

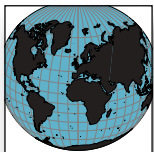


# ONE COUNTRY

"The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens" – Bahá'u'lláh

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International Community  
April-June 2003  
Volume 15, Issue 1



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*Tony Deamer in his garage with a rally car he has converted to run on coconut oil.*

**P**ORT VILA, Vanuatu — Rounding a corner and heading up a steep hill outside the capital city of this lush South Pacific island nation, Tony Deamer stomped on the gas pedal of his Range Rover — but didn't downshift.

With nary a sputter or a cough, the vehicle — modified to run on coconut oil instead of diesel fuel — took the incline in stride.

"Coconut oil is a bit more torquey, because it burns slower," said Mr. Deamer, a 52-year-old Australian-born motor mechanic. "Normally, I'd have to shift down into first here, but with coconut oil, I can keep it in second gear."

Spending time with Mr. Deamer is an extended lesson in the benefits of coconut oil over petroleum. Among the other advantages: it doesn't make black smoke, it is less costly (at least in the South Pacific), it has the potential to stimulate employment among local coconut growers, and, perhaps most importantly for the world at large, it is an environmentally friendly fuel.

And, by the way, cars burning it can be fun to drive.

In what could prove to be a boon for both the environment and cash-strapped South Pacific islands, Mr. Deamer has succeeded in proving that automotive diesel engines, with very little modification, can run safely on coconut oil. The discovery has huge potential for

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is published quarterly by the Office of Public Information of the Bahá'í International Community, an international non-governmental organization which encompasses and represents the worldwide membership of the Bahá'í Faith.

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International Community

ISSN 1018-9300

Printed on recycled paper ♻️

# The Ethics of Globalization: A Bahá'í Perspective

*[Editor's note: The following is adapted from a speech by Professor Suheil Bushrui, presented on 11 June 2003 in Brussels, in honor of the opening of a display at the European Parliament. [See page 14.] Prof. Bushrui holds the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland. The entire speech can be read at [http://www.onecountry.org/e151/global\\_ethics.htm](http://www.onecountry.org/e151/global_ethics.htm)]*

Debates on globalization, especially in policy-making circles, are often shaped by purely national interests, whether social, economic, or political. But such interests are parochial, whereas, if the phenomenon of globalization were to be carefully examined, it would be found to affect far more than the narrow range of concerns and issues to which it is customarily restricted, so that discussions of the subject would properly be broadened to take into account the cultural and spiritual dimensions.

While enormous possibilities are associated with the phenomenon of globalization, these potentialities must not blind us to the grave problems it entails. Only through concerted action by the world community can there be any hope of tackling and finally eradicating such menaces as international terrorism, the proliferation of deadly weapons, illegal drug trafficking, organized crime, the spread of disease, and environmental degradation.

Perhaps foremost, all responsible parties and bodies in today's world are compelled to seek some means of global conflict resolution and arbitration. Specifically, the question must be addressed: "How are we to avoid a disastrous and unwinnable 'clash of civilizations?'" The author of that controversial thesis has himself suggested an answer. In his 1996 book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Professor Samuel Huntington included this generally neglected conclusion:

"...as many have pointed out, whatever the degree to which they divided human-

kind, the world's major religions — Western Christianity, Orthodoxy, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism — also share key values in common. If humans are ever to develop a universal civilization, it will emerge gradually through the exploration and expansion of these commonalities."

Recognizing 125 years ago humanity's acute need for spiritual and religious reconciliation, Bahá'u'lláh touched in his writings upon the conditions essential to the creation of a universal civilization and the establishment of a system of world governance. He emphasized the necessity of creating a universal global consciousness, a new spiritual awareness, and a new sense of responsibility.

"O well-beloved ones!" Bahá'u'lláh wrote. "The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. We cherish the hope that the light of justice may shine upon the world and sanctify it from tyranny."

For the Bahá'í international community, globalization is a vision of world unity in so deep and broad a sense as to embrace every aspect of human life. Such a vision of planetary unity and integration, however, bears no relation to the often bland, faceless, and amoral global marketplace that we see operating today. Instead, it recognizes and celebrates the rich diversity of creeds and cultures while at the same time affirming the fundamental oneness of the human race. The Bahá'í approach to globalization can be summed up as a commitment to the concept of "unity in diversity" and what this practically entails in the life of the individual and society alike.

A diverse world affords the optimal conditions for all to realize their highest potential through independent intellectual, spiritual, or aesthetic endeavor. With the oneness of humanity accorded pride of place in human consciousness, its very diversity becomes rather a safeguard against tyranny than a cause of bitter conflict and division.

The multicultural approach offers a sound alternative to the paradigm of globalization which seems predominant today. Since the end of the Cold War over a decade ago, the proponents of globalization have enthusiastically acclaimed the transformative potential of markets and market mechanisms as a kind of universal panacea for all the world's ills. Undoubtedly, markets do perform certain functions very efficiently: over time, they have emerged as useful instruments for the allocation of goods and services, and, to a certain degree, have succeeded also in connecting and integrating the peoples of the world. Yet, are not other economic models also possible — models that should serve to release and develop human potential, whilst drawing upon those innate human impulses towards fairness and compassion?

All too often, dialogues on globalization are thwarted by appeals to “cultural relativism.” In theory, cultural relativism is the notion that certain social, economic, cultural, and political practices are intrinsic to particular groups, and that the peremptory imposition of alien and artificial standards is an unwarrantable infringement. Yet such protests are often but attempts to shirk the application of a universal code of human rights. In fact, cultural relativism, meaning the view that would deny such universal norms, is a political stratagem rooted in the false premise that the member societies of today's world have grown up in hermetic isolation from each other; whereas the most cursory examination of human history reveals beyond the faintest shadow of a doubt that every society on earth is related to its sisters by a thousand ties. And this is a reality which the investigations of archaeologists and others are further corroborating with each passing day. Whatsoever circumstance restricts the ability of individuals to develop their inherent capacities, and to prosper as human beings, must be changed.

Perhaps the essential and underlying unity that binds together all the peoples and races of the world is nowhere more evident than in the perennial wisdom — what Gottfried Leibniz termed the “perennial philosophy” — that “universal and unanimous tradition” common to all cultures and expressing, albeit in a myriad different ways, a common vision of the plight of man. By rediscovering such fundamental perceptions it would be possible to derive those essential commonalities which unite all peoples, and

to design in consequence a single global system of governance based upon universal values. From these could then be fashioned a comprehensive global ethic and a shared global “human rights and responsibilities constitution.”

Instead of retreating from globalization, developing countries and ethnic communities are summoned to shape the process by themselves actively participating in it; the world must not indeed be deprived of the distinctive and invaluable contribution that all societies, without exception, have within their power to make by sharing with others their highest and most noble values.

A globalization informed rather by the timeless wisdom of the prophets and sages than the arbitrary exigencies of the global mart must of necessity be set upon a firm foundation of interfaith and intercultural cooperation, and be characterized by an amicable and open dialogue between the divers creeds and cultures of the world.

For Bahá'ís, the principle of unity is the bedrock of all religious faith; but in the social sphere, the establishment of a universal standard of justice is of preeminent concern, for justice is the essential foundation of unity, and without unity there can be no peace. The construction of a peaceful global society is thus a progressive task: first, justice is universally established; second, the unity of the planet is realized; and finally, world peace reigns supreme. The global system for which humanity should strive must accordingly renounce all forms of exploitation of one group by another; its international trade must be conducted in a manner both free and fair; and it must accord to all — workers as well as managers and owners — a share in the prosperity created. The new global order should narrow the gap between rich and poor, and grant equal opportunities to all members of the human family; above all, it should insure equality between men and women.

Today perhaps more than at any other time in history, great and incalculable possibilities have opened before us as a world community. New avenues can be perceived that, if wisely followed, will lead us into a world that is at one and the same time diverse and unified, a world suffused and guided by a vision of unity transcending all human differences. Above all, we have the chance as never before to attest to the truth communicated to us by the scriptures of all past ages. Whatever our persuasion, we are all wayfarers on a single path leading to the selfsame ideal haven.\*

*Cultural relativism is a political stratagem rooted in the false premise that the member societies of today's world have grown up in hermetic isolation from each other; whereas the most cursory examination of human history reveals beyond the faintest shadow of a doubt that every society on earth is related to its sisters by a thousand ties.*



## Commemorations in Chicago highlight the immense impact of House of Worship

*The Bahá'í House of Worship outside Chicago, dedicated to the public in May 1953, is the oldest of seven Bahá'í Temples in the world — and an architectural and spiritual landmark in the United States.*



***In May, the Bahá'í community of the United States celebrated the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the first Bahá'í Temple in the West, reflecting on the building's architectural innovation, spiritual significance, and continuing prominence.***

**W**ILMETTE, Illinois, USA — Even though they are not Bahá'ís, Jayson Malfait and Priti Sinha chose to have their wedding day photographs taken at the Bahá'í House of Worship in this suburb north of Chicago.

The gardens and building are so beautiful, said Mr. Malfait. “It’s an amazing structure.”

But there is another important reason. The couple comes from different religions and cultures. Mr. Malfait was born in America, into a Christian family. Ms. Sinha was born in India, into a Hindu family.

“The Bahá'í religion is very accepting of other religions and accepting of diversity, which is important to us, since we’re from different religions, and the Temple is symbolic of that,” said Ms. Sinha. “So it means a lot to us.”

Mr. Malfait and Ms. Sinha are among the some 230,000 people who visit the Bahá'í

House of Worship here each year. Although each surely has his or her own reasons, Ms. Sinha and Mr. Malfait clearly reflect the feelings of many, who commonly tell the Temple staff that they come because of the Temple’s beauty — and its welcoming design.

In May, the Bahá'í community of the United States celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Temple’s public dedication — an event that was widely reported in newspapers of the day. In ceremonies to mark the anniversary — and in interviews — Bahá'ís and others reflected on the Temple’s architectural impact, spiritual significance, and continuing prominence.

The occasion also offered an opportunity to explore both the spiritual and practical side of Bahá'í religious observances. Although there are currently only seven such Houses of Worship in the world, one on each continent, the intent of their design and outline of their functions put them at the

heart of Bahá'í community life.

"It is one of the fundamental symbols of unity that we have," said Jacqueline Left Hand Bull, vice chair of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, which oversees the Wilmette Temple. "It is a symbol of unity because it is open to everyone to pray there."

### New Modes of Worship

The nature of worship in Bahá'í Temples also says much about the relation of man to God, as understood in the Bahá'í Faith. For example, unlike churches, mosques or synagogues, all forms of preaching or sermonizing are banned. Instead, the individual is encouraged to pray and meditate on his/her own.

"Bahá'í worship is a celebration of the Word of God," said Robert Stockman, an historian of religion who serves as director of research for the US Bahá'í community. "So in the Bahá'í House of Worship you have the readings or recitations of the Word of God. And the role of the worshiper is not to be sitting passively but rather to be meditating on the Word, and perhaps praying at the same time."

Dr. Stockman noted that for Bahá'ís the Word of God includes not only the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, the twin Messengers of the Bahá'í Faith, but also the scriptures of the other major world religions, such as the Baghavad Gita, the Hebrew Bible, the Christian New Testament, and the Qur'an.

"In other words, in contrast to worship services in many other religions, the responsibility for the interpretation and internalization of the Word rests on the worshiper — there is no one up front to mediate or do the interpreting for the worshiper," said Dr. Stockman. "Each individual has to play an active role in his or her own reflection on the Word, and in making decisions about how he or she is going to be transformed by it."

James Halstead, a Catholic priest and the Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at DePaul University in Chicago, makes a point of bringing students in his comparative religions class to the Bahá'í House of Worship.

"The first experience of the student upon seeing it is awe and wonder," said Prof. Halstead. "Isn't it beautiful?" they say."

Prof. Halstead also said his students are often struck by the lack of statues and other intermediaries to God. "Some people want those things; they want intermediaries that look like them, so they can negotiate with

the Divine," he added.

"But for me, when I go into this building, it is an encounter with silence," said Prof. Halstead. "Visual silence, aural silence. And for me, this captures the mystery of God."

### Symbolic Design

The design of the Temple is likewise quite distinctive — and indicative of underlying Bahá'í beliefs. Situated on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan north of Chicago, the House of Worship is shaped like a large circular bell — "calling" people to God, said the architect — with nine sides and nine doors.

"The architecture itself symbolizes unity with its nine entrances, drawing people in from all directions to a central point," said Ms. Left Hand Bull.

In fact, all Bahá'í Houses of Worship share this essential layout: nine sides, with nine

*Jayson Malfait and Priti Sinha chose to have their wedding day photographs taken at the Bahá'í House of Worship in May 2003, a testimony to the Temple's appeal to individuals of various religious backgrounds.*



***"The intricacy of the sculpted details of the panels on the Bahá'í House of Worship has not yet been equaled in other buildings of architectural concrete."***

**– Robert Armbruster, architect**

*A photograph inside the Chicago Temple, looking up, reveals the unique lacework ornamentation, done in pre-cast concrete, that allows light to stream in through the roof — a goal of religious architects for thousands of years.*

doors leading to a central dome. All are also illuminated by natural light in the daytime.

Rather than limiting possibilities, however, these design parameters have opened the door to a flourishing of architectural styles. Each of the seven Bahá'í Temples is distinctive in its expression.

An eighth Temple will soon be built in Santiago, Chile, and its design entails, in the words of its architect, Siamak Hariri, nine "gracefully torqued wings," which enfold the temple and give it an organic look reminiscent of a seashell or a nest.

The most famous Temple, the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India, is also a modernist design. Constructed of 27 soaring concrete "petals," arranged in the shape of a nine-sided lotus flower, the Delhi Temple has won numerous architectural awards.

It has also become the most visited building in India, surpassing even the Taj Mahal with some 4.5 million visitors a year.

Among the seven Bahá'í Temples currently in existence, the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette holds a special place in history. It is the oldest of them all, and the first to be built in the West. (The world's first Bahá'í House of Worship was built in Ishqabad (now known as Ashgabat) in Russian Turkistan (now Turkmenistan). However, it was later confiscated by the Soviet government, and, in 1962, razed after it was severely damaged in an earthquake.)

For Bahá'ís, the Wilmette Temple is es-

pecially important because 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh and the leader of the Bahá'í Faith from 1892 to 1921, laid the cornerstone himself.

That was in 1912. It took the Bahá'í community of North America another 41 years to raise funds for and to complete the Temple, which was constructed in various phases, at an overall cost of some US\$2.6 million. The building was opened to the public on 2 May 1953, in joyous ceremonies that were reported on in more than 500 newspapers, numerous radio programs, and a Universal International newsreel.

## **A Breakthrough in Construction**

The Wilmette Temple is also notable for its architectural innovation. Specifically, it is one of the first buildings to utilize pre-cast concrete panels in its construction — an application of a cutting edge technology that is today, 50 years later, in widespread use.

Cast at a factory off site, the panels hang from an inner frame of steel and glass. They incorporate extensive amounts of white quartz, giving the building a dazzling white appearance. They are also extensively ornamented, many in an arabesque lacework design that allows light to stream in from all angles.

This use of pre-cast concrete technology enabled the Temple's architect, Louis Bourgeois, to achieve a vision that had for thousands of years gone unrealized.

"If you look at the development of cathedrals, mosques, and synagogues, one of the goals was always to create a space that was uplifting — and one way to do that is to bring as much light as possible in through the walls," said Robert Armbruster, a Chicago-based architect and civil engineer who has since 1983 been closely involved with efforts to maintain and restore the Temple.

The great buttresses supporting the walls of Gothic cathedrals were designed to create tall windows, capable of bringing in maximum light, said Mr. Armbruster. "But, with the materials at hand, they were never able to bring light in through the roof."

After the industrial revolution, however, with the introduction of steel and reinforced concrete, it became possible to create buildings that were very light and open, he said, like London's famous Crystal Palace or the grand train terminals of the 1800s.

"But they still hadn't cracked the puzzle of how to add ornamentation and bring the light through it," said Mr. Armbruster. "The

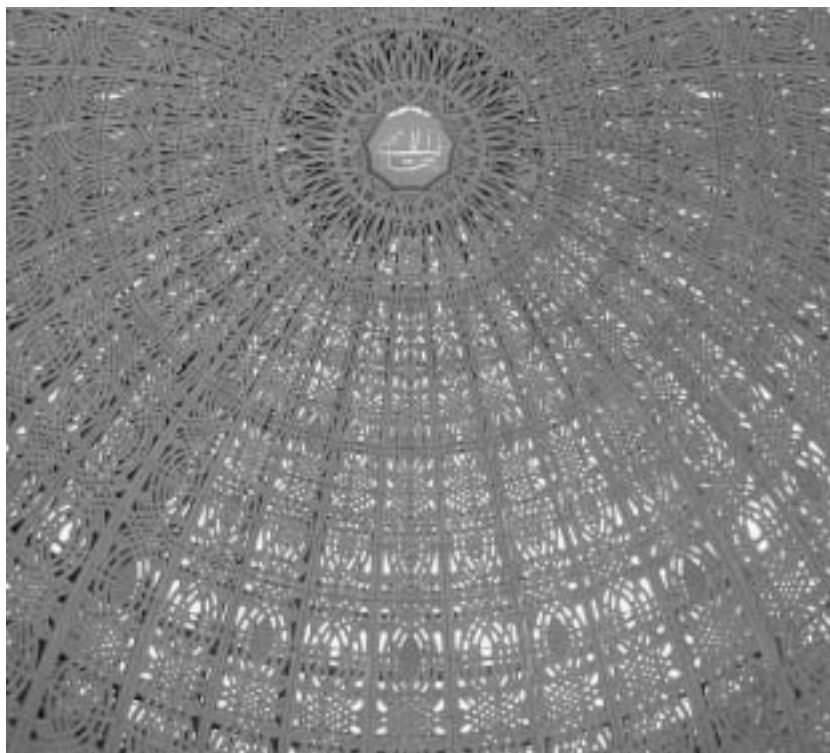


Photo by Vladimir Shilov





*The Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India, at left, was completed in 1986 and has since won numerous architectural awards. It has become the most visited building in India, surpassing even the Taj Mahal with some 4.5 million visitors a year. On 18 March 2003, the President of India, Abdul Kalam, visited the Temple, the first official visit there by an Indian head of state.*

design represents the first time an architect was able to bring light in through the walls and dome of a building with ornamentation."

"Originally, Bourgeois thought he would use stone, but the stone company said they were unable to execute the kind of ornamentation he wanted," said Mr. Armbruster. Bourgeois then turned to reinforced concrete panels, and the Temple is, in fact, the first use of such panels, he said.

"The intricacy of the sculpted details of the panels on the Bahá'í House of Worship has not yet been equaled in other buildings of architectural concrete," added Mr. Armbruster.

### **A National Landmark**

The result is a unique building that has become a major drawing point in the greater Chicago area.

"The Bahá'í Temple is nationally recognized," said Maria Berg-Stark, executive director of the Chicago's North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau, who noted that it is listed in the United States National Register of Historic Places. "And it is one of the most prominent tourist attractions in the area."

Some 58 meters in height, and with a seating capacity of nearly 1,200 people, the Temple also stands as a spiritual beacon to many, silently offering a lesson about the unity of religions.

"We think that God is one in the world and you can talk with Him in other churches,

too," said Iryna Turshyn, a Christian from Ukraine, who visited the Wilmette Temple with a friend in May. "This church is like a 'union' church. It's for everybody."

For Bahá'ís and others, these distinguishing elements — the overall design of the Temples, their innovative construction, and the distinctive mode of worship held within them — are important reflections of the creative power of the Bahá'í Faith.

"The Bahá'í Faith is a new religion, and so the Temples have to show it is new," said Fariborz Sahba, the architect of the India Temple, in a speech here on 17 May, as part of the 50th anniversary commemorations. "The architect here, Louis Bourgeois, spent eight years on this design, before it was even submitted."

Mr. Sahba noted that Bahá'ís from all over the world sent in contributions all through the first five decades of the 20th century to finance the Wilmette Temple's construction. All Bahá'í Temples are entirely financed with contributions from Bahá'ís.

"This is the Temple of which all of the Bahá'ís of the world claim ownership," said Mr. Sahba. "And they love it. But this is not only for the Bahá'ís — it is a Temple that belongs to the people of the world." ❀



*The eighth Temple will be built in Santiago, Chile, and its nine "gracefully torqued wings" will give it a distinctive, organic look.*

## At local, national, and international levels, Bahá'ís elect leadership councils worldwide

**H**AIFA, Israel — Using a distinctive electoral process that extends from the grass-roots to the international level, the worldwide Bahá'í community on 29 April 2003 elected its international governing council, the Universal House of Justice.

Altogether 1,544 electors, themselves having been elected by the Bahá'í membership in 178 national communities, chose nine people for a five-year term. Those nine come from seven different nations and reflect a diverse range of professional experiences and backgrounds.

In May, those same 178 national Bahá'í communities held elections to choose membership for national-level governing bodies, known as National Spiritual Assemblies. Also composed of nine members, National Spiritual Assemblies are elected annually.

As well, local Bahá'í communities around the world held their annual elections in mid-April, selecting nine-member governing councils known as Local Spiritual Assemblies. There are more than 11,700 Local Spiritual Assemblies worldwide.

At each level, the electoral process was marked by certain distinctive characteristics.

"The elections are conducted by secret ballot — however, there is no nomination, campaigning, or discussion of candidates," said Douglas Moore, director of the Office of Public Information at the Bahá'í World Centre, in Haifa, Israel.

"Rather, each elector, in an atmosphere of prayer and meditation, chooses

the names of those individuals he or she feels possess the best qualities to serve," he said.

"Delegates are guided by the criteria based on the writings of the Bahá'í Faith, which advise them to vote for individuals with selfless devotion, a well-trained mind, recognized ability, loyalty, and mature experience," he said.

Headquartered in Haifa, the Universal House of Justice guides and directs the activities of the five million members of the Bahá'í Faith, which has been identified in the Encyclopaedia Britannica as the second most widespread of the world's independent religions, after Christianity.

The electors of the Universal House of Justice consist of the members of the 178 National Spiritual Assemblies, who this year cast their votes by mail. Those electors, in turn, had been chosen in April 2002, through a system of delegates, by the entire adult membership of their respective national communities.

"This election is the only one in the world where the governing body of a major independent world religion is elected directly by delegates chosen by their respective national communities," said Mr. Moore.

The elections this year for the Universal House of Justice were marked by the retirement of two long-serving members: Ali Nakhjavani and Hushmand Fatheazam.

Both Mr. Nakhjavani, 83, and Mr. Fatheazam, 79, had served on the Universal House of Justice since it was first elected in 1963. They gave notice of their intention to resign earlier this year.

In the subsequent election on 29 April, two new members were chosen — and the seven others were re-elected.

The two new members, Hartmut Grossmann and Firaydoun Javaheri, had been serving at the Bahá'í World Centre as Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre.

Mr. Grossmann, born in Germany, has academic qualifications in the German and English languages. He served on the National

*Nineteen tellers assembled at the Bahá'í World Centre on Mount Carmel on 29 April 2003 to tally the votes in the election for the Universal House of Justice. The tellers came from Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Japan, Kenya, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.*





Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of Germany (1963 to 1969) and Finland (1977 to 1980). He was a university academic in Finland. In 1980, Mr. Grossmann was appointed a Continental Counsellor for Europe. A volunteer position, a Continental Counsellor advises and assists Bahá'í communities in a given region with their growth and development.

Dr. Javaheri, who was born in Iran, has a doctorate in agronomy. He lived for 27 years in Africa — first the Gambia, then Zambia — where he was chief technical adviser for the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. He served the Bahá'í communities there in the area of social and economic development. He was appointed a Continental Counsellor in 1995 after serving for 19 years as a member of its Auxiliary Board.

Other members of the Universal House of Justice, who were re-elected this year, are:

Farzam Arbab, born in Iran, who obtained his doctorate in physics at the University of California, Berkeley. He was the representative for the Rockefeller Foundation in Colombia (1974 to 1983) and the president of the FUNDAEC development foundation there. He was first elected to the Universal House of Justice in 1993.

Kiser Barnes, who was born in the United States, and holds degrees in political science and law. He practiced law and held senior positions in human rights organizations and in labor relations in the United States, before moving to Africa where he held senior academic posts at universities in Benin, Togo, and Nigeria. He was elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2000.

Hooper Dunbar, who was born in the United States, was a film actor in Hollywood before moving to Central and South America where he taught arts and English. An accomplished painter, he was first elected to



the Universal House of Justice in 1988.

Peter Khan, born in Australia, held professorial posts in electrical engineering at universities in the United States and Australia. Dr. Khan was first elected to the Universal House of Justice in 1987.

Douglas Martin, who was born in Canada, holds degrees in business administration and in history, and is an author and editor. Mr. Martin was elected to the Universal House of Justice in 1993.

Glenford Mitchell, born in Jamaica, holds a Master's degree in journalism from Columbia University. An author, he has worked as a magazine editor and managing editor, and taught English and journalism at Howard University. He was elected to the Universal House of Justice in 1982.

Ian Semple, born in England, holds a Master of Arts degree in the German and French languages and literature from Oxford University. A chartered accountant, he was first elected to the Universal House of Justice in 1963.\*

*The Seat of the Universal House of Justice, the building on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel, where the international governing council of the Bahá'í Faith has its headquarters.*

***"This election is the only one in the world where the governing body of a major independent world religion is elected directly by delegates chosen by their respective national communities."***

– Douglas Moore

## David Hofman, distinguished Bahá'í leader, passes away

OXFORD, United Kingdom — David Hofman, a former member of the Universal House of Justice, passed away at age 94 on 9 May 2003.

An actor, radio and television announcer, author, and publisher, Mr. Hofman served for some 27 years on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom before being elected as a charter member of the Universal House of Justice in 1963. He served for 25 years, until he retired in 1988.

"He will be remembered," said the Universal House of Justice, "for an adamant

loyalty to the Cause, an unfailing response to the call and guidance of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice, a central role in the advancement of the British Bahá'í community and the launching of the brilliant Africa Campaign, and his outstanding contributions to Bahá'í literature both as an author and a publisher."

After World War II, Hofman married Marion Holley, a former U.S. Olympic athlete. He also founded George Ronald, a small publishing company in Oxford, specializing in books of religious and theological interests.\*

## In Vanuatu, a proving ground for coconut oil as an alternative fuel

*Tony Deamer and his wife, Easuary, pose in front of a Toyota – now somewhat rusted – that he converted to run on pure coconut oil in an early test of the fuel's viability.*



*Coconut, continued from page one*

***Mr. Deamer has succeeded in proving that automotive diesel engines, with very little modification, can run safely on coconut oil. Late last year, some 200 mini-buses here were using a coconut oil/diesel mix on a daily basis.***

island nations like Vanuatu where the cost of imported oil is a heavy burden on the economy.

Late last year, some 200 mini-buses here were using a coconut oil/diesel mix on a daily basis, proving the concept. A recent change in Government tax laws has had the unintended consequence of temporarily raising the price of coconut oil/diesel mixtures — but many mini-bus drivers are still using the fuel, even if they have to mix it themselves.

Mr. Deamer himself continues to operate about a dozen vehicles on a pure coconut oil fuel, which is not subject to the new excise tax on petroleum mixtures. Now, he and another local coconut fuel producer are working with the Government to change the excise tax and/or to explore alternatives, such as mixing coconut oil with alcohol or converting more vehicles to run on the pure stuff.

“One way or the other, we are going ahead with this,” said Mr. Deamer, with the gung-ho enthusiasm that has made him the driving force in winning wide acceptance for coconut oil fuels here.

Indeed, it seems hard to find anyone of prominence in this small port city who doesn't know of Mr. Deamer — and of his work at promoting coconut fuel.

“He's been talking about this for a few years,” said Marc Neil-Jones, publisher and managing director of *Vanuatu Trading Post* and *Pacific Weekly Review*. “But people's interest has shot up since he started running a few cars on it.

“Coconuts are a huge commodity around the world,” added Mr. Neil-Jones. “Here, for example, the copra industry is having major problems at the moment and the government is shoring up the price and it is costing a fortune. So the possibility of using coconut oil as a fuel has the potential to really help the rural people.”

Helping the rural population is, in fact,

a main goal of Mr. Deamer's project, which he sees as an extension of his commitment to the promotion of social and economic development — a commitment that stems from his practice of the Bahá'í Faith.

### Not for profit

"This is not a commercial venture," said Mr. Deamer, explaining that the entire project stems instead from his desire to help his fellow citizens — and the world at large.

Mr. Deamer believes that if coconut oil fuel is widely accepted, it will increase the local demand for copra — the dried coconut meat that is a major, albeit low-priced, commodity on world markets. Such an increase in demand would provide jobs and money for rural villagers in Vanuatu, where cutting copra has been the major source of outside income. This, he believes, will help to stem the tide of villagers who have fled idle copra plantations to urban areas.

"If coconut oil does become a significant substitute for diesel fuel, then the local copra price will be less influenced by the world market price of coconut oil," said Mr. Deamer. "Instead, it will have a floor price determined by its relative value as a fuel and the world price of diesel fuel."

"A higher local price is likely to bring about an increase in local copra production. And more people cutting copra will mean

more money in the outer islands," he said, referring to the network of islands that surround the main island of Éfaté, where Port-Vila is located.

Formerly known as the New Hebrides, Vanuatu is a collection of some 80 islands located about 2,100 kilometers northeast of Sydney, Australia. The island chain was made famous by James Michener's World War II novel, *Tales of the South Pacific*.

The country's chief exports are agricultural: copra, kava, beef, cocoa, timber, and coffee. The population of some 200,000 people is more than 94 percent indigenous Melanesian, and some 80 percent live in rural areas. The per capita income is about US\$1,200 a year.

"For every ton of diesel fuel that we can offset, we can put back some \$200 into the local economy. And at those prices, people could earn a very good living cutting copra," said Mr. Deamer.

Government officials agree that the project has great potential.

"This is really a great idea," said Leo Moli, head of the energy unit within the Vanuatu Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. "Because it goes all the way back to the farmers who plant and cut coconut. And, if it succeeds, there will be a reduction in the importation of fossil fuels, especially diesel fuel. And this is important."

*"This is really a great idea. Because it goes all the way back to the farmers who plant and cut coconut. And, if it succeeds, there will be a reduction in the importation of fossil fuels, especially diesel fuel."*

– Leo Moli, head of the energy unit, Vanuatu Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources



*Copra, the meat of coconut, shown stacked in bags for processing, is a mainstay of the economy on Vanuatu.*



***"Tony has done groundbreaking work to show that coconut oil will work in automotive diesels without any major modification."***

**– Rodney Newell,  
president of  
Renereitech, a  
renewable energy  
company**

Mr. Moli said the energy department plans to begin operating two of its vehicles on Deamer's coconut oil fuel, as one way of supporting the project.

Sela Molisa, the Minister of Finance and Economic Management, agrees that using coconut oil to fuel automobiles could indeed reduce the need for imported oil. "On a yearly basis, we import around US\$10 million in fuel," said Mr. Molisa. "That's a lot of money for us. And I am pretty sure that at least half of that could be replaced by coconut oil."

Mr. Molisa said the country has plenty of capacity to produce more copra. He said a fall in prices for copra on international markets has reduced Vanuatu's annual harvest from a peak of some 45,000 tons in the 1970s and 1980s to about 30,000 to 40,000 tons currently. "Vanuatu can at present produce at least 50,000 tons."

The economic impact can be amplified if the coconut by-products are also used, Mr. Deamer said. The spent coconut meal makes excellent cattle feed, coconut shells can be made into high quality activated charcoal, and coconut fibers have many important uses.

The key to the entire project was proving that ordinary automotive diesel engines can run reliably on coconut oil.

### **"Groundbreaking work"**

"Tony has done groundbreaking work to show that coconut oil will work in automotive diesels without any major modification," said Rodney Newell, president of Renereitech, a small Vanuatu-based company that focuses on helping local businesses develop renewable energy.

"Vegetable oils are being used in other parts of the world in diesel engines," said Mr. Newell. "But this is a unique project in that neat coconut oil is being used. This is a first for the Pacific area."

Using coconut oil for fuel has several inherent problems. First, it tends to be thicker — more viscous — than other fuels. The unprocessed oil also usually contains more water and impurities than other alternatives.

Mr. Deamer has experimented extensively and solved many of these problems. He has developed a small and inexpensive pre-heater that lowers the viscosity of the oil before it enters the engine. And he has also worked with another local fuel distributor to develop filtration techniques to re-

move water and impurities.

Unlike many entrepreneurs, Mr. Deamer has been willing to share his findings widely, giving information to all concerned, even potential competitors.

"Tony is not doing it for money," said Dick Eade, a New Zealander who has a pineapple plantation here. "He is just doing it because it will save the country money. He has community spirit."

Nevertheless, Mr. Deamer has taken an entirely professional approach to the promotion of coconut oil fuel. He has lined up a number of investors so that he can purchase the kinds of filters and equipment to properly process raw coconut oil into refined automotive fuel.

Trained as a mechanic, Mr. Deamer came to Vanuatu from Australia in 1971. As a Bahá'í, he sought to promote social and economic development, residing first on the outer island of Tanna, working as a mechanic for the public works department there. In 1981, he relocated to Port Vila, first working for the Ministry of Education and then establishing his own automobile rental and repair business.

That enterprise has provided a good living for Mr. Deamer — and a platform on which to experiment with alternative fuels. He has converted many of his rental cars to run on coconut oil, tinkering with the pre-heaters until they ran smoothly.

In his mind, everything he does stems from Bahá'í principles. In his business, he has hired and trained a number of female motor mechanics, a move that stems from his belief in the Bahá'í ideal of equality between women and men.

"Work in the service of humanity is service to God," said Mr. Deamer. "That is the driving force of what I am trying to do, to leave behind something of value to Vanuatu, instead of just to Tony Deamer."

Disinclined to talk too much about himself, Mr. Deamer soon switched back to a discussion of the advantages of coconut oil fuel.

"One of the reasons I like using coconut oil instead of diesel fuel is you are putting back into the atmosphere the same carbon dioxide that the tree took out a year ago," said Mr. Deamer. "It's completely sustainable. Coconut trees are very efficient carbon absorbers."

"And coconut oil is also non-toxic," Mr. Deamer added. "What other Pacific fuel can you cook your fish and chips in and run your truck on?"\*

## The Bahá'í International Community expresses concern about the human rights of Iranian Bahá'ís

GENEVA — The Bahá'í International Community has expressed deep disappointment that the UN Commission on Human Rights failed this year to put forward or adopt any kind of resolution on the human rights situation in Iran.

Despite a new human rights "dialogue" between Iran and the European Union, human rights violations against Iran's Bahá'ís are not only continuing but increasing, said the Community following the close of the Commission on 25 April 2003.

"While, in principle, we support the European Union's 'Human Rights Dialogue' with Iran, we have yet to see any positive results emerging on the ground," said Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations.

"Not only has there been no progress, but the persecution of Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran has intensified since the Commission on Human Rights decided last year to suspend its monitoring of the country," said Ms. Dugal.

"The arrest and short-term detention of Bahá'ís has increased; Bahá'í teachers and students continue to be harassed; more properties belonging to the Bahá'ís have been confiscated; and all attempts to obtain redress have been systematically denied," Ms. Dugal said. "As of mid-April, five Bahá'ís were being held in Iranian prisons because of their religious beliefs." [Editor's Note: As of mid-June, four Bahá'ís remained in prison, following the release of Musa Talibi from prison in Isfahan on 28 May 2003.]

From 1982 to 2001, the Commission each year adopted a resolution expressing concern over the human rights situation in Iran, resolutions which always made special mention of the persecution of the Bahá'í community there.

Last year, however, the Commission failed to adopt such a resolution. This year, the European Union, the traditional sponsor of the resolution, failed even to put it forward, preferring at this stage to work through the dialogue process on human

rights that was initiated last year.

"In essence, the Commission and the European Union, have given the Iranian Government a chance to prove its claim that it is committed to improve respect for human rights," said Ms. Dugal. "Iran's response has been far from encouraging."

"We believe that the international community must take a stand on Iran's behavior. Accordingly, the Commission's neglect of a resolution that would provide for renewed monitoring of Iran is extremely unfortunate, both for Iran's Bahá'ís and the international community's reputation as a whole," said Ms. Dugal.

Since 1979, when the Islamic Republic of Iran was established, more than 200 Bahá'ís have been killed or executed in Iran, all solely as a result of religious persecution. Hundreds more have been imprisoned and thousands have lost jobs, pensions, and/or access to education. The persecutions reached a peak in the mid-1980s, but lessened after the international community began condemning it through the Commission on Human Rights and in other forums.

However, the Bahá'í community of Iran remains deprived of its basic rights and Bahá'ís remain under the continual threat of harassment, imprisonment or worse. Most recently, for example, Mr. Manuchihr Khulusi, a Bahá'í in Mashhad, was re-imprisoned in March 2003 for Bahá'í activities, following the judgment of the Revolutionary Court in that city.\*

### Visitors to Bahá'í Terraces on Mt. Carmel hit 1.4 million

HAIFA, Israel — Some 1.4 million people have visited the garden terraces surrounding the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel in the two years since they were first opened to the public on 4 June 2001. The vast majority of the 1.4 million visitors have been from Israel, which has a population of 6.5 million. The terraces are one of the major tourist attractions in the country.\*

*"The arrest and short-term detention of Bahá'ís has increased; Bahá'í teachers and students continue to be harassed; more properties belonging to the Bahá'ís have been confiscated; and all attempts to obtain redress have been systematically denied."*

— Bani Dugal, Bahá'í International Community

## Exhibition at European Parliament tells the story of Bahá'í contribution to social harmony

**B**RUSSELS — At its main building here in June, the European Parliament hosted a special exhibition highlighting the contribution that Bahá'í communities in Europe have made to promote social harmony.

Titled "The Bahá'í International Community: Promoting Unity in Diversity throughout Europe for over a Century," the display graced the Parliament building's main foyer from 10–13 June 2003.

The exhibition was officially opened by Jean Lambert, the member of the European Parliament who sponsored it, at a reception in the Parliament building on 11 June. More than 200 people, including Ana Palacio, the Foreign Minister of Spain, members of the Parliament, and other prominent people, attended the reception.

In addition, about 90 people attended an address given by Suheil Bushrui on "The Ethics of Globalization," as part of the day's events. [See page 2]

Composed of 14 panels, the display tells the story in words and photographs of how

the Bahá'í communities of Europe have sought to promote peace, cross-cultural integration, religious tolerance, and business ethics through a variety of projects and actions.

"The moment was quite auspicious, in that the opening of the display coincided with final deliberations on the draft European Constitution, which were being held in the same building," said Jean-Pierre Laperches, a representative of the Bahá'í community of Belgium.

"And the challenges facing the European Union as it proceeds forward with its integration are many," said Mr. Laperches. "So our goal was to share the vision that Bahá'ís have in terms of creating unity while at the same time showing respect for the rich diversity of culture, religion, and national backgrounds that exist on this continent."

The display, for example, takes note of projects like "The Institute for Social Cohesion," established in 2001 by the Bahá'í community of the United Kingdom to promote a discourse on cross-cultural harmony.\*

*Bani Dugal, right, newly elected Chair of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, and Leslie Wright, UN Representative of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, who is outgoing Chair of the Committee.*



## Bahá'í UN Representative elected to head NGO women's committee in New York

**N**EW YORK — Bani Dugal, the Principal Representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations, has been elected to chair the main committee of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with women's issues at the UN.

Ms. Dugal will serve for two years as Chair of the non-governmental organizations' Committee on the Status of Women in New York. She was elected by acclamation at the Committee's annual meeting here on 12 June 2003.

As Chair of the Committee, Ms. Dugal will work with all departments at the United Nations to promote the advancement of women

and girls and the equality of women and men.

"Each of the UN agencies has a person assigned as a 'gender focal point,' and our goal is to work closely with them to ensure that gender concerns are mainstreamed into all policies," said Ms. Dugal.

"In particular, we want to focus on promoting the concept of partnership between women and men, and the role of men and boys in the advancement of women and girls," Ms. Dugal said.

"Another issue we hope to focus on is peace and security and post-conflict resolution," Ms. Dugal said. "We want to see women represented at the peace table, and in the post-conflict work, in such places as Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries."

Ms. Dugal previously served as the Committee's vice-chair. The Committee is composed of about 200 international non-governmental organizations, and networks with hundreds more around the world.\*



# Violence Against Women

*Review, continued from page 16*

paign” to eradicate such violence. And, Drs. Penn and Nardos argue, for such campaign to be effective, it must deal not only with the outward, legalistic, elements of the problem, but also with the inward elements of violence against women — elements that concern the cultural, moral, and religious spheres of life.

“As vital as legal and human rights measures are, they are, as an increasing number of individuals and organizations are beginning to recognize, insufficient to effect the magnitude of change necessary if gender-based violence and discrimination are to be eradicated,” the authors write. “Inasmuch as violence against women and girls is sustained by long-standing, maladaptive patterns of thinking and relating, legal strategies, unaccompanied by efforts to address the intrapersonal dimensions of the problem, are likely to prove ineffective.”

In considering how to change the mental and cultural structures that lie at the root of the problem, Drs. Penn and Nardos draw extensively on the Authenticity Project, a Bahá’í-inspired initiative to develop a new paradigm for moral education that stems from work done by philosopher William S. Hatcher.

Dr. Penn is, himself, a Bahá’í and a member of the Project, which draws on the latest scientific research in human psychology, as well as on the underlying morality of the world’s major religious and philosophical systems, to create a new ethical framework that can be accepted on a global level.

The Project proposes that genuine human transformation can come about only as individuals strive to develop and sustain “authentic” relationships based on altruistic love, justice, and a new understanding of power.

“The trademark of relational authenticity is sincere, unselfish love,” write the authors. “Whenever we give priority, however subtly, to our own (perceived) needs over the needs of the other in a relationship, this kind of relating is a manifestation of egotism and negates authenticity. In extreme forms it gives rise to manipulation, exploitation, competition, and the mutual search for dominance.

“In a nonauthentic relationship we each seek power — the power to compel the other to satisfy our needs,” the authors write. “Thus, authentic relationships are said to be based on love and nonauthentic relationships on power.”

The work of the Authenticity Project also contravenes the notion that human nature is incorrigibly selfish and aggressive. This in itself opens the door to change.

On this basis, Drs. Penn and Nardos offer a series of points for moving beyond the cultural practices and faulty relationships that foster violence against women.

First, they suggest, men must shoulder a greater share of the burden in seeking to advance the rights of women on all fronts. They note that the civil rights movement in the United States gained steam in the mid-1960s when whites began to get involved — and they suggest that the same process of invigoration can occur when men become more involved in the women’s movement.

More specifically, they write, religious leaders, who are predominantly men, must take a stronger role in opposing those aspects of religious fundamentalism that have contributed to the subordination of women. And men must advocate for greater educational opportunities for women, they write, noting that education is one of the “most effective means for contributing to women’s advancement.”

The authors believe violence against women can be eradicated. They note that both slavery and racial discrimination have deep cultural roots, were once viewed as morally permissible, and have persisted for thousands of years. Yet, they offer, slavery has faded in the last hundred years or so, and much progress has been made to improve civil rights in many countries.

“As we embark on a new century, we can imagine few goals more deserving of the attention of the community of nations and of the peoples of the world than the eradication of gender-based violence,” they write. “The goal of eradicating gender-based violence should be proclaimed on billboards, televisions, and radio stations around the world. It should be discussed in classrooms, churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques. It should invite the men of the world to play a vital role.”

In its sweeping and challenging analysis — and its bold prescription for an interdisciplinary, international remedy — *Overcoming Violence against Women and Girls* offers hope that this age-old problem can be eradicated. It also suggests a new model for an crosscutting, spiritually based approach to societal problems in general, especially those based on entrenched cultural and social practices that persist despite their obvious obsolescence in an age of human maturity.\*

*“The goal of eradicating gender-based violence should be proclaimed on billboards, televisions, and radio stations around the world. It should be discussed in classrooms, churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques. It should invite the men of the world to play a vital role.”*

– Michael L. Penn  
and Rahel Nardos

## A new approach to violence against women

**Overcoming  
Violence against  
Women and Girls:  
The International  
Campaign to  
Eradicate a  
Worldwide  
Problem**

*By Michael L.  
Penn and Rahel  
Nardos*

*Rowman &  
Littlefield  
Publishers, Inc.*

*Lanham,  
Maryland, USA*

Why is it that although women compose half the world's population and put in nearly two-thirds of the world's work hours, they receive just one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property?

It does not take much reflection to realize that part of the answer to this question boils down to the capacity and willingness of men, throughout history and into modern times, to use violence to enforce and uphold their superior position.

For if all men had somehow restrained themselves, if wife beating, rape, and other forms of violence against women had been inconceivable from the start, is it likely that half the human race would have for so long remained in an inferior position?

In this light, a new book by Michael L. Penn and Rahel Nardos arrives with special importance. *Overcoming Violence against Women and Girls: The International Campaign to Eradicate a Worldwide Problem* outlines the vast scope of this continuing problem — and also offers a new and insightful interdisciplinary approach to remedying it.

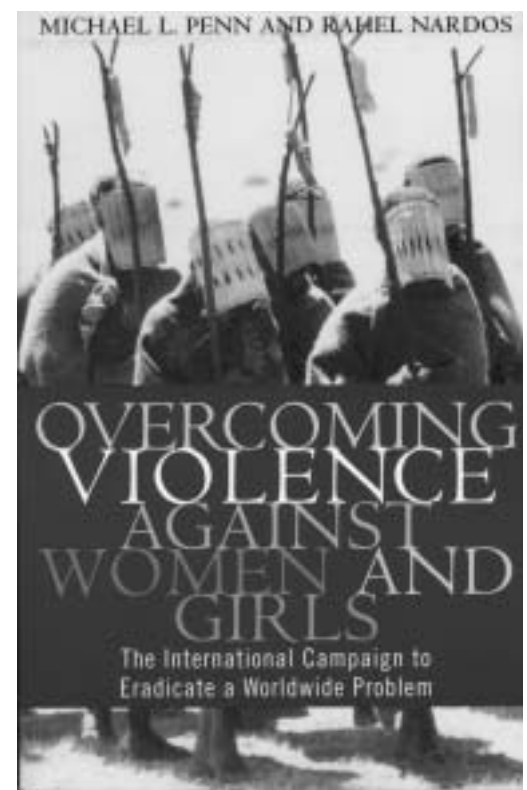
Dr. Penn, a professor of psychology at Franklin & Marshall College in Pennsylvania, USA, and Dr. Nardos, a researcher and medical student at Yale University while writing the book, now graduated with an MD, spend the first half of the book documenting the breadth and extent of the problem as a global phenomenon.

Drawing extensively on United Nations documents — such as the 1993 UNICEF study that produced the statistics in the opening paragraph — and other recent studies, Drs. Penn and Nardos show that, despite the vast progress that has been made in advancing women's rights in recent decades, violence against women and girls persists in a wide range of forms, from domestic abuse to bride burning to female genital mutilation.

Citing figures on domestic abuse, they note that an estimated 1.8 million women in the United States are battered by their husbands each year — and more than 2,000 deaths result. They cite data from Peru that indicates that some 70 percent of all reported crimes

consist of women who have been battered by their partners. And in Papua New Guinea, one study indicated that 73 percent of all women murdered were killed by a male intimate.

They likewise find that culturally sanctioned forms of violence against women are widespread. In Africa, they note that female genital mutilation, a complex phenomenon



viewed largely as a women-implemented coming-of-age ritual, stems in part from the desire of men to enforce sexual chastity. And in India, so-called “bride burning,” in which wives are “accidentally” burned to death so that husbands and their families can keep expensive dowries, remains commonplace — despite laws against it.

It is on this point — the inability of legal sanctions alone to eradicate violence — that the primary significance of *Overcoming Violence against Women and Girls* hinges. For one of the main purposes of the book is to put forward the outline for an “international cam-

*Review, continued on page 15*