



Port Alberni Nuggets

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Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

Trust in God

One day a woman came to 'Abdu'l-Bahá with her sorrows. As she told her story, 'Abdu'l-Bahá tried to calm her and said, "Don't be sad now, don't be sad." The Woman said, "My brother has been in prison for three years. He should not have been imprisoned because it was not his fault. He was weak and followed others. He will be in prison for four more years. My mother and father are full of sorrow all the time. My brother in law used to take care of us, but he has just died." The Master could see the whole human story. Here was a family which was experiencing every form of misery-they were poor, they were weak, they were sad, disgraced, and without any hope whatsoever. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "You must trust in God." "But," the woman cried, "the more I trust, the worse things become!" "You have never trusted," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá. "But my mother is reading the Bible all of the time," she said. "She does not deserve that God should leave her so helpless! I read the Bible myself; I say the 91st Psalm and the 23rd Psalm every night before I go to bed. I pray too." 'Abdu'l-Bahá looked at her lovingly and said, "To pray is not to read the Bible. To pray is to trust in God and accept His Will. You must be patient and accept the Will of God, then things will change for you. Put your family in God's hands. Trust in God and love His Will. Strong ships are not conquered by the sea; they ride the waves! Now be a strong ship, not a battered one." -Gloria Faizi, Stories About 'Abdu'l-Baha

News and Events:

News from our twin community of Jaipur, India

Besides the usual activities such as J. Y. groups, children's classes, prayer meetings and devotionals, there were Baha'i weddings and new declarations.



Bahá'í World News Service

Emergency desk created to coordinate relief efforts



ISTANBUL, Türkiye — From the early moments of the devastating earthquakes that shook Türkiye and nearby countries, Bahá'í institutions at the regional and national level in Türkiye have been in close contact with local communities in affected areas to assess people's safety and to coordinate their contribution to ongoing relief efforts.

At the heart of these efforts is an emergency desk that was established by the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly of Türkiye within hours of the first quake. The desk was soon in contact with local Bahá'í institutions in Iskenderun and a few other localities in the Hatay province to consult about strategies for a response to the needs of their fellow compatriots.

Informal networks that had formed among participants and facilitators of Bahá'í community-building activities over the years, as well as with Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assemblies, have enabled the emergency desk to reliably and swiftly gather and relay critical information across several localities, especially in rural areas.

The desk has reported that the Bahá'ís of Adana, Iskenderun, and Serinyol have opened their local Bahá'í centers to serve as hubs for officials, first responders, and volunteers as they plan and carry out recovery efforts. These centers have also provided shelter for people who have been displaced.

Meanwhile, the desk has been able to connect communities with resources beyond their immediate reach. In one village, where the lack of electricity made cooking and livestock care extremely difficult, the desk sourced and delivery a generator from a nearby location. In response to similar needs in several other places, the desk is now working to acquire more generators.

The National Spiritual Assembly has noted that even as the toll of the devastation in affected regions of the country is becoming clear, the emergency desk is receiving inspiring reports.

One of these reports describes a person who, even after losing his home, was determined to collect water and food from a nearby town to distribute to his neighbors. While on his way, he received the difficult news of the loss of a family member. Amid this difficulty he persevered, an act which proved to be essential since there was otherwise no food or water available in the locality on that day.

The emergency desk has observed how an orientation toward service and the bonds of friendship that are fostered through Bahá'í community-building efforts have been key factors in responding to the crisis. "People engaged in these activities are feeling a heightened sense of oneness and are motivated to assist anyone in need, seeing neighbors and strangers alike as part of their own family," says a member of the desk. "For example, many have opened their homes to people in need of a temporary residence."

In addition to the efforts of its emergency desk, the National Spiritual Assembly has been conveying words of encouragement since the first day the quakes struck. In one of its letters, the Assembly states: "At this moment of crisis let us all make a devoted and sacrificial effort in every circumstance and under all conditions to serve the needs of our fellow citizens. ...Give hope to all and heal their wounds with love."

Poem of the month

Fasting

A soul drinks the sweet nectar of love,
A soul relishes the bread from above,
The body is fasting....

A soul is detached and flying high,
A soul is soaring in the sky,
The body is fasting.....

A soul is in prayerful state,
A soul is free from rancour and hate,
The body is fasting.....

A soul is full of joy and delight,
A soul is full of radiant light,
The body is fasting....

A soul turns to His Beloved to beg and say,
Never let me go astray,
The body is fasting....

As our body fasts,
But our soul feasts,
Let's walk on His path,
With firm and staunch feet.

Let's share with each one everyday,
Words that guide and show us the way,
So that all may enter His loving fold,
And with radiant hearts His Glory behold.

Tahera (27 February 2021)

From the pages of history

Mulla Husayn's meeting with Mulla Muhammad-i-Nuri, and his message to Baha'u'llah

"As I approached the house of Baha'u'llah, I recognised His brother Mirza Musa, who was standing at the gate, and to whom I communicated the object of my visit. He went into the house and soon reappeared bearing a message of welcome. I was ushered into His presence, and presented the scroll to Mirza Musa, who laid it before Baha'u'llah. He bade us both be seated. Unfolding the scroll, He glanced at its contents and began to read aloud to us certain of its passages. I sat enraptured as I listened to the sound of His voice and the sweetness of its melody. He had read a page of the scroll when, turning to His brother, He said: "Musa, what have you to say? Verily I say, whoso believes in the Qur'an and recognises its Divine origin, and yet hesitates, though it be for a moment, to admit that these soul-stirring words are endowed with the same regenerating power, has most assuredly erred in his judgment and has strayed far from the path of justice." He spoke no more. Dismissing me from His presence, He charged me to take to Mulla Husayn, as a gift from Him, a loaf of Russian sugar and a package of tea, and to convey to him the expression of His appreciation and love.

"I arose and, filled with joy, hastened back to Mulla Husayn, and delivered to him the gift and message of Baha'u'llah. With what joy and exultation he received them from me! Words fail me to describe the

intensity of his emotion. He started to his feet, received with bowed head the gift from my hand, and fervently kissed it. He then took me in his arms, kissed my eyes, and said: "My dearly beloved friend! I pray that even as you have rejoiced my heart, God may grant you eternal felicity and fill your heart with imperishable gladness." I was amazed at the behaviour of Mulla Husayn. What could be, I thought to myself, the nature of the bond that unites these two souls? What could have kindled so fervid a fellowship in their hearts? Why should Mulla Husayn, in whose sight the pomp and circumstance of royalty were the merest trifle, have evinced such gladness at the sight of so inconsiderable a gift from the hands of Baha'u'llah? I was puzzled by this thought and could not unravel its mystery. -THE DAWN-BREAKERS & NABIL'S NARRATIVE

Sharing

Doug Wilson (Metchosin) sharing:

<p>Developing Community</p> <p>In particular, we urge your reflection on what is needed to strengthen a culture of home visits where meaningful conversations unfold, ties of spiritual kinship are forged, a sense of community strengthened, faith is deepened and plans are made.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">6 February Message Canadian National Assembly</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Isolation</p> <p>What will it take to overcome the pull of the habits of isolation, developed out of necessity but for the most part no longer required? What elements of current culture — habits of thought and behaviour — may be obstacles to overcome? What elements are strengths to draw on and learn from?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">6 February Message Canadian National Assembly</p> 
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News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities

About Buddha



In Introduction to Buddhism, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso explains:

In general, 'Buddha' means 'Awakened One', someone who has awakened from the sleep of ignorance and sees things as they really are. A Buddha is a person who is completely free from all faults and mental obstructions. There are many people who have become Buddhas in the past, and many people will become Buddhas in the future.

Qualities

There is nothing that Buddha does not know. Because he has awakened from the sleep of ignorance and has removed all obstructions from his mind, he knows everything of the past, present, and future, directly and simultaneously.

Moreover, Buddha has great compassion which is completely impartial, embracing all living beings without discrimination. He benefits all living beings without exception by emanating various forms throughout the universe, and by bestowing his blessings on their minds. Through receiving Buddha's blessings, all beings, even the lowliest animals, sometimes develop peaceful and virtuous states of mind.

Eventually, through meeting an emanation of Buddha in the form of a Spiritual Guide, everyone will have the opportunity to enter the path to liberation and enlightenment. As the great Indian Buddhist scholar Nagarjuna said, there is no one who has not received help from Buddha.

It is impossible to describe all the good qualities of a Buddha. A Buddha's compassion, wisdom, and power are completely beyond conception. With nothing left to obscure his mind, he sees all phenomena throughout the universe as clearly as he sees a jewel held in the palm of his hand.

Through the force of his or her compassion, a Buddha spontaneously does whatever is appropriate to benefit others. He has no need to think about what is the best way to help living beings – he naturally and effortlessly acts in the most beneficial way. Just as the sun does not need to motivate itself to radiate light and heat but does so simply because light and heat are its very nature, so a Buddha does not need to motivate himself to benefit others but does so simply because being beneficial is his very nature.

Like the reflections of the moon that effortlessly appear in any body of still water, a Buddha's emanations spontaneously appear wherever living beings' minds are capable of perceiving them. Buddhas can emanate in any form whatsoever to help living beings.

Sometimes they manifest as Buddhists and sometimes as non-Buddhists. They can manifest as women or men, monarchs or tramps, law-abiding citizens or criminals. They can even manifest as animals, as wind or rain, or as mountains or islands. Unless we are a Buddha ourselves we cannot possibly say who or what is an emanation of a Buddha.

Of all the ways in which a Buddha helps living beings, the supreme way is by emanation as a Spiritual Guide. Through his or her teachings and immaculate example, an authentic Spiritual Guide leads his or her disciples along the spiritual path to liberation and enlightenment.

From the editor's desk:

Fasting a Time of Spiritual House Cleaning

Those who know me are aware of my love for fasting. I have participated in the Baha'i Fast, 19 days of abstaining from food and drink between sunrise and sunset, every year since the age of 15.

Please don't misunderstand me. Even with all these years of experience, my body has never liked it and has made it clear to me that it does not share my enthusiasm.

Baha'i fasting is both a physical and spiritual exercise, which is why I am so attracted to it.

I love fasting because I know that I unknowingly subject my soul to many impurities during my daily life, and with this awareness, fasting has become my annual "House Cleaning."

In the same way that people clean their houses in the West before Christmas or in Iran before the New Year (Naw-Ruz), I do the cleaning with my soul.

My friends who are from different religions cannot understand why I put myself through this hardship. They think the Fast is not a good idea, but their concern allows me to inform them that fasting has been a part of most religions. When food is always available in modern life, people have forgotten about fasting to the extent that now they find it strange. However, history gives us evidence of the existence of fasting in most cultures and religions.

Fasting has been part of coming-of-age preparations for adulthood. Boys from native cultures in North America would fast in the wilderness, seeking a vision of a guardian spirit. Hindus have some form of fasting, which is an avoidance of a particular food. Generally, the ladies fast for the sake of their husbands. The Sadhus of India and Sufis fast and meditate for enlightenment. Modern Jews fast for 24 hours as a penance.

Fasting is also very much part of the life of priests — holy men of various societies would fast in preparation for particular rituals. In most mystical and monastic traditions, fasting is practiced as a means of purification. Roman Catholics traditionally abstain from meat on days associated with the passion of Christ. Added to that list are the Manifestations of God, who fasted and meditated to commune with God.

Islam is one religion that strictly tries to observe the law of fasting. In addition to obligatory prayer, fasting is the essential ritual obligation of Muslims; it is one of the five pillars of Islam. Fasting in Islam consists of deliberately abstaining from all food, drink, and sexual relations from the time of the first light before dawn until the last light after sunset. The Qur'an explicitly states that fasting is an obligation and has been central to earlier religions.

It is important to remember that the essence of fasting is the spiritual part of fasting. If depriving oneself of food was a sign of spirituality, then all the food-insecure people in the world would be holy men and saints.

**"For this material fast is an outer token of the spiritual fast; it is a symbol of self-restraint, the withholding of oneself from all appetites of the self, taking on the characteristics of the spirit, being carried away by the breathings of heaven and catching fire from the love of God." —
Abdu'l-Baha**

I believe that all the spiritual laws of God are for the benefit of humanity, and the direct gain is for the individual who obeys them and follows them.

Each year I pretend that I do not know anything about fasting and read the Holy Writings with an eager soul to uncover their mysteries and, combined with meditation, to try to get rid of the filth that has attached itself to my soul. In a way, it is a time of self-examination, and as I get older, I find more benefits in fasting.

Science has now found that intermittent fasting is very beneficial for our bodies. It maintains that by not eating for a length of time, the body gets to direct its energies toward repairs. This does not surprise me at all because I am discovering the wisdom and physical benefits of it. I am waiting for the day when humankind gets the chance to experience the sublime feeling of detachment from the body's need for food and focuses on cleansing the spiritual aspect of their lives so that we can start the process of the unification of humanity.

It may look strange to connect fasting with unity, but if we think deeply, we realize that the lack of a spiritual approach to the issues causes most conflicts and problems. That makes fasting and praying the most effective tools. Souls are linked together with a string of divinity.

I hope this year I can again introduce my mind and soul to fasting and experience a sense of purification by following this instruction for my spiritual betterment.

Famous quotes:



Rumi Hugs

Seven Advices

Beloved Rumi

In generosity and helping others: be like the river.

In compassion and grace: be like the sun.

In concealing others' faults: be like the night.

In anger and fury: be like the dead.

In modesty and humility: be like the soil.

In tolerance: be like the ocean.

Either you appear as you are, or be as you appear.

Upcoming Events:

Fasting, March 2 to March 20

Next feast, Baha/Splendour, March 21

Naw-Ruz, March 21, 2023

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