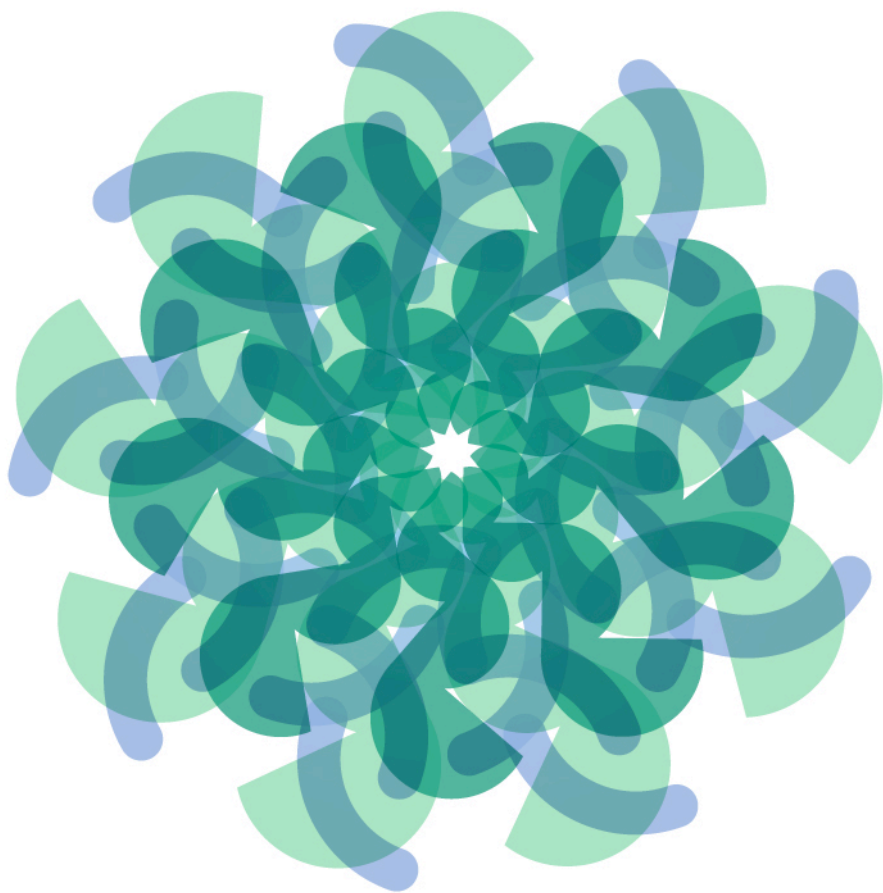


Soul Food

The Dance of Life



October 2008

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Program

01. *David Michael Levin, from The Body's Recollection of Being*
02. *Mawlawi Book 1*
03. *Helen Keller*
04. *Chaim Potok, from The Chosen*
05. *`Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Promulgation of Universal Peace*
06. *Lorraine Mafi-Williams*
07. *Rumi, from the Whirling Dervishes*
08. *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*
09. *`Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Secret of Divine Civilization*
10. *Buddhist, The Dhammapada on Earnestness*
11. *`Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Bahá'í Writings*
12. *Anon.*
13. *The Bank Account of Life*
14. *Tahirih, outtake from Tahirih A Portrait in Poetry*
15. *Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá*
16. *Albert Einstein*
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19. *Carl Jung*
20. *Garth Brooks & Victoria Shaw, from "The River"*
21. *Jan*

**The journey between what you once were and who you are now
becoming is where the dance of life really takes place.**

– *Barbara De Angelis*

01. Mortals leap and dance in obedience to the Earth, the elemental presence of ground; mortals leap and dance with a rhythm of power, a rhythm which gets its measure from the immeasurable ground which stands under their feet. Being skillful, the gestures of dance are celebratory. They commemorate and give thanks. They surrender the ego's will to power, giving it back, as the acceptance of our mortality, to the all-powerful Earth, ground of our body of understanding.

– David Michael Levin

02. We are as the flute, and the music in us is from thee;
We are as the mountain and the echo in us is from thee.
We are as pieces of chess engaged in victory and defeat:
our victory and defeat is from thee, O thou whose qualities are comely!
Who are we, O Thou soul of our souls, that we should remain in being beside thee?
We and our existences are really nonexistence; thou art the absolute Being which manifests the perishable.
We all are lions, but lions on a banner: because of the wind they are rushing onward from moment to moment.
Their onward rush is visible, and the wind is unseen: may that which is unseen not fail from us!
Our wind whereby we are moved and our being are of thy gift; our whole existence is from thy bringing into being.

– Mawlawi Book 1

03. Happiness cannot come from without. It must come from within. It is not what we see and touch or that which others do for us which makes us happy; it is that which we think and feel and do, first for the other fellow and then for ourselves.
When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.

– Helen Keller

04. **A father's advice to his son**

The span of a man's life—that is nothing.
But what a man makes of that span—
that is something.
A man must make his own meaning for life—
meaning is not automatically given to life.
Do you understand what I am saying?

– *Chaim Potok, from The Chosen*

05. Happiness consisteth of two kinds: physical and spiritual. The physical happiness is limited; its utmost duration is one day, one month, one year. It hath no result. Spiritual happiness is eternal and unfathomable. This kind of happiness appeareth in one's soul with the love of God and suffereth one to attain to the virtues and perfections of the world of humanity. Therefore, endeavour as much as thou art able in order to illumine the lamp of thy heart by the light of love.

– *`Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Promulgation of Universal Peace*

06. **Dreaming**

From out of the spirit world they all came dancing.
The seven spirit brothers and the seven sisters.
The Mi-Mi spirits from space.
Down through the Milky Way they danced
To the earth face below.
They came to dance among the mountains.
In the rivers as they wound their way to the sea.
They danced upon the earth.
They danced upon the rocks.
They danced upon the barks.
And they danced upon the canvas.
They danced in the wind for everlasting life.
They danced the Dreaming alive.
The Mi-Mi spirits from space.

– *Lorraine Mafi-Williams*

**I want you to be happy... to laugh, smile and rejoice in order that
others may be made happy by you.**

– *`Abdu'l Bahá*

**As waves upon my head the circling curl,
So in the sacred dance weave ye and whirl.
Dance then, O heart, a whirling circle be.
Burn in this flame—is not the candle He?**

– Rumi

07. Whirling Dervishes

“Dervish music cannot be written in notes. Notes do not include the soul of the dervish.”

The dervishes turn timelessly and effortlessly. They whirl, turning round on their own axis and moving also in orbit. The right hand is turned up towards heaven to receive God’s overflowing mercy which passes through the heart and is transmitted to earth with the down turned left hand. While one foot remains firmly on the ground, the other crosses it and propels the dancer round. The rising and falling of the right foot is kept constant by the inner rhythmic repetition of the name of “Allah-Allah, Al-lah...” The ceremony can be seen as a great crescendo in three stages: knowing God, seeing God and uniting with God.

The steps of the way to union with the Divine are performed according to strict rules. Within a circle the sheikh stands at the “post”. It is the highest spiritual position, marked by a red rug indicating the direction of Mecca. Red is the colour of union and of the manifested world, there are 24 colours of union and of the manifested world. The musicians platform faces the sheikh; the whirling dervishes take their places to his left.

The N’aat, a poem of praise to the Prophet, opens the ceremony. It is followed by a recitation from the Qur’an. The kudums (drums) then break the silence to introduce the flute solo that conveys the yearning for the union with God. The next step is the Sultan Veiled Walk when the dervishes, following the sheikh, circle the hall three times, stopping to bow to each other at the “post” The first selam (salutation) introduces the dance: the dervish obtains his permission to whirl by kissing the hand of the sheikh. The master of the dance directs him to his position: As the musicians play and the chorus chants, the sheikh stands at the “post” and the dervishes unfold and turn repeating their inaudible “Allah, Allah, Allah...” This part of the ceremony lasts approximately 10 minutes and is repeated four times. At the 4th selam the sheikh joins the whirling. He represents the centre (the sun)’ the dervishes represent the orbiting planets turning around him and around themselves in the solar system of Rumi. The Ceremony is concluded by the recitation of the Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Qur’an, followed by a prayer.

**Happiness is when what you think, what you say,
and what you do are in harmony.**

– Mohandas K. Gandhi

08. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

– The Gospel according to St. Matthew

09. The happiness and greatness, the rank and station, the pleasure and peace, of an individual have never consisted in his personal wealth, but rather in his excellent character, his high resolve, the breadth of his learning, and his ability to solve difficult problems.

– `Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Secret of Divine Civilization

10. May every creature abound in well-being and peace.
May every living being, weak or strong, the long and the small,
The short and medium-sized, the mean and the great,
May every living being, seen or unseen, those dwelling far off,
Those near by, those already born, those waiting to be born,
May all attain inward peace. Let no one deceive another,
Let no one despise another in any situation,
Let no one, from antipathy or hatred, wish evil to anyone.
Just as a mother, with her own life, protects her only son from hurt,
So within yourself foster a limitless concern for every living creature.
Display a heart of boundless love for all the world
In all its height and depth and broad extent,
Love unrestrained, without hate or enmity.
Then as you stand or walk, sit or lie, until overcome by drowsiness,
Devote your mind entirely to this, it is known as living here life divine.

– Buddhist, The Dhammapada on Earnestness

11. Man must be tireless in his effort. Once his effort is directed in the proper channel, if he does not succeed today he will succeed tomorrow. Effort in itself is one of the noblest traits of human character. Devotion to one's calling, effort in its speedy execution, simplicity of spirit and steadfastness through all the ups and downs, these are the hallmarks of success.

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

12. To laugh is to risk appearing a fool,
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental
To reach out to another is to risk involvement,
To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self
To place your ideas and dreams before a crowd is to risk their loss
To love is to risk not being loved in return,
To hope is to risk despair,
To try is to risk failure.
But risks must be taken because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.
The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing is nothing.
He may avoid suffering and sorrow,
But he cannot learn, feel, change, grow or live.
Chained by his servitude he is a slave who has forfeited all freedom.
Only a person who risks is free.

– *Anon.*

13. **The Bank Account of Life**

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400.
It carries over no balance from day to day.
Every “evening” deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day.
What would you do?
Draw out every cent, of course!
Each of us has such a “bank”. It’s name is TIME.
Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds.
Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose.
It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft.
Each day it opens a new account for you.
Each night it burns the remains of the day.
If you fail to use the day’s deposits, the loss is yours.
There is no going back. There is no drawing against the “tomorrow”.

You must live in the present on today's deposits.
Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success!
The clock is running.
Make the most of today.
To realize the value of ONE YEAR... ask a student who failed a grade.
To realize the value of ONE MONTH... ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.
To realize the value of ONE WEEK... ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.
To realize the value of ONE HOUR... ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.
To realize the value of ONE MINUTE... ask a person who missed the train.
To realize the value of ONE SECOND... ask a person who just avoided an accident.
To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND... ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.
Treasure every moment that you have!
And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time. And remember that time waits for no one.
Yesterday is history.
Tomorrow is mystery.
Today is a gift.
That's why it's called...
the Present!!

Where there is the Infinite, there is joy. There is no joy in the finite.

– *Hinduism, from the Chandogya Upanishad*

14. SLEEPER!

Sleeper! Wake up now! Your lover is here!
Get up, and brush the cobwebs off your hair.

Look! Your sweet love has come with love for you.
Wake up, dead lover! Your loved one is here.

The doctor of mercy stands by your bed.
Get up! Get up! No more grief, no more tears!

You – still cold from your long separation –
will now embrace your love! That much is clear!

So wan, so worn, and wasted by the Fall –
Get up! Get up! At last the Spring is here.

It's New Year's Day. Life is calling for you.
Rise up, you corpse of every dead, past year!

– *Tahirih, outtake from 'Tahirih, a Portrait in Poetry'*

15. If we are not happy and joyous at this season, for what other season shall we wait and for what other time shall we look?... Be calm, be strong, be grateful, and become a lamp full of light, that the darkness of sorrows be annihilated, and the sun of everlasting joy arise from the dawning place of heart and soul, shining brightly.

– *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

16. I have never looked upon ease and happiness as ends in themselves – this critical basis I call the ideal of a pigsty. The ideals that have lighted my way, and time after time have given me new courage to face life cheerfully, have been Kindness, Beauty, and Truth. Without the sense of kinship with men of like mind, without the occupation with the objective world, the eternally unattainable in the field of art and scientific endeavours, life would have seemed empty to me. The trite objects of human efforts – possessions, outward success, luxury – have always seemed to me contemptible.

– *Albert Einstein*

17. Daylight, full of small dancing particles
And the one great turning, our souls
Are dancing with you, without feet, they dance.
Can you see them when I whisper in your ear?

– *Rumi*

18. As to material happiness, it never exists; nay it is but imagination, as image reflected in mirrors, a spectre and shadow. Consider the nature of material happiness. It is something which but slightly removes ones afflictions; yet the people imagine it to be joy, delight, exultation and blessing. All the material blessings, including food, drink, etc, tend to only allay thirst, hunger and fatigue. They bestow no delight on the mind nor pleasure on the soul; nay they furnish only the bodily wants. So this kind of happiness has no real existence.

As to spiritual happiness, this is the true basis of the life of man because life is created for happiness, not for sorrow; for pleasure, not for grief. Happiness is life; sorrow is death. Spiritual happiness is life eternal. This is a light not followed by darkness. This is an honour not followed by shame. This is a life not followed by death. This is an existence that is not followed by annihilation. This great blessing and precious gift is obtained by man only through the guidance of God.

– *Bahá'í Writings*

19. There are as many nights as days, and the one is just as long as the other in the year's course. Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word 'happy' would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness.

– *Carl Jung*

20. You know a dream is like a river, ever changing as it flows.
And a dreamer's just a vessel that must follow where it goes.
Trying to learn from what's behind you and never knowing what's in store
makes each day a constant battle just to stay between the shores.
And I will sail my vessel 'til the river runs dry.
Like a bird upon the wind, these waters are my sky.
I'll never reach my destination if I never try,
So I will sail my vessel 'til the river runs dry.
Too many times we stand aside and let the water slip away.
To what we put off 'til tomorrow has now become today.
So don't you sit upon the shore and say you're satisfied.
Choose to chance the rapids and dare to dance the tides.

– *Garth Brooks & Victoria Shaw, from "The River"*

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

– *Mahatma Gandhi*

Time is a sort of river of passing events, and strong is its current; no sooner is a thing brought to sight than it is swept by and another takes its place, and this too will be swept away.

– *Marcus Aurelius*

**Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, our
intellect keener, and our understanding less clouded.**

– Bahá'í Writings

21. This Locality

Localities have an in-born native accuracy
A speaking knowledge of the atmosphere
Locked into the cosmos it cannot be obliterated
By the bird scratching of architecture
A soul reaches out to time and place
And time and place reach out to it
A silent doorway to the inner eye
Let's walk the platform of this place
Let colour soak into our being
Let the smell charge our batteries
Let the angle of the sun wash our skin.
Let the composition of ions name our thoughts
Let the weight of the atmosphere bear down on us
Let latitude and longitude define us.
Let what we do and how we do it
Be sharpened and sympathetic.
Let time and place connect us.
Let our feet dance lightly across our mother earth.

– Jan

**Let your life lightly dance on the edges of Time like
dew on the tip of a leaf.**

– Rabindranath Tagore

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

State Library of Victoria
Village Roadshow Theatre
Corner Swanston St & La Trobe St
(Enter via La Trobe Street)

Time

10.30am – 11.30am

Dates

First Sunday of every month:
Sunday November 2nd, 2008
Sunday December 7th, 2008

Further Information

For further information about Soul Food events in Victoria, South Australia or Western Australia please call 0402 245 752 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 0402 245 752 or email soulfoodvic@gmail.com.

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.au. 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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