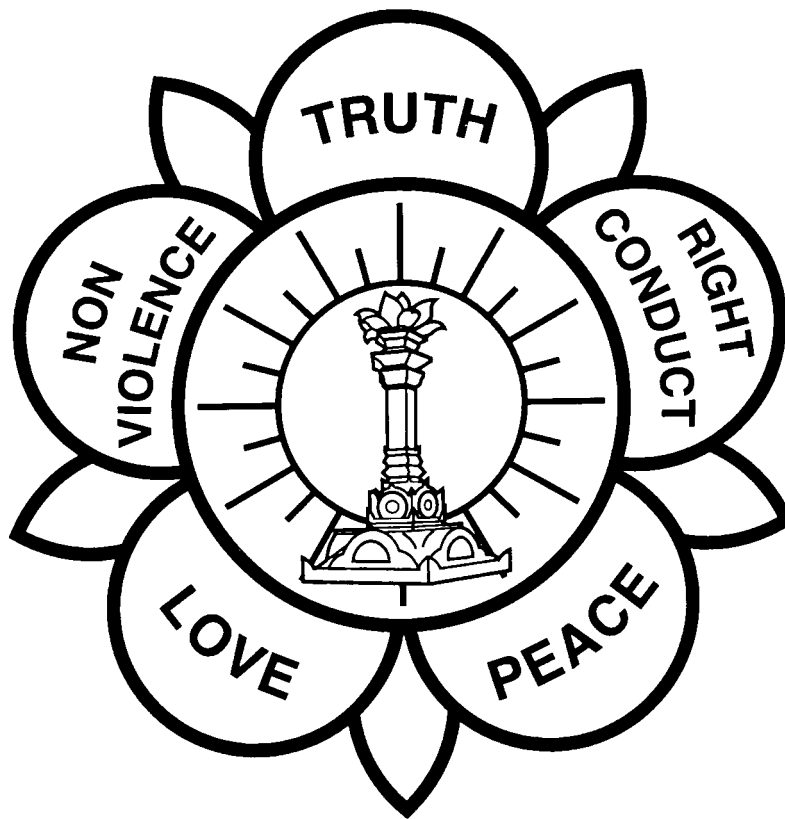


Sathya Sai Baba Centers of Northern California & Nevada
Special Study Circles on Gayathri Mantra



Sai Ram!

The Gaayathri

26-Jun-1981

The *Gaayathri manthra* has in it the validity of the *Vedas*. It contains the essence of *Vedic* teachings. Each of the four *Vedas* has a core axiom (*Mahaa Vaakya*) enclosed in it: *Thath Thwam Asi* (That thou art), *Prajnaanam Brahma* (Consciousness is *Brahma*), *Ayam Aathma Brahma* (This Self is *Brahma*) and *Aham Brahmaasmi* (I am *Brahman*). When all these are synthesized, the *Gaayathri* emerges.

Gaayathri is all Gods in One: The triple stranded *Yagnopaveetham* (Sacrificial Strand of Thread) is to be worn by every one who is initiated into *Gaayathri* recital, for he has to perform the three *sandhya* rites when the sun rises and sets, as well as when the Sun is at the zenith. The rites are in adoration of the Trinity--*Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*. The purpose of the rites is to invoke the Gods to bless the novitiate to lead a good life at all times (past, present and future), in all places (heaven, earth and nether region). The *Gaayathri* divinises the five elements; it represents the presiding deities of all the five. *Gaayathri* is worshipped as a Five-Faced Goddess--*Om*, being the first, *Bhoor-bhuvahssuvah*, the second, *Thath Savithur Varenyam*, the third, *Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi*, the fourth, and *Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayaath*, the fifth face.

Through meditation on the *Gaayathri*, one can become aware of the inner motivating principle of the five elements, the five vital airs in the human body and the five sheaths, which encase the *Aatma*. Just as there are three basic energies that govern man---the physical, the metaphysical and the psychical, the *Aadhi-bhowthik*, the *Aadhi-daivik* and the *Aadhi-aathmic*, *Gaayathri* has three facets: *Gaayathri*, *Saavithri* and *Saraswathi*. *Gaayathri* fosters the metaphysical, *Saavithri*, the physical, and *Saraswathi*, the psychical. These three *karanas* or instruments have to be cleansed and sublimated so that man can realize the goal of life. Through the recital of *Gaayathri manthra* and meditation thereon, this great task can be achieved.

Power of Gayathri

17-Mar-1983

All that is visible shines as *Gayathri*, for *Vaak* is *Gayathri* and all objects or *Bhuthas* are *Vaak*, indicated by *Vaak* and subsumed in *Vaak*. *Vaak* is speech or sound. It is *Vaak* that describes them, it is *Vaak* that declares them and it is *Vaak* that denotes them. All objects are also of the world or *Prithvi*. Nothing can go beyond it. This world is the body of man; he cannot leap out of his body. There is the *Prana* that sustains him; breath or the *Prana* is inside the *Hridaya* or "Heart". And, the *Prana* cannot move outside and beyond the *Hridaya*.

The *Gayathri* has four feet and six categories. The categories are: *Vaak*, *Bhutha*, *Prithvi*, *Sariram*, *Prana* and *Hridaya* - Speech, Objects, World, Body, Breath, and Heart. The *Purusha* that is extolled by this *Gayathri* is indeed exalted, sacred, glorious. All this objective multiplicity, as has been said, is but a fraction of his body. The number and nature, the measure and meaning of the objects or *bhuthas* are beyond understanding; yet all this is but a quarter of His Magnificence. The other three quarters are His Effulgent immortal Form.

It is impossible to grasp the mystery of that splendor filled Form. This *Purusha* indicated by the *Gayathri* is indeed referred to as *Brahmam*. He is the *Aakaasa*, beyond the comprehension of man; He is spoken of as, "*Bahir dhapurushaakaasah*." This is the mark of the waking stage; that *Purusha* is the *Aakaasa*, inside the personality of man. He is "*Antah Purushaakaasah*". That is the mark of the "dream stage". He is the *Aakaasa* inside the *Hridaya* of man. He fills it and fulfils it; that is the "deep sleep stage". Whoever knows this Truth attains Fullness and *Brahmam*. That is to say, he who knows the Three *Avasthas* of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep (*Jagrath*, *Swapna* and *Sushupthi*) is himself *Brahmam*. How ridiculous is it that man, known as *Purusha*, bearing the name of this *Atmaswarupa* should become the repository of egoism and consequent impurity, busy in the unholy pursuit of injustice! How calamitous! At least for being known even today as a "*Purusha*", man

should try to practice the path that will endow him with an atom of that Glory.

Then, what to speak of *Purushadharmā*? How can *Purushas* who have not cared to earn even the infinitesimal glory of the Primal *Purusha* be expected to practice *Purusha Dharma*? Not even the most diligent search will now reveal a fraction of it! As the ancient *Rishi* said:

*Samdhya Heeno Suchirnithyamanathas Sarva
Karmasu
Yad Anyath Kuruthe Karmo No Thasya Phala
Bhaag Bhaveth*

That is to say, when the twice born gives up the *Sandhya* worship, he falls into perdition; so say all the *Smrithis*. Those who neglect the *Sandhya* worship have no right for other type of ritual. It is because the sages of ancient times performed the *Sandhya* worship for many years that they acquired long life, fame, glory, wisdom and the splendor of Divinity; this is mentioned by Manu also. Therefore from whatever point of view we consider, no *Brahmin* can deserve that status if he does not meditate on the *Gayathri*.

Of course what is meant by *Brahmin* in this context is the man who has realized the *Brahmathathva* and who has purified himself by the practice of the *Brahmopasana*, the ceaseless contemplation of the *Brahmam*. This has nothing to do with caste and even religion. But, those who have inherited the name *Brahmin* have a special responsibility in adhering to the *Sandhya* worship and the *Gayathri*.

What exactly is *Sandhya*? *Sam* means well and *dhya* is derived from *dhyān* and so *Sandhya* refers to the proper *dhyāna* or intense meditation on the Lord. It means concentration on the Godhead. To fix the mind on God, the activities have to be controlled. For, success in that process of control one should overcome the handicaps of the *Gunas*, the *Sathwa*, the *Rajas* and the *Thamas*. When these faces of natural impulse predominate and try to direct along their channels, one must pray to God to negate their pull. That is the first duty of the man who strives towards God. It is the rule of nature, that the morning is the period of *Sathwic* quality, the "noon" of *Rajasic* nature and the "evening" hour of dusk of *Thamasic* nature. At dawn, the mind is

awakened from the comfort of sleep liberated from agitations and depressions and so, the mind is calm and clear. At that time, in that mental condition, the *dhyāna* of the Lord is very fruitful, as everyone knows. This is the reason why the *Praathah-Sandhya* is prescribed. But ignorant of the significance, men continue doing the ritual in a blind mechanical way, simply because the ancients have laid down the rule. The second duty of man is to perform the *Sandhya*-worship, after realizing the inner and deeper meaning of the same.

As day progresses, man is infused with the *Rajoguna*, the active effortful nature, and he enters the field of daily work and toll. Before he takes his noonday food, he is directed to meditate on the Lord again and to dedicate the work as well as the fruit derived through it, to the Lord Himself. He can start eating only after this act of devotion and grateful remembrance. This is the meaning of the *Maadhyaahnikam*, the Noontime worship. By observing this ritual, *Rajoguna* is kept in check and it is overpowered by *Sathwa* nature. This is the third duty of all men.

Then, man is possessed by a third nature; the *Thamas*; when evening descends, he hurries home and eats his fill and sleep overpowers him. But, there is one duty still awaiting him. To eat and sleep is the fate of idlers and drones. When the worst of the *gunas*, the *Thamas*, threatens to rule, man must make a special effort to escape its coils by resorting to prayer, in the company of those who extol the Lord, reading about the glory of God, the cultivation of good virtues, and purposeful nursing of good rules of conduct. This is the evening *Sandhya-vandanam*, which is prescribed.

Therefore, the mind that emerges from the vacancy of sleep has to be properly trained and counseled; it must be made to feel that the bliss of *Dhyāna* and the joy of being unaware of the outer world are much grander and more lasting than the comfort one gets by means of the daily dose of physical sleep. This bliss, this joy can be felt and realized by all; discrimination will bring this home to you. This is the fourth duty of man.

The man who, so long as he has life in him, observes the thrice a day *Sandhya*, is indeed of the highest type: he is ever glorious; he attains all that

he desires. Above all, he is liberated, even while alive; he is *jeevanmuktha*.

Care must be taken to see that the *Sandhya* is not taken as a routine ritual, one among many laid down for observance. This is to be carried out, aware of the significance, dwelling on the inner meaning. One should clearly grasp the sense of the *Gayathri Manthra*. It is necessary to feel the identity between that Effulgent Being, the *Atmaswarupa*, mentioned therein and oneself. It is only those who are ignorant of its meaning that will neglect the *Gayathri*.

Manu lays special stress on just this: why he has declared the *Gayathri* is the very life-breath of the Brahmin. It is not his declaration only; it is the Truth. What is more efficient for spiritual uplift than *Dhyana* on the Effulgence that illumines and feeds the Intellect of Man? What is more vitally fruitful than the prayer, which pleads for saving the mind from sin-ward tendencies?

For man, there is no better armor than the cultivation of virtues. Manu states that the *Brahmin* will not lose his status-so long as he holds on to the *Gayathri* and is inspired by its meaning; he says that, if he is too weak to pursue the study of the *Vedas*, he must at least recite the *Gayathri* and adhere to it, till the very end. The *Smrithi* too says that there is no treasure richer than the *Gayathri*.

Soul-force can accomplish all the tasks of the world; and since--the *Gayathri*: confers inner strength to foster that force, it has to be cultivated with care at the right moment, without neglect. For the growth and development of the body pure Sathwic food is very necessary, is it not? So also, the effulgence of the Sun has to be drawn, to reinforce the inner effulgence of man in the form of *Bhaavana*, or creative imagination.

When soul-force waxes, the senses too are activated and directed along fruitful lines. When it wanes, the senses fail and fail you. So, if the solar energy is drawn at that very juncture, it will be as seeds planted in season, the harvest is assured. Can darkness hide and confuse when the sun has risen and bathed the earth in splendor? Can sorrow prevail, when we have infused ourselves with that effulgence? How can we be devoid of strength, the

strength derived from the very fountainhead of *Brahman*? The technique of this process has been laid down by the ancients, for the benefit of all aspirants. Learn and practice it; by your own experience, you will be able to witness the Truth of their path.

Of what purpose is the *Upanayana* sacrament? Which is the *Manthra* that you are initiated into that day? Why has that *Manthra* alone to be taught then? Why are other mystic formulae not given equal prominence? Reflect on these matters and then you will find that the *Gayathri* is the Monarch of *Manthras*. You will also find the rituals shining with a new meaning, the rituals and restrictions full of purpose; the deeds and activities of the ancients will seem worth while. If you do not try to know the significance, you will interpret them as your fancy leads and land yourselves in tricks and stratagems, to escape the obligations of life. You will be caught in injustice and negation, *Anyaya* and *Adharma*.

Well, what is the real meaning of the word *Gayathri*? Does any one try to know it today? The word is taken to mean either a Goddess or a formula. *Gayathri* is that which protects (*Thra*) the *Gaya-s*, or *Pranas* or the *Indriyas*, beginning with *Vaak*. Besides, it is said, "*Gaayantham thraayathe yasmaad gayathri, thena thathyathe*." That is to say that which saves those who sing it, or revere it and repeat it or meditate on it is called *Gayathri*. It is this sacred *Manthra* that transformed a *Rajarshi* like Viswamithra into *Brahmarshi*. The *Vedamaatha*, the mother that is the *Veda*, will confer all boons on all those who worship Her. That Goddess is described in glorious terms in *Brahmanas* and in the *Dharmasuthras*: if you understand these clearly, you can realize it, unaided.

Dharma imbued with such deep mysteries, is today rationalized and interpreted willfully in various paltry senses, that is the reason why the decline of *Dharma* has come about. So, it is imperative to revive *Sanathana Dharma* and the principles of interpretation natural to the *Atmic* Truth, which is the basis of *Dharma*. Otherwise, the meaning will be changed out of all recognition and the whims of individuals will prevail. Every act will be stamped as *Dharma* whatever its nature!

Unique Potency of Gayathri Manthra

23-Aug-1995

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Man today spends his life fully preoccupied with worldly concerns. Owing to attachment to the body, he forgets his true nature, is immersed in the affairs of the world and involves himself in misery. He regards the body as permanent and makes bodily comforts his goal in life. These are the things which every individual experiences in daily life.

If anybody accosts a person and asks him, "Who are you"?, out of his identification with the body he gives his name in reply. In answer to further questions he introduces himself as a doctor, a farmer, or student or the like. When the enquiry goes further, he identifies himself with his nationality as an American, an Indian, a Pakistani, or so on. When you examine these answers deeply, you will find that none of them gives the truth. He got his name from his parents. It did not belong to him at birth. His identification with one or other of his professions is not true because he is not the profession.

Body, Jiva and Atma

What, then, is the truth about him? "I am the *Atma*. That is my true Self." That is the truth. But people identify themselves with their names, professions and nationality and do not base their lives on the *Atma*. No driver of a car identifies himself with the car. Likewise, the body is a car and the *Atma* is the driver. Forgetting one's true role as a driver, one is identifying one's self with the body, which is only a vehicle.

This truth is emphatically brought out by the *Gayathri Mantra*. *Dehabudhyaath Daasoham* - In the context of the body, I am an instrument, a servant. *Jivabudhyaath Thadamsah* - In the context of the *Jiva*, the individual soul, I am a spark of That (the Divine). *Aatmabudhyaath Thvamevaaham* - In

terms of the *Atma* I am you. When one views one's self from the *Atmic* standpoint, one is identical with the Divine. I am you and you are me.

Three storied mansion

Every man has thus three aspects. Our life itself is a three storied mansion. The *Brahmacharya* (celibate) stage is the foundation of this mansion. After that, the stage of *Grihastha* (householder) is the first floor. Then you have the *Vanaprastha* (retirement from the life of a householder) stage as the second floor. Finally, there's the stage of the *Sanyaasa*(renunciant) , constituting the third floor. Thus, *Brahmacharya* is the foundation for the other three stages of life. The safety and security of the other three floors depend on the strength of the foundation, (viz., *Brahmacharya*). Hence, *Brahmacharya* is the basic foundation.

But, unfortunately this vital fact has been forgotten by people. They feel happy on seeing the super structure. But the whole edifice may collapse at any time if the foundation is weak. When you feel happy at the sight of a tree and its flowers and fruits, you must be concerned about its roots. The unseen foundation is the basis for the visible mansion. The invisible roots are the basis for the visible tree. Likewise, the invisible vital force (*Praana*) is the basis for the visible body. *Praana* has no form, while the body has a form. There is, however, the *Atmic* principle which confers all the potencies for the life force (*Praana*). It is because of the power imparted by the *Atma* that the life force is able to activate the body. The body inherently is inert. It is made up of different kinds of material substances.

Three potencies in man

The first line in the *Gayathri Manthra* is *Om Bhurbhuvassuvah*. This *manthra* is assumed to refer to three worlds: the earth, the middle world and heaven (or *Swarga*, the land of the gods). *Bhu* refers to the body. It is made up of the five elements (*Pancha Bhutas*). These five elements constitute nature (*Prakriti*). There is an intimate relationship between the body and nature. The same five elements that are in nature are also in the body. *Bhuvah* is the life force that animates the body (*Praana Sakthi*). Even if the life force exists, without *Jnana* (Awareness) the body will be of no use. It is

on this account that the *Vedas* declared: *Prajnaanam Brahma* (Constant Integrated Awareness is *Brahmam*). It is by the presence of *Prajnaana* that the life force is able to animate the body. The body represents inert matter. The life force operates in the body as a vibration. This vibration derives its power from *Prajnaana*, which finds expression in radiation.

Therefore, the body, the life force and the *Prajnaana* are all within man. The entire cosmos is present in miniature within man. It is because of these three constituents that we are able to see the cosmos and experience many other things. Every potency is within us. The external is a reflection of the inner being.

It follows from this that true humanness (*maanavathvam*) is divinity itself (*Daivathvam*). Hence, the *Vedas* declared that the divine appears in human form. Every human being is inherently divine, but owing to his attachment to the body he considers himself a mere man.

How did this human body get animated by the life force? Whence has this life force come? It is from the *Atma Sakthi* (the power of the Self). Making use of this power of the Self, the life force carries out all activities.

Triple aspects of Gaayathri

Who is *Gaayathri*? *Gaayathri* is not a Goddess. *Gaayathri* is the mother of the *Vedas* (*Gaayathri Chandasaam maatha*). *Gaayantham thraayathe ithi Gaayathri*. *Gaayathri* is that which redeems the chanter of the *manthra*. *Gaayathri* is present wherever the *manthra* is chanted.

Gaayathri, however, has three names: *Gaayathri*, *Saavitri*, *Saraswathi*. These three are present in everyone. *Gaayathri* represents the senses. It is the master of the senses. *Savitri* is the master of the life force (*Praana*). Many Bharatians are familiar with the story of *Saavitri* who brought back to life her dead husband, *Sathyavaan*. *Saavitri* signifies truth. *Saraswathi* is the presiding deity of speech (*Vaak*). The three represent purity in thought, word and deed (*Thrikarana Suddhi*). Although *Gaayathri* has three names, all the three are in each of us as the

senses (*Gaayathri*), the power of speech (*Saraswathi*) and the life force, (*Saavitri*).

Gaayathri is said to have five faces and hence is called *Panchamukhi*. Is there anybody in the world with five faces? No. In the *Ramayana*, *Ravana* is said to have ten heads. If really he had ten heads, how would he be able to lie in his bed or move about? This is not the inner meaning of this description. He is said to be ten headed because he was the master of the four *Vedas* and the six *Sastras*. Likewise, *Gaayathri* is described as five faced. The five faces are: *Om* (the *Pranava*) is the first face. The *Pranava* principle represents the eight different forms of wealth (*Ashta Aiswarya*). The second face is: *Bhurbhuvah-suvaha*. The third is: *Thath-Savitur-varenyam*. The fourth is: *Bhargo Devasya dheemahi*. *Dheeyo yo nah prachodayaath* is the fifth face. When the *Gaayathri mantra* is understood in this way, it will be realised that all the five aspects of *Gaayathri* are within each of us.

Power of Gaayathri mantra

The *Gaayathri mantra* has all the three elements which figure in the adoration of God : description, meditation and prayer. The first nine words of the *mantra* represent the attributes of the divine, *Om Bhur-Bhuvah-Suvah Thath Savitur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya*. *Dheemahi* pertains to *dhyaana* (meditation). *Dheeyo yo nah Prachodayaath* is the prayer to the Lord. The *mantra* is thus a prayer to God to confer all powers and talents.

Sarvaroganivaarini Gaayathri: *Gaayathri* is the reliever of all diseases. *Sarvaduhkha parivaarini Gaayathri*: *Gaayathri* wards off all misery. *Sarvavaanacha phalasri Gaayathri*: *Gaayathri* is the fulfiller of all desires. *Gaayathri* is the bestower of all that is beneficial. If the *mantra* is chanted, various kinds of powers will emerge in one.

Hence the *Gaayathri mantra* should not be treated casually. In our respiration process the sound of *Gaayathri* is imbedded. That sound is a reminder of our true form. In the breathing process, there is inhalation and exhalation. In the *Yoga Sastra* inhalation is termed *Poorakam* and the exhalation is called *Rechakam*. Holding the breath is called *Kumbhakam*. When air is inhaled, the sound that is produced is *So-o-o*. When it is exhaled the sound is

Ham-m-m. So-ham, So-ham (Bhagavan demonstrated how this happens while breathing in and out). *So is That. Ham* is I. I am That. I am Divine. Every breath proclaims this. The *Vedas* declared the same thing in the pronouncements: *Thath Thvam Asi* (That thou art), *Aham Brahmaasmi* (I am Brahman), *Ayam Atma Brahma* (This *Atma* is *Brahman*).

Don't imagine God is somewhere remote from you. He is within you . You are God. People want to see God. *Sathyam Jnaanam Anantham Brahma* say the scriptures. Truth is God. Wisdom is God. Both these are present everywhere. They transcend the categories of time and place. Truth is that which is valid at all times past, present an future. That truth is *Gaayathri*.

Gaayathri is thus the indweller in the heart (*Hridaya*). *Hridaya* contains the word *Daya* meaning compassion. There is compassion in every heart. But to what extent is it shown in real life? Very little. All the while only anger, jealousy, pride and hatred are displayed. These evil qualities are not natural to man. They are opposed to human nature.

It has been declared that one who bases himself entirely on the mind is a demon. One who bases himself on body is an animal. One who follows *Atma* (the Self) is divinely endowed. One who relies on the body, the mind and *Atma* is a human being. Humanness is the combination of the body, mind and *Atma*. Man should strive to ascend to the divine and not descend to the demonic or animal nature.

Parent's duty

From today onwards parents should teach their children stories with morals. You all know in what a chaotic condition the world is today. Disorder and violence are rampant everywhere. Peace and security are not to be found anywhere. Where is peace to be found? It is within us. Security is also within us. How is insecurity to be removed and security secured? It is by giving up desires. In the language of the ancient *Bharatiyas* this was termed *Vairaagya* (giving up attachment). This does not mean giving up home and family and retiring into the forest. It is reduction of wants. As a householder limit your desires to the needs of the family. As a student, stick to your studies. As a professional,

adhere to the duties of your profession. Do not indulge in excesses of any kind.

In the practice of the *Gaayathri mantra*, one should realise that everything is within one and thereby develop confidence in the Self. Man today is racked by numerous troubles because he has no confidence in the Self. The aspirant on the spiritual path is he bound to face the troubles caused by the six enemies - lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy. He has to he overcome them.

Call to students

Students! On an auspicious occasion like this, you should consider how you can lead an ideal life. Through faith in God you have to sanctify the body. Without the body, you cannot experience the mind and the intellect. To achieve your ideals, the body is the instrument. It should be kept in proper condition. While the body is a instrument, the user of the instrument is the Self. All sense organs function because of the *Atma*. The *Atma* is the witness to everything. It is also known as conscience. The conscience derives its sanction from the divine. It is a fragment of the divine.

Every human being is a spark of the divine, as declared in the *Gita*. The human being is essentially divine, but tends to forget his divine origin. The *Gaayathri mantra* is enough to protect the person who chants it, because *Gaayathri* embodies all the divine potencies. It is an essential requisite for the young because it ensures a bright and auspicious future for them. The young students are the citizens and leaders of tomorrow. Hence, they should develop pure and noble thoughts. The parents also should foster such a development.

Nearness to God

The *Upanayanam* ceremony is over. The *Gaayathri mantra* has been imparted to you. You are wearing the sacred thread with three strands tied in one knot. The three strands represent *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Maheswara*. They also represent the past, the present and the future. *Upanayanam* means being near to God. Nearness to God will enable you to get rid of your bad qualities and acquire virtues.

Students! The *Vedas* have emphasised three duties: Esteem the mother as God, the father as

God and the preceptor as God. Bear this injunction in mind. Gratitude to your parents is your foremost duty. This is the lesson taught by Sri Rama.

Love your parents and remember God. When you please your parents and make them happy, your entire life will be filled with happiness.

Chant the *Gaayathri* as often as possible. If you chant it while you take a bath, your bath gets sanctified. Likewise chant it before taking your food. The food becomes an offering to the divine. Develop heartfelt devotion to God.

[Swami concluded his discourse with the *bhajan*: *Hari bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*. The vast gathering joined Bhagavan in singing the *bhajan* in chorus.]

The Basic Hypocrisy

26-Apr-1965

This day as well as yesterday, *Pundits* spoke to you about *Sanathana Dharma* and its greatness. I too shall speak only about that, for, there is nothing more important than that *Dharma* for material and spiritual happiness. *Sanathana Dharma* calls on you to revere the *Achaarya*, for he is seeking to save you from disaster, the flood of birth and death into which you are slipping, through ignorance. *Eetha* or Swimming you have to learn to escape from the swollen river; *Geetha* or the Lord's Teaching you have to learn to escape from the swirling torrent of birth death. The *Guru* points out the *Guri* (Goal) to you; he reveals the *Atmathathwam*. A man struggling in a bog cannot be saved by another who is also caught in its slime. Only one standing on firm ground can pull him out. So the *Guru* must have a secure footing, above and beyond the slush of *Samsara*. The *Rishis* or Sages struggled with themselves and elevated themselves into the purer regions of thought, to discover their own truth. They felt the thrill of that discovery and sang of the freedom they gained. These songs serve as signposts and all who derive benefit therefrom have to acknowledge the debt. How to repay the *Rishi-rna*, the debt of the *Rishis*? By study, by reflection on what they have sung of their liberation, by

practicing the *Sadhana* they adopted, by proving them right out of your own experience.

There are also three other *Rnas*, or debts, mentioned in the scriptures--*Pithr-rna*, *Maath-rna* and *Deva-rna*, the debt of the father, of the mother and of the Gods. Once there was a great sage named Uddalaka, famous for his scholarship. He had a son, Swethakethu and a daughter Sujatha. Among his disciples was Kahodaka a young man who was well behaved, virtuous, devoted to the teacher and earnest in his studies. But, he could not keep pace with the other bright lads and so became the target for taunts. The *Guru* loved him all the more on account of this. Sympathy with his lot grew into Grace; Grace resulted in the *Guru* offering his own daughter in marriage to Kahodaka! While Sujatha was enceinte, Kahodaka recited the *Vedas* as laid down in the disciplinary rules, but within hearing of the child growing in the womb. It heard the recitation but, since it was already aware of the correct pronunciation of every syllable, whenever Kahodaka spelt a syllable wrong, it squirmed in distress. So, when the baby was born, it had eight bends, crooked in eight places, in fact! Naturally, he was named eight bends or Ashtavakra.

When Ashtavakra was still in the womb, Sujatha had persuaded her husband to seek some monetary help from King Janaka to relieve their dire poverty and when Kahodaka went to Mithila, in the midst of a big *Yaga* which the king was celebrating, he had to stay on till it finished; later, he was forced by circumstances to join a competitive disputation with a celebrated scholar called Vaandena, and accept the terms laid down by the challenger, namely whoever gets defeated in argument was to be thrown into the sea.

Meanwhile, Ashtavakra, in spite of his physical deformity, became an erudite *Pundit* full of intricate scholarship, even while in his teens. His father's fate was kept from the lad by both Sujatha and Swethakethu for many years, but, one day, he was taunted by some one as one who was ignorant of his father's fate and the sad tale was revealed to the son. Immediately, he proceeded to Mithila and sought entrance into the audience-hall of King Janaka. The guards laughed when he wanted them to report to the King that a *Vedic* scholar eager for disputation with the court pundits had come. They

slighted him for his tender age but he said that age was no criterion. At last, he pleaded that his deformity, at least, entitled him to hospitality and sympathy.

Janaka was struck by the boy's persistence and courage; he ordered that he should be admitted and arranged the disputation the boy sought! If I start telling you the absurd questions that the court pundits teased him with and the replies with which Ashtavakra sparred them with, it will take so much time that perhaps we will have to sit beyond *Sivarathri* even! Janaka tried his best to dissuade him; he told him that he was too young to risk death in the sea. But, Ashtavakra argued that *Atmavidya* does not take account the *Dehathathwam*, the physical principle of the body. Vaandeena entered the fray with the deformed lad resplendent with spiritual scholarship; to the great astonishment of all, the boy gained the upper hand; the aged pundit squirmed under the questions; he failed; he had to be thrown into the sea; the deformed son of Kahodaka had triumphed over the victor who had consigned his father to the waves. The mother was delighted that her son had discharged the debt, and retrieved the honor of the line.

The father must encourage the son by example more than precept. Prahlada told his father that only the parent, who directs his progeny to God deserves obedience and respect. All others are, so far the sons are concerned, human ogres like Hiranyakasipu. There are some parents who are sorry that their sons are coming to Puttaparthi and who dread that they would start doing *Puja* or *Japam* or *Namasmarana*, and give up the habits of smoking or drinking or gambling, which they have learnt from their fathers! Such do not know the value of *Sathsanga*, for peace and happiness. They fail to equip their children or themselves with armor against the blows of fate or fortune. The *Gayathri manthra* develops the *Dhee sakthi* or power of discrimination and, so its consequence will be the giving up of evil company, and the seeking of kindred souls. If *Sathsang* is not available, you can keep company with your own higher impulses and noble thoughts. Dive deep into your own divinity. The crocodile is happy and unharmed, it is undefeatable, in the depths of the lake or river. Once it sprawls on land, it becomes the plaything of

man, an easy target for death. The depths; They are your refuge; the source of your strength. Do not stray into the shallows or the sands. You know that the Garuda bird feeds on snakes. Well, once the Garuda went to Kailasa Mount to pay respects to Siva, who wears snakes on His head, arms, wrists, neck, waist and ankles. When the snakes saw Garuda, they were unafraid; they even dared put out their forked tongues at Garuda and challenged it to come near them. That was the extent of the courage lent to them by the place where they had established themselves, So, establish yourselves in the *Atma*; no worry or grief or pride can harm you then.

Several types of *Prema* were spoken about today, but, all types are based on the 'I' feeling; it is like a drama in a film story, a plot within a plot. You must feel that all this is just a passing show, that you are the central figure, the only figure, the entire figure. *Thathwam asi*; that thou art. That is this. The external world is fundamental) One, is really *Brahmam*, appearing as many. *Thwam* is you, yourself. And, what does the experience of all the sages tell them? What is the profound discovery embodied in the wisdom of the *Vedas*? *Thath* is *thwam*, *thwam* is *Thath*; there is no second, there is only One.

If you act or feel or talk contrary to your nature you demean yourself; you deny your reality. The *Brahmathathwam* is *Vimalam*, *Achalam*, Pure, Unshakable; be pure and unshakable. It is *thrigunarahitham*, devoid of qualities (dull active or balanced); it is pure consciousness. You too must not be agitated by the storms of feeling, or the fog of dullness and sloth. Play your role, as a puppet does; the unseen Director unfolds the drama, which He has willed. Once it happened that a village drama, Harischandra, was put on boards, with Harischandra and his son, Lohithaksha selected from one of the two rival factions and Chandramathi being acted by a man from the other! Lohithaksha fell dead, bitten by a cobra, as required by the drama and Chandramathi the mother had to wail. Everyone expected the actor to do that very realistically; but, since the boy belonged to the rival party, Chandramathi refused to weep! This led to a minor riot; the 'puppets' had deluded themselves into attachment. They had failed to remember that

they were acting 'roles'. This is the basic hypocrisy; claiming to be a character in the play, but, not speaking the lines, exhibiting emotions, going through the movements and not making the role a success. Many *pundits* claim to be exponents of the *Vedas* and *Sastras*, but, it is not what they teach that tells, but how they live. Many sing the glory of the Lord, but, few live in His constant Presence and in the constant awareness of that glory that fills the Universe. Udipi Krishna, they sing--but, they don't make their hearts Udipi, so that Krishna may come and be installed therein.

There are certain special hours when you have to perform *Sandhya* and repeat *Gayathri*. This is very good discipline. Just before the Sun rises, the morning rite has to be gone through. Jonnalagadda Sathyanarayanamurthy described very poetically the calmness, the color, the eloquent silence of those hours the waking birds and flowers, the earth that thrills to the touch of dew--that is the time when you too should acclaim the rising Sun with the *Gayathri*. Yesterday, one speaker described the *Gayathri* as equal to *Ramanama*, today another Sastry said it was the elaboration of *Krishnanama* and the Bhagavatha; I ask you to fix your mind on any name of the Lord, that brings up into your consciousness the Glory and the Grace of the Lord. Also, train, your hands to do acts that serve the Lord that is shining in every being. All men are He; He shaves as the barber, He makes pots as the potter; He starches and irons clothes as the *Dhobi*. He prompts, He inspires, He devises, He fulfils. You take a sheet of paper on which My Form is printed, as Myself; you revere It; you fall to the ground before It in reverence; why cannot you then revere all human beings, believing that I am in each of them, in an even clearer Form?

The *Gayathri* is a prayer for the development of your Intellect, so that you might reach this Vision. So let Me advise the elders who are here, this. You have brought your sons or grandsons or wards for *Upanayanam* and *Gayathri-upadesam* here to My presence. You are happy at their fortune; but, they will repeat the *Manthra* only if you too repeat it, sincerely. And it is good for you also. Repent therefore, that you have given up taking that priceless drug; start from today, the *Sandhyavandanam*. Learn it from your son or

grandson, keeping aside your sense of superiority. When you have the royal road to reach the Goal, why scramble through thorny jungle tracks? Do the *Sandhya* as prescribed, and you will find a calm descending inside you, a calm that will not be shaken by any storm. You need not flee to a Himalayan valley; you can make your heart that Valley, by the discipline of the *Sandhya*.

Recruits for My Army

Date:25 Feb 1965

The Samskara of Upanayanam is beneficial not only to the boys who were initiated, but, for every one of you, who witnessed it and drew inspiration from it, The learned Pandit from Delhi spoke to you now of the meaning of this Samskara; it has made all these lads, "twiceborn" "dwithiyam mounjibandhanaath" he said. The belt of munja grass has given them that status, he said. The Upanayanam or the ceremony of leading the lad to the teacher and the recital by the initiate of the *Gayathri* manthra which prays for clear Intelligence, are the first steps towards the ultimate Realization of the Reality. Pundit Ramasaran explained how the *Gayathri* is the essence of the Rig Yajur and Sama Vedas and how the traditional conception of the *Gayathri* Devatha embodies an harmonious blending of the Five Gods, Vishnu, Surya, Maheswari, Ganapathy and Iswara, representing the Five Elements, and how prayer to *Gayathri* confers the material and spiritual needs of man.

Every man is burdened with one body and four births! He is born a Sudra; for, as a child he has no sense of cleanliness or definite ideas of right and wrong. By the rite of initiation into spiritual life, that is to say, when he is taken as a pupil by a guru, who takes up the responsibility of leading him to the Goal of Human Life, he becomes Dwija, twice-born, entering into the second chapter of his human career. When he has finished the spiritual disciplines and studied the scriptures, he becomes a Vipra; at last, when as a result of those practices and experiences, he visualizes Brahman as immanent in all, he is a Brahmana. A Vipra attains Brahmajnanam and becomes a Brahmana. This is therefore the first step, but, the most, important

step, in the process of self-realization.

The parents endow you with the material body the Deha; the Guru points out to you the Dweller within the Body, the Dehi. So, he is entitled to be honored as a God, says the Vedas. Mathru Devo-bhava: Pithru Devo Bhava; Aachaarya Devo Bhava. To make gold more amenable to the operations attendant on ornament making, it is alloyed by the addition of a little silver or copper; so too in order to manifest the multiple variety of Nature, the Brahmahathwam is converted into an alloy, with the addition of a little egoism or Mamakaaram; the Guru teaches you to regain the pure unalloyed Brahmam by the processes of Sravanam Mananam and Nididhyasa in the crucible of the intellect. The Jivathathwam and the Brahmahathwam are then clearly understood as facets of the same entity. The aim of all human effort is to achieve this One, Ekam that lies behind all this plurality. Without achieving it, man can have no peace, within or without; no amount of repetition of the Santhi manthra is capable of granting him that. The Guru reveals to the disciple the invisible current that activates the many seemingly distinct instruments, like the bulb, the mike, the fan, the refrigerator, the tape-recorder, the stove, etc. He deserves your gratitude. He is like the stranger who entered the cottage of a poor man and announced that underneath the floor of that hovel, there lies hidden a precious treasure, which he can take and own, by a few minutes of digging! The sage Viswamithra devised the Gayathri manthra as a fine drug for the spiritual aspirant; he is also to be revered, for the drug awakens your buddhi and confers upon you Viveka, Vichakshana and Vairagyam--the three distinguishing marks of humans, elevating them far above other animals.

Samskara involves double actions: removing dirt and applying paint, when the word is used with reference to a house. This Gayathri has the subtle power of removing evil tendencies and implanting virtuous habits, and so, the Upanayanam is a unique Samskara. Man is Divine; he has the Lord dwelling in his heart, but yet he is bound, miserable, limited, weak, agitated. Why? He is ignorant of his reality. He imagines himself weak, limited, bound and he is so shaped by the mind, which is the source of that imagination. How then can you be

freed? How are you to overcome this Bhrama or delusion? If you desire to overtake a train, you must speed in a car or board a plane. No vehicle slower than the train will help. So too, if you intend to overcome the delusion you must establish yourself in God; the Bhrama of Manavasakthi can be overcome only by the attainment of Daivisakthi. The Gayathri promotes the acquisition of Daivisakthi.

Gayathri means 'that which saves, when repeated'! It is the torch of Jnana, given into the hands of these lads venturing into the regions of intellectual inquiry and sensory restrictions. As paddy is treated to a process of pestling and winnowing and cleaning in order to get rice, that can be cooked and eaten, these boys have to de-husk the individual, discover the Atma hiding inside the five sheaths, of Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya. The Sandhyavandana rite they are enjoined to do, three times a day, from this very day, is part of this process of de-husking. Time must be found, time can be found, provided they have the will and they get encouragement from the elders. Supplying the calories for the spirit is as necessary a process for happy living as supplying calories for the body; breakfast, lunch and dinner, Prathahsandhyaa, Maadhyaanhika and Saayamsandhyaa--all six are equally essential. You miss any one of the six at your peril.

Dear boys, you have today got the Gayathri, the milk from the four teats called four Vedas of the udder of the cow that is Godhead; it has in it the sustenance that will make you shine with spiritual health. You must now carefully use it for your good; do not spill it or spoil; boil it, make curds out of it, churn it and get the butter that is immanent in it. It will become curds by means of your contemplation on the Lord, Bhagavath-chinthana; with the churning-rod of discipline, collect the butter of Ananda. You were initiated in this holy Presence, remember, the Presence that so many thousands covet; so, you have a special responsibility to fulfil your Brahmacharya, the path that leads to Brahmajnana. The body is fundamentally unclean, but, yet it craves to achieve both cleanliness and Godliness, because, its nature is Purity and Holiness.

Inner cleanliness should be your first aim. Which do

you cleanse more in a drinking vessel? The interior or the exterior? You may have fine vegetables, excellent tamarind juice, chilies, salt, dal; the cook may be a master of the art; the oven may be the perfect type; but, if the copper vessel, is not tinned, the 'Saambaar' will be turned into dangerous stuff, that cannot be eaten. It will act as poison to those that eat it. Sathkarma (virtuous deeds)

Sadaachaara (beneficial habits) these act to protect the Saambaar from contact with copper. For you the Gayathri and the Sandhya rites three times a day will act as the 'tin' for the Hridayapaathra, the heart-vessel, where emotions impulses and instincts are cooking. The discipline of Sandhya will tame all instincts even as the mahout's good subdues the might of the elephant and trains it to perform tricks in the circus ring. Do not fail to make the best of this chance.

As many as 450 boys have had this chance today. Some persons at Prasanthi Nilayam felt that, this being the examination season for schoolboys, many may not be able to come and get initiated in this sacred presence; but, see how, on account of strikes and consequent disturbances, schools were closed, examinations were postponed and almost all who had written about their desire to come are here before Me! This is another reminder of the efficacy of unseen merit; the rain falls on barren land and all the seeds hidden underneath the land sprout, making a green carpet to cover the area! No one knew, except Myself, that there were these seeds, of earned merit awaiting the showers of Grace in the heritage of these boys.

For the revival of Sanathana Dharma these boys will be efficient instruments. They will replenish the glory of Bharathavarsha. They are today recruited into My army. I am achieving the re-establishment of Dharma, the restoration of the Vedas, and it is with that in view that I am initiating in My Presence every year boys from all parts of India. This Samskara is fast losing its significance; the recital of the Gayathri and, the performance of the Sandhya rite are both being neglected; so, they have to be restored to their pristine glory. This is an important step. Until you see the Akshara, the unchanging, you must practice the Kshara, the changing, which helps you to transcend it. When once you are able to pronounce 'cat,' you can give up reading the

word 'c-a-t'. The Gayathri will help you to reach the Akshara; practice it, three times a day, in the Sandhya rite. The Deha-maatha (the Mother who bore the body), the Lokamaatha (the Mother who sustains the Universe) and the Gayathri-maatha (the Mother who saves you from Bondage and Ignorance) all three, deserve your devotion and worship.