



Port Alberni Nuggets

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Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

Ridvan

The Governor of Baghdad at this time was a relative of my father, but his enemy on account of differences in religious opinion and family misunderstandings. This man, rendered uncomfortable by the sight of my father's increasing fame and influence, exerted himself to effect his removal from Baghdad. He caused representations to be made to the Shah of Persia that, whereas Beha Ullah had been driven out of Persia because of the harm threatened by his presence to the Mohammedan religion in that country, now he was injuring the religion even more in Baghdad, and still exerting his evil influence in Persia; and that therefore he ought to be removed to a place at a greater distance from that country, and one where he could do less harm.

These representations and suggestions he sent repeatedly to the Court of Persia, until at length the Shah was moved to use his influence with the Sultan of Turkey to have the Bábís transferred from Baghdad to Constantinople. An order to this effect was at length made by the Sultan.

When this news came to us, from which we inferred that my father would again be made a prisoner, we were thrown into consternation, fearing another separation. He was summoned before the magistrates. My brother imperiously declared that he would go in his stead; but this our father overruled, and went himself. Great numbers of his followers had assembled about our house, and these witnessed his departure with many demonstrations of grief, feeling that it was possible that he might not return,

The magistrates expressed great sorrow to my father; they said that they respected and loved him, that they had not instigated the order, but that they were powerless to suspend or modify it, and must proceed with its execution. My father remained in conference with them nearly all day, but could do nothing to avert the catastrophe. When he returned, he told us that we must prepare to set out for Constantinople in two weeks.

This report was like a death-knell to his followers, who were still gathered about the house. Many of them were Arabs; their fierce natures rebelled and they gave way to violent remonstrances. They implored the Blessed Perfection not to desert them. 'You are our shepherd,' they said; 'without you we must die.'

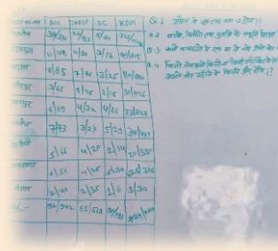
The next day they so overran the house that we could not prepare for the journey. Then the Blessed Perfection proposed to go with Abbas Effendi to the garden of one of our friends and live there in a tent till the time of departure, that the family might be able to proceed with the packing. This remark was repeated and misunderstood, and the rumour circulated among the believers that the Blessed Perfection was to be taken away alone. Then they came pouring in by hundreds, so wild with grief that they could not be pacified; and when my father started to leave the house with my brother they threw themselves upon the ground before him. One man who had an only child, which had come to him late in his life, stripped the clothes from the child's body and placing it at my father's feet cried, 'Naked I give you my child, my precious child, to do with as you will; only promise not to leave us in distress. Without you we cannot live.'

Then, as the only way in which to soothe his followers, the Blessed Perfection took all his family to the garden, leaving to friends the preparation of his household goods for the journey. Here we pitched tents and lived in them for two weeks. The tents made, as it were, a little village, that of my father, which he occupied alone, in the centre. -Myron Henry Phelps and Bahiyyih Khánum, Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi

News and Events:

News from our twin community of Jaipur, India

The usual activities of JY groups, children's classes, prayer meetings, and devotionals continue with great zeal and their numbers and frequencies. Naw-Ruz was celebrated in traditional style in Jaipur and got coverage in the local newspapers. It was also celebrated in other towns and villages. The goals were reviewed in Todabhim Bahai House from January to March 2023, and a new plan was made for April to June.



The Bahá'í World News Service

Brazil: Transcending divisions through a shared identity



BRASÍLIA, Brazil — A recent public hearing held at the National Congress in Brasília, Brazil, examined the role of religion in promoting a shared identity among the diverse populations of the country through recognition of humanity’s spiritual nature.

In her opening remarks, Federal Deputy Erika Kokay of the lower house of Congress emphasized this idea, stating: “Denying our spiritual nature is like tearing out a fundamental aspect of human existence.”

The hearing, which was jointly organized by Brazil’s Bahá’í Office of External Affairs and government officials, included the participation of an interfaith group comprising academics, faith communities, and civil society organizations.

Discussions explored how efforts to overcome deeply rooted prejudices could be strengthened by embracing spiritual principles that enable people to envision themselves as members of one human family.

Luiza Cavalcanti, a member of the Office of External Affairs, stated that at the heart of divisions in society is a crisis of identity. “We are living in a turning point in human history... a period of crisis and transition, both turbulent and promising,” she said.

Mrs. Cavalcanti explained that some groups feel a sense of unity based on narrow identities that often become the basis of opposition against those perceived as “other.”

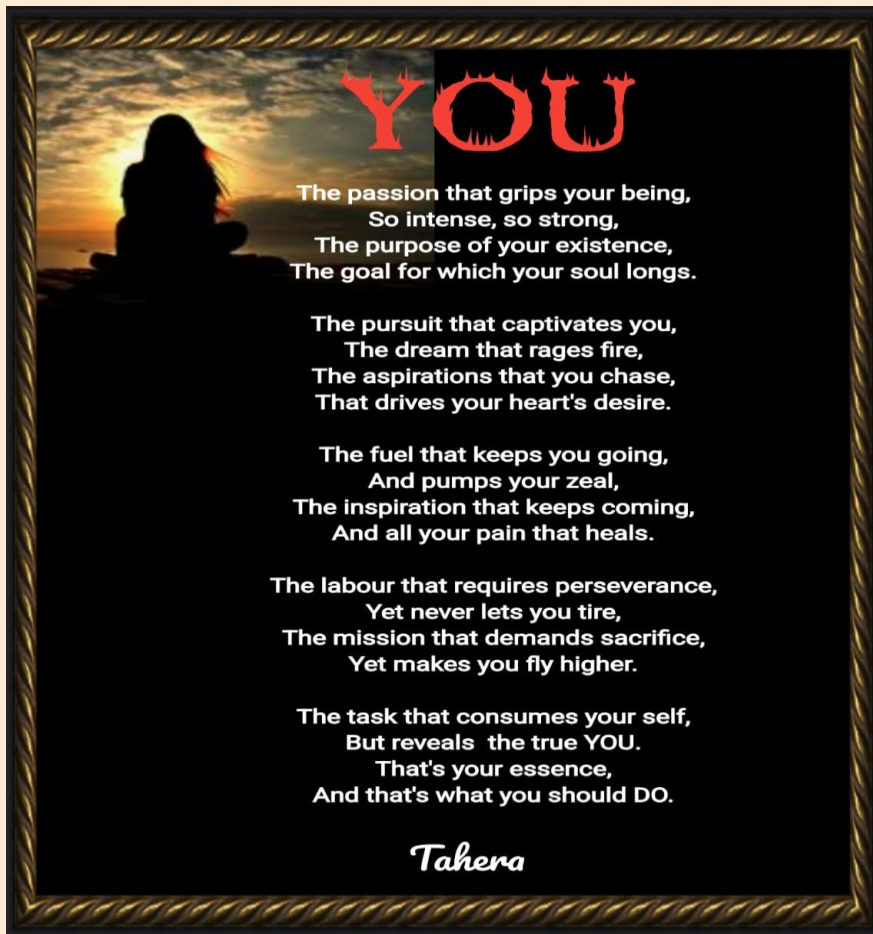
She added that these attitudes eventually become reinforced at the level of culture. “Mistakenly, we assume that our challenge today is to learn to tolerate the culture of ‘others’, and that this is enough.”

The kind of transformation required, stated Mrs. Cavalcanti, calls for “cooperative patterns of human interaction... and the establishment of a broad learning process in our society that enables more and more people and communities to distinguish between those elements of culture that lead to progress and those that lead to oppression and disintegration.”

The establishment of such a learning process, she said, would require guiding principles from religion, such as “unwavering protection of human dignity, the interconnectedness that characterizes all life on the planet,” and justice and consultation as the basis for collective action and decision-making.

The hearing was part of broader efforts of the Office of External Affairs to explore the issue of social justice and transformation of culture with a cross-section of Brazilian society, largely through discussion forums it regularly hosts.

Poem of the month



From the pages of history

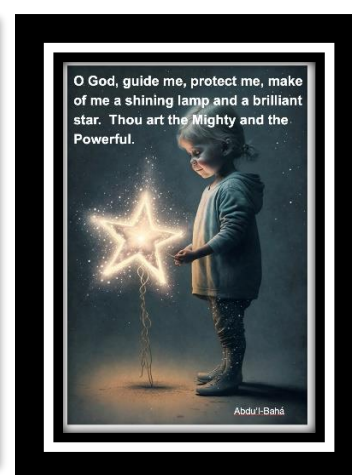
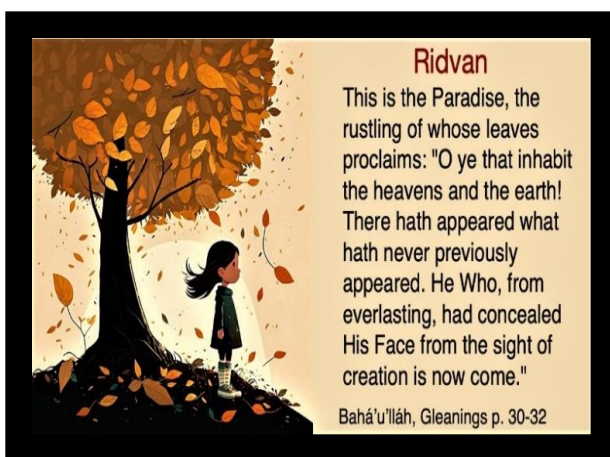
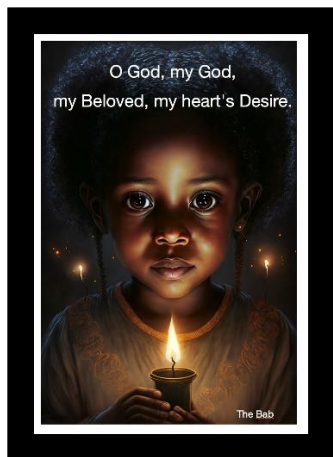
Story of the Sifter of Wheat

The first to embrace the Cause of the Bab in that city was a man, a sifter of wheat, who, as soon as the Call reached his ears, unreservedly accepted the Message. With marvellous devotion he served Mulla Husayn, and through his close association with him became a zealous advocate of the new Revelation. A few years later, when the soul-stirring details of the siege of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi were being recounted to him, he felt an irresistible impulse to throw in his lot with those heroic companions of the Bab who had risen for the defence of their Faith. Carrying his sieve in his hand, he immediately arose and set out to reach the scene of that memorable encounter. "Why leave so hurriedly?" his friends asked him, as they saw him running in a state of intense excitement through the bazaars of Isfahan. "I have risen," he replied, "to join the glorious company of the defenders of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi! With this sieve which I carry with me, I intend to sift the people in every city through which I pass. Whomsoever I

find ready to espouse the Cause I have embraced, I will ask to join me and hasten forthwith to the field of martyrdom." Such was the devotion of this youth, that the Bab, in the Persian Bayan, refers to him in such terms: " Isfahan, that outstanding city, is distinguished by the religious fervour of its shi'ah inhabitants, by the learning of its divines, and by the keen expectation, shared by high and low alike, of the imminent coming of the Sahibu'z-Zaman. In every quarter of that city, religious institutions have been established. And yet, when the Messenger of God had been made manifest, they who claimed to be the repositories of learning and the expounders of the mysteries of the Faith of God rejected His Message. Of all the inhabitants of that seat of learning, only one person, a sifter of wheat, was found to recognise the Truth, and was invested with the robe of Divine virtue!" -THE DAWN-BREAKERS & NABIL'S NARRATIVE

Sharing

Doug Wilson's work and sharing:



News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



Naa?uu, come together and feast, celebrates Tla-o-qui-aht culture with their own narrative



Trading beads from the the early colonial period are displayed with traditional coastal First Nations big house, with art displayed throughout.



The Tin Wis conference room has been converted to resemble an item brought from India, atop a Hudson's Bay Company blanket.

Tofino, BC

Among round tables, in a traditionally inspired longhouse, Naa?uu invites community members to gather and celebrate Tla-o-qui-aht culture for an evening.

On March 16 the evening began with Hjalmer Wenstob, co-host and artistic director for Naa?uu, along with singers welcoming guests with a paddle song. Soon after, the room filled with sounds of laughter and conversation as plates were brimming with salmon, mussels, and bannock, an abundance of coastal cuisine made by Heartwood Kitchen.

Wenstob said this event was an opportunity to tell Tla-o-qui-aht's narrative from their own perspective.

"What we're doing is sharing a history that you may have not heard before," said Wenstob. "A lot of the time Indigenous histories and our own histories aren't told from our perspective, they're told from a perspective other than our own and in that they can get skewed."

Tla-o-qui-aht's story goes back thousands of years before the first contact with Europeans that is commonly spoken about and taught in schools, explained Wenstob.

"The way that we share in public is to tell the story and lead the story in our own words, with our own visuals, with our own dancers, and singers," he said.

Wenstob began with sharing that "the beginning of stories" for Tla-o-qui-aht connects to the ocean, salmon, and cedar.

His account journeyed back many years to "the very beginning of time," Tla-o-qui-aht's creation story.

"The elements around us that really make us and make up who we are," he explained.

A drum began to play, a faint song followed, and as Wenstob shared, a dancer wearing a salmon mask moved across the stage and through the longhouse.

Soon after a dancer, dressed in fur and Joe David's bear mask, slowly moved its way through the crowd. Throughout the night the guardian mask, language mask, Covid mask, and raven mask followed, sharing stories of Tla-o-qui-aht, their connection to the land and their culture, through time.

He shared a story of Captain Robert Gray, who commissioned Tla-o-qui-aht to build the first tall ship on the coast. After Tla-o-qui-aht refused Captain Gray's request to take food, supplies, and women from their community, Gray destroyed over 200 Totem poles and the houses that lined the shoreline of the village of Opitsaht.

"In a time of truth, and in a time of reconciliation...it's really important for you to hear those stories, it's really important for you to hear those truths," shared Wenstob.

In 1984, when Meares Island was at risk of being logged, hereditary chiefs and elders declared it a Tribal Park for protection from logging.

With the 2008 Tribal Parks Declaration, Tribal Park Guardians would then help monitor and implement the Tribal Park plan, explained Tla-o-qui-aht Natural Resources Manager Saya Masso.

Tla-o-qui-aht territory is now divided into four Tribal Parks that encompass their territory: Wah-nuh-jus - Hilth-hoo-is (Meares Island), Tranquil Tribal Park, Ha`uukmin (Kennedy Lake Watershed), and Esowista Tribal Park.

"It's been a tool for us to engage business, for sharing who Tla-o-qui-aht is, to explain how we envision our territories to be used and respected," said Masso.

Through the guardianship program, Masso said Tla-o-qui-aht can benefit from tourism while also mitigating the impacts of it.

According to a 2018 report, Tofino saw a total of 600,000 visitors, with an average of 6,600 daily tourists in July and August.

"If tourists want to come and be here, we want to teach them. We want to have a space of education too," said Wenstob.

Wenstob explains that tourism can be a space where Tla-o-qui-aht culture is revived while also protecting their homeland and giving back to the local communities.

"We started with a story, a story that reflects in the fact that we're known as salmon people, we're known as cedar people, we're known as amazing singers and whalers, because of our connection to this place," said Wenstob as he concludes his segment of Tla-o-qui-aht history at Naaʔuu.

"Who are cedar people without cedar, who are salmon people without salmon, who are whalers without whales?" asked Wenstob. "Our work has changed from harvesting to relationships with sustainability and stewardship, we've had to change to become protectors, we've had the chance to become guardians, guardians of this place."

From the editor's desk:

The Connection Between Spiritual Principles and Financial Planning

I have often been asked by young people or their parents how they should plan to start their economic journey. It is a journey that has caused the ruin of many wise and spiritual individuals as they sink into the depths of the bottomless ocean of materialism.

There is nothing wrong with planning for a successful financial life and becoming wealthy, provided we realize that wealth can be a beautiful and God-given tool to support our families and serve humanity. The emphasis has to be that it is a tool and not the goal of our creation.

We can teach the next generation to plan for their future and not feel guilty about acquiring wealth, provided they include spirituality in their financial plans. A balanced financial plan consists of both material goals and spiritual aspirations. Such a plan has the potential of guiding young people to the full enjoyment of the fruit of their hard work through success financially and spiritually.

The pressure to plan for the future in our materialistic world is a great challenge even for mature adults, so it must be more challenging for the young. With so many crises going on today, it is difficult for many young people to imagine themselves in the future and see their place in it. I think about them and worry for their future — a future that seemingly does not look as bright as it did for me. Added to the age-old sentiment of not being taken seriously by the older generation, they face environmental challenges, fewer job opportunities, and a lack of job security. This pandemic also is a reminder that they may face more challenges of that kind in the future.

In many countries, parents plan for their kids to become doctors, engineers, or follow the family business. Here in the West, the trend is to plan to earn lots of money. In this way, parents have decided their child's life's plan for them, and this support system is outdated. My heart goes out to young people who are trying to chart their path to the future, pressured by the old ways.

Parents may also fail to teach their children the concept of delayed gratification. Delayed gratification means accepting the awareness of life's journey as a long one and planning for it. As Canadian motivational speaker, Brian Tracy put it, "The ability to discipline yourself to delay gratification in the short term in order to enjoy greater rewards in the long term is the indispensable prerequisite for success."

But to protect their children, parents may avoid creating such conditions and seek to protect their children from any form of hardship. In addition, the education system, which should be preparing youth for the future, seems to be failing them. Many of my ex-students confessed that their years in school were wasted since they did not learn the basics of economic life and how to plan a practical economic path for their future.

Unfortunately, the education system has become a stepping stone for material success without considering other aspects of young people's lives — the moral and spiritual aspects. Their schooling may lead them to material success but at the cost of their spiritual and human duties to themselves and humanity as a whole. They become one-sided individuals who have put all their energies into material achievements, forgetting to nurture their souls. Why? Because when they chart their future, they do not consider their spiritual goals.

I am reminded of this quotation:

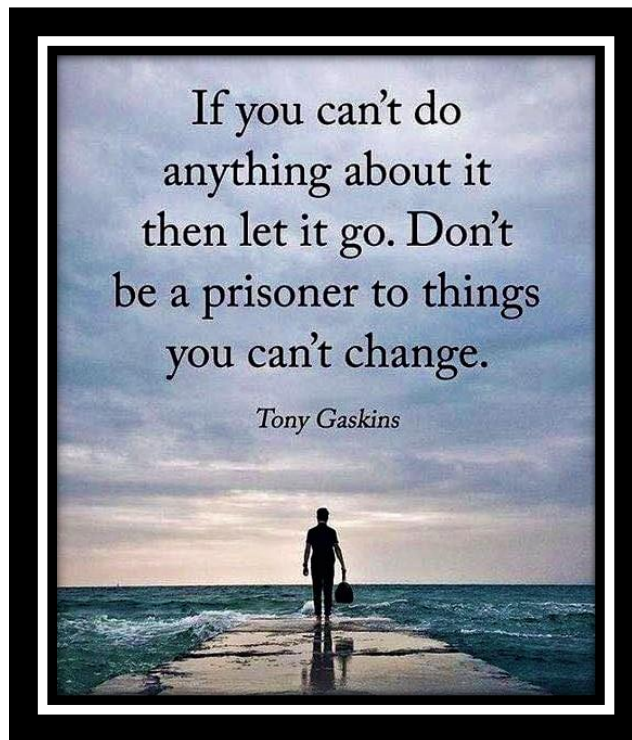
“For man two wings are necessary. One wing is physical power and material civilization; the other is spiritual power and divine civilization. With one wing only, flight is impossible. Two wings are

essential. Therefore, no matter how much material civilization advances, it cannot attain to perfection except through the uplift of spiritual civilization.” - Abdu’l-Baha

The most significant benefit of a balanced economic plan in life is that no matter who charts the financial goals, whether parents or the social trends, youth have the power to attach to it their spiritual and moral goals. If their financial goals fail, spiritual goals can give them peace of mind that they did not waste God’s precious gift of life chasing only economic aims. Spiritual goals also help them avoid the world’s material traps.

We can offer our young generation the best gift by reminding them that they should not forget their spiritual goals, duties, and obligations and ensure that a spiritual plan is integral to their future economic planning.

Famous quotes:



Upcoming Events:

Ridvan, April 21
Next feast, April 9

Contact us at: bshams@telus.net