

Published in Hinduism Today Sept/Oct 2000

The Greatness of Gayatri Mantra

How devoted recitation and living a pure life will bring great spiritual rewards

by Karunamayi Sri Vijayeswari Devi

Dear embodiments of divine consciousness, Amma's abundant Motherly love to you all. The potential Energy emanating from the entire cosmos is called Gayatri. Meditation on the Gayatri Mantra burns away all the layers of impurities covering the mind, accumulated through countless births, and bestows upon you the vision of Supreme Consciousness. The twenty-four seed syllables in the Gayatri Mantra are: ***Tat savitur varenyam; Bhargo devasya dheemahi; Dhiyo yonah prachodayaat.*** All of wisdom, knowledge, and the entire *Vedas* are well concealed in these twenty-four seed syllables. Perhaps a whole lifetime is not enough to realize the hidden divine truths of any one of these seed syllables. While we may have many kinds of bodyguards in the external world, we should never forget that the greatest and most important protection is that of Jagan Mata, Mother of the Universe. The repetition of the Gayatri Mantra with intense devotion and faith gives the seeker divine protection. One who has experienced the Divine Consciousness of these twenty-four seed syllables has nothing else left to hear, read, learn or enjoy in this external world.

Meditation with self-surrender alone is the way. Meditation will develop in you the feeling of constantly living in the divine state of *atmic* [soul] consciousness. When your heart is completely set on Gayatri, all the actions you perform in the world will be transformed into highly noble actions dedicated to God. Practice of the Gayatri Mantra enables one to attain complete divine union with the Supreme Goddess of Divine Consciousness. This occurs when the meditation you have been performing during the *brahma muhurta*, between 3:30-4:30am, has borne fruit.

There are seventy million supreme mantras contained in the Gayatri Mantra. Among all these seventy million supreme mantras, there are ten million mantras attributed to Siva, twenty million to the sun, five million to Ganesha, five million to Vishnu, and thirty million mantras, more than all the others, are attributed to the Divine Mother, the Goddess of Supreme Energy. The Gayatri Mantra is the essence of all these seventy million mantras. Just as all rivers

merge in the oceans, all mantras unite in the Gayatri Mantra, the essence of all mantras. You may ask, "Where then does the Gayatri Mantra merge?" The Gayatri Mantra merges in the great ocean of Omkara, the sound of Om.

The arrangement of the twenty-four seed syllables in the Gayatri Mantra is most wondrous and mysterious. The chanting of this mantra develops *nada*, a regular subtle vibration in the nerves of the subtle body. For example, when we turn on a computer, various letters appear on the screen. Similarly, when we chant the Gayatri Mantra, the vibrations of this mantra touch various spiritual centers of our body, and as a result, a subtle energy is awakened in the subtle body. When the fingers play upon the vina, a stringed instrument, in the correct way, musical sound waves emanate according to the set tune. In the same way, the chanting of the twenty-four seed syllables in the Gayatri Mantra generates a wondrous *jhankar*, a pulsating ringing, and a powerful energy flows from the twenty-four special chakras of the subtle body. The seeker will be endowed with yoga shakti, the energy of union with God, only when these twenty-four chakras in the subtle body are awakened. As long as these twenty-four chakras are not awakened and energized, the seeker will not acquire the power of union.

After being initiated into this mantra by a guru, if one chants it in a soft and sweet voice with a tranquil mind, his wishes, including those that have not been expressed, will all be fulfilled. That is why Gayatri is hailed as the Mother of all mothers. She protects Her children from the negative influences of the rays of the nine planets. She also maintains balance between air, fire and water, the three elements in the body, ensuring good health.

The meaning of the Gayatri Mantra is "I meditate upon the Supreme Energy, Gayatri Devi, who has the supreme quality of sporting in the creation of all the worlds, and who induces noble thoughts in the hearts of everyone." One must perform *pranayama*, the control of vital breath, five times before beginning the repetition of the Gayatri Mantra. The repetition of Gayatri Mantra bestows man with divine knowledge, the realization of Divinity, supreme peace, highest intellect and Moksha, Liberation.

While chanting the Gayatri Mantra, one should leave a gap at the five places: 1) *Om* 2...) *Bhur bhuvah suvah...* 3) *Tat savitur varenyam...* 4) *Bhargo Devasya dheemahi...* 5) *Dhiyo yonah prachodayaat...* One should not chant the Gayatri Mantra at a stretch without stopping at the places indicated above.

Wake up daily during *brahma muhurta*, between 3:30-4:30 am, and meditate. This is the best time. But if this is not possible for you, meditate at least for ten minutes by seven am, or failing even this, chant the mantra ten times. Gradually you will realize that the whole universe is the radiance of Devi. You will witness that, in reality, the entire world is an embodiment of your own soul.

When you ascend to such an elevated state, you will never fall again. You will always be drenched in an ocean of Divine Bliss! This alone is the fulfillment of spirituality. You will attain this state effortlessly by meditating on the Gayatri Mantra. Therefore, my dear children, may all of you lead a supremely pure, truthful and divine life.

Amma Sri Karunamayi, Sri Vijayeswari Devi, *revered as an incarnation of the Divine Mother, lives at her forest ashram in Andhra Pradesh. After years of tapas, she now travels and teaches globally.*