

The Lord's Prayer

Henry Harrison Brown | Summary | A Metaphysical Interpretation

Henry Harrison Brown's 1915 book "Lord's Prayer" is a New Thought treatise that reinterprets the Lord's Prayer in light of modern science and spirituality. Brown argues that the prayer, while deeply rooted in ancient religious tradition, can be understood as a powerful affirmation of unity, love, and personal power. He sees the prayer as a call to recognize the divinity within each person and to align one's will with the divine will, ultimately achieving a state of conscious unity with the universe. Brown uses a variety of sources, including religious texts, poetry, and philosophical works, to support his argument, ultimately presenting a vision of a world transformed by a collective embrace of love and truth.

Main Themes

1. **The Lord's Prayer as a scientific and metaphysical composition:** Brown rejects traditional interpretations of the Lord's Prayer, instead viewing it through the lens of metaphysics and the power of individual thought.
2. **The power of suggestion and the Law of Justice:** Brown emphasizes the impact of our thoughts on our reality, suggesting that the universe responds to our inner convictions and that we reap what we sow.
3. **Self-reliance and overcoming temptation:** Brown argues that true strength lies in overcoming challenges and using temptations as opportunities for growth. He critiques the notion of external protection, advocating for individual responsibility and inner strength.
4. **The unity of God and humanity:** Brown posits a close relationship between God and humanity, suggesting that individuals are expressions of the divine and share in God's power, kingdom, and glory.

Most Important Ideas/Facts

1. **The Name:** Brown analyses the petition "Hallowed be thy name," suggesting that it reflects the power of suggestion and the use of names to invoke spiritual receptivity. He draws parallels with practices across different cultures and time periods, highlighting figures like Tennyson who used their own name for concentration and inspiration.

"Using his own name upon which to concentrate, he reached through it the same condition others reach by other names and by other methods." (p. 40)

2. **Thy Kingdom Come:** Brown interprets this petition as a call for the establishment of a better world through individual effort and the pursuit of goodness. He sees the kingdom of God as residing within each person and emphasizes the role of individual desire in shaping reality.

"When I pray 'May thy kingdom come!' I am talking to the King I am, as 'Conscious Law,' for the 'Kingdom of God is within' and the King of that kingdom is the Conscious Human soul." (p. 61)

3. **Thy Will Be Done:** Brown challenges the traditional notion of submitting to an arbitrary divine will. He argues that aligning our will with the "divine will" is about recognizing and embracing our inherent potential as expressions of the divine. He highlights the importance of individual growth and the pursuit of good.

"The good I develop in myself helps the world. The good I will not express is my loss." (p. 61)

4. **Forgive Us Our Debts:** This petition, for Brown, underscores the Law of Justice and the principle of reciprocity. He cautions against praying for forgiveness while harbouring judgment or condemnation towards others, as this creates a contradictory inner state that hinders true forgiveness.

"With this consciousness of condemnation of others can I pray, 'Forgive my trespasses as I forgive those that trespass against me?'" (p. 112)

5. **Lead Us Not Into Temptation:** Brown critiques the idea of praying for the removal of temptation, arguing that it weakens character and hinders self-development. He proposes reinterpreting temptation as an opportunity for growth and self-mastery.

"No; we cannot pray to have temptation removed. Many a time in the past have I changed the petition to 'Strengthen me to overcome when tempted.'" (p. 123)

6. **Deliver Us From Evil:** Similar to his interpretation of temptation, Brown suggests that overcoming evil requires individual responsibility and self-reliance. He emphasizes the need to address the root causes of societal ills through individual transformation and the cultivation of inner strength.

"Manhood consists of self-control. Any education that causes the individual to lay blame on external causes, and not upon his own lack of will and wisdom, is vicious." (p. 130)

7. **For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory Forever:** Brown sees this ascription as an affirmation of the unity between God and humanity. He asserts that individuals partake in the divine attributes of power, kingdom, and glory, and that recognizing this inherent connection leads to a sense of self-trust and empowerment.

"That which I in the Real am is this same Being whose is 'The Power, the Kingdom and the Glory.' I share all He is. I do not possess, but I AM all this. And I am because He is." (p. 147)

Overall Impression

Brown's interpretation of the Lord's Prayer offers a thought-provoking perspective that challenges traditional views. He encourages readers to move beyond the limitations of external authority and embrace the power of individual thought and self-responsibility in shaping their lives and contributing to a better world. His analysis emphasizes the interconnectedness of God and humanity, presenting a path towards self-realization and spiritual empowerment through recognizing and harnessing one's inherent potential.

Glossary of Key Terms

Auto-Suggestion: The process of influencing one's own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours through repeated suggestions.

Concentration: The act of focusing one's attention on a single point or idea.

Consciousness: The state of being aware of oneself and one's surroundings.

Divine Ideal: The perfect and ultimate expression of goodness, truth, and beauty.

Evolution of Mind: The progressive development of human consciousness towards greater understanding and enlightenment.

Hallowing: To make holy; to regard with reverence and devotion.

Involution: The inward flow of spiritual energy and knowledge.

Law of Suggestion: The principle that the subconscious mind is receptive to suggestions and will act upon them.

Manifestation: The outward expression of inner thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in the physical world.

Metaphysical: Relating to the nature of reality, existence, and consciousness.

Non-ethical: Not concerned with moral principles or judgments.

Prayer: A process of aligning oneself with the Divine Ideal and expressing desires in symbolic language.

Receptivity: The openness and willingness to receive new ideas and experiences.

Self-Realization: The process of discovering and expressing one's true nature as a divine being.

Spirit: The immaterial essence of a being; the life force that animates all things.

Temptation: An internal desire to act contrary to one's higher understanding.

Universal Life: The all-encompassing life force that connects and sustains all beings.

Universal Power: The ultimate source of energy and creation in the universe.