OM.

Gayatri Hymn

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FOREWORD.

The Gayatri hymn is an attempt,- and a very sucessful one too,- to catch within the web of language the direct experience of ineffable Reality. It is regarded as the fountainhead of all the other hymns. In it the first and fre-hest inspirations have been caught. So it is an embryonic mantra. It forms the nucleus of the Vedas; and is the keystone of the magnificient Vedic arch. There are nine concepts for God in it and they are supposed to be as covering as the nine figures in the theory of numeration. Originally they seem to have been percepts each one denoting a whole situation beyond the power and compass of language to describe;for on psychological examination some of them appear to be rhapsodical and frantic cries of the soul, pure exclamations of wonder and amazement at the direct experience of the Sublime,- highly dynamic Reality.

N. K. Shrivastava
M. A.,LL B.

OM.

गायत्री

Gayatri.

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॐ ॥

OM BHUR BHUVAH SVAH TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAHI DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODAYAT. OM.

THE NINE DIVINE CONCEPTS ARE:

1. OM: (with the vowel sound sufficiently lengthened) meaning: at once All Pervading, Immanet and omnipresent Protector of all.
2. BHUR: Being-in-itself; Sole Reality; the ultimately only true; Existence absolute; the fountainhead of all energy and strength.

3. BHUVAH: Animation; the warmth of Life the Elan (Push) of life; Cosmic consciousness; Knowledge absolute; the Prime Mover; the Destroyer of miseries.

4. SWAH: Bliss Absolute; the Bestower of hapiness.

5. TAT: That which can only be experienced directly and can never be described; something too grand, too dazzling, too dynamic for the merely human intellect,- so feeble, so limited, so poor, so fumbling, so piteous, so phenomenal, so timid; something of which the soul alone,- stripped of her limitations,- can have a glimpse. It signifies the eternal, endless, transcendental Brahma (the Absolute); the Infinite Supreme Being. This is a sound- symbol for the gesture that the soul in ecstasy made to herself to take in more fully the vision of the Beautiful for later rumination. Here it serves the same purpose

as the demonstrative sign serves in modern Logic. It means quite a lot of things about God, some felt and known, others unknown and others still that must remain shrouded in mystery; it is one instance where the language of silence is more powerful than the language of speech.

6.SAVITUH: the first Cause; the Creator of the Universe;-its Mover and Purifier; also the Sun that moves our intellect to duties.

7.VARENYAM: The Adorable Admirable and Lovable One; Whose effulgence deserves unbounded admiration and ought to be sung in the most melodious of songs and must be sung constantly and ever.

8.BHARGO: the Destroyer of sins; Pure Refulgent Being: Glorious, Radiant, Sole Divinity; the Light of all lights.

9.DEVASYA: of the Deva i.e. the glorious, refulgent Lord who bestows upon us Life

heavenly bliss, unearthly happiness, divine Light, and victory.

It is through these concepts that the aesthetic contemplation of God is practised.

DHI MAHI: in perfect self- surrender we meditate (HIM)

YAH: Who (we pray)

PRACHODAYAT: may draw towards His Refulgent Majesty; impel towards the ethically good; inspire with His thought.

NAH: our

DHIYAH. (Dhiyo). Intellects (Reason, Understanding) deflecting them from this phenomenal world and from the path of evil.

TRANSLATION OF THE HYMN. We meditate the All-Pervading, Immanent, and Omnipresent Protector of all, the Being-in-itself, Truth Absolute, the Life of life, the Light of lights the Destroyer of miseries, the Bliss Absolute, who is Eternal, Endless,

Transcendental Brahma, the first cause, who is simply admirable, and who is the destroyer of sins, the refulgent lord, giver of life, bliss, light and victory. Pray deflect our intellect from the path of evil and from the entanglements of this illusory, phenomenal world and from its alluring tinsel and glamour and with might irresistible help it up to thine own refulgent and majestic presence and there let stationed it be.

THE PLACE OF THE HYMN. The Gayatri hymn is the greatest among the Vedic hymn. It has been preached to the Gods of the Hindu Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh) and to other sages and seers by God himself. Man has not been able to compose so beneficial and purifying a hymn as this. It contains the nine names of God viz. OM, BHUH, BHUVAH, SWAH, TAT, SAVITUH, VARENYAM, BHARGAH, and

DEVASYA. Every name has a couplet or shloka to explain it. Even as a man crosses a river in a boat, so does the devotee, the chanter of this hymn cross the mighty ocean of this world by the mere repetition of these nine names. God has been meditated through these nine names because they include all the innumerable and infinite names of God. This hymn occurs in all the four Vedas in the same form.

Prayers ought to be offered four times a day and through this hymn, thus. Early in the morning, at noon, in the evening and at mid-night. It may be noticed incidentally that when people will get up in the middle of the night to say their prayers, there will not be any cases of theft and when they will say it in the evening before going to bed they will not have nightmares and bad dreams. It is written in the Upanishadas that:-

"Sayamdhiyano divaskritam papam nashayati; Pratardhiyano ratrikritam papam nashayati; Sayam pratah prayunjano apapo bhavati; Nishith tuiya sandhyayam japtwa vak sidhirbhavati" the repetition of Gayatri in the evening atones for the transgressions of the day-time; early in the morning, purges a man of his sins of the night; it brings on sinlessness to one who repeats it both moring and evening and secures perfection of speech (i. e. whatever the devotee, chanter says must turn true and actualise) to one who chants it at mid-night.

ITS SYMBOLISM: Its God or presiding Deity is Savituh or the Sun. God Himself. Agni (Fire) is its mouth. Vishvamitra is its rishi or seer. Gayatri is its metre. It is used in the investiture of the sacred thread, in mystical breathing or Pranayama and in sacred repetition for spiritual purpose. i. e. for the

purification of the soul. This hymn is the fundamental, primordial of all the hymns. Spiritual discipline, of necessity, consists of three parts: Contemplation, Meditation and Prayer. The Gayatri Mantra alone contains all these three in the most splendid manner. Contemplation is practised through the nine concepts of the Deity.

DHIMAHI constitutes the meditation; in it the soul exhorts the intellect to surrender herself fully unto Him and to occupy herself with His thoughts. While practising meditation the mind should be concentrated upon the fact that the intensely golden light in the ball of the sun is the same as the golden light in the centre of my heart: they are both one and the same and I am identical with both. Curiously enough, modern science bears out this truth directly. It is now

asserted that without the sun life on earth would be impossible and the sun is the only source of vitamins whence every organism draws its supply directly or indirectly.

DHIYO YONAH PRACHODAYAT is the prayer in which the purity of the intellect, of understanding and intense devotedness is supplicated for.

There are five pauses or caesurae in this mantra which must be observed thus : the first after 'OM'; the second after 'BHUR BHUVAH SWAH'; the third after' 'TAT SAVITUR YARENYAM'; the fourth after 'BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAHI' and the fifth and last after 'DHIYO YONAH PRACHODAYAT'. At every pause one ought to stop for a while and think of the meaning of the mantra.

ITS ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE: The Mussalmans have one Kalma and the Christians have one sign : the Cross. The Hindus ought to regard this mantra as their common mantra, for those who do not have a common mantra can never hope to be knit together firmly. The divine Injunction is laid down in the Vedas thus, 'SAMANO MANTRA': your mantra should be one and common to all of you.

"Sar bhutastu vedanam guhyopnishado matah,
Tabhya sarastu Gayatri tisro vyahrityastatha."

The substance of the four Vedas are the Upanishadas and the essence of the Upanishadas is the Gayatri mantra. Hence Gayatri mantra alone is a mantra that can become universal and democratic. He who has not imbibed the spirit of this mantra or hymn knows not an iota of the Vedas even though

he may boast to be the scholar of the Vedas; he is worse than an idiot.

"Ya sandhya saiva Gayatri"

is the view of the shastras i. e. verily Gayatri is sandhya.

"Gayatri prochyate tasmat gayantam trayate yatah,' i. e. it is called Gayatri because its music brings salvation and liberation to the singer. Again

"Gayatri Vedajanani Gayatri papanashini, Gayatryastu param nasti divi chaiha cha pavanam".

This mantra is the mother, the source of the Vedas, their central inspiration, the burden of their song. There is no mantra either in this world or in the next, on the earth or in heaven, more purifying, more potent in destroying sins than this.

ITS TECHNIQUE. For spiritual purposes it may be repeated in any manner whatever and there is absolutely no restriction of time or place. It always brings purification. Manu has laid down that its mere repetition is ten times more fruitful than the performance of the ordinary sacrifice, its silent repetition where only the lips move is hundred times more effectual, and its mental repetition is even thousand times more sanctifying. This mantra can be repeated while lying down, standing up, or in any other pose or condition of the body. It fulfills desires and in the end brings salvation.

For those who go in for Siddhis or perfections i. e. enslaving natural and

supernatural forces, it is said that they must repeat this mantra in the following order:

"AUM BHUR BHUVAH SWAH, AUM TAT SAVITUR VARENYM, BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAHI, DHIYO YONAH PRACHODAYAT, AUM-"

Then those who want perfection in know ledge (Divinity) must rapeat it while sitting on the skin of a black deer; those who want final liberation Moksha or wealth, on the skin of a tiger; those who want to be cured of some disease, on the skin of an elephant: and those who want all-round perfection, on a piece of a variegated blanket. The pose in all cases may preferbly be the Siddha or Padma (Asanas). Howeverit is the profound poetical

quality of the mantra that matters; its severe simplicity, its spontaniety, its deep insight and spiritual fervour that matter, and not the petty rewards that its selfish repetition might bring.

Thou Pure Being, Refulgent, Smiling, Sole Immanence: All-pervading Omnipresent Thou, HAIL THEE: Thou Admirable One, Thou Glorious Fulgence, Thou All-in-All Creator of the Universe, Radiant Thou, HAIL THEE: Thou Truth, Beauty and Bliss: Pray deflect our Intellect from the path of Evil and with force irresistible, draw it towards Thine Own Majestic Eminence and with Thy purpose divine, quicken it.

O : Intellect ours : Frail Creature : Be steeped in His Splendor Be suffused with His Light, of the Lustrous One,– the Light of all lights. O Intellect, dull fool, cease questioning; be absorbed in that Beatific Vision yonder, that Light, that Life, that Love, that Joy, that sole fountain of Love, LIGHT, LIFE, and JOY. Exult and go mad. Play high and keep naught; drink deep in His Measure and in it be lost for ever and for ever.....ETERNALLY.

Intellect, Piteous creature : Rise from the Slough of Despond : For one now rejoice darling ! Brace up timorous one for He smiles and nods. Reckon it. Duty is our word for His bibding. Do it and never flinch and never swerve. Do His pleasure and ennoble thyself and thus His endearment.....EARN.

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"..... Albeit I be Unborn, undying, indestructible, The Lord of all things living; not the less–

By Maya, by my magic which I stamp
On floating Nature–forms, the primal vast–
I come, and go, and come. When righteousness.

Declines, O Bharata: when wickedness
Is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take.
Visible shape, and move a man with men,
Succouring the good, thrusting the evil back,
And Setting Virtue on her seat again."

Sir Edwin Arnold's Gita
