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THE MASTER LECTURES

MAYAN REVELATION NUMBER 121

LESSON NUMBER ONE

IN

THE LORD'S PRAYER SERIES

Our Father Which Art in Heaven

Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Our Father

The Great Partnership

God's Family

Our Home

Who Art In Heaven

Beloved Centurion:

Most of us learn to say the Lord's Prayer at our mother's knee. We say it when we go to church. We say it the first thing in the morning, or perhaps the last thing at night, and we know it so well that perhaps some of us say the words without actually stopping to think what they mean.

As a matter of fact there may be some among us who do not know exactly the meaning. It seems simple enough when we say the words, but there is a deeper meaning. For example, when we ask the Lord, our God, to lead us not into temptation - just what does that phrase mean? If we stop to think, we surely know that the Good Shepherd would not lead us into temptation, so why in the Lord's Prayer do we say lead us not into temptation? Jesus simply meant lead us away from temptation.

This is merely an example, as you will see as we go forward. This new series may seem a little unusual to you. It was selected for you by your Mayan Order because we feel that it is so very important. Indeed, the Lord's Prayer is the most important of all Christian documents. It is used in all Christian churches. If we have any religion in our home at all, the Lord's Prayer is taught to each child as soon as it is able to lisp the words. Even in homes that are not particularly religious, practically everyone knows the words of the Lord's Prayer, - but unless we understand it we cannot expect to receive the benefit from it that we would receive, for not understanding it we are not able to make our petitions to the Father with the deep soul-satisfying sincerity that we would have if we were thoroughly aware of what each of the seven phrases mean.

Did you ever stop to think how strange it is that each lesson that comes to you is divided into seven parts? There are also seven parts to the Lord's Prayer - the mystical number seven. Seven is the Symbol of Soul Perfection according to the tradition of the Far East.

You, as a Centurion in The Mayan Order belong to that exalted group known as Mayan Ministers, and as such are preparing, and are expected, to help others. The knowledge you have gained has made many things possible to you, of which even you, yourself, at times are not fully aware. We want you to be the best informed, the most widely read of all people, and possessing a mentality rich in wisdom and understanding of the promise of the Kingdom.

In healing, it is suggested that you use the affirmative; in other words, use the phrases, "Thy kingdom is coming; Thy will is being done." It is positive in its effect.

The greater your understanding of the Lord's Prayer, the more wonderful it will be to you. It will take care of every need spiritually and materially. You, as a truth student on the Mayan Path, are seeking perfection, happiness, - which is another way of saying spiritual riches, perfect health, freedom from fear, harmonious living. All these things can be added unto you when you gain an understanding of what was meant by Jesus when the words of the Lord's Prayer were given to us.

There is nothing impossible to you when you have a real comprehension of the principles of the Lord's Prayer. The difficult part, and that which you are seeking is the UNDERSTANDING and that is the PURPOSE of Mayanry, to bring you UNDERSTANDING, step by step, subject by subject. There is much, much more to come which

can make you a greater person.

May I pause here to congratulate you on the courageous and undaunted spirit you have shown in continuing up the path? It is not always easy, but you, Beloved Centurion, are accomplishing it. The obstacles in your path have become challenges to you which you have accepted unflinchingly. You are to be commended on your devotion in what you have set out to do. Let nothing interfere.

Now let us reverently begin this holy study with the following Prayer:

PRAYER

Our Father, help me in spirit to take my place among those who heard the Master speak of prayer. Let me learn from Him its meaning, its nature, and practice; and let my inner life expand to meet the wide boundaries it sets. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

WE are now to attempt reverently to seek to understand a prayer lovingly remembered by countless people through nineteen hundred years. It is not the only prayer Jesus used, for His was a praying life. He sometimes put a prayer into a single sentence, and He sometimes prayed for hours. His great intercessory prayer in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of John is much longer and equally lovely, but not so easily committed to memory.

The form we familiarly call the Lord's Prayer is a master specimen of a short and simple prayer for all times and occasion, a prayer representing the attitudes of soul we should always have. One needs to pray about many things, but this prayer includes the things we should always pray about. They form a background all prayer should have, whatever other praying we do. A prayer form so great and meaningful deserves our best endeavor to discover what it really means.

A great religious leader who has now passed on wrote a meaningful little book about the Lord's Prayer, and called it "The PRAYER THAT HELPS US LIVE". That is a wise name by which to think of it, for that is exactly what it does. When you read it, use it, learn it by heart, and think about it till you see at least something of the vastness of its meaning, this is what you have - A PRAYER THAT IS A PATTERN FOR LIVING. It has in it the right attitude to take toward the Divine, toward the day's work, toward the problems that arise, toward the needs of life, and toward other people.

From the lore of the ages we treasure just a few choice bits of expression, utterances perfect enough to be incapable of revision, powerful enough to challenge the mind and heart of any kind of person, and short enough to remember. Almost anyone can recite the Twenty-third Psalm, most people can repeat the Thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians, but who is there that does not know the Lord's Prayer by heart? How much richer we are for being able to carry such a gem in mind, and let it, even when we are not conscious of the fact, work itself into our lives!

The Lord's Prayer is, of course, a part of the famous Sermon on the Mount. In that discourse the Christ was outlining the qualities that must characterize the kind of lives of which His Kingdom must be built. Of course prayerfulness is one of

them. So He deals at some length with the subject of prayer - how to pray, what kind of praying is honored, common mistakes in praying, and the like. In that section He gives us this idea of a universal prayer, a prayer for every situation, a prayer that sets the pace for and indicates the spirit of all right praying, a prayer that is our best example of prayer as it should be.

These lessons can only touch the high spots of so vast a subject. They can provide only a starting point. The student must work out the details in his own thought and experience through the years.

OUR FATHER

THE Lord's Prayer takes us a long step forward in the human idea of the nature of God. Beginning in days of savagery, man had a long way to go in understanding this. He was intelligent enough, even then, to know that nothing can be made without a maker, so he became incurably religious from the beginning. But his idea of that Maker was as crude as the life he had to live. At first he thought God was the thunder, the lightning, the sun, or some other force of nature.

Then arose the idea of many gods, one for every department of experience. Also emerged the idea of the tribal god, who was mainly supposed to help clans to win battles. In the days of the patriarchs a much more intelligent idea of God emerged. From the time of Moses He became a God of law. The prophets of the seventh and eighth centuries before Christ began speaking of Him as a God of justice, and even of lovingkindness.

Then Jesus came upon the scene and promptly revolutionized the whole concept of the Divine. In this first great discourse He begins speaking of God as our Father, the Parent of our souls, the One who is responsible for our existence.

The implications are many and significant. Any parent knows what that kind of a name implies. It implies all the haunting, lingering, deep-hearted love of anyone for his children: the love that plans and serves, that seeks and follows, that pities and forgives, and that is even willing to suffer for its own. So we come to think not of a Judge interested mostly in exacting justice, but of a Father watching His children, seeking their welfare, and doing all to help them that they will accept and use. The throne of power becomes the armchair of affection, and the God who exacts becomes the God who cares.

The race had not understood that very well. People could not wholly get away from the ideas of the old savage days and the concept of the god of tribal wars. The law and the prophets did not make it plain enough. Here was God loving His children as any good father does, but with no means to make them understand it save the still, small voice, which most of them did not hear.

A human revelation was necessary to bring the lesson home, so Jesus came. The Word (the divine Idea) became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, - glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus was the Mediator who brought the divine and the human closer and more in harmony, the At-onement, who brought man and his Maker to oneness of spirit and purpose. THAT WAS WHAT HE WAS DOING WHEN HE TAUGHT OUR HUMAN LIPS TO SAY, "OUR FATHER".

Think of the best father you ever knew, multiply his kindness and goodness a

thousandfold, and you will just begin to have some idea of God in His relationship to and attitude toward all of us, even the worst of us. How life-transforming this principle is! How it empties the heart of error and fills it with warmth and confidence! Yet it is only the first thought in the Lord's Prayer.

OUR FATHER

THE first phrase of the Lord's Prayer contains only two words, but each is rich in meaning. We have reversed the order and looked at the second. Now let us look at the first. We have emphasized the father idea. Now let us look at the idea of the universality of that fatherhood. We find it in the fact that the possessive pronoun is not singular but plural.

There is a divine Grammar. In some ways it is similar to, and in other ways it differs from our ordinary laws of speech and writing. In it pronouns are especially meaningful. In all things, and especially in this connection, it makes a great difference whether we use the singular or plural form. This is always true when we are using a pronoun in the possessive form. It is important to understand, and keep very clear, that God is one of our possessions no one can monopolize. He is the God not of one, or a few, or a single class, or a specified nation, but of all. He is not the Father of this one or that one. He is OUR Father.

You can see that in using these two words the Great Teacher not only opens to us the perfect idea of God, but He also makes that idea a binding tie between all members of the human race. In two simple words He establishes once for all the fundamental principle which joins these two supreme ideas into one - the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. That is the perfect formula. We can start with it any day and build a new civilization, a safe world, and a happy and peaceful race. Think what it would mean right now if a majority of mankind would look up to heaven and sincerely and understandingly say, "Our Father".

This is more fundamental than it may seem at first thought. It is the deeply important principle of the relatedness of life, by which we think of ourselves as one in many and many in one. Of that we shall have more to say in the next section. It is enough now to notice that in His use of one little three-letter pronoun, the Master makes us conscious of each other. To live by that idea would remove the friction and conflict from our troubled world life.

Of course it may be said that this is the natural approach when two or more people are praying together or when one is praying as a representative of the rest. That is true, but what about the occasions when any one of us is praying alone? If in that situation, which is the usual one, we might not use the plural form of the possessive pronoun, we certainly should have it in mind and be making our petition in its spirit. In the most solitary closet of prayer we must remember that while we are addressing the God of each of us we are also addressing the God of all of us. Ours is a shared faith.

This little word "our" indicates something of the vastness of the right concept of God. When we get that word ingrained in our viewpoint we are beginning to think in terms of a world faith and a world kingdom. We are then not going forward in any self-sufficient attitude. We are knowingly marching with a vast host to a fulfillment that is to mean nothing less than a new and better world life.

It is indeed a great thing that we can say "Our Father". It is an even

greater thing that each of the two words plays its profound and far-reaching part in our approach to the Divine.

THE GREAT PARTNERSHIP

LET us now take a further look at something we have already mentioned, the fact that when we say "Our Father", we are recognizing not a self-centered view but the wholeness and relatedness of life under God. No man lives to himself, and no man dies to himself. We are one in Christ. The kingdom is a partnership.

The world has between two and three billions of people in it, yet it is possible for one to live in it practically unconscious of the presence of other people and certainly unconscious of their feelings and rights. It takes some people years to discover the other fellow, and even longer to learn to put themselves in his place in their dealings with him.

But to discover and consider the other fellow is one of the first requirements in sharing the kingdom life. When the wrongs of the world are made the other fellow will have to be considered. We cannot get along without him, and we must not try to make him get along without us. We all need each other, and the welfare of each depends on the welfare of the rest.

The Golden Rule is nothing impossible or unnatural. It is not strange, nor even difficult. The surest way to get our good is to get it as a part of the welfare of the race. If we labor for ourselves alone we are likely to lose in the final reckoning. If we act with consideration for all we have many helpers. A dozen or a million people working for each other can do more for each than any can do for himself. TO SEEK THE HAPPINESS OF OTHERS IS THE SHORTEST CUT TO HAPPINESS FOR OURSELVES. You, as a companion in the Higher Degrees have learned this, - never forget it. The Golden Rule is as much in our own interest as that of anyone else.

It is the same with the Great Commandment. There regard for others is tied in closely with love for God. A great churchman once said that THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A SOLITARY RELIGION. In other words, a RELIGION CENTERING IN SELF ALONE WOULD FAIL BY ITS VERY NATURE TO BE A RELIGION AT ALL.

We need very early to become conscious of the other fellow, to realize that our lives are related to his, that we must stand, or fall, or go forward or backward together; and that in the final analysis we owe him an obligation, for whatever happens to him will be reflected on to us.

Thomas Arnold, the great master of the Rugby School, said that the chief aim of the school was to turn out young men who were thoughtful, manly-minded, and conscious of duty and obligation. Duty is the meeting of obligation. Obligation is something expressed by the Latin words ob and ligare, meaning to "tie to". It is, then, being tied up to right principles and the interests of others, and especially to an ideal and a purpose. Every person and every worthy interest has a claim on us, and there is nowhere to draw the line.

In the various relationships of life we accept certain special obligations and duties. In one way this limits our freedom, but in another way it increases it. In any case the fact stands that we improve life by accepting these obligations.

GOD'S FAMILY

NOW let us think of one of the most beautiful, comforting, and satisfying implications of all that are building up out of the wonderful words, "Our Father". Let us start with a little syllogism. If God is our Father, we are His children. If we are His children, we are a family. Our life here on earth is, then, a related life, a family, a brotherhood. Whether we realize it and live like it or not, we are brothers and sisters. Of course we are a very large family, but that only makes the relationship the more interesting.

How should we live together in this world? Like brothers and sisters should live together in the home. How should we think of and act toward each other? Like brothers and sisters should think of and act toward each other. That gives us a pattern for living and dealing with others that is completely dependable, yet is so simple and plain that no one needs to become confused or fail.

We all know what brotherhood in the family involves. It involves desiring each other's happiness, success, and good, and being willing to help bring these about. It means defending each other's good name and helping each other in times of need, problems, or trials. It means cooperating in the family interest and for the good of the home. It means looking out for the family's standing and reputation. It means working together in the interest of all.

In the kingdom life by which the Master hopes to bring peace and happiness to the world, we have only to expand this idea and practice to more people. The trouble with family brotherhood is that too often it ends with the relationship and sometimes takes the form of rivalry and antagonism toward other families or groups. Christian brotherhood has no boundaries and no limitations. It means that we deal with all as members of God's family, whoever they are and whether or not we ever saw them before or will ever see them again in this world.

It means that we are to think of others on a common level with ourselves, regard their rights and feelings, help and encourage them, and do anything we can to brighten their lives and improve their situations. It means to be kind, forgiving, and considerate, to think the best rather than the worst of others, and to try to make life as good for others as we want it to be for ourselves.

Much time, strength, and ability are lost to the world by people living for conflicting things, pulling in opposite directions. Think what progress would have been achieved by now if the great human brotherhood had only been living and working together to shape the world life to the will of our Father.

We have all noticed that a likeness runs in families. The laws of heredity are such that children usually look and act like their parents. That is, they are created in the image of their father, or mother, or both. We are told that we are created in the image of our heavenly Father. That is, we have inherited some of His attributes and characteristics.

One of the tests of whether we are maintaining our kinship to God is whether we are maintaining and increasing the resemblance between our lives and His will for us, the Christ being the visible pattern we have to go by. One cannot too often check on how much or how little he resembles that pattern.

OUR HOME

Now let us shape another little syllogism. If God is our Father, we are a family. If we are a family, we live together in a home. The wonderful earth with its rich productiveness, its breath-taking scenery, and its flowering beauty, is that home. We imply all this when we say "Our Father".

What is a home for? It is made to be the dwellingplace of a family, and if that family is wise it will appreciate its home, care for it, and try to make it ever lovelier and more pleasant to live in.

It is a pity to have an unappreciative attitude toward this world which is our home. A fine home does not grow from thanklessness and is not maintained by it. The world is a lovely place for those who live it and try to take good care of it. It is the old family home of our childhood on a larger scale. There are countless things we could do for the improvement of our world and for making life in it ever lovelier and happier. We should consider those things, seek to do them and, as far as possible, do them together - as a family.

It is a sad mistake to think of the earth as something to exploit and waste for gain. We should conserve its wealth and beauty, not merely dig them out and cut them down for selfish purposes and with no concern about the ruin we have wrought. Our beautiful forests should be protected, our mineral resources made to serve long-range need, and the wastelands of the world made to prove the old prophecy that the desert shall blossom as the rose.

We have a wonderful world, and we should treat it always as a home. It is the ancestral dwelling our Father has prepared and given us. That thought should govern our attitude toward it and our use of it. Above all, a home should not be used as a place for wars and contentions. What kind of a home is it where the children fight over the rooms?

We have all seen well-conducted homes, where the parents lead and all the children help to maintain the place and the family interests, a place where each wants all the others to have their shares of whatever good there is, where strong ties of respect and affection bind the children to each other and to their parents, where life is carried on in such a way as to command the respect of neighbors and to have many friends, and where the provision for every need is met with gratitude and appreciation.

Such a home is a little heaven on earth, a hint of Christian brotherhood really carried out and practiced. From such homes have come the best life of the nation, as from the new world order will come more and more worthy sons and daughters to make the future ever better and better.

We say a great deal when we call God our Father. When we think it through we see that none is homeless and without a family. Our Father is near us and our brothers and sisters are all about. It is for us to make the most of it.

. . . WHO ART IN HEAVEN

NOW let us look at the rest of the great invocation with which this master prayer begins. We have just said that our Father is near us, and here we are confronted with the statement that He is in Heaven. Let us try to think it out, for much confusion results from starting our thought of Heaven from the wrong assumptions.

The word "Heaven" occurs very early in the Bible, early in the first chapter, in fact. In the story of the creation we are told that God created the firmament and called it Heaven. What was the firmament, and what was the meaning of the Word of which it is a translation? It comes from a word meaning "Expanse" or "Expansion". It is not a word meaning a location, but the opposite. It does not indicate merely somewhere, but anywhere, everywhere. It is not on the map; it is the map.

In youth the writer had two student friends who fell victims to an epidemic at the same time, and were hospitalized in the same room. He called on them there whenever he was near the hospital. One, lying in one corner, was most unhappy. He lived for the superficialities and frivolities of the day, and having no resources of the spirit to fall back on, he was most miserable. The other young man had cultivated deeper satisfactions. He thought out old problems, read deferred books, chatted on important topics with friends who came, recalled gems of thought he had memorized, and actually enjoyed himself. Incidentally, he went on to an outstanding life.

This is what we are getting at: HEAVEN IS PEACE AND HAPPINESS, and Hell is the lack of them. That is true wherever one is. Here were two young men in the same room, yet one was tasting the joys of Heaven and the other was withering under the hot blasts of perdition. The point is that we carry Heaven or its opposite within ourselves wherever we go. Heaven is anywhere that there is a life capable of receiving it, and nowhere that there is not such a life. Our problem is not to get into Heaven but to GET HEAVEN INTO OURSELVES.

In one of His conversations, Jesus referred to Himself as the son of man who IS in Heaven. Yet there He was standing solidly on the earth explaining some great principle of life to His hearers. How could He be standing there and at the same time be in Heaven? It was possible because He had Heaven within Himself, like a piece of built-in furniture. It went wherever He went.

But what about our going to Heaven after the death of the body? We are assured that we will, if we have Heaven within ourselves beforehand. In any world to which one goes he will have what he takes there, and he would be unhappy in any other condition. Think it over, and see if Heaven does not seem more real to you when you recognize that it is something you deal with every day. Certainly it is closer and more definite.

Thus we pray to "Our Father who is in Heaven". We love to think of Him as the imminent One, the God who is very near to us - "closer to us than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet", as Tennyson says. That does not in the least change the fact that He is in Heaven. THE WHOLE DIVINE PROGRAM OF THE AGES IS TO GET HEAVEN AND EARTH AS NEAR TOGETHER AS POSSIBLE.

Since God is in Heaven we find ourselves in heavenly places whenever we draw

near to Him. Yet they are the familiar spots we know - the firesides where we sit, the places where we labor, the roads we travel, THE ALTARS WHERE WE WORSHIP. What- ever grander realizations may lie ahead, HEAVEN IS AVAILABLE TO US ALL HERE AND NOW. WHEN IT BECOMES A PART OF US IT IS OURS TO KEEP.

Remember this last sentence as you repeat the following Affirmation. This thought will bring you security as will nothing else. Say your Affirmation thought- fully and slowly, and repeat it each morning until you receive your next Lesson. You will find it can work miracles in your daily life.

AFFIRMATION

As I keep my thoughts, desires, and purposes in Heaven I find it more and more within myself, and know that into whatever plane of existence I may go it will still be mine. I find this true as I pray to our Father who is in Heaven.

May God's richest blessings rest upon you.

Your Instructor.

Your next Lesson in this Series takes up the second phrase of The Master Prayer, Hallowed Be Thy Name, with the following subjects:

Prayer	Reverence in All Relationships
Reverence	Reverent Thinking
Third Command	Reverent Living
The Names of God	Approach To the Throne