

Gayatri Japa

*Om bhur bhuvah svah
Tat savitur varenyam
Bhargo devasya dheemahi
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayaat.*

TO BRING to one's mind repeatedly the inspiring lives of great personalities, the wise men of all the ancient religions had set apart particular days in the year, as specially sacred and auspicious on their account. On these days, nations and races glorify these lofty personalities, they re-live the spirit of the great events to perpetuate the memory of these great men. Thus we find that the calendar of the Hindus is marked by birthdays of divine incarnations, saints and sages, the Gita Jayanthi, Guru Purnima, Shivaratri, Vaikunta Ekadashi, and many more auspicious occasions. The Gayatri Japa Day is one such very holy and glorious day intended to remind all of the greatest and most glorious of all Mantras, the sacred Gayatri Mantra.

The Gayatri is the life and support of every true Hindu. It is the impregnable spiritual armour, the veritable fortress, that guards and protects its votary. In fact, that is the very meaning of the word Gayatri—"that which protects one who sings it".

The Gayatri is the divine power that transforms the human into the Divine and blesses man with the brilliant light of the highest spiritual illumination. Whoever may be one's favourite Deity, the regular repetition of a few malas (rosary of a hundred and eight beads) of Gayatri Japa every day will shower upon one incalculable benefits and blessings. It is universally applicable, being purely an earnest prayer for light addressed to the Almighty Supreme Spirit. The Para Brahma Gayatri Mantra is the most important of all Mantras. For every Brahmin of any creed or order of life, this has been prescribed as being the sole transcendental guiding light. The Brahmachari or celibate, the Grihastha or householder, and the Vanaprastha or one who is retired, must repeat this Mantra every day; the Sannyasin or renunciate is asked to repeat Om instead of this Mantra.

The nature of the Gayatri Mantra is such that you can repeat it while meditating on any form you like. It is generally conceived of as a female Deity by the majority of devotees. One who worships God as Mother adheres to this belief. But, in its true light, the Gayatri never speaks of a female at all. You cannot find a single word in the entire Gayatri Mantra, which speaks of a female. The feminine form of the word "Gayatri" cannot make its Deity a female. It is only the name of its metre and not the Deity. Some people think that the Gayatri Mantra is presided over by the sun. In fact, even this idea is to be modified a little. The sun that it speaks of is not that which shines over this earth before our physical eyes, but tat savituh or "that Sun", the great Sun which this sun or moon does not illumine, and which is the impersonal, absolute Brahman.

Therefore, this is the greatest of all Mantras as its presiding Deity is none other than Para Brahman Himself. Hence, why hanker after other Mantras? The Gayatri itself is the crest-jewel or the king of all Mantras. It is the most powerful of all Mantras. Na gayatryah paro mantrah—"There is no Mantra greater than the Gayatri".

Each word, each letter of the Gayatri bears on its head the highest Vedantic concept of the absolute, supreme Truth. Do Japa of the Gayatri—it will give you the most excellent fruit, the fruit of immortality! The Mantra is as follows:

*Om bhur bhuvah svah
Tat savitur varenyam
Bhargo devasya dheemahi
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayaat.*

- Om: symbol of Para Brahman.
Bhur: Bhu Loka or the physical plane.
Bhuvah: the astral plane.
Svah: the celestial plane.
Tat: That; the transcendental Paramatma; God.
Savitur: the Creator.
Varenyam: fit to be worshipped.
Bhargo: remover of sins and ignorance; glory, effulgence.
Devasya: resplendent, shining.
Dheemahi: we meditate.
Dhiyo: the intellect, understanding.
Yo: who.
Nah: our.
Prachodayaat: enlighten, guide, impel.

MEANING: "We meditate on the glory of the Creator who has created the universe, who is fit to be worshipped, who is the embodiment of knowledge and light, who is the remover of all sins and ignorance. May He enlighten our intellect!"

Herein there are five parts: Om is the first part; Bhur bhuvah svah is the second; Tat savitur varenyam is the third; Bhargo devasya dheemahi is the fourth; and Dhiyo yo nah prachodayaat is the last. While chanting the Mantra you should pause after every part.

This rare and most precious divine treasure of the Gayatri Mantra is neglected by the youth of the present day. This is a very serious lapse indeed. Open your eyes now on this sacred day and start in right earnest the Japa of the Gayatri. Repeat it at least 108 times (1,008 is better!) on the Gayatri Japa day. Then continue it (at least 108 times daily) without missing even a single day.

May the whole world be made Gayatri-conscious through the inspiration of the auspicious Gayatri Japa Day! May you all be thrice blessed by taking the vow of daily Gayatri Japa right from this very moment! May you realise the inner Truth of the Gayatri Mantra!

Gayatri Japa is observed on the day after the Raksha Bandhan or Avani Avittam (July-August).