

KWANZAA SPIRIT

*Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one of seven principles:
Unity, Self-determination, Collective work and responsibility, Cooperative economics,
Purpose, Creativity, Faith*

1. Umoja (Unity)

To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

Hinduism

The Yogi who pure from sin ever prays in this harmony of soul soon feels the joy of Eternity, the infinite joy of union with God. He sees himself in the heart of all beings and he sees all beings in his heart.

This is the vision of the Yogi of harmony, a vision which is ever one. And when he sees me in all and he sees all in me, then I never leave him and he never leaves me.

He who in this oneness of love, loves me in whatever he sees, wherever this man may live, in truth this man lives in me. And he is the greatest Yogi he whose vision is ever one: when the pleasure and pain of others is his own pleasure and pain.

Bhagavad Gita 6.28-32

2. Bahá'í Faith

If love and agreement are manifest in a single family, that family will advance, become illumined and spiritual; but if enmity and hatred exist within it destruction and dispersion are inevitable. This is likewise true of a city. If those who dwell within it manifest a spirit of accord and fellowship it will progress steadily and human conditions become brighter whereas through enmity and strife it will be degraded and its inhabitants scattered. In the same way the people of a nation develop and advance toward civilization and enlightenment through love and accord, and are disintegrated by war and strife. Finally, this is true of humanity itself in the aggregate. When love is realized and the ideal spiritual bonds unite the hearts of men, the whole human race will be uplifted, the world will continually grow more spiritual and radiant and the happiness and tranquillity of mankind be immeasurably increased.

Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 144-45

3. Kujichagulia (Self-determination)

To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created for, and spoken for by others.

Judaism

Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun, but if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment.

Ecclesiastes 11. 7-9

4. Bahá'í Faith

Know thou that, according to what thy Lord, the Lord of all men, hath decreed in His Book, the favors vouchsafed by Him unto mankind have been, and will ever remain, limitless in their range. First and foremost among these favors, which the Almighty hath conferred upon man, is the gift of understanding. His purpose in conferring such a gift is none other except to enable His creature to know and recognize the one true God - exalted be His glory. This gift giveth man the power to discern the truth in all things, leadeth him to that which is right, and helpeth him to discover the secrets of creation.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: XCV

5. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)

To build and maintain our community together and make our sisters' and brothers' problems our problems and to solve them together.

Zoroastrianism

The wise Lord of Life and source of goodness shall teach the wise and the righteous ones the best teachings, of which the mystic lover and teachers of philosophy are aware. Through

wisdom and pure thought only, O Mazdaⁱⁱ, one can become Thy devotee.

One who makes his mind better or worse, O Mazda, his deed, word and conscience shall follow sure. The path selected by one's voluntary choice, his will and faith shall also follow the same and shall be in tune with them. According to Thy wisdom, O Mazda, their destiny shall be distinct from each other.
Gatha Yasna 48.3-76

6. *Bahá'í Faith*

O My Servant! Ye are the trees of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth, O men of understanding! For results depend upon means, and the grace of God shall be all-sufficient unto you. Trees that yield no fruit have been and will ever be for the fire.

Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, Persian #80

7. **Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)**

To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.

Buddhism

The man who arises in faith, who ever remembers his high purpose, whose work is pure, and who carefully considers his work, who in self-possession lives the life of perfection, and who ever, for ever, is watchful, that man shall arise in glory.

By arising in faith and watchfulness, by self-possession and self-harmony, the wise man makes an island for his soul which many waters cannot overflow.

Men who are foolish and ignorant are careless and never watchful; but the man who lives in watchfulness considers it his greatest treasure.

Never surrender to carelessness; never sink into weak pleasures and lust. Those who are watchful, in deep contemplation, reach in the end the joy supreme.

Dhammapada 24-27

8. *Bahá'í Faith*

The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion. Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.

At the outset of every endeavour, it is incumbent to look to the end of it. Of all the arts and sciences, set the children to studying those which will result in advantage to man, will ensure his progress and elevate his rank. Thus the noisome odours of lawlessness will be dispelled, and thus through the high endeavours of the nation's leaders, all will live cradled, secure and in peace.

Tablets of Bahá'u'llah: 17.

9. **Nia (Purpose)**

To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

Christianity

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.... If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Galatians 5.22-23

10. *Bahá'í Faith*

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words.

Exert yourselves that ye may attain this transcendent and most sublime station, the

station that can ensure the protection and security of all mankind. This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: CXXXII

11. **Kuumba (Creativity)**

To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

Islam

Blessed is He who placed in the heavens constellations of stars, and place a burning lamp in it and the luminous moon.

It is He who made the night and day an alternation for him who cares to reflect and be grateful.

Devotees of Ar-Rahmanⁱⁱⁱ are those who walk with humility on the earth, and when they are addressed by the ignorant, say: "peace," and those who spend their nights bowed and standing before their Lord;

~ Qur'án 25: 61- 68

12. **Bahá'í Faith**

Arise, O people, and by the power of God's might, resolve to gain the victory over your own selves, that haply the whole earth may be freed and sanctified from its servitude to the gods of its idle fancies ... We cherish the hope that the Hand of Divine power may lend its assistance to mankind, and deliver it from its state of grievous abasement.

In one of the Tablets these words have been revealed: O people of God! Do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men.

~ Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: XLIII

#13 **Imani (Faith)**

To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Babí Faith

This Remembrance is indeed the glorious Remnant of the Light of God, and He will be best for you, if ye in very truth remain faithful to God, the Most Exalted . . . We have in truth sent Thee forth unto all men, by the leave of God, invested with Our signs and reinforced by Our unsurpassed sovereignty. He is indeed the appointed Bearer of the Trust of God . . .

...Persevere steadfastly as Thou art bidden and let not the faithless amongst men nor their utterances grieve Thee, since Thy Lord shall, by the righteousness of God, the Most Great, pass judgement upon them on the Day of Resurrection, and surely God witnesseth all things.

*~ Selections from the Writings of the Báb / 2.
Excerpts from the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá*

14. **Bahá'í Faith**

It is Our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind. Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors. Fix your gaze upon Him Who is the Temple of God amongst men. He, in truth, hath offered up His life as a ransom for the redemption of the world. He, verily, is the All-Bountiful, the Gracious, the Most High. If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause.

~ Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: CXLVI

Personal Prayers

Reflection on the Texts

Discussion

- If you have you been to a Kwanzaa celebration, tell us about it?

ⁱ "one who is joined", any Hindu ascetic

ⁱⁱ "The Wise Lord", the Supreme Deity (also Ahura Mazda)

ⁱⁱⁱ name of the supreme Being