

SURRENDERING PRAYER

(excerpts from Anthony de Mello's Sadhana)

BREATH PRAYER

"For the Hebrews a man's breath was his life. When a man died God took his breath away; that is what made him die. If a man lived it was because God kept putting his breath, his 'spirit' into this man. It was the presence of this Spirit of God that kept the man alive."

While you breathe in, be conscious of God's Spirit coming into you...fill your lungs with the divine energy he brings with him... While you breathe out, imagine you are breathing out all your impurities, your fears, your negative feelings etc. Imagine you see your whole body becoming radiant and alive through this process of breathing in God's life-giving Spirit and breathing out all your impurities.

Now express various sentiments to God not through words but through your breathing. Use the phrases below or bring in others that come to mind:

- * **Lord Jesus Son of God, help me...**
- * **Lord Jesus Son of God, help me to surrender...**
- * **Lord Jesus Son of God, I surrender myself entirely to you...**

EMPTYING PRAYER

Empty your mind. As thoughts approach use a word or quick image (a stream for example) to bring you back to a place of surrender and contemplation.

BODY PRAYER – SENSATIONS

Close your eyes and take up a comfortable posture. "Become aware of certain sensations in your body that you are feeling at this present moment. Be aware of the touch of clothes on your shoulders, the touch of clothes on your back, or of your back touching the back of your chair. Now become aware of our buttocks or thighs pressing against your chair.

Continue to go the round by yourself now, moving from one part of your body to the other. Do not dwell for more than a couple of seconds on each part, shoulders, back, thighs etc. Keep moving from one to the other.

Next we will go over our whole body, beginning with the top of your head and moving down to your feet. Starting with your head and face, notice the sensations that occur, not only the grosser ones but the subtler ones as well. Just feel the sensations without labeling or naming them in any way (like burning, itching etc.).

It is also important to not move any part of your body during this exercise. Remain as still as you can. "Each time you feel the urge to itch, move fidget etc. don't give in, just become aware of it as sharply as you can...it will gradually go away and you will become still once again."

So now begin with your head and slowly move down your body to the tip of your toes. As you notice a sensation, stop and take time to focus on that sensation before moving to the next part of your body.

[pause]



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Now I want you to consider this:

"Every sensation I feel, no matter how light and subtle is the result of a biochemical reaction that could not exist except for God's almighty power. Feel God's power at work in the production of every single sensation." Feel him touching you in each of those sensations that he is producing. Feel the touch of God in different parts of your body: rough, smooth, pleasurable, painful..

Now consider this:

"The experience of God need not be something sensational or extraordinary. One needs to do so little, really, to experience God. All one needs to do is quite oneself, become still – and become aware of the different sensations in your body. It is within these sensations that God can be found. It is there that you have God, living and working in you, touching you, intensely near you."

Now I want you to end with this: Perhaps you are at a place in life where you feel helpless; a place where God seems distant; a place where you are without resources, I want to invite you to do something. Spread your arms out to God. Tell God that you desperately need him. Ask him to pour out his graces upon you, to give you strength.

[pause]

SOUNDS

For most of us, we go on retreats to get away from sound. We think that in finding total silence we are more likely to find God. We also assume that some sounds – like the sounds of nature or the sound of a distant church bell – will foster silence and prayer. Of course all of this can be true. We do need to regularly get away from the hustle and bustle of life, and certainly God can be found in the sounds of nature.

"Yet there is no sound that need disturb your silence and peacefulness. If you learn to take in all sounds that surround you, you will discover that there is a deep silence in the heart of all sounds."

Begin by taking in all of the various sounds around you. "Listen to whole world of sound around you as a whole." Perhaps you hear a sound that you would normally identify as "distracting." Instead of trying to push that sound out, accept it and become deeply aware of it.

Now focus on individual sounds as they appear. As you hear a sound consider that God can be, and in fact is, present within that sound. **What does the sound communicate to you about who God is?** Alternate from one sound to the next, asking yourself that same question – **What does this sound communicate to me about who God is?** Also reflect on the reality that each sound is produced and sustained by God's almighty power...God is sounding all around you. Hear God.