

## The Bahá'ís of Florence, OR ✠ Inter-Faith Devotional Service



# FORGIVENESS

### Hinduism

All evil effects of deeds are destroyed, when He who is both personal and impersonal is realized.

*Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.9*

If we have sinned against the man who loves us, have wronged a brother, a dear friend, or a comrade, the neighbor of long standing or a stranger, remove from us this stain, O King Varuna<sup>1</sup>.

*Rig Veda 5.85.7*

Though a man be soiled with the sins of a lifetime, let him but love me, rightly resolved, in utter devotion. I see no sinner, that man is holy. Holiness soon shall refashion his nature to peace eternal. O son of Kunti, of this be certain: the man who loves me shall not perish.

*Bhagavad Gita 9.30~31*

Shining brightly, Agni<sup>2</sup>, drive away our sin, and shine wealth on us. Shining bright, drive away our sin.

For good fields, for good homes, for wealth, we made our offerings to Thee. Shining bright, drive away our sin....

So that Agni's conquering beams may spread out on every side. Shining bright, drive away our sin.

Thy face is turned on every side, Thou pervadest everywhere. Shining bright, drive away our sin.

*Rig Veda 1.97.1~6*

Of the sin against the gods Thou art atonement; Of the sin against men Thou art atonement; Of the sin against myself Thou art atonement; Of every kind of sin

Thou art atonement. The sin that I have committed knowingly, and that I have committed unawares, of all sins Thou art atonement.

*Yajur Veda 8.13*

### Judaism

The Day of Atonement atones for sins against God, not for sins against man, unless the injured person has been appeased.

*Mishnah, Yoma 8.9*

You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

*Leviticus 19.18*

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<sup>1</sup> maintainer of the cosmic order

<sup>2</sup> deity of fire

Who takes vengeance or bears a grudge acts like one who, having cut one hand while handling a knife, avenges himself by stabbing the other hand.

*Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 9.4*

Those who are insulted but do not insult others in revenge, who hear themselves reproached without replying, who perform good work out of the love of the Lord and rejoice in their sufferings... are "as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

*Talmud, Yoma 23a*

I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

*Isaiah 43.25*

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

*Psalms 51.9~10*

## **Buddhism**

Let him utter the name, Buddha Amitayus. Let him do so serenely with his voice uninterrupted; let him be continually thinking of Buddha until he has completed ten times the thought, repeating, "Adoration to Buddha Amitayus." On the strength of (his merit of) uttering the Buddha's name he will, during every repetition, expiate the sins which involve him in

births and deaths during eighty million kalpas<sup>3</sup>.

*Meditation on Buddha Amitayus 3.30*

(I pray), "O Endowed Transcendent Destroyer Vajrasattva, I myself and others request that you cleanse wrongs and hindrances from all sentient beings and purify every weakened and broken sacred word of honor."

Having requested like this, from the hum and the mantra-rosary in his heart shine out radiant lights, cleansing the wrongs and hindrances from all sentient beings, who come presenting offerings that delight the Awakened Beings and their spiritual sons. Every excellence of their body, speech and mind collects in the form of light and dissolves into the mantra-rosary and the hum. From there a white stream of nectar flows, pouring from the place of union of the Lord and consort. It enters through the pour aperture at the crown of my head, filling my whole body with a stream of nectar of pristine awareness. I become purified by the cleansing of all evils and hindrances from my three doors.

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<sup>3</sup> a thousand cycles

In answer Vajrasattva replies, "O child of my family, your wrongs and hindrances and every broken and weakened commitment are cleansed and purified." Having spoken thus, he dissolves into me and my three doors become inseparable from the perfect body, speech, and mind of Vajrasattva.

*Excerpt from Cakrasamvara Tantra*

## **Christianity**

If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

*Matthew 5.23~24*

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven."

"Therefore the kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and

payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denari; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your

fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

*Matthew 18.21~35*

## **Islam**

The best deed of a great man is to forgive and forget.

*Nahjul Balagha, Saying 201*

If you efface and overlook and forgive, then lo! God is forgiving, merciful.

*Qur'án 64.14*

Better and more rewarding is God's reward to those who believe and put their trust in Him: who avoid gross sins and indecencies and, when angered, are willing to forgive... Let evil be rewarded by like evil, but he who forgives and seeks reconciliation shall be rewarded by God. He does not love the wrongdoers.... True constancy lies in forgiveness and patient forbearance.

*Qur'án 42.36~43*

Say, "If you love God, follow me, and God will love you, and forgive you all your sins; God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate."

*Qur'án 3.31*

Say, "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the mercy of God: for God forgives all sins: for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."

*Qur'án 39.53*

God the Almighty has said, "O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as it."

*Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi 42*

## **Bábí Faith**

O peoples of the world! Whatsoever ye have offered up in the way of the One True God, ye shall indeed find preserved by God, the Preserver, intact at God's Holy Gate. O peoples of the earth! Bear ye allegiance unto this resplendent light wherewith God hath graciously invested Me through the power of infallible Truth, and walk not in the footsteps of the Evil One, inasmuch as he prompteth you to disbelieve in God, your Lord, and verily God will not forgive disbelief in Himself, though He will forgive other sins to whomsoever He pleaseth. Indeed His knowledge embraceth all things...

*Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 48*

O people of the Qur'án! Ye are as nothing unless ye submit unto the Remembrance of God and unto this Book. If ye follow the Cause of God, We will forgive you your sins, and if ye turn aside from Our command, We will, in truth, condemn your souls in Our Book, unto the Most Great Fire. We, verily, do not deal unjustly with men, even to the extent of a speck on a date-stone.

*Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 60*

Say, if ye embrace the truth on the Day of Resurrection, God will assuredly pardon you for your night and will grant you forgiveness. As to those who have faithfully observed the ordinances in the Bayán from the inception of its revelation until the Day when Him Whom God shall make manifest will appear, these are indeed the companions of the paradise of His good-pleasure who will be glorified in the presence of God and will dwell in the pavilions of His celestial Garden.

*Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p.138*

## **Bahá'í Faith**

God, assuredly, dominateth the lives of them that wronged Us, and is well aware of their doings. He will, most certainly, lay hold on them for their sins. He, verily, is the fiercest of avengers. Thus have We recounted unto you the tales of the one true

God, and sent down unto you the things He had preordained, that haply ye may ask forgiveness of Him, may return unto Him, may truly repent, may realize your misdeeds, may shake off your slumber, may be roused from your heedlessness, may atone for the things that have escaped you, and be of them that do good.

*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh,  
pp. 129~130*

O SON OF BEING! How couldst thou forget thine own faults and busy thyself with the faults of others? Who so doeth this is accursed of Me.

*The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh  
(Arabic #26)*

...if a man strikes another, and he who is struck takes revenge by returning the blow, what advantage will he gain? Will this be a balm for his wound or a remedy for his pain? No, God forbid! In truth the two actions are the same: both are injuries; the only difference is that one occurred first, and the other afterward. Therefore, if he who is struck forgives, nay, if he acts in a manner contrary to that which has been used toward him, this is laudable.

*Some Answered Questions, pp. 266~68*

## Prayer

O Lord, my God and my Haven in my distress! My Shield and my Shelter in my woes! My Asylum and Refuge in time of need and in my loneliness my Companion! In my anguish my Solace, and in my solitude a loving Friend! The Remover of the pangs of my sorrows and the Pardoner of my sins!

Wholly unto Thee do I turn, fervently imploring Thee with all my heart, my mind and my tongue, to shield me from all that runs counter to Thy will in this, the cycle of Thy divine unity, and to cleanse me of all defilement that will hinder me from seeking, stainless and unsullied, the shade of the tree of Thy grace.

Have mercy, O Lord, on the feeble, make whole the sick, and quench the burning thirst.

Gladden the bosom wherein the fire of Thy love doth smolder, and set it aglow with the flame of Thy celestial love and spirit.

Robe the tabernacles of divine unity with the vesture of holiness, and set upon my head the crown of Thy favor.

Illumine my face with the radiance of the orb of Thy bounty, and graciously aid me in ministering at Thy holy threshold.

Make my heart overflow with love for Thy creatures and grant that I may become the sign of Thy mercy, the token of Thy grace, the promoter of concord amongst Thy loved ones, devoted unto Thee, uttering Thy commemoration and forgetful of self but ever mindful of what is Thine.

O God, my God! Stay not from me the gentle gales of Thy pardon and grace, and deprive me not of the wellsprings of Thine aid and favor. `Neath the shade of Thy protecting wings let me nestle, and cast upon me the glance of Thine all-protecting eye.

Loose my tongue to laud Thy name amidst Thy people, that my voice may be raised in great assemblies and from my lips may stream the flood of Thy praise.

Thou art, in all truth, the Gracious, the Glorified, the Mighty, the Omnipotent.

☞ *Abdu'l Bahá*



## PRAYER FOR AMERICA

O Thou kind Lord! This gathering is turning to Thee. These hearts are radiant with Thy love. These minds and spirits are exhilarated by the message of Thy glad-tidings. O God! Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees, and render this just government victorious. Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world. O God! This American nation is worthy of Thy favors and is deserving of Thy mercy. Make it precious and near to Thee through Thy bounty and bestowal.

*Abdu'l-Bahá*

