

Prayer and Meditation: Warwick Leaflet

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"Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made, and His praise glorified."

Why Pray?

"...the impulse to pray is a natural one, springing from man's love for God."

"The prayerful condition is the best of all conditions, for man in such a state communeth with God, especially when prayer is offered in private and at times when one's mind is free, such as midnight. Indeed, prayer imparteth life."

How to Pray

"Should a person recite but a single verse from the Holy Writings in a spirit of joy and radiance, this would be better for him than reciting wearily all the Scriptures of God..."

"The true worshipper, while praying, should endeavour not so much to ask God to fulfil his wishes and desires, but rather to adjust these and make them conform to the Divine Will. Only through such an attitude can one derive that feeling of inner peace and contentment which the power of prayer alone can confer."

Private Prayer

"The reason why privacy hath been enjoined in moments of devotion is this, that thou mayest give thy best attention to the remembrance of God..."

The Power of Prayer

"Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee... that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men. Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb."

"If a few souls gather in a beloved meeting with the feelings of the Kingdom, with the divine attractions, with pure hearts and with absolute purity and holiness, to consort in spirit and fragrance, that gathering will have its effect upon all the world."

Praying Together

Bahá'ís meet together once every Bahá'í month for what is called a "Feast".

The first part of this consists of saying prayers together. This spiritual attitude should then be carried forward to the consultative and social parts which follow.

Bahá'ís also meet together at other times to pray - as a family, as friends, as a group. This may be at home, in a Bahá'í centre, or in a Bahá'í House of Worship.

"Thou hast asked about places of worship and the underlying reason therefore.

The wisdom in raising up such buildings is that at a given hour, the people

should know it is time to meet, and should gather together, and, harmoniously tuned to one another, engage in prayer; with the result that out of this coming together, unity and affection shall grow and flourish in the human heart."

"Whensoever a company of people shall gather in a meeting place, shall engage in glorifying God, and shall speak with one another of the mysteries of God, beyond any doubt the breathings of the Holy Spirit will blow gently over them, and each shall receive a share thereof."

Prayer is Part of Life

There are specific Bahá'í prayers which can be used for many different occasions and parts of everyday life. There is a special prayer for an expectant mother to say for the baby whilst still in the womb. There are prayers for children, prayers for marriage, for waking and sleeping and travelling.

All Bahá'í meetings should start with prayers. Prayers are also said before Bahá'í elections and if problems arise during consultation between Bahá'ís.

There are many prayers for healing: "The prayers which were revealed to ask for healing apply both to physical and spiritual healing. Recite them, then, to heal both the soul and the body."

In times of trouble Bahá'ís repeat the following prayer many times over:

"Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants and all abide by His bidding."

There is a special prayer to be said when a person dies, and also prayers to be said for those who have already passed to the next world.

"Those who have ascended (passed to the next world) have different attributes from those who are still on earth, yet there is no real separation. In prayer there is a mingling of stations, a mingling of conditions. Pray for them as they pray for you."

Obligatory Prayers

It is very important to communicate with God through prayer every day.

Bahá'u'lláh revealed three special prayers which are known as the Daily Obligatory Prayers. A Bahá'í should choose one of them to say each day. The three prayers are of varying lengths - this is the shortest one:

"I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting."

Meditation

"Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life; through it he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit."

Each day a Bahá'í should read something from the scriptures and meditate on what has been read.

"Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state man abstracts himself; in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective mood he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things-in-themselves."

"It is an axiomatic fact that while you meditate you are speaking with your own

spirit. In that state of mind you put certain questions to your spirit and the spirit answers: the light breaks forth and the reality is revealed."

"This faculty brings forth from the invisible plane the sciences and arts.

Through the meditative faculty inventions are made possible, colossal undertakings are carried out; through it governments can run smoothly. Through this faculty man enters into the very Kingdom of God."

"The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror: if you put it before earthly objects it will reflect them. Therefore, if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly subjects he will be informed of these. But if you turn the mirror of your spirits heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained."

"May we indeed become mirrors reflecting the heavenly realities, and may we become so pure as to reflect the stars of heaven."

Prayer and Meditation must lead to Action

"Prayer and meditation are very important factors in deepening the spiritual life of the individual, but with them must go also action and example, as these are the tangible results of the former. Both are essential."

"It is not sufficient to pray diligently for guidance, but this prayer must be followed by meditation as to the best methods of action and then action itself."

"Chant the words of God and, pondering over their meaning, transform them into actions!"

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