



The Vision

A monthly journal started by HH Swami Ramdas in 1933
DEDICATED TO UNIVERSAL LOVE AND SERVICE

Vol. 88

JUNE 2021

No. 09



ANANDASHRAM, PO ANANDASHRAMA 671531, INDIA



Beloved Papa Swami Ramdas (1884-1963)

Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai Ram

ॐ श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम

Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai Ram

UNIVERSAL PRAYER



Lord of the universe,

O Creator, Protector and Destroyer of the worlds,

I come in all humility to Thy holy feet,

And surrender myself entirely to Thee.

Deign to bless me ever with Thy remembrance.

O merciful Divine Master,

Give me strength, purity and peace.

Thou art absolute power, omniscient and omnipresent,

Thou art seated in the hearts of all,

Thou art all purity, all goodness and all love,

Thou art a veritable ocean of peace and bliss,

Thou art the lover of Thy devotees,

Refuge of the helpless, Redeemer and Saviour of

Those who resign themselves to Thee;

(Contd. on Pg. 5)

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THE VISION

A monthly Magazine

Published by

ANANDASHRAM

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Make me dedicate my life, to Thee and to Thy service,
By Thy Grace, may peace and joy always dwell in
my heart.

Thou art mother, master, friend and all to me,
Accept me as Thy child and servant;
Grant me power to love Thee with all my heart;
Let whatever I do, be a fitting offering at Thy holy feet;
Make me pure in thought, word and deed;
I lay my mind at Thy feet,
Fill it always with Thy remembrance;
Let Thy glorious light illumine my heart.

O Sustainer of the worlds,
O kind and compassionate Lord, God of gods,
Give me the Divine vision, so that,
I may behold Thee in all, as all;
Make me ever feel Thy constant fellowship;
May my life be guided and controlled by Thee!
Thy Presence be ever with me, in me,
And everywhere around me.
I beg of Thee, I prostrate before Thee,
Hearken to this heartfelt prayer of mine.
And make me Thine and Thine only
For ever and ever! ❑

— **Swami Ramdas**

FROM THE EDITOR

Prayer plays a very significant role in the lives of all those who have faith in God. It can be said that prayer is like having a conversation with the Lord seated within. It is a potent means for communing with Him.

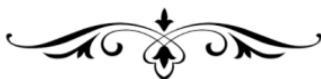
We don't always need words while praying as God is our Indweller and He knows us better than we know ourselves. Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi aptly said, "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart."

When we are confronted with various hurdles in life, we invoke the blessings of the Almighty Lord of the Universe, beseeching Him to step in and extend His supporting hand to pull us out of the mire. Proportionate to the intensity of the prayer, it is answered. However, very often, once the daunting problem is overcome, we forget that it was not because of our expertise that we could get past the problematic situation but it was because of our surrender to Him that we were saved. This forgetfulness can be attributed to the fact that the sense of individuality, which temporarily steps aside while sincerely praying, returns to reign supreme in

our daily lives. So, prayer is intended to remind us that it is He who is the Actuating Principle in everyone and everything.

This month's issue of THE VISION contains words of various Mahatmas on different aspects of prayer. May all of us be able to dwell on these thoughts and thus make our prayers more effective. □

— *Editor*



P *Prayer has tremendous influence. If the prayer is sincere and if it proceeds from the bottom of your heart, it will at once melt the heart of the Lord.*

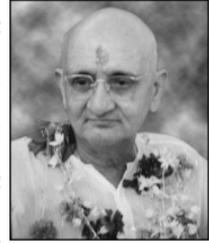
Attune your heart to the Lord by doing fervent and sincere prayers daily. Lay bare your heart to Him. Talk to Him like a child. Be humble and simple. Implore Him with a contrite heart to forgive your sins. Beseech Him to bestow His Grace. Rely on God alone. You will get His Darshan or vision.

— *Swami Sivananda*

POWER OF PRAYER

By Swami Ramdas

Prayer presupposes a belief in the existence of God. Otherwise, we would not pray. We therefore take it for granted even before we have seen God, that He does exist. This faith in His existence comes to us from the teachings of saints and sages who have seen Him. Now, taking for granted that God exists, we have next to know where He is. There also the saints have taught us that God dwells within us. Heart is the place in which God resides. Having known where He dwells, we have to see Him and realise Him and live in the light of His guidance. This is possible only by contacting God. That contact is possible only through prayer.



Prayer is a means by which we communicate with Him and establish a relationship with Him. We look upon Him as father, mother, friend, master or Lord. We consider ourselves to be His children, servants or friends. This relationship brings us nearer to Him, and our prayer then becomes very real to us.

When we look upon Him as our master, we pray to Him to guide us so that we may always walk on

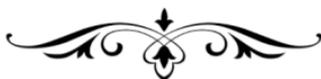
the path of righteousness without going astray. God, who is dwelling within, listens to our prayer, responds to it and grants us the necessary strength to walk always on the path of Truth. This power we derive by prayer. Prayer should be done with the sole object of attaining the knowledge of our oneness with Him.

The word 'knowledge' is rightly used here, because we are ever one with Him, but we do not know this. As we do not know it, we are like children who have missed the mother. Although the mother is with us, if we have closed our eyes, we do not see her. The moment we open our eyes we see the mother. It is not that she came there only when we opened our eyes. She was there even before, but as we had closed our eyes, we could not see her. Similarly, we have closed our eyes against God within us. If we open our eyes, we shall see He is there. He has ever been there. We are not conscious of Him, we have forgotten Him, and therefore we feel we are away from Him. It is this sense of separation that makes us miserable and unhappy, and subjects us to worries, cares, and anxieties. The moment we know that God is within us, and that we are always basking in the sunshine of His grace, then we feel supremely happy, like a child that has found the missing mother.

Prayer enables us to contact God and also to feel His presence within us. As we go on remembering Him through prayer, the intensity of our longing to have Him increases, and we feel His nearness. Our mind becomes purer and purer day-by-day, by the means of prayer and continuous remembrance of Him.

When Ramdas was struggling to know God, to realise God, to feel His presence, his one mainstay was God's holy name. He kept this all-powerful Name on his tongue always, and he felt he was very near God, because the Name gave continuous remembrance, and the remembrance developed into a consciousness in which he felt not only nearness of God, but also oneness with Him.

Name leads us to Him without any doubt. Prayer and chanting of His name are the two things needed to find Him within us and realise our unity with Him. □



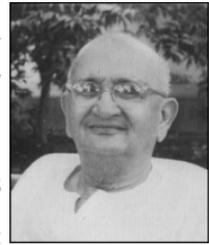
Prayer and spiritual contemplation are to spiritual health what food and physical exercise are to physical health.

— Sri Chandra Swami Udaseen

BELOVED PAPA SWAMI RAMDAS ANSWERS

Devotee: Should we pray to God?

Papa: Yes, we have to pray, all of us. Prayer is the only way by which we can keep contact with God, opening a channel between ourselves and Him. Prayer is the means to make His power, light, glory and purity flow into us.



Devotee: Could you teach us some prayer?

Papa: Prayer need not be a long-drawn one. It should be simple as the child speaking to the mother. We can place before Him our hearts' longing and that longing should be to realise Him, to feel His presence within us and everywhere about us. We can say, 'Oh Lord, make me pure in thought, word and deed by revealing Yourself in my heart!' This is the only prayer we need offer before God, and if He, by His grace, grants this prayer, we become supremely blessed, our life is elevated, illumined and filled with Divine peace and joy. A simple prayer is the best prayer. It must be essentially for our spiritual liberation. Jesus has rightly said, 'Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven.'

The Kingdom of Heaven is verily within us. It means the kingdom of happiness, of eternal peace and joy.



Devotee: Does prayer lead to communion with God?

Papa: Yes. God hears when we pray to Him. What are we without His power? In fact, without the words which He puts into our mouth, how can we pray? If only we are conscious of this, our prayers will be immediately answered. You can even hear Him talking to you. God is within, but our ignorance is such that we neither see nor hear him. Our eyes see only outside things and our ears hear only outside sounds. We can talk to God as we talk to our mother or friend. He is so near us. We can take His Name loudly or mentally, as we choose. Both ways are efficacious. If everybody in a house invokes God and holds Him close to his heart, it must produce a holy atmosphere conducive to the spiritual evolution of every member of the house.



Devotee: Is it only by praying that one can reach that state (where we have the comprehensive vision of God) — by saying the same prayer again and again?

Papa: Prayer helps us to concentrate our mind on God. In our helpless condition when we are beset with worries, we find it very difficult to fix our mind on God. Prayer unites us with Him. Our heart becomes pure and we realise His presence. Intellectual efforts to see Him meet with nothing but failure. When you commune with God through prayer, your intellect ceases to be active. In the stillness of the intellect the light of God shines in you. The mind is as restless as a monkey. How to stop its antics? The name of God is the rope with which you can tie the monkey. Ramdas' experience is that chanting of God's name is an easy way of controlling the mind. Intellectually we accept that God is within us and know that we are He. But we have to experience that state. We want intuitional experience, i.e., direct perception of the Divine within us and our union or oneness with Him. This is very important. □



P *Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts.*

— Mother Teresa

WITH THE DIVINE MOTHER

By Swami Shuddhananda

In the last three to four days, Pujya Mataji had been getting news of a spate of disastrous fires taking a heavy toll of human life.



The latest was a fire in a dance hall in Dublin in which some seventy to eighty persons were said to have perished. Mataji said that such disasters could be curbed and even averted if they prayed to the all-pervading and universal Beloved Papa. Our prayer should be from a pure heart if we wanted it to be heard. Prayer or Guru Mantra, if uttered in Rajo Guna or Tamo Guna would not produce instant result but a prayer uttered by one in Shuddha Sattwa would. “That is why I am asking you all to repeat Ram Nam or your Guru Mantra ceaselessly so that Papa will then surely answer your prayers.”



Mataji: “Do you sing devotional songs?”

Customs Officer: “Yes, Mother, we sang songs in the Bhajan hall at Bhajan time.”

Mataji: “Will you sing once more here in Papa’s

room?” He responded by singing beautifully and with feeling an invocation to Lord Subramanya.

Mataji: “You must come again tomorrow and sing this song during Bhajan at night.” Mataji, to others in the room: “Do you know why the devotional song sung just now sounded so beautiful? It is because it came from the depths of the heart.” Then, turning to the Customs officer, Mataji: “You must increase your Nama Japa. Whenever you set out for your work, remember your Guru and dedicate all your actions to Him. Even your prayers should be addressed to Him and they will then be answered. □



T *True prayer is an expression of the soul, an urge from the soul. It is a hunger for God that arises from within, expressing itself to Him ardently, silently. Vocalized prayers are wonderful only if the attention is on God, and if the words are a call to God out of the abundance of the soul's desire for Him.*

— *Paramahansa Yogananda*

WORDS OF PUJYA SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

Pray To Him For Intense And
One-pointed Devotion:

Someone has given me a question: 'How can we obtain one-pointed concentration?'



We always remember anything that gives us maximum happiness, anything that gives us maximum sorrow, anything that gives us maximum pain. Without effort, we are able to remember those things. So, if we understand, at least intellectually, that by communing with God, we will be able to get more peace and happiness than by any other means, we will be able to remember Him always, without difficulty, without effort. For this, naturally, we have to discard those that do not give happiness and those that distract us from our efforts to attain Him.

The difficulty arises only when we have not tasted even a bit of that peace and bliss that God can give us. All of you have the experience of this peace in the company of saints. That is the greatest effect of Satsang. The moment you sit before a saint, you

are able to experience unearthly peace and joy. Our effort must be to maintain that peace and joy and discard everything that stands in the way. If we are earnest on the path, if we, very sincerely, desire and aspire for attaining that peace and joy, our minds will not go astray and we will be able to think of That always. It is because of lack of love and intensity of aspiration to attain that Goal, that we are thinking of unnecessary things and our minds get attracted by our lower nature.

So, to attain one-pointed concentration we can only pray to God to give us more and more love and devotion for Him and make our aspiration intense so that our minds may ever dwell on Him.



Prayer For His Remembrance Only

Devotees accept God as the Supreme Being, all-powerful, all merciful, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. They pray to Him in all humility. They never demand anything from Him.

Prayers are answered according to the quality, sincerity and depth of the prayer. Some are not answered, for reasons known to Him only. Even if the prayers bring a delayed response or are never

answered, the devotees do not give Him up. They cling on to Him with all love and devotion. If they reject Him, what can they hold on to?

God is our only refuge. All are not praying in the same way or for the same thing; so also, the response. Whether the response is there or not, you should continue praying to Him. Such prayer will surely, even if it does not bring the desired result, purify your mind and will stand you in good stead in your spiritual life.



Pray To See God As The Entire Manifestation:

We are not very sincere in our quest (for God) and, therefore, cannot expect speedy progress. In such a condition, we should pray to Beloved Papa seated in our hearts to intensify our aspiration and make us love Him more than we love anything else. Such a constant prayer will surely make Beloved Papa cast His gracious look on us and help us progress fast. Never be satisfied with anything less than the highest realization of our oneness with Beloved Papa and seeing Him as the entire manifestation. □

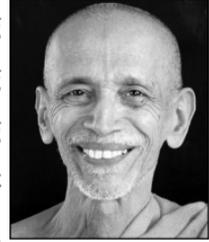


THE RATIONALE BEHIND PRAYER

By Swami Chidananda



od, not only being
transcendental, but also being
immanent, not only being
immanent but also being a specific
indwelling Divine Principle within each



and every body, why is there so much difficulty in attaining that which is nearer to us than anything else in all the universe?

Even if the most proximate thing is by your side, if you turn your head the other way and look in the opposite direction, you will not be able to see it. That is the trouble. That is the problem. There is nothing wrong with God, nothing wrong with His immanence, nothing wrong with His immediacy. What is wrong is that our gaze is elsewhere. So, everything is wrong with the direction we have decided to turn our gaze to.

Therefore, all the saints and mystics have prayed, “O Lord, bless me and grant that I may constantly remember You. Let my mind be constantly thinking of You. Let my entire being look only in Your direction, and may I have no eyes for anything else, no ears for anything else. Having ears, let me

hear nothing except Your name, Your description, Your glories, Your praise — from saints, scriptures, teachers, mystics, Yogis. Having eyes, let me see nothing except things pertaining to You, things that will help me to move towards You. Having a mind, let it think of nothing, but think only of You.

In this way, through all our faculties, let us become only God-oriented. Let all our faculties move only in His direction. Let us make up our mind, our entire being, to refuse to focus upon anything else except the supreme, ultimate, almighty, universal Spirit Divine, our ultimate goal supreme. This then is the way.

Therefore, we pray to the Supreme Being every morning to bless us that we may have the ability and strength to do so. We pray to Him. This leads us into another quandary, another difficulty, another paradox. All religions, all scriptures, all prophets have declared that God is omniscient. Does He not know our predicament? When He is omniscient and He thus knows our situation, why should we pray? Does He not know? Can He not set it right?

A baby knows nothing; it cannot express itself. But the mother, through her love and care, intuitively grasps, “Oh, something is wrong with baby’s tummy.

It's feeling discomfort; therefore it is crying." God is more than father and mother. He is everything to us, ten times more than any earthly mother that Brahma has ever created. That being so, where is the need to bring anything to His notice, as though He doesn't know it? Does He need to be told? He is the eye of our eye, ear of our ear, heart of our heart, mind of our mind. So, what is the purpose of prayer, the meaning of prayer? This is the paradox and question that faces us when we say, "Prayer can overcome all things."

A cloth gets soiled. We wish to make it clean, white and shining once again. So, we put it in a bucket of hot water and add soap powder. We clean it. The water is not in need of the cloth, nor is the soap. They can serve many other purposes, yet we bring them together. Why? Because the cloth is in need of water, it is in need of soap. Therefore, it goes into the proximity, into an active, dynamic contact with the water and soap. And it comes out clean, white, completely free from all dirt. It is restored to its original purity.

That is the logic behind prayer. Not because the Lord needs to be told, not because He does not know. He knows everything. It is because the one who

prays is benefited, is blessed by the contact he creates through prayer. Prayer has gained an essential place in the context of the mystical aspects of all the living religions of the world. They all emphasis prayer. Not because we are telling Him something that He does not know, that He has to be told, but because the very act of telling Him elevates us, sanctifies us, blesses us. Therefore, it is that we pray.

Even so, let us pray to revered and beloved Holy Master that by his blessings we will be enabled to constantly keep ourselves in a state of continuous contact and communion with the Supreme Being, for that is the greatest good of man. In that lies the highest welfare of the human individual. In that lies the fulfilment and success of the pilgrim soul upon earth, success in ultimately completing this journey of life by reaching the destination — not having to come back again to repeat this journey, but making it the final journey.

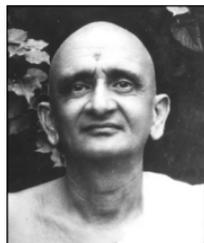
Supremely blessed are those who are thus graced by the almighty Spirit Divine and blessed by their spiritual master. May all of you who sit and hear this word be thus graced by God and Guru. God bless you all! □

Source: www.dlshq.org

PRACTICE OF PRAYER

By Swami Ramdas

Prayer is a most potent means for communing with God and thereby drawing upon Him for the needed strength and grace. We know that certain acts we do are



wrong, but still we persist in doing them. This shows that our mind is weak and cannot resist temptations. The power for gaining mastery over the mind can come to us only by communion with God, who is the source of all power. Through contact with Him, and by means of prayer, we are filled with His light which frees us from all human weaknesses.

Now, with this help, what are the principles we should practice in order to achieve perfect control over the mind and attain liberation and peace?

One: Satya or Truth. Always speak the truth, never tell a lie.

Two: Ahimsa or Non-injury. Here, it is not merely physical violence that has to be eschewed, but also wishing ill of another. We should practice non-violence in thought, word and deed.

Three: Asteya or Non-stealing. Here, again,

stealing is not merely a physical act; even desiring to have for oneself something which belongs to another, constitutes stealth. Man is prone to feel envious when another gets some material gain. He wishes he might have had it, instead of the other person. On the other hand, we must rejoice in the good fortune of others, as if we ourselves had got it.

Four: Aparigraha or Sense of Non-possession. It means, refusal to possess anything or having possession, without being attached to them. It also means that when anything is lost, you should not be worried about it. You simply say: 'It went back to the place wherefrom it came', or 'God gave and God took away'. So long as the objects are with you, you keep them in the right way, without attachment to them. Remember that you did not bring anything with you when you came into the world, and you cannot take anything with you when you leave it. So, nothing really belongs to us. Why, then, should we, in this short span of life, get attached to things and persons and cry over them when they are lost or leave us?

Five: Brahmacharya or Living in Brahman. Brahmacharya does not merely mean celibacy or continence. It means establishing oneself in Brahman, acting and living in Brahman. Brahman means God, who dwells in our heart. He is the basis

of the world manifestation. He is the substratum and support of all that exists. To realise this blessed state, the sex desire should be completely extinct. You are one with Universal Consciousness, which does not admit of a sense of duality or separation. Everywhere it is Brahman for you. Brahman is sexless. When you know you are this Brahman, then, where is the difference between you and others? It is all Brahman.

We must try to put into practice these five principles. For success in this, God's grace is essential. Knowing, as we do, that acting up to these principles alone leads us towards God, we are yet unable to live up to them. We feel weak and helpless. As we walk on the path, we stumble and fall. On such occasions, we should only pray to God in all humility: 'O God! Give me strength that I may walk on the path that takes me to You and overcome obstacles without any fall or mishap.'

Prayer puts us in direct contact with God and from Him flow into us His power and joy which enable us to walk boldly on the path with unfaltering steps. The power of prayer is therefore invincible. The connection which we keep with God through prayer is a source of strength and courage, for triumphing over all impediments that stand in our way to final realisation. □

TAP INTO THE SECRET OF PRAYER

By Swami Tejomayananda

People often ask, “Why should I pray? I believe in leading a moral life and doing good deeds. Is that not enough?” However, to be consistently virtuous one requires tremendous strength, determination and noble ideals, else, it is easily given up. We then lament, “Why should I go on doing good and suffer when others are not doing so and enjoying life?” So as not be discouraged from a righteous life we must understand the secret of prayer.



For a fan to move it must be connected to electricity. The fan’s connection is like prayer’s connection to the Source of Energy. The Lord is the ultimate source of all goodness. He provides the spiritual strength to lead a good and moral life.

One may wish to do good but the mind is easily distracted. Duryodhana also knew what was right but despite that continued to live a sinful life.

Prayer is not begging or presenting a list of demands. Perform your duties in life remembering

God. With a mind thus tuned to Him, His qualities and power will flow to you.

Often people serve society for power or fame and if their efforts are not recognized they stop. But if we work for the Lord, we will not be upset, even when criticized or crucified.

It helps to remember the beauty, strength, and talent we have are indeed His blessings and gifts. This in turn will reduce our pride and arrogance.

Ravana suffered greatly, but his ego would not let him surrender. A simple way to remove the ego is to dedicate the work to God, and derive spiritual strength.

What is God? God is that Consciousness which makes the inert living.

Some say, "There is no God." But forget that even the Power by which they talk is God.

Simple formula to live in harmony with the world and oneself is to pray to God, receive His blessings and with that gain the strength to live a life of Dharma or righteousness. Prayer gives strength. □

Source: www.chinmayamission.com



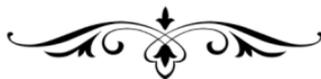
DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRAYER

By Swami Ramdas

Just as food nourishes the body, prayer nourishes the soul. There are some who love God, but they do not love Him so much as they love worldly objects. So, they cannot remember God constantly. A man who is attached to wealth cannot be devoted to God. Your love for God should be the greatest. Then alone your mind will be centred in Him. A devotee, Prahlad, while yet a boy, prayed to God, “Oh God, I do not pray for anything new from you. Let my mind run towards you with the same force as it runs towards the objects of the senses.” Only the direction of the mind has to be changed, even as we have to change the course of a stream if its waters are not to be lost in desert sands. If we direct the stream to the fields, we can raise good crops by making use of its water. Let the wandering mind be directed to God. Then our life would turn fertile and achieve good and great ideals. Otherwise, it would be wasted away.

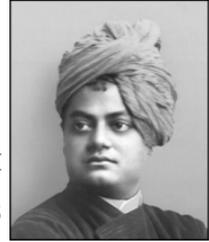
There is another kind of prayer. “Oh God, do not grant my prayers, because in my foolishness I may ask for things which are harmful to me.” This

means, leave everything to Him. He knows what is good for us. Here the devotee has passed the stage of prayer. He has entirely surrendered himself to God, just as a child in the hands of its mother. The mother does what is necessary for the child. Another devotee prayed in a wonderful way, “Oh God, you say that we should do spiritual discipline, that we should remember you by chanting your name for a number of years in order to get your Darshan or vision. That means we must toil hard in order to get what we aspire for. You are then like a shopkeeper. If we go to the shop, we pay for obtaining things. When you give Darshan only after my toiling like this, it does not mean you are conferring grace on me. You are simply paying, as it were, my wages. If you are really gracious you must reveal yourself to me without my doing anything. If you say I am not pure and so cannot see you, make me pure and grant me your vision, Then I will call it grace.” This is the highest state of the devotee in which he knows that everything is done by God, and that to say he himself can do anything is utterly false. Our struggle must cease in total surrender to Him. Then only we have Him. □



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON PRAYER

Pray for knowledge and light; every other prayer is selfish.



Prayer and praise are the first means of growth. Repeating the names of God has wonderful power.

Prayer with the lips is not enough; people should pray with their hearts.

Pray that that manifestation which is our Father, our Mother, may cut our bonds.

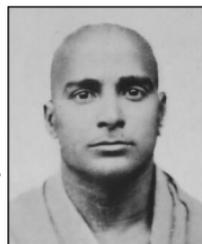
Pray, "Take us by the hand as a father takes his son, and leave us not."

Pray, "I do not want wealth or beauty, this world or another, but Thee, O God! Lord! I have become weary. Oh, take me by the hand, Lord, I take shelter with Thee. Make me Thy servant. Be Thou my refuge."

Pray, "Thou our Father, our Mother, our dearest Friend! Thou who bearest this universe, help us to bear the little burden of this our life. Leave us not. Let us never be separated from Thee. Let us always dwell in Thee." □

SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA ON PRAYER

When you pray whole-heartedly, your mind and heart run one-pointedly to the Source. During that time you become an instrument of that Power.



God is the source of all energies, the center, the powerhouse of light, life and love. Through prayer we can reach that Powerhouse and draw the energy for expanding the field of our mind and the horizon of our consciousness.



You are praying to someone who is not body, breath, and mind, but who is seated beyond and behind this mortal frame, whose nucleus is within you and whose expansion is the universe. There is only one Absolute Reality that exists, and the same exists within you.



Prayer that makes you aware of the Reality within you is the right type of prayer. To become aware of the Reality, go to the deeper aspects of your being, to the Source from where you get energy, from where you get strength. □

DEAR CHILDREN



man's daughter had asked the local minister to come and pray with her father. When the minister arrived, he found the man lying in bed with his head propped up on two pillows. An empty chair sat beside his bed.

The minister assumed that the old fellow had been informed of his visit. "I guess you were expecting me," he said.

"No, who are you?" asked the father.

The minister told him his name and then remarked, "I saw the empty chair and I figured you knew I was going to show up."

"Oh yeah, the chair," said the bedridden man.

"Would you mind closing the door?"

Puzzled, the minister shut the door. "I have never told anyone this, not even my daughter," said the man. "But all of my life I have never known how to pray. At church I used to hear the pastor talk about prayer, but it went right over my head. I abandoned any attempt at prayer," the old man continued, "until one day, four years ago, my best friend said to me, 'Johnny, prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with God. Here is what I suggest. Sit down in a chair; place an empty chair in front of you,

and in faith see God in that chair. It's not spooky because he promised, 'I will be with you always'. Then just speak to him in the same way you're doing with me right now.' So, I tried it and I've liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I'm careful though, if my daughter were to see me talking to an empty chair, she'd either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm."

The minister was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old man to continue on the journey. Then he prayed with him, anointed him with oil, and returned to the church. Two nights later the daughter called to tell the minister that her daddy had died that afternoon.

"Did he die in peace?" he asked.

"Yes, when I left the house about at two o'clock, he called me over to his bedside, told me he loved me and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the store an hour later, I found him dead. But there was something strange about his death. Apparently, just before Daddy died, he leaned over and rested his head on the chair beside the bed. What do you make of that?"

The minister wiped a tear from his eye and said, "I wish we could all go like that." □

EPISTLES OF SWAMI RAMDAS

Beloved Ram,

...To repeat God's name is to remember Him; and remembrance means consciousness of His presence within, and everywhere about us. He is ever pure and glorious. He is the only Truth. You are ever united with Him — nay, in essence you and He are not different. Humility is a great virtue that helps to dissolve the ego.

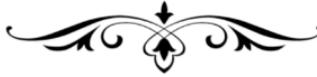
When Hanuman was dispirited and thought it was not in his power to take the leap to Lanka, a comrade awakened him to the sense of his prowess, which he had forgotten; and he could accomplish the apparently impossible task. So the immortal bliss and peace which is within us becomes revealed, when our heart is illumined by the light of knowledge. Saints help us to attain this. They constantly din into our ears what we really are. You are not a despicable worm, sinful and wretched. The Lord of the worlds has His throne in your heart — you are not only in tune with Him eternally but you are His very expression and form.

The object of prayer is to intensify our desire to attain God. When the longing has reached the

necessary pitch, realisation comes. Repetition of His holy name gives strength and concentration to prayer. The bowman hits the mark when his mind is perfectly concentrated on his act — when the thought of the mark alone rules the mind. □

Ramdas

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P *Prayer is a communion between us and the Mighty Force (God), but it usually turns into a begging session for our endless wants, which is not necessary because He is aware of our deepest desires. The best way to fulfil our wishes is to be and act as though it is already granted to us and thank Him in advance for doing so. In every likelihood it shall come true. So, a prayer should be a session devoted not to asking for ourselves, but of thanksgiving for all the things we have already received and all the things we hope to receive.*

— Dr. Bhujang Shetty

IN MEMORIAM

- Sri Gopalan K (aged 87), an inmate of the Ashram and the father of Ms. Geetha, was called by Beloved Papa on the 27th of April 2021. He was amongst the first couple of inmates of the Ashram to be diagnosed as COVID positive. Gopalanji, along with Geetha, was rushed to the hospital in Kasaragod, from where he was taken to another hospital as his condition deteriorated. However, he soon succumbed to the disease.
- Sri Shashikant Paradkar (aged 87), an ardent devotee of the Ashram from Pune, dropped his mortal coil on the 28th of April 2021. Three days prior to dropping the body, he chose to stop his food intake until the end of the lifespan of the physical body and peacefully shuffled off his mortal coil.
- Sri Niranjan Mehta (aged 85), another ardent devotee of the Ashram from Ahmedabad, was called by Beloved Papa on the 10th of May 2021. Niranjan Bhai had been associating with the Ashram since the 1950s. He was in the Ashram for a few weeks' stay when many of the Ashram inmates were diagnosed as COVID positive. Niranjan Bhai was also affected and was rushed

to a hospital in Kasaragod for treatment. As willed by Beloved Papa, after two weeks of treatment, Niranjana Bhai attained the holy feet of Beloved Papa.

- Smt P Karthyayani Amma, another ardent devotee of the Ashram from Cheruthazham, Kerala, was also called by Beloved Papa on the 11th of May 2021 due to age related problems.

We pray for Beloved Papa's blessings on the dear departed souls for eternal rest and peace at His lotus feet. □



ANANDASHRAM NEWS

15,500-CRORE NAMA JAPA YAGNA FOR WORLD PEACE: The total Japa received in the third round of the 15500-Crore Nama Japa Yagna For World Peace in the month of April is 200 crores. The grand total of the Japa done so far in this round now stands at 10196 crores.

PLAY OF THE PANDEMIC: As willed by Beloved Papa, quite a large number of the Ashram inmates and Pujya Swami Muktanandaji were diagnosed COVID positive on the 26th of April 2021.

Although most cases were asymptomatic or had minor discomforts like fever, cold and cough, a few devotees and Pujya Swamiji were admitted in various hospitals.

As mentioned in IN MEMORIAM, Sri Niranjan Mehta and Sri K Gopalan and Sri Ravindran, from the Ashram Dharmashala, succumbed to the disease.

Over 300-400 devotees, led by Smt Mira Pardasani, Smt Padma Chavan, Sri Suresh Kumar Dave, Sri CH Laxminarayna, Smt Anupamaji and Smt Leena Chavan, started Akhand Ram Nam for the speedy recovery of Pujya Swamiji and all the inmates of the Ashram.

Pujya Swamiji was discharged from hospital and returned to the Ashram after 11 days on the 10th of May 2021.

As per the doctors' instructions, Pujya Swamiji is taking complete rest. His health is steadily improving, he is on the road to recovery.

Pujya Swamiji gives Darshan to the devotees twice a day between 11:00-11:30 am and in the evening between 5:00-5:30 pm.

We pray for Beloved Papa's bounteous blessings on our dear and revered Swamiji for complete recovery and restoration to normal health so that he may continue to guide and lead us on the spiritual path. □

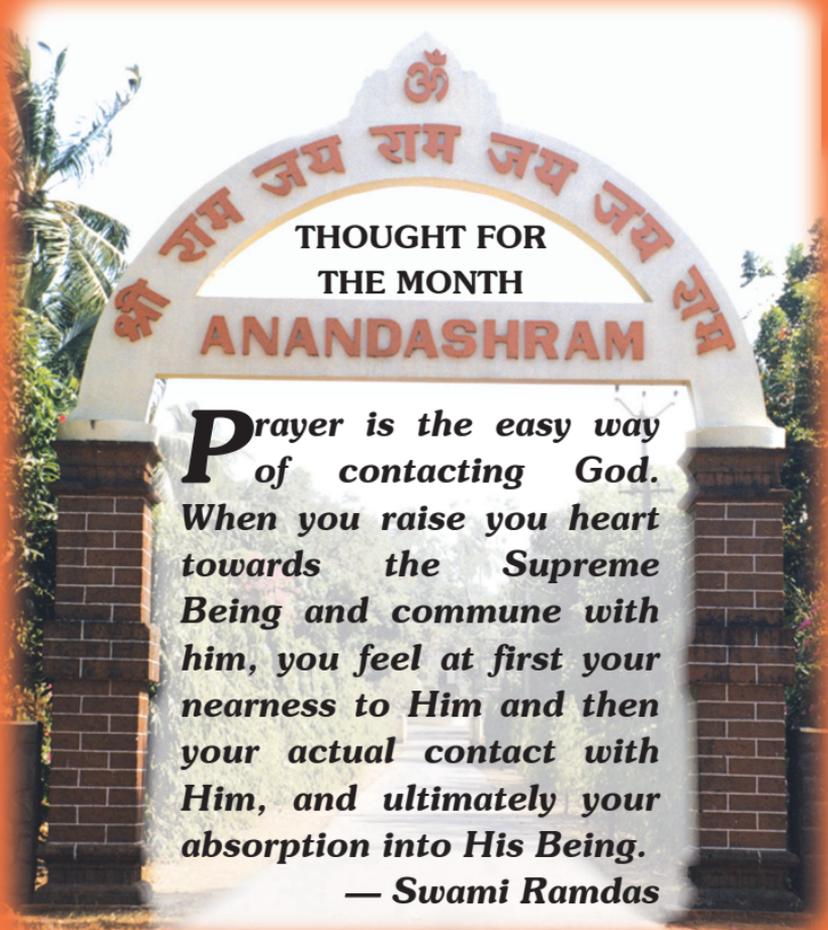


HOMAGE TO

PUJYA SWAMI SHUDDHANANDAJI

The month of June reminds us of the Samadhi of our dearest Swami Shuddhanandaji who will always be remembered for his childlike nature, innocence, simplicity and straightforwardness. Swami Shuddhanandaji through his very life has taught us that while carrying on with devotional practices and selfless service, one can always lead an innocent and simple life. By remembering him, let us try to emulate these noble qualities that he epitomized.

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Lic. No. KL/PMG/NR/WPP/1-1/KSZ/2021-23
Date of Publication: 01/06/2021



Edited and published by:

Swami Muktananda on behalf of
Anandashram Trust, Kanhangad.

and printed by him through:

Prakash Offset Printers, Mangalore.