

POWER OF PRAYER AND OUR PROPER ORIENTATION

1 **Watch over yourselves, for the Evil One is lying in wait, ready to entrap you.** Gird yourselves
2 against his wicked devices, and, led by the light of the name of the All-Seeing God, **make your**
3 **escape from the darkness that surroundeth you.** Let your vision be world-embracing, rather
4 than confined to your own self. The Evil One is he that hindereth the rise and obstructeth the
5 spiritual progress of the children of men.ⁱ

6 "Man becomes like a stone unless he continually supplicates to God. The heart of man is like a
7 mirror which is covered with dust and to cleanse it one must continually pray to God that it may
8 become clean. The act of supplication is the polish which erases all worldly desires. The delight
9 of supplicating and entreating before God cuts one's heart from the world. When the taste of
10 man is nourished by honey he never likes to taste any other sweetmeat. **Therefore, prayer is a**
11 **key by which the doors of the kingdom are opened.** There are many subjects which are
12 difficult for man to solve. But during prayer and supplication they are unveiled and there is
13 nothing that man cannot find out. Muhammad said: **"Prayer is a ladder by which every one can**
14 **ascend to heaven."** If one's heart is cut from the world his prayer is the ascension to heaven.

15 *In the highest prayer men pray only for the love of God, not*
16 *because they fear him or hell or hope for bounty or heaven.*

17 Thus the souls in whose hearts the fire of love is enkindled are attracted by supplication. **True**
18 **supplication to God must therefore be actuated by love to God only.** ... When a man falls in
19 love with a human being it is impossible for him to keep from mentioning the name of his
20 beloved. How much more difficult is it to keep from mentioning the name of God when one has
21 come to love him. One can pray for the dead and by so doing their spiritual condition will
22 become better. The spiritual man finds no delight in anything save in commemoration of God.
23 When one is confirmed his heart becomes rejoiced through the commemoration of God."ⁱⁱ

24 **1489. Praying to Bahá'u'lláh**

25 "You have asked whether our prayers go beyond Bahá'u'lláh: It all depends whether we pray to
26 Him directly and through Him to God. We may do both and also can pray directly to God, but
27 our prayers would **certainly be more effective and illuminating if they are addressed to Him**
28 **through His Manifestation, Bahá'u'lláh.**

29 *"Under no circumstances, however, we can, while repeating the*
30 *prayers, insert the name Bahá'u'lláh where the word 'God' is*
31 *used. This would be tantamount to a blasphemy."ⁱⁱⁱ*

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33 Praying to Bahá'u'lláh -- As the door

34 *"We cannot know God directly, but only through His Prophets. We*
35 *can pray to Him realizing that through His Prophets we know Him,*
36 *or we can address our prayer in thought to Bahá'u'lláh, not as God,*
37 *but as the Door to our knowing God."^{iv}*

38 1486. How to Pray -- One must Start out with the right Concept of God

39 **"...We must not be rigid about praying; there is not a set of rules governing it; the main thing**
40 **is we must start out with the right concept of God, the Manifestation, the Master, the**
41 **Guardian --** we can turn, in thought, to any one of them when we pray. For instance you can
42 ask Bahá'u'lláh for some thing, or, thinking of Him, ask God for it. The same is true of the
43 Master or the Guardian. You can turn in thought to either of them and then ask their
44 intercession, or pray direct to God.

45 *As long as you don't confuse their stations, and make them all*
46 *equal, it does not matter much how you orient your thoughts."^v*

47 1488. Turn to Manifestation

48 **"While praying it would be better to turn one's thoughts to the Manifestation as He continues,**
49 **in the other world, to be our means of contact with the Almighty.**

50 *We can, however, pray directly to God Himself."^{vi}*

51 1491. We may Turn to the Guardian in Prayer, but Should not Confuse His 52 Station with that of a Prophet

53 **"We pray to God, or to Bahá'u'lláh, as we please.** But if in our thoughts we desire to turn to the
54 Guardian first and then address our prayer, there is no objection, as long as we always bear in
55 mind he is only the Guardian, and do not confuse his station with that of the Prophet or even
56 the Master."^{vii}

57 Turning toward the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in Prayer

58 "In prayer the believers can turn their consciousness toward the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, **provided**
59 **that in doing so they have a clear and correct understanding of His station as a Manifestation**
60 **of God"** ^{viii}

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61 Through 'Abdu'l-Bahá one can Address Bahá'u'lláh

62 "If you find you need to visualize someone when you pray, think of the Master. Through Him
63 you can address Bahá'u'lláh. Gradually try to think of the qualities of the Manifestation, and in
64 that way a mental form will fade out, for after all the body is not the thing, His Spirit is there
65 and is the essential, everlasting element." ix

66

67 Prayers Should be Read as Printed

68 "Regarding your question as to the changing of pronouns in Bahá'í prayers: The Guardian does
69 not approve of such changes, either in the specific prayers or in any others. They should be
70 read as printed without changing a single word."x

71

72 THE FOLLOWING IS FROM THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH- PAGE 112

73 "To whoever may read these pages a word of warning seems, however, advisable before I
74 proceed further with the development of my argument. Let no one meditating, in the light of
75 the afore-quoted passages, on the nature of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, mistake its character
76 or misconstrue the intent of its Author.

77 *The divinity attributed to so great a Being and the complete*
78 *incarnation of the names and attributes of God in so exalted a Person*
79 *should, under no circumstances, be misconceived or misinterpreted.*

80 *The human temple that has been made the vehicle of so*
81 *overpowering a Revelation must, if we be faithful to the tenets of our*
82 *Faith, ever remain entirely distinguished from that "innermost Spirit*
83 *of Spirits" and "eternal Essence of Essences" -- that invisible yet*
84 *rational God Who, however much we extol the divinity of His*
85 *Manifestations on earth, can in no wise incarnate His infinite, His*
86 *unknowable, His incorruptible and all-embracing Reality in the*
87 *concrete and limited frame of a mortal being.*

88 *Indeed, the God Who could so incarnate His own reality would, in the*
89 *light of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, cease immediately to be God.*

90 **So crude and fantastic a theory of Divine incarnation is as removed from, and incompatible**
91 **with, the essentials of Bahá'í belief** as are the no less inadmissible pantheistic and

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92 anthropomorphic conceptions of God -- both of which the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh
93 emphatically repudiate and the fallacy of which they expose.

94 **He Who in unnumbered passages claimed His utterance to be the "Voice of Divinity, the Call**
95 **of God Himself" thus solemnly affirms in the Kitáb-i-Íqán:**

96 *"To every discerning and illumined heart it is evident that God, the*
97 *unknowable Essence, the Divine Being, is immeasurably exalted*
98 *beyond every human attribute such as corporeal existence, ascent*
99 *and descent, egress and regress... He is, and hath ever been, veiled*
100 *in the ancient eternity of His Essence, and will remain in His Reality*
101 *everlastingly hidden from the sight of men... He standeth exalted*
102 *beyond and above all separation and union, all proximity and*
103 *remoteness... 'God was alone; there was none else beside Him' is a*
104 *sure testimony of this truth."*

105 "From time immemorial," Bahá'u'lláh, speaking of God, explains, "He, the Divine Being, hath
106 been veiled in the ineffable sanctity of His exalted Self, and will everlasting continue to be
107 wrapt in the impenetrable mystery of His unknowable Essence... **Ten thousand Prophets, each**
108 **a Moses, are thunderstruck upon the Sinai of their search at God's forbidding voice, 'Thou**
109 **shalt never behold Me!';** whilst a myriad Messengers, each as great as Jesus, stand dismayed
110 upon their heavenly thrones by the interdiction 'Mine Essence thou shalt never apprehend!'"

111 **"How bewildering to me, insignificant as I am," Bahá'u'lláh in His communion with God**
112 **affirms,** "is the attempt to fathom the sacred depths of Thy knowledge! How futile my efforts
113 to visualize the magnitude of the power inherent in Thine handiwork -- the revelation of Thy
114 creative power!"

115 *"When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that*
116 *bindeth me to Thee," He, in yet another prayer revealed in*
117 *His own handwriting, testifies, "I am moved to proclaim to*
118 *all created things 'verily I am God!'; and when I consider*
119 *my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!"*

120 **"The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days,"** Bahá'u'lláh further states in the Kitáb-i-
121 Íqán, "being thus closed in the face of all beings, He, the Source of infinite grace **... hath caused**
122 **those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of**

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123 **the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world**
124 **the mysteries of the unchangeable Being and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable**
125 **Essence...** All the Prophets of God, His well-favored, His holy and chosen Messengers are,
126 without exception, the bearers of His names and the embodiments of His attributes... These
127 Tabernacles of Holiness, **these primal Mirrors** which reflect the Light of unfading glory, **are but**
128 **expressions of Him Who is the Invisible of the Invisibles."**

129 *That Bahá'u'lláh should, notwithstanding the*
130 *overwhelming intensity of His Revelation, be regarded as*
131 *essentially one of these Manifestations of God, never to be*
132 *identified with that invisible Reality, the Essence of Divinity*
133 *itself, is one of the major beliefs of our Faith -- a belief*
134 *which should never be obscured and the integrity of which*
135 *no one of its followers should allow to be compromised.^{xi}*

ⁱ (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 94)

ⁱⁱ 'Abdu'l-Bahá from notes of Miss Alma Albertson and other pilgrims, November and December, 1900. (SOW - Star of the West, Star of the West - 5)

ⁱⁱⁱ (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 14, 1937) (Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 457)

^{iv} (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer: High Endeavours: Messages to Alaska, p.71) 458

^v (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 24, 1946) 457 (Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 456)

^{vi} (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, April 27, 1937: Dawn of a New Day, p.67)

^{vii} (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 22, 1947)

^{viii} (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 15, 1953)

^{ix} (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 31, 1959)

^x (Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 458)

^{xi} FROM THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH