



Port Alberni Nuggets

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Kalimat/Words, 179, B.E

Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

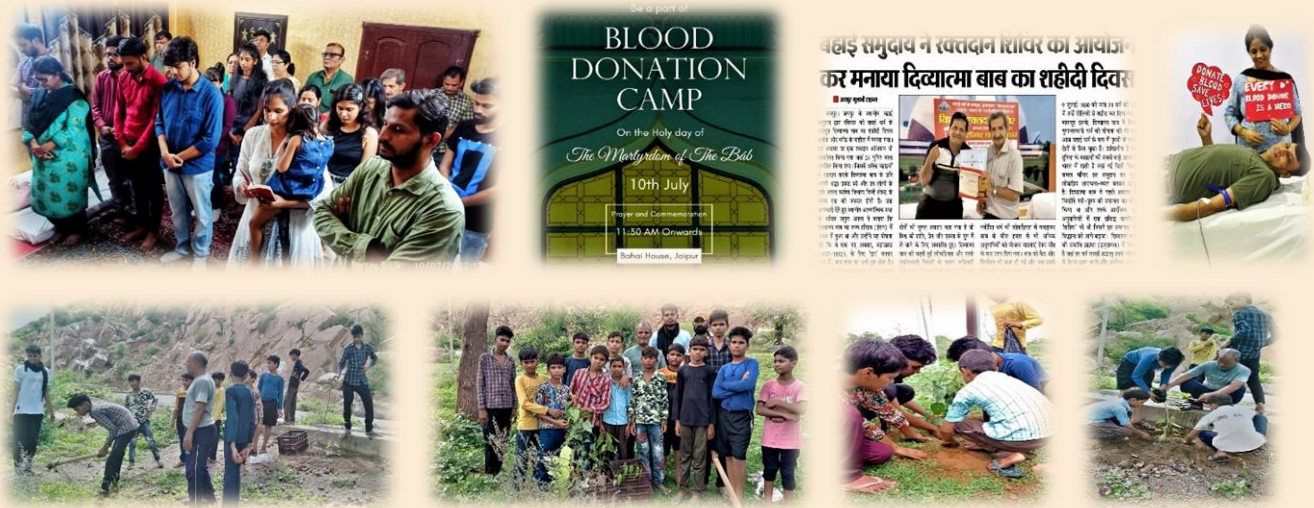
Broken Heart

He had left orders that none were to be turned away, but one who had twice vainly sought his presence, and was, through some oversight, prevented from seeing him, wrote a heartbreaking letter showing that he thought himself rebuffed. It was translated by the Persian interpreter. 'Abdu'l-Bahá at once put on his coat, and, turning towards the door, said, with an expression of unspeakable sadness, "A friend of mine has been martyred, and I am very grieved. I go out alone." and he swept down the steps. One could then see how well the title of "Master" became him. -'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, p. 109

News and Events:

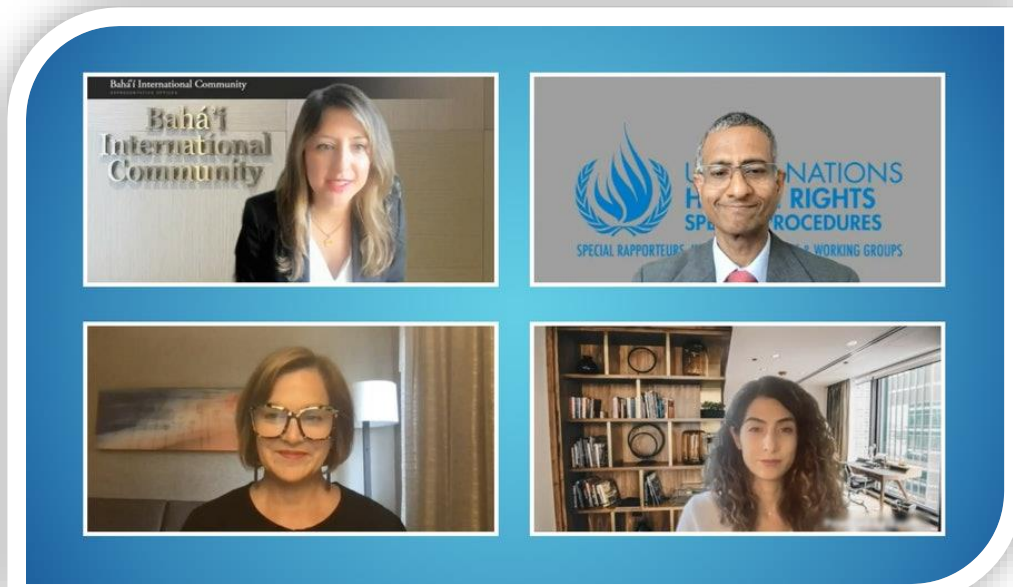
News from our twin community of Jaipur, India

On the occasion of the Martyrdom of the Bab, two campaigns were launched. One was the blood donation clinic at the Baha'i House, which was well advertised on social media. Another was a tree-planting campaign by the youth.



Bahá'í World News Service

Tackling hate speech at nexus of tech, government, and civil society



BIC GENEVA — To address the challenge of increasing hate speech online, there needs to be much closer collaboration between the tech sector, government, and civil society organizations, says the Bahá'í International Community (BIC). This was the theme of a recent panel discussion hosted by the Geneva Office of the BIC as part of the RightsCon summit, an annual international forum on human rights in the digital age.

The BIC forum brought together the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, a trustee on Meta’s Oversight Board, Kristina Arriaga, and a researcher from Human Rights Watch, Tara Sepehri Far, to explore the challenges of tackling online hate speech in the context of the campaign of disinformation against the Bahá’is of Iran.

“Hate speech ultimately creates a culture of hate, where groups are not considered to be full members of society, where social cohesion is eroded, and division is allowed to take root, impacting every aspect of relationships between individuals, communities, and governing institutions,” said Simin Fahandej, a representative of the Geneva Office.

Ms. Arriaga, a member of the Oversight Board for technology company Meta—which operates Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp—explained that while social media is an important instrument for human rights workers, it can also be used to spread hate propaganda, as in the case of the Bahá’is of Iran.

Meta’s response, Ms. Arriaga said, has been to establish an Oversight Board which monitors content and sets policies for how material is moderated. This board has also begun to work with targeted groups and communities so that hate speech can be flagged and monitored.

Despite these efforts, participants noted that content moderation—whether manual or algorithmic—is extremely difficult. “It’s not easy to know where to draw the line on hate speech,” said Ms. Sepehri Far.

She added: “Online platforms need to invest more in resources to understand not only [non-English] language content, but also societal context.”

Ms. Arriaga agreed, saying that “the scale of the problem... makes it a necessity for the human rights community to invest [time] in the tech community to learn how to... work with algorithms and how to inject knowledge of human rights into the tech sector.”

Panelists noted that although hate speech seeks to create division among populations, creating forums such as the one created by the BIC elevate discussions to the level of principle and can lead to stronger collaboration between different sectors to tackle the problems.

Discussions also highlighted the idea that despite the important role that online platforms and media entities must play in addressing hate speech, the problem cannot be addressed solely through technical solutions.

“[There is a] whole range of norms, ways of behaving, means of engaging, and communication, including mutual respect, that creates the kind of environment in which people can thrive,” said Dr. Shaheed.

Ms. Arriaga added: “We can have all the right algorithms, and the right laws... but ultimately, how we end up behaving as human beings has to do with the lived reality of our culture.”

She added: “That’s why what Bahá’is are doing to elevate [conversations] and engage others is so important. Ultimately, what happens online is a reflection of what’s happening in real life. And we can only fix it if we’re... changing our culture.”

Reflecting on the event, Ms. Fahandej states: “The forum represented an important moment in fostering a shared vision among social actors concerned with technology and the betterment of society. The BIC plans on holding future events on this theme in order to further enhance multi-sector relationships.”

Sharing:

Laurand's sharing:

In the Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, we read:

O SON OF MAN!

Sorrow not save that thou art far from Us. Rejoice not save that thou art drawing near and returning unto Us.

What does the word "save" mean for you in these hidden words?

For me, it probably means "other than".

I would like to know what other Nuggets readers think "save" means in these Hidden Words.

Poem of the month

Poem by Tahera:

***O 'Abdu'l-Bahá! O Master!
How I wish to be like Thee!
Shower Thy blessing,
Recreate me.***

***Fill me with joy,
The one that you possessed,
That radiant smile,
Full of hope and zest.***

***Give me Thy kindness,
The love that in your veins flowed,
Thy utter humility,
With servitude you glowed.***

***Bestow Thy strength,
Thy will power strong,
For tests and trials,
How Thy heart would long.***

*Make me like Thee,
May my actions speak,
To teach far and near,
May I always seek.*

News and Nuggets from our First Nations and other Communities



SERVING THE ONE IN ALL
SIKH DHARMA
INTERNATIONAL



The Path of Sikh Dharma

*Sikh simply means “seeker of truth.” Sikh Dharma is a spiritual path for those who are looking to establish an enduring connection to their Divine truth within. Like all spiritual traditions, Sikh Dharma has its lineage and legacy, guidelines and philosophies, its Masters, its saints and **history**. But primarily, Sikh Dharma offers a down-to-earth spiritual path for every-day people. It doesn't matter what your spiritual orientation is. Or what culture or background you belong to. Any person can do these practices to help them experience their own Divinity and Infinity.*

Sikhs strive to train the mind and the senses to recognize the Divine Light within oneself and within all of creation and to be of service to others.

A Sikh lives a normal life. Single or married. With children or without. In work life and in social life, as Sikhs we strive to:

- *Keep connected to the Divine in our heart with every breath*
- *Earn our living honestly and to share what we earn with others*
- *View the interactions of daily life as opportunities to serve*

One God & Universality

sikhphotos.com

When *Guru Nanak* emerged from his 3-day experience of Samadhi (union with the Divine) in the river, his first words were, “there is no Hindu, there is no Muslim”. From that simple statement *Guru Nanak* declared the belief that there is only one God – then it follows that since there can only be one God (Creator of the universe), then people of all faiths actually worship the same embodiment of the Divine.

Guru Nanak extended this doctrine to include the idea that, if all people worship the same God, then all people are equal. Ideally, this also applies to all people, regardless of caste, color, gender, etc.

It flows from this belief that if all people are equal, then all paths to God, all ways of worship are also equal. Sikhs do not believe that their way is the only way and, therefore, Sikhs do not proselytize their ideology or beliefs.

What is Guru?

The Guru is many things and can be experienced in many forms; or even without form. The *Siri Singh Sahib* often translated Guru to mean, that which takes you from the darkness to the light. “Guru” is often thought to refer to a teacher, such as with a teacher of classical Indian music. But even when referring to such a teacher, it is understood that the Guru’s role is to train the student in all facets of being. In the full definition, Guru is an infinite resource of teaching, healing and guidance.

The spiritual path can be difficult to navigate alone. The role of the Guru here is to be the “boat” that crosses the treacherous waters, that connects our limited self to our infinite self; to be the “doorway” that opens our understanding to the expanded vision of the path forward; to be the “beacon of light” leading our ship to safe harbor. By the Grace of the Guru, the door opens – our ears open, we hear the call and we respond to it.

Formless Guru

Often, you may first experience the Guru in the form of sudden or fleeting insight or guidance. This can be categorized as the Nirgun (formless) Guru. Or this can be said to be the “hand of the Guru”. You feel as though there is a divine intervention. It can be as mundane as a revealing comment spoken by another person in a casual conversation that changes your understanding of an important aspect of your life. Or it can be in a sudden change in the direction of events where you are spared some seemingly-unavoidable unpleasant outcome.

Embodied Guru

There is also the Sargun (fully-manifest) Guru where this source of divine connection is continuously present in someone or something. Many people may not recognize, with full understanding, the depth and authenticity of such a Guru. In this form the Guru delivers God’s Truth with clarity and depth, and is the source of continued and inspired regeneration of hope – hope in ourselves and hope in the world. In this form the Guru inspires and guides all to their highest destiny. The relationship between Guru and Chela (student) has been highly developed in India over the last couple of thousand years. To find a Guru in that system there was a lot of importance put on vetting the pedigree of a Guru, to be sure that his Guru, and his Guru’s Guru were of recognized value and importance. There were plenty of opportunities to choose poorly; to unwittingly choose a Guru stuck in their own struggle with materialism, hence limiting the student’s progress to Infinity.

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 are recognizing 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

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 your 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:

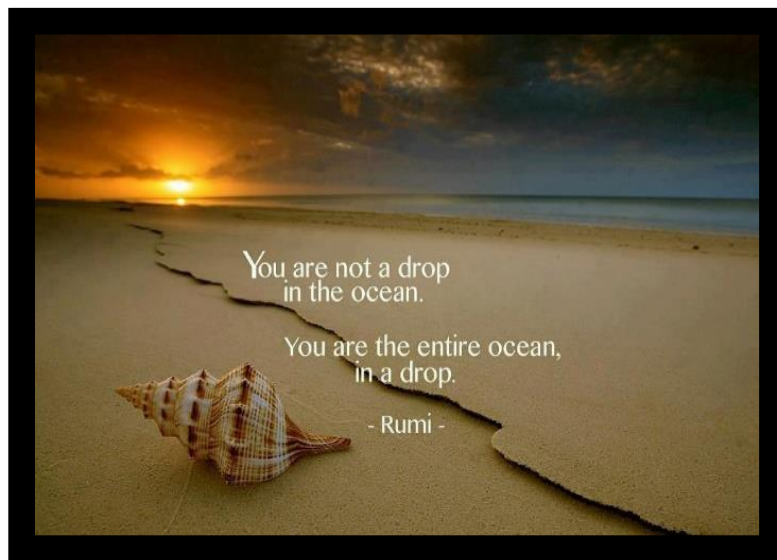
Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

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 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:



Upcoming Events:

Next feast, Kamal/Perfection, August 1, 2022

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