

## A READING FROM THE KATHA UPANISHAD

'Know the self<sup>1</sup> as a chariot owner,  
 the body as a chariot,  
 the intelligence as a charioteer,  
 the mind as the reins.<sup>2</sup>  
 The senses they call the horses,  
 the objects of sense the roads.  
 The self, when joined with sense and mind,  
 the wise call "the enjoyer."

The senses of those without understanding,  
 with undisciplined minds,  
 are out of control like vicious horses of a charioteer.  
 The senses of those with understanding,  
 with minds always disciplined,  
 are under control like good horses of a charioteer.

Those without understanding,  
 unmindful, ever impure,  
 do not reach that place,  
 but go on to *samsara*.<sup>3</sup>  
 Those with understanding,  
 mindful, ever pure,  
 attain that place from which they are not born again.

Those who have understanding as a charioteer  
 and have control of the reins of the mind,  
 attain the journey's end,  
 the highest place of Vishnu.

(3:3-9)

## A READING FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Those who are content with whatever comes along,  
 are free from jealousy  
 and have transcended all pairs of opposites like joy and grief;  
 they are even-minded in success and failure,  
 and not bound by their action.

All their actions get dissolved entirely  
 who are free from attachment

---

<sup>1</sup> Skt. *atmanam*, here meaning the individual self, hence lower case "s."

<sup>2</sup> Skt. intelligence and mind are *buddhi* and *manas*.

<sup>3</sup> The cycle of birth and death as a consequence of *karma*.

and have no identification  
and no sense of mine with the body,  
whose minds are established in the knowledge of the Self,  
and who work merely for the sake of sacrifice.

Brahman is the ladle, Brahman is the oblation.  
Brahman is the fire, Brahman is the sacrificer.  
Brahman is the act of pouring the oblation into the fire.  
Brahman is the goal to be reached  
by those who are absorbed in Brahman as the act of sacrifice.

(4:22-24)

9.3

A READING FROM THE TAO TE CHING

It is better to stop while you can  
instead of pouring in more.  
Making a blade sharper  
won't make it last longer.  
Houses full of gold and jade  
can never be safe.  
The vanity of success  
authors its own failure.

Retire when your work is done.  
This is the way of heaven.

(#9)

9.4

A READING FROM THE DHAMMAPADA

Long is the night to the wakeful,  
long is the league to the weary;  
long is *samsara* to the foolish who know not the sublime truth.

Should a traveler fail to find a companion equal or better,  
one should walk resolutely alone,  
rather than suffer the company of a fool.

"I have children! I have wealth!"  
These are the claims of the unwise.  
If one cannot call oneself one's own,  
how can one claim children and wealth as one's own?

The foolish who know that they are foolish,  
for that very reason are wise.  
Fools who think they are wise are fools indeed.

The foolish may associate with the wise throughout their life,  
and still remain untouched by *dhamma*,  
even as a spoon cannot taste the flavor of soup.  
Though the intelligent associate with the wise for only a moment,  
they understand the *dhamma* quickly  
as the tongue the flavor of soup.

The unwise, lacking understanding,  
behave as their own worst enemy,  
committing evil deeds that produce bitter fruit.

(5:1-7)

9.5

A READING FROM ASHVAGHOSA'S AWAKENING OF FAITH

We use words to get free from words until we reach the pure wordless Essence. In Essence of Mind there is nothing that can be taken away and nothing that can be added. All concepts are an undivided part of Reality; they are not artificial but are unchangeable and ineffable and unthinkable. They are the Essence of Mind Itself.

Someone may ask that if all concepts are to be thus regarded, how are sentient beings to make use of them to abstract their minds into the Mind's pure Essence? The reply is that whenever any sentient being uses words in relation to the mind's pure Essence, (they) should remember their falsity and cherish no arbitrary conceptions, nor distinctions between themselves and the spoken words and the thing spoken about. As they use words to express their thought they should remember that words are wholly independent of the speaker and are not to be grasped as their own. If any sentient being should be able to thus keep free from all arbitrary conceptions, it would mean that they had attained oneness with the pure Essence of all concepts.

(Part Three, 1)<sup>4</sup>

9.6

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

My child, if you accept my words  
and treasure up my commandments within you,  
making your ear attentive to wisdom  
and inclining your heart to understanding;  
if you indeed cry out for insight,  
and raise your voice for understanding;  
if you seek it like silver,  
and search for it as for hidden treasures—  
then you will understand the fear of the Lord

---

<sup>4</sup> Trans. Dwight Goddard in *A Buddhist Bible*.

and find the knowledge of God.

For the Lord gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;  
he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;  
he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly,  
guarding the path of justice  
and preserving the way of his faithful ones.  
Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity,  
every good path;  
for wisdom will come into your heart,  
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;  
prudence will watch over you;  
and understanding will guard you.

Therefore, walk in the way of good,  
and keep to the paths of the just.  
For the upright will abide in the land,  
and the innocent will remain in it.

(2:1-11, 20-21)

9.7

A READING FROM THE TALMUD

As the Holy One fills the entire world, so the soul fills the entire body. As the Holy One sees but is not seen, so the soul sees but is not seen. As the Holy One sustains the entire world, all of it, so the soul sustains the body. As the Holy one is pure, so the soul is pure. As the Holy One dwells in the chambers that are innermost, so the soul dwells in chambers that are innermost.

(Berakot 10a)<sup>5</sup>

9.8

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

And Jesus said,  
'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.  
'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell

---

<sup>5</sup> In *A Book of Life*, 10.

you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

(6:24-34)

9.9

FROM A SERMON BY SAINT PETER CHRYSOLOGUS

There are three things by which faith stands firm, devotion remains constant, and virtue endures. They are prayer, fasting and mercy. Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives. Prayer, mercy and fasting: these three are one, and they give life to each other.

Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated. If you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, you open God’s ear to yourself.

(*Sermo 43*)<sup>6</sup>

9.10

FROM THE WRITINGS OF IBN ‘ARABI

What can save the human realm from danger is its obedience to a beneficent influence that comes from outside. That influence from outside of the human being is the divine principles. It is only when a person is open and ready to accept the divine principles that the spirit in him recognizes that its influence has the same nature, the same characteristics, as itself. Only then may it distance itself from the evil-commanding ego. When this happens, reason imagines that it has found an ally against the ego, and rises against it—and the war between them starts.

The two forces fighting to dominate the human being become aware of their differences only in relation to the divine principles. Yet viewed from the outside, it is evident that one of these forces is aimed at bringing the human being to destruction, and the other, to felicity.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> *Office of Readings*, 403.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn ‘Arabi, “Divine Governance of the Human Kingdom,” translated by Tosun Bayrak (Louisville, Ky: Fons Vitae, 1997), 57.

## FROM THE POEMS OF MIRABAI

My Lord, I am offering a petition:  
 Take my raft to the further shore.  
 I have suffered much in this world,  
 Remove my doubts and afflictions,  
 the eight world preoccupations have set in:  
 Oh, remove my pain.  
 The world is a flowing stream  
 Comprising eighty-four laks of birth.

(#135)<sup>8</sup>

## FROM THE PRAYERS OF THE SIKHS

The city that is your body  
 is full to the brim with lust and anger.  
 Meet the saint, and destroy that lust and anger.  
 Bow humbly to the saint:  
 that is a pious act.  
 Bow to the ground before a saint:  
 that is devotion indeed.  
 By God's decree, I have found my Guru  
 and my soul is absorbed in the love of the Lord.

The faithless do not know  
 the joy of the love of the Lord.  
 In their hearts is the thorn of self-love,  
 and it pierces deeper and deeper  
 with every step they take.  
 And they feel pain and sorrow  
 till they bring death upon their heads.

The Lord's chosen are absorbed in the Lord's name.  
 The pain of birth and the fear of death are broken.  
 They have attained the Imperishable Lord;  
 great honor is theirs in all regions.

I am poor and wretched,  
 but I am yours, O Lord.  
 Save me, O save me, O greatest of the great.  
 To your slave Nanak,  
 your name is as a staff and shield.  
 Only in the name of the Lord have I found comfort.

*(Bedtime Prayer #4)*


---

<sup>8</sup> Trans. A J Watson, *The Devotional Poems of Mira-Bai* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 99.