

Sharad Sangam 2009
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Meditation Brings Proof of God's Existence
-by Br. Onkaranandji

Guruji and Ma and other great ones from time to time have spoken or thought about prayer and this talk will make it clear. There is not necessarily a sequence, just certain points.

This talk will help you get a clear idea of where you can improve the efficiency and efficacy of prayers. The word 'prayer' has a lot of definitions in the English Dictionary. One definition says **'it is the act of making a reverent petition to God.'**

As per the definition of 'prayer' by Mahatma Gandhi:

'Our prayer is a heart search. It is a reminder to ourselves that we are helpless without His support. No effort is complete without prayer, without a definite recognition that the best human endeavor is of no effect if it has not God's blessing behind it. Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self purification, to inward search.'

And from the way he lived his life it is very clear that his concept of prayer is very powerful.

Traditionally nothing starts without invoking the blessings of the Divine. It is as if you are saying – 'I know I can do it, but if you are with me, walking with me, holding my hand so much the better.' Then our King sized ego dissipates and disappears. It is an inner search to what is our goal. Guruji says:

'True prayer is an expression of the soul, an urge from the soul. It is a hunger for God that arises from within, expressing itself to Him ardently, silently.'

There is nothing Guruji will talk about without linking it to one and only goal – hunger for God, increasing the appetite for God. We are making that extra effort while the world says it is not so important. It is also very natural, because it comes from the soul. Guruji says when the baby is born doctors find that the baby comes out with hands clasped as if in prayer. It seems to be the natural response of the child when taking birth.

Way back in school, our first period used to be Moral Science and Catechism. That was also the only subject in which I used to get good marks in. I found it very easy and simple and since there were mainly stories there, it appealed to my soul. Science and religion are often contradictory. Science says: **'Faith is nothing more**

than an excuse to ignore logic and common sense. Religion is nothing but a crutch for the weak minded and the fearful.'

A test was carried out where a little boy was left on a secluded island. He had no knowledge of God and the topic of God was never brought up before him. After some days he was found kneeling on the sea shore early in the morning and talking to the sun. When he was asked what he was doing, he said: 'I am praying to the creator of this magnificent creation. That was natural for the child. You may do, anything but you cannot subdue the natural inner urge to pray.

Ma's own beautiful search for God has made her say:

'I don't even like to use the word 'prayer,' which seems to suggest a formal, one-sided appeal to God. To me, conversation with God, talking to Him as to a near and dear friend, is a more natural, personal, and effective form of prayer.'

You got to hand it over to her. She has sorted out the most complex debate on how to pray in one simple sentence. She said I don't consider prayer to be a formal appeal but it is like talking to a near and dear one. She says, **"When I hear about the tragedies of war and other sufferings of humanity, or when anyone writes to me and asks for help, I immediately talk it over with God, conversing with Him in the silent sanctuary of my soul."**

She doesn't believe in taking a *punga* with God, "What is this? Why is the world going through this sorrow and pain?" or "Why do I have to go through this pain and suffering?" I prefer to sort out the issue with God. That's why it is blessed to have Ma guiding us. Whenever Ma would hear someone is in trouble or unhappy she ... (these lines appear somewhere in one of the Yogoda/Self Realization magazine in an interview with Daya Ma – could not find it, right now.)

Guruji says, "When do we pray? When we find some desire that is not fulfilled. Every prayer expresses a desire." That is true. At one time or another some of our desires get fulfilled. Why? Because of will power. It touches the heart of the Father. Putting a thought in your consciousness and then striving to achieve it. How wonderfully this great power works. It operates mechanically; there are no 'ifs' about it. When we just shut off everything else from our mind, we have churned the ether – then somebody just comes along in the form of the most unlikely person as a solution to our problem. How often do we pray? I remember seeing a ceramic mug in Sw. Shanatanandji's room that someone had gifted to him. It said, 'I don't believe in miracles – I depend on them.'

Prayer is a standard thing – it cuts across race, religion, country. And how does prayer operate? See how it operates. Guruji says: "--- God's presence." See he is

not going to make us forget God. You can talk to him about education or anything he will get us back to talking about God. He will say it is all right to have fun, all right to have money...but in the end he will get us to come to God.

We need to know how to get our prayers answered. From Journey to Self-Realization, Chap. - Receiving answers to Your Prayers:

‘The Divine Being cannot be deceived by a mockery of prayer, because He is the fountain of thoughts. He cannot be bribed at any time, yet it is easy to move Him with sincerity, persistency, concentration, devotion, determination, and faith.’

You can’t deceive him by a mockery of prayers. Go in front of the altar and invoke God with prayers while your mind is busy with other thoughts – it will not happen. In ‘Finding the Joy within You,’ Pg. 113, Ma says:

‘Meditation must never become for you just a routine, humdrum activity. In my travels I have gone to temples, mosques, and churches, and around the world I have seen devotees saying their prayers with distracted minds. I remember visiting the holy places in Jerusalem where Jesus Christ walked and communed with God, and seeing that the priest conducting the service was praying mechanically, more interested in his audience than in Him to whom he was praying. My inner feeling was: “No, no, no! You are here to commune with Christ!” Similarly, in temples in India, I saw priests perform their *pujas*, busily looking at the other people all the while they were talking to God. The One to whom their prayers were addressed was not listening because those devotees were not thinking of Him!’

God cannot be bribed. Don’t we often say, “Let my business succeed and I will give you God, 25%. (Mentally you will think that is a good deal because my partner is getting only 8%)

Guruji has said in Journey to Self Realization, Pg. 225,:

‘Furthermore, repeating a long intellectual prayer with the mind absent develops hypocrisy; and to pray or demand without understanding develops ignorance, fanaticism, and superstition. Repeating a demand with concentration and faith is not mechanical repetition, but a changing, progressing power and mental preparation which, step by step, scientifically reaches God.’

‘These sacred demands are logical, devotional, deep soul outbursts. If one prepares the mind by concentration, and then deeply, with ever-increasing faith and devotion, mentally [or aloud, in congregations] affirms these scientific divine demands, one is bound to receive results. To reestablish your

unity with the Divine Father as a son of God is your most important demand. Realize this truth, and you will have received everything.'

Naturally the logical mind will say, how come my prayer will be answered? - Because God has spiritualized your prayer and changes the consciousness. When you pray with faith attention and devotion what you pray for comes out as a response once it hits the super consciousness. Be thoroughly convinced he has listened to you. Then you will know what is God's is yours too. This is exactly how it is. So:

1st - talk to God.

2nd - believe he will answer.

3rd - do your bit and know eventually we will reclaim our divine heritage – what is ours.

In Journey to Self-Realization, Pg. 227, Gururji says:

'Prayer-demands are like ever-living plants that ceaselessly put forth new blossoms. A prayer plant retains the same branches of words, but daily yields fresh roses of God-feeling and inspiration, if one regularly waters the plant with meditation. The prayer-plant must also be protected from the ravages of doubt, distraction, mental idleness, leaving-meditation-until-tomorrow (the morrow that never comes), absentmindedness, and thinking-of-something-else while imagining that the mind is wholly on the soul force of a prayer.'

See I told you he will come back to God, to meditation. Take note of this – imagining that the mind is wholly on the soul force of a prayer. We think we are concentrating on God and Guru - But how much? It is a work in progress – to be aware of how much time I was supposed to be in concentration with the divine and how much time I have wasted. To continue with what Gururji was saying:

'Such parasites on the prayer-plants should be destroyed by faith, devotion to God, self-control, determination, and loyalty to a teaching. Roses of immortal inspiration may then be gathered daily from the plants of these prayer-demands.'

If I am so dispersed I will not be able to bring thought to my conversation. If I have thoughts such as – 'If I talk to this avatar, that avatar of the Guru will get upset' – it is foolish. If you are loyal to a teaching, allow your focus to converge. So much about what is prayer!

Now types of prayers. Some take on the ailments of others. In Autobiography of a Yogi, Gururji describes St. Therese Neumann thus in Chap. 39:

'Her brother Ferdinand, about twenty-three, explained that Therese has the power, through prayer, of working out on her own body the ailments of others. The saint's abstinence from food dates from a time when she prayed

that the throat disease of a young man of her parish, then preparing to enter holy orders, be transferred to her own throat.'

This is a saint. So we may say, what a big deal – saints are supposed to do that. But even simple householders are doing that. It transcends race and religion. Again it is mentioned in the Autobiography of a Yogi about the Muslim King Babar, Chap. 21:

'A historical healing incident concerns King Baber (1483-1530), founder of the Mogul empire in India. His son, Prince Humayun, was mortally ill. The father prayed with anguished determination that he receive the sickness, and that his son be spared. After all physicians had given up hope, Humayun recovered. Baber immediately fell sick and died of the same disease which had stricken his son. Humayun succeeded Baber as Emperor of Hindustan.'

Baber told God, 'I have lived my life, but my son is a young soul, he is yet to see the world, give his sickness to me, and spare him.' And Humayun was saved from the fatal illness, but Baber died. Our parents also often say – Give me this suffering; let my child not have to take it. I don't care about myself, but to protect my kith and kin, I am ready to take over on myself this difficulty. It may not always be answered by God but this is the power of a parent's prayer.

In Memoriam, Pg. 12:

'In helping to lift the karmic load of disciples, a guru sometimes works out on his own body some of their karma. In his compassionate love, Paramhansaji lightened the burden of many a disciple, and this is the reason the great master suffered certain physical disabilities during the last two years of his life. (See Pg. 93 of In Memoriam – Why does a great Master suffer?)'

Ma says that during his last days Guruji took on the karma of some disciples as well as some mass karma. It would manifest in Guruji's body. There were times when the persons would not be receptive, and yet they were healed. In the Autobiography (Chap. 17) it is mentioned how one of Guruji's friend Santosh's father was also healed by Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji just to uphold Guruji's request that his life be saved.

"Why bring a dead man to the ashram?" Sri Yukteswar looked at me inquiringly as soon as the door had closed on the Calcutta skeptic.

"Sir! The doctor is very much alive!"

"But in a short time he will be dead."

I was shocked. "Sir, this will be a terrible blow to his son. Santosh yet hopes for time to change his father's materialistic views. I beseech you, Master, to help the man."

"Very well; for your sake." My guru's face was impassive. "The proud horse doctor is far gone in diabetes, although he does not know it. In fifteen days he will take to his bed. The physicians will give him up for lost; his natural time to leave this earth is six weeks from today. Due to your intercession, however, on that date he will recover. But there is one condition. You must get him to wear an astrological bangle; he will doubtless object as violently as one of his horses before an operation!" Master chuckled.

After a silence, during which I wondered how Santosh and I could best employ the arts of cajolery on the recalcitrant doctor, Sri Yukteswar made further disclosures.

"As soon as the man gets well, advise him not to eat meat. He will not heed this counsel, however, and in six months, just as he is feeling at his best, he will drop dead. Even that six-month extension of life is granted him only because of your plea."

It is not that Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji did not know how it is going to play out. But he saw the sincerity of Guruji and his empathy for his friend. As per karmic law he should have been finished, but his life span was extended. How the law of karma at times is so exacting and at times it can be pushed is very interesting.

'The Hindu sage Narada started out on a pilgrimage to the temple of lord Vishnu. One night he stopped at a village and was given hospitality in the hut of a poor couple. Before he set out the next morning the man said to Narada, "You are going to Lord Vishnu. Ask him to give me and my wife a child, for it is many years now that we are childless."

When Narada reached the temple, he said to the Lord, "that man and wife were kind to me. Be merciful to them grant them a child." The lord replied, with an air of finality, "It is not in their destiny to have children." So Narada performed his devotions and went back home.

Five years later, he set out on the same pilgrimage and stopped at the same village and was offered the same hospitality by the same couple. This time there were 2 little children playing at the entrance of the hut?

"Whose children are these?" asked Narada.

"Mine" said the man.

Narada was puzzled. The man went on, "soon after you left us 5 years ago, a holy mendicant came to our village. We put him up for the night. The next morning before departing, he blessed my wife and me..And the Lord gave us the gift of those two children.

When Narada heard this, he could not wait to get to the temple of Lord Vishnu again. And when he got there he shouted right from the entrance, "Did you not tell me that it was not in their destiny to have children?"

When the Lord heard this, he laughed aloud and said, "That must be the doing of a saint. Saints have power to change destiny."

This is because saints can do everything – that is why we revere them. They have unbounded compassion at times. They can pull us out of the cause and effect principle. In another case mentioned in the Autobiography of a Yogi, Guruji describes how he received a telegram calling him to Puri in 1935-36. (Chap. 42)

"Come to Puri ashram at once." This telegram was sent on March 8th by a brother disciple to Atul Chandra Roy Chowdhry, one of Master's chelas in Calcutta. News of the message reached my ears; anguished at its implications, I dropped to my knees and implored God that my guru's life be spared. As I was about to leave Father's home for the train, a divine voice spoke within.

"Do not go to Puri tonight. Thy prayer cannot be granted."

"Lord," I said, grief-stricken, "Thou dost not wish to engage with me in a 'tug of war' at Puri, where Thou wilt have to deny my incessant prayers for Master's life. Must he, then, depart for higher duties at Thy behest?"

In obedience to the inward command, I did not leave that night for Puri. The following evening I set out for the train; on the way, at seven o'clock, a black astral cloud suddenly covered the sky. Later, while the train roared toward Puri, a vision of Sri Yukteswar appeared before me. He was sitting, very grave of countenance, with a light on each side.

"Is it all over?" I lifted my arms beseechingly.

He nodded, then slowly vanished.

In God Alone, talking about Sr. Gyanmata, Guruji says (Pg. 45):

Sometime after, I went one day to see Sister in her room at Mt. Washington. I could hear her heart pumping just like a bellows, even from the door. I was very frightened for her, and I called on God.

But she was calm. Though she was lying down, gasping for breath, she said, "Don't pray for me. Don't trouble yourself. Just bless me." Tears rolled down my cheeks. "Sister," I said, "Heaven is with you, and I beg your life from God." She immediately became well, and was breathing normally. And I knew that having begged her life from God, she could not go from this earth without my prayer to God to release her. His troth with me was: "She will not go until you say so."

Here is a disciple who is praying don't pray for me when she is going through the most arduous trouble. You may say, karmically she deserved it, so what's the big deal? Guruji continues:

“Sister didn't need suffering for that reason. Her suffering was because of the sins of many others who became saintly through her life. There was not a sin of her own I could find. I want you to know that. Such is the mystery of God.”
But she was there as an instrument for God and Guruji.

In God Alone, Sr. Gyanmata writes:

‘During the same period of my life, late one afternoon, I was kneeling in prayer in the chapel – I was thinking of something that was coming into my life that filled me with apprehension. I knew that it was not the will of God that I should be saved from the experience. Even at that moment it was moving toward me. Suddenly God told me the prayer He would listen to, and I said quickly: “Change no circumstance of my life. Change me.”’

There are experiences that the soul never forgets, but which cannot properly be expressed. My prayer was answered instantly. I was changed. Trying to put this into words, all I could compare it to was a window being opened in an overheated room and a cool, refreshing breeze blowing in. It is not getting our own way that gives joy; it is attunement with the Divine Will.’

You know this test is coming my way; you are at the human level. And yet you say – don't change the circumstance, change me. Teach me to fight it, hold my hand and walk with me. It is not getting your own way that gives joy but doing the will of God. It is the attitude. Take it and understand it.

Talking about unanswered prayer in a lighter tone:

After satsanga one parent gave a feed back. My daughter asked

“What does Swamiji do before satsanga?”

“He prays.”

“What about?”

“That he gives a good satsanga.”

“Then how come God doesn't listen to his prayer,” said the daughter.

That is why I don't allow children to attend my satsanga. They let the cat out of the bag.

We need to be willing to take it, and no use sulking and saying, ‘You didn't listen to me,’ when our prayers are not answered. Children are pure, uncorrupted by the world. Instead of teaching them to sit cross legged and cross eyed, teach them to talk to God in the language of their heart. It is better if early in life children are

taught to pray. Daya Ma writes in *Finding the Joy within You*, Chap. – The skilled profession of child rearing:

‘In my own childhood, at a very early age we children learned to pray at our mother’s knee. It was part of getting ready for bed. We knelt around her, said a short prayer, and then prayed for the different members of the family. It was so sweet. We were never forced to do it. A child who is taught to pray loves it. By the time I was seventeen and came into Self-Realization Fellowship, I was so busy praying for others that my prayer at night seemed never-ending – there were so many to add to the list. Praying for others teaches one to feel for others. Children should be taught to be caring and unselfish.’

In fact during prayer time children sometimes say such sweet things.

A child had just buried his favorite puppy. At dinner time the whole family gathered together and the child prayed:

“God please take care of Sandy. He was such a good dog. He never entered the kitchen, he never bit anyone. He always obeyed. In fact we think he behaved better than any member in the family.” – Nothing under the carpet.

In fact we adults tend to feel shy. That quality of openness should never be covered up by fear of ridicule. People learn to keep on growing in that caring atmosphere.

It is beyond time and you all must be thinking ‘Oh my God, can’t one of them finish on time. My legs are killing me.’

When Gyanmata was asked about her plans and directions she said that she did not want prayers for herself. She said something like - All I ask is that as you leave, turn up and give me a glance. This is in contrast to another devotee. I am not ridiculing but showing how *maya* can play a trick on us.

2002 SRF Retreat at Xavier Center, N.J

Brother Atmananda

Brother Atmananda visited the meditation group in Atlanta some years ago and had the privilege of meeting a woman who had known Master. Her name was Mary Lou. She was a “southern bell”, very outspoken and opinionated, never became a disciple, but she had a remarkable story about Master.

Back when Master was living in Encinitas, Mary Lou was on a vacation trip with her baby from her home in Atlanta to California, and she heard Master lecture in San Francisco. Later, as she traveled south and neared San Diego

she remembered there was a hermitage in Encinitas and decided to try to find it and pay a visit to Master. She drove through town, but had no success in finding the hermitage, and finally decided to move on. But then a strong impulse came that she should try one more time and as she circled around town once more she felt drawn to stop the car and ask a woman for directions.

This woman happened to be pushing a baby carriage, and when Mary Lou pulled the car over, the woman told her that Master had been expecting her for dinner. Mary Lou expressed her doubt that she was the person they were looking for, but the woman was quite insistent that indeed she was. The woman reached over and picked up Mary Lou's baby, put the baby in the carriage, and before Mary Lou knew what was happening she was being led through the doors of the hermitage and into the dining room where there were a whole lot of people and Master at the head of the table. She felt quite certain there would follow embarrassment for all when they realized she was not the person they were waiting for. There was an empty chair beside Master and he motioned for her to sit there.

He told her, "You gave me a lot of trouble. I had to work very hard to get you to turn your car around." Later he told her that in a previous life she had been his teacher (he did not say what she had taught him). Then he told her that he would like to grant her 3 wishes.

Believe it or not, these were her wishes: She said she always wanted curly hair. Master said 'okay,' and after that her hair started growing in curly and was curly for the rest of her life. She said she always wished she could wake up early in the morning and feel refreshed. Master said 'okay,' and ever after that she always did. Then she said she would like to have a million dollars. Master shook his head and said, "I think what you really want is to have enough so that you are never in want." She agreed that was true and ever after that she was always materially comfortable.

The dinner was, in fact, in her honor and the wishes granted were in gratitude for her previous service as his teacher. (The guru never forgets a service.) Master also told her at that time that there would be a temple in Atlanta within her own lifetime. Several years ago that temple came into being, just a few months before Mary Lou passed on.

We would have wished to be in her place. We are laughing but this story reflects what is in your consciousness. If you have straight come from satsanga and if

Guruji and Ma were to ask us, “What do you want,” without a moment’s hesitation we would have said, “God-realization.”

Pray deeply for all. That is why we have the world wide prayer circle. We need to learn that the whole world is an extended part of our family. It is our brothers and sisters. During the last convocation the prayers of the 4000 devotees who attended the convocation generated such a tremendous force that it averted a natural catastrophe that was to take place.

Guruji writes in Man’s Eternal Quest, Chap. – Answered Prayers:

The first rule in prayer is to approach God only with legitimate desires. The second is to pray for their fulfillment, not as a beggar, but as a son: “I am Thy child. Thou art my Father. Thou and I are One.” When you pray deeply and continually you will feel a great joy welling up in your heart. Don’t be satisfied until that joy manifests; for when you feel that all-satisfying-joy in your heart, you will know that God has tuned in your prayer broadcast. Then pray to your Father: “Lord, this is my need. I am willing to work for it; please guide me and help me to have the right thoughts and to do the right things to bring about success. I will use my reason, and work with determination, but guide Thou my reason, will and activity to the right thing that I should do.”

Before every meeting and before taking any decision in the ashram we pray and affirm: **“Lord, we will reason, we will will, we will act; but guide Thou our reason, will and activity to the right thing that I should do.”**

Then we need to work on it. We need to work for months and years until we crack it (like the discoveries that are made by scientists and mathematicians). Similarly on the basis of symptoms, diagnose the problem, and then back up your action with prayer. Figure out the food pattern, change the habit pattern, increase the mind power, and change the system.

If you want a good alliance for the daughter, you don’t pray and then go and sit down and watch television. No! Go and do some work. Go to the nth degree.

Daya Ma says: **“It is my duty...clog...for you to reopen the channel...negation, criticism, resentment...Pray...offer the cry of the soul...”**

Guruji says in Scientific Healing Affirmations:

“As you utter prayers or affirmations, always believe that you are using your own but God-given powers to heal yourself or others. Ask His aid; but realize that you yourself, as His beloved child, are employing His gifts of will, emotion, and reason to solve all difficult problems of life. A balance should be

struck between the medieval idea of wholly depending on God and the modern way of sole reliance on the ego.”

The modern way is – Hey I am the Master of all I survey. I can deal with it by myself. And the medieval way is through superstitions, with doubts – will He give, will He not give? But I am going to use prayers.