

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



PROGRESSIVE RELATION

“I WILL NEVER LEAVE THE PEOPLE WITHOUT GUIDANCE.”

Genesis

Hinduism

Whenever the Law declines and the purpose of life is forgotten, I manifest myself on earth. I am born in every age to protect the good, to destroy evil and to re-establish the Law

Bhagavad Gita 4.7-8

I (Krishna) told this eternal secret to Vivasvat. Vivasvat taught Manu, and Manu taught Ikshvaku. Thus, Arjuna, eminent sages received knowledge of yoga in a continuous tradition.. But through time the practice of yoga was lost in the world. The secret of these teachings is profound. I have explained them to you today because you are my friend and devotee.

Bhagavad Gita 4.1-3

In the Kali age, men will be afflicted by old age, disease, and hunger, and from sorrow there will arise depression, indifference, deep thought, enlightenment, and virtuous behavior. Then the age will change, deluding their minds like a dream, by the force of fate, and when the Golden Age begins, those left over from the kali age will be the progenitors of the Golden Age. All four classes will survive as a seed, together with those born in the Golden Age, and the seven sages will teach them all dharma. Thus there is eternal continuity from age to age.

Linga Purana 1.40

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Judaism

The Lord your God will raise up for a prophet from among your own people, like myself; him you shall heed. This is just what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb, on the day of the Assembly, saying, “Let me not hear the voice of the Lord my God any longer or see the wondrous fire any more, lest I die.” Whereupon the Lord said to me, “They have done well in speaking thus. I will raise up a prophet for them from among their own people, like yourself: I will put My words in His mouth and He will speak to them all that I command Him; and if anybody fails to heed the words He speaks in My name, I myself will call him to account. But any prophet who presumes to speak in My name an oracle that I did not command Him to utter, or who speaks in the name of other gods –that prophet shall die.” And should you ask yourselves, how can we know that the oracle was not spoken by the Lord?—if the prophet speaks in the name of the Lord and the oracle does not come true, that oracle was not spoken by the Lord; the prophet has uttered it presumptuously: do not stand in dread of Him.

Deuteronomy 18.15-18

As I looked on, in the night vision, one came like a human being, came with the clouds of heaven; he reached the Ancient of Days and was presented to Him. Dominion, glory, and kingship were given to him; all peoples and nations of every language must serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed.

Daniel 7.13~14

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Zoroastrianism

And then when tribulation shall come for their offenses, O Wise One, Thy kingdom shall be established by Good Thought, for those who, in fulfillment, deliver evil into the hands of Truth!

And then may we be those who make life renovated, O Lord, Immortals of the Wise One, and O Truth, bring your alliance, that to us your minds may gather where wisdom would be in dispute!

Then, indeed, shall occur the collapse of the growth of evil, then they shall join the promised reward: blessed abode of Good Thought, of the Wise One, and of Right, they who earn in good reputation!

Avesta, Yasna 30.8~10

The victorious World-renovator and his helpers...shall make the existence renovated—ageless, deathless, unputrifying, incorruptible, ever-living, ever benefiting, ruling at will. The dead shall rise up, life shall prevail indestructible, and existence shall be renovated at the will of God!

The worlds shall be deathless, by the will of Right, benefiting all! Evil will stand against, but will flee away, here and there causing death to the holy and his progeny and creatures, but running to its death and destruction at the will of the Judge!

Zamyad Yasht 19.11~12

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Buddhism

Of yore I followed countless Buddhas, and perfectly trod the Ways of the profound and mystic Law, hard to perceive and perform. During infinite kotis of kalpas, having followed all these Ways, attaining fruition on the Wisdom-throne, I could perfectly understand.

Lotus Sutra 2

While the living see, at the kalpa's end, the conflagration in its burning, tranquil remains this realm of mine, ever full of gods and men, parks and many palaces, with every sort of gem adorned, blooming and fruitful jewel trees, where all creatures pleasure take; the gods strike up their heavenly drums and music make for evermore, showering down celestial flowers on Buddha and his mighty host.

My Pure Land is not destroyed, though all view it as being burned up, and grief and horror and distress thus fill them to the full. Those creatures, full of sin by reason of their evil karma, throughout kalpas numberless hear not the name of the most Precious Three. But those who virtuous deeds shall do, are gentle and of upright nature, these will ever me behold here expound to all the Law.

Lotus Sutra 16

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Christianity

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 5.14~18

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new, and He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Revelation 21.1~7

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Islam

We have sent revelations to you as We sent revelations to Noah and the prophets who came after Him; and we sent revelations to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob, and their offspring, and to Jesus and Job, and to Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and to David We gave the Book of Psalms, and to many an apostle We have mentioned before, and to many other apostles We have not mentioned to you and to Moses God spoke directly. All these apostles of good news and admonition were sent so that after the apostles men may have no argument against God. God is all-powerful and all-wise.

Qur'án 4.163~65

And Paradise will be brought close, not far from those who took heed for themselves and feared God. "This is what you had been promised," will be said to every penitent who remembered his duty, who feared Ar-Rahman in secret, and came with a penitent heart: "Enter it in peace. this is the day of life abiding." Theirs will be whatsoever they wish: and with Us there is more.....So bear with patience what they say, and sing praises of your Lord before the rising of the sun and its setting. And glorify Him for some portion of the night, and additional adorations. Take heed that the day the crier calls from a place close to everyone, the day they actually hear the blast, will be the Day of the rising of the dead. We are the one who gives life and death, and to Us will be the destination.

Qur'án 50.31~43

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Bábí Faith

...from the inception of the mission of Jesus - may peace be upon Him - till the day of His ascension was the Resurrection of Moses. For during that period the Revelation of God shone forth through the appearance of that divine Reality, Who rewarded by His Word everyone who believed in Moses, and punished by His Word everyone who did not believe; inasmuch as God's Testimony for that Day was that which He had solemnly affirmed in the Gospel. And from the inception of the Revelation of the Apostle of God - may the blessings of God be upon Him - till the day of His ascension was the Resurrection of Jesus - peace be upon Him - wherein the Tree of divine Reality appeared in the person of Muhammad, rewarding by His Word everyone who was a believer in Jesus, and punishing by His Word everyone who was not a believer in Him.

Selections from the Báb, p. 107

At the time of the manifestation of Him Whom God shall make manifest everyone should be well trained in the teachings of the Bayán, so that none of the followers may outwardly cling to the Bayán and thus forfeit their allegiance unto Him. If anyone does so, the verdict of 'disbeliever in God' shall be passed upon him.

I swear by the holy Essence of God, were all in the Bayán to unite in helping Him Whom God shall make manifest in the days of His Revelation, not a single soul, nay, not a created thing would remain on earth that would not gain admittance into Paradise. Take good heed of yourselves, for the sum total of the religion of God is but to help Him, rather than to observe, in the time of His appearance, such deeds as are prescribed in the Bayán. Should anyone, however, ere

He manifesteth Himself, transgress the ordinances, were it to the extent of a grain of barley he would have transgressed His command.

Selections from the Báb, p. 85

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Bahá'í Faith

...the Bearers of the trust of God are made manifest unto the peoples of the earth as the Exponents of a new Cause and the Bearers of a new Message. Inasmuch as these Birds of the Celestial Throne are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they therefore are regarded as one soul and the same person. For they all drink from the one Cup of the love of God, and all partake of the fruit of the same Tree of Oneness.

Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 152

Praise be to Thee, O Lord my God, for the wondrous revelations of Thine inscrutable decree and the manifold woes and trials Thou hast destined for myself. At one time Thou didst deliver me into the hands of Nimrod; at another Thou hast allowed Pharaoh's rod to persecute me. Thou alone canst estimate, through Thine all-encompassing knowledge and the operation of Thy Will, the incalculable afflictions I have suffered at their hands. Again Thou didst cast me into the prison-cell of the ungodly for no reason except that I was moved to whisper into the ears of the well-favored denizens of Thy kingdom an intimation of the vision with which Thou hadst, through Thy knowledge, inspired me and revealed to me its meaning through the potency of Thy might. And again Thou didst decree that I be beheaded by the sword of the infidel. Again I was crucified for having unveiled to

men's eyes the hidden gems of Thy glorious unity, for having revealed to them the wondrous signs of Thy sovereign and everlasting power. How bitter the humiliations heaped upon me, in a subsequent age, on the plain of Karbila! How lonely did I feel amidst Thy people; to what state of helplessness I was reduced in that land! Unsatisfied with such indignities, my persecutors decapitated me and carrying aloft my head from land to land paraded it before the gaze of the unbelieving multitude and deposited it on the seats of the perverse and faithless. In a later age I was suspended and my breast was made a target to the darts of the malicious cruelty of my foes. My limbs were riddled with bullets and my body was torn asunder. Finally, behold how in this day my treacherous enemies have leagued themselves against me, and are continually plotting to instill the venom of hate and malice into the souls of Thy servants. With all their might they are scheming to accomplish their purpose... Grievous as is my plight, O God, my Well-beloved, I render thanks unto Thee, and my spirit is grateful for whatsoever hath befallen me in the path of Thy good-pleasure. I am well pleased with that which Thou didst ordain for me, and welcome, however calamitous, the pains and sorrows I am made to suffer.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXXIX

Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying imposter.... Should a man appear, ere the lapse of a full thousand years - each year consisting of twelve months according to the Qur'án, and of nineteen months of nineteen days each, according to the Bayán - and if such a man reveal to your eyes all the signs of God, unhesitatingly reject him!

Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 32



Prayer

I beseech Thee, O God of bounty and King of all created things, to guard Thy servants from the imaginations which their hearts may devise. Raise them up, then, to such heights that their footsteps may slip not in the face of the evidences of Thy handiwork, which the manifold exigencies of Thy wisdom have ordained, and whose secrets Thou hast hid from the face of Thy people and Thy creatures. Withhold them not, O my Lord, from the ocean of Thy knowledge, neither do Thou deprive them of what Thou didst destine for such of Thy chosen ones as have near access to Thee, and those of Thy trusted ones as are wholly devoted to Thy Self. Supply them, then, from Thy sea of certainty with what will calm the agitation of their hearts. Turn, O Lord my God, the darkness of their fancies into the brightness of certitude, and cause them to arise, and to walk steadfastly in Thy straight Path, that haply Thy Book may not hinder them from recognizing Him Who is its Revealer, and Thy names from acknowledging the One Who is their Creator, and their Provider, and their Origin, and their King, and their Begetter, and their Destroyer, and their Glorifier, and their Abaser, and their Governor, and the Sovereign Protector of their Bearers.

☞ Bahá'u'lláh





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

