



Spiritual Liberty

104th anniversary of Universal Worship celebrated on Sunday 11th May 2025.

The Universal Worship is a service to draw humanity together, in the hope that people of all religions can pray together in peace; and live together in harmony.

After music from the *Flute sisters*, Zubin Shore introduced the Universal Worship with the words of Hazrat Inayat Khan: 'Every line of the prayers Saum, Salat and Khatum draws us closer to the Divine Being. The simplicity of the words of the prophets reveals the Mountain of Truth behind them. Seeking God in the depth of our hearts and in the hearts of those around us, is the religion of the future'

From South Africa, Magda Alberts van - Essen spoke on God and Worship.

Hello, Sufi friends, far and wide throughout the world. Very warm greetings from South Africa.

In the teaching on Spiritual Liberty Murshid tells us that whoever we are, Believer or unbeliever, God doesn't care. His mercy and grace flow through all. What better demonstration of Spiritual Liberty is there? Then in the section headed Worship, Murshid gives a resounding NO to the question of whether theoretical knowledge of God can lead us to the highest realization. And his striking analogies are that written music can't entertain us. That the description of perfume can't delight our senses. And that no recipe can satisfy our hunger. To me, these examples are better than volumes of text.

And while Murshid tells us to strive to realize God, he gives an alternative by saying that we can also attain eternal happiness through the admiration and worship of nature's beauty and its source. Another example of Spiritual Liberty. The Sufi message is just so inclusive. And we know that it isn't the only path. But it is our path. And for that we can be deeply grateful. Thank you.

From the United Kingdom Haniyya Harradine spoke on Nature and Personal Being.

The argument has been raised that all manifestation is due to the interaction of natural elements. Working by their own force, every cause has its effect. And the effect again becomes a cause for the reaction. Thus nature works unaided.

The answer is that every cause must have some preceding cause or first cause to produce it. And logically, one cause may produce many effects. Which effects again become second causes, producing new reactions.

While intellectual minds are seeking second causes. The wise only perceive the first cause. Air, earth, water, being second causes. The preceding cause, which makes them act and pause is hidden. Granting that we see nature and also admitting its original cause, upon what grounds do we consider the cause to be a personal God,

meriting worship? The answer is that nature itself consists of different personalities. And each of them has its peculiar attributes.

The sum total of all these personalities is one. The only real personality. In relation to that one, all other personalities are merely an illusion. It may be said that the personality of man is quite comprehensible, since his actions exhibit him as a single individual. Whereas God's personality has no clear identification of its own. The answer is that variety covers unity.

Thank you.

From the Netherlands Noor van Duijn spoke on Truth

Different methods, religions and philosophies have been adopted by different nations at various periods. Though the form and teachings of the several religions appear so unlike, their source is one and the same. But from the very beginning the differences have created prejudice and fear and antagonism between people. Such dissensions occupy a large portion of the histories of the world and have become the most important subjects in life.

'So many castes, so many creeds,
so many faiths, and so many beliefs.
All have arisen from the ignorance of man.
Wise is one who only Truth conceives.'

The wise person realizes that the fundamental basis of all religions and beliefs is One, Haq or Truth. The Truth has always been covered by two garments. A turban on the head and a robe upon the body. The turban is made of mystery known as mysticism, and the robe is made of morality which is called religion. Truth has been covered up by most of the prophets and saints in order to hide it from ignorant eyes, as yet too undeveloped to bear it in its naked form.

Those who see the Truth uncovered abandon reason and logic, good and bad, high and low, new and old. Differences and distinctions of names and forms fade away and the whole universe is realized as nothing other than Truth. Truth in its realization is One. In its representation, it is many, since its revelations are made in the varying conditions of time and space. As water in a fountain flows in one stream but falls in many drops divided by time and space, so are the revelations of the one stream of Truth.

Not everyone can comprehend the idea of different truths being derived from the one Truth. Common sense has been so narrowly trained in this world of variety that it naturally fails to realize the breadth and subtlety of the spiritual fact so far beyond the reach of its limited reasoning.

From Australia, the editor of Spirit Matters magazine Yaqin Hull spoke on Self Knowledge and Love.

The Sufis have existed throughout human history. The word Sufi comes from the word Safa. Which means purity, freedom from dogmatism, negativism and fanaticism. Sufis have naturally been drawn to the mystical path. They've been born in different parts of the world and have grown up speaking different languages. And yet they've all spoken the language of the heart. Which is the absorption in the divine, the mystical path of Oneness with God. They've often had to conceal their understanding and their mystical beliefs from people in general. Because these mystical beliefs have often been misunderstood. And indeed, Sufis have been persecuted at times throughout history.

The Sufis have come to know God as the Absolute. The only being. And with this understanding is the knowledge that everything is a manifestation of the divine being. It is through self-knowledge and the total absorption in God, that the Sufi attains the highest level of understanding.

It's the complete realization that there is only God. *Ishq Allah Ma'bud Lillah*

Translate as 'God is love, lover and beloved.'

Love manifests in God. And when love is perfected and a person is completely absorbed in the divine presence through surrender, then they achieve the highest attainment. It is this mystical understanding that God is Love. When a Sufi arrives at this realization, he or she becomes totally absorbed in bliss, which is oneness with God. He or she then ceases to exist as a separate person and becomes one with the absolute.

This lack of dogmatism and fanaticism in Sufism is what has drawn me to this path. And the glimpses that we get through our practices and through zikr spur me on, drawing me deeper into the Message.

Readings from the spiritual traditions on the topic of spiritual liberty.

We read from the World Scriptures on the subject of Spiritual Liberty

We read from the Hindu Scriptures - Bhagavad Gita:

Worn-out garments are shed by the body,
worn-out bodies are shed by the dweller within the body,
new bodies are donned by the dweller, like garments...

And, such is the one.

Not dried, not wetted, not burned, not wounded,
Innermost essence, everywhere, always,
being of beings, changeless, eternal, for ever and ever -
'Self-Knowledge is the real wisdom.'

"Knowledge of God as well as the knowledge of our own divine nature.

What do we mean when we say God?

God is infinite existence, infinite consciousness, and infinite bliss.

We offer to the omniscient God our reverence, our homage and our gratitude, for the light of the Divine Wisdom.

We read from the Buddhist Scriptures Dhammapada, 4: 52-56

Like a beautiful flower full of colour and also fragrant, even so
fruitful are the fair words of one who practices them.

As from a great heap of flowers many garlands can be made, even so
should many good deeds be done by one born a mortal.

Not the sweet smell of flowers, not even the fragrance of sandal,
tagara, or jasmine blows against the wind. But the fragrance of the
virtuous blows against the wind. Truly the virtuous one pervades all
directions with the fragrance of their virtue.

Of all the fragrances - sandal, tagara, blue lotus and jasmine - the
fragrance of virtue is the sweetest.

Faint is the fragrance of tagara and sandal, but excellent is the fragrance of the virtuous, wafting even amongst the gods.

We offer to the omniscient God, our reverence, our homage and our gratitude, for the Light of Divine Compassion.

We read from the Zoroastrian Scriptures God is found through worship: 62

We first offer sacrifice to Thee, O Lord.

And so, thinking of Thee, and of all the gifts of the Good Spirit, and of the deeds of the Saint whose soul is united with Righteousness, we draw near to Thy Majesty to worship with songs of Praise, O God.

To Thee, O Lord, and to Righteousness shall we thus humbly pay our due, all of us who indeed humbly dwell in the Kingdom and who are fed by Love, for the wise find bliss in all things within Thy Majesty, O God.

We offer to the omniscient God, our reverence, our homage and our gratitude, for the Light of Divine Purity.

We read from the Jewish Scriptures: Isaiah 26 8-10

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you;
your name and renown are the desire of our hearts.

My soul yearns for you in the night;
in the morning my spirit longs for you.

When your judgments come upon the earth,
the people of the world learn righteousness.

We offer to the omniscient God our reverence, our homage and our gratitude, for the light of the Divine Law.

We read from the Christian Scriptures: Corinthians 8-13

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease;
where there are tongues, they will be stilled;
where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part,
but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.

When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.

For now, we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face.

Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love.

We offer to the omniscient God our reverence, our homage and our gratitude, for the light of the Divine Self Sacrifice.

We read from the Scriptures of Islam Sura At-Taghabun 64 15-17

Your wealth and children are only a test, but Allah alone has a great reward.
So be mindful of Allah to the best of your ability, hear and obey, and spend in charity—that will be best for you. And whoever is saved from the selfishness of their own souls, it is they who are truly successful.
If you lend to Allah a good loan, He will multiply it for you and forgive you. For Allah is Most Appreciative, Most Forbearing.
“He is the” Knower of the seen and unseen—the Almighty, All-Wise.

We offer to the omniscient God our reverence, our homage and our gratitude, for the light of the Divine Unity.

We read from the Gayan: (Raga’s p. 124)

Thou hast won my heart
A thousand times over.
Thou comes veiled under many and varied guises
And in every guise thou art unique.
Who is not attracted by the splendour
thou hast so skilfully produced on the face of the earth?
In this fair beauty thou shinest, adorned in myriad garbs.

We offer to the omniscient God, our reverence, our homage and our gratitude, for the Light of Divine Truth.

Siraj un Munir: Pir Nawab Pasnak - Spiritual Liberty

First of all, thank you all for coming, thank you to the ones who have made the organisation and thank you to everyone who is here. I know that for some, it is a sacrifice - 6 o'clock in the morning in Mexico, and it's coming on to 11 o'clock at night in Australia. But sacrifices bring their rewards and we are celebrating this Universal Worship, because it's more or less the anniversary of the birth of Universal Worship, which was given to us by Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan as a way of recognising the unity that there is in all the spiritual traditions around the world.

As we've already heard from the speakers, unity is one truth, which is covered by many garments. When we consider the different scriptures, in the Hindu scripture, it talks about worn out garments, that we shed, and worn-out bodies that are shed by the Spirit, because the innermost essence is everywhere and always. That is the being of being, changeless and eternal forever and ever.

And how do we find that? We find that by knowing ourselves. To the Hindu scriptures, Self knowledge is the real wisdom. In the Buddhist scriptures, there is a very poetic evocation of the fragrance of the virtuous or the wise, that is not blown about by the wind, but spreads independent of the physical world, that is felt everywhere. Faint as the fragrance of tagara and sandalwood, excellent as the fragrance of the virtuous, wafting even amongst the gods.

In the Zoroastrian scripture, we hear we are those who are fed by love. Who in the world is not fed by love? Everyone is fed by love. The wise find this in all things within Thy majesty. And what is excluded from the majesty of God. Nothing. Therefore, the wise find bliss in all things.

In the Jewish scriptures, it talks about my soul yearning for you in the night, and in the morning, my spirit longs for you. So in the darkness, in the daylight, in the moments of unconsciousness, in the moments of consciousness, always, we are longing for that one. And when Your judgement comes upon the earth, the people know the world learn righteousness. Yes.

In the Christian scripture, we read, Love never fails. Prophecies? Yes, they will cease. And tongues will be still, because they are working in the world of manifestation. Prophecy is forced into form, but Love is beyond form, and so it will never fail. Now, I know in part, but I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 'Of these three, of faith, hope and love, the greatest is love.'

And in the scriptures of Islam, a very interesting sentence, it says, 'Your wealth and children are only a test'. We may think they are the reward, my wealth is my reward, my children are my reward. They are a test. What is a test? A test is a way of revealing what is in us. By our reaction, too, the blessing of having children, by our reaction to the wealth or the lack of wealth that we have in our life, this shows us something about ourselves. But if we invest our time, our life, our concentration, our consciousness, in Allah, then we find the great reward. If you lend to Allah a good loan, if you give Allah yourself, He will multiply it for you and forgive the loan, for Allah is most appreciative, most forbearing. He is the knower of the seen and the unseen, the Almighty, the all-wise. So when we go beyond the limitation of ourselves, we may come to that all knowing consciousness.

And in the Gayan, we read 'Thou comest veiled under many and varied guises, and in every guise Thou art nature.' Every form is the form of all. It is the form of God. Every form, every person is the form of Allah, if we know how to look at them. 'In this air of beauty, Thou shinest adorned in myriad garbs.'

Sometimes, people look for something, some clear guidance in the scriptures or sometimes in sermons, they say, "Well, now, just tell us what we're supposed to do."

All the scriptures tell us what to do if we know how to listen. If the scripture says, Love your neighbour as yourself, that's clear. But it takes the right attunement in order to be able to do that. If we look for unity, we can find unity. If we look for differences, we will only find differences.

This universal worship is something that has, you could say, two faces. One is the face of and for the community. It's a chance for us to come together. Unfortunately online we can't sit beside each other, in the pews, in the church, or kneel beside each other on the carpet. But we can see each other's faces and feel the fellowship of our family.

Universal Worship also has a face toward the divine, it directs us toward that One. And what is spiritual liberty? It's not the freedom to do whatever we want. It's liberty from all that constrains us. It's liberty from all the preconceptions and dogmas and assumptions and opinions that limit us so much in our life. And when we can let go of that, then we can appreciate all that surrounds us, both the pleasant and the unpleasant, because life will always have both.

When we are free to appreciate everything, then we can really appreciate the Creator that gave us everything. Let's listen now to some music.

Prayer Khatum and Blessing.