

Welcome/Introduction

Prayer for America

“O Thou kind Lord! This gathering is turning to Thee. These hearts are radiant with Thy love. These minds and spirits are exhilarated by the message of Thy glad-tidings. O God! Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees, and render this just government victorious. Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world. O God! This American nation is worthy of Thy favors and is deserving of Thy mercy. Make it precious and near to Thee through Thy bounty and bestowal.” - *Abdu'l-Baha*

Music Selection #1

He, verily, loveth the one that turneth towards Him.

Baha'u'llah

PRAYER

1. On Me fix thy mind; be devoted to Me; sacrifice to Me; prostrate thyself before Me....

Hinduism: from the Bhagavad-Gita, in the Portable World Bible, p. 66

2. Worship Me...by day and by night, with offerings of libations well accepted. I will come unto thee for help and joy....

Zoroastrianism: from the Zendavesta, in the PWB, p. 185

3. The Holy One, praised be He, longs for the prayers of the righteous. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon Him in truth....

Judaism: The Talmud, Yebamot 64a; The Old Testament, Psalm 145:18

4. No man that seeketh us will We ever disappoint, neither shall he that hath set his face towards Us be denied access unto Our court....

Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, pp. 271-272

5. *The Indian loved to worship. From birth to death, he revered his surroundings. He considered himself born in the luxurious lap of Mother Earth, and no place was to him humble. There was nothing between him and Wakan Tanka. The contact was immediate and personal, and the blessings of Wakan Tanka flowed over the Indian like rain showered from the sky.*

Luther Standing Bear, Oglala Sioux chief

6. Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the

sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made and His praise glorified.

Baha'u'llah: Baha'i Prayers, p.1

7. There is a polish for everything that becomes rusty, and the polish for the heart is the remembrance of God.

Islam: Hadith of Tirmidhi

8. The regular act of prayer is a sacred obligation upon believers in its prescribed times....When you have completed the prayer-rite, keep God in constant recollection....Remember your Lord in your soul with humility and reverence morning and evening....

Islam (Mohammad): The Qur'an, 4:104; 7:205

9. Reflect, O people, on the grace and blessings of your Lord, and yield Him thanks at eventide and dawn....We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God, your Lord, and the Lord of your forefathers.

Baha'u'llah: Kitab-i-Aqdas, paras. 33, 10

10. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men....

Jesus Christ: The New Testament, Matthew 6:5

Music Selection #2

11. Let not thy tongue pay lip service in praise of God while thy heart be not attuned to the exalted summit of Glory, and the Focal Point of CommunionThe most acceptable prayer is the one offered with the utmost spirituality and radiance; its prolongation hath not been and is not beloved of God.

The Bab: Selections from the Writings of the Bab, pp. 94, 77

12. It is true that God knows the wishes of all hearts; but the impulse to pray is a natural one, springing from man's love for God....But if this love and this desire are lacking, it is useless to try to force them. Words without love mean nothing.

Abdu'l-Baha: Quoted in Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 94

13. The wisdom of prayer is this: That it causeth a connection between the servant and the True One, because in that state, man with all heart and soul turneth his face towards His Highness the Almighty, seeking His association and desiring His love and compassion. The greatest happiness for a lover is to converse with his beloved, and the greatest gift for a seeker is to become familiar with the object of his longing; that is why with every soul who is

attracted to the Kingdom of God, his greatest hope is to find an opportunity to entreat and supplicate before his Beloved, appeal for His mercy and grace and be immersed in the ocean of His utterance, goodness and generosity.

Beside all this, prayer and fasting is the cause of awakening and mindfulness and conducive to protection and preservation from tests. The obligatory prayer is revealed from the Supreme Pen....

Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha, pp. 683-684

14. O thou who art turning thy face towards God! Close thine eyes to all things else, and open them to the realm of the All-Glorious. Ask whatsoever thou wishest of Him alone; seek whatsoever thou seekest from Him alone. With a look, He granteth a hundred thousand hopes; with a glance, He healeth a hundred thousand incurable ills; with a nod, He layeth balm on every wound; with a glimpse, He freeth the hearts from the shackles of grief. He doeth as He doeth, and what recourse have we? He carrieth out His Will, He ordaineth what He pleaseth. Then better for thee to bow down thy head in submission, and put thy trust in the All-Merciful Lord.

Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 51

15. O Son of Spirit! Ask not of Me that which We desire not for thee, then be content with what We have ordained for thy sake, for this is that which profiteth thee, if therewith thou dost content thyself. A servant is drawn unto Me through prayers until I answer him; and when I have answered his prayers, I become the ear wherewith he heareth.

Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, 18; Seven Valleys, p. 22

15a. The above Hidden Words in Arabic language. A few quotes on prayer and meditation in Persian language for our Persian speaking friends.

16. And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

The Old Testament, Isaiah 65:24

17. ...Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him.

Jesus Christ: The New Testament, St. Matthew, 6:7-8

18. This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us....

The New Testament, 1 John 5:14

19. It is the language of the spirit which speaks to God. When, in prayer, we are freed from all outward things and turn to God, then it is as if in our hearts we hear the voice of God. Without words we speak, we communicate, we converse with God and hear the answer....

God is merciful. In His mercy He answers the prayers of all His servants when, according to His supreme wisdom, it is necessary.

Abdu'l-Baha: quoted in Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 94; The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 247

20. Prayer need not be in words, but rather in thought and action....

Briefly, all effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity. This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people.

...Therefore strive that your actions day by day may be beautiful prayers. Turn towards God, and seek always to do that which is right and noble.

Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 94; Paris Talks., pp. 176-177, 81

Music Selection #3

MEDITATION

21. O Son of Light! Forget all save Me, and commune with My spirit....

Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, 16

22. Worship Me through meditation in the sanctuary of the heart.

Hinduism: Srimad Bhagavatam 11.5

23. To meditate means to realize the imperturbability of one's original nature....The original nature is by itself pure and calm....Freeing the mind from all wrong is the discipline of our original nature. Freeing the mind from all disturbances is the calmness of our original nature. And freeing the mind from all delusions is the wisdom of our original nature....

Buddhism: From the Platform Sutra

24. While in the same way that rain cannot break into a well-roofed house, desire cannot break into a mind that has been practising meditation well.

From meditation springs wisdom. From lack of meditation, loss of wisdom. Recognising these alternative roads of progress and decline, one should so direct oneself so that one's wisdom will increase.

Buddhism: The Dhammapada, vv. 14, 282

25. The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written

therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Judaism: The Old Testament, Joshua 1:8

26. Meditate profoundly, that the secret of things unseen may be revealed unto you, that you may inhale the sweetness of a spiritual and imperishable fragrance, and that you may acknowledge the truth that from time immemorial even unto eternity the Almighty hath tried, and will continue to try, His servants, so that light may be distinguished from darkness, truth from falsehood, right from wrong, guidance from error, happiness from misery, and roses from thorns.

Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 8

27. Were any man to ponder in his heart that which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed and to taste of its sweetness, he would, of a certainty, find himself emptied and delivered from his own desires, and utterly subservient to the Will of the Almighty. Happy is the man that hath attained so high a station, and hath not deprived himself of so bountiful a grace.

Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 343

28. If...he places his mind in meditation upon the Supreme Spirit, he comes to the regions of light of the sun. There he becomes free from all evil, even as a snake sheds its old skin, and...goes to the heaven of Brahma wherefrom he can behold the Spirit that dwells in the city of the human body and which is above the highest life.

Hinduism: from the Prasna Upanishad

29. When meditation is mastered, the mind is unwavering like the flame of a lamp in a windless place. In the still mind, in the depths of meditation, the eternal Self reveals itself.

Beholding the self by means of the Self, an aspirant knows the joy and peace of complete fulfillment. Having attained that abiding joy beyond the senses, revealed in the stilled mind, he never swerves from the central truth. He desires nothing else, and cannot be shaken by the heaviest burden of sorrow. The practice of meditation frees one from all affliction. This is the path of yoga....

Wherever the minds wanders, restless and diffuse in its search for satisfaction without, lead it within; train it to rest in the Self. Abiding joy comes to those who still the mind. Freeing themselves from the taint of self-will, with their consciousness unified, they become one with God.

Hinduism: Bhagavad Gita 6.18-27

30. It is an axiomatic fact that while you meditate you are speaking with your own spirit. In that state of mind you put certain questions to your spirit and the spirit answers: the light breaks forth and the reality is revealed. ...Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life; through it he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit--the bestowal of the Spirit is given in reflection and meditation. The spirit of

man is itself informed and strengthened during meditation; through it affairs of which man knew nothing are unfolded before his view. Through it he receives Divine inspiration, through it he receives heavenly food.

Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state man abstracts himself: in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective mood he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things-in-themselves....

The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror; if you put it before earthly objects it will reflect them. Therefore if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly subjects he will be informed of these. But if you turn the mirror of your spirits heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained....May we indeed become mirrors reflecting the heavenly realities, and may we become so pure as to reflect the stars of heaven.

`Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, pp. 174-176

31. Thus if haply thou dost live in the Day of Resurrection, the mirror of thy heart will be set towards Him Who is the Day-Star of Truth; and no sooner will His light shine forth than the splendour thereof shall forthwith be reflected in thy heart. For He is the Source of all goodness, and unto Him revert all things.

The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Bab, p. 94

Prayer for New York

“I eagerly anticipate the day when New York will become a blessed spot from which the call to steadfastness in the Covenant of God will go forth to every part of the world, thus making that city outstanding from every point of view.

Bless Thou, O King of Kings, the city of New York! Cause the friends there to be kind to one another. Purify their souls and make their hearts to be free and detached. Illumine the world of their consciousness. Exhilarate their spirits and bestow celestial power and confirmation upon them. Establish there a heavenly realm, so that the City of Bahá may prosper and New York be favoured with blessings from the Abhá Kingdom, that this region may become like the all-highest Paradise, may develop into a vineyard of God and be transformed into a heavenly orchard and a spiritual rose garden.”

`Abdu'l-Bahá

Announcements/Prayer Requests Music Selection # 4 Fellowship