

Soul

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Much attention has been focused on the health of our physical bodies. Organic, non-GMO, cage-free and grass-fed foods are in high demand; exercise routines, nutritional programs, medical procedures, medications and vitamins abound.

Baha'i writings emphasize the importance of one's both physical and spiritual health. They say that human spirit, or as philosophers have called it, the rational soul is immortal and thus continues its progress after the death of the physical body. Its health is therefore of paramount importance.

The relationship between this world and the next has also been likened to that of the womb and this world. As the fetus develops various organs and limbs in preparation for life in this world, the soul needs to develop its capacity in this world in preparation for the world beyond.

So what is necessary for the development of the soul?

First, is prayer and meditation: "... the core of religious faith is that mystic feeling that unites man with God. This state of spiritual communion can be brought about and maintained by means of meditation and prayer. ...The Bahá'í Faith, like all other Divine religions, is thus fundamentally mystic in character. Its chief goal is the development of the individual and society, through the acquisition of spiritual virtues and powers. It is the soul of man that has first to be fed. And this spiritual nourishment prayer can best provide....[All] should therefore realize fully the necessity of praying. For prayer is absolutely indispensable to their inner spiritual development."

Second, is service: "the spiritual development of the soul requires not merely prayer and meditation, but also active service to one's fellowmen in accordance with the laws and principles of the Revelation of God. The reconstruction of human society and the spiritual advancement of individual souls go hand in hand."

But what type of service? "In every century a particular and central theme is, in accordance with the requirements of that century, confirmed by God. In this illumined age that which is confirmed is the oneness of the world of humanity. Every soul who serveth this oneness will undoubtedly be assisted and confirmed."

Human mind "is the power of the human spirit. The spirit is as the lamp, and the mind as the light that shines from it." As the soul develops, its perfections should continually appear in this world through action because "if the perfections of the spirit were not manifested and the light of the mind were not shining in this world, it would be like a body without a spirit."

In light of the importance of worship and service, Mountain View Baha'i community hosts a number of interfaith gatherings including a regular program, held in Los Altos library, called Soul Food "which provides an opportunity for us all to unite in a tranquil environment and reflect on inspiring themes and common threads that tie us all together. It features audio-visual pieces and readings from faiths and philosophers, authors, leaders and indigenous cultures, from all over the world." Its purpose "is to

inspire us to transform our lives, our neighborhoods and communities, with actions that promote the unity and betterment of society.” See www.meetup.com/Soul-Food-SV/.
