

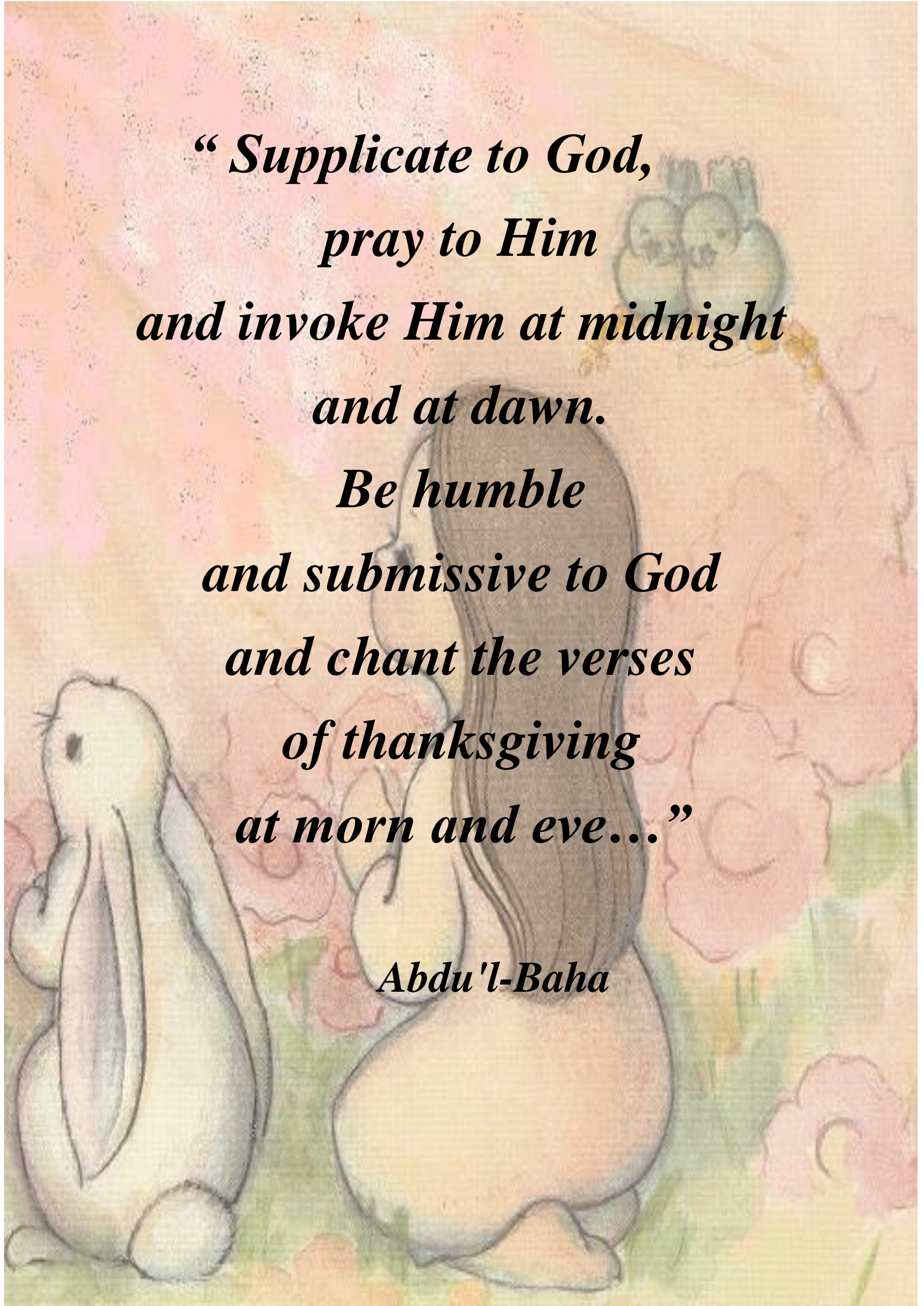


Hiru no Hoshi

No. 235

Contents

2. Words of Baha'u'llah
3. What is Prayer?
4. Okinawan children
6. Quiz
7. Coloring Page
8. Candle Holders
9. Photos
11. Parents' Page

A watercolor illustration of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, seen from the back, wearing a white garment. She is standing in a garden with pink and green flowers. To her left is a white rabbit with long ears, also facing away from the viewer. The background is a soft, textured wash of pink and green colors.

***“ Supplicate to God,
pray to Him
and invoke Him at midnight
and at dawn.***

***Be humble
and submissive to God
and chant the verses
of thanksgiving
at morn and eve...”***

Abdu'l-Baha

***“Supplicate to God...
pray to Him and invoke
Him at midnight
and at dawn.***

to ask God for help.
to call upon
God in the middle of the night.

***Be humble
and submissive to God
and chant the verses
of thanksgiving
at morn and eve...***

Obedient and do what God says.
say the words from God.
in the morning and the evening.

In this quote Abdu'l-Baha is telling us that it is very important that we say prayers every morning and evening. Also Abdu'l-Baha is explaining that we need to not only pray but also to read the teachings from God, the Holy Words, every morning and evening, and obey whatever God tells us to do.

Praying is talking to God. Children around the world pray in many different ways. Here in Japan, children go to the Shinto Shrine and stand and bow clapping their hands together. In the Buddhist Temple they kneel in front of the incense burner and put a pinch of the ashes to their forehead and put their hands together. They pray every meal by putting their hands together before they eat and saying “itadakimasu” and “gochisosama” when they finish. Children in Europe kneel by their beds at night or go to churches or synagogues and fold their hands to pray. Children in the Iraq kneel with their heads to the ground to pray. Some American Indian children raise their hands to sky to pray to the Great Spirit. God hears and answers all these prayers. Abdu'l-Baha said that even the little plants pray for rain, and God hears them.

God loves when we pray, because it brings us closer to Him.





Once upon a time, the 5 little children in Okinawa were settling down for the night. Mother was just putting the little ones to bed, as Mona, Asma and Riaz were finishing their homework. They heard Shahla and Anisa say their prayers. Then, as the little girls lay their heads on their pillow, Mother, patting them in time to the music or stroking their hair, sang several prayer songs to them. She kissed them good night and said, as always...

“Last thing before you go to sleep, and the first thing when you wake up in the morning, Ya Baha’ul-Abha!”

Riaz suddenly said, “Why do you always say that? And why do you make us say prayers every morning and every night? None of our friends do that.”

Mother walked over to Riaz and gave him a kiss on the top of his head before he could duck away.

“Well, first let me say that Ya Baha’ul-Abha! Is the tiniest little prayer that you can say. It is like calling on God to be near you. So, why do we say prayers?...Pretend that you are walking through a jungle and are trying very hard to find your way home. Your home is... hmmm....west of where you started out from. How do you make sure your going in the right direction to reach home?”

“Use a compass!” said Asma, who loved adventure stories.

“Good idea!” said mother. “Do you need to look at the compass only once during the whole trip, to find your way?”

“No, of course not Mom!” said Riaz, “You keep checking and checking so you don’t get lost.”

“Well,” said Mother. “That is exactly why we say prayers every day, and especially when we wake up, and before we go to sleep. It is to keep our soul on the right path on its journey towards God.”

Shahla’s sleepy voice could just barely be heard “Don’t we say prayers before we go to sleep so we can have good dreams?”

“Yes”, said Mother, “when you go to sleep thinking about happy, spiritual things, then you are so much more likely to have happy, spiritual dreams.”

“LIKE FLYING!” Shouted little Anisa, who wasn’t asleep at all. Everyone laughed.

“Well, maybe you will have dreams of flying” said Mother, “Those are nice

dreams aren't they.”

“Also”, said Mother, “Abdu'l-Baha tells us that prayer is like food for our soul. Just like we need to eat several times a day to keep our bodies strong and healthy, we also must say prayers several times a day to keep our souls strong and healthy.”

Mona lifted up her head from her studying and commented,

“If Riaz would feed his soul as often as he stuffs his mouth with food, he would have the healthiest soul around!” Riaz responded to that by throwing a pillow at her.

“Now, now”, said Mother. “There is one other thing, Abdu'l-Baha said we should ‘live in a state of prayer.’ That means we should live our life so that we are always at prayer.”

“How could we get anything done if we were always reading prayers?” asked Asma.

“Reading prayers isn't the only way to pray,” said Mother. “Working or studying hard is like prayer, playing beautiful music is like prayer. Basically, anything you do in service to someone else, is prayer,” said Mother. “There is a beautiful story of an African woman who told how the women of her village would walk to the river to get water and they would put big pots full of water on their heads. On the walk home they would talk to their neighbors, help a child here or there, and basically go about their daily lives, but they could never forget that they had that large pot of water balanced on their heads, or the water would be spilt. This African woman explained that ‘living in a state of prayer’ was just like that. We go about our lives with this thought of God in our hearts, like those African women, with the pots of water on their heads.”

Anisa, jumping on her bed, yelled out “And if we drop it, all the prayers spill out!” Stories always made Anisa very excited.

Shahla yawned and said, so sleepily....”won't you guys ever be quiet and let people go to sleep?” Everyone laughed. Mother put Anisa back under the covers, gave each one a last kiss, and closed the door....”Good night.”



Quiz

1. What does “supplicate” mean?

2. What does “invoke” mean?

3. What does “submissive” mean?

4. When is “eve”?

5. Who are we talking to when we pray?

6. Does God hear everyone’s prayers even if they pray indifferent ways or call God by different names?

7. How is prayer like a compass (as explained by Mother in the story)?

8. How is prayer like food?

9. How can we live in a state of prayer?

How did you do? Did you get them all right?

The answers are on the Parents Page.



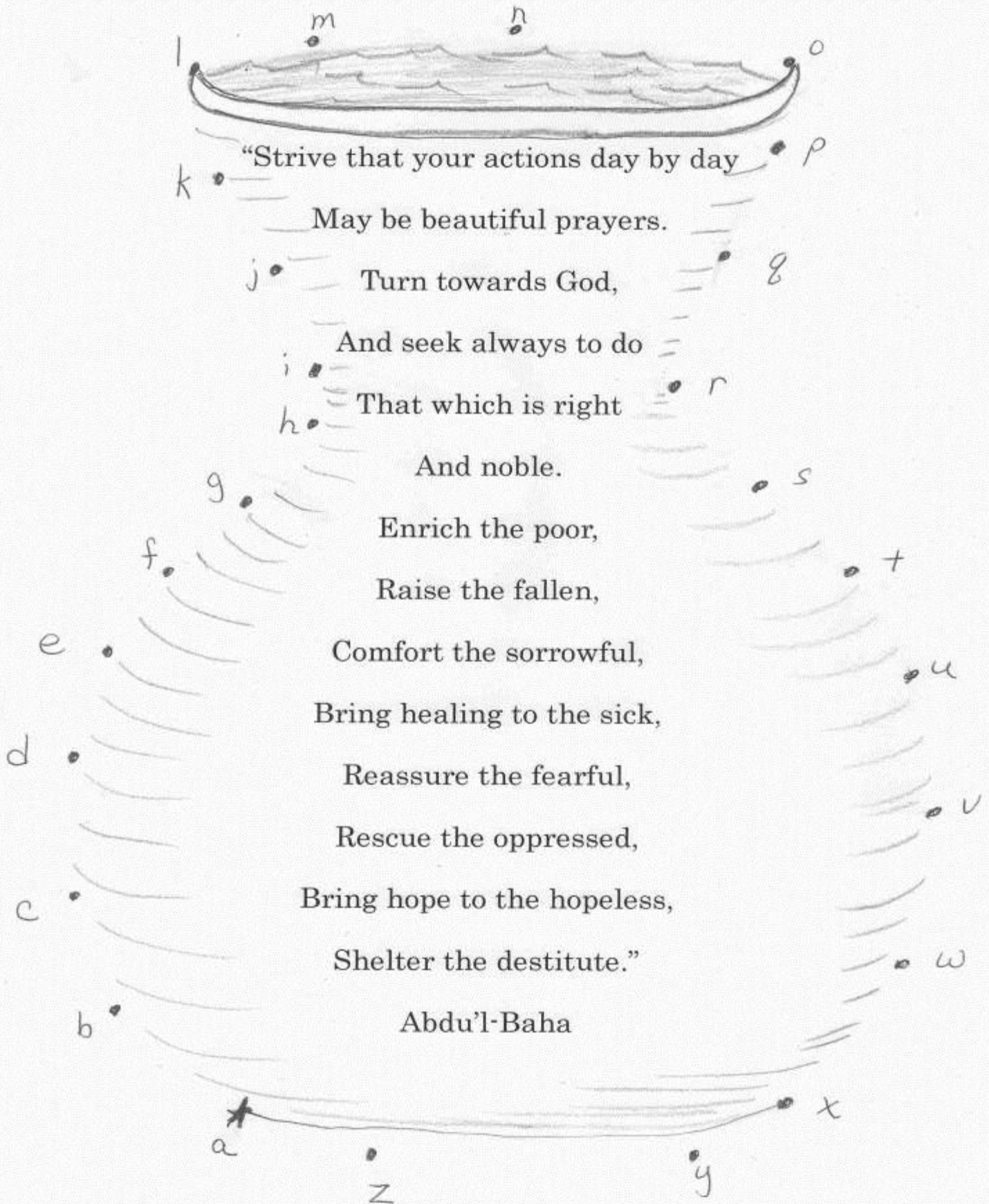
a to b

b to c,

Follow the dots,

And what will it be?

Then color and decorate it nicely.



Make Candle Holders



Colored kami nendo (paper clay) light or heavy

Tea candles

Plastic beads (from a costume necklace etc.) large and small, any color.

All this stuff you can buy in the 100 yen shops.

How to do it

Make a good size ball of Colored clay. Smash the tea candle into the middle of it all the way to the bottom to get the right size.

Take out the tea candle and smooth out the edges to make a cup.

When the shape is just the way you like it...cut the large beads off the necklace and push it all the way into the cup so it will be like a glass in a window. Do several "windows" around the cup so when the candle is lit it will sparkle out the windows. You can leave the small glass beads on the string and put them around the top and/or bottom of the candle holder.

Put the tea candle back in the candle and let the clay dry.

When it is dry you have a nice candle holder for Devotionals, Holy Days, or Feasts. Or you can give it away as a present.

NEVER LIGHT A CANDLE WHEN THERE ARE NO GROWNUPS AROUND!.....PROMISE???



Prayers for Children

*“I am O my God, but a tiny seed,
which Thou hast sewn in the soil of Thy love,
and caused to spring forth by the Hand of Thy Bounty.”*

-Abdu'l-Baha



*“He is God! O God, my God!
Bestow upon me a pure heart,
Like unto a pearl.”*

-Abdu'l-Baha



O My God!

*I ask Thee by Thy most glorious Name,
to aid me*

*in that which will cause the affairs of Thy servants to prosper,
and Thy cities to flourish.*

Thou indeed hast power over all things!”

-Baha'u'llah

*O Lord! I am a child enable me to grow beneath the shadow of Thy
loving-kindness. I am a tender plant; cause me to be nurtured through the
outpouring of the clouds of Thy bounty. I am a sapling of the garden of love;*

make me into a fruitful tree.”
-Abdu'l-Baha
Kids at Prayer



Parents' Page

Psychologists teach us that children that are raised with the security that there is always someone there that loves them and will take care of them, grow up to be self confident and happier adults. Unfortunately, though, we can not guarantee that we will always be there when our children need us. If we teach our children from the youngest years of their life to be always connected with God, to trust that God is always there to help them, then, even if we are not with them, they know where to turn for help. When they have questions about how they should act they know how to find the answers.

If we are taught from childhood to pray and trust in God, it will always be very natural for us. It is a very difficult lesson to learn this as an adult. We can read prayers and agree with them, but the total trust that God loves us and will only let that which is the best for us to happen, needs to be taught from childhood. When children have this great gift, they will not fear anything, even death. They will go through life happier and emotionally healthier.

So pray with your children, in the morning before they go to school, and at night before they go to bed. It can create lasting bonds between you and your children. If you are interested, the Baha'i Publishing trust has available some beautiful prayer books especially for children.

Abdul Baha has much to say on prayer. Here are just a few samples.

“There is nothing sweeter in the world of existence than prayer. Man must live in a state of prayer and supplication. Prayer is conversation with God. The greatest attainment or the sweetest state is none other than conversation with God. It creates spirituality, creates mindfulness and celestial feelings, begets new attractions of the Kingdom and engenders the susceptibilities of the higher intelligence.”

“Spirit has influence; prayer has spiritual effect. Therefore, we pray ‘O God! Heal this sick one!’ Perchance God will answer. Does it matter who prays? God will answer the prayer of every servant if that prayer is urgent. His mercy is vast, illimitable. He answers the prayers of all His servants. He answers the prayer of this plant. The plant prays potentially, ‘O God! Send me rain.’ God answers the prayer, and the plant grows. God will answer anyone.”

Answers to the Questions

1) Supplicate means to ask for help 2) invoke means to call upon 3) submissive means to obey 4) Eve is evening 5) We are talking to God when we pray 6) God hears everyone's prayers 7) Prayer, like a compass keeps us on a path towards God 8) Prayer is food for our soul 9) We can live in a state of prayer by always keeping God in our hearts .



If you have stories of your children learning a virtue or anything connected to the Faith, please send them to us, so we can have stories of "A little boy in Yamaguchi" or "A little girl in Akita". You can either write the story yourself or send the details and we will write the story. Either English or Japanese is fine. We also are waiting for pictures of

Hiru no Hoshi

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Japan

13-2-7 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo-to

160-0022

Tel. 03-3209-7521 Fax 03-3204-0773

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Hiru no Hoshi Committee: Rie Mactier, Seishi Hirahara, Luana Hirahara

Contributors:

Translators: Kazuko Bray, Rie Mactier, Seishi Hirahara, Asma Hirahara

Photographs: Nao Hara, Luana Hirahara,

Cover Page and 2nd page Painting by Keiko Mayahara

Drawings Larry Curtis, Luana Hirahara,

Technical Advisor: Nicholas Mayer, Asma Hirahara

Supervisor: Yuichi Hirano