

Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue, and the lights of fairness, of justice, of tranquility and peace will cease to shine.

- Bahá'u'lláh

My mother was a Baptist, she believed Jesus was the son of God, and I don't believe that. But even though my mother had a religion different from me, I believe that on Judgment Day, my mother will be in heaven.

- Muhammad Ali

Of all religions, the Christian is without doubt the one which should inspire tolerance most, although up to now the Christians have been the most intolerant of all men. The Christian Church was divided in its cradle, and was divided even in the persecutions which under the first emperors it sometimes endured. Often the martyr was regarded as an apostate by his brethren, and the Carpocratian Christian expired beneath the sword of the Roman executioners, excommunicated by the Ebionite Christian, the which Ebionite was anathema to the Sabellian.

This horrible discord, which has lasted for so many centuries, is a very striking lesson that we should pardon each other's errors; discord is the great ill of mankind; and tolerance is the only remedy for it.

- Voltaire, *Tolerance*

Religion is the fashionable substitute for belief.

- Oscar Wilde

More Than Half of Americans Say Religion Is 'Very Important' to Them

% who say religion is _____ important in their lives

	—2007—					—2014—				
	Very %	Somewhat %	Not too %	Not at all %	DK/ ref. %	Very %	Somewhat %	Not too %	Not at all %	DK/ ref. %
Total	56	26	9	7	1=100	53	24	11	11	1=100
All affiliated	64	27	6	2	1	66	25	6	2	1
Christian	66	26	6	2	1	68	25	5	2	1
Protestant	70	23	5	2	1	72	22	4	1	1
Evangelical	79	17	2	1	1	79	17	2	1	1
Mainline	52	35	9	3	1	53	34	10	2	1
Historically black	85	13	1	1	*	85	12	1	1	*
Catholic	56	34	7	2	1	58	32	8	2	*
Orthodox Christian	56	31	9	4	0	52	33	12	3	*
Mormon	83	13	3	1	0	84	12	3	1	0
Jehovah's Witness	86	10	2	*	1	90	8	*	*	1
Non-Christian faiths	39	36	15	9	1	37	34	17	11	1
Jewish	31	41	18	9	1	35	36	20	9	*
Muslim	67	23	6	4	0	64	24	8	2	1
Buddhist	35	38	18	6	2	33	39	15	10	2
Hindu	45	40	12	3	1	26	53	15	6	*
Unaffiliated	16	25	25	33	2	13	21	26	39	1
Atheist	3	8	14	72	3	2	5	11	82	*
Agnostic	6	17	35	41	1	4	14	32	50	1
Nothing in particular	19	29	24	26	2	17	27	27	28	1
Religion not important ¹	0	0	46	51	3	0	0	48	50	2
Religion important ²	40	60	0	0	0	39	61	0	0	0

Source: 2014 Religious Landscape Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014. QF2. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

¹ Those who describe their religion as "nothing in particular" are subdivided into two groups. The "religion not important" group includes those who say (in Q.F2) religion is "not too" or "not at all" important in their lives as well as those who decline to answer the question about religion's importance. The "religion important" category includes those who say religion is "very" or "somewhat" important in their lives.

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O honoured lady! For a single purpose were the Prophets, each and all, sent down to earth; for this was Christ made manifest, for this did Bahá'u'lláh raise up the call of the Lord: that the world of man should become the world of God, this nether realm the Kingdom, this darkness light, this satanic wickedness all the virtues of heaven—and unity, fellowship and love be won for the whole human race, that the organic unity should reappear and the bases of discord be destroyed and life everlasting and grace everlasting become the harvest of mankind.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Now, Kalamas, don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves that, 'These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness' — then you should enter & remain in them.

- *Gautama Buddha, Kalama Sutta*

Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, the nights.

- *Prophet Muhammad ﷺ [Sahih Bukhari]*

If religion has given birth to all that is essential in society, it is because the idea of society is the soul of religion.

- *Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

Rivers, ponds, lakes and streams - they all have different names, but they all contain water. Just as religions do - they all contain truths.

- *Muhammad Ali*

Of all bad men, religious bad men are the worst.

- *C.S. Lewis*

This is an important aspect of Buddhism in modern society. Dharma practice isn't just coming to the temple; it's not simply reading a Buddhist scripture or chanting the Buddha's name. Practice is how we live our lives, how we live with our family, how we work together with our colleagues, how we relate to the other people in the country and on the planet. We need to bring the Buddha's teachings on loving-kindness into our workplace, into our family, even into the grocery store and the gym. We do this not by handing out leaflets on a street corner, but by practicing and living the Dharma ourselves. When we do, automatically we will have a positive influence on the people around us. For example, you teach your children loving-kindness, forgiveness, and patience not only by telling them, but by showing it in your own behavior. If you tell your children one thing, but act in the opposite way, they are going to follow what we do, not what we say.

- *Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron*

The first principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: The Search for Truth
Man must cut himself free from all prejudice and from the result of his own imagination, so that he may be able to search for truth unhindered. Truth is one in all religions, and by means of it the unity of the world can be realized.

All the peoples have a fundamental belief in common. Being one, truth cannot be divided, and the differences that appear to exist among the nations only result from their attachment to prejudice. If only men would search out truth, they would find themselves united."

- *'Abdu'l-Bahá*

Anyone who thinks sitting in church can make you a Christian must also think that sitting in a garage can make you a car.

- *Garrison Keillor*

Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.

- *Albert Einstein*

When I told the people of Northern Ireland that I was an atheist, a woman in the audience stood up and said, "Yes, but is it the God of the Catholics or the God of the Protestants in whom you don't believe?"

- *Quentin Crisp*

They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples.

[...]

Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!

- *Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas*

Rituals and religions are all just entanglements; bad and good are bound up with them. Those things done for the sake of children and spouse, with ego and attachment in the heart, are just more bonds. Wherever I look, there I see the noose of attachment to Maya. O Nanak, without recognising higher Truth, the world is engrossed in blind entanglements

- *Guru Granth Sahib*

The secret of Buddhism is to remove all ideas, all concepts, in order for the truth to have a chance to penetrate, to reveal itself.

- *Thich Nhat Hanh*

The Buddha's method was different. His method was to change the mind of man: to alter his disposition: so that whatever man does, he does it voluntarily without the use of force or compulsion. His main means to alter the disposition of men was his Dhamma and the constant preaching of his Dhamma. The Buddha's way was not to force people to do what they did not like to do although it was good for them. His way was to alter the disposition of men so that they would do voluntarily what they would not otherwise do.

- *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar*

That which science refuses to grant to religion is not its right to exist, but its right to dogmatize upon the nature of things and the special competence which it claims for itself for knowing man and the world.

- *Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

- *First Amendment, US Constitution*

And yet, is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions?

- *Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Íqán*

The Way is not in the sky; the Way is in the heart.

- *Gautama Buddha*

The fourth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is:

The Unity of Religion and Science

We may think of science as one wing and religion as the other; a bird needs two wings for flight, one alone would be useless. Any religion that contradicts science or that is opposed to it, is only ignorance—for ignorance is the opposite of knowledge.

Religion which consists only of rites and ceremonies of prejudice is not the truth. Let us earnestly endeavour to be the means of uniting religion and science.

'Alí, the son-in-law of Muḥammad, said: 'That which is in conformity with science is also in conformity with religion'. Whatever the intelligence of man cannot understand, religion ought not to accept. Religion and science walk hand in hand, and any religion contrary to science is not the truth.

- *'Abdu'l-Bahá*

Learn your religion, do not inherit it

- *Imam Ali (عليه السلام)*

"To some, Islam is nothing but a code of rules and regulations. But, to those who understand, it is a perfect vision of life."

- *Yasmin Mogahed*

It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business.

- *Mahatma Gandhi*

The day I met Islam, I found a power within myself that no man could destroy or take away from me.

- *Muhammad Ali*

How do we change it? Dr Ambedkar himself made this very clear in a talk he gave just weeks before he died: 'The greatest thing the Buddha taught the world is that the world can only be reformed by reforming the mind of Man'.⁸ The problem lies in our minds: more particularly in the interpretation that we give to our lives. The way we understand things at the most fundamental level has a major effect upon how we act. People's actions emerge out of their view of life. Their ethics stand upon their philosophy, in the deepest sense, even if that philosophy is not articulated or consistent or, perhaps, even fully conscious – or even if their real guiding views are at odds with their professed beliefs. It is this understanding, view, or underlying philosophy that we need to encourage people to transform. If people are to act differently and live a more satisfying life, individually and collectively, they need a very different way of understanding themselves and their experience, a new perspective on their place in the human community, indeed in existence itself. There needs, therefore, to be a reform of the mind on a wide scale and this is task of the Dharma revolution.

- *Dharmachari Subhuti, The Dharma Revolution and the New Society*

Every other sect supposes itself in possession of the truth, and that those who differ are so far in the wrong. Like a man traveling in foggy weather they see those at a distance before them wrapped up in a fog, as well as those behind them, and also people in the fields on each side; but near them, all appears clear, though in truth they are as much in the fog as any of them.

- *Benjamin Franklin*

My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind.

- *Albert Einstein*

The third principle of Bahá'u'lláh is:

Religion should be the Cause of Love and Affection

Religion should unite all hearts and cause wars and disputes to vanish from the face of the earth, give birth to spirituality, and bring life and light to each heart. If religion becomes a cause of dislike, hatred and division, it were better to be without it, and to withdraw from such a religion would be a truly religious act. For it is clear that the purpose of a remedy is to cure; but if the remedy should only aggravate the complaint it had better be left alone. Any religion which is not a cause of love and unity is no religion. All the holy prophets were as doctors to the soul; they gave prescriptions for the healing of mankind; thus any remedy that causes disease does not come from the great and supreme Physician.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Science investigates; religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge, which is power; religion gives man wisdom, which is control. Science deals mainly with facts; religion deals mainly with values. The two are not rivals.

- Martin Luther King Jr.

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord.

- Bahá'u'lláh

The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the second leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is the following: The Pen of the Most High exhorteth, at this moment, the manifestations of authority and the sources of power, namely the kings, the sovereigns, the presidents, the rulers, the divines and the wise, and enjoineth them to uphold the cause of religion, and to cleave unto it. Religion is verily the chief instrument for the establishment of order in the world and of tranquillity amongst its peoples. The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the foolish and emboldened them and made them more arrogant. Verily I say: The greater the decline of religion, the more grievous the waywardness of the ungodly. This cannot but lead in the end to chaos and confusion. Hear Me, O men of insight, and be warned, ye who are endued with discernment!

- Bahá'u'lláh, *Words of Paradise*

If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion. I am just a distributor, but the grant is from Allah. (And remember) that this nation (true Muslims) will keep on following Allah's teachings strictly and they will not be harmed by any one going on a different path till Allah's order (Day of Judgment) is established.

- Prophet Muhammad ﷺ [Sahih Bukhari]

O Lord! Provide for the speedy growth of the Tree of Thy divine Unity; water it then, O Lord, with the flowing waters of Thy good-pleasure, and cause it, before the revelations of Thy divine assurance, to yield such fruits as Thou desirest for Thy glorification and exaltation, Thy praise and thanksgiving, and to magnify Thy Name, to laud the oneness of Thine Essence and to offer adoration unto Thee, inasmuch as all this lieth within Thy grasp and in that of none other.

Great is the blessedness of those whose blood Thou hast chosen wherewith to water the Tree of Thine affirmation, and thus to exalt Thy holy and immutable Word.

- The Báb

To be sure, religion has allowed itself to be used by all manner of self-interested and malignant causes, used and abused by those who seek power for power's sake alone. It has often refused to come to terms with the effectiveness of the scientific method. Those who would rid society of religious institutions don't have far to go to find reasons. Yet this modern understanding of religion has also been partial and one-sided, blind to the contributions that religion has made to human life through the centuries, contributions still very much in evidence today around the world if one cares to look with a fair and reasonable eye. The well-being, security and happiness of communities, as well as of millions upon millions of individual lives, owes much to religion if a just and balanced assessment is made.

Religion in general, never minding its many forms, communities, confessions and practices, surely invites a more reasonable and effective defence and a more vigorous effort to define and uphold its many virtues than popular opinion and the average media reference to it acknowledge. If religion is to be fairly assessed as a social good, then it must be understood for what it is, in all its diversity, and that requires a certain level of freedom of belief, and non-belief, in an environment of toleration, mutual respect and pluralism. That is the only practical conception of global and national societies that seems possible as a modus vivendi in the ever more diverse communities around the world.

- Bahá'í Community of Canada

O Lord! Enable all the peoples of the earth to gain admittance into the Paradise of Thy Faith, so that no created being may remain beyond the bounds of Thy good-pleasure.

From time immemorial Thou hast been potent to do what pleaseth thee and transcendent above whatsoever thou desirest.

- The Báb

Magnified be Thy Name, O Lord my God! Thou art He Whom all things worship and Who worshipeth no one, Who is the Lord of all things and is the vassal of none, Who knoweth all things and is known of none. Thou didst wish to make Thyself known unto men; therefore, Thou didst, through a word of Thy mouth, bring creation into being and fashion the universe. There is none other God except Thee, the Fashioner, the Creator, the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

I implore Thee, by this very word that hath shone forth above the horizon of Thy will, to enable me to drink deep of the living waters through which Thou hast vivified the hearts of Thy chosen ones and quickened the souls of them that love Thee, that I may, at all times and under all conditions, turn my face wholly towards Thee.

Thou art the God of power, of glory and bounty. No God is there beside Thee, the Supreme Ruler, the All-Glorious, the Omniscient.

- Bahá'u'lláh

Whoever shall introduce into public affairs the principles of primitive Christianity will change the face of the world.

- Benjamin Franklin

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

- UN Declaration of Human Rights

O God, my God! Thou seest how black darkness is enshrouding all regions, how all countries are burning with the flame of dissension, and the fire of war and carnage is blazing throughout the East and the West. Blood is flowing, corpses bestrew the ground, and severed heads are fallen on the dust of the battlefield.

O Lord! Have pity on these ignorant ones, and look upon them with the eye of forgiveness and pardon. Extinguish this fire, so that these dense clouds which obscure the horizon may be scattered, the Sun of Reality shine forth with the rays of conciliation, this intense gloom be dispelled and the resplendent light of peace shed its radiance upon all countries.

O Lord! Draw up the people from the abyss of the ocean of hatred and enmity, and deliver them from this impenetrable darkness. Unite their hearts, and brighten their eyes with the light of peace and reconciliation. Deliver them from the depths of war and bloodshed, and free them from the darkness of error. Remove the veil from their eyes, and enlighten their hearts with the light of guidance. Treat them with Thy tender mercy and compassion, and deal not with them according to Thy justice and wrath which cause the limbs of the mighty to quake.

O Lord! Wars have persisted. Distress and anxiety have waxed great, and every flourishing region is laid waste.

O Lord! Hearts are heavy, and souls are in anguish. Have mercy on these poor souls, and do not leave them to the excesses of their own desires.

O Lord! Make manifest in Thy lands humble and submissive souls, their faces illumined with the rays of guidance, severed from the world, extolling Thy Name, uttering Thy praise, and diffusing the fragrance of Thy holiness amongst mankind.

O Lord! Strengthen their backs, gird up their loins, and enrapture their hearts with the most mighty signs of Thy love.

O Lord! Verily, they are weak, and Thou art the Powerful and the Mighty; they are impotent, and Thou art the Helper and the Merciful.

O Lord! The ocean of rebellion is surging, and these tempests will not be stilled save through Thy boundless grace which hath embraced all regions.

O Lord! Verily, the people are in the abyss of passion, and naught can save them but Thine infinite bounties.

O Lord! Dispel the darkness of these corrupt desires, and illumine the hearts with the lamp of Thy love through which all countries will erelong be enlightened. Confirm, moreover, Thy loved ones, those who, leaving their homelands, their families and their children, have, for the love of Thy Beauty, traveled to foreign countries to diffuse Thy fragrances and promulgate Thy Teachings. Be Thou their companion in their loneliness, their helper in a strange land, the remover of their sorrows, their comforter in calamity. Be Thou a refreshing draught for their thirst, a healing medicine for their ills and a balm for the burning ardor of their hearts.

Verily, Thou art the Most Generous, the Lord of grace abounding, and, verily, Thou art the Compassionate and the Merciful.

- *'Abdu'l-Bahá*

Religion

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