



Program — Song of Unity
January 2004

MUSICAL MEDITATION

~ performed by Emma Horwood

THE FRAGILE WORLD

~ Baha'i Writings

~Russell Schweickart, Astronaut

~Simon of Taibutheth

~The Dalai Lama

~Wilfred Gibson

~ Vincent Van Gogh

MUSIC

~ performed by Emma Horwood

ONENESS

~ Islamic Tradition

~ from the Baha'i Writings

~ Daphne Rose Kingman

~ James Joyce

~ Henry David Thoreau

MUSIC

~ performed by Emma Horwood

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

~ Hindu Writings

~ Buddhist Writings

~ Christian Writings

~ Baha'i Writings

~ Buddhist Writings

~ Al-Anon

~ Baha'i Writings

MUSICAL FINALE

~ performed by Emma Horwood

The Fragile World

*To see the world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wildflower
To hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour*

William Blake

MUSIC

performed by Emma Horwood

O my God! O my God! Verily, I invoke Thee and supplicate before Thy threshold, asking Thee that all Thy mercies may descend upon these souls. Specialize them for Thy favour and Thy truth.

O Lord! Unite and bind together the hearts, join in accord all the souls, and exhilarate the spirits through the signs of Thy sanctity and oneness. O Lord! Make these faces radiant through the light of Thy oneness. Strengthen the loins of Thy servants in the service of Thy kingdom.

O Lord, Thou possessor of infinite mercy! O Lord of forgiveness and pardon! Forgive our sins, pardon our shortcomings, and cause us to turn to the kingdom of Thy clemency, invoking the kingdom of might and power, humble at Thy shrine and submissive before the glory of Thine evidences.

O Lord God! Make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, united, agreed through the bounties of Thy love. O Lord! Dilate the breasts through the signs of Thy oneness, and make all mankind as stars shining from the same height of glory, as perfect fruits growing upon Thy tree of life.

Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the Self-Subsistent, the Giver, the Forgiving, the Pardoner, the Omniscient, the One Creator.

from the Baha'i Writings ~ 'Abdu'l-Baha

No Frames, No Boundaries

BUT UP THERE you go around every hour and a half, time after time after time. You wake up usually in the mornings, over the Middle East and over North Africa. As you eat breakfast you look out the window and there's the Mediterranean area, Greece and Rome and North Africa and the Sinai, that whole area. And you realize that in one glance what you're seeing is what was the whole history of humankind for years - the cradle of civilization. And you go down across North Africa and out over the Indian Ocean and you look up at that great subcontinent of India pointed down toward you as you go past it, Ceylon off to the side, then Burma, Southeast Asia, out over the Philippines and up across that monstrous Pacific Ocean, that vast body of water - you've never realized how big that is before. And you finally come up across the coast of California, and you look for those friendly things, Los Angeles and Phoenix, and on across to El Paso. And there's Houston, there's home, you know, and you look out, and you identify with it.... And you go out across the Atlantic Ocean and back across Africa, and you do it again and again and again... And it all becomes friendly to you.

AND YOU IDENTIFY with Houston and then you identify with Los Angeles and Phoenix and New Orleans. And the next thing you recognize in yourself is that you're identifying with North Africa. You look forward to it, you anticipate it, and there it is. And that whole process of what it is you identify with begins to shift. When you go around the Earth in an hour and half, you begin to recognize that your identity is with the whole thing. And that makes a change.

YOU LOOK DOWN there and you can't imagine how many borders and boundaries you cross, again and again and again, and you don't even see them. There you are - hundreds of people in the Middle East killing each other over some imaginary line that you're not even aware of, that you can't see. And from where you see it, the thing is a whole, the earth is a whole, and it's so beautiful. You wish you could take a person in each hand, one from each side in the

various conflicts, and say, "Look. Look at it from this perspective. Look at that. What's important?"

AND YOU REALIZE that on that small spot, that little blue and white thing, is everything that means anything to you - all love, tears, joy, games, all of it on that little spot out there .

AND YOU THINK about what you're experiencing and why. Do you deserve this? Have you earned this in some way? Are you separated out to be touched by God, to have some special experience that others cannot have? And you know the answer to that is no. There's nothing you've done that deserves this experience that earned it. It's not a special thing just for you. And you know very well at that moment, for it comes through to you so powerfully, that you are the sensing element for all of humanity, you as an individual are experiencing this for everyone.

YOU LOOK DOWN and see the surface of that globe you've lived on all this time, and you know all those people down there and they are like you, they are you - and somehow you represent them. You are up there as the sensing element, that point out on the end, and that's a humbling feeling. It's a feeling that says you have a responsibility. It's not for yourself. The eye that doesn't see doesn't do justice to the body. That's why it's there. That's why you are out there. And somehow you recognize that you're a piece of this total life. And you're out there on that forefront and you have to bring that back somehow. And that becomes a rather special responsibility and it tells you something about your relationship with this thing we call life. And that's a change. That's something new. And when you come back there's a difference in that world now. There's a difference in that relationship between you and that planet, and you and all those other forms of life on that planet, because you've had that kind of experience. It's a difference and it's so precious.

Russell Schweickart, astronaut

Consider, O discerning man, that you are the image of God and the bond of all creation, both of the heavenly and the terrestrial beings, and whenever you bend your head to worship and glorify God, all the creations, both heavenly and terrestrial, bow their heads with you and in you, to worship God; and whenever you do not worship and glorify Him, all the creations grieve over you and turn against you, and you will fall from grace.

Simon of Taibutheth

In today's highly interdependent world, individuals and nations can no longer resolve many of their problems by themselves. We need one another. We must therefore develop a sense of universal responsibility . . . It is our collective and individual responsibility to protect and nurture the global family, to support its weaker members, and to preserve and tend to the environment in which we all live.

The Dalai Lama

Unity

When the cooling tyre contracts
Round the fellowe of the wheel,

Do not spokes that once where boughs
In close knitting fibers feel
A glow in being ironbound
In unity secure and round
For conquest of untravelled ground?

Wilfred Gibson

We humans are often shackled with the incapacity to act, being captives in some dreadful, truly dreadful cage. I know there is such a thing as liberation, the longed-for liberation. If, whether with or without cause, you lose your good name and reputation, fall into want and adversity or under the pressure of circumstances, you are a prisoner. You cannot always tell what it is that bars your way, encompasses and entombs you, but you feel the barriers, the obstacles, the walls.

You know what will cause the prison to collapse? A deep, genuine love, being friends and brothers, loving one another; that will break down the gates of the prison with irresistible force. Those who possess none of this, stay dead. But where friendship blooms, life is reborn.

Vincent Van Gogh

Oneness

Religion is a candle inside a multicoloured lantern. Everyone looks through a particular colour, but the candle is always there.

Mohammed Negulb

MUSIC

performed by Emma Horwood

A madman stood
In the middle of town
Thousands were going and coming
To and fro on all sides
He shouted:
“Going in a hundred directions
How can you get anywhere?
You have a single heart
But many and many a heart’s desire”

Attar of Neishapur

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.

O Peoples of the earth! God, the Eternal Truth, is My witness that streams of fresh and soft-flowing waters, have gushed from the rocks, through the sweetness of the words uttered by your Lord, the Unconstrained; and still ye slumber. Cast away that which ye possess, and, on the wings of detachment, soar beyond all created things, Thus biddeth you the Lord of creation, the movement of Whose Pen hath revolutionized the soul of mankind.

From the Baha'i Writings ~ Baha'u'llah

The person who doesn't fit in with our notions of who is worthy of our love—the bag lady at the corner, the strange old man who rides through town on a three-wheel bike all strung up with flags—is just the person who, by not fitting into our patterns, insists that we expand not only our views but also our capacity to love.

Today, see if you can stretch your heart and expand your love so that it touches not only those to whom you can give it easily, but also to those who need it so much.

Daphne Rose Kingman

Every day, in many ways, day after day, we walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-laws. But always meeting ourselves.

James Joyce

Explore your own higher altitudes . . . Nay be a Columbus to whole new continents and world within you, opening new channels, not of trade but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no 'self' respect, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay.

The skeleton which at first sight excites only a shudder in all mortals becomes at last not only a pur but suggestive and pleasing object to science. The more we know of it, the less we associate it with any goblin of our imaginations. The longer we keep it, the less likely it is that any such will come to claim it. We discover that the only spirit which haunts it is a universal intelligence which has created it in harmony with all nature. Science never saw a ghost, nor does it look for any, but it sees everywhere the traces, and it is itself the agent, of a Universal Intelligence.

Meditations by Thoreau

MUSIC

performed by Emma Horwood

Overcoming Obstacles

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Psalms 133

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

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.

The Teachings of Buddha

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets.”

Matthew

. . . we say that differences are of two kinds. One is the cause of annihilation and is like the antipathy existing among warring nations and conflicting tribes who seek each other’s destruction, uprooting one another’s families, depriving one another of rest and comfort and unleashing carnage. The other kind which is a token of diversity is the essence of perfection and the cause of the appearance of bestowals of the Most Glorious Lord.

Consider the flowers of a garden: though differing in kind, colour, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. Thus when that unifying force, the penetrating influence of the Word of God, taketh effect, the difference of customs, manners, habits, ideas, opinions and dispositions embellisheth the world of humanity. This diversity, this difference is like the naturally created dissimilarity and variety of the limbs and organs of the human body, for each one contributeth to the beauty, efficiency and perfection of the whole. When these different limbs and organs come under the influence of man’s sovereign soul, and the soul’s power pervadeth the limbs and members, veins and arteries of the body, then difference reinforceth harmony, diversity strengtheneth love, and multiplicity is the greatest factor for cooperation.

How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and colour! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof.

from the Baha’i Writings ~ ‘Abdu’l-Baha

But the gentle mind of the Buddha was offended at the unnecessary cruelty performed on the altars of the gods. He said: ‘Ignorance only can make these men prepare festivals and hold vast meetings for sacrifices. Far better to revere the truth than try to appease the gods by shedding blood. What love can a man possess who believes that the destruction of life will atone for evil deeds? Can a new wrong expiate old wrongs? And can the slaughter of an innocent victim blot out the evil deeds of mankind? This is practising religion by neglect of moral conduct. Purify your hearts and cease to kill; that is true religion.

The Teachings of Buddha

Silence can be a two-edged weapon. It will hurt me if I use it to hurt someone else. Silence can also be a blessing, if I enter into it serenely to take stock of myself and meditate on how I can improve.

“God help me to know that silence, like speech, can reflect my inner feelings. Help me to use it, not as a cork to keep my anger bottled up, but to express a healing quiet of the spirit.”

from One Day at a Time in Al-Anon

How good it is if the friends be as close as sheaves of light, if they stand together side by side in a firm unbroken line. For now have the rays of reality from the Sun of the world of existence, united in adoration all the worshippers of this light; and these rays have, through infinite grace, gathered all peoples together within this wide-spreading shelter; therefore must all souls become as one soul, and all hearts as one heart. Let all be set free from the multiple identities that were born of passion and desire, and in the oneness of their love for God find a new way of life.

From the Baha'i Writings ~ Abdu'l-Baha

MUSIC

*performed by
Emma Horwood*