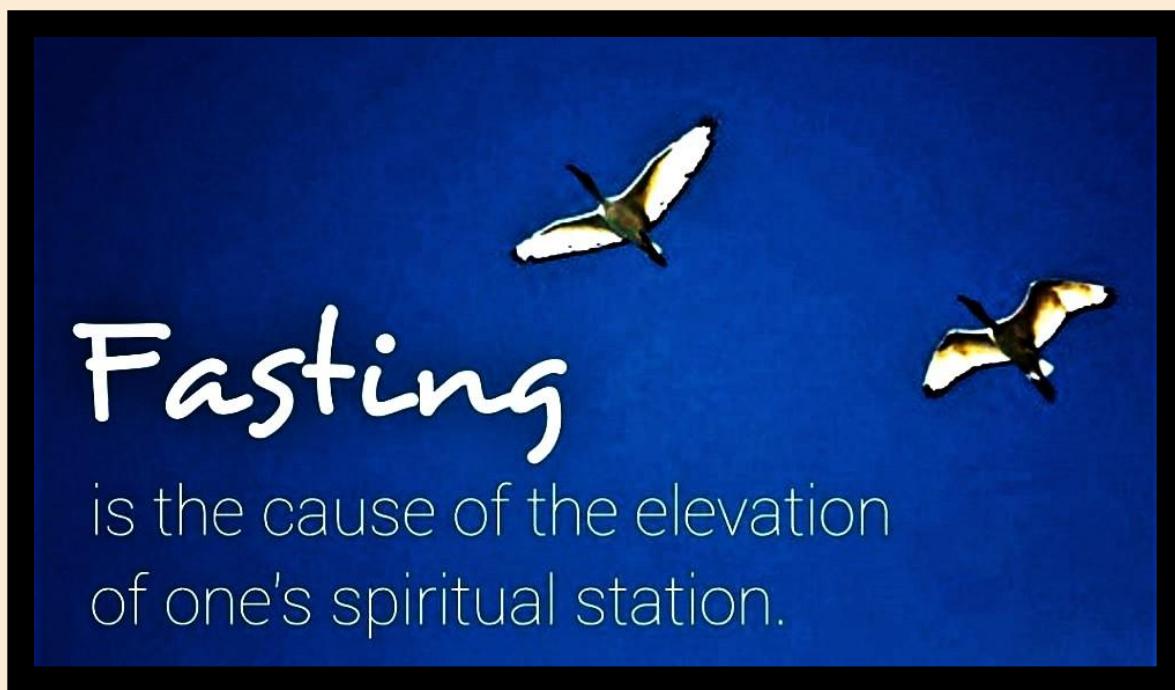




The Nuggets

Volume 4, Issue No.1



Baha'i Stories

Naw Ruz

On the [day] of the first Naw-Ruz (1909), which He celebrated after His release from His confinement, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the marble sarcophagus transported with great labor to the vault prepared for it, and in the evening, by the light of a single lamp, He laid within it, with His own hands -- in the presence of believers from the East and from the West and in circumstances at once solemn and moving - the wooden casket containing the sacred remains of the Báb and His companion. When all was finished, and the earthly remains of the Martyr-Prophet of Shiraz were, at long last, safely deposited for their everlasting rest in the bosom of God's holy mountain, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who had cast aside His turban, removed His shoes and thrown off His cloak, bent low over the still open sarcophagus, His silver hair waving about His head and His face transfigured and luminous, rested His forehead on the border of the wooden casket, and, sobbing aloud, wept with such a weeping that all those who were present wept with Him. That night He could not sleep, so overwhelmed was He with emotion. The most joyful tidings is this," He wrote later in a Tablet announcing to His followers the news of this glorious victory, "that the holy, the luminous body of the Báb ... after having for sixty years been transferred from place to place, by reason of the ascendancy of the enemy, and from fear of the malevolent, and having known neither

rest nor tranquillity has, through the mercy of the Abhá Beauty, been ceremoniously deposited, on the day of Naw-Rúz, within the sacred casket, in the exalted Shrine on Mt. Carmel... By a strange coincidence, on that same day of Naw-Rúz, a cablegram was received from Chicago, announcing that the believers in each of the American centers had elected a delegate and sent to that city ... and definitely decided on the site and construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar. -Shoghi Effendi

Events and News

The Baha'i World News Service



Bolivia: Women's education a catalyst for societal progress

LA PAZ, Bolivia — A forum recently held by the Bahá'í Office of External Affairs in Bolivia brought together government officials, civil society leaders, academics, and journalists to explore the centrality of women's education to social progress.

The discussions underscored the significance of ensuring equal educational opportunities for women and men as a fundamental aspect of achieving justice. The conversation, however, went further, emphasizing the need for the principle of equality to be interwoven into the very fabric of society.

"Humanity's advancement is inextricably linked to its commitment toward equality," stated Rosmery Chambi of the Office of External Affairs.

Ms. Chambi added that when the principle of equality is genuinely applied in different facets of life, it fosters equal opportunities and empowers women to "become active promoters of social wellbeing."

Participants noted that the challenge of achieving equal access to education is not merely a hurdle, but a manifestation of deeper, widespread inequities within society.

Bitia Vargas, director of the Q'umara Community Mental Health Association, highlighted the cyclical nature of this challenge. She pointed out how historical barriers to education for women and girls have not just been symptoms but also perpetuators of inequalities.

However, Ms. Vargas offered a hopeful perspective drawing on the Bahá'í teachings, which state that the soul has no gender. “The Bahá'í teachings state that there is no inherent distinction between women and men, they both have capacities to contribute to the advancement of society.”

Janette Huallpa, a representative of the Coordinator of Women of Bolivia, drew attention to the stark gender-based educational disparities identified through her organization's research. There are significantly higher rates of illiteracy among women than men, particularly in rural areas—a discrepancy that sheds light on the broader issues of poverty and violence, which disproportionately affect women and girls.

“Education acts as a transformative force,” Ms. Huallpa stated. “It not only broadens opportunities for women to share their insights and enriches their contributions to society, but it also plays a crucial role in combating poverty, reducing infant mortality, spurring economic growth.”

An important insight from the discussion was the recognition that intellectual education, while indispensable, represents just one dimension of a comprehensive educational approach. “Spiritual education is both essential and complementary to academic learning,” stated Ms. Chambi.

She added: “True development encompasses both the spiritual and material aspects of an individual. Insights from religion, such as the essential oneness of humanity, permit us to transcend cultural and social differences, and they contribute to the creation of a more united and equitable society.”

To construct a more equitable society, profound changes are necessary in the existing social order, said Xavier Saire, a representative of the Multidisciplinary Educational Center. “Empowering only women is not enough; empowering men is not enough either. Rather, we must seek a deep transformation of societal structures themselves.”

Participants noted that the forum was an important space enabling diverse social actors to reflect on how such a transformation can occur. Yascara Terrazas, legal advisor to the Association of Women Councilors and Mayors of Bolivia, asked: “Who are the protagonists of change?”

“We all are—government, families, and society at large,” she explained. “While obstacles are inevitable on this journey, discussions like this are crucial for forging new paths and crafting a shared vision for social transformation.”

News from the Twin Community of Jaipur

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. There was a Quarter reflection and Planning by the Training Institute Board and also the Auxiliary Board Member Seminar.



Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul

What is Love?

A group of professionals posed this question to a group of 4- to 8-year-olds: 'What does love mean?' The answers they got were broader, deeper, and more profound than anyone could have ever imagined!

'When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore... So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis, too. That's love.' Rebecca - age 8

'When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.' Billy - age 4

'Love is when a girl puts on perfume, and a boy puts on shaving cologne, and they go out and smell each other.' Karl - age 5

'Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs.' Chrissy - age 6

'Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.' Terri - age 4

'Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy, and she takes a sip before giving it to him to make sure the taste is OK.' Danny - age 8

'Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and just listen.' Bobby - age 7 (Wow!)

'If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.' Nikka - age 6
(we need a few million more Nikka's on this planet)

'Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day.' Noelle - age 7

'Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.' Tommy - age 6

'During my piano recital, I was on a stage, and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling.'

He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore.' Cindy - age 8

'My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night.' Clare - age 6

'Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken.' Elaine - age 5

'Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford.' Chris - age 7

'Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.' Mary Ann - age 4

'I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones.' Lauren - age 4

'When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.' (what an image!) Karen - age 7

'Love is when Mommy sees Daddy on the toilet and she doesn't think it's gross...' Mark - age 6
'You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.' Jessica - age 8

And the final one: The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, 'Nothing, I just helped him cry.'

Poems

By Tahera Yadev

Fasting

A soul drinks the sweet nectar of love,
A soul relishes the bread from above,
The body is fasting....

A soul is detached and flying high,
A soul is soaring in the sky,
The body is fasting.....

A soul is in prayerful state,
A soul is free from rancour and hate,
The body is fasting.....

A soul is full of joy and delight,
A soul is full of radiant light,
The body is fasting....

A soul turns to His Beloved to beg and say,
Never let me go astray,
The body is fasting....

As our body fasts,
But our soul feasts,
Let's walk on His path,
With firm and staunch feet.

Let's share with each one everyday,
Words that guide and show us the way,
So that all may enter His loving fold,
And with radiant hearts His Glory behold.

Tahera (27 February 2021)

Social Action

Before getting involved or committing to Social Action, it would be helpful to understand the concept better. From the next issue, we will share inspiring social action worldwide.



Definition of social action

Social action refers to any element or series of social behavior or activity. It is a deliberate or purposeful social behavior that includes cognitive decisions rather than the outcome of a biological response. It describes a behavior that is influenced by the presence of others and involves comprehending and interpreting their actions. Action is any single or series of social activities done by an individual with a goal and requires thought.

Sociological Explanation

According to Weber, every course of activity motivated by subjective meaning and focused on others qualifies as meaningful social action. According to a symbolic interactionist like Blumer, a crucial aspect of human activity is that actors act rather than passively react.

Weber's theory of social action integrates two academic traditions, positivism and hermeneutics, which emphasize the causal justification of empirically verifiable circumstances and the interpretation of the expression, respectively. Any social activity has significance and objective factors, both significant in sociological interpretation.

According to Weber, empathy and verstehen are essential for comprehending human behavior.

One of the most important social theories in sociology is Action Theory by Max Weber. Max Weber thinks that sociology is the interpretation of social action and that the first step in this work is to understand the stakeholders' meanings, goals, belief systems, and value systems. The underlying premise of action theory is that most individuals are rational and act for what they perceive as justifications. In general, action theorists have devoted substantial attention to the social institutions that form and are influenced by human action.

Social action, in Weber's view, serves as the fundamental conceptual foundation for understanding human behavior. He constructs a paradigm of social activity as a set of "ideal types."

*The difference between **rational and non-rational action** helps define the different action types.*

Rational action is the intentional consideration of one's actions to reach a certain goal.

***Instrumentally rational and value rational social action** are the two categories into which rational social action is classified. The term "instrumentally rational" describes behavior in which the selection of the methods to accomplish a selected goal is determined. Value-based rational action is a goal-directed human behavior focused on the importance of the activity under consideration.*

***Traditional action and emotional affective behavior** are the two basic categories of non-rational social action. Action motivated by instant feelings towards somebody or something is known as emotionally effective action. This behavior occurs when a decision is made without first considering its implications or the likelihood of its outcomes. Traditional action is when a person takes a course of action dictated by embedded habit and may not even use much conscious thought or reasoning.*

By providing observers with value-free notions, Weber hoped that the typology would help them understand how individuals behave in nearly any social setting.

All aspects of human behavior, apart from physiological responses, are significantly impacted by the social and cultural contexts in which they occur. Neo-Kantian philosopher Max Weber defined social action as an activity in which an actor attaches existential significance when they gravitate to certain other performers in the past, present, or future.

Emile Durkheim emphasized the importance of cultural factors in shaping the form and substance of social activity. According to Durkheim, our commonplace behaviors, such as communicating a

particular dialect or handing over cash in a specific manner, are shaped by widely accepted ways of living. Durkheim's collectivist perspective on the action influenced Talcott Parsons' thinking. More ambitiously, G.H. Mead saw social interaction as a kind of sociality. Actors generate interaction, according to Mead, by emitting and responding to symbolic gestures. Symbolic gestures and the acquired emotions that individuals assert are processed by the human mind, where a certain degree of individual autonomy, whether greater or lesser, is first introduced.

According to Goffman, important social behaviors occur as rituals during contact. These rituals have a moral purpose and establish small-scale local moral order. One of Goffman's reports highlights his praxiological focus on the subtle, unconscious execution of modest but ritually important movements. According to Garfinkel, social activity is always locally localized, instinctively deriving its significance from the context created in a specific location and perpetuating or changing that environment's characteristics.

Interaction, whether direct or indirect, is a component of social activity. Direct communication includes speaking to another individual directly. Indirect social action refers to the impact of a social action carried out by a different actor at a different time and place, as well as the influence of a social action that results from an impersonal contact.

According to Parson, a social theory that retains the belief that human conduct can be properly characterized without consideration of the agent's viewpoint is positivistic. He saw utilitarianism as an excellent illustration of a positivistic theory. According to Parsons, the action does not occur in a vacuum. It does not exist in empirically distinct forms but in constellations that make up systems. According to Parsons, the idea of activity comes from how people behave as living things.

Example

UNICEF members distributing food packets in Africa is an action.

Environmentalists raising awareness programs about global warming is a social action.

From the Pages of History

The Bab's arrival at Jaddih, and an incident on the way to Mecca

Upon His arrival in Jaddih, the Bab donned the pilgrim's garb, mounted a camel, and set out on His journey to Mecca. Quddus, however, notwithstanding the repeatedly expressed desire of his Master, preferred to accompany Him on foot all the way from Jaddih to that holy city. Holding in his hand the bridle of the camel upon which the Bab was riding, he walked along joyously and prayerfully, ministering to his Master's needs, wholly indifferent to the fatigues of his arduous march. Every night, from eventide until the break of day, Quddus, sacrificing comfort and sleep, would continue with unrelaxing vigilance to watch beside his Beloved, ready to provide for His wants and to ensure the means of His protection and safety.

One day, when the Bab had dismounted close to a well in order to offer His morning prayer, a roving Bedouin suddenly appeared on the horizon, drew near to Him, and, snatching the saddlebag that had been lying on the ground beside Him, and which contained His writings and papers, vanished into the unknown desert. His Ethiopian servant set out to pursue him, but was prevented by his Master, who, as He was praying, motioned to him with His hand to give up his pursuit. "Had I allowed you," the Bab

later on affectionately assured him, “you would surely have overtaken and punished him. But this was not to be. The papers and writings which that bag contained are destined to reach, through the instrumentality of this Arab, such places as we could never have succeeded in attaining. Grieve not, therefore, at his action, for this was decreed by God, the Ordainer, the Almighty.” Many a time afterwards did the Bab on similar occasions seek to comfort His friends by such reflections. By words such as these He turned the bitterness of regret and of resentment into radiant acquiescence in the Divine purpose and into joyous submission to God’s will. --THE DAWN-BREAKERS & NABIL’S NARRATIVE

Sharing

Douglas Wislon’s artwork and Badi’s words



Monic Angers recently became a Baha’i in our community in Port Alberni, and this is her sharing.

Monic Angers’ sharing:

The reason I became a Baha’i

I was brought up being Catholic. Lately, I did not want to be Catholic anymore, with all the things that happened years ago with native people, things happening with kids also lately, also the money we gave to the church to improve the look of the church... Long story.

I decided to become Baha'i after being invited to Summer picnics and conferences in May (Nanaimo) and Courtenay (I cannot remember which month). Friendly people - Donations that really go to people in need, institutions... all those things really made my choice easy to become a Baha'i.

News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



Pacheedaht launches first community chaputs in 70 years



The traditionally carved canoe is part of a cultural immersion project conducted with assistance from neighbouring Ditidaht members.

Port Renfrew, BC *It was a proud moment for Pacheedaht members as they witnessed the blessing and launch of the first community carved canoe in nearly 70 years, according to PFN elder Bill Jones. He recalled the names of four elders that made the last canoe in the 1950s or 60s.*

PFN Hereditary Chief Charlie Queesto Jones made another dugout canoe under contract with retired researcher Eugene Arima in the early 1970s, but that one left the community when it was completed. It is on display in a Tofino-area museum. Born in 1876, Chief Charlie was nearly 100 years old when that canoe was made.

This canoe project brought together two young Pacheedaht men under the mentorship of Makah master carver Micah McCarty to build a canoe from start to finish in just a few months. The project was made possible through a \$200,000 grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which also funded other cultural revitalization initiatives for the Pacheedaht First Nation.

The project got a start as a vision of PFN “elder-in-training”, as she calls herself, Leona Canute. From there, Roxy Jones, former Pacheedaht Health Director, went to work applying for grants. With funding in place and a partnership with the University of Victoria, PFN was set to build their first canoe.

The work not only involved making the canoe, but also cultural teachings. With support from their Ditidaht relatives they began weekly cultural classes, learning language, singing and dancing as well as paddle carving, shawl making and more.

It was a cultural immersion project that involved the entire community and one that fostered pride in being Pacheedaht, people of the sea foam.

Chief Councillor Jeff Jones told the crowd that the old growth red cedar log was harvested from Pacheedaht territory. Through a partnership with Cowichan Community Forest, it was cut and hauled to their village. In June 2021, McCarty and his two Pacheedaht apprentices began hollowing out and shaping the giant log.

The blessing ceremony took place Oct. 28, under the cover of a carving shed as a drenching autumn rain pounded down on the roof. The air was filled with the aroma of fresh-cut cedar as excited community members gathered around the still unpainted chaputs (dugout canoe).

People came from neighboring Ditidaht First Nation, as well as Victoria and Port Renfrew residents came to witness the historic occasion. An elder from Quatsino came down from the nearby Fairy Creek encampment to see the canoe and to pray for its safety on the water.

Elected chief Jeff Jones introduced Pacheedaht Hereditary Chief Frank Jones, as he welcomed the guests on the chief’s behalf. The power was out in Port Renfrew that day as a fallen tree knocked down power lines in Jordan River.

“Some people drove over those power lines to get here to celebrate the creation of this chaputs.” said Jeff Jones, adding that it was an exciting project celebrating unity.

Phillip Edgar and other Ditidaht relatives led the cultural business associated with the proper blessing of the new chaputs. That started by offering ta’ilthma (support) to those that recently lost loved ones and also to the Tyee Ha’wilth, Frank Jones, who survived a recent car accident.

“We do this because we care for these people, we are glad you are still here – we love you,” he told them.

PFN Councilor Tracey Charlie told the carving crew that she admired their determination and dedication to a project that saw the rough old growth cedar log transform to a chaputs in just a few short weeks.

“I am honored to be part of this project,” said master carver Micah McCarty.

He told the crowd that his journey in Pacheedaht was inspired by something he saw on the west coast Highway leading south from Port Renfrew. From there, on a clear day, you can see across Juan de Fuca Strait to Neah Bay, home of the Makah.

McCarty said the sunlight shone in a way that it reflected off the lighthouse near his homeland.

“It reminded me of the ties we’ve always had, the cultural and family ties,” said McCarty.

He told the crowd that his grandmother came from Pacheedaht and married into Makah, making the people of Pacheedaht his cousins. And so, it was important for him to help keep the culture alive by sharing his knowledge and skills with his family.

“We’re enshrining something as we bring her to life,” said McCarty of the chaputs.

Many gifts were exchanged ahead of the blessing ceremony. One included the children, who, at times, helped with the canoe. They were called up to receive hand-crafted paddle necklaces.

“That’s who this (chaputs) is for,” said Jeff Jones.

He spoke of the teachings that came from the canoe project - and the canoe itself - being a gift from this generation to future generations of Pacheedahts.

McCarty spent several months away from his wife and five children to lead the project. He had to spend some time in quarantine due to the pandemic before he arrived in Port Renfrew to begin working on the log.

He mentored Trystan Dunn-Jones and Trent Jones, whom he said had an instinct for the work. McCarty said it wasn’t long before they figured some things out on their own and sometimes got things done before he had a chance to go check their work.

Sheila Jones completed her final Child and Youth Care university practicum in her home territory over the summer, working with youth and coordinating many of the cultural activities. She assisted with the chaputs and youth activities. Part of that was beadwork done on eagle feathers harvested from a carcass donated by conservation officers.

Residents worked on beading the feathers and they were gifted to people who helped with the chaputs project.

Finally, with heavy rain still pouring down, Ditidaht singers drummed while Pacheedaht members brushed the chaputs with cedar branches, blessing it. The canoe was trailered down to the river where it was taken on its maiden voyage, filled with people of all ages.

A scheduled totem pole raising was postponed out of respect for HUU-ay-aht First Nation, who were in mourning and not available that day. The totem pole, gifted to Pacheedaht from HUU-ay-aht, will take place at a later date.

From the Editor’s Desk

Fasting a Time of Spiritual House Cleaning

Those who know me are aware of my love for fasting. I have participated in the Baha’i Fast, 19 days of abstaining from food and drink between sunrise and sunset, every year since the age of 15.

Please don’t misunderstand me. Even with all these years of experience, my body has never liked it and has made it clear to me that it does not share my enthusiasm.

Baha'i fasting is both a physical and spiritual exercise, which is why I am so attracted to it.

I love fasting because I know as a human being during my daily life, I unknowingly subject my soul to many impurities, and with this awareness, fasting has become my annual "House Cleaning."

In the same way that people clean their houses in the West before Christmas or in Iran before the New Year (Naw-Ruz), I do the cleaning with my soul.

My friends who are from different religions cannot understand why I put myself through this hardship. They think the Fast is not a good idea, but their concern allows me to inform them that fasting has been a part of most religions. When food is always available in modern life, people have forgotten about fasting to the extent that now they find it a strange practice. However, history gives us evidence of the existence of fasting in most cultures and religions.

Fasting has been part of coming-of-age preparations for adulthood. Boys from native cultures in North America would fast in the wilderness, seeking a vision of a guardian spirit. Hindus have some form of fasting, which is an avoidance of a particular food. Generally, the ladies fast for the sake of their husbands. The Sadhus of India and Sufis fast and meditate for enlightenment. Modern Jews fast for 24 hours as a penance.

Fasting is also very much part of the life of priests — holy men of various societies would fast in preparation for particular rituals. In most mystical and monastic traditions, fasting is practiced as a means of purification. Roman Catholics traditionally abstain from meat on days associated with the passion of Christ. Added to that list are the Manifestations of God, who fasted and meditated to commune with God.

Islam is one religion that strictly tries to observe the law of fasting. In addition to obligatory prayer, fasting is the essential ritual obligation of the Muslim; it is one of the five pillars of Islam. Fasting in Islam consists of deliberately abstaining from all food, drink, and sexual relations from the time of the first light before dawn until the last light after sunset. The Qur'an explicitly states that fasting is an obligation and has been central to earlier religions.

It is important to remember that the essence of fasting is the spiritual part of fasting. If depriving oneself of food was a sign of spirituality, then all the food insecure people in the world would be holy men and saints.

"For this material fast is an outer token of the spiritual fast; it is a symbol of self-restraint, the withholding of oneself from all appetites of the self, taking on the characteristics of the spirit, being carried away by the breathings of heaven and catching fire from the love of God." —Abdu'l-Baha

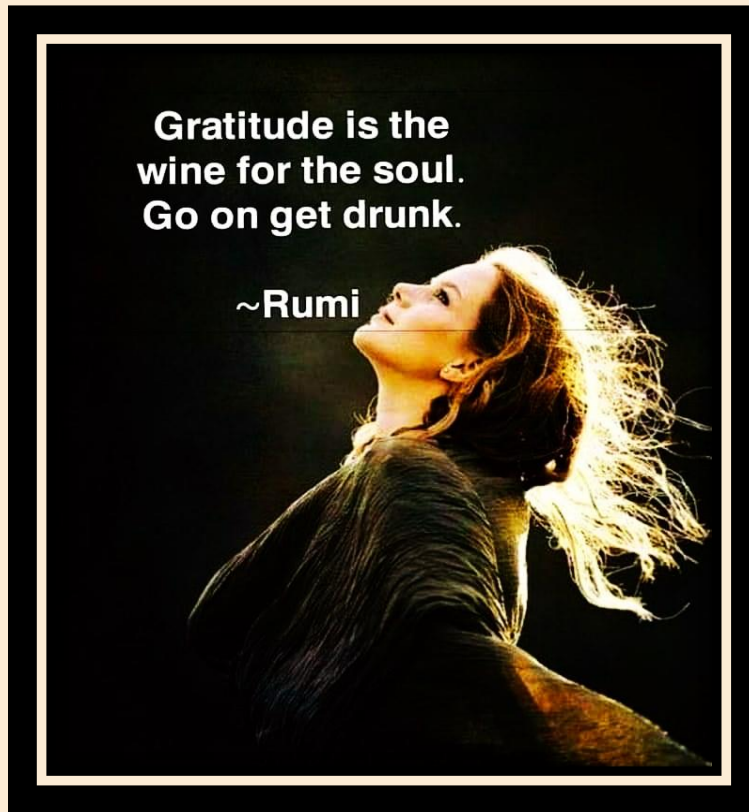
I believe that all the spiritual laws of God are for the benefit of humanity, and the direct gain is for the individual who obeys them and follows them.

Each year I pretend that I do not know anything about fasting and read the Holy Writings with an eager soul to uncover their mysteries and, combined with meditation, to try to get rid of the filth that has attached itself to my soul. In a way, it is a time of self-examination, and as I get older, I find more benefits in fasting.

Science has now found that intermittent fasting is very beneficial for our bodies. It maintains that by not eating for a length of time, the body gets to direct its energies towards repairs. This does not surprise me at all because I am discovering the wisdom and physical benefits of it. I am waiting for the day when humankind gets the chance to experience the sublime feeling of detachment from the body's need for food and focuses on cleansing the spiritual aspect of their lives so that we can start the process of the unification of humanity.

It may look strange to connect fasting with unity, but if we think deeply, we realize that most conflicts and problems are caused by the lack of a spiritual approach to the issues. That makes fasting and praying the most effective tools. Souls are linked together with a string of divinity.

I hope this year I can again introduce my mind and soul to fasting and experience the sense of purification by following this instruction for my spiritual betterment.



Holy Writings to Ponder and Practice

“Look to this day, for it is life, the very breath of life. In its brief course lie all the realities of your existence; the bliss of growth, the glory of action, the splendor of beauty. For yesterday is only a dream, and tomorrow is but a vision. But today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this day.” -Ancient Sanskrit

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