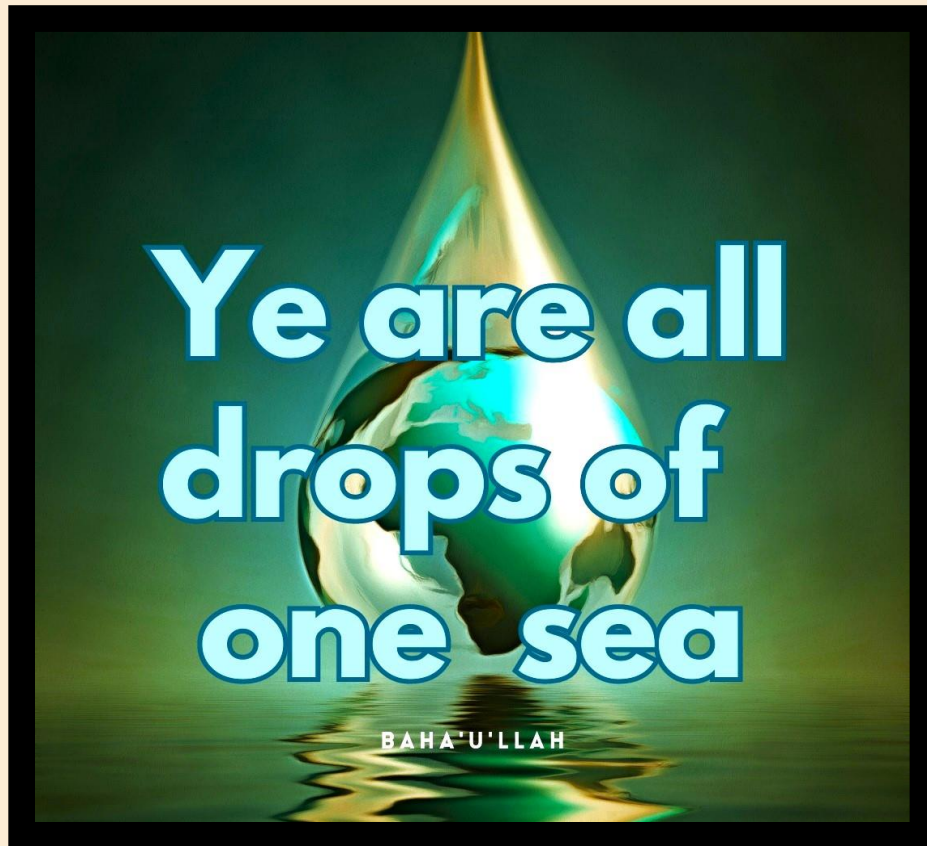




The Nuggets

Volume 4, Issue No.4



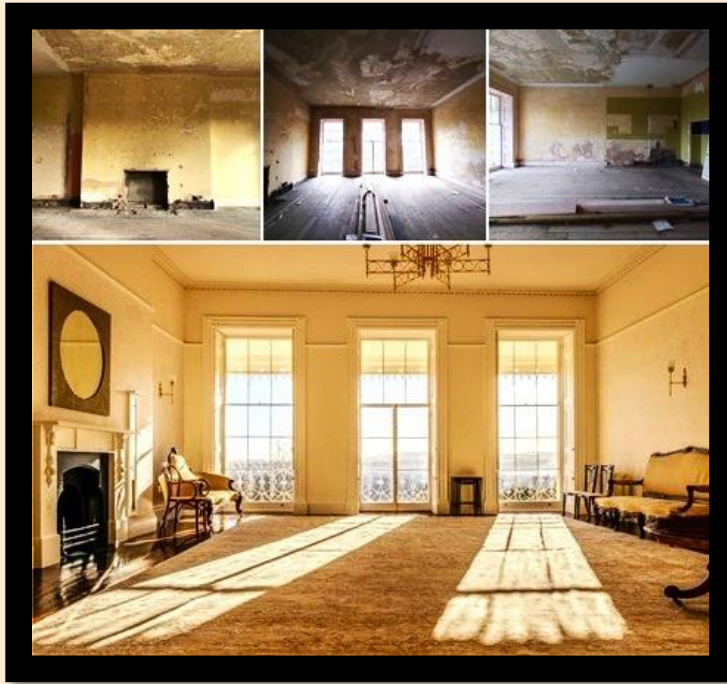
Baha'i Stories

Grief

'Abdu'l-Bahá learned well the meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's words: 'Beware, lest thou allow anything whatsoever to grieve thee.' Acquainted with sorrow, He was known to shed tears when He spoke of the hardships endured by Bahá'u'lláh, His family and His followers who went into exile with Him. Sometimes He appeared sad because not more people were responsive to His call to Bahá'u'lláh, but He truly lived what He spoke when He said, referring to the spiritual Kingdom, 'A man living with his thoughts in this Kingdom knows perpetual joy. The ills all flesh is heir to do not pass him by, but they only touch the surface of his life, the depths are calm and serene.' ~Honnold, Annamarie, Vignettes from the Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Events and News

United Kingdom: Restoration project honors enduring impact of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s message of peace



The restoration aimed to bring the apartment as close as possible to its appearance at the time of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit. The original floorboards and windows were restored, and new wallpaper and carpets were created, informed by elements visible in historic photographs of the rooms.

BRISTOL, United Kingdom — *The Bahá’ís of the United Kingdom recently marked the completion of the restoration of an apartment at 17 Royal York Crescent in Bristol, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stayed and gave public presentations in 1911 and again in 1913 during His historic travels to the West.*

Members of the Bahá’í National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, along with the architectural team and other invited guests, gathered to dedicate the apartment, which will now be open for visits.

In his welcoming remarks, Patrick O’Mara, a member of the National Assembly, highlighted how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá promoted the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and their application to many contemporary issues. “‘Abdu’l-Bahá served all who crossed His path, no matter what their class, their race, or their religion. He was a loving father and friend, a wise counsellor and a refuge for all in need.”

Jonathan Lees, who led the architectural team that carried out the restoration work, stated: “There is something special about this space. Whether it be out on the balcony, or more particularly in the two rooms [where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stayed] there was always a feeling that we were doing something really special. There was this respect for history and what had happened in here.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s connection with 17 Royal York Crescent

In 1908, turmoil in the Ottoman capital culminated in the Young Turk Revolution, leading to the release of all the empire’s religious and political prisoners. Freed after decades of imprisonment and exile, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá embarked on a three-year journey from the Holy Land that took Him through Egypt, Europe, and North America to promote the cause of unity and peace.

Bristol was among the many stops during ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s travels. It was here that Wellesley Tudor Pole, an admirer of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s who had previously visited Him in Egypt, offered hospitality. Tudor Pole had acquired adjoining properties at 16 and 17 Royal York Crescent, which had opened as a guest house. He extended an invitation to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to stay there during His September 1911 visit to England.

During his stay in Bristol, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave addresses about the condition of modern society, devoted to such concerns as peace, women’s rights, racial equality, social reform, and moral development.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá described the era as “the age of woman” and spoke about the need for women to receive the same privileges and opportunities as men, particularly in education.

Olinga Tahzib, another member of the National Assembly, shared insights into ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s profound interactions during His stay at Royal York Crescent. Mr. Tahzib recounted how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá dedicated each room of the house to the service of humanity, declaring that the house would serve as “a center of peace and rest for pilgrims from East and West,” symbolizing unity and a meeting point of diverse cultures.

In January 1913, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá again came to Bristol during His return journey from North America to the Holy Land. On this occasion, He addressed approximately 150 attendees in the guest house, elaborating on several profound themes, including the necessity of universal peace and the importance of unity across racial and religious divides.

Shortly afterwards, a local newspaper published a message from Him to the people of Bristol, expressing His aspirations for them: “It is my hope that they will be assisted to serve the whole of humanity. May they become the means of creating good fellowship among the children of men.”

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.





Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul

'Hero' Teacher Stopped Shooting with Hug

A Nevada gym teacher who risked her own life to stop a 14-year-old student who allegedly was shooting his classmates is being called a hero, but Jencie Fagan says any mother would have done the same thing.

"I think anybody else would have done it," Fagan told "Good Morning America." "I look at the students as if they're my own, and I'm sure the teachers at my daughter's high school look at my daughter as if she's their own."

When three gun shots were fired in the halls of Pine Middle School just after 9 a.m. on Tuesday, students scattered, but Fagan walked toward the alleged shooter, 14-year-old James Newman.

"As soon as I came to the doors of the cafeteria from the gym, he discharged the weapon once and I looked at what was going on," Fagan said.

Police say Newman managed to get off three shots, hitting one boy in the upper arm. A girl was hurt when a bullet ricocheted off the floor, hitting her knee. Both students are doing fine.

Fagan persuaded Newman to put down the gun, then held Newman in a "bear hug" until other teachers arrived to help.

"He tossed the gun down, and then I hugged him, and I told him I wouldn't leave him," Fagan said.

"She's a hero in my book," said Reno police Lt. Ron Donnelly. "She displayed uncommon courage and character. That's not a natural reaction, to hear gunfire and walk toward that gunfire."

Newman was booked on suspicion of attempted murder and remains in jail on \$150,000. He will be tried as an adult.

Fagan said she was shocked by the shooting.

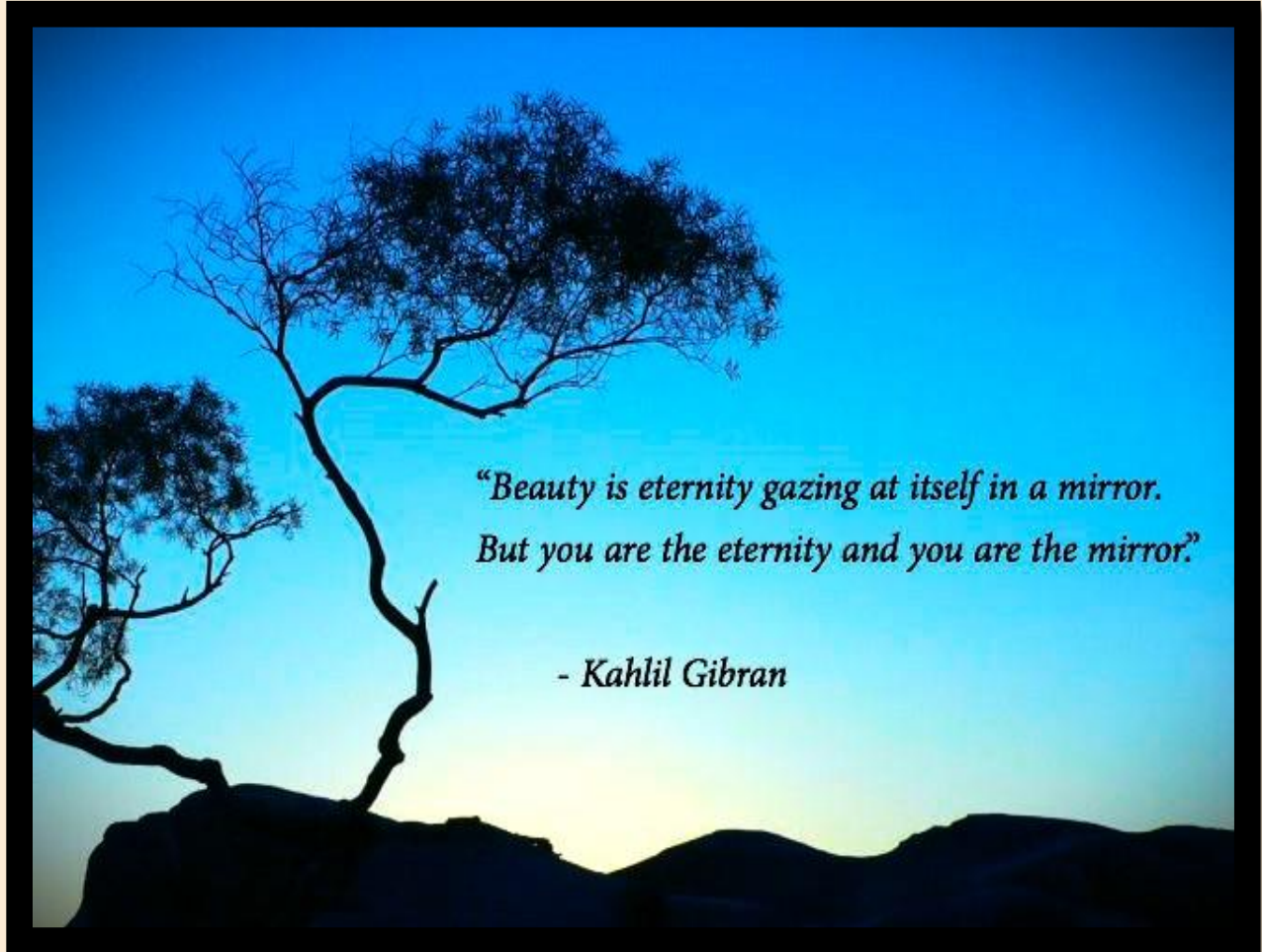
"We had no clue this might happen," she said. "I knew him [Newman] pretty well. We had had several conversations. He was even talking about joining the track team. He wasn't a problem student, and he wasn't an unhappy kid."

Donnelly said detectives had found drawings and writing in Newman's school locker that suggested he was planning to kill.

"We found stick drawings in his locker and James Newman had labeled one of the figures as himself and he had a gun and there were other figures lying on the ground," Donnelly said. "We also found a note, or a letter to himself, that essentially says 'No one knows who I am now, but they will tomorrow.'"

Poems

By Khalil Gibran:



*"Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror.
But you are the eternity and you are the mirror."*

- Kahlil Gibran

Social Action

Baha'i-inspired training empowers Washington teachers and staff



Schools in the Yakima, Washington area face profound challenges. Located on the traditional homelands of the Yakama Nation, almost half of the population is White, and almost half is Hispanic, with a large immigrant population from Mexico, including many who speak only Spanish. Eighty-four percent of families live below the federal poverty line. Poverty, plus the legacy of social and educational discrimination, has led to homelessness, gangs as a substitute for family, and a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Students need much more than traditional education in such circumstances.

This is where UnityWorks helps. Its training model engages a team of administrators, teachers and staff from schools in a five-day summer training institute that includes singing, dancing, poetry, arts and crafts, and other activities that can be used in K-12 classrooms. Topics include race, gender, language, stereotyping, discipline, anti-bias curriculum and instruction.

The goal is to build capacity at the grassroots, empowering each team to create its own blueprint for change. On the final day of training, each team puts together a Diversity Action Plan aimed at reducing prejudice, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and giving students a firmer sense of belonging.

Lorenzo Alvarado has seen this play out at the high school where he serves as Assistant Principal. In a workshop at the National Race Amity Conference last November, he reported that in cases where activities inspired by UnityWorks take root, “The kids are proud of where they come from. They’re happier at school and they do better academically.”

Starting with one school in Yakima in 2014, UnityWorks grew to serve 26 schools across Washington state before COVID-19 interrupted in-person training. It has since expanded to online training nationwide, thanks to capacities developed during the pandemic.

Gottlieb, a longtime Baha'i who taught graduate multicultural education courses at the local university for more than a dozen years before UnityWorks was established, points out that diversity in schools is not an ideal or an aspiration — it's a fact.

Nationwide, the population of color has grown to include more than half of all public-school students, and is expected to encompass half the total U.S. population by the 2040s. She notes that public schools in Kent, Washington, for example, have students from over 138 language backgrounds.

As culturally rich as this may be, she says, it presents challenges for learning. "Many children, for example, already hold negative stereotypes of other racial groups by the time they enter first grade."

Bearing this reality in mind, Alvarado says a key starting point for UnityWorks' operation is "helping educators to recognize the oneness of humankind. That is the firmest basis for building relationships that can be safe places for healing."

He shares an example of those principles in practice. One high school developed monthly lessons on prejudice, stereotyping, race and culture for all students. It also hosted an international students' cultural fair, with much of the planning entrusted to the students themselves. They were excited to share their culture's history, geography, languages, foods and other elements.

At another high school, the UnityWorks team organized a well-attended exhibit on African-American history — one of the missing chapters in their textbooks. The school also formed a student multicultural club dedicated to learning and service.

One middle school was concerned with the lack of parental involvement, which correlates with low academic achievement, so they set the goal of increasing community participation. In consultation with local families, they decided to do this by learning about the cultures represented in their school, with teams of staff, students and parents meeting monthly to prepare a year-end cultural celebration. The plan was a success, with participation growing from only five parents at the start of the year, to more than 450 at their culminating activity.

Cooperative projects at elementary schools had students working together to explore themes such as "No Room in My Heart for Prejudice"; virtually visiting each other's ancestral countries with a "magic school bus"; and more. As part of a science lesson, one teacher created a family tree to show that, although there are many branches, we are all leaves of one tree. At another school, a series of artistic lessons on race and skin color helped quell a sharp increase in racial bullying, Alvarado said.

The workshop offered testimonials from administrators and educators who have gone through the UnityWorks training. "I came in here with an intellectual lens. Through the experiences this week, it's gone from my brain to my heart," said a school counselor. "Even though I'm young, I can make a difference. Others say I can't, but I can!" said a high school student who took part in a training. "It's a way of validating every student we serve, whatever their ethnicity or upbringing may be," said a teacher who has worked with the program at her elementary school.

The presenters also mentioned some tools they have developed to support these diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, including a “Teaching Unity” curriculum guide, a PDF handout on “Overcoming Prejudice,” colorful PowerPoint shows for kids, constructive conversation guides, assessment tools, and classroom art.

And Gottlieb reaffirmed that the oneness of humanity remains at the center of this effort. “Each one of us has this challenge,” she said: “to expand the circle of who you call ‘us.’”

From the Pages of History

The Bab’s stay in Shiraz after the pilgrimage stay in Shiraz

The visit of the Bab to Medina marked the concluding stage of His pilgrimage to Hijaz. From thence He returned to Jaddih, and by way of the sea regained His native land. He landed at Bushihr nine lunar months after He had embarked on His pilgrimage from that port. In the same khan⁽¹⁾ which He had previously occupied, He received His friends and relatives, who had come to greet and welcome Him. While still in Bushihr, He summoned Quddus to His presence and with the utmost kindness bade him depart for Shiraz. "The days of your companionship with Me," He told him, "are drawing to a close. The hour of separation has struck, a separation which no reunion will follow except in the Kingdom of God, in the presence of the King of Glory. In this world of dust, no more than nine fleeting months of association with Me have been allotted to you. On the shores of the Great Beyond, however, in the realm of immortality, joy of eternal reunion awaits us. The hand of destiny will ere long plunge you into an ocean of tribulation for His sake. I, too, will follow you; I, too, will be immersed beneath its depths. Rejoice with exceeding gladness, for you have been chosen as the standard-bearer of the host of affliction, and are standing in the vanguard of the noble army that will suffer martyrdom in His name. In the streets of Shiraz, indignities will be heaped upon you, and the severest injuries will afflict your body. You will survive the ignominious behaviour of your foes, and will attain the presence of Him who is the one object of our adoration and love. In His presence you will forget all the harm and disgrace that shall have befallen you. The hosts of the Unseen will hasten forth to assist you, and will proclaim to all the world your heroism and glory. Yours will be the ineffable joy of quaffing the cup of martyrdom for His sake. I, too, shall tread the path of sacrifice, and will join you in the realm of eternity." The Bab then delivered into his hands a letter He had written to Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali, His maternal uncle, in which He had informed him of His safe return to Bushihr. He also entrusted him with a copy of the Khasa'il-i-Sab'ih,⁽¹⁾ a treatise in which He had set forth the essential requirements from those who had attained to the knowledge of the new Revelation and had recognised its claim. As He bade Quddus His last farewell, He asked him to convey His greetings to each of His loved ones in Shiraz.

~ The Dawn Breakers & Nabil’s Narrative

Sharing

Douglas Wilson’s sharing:



Confer upon me thoughts which may change this world into a rose garden through the outpourings of heavenly grace.

-Abdu'l-Bahá-

Badi's sharing:

I am pleased to inform you that the website “Baha’i Inspired Economics” at badishams.com had more than 95,000 visitors in 5 years, who visited 246,900 pages of the website. This indicates the world's need and desire to find solutions for its ever-increasing problems. Please share this site with anyone interested in finding an ultimate solution to economic problems based on humanity and spirituality.



News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities

‘Should we go missing, we must be found’: Parliament takes steps towards Red Dress Alert



Ottawa, ON, MP Leah Gazan took to Parliament Hill, on behalf of the House of Commons status of women committee, to announce the beginning of their formal study for the proposed Red Dress Alert System. The system, like Amber Alerts, will notify the public when an Indigenous woman, girl, or two-spirit person goes missing.

“This whole initiative came from the hard efforts of family members and advocates, around the country, who join together to say that, should we go missing, we must be found,” said the NDP Member of Parliament.

One month after Gazan’s announcement, the 2024 budget revealed a \$1.3 million investment over a three-year period to implement a Red Dress Alert System.

But this is not the first time the Red Dress Alert System has appeared in the Budget. In 2023, the alert system made its debut, amid a \$2.5 million investment over a period of five years, allocated to advance the National Action Plan for MMIWG2S.

Since the 2023 budget announcement, the government has worked alongside Indigenous partners to co-develop the alert system, reads the 2024 Budget. Through this work a need for regionally specific approaches to the Red Dress Alert System was identified to accommodate the unique needs of Indigenous communities across the country.

“There’s more work to be done, but I feel that at this point, it’s moving in [the] right direction,” said Gazan. “It’s important that we all come together, to work together, to make sure this becomes a reality.”

Since March 19, the status of women committee has met six times pertaining to the Red Dress Alert System.

“Right now, women go missing and murdered, and are never found,” said Gazan. “This is a critical initiative; this is an initiative that will save lives.”

Carol Frank is the aunt of Lisa Marie Young, a 21-year-old Tla-o-qui-aht woman who went missing in Nanaimo over two decades ago. Since her disappearance in 2002, Young’s family and friends continue persistent search efforts to find her.

“When my niece went missing, it took a few days for the RCMP to see my sister and speak to her,” said Frank, who is pleased to hear about the Red Dress Alert System. “It’s really good to hear that they’re doing that.”

For Nicki McCarthy, Teechuklt Mental Health regional coordinator, the implementation of the Red Dress Alert System acknowledges the longstanding MMIWG2S crisis, while providing more safety for Indigenous people.

“[It’s] a level of safety that we’ve never had before,” said McCarthy. “And in that level of safety, does come some comfort. And in that level of safety, we also have some education as well.”

Indigenous women in Canada are starkly overrepresented as victims of murder, making up a rate six times higher than non-Indigenous victims, while they are also four times more likely to be victims of violence.

For Nuu-chah-nulth, the impacts of the MMIWG2S crisis have been felt through the communities with over 50 women who have been murdered or remain missing, according to an article written by Ha-Shilth-Sa last year.

“It gets the public involved in bringing awareness and being informed that a person has gone missing, and to help reduce the risks,” said Sanne Van Vlerken, manager of Teechuklt mental health, noting it also helps increase capacity of support for the families of the missing individual.

“It’s a really effective methodology and framework to notify the general public when an Indigenous person goes missing,” added McCarthy. “I think it’s something that needs to happen and can save lives.”

From the Editor’s Desk

Making Sense of Confusing Times

The events in the world these days baffle both the learned and the ignorant, confuse the young and the old, and perplex people of all ideologies and religions.

People ask what I think about the world's seemingly unresolvable problems. I tell them that Baha'is believe humanity's future is bright and that humanity cannot resolve these upheavals using ideologies of bygone days or even today's digital database solutions.

I tell them the root cause of problems is the lack of morality and lack of spirituality.

Humanity has lost its moral compass, and even human history cannot help us find our way out because the rate of change has accelerated so fast that we have no historical reference point for it. But we do know how many times humanity has reached the point of no return and has found a way out of seemingly impossible situations. World War II is an excellent example of when everything seemed very dark and hopeless, yet the forces of good managed to prevail.

Regardless of history, though, it's hard to deny the gravity of our present world situation: the plight of millions of refugees who are running from terror and economic misery; the extreme nationalism leading to the election of governments throughout the world that enforce strict border controls, leaving migrant populations to endure in demeaning conditions; climate change that threatens the existence of the world to the point that the young generation wonders if it has a future; the religious fundamentalism and fanaticism spreading in every corner of the world, the glut of misinformation and propaganda that has replaced decency, respectful discourse and facts.

I see the present situation in the world as one in which humanity has turned its back to spirituality and morality and has chosen materialism to achieve its goal.

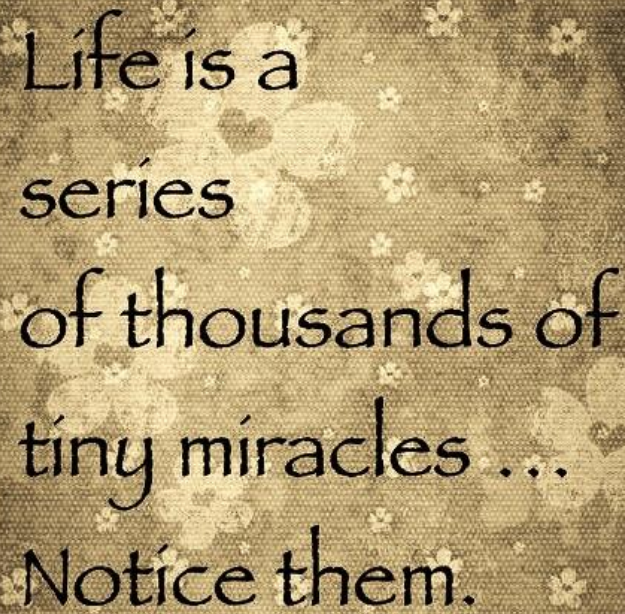
"That nothing short of the fire of a severe ordeal, unparalleled in its intensity, can fuse and weld the discordant entities that constitute the elements of present-day civilization, into the integral components of the world commonwealth of the future, is a truth which future events will increasingly demonstrate." – Shoghi Effendi

Humanity today stands at a crossroads, and every individual has the privilege to be part of the plan to lead it towards unity and harmony.

So I tell my friends that though they have an accurate picture of the problems in the world, they are wrong to give up and accept defeat while the struggle between the forces of construction and destruction plays out all around us. These upheavals send us signals so we can play our part in preparing for a new spiritually based system of global governance.

As for the present time trends, it seems that in most cases, kindness and cooperation towards our fellow man have taken a back seat to nationalism and self-interest. I believe that these trends are the "last hurrahs" of the decaying old order, whose followers are making a desperate attempt to hold on to political control. Yes, the changes in the world are rapid and confusing, and most of the people in charge of making policies and laws cling to short-sighted goals instead of working for the betterment of the conditions of the world in all areas of life.

But all of this upheaval provides us with the opportunity to re-examine our values, to take hold of the vision of a united and peaceful world and become a powerful part of its construction of a better future.



Life is a
series
of thousands of
tiny miracles ...
Notice them.

Writings to Ponder and Practice

“Distress and anxiety have waxed great and every flourishing region is laid waste. O Lord! Hearts are heavy, and souls are in anguish. Have mercy on these poor souls and do not leave them to the excesses of their own desires.” ~‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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