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VADE MECUM, VOLVENTIBUS ANNIS

THE MAYANS
SAN ANTONIO,
TEXAS

Degree 6 - 7

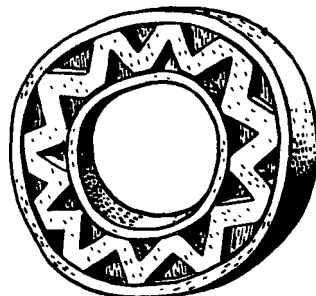
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PHILOSOPHY SERIES ONE

(Part Two)

6th and 7th Degrees



SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION

EFFECTIVE PRAYER

Beloved Companion:

May the Great Spirit bless your Mayan Ministry and your life, inspiring you always in \triangle , in \square , and in \odot , which are the passwords to your higher life.

May you be moved to instruct others, that their lives too will be more fully blest. And wherever you teach, remember to instruct them in the manner of prayer. For prayer is the greatest gift The Father has given unto the children of Earth.

The word "prayer" has become so common that too many people use it glibly without stopping to consider what it means. They take it for granted, like they do the air, sunshine, and rain, without reminding themselves occasionally how important it is and how grateful for it they should be. That is most unfortunate because it tends to allow prayer to fall into disuse. People get into the habit of thinking of it merely as a nice formality, one of the respectabilities of life, to be used for the sake of appearance on certain occasions but not to be taken very seriously.

But prayer is much more than that and needs to be taken very seriously indeed. People stand in awe before the new processes of fission by which atomic energy is released. The fact is that the power of prayer is much more wonderful than anything yet discovered in the laboratories, or anything yet done by the atom smashers. One reason people do not realize that and make prayer the leading wonder it is, may be found in the lack of demonstration.

The public has largely forgotten the amazing power of prayer because not enough people are showing in actual practice what it can do. It speaks for itself when demonstrated. More demonstration, then, is the purpose of this lesson. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of", said Tennyson. Yes, and much more yet could be wrought if we would do the good things we can do and apply

the force of prayer to the good things that are too much for us. Remember that right projects only constitute the field of prayer.

What we have here said about prayer may to the unknowing seem extravagant, as most reverent discussions of the subject do; but prayer is one of the things about which we can make extravagant statements and still be conservative. It is the amazing power we claim for it. Why? Because in some marvelous way it releases the greatest of all forces, the divine energy. By physical science we may break up the whirling constituents of an atom composing some ordinary substance and find that we have released enough force to blow up a city. But from the storehouse of energy from which these whirling entities were formed, prayer can release enough force to do an infinitely greater thing - perhaps to feed a city, or guide a city to a great ideal, or to save a city from ruin. If it can do this for a city, then why not for a world?

Did not Jesus say that one who has faith even as a grain of mustard seed might command a mountain to move and it would be done? That was really an understatement. Faith can do much greater things than that, and HAS DONE THEM. Through prayer it CAN SET IN MOTION THE VERY POWERS THAT MADE THE UNIVERSE, and what limits can we set to the possibilities of that?

The trouble with nearly all prayer teaching is that it is not daring enough. It is really too formal, conventional, and traditional to be very effective. Thus we get little idea of what it is and can do. We need to stop our theorizing and make more "laboratory studies". We need to take prayer out of the range of little, unimportant things where it is kept in the practice of so many, and apply it in the great projects, indeed the very greatest ones. The writer of these lessons happened to be engaged in a special program of prayer for the end of the war when it came. No doubt many others also were. Call it coincidence if you wish, but we think we know. There is need now for effective praying for the end of the war of wills and ideologies that is postponing real peace. Pray about little personal worries if you wish, but let us pray en masse also for the coming upon earth of the City of God - "Thy kingdom come" - remember?

Jesus was asked for teaching about prayer, and gave it; but those whom He taught were so immature that He could not do much more than suggest. We can learn much from His prayer discourses, but we can learn more from His prayer practices, for we can see that He did not stop short of contacting the Divine. He did not make prayer a nice little formality; He worked at it. He thrust it, like a lever, under the heaviest tasks and most forbidding problems. He laid hold of great projects with it like a strong man takes hold of a ~~mis~~ wagonwheel with his hands. And they moved. They will do so still.

Let us examine a few questions about the nature of prayer. The important thing is practice, but a certain amount of understanding is necessary before one can practice anything intelligently.

In trying to explain prayer too many people have explained it away. One of the favorite claims of those who for some strange reason seem to want to devitalize prayer is that it simply puts the supplicant in a mood to go to work and answer his own prayers.

There is no question but that prayer does tend to put one in the attitude

to do something about the problem about which he prays, but THAT IS BECAUSE GOD HAS HEARD HIS REQUEST AND IS ALREADY GIVING HIM GUIDANCE WHAT TO DO HIMSELF. He is getting the kind of instructions we find in books telling what to do before the doctor arrives. In this case we are being told what to do while the great universal power intervenes. Prayer brings illumination as to certain things we can do, but it also RELEASES POWER to do the things we could never do. When we rule God out, the process is no longer prayer. Praying people should be self-reliant, but self-reliance is not prayer.

The great majority of people seem to assume that the function of prayer is to get something we want out of the divine bounty. They seem never to consider it as anything else but going before the throne of mercy to ask for something, perhaps to argue with God to get Him to see something our way or to induce Him to do something He is unwilling to do.

What a low idea of praying! What amount of argument from our small understanding could turn the divine mind from anything but the truth? And what amount of pleading could induce Him to turn His will from the right? What a sad thing it would be if human beings could change the attitude of Him whose wisdom is infinite and whose ways are always just! No, the function of prayer is something quite different. It is not to bring God into harmony with us, but to bring us into harmony with Him. When the divine will and purpose prevail, that will be better for us than any plans we could make.

What about prayer being the key to achievement and success then? This is exactly what makes it so. The harmony right-praying establishes makes us partners of the Divine - "workers together with God". Out of harmony with God we cannot succeed. In harmony with Him we cannot fail, for His purposes never fail, and they have now become our purposes.

Think what it means to have the universe on your side. That is better than the support of all the armies and navies of the world, together with all the treasure. There is a sure way to have the universe on your side, and that is to be on the side of the universe. The purposes of God are one with yours THE MOMENT yours become one with His.

Shall we Mayans, as individuals, use private prayer or public prayer? Both. When two or more people pray together, "of one accord in one place", they gain the advantage of the interaction of minds and wills on each other. That is sometimes the secret of great blessings, as on the Day of Pentecost. That by no means takes the place of what Jesus commanded when He said to pray much behind the locked door of the closet of silence and solitude. That was His way of commanding the silence, for that is where the soul grows.

Are printed prayers or prayers led by others of value? Yes, all praying is of value, whatever its form and method. It all helps to shape the inner life and to register its unseen result. Nothing can take the place of a personal program of prayer carried on with a definite purpose, but ANY WORD OR THOUGHT OF PRAYER will leave its mark on the spirit as truly as dye being strained through a cloth.

Let us now consider a few cases, all of which are personally known to your

Instructor. You may have your own list of prayer wonders. Certainly you will as you proceed with the experience and practice of praying.

A college student was far from home when school closed, and being out of money he could not go home. He would not be able to pay his room rent the next week. One evening he used the last coins he had for food, taking a few crackers to his room to fight off hunger pangs as long as he could. He was afraid he could not sleep that night for worry. He retired, however, and in the darkness laid his problem and need before God. Then he fell asleep and rested so well that he was awakened next morning only when the landlady came to announce a telephone call. It was the president of the college saying he had some office work that had to be done and his secretary had been called away. The work was of a special nature, having to do with some building specifications and bids; and it took about three weeks. By that time satisfactory employment for the summer had opened up.

A man who believed deeply in prayer was stopped on the street by a lady one winter morning when he was on the way to keep an appointment. Her purpose was to ask him to pray for her grandmother who was ninety-three and who lay at the point of death. Hurriedly as he walked through the snow he asked the mercy and grace of heaven for the old lady, then he became engrossed with the business in hand and forgot all about her and his purpose to do the matter greater justice when he could have privacy. Four days later he remembered it with a start and a feeling of cold sweat. He was ashamed to call the lady and find out when the funeral had been, but felt he must.

"Why, hadn't you heard?" she asked.

"No, what?" he replied, more disturbed than ever.

"She is up and around again. She wanted to get out of bed the afternoon of the day I saw you. Isn't it wonderful?"

It was, and for two reasons. One was that God hears and answers prayer, and the other was that He often takes our prayers more seriously than we do ourselves. Never trifle with prayer. WHEN YOU PRAY YOU RELEASE SOMETHING THAT TRAVELS FAR, LASTS LONG, AND AFFECTS MANY. God takes it seriously, and so must we.

A certain man was deeply worried and hurt about the unkindness of another person. He had felt the ordinary human impulse to meet the unkindness with scorn and denunciation, but something had restrained him. That was fortunate because the other person was near and dear to him, and he could not have afforded a break.

It occurred to him to try prayer. Finding a place of privacy he knelt at a chair and prayed for the other person in love, asking God's blessing on the other person and that God would guide them both in love and wisdom. At the next contact of the two he found all tension gone, and only love and good will remaining. Then he remembered a significant thing in the Epilogue of the Book of Job. After Job's troublesome visitors had departed instead of seeking revenge he prayed for them, "and the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends."

THERE IS A GREAT PRINCIPLE INVOLVED HERE. This much neglected use of prayer is entirely Biblical. Did not Jesus say, "pray for them that despitefully use you"? Test it out, but be careful to do it without resentment or the attitude that

you are right and the other person wrong. Don't ask God to vindicate you; ask him to bless the person who has despitely used you. You may be surprised at what will happen.

A certain man keeps a prayer list, and works it through every day. He says he does it because he wants the divine blessing for the people whose names are there, of course; but that he also has another reason - the salvation of his own soul. He says there is a Biblical expression like this, "God forbid that I should sin against the Holy Spirit in ceasing to pray for you."

We have had much discussion and debate on the question of what constitutes the sin against the Holy Spirit, the supposedly unforgivable sin, the sin unto death. Perhaps here we have the answer. Perhaps it is nothing more nor less than failing to pray for others. Too much praying is for self. A principle of spiritual growth and success is expansion. It is as our interest, sympathy, and understanding expand and tend toward universality that the best comes to ourselves. Notice that in the Lord's Prayer the pronoun is not first person singular, but plural. In praying "I" and "me" must more and more give way to "we" and "us".

This leaves one thing more to be considered, and that is the fact that it cannot be said that everyone always gets what he prays for. Some say their prayers are not answered. That is not true; they are merely answered in the negative. Some say their prayers are unavailing. That is not true either; they are merely ungranted. That is exactly as it should be, for people sometimes ask God for things that would be ruinous if they got them; they sometimes ask for lesser blessings when it is the will of God to give them greater ones, and they sometimes make requests that are too selfish or that involve the disadvantage of others. Sometimes, as James says, "we receive not, because we ask amiss."

One day the writer heard a child crying for a pretty bottle. The bottle contained poison. The fact that the request was denied did not prove the parent's unkindness, but his kindness. Many of God's children do the same thing. We never know how much trouble our ungranted prayers have kept us out of. Anyway, we are not to forget that the function of prayer is not to get OUR wills done, but to get the Divine purpose for ourselves and all our fellow human beings accomplished.

Many people familiar with the newer and more advanced spiritual teachings are increasingly using the affirmative form in their praying. It is based on the principles involved in what we have called creative meditation, which, between it and the affirmative form of prayer, the dividing line is very slight.

The law is that creative powers are contained in the subconscious levels of the mind, and that by some process it, or powers connected with it, start realizing any pattern set before it. That is, one sees a condition in its perfection, affirms it to the divine powers working in his subconscious, and they begin making his dream come true. He is not hiding his head in the sand and refusing to see things as they are, nor is he recklessly claiming something that is not true. He is setting the pattern of things to be, so they can begin. That pattern, just as in any creative meditation, involves two things - the affirmation of the good and the denial of the evil.

Again as in creative meditation, it helps to visualize these desired conditions as much as possible. If you can see imaginatively the right thing done or

the wrong thing made right, it helps just that much more to register the plan in the subconscious mind.

A SECOND LOOK AT MANY THINGS IN THE BIBLE WILL INDICATE THAT THEY ARE REALLY PRAYER AFFIRMATIONS. Some truth teachers speak of them as "treatments". Call them what you will; the important thing is to use those we have and fashion others to fit your particular needs.

The Twenty-third Psalm is a perfect creative meditation or affirmative prayer. Think it through again as a pattern for desirable living, and you will want to submit it to your creative self that God may make it increasingly real for you. If you do this after you have retired at night you should find sleep much quicker and deeper after you have walked by "the still waters" and been made to "lie down in green pastures." It is a very wholesome thing to repeat this psalm prayerfully every day, also to make great use of other similar material in the Bible.

Some say the Lord's Prayer was really intended to have the affirmative form, and some of this holy prayer still does despite whatever may have been done to it through various translations and editings. TRY IT AS AN AFFIRMATION, AND SEE HOW IT INCREASES ITS EFFECTIVENESS FOR YOU. It would run something like this:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed is Thy name. Thy kingdom comes. Thy will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. Thou givest us each day our daily bread. Thou forgivest our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Thou leadest us not into temptation, but deliverest us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

This process has its own mechanics, and they are mysterious and wonderful. Few know a great deal about them, but we know they are effective, which is the important thing. They take nothing and attempt to take nothing out of the hands of God, for that is impossible. Whatever mechanism does a thing, remember that God alone can empower it.

This form of prayer may or may not seem to meet all your needs. If it does not, use the request form when it seems to suit better. One should try out the affirmation form, however, to see what it will do. You may find yourself using it more and more. At least that is the experience many have had.



Now for a few closing reminders to cover minor points, - if any points in connection with such a subject can be said to be minor.

When there are results to be achieved, pray for results. Mean business when you go about it, just as when you go about anything concerning which you are very much in earnest.

Know what you want before you begin asking. You could be putting your case in confused and confusing form, and the creative powers require a clear pattern to work on. Even the best builder cannot do his best when the blueprints and the

specifications are indefinite and mixed up. Be sure you are saying what you mean, for you may be writing into the eternities something that you can't erase. Be sure it is something you want there, and that it is in the form you want it. Remember that we have to live with the results of our prayers. Ask God for wisdom in prayer. We all need it.

That means to take your praying seriously enough to do it well. Prayer should never be thoughtlessly and carelessly done. An inattentive and scattering mind does the same thing to a prayer it does to a letter or other piece of writing, except that in the case of the prayer the results are infinitely more serious. Thoughtless mumbling is as much of an insult to God as to a human listener.

If you have nothing to pray for, ask God to open your eyes. When He does you will find that there are plenty of things to pray for. The world and each of our lives are full of needs that will never be met until God's creative and transforming forces are released on them.

We are told to "pray without ceasing". That does not mean to give up everything else and spend the entire time in formal prayer. It means to live each day in the spirit of prayer, to make life itself a prayer. Much of it may be silent thought or wordless desire, but it is prayer and will have its effect. You will always find plenty to pray for and about as you go along. By the time you have cleared your daily living at the throne of grace you will have woven a golden thread of prayer through your day.

Pray sometimes when you have no requests to make. God is a parent, and while any parent likes to listen to the children's troubles, he also likes to see them come sometimes just for a little quiet understanding chat. It helps to keep your purposes in tune with the divine, and to sustain your mutual understanding with God. You do not like to see anyone come always as a beggar, so go to God sometimes when you are not begging. You will find the effect very wholesome.

What can you talk about? Many things. If you are a parent, did any of your children ever come to you just to remind you that they loved you? If so, you know how unforgettable that moment has always been. Perhaps God would like to be told occasionally just of your love and gratitude. He knows of them already, do you say? Well, you knew your child loved you already too, but didn't it help to hear that little voice saying so? Love doesn't like always and forever to have to take things for granted.

Speaking of gratitude, that is a vital matter in all our relations with our heavenly Father. Forever receiving and never saying "thank you" doesn't succeed very well or very long in our relations with other people, neither does it work out very well with the Source of all bounty. Plenty of people have had the experience of seeking some blessing in vain until they remembered to give thanks for some blessing already received, then the new desire was promptly realized. That is undoubtedly what is standing in the way of a great many petitions at this moment.

Once more let us emphasize the necessity of praying in faith. You can no more pray effectively without it than you can run a motor car without fuel or a motor without electric current. It is strictly a must in all matters of spiritual achievement. Do not think of faith as some elusive and baffling thing. Remember that it is merely trusting a Friend. It is as simple as that, and the Friend is one

who certainly has given us every reason to trust Him. There is an advertising picture of a father holding up his little child and saying, "I'll never let you down." Our heavenly Father does that with us every day, and He keeps His word. Faith in Him should not be difficult.

You will have many valuable by-products accruing from your prayer practice. Prayer is a great benefit to the mind. It clears, stimulates, and strengthens the mental processes. It is good for one's powers of expression too. People of the most stumbling and halting speech have been known to become actually eloquent through their talks with God.

Always be conscious that you are using a world-moving force, and that you must be careful. It is a fearful thing to use any power wrongly, and in this case it is the more so because this is the greatest force of all.

I pray The Father will bless your Mayan Path, so that many others will ask the blessings of The Great Spirit upon you also.

Your Instructor
in The Mayans

YOUR NEXT REVELATION

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LOVE CROWNS THE HEAD WITH HEAVENLY GLORY

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