

Gayatri Mantra Booklet

Gayatri Mantra

OM BHUR BHUVAH SUVAHA We meditate upon the
TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM glorious splendor of
BHARGO DEVASYA DHEEMAHI the Vivifier Divine.
DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODAYAT May He Himself illumine our minds!

The ancient mansion of Hindu tradition and custom is built on the four walls of Karma, Janma, Dharma and Brahma. Regardless of its size, a house needs four supporting walls. It follows therefore that in the huge mansion of ancient Hindu thought, customs and traditions should have a point of meeting together somewhere. It is not possible for anyone to escape from the consequences of what one does knowingly or otherwise. You have to face up to the consequences of all your actions, whether good or bad. Clearly, therefore, the doctrine of Karma stands as a cardinal principle that governs a person's life. One has to live and die with this principle. It is this Karma which determines one's joys and sorrows. And it is through Karma that you are endowed with this life itself. What is the secret of this Janma? This body has been given to you so that you could undertake your Karma and therein lies the point- that through the body you have to uphold Dharma. When you conduct yourself in keeping with Dharma, you qualify to attain Brahma. The Gita proclaims that when Dharma declines God incarnates as an Avatar. Truly, what you see in the form of a body is nothing but a manifestation of God himself. God takes the form of a human being to restore Dharma. What you call 'creation' is a manifestation of the Cosmic Principle. We also refer to it as nature. Whoever is born in this nature will certainly have the same attribute of this nature. Man who has the same qualities of this Cosmic Principle, this creation, this nature, is offering all that is embedded in this creation to someone for some purpose. To whom is he offering it? Is it for the sake of one's own selfish ends? Or is it for the benefit of the fellow beings around him? It is not right to act that way. Whatever you do and whatever you may perform, if you were to be inspired by the feeling that it is for the Ananda of God, then it is bound to reach him. Therefore, the abiding feeling in you should be that whatever you do, you are doing it as worship of the Lord. This principle contains the very essence of Karma.

CHANTING OF GAYATRI

When an individual is first born from the mother's womb, this is the natural type of birth. This is the natural state. This is the first birth as such. After you have been given the Gayatri Manthra, the dawn of a second birth emerges in your life. What is this Gayatri Mantra? It is the very quintessence of the Vedas. Verily it is the mother of the Vedas. The meaning of the syllable "Ga" is Jiva. Gayatri is that which protects and fosters all life forms. You must realise therefore that on being given this Gayatri Manthra, you have been given a second birth. When you start chanting this Manthra in conformity with certain rules and code of conduct, you will certainly be able to reach a state in fulfillment of this Manthra. You arrive at a new stage, the third stage, which is called the Vipra. At this stage you begin to chant the Vedas. Even as you try and understand and chant the Manthras in the Vedas, you must realise their significance and start practicing the underlying principle and thus live the Vedas every second of your life. In this way you will certainly succeed in attaining Brahma. It is only when you understand this Brahma Thathwa and perform your actions in accordance with this understanding can one be called a Brahmana. It is not by birth alone that one becomes a Brahmana. It is necessary that one's actions should correspond to this understanding. We really deserve to be called a Brahmana only when we understand the Brahma Thathwa.

TIME FOR CHANTING

It has been laid down that this Gayatri Mantra has to be chanted three times every day: during the sandhyas of early morning, afternoon and evening. Sandhya means the conjunction of two stages of time. Pratah Sandhya is the time when transition from the night to the day takes place. Likewise evening sandhya is the time when the day slides into the night. Madhyanna Sandhya is the time when the morning and afternoon are connected. Man is the embodiment of three Gunas. These three attributes are not confined to man as such; even time has these attributes. Time also has Sathwa, Raja and Thamo Gunas. What do we mean by time having Sathwa guna? All these three attributes have 24 hours to go by in a day. Each of these three Gunas takes up 8 hours by itself i.e, Sathwa has 8 hours, Rajasik has 8 hours and Thamasik has 8 hours. What are these 8 hours of Sathwik time? When you designate the period from 4 a m to 8 a m the intervening 4 hours are Sathwik. In like manner, the time between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. is also Sathwik. These two stretches of 4 hours apiece are Sathwik hours. The time from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. is Rajasik. It is during this time that all lifeforms keep doing whatever has to be done by them. Not only men, but also animals and the like do what is expected of them during these 8 hours. The factory worker, the farmer, the agriculturist and anybody that one can think of has to work during these 8 hours of Rajasik time. So we find that every individual has an experience of this Rajasik time. Then we have the time from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. during the night. This is the Thamasik time. That it is indeed Thamasik we know from our experience. The chief quality that is associated with this time is sleep. Sleep is being equated to Thamasik in this analysis. It is during the Sathwik time viz., from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. and from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. that we should undertake our sacred and noble duties. This will sanctify our life. We should understand and appreciate how time has been divided for various activities and only then can we realise the true nature of our existence. This Gayatri Manthra has to be taken up for chanting at any time during the period of from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m., and then at any time between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. It is absolutely necessary that you chant this Gayatri Manthra either in the early hours of the morning or in the evening hours. During the mid-day also it can be taken up for chanting, but for certain purposes. When you look upon it as a Sadhana, it is the morning and evening hours which are sacred for chanting. You should chant this Manthra at least three times in the morning hours and three times in the evening time. When you do this, you can certainly free yourselves from the fruits of your Karma. It is said that a day's chanting takes care of all the ill effects of the day's Karma. To illustrate this point, let me cite an example. When you go and buy a certain thing on loan, not only does the loan amount increase, but also the interest on it goes up. On the other hand, if you were to barter something for the item at the shop, there is no loan to be cleared, nor is there any interest to be paid. When you have borrowed something on loan, then you find that whatever you have earned has to be given for repayment of the loan, and the interest thereof. So, when you try and clear your debts as and when you buy a certain thing, then there is no loan nor is there any interest to be paid back. In the same manner, chanting Gayatri three times in the morning and three times in the evening hours before you go to bed would take care of all your errors in the form of loan and interest to be cleared off. By chanting this Manthra with this feeling you can certainly transcend Your Karma, you can even reach the state of Nishkama Karma. You can sanctify your life in this manner. Therefore, in order that you may understand the significance and reap the benefits of chanting Gayatri, you should know the significance of the morning and evening hours. There are those who feel that they do not have the time either in the morning or in the evening, to chant Gayatri. You do have the time indeed! Where there is a will, there is a way, it is said. We do fritter away a lot of our time. A fraction of your time that you waste, if directed to chanting Gayatri, can purify your life. You do have a bath every day. So, even as you bathe, if you chant this Manthra, you are not only chanting this Manthra and deriving the benefits thereof, but it becomes a form of worship. So also, in the afternoon, if you were to chant this Manthra as you eat your food, the meal becomes sanctified- the food becomes a

Naivedya. You may or you may not chant any other Manthra, but do remember that chanting the Gayatri is beneficial and you can experience this yourself.

EXPLANATION OF THE MANTHRA

Gayatri is the embodiment of all forms of Godhead- "Sarva Devatha Swaroopam."
Gayatri does not belong to any caste, to any sect or to any religion as such.
It is universal in its scope.

Gayatri has nine important attributes. These are:

1. Aum Sound as the basis of Creation, Brahman.
2. Bhuh The Earth, the gross.
3. Bhuvah The Atmosphere, the Ether, the Subtle.
4. Suvah Heaven, the region beyond Bhuvah the Causal.
5. Tat Stands for That. The Ultimate Reality is simply referred to as That because it defies description through speech or language.
6. Savitur Stands for Divine Savitri, equated with the vivifying power contained within the Sun.
7. Varenyum Adore.
8. Bhargo Radiance, Lustre, Illumination.
9. Devasya Divine Radiance or Grace.

"Dheemahi" signifies worship of or meditation on the Lord. "Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat" as the last syllable, is a prayer. Therefore, in the Gayatri, there is Varnam, Dhyanam and Prathana (description, meditation and a prayer) these aspects converge in the Manthra.

GAYATRI AND ADVAITHA

What goes on within you, depending upon the circumstances, are classified as follows - we talk of Sankalpa and for this we use the "manas" or the mind. When we talk of the aspect of "wavering" we have the "Chithha." When you think of discrimination, "Vicharana," we use the term "Buddhi", the intellect. When you have the motive of selfishness, you talk of "Ahamkara" or ego. What you have to understand is that basically one entity is described as mind, chithha, intellect and ego. We will do well to understand the basic difference between the mind on the one hand and the intelligence on the other. Mind is something that has got in its nature a divisive tendency. The intellect is beyond such divisions. Therefore this intellect is associated with the principle of "Adwaitha". When there is a division taking place in understanding the phenomena, we are assailed by the "Dwaitha" bhava. When you have this divisiveness in you, when you tend to see more than one thing, it is the mind that perceives this duality. The intellect tries to see the one among the many. What you should try and do is see the underlying unity in the diversity and not the other way around. This Gayatri is a sacred Manthra which tells you about this underlying unity in the diversity of things. It is through this vision on unity that we can perceive divinity and sanctify our lives. In this world we have mud or clay in one form or another. This clay can be one but the forms that it can take are multifarious. Likewise, gold is one, but the ornaments could be many. Milk is one, but the cows can be many in description. So also the Atma is one, but the forms that it indwells are many. In the world around you, beyond the names and forms, there is no third entity. This world is nothing but the convergence of name and forms. One form, one name. Between these two viz., the name and form- is the form that changes

continually, something which withers away and fades away and finally disappears. Though the form disappears, though the form undergoes change, the name as such remains the same at all times (Nithya Sathya); it remains changeless. For example, you have given the name cow to an animal. The cow, the animal, will disappear with the passage of time. But the name will remain. Forms will disappear but the name will last forever.

The sanctity of the name needs to be understood properly. It will be difficult for you to try and identify a person in a crowd by means of his form. However even in a huge congregation of people, if you were to call out the name of an individual, he would respond to your call. Through this name, therefore you can recognise the individual. In the same way if you take up the Lord's name as the basis, you can understand that forms in various hues and sizes have taken that name. If you know the name of the station, you can ask for a ticket for that station and undertake your journey. When you are not aware of the name of the station, how can you possibly proceed on the journey? Therefore it is the name that is important, and not the form as such. When you understand the full efficacy and the significance of this Gayatri, you will be in a position to understand the true nature, the underlying unity, the Atmic principle dwelling in all different forms.

ITS GREAT BENEFICIAL EFFECTS

Who is this Gayatri? She is the personified unity of the triumvirate divinity - Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswathi. Gayatri is also known as the five-faced divinity. The first face signifies Om. The second is Bhur Bhuvah Svah. Thath Savithur Varenyam is the third face. Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi is the fourth face. Dheeyo Yo Nah Prachodayath is the fifth face. This is the Pancha Mukhi Swaroopam, the five-faced divinity. From these five faces emanate the five life forces, Pancha Pranas. These five life forces are fostered and protected by Gayatri and therefore She is called the benefactor and the protector. During the time She is protecting thus, She is called "Savitri." You may have read about the story in the epics that Savitri protected Satyavan. Who is this Savitri? She is the Pancha Prana Swaroopini. This truly means that Savitri protects and guides those who lead a life of truthfulness. When She tries to improve your qualities, She is called Gayatri; when She protects and fosters your word, She is called Saraswati. Therefore, this Goddess protects the intellect, the life force and the word, and thus in every way She protects the individual at all times. Today you have been given this Gayatri Manthra. It is verily a day when you are having your second birth. Purify and sanctify your second life and then you become eligible for the third stage of Viprathwa. From there you will proceed to the stage of attaining Brahma. "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi" - how do you attain this state? You can attain in only when you have understood your own nature. When you ask the question, 'when do we become deserving to attain the state of Brahma?' then can you understand this. Before being married, a girl would be an ordinary person. After the marriage, she has the privilege of claiming half of whatever her husband has, as a matter of right. What is it that marks out from the earlier stage of being an alien and the latter stage of married life when she can claim something by right? That right is conferred on her by a sacred thread tied to her neck, the Mangal Sutra. In the same manner, so long as you have not reached the state of surrender, you are an alien to the Lord. Once you have put the thread of surrender around your neck, you become One with Him, and you have earned the right to, and can demand from God, half of whatever He has. Therefore, through your own efforts you should try and reach the state of surrender to GOD. How is it possible, you might ask, by chanting this Gayatri continuously, to reach the state of fulfillment and sense of feeling that you have received something? There is an inner meaning in giving this Gayatri Mantra to young people. We have in this Mantra the concluding words, Dheeyo yo nah Prachodayat. The meaning is this: Before you were given this Mantra, you may have been backward intellectually, or were a bit lazy. But now that you have been given this Mantra, you become sharper in intellect, become more

zealous, more enthusiastic, and certainly become more qualified for scaling greater heights in acquiring knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Before the sun rises, everything is enveloped in darkness. Even as the rays of the Sun dispel this darkness, so also the chanting of this Gayatri dispels all darkness and ignorance. The rays of this Sun dispels the area of darkness. Darkness has no place where the rays of the sun reach out. So also once your intellect blossoms forth by virtue of your having been given this Manthra, your intellectual rays will dispel the ignorance which has been persisting in you, will drive away all darkness and endow you with intelligence.