Written Sermon: Democracy; Through My Eyes Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson

GOOD MORNING AND WELCOME TO THE SEDONA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

I WELCOME YOU IN THE NAME OF THE ANCESTORS, ON WHOSE SHOULDERS I STAND,

AND I WELCOME YOU IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT IS HOLY AND SACRED.

I AM MTUASWA ANTHONY JOHNSON, CURRENTLY A SECOND YEAR STUDENT AT STARR KING SCHOOL FOR THE MINISTRY.

IT IS INDEED AN HONOR AND A PLEASURE TO BE ABLE TO SHARE THIS SPACE WITH YOU ON THIS BEAUTIFUL MORNING.

MY APPRECIATION FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM ARE BEST SUMMED UP

IN THE WELCOMING WORDS ADAPTED FROM THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF DUBLIN, IRELAND, AND I QUOTE:

“WE DO NOT ASK WHAT YOU BELIEVE, OR EXPECT YOU TO THINK THE WAY WE DO,

BUT ONLY THAT YOU TRY TO LIVE A KINDLY, HELPFUL LIFE,

WITH THE DIGNITY PROPER TO A HUMAN BEING.

WELCOME, ALL WHO BELIEVE THAT RELIGION IS

WIDER THAN ANY SECT

AND DEEPER THAN ANY SET OF OPINIONS,

WELCOME ALL WHO MIGHT FIND IN OUR

FRIENDSHIP, STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR DAILY LIVING.”

HAPPY POST THANKSGIVING OR THANKSGRIEVING DAY DEPENDING ON YOUR

PERSPECTIVE.

TODAY’S SERMON WILL SPEAK TO THE CONCEPT OF SOUL IN OUR MODERN LIVES AND

WHAT IT MAY MEAN TO SURRENDER TO “THE SOUL.”

THE “WISE SILENCE”, AS EMERSON CALLED IT. LAO TZU CALLED IT THE TAO, PLATO

CALLED IT THE “GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL”,

ARISTOTLE CALLED IT “BEING”.

IN JUDAISM THEY CALL IT “EIN SOF”, THAT WHICH IS EVERYTHING AND IS NOTHING.

THE “KA, THE “BA” AND THE “AKH” IS WHAT THE EGYPTIANS CALLED IT.

WE CALL IT “THE SOUL.”

TODAY MOST OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD BELIEVES IN AN IMMORTAL SOUL

THAT LIVES ON IN SOME FORM.

IT IS A SHARED TEACHING OF HINDUISM, ZOROASTRIANISM, JUDAISM, BUDDHISM,

CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM AND BAHÁ’Í,

AS WELL AS OF NATIVE AND TRIBAL RELIGIONS THROUGHOUT AFRICA, THE AMERIC

AND ELSEWHERE.

SOME SAY THAT SOUL WILL LIVE FOREVER IN EITHER A HEAVEN OR A [HELL](http://www.vision.org/visionmedia/origin-of-hell/41044.aspx).

OTHERS SUPPOSE THAT AFTER DEATH THE SOUL WILL REANIMATE OTHER LIFE FORMS

IN AN ENDLESS CYCLE OF REINCARNATION.

MOST NONBELIEVERS, OF COURSE, DISPUTE THE IDEA OF A SOUL, BEING CONVINCED

THAT AFTER DEATH THERE IS ONLY NOTHINGNESS.

I BELIEVE, LIKE EMERSON, THAT THE SOUL OF THE WHOLE

RESIDES IN THE PERSON SITTING NEXT TO YOU. THE PERSON YOU HAD COFFEE WITH

THIS WEEK. THE PERSON YOU FROWNED UPON YESTERDAY AND THE PERSON

WHO YOU SAW IN THE MIRROR THIS MORNING. EMERSON STATES;

“THAT GREAT NATURE IN WHICH WE REST, AS THE EARTH LIES IN THE SOFT ARMS OF

THE ATMOSPHERE [IS] THAT UNITY,

THAT OVER-SOUL, WITHIN WHICH EVERY MAN’S PARTICULAR BEING IS CONTAINED

AND MADE ONE WITH ALL OTHER.

WE LIVE IN SUCCESSION, IN DIVISION, IN PARTS, IN PARTICLES.

MEAN TIME WITHIN MAN IS THE SOUL OF THE WHOLE; THE WISE SILENCE;

THE UNIVERSAL BEAUTY, TO WHICH EVERY PART AND PARTICLE IS EQUALLY

RELATED; THE ETERNAL ONE. AND THIS DEEP POWER IN WHICH WE EXIST,

AND WHOSE BEATITUDE IS ALL ACCESSIBLE TO US,

IS NOT ONLY SELF-SUFFICING AND PERFECT IN EVERY HOUR,

BUT THE ACT OF SEEING AND THE THING SEEN,

THE SEER AND THE SPECTACLE,

THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT, ARE ONE.

WE SEE THE WORLD PIECE BY PIECE,

AS THE SUN, THE MOON, THE ANIMAL, THE TREE;

BUT THE WHOLE, OF WHICH THESE ARE THE SHINING PARTS,

IS THE SOUL.”

BY THE WAY… YOU DO KNOW THAT NO ONE IN THIS CONGREGATION WHETHER

PRESENT THIS MORNING OR NOT…HAS A SOUL

YOU DO NOT HAVE A SOUL…YOU ARE A SOUL

THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF MY SERMON TODAY.

OF MY OFFERING FOR TODAY.

THAT WE ALL SURRENDER TO THE REALIZATION,

TO THE BELIEF THAT WE ARE SOULS.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH TO THE POSSIBILITY.

THAT WE ARE SOULS ON THIS PHYSICAL JOURNEY.

THAT WHEN I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES

I AM FEEDING YOUR SOUL.

MAYBE THAT IS WHY IT IS SO HARD FOR SOME OF US TO LOOK ONE ANOTHER IN THE EYE.

I BELIEVE THAT EYE CONTACT IS FOOD FOR THE SOUL.

IN ONE OF MY POEMS I CALL IT CHAKRA FOOD:

CHAKRA FOOD!

IT’S WHAT KEEPS THE CHAKRAS HOT.

IT IS A FEELING, MAYBE HARD TO CLASIFY OR QUANTIFY

AFTERALL. HOW MUCH DOES THE SOUL WEIGH, WHAT SIZE IS IT?

WHAT IS ITS TEMPERATURE, WHERE ON THE TABLE OF ELEMENTS DOES THE SOUL

BELONG?

IF IT CANNOT BE QUANTIFIED DOES THAT MAKE IT UNREAL, A FANTASY? I THINK NOT.

I THINK, LIKE THE ANCIENT ONES, LIKE THE ZULU WHO CALLED IT MOYA.

LIKE THE DAGARA OF BURKINA FASO WHO CALL IT YIELBONGURA. ”THE THING THAT

KNOWLEDGE CANNOT EAT.”

I'M GONNA ASK THE PERSIAN POET HAFIZ

TO HELP US OUT... HAFIZ SAYS;

                 "ALL THE PARTICLES IN THE WORLD   
  ARE ALIVE AND LOOKING FOR LOVERS.

                  PIECES OF STRAW TREMBLE IN THE  
                   PRESENCE OF AMBER

HIS TEACHER’S DEATH UNLEASHED A TORRENT OF ESCTATIC POEMS.

LOVERS, IT IS TIME  
  FOR THE TASTE OF FIRE.

LET SADNESS AND YOUR FEAR OF DEATH  
 SIT IN THE CORNER AND SULK....

THE SKY ITSELF REELS WITH LOVE.

 THERE IS ONE BEING  
 INSIDE ALL OF US, ONE PEACE.

POET, LET EVERY WORD TREMBLE ITS WIND BELL.

SADDLE THE HORSE WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION.

WE ARE ALL STILL RIDERS

WE ARE STILL POETS

SOUL STILL FLOWS IN OUR BLOOD

AND IS PRESENT IN OUR BONES,

RESONATING IN A KIND OF SIMMERING SAUCE

WAITING TO BE SERVED.” END OF QUOTE

I JUST HOPE THAT THIS IS NOT OUR LAST SUPPER.

ASHE’, AMEN, BLESSED BE.