

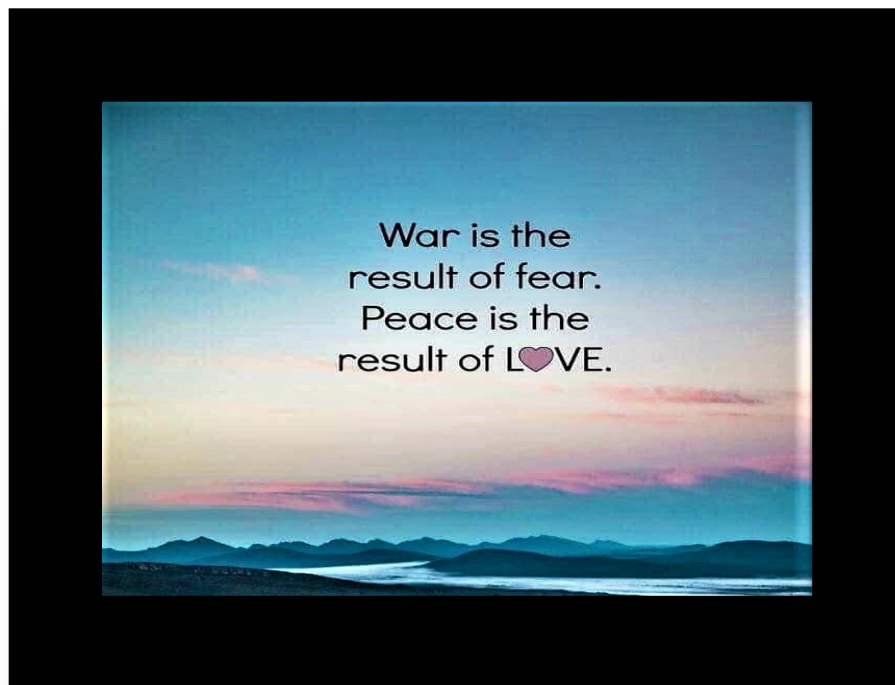


Port Alberni Nuggets

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Asma/Names, 179, B.E

Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

Democracy

*When Shoghi Effendi was beginning to write *The Advent of Divine Justice* he was one day expatiating on this theme and suddenly stated that the United States was the most corrupt country politically in the world. I was simply stupefied by this remark as I had always taken it for granted that it was because of our system of democracy and our political prominence that God had chosen us to build His Administrative Order! I ventured to remonstrate and said surely Persia was more corrupt politically. He said no, America was the most corrupt politically. He must have seen in my face how hard and unbelievable this new idea was for me to accept for he suddenly pointed his finger at me and said: "Swallow it, it is good for you." I swallowed it and kept silent and as he elaborated this theme, and when he wrote his memorable passages on it, and, indeed, in the course of years, I came to see clearly how he*

was enunciating, clarifying from the teachings, great spiritual laws and truths in which lie healing and strength for us if we but grasp them. We derive no advantage, as Bahá'ís, from having the wrong concepts, from colouring the teachings of the Divine Educator with our limited, prejudiced, environment-produced ideas. Nothing is improved or rendered more serviceable by distortion. That is why I think of these great themes, these statements of truth given us by the Guardian, as guiding lines of thought which enable us to see things as they are and obtain a correct understanding of our Faith.
-Rúhíyyih Khánum, The Priceless Pearl, p. 361

News and Events:

News from our twin community of Jaipur, India

Children's classes, junior youth groups, and devotional gatherings are held day and night in the buildings and fields. There was another three plantation project.



Bahá'í World News Service

United Kingdom: How Sensationalist Journalism Obscures View of Reality



What is the role of journalists in promoting understanding and dialogue, especially in a media environment that is often driven by sensationalism?

This was among the questions explored by two experienced journalists in the United Kingdom — a former BBC reporter and a writer for The Guardian newspaper — along with members of the Baha’i Office of Public Affairs of that country in a recent podcast produced by that Office titled In Good Faith: Truth and Standards in Media.

“Writers have to be free from prejudice, fair-minded, and be able to look at issues with a sense of justice,” said Carmel Kalani, of the Office of Public Affairs.

Ms. Kalani drew on an analogy from the Baha’i teachings to describe the power of the media in raising public consciousness, stating: “Newspapers, social media, and other forms of media are like ‘the mirror of the world.’ They are ‘endowed with hearing, sight, and speech.’”

One of the implications of this, she said, is that articles and other forms of expression by journalists have the potential to inspire in all of us a sense of oneness with our fellow human beings.

“When journalists tell a story, they shape the world we live in, they shape what we see as possible,” said Ms. Kalani, explaining that the media can unlock the “immense capability of people to bring about unity and peace.”

Despite this tremendous potential, certain practices place pressure on journalists to produce reports that are sensationalist, such as surprising people in distress for an interview.

“There’s something called the ‘door-knock’ in journalism, whereby you have to go and knock on somebody’s door, who’s in the middle of a story, usually through no fault of their own ... and ask them for a comment on their doorstep,” said John McManus, former BBC reporter and head of communications for the Jesuits in Briton.

“It [is] purely to fill time and a news story,” continued Mr. McManus, as he explained that this approach typically does not yield any new facts. Instead, it caters to the audience’s appetite for the dramatic and can distract attention from the real issues.

Mr. McManus added that many journalists are uncomfortable with practices in their field that lead to sensationalist news coverage and stressed the importance of empathy and preservation of human dignity when reporting. “At the heart of all these stories are human beings with feelings. ... They’ve all got family. So I always try to remember that, [which] moderates my thinking and actions.”

Remona Aly, a reporter for The Guardian, stated: “You have this sense of responsibility to whoever you’re interviewing. ... I really try hard to maintain that protection. I say [to the interviewee] ‘you can look over the article afterwards so that you’re comfortable with it.’”

Discussions also looked at how biases and false dichotomies can reduce multi-faceted issues to simplistic representations of reality that reinforce social, political, economic, and religious divides, leading to sensationalist news coverage.

Mr. McManus, speaking about the responsibility of journalists to maintain objectivity, stated: “Things are not black and white. You can hold two different points of view in your mind which are both correct, because we know that human life is infinitely varied and complex.”

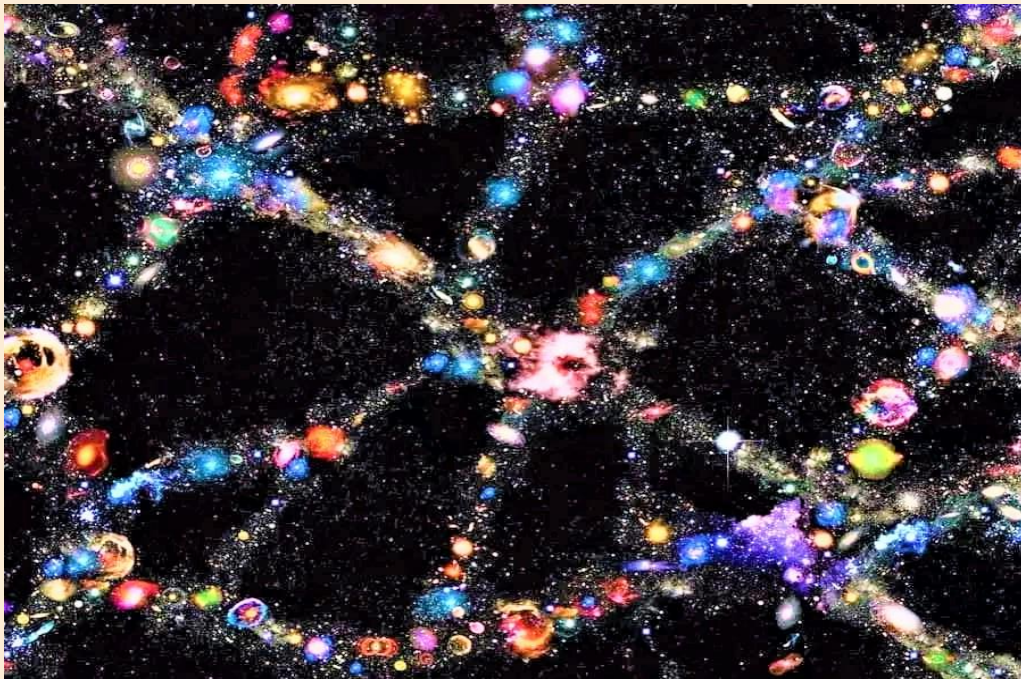
Reflecting on this discussion, Nancy Warren, of the Baha’i Office of Public Affairs, explains that this podcast series is part of the ongoing efforts of the Office to contribute to the discourse on the constructive role of media in society.

“People begin their journalistic career with very high ideals, but they eventually find it difficult to write in a way that is in line with their principles,” she says.

“The forums offered by the Office — be they podcasts, online discussions, or in-person gatherings— provide a space for journalists to explore prevalent issues in their field in light of spiritual principles that resonate with their moral convictions.”

Sharing:

Badi’s sharing:



*When I look at this little slice of our universe with the millions of its galaxies, it humbles me. It makes me think about what the Creator of this infinite universe thinks of our narrow view and our fighting for the possession of a tiny piece of this speck of dust called Earth. And how He views our air of superiority over others for the reasons of race, nationality, religion, gender, ideology and skin colour.
How childish we look in the eye of our Creator.*

Poem of the month

By Tahera for the long-suffering Baha'is of Iran:

IN THE LAND

In the land
Where the sunlight
Shattered the darkness,
And the light of His teachings
Awoke souls from slumber.



In the land
Where He manifested Himself
In full Majesty,
Where He revealed His word,
Fulfilled His Promise.



In the land
Where seeds of Faith,
Were scattered in the soil of the heart,
And nurtured
With the blood of the martyrs.



In the land,
That was blessed with His footsteps,
The oppressors sink yet again,
Their venomous fangs,
Into the flesh of His loved ones.

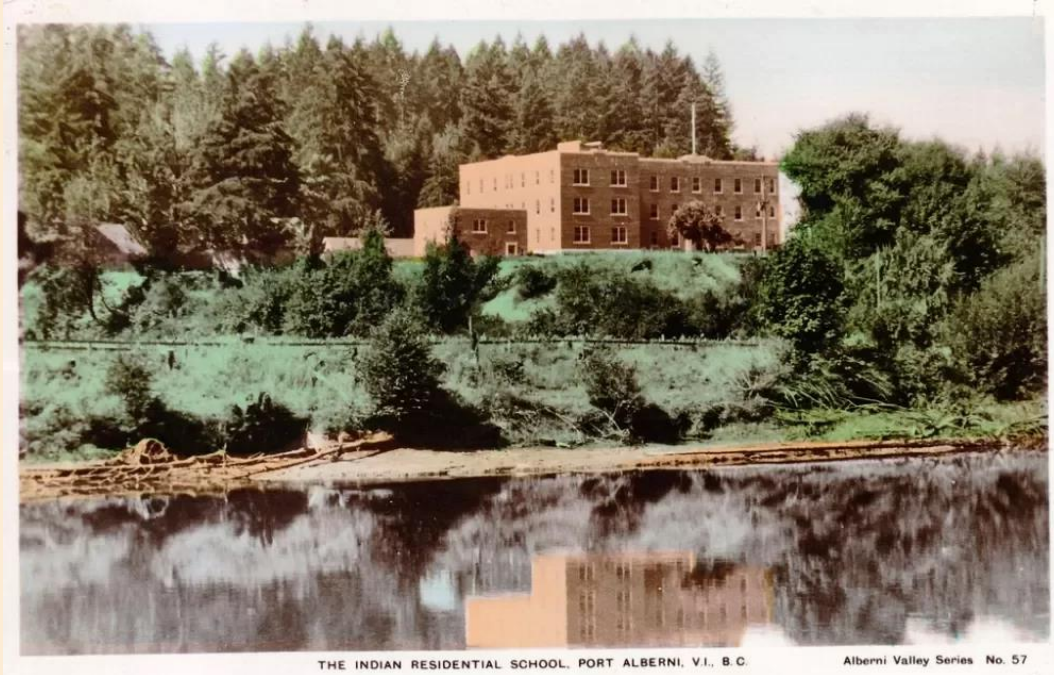
Recompense their sacrifices, O God,
That Thy banner maybe raised aloft,
That the attacks they endure may Embolden our endeavours
To illumine humanity
With the light of unity.

Tahera

News and Nuggets from our First Nations and other communities



Radar scanning works through rough terrain around former residential school grounds



THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, PORT ALBERNI, V.I., B.C.

Alberni Valley Series No. 57

Port Alberni, BC

One week of ground-scanning work has been undertaken to identify possible burial sites on Tseshahst territory, bringing challenges in penetrating the rugged terrain that make up the former grounds of the Alberni Indian Residential School.

After months of preparations, including close consultation with survivors from the residential school, possible burial locations have been identified on the more than 100 hectares that used to surround the institution's grounds for 81 years. The Tseshahst First Nation secured the expertise of GeoScan to analyse the sites, employing ground-penetrating radar technology that has indicated burial sites at other residential schools across Canada. This scanning work began July 11, and is expected to last two weeks.

But Vancouver Island's terrain has proven to be more challenging than the meadows and fields upon which other residential schools once operated elsewhere in Canada.

"We've had to focus our priority areas on areas that we can actually do right now," said Tseshahst Chief Councillor Ken Watts of the technology. "The grass has to be a certain height. There can't be huge rocks and sticks and things below it. It makes it pretty limited on what it can and can't do."

One advantage of having the residential school on its reserve is that the Tseshahst don't have to negotiate with private landowners for the radar work to be conducted, as has happened elsewhere in Canada.

"They've had to work with private landowners who aren't as comfortable looking for unmarked graves in their backyards," said Watts. "It's really up to us. This is in our backyard, we have to live with it."

Used in crime scene investigations and archaeological studies, ground-penetrating radar sends high-frequency electromagnetic waves underground. Although this can give a likely impression that a body may be buried in the ground, the technology cannot determine exactly who or what is down there.

“It’s probable that’s what it is based on what the research and the scanning is telling you,” explained Watts of locating possible burials. “The only real way to 100 per cent verify it is through exhuming. We haven’t even had that conversation as a community.”

The undertaking of identifying any burials under AIRS is being led by ʔuuʔatumin yaqckʷiimitqin (Doing it for Our Ancestors), a team of former residential school students, Ha’wiih and elected council members to ensure cultural protocols are followed to the benefit of the Tseshaht community. Although he has heard of other First Nations consider exhuming, the sensitivity of the undertaking makes deep ground disturbance an unlikely approach, said Watts.

“I’ve never heard any of our community members say we’re interested in that,” he said. “In our culture, you’re not really supposed to disrupt those that are now gone, they should be left alone.”

Access to the site of the former institution has been tightly restricted over the first weeks of the scanning process, and the Tseshaht have even had a no-fly zone implemented by Transport Canada over the former AIRS grounds to minimize disturbances.

For generations former AIRS students have known about children who died at the school. Now examination of the site is triggering traumatic memories.

“We’ve had members coming here into our office getting supports culturally as well as clinical counselling,” said Watts. “I think it’s really impacted our community. I’ve heard many stories from people who live around the neighbourhood, spirits and things they’ve felt since then. I think it’s created this awakening in our community.”

After the first two weeks of scanning are completed, the First Nation plans to prepare other areas for GeoScan to return in late August or September.

A full summery report of the work is expected in October.

“This has been difficult, but to move onto the next steps and identify those areas, actually marking them and letting people know the results, it’s going to be hard,” said Watts. “I honestly think that I don’t know that the general public is going to be ready for whatever the results may be.”

From the editor's desk:

We Need To Justify Our Spending

Do we have to justify our spending to anyone? Most people would answer “No—my money is mine, I earned it, and I can spend it any way I want!”

Some of those people consider themselves hedonists, a school of thought which argues that pleasure and happiness are the primary or most important intrinsic goods and the proper aim of human life. Hedonists strive to maximize net pleasure, so for them spending any amount of money in the pursuit of pleasure would seem justifiable.

Entire life philosophies have been built around this idea, including one called ethical hedonism—the idea that all people have the right to do everything in their power to achieve the greatest amount of pleasure possible. Ethical hedonism maintains that every person’s pleasure should far surpass their

amount of pain. Started by Aristippus of Cyrene, a student of Socrates, ethical hedonists hold the idea that pleasure constitutes the highest good.

The Baha'i teachings look at life differently. Rather than living solely to maximize our own pleasure, Baha'is try their best to love the Creator, seek God's pleasure, and therefore love His creation—humanity. Instead of focusing solely on personal pleasure, the Baha'i writings say, we should turn away from ourselves and focus on a higher purpose:

“If thou lovest Me, turn away from thyself; and if thou seekest My pleasure, regard not thine own; that thou mayest die in Me and I may eternally live in thee.” – Baha'u'llah, *The Hidden Words*, p. 5.

So try this: take a look at your personal spending in that light.

In one way, our spending reflects our values. “You are what you buy,” as one writer put it. If you spend primarily on yourself and your own pleasure, it may indicate a lack of empathy for or awareness of the needs of other people.

On the other hand, if most of your spending goes to help others, it obviously has come to recognize the extreme poverty in the world, and the fact that not much has been done to remedy it. If you're fully aware of the great poverty in the world today, you soon recognize that you'll have to answer to your conscience for any unnecessary or selfish spending. That compassionate awareness, and the actions that accompany it can make our material choices into spiritual decisions:

“Certainly, some being enormously rich and others lamentably poor, an organization is necessary to control and improve this state of affairs. It is important to limit riches, as it is also of importance to limit poverty. Either extreme is not good. To be seated in the mean is most desirable. If it be right for a capitalist to possess a large fortune, it is equally just that his workman should have a sufficient means of existence.

A financier with colossal wealth should not exist whilst near him is a poor man in dire necessity. When we see poverty allowed to reach a condition of starvation it is a sure sign that somewhere we shall find tyranny. Men must bestir themselves in this matter, and no longer delay in altering conditions which bring the misery of grinding poverty to a very large number of the people. The rich must give of their abundance, they must soften their hearts and cultivate a compassionate intelligence, taking thought for those sad ones who are suffering from lack of the very necessities of life.” – Abdu'l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p. 152.

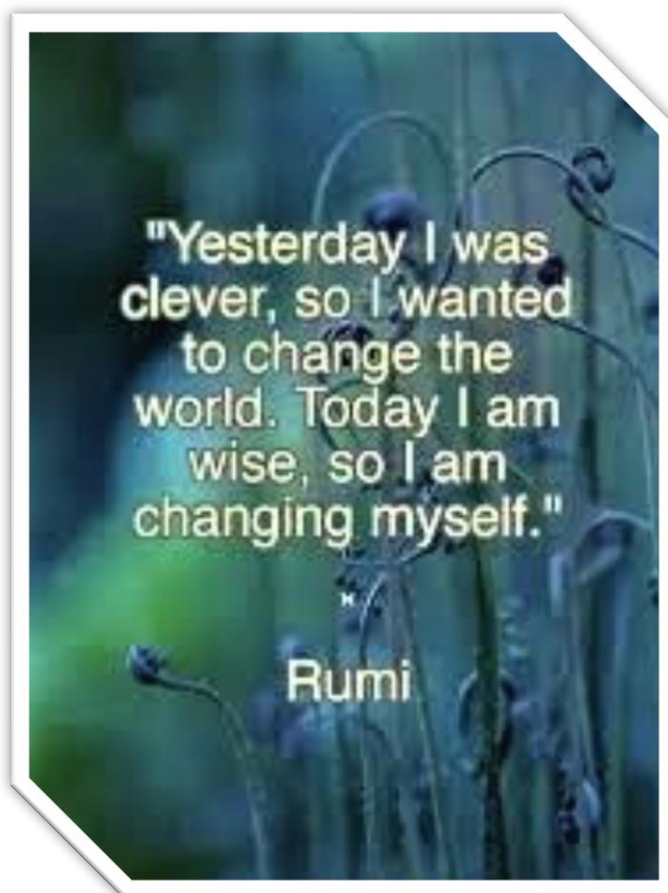
No power in the world can force people to re-examine or justify their spending habits, except the power of our own realization and awareness of the level of poverty of our fellow human beings who are barely surviving. By this reconsideration of your ways of spending, you may soon find it hard to spend on unnecessary pleasures and desires. Instead, you might find yourself spending your resources on your essential needs so that you can have enough left over to help the poor and needy.

The Baha'i teachings gently remind us that we human beings are one—that every individual is part of the human family. In other words, we're all relatives. Would you want your relatives to live in abject poverty, hunger, and want, while you spent your resources on luxuries and pleasures for yourself?

“Know ye that the poor are the trust of God in your midst. Watch that ye betray not His trust, that ye deal not unjustly with them and that ye walk not in the ways of the treacherous. Ye will most certainly be called upon to answer for His trust on the day when the Balance of Justice shall be set, the day when unto every one shall be rendered his due, when the doings of all men, be they rich or poor, shall be weighed.” – Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, p. 251.

Baha'is believe that humanity is gradually waking up to the fact that we have a very important responsibility and duty to look after the poor and needy, to make sure that they are cared for and live happily. This is a God-given duty. They have been entrusted to us, and by caring for them we take a step towards the unity of humanity and a future society in which there are no poor.

Famous quotes:



Upcoming Events:

Next feast, Izzat/Might, September 8, 2022

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