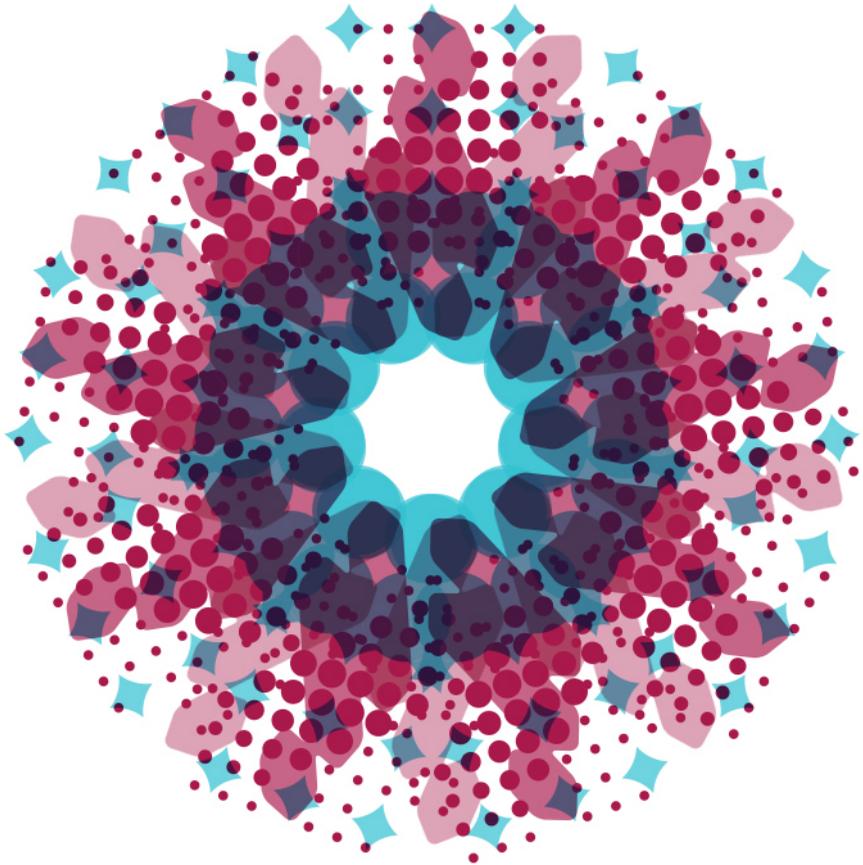


# Soul Food

The Butterfly Effect



# The Butterfly Effect

This month's program will explore our physical and spiritual relationship with our environment, and how these elements work hand in hand.

## Program

01. *Native American writings*
02. *Judaism*
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05. *Charles M. Skinner, "Myths & Legends of Flowers, Trees, Fruits & Plants"*
06. *Richard St Barbe Baker*
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Thank you for turning off your mobile device. We request that you kindly hold your applause until the end of the program.

**Air is the guru, water is the father,  
and Earth is the mother of all.**

– *Sikhism*

01. Behold! Our Mother Earth is lying here. Behold! She gives of her fruitfulness. Truly, her power gives she us. Give thanks to Mother Earth who lies here. Behold on Mother Earth the growing fields! Behold the promise of her fruitfulness! Truly, her power gives she us. Give thanks to Mother Earth who lies here. Behold on Mother Earth the spreading trees! Behold the promise of her fruitfulness! Truly, her power gives she us. Give thanks to Mother Earth the running streams; We see the promise of her fruitfulness. Truly, her power gives she us. Our thanks to Mother Earth who lies here!

– *Native American writings*

02. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters...

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

– *Judaism*

03. I call upon the four winds, Earth to ground me, Air to teach me, Fire to empower me, Water to uplift me, I honor Grandmother Earth who bore me, Grandfather Sky who watches over me, And the Creator whose spark is within me and all things.

– *Celtic Invocation*

04. A drop of the billowing ocean of His endless mercy hath adorned all creation with the ornament of existence, and a breath wafted from His peerless Paradise hath invested all beings with the robe of His sanctity and glory. A sprinkling from the unfathomed deep of His sovereign and all-pervasive Will hath, out of utter nothing-ness, called into being a creation which is infinite in its range and deathless in its duration. The wonders of His bounty can never cease, and the stream of His merciful grace can never be arrested. The process of His creation hath had no beginning, and can have no end.

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

**Though a tree grows so high,  
the falling leaves return to the root.**

– *Malay proverb*

05. Larger and finer meanings are read into the older legends of the plants, and the universality of certain myths is expressed in the concurrence of ideas in the beginnings of the great religions. One of the first figures in the leading cosmologies is a tree of life guarded by a serpent. In the Judaic faith this was the tree in the garden of Eden; the Scandinavians made it an ash, Ygdrasil; Christians usually specify the tree as an apple, Hindus as a soma, Persians as a homa, Cambodians as a talok; this early tree is the vine of Bacchus, the snake-entwined caduceus of Mercury, the twining creeper of the Eddas, the bohidruma of Buddha, the fig of Isaiah, the tree of Aesculapius with the serpent around his trunk.

– *Charles M. Skinner, "Myths & Legends of Flowers, Trees, Fruits & Plants"*

**Happy is the man... his delights is in the law  
of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.  
He is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not wither.**

– *Psalms 1: 1-3*

## 06. RICHARD ST BARBE BAKER

Richard St Barbe Baker, O.B.E. was a 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 The Men of Trees, now called Trees for Life, 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 as a member of the Bahá'í Faith, 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 comes to mind is 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 and was 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 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".

**Keep a green tree in your heart and  
perhaps a singing bird will come.**

— *Chinese proverb*

07. I will write of nothing but you  
who have poured kindness  
like a sea to my thirsty eyes.

Speaking of you  
is speaking of the beginning and the end  
of clear greenness of earth  
the elegant beauty of sunset  
and the sun that slowly hides  
in the blue horizon of the sea.

I will write of nothing but you.  
In this endless night,  
in this darkness with no window to light,  
speaking of you is light and freshness and air.

I will write of nothing but you.  
My kind one  
you are the eternal poem.

— *Roshanak Amrien, from "One Million Flights"*

08. Hello, I'm Severn Suzuki speaking for E.C.O. - The Environmental Children's Organization. We are a group of twelve and thirteen-year-olds from Canada trying to make a difference: Vanessa Suttie, Morgan Geisler, Michelle Quigg and me.

We raised all the money ourselves to come six thousand miles to tell you adults you must change your ways. Coming here today, I have no hidden agenda. I am fighting for my future. Losing my future is not like losing an election or a few points on the stock market. I am here to speak for all generations to come.

I am here to speak on behalf of the starving children around the world whose cries go unheard. I am here to speak for the countless animals dying across this planet because they have nowhere left to go. We cannot afford to be not heard. I am afraid to go out in the sun now because of the holes in the ozone. I am afraid to breathe the air because I don't know what chemicals are in it. I used to go fishing in Vancouver with my dad until just a few years ago we found the fish full

of cancers. And now we hear about animals and plants going extinct every day - vanishing forever.

In my life, I have dreamt of seeing the great herds of wild animals, jungles and rainforests full of birds and butterflies, but now I wonder if they will even exist for my children to see. Did you have to worry about these little things when you were my age?

All this is happening before our eyes and yet we act as if we have all the time we want and all the solutions. I'm only a child and I don't have all the solutions, but I want you to realize, neither do you!

You don't know how to fix the holes in our ozone layer.  
You don't know how to bring salmon back up a dead stream.  
You don't know how to bring back an animal now extinct.  
And you can't bring back forests that once grew where there is now desert.  
If you don't know how to fix it, please stop breaking it!

Here, you may be delegates of your governments, business people, organizers, reporters or politicians - but really you are mothers and fathers, brothers and sister, aunts and uncles - and all of you are somebody's child.

I'm only a child yet I know we are all part of a family, five billion strong, in fact, 30 million species strong and we all share the same air, water and soil - borders and governments will never change that.

I'm only a child yet I know we are all in this together and should act as one single world towards one single goal. In my anger, I am not blind, and in my fear, I am not afraid to tell the world how I feel.

In my country, we make so much waste, we buy and throw away, buy and throw away, and yet northern countries will not share with the needy. Even when we have more than enough, we are afraid to lose some of our wealth, afraid to share. In Canada, we live the privileged life, with plenty of food, water and shelter - we have watches, bicycles, computers and television sets.

Two days ago here in Brazil, we were shocked when we spent some time with some children living on the streets. And this is what one child told us: "I wish I was rich and if I were, I would give all the street children food, clothes, medicine, shelter and love and affection." If a child on the street who has nothing, is willing to share, why are we who have everything still so greedy?

I can't stop thinking that these children are my age, that it makes a tremendous difference where you are born, that I could be one of those children living in the Favelas of Rio; I could be a child starving in Somalia; a victim of war in the Middle East or a beggar in India. I'm only a child yet I know if all the money spent on war was spent on ending poverty and finding environmental answers,

what a wonderful place this earth would be!

At school, even in kindergarten, you teach us to behave in the world. You teach us:

not to fight with others,  
to work things out,  
to respect others,  
to clean up our mess,  
not to hurt other creatures  
to share - not be greedy

Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do?

Do not forget why you're attending these conferences, who you're doing this for - we are your own children. You are deciding what kind of world we will grow up in. Parents should be able to comfort their children by saying "everything's going to be alright", "we're doing the best we can" and "it's not the end of the world". But I don't think you can say that to us anymore. Are we even on your list of priorities? My father always says "You are what you do, not what you say."

Well, what you do makes me cry at night. You grown ups say you love us. I challenge you, please make your actions reflect your words. Thank you for listening.

*– From a speech given by Severn Suzuki, daughter of David Suzuki, at the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil; she is twelve years old and received a standing ovation.*

**If all mankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed ten thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos.**

**– E. O. Wilson**

**Eat and drink, but waste not by excess:  
He loves not the excessive.**

**– Islam**

09. O Ye Rich Ones on Earth!

The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease

O Son of Being!

Busy not thyself with this world, for with fire We test the gold, and with gold We test Our servants.

O Son of Passion!

Cleanse thyself from the defilement of riches and in perfect peace advance into the realm of poverty; that from the well-spring of detachment thou mayest quaff the wine of immortal life.

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

10. What misleads citizens in the richer nations is that we in the industrialized North are very well provided for indeed: with some notable exceptions, we either don't see, don't experience, or choose to ignore the impact our lives have. It is difficult for us to imagine that the ecological principle of carrying capacity can significantly affect us. Between the advertisements for Eddie Bauer, jeeps, the suburbs, and the mall, we assume that we're not taking too much from our environment, or we would see more signs of stress and deterioration around us.

Our comfort and abundance is the foundation for the great differences we see in public debate and private discussions about the environment... We confuse our rate and ability to consume with the capacity of living systems to provide for those wants

– *The Ecology of Commerce, by Paul Hawkin*

11. From heaven We have sent down the blessed rain whereby We made the gardens grow, and grain of harvest and tall palm trees laden with clustered dates, in provision for men, thereby bringing again to life a land that was dead. Thus will be the Resurrection

– *Surah 50, from the Qur'an*

12. O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence. O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, conferrest life upon all. Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony. O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind. O God! Establish the Most Great Peace. Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together. O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence. Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind

– ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *from the Bahá’í writings*

13. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: The voice said, cry aloud.

And he said, What shall I cry?

All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people are grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever

– *Isaiah, Chapter 40, from the Bible*

14. **The Butterfly Effect**

How does the flap of a butterfly’s wings in Brazil setoff a tornado in Texas?

This question asked by Edward Lorenz in 1972 set out the idea commonly known as “The Butterfly Effect”. Since then, even though the place of the butterfly flapping, and the forms and the regions of the weather system have changed from New York to China, the butterfly effect has stayed the same.

It has become a metaphor that encapsulates the concept of sensitive dependence: namely the small differences in the initial condition of a dynamic system may produce large variations in the long-term behaviour of the system. It refers to the idea that a butterfly's wings might create tiny changes in the atmosphere, that ultimately create chaos.

15. The oneness of mankind... implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced... It calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world – a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units...

Bahá'í Scriptures maintain that adherence to the principle of the oneness of humanity will have a direct and enduring impact on man's spiritual, social and physical environments. Universal acceptance of this principle will entail a major restructuring of the world's educational, social, agricultural, industrial, economic, legal and political systems. This restructuring will facilitate the emergence of a sustainable, just and prosperous world civilization. Ultimately only a spiritually based civilization - in which science and religion work in harmony – will be able to preserve the ecological balance of the earth, foster stability in human population, and advance both the material and the spiritual well-being of all peoples and nations.

– *From the Bahá'í presentation to the United Nations on 'Conservation and Sustainable Development', 1995*

16. All things in this creation exist within you, and all things in you exist in creation; there is no border between you and the closest things, and there is no distance between you and the farthest things, and all things, from the lowest to the loftiest, from the smallest to the greatest, are within you as equal things. In one atom are found all the elements of the earth; in one motion of the mind are found the motions of all the laws of existence; in one drop of water are found the secrets of all the endless oceans; in one aspect of you are found all the aspects of existence.

– *Khalil Gibran, 'The Treasury of Khalil Gibran'*



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's purpose is to inspire us to transform our lives, our neighbourhoods and communities, with actions that promote the unity and betterment of society.

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**

11.00am – 12.00pm

## **First Sunday of every month**

August 3rd  
September 7th  
October 5th  
November 2nd  
December 7th

## **Further Information**

For further information about Soul Food events in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania or Western Australia please call 03 9415 6007 or visit [www.soulfood.com.au](http://www.soulfood.com.au).

## **Study Circles**

The Bahá'í community offers 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 9415 6007 or email [soulfoodvic@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.bahai.org.au).

## **Supporters**

Soul Food is proudly supported by the Baha'i Council of South-Eastern Australia.