



See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! *1 John 3:1*

A hush fell on the crowd gathered in the Tabernacle on Temple Square at the very heart of Salt Lake City. Interfaith Week 2008 was about to culminate in a concert of music and dance featuring local groups from many different faiths and religious traditions. On this Sunday evening in February, the lines that divided us into Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Native American, Muslim and Jew, would grow dim while the common bonds of our humanity would shine bright. But first, before the choirs could begin to sing and the dancers swirl, the call to prayer would ring out in the ancient styles of our many traditions.

A spotlight picked out a solitary figure at a distant podium. Suddenly, in that place dedicated for pioneering Latter-day Saints by their rough and ready leader Brigham Young, the high, exotic tones of the Adhan – the Muslim call to prayer – floated up and out over the heads of the hushed audience. Five times that plaintive, wailing song was repeated while we sat and listened in reverent silence.

Yet, not all of us were silent. From somewhere hidden above in the balcony, a baby began to wail back, its piercing, fussy cry interfering with the call to prayer being sung below. When the Adhan ended, two Jewish men, their heads covered with prayer shawls, blew the Shofar, the sacred curled ram's horn, and cried out in Hebrew. The baby cried back, even harder. Soon other infant voices joined in from distant corners of the Tabernacle. The adults in the audience grew increasingly restless as they tried to keep their attention fixed on those who were calling us to prayer. By the time a cantor from the Episcopal cathedral began to intone a plainsong chant, I, like others around me bristled in annoyance at these noisy children and their parents who resolutely kept them in the building instead of banishing them to the outside.

And then, in an instant, I glimpsed the truth. And I shivered. As any nurse who works with newborns knows, babies cry when they hear other babies cry. Could it be that these ancient, plaintive calls to prayer sung by Muslim, Jew, and Christian, were heard by those babies in the audience for what they truly are? Cries to God our Father, our Mother, our Creator, our Sustainer. Nothing more than the cries of children, transcending language, culture, and religion. Cries from the needy heart of humanity straight to the loving heart of God. Yes, we are all God's children. Which is why God cannot fail to hear us when we call. – David Pascoe © 2008