

Soul Food

A Gateway to Happiness



April 2015

Gateway to Happiness. This program explores the principle that true happiness for the individual and humanity comes from following the paths of justice, kindness and concern for others as expressed in the Divine Teachings.

April 2015

Program:



01. *Prayer*
02. *Thich Nhat Hanh*
03. *'Abdu'l-Bahá*
04. *Denise Rowley*
05. *Christian Writings*
06. *Christian D. Larson*
07. *Dalai Lama*



08. *Christian Writings*
09. *Bahá'í Writings*
10. *The Buddha*
11. *Mohandas Gandhi*
12. *Sir Laurens van der Post*
13. *Ibn Arabi*



14. *'Abdu'l-Bahá*
15. *Anonymous*
16. *Sharon Salzberg*
17. *Hafiz*
18. *Lawrence G. Lovasik*
19. *'Abdu'l-Bahá*



*Joy gives us wings!
In times of joy our strength is more vital,
our intelligence keener, and our understanding less clouded.
We seem better able to cope with the world and to find
our sphere of usefulness.
Ábdu'l-Bahá*



- 01 O God, refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart.
Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand.
Thou art My Guide and My Refuge. I will no longer be
sorrowful and grieved, I will be a happy and joyful being.
O God, I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let
trouble harass me.
I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life.
O God, Thou are more friend to me than I am to myself.
I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord.
~ Ábdu'l-Bahá

*Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come,
whispering 'it will be happier'...
Alfred Tennyson*

02. The source of love is deep in us and we can help others realize a lot of happiness.
One word, one action, one thought can reduce another person's suffering and bring that person joy.
~Thich Nhat Hanh

03. Progress is of two kinds, material and spiritual. The former is attained through observation of the surrounding existence and constitutes the foundation of civilization. Spiritual progress is through the breaths of the Holy Spirit and is the awakening of the conscious soul of man to perceive the reality of divinity. Material progress insures the happiness of the human world. Spiritual progress insures the happiness and eternal continuance of the soul.

The prophets of God have founded the laws of divine civilization. They have been the root and fundamental source of all knowledge. They have established the principles of human brotherhood or fraternity which is of various kinds, such as the fraternity of family, of race, of nation and of ethical motives. These forms of fraternity, these bonds of brotherhood are merely temporal and transient in association. They do not insure harmony and are usually productive of disagreement. They do not prevent warfare and strife; on the contrary they are selfish, restricted and fruitful causes of enmity and hatred among mankind.

The spiritual brotherhood which is enkindled and established through the breaths of the Holy Spirit unites nations and removes the cause of warfare and strife. It transforms mankind into one great family and establishes the foundations of the oneness of humanity. It promulgates the spirit of international agreement and insures Universal Peace.

Therefore we must investigate the foundation reality of this heavenly fraternity. We must forsake all imitations and promote the reality of the divine teachings. In accordance with these principles and actions and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, both material and spiritual happiness shall become realized.

Until all nations and peoples become united by the bonds of the Holy Spirit in this real fraternity, until national and international prejudices are effaced in the reality of this spiritual brotherhood, true progress, prosperity and lasting happiness will not be attained by man. This is the century of new and universal nationhood. Sciences have advanced, industries have progressed, politics have been reformed, liberty has been proclaimed, justice is awakening.

~Abd'ul-Bahá

Let us dance in the sun, wearing wild flowers in our hair...
Susan Polis Schutz

04. **Sensing your Spirit**

The Soul's presence is often glimpsed in the abundant ordinary moments of life.

Seeing the world through the eyes of a child.

Witnessing the dignity of a suffering friend.

Unexpected graciousness from someone.

Being forgiven.

Being able to forgive.

Hope in the face of hopelessness.

Courage in the face of fear.

Kindness in the face of cruelty.

Feeling the spirit of the place.

Celebrate these moments.

~ Denise Rowley

05. My beloved speaks and says to me:
"Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away;
for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.
The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise my love, my fair one and come away".
~Song of Songs 2:10-13

***Take time to be friendly – It is the road to happiness.
Old English***

06. Promise yourself
to be so strong that nothing
can disturb your peace of mind.
To talk health, happiness, and prosperity
to every person you meet.
- To make all your friends feel
that there is something in them.
To look at the sunny side of everything
and make your optimism come true.
- To think only the best, to work only for the best,
and to expect only the best.
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others
as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past
and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
To wear a cheerful countenance at all times
and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself
that you have no time to criticize others.
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear,
and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

To think well of yourself and to proclaim this fact to the world,
not in loud words but great deeds.
To live in faith that the whole world is on your side
so long as you are true to the best that is in you.
~ Christian D. Larson, Your Forces and How to Use Them

07. We begin from the recognition that all beings cherish happiness and do not want suffering. It then becomes both morally wrong and pragmatically unwise to pursue only one's own happiness oblivious to the feelings and aspirations of all others who surround us as members of the same human family. The wiser course is to think of others when pursuing our own happiness.
~Dalai Lama

***Should prosperity befall thee, rejoice not, and should
abasement come upon thee, grieve not, for both shall
pass away and be no more.
Bahá'u'lláh***



- o8. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
Instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.
Isaiah 55 10-13 – Christian Writings

09. **The Garden of Ridvan**

The Festival of Ridvan (April 21-May 2), termed by Bahá'u'lláh the “Most Great Festival” and the “King of Festivals” provides the occasion for the holiest days of the Bahá'í year. In 1863 Bahá'u'llah proclaimed His mission – in a garden of Baghdad, called by Baha'is “The Garden of Ridvan” (Paradise). This period signals the commencement of what has come to be recognised as the holiest and most significant of all Baha'i festivals.

During the twelve days that Bahá'u'lláh remained in the Garden of Ridvan, great numbers came from all over Baghdad to pay their respects and to say goodbye to Him – for He was about to be exiled again. A Bahá'í witness of that historic time has left to posterity the following vivid description of the joyous atmosphere of that historic time:

'Every day ere the hour of dawn, the gardeners would pick the roses which lined the four avenues of the garden, and would pile them in the center of the floor of His blessed tent. So great would be the heap that when His companions gathered to drink their morning tea in His presence, they would be unable to see each other across it. All these roses Bahá'u'lláh would, with His own hands, entrust to those whom he dismissed from his presence every morning to be delivered, on His behalf, to His Arab and Persian friends in the city...'

~Bahá'í Writings

We aspire to...act with the eyes and heart of compassion...

We know the happiness of others in our own happiness...

We know that every look, every action, and every smile can bring happiness to others.

Thich Nhat Hanh

10. Everything has mind in the lead, has mind in the forefront,
is made by mind. If one speaks or acts with a corrupt mind,
misery will follow, as the wheel of a cart follows the foot of an ox.
Everything has mind in the lead, has mind in the forefront,
Is made by mind. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness
will follow, like a shadow that never leaves.
~ The Buddha from the Dhammapada
11. To think that human nature cannot improve is a flawed conclusion.
Ghandi writes:
We do see men constantly becoming better under effort and discipline.
There is no occasion for limiting the capacity for improvement. Life to me
would lose all its interest if I felt that I could not attain perfect love on
earth. After all, what matters, is that our capacity for loving ever expands...
I have no message to give except this: that there is no deliverance for any
people on this earth or for all the people of this earth except through truth
and non-violence in every walk of life without any exceptions.
I claim to be no more than an average person with less than average ability.
I have not the shadow of a doubt that anyone can achieve what I have, if
that person would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and
faith.
~ Mohandas Gandhi

***If you want others to be happy, practice compassion.
If you want to be happy, practice compassion.
Dalai Lama***

12. The Bushmen in the Kalahari Desert talk about two “hungers.”
There is the Great Hunger and there is the Little Hunger.
The Little Hunger wants food for the belly;
but the Great Hunger, the greatest hunger of all, is the hunger
for meaning...
There’s ultimately only one thing that makes human beings deeply
and profoundly bitter, and that is to have thrust upon them a life
without meaning.....
- There is nothing wrong in searching for happiness...
But of far more comfort to the soul....
is something greater than happiness or unhappiness and that is meaning.
Because meaning transfigures all.....
Once what you are doing has for you meaning, it is irrelevant
whether you’re happy or unhappy. You are content – you are
not alone in your Spirit – you belong.
~Sir Laurens van der Post

13. **Whatever way love’s camel takes.....**
My heart has become capable of every form:
It is a pasture of gazelles and a monastery for Christian monks,
And a temple for idols,
And the pilgrim’s Ka’ba,
And the tablets of the Torah,
And the book of the Koran.
I follow the religion of love:
Whatever way love’s camel takes
That is my religion, my Faith.
~Ibn Arabi

*Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute
with love, grace, and gratitude.
Denis Waitley*



- 14.. Happy are the wise that have recognized the straight path of God and turned unto His Kingdom; happy are the glad and sincere, the lamps of whose hearts burn with the knowledge of the All-Merciful and are protected by self-abnegation from the rough winds of tests and sorrows; happy are the brave whose hearts the power of the oppressor cannot daunt; happy are the clear-sighted that have learned to distinguish the transitory from the eternal, that have turned their faces to the Imperishable and are named among the Immortals in the realm of power and glory.....
~Ábdu'l-Bahá

15. **Helping Hands**

A mother wishing to encourage her son's progress at the piano, bought tickets to a performance by the great Polish pianist Ignace Paderewski. When the evening arrived, they found their seats near the front of the concert hall and eyed the majestic Steinway waiting on the stage. Soon the mother found a friend to talk to, and the boy slipped away. At eight o'clock, the lights in the auditorium began to dim, the spotlights came on, and only then did they notice the boy – up on the piano bench,

innocently picking out "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." His mother gasped in shock and embarrassment but, before she could retrieve her son, the master himself appeared on the stage and quickly moved to the keyboard. He whispered gently to the boy, "Don't quit, keep playing." Leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in the bass part. Soon his right arm reached around the other side and improvised a delightful obbligato. Together, the old master and the young novice held the crowd mesmerized with their blended and beautiful music.

In all our lives, we receive helping hands - some we notice, some we don't. Equally we ourselves have countless opportunities to provide helping hands – sometimes we would like our assistance to be noticed, sometimes we don't. Little of what we all achieve is without learning from others and without support from others, and what we receive we should hand out.
Anonymous

***The will of God will never take you where the
grace of God cannot sustain you.
Billy Graham***

16. It doesn't matter how long we may have been stuck in a sense of our limitations. If we go into a darkened room and turn on the light, it doesn't matter if the room has been dark for a day, or a week, or ten thousand years - we turn on the light and it is illumined. Once we contact our capacity for love and happiness....the light has been turned on.
Sharon Salzberg

17. Disguise yourself in a thousand ways: I will still know you, my Beloved.
Veil yourself with any enchantment: I will still feel you, most precious
Presence, near and known.

In the springing of cypresses, in the shining surfaces of lakes, in the tumult
of fountains, in clouds that roll, in meadows laced in colour: I will greet you.

O Beloved Presence, you who glow more brightly than all the stars
combined, I see your face even in the plants that climb, in grapes that
cluster, in dawn making the mountains glow red, in the vast arch of the
sky.

You make the whole world glad. You make every heart great. You breathe
the world.

~Hafiz

***Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without
getting a few drops on yourself***
Ralph Waldo Emerson

18. Try to make at least one person happy every day. If you cannot do a kind
deed, speak a kind word. If you cannot speak a kind word, think a kind
thought. Count up, if you can, the treasure of happiness that you would
dispense in a week, in a year, in a lifetime!
Lawrence G. Lovasik

19. The advent of the prophets and the revelation of the Holy Books is intended to create love between souls and friendship between the inhabitants of the earth. Real love is impossible unless one turns his face towards God and be attracted to His Beauty ... for though there be many bodies, the spirit of the faith is one and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is universal. There is one Light but many lamps; there is one Wine but the glasses differ. So thou shouldst love with all thy heart and soul...and associate with them in utmost affection in order that thou mayest realize divine happiness and behold the outpourings of mercy.
~Ábdu'l-Bahá

All the prophets of God proclaim the same faith.
Bahá'u'lláh



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Please join us for refreshments

Children's Classes in the Neighbourhood

Regular children's classes are held in communities around Australia and aim to nurture the hearts and minds of children with an emphasis on helping them to reflect on, and apply, inner gifts and spiritual principles - such as love, unity and justice - to their own lives and the lives of others. Based on the teachings of Baha'u'llah, the Founder of the Baha'i Faith, the classes seek to inspire in children a love of God and His Messengers, and of humanity in all its diversity. Classes include short lessons, story-telling, art projects, games, as well as prayer and memorization of quotes from Sacred Texts to engage the whole child. Baha'i children's classes are open to all children, subject to parental approval. All teachers are certified under the Baha'i Child Protection Policy, which includes a mandatory police check. For inquiries or more information please call Shohreh on 0419 585 453.

"Children are even as a branch that is fresh and green; they will grow up in whatever way you train them. Take the utmost care to give them high ideals and goals, so that once they come of age, they will cast their beams like brilliant candles on the world..."

-- from the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith

Junior Youth Groups

The junior youth spiritual empowerment program is open to young people aged between 11 and 14, and assists them to navigate through a crucial stage in their lives. Those in their early adolescent years possess altruism, a sense of justice, eagerness to learn about the universe, and a desire to contribute to the construction of a better world. Young people's spiritual capacity, the basis for their own happiness and sense of well-being, is a powerful force for social change. The program helps them form a strong moral identity and empowers them to contribute to the well-being of their communities and the world at large. By developing their spiritual qualities (virtues), their intellectual capabilities and their capacities for service to society, the participants come to see that they can become agents of positive change in the world. The program adopts a participatory mode of learning where the facilitator (animator) and participants learn from each other. Groups of participants engage in activities such as artistic expression, discussion, drama, cooperative games, study of literature, story telling and acts of community service. The junior youth program explores themes from a Baha'i perspective, but is not a formal religious education program. Junior youth groups meet on a regular basis, is open to all, subject to parental approval, and there is no written homework. All program facilitators are certified under the Baha'i Child Protection Policy, which includes a mandatory police check. Parents are welcome to meet with an animator to learn more about the program.

For enquiries or more information, please call James Pepperell ☎ 0404352042 or email him james.pepperell@gmail.com

Study Circles

The Bahá'í Community is offering a series of life-changing circles of study. The purpose of these study circles is to provide participants with the knowledge, spiritual insights and skills to enable them to contribute to the betterment of society, starting with their own neighbourhood. This is done through systematic study of a sequence of courses based on the Bahá'í Writings using the courses of the Ruhi Institute. The first in the sequence of seven books is called Reflections on the Life of the Spirit. It examines spiritual matters such as prayer, meditation, life and death and the development of the soul. Study circles are held all around Australia in an uplifting environment conducive to the spiritual empowerment of individuals, who come to see themselves as active agents of their own learning. The role of the study circle facilitator is not to impart knowledge, but to assist discussion. Study circles feature participatory learning, involving discussion with others, the use of the arts and are open to all. You are invited to take inspiration from the Bahá'í teachings, benefitting from whatever gems of wisdom and knowledge will help you to address the challenges you face. For inquiries or more information please email Shirin at shirin@iinet.net.au

Soul Food

Soul Food is an open community devotional event hosted at the Bahá'í Centre of Learning in Hobart on the first Sunday of each month. It provides an occasion to be inspired and reflect on uplifting themes. Our programs feature live music, audio-visual pieces, and readings from various authors, sources and Faiths - indigenous, ancient and modern- from all over the world.

Soul Food was initiated by the Bahá'í community in Adelaide and now occurs in places around Australia and as far afield as Botswana, California and Kansas. It is also proudly supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission in Victoria, Australia. Original programs are available for free download from www.soulfood.com.au/tas/

Venue: Bahá'í Centre of Learning, Hobart

Time: 3.00pm – 4pm

May we invite you to join us:

for the next program:

“The Spiritual Home”

Sunday May 3rd 3pm

Dates for 2015

June	7 th	-	Trustees of Earth
July	5 th	-	Sweet Scents of Friendship
August	2 nd	-	Youth: Bridge to the Future
September	6 th	-	The Light of Universal Peace
October	4 th	-	The Inner Balance – Spiritual Health
November	1 st	-	Children -Tender plants in the garden of life
December	6 th	-	Reflections

All Soul Food programs are available for free download from
www.tasbcl.com.au

The Bahá'í Faith

You can find out more about the Bahá'ís and their world embracing vision at
www.bahai.org.au, or feel free to call 03 6234 7654 for more information.

