

SOUL FOOD



Harmony the Stream of Time

March 2004

MUSICAL MEDITATION

~ *music by Alain Valodoze*

THE WORLD OF ONENESS

- ~ Dionysius *Divine Peace*
- ~ John Donne *No Man is an Island*
- ~ 'Abdu'l-Baha *from the Baha'i Writings*
- ~ Guru Nanak *Sikh Morning Prayer*
- ~ Reb Noson of Breslov *Jewish meditation*
- ~ Orison Swett Marden
- ~ Baha'u'llah *from the Baha'i Writings*

MUSIC

~ *performed by Robbie Hoad*

UNIVERSAL HUMANITY

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~ *performed by Karina Chavez*

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MUSIC

~ *performed by Robbie Hoad*

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

- ~ 'Abdu'l-Baha *from the Baha'i Writings*
- ~ The Dalai Lama *Buddhist sentiments*
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MUSICAL FINALE

~ *performed by Alain Valodoze*

MUSICAL MEDITATION
~ music by Alain Valodoze

The World of Oneness

"If you are here to help me then you are wasting your time. But if you come because your liberation is bound up with mine then let us begin."

Lilly Walker (Labonte, 1994)

Divine Peace

For the Divine Peace remains indivisible and shows forth all its power in a single act, and permeates the whole world without departing from its own Identity. For it goes forth to all things and gives to all things of itself (according to their kinds), and overflows with the abundance of a peaceful fecundity, and yet through the transcendence of its unification it remains wholly and entirely in a state of Absolute Self-Unity.

Dionysius

No Man Is An Island

No man is an island, entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
As well as if a promontory were,
As well as if a manor of thy friends
or of thine own were.
Any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore never send to know
for whom the bell tolls
It tolls for thee.

John Donne

From the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá

Ye observe how the world is divided against itself, how many a land is red with blood and its very dust is caked with human gore. The fires of conflict have blazed so high that never in early times, not in the Middle Ages, not in recent centuries hath there ever been such a hideous war, a war that is even as millstones, taking for grain the skulls of men.

Nay, even worse, for flourishing countries have been reduced to rubble, cities have been levelled with the ground, and many a once prosperous village hath been turned into ruin.

Fathers have lost their sons, and sons their fathers. Mothers have wept away their hearts over dead children. Children have been orphaned, women left to wander, vagrants without a home.

From every aspect, humankind hath sunken low. Loud are the piercing cries of fatherless children; loud the mothers' anguished voices, reaching to the skies.

And the breeding-ground of all these tragedies is prejudice: prejudice of race and nation, of religion, of political opinion; and the root cause of prejudice is blind imitation of the past – imitation in religion, in racial attitudes, in national bias, in politics.

So long as this aping of the past persisteth, just so long will the foundations of the social order be blown to the four winds, just so long will humanity be continually exposed to direct peril.

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

Sikh Morning Prayer

God has His seat everywhere,
His treasure houses are in all places.
Whatever a man's portion is
God at the creation
Appointed him that share once and for all
What He has created
The Lord forever contemplates
O Nanak, true are his works
As He Himself is the tree.

Guru Nanak

Jewish Meditation

. Know and remember well every day that God is great and His greatness is infinite. Every moment of every day, entirely new and miraculous things are being created and are taking place in the world. All this is to inform, to hint, and to remind each person about God's greatness and sovereignty, so that every single person, wherever he is, can attach himself to God at any time, any hour, any moment— whenever he wishes.

Reb Noson of Breslov

The universe is one great kindergarten for man. Everything that exists has brought with it its own peculiar lesson. The mountain teaches stability and grandeur; the ocean immensity and change. Forests, lakes, and rivers, clouds and winds, stars and flowers, stupendous glaciers and crystal snowflakes—every form of animate or inanimate existence, leaves it impress upon the soul of man. Even the bee and ant have brought their little lessons of industry and economy.

Orison Swett Marden

Enter thou My presence, that thou mayest behold what the eye of the universe hath never beheld, and hear that which the ear of the whole creation hath never heard, that haply thou mayest free thyself from the mire of vague fancies, and set thy face towards the Most Sublime Station, wherein this Wronged one calleth aloud: "The Kingdom is God's, the Almighty, the All-Praised!" We fain would hope that through thine exertions the wings of men may be sanctified from the mire of self and desire, and be made worthy to soar in the atmosphere of God's love.

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

MUSIC

performed by Robbie Hoad

Universal Humanity

"Relativity teaches us the connection between the different descriptions of one and the same reality"

Albert Einstein

You
Are part of the Great Spirit
You
Are perfection.
Yet you have allowed others
To place limitations upon you.
Now is the time of awareness.
Now is the time for remembrance.
You have chosen this.
No other
Can choose it for you.

Trust yourself.
Trust your own knowing.
Take it by the hand and follow it.
Listen and you will hear
The silent voice
That speaks to you
From your heart.
Follow it
And you will know
Great beauty.

Clear Water *Native American Meditation*

I would like

to be born in every country,

have a passport
 for them all, to throw all foreign offices
 into panic,
be every fish in every ocean
and every dog in the streets of the world.
I don't want to bow down
 before any idols
or play at being a Russian Orthodox church hippie,
but I would like to plunge deep into Lake Baikal
and surface snorting
 somewhere, why not in the Mississippi?
In my damned beloved universe I would like
 to be a lonely weed,
but not a delicate Narcissus kissing his own mug
 in the mirror.
I would like to be any of God's creatures
right down to the last mangy hyena--
 but never a tyrant
 or even the cat of a tyrant.
I would like to be
 reincarnated as a man in any image:
a victim of prison tortures,
a homeless child in the slums of Hong Kong,
a living skeleton in Bangladesh,
a holy beggar in Tibet,
a black in Cape Town,
but never
 in the image of Rambo.
The only people whom I hate are the hypocrites--
 pickled hyenas in heavy syrup.
I would like to lie
 under the knives of all the surgeons in the world,
be hunchbacked, blind, suffer all kinds of diseases,
 wounds and scars,
be a victim of war,
 or a sweeper of cigarette butts,
 just so a filthy microbe of superiority
 doesn't creep inside.
I would not like to be in the elite, nor, of course,
in the cowardly herd, nor be a guard dog of that herd,
nor a shepherd, sheltered by that herd.
And I would like happiness,
 but not at the expense of the unhappy,
and I would like freedom,
 but not at the expense of the unfree.
I would like to love all the women in the world,
and I would like to be a woman, too-- just once...
Men have been diminished by Mother Nature.
Why couldn't we give motherhood to men?
If an innocent child stirred below his heart,
man would probably
 not be so cruel.
I would like to be man's daily bread-- say, a cup of rice
 for a Vietnamese woman in mourning,
cheap wine in a Neapolitan workers' trattoria,
or a tiny tube of cheese in orbit round the moon.
Let them eat me,
 let them drink me,
only let my death be of some use.
I would like to belong to all times,

shock all history so much that it would be amazed
what a smart aleck I was.
I would like to bring Nefertiti to Pushkin in a troika.
I would like to increase the space of a moment
a hundredfold,
so that in the same moment I could drink vodka
with fishermen in Siberia
and sit together with Homer,
Dante, Shakespeare, and Tolstoy,
drinking anything, except, of course, Coca-Cola,
--dance to the tom-toms in the Congo,
--strike at Renault,
--chase a ball with Brazilian boys
at Copacabana Beach.
I would like to know every language,
like the secret waters under the earth,
and do all kinds of work at once.
I would make sure that one Yevtushenko was merely a poet,
the second--an underground fighter somewhere,
I couldn't say where for security reasons,
the third--a student at Berkeley,
the fourth--a jolly Georgian drinker,
and the fifth--maybe a teacher of Eskimo children in Alaska,
the sixth-- a young president,
somewhere, say, modestly speaking,
in Sierra Leone,
the seventh-- would still be shaking a rattle in his stroller,
and the tenth...
the hundredth...
the millionth...
For me it's not enough to be myself, let me be everyone!
Every creature usually has a double,
but God was stingy with the carbon paper,
and in his Paradise Publishing Corporation
made a unique copy of me.
But I shall muddle up
all God's cards--
I shall confound God!
I shall be in a thousand copies to the end of my days,
so that the earth buzzes with me,
and computers go berserk
in the world census of me.
I would like to fight on all your barricades, humanity,
dying each night like an exhausted moon,
and resurrecting each morning like a newborn sun,
with an immortal soft spot--fontanel--
on my head.
And when I die,
a smart-aleck Siberian Francois Villon,
do not lay me in the earth
of France
or Italy,
but in our Russian,
Siberian earth,
on a still-green hill,
where I first felt
that I was
everyone.

Yevgeny Yevtushenko 1972
Translated by the author

MUSIC

performed by Karina Chavez

*Blessed is the spot, and the house,
and the place, and the city,
and the heart, and the mountain,
and the refuge, and the cave,
and the valley, and the land,
and the sea, and the island,
and the meadow where mention
of God hath been made,
and His praise glorified.*

Baha'i Prayer

Universal Responsibility

“Examine the prayers of the saints of all ages, and you have their faith, their life, their ruling motive,
their work.”

Adolphe Monod

I urge you
To trudge not through life
Leaving ugly gashes,
To tiptoe not through life
Leaving half-formed impressions,
But,
To tread gently, lovingly and purposefully,
Leaving graceful heart prints.

Unity Dow: High Court Judge, Botswana

How can the divine oneness be seen?
In beautiful forms, breathtaking wonders,
Awe-inspiring miracles?
The Tao is not obliged to present itself this way.

It is always present and always available
When speech is exhausted and mind dissolved,
It presents itself.
When clarity and purity are cultivated,
It reveals itself.
When sincerity is unconditioned, it reveals itself.

If you are willing to be lived by it, you will see it everywhere,
Even in the most ordinary things.

Lao Tzu *Hua Hu*
Ching

Like two birds of golden plumage, inseparable companions, the individual self and the immortal Self are perched on branches of the selfsame tree. The former tastes of the sweet and bitter fruits of the tree; the latter, tasting of neither, calmly observes. The individual self, deluded by forgetfulness of his identity with the divine Self, bewildered by his ego, grieves and is sad. But when he realizes the worshipful Lord as his own true self, and beholds His glory, he grieves no more. When the seer beholds the Effulgent One, the Lord, the Supreme Being, then, transcending, both good and evil, and freed from impurities, he unites himself with Him. The Lord is the one life shining forth from every creature, seeing Him present in all, the wise man is humble, puts not himself forward. His delight is in the Self, his joy is in the Self, he serves the Lord in all.

Mundaka Upanishads
Hindu Meditation

Lo, I am with you always means, that when you look for God, God is in the look of your eyes,
In the thought of looking, nearer to you than your self, There is no need to go outside.

Be melting snow.
Wash your self.

A white flower grows in the quietness.
Let your tongue become that flower.

Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Islamic Meditation*

Henri Dunant

Henri Dunant, at the age of 30 was a wealthy Swiss banker and financier. His life would probably have continued much as it had except for one fateful day, June 24, 1859, that changed everything.

Dunant had been sent by his government to talk to Napoleon III. He was to discuss a business deal between the Swiss and the French that would benefit both. But Napoleon was not in Paris; he was on the plain of Solferino about to do battle with the Austrians.

Henri Dunant tried to reach the scene before the battle began, but he was too late. His carriage came to a halt on top of a hill that overlooked the battlefield.

Suddenly trumpets blared, muskets cracked, cannons boomed. The two cavalries charged and the battle was on. Henri Dunant, as if in a box seat at the theatre, sat transfixed. He could see the dust rising, hear the screams of the injured, the dying. Dunant sat as if in a trance at the horror below him.

But the real horror was later—when he entered the small town after the battle was over. Every house, every building was filled with the mangled, the injured, the dead. Driven by pity at the suffering he saw all around him, Dunant stayed in the town for three days doing everything he could to help.

He was never the same man again. War was barbarous. The world should abolish it.

This was not the way to settle differences between nations. And most of all, there ought to be a worldwide organization to help people in times of suffering and chaos.

Henri Dunant returned to Switzerland. In the next few years he became a fanatic on the subject of peace and mercy. He began to travel all over Europe preaching his message. Eventually his business suffered in the effort and he was soon broke. But he persisted.

At the first Geneva Conference he carried on a one-man assault against war. As a result, the Conference passed the first international law against war—a movement that was to give birth eventually to both the League of Nations and the U.N.

In 1901, Dunant was awarded the first Nobel Peace prize. And though he was penniless and living in a poor house, he gave the entire prize to the worldwide movement he had founded.

Henri Dunant died in 1910 almost totally forgotten by the world. But Dunant needed no monument to mark his grave. As a symbol of the organization he had fathered, he had taken the Swiss flag, a white cross on a red background and reversed it: a red cross on a white background. The organization that became his everlasting monument was the Red Cross.

MUSIC

performed by Robbie Hoad

Unity in Diversity

“To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming is the only end of life.”

Robert Louis Stevenson

. . . Now is the time for the lovers of God to raise high the banner of unity . . . And to demonstrate to all that the grace of God is one. This is the time for growing, the season for joyous gathering . . . If we are not happy and joyous at this season, for what other season shall we wait and for what other time shall we look.

‘Abdu’l-Baha from the Baha’i Writing

To develop a sense of universal responsibility—of the universal dimension of our every act and of the equal right of all others to happiness and not to suffer—is to develop an attitude of mind whereby, if we see an opportunity to benefit others, we will take it in preference to merely looking after our own self-interests. But, though, off course, we care about what is beyond our scope, we accept it as part of nature and concern ourselves with doing what we can.

An important benefit of developing such a sense of universal responsibility is that it helps us become sensitive to others—not just those closest to us. We come to see the need for caring to care for those members of the human family who suffer most. We recognize the need to avoid causing divisiveness among our fellow beings. And we become aware of the overwhelming importance of contentment.

The Dalai Lama Buddhist sentiment

There is a time for everything,
And a season for every activity under heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die,
A time to plant and a time to uproot,
A time to kill and a time to heal,
A time to tear down and a time to build,
A time to weep and a time to laugh,
A time to mourn and a time to dance,

A time to scatter stones and
A time to gather them,
A time to embrace and a time to refrain,
A time to search and a time to give up,
A time to keep and a time to throw away,
A time to tear and a time to mend,
A time to be silent and a time to speak,
A time to love and a time to hate,
A time for war and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3 *Chrsitian Bible*

Look to this day,
For it is life,
The very life of life.
In its brief course, lies all
The realities and verities of
Existence,
The bliss of growth,
The splendour of action,
The glory of power;
For yesterday is but a dream
Of happiness,
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well therefore, to this day.

Sanskrit Proverb

So intensely hath the glory of Divine Unity penetrated souls and hearts that all are now bound one to another with heavenly ties, and all are even as a single heart, a single soul. . . reflections of the spirit and impressions of the Divine are now mirrored clear and sharp in the deep heart's core. I beg of God to strengthen these spiritual bonds . . . that they may strive with all their might until universal fellowship, close and warm, and unalloyed love, and spiritual relationships, will connect all the hearts in the world. Then will all humankind, because of this fresh and dazzling bounty, be gathered in a single homeland. Then will conflict and dissension vanish from the face of the earth, then will mankind be cradled in love for the beauty of the All-Glorious. Discord will change to accord, dissension to unison. The roots of malevolence will be torn out, the basis of aggression destroyed. The bright rays of union will obliterate the darkness of limitations, and the splendours of heaven will make the human heart to be even as a mine veined richly with the love of God.

. . . This is the hour when ye must associate with all the earth's peoples in extreme kindness and love, and be to them the signs and tokens of God's great mercy. Ye must become the very soul of the world, the living spirit in the body of the children of men. In this wondrous Age, at this time . . . the Word of God hath infused such awesome power into the inmost essence of humankind that He hath stripped men's human qualities of all effect, and hath, with His all-conquering might, unified the peoples in a vast sea of oneness.

Now is the time for the lovers of God to raise high the banners of unity, to intone, in the assemblages of the world, the verses of friendship and love and to demonstrate to all that the grace of God is one.

In every dispensation, there hath been the commandment of fellowship and love, . . . praised be God, the commandments of God are not delimited, not restricted to any one group of people, rather have all the friends been commanded to show forth fellowship and love, consideration and generosity and loving-kindness to every community on earth. . . . He hath guided all the peoples of the earth to oneness. . . He hath lit man's world. and made this earth of dust to send forth streams of light.

From the Baha'i Writings

MUSICAL FINALE

performed by Alain Valodoze