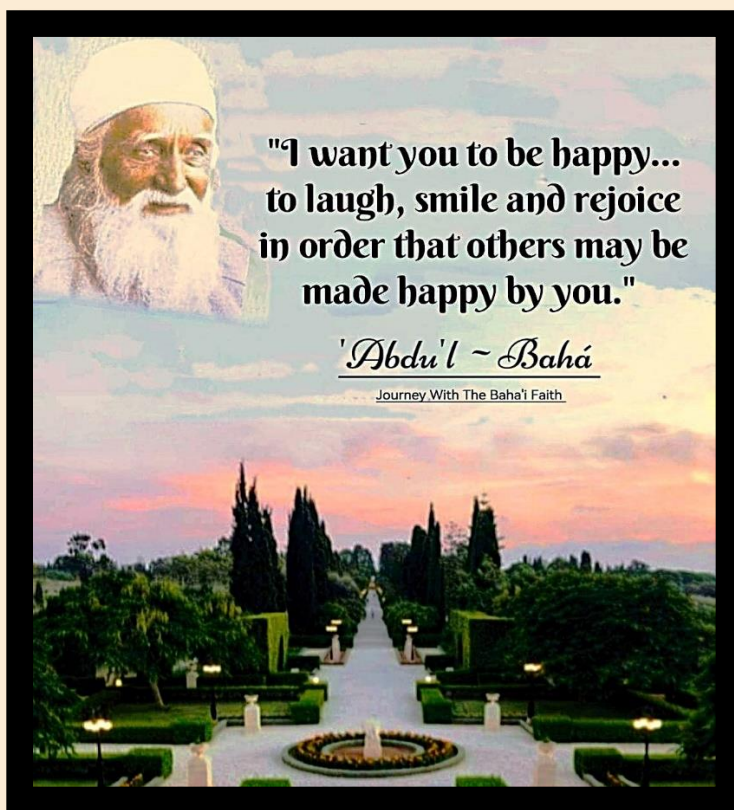




# The Nuggets

Volume 5, Issue No.8



## Baha'i Stories

### Grief

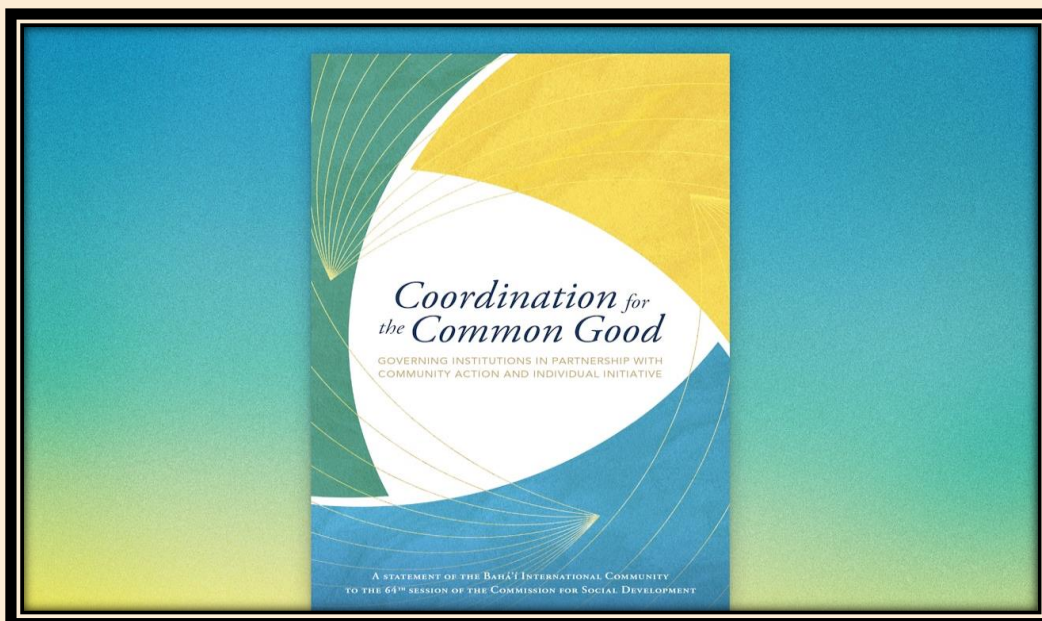
*'Abdu'l-Bahá learned well the meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's words: 'Beware, lest thou allow anything whatsoever to grieve thee.' Acquainted with sorrow, He was known to shed tears when He spoke of the hardships endured by Bahá'u'lláh, His family and His followers who went into exile with Him. Sometimes He 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



### **Institutions, Communities, and Individuals Advancing the Common Good**



**BIC NEW YORK** — *Across many societies, efforts towards social progress are revealing a recurring challenge that often goes unexamined: how the relationships that hold societies together are conceived and nurtured. In many contexts, interactions among institutions, communities, and individuals have become marked by tension, falling levels of trust, or transactional expectations—patterns that weaken social cohesion and limit collective capacity.*

*In this context, the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) released a new statement, “Coordination for the Common Good: Governing Institutions in Partnership with Community Action and Individual Initiative,” ahead of the 64th session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD), which began this week at United Nations Headquarters in New York.*

*The statement addresses the Commission’s priority theme—“Advancing Social Development and Social Justice through Coordinated, Equitable, and Inclusive Policies”—by examining what the BIC describes as three main types of social actors: individuals, the community, and institutions of society.*

*“Social development advances most effectively when the efforts of local governing institutions, community groups, and individual people complement and reinforce one another, rather than duplicate*

*or detract,” the statement explains. Where these relationships are characterized by reciprocity and mutual assistance, it adds, “possibilities for transformative change are far more readily within reach.”*

*Drawing on experiences from diverse settings, the statement highlights how constructive patterns of interaction can emerge when the three types of social actors learn to see themselves as collaborators in a shared endeavor.*

*One such example comes from Spain’s Canary Islands, where years of community-building efforts focused on applying moral principles through acts of service have gradually fostered stronger bonds of trust, a sense of local ownership, and growing cooperation with municipal authorities.*

*Over time, this has enabled locally led development initiatives in response to neighborhood needs, ranging from women’s empowerment, environmental restoration, and immigrant resettlement to tutorial assistance, community health, and parenting support.*

*Reflecting on this understanding of collaboration among institutions, communities, and individuals, Cecilia Schirmeister, a representative of the BIC’s New York Office, explained that the statement offers a vision that moves beyond familiar narratives that cast institutions and citizens in opposition.*

*In many societies, she noted, institutions are viewed as distant or top-down, while individuals are seen primarily as critics or protestors. “The statement instead explores how strengthened collaboration and coordination among the three types of social actors can help improve the social development of a community when all are animated by a common vision of the future based on the oneness of humanity,” said Ms. Schirmeister.*

*A central insight of the statement is that community is not simply the sum of individuals, but a distinct social reality with its own role to play. Through spaces for consultation and collective reflection, individuals begin to see themselves as participants in a shared enterprise, rather than isolated actors. As Ms. Schirmeister observed, when people feel a sense of ownership over the well-being of their surroundings, voluntary initiative flourishes and cooperation with institutions becomes natural rather than adversarial.*

*During the Commission, the BIC will contribute to discussions through its participation in a high-level panel discussion and by hosting a side event, where two participants from the Canary Islands will share reflections on their experience. Together, these engagements aim to advance thinking about how coordinated action, rooted in trust, consultation, and shared purpose, can strengthen the social fabric and open pathways toward more inclusive and peaceful societies.*

## **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.*

*Ayyam-i-Ha and Naw-Ruz were celebrated, and 9 friends from 90 KM away connected with Nazz Rest Home attended. There was a Ruhi Book 7 campaign at the Jaipur Baha’i House. Also, there was a 4-day Institutional Gathering in Delhi.*



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



### **Many Visitors to Taiwan Volunteer to Help the Flood Victims**



*Taiwan society has mobilized in response to flooding after a typhoon made landfall on the East Asian island, including visitors and foreign residents.*

*With those arriving with rainboots and shovels dubbed “Shovel Supermen” and those arriving to cook meals for those whose homes were destroyed dubbed “Cooking Supermen,” it’s a touching and inspiring example of an all-hands-on-deck response to disaster.*

*Typhoon Ragasa made landfall last Tuesday, causing heavy rains in Hualien County and causing local water sources to overflow. Flooding and mudslides have displaced hundreds of residents, particularly in Guangfu Township.*

*In response, thousands of volunteers have streamed south, shovels and rainboots in hand, to help. The Buddhist charity Tzu Chi managed to co-opt 3,000 volunteers by the following Saturday. Others brought food and portable kitchen supplies to cook food for volunteers and victims alike.*

*Heading southward in extra trains mobilized by Taiwan Railway Corp., the volunteers included two Ukrainian women who had lived in Taiwan for 9 years, and a Japanese resident Saito Tadataka.*

*One of the Ukrainians had actually planned on visiting Hualien County, and when seeing it underwater, felt compelled to help. Mr. Saito too felt he had to act when he saw the number of other volunteers using their 3-day weekend time to help their countrymen.*

*The county government turned over the coordination of the relief efforts to Tzu Chi, while enlisting the national government to identify hotel and lodging businesses who would be able and willing to house those displaced to ensure emergency shelters aren’t overwhelmed.*

*Displaced residents are being given a government stipend to pay for essential supplies while relief efforts are ongoing.*

## Poetry

**by Khalil Gibran:**

“I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind.”

~ Khalil Gibran

## Social Action

### Keeper of Kindness



*For nearly ten years, Maggie has been selling flowers to raise money to buy Christmas gifts for those in need in her community. Maggie just turned fifteen. Last year, she donated over 550 presents to people in her community who wouldn't otherwise receive a holiday gift.*

*Maggie shares, "I started my business when I was 5 years old because I wanted to go hang gliding on a family vacation to North Carolina later that year. It would cost \$100 for me to go and my parents didn't have that money just for me. We started brainstorming ways that I could make enough money to go. I always loved getting flowers when my Mom, Grandma and I would go to the farmers market, so we decided that I could sell flowers. My Papa made me a flower stand and we put it outside of our house. That year, I made \$200 so my Dad and I went hang gliding with my Papa. The next year, I loved growing and selling flowers and I wanted to do something meaningful with the proceeds. That's how we came up with the idea to buy gifts for kids in need."*

*That year, Maggie bought 30 toys and adopted one family through a local food pantry. Since then, she has continued growing flowers to purchase Christmas gifts for those in need.*

*Last year was Maggie's ninth year raising money with her flowers and buying gifts for others. In addition to her local food pantry, she now also provides for a local nursing home, a mobile food pantry, her entire school district and 3 local families she adopts who could use the help during Christmas time.*

*Maggie supports two events with her school district. At the first event, principals at all 12 schools in the district extend an invitation: parents who could use some extra help during Christmas are invited to shop from donated gifts, picking out a present for each of their children.*

*Later in the season, Maggie supports the second gift drive when High School Students in need are invited to come pick out presents for their entire family.*

*But Maggie's generosity doesn't stop there. Each holiday, Maggie receives wish lists from the resident's at her local nursing home. She uses the funds she raised selling flowers to shop for special gifts for each resident. Then, she hand delivers every gift during the annual Christmas party at the home.*

*Maggie shares, "I have been purchasing gifts for them for six years and I have been able to have a relationship with a lot of them. I see them at Christmas time and I also see them during the summer when I pass out flower bouquets to them."*

*Throughout the summer, Maggie grows flowers in gardens at her family's home. She currently has eight different gardens, with hopes and plans to expand even more this summer. While she grows an abundance of perennials and annuals, she admits that dahlias are her favorite.*

*And it's because of dahlias that Maggie and the Growing Kindness project are now connected. After a tough winter, Maggie shared on social media that she'd lost all of her dahlia tubers. We knew the beautiful work Maggie was doing in her community and immediately send her a box of dahlia tubers to get her back up and running.*

*Maggie sells her flowers at six different roadside stands, various markets, through subscription orders, special event flowers in her community of Dorr, Michigan. She also provides flowers all season long for her local Chick-Fil-A. Each week, Maggie includes a specially tagged "Growing Kindness" bouquet in her stands and markets. Anyone who finds the bouquet is asked to give it someone who could use some extra kindness that day.*

*In addition to her flower business and generous gifting, Maggie manages to not only keep up, but excel at school. Though just starting high school this year, she's already taking honors level classes along*

*with Advanced Placement US History. Her dream is to go to HOPE college in Holland MI to become a high school or middle school history teacher.*

*She admits its a lot of work to do all that she does, but also believes its worth every bit of effort. “It’s definitely a lot of work to run a business and go to school, but I always think about all of the people who will have a better Christmas and it motivates me to keep going even when I’m super tired. Maggie’s Flowers has changed my life in so many ways. I would not be the same person if I didn’t do Maggie’s Flowers. I’ve had so many incredible opportunities to make people’s lives better and it has truly made my life better too.”*

*Maggie is proving that we kindness knows no age or no bounds.*

## *From the Pages of History*

### **The Bab’s Incarceration in the Castle of Mah-Ku**

*SIYYID HUSAYN-I-YAZDI has been heard to relate the following: “During the first ten days of the Bab’s incarceration in Tabriz, no one knew what would next befall Him. The wildest conjectures were current in the city. One day I ventured to ask Him whether He would continue to remain where He was or would be transferred to still another place. ‘Have you forgotten,’ was His immediate reply, ‘the question you asked me in Isfahan? For a period of no less than nine months, we shall remain confined in the Jabal-i-Basit, from whence we shall be transferred to the Jabal-i-Shadid. Both these places are among the mountains of Khuy and are situated on either side of the town bearing that name.’ Five days after the Bab had uttered this prediction, orders were issued to transfer Him and me to the castle of Mah-Ku and to deliver us into the custody of Ali Khan-i-Mah-Ku’i.”*

*The castle, a solid, four-towered stone edifice, occupies the summit of a mountain at the foot of which lies the town of Mah-Ku. The only road that leads from it passes into that town, ending at a gate which adjoins the seat of government and is invariably kept closed. This gate is distinct from that of the castle itself. Situated on the confines of both the Ottoman and Russian empires, this castle has been used, in view of its commanding position and strategic advantages, as a centre for reconnoitring purposes. The officer in charge of that station observed, in time of war, the movements of the enemy, surveyed the surrounding regions, and reported to his government such cases of emergency as came under his observation. The castle is bounded on the west by the river Araxes, which marks the frontier between the territory of the Shah and the Russian empire. To the south extends the territory of the Sultan of Turkey; the frontier town of Bayazid being at a distance of only four farsangs from the mountain of Mah-Ku. The frontier officer, in charge of the castle, was a man named Ali Khan. The residents of the town are all Kurds and belong to the sunni sect of Islam. The shi’ahs, who constitute the vast majority of the inhabitants of Persia, have always been their avowed and bitter enemies. These Kurds particularly abhor the siyyids of the shi’ah denomination, whom they regard as the spiritual leaders and chief agitators among their opponents. Ali Khan’s mother being a Kurd, the son was held in great esteem and was implicitly obeyed by the people of Mah-Ku. They regarded him as a member of their own community and placed the utmost confidence in him.*

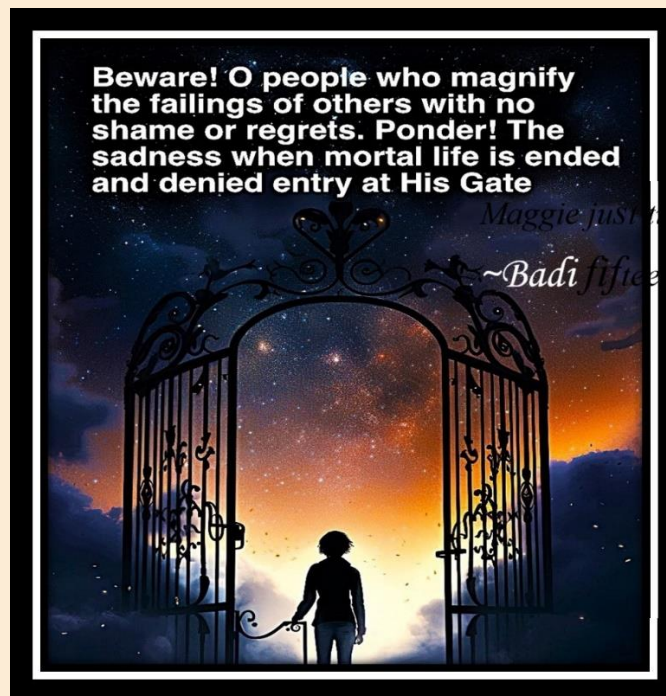
*Haji Mirza Aqasi had deliberately contrived to relegate the Bab to so remote, so inhospitable and dangerously situated a corner of the territory of the Shah, with the sole purpose of stemming the tide of His rising influence and of severing every tie that bound Him to the body of His disciples*

throughout the country. Confident that few, if any, would venture to penetrate that wild and turbulent region, occupied by so rebellious a people, he fondly imagined that this forced seclusion of his Captive from the pursuits and interests of His followers would gradually tend to stifle the Movement at its very birth and would lead to its final extinction. He was soon made to realise, however, that he had gravely mistaken the nature of the Revelation of the Bab and had underrated the force of its influence. The turbulent spirits of this unruly people were soon subdued by the gentle manners of the Bab, and their hearts were softened by the ennobling influence of His love. Their pride was humbled by His unexampled modesty, and their unreasoning arrogance mellowed by the wisdom of His words. Such was the fervour which the Bab had kindled in those hearts that their first act, every morning, was to seek a place whence they could catch a glimpse of His face, where they could commune with Him and beseech His blessings upon their daily work. In cases of dispute, they would instinctively hasten to that spot and, with their gaze fixed upon His prison, would invoke His name and adjure one another to declare the truth. Ali Khan several times attempted to induce them to desist from this practice but found himself powerless to restrain their enthusiasm. He discharged his functions with the utmost severity and refused to allow any of the avowed disciples of the Bab to reside, even for one night, in the town of Mah-Ku.

“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. ~ The Dawn Breakers & Nabil’s Narrative

## Sharing

**Douglas Wilson’s artwork:**



# History, News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



## When a School has its own Cemetery



### Meares Island, BC

*When you go up the road from the dock to the site of the former Christie Indian Residential School, there is a barely noticeable clearing off the side of the road surrounded by a weathered split rail fence. It is a cemetery with a single stone grave marker and, in another area, a Madonna statue sheltered from the weather by a wooden structure.*

*Back in the 1980s there were other wooden grave markers but they have since withered and gone back to Mother Earth. The stone cross was lovingly dedicated by the parents of Samson McLean. His school records show his first given name was Bertram and he was only nine when he died in March 1949. The last line on the stone reads, "our beloved one."*

*At the back of the cemetery is a wooden board carved with names of some of the students who passed at Christie Indian Residential School, proof positive that children died there and that sometimes their remains didn't make it back home.*

*There are seven names on the board with some missing information: Agnes Amos, 1942-1952, Cecilia George 1937-1945, Edith Charleson, Rose Johnson, 1934-1944, Hamilton Charleson, 1944-1948, Reynhold Michael died 1971 and Lorena.*

*At the healing gathering hosted on Oct. 9 by the Ahousaht Residential School Research Team and the first Nation's leadership dozens of former students showed up to witness the demolition of one of the last remaining outbuildings that was part of Christie. Some of those that attended did so to honor the memories of their parents or grandparents*

*Two smaller buildings were already torn down, their rubble left in heaps where they once stood. Organizer Vina Robinson said this was done so that participants could get a better look at the larger*

*building, known as the gym, which was to be torn down that day. According to the Government of Canada, the gym was built in 1923 and contained a bowling alley.*

*As people came outside from the gym, they were immediately met with cultural workers who brushed everyone off. The organizers were well-prepared with dozens of support workers helping people in many different ways as they went through their emotions.*

*Two of the heavy equipment operators were former Christie students. Bruce Lucas of Hesquiaht and Wilfred Atleo of Ahousaht each ran excavators, tearing down sections of the gym. They were cheered on by the crowd when they exited their machines.*

*Greg Louie, a former Ahousaht chief councillor and the spokesperson for the event, told the crowd that he was at Old Christie from 1966 to 1970. He said he recognized many of the faces in the crowd as his former school mates.*

*With the scent of sage and sweet grass wafting through the air, the Ahousaht Ha'wiih and other Nuu-chah-nulth Ha'wiih that were there were acknowledged for being there to support their people. Tyee Ha'wiih Maquinna, Lewis George, was there with his son Hasheukmiss, Richard George.*

*“There is a stigma attached to this place,” said Ahousaht elder Cliff Atleo.*

*He said it was the August family that lived there prior to the construction of Christie. Atleo called for healing and the removal of the residential school negative energy from the site.*

*“Having our language is a sign of resilience. It is who we are and shows our connectedness to the land,” said Louie. “When we got here, they cut our hair, took our clothes, but they couldn't take away our souls – resilience is the reason we're here today. We're still here and we will be here forever!”*

*During the tour of the inside of the gym, loud bangs, breaking glass and the occasional loud cry could be heard. Excavators began tearing down the building as visitors were fed lunch, observing the work in the cool October sun.*

*Following lunch, leaders from other Nuu-chah-nulth nations were invited up to blanket their survivors. It was, the Hesquiahts said, a way to comfort the survivor and to let them know their inner child is leaving this place and coming back home.*

*Her voice heavy with emotion, Hesquiaht Chief Councillor Mariah Charleson said, “My Aunty, uncle and two cousins are buried here.” She noted with sadness that they never came back to their Hesquiaht home.*

*When it was her turn to be blanketed, Cathy Michael of Nuchatlaht said her people watched as they tore that “ugly building” down, “Like they tore our lives down!”*

*Michael went on to say that she has been angry all these years, but she wants to leave that at the site.*

*With all the residential school unmarked graves denialism happening across the country, it is noteworthy that the Christie Residential School cemetery was built behind the school, specifically for the children that died there.*

*The Find-a-grave website collects information about cemeteries and records information about burials at each one. It lists 23 memorials at 'Kakawis Christie Residential School Cemetery'.*

*The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation lists 46 names, which includes all 23 from Find-a-grave.*

*They note six confirmed student deaths between the years 1939 to 1941 caused by tubercular meningitis.*

*Most of the information on the Find-a-Grave memorial site for Christie is complete but there are a few that are not, like the earliest recorded death of Juliana at Christie on September 13, 1903. We don't know her last name, her birthdate or where her home was.*

*Also noteworthy is that the students were referred to as numbers in government records. For example, "I have the honour to enclose Memorandum of inquiry concerning death of Pupil No. 250, Cecil Williams, and No. 253, Andrew Tom, both of the Christie Indian Residential School."*

*According to federal archive records, some of the deaths were recorded in government and church correspondence. Of those, most were due to tuberculosis, meningitis or pneumonia. One girl died of peritonitis after suffering for days with a ruptured appendix.*

*In April 2024 Ahousaht delivered a report from their ground penetrating radar scans at the site of Ahousaht Residential School on Flores Island and also at Christie on Meares Island. While they didn't deliver numbers in their report, they indicated that there are presumed graves in Ahousaht and a cluster of unknown features that need to be investigated further.*

*Anne Atleo, manager of the Ahousaht Residential School Research Team, has said that further investigation needs to be done and long-term funding and better access to archival material is needed.*

## *From the Editor's Desk*

### **Defending the Essence of All Religions**

*Recently I revisited this profound quote from the Baha'i writings, and this time it penetrated my soul and made me clearly see what is happening all around us in every part of the world:*

**"The vitality of men's belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it?" - Baha'u'llah**

*He diagnoses humanity's primary problem in two sentences and suggests the remedy. It makes me realize that humanity's peace and salvation are in God's hands – and in our hands, too.*

*We need to retain the great spiritual laws taught by all Faiths – while, at the same time, adjusting the social laws inspired by those religions to the needs of the time.*

*In recent times, I've found myself defending Islam from the criticisms of Muslims themselves – those who feel fed up with the mullahs and the fanaticism of some other Muslims and who no longer want*

*anything to do with Islam as a result. Mounting that defence has proven difficult since most people cannot or will not differentiate mullahs' actions from Islam's inherent spirituality and essential teachings.*

*By the same token, I have defended Christianity from Christians who want nothing more to do with the priests and other Christians who have damaged the image of Christianity with their actions.*

*This has made me more determined to counsel disheartened Muslims, Christians, and followers of other religions, urging them not to "throw the baby out with the bathwater." That's where the rejection of religion generally comes from, in my experience – people cast doubt on the spiritual laws of their Faiths when they simply need to re-examine the social laws inspired by their religions, which are subject to change. Name: Rakesh Sharma*

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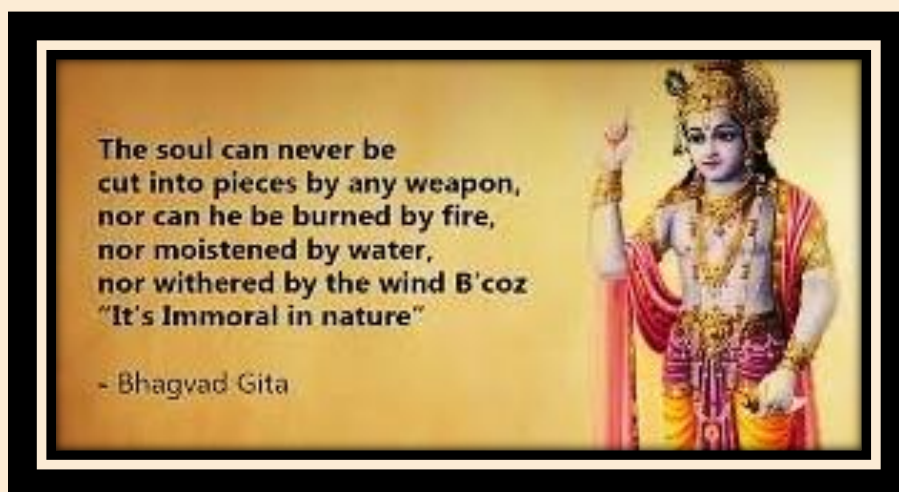
*So the spread of irreligiousness today has added another role to the principal aim of the Baha'i Faith, which is to work towards achieving the oneness of humanity. Since the magnetism of religion is losing power and becoming more irrelevant in the eyes of the world, Baha'is defend each religion's essence and the sacredness of the Holy Books and their Authors – because Baha'is believe that all religions are one. Therefore Baha'is defend the spirituality of all of the great religions.*

*Humanity needs to face the unprecedented crises of today with all of its spiritual tools at the ready, and its future rests on the degree of the unification of all countries and of all religions. Sadly, the pure water of the messages of spiritual healing has been combined with so many impurities that it no longer possesses all of its original healing qualities.*

*What the world needs today is not the destruction of all things sacred and moral in the name of freedom of speech and action. That sense of the sacred is the cause of our salvation – and it stems originally from the holy books of all religions.*

*Defending those spiritual values and the origin of those teachings in all religions is our moral duty. Since all Faiths are essentially one, they're all part of our Faith. As I maintain friendships with people*

*of different Faiths, I try to ensure that they know my respect for their Messengers, and their Holy Books, because they are all part of my religion.*



### *Writings to Ponder and Practice*

**“For the tongue is a smoldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endureth a century.” ~Bahá’u’lláh**

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