

Welcome/Introduction

Prayer for America

Music Selection #1

1. O Friend! In the garden of thy heart, plant naught but the rose of love, and from the nightingale of affection and desire, loosen not thy hold....

Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, no. 3

Christianity:

2. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love....If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things....And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

The New Testament: 1 John 4:7-8, 12; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 13

Unitarian Universalist:

3. Let all the beauty we have known:

Let all the beauty we have known illuminate our hearts and minds. Rejoice in wonders daily shown, in faith and joy, and love that binds. We celebrate with singing hearts the loveliness of sky and earth, The inspiration of the arts, the miracle of every birth. Life's music and its poetry surround and bless us through our days. For these we sing in harmony, together giving thanks and praise.

By Rev. Dana McLean Greeley, 1908-1986

From the UU Hymnal, "Singing the Living Tradition No. 326"

The Baha'i Faith:

4. Know thou of a certainty that Love is the secret of God's holy Dispensation, the manifestation of the All-Merciful, the fountain of spiritual outpourings. Love is heaven's kindly light, the Holy Spirit's eternal breath that vivifieth the human soul.

Love is the cause of God's revelation unto man, the vital bond inherent, in accordance with the divine creation, in the realities of things.

Love is the one means that ensureth true felicity both in this world and the next.

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 most great law that ruleth this mighty and heavenly cycle, the unique power that bindeth together the divers elements of this material world,

the supreme magnetic force that directeth the movements of the spheres in the celestial realms. Love revealeth with unfailing and limitless power the mysteries latent in the universe. 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....O ye beloved of the Lord! Strive to become the manifestations of the love of God, the lamps of Divine guidance shining amongst the kindreds of the earth with the light of love and concord....

Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, pp. 27-28

Music Selection #2

5. Love gives life to the lifeless. Love lights a flame in the heart that is cold. Love brings hope to the hopeless and gladdens the hearts of the sorrowful. In the world of existence, there is indeed no greater power than the power of love. When the heart of man is aglow with the flame of love, he is ready to sacrifice all---even his life. In the Gospel, it is said God is love.

...The love which exists between the hearts of believers is prompted by the ideal of unity of spirits. This love is attained through the knowledge of God, so that men see the Divine Love reflected in the heart. Each sees in the other the Beauty of God reflected in the soul, and finding this point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in love. This love will make all men the waves of one sea, this love will make them all the stars of one heaven and fruits of one tree. This love will bring the realization of true accord, the foundation of real unity.

Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, pp. 179-181

6. 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....

Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 215

7. O ye beloved of the Lord! Commit not that which defileth the limpid stream of love or destroyeth the sweet fragrance of friendship. By the righteousness of the Lord! Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancour. Take pride not in love for yourselves but in love for your fellow creatures. Glory not in love for your country, but in love for all mankind....

Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 138

8. ...When you love a member of your family or a compatriot, let it be with a ray of the Infinite Love! Let it be in God, and for God! Wherever you find the attributes of God, love that person, whether he be of your family or of another. Shed the light of a boundless love on every human being whom you meet, whether of your country, your race, your political party, or of any other nation, color, or shade of political opinion. Heaven will support you while you work in this in-gathering of the scattered peoples of the world beneath the shadow of the almighty tent of unity.

In every dispensation, there hath been the commandment of fellowship and love, but it was a commandment limited to the community of those in mutual agreement, not to the dissident foe. In this wondrous age, however, praised be God, the commandments of God are not delimited, not restricted to any one group of people, rather have all the friends been commanded to show forth fellowship and love, consideration and generosity and loving kindness to every community on earth.

Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, p. 38; Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, pp. 20-21

9. God hath prescribed matrimony unto you....Enter into wedlock, O people, that ye may bring forth one who will make mention of Me amid My servants.

Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 41

10. O ye two believers in God! The Lord, peerless is He, hath made woman and man to abide with each other in the closest companionship, and to be even as a single soul. They are two helpmates, two intimate friends, who should be concerned about the welfare of each other. If they live thus, they will pass through this world with perfect contentment, bliss, and peace of heart....

Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 122

Music Selection #3

11. Baha'u'llah has urged marriage upon all people as the natural and rightful way of life. He has also, however, placed strong emphasis on its spiritual nature, which, while in no way precluding a normal physical life, is the most essential aspect of marriage. That two people should live their lives in love and harmony is of far greater importance than that they should be consumed with passion for each other. The one is a great rock of strength on which to lean in time of need; the other a purely temporary thing which may at any time die out. (1943)

...Only when these different values are given each their due importance, and only on the basis of the subordination of the physical to the moral, and the carnal to the spiritual, can such excesses and laxity in marital relations as our decadent age is so sadly witnessing be avoided, and family life be restored to its original purity, and fulfil the true function for which it has been instituted by God. (1938)

Wherever there is a Baha'i family, those concerned should by all means do all they can to preserve it, because divorce is strongly condemned in the Teachings, whereas harmony, unity and love are held up as the highest ideals in human relationships. (1956)

Letters of Shoghi Effendi

12. The bond that unites hearts most perfectly is loyalty. True lovers once united must show forth the utmost faithfulness one to another....Allow no trace of jealousy to creep between you, for jealousy, like unto poison, vitiates the very essence of love. Let not the ephemeral incidents and accidents of this changeful life cause a

rift between you. When differences present themselves, take counsel together in secret, lest others magnify a speck into a mountain. Harbour not in your hearts any grievance, but rather explain its nature to each other with such frankness and understanding that it will disappear, leaving no remembrance. Choose fellowship and amity, and turn away from jealousy and hypocrisy.

Your thoughts must be lofty, your ideals luminous, your minds spiritual, so that your souls may become a dawning-place for the Sun of Reality. Let your hearts be like unto two pure mirrors reflecting the stars of the heaven of love and beauty.

...No mortal can conceive the union and harmony which God has designed for man and wife. Nourish continually the tree of your union with love and affection, so that it will remain ever green and verdant throughout all seasons and bring forth luscious fruits for the healing of nations....Lay the foundation of your affection in the very center of your spiritual being, at the very heart of your consciousness, and let it not be shaken by adverse winds....

Build your nest on the leafy branches of the tree of love. Soar into the clear atmosphere of love. Sail upon the shoreless sea of love. Walk in the eternal rose-garden of love. Bathe in the shining rays of the sun of love....Perfume your nostrils with the fragrance from the flowers of love. Attune your ears to the soul-entrancing melodies of love. Let your aims be as generous as banquets of love, and your words as a string of white pearls from the ocean of love. Drink deeply of the elixir of love, so that you may live continually in the reality of Divine Love.

Abdu'l-Baha: from an article in Star of the West, March 1920

Prayer for New York

"I eagerly anticipate the day when New York will become a blessed spot from which the call to steadfastness in the Covenant of God will go forth to every part of the world, thus making that city outstanding from every point of view.

Bless Thou, O King of Kings, the city of New York! Cause the friends there to be kind to one another. Purify their souls and make their hearts to be free and detached. Illumine the world of their consciousness. Exhilarate their spirits and bestow celestial power and confirmation upon them. Establish there a heavenly realm, so that the City of Bahá may prosper and New York be favoured with blessings from the Abhá Kingdom, that this region may become like the all-highest Paradise, may develop into a vineyard of God and be transformed into a heavenly orchard and a spiritual rose garden."

Abdu'l-Bahá

Music Selection #4

Prayer Requests

Announcements

Fellowship