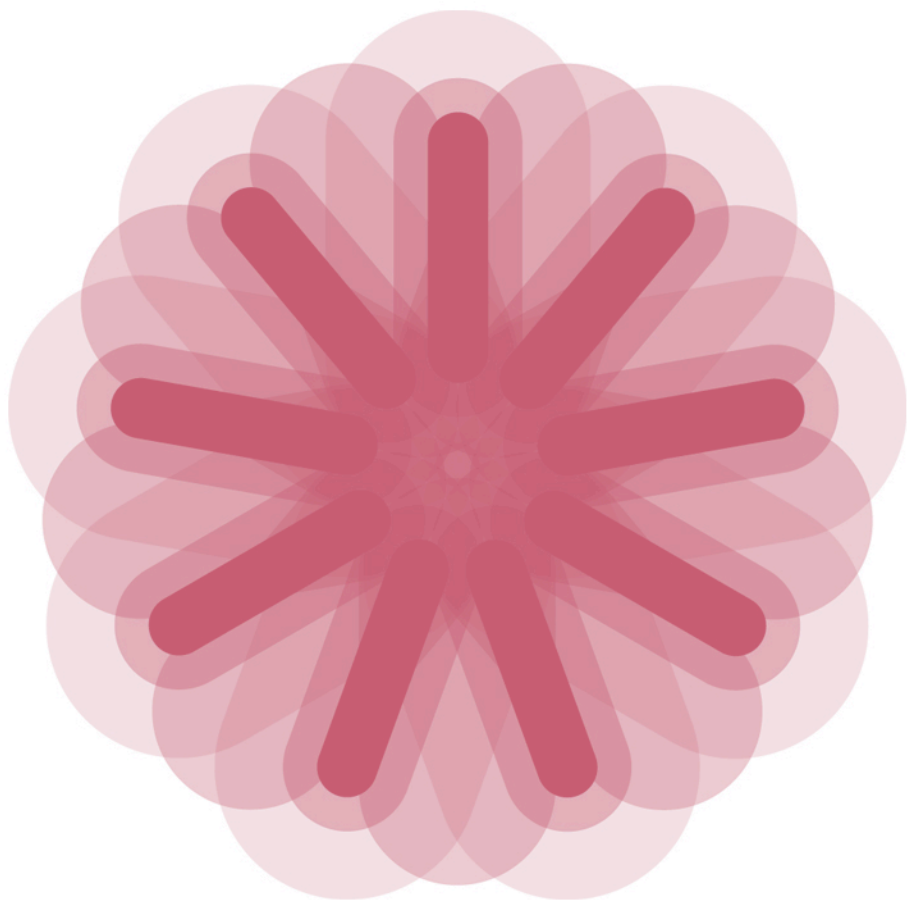


# Soul Food

In the Garden



April 2007

# **In the Garden**

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***“We may all come on different ships but we’re in the same boat now”***

*- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

01. **FREDERICK by Leo Lionni**

All along the meadow where the cows grazed and the horses ran, there was an old stone wall. In that wall, not far from the barn and the granary, a chatty family of field mice had their home. But the farmers had moved away, the barn was abandoned, and the granary stood empty. And since winter was not far off, the little mice began to gather corn and nuts and wheat and straw. They all worked day and night. All—except Frederick.

“Frederick, why don’t you work?” they asked. “I do work,” said Frederick. “I gather sun rays for the cold dark winter days.” And when they saw Frederick sitting there, staring at the meadow, they said, “And now, Frederick?” “I gather colours,” answered Frederick simply. “For winter is gray.” And once Frederick seemed half asleep. “Are you dreaming, Frederick?” they asked reproachfully. But Frederick said, “Oh no, I am gathering words. For the winter days are long and many, and we’ll run out of things to say.” The winter days came, and when the first snow fell the five little field mice took to their hideout in the stones. In the beginning there was lots to eat, and the mice told stories of foolish foxes and silly cats. They were a happy family. But little by little they had nibbled up most of the nuts and berries, the straw was gone, and the corn was only a memory. It was cold in the wall and no one felt like chatting.

Then they remembered what Frederick had said about sun rays and colours and words. “What about your supplies, Frederick?” they asked. “Close your eyes,” said Frederick, as he climbed on a big stone. “Now I send you the rays of the sun. Do you feel how their golden glow...” And as Frederick spoke of the sun the four little mice began to feel warmer. Was it Frederick’s voice? Was it magic? “And how about the colours, Frederick?” they asked anxiously. “Close your eyes again,” Frederick said. And when he told them of the blue periwinkles, and the red poppies in the yellow wheat, and the green leaves of the berry bush, they saw the colours as clearly as if they had been painted in their minds.

“And the words, Frederick?” Frederick cleared his throat, waited a moment, and then, as if from a stage, he said: “Who scatters snowflakes? Who melts the ice? Who spoils the weather? Who makes it nice? Who grows the four-leaf clovers in June? Who dims the daylight? Who lights the moon?”

Four little field mice who live in the sky.

Four little field mice like you and I.

One is the Spring mouse who turns on the showers. Then comes the Summer who paints in the flowers.

The Fall mouse is next with walnuts and wheat. And winter is last... With little cold feet.

Aren't we lucky the seasons are four? Think of a year with one less... or one more!”

When Frederick had finished, they all applauded. “But Frederick,” they said, “you are a poet!”

Frederick blushed, took a bow, and said shyly, “I know it.”

– *Leo Lionni Frederick*

## 02. **O Ye Dwellers in the Highest Paradise!**

Proclaim unto the children of assurance that within the realms of holiness, nigh unto the celestial paradise, a new garden hath appeared, round which circle the denizens of the realm on high and the immortal dwellers of the exalted paradise. Strive, then, that ye may attain that station, that ye may unravel the mysteries of love from its wind-flowers and learn the secret of divine and consummate wisdom from its eternal fruits. Solaced are the eyes of them that enter and abide therein!

### **O Children of Men!**

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light!

Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

### **O Son of Being**

Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me. For I have created thee rich and have bountifully shed My favour upon thee.

– *Bahá'u'lláh, from the Bahá'í Writings*

03. He is the same Self of the AUM taken in syllables— the ‘A’, and the ‘U’, and the ‘M’ viewed as letters; the Aspects (correspond to) the letters and the letters (to) the Aspects.  
*The Waker,*  
whose sphere is the Waking State, is ‘A’, the first letter, because he pervades all and is the first; he who knows this (Aspect) truly fulfils all desires and becomes the first (of all).  
*The Dreamer,*  
whose sphere is dream, is the ‘U’ the second letter, because it excels or comes in the middle; he who knows this (Aspect) certainly excels in knowledge and becomes equal to all, (for) none is born into his family ignorant of God.  
*The Sleeper,*  
whose sphere is (Deep) Sleep, is the third letter ‘M’, because it is both the measure and that wherein all become one; he who knows this, the Fourth (Aspect) soundless, transcendent, unmanifest, still, blissful, secondless, the very (utterance of) the AUM— the self who knows This enters the SELF by means of the self (alone)...
- *Mandukya Upanishad*

04. We all know that the soul at its highest elevation has the vision of a superior and immaterial reality. Besides, since ‘discernment is the souls ability’, is it possible to reject the existence of the soul?

The more one is ascending, the more he is seeking to reach perfection. Man finds his spiritual freedom when he prevails upon himself. The unbuild Light, the mystic and invisible power, elevates him high and he feels the breath of Infinity.

– *Eygenia Kleidara, Mother Superior of St Raphael’s Holy Monestary  
Thermi Mytilini Greece*

05. At the gate of the garden some stand and look within, but do not care to enter. Others step inside, behold its beauty, but do not penetrate far.

Still others encircle this garden inhaling the fragrance of the flowers, having enjoyed its full beauty, pass out again by the same gate. But there are always some who enter and becoming intoxicated with the splendour of what they behold, remain for life to tend the garden.

– *Parable of Sri Ramakrishna*

06. **In The Garden**

At the gate of the garden some stand and look within, but do not care to enter. Others step inside, behold its beauty, but do not penetrate far.

Still others encircle this garden inhaling the fragrance of the flowers, having enjoyed its full beauty, pass out again by the same gate. But there are always some who enter and becoming intoxicated with the splendour of what they behold, remain for life to tend the garden.

– `Abdu'l-Bahá, *from the Bahá'í Writings*

***O Friend***

***In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose  
of love, and from the nightingale of affection and  
desire loosen not thy hold...***

*- Bahá'u'lláh*

07. **Richard St Barbe Baker (The Man Who Planted Trees)**

Richard St Barbe Baker, O.B.E. was man of vision who foresaw and strove all his life for a return to a green Earth covered in trees and peopled by nations who lived in harmony. Richard St Barbe Baker was born in a country house in the South of Hampshire, England, on 9 October 1889 and, from his earliest days, developed a keen awareness of the beauty of the forests and trees and the creatures therein.

In 1924 Baker founded Men of Trees in England In 1931 Baker went to Palestine at the invitation of Sir John Chancellor, the Governor, to assist in establishing a tree planting program in the hope of uniting warring factions. He spent some time in Jerusalem, coordinating a meeting of the heads of the Arab, Hebrew and Catholic communities to plant trees under the banner of Men of Trees. In 1979 Baker again visited the Holy Land this time to present a large variety of rare seeds for the beautification of the renowned Bahá'í gardens on Mount Carmel.

As a young reporter for the Southeast Missourian Sam Blackwell told the following story when he was asked who the most memorable person he'd ever interviewed was.

“The name that immediately came to mind was Richard St. Barbe Baker. If any single person deserves credit for saving California's ancient redwood trees from becoming patio furniture, he does. He was an Englishman but more of a citizen of the world. He helped found one of the early conservation groups, The Men of the Trees, and became known as "The Man of the Trees.” A forester and writer who devoted his life to preserving trees, he was particularly taken with redwoods. He began the Save the Redwoods Fund. After many decades, his work and that of many others led to the creation of Redwood National Park, where 2,000-year-old redwood trees live in safety.”

“He was about to be honoured. The park was being dedicated as a World Heritage Site, one of a few hundred places on Earth recognized for their global significance. Australia's Great Barrier Reef, Peru's Machu Picchu . . . are on the list too.”

“St. Barbe Baker was staying in a cabin on the Smith River, the last wild river in Northern California. He was very old and frail. The young environmentalists taking care of him said I could speak with him as soon as he awoke. They treated him with respect and awe.

“When he did wake up he could barely speak, and the words he said were difficult to understand. It didn't matter. He had a presence that made you happy to be in his company. His was a great soul.

“We went outside to take his photograph. Spontaneously, he did what people who scorn environmentalists make jokes about: He hugged a tree. I don’t mean he put his arms around it. He hugged it like I hug my old friend Carolyn, like he never wanted to let go. I began to understand.

“We do need to care, of course, for everything and everyone.”.

***"In the stillness of the mighty woods, man is made aware of the divine,"***

*- St. Barbe Baker*

08. *The following poem by Roger White is a tribute to this remarkable man:*

**Notes Toward Survival**

You were parchment frail  
quaintly exquisite as the courtesy accorded me  
when you enlisted my pad and rusty Pitman  
To record you notes.  
Only your fingers looked young.  
Slender and white as peeled twigs  
they moved with a rosary-teller’s nimble reverence  
among the dry rustling seeds, to me  
anonymous as lint or dust motes  
till, devoutly sorting, dividing,  
you named them, told their ancestries and lives,  
coaxed into vision by excited words  
groves and orchards and gardens.  
Carmel would be greener for your conjuring.  
You would have me convert to your benign obsession,  
under your tutelage touch the dehydrated miracles,  
package and label, recite like a novitiate  
their names, mythical and gallant  
as those of legendary conquerors.  
Man must resuscitate his planet with trees,  
his heart with faith. So you simplified  
survival’s creed. Your coniferous hope  
sealed my discipleship. What Sahara  
could resist your passion for verdancy?  
Leaving your monkish intensity  
a forest of images crowded my mind  
thrusting zealously toward light.  
Now I cannot see a leaf but think  
love’s task was ever reclamation.

09. Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship. Whatsoever hath led the children of men to shun one another, and hath caused dissensions and divisions amongst them, hath through the revelation of these words, been nullified and abolished...

Of old it hath been revealed: "Love of one's country is an element of the Faith of God." The Tongue of Grandeur hath, however in the day of His manifestation proclaimed:

"It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world."

Through the power released by these exalted words He hath lent a fresh impulse, and set a new direction, to the birds of men's hearts, and hath obliterated every trace of restriction and limitation from God's holy book.

If thine eyes be turned toward mercy, forsake the things that profit thee, and cleave unto that which will profit mankind. And if thine eyes be turned toward justice, choose thou for thy neighbour that which thou choosest for thyself..

– *Bahá'u'lláh, from the Bahá'í Writings*

10. All is contained in the Divine Breath,  
As is light in the darkness before dawn.  
Knowledge transmitted by proof  
Is like the dawn to one half drowsing.  
He perceives what we speak of as in a dream,  
But that gives him a clue to the Breath..

– *Ibn Al-'Arabi, from Islamic Tradition*

11. Even though a speech be a thousand (of words), but made up of senseless words, one word of sense is better, which if a man hears, he becomes quiet. Even though a Gatha (poem) be a thousand (of words) one word of a Gatha is better, which if a man hears, he becomes quiet.

Though a man recite a hundred Gathas made of senseless words, one word of the law is better, which if a man hears, he becomes quiet. If one man conquer in battle a thousand times thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors.

One's own self conquered is better than all other people; not even a god, a Gandharva, not Mara with Brahman could change into defeat the victory of a man who has vanquished himself, and always lives under restraint.

– *Dhammapada, chap. VIII the thousands*

12. To conceive of God is difficult; and to describe Him is impossible, even if one is able to conceive Him. For it is not easy for that which is imperfect to comprehend that which is perfect, and it is hard for that which is of short duration to have dealings with that which is everlasting. The one ever is, the other passes; the one is real, the other is but shadowed from sense picturing. So widely is that which is mortal separated from that which is divine. And the wide interval between them dims man's vision of the Beautiful. With our eyes we can see bodies; but that which is incorporeal and invisible and without shape, and is not composed of matter, cannot be apprehended by senses such as ours...

– *Hermes Trismegistus Stobaeus Hermetica*

***“I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among the creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of kindness and compassion.”***

*- William Faulkner*

13. **The Hour of Unity**

Today the light of Truth is shining upon the world in its abundance; the breezes of the heavenly garden are blowing throughout all regions; the call of the Kingdom is heard in all lands, and the breath of the Holy Spirit is felt in all hearts that are faithful. The Spirit of God is giving eternal life. In this wonderful age the East is enlightened, the West is fragrant, and everywhere the soul inhales the holy perfume. The sea of the unity of mankind is lifting up its waves with joy, for there is real communication between the hearts and minds of men...

This is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of unity of the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes. You are loosed from ancient superstitions which have kept men ignorant, destroying the foundations of true humanity. The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and of the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between nations, and by the will of God the Most Great peace shall come...

– *Abdu'l-Baha, from the Bahá'í Writings*

14. This is indeed a power world. Great forces are at play—the sun, the wind, night, day—they are big things and do big things in nature. Electricity, gravitation, are strong forces that forge the earth, with all its beauty, its life, its growth. We humans are subjected to strong forces too. Love, hate, passion, sorrow, pain—they act on us and spur us on, that develop our qualities and give us colour and individuality. Why should we want to shun and abolish some of the factors that bring out the best in us, that temper our steel, that teach us to value happiness at its true worth? Can a man who had never been hungry in all his life know what a piece of bread means, and savour all its sweetness, as a man who has starved can? If we must go through life denying the existence of pain and suffering, or refusing to experience their keenness because we pad ourselves with foolish mental attitudes of psychological opiates, we shall grow to be a race lacking depth, lacking sensitivity, devoid of strong moral fibre. The blade of our soul will become dull.

– *Ruhíyyih Rabbani, from Prescription for Living*

15. Know the strength of man,  
But keep a woman's care!  
Be the stream of the universe!  
Being the stream of the universe,  
Ever true and unwavering,  
Become as a little child once more.

Know the white.  
Become the black!  
Be an example to the world  
Being an example to the world,  
Ever true and unwavering,  
Return to the infinite.

Know honour  
Yet keep humility.  
Be the valley of the universe!  
Being the valley of the universe,  
Ever true and resourceful,  
Return to the state of the uncarved block.  
When the block is carved, it becomes useful.  
When the sage uses it, he become the ruler.  
Thus, "A great tailor cuts little."

– *Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching*

16. My beloved Brethren, we must provide discreetly for the wants of our Brother the Body, lest we become overwhelmed with sadness and weakness. The servant of God should satisfy his body with moderation in eating, drinking, sleeping, and its other necessities, so that it may not grow weary of watching and of persevering reverently in prayer. We must not give Brother Body cause to murmur, saying 'I perish with hunger, therefore I cannot bear the burdens you put upon me: I cannot remain upright and in respectful posture during your long prayers: I cannot rejoice in my tribulations, nor can I do good to others, because you do not supply me with what is necessary.'

– *Saint Francis of Assisi*

17. A good walker leaves no tracks;  
A good speaker makes no slips;  
A good reckoner needs no tally.  
A good door needs no lock,  
Yet no one can open it.  
Good binding requires no knots,  
Yet no one can loosen it.  
Therefore the sage takes care of all men  
And abandons no one.  
He takes care of all things  
And abandons nothing..

– *Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching*

18. **From the Tablet of Ridvan**

Hear Me, ye mortal birds!

In the Rose Garden of changeless splendour a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. Arise, therefore and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your soul, the full fervour of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavour to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, To breathe the sweet savours of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory.

Who so followeth this counsel will break his chains asunder, will taste the abandonment of enraptured love, will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.

– *Baha'u'llah, from the Bahá'í Writings*

**Please join us for refreshments**



All Soul Food programs are available for free download from  
**[www.soulfood.com.au](http://www.soulfood.com.au)**

## About Soul Food

Soul Food is a monthly event held at the State Library of Victoria, providing an opportunity to relax in a tranquil environment and reflect on inspiring themes. It features music, audio-visual pieces and readings from various Faiths; indigenous, ancient and modern, from all over the world. Soul Food is a free community event open to all.

### Venue

Village Roadshow Theatrette  
State Library of Victoria  
Corner Swanston St & La Trobe St  
(Entry 3, La Trobe Street)

### Time

10.30am – 11.30am

### Date

First Sunday of every month:

Sunday, May 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	Sunday, September 2nd, 2007
Sunday, June 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2007	Sunday, October 7th, 2007
Sunday, July 1st, 2007	Sunday, November 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2007
Sunday, August 5th, 2007	Sunday, December 2nd, 2007

### Further Information

For further information about Soul Food please contact 0402 245 752 or visit [www.soulfood.com.au](http://www.soulfood.com.au).

## Study Circles

In response to interest from Soul Food guests, the Bahá'í community is now offering a series of regular 'Study Circles' – as an opportunity to further explore subjects related to spiritual development. Study Circles are small, informal groups, and provide an environment in which to discuss meaningful topics with like-minded people. The first Study Circle is titled "Reflections on the Life of the Spirit", from the Ruhi Study Circle series. It is a three unit study on; Understanding the Bahá'í Writings, Prayer & Meditation, and Life & Death.

If you enjoy Soul Food then a Study Circle may also appeal to you. For more information please contact 0402 245 752 or email [soulfood@netspace.net.au](mailto:soulfood@netspace.net.au)

## **The Bahá'í Community of Victoria**

Soul Food is an initiative of the Bahá'í Community of Victoria. For further information about the Bahá'í Faith please visit [www.bahai.org](http://www.bahai.org). For books on the Bahá'í Faith and related subjects such as spiritual development, world religion, education and more please visit:

### **Hidden Words – Bahá'í Books & Information**

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