

A READING FROM THE KENA UPANISHAD

*What has called the mind to fly?
 What has made the breath move?
 Who urges on the speech that people utter?
 What god has opened the eye and the ear?*

It lives in all that lives,
 the ear of the ear,
 the mind of the mind,
 the speech of speech,
 the eye of the eye.
 The wise, by not clinging,
 renounce the world and become immortal.

Eye and tongue cannot approach it, nor can the mind know.
 We do not know, we do not understand.
 It lies beyond the known, and beyond the unknown.
 Thus have we heard from those of old who have explained it to us.

That by which speech is expressed—not what is expressed by speech—
 that alone is God, not what they worship as such.
 That by which the mind is thought of—not what is thought of by the
 mind—
 that alone is God, not what they worship as such.
 That by which the eye sees—not what is seen by the eye—
 that alone is God, not what they worship as such.
 That by which the ear is heard—not what is heard by the ear—
 that alone is God, not what they worship as such.
 That by which breath is breathed—not what is breathed by the breath—
 that alone is God, not what they worship as such.

(1:1-9)

A READING FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

One should sit for meditation,
 restraining all senses, concentrating the mind,
 devoting heart and soul to me.
 Those who control their senses have a stable mind.

Those who do not turn the mind away
 get attached to what the senses tell them.
 Attachment gives rise to desire,
 desire gives rise to anger.
 Anger leads to infatuation,
 infatuation distorts one's memory.

Distortion of memory leads to loss of reason,
and then complete ruin.

But the self-controlled roam the sensual world
with senses under control,
freed from likes and dislikes;
they attain to peace of mind.
In peace of mind, all sorrows come to an end,
for the judgment of the clear-minded is unerringly steadfast.

(2:61-65)

3.3

A READING FROM THE TAO TE CHING

Bestowing no honors prevents quarreling,
prizing no treasures prevents stealing,
displaying no attractions prevents confusion.

Therefore,
the wise rule by emptying the mind but filling the stomach,
weakening aspirations but strengthening bones.
When people lack knowledge or desire,
the learned will not dare to act.

If nothing is done, all will be well.

(#3)

3.4

A READING FROM THE SAMYUTTA NIKAYA

One who has considered all the contrasts of this earth, and is no more disturbed by anything whatever in the world, the Peaceful One, freed from rage, from sorrow, and from longing, has passed beyond birth and decay.

This I call neither arising, nor passing away, neither standing still, nor being born, nor dying. There is neither foothold, nor development, nor any basis. This is the end of suffering.

Hence, the purpose of the Holy Life does not consist in acquiring alms, honor, or fame, nor in gaining morality, concentration, or the eye of knowledge. The unshakable deliverance of the heart: that, indeed, is the object of the Holy Life, that is its essence, that is its goal.¹

¹ Trans. Nyanatiloka, in *Teachings*, 41.

A READING FROM THE DHAMMAPADA

A careless person,
 quoting much of the scriptural text but not living it,
 cannot share the abundance of the holy life,
 just as the cowherd, counting other people's cattle,
 cannot taste the milk or ghee.

Reciting a small portion of the scriptures,
 but putting it diligently into practice;
 letting go of passion, aggression, and confusion;
 revering the truth with a clear mind;
 and not clinging to anything, here or hereafter;
 brings the harvest of a holy life.

(1:19-20)²

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of our ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and this is my title for all generations."

(Exodus 3:1-6, 13-14, 15c)

² Trans. Ananda Maitreya.

FROM THE SAYINGS OF THE HASIDIM

God says to us as he said to Moses: “Put off your shoes from off your feet”—put off the habitual which encloses your foot and you will recognize that the place on which you happen to be standing at this moment is holy ground. For there is not a rung of being on which we cannot find the holiness of God everywhere and at all times.³

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Jesus said:

“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.”

(5:21-25)

FROM A SERMON BY SAINT PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

In all the events we have recalled, the flame of divine love enkindled human hearts and its intoxication overflowed into human senses. Wounded by love, they longed to look upon God with their bodily eyes. Yet how could our narrow human vision apprehend God, whom the whole world cannot contain? But the law of love is not concerned with what will be, what ought to be, what can be. Love does not reflect; it is unreasonable and knows no moderation. Love refuses to be consoled when its goal proves impossible, despises all hinderances to the attainment of its object. Love destroys lovers if they cannot obtain what they love; love follows its own promptings, and does not think of right and wrong. Love inflames desire which impels it toward things that are forbidden.

It is intolerable for love not to see the object of its longing. That is why whatever reward they merited was nothing to the saints if they could not see the Lord. A love that desires to see God may not have reasonableness on its side, but it is the evidence of filial love. It gave Moses the temerity to say: *If I have found favor in your eyes, show me your face.*⁴ It inspired the psalmist to make the same prayer: *Show me your face.*⁵

(*Sermo 147*)⁶

³ Adapted from Buber *Rungs*, 15.

⁴ Ex 33:18

⁵ Ps 27:8

⁶ *Office of Readings*, 34-35; adapted for inclusive language.

A READING FROM THE QUR'AN

Look around you!—
 In the creation of the heavens and the earth;
 in the alternation of night and day;
 in the sailing of ships through the ocean for the profit of humankind;
 in the waters which God sends down from the skies
 and the life which the One gives by means of it to an earth that is dead;
 in the living creatures of all kinds which multiply there;
 in the change of the winds
 and the clouds that follow, between sky and earth;
 truly, these are signs for people who reflect.

(2:164)

FROM THE POEMS OF RUMI

Looking at my life
 I see that only love
 has been my soul's companion.
 From deep inside
 my soul cries out:
 Do not wait, surrender
 for the sake of Love.

Rubaiyat #42⁷

FROM THE PRAYERS OF THE SIKHS

In the house in which people sing the Lord's praises
 and meditate upon him,
 in that house sing the songs of praise
 and remember the Creator!
 Sing the song of praise of your fearless Lord!
 Let me be a sacrifice unto that song
 by which we attain everlasting solace.

Day by day, ever and ever,
 the Lord watches over his living creatures;
 the Bountiful Giver looks after one and all.
 Who can set a price on his gifts,
 or say how great he is?

⁷ Trans. Maryam Mafi and Azima Melita Kolin in *Rumi: Whispers of the Beloved* (London: Thorsons, 1999).

The year and the sacred day for the wedding is fixed.
Comrades! Pour oil at the door to welcome the bride!
Give me your blessings, O friends;
I depart for my union with God.

The summons is sent to every house,
to every soul, every day it is issued.
Remember, O Nanak, the one who sends the summons.
The day is not far when you also may hear it.

(Bed-time Prayer #1)