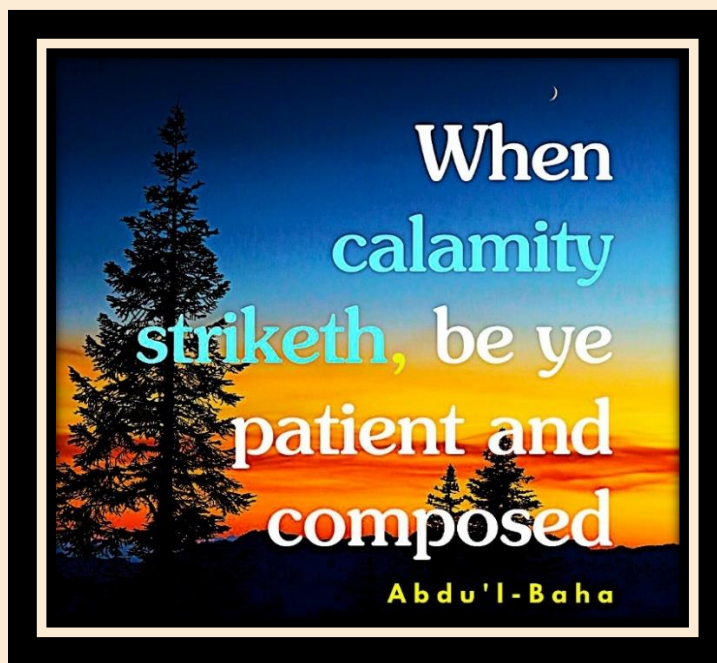




## *The Nuggets*

*Volume 5, Issue No.10*



## *Baha'i Stories*

### **Deeds not Words**

On the evening of the same day 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke briefly again to a group of Bahá'í friends of the subject which, on these last days seemed very close to His heart and lips - the station to which those who had accepted the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh were called and expected to attain by the very fact that they had accepted them. I remember, in this connection, a story told me by one of the friends present at a meeting of the executive committee of the New York Spiritual Assembly. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been asked to be present. After listening to their deliberations for a half-hour or so He calmly arose to leave. At the door He paused a moment and surveyed the faces turned towards Him. After a moment of silence He said, that He had been told that this was a meeting of the executive committee. "Yes, Master," said the Chairman. Then why do you not execute. Always was His emphasis upon deeds: and deeds of such quality and purity as seemed, to those who listened, unattainable. Nevertheless there was no lowering of

the standard. And He set the example. There was no doubt of that. Like the true Leader He never called upon His followers to go where He had not blazed the Path. -Howard Colby Ives, Portals to Freedom

## Events and News



### Moral and Academic Education Fosters life of Service



**NAKU‘ALOFA, Tonga** -Education, when understood simply as the amassing of information, falls short of helping young people reveal what is noblest within them: those moral and spiritual qualities that give knowledge its direction and its purpose. Over the past three decades, Ocean of Light International School, a Bahá’i-inspired educational institution, has been exploring how the cultivation of moral qualities and academic learning can be woven into a single educational endeavor. This was among the themes at the heart of a recent gathering of government officials, school administrators, teachers, and students and families marking the school’s 30th anniversary.

*“We have striven over these years to create a school where knowledge acquisition is guided by moral and spiritual principles and learning is directed toward service to humanity,” said Ta‘hirih Fifita Hokafonu, director of the school, during her address. Understood this way, she suggested, students come to see their efforts throughout their education as a means by which to contribute to the life of their families and communities.*

*Mo‘ale ‘Otunuku, Tonga’s Minister for Education and Training, expressed his appreciation for the school’s efforts, stating that his department alongside Ocean of Light have been “ensuring that the*

*students are prepared not only for examinations but for life. They are equipped with knowledge, values, and skills to serve their families, their communities, and the nation.” Dr. ‘Otunuku spoke warmly of the Ministry’s long-standing relationship with the school, a collaboration he stated had “helped strengthen Tonga’s education system” as a whole.*

*Dr. ‘Otunuku went on to describe the holistic approach to education that Ocean of Light has taken: “Alongside rigorous academic instruction, the school emphasizes moral and spiritual education.” He drew on a passage from the writings of Bahá’u’lláh about knowledge being as wings to the human spirit, allowing it to soar. Reflecting on these words, Dr. ‘Otunuku spoke of education as a force that “enables us to rise beyond limitations and see further than before.”*

*Many of the speakers at the gathering highlighted the principle of the harmony of science and religion as central to the school’s ethos. Far from standing in opposition, science and religion are understood as two complementary systems of knowledge that, together, help illuminate reality and guide individual and collective progress. Through the application of that principle, young students are encouraged to look beneath the surface of the ideas, technologies, and social forces they encounter, reflecting not only on how things function, but also on the values and purposes that should shape their use. In this way, young people begin to consider how knowledge can contribute to both their own lives and the well-being of their communities.*

*Former students remember “the importance of unity and being able to work together as a team.” Glimpses of this orientation can be seen within the school itself. Former student Mona Taumoefolau, speaking on behalf of her fellow graduates, recalled being one of nine students in the inaugural class of 1996. “We all remember, as alumni, the importance of unity and being able to work together as a team,” she said.*

*From the early beginnings of the school, she reflected, the competitive habits so often assumed in academic settings had given way to a culture of mutual support. Students learned to see a classmate’s progress as inseparable from their own. That ethos gradually attracted more people to the school. The student body now numbers more than 580, from preschool through high school—an expansion that unfolded in part because parents, moved by what they saw taking shape, asked that the school grow to include a high school.*

*The spirit of shared endeavor and encouragement, Ms. Hokafonu suggested, is not held by students alone. “This element of being called to our higher self, to our noble being, I feel is most important as a student or as a teacher,” she said.*

*“When I channel the sense of service toward humanity in my immediate environment,” continued Ms. Hokafonu, “I am further encouraged to serve my colleagues, students, and the wider school community.” Educator and student, in her account, are walking the same path.*

*For the students themselves, the school’s foundational principles resonate with their own aspirations. “Because we are taught about unity in diversity, I see that even though we are from different backgrounds, we are all one thing, part of one human family,” said Christine, a high school student.*

*Pua Tuamei ‘uta, a teacher at the school, expressed a hope held in common across the staff: that the young people leaving the school’s gates “will become a light everywhere they go.”*

## News from the Twin Community of Jaipur, India

*Junior youth groups, Ruhi study groups, children's classes, home visits, and devotional and prayer meetings continued in different parts of Jaipur and Rajasthan. The 12-day youth campaign to complete Ruhi books 1, 3 and 5 was held in Chabrana village, and about 40 participants attended children's classes and Junior youth classes.*

*The Ascension of Baha'u'llah and the Declaration of the Bab were celebrated.*



## *Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul*



## Center for Restorative Youth Justice



*In Montana, a focus on restorative justice is reducing juvenile recidivism through a nonprofit program that engages them, rather than punishes them.*

*The nonprofit believes that it's actually far more challenging for juvenile offenders to look their victims in the eye and explain why they behaved antisocially than it is to simply serve a suspension from school, where they're distanced from friends and mentors, and often fall behind in their education.*

*The Center for Restorative Youth Justice (CRYJ), is not a new organization, but their influence in Montana is growing. From a background of success in the city of Kalispell, their programs eventually expanded to include Missoula County, and via another group, neighboring Flathead County as well. By 2023, the number of Kalispell youth receiving out-of-school suspensions decreased, CRYJ recorded, to just 82 individuals compared to over 200 five years earlier. The recidivism rate dropped to just 10%, compared to 23% in the nearby Flathead County.*

*At its most elemental, CRYJ receives referrals from Youth Court probation officers, school administrators, or school resource officers made on behalf of a juvenile offender who's broken the law. CRYJ then has a conference with the youth and their parent or guardian, and creates a tailor-made program of restorative justice. This can involve peer group discussion, victim-offender meetings, and other situations where the youth is given the forum to reestablish a relationship with the community, rather than something like a school suspension.*

*CRYJ believes that by limiting the overuse of exclusionary discipline and emphasizing a community-driven approach, it can help at-risk youth avoid falling behind in school which often compounds the problems that caused them to offend in the first place.*

*Courtesy of CRYJ juvenile criminal justice center in Montana*

*"We spend a lot of time separating people after there's been harm, but often the deepest healing and learning and moving forward can happen ... when we can actually come together and talk about what happened and how to make things right."*

*Those were the thoughts of Emma Schmeltzer, co-director of CRYJ's Missoula program, who along with her colleague Kaya Juda-Nelson and University of Montana master's student Tara Cook, receive referrals for students and organize meetings one-on-one or in groups to identify the offense and the best way to reestablish that student's place in society after something like drug or alcohol use, bullying, assault, or theft.*

*Schmeltzer and Juda-Nelson spoke with the Montana Free Press about their work in Missoula which began this year, with the latter saying that while it might sound like a lighter touch than Youth Court and probation, it doesn't let the kids off easy.*

*"I think that asking a kid to sit down and actually talk about what happened and work through it and express that vulnerability and really have to have an honest conversation about what was going on for them and why they engaged in whatever behavior or incident they engaged in, I think that is often much more challenging, for a teenager especially," she said.*

*Montana Free Press reported that in the 2024/25 scholastic year, CRYJ received referrals for 118 youths at a program cost of \$430 per person, while in nearby Flathead County, the 40 youths eventually detained and sent to Youth Court during the same period cost the taxpayers \$6,815 per person.*

*A similar, unaffiliated organization called the Center for Youth Justice at Georgetown University, is applying the Kalispell program template from CRYJ in Flathead County, to more of the same success.*

*Called “Diversion in Action,” organizers stress another benefit of the restorative justice model: it lightens the workload for county attorneys—who have less cases coming across their desks; for school resource officers—who can spend more time keeping the school safe rather than doing paperwork for citations; for school administrators—who can hand off behavioral issues to those who are actually trained to handle them.*

## Poetry

**by Khalil Gibran:**

*“And forget not that the  
earth delights to feel your  
bare feet and the winds  
long to play with your  
hair”*

*— Khalil Gibran, The  
Prophet*

## Social Action

*A 12-day educational program began at Nazz Rest Home (a Baha’i-inspired project in India) in the village of Chabrana and concluded. Due to the dedication of 3 Baha’i friends from Jaipur in providing the educational component, and the sacrifice and dedication of the Bajrang family in providing food and daily transportation for participants, Ruhi books 1, 3, and 5 were completed by the youth. There were also children’s classes and a junior youth group at Nazz Rest Home.*

*In the evenings in the village of Chabrana, children’s classes, teen groups and many prayer meetings were held.*



## *From the Pages of History*

### **Arrival of Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi, and the Bab's Message to him**

*“For the first two weeks,” Siyyid Husayn further related, “no one was permitted to visit the Bab. My brother and I alone were admitted to His presence. Siyyid Hasan would, every day, accompanied by one of the guards, descend to the town and purchase our daily necessities. Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi, who had arrived at Mah-Ku, spent the nights in a masjid outside the gate of the town. He acted as an intermediary between those of the followers of the Bab who occasionally visited Mah-Ku and Siyyid Hasan, my brother, who would in turn submit the petitions of the believers to their Master and would acquaint Shaykh Hasan with His reply.*”

*“One day the Bab charged my brother to inform Shaykh Hasan that He would Himself request Ali Khan to alter his attitude towards the believers who visited Mah-Ku and to abandon his severity. ‘Tell him,’ He added, ‘I will tomorrow instruct the warden to conduct him to this place.’ I was greatly surprised at such a message. How could the domineering and self-willed Ali Khan, I thought to myself, be induced to relax the severity of his discipline?”*

*Early the next day, the gate of the castle being still closed, we were surprised by a sudden knock at the door, knowing full well that orders had been given that no one was to be admitted before the hour of sunrise. We recognised the voice of Ali Khan, who seemed to be expostulating with the guards, one of whom presently came in and informed me that the warden of the castle insisted on being allowed admittance into the presence of the Bab. I conveyed his message and was commanded to usher him at once into His presence.*

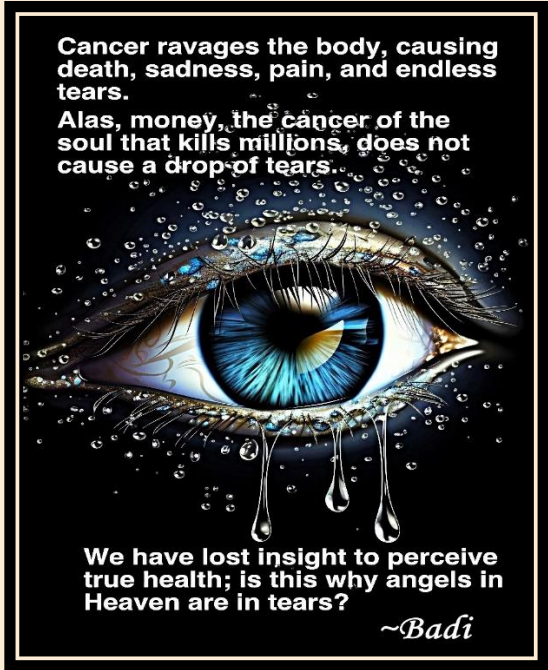
*As I was stepping out of the door of His antechamber, I found Ali Khan standing at the threshold in an attitude of complete submission, his face betraying an expression of unusual humility and wonder. His self-assertiveness and pride seemed to have entirely vanished. Humbly and with extreme courtesy, he returned my salute and begged me to allow him to enter the presence of the Bab. I conducted him to the room which my Master occupied. His limbs trembled as he followed me. An inner agitation which he could not conceal brooded over his face. The Bab arose from His seat and welcomed him.*

*Bowing reverently, Ali Khan approached and flung himself at His feet. ‘Deliver me,’ he pleaded, ‘from my perplexity. I adjure You, by the Prophet of God, Your illustrious Ancestor, to dissipate my doubts, for their weight has well-nigh crushed my heart. I was riding through the wilderness and was approaching the gate of the town, when, it being the hour of dawn, my eyes suddenly beheld You standing by the side of the river engaged in offering Your prayer. With outstretched arms and upraised eyes, You were invoking the name of God. I stood still and watched You. I was waiting for You to terminate Your devotions that I might approach and rebuke You for having ventured to leave the castle without my leave. In Your communion with God, You seemed so wrapt in worship that You were utterly forgetful of Yourself. I quietly approached You; in Your state of rapture, You remained wholly unaware of my presence. I was suddenly seized with great fear and recoiled at the thought of awakening You from Your ecstasy. I decided to leave You, to proceed to the guards and to reprove them for their negligent conduct. I soon found out, to my amazement, that both the outer and inner gates were closed. They were opened at my request, I was ushered into Your presence, and now find You, to my wonder, seated before me. I am utterly confounded. I know not whether my reason has deserted me.’*

*The Bab answered and said: ‘What you have witnessed is true and undeniable. You belittled this Revelation and have contemptuously disdained its Author. God, the All-Merciful, desiring not to afflict you with His punishment, has willed to reveal to your eyes the Truth. By His Divine interposition, He has instilled into your heart the love of His chosen One and caused you to recognise the unconquerable power of His Faith.’” ~ The Dawn Breakers & Nabil’s Narrative*

## Sharing

**Douglas Wilson’s artwork:**



*History, News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities*



**Redd Fish Society Works with Hesquiaht, Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht to Restore Salmon Habitat**



**Clayoquot Sound, BC**

*A project is being launched in Clayoquot Sound that researchers believe attends to the “root causes of salmon decline”.*

*It's part of a \$6-million investment in watershed restoration has been launched across British Columbia to improve salmon recovery, support Indigenous-led environmental stewardship and ecosystem restoration.*

*The Watershed Security Fund (WSF), a collaboration with the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC), the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) and the First Nations Water Caucus, announced the beneficiaries that will receive funding from its grants program, with \$6 million being shared among 26 community-based projects within the province.*

*The program includes \$5 million generated from the province's \$100 million endowment, along with an additional \$1 million contribution from the Hillary and Galen Weston Foundation.*

*"This work is about restoring balance and abundance in our haḥuuli," said Saya Masso, the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation's Lands and Resources manager. "By leading watershed restoration in partnership, we are bringing together knowledge systems, creating opportunities for our people, and ensuring these ecosystems are healthy for generations to come."*

*The Redd Fish Restoration Society, one recipient of the WSF grant, will receive \$400,000 to continue evaluating and identifying better strategies to speed up the recovery of wildlife habitats, starting immediately with landslide stabilization in Hesquiaht territory.*

*With the support of the WSF, the Redd Fish Restoration Society will collaborate with the Hesquiaht, Ahousaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations to restore salmon habitats and watersheds prioritized by the nations.*

*The restoration work is built on a decade of detailed assessments and monitoring of the watersheds and ecosystems to understand the issues within each area that are limiting salmon recovery.*

*"We've identified some really critical projects that could help address the root causes of salmon decline and support the recovery for the long term," said Jessica Hutchinson, executive director and an ecologist at the Redd Fish Restoration Society. "Our work is looking at each of the salmon [life phases] and trying to identify factors that may be limiting abundance or recovery. Once we've pinpointed [these], we can begin to look at what tools we have in our toolkit that could help repair these damages . . . and help accelerate the recovery of these ecosystems that support salmon."*

*The primary factor of the salmon habitat issues within freshwater dates back to the 1960s, and lasted up until the 1990s, according to Hutchinson. This period was marked by industrial logging in the watersheds, overfishing, and poor management that led to the decline of the Chinook, coho, chum, sockeye, pink and steelhead salmon populations. Now human intervention is needed to balance restoration and recovery in the same measure.*

*"There's often this misconception that nature heals itself, and to a certain extent I think that is correct, but when we've damaged ecosystems to the extent that we have through mining, logging and other industrial activities, we have an obligation to go back and help these watersheds get on a healing trajectory," said Hutchinson. "[It] is going to take stewardship [and a] commitment by these nations to manage and support these watersheds through that recovery process."*

*The loss of Indigenous management and stewardship in the watersheds is another factor in the historical degradation. The Redd Rish Restoration Society works closely with First Nations to support guardian programs, stewardship, and the reconnection of these communities with the affected watersheds.*

*Climate change is another contributor to salmon decline, with water temperatures that aren't suitable for juvenile and adult salmon to incubate their eggs. Summer droughts are affecting salmon, as they become stranded near creeks and streams, leaving the fish vulnerable to predators.*

*Watersheds play a critical role in the ecosystem by regulating water flow and temperature, with the salmon population highly dependent on these structures to thrive and avoid decline. The partnership with the Redd Fish Restoration Society and First Nations communities offers the opportunity to restore the wild salmon, one of the coast's most culturally important resources.*

*“Collaboration is at the heart of this work, as we all have a shared responsibility to contribute to the care and preservation of our most sacred source of life — water,” said Toni Boot, vice-chair of the REFBC Board of Governors and a member of the Watershed Security Fund Joint Executive. “When we support each other in this work, we support a future with vibrant watersheds and healthy communities.”*

*The 26 beneficiaries of the WSF are set to work on implementing nature-based solutions to lessen the impact of climate change on ecosystems and place First Nations' rights and knowledge at the centre of the operation, fostering lasting collaborations based on respect and balance.*

*These 80 projects have supported over 640 jobs while helping communities achieve economic, cultural, social, and environmental objectives by prioritizing watershed health.*

*The Wildsight Foundation, another beneficiary of the grant, is offering an educational program to empower students from Grades 10 to 12 across the Columbia River Basin area to engage in water monitoring and management.*

*The Soowahlie First Nations, another recipient of the WSF grant, is set to restore the Sweltzer Creek Watershed, aiming to replace the current inadequate infrastructure for community safety and flood management.*

*Since the launch of the grant program in 2024, the WSF has supported 80 watershed projects and made \$18 million in direct investments to communities, including \$10 million from the WSF, \$8 million in philanthropic contributions.*

*In those two years, the WSF has received 400 grant applications with over \$100 million in funding requests, proof of the vast need for funds and the serious commitment of communities to care for water resources within the ecosystem.*

*“We're grateful to the nations that we work with on habitat recovery and restoration. We're also very grateful to the Real Estate Foundation of BC, the Watershed Security Fund and everyone who really believes in the work that we're doing. We're excited about what strides we can make with this funding,” said Hutchinson.*

*The WSF will continue to seek funding opportunities through government, philanthropic and industry contributions to secure reliable funding that will support healthy watersheds and communities.*

## *From the Editor's Desk*

### **Alleviating Poverty Through Virtues**

*For many years, I've tried to emphasize the need for humanity and morality in our economic systems – because I believe that lack of morality is the root cause of misery in the lives of billions of people.*

*Those people struggle daily to survive in the face of immoral economic injustice.*

*In this brief essay, I will define economics as it is now practiced in most places, identify its problems, and propose a remedy.*

*The complex subject of economics is hard to define, so here's an easy way to understand it by going to the original root of the term: economics is derived from the Greek word "Oikonomia," which refers to managing a household or family. This means, obviously, that an economic system is supposed to help us manage our households – not only in the individual sense but in the collective one, as well.*

*Every economic system, then, should exist to help sustain the welfare of all human family members, so that, at a minimum, they can live comfortable lives and share their resources and earnings. That way, no family member lives in poverty or privation, and humanity as a whole can live a stable and productive existence. Historically, when great wealth disparities exist, they destabilize entire societies, provoking war and revolution – so a good economic system doesn't only ensure prosperity; it also keeps the peace.*

*Sadly, as most of us know, this lack of reciprocal kindness means our current economic systems do not work well – in the human family, one in ten people lives on less than \$2 a day. Globally, one-third of urban dwellers live in slums. What is the problem? Where did the system go wrong?*

*Perhaps the problem was exacerbated when Adam Smith, who observed economic activities in the marketplace and their relation to people's behaviour, made assumptions and developed a system. He assumed that everyone wants to maximize their satisfaction or profits, with self-interest as the major motivation. He also said the market could correct itself, so no governmental intervention is necessary.*

*This made sense to many, but Mr. Smith's system left little room for morality or human virtues.*

*In today's economic reality, money has become like a religion; therefore, we follow the practice of everyone in it for themselves, making as much money as they want by any means. Nobody asks whether someone is a good person or whether they exhibit praiseworthy actions. Many consider someone who is poor a failure because they believe we have been created to make money and get rich.*

*It is easy to criticize the system itself, but that does not solve the problem.*

*Instead, we can all have a hand in reforming the system by gradually and slowly injecting virtues into it, so that it revives and becomes a system sensitive to the needs of humanity, the poor people of the world, and the spiritual aspirations of human beings.*

*Every day, we can practice virtues like truthfulness, kindness, generosity, and honesty in our economic activities. These spiritual virtues, common to all religions, create an environment of generosity, caring,*

*and cooperation – all of which are necessary for the poor to prosper. We can do the same by injecting human values into the political, educational, and other systems because all systems suffer from the same afflictions.*

*We must take action – because our inaction is partly responsible for the suffering of the poor. If we don't change the system, millions of people will continue to live in misery every day, deprived of God's purpose for them because they are too busy finding a few dollars to survive.*

*We need “Humanomics” – economics with a human element – because we are humans, and we all aspire to those qualities and values. You may ask: how can we do this? What is my role? It is impossible to change a system, so why should I even try? All systems are subject to change, so, in countless small ways and some large ones, too, we all can make a difference.*

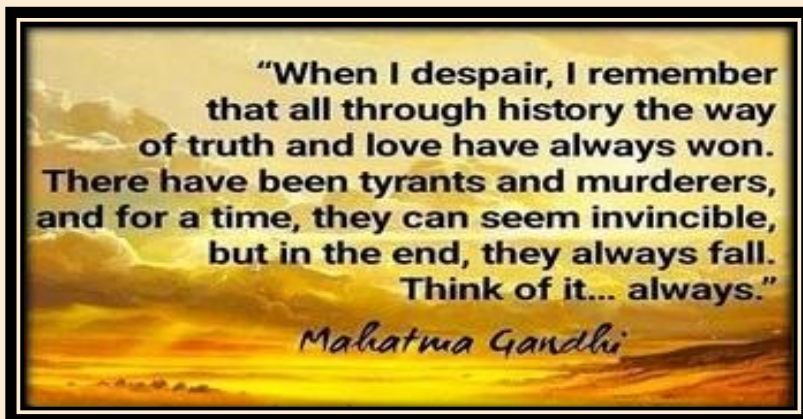
*We can create a yardstick that measures our material and spiritual achievements. A yardstick that considers both spirituality and material things changes our perspective. At present, sadly, our measurements are incredibly lopsided.*

*That personalized economic yardstick involves an important measurement: simple living. Throughout history, many people have been symbols of simplicity, living simple lives, avoiding materialism, and sharing whatever they had with others. Simplicity also makes financial sense, which can relieve us of so many headaches.*

*The pandemic highlighted the poor's plight, widening the gap even more between the rich and the poor, and now the war in Europe has dragged millions more into poverty and starvation. The need for action is dire and urgent. The Baha'i teachings urge every human being not to close their eyes to the sufferings of members of our human family:*

**“Fear the sighs of the poor and of the upright in heart who, at every break of day, bewail their plight ... They, verily, are thy treasures on earth. It behoveth thee, therefore, to safeguard thy treasures from the assaults of them who wish to rob thee. Inquire into their affairs, and ascertain, every year, nay every month, their condition, and be not of them that are careless of their duty.” - Baha'u'llah**

*By introducing spiritual virtues into our economic life, we begin to revolutionize the economic system from within, transforming it into a humane system that meets the material needs and spiritual aspirations God intended for everyone.*



## *Writings to Ponder and Practice*

**“In all circumstances they should conduct themselves with moderation; if the meal be only one course this is more pleasing in the sight of God; however, according to their means, they should seek to have this single dish be of good quality.” - Bahá’u’lláh**

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