

# From the Editor's Desk

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As the Bahá'í community watches, the construction of the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá progresses. For a brief time still, the Master's earthly remains rest in a side chamber of the Shrine of the Báb, whose every stone He, "with infinite tears and at tremendous cost, raised and placed in position" (qtd. in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* 275). Soon, those remains will move to their final resting place, near the route from Haifa to Bahjí that was His constant pilgrimage for long years. The design of His shrine, emerging organically from the earth itself—that perfect symbol of humility (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings V*)—seems to invite the visitor to come down to commune with the Perfect Exemplar of humility, and to reflect on His life and example.

And how much there is to reflect on. On the one hand, His writings and recorded utterances provide us with His penetrating insights into a breathtaking range of questions. Not every Bahá'í will think of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a philosopher; the word is, after all, inadequate to capture either the mystery of His station, or the beloved place He holds in the hearts of Baha'is. Yet the depth of philosophical mastery of this exile and prisoner is such that there is no end to the treasures we uncover as we reflect

on His words. Douglas Perry's "A New Perspective on Human Evolution" helps us do just that, on one of the most subtle and provocative subjects 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed: the nature and origins of the human being. Perry demonstrates how, if we can avoid deciding too soon that we know what either science or religion is telling us, and instead remember that both rely on a range of metaphors and models that express different facets of reality, we may sometimes find that apparent contradictions or tensions between them dissolve. His work will be of interest to those in the sciences specifically, but every reader will appreciate this example of the dialectic process of putting science and religion into ongoing conversation with each other, in faith that they will reveal their underlying harmony to the patient inquirer.

On the other hand, the pilgrim to the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá can reflect on His lived example of coherence between unwavering commitment to principle and masterfully effective action in the world. He "tread the mystic way with practical feet" (Jordan, qtd. in "Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith"). Tahereh Khollos Pourshafie and Janice Orrell's "Fostering Wisdom in Youth through Moral Education in a Bahá'í-inspired School" presents an ethnographic study of a Bahá'í-inspired school that seeks to instill this very quality in its students. The approach described is far from haphazard; curriculum design, teacher training, and school spaces are all crafted to promote the development of students'

innate capacity for wisdom, which in the literature on moral education involves both an altruistic orientation and the capacity to act in a way that responds to the practical situations in front of us. This article is the first in a series of contributions on pedagogy, education, and youth, and we are very excited to share the practical insights of diverse researchers and educators on these vital topics.

This issue also features two book reviews. Ann Boyles reviews *The Bahá'í House of Worship: Design, Construction and Community* by Joe Carter and Nooshfar Afnan. Published by George Ronald in a lush, large format full of color photographs, architectural plans, and inspiring documentations of the Houses of Worship's influence on community development, this book is a rare witness to the evolution of art in the Bahá'í community.

Navid Pourmokhtari's impressive and timely contribution to the discourses related to international relations, *Toward a Paradigm Shift in International Relations: (Re)Claiming World Peace* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024) is reviewed by Alex Douglas, who notes how the book "documents the unworkable assumptions of IR that humanity must urgently reconsider, making the case for both the avid layperson and the scholar in the field that the time for a paradigm shift has come" (74).

A poem by John S. Hatcher rounds this issue with his customary tongue-in-cheek-and-flowing-hair, seriously-hip-scholar style.

#### WORKS CITED

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