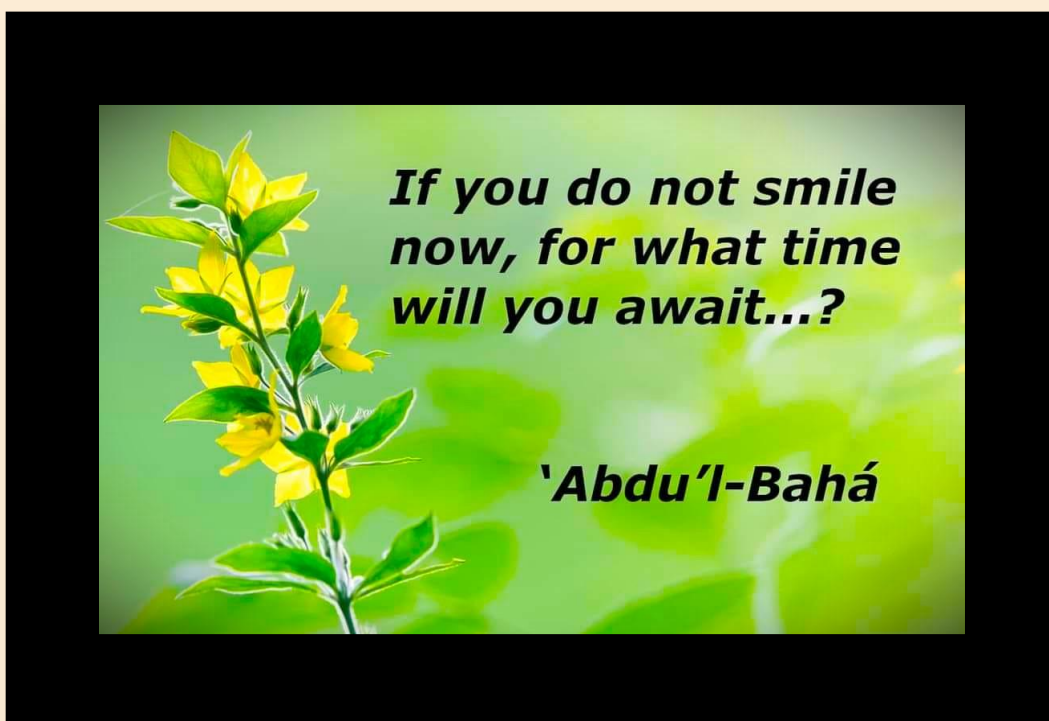




The Nuggets

Volume 4, Issue No.8



Baha'i Stories

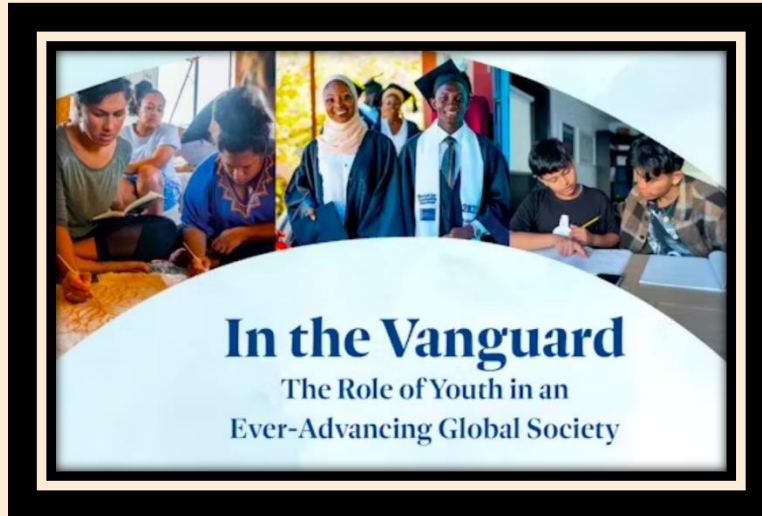
Beauty

Driving home, we came to the most spectacular waterfall, foaming down a black precipice. The Master peremptorily stopped the car and with a sort of excitement got out of it; then walked to the very edge of the precipice. After standing there for some time, His eyes fixed on that long, shining torrent, which seemed to be shaking off diamonds in a fury, He seated Himself on a rock hanging over the deep abyss. I can still see that Figure of quiet Power perilously poised above the precipice, that still, rapt Face delighting in some secret way in the beauty of the waterfall. Tears came to Laura's eyes and mine. During the whole drive He was always discovering lovely things and with vivid animation pointing them out to us: the bright green of the fields and hills, the neat villages, a spire rising from a cluster of Swiss houses, or from some lonely spot on a mountain. A tiny village, high among the peaks, caught His eye . . . It was just after we left the waterfall that the Master turned,

smiling, to me. “If I come to America, Juliet, will you invite Me to see such waterfalls?” ~Diary of Juliet Thompson

Events and News

Bahá’í World News Service



New statement highlights transformative potential of youth

BIC NEW YORK — *A new statement released by the New York Office of the Bahá’í International Community (BIC) explores the profound potential of young people in fostering societal transformation and contributing to an ever-advancing global society.*

Titled “In the Vanguard: The Role of Youth in an Ever-Advancing Global Society,” the statement calls for a rethinking of how youth are perceived and engaged by communities and institutions with the aim of creating conditions that allow their capacities to flourish.

“In the youth of the world lies a vast reservoir of capacity to advance the constructive transformation of society,” remarked Cecilia Schirmeister, a BIC representative from the New York Office.

Drawing on experience from Bahá’í community-building endeavors across the globe, Ms. Schirmeister added: “Young people possess this potential irrespective of background or personal circumstance. The desire to bring about positive change and the ability to render meaningful service to the common good are characteristic of youth everywhere.”

When this potential is recognized and nurtured, new patterns of interaction emerge between generations, allowing youth to take their rightful place in continuing the efforts of those before them and assisting those younger than themselves who seek to contribute to social progress.

The statement highlights how Bahá’í moral and spiritual education programs foster young people’s conviction “that a peaceful and just world is possible, ...that deep change for the betterment of society can be consciously advanced, that the capacity for nobility is inherent in the human spirit.”

Participation in these programs has assisted youth to protect themselves against forces that would, the statement reads, “manipulate their sense of identity according to the vested interests of others: for example, those that would define them primarily as consumers to be satiated, voters to be persuaded, or viewers to be entertained.”

Liliane Nkunzimana, another representative from the New York Office, elaborated that when youth are assisted in exploring issues of moral purpose deeply through Bahá’i educational programs, they “show a remarkable ability to overcome setbacks, remain free from cynicism and bitterness during difficult times, and maintain hope and joy even in adversity.”

Ms. Nkunzimana added: “These qualities enable young people to pursue efforts toward social change not just for a few years, but throughout their lives.”

In its statement, the BIC quotes several people engaged in community-building endeavors, including a youth from Zambia who reflected on the broader implications of societal attitudes towards young people: “The way that a community views youth is a reflection of the community itself.

“If the community has no vision of itself, no sense of direction, then youth will be seen as a menace, a source of crime, and so on. But if there is a sense of future in the community, a sense of direction and progress, then young people are seen as resources. They are seen as the energy that is going to move the community toward its destination.”

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 friends from Jaipur planted more trees in the Baha’i Cemetery and offered prayers. Thanks to the friends’ efforts, the Baha’i Cemetery’s grounds look very green and beautiful.



Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul

Enemy Soldiers Who Saved Each Other Reunite



There's nothing like a good story of destiny, and in a time when three continents are engulfed in war, CBC News brings a story of reunion by two star-crossed soldiers.

The Iran-Iraq War became the longest conventional war of the 20th century and claimed over 1 million casualties, but this inspiring tale of former foes Najah Aboud from one side, and Zahed Haftlang from the other, is unforgettable.

"I didn't know much about Iran. I knew it was a neighboring country. And that they were people next door to us," Najah Aboud, an invading soldier from Iraq told CBC's show Ideas. "We enjoyed their music. They enjoyed ours. They were just like us."

A conscript assigned to a tank unit, Aboud was told to occupy a bunker in the city of Khorramshahr which the Iraqis had captured. Shortly after he got there, the bunker was cleared out in a massive take-no-prisoners counterattack by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and their militia support, in which Zahed Haftlang was assigned as a medic.

Haftlang was ordered to go into the bunker and treat his wounded countrymen, and that's where he came upon Aboud, lying with injuries to the head, back, and chest. While each worried that the other might do them violence, it eventually happened that Haftlang found a picture of an infant son and woman in Aboud's breast pocket: his family.

It was at that moment when the Persian, who couldn't speak Aboud's native language of Iraqi Arabic, decided to save him, even against the will of his comrades.

In some cases he had to physically fight his barracks mates off, with one Iranian soldier hitting the prone Aboud's face with the stock of his rifle. Against all odds, Haftlang got Aboud to a field hospital and asked the attending doctors to treat him—which they didn't want to do at first.

Even they relented though, and Aboud was successfully saved before being dumped in a POW camp for 17 years. Haftlang visited him one time, but the two men could only communicate with gestures—the kissing of a hand.

The war took everything the two men had. Aboud was eventually released and returned to his home in Basra to find his fiancée and his son long gone. Haftlang spiraled into years of depression and violent jobs before jumping ship in Vancouver after getting into a scrap with the Iranian sailors on board.

After a brief stint in homelessness, Haftlang ended up in a halfway house where he would try to commit suicide. But in an incident indicative of fortune, some coworkers came in, rescued the poor Iranian, and recommended he visit a hospital for mental health crises. Haftlang relented.

It was there in the waiting room that Haftlang saw an obviously Middle Eastern fellow about his age come into the same mental hospital. The two opened a conversation, and the Iranian found that the newcomer spoke his language.

"I was a prisoner of war," the newcomer replied, explaining how he had come to know Farsi.

"I remember taking an Iraqi to a field hospital. His teeth were broken," Haftlang recounted to Ideas, before mentioning that he hadn't finished speaking before he saw that the man's teeth were in fact broken.

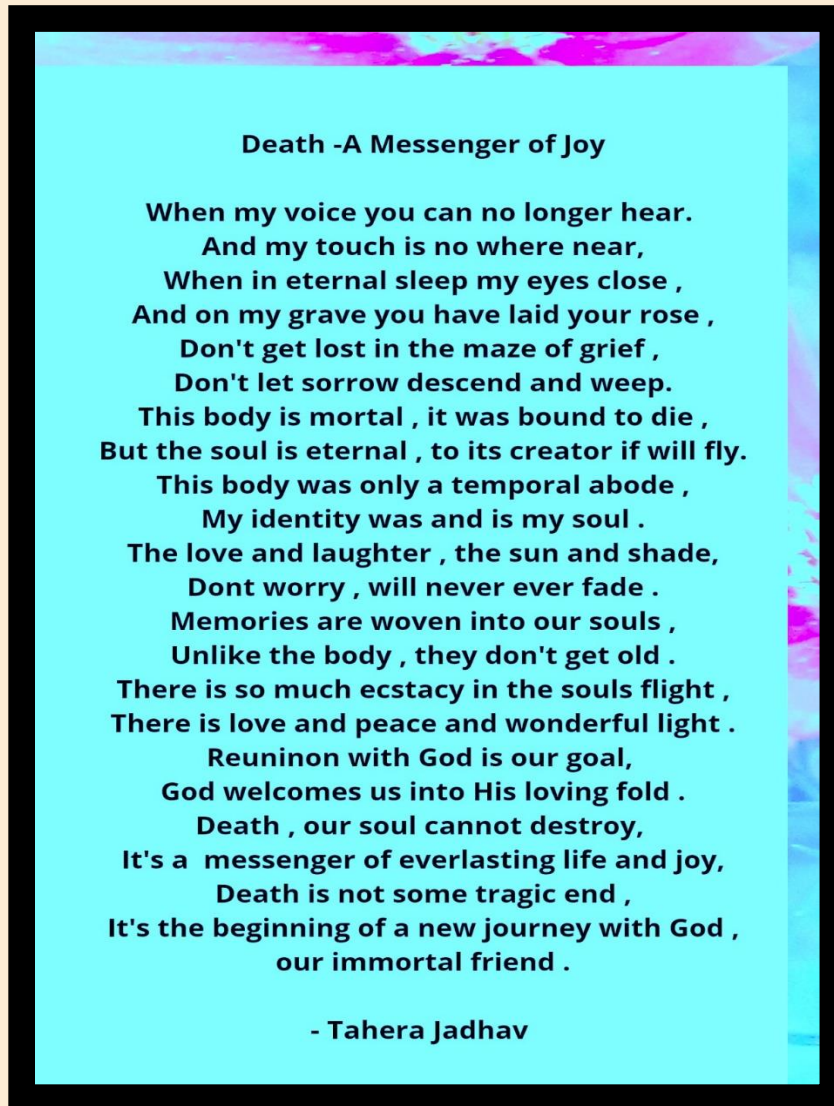
"He'd mentioned that he'd been captured in Khorramshahr. In a bunker. And I asked him, 'Which bunker, where?' And then I said to him, 'Did you keep a photograph of your family in your pocket?' and he said, 'Yes, how did you know that?' And I said, 'I'm the guy! I'm the soldier who was with you, caring for you!'"

In the most unbelievable coincidence, the two men had immigrated to the same country, and visited the same hospital on the same day at the same time. Their joy—their hugs and kisses, caused the staff of the mental hospital—who are probably easily triggered by raised voices, to come rushing in, only to burst into tears alongside the former soldiers turned friends after hearing their story.

Without family and without their homes, the two men admitted that their friendship is the most precious thing in the world to them.

Poems

By Tahera:



Social Action

Parent education

United States Parent University was established in 2000 in the United States with an aim of helping families in low-income neighborhoods of Savannah to take greater ownership of the education of their children and to assist them to overcome certain social issues facing the local population, such as poverty and relatively low access to formal educational opportunities. The organization offers a variety of courses to parents as well as other members of the extended family that equip them with the knowledge and skills required to create environments that are conducive to their children's learning. Parent University has more recently started to offer a new multi-session module called "Early Learning

College," tailored to parents of children aged five and below. Some 3,000 individuals have thus far participated in the courses offered by Parent University.

"The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind..."
~'Abdu'l-Baha

From the Pages of History

The Bab's meeting with Husayn Khan

Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali, his heart filled with gratitude to God, conducted the Bab to His home and committed Him to the loving care of His revered mother. He rejoiced at this family reunion and was greatly relieved by the deliverance of his dear and precious Kinsman from the grasp of that malignant tyrant. In the quiet of His own home, the Bab led for a time a life of undisturbed retirement. No one except His wife, His mother, and His uncles had any intercourse with Him. Meanwhile the mischief-makers were busily pressing Shaykh Abu-Turab to summon the Bab to the Masjid-i-Vakil and to call upon Him to fulfil His pledge.

Shaykh Abu-Turab was known to be a man of kindly disposition, and of a temperament and nature which bore a striking resemblance to the character of the late Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, the Imam-Jum'ih of Tihiran. He was extremely reluctant to treat with contumely persons of recognised standing, particularly if these were residents of Shiraz. Instinctively he felt this to be his duty, observed it conscientiously, and was as a result universally esteemed by the people of that city. He therefore sought, through evasive answers and repeated postponements, to appease the indignation of the multitude. He found, however, that the stirrers-up of mischief and sedition were bending every effort further to inflame the feelings of general resentment which had seized the masses. He at length felt compelled to address a confidential message to Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali, requesting him to bring the Bab with him on Friday to the Masjid-i-Vakil, that He might fulfil the pledge He had given. "My hope," he added, "is that by the aid of God the statements of your nephew may ease the tenseness of the situation and may lead to your tranquillity as well as to our own."

The Bab, accompanied by Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali, arrived at the Masjid at a time when the Imam-Jum'ih had just ascended the pulpit and was preparing to deliver his sermon. As soon as his eyes fell upon the Bab, he publicly welcomed Him, requested Him to ascend the pulpit, and called upon Him to address the congregation. The Bab, responding to his invitation, advanced towards him and, standing on the first step of the staircase, prepared to address the people. "Come up higher," interjected the Imam-Jum'ih. Complying with his wish, the Bab ascended two more steps. As He was standing, His head hid the breast of Shaykh Abu-Turab, who was occupying the pulpit-top. He began by prefacing His public declaration with an introductory discourse. No sooner had He uttered the opening words of "Praise be to God, who hath in truth created the heavens and the earth," than a certain siyyid known as Siyyidi-Shish-Pari, whose function was to carry the mace before the Imam-Jum'ih, insolently shouted: "Enough of this idle chatter! Declare, now and immediately, the thing you intend to say." The Imam-Jum'ih greatly resented the rudeness of the siyyid's remark. "Hold your peace," he rebuked him, "and be ashamed of your impertinence." He then, turning to the Bab, asked Him to be brief, as this, he said, would allay the excitement of the people. The Bab, as He faced the congregation, declared: "The condemnation of God be upon him who regards me either as a representative of the Imam or the gate thereof. The condemnation of God be also upon whosoever imputes to me the charge of having denied the unity of

God, of having repudiated the prophethood of Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, of having rejected the truth of any of the messengers of old, or of having refused to recognise the guardianship of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, or of any of the imams who have succeeded him." He then ascended to the top of the staircase, embraced the Imam-Jum'ih, and, descending to the floor of the Masjid, joined the congregation for the observance of the Friday prayer. The Imam-Jum'ih intervened and requested Him to retire. "Your family," he said, "is anxiously awaiting your return. All are apprehensive lest any harm befall you. Repair to your house and there offer your prayer; of greater merit shall this deed be in the sight of God." Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali also was, at the request of the Imam-Jum'ih, asked to accompany his nephew to his home. This precautionary measure which Shaykh Abu-Turab thought it wise to observe was actuated by the fear lest, after the dispersion of the congregation, a few of the evil-minded among the crowd might still attempt to injure the person of the Bab or endanger His life. But for the sagacity, the sympathy, and the careful attention which the Imam-Jum'ih so strikingly displayed on a number of such occasions, the infuriated mob would doubtless have been led to gratify its savage desire, and would have committed the most abominable of excesses. He seemed to have been the instrument of the invisible Hand appointed to protect both the person and the Mission of that Youth. ~ **The Dawn Breakers & Nabil's Narrative**

Sharing

Douglas Wilson's sharing, Badi's words:

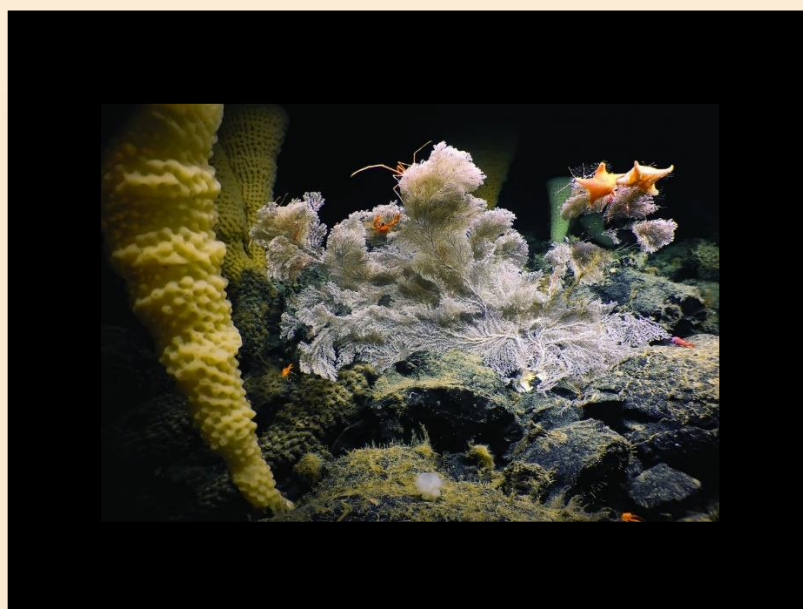


**Yearning to be a child at heart again.
To laugh with a pure heart and with the
eye of childish curiosity and
wonderment to rediscover the world
again.**

News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



Coastal First Nations and DFO Protect 133, 017 Square Kilometres of Deep-Sea Territory



*The offshore area was last explored in the summer of 2022 with a three-week research expedition by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. (DFO photo)
A unique ocean area four times the size of Vancouver Island has gained official protection from petroleum exploration, deep-sea mining and bottom trawl fishing.*

Located about 150 kilometres west of Vancouver Island and off the southern tip of Haida Gwaii, the Tang.gwan-ḥačx^wiqak-Tsigis Marine Protected Area (MPA) is home to extraordinary seafloor features, including more than 47 underwater mountains, known as seamounts, and all confirmed hydrothermal vents in Canada. It is now the largest MPA designated under Canada's Oceans Act.

"The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) is very pleased that the MPA off the coast of Vancouver Island within our territories has been officially created," NTC President Cloy-e-iis, Judith Sayers, told the Ha-Shilth-Sa. "We have always taken care of our oceans which are critical to our way of life, and this is a formality to working with Haida, Pacheedaht and Quatsino and DFO to manage this area that is rich with hydrothermal vents, seamounts and unique habitat for many species that we have an Aboriginal right to."

“Because it is such a big area, it was important to work with Haida, Quatsino and Pacheedaht in naming it so we can work together in managing it as much as we can and protect what we can,” she continued.

Formerly known as the Offshore Pacific Area of Interest, this deep-water ocean area was first identified for protection in May 2017. Measures to prevent certain fishing activities were subsequently put in place, reads a July 11 media release from the Government of Canada. In 2023, the Council of the Haida Nation, the NTC, Quatsino First Nation, Pacheedaht First Nation and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining how the parties will collaboratively manage the Tang.gwan-ḥačx̣ẉiqak-Tsigis MPA.

In the media release, Diane Lebouthillier, minister of Fisheries, Ocean and the Canadian Coast Guard, said the designation is a giant step toward protecting Canada’s oceans.

“Working collaboratively with partner First Nations to co-operatively manage and designate the Tang.gwan-ḥačx̣ẉiqak-Tsigis MPA signifies our joint commitment to preserve ecologically and culturally important marine and coastal areas. The designation of this MPA brings us halfway to our goal of conserving 30 per cent of our oceans by 2030,” Lebouthillier wrote.

“With so many threats to our oceans such as climate change and pollution, we must be vigilant in what we allow to happen in our waters,” reiterated Sayers. “Joint management is key to reconciliation and living up to UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act). Using our ecological knowledge is essential to the future of our oceans.”

The announcement was celebrated amongst environmental groups and research networks across the country.

“This MPA will safeguard rare deep-sea ecosystems that are home to species that get their energy not from the sun, like most life on Earth, but from chemicals released underwater vents,” said Carlo Acuña, senior conservation campaigner for the Ocean Program at the Canadian Parks And Wilderness Society - British Columbia (CPAWS-BC), in a media release. “We all can now be proud to say that this incredible and important area is permanently protected.”

Ocean Networks Canada (ONC), a University of Victoria initiative, has been providing ocean monitoring of the MPA through its deep-sea cabled observatory NEPTUNE (North-East Pacific Time-series Undersea Networked Experiments) since 2009.

“ONC has been delighted to work together with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, British Columbia coastal First Nations and other partners to explore and uncover the rich and biodiverse ocean offshore our west coast,” stated ONC president and CEO Kate Moran in a news release. “This work helped set the stage for delineating Canada’s newest protected area — Tang.gwan-ḥačx̣ẉiqak-Tsigis — which is a key part of ensuring that future generations will inherit a healthy ocean and thriving coastal communities.”

Co-management efforts, scientific research and enforcement is expected to cost \$3.5 million in federal funds over the next decade to protect Tang.gwan-ḥačx̣ẉiqak-Tsigis MPA. Contravention of these new regulations, published in Canada Gazette Part II, Volume 158, Number 13, can bring up to \$8 million in fines, or even more if an offence brings a criminal conviction.

From the Editor's Desk

Is ‘Fighting’ still the only way of dealing with a problem?

There comes a time when, as human beings, we are powerless to solve some of our problems. The question remains: how do we want to deal with them? Having seen my loved ones going through cancer, the words “fighting cancer” have really struck a chord.

When we talk about ending the world’s injustices — poverty, racism, and sexism, we tend to use the same language. We often say we are “fighting” these things. And we absolutely should do everything we can to end these social and spiritual ills and ensure humanity’s unity, peace, and prosperity.

The question in my mind is, is “fighting” the only way to face the problems given to us?

I understand that anger can be the first reaction in grasping the reality of what has happened, and it is natural to react with rage for a short time. However, scientific research shows that allowing this emotion to dominate for long periods has a negative effect on the body.

Common sense and the law of karma (for those who believe in it) encourage us to live positively since whatever energy we put into the universe will eventually return to us. You are what you think. Fighting needs anger, and when we are sick, we need peace more than anger because so much needs our attention.

I wonder if there are other ways of approaching these situations rather than dealing with them with so much anger, especially since anger and high anxiety are the last things that the body and soul need.

When one of my most cherished friends got cancer, she was given little chance of surviving. She deliberately used the word “dealing” rather than “fighting” when talking about her condition.

Humanity has had to face many difficulties throughout the ages, such as fighting big animals in the Stone Age or enemies during the great wars in our history. We needed a fighting mentality that gave us motivation or the force to overcome adverse situations.

We live in a different world, and our awareness has dramatically improved. And we know what our body and soul need to gain the strength to overcome or deal with difficult situations in life.

We know that peace of mind through meditation and prayers is an essential tool to solve life-threatening problems. They give us guidance and strength to empower ourselves to follow a healthy diet of food and exercise and research other medical treatments to help us overcome the disease. A wealth of writings guide us in approaching tests and dealing with them.

I know so many cancer survivors (including my dear friend) and survivors of accidents and other tragedies. When asked what helped them, mostly they mentioned prayer and their family and friends’ good wishes that gave them the strength to deal with these challenges.

This logic helps me see the situation with a better frame of mind and soul to face the challenges that will always be part of our lives. Sometimes, our language reflects our mentality. When we want to fight, we are angry. When we want to do our best, it may reflect a sense of serenity and acceptance.

We can also consider the “Will of God” and whether we should learn about it. I believe that it is a critical approach that some have found useful to help them do the things within their powers and be detached from the outcome. Following this practice has created great contentment in me since I am satisfied that I have played my part and acknowledged that my efforts are not the only deciding factor. It can enable us to continue our efforts to serve humanity by relying on a higher power for assistance.

“Wert thou to consider this world, and realize how fleeting are the things that pertain unto it, thou wouldst choose to tread no path except the path of service to the Cause of thy Lord. None would have the power to deter thee from celebrating His praise, though all men should arise to oppose thee.” -Baha’u’llah

I hope we can become more aware of our limited powers and use them wisely with a more mature and peaceful approach. The world is full of wars and can do without my declaration of war on a disease or ideology. We need a new race of men and women who will do everything to bring justice and unity and spend those energies educating themselves and others.



Writings to Ponder and Practice

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” ~John 15:13

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