

Welcome/Introduction

Prayer for America

“O Thou kind Lord! This gathering is turning to Thee. These hearts are radiant with Thy love. These minds and spirits are exhilarated by the message of Thy glad-tidings. O God! Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees, and render this just government victorious. Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world. O God! This American nation is worthy of Thy favors and is deserving of Thy mercy. Make it precious and near to Thee through Thy bounty and bestowal.” - *Abdu'l-Baha*

Music Selection #1

1. Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear....

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower:

When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the Wicked One, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended.

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the Word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The New Testament: Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23

2. If so be that ye have heard [Jesus], and have been taught by Him, ...put off...the *old* man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And...put on the *new* man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. ...

St. Paul, The New Testament: Ephesians 4:22-24

3. Like a beautiful, fragrant lotus, springing up on a pile of rubbish thrown out on the highway, so a disciple of the Enlightened One stands out among rubbish-like and blinded ordinary people by virtue of his wisdom.

Buddhism., Dhammapada, 58 & 59

4. First and foremost among these favors, which the Almighty hath conferred upon man, is the gift of understanding. His purpose in conferring such a gift is none other except to enable His creature to know and recognize the one true God-exalted be His glory. This gift giveth man the power to discern the truth in all things, leadeth him to that which is right, and helpeth him to discover the secrets of creation....

His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds....

The incomparable Creator hath created all men from one same substance, and hath exalted their reality above the rest of His creatures. Success or failure, gain or loss, must, therefore, depend upon man's own exertions. The more he striveth, the greater will be his progress. We fain would hope that the vernal showers of the bounty of God may cause the flowers of true understanding to spring from the soil of men's hearts, and may wash them from all earthly defilements.

...Unto each one hath been prescribed a pre-ordained measure, as decreed in God's mighty and guarded Tablets. All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition.

It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action....

Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, pp. 194, 299, 81-82, 149, 250

5. Mere knowledge of principles is not sufficient. We all know and admit [for example] that justice is good, but there is need of volition and action to carry out and manifest it.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 121

6. Labor is needed, if we are to seek Him; ardor is needed, if we are to drink of the honey of reunion with Him; and if we taste of this cup, we shall cast away the world.

Bahá'u'lláh: The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys, p. 7

7. He who knows both knowledge and action, with action overcomes death and with knowledge reaches immortality.

Hinduism: from the Isa Upanishad

Music Selection #2

8. ...We must thank God that He has created for us both material blessings and spiritual bestowals. He has given us material gifts and spiritual graces, outer sight to view the lights of the sun and inner vision by which we may perceive the glory of God. He has designed the outer ear to enjoy the melodies of sound and the inner hearing wherewith we may hear the voice of our Creator.

We must strive with energies of heart, soul and mind to develop and manifest the perfections and virtues latent within the realities of the phenomenal world, for the human reality may be compared to a seed. If we sow the seed, a mighty tree appears from it. The virtues of the seed are revealed in the tree; it puts forth branches, leaves, blossoms, and produces fruits. All these virtues were hidden and potential in the seed. Through the blessing and bounty of cultivation these virtues became apparent.

Similarly, the merciful God, our Creator, has deposited within human realities certain latent and potential virtues. Through education and culture these virtues deposited by the loving God will become apparent in the human reality, even as the unfoldment of the tree from within the germinating seed...If no fruits of the Kingdom appear in the garden of his soul, man is not in the image and likeness of God, but if those fruits are forthcoming, he becomes the recipient of ideal bestowals and is enkindled with the fire of the love of God. If his morals become spiritual in character, his aspirations heavenly and his actions conformable to the will of God, man has attained the image and likeness of his Creator; otherwise, he is the image and likeness of Satan.

Abdu'l-Bahá: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 90-91, 335-336

9. The results I expect are these: that the individual soul shall be released from self and desire and freed from the bondage of satanic suggestions. May the mirrors of hearts be cleansed from dust in order that the Sun of Truth may be reflected therein.

Man possesses two kinds of susceptibilities: the natural [earthly] emotions, which are like dust upon the mirror, and spiritual susceptibilities, which are merciful and heavenly characteristics.

There is a power which purifies the mirror from dust and transforms its reflection into intense brilliancy and radiance so that spiritual susceptibilities may chasten the hearts and heavenly bestowals sanctify them.. What is the dust which obscures the mirror? It is attachment to the world, avarice, envy, love of luxury and comfort, haughtiness and self-desire; this is the dust which prevents reflection of the rays of the Sun of Reality in the mirror. The natural emotions are blameworthy and are like rust which deprives the heart of the bounties of God. But sincerity, justice, humility, severance, and love for the believers of God will purify the mirror and make it radiant with reflected rays from the Sun of Truth.

It is my hope...that you may search out your own imperfections and not think of the imperfections of anybody else. Strive with all your power to be free from imperfections....

Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 244

10. The spiritually learned must be characterized by both inward and outward perfections; they must possess a good character, an enlightened nature, a pure intent, as well as intellectual power, brilliance and discernment, intuition, discretion and foresight, temperance, reverence, and a heartfelt fear of God. For an unlit candle, however great in diameter and tall, is no better than a barren palm tree or a pile of dead wood.

Abdu'l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization, pp. 33-34

Music Selection #3

11. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it? Is it within human power...to transmute [particles of matter] into purest gold? ...The still greater task of converting satanic strength into heavenly power is one that We have been empowered to accomplish. The Force capable of such a transformation transcendeth the potency of the Elixir itself. The Word of God, alone, can claim the distinction of being endowed with the capacity required for so great and far-reaching a change....

Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration.

Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, pp. 200, 92-93

12. When one supplicates to his Lord, turns to Him and seeks bounty from His Ocean, this supplication brings light to his heart, illumination to his sight, life to his soul and exaltation to his being.

Abdu'l-Baha, quoted in Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 93

13. When the Yogi has full power over his body composed of the elements of earth, water, fire, air, and ether, then he obtains a new body of spiritual fire which is beyond illness, old age, and death.

...Even as a mirror of gold covered by dust, when cleaned well shines again in full splendour, when a man has seen the Truth of the Spirit, he is one with him, the aim of his life is fulfilled, and he is ever beyond sorrow.

Hinduism: From the Svetasvatara Upanishad

14. And whoso maketh efforts for Us, in Our ways will We guide them: for God is assuredly with those who do righteous deeds.

Mohammad (Islam): Qur'an, 29:68

15. If in this day a soul shall act according to the precepts and the counsels of God, he will serve as a divine physician to mankind, and like the trump [trumpet] of Isráfíl, he will call the dead of this contingent world to life; for the confirmations of the Abhá Realm are never interrupted, and such a virtuous soul hath, to befriend him, the unfailing help of the Company on high. Thus shall a sorry gnat become an eagle in the fulness of his strength, and a feeble sparrow change to a royal falcon in the heights of ancient glory.

Wherefore, look not on the degree of your capacity, ask not if you are worthy of the task: rest ye your hopes on the help and loving-kindness, the favours and bestowals of Bahá'u'lláh--may my soul be offered up for His friends! Urge on the steed of high endeavour over the field of sacrifice, and carry away from this wide arena the prize of divine grace.

Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 23

16. God grant that through His gracious and invisible assistance, thou mayest divest thy body and soul of the old garment, and array thyself with the new and imperishable attire.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 158

17. Reading in Persian (next page) for our persian speaking friends.

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

