

Pathwork on
Prayer

From **Pathwork Lecture 105**: Humanity's Relationship to God in Various Stages of Development

18	<p>Needless to say that in man's relationship to God, his prayer -- meaning his speaking to God -- also goes through these phases. The prayers are the expression of the various phases. It is often the case, as it is with all things on earth, that man is actually inwardly already in a new stage, while he outwardly still clings to old habit patterns; patterns he adopted in a former stage. This may not only apply to the way man prays, but also to certain concepts he clings to, in his conscious mind, while inwardly he is already beyond it. The mind is habit-forming. Habit is an intrinsic quality of the mind. Experience out of <u>being</u> never forms habits. It is only the mind that does it. The memory, combined with the tendency to form habits, is the danger of the mind in regard to true spiritual experience. The more flexible you are, the less will you fall into the trap of set habit patterns; of clinging to old concepts and ideas that once gave you an experience and which you wish to recreate by holding onto it.</p>
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32	<p>QUESTION: Will you please elaborate on the meaning of prayer in the different stages?</p> <p>ANSWER: I believe it is rather evident from the lecture itself. Prayer will be adapted to the conscious attitude and concept of any given phase. In the very first stage, when man is still almost in the stage of being without awareness, there is no prayer, because there is no God-concept. In the next stage, when man begins to ask questions and wonder, and in this spontaneous experience of wondering and allowing new considerations to fill him, this, in itself, is prayer or meditation. The next stage may be the realization of a Supreme Intelligence. In this stage, prayer takes the form of admiration of the marvel of the universe and nature. It is worship. In the next stage, when the confusion of the mind, the immaturity and inadequacy cause fear, clinging, helplessness, dependence; when wishful-thinking and greed, unacceptance of reality causes supplication, prayer will be expressed accordingly. When prayers seem to be answered in this state, it is not because God acts, but because, in some way, man is sincere in spite of all his self-deceptions and evasions and has thus opened a channel within through which laws of being can penetrate to him. This is an important distinction that will only be perceived at a later stage. When man realizes his own participation in whether or not a prayer is answered, he will lose the sense of helplessness and of the arbitrariness of a willful God he has to appease by man-made and superimposed rules. But I might also add that what often appears like an answered prayer is the strength of an unconflicted mind in the particular area where the prayer is answered, at least at that time.</p>
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33	<p>When man comes into the state of independence, when he lets go of this imaginary God who punishes, rewards, and leads life for him, when he finds himself in the state of atheism, of denial of any higher being, he does not pray, of course. At least not in the conventional sense. He may meditate on himself, he may look at himself in sincerity, and this, as you all know by now, is the best prayer in the true sense. But it may also be that man, in the atheistic state, is completely irresponsible, and fails to think and look at himself. He may escape from himself the same way as the person who uses God as an escape from himself.</p>
34	<p>When man reaches the stage of active pursuit of self-awareness, of facing himself as he really is, he may, at the beginning, still be accustomed to the old prayer of begging for help, asking God to do for him what he used to shy away from doing himself. Yet, in spite of this habit in prayer, he begins to face himself. Only after reaching deeper levels of such self-facing, will he gradually avoid the kind of prayer he was used to. He may even go through a stage of not actively praying at all, in the usual sense. But he meditates -- and that is often the best prayer! He meditates by looking at his real motivations; by allowing his actual feelings to come to the surface; by questioning them as to their reason for being. In this kind of activity, prayer in the old sense becomes more and more meaningless, contradictory. His prayer is the action of self-awareness and of looking at himself in truth. His prayer is his sincere intent to face what may be most unpleasant. It is prayer because it contains the attitude that truth for the sake of truth is the threshold to love. Without truth and without love, there can be no God-experience. Love cannot grow out of trying to pretend a truth that is not felt. But love can grow out of facing a truth, no matter how imperfect it is. This attitude IS prayer. Candor with oneself IS prayer; alertness to one's resistance is prayer; owning up to something that one has hidden from in shame is prayer. When this proceeds, the state of being gradually comes into existence, little by little, with interruptions. Then, in the state of being, prayer is no longer an action of uttered words or thoughts. It is a feeling of being in the eternal <u>now</u>; of flowing in a current of love with all beings; of understanding and perception; of being alive. It is impossible to convey that these few aspects I mentioned here, in addition to many more indescribable feelings, comprise prayer in the highest sense. It is awareness of God in His Reality. But this kind of prayer cannot be imitated or learned through any teachings, prescribed practices, or disciplines. It is the natural outcome of the courage and humility to face oneself completely and without reservation. Before you have reached this highest state of relating to God, of being, where prayer and being are one, all you can do, the best prayer in the world, is the renewed constant intent to face yourself without any reservation; to remove all pretenses between your conscious mind and that which is in you; and then, to remove the pretense between what is in you, and others. This is the pathway, my friends.</p>