

**Satsang with Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati**  
**Arsha Vidya Gurukulam**  
**More on Prayer**

*Question*

When we pray for others, do they get the benefit of our prayer?

*Answer*

Prayer is an action and therefore must bear a result. While performing the action, if you have resolved that the prayer should be helpful to a given person, the result will then be directed that way. It is like sending a gift-subscription. I pay for it, but instruct the publisher to deliver the magazine to some other person as a gift. Similarly I can perform the prayer and assign the benefit to someone else.

*Question*

Can we modify our destiny through prayer?

*Answer*

Not only can we modify our destiny, but we can create our own destiny as well. Our destiny is the result of actions that we have performed in the past. Even now, we are performing some deliberate action that will create another force which will also act along with that destiny. Therefore, there is no doubt that we can modify our destiny. Depending on how strong the destiny is, we may not be able to change it significantly, but we can try. Prayer is an action and when you perform prayer, it must bear fruit. It can change destiny, modify destiny, or at least reduce its impact to whatever extent you perform the prayer.

## ***Question***

If I am the Lord, who am I praying to?

## ***Answer***

Who is the 'I' that is praying? 'I' is the one who is separate from the rest of the universe. And the Lord, in the form of the rest of the universe, listens to your prayer. It is you, who creates a division of 'I' and everything other than your 'I' when you say 'I pray' and therefore, the Lord in the form of everything other than this 'I', listens to the prayer and responds.

Everything is Lord. In that Lord, I create a division such as 'I' and 'other than me'. I invoke all the forces other than me, which govern the happenings, so that they turn favorable to me and enable me to achieve what I want. Prayer can be performed towards any end. While it is desirable that we pray for self-purification, one can pray for worldly things also. For instance, if you desire a job, there is a certain prayer that you can perform. This is called *sakāma karma* or action performed with the intention of fulfilling a desire. This form of prayer is acceptable until I rise to a point where I don't care for the fulfillment of desires and care only for the purification of the mind. When you are in the mood for the purification of the mind, perform prayer for that. If you want to fulfill a desire instead, it is ok too. Similarly, you can perform prayer for the benefit of somebody else who may be needy like you. My needs can be fulfilled when I perform an action, and when many other factors are favorable to me, such as, unseen factors, unknown factors, hidden factors, or factors that are beyond my control. Prayer is to make those factors favorable to me. The whole universe is God in the form of many forces, e.g., the Law of Karma. If that law becomes favorable to me, I can attain the result that I want. It is to the Lord in the form of the Law, that we pray.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Transcribed and edited by Jayshree Ramakrishnan and KK Davey.