



International Day of Light – May 16

Dear sweet children,

Our life on this earth is a mystery and a phenomenon. We say “Water is life”, “Food is life” “Air is life”, To these concepts, we have to think of also “Light is life”. Without light, life on our planet would not exist. In studying light through astrophysics, we delve into some of the deepest mysteries of the universe. In exploring optics and quantum optics, we plunge into the heart of matter itself and can see much depth in the phenomena of nature and our human existence.



It is therefore not surprising that, across cultures, light is a universal symbol of life, inclusion, and renewal. Light is associated with illumination, or spiritual awakening. Light is seen in opposition to darkness, which represents ignorance and intolerance. It is our sacred duty to dispel the negativity and obscurity that lurk in our lives and go in the direction of radiance and luminosity through our good thought, good words and good deeds, and most of all, service for others with love and compassion. We go towards the light also through our devotion to the Divine, and our spiritual practices such as meditation, breathing exercises, chanting, and study of scriptures, conducting ceremonies and high rituals that cleanse and empower us, and link us to the cosmic force.

Although light symbolizes knowledge, we are still blind to many of its everyday applications. The high broadband speeds we use today could not have been achieved without fiber optics. DVDs and Blu-Ray discs could not be read without light. Solar energy is a source of heating. Light-based technologies are essential in healthcare, where optical instruments and tools are used for analysis and imaging, and ultraviolet light sources are used for sterilization. These technologies are also essential for sequencing genomes – like that of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, currently wreaking havoc around the world.

It is these exceptional properties that we celebrate every 16th May, on the International Day of Light. Over the last two years, as the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, we hope that this event will also be an opportunity to shed light on unprecedented global challenges. We cannot deny science and but must go in accordance with the evidence available to help eradicate the virus. Similarly, we cannot deny Climate Change, and work with the scientific community to mitigate the impact of destructive disasters.

Light plays a central role in our lives. On the most fundamental level, through photosynthesis, light is at the origin of life itself. The study of light has led to promising alternative energy sources, lifesaving medical advances in diagnostics technology and treatments, light-speed internet and many other discoveries that have revolutionized society and shaped our understanding of the universe. These technologies were developed through centuries of

fundamental research on the properties of light – starting with Ibn Al-Haytham’s seminal work, Kitab al-Manazir (Book of Optics), published in 1015 and including Einstein’s work at the beginning of the 20th century, which changed the way we think about time and light.

The International Day of Light (IDL) celebrates the role light plays in science, culture and art, education, and sustainable development, and in fields as diverse as medicine, communications, and energy. The celebration will allow many different sectors of society worldwide to participate in activities that demonstrates how science, technology, art and culture can help achieve the goals of UNESCO – building the foundation for peaceful societies.

The IDL is celebrated on 16th May each year, the anniversary of the first successful operation of the laser in 1960 by physicist and engineer, Theodore Maiman. This day is a call to strengthen scientific cooperation and harness its potential to foster peace and sustainable development.

The message of the International Day of Light 2021 — Trust Science — encourages both scientists and the public alike to sign and support a declaration affirming their trust in science and the importance of public confidence in the scientific process. Now is the time for us all to pledge our support.

3953 supporters of science, including educators, scientists, engineers, healthcare professionals, Nobel Laureates, science enthusiasts, organizations, students and people around the world who rely on solutions provided by science and technology have pledged to trust science. Sign the Pledge to Trust Science and help spread the word.

We should all support the International Day of Light and its objectives by signing the Trust Science Pledge. This includes those who support the crucial role of the scientific process in improving our quality of life.
<https://www.trust-science.org/take-action>.

So, while we acknowledge and support the phenomenon of light in scientific applications of our day-to-day living, let us also see light from the spiritual realm of our inner awakening, taking us towards enlightenment.