



S.M.O.C. GAZETTE



EDITO

As we grow up and look back on our school life, we tend to realize how certain rules about which we used to complain and few people whom some of us used to bother turn out to be the golden keys by which we open the doors to our future. Sometimes we don't directly see how each individual we encounter leaves a trace in our lives, and how simple experiences we have been through teach us a great deal.

We have individuals surrounding us with their warmth, experience and knowledge. We have a system of rules and responsibilities governing our existence. At early stages, the view is blurred to some learners who tend to disobey these individuals and run away from responsibilities.

We should not imprison ourselves in darkened shells. The individuals around us are our guiding torches. We are like seeds. This system of rights and responsibilities is the nurturing soil and the water which help us grow. This is how our character develops. And thus we reach a stage of maturity where it will be our duty to stop taking and start giving.

Viviane Badaan- G11 SB
The Creative Writing Club

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Beloved SMOC family,

If we are sensitive to the sound of our inner self, we might be able to hear the sounds of the invisible, where humanity and nature both find their shape. We will never fully understand the meaning of the signs of the invisible pointing to a reality beyond itself. This reality is the presence of God. This reality might become a problem when we lose the sense of His presence, hidden behind the veil of the invisible. His presence is visible in all that is, grows, lives and dies. His invisible presence bears its imprints in us.

Life is a continuous celebration. Events bear more than their face value. Events are a continuous celebration of tiny moments, almost invisible; however, each moment is imprinted with a special atmosphere. It is full of flavors, sounds and smells, almost imperceptible. The sound of silence that is considered as a moment during which sound is absent could bear infinity of meanings, happiness, sadness, sorrow or love. God's silence does not mean his absence.

We might fool ourselves if we consider the invisible as if it is inexistent. The invisible is a mystery about which all nature speaks day and night.

This issue of our Gazette is about "The Invisible". This looks a bit strange when we know that our yearly theme tackles "Imprints". This paradox at first sight unveils its mystery when we become more aware of all that surrounds us and grows in us.

The coming New Year is still for us a mystery loaded with the "invisible" and the unexpected. Nevertheless, "mystery" does not mean only the unknown but most of all the "miracle" of God's presence in our history and consequently in our lives. He is here to lead us, to protect and to preserve us, to bless us with His Divine Graces. He is most of all, waiting for us to respond freely to His call. When we respond to His call and love, we will reflect, here and now, His invisible presence in a visible and tangible way. Created in His image we tend to be His likeness. Then we will also be able to care truly for the Divine dimension embedded in humanity and nature like a sapphire in a golden ring.

FATHER GEORGE DIMAS

Educator's Proficiency and Learner's Achievement



Recent studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between levels of educator's proficiency and learner's achievement. They also confirm that competent educators have greater confidence and, in turn, positively influence the levels of motivation and enthusiasm of learners.

Therefore, the Four Sister Schools aim at securing a core of skilled staff members by improving their levels of competence as they progress in their profession. In this perspective, the OTD's mission is to provide continuous professional development and support to all the institution's staff at all levels. It does this through planning, coordinating and seeking appropriate development and support programs within the school's framework and from experts in the fields.

For the last three months, the Office has planned various in-service training sessions attended by Teachers, Heads of Divisions and Heads of Academic and Administrative Departments: Using the School Website, Item Banking, Comment Utiliser Sésame, Développer la Communication Orale en classe de français, How to Carry out a Math Science & Technology Fair, Detecting and Dealing with Learners with Learning Difficulties, Clinical Supervision of Teachers in the Classrooms and Time Management.

Consequently, the number of trainees reached around 425 and they attended approximately 2480 hours of training.

In conclusion, by fostering change, motivation, critical thinking and professional renewal among staff members, The OTD aims at developing professionalism in order to improve the quality of education provided at school.

Rania El Hage
OTD Director

Below are excerpts from articles written by the trainers themselves about the workshops they conducted:

"...In the process of preparing for the Science, Math & Technology Fair, a two-session workshop on "How to Carry Out a Fair" was conducted on November 7th and 9th, 2005 at SMOC. The first session dealt with the theoretical part and tackled the following points: the objectives behind organizing the Fair, learners', teachers', and parents' involvement in the preparation, types of presentation and how they can serve the purpose of the project, characteristics of a successful project, and the mode of work adopted this year for the Fair..."

"...The workshop on "Detecting and Dealing with Learners with Learning Difficulties" was intended to help teachers in detecting learners with Learning Difficulties; accordingly, these learners would be referred to outside therapists if the need arises and they would be assisted in their classes by the special educators found in the schools. As a consequence, the Unit of Learners with Learning Difficulties ensures a closer follow up on these learners' performance..."



Our School Days

As autumn arrived, our nursery teachers prepared a simple funny play about the natural changes that occur during this time of year. We laughed a lot with the characters of the play who were: the sun, the cloud, the tree, and the bird.

There is also that time we went to Baabda forest and got the chance to actually see the changes of nature in autumn in addition to the forest animals and insects!!



Among our great experiences is the time when we video taped our body movements (parallel to the unit's theme: "senses and body parts"), and watched them live on TV. It was probably our first direct contact with the camera and we all felt as if we were stars! Ah did we tell you how much fun we had when we cooked tasty chocolate cookies or the day we played the parents' roles by giving the baby doll a real shower?

And the list goes on...

Yasmine Baasiri

Homeroom Teacher-Nursery D



رحلة الى عالم الروضة الأولى...

كم استمتعنا بالأسبوع اللبناني الذي أمضيناه معاً في المدرسة وتخلّته نشاطات عديدة وممتعة. فقد زارنا أصدقائنا من مدرسة البشارة الأثريّة وكسبنا حيث شاهدنا معاً رقصاً الدبكة اللبنانية التي قدّمها لنا معلّمو القسم الثانوي، ومن ثمّ حدثونا عن تاريخ هذه الرقصة والزّي التقليدي الذي كانوا يرتدونه. أما في اللعب، فكانت بانتظارنا مائدة شهية مليئة بأطباق الأطعمة اللبنانية ومنها التبولة، ورق العنب، الكبة المقلية والمعجنات... ماما، هلا حضرت لنا الكبة للغداء لأنّ الطعام اللبناني هو حقاً لذيذ وصحّي؟

وتبعاً للمحور المخصّص لأصدقائنا الحيوانات، فقد خرجنا في رحلة إلى حديقة الحيوانات حيث شاهدنا الأليفة منها كالسحفاة وتعرّفنا إلى أخرى مفترسة كالحيّة والثعلب.

كما قمنا بنشاطات عدّة تدخل في إطار محور "حوك الطاولة"، منها كيفية تحضير سلطة الفاكهة. وقد تعلّمنا مبادئ مهية علينا أن نتبعها خلال تناولنا الطعام كالوضعية المناسبة للجلوس، وكيفية وضع الأطباق، والطريقة الصحيحة للاستعمال السوكة والسكين. كما تعرّفنا على ما يجب علينا تحاشيه على المائدة كعدم التكلّم وإغلاق الفم خلال المضغ! وقد طبّقنا كلّ ما تعلّمناه عندما قدّموا لنا حلوى لذيذة تناولناها معاً كعائلة واحدة.

علينا أن نسرّع الآن لنعلّق معاً زينة شجرة الميلاد...!!!

إيمان الفتى

مدرسة اللغة العربيّة- الروضة الأولى

A World of Sharing

Our awareness program primarily aims at educating our learners and helping them value themselves as well as the world around them. Following are some of the activities they had within this program.

In the first theme, "I am special", learners were introduced to the concept of self identity. They drew their portrait, printed their thumbs and wrote their names. They were very excited during these activities and proud of the results.

With respect to the second theme, learners watched a video about "Lebanon". It was followed by a discussion during which they were able to identify some places that they were familiar with especially the various regions of Lebanon where they came from. As a conclusion, learners were



aware that "no matter where we come from, we are all friends and we should all respect each other".

We will always keep you updated with our learners' news and their accomplishments at their second home!

Nada Kreitem

Homeroom Teacher- KG2D

As world wide communication has opened the doors to easier contact between various countries, intercultural communication skills have become a must. Accordingly, we always urge our learners to prepare cultural events about Lebanon as well as other countries, and to participate in others which we prepare for them. The first term witnessed a series of these events. The Cultural Program for the Secondary learners lies at the heart of these activities. Grade 11 Humanities organized an "African Day" for their teachers and schoolmates. The famous French pianist Elizabeth Sombart played magical pieces for our Intermediate learners. As for Grade 3 learners, they attended the "Lire en Francais et en Musique" exhibition at BIEL. Following are excerpts from the cultural events' articles besides some photos.

Does It Leave Any Imprint?

Considering our academic responsibilities, the Cultural Program can sometimes be a burden! Moreover, when panic, delay, and confusion are combined with oral presentation phobia, some hearts will approach a systole. On the other hand, many simple yet still amazing minds take advantage of the dim ambiance to rest from long nights of no sleep, work, or simply watching TV.

Does the Cultural Program leave any imprint? This would then be the question to ask yourself especially if you are the type of people who regularly self-evaluate. To find an imprint, you have to look for one, and generally, when you look for imprints you find many and you end up leaving even more. But how would you recognize the right imprint? What does it look like anyway?

Compared to previous results, you realize you should not look for a shallow mark; you should rather scratch the soil of the heart to see little grains, as little as mustard grains. Their presence indicates that one day a huge mustard tree will grow and cover many with its shade.

So does it leave any imprint? Look inside your heart and you will find out.

Elie Daoun
Cultural Program Coordinator



لقاء سوبار مع التعلّمين

« ... خلال حلقتي متاليتين أطلت على خشبة مسرح مدرسة البشارة الأرثوذكسية عازفة البيانو العالمية اليزابيث سوبار لتلقي متعلّمي صفرت السابع، والثامن، والتاسع من المدارس الأرثوذكسية السقيفة، في حوار موسيقي، إرشادي، كللته بعزف أكتسى بوشاع من الجمال والراقي حتى أبحرنا معها في فضاء الأنغام، مطهرين نفوسنا وعقولنا من تشارف نيكاد أن يصبح خبزنا اليومي... من باغ الك موزار فيستوفون وشوبرت، كانت لنا محطات عبر تاريخ الإبداع. فقبل كل معزوفة، كانت اليزابيث سوبار تلقي الضوء على حياة المؤلفين الموسيقيين وعلى الظروف التي أمطت بهم خلال كتابة أعمالهم الموسيقية... في الختام، كانت للحوار المباشر مع التعلّمين حيز مهم، حيث أجابت السيدة سوبار على كل الأسئلة المطروحة...»

غبريال عبد النور
منسّق مادة الموسيقى

Le Salon du livre... destination des EB3

"Jeudi 17 novembre, les apprenants de la classe EB3 ont eu l'occasion de faire connaissance avec l'auteur de la série "Sésame" Mr. Francis Imbs, au Salon "Lire en Français et en Musique" organisé comme chaque année au Biel. M. Imbs leur a parlé un peu des livres qu'ils utilisent cette année puis leur a raconté une histoire en les faisant participer activement. Tout le monde avait des questions à poser et des éclaircissements à demander. C'était une bonne expérience d'avoir communiqué avec l'auteur de leur livre.

Ensuite, les apprenants disposaient d'un peu de temps pour faire un tour à l'exposition des livres...".

Lina Issa
Enseignante de Français EB3-EB4





Visiting Physically Impaired Children

On Tuesday November 29th, we visited a private school for deaf and blind children. We introduced ourselves to them and they also told us their names. The children were of different ages and they take various classes in school just like we do. For example, in one of the classes, learners were taking a lesson about equal groups in math.

We figured out how smart those learners are! The blind learners read through the Braille system and write using a Braille writer or a type writer. They provided us with handouts which clearly illustrated the Braille letters in English and Arabic as well as the Braille numbers. They guided us into writing our own names in Braille. The deaf children taught us some sign language gestures and also gave us a handout illustrating daily expressions in sign language.

After visiting their classes, we shared a very tasty snack of juice and muffins together. We had brought these snacks with us especially for them. Then, we went to the playground and played various games. Some of us sat and chatted with the learners. When the recess ended, we had the chance to see how talented those learners are. They make very artistic objects and crafts. Some of them were making beautiful straw chairs. Others are excellent musicians! The school band played three amazing songs for us before it was time for us to go back to school! It was a very nice experience from which we learned that physically impaired children are normal just like us. We should support, respect, and help them because they have great capabilities. We really thank our school for taking us to visit them. We would like to visit them more often and become their friends!

Nathalie Abdel Baki – G4C

Rida Farhat – G4C

Sharing Is the Key

Every year, our school reserves one day for social activities where each class in our Secondary Divisions (SMOC and BAC) visits a social institution. This year, Wednesday, December 21st will be the big day, and our target population is people with physical and mental impairments. Our friends in G10 will be visiting the Classes Orange institution. We, G11 Scientific sections will visit " مؤسّسة الأمل " and " مؤسّسة أنت أنهي " and G11 H will be awaiting the visit of the learners in " مؤسّسة التنمية الفكرية ". As for our G12 schoolmates, they will visit "Sesobel" institution.

In preparation for this social day, we planned activities to share with the learners in these institutions and we always find that they had prepared a program for us as well. Moreover, we have spent the past few weeks preparing and participating in various fund-raising events so that to be able to help them as much as possible. These events include fund-raising sports games, many food sales, and civil days. As for the sports games, they were loaded with fun. We had the chance to participate in a basketball and a football tournament and played a football game against our teachers. We had the chance to beat them! The food sales were a success! Everyone wanted to try our tasty sandwiches, salads, cakes, cookies and juice! The hotdogs sandwiches and mini pizzas were the most requested items. Finally, the civil days gave us the chance to take a short vacation from our uniforms!

To wrap it all up, these fundraising activities gave us the chance to have fun while directing all our efforts towards the wellbeing of others. These social activities are very fulfilling as they give us the chance to see how we can make others happy by simple means.

Arek Dakessian

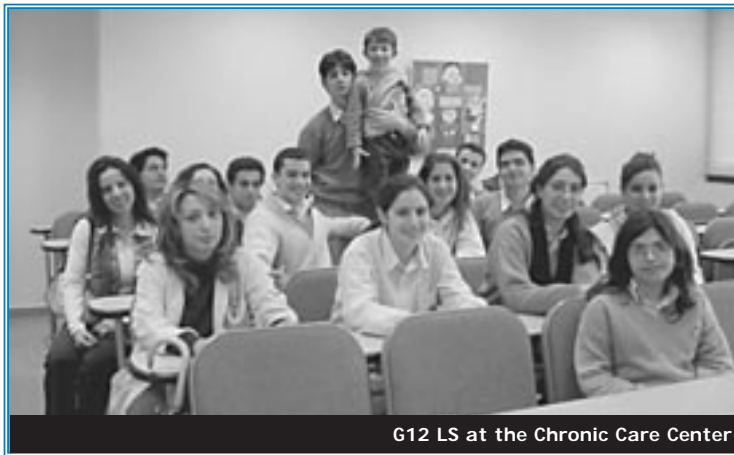
G11 SA



Throughout the academic year, the school organizes two types of outings for the learners: educational outings which go hand-in-hand with the curriculum, and amusement outings where the learners enjoy a fun-and-play day outside school. Educational outings aim at providing the learners with hands-on experience relevant to what they are studying in class. So far, Grade 12 LS learners visited the Chronic Care Center further to their biology lesson about Karyotyping and genetic impairments. Grade 11 learners visited the international companies Siemens, 7UP and Nestle as examples of their lessons in geography and economics. Moreover, Grade 10 learners went to the airport to have a closer look at the observatory, their subject under discussion in their geography class. As for Grade 7 learners, they visited the Water Station to observe the water purification process they were studying about in their chemistry and physics classes. The Lower Elementary Division had its share as Grade 1 learners visited a pet clinic within their Science and English programs.

On the other hand, fun outings aim at giving learners the chance to relax from everyday pressure and focus on their motor as well as cognitive skills. Elementary learners had the chance to go to Putt-Putt, Yuppie Park. Upper Elementary, Intermediate and Secondary learners visited Sun City Resort or Mount Smash.

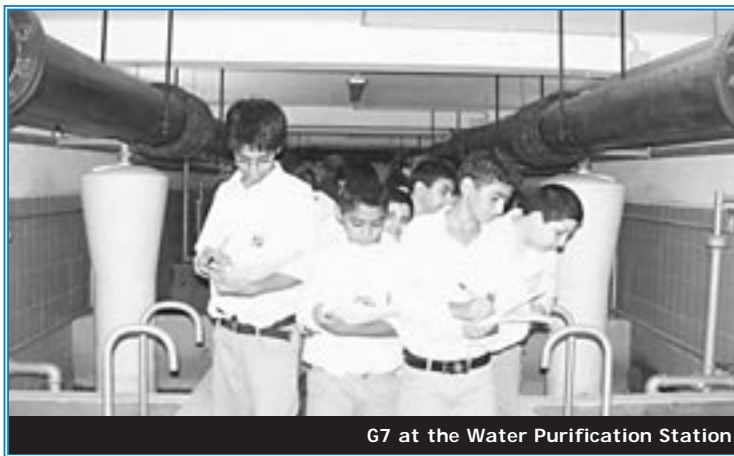
We could tell that they had a lot of fun from the wide smiles on their faces on their way back to school. Following are some snapshots.



G12 LS at the Chronic Care Center



G11 at the 7UP company



G7 at the Water Purification Station



G12 at Mount Smash



UE learners at Sun city



LE learners at Yuppie Park

invisible Hands

They are everywhere, in our houses, on the streets, at the workplace, at our school, in the charity houses...everywhere. We can sense them on our blank papers, while working on the internet, through our high quality leather jacket, or even in our toothpaste. They are the millions of perfectionists. They are the innovative hands, the brilliant minds, the sleepless eyes, the busy fingers, the restless bodies...

Do we ever read all the names when a movie ends? Do we ever listen to the truth beyond the words? Rarely do we ever stop and consider those masters of productivity and invention. Will we ever be able to survive if they were literally "Invisible"?!

Dima Rashid G12LS

Behind the " Mimeography" Door

We invade the school playground several times during the day: recesses, sports and activity hours, on our way in and out of school...We can't but notice the white door next to the staircase we use to get to our classrooms:

"Mimeography". As we always wondered about what lies behind it, we took



the initiative to explore this on our own by interviewing Mr. Makram Abdul Nour, who gave us precious information. Mr. Abdul Nour has been a full-timer in SMOG for thirteen years. He spends his 7:30-to-5 schedule doing various tasks. He is responsible for all the photocopies and handouts that circulate around school as well as the documentation of the foreign workers in school. He clarifies that his work cannot be perfected had he not been working cooperatively as part of a group. The team spirit exhibited in the department always encourages all the members to enjoy their work and try their best. Mr. Abdul Nour was more known to the school community when he was a teacher. Now that his relationship with learners is indirect, only few of them know him in person. "I think that our personality determines whether we are to be visible or invisible to others." Mr. Makram adds that work is not really about whether a person is known to others or not; it is rather about being effective and beneficial to them.

Mr. Abdul Nour says that each person he got to know inside and outside the school has left a precious imprint in his life. He wishes to leave a positive trace in the lives of those around him.

Mr. Abdul Nour concluded the interview by giving some precious pieces of advice to learners in general and to the graduating class in particular: "Try to make a positive

Follow the Aroma

Ever wondered who's behind the tasty sandwiches learners eat at the Four Sister Schools, the Preschoolers' breakfast, the Daycare hot meals? Well, to find out the answer, all you have to do is to follow the magical aroma! When we did, we suddenly found ourselves being drawn to the school kitchen occupying the ground floor of the Preschool building.



Believe it or not, the Chef, Mr. Youssef Nakhoul, opens the school and starts working at 4:00 a.m.!! He leaves school at 3:00 p.m. Joe and Olga are also members of his team without whom, in his opinion, work cannot be done! "Our work is a huge responsibility. Yet we are not pressured by it because we love it!" he says. Mr. Nakhoul says that though not all the school community knows him in person, he is visible to them through his work.

When asked about people who influenced him in his life, he mentioned a school teacher who always told him to keep aspiring to a successful future rather than to submit to challenges. This is why he always keeps on moving forward. Mr. Nakhoul encourages all the learners to do something they like doing so that to be able to work from the bottom of their hearts! He believes that the new generation has a better chance than his "the whole world is before you, so keep going!" he concludes.

Nadia Moati (G12 GS) and Lama Fadda (G12 HP)

change in the world by holding on to what is good and leaving out everything that is bad and harmful."

We finally figured out what was behind that door: very hard-working people who have secretly accompanied us throughout our school experience!

Nadia Moati (G12 GS) and Carole Mehio (G12 SE)



Mustafa Chaaban G12 GS

Behind the Scenes: The Production Saga

Is it really "What you see is what you get" when it comes to the motion pictures we watch on television and in movie theaters? There is in fact a large group of individuals involved in these productions whose roles cannot be overlooked.

The process starts with the script writers whose text is adopted and turned into a movie. From this point on, producers take over. They team up with directors in order to find the film crew including the actors and actresses. The most important individuals at this stage are the directors: the film director, the director of photography and the art director. Those have to work in harmony because their tasks are highly interdependent. We should also give credit to the sound director and operator who also share in finding appropriate sound effects and songs that go along with the different scenes and the editors who work hard to secure that the scenes start and end at the assigned time and according to the story board.

Moreover, we have to reflect on the great artists who are behind the beauty of the actresses and actors when we see them on screen. Here, we observe the genius of make up artists, hair dressers, outfit designers and fashion specialists who secure that every star looks his/ her best. Thus, we learn to scratch the surface to see what lies beneath, to look into things rather than to look at them. We should look into what is behind the face on the inside rather than how it looks like on the outside.

Lama Fadda G12 HP



Without any reflections;
I notice that
I'm INVISIBLE!
my body is
but a cloud
of tears waiting to
disperse...

Dimitri Sayegh
G12 SE

"People are like the moon, they only show one of their sides"- Vernon Howard

The Titanic drowned because it hit an iceberg 90% of which was invisible.

We get to see an unmentionable part of our planet, not knowing much about what lies beneath the surface.

We have to be aware of all that is around us whether visible or not. The invisible complements the visible to form life: an invisible concept that comes into life through us.

Nadine Tayyur
G12 HP

No one is invisible and everyone has his own color in life's spectrum.

Rana Abi Abdallah
G12 SE

Being Invisible...Isn't a bad idea

Being Invisible...Is a wish I desire sometimes

Being Invisible...Is an act that would help me adapt

Adapt in Awkward moments

Adapt in Painful events

Adapt in Difficult periods

So being Invisible...Isn't a bad thought

Ziad Rawas
G12 HP

سَخَّرُوا أَعْيُنَكُمْ لِتَسْمَعُوا بِضَمَائِرِكُمْ

يعرف الناس التلوث السمعي بطرق مختلفة، منها ما يقتصر على الأصوات المدوية في طرقات المدن الكبرى المزدحمة والعامل والمصانع المنتشرة فيها. بيد أنه نمّة أصوات أخرى كثيرة يعتبرها البعض تلوثاً سمعياً لأنها لا تتخطى الأذنان لتصل إلى القلب. فماذا عن عويل الأم التلكى التي فقدت للتو ابنها الذي لم يمض شهر على تخرجه من الجامعة إثر غارة جوية في طريقه إلى المنزل بعد أول يوم عمل؟ وماذا عن بكاء الزوجة التلكوبة، تبعت عن جثة زوجها تحت أنقاض مجمع تجاري لتبني له قبراً يخلد ذكره في حياة طفله ابن الثلاثة أشهر؟ وماذا عن بكاء الطفل الرضيع الذي يرى أمه أمامه ملطخة بدمائها تبخل عليه بجرعة حليب من صدرها النازف؟ وماذا عن شقيق أب يلتقط أنفاسه الأخيرة متحيراً من سيمعمل جثة ابنه ليلسّمها إلى الله؟ وماذا عن ذوي المدافع والرصاص والإنفجارات المتعاقبة كتعاقب الليل والنهار؟ وماذا عن صوت الحجارة ترتطم أرضاً كالصاعقة بعد أن فتكت بأحدهم؟

لقد سَخَّرْتُمْ أَعْيُنَكُمْ لما يكفي من زمان، وسمعت أذانكم ما يكفي من كلام. أهدات كرههنا أصبحنا نعتريها جزواً لا يتجزأ من حياتنا اليومية، نخالها مشاهد من أفلام رعب نُنقل إلينا مجاناً عبر محطات التلفاز. أهدات نتعاشى رؤيتها قدر المستطاع، مقنعين أنفسنا مراراً وتكراراً بأنها واهية غير حقيقية. فهل يُعقل أن تصمت الكلمة في عقولنا وقلوبنا إثر صمتها على ألسنتنا؟ وهل من الصعب الاعتماد على منجرة وأبجدية من ثمانية وعشرين حرفاً للإبصار كلمتنا إلى المجتمع الدولي؟ إن أصوات البؤس والأسى هي الأصوات الحقيقية التي يجب أن تقض مضاجعنا لتوقظ ضمائرنا التلكى، وصوت صمتنا لهو التلوث السمعي بعد ذاته.

نيفين قنار- الصفح الثاني عشر (علوم الحياة)