



**Association for Bahá'í Studies–North America  
 41st Annual Conference**

**10 – 13 August 2017  
 Hyatt Regency Orange County, California, USA**

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***Important Information***

***Conference Badge*** Your conference badge is your “ticket of admission” to all sessions. You must wear it to attend conference sessions. The security personnel will not allow admittance to anyone without a badge.

***Security*** The security and usher volunteers at the conference are there to assist you. Please follow their instructions at all times. They can be identified by red ribbons on their badges.

***Promptness*** The schedule of sessions is very full. To give equal time to the speakers, the sessions must begin on time. We request your cooperation in arriving promptly.

***Cell Phones*** The ringing of mobile telephones in the audience is very disruptive to a presentation. Please turn off your cell phone or put it on “silent” mode while you are in the conference sessions.

***The Children and Junior Youth Program*** (Children must be preregistered to attend)  
 The Children and Junior Youth Program for ages 5 to 14, is being held in **Salons I, II & III** on the **Second Floor (North Tower)**. Parents may drop off children at their program 15 minutes before the adult sessions’ starting time. Parents are asked to pick up their

children promptly at the close of each session and for the lunch breaks. (Snacks are included in the children's program.) The times for Children/Junior Youth sessions are

Thursday, 10 August 10:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.

Friday, 11 August 9:00 a.m. — 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, 12 August 9:00 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, 13 August 10:00 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

Parents are required to sign a Medical Information and Emergency Health Care Release form and return it to the Children's Program coordinators.

*The Conference Bookstore* is operated by the Bahá'í Distribution Service in the United States. The bookstore is located in **Garden 4** room on the 1st floor and offers a wide selection of books and materials, including books and CDs by authors and artists presenting at the conference, and Bahá'í jewellery. Hours of operation are

Thursday, 10 August 2:00 p.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Friday, 11 August 9:00 a.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, 12 August 9:00 a.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, 13 August 9:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

*Conference Evaluation* The ABS Executive Committee values your feedback in continuing efforts to improve the conference, and invites you to submit your evaluation online at <http://bahai-studies.ca/conferenceevaluation>.

*Audio and Video Recordings* Plenary session recordings will be available to download and for viewing on the ABS website after the conference at <http://bahai-studies.ca/proceedings-and-recordings/>.

*Lost and Found* Lost and found articles should be reported to the Conference Registration Table. After the close of the conference, any items not picked up will be turned over to the hotel.

*Association Endowment Funds:* These funds are established by individuals to support and encourage Bahá'í Scholarship initiatives. If you wish to explore opportunities to contribute to these funds and support the goals of the Association, please feel free to consult with the treasurer of the Executive Committee.

## Conference Statement

Since the establishment of the Association for Bahá'í Studies more than 40 years ago, it has existed to enrich the intellectual life of its participants and of the Bahá'í community. The annual conference is one way in which the Association brings together a growing number of participants to explore the implications of the Bahá'í teachings for a variety of disciplines, professions, and fields of inquiry. Our common purpose is to examine the ideas, concepts, and theories operating within the scholarly and professional disciplines, and to pursue knowledge that is associated with an evolving tradition of Bahá'í thought.

With this purpose in mind, the conference serves as a venue in which fresh approaches can be taken to generate and apply knowledge related to various disciplines and fields of study. Participants are invited to consider how they can play a role in working with others “to earnestly strive to reflect on the implications that the truths found in the Revelation may hold for their work.”<sup>1</sup> Plenary sessions help to raise our vision and frame our thinking, and breakout sessions create spaces where specialized presentations and discussion can proceed. Across these different settings participants will discover new ideas and begin to explore collaborative enterprises that will extend new lines of inquiry. We hope that the format and spirit of the conference will be conducive to participation so that all can see themselves as actively engaged in a vibrant, inclusive, and uplifting process of learning.

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<sup>1</sup> The Universal House of Justice, Letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 24 July 2013.

# *Thursday, 10 August 2017*

## *10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Special Simultaneous Workshop Sessions*

- 10:00 – 12:00  
*Garden 1, 2, 3*  
*Harbor*  
*Pacific*
- Participating in Academic and Professional Discourses**  
Participants will study and consult about recent guidance from the Universal House of Justice regarding participation in academic and professional discourses. This constitutes a primary focus of the Association for Bahá'í Studies.  
**This session takes place simultaneously in rooms *Garden 1, 2 & 3, Harbor, and Pacific*. Please attend wherever space permits.**  
Organizer: ABS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
- 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.      *Lunch Break*
- Garden 1 & 2*  
2:00 – 3:15
- Study of 1 March 2017 Message from the Universal House of Justice Regarding Path to Global Economic Wellbeing**
- 3:30 – 5:00
- Understanding the Models of Change the Universal House of Justice Is Teaching Us: Three Recent Letters on How to Solve Complex Problems of Our Era**    WHITNEY KAZEMIPOUR
- Garden 3*  
2:00 – 3:15
- Study of 27 April 2017 Letter from the Universal House of Justice Regarding Social Action, Public Discourse, and Non-Involvement in Political Affairs**
- 3:30 – 5:00
- Psychotherapy Inspired by Bahá'í Teachings: A Tool for Personal Transformation and Social Change**    KEYVAN GEULA
- Pacific*  
2:00 – 3:15
- Study of 25 February 2017 Message from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States**
- 3:30 – 5:00
- Integrating Character with Relationships: New Research and Gamification Approaches**    GRANT PEIRCE and SUSANNE ALEXANDER
- Harbor*  
3:30 – 5:00
- Integrating Drama and Other Arts into Community Activities**    MARK PERRY

2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

### **Learning about Working Groups**

The purpose of the Working Groups is to explore thought in a field or profession in light of the Bahá'í Teachings, to foster diverse individual and collective efforts with the aim of engaging effectively in academic and professional discourse. All are welcome. The following groups will reflect on their ongoing work and make plans for future gatherings.

*Salon IV: Arts*

*Salon V: Economies*

*Salon VI: Education*

*Salon VII: Health*

*Salon VIII: Indigenous Studies*

*Valencia: Law*

*Barcelona: Media*

*Granada: Organizational Development*

*Seville: Peace Studies*

*Commodore: Religion and Society*

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

*Dinner Break*

## ***Thursday Evening – 10 August 2017***

*Grand Ballroom*

7:00 p.m.

### **Plenary Session**

Chair: JULIA BERGER

Welcoming Remarks ABS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Devotions

**The Age We Live In** ROBERT HENDERSON

# Friday, 11 August 2017

Grand Ballroom

9:00 a.m.

## **Plenary Session**

Chair: ANTHONY VANCE

Devotions

Official Conference Welcome

Representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States and Canada

## **The Beautiful Struggle: Understanding Racism and Transforming Words into Deeds** RUHA BENJAMIN

Musical Performance KELSEY BULKIN

## **Plenary Panel – Reflections on Race: Exploring the Relationship between Justice and Oneness**

MARIAM ASHTIANI, ZHALEH BOYD, NANABAH BULMAN, and ROBIN CHANDLER

12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

*Lunch Break*

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

## **Side and Interest Sessions**

*The following Side and Interest Sessions will take place during the lunch break:*

*Salon VI*

Wilmette Institute: Development of Online Courses

*Salons VII & VIII*

Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE): Study and Consultation about BIHE's Goals and Vision

*Garden 2*

Consultation with Artists

*Seville*

Indigenous Studies Working Group

*Barcelona*

Law Working Group

*Garden 3*

Study of 1 March 2017 Message from the Universal House of Justice Regarding Path to Global Economic Wellbeing

*Harbor*

Study of 27 April 2017 Letter from the Universal House of Justice Regarding Social Action, Public Discourse, and Non-Involvement in Political Affairs

*Pacific*

Study of 25 February 2017 Message from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

## 3:00 — 5:15 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions

<i>Grand Ballroom A</i>	<b>Arts and Literature</b>
3:00 – 4:00	Socially Engaged Art: Change for the Community SHIRIN TOWFIQ
4:15 – 5:15	<i>Accomplice</i> : Human Nature in Action SHAPOUR DANESHMAND
<i>Grand Ballroom F</i>	<b>Community Development I</b>
3:00 – 4:00	Consultation and Social Discourse: Framing the Future TRIP BARTHEL
4:15 – 5:15	Applying Bahá'í Principles to Community Transformation BRIAN O'TOOLE and JOHN SAFAPOUR
<i>Garden 3</i>	<b>Economics and Organizational Development I</b>
3:00 – 4:00	From Knowledge Generation to Patenting: The Need for Increased Access NIKY BUKOVCAN
4:15 – 5:15	A Pathway to Prosperity: Economic Justice, A New Financial Order and Huququ'lláh SHAMIM MAANI
<i>Salons VII &amp; VIII</i>	<b>Education I</b>
3:00 – 4:00	Applying Approaches from the Five-Year Plan to Advance Discourses and Transform Structures in Our Fields: An Example from Education NAZANIN ZARGARPOUR and ROYA TABRIZI
4:15 – 5:15	Creating Active Agents of Change in K12 YMASUMAC MARAÑÓN DAVIS
<i>Grand Ballroom E</i>	<b>Education II</b>
3:00 – 4:00	Elevating the Discourse in Higher Education SHEIBA KAUFMAN and BRET KAUFMAN
4:15 – 5:15	Preparing Students for 21st Century Lives and Careers: Education that Prioritizes Purpose and Service SUSAN BRILL DE RAMIREZ
<i>Garden 1 &amp; 2</i>	<b>Health I</b>
3:00 – 4:00	Insights and Learnings on Patient-Centered Care LISA MOLIN and SHOGHI FAREID
4:15 – 5:15	Medical Education: Engaging Early Learners in a Dialogue about Spirit, Vision and Idealism in the Practice of Medicine RAMINE YAZHARI and MARK YAZHARI
<i>Grand Ballroom B/C/D</i>	<b>Health II</b>
4:15 – 5:15	Food as Medicine: The Bahá'í Writings and an Update on the State of the Science FARSHAD FANI MARVASTI
<i>Grand Ballroom G</i>	<b>History and Sacred Text I</b>
3:00 – 4:00	Táhirih, A Symbol of Progress: Reading a Nineteenth-century Iranian Poet in the United States and England KEEMIA SOHEIL
4:15 – 5:15	"Under the Tree of Covenant": Memoirs of Bad'í Bushru'í of 'Abdu'l-Bahá ASHKAN MONFARED

<i>Harbor</i>	<b>Media and Technology I</b>
3:00 – 4:00	What's So Funny? The Spiritual Principles of Humor, and Humor as a Social Force ELAHE IZADI
4:15 – 5:15	Navigating Bahá'í-inspired Content in the Online Space: An Interactive Exploration with Bahá'í Blog NAYSAN NARAQI
<i>Grand Ballroom B/C/D</i>	<b>Psychology I</b>
3:00 – 4:00	Is Spirituality Effective in Addiction Recovery and Prevention? ABDU'L-MISSAGH GHADIRIAN and SHADI SALEHIAN
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	<i>Dinner Break</i>

## ***Friday Evening – 11 August 2017***

<i>Grand Ballroom</i>	<b>Plenary Session</b>
7:30 p.m.	MC: KIMIA KLINE
	A Dramatic Reading of Scenes from <i>A New Dress for Mona</i> by Mark Perry Directed by Irlyaan Mondschein
	A country in revolution A dream of three dresses 16 year-old Mona is finding out the meaning of love.
	Shiraz, Iran, 1982. Fanaticism runs rampant in the streets, and Mona, as a Bahá'í—a member of Iran's largest religious minority—is the fanatics' prime target. One night, she has an important dream. It is a dream of three dresses, each representing a different direction her life might take. In her dream and in her waking life, Mona makes her choice—a choice that will lead her straight into danger's path.

## ***Saturday, 12 August 2017***

<i>Grand Ballroom</i>	<b>Plenary Session</b>
9:00 a.m.	Chair: KIT BIGELOW Devotions
	<b>Race, Gender, and Immigration: Working towards Equality while Avoiding Partisan Politics</b> LAYLI MILLER-MURO
	Artistic Presentation TATIANA ZAMIR
	<b>Plenary Panel – Altruism and Identity: Reflections on a Ground-breaking Program of Research</b> MICHAEL KARLBERG and KRISTEN MONROE
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	<i>Lunch break</i>



## 2:00 – 5:45 / 6:00 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions

<i>Grand Ballroom A</i>	<b>Arts and Literature II</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Realists of a Larger Reality: Bahá'ís and the Literature of Hope in an Age of Despair CAITLIN CASTELAZ, YASMIN ROSHANIAN and SALEEM VAILLANCOURT
3:30 – 4:30	Modern Art History within the Century of Light: An Examination of Visual Culture MICHELE DAVEY-HATCHER
4:45 – 6:00	Changing the World, One Wall at a Time: The Story of Education Is Not a Crime SALEEM VAILLANCOURT and NASIM BIGLARI
<i>Grand Ballroom F</i>	<b>Community Development II</b>
4:45 – 5:45	Intercultural Marriage in an Age of Uncertainty ASHLEY MONFARED and ASHKAN MONFARED
<i>Garden 3</i>	<b>Economics and Organizational Development II</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Communities as Economic Actors – Economies Working Group VESALL NOURANI, KIM NAQVI and IAN HAMILTON
<i>Salons VII &amp; VIII</i>	<b>Economics and Organizational Development III</b>
2:00 – 3:15	The Practical Application of Bahá'í Consultation in any Business or Organization MICHAEL BURKE and KEVIN SMITH
<i>Salons VII &amp; VIII</i>	<b>Education III</b>
3:30 – 4:30	The Bahá'í Community and Education – 'Engaged Learning' ASHIYAN RAHMANI
4:45 – 5:45	Raising Prejudice-Free Children? CARL MURRELL
<i>Salon VI</i>	<b>Education IV</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Unifiers of Humanity, Bahá'í Founders and Bicentenary Reflections: An Experimental Public Course HAROLD ROSEN
3:30 – 4:30	Nations University: An Attempt to Introduce Bahá'í Principles into the Education System in Guyana BRIAN O'TOOLE
4:45 – 5:45	The Development of Online Courses by the Wilmette Institute ROBERT STOCKMAN
<i>Grand Ballroom F</i>	<b>Gender Studies</b>
3:30 – 4:30	Gender, Equality, and the Process of Creation: Redefining Gender in Light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation JESSIE LANE
<i>Garden 2</i>	<b>Health III</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Health Equity, Social Determinants of Health, and the Bahá'í Writings SANA REZAI, LITA CAMERON, DARIUS LOGHMANEE, and TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI
3:30 – 4:30	Defining Health as Social Action BABAK ETEMAD
4:45 – 6:00	Advancing the Discourse on Health: Developing an Integrated Conceptual Framework on Health and Wellbeing SHAHRZAD SARIRIAN, GREGORY SCHWEITZ, SETAREH ROUHANI, and FARSHAD FANI MARVASTI

<i>Garden 1</i>	<b>Health IV</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Understanding the Global Refugee Crisis: Responding to Humanity's Current Challenge through Social Action SETAREH ROUHANI, SHADI SALEHIAN and SOROOSH BEHSHAD
3:30 – 4:30	Moving Towards a Community-Based Paradigm of Health Education KIMBERLY WU and DARIUS LOGHMANEE
4:45 – 6:00	Health Education Development and Empowerment: Review and Future Endeavors VADI ESMAILZADEH, KASRA BEHIZAD, MELODY ROWHANI and TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI
<i>Pacific</i>	<b>History and Sacred Text II</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Louis Gregory, The Oneness of Humanity and Highlights in the Development of the African American Lawyer ANTHONY VANCE
3:30 – 4:30	Teachings Concerning Non-Violence and Non-Retaliation in the Early Writings of Bahá'u'lláh SHAHROKH MONJAZEB
4:45 – 5:45	The 19-Day Calendar as a Method for Measuring Spiritual Progress: An Empirical Study with Bahá'ís and their Friends CORA PALAZZOLO
<i>Grand Ballroom B/C/D</i>	<b>Indigenous Studies</b>
2:00 – 3:15	The Journey to Reconciliation TARA NAULT and MICHELE NAULT-MCISAAC
<i>Grand Ballroom E</i>	<b>Law and Politics</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Developing the Human Spirit as a Strategy for Promoting Human Rights MICHAEL PENN and MENGXIAO WU
3:30 – 4:30	Applying Bahá'í Principles in International Treaty Negotiations and the Contemporary Practice of International Law MAJA GROFF
4:45 – 5:45	Advancing Justice through Civil Mediation Reform: Comparative Perspectives SHAHLA ALI
<i>Grand Ballroom F</i>	<b>Media and Technology II</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Journalism and Society in a Time of Fake News and Post-truth RACHEL WOLFE, ELAHE IZADI and JAMES SAMIMI-FARR
<i>Grand Ballroom G</i>	<b>Psychology II</b>
4:45 – 5:45	Mining the Gems of Spiritual Capital: Human Development from Birth till Death NICOLE JAFARI and FERESHTEH BETHEL
<i>Garden 3</i>	<b>Religion and Philosophy</b>
3:30 – 4:30	A New Historical Dialectic ROYA AKHAVAN
4:45 – 5:45	Shoghi Effendi: The “Charters” and His “Crusade,” Ultimate Guide and Model for Our Needed “Herculean” Efforts SHAHEEN SEAN TEDJARATI
<i>Grand Ballroom G</i>	<b>Science and Religion</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Science, Technology, and Spiritual Understanding: The Role and Significance of Scientists and Technologists in the Bahá'í Era STEPHEN FRIBERG, MEHRDAD EHSANI, and JENA KHADEM KHODADAD
3:30 – 4:30	A Systems Approach to Scientific Methods PHILIP SMITH

<i>Harbor</i>	<b>Social and Economic Development I</b>
2:00 – 3:15	Cohering Scholarship and Social Action in Critical Spaces SAHAR SATTARZADEH, JUSTIN DE LEON, KEVIN NAIMI, FIONA PURTON and MOJGAN SAMI
3:30 – 4:30	A Radical Redefinition of International Development ANISA KHADEM NWACHUKU
4:45 – 5:45	Introducing Peaceful Activism through Bahá'í Models and Asset-Based Community Development Approach SOHEILA AZIZI, JAYE HOUSTON, and IRAJ KAMALABADI
<i>Grand Ballroom B/C/D</i>	<b>Social and Economic Development II</b>
3:30 – 4:30	The Fundamental Basis of the Community Is Agriculture NEGAR KNOWLES
4:45 – 6:00	Constructive Resilience as a Response to Oppression MICHAEL KARLBERG, HOLLY HANSON, MICHAEL PENN and BRADLEY WILSON
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.	<i>Dinner Break</i>

## ***Saturday Evening, 12 August 2017***

<i>Grand Ballroom</i>	<b>Plenary Session</b>
7:30 p.m.	Chair: GEOFFREY CAMERON
	Devotions
	<b><i>Presentation of Awards by the ABS Executive Committee</i></b> MARTHA SCHWEITZ
	SONA ARBAB, 2017 Award for Distinguished Scholarship — Book Category
	JUSTIN DE LEON, 2017 Award for Distinguished Scholarship — Graduate Thesis Category
	OMID NIKOOEIGHAMSARI and SOROUGH AHMADI, 2017 Bahieh Moayyad- Khademi Scholarship Award
	SABA FARBODKIA, 2017 Dr. Redwan Moqbel Scholarship Award
	Asking Questions about Income Inequality and the Aspirations of Ordinary People HOLLY HANSON

# *Sunday, 13 August 2017*

*Grand Ballroom*

10:00 a.m.

**Plenary Session**

Chair: MEHRAN KIAI

Devotions

**Soul Pancake** SHABNAM MOGHARABI

**Recognizing Bahá'u'lláh on the Bi-Centenary of His Birth**

HOOPER DUNBAR

**Priceless Pearls Interfaith Choir**

12:30 p.m.

Closing remarks

## *Abstracts and Autobiographical Notes*

### **Roya Akhavan • A New Historical Dialectic**

This presentation tells the story of a new historical dialectic in the world between two parallel processes: one of construction and the other of destruction. It lays out an empirical foundation for understanding the growth in the constructive global collective consciousness that began in the nineteenth century and the progress humanity has since made toward the achievement of a more just and peaceful world as a result of the discovery of new scientific and spiritual truths.

DR. ROYA AKHAVAN currently serves as Professor and Director of Graduate Studies at the Department of Mass Communications, St. Cloud State University. Her most recent work, a book published in January 2017, is titled, *Peace for Our Planet: A New Approach*.

### **Susanne Alexander • Integrating Character with Relationships: New Research and Gamification Approaches** (see Peirce for abstract)

SUSANNE ALEXANDER is a Relationship and Marriage Educator, character specialist, author, and coach with Marriage Transformation. She meets with clients for relationship and marriage preparation and strengthening and is the lead faculty member for the Wilmette Institute relationships and marriage courses

### **Shahla Ali • Advancing Justice through Civil Mediation Reform: Comparative Perspectives**

As judicial systems advance, evolving conceptions of justice are reflected in varying emphasis on the role, place and practice of mediation which aims at party-directed reconciliation in civil courts. This paper explores initial comparative empirical findings, examining the impact of judicial mediation structure on perceptions of justice, efficiency and confidence in courts by investigating whether—and if so, how—variation in civil mediation policy (whether mandated or voluntary) as one factor, affects variation in judicial efficiency, confidence in courts, and perceptions of justice.

SHAHLA ALI is an Associate Professor and Deputy Head of the Department of Law, and Deputy Director of the LLM in Arbitration and Dispute Resolution at the University of Hong Kong. She writes and practices in the area of comparative dispute system design drawing on empirical and comparative methods.

### **Mariam Ashtiani, Zhaleh Boyd, Nanabah Bulman and Robin Chandler • Reflections on Race: Exploring the Relationship between Justice and Oneness – Plenary Panel Presentation** (see individual names for biographies)

Racism is America's most challenging issue. It has led to the oppression and marginalization of people, preventing them from full participation in the life of society. This panel will explore a framework to overcome racism at the level of the individual, the community, and the institution.

MARIAM ASHTIANI is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at California State University, Fullerton. Her research and teaching examine racial inequities in education, employment, and the criminal justice system. Dr. Ashtiani also works with policy organizations, including The Gates Foundation and MDRC, devising programs that improve educational opportunities for underrepresented youth.

**Soheila Azizi, Jaye Houston, and Iraj Kamalabadi • Introducing Peaceful Activism through Bahá'í Models and Asset-Based Community Development Approach** (see individual names for biographies)

This presentation introduces the application of Bahá'í principles and spirituality in general to create a paradigm shift in the attitudes and daily lives of individuals, communities and civic leadership by adopting an asset-based community development model. The three presentations address the realization that humanity is one integrated whole destined for peace and prosperity and how the elements of trust promote positive interaction of three components: individual, community, and government leadership in producing sustainable peace and prosperity.

SOHEILA AZIZI is a trial lawyer, a conflict resolution specialist and a community activist. She is also the founder of People for Peace and Prosperity, a non-profit organization, co-founder of CAMS Conflict Revolution Services, and serves on the Board of "Women on the Move Network."

**Trip Barthel • Consultation and Social Discourse: Framing the Future**

What are the principles of consultation that we can bring into community conversations? Consultation offers a complete foundation for building positive and engaging dialogues. There are many public programs that demonstrate these current practices such as the National Conference on Dialogue and Deliberation, World Café, and the Public Conversations Project. This session will explore how the Bahá'í principles work seamlessly with several modern forms of community engagement.

TRIP BARTHEL, MA has been teaching and practicing mediation and facilitation around the world for the past 20 years. He has been admitted to the Academy of Advanced Mediators and currently serves as the International Chair of the Association for Conflict Resolution.

**Kasra Behizad • Health Education Development and Empowerment: Review and Future Endeavors** (see Esmailzadeh for abstract)

KASRA BEHIZAD is a medical student from Los Angeles, California, with a concentration in community medicine. His research involves the development of the Youth Health Leadership (YouHeaL) Program, an obesity-prevention intervention modeled on the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program with the goal of empowering trainers of youth Peer Health Educators.

**Soroosh Behshad • Understanding the Global Refugee Crisis: Responding to Humanity's Current Challenge through Social Action** (see Rouhani for abstract)

SOROOSH BEHSHAD, MD, MPH is an Ophthalmologist and Professor at Emory University. He has worked with hospitals and ministries of health to develop national eye care plans in developing countries. His research includes improving access to healthcare and developing projects to

address health disparities for underserved populations, both locally and abroad.

**Ruha Benjamin • The Beautiful Struggle: Understanding Racism and Transforming Words into Deeds**

In this talk, Professor Benjamin will pair social scientific insights on racism and inequality with spiritual insights on human oneness and justice which, taken together, offer tools that we urgently need to bring a better world into existence.

RUHA BENJAMIN is a professor in the Department of African American Studies at Princeton University. She writes, teaches, and speaks about the relationship between innovation and equity, health and justice, science, and citizenship. She is the author of *People's Science: Bodies and Rights on the Stem Cell Frontier*, and *Race After Technology*.

**Fereshteh Bethel • Mining the Gems of Spiritual Capital: Human Development from Birth till Death** (see Jafari for abstract)

FERESHTEH BETHEL, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist with 22 years of academic career at California State University system, and has taught undergraduate and graduate level courses in psychology and human development. In 1984, she wrote her doctoral dissertation on "A Psychological Theory of Martyrdom."

**Zhaleh Boyd • Reflections on Race: Exploring the Relationship between Justice and Oneness – Plenary Panel Presentation** (see Ashtiani for abstract)

ZHALEH BOYD is a second-generation Bahá'í and CEO of Zhaleh Solutions, a consulting firm providing human trafficking intervention design to governmental, non-governmental, community based, and corporate organizations. Zhaleh has a Masters in Public Diplomacy from University of Southern California and a PhD in Contemporary Slavery from the University of Hull-WISE.

**Susan Brill de Ramirez • Preparing Students for 21st Century Lives and Careers: Education that Prioritizes Purpose and Service**

This talk will present the recent research in the increasingly interrelated fields of student success in college and employee post-college career readiness that is demonstrating the importance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's guidance a century ago, urging "the study of those arts and sciences of which society stands in dire need." Drawing upon extensive data regarding the state of higher education and its relation to the changing demands of the 21st century workplace, this presentation articulates the necessity for a coherent vision forward for the education and training of students and employees.

DR. BRILL DE RAMIREZ is Caterpillar professor of English at Bradley University, coordinator of English Graduate Studies, BIHE faculty, National Humanities Councilor for Council for undergraduate Research, Native American Literature Series Editor for Lexington Books, author of eight books including *Make College Work for You* (Pearson), and WAC Board member.

**Niky Bukovcan • From Knowledge Generation to Patenting: The Need for Increased Access**

Patent filings may be used to measure economic growth and innovation that stem from knowledge generation. The statistics on patent filers reveals an innovation disparity between wealthier nations and developing economies. Across the United States, innovation growth is largely concentrated in a few geographic areas and patent rights are primarily held by large corporations. Attendees will study the importance of decentralized knowledge generation and its IP implications and will explore means for allowing participants in core activities to engage in scientific discovery to solve local needs.

NIKY BUKOVCAN has a background in engineering and has practiced law since 2007. Her primary area of practice is in the field of patent litigation. Most recently, she obtained an LL.M. where she presented her thesis on access to knowledge generation and patenting, as inspired by the Bahá'í Writings.

**Nanabah Bulman • Reflections on Race: Exploring the Relationship between Justice and Oneness – Plenary Panel Presentation** (see Ashtiani for abstract)

NANABAH FOGUTH BULMAN is from the Navajo reservation in Northern Arizona. She has worked closely with the junior youth program and has been working at the Native American Bahá'í Institute as program coordinator. Her focus is creating spaces for local resources to explore how elements in our culture are reinforced by principles of the Faith.

**Michael Burke and Kevin Smith • The Practical Application of Bahá'í Consultation in any Business or Organization** (see individual names for biographies)

Decision-making and problem-solving in a business setting is often approached by a process of compromise. But compromise is often made difficult or impossible by issues of ego and competitiveness. We present an approach based on the principles of Bahá'í Consultation, which we call Solution-Building™, to help overcome these issues and create an atmosphere in which problems can be examined and true solutions be developed and then implemented. Several guiding principles, or rules, are presented and discussed for the application of Solution-Building.

MICHAEL BURKE has had a long career in the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and nanotechnology industries with positions ranging from the laboratory to the executive suite. He currently teaches part time at the college level. He and his wife Susan Bowling live in Colorado.

**Lita Cameron • Health Equity, Social Determinants of Health, and the Bahá'í Writings** (see Rezai for abstract)

LITA CAMERON is a resident in family medicine with an interest in global health. She is currently working with fellow residents to formally incorporate the social determinants of health into postgraduate training.



**Caitlin Johnson Castelaz, Yasmin Roshanian, and Saleem Vaillancourt • Realists of a Larger Reality: Bahá'ís and the Literature of Hope in an Age of Despair** (see individual names for biographies)

Disintegration and integration constitute the great drama of our age. Literature often reflects the disintegration; despair is pervasive and writers, as well as their fictional characters, are bewildered. Some writers, though, struggle against the temptation to represent only the baser side of human nature. Ursula Le Guin is one: she calls for writers to see alternatives to how we live, to be “realists of a larger reality.” Our panel seeks to identify fellow travelers to engage in a new discourse on writing with hope. The panelists represent a subgroup of the Media Working Group focused on the literary arts.

CAITLIN JOHNSON CASTELAZ lives in New York City and works as a writer and editor. She is the founding editor of *Vahid*, an annual Bahá'í-inspired literary magazine, and serves as an editor at NineteenMonths.com, where she publishes collaborative writing initiatives. Her poetry has appeared in *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, and other publications.

**Robin Chandler • Reflections on Race: Exploring the Relationship between Justice and Oneness – Plenary Panel Presentation** (see Ashtiani for abstract)

DR. ROBIN CHANDLER is a tenured professor at Northeastern University in Boston. A sociologist working in international development as a specialist in gender and cultural competency, Chandler has worked on six continents, is the recipient of grant awards from the Fulbright Commission, the National Science Foundation, and has an extensive publication record.

**Shapour Daneshmand • *Accomplice*: Human Nature in Action**

During the last four decades, the Iranian regime has continued its violation of human rights. Most severe cases of such violations have been heaped upon the Bahá'í community who is the most peace-loving, peace-promoting segment of the country's population. Considering human nature is potentially good, one question remains to be answered: Why is nothing being done by the multitude of good souls to stop such atrocious acts? *Accomplice*, a full feature documentary, attempts not only to highlight the problem, but to take a positive step toward bringing it closer to its end.

SHAPOUR DANESHMAND is an accomplished producer, director, and international filmmaker with over 25 years of experience. He studied at the prestigious London International Film School. Shapour is an activist with a keen sense of justice, an Emmy award winner who turns ideals into reality.

**Michele Davey-Hatcher • Modern Art History within the Century of Light: An Examination of Visual Culture**

What is modern art? Why is it important? Visual art is complex, and rooted in a diverse range of cultural interactions and social movements. Let us collectively examine a handful of art works relating

to a variety of artistic movements occurring since the mid-1800s, to reflect on the ways in which visual culture is a means of mapping and understanding social transformation. In considering the spiritual relevancy and influence of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation in contextualizing global artistic development, we can more fully understand the potential of the creative faculty of the human soul.

MICHELE DAVEY-HATCHER is currently attending the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Art and Art History. Michele has been working within various galleries and institutions in Vancouver, learning about public programming, community engagement and education in relation to the arts.

### **Ymasumac Marañón Davis • Creating Active Agents of Change in K12**

How can an institution over one hundred years old change to empower students? Developing active agents of their own learning in the K12 system is a challenging and exciting task. With the use of technology, many districts are being asked to rethink their learning spaces. Rethinking a learning space includes culture, infrastructure, mind-sets, and pedagogy. This workshop offers insight into how the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh can offer a guiding light to this revolutionary change in learning.

YMASUMAC MARAÑÓN DAVIS is a consultant using her extensive work in K12 to support organizations in changing their learning culture. Her professional background extends from classroom teacher to county office of education providing professional development to educators, families and community. She's also a writer, mother of four, and an avid traveler.

### **Justin de Leon • Cohering Scholarship and Social Action in Critical Spaces** (see Sattarzadeh for abstract)

JUSTIN DE LEON, Ph.D. teaches in the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of California, San Diego. His research includes focus on Indigenous worldviews, social change, and the Lakota Sioux.

### **Hooper Dunbar • Recognizing Bahá'u'lláh on the Bi-Centenary of His Birth**

This talk consists of thoughts and comments in light of the worldwide spread of Bahá'u'lláh's resplendent Faith and its healing Message during the year of the bicentenary of His Birth. We will consider the progressive stages in the rise of the Sun of Truth and the potential offered for greater awareness of the role Bahá'u'lláh plays in our collective lives.

HOOPER DUNBAR is retired member of the Universal House of Justice, was a long-time Bahá'í pioneer, educator, translator and publisher in Latin America. An accomplished painter and published author, he has served for 37 years at all levels of Bahá'í administration.

**Mehrdad Ehsani • Science, Technology, and Spiritual Understanding: The Role and Significance of Scientists and Technologists in the Bahá'í Era** (see Friberg for abstract)

MERHDAD EHSANI is the Robert M. Kennedy Professor at Texas A&M University. He has over 130 international awards, is co-author of 17 books, over 400 publications, and more than 30 patents. He has been interested in the convergence of scientific and spiritual search for over four decades.

**Vadi Esmailzadeh, Kasra Behizad, Melody Rowhani, and Tina Shahidyazdani • Health Education Development and Empowerment: Review and Future Endeavors** (see individual names for biographies)

This presentation will explore current approaches used in the development of community health education programs. Focusing on programs that claim to utilize empowerment-based curricula, a comprehensive literature review will be performed to analyze current theories and assumptions about health, youth, and empowerment which guide the methodology and approach of health interventions. Based on findings of the review, presenters will relate the varied outcomes of past interventions with the diverse conceptual frameworks used to guide them. The presenters will also discuss the contribution of Bahá'í principles to discourse and action within the field of health empowerment and curriculum development.

VADI ESMAILZADEH, a UCLA medical scribe and dermatology researcher, is pursuing a career in medicine and public health. She also works as a program developer for the Youth Health Leadership Program, an obesity-prevention intervention modeled on the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program that aims to empower health mentors.

**Babak Etemad • Defining Health as Social Action**

The Office of Social and Economic Development (OSED) at the Bahá'í World Centre writes, "Bahá'í activity in the fields of social and economic development seek to promote the well-being of people of all walks of life. . . to effect constructive social change, as it [the Bahá'í Community] learns to apply the teachings of the Faith. . . to social reality." This paper proposes "health" as a social reality that should be explored as a path toward social action within the Bahá'í Community. A working definition of health and wellness will be proposed, integrating physical and spiritual aspects of the human condition from Bahá'í sacred texts.

BABAK ETEMAD is a gastroenterologist and is currently medical director of gastrointestinal endoscopy for the Main Line Health System in Philadelphia. He serves on the Board of Health for Humanity. His professional and Bahá'í activities have taken him to many areas around the world. He currently lives in the Philadelphia suburbs.

**Shoghi Fareid • Insights and Learnings on Patient-Centered Care** (see Molin for abstract)

SHOGHI FAREID is a lecturer and practicing dentist in California. Dr. Fareid is a John Greenspan Global Health Fellow and Pierre Fauchard Academy Merit Award Winner with interest in the evaluation of

health-care systems. He holds a doctorate in dental surgery from the University of California, San Francisco.

**Stephen Friberg, Mehrdad Ehsani, and Jena Khadem Khodadad • Science, Technology, and Spiritual Understanding: The Role and Significance of Scientists and Technologists in the Bahá'í Era** (see individual names for biographies)

The insights of modern science and spirituality about reality are converging. Meanwhile, traditional religions are experiencing gradual irrelevance. What will take the place of traditional religions? This panel presents insights from science, technology and the Bahá'í teachings and explores the role and significance of scientists and technologists for harmonious spiritual and material progress in the Bahá'í Era.

STEPHEN FRIBERG is a physicist living in Silicon Valley and working in the semiconductor industry. His research was in quantum optics, quantum entanglement and photonics and he has written over 60 technical papers and 7 patents. He writes and speaks frequently on science, religion, and the Bahá'í Faith.

**Keyvan Geula • Psychotherapy Inspired by Bahá'í Teachings: A Tool for Personal Transformation and Social Change**

The Bahá'í Writings are a divine instrument that educates the mind about spiritual truths and enables us to adopt God-like thoughts, volition and actions. Recent research in neuroscience and mental-health acknowledges the significance of the spiritual self in overall well-being. Love of Bahá'u'lláh serves as a magnetic force that draws us away from self-centered and wayward patterns of thought, ready to perform in one universal and divine symphony. This workshop will explore the mental and social benefits of the application of Bahá'í Teachings in psychotherapy noting the difference it could make in the spiritualization of the individual as well as the betterment of the world.

KEYVAN GEULA, MFT, has been a licensed Marriage, Family, and Child counselor for over 25 years specializing in the integration of psychotherapy and spirituality from a Bahá'í perspective. She is founder and president of Center for Global Integrated Education which explores and teaches the mind-body-spirit approach in education, integrating spiritual wisdom with the latest discoveries in behavioral sciences and character education.

**Abdu'l-Missagh Ghadirian and Shadi Salehian • Is Spirituality Effective in Addiction Recovery and Prevention?** (see individual names for biographies)

Substance abuse and addiction are of epidemic proportion and represent leading causes of morbidity and mortality affecting all strata of society globally. Criminalization has failed as a strategy and innovative integrated solutions are required. Multifaceted programs that include medical, psychosocial and spiritual approaches provide a unique opportunity for prevention, treatment, and reduction of relapse. We explore and propose the role of spirituality as part of a holistic approach to a comprehensive and integrated programme for recovery from and prevention of addiction. We present evidence-based data to show the role of spirituality in addiction prevention, recovery, and reduced relapse.

DR. ABDU'L-MISSAGH GHADIRIAN, professor emeritus of McGill University, is a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. He has established a course on spirituality and ethics in medicine at McGill which continues to this day. As an author and researcher he has spoken in conferences worldwide.

### **Maja Groff • Applying Bahá'í Principles in International Treaty Negotiations and the Contemporary Practice of International Law**

This session will explore the contemporary practice of international law and the many ways that Bahá'í principles might assist in facilitating positive global outcomes in such practice. The presenter will draw from her practical experience in and around international legal institutions and processes in The Hague, New York, and elsewhere.

MAJA GROFF is an international lawyer based in The Hague, assisting in the development, negotiation, and servicing of international multilateral treaties. She holds degrees from McGill, Oxford, and Harvard universities, and is an attorney admitted to practice in the state of New York.

### **Holly Hanson • Constructive Resilience as a Response to Oppression** (see Karlberg for abstract)

### **Holly Hanson • Asking Questions about Wealth Inequality and the Aspirations of Ordinary People**

Growing extremes of wealth and poverty shape the lives of every person on the planet. Can ordinary people make choices that take apart economic and social structures that have been intensifying inequality for several hundred years? Can we create economic structures that build reciprocity and solidarity? We look to the past at communities which organized economic activity to benefit the whole as well as the individual, asking how they did it, why it worked, and whether their efforts are relevant now. We look to the future to ask how groups of people could learn systematically about making economic choices that lead to dynamic, united, prosperous communities.

HOLLY HANSON is a professor of history at Mount Holyoke College, where she teaches African history, the history of global inequality, and history of small-scale agriculture. Her publications include *A Path of Justice: Building Communities with the Power to Shape the World*, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda*, and *Social and Economic Development: A Bahá'í Approach*.

### **Robert Henderson • The Age We Live In**

The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has released powerful forces that are coursing through nations—reshaping global order, creating opportunities for growth, and confronting us with destabilizing challenges. In the United States, the fraying social fabric is evident in the differentiation of human value by race and class and in the sharp decline of conditions needed for marginalized populations to lead safe, healthy, and dignified lives.

ROBERT HENDERSON is Principal Consultant for The Henderson Consulting Group, specializing in the development of high performance corporate organizations. Dr. Henderson is an elected member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, the Bahá'í Faith's senior national

administrative institution. He holds a doctoral degree in Education from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

**Jaye Houston • Introducing Peaceful Activism through Bahá'í Models and Asset-Based Community Development Approach** (see Azizi for abstract)

DR. JAYE HOUSTON is Coordinator of Community Service and Professor of Religion at the University of La Verne. She serves on the advisory board of Women on the Move Network and the board of People for Peace and Prosperity.

**Elahe Izadi • What's So Funny? The Spiritual Principles of Humor, and Humor as a Social Force**

Humor is a lens through which we can view and examine reality, and when wielded with expertise, can serve as a powerful tool. This session aims to provide a space to begin an exploration of comedy's underlying spiritual principles, practice as an artistic discipline, and role as a social force. We will draw upon writings and stories from the history of the Bahá'í Faith, examples from more modern-day contexts and reflections from seasoned performers. Jokes may or may not be included.

**Elahe Izadi • Journalism and Society in a Time of Fake News and Post-truth** (see Wolfe for abstract)

ELAHE IZADI writes about pop culture for *The Washington Post*, where she previously worked as a national general assignment reporter. She has covered a range of beats in her decade-long journalism career, including Congress, race and policing. She also regularly performs in the D.C. area as a stand-up comic.

**Nicole Jafari and Fereshteh Bethel • Mining the Gems of Spiritual Capital: Human Development from Birth till Death** (see individual names for biographies)

Spiritual capital, a relatively new and understudied concept, is viewed here as those “names and attributes of God” invested in the soul. This foundational capital is the very building block of all human beings, and can be transformed into functional capital here in the world. The presentation will look at spiritual capital as it relates to parenting and child development, identity as the “true self,” and the implications for psychotherapy acknowledging this inner capital as a source of strength, power and recovery.

DR. JAFARI is a member of the faculty at both California State University, Long Beach, and California State University, Fullerton. She is a professor of Child and Human Development, and the author of a textbook, *Child and Adolescent Development*.

**Iraj Kamalabadi • Introducing Peaceful Activism through Bahá'í Models and Asset-Based Community Development Approach** (see Azizi for abstract)

IRAJ KAMALABADI is a civil engineer in Southern California, a human rights advocate on behalf of his sister Fariba and all other prisoners of conscience in Iran. He serves on the board of directors

**Michael Karlberg, Holly Hanson, Michael Penn, and Bradley Wilson • Constructive Resilience as a Response to Oppression** (see individual names for biographies)

A study titled “Constructive Resilience: The Bahá’í Response to Oppression,” brings into focus a non-adversarial approach to social change that is distinct from non-violent opposition. Elements of this model find expression beyond the Bahá’í community but the model has not yet been studied in other contexts. This panel will explore ways to apply this model as a lens for examining diverse struggles for justice and social change. It will suggest contexts in which it is possible to apply this lens and it will explore the possibility of an expanding program of research along these lines.

**Michael Karlberg and Kristen Monroe • Altruism and Identity: Reflections on a Groundbreaking Program of Research**

Kristen Monroe’s scholarship has changed the fields of political psychology, political economy, and normative political theory. Monroe’s work has demonstrated that altruism derives from a perception of the oneness of humanity, which shapes the cognitive basis for action. These findings demonstrate the limits of egoistic theories of human behavior. They also have significant implications for our understanding of ethics and moral choice in relation to identity formation. Through this conversational interview, Dr. Monroe will reflect on her program of research, discuss some of her key findings, and offer her thoughts about the wider social implications of those findings.

KRISTEN MONROE is the founding Director of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Scientific Study of Ethics and Morality at UC Irvine. Her award-winning publications include *The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity*. She was President of the International Society of Political Psychology and Vice-president of the American Political Science Association.

MICHAEL KARLBERG is a Professor of Communication Studies at Western Washington University. He is the author of *Beyond the Culture of Contest* and numerous chapters and articles on related themes, including “The Paradox of Protest in a Culture of Contest” and “Constructive Resilience: The Bahá’í Response to Oppression in Iran.”

**Sheiba Kaufman and Bret Kaufman • Elevating the Discourse in Higher Education**

Elevating the discourse in college and university classrooms is possible through a combined theoretical and practical pedagogy that introduces the concept of global citizenship in a historical, philosophical, and ethical framework. In responding to the guidance of the Universal House of Justice to participate in the “prevalent discourses of society,” this presentation considers how the topic of global citizenship positively influences higher education, leading to meaningful conversations and a transformative experience in the public college classroom.

DR. SHEIBA KIAN KAUFMAN is an Ahmanson-Getty Postdoctoral Fellow at the UCLA Center for 17th and 18th Century Studies. Her work is published in *Shakespeare and Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Exchange* (2016). She has served as a tutor of the Ruhi Institute for the past decade.

BRET ADRIAN KAUFMAN is an Assistant Professor of English at Cypress College, California, and a doctoral candidate in the Education and Social Justice Program at Lancaster University. His published creative work appears in several journals. He has served as a tutor of the Ruhi Institute for the past decade.

### **Whitney White Kazemipour • Understanding the Models of Change the Universal House of Justice Is Teaching Us: Three Recent Letters on How to Solve Complex Problems of Our Era**

The letters of the Universal House of Justice are characterized by nuance and complexity, both in analyzing the problems of our era and pointing out the path to solving them (for example, establishing gender equality, preserving natural resources, eliminating racial injustice). Examining three recent letters (1 March 2017 on economic justice; 18 December 2014 to Iranian Bahá'ís; 2 March 2013 to Iranian Bahá'ís), I propose that at least three models of complex and deep societal change underlie this guidance. Understanding these models can help us to embrace the community problem-solving which is appropriate to a newly-maturing humanity.

WHITNEY WHITE KAZEMIPOUR (Ph.D., Anthropology, UCLA) is a psychocultural anthropologist specializing in the study of social change and how individuals can contribute to change, including immigrant mothers and indigenous Panamanian Bahá'ís. She coaches academic writing to faculty and graduate students at [academicmuse.org](http://academicmuse.org), and is the proud mother of three daughters.

### **Anisa Khadem Nwachuku • A Radical Redefinition of International Development**

As Bahá'ís concerned with the well-being of humanity, many of us have pursued professional paths in development. Our professional lives sit in parallel to efforts in our communities to foster a dynamic coherence between material and spiritual prosperity where individuals are protagonists of their own development. It is challenging for these two worlds to “dialogue” with one another, and we find ourselves in fragmented incoherence as a result. This presentation is an attempt to bridge 1) the processes of personal and social transformation about which Bahá'í communities are actively learning, and 2) discourse and practice in international development.

ANISA has spent 15 years trying to understand what's wrong with development through study and work in academia, think-tanks, consulting firms, development contractors, local NGOs, international NGOs, faith-based organizations, private sector actors, government agencies, civil society organizations, impact investors, foundations, multilateral institutions and development banks.

### **Jena Khadem Khodadad • Science, Technology, and Spiritual Understanding: The Role and Significance of Scientists and Technologists in the Bahá'í Era (see Friberg for abstract)**

JENA KHADEM KHODADAD is Emeritus professor of cell biology and researcher on molecular organization of cellular membranes, leading to publications and presentations nationally and internationally. Her long-time interest is exploring spiritual principles concerning challenges posed by genetic technology.



## **Negar Knowles • The Fundamental Basis of the Community is Agriculture**

The detrimental physical and societal effects of industrialized farming and food production have been well described by other authors. The spiritual effects of our collective divorce from farming and food production are less well described but no less profound and impactful. Our understanding of the innumerable metaphors relating to gardening, plants, and animals becomes intellectual and hollow and lacks the richness and emotional impact that would be present if we had our own tangible experiences to draw on. This is an exploration of the spiritual importance of local gardening and farming in modern society.

NEGAR KNOWLES is a practicing physician specializing in cardiothoracic radiology. She and her family have spent the last seven years on a small farm in Washington state, growing fruit and vegetables, raising sheep, dairy cows and goats, and chickens for eggs, selling the produce at their farm stand and the local farmers market.

## **Jessie Lane • Gender, Equality, and the Process of Creation: Redefining Gender in Light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation**

How do we begin to reimagine femininity and masculinity in light of the fact that Bahá'u'lláh has "lifted distinctions from between His servants and handmaidens, and... broken the back of vain imaginings with the sword of utterance"? The past 100 years have seen an implosion of traditional gender roles. This workshop will explore how the Bahá'í Writings illuminate a complete paradigm shift for understanding gender and gendered identity. We will also reflect on how these ideas are fundamental to the health and wellbeing of our relationships, our community life, and our teaching efforts.

JESSIE LANE was trained as an Interspiritual Counselor at the One Spirit Learning Alliance. She has a private practice as a Spiritual Counselor and offers workshops on issues relating to spirituality and health. Her passion is investigating the impact of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation on gender identity.

## **Darius Loghmanee • Moving Towards a Community Based Paradigm of Health Education (see Wu for abstract)**

## **Darius Loghmanee • Health Equity, Social Determinants of Health, and the Bahá'í Writings (see Rezai for abstract)**

DARIUS LOGHMANEE is a sleep specialist from Chicago, Illinois. He is the Director of the Advocate Children's Sleep Network which is focused on helping develop capacity in a growing number of people within a multi-hospital system to think and act systematically to optimize sleep health in children.

## **Shamim Maani • A Pathway to Prosperity: Economic Justice, A New Financial Order and Huqúqu'lláh**

Since the Financial Crisis governments have focused solely on financial stability. Yet wealth inequality and social unease have only intensified. This collateral damage grew because our economic system as designed is incapable of generating sustainable prosperity. Fortunately, Bahá'u'lláh has provided guidance so revolutionary that prosperity itself must be re-examined. A key element of this awakening is the Law of Huqúqu'lláh. This mysterious Institution offers a pathway to economic justice. We explore the connection between our financial system, wealth inequality, and the power of Huqúqu'lláh.

SHAMIM has seventeen years of experience in global financial markets. He spent several years at a major Wall Street investment bank, as well as three years in Haifa, helping to manage the Bahá'í World Centre investment funds. Shamim is currently 2nd Vice President at Northern Trust Corporation in Chicago.

## **Farshad Fani Marvasti • Food as Medicine: The Bahá'í Writings and an Update on the State of the Science**

This presentation will explore selected excerpts from the Bahá'í Writings related to health and healing with an emphasis on the role of food in the practice of medicine. Connections will be drawn between these excerpts and our current understanding of the role of food in the pathogenesis and prevention of disease. Participants will be exposed to the latest evidence and emerging scientific theories related to this topic in an interactive presentation with practical applications to develop ongoing collaborations and community building efforts together.

## **Farshad Fani Marvasti • Advancing the Discourse on Health: Developing an Integrated Conceptual Framework on Health and Well-being** (see Saririan for abstract)

FARSHAD FANI MARVASTI, MD, MPH is a physician and medical educator. He holds faculty appointments at Stanford University School of Medicine, as Director of Public Health, Prevention and Health Promotion at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, and is Medical Director of the Healthy Lifestyles Research Center at Arizona State University.

## **Layli Miller-Muro • Race, Gender, and Immigration: Working towards Equality While Avoiding Partisan Politics**

The Bahá'í Writings warn us that “matters political and partisan in character should be carefully avoided” while tasking us with building a New World Order and being actively engaged in “discourse and action intended to bring about constructive social change.” As much injustice, inequity, and intolerance has been prompted by politics, it would seem that politics is the realm in which to address it. But, the Bahá'í Writings give us guidance to the contrary. This presentation will assert that we can be at the forefront of creating a just society and engaged in many hot-button issues including racism, immigration, and women's rights, while rising above political debates.

LAYLI MILLER-MURO is the Founder and CEO of the Tahirih Justice Center, a Bahá'í-inspired organization that provides free legal services and advocates on behalf of women and girls fleeing human rights abuses. Tahirih has protected over 22,000 women and girls courageously rejecting violence. Layli lives in Virginia with her husband and three young children.

**Lisa Molin and Shoghi Fareid • Insights and Learnings on Patient-Centered Care** (see individual names for biographies)

Current discourse in the medical literature is increasingly focused on the concept of patient-centered care (PCC) and of patient-physician relationship (PPR). Incorporating the patient's perspective into a relationship-centered medical paradigm has been suggested as appropriate for the 21st century. The purpose of this discussion is to explore the implications of a relationship-centered medical paradigm on the nature of the PPR and its expression in the practice of medicine. The Bahá'í Writings, as they pertain to the roles of patient and physician, will be interwoven throughout the discussion to shed light onto these perspectives.

LISA MOLIN, M.D., is a practicing Otolaryngologist-Head and Neck Surgeon in California. She is currently in a group practice and has participated in medical missions for the treatment of cleft lip and palates in South America, Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. She currently travels to Fiji annually on a general ENT mission. Her special interests include nutrition and she is an avid cyclist.

**Ashley Monfared and Ashkan Monfared • Intercultural Marriage in an Age of Uncertainty**

Drawing upon the Bahá'í Writings the presenters will discuss how the ideals of oneness of humanity are achieved through practical steps of transforming the community. Family is the building block of every community and unity of mankind begins with unification of families. The presenters hope to create an engaging environment for the participants to discuss topic of inter-cultural marriages and will share lessons they have learned themselves through their marriage of Persian and African-American culture.

ASHLEY and ASHKAN MONFARED are an African-American and Persian couple living in Northern Virginia. Through surmounting the challenges of understanding and appreciating one another's cultural nuances, they soon realized that the same spiritual principles that would consolidate and nurture their marriage are the building blocks of unity of mankind.

**Ashkan Monfared • "Under the Tree of Covenant": Memoirs of Bad'í Bushru'í of 'Abdu'l-Bahá**

"Under the Tree of Covenant" comprises the memoirs of Mr. Bad'í Bushru'í of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from 1902 until 1917. They were meticulously edited for over a decade and recently published in Persian. As pilgrims were unable to reach the Holy Land during WWI, these memoirs are a rather unique record available of the Master's daily activities at that time. This presentation will focus on some of the important themes covered in the book through the reverent and devoted pen of a young man who recorded much of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's activities and conversations on a daily basis.

ASHKAN MONFARED was entrusted by the late Professor Suheil Bushru'i to compile and edit his father's memoirs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He served as his teaching and research assistant at the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace and currently lives in Northern Virginia with his family.

### **Shahrokh Monjazer • Teachings Concerning Non-Violence and Non-Retaliatioin in the Early Writings of Bahá'u'lláh**

During the years of His ministry, the Báb sanctioned defensive action to be carried out by His followers for the purpose of protecting and safeguarding the interests of the nascent Faith against the relentless attacks of its brutal enemies. In contrast, however, from the onset of His Divine Mandate, Bahá'u'lláh enjoined and promoted non-violence and non-retaliatory behavior among His adherents no matter how grave their circumstances would become in the face of persecution and attacks by their ill-wishers. This presentation will examine the origins and the nature of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings concerning non-violence prior to the formulation and codification of His Book of Laws, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, in 1873.

SHAHROKH MONJAZEB is the co-founder of The Furútan Academy for the Study of Bahá'í History and Sacred Text and is the author of numerous articles on Bahá'í history and sacred scripture including the monograph, *Bahá'u'lláh: A Brief Survey of His Life and Works*.

### **Carl Murrell • Raising Prejudice-Free Children?**

Can a child be raised prejudice-free in a prejudice-filled world? As children form core values, habits of mind and behaviors within the complex, dynamic web of family life, this workshop asks: Can raising prejudice-free children be a conscious, life-giving principle for the whole family? Can children's inner and outer selves be nurtured to be prejudice-free? What are characteristics of prejudice-free families? What is our responsibility in the spaces we inhabit and the thoughts we hold to remove all traces of prejudice from our inner and outer lives as an example to children?

CARL MURRELL is the Principal United Nations Representative for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. The primary focus of his work is men's engagement in the advancement of women.

### **Kevin Naimi • Cohering Scholarship and Social Action in Critical Spaces** (see Sattarzadeh for abstract)

KEVIN NAIMI is a Ph.D. candidate in the Sociology of Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. His research focuses on the theory, discourse, and practice of creativity in society today.

## **Naysan Naraqí • Navigating Bahá'í-inspired Content in the Online Space: An Interactive Exploration with Bahá'í Blog**

With multimedia content and access to the web increasing dramatically day by day, the use and creation of various forms of online content and how it relates to the teachings of the Faith is something which needs to be explored. In this interactive workshop, participants will take part in a conversation which explores some of the experiences and learnings in creating Bahá'í-inspired multimedia content for the online space. By using tangible examples of audio, written, and video content from Bahá'í Blog as case studies, participants will explore and reflect on the purpose, impact, sensitivities and implications these various avenues.

NAYSAN NARAQI is the creator of Bahá'í Blog and he has worked in various avenues of media for twenty years. He is passionate about using the arts and media to support and explore the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and issues around social justice.

## **Tara Nault and Michele Nault-McIsaac • The Journey to Reconciliation**

This session will centre on an understanding of the Indigenous (to be inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as defined by the Constitution of Canada) community of Canada and the spiritual principles that are required to come to a deeper awareness and understanding of reconciliation. The presenters will explore how Bahá'ís can increase their understanding of Indigenous Cultural Competency leading to Cultural Humility based on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Participants will also explore expansion of engagement with Indigenous communities.

TARA NAULT is Director of Aboriginal Health with the BC Ministry of Health. She has worked with Indigenous communities for over thirty years and is a graduate in Indigenous Governance from the University of Victoria. Tara is Métis with cultural roots in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

MICHELE NAULT MCISAAC is the Director of Programs and Special Projects with M'akola Housing Society. She is a Métis woman from Saskatchewan and has lived and worked on Vancouver Island for over thirty years. Michele holds a degree in Adult Education and Training from the University of Regina.

## **Vesall Nourani, Kim Naqvi, and Ian Hamilton • Communities as Economic Actors – Economies Working Group**

Demonstrating that communities can take actions which shape local economies in positive ways would be a useful contribution to current discourse. Could knowledge regarding communities as economic actors be generated through thoughtful collective effort? In this session, a few members of the working group will speak briefly about their observations of communities taking economic action (such as attempting to create employment opportunities for youth engaged in the Institute process), then methods that might be used to gather information that would allow for systematic analysis of community economic action will be explored.

VESALL NOURANI is a 5th year PhD Student in Economics at Cornell University and a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow. His dissertation research examines the role of social relationships in village economies in Sub-Saharan Africa with a focus on social learning, redistribution, and collective decision making.

KIM NAQVI is a human geographer specialising in the study of social and economic development and cultural change. She teaches at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, BC.

### **Brian O’Toole • Nations University: An Attempt to Introduce Bahá’í Principles into the Education System in Guyana**

We started School of Nations in Guyana twenty years ago. Nation now has 2,300 students. Partnerships have been established with institutions in Australia, United Kingdom and North America to offer MBA programmes, law degrees, international diplomas and certificates. Nations University Research Institute (NURI) has undertaken consultancies with UNICEF, ILO, IADB and WHO. The university has also developed a partnership with a leading training institute in Boston to provide training to meet the huge discovery of oil in Guyana. What lessons can be learnt from these twenty years? And what challenges lie ahead?

### **Brian O’Toole and John Safapour • Applying Bahá’í Principles to Community Transformation (see individual names for biographies)**

The Bahá’í Community Health Partnership in the Rupununi Region of Guyana has been operating for over a decade, resulting in sustainable structural and community transformation through the application of Bahá’í principles to the discourse on community development. Led by the Bahá’í Guyana Office of Social and Economic Development, the project began with medical staffing and equipment in one of the poorest regions of the country, but quickly shifted to accompanying the Amerindian community to become protagonists of their own development. The lessons learned are now being applied broadly to the discourse of community transformation through the 100 Million Healthier Lives initiative.

BRIAN O’TOOLE has worked in Guyana for thirty-nine years. He was a founder of the Varqa Foundation, with which he worked for twenty years. He worked as a Consultant for WHO, UNICEF, UNDP on health and education projects in thirty-six countries. He is the Director of Nations University in Guyana.

### **Cora Palazzolo • The 19-Day Calendar as a Method for Measuring Spiritual Progress: An Empirical Study with Bahá’ís and their Friends**

This presentation offers a method to experience, deepen and measure one’s relationship with the divine utilizing the nineteen qualities inherent in the calendar. These qualities serve as markers for practice and assessment by which one may “Bring thyself to account each day” (Bahá’u’lláh, Hidden Words, Arabic 31). This empirical 19-day study demonstrates the efficacy of the 19-day calendar in daily practice, offers a doorway by which to engage in “meaningful and distinctive conversations” and leads to what Bahá’í author Christopher Buck terms a “theophoric metamorphosis” in individual and community life—regardless of the participant’s belief system.

CORA PALAZZOLO has an MA in Applied Theology and is a pioneer in the field of bringing the Bahá'í calendar to the larger world. Cora teaches a method to inspire the qualities of the calendar, offering a deeper experience of the divine and a platform for creating vibrant community feasts.

**Grant Peirce and Susanne Alexander • Integrating Character with Relationships: New Research and Gamification Approaches** (see individual names for biographies)

There is a better way to do relationships. The Bahá'í teachings encourage individuals and couples to know and grow their character as the foundation of their relationship from the moment of attraction through friendship, courtship, commitment, and marriage. However, many of the tools individuals use focus only on personality, some shared interests, and physical appearance. This session will present an initiative to infuse character into all phases of a relationship or marriage. Participants will play a fun game designed to build character knowledge and application

GRANT PEIRCE is an Industrial/Organizational Psychologist with twenty-five years of experience helping individuals and organizations develop their fundamental character, and make the conscious decisions necessary to achieve true and sustainable success.

**Michael Penn • Constructive Resilience as a Response to Oppression** (see Karlberg for abstract)

**Michael Penn and Mengxiao Wu • Developing the Human Spirit as a Strategy for Promoting Human Rights** (see individual names for biographies)

The concept of the human spirit is vital to the effort to protect human rights and thus an effort is made to provide a rational, Bahá'í-inspired account of what this concept entails. We seek to deepen reflection on the human spirit by introducing those theorists and philosophers of China whose ideas comport with, and further illuminate, some of the insights that are contained in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. In conclusion, we suggest that the Bahá'í effort to advance learning at the community level may be one of the most effective ways to protect human rights.

MICHAEL PENN is a Clinical Psychologist and Professor of Psychology at Franklin & Marshall College. His research interests and publications explore the application of psychological research and theory to human rights, the interpenetration of psychology and philosophy, and the epidemiology of gender-based violence.

**Mark Perry • Integrating Drama and Other Arts into Community Activities**

Energize your community activities with the arts. The arts should not be the province simply of the professional in our communities. They can be integrated into virtually every aspect of our community life as a natural expression of our joy, reverence, and unity. In our core activities, the arts can bring enjoyment as well as a deeper qualitative understanding of the material under study, whether working with children, junior youth, youth or adults. This workshop will explore some simple ways of

invigorating study circles, junior youth groups, children's classes and even devotional gatherings. It is suggested you wear comfortable clothing.

MARK PERRY teaches play analysis and playwriting in the Department of Dramatic Art at UNC, Chapel Hill, and serves as a dramaturg for Playmakers Repertory Company. He and his wife Azadeh live in the Triangle Cluster in North Carolina, where they love to work with children, junior youth, and youth.

**Fiona Purton • Cohering Scholarship and Social Action in Critical Spaces** (see Sattarzadeh for abstract)

FIONA PURTON is a Ph.D. candidate in the Curriculum Teaching and Learning program at the Ontario Institute Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Her work seeks to understand how Indigenous pedagogical approaches are used in Bachelor of Education programs when teaching knowledge which causes cognitive dissonance.

**Ashiyah Rahmani • The Bahá'í Community and Education – 'Engaged Learning'**

Increasingly, in various educational spaces, Freire's ideas of praxis and voice are being realized through the utilization of "engaged learning" processes. This presentation will reflect on some of the ideas of "engaged learning," the role of mutual support, particularly in a higher education context, discussing Freire's ideas as well as from the Bahá'í community, and also reflect on effective educational activities that participants have engaged in. An example from my own experience from an upper division class of Communication for International Development, taught at the University of Hawaii will be shared, followed by participants developing their own "engaged learning" activity.

ASHIYAN is a PhD Candidate in Communication and Information Sciences and teaches at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. His research looks at the way in which women in rural communities in Fiji use mobile devices to interact with community radio. He serves as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii.

**Sana Rezai, Lita Cameron, Darius Loghmanee and Tina Shahidyazdani • Health Equity, Social Determinants of Health, and the Bahá'í Writings** (see individual names for biographies)

This panel will explore concepts and assumptions from the conceptual framework and from the principles and teachings of the Faith that can inform and contribute to the discourse on health equity and social determinants of health.

SANA REZAI is a primary care physician striving to learn about empowering patients at a community level to become protagonists of their health care. As the processes of the Plan develop more and more human resources in his area, and the conditions are such that a neighborhood clinic can be formed, he hopes to contribute.



**Harold Rosen • Unifiers of Humanity, Bahá'í Founders and Bicentenary Reflections: An Experimental Public Course**

This free public course introduces the Bahá'í Faith, offering a new way of understanding world religion and history as a drama of overall progress. We take a developmental and objective approach to Bahá'u'lláh (1817 to 1892), the Founder, and to the forerunner, the Báb (1819 to 1850). We explore Their emergence in 19th century Persia, Their missions, teachings and the global civilisation arising in Their wake. Our goal is a broader, deeper understanding of humanity's spiritual progress and of our transition to a more united world.

HAROLD ROSEN is a community interfaith educator in Vancouver, Canada, designing and teaching courses on world religions and the history of ideas. He wrote *Founders of Faith: The Parallel Lives of God's Messengers*. He served as a Unitarian minister for twenty-five years before declaring as a Bahá'í in the year 2000.

**Yasmin Roshanian • Realists of a Larger Reality: Bahá'ís and the Literature of Hope in an Age of Despair** (see Castelaz for abstract)

YASMIN ROSHANIAN holds a bachelor degree in English and Creative Writing from UCLA and a master's in Creative Writing from Columbia University. She is writing a novel surrounding a family of Iranian immigrants. She lives in New York.

**Setareh Rouhani • Advancing the Discourse on Health: Developing an Integrated Conceptual Framework on Health and Well-being** (see Saririan for abstract)

**Setareh Rouhani, Shadi Salehian and Soroosh Behshad • Understanding the Global Refugee Crisis: Responding to Humanity's Current Challenge through Social Action** (see individual names for biographies)

Rates of international migration have increased dramatically in recent years. Coupled with the rise in global chronic and infectious disease rates, heightened geo-political instability and insurgent waves of refugee displacement highlight the need to engage in social action and advocacy. We explore a historical overview of refugees in a global context, including recent field work with Syrian refugees in Jordan. We will examine this global challenge through a lens that empowers and highlights the resilience of this population by incorporating insights from the Bahá'í Writings that contribute to our discourse on public health and social justice.

SETAREH ROUHANI, MSc, PhD (Cand) is a Research Methodologist with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Ottawa Hospital, with intersectoral experience in health equity analysis and policy research. She is completing her doctoral degree in Population Health with the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Ottawa.

**Melody Rowhani • Health Education Development and Empowerment: Review and Future Endeavors** (see Esmailzadeh for abstract)

MELODY ROWHANI, MPH, RN, has been learning about Indigenous and community health issues. Contributions include a paper published in the *Journal of Health, Wellness and Society*. She's part of a team of health educators promoting and developing empowerment material related to education on diabetes and other prevalent diseases in the community.

**John Safapour • Applying Bahá'í Principles to Community Transformation** (see O'Toole for abstract)

JOHN SAFAPOUR, MD, MPH, serves as a healthcare and innovation consultant, and as a member of the Health for Humanity Board of Directors.

**Shadi Salehian • Is Spirituality Effective in Addiction Recovery and Prevention?** (see Ghadirian for abstract)

**Shadi Salehian • Understanding the Global Refugee Crisis: Responding to Humanity's Current Challenge through Social Action** (see Rouhani for abstract)

SHADI SALEHIAN served at the Research and other departments at the Bahá'í World Centre, Israel. She has a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins and has experience working on global public health issues with emphasis on mental health and drug addiction focusing on displaced, vulnerable, and refugee populations.

**Mojgan Sami • Cohering Scholarship and Social Action in Critical Spaces** (see Sattarzadeh for abstract)

MOJGAN SAMI, PhD, is an urban health researcher, community scholar and lecturer at the University of California, Irvine.

**James Samimi-Farr • Journalism and Society in a Time of Fake News and Post-truth** (see Wolfe for abstract)

JAMES SAMIMI-FARR is a freelance writer and journalist currently based in Minneapolis. His work has appeared in *Maisonneuve* magazine, *The Toronto Star*, and numerous other publications.

**Shahrazad Saririan, Gregory Schweitz, Setareh Rouhani, and Farshad Fani Marvasti • Advancing the Discourse on Health: Developing an Integrated Conceptual Framework on Health and Well-being** (see individual names for biographies)

In 1948, WHO defined health as a "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and is not merely the absence of disease nor infirmity." This definition, although criticized for over

sixty years, has never been adapted. Since its inception, expert groups and research have advanced our understanding of health to a more integrative view on well-being. Bahá'í Teachings foster the growth and prosperity of healthy individuals and communities. This presentation provides an overview of the contemporary, scientific discourse on health, and explores insights from the Bahá'í Writings to develop an integrated conceptual framework on health.

SHAHRZAD SARIRIAN, MD, is a Bahá'í from Montreal, Canada, and currently resides in Scottsdale, Arizona. She is board-certified in Family Medicine in both Canada and the United States. She is an Assistant Professor at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, Phoenix, and practices primarily in an underserved community clinic.

**Sahar Sattarzadeh, Justin de Leon, Kevin Naimi, Fiona Purton, and Mojgan Sami • Cohering Scholarship and Social Action in Critical Spaces** (see individual names for biographies)

Popularized social discourses and movements utilizing concepts such as “resistance,” “critical,” “decolonization,” “power,” “social justice,” and “activism” are often contradictory, founded upon worldly, fractured, self-serving, and contentious motivations that “reinforce an entirely different set of assumptions about social existence.” In this session, presenters explore diverse possibilities of embodying the qualities of a Bahá'í-inspired “scholar” and “activist.” Highlighting communities of practice and traditional Lakota societies, urban skateboarders reimagining themselves via resistance to colonized land uses, educators’ pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning difficult knowledges, and racialized student protests at South African universities, panelists discuss revisiting “critical” social change knowledges and practices.

SAHAR D. SATTARZADEH, Ph.D., is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. She studies (in)equality, (in)equity and (in)justice within: sociologies of knowledge and education; science, technology and society; and activism.

**Gregory Schweitz • Advancing the Discourse on Health: Developing an Integrated Conceptual Framework on Health and Well-being** (see Saririan for abstract)

GREGORY SCHWEITZ, MD, is a Bahá'í from Chicago, Illinois. He completed his residency in Emergency Medicine at Maricopa County Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona, and currently practices emergency medicine in Scottsdale, Arizona. His interests include health equity, medical education, and youth empowerment.

**Tina Shahidyazdani • Health Equity, Social Determinants of Health, and the Bahá'í Writings** (see Rezai for abstract)

**Tina Shahidyazdani • Health Education Development and Empowerment: Review and Future Endeavors** (see Esmailzadeh for abstract)

TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI is a pediatrician practicing at a community health clinic in San Diego, California. Currently, in collaboration with the Behavioral Health department, they are exploring strategies and innovative approaches to empower the pre-adolescent patients to take ownership of their own physical, intellectual, and emotional well-being.

**Kevin Smith • The Practical Application of Bahá'í Consultation in any Business or Organization** (see Burke for abstract)

KEVIN SMITH has been a part of several organizations, small to large over his 30+ year career. His experience includes real estate development, construction, supply chain and professional services. Kevin and his wife Juli live in Colorado and enjoy the outdoors as much as possible.

**Philip Smith • A Systems Approach to Scientific Methods**

The concept of an evolving conceptual framework and selected philosophical explanations from the Bahá'í Writings are correlated with a systems approach to scientific methods to clarify the relationship between science and religion as two complementary and overlapping systems of knowledge and practice. The approaches used to systematically investigate reality in diverse scientific disciplines and to generate knowledge in the Bahá'í Faith are combined in a systems perspective with insights from six major philosophers. Challenging implications for the harmony of science and religion are examined.

PHILIP SMITH holds a DEA in Agronomic Sciences and Biological Engineering from Gembloux Agricultural University, an MSc in Agricultural Development from the University of London and a BSc (Honours) in Mathematics and Engineering from Queen's University at Kingston. He is a long-term pioneer to Togo.

**Keemia Soheil • Táhirih, A Symbol of Progress: Reading a Nineteenth-century Iranian Poet in the United States and England**

Táhirih is one of the Bahá'í Faith's earliest and most esteemed heroines. As a result, her story has been widely circulated. Central to most of these accounts are the critical events of her unveiling and martyrdom. But few know of her literary prowess and, as such, less attention has been paid to her poetry. This presentation examines the reception of Táhirih and her poetry in two contrasting Anglophone reading publics: nineteenth century England and early twentieth century United States. Through a close reading of Táhirih's poetry, along with a selection of American and English primary sources, we will explore Táhirih's representation as a universal symbol of progress.

In 2017, KEEMIA SOHEIL graduated from the University of Michigan with a double major in Economics and English. To culminate her work in the University's honors program, she wrote an award-winning thesis titled "Táhirih, a Symbol of Progress: Reading a Nineteenth-Century Iranian Poet in the United States and England."

## **Robert Stockman • The Development of Online Courses by the Wilmette Institute**

In the last year the Wilmette Institute has inaugurated a core group of courses, requiring 150 hours of rigorous work, that qualify for college credit. It has also inaugurated a series of videos that provide short, free mini-courses. These are in addition to the 55 “continuing and professional education” courses offered in 2017 to about 1,400 people. Crucial to the Institute’s success has been a learner-centered philosophy that calls on participants to create their own learning plan with personalized goals within an existing framework which focuses on personal transformation and community development. Courses usually focus on developing critical writing, thinking, and speaking skills.

ROBERT STOCKMAN has a doctorate in history of religion in the United States from Harvard University. He is the Director of the Wilmette Institute and teaches religious studies part time at Indiana University, South Bend. He is the author of five books and numerous articles on the Bahá’í Faith

## **Roya Tabrizi • Applying Approaches from the Five-Year Plan to Advance Discourses and Transform Structures in Our Fields: An Example from Education** (see Zargarpour for abstract)

ROYA TABRIZI is an Education doctoral candidate at San Diego State University and Claremont Graduate University. Her interests include learning how communities can be protagonists in the process of empowerment and the relationship between communities and schools in the generation, implementation and dissemination of knowledge.

## **Shaheen Sean Tedjarati • Shoghi Effendi: The “Charters” and His “Crusade,” Ultimate Guide and Model for Our Needed “Herculean” Efforts**

The Guardian’s development of the “Charters” and “Divine Plans/Crusade” and the Bahá’í community’s response overcoming myriad challenges and new paradigms, transformed us into a global Faith. The plans by the Universal House of Justice aim to further advance the process of entry by troops, calling for “herculean” efforts in transforming and empowering all strata of society establishing a New World Order. Building upon the foundation and the germinating seeds of those indefatigable efforts, many similarities, parallels and lessons exist to aid our current and future services. Enhanced understanding and analysis can provide invaluable, inspiring and practical guide and insights to our needed “herculean” efforts.

DR. TEDJARATI is chief/professor of Robotic surgery/Women’s oncology in New York. He has studied leadership and management extensively with in-depth analysis of Shoghi Effendi’s Ministry as a model. He holds an MBA and MPH from Yale and Johns Hopkins University. His other research interests include Bahá’í Covenant, history and administrative order.

## **Shirin Towfiq • Socially Engaged Art: Change for the Community**

The Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program (JYSEP) guides people to adopt a participatory mode of learning and contribute to the well-being of their communities and the

world at large. The JYSEP can make lasting change in the participants and community through the vehicle of socially engaged art where Junior Youth create alternative solutions to community issues. Social practice is an art medium that invites collaboration between individuals and communities that create participatory art that in turn make social change with often few resources. Taking part in socially engaged art will allow the participants to be more effective in being involved in their communities in the future as alternative problem solvers.

SHIRIN TOWFIQ is a San Diego-based conceptual artist. She received a BA in Practice of Art from University of California, Berkeley. Shirin is the founder of So Sew Co, an organization that inspires creativity and builds community through alternative sewing projects and art workshops.

**Saleem Vaillancourt • Realists of a Larger Reality: Bahá'ís and the Literature of Hope in an Age of Despair** (see Castelaz for abstract)

**Saleem Vaillancourt and Nasim Biglari • *Changing the World, One Wall at a Time: The Story of Education Is Not a Crime***

Education Is Not A Crime raises awareness of education apartheid against Iranian Bahá'ís. The campaign began in 2014 with Iranian-Canadian journalist Maziar Bahari's documentary film *To Light a Candle*, screened in nearly 300 locations around the world, before turning into a global art project telling the story of the Bahá'í. Pressuring Iran's government to respect the rights of its Bahá'í citizens calls for a new audience for this message—which the campaign builds through street art, community outreach, and social media. A new film, *Changing the World, One Wall at a Time*, showcases this work.

SALEEM VAILLANCOURT is a journalist and the coordinator of the Education Is Not A Crime campaign. Saleem writes about human rights, art and society, and has worked in London, New York, and Singapore. He studied English at the University of London and Global Politics at the London School of Economics.

NASIM BIGLARI is a visual arts student at the University of California, San Diego. Before moving to the United States in 2007, she studied English Literature at the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) in Iran. The BIHE is an informal education initiative of the Iranian Bahá'í community in response to the denial of their right to higher education by the Iranian government.

**Anthony Vance • Louis Gregory, The Oneness of Humanity and Highlights in the Development of the African American Lawyer**

This presentation outlines the life of Louis Gregory within the context of the development of black lawyers in American society from the mid-19th century to the present, including the role played by Mr. Gregory, together with Elsie Austin and Matthew Bullock, in promoting the oneness of humanity and facilitating the distinctive development of the American Bahá'í community.

ANTHONY VANCE is the Director of the U.S. Bahá'í Public Affairs Office. He served as Deputy Secretary-General at the Bahá'í World Centre from 2006 to 2010, and as a lawyer in Africa for USAID from 1985 to 2006. He holds a B.A., Economics, M.B.A. and J.D., all from Harvard University.

**Bradley Wilson • Constructive Resilience as a Response to Oppression** (see Karlberg for abstract)

BRADLEY WILSON is associate professor of Geography and director of the Food Justice Lab at West Virginia University. His research focuses on food network inequalities. The Lab conducts action research and incubates projects to build resilient people-centered food networks in Appalachia and beyond.

**Rachel Wolfe, Elahe Izadi, and James Samimi-Farr • Journalism and Society in a Time of Fake News and Post-truth** (see individual names for biographies)

Media and journalism have fundamentally changed over the years, leaving society scrambling to adjust to today's reality. Considering the state of media today, what are the roles of journalists? Who is and is not a journalist today? How do we understand journalism and its relationship to the audience? And how can these important questions be reconsidered from a perspective informed by the Bahá'í Writings.

RACHEL WOLFE is the Media Relations Officer for the U.S. Bahá'í Office of Public Affairs. She coordinates and secures publicity for the Office's strategic areas of engagement. She also manages the Public Information Officer Network, training local Bahá'í communities to improve their media literacy.

**Mengxiao Wu • Developing the Human Spirit as a Strategy for Promoting Human Rights** (see Penn for abstract)

MENGXIAO WU is an undergraduate student at Franklin & Marshall College who majors in Religious Studies with a special focus on the religions of Asia. Her research on the human spirit is supervised by Professor Penn and is funded by the Hackman Scholars Program.

**Kimberly Wu and Darius Loghmanee • Moving Towards a Community Based Paradigm of Health Education** (see individual names for biographies)

Historically, the generation of knowledge related to health and disease management has belonged to a few. More recently attention has been given to the notion of community learning as it pertains to advancing specific health objectives. A review of the literature related to lay health education of parents was initiated in order to better understand this discourse. Analysis of assumptions about human nature and spiritual reality that have informed approaches to engaging parents at the neighborhood level will be explored, along with consultation on how elements of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh will impact this aspect of the discourse on health

KIM WU (MPH candidate), is a community health manager in Los Angeles, California. She currently works on school and community based healthy eating and exercise programs. In addition to health promotion, Kim aims to explore the role that art and storytelling play in nurturing holistic wellness.

## **Ramine Yazhari and Mark Yazhari • Medical Education: Engaging Early Learners in a Dialogue about Spirit, Vision, and Idealism in the Practice of Medicine**

Pre-med and early medical students represent a unique group. Generally young and idealistic, they enter their training with certain assumptions about the practice of medicine. Over the course of their medical education, however, these students are confronted with a medical culture that sometimes appears to be at odds with their ideals and assumptions. Were these students' ideals incorrect or naive? Is our current medical culture the inevitable outcome of a demanding profession? This session will explore these and related questions, and the efforts made in one hospital system to address them.

DR. RAMINE YAZHARI is a physician specializing in emergency medicine. He has been in practice for fifteen years at Legacy Emanuel Hospital and Randall Children's Hospital in Portland, Oregon. His practice includes training and education of pre-med and medical students, as well as resident physicians.

MARK YAZHARI is a pre-medical student enrolled at Northwestern University. He has engaged in activities related to the spirit of the practice of medicine for several years, founding the Music is Medicine organization in high school, and recently helping to develop a related pre-med curriculum.

## **Nazanin Zargarpour and Roya Tabrizi • Applying Approaches from the Five-Year Plan to Advance Discourses and Transform Structures in Our Fields: An Example from Education (see individual names for biographies)**

The Regional Learning Collaborative (Collaborative), is a partnership of educational leaders and youth service organizations in Pomona, California, to facilitate the advancement of low-income students to and through college and into living wage jobs. In founding and leading the Collaborative, the Education, Development, and Evaluation (EDEVAL) Lab has drawn on experiences and learning from community-building efforts in the Five-Year Plans. In this session, we seek to generate meaningful conversation about how aspects of our collective experiences in community building may be applied in efforts to advance the discourses and transform structures in our respective fields.

DR. NAZANIN ZARGARPOUR is Director of the Master's Program in Educational Evaluation, Professor, and Senior Research Fellow at the Claremont Evaluation Center, Claremont Graduate University. As a strategic partner to educational organizations and institutions, she applies research, strategic planning, and evaluation science to advance attainment for all students.



## *Artists Performing*

KELSEY BULKIN is a singer, songwriter, mother and recording artist living in Los Angeles. Kelsey will share quotes from prayers set to music using guitar, her voice, and guided audience participation.

SHABNAM MOGHARABI is CEO of SoulPancake, the inspiring media company co-founded by Rainn Wilson. SoulPancake produces daily content for its ten million fans and has amassed nearly 500 million video views. SoulPancake was recently acquired by Participant Media. Shabnam is a *New York Times* bestselling author and award-winning journalist. She is also a member of the 2016 Class of Henry Crown Fellows. Shabnam Mogharabi will be sharing content from SoulPancake inspired by the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Bahá'u'lláh and sharing how creating media content can be inspired by the Bahá'í Faith.

MARK PERRY teaches play analysis and playwriting in the Department of Dramatic Art at UNC, Chapel Hill, and serves as a dramaturg for Playmakers Repertory Company. He and his wife Azadeh live in the Triangle Cluster in North Carolina, where they love to work with children, junior youth, and youth.

AZADEH ROHANIAN PERRY works at the UNC School of Dentistry as a clinic manager in the Pediatric Department. She and her husband Mark live together in Chapel Hill, where they love to work with children, junior youth, and youth, and where they join with others in learning about community building.

PRICELESS PEARLS INTERFAITH CHORUS, formed in 2013, has 20 members, ages 6 to 12. They are uplifting and inspiring, singing various types of music—sacred and secular—with positive and unifying themes, appealing to all. Music is important to the education and development of humanity. Priceless Pearls members reside in Orange County.

TATIANA ZAMIR is a dance instructor, holistic healer and multi-disciplinary artist who combines creative storytelling with movement. She is interested in creating spaces which catalyze creativity, community building and transformational healing. [TatianaZamir.com](http://TatianaZamir.com)  
She will be sharing three different pieces with brief introductions in between each piece. *I Watched*: An autobiographical story illustrated through live storytelling and movement, which identifies complexities around internal belief systems and how they can conflict with real life events, particularly around themes of personal and communal justice. *Noble Am I*: Video clip of a group dance choreographed to a spoken word piece, influenced by ideas surrounding Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome and its effects on black women. The last piece will be a poem exploring gender inequality and its effects.

## Conference Organization

<i>Conference Sub-Committee</i>	Julia Berger, Kimia Kline, Shabnam Koirala-Azad, Eleanor Mitten, Tara Raam, Parvin Rowhani
<i>Arts Programme</i>	Kimia Kline
<i>Children's Conference Coordinator</i>	Elaheh Mottahedeh Bos and Aram Nahidipour
<i>Junior Youth Program Coordinator</i>	Ridvan Bruss and Shyon Nasrollahi
<i>Conference Coordinator</i>	Parvin Rowhani
<i>Logistics AV</i>	Camellia Pirmoradi
<i>Photography</i>	Peter Dizaj
<i>Publicity</i>	Farshad Jahed and Ron Carrigan
<i>Registration</i>	Nilufar Gordon and Oranous Danandeh
<i>Security/Ushers</i>	Jalil Rouhanifard
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Lucas Rivera and Luke Pereira
<i>Technical Director</i>	Geoff Cohen
<i>Volunteer Coordinator</i>	Melvin Jacobsen

**The ABS Executive Committee extends its deep appreciation to all those who have assisted in the preparation and running of this conference. Our heartfelt thanks are also due to the many volunteers who contributed their service and have worked so hard to make this conference a success.**

**With special thanks to the Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of the greater Los Angeles area.**