

# PRAISING GOD

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## Speaking of God

Since human language was first invented, its purpose has been to facilitate the description of things and events in a world of sense, that is to say, within a spatio-temporal environment. Language is structured, therefore, on the perceived relationship between a subject (the seer) and an object (the seen). That subject-object based language, is inapplicable, however, when we attempt to speak of God, our spiritual Source. Man—whose individual soul is within and inclusive to God, and whose body is within and inclusive to God's Creative Power—may not appropriately designate the Creator as 'other' since the two are essentially one, beyond the designation of either 'subject' or 'object'. In this case, the subject *is* the object, and the object is the subject. And, for this reason, we humans have such great difficulty in thinking and speaking meaningfully about God.

In fact, it is that very subject-predicate-noun structure of language that precludes the possibility of meaningfully expressing the relationship of creature to Creator, of man to God. For, since God, the Spirit, is the substratum in which we ourselves are contained, He is never something 'other' to which we can relate as a subject to an objective noun. And though we may occasionally speak of God as an objective reality, in fact, the subject, "I", and the object, "Thou", are eternally one—even though, in the common usage of our subject/object-based language, that fact is seldom noted. Yet, despite this great inadequacy of language, we have no alternative but to speak of God however we may, as He is omnipresent and is invariably involved in every occurrence in the universe and beyond.

Human language is inappropriate for speaking of God for another reason as well, as our language requires gender-specific pronouns to represent sentient beings, and God, the source of all sentience, is neither male nor female, but contains, or rather is the source of, both genders. That all-inclusive One cannot therefore be realistically designated as either "He" or "She". The alternate pronoun, "It", is ordinarily reserved as a designate of inanimate things, and God, the source of all animate life, cannot be relegated to that

narrow linguistic category either. Our language simply does not accommodate the possibility of accurately referring to God. And so, we have no choice but to use whatever pronoun best appeals to us at the time, even while knowing that there is, in our language, no possible means of referring to [Him] that is truly appropriate.

And so, I ask you to please excuse my unavoidable linguistic blunders, while I do my best to tell what I know of [Him]: He is not known by the intellect, and He is not captured in our human words; He may be known only through love and the bestowal of His merciful Grace.

### **How May I praise Thee, Father?**

Thou art the ocean on which this wave rolls;  
 Thou art the wind on which this leaf rides;  
 Thou art the loam in which this plant grows.  
 Thou art my Creator, my bone and my flesh;  
 Thou art the Life that pulses in my blood.  
 Great Father of the universe! Begetter of all!  
 Thy blessing is on me, and my love looks to Thee.

I seek Thee to love Thee, but Thou art within me,  
 Invisible to my eye or my mind. How amazing  
 That Thou dost reach out in me to Thyself in Thee!  
 It is Thy doing that divides Thy creature from Thyself,  
 And it is Thou who dost embrace me as one in Thyself.  
 Lord God, my kind Father and beloved Self,  
 If I am to see, I will see with Thy sight;  
 If I am to know, I will know by Thy gift.  
 On Thee I depend, O my Fountain, my Source.  
 Thou art my soul and my world, Thou the Breath of my breath.  
 Do with me, Father, whatsoever Thou wilt.

## **Born of His Light**

Don't you know that we are born of His light—that every elementary  
 particle of matter began as a photon of light?  
 Every electron, every quark in the interior of every proton or neutron came  
 into being and acquired its properties  
 In the transformation of those high-energy photons of light  
 Streaming out from the Creator's breath.  
 This world and all worlds sparkling throughout the cosmos are made of the  
 radiance of God's power,  
 A dancing array of His light's many ephemeral forms.  
 And we, evolved from His light, are endowed with the presence of His  
 eternal Self, and live by His life,  
 And love with His love and know with His wisdom.  
 We are conscious by His marvelous all-pervading awareness;  
 We see by His loving grace, and we sing His praise by His gift of song.

Then sing, ye God-born angels of light!  
 Raise up your voices to Him whose fabric forms your being and appearance,  
 Whose life-pulse fires your heart and breath.  
 Remember Him whose goodness molded you, whose love enfolds you,  
 Whose existence is the life-stream of your being, and whose  
 out-flowing Bliss provides the everlasting joy of your soul.  
 Until we wend our way back into His eternal light, sing forth His praise.

## **How May I Praise Thee, Lord?**

Though my soul yearns to flood the world with Thy praise, when I open my  
 mouth to speak, there are no words to say. My heart leaps up to sing, but the  
 sound is stillborn in bewildered silence. My arms lift up thousands of  
 bouquets of multi-hued flowers to lay at Thy feet but fall helpless at the  
 realization that these flowers already belong to Thee, are indeed Thy glory  
 and Thy gift.

How then may I praise Thee, Lord, who art the singer, the praise, and the  
 instigator of the desire to praise? What words are worthy to speak of Thee?  
 What gift is not Thine own? What song is not Thy sound? O God, who dost  
 fill my heart with the desire to praise Thee, let Thy song of love cascade  
 from this heart which is also Thine own, and enchant the world with its

joyful melody. Let all hearts be awakened to see Thy spreading Light. Let knowledge of Thee spring up like a clear spring of water to quench the thirst of every mind and satisfy every soul with certainty and peace.

O God Thou dost praise Thy own self in the countless hearts of countless creatures fountained forth from Thy own effulgent will. If it be Thy will, let this life which Thou has imagined into being become an instrument of Thy praise, whether in song or in silence. Let Thy Love, Thy Grace, Thy boundless Joy release itself and flow through this projected form of Thine to flood the world with Thy own Light and Thy own Song to lift all souls to Thee.

### **Song of Thanksgiving**

Hari, my love, I wish to sing to Thee a song of Thanksgiving.  
 Yet, O how I dread the futile search for meaningful words to offer Thee!  
 My heart is full of thanks and praise for each breath that is granted me,  
 But to speak reveals the lie of pretended two-ness that I must tell.  
 For Thou art my breath, my voice, the Real; and I am but the image;  
 I live by Thy uncommon Life, imaged in Thy dream of me.  
 And yet my gratitude to Thee upwells, as an image in a mirror  
 Might admire its own source, its real and original Face;  
 Or as a dream character might call out praise to its dreaming Self.

Though we are one, not two, I'll speak as though we're separate and apart;  
 For how else might I truly speak to Thee?  
 O Hari, Thou art alone, undiminished by the clatter and glitter  
 Of a billion billion images, mere reflections in a house of mirrors;  
 For Thou art alike the house, the mirrors, and the flitting images as well.  
 This speaking too is like the barking of a dog in an empty field;  
 For, though it may be heard, the silence of the cosmos remains unbroken.  
 Yet I, this imagined form, am present—at least in appearance;  
 And because I'm here, please let me speak to Thee in loving thanks.

O Hari look how wonderful is this story Thou dost tell!  
 Look how beautiful is this body and the life ensouled.  
 Though all too quickly it will turn to dust, this form is Thine  
 And holds Thy greatness and Thy holy light and breath of life.  
 Thou, this brightly glowing wakeful knowing;  
 Thou, this deep and endlessly creative song of light and love

That bubbles up from Thy unfathomable depths  
 Within the soul of me to greet each day with joyful thanks.

O Hari, from Thy eternal Goodness and unknowable Repose,  
 Thou hast issued forth this universe of man and beast  
 With purpose known only to Thy own delight;  
 And Thou hast given Thy own thoughts to guide us from within  
 To bring us happily, through adventures great and small,  
 To our end in Thy boundlessly blissful Self.  
 O Hari, it is a most wonderful and admirable drama  
 Thou hast produced, full of harrowing dilemmas,  
 Frightful predicaments, and uproarious denouements!

Yet, in the end, we all awake to know one Self,  
 The Dreamer of this dream, our ever-undisturbed Reality.  
 Always unperturbed, Thou art forever untouched by time,  
 As the patient sky is ever untouched by passing clouds;  
 We are where we have always been in truth, never separated  
 From our constantly unfolding, ever undivided Self;  
 Where all the fervent lives o'erpassed, like dreams,  
 Once left behind in waking, hastily retreat from view,  
 Revealed as the flimsiest of transient illusions.

In waking, we are one in Thee, O Hari!  
 And in Thee, *as* Thee, we have always been.  
 Never imprisoned as we thought in separate forms,  
 Once reawakened from our dreams, we know our  
 Ever-undivided and eternal Identity as Thee.  
 In blissful folds of snow-white radiant Eternity  
 We rest as Thee in peaceful oneness and joy;  
 But while I live in pretended separation from Thyself,  
 Let me now offer my song of grateful thanks to Thee,  
 Who art the Life that lives me, my secret pride and joy;  
 For it is Thou who hast made Thyself as me.

Dear Father, all that Thou hast made is good,  
 And all Thy beauteous forms sing praise and thanks to Thee.  
 Then, let me uplift my voice in song as well  
 To glorify in praise my gracious Lord:  
 O Hari, all praise be to Thee in Thy heavenly glory!

All praise be to Thee in Thy universal pageantry of form!  
 My head is bowed in loving thanks and worship,  
 Knowing Thou art all and more than all.  
 Thy grace to me is beyond what my voice can tell;  
 I can but offer thanks, with hands held high, to Thee,  
 My ever kind and gracious Lord.

### **Praise God**

I'm here to sing the praise of God, and so I shall.  
 And let none think belief's the basis of my song,  
 Or words I've read in high-flown works;  
 The subject of my song is what I've seen,  
 What He's revealed to my most meager sight  
 In holy quiet night's retreat.

Though many have praised His creation —  
 Its beauties, and its grandeur;  
 I would praise Him in His unborn formless Essence  
 Where He lives unmoved, and happily serene.

Though He breathes forth the immense and tumultuous cosmos,  
 Enjoying the drama of its unfolding activity,  
 He remains clearly indivisible  
 And perfectly unmoved within Himself,  
 Continually aware that He alone exists.  
 There is no other; so, all's contained in Him.

Serene, yet keenly awake, He spreads  
 His outflowing radiance in every direction;  
 Delight, unbounded and uninterrupted,  
 Permeates Him and all that He proffers.  
 In one breath, He flashes forth the universal array,  
 And then withdraws it all again,  
 Only to breathe once more and fling the stars  
 And galaxies wheeling on their rounds again.

For creatures, it's an almost endless parade  
 Of eon upon eon, unfathomably deep in time's recess;

But for him, who knows no change or movement,  
It's but a moment's breath.

And yet the greatest wonder is that every soul breathed forth  
Is but a time-wrought image of Himself;  
And each one, being His by virtue of its life in Him,  
Is capable of finding at its core that One who fashioned it to life.

As a figure in a dream awakes to know he is the dreamer,  
Each soul, when it awakes, discovers it is none but Him.  
He appears as though in a house of many mirrors,  
Fragmented into a million images, yet all are Him;  
It's but a masquerade.

And when the soul awakes to know its deathless Self,  
Beyond imagined dreams of personhood,  
It knows that forever it has lived serene and blissful,  
Just beyond the dream.

It learns that all the devilish battles and tortuous travails  
Were but a thought-parade in which, for the briefest time  
It marched, all unawares, to finally break away  
And find its way to freedom from time's tumultuous play.

To find such freedom one must look within,  
And, gaining clarity of mind, discover who one really is.  
Who one really *is* is Him! For none exists but Him alone.  
It's true! He lives alone in high eternity;  
But He lives as well as you and me.

It's you and me who lives in that eternal sky  
While playing out our destined roles below.  
Two selves, one vigilant while tossing out the stars,  
The other strutting on this stage of dreams,  
Oblivious to the other, her subtler Self and Source.

The all-encompassing, all-sustaining Self of all  
Is quite alone, and quite contained  
Without a drama to behold,  
Until He beams Himself in outward radiance

As particles and galaxies and separate living things  
 In bright array,  
 To people all these worlds with beings  
 Conscious of their knowing selves.  
 His game: to lead them all within themselves  
 In stage by stage to knowledge of the ways of things,  
 And, finally, to awareness of that deeper Self  
 Who flung them forth to journey home  
 To know the ultimate Truth that they are Him.

Awaking to that joyful knowledge,  
 The spell of separation falls away  
 Along with fear and worry, woes and cares.  
 And, lifted up in mind and spirit,  
 The knower lives in peace and joy beyond this world  
 Alone, eternal, as all in all.  
 He knows the universal design to be his own;  
 He walks in freedom. His soul is blest.  
 Praise God!

### **Now, While There's Still Time**

Now, while there's still time, call on God with a yearning heart!  
 How swiftly passes this busy life of occupations and obligations.  
 Too soon, the day is lost to inconsequential chores;  
 Too soon the months, the years, are lost to scattered aims and fruitless  
 schemes.  
 Suddenly we awake one morning, and we're old and feeble, unable to  
 make any effort at all.  
 And who knows when the end will come?  
 You may be certain it will come one day —  
 Perhaps without warning, unannounced,  
 Perhaps while you walk, or sleep, or play;  
 Or in between the syllables of a word you start to say.  
 And when it comes, will your heart leap up and cry,  
 "O glorious day!"?  
 Or will you beg for just a little time to set things right—the way you'd  
 always hoped they'd be?  
 O friend make now your heart to be as you would have it then.

O now, my friend, while there's still time, call on God with a yearning heart!  
 Lead your soul to Him who is your true and everlasting home.  
 He is your joy unlimited, your boundless satisfaction;  
 Your Lord, your Goal, your Life, your Self.

### **Song of Praise**

O God let me sing a song to Thee.  
 I am just Thy foolish unworthy child, as Thou dost know;  
 But I beg Thee, let me honor Thee with my song of praise.  
 After all, I have no other reason for existing but to sing Thy praise.

O God Thou art so far beyond my vision that I do not know how to begin to praise Thee.  
 Thou art hidden beyond this world of my daily experience,  
 invisible to my eye.  
 But Thou hast shown Thyself to me when I was young.  
 I know Thy perfect aloneness, untouched by all that transpires here below;  
 I know Thy timeless face, Thy incomparable peace.  
 Dear Lord, I can only stammer and write these miserably inadequate words;  
 for no words are there to speak of Thee.  
 All that flows from Thee bespeaks Thy bounty; but Thou art far greater than the sparkling sky, the star-filled cosmos.  
 Thou art the emptiness from which all bounty flows;  
 An emptiness that contains nothing yet gives being to everything.

As winds arise from air, as waves arise from the sea, as dreams arise from the quieted mind, so does the universe arise from Thee.  
 Thou art the bearer of happiness, the stirrer of devotion,  
 the inventor of thought, surprise, and awe.  
 Thou art the redeemer of error, the mother of love;  
 Thou art the beauty of a summer's day.  
 O God, whatever *is* is done by Thee.

But why should I remind Thee of Thy works?  
 It's Thee, above all works, that I adore.

I, who am Thy errant child, whose soul is birthed by Thee, and who longs to return to Thy womb, am nothing else but Thine.

Displayed into this world, I am Thy own substance, Thy own imagined form. And as I'm from Thee, so to Thee shall I return.  
No longer image shall I be, but transformed into Thee,  
not something other, but Thee entire;  
One glowing I, unending, perfect beauty, perfect bliss, and consciousness absolute.

None of these words, of course, come close to saying what Thou art; though I searched, I could not find words that tell Thee truly.  
Down here, we have no words to describe what Thou art;  
and so, once more, my praise falls short.  
But we both know Thy true condition; we both know Thy unspeakable place of being; and we both know it is of that I speak.

Dear Father of my life, my thought, my love, please accept my pitiful attempt to praise Thee.  
Fault me not for my lack of words that tell Thee.  
Only grant that I may always love Thee, till I am once again at home with Thee.

O dear God of gods hear my prayer! You know my heart, my heart's desire:  
I long to rise above this worldly self to bathe in Thy untroubled Life.  
I cannot do it, but only Thou canst bring me there to live in Thee.

O Lord, who art alone, sole Source and Master of the world,  
I beg Thee draw my mind and heart to Thee; let no other love distract me.  
Let no dreams or other goals detain me from my journey home to Thee.

### **Do You Wish To Know God?**

Do you wish to know God?  
Then pray for His grace. But even that you cannot do  
Until the magnet of His Love draws forth your heart's desire.

Do you wish to know God?  
That wish is God's own power alive within you drawing you home.

But you must set your wings for flight and soar to heights unknown before,  
Releasing all below.

A strong and focused mind will be the wings on which you'll climb to His  
domain  
Where you may offer up your soul to Him and beg for entrance to His heart.

If you are steady in your goal, His heart will open wide  
and draw you in to make you one with Him.  
And then you'll know that you and He were never set apart.  
You'll see the universe in you; in you, the universal Self.

Your calling lifts you toward Him, but He responds only in His time.  
He will leave you yearning for His love, your heart an abject song.  
For He tortures those who love Him with a longing unfulfilled,  
And lures us on with sweetness, withholding His embrace.

What pathetic fools He makes of us who bargain all for Him,  
Who fill our nights with lonely pleas that He might hear our song!  
Addicts of His mercy, we pray He'll bring us home,  
And fold us in His sweet embrace as a father does a son.

No doubt, His mercy keeps us there in longing for His touch;  
Our hearts grow sweet, our love expands, as we call aloud His name;  
And lift our minds and hearts to Him, desiring only Him.  
This barb of sorrow, this aching love, upholds us in His grace,  
And leads us upward, onward, till one day we shall see His face.

O, who will take me to my Lord? Who will give me wings?  
I grow older, Father, every day, and my mind is growing dim.  
My eyes are weak, my vision strains to penetrate the dark.  
My Lord, I have no other goal but Thee; have mercy on this soul!

## Why We Were Born

The Jews are praising Thee, Lord;  
 The Christians and Muslims are busy praising Thee as well.  
 The Hindus and the Sikhs, the Platonists and the Taoists  
 also sing Thy praise.  
 The farmers tilling the land have no other goal but to give  
 praise to Thee;

Even the men and women of science, who hope to ferret out  
 Thy secrets,  
 Are engaged unwittingly in praising Thee.  
 For no one on this earth of Thine can find satisfaction  
 In anything other than Thy praise.  
 What other purpose might we have, O Lord?  
 Why else were we born? Why else would we live  
 But to joy in giving praise and glory to Thee?

## In Praise of God

Let us now, for our own heart's joy, give praise to God. He is the Refuge of the troubled mind and the Bringer of peace to the troubled heart. As a cold drink of water to a thirsty man, so is the name of God to the wearied soul. He is the cool Cave of the heart, wherein the soul finds quiet sanctuary from the darting demons of egotistical thought. He makes the passionate will to be stilled in silence and dispels all the incriminations of the wounded heart. O let us rest in that silent, bliss-filled Cave, hidden away from the clamor of the world; and drink from the fountain of the nectar of His name.

O mind scratch His name on the cave-wall of your heart, and never let your eyes be without the sight of His name. Sing His name softly in that heart-sanctuary, that your ears may never be without the sound. And give praise to Him who alone is worthy of praise; for all that is done is done by Him, and every gift that comes is a gift from His hand.

O my heart, praise Him with words, and praise Him in acts of love. No sin has ever touched so much as a hair on the head of one who is busied with the praise and remembrance of God. If you wish to do some good in this world, O my soul, never stray from His dwelling-place in the heart. For, as the

moon sheds the light of the Sun only when its face is turned to the Sun, we also are bathed in and reflect His gentle Love only when we're turned in love to Him.

We gather to give praise to God, not that we might please Him with our devotion, nor to make a show to others of our holy ways. Why, then, should we find pleasure in singing His praise? Is it not out of a pure love that springs from God Himself and wells up to overflow within us? Is it not His own heart's Love that made us, and that fills our every fiber with a sweet desire? And is it not His inward flame of Love 'round which we, moth-like, dance, yearning to be extinguished in His unifying light?

He is the Love and He is the Light that draws us to Himself. From His gentle Light we have emerged, and to Him we shall return. May we learn, in this fragile life, to walk always in His Love, and to keenly sense in every moment His all-pervading Light. May we breathe His joy, and taste His sweetness, and shed His mercy on everyone we meet.

It is this for which we gather, for which we give Him praise. For, as the summer flowers blossom forth the exuberant joy and beauty of God on earth, so do our hearts blossom forth His Love in songs of praise; and mercifully shower on ourselves the sweet fragrance of delight.

Lord, when I look within me, I see Thy light and I know Thy peace, and I am guided by Thy sweet words of wisdom. And when I look about me, I see only Thee in all Thy splendorous forms. It has been said that man is like an empty bottle floating in the sea of God; water flows within and water flows without; everywhere there is only the vast ocean of God. Thus, Lord, I am immersed in Thy ocean of Consciousness and Light, and I know Thee both within and without.

But, O God, what of this "bottle," this "me," which separates the within from the without? What is this "I" that stands apart and speaks to Thee of within and without? O my Lord, even this body is Thine own! It is a form composed of Consciousness and Light, composed of Thyself; it is a shimmering mass of Energy projected from Thee, and can never be separate from Thee.

Who, then, is this "I" that speaks of "I and Thou," and thus sets up a division between my soul and Thee? Truly, there is none else but Thee; there is none

but the one Life that is manifest as all this vast cosmos in all its variety of color and form. And, though I sometimes imagine I am far from Thee, and I seek Thee in the darkness and turbulence of my mind, truly I can never be separate from Thee.

Therefore, let me ever remember my oneness, my identity, with Thee. For the lover, the Beloved, and the love itself, all are one. And I know: "I am the Soul of all; I am the Light that illumines the world. I am as pure and vast as the infinite blue sky. I am the Self of all. I am the Self of all."

I know, my Lord, that, in essence, I am Thy own and ever-one with Thee. Yet, so long as there is in me this errant and rebellious mind, let it learn to be ever-ready at Thy service—for Thy service is the service of my own eternal Self. How, then, may I serve my greater Self, my God? Only by letting Thee live through me. By loving what Thou lovest. By desiring what Thou desirest. By seeing with Thine eye of equal vision and loving all as Thou dost love and sustain all.

Let me, then, be perfect in love, O God, as Thou art perfect, that I may be fit to serve as Thy instrument. All of us are helplessly driven to action in this world by the forces of Nature; therefore, let all my actions be done in the joyful remembrance of Thee, the divine Self who lives as me. And may the darkness of illusion be so dispelled in me that Thy light shines forth clearly in all I say or do.

Let me see no other in this world but the One whose dance of joy fills all this immense universe; let me offer my work as well as my heart's love to Thee in all Thy many forms. And, lastly, may my heart's good intent so move Thee that Thou dost consent to listen to my prayer, and lift up my mind to greater likeness with Thyself, till I am merged and melted into Thee, and know first-hand my oneness with my Lord.

My Lord remove from me all confusion and dullness of mind and open my heart to the sweetness of Thy Love; for I have no other goal but Thee.

It is Thy most wondrous grace to me that, when I am sunk in the grayness of my own misery, Thou dost cast a sunbeam of Light into my heart to awaken in me Thy Love. O Lord, I have no other goal but Thee.

And so, I ask of Thee, O God, lift up my soul to Thee, that has so long been locked in a self-created dungeon of darkness and despair. Lift me into the clarity and freedom of Thy Light! For I have no other goal but Thee.

O Father grant me this grace of Thine; light up my soul with the gladness of Thy joyful presence and fill my heart with song. For I have no other goal but Thee, O Lord.

Thy Love is the only food I crave; increase in me Thy bounty and let me feast on Thy sweetness. For Thy grace of Love is my only treasure, my sole desire. I have no other goal but Thee, O Lord.

Assuage, then, O God, the pain of darkness which I so often bear, and open my eyes and my heart to Thee. Reveal to me that Thou art all that appears before me, and that Thou art my very soul, my life, my light, my joy. Dear Lord, I have no other goal but Thee.

### **Meditation**

The great Sufi mystic and poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, said: “The religion of love is distinct from all others; the lovers of God have a religion and a faith all their own.”

What is this religion of love? It has no name. Neither does it have any nationality. It is beginningless, and without end. It originates in the heart and can only be mimicked in speech. It is the cry of the heart for God’s mercy and grace. Yet, even this heartfelt pain is His grace; for this yearning is but the drawing of His comfort and solace.

Love calls, and Love responds. In both instances, that Love is accompanied by tears. Yet, even this calling, though painful, is sweet; for it is *His* Love that burns in the heart. And when He responds, the heart’s cup is filled with much more than it can hold. No eyes have seen this filling; no words have ever told of its taste. Yet, in countless hearts, throughout the universe, this religion lives, and supplies the world with Love.

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