

Prayer

The Power of Divine Assistance

Instrument for our spiritual education

Learning about the Bahá'í Faith

Bahá'í Class – Prayer 3

Prayer

We have seen the importance of prayer to our spiritual growth, along with study of the Bahá'í Writings and living a life of service to humanity. Daily prayer and study are essential to help us resist the idle fancies and vain imaginings of the insistent self within all of us.

Prayer

With Divine Assistance, anything is possible. Yet we are warned that we can easily slip and fall, and lose everything when we think of ourselves and that assistance is cut off.

Prayer

Bahá'u'lláh and the Master have both urged us repeatedly to disregard our own handicaps and lay our whole reliance upon God. He will come to our help if we only arise and become an active channel for God's grace.

(Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 31 March 1932, Compilation of Compilations II, p.219)

Prayer

If any one of them should even for a second consider his achievements as due to his own capacities, his work is ended and his fall starts.... The criterion is the extent to which we are ready to have the will of God operate through us.

(Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 31 March 1932, Compilation of Compilations II, p.219)

The Ten Year Crusade

In many of the stories of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, we saw how the power of prayer was behind their victories.

The Concourse on High watches over them ready to vouchsafe its aid and confer its blessings on their valiant and concerted endeavours.

The Ten Year Crusade

The Author of the Divine Plan will, as promised by Him in his epoch-making Tablets, assist them to surmount whatever obstacles they may encounter in their path, and crown their historic enterprise with a resounding victory.

(Shoghi Effendi, 2 July 1957, to the NSA of the Iberian Peninsula, Compilation of Compilations II p.219)

Knights of Bahá'u'lláh - Belize

The 'two American ladies' represented a strange Eastern religion that did not believe that Jesus was God incarnate, and therefore it was claimed they did not believe in God. In 1955, 'God works in mysterious ways'. At a unity feast, after saying the Tablet of Ahmad three times each evening for 19 days, there were three declarations.



Shirley
Warde

Cora
Oliver



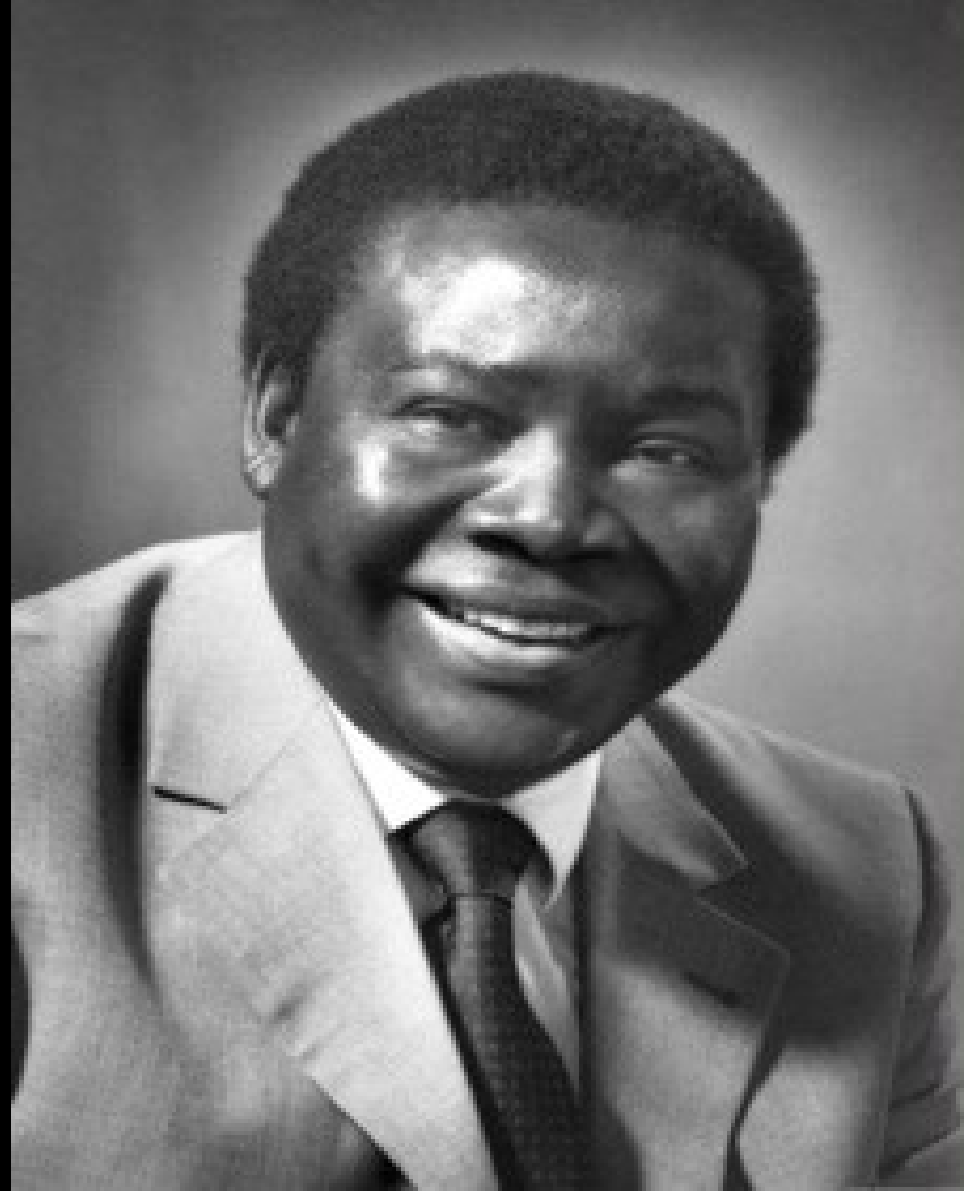
Enoch Olinga - Cameroon

When Mr. and Mrs. Banani went on pilgrimage, they carried a letter from the local believers asking the Guardian to pray for a planned public meeting. While many people came, nothing happened. But Enoch Olinga came in the evening to ask questions about Bible prophecies. Then, much to their joy, he said "How does one become a Bahá'í?"

Enoch Olinga

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Hand of the Cause of God



Rolf Haug - Crete

“A young man stopped me on the street. He told me of a dream, in which he saw an exalted Person, who told him to request a book from me, and to read it. Overjoyed, I took him to my room. As he came into my room and saw the portrait of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the wall: ‘It is him who appeared to me in my dream. Who is it?’, was his spontaneous question. I told him. ‘And the book?’, was his second question. Yes, I had a Greek edition of Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era.”

Rolf Haug - Crete

The man's name was Manolis. "He took the book with great joy and very soon had read and studied it.... I have just passed through the great significance of this time spent in spirit and prayer when I dared to ask (a friend) the glorious question: 'Do you wish to become a Bahá'í?' One cannot measure the rapture that seized us, when, after an affirmative answer, we united in prayer and begged for steadfastness and guidance."

(Rolf Haug, quoted in Earl Redman. 2017. *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*. Oxford: George Ronald, p. 373)



Rolf Haug, Waltraub Weber and Manolis 1954

Jean Sevin – Tuamotu Archipelago

“Divine assistance is unfailing for the pioneer who turns constantly towards the world of the Kingdom. Such will be his faith, his patience, his supplications - while living his life – such will be his powers. An instant of neglect of the implications of his divine mission and divine assistance will no longer come in the same way. Over all obstacles, he can be assured of final victory but only to the extent that he tries each instant to fulfil his sacred mission, as demanded by the Master and embodied in His *Tablets of the Divine Plan*.” (Jean Sevin, 1955, provisional translation)

Jean Sevin – Tuamotu Archipelago

“He only needs faith, patience and love. But also absolute detachment from all material things. And from his effort to keep his eyes on the Kingdom, on the only indispensable goal, and supported by the celestial concourse, will depend the rapidity of his victory. Have we tried hard enough? Then the Beloved will draw forth souls to whom we can convey the light. Pray, love, try to be detached, this is the only method.” (Jean Sevin, 1955, provisional translation)

Jean Sevin 1975



Amin Banani - Greece

“At no time in my life did I feel as vital and happy and thankful as in those days... I remember chanting prayers up and down the hill of the refugee camp, and drawing strength from the hidden sources that aid all pioneers.”

Sheila and
Amin Banani

1952



Cynthia Olson – Marianas Islands

“...that first evening and the next day she had some serious talks with Bahá'u'lláh. Never had she been so dismayed at a situation, and never had she prayed any harder. She was overwhelmed. The problem appeared insurmountable... Stuck in a house running over with bugs, with no transportation and no place to go. ‘Please God, help me!’”

Soon, with bug spray, she got rid of the bugs. She hadn't driven a car for 18 years, but prayed to Bahá'u'lláh that she might not injure anyone.

(based on Earl Redman. 2017. *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp.185-191)

Cynthia
and
Olie
Olson



Muhajirs - Mentawai Islands

"Nothing in our life had prepared us for the Mentawai Islands. The boat had to drop anchor a long way from the shore, and we were told to climb down a rope ladder.... Then we had to board a rowing boat, crewed by two men who appeared to be completely naked. My first thought was to run back to the cabin and hide... However my hand was held firmly by Rahmat, who was quietly chanting the Tablet of Ahmad..."

*(Irán Muhájir, quoted in Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 180)*

Iran
and
Rahmatu'lláh

Muhájir

1953



Ted Cardell - Namibia

“So, now I thought this is about the time to start praying. What else could you do? So, I prayed for a bit then fell asleep. And when I woke up, I got the idea to go down to the newspaper office again, which I did and they gave me a a job instantly at double the salary I had been getting in London.”

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)



Aziz Yazdi, Claire Gung, Ted Cardell

Brigitte Hasselblatt – Shetland Is.

Driving to Lerwick from the airport on her arrival, she saw “no houses, no trees, no bushes or flowers, only brown peat-covered hills.”

“I had no conception of the nature of the tests and difficulties that are to assail every soul in his Service and without the spiritual forces released by the prayers of the friends, I cannot but fail in fulfilling the task before me.”

Brigitte Hasselblatt

Knight of
Bahá'u'lláh

Shetland
Islands



Prayer

He, Who has entrusted them with such a great mission to the world, is waiting and patiently waiting for them that labour in His Divine Vineyard to turn their hearts in prayer and supplication to the Almighty and seek that aid and guidance that can alone enable them to carry out His Divine Plan for this world.

(From a letter dated 7 January 1923 written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í community of Pasadena, California)

Power of Prayer

At a California university, a Bahá'í club had regular activities to teach the Faith. One student showed interest and came for a while, but then stayed away for several months. One day the club president worried about him and recited the Tablet of Ahmad in his name to assist him. Twenty minutes later, the student called and said he wanted to become a Bahá'í.

Prayer

Can you think of some examples of the power of prayer?

Have you heard stories of how prayer has helped others to accomplish things that seemed very difficult?