

Om Sri Sai Ram



2009 USA NYC Sadhana Program

National Gayatri Mantra Initiative

Study Circle Supplement

Om Sri Sai Ram,

- This document is a slide-by-slide guide to the accompanying PowerPoint titled "Gayatri Mantra Study Circle ppt."
- Please feel free to edit the material to meet the needs of your group.
- The Study Circle facilitator should be familiar with this document prior to the study circle and use it as a tool to encourage discussion.
- It includes A dialogue with God that had Discussion questions, quotes and significance of Gayatri Mantra.
- All material used to compile the study circle material were all gathered from Swami's discourses and other links as shown below.

A Dialogue with God

1. What is the Gayatri Mantra?

Gayatri Mantra is the Universal Prayer enshrined in the Vedas, the most ancient Scriptures of Man. (Sathya Sai Speaks- X - 109)

2. Universal Prayer... but I've heard the Vedas are associated with the religions of the Far East.

The Vedas make no distinction whatsoever on the basis of religion, caste, nationality, etc. The Vedic Mantras can be chanted by one and all. (Divine Discourse, August 9, 2006)

In fact,

[The Gayatri Mantra] is not related to any particular sect, caste, idol, or institution. It is the torch of spiritual wisdom. (Divine Discourse, March 17, 1983)

3. So what exactly is a “Mantra?” and who discovered this mantra?

A mantra is that which protects the person who contemplates on it. The *Gayatri* Mantra was discovered by Sage Viswamitra. It was the same sage Viswamitra who initiated Sri Rama into mysteries of Sun worship, through the mantra *Aaditya Hrudayam*. The RISHI (Sage) for *Gayatri* Mantra is Viswamitra himself.

The Gayatri Mantra is special because:

Gayatri is that which protects (thra) the life breaths (gayas or pranas) or the senses (indriyas), beginning with speech. Besides, it is said, That which saves those who sing it, revere it, repeat it, or meditate on it is called Gayatri. (Dharma Vahini, Chapter 7)

4. Really? Can mere sounds do that?

Yes!

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. (Divine Discourse, June 20, 1977)

5. I didn’t know that! What else can the Gayatri Mantra do?

The Gayatri Mantra has many benefits, for example:

- Repetition of this Mantra will develop the Intelligence. (Sathya Sai Speaks - V - 58)
- Gayatri is the reliever of all diseases. (Divine Discourse, August 23, 1995)
- Gayatri wards off all misery. (Divine Discourse, August 23, 1995)
- Gayathri is the fulfiller of all desires. (Divine Discourse, August 23, 1995)
- Gayatri is the bestower of all that is beneficial. (Divine Discourse, August 23, 1995)
- If the Gayatri Mantra is chanted, various kinds of powers will emerge in one. (Divine Discourse, August 23, 1995)
- The effulgence of the Divine will descend on you and illumine your intellect and light your path when this mantra is chanted. (June 20, 1977)

6. OK! I'm sold! How do I learn the Gayatri Mantra?

Wait! Before learning to chant the Gayatri Mantra, we have to learn how to accurately pronounce and intonate the words. Swami has said,

The sound of a mantra is as valuable as its meaning. (Sathya Sai Speaks- III – 242)

7. I understand. Now I'm ready to learn!

Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah

Tat Savitur Varenyam

Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi

Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayaat

It is also important to:

Repeat shanthi thrice at the end, for that repetition will give shanthi or peace to three entities in you -- body, mind, and soul.

8. How do I pronounce the words? Is there a recording out there somewhere?

We are fortunate to have a recording of Bhagavan Baba reciting the Gayatri Mantra – the best source for the proper way to chant! Double-Click the icon below to hear Swami reciting the Gayatri.



Gayatri_Mantra.mp3

9. Are there any other guidelines about reciting the Gayatri Mantra?

Aside from emphasizing proper pronunciation and intonation, Bhagavan has given specific instructions for when and how frequently to chant the Gayatri Mantra:

It is essential to recite the Gayatri mantra at least three times during morning, noon, and evening. (Divine Discourse March 17, 1983)

10. Why three times a day? Doesn't that make this another ritual?

Devoid of meaning, any 'spiritual' discipline becomes a ritual. But if we understand its meaning and importance and practice with faith and devotion, the ritual becomes a spiritual activity. On the point of reciting the Gayatri thrice a day at morning, noon, and night, Swami has said:

[It] 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. (Divine Discourse March 17, 1983)

The heart needs to be cleansed thrice a day – dawn, noon and dusk. (Vision of the Divine, pages 79-88)

11. Wow! I could use some karmic cash! What about reciting the Gayatri at other times of the day?

There is no restriction on when the Gayatri can be chanted. Bhagavan has said,

If we chant the Gayatri Mantra while taking a bath, our bath gets sanctified. If we chant it before taking our food, our food becomes an offering to the Divine. We should develop heartfelt devotion to God. (Sathya Sai Speaks IX - 238)

Moreover,

The more one chants the Gayatri Mantra, the greater the benefit to that person. (Sathya Sai Speaks – IX– 238)

12. Someone once told me that only certain groups of people are supposed to chant mantras like the Gayatri. Is that true?

This is a mistaken belief. Swami has declared:

The Gayatri Mantra is a Prayer that can well be spoken with yearning by men and women of all creeds and climes in all centuries. (Sathya Sai Speaks - V - 58)

13. Great! This clarifies a lot of my doubts. Now I only wish I had the meaning of this mantra.

The Gayatri Mantra is embedded with profound meaning. One of the simplest explanations is:

In the Gayatri Mantra, the unity of body, mind and soul is depicted in the first line, "Bhur-Bhuvah-Suvaha." The next line, "Bhargo Dhevasya Dheemahi", means "Throw away the darkness." "Dheeyo yonah Pracho-dhayaath" means "Let the effulgence of the Divine dispel the darkness of ignorance." (Divine Discourse May, 6, 1995)

However, there are many ways of understanding the meaning of the Gayatri Mantra.

14. Since you mentioned it, what are some of the other ways of understanding the Gayatri Mantra?

Here are a few different meanings:

We contemplate the glory of Light illuminating the three worlds: gross, subtle, and causal. I am that vivifying power, love, radiant illumination, and divine grace of universal intelligence. We pray to the divine light to illumine our minds. (International Sathya Sai Organization website, <http://www.sathyasai.org>)

May the Supreme Light that illuminates the three worlds, illumine our intellect also, fully, and direct the rays of our intelligence to the path of virtue. (Dr. Joe Phaneuf, Interview with Swami)

We meditate on the Divine Light of that adorable Sun of Spiritual Consciousness. May it illumine our intellect just as the splendorous sunlight dispels our darkness. (Dr. Joe Phaneuf, Interview with Swami)

Earth. Sky. Heaven. Let us meditate on these and on the most excellent Light of that adorable Sun. We pray that they may guide our intellect. (Dr. Joe Phaneuf, Interview with Swami)

15. I see a trend here. All of these revolve around illumination. What is the connection between the Gayatri Mantra and light?

The Gayatri Mantra is addressed to the energy of the Sun. It has immense powers, powers that are truly amazing, for the Sun is its presiding Deity. (Sathya Sai Vahini – 183-4)

16. Sure, the sun is responsible for light in the world we live in, but does it really illuminate us within?

What is more efficient for spiritual uplift than meditation on the effulgence that illumines and feeds the intellect? What is more vitally fruitful than the prayer that pleads for saving the mind from sinful tendencies? (Dharma Vahini , Chapter 7)

17. But practically speaking, how does the Gayatri Mantra illumine us within?

[Gayatri] has three names: Gayatri, Savitri, and Saraswati. These three are present in everyone. Gayatri represents the senses; it is the master of the senses. Savitri is the master of the Life Force. Savitri signifies truth. Saraswati is the presiding deity of speech. The three represent purity in thought, word, and deed. Although Gayatri has three names, all three are in each of us as the senses (Gayatri), the power of speech (Saraswati), and the life force (Savitri). (Divine Discourse August 23, 1995)

18. So Gayatri Mantra helps us develop purity in thought, word and deed. That's great! But I still have a doubt. There are so many prayers and mantras out there. How is Gayatri different from the rest?

You may or may not chant any other Mantra, but do remember that by chanting the Gayatri Mantra, the benefits are there for you to see. By continuously chanting the Gayatri Mantra you yourself will reach

the state of fulfillment, a sense of feeling that you have achieved something (Divine Discourse, March 17, 1983)

19. *OK, you've made your point. But I'm not sure I'm ready to make another commitment.*

If the Gayatri Mantra is chanted various kinds of powers will emerge in one. Hence the Gayatri Mantra should not be treated casually. (SS 9/95-236)

20. *Has Swami mentioned anything about the effects of chanting Gayatri Mantra for Youth, such as myself?*

Before you have been given this Mantra, you have been backward intellectually, mentally a bit lazy and with a few negative points to your credit. But after you have been given this Mantra, you have become sharper in Intellect, you have become more zealous, more enthusiastic, and certainly qualified to get better marks, better rank and first classes. From tomorrow, the children by virtue of chanting this Mantra in the morning and in the evening, may they be endowed with a rare Intelligence which will take care of their fortunes that will be presiding over their destiny. They will become highly qualified. They will become model citizens so that the future of the country will be safe in their hands. (Divine Discourse, March 17, 1983)

21. *That's pretty amazing! Anything else I should know?*

It (the Gayatri Mantra) is an essential requisite for the young, because it ensures a bright and auspicious future for them. (Divine Discourse, August 23, 1995)

Additional Info from slides for Study circle:

Gayatri Mantra – Three Aspects - Slide 3

Gayatri has three names: *Gayatri*, *Savitri* and *Saraswathi*. *Gayantham Trayate ithi Gayatri*, it protects the one who recites it. *Gayatri* is the master of the senses. *Savitri* is the master of the life principle. When *Gayatri* acts as the protector of life forces, she is known as *Savitri*. You might have heard the story of *Savitri*, a woman of chastity, who brought her dead husband, *Sathyavaan*, back to life with the power of her prayer. *Savitri* protects those who lead a life of *Sathya* (truth). This is the inner meaning. *Saraswathi* is the presiding deity of speech. Man has to earn the grace of *Gayatri*, *Savitri* and *Saraswathi* to sanctify his life.

Gayatri, *Savitri* and *Saraswathi* are latent in everybody. *Bhur*, *Bhuvah* and *Suvah* in the *Gayatri Mantra* refer to body (materialization), life force (vibration) and soul (radiation). *Bhur* means *Bhuloka* (the earth), which is nothing but the combination of the elements. This denotes the human body, which is also a combination of the elements. *Bhuvaha* refers to the life force, which makes the body move. *Suvaha* refer to *Prajnana Shakti*, which sustains the life force. This *Prajnana Shakti* is known as the Constant Integrated Awareness. This is also termed as radiation. All the three, viz., 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 level), the one others think you are (mental level) and the one you really are (*Atmic* level).

Discussion Question:

Why *Gayatri* is called *Pancha Mukhi*?

Quote from SWAMI:

"*Gayatri* is known as *Panchamukhi*, meaning she has five faces. What are they? *Aum* is the first face; "*Bhur Bhuvah Suvaha*" is the second; "*Tat Savitur Varenyam*" is the third; "*Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi*" is the fourth; "*Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat*" is the fifth. 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. "*Dheemahi*" is related to the meditative aspect. "*Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat*" relates to the aspect of prayer. Chanting of the *Gayatri* Mantra purifies the mind and confers devotion, detachment and wisdom. Young men must necessarily chant the *Gayatri* Mantra. Today we find people getting initiated into the *Gayatri* Mantra in the advanced stages of their youth. Intellect will blossom and shine forth in all its splendor only after initiation into the *Gayatri* Mantra. That is why it is essential that *Upanayanam* be done at the age of eight. One who is initiated into the *Gayatri* Mantra at an early age will become highly intelligent. Chanting of the *Gayatri* Mantra will sanctify man's life."

Swami Says.... - Slide 4

Bhagawan taught the *Gayatri* Mantra and its importance to Sri E.B. Fanibunda.

What are the main points in Bhagawan's teaching?

Bhagawan's Teachings to Sri Fanibunda are given in his Book "Vision of the Divine" (pages 79 to 88).

The main points are:

1. If the *Gayatri* Mantra is not recited correctly, it has the opposite effect of enveloping the person in darkness. But, if we recite it with Love, God will accept it.
2. Baba advises that each word should be pronounced clearly and distinctly, without undue haste or hurry.
3. The *Gayatri* Mantra is at the very basis of the Vedas, and merits the name *Veda Mata* or the Mother of the Vedas. The *Gayatri* Mantra is all pervasive throughout the manifest Cosmos.
4. *Gayatri* is "That which preserves, protects and rescues the chanter from mortality".
5. The *Gayatri* is a Universal Prayer which asks for a clear Intellect so that the Truth may be reflected therein without distortion.
6. Bhagawan has said that the *Gayatri* Mantra can be recited by men and women of all climes and creeds.
7. It calls upon the Glorious Power that pervades the Sun and the Three Worlds to arouse, awaken and strengthen the Intelligence, so that it may lead us through intense Sadhana to success. (See also SATHYA SAI SPEAKS Vol III – 242)
8. The heart needs to be cleansed thrice a day – dawn, noon and dusk. Besides these times, Bhagawan has said that the *Gayatri* Mantra can be repeated anywhere at any time, including nighttime.
9. The *Gayatri* Mantra is synonymous with Divinity and has therefore to be approached with humility, reverence, faith and love towards the Mantra.
10. The Vedas are the very breath of God, and the *Gayatri* Mantra is at the very basis of the Vedas.
11. Bhagawan is the *Vedapurusha* (verily the personification of the Vedas) and is therefore the Supreme Authority on the Vedas.
12. Love and reverence for the Mantra and faith in its promised results are far more important than mere mechanical repetition while the mind wanders.
13. This Prayer is directed to the Divine Mother – "O Divine Mother, our hearts are filled with darkness. Please make this darkness distant from us and promote Illumination within us".
14. Full faith in the power and potency of the *Gayatri* Mantra will be generated only when the seeker has developed the requisite degree of enthusiasm, reverence and love towards this Mantra.
15. The more one recites the *Gayatri* Mantra, the greater the benefit to the one who recites it.

Benefits of Chanting the Gayatri Mantra - Slide 5

The *Gayatri* leads one through spiritual effort and activities to success. *Gayatri* Mantra does not ask for mercy or pardon, but asks for a clear intellect so that the Truth may be reflected therein without distortion.

Bhagavan has said that: **"The Sound of a Mantra is as valuable as its Meaning".**

At the Upanayanam ceremony held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 17-3-1983, (Bhajanavali Tape no 14) Sai Baba told the students: "You may or you may not chant any other Mantra, but do remember that by chanting the *Gayatri* Mantra, the benefits are there for you to see. By continuously chanting the *Gayatri* Mantra you yourself will reach the state of fulfilment, a sense of feeling that you have achieved something.

Bhagavan Baba, In his discourse in the Prasanthi Mandir on 23-8-1995, said, **" The *Gayatri* Mantra is an essential requisite for the young, because it ensures a bright & auspicious future for them."**

If chanted when one is taking a shower or bath, it will also mean offering ablutions (*abhishekams*) to the God resident within oneself. In practice, as the outside is washed and purified, the *Gayatri* will purify the mind and intellect.

When does a prayer become meaningful? It is only when you stabilize your mind and turn it toward God. The basis for this is to meditate, pray, and experience. It is essential to achieve harmony in thought, word, and deed. *Gayatri* is teaching this great lesson. - Divine Discourse May 6, 1995

“ In the practice of the *Gayatri* Mantra, one should realize that everything is within one and thereby develops confidence in the self” – Sri Sathya Sai Baba [23-08-1995]. There He mentions that *Gayatri* Mantra is the first step towards the ultimate realization of the Self.

- Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The 24 powers of *Gayatri* mentioned (*see link below) awaken in the *Sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) certain qualities, and along with this awakening the aspirant starts getting success and prosperity i.e., *Siddhi*. The benefits do not accrue of their own accord and that all of them are the results of the interplay of spiritual forces in the aspirant.

Gayatri sadhana or *Upasana* is not a blind faith but a scientific process too, whose development and progress are sure to yield to desired fruits. *Gayatri* mantra is not restricted and it is universal, for the whole world, contains the culture of humanity. The *Gayatri* mantra is a treasure and heritage that belongs to the whole of humanity without exclusion.

The *Gayatri* mantra is central to *Yoga*, *Vedanta*, *Ayurveda* and *Vedic astrology* (*Jyotish*).

- For *Yoga* it sets in motion the Divine will towards transformation, stimulating the *kundalini* force.

- For *Vedanta* it grants Self-Knowledge, knowledge of the solar self.
- For *Ayurveda* it gives the power of the cosmic *prana* that is born of the sun.
- For *Jyotish* it gives knowledge of the movements of the heavenly bodies ruled by the cosmic sun.

Gayatri is the *ADI SHAKTI* (the prime force). Just as one can easily hear any broadcast from any station by just tuning a knob, similarly, one can establish one's contact through one's spiritual powers with the subtle, all pervading *Gayatri*. One can use one's own spiritual power for attainment of all or a particular benefit-material, psychological or spiritual, this is *Sadhana*.

- SOURCE: "Gayatri Pariwar Publication commemorating the AshwaMedha Maha Yagna of 1993."

Of all the Mantras, the Supreme and **the most potent power of powers is the great, glorious *Gayatri Mantra***. *Gayatri* is an impregnable spiritual armor, a veritable fortress that guards and protects its votary, that transforms aspirant into the Divine and blesses with the brilliant light of the highest spiritual illumination.

The regular repetition of a few *malas*, one mala consists of repeating the *Gayatri* mantra 108 times, of *Gayatri* everyday will bestow upon you all that is auspicious and benevolent to you, herein and hereafter. It is verily the sole transcendental guide- light to humanity. If the aspirant is really sincere, earnest and faithful, life will indeed be blessed.

Start regular, daily *Gayatri japa* (chanting) and feel for yourself the wondrous power that you derive there from. *Gayatri* is the mother of the Vedas and the destroyer of all sins. **There is nothing more purifying on earth than the *Gayatri Mantra***. The *Gayatri* mantra chanting brings the same fruit as the recitation of all the Vedas with the *Angas*. This single Mantra repeated sincerely and with a clear conscience brings the supreme good, which is liberation or emancipation from the wheel of birth and death.

- Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh (1887 - 1963)

The *Gayatri* mantra contains in itself the spirit and energy of all the Vedic mantras. Only by the intense repetition of the *Gayatri* Mantra shall we be able to master the Vedic Mantras. The benefit we derive from the *Gayatri* Mantra is the cleansing of the mind - *Chitta Shuddhi*.

Sri Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati Swami (1894 -1994-The Shankaracharya of Kaanchiipuram)

Gayatri meditation destroys all delusions, energies (*prana*), bestows longevity, health, brilliance and illumination. *Gayatri* mantra opens the door of cosmic consciousness and truth can be realized. This mantra confers wisdom, prosperity, purity and liberation.

- One who repeats the mantra 108 times in each sitting will attain radiance soon.
- One who repeats the mantra 1008 times with sincerity and devotion in each sitting will attain illumination in 40 days.

Performance of *Gayatri purascharana* and *Gayatri yajna* results in peace for individual, national and international. The entire world with transcendental peace can be attained.

- Sadguru Sant Keshavadas

Important Links:

- 1). <http://www.saibaba.ws/teachings/sarvadeviswarupini/ssvg.htm>
- 2). Dr. Dato Jagadeesan's talk on the significance of *Gayatri* Mantra.
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=2334823536736840347>
- 3). The Power and Potency of *Gayatri* Mantra
<http://www.saibaba.ws/teachings/powergayatri/powergayatri.htm>