



Port Alberni Nuggets

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Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

Justice

When Bahá'u'lláh along with His family and a number of His companions were travelling from Baghdad to Constantinople an incident took place near the city of Mardin which provides us with a wonderful example of Bahá'u'lláh's high sense of justice, a principle greatly stressed in His Revelation. The caravan had encamped for the night at a small village below the town. "There, during the night, two mules, belonging to an Arab travelling with the caravan, were stolen. The owner was beside himself with grief. Bahá'u'lláh asked the official who accompanied the caravan to try and find the missing animals. Other officials were called in, but no animal was forthcoming. As the caravan was on the point of departing, the poor Arab went crying to Bahá'u'lláh. 'You are leaving,' he moaned, 'and I shall

never get back my beasts.' Bahá'u'lláh immediately called off the resumption of the journey. 'We will go to Firdaws [a nearby estate] and stay there', He said, 'until this man's mules are found and restored to him.' "... The Mutasarrif [local Governor] threatened the headman of the village, where the mules had been stolen, with imprisonment if the animals were not found. The headman offered a sum of money in lieu of the mules. But Bahá'u'lláh insisted that the Arab was entitled to have his beasts restored to him. On the second day the headman came with a promissory note guaranteed by higher officials, offering to pay 60 pounds within a month, the value of the two mules. But Bahá'u'lláh refused this offer too. Then the headman realized that the game was up, sent for the animals and gave them to their distraught owner. People were amazed, for such a thing had never happened before. No stolen property had ever been retrieved, nor restitution made to the rightful owner. Aqa Husayn-i-Ashchi, in his reminiscences some four decades later, recalled that various officials went to Bahá'u'lláh to speak of the part they had played in retrieving the beasts and received suitable rewards. The Mutasarrif was given a costly cashmere shawl, the Mufti an illuminated copy of the Qur'an, the head of the horsemen a sword with bejewelled scabbard." -Hasan Balyuzi, King of Glory, p. 187-188

News and Events:

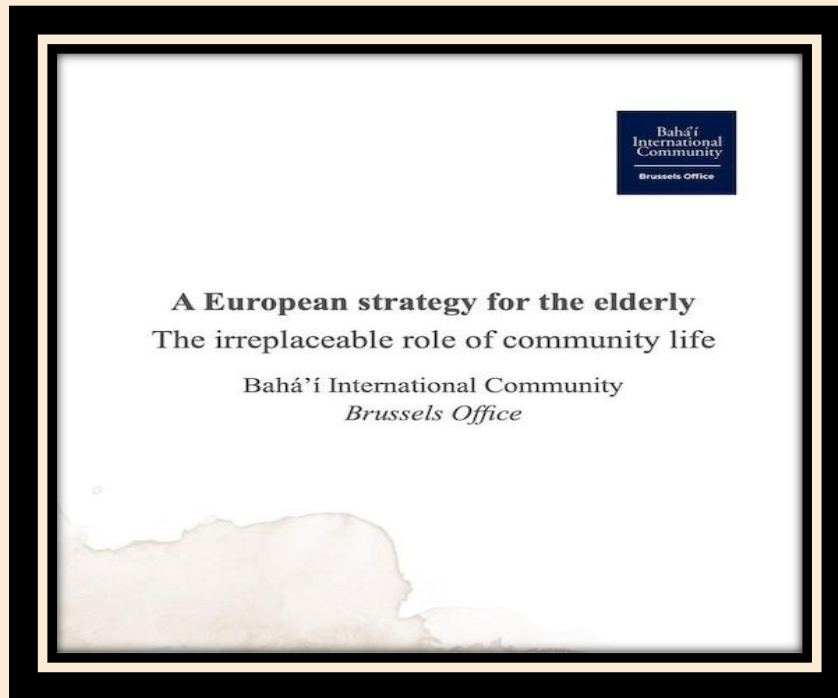
News From our Twin Community of Jaipur, India

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. "Planting one tree is equal to raising a hundred children." Members of the Baha'i community of Jaipur carried out intensive tree plantation in Gulistan in which children, youth, women and senior citizens participated enthusiastically. The Baha'is of Jaipur celebrated the Day of Covenant.



The Bahá'í World News Service

Reimagining The Elderly's Role



BRUSSELS — At a time when societal conversations often focus on the complexities of supporting the elderly within healthcare and pension systems, the Brussels Office of the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) offers a refreshing perspective: envisioning the elderly as invaluable contributors to the fabric of community life, emphasizing their role as active participants in shaping a cohesive and vibrant society.

This perspective, explored in the statement titled *A European strategy for the elderly: The irreplaceable role of community life*, is particularly relevant in light of increasing concerns over loneliness and social isolation among the elderly in Europe and globally.

The statement was distributed to European Union (EU) officials, as well as to speakers and organizers of last week's conference titled "Present and future of EU policy for older persons," jointly hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee and the Spanish Presidency of the EU to explore strategies in Europe for addressing the issue.

In its effort to emphasize the centrality of a vibrant community life to a range of social issues, the statement has also been shared with many civil society groups involved in elderly care as well as those concerned with social cohesion.

Rachel Bayani, a representative of the Brussels Office, spoke with the News Service, stating: "The BIC's vision reconceptualizes the elderly not just as members of society to be cared for, but as vital contributors to community life.

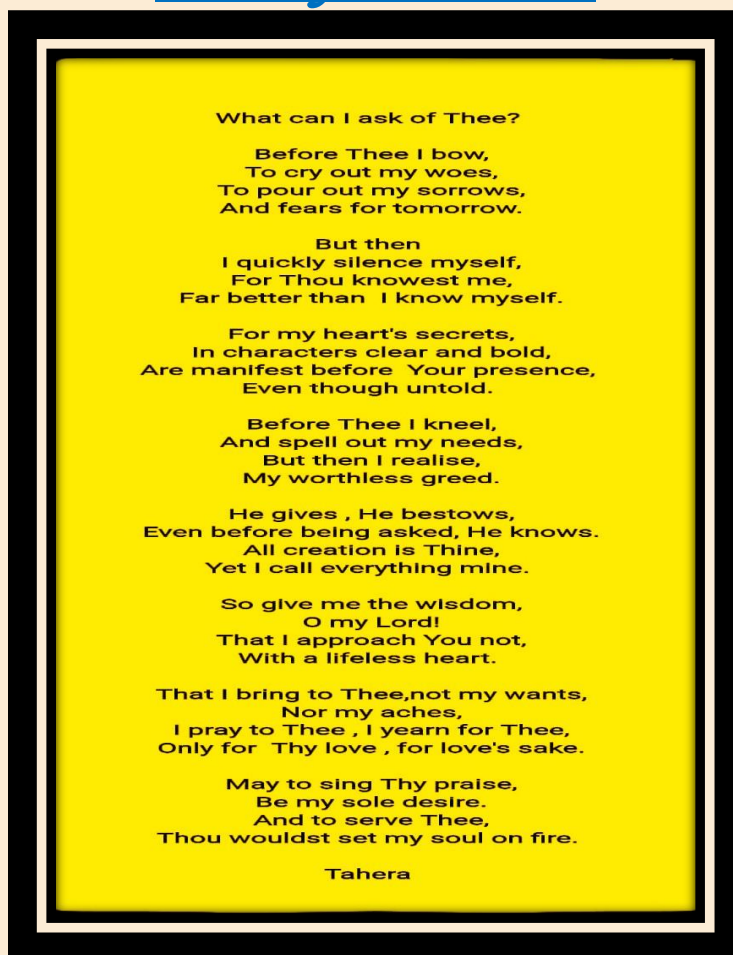
"The desire to serve and contribute meaningfully to society does not fade with age," she said.

Mrs. Bayani added: “By recognizing the diverse capacities of the elderly, communities can foster a culture in which every age group enriches the other, creating a harmonious pattern of shared experiences and mutual support.”

The statement of the Brussels Office emphasizes a shared responsibility—encompassing individuals, communities, and institutions in Europe—to create environments where every person’s contribution is valued and fostered.

It also highlights the need “to address the root causes that lead to isolation and loneliness as they are manifested across all segments of society and to offer channels through which the innate desire within people of all ages to contribute meaningfully to their society can find practical expression.”

Poem of the month:



From the pages of history

Baha’u’llah’s relations with His uncle Aziz

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.

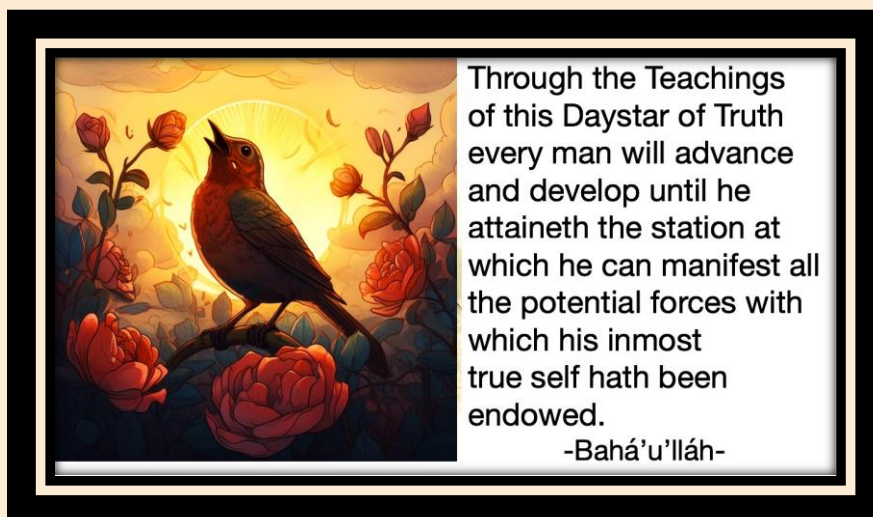
Alarmed, he sought the aid of the mujtahid of Nur, Mulla Muhammad, and appealed to him to lend him immediate assistance. "O vicegerent of the Prophet of God!" he said. "Behold what has befallen the Faith. A youth, a layman, attired in the garb of nobility, has come to Nur, has invaded the strongholds 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.

Those who attained the presence of Baha'u'llah and heard Him expound the Message proclaimed by the Bab were so much impressed by the earnestness of His appeal that they forthwith arose to disseminate that same Message among the people of Nur and to extol the virtues of its distinguished Promoter. The disciples of Mulla Muhammad meanwhile endeavoured to persuade their teacher to proceed to Takur, to visit Baha'u'llah in person, to ascertain from Him the nature of this new Revelation, and to enlighten his followers regarding its character and purpose. To their earnest entreaty the mujtahid returned an evasive answer. His disciples, however, refused to admit the validity of the objections he raised. They urged that the first obligation imposed upon a man of his position, whose function was to preserve the integrity of shi'ah Islam, was to enquire into the nature of every movement that tended to affect the interests of their Faith. Mulla Muhammad eventually decided to delegate two of his eminent lieutenants, Mulla Abbas and Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, both sons-in-law and trusted disciples of the late mujtahid, Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, to visit Baha'u'llah and to determine the true character of the Message He had brought. He pledged himself to endorse unreservedly whatever conclusions they might arrive at, and to recognise their decision in such matters as final. -THE DAWN-BREAKERS & NABIL'S NARRATIVE

Sharing

Douglas's sharing:



News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities

Things You Need to Know About Hinduism



1) Hinduism is at least 5000 years old

Hinduism is one of a few ancient religions to survive into modern times. The collection of traditions that compose modern-day Hinduism have developed over at least the past 5000 years, beginning in the Indus Valley region (in the nations of modern India and Pakistan), in what was the largest civilization of the ancient world. There is no 'founder' of Hinduism, nor single prophet or initial teacher. Hindus believe their religion has no identifiable beginning or end and, as such, often refer to it as Sanatana Dharma (the 'Eternal Way'). As for the name itself, 'Hindu' is a word first used by Persians, dating back to the 6th century BCE, to describe the people living beyond the Indus River. Initially it did not have a specific religious connotation. The religious meaning of the term did not develop for roughly another 1000 years.

2) The Vedas are one of Hinduism's many primary religious texts

*Hinduism does not have a single holy book that guides religious practice. Instead, Hinduism has a **large body of spiritual texts** that guide devotees. First among these are the Vedas ("knowledge" in Sanskrit), a collection of hymns on the divine forces of nature presenting key Hindu teachings. The Vedas, considered to be realized (revealed) eternal truths, were passed down via an oral tradition for thousands of years before being written down. Hindu philosophy was further developed in the*

Upanishads. This philosophy was restated in the Puranas, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata (the world's longest epic poem), as well as the Bhagavad Gita. Countless life stories, devotional poetry, and commentaries by sages and scholars have also contributed to the spiritual understanding and practice of Hindus.

3) Hinduism is one of four 'Dharmic' or 'Indic' traditions

Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism can be referred to as the "Dharmic" or "Indic" traditions. The Dharma traditions share a broadly similar worldview, and share many spiritual concepts, such as dharma, karma, samsara, and moksha—though each religion understands and interprets them differently.

4) Hinduism sees the Divine present in all existence

The deepest single spiritual truth presented through the Vedas is that Brahman (roughly understood in English as 'the Absolute' or 'the Divine') pervades the entire universe. This divine reality, or its essential nature, is present in all living beings, eternal, and full of bliss. Brahman is understood as the cause of creation, as well as its preservation, and dissolution and transformation, all done in a constant, repeating cycle.

5) The nature of the Divine is understood in different ways in different lineages

Within Hinduism there is a broad spectrum of understandings about the nature of Brahman. Some Hindus believe that Brahman is infinite and formless, and can be worshipped as such, or in different forms. Other Hindus believe that the Divine is infinite and has a transcendental form. For example, some Vaishnavas believe that the one supreme form is Krishna, while Shaivites call this form Shiva.

6) Hinduism worships the Divine in both male and female, animal form

*Because Hindus believe that Brahman can take form, they accept that there are a variety of ways in which all human beings can connect with the Divine. This universal Divinity is worshipped in both male and female forms. The female form is known as devi, which is a manifestation of shakti (energy or creative force). Other forms combine male and female aspects together and **some resemble animals**, such as Ganesh or Hanuman. Each of these forms has a symbolic meaning. Hindus have long told stories about these various forms of the Divine to inspire devotion and instill ethical values.*

From the editor's desk

What Can Be Done with the Widening Gap Between the Rich and the Poor?

This was the title of a news item:

“The 26 richest people on earth in 2018 had the same net worth as the poorest half of the world's population, some 3.8 billion people.”

This reminded me of another report:

“A CEO from one of the world’s top five global fashion brands has to work for just four days to earn what a garment worker in Bangladesh will earn in an entire lifetime.”

Some may argue that is not true because, in general, people have more than they had in the past, and the standard of living has improved for most of the middle class so that they are richer. This is not always true because they may not know all the facts. As standards of living improved for most of them, so did the level of their debts. That increase in debt is due to more access to credits, loans and mortgages. People are spending more than they make. But I think of the poor who do not have enough to live, so getting a loan or credit is out of the question.

There can be many arguments about the accuracy of the data and the methods of collecting it, but no one can deny that the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer.

These headlines are often on TV, in newspapers, and on social media. This is not the first time such numbers have highlighted the sad economic situation of the world. As I stared at these statistics, my mind was focused on the plight of the poor, and I considered how a fraction of that wealth could change the lives of billions of poor people.

It was the only conclusion that I could draw from these tragic statistics, which made me extremely sad. Then the thought came to me that the rich see these articles, and it has not affected the lifestyles of the majority of them, and that thought made me feel helpless. I felt that the widening gap between the rich and the poor would continue growing, and no one could stop it. I questioned our humanity, which allows these disparities to continue.

Then I decided that I could only do my part as a Baha’i and citizen of the world to call attention to this story to reach as many people as possible, hoping that we can all take a small step to remedy this economic imbalance.

I am reminded of these words:

“Why, then, exhibit such greed in amassing the treasures of the earth, when your days are numbered and your chance is well-nigh lost? Will ye not, then, O heedless ones, shake off your slumber?”

“O ye rich ones on earth! The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease.” – Baha’u’llah

I hope that we wake up to the reality of this situation, which is an indication of a sick economic system that favours the rich and ignores the plight of the poor while the majority of humanity stands helplessly on the sidelines.

Each of us can be an instrument of change, however small, by creating empathy for the poor in our hearts and then working in whatever ways we can to remedy this inequity.

I cannot close my eyes to these statistics and do nothing. I am sure millions feel the way I feel, and that gives me great hope for the future.

Famous quotes:



Holy Writings to Ponder and Practice

“Finding the negative in people is easy, but seeing good shows maturity.”
-Luke 4:4

Upcoming Events:

Coming feast, Masa'il/Questions, December 11, 2023

Next feast, Sharaf/Honour, December 30, 2023

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