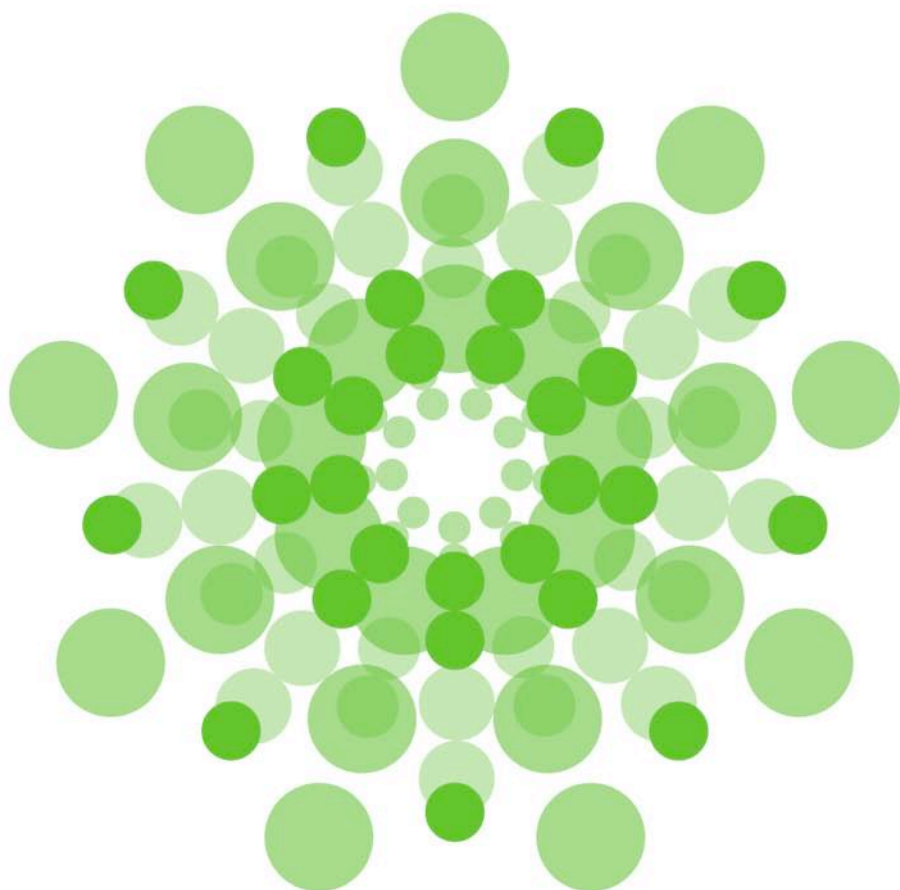


Soul Food



The Light Within

February 2006

Music: Lee Morgan

Program

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The words that enlighten the soul are more precious than jewels.

– *Hazrat Inayat Khan*

Let your light shine. Shine within you so that it can shine on someone else. Let your light shine.

– *Oprah Winfrey*

1. In today's highly interdependent world, individuals and nations can no longer resolve many of their problems by themselves. We need one another. We must therefore develop a sense of universal responsibility... It is our collective and individual responsibility to protect and nurture the global family, to support its weaker members, and to preserve and tend to the environment in which we all live.

– *The Dalai Lama*

2. It is not enough to say we must not wage war. It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it. We must concentrate not merely on the negative expulsion of war, but on the positive affirmation of peace. In short, we must shift the arms race into the peace race. Some years ago a novelist died, among his papers was found a list of suggested plots for further stories, the most prominently underscored being this one:

A widely separated family inherits a house in which they have to live together. This is a great new problem of mankind. We have inherited a big house, a great world house in which we have to live together, black men and white men, easterners and westerners, gentiles and Jews, Catholics and Protestants, Muslims and Hindus. A family unduly separated in ideas, culture, and interest, who, because we can never again live without each other, must learn somehow, in this one big world house, to live with each other.

And this is our great challenge. This means that more and more, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. We must now give an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in our individual societies. This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class and nation is in reality a call for an all

embracing, an unconditional love for all men. I'm not speaking of some sentimental and weak response which is little more than emotional bosh. I'm speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as a supreme unifying principle of life.

– *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

3. When our darkness is repelled by the light of the soul, the Truth is manifested, splendid and clear, as if the Sun of Wisdom had ascended to shed Its rays at dawn... The world is overcome by such as fix their faith on Unity. The perfect Creator dwells in Unity and they in the Creator.

– *Bhagavad Gita*

4. The soul is a sign of God, a heavenly gem whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel. It is the first among all created things to declare the excellence of its Creator, the first to recognize His glory, to cleave to His truth, and to bow down in adoration before Him. If it be faithful to God, it will reflect His light, and will, eventually, return unto Him.

Blessed is he that hath recognized the true stature of such a soul, that hath acknowledged its station, and discovered its virtues. Much hath been written in the books of old concerning the various stages in the development of the soul, such as concupiscence, irascibility, inspiration, benevolence, contentment, Divine good-pleasure, and the like; the Pen of the Most High, however, is disinclined to dwell upon them.

Every soul that walketh humbly with its God, in this Day, and cleaveth unto Him, shall find itself invested with the honor and glory of all goodly names and stations.

– *Bahá'u'lláh, the Bahá'í Writings*

5. The Inner Light is beyond both praise and blame,
Like unto space it knows no boundaries;
Yet it is right here with us,
Ever retaining its serenity and fullness.
It is only when you seek it that you lose it.
You cannot take hold of it nor can you get rid of it;
While you can do neither, it goes on its own way.
You remain silent and it speaks;
You speak and it is silent.
The Gate of Heaven is wide open with not a single obstruction before it.

– *Buddhist Teachings*

The mind of a bigot is like the pupil of the eye. The
more light you shine on it, the more it will contract.

– *Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.*

6. In this day... [the] means of communication have multiplied, and the five continents of the earth have virtually merged into one... In like manner all the members of the human family, whether peoples or governments, cities or villages, have become increasingly interdependent. For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education, are being strengthened every day. Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved... Eventually it will be seen how bright its candles will burn in the assemblage of man. Behold how its light is now dawning upon the world's darkened horizon.

The first candle is unity in the political realm, the early glimmerings of which can now be discerned.

The second candle is unity of thought in world undertakings, the consummation of which will ere long be witnessed.

The third candle is unity in freedom which will surely come to pass.

The fourth candle is unity in religion which is the corner-stone of the foundation itself, and which, by the power of God, will be revealed in all its splendour.

The fifth candle is the unity of nations – a unity which in this century will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland.

The sixth candle is unity of races, making of all that dwell on earth peoples and kindreds of one race... Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization.

– *From the Bahá'í Writings*

7. Religion is a candle inside a multicoloured lantern. Everyone looks through a particular colour, but the candle is always there.

– *Mohammed Negulb*

8. Certainly, virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed:
for prosperity doth best discover vice;
but adversity doth best discover virtue.

– *Francis Bacon*

9. If compassion be thy mosque,
faith thy prayer mat,
and honest living thy Qur'an,
And modesty thy circumcision,
contentment thy fast,
then verily, thou art a true Muslim.
Let good deeds be thy Kaaba,
and Truth thy Prophet,
and let thy prayer be God's Grace.
And thy rosary be His will, then,
God will keep thy Honour.

– *Sikh writings: Guru Nanak.*

10. It is only he who is completely genuine in the affairs of this world who can develop his own nature to its fullest. If he can develop his own nature to its fullest, then he can help in the development of the natures of other men.

If he can help in the development of other men's natures, then he can help in the full development of the natures of all animate and inanimate beings.

If he can help in the full development of all animate and inanimate beings, then he can help in the production of Nature above and Nature below.

When he helps in the production and maturation of Nature above and Nature below, he likewise becomes a creative agent of the universe.

– *Confucius*

11. **EARTH DYING, EARTH REBORN**

Once, the earth was completely dark and silent; nothing moved on its barren surface. Inside a deep cave below the Nullarbor Plain slept a beautiful woman, the Sun. The Great Father Spirit gently woke her and told her to emerge from her cave and stir the universe into life. The Sun Mother opened her eyes and darkness disappeared as her rays spread over the land; she took a breath and the atmosphere changed; the air gently vibrated as a small breeze blew.

The Sun Mother then went on a long journey; from north to south and from east to west she crossed the barren land. The earth held the seed potencies of all things, and wherever the Sun's gentle rays touched the earth, there grasses, shrubs and trees grew until the land was covered in vegetation. In each of the deep caverns in the earth, the Sun found living creatures which, like herself, had been slumbering for untold ages. She stirred the insects into life in all their forms and told them to spread through the grasses and trees, then she woke the snakes, lizards, and other reptiles, and they slithered out of their deep hold.

As the snakes moved through and along the earth they formed rivers, and they themselves became creators, like the Sun. Behind the snakes mighty rivers flowed, teeming with all kinds of fish and water life. Then she called for the animals, the marsupials, and the many other creatures to awake and make their homes on the earth.

The Sun Mother then told all the creatures that the days would from time to time change from wet to dry and from cold to hot, and so she made the

seasons. One day while all the animals, insects and other creatures were watching, the Sun travelled far in the sky to the west and, as the sky shone red, she sank from view and darkness spread across the land once more. The Creatures were alarmed and huddled together in fear. Some time later, the sky began to glow on the horizon to the east and the Sun rose smiling into the sky again...

– *Aboriginal Dreaming*

12. If men wish to draw near to God, they must seek Him in the hearts of men. They should speak well of all men, whether present or absent, and if they themselves seek to be a light to guide others, then, like the sun, they must show the same face to all. To bring joy to a single heart is better than to build many shrines for worship, and to enslave one soul by kindness is worth more than the setting free of a thousand slaves. That is the true man of God, who sits in the midst of his fellowmen, and rises up, and eats and sleeps, and buys and sells, and gives and takes in the bazzars amongst other people, and who marries, and has social intercourse with other folk, and yet, is never for one moment, forgetful of God.

– *Abu Sa'id b. Abi 'l-Khair*

13. [God] is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us 'unfettered' to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and under cover of free will leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense. Therefore it is that Hinduism calls it all His sport (Lila), or calls it all an illusion (Maya)... Let us dance to the tune of his bansi (flute), and all would be well.

I have no message to give except this: that there is no deliverance for any people on this earth or for all the people of this earth except through truth and nonviolence in every walk of life without any exceptions. Non violence is the greatest force humanity has been endowed with. Truth is the only goal humanity has. For God is none other than Truth. I believe that the religion of non violence springs from the fact that the advancement of one promotes the advancement of all, and the fall of one implies the fall of all. We have therefore been enjoined to show compassion to every living being. The way of peace is the way of truth. Truthfulness is even more important than peacefulness. Truthful people cannot long remain violent.

– *Mohandas Gandhi*

14. We men of Earth have here the stuff
Of Paradise – we have enough!
We need no other stones to build
The stairs into the unfulfilled –
No other ivory for the doors –
No other marble for the floors –
No other cedar for the beams
And dome of man's immortal dreams.
Here on the paths of every day –
Here on the common human way
Is all the stuff the gods would take
To build a Heaven, to mould and make
New Edens, Ours the stuff sublime
To build eternity in time!

– *Edwin Markham, Earth Is Enough*

15. Lord make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

– *St. Francis of Assisi*

16. Ryokan, a Zen master, lived the simplest kind of life in a little hut at the foot of a mountain. One evening a thief visited the hut to find there was nothing in it to steal. Ryokan returned and caught him.
“You may have come along way to visit me,” he told the prowler,
“And you should not return empty-handed. Please take my clothes as a gift.”
The thief was bewildered. He took the clothes and slunk away.
Ryokan sat naked watching the moon.
“Poor fellow,” he mused,
“I wish I could give him this beautiful moon.”

– *Zen Buddhism*

17. Bright but hidden, the Self dwells in the heart.
Everything that moves, opens, and closes, lives in the Self.
He is the source of love and may be known through love but not through thought.
He is the goal of life. Attain the goal!
The shining Self dwells hidden in the heart.
Everything in the cosmos, great and small, lives in the Self.
He is the Source of life,
Truth beyond the transience of the world.
He is the goal of life. Attain the goal!

– *Hinduism: Mundaka Upanishad 2.2. 1.2*

18. Know thou of a certainty that Love is the secret of God's holy Dispensation, the manifestation of the All-Merciful, the fountain of spiritual outpourings. Love is heaven's kindly light, the Holy Spirit's eternal breath that vivifieth the human soul. Love is the cause of God's revelation unto man, the vital bond inherent, in accordance with the divine creation, in the realities of things. Love is the one means that ensurcth true felicity both in this world and the next. Love is the light that guideth in darkness, the living link that uniteth God with man, that assureth the progress of every illumined soul. Love is the most great law that ruleth this mighty and heavenly cycle, the unique power that bindeth together the divers elements of this material world, the supreme magnetic force that directeth the movements of the spheres in the celestial realms. Love revealeth with unfailing and limitless power the mysteries latent in the universe. Love is the spirit of life unto the adorned body of mankind, the establisher of true civilization in this mortal world, and the shedder of imperishable glory upon every high-aiming race and nation.

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

So powerful is the Light of Unity that it can illuminate
the whole earth.

– *Bahá'u'lláh*

Please join us for refreshments



All Soul Food programs are available for free download from
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

Dates

Sunday, March 19th
Sunday, April 23rd

Further Information

For further information about Soul Food please contact 03 9489 3837 or visit 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 03 9489 3837 or email 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. For books on the Bahá'í Faith and related subjects such as spiritual development, world religion, education and more please visit:

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