



The Quaker Heron

Spring 2004

The Journal of Patapsco Friends Meeting

From the Editor

In June, Patapsco Friends will host Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting. We have taken this occasion to invite Tony Prete of Central Philadelphia Meeting to lead us in worship-sharing on the *Psalms*. In joining us, Tony is acting on a leading he had many years ago to deepen Friends' awareness of this record of a community's conversation with their God.

Some years ago, as a spiritual discipline, Betsy Meyer of Sandy Spring Meeting memorized all of the *Psalms*. Hearing this, I realized that I had not even *read* all of them; so I set out one morning to begin at the beginning with *Psalm 1*. It is six verses long and ends: "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." (KJV) In *Psalm 2* the Lord says to his anointed: "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (KJV) And with Handel's *Messiah* ringing in my ears I gave up my project. The first time I met Tony Prete I told him it was this stuff that justified slavery, colonization and war.

Tony told me that starting with the first and reading right through to the end was the wrong way to go about reading *Psalms*. He didn't argue my point that the Bible has been used to justify all sorts of wrong.

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The Lord's Prayer

by John Buck

The book *Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus* by Neil Douglas-Klotz, 1994, totally changed my view of the Lord's Prayer from unappealing and dusty to full of Light and energy. The author goes back to the original Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke) and gives a fresh translation of each line. It seems that Aramaic is a fluid language that can be translated literally in a variety of ways. I quote only one possible translation offered by the author:

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,

Focus your light within us — make it useful:

Create your reign of unity now —

Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light, so in all forms.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold
of others' guilt.

Don't let surface things delude us,
But free us from what holds us back.

From you is born all ruling will,
the power and life to do, the song that beautifies all —
from age to age it renews.

Truly — power to these statements —
may they be the ground from which all
my actions grow:
Sealed in trust and faith.

Amen.

Editor's note: Other translations from *Prayers of the Cosmos* are at the top of the following pages.



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father which art in heaven

Wordless Action, Silent Potency — where ears and eyes awaken, there heaven comes.

A Common Prayer

by Jim Rose

*and the glory
forever...*

The Lord's Prayer has been part of my being for as long as I can remember. Over the years I have joined with others to repeat the words in joy, and also in deepest grief. I have heard the prayer delivered with eloquence, sung with beauty, whispered with love. Now in my 80's, a certain dementia scatters my thoughts and slows my memory, but prayer continues in wordless appreciation of the goodness of God . . . and the glory forever.

Ruth Butcher

While it has seldom been the focus of my meditation, this prayer represents for me a somewhat troubling history. In the Episcopal tradition this is one of the prayers which is chanted in unison by the congregation, and the sound of that chanting, echoing centuries of obedient service, is a fearsome sound to me even to this day. The ability of man, no, the willingness of man to put aside his individuality and join a herd, to blend in with others and give unquestioning vocal support to authority can lead, and has led, to unbelievable atrocities.

But peeling back the layers of frightening connotations and hysterical history, I have been encouraged to take a fresh look at the prayer, at the words and at the meaning. And the most outstanding feature of the Lord's Prayer is one which, in my state of denial, had escaped me completely: this is a communal prayer. This is not an individual supplication (give me my daily bread), addressed to a uniquely personal God (My Father who art), or a selfish petition (forgive me my trespasses), but a prayer of community, a recognition that we are bound together in God, that when we pray, we pray to a common God for the common good.

The stress on community may not be unique to Judaism and Christianity, but it is a thread which can be found since the very early pages of the Bible. And certainly it was a thread which was taken up seriously

by George Fox and the early Quakers. Fox's letters are full of injunctions to 'meet', to join in community, to support one another. Quakerism centers on the 'gathering', and a 'gathered meeting' is for all of us a unique experience where a common spirit speaks to many, and we are joined in a common bond. And there is an understanding among Quakers that while there is that of God in each of us, it is a common God, and we are joined to a common Spirit. The light that shines within you illuminates my path.

Individual convincement is, if not the starting point in a person's spiritual journey, a significant step on the path toward understanding. While that convincement may be an experience which is thoroughly personal, it often occurs in the context of a Quaker community, with that community's support explicitly or implicitly. Each person brings their individual light to the meeting, and it is that light which enlightens us all and identifies us as a community.

The Lord's Prayer was given to us as a reminder that we exist better as a community of souls with common interests and a common destiny. So the Light which I seek, and sometimes catch a glimmer of, is not my Light but something which belongs to us all, as Quakers, as human beings: it is our Light, our Father. And the forgiveness which I seek cannot be for myself, but for all of us, for our community and the community of man.

Hallowed be thy name

Help us breathe one holy breath feeling only you — this creates a shrine inside, in wholeness.

A Bridge Inward

by Diane Reynolds

When I first began attending Quaker meeting I had trouble filling the silence.

I would often find the Lord's Prayer, a weekly fixture in my old church, floating through my mind. It became a bridge between my old form of worship and my new.

In Quaker meeting, I found I had the time to think about the words of the prayer and what they meant. The words are very simple. We are asking that God's will be done and God's kingdom established. This is the opposite of using religious practice to try to bend God, "the gods," or nature to the will of human beings. Jesus is very clear that the form of worship he is trying to communicate is not a magical manipulation of God to gain what we want. Instead, it is an attempt to discern and enact what God desires on Earth. This is the essence of Quakerism.

The Lord's prayer acknowledges our physical needs and tells us to expect that God will meet those needs. This brings peace.

The prayer tells us that when we act first to reconcile ourselves with others who have wronged us, we will find peace from our own wrongs. This is congruent with Jesus' core concept that if we love our enemies, good will follow. Jesus communicates this counter-intuitive information as a fact, not a fancy.

The prayer asks for protection from evil and from the temptation to act out of our own wills. It does not assume that living in the world is easy.

I was much taken with a comment in meeting that the Lord's prayer is a communal prayer. We pray to "our father," ask for "our daily bread," petition for "our sins to be forgiven," that "we not be led into temptation." This has led me to ponder the communal nature of Christianity.

Recently, I had an opportunity to write about a Wiccan family. Despite (or because) I am a deeply Christ-centered person, I was touched by how they try to live their faith in every aspect of their lives. I was also struck by how easy it was for them to be in constant touch with their gods. They burned incense in the kitchen to ward off evil. Statues of Thor or Osiris could be pulled off a shelf in a flash. Spellcasting occurred in the home, around the kitchen table, performed within the family.

Quakers do not burn incense or worship statues in the home. The work we do and the life we live becomes our prayer — a prayer easily eroded without the support and fellowship of other Quakers.

Christianity, as I have experienced it, has been public and communal. Worship takes place in a central building, open to all.

"The Church" as an entity is greater than any one person or family.

Even in periods of persecution, Christians have insisted on public witness. For example, George Fox made a point of worshiping openly when he knew arrest was inevitable.

In a society that has become less communal and much more private, family-oriented and individual, I see a deep need to preserve the communal structure of Quakerism, but also to add more individual worship into my home. I feel the domestic need because I see communal religious institutions becoming peripheral, rather than central, to people's lives. In my own life, I am more willing to skip meeting for work than work for meeting. I thought of this as I missed a peace march because I had to work. This privileging of work is so commonplace that we no longer question it.

There has doubtless never — or only in brief flashes, such as described in the book *Acts* or the early Quaker movement — been the kind of collective faith and intensity the Lord's Prayer seems to call for. But the call to community is clear.



The Lord's Prayer

Thy kingdom come

From this divine union, let us birth new images for a new world of peace

Becoming Prayer

by Bethanne Kashkett

V'havta: You shall love

*from the first paragraph of the
Shema*

So you shall love what is holy
with all your courage, with all
your passion, with all your
strength.

Let the words that have come
down shine in our words and in
our actions.

We must teach our children to
know and understand them.

We must speak about what is
good and holy within our homes,
when we are working, when we
are at play,

when we lie down and when we
get up.

Let the work of your hands
speak them.

Let your eyes shine and see with
their knowledge.

Let them run in your blood and
glow from your doors and
windows.

I first studied meditation in college, when the student union offered a Transcendental Meditation course. Each of us received a personal, secret mantra. I wondered why in TM, meditation was only accessible to those who could afford the hefty class fee and why the technique was a secret. Years later, I was lucky to find a book called **Meditation** by Eknath Easwaran, of the Blue Mountain Center for Meditation. I noticed that it was published by Nilgiri Press, the same company that published the popular vegetarian cookbook **Laurel's Kitchen**. In the introduction of the cookbook, the authors talk of their progression towards vegetarianism, their teacher, meditation and living a spiritual life.

Their words struck a chord. Their teacher was Sri Eknath Easwaran. The meditation technique he taught included memorizing a poem or prayer that you feel a connection to, and then repeating it silently, for 30 minutes, once a day. When your mind wanders away from the prayer, as it naturally will, you begin again. The reasoning behind this method involves the belief that the more you recite a prayer, the more you *become* the prayer.

Most Blue Mountain satsangs, or spiritual communities, begin with the prayer of Saint Francis: "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace..." Once that prayer is mastered,

many people branch out, memorizing a wide variety of prayers that span all the religious traditions. In fact, Sri Easwaran created a lovely book of collected prayers of the world, entitled **God Makes the Rivers to Flow**.

In the satsang I attended, one woman was using the Lord's Prayer. She suggested I try it myself. Coming from a Jewish background, I only had a sketchy knowledge of the prayer, so I set out to learn more about it. The traditional wording did not appeal to me. This was not particularly surprising, since I have a long history of not relating to the wording of traditional prayers. Typically, I would change a few words, staying true to the prayer's meaning, but allowing the language to feel more comfortable and usable.

I happened upon a Unitarian Universalist version of the Lord's Prayer from the book **On Considering Worth-ship with Children** by Barbara Marshman. This is her revision:

*Giver of Life, who is in and
beyond the universe,*

*We would speak your name
with thoughtfulness.*

*May we follow the laws of peace
and understanding here on
Earth*

*As the stars obey the laws of
heaven.*

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven

Create in me a divine cooperation — from many selves, one voice, one action

*May there be food for all so that
none may go hungry.
When we have been unfair,
unkind or thoughtless,
Give us the courage to say we
are sorry
and help us to be forgiving
when others hurt us.
Give us the strength to do what
we feel is right
and to turn away from
whatever hurts ourselves or
others.
For the wonder, the beauty, and
the goodness all around us,
We give grace and thanks.
Amen.*

True to my previous experience, I needed a simpler version that would still maintain the prayer's essence. I made a few changes of my own, so that it would feel more natural to me. Here's my adaptation:

*Great Spirit, who's name is
sacred,
Guide us to follow your laws of
peace here on Earth,
as the stars obey the laws of
heaven.
May there be food for all
beings, so that none may go
hungry.
When we have been hurtful,
give us the courage to say we are
sorry.
Help us to be forgiving, when
others hurt us.
Give us the strength to do what
we know is right*

*and turn away from what
harms us, our planet or other
sentient beings.
For your wonder, beauty and
goodness all around us,
We give grace and thanks,
Amen.*

I used the Lord's Prayer as a meditative tool. In many ways, it reminds me of the Shema prayer that is central in the Jewish faith. They both offer a model for how to live a spiritual life. I believe that prayer can bring comfort and a sense of peace. Having not been raised with the Lord's Prayer, I had no preconceived notions about it. This enabled me to view it as a universal prayer that expresses a way in which to live a God-filled life.

Ultimately, I learned many different prayers. However, I am grateful for the opportunity to be exposed to the Lord's Prayer and the chance to recognize its down-to-earth message. It is a prayer that I deeply respect and value.

Psalms

*Worship-sharing with
Tony Prete
Patapsco Friends Meeting
Mt. Hebron House
Saturday, June 12th,
1-5 pm*

Tony Prete has conducted worship-sharing on the *Psalms* at Pendle Hill for the past four years. He also teaches Scripture at Friends' meetings and at Friends General Conference Gatherings. In 2003, he delivered the Gathering's closing plenary address: *Shalom: Much More Than Just Peace*.

For small children, we will have childcare on site. For older children, we will have swimming in a pool at a the Rausch's farm; bring swimming suits and towels.



The Lord's Prayer

Give us this day our daily bread

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight: subsistence for the call of growing life

Visioning Every Step

by Susan Rose

Some years ago I participated in a workshop at William Penn House on “Every Meeting a Center for Peace.” Elise Boulding led us in a “visioning” exercise in which we were asked to express in words and images what we would like our meeting’s community to look like twenty years from now. We did this first alone, then in a small group and finally with the twenty or so Friends gathered that weekend.

This was only the first part of our exercise. Next we were asked to think about what our community would look like just before it became what we envisioned in its twentieth year, and what it would look like just *before then*, and just *before then* ...

Try it. If you do, perhaps you will understand the challenge I felt trying to think about what the steps are to get from the end point I could so easily imagine to the present moment.

*Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.*

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done

On earth as it is in Heaven.

Well, of course, it never crossed my mind to think of the Lord’s Prayer at any time during that visioning exercise. But I have no doubt that my vision of twenty years hence was shaped, however roughly, by my vision of what the world would look like if God’s will was done on earth as it is in heaven.

The thing is, I learned the Lord’s Prayer, along with the creeds, as a chant, words repeated by a whole assembly at a certain point in a church service each Sunday. I can’t remember ever being asked to think about these words, although I surely must have been taught something about them.

I did sing them, accompanying myself on the piano with great crashing chords on the words “Kingdom” and “Power” and “Glory” and “Forever.” Maybe all this power and glory made me think this prayer was all about *God* doing something. All I needed to do was just keep chanting and singing and banging out those chords.

*Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses as
we forgive those who trespass
against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

So there I was in my visioning workshop asking myself what the next-to-last step to getting to peace is and, by thinking backwards, at last asking what the *first* step to peace is.

I see now that I spent the better part of the visioning exercise thinking about how I was uncomfortable with the way of the world and how the world needed to change. Yet in its few lines Jesus’ prayer invites discomfort, not with the world but with ourselves. Do I truly want what I am praying for? And if this

is what God wants for me will I attend to it, or turn away.

So the first step to peace is to stand still in the light — the light that reveals whatever is opposed to it.

Are we greedy for more of the things of this world than are sufficient unto the day? Do we in our indifference harm others and respond to those who hurt us with a desire to harm them?

And standing still there you will receive the power and strength to resist that part of you which the light has exposed.

Do we sense the power given us to turn away from the obsessions and fears that rule us toward a new intention to live simply and lovingly?

*Because this is where grace grows, where God alone is seen to be glorious and powerful and where unknown truth — unknown to the world out there — is revealed. The truth then liberates what has been held in prison, and in the course of time it revives it, leading it in time to the God who is beyond time.**

How on earth do we live as God wills, now and twenty years hence? By living as God wills at this present moment. Do we truly want to? Do we trust that we can?

*For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever.
Amen.*

*Geo. Fox, *Works* 4:17. Quoted in Rex Ambler, *Light To Live By*, page 9.

And forgive us our trespasses and we forgive those who trespass against us
 Erase the inner marks our failures make, just as we scrub our hearts of others faults

Book Review

by Diane Reynolds

On Fighting Fire with Fire

Lemony Snicket, **The Slippery Slope**, HarperCollins, 2003

Right before we left for vacation, nine-year-old Will was hit accidentally above the eye with a hockey stick. At our hotel, several friendly employees asked about the cut and said they hoped the person who hit Will looked worse than he did when Will was through with him. The message: a self-respecting boy always fights fire with fire. On the way home on the airplane, we watched **Back to the Future**, a light-hearted comedy about a teen-aged boy whose accidental journey to the past threatens to keep his parents from marrying. In the new version of history brought on by his son's appearance, the father fights fire with fire. He confronts and beats up a lifelong bully, gaining a self-respect he never had before.

I was — and am — bothered by this monotone view of life that repeatedly drives home the message that the one and only route to self-respect is the physical domination of an enemy. There is no choice: we must, our popular culture teaches, fight fire with fire.

In **Back to the Future**, it is painful to watch the degradation of the hero's father at the hands of the swaggering, self-confident and much larger bully. We want the father to fight back, not to continue

to grovel before his foe. We cheer when he lands the blow on the bully's chin that knocks him out. However, I wondered why the father couldn't just bravely refuse to cave into the demands of the bully and take the consequences — nonviolent protest. Why couldn't this 1950's kid learn a different way by watching TV news about resistance to the South's segregation? Why do we always have to "fight fire with fire?"

In **The Slippery Slope**, the tenth book in the popular series about the orphaned and unfortunate Baudelaire children, Snicket raises this very question. "Fighting fire with fire" is the credo of the book's villains, Count Olaf and the very "in" Esme Squalor. Olaf and Squalor become literal pyromaniacs in their lust for destruction and victory over their enemies.

Olaf, a distant relative and one-time guardian of the Baudelaire orphans, wants to kidnap the children so that he can steal their fortune. Through many miserable (and funny) adventures throughout a series of books, the children show great resourcefulness, dignity and courage in slipping through Olaf's fingers.

In this book, the two older Baudelaire orphans are faced with rescuing their little sister from the clutches of Olaf and Squalor. The toddler is forced to work as their slave on the top of a cold mountain.

The little thing talks in a shorthand that only her brother and sister can understand. When she says "bush-eney" to Count Olaf, she means, says the author, "You are an evil man with no concern whatsoever for other people." This comment about our political leaders and their methods foreshadows the alternative way her Baudelaire siblings will behave.

Her siblings come very close to "fighting fire with fire," determining that to achieve the good end of liberating their sister they must use violence. They see no other path — until they start to ponder the implications of their act. They suffer for their decision and are derided as weak and foolish. I do not want to spoil a marvelous book by saying more but I couldn't have been more delighted with how the plot unfolded. Or surprised. I can't remember the last time I read a piece of popular literature where the heroes didn't feel justified in a violent triumph against their foes.

This book is such a great read for adults and for children, I can't recommend it too highly.



The Lord's Prayer

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
Don't let us enter forgetfulness, the temptation of false appearances

Continued from page 1

He simply encouraged me to find those psalms I could love and attend to them.

I don't think he actually said, "Find the ones you can love." That's the way I remember his words now. Tony's passion for the *Psalms* drew me. Since that conversation I have spent something like thirty hours in his workshops. In that time we have discussed perhaps twelve or so psalms. I have come to love these, and more — I have come to love "doing Torah with Quakers" as a Jewish participant in last summer's workshop called it. At that workshop we studied *Psalms 22*, which begins: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" I don't know if Jesus

actually cried these words from the cross, but if he did the Jewish witnesses who heard them would have known them as the opening words of a song of lamentation, of trust, of praise for the One Jesus called "Abba" — Father.

Let the humble eat and be satisfied.

Let those who seek the LORD praise him.

May you always be in good heart!

Let all the ends of the earth remember and turn again to the LORD.

There are amazing things to be experienced when you are turned to what you love with others who love. — *Susan Rose*

Spinach Pie
A Recipe from Bethanne Kaskett

10 oz. pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed
 1 small onion, chopped
 1 T. olive oil
 1/2 t. basil
 1 lb. cottage cheese
 2 eggs, beaten
 3 T. flour
 1/4 C. sharp cheddar cheese, grated
 black pepper to taste
 1 crust pie shell, unbaked
 1 C. plain yogurt
 paprika

Saute spinach and onion in oil. Combine next 7 ingredients with spinach and onions. Spread in unbaked pie crust. Top with yogurt sprinkled generously with paprika. Bake at 375 degees for 40-45 minutes. Chill and reheat to serve.

Patapsco Friends Meeting

Mt. Hebron House
2331 Calvin Circle
Ellicott City MD 21045

Calendar

Ongoing

Meeting for Worship and First Day School.
First Day (Sunday to the world), 10:30 PM
at Mt. Hebron House, followed by Simple Meal.

Upcoming

Sat., June 12, 1-5 pm: Psalms
Worship-sharing with Tony Prete

Sun., June 13, Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting
9:30-10:30: Quarterly Business Meeting
11:00-12:00: Meeting for Worship

Telephone: 410-465-6554
Website: <http://www.patapscofriends.com>

All are welcome!