

## LOVING DEMAND

*Swami Yogananda*



**E**ffective prayer must be scientific and definite in performance and must give intelligent understanding of all its factors. All those who want to demonstrate the scientific nature of prayer must first be sure that there is a God to pray to. The word “prayer” should be changed to “loving demand.” The Father made us His children, and we have chosen to be beggars. We must destroy our deficiencies and become acknowledged as His children, as Jesus did. To do that we must stop being prodigal children and retrace our steps homeward from the misery-making mainland of matter. We live in hope and die either with unfulfilled hope or broken-hearted. Very seldom does real, complete happiness dawn on the horizon of our lives.

The popular method of prayer does not reveal the psychology and art of prayer. Ordinary prayer consists of addressing our desires, half in belief and half in doubt, to an unknown God. If prayers are answered, a superstitious trust in God may result; if they are ineffective, distrust may follow. Even an answered prayer has to be tested and distinguished from a fulfillment which was coming anyway without the causal intervention and effective activity of the prayer.

The popular system of prayer is ineffective for the most part because we do not mean business. God, the Secret Knower of our thoughts, knows what selfish desires we have in our innermost mind, so He seldom manifests Himself. While the demons of sensations and thoughts dance in the temples of body and mind, it is difficult to recognize God, who remains hidden behind the veil of Silence within.

Some people pray with excited emotion and become intoxicated with the exuberance of their own passion. Such people feel satisfied by being drunk with their own blind feelings, and they think that they are inspiration from God. Such emotions often lose their force in tears, or in religious dances, or muscular demonstrations. Visitation of God through intuition is different from emotional outbursts. Emotional prayers bring activity and excitement, while devotional prayers bring the calm joy of the Soul.

So-called intellectual prayers may uplift the intelligence but not the soul. They may give intellectual satisfaction, but they do not bring conscious response from God. He does not reveal Himself unto the theoretically wise, but unto babies, who surrender themselves, their egoism, their pride, and their mustard-seed-like knowledge before the vastness and humbleness of His measureless Wisdom.

### *Are Your Prayers Answered?*

Do you realize that you may have been praying to an unknown God and may not have been getting any response? Have you ever taken time to think that your ordinary daily prayer to God is almost always a one-sided affair? Do you like to talk to a deaf, mute person? Do you want to go on appealing or talking to someone who never replies?

You must pray intelligently, with a bursting soul, seldom loudly, mostly mentally, without displaying to anyone what is happening within. Pray intelligently, with the utmost devotion, as if God were listening to everything you were internally, mentally affirming. Pray on into the depths of the night in the seclusion of your soul. Pray until He replies to you through the intelligible voice of the utmost bursting joy tingling through every body cell and every thought, or through visible visions depicting what you should do. Pray unceasingly until you are absolutely sure of the Divine contact, then claim your material, mental, or spiritual needs from the Most High as your Divine Birthright. Don't cry to Divine Mother like the baby who stops crying immediately his mother sends him a toy, but cry unceasingly, rending the heart of the Divine Mother like a Divine Naughty Baby, throwing away all lures and toys of name, fame, power, and possessions, and then you will find the answer to your prayers

You may say, “I know my prayers are answered, for I hear God talking to me. I have demonstrated His response to my prayers.” “Well,” I ask, “are you sure that your prayers reached God, and if they did reach Him at all, did He consciously re-



spond to them?” What is the proof? You prayed for healing and you became well. Do you know whether your cure was due to natural causes, or medicine, or to your own or another’s prayers, bringing help from God? Sometimes there may be no causal relation between your prayer and your cure. You might have been healed even if you had not prayed. This is the reason why we should find out whether the law of cause and effect can be scientifically applied to prayer. It has been said that God responds to law. Some people have experienced this response and have said that all people who conform to the law can test and experience it for themselves. Physical laws have to be interpreted by the physical senses and judged by the understanding. Divine laws have to be comprehended by concentration, meditation, and intuition.

There comes the question: Would a conscious God, Almighty in nature, subject Himself to be commanded by the law of cause and effect which He created Himself? Why not? The maker of all laws certainly does not want to break the laws of His own making. Of course, we must remember that, although God is approachable through the law of cause and effect, still He, being above the law of cause and effect, has the right to respond or not to respond to a mechanical prayer. God is something more than can be demonstrated in a laboratory.

### ***To Sum Up***

1. Solitude is the price of God-contact.
2. Knowledge of the laws of tuning the body, mind, and soul radios to contact God is necessary.
3. Since God is also above law, devotion is necessary to call His attention. The devotional call, if sincere, deep, and continuous, and if it is supplemented by sincere efforts at deep meditation, must bring Divine response. Devotional demand is greater than law, for it touches the heart of God and makes Him answer His naughty and good children alike. Law is based upon mathematical precision, but devotion is based upon claiming God as our own true Love, for did He not make us in His own image? Law is exacting in its demand, while love causes God to surrender Himself to the devotee. God can never hide from the person who exercises devotion, love, the law of meditation, and the soul-call.
4. Continuous personal zeal must be put forth. Whether God seems to respond or not, one must never cease loving. The beginner in devotion must not be discouraged if God does not respond to His immediate intense demands. God never fails to listen to all soul-calls, but He does not always respond in the way that we want Him to. He has His own mysterious ways. Besides, He consciously responds only when He is sure that the devotee wants Him and Him alone. That is why some saints have been tested with disease, or extreme poverty, or temptation, and when found to prefer God to health, life, abundance, or temptation, then God came. If one persists long enough in seeking, one will surely find God at the end of the trail.
5. Never mind if you cannot see Him or hear His knock at the gate of your heart. For a long time you have been hiding from Him and running away in the marsh of the senses. It is the noise of your own rowdy passions and the flight of your heavy footsteps in the material world that has made you unable to hear His call within. Stop, be calm, pray steadfastly, and out of the Silence will loom forth the Divine Presence.

