others, even in such cruel circumstances and those whose helplessness is heart-breaking. There's one of the latter variety that I cannot forget; I'm quite haunted by her. She's a young woman, and her story is heart-rending, because you can imagine it multiplied millions of times—wherever women are oppressed.

This young woman was happily married, had a child, and was pregnant with the second when her husband died. He fell from some scaffolding, and that ended her life, as well as his. A young pregnant widow with one child is a real liability in a patriarchal and fundamentalist culture. First of all, her husband's parents claimed the children—the eldest son, and the second as soon as he was born—because according to the law they belong to the paternal side of the family. Then, stripped of her children, and still with milk in her breasts, she has to go back to live with her parents, where her father insists that she be remarried. Otherwise, it's a shame on the family. So, he forces her to marry an old man who is anathema to her and an opium addict.

She is pushed to such limits of despair that she does a terrible thing. In an attempt to drug them and escape, she kills her family by mistake—her brother, her sister, even her father—and then burns the house down to hide the crime. But this man, her husband, survives, and now she is a murderer. The girl is in a state of trauma. She doesn't know what she's done. She only knows that since her mother has paid the bail, she will have to go back to her abhorred husband. And she talks to Mahvash, in tears, in the middle of the night, saying that she doesn't deserve to live. I don't know why this story stays with me in particular; I think it is because Mahvash met several others like her, whom she describes in the rest of the memoir, and so this young woman stands out as a representative of the helpless and hopeless millions all over the world.

BC: Do you have insight into Mahvash's hopes for this book?

BN: Despite the fact that Mahvash is a prominent Bahá'í and has been sentenced and suffered for her faith in Bahá'u'lláh, this is not, strictly speaking, a book about the Bahá'í Faith. It's not a book that sets out to teach the principles or describe the history of the Faith. It is quite simply a book about hope, about integrity and compassion in times of difficulty, and our longing for justice. It's a very personal story, and at the same time one whose power is universal. Mahvash wanted this story to reach as many people as possible, whether they knew about the Bahá'í Faith or not. That was her dream. If we respond to it, that means our heart's mirror yearns for that same light, longs for that very hope. Mahvash's message is so important that it should reach many, many people. Whoever reads her book will surely become an ambassador for hope too, in these times of despair.

BC: How was the title of the book *Open Wide the Doors* decided on?

BN: Mahvash didn't have a title in mind when she wrote her memoirs, but she refers to doors at least 200 times in this book. You go through this door, you come from another. Shut doors, open doors, the clanging of doors, the locking and unlocking of doors, doors with and without handles and keys. There are just non-stop doors, a labyrinth of doors in the prisons she describes.

There are also the doors inside us—shutting us behind our blind prejudices, locking us in our obstinate ignorance. When I read the wonderful passages in the book where Mahvash says, "I felt as if I was free, and everybody else was in prison," I thought, it's because her doors are wide open. So it seemed like a logical choice. Besides, the title has that radiant Biblical resonance of prophecy about it, and God willing, one day the doors of Iran will also be opened wide. We used a line from the poetry of Rumi to set the tone of this book: "Why stay in prison when the door's wide open?" and chose to dedicate the book to the people of Iran, in the spirit of this same hope.

Planting "roses of love" in the Leeward Islands

The following story from a family who pioneered from Toronto, Ont., to the Leeward Islands describes the growing influence of a few children's classes in their neighbourhood.

"…raising communities whose habits of thought and action are rooted in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation."[1]

A few months ago, two weekly children's classes were established in our neighbourhood on the island of Antigua—a part of the Leeward Islands—engaging 20 children. In addition to the weekly classes, the teachers often gather the children and take them to play together in a nearby park. During their first visit to the park, some of the children were teasing and saying unkind things about each other. While this behaviour is normalized and accepted among children in this neighbourhood, it did not reflect the quotes they have been memorizing in class.





1 From the Universal House of Justice to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors, 29 December 2015.

When unkind words were spoken, the teachers quickly reminded the children of the first quote they had all memorized, "O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart…" The teachers then said that one requirement for joining the group at the park is to strive to have pure, kindly, and radiant hearts. The children responded quickly, and although overcoming old habits and attitudes is challenging, they are trying and remind each other to play well.

When new children join the group at the park, they often interact in less kind ways. The children from the classes are now quick to tell them the rules for joining us at the park: "You have to have permission from your parents, and you have to have a kind heart and treat everyone well."

On a subsequent visit to the park, two of the young girls had a disagreement and refused to walk home together. The teacher reminded each of them that even though they had a disagreement, they must be careful to plant ONLY the rose of love in their heart as they learned in lesson three of the children's class: "O Friend! In the garden of thy heart, plant naught but the rose of love…"

The teacher explained that if they are not careful, they can become like the man in the story from that lesson, whose heart became so full of anger that it spilled onto those around him.[2] The teacher then gave them some space but kept an eye on what happened next. A slightly older student from the class stayed close to the girls and continued to counsel them, using the quote and the reference from the story. By the time the girls reached their houses, they gave each other big hugs and said they wanted to be friends and have hearts filled with love.

The children's classes are beginning to influence the entire population of children, even those who do not attend. Even the youngest children in the class help older children resolve difficulties and disagreements that arise during games, reminding them of the quotes they have learned and how they should treat each other.

– Emily and Ashraf Rushdy

2 In this story, which takes place in 'Akká, a poor man treats 'Abdu'l-Bahá very badly because He is a Bahá'í, even when 'Abdu'l-Bahá showers him with kindness avnd practical assistance. After a period of 24 years, the man's heart finally changes, and he asks for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's forgiveness.



Sacred Charge campaign: a vibrant youth movement across Ontario



The following article provides insight into some of the meaningful conversations that inspired young people to think about how they can contribute to the betterment of their communities.





This past summer, youth across Canada dedicated their time and energy to service, building resolve among a growing number of their peers to make a positive difference in their communities. Several organized spaces channelled these young people's aspirations. In Ontario, the Sacred Charge campaign, which took place in Toronto, Ont., and Ottawa, Ont., brought together 88 youth, aged approximately 17-23, from Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada. These youth reached out to hundreds more. In addition, several other clusters in Ontario and the regions of Quebec and Atlantic Canada, drew on the capacity of the Sacred Charge participants to organize campaigns, summer of service programs or teaching projects later in the summer.

In simple, uplifting conversations, the youth shared short excerpts from the Bahá'í Writings with new friends, thinking together about how to apply shared insights immediately to improve some aspect of community life.

This approach reflects the "expansive view" of the institute that the Universal House of Justice outlined in its 30 December 2021 message, as participation in the institute courses not only prepares individuals to carry out activities related to expansion and consolidation but also for "ever-deeper engagement in the life of the wider community."

The following examples illustrate how meaningful conversations inspired participation in the community-building process:

Three youth tutors entered a neighbourhood with the vision of sharing the Word of God with many people. They met a youth who said he liked the community and wished for more programs in the neighbourhood. One of the tutors shared the quotation—the first to appear in Ruhi Book 1: *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*—"The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct."

After reading this quote, one of



the tutors asked the youth, "How can the betterment of the world be accomplished?" The youth responded, "More people doing good things for the community." The tutor then asked, "What do you think your role is in the betterment of the community?" The youth shared, "I am not sure I can do anything. It's not really my job." The tutor replied, "Then whose job is it?" The youth replied, "Probably a community leader." Another tutor returned to the quote, emphasizing that the betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, and asked, "Can you give an example of a pure and goodly deed?" The youth replied, "Giving $5 to a homeless person." The tutor then asked, "Do you think you could do that?" Again, the youth confidently responded, "Yes, I can!" The tutor responded, "So it is clear you can contribute to the betterment of the world, right?" The youth confidently responded, "Yes, I can!"

When asked whom he could bring this conversation to, the youth enthusiastically led the tutors to a park where several youth and junior youth were playing soccer. He approached them and shared the quote. Over a 10-minute conversation, the tutors saw this youth shift from ambivalence about his role in his community to eagerness to participate actively in the community-building process and to share the Word of God with others.

Beyond the initial encounter: sparking a pattern of collective action

Another tutor met a group of youth around a basketball court. After reflecting on the same quotation about the betterment of the world, they had the idea of organizing a community basketball festival. Later, the tutor visited the apartment where the youth lived, with plans to go to Tim Horton's to continue their conversation.

Before leaving, he asked whether he could introduce himself to the youth's family. Instead of going to Tim Hortons, the tutor found himself sitting with the youth's mother, younger brother, and several of the brother's friends. He shared a bit about the seminar he was participating in and discussed the role youth play in contributing to their communities.

The mother shared how happy she was to see youth eager to improve their community and immediately recognized the potential of the basketball festival. The tutor soon realized the conversation had expanded beyond the initial youth and that the hearts of all present were open. He asked the youth if they could study Book 1 together with his family. Before beginning, he explained that the purpose of the institute is not simply to study ideas but to learn how spiritual qualities can be translated into action within our communities. As the mother and the two brothers eagerly began studying together, the study circle gave rise to a profound conversation. Eventually, they began planning the festival, with the tutor encouraging their efforts and offering support.

The younger brother suggested making an announcement at Mass and initially asked the tutor to make it. The tutor's immediate response was that it would be more meaningful if he made the announcement himself and that he would gladly accompany him in doing so. Similarly, when the older brother suggested creating a poster and asked the tutor to make it, the tutor tried not to focus on his own conceptions of what would make the "best" poster. Instead, he asked what had inspired the youth to create this festival and how those same sentiments could be conveyed to the community. Through these conversations, the tutor began to understand that accompanying

others is not about carrying out tasks on their behalf, but about helping people recognize and express their capacity to contribute to the betterment of their communities.

When the tutor met the youth again, they thought they should visit the community centre and speak with the manager before holding the festival. This would ensure the initiative respected the community's existing structures. Before the visit, the youth and the tutor studied portions of the youth conference material and reflected on the attitudes and language required when engaging in collective action. Although there was some initial hesitation, the youth courageously led the conversation with the community manager. The community manager expressed joy that the youth were organizing this initiative of their own free will and even asked whether they hoped to establish it as an ongoing pattern of activity.

Later that day, the festival took place. As people arrived, the organizing group discussed how to incorporate meaningful conversations into the festival. They decided that anyone wanting a water bottle would first have to participate in a conversation using materials they had on the role of youth. During the festival, the tutor consciously stepped back from the role of organizer and instead accompanied the youth as they facilitated conversations with their own friends. His role shifted towards welcoming new participants and helping establish a spirit of cooperation rather than competition. Reflecting afterwards, one youth shared that while the beginning of the festival felt like any other gathering at the park, the atmosphere noticeably changed once meaningful conversations became part of the experience. Other youth shared that they wished there had been more opportunities for diverse groups of people, including adults and young women, to participate. Some even suggested that future gatherings could be centred more explicitly on conversation and friendship rather than on basketball

Swiftly welcoming youth into the institute

When a group of youth reached out in a neighbourhood, sharing quotations from Ruhi Book 1 and engaging in meaningful conversations, a young woman approached them and asked what they were doing. The youth explained that they were studying materials from the Ruhi Institute to develop their capacity for service. The young woman immediately expressed a desire to join them. The next day, she began studying Book 1 and completed it over the following four days.

After she completed the book, the tutor accompanied her to visit her family and share some of the ideas and themes she had been studying. Her family responded with great enthusiasm and wanted to learn more. The family was quite isolated from others in the neighbourhood, and when the tutor asked how they might extend the process to others, they were initially unsure. After consultation, they decided to begin serving within their own household.

The tutor then shared several children's class lessons with the young woman. She began holding children's classes with her younger sister, and at times they studied several lessons together each week. She also started a family devotional gathering at her home. Through ongoing visits and conversations with the tutor, the mother began studying Book 1 and consulting with her daughter about the themes they were exploring together.

Over time, the family began discussing the ideas they were learning with neighbours and friends. Together with other families in the area, they helped organize parent gatherings and children's camps to engage the many children living in the neighbourhood.

Walking a path of service

The youth participating in the Sacred Charge campaign received strong support from the local community, who assisted in various ways, including by hosting the youth in their homes and preparing food. Experienced young adults accompanied the youth in the field of service.

In exercising their twofold moral purpose—to grow spiritually and contribute to their communities—young people build capacity during these campaigns to nurture havens of peace through the potent instrument of the institute. While this campaign intensified the youths' efforts over the summer months, it also orients them to a life of service, which becomes the organizing principle of their lives as they pursue studies, work, and other important aspects of life. Young people are developing their spiritual qualities and capacities to act, consult and reflect in light of the Bahá'í teachings.

Youth who participated in this campaign return to their home communities with increased experience and an expanded vision of the institute.

This article was adapted from material provided by the Bahá'í Council of Ontario.



Widening the conversation with youth

A team of tutors in the Central Okanagan cluster in British Columbia share some of what they learned about the broad conversation that connects the institute process to the lives and concerns of youth.



Over the past two years, we set out to understand how the institute process can foster individual and collective transformation at the neighbourhood level. Our focus was on youth, a population that, worldwide, has "shown their ability to take initiative and identify fruitful avenues of service."[1] About 60 youth have completed Ruhi Book 1, 22 have completed Book 2, 10 have completed Book 3, 11 have completed Book 4, and 13 have completed Book 5. Seven youth have arisen to serve as tutors.

Initially, we framed our invitations through conversations that focused narrowly on volunteer opportunities and service to the younger generation. Over time, we realized our conversations needed to be broader so that all young people could see themselves as welcome contributors. As the Universal House of Justice describes, "A generation of

1 From the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridván 2026.





youth is being galvanized into action by a compelling vision of how they can contribute to building a new world."[2] We began inviting youth to join a growing community of friends striving to contribute to the betterment of society.

Taking youth to overnight camps has helped them progress through the institute courses at an accelerated pace, in an uplifting environment. We have learned to complement our study with films commissioned by the Universal House of Justice that are relevant to different segments of the courses offered. The practical component of the courses is also explored during the camp and then carried out in their own realities. For example, after studying Ruhi Book 1: *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*, participants began devotional gatherings in their homes and social spaces, such as their college campus. These initial acts of service have helped the youth see more clearly that the institute is meant for everyone.

As tutors, we wanted to better understand the flow of ideas in the material before each institute camp and, where possible, connect each section to the reality of the youth. Many of our initial conversations focused on the youth's personal experiences seeking shelter from war-torn regions in search of a brighter future. We connected this desire to Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a united humanity, offering it as a source of hope. Through the youth's reflections, we are seeing how the principle of the oneness of humanity is profoundly impacting their thinking and actions. They see this principle as a fundamental truth and have begun acting on their convictions, teaching others.

For example, one youth began sharing the content of Ruhi Book 1 with his family and friends at college. In one of his classes, his professor consistently placed him with students of his own race and background for learning activities. He would then move to sit with people who did not look like him. As he continued to change his groups, the professor expressed frustration, as he wanted to keep people of similar cultures together for learning purposes. This youth explained that he could learn with students from any background because he had come to realize a spiritual truth—that we are part of one human family. He then asked his professor if he had heard about Bahá'u'lláh.

Another youth began teaching a children's class, including his siblings, a neighbour, and cousins. He feels responsible for those younger than himself and naturally brings other youth into conducting the classes alongside him. His younger brother assists with maintaining discipline—although his methods are not always ones he encourages—but he is learning. Recently, when reflecting on the class, he shared that he had finished all 24 lessons of the first grade and moved the children to Ruhi Book 4. The tutors were curious and asked what he meant, to which he replied, "I am sharing the stories from Book 4 about the lives of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh and using the videos from the institute camps."

The path was not an easy one. It often felt as though doors did not readily open to us. The initial cohorts of young people frequently left their studies before completing them, and the camps we organized were small, limiting the sense of participating in a growing movement. Returning from a regional youth conference filled us with hope and excitement, yet the summer schedule we arranged lacked the structure needed to help the friends engage meaningfully with the institute materials.

Yet each of these efforts sowed seeds, and we are now beginning to see their fruit. Every glimpse of receptivity strengthened our conviction that these apparent setbacks were opportunities to learn. Rather than becoming discouraged, we found that each challenge deepened our determination to learn about the kinds of conversations that can connect thousands of people to the educational process.

2 From the Universal House of Justice to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors, 29 December 2015.

Seasonal schools in British Columbia cultivate learning and joy



The Nine Year Plan has inspired a reimagining of seasonal schools in British Columbia, with five schools held this year on the theme "Fostering the spiritual health of families and communities."



For those who have never attended a seasonal school—or have not done so in some time—this summer offered a glimpse of what these gatherings can be: spaces of joy, learning, and spiritual refreshment. Schools in British Columbia explored the theme "Fostering the spiritual health of families and communities." Participants explored this theme through study, devotions, visual arts, and music.

This year, five schools across the province brought together hundreds of friends from diverse backgrounds and communities. These included schools in the Southern Interior at Naramata (June 4–6), the Fraser Valley at Camp Whonnock (June 26–28), Christina Lake Bahá'í School at Christina Lake (August 14–16), Mid-Island School at Camp Caillet (August 14–16), and the first Pacific Coast Bahá'í School at Loon Lake Lodge (October 9–11).

Each gathering had its own character, shaped by the landscape, the participants, and the host community's unique spirit. At the Mid-Island School at Camp Caillet in Nanaimo, B.C., the friends woke to the gentle sounds of farm animals and birds, with a soft mist rising in the distance. The day began with dawn prayers and stretching.

Set among three acres of coniferous trees, the campsite offered beautiful, accessible spaces for workshops, arts and storytelling, and fellowship. More than a hundred people came from communities across Vancouver Island and the mainland. One family travelled 10 hours to take the ferry to the island, and a few travelled from the United States.

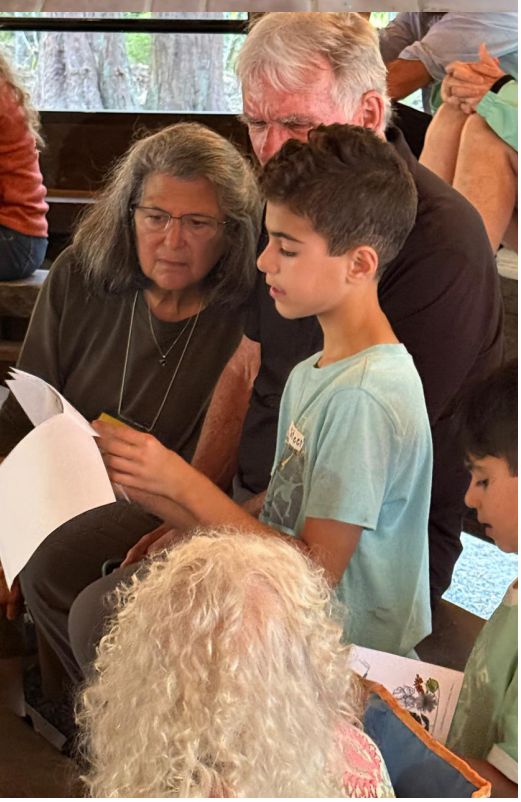
It was an intergenerational space where children, youth and adults came together. Decorating the school was a collective endeavour. Throughout the weekend, participants made origami birds, each displaying a virtue, and hung them around the main gazebo. Suspended in the breeze, the birds danced above the gathering place, adding colour and playfulness to the space.

Music was also a major part of the school, especially during devotions and each evening when everyone gathered after dinner. This called to mind 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words: "The diversity of the human family should be cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord."[1] Everyone was also invited to play cooperative games in a large open field.

1 'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 32.

In a sweet moment, the children shared what they had learned with the adults in small groups, as if on a home visit. The adults not only enjoyed the experience but also learned from it. Parents delighted in seeing their children happy and engaged, while friends, old and new, shared in the joy of being together. As everyone departed, gratitude filled their hearts and eager anticipation for next year's gathering grew.





One participant described the summer school as "A good example of creating a safe space where we can move spiritual concepts from words to deeds." Another participant commented, "I felt empowered by the summer school to engage my greater local community and serve with them." The summer schools have led to the formation of several Book 8: *The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh* study circles at the local level and to more connections with Right of God representatives, who offered workshops at the seasonal schools.

Behind the scenes, the Regional Schools Coordinating Committee (RSCC) has steadily built capacity to sustain and expand seasonal schools at both the regional and cluster levels. During the pandemic, physical schools were discontinued, and in 2022 the community's focus on global conferences made holding them impractical. During this period, we studied the Universal House of Justice's 30 December 2021 guidance and considered how seasonal schools might best serve the work in this unfolding new reality.

The RSCC reflected and asked many questions. How can seasonal schools advance the goals of the Nine Year Plan? What do schools look like when the community is envisioned in this new light, avoiding congregational thinking? Is there a difference in purpose between a family camp and a seasonal school? At the same time, we were receiving enquiries about when a physical summer school would take place.

Many challenges remained, most stemming from lost momentum. Longstanding resources were no longer available. We had stopped reserving venues and had lost connections. We struggled to find a starting point, yet the Master's counsel not to become engrossed in present difficulties or material concerns, but to look with eyes of faith into the future, kept us going. With support from other agencies, individuals, and new organizing teams, we rebuilt the capacity to organize summer schools.

This capacity continues to grow. This year, the RSCC focused on developing financial systems that enable easy payment and timely reporting; using the www.bahaischools.org website as a 'one-stop shop' to share information and facilitate registration for all schools in British Columbia; standardizing registration forms and processes; and providing organizing teams with clearer guidance and templates. The schools operate on a cost-recovery basis and do not draw from the Funds of the Faith.

A highlight this year has been the close collaboration with the Right of God representatives, whose encouragement, support, and insight have strengthened every aspect of this work. Together, these efforts are laying the foundation for more schools, smoother operations, and greater accessibility for friends across the province.

In addition, the RSCC continues to host virtual seasonal schools, providing accessible learning opportunities during the winter months, when travel is more challenging. In mid-January, friends across Canada were grateful to listen to Dr. Firaydoun Javaheri, a former member of the Universal House of Justice, deliver a keynote address titled "The Nine Year Plan—Fostering Spiritual Health." This and other virtual sessions have been recorded and are available on the RSCC website's "Resources" page.

Seasonal schools continue to be places where friendships deepen, capacities grow, and the spirit of service is rekindled. As we look ahead to 2027, the Regional Schools Coordinating Committee and the organizing teams remain committed to expanding these opportunities and to welcoming more friends to this uplifting experience.

- The Regional Schools Coordinating Committee

Historic gathering in Winnipeg, Manitoba, explores translating the Bahá'í Writings into Indigenous languages

Those present explored how translation can connect the spiritual aspirations of Indigenous Peoples to the Word of God.

Language is the repository of a people's wisdom and the primary means through which its values are preserved and transmitted; it is the expression of the spirit of a people. The availability of the Word of God, the wellspring of all material, social, and spiritual progress, strengthens the development of communities and deepens their capacity to contribute their unique share to the advancement of civilization.

Over the past several years, a small collective initiative to translate short prayers into Hul'q'umi'num, spoken in southeastern Vancouver Island, British Columbia, has produced two small prayer books: *Wings of Grace* (Cedar Edition) and *These Children are Pearls.* The prayers were also recorded, and the books include links to these recordings. A separate initiative resulted in the publication of a similar prayer book, *Sous l'aile de ta protection,* in the Innu language, spoken in northern and eastern Quebec and Labrador.

To build on these efforts, the Publication and Distribution Board, an agency of the National Spiritual Assembly, thought it timely to host a gathering of Indigenous friends to reflect on what has been learned about translation and to explore how to increase the volume of Writings available in Indigenous languages in Canada, a long-standing hope of Indigenous Bahá'ís to have greater access to the Word of God in their own languages.

With the support of the National Spiritual Assembly, about 20 friends





from Vancouver Island, Alaska, Yukon, southern Alberta, northern Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, northern and central Ontario, northern Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Nunavut gathered in Winnipeg for three days at the end of May 2026. In an expression of enthusiasm and support, the National Assembly asked its Archives Department to send the ceremonial buckskin dress of Melba Loft, the first Indigenous believer in Canada, to the gathering.

Those assembled around the circle ranged in age from 19 to 83; three generations of lived experience shaped by the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. This breadth and depth of experience fostered consultation characterized by humility, sincerity, and a spirit of collaboration. The circle explored four organizing themes, with participants sharing their reflections, often through storytelling.

The gathering began with an opportunity to describe and reflect on the current situation regarding access to the Bahá'í Writings in Indigenous languages. Participants then studied eight passages from the Writings and guidance from the Universal House of Justice on the power of the Word of God and the importance of translation. The guidance uplifted the spirits of all present and helped focus the subsequent consultations.

Attention then turned to the question, "What are the spiritual aspirations of your people?" The conversation helped identify where concepts from the Writings could be particularly helpful. The most common aspirations noted were the well-being and spiritual progress of children and youth, the strengthening of extended families, and the importance of hope and nurturing a vision of a better future. The final theme for consultation focused on what could be achieved now. Participants shared a range of ideas for advancing the translation work, from creating music and visual arts to producing additional books that would make a broader selection of the Writings available in Indigenous languages.

The gathering has shaped a few lines of action that will gradually increase the number of Writings available in several Indigenous languages. More importantly, it has strengthened a learning process around translating the Sacred Word into these original languages, ensuring this work builds momentum. The following passages illustrate the importance of these efforts.

> **Regarding the translation of the Books and Tablets of the Blessed Beauty, erelong will translations be made into every tongue, with power, clarity and grace. At such time as they are translated, conformably to the originals, and with power and grace of style, the splendours of their inner meanings will be shed abroad, and will illumine the eyes of all mankind. Do thy very best to ensure that the translation is in conformity with the original. [1]**

> **Equally important is the right of the members of indigenous populations to learn, speak, write and communicate in their native tongue, if they so wish, in addition to the official language of the country in which they reside, for language is the expression of the spirit of a people and the vehicle of its cohesive and inspiring traditions. Facility in one's native language in addition to the official language of one's country can produce an enrichment of the heritage of the entire people and can act as a stabilizing influence in society, while the cultural oppression which seeks to obliterate minority languages can have a deracinating and demoralizing effect that will be very difficult to correct. Furthermore, Bahá'ís advocate the development or adoption of an international auxiliary language by which all the peoples of all countries and cultural backgrounds will be able to communicate. [2]**





Photo: Jordan Bighorn

1 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,* no. 31.13.

2 From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual, 25 July 1995.

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Membership Portal: Use the online membership portal to update your personal information in the national database, participate in Bahá'í elections and contribute to the Funds of the Faith. Log in or register by visiting the website https://member.bahai.ca/member. To register, you will need your Bahá'í ID card information.

Other ways to **Contribute to the Funds of the Faith** include through the Treasurer of your Local Assembly, or the Regional Bahá'í Council in your area. You can also donate through the National Spiritual Assembly. In this case, kindly make your cheque payable to "Canadian Bahá'í Fund" and mail it to:
The Treasury Department, Bahá'í National Centre,
7200 Leslie Street Thornhill, ON, L3T 6L8.

The major Funds of the Faith to which one can make contributions are:

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To change your address, use the online Membership Portal, and notify your Local Spiritual Assembly, Regional Council or the Statistics and Membership Department of the National Spiritual Assembly, providing your name, old address, new address and your Bahá'í ID number to: Statistics and Membership Department,
Bahá'í National Centre,
7200 Leslie Street, Thornhill, ON, L3T 6L8;
Phone: 905-889-8168; Fax: 905-889-8184;
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To request international credentials from the Bahá'í National Centre when planning to visit countries other than the United States, contact the Statistics and Membership Department:
7200 Leslie Street, Thornhill, ON, L3T 6L8;
Phone 905-889-8168; Fax: 905-889-8184;
Email: records@bahai.ca

Pilgrimage requests (nine-day pilgrimage or three-day visit) are to be made directly to the Bahá'í World Centre through the Bahá'í Pilgrimage Website
https://pilgrimage.bwc.org
or by post or email: Office of Pilgrimage,
PO Box 155, 3100101, Haifa, Israel;
Email: pilgrimage@bwc.org

Getting married? A Bahá'í wedding cannot take place without the authorization of a Local Spiritual Assembly. Please contact, as early as possible, the Local Assembly in whose jurisdiction the wedding will take place. The Statistics and Membership Department at records@bahai.ca can provide you with the necessary contact details.

Submit news, photos, etc. to *Bahá'í Canada* through email bahaicanada@bahai.ca or mail to 7200 Leslie St., Thornhill, ON, L3T 6L8. Items submitted to *Bahá'í Canada* are considered for publication online and in the magazine.

The Right of God ~ Ḥuqúqu'lláh

"Ḥuqúqu'lláh is indeed a great law. It is incumbent upon all to make this offering, because it is the source of grace, abundance, and of all good. It is a bounty which shall remain with every soul in every world of the worlds of God, the All-Possessing, the All-Bountiful." - Bahá'u'lláh, Ḥuqúqu'lláh — The Right of God, p.5.

ḤUQÚQU'LLÁH PAYMENT INFORMATION

In response to guidance from the International Board of Trustees, the Board of Trustees of Ḥuqúqu'lláh in Canada has set up a centralized system of receipting and recording of payments at the Treasury Department of the Bahá'í National Centre. Payments of the Right of God (Ḥuqúqu'lláh) are not processed through individual Deputies or Representatives.

Payments should be sent directly to the **Ḥuqúqu'lláh Treasury** at the Bahá'í National Centre, 7200 Leslie Street, Thornhill, ON, L3T 6L8. The Ḥuqúqu'lláh Treasury will issue one receipt, which will serve both as an acknowledgment receipt and as an official tax receipt. It is up to the individual to determine whether or not she/he wishes to use the receipt when filing her/his income tax return. Cheques, bank drafts, bank and/or postal money orders should be made payable to "**Canadian Bahá'í Fund**" earmarked "**Ḥuqúqu'lláh**" or "**Right of God.**" Payments to the Right of God can also be made utilizing the online membership portal **<https://member.bahai.ca/member>**. The individual's Bahá'í identification number must be provided on all payments.

Payments should not be made through a Local Spiritual Assembly.

Inquiries regarding the law of the Right of God (Ḥuqúqu'lláh) should be directed to your nearest Representative or Deputee Trustee.

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اطلاعیهء مهم در خصوص نحوهء پرداخت "حقوق الله"

با توجه به راهنمائی هیأت بین المللی امنای حقوق الله، هیأت امنای حقوق الله در کانادا برنامهء مرکزی جدیدی را برای دریافت وجوه، صادر کردن رسید و نگهداری سوابق حقوق الله در ادارهء مالی دفتر محفل ملّی کانادا برقرار کرده است. لذا امور مربوط به حقوق الله دیگر توسّط افراد معاونین و یا نمایندگان امین حقوق الله اجرا نخواهد شد. وجوه مزبور مستقیماً باید به صندوق حقوق الله به آدرس زیر ارسال گردد:

Bahá'í National Centre Ḥuqúqu'lláh Treasury, 7200 Leslie Street Thornhill ON L3T 6L8

خزانه دار هیأت امنای حقوق الله رسید وجوه دریافت شده را که در عین حال رسید مالیاتی نیز محسوب میگردد برای فرستنده ارسال خواهند داشت. تقدیم کنندگان حقوق الله میتوانند از این رسید ها در زمان تهیهء اوراق مالیاتی استفاده نمایند. در روی چک، حوالهء بانکی یا پستی باید عبارت Canadian Bahá'í Fund -- Ḥuqúqu'lláh ذکر شود. شمارهء تسجیل بهائی نیز باید در هر پرداخت قید گردد. از چندی پیش امکان پرداخت حقوق الله از طریق سایت اینترنتی https://member.bahai.ca/member/ و با استفاده از کارتهای اعتباری نیز میسّر شده است.

وجوه تقدیمی برای حقوق الله به هیچ وجه نباید توسّط محافل روحانی محلّی ارسال شود.