

How to Pray Effectively

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Subject this morning: "How to Pray Effectively."

Many people do not obtain response to their prayers for the simple reason that they fail to realize that prayer and the response from your prayers is a definite scientific technique. There are definite laws governing prayer, just like there are laws governing mathematics. If you conform, you will get your response. If you do not, there'll be no response. That's the first thing to realize. If your prayers do not seem to be answered, there's a reason, a definite reason, because prayer is scientific, very scientific; because it is the great desire of the devotee for a response from the Master of the Universe, who has made all things.

There are two general requisites for prayer. If you use these two, you will find much different results from your prayer.

The first requisite is that to pray successfully we must attain the Presence of God. That's the first thing. We must be in His Presence. For the simple reason, if we are in His Presence, then we will know, at least, He hears us. And the second requisite is, that in His Presence, knowing you are in His Presence, then you must somehow register what you desire in His Omnipresence, All-pervading. In that Omnipresence is God's Eternal Consciousness, and you can see, that if you register in that Omnipresence, that you will get your answer to prayer according to His Will.

Now that, being able to touch His Great Omnipresence, so to speak, comes only with full surrender to God. Now you can see why sometimes your prayers are not answered. Even some of us are able to attain the Presence of God, but is the mind perfectly calm? Have we so surrendered to God that does not ripple in the wave of your mind, or the ocean of mind? No. We know that's not so. But there will come a time, if you persist, when you will fully surrender to God. Then there'll be nothing but the One Presence of God's Consciousness and your own. There'll be no separation. And then, there'll be no need to pray, because then you will have what your Father has – all things, eternally present.

So remember the two requisites. Let us keep this subject simple. First, attain the Presence of God, and then having His Presence, be able to touch His Great

Omnipresent Love, and that comes by full surrender, just those two things. Of course, it takes will to do it, as I said a few moments ago, will is very necessary. But we can do it, because in God's Presence, and, if we touch His Omnipresence, His Will, or rather, our will is His Will, and we can pray successfully.

Now first, as to attaining the Presence of God; how shall we know when we are in His Presence? Well, how do you know you're in my presence; and how do I know you're in, how do I know you're in my presence; how do you know you're in my presence? Well, you know what I mean? How do we know we're in each other's presence? It's so hot you can't even think of the Presence of God.

So there you have it. How do we know that: by simple, simple things. I see you, sometimes I hear you, as I just heard you giggling, and I also feel your presence, as God's Love in your heart. I know I'm in your presence, and you know you're in mine. Now the same thing applies to attaining the Presence of God, except it is not done through the outward faculties of senses, mind, or intellect – of which I have just mentioned – and feeling. It is not done that way. But it is done through seeing, hearing, and feeling on the Intuition of the Soul, in the Intuition of the Soul's Presence. That's the only difference. But this *modus operandi* is the same, exactly. Get into the Presence of God. We have to see Him. Actually, we have to feel His Love, and we have to hear His Voice. As you hear my voice, you hear the voice of God. Now when you can do those things, you're in God's Presence. Understand that.

Now, how can we do that? Well, all the scriptures say the same thing. Our own Bible says the same thing: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God."¹ And you've heard me say that hundreds of times, but it's still the Word of God. Now in that Holy Vibration, which is within each and every one of us, is Sight, Sound, or hearing, and greatest of all, God's Love. And so, when you can be in that Presence – not through the ordinary eyes, or the hearing, and so forth – but through the Intuition of the Soul, where you see the Light of God all around – at the Christ Center perhaps, only, or expanded all around – or you can hear His Voice, as the Great Sound "of many waters," the "trumpet" Sound, or you can feel His Presence, as you and I feel the presence of one another, magnified many, many, many times; when you can do that, or be in any one of those aspects, even; you are in the Presence of God, because the Word is God, the Word was God, the Word is God, and in that Holy Vibration – called the Word in our Bible; the Om in the Hindu religion; the Amin in

¹ St. John 1:1

Mohammedanism; the Ahunavar in Zoroastrianism – means the same thing: the Presence of God.

Now, God is a Spirit. He has to be worshiped in Spirit. God is a definite Force. He's not just an idea of somebody sitting way up; taking care of us. As a definite Force, and that force is what I have just spoken of, the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost – “holy” means unseen, unseen vibration, Holy Ghost means unseen; holy means that Vibration in which is the Presence of God – now that's what we have to attain first. If we can do that, we at least know one thing, as I know one thing, now, that I'm in your presence, and you're in mine.

So we, being in God's Presence, we know He hears us; and that's half the battle, or more than half – almost. If we know God hears us, we realize that He – being a True and Loving Father, as we all feel deep within our Souls – He hears us; He's going to answer us, according to His Will. So let us understand that first requisite, is to attain the Presence of God.

And so, as I have said, this Presence is not attained by ordinary consciousness. That's the mistake. But go deeper than that ordinary thought within you – an ordinary feeling. Go deeper within that. And through the Soul, you'll hear the Cosmic Sound of God's Voice. You will see His Light at the Christ Center. Perhaps He will expand your consciousness, and you'll see His Light all around, pervading all things. And greatest of all, when He just touches you, through His Love, there'll be no question but you are in the Presence of God.

And so, we can contact Him, not through mundane consciousness, but through the Power of the Soul, which is in each and every one of us. And that Soul is a ray of God. That's how we can contact Him. And we can see Him, hear His Voice, and feel His Love more than you can see, and hear, and feel each one of us now. Such is God. He's the One Reality. We have to attain His Presence. This is clearly pointed out in the scriptures. In Matthew, Matthew, the 6th Chapter, the 6th Verse. Listen carefully. Be thou, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father [which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly] ~~will answer~~ thee openly."

What does it mean really? Enter into the closet means, "go within." Go within, into the closet, as we just sang our little chant, the secret where the Soul resides, "the secret cave of silence." Go into that. That's entering the closet; and when you've shut the door, shut the door of the senses and the thoughts. Don't think of making money, as was pointed out. Shut the door, shut out the thoughts, shut

out the sensation, and then pray to God, secretly. Not with outward things of senses, mind, and intellect, but with the Intuition of the Soul, and the Love of God in your heart. That's what the scriptures tell us to do in our own Bible. And God will repay you, or reward you, openly. You will see His Hand working, without question of a doubt. We'll come to that a little later.

Now, many of God's children pray in restlessness. We have been talking about that. They pray in restlessness. They get perhaps into a Presence of God. Yes, sometimes they hear the Cosmic Sound, and then they begin to pray, "Father, reveal Thyself." And then, perhaps on the other hand, they're thinking, "Well, I wonder what the Dodgers are doing today. Wonder if they're winning their game." All sorts of things. That's what it means by "praying in restlessness." Or perhaps they're thinking, "Wonder if that deal is coming off. What? God I want Thee. Reveal Thyself." And then, on the other hand, "I wonder if everything's all right at home." Many millions of things come. That's praying in restlessness. But when you really, and fully, and completely, attain the Presence of God, you will not pray in restlessness. Because restlessness cannot exist, cannot remain, when God's Presence fully permeates the Soul. So realize that.

Go deeper. Have more love for the Infinite Father. When those thoughts come – they're not evil thoughts – they're natural for everybody. We all have done the same thing, and will do it, until finally, by the Grace of God, they'll be eradicated. But go deeper. Go deeper, as Master used to say, "With loving attention," loving attention.

How about yourself? If your children come to you, or your friends come to you, with loving attention, can you resist them easily? So the same with God; He's the most human, because He's made the whole bunch of us. He knows how we feel and what we need. So approach Him with loving attention, and you will see. Try it. You will see the thoughts, they get kind of limp, and weak, and they can't remain. Such is God's Power. Such is His Love. We must realize it.

And so, our Father's Presence, His Love, is what we all must have. And we must pray, not in restlessness, but in peace; in full confidence that God will take care of us. And Swami Ram said, "Peace like a river flows through me." "Peace like a river flows through me." When you feel that, you know you're in God's Presence; and you know He hears, at least hears what you are asking for, and that gives you great confidence to go deeper and deeper – diving deeper in His Love.

Now, second, or first, before we take up the second requisite – we will be able to better pray without restlessness, if we practice yoga; if we practice the highest technique of concentration plus the highest technique of meditation. We will be better able to pray without restlessness, if we will do these things, because many, many, especially in this room, have tried it, and have found it so. Because before you can attain the Presence of God, you must know how to concentrate. And before you can also attain the Presence of God, you must know how to put your concentration on the Presence of God, or on the Holy Vibration, the Holy Ghost.

That's what yoga will do for you, and that's what the Self-Realization Fellowship lessons will do for each one of you. So realize that. If you are to supersede this prayer in restlessness – which we all go through – know how to concentrate first; and then, know how to place that concentration on God's Presence. Then you will attain the first requisite. Without doubt, you will attain His Presence, and you will know it, because you will hear His Sound, His Voice; you will see His All-pervading Light; and you will feel, greatest of all, the Touch of His Love; and you will feel and know you are in His Presence. So much for the first point.

Now, going on; the second requisite is, as I have said, the ability to register and touch God's Omnipresence. We know that His Omnipresence is All-pervading. The sparrow's fall is noted. We know these things. But we do not realize them. That's the important thing. Now when you realize them, realize these things by touching His Omnipresence, by registering it, without question of a doubt; by full surrender to Him; then you will know, not only He hears you, not only you are in His Presence, but that He will answer you, absolutely, according to His Will. And His giving, His answer to prayer, will be much better than what you could do for yourself. That much we know. Those who pray and contact the Presence of God, and then surrender to Him, fully surrender to Him. Then you will see that prayer is so scientific, and God handles it so much easier than we can. He takes care of His children.

Our Master used to say that there is a certain way to pray. Love is the key. Ordinarily you cannot get an answer to your prayer until you feel God's Love. Therefore, Master said, "When you attain the Presence of God; then follow it with loving attention," loving attention. And also, "Make a loving demand." That's what most of us do not do. We feel so awed by the Presence of God; we feel so little, so to speak, in His Omnipresence that we forget that we are His children, and that our consciousness is His Consciousness; that our love is His Love; and so we don't demand. We should demand, just like our children demand of us. We brought them here. They can demand certain things – and

they do. Sometimes they demand more than they should. But, nevertheless, they can demand, and they do.

So can we with God, because He has placed us here, we are His children. He placed us here through Love. He created all things through Love. Don't you think He'll respond to Love more than anything else? Therefore, our Master says, "With loving attention and followed by loving demands." "I've got to have Thee, God. I must have Thee." Have one prayer: "Reveal Thyself. Reveal Thyself, O Father. Reveal Thyself." If you do this, God knows what we need, surely, more than we do, better than we do. And if we just say, "Father, reveal Thyself. Do as you want with me. Thy will be done." He will give us what we need in a far greater way than we could ever think of doing. Such is the Greatest Prayer: "Reveal Thyself." That is, "Lord, I surrender my will to Thee. Your will be done. I am Thy child. I have full faith and confidence in Thee." That's the thing God likes to hear. Not a half-hearted prayer, wondering if He's going to fulfill it, and then on the other hand, thinking of something else. No. God likes to feel we have full, full faith in Him. That's the thing. That's the greatest thing – so hard to do; so difficult to do, due to the delusion in the world.

There's the second requisite – full surrender to God. And when you can do that, you can touch His Omnipresence. You can register your presence as one Him. Then He surely, being a true Father, filled with Love and Compassion, as Master said, "He wants us more than we want Him." How can He but help answer us? I cannot understand anything but that. That's the consciousness we must drive home – that God hears and God will answer, because he is our Father and we are His children.

Now, a reference, let's see how the Master says it. He says it so wonderfully, a few things, which I have brought out. From the Autobiography [of a Yogi] first: "The Lord responds to all and works for all, so he fulfills any sincere desire of the devotee." "The Lord responds to all," but we have to follow those two requisites. He's willing to respond, but we have to get into His Presence, and then touch His Omnipresence by full surrender. Then these words are absolutely true.

"Seldom do men realize how often God hears, heeds their prayers." Because many times they pray when they really want God, they go deep, they touch His Omnipresence. Then he certainly answers. So our Master says, "Seldom do men realize how often God heeds their prayers. He is not partial to a few, but listens to everyone that approaches Him trustfully, or with full faith." That's the

greatest thing. "His children should ever have implicit faith in the loving kindness of their Omnipresent Father."

And from the Whispers From Eternity, "Divine recollection." Why can we remember what we were, and that we are God's children, and we are His Omnipresence? Because we were in that state of Omnipresence and we can recollect it. So the Master says, "Divine recollection is the simplest way to achieve God communion." Get into His Presence. Fully surrender to Him. You'll remember what you were, a part of Him, One with Him. "Our inner assertion," now listen carefully, "Our inner assertion of spiritually, of spiritual identity," as I have explained, "oneness with God, is sufficient to operate the law for fulfillment of prayers." Here the Master points out it's a definite law – a definite law. And when you touch God's Omnipresence, the inner assertion that you are one with Him, and feel it, and know it, the law works automatically. That's real prayer. These things are quite different than ordinary prayers, "parroting prayers," as our Master used to say. And then finally, "This law has been utilized by the saints of all ages."

Two things, that's all. Get into His Presence, and when you know you're in His Presence, there's no doubt about it, by the way I have explained, fully surrender to God, and His Grace will let you know that there's no difference between you and His Great Consciousness, and His All-pervading Omnipresence. Such is the God that we have, and such is the God we must know, more and more, until final liberation and salvation.

And so, Love, Divine Love, as I have pointed out, is paramount in prayer – paramount in prayer. Only by Love will this old world of ours change. Only when the hearts of men are changed by God's Love will we have any sense of sensibility, if I can put it that way. God's Love is what we all need. Those who are depraved and subject to bad habits, and are addicts to anything, in the many things of which we are cognizant, they need one thing; and that one thing is God. Not just the God in idea, but the God in Reality, which is His Love. There's nothing more real, or as real, as God's Love, and that's what we all need. Therefore, Love is a paramount issue when we come to prayer. Let us understand that.

If love for the Infinite Father is the motivating impulse of our lives, then the prayer, which Master suggested, will be the only prayer we will ask: "Reveal Thyself O Father. Reveal Thyself. Whatever you want, I am satisfied with, because I know you are Love." And feeling God's Love, there'll be no question,

there'll be no doubts. Then we can follow scripture's: "Nor be you of doubtful mind."² You cannot be that unless you feel God's Love. It's impossible. Because we're human, in one aspect of ourselves, and as long as a little of that is there, we doubt. But when you feel God's Love, then you can realize that you are not of doubtful mind, as the scriptures say; more doubt, not God. That's the point. Have faith in Him. That comes when you fully surrender to Him. There's nothing to it then. Until we do that, it's difficult – very difficult.

And so, in the Bible we have this pointed out, these very things. In 1st John, the 5th Chapter, the 15th Verse – and listen carefully. "And if we know that He hear us..." these are the things, exactly, what I've been pointing out, or tried to do. If we really know God hears us, by attaining His Presence, "...whatsoever we ask, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him"

We know we will have our prayers answered; the prayers we have desired will be fulfilled by God. That's a strong statement. But that presupposes attaining God's Presence, and full surrender. You know God hears you, and you know He will answer you, according to His Will. That's the state we must be in when we pray. That's real prayer. Then our prayer will be effective.

The delusion of separation from God hinders us in our prayers. That's why it is so important, as I have said, to attain first, the Presence of God. We feel separated from Him. You know you do. I know I do, at times. When I hear the Cosmic Sound, and see the Cosmic Light, and feel His Love, there's no separation at all. That's what we must attain; that's why attaining the Presence of God is so important. Then it's much easier to fully surrender, and there's no separation.

Separation is the only sin. That's why "Reveal Thyself" is the greatest prayer. Because it prays for that one thing; "Take away the separation which exists between us, O Father." Such a wonderful thing to remember. If we just know that God is right here with us, and you can know it, every moment. There's no separation. Are you gonna pray for anything? You're just gonna say, "Father, let this go on?" "Reveal Thyself. Eternally to me." Such is the greatest prayer.

And another reference from our Master's writings, which points this out, clearly, from the little book, The Master Said: "Most people are engrossed in material things," said the Master. "If they think of God at all, it is only to ask Him for money or health. They seldom pay, pray for the supreme gift, the sight of His

² Luke 12:29

Face, and the transforming touch of His Hand." When God answers your prayer, and you feel one with Him, and you see Him silently working, leading you by His Hand, there's nothing will touch that. That's what Master's pointing out here.

And finally, from the same book: "What is the best prayer? A disciple inquired. And the Master said, Say to the Lord, please tell me Thy Will." That is, "Reveal Thyself" is the same thing. Don't say, "I want this and I want that," but have faith that He knows what you need. And see where we fall down? We do not have that faith in God. And I pound myself all the time. Don't worry. I have lots of trouble – so do you. Let us increase our faith in God. He knows what we need. And then, "If you do this," the Master concludes, "you will see that you get much better things when He chooses them for you." Because He is the one Eternal Father; He's God Alone; there's nothing else needed but Him. We must realize that.

And so, finally, the more you meditate, and the more you gain God's Presence through full surrender, you will find, you will find, that's what you need, you will find He's the Greatest Friend. The Greatest Friend you can ever conceive of. And then you will see Him, as I pointed out a moment ago, leading you by the hand. You will hear His Voice. You'll see the Light of His Presence, but you'll feel Him leading you by His Hand in every action you do. That's the greatest thing. That's why we should understand the laws of prayer. And then having Him, having Him, you'll want nothing else – nothing else. I've talked to many, and they all say the same thing, "If I could just hold, and retain that Presence of God." There's nothing else you want, because there's all-fulfillment in God.

Remember those three things. Meditate more. Make more acquaintance with God. Be one with Him, so that you know He's your Father, your Greatest Friend; ready, and willing, and waiting to help you in everything. Knowing that, you'll want nothing else. Not a thing will you want, because in God is All-fulfillment.