

# *Prayer is Mental utterance in secret*

Spartan. Is it to thee, or to God, that I must confess?

Priest. To God.

Spartan. Then, *man*, stand back!

— Plutarch<sup>1</sup>

*To whom* am I to pray?

I do not, for I am myself Parabrahm.

I only contemplate.

Contemplation is a state of mind.

— A Chela<sup>2</sup>

## True prayer is work



The whole Sunday-question resolves itself into the demand to know whether it is in any degree right, or in accordance with divine law, than man should be so devoted to selfish toil, during the week, as to have virtually no time or strength left for prayer (*i.e.*, meditation) during the six days, and whether, therefore, it is right that the seventh day or Sunday should be set apart from it. All depends upon whether doing one's duty in the state of life to which one is called, is "doing," or not doing, "all to the glory of God." We think that work is prayer; and if so, the devotion of Sunday to innocent pleasure is really making it a day of rest.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Isis Unveiled*, II p. 212; [quoting Plutarch's *Laconic Apophthegms*.]

<sup>2</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PARABRAHM, DEFINED BY VEDANTINS) IV p. 450; [a Chela of a Vedantin Sannyasi of Benares addressing Ramji Mall Pandit on God.]

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* (SUNDAY DEVOTION TO PLEASURE) IX p. 69; [*Illustration*: Virgin in Prayer by Elisabetta Sirani, 1658.]



### True prayer is an act of will and a command

Colonel Olcott was never an atheist “to our knowledge,” but an esoteric Buddhist, rejecting a *personal* God. Nor was *genuine* prayer — *i.e.*, the exercise of one’s intense will over events (commonly brought about by blind chance) to determine their direction — ever repugnant to him. Even prayers as commonly understood, are not “repugnant” in his sight, but simply useless, when not absurd and ridiculous as in the case of prayers to either stop or bring about rain, etc. By “prayer” he means — WILL, the desire or command *magnetically expressed* that such and such a thing beneficent to ourselves or others should come to pass.<sup>4</sup>

### Unless enacted, prayers are useless

Our prayers and supplications are vain, unless to potential words we add potent acts, and make the aura which surrounds each one of us so pure and divine that the God within us may act outwardly, or in other words, become as it were an extraneous Potency. Thus have Initiates, Saints and very holy and pure men been enabled to help others as well as themselves in the hour of need, and produce what are foolishly called “miracles,” each by the help and with the aid of the God within himself, which he alone has enabled to act on the outward plane.<sup>5</sup>

### Loud prayers are disastrous

Thus a prayer, unless pronounced *mentally* and addressed to one’s “Father” in the silence and solitude of one’s “closet,” must have more frequently disastrous than beneficial results, seeing that the masses are entirely ignorant of the potent effects which they thus produce. To produce good effects, the prayer must be uttered by “one who knows how to make himself heard in silence,” when it is no longer a prayer but becomes a command. Why is Jesus shown to have forbidden his hearers to go to the public synagogues? Surely every praying man was not a hypocrite and a liar, nor a Pharisee who loved to be seen praying by people! He had a motive we must suppose: the same motive which prompts the experienced Occultist to prevent his pupils from going into crowded places now as then, from entering churches, séance-rooms, etc., unless they are in sympathy with the crowd.<sup>6</sup>



The *mantra* may be uttered aloud, muttered silently or repeated mentally. The silent repetition is more effective than the loud but the purely mental repetition has the highest effect and is *japa* in the real sense of the term.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (ZOROASTRIANISM IN THE LIGHT OF OCCULT PHILOSOPHY) IV pp. 519-20

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. 1) XII pp. 533-34

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* XII p. 535; [Illustration: Prayer by William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1865.]

<sup>7</sup> Taimni IK. *Gayatri*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978; p. 48



### Our prayers should be for blessings on all

The greatest crime that was ever perpetrated upon mankind was committed on that day when the first priest invented the first prayer with a selfish object in view. A God who may be propitiated by iniquitous prayers to “bless the arms” of the worshipper, and send defeat and death to thousands of his enemies — his brethren; a Deity that can be supposed not to turn a deaf ear to chants of laudation mixed with entreaties for a “fair propitious wind” for self, and as naturally disastrous to the selves of other navigators who come from an opposite direction — it is this idea of God that has fostered selfishness in man, and deprived him of his self-reliance. Prayer is an ennobling action when it is an intense feeling, an ardent desire rushing forth from our very heart, for the good of other people, and when entirely detached from any selfish personal object; the craving for a beyond is natural and holy in man, but on the condition of sharing that bliss with others. One can understand and well appreciate the words of the “heathen” Socrates, who declared in his profound though untaught wisdom, that:

Our prayers should be for blessings on all, in general, for the Gods know best what is good for us.<sup>8</sup>

### We shall be able to pray properly, when we approach by ourselves alone to the Alone

. . . *invoking God himself, not with external speech, but with the soul itself, extending ourselves in prayer to him, since we shall then be able to pray to him properly, when we approach by ourselves alone to the alone.* It is necessary, therefore, that the beholder of him, being in himself as if in the interior part of a temple, and quietly abiding in an eminence beyond all things . . .<sup>9</sup>



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<sup>8</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (THE SECRECY OF INITIATES) XIV p. 42; [See Plato’s *Laws*, Books 3, 7 & 10 (¶ 900 etc.); as well as Intro. to Bk. X by Proclus in Th. Taylor ed. — Dara Eklund.]

<sup>9</sup> Taylor T. (*Tr. & Annot.*). *Collected Writings of Plotinus*. (Vol. III of The Thomas Taylor Series) Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 2000; [*Ennead V*, i ¶ 6, p. 305.]



## Will and Desires contrasted

Addendum to a discussion in Haskayne, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2006, contrasting mental with uttered prayer. The common meaning of prayer includes appeal, entreaty, petition, supplication.

### Will

- 1 Inner, subjective, unmanifested.
- 2 Controlled command.
- 3 Impersonal, abstract.
- 4 A focused higher mental, noetic, or spiritual process.
- 5 A within-without expansion of universal consciousness, exhibiting aspects of Itself to the perception of finite minds.
- 6 Motivated by universal interest.
- 7 Sacrifices Its Integrity for the benefit of All.
- 8 Co-operates with Nature to realise the divine plan, here on earth.
- 9 Accomplishing divine works at one's own expense and resources is White Magic.
- 10 The occultist thinks, wills, and acts impersonally for the common good.
- 11 Working for and loving all without any ulterior aim.
- 12 The occultist operates through self-induced and self-devised exertions.
- 13 By following the reverse route, those who are intellectually and ethically fit might come near to the world's occult verities.

### Desires

- Outer, objective, manifested.
- Uncontrolled petitions.
- Personal, concrete.
- An unfocused lower mental, psychic, or material process.
- A without-without projection of expectations and desires to other individualised consciousnesses.
- Motivated by self-interest.
- Sacrifices other "withouts" for personal benefit.
- Co-operates with no-one (except with other lower natures, if expedient) and antagonises everyone in the pursuit of personal ends.
- Doing one's own thing at others' expense is Black Magic.
- The common man acts only if an outcome is likely to be of personal benefit. Otherwise, he shuns personal involvement at all costs but may enlist others to act on his behalf.
- Preoccupied with self, love of self, and mundane objectives.
- The profane sits idly and prays.
- Wants, wishes, and vocalisations are not only useless: they are full of perils. What counts is thoughtful, self-reliant, heroic action.



## The “Spiritual Will”

First published in: *Subsidiary Papers* (No. A), Issued in the Western Division, September 1894, (EASTERN SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY: SUGGESTIONS AND AIDS). Republished in: Eklund D. (Comp.). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1975-1987. Vol. III: publ. 1987. (Section V); pp. 454-55.

*The matter under this head is not secret, but at the same time, it being done for the sake of the School, it should be used only where proper and not be credited to the E.S.T.*

This term is used to designate an action of the will which is more definitely spiritual than the ordinary action. The ordinary is (a) that which causes automatic physical action, such as the heart-beat, blush, digestion, and so on, (b) the actions following on ordinary thought, desires, and wants, (c) that force of will which is developed by various forms of Yoga practice.

Anyone can — and all truly sincere members ought to — develop, to that extent which is possible for each, the spiritual will. They need not look anxiously or curiously for proofs that such development is attained, for in many cases they will not be able to know, with the lower brain mind, that the spiritual will is active. It is developed by true unselfishness, a sincere and full desire to be guided, ruled, and assisted by the Higher Self and to do that which, and suffer or enjoy whatever, the Higher Self has in store for one by way of discipline and experience; by sinking as much as possible, day by day, little by little, the mere personal self.

Hence self-discipline must be pursued. Mere mortifications, such as eating unaccustomed food or doing any other outer observance for the sake of what is hoped to be gained, will not bring out the spiritual will. The observances and practices must be mental and moral. They must be in the nature of an actual sacrifice of the personal self, which, acting as a mortification of the latter begins to loosen the hold of the lower and bring out the powers of the higher nature.

The very perfection of this sort of mortification is hardly possible in our present state, nor would it now be judicious. It consists in not doing that which one's personal self desires for itself. Such a method would, with the ordinary student lead to confusion, because he has not yet found out how to distinguish duty pure and simple from personal desires. But the essence of the practice, so far as it is possible, lies precisely in that regulation. That is, the personal self must be mortified, and it must begin with our relations to and with each other. As a real and valuable branch of Occultism this is not thought much of by the general mass, but it is essential. We see a great deal about getting rid of the personal self, but this method, which will lead to reducing the lower self to its proper subjection to the Higher, is not followed. It will be easy to know when to do thus and when to refrain by always looking to see if what you are going to do is for purely your own sake and pleasure, or because it is a duty owed to others, either from natural law or from agreement. Let me illustrate!



You dislike to be interrupted. You have decided to sit down and write or read Theosophy or on some other useful subject. A person comes who perchance happens to be a bore in the ordinary sense, or who is not agreeable personally to you. First, you do not wish to have your fixed object laid aside, and, second, you dislike being bored. Both these are solely personal. In this case — unless of course some pressing duty to others requires you to go on — you should at once mortify the personal self by dropping the reading, writing, or whatever it is, and attend to the wants of the other person. Judgment of course must be used. But there will be every day and in all places opportunity after opportunity to pursue this practice. It is the giving up of yourself, and that is the only way through which a true White Adept is ever a possibility.

Little by little, then, especially if the Voice of Conscience is attended to, the “spiritual will” develops and works.

Its mode of action is that, asleep or awake, near or far, your true desires arising from the impulse of the Higher Self will be accomplished. For this phase of the will flyeth like light, cuts obstacles like a sharp sword. This is one of the occult meanings of the words of the Christian Scriptures, “Not my will but thine be done.”



Fire in the Land of Shadows by Inga Nielsen

