

## A READING FROM THE MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

This is that, the truth of things:  
 as from one high-kindled fire thousands of different sparks are born  
 and all have the same form of fire,  
 so manifold becomings are born from the immutable  
 and even into that do they depart.

The divine formless Spirit  
 is the outward and the inward and the Unborn,  
 beyond life, beyond mind, luminous, Supreme,  
 beyond the immutable.

Life and mind and the senses are born from that one,  
 and the sky and the wind and light  
 and the waters and earth upholding all that is.

(2.1.1-3)

## A READING FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Completely renouncing all desires arising from thoughts of the world,  
 and fully restraining the whole pack of the senses from all sides of the  
 mind,  
 one should through gradual practice attain tranquility.

And fixing the mind on God through reason controlled by steadfastness,  
 one should not think of anything else.

Drawing back the restless and fidgety mind  
 from all those objects after which it runs,  
 one should repeatedly fix it on God.

For to the yogi whose mind is perfectly serene,  
 who is sinless, whose passion is subdued,  
 and who is identified with Brahman,  
 the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss,  
 supreme happiness comes as a matter of course.  
 The sinless yogi thus constantly united with God,  
 easily enjoys the bliss of oneness with Brahman.

(6:24-28)

## A READING FROM THE TAO TE CHING

Get rid of saintliness and reason,  
and people will live a hundred times better.  
Get rid of kindness and morality,  
and people once more will love and obey.  
Get rid of ingenuity and profit,  
and thieves will cease to exist.

But these three sayings are not enough.  
Hence, let this be added:  
wear the undyed and hold the uncarved.  
Reduce self-interest and temper desire.

Get rid of learning and problems will vanish.

(#19)

## A READING FROM THE DHAMMAPADA

It is the rare being who is restrained by self-direction,  
who does not invite reproof,  
as a good horse does not invite the whip.

Be like a good horse, touched gently by the whip—  
the horse moves forward with full power and energy.  
Have an abundance of confidence,  
good conduct, effort, concentration.  
Be aware and attentive,  
put aside this great mass of suffering.  
Those who would irrigate the land  
bring the water wherever they choose.  
Arrowsmiths fashion arrows.  
Carpenters shape wood.  
The virtuous mold themselves.

(10:15-17)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Trans. Ananda Maitreya.

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF DOGEN-ZENJI

“The Divine and profound light permeates everywhere.” This light is in the monastery, the Buddha Hall, the administration building, and in the main gates. Divine Light is limitless, continually actualizing itself everywhere.

“Both ordinary people and saints live in their own house.” This does not mean that there is no difference between ordinary people and saints; it means that you should not condemn different types of people. If your innermost resolve is based on the Buddha-mind you will be able to reach enlightenment. Every religious intention must be part of the Buddha-mind, then it will lead to the realization of Truth *as it is*. Our religious intentions must be based on our innermost consciousness, at the deepest level. If the consciousness is activated, clouds [of delusion] will disappear.

(Kuge)<sup>2</sup>

## A READING FROM THE SONG OF SONGS

I compare you, my love,  
to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots.  
Your cheeks are comely with ornaments,  
your neck with strings of jewels.  
We will make you ornaments of gold,  
studded with silver.

While the king was on his couch,  
my nard gave forth its fragrance.  
My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh  
that lies between my breasts.  
My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms  
in the vineyards of En-gedi.

Ah, you are beautiful, my love;  
ah, you are beautiful;  
your eyes are doves.  
Ah, you are beautiful, my beloved,  
truly lovely.  
Our couch is green;  
the beams of our house are cedar,  
our rafters are pine.

(1:9-17)

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<sup>2</sup> *Shobogenzo*, 50.

## FROM THE SAYINGS OF THE HASIDIM

This is how Rabbi Enoch interpreted the words in the Scriptures, "... and the mountain burned with fire unto the heart of heaven":

"The fire of Sinai burned into the core of human beings until it made something heavenly of their hearts."<sup>3</sup>

## A READING FROM SAINT PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS,

Heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

(4:1-7)

## FROM A HOMILY BY SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Would you like me to list also the paths of repentance? They are numerous and quite varied, and all lead to heaven.

A first path of repentance is the condemnation of your own sins...

Another and no less valuable one is to put out of our minds the harm done us by our enemies, in order to master our anger, and to forgive our fellow servants' sins against us...

So you want to know a third path? It consists of prayer that is fervent, careful and comes from the heart.

If you want to hear of a fourth, I will mention almsgiving, whose power is great and far-reaching.

If moreover, (one) lives a modest, humble life, that, no less than the other things I have mentioned, takes sins away...

Thus I have shown you five paths of repentance: condemnation of your own sins, forgiveness of our neighbor's sins against us, prayer, almsgiving and humility.

Do not be idle, then, but walk daily in all these paths...<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Buber *Rungs*, 59.

<sup>4</sup> Hom. *De Diabolo tentatore* 2, 6; *Office of Readings*, 1006-7.

FROM DELIVERANCE FROM ERROR BY ABU HAMID AL-GHAZALI<sup>5</sup>

I learned with certainty that it is above all the mystics who walk on the road of God; their life is the best life, their method the soundest method, their character the purest character; indeed, were the intellect of the intellectuals and the learning of the learned and the scholarship of the scholars, who are versed in the profundities of revealed truth, brought together in the attempt to improve the life and character of the mystics, they would find no way of doing so; for to the mystics all movement and all rest, whether external or internal, brings illumination from the light of the lamp of prophetic revelation; and behind the light of prophetic revelation there is no other light on the face of the earth from which illumination may be received.

(Part Three, #3)<sup>6</sup>

FROM THE WRITINGS OF NASIRI AL-KHUSRAW<sup>7</sup>

Have you ever heard of a sea which flows from fire?  
 Have you ever seen a fox become a lion?  
 The sun can transmute a pebble, which even the and  
 of nature can never change, into a gem.  
 I am that precious stone, my Sun is he  
 by whose rays this tenebrous world is filled with light.  
 In jealousy I cannot speak his name  
 in this poem, but can only say that for him  
 Plato himself would become a slave. He  
 is the teacher, healer of souls, favored by God,  
 image of wisdom, fountain of knowledge and truth.  
 O Countenance of Knowledge, Virtue's Form,  
 Heart of Wisdom, Goal of Humankind,  
 O Pride of Pride, I stood before thee, pale  
 and skeletal, clad in a woolen cloak  
 and kissed thine hand as if it were the grave  
 of the Prophet or the Black Stone of the Kabah.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century Iraqi Islamic scholar and Sufi mystic, considered the greatest religious authority after the Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>6</sup> Trans. Montgomery Watt.

<sup>7</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> Century Ismaili (Iranian) philosopher.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Azim Nanji, "Ismailism," in S. H. Nasr, *Islamic Spirituality: Foundation*, which he also edited (London, 1987), 195-96. The Kabah (Ka'ba) is the cubic building in the center of the great mosque at Mecca, revered by Muslims as the focus of the five times daily *salat*; said to have been built by Adam, the Prophet cleared it of idols in 630 CE. The Black Stone is embedded in the eastern corner.

## FROM THE SACRED WRITINGS OF THE SIKHS

Listen, my heart!  
 Let your love be that of the lotus for the pool,  
 though the ripples shake the lotus and torment it,  
 it flowers and loves the waters even more.  
 Let your love be that of the fish for the water  
 without which they perish.  
 O my heart, how shall you find freedom  
 except you find it through love?  
 God dwells in the hearts of the saints.  
 To them God gives the treasure of true devotion.  
 Listen my heart: love God ceaselessly  
 as the fish love water:  
 the deeper the water,  
 the happier and more tranquil the fish.  
 God alone knows the suffering of fish separated from the waters.

*(Sri Rag)*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> From "The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs," 72. Adapted for modern and inclusive language.