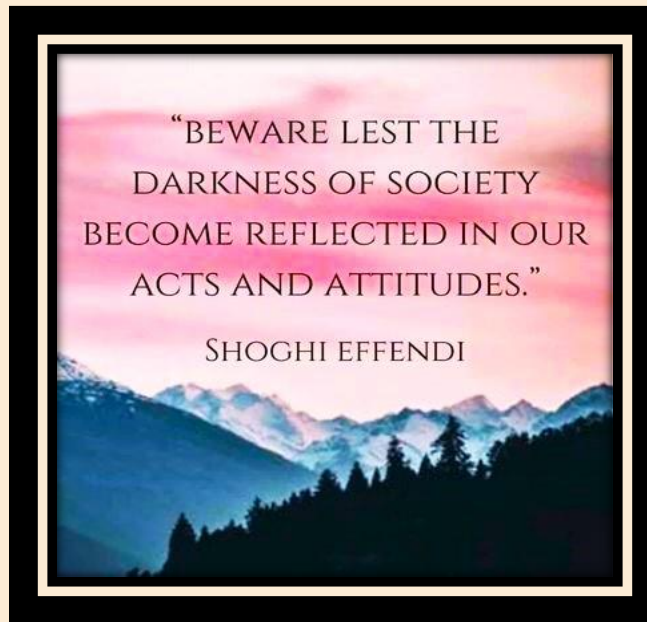




The Nuggets

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Baha'i Stories

Gifts

A major event during the Master's visit to America was the dedication of the land for the first Bahá'í House of Worship of the western hemisphere in Wilmette, Illinois. Mrs. Nettie Tobin lived nearby in Chicago and was anxious to contribute something, despite the fact that she was not well off. The following is her account of how she solved the problem. 'I had heard that the Master was to be at the Temple site on May first, and I thought that He should have a suitable stone to mark the location of the Temple. So I went to a building under construction near my home, and seeing a pile of stones at a wall, I asked the builder if I could get a stone. He said, "Sure, help yourself, these are rejected." So I went home, got an old, small, baby carriage, loaded the stone into it and wheeled it home. Early the next morning, with the help of a Persian friend, I wheeled the carriage to the car line, and against the protests of the conductor, we got the carriage onto the platform of the car. We made two changes and finally, after endless delays, we got the baby carriage to the corner of Central Street and Sheridan Road. Here, when we pushed the carriage over a broken pavement it collapsed. As we stood despairing of getting the stone to the Temple grounds in time, since the hour had passed for the service, two boys with an express wagon came along. The boys were quickly persuaded to lend their wagon for the transportation and so we finally came to the grounds. Imagine my joy when "the stone refused by the builder" was received and used by the Master! -Honnold, Annamarie, Vignettes from the Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Events and News

Oneness of humanity essential to food system reform



BIC BRUSSELS — *An overarching principle that should underpin any conversation on agriculture is the oneness of humanity, says the Brussels Office of the Bahá’í International Community (BIC) in a new statement on the future of agriculture in the European Union.*

The statement—addressed to a recent meeting of the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting—highlights several broad considerations essential to effective reforms to food systems, including: justice as a guiding principle in international relations to ensure that trade is fair and beneficial to all; the need to revisit the assumption that competition and relentless growth are essential for material well-being; prioritizing the needs of farmers of all scales of production in agricultural deliberations and policymaking; and fostering educational systems that emphasize the nobility of farming and encourage youth to apply their intellectual and scientific capabilities toward the development of new, sustainable, and context-appropriate technologies.

The Brussels Office further states that Europe’s decisions regarding agriculture have far-reaching impacts, necessitating a deep appreciation of the broader global context. It stresses that the agricultural well-being of all societies is not just a strategic imperative but, above all, a moral one, especially given Europe’s “pivotal role in the global economic and financial order.”

Rachel Bayani, a representative of the BIC Brussels Office, spoke with the News Service, discussing the essential interconnectedness of global food systems and the moral imperative to collectively address the challenges of developing more sustainable, equitable, and resilient food systems.

“The future of agriculture hinges not only on technical solutions but on our recognition of the oneness of humanity,” she stated.

“We must embrace justice and cooperation at every level,” continued Mrs. Bayani, “reimagine our economic assumptions, and place the needs of farmers and the environment at the heart of our policies.

By doing so, we can cultivate a world where the prosperity and sustainability of the agricultural sector worldwide reinforces our shared humanity.”

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. The day of martyrdom of the Bab, the Baha’is of Jaipur organized a blood donation camp in the Baha’i House. A two-day institutional meeting was organized at Bahai House. Friends from Jaipur and the Todabhim Group of Clusters participated in the meeting, and plans and reviews were made for the next three months.



Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul

A couple spend their winnings on fostering children

A kindhearted couple who won £100,000 on the Euromillions is planning to spend their winnings on fostering children.

Already parents to three children, the couple in their 40s will now convert their garage into extra bedrooms to begin fostering kids in need, a dream they’ve always shared.

Kathleen Reece admits she’s often moaned in the past about her husband Mark playing the Euromillions every week, believing they weren’t lucky enough to ever win.

And she thought Mark was playing a practical joke on her when he asked her to check the winning ticket while he went out to get some milk in North Worcestershire, England.

But her daughter helped her double-checked the numbers online. “We called out the winning numbers to each other and, as the realization of what this meant hit us, we sat there in disbelief.”

“I decided to call the number on the back of the ticket and was talking to a lady from The National Lottery when Mark came home with the milk.

“I told him to shush, as I was on the phone to The National Lottery. His jaw dropped.

“He looked at me in disbelief so I put the phone on speaker and the lady confirmed we’d won £100,770.”

Kathleen, Mark and their daughter and two sons all sat in the kitchen staring at each other before hiding the winning ticket in Mark’s passport for safekeeping.

"I've always wanted to foster children," said Kathleen. "Mark and I discussed it many years ago and then we had our own.

"My three kids will be leaving home soon and I have too much love to give. I've always wanted to foster, however having enough space has always been an issue."

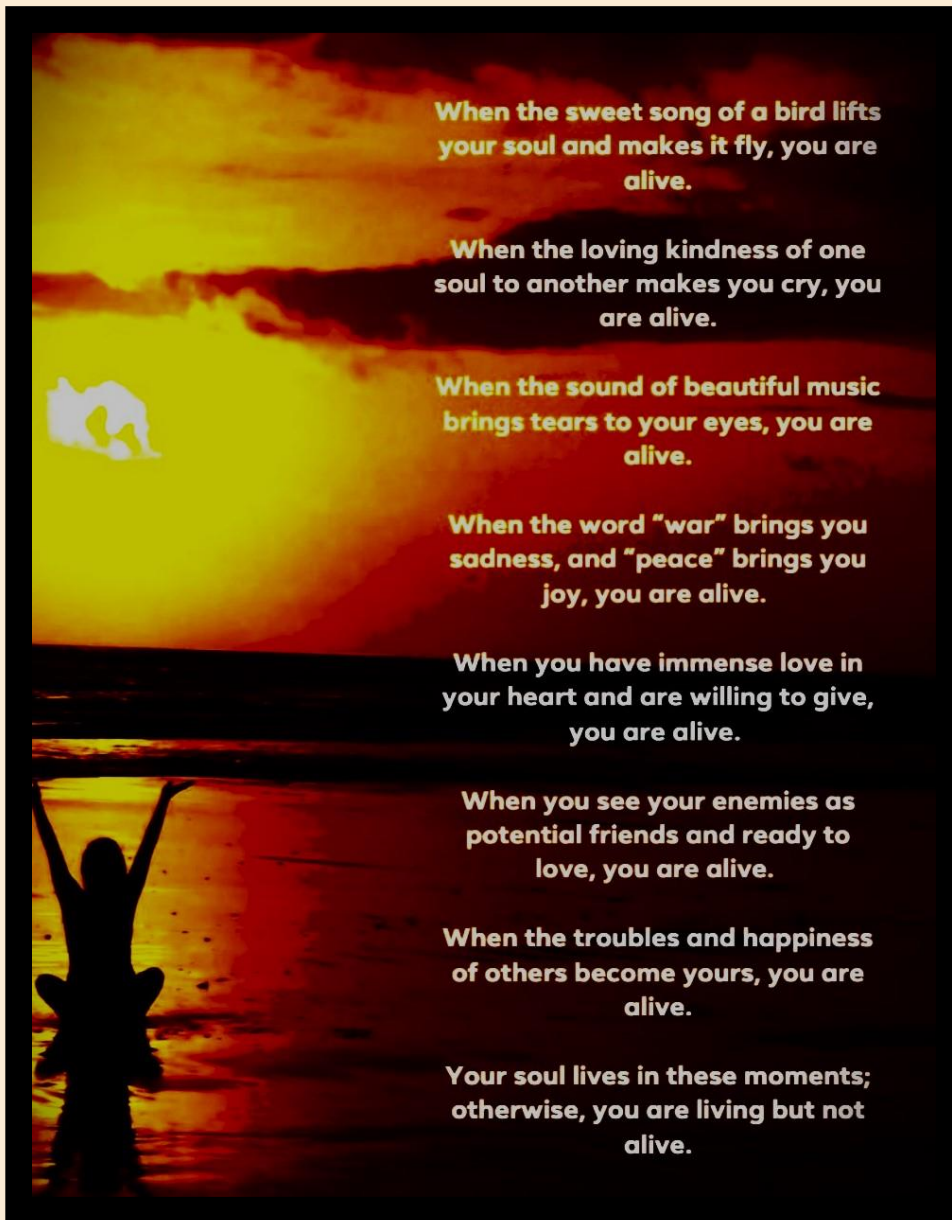
Kathleen, a full-time teaching assistant said the win was a brilliant way to finish off her summer break.

"Thanks to the win it'll no longer be a problem. I'm so happy we can finally fulfill our dream."

Poems

Badi:

You are alive



Social Action

Adopt a Highway by the Baha'is of Victoria

*The Baha'is of Victoria, BC, initiated the Baha'i Adopt a Highway project, which started in the summer of 2007 with the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure. Initially, the Baha'is adopted a 2km section of Highway 1. The Baha'is clean this area 3-4 times a year. There are 2 signs on each side of the highway saying: **Adopt a Highway, Baha'i Community***



Thousands of commuters visit this area daily, seeing the Baha'i signage and the website address 24/7. Members of Baha'i Communities volunteer for the environmental cleanup along with many youth and friends of the Faith. Any community anywhere in BC or Canada can adopt a section of highway and get recognized by the Ministry of Transportation. The Ministry provides all the cleaning gear, bags, signage, gloves, uniforms, insurance, etc. We have to do our part to help clean the environment.



From the Pages of History

Return of the Bab to Shiraz

The Bab straightway resumed His journey to Shiraz. Free and unfettered, He went before His escort, which followed Him in an attitude of respectful devotion. By the magic of His words, He had

disarmed the hostility of His guards and transmuted their proud arrogance into humility and love. Reaching the city, they proceeded directly to the seat of the government. Whosoever observed the cavalcade marching through the streets could not help but marvel at this most unusual spectacle. Immediately Husayn Khan was informed of the arrival of the Bab, he summoned Him to his presence. He received Him with the utmost insolence and bade Him occupy a seat facing him in the centre of the room. He publicly rebuked Him, and in abusive language denounced His conduct. "Do you realise," he angrily protested, "what a great mischief you have kindled? Are you aware what a disgrace you have become to the holy Faith of Islam and to the august person of our sovereign? Are you not the man who claims to be the author of a new revelation which annuls the sacred precepts of the Qur'an?" The Bab calmly replied: "If any bad man come unto you with news, clear up the matter at once, lest through ignorance ye harm others, and be speedily constrained to repent of what ye have done." ⁽¹⁾ These words inflamed the wrath of Husayn Khan. "What!" he exclaimed. "Dare you ascribe to us evil, ignorance, and folly?" Turning to his attendant, he bade him strike the Bab in the face. So violent was the blow, that the Bab's turban fell to the ground. Shaykh Abu-Turab, the Imam-Jum'ih of Shiraz, who was present at that meeting and who strongly disapproved of the conduct of Husayn Khan, ordered that the Bab's turban be replaced upon His head, and invited Him to be seated by his side. Turning to the governor, the Imam-Jum'ih explained to him the circumstances connected with the revelation of the verse of the Qur'an which the Bab had quoted, and sought by this means to calm his fury. "This verse which this youth has quoted," he told him, "has made a profound impression upon me. The wise course, I feel, is to enquire into this matter with great care, and to judge him according to the precepts of the holy Book." Husayn Khan readily consented; whereupon Shaykh Abu-Turab questioned the Bab regarding the nature and character of His Revelation. The Bab denied the claim of being either the representative of the promised Qa'im or the intermediary between Him and the faithful. "We are completely satisfied," replied the Imam-Jum'ih; "we shall request you to present yourself on Friday in the Masjid-i-Vakil, and to proclaim publicly your denial." As Shaykh Abu-Turab arose to depart in the hope of terminating the proceedings, Husayn Khan intervened and said: "We shall require a person of recognised standing to give bail and surety for him, and to pledge his word in writing that if ever in future this youth should attempt by word or deed to prejudice the interests either of the Faith of Islam or of the government of this land, he would straightway deliver him into our hands, and regard himself under all circumstances responsible for his behaviour." Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali, the Bab's maternal uncle, who was present at that meeting, consented to act as the sponsor of his Nephew. In his own handwriting he wrote the pledge, affixed to it his seal, confirmed it by the signature of a number of witnesses, and delivered it to the governor; whereupon Husayn Khan ordered that the Bab be entrusted to the care of His uncle, with the condition that at whatever time the governor should deem it advisable, Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali would at once deliver the Bab into his hands.

Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali, his heart filled with gratitude to God, conducted the Bab to His home and committed Him to the loving care of His revered mother. He rejoiced at this family reunion and was greatly relieved by the deliverance of his dear and precious Kinsman from the grasp of that malignant tyrant. In the quiet of His own home, the Bab led for a time a life of undisturbed retirement. No one except His wife, His mother, and His uncles had any intercourse with Him. Meanwhile the mischief-makers were busily pressing Shaykh Abu-Turab to summon the Bab to the Masjid-i-Vakil and to call upon Him to fulfil His pledge.~ **The Dawn Breakers & Nabil's Narrative**

Sharing

Douglas Wilson's sharing:



Confer upon me thoughts which may change this world into a rose garden through the outpourings of heavenly grace.

-Abdu'l-Bahá-

News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities



Simple joys, Food and Friendship



As shared by SS Siri Chand Singh Khalsa from Espanola, New Mexico

When I was asked to share my experiences with the evening chanting and langar program that we hold at the Hacienda de Guru Ram Das ashram in Espanola, it got me thinking about what I could include that isn't already obvious. As ministers, we all know how deep an impact meditating together and gathering as a sangat can have on us, on our community, and—as studies suggest—even on the world. In addition, we have all experienced the benefits of seva, or the benefits a seva program can have in uniting and uplifting a community. We have also experienced the simple joy of gathering and sharing a meal: sangat and pangat.

As I thought about it, I realized that one of the greatest added benefits of our program has been the opportunity to meet the visitors to the ashram. In the past they would just come to an empty parking lot and a locked Gurdwara—and with luck they might find someone to unlock it for them to enter! During the almost four years of our evening gatherings, we have met people who traveled from afar specifically to see the ashram. Some have come because the ashram is on the way to their destination. These are mostly Punjabi truckers or Punjabi families on vacation in Santa Fe, in addition to some road trippers and wild spirit wanderers. Some have come who just ‘happened’ to find our ashram and walked in. Locals have come, who wanted to know more about us. We have had visitors on different spiritual paths, who are curious to learn about ours. We have had visits from some people who used to live in a 3HO ashram in the 70s or 80s, as well as members of our worldwide 3HO sangat.

Most of these visitors love the Rehiras and the kirtan, while a few don’t quite get into it. However, almost invariably, during our conversations either right after meditating or at langar, ‘outsiders’ quickly become ‘friends.’ One Hindu lady loved her experience here so much that she told us she wanted her daughter’s wedding to be in our Gurdwara. A few people have even changed their trips and decided to stay at the ashram for a few days. One of the most memorable of these was a short-haired Punjabi man who kept extending his stay here for several months. He had finally found his path, and did sadhana every day, both in the Amrit Vela and in the evenings, as well as a lot of seva in the kitchen. He is back home with his family again but is now an Amritdhari Sikh with a strong daily practice. He visits occasionally and keeps in contact with several sangat members.

The evening kirtan and langar program has certainly been very helpful for interacting with our visitors and allowing them to feel welcome and uplifted. However, its greatest value is in how it has helped us, both individually and as a sangat. It has been a very rewarding sadhana for me personally and has helped to create a very cozy atmosphere. It has helped us strengthen the friendship among sangat members—even transcending the polarization of political views. One of our visitors who is an active 3HO sangat member once told us that this is the most welcoming and cozy it has ever been at the Espanola ashram.

From the Editor’s Desk

Making Economics Serve Humanity

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 sufferings of the poor and underprivileged. 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.

We need Humanomics: a human system with human values and less economics to solve the inequalities in our economic system. A lack of humanity has been with the system since its inception and has devastated millions of lives.

The Baha'i Writings remind me to be aware of my role in taking care of the poor since my 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.

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 the plight of others. 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 should 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 far-fetched 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.

**“ If you feel pain, you're
alive. If you feel other
people's pain, you're a
human being ”**

-Leo Tolstoy

Writings to Ponder and Practice

**“For service in love for mankind is unity with God. He who serves has already entered the Kingdom and is seated at the right hand of his Lord.”
-Abdu’l-Baha**

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