

A READING FROM THE ISHA UPANISHAD

The Self¹ is one, unmoving,
 swifter than the mind.
 The senses lag, but it moves ahead.
 Unmoving, it outruns pursuers.
 Because of it, Air² supports all activities.

Unmoving, it moves.
 It is far away, yet near.
 It is within all, it is outside all.

Whoever sees all beings in the Self
 and the Self in all beings
 by virtue of that knows no sorrow.
 For the one who knows,
 in whom all beings have become the Self,
 how can there be delusion or grief
 when one sees such oneness?

The Self is everywhere, bodiless, shapeless,
 whole, pure, wise,
 all-knowing, bright shining,
 self-depending, all transcending,
 eternally arranging all things according to their nature.

(4-8)

A READING FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

You are entitled to perform works,
 but not at all to their fruits.
 The fruit of your work should not be your motive;
 nor should you be attached to inaction.

Follow discipline³ and perform your works with detachment,
 even-minded in success and failure.
 Discipline means even-mindedness.
 For a work performed with a selfish motive
 is far inferior to the discipline of even-mindedness.
 Seek refuge in evenness of mind.
 Wretched are those whose incentive is results.

Those with even-mindedness

¹ Lit. "it," implied *atman*.

² Or "breath" (Skt. *matarisva*)

³ Skt. *yoga*.

renounce the fruit of actions and enter the state of bliss.
When your mind fully crosses this mire of delusion,
you will no longer worry about
the enjoyments of this world or the next
that the Scriptures have taught you or will teach you.
When your meditating mind—
now bewildered by conflicting views—
stands firm and undistracted in meditation,
then you will attain discipline.⁴

(2:47-53)

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A READING FROM THE TAO TE CHING

The Tao⁵ that can be told
is not the immortal Tao.
The name that can be named
is not the immortal name.

The origin of heaven and earth has no name.
The mother of the ten thousand things has a name.

Thus in innocence we see the mystery;
in passion we see the manifestations.
Two different names for one and the same.
The one we call dark—the dark beyond dark—
the door to all mystery!

(#1)

14

A READING FROM THE SAMYUTTA NIKAYA

The Buddha said, "I discovered that profound truth, so difficult to perceive, difficult to understand, tranquillizing and sublime, which is not to be gained by mere reasoning, and is visible only to the wise.

"The world, however, is given to pleasure, delighted with pleasure, enchanted with pleasure. Truly, such beings will hardly understand the law of conditionality, the dependent origination of everything. Yet others are beings whose eyes are only a little covered with dust: they will understand the truth."

What now is the Noble Truth of Suffering?

Birth is suffering; decay is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering; not to get what one desires is suffering; in short the five groups of existence are suffering.

⁴ Skt. *yoga*.

⁵ *Tao*="way"

What now is the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering?
It is craving, which, . . . bound up with pleasure and lust, now here, now there, finds ever-fresh delight. But where does this craving arise and take root? Wherever in the world there are delightful and pleasurable things, there this craving rises and takes root. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are delightful and pleasurable: there this craving arises and takes root.⁶

15

A READING FROM THE DHAMMAPADA

Mind is the forerunner of all actions.
All deeds are led by the mind, created by the mind.
If one speaks or acts with a corrupt mind, suffering follows,
as the wheel follows the hoof of an ox pulling a cart.

Mind is the forerunner of all actions.
All deeds are led by the mind, created by the mind.
If one speaks or acts with a serene mind happiness follows,
as surely as one's shadow.

Animosity does not eradicate animosity.
Only by loving kindness is animosity dissolved.
This law is ancient and eternal.

There are those who are aware
that they are always facing death.
Knowing this they put aside all quarrels.

(1:1-2, 5-6)⁷

16

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS

In the day that the LORD God made the heavens and the earth, when no plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.

(1:4b-7)⁸

⁶ Trans. Nyanatiloka, in *Teachings of the Buddha*, ed. Jack Kornfield, (Boston: Shambala, 1993), 38.

⁷ Trans. Ananda Maitreya, (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1985).

⁸ All Jewish and Christian Scriptures citations from *New Revised Standard Version* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

FROM THE SAYINGS OF THE HASIDIM

Before the soul enters the air of this world, it is conducted through all the worlds. Last of all, it is shown the first light which once—when the world was created—illuminated all things, and which God removed when humankind grew corrupt. Why is the soul shown this light? So that, from that hour on, it may yearn to attain the light, and approach it rung by rung in its life on earth. And those who reach it, the *zaddikim*⁹—into them the light enters, and out of them it shines into the world again. That is the reason it was hidden.¹⁰

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he taught them saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
 Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

(5:1-9)

FROM THE PROSLGION OF SAINT ANSELM

Escape from your everyday business for a short while, hide for a moment from your restless thoughts. Break off your cares and troubles and be less concerned about your tasks and labors. Make a little time for God and rest a while in him.

Enter your mind’s inner chamber. Shut out everything but God and whatever helps you to seek God; and when you have shut the door, look for him. Speak now to God and say with your whole heart: *I seek your face; your face, Lord, I desire.*¹¹

Teach me to seek you, and when I seek you show yourself to me, for I cannot seek you unless you teach me, nor can I find you unless you show yourself to me. Let me seek you in desiring you and desire you in seeking you, find you in loving you and love you in finding you.

(Cap. 1: *Opera omnia*)¹²

⁹ *Zaddikim*=the righteous, or Hasidic teachers.

¹⁰ From Martin Buber, *Ten Rungs: Hasidic Sayings* (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), 38.

¹¹ Ps. 27:8

¹² *The Office of Readings According to the Roman Rite* (Boston: St Paul Editions: 1983), 1387.

1.10

A READING FROM THE QUR'AN

Truly: all who surrender their whole being to God,
and do good, shall have their reward with their Sustainer;
these need have no fear, neither shall they grieve.

(2:112)¹³

1.11

FROM THE POEMS OF RUMI

O pure people who wander the world,
amazed at the idols you see,
what you are searching for out there,
if you look within, you yourself are it.

O tribe, more beautiful than moonlight,
how can you tolerate your muddy existence?
You have drowned yourself in the tavern,
wake up! It is day. Why are you asleep?

(*Rubaiyat* #549, 561)¹⁴

1.12

FROM THE PRAYERS OF THE SIKHS

It is not through thought that God is to be comprehended
though we strive to grasp him a hundred thousand times;
nor by outer silence and deep meditation
can the inner silence be reached;
nor is our hunger for God appeasable
by piling up world-loads of wealth.
All the innumerable devices of worldly wisdom
leave a person disappointed; not one avails.
How then shall we know the Truth?
How shall we tear the veils of untruth away?
Abide by God's will, O Nanak, and make his will,
which is written in your heart, your own.

(*Morning Prayer* #1)¹⁵

¹³ All readings from the Qur'an will be taken from "The Light of Dawn: Daily Readings from the Holy Qur'an," selected and rendered by Camille Adams Helminski (Boston: Shambala, 2000) unless otherwise noted.

¹⁴ Trans. Kabir Helminski, *The Pocket Rumi* (Boston: Shambala, 2001), 718.

¹⁵ All these Sikh Prayers are based on the translations of Khushwant Singh and others; adapted for inclusive language and modern idiom.