

# Soul Food

## Family – The Foundational Bond



May 2020

## Family – The Foundational Bond

This month's program will explore the importance of families, and how unity and peace in the home can profoundly impact unity and peace outside the home.

### Program



1. *Prayer*
2. *Bahá'í Writings*
3. *Buddhist Writings*
4. *Zoroastrian Writings*
5. *Buddhist Writings*
6. *Hindu Scripture*



7. *Jewish Writings*
8. *Christian Writings*
9. *Bahá'í Writings*
10. *Muslim Writings*
11. *J.R. Miller*
12. *A Family in Afghanistan*



13. *Marge Kennedy*
14. *Mitch Albom, Tuesdays with Morrie*
15. *Bahá'í Writings*
16. *Ardelia Cotton Barton*



17. *Sobonfu Somé*
18. *Gladys Hunt*
19. *Edgar Guest*
20. *Christina Rossetti*
21. *Service of the Heart*
22. *Bahá'í Writings*



***If tolerance, respect and equity permeate family life,  
they will translate into values that shape societies,  
nations and the world.***

***Kofi Annan***



1. I beseech God to graciously make of thy home a centre for the diffusion of the light of divine guidance, for the dissemination of the Words of God and for enkindling at all times the fire of love in the hearts of His faithful servants and maidservants. Know thou of a certainty that every house wherein the anthem of praise is raised to the Realm of Glory in celebration of the Name of God is indeed a heavenly home, and one of the gardens of delight in the Paradise of God.  
~'Abdu'l-Bahá
2. According to the teachings of Baha'u'llah the family, being a human unit, must be educated according to the rules of sanctity. All the virtues must be taught the family. The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered, and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed. The rights of the son, the father, the mother—none of them must be transgressed, none of them must be arbitrary. Just as the son has certain obligations to his father, the father, likewise, has certain obligations to his son. The mother, the sister and other members of the household have their certain prerogatives. All these rights and prerogatives must be conserved, yet the unity of the family must be sustained. The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor of all. –  
~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá - *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 168.

***Family is not an important thing, it's everything."***

***Michael J. Fox***

03. A family is a place where minds come in contact with one another. If these minds love one another the home will be as beautiful as a flower garden. But if these minds get out of harmony with one another it is like a storm that plays havoc with the garden.  
~Buddha

04. The home should be a place where obedience, peace, love, generosity, humility, truth and righteousness reign. Here children should respect their parents. To such a home will come contentment, knowledge, prosperity and glory.  
~Zoroastrian Writings

***There is no doubt that it is around the family and the home  
that all the greatest virtues...  
are created, strengthened and maintained.***

***Winston Churchill***

05. The home should be a place of mutual understanding and love, of chastity and faithfulness, of reverence for the aged and respect for the young. There should be no selfishness among members of the family.  
~Buddhist Scripture

- o6. Let the son be courteous to his father, of one mind with his mother.  
Let the wife speak words that are gentle and sweet to her husband.  
Never may brother hate brother or sister hurt sister.  
United in heart and in one purpose, commune sweetly together.  
I will utter a prayer for such concord among family members as binding together the Gods, among whom is no hatred.  
Be courteous, planning and working in harness together, approach, conversing pleasantly like-minded, united.  
~Hindu Scripture.

***Honour your father and mother,  
and love your neighbour as yourself.***

***Matthew 19:19***



- o7. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place.  
For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there forever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.  
~ Jewish Writings

- o8. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.  
~ Christian Writings.

***The way you help heal the world is you start with your own family.***  
***Mother Teresa***

- o9. As to thy question concerning the husband and wife, the tie between them and the children given to them by God: Know thou, verily, the husband is one who hath sincerely turned unto God, is awakened by the Beauty of El-Baha, and chanteth the verses of Oneness in the great assemblies; the wife is a being who wisheth to be overflowing with and seeketh after the attributes of God and His names; and the tie between them is none other than the Word of God. Verily it causeth the multitudes to assemble together and the remote ones to be united. Thus the husband and wife are brought into affinity, are united and harmonized, even as though they were one person. Through their mutual union, companionship and love great results are produced in the world, both material and spiritual. The spiritual result is the appearance of divine bounties. The material result is the children who are born in the cradle of the love of God, who are nurtured by the breast of the knowledge of God and who are brought up in the bosom of the gift of God, and who are fostered in the lap of the training of God. Such children are those of whom it was said by Christ, "Verily, they are the children of the Kingdom!"  
~'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets Vol. 3, pp.605-6

10. We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents. In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the child to his weaning is a period of thirty months. At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years. He says, 'O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou has bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may work righteousness such as Thou mayst approve; and be gracious to me in my issue. Truly have I turned to Thee and truly do I bow to Thee in Islam.'
- ~Qur'an

***The family is a unit and should beseech God as one.***

***The Qur'an***

11. A true home is one of the most sacred of places. It is a sanctuary into which men flee from the world's perils and alarms. It is a resting place to which at close of day the weary retire to gather new strength for the battle and toils of tomorrow. It is the place where love learns its lessons, where life is schooled into discipline and strength, where character is moulded.
- Few things we can do in this world are so well worth doing as the making of a beautiful and happy home. He who does this builds a sanctuary for God and opens a fountain of blessing for men.
- Far more than we know, do the strength and beauty of our lives depend upon the home in which we dwell. He who goes forth in the morning from a happy, loving, prayerful home, into the world's strife, struggle, and duty, is strong, inspired for noble and victorious living. The children who are brought up in a true home go out trained and equipped for life's battles and tasks, carrying in their hearts a secret of strength which will make them brave and loyal to God, and will keep them pure in the world's severest temptations.
- ~ J.R. Miller

## 12. A FAMILY IN AFGHANISTAN

My earliest memory is of being four years old and running with my grandfather's sheep high in the mountains. Grandfather, or Zoor aba (old father) as I called him in my native language of Pashtu, was a nomadic farmer and shepherd. He was a short man, made taller by the traditional grey turban he always wore. His hazel-flecked eyes shone with a vital energy that belied his years.

Each spring he walked his flock of thickly fleeced sheep and spiral-horned cattle to the furthest reaches of the mountains in search of fresh and fertile pasture. My grandparents' home, a traditional tent made from wooden poles and embroidered cloth, went with them. Two donkeys carried the tent on their backs, along with the drums of cooking oil, sacks of rice, and the flour my grandmother needed to make naan bread.

I would watch transfixed as my grandmother spread out and kneaded sticky dough along a flat rock before baking it over the embers of an open fire. She cooked on a single metal pan which hung from chains slung over some branches balanced over the fire. I loved helping her to gather armfuls of wild nettles which she boiled to make a delicately scented, delicious soup. I don't know how she did it, but everything she created in that pan tasted of pure heaven to a constantly hungry little boy like me.

Every year, as the leaves began to turn into autumn's colours, they would head back down to lower ground, making sure to return to civilization before the harsh snows of winter descended and trapped them on the mountains' slopes. There they joined the rest of their family, their six children and assorted grandchildren, in the rambling house that was home to our entire extended family. Our house then was a very simple but lovely, single-storey stone structure perched above a clear, flowing river.

Grandfather loved his family with a fierce passion, and laughter came easily to him and my grandmother. I don't think I ever saw him angry.



I was my grandparents' shadow, so I was thrilled when , aged three, they took me with them the next time they returned to the mountains, Their youngest daughter, my auntie, Khosala ('happy') was also with us. She was fifteen and like a big sister to me.

For the next three and a half years I shared my grandparents' nomadic lifestyle, at night falling soundly asleep beneath a vast, star-filled mountain sky, safely tucked up inside the tent nestled between the pair of them.

~Extract from Gulwali Passarly. *The Lightless Sky: An Afghan Refugee Boy's Journey of Escape to a New Life*. London: Atlantic Books, 2015

***The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other's life.***

***Richard Bach***



13. In truth a family is what you make it. It is made strong, not by number of heads counted at the dinner table, but by the rituals you help family members create, by the memories you share, by the commitment of time, caring, and love you show to one another, and by the hopes for the future you have as individuals and as a unit.  
~Marge Kennedy

14. This is part of what a family is about, not just love. It's knowing that your family will be there watching out for you. Nothing else will give you that. Not money. Not fame. Not work.  
~ Mitch Albom, Tuesdays with Morrie

***If love and agreement are manifest in a single family, that family will advance, become illumined and spiritual...  
'Abdu'l-Bahá***

15. Note how easily, where unity existeth in a given family, the affairs of that family are conducted what progress the members of that family make, how they prosper in the world. Their concerns are in order, they enjoy comfort and tranquillity, they are secure, their position is assured, they come to be envied by all. Such a family but addeth to its stature and its lasting honour, as day succeedeth day...  
~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá,

16. A perfect home is heaven's door,  
It's built of loving deeds,  
no angry frown nor biting word  
will sow discordant seeds.

No selfish wish nor cruel act,  
will in this home be found.  
No thought of self will have a place,  
For each to each is bound  
By ties of love so pure indeed,  
So helpful, so serene;  
That door seems portal of high  
heav'n,  
Rich treasures there are seen.

Oh! joyous home, when built of love-  
Foundation of esteem.  
The walls are raised from happiness,  
With love the windows gleam.  
This home will stand for aye on earth  
And through eternity,  
For God and angels hold the lease—  
~Ardelia Cotton Barton

***By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is  
established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all  
precious and pleasant riches.***

**Proverbs 24:3-4**



**17. A Big Family**

The family in Africa is always extended. You would never refer to your cousin as 'cousin,' because that would be an insult.

So your cousins are your sisters and brothers. Your nieces are your children. Your uncles are your fathers. Your aunts are your mothers. Your sister's husband is your husband, and your brother's wife is your wife. Children are encouraged to call other people outside the family mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers... This concept of the big family is really helpful. I remember when I was a kid, I had the choice of a different father every day, depending on my mood. So if I wanted one of my uncles to be my father for the day, I would focus all my attention on that person and ignore the others. And the others wouldn't take it personally, because they saw it as an opportunity for me to decide what I wanted. This also allows a large number of people in the village to acknowledge the child and to see her or his spirit.

~ Sobonfu Somé, *The Spirit of Intimacy: Ancient Teachings in the Ways of Relationships*

**18. What is home?**

My favourite definition is "a safe place," a place where one is free from attack, a place where one experiences secure relationships and affirmation. It's a place where people share and understand each other. Its relationships are nurturing. The people in it do not need to be perfect; instead, they need to be honest, loving, supportive, recognizing a common humanity that makes all of us vulnerable.

~Gladys Hunt

***Families are the compass that guides us. They are the inspiration to reach great heights, and our comfort when we occasionally falter.***

***Brad Henry***

19.

**Only A Dad**

Only a dad, with a tired face,  
Coming home from the daily race,  
Bringing little of gold or fame,  
To show how well he has played the game,  
But glad in his heart that his own rejoice  
To see him come, and to hear his voice.

Only a dad, with a brood of four,  
One of ten million men or more.  
Plodding along in the daily strife,  
Bearing the whips and the scorns of life,  
With never a whimper of pain or hate,  
For the sake of those who at home await.

Only a dad, neither rich nor proud,  
Merely one of the surging crowd  
Toiling, striving from day to day,  
Facing whatever may come his way,  
Silent, whenever the harsh condemn,  
And bearing it all for the love of them.

Only a dad, but he gives his all  
To smooth the way for his children small,  
Doing, with courage stern and grim,  
The deeds that his father did for him.  
This is the line that for him I pen,  
Only a dad, but the best of men.  
~Edgar Guest

20. Sonnets are full of love, and this my tome  
Has many sonnets: so here now shall be  
One sonnet more, a love sonnet, from me  
To her whose heart is my heart's quiet home,  
To my first Love, my Mother, on whose knee  
I learnt love-lore that is not troublesome;  
Whose service is my special dignity,  
And she my lodestar while I go and come  
And so because you love me, and because  
I love you, Mother, I have woven a wreath  
Of rhymes wherewith to crown your honoured name:  
In you not fourscore years can dim the flame  
Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the laws  
Of time and change and mortal life and death.  
~Christina Rossetti

***Where we love, is home.  
Home that our feet may leave,  
but not our hearts.  
Oliver Wendell Holmes***

- 21 Almighty Father, we humbly pray for your blessing upon this home. Accept our offering of thanksgiving for the promise of security and happiness which it represents, and fortify our resolve to make it, now and always, a temple dedicated to you. Let it be filled with the beauty of holiness and the warmth of love, May the guest and stranger find within it welcome and friendship. So may it ever merit the praise: 'How lowly are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel.'  
~Service of the Heart

***The upbuilding of a home, the bringing of joy and comfort into human hearts are truly glories of mankind.***

***'Abdu'l-Bahá***

22. In this glorious Cause the life of a married couple should resemble the life of the angels in heaven — a life full of joy and spiritual delight, a life of unity and concord, a friendship both mental and physical. The home should be orderly and well organized. Their ideas and thoughts should be like the rays of the sun of truth and the radiance of the brilliant stars in the heavens. Even as two birds should warble melodies upon the branches of the tree of fellowship and harmony. They should always be elated with joy and gladness and be a source of happiness to the hearts of others. They should set an example to their fellowmen, manifest a true and sincere love towards each other and educate their children in such a manner as to blazon the fame and glory of their family.

~ `Abdu'l-Bahá

***The love that is kindled in the home expands itself over the whole human race.***

***Asoka***



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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/](http://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](mailto: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, 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 Niloufar Pepperell 0412899498  
email [snshahzadi@gmail.com](mailto:snshahzadi@gmail.com)

**join us** for the next program

**Sunday June 7<sup>th</sup> 3pm**

**“The Sacred Earth”**

**Upcoming Dates and Titles for Soul Food 2020:**

June 7th ,	The Sacred Earth
July 5th ,	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 June 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](http://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](http://www.bahai.org.au) or feel free to call 03 6234 7654 for more information