

SOULFOOD

reflective moments

It is with the
Heart
that one sees rightly;
what is essential is
invisible to the
Eyes.

- Antoine De Saint-Exupery

*Listening
to the
Heart*



Proudly presented by the Baha'i community of Adelaide

The Baha'i Faith celebrates the unity and diversity of the human family,
the essential harmony of all religions and the oneness of the Universal Creator

Opening Music

LOVE IS THE KEY

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. Treasure the companionship of the righteous and eschew all fellowship with the ungodly.

O Son of Justice

Whither can a lover go but to the land of his beloved? And what seeker findeth rest away from his heart's desire? To the true lover reunion is life, and separation is death. His breast is void of patience and his heart hath no peace. A myriad lives he would forsake to hasten to the abode of his beloved.

O Son of Being

Thy heart is my home, sanctify it for my descent. Thy spirit is my place of revelation; cleanse it for My descent.

—*Baha'u'llah, from the Baha'i Writings*

Even though I speak in human and angelic language - but I have no love - I am as noisy and brass as a clashing cymbal. And although I have the prophetic gift and see through every secret and through all that may be known, and have sufficient faith for the removal of mountains - but I have no love - I am nothing. And though I give all my belongings to feed the hungry and surrender my body to be burned - but I have no love - I am not in the least benefited.

Love endures long and is kind. Love is not jealous. Love is not out for display. It is not conceited or unmannerly. It is neither self-seeking, nor irritable, nor does it take account of a wrong that is suffered. It takes no pleasure in injustice but sides happily with truth. It bears everything in silence, has unquenchable faith, hopes under all circumstances; endures without limit. Love never fails. As for prophesying, they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease. As for knowledge, it will lose its meaning. For our knowledge is fragmentary and so is our prophesying. But when the perfect is come then the fragmentary will come to an end.

When I was a child I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. But on becoming a man I was through with childish ways. For now we see indistinctly in a mirror, but then face to face. Now we know partly, but then we shall understand as completely as we are understood.

There remain then, faith, hope, love. These three; but the greatest of these is love.

—*The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, from the Bible*

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

—*William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Sonnet CXV*

All through eternity
Beauty unveils His exquisite form
in the solitude of nothingness;
He holds a mirror to His Face
and beholds His own beauty.
he is the knower and the known,
the seer and the seen;
No eye but His own
has ever looked upon this Universe.

His every quality finds an expression:
Eternity becomes the verdant field of Time and Space;
Love, the life-giving garden of this world.
Every branch and leaf and fruit
Reveals an aspect of His perfection-
The cypress give hint of His majesty,
The rose gives tidings of His beauty.
Whenever Beauty looks,
Love is also there;
Whenever beauty shows a rosy cheek
Love lights Her fire from that flame.

When beauty dwells in the dark folds of night
Love comes and finds a heart
entangled in tresses.
Beauty and Love are as body and soul.
Beauty is the mine, Love is the diamond.

They have together
since the beginning of time-
Side by side, step by step.

—*Rumi*

Musical Reflection

FOUR KINDS OF LOVE

There are four kinds of love. The first is the love that flows from God to man; it consists of the inexhaustible graces, the Divine effulgence and heavenly illumination. Through this love the world of being receives life. Through this love man is endowed with physical existence, until, through the breath of the Holy Spirit—this same love—he receives eternal life and becomes the image of the Living God. This love is the origin of all the love in the world of creation.

The second is the love that flows from man to God. This is faith, attraction to the Divine, enkindlement, progress, entrance into the Kingdom of God, receiving the Bounties of God, illumination with the lights of the Kingdom. This love is the origin of all philanthropy; this love causes the hearts of men to reflect the rays of the Sun of Reality.

The third is the love of God towards the Self or Identity of God. This is the transfiguration of His Beauty, the reflection of Himself in the mirror of His Creation. This is the reality of love, the Ancient Love, the Eternal Love. Through one ray of this Love all other love exists.

The fourth is the love of man for man. The love which exists between the hearts of believers is prompted by the ideal of the unity of spirits. This love is attained through the knowledge of God, so that men see the Divine Love reflected in the heart. Each sees in the other the Beauty of God reflected in the soul, and finding this point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in love.

This love will make all men the waves of one sea, this love will make them all the stars of one heaven and the fruits of one tree. This love will bring the realization of true accord, the foundation of real unity.

—Abdu'l-Baha from the Baha'i Writings

Musical Reflection

SPIRITUAL LOVE

Confucianism

To Love all men is the greatest benevolence.

Buddhism

Let a man cultivate towards the whole world a heart of love.

Hinduism

One can best worship the Lord through love.

Zoroastrianism

Man is the beloved of the Lord and should love Him in return.

Taoism

Heaven arms with love those it would not see destroyed.

Sikhism

God will regenerate those in whose hearts there is love.

Christian

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

Judaism

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyself.

Islam

Love is this, that thou shouldst account thyself very little and God very great.

Baha'i

Love Me that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not My love can in no wise reach thee.

Musical Reflection

THE VALLEY OF LOVE

Now is the traveller unaware of himself, and of aught besides himself. He seeth neither ignorance nor knowledge, neither doubt nor certitude; he knoweth not the morn of guidance from the night of error. He fleeth both from unbelief and faith, and deadly poison is a balm to him.

The steed of this Valley is pain; and if there be no pain this journey will never end. In this station the lover hath no thought save the Beloved, and seeketh no refuge save the Friend. At every moment he offereth a hundred lives in the path of the Loved One, at every step he throweth a thousand heads at the feet of the Beloved.

O My Brother! Until thou enter the Egypt of love, thou shalt never come to the Joseph of the Beauty of the Friend; and until, like Jacob, thou forsake thine outward eyes, thou shalt never open the eye of thine inward being; and until thou burn with the fire of love, thou shalt never commune with the Lover of Longing.

A lover feareth nothing and no harm can come nigh him: Thou seest him chill in the fire and dry in the sea. Love accepteth no existence and wisheth no life: He seeth life in death, and in shame seeketh glory. To merit the madness of love, man must abound in sanity; to merit the bonds of the Friend, he must be full of spirit. Blessed the neck that is caught in His noose, happy the head that falleth on the dust in the pathway of His love.

Wherefore, O friend, give up thy self that thou mayest find the Peerless One, pass by this mortal earth that thou mayest seek a home in the nest of heaven. Be as naught, if thou wouldst kindle the fire of being and be fit for the pathway of love.

—*Baha'u'llah, from the Baha'i Writings*

Spread love everywhere you go: first of all in your own house . . . Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting.

—*Mother Teresa*

THE SOUL IN LOVE

This is a kind of personal. I don't own this story, Charles Boyer does.

Remember Charles Boyer? Suave, handsome, graceful. Lover of the most famous and beautiful ladies of the silver screen. That was on the camera and in the magazines. In real life it was different.

There was only one woman. For forty-four years. His wife, Patricia. Friends said it was a lifelong love affair. They were no less lovers and friends and companions after forty-four years than the first year.

Then Patricia developed cancer of the liver. And so he sat by her bedside to provide hope and cheer. Day and night for six months. He could not change the inevitable. Nobody could. And Patricia died in his arms. Two days later Charles Boyer was also dead. He said he did not want to live without her. Her love was life to him.

It is not for me to pass judgement on how he handled his grief. But it is for me to say that I am touched and comforted in a strange way. Touched by the depth of love behind the apparent sham of Hollywood love life. Comforted to know that a man and woman can love each other that much that long.

Don't know how I would handle my grief in similar circumstances. (Here comes the personal part.) But there are moments when I look across the room – amid the daily ordinariness of life – and see the person I call my wife and friend and companion. And I understand why Charles Boyer did what he did.

It really is possible to love someone that much. I know. I'm certain of it.

-Robert Fulgham

Musical Reflection

The poor are great people.
They don't need our sympathy.
They aren't asking us to feel sorry for them.
They are great people!
They deserve our love!

Not long ago, some sisters and I went out and picked up four or five people off the streets. One of them was in terrible condition, so I told the sisters, "I'll take care of her." And I tried to do all that I could for her, all that my love of Jesus could do.

When I put her in bed, she took hold of my hand. There was a beautiful smile on her face. She said only, "Thank you!" And then she died.

She gave me much more than I ever given her, she gave me her grateful love. I couldn't help but examine myself, I said, "If I were she, what would I have done?" And my answer was sincere, "I would have tried to draw some attention to myself by saying, "I am hungry, I'm cold, I'm dying!"

But she had courage, and she had love to give to me, instead of keeping it to herself, instead of being focussed on herself. These are very admirable things!

—*Mother Teresa*

. . The more we desire to benefit others, the greater the strength and confidence we develop and the greater the peace and happiness we experience. If this still seems unlikely, it is worth asking ourselves how else we are to do so. With violence and aggression? Of course not. With money? Perhaps up to a point, but no further.

But with love, by sharing with others' suffering, by recognizing ourselves in all others— especially those who are disadvantaged and those whose rights are not respected— by helping them to be happy: yes. Through love, through kindness, through compassion we establish understanding between ourselves and others. This is how we forge unity and harmony.

Compassion and love are not mere luxuries. As the Source both of inner and external peace, they are fundamental to the continual survival of our species.

— *The Dalai Lama*

So far as ye are able, ignite a candle of love in every meeting, and with tenderness rejoice and cheer ye every heart. Care for the stranger as for one of your own; show to alien souls the same loving kindness ye bestow upon your faithful friends.

Should any come to blows with you, seek to be friends with him; should any stab you to the heart, be ye a healing salve unto his sores; should any taunt and mock at you, meet him with love.

Should any heap his blame upon you, praise ye him; should he offer you a deadly poison, give him the choicest honey in exchange; and should he threaten your life, grant him a remedy that will heal him evermore. Should he be pain itself, be ye his medicine; should he be thorns, be ye his roses and sweet herbs.

Perchance such ways and words from you will make this darksome world turn bright at last; will make this dusty earth turn heavenly, this devilish prison place become a royal palace of the Lord – so that war and strife will pass and be no more, and love and trust will pitch their tents on the summits of the world. Such is the essence of God's admonitions; such in sum are the teachings for the Dispensation of Bahá.

—*Abdu'l-Bahá, From the Bahá'í Writings*

Musical Finale

join us for the next program

Sunday the 21st of March, 11am
Radford Auditorium,
Art Gallery of South Australia