

FROM MAX HEINDEL'S WRITINGS

Prayer, Concentration,



and Meditation

UNFORTUNATELY, as prayer is commonly practiced, it is too often a petition to God to interfere on behalf of the supplicant and enable him to attain a selfish object. It is certainly a disgrace that people engage in violating the commandment of God, "Thou shalt not kill," and pray for victory over their enemies. If we measure the majority of prayers offered up today by the standard set by Christ in the Lord's Prayer they certainly do not deserve the name of *prayer*. They are blasphemies, and it were a thousand times better they were never uttered.

The Lord's Prayer having been given us as a pattern, we shall do well to analyze it if we would arrive at a correct conclusion as to prayer. If we do so, we shall find that three of the seven prayers of which it consists are concerned with adoration of the Divine: "Hallowed be Thy Name"; "Thy Kingdom come"; "Thy Will be Done." Then comes the petition for the daily bread necessary to keep our organism alive, and the remaining three prayers are for deliverance from evil and forgiveness for our shortcomings.

From these facts it is evident that every worthy prayer must contain an overwhelming measure of adoration, praise, and recognition of our unworthiness, together with a firm resolution to strive to be more pleasing to our Father in Heaven.

The main object of prayer is to get into as close communication with God as possible, in order that the Divine Life and Light may flow into and illumine us, so that we may grow in His image and

His likeness.

This is a view diametrically opposite from the common idea of prayer, which is that as God is our Father we may go to Him in prayer and He is bound to give us our heart's desire. If we do not get it the first time, we need only keep praying, and because of our very impotency, our wish will be granted. Such a view is repellent to the enlightened mystic, and if we bring the matter down to a practical basis, it is evident that a wise father who has a son able to provide for himself would naturally resent it if this son should appear before him several times a day with impotent requests for this, that, and the other thing, which he could easily obtain by going to work and earning what was needed to buy them.

Prayer, no matter how earnest and sincere, can never take the place of work. If we work for a good purpose with our whole heart, soul, and body, and at the same time pray God to bless our work, there is no doubt but that the petition will be granted every time. However, unless we put our shoulder to the wheel, we have no right to call on the Deity for assistance.

As said previously, the burden of our prayers should be praise to God "from whom all blessings flow," for our desire bodies are formed from materials of all seven regions of the Desire World in proportion to our requirements as determined by the nature of our thoughts. Every thought clothes itself in desire stuff congruous to its nature. This applies to the thoughts formed and expressed in prayer. If selfish, they attract to themselves an envelope composed of the substance of the lower

regions of the Desire World, but if they are noble, unselfish, and altruistic, they vibrate to the higher pitch of the regions of soul-light, soul-life, and soul-power. They clothe themselves in this material, giving added life and light to our spiritual nature.

Even when we pray for others it is detrimental to ask for anything material or worldly. It is permissible to ask for health, but not for economic prosperity. "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness*" is the commandment. When we comply with that command, we may rest assured that "*all these things*" will also be given. Therefore, when we pray for a friend, let us put our whole heart and soul into the petition that he may permanently seek the Way, the Truth, and the Life, for having once found that greatest of all treasures, no real necessity will ever be denied.

Nor is this merely theory. Thousands of people, the writer included, have found that "Our Father in Heaven" will take care of our material needs when we endeavor to live the spiritual life. However, in the final analysis, it is not the spoken prayer that helps. There are people who can lead a congregation in a prayer that is perfection, both in language and poetical sentiment. They may even conform their prayers to the principles laid down by the Lord as enunciated in our opening paragraphs, and yet those prayers may be an abomination because they lack the one essential requirement. *Unless our whole life is a prayer we cannot be pleasing to God*, no matter how beautiful our petitions may be.

On the other hand, if we strive from day to day and from year to year to live according to His will, then even though we ourselves know that we fall far short of our ideal, and even though we, like the publican in the Temple, are of halting speech and can only smite our breast saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," we shall find that the Spirit itself, knowing our needs, makes intercession for us with unutterable groanings, and that our modest supplication before the Throne of Grace will avail more than all the flowery speeches we could possibly make.

The relation of prayer to concentration and meditation is as follows: Concentration consists of focusing thought upon a single point, as the Sun's

rays are focused by means of a glass. When diffused over the surface of the whole earth, the sun's rays give but a moderate warmth, but even a few sun rays focused through an ordinary reading glass will set inflammable material afire. Similarly, thought flitting through the brain as water runs through a sieve is of no value; but when concentrated upon a certain object, it increases in intensity and will achieve the purpose involved, for good or ill.

Members of a certain order have practiced concentration on their enemies for centuries, and it was found that misfortune or death always overtook the object of their disfavor. We hear among certain groups today of "malicious magnetism" applied by concentration of thought. On the other hand, concentration of thought power may also be used to heal and help. Nor are examples wanting to substantiate this statement. We may therefore say that concentration is the direct application of thought power to the attainment of a certain definite object which may be good or evil according to the character of the person who practices it and the purpose for which he desires to use the object when obtained.

Prayer is similar to concentration in certain points but differs radically in other respects. While the efficiency of prayer depends upon the intensity of concentration attained by the devotee, still, if *it is accompanied by feelings of love and devotion of intensity equal to the depth of concentration*, these will render it far more efficacious than cold concentration can ever be.

Furthermore, it is exceedingly difficult for the great majority of people to concentrate their thoughts coolly, calmly, and without the slightest emotion, and exclude all other considerations from their consciousness. But the devotional attitude is more easily cultivated, for the mind is then centered in Deity.

Meditation is the method of gathering by spiritual power knowledge of things with which we are not ordinarily familiar. There is in *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* a chapter which deals very thoroughly with this method of acquiring firsthand knowledge and which elucidates this subject at length. □