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The Four Great Truths

1. Selections from Pali Sources

All that you are is the result of what you have thought of: it is based on your thoughts, it is made up of your thoughts.

If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, as his own shadow, ever-present, never-departing.

You yourself must strive: let the Buddhas only point out the way. The thoughtful who enter the way are free from the bondage of sin.

Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by not hatred: this is the law eternal. Overcome anger by not anger, overcome evil by good, overcome the miser by liberality, overcome the liar by speaking the truth.

Hatreds in the path of civilization, with the path of peace, are the greatest of all obstacles to our progress. Hatreds are the direct fruit of selfishness, and selfishness is the root of all evil. Selfishness is the great lie which underlies all other lies, and it is the great fact which underlies all other facts. The man who has conquered selfishness has conquered all evil, and when we have conquered selfishness we shall be free from all evil. Let us, then, be patient, generous, and pure, and we shall be free from selfishness, and we shall be free from all evil. Let us be free from selfishness, and we shall be free from all evil. Let us be free from selfishness, and we shall be free from all evil.

Selfishness is the parent of sin, and sin is the parent of misery. Selfishness is the parent of misery, and misery is the parent of selfishness. Let us be free from selfishness, and we shall be free from sin, and we shall be free from misery. Let us be free from selfishness, and we shall be free from sin, and we shall be free from misery. Let us be free from selfishness, and we shall be free from sin, and we shall be free from misery.

Let us be free from selfishness, and we shall be free from sin, and we shall be free from misery.

When it is said that all things are egoless, it means that all things are devoid of self-hood. Each thing may have its own individuality-the being of a horse is not of cow nature-it is such as it is of its own nature and is thus discriminated by the ignorant, but, nevertheless, its own nature is of the nature of a dream or a vision.

Awakening of Faith

(Mahayana Shraddhopada Shastra)

ADORATION to our Great Compassionate Savior, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent!

ADORATION to his Potentiality and unmanifested Universality!

ADORATION to Activity, perfectly balanced and awakening!

ADORATION to the pure Essence of Mind, wide and deep as the sea!

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.

The first significance to be revealed is when by reason of removing all objects to a distance from a mirror there is no reflection, so when all disturbing mental conditions and all mental spheres in contact with objects through the sense organs are done away with there is no disturbance of the Mind's tranquillity.

The reply is that while Essence of Mind in all alike is of one pure sameness, that because of the fumigating power of Ignorance it has become differently defiled and therefore manifests its differentiated aspects in different ways and different degrees, so that their number is incalculable. So Great is the variety of their personalities, their experiences, hindrances and suffering that only Buddha can comprehend them and embrace them all in perfect compassion.

By nature sentient beings have affinity for emancipation and enlightenment, but without suitable causes and conditions they can not attain them. Even if the have a Buddha Nature but do not chance to meet a Buddha, or a good learned Master, or a Bodhisattva, they could not of themselves attain Nirvana.

According to the Sutras, Tathagatas are represented as existing in a state of emptiness and tranquillity. Common minds interpret this to mean that Tathagatas' minds are empty and tranquil, a physical analogy. They do not understand that it refers to the immaterial perceptions of the thinking mind, a metaphysical analogy, so they mistakenly consider the Tathagata's nirvana-state" is a characteristic of Tathagatas.

The answer to this is, that a disciple is like a precious gem whose brilliance is hidden by a coating of impurities. If we are to enjoy the pure brilliance of the gem we must first resort to polishing.

First, according to the purity and rarenessness of their prasadana, after the example of Buddhas, they can descend from the heavenly palaces of the Tusita Realm, they can enter into a human womb, undergo a period of gestation, be born as a human, become a Bhikshu, attain Enlightenment, turn the wheel of the Dharma, pass into Nirvana.

Some of these Bodhisattvas, it is said in the Sutras, must descend into the evil realms for a period, but this does not mean that they have retrograded. It only means that for the maturing of their remaining karma they must experience the suffering of those lower realms to cure them of any remaining shadow of indolence less they fall short of attaining true Bodhisattvahood, so that their courage and boldness may be adequate. Such Bodhisattvas by reason of this experience in the lower realms will exert their devotional practices with renewed earnestness and will never again become timid or indolent, or having any fear of retrograding.

Second, the way of Keeping the Precepts. The purpose of this practice is to get rid of all selfish grasping after comforts, delights, and self-interests. It means not to kill any sentient being, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to deceive nor slander nor to utter malicious words nor to flatter.

There may be some disciples whose root of merit is not yet matured, whose control of mind is weak and whose power of application is limited, and yet who are sincere in their purpose to seek Enlightenment, these, for a time, may be beset and bewildered by mares and evil influences who are seeking to break down their good purpose.

Or, if they should have intimations within that they have attained transcendental powers, recalling past lives, or fore-seeing future lives, or reading other's thoughts, or freedom to visit other, Buddhalands, or great powers of discharge, if at this stage they mistake and think they may rest content, covetous for worldly power and riches and fame.

III. Selections from Chinese Sources

TAO-Teh-King

The TAO that can be "tao-ed" can not be the infinite TAO that is, the way that can be followed can not be the ultimate, pathless Way).

The source of the universe is hidden in non-existence; existence is only the mother of its evolution.

Before one can attain the supreme perfection of Taoihood, he must first realize its inmost mystery, that is , he must enter the door of this mystery of mysteries.

Everything in the world is mutually opposing and revealing itself.

So existence and non-existence are mutually related; the difficult and the easy are always in combination; the long and the short always qualify each other; the high and the low are always in opposition; the loud and the soft are loud and soft only in contrast with each other; the before and the behind are contrasted but always keep company.

TAO is invisible but permeates everywhere; no matter how one uses it or how much, it is never exhausted.

As rivers have their source in some far off fountain, So the human spirit has its source. To find his fountain of spirit is to learn the secret of heaven and earth. In this fountain of mystery, spirit is nourished by power in endless supply.

If in our practice of concentration our heavenly eye is suddenly opened and we gain enlightenment thencefoth we shall be freed from lust and greed. If we attain transcendental intelligence, our minds penetrating into every corner and into everything, then our minds will lose their self-consciousness.

To be favored is humiliating, so to attain it is as much to be dreaded as to lose it. That is what is meant by favor and disgrace are alike to be feared.

At the moment when one is able to concentrate his mind to the extreme of emptiness and is able to hold it there in serene tranquillity, then his spirit is unlifted with the spirit of the universe and it has returned to its original state from which his mind and all things in the universe have emerged as appearance.

Time will show that the humblest will attain supremacy, the dishonored will be justified, the empty will be filled, the old will be rejuvenated, those content with little will be rewarded with much, those who desire much will fall confusion.

Men act in conformity with the laws of earth, earth acts in conformity with the laws of Heaven; Heaven acts in conformity with the laws of TAO; TAO acts in accordance with its own self-nature.

Just as the valleys, because of their lowness, because the source of rivers, so the perfect Sage because of his characteristic humility returns to the simplicity of a little child.

By the nature of things, when the strength of anything is fully developed, it immediately begins to decay. This means that strength is not in accordance with the principle of TAO. Being not in accordance with TAO, it will soon pass away.

He who understands others is intelligent; he who understands himself is enlightened. He who is able to conquer others is powerful; he who can control himself is more powerful.

TAO is inscrutable, From TAO proceeds the one (potentality); one produces two (the positive and negative principles); this makes three. From these three proceed all things. All things, thus bear the imprint of the negative yin behind and embrace the positive yang in front. The primal principle of potentality, as it becomes active, brings the negative and positive together and there is manifestation.

The Way of the Great TAO is wide and straight for men to follow, but most people prefer the byparths.

One should respond to hatred with kindness; he should treat little affairs as though they were important. All the world's difficulties arise from slight causes, and all the world's great affairs have risen from small beginnings.

(It means for everybody) that there is a better way of winning than by hostility, a better way of gaining than by resort to force.

Dhyana for Beginners
(Sui Dynasty, 581-618)

A. External Conditions

If a disciple undertakes the practice of Dhyana, and to put the lessons of this book into action, he must be in possession of five external conditions.

1. He must resolve to keep the Precepts (as to killing, stealing, sexual impurity, deceit, and use of intoxicants), as it is said in the Sutra that it is in obedience to the Precepts that all intelligence is developed and all suffering is brought to an end. If after conversion they are able to keep the Precepts pure, both in letter and in spirit, they will become worthy followers of Lord Buddha and will assuredly realize the Buddha-Dharma through their faithful practice of Dhyana. It is as if their robe was perfectly white and ready for dyeing.
2. The second external condition that one must possess if one is to hope for success in the practice of Dhyana, relates to clothing and food. There are four ways of living. The second way is the way followed by the itinerant monks who live by begging their food and who are able to resist the temptation to live by the other three ways, namely, working for others for pay, living by astrology foretelling the changes and effects of the heavenly bodies in human affairs, by geomancy and fortune telling, and finally by flattery and dependency upon wealthy and mighty.
3. The third external condition that one must possess if one is to hope for success in the practice of Dhyana, relates to shelter. A retreat for a follower must be quiet and free from annoyances and disturbances of any description.
4. The fourth external condition that one must possess if one is to hope for success in the practice of Dhyana, relates to freedom from entanglement in all worldly affairs. It means to withdraw from all contemporaries and social responsibilities. It means to give up all worldly friendly conditions, and worldly interests.
5. The fifth external condition that one must possess if one is to hope for success in the practice of Dhyana, relates to association with people. We should keep in close relations with those who are of noble character and attainments. The first kind are those outside the Brotherhood who supply us with our food and clothing, and who are competent in taking good care of us and in protecting us from annoyances and troubles. The second kind of noble minded people are the members of our Brotherhood with whom we live in intimacy and mutual forbearance and kindness. The third kind are our teachers and Masters who instruct us and guide us in the use of expedient means to meet both external and internal conditions, and to show us how to become interested and to enjoy ourselves in the practice of Dhyana.

B. Censorship Over Desires Arising from the Senses

1. First is the censorship over the desires arising from the use of the eyes, among which we mention as of first importance, sensual desires that arise from seeing crystal eyes, slender brows, crimson lips, snow- white teeth, worldly adornments, garments of beautiful colors--green, yellow, red, white, purple, violet, and so on,--all of which will attract a fool's attention and awaken desires that are evil.
2. Second is the censorship over the desires arising from the use of the ears, among which we mention, musical sounds from harp, twelve-stringed lute, and instruments using silk, bamboo metal, stone, etc., and from the voices of dancing and singing girls, reciting, praising, etc. No sooner do we, disciples of Buddha, hear these sweet sounds than our hearts are stained and our minds entangled and we are led into evil acts.
3. Third is the censorship over the desires arising from the use of sense of smell. By this is meant the scent from sexually excited bodies, from beverages, from delicious foods, and from the fragrance from all kinds of slouldering perfumes.
4. The fourth is the censorship over desires arising from the sense of taste in eating and drinking, such as, bitterness, sourness, sweetness, spiciness, saltiness and fresheess.
5. Fifth is the censorship over the desires arising from the sense of touch. Our body is very sensitive to softness, warmth in winter, coolness in summer, etc.

C. Inner Hindrances to be Abolished

1. The first kind are the hindrances of sensual desires that have their origin within the mind itself, because of memory or imagination.
2. The second inner hindrance is the hindrance of hatred. This is a most fundamental factor in preventing one from attaining enlightenment. It is both the cause and condition for the manifestation of all other hindrances.
3. The third hindrance is the hindrance of laziness and sleepiness. Laziness means that our mind gets dull and inert; while sleepiness means that our five senses become relaxed, our body becomes immobile, and then we fall asleep.
4. The fourth inner hindrance is recklessness and remorse.
5. The fifth inner hindrance is the hindrance of doubt. If the mind is clouded with doubt, how can it have any faith in the teaching?

Eating is necessary for the support of the body and mind in its search for enlightenment, but too much eating would clog the system and cause sickness that would be a distress and hindrance to our practice. On the other hand, if we take too little food there will be an enacated body, the distress of hunger, a feeble and unstable mind, a weak and uncertain eye.

This then is the lesson concerning breathing that we are to learn at the beginning of our practice of Dhyana. Wear loose clothes, let the wind blow over and refresh the body; imagine that every pore of the body is participating in the breathing, Let the breathing be neither forceful nor hasty, let it be gentle and natural and deliberate. By doing so the mind will be clear, sickness will be avoided, and there will be enjoyment in the practice and a successful issue from it.

For the regulating of these three, body, breathing and mind, there is no fixed order, we should simply regulate and adjust whichever and whenever we notice any one of them to be in an improper state. As long as we sit in practice we should keep body, breathing and mind in perfect control and harmonious adjustment.

As we are sitting up and practicing Dhyana, especially by the means of insight, it is possible that all of a sudden we will be enveloped in a wave of intuition and intelligence, but as our power of concentration is still weak, our mind will be weak and fluctuating like a candle flame in the wind, so this measure of transcendental intelligence will not be lasting, Under this condition we must again go back to the method of stopping all thought. Then by the patient practice of stopping all thought, the mind will come to be like a candle in a closed room that burns steadily and brightly.

If we become attached to any of these false developments, we will soon pass under the influence of ninety-five devils who will; elude us into madness. When the gods or devil-spirits seem to be responsible for these false developments, they will sometimes give us, increased meditating power so as to lead us on into deeper development of these evil manifestations.

Under these conditions foolish people think he has attained enlightenment and they give him their faith and obedience, but his deluded mind is in a disturbed condition and is ready to be the service of evil spirits in their efforts to lead the world into turmoil.

These reactions are similar to the reactions we feel when we are with people-- if we are with bad people, we feel irritated and annoyed, but if we are with good people, we are mutually benefited and feel at ease. Stopping and observing at the time of our practice helps us to discern between the oneness and the rightness of the developments that take place during the practice.

Our Lord Buddha accumulates all his store of merit and wisdom by delivering all sentient beings into Nirvana, while evil influences are always destroying the good qualities of sentient beings and keeping them in the dreary round of life and death.

Anything which serves to transform the five objects of sense and the thoughts of the mind is the work of Mara's army of demons and golbins.

In our practice of right mindfulness we realize that the conception of Mara as the embodiment of evil and the conception of Buddha as the embodiment of goodness and truth is really one conception--the conception of manifestation-- but that in ultimate reality they balance each other and there remains only the conception of Nirvana, the ultimate Essence that abides in emptiness and silence.

If our body, mind and breathing are well regulated and our circumstances are in harmony with the teaching of Buddha, we should be able to throw off most sicknesses and heal most wounds.

In either case we should notice the beginning of sickness and try to prevent its becoming serious by remedying the conditions both external and internal as early as possible.

Medicines made up of either minerals or herbs or both may be used if they have some correspondence with the sickness.

From the very beginning the Mahasatva-Bodhisattva, beside his practice of insight into the emptiness of all phenomena, should also practice insight into the potentiality that abides in emptiness. If he does this he will realize with clearness that although the nature of mind is emptiness, as it comes into relations with suitable causes and conditions, it is potential of all phenomena though they are not real nor permanent, and though they manifest through different organs of seeing, hearing, perceiving, thinking, etc.

What does it mean to practice insight by the Middle Way? It means to look at the nature of our minds in a more comprehensive way. If we do that we will see that the mind is neither true nor false, and from this viewpoint we entrain our dependent thoughts.

Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patiarch

In Buddhist thought, sin is considered not as a legal sense as something to be punished, or forgiven, or atoned for by sacrifice, but in its cause-and effect aspect of Karma and its maturing.

Maha Prajna-paramita! The Great Transcendental-Wisdom Ideal, supreme, most exalted, foremost. It neither stays, nor goes, nor comes. By it Buddhas of the present, the past and future generations become Buddhas.

When the followers of the highest school of Mahayana study the Diamond Sutra, their minds become enlightened as they realize that Prajna is immanent in their own Mind-essence. Since they have their own access t o highest wisdom through the constant practice of concentration and contemplation (dhyana and samadhi) they realize that they no longer need to rely on scripture and authority.

This does not mean that without enlightenment a man is in a class with human beings different from Buddhahood. The opposite is the truth, he has always been in the same class with Buddhas from the beginning. Ignorance does not separate him from Buddhahood, it only obscures his realization of his true Buddha nature.

Samadhi and Prajna are fundamental. But you must not be under the wrong impression that they are independent of each other, for they are not two entities, they are inseparably united. Samadhi is the quiescence of Prajna, while Prajna is the activity of Samadhi.

In the thinking faculty, let the past be dead. If we allow our thoughts past, present and future, to become linked up into a series, we put ourselves under restraint.

What is the difference between Dhyana and Samadhi? Dhyana is the effort to be mentally free from any attachment to outer objects. Samadhi is the realization of that freedom in inward peace.

By letting our minds dwell on evil things, hell arises. By letting our minds dwell upon good acts, paradise is manifested. Dragons and snakes are the transformations of venomous hatred; while Bodhisattvas are the transformations of compassionate thoughts. Pusan heavens are the projection of Prajna; while underworlds are the transformations of ignorance and infatuation. Un-numbered, indeed, are the transformations of Mind-essence.

Contemporaneous with the Patriarch when he was living at Po-lam Monastery was Grand Master Shin-shau who was preaching in Yok-cham Monastery of King-nam. At that time the two schools of Hui-neng in the South and of Shin-shau in the North were both flourishing. As the two schools were distinguished from each other by the names' Sudden and Gradual, some Buddhist scholars were troubled as to which school to follow.

So far as the Dharma is concerned, there can be only one school.

If I should tell you that I had a system of Dhyana to transmit to others, I would be deceiving you. What I try to do my disciples, is to liberate them from their own bondage, by such device as each case requires.

He who has realized Mind-essence, himself, may dispense with such doctrines as Bodhi, Nirvana, Knowledge of Emancipation. It is only those who do not possess a single system of Dhyana, who can formulate all systems of Dhyana; those who understand what this means, may rightly use such terms as Bodhikaya, Bodhi, Nirvana, Knowledge of Emancipation.

With those who are sympathetic You may have discussion about Buddhism. As to those whose point of view differs from ours, Treat them politely and try to make them happy. Disputes are alien to our school, They are incompatible with its spirit. To be bigoted and to argue with others is disregard of this rule is to subject one's Mind-essence to the bitterness of this mundane existence.

IV. Selections from Tibetan Sources

The Life and Hymns of Milarepa

I have understood that one who aimeth at his individual peace and happiness adopteth the Lower Path (the Hinayana). But he, who from the very start, devoteth the merit of his love and compassion to the cause of others, I understand to be adopting the Higher Path (the Mahayana).

I realize that even though I should possess the whole world, at my death I should have to give up everything; and so it will confer happiness in this and the next life if I give up everything now. I am thus pursuing a life which is quite opposite to that followed by the people of the world. Give up thinking of me as a living person.

To what particular doctrine of the Mahayana Sect cost thou belong? I told her that it was the highest creed of the Mahayana; that it was called the Path of Total Self-Abnegation, for the purpose of attaining Buddhahood is one lifetime; and that to attain Buddhahood thou we must scatter this life's aims and objects to the wind.

My body was emaciated by the privations and hardships; mine eyes were deeply sunken into the sockets; my bones showed prominently; my color was of a bluish-green; my muscles were all shrunken and shriveled; a growth of bluish-green hair covered my skeleton-like form; the hairs of my head were stiff, and formed a formidable tuft; and my limbs appeared as if they were about to break.

My belief in the methods of the Mantrayanic doctrines, which had been a real transcendent knowledge can be attained by proper care of the body and without giving up nourishing food and comfortable clothing, was thus firmly established.

The Supreme Path, the Beauty of Precious Gems

Attach myself to a religious preceptor endowed with spiritual power and complete knowledge.

Seek a delightful solitude endowed with psychic influences as a heritage. Keeping in mind the evils of gluttony, use just enough food to keep thee fit during the period of thy retreat.

Study the teachings of the Great Sages of all sects impartially.

Study the beneficient sciences of medicine and astrology, and the profound art of omens.

Adopt such regimen and manner of living as will keep thee in good health.

To dwell with a sage and remain in ignorance is to be like a man dying of thirst on the shore of a lake; and this is a grievous failure.

To know the moral precepts and not to apply them to the cure of obscuring passions is to be like a diseased man carrying the medicine which he never ouetc and this is a grievous failure.

For one of little intellect, the best thing is to have faith in the law of cause and effect.

For one of ordinary intellect, the best thing is to recognize, both within and without oneself, the workings of the law of opposites.

For the superior intellect, the best thing is to have thorough comprehension of the inreparabileness of the known, the object of knowledge, and the act of knowing.

The fact that there have been made known amongst men the Ten Pious Acts, the Six Paramita, the various teachings concerning Reality and Perfection, the Four Noble Truths, the Four States of Dhyana, the Four States of Formless Existence, and the Two Mystic Paths of spiritual unfoldment and emancipation, showeth the virtue of the Holy Dharma.

Selections from Modern Sources

Practicing the Seventh Stage of Buddha's Noble Path

Sitting quietly realizing the mind's pure essence. Realizing its all-embracing wholeness, its inconceivable purity and unity, its boundless potentiality for radiation and integration; radiating going forth in rays and vibrations of cosmic energy; manifesting itself in particles, electrons and atoms; and by the phenomena of light, heat and electricity; manifesting itself in organic forms; growing toward being so perfectly balanced that all abides in the original emptiness and silence.

Realizing its all-embracing wholeness, its inconceivable purity and unity, its boundless potentiality for radiation and integration; radiation going forth in instinctive will-to-live, to-enjoy, to propagate; being manifest in instinctive acts of greed, lust and self-assertion; and in the phenomena of natural selection, struggle, conflict, self-preservation and survival. Integrating everything inward to unity and purity; the going forth and the drawing in being so perfectly balanced that all abides in the original emptiness and silence. Sitting quietly realizing the mind's emptiness and eternal silence. Realizing its inconceivable purity and unity, its imaginlessness, its egolessness; realizing it, but yielding to radiating potency continually being reborn in this Saha-world of suffering.

Sitting quietly realizing the mind's pure essence; realizing its all-embracing wholeness, its inconceivable purity and unity, its boundless potentiality for radiation and integration; radiating going forth into one and more complex forms of life--protoplasm, bacteria, cellular life and organic--manifesting itself in the phenomena of birth, growth, reproduction, decay and death. Integration drawing everything into unity and purity; the going forth and the drawing in being so perfectly balanced that all abides in the original emptiness and silence.

Realizing its all-embracing wholeness, its inconceivable purity and unity, its boundless potentiality for radiation and integration; radiation going forth in instinctive will-to-live, to-enjoy, to propagate; being manifest in instinctive acts of greed, lust and self-assertion; and in the phenomena of natural selection, struggle, conflict, self-preservation and survival. Integrating everything inward to unity and purity; the going forth and the drawing in being so perfectly balanced that all abides in the original emptiness and silence. Sitting quietly realizing the mind's emptiness and eternal silence. Realizing its inconceivable purity and unity, its imaginlessness, its egolessness; realizing it, but yielding to radiating potency continually being reborn in this Saha-world of suffering.

SELECTED QUOTATIONS FROM THE UPANISHADS & BHAGAVAD GITA

Stuart R. Kerr, III

[Upanishads] [Bhagavad Gita]

The Upanishads

Who sends the mind to wander afar? Who first drives life to start on its journey? Who impels us to utter these words? Who is the Spirit behind the eye and the ear?

It is the ear of the ear, the eye of the eye, and the Word of words, the mind of mind, and the life of life. Those who follow wisdom pass beyond and, on leaving this world, become immortal.

There the eye goes not, nor words, nor mind. We know not, we cannot understand, how he can be explained: He is above the known and he is above the unknown. Thus have we heard from the ancient sages who explained this truth to us.

Katha Upanishad Part I

NACHIKETAS. There is no fear in heaven: old age and death are not there. the good, beyond both, rejoice in heaven, beyond hunger and thirst and sorrow.

And those in heaven attain immortality. You know, O' Death, that sacred fire which leads to heaven. Explain it to me, since I have faith. Be this my second boon.

DEATH. I know, Nachiketas, that sacred fire which leads to heaven. Listen. That fire which is the means of attaining the infinite worlds, and is also their foundation, is hidden in the sacred place of the heart.

Part 2

Not many hear of him; and of those not many reach him. Wonderful is he who can teach about him; and wise is he who can be taught. Wonderful is he who knows him when taught.

He cannot be taught by one who has not reached him; and he cannot be reached by much thinking. The way to him is through a Teacher who has seen him: He is higher than the highest thoughts, in truth above all thought.

DEATH. I will tell you the Word that all the VEDAS glorify, all self-sacrifice expresses, all sacred studies and holy life seek. That Word is OM.

That Word is the everlasting Brahman: that Word is the highest End. When that sacred Word is known, all longings are fulfilled. It is the supreme means of salvation: it is the help supreme. When that great Word is known, one is great in the heaven of Brahman.

Concealed in the heart of all beings is the Atman, the Spirit, the Self; smaller than the smallest atom, greater than the vast spaces. The man who surrenders his human will leaves sorrow behind, and beholds the glory of the Atman by the grace of the Creator.

Part 5

"This is That" -- thus they realize the ineffable joy supreme. How can "This" be known? Does he give light or does he reflect light?

There the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars; lightnings shine not there and much less earthly fire. From his light all these give light, and his radiance illumines all creation.

Part 6

The whole universe comes from him and his life burns through the whole universe. In his power is the majesty of thunder. Those who know him have found immortality.

If one sees him in this life before the body passes away, one is free from bondage; but if not, one is born and dies again in new worlds and new creations.

Prasna Upanishad

First Question

The sage replied: In the beginning, the Creator longed for the joy of creation. He remained in meditation, and then came Rayi, matter, and Prana, life. 'These two', thought he, 'will produce beings for me.'

Mundaka Upanishad

Part I, Chapter I

He is beyond thought and invisible, beyond family and colour. He has neither eyes nor ears; he has neither hands nor feet. He is everlasting and omnipresent, infinite in the great and infinite in the small. He is the Eternal whom the sages see as the source of all creation.

Svetasvatara Upanishad

Part 1

By the Yoga of meditation and contemplation the wise saw the power of God, hidden in his owncreation. It is he who rules over all the sources of this universe, from time to the soul of man.

And they saw the Wheel of his power made of one circle, three layers, sixteen parts, fifty spokes, twenty counterspokes, six groups of eight, three paths, one rope of innumerable strands, and the great illusion:

There is the soul of man with wisdom and unwisdom, power and powerlessness; there is nature, Prakriti, which is creation for the sake of the soul; and there is God, infinite, omnipresent, who watches the work of creation. When a man knows the three, he knows Brahman.

Part 3

There is ONE in whose hands is the net of Maya, who rules with his power, who rules all the worlds with his power. He is the same at the time of creation and at the time of dissolution. Those who know him attain immortality.

He is Rudra, he alone is the ONE who governs the worlds with his power. He watches over all beings and rules over their creation and their destruction.

His eyes and mouths are everywhere, his arms and feet are everywhere. He is God who made heaven and earth, who gave man his arms and who gave to the birds their wings.

Greater than all is Brahman, the Supreme, the Infinite. He dwells in the mystery of all beings according to their forms in nature. Those who know him who knows all, and in whose glory all things are, attain immortality.

He is the inmost soul of all, which like a little flame the size of a thumb is hidden in the hearts of men. He is the master of wisdom ever reached by thought and love. He is the immortality of those who know him.

He has innumerable heads and eyes and feet, and his vastness enfolds the universe, and even a measure of ten beyond.

Concealed in the heart of all beings lies the Atman, the Spirit, the Self; smaller than the smallest atom, greater than the greatest spaces. When by the grace of God man sees the glory of God, he sees beyond him the world of desires and then sorrows are left behind.

Part 5

The soul can be thought as the part of a point of a hair which divided by a hundred were divided by a hundred again; and yet in this living soul there is the seed of Infinity.

The soul is not a man, nor a woman, now what is neither a woman nor a man. When the soul takes the form of a body, by that same body the soul is bound.

The soul is born and unfolds in a body, with dreams and desires and the food of life. And then it is reborn in new bodies, in accordance with its former works.

Maitri Upanishad

Part 2 Even as a man who is asleep awakes, but when he is asleep does not know that he is going to awake, so a part of the subtle invisible Spirit comes as a messenger to the body without the body being conscious of his arrival.

A part of Infinite consciousness becomes our own finite consciousness with powers of discrimination and definition, and with false conceptions. He is in truth Prajapati and Visva, the Source of creation and the Universal in us all.

Part 6

The Spirit supreme is immeasurable, inapprehensible, beyond conception, never-born, beyond reasoning, beyond thought. His vastness is the vastness of space.

At the end of the worlds, all things sleep: He alone is awake in Eternity. Then from his infinite space new worlds arise and awake, a universe which is a vastness of thought. In the consciousness of Brahman the universe is, and unto him it returns.

There are two ways of contemplation of Brahman: in sound and in silence. By sound we go to silence. The sound of Brahman is OM. With OM we go to the End: the silence of Brahman. The end is immortality, union and peace.

Even as a spider reaches the liberty of space by means of its own thread, the man of contemplation by means of OM reaches freedom.

Taittiriya Upanishad

Part 2

Words and mind go to him, but reach him not and return. But he who knows the joy of Bra, fears no more.

Part 8

There is a bridge between time and Eternity; and this bridge is Atman, the Spirit of man. Neither day nor night cross that bridge, nor old age, nor death nor sorrow.

Evil or sin cannot cross that bridge, because the world of the Spirit is pure. This is why when this bridge has been crossed, the eyes of the blind can see, the wounds of the wounded are healed, and the sick man becomes whole from his sickness.

To one who goes over that bridge, the night becomes like unto day; because in the worlds of the Spirit there is a Light which is everlasting.

The Supreme Teaching

(Waking and Dreaming)

The Spirit of man has two dwellings: this world and the world beyond. There is also a third dwelling-place: the land of sleep and dreams. Resting in this borderland the Spirit of man can behold his dwelling in this world and in the other world afar, and wandering in this borderland he beholds behind him the sorrows of this world and in front of him he sees the joys of the beyond.

(Deep Sleep)

As a man in the arms of the woman beloved feels only peace all around, even so the Soul in the embrace of Atman, the Spirit of vision feels only peace all around. All desires are attained, since the Spirit that is all has been attained, no desires are there, and there is no sorrow.

(Death)

When the body falls into weakness on account of old age or disease, even as a mango-fruit, or the fruit of the holy fig-tree, is loosened from its stem, so the Spirit of man is loosened from the human body and returns by the same way to Life, whereefrom he came.

And even as a worker in gold, taking an old ornament, moulds it into a form newer and fairer, even so the Soul, leaving the body and unwisdom behind, goes into a form newer and fairer: a form like that of the ancestors in heaven, or of the celestial beings, or of the gods of light, or of the Lord of Creation, or of Brahma the Creator supreme, or a form of other beings.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Chapter II

19 Who believes him a slayer And who thinks him slain, Both these understand not: He slays not, is not slain.

20. He is not born, nor does he ever die; Nor having come to be, will he ever come not to be. Unborn, eternal, everlasting, this ancient one Is not slain when the body is slain.

22. As leaving aside worn-out garments A man takes other, new ones, So leaving aside worn-out bodies To other, new ones goes the embodied (soul).

26. Moreover, even if constantly born Or constantly dying thou consideerest him, Even so, great-armed one, thou Shouldst not mourn him,

30. This embodied (soul) is eternally unslayable In the body of everyone, son of Bharata; Therefore all beings Thou shouldst not mourn.

Chapter III

42. The sense, they say, are high; Higher than the senses is the thought-organ; But higher than the thought organ is the consciousness; While higher than the consciousness is He (the soul).

43.Thus being conscious of that which is higher than consciousness, Steadying the self by the self, Smite the enemy, great-armed one, that has the form of desire, and is hard to get at.

Chapter IV

6. Tho unborn, tho My self is eternal, The Lord of Beings, Resorting to My own material nature I come into being by My own mysterious power.

7. For whenever of the right A languishing appears, son of Bharata, A rising up of unright, Then I send Myself forth.

8. For protection of the good, And for the destruction of evil-doers, To make a firm footing for the right, I come into being in age after age.

Chapter V

6. But renunciation, great-armed one, Is hard to attain without discipline; Disciplined in discipline, to Bra the sage Goes in no long time.

7. Discipline in discipline, with purified self, Self-subdued, with the senses overcome, His self become (one with) the self of all beings, Even acting, he is not stained.

8. 'I am (in effect) doing nothing at all!' -- so The disciplined man should think, knowing the truth, When he sees, hears, touches, smells, Eats, walks, sleeps, breathes,

9. Talks, evacuates, grasps, Opens and shuts his eyes; 'The senses (only) on the objects of sense Are operating' -- holding fast to this thought.

Chapter VI

5. One should lift up the self by the self, And should not let the self down; For the self is the self's only friend, And the self is the self's only enemy

6. The self is a friend to that self By which self the very self is subdued; But to him that does not possess the self, in enmity Will abide his very self, like an enemy.

9. To friend, ally, foe, remote neutral, Holder of middle ground, object of enmity, and kinsman To good and evil men alike, Who has the same mental attitude, is superior.

10. Let the disciplined man ever discipline Himself, abiding in a secret place, Solitary, restraining his thoughts and soul, Free from aspirations and without possessions.

Chapter VII

3. Among thousands of men Perchance one strives for perfection; Even of those that strive and are perfected, Perchance one knows Me in very truth.

Chapter VIII

5. And at the hour of death, on Me alone Meditating, leaving the body Whoso dies, to My estate he Goes; there is no doubt of that.

Chapter IX

7. All beings, son of Kunti, Pass into My material nature At the end of a world-eon; them again I send forth at the beginning of a (new) world-eon.

8. Taking as base My own material-nature I send forth again and again This whole host of beings, which is powerless, by the power of (My) material nature.

29. I am the same to all beings, no one is hateful or dear to Me; but those who revere me with devotion, they are in Me and I too am in them.

30. Even if a very evil doer Reveres Me with single devotion He must be regarded as righteous in spite of all; For he has the right resolution.

31. Quickly his soul becomes righteous, And he goes to eternal peace. Son of Kunti, make sure of this: No devotee of Mine is lost.

Chapter XI

4. If Thou thinkest that it can Be seen by me, O Lord, Prince of mystic power, then do Thou to me Reveal Thine immortal Self.

The Blessed One said: 5. Behold My forms, son of Prtha, By hundreds and by thousands, Of various sorts, marvelous, Of various colors and shapes.

8. But thou canst not see Me With this same eye of thine own; I give thee a supernatural eye: behold My mystic power as God!

God's Relationship to the Mortal Soul:

Selections from Various Sources on Religion and Philosophy

Stuart R. Kerr, III

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Zabarella (Late 16th Century A.D.)
God's function in the soul is to be the illumination of the potentially known, as the sun's light makes what is visible to be actually seen.

St. Augustine (354 A.D.)
We cannot perceive the immutable truth of things unless they are illuminated as by a sun. This divine light which illumines the mind, comes from God, who is the 'intelligible light', in whom and by whom and through whom all those things which are luminous to the intellect become luminous. As the sunlight makes corporeal things visible to the eye, so the divine illumination makes the eternal truths visible to the mind. It is not the illumination itself which is seen by the mind, nor the intelligible Sun, God, but that the characteristics of necessity and eternity in the necessary and eternal truths are made visible to the mind by the activity of God. Truth is neither inferior nor equal to our minds, but superior and more excellent. We need, therefore, a divine illumination, in order to enable us to apprehend what transcends our minds, 'for no creature, howsoever rational and intellectual, is lighted of itself, but is lighted by participation of eternal Truth'.

Matthew of Aquasparta (c. 1240)
The soul's activity alone is not sufficient to explain knowledge; the divine illumination is required. What is the divine illumination? It is really God's immediate concurrence with the operation of the human intellect, a concurrence by the aid of which we receive the *species sensibilus*, this movement being the divine illumination. God co-operates in all the activities of creatures; but the human mind is made in the image of God in a special manner and God's concurrence with the mind's activity is rightly termed illumination.

Roger Marston (d. 1303)
It is not the concepts or terms of the judgment of truths which are provided by the eternal light, God; but the eternal truth. The explanation of the fact that the human race agrees about the fundamental truths is to found in the common illumination of all minds by the one divine light. This divine light does not consist simply in the creation of the human intellect as a finite imitation of the divine intellect.

Nicolas Malebranche (b. 1638)
Our soul is not at all united to our body in the way that common opinion supposes that it is. The soul is united immediately and directly to God alone. We see all things in God.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (b. 1768)
Absolute Spirit exists only in and through the human spirit, but it does so at the level at which the individual human spirit is no longer a finite mind, enclosed in its own private thoughts, emotions, interests and purposes, but has become a moment in the life of the infinite as an identity-in-difference which knows itself as such. And we can say that man's knowledge of the Absolute and the Absolute's knowledge of itself are two aspects of the same reality. For being actualizes itself as concretely existing self-thinking Thought through the human spirit.

Soren Kierkegaard (b. 1813)
The highest self-actualization of the individual is the relating of oneself to God, not as the universal, absolute Thought, but as the absolute Thou.

Every man is, as it were, a mixture of the finite and the infinite. Considered precisely as finite, he is separated from God, alienated from him. Considered as infinite, man is not indeed God, but he is a movement towards God, the movement of the spirit.

Josiah Royce (b. 1855)
From the metaphysical point of view the life of each finite self is a unique contribution to the fullfillment of the general purpose of God. When I will,God wills in me, and my act is part of the divine life.

Saint John 14:2,3,16,17,26
In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Saint John 17:21-23
That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Romans 8:11,14,15,26
But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Romans 8:16,17
The Spirit himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are sons of God. But if we are sons, we are heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ, provided, however, we suffer with him that we may also be glorified with him.

Svetasvatara Upanisad (Part3)
Greater than all is Brahman, the Supreme, the Infinite. He dwells in the mystery of all beings according to their forms in nature. Those who know him who knows all, and in whose glory all things are, attain immortality. He is the inmost soul of all, which like a little flame the size of a thumb is hidden in the hearts of men. He is the master of wisdom ever reached by thought and love. He is the immortality of those who know him. Concealed in the heart of all beings lies the Atman, the Spirit, the Self; smaller than the smallest atom, greater than the greatest spaces. When by the grace of God man sees the glory of God, he sees beyond him the world of desires and then sorrows are left behind.

Maitri Upanishad (Part 2)
Even as a man who is asleep awakes, but when he is asleep does not know that he is going to awake, so a part of the subtle invisible Spirit comes as a messenger to the body without the body being conscious of his arrival. A part of Infinite Consciousness becomes our own finite consciousness with powers of discrimination and definition, and with false conceptions. He is in truth Prajapati and Visva, the Source of creation and the Universal in us all.

Chandogya Upanishad (Part 8)
There is a bridge betwwen time and Eternity; and this bridge is Atman, the Spirit of man. Neither day nor night cross that bridge, nor old age, nor death nor sorrow.

Evil or sin cannot cross that bridge, because the world of the Spirit is pure. This is why when this bridge has been crossed, the eyes of the blind can see, the wounds of the wounded are healed, and the sick man becomes whole from his sickness. To one who goes over that bridge, the night becomes like unto day; because in the worlds of the Spirit there is a Light which is everlasting.

The Supreme Teaching (Death)
When the body falls into weakness on account of old age or disease, even as a mango-fruit, or the fruit of the holy fig-tree, is loosened from its stem, so the Spirit of man is loosened from the human body and returns by the same way to Life, wherefrom he came. And even as a worker in gold, taking an old ornament, molds it into a form newer and fairer, even so the Soul, leaving the body and unwisdom behind, goes into a form newer and fairer: a form like that of the ancesters in heaven, or of the celestial beings, or of the gods of light, or of the Lord of Creation, or of Brahma the Creator supreme, or a form other beings.

The Koran 50:12
We created man. We know the promptings of his soul, and are closer to him than the vein of his neck.

The Koran 86:1
For every soul there is a guardian watching over it.

The Koran 10:60
We are witness of all your thoughts and all your prayers and all your actions. Not an atom's weight in earth or heaven escapes your Lord, nor is their any object smaller or greater, but is recorded in a glorious book.

The Lankavatara Scripture (Self-realisation of Noble Wisdom)
Universal Mind is like a great ocean, its surface ruffled by waves and surges but its depths remaining fotever unmoved.

Between Universal Mind and the individual discriminating mind is the intuitive-mind (manas) which is dependent upon Universal Mind for its cause and support and enters into relations with both. But the intuitive-mind enters into relations with the lower mind system, shares its experiences and reflects upon its activities. The discriminating-mind is a dancer and a magician with the objective world as his stage. Intuitive-mind is the wise jester who travels with the magician and reflects upon his emptiness and transiency. Universal Mind keeps the record and knows what must be.

The Koran

57:1 All that is in heaven and earth glorifies God; to Allah, He is the Mighty, Wise One.

57:2 His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He enlivens and (at) makes (your) dead (bodies).

57:3 He is the First and the last, visible and the unseen. He has knowledge of all things.

He created the heavens and the earth in six days and then mounted His throne. He knows all that goes into the earth and all that emerges from it, all that comes down from the heavens and all that rises up to it. He is with you wherever you are. He sees everything you do.

57:4 He is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. To Him shall all things return. He causes the night to pass into the day and the day into the night. He has knowledge of the inmost thoughts of all.

57:5 Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The light may be compared to a niche that contains a lamp, the lamp within a crystal of star quality. It is lit from a blessed tree, an olive tree neither of the east nor of the west whose oil almost shines forth, though no fire touched it. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whomever He wills.

57:6 So let the unbelievers, their works are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty traveller thinks it is water, but when he comes near he finds that it is nothing at all. He finds instead that Allah is there, and Allah will pay him his reckoning in full.

Or like darkness on a bottomless ocean spread with clashing billows and overcast with cloud: darkness upon darkness. If he stretches out his hand he can scarcely see it. Those to whom Allah does not give light have no light at all.

57:7 We created man. We know the promptings of his soul, and we are closer to him than the vein in his neck.

57:8 Every man shall have been mindful of what he has done in the Hereafter. On that day he will be resurrected from an accursed fire and from those between the fires and the rifts.

57:9 He sets down between you your thoughts and your actions and all the things you do. Are you not aware? Is not an aware's insight or sorrow because your Lord, not to mention any other creation or greater, but is revealed to a glorious book.

57:10 Those who have faith and have done good deeds will have a great reward. Why should you not believe? You will be put to the test with you and men.

57:11 Praise be to Allah, the Creator of heaven and earth! He sends forth the angels as His messengers, with two, three or four sets of wings. He multiplies His creation as He wills. Allah is powerful and knows all things.

2:98 Say: "Whoever is an enemy of Gabriel (who has by Allah's grace revealed to you the Koran as a guide and joyful tidings for the faithful, confirming what came before it) and of Michael and of the angels and of the messengers of God, God is an enemy to the unbelievers. Allah and his Messenger are enemies to the unbelievers.

76:1 No power can hinder Allah from punishing them. He is the Lord of the Leaders, by which the angels and the Spirit will ascend to him in one day a day whose length is fifty thousand years.

53:24 Someone are the angels in the heavens; our intercession would avail nothing if Allah gives leave to whom he accepts and chooses.

Those that believe in the life to come call the angels by the names of females. Yet of this they have no knowledge: they follow mere conjecture, and conjecture is no substitute for the truth.

43:19 They regard as female the angels who are Allah's servants. Did they witness their creation? Their claim shall be noted down. They shall be closely questioned.

Have we created them and do they think that we created them out of clay? Do they think that we created them out of clay? Do they think that we will do evil and blind them, when we have let no lying near Your protection and Savior? Verse

That took over the angels, the spirit and the angels in rows; none may speak except those to whom the Compassionate gives leave, and who speak the truth.

Our angels Hamar the numerous and the angels of the Spirit, the angels of the Spirit, the angels of the Spirit,