

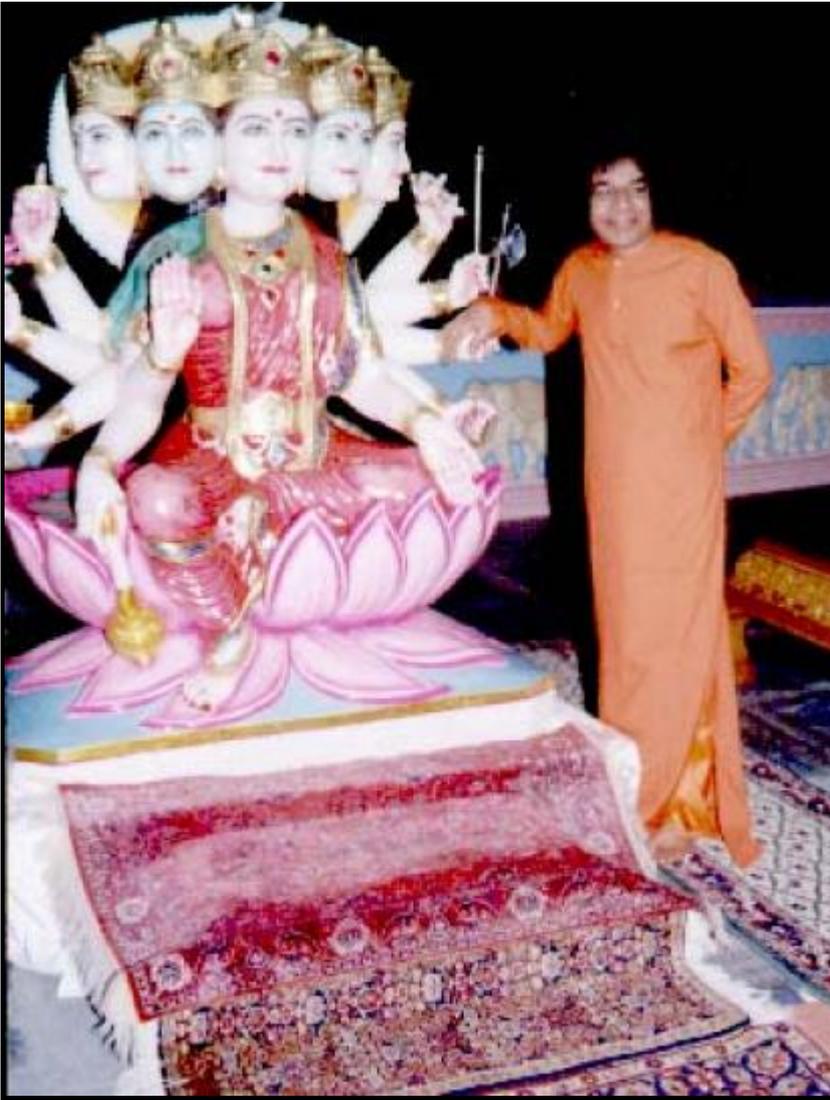
Gayatri Mantra - A Universal Prayer

*Om Bhur Bhuvah Swah
Tat-savitur Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi
Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayat*

General meaning: We meditate on that most adored Supreme Lord, the creator, whose effulgence (divine light) illumines all realms (physical, mental and spiritual). May this divine light illumine our intellect.

Word meaning: **Om**: The primeval sound; **Bhur**: the physical body/physical realm; **Bhuvah**: the life force/the mental realm **Suvah**: the soul/spiritual realm; **Tat**: That (God); **Savitur**: the Sun, Creator (source of all life); **Varenyam**: adore; **Bhargo**: effulgence (divine light); **Devasya**: supreme Lord; **Dhimahi**: meditate; **Dhiyo**: the intellect; **Yo**: May this light; **Nah**: our; **Prachodayat**: illumine/inspire.

Sathya Sai Baba chanting the Gayatri Mantra



What is the Gayatri Mantra?

The Gayatri is a universal prayer enshrined in the Vedas. It is addressed to the Immanent and Transcendent Divine which has been given the name 'Savita,' meaning 'that from which all this is born.' The Gayatri may be considered as having three parts - (i) Adoration (ii) Meditation (iii) Prayer. First the Divine is praised, then It is meditated upon in reverence and finally an appeal is made to the Divine to awaken and strengthen the intellect, the discriminating faculty of man.

The Gayatri is considered as the essence of the Vedas. Veda means knowledge, and this prayer fosters and sharpens the knowledge-yielding faculty. As a matter of fact the four core-declarations enshrined in the four Vedas are implied in this Gayatri mantra.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 13.34: June, 20, 1977]

The Gayatri Mantra is a sacred chant that demonstrates the unity that underlies manifoldness in creation. It is through the recognition of this unity that we can understand the multiplicity. Clay is one and the same thing, though pots of different shapes and sizes can be made from it. Gold is one, though gold ornaments can be multifarious. The Atma is one, though the embodied forms in which it resides may be many. Whatever the colour of the cow, the milk is always white.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 16.6: March, 17, 1983]

Who is Mother Gayatri?

Gayatri is the Mother of all scriptures (Vedas). She is present, wherever Her name is chanted. She is very powerful. The One who nourishes the individual being is Gayatri. She bestows pure thoughts on anyone who worships Her. She is the embodiment of all Goddesses. Our very breath is Gayatri, our faith in existence is Gayatri. Gayatri has five faces, they are the five life principles. She has nine descriptions, they are ‘Om, Bhur, Bhuvah, Swah, Tat, Savitur, Vareṇyam, Bhargo, Devasya’. Mother Gayatri nourishes and protects every being and she channelizes our senses in the proper direction. ‘Dhīmahī’ means meditation. We pray to her to inspire us with good intelligence. ‘Dhīyo Yonah Prachodayāt’ - We beseech her to bestow on us everything we need. Thus Gayatri is a complete prayer for protection, nourishment and finally, liberation.

[‘My Dear Students’, Vol 3, Ch 2, Mar 19, 1998]

Gayatri is the mother of the Vedas (Gayatri Chandhasam matha) Gayatri, however, has three names: Gayatri, Savitri, and Saraswathi. These three are present in everyone. Gayatri represents the senses; it is the master of the senses. Savitri is the master of Prana (Life Force). Many Indians are familiar with the story of Savitri, who brought back to life her dead husband, Sathyavan. Savitri signifies truth. Saraswathi is the presiding deity of speech (vaak). The three represent purity in thought, word, and deed (thrikarana shuddhi). Although Gayatri has three names, all three are in each of us as the senses (Gayatri), the power of speech (Saraswathi), and the life force (Savitri).

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 28.22: August, 23, 1995]

Universality of Gayatri Mantra

For every kind of power, proofs may be sought by direct perception or by the process of inference. Men sought to find out by what direct proof they could experience this transcendental power. They

found the proof in the Sun. Without the Sun there will be no light at all. Nor is that all. All activities will come to a standstill. In this world hydrogen is essential for the growth of plants and of living beings. The Sun's primary components are hydrogen and helium. Without hydrogen and helium, the world cannot survive. Hence, the ancients concluded that the Sun was the visible proof (of a transcendental power). They also found some subtle secrets about the Sun. Hence, they adored the Sun as the principal deity in the Gayatri mantra. "Dhiyo yonah Prachodayāt" - May the Sun illumine our intellects in the same way he sheds his effulgence. This is the prayer addressed to the Sun in the Gayatri mantra. In this way, they came to regard the Gayatri mantra as the mother of the Vedas.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 24.08: May, 21, 1991]

The earliest finding of the seekers was that the Sun was the most important factor in determining the daily life of man and providing the basic requirements for living. Life would be impossible without the Sun for man, beast, bird or plant. The Sun was regarded as the source of all energy and responsible for birth, growth and destruction of all things in creation. It was for this reason that Sage Viswamitra glorified the Sun God (Savitri) in the Gayatri mantra.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 19.4: March, 8, 1986]

Repeat the Gayatri - it is a universal prayer. It has three parts, meditation on the glory of God as the illumination immanent in the three worlds - upper, middle and lower (Om Bhur Bhuva Swah; Tat Savitur Vareṇyam); it has smaraṇa or picturisation of the Grace (Bhargo Devasya Dhīmahī) and prārthanā, prayer for compassion for the sake of liberation, through awakening of intelligence that pervades entire universe, not to any particular name or form of that intelligence; and so, all can use it and be saved by it. There can be no fanaticism, no hatred, no rivalry, if the Gayatri is adhered to, its pious repetition will clarify the passions and promote love.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 07.37: October, 13, 1967]

Deeper meaning of the Gayatri Mantra

Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati are latent in everybody. Bhur, Bhuvah and Swah in the Gayatri mantra refer to the body (materialization), the life-force (vibration) and the soul (radiation). Bhur means the earth, which is nothing but the combination of materials. This denotes the human body, which is also a combination of materials. Bhuvah refers to the life-force, which makes the body vibrate. Swah refers to Prajnāna-shakti, which sustains the life-force. This Prajnāna-shakti is known as constant integrated awareness. This is also termed as radiation. All three, namely, materialization, vibration and radiation are present in man. I tell you often, you are not one, but three—the one you think you are (physical body), the one others think you are (mental body) and the one you really are (Atma).

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 33.04: Feb, 10, 2000]

Gayatri is described as having five faces. The first is "Om". The second is "Bhur-bhuvah-svah". The third is. "Tat-savitur Vareṇyam". The fourth is "Bhargo Devasya Dhīmahī". The fifth is "Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayāt". Gayatri represents in these five faces the five prāṇas (life forces). Gayatri is the protector of the five prāṇas in man. "Gāyantam trāyate iti Gayatri" -- Because it protects the one who recites it, it is called Gayatri. When Gayatri acts as protector of the life-forces, she is known as Savitri. Savitri is known in the scriptural story as the devoted wife who brought back to

life her husband, Sathyavan. Savitri is the presiding deity of the five prāṇas. She protects those who lead a life of Truth. This is the inner meaning.

When one's intelligence and intuition are developed by the recitation of the mantra, the activating deity is Gayatri. When the life-forces are protected, the guardian deity is called Savitri. When one's speech is protected, the deity is called Saraswati. Because of the protective roles of Savitri, Saraswati and Gayatri, in relation to life, speech and the intellect, Gayatri is described as "Sarva-devatā-swarūpiṇī"--- the embodiment of all goddesses.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 16.06: March, 17, 1983]

The Gayatri has three parts: 1.Praise, 2.Meditation, and 3.Prayer. First, the Divine is praised, then it is meditated upon in reverence and lastly, an appeal is made to the Divine to dispel the darkness of ignorance and to awaken and strengthen the intellect. Dhīmahi is related to the meditative aspect. Dhīyo Yonah Prachodayāt relates to the aspect of prayer. Chanting of the Gayatri Mantra purifies the mind and confers devotion, detachment and wisdom.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 33.04: Feb, 10, 2000]

Learning to Chant Gayatri Mantra with Swami guiding

<http://www.sathyasai.org/devotional/gayatri>

Benefits of chanting Gayatri Mantra

Through meditation on the Gayatri, 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 Atma. Just as there are three basic energies that govern man---the physical, the metaphysical and the psychical, the ādhi-bhoutik, the ādhi-daivik and the ādhi-atmic, Gayatri has three facets, Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati. Gayatri fosters the metaphysical, Savitri, the physical, and Saraswati, the psychical. These three karaṇas or instruments have to be cleansed and sublimated so that man can realise the goal of life. Through the recital of Gayatri mantra and meditation thereon, this great task can be achieved.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 15.11: June, 26, 1981]

It will protect you from harm wherever you are --traveling, working, or at home. Westerners have investigated the vibrations produced by this mantra and have found that when it is recited with the correct accent as laid down in the Vedas, the atmosphere around becomes visibly illumined. So Brahma-prakāsha, the Divine Effulgence, will descend on you and illumine your intellect and light your path when this mantra is chanted. Also repeat shanti thrice at the end, for that repetition will give shanti or peace to three entities in you --body, mind, and soul.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 13.34: June, 20, 1977]

It is essential to recite the Gayatri mantra at least three times during morning, noon, and evening. This will serve to reduce the effects of the wrong acts one does every day. It is like buying goods

for cash, instead of getting them on credit. There is no accumulation of karmic (result of action) debt, since each day's karma (action) is atoned for that day itself by reciting the Gayatri mantra.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 16.6: March, 17, 1983]

"Sarva roga nivaarini Gayatri" (Gayatri is the reliever of all diseases). "Sarva dhukha parivaarini Gayatri" (Gayatri wards off all misery). "Sarva vaancha phalashri Gayatri" (Gayatri is the fulfiller of all desires). Gayatri is the bestower of all that is beneficial. If the mantra is chanted, various kinds of powers will emerge in one.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 28.22: August, 23, 1995]

When to say the Gayatri

Do not sing cheap and defiling film songs. Instead, recite the Gayatri. When you bathe, the body is being cleansed; let your mind and intellect also be cleansed. Make it a point to repeat it when you bathe as well as before every meal, when you wake from sleep, and when you go to bed. And also repeat shanthi (peace) thrice at the end, for that repetition will give peace to three entities in you -- body, mind, and soul.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 13.34: June, 20, 1977]

Time, like man, has three qualities: satva, rajas, and tamas (qualities of purity or serenity, passion, and inaction). The day is divided into three parts:

- 4am to 8am and 4pm to 8pm have the sātvic quality
- 8am to 4pm are rājasic
- 8pm and 4am are tāmasic

The eight hours from 8pm to 4am are used mainly for sleep. The eight hours of the day (from 8am to 4pm) are employed by all beings, including animals and birds, in the discharge of their day to day duties and are regarded as rājasic. When the four sātvic hours of the morning are used for engaging oneself in good actions like worship, virtuous deeds, and keeping good company, one is sure to raise oneself from the human to the Divine level. It is during the sātvic period (4am to 8am and 4pm to 8pm) that the Gayatri mantra should be recited.

[‘Sathya Sai Speaks’, vol 16.6: March, 17, 1983]

Further references

The Power of Gayatri ([Dharma Vahini, chap VII](#))

Significance of the Gayatri ([discourse 10 Feb 2000](#))

Unique potency of the Gayatri mantra ([discourse 23 Aug 1995](#))

The Gayatri path to God ([discourse 17 Mar 1983](#))

The Gayatri ([discourse 26 Jun 1981](#))

The universal prayer ([discourse 20 Jun 1977](#))

The basic hypocrisy ([discourse 26 Apr 1965](#))

Recruits for My army ([discourse 25 Feb 1965](#))

Upanayam ([discourse 16 May 1964](#))