

Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let freedom reign!

— *Nelson Mandela*

You will ♥ love ♥ this AMAZING book!

— *Spencer Haywood*

# PARADISE

## PRACTICAL WISDOM TO UNITE OUR DIVIDED WORLD

ROBERT C. MUSSEHL



Keep this book close to you. It will revive your belief in Heaven.

It will bring you understanding, peace, and love.

— *The Honorable Father Robert F. Drinan, S.J.,*

*Catholic priest, author, legislator, noted international human rights advocate, and leader*

## PRAISE FOR PARADISE

*“My youngest daughter and I read verses from Paradise everyday! It always provides us with inspirational wisdom that applies to our everyday activities, and brings peace and contentment to heart and soul! Paradise is like a second Bible to me and my family. Thank you deeply, Robert Mussehl, for the daily wisdom. The wisdom from Paradise is very meaningful and precious to me and to my family—and even more so because of the uncertainty, preciousness, and transience of life in the wake of the Covid pandemic. Its positive reflections on the afterlife also provide comfort.”*

— Spencer Haywood, 1968 Olympic gold medal winner and MVP; 1969 National College Player of the Year; 1970 MVP, American Basketball Association; NBA All-Star; former captain of the Seattle SuperSonics; and author. Won landmark U.S. Supreme Court case for “early entry” to the NBA; won NBA championship with Los Angeles Lakers; inducted in the Multi-Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame; and served as President of the NBA Retired Players Association. His No. 24 jersey was retired by the Seattle SuperSonics. Elected in 2015 to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and subject of a 2016 90-minute documentary, *Full Court: The Spencer Haywood Story*.

*“Paradise is motivating and inspiring! Each page contains nuggets of wisdom and enlightenment. I copy pages from the book and post them on my refrigerator for daily reference.”*

— Heather Poland Fairchild, Regional Sales Manager, Weruva International, Inc.

*“Paradise is an inspiring and beautiful quilt of wisdom that sinks into and strengthens our hearts. A much-needed heart wisdom encyclopedia that hopefully will soon be available in many schools, courtrooms, government agencies, and businesses.”*

— Dr. Franca Baroni, award-winning author of *On Governance, Cor Publicum: The Evolution of Res Publica*

*“I wholeheartedly recommend Paradise to anyone seeking personal power. This is an extraordinarily well-written, incredibly easy-to-read book with a clearly stated purpose. Paradise offers hope, peace, love, strength, and joy to everyone who reads it. I love this book and the message that I received from the author!”*

— Arwa Alawi, real estate consultant

*“Great reading for the soul in search of peace and guidance from an array of different writers, authors, thinkers, and leaders. I enjoyed this book almost to the point of addiction!”*

— Philip Ammons, paralegal

*“Paradise: Practical Wisdom To Unite Our Divided World is unlike any other book I have ever read. While most of us read books in order to escape reality, this book is a perfect way to reflect on oneself. Paradise is filled with hope and inspiration; some of the verses are so powerful that they warmed my heart instantly, made me appreciate today, and brought tears to my eyes.”*

— Fatima Dilek, attorney

## PREFACE

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On July 24, 2008, Barack Obama addressed a crowd in Berlin, Germany, of over 200,000 people, plus millions more watching television worldwide. Obama stressed that it was essential to world peace that bigotry must be eliminated and that we must tear down the barriers that keep us divided:

*The walls between races and tribes; natives and immigrants; Christian and Muslim and Jew cannot stand. These now are the walls we must tear down.*

This book, *Paradise*, helps us tear down these walls of ignorance, fear, and hatred by showing us the similarities in belief that we all share in our common worship of God.

Is there a Paradise? This is a question I have asked myself many times. What is the proof? Where is the evidence? I decided to do some personal research into this subject and wanted to share my discoveries, insights, affirmations, and poetry with others who are also looking for answers about our immortality, and the continuity and quality of life.

Our world needs healing from the political and religious strife that is all too constant today. Regardless of what religion and spiritual thinking we practice, we are all attempting to find peace and happiness in our lives. *Paradise* is a book that describes the unlimited power of love, and the vital need today for social justice and cultural and religious tolerance and acceptance. I hope that *Paradise* will inspire people of all religions to better understand and forgive one another, to be tolerant, and to concentrate on their common links to their faith in God.

All caring human beings are called by God and their conscience to promote unity in diversity. We must all use the profound interfaith power of love, hope, justice, and kindness in forging this unity. Love transcends politics and cultural differences; love overrides fear, pettiness, and even hate.

Keep *Paradise* near you and make this exquisite book of wisdom and knowledge your constant traveling companion. At home, you will want to place this visually and spiritually beautiful book on your nightstand or coffee table for an instant supply of spiritual energy, hope, and peace!

To help readers better understand the verses of the Bible, Qur'an, Bhagavad Gita, and other religious scripture, I have modernized their language while retaining their true meaning. For example, I have removed some archaic words such as "thy," "thou," and "verily," as well as eliminated some gender-prejudiced references and other antiquated expressions. My intent in providing this less-cumbersome language is to make this book more reader-friendly, simple enough for a fourth-grade student to easily understand.

The inclusion of verses from many sources along with those of the Qur'an in this book is to show the universal similarities among the various religions of the world. Out of respect for Islamic tradition and revelation, each Qur'an verse faces either another Qur'an verse or a saying of Muhammad (peace be upon him) in this book. The intention is to promote a diversity of religious thinking and tolerance, which is much needed in our modern world.

Two other items of note: It is Islamic tradition that every mention of a prophet's name is followed with the phrase "peace be upon him," so this blessing appears after the names of Abraham, Jesus, Muhammad, and other prophets (peace be upon them). Also, instead of using the more customary Arabic "Allah" in the Islamic references, the term "God" is universally used throughout this book, regardless of the religion. "Allah" is the Arabic word for God and has no plural or gender. If you are an Arab Jew, an Arab Christian, or an Arab Muslim, you worship Allah. For example, if you are a Christian Arab, your Bible cover will state, "In the name of Allah." Also, Allah is the personal name of God in Aramaic, the language of Jesus (peace be upon him) and the sister language of Arabic.

I hope and pray that you enjoy this offering and that you profit materially, peacefully, lovingly, and spiritually! God bless each of you—*always!*

— *Robert C. Mussehl*



## **Befriend Yourself**

Friendship with oneself is all-important,  
because without it one cannot be friends  
with anyone else in the world.

— *Eleanor Roosevelt* —  
(*Biography on page 595*)



## **Discuss Ideas and Ideals**

Great minds discuss ideas.  
Average minds discuss events.  
Small minds discuss people.

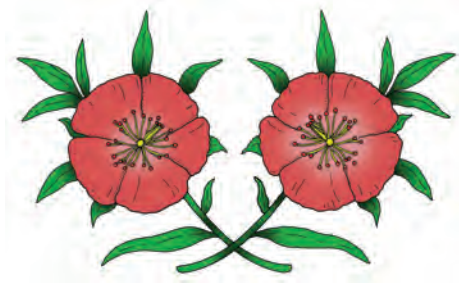
— *Eleanor Roosevelt* —  
(*Biography on page 595*)

**We Have a Mutual Obligation to One Another**

**We Must Sacrifice and Compromise for One Another**

We have lost the understanding  
that in a democracy,  
we have a mutual obligation to one another—  
that we cannot measure the greatness  
of our society by the strongest and richest of us,  
but we have to measure our greatness  
by the least of these.  
That we have to compromise and sacrifice  
for one another to get things done.

— *Michelle Obama* —  
(*Biography on page 592*)





## **Praise Be to God**

### **Fatiha**

All praise belongs to God Almighty,  
the Creator and Sustainer of the world,  
the merciful, the mercy-giving,  
the Master of the Day of Judgment.

You alone do we worship, and  
Your help and guidance do we seek.

Show us the straight way,  
the way of those upon whom  
You have bestowed Your peace, grace, and mercy  
and not the way of those who have earned  
Your anger or have gone astray.

— *The Qur'an* —  
*Chapter I (1), Verses 1–7*  
*(Biography on page 593)*

## **The Unity of Humankind**

**God Created Us from a Single Soul!  
(The Family of Earth)**

O humankind!

We created you from a single soul,  
male and female, and made you into nations and tribes,  
so that you may come to know one another.  
Truly, the most honored of you in God's sight  
is the greatest of you in piety.

God is knowing, all-aware.

— *The Qur'an* —

*Chapter XLIX (49), Verse 13*

*(Biography on page 593)*





## Love Is the Answer—Love One Another

A new command I give you:  
Love one another.

As I have loved you,  
so you must love one another.



By this all people will know  
that you are my disciples,  
if you love one another.

— Jesus —

*(Peace be upon him)*

*The Bible, John, Chapter 13, Verses 34–35*

*(Biography on page 584)*

## Promote Love

Love all religions and all nations.  
Recognize and accept all religions  
as paths leading humanity to the same destination.  
All of them teach love and compassion,  
humility, and forbearance.

Promote love, sympathy, and compassion toward all beings.  
God is present in every one of them,  
and it is your duty to revere God in each of them.

There is only one caste, the caste of humanity.  
There is only one religion, the religion of love.  
There is only one language, the language of the heart.  
There is only one God and God is omnipresent.

— Sathya Sai Baba —  
(Biography on page 573)



## **Like Attracts Like**

**Make Your Thoughts Positive and Loving!**

The great secret of life  
is the law of attraction.

This law says that like attracts like.

When you have a thought,  
you are attracting like thoughts to you.

Thoughts are magnetic,  
and thoughts have a frequency.

Your current thoughts  
are creating your future life.

What you think about the most,  
or focus on the mind the most,  
will appear as your life.

— Rhonda Byrne —

The Secret

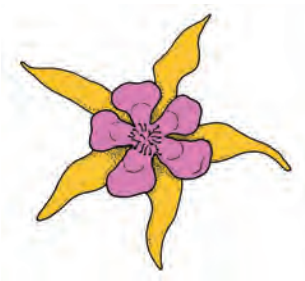
(Biography on page 576)



## **Make Peace Rather Than War**

It is better to send  
in the Peace Corps  
rather than the Marine Corps.

— *US Senator Edward “Ted” Kennedy* —  
(*Biography on page 585*)



## **Integrity Is Essential**

Integrity is the lifeblood  
of democracy.  
Deceit is a poison in its veins.

— *US Senator Edward “Ted” Kennedy* —  
(*Biography on page 585*)



## Love

See with the eyes of love.  
Hear with the ears of love.  
Work with the hands of love.  
Think of love.  
Feel love with every nerve.  
Let love be your breath.

Let the sun of love  
help the lotus of your heart to blossom.

— Sai Baba —  
(*Biography on page 573*)

## **Love Each Other**

### **Kindness Is a Mark of Faith**

Offer greetings to each other and rancor will disappear.

Give gifts to each other and love each other,  
and hatred will disappear.

You shall not enter Paradise until you believe;  
and you are not a believer until you love each other  
and spread peace among yourselves.

— *Muhammad* —  
(*Peace be upon him*)  
(*Biography on page 589*)



## **Love First**

Just love before you speak of love.

— *Thakur* —  
(*Biography on page 598*)

## **Kindness Is a Form of Wisdom**

The highest form of wisdom is kindness.

— The Talmud —  
*(Biography on page 598)*



**Love Generously**

**Trust God**

Live simply, love generously, care deeply,  
speak kindly, and leave the rest to God.

— *The Honorable Ronald Reagan* —  
*(Biography on page 594)*

## **Develop a Strong, Peaceful, and Probing Mind**

Peace comes from within.  
Do not seek peace from without.

— *Buddha* —  
(*Biography on page 575*)



## **What We Think, We Become**

All that we are  
is the result of what we have thought.  
The mind is everything.  
What we think, we become.

— *Buddha* —  
(*Biography on page 575*)



**In Paradise We Will Experience  
the Unity of Humankind**

**We Are Created in the Image of God**

We must recognize the unity of humankind,  
remembering that we are all made  
in the image of God.

— *Swami Paramahansa Yogananda* —  
(*Biography on page 601*)



**Love Is Heaven**

**Love Is Our Solution. Love Is Our Reward!**

Body, emotion and soul are not separate,  
but part of the great mystery of mortal life—  
a riddle whose solution is love.

— *Rumi* —  
(*Biography on page 595*)

## **Purity Reigns in Heaven**

### **We Can Learn Wisdom from Our Children**

Grown men and women can learn  
from very little children,  
for the hearts of little children are pure.



Therefore, the Great Spirit may show to them  
many things which older people may miss.

— *Black Elk* —  
(*Biography on page 575*)

## **There Is No Bigotry in Paradise**

**We Must Tear Down the Barriers  
That Keep Us Divided**

The walls between races and tribes,  
natives and immigrants,  
Christian and Muslim and Jew cannot stand.

These now are the walls  
we must tear down.

— *The Honorable Barack Obama* —

*Speech in Berlin, Germany*

*July 24, 2008*

*(Biography on page 591)*





## **God Appoints the Times and Seasons**

### **A Time for Everything under Heaven**

There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under Heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,  
a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

— *The Bible* —

*Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3, Verses 1–8*

*(Biography on page 574)*

## **Love and Freedom**

### **Freedom Invokes Responsibilities**

✻ Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but having the right to do what we ought to do.

✻ Love is never defeated. . . .

— *Pope John Paul II* —  
(*Biography on page 592*)



## **Actions Count the Most**

### **Knowledge and Action Lead to Heaven**

A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than knowledge that is idle.

— *Kahlil Gibran* —  
(*Biography on page 581*)

**Justice. Truth. Passion.**

**Be Constant in Purpose**

I say that justice  
is truth in action.

Men and women are only truly great  
when they act from passion.

The secret of success  
is constancy of purpose.

— *The Honorable Benjamin Disraeli* —  
(*Biography on page 578*)



## **Principles That Lead Us to Paradise**

### **The Benjamin Franklin Principles for Success for This Life**

1. Temperance: Eat not dullness; drink not to elevation.
2. Silence: Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.
3. Order: Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
4. Resolution: Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
5. Frugality: Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; waste nothing.
6. Industry: Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.
7. Sincerity: Use no harmful deceit; think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly.



8. Justice: Wrong none by doing injuries or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
9. Moderation: Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.
10. Cleanliness: Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.
11. Tranquility: Be not disturbed at trifles, nor at accidents. Be calm.
12. Chastity: Be chaste in matters with the opposite sex.
13. Humility: Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

— Benjamin Franklin —  
(*Biography on page 580*)



## SOURCES & BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

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HAYAT NANCY ABUZA (CIRCA 1956– )

Hayat Nancy Abuza is an ordained interfaith chaplain and the interfaith program coordinator at Smith College in Massachusetts, where she leads the Wellness Initiative. Abuza received her BA from Harvard and her MD from Albany Medical College in 1981. She teaches meditation, stress reduction, guided visualization, and sacred arts at Smith and Amherst Colleges. A haiku poet, she also leads classes, workshops, and retreats, drawing from her background in complementary medicine, psychology, and yoga.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672–1719)

In a peculiar time when writing poetry in early 18th-century England could help land oneself a political position, Joseph Addison excelled, becoming a prominent English essayist, poet, playwright, and politician. In 1711, Addison cofounded *The Spectator* magazine with friend Richard Steele, which was published daily and influenced much of the English reading public at the time. Addison wrote nearly half of the Spectator's 555 essays and is best known for his advocacy of reason, moderation, and harmony.

AL-TIRMIDHI (824–892)

Relatively little is known about the life of Muslim scholar Al-Tirmidhi. Al-Tirmidhi was the author of one of the six collections of Muhammad's spoken traditions known as "hadith," which are widely considered a foundation of religious law and moral guidance in the Arabic and Islamic world. Al-Tirmidhi's canonical collection "The Sound Collections" contains material that is still used in supporting legal decisions, as well as discussion of theological questions, belief, and custom. In his "Book of Good Qualities," Al-Tirmidhi comments on the character and life of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI (1872–1953)

A Muslim scholar who could recite the entire Qur'an from memory, Abdullah Yusuf Ali was most famous for his translation of this sacred text into English, making it one of the most widely known in the world. This book, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, was published in India in 1938. While he was promoting his translation, Ali helped open one of the first mosques in North America, the Al-Rashid Mosque in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

AMMACHI (SRI MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI DEVI) (1953– )

Mata Amritanandamayi was born in a small coastal village in India, where her parents noticed that she bore signs of spirituality from her birth. Ammachi or Amma, as she is known, has devoted her life to helping innumerable humanitarian services and creating institutions, including the Amrita University and School of Medicine in India. She has earned international recognition by

the United Nations for her outstanding contributions to the world community and as a spiritual leader. Amma says: "Compassion to the poor and needy is our duty to God." Through the example of her own life, Amma has inspired people from all over the world to walk in the path of selfless compassion and service toward all beings. Amma is also known as the "Hugging Saint"; she has hugged millions of people worldwide.

MERWAN SHERIAR IRANI (MEHER BABA) (1894–1969)

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Merwan showed no spiritual inclination until late adolescence, when he met and studied with five gurus, including Sai Baba. Eventually he began attracting followers of his own and was given the name "Meher Baba," or "Compassionate Father." In particular, he was noted for his verbal silence, which he maintained from 1925 to his death in 1969, and he communicated through the use of an alphabet board and hand gestures. The expression, "Don't worry, be happy," which was made famous by Bobby McFerrin's number-one US hit song of the same name in 1988, is what Baba frequently used in cabling messages to his followers in the West.

SATHYA SAI BABA (1926–2011)

Sathya Sai Baba was born in Puttaparthi, India, where as a child, he demonstrated tremendous compassion, generosity, and wisdom. At the age of 14, he declared to his family and to the people that he would be known as Sai Baba, and that his mission was to start a spiritual regeneration of humanity by demonstrating and teaching the highest principles of truth, righteous conduct, peace, and divine love. He founded several Indian institutions and services projects, such as the Sri Sathya Institution of Higher Medical Science, Sri Sathya General Hospital, and clean water projects.

JOHN BALGUY (1686–1748)

John Balguy was an 18th-century English philosopher and moralist remembered for his clear, direct prose that advocates good sense, reason, and compassion. Among his most famous works are the two-part *The Foundation of Moral Goodness*, published in 1727, and his 1741 *Essay on Redemption*. The latter contains advanced views, going beyond the definition of redemption as a mere deliverance from sin via the suffering of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), but also noting that it involves no translation of guilt, substitution of people, or vicarious punishment. By freeing oneself from these constraints, Balguy argues that it satisfies deep and urgent human wants with reason and rectitude.

DR. FRANCA BARONI (1968– )

Dr. Franca Baroni is a philosopher, writer, speaker, and attorney. Born in Switzerland, Dr. Baroni holds a doctorate in public international law and is a member of both New York and Swiss Bars. Early in her career she recognized the inadequacies of current governance and law, and she has since explored the root causes of human rights violations and advocated for a new collective awareness and the practice of peace. She is the author of *On Governance: Cor Publicum: The Evolution of Res Publica*, about a fundamentally new system of governance and law based from the integration of mind and heart intelligence.

M. CHERIF BASSIOUNI (1937– )

War crimes expert M. Cherif Bassiouni has devoted his adult life to legal justice and is currently a distinguished research professor of law emeritus at DePaul University College of Law in Chicago, as well as legal positions in Italy and France. Bassiouni has served in the United Nations in numerous legal capacities, where he has championed human rights and international justice. In 1999,

Bassiouni was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in international criminal justice and for his contribution to the creation of the International Criminal Court.

#### HENRY WARD BEECHER (1813–1887)

Given the political and moral stirrings of 19th-century America, the path of a highly popular Congregationalist minister might be quite preordained even if Henry Ward Beecher had not been born to one of the most prominent families of the time, which included sister Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), activists Charles and Isabella, and educator Catherine. Renowned for his extraordinary preaching abilities, Henry was widely considered the greatest clerical orator of his century and was unusually liberal for the time, advocating women's suffrage, temperance, and even Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. He was also intolerant of bigotry and slavery and felt that Christianity should adapt itself to the changing culture of the times. In 1874, Beecher was sued by a former friend for allegedly having an adulterous affair with his wife in what became one of the most scandalous trials in 19th-century America.

#### POPE BENEDICT XVI (1927– )

Pope Benedict XVI (born Joseph Alois Ratzinger) became Pope in 2005 after the death of John Paul II. Born in Germany near the Austrian border, Ratzinger was deeply drawn to religion even as a child, and he was an extremely reluctant participant in the mandatory Nazi draft. These difficult years of Hitler's brutal regime galvanized Ratzinger's religious faith, and following World War II, he pursued his studies in philosophy and theology in Munich and was ordained as a priest in 1951. From 1962 to 1965, Ratzinger participated in the Second Vatican Council as a theological consultant. Pope Benedict XVI is known for his conservative views and his prolific writings that defend traditional Catholic doctrine. Significant challenges have marked his papacy, including growing secularism worldwide and widespread sexual abuse by Catholic priests.

#### JNANESHVARA BHARATI (1948– )

A native of Ohio who practiced yoga and meditation even as a young child, in 1993 Jnaneshvara was ordained as a Himalayan monk. From 1998 to 1999, Jnaneshvara received training from sage Naga Swami Hanuman Giri at the cave hermitages in the high Himalayas, and in 1999, he was initiated as a Dandi Swami (the highest honor in the Shankara tradition) at the bank of the river Ganges in India.

#### THE BIBLE

In its most widely recognized form, the Bible is considered by Christians to be the inspired record of God's revelation of Himself and of His will to humankind. Written over a period of 3,500 years, "The Book," as it is sometimes called, is a collection of ancient writings that includes the books of both the Old Testament and the New Testament, which are used by the Christian Church. The Bible can also refer to the Hebrew Scriptures (the sacred book of Judaism) or, more generically, to a book or collection of writings constituting the sacred text of any religion.

The Bible, as used by most Christians, includes the Hebrew Scripture (including the books of Daniel and Job) and the New Testament, which relates the life and teachings of Jesus (peace be upon him), the letters of the Apostle Paul and other disciples to the early Church, and the Book of Revelation. The Bible also contains common portions of both Christian and Jewish biblical canons, including the Old Testament, which covers Genesis and God's creation of the world and His early relationship with humanity, and His prophets.

BLACK ELK (1863–1950)

Heháka Sápa, or Black Elk, was a famous medicine man of the Ogala Lakota (Sioux) tribe and also second cousin to Crazy Horse. A man who paradoxically passed back and forth fluidly between his native culture and that of the white man, he participated in the Battle of Little Big Horn and Wounded Knee Massacre as a youth but later became a proselytizing Catholic known for converting many Native Americans to Christianity. In his lifetime, Black Elk witnessed massive injustices committed against Native Americans by whites as the latter claimed land and resources across America, and some historians feel that Black Elk acted for the preservation of his people, who had no choice but to submit and adapt. Black Elk's storytelling and spiritual beliefs were captured by John Neihardt's poignant book, *Black Elk Speaks*.

OMAR N. BRADLEY (1893–1981)

At the end of World War I, Omar Nelson Bradley once considered himself a professional failure because he had spent his wartime years in the United States while his colleagues fought in glory on the battlefields of Europe. But he would later become one of the main US Army field commanders in North Africa and Europe during World War II, and ultimately the highest-ranking United States general in the Army. Bradley was known as the “soldier's general” for his deep compassion and concern for his men. After World War II, Bradley was appointed director of the beleaguered and antiquated Veterans Administration (VA), which he modernized and restructured, always according to the needs of its veterans and not from political decisions.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË (1816–1855)

Illness and early death ravaged the family of Charlotte Brontë, but not before she and her two sisters penned works that would later become classics in English literature. The eldest of the Brontë sisters, Charlotte's most famous novel is *Jane Eyre*, which, to avoid cultural and gender prejudice, she wrote under the pen name Currer Bell. Featuring a courageous, fiercely independent heroine who overcomes adversity through virtuous but unconventional ways, the novel immediately sparked the public's imagination upon its publication in 1847, with many wanting to know the identity of its talented, mysterious author. Brontë kept her identity secret until near the end of her short life, becoming a part of London's literary circle.

BUDDHA (CIRCA 563 BCE–CIRCA 483 BCE)

Siddhārtha Gautama began life as a spiritual teacher in ancient India but ultimately became the founder of what would become one of the world's great religions. Numerous biographies of Buddha (meaning the “enlightened one”) exist, with differences and ambiguities in interpretation, but it is widely believed that he was the son of a king of a northern Indian province. At his birth, a hermit seer predicted that the baby boy would become either a prominent king or a great holy man. The young prince rejected the material wealth and sheltered life that surrounded him in his youth, and at the age of 29, Siddhārtha left his palace to pursue a life of extreme asceticism. When he was 35, he attained Enlightenment and began to realize the causes of suffering and the solutions necessary to eliminate it, which became the Four Noble Truths, the heart of Buddhist teaching. Through a mastery of these truths, Buddha believed that anyone could attain Nirvana, or supreme liberation. Buddha devoted his remaining life to traveling and teaching throughout India without regard to race, class, or India's caste system.

RALPH JOHNSON BUNCHE (1904–1971)

An African-American who was born in Detroit, Michigan, Ralph Bunche grew up in a socially turbulent time in America when blacks were often discriminated. Despite these challenges,

*Paradise* is a book that vividly and convincingly describes the unlimited and magical power of love and kindness. Full of practical wisdom from hundreds of quotations, thoughts, and spiritual verses from a multitude of faiths, it speaks to our innate desire and need for personal and collective peace, freedom, social justice, and dignified human and civil rights that are consistently protected by fair and just laws. The spiritual, religious, and political leaders quoted within its pages show us how to live and love peacefully and gracefully with honor and respect for all faiths and traditions. Most importantly, this ecumenical book clearly establishes that there really is a Heaven, which adds realistic hope to our lives and a goal to work toward!



“This wonderful book is a collection of some of the most beautiful words I’ve read in a long time. Pick any page, read it, breathe it in, and you will feel better.”

— *Reverend Dr. Kathianne Lewis, author, TV minister and host, and senior minister, Seattle Center for Spiritual Living*

“This unique volume contains over 100 striking excerpts from the Qur’an, Muhammad, Rumi, Jesus, and the Bible. They show dramatically that the Muslim religion is Abrahamic, concurring in the realization of Judaism and Christianity that God has intervened in history and has revealed Himself.”

— *Father Robert F. Drinan, S.J., Catholic priest, author, Georgetown University Law Center professor, former US Congress member, and recipient of both the American Bar Association’s highest award and the US Congressional Distinguished Service award for human rights and world peace leadership*

“*Paradise* is a compilation which offers inspiration and solace for a troubled planet. Mussehl shows us the continuing vitality of the common faith.”

— *Phillip H. Ginsberg, Esq., recipient of 2009 CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) Award, human-rights and interfaith leader, past president of the Board of the Defender Association*

“Reading this book proves that different faith-traditions have the same idea of one God, and all want to live in peace and happiness. This precious book is a bouquet of flowers! Without any reservation at all, I enthusiastically recommend this beautiful book for all Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and all spiritually-minded people!”

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