CONTENTS

Preface

PART I
Prayer Is a Demand of the Soul

PART II
Inner Concentration: Prelude to True Prayer

PART III
Know What to Pray For

PART IV
Have a Clear Concept of God

PART V
Pray With Dynamic Will Power

PART VI
Reclaim Your Inner Sanctuary
Preface

By Sri Daya Mata

President and spiritual head (1955–2010) of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India

I met Paramahansa Yogananda in 1931, when he came to my hometown of Salt Lake City to give a series of lectures and classes. It was a meeting that profoundly transformed my life.

Though still a teenager, I was seeking spiritual answers. I had listened to the sermons of various church ministers; but my heart remained unsatisfied: “Everybody talks about God, but is there no one who actually knows Him?”

When I entered the packed auditorium where Paramahansa Yogananda was speaking, the spiritual upliftment, power, and love radiating from his presence instantly convinced me—to the core of my being—that I was in the presence of one who had found God and could guide me to Him.

One night he spoke on faith and will power. He so inspired me that as I sat and listened to him I felt it was definitely possible to move mountains with faith in God.

When the lecture was over, I waited to greet him. I had been suffering for quite some time from severe blood poisoning throughout my system—the result of an accident in high school—and the doctors could find no cure for it.
During our conversation, he suddenly said to me, “Do you believe that God can heal you?” His eyes were alight with divine power.

I replied, “I know God can heal me.”

He touched me in blessing on the forehead. Then he said, “From this day forward, you are healed. Inside one week your scars will be gone.” And that is exactly what happened. Within one week the condition had cleared, and has never returned.

For Paramahansa Yogananda, faith and prayer to God were not a matter of wishful thinking or unprovable belief. His was a scientific approach to prayer, which yields direct results, direct experience. To thousands all over the world, he taught that spiritual science—yoga, the science of the soul—the definite methods of inner communion whereby each soul can experience its oneness with the Divine.¹

“Be still, and know that I am God.” These words from Psalms describe the purpose of yoga. In the inner quietude resulting from deep meditation, each person may find a personal connection with God. Then prayer truly becomes dynamic—an intimate, loving exchange between the soul and its Creator in the sanctuary of silence within.

Paramahansa Yogananda’s many books, and his collected talks and essays, contain numerous passages about the way to make prayer effective. In this small volume we have compiled a representative sampling. For those who are just embarking upon an interior life of the Spirit, here is
inspiration and definite guidance with which to begin. For those who have already incorporated a program of prayer and meditation into their daily lives, this guide will bring a refocusing and deepening of their relationship with the Divine.

The hallmark of Paramahansa Yogananda’s teaching is that God is not remote or unapproachable. Indeed, that Divine One is “the nearest of the near, dearest of the dear, closer than the closest—just behind our thoughts and feelings, just behind the words with which we pray.”

As Paramahansaji shows in the selections in this book, if we devote even a little time each day to prayer and meditation, the Infinite Father-Mother-Friend becomes a living, enlightening Presence in our lives—bringing strength, guidance, renewal, healing.

That is my prayer for you, the reader; and I know it would be Paramahansaji’s as well.

Los Angeles
January 1998

---

1 These scientific techniques of meditation taught by Paramahansa Yogananda are available in a home-study series of lessons from Self-Realization Fellowship.
PART

I

Prayer Is a Demand of the Soul
ENTER THE QUIETNESS OF YOUR SOUL

The temple of God is within your soul. Enter into this quietness and sit there in meditation with the light of intuition burning on the altar. There is no restlessness, no searching or striving there. Come into the silence of solitude....

Enter the innermost sanctuary of the soul....Remember and realize the forgotten image of God within you.

Each of us is a child of God. We are born of His spirit, in all its purity and glory and joy. That heritage is unassailable....The Bible says: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” Always remember: your Father loves you unconditionally....

We need not run away to the jungle to seek Him. We can find Him in this jungle of daily life, in the cave of inner silence.
Even if you do no more than pray sincerely to Him, His great joy will eventually come upon you.

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.

Constantly, inwardly, talk to Him; then He cannot remain away from you.

The Lord is the Mother of all mothers, the Father of all fathers, the One Friend behind all friends. If you always think of Him as the nearest of the near, you will witness many wonders in your life. "He walks with me and He talks with me and He tells me I am His own."
WHEN NO HUMAN AID CAN HELP

There are two ways in which our needs can be taken care of. One is the material. For example, when we have ill health we can go to a doctor for medical treatment. But a time comes when no human aid can help. Then we look to the other way, to the Spiritual Power, the Maker of our body, mind, and soul. Material power is limited, and when it fails, we turn to the unlimited Divine Power. Likewise with our financial needs; when we have done our best, and still it is inadequate, we turn to that other Power.

Our endeavor must be not only to acquire financial security and good health, but to seek out the meaning of life. What is it all about? When we are hit with difficulties we react upon our environment first, making whatever material adjustments we believe may help. But when we come to the point of saying, “Everything I have tried so far has failed; what to do next?” we start to think hard about a solution. When we think deeply enough, we find an answer within. This is one form of answered prayer.