

How to Pray?

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The other day, as I was going out of the entrance door to our flat, I found a very dear friend standing outside. I asked him: "Why are you standing outside? We have been expecting you!" He replied: "Since some time, I have been pressing the button of the electric bell, waiting for you to answer me." I told him we could not hear, because it was not yet connected at the other end. He laughed and said: "This is what happens often in our lives. We keep on pressing 'the button' with profuse prayers at our end, little realizing that it is not connected with God. He does not answer, and we feel frustrated, blaming Him for not hearing our prayers!"

Many of us must have had a similar experience in our lives when we have prayed and prayed our hearts out, without receiving any tangible response from God. At such times, we must ask ourselves: Are we connected at all with God, either directly or indirectly?

If we would watch our prayers, we would find that many of them are directed towards teaching God how He should run the cosmos, the universe or at least our little lives by granting our requests for this or that. Such prayers do not reach God. They are governed by the laws of causation which have been aptly stated as, "As you sow, so shall you reap". We do not get what we desire but only that which we deserve. And, how few of us ever pray: O Lord! Give us the strength to bear with fortitude and gratitude whatever we deserve!

If our prayers do not reach God, then the question arises: Why should we pray at all? Indeed, if we pray only for the fulfillment of our egocentric desires, and if there is no force of destiny behind these desires, we are only asking for frustration. But then, asking for egocentric desires is not true Prayer.

As Revered Dadaji, Dr. Dinshah K. Mehta, has explained in this Discourse, true prayer is *offering our thoughts to God*.

Even when we make the offering in the right way, how can we be sure that it is accepted by the Source of all creation, whom we call God? This and many other matters connected with prayer are clearly explained in this Discourse, which was delivered through Revered Dadaji on April 6, 1975, at the Delhi Branch of the Society of Servants of God.

— Sundri Vaswani

Words, Thoughts, Desires and Destiny

Human beings pray in their own way, according to their subjective conceptions of prayer, whether from Scriptures or outside Scriptures. Quite often, even when

they pray genuinely with their mind and heart, the prayers are mere words. But words have some meaning; and when their human mind understands the meaning, it gets some form of subjective satisfaction.

Often, at the back of prayers are some desires of one's own making, behind which there is no force, not even of destiny. In case of most human beings, destiny is the only force of fulfillment behind their desires.

Destiny is nothing but the ripening of the past causations. The force of destiny plays a very important role in the lives of human beings on earth and when even that aspect of the force is absent, the prayers, however well-meaning, lead to frustration. And, human minds, at the average human level do not get even subjective satisfaction out of their own prayers.

Therefore, at least for one's own subjective personal satisfaction, let not any prayer be based on one's own desires. Even when such desires get fulfilled, it is not because the prayers are answered. Rather, it is because there is the force of destiny which causes the ripening of the past causations or past desires. That helps them to get what they deserve. When the force of destiny is strong then it helps the individual to succeed even in fields which may be other than the ones for which past causations of some other desires of the past have ripened.

One can say with certainty that in most cases, human beings who pray at their human levels of wakeful consciousness, merely get some subjective egocentric satisfaction through their prayers and no more, whether they pray individually or participate in group prayers with co-religionists or even praying together as a group with followers of different religions.

What is Prayer?

One should be very clear about the nature of true prayer from the spiritual point of view and not merely from the customary, conventional or even accepted religious point of view. From the spiritual point of view: *Prayer is not but offering of thoughts unto God through minds that have ascended unto God or are descending from God.*

The first aspect of this Principle, which we have mentioned, is that prayer is "offering of thoughts unto God." The offering of thoughts has to be accepted by the Source of all, generally called God. There is a big gap between the human mind that makes the offerings at the human wakeful levels of consciousness and the level of consciousness of the Mind of the Source of Sources that is God.

Gap between Average Human Beings and God

That gap can be bridged only under three conditions. One is when the one who prays offers that prayer beyond the three average levels of the human wakeful consciousness which are the sense-perception level, the emotional level and the rational level. This is very difficult for most human minds, as their prayer consists merely of subjective thoughts that go on in circles and circles of their own making, though the words may be other than those of their thoughts. The words can be even Scriptural or Divine, but they do not express the thoughtforms of the person concerned whose mind is active and wanders even when they are verbally reciting the prayers..

When there is no schism between the thoughtforms and the words, when there is a link between the thoughtforms and the words, Scriptural or otherwise, the prayers have some force towards a certain direction. Still, as long as those thoughts linked with the words are offered at the average human levels of wakeful consciousness, they cannot reach the Divine Mind on their own strength.

Transcending the three levels of the average human wakeful consciousness is not easy. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for almost all average human beings. But, as explained above, in the second out of the three aspects of prayer, if the prayer is linked through an ascending soul, then there is a possibility of the thoughts, linked with or without words, being carried towards the Divine Source through that Messenger.

Messengers of God: Ascending Souls

Messengers of God have two basic natures. One is the Messenger who has transcended the human levels of consciousness - not merely the three average levels but beyond the seventh level - and has ascended unto the spiritual plane where there are liberated souls.* (*Refer "*The Discourse*", Vol. III, Numbers 12-13, dated July 15, 1974 entitled, "Seven Levels of Wakeful Plane of Consciousness and Beyond".)

When such spiritual Beings choose to carry the messages of the average human beings, their thoughtforms of the messages of the average human beings grow unto Divine Thoughts, and these thoughtforms are completely different from the human thoughtforms. And, these thoughtforms which have been converted into Divine Thoughts are radiated unto the first spiritual plane by the liberated ascending Messenger. From there on, other High Beings, linked with the first spiritual plane, carry the message unto the higher spiritual planes until it reaches the highest spiritual plane where the Triad eternally is, and is comprised of the three emanations of the Word which have been given different names in different Scriptures.

In Vedic Scriptures, the three emanations from the Triad are called *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* or *Shiva*. In the Scriptures of the ancient Prophet of Iran, Zarathustra, the same three emanations of the Triad are called *Asha*, *Vohu Mana* and *Kshatravairyo*. Likewise, in the teachings of the ancient prophets of Israel, the same aspects of the Triad are called Raphael, Gabriel and Michael. And, in the teachings of that Great Being, one of the Highest of the High Descending Souls, Jesus the Christ, the Triad, the Holy Trinity is referred to as the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, for a prayer from the average human levels of wakeful consciousness to be accepted unto the spiritual planes, growing unto the Source of Sources, there have got to be Messengers who are ascending from the human or material levels of creations unto the Divine. This is the second aspect which has to be part of the process of praying for the prayer to be accepted.

Messengers of God: Descending Souls

The second aspect for the acceptance of a prayer becomes reality under the rarest of the rare conditions and happens when there is a Descending High Soul, who has descended from the Source of Sources unto the creation. Such High Beings are like the ones who are termed *Avatars* in this holy land of India such as the spiritual Being Ram who incarnated in the human personality known as the son of King Dasarath, like Krishna who incarnated in the human personality known as the son Vasudev, like the Buddha who incarnated in the son Suddhodhan. Likewise, the Descending High Beings in the holy lands of the Middle East.

One of them is the ancient land of Persia, now known as Iran, in which descended that great High Soul, Zarathustra, more than 9000 years ago. Subsequently, many other high Beings known as Zarathusht Tehmans have spread His teachings and have added to them.

The third holy land from which world religions have radiated is the land called Israel, from where the teachings of High Beings from Moses down to Jesus the Christ emanated, as did the teachings of Prophet Rasul Mohammad. From that holy land, High Beings have given world Scriptures – The Old Testament including the Five Books of Moses and the teachings of other Prophets, including the Great One, Elijah.

Jesus the Christ accepted all that had been given by the ancient Prophets of Israel and added to it through the revelations that He received from His Father in Heaven, which are in the New Testament.

And then came that great High Being Rasul Mohammad, who has given the eternal Scripture called the Quran, linking humanity with Divinity in increasing proportion, but beginning with and giving first value to humanity. No other world Scriptures has given the value to human beings in such clear terms as that great book the Quran, which contains also the revelations that Prophet Mohammad received through the archangel, Gabriel, who is one of the Triad.

Six World Religions

These are six world religions - Vedism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. This is because they satisfy three criteria of a world religion: - (i) They have stood the test of time of at least a thousand years, and more; (ii) Out of them, High Beings have incarnated and grown unto liberation and; (iii) At one time or another, they have spread in the major part of the world known in those times.

The originators of these six world religions have been no other than descending High Souls from the Source of Sources, the Triad. In some cases they have descended directly from the Triad and near directly in other cases. Such Beings do not easily incarnate in matter, that is man on this earth. They incarnate only when there is great, if not catastrophic, imbalance created by humanity, even with the best of intentions, but having a material foundation and not spiritual basis as a way of life. This happens when humanity in general, either individually or in groups, including nations, goes after acquisition of end-products which are no other than matter, matter and matter.

Descending High Beings Come to Restore Balance

Human beings go against the divine principles and laws, and knowingly or without knowledge, they become instruments of mortal sins - one or the other of the seven mortal sins* (*The seven mortal sins are: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Envy, Gluttony, and Sloth. Refer "*The Discourse*", Vol. II, Numbers 1-2, dated January 30, 1973, entitled, "Sublimation of the Procreative Instinct unto Truth [Satya]".). Thereby they create imbalance between matter and spirit. If this imbalance is allowed to continue, it would shake the creation called earth, which is a planet in the solar system. Through such shaking of the matter, which is sustained by the spiritual force, the whole solar system would get shaken. Thereby, even some aspect of the cosmos in matter would be shaken.

To re-balance that imbalance in the Invisible, such descending High Beings incarnate in the body of man. Whether they incarnate or not, they are eternally watchful of the imbalance. Wherever the imbalance occurs in matter, whether in the creation, which is earth, or other than earth, they re-establish the balance.

Prayer Linked through Descending High Souls

When they incarnate on this earth, it is the rarest of the rare chance for humanity to send their prayers through such Messengers, provided the human beings concerned are accepted by such Messengers as being worthy to take their prayers as their message. But more than the prayers, when such Beings incarnate, the whole of creation called man on this earth - which includes woman - gets shaken to the very core wherever they be, through human machinery or otherwise; whether political, economic or social, as is happening in the present-day way of life of human beings all over the world.

If the human beings concerned heed the shake-up and change the basis of their way of life from matter unto the Source of matter that is spiritual and Divine, then, after some shake-up, the balance is re-established again. And the destruction due to the shake-up gets replenished in the right way.

If, in their way of life, human beings do not accept the foundation that has been changed from material unto spiritual, then such Beings without doing anything at the human level, merely act as Messengers. And by carrying the message from human spheres of life unto the Divine and bringing the Message from the Divine unto humanity, their thoughtforms are enough to make the necessary changes through the human beings in power or outside power of whatever nature, whether political or economic or social.

If humanity concerned still fails to change, then such Beings are permitted to make use of nature in general to cleanse and purify the wrong that has created the imbalance with or without the right knowledge of the foundation.

Therefore, instead of merely carrying to the Divine the message of prayers of individuals or groups, the bigger work that such Beings do is that of balancing the imbalance in the material creations which are influenced by human beings.

Great Opportunity for Human Beings To Change Their Foundation from Material to Spiritual

Whenever it happens, this is a great, great opportunity, for human beings to make use of to shed their wrong foundation of matter in their way of life and replace it with the right foundation, which is spiritual. To begin with, in Scriptures, the spiritual foundation is given in the form of **Yamas, Niyamas, Sheelas** and Commandments, growing unto higher spiritual principles and laws. When human beings live according to these spiritual principles, then, instead of remaining matter-bound, their souls get liberated unto the spiritual realm.

When such High Beings do not incarnate, then, under ordinary conditions, for a soul to be liberated unto the spiritual realm it takes many many cycles of birth, life and death. However, when such High Beings incarnate, in quite a few cases, if not many, the soul can be liberated from the matter-bound state within one life-time. In the majority of cases, it can reduce the cycles of birth, life and death by many times.

As is said in the Vedic Scriptures, the average soul that has fallen away from the Source has to pass through 84 *laks** of lives. Even such souls can be liberated within a few lives, maybe less than a hundred, depending upon the soul concerned.

Misuse of Divine Radiation by Wrong Minds

Yet, it has been an unfortunate experience that whenever such High Souls incarnate, who descend from the Highest of the High, their very presence radiating through the matter that is the body of the human personality, within whom they have incarnated, gives power to all around, including undivine and anti-divine human minds. These undivine and anti-divine minds make many claims. Through temptations, fears and doubts, they mislead ignorant human beings, thereby side-tracking them away from the course leading to the liberation of their souls.

That danger is accentuated, more so, when those in material power of one nature or another make use of the spiritual Grace, unconsciously received, for their own ends for stabilizing their power or for building their esteem in the eyes of human beings at the average levels of human consciousness. But, such ones cannot go on for long. As soon as the Grace is withdrawn in the interest of their souls, they collapse like a house of cards and become nonentities even at the human level. At best, they pass into history.

Time for Humanity to Change

This is the time, all over the world, for such a change to happen in the foundation of the human way of life. This is the time for all humanity to grow towards the liberation of their souls through right prayers, or through right spiritual way of life which is transcendental to prayers. Let not humanity get sidetracked into material realms, individually or collectively, even as nations. If they do so, then they will make their souls matter-bound for eons. God Bless You.

*Lakh is a term used in several south Asian countries and denotes the numerical figure 100,000 (one hundred thousand)