

So powerful is the
light of unity that it can
illuminate the whole earth.
-Baha'i writings

a new
Harmony

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

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This program is dedicated to 'World Religion Day'
(January 18)

Opening Music

A UNIVERSAL PRAYER

In striving to recognize the primacy of Fire and Light.

I feel kinship with my Zoroastrian brothers and sisters.

In striving to obey the Ten Commandments,

I feel kinship with my Jewish brothers and sisters.

In striving to be kind to neighbour and the needy,

I feel kinship with my Christian brothers and sisters.

In striving to be compassionate to creatures great and small,

I feel kinship with my Buddhist and Jaina brothers and sisters.

In striving to surrender myself completely to God Almighty,

I feel kinship with my Muslim brothers and sisters.

In the recognition that wisdom flows from enlightened masters,

I feel kinship with my Sikh brothers and sisters.

In remembering that serving people should be the goal of religion,

I feel kinship with my Baha'i brothers and sisters.

In my respect and reverence for Nature that sustains us,

I feel kinship with my Native American brothers and sisters.

In feeling that these and more are all paths to the same Divinity,

I feel kinship with my Hindu brothers and sisters.

In my love and laughter, joy and pain,

I feel kinship with all my fellow humans.

In my need for nourishment and instinct to live on,

I feel kinship with all beings on the planet.

In my spiritual ecstasy with this wondrous world,

I feel kinship with the Cosmic Whole.

—*V.V. Rahman, inspired by the Parliament of World Religions, 1999*

RELIGION

Throughout history, the primary agents of spiritual development have been the great religions...A vast literature, to which all religious cultures have contributed, records the experience of transcendence reported by generations of seekers.

Down the millennia, the lives of those who responded to intimations of the Divine have inspired breathtaking achievements in music, architecture, and the other arts, endlessly replicating the soul's experience for millions of their fellow believers. No other force in existence has been able to elicit from people comparable qualities of heroism, self-sacrifice and self-discipline.

At the social level, the resulting moral principles have repeatedly translated themselves into universal codes of law, regulating and elevating human relationships.

Viewed in perspective, the major religions emerge as the primary driving forces of the civilizing process.

—*'One Common Faith', from the Baha'i writings*

Statesmen my dear Sir, may plan and speculate for liberty, but it is religion and morality alone, which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand...The only foundation of a free Constitution, is pure virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our people, in a greater measure, than they have it now, they may change their rulers, and the forms of government, but they will not obtain a lasting liberty.

—*John Adams, Second President of the United States*

THE CREATOR

I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God beside me.

—*Isaiah 45:5, from the Christian writings*

Say: All bounties are in the hand of God: He granteth them to whom He pleaseth: and God careth for all, and He knoweth all things.

—*Qur'an, surih 3:73, from the Islamic writings*

To every discerning and illumined heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the divine Being, is immensely exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress. Far be it from His glory that human tongue should adequately recount His praise, or that human heart comprehend His fathomless mystery.

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

Musical Reflection

INTERMEDIARIES

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, the Source of infinite grace ... hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being, and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence.

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

I come, and go, and come. When Righteousness declines, O Bharata! When Wickedness is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take visible shape, and move a man with men, succouring the good, thrusting the evil back, and setting Virtue on her seat again.

—*Bhagavad-Gita, from the Hindu writings*

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

—*John 14:6, from the Christian writings*

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth.... Light upon Light! God doth guide whom He will to His Light.

—*Qur'an, surih 24:35, from the Islamic writings*

ONE DIVINE TEACHER OR MANY?

I am not the first Buddha who came upon earth nor shall I be the last. In due time another Buddha will arise in the world, a Holy One, a supremely enlightened One, endowed with wisdom and conduct, auspicious, knowing the universe, an incomparable leader of men, a master of angels and mortals. He will reveal the same eternal truths which I have taught you.

— *Buddha Gautama, from the Buddhist writings*

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

—*John 5:45–47, from the Christian writings*

I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

—*John 16:12, from the Christian writings*

We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismā‘īl, Isaac, Jacob ... and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord....

—*Qur’án, Surih 2:136, from the Islamic writings*

It is, therefore, an inadequate recognition of the unique station of Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammad—or of the succession of Avatars who inspired the Hindu scriptures—to depict their work as the founding of distinct religions. Rather are they appreciated when acknowledged as the spiritual Educators of history, as the animating forces in the rise of the civilizations through which consciousness has flowered: “He was in the world,” the Gospel declares, “and the world was made by him....”

—*‘One Common Faith’, from the Baha’i writings*

ONE RELIGION OR MANY?

The work of each Manifestation of God has an autonomy and an authority that transcend appraisal; it is also a stage in the limitless unfolding of a single Reality. Because the purpose of the successive revelations of God is the awakening of humankind to its capacities and responsibilities as the trustee of creation, the process is not simply repetitive, but progressive, and is fully appreciated only when perceived in this context.

—*‘One Common Faith’, from the Baha’i writings*

The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples.... All things must needs have a cause, a motive power, an animating principle. These souls and symbols of detachment have provided, and will continue to provide, the supreme moving impulse in the world of being.

—*Baha’u’llah, from the Baha’i writings*

These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated.

—*Baha’u’llah, from the Baha’i writings*

THE TROUBLESOME COAT

Story written by Fuzzy Trojan (2010)

Musical Reflection

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

John Godfrey Saxe's (1816-1887) version of the famous Indian legend

It was six men of Indostan,
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approach'd the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, -"Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear,
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The Third approach'd the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee:
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he,
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said- "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Then, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL,
So, oft in theologic wars
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean;
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!

AN ANSWERED PRAYER

Whatever name You have now
Hear me. I have lost my faith.
Don't let me become cynical.
Please relate again my deeds
To the outcome of my fate.
That I may receive instruction
As then, from bird and rain.

Like items on a menu I chose
Religions, but mantra or litany
My plea is the same: Teach me
To see beyond the visible.
Reveal the eternal purpose
Behind this constant change.
I want to wake up smiling.

My worries have grown up
Please update the catechism
And shout Your answers
Whispers are no longer enough.
Restore simplicity. Prescribe
An antidote against absurdity.
Send anything that looks like hope.

—*Patricia Campuzano*

Musical Reflection

A COMMON SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West but it is righteousness - to believe in God ... to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask....

— *Qur'án, Surih 2: 177, from the Islamic writings*

Ye are the salt of the earth, Ye are the light of the world.

—*Matthew, 5:13-14, from the Christian writings*

...what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

—*Micah, 6:8, from the Christian writings*

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.

—*Matthew, 5:44, from the Christian writings*

...Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

—*Matthew, 7:7, from the Christian writings*

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.

— *Psalms, 55:22, from the Christian writings*

It is the Noble Eightfold Path, the way that leads to the extinction of suffering, namely: Right Understanding, Right Mindedness, which together are Wisdom. Right Speech, Right Action, Right Living, which together are Morality. Right Effort, Right Attentiveness, Right Concentration, which together are Concentration. This is the Middle Path which the Perfect One has found out, which makes one both to see and to know, which leads to peace, to discernment, to enlightenment, to Nirvana.

—*Buddha, Tipitaka SN 56.11, from the Buddhist writings*

Yesterday is but a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision,
but today well-lived makes every yesterday
a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow
a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.

— *Baghavat-Gita, from the Hindu Scriptures*

You must manifest complete love and affection toward all mankind.

Do not exalt yourselves above others, but consider all as your equals, recognising them as the servants of one God.

Know that God is compassionate toward all; therefore, love all from the depths of your hearts, prefer all religionists before yourselves, be filled with love for every race, and be kind toward the people of all nationalities.

—*Abdu'l-Baha, from the Baha'i writings*

ONE COMMON FAITH

As the human race in all its diversity is a single species, so the intervention by which God cultivates the qualities of mind and heart latent in that species is a single process. Its heroes and saints are the heroes and saints of all stages in the struggle; its successes, the successes of all stages.

For those with eyes to see, the new creation is today everywhere emerging, in the same way that a seedling becomes in time a fruit-bearing tree or a child reaches adulthood. Successive dispensations of a loving and purposeful Creator have brought the earth's inhabitants to the threshold of their collective coming-of-age as a single people.

Bahá'u'lláh is now summoning humanity to enter on its inheritance: "That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith."

— *'One Common Faith', from the Baha'i writings*

Musical Finale

join us for the next program

Sunday the 21st of February, 11am
Featuring Harpist Emma Horwood
Function Rooms 1 & 2,
Art Gallery of South Australia