

‘So powerful is the light of unity that it can

illuminate

the whole earth’ - Baha’i writings

LIGHT UPON LIGHT

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 United Nations
“International Day of Tolerance”(November 17th)

Opening Music

THE LIGHT OF UNITY

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.

- Baha'u'llah, from the Baha'i writings

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, from the Hindu writings

My doctrine is pure and it makes no discrimination between noble and ignoble, rich and poor. My doctrine is like unto water which cleanses all without distinction. My doctrine is like unto fire which consumes all things that exist between heaven and earth, great and small. My doctrine is like unto heavens, for men and women, boys and girls, the powerful and the lowly.

- from the Buddhist writings

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like precious oil poured upon the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes! It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion: for there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life evermore.

- Psalm 133, from the Bible

Musical Reflection

THE LIGHT OF MEDITATION

Meditate profoundly, that the secret of things unseen may be revealed unto you, that you may inhale the sweetness of a spiritual and imperishable fragrance, and that you may acknowledge the truth that from time immemorial even unto eternity the Almighty hath tried, and will continue to try, His servants, so that light may be distinguished from darkness, truth from falsehood, right from wrong, guidance from error, happiness from misery, and roses from thorns.

- Baha'u'llah, from the Baha'i writings

Wake up! It is time to wake up!
You are young, strong – why do you waver,
Why are you lazy and irresolute?
This is not the way to wisdom.
Be strict with speech, control your mind,
Let not the body do evil.
This is the way to wisdom.
These the three roads leading to it.
Meditation brings wisdom,
Lack of meditation is folly.
These are the two roads,
One leading forward and one leading backwards.
Choose the right one,
The one that leads to wisdom.
Not one tree – cut down the whole forest!
There is danger in the forest.
Cut down the forest of desires, O Bhikkus,
And discover the road to liberation.

- Dhammapada, from the Buddhist writings

Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stood in the way of sinners, Nor sat in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; And in His Law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, And whose leaf doth not wither: And in whatsoever he doeth he shall prosper.

- Psalm 1: 1-3, from the Bible

Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state man abstracts himself; in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective mood he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things in themselves. To illustrate this, think of man as endowed with two kinds of sight: when the power of insight is being used the outward power of vision does not see.

This faculty brings forth from the invisible plane the sciences and arts. Through the meditative faculty inventions are made possible, colossal undertakings are carried out; through it governments can run smoothly. Through this faculty man enters into the very Kingdom of God. Nevertheless some thoughts are useless to man: they are like waves moving in the sea without result. But if the faculty of meditation is bathed in the inner light and characterized with divine attributes, the results will be confirmed.

The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror: if you put it before earthly objects it will reflect them. Therefore if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly subjects he will be informed of these. But if you turn the mirror of your spirits heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained. Therefore let us keep this faculty rightly directed – turning it to the heavenly Sun and not to earthly objects – so that we may discover the secrets of the Kingdom, and comprehend the allegories of the Bible and the mysteries of the spirit. May we indeed become mirrors reflecting the heavenly realities, and may we become so pure as to reflect the stars of heaven.

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

Musical Reflection

THE ILLUMINATION OF GIVING

There are three kinds of persons existing in the world: one is like a drought, one who rains locally, and one who pours down everywhere.

How is a person like a drought? He gives nothing to all alike, not giving food and drink, clothing and vehicles, flowers, scents, and unguents, bed, lodging, and light, neither to recluses and Brahmins nor to wretched and needy beggars. In this way, a person is like a drought.

How is a person like a local rainfall? He is a giver to some, but to others he gives not . . . In this way, a person is like a local rainfall.

How does a person rain down everywhere? He gives to all be they recluses and Brahmins or wretched, needy beggars; he is a giver of food and drink, clothing . . . lodging and lights. In this way a person rains down everywhere.

- Itivuttakas 65, from the Buddhist writings

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

- Deuteronomy 15, from the Jewish scripture

The gift which is given without thought of recompense, in the belief that it ought to be made, in a fit place, at an opportune time, and to a deserving person—such a gift is Pure. That which is given for the sake of the results it will produce, or with the hope of recompense, or grudgingly — that may truly be said to be an outcome of Passion.

- Bhagavad Gita, from the Hindu writings

Generosity is a subversive virtue. It undermines solemnity. It allows connections to be made between the most unexpected people. It lends itself to small gestures as well as large. It flies in the face of greed, arrogance, and desire, and can undo them all. It does not depend on learning, privilege, status or riches. It is ignorant of nationality, class, colour and gender. It is as vital in the boardroom as it is in the kindergarten. It is impossible to manufacture, measure, sell or waste. It springs from a conscious intention for good and it involves the body and mind as much as the spirit.

Generosity can be shy or assertive, memorable or fleeting. Without its presence, we would scarcely know what love feels like or looks like; how love smells or sounds; how love survives and what miracles love allows.

In every impulse that restores or celebrates our faith in humankind, there generosity is. In all our finest moments, our most transcendent, tender or illuminating moments, it is also present. And so it is when disaster strikes at our communities, and we face it together.

If every one of our lives is to be worth living, and if we are to come to realize in time that our planet is worth saving, it will be because we have allowed ourselves to discover the radiant power and ease, magic and beauty of generosity: the spaciousness of it, the joy of it, the infinity of it.

—*Stephanie Dowrick*

There are three kinds of givers - the flint, the sponge and the honeycomb. To get anything out of a flint you must hammer it. And then you get only chips and sparks. To get water out of a sponge you must squeeze it, and the more you use pressure, the more you will get. But the honeycomb just overflows with its own sweetness. Which kind of giver are you?

—*Anonymous Author*

Musical Reflection

THE POWERFUL LIGHT OF LOVE

You must manifest complete love and affection toward all mankind. Do not exalt yourselves above others, but consider all as your equals, recognizing them as the servants of one God. Know thou 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.

- *Abdul-Baha, from the Baha'i writings*

The essence of all religions is love, compassion, and tolerance. Kindness is my true religion. No matter whether you are learned or not, whether you believe in the next life or not, whether you believe in God or Buddha or some other religion or not, in day-to-day life you must be a kind person... Love, compassion and tolerance are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive. The clear proof of a person's love for God is if that person genuinely shows love to fellow human beings.

- *Dalai Lama*

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*

A human being is a part of the whole that we call the universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest - a kind of optical illusion of his consciousness. This illusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for only the few people nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living beings and all of nature.

- *Albert Einstein*

A Reflection by Robert Fulgham

In the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific some villagers practice a unique form of logging. If a tree is too large to be felled with an axe, the natives cut it down by yelling at it. (*Can't lay my hands on the article, but I swear I read it.*) Woodsmen with special powers creep up on a tree just at dawn and suddenly scream at it at the top of their lungs. They continue this for thirty days. The tree dies and falls over. The theory is that the hollering kills the spirit of the tree. According to the villagers, it always works.

Ah, those poor naïve innocents. Such quaintly charming habits of the jungle. Screaming at trees, indeed. How primitive. Too bad they don't have the advantages of modern technology and the scientific mind.

Me? I yell at my wife. And yell at the telephone and the lawn mower. And yell at the TV and the newspaper and my children. I've even been known to shake my fist and yell at the sky at times.

Man next door yells at his car a lot. And this summer I heard him yell at a stepladder for most of an afternoon.

We modern, urban, educated folks yell at traffic and umpires and bills and banks and machines – especially machines. Machines and relatives get most of the yelling. Don't know what good it does. Machines and things just sit there. Even kicking doesn't always help.

As for people, well, the Solomon Islanders may have a point. Yelling at living things does tend to kill the spirit in them.

Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words will break our hearts....

- *Robert Fulgham*

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

3rd Sunday of every month
Sunday December 20th, 11am
Radford Auditorium,
Art Gallery of South Australia