

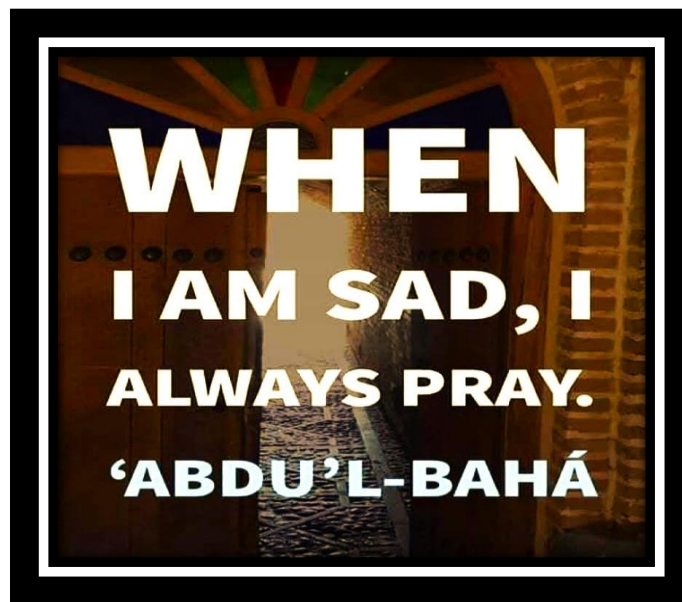


The Nuggets

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Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

Approval Seeking

'Abdu'l-Bahá went to the home of Rafael and Mrs. Pumpelly to meet some of Dublin's elite. Mr. Pumpelly had been a well-known geologist, a professor of mining at Harvard University. When someone asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá for a story, Mrs. Parsons quickly suggested story of Ios, a pretty Persian tale with a moral. 'Abdu'l-Bahá told the story to mild applause. Then, alert, and with eyes flashing, He turned to the host, saying: "NOW I will tell you a story and it isn't going to be a sermon!" The Master, dressed in His usual flowing robes and white turban and, standing amidst the formally dressed Americans, proceeded to tell a riotous Arabian story that had His listeners shouting and swaying from side to side with amusement. In the midst of the applause He arose, bade goodbye to the assemblage, and left the room with the children of the family grasping His hands and cloak as they followed Him to the car. While we were driving home, speechless with happiness, He said with the simplicity of a child: "Now, are you pleased with me?" -Earl Redman, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Their Midst

News and Events:

News From our Twin Community of Jaipur, India

Here is a sample of activities in pictures of many junior youth groups, Ruhi study groups, children's classes, and devotional and prayer meetings in different parts of Rajasthan.



The Bahá'í World News Service

Overcoming racism: Fostering social cohesion at the grassroots in Sweden



STOCKHOLM, Sweden — *Can a society truly progress when its citizens live side by side yet worlds apart, their daily lives marked more by parallel existence than meaningful interaction? Amid rising concern over racial injustice across Europe, a recent seminar in Stockholm addressed this question, exploring the importance of fostering social harmony at the grassroots.*

The seminar was co-organized by the Brussels Office of the Bahá'í International Community (BIC), the Deputy and Vice Mayors of Stockholm, and Sweden's Bahá'í Office of External Affairs.

The gathering was part of ongoing efforts by the Brussels Office and the Bahá'ís of Sweden to contribute to the discourse on social cohesion and brought together government officials, diverse social actors, and members of civil organizations.

Legislation alone is not enough

Discussions in the Swedish capital not only looked at the role of policymaking in addressing racism but also explored emerging insights from Bahá'í community-building efforts that apply spiritual principles, such as the oneness of humanity, to issues and challenges in society.

Rachel Bayani of the Brussels Office stated: “Racism and prejudice are among the greatest challenges facing humanity today.

“Legislative measures, such as the European Union Anti-Racism Action Plan 2022–2025 and the adoption of national action plans by EU member states are important steps forward but as the Plan itself points out, legislation alone is not enough.”

Echoing these sentiments on the limitations of policy-driven approaches, Åsa Lindhagen, Vice Mayor for Environment and Climate and former Swedish Minister for Gender Equality, stated: “We cannot do it alone in politics, of course, we need to cooperate with all good forces in society.”

Mrs. Bayani delved deeper into the intricacies of social interactions that perpetuate racism. “Racism thrives in settings where people of different backgrounds lack opportunities for meaningful interaction—living merely side by side. Where can such meaningful interactions take place?”

Potential of grassroots interactions

Mrs. Bayani explained that although such interactions can take place everywhere and at every level of society, it is neighborhoods and villages that provide daily opportunities for conversations among people of different backgrounds and ages, where close bonds of friendship can be forged, a shared vision of social transformation can emerge, and collective action can be taken.

Kishan Manocha of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe added, “A key component of the work that we need to focus on, I would say, is trust building, because the trust among and between individuals, communities, and institutions of governance at this time of polarization is badly broken, and needs to be restored and needs to be built along new lines.”

Mrs. Bayani emphasized that fleeting interactions, such as quick greetings in a supermarket or even annual meetings between religious leaders, do not sufficiently tackle ingrained racial prejudice.

However, she explained, through meaningful grassroots interactions, communities can find a path forward. “What is needed is joint thinking, reflection, and action towards something greater, such as transforming a neighborhood into an inclusive space,” she said.

“This approach,” continued Mrs. Bayani, “puts communities on a path to becoming protagonists of their own development”, which is a fundamental principle of Bahá’í community-building endeavors.

Expanding on the idea of collective progress, Deputy Mayor Anders Österberg said that despite existing societal divisions, there are growing aspirations in Sweden for racial harmony. He emphasized the need for collective efforts to build communities where unity can flourish.

Evin Incir, Member of European Parliament, further reinforced this point: “There’s a lot of work ahead of us. In the European Union, there’s no room for a ‘we’ and ‘them’ mentality; there’s only ‘we.’”

Examining this further, Mrs. Bayani elaborated on the principle of unity in diversity: “We are one family. The walls that divide us are artificial and need to be dismantled, acknowledging our inherent oneness.”

Community initiatives a source of hope

Reflecting on the discussion, Nogol Rahbin of the Bahá’í Office of External Affairs in Sweden said that Bahá’í community-building initiatives in Stockholm are contributing to removing social divisions. “Local residents from diverse backgrounds are coming together to organize various activities, such as family festivals.”

Dr. Rahbin added: “These gatherings are more than just social events. They stimulate a process of collective ownership among residents.”

She added that in this context, people who might never have otherwise interacted come together, forming bonds of friendship and a shared vision for their neighborhood.

Policymakers have expressed their appreciation for these activities, said Dr. Rahbin. “Last year, the Swedish Minister for Integration and Migration visited one such neighborhood to learn from its residents. These grassroots efforts offer insights that inspire hope, especially at a time when we are facing challenges like racism and rising gang violence.”

The Stockholm gathering was part of a broader initiative by the Brussels Office, in which similar discussions are held in collaboration with national Bahá’í communities and municipalities across Europe.

Poem of the month:

God's Blessings

I sat under the shade of God's tree
And gasped in delight as
The breeze of His love stirred me up,
The fruits of His knowledge quenched my hunger,
The canopy of His leaves
sheltered me from blazing tests,
The fragrance of His flowers
awakened my inner being,
The dew drops refreshed
my drooping soul,
And the song of the birds gave joyful tidings.
And then under His Graceful Abundant shade,
Seeds of gratitude, of happiness,
of humility, of hope,
of strength, of eternal love
Were gently sowed in the soil of my heart
And a new life began to unfold
A life where each breath pulsates
To the rhythm of only His name .

Tahera

From the pages of history

BAHA'U'LLAH'S JOURNEY TO MAZINDARAN

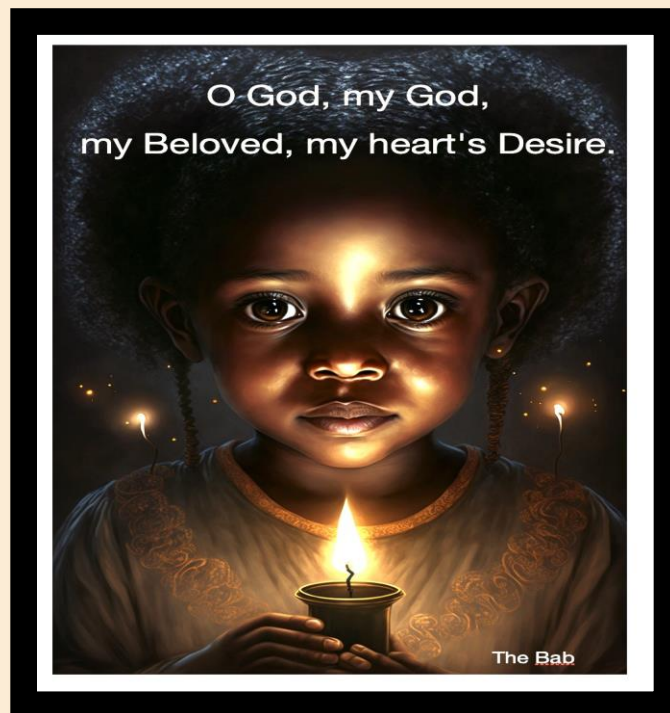
When, in the year '60, Baha'u'llah arrived in Nur, He discovered that the celebrated mujtahid who on His previous visit had wielded such immense power had passed away. The vast number of his devotees had shrunk into a mere handful of dejected disciples who, under the leadership of his successor, Mulla Muhammad, were striving to uphold the traditions of their departed leader. The enthusiasm which greeted Baha'u'llah's arrival sharply contrasted with the gloom that had settled upon the remnants of that once flourishing community. A large number of the officials and notables in that neighbourhood called upon Him and, with every mark of affection and respect, accorded Him a befitting welcome. They were eager, in view of the social position He occupied, to learn from Him all the news regarding the life of the Shah, the activities of his ministers, and the affairs of his government. To their enquiries Baha'u'llah replied with extreme indifference, and seemed to reveal very little interest or concern. With persuasive eloquence He pleaded the cause of the new Revelation, and directed their attention to the immeasurable benefits which it was destined to confer upon their country. Those who heard Him marvelled at the keen interest which a man of His position and age evinced for truths which primarily concerned the divines and theologians of Islam. They felt powerless to challenge the soundness of His arguments or to belittle the Cause which He so ably expounded. They admired the loftiness of His enthusiasm and the profundity of His thoughts, and were deeply impressed by His detachment and self-

effacement.

None dared to contend with His views except His uncle Aziz, who ventured to oppose Him, challenging His statements and aspersing their truth. When those who heard him sought to silence this opponent and to injure him, Baha'u'llah intervened in his behalf, and advised them to leave him in the hands of God. Alarmed, he sought the aid of the mujtahid of Nur, Mulla Muhammad, and appealed to him to lend him immediate assistance. "O vicegerent of the Prophet of God!" he said. "Behold what has befallen the Faith. A youth, a layman, attired in the garb of nobility, has come to Nur, has invaded the strongholds of orthodoxy, and disrupted the holy Faith of Islam. Arise, and resist his onslaught. Whoever attains his presence falls immediately under his spell, and is enthralled by the power of his utterance. I know not whether he is a sorcerer, or whether he mixes with his tea some mysterious substance that makes every man who drinks the tea fall a victim to its charm." The mujtahid, notwithstanding his own lack of comprehension, was able to realise the folly of such remarks. Jestingly he observed: "Have you not partaken of his tea, or heard him address his companions?" "I have," he replied, "but, thanks to your loving protection, I have remained immune from the effect of his mysterious power." The mujtahid, finding himself unequal to the task of arousing the populace against Baha'u'llah, and of combating directly the ideas which so powerful an opponent was fearlessly spreading, contented himself with a written statement in which he declared: "O Aziz, be not afraid, no one will dare molest you." In writing this, the mujtahid had, through a grammatical error, so perverted the purport of his statement, that those who read it among the notables of the village of Takur were scandalised by its meaning, and vilified both the bearer and the author of that statement. **-THE DAWN-BREAKERS & NABIL'S NARRATIVE**

Sharing

Douglas's sharing:



News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities

‘Youth-led reconciliation’: Ucluelet Secondary hosts third annual Truth and Reconciliation Exhibit



Ucluelet, BC

Ucluelet Secondary students jumped right into the school year to learn about residential schools, preparing interdisciplinary projects for the third annual Legacy of Hope exhibit in recognition of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Day on Sept. 30.

When Jason Sam, program coordinator for Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, first started coordinating the exhibit three years ago there were roughly three classes involved in the exhibit. Now there are closer to nine classes involved with students spending the month of September learning about residential schools from survivors, researching and preparing projects of a multitude of disciplines.

Sam refers to the students' participation in the exhibit as “youth-led reconciliation.”

The exhibit is broken down into three components: truth, honor, and a way forward.

For Nuu-chah-nulth students Lee Manson and Calianna McCarthy, their English 11 class researched the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s 94 Calls to Action and contributed a detailed account of their chosen Call to Action.

Manson chose Call to Action 49, which calls for churches and faith groups to rescind concepts that affirm colonization such as the Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius.

“It goes in depth about how and what the faith groups and churches did to Native American land and people when they first got here,” she said. “With my call to action it's very important to learn about it and spread awareness about what happened.”

McCarthy chose Call to Action 41, which deals with missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

“Together through educating each other we can really make a difference,” she said. “We have to work together to help others heal. A lot of stereotyping gets in the way of people’s cases being solved and finding the answers to people's questions.”

“They’re left with nothing,” added McCarthy. “They don’t know what happened to their family members.”

Prior to working on this project McCarthy said that she knew very little on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, while Manson chimed in to add that she did not have much prior knowledge on the 94 Calls to Action.

“I’m glad it’s being taught in schools,” said McCarthy. “Because if we didn’t have this being taught at school, I don’t think I would ever pick up a book and read the Calls to Action.”

“Adults now, they weren’t taught about truth and reconciliation and residential school,” said Manson. “It wasn’t brought up in schooling, it wasn’t mandatory.”

Manson and McCarthy’s teacher, Jess Bennett chimed in to add that they are learning alongside their students.

“Us adults, we don’t have a lot of background, ‘cause it was swept under the rug and not taught,” said Bennett. “It’s nice to see young people pushing us forward.”

“It’s nice to grow together,” added Bennett. “In a generational way.”

Alongside these Calls to Action, the USS multipurpose room is dressed in Nuu-chah-nulth language, poetry inspired by residential school stories, as well as student-designed and printed orange shirts. Cedar-woven pieces also adorn the room, and which presents information about residential schools, the impacts of trauma on the body, and information about nourishment and health at Alberni Indian Residential School.

Among the student projects is an Indian Day School exhibit provided by the Legacy of Hope, an Indigenous-led organization dedicated to providing education on the history and intergenerational impacts of residential schools.

“One of my big focuses is to teach these kids because I was never taught it in high school or university,” said Sam, who prior to organizing the exhibit helped teach about residential schools in classes at USS. “I learn new things every year I go through this.”

“I’m just trying to foster that next generation to grow up and already have that understanding and empathy built into them so when they go out into the world they take it with them,” added Sam.

From the editor's desk

Small Town's Simple Approach to Peace

Nineteen years ago, one of the churches in our little town started organizing a Peace Walk on the first day of each year. They invited everyone to join. As a Baha'i, I welcomed the invitation since Baha'is all over the world actively work for the oneness of humanity and peace on Earth, so with great joy, I attended the first Peace Walk and have participated in each one since the beginning.

The Peace Walk's route takes us through the center of town, and the cars on the road mostly honk in support of peace. Each of my fellow peace walkers—all from different groups—hold their homemade signs quoting sayings from their religions or ideologies. My sign said:

“The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens” -Baha'u'llah

After the walk, we all go to a cozy hall of a senior housing facility. There is no set program since we all know why we're there. We come from different religions, and some of us have no faith at all, but we each know that peace is essential to all of us. That shared conviction creates a feeling of togetherness sensed by everyone. We spontaneously sing religious and non-religious songs, recite poetry and give short talks on peace. After that, everybody is invited to go for lunch at a Sikh temple nearby to enjoy the delicious homemade food prepared by the Sikh community.

I like many aspects of the Peace Walk but mainly appreciate its practical, simple approach to creating peace and oneness by sharing ideas, prayers, music, and food with people from different backgrounds. This unity in diversity appeals to me immensely. It feels like a small family, with each member representing a different country and religion, sitting down to eat and enjoy each other's company together.

After a few songs, we all listened to a talk about the need to take care of the refugees and then came the turn of one of the Baha'is, a refugee himself, who talked about the biggest hindrance to peace—prejudice. He paid particular attention to the harm religious prejudice can inflict on society. His talk gave a chance to the audience, who were mostly religious, to take stock of their own feelings about other religions.

One of the main hindrances preventing us from attaining peace today has involved only talking about peace and not taking real, substantive actions. We have many talks, books, conferences, treaties, and noble thoughts about this subject—but not enough actual effort to achieve true peace:

“Love ye all religions and all races with a love that is true and sincere and show that love through deeds and not through the tongue; for the latter hath no importance, as the majority of men are, in speech, well-wishers, while action is the best.” – Abdu'l-Baha

I hope that more people use the example of the multi-faith action of our little town and participate in projects and processes that ensure peace by acts and not only words. Peace these days seems like an unattainable dream, but it should not be that way. People on our Peace Walk have simplified it to small steps of coming out, being visible and being heard—then showing that we can peacefully unite despite any differences we may have. There is no reason why we all cannot do the same by reaching out to like-minded people or organizations and facilitating similar events. In this way, we can be the active catalysts of peace and not just passive bystanders on the sidelines.

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.

Holy Writings to Ponder and Practice

“One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely, the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendour of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh.” -Shoghi Effendi

Upcoming Events:

Coming feast, Qudrat/Power, November 4, 2023

Next feast, Qawl/Speech, November 23, 2023

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