

The Bahá'ís of Florence Inter-Faith Devotional Service



THE VESTURE OF HIS LAWS

Prayer

Lord! Pitiful are we, grant us Thy favor; poor, bestow upon us a share from the ocean of Thy wealth; needy, do Thou satisfy us; abased, give us Thy glory. The fowls of the air and the beasts of the field receive their meat each day from Thee, and all beings partake of Thy care and loving-kindness.

Deprive not this feeble one of Thy wondrous grace and vouchsafe by Thy might unto this helpless soul Thy bounty.

Give us our daily bread, and grant Thine increase in the necessities of life, that we may be dependent on none other but Thee, may commune wholly with Thee, may walk in Thy ways and declare Thy mysteries. Thou art the Almighty and the Loving and the Provider of all mankind.

~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá



Hinduism

Contentment, forgiveness, self-control, not appropriating anything unrighteously, purification, coercion of the organs, wisdom, knowledge of the Supreme, truthfulness, and abstention from anger: these constitute the tenfold law for ascetics.

Laws of Manu 6.92

...by attending to the duties prescribed, he best worships Vishnu. He does not vilify another either in his presence or in his absence

- who does not speak untruth, does not injure others...
- who does not covet another's wife, wealth, and who does not bear ill feeling towards any...
- who neither beats nor slays any animate thing...
- who is ever intent upon serving the gods, the Brahmanas¹ and his spiritual

¹ the Sacred Word

preceptor.

- who is ever anxious for the welfare of all creatures, his children and his own soul...
- whose mind is not sullied with anger and other passions...
- who observes the duties laid down by scripture for every caste and condition of life; there is no other mode.

Vishnu Parana

The infinite joy of touching the Godhead is easily attained by those who are free from the burden of evil and established within themselves. They see the Self in every creature and all creation in the Self. With consciousness unified through meditation, they see everything with an equal eye.

I am ever present unto those who have realized me in every creature. Seeing all life as My manifestation, they are never separated from Me. They worship Me in the hearts of all, and all their actions proceed from Me. Wherever they may live, they abide in Me. When a person responds to the joys and sorrows of others as if they were his own, he has attained the highest state of spiritual union.

Bhagavad Gita 6.28~32

Judaism

And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

- You shall have no other gods before me.
- You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above,
- You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain;
- Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- Honor your father and your mother,
- You shall not kill.
- You shall not commit adultery.
- You shall not steal.
- You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's.

Exodus 20.1~17

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile

person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. he that doeth these things shall never be moved.

Psalm 15

Zoroastrianism

About the ten admonitions with which all instruction as to religion is connected...

- The first is to proceed with good repute, for the sake of occasioning approving remarks as to the good repute of your own guardian and teacher, high priest and master.
- The second is to become awfully refraining from evil repute, for the sake of evil repute not occurring to relations and guardians.
- The third is not to beat your own teacher with a snatched-up stick, and not to bring scandal upon his name, for the sake of annoying him, by uttering that which was not heard from your own teacher.
- The fourth is that whatever is taught liberally by your own teacher, you have to deliver

back to the worthy, for the sake of not extorting a declaration of renown from the righteous.

- The sixth is to keep the way of the good open to your house, for the sake of making righteousness welcome in your own abode.
- The seventh is that, for the sake of not developing the fiend insensibly in your reason, you are not to keep it with the religion of the good, nor to remain in impenitence of sin.
- The eighth is that, for the sake of severing the fiend from the reason, you have to force malice away from your thoughts, and to become quickly repentant of sin.
- The ninth is to fully understand the forward movement of the religion, also keep the advancing of the religion further forwards, and to seek your share of duty therein; and on a backward movement, when adversity happens to the religion, to have the religion back again, and keep your body in the continence of religion.



- The tenth is that there is to be a period of obedience towards the ruler and priestly authority, the high-priesthood of the religions.

The Pahlavi Texts, Instructions to the Priests

Buddhism

The Lord addressed the venerable Sariputra:

It is not by reasoning, Sariputra, that the law is to be found; it is beyond the pale of reasoning, and must be learnt from the Tathagata². It is for a sole object, a lofty object, that the Buddha, the Tathagata, appears in the world. To show all creatures the sight of Tathagata-knowledge does the Buddha, the Tathagata, appear in the work; to open the eyes of creatures for the sight of Tathagata-knowledge does the Buddha, the Tathagata, appear in the world.

Now the word of my commandment, as contained in nine divisions, has been published according to the varying degree of strength of creatures. Such is the device I have shown in order to introduce creatures to the knowledge of the giver of boons. And to those in the world who have always been pure, wise,

² Ultimate Reality

good-minded, compassionate sons of Buddha and one their duty under many kotis³ of Buddhas will I make known amplified Sutras⁴...

At certain times, at certain places, somehow do the leaders appear in the world, and after their appearance will they whose view is boundless at one time or another preach a similar law. Just as the blossom of the glomerous fig-tree is rare, albeit sometimes, at some places, and somehow it is met with, as something pleasant to see for everybody, as a wonder to the world...so wonderful and far more wonderful is the law I proclaim. Any one who, on hearing a good exposition of it, shall cheerfully accept it and recite but one word of it, will have done honor to all Buddhas.

Excerpt from the Lotus of the True Law

Christianity

But when the Pharisees⁵ had heard that he had put the Sadducees⁶ to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the

³ large number of indeterminate amount

⁴ divine verses

⁵ Jewish religious party

⁶ Jewish priestly sect

Lord they God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Matthew 22:34~40

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Matthew 16.24~27

Islam

Say, Come, I will recite what God has made a sacred duty for you:

- Ascribe nothing as equal with Him; be good to your parents.
- Kill not your children on a plea of want—We provide sustenance for you and for them.

- Approach not lewd behavior whether open or in secret.
- Take not life, which God has made sacred, except by way of justice and law. Thus does He command you, that you may learn wisdom.
- And approach not the property of the orphan, except to improve it, until he attains the age of maturity.
- Give full measure and weight, in justice—No burden do We place on any soul but that which it can bear.
- And if you give your word, do it justice, even if a near relative is concerned; and fulfill your obligations before God.

Thus does He command you, that you may remember. Verily this is My straight Path: follow it, and do not follow others paths which will separate you from

His Path. Thus does He command you, that you may be righteous.

Qur'an 6.151~53



Bábí Faith

God loveth those who are pure. Naught in the Bayán⁷ and in the sight of God is more loved than purity and immaculate cleanliness...

God desireth not to see, in the Dispensation of the Bayán any soul deprived of joy and radiance. He indeed desireth that under all conditions, all may be adorned with such purity, both inwardly and outwardly, that no repugnance may be caused even to themselves, how much less unto others.

The Bayán, Vahid 14

There is no paradise, in the estimation of the believers in the Divine Unity, more exalted than to obey God's commandments, and there is no fire in the eyes of those who have known God and His signs, fiercer than to transgress His laws and to oppress another soul, even to the extent of a mustard seed. On the Day of Resurrection God will, in truth, judge all men, and we all verily plead for His grace.

The Bayán, Vahid 19



⁷ major doctrinal work of the Báb
Inter-Faith Devotional

Bahá'í Faith

This is that which hath descended from the realm of glory, uttered by the tongue of power and might, and revealed unto the Prophets of old. We have taken the inner essence thereof and clothed it in the garment of brevity, as a token of grace unto the righteous, that they may stand faithful unto the Covenant of God, may fulfill in their lives His trust, and in the realm of spirit obtain the gem of Divine virtue.

O SON OF SPIRIT! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.

O SON OF SPIRIT! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

O SON OF MAN! Thou dost wish for gold and I desire thy freedom from it. Thou thinkest thyself rich in its possession, and I recognize thy wealth in thy sanctity therefrom. By My life! This is My knowledge, and that is thy fancy; how can My way accord with thine?

O CHILDREN OF ADAM! Holy words and pure and goodly deeds ascend unto the heaven of celestial glory. Strive that your deeds may be cleansed from the dust of self and hypocrisy and find favor at the court of glory; for ere long the assayers of mankind shall, in the holy presence of the Adored One, accept naught but absolute virtue and deeds of stainless purity. This is the day-star of wisdom and of divine mystery that hath shone above the horizon of the divine will. Blessed are they that turn thereunto.

The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh

Prayer

My God, my Well-Beloved! No place is there for any one to flee to when once Thy laws have been sent down, and no refuge can be found by any soul after the revelation of Thy commandments. Thou hast inspired the Pen with the mysteries of Thine eternity, and bidden it teach man that

which he knoweth not, and caused him to partake of the living waters of truth from the cup of Thy Revelation and Thine inspiration.

No sooner, however, had the Pen traced upon the tablet one single letter of Thy hidden wisdom, than the voice of the lamentation of Thine ardent lovers was lifted up from all directions. Thereupon, there befell the just what hath caused the inmates of the tabernacle of Thy glory to weep and the dwellers of the cities of Thy revelation to groan...

Purify, O my God, the hearts of Thy creatures with the power of Thy sovereignty and might, that Thy words may sink deep into them. I know not what is in their hearts, O my God, nor can tell the thoughts they think of Thee. Methinks that they imagine that Thy purpose in calling them to Thine all-highest horizon is to heighten the glory of Thy majesty and power. For had they been satisfied that Thou summonest them to that which will recreate their hearts and immortalize their souls, they would never have fled from Thy governance, nor deserted the shadow of the tree of Thy oneness. Clear away, then, the sight of Thy creatures, O my God, that they may recognize Him Who showeth forth the Godhead as One Who is sanctified from all

that pertaineth unto them, and Who, wholly for Thy sake, is summoning them to the horizon of Thy unity...

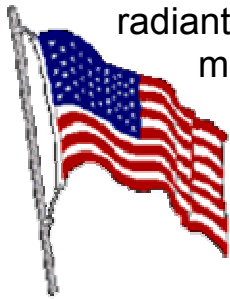
Enable Thy servants, O my God, to discover the things Thou didst desire for them in Thy Kingdom. Acquaint them, moreover, with what He Who is the Origin of Thy most excellent titles hath, in His love for Thee, been willing to bear for the sake of the regeneration of

their souls, that they may haste to attain the River that is Life indeed, and turn their faces in the direction of Thy Name, the Most Merciful. Abandon them not to themselves, O my God! Draw them, by Thy bountiful favor, to the heaven of Thine inspiration. They are but paupers, and Thou art the All-Possessing, the ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.

~ 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

