



Albrecht Durer – *The Praying Hands*

The Practice of Prayer

Prayers of Other Faiths

All faiths and religions have some form of prayer which allows their adherents to in some way be in contact with a deity, spirits, nature, the elements, or the cosmos. On the following pages are examples of prayers offered by Native Americans, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Jews. As you read these prayers, contemplate the following questions.

- Are there similarities in these prayers?
- Are there differences?
- Were there things in any of these prayers that you weren't expecting?
- Which prayer appeals to you more than others?

Native American Prayers

Traditional worship practices are a part of Native American tribal gatherings with dance, rhythm, songs and trance. Sacred narratives and beliefs are deeply based in Nature and are rich with the symbolism of seasons, weather, plants, animals, earth, water, sky and fire. The principle of an all embracing, universal and omniscient Great Spirit, a connection to the Earth, diverse creation narratives and collective memories of ancient ancestors are common among tribes.¹

Great Spirit Prayers m – Sioux Chief, Yellow Hawk

Oh Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world – hear me – I come before you, one of your children. I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom. Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset. Make my hands respect the things you have made, my ears sharp to hear your voice. Make me wise, so that I may know the things you have taught my People, the lesson you have hidden in every leaf and rock. I seek strength not to be superior to my brothers, but to be able to fight my greatest enemy, myself. Make me ever ready to come to you, with clean hands and straight eyes, so when life fades as a fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame.

Translated by Lakota Sioux Chief Yellow Lark in 1887

Oh, Great Spirit,
Whose voice I hear in the winds
and whose breath gives life to all the world.
Hear me! I need your strength and wisdom.
Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes
ever hold the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have made
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.
Make me wise so that I may understand
the things you have taught my people.
Let me learn the lessons you have hidden
in every leaf and rock.

Help me remain calm and strong in the
face of all that comes towards me.
Help me find compassion without
empathy overwhelming me.
I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother,
but to fight my greatest enemy: myself.
Make me always ready to come to you
with clean hands and straight eyes.
So when life fades, as the fading sunset,
my spirit may come to you without shame.

Mohawk Prayer

Oh Great Spirit, Creator of all things;
Human Beings, trees, grass, berries.
Help us, be kind to us.
Let us be happy on earth.
Let us lead our children
To a good life and old age.
These our people; give them good minds
To love one another.
Oh Great Spirit,
Be kind to us
Give these people the favor
To see green trees,
Green grass, flowers, and berries
This next spring;
So we all meet again
Oh Great Spirit,
We ask of you.

Hindu Prayers

Hinduism is an ancient religion with no founder or known date of origin. The term "Hinduism" simply derives from the word "India" and refers to a wide variety of religious traditions and philosophies that have developed in India over thousands of years. Most Hindus worship one or more deities, believe in reincarnation, value the practice of meditation, and observe festive holidays like Diwali and Holi.¹

Hindu Upanishads

Lead me from death to life,
from falsehood to truth.

Lead me from despair to hope,
from fear to trust.

Lead me from hate to love,
from war to peace.

Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

Peace, peace, peace.

- Adapted from the Hindu Upanishads by Satish Kumar

Prayer for the Unity of All Life

May the winds, the oceans, the herbs, and night and days, the mother earth,
the father heaven, all vegetation, the sun, be all sweet to us.

Let us follow the path of goodness for all times,
like the sun and the moon moving eternally in the sky.

Let us be charitable to one another.

Let us not kill or be violent with one another.

Let us know and appreciate the points of view of others. And let us unite.

Hindu Morning Prayer

May all in this world be happy,
may they be healthy,
may they be comfortable
and never miserable.

May the rain come down in the proper time,
may the earth yield plenty of corn,
may the country be free from war,
may the Brahmans be secure.

Buddhist Prayers

Founded in India 2,500 years ago, Buddhism remains the dominant religion of the Far East and is increasingly popular in the West. Over its long history Buddhism has developed into a wide variety of forms, ranging from an emphasis on religious rituals and worship of deities to a complete rejection of both rituals and deities in favor of pure meditation. But all share in common a great respect for the teachings of the Buddha, "The Enlightened One".¹

Bodhisattva Prayer for Humanity - Shantideva, Indian Buddhist sage 700

A.D. Prayer performed each morning by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

May I be a guard for those who need protection
A guide for those on the path
A boat, a raft, a bridge for those who wish to cross the flood
May I be a lamp in the darkness
A resting place for the weary
A healing medicine for all who are sick
A vase of plenty, a tree of miracles
And for the boundless multitudes of living beings
May I bring sustenance and awakening
Enduring like the earth and sky
Until all beings are freed from sorrow
And all are awakened.

Well, Happy, and Peaceful - Buddhist Prayer

May I be well, happy, and peaceful.
May my teachers be well, happy, and peaceful.
May my parents be well, happy, and peaceful.
May my relatives be well, happy, and peaceful.
May my friends be well, happy, and peaceful.
May the indifferent persons be well, happy, and peaceful.
May the unfriendly persons be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all meditators be well, happy, and peaceful.
May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful.

Islamic Prayers

Islam is a monotheistic religion based on revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century, which were later recorded in the Qur'an (Koran), Islam's sacred text. The faith spread rapidly and today Islam is the second largest religion in the world. The Arabic word *Islam* means "submission," reflecting the religion's central tenet of submitting to the will of God. Islamic practices are defined by the Five Pillars of Islam: faith, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and alms.¹

Sufi Prayer for Peace

Send Thy peace, O Lord, which is perfect and everlasting,
that our souls may radiate peace.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that we may think, act,
and speak harmoniously.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that we may be contented
and thankful for Thy bountiful gifts.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that amidst our worldly strife
we may enjoy thy bliss.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that we may endure all,
tolerate all in the thought of thy grace and mercy.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that our lives may become a
divine vision, and in Thy light all darkness may vanish.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, our Father and Mother, that we
Thy children on earth may all unite in one family.

God is the Light - The Qur'an (24:35)- al 'nuur - the light

God is the light
of the heavens and the earth.
The smile of God's light
is like a niche in which is a lamp,
the lamp in a globe of glass,
the globe of glass as if it were a shining star,
lit from a blessed olive tree
neither of the East nor of the West,
its light nearly luminous
even if fire did not touch it.
Light upon light!

Jewish Prayers

Judaism is one of the oldest religions still existing today. It began as the religion of the small nation of the Hebrews, and through thousands of years of suffering, persecution, dispersion, and occasional victory, has continued to be a profoundly influential religion and culture. Today, 14 million people identify themselves as Jewish. Modern Judaism is a complex phenomenon that incorporates both a nation and a religion, and often combines strict adherence to ritual laws with a more liberal attitude towards religious belief.¹

Blessed art Thou – Hebrew prayer, North America

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the world who makes the fruit of the tree.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the world whose word makes all things on earth.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the world who brings food out of the earth.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the world who gives clothes to cover our bodies.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the world who makes sweet smelling wood and plants.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the world who has kept us alive until now so we may find joy in what has just come to us.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the world who has created the wonderful things of earth and heaven.

Hasidic Prayer for Peace – Rabbi Nachman ben Feiga of Breslov, 1773-1810

Lord of Peace, Divine Ruler, to whom peace belongs.
Master of Peace, Creator of all things.
May it be thy will to put an end to war and bloodshed on earth, and to spread a great and wonderful peace over the whole world, so that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.
Help us and save us all, and let us cling tightly to the virtue of peace. Let there be a truly great peace between every person and their fellow, and between husband and wife, and let there be no discord between people even in their hearts.
Let us never shame any person on earth, great or small. May it be granted unto us to fulfill Thy Commandment to 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' with all our hearts and souls and bodies and possessions.
God who is peace, bless us with peace.