



A Sufi Message

Blessed With the Impression of Glory

Inspired by Teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan

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Our soul is blessed with the impression of the glory of God whenever we praise God.

by Hazrat Inayat Khan

What is praise but prayer? However ... People hold different opinions regarding prayer. Some say that as God knows all their wants, why should they pray? Others wonder if it is right to pray, when God knows best what is good for them. Others say that praise is the only prayer, while some even claim that they themselves are God, so that for them there is no necessity to pray.

There is a necessity for praise in prayer, praise of the beauty of God, for we must learn to recognize and praise the beauty of God as manifested in all creation. In this way we impress beauty on our soul, and we are able to manifest that beauty through ourselves. (*In the prayer Saum we say: "Thy Beauty do we worship..."*) We then become the friend of all and without prejudice. For this reason, the Sufi cultivates the heart. The emblem of the Sufi is a heart between two wings, meaning that when the heart is cultivated, we can soar up into the heights of heaven. (*As it is said in the prayer Khatum: "Raise us above distinctions and differences."*)

We are perfectly justified and right in praying for all our desires, and there is nothing that God is not able and willing to grant. But we should distinguish between what is transitory and what is lasting, what is worthwhile for our own benefit, and what is worthless. [And what is worthwhile is] Beauty of personality, devotion, love, these are all desirable, but not those things that are transitory and unsatisfying. There are some people who have reached the stage at which they are beyond all desires, both earthly and heavenly, but they continue to pray, because prayer brings them still closer to God in their limitation, and they expand from the state of limitation to the state of the unlimited being. This expansion and unification are the highest meaning of prayer.

Practice: Bismallah! (bi-smi-lah) Bismallah is the first word in the Holy Koran, meaning "We begin in the name of God". And in the Holy Torah and the Old Testament of Holy Bible the first words are: "In the beginning..." So I would like to suggest this practice of "*mindfulness*" by using the holy word "Bismallah" when we wake up, before going to sleep, before eating, before driving, beginning a walk, when crossing a threshold, preparing a meal. With every new action this month say **Bismallah!** (bi-smi-lah)

- Bismallah invites and welcomes blessings and the help of God.
- Bismallah is blessing to say prior to the beginning of any undertaking.
- Bismallah serves as the start of an action for which a person asks God for blessings upon the action.

THE FIVE ASPECTS OF PRAYER

1. Thanksgiving: The first aspect of prayer is giving thanks to God for all the numberless blessings that are bestowed upon us at every moment of the day and night, and of which we are mostly unconscious. (*Pause and consider those things in your life for which to be thankful.*)

2. Humbling Oneself Before God and Asking for Forgiveness: The second aspect of prayer is laying our shortcomings before the Unlimited Perfection of the Divine Being and asking for God's forgiveness. This makes us conscious of our limitations, and therefore makes us humble before God.

[Regarding Forgiveness, in the Lord's Prayer there is a line that says, "Forgive us our trespasses..." This act of asking for this forgiveness opens the doors of our heart to the next line, which reads: "as we forgive those who trespass against us.") I used to hear Murshid Hidayat often repeat the words of Jesus: "Forgive them Father they know not what they do." Another example we find in the **Prayer for Peace** by Saint Francis of Assisi. The last lines of the prayer for me articulate forgiveness:]

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned

By humbling oneself before God we do not lose any virtue. The joy of humility is never known by the proud. The effect produced upon a one's own feeling is as if, by our very humility, we have opened the doors of the shrine of God who is in our heart.

(Pause and ask to feel the Presence of God within the shrine of your heart. Reflect on those aspects of life where we could be more skillful, asking God's grace and mercy in helping us to become strong and diligent to overcome our shortcomings.)

3. Trusting God: The third aspect of prayer is to tell God one's difficulties and troubles, and to ask God for what one needs and wants. And who else deserves this trust but God? We can only be helped by others to a certain extent. The more one studies human nature, the more one feels inclined to bring one's troubles, difficulties, and sorrows, before God alone, and this is a part of what is taught in the form of prayer. *(Pause and consider putting one's concerns and troubles at the feet of God and ask for God's help and Light of insight. Let these challenges of life serve to make your stronger and wiser.)*

4. Loving the Unseen God: The fourth aspect of prayer is like the call of the lover to the beloved. No doubt this is a higher form [of prayer]; and to be able to pray in this manner we must rise above the ordinary level of thinking and life. This kind of loving is evolving by the lesson of love. For in this love there is no disappointment, and only the love of God can fulfill the desire of the human soul, and all other forms of love are only stepping stones that lead to the love of God. Its joy is perfect. The love of God is living and everlasting. [Note: I personally find that reading the autobiographies, poetry, and stories of the saints of various religious and spiritual traditions, one can get a glimpse of this kind of passionate love and desire for Union with God.] *(Pause and reflect on feeling God's love streaming towards our and our love returning to God.)*

5. At-One-Ment: The fifth aspect of prayer is to know God, and in this way to draw nearer to God. This is the real meaning of the expression at-one-ment, which means complete union. It cannot be learned; it is a natural tendency; it is the attraction of the soul to God. It is like the negative pole of the electric wire, which is attracted to the positive pole. It means that happiness depends on our nearness to God, and this too has been taught in the form of prayer. Before we pause for contemplation, I would like to share one of the many beautiful Rumi poems that express this At-One-Ment.

What was in that candle's light

*that opened and consumed me so quickly?
Come back, my friend.
The form of our love is not a created form.
Nothing can help me but that beauty.
There was a dawn I remember when my soul
heard something from your soul.
I drank water from your spring,
and felt the current take me. – Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi*

Practice: Ya Mujib (yaa mu-JEEB)

- Al-Mujib is the one who answers all prayers. This response to prayer matches the genuineness of the asking. The Qur'an says, "Call to me and I will answer you." In the Holy Bible it teach: "Ask and it shall be given. Knock and the door will be opened". The imperative here is to act – to pray.
- The root of al-Mujib suggests that the act of asking in prayer is a light that penetrates our inner darkness of confusion and shines upon our own self, revealing what we are really asking for. This addresses the often-repeated question of why we should pray when God already knows what we need. But here we are being told, that is in the asking we receive. Which leads to the next point.
- Invoking Ya Mujib is not simply seeking an answer; it means to pay attention and listen. If we are not listening, or are distant in our feeling, we may not be near enough to al-Mujib to receive the answer that is always there. Its repetition allows us to listen with our heart and hear God's answers.

By praising [and praying] to God the soul is filled with bliss; even to utter the name of God is a blessing that can fill the soul with light, joy, and happiness as nothing else can do.

- Khatum
- Dedication of Merit
- Giving

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Ref:

Sufi Message Volume 5, Pearls from the Ocean Unseen, Prayer

Sufi Message Volume 9, The Unity of Religious Ideals, Part I, Prayer

Unpublished papers from the Nekbakht Foundation Archives, Prayer, 8 May 1921 and 15 May 1921

Physicians of the Heart, A Sufi View of the Ninety-Nine Names of Allah, Sufi Rubaniat International