

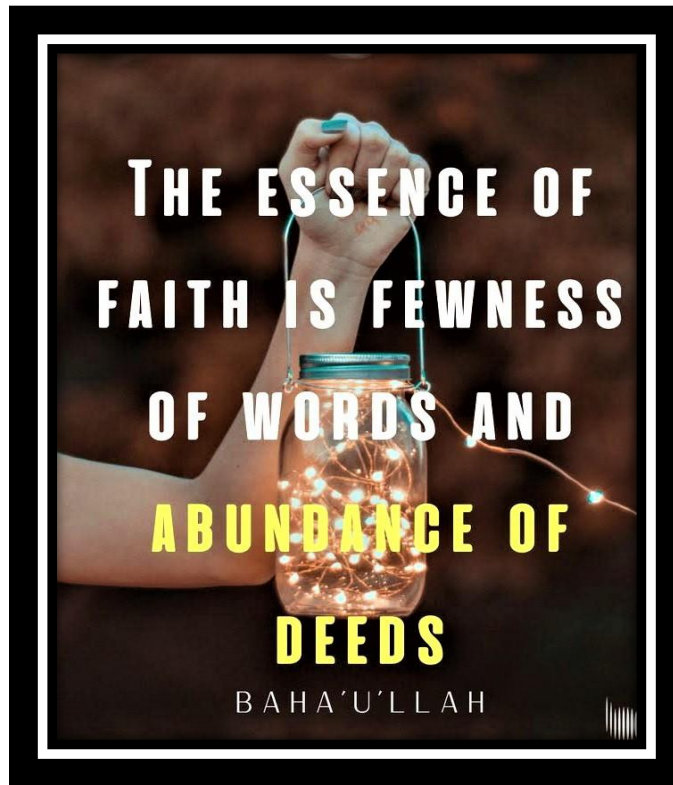


Port Alberni Nuggets

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Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

Abdu'l-Bahá - and children

On 5 May, 'Abdu'l-Bahá met with a group of 35 children in the hotel salon. After listening to them sing the song "Softly, His Voice Is Calling Now", the Master called each child to him individually. Some He took on His lap, others He kissed or stroked their hair: . . . All with such infinite love and tenderness shining in His eyes and thrilling in the tones of His voice, that when He whispered in English in their ears to tell him their names, they answered joyfully and freely as they would to a beloved father . . . The children's joy in His own happiness seemed to culminate as one dear little tot ran to Him and fairly

threw herself into His arms. Afterwards, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave each child an envelope full of rose petals, then invited them all to Lincoln Park, across the road from the hotel for a photograph.

-Earl Redman, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Their Midst, p. 117

News and Events:

News from our twin community of Jaipur, India

It was a busier time in Jaipur. Added to the regular core activities, they celebrated the birth of the Bab and Baha'u'llah, were published in the newspapers, and had visitors from Canada, a new declaration, and many more activities. Here are some of them in pictures.



Bahá'í World News Service

Kazakhstan: Social progress depends on commitment to spiritual principles



ASTANA, Kazakhstan — Religious leaders from around the world, including Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, gathered recently at the 7th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana, Kazakhstan, to examine the role of religion in contributing to social progress in a post-pandemic world.

Lyazzat Yangaliyeva, member of the country’s Bahá’í Office of External Affairs and one of the representatives of the Bahá’í community at the Congress, says that the forum—held triennially—provides an important opportunity for religious communities to foster greater understanding and cooperation.

“The role of religion is to establish peace,” she says. “Yet, long-standing prejudices, stereotypes that excuse violence against segments of society, and harmful traditions that have been handed down from one generation to another continue to divide people throughout the world.”

Ms. Yangaliyeva explains that despite these challenges there are also clear signs that religion can play a constructive role in creating bonds of trust and cooperation, pointing to the pandemic and recent environmental crises where faith communities have overcome their differences in responding to disasters.

In his remarks at a plenary session of the Congress, Bahá’í International Community Secretary-General, David Rutstein, echoed these sentiments, stating that trustworthiness find its “highest expression in service to others and to the community as a whole.”

In describing trustworthy leaders, he stated: “They welcome collective decision making and collective action and are motivated by a commitment to justice and the well-being of all of humanity.”

Dr. Rutstein added that social progress depends on a shared vision of the future founded on spiritual principles.

“We must champion the abolition of all forms of prejudice and exclusivity while celebrating the diversity of the human race. We must passionately uphold in our words and our actions the equality of men and women. We must unequivocally advocate for the harmony of science and religion.”

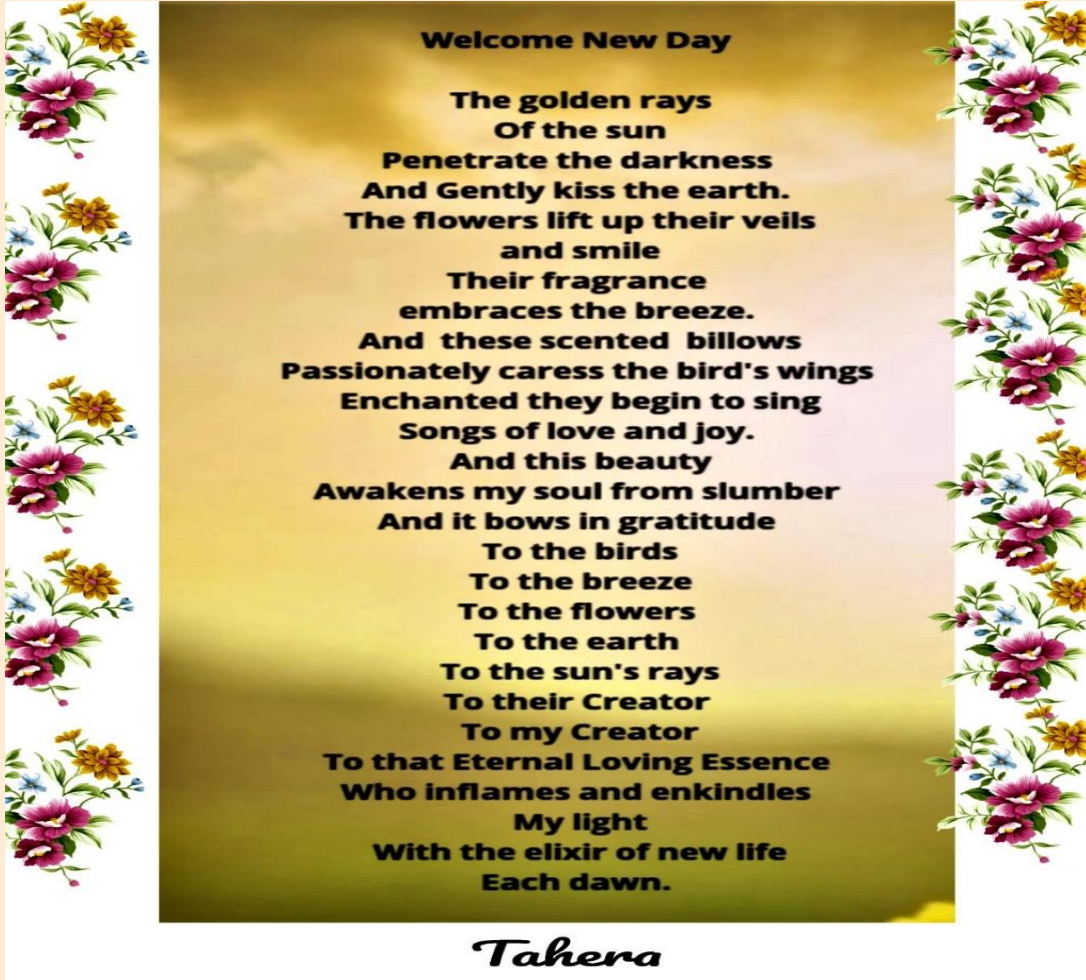
Quoting from Bahá’u’lláh’s writings, Dr. Rutstein continued: “The statement that ‘all people are created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization’ implies that everyone has the responsibility to contribute to the peace, prosperity, and unity of the entire human family.”

Reflecting on the forum, Ms. Yangaliyeva says that the spirit of collaboration among religious leaders in Kazakhstan has only increased since the event.

She states: “This was clearly felt at the gathering convened by the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the Bahá’í National Office in Astana shortly after the conclusion of the Congress, where representatives from diverse faith communities harmoniously consulted together about the future of that forum.”

The Congress, organized by the government of Kazakhstan and hosted by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, was attended this year by more than 100 delegations from over 50 countries, representing a diverse range of religions and nationalities.

Poem of the month



From the pages of history

BAHA'U'LLAH'S TRIBUTE TO THE BAB AND HIS CHIEF DISCIPLES

EXTRACTS FROM THE KITAB-IQAN

"Though young and tender of age, and though the Cause He revealed was contrary to the desire of all the peoples of the earth, both high and low, rich and poor, exalted and abased, king and subject, yet He arose and steadfastly proclaimed it. All have known and heard this. He feared no one; He was reckless of consequences. Could such a thing be made manifest except through the power of a Divine Revelation, and the potency of God's invincible Will? By the righteousness of God! Were anyone to entertain so great a Revelation in his heart, the thought of such a declaration would alone confound him! Were the hearts of all men to be crowded into his heart, he would still hesitate to venture upon so awful an enterprise. He could achieve it only by the permission of God, only if the channel of his heart were to be linked with the Source of Divine grace, and his soul be assured of the unfailing sustenance of the Almighty. To what, We wonder, do they ascribe so great a daring? Do they accuse Him of madness as they accused the Prophets of old? Or do they maintain that His motive was none other than leadership and the acquisition of earthly riches?"

"Gracious God! In His Book, which He hath entitled `Qayyumu'l-Asma'`--the first, the greatest, and mightiest of all books--He prophesied His own martyrdom. In it is this passage: `O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed myself wholly for Thee; I have accepted curses for Thy sake; and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love. Sufficient Witness unto me is God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days!"

"...Could the Revealer of such utterance be regarded as walking in any other way than the way of God, and as having yearned for aught else except His good pleasure? In this very verse there lieth concealed a breath of detachment for which, if it were breathed upon the world, all beings would renounce their life, and sacrifice their soul.

"...And now consider how this Sadrih of the Ridvan of God hath, in the prime of youth, risen to proclaim the Cause of God. Behold, what steadfastness He, the Beauty of God, hath revealed! The whole world rose to hinder Him, yet it utterly failed! The more severe the persecution they inflicted on that Sadrih of Blessedness, the more His fervour increased, and the brighter burned the flame of His love. All this is evident, and none disputeth its truth. Finally, He surrendered His soul, and winged His flight unto the realms above.

News and Nuggets from other communities

Beliefs of Muslims



Islam teaches the importance of both belief and practice; one is insufficient without the other (except for some Sufis). The following six beliefs are those that are commonly held by Muslims, as laid out in the Quran and hadith.

Six Major Beliefs

- **Belief in the Oneness of God:** Muslims believe that God is the creator of all things, and that God is all-powerful and all-knowing. God has no offspring, no race, no gender, no body, and is unaffected by the characteristics of human life.
- **Belief in the Angels of God:** Muslims believe in angels, unseen beings who worship God and carry out God's orders throughout the universe. The angel Gabriel brought the divine revelation to the prophets.
- **Belief in the Books of God:** Muslims believe that God revealed holy books or scriptures to a number of God's messengers. These include the Quran (given to Muhammad), the Torah (given

to Moses), the Gospel (given to Jesus), the Psalms (given to David), and the Scrolls (given to Abraham). Muslims believe that these earlier scriptures in their original form were divinely revealed, but that only the Quran remains as it was first revealed to the prophet Muhammad.

- **Belief in the Prophets or Messengers of God:** Muslims believe that God's guidance has been revealed to humankind through specially appointed messengers, or prophets, throughout history, beginning with the first man, Adam, who is considered the first prophet. Twenty-five of these prophets are mentioned by name in the Quran, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Muslims believe that Muhammad is the last in this line of prophets, sent for all humankind with the message of Islam.
- **Belief in the Day of Judgment:** Muslims believe that on the Day of Judgment, humans will be judged for their actions in this life; those who followed God's guidance will be rewarded with paradise; those who rejected God's guidance will be punished with hell.
- **Belief in the Divine Decree:** This article of faith addresses the question of God's will. It can be expressed as the belief that everything is governed by divine decree, namely that whatever happens in one's life is preordained, and that believers should respond to the good or bad that befalls them with thankfulness or patience. This concept does not negate the concept of "free will;" since humans do not have prior knowledge of God's decree, they do have freedom of choice.

Major Practices/Duties of Muslims

Muslims are asked to put their beliefs into practice by performing certain acts of worship. As in all faiths, since adherence to religious obligations and practices is a matter of individual choice, some people are very strict in performing these duties, while others are not.

The five pillars or acts of worship in Islam

- **The Declaration of Faith (shahada):** The first act of worship is the declaration that "There is no deity except God and Muhammad is the messenger of God." Muslims repeat this statement many times a day during their prayers. If someone wants to become a Muslim, he or she makes this profession of faith as an entry into Islam.
- **Prayer (salat):** Islam prescribes a brief prayer or ritual worship five times a day: at dawn, noon, late afternoon, sunset and night. Muslims perform ablution before prayer -- a brief prescribed washing of the hands, mouth, nose, face, arms and feet. One may pray alone or in a group in any clean location, including a mosque. The Friday noon prayer is special to Muslims and is done in a mosque if possible. Muslims face in the direction of Mecca when they pray.
- **Charity (zakat):** Muslims are required to give to the poor and needy. Islam prescribes an obligatory charity, known as zakat, based on two and a half percent of one's income and wealth. In addition to this prescribed charity, Muslims are encouraged to give as much as they can in voluntary charity throughout the year.
- **Fasting (sawm):** Muslims are required to fast from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar calendar. People gather in the evenings for a festive

breaking of the fast. When fasting, Muslims refrain from food, liquid, and sexual activity. During Ramadan, Muslims are also supposed to abstain from negative behaviors such as lying, gossip, petty arguments, and negative thoughts or behaviors, including getting angry. Muslims are required to start fasting when they reach puberty, although some younger children may also fast. People who are sick, traveling, menstruating, and pregnant or nursing may break their fast, but may make up the days later in the year. The elderly and people with disabilities are excused from fasting.

- ***Pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj):*** Every Muslim is required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, located in Saudi Arabia, once in their lifetime if financially and physically able. Mecca is home to the first house of worship of God, the Kaaba, said to have been built by the prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael. Muslims all over the world face towards the Kaaba when they pray. All outward symbols of rank and wealth are erased during the pilgrimage, as Muslim from every part of the globe come together for the purpose of worshipping God. Muslims who complete the pilgrimage are referred to as "Hajji" and greeted with great celebration and respect in their communities when they return.

From the editor's desk:

Trauma: How Can We Heal Our Wounded Souls?

You've likely heard of PTSD – post-traumatic stress disorder – but have you heard yet about PCSD? That acronym stands for post-Covid stress disorder, a newly-emerging effect of the pandemic.

Increasingly, mental health professionals recognize that the global Covid-19 pandemic has wounded the entire world's emotions. Our souls suffer from that trauma. That seems logical since millions have died from the disease, and billions are at risk, causing severe stress, anxiety, depression, and fear.

Do you feel it? Most people do, and it has led to a wider recognition of the role trauma plays in our lives.

Many societies around the world have begun to recognize the impact of mental trauma, no matter the cause. Athletes who have recently withdrawn from the Olympics and other events emphasize the importance of their emotional health and well-being by highlighting the stress they feel. This is a healthy sign – their withdrawal from these events sends a signal that emotional health is more important than fame, medals, and trophies and gives more people permission to recognize their own trauma.

Some religions claim that psychological injury or illness can only be addressed and treated by spiritual teachings, and even discourage or prohibit their followers from seeking medical or psychological advice – but the Baha'i principles encourage everyone to obtain and follow guidance from competent medical and psychiatric professionals. In accordance with the core Baha'i teaching of the agreement of science and religion, Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'u'llah's son and successor, wrote that everyone should "maintain [his or her] health by consulting with a highly-skilled physician."

According to the explicit decree of Bahá'u'lláh one must not turn aside from the advice of a competent doctor. It is imperative to consult one even if the patient himself be a well-known and eminent physician. In short, the point is that you should maintain your health by consulting a highly-skilled physician.

Medical science has made tremendous achievements in curing our physical diseases, but sadly we have little advanced understanding of the causes of mental and emotional ills. However, with greater knowledge of the brain's functioning in the future, we will hopefully have a better chance of receiving the correct remedies for the myriad of mental illnesses and traumas people experience.

Humanity has long dealt with emotional issues at every level in every profession, but the general advice so far has been to "toughen up." That approach, which means failing to recognize and then forcibly moving on through the pain and stress, simply doesn't work. Of course, to achieve a goal in life, one must expend effort, go through some difficulties and stress, and make sacrifices. The question is, to what extent do the limits of emotional endurance have to be pushed to achieve those goals?

We have made heroes of people who ignored extreme stresses and pains to achieve their goals, but few cared enough to find out later about the emotional and psychological cost of that course of action. What price did those people pay with their bodies and their emotional health?

Medicating Emotional Problems

One of the few currently-available alternatives to just ignoring the inner pain of trauma – psychoactive medications – have helped many. So far, in our fairly limited knowledge of how to treat psychological and emotional trauma, the remedies have generally involved pills of different varieties for every disorder. In many instances, individuals consult professionals who prescribe medications along with their counselling sessions. Some of these medications work well, but others have significant side effects and may ultimately create more problems than they solve.

During my own work in the public school system, it surprised me that many of the students who could not cope with the system were given medicine to calm them down. Sadly, many of them behaved like zombies after taking those medications, which left them without sufficient energy or drive to accomplish anything.

The reality: emotional health is very complicated. Many experts are looking for solutions, but we have not yet progressed to the point that we know how to determine the root cause of emotional issues, so, in the meantime, we resort to medicines that may be band-aid solutions. Thankfully there is increased awareness in this field, and more books have been written, and more support groups are created every day. There have been significant improvements in finding new ways of talking about and tackling these issues.

Based on this [Baha'i quotation](#), though, some people may be better served by treating them spiritually rather than medically:

Illnesses which occur by reason of physical causes should be treated by doctors with medical remedies; those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus an illness caused by affliction, fear, nervous impressions, will be healed more effectively by spiritual rather than by physical treatment.

So far Western medicine has mostly avoided treating these kinds of afflictions with anything but medication. However, we need to further explore the spiritual methods and solutions for these problems, like counseling, consultation, and other kinds of more spiritually-based therapies. If we do not approach these challenges with the right tools, the present solutions may end up as good attempts but failures nevertheless.

There is no doubt that medical sciences have made significant progress, and the result is the increase in the life span and eradication of many diseases that in the past would lead to death or a life of great pain.

There are now so many ways to make every part of the body function better and correct difficulties, and, in some cases, even replace afflicted body parts.

But it is time to face trauma and the emotional issues it produces with a new and different approach – to acknowledge that the root cause of many of these issues are spiritual, and then introduce spiritual methods to permanently deal with them. For example – we now have countless proven and effective methods of relaxation and meditation in every corner of the world based on some ancient philosophies, traditions and religions. New techniques are also being invented every day. Thanks to social media, they are easily accessible in the comforts of our homes.

In many Indigenous cultures, this sort of spiritual healing is an accepted part of any treatment plan for trauma. In Navajo culture, for example, a spiritual healing ceremony called a sing? is often held for returning war veterans, to heal their spirits from what they encountered in combat.

Prayers are essential for any healing. The Baha'i teachings offer many different prayers for physical and psychological healing. This one, from Baha'u'llah, comes from a tablet he wrote to a physician:

Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Sometimes, it helps to trust our faith in a higher power, do the best we can, and detach ourselves from the outcomes. This process can create a higher level of contentment essential to appreciating our blessings of the things that we have, rather than the things that we do not have and desire.

Physical and emotional illnesses require great efforts to overcome, and having patience is a great asset to face these challenges. Improvements in health or life take time, and patience helps us survive the difficulties one day at a time.

Most emotional problems can be remedied temporarily with the help of medicine, but the question remains whether they sufficiently address the origin or the causes of these issues. The future direction of solutions to mental and emotional challenges is essential for humanity's happiness, well-being, and progress. We have to widen our horizons in search of the most effective answers, and that search deserves wholehearted and earnest striving on everyone's part.

Famous quotes:

" If you feel pain, you're alive. If you feel other people's pain, you're a human being "

-Leo Tolstoy

Upcoming Events:

Next feast, Qawl/Speech, November 22, 2022

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