

Encumbrance of War

I. The Contest

The contest unfolds: eruption in the Middle East
words like *Gaza Hezbollah Beirut Haifa*
becoming more commonplace, molesting us with tortured, graphic realities—
calculated bombings destroyed edifices severed body parts broken corpses.

War escalates, raging with gusto, scented with blood,
tearing the resilient fabric of the human spirit.
Our eyes remain assaulted with images, the tug of war more
than a game with two sides in complexity—
long-standing issues over land heritage power belief.

Yet the answer is so clear:

To learn from the path of water
listen to the strength of women
become one people, in love with the same world
embrace the process of peace.

II. Cultivating Conscience

“Universal Peace is a matter of great importance, but unity of conscience is essential. . . .”
‘Abdu’l-Bahá

What stone must humankind bear around its neck
before the turn of conscience?
What scope the devastation before surrender to the light?

We languish on a bed of heedlessness,
the world heart wounded
the world mind schizophrenic
the world body bloated and yet starved
the world limbs constrained
the world soul unawakened

Yet one thing will endear us to the One who holds the remedy,
hope extended in an upward hand—
each one bringing an enlivened conscience
to the peacefield of renewal.

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