

## *Do Bahá'ís Pray?*

Bahá'ís have a spiritual obligation to pray every day. Why should we pray? To express our love, gratitude, and devotion to our supreme and everlasting Lover, to seek spiritual guidance, to remind ourselves of our immortal essence and destiny, and to strengthen our souls against the pressures of daily living. If we truly love someone, would we not call on him or her every day? Then how can we love God without remembering Him and talking to Him? Calling our true Lover and Beloved is the only long-distance call that is free, never busy, jammed, out of order, or under the control of a soulless recorder. God asks us to keep in touch, He loves to hear our voices: "Call on Me and I will answer thee" (Jeremiah 33:3). God answers our sincere prayers every time, but not always the way we expect.

At the dawn of every day he [the true seeker] should commune with God, and, with all his soul, persevere in the quest of his Beloved. He should consume every wayward thought with the flame of His loving mention.<sup>1</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

Yield ye praise then unto Him and glorify Him and bear ye witness to the sanctity and oneness of His

Being and magnify His might and majesty with wondrous glorification. This will enable you to gain admittance into the all-highest Paradise. Would that ye had firm faith in the revelation of the signs of God.<sup>2</sup>

The Báb

We should speak in the language of heaven—in the language of the spirit—for there is a language of the spirit and heart. It is as different from our language as our own language is different from that of the animals, who express themselves only by cries and sounds.

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...All of us, impossible for him to keep from mentioning the name of his beloved. How much more difficult is it to keep from mentioning the Name of

<sup>4</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá

In the Bahá'í Scriptures, we find several volumes of prayers. This is an example of a daily prayer:

*I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.*<sup>5</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

A prayer for those in difficulties:

*Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!*<sup>6</sup>

The Báb

A morning prayer:

*I have awakened in Thy shelter, O my God, and it becometh him that seeketh that shelter to abide within the Sanctuary of Thy Protection... Illumine my inner being, O my Lord, with the splendors of the Dayspring of Thy Revelation, even as Thou didst illumine my outer being with the morning light of Thy favor.*<sup>7</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

A prayer for tranquillity:

*O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my*

powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be a happy and joyful being. O God! I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life.

O God! Thou art more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord.<sup>8</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá

A prayer to express love for God:

O my God! O my God! This, Thy servant, hath advanced towards Thee, is passionately wandering in the desert of Thy love, walking in the path of Thy service, anticipating Thy favors, hoping for Thy bounty, relying upon Thy kingdom, and intoxicated by the wine of Thy gift. O my God! Increase the fervor of his affection for Thee, the constancy of his praise of Thee, and the ardor of his love for Thee.

Verily, Thou art the Most Generous, the Lord of grace abounding. There is no other God but Thee, the Forgiving, the Merciful.<sup>9</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá

A prayer seeking assistance:

O Thou Whose face is the object of my adoration, Whose beauty is my sanctuary, Whose habitation is my goal, Whose praise is my hope, Whose providence is my companion, Whose love is the cause of my

being, Whose mention is my solace, Whose nearness is my desire, Whose presence is my dearest wish and highest aspiration, I entreat Thee not to withhold from me the things Thou didst ordain for the chosen ones among Thy servants. Supply me, then, with the good of this world and of the next.

Thou, truly, art the King of all men. There is no God but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.<sup>10</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh

A prayer for healing:

Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.<sup>11</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

A prayer praising God:

I beg Thee to forgive me, O my Lord, for every mention but the mention of Thee, and for every praise but the praise of Thee, and for every delight but delight in Thy nearness, and for every pleasure but the pleasure of communion with Thee, and for every joy but the joy of Thy love and of Thy good-pleasure, and for all things pertaining unto me which bear no relationship unto Thee, O Thou Who art the

Lord of lords, He Who provideth the means and unlocketh the doors.<sup>12</sup>

The Báb

Praying and the reading of Scriptures should be done with joy and in moderation:

Pride not yourselves on much reading of the verses...Were a man to read a single verse with joy and radiance it would be better for him than to read with lassitude all the Holy Books of God.<sup>13</sup> Bahá'u'lláh

The most acceptable prayer is the one offered with the utmost spirituality and radiance; its prolongation hath not been and is not beloved by God. The more detached and the purer the prayer, the more acceptable is it in the presence of God.<sup>14</sup>

The Báb

“A pastor asked a little girl what she thought of her first experience in a meeting of ‘holy rollers,’ where they praised the Lord for hours at a time. ‘The music was nice,’ she said, ‘but the commercial was too long.’”

If one friend feels love for another, he will wish to say so. Though he knows that the friend is aware that he loves him, he will still wish to say so...God knows the wishes of all hearts, but the impulse to pray is a natural one, springing from man’s love to God...

If this love and desire are lacking, it is useless to try and force them. Words without love mean nothing.

If a person talks to you as an unpleasant duty, with no love or pleasure in his meeting with you, do you wish to converse with him?<sup>15</sup>

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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2. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 154.
3. Esslemont, J.E. *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980, p. 111.
4. Esslemont, J.E. *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1978, p. 116.
5. *Bahá'í Prayers*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991 edition, p. 4.
6. *Bahá'í Prayers*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991 edition, p. 28.
7. *Bahá'í Prayers*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991 edition, p. 117.
8. *Bahá'í Prayers*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991 edition, p. 152.
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11. *Bahá'í Prayers*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991 edition, p. 87.
12. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 182-183.
13. *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, 1992, pp. 73-74.
14. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 78.
15. Esslemont, J.E. *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980, p. 116.



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