

Reflections of Life



Words of Comfort and Encouragement



Preface

Involvement with healthcare as a user, carer or member of staff can be a positive and life enhancing experience but, as all of us are aware, at times it can be anxiety-provoking and stressful. Dealing with illness, injury, undergoing clinical investigations or potentially life changing events and losses may stimulate a range of feelings, questions and thoughts within us. Perhaps some of these may be experienced for the first time in our lives with such intensity and immediacy. No matter what our faith or belief perspective, worldview, or values-base, this creative resource offers the reader a range of readings and illustrations which may:

- give comfort and hope
- help articulate that within us which is difficult to express
- affirm thoughts and feelings which are hard to share, as normal
- remind us we are not alone in our experience and response to it.

As healthcare users and as relatives who have experienced the recovery and death of loved ones in hospital settings we commend this resource to you. It contains wisdom, honesty, beauty and humanity's search for meaning in life. In short, it reflects the human experience of wellbeing, illness and death and yet offers something beyond. As a believer, questioner, doubter or as a non-believer there is something of relevance within its pages for all. Indeed, you might be surprised where insight and

inspiration may come from as you browse through the readings and illustrations.

We are delighted that *Reflections of Life* is being made available in sacred spaces, sanctuaries, and quiet rooms throughout NHSScotland. It is our hope that this resource will offer help and comfort to all who use it and will serve as a reminder that spiritual need is part of what it is to be human. In meeting such needs a significant contribution is made to the provision of quality person-centred healthcare, enhancing peoples' wellbeing and ability to cope. Thus, it also supports the NHSScotland Quality Strategy (2010).

This book is the result of much listening and working together by representatives of 13 different belief groups as well as 5 healthcare chaplains and members of Public Focus/Patient Involvement groups from throughout Scotland. The process of the book's creation is something to be applauded as much as the end product. Geoff Lachlan, the project's co-ordinator and editor, must take great credit for both.

Pramila Kaur,
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Contents

Introduction	7
Peace	9
Thanksgiving and Forgiveness	21
Love	31
Hope and Optimism	45
Joy	57
Healing and the Meaning of Life	65
Faith, Belief and Doubt	77
Change and Birth	87
Anxiety	97
Waiting, Patience and Acceptance	107
Struggle	117
Suffering, Pain and Illness	127
Despair, Depression, Hopelessness or Self-harm	139
Loss, Death and Bereavement	149
Caring and Community	171
A Gift of Blessings	183
Background	200
Thanks	201
Contributors	202
Contacts and Further Information	203
Copyright Acknowledgements	205

Introduction

The Book

The collaboration between grassroots belief communities and frontline spiritual care specialists of NHSScotland makes this book unique. Thirteen belief communities are represented – Baha’i Faith, Believers-not-Belongers (those who believe in a supernatural force or God, but who do not belong to a particular religion or belief), Brahma Kumaris, Buddhism, Christianity, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Hinduism, Humanism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Paganism, and Sikh Dharam. Spiritual Care / Healthcare Chaplaincy is represented by Chaplains from NHS Forth Valley, Highland, Lanarkshire, Lothian and Western Isles.

The book is for the use of Healthcare Chaplains, belief representatives, volunteers, patients, their relatives and friends, and particularly all the many different valued staff who work within the NHS.

Based upon the experience of Healthcare Chaplains this book has 16 chapters, which are themed according to the most common needs issues that arise in the provision of spiritual care. Each chapter has contributions of poetry, prayer and prose from these thirteen belief communities, with additional content from the five Healthcare Chaplains and the project editor, all of which reflect that chapter’s particular theme.

The book has also been sensitively and beautifully illustrated throughout by Jane Harlington, an artist from the Isle of Lewis.

Having a spectrum of contributions from

the different beliefs allows anyone to find some words that may inspire or comfort. All endorse the Golden Rule of “Only do to others as you would have them to do to you,” so it is the contributors sincere hope and wish that no one should feel offended or uncomfortable at seeing inspiring words from different beliefs. We can all learn from, and be encouraged by, other people’s understanding of the meaning of life and death. We are reminded that we are all spiritual beings with spiritual needs – irrespective of race or belief.

However, please note that this book is not intended as a substitute for religious care from a faith leader of a patient’s own community. When this is required, the Healthcare Chaplain will be pleased to contact the relevant faith leader or representative on the patient’s behalf.

The Power of Poetry

Why should poetry have any relevance for us, either as users of NHSScotland or as employees? The power of poetry to comfort, inspire, and generally help us make sense of the meaning of our lives, especially in the midst of personal crisis of whatever sort, should not be underestimated. As has been said:

Poetry is a place where all the fundamental questions are asked about the human condition.

Poetry connects us to what is deepest in ourselves. It gives us access to our own feelings, which are often shadowy, and engages us in the art of meaning-making.

Poetry speaks to something in us that so wants to be filled. It speaks to the great hunger of the soul.

The Power of Prayer and Reflection

Prayer is not only confined to the deeply religious. Studies show that nearly 50% of motorists regularly pray, reflect, and express hope, either inwardly, or towards a good luck charm or religious symbol before beginning a long journey. Chaplains of all sectors – in Healthcare, the Prison Service, or the Military - often find that individuals support or appreciate the offer of prayer or reflection.

But prayer is most used by those who understand their spirituality through belief in a God or a supernatural force/being. Prayer has thus been described as *communion with Ultimate Reality, whether this is regarded as personal, impersonal, or beyond them both*. Prayer itself – spoken alone privately, in communion with others, or as an inward meditation - can be immensely comforting. Knowing someone else is remembering you in prayer can be even more powerful. The act of prayer is what unites all religions, and viewed in this way, encouragement and support can be gained in sharing the prayers of religious beliefs different to our own. However, one does not have to be religious to pray or benefit from prayer and reflection. It is our hope that the poetry, prayers, and prose, religious and not, offered in this book will be understood in this light.

But it is not just comfort that we derive from poetry and prayer. By speaking to and

touching our deepest being, such words can strengthen our spiritual wellbeing, which is now known to be significant in stimulating our physical and mental healing. In this way it is hoped that this book will support and enhance the patient's journey, at whatever stage they may be. For all the many different staff who help and support the patients along that journey, may this book serve as a source of strength and encouragement as well.

On behalf of all our 21 contributors, NHS Education for Scotland, Spiritual Care and Healthcare Chaplaincy, the Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Scottish Government, we hope you will find *Reflections of Life* both comforting and inspiring.

Dr Geoff Lachlan,
MBChB, FRCSEd, MA (Study of Religions),
Health Development Officer,
Scottish Inter Faith Council and NHS
Education,
Editor, Reflections of Life Project, January
2011.

Peace



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.
Celtic Blessing

.....

May quietness descend upon my limbs,
my speech, my breath, my eyes, my ears;
may all my senses wax clear and strong
as I hear your voice
within that void
of your loving presence and peace.
Peter Millar

.....

Morning

A soundless day in December;
Six below and the trees furred with frost,
The ground a snow that was not snow,
A crystallizing of cold.

I went up into the Narnia of the woods,
Making my steps soft, yearning deer and geese.
I heard nothing but my own heart;
Just a shimmering of birds from one tree –
Thirty or forty in a flight that was made of waves.
There among the trees the loch;
A breath of ice had ghosted it,
An ice swivelled with patterns,
As though in the night strange dancers
Had come to skate its stillness.

I stood, scarves of breath woolling the air
As a cloth bell somewhere
Remembered Sunday.
Kenneth Steven.

Blessed are they who discover...
...besides physical relaxations,
spiritual ones.

Oh I know,
when the body lies abed and slumbers,
the spirit also rests.
Such, after all, is the composition
of the human unity.
But there are recreations
specific to the spirit, as for example,
the contemplation of nature, music,
a chat with friends
and, if you are blessed with faith,
a chat with God,
which needs no words....

As physical relaxation affects the spirit
so spiritual relaxation
refreshes - and how!-
brother body.
Dom Helder Camara, Into Your Hands Lord

.....

O Lord be close beside me
As I set sail today.
Be thou to me the compass
That guides me on my way;
And when my anchor I let down,
And all my wandering cease,
Within the harbour of thy love
May my soul rest in peace.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

.....

O Lord, now in my heart my twilight years,
My thanks to you I raise
For all your countless blessings
Throughout my bygone days;
And through the days that lie ahead
I pray dear Lord that you
Will grant me strength and courage
To do what I must do.
Lord guide me to my journey's end;
And when my life is through,
May my soul find eternal rest,
O Lord, my God in you.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

Baha'i Faith

Create in me a pure heart, O my God, and renew a tranquil conscience within me, O my Hope! Through the spirit of power confirm Thou me in Thy Cause, O my Best-Beloved, and by the light of Thy glory reveal unto me Thy path, O Thou the Goal of my desire! Through the power of Thy transcendent might lift me up unto the heaven of Thy holiness, O Source of my being, and by the breezes of Thine eternity gladden me, O Thou Who art my God! Let Thine everlasting melodies breathe tranquillity on me, O my Companion, and let the riches of Thine ancient countenance deliver me from all except Thee, O my Master, and let the tidings of the revelation of Thine incorruptible Essence bring me joy, O Thou Who art the most manifest of the manifest and the most hidden of the hidden!

Baha'u'llah, (Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, p. 248)

.....

O Son of Man!

Be thou content with Me and seek no other helper. For none but Me can ever suffice thee.

Baha'u'llah, (The Arabic Hidden Words).

.....

Believing - Not - Belonging

Heaven-Haven

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.
And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb
And out of the swing of the sea.

Gerard Manley Hopkins.

.....

Drop thy still dews of quietness
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

J.G. Whittier

.....

The Search

We have to go so far for silence
have to row a long way out to listen
spoon and spoon the water till we dip the oars

about, above, blue nothingness
an orange edge against the sky
the tips of slow gulls leaving light

ledges of gold light that change and flash
on this last softening of sun
a rippled mirror all the way across

this somewhere in between the night and day;
then row slow home, and row slow home
soundless, leaving the sea unbroken.

Kenneth Steven

.....

A Shower of Mercy

When the heart is hard and parched up, come upon me
with a shower of mercy.

When grace is lost from life, come with a burst of song.

When tumultuous work raises its din on all sides,
shutting me out from beyond, come to me, my Lord
of silence, with thy peace and rest.

Rabindranath Tagore.



Brahma Kumaris

There is something that you can do to help create peace in the world and that is to make yourself peaceful. The first step is to find out what has made you peace-less.

Turning your mind within allows you to discover, underneath the many surfaced emotions of everyday life, a deep, undisturbed pool of spiritual well-being. You need to explore that part of yourself, not just to understand it, but to experience it, again and again. This is a very satisfying experience, one that refreshes the soul and fills it with peace.

Peace is made up of many things: love, patience, wisdom. As you practice putting these into your interactions with others, your very nature

will become peaceful. This spreads waves of peace, creating an atmosphere of peace. This is an important contribution to the task of world transformation.

Learn to be in charge of yourself and maintain your peace: centre your awareness on your spiritual form - a tiny point of light, seated in the middle of your forehead. Really experience the difference between you the Sparkling Star, the soul and your body.

Even a few moments of this practice, if done regularly, will return you to your natural state of peace. Tiredness will vanish. Irritability too. And your actions will be filled with love - for the self and others.

Dadi Janki: Companion of God.

Buddhism

Rest in Natural Great Peace, this exhausted mind
Beaten helpless by karma and neurotic thought,
Like the relentless fury of the pounding waves
In the infinite ocean of samsara.
Rest in natural great peace.
Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche.

.....

One must look for peace within oneself and not
in any other place.
Sutta Nipata v. 919.

.....

Breathing in, I calm my body
Breathing out, I smile
Dwelling in the present moment
I know this is a wonderful moment .
Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace is Every Step (1991) p. 10.

.....

This is what should be done by one who is skilled
in goodness
and who knows the path of peace.
Let them be able and upright, straightforward
and gentle in speech.
Humble and not conceited, contented and easily
satisfied.
Unburdened with duties, and frugal in their ways.
Peaceful and calm and wise and skillful, not
proud and demanding in nature
Let them not do the slightest thing that the wise
would later reprove.
Metta Sutta, first part.

.....

Peace is a fire.
Sangharashita, Peace is a Fire, Windhorse Publications.

I am a link in the Buddhas golden chain of love
that stretches around the world. I will seek to
keep my link bright and strong.
From the Golden Chain, Jodoshina Dharma Schools.

.....

What we normally view as reality is really just life
viewed through the distorting lenses of what we
want and fear, and it can seem very depressing
and hopeless. Often I see that I am allowing all
my desires, passions and fears to fill me. Not
surprisingly, I then find that my life becomes very
confusing and dark, and my daily life seems to be
out of touch with the teachings of the Dharma.
Yet when we stop demanding and asking and
look at life with a still and open heart, reality is
always the life of Buddha.
Journal of the O.B.C. Spring (2004), p. 62, Soto Zen Tradition.

.....

All states of being are determined by mind.
It is mind that leads the way.
Just as the wheel of the oxcart follow
the hoof print of the animal that draws it,
so suffering will surely follow
when we speak or act impulsively
from an impure state of mind.

All states of being are determined by mind.
It is mind that leads the way.
As surely as our shadow never leaves us,
so well-being will follow
when we speak or act
with a pure state of mind.
*p. 7, vv 1-2, A Dhammapada for Contemplation
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo, 2006.*

Christianity

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

*John Ch.14, v. 27, New Testament, The Bible;
Jesus speaks to his followers.*

.....

Lord
Bring peace
Into
Your world.

Roger Devonshire, a Naval Chaplain now retired (was Rector of Pitlochry), Roger has this printed on a tiny card, which he gives away. It is easy to remember.

.....

Like a mighty river flowing,
Like a flower in beauty growing,
Far beyond all human knowing
Is the perfect peace of God.

Like the hills serene and even,
Like the coursing clouds of heaven,
Like the heart that's been forgiven
Is the perfect peace of God.

Some hymn words by Michael Perry set faith in a peaceful landscape.

O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God,
Who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day;
Defend us in the same with thy mighty power;
And grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger;
But that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance,
To do always that is righteous in thy sight;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The third collect for Grace, from the Book of Common Prayer, 1662.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

I would that the healing power of Christ might spread over the earth and be diffused through our society and into our homes, that it might cure men's hearts of the evil and adverse elements of greed and hate and conflict. I believe it could happen. I believe it must happen. If the Lamb is to lie down with the Lion, then peace must overcome conflict, healing must mend injury.

Gordon B. Hinckley, (1910–2008), Former President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.





Hinduism

om dyauh shanti antariksha gun shantih prithvi,
shantih raapah, shantih roshadhayah, shanthi vanaspatayah, shantih vishvedevah, shanti brahma,
shanthi sarvgun, shanthi shantihreva, shanthi sama, shanthi redhi

om shanthi, shanthi, shanthi.
Vedic Mantra.

Meaning: May there be peace in all the three regions of the universe, there be peace in the atmosphere; peace reigns on earth; there is coolness in the water; the medicinal herbs are healing; the plants are peace giving; there is harmony in celestial objects and perfection in the eternal knowledge; everything in the universe is peaceful; peace pervades everywhere. May that peace come to me!

May there be peace, peace, peace!
Vedic Mantra.

.....

May the Lord of the day grant us peace. May the Lord of night grant us peace.
May the Lord of sight grant us peace. May the Lord of might grant us peace.
May the Lord of speech grant us peace. May the Lord of space grant us peace.
I bow down to Brahman, source of all power. I will speak the truth and follow the law.
Guard me and my teacher against all harm.
Taittiriya Upanishad.

.....

Unless we have a stress-free mind and a violence free society, we cannot achieve world peace. We have to create harmony within the individual, and harmony in society,
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

.....

As we grow beautiful flowers in a garden, we should cultivate the thoughts of love and peace in the garden of mind. A mind full of love and peace is capable of making this earth beautiful.
Dr Anand Sidhartha.

Humanism

I Have Seen...

I have seen a mother at a cot, so I know what love is. I have looked into the eyes of a child, so I know what faith is. I have seen a rainbow, so I know what beauty is. I have felt the pounding of the sea, so I know what power is. I have planted a tree, so I know what hope is. I have heard a wild bird sing, so I know what freedom is. I have seen a chrysalis burst into life, so I know what mystery is. I have lost a friend, so I know what sorrow is. I have seen a star-decked sky, so I know what infinity is.

I have seen and felt all these things, so I know what life is.

Anon.

Chinese Proverb

If there is light in the mind, there is beauty in the person. If there is beauty in the person, there is harmony in the house. If there is harmony in the house, there is order in the nation. If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

Anon.

Islam

Finding a sense of peace during times of tribulation can be challenging, turning to one's faith and relying on that wondrous ally can help us.

Most surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find tranquillity.

Qur'an 13:28.

Hopefully from this revelation we can channel our desire for peace and the need to obtain inner sanctity in the remembrance of Almighty God.

You can not enter paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another; spread salam (peace) among yourselves.

Saying of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him, taken from Sahih Muslim.

'God is gentle and loves gentleness'.

Saying of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him, Taken from Sahih Muslim.

Kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever is not kind has no faith.

Saying of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him, Taken from Sahih Muslim.

Peace at last

Walking through the woods on a snowy day,
Seeing the crystal blanket was so deep,
I made a wrong turn and lost my own way.
Sliding over the hill Allah made so steep,
Finding the perfect place where I could rest,
I sat down beneath a tree that looked best.
As I sat watching the snow calmly fall,
I then laid me down to give up my all.
Curling up to go to sleep on the ground,
Hearing the voice of my friend calling me,
No longer would I utter one more sound.
Death takes my hand and pulls me from the tree.
Escaping a thornful life for my gain,
I'll reach a home of peace that has no pain.

Poem by Lena Winfrey Seder.



Jainism

God give peace to all human beings. Peace is not in money, estate, bungalows and possessions. Peace does not dwell in outward things but within the soul. God is peace. Root yourself in peace or God.
Jainism teaching.

Shivmastu sarva jagatah
Let all the cosmos be blessed
Parahita nirata bhavantu bhutaganah
Let all beings be engaged in one another's well-being
Doshah prayantu nasham
Let all weaknesses, sickness and faults be diminished and vanished
Sarvatra sukhi bhavatu lokah
Let everyone everywhere be blissful and peaceful.
Prarthana.

One should suppress anger by tranquility.
Pride should be replaced by humility.
Deceit should be avoided through simplicity (straightforwardness).
One should overcome greed through contentment.
Dashvaikālik Sutra.

I keep my body steady at one place, in complete silence and meditation.
Tassa Uttari Sootra (Lesson 4 Upliftment of Soul).

Do not injure any and do good to all that you can and that is all the morality and ethics and that is all the work there is and the rest is nonsense.
Swami Vivekananda.



Judaism

I will grant peace to the land, and you shall be able to rest with nothing to make you afraid; I shall eradicate evil beasts from the Earth, neither shall the sword pass through your land.

Leviticus, Ch. 26, v. 6, Hebrew Bible.

.....

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; those who love you shall prosper.

Peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your dwelling-places.

For the sake of my brothers and companion, let me wish you Peace.

Because of the house of the Lord our God I will implore your good.

Psalms, Ch. 122, vv. 6-9, Hebrew Bible.

.....

Rabban Shimon son of Gamliel used to say: on three things does the world stand: on justice, on truth, and on peace, as it is said: "judge with truth and a judgment of peace within your gates".

Talmud, Ethics of the Fathers, Ch. 1 Mishna 18.

.....

Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: The disciples of the Sages increase peace in the world, as it is said "All your children shall be learned of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children". Do not read banayich ("your children"), but bonayich ("your builders"). May there be great peace for those who Love your Torah, and may they never stumble. May there be peace within your walls, and tranquillity in your dwellings. For the sake of my brothers and friends, I will invoke peace upon you. For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will entreat good for you. May the Lord grant strength to His people; may the Lord bless His people with peace.

Talmud, Tractate Berachot (Blessings), 64a.

.....

Ruler of the Universe, Father of mercy and of supplications, begin for us in peace the six days of work that are approaching, with good omens and good fortune; grant us wisdom and understanding; let us hear joy and gladness; let us not be the object of jealousy, nor feel jealous of others; grant blessing, ease, and success to all the work of our hands.

Mystical prayer at end of Shabbat.

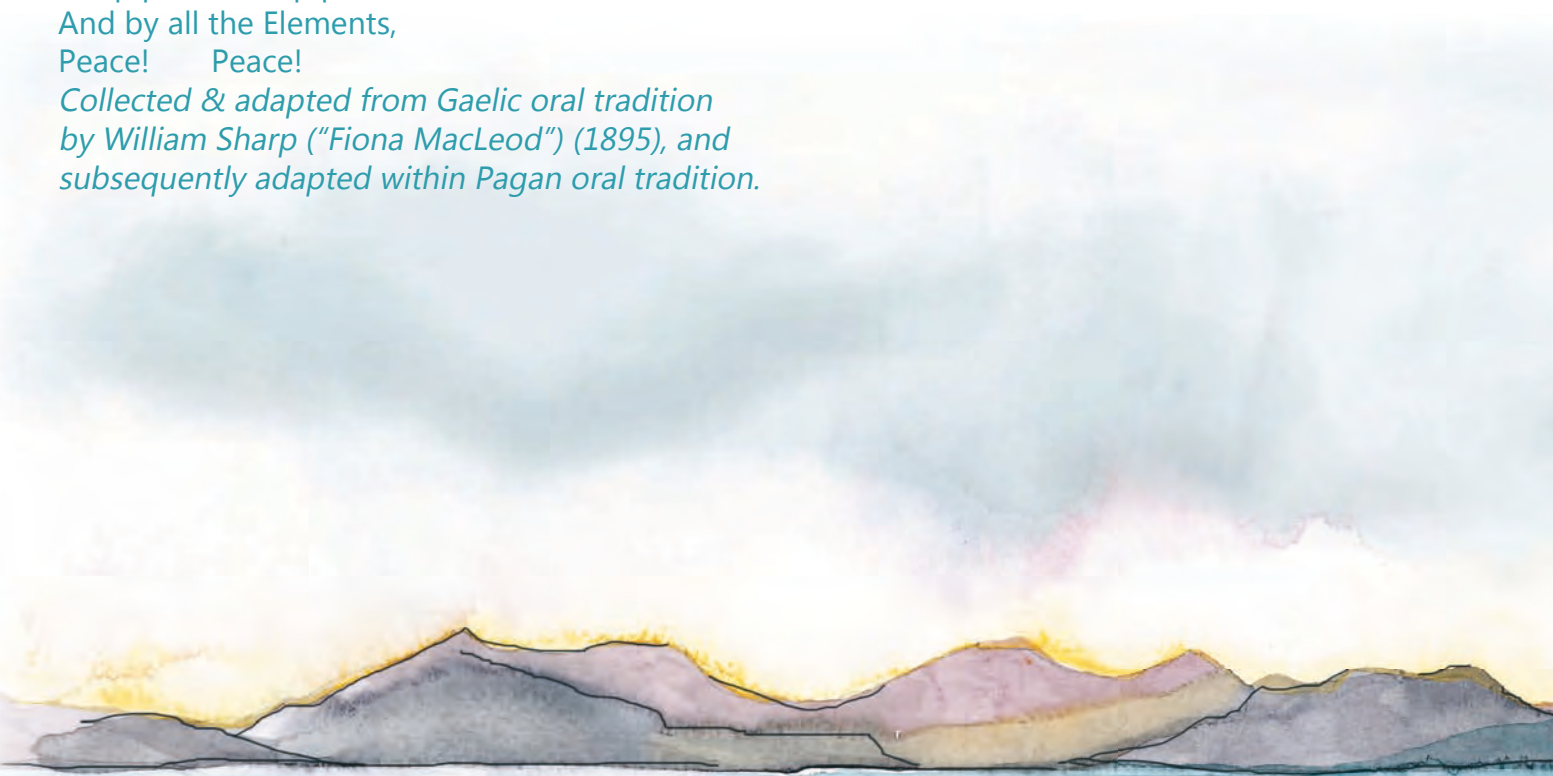


Paganism

Deep peace I breathe into you,
O weariness, here;
O ache, here!
Deep peace, a soft white dove to you;
Deep peace, a quiet rain to you;
Deep peace, an ebbing wave to you!
Deep peace, red wind of the east from you;
Deep peace, grey wind of the west to you;
Deep peace, dark wind of the north from you;
Deep peace, blue wind of the south to you!
Deep peace, pure red of the flame to you;
Deep peace, pure white of the moon to you;
Deep peace, pure green of the grass to you;
Deep peace, pure brown of the earth to you;
Deep peace, pure grey of the dew to you;
Deep peace, pure blue of the sky to you!
Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the sleeping stones to you!
Deep peace of the Yellow Shepherd to you,
Deep peace of the Wandering Shepherdess to you,
Deep peace of the Flock of Stars to you,
Deep peace from the heart of the Mother to you,
Deep peace from the heart of the Father to you,
And from Brigid,
Deep peace, deep peace!
And by all the Elements,
Peace! Peace!

*Collected & adapted from Gaelic oral tradition
by William Sharp ("Fiona MacLeod") (1895), and
subsequently adapted within Pagan oral tradition.*

Three paths to peace:
Receiving without need,
Giving without need,
And never taking where there is no need.
Emma Restall Orr (2007).



Sikh Dharam

Simran – Sikhs can obtain support and peace through chanting the mantra “Waheguru” which means the Lord is wonderful. This can be done on a 24 hour basis orally or mentally. When leading busy lives and facing troubling situations it is sometimes very difficult to achieve peace of mind but we are told to remember God at all times and peace will soon follow. For Sikhs, this can be done through the recital of Sukhmani Sahib – the prayer for peace and comfort:

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Jap Ji Sahib (Composed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the 1st Guru)

Gaaveesai suneeai man rakheeai bhaao
Sing, and listen, and let your mind be filled with love.
Dhukh parhar sukh ghar lai jaae
Your pain shall be sent far away, and peace shall come to your home.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji p. 2

Sukhmani Sahib: Prayer of Peace(Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Simra-o simar simar sukh paava-o.
Meditate, meditate, meditate in remembrance of Him, and find peace.
Kal kalays tan maahi mitaava-o.
Worry and anguish shall be dispelled from your body.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji p. 262.

Prabh ka-o simrahi say sukhvaasee.
Those who remember God dwell in peace.
Prabh ka-o simrahi sadaa abhinaasee.
Those who remember God are immortal and eternal.
Simran tay laagay jin aap da-i-aalaa.
They alone hold to the remembrance of Him, unto whom He Himself shows His Mercy.
Naanak jan kee mangai ravaalaa.
Nanak begs for the dust of their feet.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji p. 263.

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Salok Mehlaa 3 Bilaaval Kee Vaar (Composed by Guru Amar Das Ji, the 3rd Guru)

Jagat jalandaa rakh lai aapnee kirpaa Dhaar.
The world is going up in flames shower it with Your Mercy, and save it.
Jit du-aarai ubrai titai lai hu ubaar.
Save it, and deliver it, by whatever method it takes.
Satgur sukh vaykhaali-aa sachaa sabad beechaar.
The True Guru has shown the way to peace, contemplating the True Word of the Shabad.
Naanak avar na sujh-ee har bin bakhsanhaar.
Nanak knows no other than the Lord, the Forgiving Lord.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji p.853.

Thanksgiving and Forgiveness



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Thanks to Thee, O God, that I have risen today,
To the rising of life itself;
May it be to Thine own glory, O God of every gift,
And to the glory of my soul likewise.

O great God, aid Thou my soul
With the aiding of Thine own mercy;
Even as I clothe my body with wool,
Cover Thou my soul with the shadow of Thy wing.

Help me to avoid every sin
And the source of every sin to forsake;
And as the mist scatters on the crest of the hills,
May each ill haze clear from my soul, O God.
*Carmichael, A. 1988. The Sun Dances. Prayers
and Blessings from the Gaelic. Edinburgh : Floris
books.*

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.
John Whittier

For the beauty of creation Lord
That all around I see;
For birdsong and for flowers
I give my thanks to thee.
For sunshine and for showers
That make the flowers grow;
For mountains and for rivers
And for the winter snow;
For all the many blessings
That I enjoy along my way;
Let me sing thy praises, Lord,
For giving me this day.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

Lord for the joy of living
I give my thanks to thee.
For the beauty of creation
That all around I see.
From sunrise every morning
Until the close of day.
For the love of friends and family
As I go along my way.
For food and clothes and shelter
And all that I hold dear;
And the certain knowledge, Lord,
That you are always near.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

Prayer of Awareness

Settle in a chair you feel comfortable in.
Take a few deep breathes.
Ask God to shed light on your day.
Slowly recall the day allowing the moments which you enjoyed or were
life enhancing to emerge. Pause over these times.
Ask God to show you the events, the people, the moods, the feelings,
the circumstances which were enlivening and for which you would like
to give thanks. And give thanks.
Again slowly recall the day, looking for those moments which were difficult,
when you felt not at your best. What is being revealed here?
Ask God for help or perhaps for forgiveness to deal with what has come up.
How does tomorrow seem to you?
Ask for God's help and entrust yourself to God's love and care.
Ewan Kelly.

Baha'i Faith

Man must, under all conditions, be thankful to God, the One, for it is said in the blessed text: "If ye be thankful I will increase thee."

Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v. 1, p. 67).

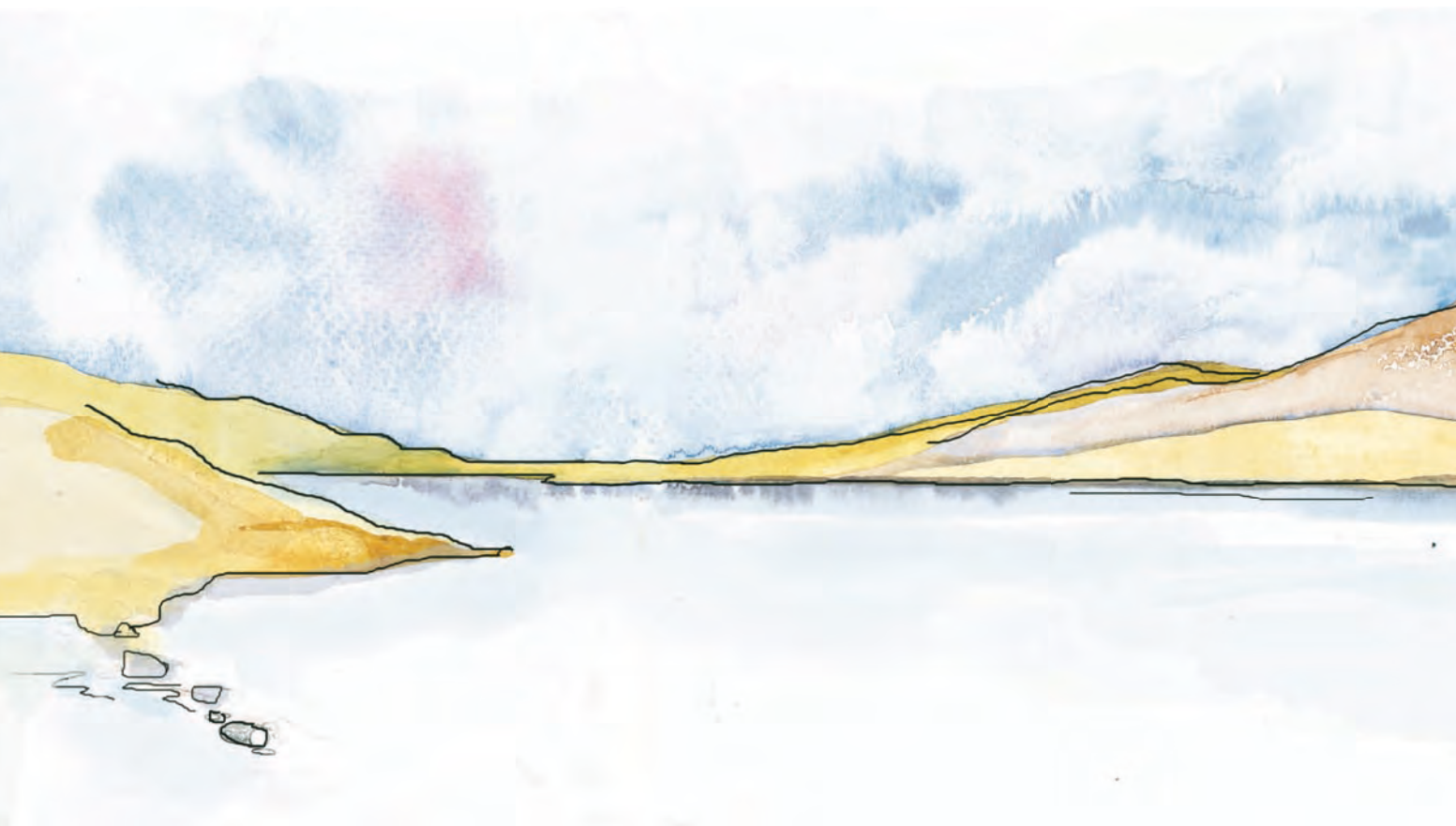
.....

O compassionate God! Thanks be to Thee for Thou hast awakened and made me conscious. Thou hast given me a seeing eye and favored me with a hearing ear, hast led me to Thy kingdom and guided me to Thy path. Thou hast shown me the right way and caused me to enter the ark of deliverance.

'Abdu'l-Bahá (Baha'i Prayers, p. 70).

O Lord my God! I implore Thee by Thy Name,.....; through which Thou didst preserve Thy servants and didst vouchsafe Thy healing; through which Thou didst show forth Thy tender mercies unto Thy servants and revealedst Thy forgiveness amidst Thy creatures -- I implore Thee to keep safe him who hath held fast and returned unto Thee, and clung to Thy mercy, and seized the hem of Thy loving providence. Send down, then, upon him Thy healing, and make him whole, and endue him with a constancy vouchsafed by Thee, and a tranquillity bestowed by Thy highness.

Baha'u'llah, Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, p. 237.



Believing - Not - Belonging

Deer on the Last Day of November

And so I feed them old forgotten apples;
Tumble half a dozen out into the forest so they lie
Half-buried in the burning snow.

For now it's Canada cold, so brittle
I hear branches crack in the stillness
Broken under their burden of white.

And I watch from the window
Praying they may come and see this,
Hoping they will find and eat.

They watch us, carved and unblinking,
Made of soft velvet, smooth-footed
so they tread on the winter world

Beautiful, perfect,
Morning and evening without fail
They pad through the wood.

I know I shouldn't feed them
Yet I want to see them find
And live, maybe it's a little giving back

For all that we have done
To wrong the wild for so long.
Kenneth Steven.

Brahma Kumaris

Thanksgiving

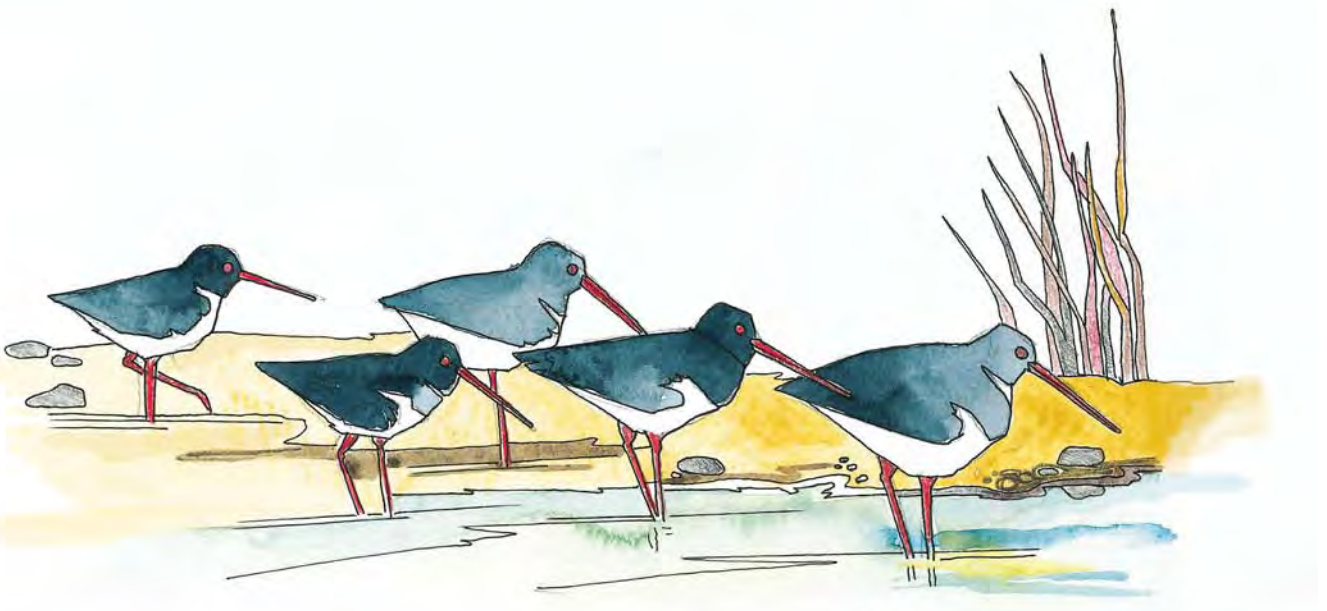
Appreciation is one of the most powerful remedies
one can use to heal oneself.

When I wake up in the morning I can say thank you
for being alive, when I eat something, I can stop to
appreciate what I have, when I interact with others, I
can value that one.

Giving thanks for all that I received, however little
that may be (a smile, a hand, a kind word), is a way
to value what comes my way. There will always be
things that irritate us, we can blame others and
the world for all the things that are not right, but
it is our choice to do that. If we were to look for
the positive and the goodness in others and in
situations, then we will feel much better.

Be grateful for all that you have been given.
Gratitude gives value to what you possess and
increases your joy in all things.

*Myriam Cotret, member of Aberdeen Brahma
Kumaris World Spirituality University.*



Forgiveness

I close my eyes and sit comfortably and relax by taking a number of deep breaths. In my imagination I see myself walking onto the beach, feeling the sand under my bare feet. I breathe in the salty air, hear the sound of the waves, feel the warmth of the sun and feel refreshed.

The beauty of this scene connects me to my own beauty, my own special qualities and virtues - I notice how still and silent my mind has become and my thoughts are naturally drawn towards a higher beauty, the beauty of God.

My soul feels light and refreshed; my deep seated resentments are dissolving naturally and easily as my own inner beauty emerges.

In the safety of God's company I bend down and write in the sand, 'I love..., I love...' and I write the names of all the people I would like to send love to, including myself. 'I love..., I love..., I love...' and then I write all the names of the people who have hurt me in some way, and again I include my name. 'I forgive..., I forgive..., I forgive..'

In my mind I see one of these people on the beach. I stabilize my feelings in the silent beauty and peace of my inner being. I am aware of both myself and that other person surrounded by a light of supreme divinity. I say 'I forgive you, I forgive you' and with every offer of forgiveness my inner spirit becomes lighter and I am at peace with that person.

Moving on, Pathways To Personal Growth, Margaret Pinkerton.

Buddhism

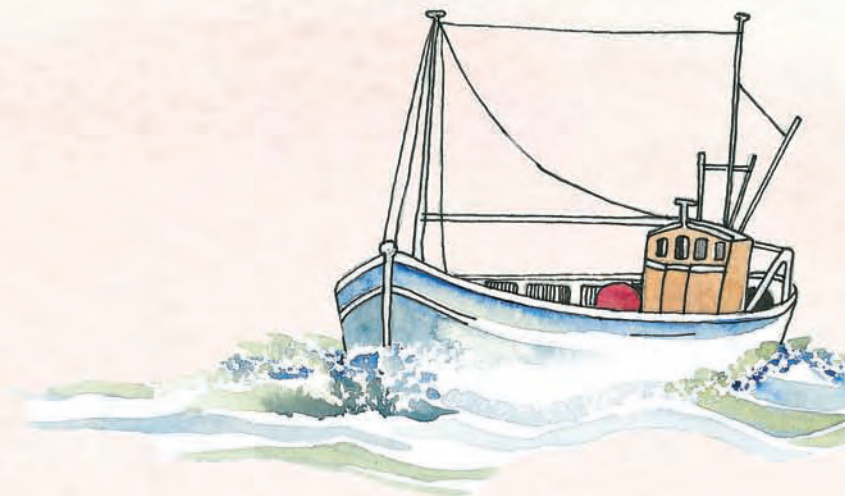
When we hold fast to such thoughts as
"They abused me, mistreated me,
molested me, robbed me,"
we keep hatred alive.

If we thoroughly release ourselves from such
thoughts as
"They abused me, mistreated me,
molested me, robbed me,"
hatred is vanquished.

Never by hatred is hatred conquered
but by readiness to love alone.
This is eternal law.

*p. 8, verses 3-5, A Dhammapada for
Contemplation
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo, 2006.*

It seems that we live in a realm of abundant
blessings that belong to no one, but that are
there to be shared with all who draw near.
Ajahn Candasiri, "The Apple Tree."



Christianity

Holy God,
Holy strong,
Holy immortal,
Have mercy on us.

An ancient invocation, written here in the form it is used in the Orthodox Church. It can be used in the singular as a prayer at a time of pressure, or as a beginning of the day mantra.

.....

Lord for the years your love has kept and guided
Urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
Sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.
Hymn writer Timothy Dudley-Smith's words of thanksgiving.

.....

And when you stand praying, if you have a
grievance against anyone, forgive them, so
that your Father in heaven may forgive you the
wrongs you have done.
Mark Ch. 11, v. 25, New Testament, The Bible.

.....

Lord Jesus, Son of God,
be merciful to me, a sinner.
Jesus-centred, this is called 'The Jesus Prayer'. It is often used by people who want to focus their being when surrounded by distraction and noise. And apart from being an 'aid to devotion' in the traditional, contemplative sense, it helps the individual to be drawn away from uncomfortable or even unbearable surroundings.

.....

Some people also meditate using 'the Jesus prayer' in between each stanza/sentence of 'The Lords' Prayer', the prayer 'that Jesus taught his followers'. This prayer can also be said slowly, using the phrase 'Thank you, Jesus' between each section. Based on a text from the Christian New Testament, Mark Ch.11, v.24:

'Jesus answered them... Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.'

.....

Holy Spirit, you live in every human being
And you come to place in us
These essential realities of the Gospel:
Kind-heartedness and forgiveness.

To love and express it with our life,
To love with kind heartedness and to forgive:
There you will enable us to find
One of the wellsprings of peace and joy.
(One of the late Bro. Roger of Taizé's prayers Spoken during his Scotland visit in 1991. Here is a prayer to encourage us to remember that every encounter in hospital or in the surgery is with a fellow human being, which those who follow the Christian way believe is spirit-centred. So no patient or staff person or reception person is ever without that quality deep down, however rushed and indifferent they seem at the time. Now the response is ours.)
and indifferent they seem at the time. Now the response is ours.



Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

In the Book of Mormon we learn that we should “live in thanksgiving daily” (Alma 34:38). Isn’t that a wonderful thought to live in thanksgiving daily? Can you imagine how your life would improve if you lived in thanksgiving daily? Can you imagine how your life would improve if others did the same? Do you think the world would be a happier place? less stressful? less angry? more spiritual?

President Joseph F. Smith proclaimed: “The grateful man sees so much in the world to be thankful for, and with him the good outweighs the evil. Love overpowers jealousy, and light drives darkness out of his life. Pride destroys our gratitude and sets up selfishness in its place. How much happier we are in the presence of a grateful and loving soul, and how careful we should be to cultivate, through the medium of a prayerful life, a thankful attitude toward God and man!”

Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed. (1939), 263).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) Former Member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles - “Live in Thanksgiving Daily,” Ensign, September (2001), 6.

Hinduism

Buraa Jo Dekhan Main Chalaa, Buraa Na Miliyaa Koiya

Jo Dil Khojaa Aapnaa Mujhse Bura Na Koiya.

Meaning - I searched for the crooked, but did not meet a single one.

When searched myself, I found “I” was the biggest crooked of all.

Sant Kabir.

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

Mahatma Gandhi.

An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.

Mahatama Gandhi.

Humanism

In Praise of a Man

He went through a company like a lamplighter - seeing the dull minds, one after another, begin to glow, to shed a beneficent light. He went through a company like a knife-grinder, seeing the dull minds scattering sparks of themselves, becoming razory, becoming useful.

He went through a company as himself. But now he’s one of the multitudinous company of the dead where are no individuals.

The beneficent lights dim but don’t vanish. The razory edges dull, but still cut. He’s gone: but you can see his tracks still, in the snow of the world.

Norman MacCaig.

Islam

We should take every opportunity to thank Allah (God) for his mercy and blessings. There is always something to be thankful for, even in times of great difficulty. If we are appreciative, God gives us more. If we are not appreciative, the loss is ours as a consequence of this decision.

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

Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Tirmidhi.

.....

He who does not thank people does not thank God.

Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Tirmidhi.

.....

All Mighty

Grant me authority.

My craft is to travel on the sea light

Do not amend my attention to others, but You,

My head, brain and acumen

Shall be acquiescent to You.

I pray to You.

I shall not desire depending upon the will of another.

Where doubtful and uncertainty

You are compassionate.

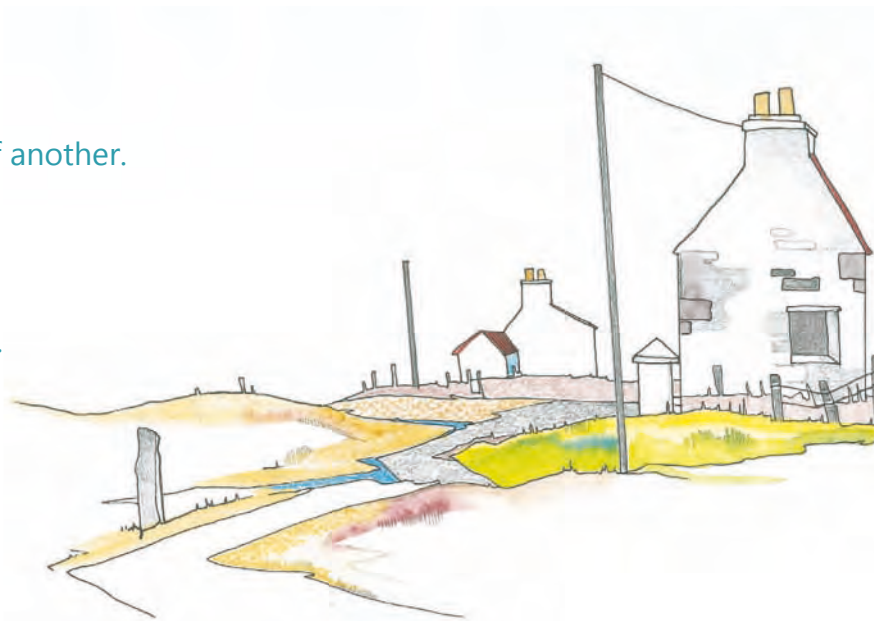
I pray to You.

I have no accusation but am grateful to You.

Me and my life, the gifts You manifest.

I pray to You.

Poem by Abu Bakr Ahmed al Haroun.



Jainism

Khamemi savv jive - *I forgive all living beings*

Savve jiva khamantu me - *Let all living beings forgive me*

Mitti me savva bhuesu - *All in this world are my friends*

Veram majza na kenai - *I have no enemies*

Prarthana.

.....

Tassa Michchhami Dukadam.

I ask your forgiveness if I have said or done anything that may have caused you harm or upset you in any way

Thanks is such a little word, no bigger than a minute. But there's a world of meaning and appreciation in it. Be thankful to God for giving us everything in life. Nothing is bad as every thing is good in his eyes. We pray that all the people of the world will avoid inflicting harm on animals and fellow human beings and practice non violence and compassion. May peace and compassion grow in ourselves and extend to all around us.

Blame and hatred result in violence to one-self. When we forgive, we heal our self (and possibly others). When we ask for forgiveness, we develop our own humility. We move forward, instead of being held back.

Jain Spirit, Issue 22, March-May 2005.

Judaism

The daily morning prayers of thanksgiving:

I give thanks to you, O living and everlasting Sovereign, for in Your mercy You restore each day my life. Great is Your faithfulness.

Modeh Ani, from traditional Siddur (prayer book).

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who grants good to those who have gone astray; who has granted me much good.

Blessing after recovery from illness or other peril, from traditional Siddur (prayer book).

A prayer of thanks for the body:

Blessed are You, Eternal, Ruler of the universe, Who has formed our bodies in wisdom, creating openings, glands and organs, marvellous in structure, intricate in design. Should even one of them, by being blocked or opened, fail to function, it would not be possible to stand before You. Blessed are you, O Lord, who heals all of humanity and performs wonderous acts.

Morning blessings, from traditional Siddur (prayer book).

A prayer of thanks for recovery:

I give thanks to You, Eternal my God, faithful healer of the sick. You gave me strength to bear pain and affliction. You have given me new spirit and hope.

I am grateful to You, Eternal my God, for all the messengers of healing for those whose medical skills and patient care aided me; for all those who helped speed my recovery by kind words and deeds of friendship and affection.

Continue to be with me during the days of my convalescence. Help me be cheerful and to bear with patience whatever discomforts I may have.

I pray that I may carry out the worthy resolutions which I made during my illness.

May I always value the blessing of health; and in gratitude for Your healing, may I do the utmost in helping to preserve the health and well-being of others.

From Prayers for Healing, prayer book press of Media Judaica.

Forgiveness- A Song of Ascents:

From out of the depths I call to You, O Lord. Lord, listen to my voice; let Your ears hear the sound of my pleading. If you, O Lord, kept records of wrongdoing, who could survive? But forgiveness is Yours, so that you may be revered. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits; I place my hope in His word. My soul waits for the Lord like those who watch for the morning – more than those who watch for the morning. Israel, hope for the Lord, for with the Lord is kindness, and there is much redemption with Him. And He will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.

Psalm 130, vv. 1-2, The Hebrew Bible.

Prayers of thanks for physical welfare:

Blessed are You, Eternal, Creator of the universe, Who has given the heart intelligence to distinguish between day and night.

Blessed are You, Eternal, Creator of the universe, Who clothes the naked.

Blessed are You, Eternal, Creator of the universe, Who sets free those who are shackled.

Blessed are You, Eternal, Creator of the universe, Who raises up those who are bowed down.

Blessed are You, Eternal, Creatōr of the universe, Who provides me with all my needs.

Blessed are You, Eternal, Creator of the universe, Whō makes firm the steps of human beings.

Blessed are You, Eternal, Creator of the universe, Who gives strength to the weāry.

Blessed are You, Eternal, Creator of the universe, Who removes sleep from my eyes and drowsiness from my eyelids.

Lead us not into error, transgression, iniquity, temptation, or disgrace. Do not let evil instincts have power over us. Keep us far from bad people and bad companions. Make us follow good instincts and good deeds, and incline us to serve You. Grant us this day and every day, grace, kindness, and compassion in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us; and bestow Your kindness upon us.

May it be Your will, Eternal Gd, to deliver me today and every day, from arrogant people and from arrogance; from bad people, bad friends, bad neighbours, bad experiences, from destructive adversaries, from harsh judgement and harsh adversaries.

Morning blessings, from traditional Siddur (prayer book).

Sikh Dharam

Salok Mehalaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Tayraa keetaa jaato naahee maino jog keeto-ee.

I have not appreciated what You have done for me, Lord; only You can make me worthy.

Mai nirguni-aaray ko gun naahee aapay taras pa-i-o-ee.

I am unworthy - I have no worth or virtues at all. You have taken pity on me.

Taras pa-i-aa mihraamat ho-ee satgur sajan mili-aa.

You took pity on me, and blessed me with Your Mercy, and I have met the True Guru, my Friend.

Naanak naam milai taa^N jeevaa^N tan man theevai hari-aa.

O Nanak, if I am blessed with the Naam, I live, and my body and mind blossom forth.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 1429

Sorath Mehlāa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Har jee-o nimaani-aa too maan.

O Dear Lord, You are the honour of the dishonoured.

Nicheeji-aa cheej karay mayraa govind tayree kudrat ka-o kurbaan. rahaa-o.

You make the unworthy ones worthy, O my Lord of the Universe; I am a sacrifice to Your almighty creative power. ||Pause||

Jaisaa baalak bhaa-ay subhaa-ee lakh apraadh kamaavai.

Like the child, innocently making thousands of mistakes

Kar updays jhirhkay baho bhaatee bahurh pitaa gal laavai.

His father teaches him, and scolds him so many times, but still, he hugs him close in his embrace.

Pichhlay a-ogun bakhas la-ay parabh aagai maarag paavai.

Please forgive my past actions, God, and place me on Your path for the future.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 624

Love



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Hearts united in pain and sorrow
will not be separated by joy and happiness.
Bonds that are woven in sadness
are stronger than the ties of joy and pleasure.
Love that is washed by tears
will remain eternally pure and beautiful.
Khalil Gibran, Love Letters in the Sand.

.....

Not for me is the love that knows no restraint,
but like the foaming wine that having burst its
vessel in a moment would run to waste.

Send me the love which is cool and pure like your
rain that blesses the thirsty earth and fills the
homely earthen jars.

Send me the love that would soak down into the
centre of being, and from there would spread like
the unseen sap through the branching tree of
life, giving birth to fruits and flowers.

Send me the love that keeps the heart still with
the fullness of peace.
Rabindranath Tagore.

.....

Sonnet 118

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
By chance or nature's changing course
untrimm'd:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,
Nor shall death brag thou wandrest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest,
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
William Shakespeare.

I gave myself to Love Divine,
And lo! My lot so changed is
That my Beloved One is mine,
And at last I am his.
Teresa of Avila.

.....

Go gently, my friends;
feel the good earth
beneath your feet,
celebrate the rising of the sun,
listen to the birds at dawn,
walk gently under
the silent stars,
knowing that you are on holy ground,
held in love –
in the wonder of God's creation.
Peter Millar.

.....

The human body
is your creation too!
It wouldn't exist
but for your breath of Love.
Dom Helder Camara, Into your hands Lord.

.....

O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love with all my soul.
St Francis of Assisi.

.....

Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul
May keep the path, but will not reach the goal;
While he who walks in love may wander far,
But God will bring him where the blessed are.
Henry Van Dyke, The Story of the Other Wise Man.

And you held me

And you held me and there were no words
and there was no time and you held me
and there was only wanting and
being held and being filled with wanting
and I was nothing but letting go
and being held
and there were no words and there
needed to be no words
and there was no terror only stillness
and I was wanting nothing and
it was fullness and it was like aching for God
and it was touch and warmth and
darkness and no time and no words and we flowed
and I flowed and I was not empty
and I was given up to the dark and
in the darkness I was not lost
and the wanting was like fullness and I could
hardly hold it and I was held and
you were dark and warm and without time and
without words and you held me.
Janet Morley.

.....

Amor vincit omnia, says
The poet with his lavish praise.
But what of Alzheimers, Murdo asks
In his final mask of masks.
*Iain Crichton Smith. (2000), A Country for Old Men
and My Canadian Uncle. Manchester : Carcanet.*

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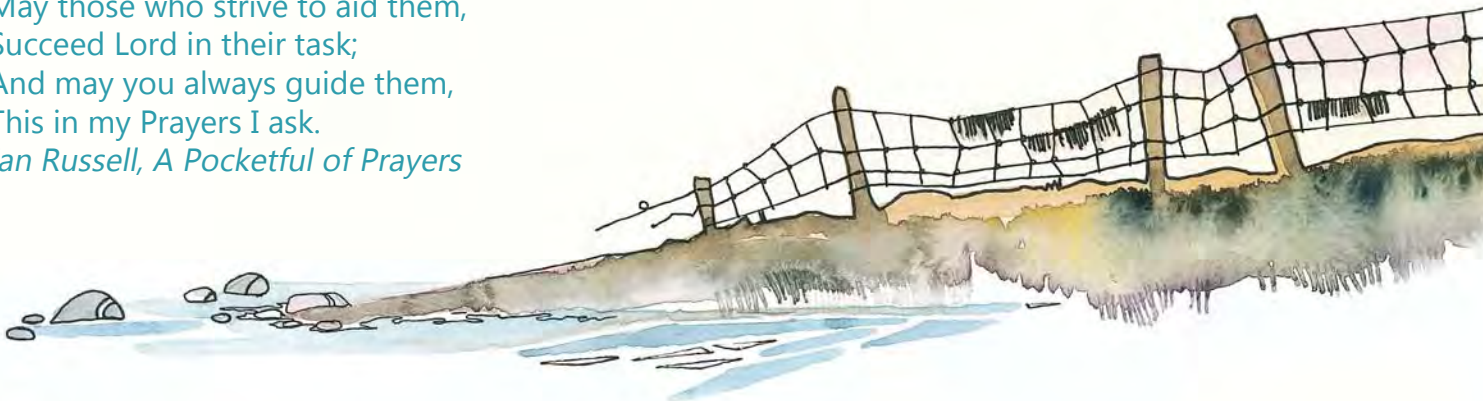
I pray before I go to bed
For those who are in need,
Who have no place to lay their head
Nor food on which to feed.
May those who strive to aid them,
Succeed Lord in their task;
And may you always guide them,
This in my Prayers I ask.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee:
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee:
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee:
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.
Hymn by George Matheson.





Baha'i Faith

O son of being!

Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.

Baha'u'llah, (The Arabic Hidden Words).

.....

The essence of love is for man to turn his heart to the Beloved One, sever himself from all else but Him, and desire naught save that which is the desire of his Lord.

Baha'u'llah, (Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 155).

.....

Now is the time to cheer and refresh the down-cast through the invigorating breeze of love and fellowship, and the living waters of friendliness and charity.

Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 7.

.....

Love is the breath of the Holy Spirit inspired into the human spirit!

Love is the cause of the manifestation of the Truth (God) in the phenomenal world!

Love is the necessary tie proceeding from the realities of things through divine creation!

Love is the means of the most great happiness in both the material and spiritual worlds!

Love is a light of guidance in the dark night!

Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha Volume 3 p. 527).

Believing - Not - Belonging

Now draw close to the well.
Stand beside it and touch it.
Feel the coolness and strength of its stone sides....
 the texture of the wooden parts...
 the smoothness of the handle...
 its resistance to being turned...
 the weight of the bucket...
 the roughness of its wood...
Look into the depths of the well.
Feel the coolness rising from the depths.
Smell the freshness of the pure, clear spring water in the well.
And know that you are very like the well.
You have at your depths a wellspring
 of clear, cool water...
 an unlimited source of wisdom....creativity...
 strength....power...goodness.
You have the ability to draw up
 from your innermost depths
 that great untapped energy...
 to bring to the light of consciousness
 your own inner resources...
 and to drink your fill....
 to satisfy the thirsting of your parched soul...
 and to share your rich gift with all those
 whose lives you touch...
 and to sing and dance for joy
 to celebrate life in its fullness.
And to know that you have met your God within.
Author unknown.



Brahma Kumaris

Where there is love, there is a world. Love looks on all with a vision of equality. Love is all giving without any thought of a return; a heart that has love is able to accommodate the whole universe and still has space for more. Selfless love is truly unlimited; it forgets and forgives the weaknesses and sees only beauty and specialities in everyone.
Living Values cards, Jewels of Practical Wisdom.

Buddhism

Kwan Shih Yin!
Say the holy name,
majestic like the ocean's thunder,
rarer than the rarest jewels.
Say it as often as you can
with full faith and trust.
To say it, or even hear it,
is a blessing beyond imagination,
Therefore; let us bow our heads,
let us bow in deepest reverence
grateful for the infinite blessings
which flow from her great compassion.
The Kwan Yin Sutra.



.....

Wishing in gladness and in safety, may all beings be at ease.
Whatever living beings there may be,
whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,
the great or the mighty, medium, short or small.
The seen and the unseen, those living near and far away.
Those born and to-be-born -- may all beings be at ease.
Let none deceive another, nor despise any being in any state.
Let none through anger or ill will wish harm upon another.
Even as a mother protects with her life her child, her only child,
so with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings.
Radiating kindness over the entire world,
spreading upward to the skies, and downwards to the depths.
Outward and unbounded, freed from hatred and ill-will.
Metta Sutta on Loving-kindness (second part).

.....

Awareness is a mirror reflecting the four elements;
Beauty is a heart that generates love and a mind that is open.
Thich Nhat Hahn, Present Moment Wonderful Moment (1993)
From gatha for 'Looking in the mirror', p. 6.

Christianity

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease;
as for knowledge it will come to an end. For we know only in part; but when the complete comes,
the partial will come to an end.
When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end
to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know
only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.
And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love
Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians, Ch. 13, vv. 8-13, New Testament, The Bible.

This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.
John, Ch. 15, v. 12, New Testament, The Bible. Jesus speaks to all who follow him.

.....

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee:
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

Verse 1 of one of Scotland's most famous hymns - words by George Matheson.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Often we assume that [the people around us] must know how much we love them. But we should never assume; we should let them know. ... We will never regret the kind words spoken or the affection shown. Rather, our regrets will come if such things are omitted from our relationships with those who mean the most to us.

President Thomas S. Monson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - "Finding Joy in the Journey," Ensign, Nov. (2008), p. 86.

Hinduism

The wise see the Lord of Love in the sun, rising in all its golden radiance
to give its warmth and light and life to all.

Prashna Upanishad.

.....

Whenever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love.

Mahatma Gandhi.

.....

Pothi Padh Padh Jag Mua, Pandit Bhayo Na Koye
Dhaai Akshar Prem Ka, Padhe so Pandit Hoye

Meaning - Reading books everyone died, none became any wise.

One who reads the words of Love, only becomes wise.

Sant Kabir.

.....

All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love's sake, because it is law of life, just as you breathe to live.

Swami Vivekananda.

Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success and, above all, love.
Swami Vivekananda.

Strength is Life, Weakness is Death.
Expansion is Life, Contraction is Death.
Love is Life, Hatred is Death.
Swami Vivekananda.

It is in love that religion exists and not in ceremony-in the pure and sincere love in the heart. Unless a man is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping Shiva is useless. The prayers of those who are pure in mind and body will be answered by Shiva, and those who are impure and yet try to teach religion to others will fail in the end. External worship is only a symbol of internal worship, but internal worship and purity are the real things. Without them, external worship would be of no avail.
Swami Vivekananda.

Akath Kahani Prem Ki, Kutch Kahi Na Jaye
Goonge Keri Sarkara, Baithe Muskae

*Meaning: Inexpressible is the story of Love
It cannot be revealed by words
It is like the dumb eating sweet-meat.
Sant Kabir.*

When love glows, it is bliss
When it flows, it is compassion
When it blows, it is anger.
When it ferments, it is jealousy.
When it is all "no's", it is hatred.
When it acts, it is perfection.
When love knows, it is me.
Sr Sri Ravi Shankar.



Here are the signs of love: When you love someone you see nothing wrong with them. Even if you see a fault in them you justify it in some way – "Everyone does that, it is normal. You think you have not done enough for them and the more you do, the more you want to do for them. They are always in your mind. Ordinary things become extraordinary. A baby winking at its grandmother becomes an extraordinary event. When you love someone, you want to see them always happy and you want to have them the best.
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Humanism

Love Doesn't End

Love doesn't end with dying or leave with the last breath. For someone you've loved deeply, love doesn't end with death.

John Addey.

Meeting Point

Time was away and somewhere else, there were two glasses and two chairs and two people with the one pulse (somebody stopped the moving stairs). Time was away and somewhere else. And they were neither up nor down; The stream's music did not stop flowing through heather, limpid brown, although they sat in a coffee shop: And they were neither up nor down.

The bell was silent in the air, holding its inverted poise - between the clang and clang a flower, a brazen calyx of no noise: The bell was silent in the air. The camels crossed the miles of sand that stretched around the cups and plates; The desert was their own, they planned to portion out the stars and dates: The camels crossed the miles of sand.

Time was away and somewhere else. The waiter did not come, the clock forgot them and the radio waltz came out like water from a rock: Time was away and somewhere else. Her fingers flicked away the ash that bloomed again in tropic trees: Not caring if the markets crash when they had forests such as these, her fingers flicked away the ash.

God or whatever means the good; be praised that time can stop like this, that what the heart has understood can verify in the body's peace, God or whatever means the good. Time was away and she was here and life no longer what it was; The bell was silent in the air and all the room one glow because time was away and she was here.

Louis MacNeice.

Notes on Love

The quiet thoughts of two people a long time in love touch lightly like birds nesting in each other's warmth. You will know them by their laughter but to each other, they speak mostly through their silence. If they find themselves apart, they may dream of sitting undisturbed in each other's presence, of wrapping themselves in each other's ease.

Hugh Prather.

Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds, admit impediments. Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds, or bends with the remover to remove; Oh no, it is an ever-fixed mark that looks on tempests and is never shaken; It is the star to every wand'ring barque, whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks within his bending sickle's compass come. Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, but bears it out ev'n to the edge of doom. If this be error and upon me proved, I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

William Shakespeare.

A Red Red Rose

O my luve's like a red red rose that's newly sprung in June; O my luve's like the melodie that's sweetly played in tune. As fair art thou, my bonnie lass, so deep in luve am I; And I will luve thee still my dear, till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear, and the rocks melt wi' the sun: Oh I will love thee still, my dear, while the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve, and fare thee weel awhile ! And I will come again, my luve, though t'were ten thousand mile.

Robert Burns.

Islam

Love of each other is indeed one of the cornerstones of the Islamic Faith.
None of you will truly believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself.
Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Sahih Bukhari.

.....

Loving Allah and what he has prescribed for us can be empowering and liberating. This sense of liberation of the spirit is natural as is the love of each other for the sake of Allah. This love is rewarded as God Almighty would say on the last day;
Where are those who love each other for the sake of my glory? Today I will shelter them with my shade, as there is no shade today except my shade.
Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Muslim.

.....

O Lord, grant me Your love, grant me that I love those who love You; grant me, that I might do the deeds that win Your love. Make Your love dearer to me than the love of myself, my family and wealth.
Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Tirmidhi.

.....

You will not enter Paradise until you have faith and you will not have faith until you love one another. Do you want me to tell you something you can do to make you love one another? Make it a habit to greet one another with 'Assalaamu Alaykum' – peace upon you.
Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Muslim.

.....

Love is our Mother and
The way of our Prophet.
Yet it is in our nature
to fight with Love.
We can't see you, mother,
Hidden behind dark veils
Woven by ourselves.
Mawlana Rumi, d. 1273, poet and scholar buried in Turkey.



Jainism

Live and let live. Love all Serve all. Where there is Love there is Life. Violence is Suicide.
Jain Commandments of Non-Violence (Ahimsa), The Teachings of Lord Mahavir.

.....

May Lord Mahavira's Jayanti bring the light of knowledge to all who are longing for peace in their own hearts and for the world at large! May we all prove worthy to receive the compassion which flows from the Lotus Feet of all Tirthankaras! May Their Sight of Love fall on many!
Sutrakrtanga Sutra.

.....

The life of man is like a flower and love is like the fragrance of it. Where there is love you will find joy of life, fearlessness, magnanimity and tolerance along with all other virtues. That is the reason we have this popular proverb "Love is Life". True love is born in the garden of heart.....If love prevails in the life, then only goodwill would prevail among fellow human beings. Love is a manifestation of God in the form of an emotion.
Pujya Santbalji.

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Judaism

Once it happened that a certain heathen came to Shammai and challenged him, 'Convert me to Judaism – but on condition that you teach me everything while I stand on one foot.'
Shammai pushed him away with the builder's rod he was holding.
Then he went to Hillel. He answered, 'What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary on that; go and learn it.'
Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, 31a.

Shema: declaration of faith

(God, faithful Sovereign.)

Hear, O Israel: the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One.

(Blessed be His name, Whose glorious Kingdom is for ever and ever.)

And you shall love the Eternal your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart: and you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk along the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be a symbol between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the door-posts of your house, and upon your gates.

From Siddur (daily prayer book); Deuteronomy Ch. 6 vv. 4-9, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall reason strenuously with your neighbour, and not bear sin on his account. You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself; I am the Lord.

Leviticus Ch. 19, vv. 17-18, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

When all within is dark,
and former friends misprise;
From them I turn to You,
and find love in Your eyes.

When all within is dark
and I my soul despise;
From me I turn to You
and find love in Your eyes.

When all Your face is dark,
and Your just angers rise;
From You I turn to You,
and find love in Your eyes.

*Israel Abrahams, based on Ibn Gabirol,
Mediaeval Jewish poet.*





Paganism

For mine is the ecstasy of the spirit,
And mine also is joy on earth;
For my law is love unto all beings.
Wiccan Charge of the Goddess (contemporary Pagan).

All began in love;
All seeks to return to love.
Love is the law,
The teacher of wisdom,
And the great revealer of mysteries.
Miriam Simos (1979).

Good relationship also requires us to be wholly generous, never slipping from the soul to soul, me and you connection, acknowledging the other's ongoing story, always awake to their needs – and the fact that their resulting priorities may well be different from our own. In listening with honour, we learn to hear and accept who the other is: our Pagan ethics don't provide the right to try to change that person, nor to expect them to change, even if we perceive that change to be healing. To love a person for who they could be is to dishonour who they are now: such love is for a concept not a person. Allowing the other to walk their own road, we take responsibility for walking our own. If there is healing or change to be done, our focus must be upon ourselves. Love requires the generosity of compromise.
Emma Restall-Orr (2007).

Sikh Daram

As Sikhs, we are taught to love all of God's creation and to not discriminate between people and it is essential to remember this regardless of any difficult situation we face in life:

Kaanraa Mahala 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Bisar ga-ee sabh taat paraa-ee.

I have totally forgotten my jealousy of others,

Jab tay saadhsangat mohi paa-ee. ||1|| rahaa-o.

Since I found the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy.

Naa ko bairee nahee bigaanaa sagal sang ham ka-o ban aa-ee.

No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger. I get along with everyone.

Jo parabh keeno so bhal maani-o ayh sumat saadhoo tay paa-ee.

Whatever God does, I accept that as good. This is the sublime wisdom I have obtained from the Holy.

Sabh meh rav rahi-aa parabh aykai paykh paykh naanak bigsaa-ee.

The One God is pervading in all. Gazing upon Him, beholding Him, Nanak blossoms forth in happiness.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 1299

Amrit Swaiye (Composed by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th Guru)

Saach keho(n) sun laehu sabhai jin prem keeo thin hee prabh paaeiou.

Listen one and all, I speak the truth, those who love will realise God.

Sri Dhasam Granth, p. 37

Bhai Kanhaiya Ji Story: Love the whole of Humanity

Bhai Kanhaiya Ji lived over 300 years ago. He was a devout Sikh who was assigned the duty of serving water to wounded Sikhs who were engaged in a defensive battle with the invading armies of the Mughal rulers. Dressed in white and carrying a water pouch from his shoulder, he tended to the injured and dying without distinction of friend or foe.

Infuriated that he was helping the enemy, his fellow Sikhs complained to the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who summoned Bhai Kanhaiya . When Bhai Kanhaiya ji came into the presence of the Guru the Sikhs repeated their complaint against him. The Guru spoke softly and with affection and asked Bhai Kanhaiya ji to explain why he was giving water to friend and foe. Bhai Kanhaiya Ji bowed to the Guru and said,

"I am merely carrying out your instructions. You have always taught us that God is everywhere and in everyone. I look at the invader and the defending Sikhs in the light of this teaching and am treating everyone alike without distinction of friend or foe." Guru Gobind Singh Ji then blessed Bhai Kanhaiya ji for realising the true essence of religion and gave him some ointment to heal the wounds of the soldiers and to continue his humanitarian service. The Guru then said "Bhai Kanhaiya has realised what I am teaching, recognise the Divine Light in all, love all and treat the whole human race as one."

Adapted from www.sikhnet.com

Hope and Optimism



Healthcare Chaplains and Editors

"Hope" is the thing with feathers,
that perches in the soul;
and sings the tune without the words,
and never stops at all.
I've heard it in the chilliest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.
Emily Dickinson, Everyman's Poetry.

.....

I have been here since the beginning, and I shall
be until the end of days; for there is no ending to
my existence. The human soul is but a part of a
burning torch which God separated from Himself
at creation.
Khalil Gibran, the Voice of the Master.

All I Know

The late sun leaving in the trees an orange-red,
A soft honey fire. There has been no breath of wind
In fifteen days; leaves hang gold and gorgeous
In the woods, and through them the deer tread
Patched with light, wary. The year begins to die;
The rowans hang in blood-red clutches, every day
The ripe sun is lower in the sky. Is this what it must be?
Or did everything begin to live forever
Before the bite of the apple and the long fall
Into our own demise? Is the worm at the earth's heart
Our fault, the birth of our badness,
Or is the last blizzard of all things,
The withering of all that is, no more
Than it should be, like a child's blown bubble –
Beautiful to begin with, spinning reds and blues –
Until it fades in a ball of cobwebs, bursts,
In a thistledown of drops?
All I know is the seed sleeps all December long –
Forgotten, gone, buried in the dark –
And then is born again.
Kenneth Steven.

.....



I know that this life, missing its ripeness in love, is not altogether lost.
I know that the flowers that fade in the dawn, the streams that strayed in the desert, are not
altogether lost.
I know that whatever lags behind in this life laden with slowness, is not altogether lost.
I know that my dreams that are still unfulfilled, and my melodies unstruck, are clinging to some
lute strings of thine,
and they are not altogether lost.
Rabindranath Tagore.



I believe many of the best things in life are indeed free: the splendour of a sunrise, the rapture of wide open spaces, the exhilarating sight of your land greening each spring.

I believe true happiness comes from watching your crops ripening in the field,
your children grow tall in the sun.
your whole family feel the pride that springs from their shared experience.

I believe that by my toil I am giving more to the world than I
am taking from it, an honour that does not come to all men.

I believe my life will be measured ultimately by what I have done
for my fellowman, and by this standard I fear no judgement.

I believe when a man grows old and sums up his days, he
should be able to stand tall and feel pride in the life he's lived.
A Crofter's Creed.

.....

O Lord, you have searched us and known us. You know when we sit down and when we rise up; you discern our thoughts from far away. You search out our paths and our lying down, and are acquainted with all our ways. Where can we go from your spirit? Or where can we flee from your presence? If we ascend to heaven, you are there; if we make our beds in Sheol, you are there. If we take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead us. For it was you who formed our inward parts; you knit us together in our mothers' wombs. We praise you, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Adapted from Psalm 139, The Hebrew Bible.

Always keep a green branch in your heart, and one day a bird will come and perch on it and sing for you.
Chinese proverb, in Saunders, C., Beyond the Horizon.

A tree is like hope because it grows from a single stem with only a few branches, into a full grown tree with many branches.

A young tree is very fragile; hope too is very fragile at first, but flourishes with care.

Young trees bend with every wind; this is nature's way of making them stronger. Hope gets redefined and stronger with each difficult life event. The branches may break off in bad storms but the tree trunk stands tall; specific hopes can get lost or set in another direction but the inner core of hope remains intact.

Trees and their leaves come in various shapes, colours and sizes. Hope comes in many dimensions. Trees drop their leaves in the fall, hibernate for the winter, and then emerge with new beauty in the spring; hope sometimes hides and needs the warmth of spring (other caring, hopeful individuals) in order to emerge in full again.

A tree provides shade, safety and strength from the storm; hope provides a refuge from life's adversity, and grows when it is shared with others.

Kaye Herth, 1998. Hope as seen through the Eyes of Homeless Children.

.....

Is there another world for this frail dust
To warm with life and be itself again?
Something about me daily speaks there must,
And why should instinct nourish hopes in vain?
'Tis nature's prophecy that such will be,
And everything seems struggling to explain
The close sealed volume of its mystery.
Time wandering onward keeps its usual pace
As seeming anxious of eternity,
To meet that calm and find a resting place.
E'en the small violet feels a future power
And waits each year renewing blooms to bring.
And surely man is no inferior flower
To die unworthy of a second spring?
John Clare, The Instinct of Hope.

.....

O come into my life dear Lord,
To my heart enter in.
Teach me thy ways to understand,
And keep me free from sin.
And in the stormy days ahead
Please bathe my soul with balm;
And always let me listen for,
Thy still small voice of calm.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

Baha'i Faith

Never lose thy trust in God. Be thou ever hopeful, for the bounties of God never cease to flow upon man. If viewed from one perspective they seem to decrease, but from another they are full and complete. Man is under all conditions immersed in a sea of God's blessings. Therefore, be thou not hopeless under any circumstances, but rather be firm in thy hope.
Abdu'l-Baha, (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 205).

.....

Promise

"O my beloved! if thou didst know what God had ordained for thee, thou wouldst fly with delight and thy happiness, gladness and joy would increase every hour."
Abdu'l-Baha (Victory Promises, p. 13) 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í World Faith p. 363).

Believing - Not - Belonging

I will not die an unlived life
I will not live in fear
Of falling or catching fire.
I choose to inhabit my days,
To allow my living to open me,
To make me less afraid,
More accessible,
To loosen my heart
Until it becomes a wing,
A torch, a promise.
I choose to risk my significance;
To live.
So that which came to me as
Seed,
Goes to the next as blossom
And that which came to me
As blossom,
Goes on as fruit.
Dawna Markova.

.....

Help us to be always hopeful
Gardeners of the spirit
Who know that without darkness
Nothing comes to birth,
As – without light
Nothing will flower.
May Sarton.

.....

Shiehallion

Tonight the moon rose in a blue sky.
It was almost eleven, June over,
The sun warm enough to walk in even then;
The river beyond the trees a slow, white slide,
Reflecting its whispered journey to the sea.

The moon rose over the hills, butter yellow,
Rippled upwards through sleeves of cloud.
I felt suddenly a yearning to be gone, to leave
The safe familiarity of the town's days

And walk the mountains then, that night,
Walk the brittle whiteness of it, the sheer upwards edge
Into a clear sky, an open mouth of moonlight,
A peak lit crystal in the summer night –
Windless and magic,
Kenneth Steven.

Brahma kumaris

Hope

If any time I begin to lose hope in myself, let me simply look inside my heart and see all the good actions I have ever performed, from the smallest to the grandest. When I see how much happiness I have given, I easily remember the purpose of my life.

A Pocket Book on Virtue by Dadi Janki.



Buddhism

Here and hereafter
those who live their lives well
abide in happiness.
They are filled
with a natural appreciation of virtue
and they dwell in delight.

*p. 12, v. 18, A Dhammapada for Contemplation,
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo, 2006.*

.....

Though living in the world, yet the heart remains
unshaken - free from sorrow, confusion and need -
this is the greatest blessing.
Sutta Nipata v. 268.

Christianity

The Master of the Infirmary ought to be gentle,
goodtempered, kind, compassionate to the sick,
and willing to gratify their needs with affectionate
sympathy. He ought to have Mass celebrated
daily for the sick either by himself or some other
person, should they not be able to come into the
Chapel. If they cannot sing the canonical hours
for themselves, he ought to sing them for them,
and frequently, in the spirit of gentleness, repeat
to them words of consolation, of patience and of
hope in God; and in no way disturb them when
they are resting.

*Adapted from the Augustinian Rule for Monastic
Living used at Soutra Hospital, Midlothian in
Mediaeval times. Patients were often brought in
from the battlefield.*

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

2. Do ye not remember that I said unto you that
after ye had received the Holy Ghost ye could
speak with the tongue of angels? And now, how
could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it
were by the Holy Ghost?

3. Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost;
wherefore, they speak the words of Christ.
Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words
of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell
you all things what ye should do.

• • •

5. For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will
enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost,
it will show unto you all things what ye should
do.

Book of Mormon (2 Nephi ch. 32: vv. 2-3, p. 5).

.....

The things we hope for are often future events.
If only we could look beyond the horizon of
mortality into what awaits us beyond this life. Is it
possible to imagine a more glorious future than
the one prepared for us by our Heavenly Father?
Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we need
not fear, for we will live forever, never to taste of
death again. Because of His infinite Atonement,
we can be cleansed of sin and stand pure and
holy before the judgment bar. The Saviour is the
Author of our Salvation.

*President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Member of the First
Presidency - "The Infinite Power of Hope," Ensign,
Nov. (2008), p. 22.*



Hinduism

For every child that is born, it brings with it the hope that God is not yet disappointed with man.
Rabindranath Tagore.

.....

What is true of the individual will be to-morrow true of the whole nation if individuals will but refuse to lose heart and hope.
Mahatma Gandhi.

.....

All power is within you, you can do, anything and everything. Believe in that do not believe that you are weak. You can do any thing and everything, without even the guidance of any one. Stand up and express the divinity within you..., Within each of you there is the power to remove all wants and all miseries.
Swami Vivekananda.



Humanism

As I Grew Older

As I grew older, I came to realise that everything that is a part of life is inevitable to it I could not be borne high upon the crest of ecstasy and joy unless I also knew the dreadful depths of the great waves of life. I could not be irradiated by such love without being swept by the shadow of despair.

The rich teeming earth from which all beauty comes is fed with decay; Out of the sweat and labour of men grows the corn. We are born to die; if death were not, life would not be either. Pain and weakness and evil, as well as strength and passions and health are part of the pattern of life, and as I grew up, I learned that that life is richer and fuller and finer, the more you can understand, not only in brain and intellect, but in your very being that you must accept it all, without bitterness, the agony, without complacency, the joy.

Helen Thomas.

.....

Thinkin and Daein

Atween the blink o the ee an the harn (brain), atween the seein an the thinkin, time an space whummelt in the swee. Dykes rise, fields, end-rigs nae pleuched syne, rummel intae the lift. Gowd-lickit clouds an bleck staunan aiks, awe the gap atween seein an thinkin.

Thinkin an daein that word nicht come speiritin oot o thon gap, speirin at the yird an awe its cronies.

Wir ain word biggit that wi maun tak it an yokein it, let it flee as the finger lifts an the air flees oot the taem chaunter. Chaumer pipes for dauncin an war ains for bleedin, auld words for speakin an new ains for readin. There's the chink atween thinkin an daein.

Harvey Holton.



Islam

Hope, irrespective of the situation is a common feeling that connects all humans together, hope for a better future, hope for salvation or the hope that someone else may be relieved,
“When we let men taste [Our] grace, they rejoice in it; but if evil befalls them as an outcome of what their own hands have wrought lo! They lose all hope.”
Qur'an 30: 36.

.....

Allah the Almighty said: I am as My servant thinks I am, I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself; and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it. And if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed.
Saying of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him, taken from Sahih Bukhari.

.....

Hope

Your hope in my heart is the rarest treasure
Your Name on my tongue is the sweetest word
My choicest hours
Are the hours I spend with You -
O God, I can't live in this world
Without remembering You-
Rabia al-Adawiyyah, d. 801, renowned lady saint of Basra.

Jainism

By renouncing passions, the soul attains the state of complete freedom, the state (VEETARÄG) beyond attachment and aversion. On attaining the state of non-attachment and non-aversion, the soul becomes indifferent to worldly pleasure and pain.

Uttarādhyayan Sutra.

.....

Nothing in the Universe has permanence, even though the whole Universe is constant. Spiritual values are therefore worth striving for as they alone offer the soul, its ultimate freedom and stability.

Anitya Bhavana (The Impermanence of the Sansaar or World).

.....

The flowers may fade but the fragrance floats ;
The body may disintegrate,
But the immortal fragrance of the soul always
will remain.

Jainism teaching.

Judaism

For an instant did I forsake you; but with great mercy will I gather you in. In a flood of anger I hid my face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord your Redeemer. For me this is like the waters of Noah: just as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more cover the earth; so have I sworn that I shall not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the Lord who has mercy on you. O you afflicted, tossed with tempest, and without comfort, behold, I will decorate your stones with bright colours, and lay your foundations with sapphire. And I will make your windows of rubies, and your gates of beryl, and all your borders of precious stones. And all your children shall be education about the Lord; and great shall be the peace of your children.

Isaiah Ch. 54, vv. 7-13, The Hebrew Bible

.....

I know the thoughts that I think of you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then shall you call upon me, and you shall go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. And you shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart. And I will allow myself to be found by you, says the Lord; and I will return you from your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places into which I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I caused you to be driven away.

Jeremiah Ch.29, vv. 11 – 15, The Hebrew Bible.



I lift my eyes to the hills:
Whence will my help come?
My help is from the Lord,
Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to slip:
He that guardeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, He that guardeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is thy guardian: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall guard thee from all evil;
He shall guard thy soul.
The Lord shall guard thy going out and thy coming in,
from this time forth and for evermore.
Psalm 121, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

If I ascend up into heaven, You are there: if I make my bed in the underworld, behold, You are there.
If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the furthest parts of the sea; even there shall Your
hand lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely only darkness cover me; and the
light become night about me, even the darkness is not dark for You, but the night shines like day:
darkness and light are alike for You. For You have formed my sinews; You have knit me together in
my mother's womb.
Psalm 139, vv.8-13, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

Rabbi Tarfon said: the day is short, and there is much work to be done; and the workers are lazy, but
the reward is great; and the employer is pressing.
He used to say: you are not obliged to finish the work, but neither are you free to abstain from it; if
you have studied much, you will be given much reward; and your employer will faithfully pay you the
reward of your labour; but be aware that the reward of the righteous is in the time to come.
Talmud, Ethics of the Fathers, Ch 2, Mishnah 15-16.

.....

Open for us, merciful Father, this week and every week,
the gates of atonement, gates of blessing, gates of charity
gates of contentment, of delight, and of enthusiasm,,
gates of gladness, of good tidings, of goodness, and of grace,
gates of health, of honour, and of insight,
gates of joy, of kindness, and of learning,
gates of length of days, of livelihood, and of mercy,
gates of patience, and gates of peace,
gates of redemption, of righteousness, and of salvation,
gates of success, and of sustenance,
gates of tranquility,
gates of understanding, and gates of wisdom.
Mystical prayer at end of Shabbat.



Paganism

For no one is either too young or too old for the health of the soul.

Epicurus (341 – 270 BCE) Letter to Menoeceus 122.

.....

Have I done something for the common good? Then I too have benefited. Have this thought always ready to hand.

Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, XI. 4.

.....

Imagine you were now dead, or had not lived before this moment. Now view the rest of your life as a bonus, and live it as nature directs.

Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, VII. 56.

Every breath we take encompasses the circle of birth, death and rebirth. The forces that push the blood cells through our veins are the same forces that spun the universe out of the primal ball of fire. We do not know what those forces are. We can invoke them, but we cannot control them, nor can we disconnect from them. They are our life, and when we die, decay, and decompose, we remain still within their cycle.

Miriam Simos (1987).

Sikh Dharam

We all have hopes and desires in life. Sometimes, life takes unexpected turns and during those times it is important that we keep faith so that we are able to face and overcome difficulties.

Sireeraag Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Sabh kichh vasgat saahibai aapay karan karayv.

Everything is in the Hands of our Lord and Master; He Himself is the Doer of deeds.

Satgur kai balihaarnai mansaa sabh poorayv.

I am a sacrifice to the True Guru, who fulfills all hopes and desires.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 44

Raag Maajh Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru):

Sabh ko aasai tayree baithaa.

All place their hopes in You.

Ghat ghat antar toonhai vuthaa.

You dwell deep within each and every heart.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 97

Sireeraag Mehlaa 1 Ghar 4 (Composed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the 1st Guru)

Tayraa ayk naam taaray sansaar.

Your Name alone, Lord, saves the world.

Mai ayhaa aas ayho aaDhaar. ||1|| rahaa-o.

This is my hope; this is my support.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 24

Optimism

Chaupai Sahib (Composed by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th Guru)

Hamaree karo haath dai rachhaa

Please give me Your Hand, Lord, and protect me.

Pooran ho-ay chit kee ichhaa

Please fulfill my mind's desires.

Tav charanan man rahai hamaaraa

Let my mind remain attached to Your Lotus Feet.

Apana jaan karo pratipaaraa

Please make me Your Own, and cherish me.

Hamaray dusht sabhai tum ghaavaho

Please destroy all my fears and inner enemies.

Aap haath dai mohi bachaavaho

Give me Your Hand, and save me.

Sukhee basai moro parivaaraa

May my family live in peace.

Sri Dasam Granth p. 2259



Joy



Highland Morning

On this quiet track
in early summer,
amid birch and larch and pine,
who could not
sense the sacred
and feel creation's heart of love?

Fourteen centuries have passed
since Iona's monks
trode these Highland hills,
at one with nature's pulse,
alive to crag and stream,
carrying Good News
about the One
whose energies of light
pulsate through strath and glen.

And, as grouse scuttle in the heather,
I find again
that place of connecting –
where the soul,
returning home,
finds rest.

This track
is holy ground,
a sacred space
where, walking lightly,
wonder becomes my companion.

I look through the trees
aware of the shy deer
who has grazed here
longer than our centuries,
certain heir of mountain and forest.

And as I meet her gaze,
something in my spirit
leaps with joy,
for I feel at one
with all that lives
on this glorious, Highland day.
Peter Millar.

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of
waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with raindrops; - on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.
William Wordsworth, from Resolution and Independence.

.....

Today a song-bird sang-
Perched so high on yonder tree
Against a sky of silver grey
Full throated song to fill the air
And lift all care away –
I stayed to listen.
Nora Leney in Saunders, C. Beyond the Horizon.

.....

He who binds to himself a joy
Doth the winged life destroy.
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in Eternity's sunrise.
William Blake in Saunders, C. Beyond the Horizon.

.....

Christ turns all our sunsets into dawns.
Clement of Alexandria.

.....

Of thine eternal love
May we by our example,
In all we do and say,
Show the joy that we have found,
For this dear Lord we pray.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

I have seen the sun break through
To illuminate a small field
For a while, and gone my way
And forgotten it. But that was the pearl
Of great price, the one field that had
Treasure in it. I realize now
That I must give all that I have
To possess it. Life is not hurrying

On to a receding future, nor hankering after
An imagined past. It is the turning
Aside like Moses to the miracle
Of the lit bush, to a brightness
That seemed as transitory as your youth
Once, but is the eternity that awaits you.
R.S. Thomas, Collected Poems.



Easter Sunday

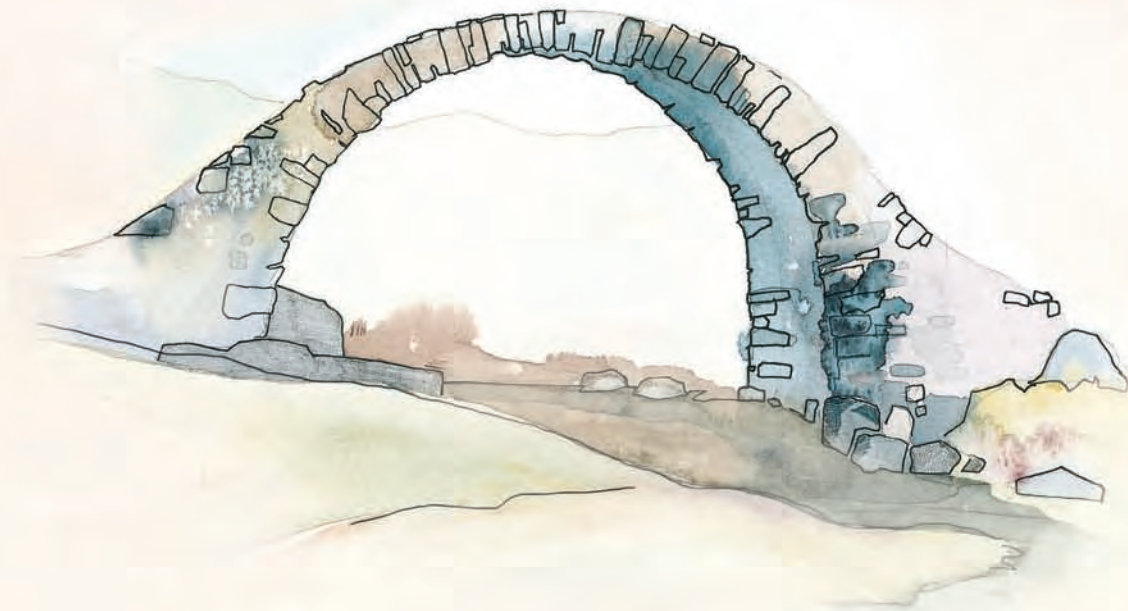
The people say that the sun dances on this day in joy for a risen Saviour.
Old Barbara Macphie at Dreimdsdale saw this once, but only once, during her long life. And the good woman, of high natural intelligence, described in poetic language and with religious fervour what she saw or believed she saw from the summit of Benmore.

'The glorious gold-bright sun was after rising on the crests of the great hills, and it was changing colour- green, purple, red, blood-red, white, intense-white and gold-white, like the glory of the God of the elements to the children of men. It was dancing up and down in exultation at the joyous resurrection of the beloved saviour of victory.

To be thus privileged, a person must ascend to the top of the highest hill before sunrise, and believe that the God who makes the small blade of grass to grow is the same God who makes the large massive sun to move.'

A.Carmichael, The Sun Dances. Prayers and Blessings from the Gaelic.

O Father,
Give the spirit power to climb
To the fountain of all light, and be purified.
Break through the mists of earth, the weight of the clod,
Shine forth in splendour, Thou that art calm weather,
And quiet resting place for faithful souls.
To see Thee is the end and the beginning,
Thou carriest us, and thou dost go before,
Thou art the journey, and the journey's end.
Helen Waddell (translator) in Saunders C. Beyond the Horizon .



Baha'i Faith

The divine messengers come to bring joy to this earth, for this is the planet of tribulation and torment and the mission of the great masters is to turn men away from these anxieties and to infuse life with infinite joy.

When the divine message is understood, all troubles will vanish. Shadows disappear when the universal lamp is lighted, for whosoever becomes illumined thereby no longer knows grief; he realizes that his stay on this planet is temporary and that life is eternal. When once he has found reality he will no longer retreat into darkness.

Abdu'l-Baha, (Divine Philosophy, p. 69).

Believing - Not - Belonging

Look to This Day:

Look to this day, for it is life,
the very life of life.

In its brief course lie all the verities
and realities of your existence;
the bliss of growth,
the glory of action,
the splendour of beauty.

For yesterday is already a dream and
tomorrow is only a vision;
but today well lived makes every yesterday
a dream of happiness
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.

From the Sanskrit.

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.

And the selfsame well from which your laughter
rises was oftentimes filled with your tears.

And how can this be?

The deeper that sorrow carves into your being,
the more joy you can contain.

Is not the lute that soothes your spirit the very
wood that was hollowed out with knives?

When you are joyous, look deep into your heart
and you shall find it is only that which has given
you sorrow that is giving you joy.

When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart,
and you shall see that in truth you are weeping
for that which has been your delight.

Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet.

Brahma Kumaris

Many circumstances come and steal my happiness and joy; I make mistakes, I worry, become agitated and sorrowful. Thoughts of envy, jealousy, anger and hatred enter the mind. I need to transform these emotions and find inner contentment. I start focusing on the good qualities I see in others. When I focus on good qualities, my thoughts will become pure and my actions will be elevated, bringing with them the result of great joy, contentment and happiness. *Sister Jayanti, Just a moment.*

Buddhism

From the unlocked cage of my heart
White doves of love go winging,
Wild larks of song rise singing,
The ice of my heart is broken, broken,
Joy’s fountain leaps in the air;
And all the while no word was spoken:
I only looked at something fair.
Sangharakshita, Complete Poems, Windhorse Publications (1995).

One of the signs of enlightenment is gratitude. It is the song of the heart in response to the Buddha Nature.
Sitting Buddha, p. 6, Soto Zen Tradition.

The Buddha says: 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 an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the wagon... if a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.
Dharmapada, Soto Zen Tradition.

Christianity

The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it.
Psalm 24 v. 1, The Hebrew Bible.

Joy to the world, the Lord has come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heav’n and nature sing,
and heav’n and nature sing
and heaven and nature sing.
Isaac Watts is inspired by Psalm 98, The Hebrew Bible, to express the joy of the birth of the infant Christ.

Hinduism

The Infinite is the source of joy. There is no joy in the finite. Only in the Infinite is there joy. Ask to know the Infinite.
Hinduism. Chandogya Upanishad 7. 23.

When totally free from outer contacts
a man finds happiness in himself,
He is fully trained in God’s discipline
and reaches unending bliss.
The experiences we owe to our sense of touch
are only sources of unpleasantness.
They have a beginning and an end.
A wise man takes no pleasure in them.
That man is disciplined and happy
who can prevail over the turmoil
That springs from desire and anger,
here on earth, before he leaves his body.
Bhagavad Gita 5. 21-23.

The felicity that results from the gratification of desire, or that other purer felicity which one enjoys in heaven, does not come to even a sixteenth part of that which arises upon the abandonment of all kinds of thirst!
Mahabharata, Shantiparva 177.

The more we come out and do good to others,
the more our hearts will be purified, and God will
be in them.

Swami Vivekananda.

When one obtains happiness then one proceeds
to act (perform sacrifice). No one acts without
first obtaining happiness.

Only by obtaining happiness does one act.

Chandogya Upanishad 7.22.

Happiness is when what you think, what you say,
and what you do are in harmony.

Mahatma Gandhi.

Aisee Vani Boliye, Man Ka Aapa Khoye
Auran Ko Sheetal Kare, Aapahu Sheetal Hoye.

*Meaning: Speak such words, which take away all
ego.*

*It makes the body remain composed & joy to the
listener.*

Sant Kabir.

When we are joyful, we do not look for
perfection. If you are looking for perfection
then you are not at the source of joy. Joy is the
realization that there is no vacation from wisdom.
The world appears imperfect on the surface
but underneath, all is perfect. Perfection hides,
imperfection flaunts itself.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Humanism

From solitude comes the joy of re-discovery
of ourselves. For years, when we have lived
for someone else, we have been governed to
some extent by our partner's wishes and needs
and now, because we are alone, we are free to
continue our journey through life. Open to every
approach others may make, with no insult to the
memory of our dear departed, but realising that
a new adventure has emerged because they are
no longer. So look for the joys yet to come and
create them from our untapped resources.

Leslie Scrase.

Islam

Those, who are God's friends and who believe
and fear God, shall have no occasion for fear or
sorrow: there is nothing but good news for them
in this world and in the Hereafter.

Qur'an 10.63.

When people have despaired of reaping a
harvest, God sends down rain. He spreads His
blessing across the world; He is the glorious
guardian. Look at how He created the heavens
and the earth, and all the creatures that He has
spread across the earth. The creation is merely
one among many of his signs. If He wanted, He
could gather the heavens and the earth and all
the creatures into one place.

Qur'an 42.27-29.

No soul knows what joy is in store for it.

Qur'an 32.17.

Therefore be patient with what they say, and
celebrate (constantly) the praises of thy Lord,
before the rising of the sun, and before its
setting; yea, celebrate them for part of the hours
of the night, and at the sides of the day: that
thou may have (spiritual) joy.

Qur'an 20.130.



But Allah will deliver them from the evil of that Day, and will shed over them a Light of Beauty and (blissful) joy.
Qur'an 76. 11.

Jainism

Happiness resides not in possessions and not in gold,
The feeling of happiness dwells in the soul.

Every soul is in itself absolutely omniscient and blissful. The bliss does not come from outside.
Teachings of Lord Mahavir.

.....

All human beings are miserable due to their own faults, and they themselves can be happy by correcting these faults.
Teachings of Lord Mahavir.

.....

May my heart sing with ecstasy
at the sight of the virtuous.
And may my life be an offering
at their feet.
Shree Chitrabhanu, Author and Poet.

May all be happy,
May all be hale and hearty,
May all attain bliss,
May none be miserable.
Navjivan Granthmala, Gariyadhar, Jainism, p. 35.

Judaism

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; That you may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that you may drink deeply, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus says the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like a flowing stream; then shall you suck, you shall be carried upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass; and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.
Isaiah Ch. 66, vv. 10-14, The Hebrew Bible.

The greatest good deed is to be happy always.
Rebbe Nachman of Breslov.

.....

O sing to the Lord a new song; for he has done marvellous things; his right hand has brought victory for Him, and his holy arm. The Lord has made known his salvation; to the eyes of the nations he has revealed his righteousness. He has remembered his love and his honesty toward the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout joyously to the Lord, all the earth; call out, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing to the Lord with the lyre; with the lyre, and the voice of song. With trumpets and the sound of a horn make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world, and those who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands; let the mountains rejoice together. Before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness, and the nations with fairness.
Psalm 98, The Hebrew Bible.

Paganism

You can ensure that your life always follows a happy course if you are able to follow the right path, and hold to what is right in all your thoughts and deeds.
Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, V. 34.16.

.....

Take your joy in simplicity, in integrity, in indifference to all that lies between virtue and vice. Love mankind. Follow god.
Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, VII. 31.

Sikh Dharam

We are blessed with a time of joy through God's mercy and grace and should remember to praise him through the happy and joyful times.

Raamkalee Mehlaa 3 Anand -The Verse of Bliss (Composed by Guru Amar Das Ji, Third Guru Ji)

Anand bha-i-aa mayree maa-ay satguroo mai paa-i-aa.

I am in ecstasy, O my mother, for I have found my True Guru.

Satgur ta paa-i-aa sahj saytee man vajee-aa vaadhaa-ee-aa.

I have found the True Guru, with intuitive ease, and my mind vibrates with the music of bliss.

Raag ratan parvaar paree-aa sabad gaavan aa-ee-aa.

The jewelled melodies and their related celestial harmonies have come to sing the Word of the Shabad.

Sabdo ta gaavhu haree kayraa man jinee vasaa-i-aa.

The Lord dwells within the minds of those who sing the Shabad.

Kahai naanak anand ho-aa satguroo mai paa-i-aa.

Says Nanak, I am in ecstasy, for I have found my True Guru.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 917.

Healing and the Meaning of Life



Healthcare Chaplain and Editor

If I lose my direction,
I have to look for the North Star,
and I go to the north.
That does not mean I expect to arrive at the North Star;
I just want to go in that direction.

*Reprinted from Being Peace (1987, 2005) by Thich Nhat Hanh with permission of Parallax Press,
Berkeley, California. www.parallax.org*

.....

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A Poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils.
William Wordsworth.

.....

Good for the body is the work of the body,
Good for the soul is the work of the soul,
And good for either is the work of the other.
Henry David Thoreau.

Happiness is the ability to say; I lived for certain values and acted on them. I was part of a family, embracing it and being embraced by it. I was part of a community, honouring its traditions, sharing its griefs and joys, ready to help others, knowing that they were ready to help me. I did not only ask what I could take; I asked what I could contribute. To know that you made a difference, that in this all too brief span of years you lifted someone's spirits, relieved someone's poverty or loneliness, or brought a moment of grace or justice to the world that would not have happened had it not been for you; these are as close as we get to the meaningfulness of a life, and they are matters of everyday rather than heroic virtue. Machiavelli famously said that it is better to be feared than to be loved. He was wrong.

Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks, To Heal A Fractured World.

.....

Lord,
I come to you in penitence,
In trust, in hope;
I come praising your glorious name.

Heal every part of me, in body,
In mind, in spirit,
Save me from all evil.

For I long to serve you, in joy,
In peace and in power,
And to praise you all my days.
J. Gunstone, Prayers for Healing.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both
and be one traveller, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could
to where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim
because it was grassy and wanted wear; though as for that, the passing there had worn them really
about the same,

And both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I marked the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh, somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I, I took the one less travelled by,
and that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost.

As I set out this morning
To greet a brand new day;
Keep me Lord and guide me
Show to me the way.
Be thou my inspiration,
In all I say and do;
And let me Lord remember,
The life I owe to you.
Let me tell others
The blessings I receive;
And tell them of the joy in store
If they in you believe.
Let me speak thy name with pride
That they dear lord might see;
The power of the love received
From walking Lord with thee.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

Life –
scattered and gathered
fragments.

Broken,
ragged and jagged
pieces.

Not
rounded, whole or
complete

stories.
Beauty and meaning
are there.
Ewan Kelly.

Known, yet unknown,
without a name yet holding every name.
In the mystery of love you come to us
and in tenderness reveal the meaning of our
lives
and the pattern of our days.
Peter Millar.



Baha'i Faith

There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first is by the use of remedies, of medicines; the second consists in praying to God and in turning to Him. Both means should be used and practiced.

Illness caused by physical accident should be treated with medical remedies; those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus an illness caused by affliction, fear, nervous impressions, will be healed by spiritual rather than by physical treatment. Hence, both kinds of remedies should be considered. Moreover, they are not contradictory, and thou shouldst accept the physical remedies as coming from the mercy and favor of God, who hath revealed and made manifest medical science so that His servants may profit from this kind of treatment also. Thou shouldst give equal attention to spiritual treatments, for they produce marvellous effects. *Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v3. p. 587).*

.....

It is incumbent upon everyone to seek medical treatment and to follow the doctor's instructions, for this is in compliance with the divine ordinance, but, in reality, He Who giveth healing is God. *Abdu'l-Baha, (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 156).*

.....

Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh (Baha'i Prayers, p. 85).

Know thou that the soul of man is exalted above, and is independent of all infirmities of body or mind. That a sick person showeth signs of weakness is due to the hindrances that interpose themselves between his soul and his body, for the soul itself remaineth unaffected by any bodily ailments. Consider the light of the lamp. Though an external object may interfere with its radiance, the light itself continueth to shine with undiminished power. In like manner, every malady afflicting the body of man is an impediment that preventeth the soul from manifesting its inherent might and power. When it leaveth the body, however, it will evince such ascendancy, and reveal such influence as no force on earth can equal. Every pure, every refined and sanctified soul will be endowed with tremendous power, and shall rejoice with exceeding gladness. *Baha'u'llah : (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah p. 155).*

.....

O God, my God! I beg of Thee by the ocean of Thy healing, and by the splendors of the Day-Star of Thy grace, and by Thy Name through which Thou didst subdue Thy servants, and by the pervasive power of Thy most exalted Word and the potency of Thy most august Pen, and by Thy mercy that hath preceded the creation of all who are in heaven and on earth, to purge me with the waters of Thy bounty from every affliction and disorder, and from all weakness and feebleness. Thou seest, O my Lord, Thy suppliant waiting at the door of Thy bounty, and him who hath set his hopes on Thee clinging to the cord of Thy generosity. Deny him not, I beseech Thee, the things he seeketh from the ocean of Thy grace and the Day-Star of Thy loving-kindness. Powerful art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. There is none other God save Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

Baha'u'llah, (Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, p. 265).



Believing - Not - Belonging

Therefore, strive that your actions day by day may be beautiful prayers. Turn towards God, and seek always to do that which is right and noble. Enrich the poor, raise the fallen, comfort the sorrowful, bring healing to the sick, reassure the fearful, rescue the oppressed, bring hope to the hopeless, shelter the destitute!

Abdu'l-Baha, (Paris Talks, p. 80).

Behold Thou this stranger, O my Lord, who hath hastened to attain his most exalted Home in the shelter of Thy shadowing mercy, and this ailing soul who hath set his face towards the ocean of Thy healing.

Baha'u'llah(Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, p. 269).

Swallows

On a day that is almost September,
Torn between sun and wind,
Like ice skaters curling the sky
They loop and skirt and lift –
Little miracles made of air.

They nest in the eaves of our porch;
Sometimes at night I open the door to the dark
To catch their jostle in the tiny light.

All these weeks and we don't even know
Their number. The young ones find the sky
As easy as breathing; catch and swivel
In a dance the same since the beginning.

Then, as though some voice has summoned them,
The swallows gather:
Africa, restless deep inside,
Thousands of miles in their wings.

The following day they're gone, all of them –
And we watch where they were, wondering....
Kenneth Steven.

In the beginning

There was nothing but everything
A robin opened the jewellery of his throat
The moon grew and ballooned the skies
A horse ran through a starlit field
Somewhere a stream sang its own song
Primroses broke from the dark to open their eyes
And someone came barefoot into warm sunlight.
Kenneth Steven.

.....

Healing is not something that comes only after you are free from the prison of disease and pain. It can come while you are still in prison and it can transform that prison into a place of love and wholeness. Healing is no less than a lifelong practise of vulnerability and openness.
Bernie Siegel.

Healing

In meditation we enter a soft, serene and wonderful world.
Limitations of ability, wealth and the body drop away, and we free fall into a subtle world of light, self expression and purest energy.
And here our hearts and minds are caressed by the healing energies of peace and love and light. And light and more light fills us, illuminates, uplifts and transforms.
And we float in a sea of inner calm and pure tranquility that frees us from the old, sad memories and the effects of the past.
Enabling us to think, to move, to run and to dance; and in that happiness, our world seems fun and bright and light.
Jim Ryan.



The Meaning of Life

There are three kinds of people in this world. The majority are those who worry about everything – the population explosion, the arms issue, crime, drugs and so on. They are always worrying, and they don't stop talking about their worries either.

The second type never worries. They just sit back and enjoy life and that's it. They are not concerned about anything else.

The third type genuinely and honestly believe that they can give such a direction to their life that will have an impact on the rest of the world....

They are those who feel responsible for the future and give their commitment, love and integrity when addressing the needs of our times.

It is God's task to transform the world, but how does He do this?

God gets His task done through the noble acts of humans.

So now is not the time for being careless with our life's aim.
It is the time to take up our responsibility, truthfully, entirely.

Now is the time to think of the world.

Now is the time to do something for the world.

For this, you need to start by seeing what it is you can do.

Do it and then share your experiences with others.
Share what it is that inspires you....and you will inspire people to think about living their lives according to their highest purpose, bring benefit and comfort to many and come close to God.
Wings of Soul, Dadi Janki.

Buddhism

A single word of truth,
which calms the mind,
is worth more than a thousand irrelevant words.
p. 37, v. 100, A Dhammapada for Contemplation, a rendering by Ajahn Munindo. (2006).

Christianity

Bless those who share with Christ
A healing ministry,
Doctors, surgeons, nurses and all hospital staff
Use their sympathy and skill
for the relief of suffering,
the conquest of disease,
and the restoration of health;
And crown all their efforts with good success
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Adapted from the Book of Common Order by the Revd. Andrew Scobie.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In him was life; and the life was the light of men."
John Ch. 1, vv. 1,4, New Testament, The Bible.

.....

He said, "I am Alpha and Omega, Christ the Lord; yea, even I am he, the beginning and the end, the Redeemer of the world."
Doctrine and Covenants 19: 1.

.....

He said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."
John Ch. 4, v. 14, New Testament, The Bible

He said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

John Ch. 8, v.12, New Testament, The Bible.

He said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

John Ch. 11, vv.25-26, New Testament, The Bible.

He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

John Ch.14, v.6, New Testament, The Bible.

Jesus Christ is the Way. He is the Light and Life, Bread and Water, the Beginning and the End, the Resurrection and the Life, the Saviour of the world, the Truth and the Way.

There is only one way to happiness and fulfillment. He is the Way. He offers a well of living water. Either we drink and never thirst more, or we don't and foolishly remain thirsty still.

He is the Bread of Life

He is the Light of the World.

He is the Resurrection and the Life. He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (*John Ch. 6, v. 63*).

He is the Saviour of the world He is the Way.

"We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost"

(*Articles of Faith 1:1*) The plan of the Father was implemented by the Son that we may have the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. The way of the Father is the way of the Son. He said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

(*Exodus 20: 3, Hebrew Bible*).

Only God can bless us. Only He can sustain us. Only He can cause our hearts to beat and give us breath. Only He can preserve and protect us. Only He can give us strength to bear up the burdens of life. Only He can give us power, knowledge, peace and joy. Only He can forgive our sins. Only He can change us and forge a godly soul. Only He can bring us back into His presence.

And He will do all of that and much more if we but remember Him to keep His commandments. What then shall we do? We will remember Him to keep His commandments. It is the only intelligent thing to do.

Elder Lawrence E. Corbridge, Member of the First Quorum of the Seventy - "The Way", Ensign, Nov. 2008, p. 34.

Hinduism

There is more to life than simply increasing its speed.
Mahatama Gandhi.

The Self is the hub of the wheel of life,
And the sixteen forms are only the spokes.
The Self is the paramount goal of life.
Attain this goal and go beyond death!
Prashna Upanishad.

Life is a bridge, enjoy while crossing but don't build a castle on it.
Upanishads.

SUDERSHAN KRIYA: su-proper, darshan - Vision, Kriya -purified action. Purified action that gives proper vision to self is a tool to healing .It gives rhythm in creation, body, thought, emotion and being. Handling the tendencies of mind with this vision can give meaning to life. The meaning to life is to live in the present moment, if we are able to do that life becomes simple. If we harmonise the layers of our existence (body,breath, mind) there will be self healing.
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Humanism

What does it mean?

A taxi driver once had Bertrand Russell in his cab . . he being the most famous philosopher of his day. Seizing the opportunity, the Cabbie asked him "So what's it all about?"

No answer was forthcoming which is no surprise, for is the 'meaning of life' not the most profound and elusive mystery of them all, unanswerable by even the greatest of minds ? So is there no answer to be had ? Perhaps we can progress to an answer by considering what makes life worth living . . the winning of a personal struggle . . the Jupiter symphony . . the infinite variety in nature . . the works of Goya or Cezanne . . that seafood restaurant . . that abiding friendship . . a special child's face . . the love of and from another . . eliminating suffering . . nurturing a well founded child ?

Surely a huge variety there, complicated by the very unpredictable nature of it all . . but we can come to a basic answer, perhaps too simplistic and surely missing much . . but perhaps only so because we expect something much more elaborate . . . but here goes . . .

The only sense that we can make of the idea that life has meaning is that there are some reasons to live, rather than to die, and those reasons are to be found in the living of life itself!

Julian Baggini.

Islam

Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Sovereignty, and He is Able to do all things. Who hath created life and death that He may try you, which of you is best in conduct; and He is the Mighty, Forgiving.

Qur'an 67. 1-2.

.....

I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me.

Quran 51. 56.

.....

O servants of God, seek treatment, because God did not create a disease but has created a treatment for it – except one disease: old age.
Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him taken from Abu Dawud.

Jainism

Without whom, even the worldly affairs cannot be carried out, I bow to that Anekāntvād , the only preceptor of the universe.

Jain Teaching.

We learn from scriptures (Sashtras) and commentaries that Jainism is existing from beginning less time.

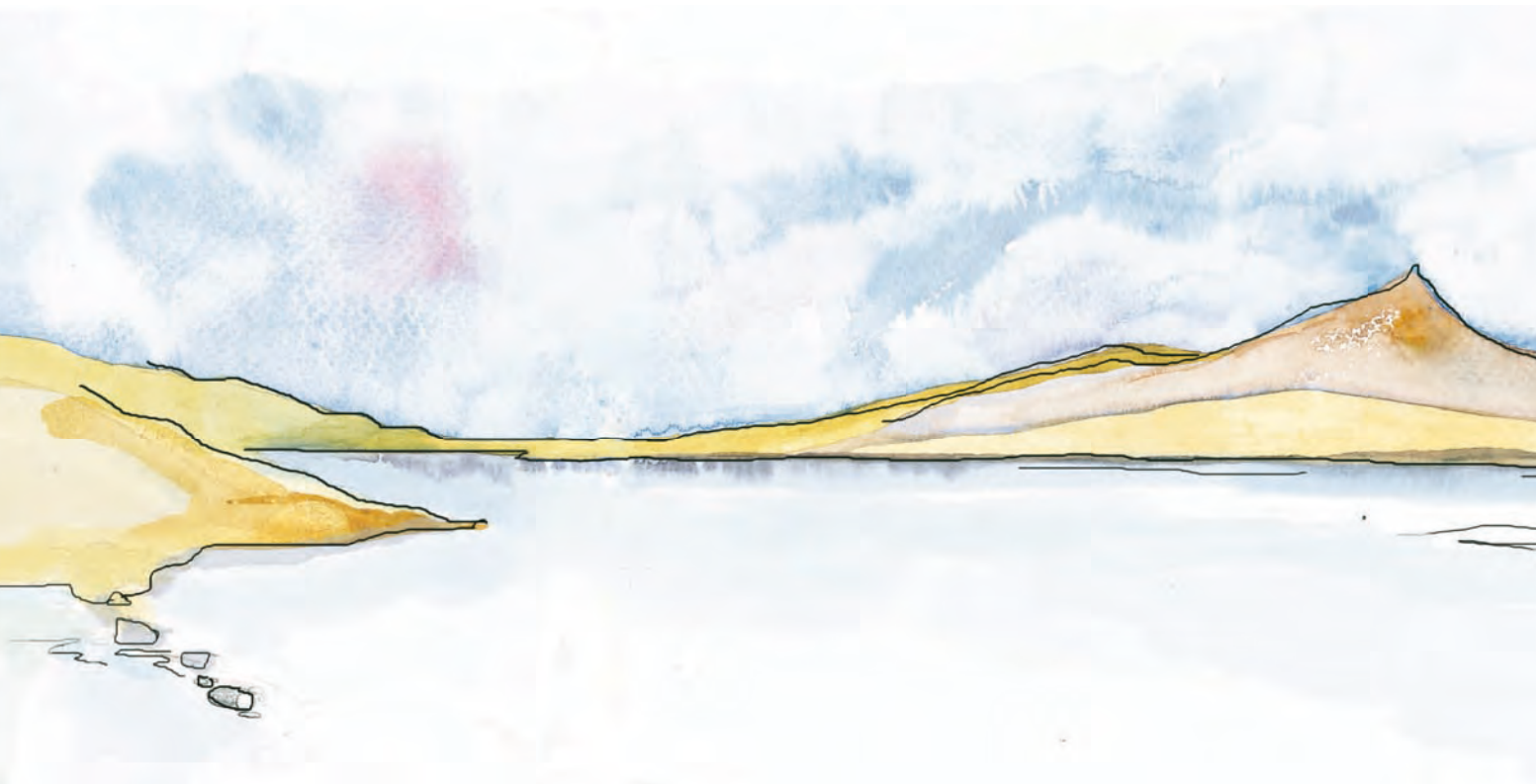
Lokamanya Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Poet.

Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct together constitute the Path of Salvation.

Jain Teachings.

The fire of austerity (conduct) which is associated with the air (oxygen) of knowledge and which has the blaze of chastity, burns the seeds (Karma) that are responsible for worldly life like wildfire burning a heap of hay.

Teachings of Lord Mahavir.





Judaism

Traditional Mi Sheberach – prayer for healing:

May the One who blessed our ancestors, Sarah and Abraham, Rebecca and Isaac, Leah, Rachel and Jacob, bless (name of person who is ill) son/daughter of (father of ill person) and (mother of ill person) along with all the ill among us. Grant insight to those who bring healing; courage and faith to those who are sick; love and strength to us and all who love them. God, let Your spirit rest upon all who are ill and comfort them. May they and we soon know a time of complete healing, a healing of the body and a healing of the spirit, and let us say: Amen.

From traditional Siddur (daily prayer book).

.....

Heal us, O Lord, and we shall be healed.
Save us, and we shall be saved, for it is You that we praise.
Advance a complete recovery for all that ails us.
May it be Your will, O Lord our God and God of our ancestors,
to send a complete cure, healing of the body and healing of the soul
to (name of ill person) along with all others who are stricken.
For You are God, King, the faithful and compassionate Healer.
Blessed are You, O Lord, Who heals the sick amongst His people.
From daily prayers, traditional Siddur.

Paganism

Every living organism is fulfilled when it follows the right path for its own nature.
Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, VIII. 7.

Sikh Dharam

The Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the Sikhs eternal Guru Ji teaches us that 'Naam' (remembering the Lord's name always) is to be recited to help with the healing process and the meaning to life.

Bilaaval Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Rog ga-i-aa parabh aap gavaa-i-aa.

The disease is gone; God Himself took it away.

Need pa-ee sukh sahj ghar aa-i-aa. ||1|| rahaa-o.

I sleep in peace; peaceful poise has come to my home.

Raj raj bhojan kaavahu mayray bhaa-ee.

Eat to your fill, O my Siblings of Destiny.

Amrit naam rid maahi dhi-aa-ee.

Meditate on the Ambrosial Naam, the Name of the Lord, within your heart.

Naanak gur pooray sarnaa-ee.

Nanak has entered the Sanctuary of the Perfect Guru,

Jin apnay naam kee pajj rakhaa-ee.

Who has preserved the honor of His Name.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p.807.

Bhairo Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Gur mil ti-aagi-o doojaa bhaa-o.

Meeting with the Guru, I have forsaken the love of duality.

Gurmukh japi-o har kaa naa-o.

As Gurmukh, I chant the Name of the Lord.

Bisree chint naam rang laagaa.

My anxiety is gone, and I am in love with the Naam, the Name of the Lord.

Janam janam kaa so-i-aa jaagaa.

I was asleep for countless lifetimes, but I have now awakened.

Kar kirpaa apnee sayvaa laa-ay.

Granting His Grace, He has linked me to His service.

SaaDhoo sang sarab sukh paa-ay.

In the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, all pleasures are found.

Rog dokh gur sabad nivaaray.

The Word of the Guru's Shabad has eradicated disease and evil.

Naam a-ukhaDh man bheetar saaray.

My mind has absorbed the medicine of the Naam.

Gur bhaytat man bha-i-aa anand.

Meeting with the Guru, my mind is in bliss.

Sarab nidhaan naam bhagvant.

All treasures are in the Name of the Lord God.

Faith, Belief and Doubt



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Lord, open to us today the sea of your mercy
and water us with full streams
from the riches of your grace,
and the springs of your kindness.
Make us children of quietness and heirs of
peace....
Strengthen our weakness by your power,
And bind us close to you and to each other.
From the Syrian Church.

Argyll, October

Out at the sea’s edge
the whole wind riding the day
the bracken crippled and whipped
the sometimes of light blown away.

Here in huddles of stone
a whole millennium before us
men from Ireland made chapels
found God in these blown wide skies.

Further in, where boats nodded and rocked
in little creeks of sun
under overhangs of oak
we listened to the psalms of blackbirds.
Kenneth Steven.

When life ends we are given another.
Love is the Eternal Life;
when you enter that immense sea,
you will know that each drop of it brims with Life.
Jalal -al -Din Rumi.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth
as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin
against us. Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are
yours now and forever. Amen.
The Lord’s Prayer.

As the rain hides the stars, as the autumn mist
hides the hills, as the clouds veil the blue of the
sky, so the dark happenings of my lot hide the
shining of your face from me. Yet, if I may hold
your hand in the darkness, it is enough. Since I
know that, though I may stumble in my going,
you do not fall. Amen.
Celtic Prayer.

Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee,
blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is
the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother
of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour
of our death. Amen.

It’s a long way off but inside it
There are quite different things going on:
Festivals at which the poor man
Is king and the consumptive is
Healed; mirrors in which the blind look
At themselves and love looks at them
Back; and industry is for mending
The bent bones and the minds fractured
by life. It’s a long way off, but to get
there takes no time and admission
is free, if you will purge yourself
of desire, and present yourself with
your need only and the simple offering
of your faith, green as a leaf.
R.S Thomas, Collected Poems.

Lord as I journey this life
I need you by my side,
To keep my feet upon thy path
And my wandering footsteps guide;
If I should stray as oft I do,
When sore beset with care;
I know that comfort is at hand,
While you my Lord are there.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.



Baha'i Faith

I beg of God that thou mayest be so replenished with the spirit of the love of God that there may not remain (in thee) any place or access for the winds of tests. For what can dark doubts do with the light of guidance, or clouds with the shining moon? Tests and trials only cause agitation to weak hearts. But the pure souls, a hundred thousand tests are but to them like mirage, imagination and shadow. The shadow cannot withstand the rays of the sun and pure fragrances of holiness will not be concealed through the doubts of the beetle. The headache of wavering (or hesitancy) will not affect those exhilarated with the wine of the love of God.

Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v. 2, p. 251).

Believing - Not - Belonging

Today there is only one possible prayer:
 "Give me to do everything in the day
 with a sense of the sacredness of life.
 Give me to be in your presence, God,
 even though I know it only as absence."
May Sarton

When I am still
 and hear
 the snow
 falling

And notice
 moon's shadows
 glistening
 on white

I feel the company
 of that silent
 Presence
 holding my hand.

I'm so glad
 I listened
 to my ridiculous desire
 to believe
 in the
 unbelievable.

Ragini

Brahma Kumaris

When I am continuously being battered by the storms of life, and my very spirit is ebbing away, then all I need to do is hang onto that gift called "Faith"; that one support which will weather the storms. Faith does not depend on a clever head, only belief: belief in the self and the strength that lies within. Faith is the seed of victory and the foundation of making the impossible possible.
A Pocket Book on Virtue Dadi Janki.

Buddhism

Passed down by the wise
is the knowledge that,
though what is externally impressive
loses its splendour,
and though our bodies will decay,
the truth itself outlasts all degeneration
*p. 53, v. 151, A Dhammapada for Contemplation,
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo. (2006).*

.....

‘Confidence (faith) is the best wealth to a person
in this world. Well practised Dhamma brings
the most happiness. Truth is the sweetest of
all tastes. Living with wisdom is said to be the
noblest kind (way to live).’
Sutta Nipata v. 182.

.....

Buddham saranam gacchami
Dharmam saranam gacchami
Sangham saranam gacchami

I take refuge in the Buddha,
the one who shows me the way in this life

I take refuge in the Dharma,
the way of understanding and love

I take refuge in the Sangha,
the community that lives in harmony and
awareness
*Thich Nhat Hanh, Heart of the Buddha’s
Teaching, p. 167, Random House.*

.....

Arousing what is difficult to arouse, practicing
what is difficult to practice... in this way you
will naturally progress in the Buddha-dharma.
Each one of us has buddha-nature. Do not
meaninglessly deprecate yourself.
*Dogen:Shobogenzo zuimonki, Soto Zen
Tradition.*

If we want a definition of Faith we may say that
it is the response, even the emotional response,
of what is ultimate in us to what is ultimate in the
Universe.

*Sangharakshita, Lecture on the Stages of the
Spiritual Path, Dharmachakra tapes no 34, 1967,
quoted in Peace is a Fire, Windhorse Publications,
1995 p. 85,*

.....

At the very moment we are moved to utter the
Name of Amida Buddha by a firm faith that our
rebirth in the Pure Land is attained solely by
virtue of the unfathomable working of Amida’s
Original Vow, we are enabled to share in its
benefits that embrace all and forsake none.
*Shinran Shonin, founder of the Jodoshinshu
tradition; The Tannisho, Soto Zen Tradition.*

Christianity

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses (debts)
as we forgive those who trespass (are our
debtors) against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil;
(-in the Roman Catholic tradition, the prayer is
taken up by a priest at this point.)
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.
*The Lord’s Prayer from the Anglican Book of
Common Prayer (1662);
The ‘old familiar form’.*

Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
lead thou me on;
the night is dark, and I am far from home,
lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
the distant scene; one step enough for me.
The hymn written by John Henry Newman, ill and far from home.

.....

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
For all the benefits thou hast won for me,
For all the pains and insults thou has
borne for me.
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
May I know thee more clearly,
Love thee more dearly,
And follow thee more nearly:
Day by day.
The prayer of St Richard of Chichester from the 12th Century.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils
and dangers of this night;
For the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus
Christ. Amen
The Third Collect for aid against all perils, Book of Common Prayer – 1662.

.....

The Lord is my light and my salvation, so whom
shall I fear?
Psalms 26, v. 1, The Hebrew Bible.



Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Each of us should remember that he or she is a son or daughter of God, endowed with faith, gifted with courage, and guided by prayer.
Thomas S. Monson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - "Choose You This Day," Ensign, Nov (2004), p. 67.

.....

For all of Christendom, for all of mankind, Easter is observed as the anniversary of the greatest miracle in human history. It is the miracle that encompasses all who have lived upon the earth, all who now live upon the earth, and all who will yet live upon the earth. Nothing done before or since has so affected mankind as the atonement wrought by Jesus of Nazareth, who died on Calvary's cross and rose from the grave the third day as the living Son of the living God, the Saviour and Redeemer of all mankind. . . . The Holy Spirit testifies of the truth, the validity, of what really occurred. His was the ultimate sacrifice; His the sublime victory.
President Gordon B. Hinckley - "The Greatest Miracle in Human History," Ensign, May (1994), p. 72.

.....

If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.
Book of Mormon, Ether 12: 2.

.....

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
Proverbs Ch. 3 ,vv.: 5,6 The Hebrew Bible.



He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; and he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
Isaiah Ch. 53, vv. 3-5, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.
Philippians Ch. 4, vv. 7, 8, 13, New Testament, The Bible.

Hinduism

The greatest religion is to be true to your own nature. Have faith in yourselves!

Swami Vivekananda.

.....

By the study of different Religions we find that in essence they are one.

Swami Vivekananda.

.....

Faith... Must be enforced by reason...When faith becomes blind it dies.

Mahatama Gandhi.

.....

To devote your life to the good of all and to the happiness of all is religion. Whatever you do for your own sake is not religion.

Swami Vivekananda.

.....

Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark.

Rabindranath Tagore.

.....

Just as the body cannot exist without blood, so the soul needs the matchless and pure strength of faith.

Mahatama Gandhi.

.....

There are three types of faiths:

Faith in yourself – Without faith in yourself, you think, "I cannot do this. This is not for me. I will not find freedom in this life."

Faith in the world – You must have faith in the world or you cannot move an inch. You deposit money in the Bank with the faith that it will be returned. If you doubt everything, nothing will work for you.

Faith in the Divine – Have faith in the Divine and you will evolve.

All these faiths are connected. You must have all three for each to be strong. If you start doubting one, you will begin to doubt everything.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

Mahatama Gandhi.

.....

The essence of all religions is one. Only their approaches are different.

Mahatma Gandhi.

.....

Doubt cannot come where there is a sense of closeness. Doubt needs distance to appear.

You never doubt something that is dear to you.

The moment you doubt something, that is no longer dear to you, a distance has come. You may doubt yourself, but you do not doubt that which is yours. Self-doubt is a lack of closeness to oneself. Belonging, closeness and intimacy are all antidotes for doubt.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Humanism

Words of Comfort

Swallow, swallow, neighbour swallow, Starting on your autumn flight,

Pause a moment at my window, Twitter softly your good-night;

For the summer days are over, All your duties are well done,

And the happy homes you builded, Have grown so empty, one by one.

Swallow, swallow, neighbour swallow, Are you ready for your flight?

Are all the feather cloaks completed? Are the little caps all right?

Are the young wings strong and steady, for your journey through the sky?

Come again in early spring-time; And till then, good-bye, good-bye!

Louisa May Alcott.

Islam

This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off evil.
Qur'an 2. 2.

O Lord!
If I worship You from fear of Hell, cast me into Hell.
If I worship You from desire for Paradise, deny me Paradise
but if I worship You for Your own sake,
then withhold not from me Your Eternal Beauty
Rabia al-Adawiyyah d. 801, renowned lady saint of Basra.

The first step to belief is doubt and self questioning.
Al Isfarani- renowned scholar of Islam from Persia.

Whoever would like to know his place with God, let him look at Allah's place with him.
Al Qushayri d. 1074, philosopher from Persia.

Jainism

Namo Arihantânam- *I bow to the Arihantâs (Prophets)*
Namo Siddhânam- *I bow to the Siddhâs (Liberated Souls)*
Namo Âyariyânam- *I bow to the Âchâryas (Preceptors or Spiritual Leaders)*
Namo Uvajjhâyâ nam- *I bow to the Upadhyâya (The spiritual Teachers)*
Namo Loe Savva Saahûnam- *I bow to all the Sadhûs (Saints)*

Eso Panch Namô karo, Savva Poava panaasano
Manglaanam Cha Savvesim, Padhamam Havai Mangalam
This fivefold mantra destroys all sins and obstacles and of all auspicious mantras, is the first and foremost. Navakâr Mantra.

Ahimsa Parmo Dharam
Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of the man.
Mohandas Gandhi.

Judaism

Where could I go from Your spirit,
or where could I flee from Your presence?
If I climb to heaven, You are there,
there too, if I lie in the depths.

Psalm 139, vv. 7-8, The Hebrew Bible.

Do not reject me in old age;
when my strength is feeble,
do not abandon me.

Psalm 71, v. 9, The Hebrew Bible.

Into Your hand I place my soul,
Asleep, awake, for You are near,
And with my soul, my body too:
You are my God, I shall not fear.
Adon Olam, traditional Siddur (daily prayer book).

At dawn I seek You out, my fortress and my rock,
set my prayer before You dawn and dusk.

In the presence of Your glory I stand and am afraid;
Your eye can see each thought inside my heart.

What is it that the heart and what the tongue
can do? Of what force is my spirit within?

And yet the song of man finds favour; therefore
I shall praise You while the breath of God is mine.
Shlomo Ibn Gabirol; mediaeval Hebrew poet.

Paganism

And I also saw, really for the first time, that I would always be a person who debates these choices, who revels in the many layers of reality, who loves the way that almost every verity has many opposing truths, how the oddest oppositions can be synthesized and connected in new ways. And I understood that these differences are good, not something to get beyond, to overcome, to dissolve, to mend, in some battle to gain the one truth, the one religion, the one political system. That in fact one of the great tasks is to help human beings feel comfortable in the complex and glorious chaos of this world, to help promote choices that aid potential, that promote autonomy, freedom, and cooperation, that allow people to feel whole despite doubt, to act fully and freely despite the uncertainty of being alive in this world.

Margot Adler (1997).



Change and Birth



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Fade, tender lily,
Fade, O crimson rose,
Fade every flower,
Sweetest flower that blows.

Go, chilly autumn,
Come, O winter cold;
Let the green stalks die away
Into common mould.

Birth follows hard on death,
Life on withering;
Hasten, we will come the sooner
Back to pleasant spring.
Christina Rossetti, Selected poems.

I was not aware of the moment when I first
crossed the threshold of this life. What was the
power that made me open out into this vast
mystery like a bud in the forest at midnight!
When in the morning I looked upon the light I
felt in a moment that I was no stranger in this
world, that the inscrutable without name and
form had taken me in its arms in the form of
my own mother. Even so, in death, the same
unknown will appear as ever known to me.
Rabindranath Tagore.

.....

What the caterpillar perceives is the end, to the
butterfly is just the beginning.
Anon.

.....

Lord Jesus as you promised,
You are always by my side;
So let me place my hand in thine,
And speak thy name with pride.
Let me in my daily life.
In all I say and do;
Let other people see the joy,
Of walking, Lord, with you.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

Baha'i Faith

This phenomenal world will not remain in an
unchanging condition even for a short while.
Second after second it undergoes change and
transformation. Every foundation will finally
become collapsed; every glory and splendor will
at last vanish and disappear, but the Kingdom
of God is eternal and the heavenly sovereignty
and majesty will stand firm, everlasting. Hence
in the estimation of a wise man the mat in the
Kingdom of God is preferable to the throne of
the government of the world.
Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 79).



Believing - Not - Belonging

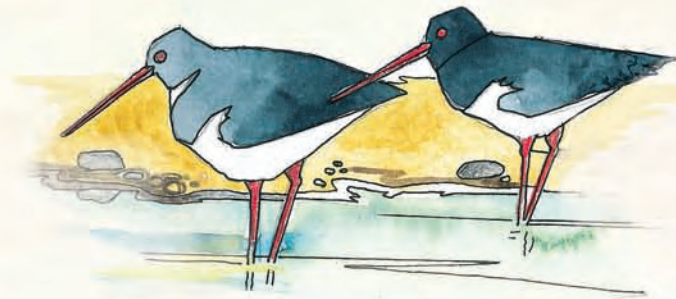
Give us the serenity to accept what cannot be changed.
Give us the courage to change what should be changed.
Give us the wisdom to distinguish one from the other.
Reinhold Niebuhr.

.....

Otter

In a furrow of bubbles once
he became
the ever-flowing curve of a thing
that can never be still
from the first stirrings of pink
when morning lies in the window of the east
like a new-caught salmon he's off –
sewn out of rivers and hills, a bend of grace –
his nose telling ten thousand things,
everything listening inside, eager
to be under and over and through
this element he can never let go –
born out of water,
water made otter.
Kenneth Steven.

Birth is the death of the life
we have known;
death the birth of the life
we have yet to live.
Marion Woodman.



Brahma Kumaris

Change

One thing about change is that it is inevitable; it is part of life.
We are subject to external and inner changes at all times and we have the choice between reacting and responding to it.
Change of circumstances occur when we least expect it, it is sudden and because we haven't been prepared for it, we may find it difficult to accept change.
However in our world, people, situations, times, and the elements are constantly moving. Things cannot remain as they were. Right now and at every moment change is happening within our human consciousness, within our bodies and our environment.
In order to be more comfortable with change, I need to be more flexible and accommodating; more detached and more loving.
External change happens against my conscious wish most of the time but it happens for good. Instead of resisting it, let me see the untold benefits that it can bring in my life, let me appreciate the fact that nothing lasts for ever, and that energy continues to flow. Let me ask myself: "Can I embrace change?"
"When I change, the world changes". In other words: instead of being the slave of change I become its master! I become the ambassador of change for the world.
Myriam Cotret.

Birth

Many people in today's world have lost touch with the meaning of life.
They have lost their way.

They do not even know that their life has meaning, or purpose. What is the purpose of life? What is the purpose of my life? Not many people take the time to sit and ask themselves such questions nowadays. If they did, they would find answers....answers which would guide them to their highest potential. They would find their purpose.

Many people are content to just look around, watch the world and live out their lives. Some parents even give birth to their children without being able to explain to them the purpose of their existence and why they are here.

Nowadays, even the education they give in school does not generally help children understand their purpose.

Purpose is a subject rarely discussed, even though the demands of today's world make it vital that we be guided by such clarity of intention.

All of the worry and fear on this planet is due to people not realizing their purpose....

Let us think about 'thought' as a seed giving birth to pure and elevated feelings.... influencing our attitude and perceptions of myself, others and life in general.

If everyone were to address this, then their highest destiny, indeed the highest destiny of humankind, could be fulfilled.

Dadi Janki.

Buddhism

'All conditioned things are impermanent'
*p. 94, v. 277, A Dhammapada for Contemplation,
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo (2006).*

.....

We always forget about change – this is why most people are so restless and why we try to find something to help us settle down.

Dainan Katagiri, Soto Zen tradition.

.....

We don't see the connection between our misery and our complaints.

Charlotte Joko Beck, Soto Zen Tradition.

No concepts about the nature of life and death will bring liberation. This leaves only the one thing we have had all along- the un-mediated life and death of this moment....one must trust oneself utterly to this moment... in accepting life this way, we let go of everything that we think and believe, love and hate....This is not simply to put the thought of death out of our minds; it is going into the heart of what we fear death to be- the end of all we hold on to. When you stop holding on, even now while still alive, you know that all is well.... we offer (our holding on) to the infinity of this moment.

Sitting Buddha, p. 74, Soto Zen Tradition.



Christianity

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

Matthew Ch. 3, vv. 1- 2, New Testament, The Bible

O Thou, from whom to be turned is to fall, to whom to turn is to rise, and in whom to stand is to abide for ever: Grant us in all our duties thy help.

in all our perplexities thy guidance,
in all our dangers thy protection,
and in all our sorrows thy peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord
A Prayer of the 4th century Saint, Augustine of Hippo.

Hinduism

Jab Tu Aaya Jagat Mein, Log Hanse Tu Roye
Aise Karni Na Kari, Pache Hanse Sab Koye

*Meaning: When you were born in this world, everyone laughed while you cried
Conduct NOT yourself in manner such, that they laugh when you are gone.
Sant Kabir.*

.....
We must become the change we want to see.
Mahatma Gandhi.

.....
In always wanting to be comfortable you become lazy. In always wanting perfection, you become angry. In always wanting to be rich you become greedy -Vivek is knowing that everything is changing. Time and again you have to awaken to this.
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Humanism

The Almond Tree

All the way to the hospital, the lights were green as peppermints. Trees of black iron broke into leaf ahead of me, as if I were the lucky prince in an enchanted wood, summoning summer with my whistle, banishing winter with a nod.

Swung by the road from bend to bend, I was aware that blood was running down through the delta of my wrist and under arches of bright bone. Centuries, continents it had crossed; from an undisclosed beginning spiralling to an unmapped end.

Crossing Magdalen Bridge, let it be a son, a son, said the man in the driving mirror, let it be a son. The tower held up its hand: the college bells shook their blessings on his head. I parked in an almond's shadow blossom, for the tree was waving, waving at me upstairs with a child's hands.

Up the spiral stair and at the top along a bone-white corridor the blood tide swung me, swung me to a room whose walls shuddered with the shuddering womb. Under the sheet wave after wave, wave after wave beat on the bone coast, bringing ashore - whom? New- minted, my bright farthing! Coined by our love, stamped with our images, how you enrich us! Both you make one. Welcome to your white sheet, my best poem.

At seven-thirty, the visitors' bell scissored the calm of the corridors. The doctor walked with me to the slicing doors. His hand is upon my arm, his voice - I have to tell you - set another bell beating in my head: your son has Down's Syndrome, the doctor said. How easily the words went in - clean as a bullet, leaving no mark on the skin, stopping the heart within it. This was my first death. The 'I' ascending on a slow last thermal breath studied the man below as a pilot treading air might the buckled shell of his plane - boot, glove and helmet feeling no pain from the snapped wires' radiant ends.

Looking down from a thousand feet, I held four walls in the lens of an eye; wall, window, the street, a torrent of windscreens, my own car under its almond tree, and the almond waving me down. I wrestled against gravity, but light was melting and the gulf cracked open. Unfamiliar the body of my late self I carried to the car.

The hospital - its heavy freight lashed down ship-shape ward over ward - steamed into night with some on board soon to be lost if the desperate charts were known. Others would come altered to land or find the land altered. At their voyage's end some would be added to, some diminished. In a numbered cot my son sailed from me; never to come ashore into my kingdom speaking my language. Better not look that way. The almond tree was beautiful in labour. Blood- dark, quickening, bud after budsplitted, flower after flower shook free.

On the darkening wind a pale face floated. Out of reach. Only when the buds, all the buds were broken would the tree be in full sail. In labour the tree was becoming itself. I too, rooted in earth and ringed by darkness, from the death of myself saw myself blossoming, wrenched from the caul of my thirty years' growing, fathered by my son, unkindly in a kind season by love shattered and set free.

Jon Stallworthy.

Islam

So Many Different Lengths of Time

Cuanto vive el hombre por fin? Vive mil dias o uno solo? Una Semena o varios siglos? Por cuanto tiempo muere el hombre? Que quiere decir "para siempre"? Pablo Neruda.

How long does a wo(man) live finally ? Is it a thousand days or only one ? Is it a week or a few centuries ? How long does a wo(man) spend living or dying and what do we mean when we say gone forever ?

Lost in such preoccupations, we seek clarification. We can go to the philosophers but they will weary of our questions. We can go to the priests and rabbis, too busy with ministrations.

So, how long does a wo(man) live after all ? And how much does s/he live while s/he lives ? We fret and ask so many questions - then when it comes to us, the answer is so simple after all. A wo(man) lives for as long as we carry her/him inside us, for as long as we carry the harvest of her/his dreams, for as long as we ourselves live, holding memories.

Her/his lover will carry her /his scent, their touch: children will carry the weight of her/his love. One friend will carry her/his arguments; another will hum her/his favourite tunes; another will share her/his terrors and fears.

And the days will pass with baffled faces, then the weeks, then the months, then there will be a day when no question is asked and knots of grief will loosen in the stomach and tear swollen faces will calm.

And on that day, name will not have ceased; s/he will simply cease to be separated from us by death.

So how long does a wo(man) live finally ? A wo(man) lives so many different lengths of time.
Brian Patten.

Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls).

Qur'an 13. 11.

Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us. Our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us Forgiveness. Have mercy on us.

Qur'an 2. 286.

Oh people! Judge yourselves before you are judged and take account of your actions before you are asked to submit your account for them.

Ali Ali Ibn AbiTalib, son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon Him.

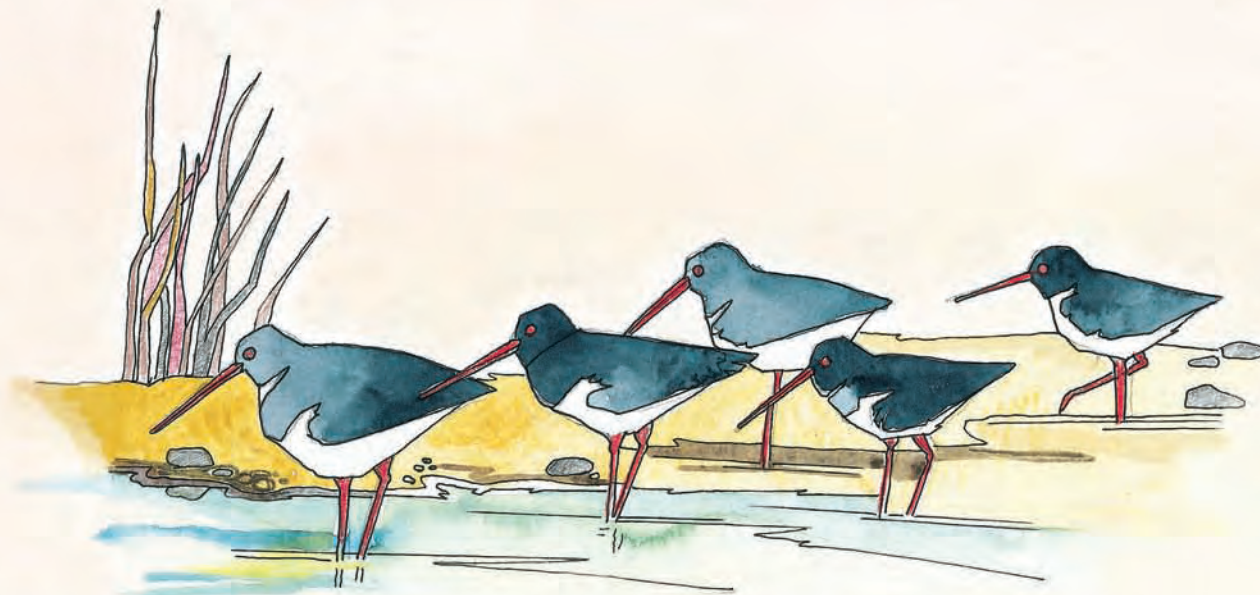
The World is three days: As for yesterday, it has vanished, along with all that was in it. As for tomorrow, you may never see it. As for today, it is yours, so work in it.

Hassan al-Basri d. 728, renowned saint and scholar of Iraq.

No one attains true freedom as long as he remains under the influence of the slightest portion of his ego.

Abu Madyan d. 1198, scholar and poet of Islam from North Africa.





Jainism

The soul transmigrates from one life to the other and in four gatis, human, animal, hellish, heavenly, and is full of pain and miseries. The Soul must achieve ultimate freedom from it, which is Moksha."

Sansar Bhavana (The Worldly existence).

Oh Lord Siddhas! You are purer than the Moon, brighter than the Sun, calm like a great ocean, do confer upon me the Blessed Emancipation (Liberation).

Logassa or Jin Prayer.

Judaism

The world is new to us every morning – this is God's gift; and every man should believe he is reborn every day.

Baal Shem Tov.

Prayer of a mother upon a healthy birth:

May it be Your will, Lord my God and God of my ancestors, King of mercy, who acts with grace and compassion, that just as You saved me from the profound strains of childbirth and from its great dangers, so may Your compassion be stirred to save all women from such dangers, all daughters of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel, our beloved seed. And just as You have saved me this time, so may You show me the same sign of your favour each time I give birth. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, God, my Rock and Redeemer.

Source unknown.

Paganism

Everything flows and nothing remains still
Empedocles, (c. 490 – c. 430 BCE).

.....

Is one afraid of change? Why, what can take place without change? And what is nearer and dearer to universal nature? Can you yourself take a hot bath unless the firewood suffers change? Can you be fed unless your food suffers change? And do you not see, then, that change in yourself is of a similar nature, and similarly necessary to universal nature?
Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, VII. 18.

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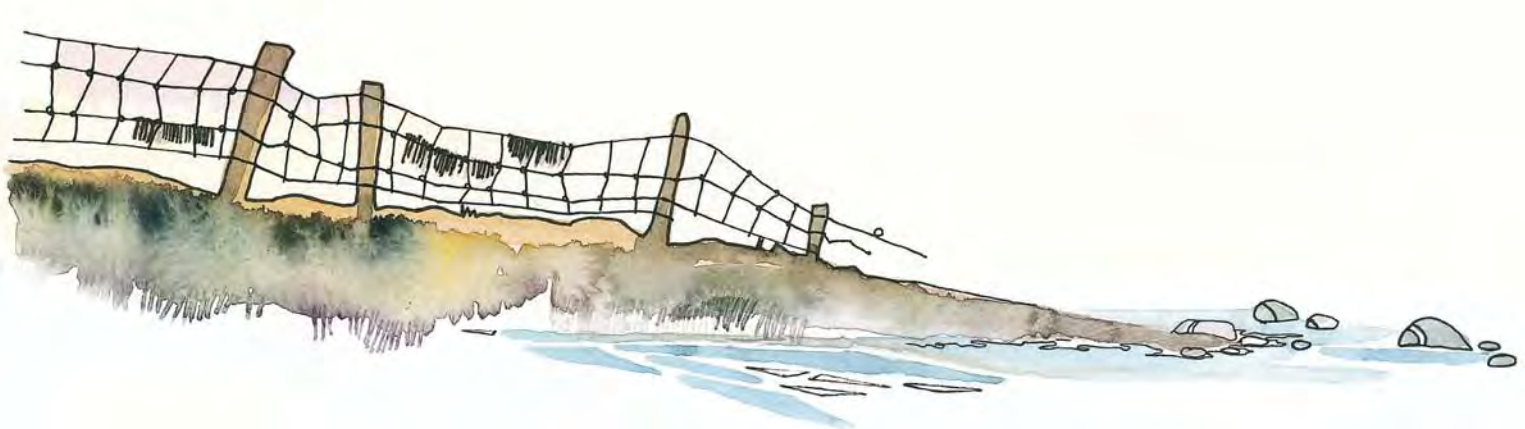
There is a stream of things entering into being, and time is a raging torrent; for no sooner does each thing enter our sight than it has been swept away, and another is passing in its place, and that too will be swept away.
Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, IV. 43.

.....

The universe is a fluid, ever-changing energy pattern, not a collection of fixed and separate things. What affects one thing affects, in some way, all things. All is interwoven into the continuous fabric of being. Its warp and weft are energy,...
Miriam Simos (1979).

.....

In the beginning, the Goddess is the All, virgin, meaning complete within Herself. Although She is called Goddess, She could just as easily be called God – sex has not yet come into being. As yet there is no separation, no division, nothing but the primal unity. Yet the femle nature of the ground is stressed – because the process of creation that is about to occur is a birth process. The world is born, not made and not commanded into being.
Miriam Simos (1979).



Sikh Dharam

The birth of a child is a happy occasion for all families throughout the world. The birth of a new life brings love, joy and happiness. But in the Sikh Dharam (Faith) the birth of a child is particularly revered as a soul has been born into a mortal body. This is the opportunity for the soul to become one with the Lord. The soul has been sent into this world to perform good deeds and meditate on the Lord. Guru Arjan Dev ji states:

Sireeraag mehalaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Pehilai peharai rain kai vanajaariaa mithraa dhhar paaeithaa oudharai maahi

In the first watch of the night, O my merchant friend, the Lord placed your soul in the womb

Dhasee maasee maanas keeaa vanajaariaa mithraa kar muhalath karam kamahi

In the tenth month, you were made into a human being, O my merchant friend, and you were given your allotted time to perform good deeds.

Muhalath kar dheenee karam kamaanae jaisaa likhath dhhur paaeiaa

You were given this time to perform good deeds, according to your pre-ordained destiny.

Maath pithaa bhaaee suth banithaa thin bheethar prabhoo sa(n)joeiaa

God placed you with your mother, father, brothers, sons and wife.

Karam sukaram karaaeae aapae eis ja(n)thai vas kishh naahi

God Himself is the Cause of causes, good and bad-no one has control over these things.

Kahu naanak praanee pehilai peharai dhhar paaeithaa oudharai maahi

Says Nanak, O mortal, in the first watch of the night, the soul is placed in the womb.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 77

.....

Basanth kee Vaar Mehala 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru):

Ik oa(n)kaar satgur prasaadh

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

Har kaa naam dhhiaae kai hohu hariaa bhaaee

Meditate on the Lord's Name, and blossom forth in green abundance.

Karam likha(n)thai paaeeai eih ruth suhaaee

By your high destiny, you have been blessed with this wondrous spring of the soul.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 1193



Anxiety



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow –
only today of its strength.
Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

.....

Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no-one can fathom.

He gives strength to the weary,
and increases the power of the weak.
Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall:
but those who hope in the Lord, will renew their
strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.
Isaiah Ch. 40, vv. 28-31, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

Although today he prunes my twigs with pain,
Yet doth his blood warm and nourish my root;
Tomorrow I shall put forth buds again,
And clothe myself with fruit.
Christina Rossetti.

.....

Dear Lord I pray to you today,
For those with troubled mind.
Support them Lord and help them,
Let them your true peace find.
Let thy calm descend on them ,
Protect them from distress;
O Lord in thy great mercy,
I ask that you bless them.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God. He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things were made; without
him nothing was made that has been made.
In him was life, and that life was the light of all
people. The light shines in the darkness, and the
darkness has not overcome it.
John Ch. 1, vv. 1-5. New Testament, The Bible

Baha’i Faith

O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my
heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in
Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I
will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be
a happy and joyful being. O God! I will no longer
be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me.
I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life.
O God! Thou art more friend to me than I am to
myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá (Baha’i Prayers, p. 150).

.....

Son of Man!
Thou art My dominion and My dominion
perisheth not; wherefore fearest thou thy
perishing? Thou art My light and My light shall
never be extinguished; why dost thou dread
extinction? Thou art My glory and My glory
fadeth not; thou art My robe and My robe shall
never be outworn. Abide then in thy love for Me,
that thou mayest find Me in the realm of glory.
Baha’u’llah, (The Arabic Hidden Words).

Believing - Not - Belonging

May He support us all the day long
till the shades lengthen, and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over and our work is done!
Then in His mercy may he grant us a safe lodging,
and a holy rest, and peace at the last.
John Henry Newman.

Do Not Fret the Future

Imagine
Watching sombre over universal stars,
Releasing
Spinning suns and
Scattering like seeds the
Solar systems:
Particle waves
With sunspots bursting just in time,
And comets
Curving nether regions of the heavens
That, like graceful dressed up
Snowball ballerinas,
Must dance in perfect step
Across the velvet backdrop sky.
Imagine
Painting perfect sunsets red
And navigating whales beneath the dusky sea
And caring fathom deep for lamprey eels
Hiding hungrily beneath slow dancing seaweed.
And further still
Beneath the ocean floor:
Imagine feeling
Imprisoned pressure building,
Volcanic upset:
Tectonic strain
Too soon
To be enduring
Earth splitting shocks
And shuddering pain.

Fear not the future.
Do not fret the past.
The present is a world of wonder
The present is the future past.

The future is the present unbecoming
It is everything we want to last.
Do not worry about tomorrow
And your fears imagined will flee fast.
Xavier Wynn-Williams.



Brahma Kumaris

Thoughts are like seeds - as are my thoughts, so will be my feelings. Negative thoughts, such as fear and sorrow, create a state of anxiety and loss that prevents you from filling yourself with the love from God.

When the mind is kept free from tension and worry, sleep comes naturally. If you can't sleep, there will still be such peace and calm that you feel refreshed.

Learn to be your own spiritual doctor. When the body is sick, learn how to let the mind simply remain in the remembrance of God. Whatever the nature of the illness - heart problems, cancer or simply intense pain - it is in stillness that you can connect with God.

Filling yourself with the love and light from God restores happiness and confidence.
Dadi Janki: Companion of God.

Buddhism

Just as a fletcher shapes an arrow,
so the wise develop the mind,
so excitable, uncertain
and difficult to control.

The active mind is difficult to tame,
flighty and wandering wherever it will;
taming it is essential,
leading to the joy of well-being.
*p. 17, verses 33 & 35, A Dhammapada for
Contemplation,
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo (2006).*

Christianity

God is our refuge and strength, a very present
help in trouble.
Psalms 46 v. 1, The Hebrew Bible.

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven:
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given.
Frederick William.

Come down, O Love Divine,
Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.
*From an ancient hymn praying for the
transforming power of the Holy Spirit of God.*

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest
thou? She saith unto them, Because they have
taken away my Lord, and I know not where they
have laid him.
John Ch. 20 v. 13, New Testament, The Bible.

O God, are you there?
Please listen to me.
I am so anxious and muddled; please help me to
think clearly.

So many questions for me to answer,
Please help me answer them
So many questions I need answered.

God, if you are here,
Please help me hear what I need to know.
Please look after me, those I love,
And those I do not know, helping here in
hospital.
Please make us all better. Amen
*Prayer written in a hospital waiting area from
prayers left in the Sanctuary.*

Dear God, be good to me;
The sea is so wide,
And my boat is so small.
*Known as the Breton fisherman's prayer, this is
often mentioned by people not in church (for
example, 'what was that prayer about a little
boat?'). It can help anyone involved in the huge
spaces of a modern hospital – to some-one in a
chair or on a trolley waiting for help and feeling
very small and lost. Also for a new member of
staff or of a team – or just a person sitting at a
desk surrounded by 'busy-ness'*

Almighty and everlasting God
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all that are penitent,
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we may be truly sorry for our sins
and obtain from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
*Anglican prayer of confession. Self-dislike is often
expressed in anxiety.*



Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
Matthew Ch. 11, vv. 28-30, New Testament, The Bible.

Hinduism

Chintaa Aisee Daakini, Kat Kalejaa Khaye
Vaid Bichara Kya Kare, Kahan Tak Dawa Lagaye.

Meaning: "Worry is the bandit that eats into one's heart.
If worry continues, what can the doctor do? How long can he keep applying the medicine"?
Sant Kabir.

.....

If you think about disaster, you will get it. Brood about death and you hasten your demise. Think positively and masterfully, with confidence and faith, and life becomes more secure, more fraught with action, richer in achievement and experience.
Swami Vivekananda.



Humanism

Don't Be Fooled

Don't be fooled by the face I wear for I wear a mask. I wear a thousand masks - masks that I'm afraid to take off for none of them are me. Pretending is an art that's second nature with me but don't be fooled, for pity's sake, don't be fooled. I give you the impression that I'm secure, that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without, that confidence is my name and coolness my game, that the water's calm and I'm in command, and that I need no one. But don't believe me. Please!

My surface may be smooth but my surface is my mask, my ever-varying and ever-concealing mask. Beneath lies no smugness, no complacency. Beneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear, in aloneness. But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it. I panic at the thought of my weaknesses and fear exposing them. That's why I frantically create my masks to hide behind. They're nonchalant, sophisticated facades to help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that knows. But such a glance is precisely my salvation, my only salvation, and I know it.

That is, if it's followed by acceptance and if it's followed by love, it's the only thing that can liberate me from myself, from my own self-built prison walls. I dislike hiding, honestly. I dislike the superficial game I'm playing, the superficial phony game. I'd really like to be genuine and me. But I need your help, your hand to hold

even though my masks would tell you otherwise. That glance from you is the only thing that assures me of what I can't assure myself, that I'm really worth something.

But I don't tell you this. I don't dare. I'm afraid to. I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh and your laugh would kill me. I'm afraid that deep-down I'm nothing, that I'm just no good and that you will see this and reject me. So I play my game, my desperate, pretending game with a facade of assurance without and a trembling child within. So begins the parade of masks, the glittering but empty parade of masks, and my life becomes a front. I idly chatter to you in suave tones of surface talk. I tell you everything that's nothing and nothing of what's everything, of what's crying within me. So when I'm going through my routine, do not be fooled by what I'm saying. Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying. Hear what I'd like to say but what I cannot say. It will not be easy for you, long felt inadequacies make my defences strong. The nearer you approach me the blinder I may strike back. Despite what books say of men, I am irrational; I fight against the very thing that I cry out for. You wonder who I am, but you shouldn't for I am everyman and everywoman who wears a mask. Don't be fooled by me. At least not by the face I wear.
Anon.

Islam

O My servants who have been prodigal to their own hurt! Despair not of the mercy of God, Who forgives all sins. Lo! He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

Qur'an 39. 53.

Ease and hardship are the feathers that give strength to the wings of your faith so that your heart and your innermost being can use them to fly to the door of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani d. 1166 , renowned scholar and saint of Persia.

Let Go of Your Worries Let go of your worries and be completely clear-hearted, like the face of a mirror that contains no images. If you want a clear mirror, behold yourself and see the shameless truth, which the mirror reflects. If metal can be polished to a mirror-like finish, what polishing might the mirror of the heart require? Between the mirror and the heart is this single difference: the heart conceals secrets, while the mirror does not.

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi d. 1273, poet and scholar buried in Turkey.

How long will you keep pounding on an open door
Begging for someone to open it?

Rabia al-Adawiyyah, renowned lady saint of Basra d. 801.

Jainism

There is no fear for a person with the right perception.

The Teachings of Lord Mahavir.

Hae Dada Bhagwan! Mane jagat kalian karvaanu nimit banvaani param shakti aapo, shakti aapo, shakti aapo.

Dearest Dada Bhagwan! Give me the infinite inner strength to become an instrument for the world in the path of self-realisation.

Jain Dikshavakyas, Nine Kalams.



Judaism

To wake up in hospital early in the morning
To the prospect of a pointless day, and feel
Set in the flesh of your heart
The teeth of despair gnaw and pierce,
Through the eye of the minutes with weary hand
To feed the rotten thread of life
Over and over again,
What do the healthy know of such an hour?

In the hospital now the day grows dark,
Already night rules;
Softly in its wake descend
Reconcilement and peace.
The doctor's footsteps are heard in the hall,
Gently the comforting hand
Touches yours,
What do the healthy know of such an hour?
*Rachel the Poetess (Rachel Bluwstein Sela),
modern Hebrew poet.*

.....

The whole world is a very narrow bridge, but the
most important thing is to have no fear at all.
Rebbe Nachman of Breslov.

Vidu - A Confession to reduce anxiety for someone gravely ill:

My God and God of my ancestors, accept my prayer; do not ignore my supplication. Forgive me for all the sins which I have committed in my lifetime. I am abashed and ashamed of the wicked deeds and sins which I committed. Please accept my pain and suffering as atonement and forgive my wrong-doing, for against You alone have I sinned.

May it be your will, Eternal my God and God of my ancestors, that I sin no more. With Your great mercy cleanse me of my sins, but not through suffering and disease. Send a perfect healing to me and to all who are stricken.

Unto You, Eternal, my God and God of my ancestors, I acknowledge that my life and recovery depend upon You. May it be Your will to heal me. Yet if You have decreed that I shall die of this affliction, may my death atone for all sins and transgressions which I have committed before You. Shelter me in the shadow of Your wings; grant me a share in the world to come.

Father of orphans and Guardian of widows, protect my beloved family, with whose soul my own soul is bound.

Into Your hand I commit my soul. You have redeemed me, Eternal, God of truth.
Hear O Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is one.
The Eternal, He is God. The Eternal, He is God.
The traditional Siddur (prayer book).



Paganism

Misfortunes must be cured by a sense of gratitude for what has been and the knowledge that what is past cannot be undone.

Epicurus (341 – 270 BCE) Vatican Collection 55.

.....

You may leave this life at any moment: have this possibility in your mind in all that you do or say or think. Now departure from the world of men is nothing to fear, if gods exist: because they would not involve you in any harm. If they do not exist, or if they have no care for humankind, then what is life to me in a world devoid of gods, or devoid of providence? But they do exist, and they do care for humankind: and they have put it absolutely in man's power to avoid falling into the true kinds of harm. If there were anything harmful in the rest of experience, they would have provided for that too, to make it in everyone's power to avoid falling into it;..

Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, II. 11.

.....

Truly no mark is set for the death of men,
Nor when we shall close the quiet day, the Sun's child,
With unfaltering joy.

Many are the streams that come to men,
Now with the heart's delight, and now with sorrow.

Pindar (518 – 438 BCE) Olympian Ode II. 31-34.

.....

Birth, growth, sexuality, fecundity, creativity, death, decay, vitality, beginnings, endings, joy, sadness and other mundane, everyday, ordinary affairs are found to be meaningful and sacred.

Graham Harvey (1997).

.....

Three ways to ensure a good life:

Accept that you will die,

Be always ready to die,

Celebrate equally the living and dying.

Emma Restall Orr (2007).



Sikh Dharam

We become very weak and unsettled when something unexpected happens, but we must be strong and accept God's way.

Salok Mahalla Nauvah (Composed by Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the 9th Guru)

Chi(n)thaa thaa kee keejeeai jo anehonee hoe

People become anxious, when something unexpected happens.

Eihu maarag sa(n)saar ko Nanak thir nehee koe

This is the way of the world, O Nanak; nothing is stable or permanent.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 1429

.....

Todee Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Satgur aa-i-o saran tuhaaree.

O True Guru, I have come to Your Sanctuary.

Milai sookh naam har sobhaa chintaa laahi hamaaree. ||1|| rahaa-o.

Grant me the peace and glory of the Lord's Name, and remove my anxiety.

Avar na soojhai doojee thaahar haar pari-o ta-o du-aaree.

I cannot see any other place of shelter; I have grown weary, and collapsed at Your door.

Laykhaa chhod alaykhai chhootah ham nirgun layho ubaaree.

Please ignore my account; only then may I be saved. I am worthless - please, save me!

Sad bakhsind sadaa miharvaanaa sabhnaa day-ay aDhaaree.

You are always forgiving, and always merciful; You give support to all.

Nanak daas sant paachhai pari-o raakh layho ih baaree.

Slave Nanak follows the Path of the Saints; save him, O Lord, this time.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 713



Waiting, Patience, Acceptance



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Now is winter and now is sorrow,
No roses but only thorns today;
Thorns will put on roses tomorrow,
Winter and sorrow scudding away.
No more winter and no more sorrow,
Tomorrow.

Christina Rossetti.

.....

The fig tree has no buds,
The vines bear no harvest,
The olive crop fails,
The orchards yield no food,
The fold is bereft of its flock,
And there are no cattle in the stalls.
Even so, I shall exult in the Lord,
And rejoice in the God who saves me.
Habbakuk Ch. 3, vv. 17-18, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

I know dear Lord throughout this day
That from thy path I've strayed;
This mornings good intentions
I seem to have mislaid.
Give me the strength in days to come
To try to make amend;
And welcome you into my heart,
My saviour Lord and friend.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

I salute this gallant old lady
As I might a Roman heroine.

Protected by her Shakespeare
And her lovely classics
And her memories of a girls' school
She faces age with style.

She switches on the light
In a lonely house.
Daily through the window
She watches the leaves fall.

And she has a quotation from Shakespeare
With which to encounter death.

She will wear her quotation like a cloak
When he knocks at the door
And stands on the threshold
With, behind him, the moon.

A cup of coffee, she asks him
In her cool controlled voice,
You must be quite cold.

Is it as you like it?
She says, remembering the wind
Which blows through the leaves
Of that Shakespeare play.

And she shivers a little
But retains her dignity
To the very end.

Sitting quite upright
As the scythe shaped moon
Shines over the pale wood.
*Iain Crichton Smith, Old Lady in A Country for
Old Men, and My Canadian Uncle.*



A noiseless, patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launched forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you, O my soul, where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,
seeking the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.
Walt Whitman.

.....

Let this time be. Let the present stay. Do not
Look back. Do not look forward. Let thought
Idle from dream into daylight, and watch, then, the coast
Climb out to dark, to grey, and then to chalk- white
Cliffs till the grey sea goes blue
And then indeed you
Are found and safe at last.
Extract from E. Jennings, The Way of Words and Language, Collected Poems.





Baha'i Faith

We must not only be patient with others, infinitely patient!, but also with our own poor selves, remembering that even the Prophets of God sometimes got tired and cried out in despair!

Shoghi Effendi, (The Unfolding Destiny of the British Baha'i Community, p. 456).

O ye Cohorts of God! In the moment of catastrophe, find ye patience, resignation and submission.

Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v. 1, p. 44.)

Be patient under all conditions, and place your whole trust and confidence in God.

Baha'u'llah,
Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 296.

Blessed are the steadfastly enduring, they that are patient under ills and hardships, who lament not over anything that befallerth them, and who tread the path of resignation....

Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 129.

"The confirmations of the Spirit are all those powers and gifts which some are born with (and which men sometimes call genius), but for which others have to strive with infinite pains. They come to that man or woman who accepts his life with radiant acquiescence."

Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 120.

O Lord! Unto Thee I repair for refuge, and toward all Thy signs I set my heart.

Lord! Whether traveling or at home, and in my occupation or in my work, I place my whole trust in Thee.

Grant me then Thy sufficing help so as to make me independent of all things, O Thou Who art unsurpassed in Thy mercy!

Bestow upon me my portion, O Lord, as Thou pleasest, and cause me to be satisfied with whatsoever thou hast ordained for me.

Thine is the absolute authority to command.
The Báb (Baha'i Prayers, p. 55).

Believing - Not - Belonging

November

In winter we go whole days without seeing light –
The trees condemned, heads bowed and bare.

Except for the odd pale yellow window,
Sky and hills and woods are one, grey and dead.

Hard to believe there will be daffodils,
That green things will happen again.

At night houses shine out in cries across fields of floodwater,
The cold of wet and wind like the cut of a spade in a bare hand.

We pull our hope and dreams behind us on sledges
Into the sheer hope of light, the one clenched promise of the spring.
Kenneth Steven.

Brahma Kumaris

Patience

As you go along the path of life you sometimes run through rough spots, you slip and you find yourself having wrong thoughts or words.

Patience makes you cool and calm. It makes the journey possible. Patience teaches you to pace yourself. Where there is patience there is peace. Where there is peace there is love.

Dadi Janki: Companion of God.

Acceptance

I see a pathway of light, opening up in front of me; it is drawing me upwards silently, into a silent space where I feel the presence of a Being of light. This Being showers waves of peace and love on me and I accept these vibrations of peace and love that reach the deepest corners of my consciousness. I feel healed, I feel whole, I feel loved, I feel accepted. It is OK to be me.

My heart is full of light, love and peace and I send peaceful feelings and good wishes to everyone. As I feel peaceful and accepting towards others, I experience the true nature of love, no questions, no demands, no expectations. I am giving and sharing, radiating warmth, caring and acceptance. My loving acceptance reaches others who are searching for peace and relief from suffering. I come back from this silence space but I continue to experience feelings of calmness, silence, peace and well-being.

Moving on, Pathways to personal growth, Margaret Pinkerton.

Waiting

Silence, perfect silence

This thought disturbs my silence
These words disrupt my silence
Each step perturbs my silence
All acts invade my silence
I yearn to be still

In a crowd
Lost in the folds of a sea of life
Amongst the ones I hold
Each instance breaks my silence
My one true love is silence

In the silence I meet God
I rise, I rise
I pass the clouds
I pass the sky
I reach without reaching

In the silence I can hear
Nothing of the world
But everything of existence

In the silence I am a cat
A stick, a tree, a fish, a bat
A stone, a fleck, a dune - I am
A universe vast untold - I am
Still and eternal
Silence, come my love!
Amber M.H., friend of the Brahma Kumaris.

Buddhism

Having empathy for others
one sees that all beings
love life and fear death. Knowing this,
one does not attack or cause attack.
*p. 47, v. 130, A Dhammapada for Contemplation,
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo (2006).*

.....

The more we are able to sit still, the more we are
able to learn because we no longer need to avoid
or fear suffering. This kind of freedom comes
gradually as we train.
Sitting Buddha, p.48, Soto Zen Tradition.

.....

Let go of the past.
Let go of the future.
Let go of the present.
With a heart that is free
cross over to that shore
which is beyond suffering.
*p 118, v. 348, A Dhammapada for Contemplation,
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo (2006)*

Christianity

Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their
strength, they shall mount up with wings like
eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall
walk and not faint.
Isaiah ch. 40 v. 31, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

My God loves me.
His love will never end.
He rests within my heart
For my God loves me.
Anon.



Holy Father, please do in me,
with me and through me: What You Want.
(This prayer – not published – was said by Pat McCormick before some of the first Christian Service broadcasts in the 1920's. As curate at St Martin-in-the fields in London, he asked everyone involved to remember this prayer in all times of challenge and uncertainty. The first broadcasts were much criticised and felt very risky to all involved. The Prayer as remembered by his daughter now aged 92.)

God, give us (me) the grace to accept with serenity
The things we cannot change,
Courage to change the things we (I) must,
And the wisdom to know the difference.
A prayer to aid decisions by the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Very well known but often not well-remembered. Perhaps a prayer for the screen-saver or the note-book for a tired and busy person.

Hinduism

If thou speakest not I will fill my heart with thy
silence and endure it.
I will keep still and wait like the night with starry
vigil and its head bent low with patience.

The morning will surely come, the darkness will
vanish,
and thy voice pours down in golden streams
breaking through the sky.

Then thy words will take wing in songs from
every one of my birds' nests,
and thy melodies will break forth in flowers in all
my forest groves.
Rabindranath Tagore.

Humanism

In the Morning of Life

In the morning of life, when its cares are unknown,
And its pleasures in all their new lustre begin,
When we live in a bright-beaming world of our own,
And the light that surrounds us is all from within;
Oh 'tis not, believe me, in that happy time
We can love, as in hours of less transport we may;
Of our smiles, of our hopes, 'tis the gay sunny prime,
But affection is truest when these fade away.

Thomas Moore.



Happy the Man

Happy the man and happy he alone, he who can call today his own; He who secure within can say, tomorrow do thy worst for I have lived today. Be fair or foul or rain or shine, the joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine. Not heaven itself upon the past has power, but what has been has been and I have had my hour.

John Dryden.

Islam

O ye who believe! Seek help in steadfastness and prayer. Lo! God is with the steadfast.
Qur'an 2. 153 .

We will surely put you to trial by involving you in fear and hunger and by causing loss of property, life and earnings. And give good tidings to those who remain steadfast in these trials: when a misfortune comes to them, they say, "We are God's and we shall certainly return to Him," Their Lord will bestow great blessings and mercy upon them; such are the people who are rightly guided.
Qur'an 2. 156-157.

If a Muslim is pricked by (as little as) a thorn in this world by the grace of God he will be absolved of some of his sins on the day of Judgment.

Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Sahih Bukhari.

How amazing is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything, and this characteristic is exclusively for him alone. If he experiences something good he is thankful and that is good for him; and if he comes across some diversity, he is patient and that is good for him.

Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Sahih Muslim.

It is impossible to lay hands on that which is not predestined for us and that which is predestined to us will reach us wherever we are.

Shaikh Sadi d. 1283, renowned poet from Persia.

All good things are attainable through patience.

Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani d. 1166, scholar and saint of Persia.

Patience means not to complain to anyone but God, not to let the organs express wrath, sorrow, grief and the like in a forbidden way.

Ibn Qayyim al Jauziyya d. 1350, scholar of Islam from Damascus.

Jainism

Know thyself, recognize thyself, and be immersed by thyself - you will attain Godhood. God is neither the creator nor the destructor of the universe. He is merely a silent observer and omniscient.

Teachings of Lord Mahavir.

The Immortal Song-Equanimity:

May I always be there to show the path

To the pathless wanderers of life.

Yet, if they should not hearken to me,

May I bide in patience.

Shree Chitrabhanu, Author and Poet.

Judaism

A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven:

A time for being born and a time for dying,

A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted;

A time for slaying and a time for healing,

A time for tearing down and a time for building up;

A time for weeping and a time for laughing,

A time for wailing and a time for dancing;

A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones,

A time for embracing and a time for shunning embraces;

A time for seeking and a time for losing,

A time for keeping and a time for discarding;

A time for ripping and a time for sewing,

A time for silence and a time for speaking;

A time for loving and a time for hating,

A time for war and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes Ch. 3, The Hebrew Bible



Paganism

Do not allow the future to trouble your mind; for you will come to it, if come you must, bringing with you the same reason that you now apply to the affairs of the present.

Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, VII. 8.

Sikh Dharam

Aasaa Ghar 7 Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Har kaa naam ridai nit dhi-aa-ee.

Meditate continually on the Name of the Lord within your heart.

Sangee saathee sagal taraa-ee.

Thus you shall save all your companions and associates.

Gur mayrai sang sadaa hai naalay.

My Guru is always with me, near at hand.

Simar simar tis sadaa samhaalay. ||1|| rahaa-o.

Meditating, meditating in remembrance on Him, I cherish Him forever. ||1||Pause||

Tayraa kee-aa meethaa laagai.

Your actions seem so sweet to me.

Har naam padaarath naanak maangai.

Nanak begs for the treasure of the Naam, the Name of the Lord.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 394.

Struggle



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

If sorrow does not carry you
in her womb, if despair does not
feel pain in giving birth to you,
and if love does not bring you
into this world in its cradle of dreams,
your whole life
remains a blank page in the book
of the universe.

Kahlil Gibran, Love Letters in the Sand.

.....

Where are the songs I used to know,
Where are the notes I used to sing?
I have forgotten everything
I used to know so long ago;
Summer has followed after spring;
Now autumn is so shrunk and sere
I scarcely think a sadder thing
Can be the winter of my year.

Yet Robin sings through Winter's rest,
When bushes put their berries on;
While their ruddy jewels don,
He sings out of a ruddy breast;
The hips and haws and ruddy breast
Make one spot warm where snowflakes lie;
They break and cheer the unlovely rest
Of Winter's pause – and why not I?
Christina Rossetti, Selected Poems.

.....

An old indigenous North American Indian chief
was his telling grandson about a traumatic
incident in the past which had impacted upon his
wellbeing and that of his people.
He said to the boy, "It feels as if there are two
wolves inside me fighting; one is angry, vengeful
and full of hate and the other is more gentle,
compassionate and forgiving."
"Which one is going to win Grandpa?" came the
reply.
"Ah," said his grandfather, "the one that I feed
the most."
Indigenous North American, Anon.

We sat up late, talking-
Thinking of the screams of the tortured
And the last silence of starving children,
Seeing the faces of bigots and murderers.

Then sleep.

And there was the morning, smiling
In the dance of everything. The collared doves
Guzzled the rowan berries and the sea
Washed in, so gently, so tenderly.
Our neighbours greeted us
With humour and friendliness.

World, why do you do this to us?
Giving us poison with one hand
And the bread of life with the other?

And reason sits helpless at his desk
Adding accounts that never balance,
Finding no excuse for anything.
*Norman MacCaig, The Red and the Black,
Collected Poems.*

.....

Dear Lord Jesus who upon the cross
Died that we might live,
I know that if I truly come,
My sins you will forgive.
Let me open up my heart dear Lord
That you may enter in,
Teach me to walk with you this day,
And keep me free from sin.
And if in weakness I should stray,
Dear Lord my footsteps guide,
Return me to the pathway,
And keep me by thy side.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.



Baha'i Faith

Effort is an inseparable part of man's life. It may take different forms with the changing conditions of the world, but it will be always present as a necessary element in our earthly existence. Life is after all a struggle. Progress is attained through struggle, and without such a struggle life ceases to have a meaning; it becomes even extinct.

From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, (December 26, 1935)
Lights of Guidance, p. 550.

.....

Seek ye divine happiness through the hardships and sorrows of this physical world, and behold spiritual well-being in the struggles of this fleeting existence.

Baha'i Scriptures, p. 439.

Believing - Not - Belonging

Stand in the middle.
Let suffering pass through.
Let joy pass through.

Do not identify,
as though there is
nothing but suffering, nothing but joy.

Yes, there is joy.
Yes, there is suffering.
Say, I suffer
I can go through this
and learn what is to be learned.

Stand in the middle,
knowing the suffering will pass,
knowing the joy will pass.
Marion Woodman.

Imagine

Imagine, just imagine, if I could put into words
those troublesome, unquiet mental indigestions
which turn my bed into a sea of irritation and wrestling
with the slow, dark hours of wakefulness.

Imagine if I could fast forward those times
and see what happens.
See that nothing turns out as I fear it will.
The future cannot be clutched at,
cannot be lived before it arrives,
bringing with it
new dawns, fresh skies swept clean of yesterday
and everyday ever born before.

Breathe the living now.
Breathe slowly.
Breathe.
Live in the only
moment
here
now.

Christa Wynn-Williams.



Brahma Kumaris

When I feel that 'life is a struggle', situations are difficult and I feel that I am losing control.... I might be worrying about myself, my health or be concerned about someone who has a special place in my heart....

My mind is heavy, my thoughts are questioning, racing, I feel lost....

To find clarity I allow myself to travel to a place where I can feel silence... in my mind's eye I find myself overlooking a calm lake or sitting on a rock high up in the mountain overlooking a peaceful landscape, the wind gently caressing my face, the rays of the sun shining on my back ...I turn to the Divine, to God, and experience a soft white light all around me..

I feel safe and my body relaxes. My mind becomes clear and with attention, gentleness and strength, I can now approach life.

Astrid Bedomir, member of Aberdeen Brahma Kumaris World Spirituality University.

Christianity

Lord, for tomorrow and its needs,
I do not pray;
But keep me, guide me, love me, Lord
Just for today.

*Sister Xavier's prayer often mentioned in
broadcasts especially by Roman Catholics.
Also dear to over-worked people and to
people suffering chronic illness, or fear of the
future.*

.....

Christ has no hands but our hands
To do his work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead all in his way.
Christ has no lips
To tell all how he died;
He has no help but our help
To bring them to his side.

*The prayer associated with St Teresa of Avila
seems to be about doing – not to preach at
others, but to encourage each person in their
own day or night. Suggested for the curers
rather than the cured.*

.....

When you walk through a storm, keep your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark.
At the end of the storm is a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of the lark.
Walk on through the wind, walk on through the rain,
Though your dreams be tossed and blown
Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart,
And you'll never walk alone,
You'll never walk alone!

Richard Roger's words are now included in a hymn book.



Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Friction, or resistance, is an interesting phenomenon. Without this force, a person or vehicle could not move about, or if already in motion, could not be stopped except by collision. Simple things like nails, screws, and bolts would not stay in place; a cork would not stay in a bottle; a light globe would drop from its socket; a lid would not stay on a jar.

The law of friction or resistance that we think of as only applying to science seems to find application in our personal lives. This is probably what Lehi was referring to when he spoke to his son Jacob. He reminded Jacob of the afflictions and sorrows that had come to him because of the rudeness of his brethren, and told him how these afflictions would ultimately result in good. These are the words of Jacob to his son: "Thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain." (2 Ne. 2:2).

In other words, the afflictions that had come to him in the form of opposition or resistance would be for his good. Then Lehi added these words that have become classic: "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, ... righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad" (2 Ne. 2:11).

We came to mortal life to encounter resistance. It was part of the plan for our eternal progress. Without temptation, sickness, pain, and sorrow, there could be no goodness, virtue, appreciation for well-being, or joy.

Howard W. Hunter (1907 – 1995), Former President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- "God Will Have a Tried People," *Ensign*, (May, 1980) p. 24.

Hinduism

Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live up to his own highest idea, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the Truth.

Swami Vivekananda.

.....

"Face the brutes." That is a lesson for all life—face the terrible, face it boldly. Like the monkeys, the hardships of life fall back when we cease to flee before them.

Swami Vivekananda.

.....

All power is within you, you can do, anything and everything. Believe in that do not believe that you are weak. You can do any thing and everything, without even the guidance of any one. Stand up and express the divinity within you..., Within each of you there is the power to remove all wants and all miseries.

Swami Vivekananda.

.....

In a day, when you don't come across any problems - you can be sure that you are travelling in a wrong path

Swami Vivekananda.

Humanism

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both and be one traveller, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanted wear, though as for that, the passing there had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had trodden black. Oh, I kept the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh. Somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost.

Do Not Go Gentle Into...

Do not go gentle into that good night, old age should burn and rave at close of day; Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right, because their words had forked no lightning they do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay, rage, rage against the dying of the light.

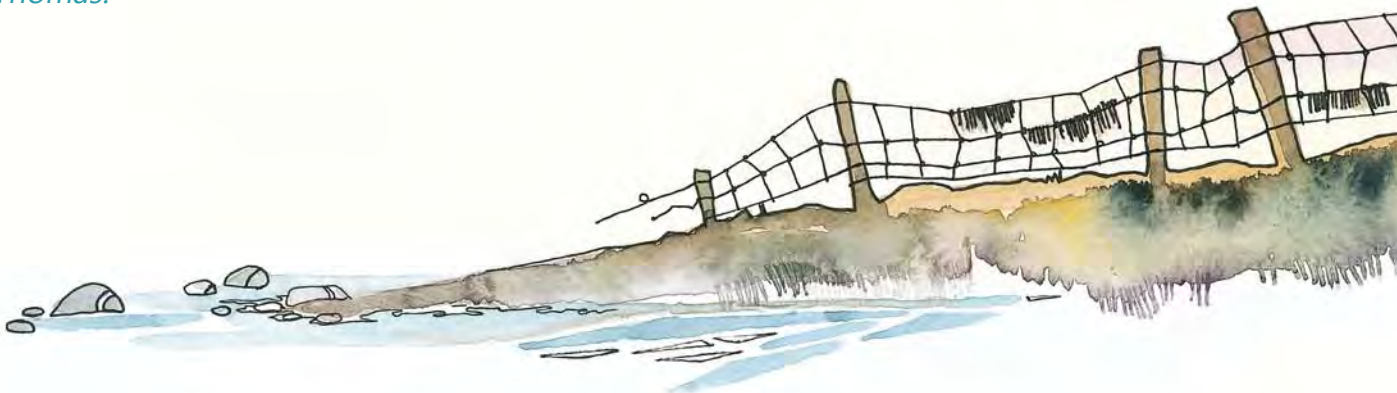
Wise men who caught and sang the sun in flight, and learn, too late, they grieved it on its way, do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight; Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay, rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height, curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray. Do not go gentle into that good night.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas.





Islam

O you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salât (the prayer). Truly! God is with As-Sâbirin (the patient ones, etc.).

Qur'an 2. 153.

.....

Those who spend [in God's Cause - deeds of charity, alms, etc.] in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men; verily, God loves Al-Muhsinûn (the good-doers).

Qur'an 3. 134.

.....

And God wants to turn unto you in His mercy, whereas those who follow [only] their own lusts want you to drift far away from the right path. God wants to lighten your burdens: for man has been created weak.

Qur'an 4: 27-28.

Jainism

Fight with yourself, why fight with external foes? He, who conquers himself through himself, will obtain happiness.

Teachings of Lord Mahavir.

.....

Knowledge without action (conduct) is of no consequence and action (conduct) without knowledge is of no consequence. A lame man can see the fire (has knowledge) but he cannot escape from it (thus his knowledge is ineffective.) On the other hand, a blind man (not knowing in which direction he is running) tries to run away from the fire (takes action) but (without knowledge) he may not be able to escape the fire.

Teachings of Lord Mahavir.

.....

Non violence is an active force of the highest order, it is soul force or the power of Godhead within us.

Gandhi Harijan, 12 Nov. 1935.

Judaism

For the conductor, with instruments. By David

Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth will I call unto You when my heart grows faint: lead me to the rock that is too high for me. For You have been a my shelter, and a tower against the enemy. May I dwell in Your tent for ever: I will trust in the protection of Your wings. (Selah.).

Psalms 61, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

A virtuoso work of David when he was in the cave. A prayer

I cry out to the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD I plead. I pour out my complaint before him; I declare my trouble before him. When my spirit is faint within me, then You know my path; wherever I walk they have hidden a snare for me. Look to the right and see that no-one knows me; escape is lost to me; no-one seeks to save me. I cried unto You, O LORD: I said, You are my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Listen unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are too strong for me. Release my soul from confinement, so that I may praise Your name; the righteous shall surround me, because of your kindness.

Psalms 142, The Hebrew Bible.

Paganism

You can choose to have evil, and heaps of it, too,
for its house lies near and the path to it is smooth.
But the Immortals decreed that man must sweat
To attain virtue; the road to it is steep and long
And rough at first, but even so the journey
Gets easy once you set foot on the peak.
Best is the man who thinks for himself
And sees how things will turn out in the end.
Noble, too, is the man who listens to good advice.
Hesiod (8th C BCE). Work and Days, 287 – 295.

.....

...heroism isn't about wielding weapons
or conquering, but a matter of finding the
courage to heal and transform.
Rae Beth (1990).

At every hour devote yourself in a resolute spirit..... to fulfilling the task in hand with scrupulous and unaffected dignity, and love for others, and independence and justice; and grant yourself a respite from all other preoccupations. And this you will achieve if you perform every action as though it were your last, freed from all lack of purpose and wilful deviation from the rule of reason, and from duplicity, self-seeking, dissatisfaction with what is allotted to you.
Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, II. 5.

.....

....you only need to admit your failure to yourself, and to the immortal Gods, not to receive absolution, but to be given guidance as to how to put right what you made wrong. You must examine every action that you make, admit your faults at least to yourself, and deal with them. You must cope with personal guilt feelings, not by getting someone else to bless them away, but by actually striving to repair what was harmed.
Marian Green (1988).

We all face struggle and hardship in life and it is easy to lose faith but we are reminded by the Gurus to sing, recite and listen to the Lord's praises to help us through such hardships:

Dhanaasree Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

A-ukhee gharhee na daykhan day-ee apnaa birad samaalay.

He does not let His devotees see the difficult times; this is His innate nature.

Haath day-ay raakhai apnay ka-o saas saas partipaalay.

Giving His hand, He protects His devotee; with each and every breath, He cherishes him.

Parabh si-o laag rahi-o mayraa cheet.

My consciousness remains attached to God.

Aad ant parabh sadaa sahaa-ee Dhan hamaaraa meet. rahaa-o.

In the beginning, and in the end, God is always my helper and companion; blessed is my friend.

||Pause||

Man bilaas bha-ay saahib kay achraj daykh badaa-ee.

My mind is delighted, gazing upon the marvellous, glorious greatness of the Lord and Master.

Har simar simar aanad kar naanak parabh pooran paij rakhaa-ee.

Remembering, remembering the Lord in meditation, Nanak is in ecstasy; God, in His perfection, has protected and preserved his honor.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 682.

Story of Bibi Rajni

Rajni was the youngest daughter of Rai Duni Chand, revenue collector of Patti. She was a Sikh, a disciple of the Guru. One day she was sitting with her sisters admiring some new clothing they all had received from their father. The girls were ecstatic and exclaiming how good their father was to them. Rajni observed that all gifts are ultimately from God. Their father was merely an instrument of His greatness. Unfortunately for her, he overheard her comment and became very angry.

Her father was so infuriated he married her to a leper with a taunt that he would see how her God would help her lead a normal life. The leper was severely disfigured and a foul smell came from his body. Rajni accepted her fate ungrudgingly and worked hard to maintain herself and her crippled husband. She kept repeating the name of God, and was certain that he was testing her with this turn of events. She was forced to beg for a living. Still she bathed and fed her leper husband, never losing faith.

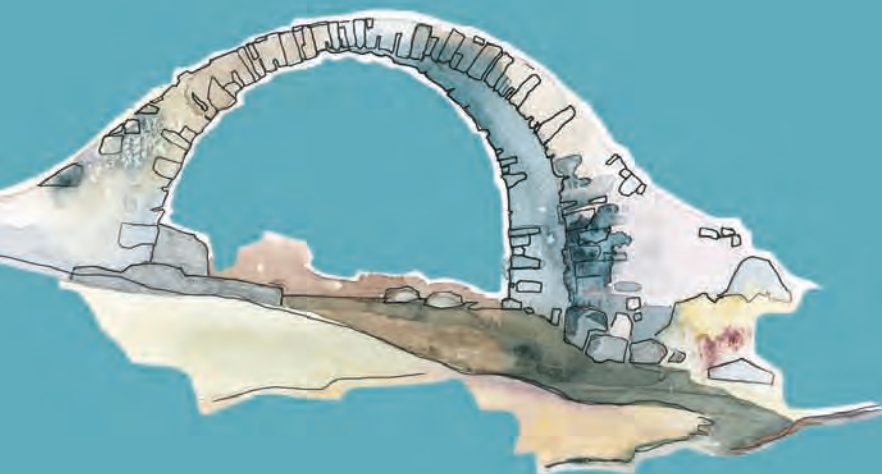
One day she stopped by a pool on her way to a neighbouring village. Parking the cart in which she used to move her husband with by the side of the pool, she had gone off on an errand. In the meantime, her crippled husband had seen a black crow dip into the water of the pool and come out white. Amazed at this miracle, the man crawled up to the edge of the pool and immersed himself into the water. To his surprise he found himself completely cured.

When his wife returned, she was amazed to find her husband in good health. At first, she was alarmed and suspected that he might be a different person. He had, however, kept one finger with leprosy marks un-dipped. He showed her the diseased finger as proof of his identity. The couple thanked God, and went to the Guru to seek his blessings. The pool was the future site of the Golden Temple.

This story shows that if you keep faith in God then one day all rewards are paid. Bibi Rajni had kept faith in God, being happy with whatever she had and thus was rewarded at the end.

Adapted from: www.sikhee.com/bibirajni.htm.

Suffering, Pain, Illness



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Some of you say, "Joy is greater than sorrow,"
and others say,"Nay, sorrow is the greater."
But I say unto you that they are inseparable.
Together they come, and when one sits alone
with you at your board, remember that the other
is asleep on your bed.
Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

Sorrow prepares you for joy. It violently sweeps
everything out of your house, so that new joy can
find space to enter. It shakes the yellow leaves
from the bough of your heart, so that fresh,
green leaves can grow in their place. It pulls
up the rotten roots, so that new roots hidden
beneath have room to grow. Whatever sorrow
shakes from your heart, far better things will take
their place.
Jalal -al-Din Rumi, Masnavi: 3678-83.

A special spark arises from the sorrow of a
burning heart. Have you ever heard how the sigh
of a broken heart touches The Beloved?"
Jalal -al-Din Rumi.

Man is fond of counting his troubles, but he does
not count his joys. If he counted them up as he
ought to, he would see that every lot has enough
happiness provided for it.
Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Sometimes I go about pitying myself, and yet
all the time I am being carried on Great Winds
across the sky.
Chippewa Indigenous American Tradition.

Wreathe no more lilies in my hair,
For I am dying, Sister sweet;
Or, if you will for the last time
Indeed, why, make me fair
Once for the winding sheet.

Pluck no more roses for my breast,
For I like them fade in my prime:
Or, if you will, why pluck them still,
That they may share my rest
Once more for the last time.

Weep not for me when I am gone,
Dear tender one, but hope and smile;
Or, if you cannot choose but weep,
A little while weep on,
But only a little while.
Christina Rossetti, Selected Poems.

Eat and drink together:
Talk and laugh together:
Enjoy life together:
But never call it friendship
Until you have wept together.
African proverb.

Let not the sins of greed and pride
Be in my heart today;
Let me think of others,
As I go along life's way.
Let me in humility
Do the things I ought;
Lord let me now remember,
The lessons that you taught.
O let me ask for those dear Lord,
Who suffer every day,
From sickness thirst or hunger,
Be with them Lord I pray.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

The Israeli violinist Yitzhak Perlman contracted polio at the age of 4. Ever since, he has had to wear metal braces on his legs and walk with crutches, yet he became one of the greatest virtuosi of our time. The story is told how on one occasion he came out onto the concert platform to play a violin concerto. Laying down his crutches, he placed the violin under his chin and began tuning the instrument. At that moment, with an audible crack, one of the strings broke. The audience were expecting him to send for another string, but instead, he signalled the conductor to begin, and he proceeded to play the concerto entirely on 3 strings. At the end of the performance the audience gave him a standing ovation and called on him to speak. What he said, so the story goes, was this. ' Our task is to make music with what remains.' This was a comment about more than a broken string. It was a comment on his paralysis, and on all that is broken in life.

Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks, To Heal a Fractured World.

.....

Big man, what storms you have suffered.
Blind and crippled, you lie there
Cut off from all your life has been.

Old man, you who don't know
The meaning of self pity,
The sea still rages against
Your broken body. But your spirit,
That stormy petrel,
Dances trippingly along
On the waves that tower over it.
Norman MacCaig, Duncan, Collected Poems.



Baha'i Faith

While a man is happy he may forget his God; but when grief comes and sorrows overwhelm him, then will he remember his Father who is in Heaven, and who is able to deliver him from his humiliations.

Men who suffer not, attain no perfection. The plant most pruned by the gardeners is that one which, when the summer comes, will have the most beautiful blossoms and the most abundant fruit.

The labourer cuts up the earth with his plough, and from that earth comes the rich and plentiful harvest. The more a man is chastened, the greater is the harvest of spiritual virtues shown forth by him

Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 50.

.....

The mind and spirit of man advance when he is tried by suffering. The more the ground is ploughed the better the seed will grow, the better the harvest will be. Just as the plough furrows the earth deeply, purifying it of weeds and thistles, so suffering and tribulation free man from the petty affairs of this worldly life until he arrives at a state of complete detachment. His attitude in this world will be that of divine happiness. Man is, so to speak, unripe: the heat of the fire of suffering will mature him. Look back to the times past and you will find that the greatest men have suffered most.'

Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 178.



Pain and Sorrow

In this world we are influenced by two sentiments, Joy and Pain.

Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, our intellect keener, and our understanding less clouded. We seem better able to cope with the world and to find our sphere of usefulness. But when sadness visits us we become weak, our strength leaves us, our comprehension is dim and our intelligence veiled. The actualities of life seem to elude our grasp, the eyes of our spirits fail to discover the sacred mysteries, and we become even as dead beings. There is no human being untouched by these two influences; but all the sorrow and the grief that exist come from the world of matter -- the spiritual world bestows only the joy!

If we suffer it is the outcome of material things, and all the trials and troubles come from this world of illusion.

.....Let us turn our hearts away from the world of matter and live in the spiritual world! It alone can give us freedom! If we are hemmed in by difficulties we have only to call upon God, and by His great Mercy we shall be helped.

If sorrow and adversity visit us, let us turn our faces to the Kingdom and heavenly consolation will be outpoured.

If we are sick and in distress let us implore God's healing, and He will answer our prayer.

When our thoughts are filled with the bitterness of this world, let us turn our eyes to the sweetness of God's compassion and He will send us heavenly calm! If we are imprisoned in the material world, our spirit can soar into the Heavens and we shall be free indeed!

When our days are drawing to a close let us think of the eternal worlds, and we shall be full of joy! You see all round you proofs of the inadequacy of material things -- how joy, comfort, peace and consolation are not to be found in the transitory things of the world. Is it not then foolishness to refuse to seek these treasures where they may be found? The doors of the spiritual Kingdom are open to all.....

Abdu'l-Baha, (Paris Talks, p. 111).

Believing - Not - Belonging

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers
But to be fearless in facing them.
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain
But for the heart to conquer it.
Rabindranath Tagore.

.....

A loveless world is a dead world
and always there comes an hour
There comes a moment
when one grows weary of one's work,
of devotion to duty
and all one craves for
is a loved face
the warmth and wonder
of a loving heart.
Albert Camus.

.....

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that
encloses your understanding.
Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its
heart may stand in the sun, so you must know
pain.
And could you keep your heart in wonder at the
daily miracles of your life, your pain would not
seem less wondrous than your joy;
And you would accept the seasons of your heart,
even as you have always accepted the seasons
that pass over your fields.
And you would watch with serenity through the
winters of your grief.
Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet.

Brahma Kumaris

Suffering

People have experienced a lot of deception in
their lives. There has been a lot of exchange of
everything that is false, so feelings have been
destroyed. People have created barriers to
protect themselves and sometimes have rejected
the world so they won't experience pain.

However when a soul starts receiving something
from God, the heart opens up. So let us take
God's love and have pure feelings. Let us
experience what pure feelings are. Let us have
trust in each other and faith in ourselves. Let us
learn to love ourselves. Let us have purity in our
feelings, then we can experience love. Let us take
from God and give to others. When we have very
powerful good wishes for others, good feelings
for others, those feelings reach them. We can
help each other through the power of our good
feelings.

Deep in the heart there is just the one feeling:
just as I have received so much from God, may all
God's children receive the same from the Father.
Dadi Janki: Companion of God.

.....

Illness

Sickness is the chance to teach the mind to
remain independent of the physical state and to
connect with the inner resources of peace and
silence and through that, stay in the light of God,
the Supreme. This is eating the nourishing food
of pure and positive thoughts.
This is the ultimate cure.
Dadi Janki: Companion of God.



Pain

Sincerely have I searched for you
Sadly have I lamented your loss
Stridently have I petitioned and protested for you
Sweetly have I composed cantatas in your name
Silently have I prayed for you

Fatally have I fought for you
Killed those I thought were you enemies
Only to find you moved further away
Pain, not peace prevailed

Peace calls to me softly
Touching a deeply held memory
of a life lived together
Naturally, gently entwined
United as one

Peace is now my private practice
Taking care of my thoughts and feelings
Standing guard over my actions
Restoring my mind to a sanctuary
Where peace can preside
Seeding a world of peace.
Christine Bell.

Buddhism

Our suffering is not a sign that we're failing...
However, it is only too easy to fall for the worldly
perspective that says if we are suffering we are
failing. But there are some things we just don't get
over. Some pain doesn't heal in the way we wish
or at the time we want. At such times, to have a
friend, somebody who shows a willing receptivity
to our suffering, is a very great comfort.
*p 101, Unexpected Freedom, Talks by Ajahn
Munindo, 2005.*

Suffering can teach us about compassion. If
you suffer, you know how it is when others
suffer. Through your suffering that you will find
understanding and compassion to help others.
*Stage 4, Tibetan Book of Living & Dying, Sogyal
Rinpoche.*

Christianity

And he came down with them, and stood in the
plain, and the company of his disciples, and a
great multitude of people out of all Judaea and
Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and
Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed
of their diseases;
And they that were vexed with unclean spirits:
and they were healed. And the whole multitude
sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of
him, and healed them all.
Luke Ch.6, vv. 17-19, New Testament, The Bible.

.....

Watch dear Lord with those
Who wake or watch or weep tonight,
And give your angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend your sick ones,
O Lord Jesus Christ,
Rest your weary ones,
Bless your dying ones,
Soothe your suffering ones,
Shield your joyous one's
And all for your love's sake.
*This prayer is attributed to St Augustine, and is
used by people separated from each other but
united in prayer for a sick or suffering person.
It is also used at Evening Prayer in Churches
– especially in the weekdays. So it is a uniting
prayer.*



Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Trying to comprehend the trials and meaning of this life without understanding Heavenly Father's marvellously encompassing plan of salvation is like trying to understand a three-act play while seeing only the second act. Fortunately, our knowledge of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, and His Atonement helps us to endure our trials and to see purpose in suffering and to trust God for what we cannot comprehend.

Revealed truths reassure us that we are enclosed in divine empathy. As Enoch witnessed, we worship a God who wept over needless human misery and wickedness (see Moses ch. 7 vv. 28–29, 33, 37). Jesus' perfect empathy was ensured when, along with His Atonement for our sins, He took upon Himself our sicknesses, sorrows, griefs, and infirmities and came to know these "according to the flesh" (Alma 7:11–12). He did this in order that He might be filled with perfect, personal mercy and empathy and thereby know how to succor us in our infirmities. He thus fully comprehends human suffering. Truly Christ "descended below all things, in that He comprehended all things" (D&C 88: 6). Elder Neal A. Maxwell, (1926 – 2004), Former Member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles - "Enduring Well," *Ensign*, (Apr 1997), 7.

Hinduism

As the intense fire of the furnace refines gold to brilliancy, so does the burning suffering of austerity purify the soul to resplendence.

Tirukkural 27:267

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers
but to be fearless in facing them.

Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain
but for the heart to conquer it.

Let me not look for allies in life's battlefield
but to my own strength.

Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved
but hope for the patience to win my freedom.

Grant me that I may not be a coward,
feeling your mercy in my success alone;
but let me find the grasp of your hand in my failure.

Rabindranath Tagore.

Arjuna, the warrior and seeker of wisdom in the Bhagavad-Gita, is told that.....

".....while the body may be in pain, the Self or soul isn't affected or harmed. The self embodied in the body of every being is indestructible..."

As the Self isn't affected, there need be no concern over temporary suffering. Those of us in pain may gain comfort by viewing pain as only a temporary condition and one that doesn't affect our inner Selves.

Bhagavad-Gita.

The only thing you must remember is how fortunate you are. When you forget this, you become sad. Sorrow reflects your negative qualities and your attachment to your positive qualities. When you think you are not good enough you blame yourself and become sad. When you think you are too good, you blame the world and become sad. The purpose of sorrow is to bring you back to the Self. And the Self is all joy. But the coming back to the Self is possible only through knowledge – through awareness.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.



Humanism

The Pain of the Earth

Does the earth grow grey with grief, For her/his hero darling fled?
Though her/his vales let fall no leaf, In our hearts her/his tears are shed.
Still the stars laugh on above: Not to them her/his grief is said;
Mourning for her/his hero love, In our hearts the tears are shed.
We her/his children mourn for her/him, Mourn the elder hero dead;
In the twilight grey and dim, In our hearts the tears are shed.
George William Russell.

.....

Death Wish

Dear medics, there's no need to strive too hard to keep this chap alive. I've had far more of weal than woe and if it's now my time to go, I'm pretty nearly umpty-five and not concerned if death arrive. Use all the bits of me you can, to help some other maid or man. Those who survive me will agree, 'tis better leave with dignity than cling to some poor hollow sham, an ancient relic of a man. If I were conscious and au fait, I'd end things now and not delay. I've no religion and no god, so even if you think it's odd, I pray you let me go in peace, as far as can be from a priest.
Anon.

Islam

And remember Ayyub (Job), when he cried unto his Lord, (saying): Lo! adversity afflicted me, and Thou art Most Merciful of all who show mercy. Then We heard his prayer and removed that adversity from which he suffered, and We gave him his household (that he had lost) and the like thereof along with them, a mercy from Our store, and a remembrance for the worshippers.
Qur'an 21. 83-84.

.....

The greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When God loves a people, He tests them. Whoever accepts this, wins His Pleasure.
Saying of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him, taken from Tirmidhi.

.....

And those who strive in Our (cause), - We will certainly guide them to our Paths: For verily God is with those who do right.
Qur'an 29. 69.

Between the human being and God are just two veils—health and wealth—all other veils come from these. Those who are healthy do not look for God and do not see Him, but as soon as pain afflicts them they cry out, "O God! O God!" Calling out and surrendering to God. Therefore, health is their veil and God is hidden in their pain. As long as people have wealth, they gratify their desires, and are preoccupied night and day with pleasures. The moment poverty appears, their spirits are weakened and they turn to God.
Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi d.1273, poet and scholar buried in Turkey.

.....

In Islam suffering is not necessarily viewed as a bad thing, and prosperity is not necessarily a good thing. As the Qur'an says;
"But it may happen that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that you love a thing which is bad for you. And God knows and you do not know!"
Qur'an 2: 216.



Jainism

Comforting it is to experience pain on account of the Friend who is also a physician daily visiting the home of the sick.

And know the help of God comes through patience and comfortable circumstances with distress and that difficulty is accompanied by ease.

Sincerity [of actions] resides in a grief-stricken heart.

Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani d.1166 , renowned scholar and saint of Persia

Pain is a blessing in disguise. Real happiness is within you. It is in Atman --Soul
Difficulties come in our path to test our strength. As such, we should welcome them. And with faith and trust in the Lord and His holy Name, we should tide over them. Remember: even this will pass away. God's ways are mysterious. The world is the play of God. Be a witness in this play.

Sri Swami Chidananda.

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God is love, God is truth, God is light of lights, God is peace, God is knowledge, God is eternity, God is immortality, God is infinite beauty . Pain turns your mind towards God, in whom alone there is lasting happiness and peace. This mundane life is full of miseries. Life is not a bed of roses. Ups and downs, troubles and tribulations are common in this world. There is no way to escape from them. The reactions of one's past actions have to be gone through.
Jainism teaching.

Judaism

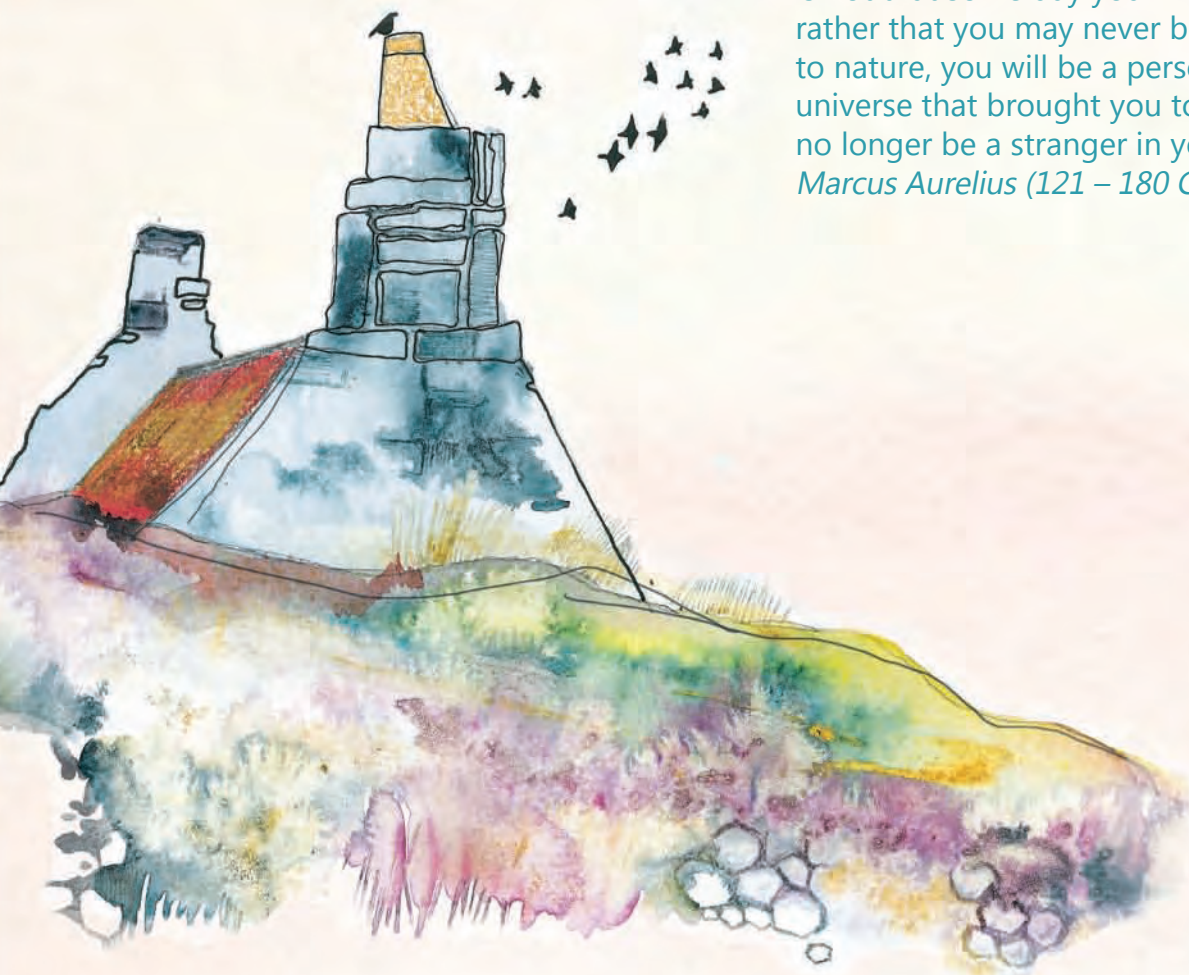
Why is light given to one in misery, and life to the bitter in soul
Who long for death that does not come, and dig deeper for it than for hidden treasure,
For what I fear has come upon me, and what I dread has overtaken me.
I have no peace or quiet, no rest, but anguish has come upon me.

Job Ch. 3, vv. 20-24, The Hebrew Bible.

All who are sick at heart and cry in bitterness,
Let not your soul complain in grief.
Enter the garden of my songs, and find balm
For your sorrow, and sing there with open mouth.
Honey compared with them is bitter to the taste,
And before their scent, flowing myrrh is rank.
Through them the deaf hear, the stutterers speak,
The blind see, and the halting run.
The troubled and grief-stricken rejoice in them,
So do the sick at heart, who cry in bitterness.
Moses ibn Ezra.

Pagansim

If then, when the time for your departure draws near, you have put all else behind you and you honour your governing faculty alone and what is divine within you, and if what you hold in fear is not that some day you will cease to live, but rather that you may never begin to live according to nature, you will be a person worthy of the universe that brought you to birth, and you will no longer be a stranger in your native land,...
Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, XII. 1.



Sikh Dharam

Meditating upon God's name can ease pain and suffering for all:

Sireeraag Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Jaa ka-o muskal at banai dho-ee ko-ay na day-ay.

When you are confronted with terrible hardships, and no one offers you any support,

Laagoo ho-ay dusmanaa saak bhe bhaj khalay.

When your friends turn into enemies, and even your relatives have deserted you,

Sabho bhajai aasraa chukai sabh asraa-o.

And when all support has given way, and all hope has been lost

Chit aavai os paarbarahm lagai na tatee vaa-o.

If you then come to remember the Supreme Lord God, even the hot wind shall not touch you.

Jaa ka-o chintaa bahut bahut dayhee vi-aapai rog.

When you are plagued by great and excessive anxiety, and diseases of the body;

Garisat kutamb palayti-aa kaday harakh kaday sog.

When you are wrapped up in the attachments of household and family, sometimes feeling joy, and then other times sorrow;

Ga-on karay chahu kunt kaa gharhee na baisan so-ay.

When you are wandering around in all four directions, and you cannot sit or sleep even for a moment.

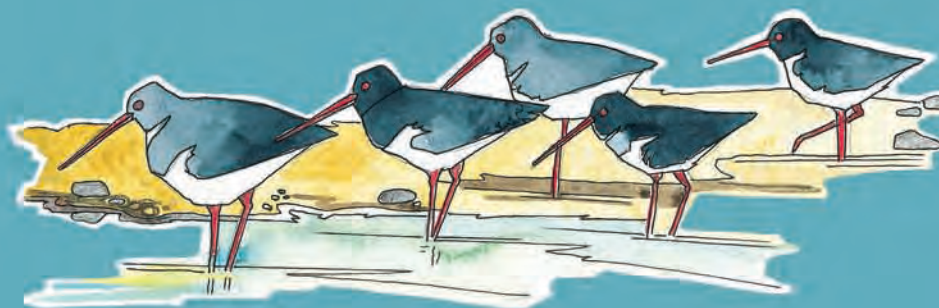
Chit aavai os paarbarahm tan man seetal ho-ay.

If you come to remember the Supreme Lord God, then your body and mind shall be cooled and soothed.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 70.



Despair, Depression,
Hoplessness, Self-harm



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

I have no words, no wit, no tears;
my heart within me like a stone,
is numbed too much for hopes or fears.
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimmed with grief
no everlasting hills I see;
my life is in the falling leaf:
O, Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
my harvest dwindled to a husk:
truly my life is void and brief
and tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud or greenness can I see;
Yet rise it shall – the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
a broken bowl that cannot hold
one drop of water for my soul
or cordial in the searching cold;
cast in the fire the perished thing;
melt and remould it, till it be
a royal cup for Him, my King:
O, Jesus, drink of me.
Christina Rossetti, Selected Poems.

Our God, in his gracious thirst, will drink us all;
The dewdrop from the earth and the tears of
Man.
Khalil Gibran, A Spiritual Treasury.

She left the room undusted, did not care
To hang a picture, even lay a book
On the small table. All her pain was there-
In absences. The furious window shook
With violent storms she had no power to share.

Her face was lined, her bones stood thinly out.
She spoke, it's true, but not as if it mattered;
She helped with washing-up and things like that.
Her face looked anguished when the china clattered.
Mostly she merely stared at us and sat.

And then one day quite suddenly she came
Back to the world where flowers and pictures grow
(we sensed that world though we were much the same
As her). She seemed to have the power to know
And care and treat the whole thing as a game.

But will it last? Those prints upon her walls,
Those stacks of books-will they soon disappear?
I do not know how a depression falls
Or why so many of us live in fear.
The cure, as much as the disease, appals.
E. Jennings, A Depression, Collected Poems.

Let me not think of me dear Lord,
As I set out today;
Let me comfort others,
That I meet upon my way.
A kindly deed let me perform,
let me the right words find
To say to others in distress.
To ease their troubled mind.
O help me Lord in some small way
To tell others of your grace,
And by thy feeble efforts,
Make this world a better place.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.



Baha'i Faith

He is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful! O God, my God! Thou seest me, Thou knowest me; Thou art my Haven and my Refuge. None have I sought nor any will I seek save Thee; no path have I trodden nor any will I tread but the path of Thy love. In the darksome night of despair, my eye turneth expectant and full of hope to the morn of Thy boundless favor and at the hour of dawn my drooping soul is refreshed and strengthened in remembrance of Thy beauty and perfection. He whom the grace of Thy mercy aideth, though he be but a drop, shall become the boundless ocean, and the merest atom which the outpouring of Thy loving-kindness assisteth, shall shine even as the radiant star.

Shelter under Thy protection, O Thou Spirit of purity, Thou Whom art the All-Bountiful Provider, this enthralled, enkindled servant of Thine. Aid him in this world of being to remain steadfast and firm in Thy love and grant that this broken-winged bird attain a refuge and shelter in Thy divine nest that abideth upon the celestial tree.
'Abdu'l-Bahá (Baha'i Prayers, p. 30).

O Lord! Thou art the Remover of every anguish and the Dispeller of every affliction. Thou art He Who banisheth every sorrow and setteth free every slave, the Redeemer of every soul. O Lord! Grant deliverance through Thy mercy, and reckon me among such servants of Thine as have gained salvation.

The Báb (Baha'i Prayers, p. 28).

Suicide:

Thou hast written of the severe calamity that has befallen thee -- the death of thy respected husband. That honorable personage has been so much subjected to the stress and pain of this world that his highest wish became deliverance from it. Such is this mortal abode -- a storehouse of afflictions and suffering. It is negligence that binds man to it for no comfort can be secured by any soul in this world, from monarch down to the least subject. If once it should offer man a sweet cup, a hundred bitter ones will follow it and such is the condition of this world. The wise man therefore does not attach himself to this mortal life and does not depend upon it; even at some moments he eagerly wishes death that he may thereby be freed from these sorrows and afflictions. Thus it is seen that some, under extreme pressure of anguish, have committed suicide.

As to him rest assured; he will be immersed in the ocean of pardon and forgiveness and will become the recipient of bounty and favor.
Abdu'l-Baha, (Baha'i World Faith - p. 378).

Believing - Not - Belonging

The heavens are calling you
and wheel around you displaying to you
their eternal beauties
and still your eye is looking on the ground.
Dante.

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Remembering the Amish

And I have seen them coming home on summer nights
Or bent above the washbowl in the kitchen,
Haloed in the window by the low sun's leaving;
Soft voices in the fields of gentle men with horses.

And in the town they walk their own way,
As though a reverence for what lies beneath their feet
Is in their shoes, and in their eyes a peace
No man may buy and few have ever found.

And sometimes when I meet them I feel like him who went
With all his Father's wealth and lived in laughter far away
And woke one day to find he'd nothing left.
I feel like turning just like him for home –

That I may also start again.
Kenneth Steven.

Brahma Kumaris

Despair

Obstacles are inevitable - so don't get upset.
Any form of worry erodes your strength

Never see a situation as difficult
Never ask, 'Why did this happen?'
Never feel you are on your own

Remember
God is always with you
God is giving you support

Take time to go into silence
Silence stops confusion and your power will be restored.

Always remember, you don't have to prove anything. Whatever is true is going to be revealed,
anyway. Working to win the hearts of others is what will bring happiness into your life
Dadi Janki: Companion of God.



Depression

In the centre of a dark room,
in front of you, a candle;
unlit, encircled by darkness.
Lighting the candle,
a flicker, a faint glow spreads and warms you.
It is the light of hope.
You are held, and slowly drawn to its centre,
and all becomes still.
Gradually the flame increases
and light begins to surround you.
It is the light of love
whose illumination moves deep within you
bringing joy and healing.
The candle flame, now growing, begins to fill the room.
It is the light of peace,
and all around is quiet and all around is calm.
And the candlelight again increases and grows
and moves beyond the room,
spreading light and love and peace
to those who are caught in the darkness of their sorrows and fears,
for it is the light of mercy,
the light of compassion,
ever expanding, evolving,
bringing healing and harmony to the Earth.
Jim Ryan.

.....

Hoplessness

You soothe, restore and heal my fractured heart.
For I have travelled long, and now I'm tired and
have no strength, no will, drained, emptied of all hope.
Yet, God is the healer of my heart,
in Your lap, You wipe away my tears and give me rest,
You uplift and fill me with Your love and purest feeling.
You take me into your ocean form,
where I'm lost in the waves of peace and love and light.
Your soothing waters wash me, renew me, recharge me,
and I begin to move, and think and smile and fly.
Jim Ryan.



Self-Harm

For times when you are overwhelmed by such extreme feelings that you let go of self-control.

Deeper than self-hatred is love
can't feel it?

Intangible, is it?

OK – STOP. Turn yourself around.. gently ...

Look in the mirror – look into those eyes
Look carefully ...

for the hope that was there only moments
earlier...

for the love that you know you can feel.

For the love you know God has for you.

Love ... LOVE? For me-- no don't be silly.

There is no love when I am in pain--

You say God loves me -as I am –

that I can just have faith and call,
but I can't...

Suddenly ... a sense of stillness touches my
mind...

I feel light and love flow into my shattered self
what is it? A moment – a memory?...

I look again in the mirror and see now
the innocence ... the sense of internal dignity
and PURE calm.

Touch it.

Let it flow into my mind, my whole being.

It flows quietly and I let it flow
that CALM ... that DiGNiTY.

I let it wash over me like a WAVE

and as I stand in this LOVE

I WAVE goodbye to the pain and darkness.

I realize I stand in God's light.

Kala Mistry.

Buddhism

Refrain from what is harmful, (to yourself and others,)

Practice what is helpful, (to yourself and others,)

And fully tame the mind, (through meditation).

Samye Dzong.

Christianity

And he went a little further, and fell on his face,
and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible,
let this cup pass from me

Matthew, Ch. 26, v. 39, New Testament, The Bible.

.....

Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O lamb of God I come

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come.

*Charlotte Elliot wrote these words of faith while
ill and feeling a failure.*

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Each of us will have our own Fridays – those days
when the universe itself seems shattered and the
shards of our world lie littered about us in pieces.
We will all experience those broken times when
it seems we can never be put together again. We
will all have our Fridays. But I testify to you in the
name of the One who conquered death – Sunday
will come. In the darkness of our sorrow, Sunday
will come. No matter our desperation, no matter
our grief, Sunday will come. In this life or the
next, Sunday will come.

*Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Sunday Will Come,"
Ensign, (November, 2006) p. 28–30.*



Hinduism

As long as we believe ourselves to be even the least different from God, fear remains with us; but when we know ourselves to be the One, fear goes; of what can we be afraid?
Swami Vivekananda.

.....

All sorrow comes from fear, from nothing else.
When you know this, you become free of it,
And desire melts away. You become happy ...
Ashtavakra Gita 11: 5.

.....

Two from one! This is the root of suffering.
Only perceive that I am one without two,
Pure awareness, pure joy, And all the world is false.
There is no other remedy!
Ashtavakra Gita 2: 16.

Fear is death, fear is sin, fear is hell, fear is unrighteousness, fear is wrong life. All the negative thoughts and ideas that are in the world have proceeded from this evil spirit of fear.
Swami Vivekananda.

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The day you feel hopeless, horrible, and worse, on that day get out of your room and ask people, What can I do for you? That service you have done that day will bring a revolution inside you. It will change your whole gramophone record.'
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

.....

Nobody can hurt me without my permission.
Mahatama Gandhi.

Humanism

Stop all the Clocks

Stop all the clocks, cut off the phone, prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum, bring out the coffin, let the mourners come. Let
aeroplanes circle moaning overhead, scribbling on the sky the message 'He Is Dead', Put crêpe
bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.
He was my North, my South, my East and West, my working week and my Sunday rest, my noon,
my midnight, my talk, my song; I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.
The stars are not wanted now: put out every one; Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun; Pour
away the ocean and sweep up the wood. For nothing now can ever come to any good.
W. H. Auden.

Islam

Say, "O My servants, who have wronged their
own souls: Do not despair of God's mercy: surely
God forgives all sins: He is the All-Forgiving, the
All-Merciful".
Qur'an 39. 53.

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you.
Qur'an 2. 152.

When God created His creation He inscribed on
His throne My mercy surpasses My wrath.
*Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon
him, taken from Sahih Bukhari.*

Call on God and you will be sheltered from all
fear. Trust in Him and you will find happiness.
But alas! Who knows how to give an ear to what
I say? Who can grasp its full meaning and etch it
into his memory?
*Al Muqaddisi d. 1000, renowned scholar from
Jerusalem.*

Jainism

He who looks inwardly at the self revels in the self;
He who revels in the self looks inwardly at the self
Acaranga Sutra.

May my heart bleed at the sight of
The wretched, the cruel, the poor.
And may tears of compassion
Flow from my eyes.
Shree Chitrabhanu, Author and Poet.

If the pessimist changes his mental attitude, the
world will appear to him to be full of Ananda—
happiness.
Jainism teaching.



Judaism

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; So shall my word be that goes out of my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn the cypress tree shall come up, and instead of the nettle shall the myrtle tree come up; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Isaiah Ch. 55, vv.6-13, The Hebrew Bible.

To the chief Musician, according to Ayeleth HaShahar, a Psalm of David:

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from helping me, from the words of my loud complaint? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night, and I have no rest. But You are holy, O you who are enthroned on the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You saved them. They cried to You, and were saved; they trusted in You, and were not disappointed. But I am a worm, and not a man; scorned by men, and despised by the people. But He has not despised nor loathed the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden his face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard.

Psalm Ch. 22, v.v 1-7 and 25, The Hebrew Bible.

A Psalm of David:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalm 23, The Hebrew Bible.

God is my light and my safety;
whom shall I fear?

God is the strength of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27, v. 1, The Hebrew Bible.

Our God and God of our ancestors, You have called us to embrace life, but life is so often bitter for us. We have gone through the storm when life was meaningless and we seriously thought of ending it all. I want to welcome my life. I want to enjoy my life. I know that were I to end my life, those I love would have to live with that pain for ever. Give me the courage to face the day and endure the nights. Give me the perspective to see my storm as temporary: faith to believe that it will soon be over and the energy to see it through. You have given me family and friends whom I love and who love me. Let me grow in strength by enjoying their love.

Rabbi Brian Fox, from Really Useful Prayers, ed. Jonathan Romain.

Pagansim

He who fears death fears either unconsciousness or another sort of consciousness. Now if you will no longer be conscious you will not be conscious of anything bad. If you are to take on a different consciousness, you will be a different being and life will not cease.

Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, VIII. 58.

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He is a foolish man who lies awake all night
And broods over everything.
When morning breaks he is weary
And all his trouble is the same as it was.
The Havamal, 23 (pre-8th C. CE).

Sikh Dharam

Even during a time of despair and depression God protects us because He is merciful and He is the one who created us.

Tilang Mehlaa 5 Ghar 3 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Miharvaan saahib miharvaan.

Merciful, the Lord Master is Merciful.

Saahib mayraa miharvaan.

My Lord Master is Merciful.

Jee-a sagal ka-o day-ay daan. rahaa-o.

He gives His gifts to all beings.

Too kaahay doleh paraanee-aa tudh raakhaigaa sirjanhaar.

Why do you waver, O mortal being? The Creator Lord Himself shall protect you.

Jin paidaa-is too kee-aa so-ee day-ay aadhaar.

He who created you, will also give you nourishment.

Jin upaa-ee maydnee so-ee kardaa saar.

The One who created the world, takes care of it.

Ghat ghat maalak dilaa kaa sachaa parvardagaar.

In each and every heart and mind, the Lord is the True Cherisher.

Kudrat keem na jaanee-ai vadaa vayparvaahu.

His creative potency and His value cannot be known; He is the Great and carefree Lord.

Kar banday too bandagee jichar ghat meh saahu.

O human being, meditate on the Lord, as long as there is breath in your body.

Too samrath akath agochar jee-o pind tayree raas.

O God, You are all-powerful, inexpressible and imperceptible; my soul and body are Your capital.

Raham tayree sukh paa-i-aa sadaa naanak kee ardaas.

By Your Mercy, may I find peace; this is Nanak's lasting prayer.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 724.

Loss, Death, Bereavement





Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Remember me, when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future you had plann'd:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be too late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far that you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.
Christina Rossetti, Selected Poems.

Death is in reality *spiritual birth*, the release of the spirit from the prison of the senses into the freedom of God, just as physical birth is the release of the baby from the prison of the womb into the freedom of the world. While childbirth causes pain and suffering to the mother, for the baby it brings liberation.
Jalal-al-din Rumi, Masnavi iii, 3556-60.

Glimpses

to see what is beautiful
to hear what is beautiful
they don't know what is beautiful

all these young people
good men, nice boys, fine chaps -
they are too busy to see

it'll be a good bit longer
before you see
what you want to see

but they don't want to see
what in some queer way
they are anxious to see

we see it very rarely
but the difference is
we are trying to see!
Openings (about dementia), Hawker, John Killick.

The night is freezing fast,
Tomorrow comes December;
And winterfalls of old
Are with me from the past;
And chiefly I remember
How Dick would hate the cold.

Fall, winter, fall; for he,
Prompt hand and headpiece clever,
Has woven a winter robe,
And made of earth and sea
His overcoat for ever,
And wears the turning globe.
A.E Housman, Collected Poems.

.....

I'm wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.

There's nae sorrow there, John,
There's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was bairth good and fair, John,
And oh ! We grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.

Now fare ye weel, my ain John,
This world's cares are vain, John,
We'll meet, and we'll be fain
In the land o' the leal.
'The Land o' the Leal', Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne.

.....

Dear Lord I come to you today
For those who mourn and grieve;
May you with everlasting love,
Their troubled hearts relieve.
Help them to find comfort,
In the knowledge good and true,
That the soul of their departed,
Has found eternal rest in you.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

Grief cannot be shared, for it is mine alone.
Grief is a dying within me,
A great emptiness,
A frightening void.
It is loneliness,
A sickening sorrow at night,
On awakening a terrible dread.
Another's words do not help.
A reasoned argument explains little
For having tried too much.
Silence is the best response to another's grief.
Not the silence that is a pause in speech,
Awkward and unwanted,
But one that unites heart to heart.
Love, speaking in silence, is the way into
The void of another's grief.
The best of all loves comes silently,
And slowly too, to soften the pain of grief,
And begin to dispel the sadness.
It is the love of God, warm and true,
Which will touch the grieving heart and heal it.

He looks at the grieving person and has pity,
For grief is a great pain.
He came among us to learn about grief,
And much else too, this Man of Sorrows.
He knows. He understands.
Grief will yield to peace – in time.
*Cardinal Basil Hume OSB, in Sandys, S. (ed) 1992,
Embracing the Mystery. Prayerful Responses to
AIDS London: SPCK.*

.....

Oh, think of stepping ashore,
And finding it heaven;
To clasp a hand outstretched,
And to find it God's hand!
To breathe new air
And find that celestial air;
To feel refreshed,
And find it immortality;
Oh! Think to step from storm and stress
To one unbroken calm:
To awake, and find it home.
Anon in Saunders, C. 1990. Beyond the Horizon .

Peace, my heart, let the time for the parting be sweet.
Let it not be a death, but completeness.
Let love melt into memory and pain into song.
Let the flight through the sky end in the
Folding of the wings over the nest.
Let the last touch of your hands
Be gentle like the flower of the night.
Stand still, O Beautiful End, for a moment,
And say your last words in silence.
I bow to you and hold up my lamp to light you on your way.
Rabindranath Tagore, Collected Poems and Plays.

.....

Sweet child whom we never really got to know,
It's hard for us to let you go.
We waited and we wanted you.
We had so many dreams for you.

We think of smiles we'll never see
We think of events that will never be.
There will be no first steps and no first teeth.
There is only a void and our own grief.

We planned to take you to places far and near.
We yearned to keep you safe and free from fear.
We hoped to show you much of your new world.
We wanted to teach you as your life unfurled.

It's hard to understand why you, our baby, died.
We feel so numb right now, many tears we've cried.
We have so many questions and no answers seem to come.
We tried so hard to save you; nothing could be done.

God, we stand before you broken-hearted
and ask you to heal these lives that must be parted
from this little one we can no longer hold,
who will always be a part of us, even when we're old.
Source unknown.

.....

The mountains, I become part of them.....
The herbs, the fir tree, I become part of them.....
The morning mists, the clouds, the gathering waters,
I become part of them.....
The wilderness, the dew drops, the pollen,
I become part of them.
Navajo Chant, Indigenous North American.



Wear not the black of mourning,
but rejoice with me in white raiment.
Speak not in sorrow of my going,
but close your eyes and you shall see me among you,
now and for ever more.
Lay me down upon leafy boughs,
raise me high upon shoulders,
then lead me slowly to the wild places.....
Khalil Gibran, A Spiritual Treasury.



I 'm standing on the sea shore,
A ship sails in the morning breeze and starts for the ocean.
She is an object of beauty and I stand watching her
Till at last she fades on the horizon and someone at my side says:
"She is gone."

Gone! Where?
Gone from my sight - that is all.
She is just as large in the masts, hull and spars as she was when I saw her
And just as able to bear her load of living freight to its destination.
The diminished size and total loss of sight is in me,
not in her.

And just at the moment when someone at my side says,
"She is gone",
There are others who are watching her coming, and other voices take up a glad shout:
"There she comes"
- and that is dying. An horizon and just the limit of our sight.
Lift us up, Oh Lord, that we may see further.

Attributed to Bishop Charles Henry Brent, (1862-1929), under the title, "What is Dying?" He was a missionary bishop to the Philippines at the turn of the last century. Also attributed to Henry Van Dyke, 1852-1933,

.....

God of all comfort, in the midst of pain heal us with your love; in the darkness of sorrow shine upon us as the morning star. Awaken in us the spirit of mercy, that as we feel the pain of others, we may share with them the comfort we receive from you. Bring us at the last, with all your people into the kingdom of your glory, where death itself is ended, and every tear is wiped from every eye. Amen.

O Lord, grant eternal rest unto this your servant, and let perpetual light shine upon him (her). May his (her) soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Bring us o Lord God at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that house where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise or silence, but one equal music; no fears or hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity in the habitations of the glory and dominion, world without end.

Based on John Donne.

Baha'i Faith

Loss of Baby or unborn child:

Question. -- What is the condition of children who die before attaining the age of discretion or before the appointed time of birth?

Answer. -- These infants are under the shadow of the favor of God; and as they have not committed any sin and are not soiled with the impurities of the world of nature, they are the centers of the manifestation of bounty, and the Eye of Compassion will be turned upon them. *Abdu'l-Baha, (Some Answered Questions, p. 240).*

.....

Be not grieved at the death of that infant child, for it is placed in trust for thee before thy Lord in His great Kingdom.

Verily God will bestow upon thee that whereby thy heart shall be rejoiced and thy breast shall be dilated. Verily thy Lord is compassionate and merciful!

Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 194).

.....

Loss of a Child:

O thou who art afflicted by a visitation by which thine eyes are overflowing with tears!

Be not grieved and afflicted for this calamity which hath befallen thee; nay, rather, rejoice that God hath favored (thy babe) with His heavenly gifts. Truly, I say unto thee, wert thou informed of that felicity which thy babe hath attained in the worlds of God, thy breast would be dilated and thy soul would be purified. Truly, I say unto thee, thy child will be fostered from the breast of the gift of God in the Exalted Kingdom and will be nursed in the bosom of mercy in the Supreme World of God. Therefore, be filled with delight, for the favor of thy Lord is very great!

I beg of God to pour on thee becoming patience, so that thy heart may be consoled with the fragrance of His mercy and that thy breast may be dilated with His favors, that thou mayest attain to the spiritual states which are lasting forever and ever.

Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v.1, p. 139).

O ye two patient souls!

Your letter was received. The death of that beloved youth and his separation from you have caused the utmost sorrow and grief; for he winged his flight in the flower of his age and the bloom of his youth to the heavenly nest. But he hath been freed from this sorrow-stricken shelter and hath turned his face toward the everlasting nest of the Kingdom, and, being delivered from a dark and narrow world, hath hastened to the sanctified realm of light; therein lieth the consolation of our hearts.

The inscrutable divine wisdom underlieth such heart-rending occurrences. It is as if a kind gardener transferreth a fresh and tender shrub from a confined place to a wide open area.

This transfer is not the cause of the withering, the lessening or the destruction of that shrub; nay, on the contrary, it maketh it to grow and thrive, acquire freshness and delicacy, become green and bear fruit. This hidden secret is well known to the gardener, but those souls who are unaware of this bounty suppose that the gardener, in his anger and wrath, hath uprooted the shrub. Yet to those who are aware, this concealed fact is manifest, and this predestined decree is considered a bounty. Do not feel grieved or disconsolate, therefore, at the ascension of that bird of faithfulness; nay, under all circumstances pray for that youth, supplicating for him forgiveness and the elevation of his station.

I hope that ye will attain the utmost patience, composure and resignation...

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha, p. 199-200.



Loss of a Son:

O thou beloved maidservant of God,
Although the loss of a son is indeed heart-breaking and beyond the limits of human endurance, yet one who knoweth and understandeth is assured that the son hath not been lost but, rather, hath stepped from this world into another, and she will find him in the divine realm. That reunion shall be for eternity, while in this world separation is inevitable and bringeth with it a burning grief.

Praise be unto God that thou hast faith, art turning thy face toward the everlasting Kingdom and believest in the existence of a heavenly world. Therefore be thou not disconsolate, do not languish, do not sigh, neither wail nor weep; for agitation and mourning deeply affect his soul in the divine realm.

That beloved child addresseth thee from the hidden world: 'O thou kind Mother, thank divine Providence that I have been freed from a small and gloomy cage and, like the birds of the meadows, have soared to the divine world - a world which is spacious, illumined, and ever gay and jubilant. Therefore, lament not, O Mother, and be not grieved; I am not of the lost, nor have I been obliterated and destroyed. I have shaken off the mortal form and have raised my banner in this spiritual world. Following this separation is everlasting companionship. Thou shalt find me in the heaven of the Lord, immersed in an ocean of light.'

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha, p. 201.

Be not sorrowful on account of the departure of thy good son. He hath indeed departed from this narrow and gloomy world which is darkened by unlimited sorrow, unto the Kingdom which is spacious, illumined, joyous and beautiful. God delivered him from this dark well and promoted him unto the Supreme Height! He gave him wings whereby he soared to the heaven of happiness. Verily this is the great mercy from Him who is precious and forgiving.

Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v. 1, p. 50.



Loss of a Daughter:

Be not grieved at the death of thy dear daughter. This divine bird flew away to the rose-garden of the Merciful and that plant of humanity hastened to the garden of the Kingdom of El-ABHA. That drop returned to the Most Great Sea and that ray betook herself to the Most Great Orb. Be happy and thankful because thou wilt see her face shining in the divine Kingdom and wilt find her as a lamp amid an assembly in the spiritual heaven.

Abdu'l-Baha, (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v. 1, p. 179).

Prayers for the dead:

O my God! O Thou forgiver of sins, bestower of gifts, dispeller of afflictions! Verily, I beseech Thee to forgive the sins of such as have abandoned the physical garment and have ascended to the spiritual world. O my Lord! Purify them from trespasses, dispel their sorrows, and change their darkness into light. Cause them to enter the garden of happiness, cleanse them with the most pure water, and grant them to behold Thy splendours on the loftiest mount.

Abdu'l-Bahá, (Bahá'í Prayers, pp. 45-6).



Believing - Not - Belonging

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the
wind and to melt into the sun?
And what is it to cease breathing but to free the
breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and
expand and seek God unencumbered?
Only when you drink from the river of silence
shall you indeed sing.
And when you have reached the mountain top,
then you shall begin to climb.
And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then
shall you truly dance.
Kahlil Gibran.

Transcendence

In those last days of war, in 1918,
the soldier poet Wilfred Owen seemed to change

there, under the mess of wire, of trampled
horses,
trampled men, a mire mile after long mile
to the very edges of the sky
this stark, raving madness of a landscape

it is as though one night on sentry duty
underneath the whole galleon of the moon
all lay clear for him, as men slept
those precious hours before the dawn

and somehow he was transformed
for something plated him, scaled him silver –
radiant, flickering –
and in those last days, his own last days,
he did not walk, he flew.
Kenneth Steven.

Death

I become aware that it is now time to leave this body of mine..... time to move on.... to let go of the old and the familiar...and to move into newness.

I begin to experience myself as separate from my body.... I am not my body I am not this tired, and worn out body.

I am an eternal soul, the living being peaceful... pure, loving energy. ...I never die.

I am the actor and this body is my costume. It has served me well.... ...but, now it is time...time to move on everything I had to do in this body, has been done....there are no regrets

Nothing is wasted...all that I am goes with me.....with love and appreciation, I thank my body for serving me.....housing me ...

and enabling me to share love and life.

Life and living has also been about making mistakes..... I forgive others and most of all I forgive myself!

Now, it is time.....time to move on. I can no longer sustain this physical body. Deep inside of me, new understanding grows and I begin to withdraw the energy of I the soul from this body.

....I give myself permission to let go and move on....I choose to move on.....it is time to release and withdraw...to let go of this heavy body.

Tiny threads that still hold me unravel and with the light of wisdom and understanding....I allow myself to move up and away from the body... the costume. Gently....slowly..... peacefully away from the body....higher and higher..... floating in a sea of peace and love.... slowly...gently.....on golden wings of love and light I fly.

I the soul, full of radiant spiritual energy feel light.....so light weightless. free.....so free.....so peaceful..... no longer tied to this body made of matter.....I am a radiant being of light... surrounded by light..... gently pulled by the Source of purest light, unconditional love and eternal peace.

Susan Balmforth.

Bereavement

To the sufferers be spirited, remember cancer is limited.

It can't cripple love, can't shatter hope,

It can't destroy confidence, can't kill friendship

It can't shut out memories, can't silence courage,

It can't invade the soul, can't reduce eternal life,

It can't conquer the spirit, so let's cherish every minute.

Time goes away too fast, so let's make these moments last.

Life is hard, life is tough, you need to be strong and never give up.

Face each day and what it brings, and you'll be ready for anything.

Sparkling like a diamond which never rusts,

The heart is filled with love and a lot of trust.

The hardest thing to do when you're facing a crisis,

is to have the biggest, warmest smile.... priceless moments.

If you have ever lost someone you loved and you felt like letting go

and giving up, just try and stay strong.

Though their legacies stay strong in our memories, it was time to move on, I guess it was meant to be,

We love you, miss you, God bless and rest in peace.

Lakhhbir.

Loss

Oh no, it's happening to me again ...
No-- not again- I feel lost – alone-- where am I?
Hopes dashed. Thoughts arrive fast...
I could just give up ...
I should... is there any other way out?
A light seems to go on in the back of my mind...
I open my eyes slowly
not everything is bleak – unless I think it so
Not all is lost. ..
only if I continue –to self-blame- the despair is there
but if I move on – and move over a bit--
move over gently... into silence, softness, light
peacefulness, calm.
Hope ... stillness ... I feel safe
a sense of worth. I remember I am peace – -
I am light
there is hope again.
I am light and am loved and protected.
I am a being of light and peace
emitting light and peace energy all around me,
radiating positive energy into the world.
I stay with this-- to blame and judge myself is not peace ...
is not I but an aberration, a false image of the self ...
I watch it move away from me and dissolve in the light.
I am peace and light energy.
With this awareness I can hold hope and send a signal
of love, peace and hope into the world.
Kala Mistry.



Buddhism

A single day lived in awareness
of the transient nature of life
is of greater value than a hundred years
lived unaware of birth and death.

*p 41, verse 113, A Dhammapada for
Contemplation,*

a rendering by Ajahn Munindo (2006).

.....

The King of Death cannot find
those who look upon the world
as insubstantial,
as transient, a bubble --
illusive, only a mirage.

*p 60, verse 170, A Dhammapada for
Contemplation,*

a rendering by Ajahn Munindo (2006)

.....

Just as family and friends joyfully welcome home
loved ones returned from afar, so do their own
good deeds welcome those that that have done
them as they go from this life to the next.

*p 76, vv. 219-220, A Dhammapada for
Contemplation,*

a rendering by Ajahn Munindo (2006)

.....

When somebody close to you dies, the shock
alone is enough to concentrate the mind. Death
is an existential situation, and you don't have to
sit down and meditate on impermanence at a
time like that – you just need to maintain a clear
awareness of what is happening in and around
you, observe your reactions and responses, and
try to understand why you think and feel the way
you do. One thing you will almost certainly feel
is fear. By its very nature, death threatens one's
whole being. The instinct for survival is so strong
that when death comes close, it is a terrifying
experience, because one identifies so completely
with the body.

*Sangharakshita, Living with Awareness,
Windhorse Publications (2003) p 69.*

Christianity

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die,
but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the
twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the
trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised
imperishable, and we will be changed.

For this perishable body must put on
imperishability, and this mortal body must put
on immortality. When this perishable body puts
on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on
immortality, then the saying that is written will be
fulfilled:

'Death has been swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death is your sting?

*Paul's 1st. Letter to the Corinthians, Ch. 15, vv.
51- 55, New Testament, The Bible.*

.....

Nearer, my God, to thee,
nearer to thee!

E'en though it be a cross
that raiseth me,
still all my song shall be,
'Nearer, my God, to thee,
nearer to thee!

There let the way appear,
Steps unto heaven;

All that thou sendest me

In mercy given;

Angels to beckon me

Nearer my God, to thee,

nearer to thee.

*Sarah Adams words have comforted many
people facing death.*

We seem to give them back to you, O God who gave them to us.
Yet as we did not lose them in giving, so we do not lose them in return.
Not as the world gives, do you give, O Lover of souls.
What you give you do not take away,
For what is ours is yours also if we are yours.
And life is eternal and love immortal, and death is only an horizon,
And an horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight.
Lift us up, Strong Son of God, that we may see further;
Cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly;
Draw us closer to yourself
That we may know ourselves to be nearer to our loved ones
Who are with you.

This is the Anima Christi as in the St Benedict's Prayer Book. Although Jesus – centred, it tries to find words after the numb moments of shock and anger of death. Something available to read with a companion nearby. The final 5 lines can be used as a prayer after silence.

.....

Soul of my Saviour, sanctify my breast,
Body of Christ, be thou my saving guest,
Blood of my Saviour, bathe me in thy tide,
Wash me with water flowing from thy side.

Guard and defend me from the foe malign,
In death's dread moments make me only thine;
Call me and bid me come to thee on high
Where I may praise thee with thy saints for ay.
Latin hymn from the 14th century.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

In our lives, sickness comes to loved ones, accidents leave their cruel marks of remembrance, and tiny legs that once ran are imprisoned in a wheelchair. Mothers and fathers who anxiously await the arrival of a precious child sometimes learn that all is not well with this tiny infant. A missing limb, sightless eyes, a damaged brain, or the term "Down syndrome" greets the parents, leaving them baffled, filled with sorrow, and reaching out for hope.

There follows the inevitable blaming of oneself, the condemnation of a careless action, and the perennial questions: "Why such a tragedy in our family?" "Why didn't I keep her home?" "If only he hadn't gone to that party." "How did this happen?" "Where was God?" "Where was a protecting angel?" If, why, where, how—those recurring words—do not bring back the lost son, the perfect body, the plans of parents, or the dreams of youth. Self-pity, personal withdrawal, or deep despair will not bring the peace, the assurance, or help which are needed. Rather, we must go forward, look upward, move onward, and rise heavenward.

It is imperative that we recognize that whatever has happened to us has happened to others. They have coped and so must we. We are not alone. Heavenly Father's help is near.

President Thomas S. Monson - "Miracles of Faith," Ensign, (July 2004) pp. 2–7.



We need to understand the principle of compensation. The Lord compensates the faithful for every loss. That which is taken away from those who love the Lord will be added unto them in His own way. While it may not come at the time we desire, the faithful will know that every tear today will eventually be returned a hundredfold with tears of rejoicing and gratitude.

One of the blessings of the gospel is the knowledge that when the curtain of death signals the end of our mortal lives, life will continue on the other side of the veil. There we will be given new opportunities. Not even death can take from us the eternal blessings promised by a loving Heavenly Father. Because Heavenly Father is merciful, a principle of compensation prevails.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin - "Come What May, and Love It," Ensign (November, 2008) pp. 26–28.

.....

If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and short life would be calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the pre-mortal past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective.

Is there not wisdom in his giving us trials that we might rise above them, responsibilities that we might achieve, work to harden our muscles, sorrows to try our souls? Are we not exposed to temptations to test our strength, sickness that we might learn patience, death that we might be immortalized and glorified?

If all the sick for whom we pray were healed, if all the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled and the basic principle of the gospel, free agency, would be ended. No man would have to live by faith.

If joy and peace and rewards were instantaneously given the doer of good, there could be no evil—all would do good but not because of the rightness of doing good. There would be no test of strength, no development of character, no growth of powers, no free agency, only satanic controls.

Should all prayers be immediately answered according to our selfish desires and our limited understanding, then there would be little or no suffering, sorrow, disappointment, or even death, and if these were not, there would also be no joy, success, resurrection, nor eternal life and godhood.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): Former President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – "Questions and Answers," Liahona (February, 2001) p. 22.

Hinduism

Death is not extinguishing the light; it is putting out the lamp because dawn has come.
Rabindranath Tagore.

.....

The holy *Bhagvad Gita* tells us that you can kill people, but you can never kill a soul. No weapon can cleave it, no fire can burn it, because the soul is immortal. The Gita also says: "For death is certain to one who is born...thou shalt not grieve for what is unavoidable."

These wise words from the Gita will console the grieving heart in our saddest moments.

"na jaayate mriyate vaa kadaachin naayam bhutva bhavita vaana bhooyah: |
ajo nityah shaashvato'yam puraano na hanyate' hanyamaane' shareere"||

Meaning: "Never is he (Soul) born, nor does he die at any time, he has never been brought into being, nor shall come hereafter; unborn, eternal, permanent and ancient (primeval). When the body is slain, he is not slain."

"vaasaamsi jeernaani yathaa vihaaya navaani grihnaati naro' paraani |
tathaa sareeraani vihaaya jeernany-anyaani samyaati navaani de'hi" ||

Meaning: "As a man casts off worn-out garments and puts on new ones, so the embodied soul casts off the worn-out body and enters other new ones."

"nainam chindanthi shastraani nainam dahati paavakah |
na ch'ainam kle'dayanth aapo' na sho'shayati maarutah" ||

Meaning: "No weapon can cleave him; nor the fire burn him, no waters can make him wet, nor the wind dry him up."

"jaatasya hi dhruvo mrityur dhruvam janma mritasya cha |
tasmaad aparihaaryethe' na twam sochitum-arhasi" ||

Meaning: "For death is certain to one who is born; to one who is dead, birth is certain; therefore, thou shalt not grieve for what is unavoidable."

Bhagvad Gita.

.....

Strength is Life, Weakness is Death.
Expansion is Life, Contraction is Death.
Love is Life, Hatred is Death.
Swami Vivekananda.

.....

If you think about disaster, you will get it. Brood about death and you hasten your demise. Think positively and masterfully, with confidence and faith, and life becomes more secure, more fraught with action, richer in achievement and experience.

Swami Vivekananda.

Humanism

Eternal Love

We both knew it was time for you to go and I, with dread, would face the emptiness, the unrelenting loneliness, the unrelenting end. Your eyes gave me that one last look of love and-so it seemed-of something more. Its meaning I could not then comprehend.

And so you left I thought for good but still that look remained. And it was then I understood. This was not to be the end at all.

Your body may have gone, it's true. But bodies change from day to day, new cells are born as old decay, not so that inner self that makes you you, that changeless self lives on, lives through.

The love we share, much stronger than mere memory that fades, goes on and grows and floods back in cascades, and overwhelmed, my very being dissolves to merge with yours again.

You're with me when the dewdrops glisten at tomorrow's dawn. You're with me when the sun's rays lift the veil of misty morn. You're with me when the thrushes greet the day with song. I feel you at my side the whole day long.

When shadows lengthen, you're still at my side and when night falls and sleep takes rein, you're there once more, close to my heart again.

John Lacorte.

.....

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

Do not stand at my grave and weep; I am not there, I do not sleep. I am a thousand winds that blow. I am the diamond glints on snow. I am the sunlight on ripened grain. I am the gentle autumn rain. When you awaken in the morning's hush, I am the swift uplifting rush of quiet birds in circled flight. I am the soft stars that shine at night. Do not stand at my grave and cry; I am not there, I did not die.

Mary Frye.



Lights Out

I have come to the borders of sleep, the unfathomable deep forest where all must lose their way, however straight, or winding, soon or late; One cannot choose.

Many a road and track that, since the dawn's first crack, up to the forest brink, deceived the travellers, suddenly now blurs, and in they sink.

Here love ends; Despair, ambition ends, all pleasure and all trouble, although most sweet or bitter, here ends in sleep that is sweeter than tasks most noble.

There is not any book or face of dearest look that I would not turn from now to go into the unknown, I must enter and leave alone, I know not how.

The tall forest towers; Its cloudy foliage lowers ahead, shelf above shelf; Its silence I hear and obey that I may lose my way and myself.

Edward Thomas.



Sometimes in Grief

Sometimes, in grief, there is complete emptiness and desolation. We have to find our way past that and no-one can do it for us. And when grief fills our whole being and seems so completely overwhelming and destructive, we can see no way forward. Nor are we sure that we actually want to go forward. And when people tell us that we must, we feel they are being insensitive and cruel.

And yet, these people are right. We can either continue on into the depths and become the despair of our friends, self-pitying, self destructive, withering and shrinking towards our own demise, or we can learn to grow and live again.

No sensible person will ask us to deny our grief but they will ask us to grow so that our grief becomes part of a larger whole. People say that time heals and that the pain of grief lessens, but if they imply that we forget, then they could not be more wrong. When there is the loss of real love, we never forget, for we want to remember and cherish what we have had. We want to take our loved one into the future, but we must do that without allowing grief to destroy our own life, or harming the lives of others who love and care for us.

If we really are to work through our grief, and emerge restored, we have to learn how to be bigger, better, more complete. The best tribute that we can pay to those who have died, is to turn from death to life again and to live our lives positively and well. That way, we take our loved ones with us and keep them safe in our hearts for the rest of our days.

Adapted from Leslie Scrase.

Islam

Every soul shall have a taste of death.

Qur'an 3. 185.

.....

Nor can a soul die except by God's leave the term being fixed as by writing. If any do desire a reward in this life, We shall give it to him; and if any do desire a reward in the Hereafter, We shall give it to him. And swiftly shall We reward those that (serve Us with) gratitude.

Qur'an 3. 145.

God Almighty has said: If My servant likes to meet Me, I like to meet him; and if he dislikes to meet Me, I dislike to meet him.

Saying of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him, taken from Sahih Bukhari.

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Oh people die before you die! Remember death frequently and prepare for its arrival and then you will have died before you die.

Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani d. 1166 , renowned scholar and saint of Persia.

.....

The duration of your life is but one breath. Take care that you master it and that it does not master you.

Abu Madyan d. 1198. Scholar and poet of Islam from North Africa.

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Life is short, time is precious, death is near and the distance to travel is great, while the moment of standing before God to account for everything, however seemingly insignificant, is daunting and difficult.

Al Haddad d. 1634, scholar of Islam from Yemen.

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Gird up your loins for death. Death shall surely meet you. Do not be angry at death when it comes to your valley.

Ali Ali Ibn Abi Talib, son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon Him.

.....

Oh God grant us wakefulness before death,
Repentance before death,
Guidance before death,
Knowingness before death,
Doing business with You before death,
Returning to Your door before death,
And entering into the abode of Your nearness before death
Amen

Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani d. 1166 , renowned scholar and saint of Persia.

.....

The advanced Sufi is forever recalling death, for it is the time appointed for seeing the countenance of the Friend, and no lover can ever forget the time fixed for meeting his beloved. He would love to be swallowed up by death so that, being freed from this dwelling place of sinners, he might rise to the abode near his Friend, just as Huzaifa relates: "O God, You know that I prefer poverty to riches - sickness to health, and death to life. Make death easy for me, that I might arrive at my reward . . . You! Sheikhs Sharifuddin Maneri d. 1381, saint and scholar from India.

Jainism

Death is separation of the soul from the physical body. Death becomes the starting point of a new and better life. Death is only gateway to a fuller life.

Hun chhu anath maro zalyo re haath
Vinavu chhu prabhu! Parasnath
Hun chhu pravasi, nathi koino prabhu! Parasnath

I am an orphan, hold my hand,
I ask Lord Parasnath, let me in,
I am traveller, all alone! I ask Lord Parasnath, let me in.
Hun Chhu Anath, Jain Stavan.

He Nath Jodi Hathe paye premthi sav lagiye
Sharanu male sachu tamru Ae radayathi magiye
Je Jiv Aaviyo Aap Pase charanma Apanavjo
Parmatama Ae Atamane Chir Shanti Apajo

We put our hands together and bow to your feet,
From our heart, we hope to find the right path to you,
Please accept the departed soul and welcome him,
Oh Lord Prarthana, give the soul long-lasting peace.
Antim Prarthana.



Judaism

Memorial prayer

Oh Lord and King, full of mercy, God of the spirits of all flesh, in whose hand are the souls of the living and the dead, accept, we beseech You, in Your great kindness, the soul of the departed, who has been gathered unto his/her people. Have pity and show mercy to him/her, pardon and forgive all his/her transgressions, for there is no-one on earth so righteous as to have only done good and never sinned. Remember the good deeds that s/he did, and may his/her reward be with him/her and his/her deeds go before him/her. Protect, we beseech You, his/her soul in the shadow of Your wings, show him/her the way of life, and grant him/her the great goodness that is reserved for the righteous. Oh Lord, who mends the broken-hearted and heals their hurt, send comfort to the mourners, grant them strength and fortitude in the day of their grief and distress, and remember them and all their family for a good and long life. Put in their hearts to love and to revere you and to serve you with a sincere heart, and may their future be peace. Amen.

As a person whose mother comforts him, so I shall comfort you, and in Jerusalem shall you be comforted. The sun will no more set for you, nor will the moon wane, for the Lord will be your light for ever, and the days of your mourning will be completed.

He shall eradicate death for all eternity, and the Lord God shall wipe the tears from every face; He will remove the shame of His people from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

At the bedside of a dying person

I sit with you now and do not know if you can hear me
I watch your breathing and wonder when the last breath will come. When will you really be gone?
What of you is left here with me? I sit and I remember who you were, who I was with you; Now we
are both someone else and the link between us is altered. Do you know I am here? And does it
bring you comfort? Do you want me to leave, am I holding you tethered to this place? I want to ask
you and yet I am so frightened. Do you want to leave? Am I in your way? I would ask God for your
release. I would ask God for my release. But I do not know what it is I really want to be released into.
Or where you would go.

But I sit with you now and do not know if you can feel me
Loving you, and crying, letting go.

Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild, from Really Useful Prayers, ed. Jonathan Romain.

Upon a miscarriage

Eternal our God,
For a time You gave us the hope of a new life,
Placed us in the expectation of a new awakening.
Now in Your wisdom,
You have taken that hope from us,
Have delayed, for reasons only known to You,
The arrival of that new soul into our world.

God, we thank You still for the hope You gave us,
And pray that You may renew in us that hope in time to come;
Though the pain of our disappointment is real and deep
We acknowledge still that You are our God,
You renew life beyond death,
You give, and take away,
You hold all our souls in the palm of Your hand.

May it be Your will to give us, once more,
The chance to share with You
In the bringing of new life to this our world;

May it be Your will that we shall be strengthened,
Both by our hopes
And our disappointments,
And learn to love the more deeply, that which we have
Blessed are You, God, who shares the sorrow of Your creation.

*Rabbi Walter Rothschild from Really Useful Prayers,
ed. Jonathan Romain*



Paganism

What dies does not pass out of the universe. If it remains here and is changed, then here too it is resolved into the everlasting constituents, which are elements of the universe and of you yourself. These too change, and make no complaint of it.

Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, VIII.18.

.....

Every one leaves life as though he had just been born.

Epicurus (341 – 270 BCE) Vatican Collection 60.

.....

Cattle die, kinsfolk die,
Even to us ourselves will death come
But one thing I know will never die –
The reputation we all leave behind at our death.
The Havamal, 77 (pre-8th C. CE).

.....

We are all sprung from heavenly seed. All alike have the same father, from whom all-nourishing mother earth receives the showering drops of moisture. Thus fertilized, she gives birth to smiling crops and lusty trees, to mankind and all the breeds of beasts. She it is that yields the food on which they all feed their bodies, lead their joyous lives and renew their race. So she has well earned the name of mother. In like manner this matter returns: what came from earth goes back into the earth; what was sent down from the ethereal vault is readmitted to the precincts of heaven. Death does not put an end to things by annihilating the component particles but by breaking up their conjunction. Then it links them in new combinations,...

Lucretius (99 – 55 BCE) "On The Nature Of The Universe" II.990-1006.

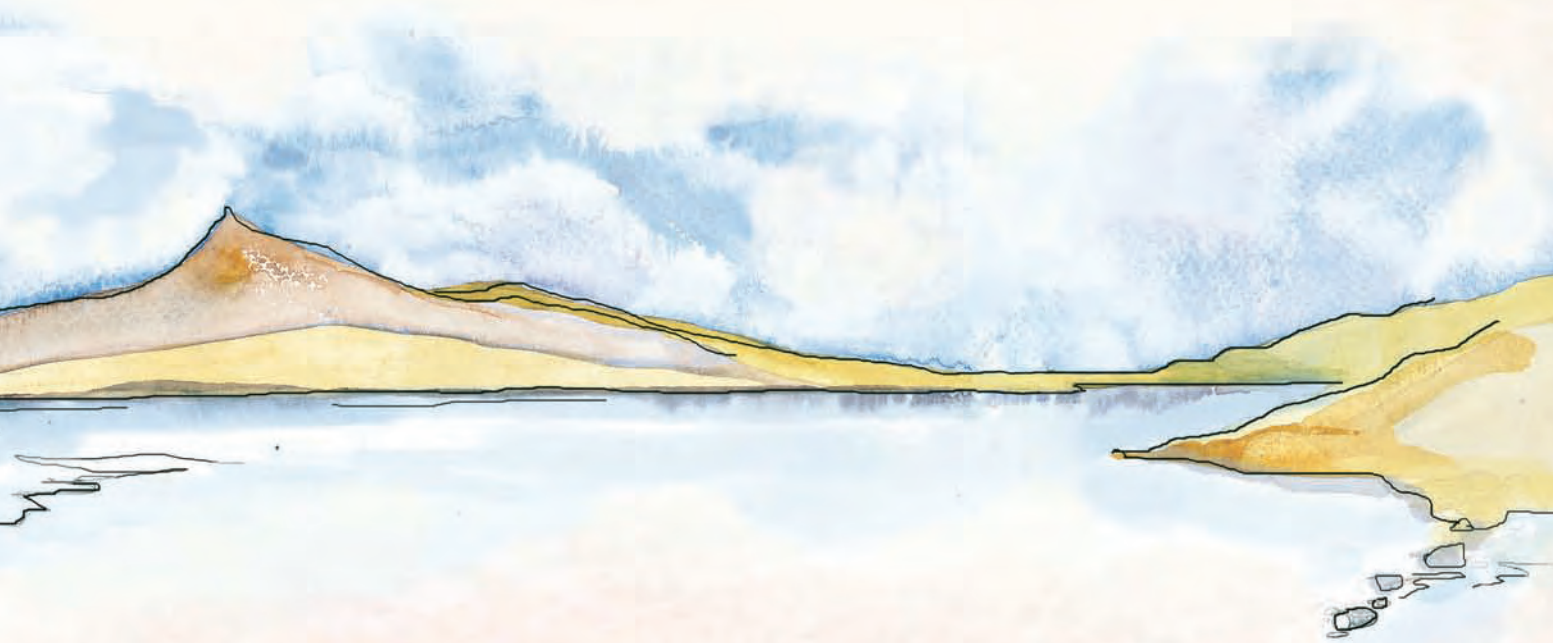
.....

Always, humans wish to stop the passage of time and to cling to that which is outworn and has lost its usefulness; but to cling to stasis is to cling to illusion – for the message of the cosmos is change. Today, many of us are separated from the world of Nature and it is no longer outside the hut door to teach us the lessons of life and death. Separated from Nature, we grow in illusion. We forget the message of change which leads to transmutation. Our own problems assume overwhelming proportions, when in terms of the millennia in which Nature operates, they are as nothing. When our problems seem too great we can go to a high place in the countryside and there, where the cries of the animals in the fields below fade into birdsong in the skies above, we can see that our individual selves are small in comparison with the greater whole, and so too are the problems and trials which inevitably beset us through our journey in manifestation. The method chosen by our ancestors to come to terms with the realities of existence is to celebrate the mysteries of life and death as seen in Nature; for it is in part through observation of the cycle of birth, death and rebirth in Nature that we understand that this too is our own fate – to be born, to die and to live again.

Vivianne Crowley (1994).

Do not stand at my grave and weep;
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there. I did not die.

Mary Elizabeth Frye (1932), subsequently adopted into Pagan oral tradition.



Sikh Dharam

Death is a natural process for all human beings and it is important to understand the purpose of all human life. This can ease the loss of family members and friends:

Aasaa Mahala 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Bha-ee paraapat maanukh dayhuree-aa.

This human body has been given to you.

Gobind milan kee ih tayree baree-aa.

This is your chance to meet the Lord of the Universe.

Avar kaaj tayrai kitai na kaam.

Nothing else will work.

Mil saadhsangat bhaj kayval naam.

Join the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy; vibrate and meditate on the Jewel of the Naam.

Saranjaam laag bhavjal taran kai.

Make every effort to cross over this terrifying world-ocean.

Janam baritha jaat rang maa-i-aa kai. ||1|| rahaa-o.

You are squandering this life uselessly in the love of Maya. ||1||Pause||

Jap tap sanjam dharam na kamaa-i-aa.

I have not practiced meditation, self-discipline, self-restraint or righteous living.

Sayvaa saadh na jaani-aa har raa-i-aa.

I have not served the Holy; I have not acknowledged the Lord, my King.

Kaho naanak ham neech karammaa.

Says Nanak, my actions are contemptible!

Saran paray kee raakho sarmaa.

O Lord, I seek Your Sanctuary; please, preserve my honour! ||2||4||

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 12

.....

This verse makes it clear that Sikhs must make use of their time through service and meditation to God. The first Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, devised three basic rules for all Sikhs to implement in their daily lives. Work hard to earn an honest living, share with others and meditate on the Lord's name. It is clear from the Holy Sikh Scriptures that death in the spiritual sense does not come to those who have led a fruitful life in service for God:

Raag Bihaagraa Mahala 3 (Composed by Guru Amar Das Ji, the 3rd Guru)

Kiaa jaanaa kiv marehagae kaisaa maranaa hoe.

What do I know? How will I die? What sort of death will it be?

Jae kar saahib manahu n veesarai thaa sehilaa maranaa hoe.

If I do not forget the Lord Master from my mind, then my death will be easy.

Maranai thae jagath ddarai jeeviaa lorrai sabh koe

The world is terrified of death; everyone longs to live.

Gur parasaadhee jeevath marai hukamai boojhai soe.

By Guru's Grace, one who dies while yet alive, understands the Lord's Will.

Naanak aisee maranee jo marai thaa sadh jeevan hoe.

O Nanak, one who dies such a death, lives forever.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 555

Caring and Community



Alzheimer’s

Chairs move by themselves, and books.
Grandchildren visit, stand
new and nameless, their faces puzzles
missing pieces. She’s like a fish

in deep ocean, its body made of light.
She floats through rooms, through
my eyes, an old woman bereft
of chronicle, the parable of her life.

And though she’s almost a child
there’s still blood between us:
I passed through her to arrive,
so I protect her from knives,

stairs, from the street that calls
as rivers do, a summons to walk away,
to follow. And dress her,
demonstrate how buttons work,

when she sometimes looks up
and says my name, the sound arriving
like the trill of a bird so rare
it’s rumoured no longer to exist.
Bob Hicok, Being Alive.

Things beyond our seeing, things beyond our
hearing, things beyond our imagining, have all
been prepared by God for those who love him.
1st Corinthians Ch.2, v. 9, New Testament, The Bible.

There is nothing in death or life, in the world
as it is, or the world as it shall be, nothing in all
creation that can separate us from the love of
God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans Ch. 8, vv. 38-39, New Testament, The Bible.

Looking Up

Why cry
when you can laugh?
It doesn’t cost you anything.
You can do it all your life.
You can put it in a wee envelope in your
baggage.
Or put it up on the wall
so that everyone can see it.

People think that you
need something beautiful
to make a beautiful picture.
But what you need is skill.
And the eye to see
that it is beautiful.

There’s beauty in everything
if you look for it:
the sky through the skylight,
in colours or not.
It depends on your mood.

Oh I went to look up in the sky
and saw it shining there
and said “That is Life”.
Are you going to take me
to see the sun?
Dementia Diary, Hawker, John Killick.

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain:
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.
Emily Dickinson.

The Blue Far Yonder

In the skies up high
with the clouds below you ---
that's where I'd like to be.

With the birds,
the little sparrows,
but I'll remain a man.

It's an attraction,
it's the spaces
that we can't reach.

I was up there one day
and got the sensation
I didn't want to come down.

I'd rather be
a creature of the air
than of the earth.
Openings (about dementia), Hawker, John Killick.

.....

O God, take control of me all through today.
Control my tongue
So that I may speak no angry word;
No cruel word;
No untrue word;
No ugly word.
Control my thoughts,
So that I may think
No impure thoughts
No bitter, envious or jealous thoughts;
No selfish thoughts.
Control my actions,
So that all through today
My work may be my best;
I may never be too busy to lend a hand to those
who need it;
I may do nothing of which afterwards I would be
ashamed.
All this I ask for Jesus' sake.
Amen.
William Barclay, in Steven, C.R., An Anthology of Hope.

Lord as I start another day
I lift my thoughts to you.
Let all I do and all I say
Be good and kind and true.
Let me help my fellow man,
Let my conscience be my guide;;
Lord help me do the best I can
Keep me ever by thy side;
And till this day comes to its end,
Be thou my saviour guide and friend.

Lord in the day that lies ahead,
Let me to you be true;
I ask that you will guide me,
In all I say and do.
Let me lend a helping hand
To those I meet in need;
May I say a word of comfort,
And do a kindly deed.
Let me show to others
Thy mercies kind and true,
That they may also find, dear Lord,
The joys of Life with you.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.



Baha'i Faith

We should all visit the sick. When they are in sorrow and suffering, it is a real help and benefit to have a friend come. Happiness is a great healer to those who are ill. In the East it is the custom to call upon the patient often and meet him individually. The people in the East show the utmost kindness and compassion to the sick and suffering. This has greater effect than the remedy itself. You must always have this thought of love and affection when you visit the ailing and affected.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Promulgation of Universal Peace, (1982 ed.) p. 204, 279 (Lights of Guidance, p. 278).

Briefly, all effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity. This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people. Service is prayer. A physician ministering to the sick, gently, tenderly, free from prejudice and believing in the solidarity of the human race, he is giving praise'. When giving medical treatment turn to the Blessed Beauty, then follow the dictates of thy heart. Remedy the sick by means of heavenly joy and spiritual exultation, cure the sorely afflicted by imparting to them blissful glad tidings and heal the wounded through His resplendent bestowals. When at the bedside of a patient, cheer and gladden his heart and enrapture his spirit through celestial power. Indeed, such a heavenly breath quickeneth every mouldering bone and reviveth the spirit of every sick and ailing one.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" sec. 131, p. 151.

The perfect human sentiments and virtues: You live to do good and to bring happiness to others. Your greatest longing is to comfort those who mourn, to strengthen the weak, and to be the cause of hope to the despairing soul. Day and night your thoughts are turned to the Kingdom, and your hearts are full of the Love of God.

Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 113.

Concern yourselves with one another. Help along one another's projects and plans. Grieve over one another. Let none in the whole country go in need. Befriend one another until ye become as a single body, one and all...[1]

1 Cf "Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" rev.ed. Haifa Bahá'í World Centre (1982), Sec. 102, pp. 128-29.

Bahá'u'lláh gives the assurance that, through harmonious cooperation of patients, healers and the community in general, and by appropriate use of the various means to health, material, mental and spiritual, the Golden Age may be realized, when, by the Power of God, "all sorrow will be turned into joy, and all disease into health."

Dr. J.E. Esslemont, Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 114.



Believing - Not - Belonging

Protection:

I adjure Thee by Thy might, O my God! Let no harm beset me in times of tests, and in moments of heedlessness guide my steps aright through Thine inspiration. Thou art God, potent art Thou to do what Thou desirest. No one can withstand Thy Will or thwart Thy Purpose.

The Báb, Baha'i Prayers, p. 28.

Immeasurably exalted art Thou, O Lord! Protect us from what lieth in front of us and behind us, above our heads, on our right, on our left, below our feet and every other side to which we are exposed. Verily, Thy protection over all things is unfailing.

The Bab, Baha'i Prayers, p. 134.

For the departed:

O my God! O my God! Verily, thy servant, humble before the majesty of Thy divine supremacy, lowly at the door of Thy oneness, hath believed in Thee and in Thy verses, hath testified to Thy word, hath been enkindled with the fire of Thy love, hath been immersed in the depths of the ocean of Thy knowledge, hath been attracted by Thy breezes, hath relied upon his supplications to Thee, and hath been assured of Thy pardon and forgiveness. He hath abandoned this mortal life and hath flown to the kingdom of immortality, yearning for the favor of meeting Thee.

O Lord, glorify his station, shelter him under the pavilion of Thy supreme mercy, cause him to enter Thy glorious paradise, and perpetuate his existence in Thine exalted rose garden, that he may plunge into the sea of light in the world of mysteries.

Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Powerful, the Forgiver and the Bestower.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Baha'i Prayers, p. 38.

Oh, the comfort
the inexpressible comfort
of feeling safe with a person.
Having neither to weigh thoughts
Nor measure words
But pouring them
All right out, just as they are
Chaff and grain together,
Certain that a faithful hand will
Take and sift them,
And with the breath of kindness
Blow the rest away.

Dinah Craik.

Brahma Kumaris

Caring

Taking courage into our hands
Hands that cope in crisis
That care and caution
Hands that create the future

Extending our compassion
Holding the world in our heart
Keeping the commitment to carrying through
An instinct to preserve

Moving past the many barriers
Seen and unseen
which block our progress
Becoming who we are in a whole sense

Not driven by competition
But drawn together by a passion
to secure a world built on trust.

The impossible becomes possible.
Your face sparkles
You create your spiritual fortune.
You will be stable and free from influences.
God's vision will fall on you and your heart will overflow.

Christine Bell.

Community

Imagine the most beautiful tree possible. It is vibrant and energetic and alive. It is red and gold and the palest of yellow. There are dark leaves and light ones. Flowers and fruits, berries and leaves and branches of every size are growing together, vibrant and energetic and alive.

This tree is humanity. It is us. It is you and it is me.

Look again and see it as it is now, in this age. Flowers are dropping and fruit is withering. Some of the branches are dying. Its beauty is becoming dark.

We need all the flowers and fruit, all the colours and textures...all the differences. That's what makes it beautiful. It needs help. It needs us.

We need to send love to every branch - to gather it up like an invisible gift and wrap it with our most heartfelt, caring wishes. Then, with the power of thought, we can send this gift to the whole tree.

After all, we are the ones, every one of us, who will awaken one morning to find the gift in our own hands. Ours to hold

Barbara Bossert Ramsay, New Delhi Peace Pavilion 2006.

Buddhism

These three ways
lead to the heavens;
asserting the truth,
not yielding to anger,
and giving, even if you have
only a little to share.

*p 78, verse 224, A Dhammapada for Contemplation,
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo, 2006.*



Christianity

Almighty God,
who gave such grace to your apostle Saint Andrew
that he readily obeyed the call of your Son Jesus Christ
And brought his brother with him:
call us by your holy word,
and give us grace to follow you without delay
and to tell the good news of your kingdom
The Collect for St Andrew's-tide revives the call to work and act together.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.
Book of Mormon (Mosiah 2: 17).

.....

One of the great tragedies of life, it seems to me, is when a person classifies himself as someone who has no talents or gifts. When, in disgust or discouragement, we allow ourselves to reach depressive levels of despair because of our demeaning self-appraisal, it is a sad day for us and a sad day in the eyes of God. For us to conclude that we have no gifts when we judge ourselves by stature, intelligence, grade-point average, wealth, power, position, or external appearance is not only unfair but unreasonable.
From D&C 46:11–12, we have this truth: "For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby."
God has given each of us one or more special talents. Socrates made the famous statement, "The unexamined life is not worth living"
"Apology," The Dialogues of Plato, trans. Benjamin Jowett, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica (1952) p. 210.

.....

It is up to each of us to search for and build upon the gifts which God has given. We must remember that each of us is made in the image of God, that there are no unimportant persons. Everyone matters to God and to his fellowmen.
We must remember that to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. It is our right and responsibility to accept our gifts and to share them. God's gifts and powers are available to all of us.
Marvin J. Ashton (1915 – 1994), Former Member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles - "There Are Many Gifts" Ensign, November (1987) p. 20.

.....

I have wept in the night
For the shortness of sight
That to somebody's need made me blind;
But I never have yet
Felt a tinge of regret
For being a little too kind.
Anon.



Hinduism

Help your brother's boat across, and your own will reach the shore.
Hindu Proverb.

Humanism

Words of Comfort

When you're crawling and broken, I'll help you to stand; when you're lost in the darkness, just reach for my hand. If you run from your fear, you can run to my side; when confused at the cross-roads, I'll then be your guide. When despair washes round you, I'll row you to shore; if you lock out the world, I'll be there at your door. If you fail, I'll support you – if you win, I'll be proud; when strangers surround you, I'll be there in the crowd.

When you're restless and wakeful, I'll soothe you to sleep; I'll offer my shoulder whenever you weep. Should you lash out in anger, I'll understand why; if you spurn my advice, I'll continue to try. If you need time alone, then I'll just disappear; but when you feel lonely, just ask and I'm here. I'll shelter your spirit and keep your soul warm; my barrier's high, it can hold off a storm.

I'll be there to protect you and banish your sorrow; I'll also be there as pain clouds lift tomorrow. And then when you're flying and joy breaks free; look down and the happiest wave will be me. I'll laugh with your laughter and cry at its end, and I'll always be here if you need me - my friend.
Emma Burrell.

Community

There's a narrow strip of birch wood by a busy railway track where the blackbirds sing superbly and the trains rush there and back. So I wander in the birch wood with the burdens of the day 'til my peace of mind takes over and all burdens slip away.

There's a glory in that birch wood, seldom seen and seldom known to the folk who trundle to and fro', for cash they'll never own. It's the glory of the sunshine and the glory of the rain, the healing of the scars of life, the easing of our pain.

But it's not the birch wood heals us, nor the sunshine, nor the rain, nor the blackbird singing blithely, nor the rushing of the train, but the healing of community when wounds are deep and sore and the human hand of friendship and the warmth of love once more.

Anon.

Islam

Thy Lord hath decreed, that ye worship none save Him, and (that ye show) kindness to parents. If one of them or both of them to attain old age with thee, say nothing ungrateful unto them nor repulse them, but speak unto them a gracious word.

Qur'an 17. 23.

.....

God says on the Day of Judgment to His Slave, "My Servant, I was Sick, and you didn't Visit Me." "Oh God". The slave will say, "How can I visit you, and you are the Lord of the Universe." God will say, "My servant so and so was sick, and you didn't visit him. Don't you know, if you visited him, you would have found Me with Him?"

Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Tirmidhi.

.....

A visitor walking to visit a sick person will be wading in the mercy of God. When the visitor sits with the sick one, they will be immersed in mercy until his or her return.

Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Imam Ahmed.

Jainism

One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated.

Mahavira, Sutrakritanga.

.....

In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard ourself.

Mahavira, Sutrakritanga.

All souls are alike. None is superior or inferior.
The Teachings of Lord Mahavir.

.....

He who is disinclined from killing the smallest living beings knows what suffering is because he who knows his own happiness and pains, knows others' too, and he who knows others' feelings knows his own feelings. This is the way one must compare himself with others. He who has obtained this knowledge would not wish to live at the expense of other living beings.
Acharang Sutra, Stanza 1. 6. 55.

.....

Sattvesu maitrim gunisa pramodam klistesu Jivesa Krapapartvam Madhyasthyabhavam Viparita
Vrattan Sada mamatma Vidhadhatudeva.

Oh Lord, I should be friendly to all the creatures of world and feel delight in meeting the virtuous people. I should always be helpful to those who are in miserable conditions and tolerant to my opponents.
Acarya Amitagati.

Judaism

[Rabbi Chaninah ben Dosa] used to say: anyone from whom the spirit of his fellows derives satisfaction, from him the spirit of the All-Present derives satisfaction. But anyone from whom the spirit of fellows derives no satisfaction, from him the spirit of the All-Present derives no satisfaction.
Talmud, Ethics of the Fathers, Ch. 3, Mishna 10.

.....

[Ben Azai] used to say: despise not any man, and do not discriminate against any thing, for there is no man that has not his hour, and there is no thing that has not its place.
Talmud, Ethics of the Fathers, Ch. 4, Mishna 3.

.....

There are four types of temperament:
easy to anger, and easy to pacify – their gain is swallowed up by their loss;
hard to anger, and hard to pacify – their loss is swallowed up by their gain;
hard to anger and easy to pacify – they are pious;
easy to anger and hard to pacify – they are wicked people.
Talmud, Ethics of the Fathers, Ch 5, Mishna 11.



Paganism

Let us share our friends' suffering not with laments but with thoughtful concern.
Epicurus (341 – 270 BCE) Vatican Collection 66.

.....

..caring for all men is according to man's nature;...
Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, III. 4.

.....

You should meditate often on the connection of all things in the universe and their relationship to each other. In a way all things are interwoven and therefore have a family feeling for each other: one thing follows another in due order through the tension of movement, the common spirit inspiring them, and the unity of all being.
Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE), Meditations, VI. 38.

.....

Community counters estrangement – it reconnects us with others and with the natural community that surrounds and sustains us.
Miriam Simos (1982).

Sikh Dharam

Bhairo Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Too mayraa pitaa toohai mayraa maataa.

You are my Father, and You are my Mother.

Too mayray jee-a paraan sukh-daata.

You are my Soul, my Breath of Life, the Giver of Peace.

Too mayraa thaakur ha-o daas tayraa.

You are my Lord and Master; I am Your slave.

Tujh bin avar nahee ko mayraa.

Without You, I have no one at all.

Kar kirpaa karahu parabh daat.

Please bless me with Your Mercy, God, and give me this gift,

Tumhree ustat kara-o din raat. ||1|| rahaa-o.

that I may sing Your Praises, day and night. ||1||Pause||

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p. 1144.



A Gift of Blessings



Healthcare Chaplains and Editor

Imichibh ann an sìth, ann an aoibhneas an Tighearna.
Agus gu robh beannachadh Dhè Uile- chumachdaich,
an t-Athair, am Mac, agus an Spiorad Naomh, maille ribh uile.

Go in peace, and may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you.
Gaelic Blessing, Anon.

.....

Gun coimheadadh sìth Dhè,
a tha thar gach uile thuigse,
ur criche agus ur n-inntin ann an Iosa Crìosd.
Agus gu robh beannachadh Dhè,
Uile chumhachdaich,
an t-Athair, am Mac, agus an Spiorad Naomh,
maille ribh a-nis agus gu sìorraidh.

May the peace of God, which goes beyond our human understanding, watch over our hearts and our thoughts in Jesus Christ. And may the blessing of God all powerful: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us now and always.
Gaelic Blessing, Philipians Ch. 4, v. 7, New Testament, The Bible.

.....

May the sun bring you new energy by day.
May the moon softly restore you by night.
May the rain wash away your sorrows.
May the breeze blow new strength
Into your being.
May you walk gently through the world, from this day forth and for ever more.
May the strength of the wind and the light of the sun,
The softness of the rain and the mystery of the moon
Reach you and fill you.
May beauty delight you and happiness uplift you,
May wonder fulfil you and love surround you.
May your step be steady and your arm be strong,
May your heart be peaceful and your word be true.
May you seek to learn, may you learn to live,
May you live to love.....and may you always know God holds you in the palm of his strong and caring hand. For God did love you first.
Celtic, Anon.



Gu robh gràdh an Tighearna Iosa
gur tarraing da ionnsaigh fhèin;
gu robh cumhachd an Tighearna Iosa
gur neartachadh 'na sheirbheis;
gu robh aoibhneas an Tighearna Iosa
a' lìonadh ur n'anama.

May the love of the Lord Jesus pull us towards himself;
may the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen us for service;
may the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our lives.
Gaelic Blessing, Anon.

.....

Sith dhomhain nan stuadh siùbhlach dhut.
Sith dhomhain an àile shruthaich dhut.
Sith dhomhain na talmhainn shàmhaich dhut.
Sith dhomhain nan reultain boillsgeach dhut.
Sith dhomhain Chrìosda, Mac an-t-sith, maille riut.

Deep peace of the running wave to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of Christ, the Son of Peace to you.
Gaelic Blessing, Anon.

[Editors note: It is recommended that in order to avoid confusion the Gaelic verses should only be read aloud if you are a native speaker or have been trained in the language.]

May the raindrops fall lightly upon your brow,
May the soft winds freshen your spirit,
May the sunshine brighten your heart,
May the burdens of the day rest lightly upon you,
And may God enfold you in the mantle of his love.
Irish Traditional.

Go gently,
feel the good earth beneath your feet,
celebrate the rising sun,
listen to the birds at dawn
walk gently under the silent stars
knowing that you are on holy ground.
Peter Millar.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.
Numbers Ch. 6, vv. 24-26, The Hebrew Bible.

Jesus says:
Let the children come to me; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it. And he put his arms round them, laid his arms on them, and blessed them.
Mark Ch. 10, vv. 13-16, New Testament, The Bible.

Child of my flesh, bone of my bone wherever you go, I will go, wherever you live, I will live. As you go into the mystery of life before us may you be at peace. That in God's good time we may be together in peace.
Stillborn and Neonatal Death Society.



Let nothing disturb you, nothing alarm you:
while all things fade away God is unchanging.
Be patient and you will gain everything: for with
God in your heart nothing is lacking, God meets
your every need. Amen.
St Teresa of Avila.

.....

For little children
To you dear Lord I pray;
Protect them keep and guide them ,
As they grow up good and true,
And learn to love and care;
Let us teach them Lord that you
For them are always there
To comfort and console them,
When they are in distress.
O Lord I pray that you will always
The little children bless.
Ian Russell, A Pocketful of Prayers.

.....

God be in my head
And in my understanding;
God be in my eyes
And in my looking;
God be in my mouth
And in my speaking;
God be in my heart
And in my thinking;
God be at my end
And at my departing.
Book of Hours 1514.

Beannacht (for Josie):

On the day when
The weight deadens
On your shoulders
And you stumble,
May the clay dance
To balance you.

And when your eyes
Freeze behind
The grey window
And the ghost of loss
Gets in to you,
May a flock of colours,
Indigo, red, green
And azure blue
Come to awaken in you
A meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays
In the curach of thought
And a stain of ocean
Blackens beneath you,
May there come across the waters
A path of yellow moonlight
To bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
May the clarity of light be yours,
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,
May the protection of the ancestors be yours,

And may a slow
Wind work these words
Of love around you,
An invisible cloak
To mind your life.
John O'Donohue, Anam Cara.



Baha'i Faith

He said: "We cannot in this world realize the bounty of God, nor can we appreciate His Love, but in the next world we can do so.

When man is in the world of the womb, God showers upon him all blessings. He gives him all the organs, eyes, ears, etc. But man cannot put this favour into use there; it is not manifest there. When the child is born from the world of the womb into this world, then all those blessings and gifts which God showered upon him in the world of the womb become manifest and useful. His gifts were not known in the world of the womb, though men did possess them there, but the world of the womb had not the capacity to receive the manifestation of these gifts. Similarly with the gifts and blessings which God showers upon man in this world. This world is not fit and has not the capacity for the manifestation of these gifts and blessings. But when man enters the World of the Kingdom, then those gifts will be manifested.
Diary of Juliet Thompson, p. 8.

Prayers for hardship and difficulties:

Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!
The Báb (Baha'i Prayers, p. 27).

O my Lord! Thou knowest that the people are encircled with pain and calamities and are environed with hardships and trouble. Every trial doth attack man and every dire adversity doth assail him like unto the assault of a serpent. There is no shelter and asylum for him except under the wing of Thy protection, preservation, guard and custody. O Thou the Merciful One! O my Lord! Make Thy protection my armour, Thy preservation my shield, humbleness before the door of Thy oneness my guard, and Thy custody and defence my fortress and my abode. Preserve me from the suggestions of self and desire, and guard me from every sickness, trial, difficulty and ordeal. Verily, Thou art the Protector, the Guardian, the Preserver, the Sufficer, and verily, Thou art the Merciful of the Most Merciful.

'Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i Prayers, pp. 136-13.

.....

Expectant mothers:

My Lord! My Lord! I praise Thee and I thank Thee for that whereby Thou hast favoured Thine humble maidservant, Thy slave beseeching and supplicating Thee, because Thou hast verily guided her unto Thine obvious Kingdom and caused her to hear Thine exalted Call in the contingent world and to behold Thy Signs which prove the appearance of Thy victorious reign over all things.

O my Lord, I dedicate that which is in my womb unto Thee. Then cause it to be a praiseworthy child in Thy Kingdom and a fortunate one by Thy favour and Thy generosity; to develop and to grow up under the charge of Thine education. Verily, Thou art the Gracious! Verily, Thou art the Lord of Great Favour!

'Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v. 1, p. 139 Bahá'í Prayers, p. 65. Prayers 9 p. 67.

.....

Children:

Praised be Thou, O Lord my God! Graciously grant that this infant be fed from the breast of Thy tender mercy and loving providence and be nourished with the fruit of Thy celestial trees. Suffer him not to be committed to the care of anyone save Thee, inasmuch as Thou, Thyself, through the potency of thy sovereign will and power, didst create and call him into being. There is none other God but Thee, the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

Lauded art Thou, O my Best Beloved, waft over him the sweet savors of Thy transcendent bounty and the fragrances of Thy holy bestowals. Enable him then to seek shelter beneath the shadow of Thy most exalted Name, O Thou Who holdest in Thy grasp the kingdom of names and attributes. Verily, Thou art potent to do what Thou willest, and Thou art indeed the Mighty, the Exalted, the Ever-Forgiving, the Gracious, the Generous, the Merciful.

Bahá'u'lláh, Baha'i Prayers, p. 33.

.....

O Peerless Lord! Be Thou a shelter for this poor child and a kind and forgiving Master unto this erring and unhappy soul. O Lord! Though we are but worthless plants, yet we belong to Thy garden of roses. Though saplings without leaves and blossoms, yet we are a part of Thine orchard. Nurture this plant then through the outpourings of the clouds of Thy tender mercy and quicken and refresh this sapling through the reviving breath of Thy spiritual springtime. Suffer him to become heedful, discerning and noble, and grant that he may attain eternal life and abide in Thy Kingdom for evermore.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Baha'i Prayers, p. 36.

O Thou most glorious Lord! Make this little maidservant of Thine blessed and happy; cause her to be cherished at the threshold of Thy oneness and let her drink deep from the cup of Thy love so that she may be filled with rapture and ecstasy and diffuse sweet-scented fragrance. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful, and Thou art the All- Knowing, the All-Seeing.

'Abdu'l-Baha (Handmaidens of God - Baha'i Prayers for Women).

Believing - Not - Belonging

For a newborn:

I lift up this newborn child to you.
You brought it to birth, you gave it life.
This child is a fresh bud on an ancient tree,
A new member of an old family.
May this fresh bud blossom.
May this child grow strong and righteous.
Kalahari Bushman's song, Africa.

May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
The rain fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again
(And we will meet again)
May love hold you in the palm of its hand.
Amen.

An Irish blessing.

Brahma Kumaris

In order to give blessings:

Have elevated thoughts for the self and others.
Have a generous and compassionate heart.
Be free from the desire of giving.
Only see the virtues and specialties of others.
Neither be impressed by others nor be influenced by their weaknesses.
Have constant good wishes in every situation.
Maintain your self respect by seeing your specialities.
Remain seated on God's Heart-throne.

In order to receive blessings:

Have an honest and open heart.
Serve with deep love.
Let the past be past.
Be obedient to God.
Surrender and let go of your weaknesses.
Let there be humility.
Use everything in a worthwhile way.
Maintain equanimity in praise and defamation.
Keep good company.
Remain tolerant.
Have the feeling of learning.
Dadi Janki.



Buddhism

Do not ignore the effect of right action saying, "This will come to nothing."

Just as by the gradual fall of raindrops
the water jar is filled,
so in time the wise
become replete with good.

p. 44, v. 122, *A Dhammapada for Contemplation*,
a rendering by Ajahn Munindo (2006).

.....

Giving is the natural, unforced interchange of
one's energy with that of others. In this sense real
giving is receiving.

*Sangharakshita, Unpublished seminar on the
Precious Garland by Nagarjuna.*

.....

Getting truly to know another human being is
like exploring a new continent – or another world.
One plunges into abysses, wanders among lofty
mountains, is lost in the depths of mysterious
forests, rests in bowers of roses with the brook
sparkling beside one and the birds singing in the
branches overhead, and stands on lonely shores
gazing out over the illimitable expanse of sunlit
waters.

*Sangharakshita, Peace is a Fire, Windhorse
Publications (1995) p. 65.*

Christianity

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them,
he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and
gave to them.

And their eyes were opened, and they knew him;
*Luke Ch. 24, vv. 30-31a, New Testament, The
Bible.*

.....

Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen

*The words of gratitude to God used in the
Anglican Prayer Book.*

.....

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ before me, Christ beside me.

Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger
*St Patrick's Breastplate: the prayer for blessing on
the journey attributed to St Patrick.*



Hinduism

Shubham Karoti Kalyanam, Arogyam Dhana Sampadah
Shatru Buddhi Vinashaya, Dipa Jyotir Namostute.

Meaning: "I fold my hands before the light that brings prosperity, auspiciousness, good health, abundance of wealth and destruction of the enemy's intellect". Here, Darkness symbolizes enemy's intellect and with the arrival of light, darkness disappears. Likewise, light (God's Grace) destroys darkness (enemy's intellect).

Karamkanda.

Asato maa satgamaya,
Tamaso maa jyotir gamaya
Mrityor maa amritan gamaya.

*Meaning: O Lord, Lead us from the unreal to the Real
Lead us from darkness to Light
Lead us from the fear of death
To knowledge of Immortality.*

My imperfections and failures are as much a blessing from God as my successes and my talents and I lay them both at his feet.
Mahatama Gandhi.

In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.
Mahatama Gandhi.

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers
but to be fearless in facing them.

Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain
but for the heart to conquer it.

Let me not look for allies in life's battlefield
but to my own strength.

Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved
but hope for the patience to win my freedom.

Grant me that I may not be a coward,
feeling your mercy in my success alone;
but let me find the grasp of your hand in my failure.
Rabindranath Tagore.



Saha naavavatu sahanau bhunaktu
Saha veeryam karavaavahai
Tejasvi naavadheetamastu maa vidvishaavahai.

Meaning: May He protect us both (teacher and the student)! May He cause us both to enjoy the bliss of Mukti (liberation)! May we both exert to discover the true meaning of the sacred scriptures! May our studies be fruitful! May we never quarrel with each other! Let there be threefold peace.
Upanishad (Ved).

.....

Om vishwaani deva savitar duritaani paraasuva
Yad bhadran tanma aasuva.

Meaning: O all pervading, Supreme Lord, the effulgent Creator, we place our faith and trust entirely in Thee. Keep away from us all that is evil and bestow upon us all that is good.
Veda.

.....

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah, Sarve santu niraamayaah
Sarve bhadraani pashyantu, Maakaschit duhkha bhaag bhavet.

Meaning: May all be happy! (sukhinah) May all be free from disabilities!
(niraamayaah)
May all look (pashyantu) to the good of others!, May all be free from suffering ! (duhkha)
Upanishad.

Humanism

Thankful am I that I have lived in this great world and known its many joys, the thrill of mountains and the morning air, hills and the lonely covered moors, harvest and the strong sweet scent of hay. A rock strewn river overhung with trees, shafts of sunlight in a valley leading to the sea, the beat of waves on rough and rocky shores and wild white spray flung high in ecstasy. The comfort of my home and treasured things, the love of kin and fellowship of friends, firelight and laughter and children at their play with hopes and dreams as their future beckons. The faithful eyes of dogs, companionship of cats, my garden rich from toil and all things dear and beautiful. The tapestry of life, joy and pain, is ours to live but once, and not again. When I look back upon my richly varied years, I crave no more, thankful that I have lived . . . so shed no tears.

Leslie Scrase



Islam

And whatever blessings and good you have, it is from God.

Qur'an 16. 53.

And if you were to count the blessings of Allah, you will never be able to count them.

Qur'an 14. 34.

Therein is fruit and date-palms, producing spathes (enclosing dates); Also corn, with (its) leaves and stalks for fodder, and sweet-smelling plants. Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny?

Qur'an 55. 11-13.

If you expect the blessing of God then be kind to his people.

Abu Bakr companion of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him.

God says "Whosoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him. My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it. I do not hesitate about anything as much as I hesitate about [seizing] the soul of my faithful servant: he hates death and I hate hurting him."

Saying of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him, taken from Sahih Bukhari.

The Messenger of God (Peace be upon him) said: Our Lord (glorified and exalted be He) descends each night to the earth's sky when there remains the final third of the night, and He says: Who is saying a prayer to Me that I may answer it? Who is asking something of Me that I may give it him? Who is asking forgiveness of Me that I may forgive him?

Saying of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him, taken from Sahih Bukhari.

The man who is either unable or lacks the energy to perform all the possible kinds of good works should not abandon them all, but should do whatever he finds easy and accessible. For goodness attracts goodness, the small attracts the great and a little invites plenty.

Al-Haddad d. 1694 scholar from Yemen.



Everything you seem to possess is merely a loan to you. Whether it be your youth, your good health, your leisure, your affluence, your poverty or your life itself, it is with you as a loan. So you had better take care of it.

Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani d. 1166 , scholar and saint of Persia.

.....

Know that the first condition of worship of God – may He be exalted and magnified – is knowledge of God and that the basis of knowledge of God is the recognition of His being One and that His unity demands the absolute negation of the possibility of describing God in answer to the questions: How? Where? And When?

Junayd d. 910, saint from Persia.

.....

Whoever knows all things without knowing God – great and glorious – is not worthy to be called wise because he does not know the most sublime and highest of all things.

Al-Ghazali d. 1111, renowned scholar from Persia.

.....

Jainism

One who, even after knowing the whole universe, can remain unaffected and unattached is God.

The Teachings of Lord Mahavir.

.....

Greed always increases with possessions. The more we get, the more we want. In the beginning, we desire for a little wealth and think that it will be sufficient for our needs. On acquiring it, we think that even millions will not be sufficient for our needs.

Uttarādhyayan Sutra.

.....

All living things love their life, desire pleasure and do not like pain; they dislike any injury to themselves; everybody is desirous of life and to every being, his life is very dear.

Yogashastra, Jain Scripture c. 500 BC.



Paganism

I am Nature, the universal Mother, mistress of all the elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things spiritual, queen of the dead, queen also of the immortals, the single manifestation of all the Gods and Goddesses that are. My nod governs the shining heights of Heaven, the wholesome sea-breezes, the lamentable silences of the world below. Though I am worshipped in many aspects, known by countless names, and propitiated with all manner of different rites, yet the whole round earth venerates me.

Lucius Apuleius, The Golden Ass (2nd C, CE).

.....

I call upon the Triple Goddess of the Circle of Rebirth, She who brings all life into being. She who shines in the night sky with beauty and enriches all the earth with mystery. She who is the wisdom of the stars, the pulse of blood, and the slow growth of trees. May Her presence guide me and Her blessing be upon me, for I am of Her creation.

Rae Beth (1990).

.....

I am a Pagan. The Earth is my Mother,
And the Heavens my Father.
My religion is the adoration of life.
All living things are part of my family.
I have walked this Earth before,
And be very sure, at this life's end,
I shall return.

Dan Hussey (2001).

JUDAISM

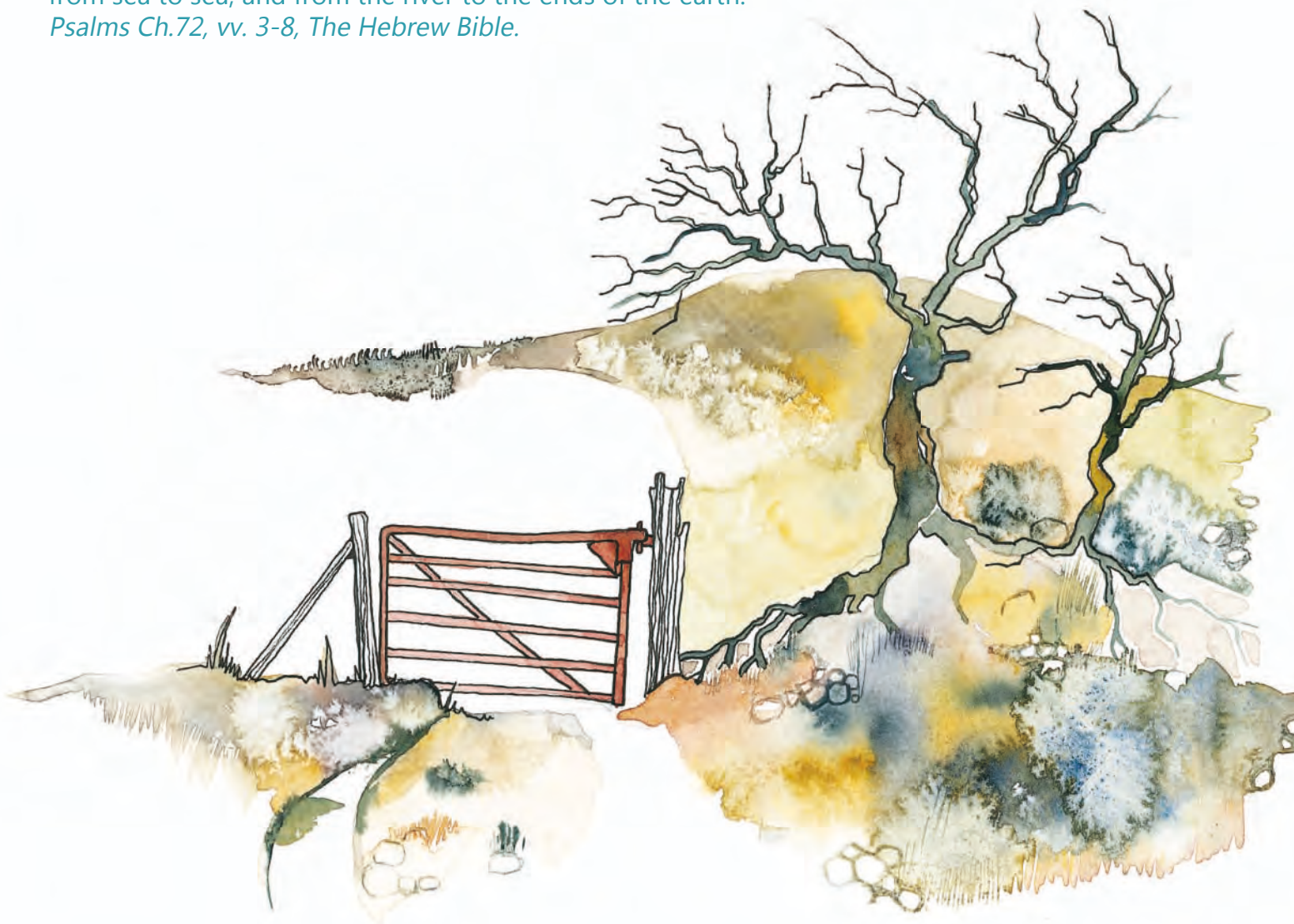
May God bless you and protect you,
May God shine His face upon you and be gracious to you
May God lift His face towards you and grant you peace.
Priestly Blessing, Numbers Ch.6, vv.24-26, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon us. You have put more gladness in my heart than they have whose grain and wine are increased. I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.
Psalms Ch. 4, vv. 7-9, The Hebrew Bible.

.....

Let the mountains bring peace to the people, and the hills, by righteousness. May he judge the poor of the people, may he save the children of the needy, and may he break in pieces the oppressor. May they fear you as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. May he come down like rain that falls on the mown grass; like showers that water the earth. Let the righteous flourish in his days; and let there be abundance of peace till the moon is no more. May he have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.
Psalms Ch.72, vv. 3-8, The Hebrew Bible.



Sireeraag Mehlaa 5 (Composed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Guru)

Sabhay thok paraapatay jay aavai ik hath.

All things are received if the One is obtained.

Janam padaarath safal hai jay sachaa sabad kath.

The precious gift of this human life becomes fruitful when one chants the True Word of the Shabad.

Gur tay mahal paraapatay jis likhi-aa hovai math.

One who has such destiny written on his forehead enters the Mansion of the Lord's Presence, through the Guru.

Mayray man aykas si-o chit laa-ay.

O my mind, focus your consciousness on the One.

Aykas bin sabh Dhandh hai sabh mithi-aa moh maa-ay.

Without the One, all entanglements are worthless; emotional attachment to Maya is totally false.

//1//Pause//

Lakh khusee-aa paatisaahee-aa jay satgur nadar karay.

Hundreds of thousands of princely pleasures are enjoyed, if the True Guru bestows His Glance of Grace.

Nimakh ayk har naam day-ay mayraa man tan seetal ho-ay.

If He bestows the Name of the Lord, for even a moment, my mind and body are cooled and soothed.

Jis ka-o poorab likhi-aa tin satgur charan gahay.

Those who have such pre-ordained destiny hold tight to the Feet of the True Guru.

Safal moorat saflaa gharhee jit sachay naal pi-aar.

Fruitful is that moment, and fruitful is that time, when one is in love with the True Lord.

Dookh santaap na lag-ee jis har kaa naam adhaar.

Suffering and sorrow do not touch those who have the Support of the Name of the Lord.

Baah pakarh gur kaadhi-aa so-ee utri-aa paar.

Grasping him by the arm, the Guru lifts them up and out, and carries them across to the other side.

Thaan suhaavaa pavit hai jithai sant sabhaa.

Embellished and immaculate is that place where the Saints gather together.

Dho-ee tis hee no milai jin pooraa guroo labhaa.

He alone finds shelter, who has met the Perfect Guru.

Naanak badhaa ghar tahaan jithai mirat na janam jaraa.

Nanak builds his house upon that site where there is no death, no birth, and no old age.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, p.44.



Background to the Project

Background to the Project

It was in 2008 following the dissemination of *'Religion and Belief Matter : An Information Resource For All Healthcare Staff'*, a joint NHS Education for Scotland, Scottish Government and Scottish Inter Faith Council document, that requests were received for a multi-faith and belief book of poetry and prayers. These came from faith leaders, the Humanist Society and healthcare chaplains. In addition, a frequent comment from many of the patients who attended focus groups for the Religion and Belief Project, particularly from the Pagan Federation and the Humanist Society, was that, apart from the Bible and the Qur'an, there was a dearth of any inspiring or reflective reading materials in the chapel, quiet room or sanctuary of hospitals.

The *Reflections on Life* Project is the direct consequence of these requests and comments, and is another example of the successful and productive working relationship between the Scottish Inter Faith Council, NHS Education for Scotland and the Scottish Government. The National Spiritual Care Development Committee of NHSScotland commissioned the production of a multi-faith and belief resource of inspiring and comforting poetry, prayer, and prose.

Whilst this resource is for the use of Healthcare Chaplains, belief community representatives, staff, patients, and their relatives and friends, its use need not be restricted to the healthcare sector. Prison, university, school, and industrial chaplains would all find it of interest as well.

Care of the Spirit

According to the World Health Organisation, good health is "*A state of complete physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing,*" not merely the absence of disease. In a recent key

policy document CEL (49) 2008 the Scottish Government Health Directorates emphasised that "*.....Spiritual Care is now, a necessary and integral part of the whole person care offered by the NHS in Scotland.*" Thus, 21st. Century healthcare must encompass caring for the spirit, and this is led by the Spiritual Care Teams of the NHS who have the responsibility of meeting the *spiritual* needs of all who use the NHS. This includes providing religious needs support for those who require it. However, the key concept of this approach is that all people are spiritual beings as part of their humanity. It is this understanding that requires spiritual care to be inclusive for all in NHSScotland – service users and staff.

Spiritual Care also enhances our sense of *Spiritual Wellbeing*, with increasing evidence that this promotes healing and good health. For example, the most popular of the Special Interest Groups of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, *Spirituality and Mental Health*, is active in raising awareness of the central role of supporting patients' spirituality in the management of and recovery from mental illness.

In our healthcare context we use the term *spirituality* to describe what gives our lives meaning, purpose, and hope, how we make sense of the world, and how we define our identity within it, in relation to our families and friends. We need to feel "connected" through these relationships, and in particular, to not only feel loved but also to be able to give love in return. We want people to have compassion for us, and to be able to show compassion in return. The Spirituality and Mental Health group state that spirituality involves "*..... experiencing a deep-seated sense of meaning and purpose in life. This desire for wholeness of*

being lies in the essence of what it means to be human."

Whilst healthcare chaplains are the specialist providers of spiritual care, it is healthcare staff who identify and help support the spiritual needs of patients. Treating patients with dignity and respect is basic to any staff approach to care, whether as a porter, domestic, clerk, staff nurse, or neurosurgeon. This will help foster an organisation that promotes a sense of positive spiritual wellbeing within the working environment. Similarly, NHSScotland itself, has a duty to support and enhance the spiritual needs of its staff.

Ultimately, we are all spiritual beings with a variety of spiritual needs – from chief executive to domestic, and from patient to relatives and friends. If this book helps to support this concept, then the main aim of the various members of the Project Working Group would have been met.



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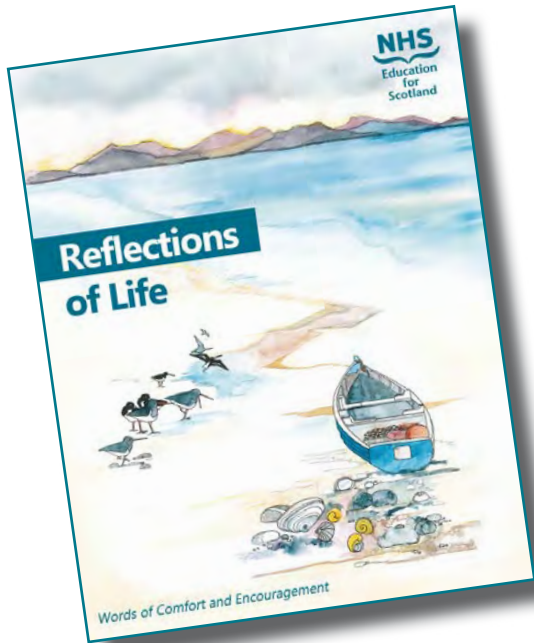
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It is hoped that the resource will be of help to all who offer spiritual care in NHSScotland, including service users, staff and belief representatives.



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