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## Children's Bahá'í Education Service

### Nurturing Our Future Community – passing on the DNA

IN THE last issue of the Journal the Children's Bahá'í Education Service (CBES) had commissioned Trevor Finch to write about the need for a curriculum and its indispensability for passing on the ideals, insights and values of our Faith to the next generation in a systematic manner. In this issue, we will examine how that curriculum can be used to nurture and educate our children who will soon be the future community.

*“Man is even as steel, the essence of which is hidden: through admonition and explanation, good counsel and education, that essence will be brought to light.”*

(Bahá'u'lláh, cited in *Bahá'í Education*, p. 3, *Compilation of Compilations*, p. 247)

Who is going to bring that essence to light? Often, it is thought that this responsibility falls to the parents of the child. Undoubtedly, the parents have the biggest portion of responsibility in the education of their child (they are likely to spend the most time with them), but the responsibility does not lie solely with the parents. Bahá'u'lláh says that each and every one is charged with this responsibility and that it is an inescapable command.

*“We prescribe unto all men that which will lead to the exaltation of the Word of God amongst His servants, and likewise, to the advancement of the world of being and the uplift of souls. To this end, the greatest means is education of the child. To this must each and all hold fast. We have verily laid this charge upon you in manifold Tablets as well as in My Most Holy Book. Well is it with him who deferreth thereto. We ask God that He will assist each and every one to obey this inescapable command that hath appeared and been caused to descend through the Pen of the Ancient of Days.”*

(Bahá'u'lláh, cited in *Bahá'í Education*, p. 3, *Compilation of Compilations*, p. 247)

The Universal House of Justice reminds us that success will not be ours unless there is united and coordinated action from the individual, the community and the institutions. In the case of nurturing the children of our community, not only are the parents responsible but also nonparents, the community as a whole, and the institutions such as the LSAs. What better way to serve in this capacity than to be directly involved at the “coal face” by giving instruction, explanation and good counsel, that is, by being a teacher.

### Children's Bahá'í Education Service

#### Extensive new teaching resource!

Need materials to help you teach your children at home or in a children's class? This new CD contains much that can help you.

- The In Home Study Programme (IHSP) – 844 pages of materials covering a wide range of subjects and for a range of different ages, useful for families at home and as supporting material within a more formal setting too. It used to cost almost £50 to buy the photocopied version but now is available for a fraction of that cost on CD. Now extremely versatile – print pages as you require them, adapt them to suit your needs, fill in “question pages” on the computer ... whatever suits you.

- Brand new traditional syllabus Light Upon Light, inspired by the National Bahá'í Curriculum, Waiting Upon the Blessed Beauty and covering the full range of age groups. It will be useful for teachers to

organise what they teach and when, and provides a wide range of suggestions for activities and supporting materials. Has received a 3/5 star rating from the

Most Bahá'í teachers are courageous individuals who, with little or no formal training, come forward to perform this "most meritorious acts of humankind." ('Abdu'l-Bahá: Selections p. 129-130). They are often individuals with a great vision and understanding. Their aims are not only for the present community but also for the future Bahá'í community.

The CBES endeavours, with its very limited human resources, to provide training for any individual who arises to serve as a teacher. Indeed all community schools, of which there are 16 throughout the UK, have on their staff a very valued member: an Education Consultant, who is a state qualified teacher. Their job is to provide in-service training for the teachers and assistant teachers of their school. For more isolated teachers, involved in smaller children's classes, the CBES itself provides initial or inservice training. This is offered either as a comprehensive manual "Educate These Children" (written by Maggie Manvell) or presented by a teacher trainer over a two-day course or a summarised version as a one-day course (a website and a CD-ROM are in the process of being developed). In either case one cannot expect to get much more than a flavour of what teaching in a Bahá'í class is like. After all, state qualified teachers have between one and four years of study, both theory and practice, before they are considered qualified by the state (and most still don't feel suitably qualified when they first face a class full of pupils). The CBES aims to offer this course at least twice per academic year and has succeeded in doing so since its availability in the academic year 1999/2000.

There are also a number of highly dedicated Bahá'í state qualified teachers, who, on top of their recognised burdensome professions, offer their services by phone or email to any teacher engaged in Bahá'í education. They have, between them, 120 years experience inside and outside the Bahá'í education system. The CBES would warmly welcome further offers of help from state qualified teachers (primary and secondary trained). The community would greatly benefit from the expertise of such qualified teachers.

*"Upon becoming a Bahá'í one's whole life is, or should become, devoted to the progress of the Cause of God, and every talent or faculty he possesses is ultimately committed to this overriding life objective."*

(Universal House of Justice: *Wellspring of Guidance* p. 153)

If you have been thinking about Bahá'í education in the last couple of years, as a result of reading and studying the messages of the Universal House of Justice, procrastinate no more! now is the time to act! What better way to serve in this field than to be directly involved – be a teacher! You will have no regrets. Anyone who is involved in this service would vouch that the bounties and confirmations experienced are just the same as those when teaching and proclaiming the Faith. Go for it! The timing is right for the year 2002/2003. The CBES particularly appeals to young adults, between 21 and 30, who may be single or without children to consider offering their services – contrary to popular belief once you are married or have children there will be even less time.

For further information contact:

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*"Today the training and education of the believers' children is the pre-eminent goal of the chosen. It is the same as servitude to the Sacred Threshold and waiting upon the Blessed Beauty. Joyously, therefore, canst thou pride thyself on this."*

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá, cited in *Bahá'í Education* p. 36, *Compilation of Compilations* p. 274)

With loving Bahá'í greetings,  
The Children's Bahá'í Education Service

Syllabus Review Panel.

- Lesson plans to support the syllabus Light Upon Light. Thorough plans which will help even an inexperienced teacher with more to come in the future.

All of this is thanks to Alan Woodhurst who is the author of the syllabus and lesson plans and who has carried out the laborious task of scanning in the IHSP to make it available electronically.

To order your copy please send a cheque for £1.50 (incl. p&p) made payable to Alan Woodhurst (including your address!) to:

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Upminster, Essex RM14  
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