

## A READING FROM THE MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

The Self is not known through study,  
nor through reason and great erudition in scriptures.  
Only by those whom It chooses is It comprehended;  
and the Atman reveals Its true nature to them.

The Atman cannot be attained by the weak,  
nor by one who is indolent;  
nor by those who practice penance which is not genuine.  
However, those who have knowledge strive through these means—  
and into the abode of Brahman their Atman enters.

The wise, satisfied with their knowledge of the self,  
having found it with their self disciplined and prepared,  
dispassionate and serene,  
—they, with their self well-disciplined,  
enter from here into the omnipresent allness.

(III.2.3-5)

## A READING FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Those with the mind disciplined through Yoga  
in the form of the practice of meditation,  
thinking of nothing else,  
who are constantly engaged in contemplation of God,  
attain the supremely effulgent Divine Purusha.

They contemplate the all-wise, ageless being,  
the Ruler of all, subtler than the subtle,  
the universal sustainer, inconceivable,  
effulgent like the sun and far beyond the darkness.

Those who firmly hold the life breath in the space between the eyebrows  
even at the time of death,  
contemplating God with a steadfast mind, full of devotion,  
truly reach that supreme divine Purusha.

(8:8-10)

## A READING FROM THE TAO TE CHING

The heavy is the root of the light.  
Tranquility masters agitation.  
Therefore the wise travel all day  
without leaving the luggage cart,  
and even in glorious palaces  
remain detached and composed.

How could the lord of ten thousand chariots  
act lightly in the world?  
One who acts lightly loses the foundation;  
one who is agitated loses command.

(#26)

## A READING FROM THE DHAMMAPADA

Unwholesome action, hurting self, comes easily.  
Wholesome action, healing self, takes effort.

By oneself is evil done,  
by oneself is oneself made impure.  
By oneself is evil undone,  
by oneself is one made pure.  
Each one is responsible for purity and impurity.  
No one can cleanse another.

One should not neglect one's own moral good  
for the sake of another's.  
Learn first before teaching another.

(12:7, 9-10)<sup>1</sup>

## A READING FROM THE VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA

As I was sitting in the forest under a tree in quiet meditation, Vimalakirti approached me and said: "To sit is not necessarily to meditate. Not to reveal the body in the three worlds,<sup>2</sup> that is meditation. Not to rise up from concentration in which the inner functions are extinguished and yet to conduct oneself worthily, that is meditation. Not to abandon the way of the teaching and yet to go about one's business as usual in the world, that is meditation. Not to give one's spirit abode within or without, that is meditation. Not to allow oneself to be bothered

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

<sup>2</sup> The worlds of lust, form and formlessness.

about all sorts of possible bad intentions but rather to practice the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, that is meditation. Not to cut off disturbances and yet to enter nirvana, that is meditation. Anyone who sits in meditation thus receives the seal of the Buddha.<sup>3</sup>

26.6

A READING FROM THE SONG OF SONGS

I come to my garden, my sister, my bride;  
I gather my myrrh with my spice,  
I eat my honeycomb with my honey,  
I drink my wine with my milk.

Eat, friends, drink,  
and be drunk with love.

I slept, but my heart was awake.  
Listen! my beloved is knocking.  
'Open to me, my sister, my love,  
my dove, my perfect one;  
for my head is wet with dew,  
my locks with the drops of the night.'  
I had put off my garment;  
how could I put it on again?  
I had bathed my feet;  
how could I soil them?  
My beloved thrust his hand into the opening,  
and my inmost being yearned for him.  
I arose to open to my beloved,  
and my hands dripped with myrrh,  
my fingers with liquid myrrh,  
upon the handles of the bolt.  
I opened to my beloved,  
but my beloved had turned and was gone.  
My soul failed me when he spoke.  
I sought him, but did not find him;  
I called him, but he gave no answer.  
Making their rounds in the city  
the sentinels found me;  
they beat me, they wounded me,  
they took away my mantle,  
those sentinels of the walls.  
I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
if you find my beloved,  
tell him this:  
I am faint with love.

(6:1-8)

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Dumoulin, 50.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RABBI ISRAEL BAAL SHEM TOV<sup>4</sup>

We should constantly meditate<sup>5</sup> on the Divine Presence. We should have no other thought in the mind other than our love of God, seeking that the Divine Presence should attach itself to us. In our mind we should constantly repeat, “When will I be worthy that the Light of the Divine Presence should dwell within me?”<sup>6</sup>

## A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Jesus saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up, left everything, and followed him.

Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

(5:27-32)

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF CATHERINE OF SIENA

When a soul sees not self for self’s sake, but self for God and God for God, inasmuch as God is supreme eternal goodness, all-worthy of our love—contemplating in God the effect of his fiery and consummate love—it finds in God the image of God’s creature, and in itself, that image, it finds God. That is, the love that we see that God has for us, we in turn extend to all creatures, and so at once feel compelled to love our neighbor as ourself, for we see how supremely we ourselves are loved by God, when we behold ourself in the wellspring<sup>7</sup> of the sea of God’s divine Essence. We are then moved to love self in God and God in self...

Think of it like this: we see neither our dignity nor the defects that mar the beauty of the soul unless we go and look at ourselves in the still sea<sup>8</sup> of the divine Essence wherein we are portrayed; for from it we came when God’s Wisdom created us to his image and likeness.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Founder of Hasidism (1698-1760).

<sup>5</sup> Hb. *hitboded*.

<sup>6</sup> In *Meditation and the Bible*, 15, adapted for inclusive language.

<sup>7</sup> It. *fonte*.

<sup>8</sup> It. *mare pacifico*.

<sup>9</sup> From *I, Catherine*, ed. and trans. Kenelm Foster, OP and Mary John Ronayne, OP (London: Collins, 1980), 171-172; altered for inclusive language.

## FROM THE TEACHINGS OF SHAMS OF TABRIZ

What we need is to leave aside that *salaat*<sup>10</sup> of the outside that is sometimes done or sometimes cannot be done because of some excuse or forgetfulness—a very sober and a very sad person both do it. Sometimes a person doesn't talk about doing the *salaat*, but a time comes when he declares that he is in a state of continuous *salaat*. If he is a man, he swears that he will divorce his wife if it isn't true; if she is a woman, she swears by putting her hand on the Qur'an fifty times that what she says is the truth. Because there is a *salaat* of the outside and of the inside, just like everything that has an inside has an outside.

The *salaat* of the inside is peace of heart.<sup>11</sup>

## FROM THE POEMS OF RUMI

The early breeze at dawn  
is the keeper of secrets.  
Don't go back to sleep!  
It is time for prayer,  
time to find what  
is your real need.  
Don't go back to sleep!  
The door of the One  
is open, always.  
Don't go back to sleep!

(*Rubaiyat* #754)<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ar., the name for the five formal times of prayer in Islam.

<sup>11</sup> From *Rumi's Sun: The Teachings of Shams of Tabriz*, trans. Refik Algan and Camille Adams Helminski (Sandpoint: Morning Light Press, 2008), 211.

<sup>12</sup> Trans. Mafi and Kolin, *Whispers*.

## FROM THE SACRED WRITINGS OF THE SIKHS

There are many dogmas, there are many systems,  
 there are many scriptural revelations,  
 many modes to fetter the mind:  
 but the saint seeks for release through Truth;  
 Truth is higher than all there,  
 and higher still is the life lived in Truth.  
 All that is, is great and high:  
 there is nothing base.  
 One potter has fashioned all the pots,  
 one light pervades all Creation.  
 Through Grace is the Truth revealed,  
 and none can resist Grace.

In the company of the holy congregation,  
 we attain to the Guru:  
 the love of the Guru and his peace are awakened in the mind.  
 We grasp the ineffable story of the Lord  
 if the spirit of the True Guru is within us.  
 The soul then drinks the nectar and feels peace,  
 and honor is attained in the presence of the Lord.

*(Sri Rag)*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> From *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, 75, slightly altered for modern idiom.