

SUNDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 2016

The National Spiritual Assembly warmly acknowledges the Guringai people who are the traditional custodians of this land. We pay respect to the elders of the Guringai nation, past, present and future.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia welcomes you to this service celebrating the sacredness of life and music. We particularly welcome the many singers from throughout Australia who have come to perform today as part of the 2016 Australian Bahá'í Choral Festival.

Honouring the sacredness of life is a common element among the religions of the world. In most traditions, music plays a special part in uplifting our souls and worshipping the Divine. Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, wrote:

“We, verily, have made music as a ladder for your souls, a means whereby they may be lifted up unto the realm on high.”

The Bahá'í House of Worship is a place of prayer and meditation that is open to people of all beliefs. Like all services in the House of Worship, today's program comprises singing and reading of excerpts from the sacred texts of the world's religions. No musical instruments may be used: it is a space reserved for voice alone.

For Bahá'ís, living a sacred life is vital. Elevating our thoughts daily to God and His high aspirations for us is what drives us to make “each morn be better than its eve and each morrow richer than its yesterday.” Prayer and meditation, often set to music, provides spiritual nourishment for the soul. Bahá'ís are encouraged – indeed, it is considered a religious obligation – to pray and meditate every day.

We hope you enjoy this special service from the 2016 Australian Bahá'í Choral Festival.

NOTICE OF VIDEO RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

This event will be video-recorded and photographed for publication in print and electronic media, including web-based publication. The choir will be the primary focus, but audience members may be captured as well. If you have any concerns about this, please consult with an usher.

BLESSED IS THE SPOT

*Music by Elizabeth Haberman, arr. by Russell Garcia
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold
(Woiwurrung, Maori and English)*

LORD'S PRAYER

*Music by Peter Davies
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold*

Say: Blessed the slumberer who is awakened by My Breeze. Blessed the lifeless one who is quickened through My reviving breaths. Blessed the eye that is solaced by gazing at My beauty. Blessed the wayfarer who directeth his steps towards the Tabernacle of My glory and majesty. Blessed the distressed one who seeketh refuge beneath the shadow of My canopy. Blessed the sore athirst who hasteneth to the soft-flowing waters of My loving-kindness.

Bahá'í Scripture, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, Lawh-i-Aqdas, p. 16

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

Jewish Scripture, The Tanakh, The Book of Mishlei (Proverbs) 4:7 - 4:10

O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.

Bahá'í Scripture, Prayer of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O DIOS

*Music by Ameli Dziemba
Conducted by Stephanie Arlidge
(Spanish)*

*O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star.
Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.*

GOD GRANT THAT THE LIGHT OF UNITY

*Music by Mark McDowell
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold*

SUFFER ME, O MY GOD

Music by Alan Manifold

Conducted by Lorraine Manifold

In safety and in bliss, may the creatures of all be of a peaceful heart. Whatever living things there are: whether weak or strong with none excepted. Great or small, seen or unseen, dwelling far or near, born or awaiting birth – may all be blessed with peace. Let no one work another one's undoing, or show contempt in any place. Let no one wish another harm, through provocation or resentful thought. Just as a mother with her life protects her child, her only child, let all the embracing thoughts for all that lives be yours. An all embracing love for all the universe, in all its height and depth and breadth.

Buddhist Scripture, Sutta Nipata, Metta Sutta 1.8 (Loving Kindness)

Hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided.

Islamic Scripture, The Qur'an, Surah 3 (103) - Family of Imran

Assemble, speak together: let your minds be all of one accord, just as the gods of ancient times agreed among themselves and sat down to their appointed share. The place is common, common the assembly, common the mind, so be their thought united. A common purpose do I lay before you, and with a single libation do I sacrifice to you. One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord. United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree.

Hindu Scripture, Rig Veda - Book 10, Hymn 191

O MY BROTHER! Hearken to the delightful words of My honeyed tongue, and quaff the stream of mystic holiness from My sugar-shedding lips. Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of thy heart, and water them with the water of certitude, that the hyacinths of My knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green in the sacred city of thy heart.

Bahá'í Scripture, Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, Persian #33

HEARKEN TO THE DELIGHTSOME WORDS

Music by Tom Price
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold

LOVE ME, THAT I MAY LOVE THEE

Music by Ameli Dziemba
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold

AI OMWANA W'OMUNTU

Music by Richard Kansimbe & Bweyeyeyo Bahá'í community
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold
(Luganda)

*O SON OF MAN! Be thou content with Me and seek no other helper.
For none but Me can ever suffice thee.*

THOUSANDS OF CANDLES

Music by Parisa Sabet
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold
(Baha'i, Buddhist and Christian scripture)

Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Christian Scripture, Bible, New International Version (NIV), Philippians 2:2-2:4

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

Christian Scripture, King James Bible, Revelations 21:1 - 21:5

Hear Me, ye mortal birds! In the Rose Garden of changeless splendor a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the

brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breathe the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. Whoso followeth this counsel will break his chains asunder, will taste the abandonment of enraptured love, will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.

Bahá'í Scripture, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 319

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves. That the divers communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His Religion. These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated.

Bahá'í Scripture, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 287

PRAYER FOR UNITY

*Traditional, arr. by Angela Bryan
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold*

CIRCLE OF UNITY

*Music by Paul George Webb
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

*Music by Russell Garcia
Conducted by Pierre Weber
(Arabic)*

O Bahá'u'lláh! God is Most Glorious!

O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source

of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. This is the straight Path, the fixed and immovable foundation.

Bahá'í Scripture, Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 112

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves. That the divers communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His Religion. These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated.

Bahá'í Scripture, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 287

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words.

Bahá'í Scripture, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 287

LIGHT OF UNITY

*Music by Farid Javidan
Conducted by Pierre Weber*

HOME OF PEACE

*Music by Anne Biswell, arr. by Pierre Weber
Conducted by Stephanie Arlidge*

LIGHT OF UNITY

*Music by Farid Javidan
Conducted by Pierre Weber*

He who beholds all beings in the Self, and the Self in all beings, he never turns away from it. When to a man who understands, the Self has become all things, what sorrow, what trouble can there be to him who once beheld that unity?

Hindu Scriptures, Vagasaneyi Samhita Upanishad

Before the face of all men I have arisen, and bidden them fulfil My pleasure. My object is none other than the betterment of the world and the tranquillity of its peoples. The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. This unity can never be achieved so long as the counsels which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed are suffered to pass unheeded.

Through the power of the words He hath uttered the whole of the human race can be illumined with the light of unity, and the remembrance of His Name is able to set on fire the hearts of all men, and burn away the veils that intervene between them and His glory. One righteous act is endowed with a potency that can so elevate the dust as to cause it to pass beyond the heaven of heavens. It can tear every bond asunder, and hath the power to restore the force that hath spent itself and vanished....

Bahá'í Scripture, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 286

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor 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 Scripture, Bible, New International Version (NIV), I Corinthians 13:4

Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. Then will the effulgence of the world's great Luminary envelop the whole earth, and its inhabitants become the citizens of one city, and the occupants of one and the same throne. This wronged One hath, ever since the early days of His life, cherished none other desire but this, and will continue to entertain no wish except this wish. . . . Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you.

Bahá'í Scripture, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 217

LOVE ALL MANKIND

*Music by Lorraine Manifold
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold*

CLOSE YOUR EYES

*Music by Alan Manifold
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold*

POWER OF LOVE

*Music by Lorraine Manifold
Conducted by Lorraine Manifold*

*The Bahá'í House of Worship is a gift from the Bahá'ís and
a demonstration of our faith in the oneness of God,
the oneness of the world religions and the oneness of the human race.
In the future, humanitarian, educational, social and charitable institutions
will also be established in its vicinity.*

*Services in the House of Worship comprise readings and unaccompanied
singing of sacred texts of the world's religions.*

*When the devotional program concludes, please remain seated, if you
wish, for silent reflection, meditation or prayer.*

You are welcome to keep this programme.

*For further information about the Bahá'í Faith visit the Bahá'í website
www.bahai.org.au*

