

## Prayer: A Dialogue with Ultimate Truth Within

**P**rayers are dialogues with the ultimate truth within. It is the realisation of the truth that God exists everywhere and in offering a prayer one experiences His presence all-round. Through meditation one realizes that a prayer becomes a bridge between a human being and the ultimate truth. The Rishis practised meditation to feel the presence of that super power which keeps the universe going in harmony.

A prayer is not a petition asking for something from God. A prayer is to express our gratitude to Him for whatever He has made of us and in whatever form He bestows upon us His blessings. This expression of gratitude made through prayer becomes reverence to the Almighty to strengthen the inner fabric of our psyche. Whoever we are, in whatever situation, His grace is always showered and prayer expresses our sense of gratefulness to Him. Osho says that whatever you do can be a prayer if you become prayerful in doing it. Kabir's weaving of a chaddar was itself a prayer, as while weaving the cloth, Kabir was profoundly prayerful. Whatever you do, do it in totality and that becomes a prayer. Kabir used to make his way dancing when he took the chadders to the market for selling and that became a meditative prayer.

Rabindranath Tagore used to get up at dawn to observe nature's grand feat of unfolding of a flower from a bud. This was his prayer to the existence around. Osho says that our prayers are formal rituals and while we pray, our mind wanders elsewhere, such prayers without any

intense feelings are only a physical exercise and, therefore, go unresponded. In temples and mosques we often see people praying hurriedly and leaving soon afterwards for their routine work. They do not even wait to listen to His response of Him. Osho says that this is like calling in a valley where one gets the response to one's voice through its pratidhwani. Every prayer is answered by Him provided we have time to wait.

Mahatma Gandhi used to say that a prayer is not something like a petition; it is supposed to be contemplation. When anything is said with intense dedication, it becomes a prayer. A prayer need not be in words but it can even be expressed through silence.

In ancient Vedas, whenever prayers were offered, the Rishis asked something from the Divine. But this asking was not for getting anything in material terms, but the Divine was invoked to bestow upon the Sadhakas something in the nature of spiritual elevation. A prayer in Shatpath Brahman goes like this: "Oh Divine, from untruth take me to the truth, from darkness lead me to light and from death take me to immortality". The prayer is a petition for being blessed with spiritual progress, suggesting a qualitative growth. In Yajurveda, a prayer says, "Dispel the darkness around me and spread light all over". In Rigveda, sages asked for "Aa no bhadra Kritavo Yantu Vishvatah" which means "let enlightening pursuits come to us from all directions".

A prayer is exclusively personal and it may not be expressed in words, as words are very often superfluous, devoid of any intense expression. Your prayer, as Osho says, is yours only and cannot be borrowed from others. It should have your signature below and it may



— CA. Vishnu Mahajan

*(The author is a member of the Institute. He can be reached at vam@mnad-ca.in)*

not be in flowery words nor should it be in any rhythm or alliteration. It should be like your thumb impression. For Gautam Buddha, a prayer meant mere silence while Meera and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu danced their way while praying. Mahavir stood all the time and became prayerful. In this world everyone is unique and as Rabindranath Tagore used to say, "You have to sing your song, your prayer has to be spontaneous and overflowing with your love for the creator of the world and should spring out like a fountain unfolding your inner being." A prayer should be a happening and this happening can even be looking at a flower or gazing at the stars, looking at the innocence of a child or experiencing the mysticism of the objects of nature such as trees, river, stream, birds, stars, mountains or listening to music with intense sensitivity.

An unsurpassed literary piece in Marathi language is "Dnyaneshwari" by Sant Dnyeshwar, which is a commentary on the Gita. It is a "Magnum Opus" of Marathi language. It is a tradition that when any great work of such high caliber is finished, the author prays for blessings from the Almighty to be bestowed upon him. Quite interestingly, Sant Dnyaneshwar, who suffered enormously at the hands of the society of his time, always wished well of the society and completed the voluminous Dnyaneshwari at the age of sixteen. He was a great progressive saint with a literary flair of unparalleled excellence. Despite ill treatment by the society and undergoing a period of trials and tribulations, Sant Dnyaneshwar prayed for the welfare of the masses and invoked His blessings for the entire world and especially for those who suffered, asking for His grace. Not only this, he prayed for the transformation of the cruel society without a sense of vengeance. His prayer depicts a pure heart and without any feeling of ill will against the society. This prayer is known as Pasayadan which will go as a great prayer in the annals of history. Jesus Christ, too, who before his crucifixion by the society had prayed, "Oh God, forgive them as they know not what they are doing". "The Mother" from Pondichery had prayed like this: "So my prayer is that my love towards you grow so much that I become one with you totally".

Let our prayers usher in the brotherhood of nations and peace and harmony in all spheres of existence. □