



The Nuggets

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Baha'i Stories

Obedience

amal was one of those who read the text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas soon after it was revealed. Bahá'u'lláh permitted him to copy some excerpts and share them with the believers. According to his own testimony, he asked Bahá'u'lláh to make him exempt from obedience to the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Bahá'u'lláh granted him his wish and conveyed to him that he was free and did not have to obey the laws of that book. It is interesting to note that on one occasion when he was boasting about the freedom which Bahá'u'lláh had granted him, someone recited these words of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas to him: 'Know ye that the embodiment of liberty and its symbol is the animal.' ~Adib Taherzadeh, The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh

Events and News

“Practitioners of Peace”: Ontario youth conference strengthens movement for social progress



WATERLOO, ONTARIO, Canada — *What does it mean to be a “practitioner of peace” in today’s world? For over 700 young people who gathered at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo this question sparked profound conversations about how to nurture communities that can embody the fundamental principles of peace through practical action.*

The two-day conference drew participants from 92 localities across Ontario—from those within walking distance of the venue to a group who undertook a 15-hour journey from Thunder Bay.

Several participants spoke with the News Service, reflecting on their community-building experiences and shared insights from their discussions at the conference.

Fostering a culture of peace

Attendees described how everyday efforts to create spiritual and social conditions for unity are gradually fostering a culture of peace in their neighborhoods. In these places, people are striving to give expression to the principle of the equality of women and men and are developing a heightened awareness of the essential need for justice and fairness in all aspects of community life—from how decisions are made to how knowledge is shared and applied.

Through Bahá’í community-building initiatives that promote genuine love and durable bonds among individuals, people from diverse groups that once had limited interaction are discovering their inherent oneness and learning to work together for the common good.

“There’s a lot of destruction, hurt, and pain in the world,” said Naya, who is 17 years old. “This is the time for us to come together as a community,” she continued, “to uplift... and take care of each other, because we are one.”

Shidan, 15, from a locality where families of diverse ethnic backgrounds reside, elaborated: “In the past, people in my community were separated by caste, religion, and economic status.

“But through the spiritual education of the younger generation, we’ve found ways to bring our families, who are from different groups, together to have a common conversation about the future of our community.”

He added: “When I think about working toward peace, I see it already in the vibrant community celebrations we hold at our neighborhood center, in the dance group that started and recently had its first anniversary, and in the devotional gatherings that draw all of us from seemingly different backgrounds to see our inherent oneness.”

Removing barriers to unity through consultation

In communities where Bahá’í educational endeavors are taking root, consultation has emerged as a powerful tool for fostering a culture of peace through collective decision-making. Participants are discovering how to transcend social barriers and build agreement.

Participants of the conference highlighted how spaces for consultation have the power to reveal our shared humanity. Perma, 20, said, “In these moments, barriers are broken down. People come together, discover common ground, and realize that they are all striving toward the same aspirations.”

Speaking about the unique nature of these consultative spaces, Jenny, 18, said, “Not many places provide opportunities to discuss life’s most important issues.

“Sometimes, you want to talk about significant topics but don’t know when or where to do it. ...Bahá’í spiritual education activities provide that space, allowing us to explore critical issues and think about practical solutions.”

Strengthening a sense of purpose through service

Participants of the conference observed that a striking feature of Bahá’í community-building activities is how they nurture in young people the capacity to rise above prejudice and channel their energies toward constructive change. Attendees spoke about how serving others, particularly those younger than themselves, has reshaped their understanding of what youth can achieve.

Many of these participants serve as teachers of Bahá’í moral classes for children or facilitators of groups for adolescents. “You see them progress,” shared Preeti, who is 16. “They’re becoming more open and more social. ...They have more ideas. They’re raising their hands more. ...It’s such a big thing.”

David, 15, described how his involvement in Bahá’í educational programs awakened his sense of purpose—echoing a central theme of the gathering:

“You can take action now. You don’t have to wait until you’re older,” said David.

“Realizing I could contribute to my community was truly empowering and has inspired me to assist in the development of those younger than me.”

Through the experience of service, participants described how a shared vision of social progress has enabled them to face challenges with greater resilience. As they support one another in addressing difficulties, their unity of purpose strengthens their collective capacity to persevere through daily challenges.

United by this spirit of mutual support, participants are discovering how their combined efforts, guided by spiritual principles, can transform their neighborhoods in ways that would be impossible to achieve alone.

David explained that witnessing the difficulties young people encounter motivated him to engage them in service to their neighbors. “We began by observing the needs of our neighborhood and determining how we could address them,” he said.

One particular experience left a lasting impression on him. “We assisted a neighbor who was living alone and had accumulated a significant amount of garbage that she couldn’t move while she was pregnant. As we worked together, clearing the yard and planting roses, I noticed the children’s smiles,” he recalled. “They even began asking questions about why we were doing this and how we could expand these efforts.”

David reflected on the broader impact of these actions. “It brought me great happiness to see how, by shifting their focus to service, the negative environment they had been exposed to was gradually being transformed.”

Living a coherent life

The conference explored how achieving lasting social change requires a profound transformation in how young people view their lives and purpose.

Participants discussed how certain patterns of thought often separate academic achievement, personal development, and service to society into distinct domains. However, through their engagement with Bahá’í moral and spiritual education programs, these youth are discovering a more integrated approach to life.

Reflecting on how this integrated understanding challenges prevailing notions of value and success, Ken, 19, said: “Other young people come and ask us why we do this, why we help the community, why we help them and what value we get out of it. What I tell them is that the value you’re thinking of is monetary value... You’re thinking about how ‘I can help myself,’ ... ‘If I get anything out of it.’”

Ken added that the real reward comes from seeing positive change in their communities and contributing to others’ well-being—a fulfillment that transcends material considerations.

This understanding is reshaping how youth are approaching their career choices. Perma described her journey: “When I started my career, I didn’t know what I wanted to do. I chose healthcare to help people but was confused about my role.

“Now, I see a new direction in policymaking because many issues in the healthcare system need addressing. It’s easy to complain about what’s wrong, but realizing I can make a difference is powerful. I want to shift my career so I’m not waiting for change but actively initiating it and contributing to my community.”

Looking ahead, the youth made plans for activities in the coming months that could engage over 20,000 of their peers in a growing movement dedicated to community transformation through systematic, collective action.

As these youth return to their communities to implement their plans, their enthusiasm points to the far-reaching impact of their collective efforts. As Livia, a 19-year-old from Stratford, expressed, “I can’t wait to see what this conference is going to bring for the future.”

The Bahá’i World News Service has released a short documentary about the conference and the efforts of youth in Ontario toward the common good, which can be viewed [here](#).

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, home visits and devotional and prayer meetings in different parts of Jaipur and Rajasthan.



Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul

Back-to-School Book Bag Giveaway distributed 33,000 backpacks and \$1.3 million in school supplies



An 18-year-old Oklahoma boy spent his Saturday igniting school spirit by giving away 6,000 book bags stuffed with school supplies.

It was his ninth annual Back-to-School Book Bag Giveaway, which has distributed more than 33,000 backpacks and \$1.3 million in school supplies to students and families from Reed's hometown and beyond, including across Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas.

Yesterday's drive-thru event is just one aspect of Reed Marcum's uplifting work to address the needs of the McAlester community in Pittsburg County

"I want to help kids get their school year started right," said Reed, who is a rising sophomore at Oklahoma State University. "We have been distributing book bags and school supplies for nine years now and each time it is so fulfilling to know we are playing a small part in getting kids excited about their education."

Reed was inspired by his longtime membership in 4-H, an American youth organization whose mission is "engaging youth to reach their fullest potential to become true leaders."

The giveaway is part of Reed's annual 4-H service project—and its success resulted in the teen being honored with the 4-H Youth in Action Award for his community-centered projects that have collectively raised more than \$3.5 million in funds and donated items.

As a national winner, Marcum received a \$5,000 higher education scholarship and has had opportunities to showcase his story nationally, develop professional skills and network with prominent 4-H alumni.

“Reed’s commitment to his community is inspiring. He has had a huge impact here in McAlester,” said Greg Owen, Pittsburg County 4-H Educator and Marcum’s mentor. “I am so proud to support his service projects and watch him grow.”

Since 2016, Reed has also organized an annual 4-H Toy Giveaway. During last year’s toy drive, cars lined up for over three miles near the Southeast Expo Center in McAlester and Marcum distributed more than 10,000 toys to children and families in need for the holidays.

“I’m grateful to 4-H for the support and opportunity to make a difference in my community.”

Poems

By Rumi:

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

- Rumi -

Social Action

LEARNING ABOUT AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

In Uganda, the Kimanya-Ngeyo Foundation for Science and Education has established an agricultural research farm for participants in the Preparation for Social Action program to apply the knowledge and capacities they gain from their study. A group of youth studying a text that assists them to make well-informed technological choices carefully has been formed that collectively works to apply certain principles—such as mutual support, consultation, and service—to their food production efforts. In many community schools, teachers have been able to strengthen agriculture education and have established or improved simple food production plots for the school. In some cases, conversations have extended further into the community and led to refinements in agricultural practices of families. Educational programs for youth that build capacity for social action have also led to an increased interest in this area and to the emergence of small agricultural initiatives.

Building on these processes, Fondation Erfan Connaissance, which has promoted the establishment of community schools in the Kivu region of the country since 2007, began to incorporate materials on agriculture in its teacher-training seminars in 2016. Through this, the organization has aimed to develop the scientific capabilities of teachers and parents around food production and nutrition. Such training, combined with ongoing visits, has also assisted teachers who typically work as farmers to increase their household income. In some of the community schools where there are sufficient resources, plots have been established to grow food for students and to provide a space for them to learn about food production with their families. From these initial efforts to broaden the scope of the training of teachers, a large number of backyard gardens have emerged, and a seed bank has been established in one of the villages in the region, serving some 1,500 farmers. In the more urban context of Goma, teachers have supported the establishment of backyard gardens with the support of the families of their students. Many of these teachers have noted how the process of learning to manage and nurture a garden has enhanced the patience, determination and generosity of their students. Others involved have also observed a shift in the nature of interactions between families in neighbourhoods with backyard gardens, in some instances showing glimpses of greater collaboration and collective endeavor. In one neighbourhood, for instance, six families collaborated closely to grow medicinal plants and food crops. Some were able to sell their produce in the local market.

From the Pages of History

Arrival of Mulla Husayn in Shiraz

Soon after the arrival of Mulla Husayn at Shiraz, the voice of the people rose again in protest against him. The fear and indignation of the multitude were excited by the knowledge of his continued and intimate intercourse with the Bab. "He again has come to our city," they clamoured; "he again has raised the standard of revolt and is, together with his chief, contemplating a still fiercer onslaught upon our time-honoured institutions." So grave and menacing became the situation that the Bab instructed Mulla Husayn to regain, by way of Yazd, his native province of Khurasan. He likewise dismissed the rest

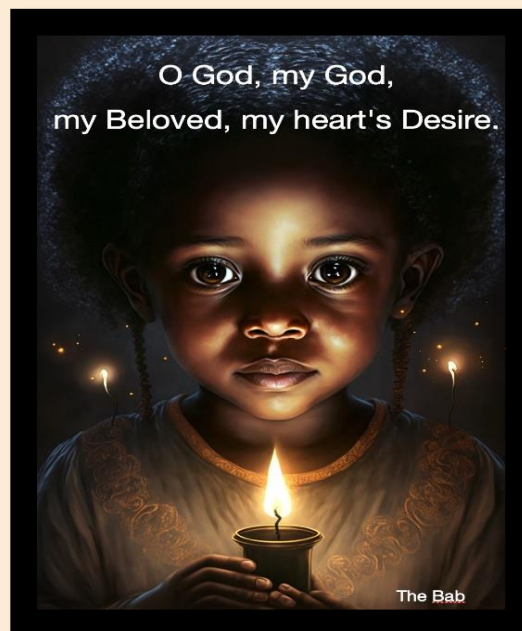
of His companions who had gathered in Shiraz, and bade them return to Isfahan. He retained Mulla Abdu'l-Karim, to whom He assigned the duty of transcribing His writings.

These precautionary measures which the Bab deemed wise to undertake, relieved Him from the immediate danger of violence from the infuriated people of Shiraz, and served to lend a fresh impetus to the propagation of His Faith beyond the limits of that city. His disciples, who had spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, fearlessly proclaimed to the multitude of their countrymen the regenerating power of the new-born Revelation. The fame of the Bab had been noised abroad and had reached the ears of those who held the highest seats of authority, both in the capital and throughout the provinces.⁽¹⁾ A wave of passionate enquiry swayed the minds and hearts of both the leaders and the masses of the people. Amazement and wonder had seized those who had heard from the lips of the immediate messengers of the Bab the tales of those signs and testimonies which had heralded the birth of His Manifestation. The dignitaries of State and Church either attended in person or delegated their ablest representatives to enquire into the truth and character of this remarkable Movement.

Muhammad Shah⁽¹⁾ himself was moved to ascertain the veracity of these reports and to enquire into their nature. He delegated Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi,⁽²⁾ the most learned, the most eloquent, and the most influential of his subjects, to interview the Bab and to report to him the results of his investigations. The Shah had implicit confidence in his impartiality, in his competence and profound spiritual insight. He occupied a position of such pre-eminence among the leading figures in Persia that at whatever meeting he happened to be present, no matter how great the number of the ecclesiastical leaders who attended it, he was invariably its chief speaker. None would dare to assert his views in his presence. They all reverently observed silence before him; all testified to his sagacity, his unsurpassed knowledge and mature wisdom. ~ The Dawn Breakers & Nabil's Narrative

Sharing

Douglas Wilson's sharing:



Badi's sharing:

My brain cannot retain too many Baha'i writings, quotes, or stats, so I simplify the concepts and try to act like a Baha'i. I am sharing my simplified version of being a Baha'i based on Abdu'l-Baha's words.

Who is a Baha'i?

"It makes no difference whether you have ever heard of Baha'u'llah or not, 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

What should a Baha'i do?

"You live to do good and to bring happiness to others. Your greatest longing is to comfort those who mourn, to strengthen the weak, and to be the cause of hope to the despairing soul. Day and night your thoughts are turned to the Kingdom, and your hearts are full of the Love of God. Thus you know neither opposition, dislike, nor hatred, for every living creature is dear to you and the good of each is sought" ~Abdu'l-Baha.

How to do it?

"Look at me, follow me, be as I am." ~Abdu'l-Baha

News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



Prophecy of Islam

Prophets are men specially elected by God to be his messengers. Prophethood is indivisible, and the Qur'an requires recognition of all prophets as such without discrimination. Yet they are not all equal, some of them being particularly outstanding in qualities of steadfastness and patience under trial.

Abraham, Noah, Moses, and Jesus were such great prophets. As vindication of the truth of their mission, God often vests them with miracles: Abraham was saved from fire, Noah from the Deluge, and Moses from the pharaoh. Not only was Jesus born from the Virgin Mary, but God also saved him from crucifixion at the hands of the Jews. The conviction that God's messengers are ultimately vindicated and saved is an integral part of the Qur'anic doctrine.

All prophets are human and never part of divinity: they are the most perfect of humans who are recipients of revelation from God. When God wishes to speak to a human, he sends an angel messenger to him or makes him hear a voice or inspires him. Muhammad is accepted as the last prophet in this series and its greatest member, for in him all the messages of earlier prophets were consummated.

The archangel Gabriel brought the Qur'ān down to the Prophet's "heart." Gabriel is represented by the Qur'ān as a spirit whom the Prophet could sometimes see and hear. According to early traditions, the Prophet's revelations occurred in a state of trance when his normal consciousness was transformed. This state was accompanied by heavy sweating. The Qur'ān itself makes it clear that the revelations brought with them a sense of extraordinary weight: "If we were to send this Qur'ān down on a mountain, you would see it split asunder out of fear of God."

This phenomenon at the same time was accompanied by an unshakable conviction that the message was from God, and the Qur'ān describes itself as the transcript of a heavenly "Mother Book" written on a "Preserved Tablet." The conviction was of such an intensity that the Qur'ān categorically denies that it is from any earthly source, for in that case it would be liable to "manifold doubts and oscillations."

From the Editor's Desk

Humanomics Is the Solution to Economic Problems

The recent pandemic has highlighted the glaring disparities in the economic system between the rich and the poor. On the one hand, we have the plight of poor people living under the poverty line and trying to survive the onslaught of miseries caused by financial hardship. In contrast, a small percentage of people continue to add billions to their already colossal wealth.

It upsets me because it looks like humanity has lost its consciousness and has become numb to the poor and underprivileged sufferings. I see the ever-widening gap between the poor and the rich getting wider and wider, yet there seems to be no solution in sight. That makes me more determined than ever to keep this issue alive and continue to address it.

I like to use the word "humanomics" to describe the solution to the inequalities in our economic system because a lack of humanity has been with the system since its inception and has had devastating effects on millions of lives.

The Baha'i Writings remind us to be aware of our role in taking care of the poor since our moral and spiritual duty is to protect and care for them.

"O SON OF MAN! Bestow My wealth upon My poor, that in heaven thou mayest draw from stores of unfading splendour and treasures of imperishable glory. But by My life! To offer up thy soul is a more glorious thing couldst thou but see with Mine eye." -Baha'u'llah

In addition to helping on an individual level, we need to work towards changing the economic system to make it more sensitive to people's needs and inject morality and spirituality into it to serve humanity rather than humanity being sacrificed to make the system work. We need Humanomics: a human system with human values and less of economics.

This can only be done by practicing truthfulness, trustworthiness, and other moral values in our actions, especially in our economic activities. These activities are not just economical but spiritual.

The economic problems of the world will not be solved if we do not change the system. The present financial system is a by-product of the old order and was built on wrong assumptions. It is assumed that

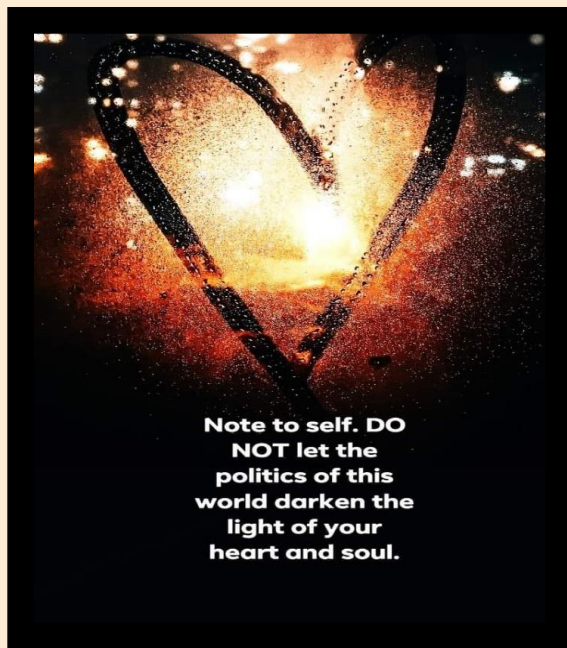
people only think of their interests and do not concern themselves with others' plight. This assumption has been the engine for driving the system, and it has become a fertile ground for greed to spread in every aspect of human life, and we can see the result is the present economic injustices in the world.

The sad part about this is that every single day that this continues, thousands of people in the world will be dragged into a life full of economic challenges without any hope of remedy.

The essential element missing in the present economic system is justice, which has to be its foundation. Economic justice these days is the scarcest commodity in the world

I feel that every individual is responsible for trying to do his or her utmost to lessen the burden of poverty from the shoulders of our fellow humans so that every person in the world has the economic means to live a comfortable and fulfilled life — which is a fundamental human right for everyone.

Though the possibility of the economic system becoming more humane looks like a farfetched dream, if we desire it and strive to attain it by playing our small part, we can transform this rigid system — which is currently devoid of spirit — into a fantastic tool for the prosperity of humanity.



Writings to Ponder and Practice

“According to the exhortations of the Supreme Pen and the confirmatory explanations of the Covenant of God Bahá’ís are in no way allowed to enter into political affairs under any pretense of excuse; since such an action brings about disastrous results and ends in hurting the Cause of God and its intimate friends.”
~Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian

For sharing materials and questions, write to bshams@telus.net