

Soundings of Union with God across Religious Traditions

- Plotinus (204-270; Greek philosopher): “Many times it has happened: lifted out of the body into myself; becoming external to all other things and self-encentered; beholding a marvelous beauty...acquiring identity with the divine.”
- Abraham Abulafia (1240-1291; Jewish): “[They] will be united with it (God) after many hard, strong and mighty exercises, until the particular and personal prophetic [faculty] will become universal, permanent and everlasting, similar to the essence of its cause, and he and He will become one unity.”
- Kalonymus Kalman Epstein (b. 1753; Jewish): “The true *zaddik* [holy person] proceeds in his prayers through all the upper worlds until he reaches the Supernal Intelligences and from there he proceeds until he reaches *Ein-Sof* [God], the negation of all comprehension.
- Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153; Christian): “In the kiss of his mouth we receive a full infusion of joys, a revelation of secrets, a wonderful and inseparable mingling of the light from above and the mind on which it is shed, which, when it is joined with God is one spirit with him.”
- John of the Cross (1542-1591; Christian): “Having been made one with God, the soul is somehow God through participation.... For the will of the two is one will, and thus, God’s operation and the soul’s are one.... A reciprocal love is thus actually formed between God and the soul, like the marriage union and surrender, in which the goods of both (the divine essence that each possesses freely by reason of the voluntary surrender between them) are possessed by both together.”
- Abū l-Qāsim al-Junayd (830-910; Islamic): “The Real sets me apart. When he seizes me with fear, he annihilates me from myself through my existence, then preserves me from myself.... My annihilation is my abiding.... He protects you from yourself, and brings you to himself through the passing away of your passing away in your attainment of your aim. He abides in your abiding, that is, the unity of the affirmer of unity (soul) abides through the abiding of the one who is one (God), even as the affirmer of unity (soul) passes away.”
- Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rumi (1207-1273; Islamic): “The prayer of the holy one is different from other prayers. He has so completely dissolved his ego—nothinged himself—that what he says is like God talking to God.... His spirit grows wings, and lifts. His ego falls like a battered wall. He unites with God, alive, but emptied of identity.”
- *Prasna Upanishad* (Hindu): “He who knows, O my beloved, that Eternal Spirit wherein consciousness and the senses, the powers of life and the elements find final peace, knows the All and has gone into the All.”
- *Svetasvarata Upanishad* (Hindu): “When a man knows God, he is free: his sorrows have an end, and birth and death are no more. When in inner union he is beyond the world of the body, then the third world, the world of the Spirit, is found, where the power of the All is, and man has all: for he is one with the ONE.”
- Yan Hui (521-490 BCE; Confucian/Daoist): “I allow my limbs and body to fall away, expel my intellectual faculties, leave my substance, get rid of knowledge and become identical with the Great Universality.”
- Zhang Zai (1020-1077; Confucian/Daoist): “Now I am grasping its (Life’s) beginning and can go beyond the maker’s wheel. Through solitary vastness I ascend to the Great Silence, meeting only the clear and the perfected. Pure and shining I encompass primordial harmony, joined with pure energy in mutual relation.”