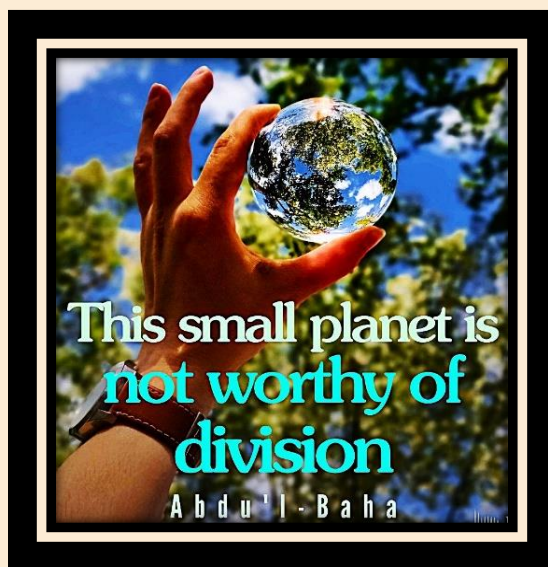




## *The Nuggets*

*Volume 4, Issue No.15*



## *Baha'i Stories*

### **Materialism**

*Earlier that day 'Abdu'l-Bahá talked about the material progress of the world. He said that some countries had reached the apex of material progress. Physically, they were like healthy bodies, but unfortunately they were empty of spirit. He noted that a spiritless body was a dead one until it acquired spiritual capacity. Then He said: "The people of America have a great capacity for the acquisition of spiritual qualities but they are immersed in material affairs. They are like machines which move uncontrollably; they move but are devoid of spirit. They will attain perfection when the spirit of divine civilization is breathed into them. ~Earl Redman, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Their Midst*

## *Events and News*

### **Bahá'í World News Service**

## Equality of Women and Men Essential for Creating Peaceful Societies



**BIC NEW YORK** — *The advancement of women, rooted in the spiritual principle of the equality of women and men, is not merely an aspiration but a necessary condition for peace, says the Bahá’í International Community in a statement released for the 69th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.*

*The statement, titled “In full partnership: Women’s advancement as a prerequisite for peaceful societies,” emphasizes that true equality requires a transformation that goes beyond policy reforms to address the spiritual and cultural roots of inequality. It comes as the international community marks 30 years since the landmark Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.*

*Liliane Nkunzimana, a BIC representative from the New York Office, noted: “The 12 critical areas of concern articulated in Beijing were an important evolution in equality of women and men. However, many of these advances have been eroded by policy rollbacks and other forces, from the grassroots through to the international stage. This is a disturbing regression. And it should prompt us to identify more enduring approaches to transformation.”*

*The statement highlights a connection between the equality of women and men and peace, emphasizing that societies with higher levels of equality tend to experience lower levels of violent conflict, and that peace processes involving women tend to last longer. However, it stresses that true lasting change needs to go beyond institutional reforms to encompass transformation within individual mindsets and social norms.*

*“Until transformation takes root within mindsets and finds expression in culture, the underlying causes of prejudice and discrimination, embedded in the systems and structures of societies, will remain unquestioned and will continue to perpetuate injustice,” the statement reads.*

*To illustrate how such a transformation can unfold at the grassroots level, the statement shares experiences from Bihar, India, where Bahá’í educational programs fostered reflection on the*

*principle that every individual, regardless of gender, is inherently noble. As local community members examined this and other Bahá'í principles—such as justice and the oneness of humanity—they began to recognize contradictions between their belief in equality and entrenched social practices that limited women's opportunities in education and decision-making.*

*In response, the community created consultative spaces where families openly discussed these issues. Through honest conversations, guided by spiritual principles, participants explored how long-standing attitudes acted as barriers to women's advancement—such as the belief that a daughter's primary role was marriage, the perception of women as “unclean” during menstruation, or the assumption that it was unsafe for girls to travel long distances to school.*

*The discussions in Bihar shed light on how such views found expression in daily life: boys were often prioritized for schooling, financial resources were allocated to dowries rather than education, and women were excluded from leadership roles and decision-making spaces.*

*The process of social and spiritual discovery in Bihar led to concrete actions. Neighbors and friends began to work collectively to remove identified obstacles by creating new educational opportunities emphasizing the moral and intellectual development of every child, regardless of gender.*

*Many in that community have observed how the application of spiritual principles to different spheres of life can lead to the evolution of a new culture—one that increasingly reflects the truth of equality in both belief and practice. These efforts have fostered greater mutual respect and trust between men and women, extending from homes to the broader community—offering glimpses of how sustainable societal change can take root.*

## **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. (PSA) Preparation for the Social Action program started at Jaipur Baha'i house with 35 participants. Naw-Ruz was celebrated in various parts of Rajasthan.*



# Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul



## Life-changing Surgery to Straighten Her Legs



*Fudia was born with a progressive orthopedic condition that worsened over time and caused her feet to turn inwards at a 90-degree angle, making it extremely difficult and painful to walk.*

*Local hospitals in Sierra Leone were never able to help her, but her uncle Joseph realized there was still hope—in the form of Mercy Ships, an international hospital charity that travels the world.*

*As her guardian, he moved with Fudia to Freetown, so they could apply for help the next time Mercy Ships docked there. After waiting six years until it returned in 2023, the 9-year-old was taken aboard and diagnosed with Blount’s disease, which causes severe leg deformities.*

*British volunteer surgeon Rachel Buckingham performed a four-hour procedure on Fudia in January that fully straightened her legs and left her able to walk with confidence.*

*“We noticed it on the very first day she was born; her legs were not normal,” said Joseph. “She got rejected in school by her friends and colleagues. Even after changing schools because of that, she was still suffering mockery from people. “When she was selected for surgery, I was very happy, and when I heard that her surgery was successful, I was overjoyed for all that has happened for Fudia.”*

*Her recovery was both challenging and emotional, with unexpected delays and additional wound care needed, but she stayed strong and is now back on her feet—a fair bit taller—and much happier, thanks to the free surgery from Mercy Ships (support the charity here with donations or by volunteering). “I will never forget the first time I met Fudia,” said Dr. Buckingham. “Every step was an agonizing effort. Her legs were so severely twisted that walking was a daily battle.”*

*Physical Therapist Declan Osborne working with bow-legged girl – Mercy Ships via SWNS  
“As a volunteer children’s orthopedic surgeon with Mercy Ships, I’ve met many children who need urgent surgery, but something about Fudia’s quiet courage struck me deeply.*

*“Despite the suffering she’s endured—like being turned away from hospitals that couldn’t help her—she held on to hope.*

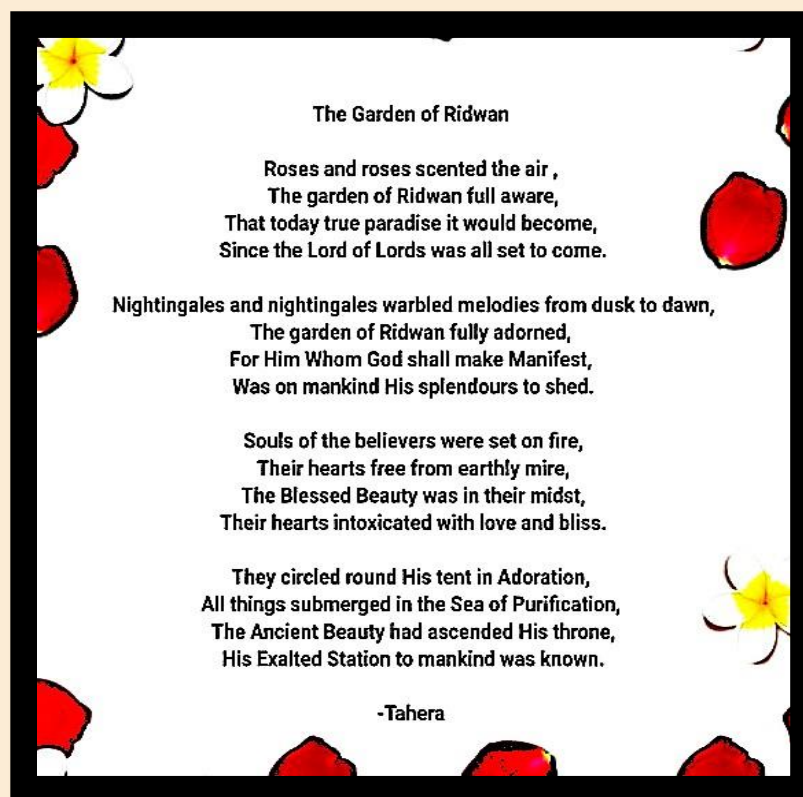
*“I’m so thankful we were able to provide the right surgery, and she can now walk, run and play happily.”*

*Fudia’s aunt and caregiver, Massa, said the little girl now loves playing with her friends and going to school.*

*Even more inspiring, Fudia now wants to be a doctor when she grows up—so she can help others, just like the Mercy Ships team helped her.*

*“She was ashamed to go to school,” reported Massa. “But now, no more shame.”*

## **By Tahera Yadav:**



## *Social Action*

### **Nazz Rest Home**

*After a long wait, we are extremely excited to find good and mature fruit trees and Bougainvillea for the “Nazz Rest Home” project, a Baha’i-inspired home for the underprivileged elderly in Jaipur, India. We found an excellent nursery and we bought additional varieties of 200 fruit trees and 150 more Bougainvillea, which have all been planted so the dream of having hundreds of*

trees in Nazz Rest Home is being realized. The trees came with some fruit and will bless the soil to give fruits and beauty to those who walk their paths.

Now, we can plan to install an irrigation system to water them.

The road to Nazz Rest Home is drying, and soon the construction of the big room and the work of the installation of the septic tank, plumbing, and electrical will start, concluding phase one.

Exciting and challenging times are ahead when the preparation and planning for the construction of the main building will start.



## *From the Pages of History*

### **Story of Abdu'l-Vahhab**

No sooner were these words uttered than Mulla Ali arose from his seat and set out to prosecute his mission. At about a farsang's distance from Shiraz he was overtaken by a youth who, flushed with excitement, impatiently asked to speak to him. His name was Abdu'l-Vahhab. "I beseech you," he tearfully entreated Mulla Ali, "to allow me to accompany you on your journey. Perplexities oppress my heart; I pray you to guide my steps in the way of Truth. Last night, in my dream, I heard the crier announce in the market-street of Shiraz the appearance of the Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful. He called to the multitude: 'Arise and seek him. Behold, he plucks out of the burning fire charters of liberty and is distributing them to the people. Hasten to him, for whoever receives them from his hands will be secure from penal suffering, and whoever fails to obtain them from him, will be bereft of the blessings of Paradise.' Immediately I heard the voice of the crier, I arose and, abandoning my shop, ran across the market-street of Vakil to a place where my eyes beheld you standing and distributing those same charters to the people. To everyone who approached to receive them from your hands, you would whisper in his ear a few words which instantly caused him to flee in consternation and exclaim: 'Woe betide me, for I am deprived of the blessings of Ali and his kindred! Ah, miserable me,

*that I am accounted among the outcast and fallen !' I awoke from my dream and, immersed in an ocean of thought, regained my shop. Suddenly I saw you pass, accompanied by a man who wore a turban, and who was conversing with you. I sprang from my seat and, impelled by a power which I could not repress, ran to overtake you. To my utter amazement, I found you standing upon the very site which I had witnessed in my dream, engaged in the recital of traditions and verses. Standing aside, at a distance, I kept watching you, wholly unobserved by you and your friend. I heard the man whom you were addressing, impetuously protest: 'Easier is it for me to be devoured by the flames of hell than to acknowledge the truth of your words, the weight of which mountains are unable to sustain!' To his contemptuous rejection you returned this answer: 'Were all the universe to repudiate His truth, it could never tarnish the unsullied purity of His robe of grandeur.' Departing from him, you directed your steps towards the gate of Kaziran. I continued to follow you until I reached this place."*

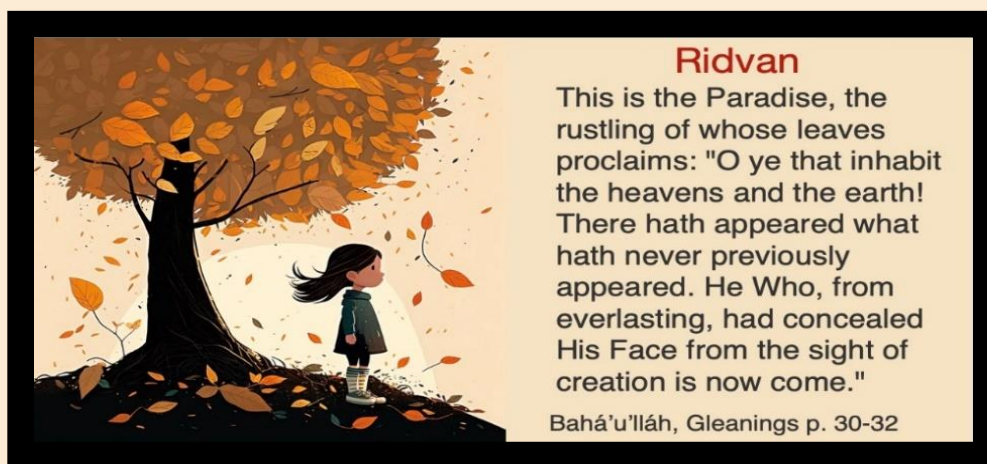
*Mulla Ali tried to appease his troubled heart and to persuade him to return to his shop and resume his daily work. "Your association with me," he urged, "would involve me in difficulties. Return to Shiraz and rest assured, for you are accounted of the people of salvation. Far be it from the justice of God to withhold from so ardent and devoted a seeker the cup of His grace, or to deprive a soul so athirst from the billowing ocean of His Revelation." The words of Mulla Ali proved of no avail. The more he insisted upon the return of Abdu'l-Vahhab, the louder grew his lamentation and weeping. Mulla Ali finally felt compelled to comply with his wish, resigning himself to the will of God. Haji Abdu'l-Majid, the father of Abdu'l-Vahhab, has often been heard to recount, with eyes filled with tears, this story: "How deeply," he said, "I regret the deed I committed. Pray that God may grant me the remission of my sin. I was one among the favoured in the court of the sons of the Farman-Farma, the governor of the province of Fars. Such was my position that none dared to oppose or harm me. No one questioned my authority or ventured to interfere with my freedom. Immediately I heard that my son Abdu'l-Vahhab had forsaken his shop and left the city, I ran out in the direction of the Kaziran gate to overtake him. Armed with a club with which I intended to beat him, I enquired as to the road he had taken. I was told that a man wearing a turban had just crossed the street and that my son was seen following him. They seemed to have agreed to leave the city together. This excited my anger and indignation. How could I tolerate, I thought to myself, such unseemly behaviour on the part of my son, I, who already hold so privileged a position in the court of the sons of the Farman-Farma? Nothing but the severest chastisement, I felt, could wipe away the effect of my son's disgraceful conduct.*

*"I continued my search until I reached them. Seized with a savage fury, I inflicted upon Mulla Ali unspeakable injuries. To the strokes that fell heavily upon him, he, with extraordinary serenity, returned this answer: 'Stay your hand, O Abdu'l-Majid, for the eye of God is observing you. I take Him as my witness, that I am in no wise responsible for the conduct of your son. I mind not the tortures you inflict upon me, for I stand prepared for the most grievous afflictions in the path I have chosen to follow. Your injuries, compared to what is destined to befall me in future, are as a drop compared to the ocean. Verily, I say, you shall survive me, and will come to recognise my innocence. Great will then be your remorse, and deep your sorrow.' Scorning his remarks, and heedless of his appeal, I continued to beat him until I was exhausted. Silently and heroically he endured this most undeserved chastisement at my hands. Finally, I ordered my son to follow me, and left Mulla Ali to himself. "On our way back to Shiraz, my son related to me the dream he had dreamt. A feeling of profound regret gradually seized me. The blamelessness of Mulla Ali was vindicated in my eyes, and the memory of my cruelty to him continued long to oppress my soul. Its bitterness lingered in my heart until the time when I felt obliged to transfer my residence from Shiraz to Baghdad. From Baghdad I moved to Kazimayn, where Abdu'l-Vahhab established his business. A strange mystery brooded over his youthful face. He seemed to be concealing from me a secret which appeared to have transformed his life. And when, in the year 1267*

*A.H., Baha'u'llah journeyed to Iraq and visited Kazimayn, Abdu'l-Vahhab fell immediately under the spell of His charm and pledged his undying devotion to Him. A few years later, when my son had suffered martyrdom in Tihran and Baha'u'llah had been exiled to Baghdad, He, with infinite loving-kindness and mercy, awakened me from the sleep of heedlessness, and Himself taught me the message of the New Day, washing away with the waters of Divine forgiveness the stains of that cruel act." ~ The Dawn Breakers & Nabil's Narrative*

## Sharing

### **Douglas Wilson's sharing:**



### **Lesley's sharing:**

#### **Naw-Ruz Celebration**

*What a joy to host a gathering for the Baha'i New Year in our home with 19 friends from diverse walks of life and cultures. Even the food reflected ethnic diversity - Albanian, Moroccan, Persian and Indian delicacies. Lively conversation and live entertainment enhanced the spirit of the celebration.*





# History, News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



## **Buddhism**

### **Maya's Dream and the Birth of Siddhartha (Buddha)**

*THE same hour that spring was born, a dream came to Maya as she slept. She saw a young elephant descending from the sky. It had six great tusks; it was as white as the snow on mountain-tops. Maya saw it enter her womb, and thousands of Gods suddenly appeared before her. They praised her with immortal songs, and Maya understood that nevermore would she know disquietude or hatred or anger.*

*Then she awoke. She was happy; it was a happiness she had never felt before. Arising, she arrayed herself in bright colors, and, followed by her most beautiful maidens, she passed through the palace-gates. She walked in the gardens until she came to a little wood, where she found a shaded seat. Then she sent two of her maidens to King Suddhodana with this message: "That the king should come to the wood; Queen Maya wishes to see him and will await him there."*

*The king promptly complied. He left the hall where, with the help of his counsellors, he had been administering justice to the inhabitants of the city. He walked toward the wood, but, as he was about to enter, a strange feeling came over him. His limbs faltered, his hands trembled and tears welled from his eyes. And he thought:*

*"Never, not even in the heat of battle when fighting my bravest enemies, have I felt as profoundly disturbed as at this moment. Why is it I can not enter the wood where the queen awaits me? Can anyone explain my agitation?"*

*Whereupon a great voice thundered in the sky:*

*"Be happy, King Suddhodana, worthiest of the Sakyas! He who seeks supreme knowledge is about to come into the world. He has chosen your family to be his family because of its fame, good fortune and virtue, and for mother he has chosen the noblest of all women, your wife, Queen Maya. Be happy, King Suddhodana! He who seeks supreme knowledge would fain be your son!"*

*The king knew that the Gods were speaking, and he rejoiced. Regaining his serenity, he entered the wood where Maya awaited him.*

*He saw her; quietly, without arrogance, he asked:*

*"Why did you send for me? What do you wish?" The queen told him of the dream she had had; then added:*

*“My lord, there are brahmans who are clever at interpreting dreams. Send for them. They will know if the palace has been visited by good or evil, and if we should rejoice or mourn.”*

*The king agreed, and brahmans familiar with the mystery of dreams were summoned to the palace. When they had heard Maya’s story they spoke in this manner:*

*“A great joy is to be yours, O king, O queen. A son will be born to you, distinguished by the favor of the Gods. If, one day, he should renounce royalty, leave the palace, cast love aside; if, seized with compassion for the worlds, he should live the wandering life of a monk, he will deserve marvellous praise, he will richly deserve magnificent gifts. He will be adored by the worlds, for he will give them that which they hunger after. O master, O mistress, your son will be a Buddha!”*

*The brahmans withdrew. The king and queen looked at each other, and their faces were radiant with happiness and peace. Suddhodana then ordered that alms be distributed to the poor in Kapilavastu; and food was given to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and the women received flowers and perfume. Maya became the object of their veneration; the sick crowded her path, and when she extended her right hand they were cured. The blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spoke, and when the dying touched a blade of grass she had gathered they recovered at once their health and their strength. And above the city a ceaseless melody was borne on the wind, exquisite flowers rained from the sky, and songs of gratitude rose on the air around the palace walls.*

*MONTHS passed. Then, one day, the queen knew that the time was approaching for her son to be born. She went to King Suddhodana, and she said to him:*

*“My lord, I would wander through the happy gardens. Birds are singing in the trees, and the air is bright with flower-dust. I would wander through the happy gardens.”*

*“But it will weary you, O queen,” replied Suddhodana. “Are you not afraid?”*

*“The innocent being that I carry in my womb must be born amid the innocence of budding flowers. No, I will go, O master, I will go into the flower-gardens.”*

*The king yielded to Maya’s wish. He said to his servants:*

*“Go into the gardens and deck them out in silver and in gold. Drape the trees with precious hangings. Let everything be magnificent, for the queen will pass.”*

*Then he addressed Maya:*

*“Array yourself, to-day, in great splendor, O Maya. Ride in a gorgeous palanquin; let your most beautiful maidens carry you. Order your servants to use rare perfumes; have them wear ropes of pearls and bracelets of precious stones; have them carry lutes and drums and flutes, and sing sweet songs that would delight the Gods themselves.”*

*Suddhodana was obeyed, and when the queen reached the palace-gates the guards greeted her with joyous cries. Bells pealed gaily, peacocks spread their gorgeous tail-feathers, and the song of swans throbbed in the air.*

*They came to a wood where the trees were in bloom, and Maya ordered them to set down the palanquin. She stepped out and began wandering about, aimlessly. She was happy. And behold! she found a rare tree, the branches drooping under their burden of blossoms. She went up to it; gracefully extending her hand, she drew down a branch. Suddenly, she stood very still. She smiled, and the maidens who were near her received a lovely child into their arms.*

*At that same moment all that was alive in the world trembled with joy. The earth quivered. Songs and the patter of dancing feet echoed in the sky. Trees of all seasons burst into flower, and ripe fruit hung from the branches. A pure, serene light appeared in the sky. The sick were rid of their suffering. The hungry were satisfied. Those to whom wine had played false became sober. Madmen recovered their reason, the weak their strength, the poor their wealth. Prisons opened their gates. The wicked were cleansed of all evil.*

*One of Maya's maidens hastened to King Suddhodana and joyously exclaimed:*

*"My lord, my lord, a son is born to you, a son who will bring great glory to your house!"*

*He was speechless. But his face was radiant with joy, and he knew great happiness.*

*Presently he summoned all the Sakyas, and he commanded them to accompany him into the garden where the child had been born. They obeyed, and, with a host of brahmans in attendance, they formed a noble retinue as they gravely followed the king.*

*When he came near the child, the king made a deep obeisance, and he said:*

*"Do you bow as I bow before the prince, to whom I give the name Siddhartha."*

*They all bowed, and the brahmans, inspired by the Gods, then sang:*

*"All creatures are happy, and they are no longer rough, those roads travelled by men, for he is born, he who gives happiness: he will bring happiness into the world. In the darkness a great light has dawned, the sun and the moon are like dying embers, for he is born, he who gives light: he will bring light into the world. The blind see, the deaf hear, the foolish have recovered their reason, for he is born, he who restores sight, and restores hearing, and restores the mind: he will bring sight, he will bring hearing, he will bring reason into the world. Perfumed zephyrs ease the suffering of mankind, for he is born, he who heals: he will bring health into the world. Flames are no longer pitiless, the flow of rivers has been stayed, the earth has trembled gently: he will be the one to see the truth."*

## *From the Editor's Desk*

### **We Need to Replace Money as a Measure of Success**

*Humanity needs a new yardstick to measure achievement—today, we quantify it with money and material gain, the worst possible way to evaluate true success in life.*

*Money serves as an inadequate way to measure life's achievements. How can a solely materialistic tool pass judgment and render a verdict on our life's attainments?*

*We need to replace money as a measure of success with a more spiritual or humane one. However, that would necessarily involve a revolution in our current system of values in fighting the cancer of materialism that has eaten into every fabric of our lives and endangered the future of humankind and the planet.*

*One of the most significant driving forces globally is and has traditionally been the desire for money. So many wars have been fought for it, and millions of lives have been lost for it. No aspect of modern life seems immune from its spell.*

*Accordingly, we must look for a better place to invest our God-given gift of life with all its talents and abilities. This gift of life—meant to be spent on acquiring spiritual qualities, knowledge, and the sciences and arts—does not focus on transitory achievements and material goods. Life serves a higher cause than money.*

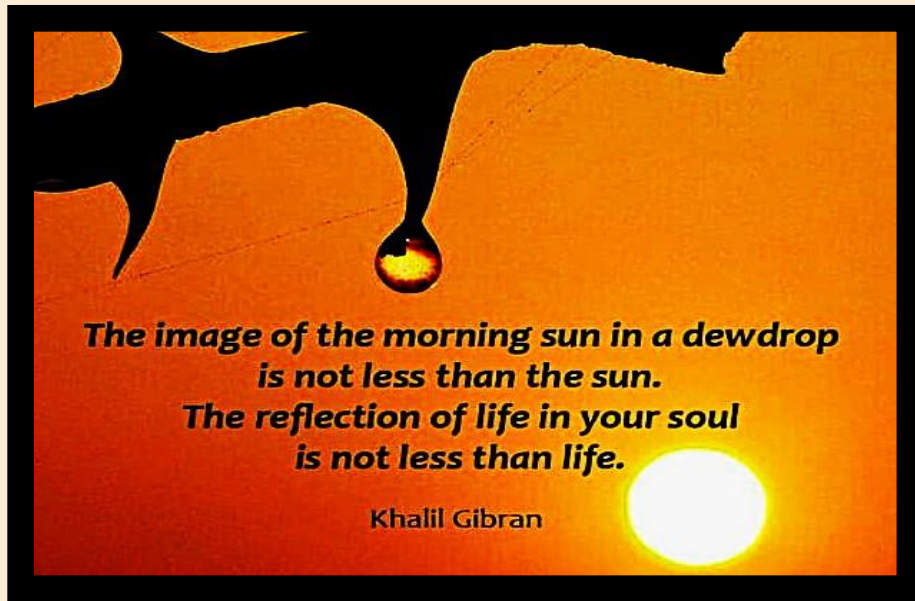
*So the time has come to try to create and define a new and comprehensive yardstick that covers all areas of our lives, reflecting our spiritual and human achievements alongside the material ones. This new yardstick will help us understand and work on all aspects of our lives—not just material prosperity. Then we can rationally decide the importance of money or lack of money in our lives and to what extent we have to invest our energies in it.*

*The Baha'i teachings say there is nothing wrong with money as a tool as long as we know its use and its danger to our life goals. It can be given value for measurement, then, as long as it serves its purpose:*

**“Wealth is praiseworthy in the highest degree, if it is acquired by an individual's own efforts and the grace of God, in commerce, agriculture, art and industry, and if it be expended for philanthropic purposes. Above all, if a judicious and resourceful individual should initiate measures which would universally enrich the masses of the people, there could be no undertaking greater than this, and it would rank in the sight of God as the supreme achievement, for such a benefactor would supply the needs and insure the comfort and well-being of a great multitude. Wealth is most commendable, provided the entire population is wealthy.” – Abdu'l-Baha**

*If we move our measurement of achievement away from money, what should our yardstick measure? We might want to change our focus to spiritual qualities or virtues such as trustworthiness, truthfulness, tolerance, generosity, compassion, love, faithfulness, flexibility, forgiveness, friendliness, gentleness, helpfulness, honesty, honour, humility, idealism, joyfulness, justice, kindness, loyalty, mercy, moderation, tact, thankfulness, tolerance, trust, and unity among others.*

*Suppose we adopted trustworthiness and truthfulness as moral measuring tools to reflect more on our spiritual progress than money. In that case, that new yardstick could become a source of encouragement for many people who think they have failed in life. This would create a new way of getting rich in a real sense and leaving the rat race of material acquisition—a step in the right direction that would lead towards transformation into a new race of more spiritual human beings.*



## *Writings to Ponder and Practice*

“Be not the slave of your moods, but their master. But if you are so angry, so depressed and so sore that your spirit cannot find deliverance and peace even in prayer, then quickly go and give some pleasure to someone lowly or sorrowful, or to a guilty or innocent sufferer! Sacrifice yourself, your talent, your time, your rest to another, to one who has to bear a heavier load than you.” ~Abdu'l-Bahá

For sharing materials and questions, write to [bshams@telus.net](mailto:bshams@telus.net)