

## RADICAL SERVICE

MUSIC Tarrega, Marcelo Kayath (1997), 'Memories of the Alhambra' ,  
*Presenters' Choice*, Classic FM, from Carlton Classics - length 4:11 [Track 08]

### CHALICE LIGHTING

[Either] In the darkest of our troubles, the light within shines ever more brightly; it is the inner hope against the troublesome outer world. Even for the brightest happiness, the flame still adds to the light, and forms its shape and gives its energy. So we light the flame of freedom in the cup of our communion.

[Light the chalice]

With our eyes may we behold righteousness.  
With our ears may we hear what is good.  
Tranquil in body, may we who worship find rest.  
Peace be in this house  
For to all who come into it.  
And peace be with us when we depart.

[Or] The flaming chalice is our world wide symbol;  
We light this our own chalice so that the flame comes once again.

[Light the chalice]

The chalice is our container, like our fellowship;  
It is a parabola that focuses all rays of thought,  
And the flame, alive, is the reaching spirit -  
Burning, consuming, lighting, warming.  
It is who we are.

[Possibly add this] 'Beathe Reprise' from *Dark Side Of The Moon* by Roger Waters

Home, home again  
I like to be here when I can

When I come home, cold and tired  
It's good to warm my bones beside the fire

Far away across the field

The tolling of the iron bell  
Calls the faithful to their knees  
To hear the softly spoken magic spell.

[Roger Waters (1973), 'Breathe Reprise', *Dark Side of the Moon*, Pink Floyd Music Publishers Limited. Note: if using this, perhaps read 'Time' as below, perhaps use 'Eclipse' in the Benediction]

HYMN 172 'All Are Welcome Here', *Hymns for Living* [Or any other]  
[Tune: Westminster] [TRACK 09]

MEDIATIONS [All three or second two]:

Let us lift up our hearts and use our voices for justice and judgement; mercy and truth are uppermost in our desires. We are prepared to work for these, and to wait with necessary contemplation and reflection. Nothing is easy; perhaps we need to draw upon more wisdom and even steadfastness. Not everything comes as we would wish, but this is our duty and our aim. Amid the changing shadows of opinion, these central purposes we maintain, in communion with one another, and by walking in faith and trust with one another.

Here, in the quiet rest of this day, in this our house of meditation and prayer, we leave behind us all lower thoughts and cares, and rise to higher matters. We seek the fountains of love and righteousness, to drink of their living waters, in order to return to our daily duties with hearts refreshed, and with strength renewed and increased, intending greater consciousness and character, till our whole lives shall be a thanksgiving for what we have and what we can become.

Yes, we reflect on what we have done and should not, and what we could have done and did not, and thus examine ourselves for shortcomings. This done, we can and should turn the page: say sorry and move on, positively. This everyone can do, and it is a beginning again.

LITANY

[Either] [The congregation may chant as in bold.] From Harry Youlden

It is the deep yearning of our hearts that our homes may be full of peace,

giving perfect rest: that they may be nurseries of goodness, where our better selves have power, where love is never wounded, where sympathy is never denied, where each grows to fullness and all unite to help each other.

**This is the deep yearning of our hearts.**

That those we love should come to no evil fortune, that they may have health and safe deliverance from any danger, that their undertakings may be good and prosperous, that their value to the world should increase and their happiness endure.

**This is the deep yearning of our hearts.**

That the sick may be restored, that all in pain may find ease, that all whose days are made weary should obtain relief, may be fortified and be of good cheer.

**This is the deep yearning of our hearts.**

That the dying may have calm thoughts and pass to their rest without pain and struggle, finding death as welcome as sleep, leaving a shining memorial and deeds that forever remain.

**This is the deep yearning of our hearts.**

[After Youlden, H., (1914), *Manual of Ethical Devotion*, 26-27]

[Or this] From Harry Youlden

O friends and dear lovers, bless our hearts: comfort and purify them forever.

Voices of home, children, memories of the dead, bless our hearts: comfort and purify them forever.

Words of the wise, bless our thoughts: clear them and harmonize them forever.

Teachers and guides, sorrow and trial, discussion and speech, meditation and dream, confession and creed, bless our thoughts: clear them and harmonize them forever.

Motives of love, bless our deeds: strengthen and beautify them forever.

Uprightness and honour, resolution and courage, simplicity and grace,  
patience and care, leisure and health, bless our deeds: strengthen and  
beautify them forever.

Green leaves of our labour, white flowers of our thought, and red fruit of our  
death, bless the earth; bless humanity now and forever.

[Based on Youlden, H. (1914), *Manual of Ethical Devotion*, 94-6]

[Or this] From Robert T. Weston

Out of the stars in their flight, out of the dust of eternity, here have we come,  
Stardust and sunlight, mingling through time and through space.

Out of the stars have we come, up from time.  
Out of the stars have we come.

Time out of time before time in the vastness of space, earth spun to orbit the  
sun,  
Earth with the thunder of mountains newborn, the boiling of seas.

Earth warmed by sun, lit by sunlight;  
This is our home;  
Out of the stars have we come.

Mystery hidden in mystery, back through all time;  
Mystery rising from rocks in the storm and the sea.

Out of the stars, rising from rocks and the sea,  
kindled by sunlight on earth, arose life.

Ponder this thing in your heart, life up from sea:  
Eyes to behold, throats to sing, mates to love.

Life from the sea, warmed by sun, washed by rain, life from within, giving  
birth, rose to love.

This is the wonder of time; this is the marvel of space; out of the stars swung  
the earth; life upon earth rose to love.

This is the marvel of life, rising to see and to know; Out of your heart, cry  
wonder: sing that we live.

CREDO [The lines after the first may be said by the people present, if they have them available to read]:

We covenant within this congregation, and with other Unitarian congregations, so that, together:

**We uphold the worth and dignity of every person;**

**We are compassionate with other people and animals;**

**We desire justice and equity in human relations;**

**We maintain the right of conscience;**

**We affirm the goals of peace, liberty and justice;**

**We support the peaceful democratic process;**

**We respect the web of all existence;**

**And so:**

**We act carry out a free and responsible search for truth and meaning;**

**We give one another our mutual trust and support;**

**We encourage spiritual growth in our congregations.**

FIRST LESSON [Choose a spiritual or reflective secular reading, for example:]

[Either] A reading from Richard Wilhelm's *Lectures on the I Ching*.

...practical experience suggests that everything we know moves in opposites. Indeed, presence of opposites is necessary for experience to take place. There must be contrast between subject and object, for otherwise consciousness, or the knowledge of things, is altogether impossible; Contrast between light and dark allows sense impressions to occur. Contrasts must exist for consciousness to be kindled. However, according to the Book of Changes, these opposites must not be regarded as enduring, but should be seen as changing states, which can pass from one into another. And because of this, contrast as such becomes relative. The point is merely to find the proper attitude for the understanding of contrast. By reaching such a position, a person no longer clings to one pole and assigns to the other a negative, opposite position, but, flowing with time, he can experience contrast itself. The stress here is on an inner adaptation to these outer opposites. If one maintains a harmony between the inner self and the surrounding world, the world, in spite of all diversity, can do no harm. This is perhaps Confucius' central contribution to the Book of Changes. Among China's sages, Confucius is described as the most timely. According to one of his statements, man's concern should not be to assume a fixed attitude that is forcefully maintained under any circumstances. An inflexible attitude naturally produces its

opposite, perpetuating the battle. Since in accordance with this law of change, the moment of victory is also the moment the turning point, neither side can achieve a conclusive victory. Rather, man should be in harmony with his surroundings; when prosperous, his conduct should be that of a prosperous man; when poor, his conduct should be that of a poor man; and when among barbarians, his conduct should be that of a man who is among barbarians. In this way every position in life is balanced by creating a harmony between the inner self and the surrounding world.

To create this kind of harmony, it is essential to find the proper position. And this proper position is in the centre. Time, it was stated, is the necessary ingredient that enables us to experience opposites; and experience, in fact, is only possible if contrast is encountered. But we see now also the importance of not being borne along by time alone, for time cannot become reality, unless we have a resting point from which to experience it. As long as we are tossed and torn from moment to moment, reproducing a phantasy of our past in the imagination, or anticipating the future with fear and hope, we are merely objects among many such objects. Mechanically propelled by our fate, like all other purely mechanical objects, we are moved here and there by thrusts and counter-thrusts. However, if we succeed in experiencing time, including its opposite from a central point of view, rather than withdrawing from it, then the circle will begin to close, and we can experience time as perpetuity. This consists precisely in time becoming harmonious. Only in this sense can we understand the statement from the Doctrine of the Mean, 'Effect central harmony', a statement which, in fact, expresses the secret of the Confucian doctrine.

[Wilhelm, R., Eber, I (trans.) (1980), Lectures on the I-Ching: Constancy and Change, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 3-5.]

[And/ Or] 'Time' from *Dark Side of the Moon*, by Roger Waters.

Ticking away the moments that make up a dull day  
You fitter and waste the hours in an off hand way  
Kicking around on a piece of ground in your home town  
Waiting for someone or something to show you the way.

Tired of lying in the sunshine staying home to watch the rain  
You are young and life is long and there is time to kill today  
And then one day you find ten years have got behind you  
No one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun

And you run and you run to catch up with the sun, but it's sinking

And racing around to come up behind you again  
The sun is the same in a relative way, but you're older  
Shorter of breath and one day closer to death.

Every year is passing shorter, never seem to pass the time  
Plans that either come to naught or half a page of scribbled lines  
Hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way  
The time is gone, the song is over, thought I'd something more to say.

[Roger Waters (1973), 'Time', *Dark Side of the Moon*, Pink Floyd Music Publishers Limited.  
Note: if using this, use 'Eclipse' as part of or the Benediction; if playing this (Track 04 in  
*Dark Side of the Moon*, includes 'Breathe Reprise'), it's perhaps best to play after the  
Benediction as a walk away music]

[Or] a reading from Esmé Wynne-Tyson on the right place for compassion as well as reason.

...Spinoza's concept of love, like his concept of God lacked compassion, and he was aware of this but regarded it as a virtue. Like Kant after him he considered the emotions of compassion and pity bad in themselves, and believed that all good acts to others should be motivated by reason.

...The obvious objection to this reasoning - that, without compassion there would be no desire to help the fellow man - never seems to have occurred to Spinoza; and this very dangerous theory, that compassion must never be indulged, evidently accounts for his Jehovahistic attitude to the lesser creatures. On this subject he writes:

Men have more rights over beasts than beasts over men. I do not deny that beasts feel; but I deny on that account we should not commit our necessity and use them as much as we wish and treat them as we will, since they do not agree with us in nature, and their emotions in nature are different from human emotions.

This is, of course, the modern scientific point of view. [We might question this assertion] But, apart from the fallacy of the argument as to the emotions of animals and men being wholly dissimilar, a fallacy obvious to anyone who has had personal experience of the lesser creatures, the idea that one may kill and ill-treat helpless sentient creatures because their emotions are different from our own, is not only utterly inhumane but verges on the ridiculous. Remembering the treachery, violence, lust and cruelty of many human beings, the "difference" in the comparatively mild emotions of most animals points to their superiority.

[Wynne-Tyson, E.(1970), *The Philosophy of Compassion*, London: Centaur Press, 244.]

Or read another selected text of substance.

HYMN 156 'The Harvest of Truth', *Hymns for Living* [Or any other]

[Tune: Rimington L. M.] [TRACK 10]

## SECOND LESSON

[Choose something scientific, secular or poetic]

[Either] A reading from *God's Utility Function* by Richard Dawkins

Let us return to living bodies and try to extract their utility function. There could be many but, revealingly, it will eventually turn out that they all reduce to one. A good way to dramatize our task is to imagine that living creatures were made by a Divine Engineer and try to work out, by reverse engineering, what the Engineer is trying to maximize: What was God's Utility function?

Cheetahs give every indication of being superbly designed for something, and it should be easy enough to reverse-engineer them and work out their utility function. They appear to be well designed to kill antelopes. The teeth, claws, eyes, nose, leg muscles, backbone and brain of a cheetah are all precisely what we should expect if God's purpose in designing cheetahs was to maximize deaths among antelopes. Conversely, if we reverse-engineer an antelope we find equally impressive evidence of design for precisely the opposite end: the survival of antelopes and starvation among cheetahs. It is as though cheetahs had been designed by one deity and antelopes by a rival deity. Alternatively, if there is only one Creator who made the tiger and the lamb, the cheetah and the gazelle, what is He playing at? Is He a sadist who enjoys spectator blood sports? Is He trying to avoid overpopulation in the mammals of Africa? Is He manoeuvring to maximize David Attenborough's television ratings? These are all intelligible utility functions that might have turned out to be true. In fact, of course, they are all completely wrong. We now understand the single Utility Function of life in great detail, and it is nothing like any of those.

...the true utility function of life, that which is being maximized in the natural world, is DNA survival. But DNA is not floating free; it is locked up in living bodies and it has to make the most of the levers of power at its disposal. DNA sequences that find themselves in cheetah bodies maximize their survival by

causing those bodies to kill gazelles. Sequences that find themselves in gazelle bodies maximize their survival by promoting opposite ends. But it is DNA survival that is being maximized in both cases.

Dawkins, R. (1995), *God's Utility Function*, London: Phoenix, 16-18, first published as (1995), *River Out of Eden*, preface and chapter 4, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

[Or] Lee Smolin discusses time, as affected by quantum and relativity theories.

...quantum mechanics allows many different, and apparently contradictory, situations to exist simultaneously, as long as they exist in a kind of shadow or potential reality... This applies to clocks as well, in the same way that a cat in quantum theory can exist in a state that is at the same time potentially living and potentially dead, a clock can exist in a state in which it is simultaneously running the usual way and running backward....

But it is worse than this, because relativity theory seems to require other changes in the notion of time... For relativity is a theory in which time can truly start and stop.

One circumstance in which this happens is inside of a black hole. A black hole is the result of the collapse of a massive star, when it has burned all its nuclear fuel and thus ceased to burn as a star. Once it is no longer generating heat, nothing can halt the collapse of a sufficiently massive star under the force of its own gravity. This process feeds on itself, because the smaller the star becomes, the stronger the force by which its parts are mutually attracted to one another. One consequence of this is that a point is reached at which something would have to go faster than light to escape from the surface of the star. Since nothing can travel faster than light, nothing can leave. This is why we call it a black hole, for not even light can escape from it.

However, let us think not of this, but of what happens to the star itself. Once it becomes invisible to us, it takes only a short time for the whole star to be compressed to the point at which it has an infinite density of matter and an infinite gravitational field. The problem is, what happens then? The problem, indeed, is what, in such a circumstance, 'then' might mean. If time is only given meaning by the motion of physical clocks, then we must say that time stops inside of each black hole. Because once the star reaches the state of infinite density and infinite gravitational field, no further change can take place, and no physical process can go on that would give meaning to time. Thus, the theory simply asserts that time stops.

The problem is in fact even worse than this, because general relativity allows for the whole universe to collapse like a black hole, in which case, time stops everywhere. It can also allow for time to begin. This is the way we understand the big bang, the most popular theory, currently, of the origin of the universe.

Perhaps the central problem that those of us who are trying to combine relativity and quantum mechanics think about is what is really happening inside a black hole. If time really stops there, then we must contemplate that all time, everywhere, comes to a stop in the collapse of the universe. On the other hand, if it does not stop, then we must contemplate a whole, limitless world inside each black hole, forever beyond our vision. Moreover, this is not just a theoretical problem, because a black hole is formed each time a massive enough star comes to the end of its life and collapses, and this mystery is occurring, somewhere in the vast universe we can see, perhaps one hundred times a second.

So, what is time? Is it the greatest mystery? No, the greatest mystery must be that each of us is here, for some brief time, and that part of the participation that the universe allows us in its larger existence is to ask such questions. And to pass on, from schoolchild to schoolchild, the joy of wondering, of asking, and of telling each other what we know and what we don't know.

[Smolin, L. (1995), 'What is Time', *Science, Mind and Cosmos*, 44-52, London: Phoenix Paperback., 50-52]

Or: Charles Darwin concludes *The Origin of Species* (1872):

It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse: a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for Life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of

gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved.

[Darwin, C. (1994, first published 1872), *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or The Preservation of Favoured races in the Struggle for Life*, London: Senate, originally London: John Murray, 429.]

[Or] a reading from *The Glories* by Rudyard Kipling

In Faiths and Food and Books and Friends  
Give every soul her choice.  
For such as follow divers ends  
In divers lights rejoice.

There is a glory of the Sun  
(Pity it passeth soon!)  
But those whose work is nearer done  
Look, rather, towards the Moon.

There is a glory of the Moon  
When the hot hours have run;  
But such as have not touched their noon  
Give worship to the Sun.

There is a glory of the Stars,  
Perfect on stilly ways;  
But such as follow present wars  
Pursue the Comet's blaze.

There is a glory in all things;  
But each must find his own,  
Sufficient for his reckonings,  
Which is to him alone.

Rudyard Kipling, *The Glories* (1925)

[And/ Or] a recombined verse from 'If' by Rudyard Kipling

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two imposters as the same.  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute

With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

[From 'If', first appearing in Kipling, *Rewards and Fairies*, in 1909]

MUSIC : Janacek, Andras Schiff (2001), 'The Barn Owl Has Not Flown Away'  
from *On An Overgrown Path*, Janacek, *A Recollection: Piano Works*, EMI,  
4:10 [TRACK 11]

## PRAYERS

Pray one or more of these:

A prayer by Norbert Capek, Unitarian minister, written when imprisoned by the Nazis:

It is worthwhile to live and fight courageously for sacred ideals.  
Oh blow ye evil winds into my body's fire; my soul you'll never unravel.  
Even though disappointed a thousand times or fallen in the fight and  
everything would worthless seem,  
I have lived amidst eternity.  
Be grateful, my soul,  
My life was worth living.  
He who was pressed from all sides but remained victorious in spirit is  
welcomed into the choir of heroes.  
He who overcame the fetters giving wing to the mind is entering into the  
golden age of the victorious.  
Amen.

We seek to be righteous;  
We seek to be courageous: standing upright and strong;  
We seek to be true.  
Get our hands busy, and make our feet become swift,  
Build a secure foundation for when those winds of change shift.  
Make our step steady and build the arm strong,  
Raise a ladder toward the stars and climb on every rung.  
Always do for others, and let others do for us,  
Expand the opportunities, and develop space and choice.  
Become bold and learn, and learn to live.  
Let's live to love, and use this gift.

May beauty delight and happiness come,  
May wonder fulfill and life become fun.  
May our hearts be peaceful and our actions just,  
May we find the truth, and tolerate we must.  
Yes, but all this may take so long!  
But meantime, so what, just sing this song.

Now let us think of the needs of ourselves alongside others.

First we pray for people of faith, particularly the followers and the leaders who serve. And we pray for the worldwide Unitarian Churches, including those in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Transylvania and the few in Scandinavia. Of course we include our own British Unitarian Churches and indeed this congregation, where people have worshipped for hundreds of years.

We pray for the world, thinking of... [mention some conflict zones]. We look for good governance in the European Union and our own countries of the British Isles. We do not forget the city and its surroundings where many of us live, that it may tackle its problems and reach out for a prosperous future.

We consider those individuals having a difficult time, either economically, socially or in difficult health. We think of anyone known to us, or those affected by another's bad health [pause]. There are also those who have died and have left those who mourn. If any are known to us, we can think of them now [pause].

We consider all these matters and these people to remind ourselves of what is important in this life: our communities, our world, and the people around us.

HYMN 157 'The Golden Rule', *Hymns for Living* [Or any other]  
[Tune: Belmont C. M.] [TRACK 12]

SERMON [optional]

[Offer some thoughts on any of the readings or talk about recent events or a topic of interest and give a religious interpretation.]

COLLECTION AND NOTICES

HYMN [optional] 177 'We can Become', *Hymns for Living* [Or any other]  
[Tune: Amazing Grace C. M.] [TRACK 13]

## BENEDICTION

[Either]

All that you touch, and all that see, all that you taste, all you feel, and all that you love, and all that you hate, all you distrust, all you save, and all that you give, and all that you deal, and all that you buy, beg, borrow or steal, and all you create, and all you destroy, and all that you do, and all that you say, and all that you eat, and everyone you meet, and all that you slight, and everyone you fight, and all that is now, and all that is gone, and all that's to come, and everything under the Sun is in tune, but the Sun is eclipsed by the Moon.

[Roger Waters (1973), 'Eclipse', *Dark Side of the Moon*, Pink Floyd Music Publishers Limited.]

[And/ Or]

Go out and look with sincerity  
With those who see and say things differently;  
Look them in the eye and listen;  
Don't just criticise but find with them what is in common.  
Nothing is perfect, but nothing is totally in the dark,  
And so pull together on what is separate or in the shade  
Back into the light  
To take the richness of what is discovered with them  
And hold it out for others.  
Amen.

MUSIC: Bellini, Maria Callas, Soprano (2000), 'Casta Diva' from *Norma*, Act I, 1961, Maria Callas, EMI Classics - length 5:33. [TRACK 14]