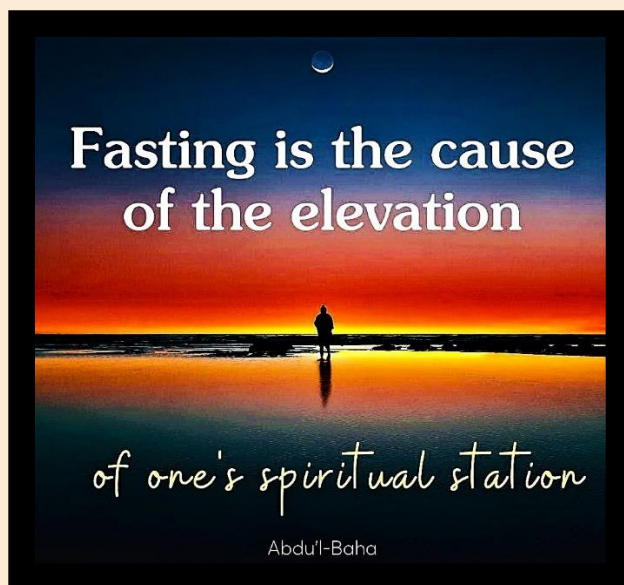




# The Nuggets

Volume 4, Issue No.14



## Baha'i Stories

### **Fasting**

*The early believers in Akká not only observed the Bahá'í Fast, but also observed the Muslim 30-day Fast of Ramadan during their incarceration in the Most Great Prison!*

*These are Thy servants, O my Lord, who have entered with Thee in this, the Most Great Prison, who have kept the fast within its walls according to what Thou hast commanded them in the Tablets of Thy decree. ~Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'í Prayers*

## Events and News

### **Bahá'í World News Service**

## Countering Violence in Neighborhoods Through Service



**MEXICO CITY** — Mexico’s Bahá’í Office of External Affairs has been contributing to a series of discussion forums with diverse voices from government, academia, faith communities, and civil society to explore how recognizing the spiritual nature of human beings can help address the roots of violence and strengthen social cohesion.

*“We need to find different ways of relating to each other that do not feed into cycles of violence,” said Carlos Ceballos, head of the Theology Department at La Salle University and a participant in a recent discussion forum organized by the Office of External Affairs.*

*Over the past two years, these forums have created opportunities for social actors to examine how the application of spiritual principles—such as the equality of women and men, justice, and the oneness of humanity—at the neighborhood level can create environments where constructive patterns of interaction replace those that perpetuate conflict.*

*These discussions are enriched by insights emerging from Bahá’í moral and spiritual education programs, where young people throughout Mexico are discovering their capacity to contribute to social transformation by serving their families and neighbors.*

*“What we’re seeing at the grassroots level,” explains Oscar Covarrubias of the Office of External Affairs, “is that when young people recognize their own spiritual nature and capacity to serve others, they become protagonists for positive change in their communities.”*

*The spirit of service being cultivated among youth and its power to transform neighborhoods has drawn the attention of social actors seeking fresh perspectives on violence prevention.*

*Since 2023, these discussions have grown to include a widening circle of government officials and other social actors exploring these themes.*

*A key takeaway from these discussions has been how young people are developing their capacities for meaningful relationships and constructive dialogue with their families and peers through their participation in Bahá’í moral educational programs that combine spiritual development with service to the community.*

*The importance of nurturing these capacities, particularly for constructive interaction and communication, was highlighted by Angello Baños, sociologist and workshop facilitator at the General*

Directorate for Well-being and Social Cohesion. “Our ability to see, our voice, and our words have been taken from us. When communication is absent, interpretation occurs, and misinterpretation generates violence. That is why maintaining a connection with our children and friends is so crucial,” he stated.

Arturo Serrano, another member of the Office of External Affairs, observed how these connections among family members and neighbors strengthen as a spirit of service to humanity grows in a neighborhood.

“When young people engage in service to others, they begin to see themselves differently,” Mr. Serrano added. He explained that each act of service, no matter how small, helps the youth recognize their own nobility and capacity to contribute to society. Their growing sense of purpose, combined with the bonds they form through serving together, creates a natural resilience against the harmful forces they encounter daily.

Dr. Ceballos emphasized this idea, saying, “How do you fight a fire? One way is to enter it and try to extinguish it; another is to remove what fuels it.”

He added: “Work in neighborhoods transforms people over the long term, creating a sense of community. We must strengthen the communal sense, the social fabric, and it is much easier to do that locally on the basis of shared moral and spiritual principles.”

Jimena Esquivel, Director of the Tolerance and Religious Freedom at the General Directorate of Religious Affairs added, “Building peace is a long-term endeavor. It requires us to make the effort to place ourselves in one another’s shoes, to listen, and to feel from others’ perspective.”

Looking ahead, the Office of External Affairs plans to continue these conversations, addressing specific social issues such as violence against women and children. The aim is to expand the reach of these conversations while maintaining the intimate nature of discussions that allow for meaningful exploration of spiritual solutions to social challenges.

## 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. Ayyam-i-Ha was celebrated with dance and songs and was also publicized in local newspapers. There was a Baha’i wedding.



**मुस्लिम-बोहरा समाजजन स्वर्गे रोजे, ईश्वर, बरहार्ह व जैन श्रद्धालु करेगे उपवास मार्च... कल से इबादत, उपवास और आस्था का महासंगम शुरू**

**शहर रहिंगे प्रपरा पर और त्योहार**

**दिलाल कमेटी की बैठक आज**

**दिवाब जैन समाज बरहार्ह समाज : नववर्ष नवराज 20 को**



# Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul



GOOD NEWS NETWORK

## Firefighters Invite Gang Members



*In a Los Angeles neighborhood full of gang activity, where bullets sometimes fly, Fire Station No. 68 serves the community of central Los Angeles, instead of keeping a low profile. The Fire Department has opened its doors to the community. "It used to be we'd be out on a call and there'd be gangs shooting at each other," said Capt. Kawme Cooper, one of the organizers of a city-wide community-based program. "We found out who the leaders are of approximately eight gangs in the district and we introduced ourselves in gang intervention meetings. Then we didn't push it."*

*Soon, said Cooper, the gangs approached the fire house. "They wanted to do a toy drive in the community."*

*That began our working together. Now, sometimes when we're out on emergencies, whether it's a shooting or fire, gang members help with crowd control and help protect us from violence when we're on calls."*

*Cooper said members of the L.A. Fire Department realized they needed to become more involved in their communities after the rioting that followed the Rodney King verdict. "We realized we weren't as well thought of as we thought we were," said Cooper. So a fire-protection committee put together a curriculum offering fire stations around the city ideas for programs which can help increase communication between firefighters and neighborhood residents. These include book donation programs, tutoring, character-building picnics, career days and Christmas tree pick-ups.*

*Firefighters from across the city are also encouraging elementary school children to participate in the "Fire Cadet"• program. Firefighters visit third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classes in local schools once a week for six months and teach basic fire, earthquake and medical safety.*

*"We don't just teach 'stop, drop and roll'," said firefighter LaMorris Wilcher, who has been at Fire Station 68 for two years. "We teach them about responsibility, and talk to them about staying in school and staying off drugs. Now when we go on calls where some of these kids live, the kids know us by name and it takes some of the fear out of what's going on."*

*Firefighter Mark Ryan, who's been at Station 68 for eight years, said that before they began the program it was rare to see children outside after 5 p.m. "This is a gang-infested neighborhood, a high crime rate area," he said. "These kids are scared. Now, they feel a little safer because they know who we are. People used to see us as a closed door place. Now kids and their parents aren't afraid to approach fire department officers." Ryan added, "Parents of the kids also come and get involved in programs. They see their kids learn respect for adults and authority figures."*

*Damien Martin, 16, has participated in the fire department's Educational Athletic Program, which pairs firefighters with teams of four teens to play basketball on Saturday mornings. "The park to play basketball is too far away, and we couldn't get rides," said Martin. "We got to know the firefighters and they asked if we wanted to get a group together to play. Before the program began, I didn't know anything about the fire department or the firefighters. The fire house was just a building on the block."*

*The Educational Athletic Program combines basketball playing with a short educational program designed to build self-esteem and encourage responsibility, all taught by firefighters who are trained by the department captains. "It's opened a lot of doors for us," said Martin. "We're not just hanging out on the street. We can open up to them about anything that's going on in our lives."*

*Cooper said, "We have to go beyond sitting in the station and playing cards. It's a philosophical challenge for some of the firefighters who were hired to put out fires and respond to emergencies. We want to be the good neighbor and help the community."*

By Tahera Yadav:

### 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.

## Social Action

### Baha'i Inspired Economics Website

*It is a pleasure to report that the **Baha'i Inspired Economics website**, in 7 years of its existence, has had 127,000 visitors who viewed 281,400 website pages from more than 200 countries. There is a desperate need for a **New And Moral Economic System (Humanomics)**. With more than 400 resources in English and Spanish, this website is a library of books, videos, and articles by like-minded writers and humanists working hard to lay the foundation for a new economic system.*

# Baha'i Inspired Economics

[badishams.com](http://badishams.com)

*This website is a source of information with an emphasis on the moral and spiritual aspects of economics, and we will discuss spiritually inspired ideas. Hopefully, the visitor will find my **blogs and resources** useful, and they will empower him or her to act and realize the tremendous power we have as individuals to transform society in every way, including economic ways.*

*The present economic system is sick and is dying. It cannot meet the needs of humanity. The gap between rich and poor is getting wider and wider, which has increased the suffering of the masses. The solutions that can heal it have been ignored. It is time to re-examine the fundamental assumptions that this system was built on and replace them with humane, moral and spiritual ones. We need to build an economic system that is fit to help mankind achieve its goal of an ever-advancing civilization, a world where there is no room for economic injustice, and people have all the necessities of life so they can live peaceful and fulfilling lives. A shift in thinking is needed. This website aims to provide some insight and suggestions for taking steps to lay the foundation for a better economic future. We have the solutions and the technology to build a new system; we need the resolve and the will. Everyone has an inherent power to contribute. The time for action is upon us. This is our eleventh hour.*

## [From the Pages of History](#)

### **Dismissal of Mulla Husayn**

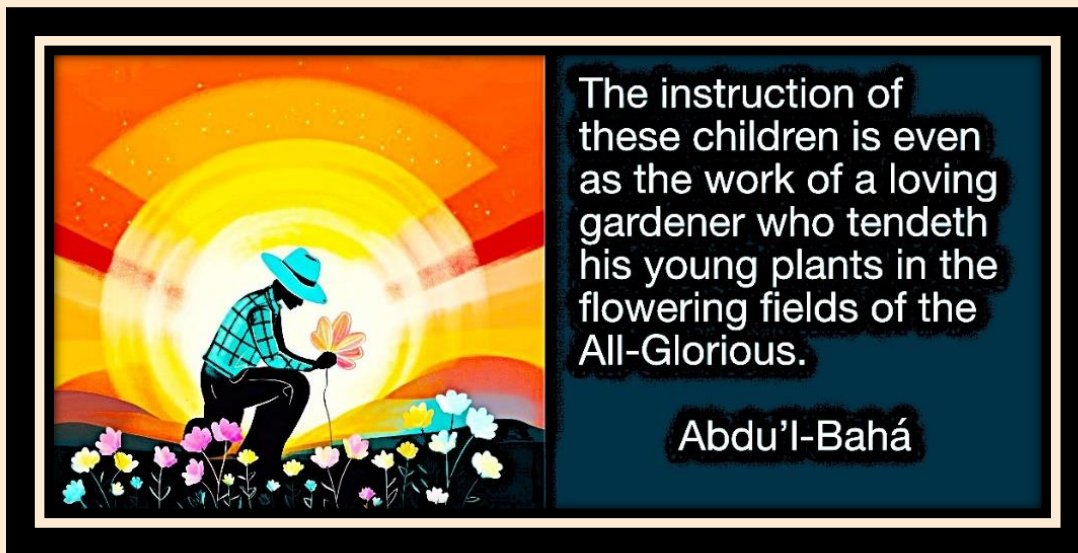
*Mulla Husayn, who anticipated being the chosen companion of the Bab during His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, was, as soon as the latter decided to depart from Shiraz, summoned to the presence of his Master, who gave him the following instructions: “The days of our companionship are approaching their end. My Covenant with you is now accomplished. Gird up the loins of endeavour, and arise to diffuse My Cause. Be not dismayed at the sight of the degeneracy and perversity of this generation, for the Lord of the Covenant shall assuredly assist you. Verily, He shall surround you with His loving protection, and shall lead you from victory to victory. Even as the cloud that rains its bounty upon the earth, traverse the land from end to end, and shower upon its people the blessings*

which the Almighty, in His mercy, has deigned to confer upon you. Forbear with the ulamas, and resign yourself to the will of God. Raise the cry: 'Awake, awake, for, lo! the Gate of God is open, and the morning Light is shedding its radiance upon all mankind! The promised One is made manifest; prepare the way for Him, O people of the earth! Deprive not yourselves of its redeeming grace, nor close your eyes to its effulgent glory.' Those whom you find receptive to your call, share with them the epistles and tablets We have revealed for you, that, perchance, these wondrous words may cause them to turn away from the slough of heedlessness, and soar into the realm of the Divine presence. In this pilgrimage upon which We are soon to embark, We have chosen Quddus as Our companion. We have left you behind to face the onslaught of a fierce and relentless enemy.

Rest assured, however, that a bounty unspeakably glorious shall be conferred upon you. Follow the course of your journey towards the north, and visit on your way Isfahan, Kashan, Qum, and Tihiran. Beseech almighty Providence that He may graciously enable you to attain, in that capital, the seat of true sovereignty, and to enter the mansion of the Beloved. A secret lies hidden in that city. When made manifest, it shall turn the earth into paradise. My hope is that you may partake of its grace and recognise its splendour. From Tihiran proceed to Khurasan, and there proclaim anew the Call. From thence return to Najaf and Karbila, and there await the summons of your Lord. Be assured that the high mission for which you have been created will, in its entirety, be accomplished by you. Until you have consummated your work, if all the darts of an unbelieving world be directed against you, they will be powerless to hurt a single hair of your head. All things are imprisoned within His mighty grasp. He, verily, is the Almighty, the All-Subduing." ~ The Dawn Breakers & Nabil's Narrative

## Sharing

### Douglas Wilson's sharing:





# History, News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



## **‘Every Child Matters’ now Protected by Trademark**



*On Sept. 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the streets are flooded with a sea of orange. Across Canada, people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds wear orange shirts which feature the phrase “Every Child Matters”. The orange shirts are more than clothing; they are a symbol of remembrance, resilience, and a commitment to reconciliation.*

*In August, the Orange Shirt Society registered a trademark for the phrase “Every Child Matters”. The trademark has granted the Orange Shirt Society exclusive rights to use the phrase on merchandise, meaning any vendor wishing to sell items featuring the phrase must first obtain written permission.*

*A broad and complex perspective is shared by Chief Willie Sellars of Williams Lake First Nation, whose community has been at the forefront of the Orange Shirt Day movement.*

*“The history and legacy of the Orange Shirt Day is Phyllis Webstad’s story,” he said. “The phrase ‘Every Child Matters’ started with Phyllis Webstad and we have to recognize that. We also have to hold up what the day represents and how it’s grown into something so much bigger than all of us.”*

*The Orange Shirt Society is Phyllis Webstad’s non-profit organization, created to raise awareness of the residential school experience and support reconciliation. On Aug. 29, 2024 the Orange Shirt Society posted a trademark notice to Facebook, just one month before Truth and Reconciliation Day. Vendors selling merchandise featuring the phrase “Every Child Matters” are expected to cease unless they obtain written permission.*

### **The Creation of Orange Shirt Society**

*At six years old Phyllis Webstad lived in poverty with her grandmother on the Dog Creek Reserve. Her grandmother managed to purchase Webstad a new shirt just in time for her to wear it at the Saint Joseph Mission residential school.*

*On her first day at residential school, she was stripped, and her orange shirt was confiscated. Her excitement quickly turned to the hardship of living at the residential school, which Webstad spoke of while accepting a B.C. Reconciliation Award on Jan. 23.*

*“We had to cry ourselves to sleep,” she recalled at the recent event in Victoria.*

*In May 2013, survivors of the Saint Joseph Mission residential school organized a reunion event and commemoration project, initiated by the Esketemc First Nation Chief Fred Robbins. The event was held in Williams Lake with Webstad as the spokesperson. She shared her story, creating the legacy of Orange Shirt Day. The Orange Shirt Society was established in 2015 by Webstad and other founders of Orange Shirt Day.*

### **Trademark Controversy**

*Walmart, Aritzia, London Drugs, and other large corporations are the only authorized licensees to use the trademark in association with merchandise. While the trademark might seem like a necessary step to protect the integrity of the phrase, it has sparked debates within Indigenous communities.*

*Ida Thompson from Haisla First Nation is a scholar and activist.*

*“I believe Indigenous artists should be the only authorized entities, and it’s interesting that Walmart, Aritzia, and London Drugs are now profiting off the trauma caused by the Canadian government,” she said. “I think what would be helpful would be engaging in open dialog with Indigenous artists, communities and survivors...”*

*She also suggests that the trademark permits Canadians to only think about the horrific residential school legacy once a year.*

*Andy Everson from K’omoks First Nation is a renowned artist. In 2015, he designed a logo which was popularly associated with the phrase “Every Child Matters”. The design was appropriated by international online retailers, which mass-produced Everson’s design and the slogan without any consultation or compensation.*

*During an interview with the Nanaimo News Bulletin in September Webstad addressed the issue of others profiting from the Orange Shirt Day movement.*

*“[M]y 10-year experience being held captive there was anything but fashionable,” she said in the News Bulletin article. “They just look at it as a money-maker. They don’t understand the history behind it they see it as trending and popular.”*

*Profits from the sale of “Every Child Matters” merchandise are solely controlled by the Orange Shirt Society and its licensees.*

### **What Might the Trademark Inspire?**

*Collette Jones, PhD, from Snuneymuxw First Nation, is a first and second-generation residential school survivor and has expressed her support for the Society’s trademark. All nine of Collette’s siblings attended residential school. She acknowledges the importance of protecting the integrity of the phrase. Jones’s niece, for example, created a new design that honors residential school survivors without infringing on the trademark by omitting the “Every Child Matters”. Collette’s voice trembled as she described the shirt.*

*“I was really touched when I saw that,” she said. “I was so touched, because we all survived.”*

*Her niece’s design, while recognizably an orange shirt homage, does not infringe the trademark.*

*“If they [The Society] began it first then rightfully so it should be theirs,” said Jones. “It’s protected. Just like any other business. People are respectful and cautious with other trademarks, they need to do the same for the Orange Shirt Society.”*

*Rustee Watts from Hupacasath First Nation is an activist and is working toward his master’s in educational leadership. Watts believes that while the trademark may restrict some artists, it could also spark new forms of creativity. The idea of Nuu-chah-nulth day is coming back, and Watts envisions a sea of red and black marching Port Alberni on Sept. 30. Orange sashes would be an addition to the red and black clothing, to honour Webstad as a driving force.*

*“Orange Shirt Day and Every Child Matters, that is Phyllis Webstad’s dream,” said Watts. “Beautiful dream! I want to see other dreams. There are so many dreams... why stop there?”*

*“[W]e have never been official as Indigenous vendors before, so what is not being official going to matter us again?” he continued. “You go to Indigenous tournaments, or any sort of gatherings, or places where these vendors are allowed to set up and they mutate a lot of things in fun ways to spread fun messages. And in no way do I think there is a bad heart involved...”*

### **Intellectual Property and Ethical Considerations**

*The legal implications of the trademark are complicated. According to Andy Chow, the Orange Shirt Society’s intellectual property lawyer, a registered trademark is not always necessary to enforce the rights associated with a brand or slogan. Even without registration, the Orange Shirt Society still has common law rights to the phrase. This means unauthorized use of the phrase or its associated logo could result in legal action. The trademark system, designed to protect intellectual property, does not account for the cultural significance and the shared history behind the phrase.*

*The Orange Shirt Society’s Branding and Copyright Policy states, “Subsequent failure to rectify the improper use of the Trademark may result in a termination of any license to use the Trademark and in legal action by the Society, including but not limited to the exercise of any rights available to the Society at law.”*

*Many are curious if the trademark can be retroactively applied. The answer is unclear.*

*“I think that the logo itself is more important than the words, because the words themselves, that’s been our motto,” Watts said. “We have always been in a village mentality, and the centre of our villages are the youth, so ‘Every Child Matters’... its been our motto.”*

*“Indigenous artists should have the freedom to use culturally significant slogans in their work because it serves as a form of expression and reclamation of our heritage,” said Thompson. “But there’s also concerns about commercial exploitation of cultural symbols without proper acknowledgement or compensation, ultimately it would be ideal to foster a system that respects both the rights of the original creators and the need for Indigenous artists to stress their culture freely. Collaborative agreements and partnerships could help bridge this gap.”*

## *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***

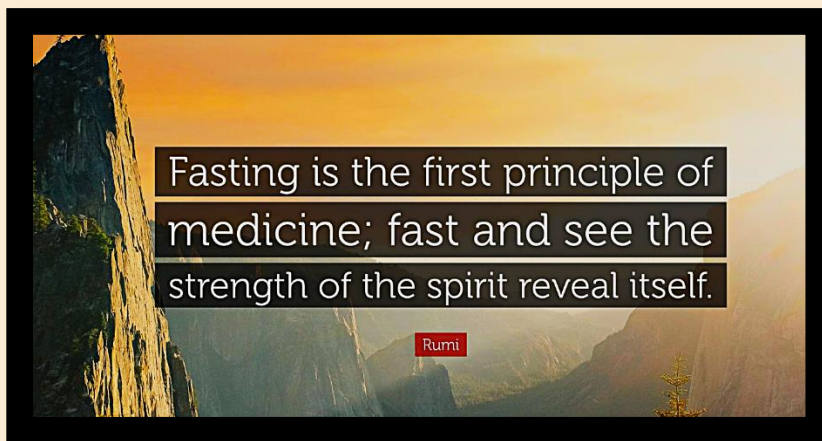
*I believe that all the spiritual laws of God are for the benefit of humanity, and the direct gain is for the individual who obeys them and follows them.*

*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.*



## *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***

**For sharing materials and questions, write to [bshams@telus.net](mailto:bshams@telus.net)**