

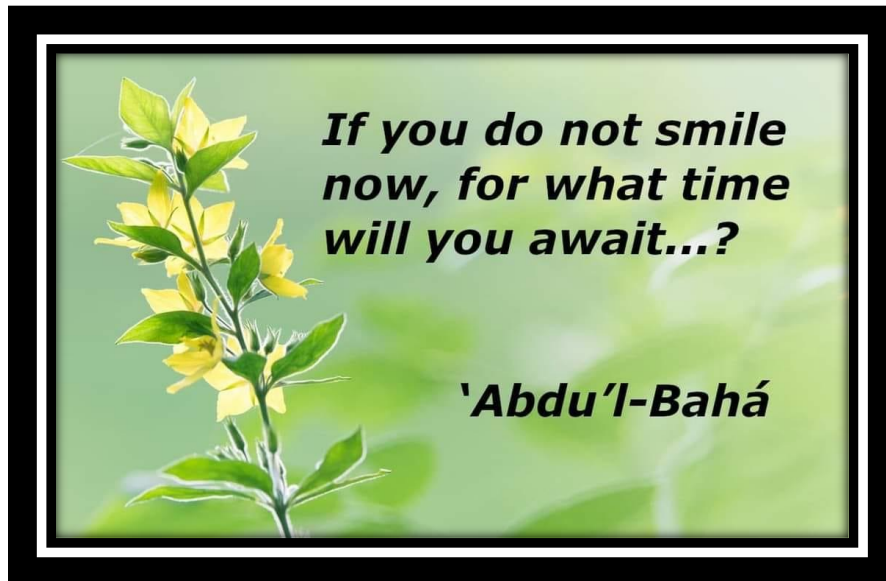


Port Alberni Nuggets

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Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

Approval Seeking

Evidently some of the Americans were bothered that the Persians for their normal clothing and requested that they change into attire to suit the circumstances of the time and place. 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded by asking them 'What harm is there in it? I do not care much about what is unimportant and what is not harmful to the cause. They are trifles.'

-Earl Redman, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Their Midst, p. 53

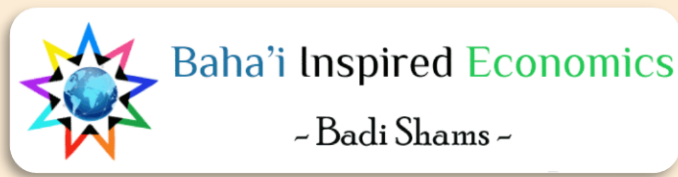
News and Events:

News from our twin community of Jaipur, India

The Baha'i Cemetery was cleaned up, and some trees were planted. All activities are going according to the plans.



News from the Baha'i Inspire Economics website:



From the last Baha'i feast, our website had 307 visitors from 47 countries.

Bahá'í World News Service

A seamless experience: Charting the future of the educational journey in Zambia



LUSAKA, Zambia — This past month, the Bahá'ís of Zambia have been occupied with a pivotal question: How can the range of Bahá'í educational initiatives in that country offer a seamless, coherent experience from early childhood into adulthood?

Bahá'í institutions and Bahá'í-inspired organizations in Zambia gathered recently for five days in Lusaka to take an expansive view of the various educational undertakings in that country which have been unfolding over several decades.

Musonda Kapusa-Linsel, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa, describes the significance of the gathering, saying: “This seminar allowed agencies involved in promoting spiritual and material education in Zambia to come together for the first time and gain a deeper appreciation for the full spectrum of initiatives in the country, exploring possibilities for much closer collaboration in their efforts.”

Mrs. Kapusa-Linsel explains that the dynamic discussions opened thrilling new vistas and have enabled participants to see their endeavors as contributing to a single goal—to awaken the energies latent in the human soul and channel them toward the betterment of their neighborhoods, villages, and ultimately their society.

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An educational system in a state of constant refinement

Hamed Javaheri, another Counsellor from Zambia, explains that in order to chart a path for the future, participants agreed that it was important to articulate a shared understanding of the journey of the burgeoning educational system thus far.

To do this, participants looked at experiences with educational efforts for spiritual and moral empowerment, academic education, and educational initiatives related to social and economic development. A document prepared by the Bahá’í National Spiritual Assembly of Zambia provided an opportunity for attendees to see all these endeavors in one light, capturing insights and experiences from the past twenty years of effort. What quickly became apparent was that what has emerged is an educational system in a state of constant refinement.

The story begins in 1983 when a training institute concerned with moral education was first established.

“With a focus on building capacity for service to society, this early institute provided the foundations for community-building endeavors as well as all subsequent educational initiatives,” says Mr. Javaheri.

He describes how this institute, which has since been decentralized into four institutes serving the many regions of Zambia, brought together people of all ages in small groups to explore Bahá’í principles—such as the oneness of humanity, the equality of women and men, the importance of a life of service to society, and consultation—and to gain practical experience in applying these principles to neighborhood and village life.

As participation in the moral empowerment programs of the training institutes grew over the years, so did the desire and capacity of people to offer more complex service to their communities. This rising capacity, explains Mr. Javaheri, paved the path for exploring additional educational imperatives, namely those concerned with academic education, as well as initiatives related to social and economic development.

Many educational initiatives, one overarching goal

The discussions in Lusaka enabled attendees to see that although there are many Bahá’í educational initiatives in Zambia, they all share an overarching goal. Mohamed Abdou-Salami of the Inshindo

Foundation, a Bahá'í-inspired organization, states: "The operating principle of all these initiatives is faith in a population's ability to be the protagonist of its own material, spiritual, and intellectual advancement, not just recipients or mere participants."

Attendees of the gathering saw how the moral empowerment programs of the training institute recognize and help to cultivate a desire for knowledge, education, and service.

The skills and abilities gained through the training institute have also enhanced the experience of young people who have participated in another educational initiative: Bahá'í-inspired primary and secondary schools established by people who have been trained by the Inshindo Foundation. These community schools nurture a thirst for academic excellence in students and orient them toward service to their fellow citizens. Since the mid-2000s, a network of 63 schools has emerged in that country, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas, where educational opportunities for young people have historically been limited.

Mr. Javaheri notes that these community schools are typically formed in places with capacity to sustain large numbers of Bahá'í community-building activities. Such communities enable schools to be established on firm foundations, with support from parents, trained teachers, and Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assemblies, in collaboration with community leaders, and in some cases with government agencies and civil society organizations.

Another academic initiative is the Banani International School. Established in 1992, it offers quality secondary education to Zambian girls focused on moral and intellectual excellence. The school is learning to combine an international curriculum with a character development programme that draws on Bahá'í educational materials.

As youth enter their secondary studies and develop a heightened awareness of social issues, they are introduced to the Preparation for Social Action (PSA) program, which is implemented by the Inshindo Foundation.

Mr. Abdou-Salami explains that PSA raises capacity in young people to apply knowledge drawn from both science and religion for the development of their communities in areas including education, agriculture and sustainable food production, health, and the environment.

"Participants of the PSA program come to see the development of their community as something they can shoulder. They are not waiting around for help from people outside. They identify needs and they take action to address those needs," he says.

He adds that participants learn to initiate agricultural projects, establish preschools, design environmental health campaigns and activities, and start small businesses.

As these young people approach tertiary education, some require additional academic assistance to excel in their university studies. The newly established Lomthunzi Foundation seeks to address this need through a tutorial program that provides students with complementary classes in science, mathematics, and English.

Chungu Kapusa, of Lomthunzi, says: "The Lomthunzi Foundation also provides students with career advice, accompanies them through vocational training schools, colleges, and universities, and assists students with pursuing professions that allow them to give back to their community."

Upon entering tertiary education, the youth who have gone through these educational initiatives experience an ever-deepening desire to understand social reality in light of Bahá'í principles. It is then that the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity offers undergraduate seminars, which acquaint university students with a Bahá'í perspective on issues relevant to social progress. Among the aims of these seminars is to assist participants to see their university education as integral to their efforts to contribute to the transformation of society.

Advances in culture

Among the insights gained at the national gathering in Lusaka was the early signs of the impact of the Bahá'í educational initiatives on the culture of some rural areas, particularly in places where social or cultural barriers may be impeding the educational experience of youth.

Clyv Lengwe, of the community schools program, says: “As parents and the wider community interact with the different educational programs of the Bahá'ís of Zambia, their understanding of the importance of both intellectual and spiritual education grows.”

Pauline Kaumba, a regional coordinator of the training institute in the North-Western Province, elaborates: “In some villages, girls lack support in their education and feel pressure from traditional customs about early marriage.

“But as these girls participate in the educational programs of the Bahá'í community and undertake social action, their parents and families see something different; their mindset about early marriage shifts.

Ms. Kaumba adds: “These young women continue their education and come to see themselves as agents of change, as people who can really contribute to the development of their village.”

Living a coherent life

Ms. Kapusa, of the Lomthunzi Foundation, explains that all these interlocking educational imperatives—developing spiritual and moral capabilities, promoting academic excellence, and raising capacity for social action—are enabling young people to channel their creative and intellectual abilities to enrich the social, economic, and spiritual life of their society.

She says: “These young people are learning about living a coherent life—that studying while serving their fellow citizens is possible. Upon completing their tertiary education, they come back to contribute to the development of their communities through their profession.”

Extending the conversation to the grassroots

Mrs. Kapusa-Linsel explains that the national discussion in Lusaka was the first of many that will now continue at the local level, particularly in neighborhoods and villages.

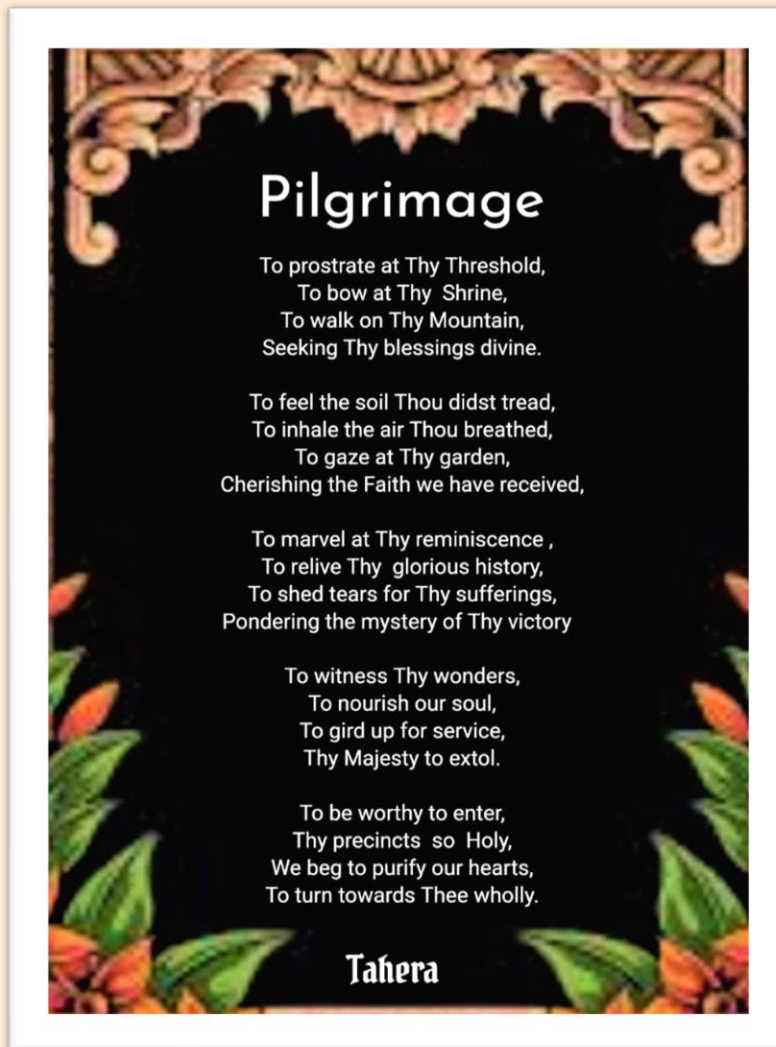
Those discussions, the first of which has already taken place in the village of Katuyola in the North-Western Province, will bring together entire families, teachers, traditional leaders, and other social actors to explore how they can strengthen the foundations of existing initiatives, addressing the intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspirations of their communities from primary through to tertiary education.

Sharing:

Lesley's sharing:

Sometimes it takes a while to properly realize what a change in your life will mean and to consider the dear friends you will leave behind. Yesterday I moved some of my furniture and it hit me. I'm sad to be leaving my home community of 22 years. I will miss everyone- all the prayerful moments, all the discussions related to service in our precious Faith, all our moments of laughter and genuine joy in being together. Thank you to each one of you for your endless encouragement and confidence in me, for the multiple times we worked together to resolve a difficult issue, each depending upon His direction and guidance, and, above all, the deep friendships we forged. It is a bittersweet time for me, to move on to something new, to the unknown. I hope there will be opportunities for our paths to cross and I always wish you the best in everything you do in life and, of course you are in my prayers.

Poem of the month



News and Nuggets from our First Nations and other communities



SERVING THE ONE IN ALL
SIKH DHARMA
INTERNATIONAL

The Story of the Creation of the Adi Granth Sikh History



This Story was Originally Published in the Book “Sikh Spiritual Practice” by Siri Kirpal Kaur Khalsa

The Shabad Guru rang so clearly in Arjan’s words that Guru Ram Das ordained him as his successor, Guru Arjan Dev. Well over 2000 Shabads from Guru Arjan Dev’s pen have come down to us.

Word came to Guru Arjan Dev that his older brother, Prithi Chand, was writing poems and signing them with the name of Nanak, the signature of Guru Nanak and all his successors—a signature Prithi Chand had no right to use. These poems did not have the uplifting impact of the Shabads of the True Guru.

Realizing the harm these spurious Shabads could do, Guru Arjan Dev decided to create a definitive canon of Shabads.

The most complete collection of Shabads composed by the first three human Gurus was in the hands of Mohan, the eldest son of Guru Amar Das. So Guru Arjan Dev dispatched his secretary, Bhai Gurdaas, to request this collection from Mohan. Bhai Gurdaas returned unsuccessful. Baba Buddha, a respected and elderly Sikh who had been one of Guru Nanak’s followers and who had already installed four of Guru Nanak’s successors (he would later install one more), then offered to go. He returned unsuccessful as well.

So Guru Arjan Dev himself went from Amritsar to Goindwal to entreat Mohan to part with his collection. No one at Mohan’s house answered his call. So Guru Arjan Dev began to sing sweetly.

“O Mohan, lofty is your mansion and matchless is your palace.

O Mohan, saints adorn your temple doors.

In your temple, they ever sing the praises of the Infinite and Merciful God.

Where the company of the saints assemble, they meditate on you.

Show compassion and kindness, O Compassionate One, and be merciful to the poor.

Nanak says, I am thirsting for a sight of you, grant it to me, and all happiness will be mine.” [6]

After this verse, Mohan opened the door. After two more verses in a similar vein, Mohan handed the collection of Shabads over to Guru Arjan Dev, who then sang one final verse.

“O Mohan, may you be successful with your family.

O Mohan, you have saved your children, friends, brethren and family.

You have saved those, who having beheld you, have dispelled their pride.

Death never approaches those who magnify you.

Endless are Your excellences; they cannot be described, O True Guru and Supreme God.

Says Nanak, You have preserved a prop clinging to which the world shall be saved.” [7]

While this treasure trove of Shabads and his own Shabads formed the nucleus of the collection, Guru Arjan Dev received Shabads and poems from other people as well. He called for Shabads written by Hindu and Muslim/Sufi saints. He called for the exquisite poetry of his secretary Bhai Gurdaas, who declined the honor, but whose Shabads are still sung in Sikh Gurdwaras everywhere.

Guru Arjan Dev did receive Shabads from other contemporary bards. With this wealth of material, he set to work to form his collection. He didn't accept everything he received for this collection. He rejected anything that was too emotional or egotistical, anything that was idolatrous, anything that denigrated women, anything that promoted isolation from humanity as the path of salvation, anything that upheld the caste system or other forms of discrimination, and anything that wasn't in Naad.

Naad, which literally means sound current or inner sound, is the key to the value of the Shabad Guru. Shabads are designed to be sung and recited out loud. When Shabads are in Naad, the act of singing or reciting them types a code on the upper palate of the mouth that triggers the experience of God consciousness in the singer/reciter. Absolutely everything Guru Arjan Dev allowed into his magnum opus, which was to be called the Adi Granth, has this quality.

Adi Granth literally means “Primal Knot”—that which ties a knot between the disciple and the Divine. Chanting those words, singing those words, raises the singer's consciousness to the level of the saints who originally wrote or sang the words.

To emphasize the need to sing and recite the Shabads, Guru Arjan Dev arranged the Adi Granth as a songbook. The Shabads do not appear in alphabetical order. They do not appear in chronological order. They are not organized by subject. The way Guru Arjan Dev placed them is according to the Raag, or melodic mode, they were originally written in.

Within each Raag, Shabads are grouped by author and by length. Those few Shabads not originally written in any Raag appear in the Adi Granth and its successor, the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, either before or after the ones that are in Raag.

For approximately three years, Guru Arjan Dev selected the Shabads and dictated them to his secretary Bhai Gurdaas. They completed this labor of love on August 15, 1604. It took another 15 days to create an index and have the Adi Granth bound.

The Adi Granth was installed in Amritsar (which means Nectar Tank) at the Hari Mander Sahib (literally “Great Temple of God”—now known to us as the Golden Temple) in a gala ceremony on August 30, 1604.

Baba Buddha, the elderly Sikh who in childhood had followed Guru Nanak, carried the Adi Granth on his head. Guru Arjan Dev walked behind carrying a chauri sahib, or fly whisk, so indicating that he was the Adi Granth’s servant.

Accompanying them were many, many Sikhs singing kirtan (Shabads set to music and sung). Baba Buddha reverently placed the Adi Granth on a decorated throne inside the Hari Mander Sahib—which is situated in the middle of the pool of water that gives Amritsar its name. He then opened the Adi Granth at random and took the first Hukam—literally “command,” a reading for Sikhs to ponder and follow.

It began like this:

God has come to complete the tasks of His Saints.

God has come to do their work.

In this beautiful land, in the beautiful pool, is contained the nectar water.

Filled with this nectar water, tasks are completed and all desires are fulfilled.

Cheers of victory resound around the world, and all sorrows are ended. [8]

Guru Arjan Dev had appointed Baba Buddha to be the first Granthi, or caretaker of the Granth. So, when the ceremony ended, Baba Buddha asked Guru Arjan Dev where he should put the Adi Granth. Guru Arjan Dev told him to place it on his (Guru Arjan Dev’s) bed. Thereafter, Guru Arjan Dev slept on the floor.

From the editor’s desk:

Ego or Insistent-self: How to live with it

No matter how we succeed in the realms of spirituality, materially, in science, arts, sports, intellectually or success in any field, there is always a great danger of being destroyed by our greatest enemy within us. Our ego and better put an insistent and never resting self who can make a lifetime of achievements to disappear in an instant. It can manifest its self in the form of a gesture, a look, a word or an action, but the end result is the same. Its dominance on our behavior can be interpreted as a victory for the negativity and a defeat for the forces of passivity or evil winning over goodness. It is always with us and is like a volcano ready to erupt which has to be constantly under the supervision by the higher nature. Baha’i Faith has numerous Writings to prepare us to face this test and handling it. Our Writings differentiate between our two selves: our animal, material or lower nature and our spiritual, divine or higher nature.

“In man there are two natures; his spiritual or higher nature and his material or lower nature. In one he approaches God, in the other he lives for the world alone. Signs of both these natures are to be

found in man. In his material aspects he expresses untruth, cruelty and injustice; all these are the outcomes of his lower nature. The attributes of his divine nature are shown forth in love, mercy, kindness, truth and justice, one and all being expressions of his higher nature. Every good habit, every noble quality belongs to man's spiritual nature, whereas all his imperfections and sinful actions are born of his material nature. -‘Abdu’l-Bahá

We can find in the history of our Faith and the history of different religions many of examples of how even good-hearted and spiritual men and women were the victims and this hidden enemy which is ready to destroy in an instant the great achievements earned in a lifetime.

Not many are aware of this lurking hunter and are ill prepared for its assaults. It has been the cause of the downfall of a great many leaders and learners of man in all walks life, of art and of sciences, of spirituality and morality. They could not see it coming or recognized its imminent danger until it was too late. Being aware of it and recognizing its signs are one way of dealing with it and finding ways combat it or to keep it under control is essential for those who want to progress in life both materially and spiritually. It is a lifelong conversation that we have to have with ourselves.

“A man may converse with the ego within saying “May I do this? Would it be advisable for me to do this work?” Such as this is conversation with the high self.” -‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Great men of religions, philosophers, poets, and men of vision have recognized it and warned us to be aware of this invisible and elusive enemy.

“Your worst enemy is hiding within yourself, and that enemy is your “nafs” (self) or false ego.” -Rumi

“Though one should conquer a 1000 times a 1000 men in battle, he who conquers his own self is the greatest of all conquerors.” -Buddha

“The lowliest and most abject of all things holdeth sway over thee, and that is none other than self and passion, which have ever been reprehensible.” – Bahá’u’lláh

Though very difficult but there are ways that insistent self can be contained and subordinated with the help of old age methods used by different spiritual disciplines. Here are two of them to start with.

Self-knowledge

It is like taking an inventory of you with honesty and intention of discovering more about oneself to discover what abilities one has to face it and also finding the areas where one will be tested, where there could be a possibility of failure. This process of self-examination needs the courage to face ourselves as who we are and not what we wish to be. We cannot fool ourselves because the consequence of that would be catastrophic.

An added benefit of self-knowledge is the spiritual growth and depth of knowledge that comes with this process.

“O, My servants! Could ye apprehend with what wonders of My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would, of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would gain a true knowledge of your own selves — a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being.” – Bahá’u’lláh

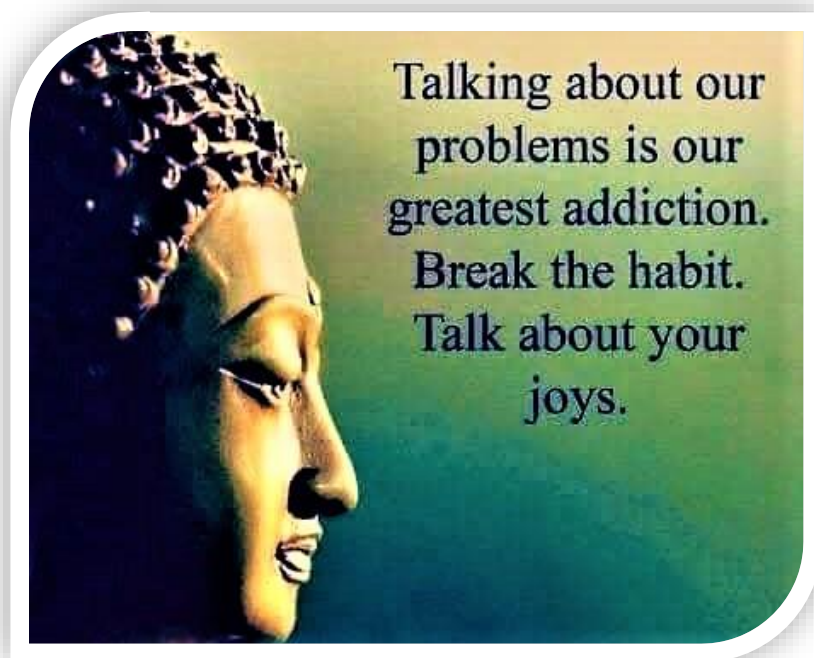
Meditation and prayers

It is well understood that meditation can strengthen your powers the higher nature to deal with the challenges of life, and no challenge is bigger than the insistent-self residing within.

“By obeying the laws of God, seeking to live the life laid down in our teachings, and prayer and struggle, we can subdue our egos. We call people “saints” who have achieved the highest degree of mastery over their ego.” -Shoghi Effendi

We have to deal with our insistent self or ego; otherwise, it can undo any success or progress. It is to be recognized as a serious threat to our good efforts. As a human being our life in this world and our progress in the next world depend on the decisions we make. Some say we make our own heaven and hell here on earth as a result of the choices we make. It is sad if we do not make the right decision and give our higher nature the upper hand. Because we are surrounded by materialism and consumerism so nurturing our higher nature is very difficult, and that is why we need to tune ourselves spiritually to make the right choice so that we get the rewards and benefits of those choices. When we read the spiritual writings and meditate our souls are uplifted, and that affects our decision making. Our souls are tuned by reading the writings and bringing ourselves to account each day. It is like a spiritual balance sheet so that we can perceive the good and the bad in our ways. This is such an important matter with great concrescences in our lives, and we need to take the opportunity to fully deal with it so that our lifelong achievements are not left at the hand of our ego.

Famous quotes:



Upcoming Events:

Next feast, IIm/Knowledge, October 16, 2022

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