

Soul Food

The Sacred Earth



June 2020

The Sacred Earth

This month's program commemorates World Environment Day on June 5th. It will explore our physical and spiritual relationship with our environment, and how these elements work hand in hand.

Program



01. *Prayer*
02. *Bahá'í Writings*
03. *Words of Chief Sealath*
04. *Qur'an*
05. *Christian Writings*
06. *Bahá'í Writings*



07. *William Wordsworth*
08. *John Burroughs*
09. *Saving an Ancestral Homeland*
10. *Uvavnuk Iglulik*
11. *Sobonfu Somé*
12. *Baha'i Writings*



13. *Rudyard Kipling*
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Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

Chief Seattle, 1855



1. O Thou kind Lord! These are Thy servants who have gathered in this meeting, have turned unto Thy kingdom and are in need of Thy bestowal and blessing. O Thou God! Manifest and make evident the signs of Thy oneness which have been deposited in all the realities of life. Reveal and unfold the virtues which Thou hast made latent and concealed in these human realities.

O God! We are as plants, and Thy bounty is as the rain; refresh and cause these plants to grow through Thy bestowal. We are Thy servants; free us from the fetters of material existence. We are ignorant; make us wise. We are dead; make us alive. We are material; endow us with spirit. We are deprived; make us the intimates of Thy mysteries. We are needy; enrich and bless us from Thy boundless treasury. O God! Resuscitate us; give us sight; give us hearing; familiarize us with the mysteries of life, so that the secrets of Thy kingdom may become revealed to us in this world of existence and we may confess Thy oneness. Every bestowal emanates from Thee; every benediction is Thine.

Thou art mighty. Thou art powerful. Thou art the Giver, and Thou art the Ever-Bounteous.

~Abdu'l-Bahá Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers, p. 110

02. 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 nothingness, 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.
~ Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings No 26

***To see the world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wild flower,
hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour.
William Blake***

03. **Sacred Earth**
Teach your children what we have taught our children; that the Earth is our Mother. Whatever befalls the Earth, befalls the children of the Earth God is the God of all people... And what is man without the beasts...? All things are connected. This we know. The Earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the Earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected.
~ Words of Chief Sealth of the Suquamish
04. It is God who created the stars for you, so that they may guide you in the darkness, both on land and at sea. It is God who created you from one being, and provided you with homes where you can rest. It is God who sends rain from the sky, bringing forth buds and green leaves on every plant.
~Qur'an: 6:95-99

***If the soul could have known God without the world,
the world would never have been created.***

Meister Eckhart

- o5. The heavens declare God's glory
And the magnificence of what made them.
Each new dawn is a miracle;
Each new sky fills with beauty.

Their testimony speaks to the whole world
And reaches to the end of the earth.

In them is a path for the sun,
Who steps forth handsome as a bridegroom
And rejoices like an athlete as he runs.

He starts at one end of the heavens
And circles to the other end,
And nothing can hide from his heat.

~Psalm 19: 1-6

- o6. Every time I lift up mine eyes unto Thy heaven, I call to mind Thy
highness and Thy loftiness and Thine incomparable glory and greatness;
and every time I turn my gaze to Thine earth, I am made to recognize
the evidences of Thy power and the tokens of Thy bounty. And when I
behold the sea I find that it speaketh to me of thy majesty, and of the
potency of Thy might, and of Thy sovereignty and Thy grandeur and at
whatever time I contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the
ensigns of Thy victory and the standards of Thine Omnipotence.

~Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings No 26

***Earth's crammed with heaven,
and every common bush afire with God.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning***



07. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

~William Wordsworth, Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey

- o8. Nature-love as Emerson knew it, and as Wordsworth knew it, and as any of the choicer spirits of our time have known it, has distinctly a religious value. It does not come to a man or a woman who is wholly absorbed in selfish or worldly or material ends. Except ye become in a measure as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of Nature – as Audubon entered it, as Thoreau entered it, as Bryant and Amiel entered it, and as all those enter it who make it resource in their lives and an instrument of their culture. The forms and creeds of religion change, but the sentiment of religion – the wonder and reverence and love we feel in the presence of the inscrutable universe – persist..... If we do not go to church as much as did our fathers, we go to the woods much more, and are much more inclined to make a temple of them than they were.
~John Burroughs (1837 – 1921)

***He who sees the infinite
in all things, sees God.
William Blake***

9. **Saving an Ancestral Homeland**
(Xeni Gwet'in is pronounced "Honey-wuh-heen")
Each year the Goldman Environmental Foundation offers prizes to environmental heroes from around the world for their role in defending the earth, sometimes at great personal risk.
In 2015 Marilyn Baptiste, a former chief of the Xeni Gwet'in First Nation in Canada, led her community in defeating one of the largest proposed gold and copper mines in British Columbia. The mine would have destroyed Fish Lake, a source of spiritual identity and livelihood for the Xeni Gwet'in, who for generations have been steadfast protectors of their territory and the surrounding pristine environment of forests, lakes, streams and diverse wildlife such as bighorn sheep, grizzly bears, wild salmon and rainbow trout. Their territory became of interest to a Vancouver-based mining company which was on a long quest to build a

three kilometre wide, massive open-pit mine which was regarded as a gateway project to the area and its natural resources. The mining proposal described plans to drain Fish Lake and use it for waste storage, which would destroy the adjacent Little Fish Lake, not only a source of spiritual identity, but the local people's source of food, water and medicine. The British Columbian regional government rubber-stamped the mine in January 2010, well before the federal government's environmental review began.

Marilyn Baptiste spent most of her childhood in Nemiah Valley, where she grew up with her parents and sisters. Baptiste often joined her father, then chief of the Xeni Gwet'in community, on his trips to survey the territory. When he saw people he didn't recognize, he stopped and spoke with them to make sure they understood they were on Xeni Gwet'in land and the importance of passing through with the smallest footprint possible.

Subsistence living—taking from nature's resources in a respectful, sustainable way—is a way of life for the Xeni Gwet'in, and the Baptiste household was no exception. The girls learned to dip-net for salmon and hunt moose and deer. The family used every part of the animal, especially the liver, which was set aside for Baptiste to help treat her iron deficiency. When foraging for berries, Baptiste and her sisters learned not to break off entire branches for easier picking since it would mean fewer berries—and hungrier bears—in following years.

Enriched by these experiences, Baptiste followed in her father's footsteps to fight for the community's rights. She worked her way up at the First Nations legal centre and led protests and legal challenges against the mine. The case was presented to the Environmental Assessment Agency and the Federal Government rejected the mine.

After another proposal the company began to bring heavy equipment to the site. Marilyn sprang into action and created a "one woman road block", putting a stop to a long train of vehicles occupied by men ready to work for the mine. She stood in her power, despite some threatening behaviour from the vehicle occupants.

Due to the efforts of Marilyn Baptiste and her community the District of Columbia Supreme Court issued an injunction prohibiting any further work on the mine and the Canadian Federal Government again rejected the mine on environmental grounds.

It was a critical win.

~Adapted from Goldman Foundation website and commondreams.org

10. The great sea stirs me.
The great sea sets me adrift.
It sways me like the weed
On a river-stone.

The sky's height stirs me.
The strong wind blows through my mind.
It carries me with it,
So I shake with joy.
~Uvavnuk Iglulik Eskimo shaman

We cannot own the land. We are but custodians of the land.
Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker)

11. We have five different elements: earth, water, mineral, fire and nature. The element earth is responsible for our groundedness, our sense of identity, and our ability to nurture and to support one another. Water is peace, focus, wisdom and reconciliation. Mineral helps us to remember our purpose and gives us the means to communicate and to make sense out of what others are saying. Fire is about dreaming, keeping our connection to the self and ancestors and keeping our visions alive. Nature helps us to be our true self, to go through major changes and life-threatening situations. It brings magic and laughter.
~Sobonfu Somé

12. We cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.
~ Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Writings

***When we recognise the virtues, the talent,
the beauty of Mother Earth,
something is born in us, some kind of connection,
love is born.
Thich Nhat Hanh***



13. **The Way through the Woods**
They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-dove broods,
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.
Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate,

(They fear not men in the woods,
Because they see so few.)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods.
But there is no road through the woods.
~Rudyard Kipling

14. **The Life That Nurtures**

All the brilliance of heaven,
the richness of earth.
Time flows without cease,
years pass without end.
In heaven and earth
is the life that nurtures all.
In heaven and earth
is the Truth that orders all.
For this wondrous form,
For these wondrous works
Let us praise Tenchi Kane no Kami
Let us praise Kami of heaven and earth.
~ A Shinto prayer
(Kami are the sacred powers venerated by Shinto devotees)..

***Among the parts of existence there is a wonderful connection and
interchange of forces which is the cause of life of the world.
'Abdu'l-Bahá***

15. **Oh Earth, Wait for Me**

Return me, oh sun,
to my wild destiny,
rain of the ancient wood,
bring me back to the aroma and the swords
that fall from the sky,
the solitary peace of pasture and rock,
the damp at the river-margins,
the smell of the larch tree,
the wind alive like a heart
beating in the crowded restlessness
of the towering araucaria.
Earth, give me back your pure gifts,
the towers of silence which rose
from the solemnity of their roots.
I want to go back to being what I have not been,
and learn to go back from such deeps
that amongst all natural things
I could live or not live; it does not matter
to be one stone more, the dark stone,
The pure stone which the river bears away.

~ Pablo Neruda, Selected Poems of Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)

16. Feel this earth. It is your flesh, your blood, your sinews. You are the earth, and the earth is you. Your ancestors were made from this earth, and this earth is sacred. Whatever happens, remember that.

~Towradgi Australian Aboriginal woman

If all mankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed ten thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos.

E. O. Wilson

17. Say: Nature in its essence is the embodiment of My Name, the Maker, Creator. Its manifestations are diversified by varying causes, and in this diversity there are signs for men of discernment. Nature is God's Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world. It is a dispensation of Providence ordained by the Ordainer, the All-Wise. Were anyone to affirm that it is the Will of God as manifested in the world of being, no one should question this assertion. It is endowed with a power whose reality men of learning fail to grasp. Indeed a man of insight can perceive naught therein save the effulgent splendor of Our Name, the Creator.

~Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh

18. **Wild Geese**

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees

for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body

love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain

are moving across the landscapes,

over the prairies and the deep trees,

the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,

are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,

the world offers itself to your imagination,

calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—

over and over announcing your place

in the family of things.

~Mary Oliver

***Love –Tis seen in flowers,
And in the morning's pearly dew;
In earth's green hours,
And in the heaven's eternal blue.***

John Clare

19. The care of the earth is our most ancient and most worthy and after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope.

~Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*

20. Behold! Our Mother Earth is lying here.
Behold! She gives of her fruitfulness.
Truly, her power she gives us.
Give thanks to Mother Earth who lies here.
Behold on Mother Earth the growing fields!
Behold the promise of her fruitfulness!
Truly, her power gives she us.
Give thanks to Mother Earth who lies here.
Behold on Mother Earth the spreading trees!
Behold the promise of her fruitfulness!
Truly, her power she gives us.
Give thanks to Mother Earth for the running streams;
We see the promise of her fruitfulness.
Truly, her power gives she us.
Our thanks to Mother Earth who lies here.

~Native American Writings

***Blessed is the One who has compassion on the earth.
Blessed is the One who has compassion for all creatures.
The Baruch She'amar Morning prayer***

21. It has been widely acknowledged that economic prosperity has come at a tremendous cost to our natural environment. In fact, no country has emerged as a major industrial power without a legacy of significant environmental damage, affecting the security and well-being of its own

populations and, equally significantly, those of developing nations. The growth-driven economic paradigm rooted in national interests at the expense of social and environmental variables and international well-being is under increasing scrutiny. Challenging ethical questions of resource distribution and responsibility for damages force governments to develop institutional mechanisms and implement policies that consider the prosperity and health of the global community and that of future generations. On an institutional level, a global entity with a strong scientific advisory capacity is needed to streamline reporting and decision-making processes, including the voices of non-state actors. It must coherently link environmental issues to social and economic priorities, for none of these can advance in isolation. At the educational level, curricula must seek to develop a sense of responsibility towards the natural environment as well as foster a spirit of inquiry and innovation so that the diversity of human experience can be brought to bear on the challenge of creating an environmentally sustainable development pathway.

Bahá'í International Community, *Eradicating Poverty: Moving ~Forward As One*, 2008

May you walk gently in the world. May you see its beauty all the days of your life.

Traditional Navajo blessing



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Please join us for refreshments

Soul Food

Soul Food is an open community event hosted on the first Sunday of each month and whose purpose is to inspire us to transform our lives, our neighbourhoods and our communities with actions that promote the unity and betterment of society. Set in the tranquil setting of the Baha'i Centre of Learning, it provides an occasion to be inspired and reflect on uplifting themes with our neighbours. 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, Africa. It is also proudly supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Original programs are available for free download from www.soulfood.com.au/tas/

Soul Food - First Sunday of each month.

Venue: Bahá'í Centre of Learning, Hobart

Time: 3.00pm – 4pm

Study Circles

Study Circles The Bahá'í Community is offering a series of life-changing circles of study. The purpose of Bahá'í 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 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 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. Study circles are held in an uplifting environment conducive to 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 discussions with others and the use of the arts. For inquiries or more information please email: Sandhya Keenoo sandhya.keenoo@gmail.com ■ 0448507285

Children's classes in the Neighbourhood

Regular children's classes are held in communities around Tasmania and provide moral, spiritual and virtues-based training essential in nurturing the inner capacities of children. The classes aim to build a strong moral framework which will assist children to achieve excellence in material, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of life. For inquiries or more information please call Jennifer's mobile **■0404352042**

"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, storytelling 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 Niloufar Pepperell 0412899498
email snshahzadi@gmail.com

join us for the next program

Sunday July 5th 3pm

“A Kindly and Radiant Heart”

Upcoming Dates and Titles for Soul Food 2020:

July 5 th	A Kindly and Radiant Heart
August 2nd	The Power of Words
September 6th	Unfurling the Banners of Peace
October 4th	The Ornament of Justice and Fairness
November 1st	Polishing the Gems – the education of Children
December 6th	The Joy of Giving

Please Note:

Should the current government restrictions still be in place in July our programs will be sent to all email recipients and available to download on the Hobart Baha'i Centre of Learning/Soul Food Face Book .

We miss you all very much and look forward to the time when we can again enjoy a Soul Food program at the Bahá'í Centre.

Soul Food Team:

Erica Davidson, Lyn Newitt, Val De Nadai

Our other exciting program normally held every Tuesday afternoon
12.30pm – 1.30pm in the Tranquillity Room which is a short
Devotional designed to lift up our spirits and so is called:

“Lunchtime Lift”

That we love to share this with YOU. Is also on hold until
further notice.



We extend our warmest appreciation to the performers who have so generously contributed to our program.

Our Artists this month:

Angela Bryan – Vocal

Adrian Bryan – Guitar

Jonathan Bryan - Flute



Soul Food programs are available for free download from
www.soulfood.com.au/tas

The Baha'i Faith is an independent world religion, the main principles of which are:

- The Oneness of God
- The oneness of humankind
- The independent investigation of truth
- The essential harmony between science and religion
- Equality of men and women
- Elimination of prejudice of all kind
- Universal compulsory education
- Spiritual solution to economic problems
- A universal auxiliary language
- Universal peace upheld by a world federation

Baha'is strive to put into practice, in their own lives and to the betterment of others, the spiritual and practical teachings of their Faith.

In the Baha'i Faith belief must be expressed in deeds – service to others is service to God.

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