

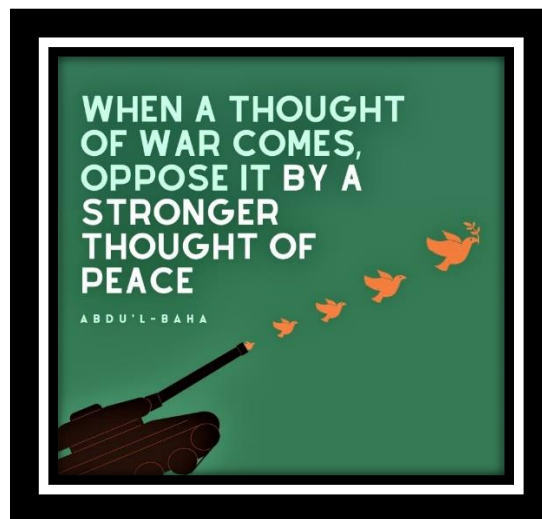


Port Alberni Nuggets

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Asma/Names, 180, BE

Baha'i Quote of the Month



Baha'i Stories:

Guest

Once, when I lived in Baghdad," He [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] went on, "I was invited to the house of a poor thorn-picker. In Baghdad the heat is greater even than in Syria; and it was a very hot day. But I walked twelve miles to the thorn-picker's hut. Then his wife made a little cake out of some meal for Me and burnt it in cooking it, so that it was a black, hard lump. Still that was the best reception I ever attended."
-The Diary of Juliet Thompson

News and Events:

News from our twin community of Jaipur, India

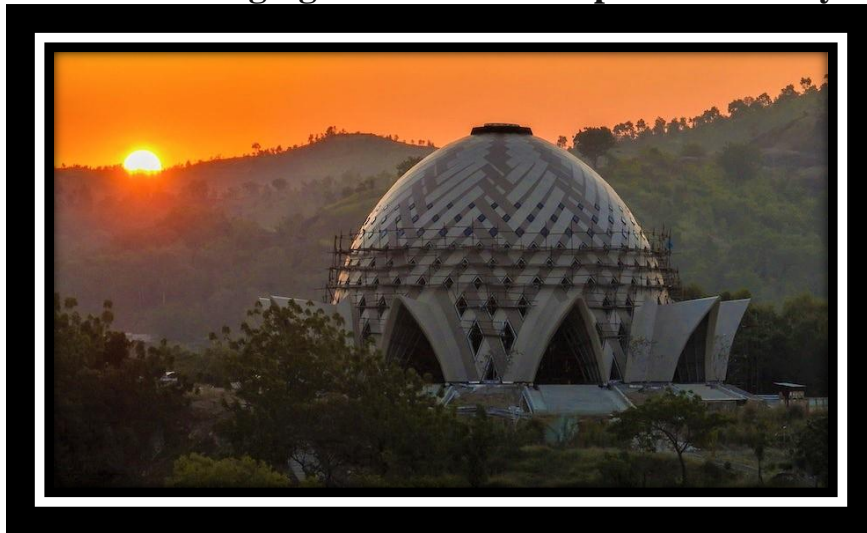
The Local Spiritual Assembly, Jaipur, organized a Welcome back Get-together for Aastha Haghightat, who returned to her hometown, Jaipur, after serving four years in the Holy Land in Haifa, Israel. She shared her experience and memories. The Jaipur Baha'i community is proud of her sacrifice and devotion.

Seven youth studied one of the JY books. Regular Ruhi classes continue to be held in the Jaipur Baha'i Community. A recent stride is a weekly study class (every Sunday) on the abridged version of the Dawnbreakers. Reading the book edited by Mrs. Zena Sorabjee continues to attract the believers and offers a love-filled get-together. Two children's classes and Baha'i youth interacted with other children and teenagers about Baha'i activities and played games with them to boost their morale.



The Bahá'í World News Service

Papua New Guinea: Emerging House of Worship stands as a symbol of unity



PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea — *As the sun rises over Port Moresby, it illuminates a unique woven exterior that wraps the emerging Bahá'í House of Worship in its embrace. The design of the recently completed façade—inspired by traditional weaving—is symbolic of unity and the coming together of people of different backgrounds from across Papua New Guinea.*

In a land enriched by over 1,000 ethnic groups, this sacred structure, now nearing completion, beckons all people. Kevin Tagos, a worker on the site, says, “We come from different parts of Papua New

Guinea and learn from one another. We share stories about the beauty of the House of Worship and how it binds us together.”

Houses of Worship are described in the Bahá'í teachings as vital institutions that exemplify in a tangible form the integration of worship and service. This idea is finding greater expression in the communities surrounding the temple, as growing numbers of people regularly gather at the site to pray and to contemplate how they can serve the needs of their fellow citizens.

Advances in the construction work in recent months can be seen in the images below.



Poem of the month

Bahá'u'lláh

He raised the call,
And the chosen ones answered.

He unsealed the chalice of Immortality,
And the devoted ones drank their fill.

He revealed the treasures of His knowledge,
And the precious ones gathered the hidden gems.

He poured down the rains of His bounty,
And the favoured ones soaked their souls.

He shed the light of His love,
And the beloved ones dazzled in His illumination.

He laid the path,
And the faithful ones marched with steadfast feet.

He shattered the shackles of prejudice,
And the entrusted ones embraced true freedom.

He stirred mankind from slumber,
And the awakened ones girded up their loins.

He breathed life into the whole creation,
And created a new race,

Grateful we are, that we have a share of
His blessings and grace.

Tahera

From the pages of history

Afflictions which befell Quddus and Mulla Sadiq

Husayn Khan ordered the arrest of both Quddus and Mulla Sadiq. The police authorities, to whom they were delivered, were instructed to bring them handcuffed into the presence of the governor. The police also delivered into the hands of Husayn Khan the copy of the *Qayyumu'l-Asma'*, which they had seized from Mulla Sadiq while he was reading aloud its passages to an excited congregation. Quddus, owing to his youthful appearance and unconventional dress, was at first ignored by Husayn Khan, who preferred to direct his remarks to his more dignified and elderly companion. "Tell me," angrily asked the governor, as he turned to Mulla Sadiq, "if you are aware of the opening passage of the *Qayyumu'l-Asma'* wherein the *Siyyid-i-Bab* addresses the rulers and kings of the earth in these terms: 'Divest yourselves of the robe of sovereignty, for He who is the King in truth, hath been made manifest! The Kingdom is God's, the Most Exalted. Thus hath the Pen of the Most High decreed!' If this be true, it must necessarily apply to my sovereign, Muhammad Shah, of the Qajar dynasty,⁽¹⁾ whom I represent as the chief magistrate of this province. Must Muhammad Shah, according to this behest, lay down his crown and abandon his sovereignty? Must I, too, abdicate my power and relinquish my position?" Mulla Sadiq unhesitatingly replied: "When once the truth of the Revelation announced by the Author of these words shall have been definitely established, the truth of whatsoever has fallen from His lips will likewise be vindicated. If these words be the Word of God, the abdication of Muhammad Shah and his like can matter but little. It can in no wise turn aside the Divine purpose, nor alter the sovereignty of the almighty and eternal King."

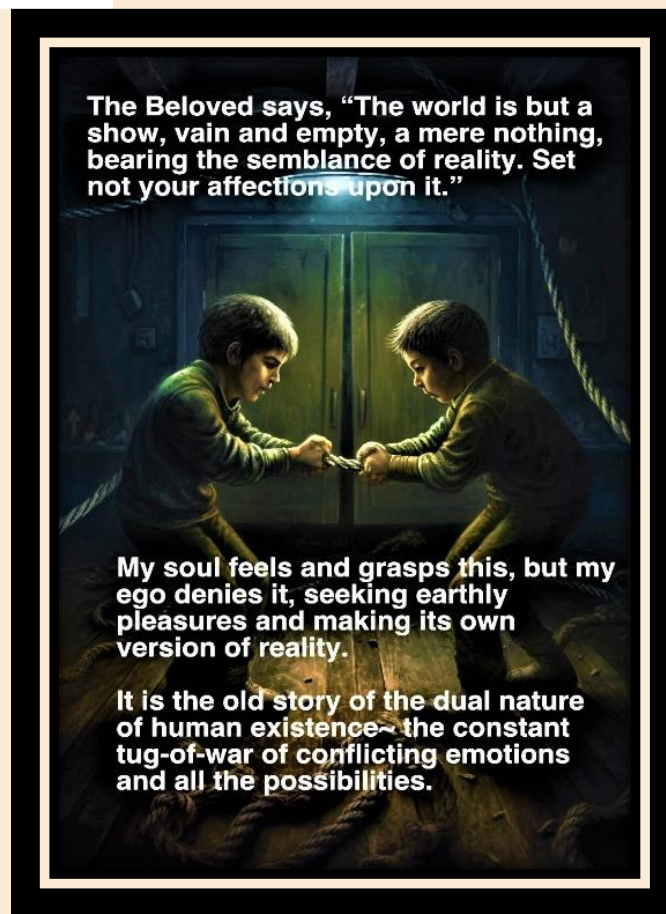
That cruel and impious ruler was sorely displeased with such an answer. He reviled and cursed him, ordered his attendants to strip him of his garments and to scourge him with a thousand lashes. He then commanded that the beards of both Quddus and Mulla Sadiq should be burned, their noses be pierced, that through this incision a cord should be passed, and with this halter they should be led through the streets of the city.⁽²⁾ "It will be an object lesson to the people of Shiraz," Husayn Khan declared, "who will know what the penalty of heresy will be." Mulla Sadiq, calm and self-possessed and with eyes upraised to heaven, was heard reciting this prayer: "O Lord, our God! We have indeed heard the voice of One that called. He called us to the Faith--`Believe ye on the Lord your God!`--and we have believed. O God, our God! Forgive us, then, our sins, and hide away from us our evil deeds, and cause us to die with the righteous."⁽³⁾ With magnificent fortitude both resigned themselves to their fate. Those who had been instructed to inflict this savage punishment performed their task with alacrity and vigour. None intervened in behalf of these sufferers, none was inclined to plead their cause. Soon after this, they were both expelled from Shiraz. Before their expulsion, they were warned that if they ever attempted to return to this city, they would both be crucified. By their sufferings they earned the immortal distinction of having been the first to be persecuted on Persian soil for the sake of their Faith. Mulla Aliy-i-Bastami, though the first to fall a victim to the relentless hate of the enemy, underwent his persecution in Iraq, which lay beyond the confines of Persia. Nor did his sufferings, intense as they were, compare with the hideousness and the barbaric cruelty which characterised the torture inflicted upon Quddus and Mulla Sadiq.

An eye-witness of this revolting episode, an unbeliever residing in Shiraz, related to me the following: "I was present when Mulla Sadiq was being scourged. I watched his persecutors each in turn apply the lash to his bleeding shoulders, and continue the strokes until he became exhausted. No one believed that Mulla Sadiq, so advanced in age and so frail in body, could possibly survive fifty such savage strokes. We marvelled at his fortitude when we found that, although the number of the strokes of the scourge he had received had already exceeded nine hundred, his face still retained its original

serenity and calm. A smile was upon his face, as he held his hand before his mouth. He seemed utterly indifferent to the blows that were being showered upon him. When he was being expelled from the city, I succeeded in approaching him, and asked him why he held his hand before his mouth. I expressed surprise at the smile upon his countenance. He emphatically replied: 'The first seven strokes were severely painful; to the rest I seemed to have grown indifferent. I was wondering whether the strokes that followed were being actually applied to my own body. A feeling of joyous exultation had invaded my soul. I was trying to repress my feelings and to restrain my laughter. I can now realise how the almighty Deliverer is able, in the twinkling of an eye, to turn pain into ease, and sorrow into gladness. Immensely exalted is His power above and beyond the idle fancy of His mortal creatures.'" Mulla Sadiq, whom I met years after, confirmed every detail of this moving episode. -THE DAWN-BREAKERS & NABIL'S NARRATIVE

Sharing

Douglas's art with Badi's words:



News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



SERVING THE ONE IN ALL

SIKH DHARMA
INTERNATIONAL

REFLECTION ON BANDI CHHOR DIVAS: A LESSON IN SELFLESSNESS



Indian Sikh devotees gather in front of an illuminated Golden Temple in Amritsar

Each autumn, most of those of South Asian descent around the world celebrate Diwali, the “festival of lights” that is rooted in the Hindu tradition. It is one of the major celebrations of the year for Hindus, Jains and Sikhs, and was even recognized in a video by former President Obama in 2009.

I have written in past years about Bandi Chhor Divas — the Sikh celebration at this time of year that commemorates the release from the prison at Gwalior Fort (in Madhya Pradesh, India) of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, in 1619. As his release occurred around the time of Diwali, the celebrations took on a new connotation for the Sikhs, making it a commemoration of the “Day of Liberation.”

We do not only celebrate the release of Guru Hargobind, but also his action to secure the release of 52 other kings and princes who were also locked up in the prison by India’s Mughal ruler of the time, Jahangir. This emperor long had an antagonistic relationship with this new religious community rising from within his kingdom, and so much so that he had ordered and carried out the execution of Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs and Guru Hargobind’s predecessor. When Jahangir was eventually convinced to release Guru Hargobind, the Guru indicated that he would only leave when the other prisoners were also set free.

Jahangir would offer a counter-condition: “whoever can hold on to the Guru’s cloak can be released.”

On this condition, the Guru had a cloak made with 52 strands on to which each other prisoner could hold and walk out of the fort with the Guru. And, in doing so, he secured the release of his fellow inmates.

Imagine: a prisoner giving conditions to the Emperor about his own conditions of release — not for his own benefit, but for that of others. This is a poignant legacy that we Sikhs must reflect upon each year.

While the celebration of Bandi Chhor Divas affords Sikhs the opportunity to celebrate alongside our Hindu and Jain siblings, we must also consider what this day signifies for Sikhs, as more than just a day of celebration involving candles and fireworks. In this context, I find myself thinking about Bandi Chhor Divas in a different way this year.

Guru Hargobind's actions almost 400 years ago are a lesson today for all of us, Sikhs or otherwise. Instead of a celebration of a historical event, I find this history now to offer a personal challenge. I must ask myself: in the spirit of Bandi Chhor Divas, what am I doing today to carry on that legacy?

As I have gradually increased my community involvement over the past year, the story of Bandi Chhor Divas is a reminder to look beyond oneself, and to use the privilege that has been conferred by the Creator to aid those who are less fortunate. It requires me to think about my actions beyond my own interests and instead be an agent of positive effect for my community.

The story of Guru Hargobind's cloak symbolizes the connections with others to work towards common goals. We must look at our individual causes in the lens of how that work promotes the greater good.

From the editor's desk

Spiritual Solutions Needed for Economic Problems

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the world around us and our way of life has totally changed. New attitudes, and a new way of thinking, have to be adopted. What is happening has highlighted the plight of the poor and the need for the governments and other agencies to step up and do all they can to help — because this epidemic is killing more of the underprivileged and people living in poverty.

However, there is some good news too; for example, celebrities, sports figures, and other wealthy people have got their wake-up call and are realizing that there is more to life than accumulating wealth. Financial institutions have relaxed their lending rates and brought credit cards interest to zero. There is a sense of unity, even with some warring parties across the world. They have ceased fighting because they have found a bigger enemy in the virus. Though these changes of attitudes have not come organically, nevertheless, they are welcome changes, and they make me happy in these stressful times.

Despite all these positive changes, the problems of the poor remain unchanged and instead have become worse. The problem lay in the failure to grasp that each of us, from the poorest person to the richest, are the stakeholders in all the affairs of humanity, and we all are in it together.

I have tried to address the nature of economic problems through spiritual solutions. According to the Baha'i Writings:

“The secrets of the whole economic question are Divine in nature, and are concerned with the world of the heart and spirit.” – Abdu'l-Baha

In recent decades, many religious and political leaders, philosophers, and economic experts have attempted to bring changes to a system built on the idea of promoting self-interest and individualism without any thought given to creating prosperity for the whole of humanity? Now, this universal disease, Coronavirus, is tearing into all those barriers of nationalism, racism, and religious differences and making everyone think, "Oh my God, we all are in this together." This realization weakens those barriers but does not destroy them.

The question in my mind is, do we need a disaster like this one that has paralyzed the whole world or a meteor from space to wake us up to the fact that this universe, this earth, has been created by one creator. We are all its occupants, so why don't we act as neighbours or family members?

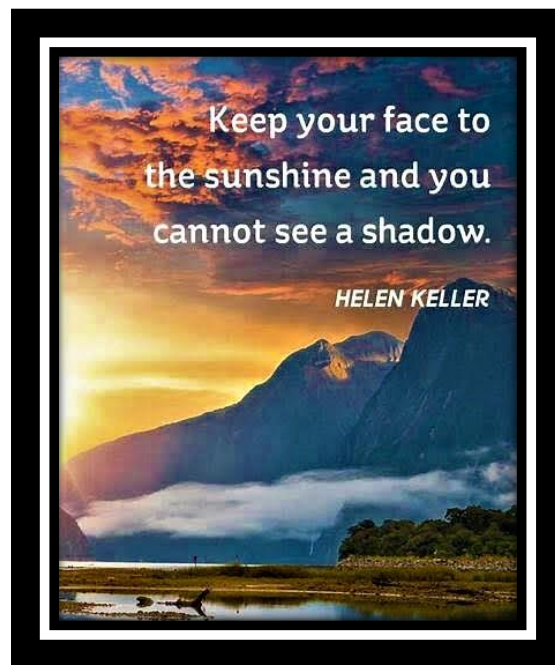
“The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens” – Baha’u’llah

Why can't we create an economic system in such a way that all the citizens of the world would live fulfilling lives in prosperity?

In this health crisis and other disasters, whether natural or otherwise, it is poor and the underprivileged who are the ones who suffer the most due to not having the material means to protect themselves against diseases and disasters. You may ask why? I say because our economic system is set up that way. After all, the economic system is deprived of moral values. This is because we have separated morality and humanity from our economic system and economic activities. This caused the economic system to almost crash in 2008, leading to a financial crisis and yet this system continues to ignore the plight of the poor.

I believe that humanity has reached that level of maturity. It is my hope that it won't take crises and disasters to inspire us to find a better way of organizing our affairs — including economics.

Famous quotes:



Holy Writings to Ponder and Practice

**“ But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”
-James 1:22**

Upcoming Events:

Coming feast, Asma/Names, August 20, 2023

Next feast, Izzat/Might, September 8, 2023

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