

Readings in Religion

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For PHIL 200
“Comparative Religion”

taught by
David Wayne Layman, Ph.d.

Readings in Religion

RIG VEDA

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1. Agni

I Laud Agni, the chosen Priest, God, minister of sacrifice, The hotar [priest], lavishest of wealth.
Worthy is Agni to be praised by living as by ancient seers. He shall bring hitherward the Gods.
Through Agni man obtaineth wealth, yea, plenty waxing day by day, Most rich in heroes, glorious.
Agni, the perfect sacrifice which thou encompassest about Verily goeth to the Gods.
May Agni, sapient-minded Priest, truthful, most gloriously great, The God, come hither with the Gods.
Whatever blessing, Agni, thou wilt grant unto thy worshipper, That, Angiras, is indeed thy truth.
To thee, dispeller of the night, O Agni, day by day with prayer Bringing thee reverence, we come
Ruler of sacrifices, guard of Law eternal, radiant One, Increasing in thine own abode.
Be to us easy of approach, even as a father to his son: Agni, be with us for our weal.

2. Soma

We have drunk Soma and become immortal; we have attained the light, the Gods discovered.
Now what may foeman's malice do to harm us? What, O Immortal, mortal man's deception?
Absorbed into the heart, be sweet, O Indu, as a kind father to his son, O Soma,
As a wise Friend to friend: do thou, wide-ruler, O Soma, lengthen out our days for living.
These glorious drops that give me freedom have I drunk. Closely they knit my joints as straps secure a
car.
Let them protect my foot from slipping on the way: yea, let the drops I drink preserve me from disease.
Make me shine bright like fire produced by friction: give us a clearer sight and make us better. For in
carouse I think of thee, O Soma, Shall I, as a rich man, attain to comfort? May we enjoy with an
enlivened spirit the juice thou givest, like ancestral riches. O Soma, King, prolong thou our existence as
Surya makes the shining days grow longer.
King Soma, favour us and make us prosper: we are thy devotees; of this be mindful.
Spirit and power are fresh in us, O Indu give us not up unto our foeman's pleasure.
For thou hast settled in each joint, O Soma, aim of men's eyes and guardian of our bodies.
...
This Soma now deposited within me. For this, I pray for longer life to Indra.
Our maladies have lost their strength and vanished: they feared, and passed away into the darkness.
Soma hath risen in us, exceeding mighty, and we are come where men prolong existence.
Fathers, that Indu which our hearts have drunken, Immortal in himself, hath entered mortals. So let us
serve this Soma with oblation, and rest securely in his grace and favour.
Associate with the Fathers thou, O Soma, hast spread thyself abroad through earth and heaven. So with
oblation let us serve thee, Indu, and so let us become the lords of riches,
Give us your blessing, O ye Gods' preservers. Never may sleep or idle talk control us. But evermore
may we, as friends of Soma, speak to the synod with brave sons around us.
On all sides,. Soma, thou art our life-giver: aim of all eyes, light-finder, come within us. Indu, of one
accord with thy protections both from behind and from before preserve us.

Readings in Religion

JUDAISM

1

2 1. Yhwh calls Abram (=Abraham) Genesis 17

3 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God
4 Almighty. Walk before me, and be blameless. I will make my covenant between me and you, and will
5 multiply you exceedingly.”

6 Abram fell on his face. God talked with him, saying, “As for me, behold, my covenant is with you. You
7 will be the father of a multitude of nations. Neither will your name any more be called Abram, but your
8 name will be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made you. I will make you
9 exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you. Kings will come out of you. I will establish my
10 covenant between me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting
11 covenant, to be a God to you and to your seed after you. I will give to you, and to your seed after you,
12 the land where you are traveling, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. I will be their God.”

13 God said to Abraham, “As for you, you will keep my covenant, you and your seed after you throughout
14 their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your seed after
15 you. Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin.
16 It will be a token of a covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old will be circumcised
17 among you, every male throughout your generations, he who is born in the house, or bought with money
18 of any foreigner who is not of your seed. He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your
19 money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. The
20 uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his
21 people. He has broken my covenant.”

22 God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but her name will be
23 Sarah. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. Yes, I will bless her, and she will be a
24 mother of nations. Kings of peoples will come from her.”

25 Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to him who is
26 one hundred years old? Will Sarah, who is ninety years old, give birth?” Abraham said to God, “Oh that
27 Ishmael might live before you!”

28 God said, “No, but Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You shall call his name Isaac. I will establish
29 my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard
30 you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He will
31 become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I establish with
32 Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this set time in the next year.”

33 2. Jacob wrestles with “God” (Genesis 32)

34 He rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven sons, and passed
35 over the ford of the Jabbok. He took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he
36 had. Jacob was left alone, and wrestled with a man there until the breaking of the day. When he saw that
37 he didn’t prevail against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was
38 strained, as he wrestled. The man said, “Let me go, for the day breaks.” Jacob said, “I won’t let you go,
39 unless you bless me.”

40 He said to him, “What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.” He said, “Your name will no longer be called
41 ‘Jacob,’ but, ‘Israel,’ for you have fought with God and with men, and have prevailed.”

42 Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” He said, “Why is it that you ask what my name is?” He
43 blessed him there.

44 Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for, he said, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is
45 preserved.” The sun rose on him as he passed over Peniel, and he limped because of his thigh. Therefore
46 the children of Israel don’t eat the sinew of the hip, which is on the hollow of the thigh, to this day,
47 because he touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh in the sinew of the hip.

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1 3. Yhwh saves Israel from Egypt; the first Passover

2 Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month shall be to you the
3 beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel,
4 saying, ‘On the tenth day of this month, they shall take to them every man a lamb,and the whole
5 assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at evening. They shall take some of the blood, and put
6 it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, on the houses in which they shall eat it. They shall eat the flesh
7 in that night, roasted with fire, and unleavened bread. They shall eat it with bitter herbs. Don’t eat it raw,
8 nor boiled at all with water, but roasted with fire; with its head, its legs and its inner parts. You shall let
9 nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remains of it until the morning you shall burn with
10 fire. This is how you shall eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your
11 hand; and you shall eat it in haste: it is Yahweh’s Passover. For I will go through the land of Egypt in
12 that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and animal. Against all the gods
13 of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Yahweh. The blood shall be to you for a token on the houses
14 where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be on you to
15 destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be to you for a memorial, and you shall keep
16 it a feast to Yahweh: throughout your generations you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.
17 . . . In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread,
18 until the twenty first day of the month at evening. Seven days shall there be no yeast found in your
19 houses, for whoever eats that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel,
20 whether he be a foreigner, or one who is born in the land. You shall eat nothing leavened. In all your
21 habitations you shall eat unleavened bread.”

22 4. Yhwh reveals his name to Moses

23 Moses said to God, “Behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and tell them, ‘The God of your
24 fathers has sent me to you;’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ What should I tell them?”

25 God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM,” [*Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*] and he said, “You shall tell the children
26 of Israel this: “I AM [*Ehyeh*] has sent me to you.” God said moreover to Moses, “You shall tell the
27 children of Israel this, ‘Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the
28 God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and this is my memorial to all generations.
29

30 [*Ehyeh* can mean “I am” or “I will be” (first person, singular, present or future). *Asher* can mean “who” or
31 “what”. That means (add ‘em up!) that *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh* can have eight different meanings. Among the
32 most likely are “I am who I am,” “I am *what* I am,” or “I will be who (*or*, what) I will be.”—instructor’s
33 note]

34 5. The realization that God “goes” everywhere (Psalm 139)

35 Yahweh, you have searched me, And you know me.
36 You know my sitting down and my rising up.
37 You perceive my thoughts from afar.
38 You search out my path and my lying down,
39 And are acquainted with all my ways.
40 For there is not a word on my tongue,
41 But, behold, Yahweh, you know it altogether.
42 You hem me in behind and before.
43 You laid your hand on me.
44 This knowledge is beyond me.
45 It’s lofty. I can’t attain it.
46 Where could I go from your Spirit?
47 Or where could I flee from your presence?
48 If I ascend up into heaven, you are there.

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1 If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, you are there!
2 If I take the wings of the dawn,
3 And settle in the uttermost parts of the sea;
4 Even there your hand will lead me,
5 And your right hand will hold me.
6 If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me;
7 The light around me will be night;"
8 Even the darkness doesn't hide from you,
9 But the night shines as the day.
10 The darkness is like light to you.

11 6. Creation: Genesis 1

12 In the beginning, God* created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty. Darkness
13 was on the surface of the deep and God's Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters.
14 God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw the light, and saw that it was good. God
15 divided the light from the darkness. God called the light "day", and the darkness he called "night". There
16 was evening and there was morning, the first day.
17 [In the next four days, God (day 2) separates the sky and the earth, (day 3) separates land from water and
18 makes plant life, (day 4) sun and moon (day 5) creates sea animals and birds, (day 6) land animals.
19 Continuing on day 6...]

20
21 God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of
22 the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every
23 creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in his own image. In God's image he created
24 him; male and female he created them. God blessed them. God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the
25 earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every
26 living thing that moves on the earth." God said, "Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed,
27 which is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree, which bears fruit yielding seed. It will be your
28 food. To every animal of the earth, and to every bird of the sky, and to everything that creeps on the earth,
29 in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food;" and it was so.
30 God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. There was evening and there was
31 morning, a sixth day.

32 7. Genesis 2 and 3: Evil comes into the world

33 Yahweh God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it. Yahweh God
34 commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but you shall not eat of the
35 tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die."

36 [ch. 3] Now the serpent was more subtle than any animal of the field which Yahweh God had made.
37 He said to the woman, "Has God really said, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'"

38 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees of the garden, but not the fruit of the
39 tree which is in the middle of the garden. God has said, 'You shall not eat of it. You shall not touch it, lest
40 you die.'"

41 The serpent said to the woman, "You won't surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat it, your
42 eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

43 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the
44 tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took some of its fruit, and ate; and she gave some to her
45 husband with her, and he ate it, too. Their eyes were opened, and they both knew that they were naked.
46 They sewed fig leaves together, and made coverings for themselves. They heard Yahweh God's voice
47 walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence
48 of Yahweh God among the trees of the garden.

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1 Yahweh God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”

2 The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid
3 myself.”

4 ...

5 Yahweh God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, lest he
6 reach out his hand, and also take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever...” Therefore Yahweh God
7 sent him out from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. So he drove out the
8 man; and he placed cherubim* at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every
9 way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

10 8. God’s judgment on King David

11 *King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the young wife of one of his soldiers. When she became*
12 *pregnant, David set up her husband, Uriah, to be killed in battle. After David married Bathsheba, God*
13 *sent the following message to David, through a “prophet,” Nathan:*

14 Yahweh sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, “There were two men in one city; the
15 one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had
16 nothing, except one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and raised. It grew up together with him, and
17 with his children. It ate of his own food, drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was to him like
18 a daughter. A traveler came to the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd,
19 to dress for the wayfaring man who had come to him, but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the
20 man who had come to him.”

21 David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As Yahweh lives, the man
22 who has done this is worthy to die! He shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and
23 because he had no pity!”

24 Nathan said to David, “You are the man.”

25 DAOISM

26 1. Wu-wei

27 [Muller translation: <http://www.human.toyogakuen-u.ac.jp/~acmuller/contao/laotzu.htm>]

28 Heaven and Earth are not jen [benevolent, *or*, compassionate],

29 And regard the people as straw dogs.

30 The sage is not jen, and regards all things as straw dogs.

31 2. Daoist Government

32 [Elwin Mitchell translation]

33 If you overesteem great men, people become powerless [*or*, will fight].

34 If you overvalue possessions, people begin to steal.

35 The Master leads by emptying people’s minds and filling their cores [“bellies”], by weakening their
36 ambition and toughening their resolve.

37 He helps people lose everything they know, everything they desire, and creates confusion in those who
38 think that they know.

39 [Legge translation]

40 When the Great Tao (Way or Method) ceased to be observed, benevolence and righteousness came into
41 vogue. (Then) appeared wisdom and shrewdness, and there ensued great hypocrisy.

42 When harmony no longer prevailed throughout the six kinships, filial sons found their manifestation;
43 when the states and clans fell into disorder, loyal ministers appeared.

Readings in Religion

1 [Muller translation: <http://www.human.toyogakuen-u.ac.jp/~acmuller/contao/laotzu.htm>]
2 The more regulations there are, The poorer people become.
3 The more people own lethal weapons, The more darkened are the country and clans.
4 The more clever the people are, The more extraordinary actions they take.
5 The more picky the laws are, The more thieves and gangsters there are.

6 CHRISTIANITY

7 1. Jesus' baptism (Matthew 2)

8 In those days, John the Baptizer came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the
9 Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" ... Then people from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and all the region around
10 the Jordan went out to him. They were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he
11 saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of
12 vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit worthy of repentance!
13 ...

14 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. But John would have
15 hindered him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?"

16 But Jesus, answering, said to him, "Allow it now, for this is the fitting way for us to fulfill all
17 righteousness." Then he allowed him. Jesus, when he was baptized, went up directly from the water: and
18 behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming on
19 him. Behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."
20

21 2. Jesus the Healer (Matthew 8)

22 When he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. Behold, a leper came to him and
23 worshiped him, saying, "Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean."

24 Jesus stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying, "I want to. Be made clean." Immediately his
25 leprosy was cleansed. ...

26 When he came into Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking him, and saying, "Lord, my servant
27 lies in the house paralyzed, grievously tormented."

28 Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

29 The centurion answered, "Lord, I'm not worthy for you to come under my roof. Just say the word, and
30 my servant will be healed. For I am also a man under authority, having under myself soldiers. I tell this
31 one, 'Go,' and he goes; and tell another, 'Come,' and he comes; and tell my servant, 'Do this,' and he
32 does it."

33 When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to those who followed, "Most assuredly I tell you, I haven't
34 found so great a faith, not even in Israel. ... Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way. Let it be done for
35 you as you have believed." His servant was healed in that hour.

36 When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. He touched her
37 hand, and the fever left her. She got up and served him. When evening came, they brought to him many
38 possessed with demons. He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick;

39 3. Jesus: forgive as you have been forgiven

40 Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king, who wanted to reconcile accounts with his
41 servants. When he had begun to reconcile, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. a
42 But because he couldn't pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, with his wife, his children, and all that
43 he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and kneeled before him, saying, 'Lord,
44 have patience with me, and I will repay you all!' The lord of that servant, being moved with compassion,
45 released him, and forgave him the debt.

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1 “But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, who owed him one hundred denarii,^a
2 and he grabbed him, and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’

3 “So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will
4 repay you!’ He would not, but went and cast him into prison, until he should pay back that which was
5 due. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly sorry, and came and told to
6 their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him in, and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave
7 you all that debt, because you begged me. Shouldn’t you also have had mercy on your fellow servant,
8 even as I had mercy on you?’ His lord was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors, until he should
9 pay all that was due to him. So my heavenly Father will also do to you, if you don’t each forgive your
10 brother from your hearts for his misdeeds.”

11 4. Jesus’ crucifixion (Mark’s version)

12 They brought him to the place called Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, “The place of a skull.” They
13 offered him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, but he didn’t take it.

14 Crucifying him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots on them, what each should take. It
15 was the third hour,^a and they crucified him. The superscription of his accusation was written over him,
16 “THE KING OF THE JEWS.” With him they crucified two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on
17 his left. The Scripture was fulfilled, which says, “He was numbered with transgressors.”

18 Those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying, “Ha! You who destroy the
19 temple, and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!”

20 Likewise, also the chief priests mocking among themselves with the scribes said, “He saved others. He
21 can’t save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see
22 and believe him.” Those who were crucified with him insulted him.

23 When the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.^b At the
24 ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is, being
25 interpreted, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

26 Some of those who stood by, when they heard it, said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.”

27 One ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Let
28 him be. Let’s see whether Elijah comes to take him down.”

29 Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and gave up the spirit. The veil of the temple was torn in two from the
30 top to the bottom. When the centurion, who stood by opposite him, saw that he cried out like this and
31 breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

32 5. Jesus’ Resurrection (Mark’s version)

33 When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices,
34 that they might come and anoint him. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb
35 when the sun had risen. They were saying among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the
36 door of the tomb for us?” for it was very big. Looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back.

37 Entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they
38 were amazed. He said to them, “Don’t be amazed. You seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who has been crucified.
39 He has risen. He is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him! But go, tell his disciples and Peter,
40 ‘He goes before you into Galilee. There you will see him, as he said to you.’”

41 6. Jesus’ resurrection appearance (Luke’s version)

42 Behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was sixty stadia^a from
43 Jerusalem. They talked with each other about all of these things which had happened. It happened, while
44 they talked and questioned together, that Jesus himself came near, and went with them. But their eyes
45 were kept from recognizing him. He said to them, “What are you talking about as you walk, and are
46 sad?”

47 ...

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1 They said to him, "The things concerning Jesus, the Nazarene,Beginning from Moses and from all
2 the prophets, he [Jesus] explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. They drew
3 near to the village, where they were going, and he acted like he would go further.

4 They urged him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is almost evening, and the day is almost over." He went in
5 to stay with them. It happened, that when he had sat down at the table with them, he took the bread and
6 gave thanks. Breaking it, he gave to them. Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he
7 vanished out of their sight. They said one to another, "Weren't our hearts burning within us, while he
8 spoke to us along the way, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?" They rose up that very hour,
9 returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them, saying,
10 "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" They related the things that happened along the
11 way, and how he was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

12 As they said these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be to you."

13 But they were terrified and filled with fear, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

14 He said to them, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my
15 feet, that it is truly me. Touch me and see, for a spirit doesn't have flesh and bones, as you see that I
16 have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While they still didn't believe for
17 joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"

18 They gave him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. He took them, and ate in front of them.

19 7. Resurrection and later appearance (John's version)

20 (Mary goes to the tomb and finds it empty. While crying, she meets a mysterious man....)

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She, supposing him to be
22 the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will
23 take him away."

24 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him, "Rhabbouni!" which is to say, "Teacher!"

25 Jesus said to her, "Don't touch me, for I haven't yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers, and
26 tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

27 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had said these
28 things to her. When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors
29 were locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst,
30 and said to them, "Peace be to you."

31 ...

32 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, wasn't with them when Jesus came. The other
33 disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands
34 the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

35 After eight days again his disciples were inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors being
36 locked, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be to you." Then he said to Thomas, "Reach here your
37 finger, and see my hands. Reach here your hand, and put it into my side. Don't be unbelieving, but
38 believing."

39 8. The proclamation of Jesus: "I am..."

40 "Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many
41 mansions. If it weren't so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. If I go and
42 prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you to myself; that where I am, you may be
43 there also. Where I go, you know, and you know the way."

44 Thomas says to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

45 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.

46 ...

Readings in Religion

1 ... the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things,
2 and will remind you of all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the
3 world gives, give I to you. Don't let your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful. ...

4 ... I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit,
5 for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man doesn't remain in me, he is thrown out as a branch, and is
6 withered; and they gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you remain in me, and
7 my words remain in you, you will ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you.

8 "In this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; and so you will be my disciples. Even as the
9 Father has loved me, I also have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will
10 remain in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and remain in his love. I have
11 spoken these things to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be made full.

12 9. Jesus Christ is the "Word" [*Logos*]

13 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in
14 the beginning with God. All things were made through him. Without him was not anything made that has
15 been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the
16 darkness hasn't overcome it. ...

17 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn't recognize him. He
18 came to his own, and those who were his own didn't receive him. But as many as received him, to them
19 he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of
20 blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Word became flesh, and lived
21 among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

22 10. Nicene Creed: God the Father and God the Son

23 We believe in one God,
24 the Father, the Almighty
25 maker of heaven and earth,
26 of all that is, seen and unseen.
27 We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
28 the only Son of God,
29 eternally begotten of the Father,
30 God from God, Light from Light,
31 true God from true God,
32 begotten, not made,
33 of one Being with the Father.
34 Through him all things were made.
35 For us and for our salvation
36 he came down from heaven:

37 by the power of the Holy Spirit
38 he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and
39 was made man.
40 For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
41 Pilate;
42 he suffered death and was buried.
43 On the third day he rose again
44 in accordance with the Scriptures;
45 he ascended into heaven
46 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
47 He will come again in glory to judge the living
48 and the dead,
49 and his kingdom will have no end.

50 BHAGAVAD GITA (HINDUISM)

51 *Arjuna, the great warrior, doesn't want to fight. Among other reasons, he is afraid of the bad karma he*
52 *will get from slaughter of his enemies. But the god Krishna tells him he ought to fight, and gives Arjuna*
53 *three ways of avoiding bad karma even while he carries out his job as a warrior.*

54 1. Jnana Yoga

55 Know that the being that pervades everything is indestructible, and that no one can cause the destruction
56 of this immutable (unchangeable) being.

57 It is said that the eternal soul found in the body is indestructible and incomprehensible. Only the body can
58 perish. Therefore fight, O Arjuna.

Readings in Religion

1 He who thinks that this soul is a slayer, and he who thinks that this soul is slain, are both ignorant. The
2 soul neither slays nor is slain.
3 It [the soul] is never born, nor does it die, nor having once been, will it again cease to be. It is unborn,
4 eternal, and everlasting. This primeval [first, original] one is not slain when the body is slain.
5 He who knows that the soul is indestructible and eternal, unborn and unchanging, how can that man slay,
6 O Arjuna, or cause another to slay?
7 Just as a man casts off worn-out clothes and takes on others that are new, so the embodied soul casts off
8 worn-out bodies and takes on others that are new.
9 ... The soul is eternal, omnipresent, unchanging, and immovable. It is everlasting. ... therefore, knowing
10 it as such, you should not grieve [when you kill the body].

11 2. Karma Yoga

12 You only have a right to the action, not to its fruits. Do not let your motive be the fruits of action; but
13 neither be attached to inaction.
14 Fixed in yoga, O winner of wealth, perform actions, abandoning attachment and remaining evenminded in
15 success and failure; for serenity of mind is called yoga.
16 Having disciplined their intelligence and having abandoned the fruit born of their action, the wise are
17 freed from the bondage of birth and attain the state that is free from sorrow.
18 The disciplined man, having abandoned the fruit of action, obtains enduring peace; the undisciplined man,
19 impelled by desire, is attached to the fruit is bound.
20 One should not rejoice when obtaining the pleasant, nor be agitated when obtaining the unpleasant.
21 Unbewildered, with firm intelligence, the knower of Brahman is established in Brahman.
22 To these holy men who have destroyed desire and anger, who have controlled their minds, who know the
23 Self, the bliss of Brahman is near.
24 *Question: does this mean we shouldn't do anything, not even religious acts?*
25 Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity ought not to be abandoned, rather they should be performed; for
26 sacrifice, gift and austerity are purifiers of the wise.
27 These actions ought to be performed, abandoning attachment and fruits, O Arjuna; this is My decided and
28 highest judgment.
29 ... He who abandons an action [only] because it is painful or from fear of physical pain performs a *rajasic*
30 kind of abandonment [that is, he doesn't abandon the act for the right reasons]. He does not obtain the
31 fruit of abandonment.
32 He who performs a prescribed action because it ought to be done, abandoning attachment and the fruit,
33 that abandonment, O Arjuna, is thought to be *sattvic* [wise].
34 The wise man, the abandoner, whose doubts are removed who is filled with goodness, does not hate
35 unpleasant action and is not attached to pleasant action.
36 It is impossible for an embodied being to abandon actions entirely; he who abandons the fruit of action is
37 called the (true) abandoner.

38 3. Bhakti Yoga

39 Hear again My supreme word, the most secret of all: thou are greatly beloved by Me, hence I will speak
40 for thy good.
41 Center your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, revere Me, and you will come to Me. I
42 promise you truly, for you are dear to Me.
43 Abandoning all other duties, come to Me alone for refuge. I shall free you from all sins: don't be grieved.
44 Never tell speak of this to one who is without austerity, nor to one who is without devotion, nor to one
45 who is not obedient, nor to one who speaks evil of Me.
46 He who shall declare this supreme secret to My devotees, and display the highest devotion to Me, shall
47 doubtless come to Me.

Readings in Religion

RABBINIC JUDAISM

1

2 9. Independence of Halakhic Judgment

3 “On that day, Rabbi Eliezer put forward all the arguments in the world, but the Sages did not accept them.

4 [Another version says, the vote was 10 to 1 against Rabbi Eliezar.]

5 “Finally, he said to them, ‘If the *halakha* [the legal ruling] is according to me, let that carob-tree prove it.’

6 “He pointed to a nearby carob-tree, which then moved from its place a hundred cubits, and some say, four
7 hundred cubits. They said to him ‘One cannot bring a proof from the moving of a carob-tree.’

8 “Said Rabbi Eliezer, ‘If the *halakha* is according to me, may that stream of water prove it.’

9 “The stream of water then turned and flowed in the opposite direction.

10 “They said to him, ‘One cannot bring a proof from the behavior of a stream of water.’

11 ...

12 “Then, said Rabbi Eliezer to the Sages, ‘If the *halakha* is according to me, may a proof come from
13 Heaven.’

14 “Then a heavenly voice went forth and said, ‘What have you to do with Rabbi Eliezer? The *halakha* is
15 according to him in every place.’

16 “Then Rabbi Joshua rose up on his feet, and said, ‘It is not in the heavens’ ([Deuteronomy 30:12](#)).

17 “What did he mean by quoting this? Said Rabbi Jeremiah, ‘He meant that since the [Torah](#) has been given
18 already on Mount Sinai, we do not pay attention to a heavenly voice, for You have written in Your Torah,
19 ‘Decide according to the majority’ ([Exodus 23:2](#)).¹

20 [Another version ends with a rabbi standing up and declaring: “Very well, Rabbi Eliezar, ten to *two*.” I.e.,
21 God has (only) one vote.]

22

THE “DHARMA” OF BUDDHISM

23 1. **Karma** (Novak, Philip. *The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions* (pp. 66-67).
24 HarperOne. Kindle Edition.)

25 It is volition that I call “karma.” Having willed, one [then] acts by body, speech, and mind. ...

26 All beings are the owners of their deeds (karma), the heirs of their deeds; their deeds are the womb from
27 which they sprang... Whatever deeds they do—good or evil—of such they will be the heirs.

28 ... Truly, because beings, obstructed by ignorance and ensnared by craving, seek ever fresh delight, fresh
29 rebirth continually comes to be. ... And the action...that is done out of greed, hatred and
30 delusion,...wherever this action ripens there one experiences the fruits of this action, be it in this life, or
31 the next life, or in some future life....

32 3. **Nirvana** (Novak, Philip. *The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions* (p. 75). HarperOne. Kindle Edition.)

33 This, truly, is Peace, this is the Highest, namely the end of all karma formations, the forsaking of
34 every substratum of rebirth, the fading away of craving, detachment....

35 The extinction of greed, the extinction of hate, the extinction of delusion: this indeed is called
36 Nibbana. ...

37 For those who in mid-stream stay, in great peril in the flood,...do I proclaim the Isle...of No-
38 beyond. Nirvana do I call it—the utter extinction of ageing and dying.

¹ http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Judaism/Halakha_&_aggadata_&_midrash.html , accessed December 28, 2012.

Readings in Religion

1 4. “Be Lamps unto yourselves”

2 “Therefore, O Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourselves, and do not rely on external help.
3 Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Seek salvation alone in the truth. Look not for assistance to any one
4 besides yourselves.

5 “And how, Ananda, can a brother be a lamp unto himself, rely on himself only and not on any external
6 help, holding fast to the truth as his lamp and seeking salvation in the truth alone, looking not for
7 assistance to any one besides himself? Herein, O Ananda, let a brother, as he dwells in the body, so regard
8 the body that he, being strenuous, thoughtful, and mindful, may, whilst in the world, overcome the grief
9 which arises from the body’s cravings. While subject to sensations let him continue so to regard the
10 sensations that he, being strenuous, thoughtful, and mindful, may, whilst in the world, overcome the grief
11 which arises from the sensations. And so, also, when he thinks or reasons, or feels, let him so regard his
12 thoughts that being strenuous, thoughtful and mindful he may, whilst in the world, overcome the grief
13 which arises from the craving due to ideas, or to reasoning, or to feeling.

14 5. Anatta (Not-Self)

15 ... The Blessed One said this. “Bhikkhus, form is not-self. Were form self, then this form would not lead
16 to affliction, and one could have it of form: ‘Let my form be thus, let my form be not thus.’ And since
17 form is not-self, so it leads to affliction, and none can have it of form: ‘Let my form be thus, let my form
18 be not thus.’

19 “Bhikkhus, feeling is not-self...

20 “Bhikkhus, perception is not-self...

21 “Bhikkhus, determinations are not-self...

22 “Bhikkhus, consciousness is not self. Were consciousness self, then this consciousness would not lead to
23 affliction, and one could have it of consciousness: ‘Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness
24 be not thus.’ And since consciousness is not-self, so it leads to affliction, and none can have it of
25 consciousness: ‘Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness be not thus.’ “Bhikkhus, how do you
26 conceive it: is form permanent or impermanent?” -- “Impermanent, venerable Sir.” -- “Now is what is
27 impermanent painful or pleasant?” -- “Painful, venerable Sir.” -- “Now is what is impermanent, what is
28 painful since subject to change, fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this is I, this is my self’?” -- “No,
29 venerable sir.” “Is feeling permanent or impermanent?...”

30 ...

31 ... “Any kind of consciousness whatever, ... must ... be regarded thus: ‘This is not mine, this is not I, this
32 is not my self.’ “Bhikkhus, when a noble follower who has heard (the truth) sees thus, he finds
33 estrangement in form, he finds estrangement in feeling, he finds estrangement in determinations, he finds
34 estrangement in consciousness. “When he finds estrangement, passion fades out. With the fading of
35 passion, he is liberated. When liberated, there is knowledge that he is liberated. He understands: ‘Birth is
36 exhausted, the holy life has been lived out, what can be done is done, of this there is no more beyond.’” --
37 SN XXII, 59

38 CONFUCIANISM

39 1. Li

40 Tseng Tzu said: “When they are careful (about their parents) to the end [*or*, perform the funeral rites] and
41 continue in reverence after (their parents) are long gone, the virtue of the people will return to its natural
42 depth.”

43 Confucius said: “If you can govern the country by putting propriety first, what else will you need to do? If
44 you can’t govern your country by putting propriety first, how could you even call it propriety?”

45 Confucius said: “Courtesy without propriety is wasted energy. Caution without propriety is timidity.

46 Boldness without propriety is recklessness. Straightforwardness without propriety is rudeness. When the

Readings in Religion

1 ruler is kind to those who are close to him, the people will be moved toward jen. If he does not forget his
2 old friends, the people too, will not be fickle.”
3 Confucius said: “Be aroused by poetry; structure yourself with propriety, refine yourself with music.”
4 ... If the Superior Man is reverent without lapse, and courteous to everyone within the frame of propriety,
5 everything within the four seas will be his brother. Why should a Superior Man be concerned about not
6 having brothers?”

7 2. Filial Piety

8 Tzu Lu asked about the meaning of filial piety. Confucius said, “Nowadays filial piety means being able
9 to feed your parents. But everyone does this for even horses and dogs. Without respect, what’s the
10 difference?”

11 Tzu Hsia asked about filial piety. Confucius said, “What is important is the expression you show in your
12 face. You should not understand ‘filial’ to mean merely the young doing physical tasks for their parents,
13 or giving them food and wine when it is available.”

14 Junzi [“superior man,”gentleman]

15 Confucius said: “When the Superior Man eats he does not try to stuff himself; at rest he does not seek
16 perfect comfort; he is diligent in his work and careful in speech. He avails himself to people of the Tao
17 and thereby corrects himself. This is the kind of person of whom you can say, ‘he loves learning.’”

18 Confucius said: “The Superior Man is not a utensil.” Tzu Kung asked about the character of the Superior
19 Man. Confucius said, “First he practices what he preaches and then he follows it.” Confucius said: “The
20 Superior Man is all-embracing and not partial. The inferior man is partial and not all-embracing.”

21 Confucius said: “The Superior Man takes Righteousness as the essence. He actualizes it through
22 propriety, demonstrates it in humility, develops it by truthfulness. This is the Superior Man!” Confucius
23 said: “**The Superior Man suffers from his own lack of ability, not from lack of recognition.**”

24 Confucius said: “The Superior Man is concerned about the kind of reputation he will have after he passes
25 away.”

26 Confucius said: “The **Superior Man seeks within himself**. The inferior man seeks within others.”

27 Confucius said: “The Superior Man strives but does not wrangle. He has friends, but doesn’t belong to a
28 clique.” Confucius said: “**The Superior Man does not promote a man because of his words, and does
29 not disregard the words because of the man.**”

30 CHRISTIAN ETHICS

31 ... don’t you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We
32 were buried therefore with him through baptism to death, that just like Christ was raised from the dead
33 through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united
34 with him in the likeness of his death, we will also be part of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old
35 man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be
36 in bondage to sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe
37 that we will also live with him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no
38 more has dominion over him! For the death that he died, he died to sin one time; but the life that he lives,
39 he lives to God. Thus also consider yourselves also to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our
40 Lord.