



Port Alberni Nuggets

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Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

Deeds

On the evening of the same day 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke briefly again to a group of Bahá'í friends of the subject which, on these last days seemed very close to His heart and lips - the station to which those who had accepted the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh were called and expected to attain by the very fact that they had accepted them. I remember, in this connection, a story told me by one of the friends present at a meeting of the executive committee of the New York Spiritual Assembly. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been asked to be present. After listening to their deliberations for a half-hour or so He calmly arose to leave. At the door He paused a moment and surveyed the faces turned towards Him. After a moment of silence He said, that He had been told that this was a meeting of the executive committee. "Yes, Master," said the Chairman. Then why do you not execute. Always was His emphasis upon deeds: and deeds of such quality and purity as seemed, to those who listened, unattainable. Nevertheless there was no lowering of

the standard. And He set the example. There was no doubt of that. Like the true Leader He never called upon His followers to go where He had not blazed the Path. -Howard Colby Ives, Portals to Freedom

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 Jaipur group presented the plan in the zonal seminar. A seven-day camp started at Bahai House. Three groups participated in book number one and book number two.



The Bahá'í World News Service

Banani International School: 30 years of empowering women for social progress



LITETA, Zambia — As societies globally grapple with achieving equality between women and men, the role of education in empowering women is vital. Well known for embracing this principle, the Banani International School in Zambia, a Bahá'í-inspired endeavor, recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. The school's multifaceted educational approach integrates intellectual pursuits with the acquisition of moral understanding and spiritual insights, cultivating a rich learning environment.

The school's anniversary was marked by a recent event, bringing together the Chief of Liteta, representatives of the Ministry of Education, and other government officials, dignitaries, representatives of various educational institutions, students, graduates, and staff.

Margaret Lengwe, a member of the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in Zambia, speaking with the News Service, highlighted the school's primary objective: "Banani School strives to develop the intellect and character of young women, nurturing their aspiration to contribute to their communities and the country at large."

Reflecting on her transformative experience, alumna Thandose Nyathando, now a compliance and operations manager at a major bank in Zambia, says, "We were taught to view ourselves as mines rich in gems of inestimable value, a belief that has empowered us in our various professional fields around the world."

Principal Amita Yaganagi adds that Banani School alumni work in many fields across diverse sectors in Zambia and globally, including education, banking, entrepreneurship, communications, and law. She says that by excelling in areas such as math, science, and technology, alongside social sciences, students challenge traditional expectations for girls.

Ms. Lengwe further observes that Banani School's environment fosters deep contemplation in students about the purpose of their lives from an early age. In this setting, academic learning advances alongside personal and spiritual growth. As students progress in their educational journey, they acquire not only knowledge but also develop a vision for their meaningful contribution to society.

Founding vision

Tracing its origins to 1993, the Banani International School was founded on principles of the Bahá'í teachings, with a special focus on empowering girls through education. Opening its doors to an initial cohort of 65 students, the school has grown to a vibrant educational community, serving over 300 students at any time in both primary and secondary programs, including 10% of young people from international backgrounds.

Reflecting on the school's vision, Maame Brodwemaba Nketsiah, a Director of the Bahá'í International Development Organization, states: "The aim has always been to provide Zambian women with a kind of educational experience they may not have otherwise had, preparing them to make significant contributions to the country's progress."

The school operates under the auspices of the William Mmutle Masetlha Foundation—a development organization established in 1983 to contribute to social and economic development in Zambia.

Integrating academic excellence with moral empowerment

Principal Yaganagi explains that Banani’s curriculum covers a broad academic spectrum, placing a strong emphasis on character development. From fostering foundational moral values in early education to exploring spiritual identity and encouraging involvement in community life in higher grades, students engage in a holistic educational journey.

Ms. Lengwe, highlighting the broader impact of this approach, says, “This fosters values of truthfulness, generosity, and kindness, creating a nurturing environment for both students and teachers.”

Merina Phiri Ndumba, reflecting on her time as a former student at Banani School and her career as a chartered accountant and central banker, speaks to the lasting impact of her education: “The focus on character development and service at Banani profoundly shaped my life, as well as my approach as a parent.”

She adds: “I strive to impart the same values to my children, such as resilience, grace, and a mindset focused on making positive contributions, values which I believe should be more prevalent in all schools.”

Applying principles beyond the classroom

At Banani, applying moral principles in everyday life is a cornerstone of the educational experience, extending beyond academic lessons in tangible service projects.

Principal Yaganagi highlights the role of senior students in community engagement: “Our students in Grade 11 and 12 offer weekly English and Math tutorials to younger pupils in neighboring schools.

“This initiative helps prepare the younger pupils for important public exams and cultivates a deep sense of responsibility and desire for service in our own students.” She notes plans for extending these activities to include environmental initiatives, such as tree planting

Younger students at Banani also participate in service-oriented initiatives, contributing within the school through activities such as assisting in the primary school, maintaining the school environment, and helping in the kitchen and gardens.

Reflecting on the impact of her time at Banani, Ndinawe Ruppert, another former student and now a solicitor, says, “The sense of unity and world-embracing vision fostered in us at Banani significantly influenced my career path. It inspired me to commit to pro bono services, even at a time in my life when I did not have many resources.”

Future outlook

At the recent celebration, Ms. Nketsiah shared her reflections on Banani’s journey and its future direction, emphasizing the role of education in social betterment. “The future fortunes of a nation are intrinsically linked to the ability to provide a growing number of women excellent education, in its intellectual and spiritual dimensions.”

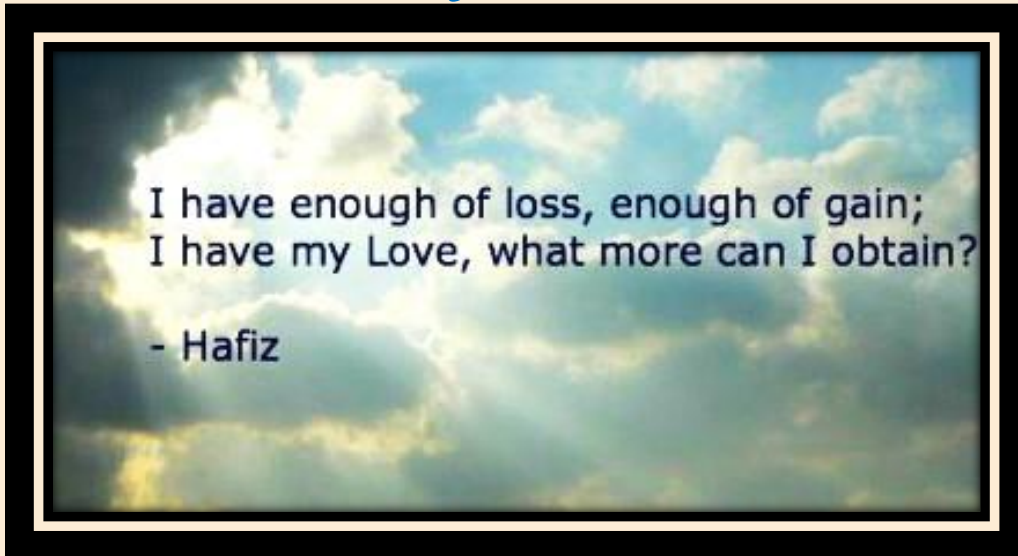
She added: “The influence of women in shaping society and the character of future generations cannot be overstated. Banani International School’s contribution to Zambia’s development is exemplified by its graduates, women who are motivated by service to their communities, who possess an upright character

and play pivotal roles in the advancement of society in every sphere—including the family, the local community, industry, and government.”

Echoing these sentiments, Sylvia Masiye, a Banani alumna and now an international tax practitioner, shared her perspective: “I can think of very few learning institutions that equip the girl child with a mindset to pursue individual excellence yet remain alive to the need to be of service to society.

“In an increasingly challenging world, my hope is for Banani School to continue to gift the global community with young women with bold dreams to transform our common home.”

Poem of the month:



From the pages of history

The effects of Baha'u'llah's visit to Nur and the Vazir's dream of Baha'u'llah

Baha'u'llah's visit to Nur had produced the most far-reaching results, and had lent a remarkable impetus to the spread of the new-born Revelation. By His magnetic eloquence, by the purity of His life, by the dignity of His bearing, by the unanswerable logic of His argument, and by the many evidences of His loving-kindness, Baha'u'llah had won the hearts of the people of Nur, had stirred their souls, and had enrolled them under the standard of the Faith. Such was the effect of words and deeds, as He went about preaching the Cause and revealing its glory to His countrymen in Nur, that the very stones and trees of that district seemed to have been quickened by the waves of spiritual power which emanated from His person. All things seemed to be endowed with a new and more abundant life, all things seemed to be proclaiming aloud: "Behold, the Beauty of God has been made manifest! Arise, for He has come in all His glory." The people of Nur, when Baha'u'llah had departed from out their midst, continued to propagate the Cause and to consolidate its foundations. A number of them endured the severest afflictions for His sake; others quaffed with gladness the cup of martyrdom in His path. Mazindaran in general, and Nur in particular, were thus distinguished from the other provinces and districts of Persia, as being the first to have eagerly embraced the Divine Message. The district of Nur, literally meaning "light," which lay embedded within the mountains of Mazindaran, was the first to catch the rays of the

Sun that had arisen in Shiraz, the first to proclaim to the rest of Persia, which still lay enveloped in the shadow of the vale of heedlessness, that the Day-Star of heavenly guidance had at length arisen to warm and illuminate the whole land.

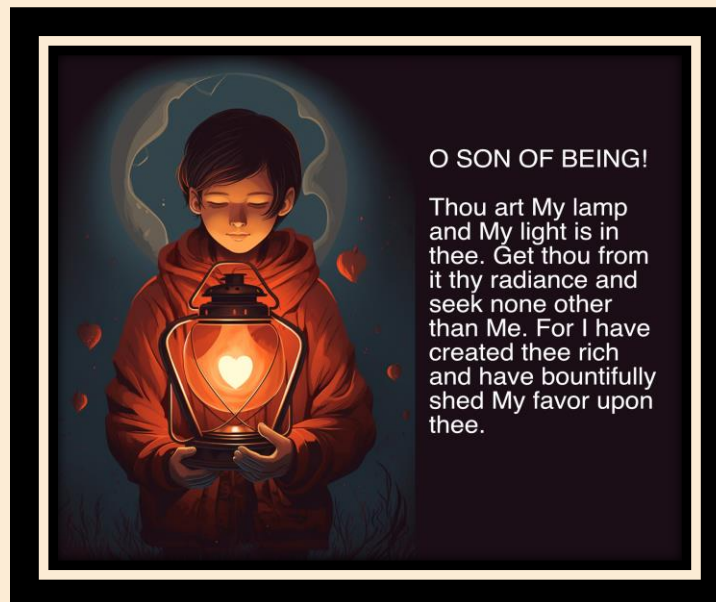
When Baha'u'llah was still a child, the Vazir, His father, dreamed a dream. Baha'u'llah appeared to him swimming in a vast, limitless ocean. His body shone upon the waters with a radiance that illumined the sea. Around His head, which could distinctly be seen above the waters, there radiated, in all directions, His long, jet-black locks, floating in great profusion above the waves. As he dreamed, a multitude of fishes gathered round Him, each holding fast to the extremity of one hair. Fascinated by the effulgence of His face, they followed Him in whatever direction He swam. Great as was their number, and however firmly they clung to His locks, not one single hair seemed to have been detached from His head, nor did the least injury affect His person. Free and unrestrained, He moved above the waters and they all followed Him.

The Vazir, greatly impressed by this dream, summoned a soothsayer, who had achieved fame in that region, and asked him to interpret it for him. This man, as if inspired by a premonition of the future glory of Baha'u'llah, declared: "The limitless ocean that you have seen in your dream, O Vazir, is none other than the world of being. Single-handed and alone, your son will achieve supreme ascendancy over it. Wherever He may please, He will proceed unhindered. No one will resist His march, no one will hinder His progress. The multitude of fishes signifies the turmoil which He will arouse amidst the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Around Him will they gather, and to Him will they cling. Assured of the unfailing protection of the Almighty, this tumult will never harm His person, nor will His loneliness upon the sea of life endanger His safety."

That soothsayer was subsequently taken to see Baha'u'llah. He looked intently upon His face, and examined carefully His features. He was charmed by His appearance, and extolled every trait of His countenance. Every expression in that face revealed to his eyes a sign of His concealed glory. So great was his admiration, and so profuse his praise of Baha'u'llah, that the Vazir, from that day, became even more passionately devoted to his son. The words spoken by that soothsayer served to fortify his hopes and confidence in Him. Like Jacob, he desired only to ensure the welfare of his beloved Joseph, and to surround Him with his loving protection. -THE DAWN-BREAKERS & NABIL'S NARRATIVE

Sharing

Douglas's sharing:



Badi's sharing:

I lost my sweet, quiet nephew Mehrdad to cancer. Please, please pray for the progress of his soul.



News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities

Things You Need to Know About Hinduism (Part two)



7) Hindus pray to different aspects of the Divine

Hindus pray to different forms of Brahman as manifestations of particular divine qualities or powers. For example: Ganesh is honored by Hindus (as well as sometimes by followers of other Indian religions) as the remover of obstacles and honored for his great wisdom, and is often invoked before beginning any important task or project; Saraswati is the Goddess associated with learning and wisdom; Lakshmi is worshipped as the Goddess of Prosperity. God is believed to have taken human form of Rama to show people how to live the path of Dharma. Krishna is said to have come to eradicate evil and protect good. Shiva is worshipped as the lord of time and change. Furthermore, the prominence of each of the aspects of the Divine varies depending on the lineage of the individual Hindu.

8) Hindus use images in worship to make the infinite comprehensible to the human mind

Hindus represent the various forms of God in consecrated images called murti. A murti can be made of wood, stone, or metals (and sometimes can be naturally occurring, rather than fashioned by human hands). Murti offer a way to visualize and meditate upon Brahman, which due to its infinite nature is believed to be beyond the grasp of the human mind. Murti is often inaccurately translated as 'idol' but a more accurate translation is 'embodiment'. Hindu families conduct their daily worship at home altars and also at temples on special occasions. Many Hindus consult gurus (recognized spiritual teachers and guides) for advice or answers to spiritual questions.

9) Hindus believe the soul is eternal and is reborn in different forms

*Hindus believe that the soul, atman, is eternal. When the physical body dies the soul is reborn in another body. This continuous cycle of life, death, and rebirth is called samsara. Rebirth is governed by **karma**: the principle that every action (be it physical or mental) has a result, like cause and effect. What an individual experiences in this life is the result of their past actions, either actions they have already taken in this life or actions from a past life. How an individual acts today impacts the future, both in terms of effects felt later on in this life or in a future birth. Though the effects of karma make certain actions easier or more difficult to take, just as our personal habits influence our lives, this is not a deterministic or fatalistic system. Rather, we all have the ability to freely choose how to act in any situation.*

10) Hindus believe we each have four goals in life

*Hindus believe we have **four goals in life**: **Dharma** (conducting ourselves in a way conducive to spiritual advancement), **Artha** (the pursuit of material prosperity), **Kama** (enjoyment of the material world), and **Moksha** (liberation from the attachments caused by dependence on the material world and from the cycle of birth and rebirth).*

11) There are four paths to Moksha

*Hindu scripture outline four primary paths to experience God's presence and ultimately obtain **the fourth goal, moksha**. These paths are not mutually exclusive and can be pursued simultaneously depending on an individual's inclination. These paths are: **Karma Yoga** (performing one's duties selflessly), **Bhakti Yoga** (loving God through devotion and service), **Jnana Yoga** (study and contemplating sacred texts), and **Raja Yoga** (physically preparing the body and mind to allow deep meditation and introspection, so as to overcome suffering caused by material attachments).*

12) Hinduism acknowledges the potential for truth in other religions

*Hinduism is a deeply pluralistic tradition, promoting respect for other religions and acknowledges the potential for truth in them. Hindus see the varieties of religions and philosophies as different ways to understand and relate to God. This philosophy leads to pluralism within Hinduism and outside of it. **The core philosophy of Hinduism** is the search for truth, not the specific path taken. A quote from the Vedas that summarizes the Hindu perspective is, "Truth is one; the wise call it by various names."*

From the editor's desk

How Does the Philosophy of Karma Fit into Science and Religion?

As a Baha'i, I have always tried to believe in the harmony of science and religion and wanted to see the two sides of a given concept. The law of karma is one of them, and I wanted to see a scientific explanation for it. In my years of stay in India, I could see the effect of this belief on people and how it made them conscious of their actions. For those who have not heard about it is a concept familiar to Buddhists, Hindu, Jain and many other religious traditions—essentially that every action has a consequence, that good actions will inevitably have good consequences.

Most people believe in this law, which basically states that the intent and actions of any individual will influence his or her future. That's a wonderful thing because any concept that makes us think about the consequences of our actions will help us become better people—which in turn will make the world a better place.

In a scientific sense, the closest I came to compare the law of karma was Newton's third law of motion. Simply put, this law states that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Newton proposed it in order to describe the laws of physics in the material universe—but it also expresses the truth of our spiritual reality. In fact, karma and Newton's third law both express the same thing, and when combined together, they express something even more profound—the essential harmony of science and religion.

The Baha'i writings explicitly endorse that harmony.

“Religion and Science are inter-twined with each other and cannot be separated. These are the two wings with which humanity must fly. One wing is not enough.” – Abdu'l-Baha

According to the basic Sanskrit definition, karma simply means “action.” In essence, everything

We do create a corresponding energy that comes back to us in some form or another-or, as the common phrase says, "what goes around comes around." Newton's third law states: For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. We know that physical force, when applied, will cause a reaction, and that no force or energy vanishes into nothing.

These two laws may explain why all the religions and philosophers have universally agreed on the concept of the Golden Rule, which has been expressed in different wordings in many religions. What one puts in, whether physical or spiritual, that same energy will eventually come back. The Golden Rule makes us aware of our actions.

Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. – **Buddhism**

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the law and the prophets. – **Christianity**

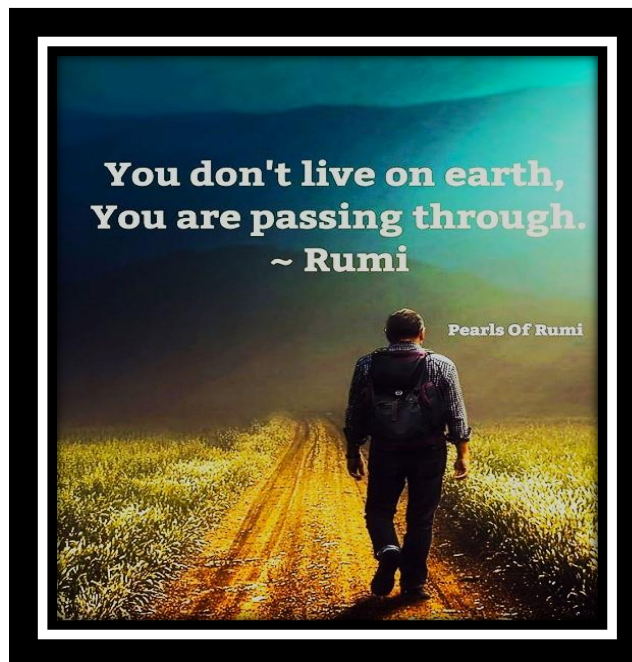
This is the sum of duty; do naught onto others what you would not have them do unto you. – **Hinduism**

Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself. – **Islam**

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it. – **Judaism**

So to me, whether I look at my actions through Newton's law, the law of karma, or the Golden Rule, the conclusion becomes very clear. Those immutable laws tell me that I should be very considerate and mindful of my actions because they always have consequences. In a sense, I create my own happiness, misery, or my hell and heaven.

Famous quotes:



Holy Writings to Ponder and Practice

“If it be Thy pleasure, make me to grow as a tender herb in the meadows of Thy grace, that the gentle winds of Thy will may stir me up and bend me into conformity with Thy pleasure, in such wise that my movement and my stillness may be wholly directed by Thee.” -Bahá'u'lláh

Upcoming Events:

Coming feast, Sharaf/Honour, December 30, 2023

Next feast, Sultan/Sovereignty, January 18, 2024

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