

A READING FROM THE KATHA UPANISHAD

Beyond the senses are the objects.
 Beyond the objects is the mind—*manas*.
 Beyond the mind is the intellect—*buddhi*.
 Beyond the intellect is the Great Self—*mahat*.
 Beyond the Great Self is the Unmanifest—*avyakta*.
 Beyond the Unmanifest is the Great Person—*purusha*.

There is nothing higher than the *purusa*.
 This is the culmination, the supreme goal.
 Hidden in all things, the Self does not shine forth;
 but it is seen by those of subtle sight
 with supreme, subtle intelligence.

The discriminating should merge the speech into the mind,
 the mind into the intelligent self,
 the intelligent self into the Great Soul,
 and the Great Soul into the peaceful Self.

Stand up! Wake up!
 And learn by approaching the excellent ones.
 The wise ones describe that path to be as impassable as a razor's edge,
 which, when sharpened, is difficult to tread on.

Those who have seen the wordless,
 untouched, formless, undiminishing,
 and also tasteless, eternal, without scent,
 without beginning and without end,
 higher than the great, ever constant,
 are freed from the jaws of Death.

(3:10-15)

A READING FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Better than sacrifice of matter alone
 is sacrifice through understanding.
 All action, without exception,
 is completed in understanding.

Know the true nature of this understanding
 by approaching illumined souls.
 If you prostrate at their feet, render them service,
 and question them with an open, guileless heart,
 those wise seers of Truth will instruct you in that knowledge.

When you have gained enlightenment,
you will not be confused again.
This understanding will show you
that all exists in yourself, and then in me.
Even if you were the worst of all evildoers,
this knowledge alone would carry you,
like a raft, across evil and deceit.

Once the fire is kindled,
it reduces the firewood to ashes.
Just so, understanding consumes all action.
There is no purifier like understanding.
One who has attained purity of heart through discipline¹
will see the light of truth in the self in the course of time.

Those who master their senses,
are devoted to their practice and full of faith,
attain understanding.
Having gained understanding,
they soon reach supreme peace
in the form of God-realization.
But those full of doubts,
lacking discrimination and faith, are lost.
For those full of doubts
there is neither this world nor the world beyond,
nor even happiness.

(4:33-40)

10.3

A READING FROM THE TAO TE CHING

Can your breath and blood, heart and soul,
become as one?
Can you breathe like a baby
or wipe the dark mirror free from stain?
Can you love the people
but govern without ruling?
Can you be like a woman,
opening and closing the gates of the sky?
Can you light up the world without trying?

Giving birth and nourishing,
producing yet not possessing,
working and not taking credit,
sowing well but not reaping:
this is *Te*—the Primal Virtue.

¹ Skt. *yoga* (*yogasamsiddhah*).

10.4

A READING FROM THE DHAMMAPADA

If one sees an intelligent person
who is skillfully able to point out faults
and give suitable reproof,
let one associate with such a revealer of treasures.
Only good can come from such an association.

Let the wise guide, correct
and dissuade others from what is vile.
They will be treasured by the good
and spurned by the evil.

Do not choose bad friends.
Do not choose persons of low habits.
Select good friends.
Associate with noble persons.

Whoever drinks deeply of *dhamma* lives happily,
with a peaceful mind.
The wise delight in the *dhamma*
taught by the holy ones.²

(6:1-4)

10.5

FROM THE WRITINGS OF DOGEN ZEN-JI

If you wish to attain enlightenment, begin at once to practice *za-zen*. For this meditation you need a quiet room; food and drink should be taken in moderation. Free yourself from all attachments and bring to rest the ten thousand beings. Think not of good or evil; judge not on right or wrong; maintain the flow of the mind, will, and consciousness; bring to an end all desire, all concepts and judgments!³

10.6

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
So you will find favor and good repute
in the sight of God and of people.

² Pali/Skt. *ariyas*—those free from passion.

³ Trans. Dumoulin, in *Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, 1065.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.
It will be a healing for your flesh
and a refreshment for your body.

(3:3-8)

10.7

FROM THE WRITINGS OF HAI GAON⁴

God arranged the order of creation so that all things are bound to each other. The direction of events in the lower world depends on entities above them, as our sages teach, "There is no blade of grass in the world below that does not have an angel over it, striking it and telling it to grow.

Human souls are also bound to higher levels, and therefore, when a perfect individual becomes involved in meditation⁵ upon wisdom, it is possible for one to predict future events. As a result of deep meditation, one's consciousness and mind fall into a trance, and through one's deep probing of the mysteries of existence, one reaches the First Cause. The faculties of the heart then become like the Urim and Thumim,⁶ mystically bound to the angels in heaven, and one becomes attached to the Ultimate Good.

(*Sefer Yetzirah* 4:2)⁷

10.8

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

And Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

(7:7-11)

⁴ 939–1038, Jewish religious leader and mystic.

⁵ Hb. *hitboded*.

⁶ A high priestly oracular device worn on the breastplate used for questioning God on behalf of rulers. See Nm 27:21, 1 Sm 23:1-12.

⁷ In *Meditation and the Bible*, 11.

10.9

FROM THE WRITINGS OF MEISTER ECKHART

Now pay attention: God is nameless, because no one can say anything about him. . . . So if I say: "God is good," that is not true. I am wiser than he. If I say: "God is being," it is not true; he is a being transcending being and transcending nothingness . . . So be silent, and do not chatter about God; for when you chatter about him, you are telling lies and sinning.

*Predigt 83*⁸

10.10

FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABU HAMID AL-GHAZALI

There is nothing closer to you than yourself. If you don't know yourself, how will you know others? You might say, "I know myself," but you are mistaken.... The only thing you know about yourself is your physical appearance. The only thing you know about your *batin*—your unconscious is that when you are hungry you eat, when you are angry, you fight, and when you are consumed by passion, you make love. In this regard you are equal to any animal. You have to seek the reality within yourself.... What are you? Where have you come from and where are you going? What is your role in the world? Why have you been created? Where does your happiness lie? If you would like to know yourself, you should know that you are created by two things. One is your body and your *zahir*—your outer appearance, which you can see with your eyes. The other is your *batin*—your inner forces. This is the part you cannot see, but you can know with your insight. The reality of your existence is in your inwardness. Everything is a servant of your inward heart.

*(from the Alchemy of Happiness)*⁹

10.11

FROM THE POEMS OF RUMI

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.

⁸ Essential, 206-207.

⁹ Trans. Claude Field (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), 5-6.

He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.¹⁰

10.12

FROM THE PRAYERS OF THE SIKHS

The Word of the Guru is the inner music;
the Word of the Guru is the highest scripture;
the Word of the Guru is all pervading.
The Guru is Siva,
the Guru is Vishnu and Brahma,
the Guru is the Mother goddess.

If I knew the Guru as the Guru truly is
what words could utter my knowledge?
Enlightened by God, the Guru has unraveled one mystery:
"There is but one Truth, one Bestower of life;
may I never forget that One!"

(Morning Prayer #5)

¹⁰ Trans. Colman Barks in *Rumi Poems*, selected and edited by Peter Washington (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 17.