

# ABS Bulletin

A PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES—NORTH AMERICA

## “Scholarship and the Life of Society” 2014 ABS Conference Theme Statement and Call for Presentations

The Association for Bahá'í Studies Executive Committee is delighted to announce the theme for the 2014 ABS conference and would like to invite you to explore this theme at its 38th Annual Conference to be held in Toronto, Canada from Thursday, August 7 - Sunday, August 10. The venue is the Fairmont Royal York Hotel.

### Theme Statement

The 2014 ABS Conference is being planned in light of ongoing consultations on the new guidance received from the Universal House of Justice regarding the role of the Association. The 24 July 2013 letter from the House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada is available on the ABS website, [www.bahai-studies.ca](http://www.bahai-studies.ca), for all to study, such that the spirit and aims of this guidance may increasingly be reflected in the presentations and consultations at the conference.

Writing about developments in the worldwide Bahá'í community in 2010, the House of Justice noted “the significant strengthening of a culture in which learning is the mode of operation, a mode that fosters the informed participation of more and more people

in a unified effort to apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to the construction of a divine civilization, which the Guardian states is the primary mission of the Faith.” (The Universal House of Justice, Ridván Message 2010, para. 19)

This culture of learning is evident within the field of Bahá'í scholarship. Those engaged in Bahá'í scholarship represent every field of knowledge, every profession, and all areas of the arts and sciences. While their methods and approaches vary widely, they are united in striving to gain a deeper understanding of the Bahá'í teachings and the implications they hold for the issues and challenges facing the wider society.

Strengthening individuals' capacity to engage in diverse forms of Bahá'í scholarship is central to the mission of the Association for Bahá'í Studies. In the recent letter, the Universal House of Justice described the role of the Association:

Every believer has the opportunity to examine the forces operating in society and introduce relevant



City of Toronto (*Destination Toronto*)

aspects of the teachings within the discourses prevalent in whatever social space he or she is present. It is, perhaps, as a means to enhance the abilities of the friends to explore such opportunities in relation to their scholarly interests that the endeavours of the Association for Bahá'í Studies can be conceived. Through the specialized settings it creates, the Association can promote learning among a wide range of believers across a wide range of disciplines. (The Universal House of Justice, Letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 24 July 2013)

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## Annual conference call

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The Association's 2014 conference will focus on scholarship and its potential to contribute to the life of society. All those who are interested in promoting and pursuing Bahá'í scholarship in all its forms are invited to come together, share their learning, and reflect on the challenges and transformative possibilities ahead. As the Universal House of Justice has explained,

Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation is vast. It calls for profound change not only at the level of the individual but also in the structure of society. . . . There are no shortcuts, no formulas. Only as effort is made to draw on insights from His Revelation, to tap into the accumulating knowledge of the human race, to apply His teachings intelligently to the life of humanity, and to consult on the questions that arise will the necessary learning occur and capacity be developed. (The Universal House of Justice, *Ridván Message 2010*, para. 25)

### Call for Presentations

Proposals are invited for presentations on (but not limited to) the above themes, as well as themes pertaining to creative processes and concepts within the performing arts, visual arts, and other modes of artistic expression.

Presentations must explore an original question or proposition through a clearly described method or approach. Proposals must outline the presentation in detail and provide sufficient background on the topic and on the presenter's qualifications for the review panel to assess the value of the contribution. A broad range of qualifications is recognized, beyond purely academic and/or professional. Proposals must be for substantially original work, either unpublished or not previously presented, or work

which systematically continues the development of previously published or presented work.

While many presentations are in the style of talks, the use of the arts and other diverse approaches is also encouraged. Presentations should be seen as a collaborative process, rather than a lecture. Presenters are expected to actively engage conference participants in discussion on their new work, in order to advance that work. Papers will be considered for publication in *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*. Proposals are especially welcome from youth and first-time ABS presenters. Guidelines for submissions are available on the ABS website ([www.bahai-studies.ca/SubmissionGuidelines](http://www.bahai-studies.ca/SubmissionGuidelines)), and you can also contact the ABS if you would like further assistance with preparing a proposal.

In keeping with the Association's desire to emphasize scholarly exchanges and partnerships, special importance is being placed on interaction and collaboration among people working in similar or diverse but potentially overlapping fields.

Therefore, there are opportunities to collaborate in presentations, in addition to panel proposals from existing groups. Those submitting proposals will be asked to choose among:

- a stand-alone presentation by a single or multiple presenters, scheduled for either 20 minutes, with 40 minutes for discussion; or 40 minutes, with 20 minutes for discussion;
- panel presentation of two or more people who would collaborate from the outset, offering different perspectives on a common theme;
- an individual submission with a special request to be placed (if possible) in a collaborative panel with presenters on related themes, for later discussion and interaction;
- a poster presentation, in which a summary of your work is present-

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## Important Changes to the *ABS Bulletin*

The time has come for the *ABS Bulletin* to go digital. Starting from the next issue, the Bulletin will only be produced electronically and emailed to you along with other membership notices, invoices and announcements.

In consideration to those members with no access to email, the Association will print copies of the Bulletin and continue to mail the issue upon request. Kindly fill out the colour insert in this package, and mail it back to us.

The *ABS Bulletin* (ISSN 0840-6138) is published quarterly by the Association for Bahá'í Studies, a nonprofit scholarly organization with 1833 international individual memberships and 113 institutional memberships. The Association promotes scholarship on all aspects of the Bahá'í Faith; holds conferences and seminars on promising research fields; and publishes books, as well as the refereed *Journal of Bahá'í Studies*.

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ed in a mixed visual and verbal poster format, and presenters interact with conference participants on a one to one basis or in small groups in a specified session. Guidelines on how to do a poster presentation can be found at ([www.bahai-studies.ca/PosterPresentationGuidelines](http://www.bahai-studies.ca/PosterPresentationGuidelines)).

Whether arranged from the outset by the collaborators or facilitated by the conference organizers, panel presentations will be scheduled for between 90 to 120 minutes, depending on number of participants and scheduling constraints. Panellists must be prepared for strict time-keeping to ensure that at least one third of the scheduled time is preserved for discussion. They must also be prepared to engage in discussion with their fellow panellists. Where possible, they should get to know each other and each other's work in advance.

Proposals must be submitted online at [www.bahai-studies.ca/PresentationForm](http://www.bahai-studies.ca/PresentationForm)). Potential presenters unable to submit online may contact the ABS office for further information on alternate means of submission.

**The deadline for submitting proposals is 1 April 2014**

## Registration and Hotel Information

Conference registration and hotel information are available on the ABS website: <http://www.bahai-studies.ca/UpcomingConference>. For further inquiries, please contact the Association for Bahá'í Studies, 34 Copernicus St., Ottawa, ON, Canada K1N 7K4; tel.: 613-233-1903; fax: 613-233-3644; e-mail: [<abs-na@bahai-studies.ca>](mailto:abs-na@bahai-studies.ca).

Hotel reservations must be made directly with the conference hotel, The Fairmont Royal York, 100 Front Street West, Toronto, ON M5J 1E3. To book your room, please call the Reservations Department at 1-800-663-7229 or the Global Reservation Centre at 1-800-441-1414, and refer to the group and meeting name "Bahá'í Studies Conference." You can also book online at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/bahaistudies2014>

Room rates are CDN \$139.00 single/double. Each extra person sharing a room will be charged an additional \$20.00 per night. There will be no charge for children up to and including 18 years old who share with their parents. These rates are guaranteed only until **July 22, 2014**. Reservations made after the cut-off dates will be based on availability at the Hotel's prevailing rates. The conference rates are extended to three days before and after the conference dates based on availability.



*Royal Ontario Museum (Courtesy of Destination Toronto)*

## ABS Webinar Schedule

The Association is continuing to schedule webinars to engage both ABS members and the community at large in the study and discussion of scholarly topics. For the list of upcoming webinar sessions go to the ABS website at: <http://www.bahai-studies.ca/UpcomingWebinars>.

**Tuesday, February 18, 8:00 p.m. EST with Dr. Keyvan Geula**

**Topic: Emotional Intelligence/Relationship, and the Long Obligatory Prayer**

Our brain continually reshapes itself according to the experiences we have. If we are learning a song, that circuitry will attract connections and neurons. If we are changing a habit; trying to get better at listening—then that circuitry will grow accordingly. On the other hand, when we try to overcome a bad habit, we're up against the thickness of the circuitry for something we've practiced and repeated thousands of times. Emotional intelligence is a way of recognizing, understanding and choosing how we think, feel and act. It shapes our interactions with others, with our own selves and with God.

KEYVAN GEULA a licensed Marriage Family Therapist for over 20 years, specializes in using the Bahá'í Teachings to identify theories, techniques and approaches that produce the best results for her clients. She is the founder and executive director of Center for Global Integrated Education, a non-profit Bahá'í inspired educational organization.

**Thursday, March 27, 2014 8:00 p.m. EST with Shabnam Mogharabi**

**Topic: Watch, Like, Share: How YouTube is Advancing Mankind**

Did you watch Caine's Arcade? Remember KONY 2012? What about Kid President? All three videos inspired millions into action. Today, the arts online are about more than watching entertaining cat videos on YouTube. Talented artists are posting online content with uplifting, spiritual messages that both change perceptions and inspire action. This multimedia presentation explores how passionate, Bahá'í-inspired creative companies and filmmakers use social networking platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Kickstarter, HitRecord, Vine, etc. to inspire and activate change. The presentation also discusses the importance of art in advancing the collective consciousness of society, our youth, and mankind as a whole.

SHABNAM MOGHARABI is an owner and Executive Producer at SoulPancake, actor Rainn Wilson's media/production company that explores life's big questions through art and creativity. SoulPancake posts thoughtful, uplifting videos daily to its premium YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/soulpancake](http://www.youtube.com/soulpancake), and now develops content for television, events, and major brands.

To watch recordings of past webinars, go to: <http://www.bahai-studies.ca/PastWebinars>

## 37th ABS Annual Conference Plenary Sessions Recordings

The audio CDs of the plenary talks are available for purchase. The videos are also available on the ABS website for free viewing or download. Order the CDs at our online store, on the ABS Website: <[http://www.bahai-studies.ca/catalog/12/cds\\_dvds](http://www.bahai-studies.ca/catalog/12/cds_dvds)>

The Ocean of Revelation: Dynamic Source of All Learning **Hooper Dunbar**

What Are Bahá'ís Learning from Working in Fragile War-Torn States? **Andy Tamas** and **Vasu Mohan**

Reading, Analyzing and Transforming Reality through Participatory Research **Shabnam Koirala-Azad**

The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace and Academic Discourse **Hoda Mahmoudi**

The Matrix and Morality **Rainn Wilson**

Generation of Knowledge and Collective Learning in Action **Borna Nouredin**

Generation of Knowledge and Evolution of Thought, Public Opinion, and Policy **Farida Vahedi**

Justice, Reconciliation, and the Future of Iran **Payam Akhavan**

The 31st Hasan M. Balyuzi Lecture: Knowledge into Action: The Bahá'í Imperative to Serve Humanity **Layli Miller-Muro**

Co-Generating Knowledge through Action-Research: Field Experiments in Behavioral Economics **Nava Ashraf**

An Interview with Dr. Richard Thomas: Scholarship, Learning and Action in the Field of Race Relations – Two Generations of Bahá'ís Reflect upon Key Racial Issues **Richard Thomas**, **Ramya Narahariseti** and **Aaron Yates**

Creating Discourse through Creative Media, a Panel Presentation **Josh Homnick** and **Hashem Selph**.

Moderator: **Adam Mondschein**

# 2014 Call for Nominations

## ABS Awards for Distinguished Scholarship

### Terms of Reference

The Association for Bahá'í Studies – North America (ABS) Endowment Fund was established in 2007 by anonymous donors. The purpose of the endowment is to recognize contributions to Bahá'í scholarship. All fields of Bahá'í scholarship may be considered for this award but, in accordance with the terms of this endowment, preference will be given to scholarly work that correlates the Bahá'í teachings with contemporary issues. The award is intended to stimulate and encourage research in Bahá'í studies.

Nominations will be invited from Association members annually (see below). Awards are made on the basis of demonstrated excellence in generating Bahá'í scholarship and the names of the recipients will be announced at the Annual Conference of the Association. Both awards have an associated monetary value determined annually by the Executive Committee of the Association for Bahá'í Studies.

- The first award will recognize the publication of a major study that advances our collective understanding of the Bahá'í teachings and, where appropriate, that correlates Bahá'í teachings to contemporary issues. Books must have already been published (no earlier than 2011) or been accepted for publication. In the latter case a letter from the publisher is required attesting that the book has been accepted and giving an expected date of publication. This award will be designated as the *Association for Bahá'í Studies – Award for Distinguished Scholarship, Book Category* (ABS Book Award)

- The second award will recognize the work of a graduate student who has recently completed a graduate thesis. The student will already have graduated or his/her thesis been accepted for graduation. In the latter case, a letter from the supervisor or the person responsible for Graduate Studies is required attesting that the thesis has been accepted and indicating the date of graduation. This award will be designated as the *Association for Bahá'í Studies – North America Award for Distinguished Scholarship, Graduate Thesis Category* (ABS Thesis Award)

In both cases, while at levels necessarily different, the works being considered for the awards will represent significant contributions to knowledge in the field of Bahá'í Studies.

Awards will be adjudicated by the Awards Adjudication Committee appointed by the Executive Committee of the Association for Bahá'í Studies. The Executive Committee will review and approve the recommendation of the Adjudication Committee.

### Call for Nominations

The Association for Bahá'í Studies invites nominations for each of the two awards, the ABS Book Award and the ABS Thesis Award.

All nominations will provide the following documentation:

- A cover letter outlining the reasons for making the nomination. The cover letter should not be more than two pages long.
- A copy of the published book or of the bound thesis
- In the case of a book having not yet been published but having been accepted for publication, a letter from the publisher confirming that the book has been accepted for publication and indicating the date of publication
- In the case of a graduate student having yet to graduate but his/her thesis having been accepted for graduation, a letter from the supervisor or from the person responsible for Graduate Studies attesting that the thesis has been accepted and indicating the date of graduation.

A resume of the nominee's curriculum vitae stressing both salient academic and service activities. The resume should not be more than one page. Nominations with accompanying documentation should be sent to Association for Bahá'í Studies – North America, 34 Copernicus Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1N 7K4. Nominations can be emailed to [abs-na@bahai-studies.ca](mailto:abs-na@bahai-studies.ca) or faxed to 613-233-3644 with supporting documents to follow by regular mail or courier.

Nominations should be received at the Centre for Bahá'í Studies post-marked 20 March 2014, midnight, at the latest. Any applications received after this date will not be considered. Please note that no material will be returned to the person or persons submitting the nomination. Pending unforeseen events, the Adjudication Committee will make its recommendation to the Executive Committee before **May 15** and the recipients will be informed soon after. The names of the recipients will be announced at the annual conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies and recipients attending the conference will be presented with the awards at that time.

## **Bahá'í Lawyers Retreat ABS Sponsored Event at Green Acre**

A group of Bahá'í lawyers and legal scholars who participate in the Bahá'í Law List gathered at Green Acre on the weekend of December 6-8, 2013 to consult and examine ways and means of infusing Bahá'í principles and perspective into the discourses relating to the legal profession in North America.

The group had a fruitful gathering and spent part of the weekend deepening on recent guidance from the Universal House of Justice, especially the letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada regarding the role of the Association for Bahá'í Studies. The event was co-sponsored by the Association and the Bahá'í Law List.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States addressed the gathering with the following message:

To the attorneys and other Law practitioners and scholars gathered for the Bahá'í Lawyers Retreat.

Dearest Friends,

It gives us much pleasure to welcome you—with warm affection and with high regard for the honored and honorable profession in which you are variously engaged—to the campus of the storied Green Acre Bahá'í School.

You have come together this weekend not to hone lawyerly skills or to augment your knowledge of particular facets of the Law, for other forums offering opportunities for such professional development abound. You have gathered, instead, for a purpose wholly different and most promising: to confer on ways and means through which the unique perspective of Bahá'ís—and the unifying principles

and values that nourish and sustain us—can increasingly be brought to bear in the vast and multifaceted discourse both within and surrounding the legal profession in America.

We are particularly excited by—and support wholeheartedly—your exploration of this purpose, for it is not only in consonance with the Universal House of Justice's Five Year Plan guidance but with the focus the Supreme Institution has advised other Bahá'í professional and scholarly associations to adopt. Indeed, we hope this will be just the first of many such conferences, perhaps convened regionally and held at regular intervals. We feel sure the professional camaraderie, rich consultation, and stimulating interchange of ideas such gatherings can generate holds great potential for your increased participation in shaping the profession's standards, practices, and direction.

Be sure the National Spiritual Assembly's best wishes, hopes, and prayers will surround and support you throughout the weekend and that we will be eagerly looking forward to word of the retreat's outcome.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,  
Kenneth E. Bowers  
Secretary

Participants left Green Acre planning to arrange similar gatherings among Bahá'í lawyers in their home metropolitan areas. Look for a follow up gathering for lawyers at the ABS annual conference, and for similar sessions for people in other fields and professions at the conference and throughout the year. As described in the recent guidance from the House of Justice regarding the Association, the aim is to systematically develop such specialized consultations in various fields and topics of public discourse.

## **Calendar of Events**

**February 21–23**

**18th European Bahá'í Justice conference (supported by ebbf), De Poort Centre, The Netherlands**

Theme: “Holistic Justice: Treading a Path of Coherence and Service in Balanced Lives”

For information, call for papers, and registration: [www.depoort.org](http://www.depoort.org)

**May 9–11**

**EBBF International Learning Event, Selsdon Park Hotel, London**

For information: [www.makeitmeaningful.org](http://www.makeitmeaningful.org)

**May 22–25**

**'Irfán Colloquium, Bosch Bahá'í School, Santa Cruz, California, USA**

For information and program details: [www.irfancoquium.org](http://www.irfancoquium.org)

## **Members' News**

**Dr. Will van den Hoonaard** was recently presented with the 2013 Award for Lifetime Achievement at the Health Improvement Institute's Awards for Excellence in Human Research Protection, December 2013.

He has been previously honoured with a UNB President's Medal, a Merit Award, and the United Nations Association of Canada Global Citizen Award for his exceptional record in teaching, research and community service. He is internationally renowned for his work on the ethical use of human test subjects.

# SCHOLARSHIP AND THE LIFE OF SOCIETY

Association for Bahá'í Studies  
 38th Annual Conference, 7–10 August, 2014  
 Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Please register for EACH person attending the conference by *fax*: 1-613-233-3644, by *phone*: 1-613-233-1903, *online* at <http://www.bahai-studies.ca> or by *mail*: 34 Copernicus Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1N 7K4.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Province/State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Postal/ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

If this registrant is a child, please indicate age \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have any special needs? \_\_\_\_\_

		Full Conference Fee (4 days)		One-Day Fee	
		ABS Member	Non-Member	ABS Member	Non-Member
Individual Adults	By May 31	\$90	\$150*	\$35	\$55**
	By July 31	\$100	\$160*	\$35	\$55**
	After July 31	\$110	\$170*	\$45	\$65**
Couples	By May 31	\$150	\$220†	n/a	n/a
	By July 31	\$160	\$230†	n/a	n/a
	After July 31	\$170	\$240†	n/a	n/a
Seniors (65+)/ Students/ Unwaged	By May 31	\$70	\$100*	\$25	\$30**
	By July 31	\$80	\$110*	\$25	\$30**
Children (ages 5–15) must be registered by July 31		\$70		\$35	
	Special Discounts	Senior/Student couple: 10% off total registration fee Family: 20% off total registration fee†††			

← Please circle one fee.

ALL CONFERENCE FEES ARE IN CDN DOLLARS

\*This fee includes a 1-year membership in the Association, including a year's subscription to *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* and *ABS Bulletin*, and discounts on ABS publications and conferences. US memberships are charged at the Canadian currency rate.

\*\*This fee does not include membership.

\*\*\*Parents and dependent children living at the same address (minimum 3 registrants)

Total Fees: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarship Contribution: \_\_\_\_\_

GRAND TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

## Method of Payment

- Cheque  Money Order  
 VISA  MasterCard  American Express

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Name (please print clearly) \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Registration fees are refundable, less 10% administrative fees if the Association is notified by July 31, and less 20% administrative fees if notified after July 31.

**Registrants from outside Canada, please note:** fees paid by credit card are processed in Canada. Some credit card companies apply a service charge for transactions taking place in another Country.

## HOTEL AND RESERVATIONS

Standing in the heart of downtown Toronto, the conference hotel features five restaurants, four lounges, a business center, a spa and a health club with indoor swimming pool and steam baths.



### Fairmont Royal York

100 Front Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Special conference room rate:

Single/double occupancy:  
\$139/night (plus tax)

Each additional occupant:  
\$20/night (plus tax)

Maximum occupancy: 4 persons per room.  
No charge for children up to and including  
18 years old who share with their parents.

Toll-free reservations: 1-800-663-7229, group/meeting “Bahá’í Studies Conference”

Online booking: <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/bahaistudies2014>

Conference attendees must make hotel reservations directly with the hotel.

**PLEASE NOTE:** these rates are guaranteed only until the room-block is filled or until July 22, 2014, whichever comes first. Reservations made after the cut-off dates will be based on availability at the Hotel’s prevailing rates. The conference rates are extended to three days before and three days after the conference dates.

## TOURISM AND TRANSPORTATION

Toronto is a vibrant, multicultural city that offers something for every taste. For interesting suggestions regarding nearby activities, please visit <http://www.sectorontaronow.com>. More details on transportation to the hotel are available on our website: <http://www.bahai-studies.ca/hotel>.

## ROOM SHARING

Reduce your conference costs (and make new friends!) by sharing a room at the hotel. To contact other attendees interested in sharing a room, please join the Yahoo! Group “ABS-NA Conference” by visiting its site: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/absconference> or by sending an e-mail to: [absconference-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:absconference-subscribe@yahoo.com). **NOTE:** attendees must make their own hotel reservations and are responsible for contacting interested parties to make their own sharing arrangements. If you encounter difficulties with the Yahoo! Group system, please contact the Association for Bahá’í Studies office for assistance.

