

Understanding the methods of prayer and the amazing influence they play in the lives of all of humankind.

While in Haifa, the beloved Guardian of the Cause gave to the writer (Mrs Ruth Moffat), the most concise, complete, and effective formula she has ever seen, for the Dynamics of Prayer. After saying to stress the need of more prayers and meditation among the friends, he said to use these five steps if we had a problem of any kind for which we desired a solution or wished help.

First Step. - Pray and meditate about it. Use the prayers of the Manifestations as they have the greatest power. Then remain in the silence of contemplation for a few minutes.

Second Step. - Arrive at a decision and hold this. This decision is usually born during the contemplation. It may seem almost impossible of accomplishment but if it seems to be as answer to a prayer or a way of solving the problem, then immediately take the next step.

Third Step. - Have determination to carry the decision through. Many fail here. The decision, budding into determination, is blighted and instead becomes a wish or a vague longing. When determination is born, immediately take the next step.

Fourth Step. - Have faith and confidence that the power will flow through you, the right way will appear, the door will open, the right thought, the right message, the right principle or the right book will be given you. Have confidence, and the right thing will come to your need. Then, as you rise from prayer, take at once the fifth step.

Fifth Step. - Then, he said, lastly, ACT; Act as though it had all been answered. Then act with tireless, ceaseless energy. And as you act, you, yourself, will become a magnet, which will attract more power to your being, until you become an unobstructed channel for the Divine power to flow through you. Many pray but do not remain for the last half of the first step. Some who meditate arrive at a decision, but fail to hold it. Few have the determination to carry the decision through, still fewer have the confidence that the right thing will come to their need. But how many remember to act as though it had all been answered? How true are those words - "Greater than the prayer is the spirit in which it is uttered" and greater than the way it is uttered is the spirit in which it is carried out.

The above statement belongs properly to the class of statement known as "pilgrim's notes" and as such as no authority but, since it seems to be particularly helpful and clear, it was felt that believers should not be deprived of it.

(Compilations, *Principles of Bahá'í Administration*, p. 91.)

1. 'Should Prayer take the form of action?'

'Abdu'l-Bahá. -- 'Yes: In the Bahá'í Cause arts, sciences and all crafts are (counted as) worship. The man who makes a piece of notepaper to the best of his ability, conscientiously, concentrating all his forces on perfecting it, is giving praise to God. Briefly, all effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity. This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people. Service is prayer. A physician ministering to the sick, gently, tenderly, free from prejudice and believing in the solidarity of the human race, he is giving praise'.
('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 176.)

2. Praise be to God, thy heart is engaged in the commemoration of God, thy soul is gladdened by the glad tidings of God and thou art absorbed in prayer. The state of prayer is the best of conditions, for man is then associating with God. Prayer verily bestoweth life, particularly when offered in private and at times, such as midnight, when freed from daily cares.

('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 201.)

3. There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first is by the use of remedies, of medicines; the second consists in praying to God and in turning to Him. Both means should be used and practiced.

('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá v3*, p. 587.)

4. If thou be a man of communion and prayer, soar up on the wings of assistance from Holy Souls, that thou mayest behold the mysteries of the Friend and attain to the lights of the Beloved, "Verily, we are from God and to Him shall we return."

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 17.)

5. In the highest prayer, men pray only for the love of God, not because they fear Him or Hell, or hope for bounty or heaven... When a man falls in love with a human being, it is 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 God when has come to love Him... The spiritual man finds no delight in anything save in commemoration of God.

(Report of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words quoted in *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 105; cited in Wilmette 1976 ed: *The Important of Prayer, Meditation, and the Devotional Attitude* –a Compilation and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 461.)

6. Whensoever the light of Manifestation of the King of Oneness settleth upon the throne of the heart and soul, His shining becometh visible in every limb and member. At that time the mystery of the famed tradition gleameth out of the darkness: "A servant is drawn

unto Me in prayer until I answer him; and when I have answered him, I become the ear wherewith he heareth....” For thus the Master of the house hath appeared within His home, and all the pillars of the dwelling are ashine with His light. And the action and effect of the light are from the Light-Giver; so it is that all move through Him and arise by His will.

(Bahá’u’lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 21.)

7. Verily He answereth him who prayeth unto Him, and is near unto him who calleth on Him.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *A Traveller’s Narrative*, p. 80.)

8. While praying it would be better to turn one’s thoughts to the Manifestation as He continues, in the other world, to be our means of contact with the Almighty. We can, however, pray directly to God Himself.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, 27 April 1937; cited in *Dawn of a New Day*, p.67 and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 457.)

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

Under no circumstances, however, we can, while repeating the prayers, insert the name Bahá’u’lláh where the word ‘God’ is used. This would be tantamount to a blasphemy.

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

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

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, 31 January 1949; cited in *Bahá’í News*. No. 222, August 1949, p. 2 and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 486.)

11. The believers, as we all know, should endeavour to set such an example in their personal lives and conduct that others will feel impelled to embrace a Faith which reforms human character. However, unfortunately, not everyone achieves easily and rapidly the victory over self. What every believer, new or old, should realise is that the Cause has the spiritual power to re-create us if we make the effort to let that power influence us, and the greatest help in this respect is prayer. We must supplicate

Bahá'u'lláh to assist us to overcome the failings in our own characters, and also exert our own will-power in mastering ourselves.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 27 January 1945; cited in *The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community*, p. 441.)