



The Nuggets

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Baha'i Stories

Birthday

Over a hundred guests had come to welcome the Master. Florence's mother Alice Breed had baked Him a birthday cake with sixty-eight candles, and to symbolize universality and the love many bore Him then and would in increasing numbers bear Him down the ages, had decorated it with tiny flags of the United States, Persia and England. Her first cake fell and she had to bake another. This may have produced a number of stories we have often heard but could never verify. It is reported that of a failed cake, whose creator told Him she had used her prayer book while preparing it, the Master responded, 'You should have used your cook book instead.' We like the anecdote but somehow it does not sound like the Master to us, and we are fairly sure it did not happen in the present case. Significantly, He did not stay for the festivities. He forgave this time, but had forbidden the celebration of His birthday. Six years before He had told Khan and other pilgrims that besides Naw-Ruz (New Day) the Holy Days were only for the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, that His birth on the twenty-second/twenty-third of May (the Bahá'i day begins at sunset) was 'only a coincidence', and now in His address He spoke only of the Báb's Declaration on

this day, saying not a word about Himself. Afterward, Alice persuaded Him to step into the dining room and at least see the festive table and the cake, and take a little refreshment. He sat in the large, brocaded 'grandfather' chair but soon left. ~Marzieh Gail, Arches of the Years

Events and News

Bahá'í World News Service

Reimagining Path to Peace through Harmony of Science and Religion



BAKU, Azerbaijan — *In societies throughout the world grappling with religious extremism and scientific skepticism, can harmony between science and religion offer a path to lasting peace?*

This was the central question explored at a recent national conference in Azerbaijan, organized by the Bahá'í community of that country in collaboration with the government's State Committee on Religious Associations.

The conference, titled "Global Peace: Unity of Science and Religion," brought together some 80 participants, including members of parliament and other officials, academics, journalists, and representatives of diverse faith communities to explore how neither science nor religion alone is sufficient to enable humanity to attain peace; rather, it is their harmonious integration that can provide the necessary insights and motivations for transformative action.

Ramazan Asgarli, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Azerbaijan, elaborated on the principle of the harmony of science and religion. "To think about peace and take practical action, we draw knowledge from two systems: science and religion."

He added: "One reveals the secrets of nature to us... provides the power to reveal things in the material realm through intellectual enquiry, while the other helps us navigate life and search for meaning. ...But both serve human well-being."

World peace is not only possible but inevitable

Sayavush Heydarov, the Deputy Head of the State Committee for the Work with Religious Organizations, highlighted the significance of the conference, stating, “Our world faces numerous afflictions. We must seek a remedy to heal the wounds and chart a course towards global peace. In this journey, we need to carefully consider the parts that science and religion play in guiding us towards that destination.”

Mr. Asgarli, offered a perspective on the journey toward peace, quoting from the statement of the Universal House of Justice titled “The Promise of World Peace:”

“For the first time in history it is possible for everyone to view the entire planet, with all its myriad diversified peoples, in one perspective. World peace is not only possible but inevitable. It is the next stage in the evolution of this planet.”

Farah Asgarova, the conference’s moderator and a member of the country’s Office of External Affairs, elaborated on this powerful assertion, emphasizing that peace in its Bahá’í conception is not merely the absence of conflict. Rather, fundamental transformation of society’s structures is needed, informed by spiritual principles, such as the principles of the harmony of science and religion, the equality of women and men, and the oneness of humanity, among others.

Addressing prevailing misconceptions of human nature

Participants discussed how the principle of the harmony of science and religion can offer insights into societal challenges such as religious radicalization.

Mr. Asgarli emphasized that this principle encourages a rational approach to understanding human nature and society, while also drawing upon spiritual teachings that affirm our higher potential.

One of the main obstacles to peace, he explained, is a prevailing misconception about human nature that often goes unexamined. “Aggression and conflict dominate the world’s social, economic, and religious systems,” he said, “leading many to believe such behavior is innate and impossible to change.

“This view creates contradictions in relationships: while many people worldwide seek peace and harmony, they simultaneously accept that human nature is inherently selfish and aggressive, making progress and peace seem unattainable.”

Mr. Asgarli presented an alternative perspective: “By reframing human nature as capable of nobility and peace, we can work toward aligning our social structures and educational systems with a vastly different conception of human potential—one that can enable societal conditions for nurturing peace rather than conflict.”

A point of inflection in a national conversation

Participants noted that the conference provided a unique national forum to reflect on building peace through diverse perspectives, providing a pivotal point in deepening the ongoing national conversation about societal harmony and progress.

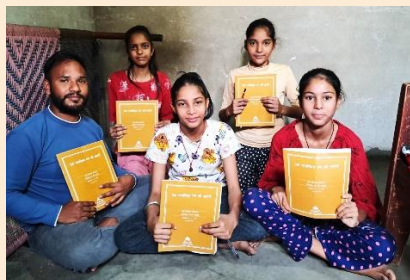
Yadigar Mammadli, head of the Media Department at the Baku International Multiculturalism Center, underscored the importance of inclusive discussions. He stated, “The security and salvation of humanity are to be found in global peace. How are we going to build it? We need to talk about it from different perspectives. I thank the Bahá’í community for such a courageous initiative.”

The conference also prompted reflections on the role of faith communities in fostering peace. Turan Irfan, a religious scholar, observed, “I am happy that the Bahá’is [of Azerbaijan] initiated discussion on such a challenging topic and made it the focus of an expanding conversation.”

The conference’s impact extends beyond the event itself, with plans already under way to continue these conversations in smaller settings throughout the year, culminating in a second seminar on the theme of harmony between science and religion next year.

News from the Twin Community of Jaipur

Here is a sample of activities in pictures of many junior youth groups, Ruhi study groups, children’s classes, home visits and devotional and prayer meetings in different parts of Jaipur and Rajasthan. The birthday of the Bab and Baha’u’llah were celebrated.



Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul

A Realtor in Missouri is Determined to make her Hometown “a City where no one Sleeps Outside.”



For nine years Linda Brown and her husband David organized a nightly drop-in shelter where homeless people in Springfield could eat, shower, do laundry, use a computer, and socialize during bingo games and karaoke—but they wanted to do more.

So they transformed an abandoned mobile home property into a village of tiny homes that provides permanent housing to the chronically disabled homeless.

They raised \$4.75 million and opened Eden Village in 2018, erecting 31 tiny homes that are now occupied by people like Jonathan Fisher. He was battling substance abuse and had lived on the streets for two years when he met Linda Brown, who changed his life.

“In the worst moments of my life, Linda gave me guidance, care, and made me feel like I was still worth something,” Fisher says. He says that Brown took the time to learn about how he became homeless, and then encouraged him as he rebuilt his life. She even offered him a job.

Now sober, Fisher works full-time for Brown, doing construction and maintenance on the 31 homes, and helping others experiencing struggles similar to what he went through.

The driving philosophy behind Eden Village is the same that fuels the Housing First movement: The root causes of a person’s homelessness cannot be thoroughly addressed until his or her immediate housing needs are met.

“I watched as my (homeless) friends walked off into the darkness to a hidden, wet, cold camp while we went home to a warm bed,” Linda told the National Association of Realtors, who honored her with their Good Neighbor Award in 2020. “I had to do something,”

That was the moment that formed her vision for the tiny-home village that serves as a place where the chronically disabled homeless “can live with dignity and self-worth.”

Changing Lives, One Village at a Time

After drawing sponsorship money from Coldwell Banker, the Greater Springfield Board of Realtors, local banks, churches, and area residents, by February 2019, all 31 tiny homes, which cost about \$42,000 each, were occupied.

“It takes someone who wants to do something, and then believes they can. I’ve watched Linda Brown live that out,” says Nate Schleuter, who helped launch a tiny-home village for the homeless in Austin, Texas, but now is the chief visionary officer for Eden Village.

“It’s exciting to watch the homeless who thought they’d live the rest of their life on the street now have a home.”

Brown’s 13 years of real estate expertise has been essential to the development of the tiny-home community. She learned of a listing for an abandoned 4.2-acre mobile park on Springfield’s east side. The property wouldn’t need to be rezoned for tiny-home trailers, and the infrastructure and utilities were already in place.

The tiny homes are rolled in on wheels attached to their steel frames, qualifying them as recreational vehicles. The 400-square-foot individual homes are fully furnished, including dishes and bedding. Residents pay \$300 per month, which includes utilities. Most receive government disability checks of \$725 per month to cover expenses. They can remain in their home as long as they wish, provided they remain a good neighbor in the community.

The village includes a 4,000-square-foot community center where residents can hold cookouts, do laundry, and access a medical office staffed with student nurse volunteers and mental health professionals. Eden Village was even the site of a marriage ceremony for two residents.

Plans for additional villages are already underway on donated land. Eden Village 2 will house 24 residents in tiny homes and is close to opening.

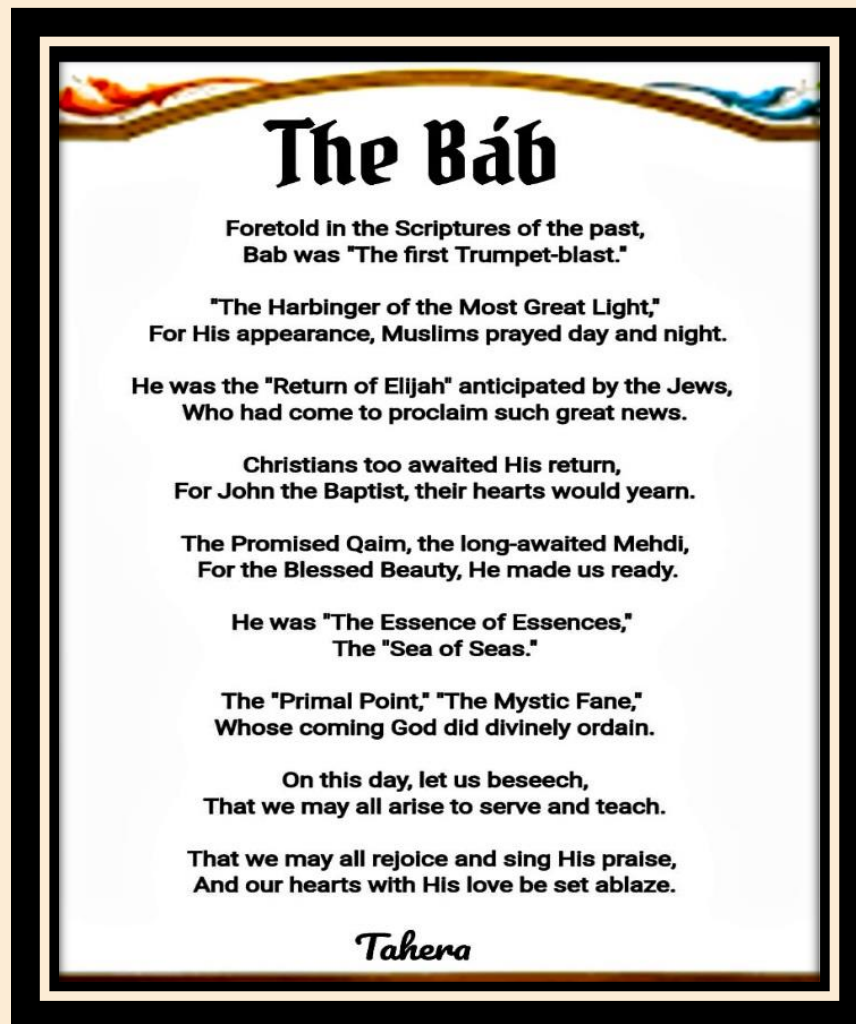
Then, work will begin on Eden Village 3, which could house up to 80 residents in duplexes. Over the next six years, Brown, who is a realtor for Amax Real Estate, plans to have five villages across Springfield, housing an estimated 200 homeless people.

Fisher says Brown's devotion helped him emerge from the grip of homelessness. "She helped me to build a better life," Fisher says. "Even when I was struggling with homelessness and sobriety, she showed me I was valuable and that my potential shouldn't be wasted. She made me feel like I belonged somewhere."

Other cities are seeking to duplicate Eden Village. One project is underway in Wilmington, N.C., and 34 other communities are making plans.

Poems

By Tahera:



Social Action

Nazz Rest Home Project in Rajasthan, India

This project is dreaming of creating an environment for those elderly who have been abandoned by their children and the government and are struggling to survive.

Based on the idea suggested by the Universal House of Justice for the full integration of the elderly in the community, this project is laying its foundation on the service to the community by building a facility for protecting and nurturing the bodies and souls of older people.

Every day, more work is done. The trees are growing slowly. With some hard work on foot and motorcycles, the newly purchased plants were taken to the land for more planting. Planting all trees was done with the help of locals and young Baha'i friends coming 80 kilometres from Jaipur to have a plantation day.

So far, a room needed to bring the electricity has been constructed, and about 400 hundred trees have been planted. There is a well that pumps water for the trees and the fields of crops, and the proceeds go towards the education of the children in the small school near it. Shortly, the main building will be built to accommodate the elderly.



From the Pages of History

Departure of Mulla Husayn for Isfahan

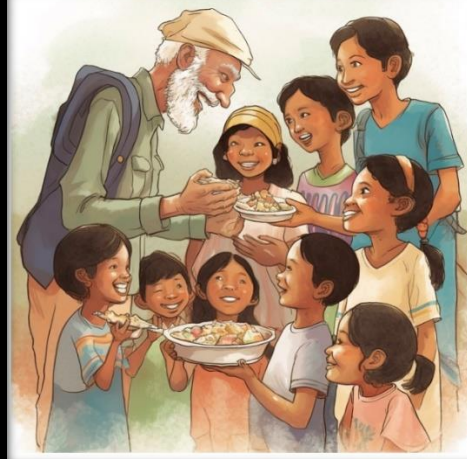
Mulla Husayn decided to join the company of his friends and to proceed with them to Isfahan. Travelling alone, at about a farsakh's distance in advance of his companions, he, as soon as he paused at nightfall to offer his prayer, would be overtaken by them and would, in their company, complete his devotions. He would be the first to resume the journey, and would again be joined by that devoted band at the hour of dawn, when he once more would break his march to offer his prayer. Only when pressed by his friends would he consent to observe the congregational form of worship. On such occasions he would sometimes follow the lead of one of his companions. Such was the devotion which he had kindled in those hearts that a number of his fellow-travellers would dismount from their steeds and, offering them to those who were journeying on foot, would themselves follow him, utterly indifferent to the strain and fatigues of the march.

As they approached the outskirts of Isfahan, Mulla Husayn, fearing that the sudden entry of so large a group of people might excite the curiosity and suspicion of its inhabitants, advised those who were travelling with him to disperse and to enter the gates in small and inconspicuous numbers. A few days after their arrival, there reached them the news that Shiraz was in a state of violent agitation, that all manner of intercourse with the Bab had been forbidden, and that their projected visit to that city would be fraught with the gravest danger. Mulla Husayn, quite undaunted by this sudden intelligence, decided to proceed to Shiraz. He acquainted only a few of his trusted companions with his intention. Discarding his robes and turban, and wearing the jubbih ⁽²⁾ and kulah of the people of Khurasan, he, disguising himself as a horseman of Hizarih and Quchan and accompanied by his brother and nephew, set out at an unexpected hour for the city of his Beloved. As he approached its gate, he instructed his brother to proceed in the dead of night to the house of the Bab's maternal uncle and to request him to inform the Bab of his arrival. Mulla Husayn received, the next day, the welcome news that Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali was expecting him an hour after sunset outside the gate of the city. Mulla Husayn met him at the appointed hour and was conducted to his home. Several times at night did the Bab honour that house with His presence, and continue in close association with Mulla Husayn until the break of day. Soon after this, He gave permission to His companions who had gathered in Isfahan, to leave gradually for Shiraz, and there to wait until it should be feasible for Him to meet them. He cautioned them to exercise the utmost vigilance, instructed them to enter, a few at a time, the gate of the city, and bade them disperse, immediately upon their arrival, into such quarters as were reserved for travellers, and accept whatever employment they could find.

The first group to reach the city and meet the Bab, a few days after the arrival of Mulla Husayn, consisted of Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Nahri, Mirza Hadi, his brother; Mulla Abdu'l-Karim-i-Qazvini, Mulla Javad-i-Baraghani, Mulla Abdu'l-'Aliy-i-Harati, and Mirza Ibrahim-i-Shirazi. In the course of their association with Him, the last three of the group gradually betrayed their blindness of heart and demonstrated the baseness of their character. The manifold evidences of the Bab's increasing favour towards Mulla Husayn aroused their anger and excited the smouldering fire of their jealousy. In their impotent rage, they resorted to the abject weapons of fraud and of calumny. Unable at first to manifest openly their hostility to Mulla Husayn, they sought by every crafty device to beguile the minds and damp the affections of his devoted admirers. Their unseemly behaviour alienated the sympathy of the believers and precipitated their separation from the company of the faithful. Expelled by their very acts from the bosom of the Faith, they leagued themselves with its avowed enemies and proclaimed their utter rejection of its claims and principles. So great was the mischief which they stirred up among the people of that city that they were eventually expelled by the civil authorities, who alike despised and feared their plottings. The Bab has in a Tablet, in which He expatiates upon their machinations and misdeeds, compared them to the calf of the Samiri, the calf that had neither voice nor soul, which was both the abject handiwork and the object of the adoration of a wayward people. "May Thy condemnation, O God!" He wrote, with reference to Mulla Javad and Mulla Abdu'l-'Ali, "rest upon the Jibt and Taghut, the twin idols of this perverse people." All three subsequently proceeded to Kirman and joined forces with Haji Mirza Muhammad Karim Khan, whose designs they furthered and the vehemence of whose denunciations they strove to reinforce. ~ The Dawn Breakers & Nabil's Narrative

Sharing

Douglas Wilson's sharing:



We must be attentive,
alert and mindful,
occupied with service
to all mankind,
-Abdu'l-Bahá-

News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



Tla-o-qui-aht Honours Residential School Warriors with Paddle, quu?as names



Tofino, BC

Christie Residential School warrior Rose Tom says she felt like a queen on Sept. 30, Canada's fourth National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Tom journeyed on a boat from the rocky shores of Meares Island and the site of Kakawis/ old Christie Indian Residential School (IRS) with a pod of fellow warriors, some paddling a dugout canoe and others on support boats, to Tofino's First Street Dock.

It was an emotional morning, triggering memories of a time most don't want to talk or think about, but as the residential school warriors cruised into the Tofino inlet, they were greeted by a sea of orange supporters and family – four generations strong.

Tla-o-qui-aht Chief Councillor Elmer Frank explained that the paddle from Kakawis to Tofino was a pathway for the warriors to heal from the trauma of residential school.

"A lot of hurt happened (at Christie) to our people. One of the ways to start healing is to start from where we were hurt. To paddle together, to uphold each other, to continue that strength that we have as Tla-o-qui-aht and First Nations People. To be able to overcome that hurt that we endured," said Frank.

"Today we are here to celebrate; to celebrate our survival, to celebrate our healing journey, to celebrate together and collectively," he said.

Tom was forced to attend Christie when she was five or six years old for three years. She said they separated the boys from the girls, so she didn't even know her brothers had also attended the "school" at the same time she did.

On the 3.6-kilometre walk from Tofino to Tin Wis and the site of the newer Christie location, Tom didn't say much about residential school other than she did not like it. Instead, she talked about her six kids, her 18 grandkids, her upcoming 78th birthday on Nov. 11 and the fact that she is 40 years sober.

"I wish the drugs and alcohol would just disappear," said Tom, who lives in the Tla-o-qui-aht community of Opitsaht across from the inlet from Tofino.

Following the walk, Tla-o-qui-aht Councillor Autlieyu (Francis Frank) welcomed the standing-room only gathering to the Orange Shirt Day community lunch that featured dishes prepared by Tofino's culinary champions.

"Nuu-chah-nulth are carrying heavy hearts for lost loved ones. Today is about reclaiming our spirits. It's about helping our survivors reclaim their identity," said Autlieyu.

"The goal of the residential school was to take the Indian out the child and also to remove us from practicing and living who we are, speaking our language and singing our song and dance," he continued. "That's what we are going to do today. They tried, but they failed. We are still here and we are going to be here for another 100 plus years."

After lunch, the tables were stored away to open the space for dance, song and a special naming ceremony.

Honouring the residential school warriors by giving them quu?as names

Tla-o-qui-aht Ha'wiih worked with their language team and the families of the IRS warriors to give them each a unique quu?as (Indigenous) name.

“A lot of survivors expressed that their identity was taken away from them,” said Chief Frank. “Our names are English because of the colonial system that was created for us.”

Like a high school graduation, the IRS warriors were called up to the front one by one, they were blanketed by a Tla-o-qui-aht youth and presented a certificate with their new Indigenous name. The crowd recited the names in unison and applauded as the warrior returned to their seat.

From the Editor's Desk

The Beauty and Benefits When East and West Meet: A Personal Experience

I have spent precisely half of my life in the global East, and the other half living in the West. East and West functioned as schools of learning for me, educating me in unique ways.

I feel like a lucky plant rooted in the soil of the East and watered and nurtured by the West, and the recipient of the best of both worlds.

History is full of records of the past contributions of the East in culture, art, music, architecture, sciences and literature. The physical evidence of some of the East's rich cultures can still be seen today. The East is the birthplace of Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and many more religions.

On the other hand, the West has been the birthplace of many scientific discoveries and innovations that have advanced humanity and led to a better and more prosperous standard of living. Western science has discovered the smallest parts of atoms, mapped the DNA of the human body, and sent spaceships to distant planets looking for signs of life.

If I could describe the relation between East and West simplistically, I would use the metaphor of the heart and brain in the human body. With its deep roots in spirituality, the East functions like the heart, pumping the lifeblood of guidance and values; and the West, with its advancements in science and finance, functions as the brain.

“In these days the East is in need of material progress and the West is in want of a spiritual idea. It would be well for the West to turn to the East for illumination, and to give in exchange its scientific knowledge. There must be this interchange of gifts. The East and the West must unite to give to each other what is lacking. This union will bring about a true civilization, where the spiritual is expressed and carried out in the material.” - Abdu'l-Baha

I do not think I fully understood the implications until our Baha'i community decided to adopt the community of Jaipur in India as its twin sister community and join forces and share experiences.

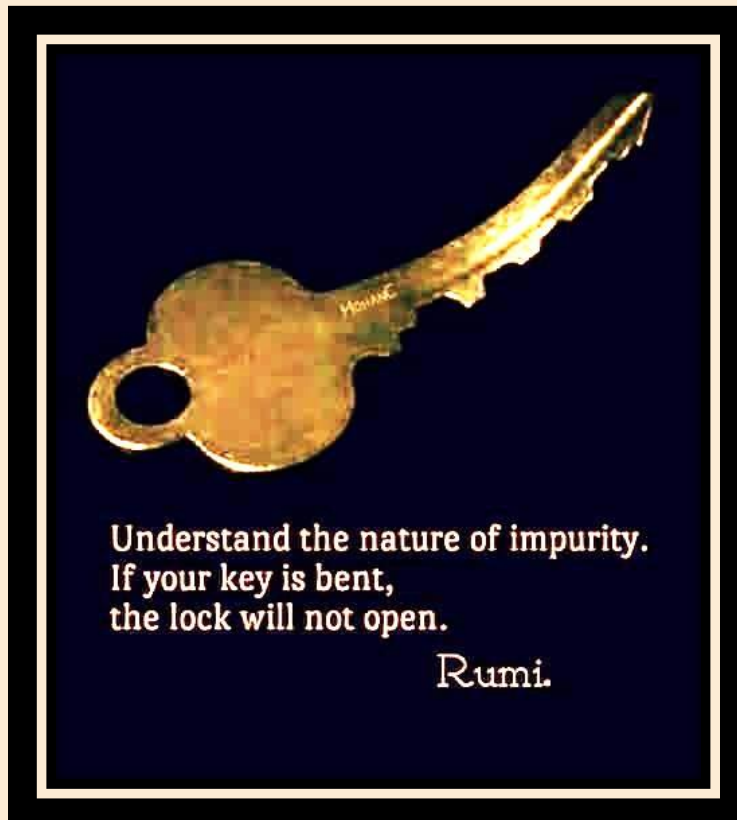
Soon, we found out that we are lucky in the West to have the financial means, but we lack human resources in our small community. In contrast, our friends in Jaipur have ample human resources, but they struggle with the finances to carry out activities.

Each member of our community feels a sense of pride and accomplishment due to this beautiful involvement and experience, helping with activities such as children's classes, junior youth activities, and devotional gatherings there. Friends in Jaipur are very grateful for our financial support.

Although humanity is connected by physical means, people's hearts are very distant from each other. Many walls, such as skin colour, nationality, religion, political views, and language, are hindering the East and the West from getting closer.

Whether from East or West, we all recognize that our world is getting smaller thanks to improvements in communication and transportation. This highlights the need for unified efforts by all countries to share resources for the betterment of the world.

I am not sure that our community's small attempt to reach out to a community in the East will reduce the weight of the world's problems. Still, it surely has given us a sense of pride that at least we are working to cooperate with our brothers and sisters on the other side of the planet.



Writings to Ponder and Practice

**“There is no act of worship more pleasing unto God than benefiting others, even if it is only by creating joy in their heart.”
~ The Bab**

For sharing materials and questions, write to bshams@telus.net