

# Why my prayer for Bali includes everyone—even the terrorists

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Almost three years to the day of the last terrorist attack in Bali, three suicide bombers targeted Western tourists, including Australians, on this beautiful Indonesian island. While seated at restaurants in Kuta Square and at Jimbaran Bay beach in the cool of a Saturday evening, 22 people were killed and 122 were injured by shrapnel.

As I heard the news of the attack, my heart went out to all those affected by this tragedy. I prayed for the survivors, especially those who were injured, for the families grieving for loved ones, for the Balinese people—and yes, even for the three bombers.

As I prayed to bring healing to the situation, I found myself asking, What can I do to help stop suicide bombings from recurring?

Experts in this field have offered many proposals, but solutions seem to elude them. I decided to pray to find spiritual answers that would give peace to my own heavy heart, and also support the quest for a permanent solution.

## ***Hatred is no part of God's creation.***

I thought about what I'd learned from my study of the Bible and *Science and Health* over many years: God is divine Mind. He is wholly good. He does not know nor make evil. His children, created in His image and likeness, are just like Him—loving, non-violent and incorruptible. Hatred and murderous acts are no part of God's man, and that includes both men and women.

The individuals recruited by terrorists to carry and detonate the bombs were not being directed to do so by divine Love. They were being influenced and manipulated by people who espouse violence—even against the innocent, if it will forward their aims.

Those who succumbed to this mental manipulation were falling prey to animal magnetism—a mesmeric influence that attracts human thought toward evil. Under this influence, even a basically good person can be led to do things he or she wouldn't normally do.

Mary Baker Eddy, who discovered Christian Science, exposed how this evil or animal magnetism operates in an individual's thinking. "Animal magnetism, in its ascending steps of evil, entices its victim by unseen, silent arguments," she wrote. "Reversing the modes of good, in their silent allurements to health and holiness, it impels mortal mind into error of thought, and tempts into the committal of acts foreign to the natural inclinations. The victims lose their individuality, and lend themselves as willing tools to carry out the designs of their worst enemies, even those who would induce their self-destruction" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 212).

## ***How can we pray for those at risk for terrorist recruitment?***

So, I wondered, how can I pray for those individuals most at risk of being recruited to carry out evil plans? How could I help them resist the aggressive pull of animal magnetism?

I found this statement in *Science and Health* helpful: "Evil thoughts, lusts, and malicious purposes cannot go forth, like wandering pollen, from one human mind to another, finding unsuspected lodgment, if virtue and truth build a strong defence."

I reasoned that through prayer, I could help build strong mental resistance to evil in myself and others. So I prayed like this: “Dear Almighty One, You are the Father of us all. You have made Your children spiritual, able to resist evil thoughts. You are the only Mind, and each of us is Your idea. So there is no mind opposed to good that can manipulate or be manipulated. You have given us the ability to think rightly—to be obedient to and protected by Your law of good. Through Christ speaking in our hearts, we are able to discern right from wrong, to reject evil and respond only to good thoughts.”

Although I'd prayed along similar lines after hearing of the London suicide bombings, this time I was more determined to pray each day—to build strong mental defenses against the enticements of evil.

As a practitioner of Christian Science spiritual healing, I've prayed with people who were intent on killing themselves. Each time, I've seen their thought change and the whole desire to commit suicide fade completely away. There is no reason why our prayers for suicide bombers can't be equally effective.

***We can resist the mesmerism of evil thoughts.***

Prayer is powerful. It changes people's attitudes for the better. It doesn't matter what race or faith anyone is. None of us is imprinted with evil inclinations. We are not receptacles for malicious or suicidal thoughts. Each one's consciousness is the reflection of divine Mind. And each of us can resist the mesmerism of evil ideologies or purposes.

All of God's children have been created decent and honorable. We are naturally responsive only to purity and goodness. This is the truth about everyone and it can, and does, keep us from doing wrong. God is ever-present, and His all-powerful love can help each of us triumph over evil acts and intentions, no matter where in the world we live.



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*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, is her textbook on Christian Science healing practice and her class textbook in teaching Christian Science healing.

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**The Truth that destroys evil thoughts:**

**Science and Health:** 234:32-3, 515:21 Man

**King James Bible:** | John 1:5