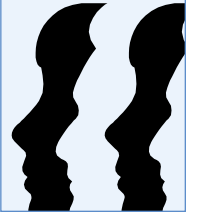


## Interfaith Unity Feast

1556 Bell Road - Nashville, TN

*We are drops of one ocean, leaves of one tree.*



### Music and Religion

- **Welcome - Aram Ferdowsi**
- **Opening Prayers**

#### *Bahá'í Prayer*

Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men. — **Bahá'u'lláh**

Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made, and His praise glorified.— **Bahá'u'lláh**

*(Prayer sung by Jennifer Hawkins)*

#### *Christian Prayer*

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. — **Words of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians, Colossians 3:15-17**

#### *Jewish Prayer*

O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised...the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. — **Psalms 96: 1-6**

- **Music - Rachel Price**
- **Guest Speaker - Tom Price**
- **Holy Writings**

#### *From the Christian Holy Writings*

There are many instances in the New Testament that speak to how often songs or psalms were sung to honor God: In Matthew, it is recorded during The Last Supper Christ said: "I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." And after that, the disciples sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. — **Matthew 26:29-30**

Again, when followers of Christ, Paul and Silas, were attacked by the authorities, this is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: "After they were beaten, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose." — **Acts 15:22-26**

Paul tells the people of Ephesus to "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father." — **Ephesians 5:18-20**

#### *From the Hindu Tradition*

Music is an essential part of Hindu philosophy and mythology. The first sound in the Universe was OM, also called Naada Brahma (the first note). OM is believed to be the purest sound ever made. Since Brahman pervades the entire universe including the human soul at its core, the notion of sacred sound manifested as chant and music provided a veritable thread binding the

human realm to the divine, such that most musicological treatises discuss Naada-Brahman as the foundation of musical sound.

RigVedic hymns are directed at Gods, to be chanted during sacrifices to please them. It is possible Gods were thought to be fond of music and that it would be easier to please them if the hymns were sung rather than just chanted. Thus, many of the Rig Vedic hymns were set to music and sung.

- **Music - Nandini Kambi**

*From the Zoroastrian Tradition*

Performance of music in keeping with Zoroastrian religious rites is as old as the Zoroastrian religion itself. A review of some historical texts proves that solo and choir music was broadly practiced at various ceremonies and occasions in fire temples and other Zoroastrian religious institutions before the advent of Islam. Based on the structure and rhythm of Zoroastrian texts and especially the gathas, choir and group music was considered a very important task by the Zoroastrian believers.

*From the Buddhist Tradition*

The teachings of the Buddha mention music on many occasions. In the Amitabha Sutra, it is written that “heavenly singing and chanting is heard all day and night as mandara flowers softly rain down from the heavens. All kinds of birds produce beautiful and harmonious music throughout the day and night. Upon the blowing of a gentle breeze, the movements of jewel trees bring about a kind of wondrous music, as if thousands of gentle tunes are being played together in harmony. Upon hearing these melodious sounds, those present naturally become mindful of the Buddha, mindful of the Dharma, and mindful of the Sangha.” In accordance, all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are very skilled in utilizing music to spread the Dharma and guide sentient beings to enlightenment.

The Buddha asked a disciple about the “promise of a happy region” -- the disciple replied: “There is in the west a paradise called the Pure Land, exquisitely adorned with gold and silver and precious gems. There are pure waters with golden sands, surrounded by pleasant walks and covered with large lotus flowers. Joyous music is heard, and flowers rain down three times a day. There are singing birds whose harmonious notes proclaim the praises of religion, and in the minds of those who listen to their sweet sounds, remembrance arises of the Buddha, the law, and the brotherhood. “In truth,” said the Buddha, “there is such a happy paradise.”

In Buddhism, sutras sung as hymns and other songs praising the virtues of the Buddhas have attracted and have helped purify the hearts of countless disciples. One of the Buddha’s teachings (Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom [skt. Mahaprajnaparamita Sastra]) says, “In order to build a pure land, the Bodhisattvas make use of beautiful music to soften people’s hearts. With their hearts softened, people’s minds are more receptive, and thus easier to educate and transform through the teachings.” For this reason, music has been established as one type of ceremonial offering to be made to the Buddha. In addition to propagating the Dharma (the teachings of the Buddha), there is a long history of adapting Buddhist songs for use in various ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, etc. In this capacity, Buddhist Music plays an integral role in common cultural practices.

*From the Native American Tradition*

Native American song texts include both public pieces and secret songs, said to be “ancient and unchanging”, which are used only for sacred and ceremonial purposes. The styles and purposes of music vary greatly between and among each Native American tribe. However, a common concept amongst many Native American groups is a blend of music and power. For example, the Pima [Arizona and New Mexico] people feel many of their songs were given in the beginning and sung by the Creator.

- **Music - J.J. Kent**

*From the Muslim Tradition*

Nowhere in the Qur’an is music specifically mentioned. There are arguments by Muslim scholars who say because it is NOT specifically forbidden, music is permissible. There are other

schools of Islamic belief that quote certain hadiths (sayings) of the Prophet Mohammad which they believe condemn listening to music and/or singing. It is still a heated debate among conservative fundamental and contemporary Muslims.

***From the Bahá'í Holy Writings***

O bird that singeth sweetly of the Abhá Beauty! In this new and wondrous dispensation the veils of superstition have been torn asunder and the prejudices of eastern people stand condemned. Among certain nations of the East, music was considered reprehensible, but in this new age the Manifest Light hath, in His holy Tablets, specifically proclaimed that music, sung or played, is spiritual food for soul and heart. — **'Abdu'l-Bahá**

O thou honorable one!

Thank thou God that thou art instructed in music and melody, singing with pleasant voice the glorification and praise of the Eternal, the Living. I pray to God tht thou mayest employ this talent in prayer and supplication, in order that the souls may become quickened, the hearts may become attracted and all may become inflamed with the fire of the love of God! — **'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, v. 3, p. 512.**

Let us seek the song with the sweetest strains, so that it may be taken up by the angels and carried to the supreme concourse. Let us hearken to the melody which will stir the world of humanity, so that the people may be transformed with joy. Let us listen to a symphony which will confer life on man; then we can obtain universal results; then we shall receive a new spirit; then we shall become illumined. Let us investigate a song which is above all songs; one which will develop the spirit and produce harmony and exhilaration, unfolding the inner potentialities of life.— **'Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 76-78**

- **Music — Rachel Price**
- **Closing Prayer**

***From the Jewish and Christian Faiths***

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you  
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.  
— **Numbers 6:24-27**

- **Closing Remarks**
- **Refreshments**



The Unity Feast is sponsored by the Greater Nashville Bahá'í Community  
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