



Prayer – Its Prerequisites

The All-Souls' Day and the All-Saints' Day are specially set apart by the Christian world as the days of devout prayerfulness. To us, spiritual aspirants, this observance has come to mean a day of universal prayerfulness, an exercise of devotion to be performed by all selfless souls, who have in their heart the welfare of all their fellow-souls. All souls are struggling to get free from the earthly trammels and thralldom of ignorance and trying to manifest their divine consciousness. Therefore, let our prayer be for *sarva-bhutas* – animate and inanimate, animal, human and also celestial beings. Let our prayer be universal in the truest sense of the term.

Are there any conditions that we may have to fulfil if our prayer is to be effective? Certainly, there are. If a bell has to produce a melodious chime that pleases the ear and reaches long distance, the bell must be sound, the alloy must be pure, and there must be no crack. Similarly, if a prayer ought to be effective, it should emanate from a heart, which is absolutely pure, which is devoid of crookedness, cunningness, carnality, greed and evil thought. This is the first and one of the most important requisites for effective prayer. Purity is the prime condition of effective prayer.

Service and Sympathy ought to be practical; even so, our prayer should not be mere lip-prayer. It should be sincere. It is sincere prayer alone that will amaze us with miraculous and marvellous way in which it bears fruit. Prayer should be full of *bhava*. *Bhava* makes prayer live, vital and dynamic. Prayer without *bhava* is like a blazing fire in a painted picture, whereas prayer with *bhava* is like the actual blazing fire. There is one more thing, which the man who would pray ought to observe. Our lives and our actions should be in harmony with the spirit of our prayerfulness, and should in no way contradict the *bhava* of our prayer. We should practically live for the well-being of others. Our motives, our *kalyan* (welfare of the entire world), and our life should be dedicated to *sarva-mangala* and *loka-hita* (the prosperity and welfare of all). If we pray for the welfare of all, we should live and work for the welfare of all.

If you want the fullest efficacy of prayer, then earnestly try to acquire these qualities. For spiritual aspirants, All-Souls Day is every day of the year; praying for the welfare of all is done everyday. May all souls attain the highest Happiness and Bliss, and the highest goal.

God Bless You All !

■ Swami Chidananda