

## A READING FROM THE MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

Manifested, it is here set close within,  
 moving in the secret heart.  
 This is the mighty foundation  
 and into it is consigned all that moves and breathes and sees.  
 This that is the great foundation here  
 know as the Is and Is-not,  
 the supremely desirable, greatest and most high,  
 beyond the knowledge of creatures.

That which is the Luminous,  
 that which is subtler than the subtlest,  
 in whom exist the worlds and all their peoples,  
 That is This—the immutable Brahman,  
 the principle of life, and speech and mind.  
 That is This—the real, the immortal.  
 It is into That you must pierce,  
 the one goal to be attained.

Take the incomparable bow of sacred knowledge,<sup>1</sup>  
 lay against it the arrow of devotion,  
 pull the string of concentration,  
 strike the target.

OM is the bow,  
 the arrow is the individual self,  
 Brahman is the target.  
 Take aim accurately and lose yourself in it.

(2.II.1-4)<sup>2</sup>

## A READING FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

The yogi who is united with the all-pervading,  
 infinite consciousness,  
 whose vision everywhere is even,  
 beholds the Self existing in all beings,  
 and all beings as assumed in the Self.  
 Those who see me present in all beings,  
 and all beings existing within me,  
 are never lost to me,  
 nor am I ever lost to them.

<sup>1</sup> Skt. *upanisad*.<sup>2</sup> based on Aurobindo's trans., check against others.

Yogis who are established in union with me,  
and worship me residing in all beings as their very Self,  
do all their activities with me.  
Those who look on all as one,  
in the image of their own self,  
and look upon the joy and sorrow of all equally—  
such yogis are deemed to be the highest of all.

(6:29-32)

20.3

A READING FROM THE TAO TE CHING

Is there a difference between yes and no?  
Is there a difference between pretty and ugly?  
Must I fear what others fear? Nonsense!  
Everyone is happy before the moon wanes  
as if they were at the great Sacrifice  
or climbing a tower in spring.  
I alone am drifting, not knowing where I am.  
Like a newborn babe before it learns to smile,  
I am alone, without a place to go.

Others have what they need,  
but I alone seem forgotten.  
My mind is so foolish, so simple.  
Others are bright; I alone seem dim.  
Others are certain; I alone am confused.  
I drift like the waves of the sea,  
waxing restlessly.

Everyone else is busy;  
I alone am dumb and backward.  
I am different.  
I am nourished by the great mother.

(#20)

20.4

A READING FROM THE DHAMMAPADA

Can there be joy and laughter  
when always the world is ablaze?  
Enshrouded in darkness  
should you not seek a light?

Look at the body adorned,  
a mass of wounds, draped upon a heap of bones,

a sickly thing, this subject of sensual thoughts!  
Neither permanent, nor enduring!

The body wears out,  
a nest of disease,  
fragile, disintegrating,  
ending in death.

What delight is there in seeing the bleached bones,  
like gourds thrown away,  
dried and scattered in the autumn sun?

A citadel is this structure of bones,  
blood and flesh, within which dwell  
decay, death, conceit, and malice.

The royal chariots surely come to decay  
just as the body, too, comes to decay.  
But the shining truth and loving kindness live on,  
so speak the virtuous to the virtuous.

(11:1-6)<sup>3</sup>

20.5

FROM THE WRITINGS OF DOGEN-ZENJI

The Divine Light of Buddha's teaching has been handed down continuously by each successive Patriarch. Before Bodhidharma's time the Divine Light of Buddha was not seen or heard in China; no one was able to perceive his own Divine Light. Even though everyone inherently possesses Divine Light no one can discover it by using only their own judgments. Therefore, no one in China was able to clarify the form and original nature of Divine Light or experience its virtues until Bodhidharma. They did not understand that Divine Light is their very essence. They thought that the Divine Light is completely separate from themselves. Their mind was clouded by this false idea of separation and they could not perceive that everything is Divine Light.

(Komyo)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Trans. Ananda Maitreya.

<sup>4</sup> *Shobogenzo*, 54.

## A READING FROM THE SONG OF SONGS

I am a rose of Sharon,  
a lily of the valleys.

As a lily among brambles,  
so is my love among maidens.

As an apple tree among the trees of the wood,  
so is my beloved among young men.  
With great delight I sat in his shadow,  
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.  
He brought me to the banqueting house,  
and his intention towards me was love.  
Sustain me with raisins,  
refresh me with apples;  
for I am faint with love.  
O that his left hand were under my head,  
and that his right hand embraced me!  
I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
by the gazelles or the wild does:  
do not stir up or awaken love  
until it is ready!

(2:1-7)

## FROM THE SAYINGS OF THE HASIDIM

Of the voice over Sinai, the Scriptures say that "it went no more." According to the Aramaic translation, this means that the voice never paused at all. And the voice does, indeed, speak today, just as it did in times immemorial. But just as then, now too, one requires preparation to be able to hear it. As it is written, "Now, therefore, if you will hearken, hearken to my voice." The word "now" means at whatever moment we hear it.<sup>5</sup>

## A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PETER

His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature. For this very reason, you

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Buber *Rungs*, 60.

must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful...

(2 Pet. 1:3-8, 11)

20.9

FROM A SERMON BY SAINT ANDREW OF CRETE

In his humility, Christ entered the dark regions of our fallen world and he is glad that he became so humble for our sake, glad that he came and lived among us and shared in our nature in order to raise us up again to himself. And even though we are told that he has now ascended above the highest heavens—the proof, surely, of his power and godhead—his love for human beings will never rest until he has raised our earthbound nature from glory to glory, and made it one with his own in heaven.<sup>6</sup>

20.10

FROM DELIVERANCE FROM ERROR BY ABU HAMID AL-GHAZALI

In general, how is a *tariqah*—mystic way described? The purity that is the first condition of it is the purification of the heart completely from what is other than God most high; the key to it, which corresponds to the opening act of adoration in prayer, is the sinking of the heart completely in the recollection of God; and the end of it is complete *fana*—absorption in God. At least this is its end relative to those first steps which almost come within the sphere of choice and personal responsibility; but in reality in the mystic way it is the first step, what comes before it being, as it were, the ante-chamber for those who are journeying towards it.

With this first step of the way there begin revelations and visions. The mystics in their waking state now behold angels and the spirits of the prophets; they hear these speaking to them and are instructed by them. Later, a higher state is reached; instead of beholding forms and figures, they come to stages in the way which is hard to describe in language; if one attempts to express these, words inevitably contain what is erroneous.

(Part Three, #3)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Oratio 9 in ramos palmarum; PG 97; *Office of Readings*, 463.

<sup>7</sup> Trans. Watt.

## FROM THE POEMS OF RUMI

We are bound together.  
 I am the ground,  
 you are the step.  
 How unfair is this love!  
 I can see your world,  
 But you I cannot see.

Deafened by the voice of desire  
 you are unaware that  
 the Beloved lives in the core of your heart.  
 Stop the noise,  
 and you will hear His voice in the silence.

Beyond a hundred steps of wisdom,  
 I will be free from good and bad.  
 Behind the veils I will find  
 such splendor, such beauty  
 that I will fall in love with myself.

Prayer clears the mist  
 and brings back peace to the soul.  
 Every morning, every evening  
 let the heart sing,  
*La ilaha il Allah!*<sup>8</sup>

## FROM THE SACRED WRITINGS OF THE SIKHS

O, my heart, listen:  
 love God even as the Chatrik bird loves the raindrops.  
 Rivers in spate and the drenched uplands  
 are of no avail to the Chatrik;  
 nothing but the raindrops can quench its thirst.  
 As one sows, so shall one reap.  
 That which the Lord ordains must come to pass.  
 O my heart, listen:  
 love God as water loves milk.  
 The water must suffer, must evaporate  
 before the heat can touch the milk.  
 God is the separator, God is the Joiner:  
 the Lord is the one who exalts through Truth.

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

<sup>8</sup> Ar., "There is not God but God." Trans. Maryam Mafi and Azima Melita Kolin, *Whispers*.

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