

June 4, 1981

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Let me share with you a very old rabbinic commentary on a familiar biblical text.

The rabbis say it is written ~~that we are~~ "to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul (Deut 11:13) But what is this service of the heart, they ask. You must ^{answer} ~~say~~ it is prayer. Prayer is the service of the heart. (B.T. 2a)

Few among us would quarrel with that conclusion, ~~which~~ ^{on} the surface, ^{it} would appear almost self evident. Especially we whose lives are spent serving our religious constituency would believe without very much exception that Prayer is the service of the heart.

Nevertheless, I submit to you that prayer is an enormously dangerous enterprise.

It is simple to ~~assent~~ assent to prayer.

It is usually simple to read or speak a prayer. And sometimes we yield to the

over sigplistic pious platitudes
to explain prayer, its effects,

its reality and function.

But by what right do we ask the Almighty to do our will!

I would not for a moment intimate

in the ~~x~~ slightest that I know the
answers to the problem of prayer.

I do think we fulfill an important
function for ourselves and the people
we serve to be alerted to the profundity

of that which we call prayer. ~~and I think~~

a religious leaders we should be the first to

realize that it is better to live with

some unanswered questions ~~xx rather~~ than

to pretend we have found refuge in

feeble answers *that have no relationship to our ethical life*

I dare to speak to you in very direct

Jewish terms because I ~~think~~ ^{think} that

~~as~~ there are specific elements in

Christian liturgies with much to say

about the human spiritual condition,

^{to} So do I believe that in Jewish tradition

there is much both of background and

future ~~and~~ ^{direction} that is of value to us

both.

(In our tradtion -- and some of you may have some trouble with this thought--- prayer, ^{+ the ethical life} ~~and~~ study, are almost indistinguishabl^{n each other.}

I have long be^{en} interested in the analysis of Jewish and Christian liturgies. (I commend this approach to ^{fundamental principles of faith} ~~theology~~ because it is startlingly true that prayer services are magnificent outlines of theology.

(If you want to know ~~that~~ a people believes, take careful note of the language of their prayers.

(In the cherished invitation to guide this morning's service, Bishop Bryan explicitly asked me to ledd in a worship very rich in Jewish tradtion. (I trust we will fulfill his and your expectations. (And because study and prayer are so intertwined among our People whose prayers we share with you, I will let the service (or , if you wish, the medium) be the ~~x~~ message.

[First,] (Prayer is a most serious matter among Jews. (Vast literatues are concerned

with the time, place and wording of prayers.

(The distillation of that literature results in an ~~an~~ order of worship. (This is to say that there is a discipline to worship.

(Such does not preclude spontaneous worship.

The authors of such personal prayers as the Psalms could not possibly do that.

(But ~~an~~ orderliness takes precedence.

(The message is, of course, that an orderly spiritual life is constantly suggested by

the sequence and content of the daily prayers. *forms + content. Repetition was not a problem.* (We are reminded to bless, to

praise, to take note of the miraculous in

in miniscule as well as the grand aspects of

life. *There are no minutiae & no greater to determine an ethical act.* (As we live in an orderly universe,

personal so too our *by our prayers directed* moral lives are to be *ordered by* ordered by

God-consciousness.

You may notice another hall-mark of ~~the~~
~~The second characteristic after order in~~

our prayers is plurality.

(Of course, *any of us* ~~we~~ may pray alone but prayer with a congregation reminds us of a

common humanity. (The prayers that are most

valuable to God are those which kind men

one to the other and do not indulge ^{thrive} personal whim or advantage ^{even personal escape from trouble} (This, of course, ^{may not pray - let bring home not be mine.}

~~Individualism~~, does not eliminate personal petition but it does say that the destiny of each of us is bound up with our fellows; and in the sight of God our common humanity ought never be forgotten.

(So you will note ~~that~~ our prayers are voiced in the plural. We seek communion ^{with each other &} with God.

(Along with order and plurality, there is another element of true worship which both ^{X'ian & Jew} of us share. (It is the ~~element of~~

deliberate introduction of learning or instruction through the reading of scripture. (In Jewish tradition this regular reading of Scripture with assigned portions week by week is a method of study. (From ancient times it was accompanied by translation and commentary which, for better ~~xxx~~ or worse, was the origin of the sermon. ^{Purpose} The sermon was to urge to the ethical life.

Order, Plurality and ~~Smx~~ Study are

Components of
~~prayer to God thru~~ prayer. In this x

manner let us pray together Let us be
guided by our worshp but not constrained
by it *[Let us voice prayer to God, but listen
to the words ourselves.]*

~~Qxxx~~ { In Jewish lore a story teaches

this lesson. *[It points up the dialectic between
ideals & practicality, personal & public elevation, learned & simple
faith.]*

{ There was a poor unlearned shephard.

{ He could neither read nor write, an unusua
and frowned upon disability. { But each
morning , wishing to pray as did others,
he would pause and say Dear God, I love
you very much. I do not know how to ~~xxx~~
read the prayers but I do know the
letters of the alphabet and for you,
dear God, I say them. And he would then
recite the letters: ABC etc.

{ One day a ~~learned man~~ *scholar* passed by and heard
him mumbling the alphabet and asked him
what he was doing? The ;man told him.
Listen, said the scholar, that is not
right. Come to me and I will tqach you.

nights in an effort to learn. [But the more he listened ~~by~~ the more he became confused.] So he quit. [And, being told he was wrong to pray in the former manner, he ceased speaking to God as was his custom.]

~~Then~~ And, says the ~~xx~~ story, God appeared to the acholar and said: What have you done to my beloved shephard, he speaks to me no more. [Each day he told me he loved me. What have you done? Go to him, tell him I ~~wait for~~ his prayers.] So the scholar went to the ~~man~~ ^{Confessed his error?} and told him ~~he was mistaken and to par~~ as ~~his~~ ~~xxx~~ heart told him for Pryer is the

Service of the Heart. [And the sheahard was ^{also} over joyed, for he missed talking to his God, & simply and devoutly.] And ~~he returned~~ ^{once} ~~again each day he said again~~ ~~to saying:~~ "Dear God, I love you very much,

I cannot pray as others but for you I ^{to your Heaven} send the letters of the alphabet: ABC....

Let us now pray the service of the heart.

figure the service of our lines
how to