



# Port Alberni Nuggets

Volume 3, Issue No.17

Sultan/Sovereignty, 180, BE

## Baha'i Quote of the Month



## Baha'i Stories:

### **Disintegration**

*The Master went to the public park, which He greatly enjoyed. Walking by a lake, He saw the remains of the few marble pillars left by the 1906 earthquake. Looking at them, He said, "The world and its condition will change to such a degree and the Bahá'í Cause will prevail to such an extent that nothing but a remnant – like these pillars will remain of the previous order." -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 Jaipur and Rajasthan.*



## The Bahá'í World News Service

### COP28: Broader Conception of Human Progress Needed



**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates** — *In order to address the climate crisis, a searching examination of notions of human progress and development is needed, emphasized the delegates from the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) at the recent COP28 climate conference.*

*Recognizing the limitations of a purely materialistic viewpoint, they highlighted the need for a broader understanding of progress that encompasses both the material and spiritual development of individuals and societies.*

*Daniel Perell, a representative of the BIC New York Office and member of the BIC's delegation, expanded on this perspective, noting: "The prevailing global conditions, shaped by dominant narratives*

*of competition and consumption, call for alternative narratives anchored in principles, including such values as compassion, trustworthiness, and generosity.”*

*Roeia Thabet, from the Bahá’i Office of External Affairs in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), underscored the need to rethink relationships among social actors in light of a more expansive view of progress, one that reflects the principle of the oneness of humanity.*

*Dr. Thabet said: “True progress calls for a transformation not just in individual actions but in the relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions. Cultivating these relationships to be increasingly characterized by cooperation and reciprocity is essential to fostering societies that are in harmony with the environment.”*

*Mr. Perell and Dr. Thabet were joined in the BIC delegation to the conference by Hatem El-Hady from the BIC Cairo Office, Gabriela Rawhani from the BIC Geneva Office, Cecilia Schirmeister and Saphira Rameshfar from the BIC New York Office, Roya Hassan from the UAE, and Ian Hamilton from the United States.*

### **Glimpses of BIC’s participation at COP28**

*Provided below are a few highlights from contributions of the BIC delegation to discussions at COP28, during which representatives explored themes such as the interdependence of humanity, the need for shared values that can guide actions and initiatives aimed at social progress, and the application of spiritual principles to environmental action.*

*In his comments, Mr. Perell highlighted the necessity of reevaluating traditional leadership qualities in the context of climate action. “Humility, generosity, compassion, and love are qualities that transcend gender. While historically confined to the realm of ‘care,’ and undervalued in leadership, we are now recognizing their immense value in guiding effective leadership.”*

*Mr. Perell emphasized that these attributes, often associated with the feminine, are human qualities attainable and necessary for all, regardless of gender.*

*She emphasized the need to bridge the gap between knowledge and action in transforming food systems, anchored in spiritual principles such as justice.*

*Ms. Rawhani stated: “The analogy of humanity as one body illustrates our interconnectedness. If one part of the body is in pain, the entire body is affected, much like how one section of society’s challenges affects the whole of society.*

*“True progress and transformation of our food systems will come from seeing ourselves as a whole, not just looking out for the interests of a few.”*

*He stated that “shared values are needed as we move to that realization that we have one common objective, one common challenge as humanity to save this planet, and one common opportunity to work together in unity.”*

## Poem of the month:

### **STAY TRUE**

Life is a complicated mystery,  
Much like a maze.  
It has so many crossroads,  
Feels like wandering in a haze.

There are times you want to run,  
But you must gracefully stop.  
And when you want to rest,  
You will be forced into a painful hop.

The turns and twists are sudden,  
They appear out of the blue.  
And if you want to make it,  
You should know how to be true.

If you're true to yourself,  
The way will be clear.  
But if others cloud your actions,  
Your heart will always be in fear.

If you're true to your journey,  
It will let you learn and lead.  
But if you just want to reach the end,  
You will keep falling off your steed.

It takes courage to traverse the ups and downs,  
And humility to learn what went wrong.  
It takes resilience to keep your flame strong,  
And optimism to hum a grateful song.

The journey takes every bit and atom of you,  
But it will transform and make you new.  
Don't worry, you will pass through,  
Just stay true, just stay true.

*Tahera*



## From the pages of history

### Baha'u'llah's visit to Nur after Mulla Husayn's arrival in Tihran

*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.<sup>(1)</sup> 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*

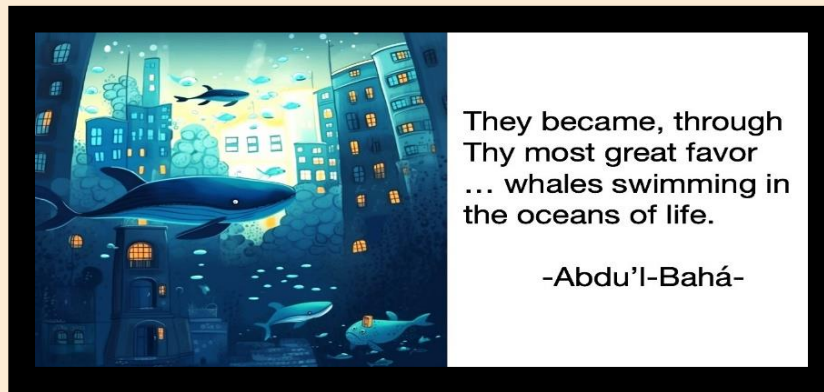


arguments or to belittle the Cause which He so ably expounded. They admired the loftiness of His enthusiasm and the profundity of His thoughts, and were deeply impressed by His detachment and self-effacement.

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

  
**Ha-Shilth-Sa**  
Canada's Oldest First Nation's Newspaper

## Finding the Red Road: A Family Breaks Free From Addiction



### **Anacala, BC**

*It started with alcohol addiction for 50-year-old Jacquie Dennis of Huu-ay-aht, and eventually this led to hard drugs. In 2013 Jacquie first used crystal meth with her boyfriend in Vancouver.*

*“He used, I saw it always happening everywhere, so I decided to try it,” she recalled.*

*It was her boyfriend that gave her the first shot of crystal meth.*

*“That first rush, the first high is what I chased, but you keep trying and never get it,” she said.*

*Dennis was in addiction with her adult children in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. They have all kicked their habits and are living back at home in Anacala, where they support one another in sobriety.*

*“I want to share my story of where we’ve been, where we are now, and let people know that recovery is possible,” she told Ha-Shilth-Sa.*

*Jacquie is now the housekeeping manager for one of the Huu-ay-aht businesses. Her son and daughter work with her at the motel.*

*Dennis said her addictions started long before hard drugs.*

*“It started off with alcohol addiction since I was 14 or 15. I was in very abusive relationship, in every sense of the word. When I broke free, I had all kinds of freedom. It was too much freedom. I was doing anything and everything,” she recalled.*

*She wound up moving in with her brother in Vancouver and got into partying.*

*“I was pushing carts and selling stuff on the skids,” she shared.*

*If she misses anything, it’s the amount of money she could make on the streets.*

*“Downtown Eastside is crazy, and it was hard to leave,” she said.*

*Through dumpster diving, Dennis remembered finding \$860 in cash and another time she found Rolex watch.*

### **‘Whenever I started getting into my feelings I’d use’**

*Over time, her children followed her to the streets. Stephane Dennis, 32, also says his addictions started with alcohol when he was in his teens.*

*“I started drinking at a young age and a lot of it is a blur,” he shared.*

*Over time he began using drugs.*

*“It started with cocaine and crack then I moved on to the harder stuff, like heroin,” he said. “I used anything at anytime.”*

*Dani Dennis, now 30, said her addictions started with alcohol when she was about 13 years old.*

*“I started just for fun but by the time I was 15, I was in a juvenile detention centre for doing stupid shit when I was drunk,” said Dani.*

*She was given the option of time in juvenile detention or an alcohol treatment centre. She chose alcohol treatment.*

*"I was sober for about six months," she remembers.*

*Dani says that while she has done drugs, it was never as much of a problem for her as alcohol was. She recalls never being in one place for long. She was in foster care and sent to live with her father at one point.*

*"I kept running away," she said.*

*On her own at age 19, Dani went back to Vancouver. She lived in an apartment with her boyfriend but was kicked out due to her excessive drinking. By the time she was 20 she was on DTES where she stayed for about eight years.*

*Concerned about getting addicted to drugs, Dani and her best friend made a pact.*

*"If we found ourselves doing more drugs than drinking, well, we'd wind up going to buy a bottle and drink some more," she said.*

*In 2018, after five years on the DTES, Jacquie went back to Vancouver Island.*

*"My son pleaded for me to come home but I didn't want to. For him, I did it, but he died four days later on April 15, 2018," she said.*

*Her son, Fabian, had overdosed.*

*"For four years I honestly thought he was still alive. I couldn't wrap my head around him being gone," said Dennis.*

*She already lost a son in 1992 to sudden infant death syndrome, also known as crib death.*

*"I got more into addiction. Whenever I started getting into my feelings I'd use," said Jacquie.*

*The loss was equally difficult for Stephane.*

*"I went hard after he passed," he said, adding that the family suffered many losses in a short amount of time.*

*Jacquie had returned to Vancouver when she got word that her mother had cancer.*

*"I came back to take care of her, I put the majority of my addictions on the back burner while I cared for her," she shared.*

*One day, while at her mother's home, Jacquie found a full needle in her purse.*

*"I never used at my mom's, and I wondered if she knew how to use Narcan," said Dennis.*

*She prepared the needle for injection, thinking it was crystal meth.*

*"The moment I took the tie off I knew I was fucked. Something was seriously wrong," said Dennis.*

*She remembers calling for her mother.*

*"Mom said I made it from bathroom to kitchen, called out her and fell," said Jacquie. "It was pure heroin in my system, I overdosed in my mom's arms, literally died in her harms."*

*But she survived because there was a Narcan kit there and the ambulance was called.*

*"By rights I should be dead but by the grace of God, I'm here for a reason."*

*Dennis' mother fought cancer for seven months before passing away on June 30, 2020.*

## **Asking for protection**

*"For about five months I was on a downward spiral. At that point I didn't want to use needles anymore," Jacquie remembered. "I wrote a letter to my mom and late sons, asking them to protect me and to ... when I burned that letter, I swear I could not get the needle in anymore."*

*As hard as she tried, Jacquie felt like she could not get high.*

*"One night I bought \$100 worth of dope. I flushed it down the toilet," said Dennis, adding that she believes it was her mom and sons that guided her.*

*She also credits her remaining children for her motivation to get clean.*

*"They were stuck in addiction with me in Vancouver, homeless, alcoholics," said Dennis.*

*There was a lady at the SRO, single-room-occupancy, old hotel rooms used to house the homeless, who gave Dennis good advice.*

*"She told me to lead by example. Her words stuck," said Jacquie.*

*Shortly after Dennis left the streets, her children followed her.*

*"I had to get sober to help them," she said.*

*Dani says she never had much contact with her mother growing up, but Jacquie would invite her home to Bamfield.*

*"My best friend shacked up and moved away and I was thinking, what am I doing down here (DTES)," said Dani.*

*On welfare day, Dani made up her mind to go to her mother's house.*

*"If I didn't leave then, it would have probably been a long time before I would think about going there," she said.*

*She showed up on her mother's doorstep late one night nearly a year ago.*

*"On November 2, I will be one year sober," said Dani, laughing that she has no plans for celebrating the milestone. "It's just another day."*

## **Difficulty getting Methadone treatment**

*"My mom and sister were the first to clean up," said Stephane.*

*It was over a year ago that he called his mother from Port Alberni and asked her to pick him up.*

*"I was in a bad place in Port Alberni, people were attacking me all the time, fighting over drugs," said Stephane.*

*He tried quitting at least five times before but never lasted more than a week, each time. This time, he was able to sustain sobriety thanks to access to Methadone.*

*"It's hard to get and I didn't know a doctor that prescribed it," Stephane shared.*

*His former girlfriend knew a doctor that is licensed to prescribe the drug, which is an opioid, as is heroin or opium. Methadone maintenance treatment is used to treat opioid dependence.*

*"It's an addiction in itself," said Stephane, who says he is still being prescribed the medication. "My doctor is helping me to lower the dose."*

*He credits his mother and sister for his sobriety.*

*The family are all working together at the motel. Stephane says he is happy there and learning new things all the time. But he also credits himself for the time and effort he's put in to getting clean.*

*"It took me a lot of tries to do this and people that go back after all this time don't usually survive," he shared.*

*Jacquie also credits her brother, Qiic Qiica (Robert Dennis Jr.), for inspiring her to get clean. In January, Jacquie will be three years clean.*

*She dreams of helping others get sober. She remembered how hard it was to get Stephane methadone when he left the streets.*

*"It's a challenge, there are so many hoops you have to jump through," said Jacquie.*

*Jacquie wants to do outreach work, and envisions Nuu-chah-nulth people going out to contact the people in all major urban centers.*

*"I want to see them develop trusting relationships and have the ability to bring them somewhere to get clean," she said, adding that for now, it's difficult to get someone into treatment when they want it.*

*Dennis wants to be involved in the decision-making and recently ran for council with her nation.*

*"When son came home, to get him on Methadone was a challenge, and he wanted detox, but Vancouver Island only has 11 beds, and you need a referral. A walk-in detox centre would be ideal," said Jacquie.*

*For now, she collects and distributes food, clothes, blankets, and tents to the homeless people.*

*"They say to me, you're an inspiration Jacquie, I want to you to help me," she shared. "I would love to go out and speak to at-risk youth."*

*And for those wondering what it's like to get high on drugs, Jacquie has this to say, "Don't do it. It took everything from me. It took my children from me."*



*“I recover out loud in hopes that my journey can inspire others,” she added. “I am currently enrolled in a community mental health and addictions course at VIU.”  
From there she will begin a two-year social work program.*

## *From the editor's desk*

### **Mass Shootings: What Can We Possibly Do About Them?**

*A dear friend of mine, who knows that I write articles, said: “There was another shooting in the US. What about an article relating to this?”*

*My field is economics, so I initially felt hesitant—but I reminded myself about the many years I worked in the school system, where my first and foremost responsibility was protecting my precious students from the usual dramas and bullying.*

*I told my friend that I would try, so this is my attempt to share what is in my heart about these horrible mass shootings.*

*At the outset, I admitted that I didn't have all the solutions. I'm uncomfortable even tackling the subject due to its explosive and political nature, the emotions it evokes, and especially my personal experience with violence. Also, as a Baha'i, I will not insert myself into the party politics that have become so tied up in this issue. But these horrific killings must stop, so let's see if we can come up with some starting points.*

*We have to remember these mass shooters—these killers of children—did not come from the moon or other planets. They were and are our kids, students, neighbours, cousins, and even friends. Many of them were almost invisible to us, but yet they existed, and most of us missed the signs of their struggles. We failed to see how ill-equipped they were to deal with the realities around them, and as a consequence, we did not help them.*

*As you can already see, I want to take a self-examining approach first and foremost, although there are other contributing factors. I believe we spend very little time exploring our own roles in this crisis, and consequently, we don't do enough to discover how we can empower ourselves to do our part in avoiding these tragedies.*

*There are things we can do as individuals. We can pay attention to those who are ignored, bullied, or ostracized; we can show them that we care, build alternative activities that allow them some respite from their negative environments, and connect them to positive, welcoming people and courses and group activities. For example, we can connect them with youth activities focusing on spiritual*

*exploration and serving the community. We could do countless things if we cared enough and loved enough.*

*The Baha'i teachings ask us to love everyone because God knows that love is the real solution in His wisdom. Abdu'l-Baha, who exemplified love all his life through his actions, said:*

**“Love gives life to the lifeless. Love lights a flame in the heart that is cold. Love brings hope to the hopeless and gladdens the hearts of the sorrowful. In the world of existence, there is indeed no greater power than the power of love.” – Abdu'l-Baha**

*When I worked in the school system, I had some sleepless nights worrying about some of the kids who were so full of anger and frustration that I was afraid that they might do some harm to themselves or others. You might ask: Why were those students so hurt and angry? I would say because they were not getting enough love, care and attention. Most were deeply lonely, believing strongly that nobody understood or cared about them. They craved love, but they were getting anger, punishment and disciplinary rules that aimed to set them right without addressing the root cause of their problems.*

*I am not trying to portray the mass shooters as innocent victims. I am fully aware that complex issues are involved and deeply rooted personal and societal problems. Yet, in some ways, they are, perhaps like you and I, victims of a very common disease, a deficiency in love. In most cases, the essentially spiritual remedy of love can work much more effectively and pre-emptively than legal deterrents, although both are needed.*

*We could arm more people to protect the schools, install more metal detectors, and do more body searches to confiscate weapons, but those approaches would never have more than a limited effect at best. I wish we would also spend time and resources on how, as a society, we can reach out to those angry and hurting individuals before they choose violence.*

*How can we as human beings lessen the emotional burden of people that may lead them down an awful path? The Baha'i teachings say we can take action to truly begin to address the problem:*

**“Love manifests its reality in deeds, not only in words—these alone are without effect.” – Abdu'l-Baha**


*If we cared for and loved all human beings and did so with deeds rather than words, I believe most of those shooters would choose a different path. I witnessed the drastic change that love and caring made for many of my own students, who I honestly thought might do some harm. In all my years of dealing with troubled kids, I learned to look beyond their anger and bad behaviour and the barriers they put up to not get hurt because behind all that, usually, a scared person just wanted to be accepted and loved.*

Issues such as a lack of proper gun control, easy availability of weapons, violent video games, and other suspects in this sad affair are legitimate concerns. But I suggest we also look at ourselves and resolve to befriend the sad and alienated before they become a danger to society.

By being aware of our potential power as a preventive agent in these mass shootings, combined with proper legal prevention measures and reasonable safety precautions, we can dream of a day when these tragedies will be nothing but a bizarre footnote in a sadder and darker period of human history.

### Famous quotes:

**SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS ON GIVING/GENEROSITY**

-  "The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing." - Islam
-  "May Obedience conquer disobedience within this house, and generous giving over avarice, reverence over contempt, speech with truthful words over lying utterance." - Zoroastrianism
-  "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed." - Judaism
-  "Giving is pure when it is given from the heart to the right person at the right time and at the right place, and when we expect nothing in return." - Hinduism
-  "We must be like the fountain or spring that is continually emptying itself of all that it has and is continually being refilled from an invisible source. To be continually giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by fear of poverty and reliant on the unflinching bounty of the Source of all wealth and all good — this is the secret of right living." - Baha'i Faith
-  "If people knew, as I know, the results of giving and sharing, they would not eat without having given, nor would they allow the stain of stinginess to obsess them and take root in their minds. Even if it were their last morsel, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared it, if there were someone to share it with" - Buddhism
-  "Feed the hungry! Help those in trouble! Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you shall be as bright as day. And the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy you with all good things, and keep you healthy too; and you will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring." - Christianity

### Holy Writings to Ponder and Practice

"It makes no difference whether you have ever heard of Baha'u'llah or not," was the answer, "the man who lives the life according to the Teachings of Baha'u'llah is already a Baha'i. On the other hand a man may call himself a Baha'i for fifty years and if he does not live the life he is not a Baha'i." -Abdu'l-Baha

### Upcoming Events:

Coming feast, Sultan/Sovereignty, January 18, 2024

Next feast, Mulk/Dominion, February 7, 2024

Contact us at: [bshams@telus.net](mailto:bshams@telus.net)