

“A Conversation between Two Souls” Engaging in Spiritual Conversation

“...these Holy Days should be viewed as special opportunities for the friends to reach out to the widest possible cross-section of society and to all those with whom they share a connection—whether through a family tie or common interest, an occupation or field of study, neighbourly relations or merely chance acquaintance—so that all may rejoice in the appearance, exactly two hundred years before, of One Who was to be the Bearer of a new Message for humankind.”

-- Universal House of Justice: 18 May 2016 message ¶ 1

“And what could be more fitting to offer the Blessed Beauty on the two hundredth anniversary of His Birth than the earnest striving of His loved ones to extend the reach of His Faith? The first of the two bicentenaries to be celebrated by the Baha'i world is thus an occasion with prospects most thrilling. Viewed aright, this year presents the single greatest worldwide opportunity there has ever been for connecting hearts to Baha'u'llah. In the months ahead, let all be mindful of this precious chance and alert to the possibilities that exist in every space for acquainting others with His life and sublime mission. For the teaching opportunity that is now before the Baha'i world to be seized to its fullest extent, creative thought needs to be given to the conversations that could unfold with every kind of person. In the course of such meaningful conversations, perception is heightened and hearts are opened—sometimes immediately. In this worthy occupation all find a calling, and of the joy that comes from being engaged in this work none should deprive themselves. We entreat the one Beloved that the whole of this bicentennial year may be filled with this joy that is purest and sweetest: telling another soul of the dawning of the Day of God.”

-- Universal House of Justice: Ridvan 2017 message ¶ 2

Conversation is interactive, more-or-less spontaneous, communication between two or more conversants. Interactivity occurs because contributions to a conversation are response reactions to what has previously been said. Spontaneity occurs because a conversation must proceed, to some extent, and in some way, unpredictably.

-- Wikipedia

So why must we get outside of our comfort zones and generate conversations?

➤ **Baha'u'llah could have changed the world without us....**

*"Say: If it be Our pleasure We shall render the Cause victorious through the power of a single word from Our presence. He is in truth the Omnipotent, the All-Compelling. Should it be God's intention, there would appear out of the forests of celestial might the lion of indomitable strength whose roaring is like unto the peals of thunder reverberating in the mountains. However, since Our loving providence surpasseth all things, **We have ordained that complete victory should be achieved through speech and utterance**, that Our servants throughout the earth may thereby become the recipients of divine good. This is but a token of God's bounty vouchsafed unto them. Verily thy Lord is the All-Sufficing, the Most Exalted."*

-- Baha'u'llah: *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*

➤ **But He chose us to do it.....**

*"**From amongst all mankind hath He chosen you**, and your eyes have been opened to the light of guidance and your ears attuned to the music of the Company above; and blessed by abounding grace, your hearts and souls have been born into new life. Thank ye and praise ye God that the hand of infinite bestowals hath set upon your heads this gem-studded crown, this crown whose lustrous jewels will forever flash and sparkle down all the reaches of time."*

*"**To thank Him for this**, make ye a mighty effort, and choose for yourselves a noble goal. Raise ye a clamour like unto a roaring sea; like a prodigal cloud, rain down the grace of heaven. Lift up your voices and sing out the songs of the Abha Realm.... Strive ye with all your hearts, raise up your voices and shout, until this dark world be filled with light, and this narrow place of shadows be widened out, and this dust heap of a fleeting moment be changed into a mirror for the eternal gardens of heaven, and this globe of earth receive its portion of celestial grace."*

-- Abdu'l-Baha: *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha*, p. 35

What should be our mindset as we approach someone to begin a conversation?

➤ It is about family....

“Conscious of the spiritual forces that support you, you will resolve to make this global enterprise a personal concern and become as occupied with the well-being of the human family as you are with that of your dearest kin.” -- UHJ: 1 January 2011 ¶ 2

➤ The Universal House of Justice quotes ‘Abdu’l-Baha:

“See ye no strangers...rather see all men as friends, for love and unity come hard when ye fix your gaze on otherness.” -- UHJ: Ridvan 2010 message ¶ 33

➤ The Master offers us the best way to do this work:

*“The friends of God should weave bonds of fellowship with others and show absolute love and affection towards them. These links have a deep influence on people and they will listen. When the friends sense **receptivity** to the Word of God, they should deliver the Message with wisdom. They must first try and remove any apprehensions in the people they teach.... This is the best method.”*

-- ‘Abdu’l-Baha: The Individual and Teaching, p12

The context and content of spiritual conversation:

➤ The Universal House of Justice points us to the Master:

*“For insight into this work let every believer look to ‘Abdu’l-Baha... **Tirelessly**, he expounded the teachings in **every social space**: in homes and mission halls, churches and synagogues, parks and public squares, railway carriages and ocean liners, clubs and societies, schools and universities. Uncompromising in defense of the truth, yet infinitely gentle in manner, he **brought the universal divine principles to bear on the exigencies of the age**. To all without distinction – officials, scientists, workers, children, parents, exiles, activists, clerics, skeptics – He imparted love, wisdom, comfort, whatever the particular need. **While elevating their souls, He challenged their assumptions, reoriented their perspectives, expanded their consciousness, and focused their energies**. He demonstrated by word and deed such compassion and generosity that hearts were utterly transformed. No one was turned away... **Set His example before your eyes and fix your gaze upon it: let it be your instinctive guide in your pursuit of the aim of the Plan.**”*

-- UHJ: Ridvan 2011 message ¶ 5

- **'Abdu'l-Baha always used questions to open hearts to an exploration of reality. What questions can you use to open hearts and engage in spiritual conversation?**