

# The Lectures of Rudolf Steiner

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## The Lord's Prayer

GA 96

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Introduction

Lecture: The Lord's Prayer

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### Introduction

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*Our Father Who art in Heaven*

*Hallowed be thy name*

*Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*

*Give us this day our daily bread*

*And forgive our transgressions, as we forgive those who transgress against us*

*And lead us while in temptation*

*And deliver us from evil*

*May your power and glory work in us through all periods and ages of time.*

*Amen.*

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Source for the following: [https://anthroposophy.eu/Lord%27s\\_Prayer](https://anthroposophy.eu/Lord%27s_Prayer)

### Key Points

- the Lord's Prayer is not just a mantra, rather it is a 'thought mantra' that does not lose its power even when translated into a thousand languages (1907-02-17-GA097)
- Everyone who prays the Lord's Prayer is affected by it, one does not need knowledge at all, however one who does will receive "an entirely different fruit" from it (1907-02-17-GA097)
- In the Atlantean Mysteries (the past), the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer were given to disciples in the form of a scale of seven tones, together with seven specific colors and fragrances, to experience the sevenfold essence of the human being (1907-02-17-GA097)
- In future times to come, the highness of the Lord's prayer will cause people not to allow themselves to pray it fully in one day. Man will have such a huge imagination of the working together of the seven petitions, that one will not deem oneself worthy to unfold this prayer in one's heart every day (1912-06-12-GA244 - Q&A 232.3)

## Ref: 1904-10-20-GA053

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*Prayer has been present throughout evolution. For the early Christians, it signified something more than simply a means of uniting human beings with their God. It is precisely the mood that Tolstoy depicted as the mood of the human soul, feeling himself quite imbued with it, that should be invoked by Christians through prayer. The loftier the things a person prays for, the better it is. Praying for outer things is foreign to the sense of original Christianity: "Father, not my will but your will be done."*

*What is the Father's will in the original Christian sense? It is the will that represents the primal law governing all of cosmic evolution. I want all my successes and wishes to be so perfect that they correspond to the sense of the Father's will, that is, to the spiritual law of the cosmos; I want them not to deviate from this great spiritual law. If I aspire to some arbitrary request when I pray, to something that springs from my everyday nature, from personal preference, I am not praying in the sense of "not my will, but your will be done."*

*We pray in this sense, however, when our intent is not to pull down to us what we are praying for or to have our own will prevail, but when we and our will are lifted up, striving to become divine, for our soul's resurrection in the divine, in the Christ element.*

*Since the intent of spiritual science is to understand all religious creeds, it can agree with that. People can come into conflict with spiritual science only by not understanding their own religion. Anyone familiar with the methods of Christianity, and prayer is one of its methods, since it is a means of uniting with the divine universal soul, knows that there is no contradiction between prayer and spiritual science.*

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## Ref: 1906-09-02-GA095

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*The primal Christian prayer is:*

*"Lord, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but your will be done."*

*One should not pray in an egoistic way. Prayer should be a lifting of oneself into the spiritual world, a source of force and strength.*

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## Ref:1907-02-17-GA097

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*We find the basic spiritual scientific concepts in all religious formulas and confessions, just as we do in the Lord's Prayer.*

*...*

*during the Atlantean age, astral bodies were always the same, and one could bring to all people one primal wisdom.*

*After the great flood had passed over Atlantean humanity, a unified wisdom was no longer possible. One had to teach in India according to what the Indian body required, differently in Persia, differently in Egypt, differently with the Greeks and Romans, and differently again with the ancient Germanic races. Nevertheless, within all true forms of religion, the common element from which each had arisen continued to live. In Atlantis enlightenment meant imparting life, not teaching. The sign of the spiral awakened an immediate feeling sensation. Today feelings must first be awakened by thoughts.*

***The seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer were also once given in the form of a scale of seven tones, together with seven specific colors and fragrances. In this way, disciples in Atlantis experienced the sevenfold essence of the human being.***

***Christ, the greatest of the religious teachers, poured this into the Lord's Prayer. Everyone who prays the Lord's Prayer is affected by it. It is not really a mantra, though it may have mantric powers. It is a "thought mantra."***

***Of course, its greatest power was in the original human language, but because it is precisely a thought mantra, it will not lose its power even when translated into a thousand languages.***

*We can digest food without knowing the laws of digestion; similarly, we have the fruit of the Lord's Prayer without knowledge. One who has the higher knowledge, however, will receive an entirely different fruit from it.*

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## Lecture: The Lord's Prayer

28 January 1907, Berlin

Today I should like to indicate the extent to which religious systems reveal, in specific instances, their hidden spiritual-scientific foundations.

It is a small but important aspect of the occult scientific basis of religions that I wish to discuss. Even the simplest people in contemporary society recognize this hidden background of religions as a spiritual fact involving the deepest truths. Seeking these truths brings to light how wisdom-filled and fraught with mystery are the ties binding together the spiritual life of mankind.

Think of Christian prayer. You all know what it is. It has often been spoken of, and Anthroposophists have often reflected upon its relation to the spiritual-scientific world view. This spiritual-scientific world conception has brought to members of the Anthroposophic movement another method of elevating the human being — the human soul — to contact with the divine, spiritual, cosmic forces. This method is meditation, by which a person experiences the spiritual content within himself, and receives something of what is given by the great guiding spirits of humanity or by the spiritual content of great civilizations in which the human being immerses himself and so identifies himself with the divine spiritual currents in the world.

Meditating in even the simplest way upon one of the formulas pronounced by the spiritual leaders of mankind, admitting to the mind a formula that embodies a great thought — not every thought is suitable, as you know, but only one handed down for this purpose by the guiding spirits of humanity — and letting such a formula really live in the heart and experience, brings a person to union with the higher spirituality. A higher power, in which he lives, streams through him, and patient perseverance to the point of letting this flow of power strengthen him enough morally and intellectually, brings him to the moment when the content of his meditation can awaken the deeper forces latent in the human soul. This kind of meditation may reach any of a number of stages, from the smallest gain in moral strength to the highest attainments of clairvoyance. But time, patience and energy are needed to bring most people to the higher degrees of clairvoyance by this means.

Meditation is usually thought of as an oriental approach to the divine. In the Occident, especially in Christian communities, prayer has taken its place. It is by prayer that the Christian customarily approaches the Divine, and through it he seeks entry to the higher worlds.

It should be noted by the way that what passes for prayer today would by no means have been considered such in early Christian times, least of all by the Founder of Christianity, Christ Jesus Himself. For if it were to happen that someone were really to gain the gratification of his personal wishes by prayer or entreaty, he would soon entirely disregard the all-embracing effect that the granting of the prayer should bring. He would assume that the Deity granted *his* wishes rather than those of others. One peasant might pray for sunshine for a particular crop; another for rain for another crop. What would Divine Providence then do?

Or suppose two opposing armies are facing each other, with each side praying for victory and supposing its cause alone to be just. Such an instance makes immediately obvious how little universality and sense of brotherhood attach to prayers arising out of personal wishes, and the granting of such prayers by God can satisfy only one group of supplicants. People so praying disregard the prayer in which Christ Jesus set forth the fundamental attitude of mind that should prevail in all prayer: "Father, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." This is the Christian attitude of prayer.

Whatever the object of the prayer, this fundamental temper of mind must echo readily as an undertone in the soul of the petitioner for his prayer to be given in a Christian manner. When this is the character of his plea, the form of his prayer will be but a means of rising to higher spiritual realms to experience the Divinity within the soul. It will be such, moreover, as to expel every selfish wish and will-impulse. Its spirit will be that of the words, "Not my will, but thine, be done." The result will be a rising to the divine world and absorption in it. Attainment of this soul mood in Christian prayer renders it similar to meditation, though more colored by feeling. Originally, Christian prayer was not essentially different from meditation. Meditation is more imbued with thought, however. Through it, the thoughts of the great leaders of mankind draw the meditator onward toward harmony with the divine currents streaming through the world. Through feeling, prayer accomplishes the same result.

The goal of both prayer and meditation is thus clearly the soul's union with the divine currents in the world. This union, on the highest plane, is the so-called *unio mystica*, or mystical union, with the Godhead.

Never could the human being attain to this union with God, never could he gain a relationship with higher spiritual beings, were he himself not an emanation of the divine-spiritual. Man's nature is twofold, as we know. In him are the four oft-mentioned human principles — physical body, etheric or

life-body, astral body and ego. Then, within the ego, he has the possibility of unfolding for the future the three higher principles — manas, buddhi and atma, known in our western languages as spirit self, life spirit and spirit man.

To understand rightly this twofold human nature, let us consider the period of man's origin. From previous lectures, you will remember that man now represents the blending of these two natures — the blending of the three higher potentials (spirit self, life spirit and spirit man) with the four existing lower principles (physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego) developed in a far-distant past, which we term the Lemurian epoch of the earth. Tracing man backward from the present epoch through the Greco-Latin, Egypto-Chaldean, Persian and Indian periods of mankind to the great Atlantean flood recorded in the deluge-myths of all nations, we reach those ancestors of ours who lived on the land-mass we call Atlantis, between present-day Europe and America. Still further back, we come to a primeval land-mass, which we call Lemuria, lying between Australia and India. It was in the middle of that Lemurian period that the higher triad of spirit self, life spirit and spirit man united with the four lower human principles — physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego.

Correctly speaking, at that period in the Lemurian epoch, the highest being on earth was not yet a physical human being in our sense of the word. Only a kind of envelope existed, made up of the highest animal nature — a being, or collection of beings, made up of the four lower principles of human nature. But until then the higher human being, which is the internal part of human nature, destined to evolve further and further in the future through the three principles of spirit self, life spirit and spirit man, rested in the bosom of the Godhead.

To picture the scene at that time by a trivial modern comparison, it was as though all the people living on earth had been building bodies capable of receiving a human soul as a sponge absorbs water. Picture a vessel of water. It is impossible to tell where one drop of water ends and another begins. But picture also a number of little sponges immersed in the water, each soaking up a part of it. What had been a uniform mass of water is now distributed among the many little sponges. So it was with human souls in that remote age. Previously, they had been at rest, without individuality, in the bosom of the Divine First Cause, but at that particular moment they were absorbed by human bodies and so individualized, like the water by the sponges.

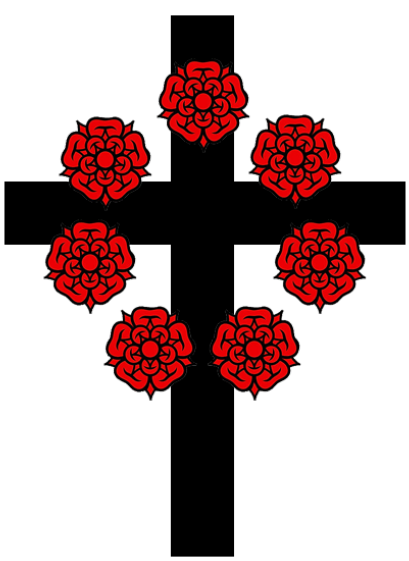
What was then absorbed by the separate bodies, or four lower principles, continued to evolve further, and will so continue into the future. In spiritual science it has always been called the higher triad, and the triangle and the square were made symbols, especially in the Pythagorean school, of the human being as he came into existence at the middle of the Lemurian epoch. The diagram on the next page thus represents the constituent elements of the human being,

But the higher, eternal portion, which passes through all incarnations, has a double character, as you can see, From one side it may be regarded as the primordial, eternal element of humanity and, from the other, as a drop of the Divine Essence given up by the Godhead and poured into the fourfold human vessel. As a result, a drop of the independently individualized Divinity is to be found in each of us human beings.

The three higher members of the human being — the eternal portion — may thus be looked upon as the three highest principles in man, but equally as three principles in the Godhead Itself. Actually, the three highest principles of human nature are at the same time the three lowest principles of the Divinity nearest to man. An enumeration of man's principles must start with the physical body, continue with the etheric body, astral body and ego, thence from spirit self to spirit man. But a corresponding enumeration of the principles of those Divine Beings who gave a drop of their own

soul nature to man at the time of which we are speaking in the far-off past, must begin with spirit self, continue with life spirit and spirit man, and thence proceed to principles above spirit man, of which contemporary man can only conceive when he is a pupil of Initiates.

Our Father which are in Heaven



Rose Cross: Compare the position of the roses to the above infographic

You see that the three principles of higher human nature may be looked upon as three divine principles, and today we shall so regard them, not as human, but as divine principles, describing them accordingly. The highest principle in us, which we shall only develop at the end of our earth incarnations, or, we may say, at the end of our present planetary course, is called spirit man in terms of spiritual or occult science. The original essence of this human principle is faintly comparable to the will element in present-day human nature. This comparison is not exact, but only a faint indication.



Yet the fundamental character of this highest of the divine principles in us is of the nature of will — a kind of willing. This will element in us, today only feebly developed in our inner being, will become in the course of our ever ascending development the predominating principle in us.

Man is today essentially a consciousness, or understanding being, whereas in many ways his will is limited. He understands the surrounding world as a totality — that is, to a certain degree — but has no real control over all that he penetrates with his knowledge. This control by his will is a development of the future, and it will become ever stronger until he attains that central goal of existence known to spiritual science as "the great sacrifice," signifying the power of will to sacrifice oneself completely, not merely in dribblets of human sacrifice of the kind of which man is capable today with his puny present feelings and will power. In future time he will have developed the strength to sacrifice his whole being by letting it flow directly into material substance.

One may picture this "great sacrifice," the highest expression of will in divine nature, by imagining oneself before a mirror in which one's image is reflected. This image is, of course, an illusion, a semblance. Now carry over this image to the point of imagining yourself dying, sacrificing your existence, your feeling and thought, your very being, to inject life into that image. Spiritual science in all ages has called this phenomenon the "outpouring," "the emanation." If you could really make this sacrifice, it would be clear that you would no longer be here because you would have given up your whole being to this reflected image to imbue it with life and consciousness.

When the will has become capable of making the "great sacrifice," it actually creates a universe, great or small, whose mission is bestowed upon it by its creator. Such is the creative will in the Divine Being.

The second principle in the Godhead, life spirit, insofar as it has flowed into humanity, has already been indicated in the comparison that has been made with the mirror. This second principle is the reflected image itself.

Now imagine the inner being of a Divinity that has in this way created a universe, with itself as the center. If, for example, you imagine yourself as the central point in this room, surrounded not by these six surfaces of walls, ceiling and floor, but by a hollow globe that reflects its content, you will see yourself, as the central point, reflected on all sides, everywhere. In like manner you can picture a Divinity as a central will, reflected on all sides, and the mirror is both image of Divinity and the universe. For what is a universe? Nothing but a mirror of the essential nature of Divinity.

The universe lives and moves because the Divinity is poured into it — the "outpouring" — when Divinity makes the "great sacrifice" and is reflected in the universe. The pouring of life and being into a reflected image is an exact picture of this divine creative process.

The divine will expresses itself in infinite diversity, animating thereby the entire universe. In spiritual science, this process of Divinity repeating itself in infinite differentiation, in multiplicity, is known as "the kingdom," distinguished from the will itself. The will is the central point; its reflection, the kingdom. The will is in this sense comparable with spirit man; the kingdom, or will's reflected image, with life spirit.

The kingdom, in turn, reproduces the being of the Divine in infinite variety. Observe it fully, at least to the extent to which it is our kingdom, our multiplicity, or universe. Observe its visible manifestations in minerals, plants, animals and human beings. The kingdom is manifested in each separate being of all these, a fact that even our language expresses in the terms "mineral kingdom," "vegetable kingdom," "animal kingdom" and all the great divisions of our universe. The kingdom is all

these; each of these in turn, is a kingdom, and if we observe the mass of details involved, we find the nature of all to be divine. In all of them the divine being is reflected, just as the central being is reflected in a hollow globe.

So an observer, looking at the world in the sense of spiritual research, sees God reflected in every human being as an expression and image of the Divine. In a graded series of beings, in infinite diversity, the Godhead appears in the kingdom, and the separate entities are distinguished from one another in the sense of spiritual science by their *names*. An observer at a stage of existence sufficiently lofty to look upon all these separate entities as "emanations," or "outpourings," of the Divine is able to give these entities their *names*, to give each manifestation of the Divine its *name*.

Of all beings in the universe, only man thinks the *name* of each of the separate members of the great multiplicity of the kingdom, distinguishing each from all the others. The will, as we have noted is comparable with spirit man; the kingdom, or reflected image into which the will has been "outpoured," is comparable with life spirit. The third of the three highest human principles that emanate from the Divine, by which the separate members of the great multiplicity of the kingdom are distinguished from one another and separately named, is comparable with spirit self. The occult science of the different religions has thus simply taught what it was that emanated from the Godhead and flowed into a person to become his eternal image or archetype.

Thus, if you could see yourselves in that condition to which you should finally rise — the condition of spirit man — you would recognize its *will*-like nature.

If you would rise in thought to a comprehension of the vehicle of will (spirit man) — in other words, to life spirit — you would see that it is the *kingdom* that represents it in the divine sphere.

If you would rise to penetrate what the names, or conceptions or ideas of things really signify in spirit, you would see that it is the *name* that represents this wisdom in the divine sphere.

So does ancient teaching reveal that the emanation of Divinity, which has flowed into human nature to form its eternal part, consists of *name*, of *kingdom*, of *will*. Thus what is called the higher triad in man is recognizable as part of the Divine.

To complete this picture, think of the four lower principles of perishable human nature. The three higher principles may be thought of, we know, as principles of the Godhead. Similarly, the four lower principles may be considered as of the perishable world, as human principles.

**Think of the physical body, composed as it is of the same substances and Forces as is the seemingly lifeless world around it. The physical body could not go on existing without the inflow into it of matter and force from the surrounding world. The physical body, in a strict sense, is a continual thoroughfare for all that is in it. Into it and out of it again the substances continuously flow that are at one time of the outer world and at another time within us. In the course of seven years, as we have mentioned in other connections, the entire material composition of the human body is renewed. In none of you are the substances that were in you ten years ago. We are perpetually renewing the substances of our physical body. What was formerly in us is now somewhere else, distributed outside us in nature; something else has replaced it inside of us. The body's life depends upon this continual inflow and outflow of matter.**

Just as we have considered the three higher human principles as parts of Divinity, we may observe the four principles of our lower nature as parts of Divine Nature.



The physical body may be seen as part of the physical substance of our planet. Its substance is taken from the material planet, then is returned to it. The etheric body likewise may be considered a part of the environment surrounding us here, and so also the astral body.

**Think of the etheric body and the astral body together. The astral body, as you know, is the vehicle of all that lives in man as impulse, desire and passion, all that surges up and down in the soul as joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain. The etheric body, on the contrary, is the vehicle that represents and bears within it the more lasting qualities of soul.**

Often I have compared the development of the etheric body and astral body with the hour-hand and the minute-hand of a clock. A great difference is observable between what you knew and experienced as an eight-year-old child and what you now know and have experienced, as I have also reminded you on other occasions. You have learned so much, gained so many concepts, in the intervening period. Much that your soul has taken in of joy and sorrow has left it again, actually has passed through it. How different are these relatively ephemeral experiences from such human elements as temperament, character and tendencies that are persisting and continuing. You will find, for instance, that if you were passionately inclined as a child, you are probably still so in later years. Most people keep throughout their lives such basic elements in their natures. It is to overcome this relatively stationary quality of the etheric organism that spiritual training and development are instituted; for, as has often been emphasized, such training is no matter of mere theoretical knowledge. The student has accomplished a great deal, indeed, if he has changed one quality of temperament to which he is predisposed, so speeding up the hour-hand of the clock even a little.

**Whatever evolves slowly in this way — a human being's lasting tendencies, enduring qualities of temperament, habits that persist — is rooted in the etheric body; whatever changes quickly by contrast, minute- hand-wise, has its roots in the astral body.**

Applying these facts practically to the human being in his environment, to life in the external world, the observer notices a person's connections with the epoch in which he lives, with a nation, with a family, all of which are revealed in his habits, temperament and enduring inclinations. These relatively fixed and abiding qualities tend to be observable, not only in the person himself, but in all with whom he is in any way connected — his family, his nation, etc. A nation's separate individuals are recognizable through their common habits and temperament. An individual who is to achieve a higher spiritual development, to unfold his higher nature, must change his disposition and basic habits. Such **a man is called "homeless" in the terminology of spiritual science, because he is obliged to change his etheric body, through which he has been, except for this higher development, connected with his nation.**

Life in one's native community reveals, too, that the qualities linking one to a family or nation, stirring one to feel relationships with individual people of the nation, are similar also to qualities widely discernible in one's era. If an ancient Greek should walk into your life, you would have little in common with him. His etheric body would be so unlike yours. Human beings understand one another through common qualities in their etheric bodies.

In the astral body, however, is rooted a man's ability to lift himself more readily out of certain qualities binding him to a common life with others, and to establish himself as a separate individual in his family, in his folk, so that he is not a mere Frenchman nor a mere German nor a member of a family, but stands out as a special individuality within the folk, the family, etc. Thus he can outgrow

the totality of characteristics of his nation. Those qualities that he transcends are rooted in the astral body. The astral body is their bearer. **The astral body is thus seen to bear more of what is individual and personal in man.**

So it is that faults committed through the etheric body render a man more a sinner toward his fellow men through neglect of those obligations and conditions making social life possible among them, between one man and the next. On the other hand, faults of a more individual nature, a man's wrong-doings as a separate personality, result from qualities in the astral body.

Spiritual science has always termed as "guilt" (German, "*Schuld*") those **sins that are against the community, and that originate in a faulty etheric body.** The more common English word "debts" ("*Schulden*") has in German an origin similar to the word "guilt," with its more moral connotation in English, signifying what one man owes another in a moral sense. **Debt, or guilt, derives from defective qualities in the etheric body, whereas a defective element in the astral body leads to what spiritual science associates with the word "temptation." The man yielding to temptation takes upon himself a personal fault, or failure.**

The ego, or true personality, too, can commit faults. The Paradise story indicates the kind of fault through which an ego may fall. The human being's higher soul became an ego when it descended from the bosom of the Godhead and entered an earthly body for the first time. It was taken up by the earthly body like a drop of water by a sponge.

The higher soul, or individuality, can commit faults within the ego. These ego-failures, which are different from those stemming from faulty qualities of the etheric and astral bodies, occur through the very fact of a man's attaining independence. To rise gradually, in full consciousness, to freedom and independence, man had to pass through selfishness and egotism. As a soul, he is descended from the Godhead, which is incapable of egotism. A member of an organism never imagines itself independent; if a finger were to imagine itself independent, it would fall away from the rest of the hand and wither.

The self-dependence that is so necessary to human development, and that will attain its full meaning when its fundamental nature is unselfishness, could originate only from selfishness.

It was when this selfishness entered the human body that man became a self-seeking, egotistic being. The ego naturally follows the body's inclinations. Man devours his fellow man, follows selfish impulses and desires, is completely entangled in his earthly receptacle as the drop of water in the sponge.

The Paradise story shows the individual placed in a position to sin just by having become an individual, a really independent being. Whereas formerly he drew in what he needed from the universe, as a single drop in a mass of water derives its force from the mass, his impulses as a fully independent individuality derive wholly from himself. The eating of the apple in Paradise signifies this kind of error stemming from independence. It is significant, too, that the Latin *malum* means both "evil" and "apple." All real meanings of words, of course, provided they have any spiritual scientific background, are deeply connected in an inner sense. Spiritual science never uses the word "evil" for any transgression that does not stem from the ego.

**Evil is thus the fault proceeding from the ego. Trespass, or guilt, is the fault proceeding from the etheric body of a man in social relationships with his fellow men. Temptation may assail the astral body in any respect in which it is individually and personally at fault.**

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*The fault (weakness) of the etheric body: Transgressions, or Guilt.*

*The fault (weakness) of the astral body: Succumbing to Temptation.*

*The fault (weakness) of the ego: Falling into Evil.*

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Consider the relation of the four lower principles of human nature to their environment, that is, the planetary conditions surrounding them. **The physical body continually takes in physical substance as nourishment; so it maintains its existence. The etheric body's life in a finite condition is possible only by maintenance of fellowship with people into whose community one has grown. The astral body is maintained by overcoming temptation. The ego is maintained, and undergoes development in the right way, by not succumbing when "evil" threatens.**

Now bring before your mind's eye the whole human being — the lower quaternary and the higher triad — so that you can say: In individual man there lives a drop of Divinity; he is evolving to the Divine through the expression of his deepest, innermost nature. In once expressing outwardly that deepest, innermost nature, he reveals that he has by gradual development transmuted his own being into what Christianity calls the "Father." What lies hidden in the human soul and hovers before humanity as its great goal is called the *Father in Heaven*.

One wishing to attain that degree of development must be capable of bringing his higher triad and lower quaternary to the point at which they can maintain the physical body adequately. The etheric body must live socially so that an adjustment is effected with whatever exists of "trespass" within it. The astral body must not perish in "temptation," nor the body of the ego fall in "evil." Man must strive upward to the Father in Heaven through the three higher principles — the Name, the Kingdom, the Will.

The Name must be felt in such a way that it becomes hallowed. Look around you. All things in their diversity express the Godhead. In calling each thing by its name, you make it a member of the divine order of the world. By beholding in every single thing or being that you name in your environment some element that reveals in it a principle of Divine Being, you help make each part of your environment sacred. You *hallow* each part. You grow into the Kingdom — which is the outpouring of Divinity — and develop yourself up to the Will, which is spirit man but at the same time a principle of the Godhead.

Think, now, of a meditant (one who meditates) who concentrates wholly upon this meaning of human development, and who wishes to gather this meaning — the seven principles of man's spiritual evolution — into seven petitions in prayer. How will he pray?

To express the aim of the prayer, he will have to begin, before he utters the seven petitions:

***Our Father which art in Heaven.***

In this form of salutation, man concerns himself with the deepest foundation of the human soul, the inmost element of the human being, which Christian esoteric teaching characterizes as of the kingdom of spirit. The link of the first three petitions, which follow this exalted salutation, is with the three higher principles of human nature, with the divine substance within man:

***Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.***

Now the prayer moves from the spiritual to the earthly kingdom:

***Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.***

The four last petitions are linked with the four lower principles of human nature.

What appeal is the supplicant to make with reference to the physical body that it be sustained within the planetary life?

***Give us this day our daily bread.***

What is he to say with reference to sustaining the etheric body?

***Forgive our transgressions, as we forgive those who transgress against us.***

The adjustment of what takes place through the transgressions of the etheric body is what he asks for here.

What is he now to ask with regard to the astral body?

***And lead us through temptation***

And with regard to the ego?

***And deliver us from evil.***

The seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer are thus seen to express the fact that the human soul, when it aspires rightly, implores the Divine Will for a development of the seven elements in human nature that will enable a man to find his right course of life in the universe, a development of all these seven elements in the right way. Through the Lord's Prayer, the petitioner, at the time when he uses it, may rise to understand the full meaning of the development of his seven-principled human nature. It follows that even when the users of these seven petitions are the simplest people, who do not necessarily at all understand them, these petitions express for them, too, the spiritual-scientific view of human nature.

All formulas for meditation in the world's great religious societies throughout history have had their origins in spiritual science. Analyze every true prayer that exists — word for word — and you will find it to be no arbitrary stringing together of words. Never has a mere blind impulse been followed to string together so many beautiful words. Not at all; rather, the great wise men have adopted these prayer forms from the wisdom teaching that is now called spiritual science. Every true form of prayer was born of this great knowledge; and the great Initiate Who founded Christianity — Christ Jesus — had in mind the seven principles of human nature when he taught His prayer, expressing in it the seven-principled nature of man.

So are all prayers arranged. If it were not so, their power could not have continued to be exercised for thousands of years. Only this manner of arrangement is effective, even among simple people who do not in the least understand the deep meaning of the words.

A comparison of human life with occurrences in nature will make this appeal of true prayer to the simplest of people more understandable. Observe a plant. It delights you, though you may know nothing at all of the great universal laws according to which it has come into existence. It is there, and may have interest for you, but it would never have been created if primal, eternal laws had not existed according to which the necessary creative forces flowed into it. There is no need for simple natures to know these laws at all, but if a plant is to be created it must be produced in accordance with them. Similarly, no prayer that has not issued from the fountainhead of wisdom has real meaning for either the learned or the simple.

It is in this present age that those who have so long observed the plant and received its blessing can be led to the wisdom in these great universal laws. For two thousand years the Christian has been praying as the unscientific man observes a plant. The time is coming when he will discern the power that prayer possesses from the deep source of wisdom out of which it has flowed into being. Every prayer, especially the prayer that is central to Christian life, the Lord's Prayer, expresses this primeval wisdom.

As light is manifested in the world in seven colors, and the Fundamental sound in seven tones, so does the seven-membered human being, aspiring upward to its God, attain expression in the seven different feelings of aspiration that refer to the seven-principled human nature and are expressed in the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

Thus, in the soul of the Anthroposophist, this prayer expresses seven-principled man.

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Source: [https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/LorPry\\_index.html](https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/LorPry_index.html)



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