

Cycle 13 - Musical Fireside

“the ones who, before the gaze of the dwellers on earth and the denizens of heaven, shall arise and, shouting aloud, acclaim the name of the Almighty, and summon the children of men to the path of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised.” – Bahá’u’lláh

In the Writings of our Faith the arts are described as a powerful instrument to move the spirit and serve the Cause. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá praised the arts and testified to their capacity to awaken and uplift the hearts. “Music,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, "has a great effect upon the human spirit.” (International Teaching Centre)

Something which is helpful to remember when conveying the concepts in the introductions to each part of the presentation:

“When a speaker’s brow shineth with the radiance of the love of God, at the time of his exposition of a subject, and he is exhilarated with the wine of true understanding, he becometh the centre of a potent force which like unto a magnet will attract the hearts. This is why the expounder must be in the utmost enkindlement.”

(From a Tablet - translated from the Persian) (Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol II, p. 299)

Musical Fireside:

1. Welcome

We would like to welcome all of you and thank you for coming to tonight’s presentation. Before we begin the presentation we’ll start with a few prayers from the Baha’í Faith. After the presentation there will be opportunities to ask questions and explore these ideas further.

[Remind people to turn off cell phones/pagers]

2. Chants/Prayers

3. Introduce Plight of World Video

The program will start with a short audio-visual presentation on the plight of the world. The images that you will see are just a few examples of the challenges that mankind is facing.

4. Plight of the World Video - Part 1

5. Reflecting on Plight of World - transition

What we just saw are images from around the world that represent some of the problems, challenges, and suffering that humanity is experiencing. I'm sure you agree that there are still many problems in the world today that have not been solved. Even here in our community, issues such as crime, poverty, substance abuse, lack of proper education, and breakdown of family unity are a few examples of the many issues that humanity is struggling to overcome and which touch everyone. This evening hopefully you will find some answers to questions that you have. I know that the ideas we will be exploring have answered many of my own questions.

6. Baha'i Faith

Now we would like to take all of you through a musical journey.

The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion whose purpose is to unite all the races and peoples in one universal Cause and one common Faith.

Now we'll sing a song that reflects this unity that the Baha'i Faith aims to establish.

Guitar Player: This song is not some idealistic dream of peace, but rather it is an expression of the vision that Bahá'u'lláh inspires with His promise that the unity of mankind is not only possible but inevitable.

Song: One Planet One People

Song: One Planet One People

7. Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh is the Promised One of all Ages.

As you know, the traditions of almost every people include the promise of a future when peace and harmony will be established on earth and humankind will live in prosperity

We believe that the promised hour has come and that Bahá'u'lláh is the great Personage Whose Teachings will enable humanity to build a new world."

The following is a song in which one people, the Zulu from southern Africa, are celebrating the fulfillment of this promise. It reflects the deep reverence by which the peoples of Africa have expressed their Faith in Baha'u'llah.

Song: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Song: Rejoice! Rejoice!

8. God

“The first of Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings is about God and our relationship with Him. God is unknowable in His Essence.

That which has been created cannot understand its creator, just like a table cannot understand the nature of the carpenter that made it. The carpenter’s existence is totally incomprehensible to the objects he or she makes.

God created all things and the reason behind our creation is love. Bahá’u’lláh says:

“O Son of Man! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life.”

Guitar Player: “The words of this song are from a collection of short but spiritually profound statements of Baha’u’llah known as the Hidden Words. In this Hidden Word He states that the very fact of our creation is proof of God’s love for us.

Song: Hidden Words “Veiled in My immemorial Being”

Song: Hidden Words “Veiled in My immemorial Being”

9. Eternal Covenant

So although God’s existence is far beyond our understanding, His love touches our lives and beings constantly. The way this love flows to us is through His Eternal Covenant. According to this Eternal Covenant God never leaves us alone and without guidance.

Whenever humanity moves away from Him and forgets His Teachings, a Manifestation of God appears and makes His Will and Purpose known to us.

The next song is about God who is the “origin of all things” and Whose knowledge of is impossible to attain except through these “luminous beings”

Song: The Origin of All Things

Song: The Origin of All Things

10. Manifestations of God

“Manifest means to reveal or to bring forth something that was not known before.

Manifestations of God are those special Beings Who reveal to humanity the Word and the Will of God; thus when we listen to Them, we are responding to the call of God.

In this world, the sun is the source of all warmth and light, without which life would not exist on the planet. Yet the sun itself does not descend to earth, and if we tried to approach it, we would be totally consumed.

But suppose we take a well-polished mirror and point it to the sun. We will see the image of the sun and the more perfectly polished the mirror, the more perfect the image will be. These Manifestations of God are like perfect Mirrors that reflect the Light of God in all its Splendour and all these Mirrors reflect the same Light.

While God is beyond our reach, these perfect Beings come to us from time to time, live among us, give us guidance, and fill us with the energy we need to progress, materially and spiritually.”

Song: Waves of one Sea

Song: Waves of one Sea

11. This is the Day

“Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings are in perfect harmony with all the religions of the world, but they address the condition of humanity today.

If you think for a moment about the plight of humanity, I am sure you will agree that the time is right for another Manifestation of God to appear. Bahá’u’lláh Writes:

“This is the Day in which God’s most excellent favours have been poured out unto men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things. It is incumbent upon all the peoples of the world to reconcile their differences, and, with perfect unity and peace, abide beneath the shadow of the Tree of His care and loving-kindness.”

12. Video – Part 2

12. Video – Part 2

13. These Great Oppressions

The aim of the Baha'i Faith, the very purpose of the coming of a new Manifestation of God, is to unify mankind. In the Baha'i Teachings we are told that we are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch. With the coming of Bahá'u'lláh the human race, as a whole, has been summoned to recognize its oneness, and this has launched it on a wholly new stage in its spiritual and social evolution. This is why this Day is so important, as was mentioned in the last quotation. Over 100 years ago a European scholar visited a Prisoner and an Exile whose words have now penetrated the life of every peoples and nation in the world. That Prisoner was Baha'u'llah. He stated during that visit that:

“Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile... We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment... that all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that differences of religion should cease and differences of race be annulled – what harm is there in this?... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come... Let not a man glory in this that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this that he loves his kind.”

Song: These Great Oppressions

Song: These Great Oppressions

14. Conclusion

(Express thanks to everyone for attending and thank hosts.)

This concludes our musical presentation. We started by looking at the state of the world, and really the state is so poor that even here in Vancouver - one of the nicest places to live in the world - all we have to do is open the newspaper and we see statements such as “We need people to stop killing each other” [or cite another personal or local example]. Bahá’u’lláh teaches that at such times from age to age, times of such moral decay and material deprivation, that our unknowable Creator - God - sends a Perfect Educator [Manifestation, Messenger, etc.] to help civilization advance, enable us to bring unity to the world, and renew the spiritual life of mankind. Bahá’u’lláh is such a Personage, and we thank you for letting us share some of His teachings with you.

However, these are not just nice ideals that are intended to make us feel better about the problems of the world. The Bahá’ís are working in communities all over the world, including this one, to put these teachings into practice and help transform the world. From children to adults, programs for spiritual transformation and the building of unity are being established. For children there are classes for spiritual education where they learn about qualities such as love, justice, respect and kindness. For older children there are programs for spiritual and moral empowerment where they learn to become an agent for positive change in their communities. For youth and adults, study circles which help build capacities for service focus the individual on spiritual development and a systematic study of the Creative Word.

We invite you to learn more about these exciting programs and to further explore the ideas presented tonight.

“The hospitality of our hosts has not yet finished, so please stay seated and we'll bring some tea for you... And please continue to talk about the ideas presented and their potential impact on the world.”

If Thou Lovest Me

If thou lovest Me
Turn away from thyself
If thou seekest My pleasure
Regard not thine own

That thou mayest die in Me
And I may eternally live in thee

O Son of Man

One Planet One People

We're all living in a dream of one world
Hoping that everyone will
Love as they were meant to love
We're all living in a dream of one world
Hoping that everyone will
Live as they were meant to live

Chorus: One planet, one people, please God we may achieve it,
one planet, one people please... (2X)

We're all living in a dream of world peace
Hoping that everyone one sees
A world of love and unity
We're all living in a dream of world peace
A world of different countries
Living in peace and harmony

(Chorus)

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Toko zani nina laba wanki
Le li langa lakuka na
Toko zani nina laba wanki
Le li langa lakuka na
Toko lakola luku Baha
Um lama wah lampa
Kaday kuday si liendole
Ya Baha'u'l-Abha
Ti Ya Baha'u'l-Abha
Ti Ya Baha'u'l-Abha

Rejoice, rejoice, for a new Day has dawned
The whole wide world is all one fold
Rejoice, Rejoice, for a new Day has dawned
The plan of God has now been told
The Promised One by the name of Baha
Came to bring a new Day
Let us be happy, let us say
Ya Baha'u'l-Abha
Say Ya Baha'u'l-Abha
Say Ya Baha'u'l-Abha

Veiled in my Immemorial Being

O Son of Man!

Veiled in my Immemorial Being
And in the ancient eternity of My essence (2X)
I knew My love for thee
Therefore I created thee
Have engraved on thee Mine image
And revealed to thee My Beauty

The Origin of All Things

The knowledge of Him
Who is the Origin of all things (2X)

and attainment unto Him
are impossible save through knowledge of
and attainment unto, these luminous Beings who proceed from the Sun of Truth

Unlock the gates of true understanding
And let the light of faith shine resplendent

Waves of One Sea

Noah, Abraham, Krishna
Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha
Jesus Christ and Muhammad
The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh

They are the waves of one sea
They are the birds of one tree
They are the lamps of one light
Come and be their lovers, be lovers, be lovers, be (3X)
lovers of light

These Great Oppressions

These great oppressions
that have befallen the world
are preparing it for the advent
of the Most Great Justice

these fruitless strifes
these ruinous wars
shall pass away
and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come

<http://www.vancouverbahai.org/fireside> (music/lyrics etc.)