



REALITY of MAN

Hinduism

There are two selves, the apparent self and the real Self. Of these it is the real Self, and he alone, who must be felt as truly existing. To the man who has felt him as truly existing he reveals his innermost nature.

Katha Upanishad, excerpt

Life in the world and life in the spirit are not incompatible. Work, or action, is not contrary to knowledge of God, but indeed, if performed without attachment, is a means to it. On the other hand renunciation is renunciation of the ego, of selfishness—not of life. The end, both of work and of renunciation, is to know the Self within and Brahman without, and

to realize their identity. The Self is Brahman, and Brahman is all.

Isha Upanishad, excerpt

Man is composed of such elements as vital breath, deeds, thought, and the sense—all of them deriving their being from the Self. They have come out of the Self, and in the Self they ultimately disappear – even as the waters of a river disappear in the sea.

Prasna Upanishad, excerpt

The Self-existent pierced sense openings outward; therefore a man looks out, not in. But a certain wise man, in search of immortality, turned his gaze inward and saw the Self within.

The foolish go after outward pleasures and walk into the snare of all-embracing death. The wise, however, discerning immortality,

do not seek the permanent among things impermanent.

Katha Upanishad 4.1~2

The antidote, assuredly, for the elemental soul (bound to samsara¹) is this: study of the knowledge of the Veda and pursuit of one's own duty.

Maitri Upanishad 4.3

Judaism

And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth."

Torah Genesis 1.27~28

A prayer of Moses, the man of God.

¹ the eternal cycle of birth, suffering, death and rebirth.

O Lord, You have been our refuge in every generation. Before the mountains came into being, before You brought forth the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity You are God.

You return man to dust; You decreed, "Return you mortals!" For in Your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that has past, like a watch of the night. You engulf men in sleep; at daybreak they are like grass that renews itself; at daybreak it flourishes anew; by dusk it withers and dries up. So we are consumed by Your anger, terror-struck by Your fury. You have set our iniquities before You, our hidden sins in the light of Your face. All our days pass away in Your wrath; we spend our years like a sigh. The span of our life is seventy years, or, given the strength, eighty years; but the best of them are trouble and sorrow. They pass by speedily, and we are

in darkness. Who can know Your furious anger? Your wrath matches the fear of You. Teach us to count our days rightly, that we may obtain a wise heart.

Turn, O LORD! How long? Show mercy to Your servants. Satisfy us at daybreak with Your steadfast love that we may sing for joy all our days. Give us joy for as long as You have afflicted us, for the years we have suffered misfortune. Let Your deeds be seen by Your servants, Your glory by their children. May the favor of the LORD, our God, be upon us; let the work of our hands, prosper, O prosper the work of our hands!

Kethuvim Psalm 90

Zoroastrianism

The Teacher of the Law will stride forth upon this Earth among its dwellers! It is for the choice of man by man, each individually for himself, to recognize the great

impulse of the cause of ASHA. Then will he labor to complete the progress and renovation of the World.

Zend Avesta, excerpt

He, who, according to ASHA, in Mind and in his Life shall verily perform for me, for Zarathustra, that which is, thus, most helpful for my cause, upon him shall the Ahuras bestow rewards beyond this Earth, with every blessing.

Gathas, Yasna 46.10

And unto this man will Ahura Mazda give both the two greatest gifts: His universal Weal and immortality, by means of His bountiful Spirit, and with His Best Mind, due to His desire to maintain His Cosmic Order in Word and Deed, and by the strength and wisdom of His Cosmic Sovereign Power.

Gathas, Yasna 47.1

And therefore, O great Creator! Inspired by Thy Benevolent Mind,

do I approach Thee and beseech
Thee to grant me as a bountiful
gift, for both Worlds – the
corporeal and that of the mind –
those attainments to be derived
from the Divine Order of ASHA².

O Thou Cosmic Order! And Thou
Universal Mind! (Infinite
Intelligence) I will worship Thee
and Ahura Mazda³ because of
Whom the Creative Mind within us
is causing the Imperishable
Kingdom to progress. So long as I
be able and may have the power,
so long will I teach the people
concerning these Deeds to be
done by them with faith toward
Mazda, and in the desire for the
coming of the Cosmic Order of
ASHA into their Souls and their
Bodies.

Gathas, Yasna 28.3-5

² cosmic principle of order, justice,
righteousness and truth

³ Supreme Creator

Buddhism

Difficult is the attainment of the
human state. Difficult the life of
mortals. Difficult is the hearing of
dhamma⁴ true. Difficult the
appearance of the Awakened
Ones. Refraining from all that is
detrimental, the attainment of what
is wholesome, the purification of
one's mind: This is the instruction
of the Awakened Ones.

The Dhammapada 14.4-5

Within the Essence of Mind all
things are intrinsically pure, like
the azure of the sky and the
radiance of the sun and the moon
which, when obscured by passing
clouds, may appear as if their
brightness had been dimmed; but
as soon as the clouds are blown
away, brightness reappears and
all objects are fully illuminated.
Learned audience, our evil habits
may be likened unto the clouds;

⁴ righteousness or duty; "law" in the broadest
sense

while Sagacity and Wisdom are like the sun and the moon respectively. When we attach ourselves to outer objects, our Essence of Mind is clouded by wanton thoughts which prevent our Sagacity and Wisdom from sending forth their light.

Sutra of Hui Neng 6

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.

Dhammapada, The Twin Verses, excerpt

Christianity

Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God. When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

Matthew 19.21~26

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, “You will be made free?”

Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

John 8.31~36

For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit

that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

I Corinthians 2.11~16

Islam

I call to witness the Fig and the Olive, the Mount Sinai, and this Soil Secure, that we created man of finest possibilities, then brought

him down to the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do the right, for whom there is reward undiminished. Who should then make you deny the Judgment after this? Is not God the most equitable of all judges?

Qur'án 95

It is not given to man that God should speak to him except by suggestion or indirectly, or send a messenger to convey by His command whatsoever He please. He is all-high and all-wise. So have We revealed to you the Qur'án by Our command. You did not know what the Scripture was before, nor (the laws of) faith. And We made it a light by which We show the way to those of Our creatures as We please; and you certainly guide them to the right path, the path of God to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And will not all things go back to God?

Qur'án 42.51~53

O men, it is you who stand in need of God. As for God, He is above all need, worthy of praise. He could take you away if He pleased, and bring a new creation (in your place).

Qur'án 35.15~16

So keep yourself exclusively on the way, the creational law of God according to which He created man with the quality of choosing right or wrong. There is no altering of God's creation. This is the supreme law. But most men do not understand.

Qur'án 30.30

Tell them: "O my creatures who have come to belief, have fear of displeasing your Lord. There is good for those who do good in this world, and productive is God's earth. Only those who persevere will get their reward measureless."

Qur'án 39.10

Bábí Faith

The One true God may be compared unto the sun and the believer unto a mirror. No sooner is the mirror placed before the sun than it reflects its light. The unbeliever may be likened unto a stone. No matter how long it is exposed to the sunshine, it cannot reflect the sun. Thus the former layeth down his life as a sacrifice, while the latter doeth against God what he committeth. Indeed, if God willeth, He is potent to turn the stone into a mirror, but the person himself remaineth reconciled to his state. Had he wished to become a crystal, God would have made him to assume crystal form. For on that Day whatever cause promoteth the believer to believe in Him, the same will also be available to the unbeliever. But when the latter suffereth himself to be wrapt in veils, the same cause shuteth him

out as by a veil. Thus, as is clearly evident today, those who have set their faces toward God, the True One, have believed in Him because of the Bayán⁵, while such as are veiled have been deprived because of it.

Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 103

Rid thou thyself of all attachments to aught except God, enrich thyself in God by dispensing with all else besides Him, and recite this prayer:

Say: God sufficeth all things above all things, and nothing in the heavens or in the earth or in whatever lieth between them but God, the Lord, sufficeth. Verily, He is in Himself the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent.

Regard not the all-sufficing power of God as an idle fancy. It is that genuine faith which thou

⁵ major doctrinal work of the Báb

cherishest for the Manifestation of God in every Dispensation. It is such faith which sufficeth above all things that exist on earth, whereas no created thing on earth besides faith would suffice thee. If thou art not a believer, the Tree of divine Truth would condemn thee to extinction. If thou art a believer, thy faith shall be sufficient for thee above all things that exist on earth, even though thou possess nothing.

Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p.123

Bahá'í Faith

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that Most Great Light. Methinks, but for the potency of that revelation, no being could ever exist. How resplendent the

luminaries of knowledge that shine in an atom, and how vast the oceans of wisdom that surge with a drop! To a supreme degree is this true of man, who, among all created things, hath been invested with the robe of such gifts, and hath been singled out for the glory of such distinction. For in him are potentially revealed all the attributes and names of God to a degree that no other created being hath excelled or surpassed.

The Kitáb-i-Íqán pp. 100~1

These energies with which the Day Star of Divine bounty and source of heavenly guidance hath endowed the reality of man lie, however, latent within him, even as the flame is hidden within the candle and the rays of light are potentially present in the lamp. The radiance of these energies may be obscured by worldly desires even as the light of the sun can be concealed beneath the dust and dross which cover the

mirror. Neither the candle nor the lamp can be lighted through their own unaided efforts, nor can it ever be possible for the mirror to free itself from its dross. It is clear and evident that until a fire is kindled the lamp will never be ignited, and unless the dross is blotted out from the face of the mirror it can never represent the image of the sun nor reflect its light and glory.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 65-66

The potentialities inherent in the station of man, the full measure of his destiny on earth, the innate excellence of his reality, must all be manifested in this promised Day of God.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 341

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