

## FFWPU USA: I Pray This in My Name, Aju

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What is prayer to you? A prayer takes on many forms. It could be a meditation, a ritual, devotion, or a conversation with our Heavenly Parent. In the Hindu faith, Puja is a form of ritual prayer, and it is the way Hindus show reverence and devotion to God. When they wake up, believers offer water, fruit, flowers, and incense to God or the divine. In the Muslim faith, prayer is known as a Salawat where believers pray five times a day. Each time they pray, practitioners recite words from the Quran while bowing and reciting scriptures. One key aspect of prayer in the Unificationist faith is the act of praying in our own name.

### Prayer in Our Own Name

In the Unificationist faith founded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, prayer takes on all those forms. Prayer is a spiritual practice to be more in tune with our Heavenly Parent. It is also an act of devotion. Unificationists are encouraged to report to God what we are doing to support His dream, instead of asking what God can do for us.

"The age of pleading through prayer is over. From now on, you should pray in alignment with your responsibility, saying I understand what I need to do, and I will do it."

- Rev. Sun Myung Moon

You may have heard prayers ending in "Amen", "thy will be done" or "so be it," but have you heard the prayer ending "Aju"? Coined in 2006, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, affectionately known by Unificationists as True Parents, stressed the importance of praying in our own name and ending in "Aju". Instead of saying "Amen" as an affirmation of God's absolute power, "Aju" became a way of promising our Heavenly Parent that we will fulfill His will.

### A New Age of Prayer

Rev. Sun Myung Moon later explained, "Up to the present you have prayed, 'Please do this; please let that be done.' God then listened to your prayers and fulfilled everything for you. However, after receiving all that from God, you need to do what I have done: face Satan's world of the flesh, invest all your mind and body, and win. You understand all this. If so, why do you need to pray like that? The age of pleading through prayer is over. From now on, you should pray in alignment with your responsibility, saying I understand what I need to do, and I will do it." (1999)

### Praying Is Not Always Easy

It can often be a battle of calming your mind and heart while there are a million to-dos on your plate. At the same time, praying for topics bigger than us, like poverty, famine, crime, and even our next-door neighbor, may at first seem hard to reach. However, Paul Werner, a Unificationist and author of In

Harmony with the Eternal, talks about the importance of learning how to pray just like we learn to do everything else we are not good at first. He says, "We have to learn how to talk, walk, write, and sing - so many things. And just like any of them, we have to learn how to pray. Prayer is like ingesting a meal of spiritual food. And it is like breathing spiritual air. When we pray, we inhale God and drive out the devil as we exhale. That is part of the purification process prayer affords us." (Werner 79)

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Even if we only can pray for ourselves, then that is the sincerity to which God will listen. Even if we can only repeat the prayer Jesus taught, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven," God is surely listening. The moment we begin to feel how much our Heavenly Parent is guiding us and loving us, we may naturally begin to feel the urge to pray more for bigger purposes than ourselves. We will feel the need to pray for support, love, and guidance to the people around us, to the leaders who are in front of us, and to this world. Those are the kinds of prayers being taught by Jesus, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

### **Heavenly Parent is Listening**

We know through our personal life of faith that our Heavenly Parent listens to our needs, desires, and worries. When we pray for the safety of our family members overseas or our friend's health, God is surely listening. When we pray that our parents can stay healthy and live the most fulfilling life they can live, God has our ear. However, Father and Mother Moon teach us about the value in seeing prayer as a way of reporting.

"We offer You, our gratitude. Heavenly Parent, please accept this joy and glory."

- Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, also known as Mother of Peace, at a recent Marriage Blessing prayed, "We offer You, our gratitude. Heavenly Parent, please accept this joy and glory. I pray that all 8,000 couples who are receiving the Blessing today will fulfill their responsibility. Let them guide the eight billion people of the world to Heavenly Parent's bosom in the shortest possible time so that they can become couples whom You will remember and be proud of and in whom You will have increasing hope. Please grant them Your wisdom and capability . . . In True Parents' name, we pray and proclaim these words. Aju."

### **Pray to Support God**

Even a grown adult will sometimes ask their parents for clarity, guidance, and support in times of trouble. Hearing that, a loving parent will gladly do what's necessary to make sure their child is taken care of. We don't always know when our prayers will be answered, but when we look back, they always are in some way, shape, or form. When we say "Aju" in our next prayer, let us think about the plans and promises we will accomplish to comfort the heart of our Heavenly Parent, rather than how Heavenly Parent can comfort us.