

The Horse's Prayer

"To thee, my master, I offer my prayer. Feed me, water and care for me, and, when the day's work is done, provide me with shelter, a clean, dry bed and stall wide enough for me to lie down in comfort.

Always be kind to me. Talk to me. Your voice often means as much to me as the reins. Pet me sometimes, that I may serve you the more gladly and learn to love you. Never strike, beat or kick me when I do not understand what you want, but give me a chance to understand you. Watch me, and if I fail to do your bidding, see if something is not wrong with my gear or my feet.

Do not check me so that I cannot have the free use of my head. If you insist that I wear blinders, so that I cannot see behind me as it was intended I should, I pray you be careful that the blinders stand well out from my eyes.

Do not overload me, or hitch me where water will drip on me. Keep me well shod. Examine my teeth when I do not eat; I may have an ulcerated tooth and that, you know, is very painful. Do not tie my head in an unnatural position, or take away my best defense against flies and mosquitoes by cutting off my tail. I cannot tell you when I am thirsty, so give me clean, cool water often. Save me, by all means in your power, from that fatal disease - the glanders. I cannot tell you in words when I am sick, so watch me, that by signs you may know my condition. Give me all possible shelter from the hot sun, and put a blanket on me, not when I am working but when I am standing in the cold. Never put a frosty bit in my mouth; first warm it by holding it a moment in your hands.

I try to carry you and your burdens without a murmur, and wait patiently for you long hours of the day or night. Without the power to choose my shoes or path, I sometimes fall on the hard pavements which I have often prayed might not be of cement but of such a nature as to give me a safe and secure footing. Remember that I must be ready at any moment to lose my life in your service.

And finally, o my master, when my useful strength is gone, do not turn me out to starve or freeze, or sell me to some cruel owner to be slowly tortured and starved to death; but do thou, my master, take my life in the kindest way, and your God will reward you here and hereafter. You will not consider me irreverent if I ask this in the name of Him who was born in a stable, Amen"

- Author Unknown