

## Nine Point Code of Conduct : PRAYER

*“God gives you whatever you pray for, so take care. Ask for the right things” – Baba*

### **1 What is a Prayer?**

In simple words, Prayer is a means to communicate with God. Swami says *“Prayer is the very breath of religion, for it brings man and God together and with every sigh, nearer and nearer. Swami also says, “Prayers go up and the blessings come down”*. Swami beautifully described that *“Prayer is not the pronouncing of words. Prayer is the yearning the devotee experiences to awaken the divinity latent in the heart. A heart without words is far more precious than words without a heart.”*

### **2 How does it work?**

It has been found that belief in a higher power can enhance the relaxation response we get when we are in a mediate state. This simply means that when you pray with faith and believe that you will derive benefit from prayers, your blood pressure lowers, your anger vanishes, and you are more quickly able to tap into your potential for healing. Sometimes, just calling on God in the way you have done countless times over the years can start the positive effects.

### **3 Prayer versus Meditation**

Swami clarified that *“These are two roads to fulfilment: prayer and meditation. Prayer makes you a suppliant at the feet of God. Meditation (Dhyana) induces God to come down to you and inspire you to raise yourselves to Him; it tends to make you come together in a loving and compassionate relationship, not place one lower than the other.”*

### **4 From what age should we start praying?**

The parents must teach their children right from the very tender age, to find sometime for spent regularly in the contemplation of God. Parents must involve children in their daily prayers - similar to helping a child learning to speak, walk and do so many other activities. Who teaches them? Parents hold the finger of the child and help him to walk - Don't they? So when the child starts walking right at that time parents must give their children the right direction - Walk towards God. Parents get the greatest joy when their child starts speaking. Mother will point a finger at her and will ask the child to say, “Mama”. Then the mother will point her finger at her husband and tell the child to say “Papa”. The child will not say Mama or Papa in one sitting or in one day. But eventually he will know and learn. Same way the parents have the responsibility to teach their child to sit down in front of the altar, close the eyes and fold the hands. The child at the tender age is very observing. He will pick up what parents are doing or what ever he sees in his surroundings.

### **5. Why should you pray?**

## Nine Point Code of Conduct : PRAYER

By praying you gain energy, courage zeal and strength from within. Swami says, "Prayers help you to pay your tax to God." Once Swami said, "*There was a professor in Kasi who used to do prayer and worship at the alter in his house. An atheist friend of his who visited him remarked that he was wasting so much time in prayer. The professor replied that the prayer to God will never go to waste. He added: "If according to you, God does not exist, I waste only one hour per day. But if God exists, you are wasting your whole lifetime."*

### **6 But how to find some time to pray?**

We should utilise every moment of our life to remember God. Say you are going to sleep but you are not feeling sleepy or still tossing about in the bed. Then why don't you utilise that time by silently praying to God in your mind and you will notice that you will fall asleep soon. Even while driving car, what do you do - Listen to the car radio? Why not switch off the radio for a while and pray to God while driving. If you look at it, you will certainly find a lot of time which goes on waste, could be utilised toward God. Some people get very frustrated when they have to stop repeatedly due to red signal at traffic lights during peak hours - they run out of patience. What happens then? They start grumbling and fuming out, the language become abusive in nature, and then they drive carelessly and end up either paying traffic fine or having an accident or losing peace of mind. Why not to use this opportunity in a positive way, by making it a practice to pray to God for friends, siblings and family separately at every time you stop at red signals.

### **7 How frequent you should pray?**

There is no hard and fast rule for how many times a day you must pray. Obviously you might be praying many times a day for selfish purpose. First thing one must understand that the prayer must be Satwick. Swami says, "*Regular prayers twice a day will give strength and courage, to withstand illness. The Grace of God will confer mental peace and also good sleep and rest for the mind. Feel that you are a hundred percent dependent on God. He will look after you and save you from harm and injury."*

Let no devotee miss his daily appointment with God. The mind may suggest the movies or some other distractions; but when the time comes for God each day, keep that sacred engagement. Otherwise one will be a long time finding Him.

Swami says, "*Offering prayers to God repeatedly during the course of the day, clears one's mind of the impurities collected during the intervals when he acts and reacts in the world. Therefore all religions advise offering of prayers to God many times during the day."*

### **8 What should you pray for?**

Man has come to this world solely to learn to know God; he is here for no other reason. This is the true message of the Lord. Pray only to know God.

## Nine Point Code of Conduct : PRAYER

Swami says, “*You should not pray to God seeking this favour or that. The reason is: no one can know what immensely precious, Divine and magnificent treasures lie in the treasure house of Divine Grace. No one can know what God intends or desires to give to a devotee. In such a situation, by asking for trivial and petty things, man is demeaning his divine estate. No one can understand what valuable, sacred and divine favour God chooses to confer on a deserving devotee. Hence man should not seek from God, nor desire, nor pray for some petty trifles. More precious and desirable than everything else is God’s Love.*”

Swami explained, “*Be devoted to the Universal; be eager to become that; when you pray to God for a job, a son, or a prize, you are devoted not to God, but to the job, son and to the prize. Pray to God for God only. Love, because it is your nature to love, because you know nothing else and because you cannot act otherwise than love. Expand yourself, take in all! Grow in Love.*”

Swami emphasised, “*If you wish to ask anything from God pray to Him thus – “Oh Lord! Let me have you alone.” Once you have secured the Lord, you can get anything you want. That was why Mira sang: ‘Oh my loving heart, drink the nectar of divine Love.’ When you can have divine love, to crave for anything else is like asking for coffee powder from the wish-fulfilling Tree! (Kalpatru).*”

### **9 What is the best time to pray & how does prayer reach God?**

One can pray to God at any time. Praying is the union with God. Praying is communication with God. When you pray you must have the feeling and devotion for God. If possible - it is good practice to pray daily at the same time.

Swami says, “*The stamp of Bhakti (devotion) is what makes the prayer reach the destination, God; not the festoons, the fanfare, the heaps of flowers, or the festive nature of the feast-offerings. The simple, sincere heart is the stamp that makes the prayer travel fast.*”

Swami explains, “*Prayers for worldly ends do not reach God. They will reach only those deities who deal with such restricted spheres. But all prayers arising from pure love, unselfish eagerness to render service and from hearts that are all inclusive will reach God. For God is the very Embodiment of Love. We know that we have to see the Moon only through Moonlight. So too, God who is Love can be realised only through Love. Love is God. Live in Love.*”

### **10 Will my prayer be answered?**

Yes, but not necessary the way you want. Because God only knows what is good for you at different stages of life. Only He knows what is good for your spiritual progress. Only He knows your past lives’ background and the Karmas you have had performed. You might ask now, “Then what is the point to pray now, as God knows what He is doing?” When you sit closer to fire, you get some heat. When you sit closer to air cooler you get breeze. When you sit closer to a rose you get its fragrance. Similarly

## Nine Point Code of Conduct : PRAYER

when you sit closer to God or at least think of God or develop habit of communicating with God daily, you will indeed get some of His divine grace. Yes, you might still have to go through your Karmas, but God can give you enough strength and wisdom to handle that so that you might not feel the pain of it. You will take good and bad in the same manner, as a passing cloud. You will become a positive thinker.

Swami says, *“Prayer is the very breath of religion, for it brings man and God together and with every sigh, nearer and nearer.”* Swami elaborated, *“The Lord is every ready to answer the prayers of the devotees. But what passes for ‘devotion’ nowadays is only ‘deep ocean’ (submergence in the ocean of worldly life). People talk about the ‘Divine’ but are interested only in ‘deep wine’. They talk of ‘compassion’ but are concerned only with ‘fashion.’ They mouth the word ‘Co-operation,’ but indulge only in ‘operation.’ Devotion has been reduced to a pompous show. True knowledge can come only when one is confronted with an extreme moral crisis. It is at times of such crisis that one thinks of God and seeks Divine help.”*

### 11 Of what avail is Prayer?

Will the Lord gratify all that we ask for, in our prayers? He can give us only what, according to Him, we need, or what we deserve. Is it not? Will the Lord like to give us all that we ask for, in our prayers to Him? Under such circumstances, what is the use of prayer?

Swami says, *“If the Bhaktha has dedicated all his body, mind and existence, to the Lord, He will Himself look after everything, for He will always be with him. Under such conditions, there is no need for prayer. But, have you so dedicated yourself and surrendered everything to the Lord? No. When losses occur, or calamities come, or plans go away, the Bhaktha blames the Lord. Some, on the other hand, pray to Him to save them. Avoiding both these, as well as the reliance on others, if complete faith is placed on the Lord at all times, why should He deny you His grace? Why should He desist from helping you? Men do not rely fully and unswervingly on the Lord; therefore, though you have to be the agent and the instrument doing everything, keep on praying with devotion and faith. Faith is the product of Santhi, not of haste and hurry. For the acquisition of the Grace of the Lord and the resulting Awareness of the Reality the quality of Santhi is the prime need.”*

### 12 What are the Rules of the Prayer?

The first rule of the prayer is to approach God only with legitimate desires. The second rule is to pray for their fulfilment, not as a beggar, but as a son: “I am Thy child. Thou art my father, Thou and I are one”. When you pray deeply and continuously you will feel a great joy welling up in your heart. Don’t be satisfied until that joy manifests, for when you feel that all satisfying joy in your heart, you will know that God has tuned in your prayer broadcast. Then pray to your Father: - “Lord, this is my need. I am willing to work for it, please guide me and help me to have the

## Nine Point Code of Conduct : PRAYER

right thoughts and to do the right things to bring about peace and harmony, joy and happiness to all.”

Be practical and earnest about prayer. Concentrate deeply on what you are praying. Before you seek a job, or sign a contract, or before you do anything important think of that Power. Think of it continuously.

Swami says, *“To beg from an equal puts you down and him up. But when you ask God, you rise up to His level. You must ask God. To ask God is perfectly all right. It is not begging. It is your duty to ask God. Words must be said, and the words must correspond to the thought. The thought must be put into a true word. It is true enough that the Divinity knows all. But He requires that the true word be said. The mother may know that to maintain life the child requires food. But milk is given when the child asks for it. When there is a real need, God should be asked to provide. God is not bothered by a multitude of small requests and He will certainly give. Therefore, one should always ask God to meet needs. It is the individual’s right to ask. There is no question of begging.”*

### 13 Does any prayer reach God directly?

Swami pointed out, *“Three types of activity reach God and earn His Grace.*

- 1 Activity not prompted by personal desire,
- 2 Activity emanating from unselfish Love and
- 3 Prayer arising from pure hearts

*These are the items to which the Lord pays heed; they reach God direct. Therefore, prayers have to be unselfish, saturated with Love, and free from the taint of “attachment to the gift that the prayer would bring”.*

### 14 Shall we pray by singing Bhajans or chanting Mantras?

Swami says, *“The Lord can be prayed to by means of Kirthana, Japa, dhyana or Bhajan. In every one of these, the chief item is the Divine Name. That is why Krishna spoke in the Gita of Japayajna. When Japa is done, it is better to recite aloud, and make it a Bhajan. This will inspire the gathering. If Bhajan is sung in a sweet voice, people will be drawn towards the Lord. Gradually, it will develop into the love for God, and his Grace will follow in due course. One should patiently wait for that Grace.”*

### 15 What if we do not know the meaning of the Mantras while praying?

A student asked our Lord – “Swami! We do not find today any loving feelings that produce such prayers anywhere among men. People repeat these Vedic prayers, as gramophone records do, without any knowledge of their meanings, out of sheer habit. Do they get the Wisdom that is the most precious treasure of God?

Swami replied, *“My dear fellow! You yourself said now that they recite the Veda as gramophone records do, didn’t you? So, they gain as much wisdom and Aiswarya*

## Nine Point Code of Conduct : PRAYER

*(treasure) as those records get. How can they acquire the treasure of full potency? Planting a branch that has been severed, can one claim that it is a tree growing there? Those who recite the Vedas with the awareness of their meaning, experiencing at the same time the feelings embedded in the hymns, they alone can earn the Grace of Brahman, the Brahma Vidya, the Highest Wisdom, the Supreme Treasure.”*

### 16 Can prayer bring the World Peace?

*Swami says, “Everywhere now, one can hear the cry, “World Peace”, “World Peace”, but the number of persons who can tell how it can be attained is very small! There is no one who can even picture correctly what exactly is meant by Shanthi or Peace. For, if one has acquired true Shanthi and experienced it, the turmoils and confusions of the world will not be cognised at all. You cannot be aware of its absence if you have it.”*

*Swami explained - Shanthi means, “the giving up of the activities of the senses”. How can such Shanthi be spread and ‘promoted’, by any one who has gained it? It can be experienced, but, it is incapable of being exchanged from person to person. The best that can be done is to show the way to others, to inform others of its sweetness. How can another’s hunger be appeased by your eating your food? The diner alone derives satisfaction from the dinner. Shanthi too is of such a nature. Each has to earn and experience it for himself, so that all may have it. Love and fortitude are enough to confer Shanthi. But, you should not concentrate on mere outward show; let these virtues saturate your thought, word and deed; that is the way to establish world peace also.*

*Certain others declare that Prayer can bring about world peace and they ask people to pray. Of course, it is good to pray; but Shanthi can never be gained by that lone. Prayer must be united with practice. You should not pray for one thing and practice another. Such prayer is only a means of deception. The words you utter, the deeds you do, the Prayers you make must all be directed along the same path. While repeating prayers for World Peace or Loka Shanthi, if you cannot patiently put up with others, if you slander others and look down upon them, you yourself will have no Shanthi; you will have turmoil, instead! And, with the turmoil, all the attendant sorrow and pain!*

*Through world peace, individual peace too can be cultivated. When food is taken by the hand to the mouth, chewed and swallowed, the essence spreads to every part of*

*the body, similarly, if the hands are engaged in acts promoting peace, and the tongue engaged in prayers for peace, by these two means, the essence of Shanthi will spread into all parts of the World, which is but the body of the Lord. The Shanthi with in each devotee is the basis for genuine Shanthi in the World.*

*Lokasanthi is the life-breath of all beings; so, strive ever for that. The Lord can be won only when the sacred motherland is immersed in Shanthi. When Prakriti (mother nature) merges in Paramatma, (universal soul) it is called Moksha. So, seekers of Moksha must yearn for the Shanthi and Prema of Prakrithi as much as they yearn for the Prema and Grace of Paramatma. Without the Grace of both Prakriti and Paramatma, the strong and subtle evil of the senses cannot be conquered. That is, the*

## Nine Point Code of Conduct : PRAYER

*destruction of the mind, the stilling of the agitations of the mind cannot be done. Therefore, everyone has to achieve Shanthi, as his chief duty."*

*To enjoy Shanthi, mankind must be controlled and directed by ideals of Dharma; this depends on mutual tolerance in the family; that again is based on individual conduct which is Sathwic: and aims at pleasing every one. Such conduct has a charm, all its own. Avoid in your behaviour, your actions, and your speech all trace of the desire to pain others, to insult others, or to cause loss or misery to others. Find out the best means of reforming yourself thus, practice this type of living, desist from injury to yourself and your own good, and walk always in the path of Truth. That is verily the path of Beauty that is conduct that is really charming.*

*For this, large heartedness is essential. One can acquire it only if he has*

- *Inborn impulse or Samskara and*
- *Bhakthi (devotion) in every act*

*Through Bhakthi or devotion to the Lord one gets humility, fear of sin, and faith in scripture. Through these qualities, littleness of mind is wiped out and man becomes large-hearted. Therefore, O ye Seekers! First direct your efforts towards acquiring Faith in God and Fear of Sin. These two will promote Meekness; and, remember Meekness is Shanthi.*

*Through world peace, individual peace too can be cultivated. When food is taken by the hand to the mouth, chewed and swallowed, the essence spreads to every part of the body, so also, if the hands are engaged in acts promoting peace, and the tongue engaged in prayers for peace, by these two means, the essence of Shanthi will spread into all parts of the World, which is but the body of the Lord. The Shanthi of the World is the basis for genuine Shanthi."*

**Aum Sai Ram - Peace be with you**