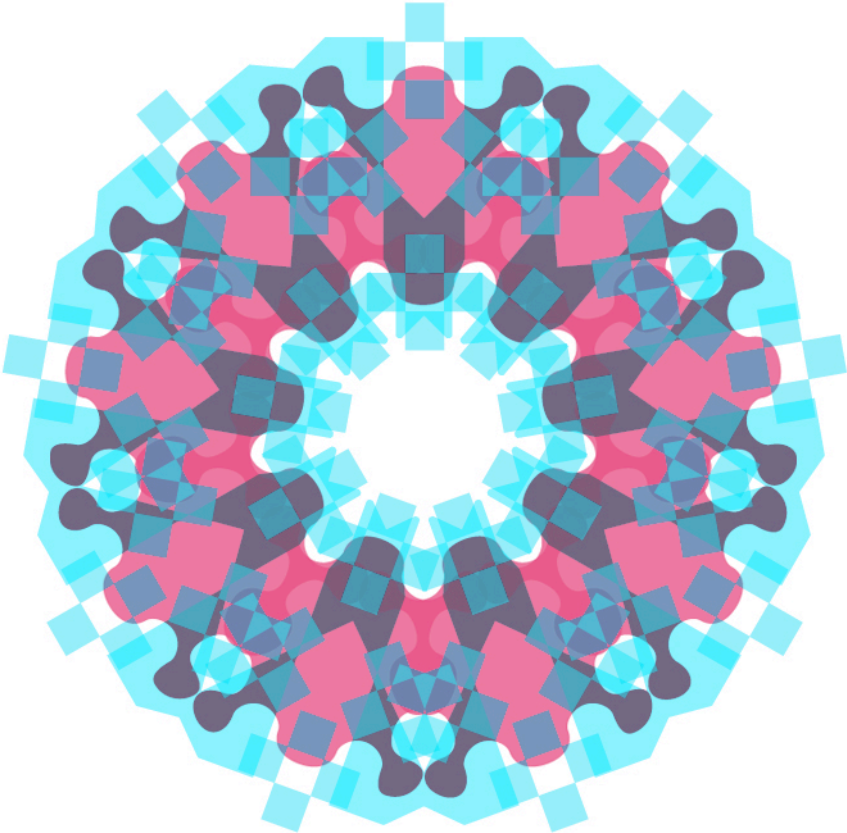


# Soul Food

Restoring the Balance



# Restoring the Balance

This month's program will explore how our spiritual wellbeing affects the equilibrium of our health and physical wellbeing.

## Program

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**It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.**

**– Mahatma Gandhi**

01. The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and to have correctly diagnosed its ailments. No man, however acute his perception, can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician in this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy? In like manner, every time the Prophets of God have illumined the world with the resplendent radiance of the Day Star of Divine knowledge, they have invariably summoned its peoples to embrace the light of God through such means as best befitted the exigencies of the age in which they appeared. They were thus able to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and to shed upon the world the glory of their own knowledge. It is towards the inmost essence of these Prophets, therefore, that the eye of every man of discernment must be directed, inasmuch as their one and only purpose hath always been to guide the erring, and give peace to the afflicted. These are not days of prosperity and triumph. The whole of mankind is in the grip of manifold ills. Strive, therefore, to save its life through the wholesome medicine, which the almighty hand of the unerring Physician hath prepared.

*- Bahá'u'lláh, from the Baha'i writings*

02. Every human being is the author of his own health and disease.

To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.

The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly.

– *Buddhist writings*

03. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The Lord of the Worlds,

Who hath created me, and guideth me,

Who giveth me food and drink;

And when I am sick, he healeth me,

And who will cause me to die and again quicken me,

And who, I hope, will forgive me my sins in the day of reckoning.

My Lord! bestow on me wisdom and join me to the just,

And give me a good name among posterity,

And make me one of the heirs of the garden of delight,

And forgive my father, for he was one of the erring,

And put me not to shame on the day when mankind shall be raised up,

The day when neither wealth nor children shall avail,

Save to him who shall come to God with a sound heart:

When Paradise shall be brought near the pious,

And Hell shall lay open for those who have gone astray.

And it shall be said to them, 'Where are they whom ye worshipped

Beside God? Can they harm you or help themselves?

– *Islamic Scripture*

04. Healing through purely spiritual forces is undoubtedly as inadequate as that which materialist physicians and thinkers vainly seek to obtain by resorting entirely to mechanical devices and methods. The best result can be obtained by combining the two processes: spiritual and physical.

– *Shoghi Effendi, from the Baha'i writings*

**Health is a large word. It embraces not the body only,  
but the mind and spirit as well; and not today's pain or  
pleasure alone, but the whole being and outlook of a man.**

– *James H. West*

05. O thou distinguished physician!... Praise be to God that thou hast two powers: one to undertake physical healing and the other spiritual healing. Matters related to man's spirit have a great effect on his bodily condition. For instance, thou shouldst impart gladness to thy patient, give him comfort and joy, and bring him to ecstasy and exultation. How often hath it occurred that this hath caused early recovery. Therefore, treat thou the sick with both powers. Spiritual feelings have a surprising effect on healing nervous ailments.

– *'Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Baha'i writings*

06. Dr. Dean Ornish, in his book, "Love and Survival," (Harper Books, 1998) addresses the importance of friendship in maintaining good health, which, he laments, both physicians and the media want to discount. He is best known for his amazing medical breakthrough in not only halting but actually reversing cardiopathology in heart attack victims:

Love and intimacy are at the root of what makes us sick and what makes us well, what cause sadness and what brings happiness, what makes us suffer and what leads to healing. If a new drug had the same impact, virtually every doctor in the country would be recommending it for their patients. It would be mal-practice not to prescribe it -- yet, with few exceptions, we doctors do not learn much about the healing power of love, intimacy, and transformation in our medical training.

– *Dr Dean Ornish*

**Our body is a machine for living. It is organized for that, it is its nature. Let life go on in it unhindered and let it defend itself, it will do more than if you paralyze it by encumbering it with remedies.**

**– Leo Tolstoy**

**Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon.**

**– Doug Larson**

07. The science of medicine is still in a condition of infancy; it has not reached maturity. But when it has reached this point, cures will be performed by things which are not repulsive to the smell and taste of man — that is to say, by aliments, fruits and vegetables which are agreeable to the taste and have an agreeable smell. For the provoking cause of disease — that is to say, the cause of the entrance of disease into the human body — is either a physical one or is the effect of excitement of the nerves.

But the principal causes of disease are physical, for the human body is composed of numerous elements, but in the measure of an especial equilibrium. As long as this equilibrium is maintained, man is preserved from disease; but if this essential balance, which is the pivot of the constitution, is disturbed, the constitution is disordered, and disease will supervene.

For instance, there is a decrease in one of the constituent ingredients of the body of man, and in another there is an increase; so the proportion of the equilibrium is disturbed, and disease occurs...when by remedies and treatments the equilibrium is reestablished, the disease is banished. So if the sugar constituent increases, the health is impaired; and when the doctor forbids sweet and starchy foods, the sugar constituent diminishes, the equilibrium is reestablished, and the disease is driven off. Now the readjustment of these constituents of the human body is obtained by two means — either by medicines or by aliments; and when the constitution has recovered its equilibrium, disease is banished. All the elements that are combined in man exist also in vegetables; therefore, if one of the constituents which compose the body of man diminishes, and he partakes of foods in which there is much of that diminished constituent, then the equilibrium will be established, and a cure will be obtained. So long as the aim is the readjustment of the constituents of the body, it can be effected either by medicine or by food.

The majority of the diseases which overtake man also overtake the animal, but the animal is not cured by drugs. In the mountains, as in the wilderness, the animal's physician is the power of taste and smell. The sick animal smells the plants that grow in the wilderness; he eats those that are sweet and fragrant to his smell and taste, and is cured. The cause of his healing is this. When the sugar ingredient has become diminished in his constitution, he begins to long for sweet things; therefore, he eats an herb with a sweet taste, for nature urges and guides him; its smell and taste please him, and he eats it. The sugar ingredient in his nature will be increased, and health will be restored.

It is, therefore, evident that it is possible to cure by foods, aliments and fruits; but as today the science of medicine is imperfect, this fact is not yet fully grasped. When the science of medicine reaches perfection, treatment will be given by foods, aliments, fragrant fruits and vegetables, and by various waters, hot and cold in temperature.

– ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *from the Baha’i writings*

**Let your food be your medicine,  
and your medicine be your food.**

– *Hippocrates*

08. The best six doctors anywhere  
And no one can deny it  
Are sunshine, water, rest, and air  
Exercise and diet.  
These six will gladly you attend  
If only you are willing  
Your mind they’ll ease  
Your will they’ll mend  
And charge you not a shilling.

– *Nursery rhyme quoted by Wayne Fields, What the River Knows, 1990*

**The deviation of man from the state in which he was originally placed by nature seems to have proved to him a prolific source of disease**

**– Edward Jenner**

09. I've seen people recover physical abilities, yet never get over emotional trauma after a serious accident. I've seen other people overcome the psychological and emotional trauma of a serious illness even though they may never fully regain their physical capabilities. Which is the greater healing? Which is the better recovery? If I had the option of choosing between a mediocre life with eyesight or the life I have today, even though I am blind, I'd stay blind and keep the life I have.

*– Jim Stovall*

10. Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling five balls in the air. You name them – work, family, health, friends, and spirit – and you're keeping all of these in the air. You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls – family, health, friends, and spirit are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life.

*– Brian Dyson, CEO of Coca Cola Enterprises from 1959-1994*

11. We're fed more than food when we eat with others. Instead of taking a solitary trip through life, when you dine with family you learn to share and care for others, as well as practice social skills, tradition, and ritual. Talk begins to flow, feelings are expressed, and a sense of well-being takes over.

*– Cunningham, Resetting the American Table*



12. Not getting together at dinner time contributes greatly to our epidemic of childhood obesity. Indeed, with one in five American kids being overweight, and still others (one in eight) suffering from obesity, the growing girth of adolescents has become an urgent national health problem.

Limited physical activity plays a part. So does consuming large portions of high-fat food and excessively sweet sodas. Add inactivity to high-calorie meals outside of the home, and you have a recipe for obesity and all the ensuing complications of hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, and orthopedic problems. A lifetime of low self-esteem is often part of the obesity package.

The antidote: Get together regularly as a family for meals offering fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains (brown rice, oatmeal, and so on), and legumes, and increase physical activity together. If healthful eating and activity do not become a family affair, the obesity epidemic will continue.

– *Richard Strauss, M.D., director of the Childhood Weight Control Program at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick, New Jersey*

**The way you think, the way you behave, the way you eat,  
can influence your life by 30 to 50 years.**

**- Deepak Chopra**

**If thou wouldst preserve a sound body, use fasting and walking;  
if a healthful soul, fasting and praying. Walking exercises the body;  
praying exercises the soul; fasting cleanses both.**

**- Francis Quarles, English Poet**

13. Meditate profoundly, that the secret of things unseen may be revealed unto you, that you may inhale the sweetness of a spiritual and imperishable fragrance, and that you may acknowledge the truth that from time immemorial even unto eternity the Almighty hath tried, and will continue to try, His servants, so that light may be distinguished from darkness, truth from falsehood, right from wrong, guidance from error, happiness from misery, and roses from thorns.

– *Bahá'u'lláh, from the Baha'i writings*

**What we have to learn, in both meditation and in life,  
is to be free of attachment to the good experiences, and free  
of aversion to the negative ones.**

**– Sogyal Rinpoche, Tibetan Buddhist writer and  
meditation master**

14. Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; And in His Law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, And whose leaf doth not wither: And in whatsoever he doeth he shall prosper.

*– Psalm 1: 1-3, from the Bible*

15. Most people think that aging is irreversible and we know that there are mechanisms even in the human machinery that allow for the reversal of aging, through correction of diet, through anti-oxidants, through removal of toxins from the body, through exercise, through yoga and breathing techniques, and through meditation.

Meditation is not a way of making your mind quiet. It's a way of entering into the quiet that's already there - buried under the 50,000 thoughts the average person thinks every day.

*– Deepak Chopra, MD, endocrinologist, Ayurvedic Medicine,  
chief of staff New England Memorial Hospital, author.*

**The best of all medicines are rest and fasting.**

**– Benjamin Franklin**

16. By fasting we are losing nothing financially; we are blessing ourselves physically; and we are gaining greater spiritual power to withstand the temptations that we meet in life; and, best of all, in giving to the poor we are practicing the very essence of our religion.

There is a spiritual strength derived from the subjecting of the physical appetite to the will of the individual. "He who reigns within himself and rules passions, desires, and fears is more than king." If there were no other virtues in fasting but gaining strength of character, that alone would be sufficient justification for its universal acceptance.

– *David McKay, 9th President of the Mormon Church*

17. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

– *Christian Scripture, New Testament, King James Bible,  
Matthew 4:23, and 5:1-10*

18. Wake up! It is time to wake up!  
You are young, strong – why do you waver,  
Why are you lazy and irresolute?  
This is not the way to wisdom.  
Be strict with speech, control your mind,  
Let not the body do evil.  
This is the way to wisdom.  
These the three roads leading to it.  
Meditation brings wisdom,  
Lack of meditation is folly.  
These are the two roads,  
One leading forward and one leading backwards.  
Choose the right one,  
The one that leads to wisdom.  
Not one tree – cut down the whole forest!  
There is danger in the forest.  
Cut down the forest of desires, O Bhikkus,  
And discover the road to liberation

– *Dhammapada, from the Buddhist writings*

19. National rivalries, hatreds and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and co-operation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

– *Bahá'u'lláh, from the Baha'i writings*

**It may be possible to incorporate laughter into daily activities,  
just as is done with other heart-healthy activities,  
such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator.**

**The recommendation for a healthy heart may one day be exercise,  
eat right and laugh a few times a day.**

***– Michael Miller, MD, F.A.C.C., Center for Preventive  
Cardiology at the University of Maryland Medical Center***



All Soul Food programs are available for free download from  
**[www.soulfood.com.au](http://www.soulfood.com.au)**

## **About Soul Food**

Soul Food is a monthly event held at the State Library of Victoria, providing an opportunity to relax in a tranquil environment and reflect on inspiring themes.

It features music, audio-visual pieces and readings from various Faiths; indigenous, ancient and modern, from all over the world. Soul Food's purpose is to inspire us to transform our lives, our neighbourhoods and communities, with actions that promote the unity and betterment of society.

Soul Food is a free community event open to all.

## **Venue**

State Library of Victoria,  
Village Roadshow Theatre  
Corner Swanston St & La Trobe St (Enter via La Trobe Street)

## **Time**

11.00am – 12.00pm

## **First Sunday of every month**

April 6th

May 4th

June 1st

July 6th

August 3rd

September 7th

October 5th

November 2nd

December 7th

## **Further Information**

For further information about Soul Food events in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania or Western Australia please call 03 9415 6007 or visit [www.soulfood.com.au](http://www.soulfood.com.au).

## **Study Circles**

The Bahá'í community offers a series of regular 'Study Circles' – as an opportunity to further explore subjects related to spiritual development. Study Circles are small, informal groups, and provide an environment in which to discuss meaningful topics with like-minded people. The first Study Circle is titled "Reflections on the Life of the Spirit", from the Ruhi Study Circle series. It is a three unit study on; Understanding the Bahá'í Writings, Prayer & Meditation, and Life & Death.

If you enjoy Soul Food then a Study Circle may also appeal to you. For more information please contact 03 9415 6007 or email [soulfoodvic@gmail.com](mailto:soulfoodvic@gmail.com).

## **The Bahá'í Community of Victoria**

Soul Food is an initiative of the Bahá'í Community of Victoria. For further information about the Bahá'í Faith please visit [www.bahai.org.au](http://www.bahai.org.au).

## **Supporters**

Soul Food is proudly supported by the Baha'i Council of South-Eastern Australia.