

Soul Food

The Light Within



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Program

01. *The Prayer Tree, Michael Leunig*
02. *Buddhist Teachings*
03. *Hinduism, Mundaka Upanishad*
04. *Bahá'u'lláh, from the Bahá'í Writings*
05. *Abu Sa'id (b. Abi'l-Khair)*
06. *Confucius*
07. *Attributed to a Rifa'i dervish*
08. *Thomas Merton, from Christian Tradition*
09. *Paulo Coelho*
10. *Francis Bacon*
11. *'Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Bahá'í Writings*
12. *Bruce Lee*
13. *Zen Buddhism*
14. *Bahá'u'lláh, from the Bahá'í Writings*
15. *Bhagavad Gita*
16. *Dalai Lama*
17. *'Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Bahá'í Writings*

The words that enlighten the soul are more precious than jewels.

– Hazrat Inayat Khan

01. The Prayer Tree

We search and we search and yet find no meaning.
The search for meaning leads to despair.
And when we are broken the heart finds its moment
To fly and to feel and to work as it will
Through the darkness and mystery and wild contradiction.
For this is its freedom, its need and its calling;
This is its magic, its strength and its knowing.
To heal and make meaning while we walk or lie dreaming;
To give birth to love within our surrender;
To mother our faith, our spirit and yearning.
While we stumble in darkness the heart makes our meaning
And offers it into our life and creation,
That we may give meaning to life and creation.
For we only give meaning; we do not find meaning.
The thing we can't find is the thing we shall give.
To make love complete and to honour creation.

– Michael Leunig

02. The Inner Light is beyond both praise and blame,

Like unto space it knows no boundaries;
Yet it is right here with us,
Ever retaining its serenity and fullness.
It is only when you seek it that you lose it.
You cannot take hold of it nor can you get rid of it;
While you can do neither, it goes on its own way.
You remain silent and it speaks;
You speak and it is silent.
The Gate of Heaven is wide open with not a single obstruction before it.

– Buddhist Teachings

03. Bright but hidden, the Self dwells in the heart.
Everything that moves, opens, and closes, lives in the Self.
He is the source of love and may be known through love but not through thought.
He is the goal of life. Attain the goal!
The shining Self dwells hidden in the heart.
Everything in the cosmos, great and small, lives in the Self.
He is the Source of life,
Truth beyond the transience of the world.
He is the goal of life. Attain the goal!

– *Hinduism, Mundaka Upanishad*

**The kingdom of inexhaustible light,
Whence is derived the radiance of the sun,
To this kingdom, transport me,
Eternal, undying.**

– *Hinduism, Rig-Veda, IX.113:7*

04. The soul is a sign of God, a heavenly gem whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel. It is the first among all created things to declare the excellence of its Creator, the first to recognize His glory, to cleave to His truth, and to bow down in adoration before Him. If it be faithful to God, it will reflect His light, and will, eventually, return unto Him.

– *Bahá'u'lláh, from the Bahá'í Writings*

05. If men wish to draw near to God, they must seek Him in the hearts of men. They should speak well of all men, whether present or absent, and if they themselves seek to be a light to guide others, then, like the sun, they must show the same face to all. To bring joy to a single heart is better than to build many shrines for worship, and to enslave one soul by kindness is worth more than the setting free of a thousand slaves. That is the true man of God, who sits in the midst of his fellowmen, and rises up, and eats and sleeps, and buys and sells, and gives and takes in the bazaars amongst other people... and yet is never, for one moment, forgetful of God.

– *Abu Sa'íd (b. Abi'l-Khair)*

06. It is only he who is completely genuine in the affairs of this world who can develop his own nature to its fullest. If he can develop his own nature to its fullest, then he can help in the development of the natures of other men. If he can help in the development of other men's natures, then he can help in the full development of the natures of all animate and inanimate beings. If he can help in the full development of all animate and inanimate beings, then he can help in the production of Nature above and Nature below. When he helps in the production and maturation of Nature above and Nature below, he likewise becomes a creative agent of the universe.

– *Confucius*

It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light.

– *Aristotle Onassis*

07. Seventy Thousand Veils separate Allah, the One Reality, from the world of matter and of sense. And every soul passes before his birth through these Seventy Thousand. The inner half of these are veils of light; the outer half, veils of darkness. For every one of the veils of light that it passes through, in this journey towards birth, the soul puts on a divine quality; and for every one of the dark veils, it puts on an earthly quality. Thus the child is born weeping, for the soul knows its separation from Allah, the One Reality.

And when the child cries in its sleep, it is because the soul remembers something of what it has lost. The passage through the veils has brought with it forgetfulness.... He is now, as it were, in prison in his body, separated by these thick curtains from Allah.

But the whole purpose of Sufism, the Way of the Dervish, is to give him an escape from this prison, an apocalypse of the Seventy Thousand Veils, a recovery of the original unity with the One, while still in the body. The body is not to be put off; it is to be refined and made spiritual— a help and not a hindrance to the spirit. It is like a metal that has to be refined by fire and transmuted. And the sheikh tells the aspirant that he has the secret of this transmutation: 'We shall throw you into the fire of Spiritual Passion,' he says, 'and you will emerge refined.'

– *Attributed to a Rifa'i dervish*

08. **Called Out Of Darkness**

The brightness of the eternal light is so great that we cannot see it, and all other lights become darkness by comparison with it. Yet to the spiritual man, all other lights contain the infinite light. He passes through them to reach it. And as he passes, he no longer hesitates, comparing one finite light with another, one empirical object with another, concept with concept. Travelling with haste, in the unerring security which transcends all objects, instructed by the Spirit Who alone can tell us the secret of our individual destiny, man begins to know God as he knows his own self. The night of faith has brought us into contact with the Object of all faith, not as an object but as a Person Who is the centre and life of our own being, at once His own Transcendent Self and the immanent source of our own identity and life.

– *Thomas Merton, from Christian Tradition*

09. **From The Manual for the Warrior of Light**

From now on—and for the next few hundred years—
the Universe is going to help warriors of light and hinder the prejudiced.
The Earth's energy needs to be renewed
New ideas need space.
Body and soul need new challenges.
The future has become the present, and every dream—
except those dreams that involve preconceived ideas—
will have a chance to be heard.
Anything of importance will remain; anything useless will disappear.
However, it is not the warrior's responsibility to judge the dreams of others,
and he does not waste time criticizing other people's decisions.

– *Paulo Coelho*

So powerful is the Light of Unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.

– *Bahá'u'lláh*

10. Certainly, virtue is like precious odours,
most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed:
for prosperity doth best discover vice;
but adversity doth best discover virtue.

– *Francis Bacon*

11. How good it is if the friends be as close as sheaves of light, if they stand together side by side in a firm unbroken line. For now have the rays of reality from the Sun of the world of existence united in adoration all the worshippers of this light; and these rays have, through infinite grace, gathered all peoples together within this wide-spreading shelter; therefore must all souls become as one soul, and all hearts as one heart. Let all be set free from the multiple identities that were born of passion and desire, and in the oneness of their love for God find a new way of life.

– *'Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Bahá'í Writings*

12. The life of perfection is the simple life — A simple life is one of plainness, in which profit is discarded, cleverness abandoned, selfishness eliminated, and desires reduced. It is the life of perfection which seems to be incomplete, and of fullness which seems to be empty. It is the life which is as bright as light, but does not dazzle. In short, it is a life of harmony, unity, contentment, tranquillity, constancy, enlightenment, peace and long life.

– *Bruce Lee*

Religion is a candle inside a multicoloured lantern. Everyone looks through a particular colour, but the candle is always there.

– *Mohammed Negulb*

13. Ryokan, a Zen master, lived the simplest kind of life in a little hut at the foot of a mountain. One evening a thief visited the hut to find there was nothing in it to steal. Ryokan returned and caught him.
“You may have come a long way to visit me,” he told the prowler,
“And you should not return empty-handed. Please take my clothes as a gift.”
The thief was bewildered. He took the clothes and slunk away.
Ryokan sat naked watching the moon.
“Poor fellow,” he mused, “I wish I could give him this beautiful moon.”

– *Zen Buddhism*

14. Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts.

– *Bahá'u'lláh, From the Bahá'í Writings*

15. When our darkness is repelled by the light of the soul, the Truth is manifested, splendid and clear, as if the Sun of Wisdom had ascended to shed Its rays at dawn... The world is overcome by such as fix their faith on Unity. The perfect Creator dwells in Unity and they in the Creator.

– *Bhagavad Gita*

Let your light shine. Shine within you so that it can shine on someone else. Let your light shine.

– *Oprah Winfrey*

16. In today's highly interdependent world, individuals and nations can no longer resolve many of their problems by themselves. We need one another. We must therefore develop a sense of universal responsibility... It is our collective and individual responsibility to protect and nurture the global family, to support its weaker members, and to preserve and tend to the environment in which we all live.

– *The Dalai Lama*

17. Know thou of a certainty that Love is the secret of God's holy Dispensation.... Love is heaven's kindly light, the Holy Spirit's eternal breath that vivifieth the human soul.... Love is the light that guideth in darkness, the living link that uniteth God with man, that assureth the progress of every illumined soul.... Love is the spirit of life unto the adorned body of mankind, the establisher of true civilization in this mortal world, and the shedder of imperishable glory upon every high-aiming race and nation.

– *'Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Bahá'í Writings*

When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a manner that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice.

– *Indian proverb*



All Soul Food programs are available for free download from
<http://www.srcf.ucam.org/bahai/soul-food>

About Soul Food

Soul Food is a monthly event providing an opportunity to unite in a tranquil environment and reflect on inspiring themes and common threads that tie us all together.

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 neighborhoods and communities, with actions that promote the unity and betterment of society.

Soul Food is a free community event open to all.

Venue

Latimer Room, Old Court
Clare College
Trinity Lane, Cambridge, CB2 1TL

Time

4pm – 5pm

Upcoming Dates

Saturday, December 14
Saturday, January 18
Saturday, February 8

Further Information

For further information about Soul Food events in Cambridge please visit <http://www.srcf.ucam.org/bahai/soul-food/> and like our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SoulFoodCambridge>.

The Bahá'í Community

Soul Food is an initiative of the Cambridge University Bahá'í Society and supported by the Bahá'í community of Cambridge. For further information about the Bahá'í Faith please visit <http://www.bahai.org.uk/>.

For books on the Bahá'í Faith and related subjects such as spiritual development, world religion, education, and more, please call 020 7584 2566 or visit the National Bahá'í Centre at 27 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD.