

GAYATRI SADHANA
THE TRUTH AND DISTORTIONS
(Explained in question answer form)

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PREFACE

Ever since the beginning of the *Vedic* Era chanting and contemplation of *Gayatri Mantra* and performance of *Gayatri Yagya* have been considered the most potent means of invoking the divine energies, latent in the deeper layers of consciousness, for the refinement, upliftment and wellbeing of individuals and the society. However, with the passage of time, especially during the dark medieval ages of feudalism and foreign domination, there came about a general all-round decline of ethical, moral and social values. As a result, *Vedic* rituals, modes of worship and prayer also underwent gross distortions at the hands of the entrenched priestly class. These 'merchants' of religion, through their perverted interpretations of the scriptures, ordained that *Gayatri Sadhana* was the exclusive prerogative of male members of one particular caste, the *Brahmins*; and all other *Varnas* (castes) were forbidden to do *Gayatri Sadhana*. Women were strictly forbidden to take up *Gayatri Sadhana*. The priestly class ruled that if any woman dare do *Gayatri Sadhana*, great misfortune will befall her. They also declared that the *Gayatri*

Sadhana, according to scriptures, was a secret doctrine and the ***Mantra*** could not be chanted audibly. Such retrograde orthodoxy and the pomp, pelf and ostentation that was introduced into the rituals and modes of worship led to the undermining of faith in ***Vedic Dharma*** amongst the vast masses who otherwise swore by Hinduism. They also alienated the educated classes from their religious roots.

About a century-and-a-quarter back, the Arya Samaj Movement initiated and founded by Swami Dayanada Saraswati, took up the uphill task of resurrecting ***Gayatri Sadhana*** and ***Vedic Yagya*** in their pristine purity and succeeded, to some extent, in establishing a powerful platform for challenging and countering the exploitation and perversion of religious rites by entrenched vested interests. However, the Arya Samaj Movement had its own limitations. It could not make the vast majority of the believers in Hindu Dharma to accept the idea of invoking Divinity through impersonal ***Gayatri Sadhana***, as from very ancient times common people had been worshipping and praying before idols of various deities – in their homes and temples. It re-

quired the '*Bhagirath Prayatna*' (Herculean effort) of a *Yug Rishi* to re-establish scripturally-enjoined *Gayatri Sadhana* amongst the masses of all castes and classes (both men and women) – majority of whom were idol worshippers.

It was against this back-drop that there appeared on the scene, a sage-seer, Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya, the founder of *Gayatri Mission*. Born in 1911, it was his fourth re-incarnation to consciously carry forward the mission of spiritualisation of humanity that he had initiated and promoted during his three earlier incarnations as : Sant Kabir, Samartha Ramdas and Ramakrishna Paramhansa. His own awakening to the *mission* of his life occurred like a flash of lightening at the tender age of 15, in 1926, on the sacred day of *Vasant Panchami*, when his *Gurudev*, Shri Sarveshwaranandaji, who has been doing *tapascharya* for the spiritual well-being of humanity in his astral body in the remote Himalayas for the past hundreds of years, appeared before *Acharyashri*, and revealed to him the purpose of his birth.

Under his *Sadguru's* instructions, *Acharyashri* lighted an '*Akhand Jyoti*' and undertook a series of 24 *Mahapurashcharnas*, each of 24-lakh recitations of *Gayatri Mantra* each year – observing strict austerities. During the course of this long austere *Sadhana*, *Acharyashri* subsisted only on a meagre diet of barley *chapatis* and butter milk, without salt or sugar. Whole barley was first fed to a cow, was retrieved from the cow-dung, washed, dried and then ground into flour. The tremendous spiritual energy released through these austerities manifested itself as the human and material resources that he needed for the execution of his mission.

In 1937 he started publication of a monthly Hindi magazine '*Akhand Jyoti*', for dissemination of the eternal *Vedic* wisdom. Apart from Hindi, this magazine is now being published in eight other Indian languages as also in English and has a readership of about 15 lakhs in India and abroad.

During the years 1940 and 1984, *Acharyashri* undertook, as instructed by his divine *Gurudev*, four solitary retreats in the depths of the Hima-

layas, each of six months to one year, for more and more intensive *Gayatri Sadhana*.

On the completion of 24 *Gayatri Mahapurashcharanas*, *Acharyashri* established the *Gayatri Tapobhoomi* hermitage at Mathura, at the location where, in the remote past, *Rishi Durvasa* had performed supreme austerities.

In 1958 *Acharyashri* performed a grand 1008-*kundiya Yagya* at Mathura, wherein over four lakh participants offered oblations.

A comprehensive treatise on the super-science of *Gayatri* was written by *Acharyashri* and was originally published in three volumes. Now it is available in a single compact volume. On his return from his solitary sojourn in the Himalayas in 1961 he started writing and publishing his translations of and commentaries on the *Vedas*, *Upnishads*, *Smritis*, *Darshan Shastras* and *Puranas*. He also wrote four volumes of *Pragya Puran*, thousands of books and booklets on a varieties of topics : spiritual, moral, ethical, social – always stressing the basic unity and inter-beingness of all phenomena ; with special ref-

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erence to human unity, cutting across all barriers of race, religion, sex, region etc. The vast corpus of his writings has now been published in 108 volumes in Hindi, 70 of which are already available in print and 38 are under publication.

The present book gives, in question-answer form, English translation of pertinent excerpts from *Acharyashri's* writings. It is hoped that the material in this compilation will help the seekers, aspiring to take up *Gayatri Sadhana*, in clearing their doubts about this particular path of *Sadhana*.

Dr. Pranav Pandya
Shantikunj

PART -1

SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATIONS

Q.1. Why is an idol or picture used for worship of God, who is formless? Are there more than one *Gayatri*?

Ans. It is an oft-repeated question. It should be understood that basic purpose of worship is meditation and contemplation; and name and form are essential for meditation. Everywhere people coordinate feelings and symbols in order to refine their sentiments. Every nation has its own national flag. Its citizens pay reverence to the national flag and get infuriated when it is insulted. Even communists, who consider themselves atheists offer salutation to the red flag and when they go to Russia they pay a visit to Leningrad to have a glimpse of the place where Lenin's embalmed body has been kept. Muslims who do not believe in idol worship offer their prayers facing *Kaba*. They kiss the symbolic stone '*Sang Asavad*' of *Syah Moosa* in Mecca. Arya Samajists express divine faith in the letter '*Om*' and in performing *Agnihotra*. The obvious reason is that it is convenient to concentrate the mind with the help of symbols. The work of teaching the alphabet to children becomes easy when it is done through pictorial symbols as *Ka- Kabutar, Kha-Khargosh, Ga-Gamla, Gha- Ghadi*, and so on in Hindi. The same principle applies to installation of idols of gods and god-

desses. The *Gayatri mahamantra* does not have any other form or variant. Its authentic classical form comprises a syntax of just twenty-four letters encompassing three verses of eight letters each, three *Vyahritis* and one *Onkar* (o-o-o-m).

It is this ancient *Mantra* which is used during the traditional *Sandhyavandan* and for *Gurudeekcha* during *Yagyopaveet* ceremony. It is also known as the *Guru Mantra*. It appears that the other variants of *Gayatri* had been fabricated during the dark Middle Ages by founders of various sects to propagate their own pre-eminence.

Q.2. Why is *Gayatri* visualized as a young woman with its peculiar ornaments?

Ans. One should not be under the illusion that *Gayatri* is a living being with one mouth and two arms or five mouths and ten arms. Woman has intrinsic superiority over man and so *Gayatri* is given mother's form. Having *Kamandal* and a book in *Gayatri Mata's* hands are symbolic of knowledge and science. There is no living being in the world having five mouths and ten arms. This is just a symbolic representation. Five mouths signify *Panch-kosh* as the five, sheaths of human existence and ten arms represent ten characteristic features of religion.

The symbolism of Mother *Gayatri* sitting on a swan is that the *Sadhak* should keep discriminative wisdom like a royal swan or *Paramhans*. It is said about the mythological *Rajhans* (royal swan) that it has the power to

discriminate the good from the bad, to separate milk from water, to pick up only pearls and leave pebbles. It never eats worms and insects. This is an example of the soul status of a *Param-hansa*. Ordinarily swans live on insects, neither consume milk nor dive to the depths of the ocean to find pearls. The representation of God and powers of Divinity as female deities is a unique feature of Indian spirituality. There are compelling reasons for this insight. Nature has exclusively equipped the female of the species with powers of reproduction and sustenance of the infant. The expression of selfless love of a mother can only be the true representation of love of God for human beings. Hence, *Gayatri* has been conceived as Mother. Since, Divinity never grows old and is eternally young and beautiful, Mother *Gayatri* is shown as young attractive maiden. Besides, meditating on a beautiful woman as symbolic of Divinity also helps one develop a platonic - pious attitude towards women in general. The lotus as Her seat means the presence of Divinity in an environment which is fragrant, pleasant and blossomingly cheerful.

Q.3. In what way the twenty-four emanations of Divine Mother (*Matrikas*) represent *Gayatri*?

Ans. As various organs perform specific functions in the human body, the primary divine energies inherent in the Primordial Supreme Power (*Adyashakti*) of God have been conceived as twenty-four motherly emanations or nine *Devis* (female deities) - since, amongst

the living beings in the world, only the female of the species is capable of creation.

Q.4. Are *Gayatri* and *Savitri* different?

Ans. Not exactly. They are different expressions of the Supreme Power of God. As such they are opposite faces of the same coin. *Gayatri* (idolised with nine faces) and *Savitri* (idolised with five faces) in fact identify the extra-sensory and sensory excellence in human life which are known as *Riddhis* and *Siddhis* in *yogic* parlance. *Gayatri* and *Savitri* are inseparable - inherent like heat and light in fire.

Q.5. What are the specific divine emanations associated with *Gayatri* and *Savitri*?

Ans. As mentioned in the answers to Q.No. 4, *Gayatri* and *Savitri* are two sides of the same coin. *Gayatri* has been referred to by innumerable names. Amongst its significant twenty-four thousand aliases, 24 represent its principal emanations. Twelve of these have been idolized for practical spiritual growth and the remaining twelve for material gains. These are enumerated as:

A) Emanations worshipped for spiritual growth (*Adhyatmik pragati*)

- 1) *Adyashakti* 2) *Brahmi* 3) *Vaishnavi* 4) *Shambhavi*
- 5) *Vedmata* 6) *Devmata* 7) *Vishwamata* 8) *Ritambhara*
- 9) *Mandakini* 10) *Ajapa* 11) *Riddhi* 12) *Siddhi*

B) Emanations worshipped for material gains

1) *Savitri* 2) *Saraswati* 3) *Lakhyami* 4) *Durga* 5) *Kundalini* 6) *Pranagni* 7) *Bhawani* 8) *Bhuwaneshwari* 9) *Annapurna* 10) *Mahamaya* 11) *Payaswani* 12) *Tripura*

(For details please refer to the publication '*Gayatri ki Chaubis Shakti Dharaein*' in Hindi-Published by this mission.)

Q.6. Why is the Primordial Divine Energy (*Gayatri*) represented in so many forms (idols)?

Ans. God is omnipresent. The primordial Divine Energy symbolized as *Gayatri* take up numerous forms and functions in innumerable ways. The analogy of an actor will illustrate the point. An actor in a play has to wear different costumes on various occasions to portray different roles. For each role, he is made to don specific garments with appropriate ornamentation and adopts suitable histrionics. The person chooses the deity according to one's need. During *Trikal Sandhya* for instance, the trinity *Brahmi - Vaishnavi - Shambhavi* is invoked. Aspirants for strength and success in worldly pursuits worship *Durga*; for prosperity, *Lakhyami*; for scholarship and cultural excellence, *Saraswati*; and so on.

Q.7. Why is *Gayatri* represented as a deity with five faces?

Ans. Descriptions of deities and characters in mythology showing many heads and arms are common and

may appear odd and paganish to a person not familiar with the subtleties of Indian spiritual tradition. *Brahma* and *Vishnu* have been described as having four faces, *Shiva* with five, *Kartikeya* with six, *Durga* with eight and *Ganesha* with ten heads. It is said that the demon king *Ravana* had ten heads and twenty arms; and *sahastrabahu*, another demon had a thousand hands. Here, the numbers do not refer to the physiology, but to characteristics of the divine or evil attributes of the deities or demons as the case may be.

Indian spirituality frequently mentions five-fold classifications - such as the five basic elements of the cosmos (*Tatvas*); the five sheaths (*Koshas*) covering the human soul; the five organs each of perception and action in the human body (*Gyanendriyas* and *Karmendriyas*), the five life-forces (*Prans*); the five types of energies operating in human bodies (*Agnis*); the five types of *Yoga*etc. The *Gayatri Mantra*, too is divisible in five parts namely (1) *Om* (2) *Bhurbhuwaha Swaha* (3) *Tatsaviturvareniyam* (4) *Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi* (5) *Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat*. Each of these corresponds to the five primary emanation of the supreme spirit: *Ganesh*, *Bhawani*, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* respectively. The entire super-science of spirituality too is encapsuled in the four *Vedas* and one *Yagya*.

The five faces of *Gayatri* refer to these Divine attributes, which the *Sadhak* has to deal with in course of *Sadhana*.

Q.8. Why is *Gayatri* known as *Tripada- Trinity* ?

Ans. *Gayatri* is *Tripada*- a *Trinity*, since being the Primordial Divine Energy, it is the source of three cosmic qualities known as “*Sat*”, “*Raj*” and “*Tam*” represented in Indian spirituality by the deities “*Saraswati*” or “*Hreem*”. “*Lakhyami*” or “*Shreem*” and “*Kali*” or “*Durga*” as “*Kleem*”. Incorporation of “*Hreem*” in the soul augments positive traits like wisdom, intelligence, discrimination between right and wrong, love, self-discipline and humility. *Yogis*, spiritual masters, philosophers, devotees and compassionate saints derive their strength from *Saraswati*.

The intellectuals, missionaries, reformists, traders, workers, industrialists, socialists, communists are engaged in management of equitable distribution of *Shreem* (*Lakhyami*) for human well-being. *Shreem* is the source of wealth, prosperity, status, social recognition, sensual enjoyment and resources.

“*Kleem*” (*Kali* or *Durga*) is the object of reverence and research by the physical scientists. The plethora of scientific research and development depends on the “*Kleem*” element of *Gayatri*.

The “*Hreem*”, “*Shreem*” and “*Kleem*” elements of *Gayatri* have eternally existed in the cosmos. The modern western civilisation has particularly devoted itself to the management of “*Kleem*” (Heat, light, electricity, magnetism, gravity, matter, nuclear energy etc.) and *Shreem*; whereas the occultists and mystics of East have remained particularly engaged in research of “*Hreem*”. It is evident that the key to lasting global peace harmony and prosperity lies in integral devotion of *Hreem*, *Shreem* and *Kleem*. *Gayatri Sadhana* is the super-sci-

ence for mastery of these three aspects of the Divine Mother.

Q.9. Why is *Gayatri* designated as *Vedmata*, *Devmata* and *Vishwamata*?

Ans. *Gayatri* has been called *Vedmata* because it is the essence of source of *Vedas*. It is called *Devmata* because there is perpetual growth of divinity and righteousness in its devotee. Its ultimate object is to inculcate and awaken the feeling of ‘*Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*’ and ‘*Atmavat Sarvabhooteshu*’ (Welfare of man - the individual lies in the welfare of all human-kind). It is known as *Vishwamata* since it aims at establishment of good-will, equality, unity and love amongst the entire human race, cutting across barriers of language, race, colour, sex etc. and ultimately uniting the whole world on basis of realised spiritual unity in diversity.

The individual basis of *Gayatri* is to establish righteous wisdom. ‘*Naha*’ implies inculcation of cooperation and collective endeavour - mutual caring and sharing.

The absolute wisdom condensed in *Gayatri* magnified itself as the *Vedas*. For this reason *Gayatri* is known as the Mother of *Vedas*. (*Gayatri Mantra* is the means for invocation of Divine grace).

Gayatri is the fountainhead of all divine powers (*Devatas*). It is therefore, known as the *Devmata*. (Ref. *Tandya Brahman*).

Gayatri sustains the cosmos as the three Supreme Emanations of the Supreme, known as *Brahma*, *Vishnu*

and *Mahesh*. Hence, it is called *Vishwamata* (*Ek Pwan Kashi Khand, Poorvardha 4.9.58*)

Q.10. What is the relationship between *Gayatri Mantra* and other powers of God?

Ans. According to *Savitri Upnishad*, from the eternal omnipotence of God represented by *Om*, seven streams of divine power, known as *Vyahritis*, emanate. Three amongst these (*Bhur*, *Bhuwaha* and *Swaha*) form the prefix of *Gayatri Mantra*. The *Vyahritis* are also known as the ‘*Sheersha*’ (fountainhead) of *Gayatri*.

When *Gayatri*- the Primordial Power of the Divine, with Its totality of energy systems, interacts with the five basic elements of material universe (*Panch Bhautik Prakriti - Savitri*), complex, mysterious reactions are set into motion. Spirituality identifies these five basic elements (of which the entire material universe in its of solid, liquid and gaseous states and physical bodies of animate systems are composed) as *Prithvi*, *Jal*, *Vayu*, *Tej* and *Akash*. In course of interaction of the cosmic energies with these basic elements subtle sound waves similar to those produced by twenty-four letters of *Gayatri Mantra* are created.

In the course of thousands of years of research, Indian spiritual masters and *yogis* have evolved procedures for accessing divine energy by “tuning” into these cosmic sound waves by chanting of *Gayatri Mantra*, performance of *Yagya* and other associated procedures of *Gayatri Sadhana*.

(Also please see the answer to Q.No. 8)

Q.11. What is Savita?

Ans. The deity for meditation on *Gayatri Mantra* is ‘Savita’. *Savita* is the cosmic power of God which provides energy to all animate and inanimate systems of the cosmos. In the Sun and other stars, for instance, it works as fission and fusion of atoms.

Q.12. Why is Gayatri Upasana considered supreme as compared to other forms of worship?

Ans. *Gayatri* is the fountainhead of all streams of divine powers personified and designated as deities (*Lakhyami, Durga, Saraswati* etc.) Thus by invocation of *Gayatri* the *Sadhak* starts accessing divine attributes. Speciality of *Gayatri Sadhana* lies in the fact that it provides the *Sadhak* an access to the huge store of spiritual energy accumulated in the cosmos by *Tap* of innumerable *Gayatri Sadhakas* since times immemorial. With a little effort, he is able to get assistance from the ancient *Rishis* in astral realms (the abodes of elevated and enlightened soul) and moves speedily realms on the spiritual path.

Gayatri Sadhana is based on the super-science governing the laws of transformation of matter and energy by influx of divine energies from supramental (*Para*) realms to the natural (*a-Para*) realm.

Gayatri is also personification of God’s power of righteous wisdom. Assimilating the substance and meaning underlying its worship leads to far-sighted wisdom. This alone is sufficient incentive to inspire one to lead right-

eous life and effortlessly get rid of worldly sorrows, grief, pain and suffering. The *Sadhak* gets patience to endure difficulties which cannot be avoided. He is also crowned with worldly success on account of inculcation of perseverance and courage to march ahead on the path of integral growth.

Attainment of heaven and liberation are the outcome of refinement in outlook and incorporation of excellence in the method of working. It is not necessary to wait for the next life after death for achieving these twin aims. Liberation from bondage means freedom from the fetters of greed, infatuation and egoism. A person who assimilates the knowledge underlying *Gayatri* and infuses his soul with inner refinement surely gets liberated from worldly bondage. However, when *Jap* is performed in a routine manner as a ritual and no attempt is made to assimilate its substance in practical life, no perceptible progress takes place.

Q.13. What are the basic aims of *Gayatri Sadhana*?

Ans. The science of *Gayatri Upasana* has been developed to help human beings in ridding themselves of base animal instincts and replace them with the divine virtues. Adherence to the laws of this science provides a *Sadhak* permanent relief from the shackles of unhappiness and misery.

Q.14. What is the relevance of *Gayatri Upasana* in the modern society?

Ans. During the last few decades concepts of religion have been increasingly distorted by vested interests. The deliberately induced misconceptions about religion led to the miraculous achievements in the field of material sciences, created an environment wherein people began to doubt the utility of spirituality and became sceptic about the very existence of God. Many of the neo-literates began to regard religion as superstition to the extent that being an atheist became a symbol of intellectualism.

Now, on the peak of its achievements, science has failed to achieve the wellbeing of the society as a whole, and people have begun to revise their attitude about spirituality. It is being realised that for restoring ethical and the moral values, spirituality is as important as the material aspects of life. *Gayatri Sadhana* is within the reach of common man, Its methodology is easy to adopt, it is well defined and is easily understood. With the help of *Gayatri Sadhana*, therefore, one can make remarkable progress in imbibing basic ethical and moral values with minimal effort.

PART - 2

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ELIGIBILITY FOR *GAYATRI SADHANA*

Q.1. Are there any restrictions on *Gayatri* worship?

Ans. There is a prevalent belief that the right to worship *Gayatri* is exclusively restricted to the *Brahmans* or the so called “*Dwij*” (which is traditionally considered synonymous with “*Brahmans*”, a caste in India).

This is a gross misconception. If there is a dispute on the basis of caste only *Kshatriyas* will be entitled to *Gayatri Sadhana* as revealed to *Vishwamitra*, who was its *rishi*. His descendants will be well within their right to lay claim to their ancestral right. But such an argument would be nothing but childish.

If persons living in India alone claim the right in respect of *Gayatri* what will happen to those Indians who have accepted citizenship of other countries? If *Gayatri Sadhana* is regarded only for Hindus, a ban will have to be imposed on those scientists who are conducting research in this field in foreign countries. In fact, in this age of intellectual freedom it is ridiculous to talk of such absurdities. *Gayatri* is the manifestation of the Creative Power of God; and like the sun, water, air earth etc. everyone is entitled to derive benefit from it. The concept of proprietary rights is applicable to only material objects. Creations of nature are accessible to

all in equal measure. Endless benefits (*Gayatri kalpavrikcha*) can be enjoyed by invocation of *Gayatri* by all human beings irrespective of their social status. Every religion has its Supreme *Mantra* like *Kalma* of Muslims, ‘*Baptisma*’ of Christians, *Namonkar* of Jains, *Om Mani Padme Ham* of Tibetan Buddhists. So also in Indian religions tradition there is only one Supreme *Mantra*, *Gayatri Mantra*.

It is foolish to say that *Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas*, *Kayasthas* etc. have different *Gayatris*. This bane of discrimination on account of high or low caste should not be allowed to enter into and pollute the spiritual environment in which there is one God, one religion and one source of knowledge.

Gayatri is also the key to the invisible Cosmic Consciousness. An ancient Indian practice required compulsory admission of children to schools (*Gurukuls*) for learning spiritual concepts and practices. Here, the student was initiated by the spiritual preceptor (*Guru*) through this very *Gayatri-Mantra*, irrespective of his social background. As a matter of fact, the *Shikha* (tuft of hair on the crown of head) symbolises Ancient Indian (*Bhartiya*) culture. All Hindus traditionally keep *Shikha* as constant reminder to them to nurture high and noble thoughts. As such, *Shikha* itself represents *Gayatri*, which entitles all to the worship of *Gayatri*.

Q.2. Is it true that *Gayatri Sadhana* is permissible to a particular caste only ?

Ans. The concept of caste is grossly misunderstood in the modern society. Ancient Indian Culture did not relate the caste system to one's parentage or ancestry. In those days, defaulters of basic codes of social conduct were deprived of normal civil rights. They were compelled by the society to undertake specific duties along with deprivation of the right to worship *Gayatri*. The caste of a person thus denoted the field of his activity rather than his parentage. Denial of worship was, therefore, a punishment to the guilty. In the present context, the codes for "social punishment" have changed. Work-assignments have also undergone a sea-change. Under these circumstances, all human beings, owing their existence to the one Supreme Being, are entitled to worship *Gayatri* irrespective of their ancestry, parentage or belief.

Q.3. Do *Brahmans* have a special privilege to do *Gayatri Sadhana*?

Ans. The professed proprietary right of *Brahmans* (by birth) on *Gayatri* worship is ridiculous. Credit for embodiment and elaboration of mysticism of *Mahamantra Gayatri* goes to *rishi Vishwamitra*, who belonged to *Kshatriya* caste by birth. Thus, even if the caste is considered essential for *Gayatri* worship, the *Kshatriyas* should have priority over other castes.

The concept of *Brahmanism* has an entirely different connotation. A *Brahman* is one who conforms to the wisdom of *Brahma* (*Brahmaparayan*) and has an ex-

emplary character. Only such persons of refined character can derive maximum advantage from *Gayatri* worship. It has been said that *Gayatri* is *Kamdhenu* of *Brahmans*. In several Sanskrit couplets, *Dwij*s alone have been described as entitled to worship *Gayatri*.

Traditionally, the words *Dwij* and *Brahman* have been considered as synonymous. In this way each *Dwij* or *Brahman* was supposed to have the exclusive privilege of worship of *Gayatri*. Does it mean that individuals belonging to other castes were scripturally prohibited from worshipping *Gayatri*?

The confusion has arisen because of misunderstanding of the meanings of words like *Brahman*, *Dwij* and caste, which are being misconstrued as hereditary distinctions conferred by God on various classes of society. Nothing can be more absurd than considering the Creator as discriminative and partial, making people take birth in a family of high or low caste.

When scriptures declare that *Gayatri* is *kamdhenu* of *Brahmans* i.e. *Gayatri* fulfils all desires of a *Brahman*, they mean that any human being who diligently aspires to be a *Brahman* by following righteousness in thoughts, words and deeds gets an access to the benefits of *Gayatri*. That is to say, *Brahmanism* is a pre-requisite for *Gayatri* worship.

As regards the word *Dwij* it literally means ‘born again’. The initiation to *Gayatri* is the spiritual birth of a person, who has otherwise taken birth as any other animal. This initiation or *Diksha* is like ‘Baptism’ amongst the Christians and is akin to admission in the primary

class of the school of spirituality. The concept of caste has been grossly distorted, misunderstood and misappropriated by vested interests. In *Vedic* times, division of civic responsibilities into four classes of people who were given education and training pertaining to their respective assignments was considered expedient. Each of this class was referred to as a *varna*. In course of time, when successive generations began to follow the same profession *varnas* got ossified into 'castes'. With the change in social environment, certain castes assumed greater prominence in the society and in order to retain their supremacy propagated the concept of caste by birth as a God-given status.

Q.4. Are women entitled to take up *Gayatri Sadhana*?

Ans. For countering the oft-repeated arguments against women's right to *Gayatri* worship, let us try to understand the basic principles of ancient Indian culture. It propounds a global religion, for the entire humanity. Nowhere does it support the illogical inequalities based on differentiation of caste, sex etc. The code of conduct in Hindu religion assigns equality of status to all human beings in all respects with unity and compassion as its basic tenets. Thus, the abridgement of natural human civil and religious rights of women is, therefore, not in conformity with authentic Indian spiritual tradition. On the contrary, Hindu culture regards the female of human species as superior to its male counterpart. How could then

the wise sages of India deprive the women of practice of *Gayatri Sadhana*? The spirit of Indian ethos is totally against any such discrimination. *Gayatri* is accessible to every individual of human species. Any thought or belief contrary to this concept is sheer nonsense and should not be given any importance.

Q.5. What are the basic reasons for the anti-women stance of some sects in India?

Ans. During the medieval period there occurred overall degeneration and corruption in Indian society. Resources and power were usurped by a handful of corrupt rulers who ruthlessly exploited the poor and the downtrodden to fulfil their coffers and maintain a high style of living. It was the period of high tide of corrupt practices. Bonded labour, keeping concubines, abduction, feudal wars, mass-murders and so many other vices took deep roots in the society. The scholars dependent on the feudal lords were forced, or to write and insert spurious verses in the ancient scriptures to please their masters.

Women, too, could not escape this oppression. To exploit their youth, physical and intellectual capabilities, the social codes of conducts were modified and she was systematically brainwashed and subdued. The rulers, along with the so-called scholars, gave a religious justification for the traditions established by them. The women and the “untouchables” in India thus continuously suffered from dual op-

pression, from within the country and from the foreign invaders. Woman was made to accept the 'virtues' of 'purdah' (veil) and submissively follow the just and unjust demands of her 'God-husband'. She was even compelled to commit suicide by forced immolation on the funeral pyre of her dead husband (the ancient tradition of *sati*). Depriving a woman from worship of *Gayatri* was also part of this conspiracy.

Ancient Indian history and scriptural disciplines provide ample evidence to show that the religion in India did not permit any discrimination whatsoever between the rights of men and women. On the contrary, woman was always considered superior to man and worthy of reverence. In ancient times, the *Rishikas* (nuns) participated as equal with men in all religious rituals. When *Gayatri* herself has been symbolised as a female deity, what is the logic in denial of right of *Gayatri* worship to a woman?

Q.6. Is *Gayatri* worship permissible for the non-vegetarians and those who take liquors?

Ans. It is said that *Gayatri* is a sacred *Mantra* and those who worship it should live a life of inner and outer purity. They should not take liquor, meat etc. It is good not to indulge in intoxicants. It is better to remain pure as far as possible. This, however, does not mean that no medicines should be given to a person living in unhealthy conditions. It is the speciality of *Gayatri*

Mantra that by its worship, defects and vices of a person start falling off from the *Sadhak's* nature. By taking a dip in the *Ganga* every living being becomes pure. None, not even a cow, buffalo, donkey, horse is prevented from entering into this sacred river. In the same way any person of any social status can perform *Sadhana* of *Gayatri Mantra* without any restrictions, whatsoever. His vices, defects will automatically go on reducing in the course of time. Just as the argument that a patient should not be given medicine is wrong, so also the statement that *Gayatri Mantra* should not be adopted if food and daily routine of a person are defective is fallacious.

Q.7. Is *Yagyopaveet* essential for *Gayatri* worship? What is its significance ?

Ans. It cannot be made mandatory that those alone who put an *Yagyopaveet* can perform *Gayatri Jap*. However, since *Yagyopaveet* is an image of *Gayatri* it is better if its worshipper puts it on.

Yagyopaveet is a form of *Gayatri*. It is preferable to perform worship sitting in a temple in front of a deity. It, however, does not mean that if there is no temple or deity, worship should not be performed. *Gayatri Sadhana* can be performed even, without putting on the *Yagyopaveet*.

Yagyopaveet is, in fact, a symbol of *Gayatri mahamantra*. The nine threads in it represent the nine words of *Gayatri Mantra*. Three strands indicate three-

fold achievements. Similarly the three knots (*Vyahritis*) and the large knot (*Om*) are also part of the *Mantra*. In a nutshell, *Yagyopaveet* is the sacred symbol of *Gayatri*, wearer of which (across the left shoulder near the heart) constantly remembers the pledge he has taken to follow the doctrine of *Gayatri Sadhana*. Just as one derives greater benefit by worshipping before a deity in a temple, but can also pray anywhere, *Yagyopaveet* is recommended but is not mandatory.

PART-3

QUERIES ABOUT THE MANTRA

Q.1. How does the ‘Gayatri Mantra’ as a *Vedmantra* differ from other ‘*Laukik mantras*’?

Ans. *Gayatri Mantra* is the primordial *Mantra* self-manifested by the projection of the will (*sankalp*) of Omnipotent Divine to bring into existence the present cycle of creation (*Varah Kalpa*). According to Hindu mythology there are infinite cosmic cycles of expansion and contraction known as *Shrishti and Pralaya*. At the time of *Mahapralaya* or *Doom’s Day*, all matter and energy present in the cosmos gets contracted into elementary ‘*Akash*’ and ‘*Pran*’. In the succeeding cycle, these expand to constitute the multitude of energies and forces which operate on the elemental *Akash* to produce animate and inanimate objects of the ‘Creation’.

Vedas, in which *Gayatri Mantra* is mentioned several times (*Rigveda* 3.62.10, *Yajurveda* 3.35.22.9, 36.3, *Samveda* 462) are considered divine revelation (*Apaurusheya*). The *Laukik Mantras*, are, on the other hand, composition of *rishis* – i.e. they are man-made (*Paurusheya*). Hence the supremacy of *Gayatri Mantra*.

Q.2. Is it permissible to chant other *Mantras* or worship other deities along with *Gayatri*?

Ans. Central theme of any form of worship is meditation. The exclusive objective of *Jap* and meditation in *Upasana* is to establish an intimate emotional bond between the devotee and God. Spirituality in India permits a free choice amongst a multitude of symbols (as deities) for meditating on attributes of the Creator. Once a particular deity is chosen as one's *Ishtadeo* (Exclusive representative deity for worship), it is considered mandatory to follow the rituals and *Mantras* of *Upasana* pertaining to the *Ishtadeo* only and pursue *Upasana - Sadhana - Aradhna* strictly according to the procedure laid down by the *Guru*. During *Sadhana*, the *Ishtadeo* is treated like a living person, as one's most intimate relative, as father - mother - brother - helper - master - friend, all rolled into one (*Twameva Mata-cha, Pita Twameva...*). Only after cultivating such an intimate relationship with God, can one expect His / Her grace.

Because of ignorance, many devotees decorate their place of worship with assorted forms, (photographs etc.) of deities, chant many *Mantras* and say prayers to please them. Disregarding the Oneness of God (*Brahma*), they try to establish some relationship with many deities in expectation of multifarious benefits from each of them. In the field of spirituality such a practice becomes counterproductive. The deities represent streams of that 'One fountainhead' of God. Interaction with some particular attributes of God (deity) may be necessary for a particular purpose, but for an allround spiritual progress one should

choose *Gayatri* as *Ishtadeo*. (Ref. *Upasana Ke Do Charan Jap or Dhyan*).

Q.3. Why is *Gayatri* represented as a female deity?

Ans. Several people say that when masculine words have been used in *Gayatri* how can it be said *Gayatri Mata*? It should be understood that the Absolute Divinity it represents, is all pervasive and formless. It is beyond gender. In scriptures both masculine and feminine words are used for fire, air etc. The famous Sanskrit couplet which is a prayer to God says, ‘Oh God, you are mother, you are father (*Twameva Mata-cha Pita Twameva*).’ Literally, *Savita* may be called masculine, but its power, *Savitri* is feminine. These allegorical descriptions in the scriptures should be taken as such, and not used to score declamatory points.

Q.4. What is the basis of words in *Gayatri Mantra* adding upto 24 letters?

Ans. The confusion about *Gayatri Mantra* having a total of 23 letters only, arises mainly because of the word *Nayam* in *Varenyam*. In the composition of the *Richas* (couplets) of *Vedas*, meanings are subordinate to the syntax of words, which is according to specified musical notations. The *chhandas* (components of *Vedas* classified according to number of letters) in the *Vedas* are composed keeping in view the symphony to be created by the succession of words for a desired objective. Musicians change the pitch and duration of the

tones to conform to a *Raga*. The mystery of difference between the “written” and pronounced *Nyam* in the *Mantra* lies in its sonic effect. In this way considering *Nyam* as a composite of *Ni* and *Yam* according to their musical notation, the first, second and third segments of the *Mantra* add up to 8 words each. *Adya Shankaracharya* endorses this view. The *Pingal Shastra* and *Mantrartha Chandrodaya* also support the grammatical conformity of *Gayatri Mantra* on the same principle. In this way, the letters in the *Mantra* are to be counted as follows:

TAT SA VI TU VAR RE NI YAM BHA RGO DE VASYA DHI
 1+ 1+ 1+1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+
 MA HI DHI YO YO NAH PRA CHO DA YAT
 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1+ 1 = 24

For further reference please refer to the monthly periodical *Akhand Jyoti*, May 1983 issue.

Q.5 Does *Gayatri Mantra* conform to the rules of Sanskrit Grammar?

Ans. At times points are raised about supposed grammatical inaccuracies in the composition of *Gayatri Mantra*. These misconceptions arise when the *Shrutis* (*Richas* of *Vedas* and *Upnishads*) are studied and evaluated as literary, human creations. Unlike the religious books and teachings of the Rishis compiled as *Smritis*, *Puranas*, *Tantras* etc., *Shrutis* are considered eternal divine revelations (*A- paurusheya*) dealing with inter-relationship of soul and God. Thus, *Shrutis* are not meant for literary comprehension and intellectual dis-

sertations. Their compilers had explicitly stated that in order to understand and experience the mysteries of *Vedas* (i.e. *Shrutis*), it is essential to have adequate exposure to various related scriptural texts, commentaries of seers, interaction with seer scholars and above all the grace of God, This alone can purify the soul, making it receptive to the supreme wisdom revealed in the *shrutis*.

It is, thus, irrefutable that the *Vedas* (which include the *Gayatri Mantra*) are not governed by the laws of Sanskrit Grammar, which is a product of human endeavour and came into existence at a much later stage in human evolution.

Q.6. How many “Onkars” are included in the *Gayatri Mantra*?

Ans. *Gayatri Mantra* is complete in itself. It is not at all necessary to supplement it by assigning three or five ‘Oms’ by way of *beej Mantra* or *samput*. This is done only in the *Tantrik* system. The common man should not bother about some odd references in scriptures which justify prefixing, inter-fixing or suffixing more than one Onkars (*Om*) with the *Gayatri Mantra*. The practice of using more than one *Onkar* was probably adopted by different sects as a mark of distinction (as followers of various sects use uniform, *Tilak chhap* marking on forehead etc. to identify themselves).

The standard *Guru-Mantra*, *Gayatri* comprises of three *Vyahritis* and three phrases of eight letters each pre-fixed by *Om*. *Om* is in fact, a symbol of reverence preceding all *Ved Mantras*, as Mr., Mrs., Miss, etc. are prefixed to the names of persons. However, there is no restriction in using more than one *Onkars* though the standard practice of pre-fixing one *Onkar* (*Om*) is recommended for maintaining uniformity.

Q.7. What are “Vyahritis”?

Ans. The *Gayatri Mantra* begins with enunciation of “*Om*” (Amen in Christianity and Aameen in Islam are its variants). “*Om*” is believed to be resonating all over the cosmos as the primordial sound. Spiritual-science considers it as one of the cosmic representations of omnipresent GOD (*Shabda Brahma* or *Nad Brahma*). Devotees attempt to simulate “*Om*” in audible frequencies by blowing in a conch shell, sounding a gong, ringing a large bell or simply by pronouncing “O-O-O-M”. The ‘*Vyahritis*’ *Bhoor*, *Bhuwaha* and *Swaha* are the three amongst the five elemental streams of primordial energy emanating from “*Om*” (Ref. *Gayatri Tatva Bodh*). Spiritual-science refers to these streams as *Brahma* (The Creator), *Vishnu* (The sustainer), *Mahesh* (The Destroyer). The three primary attributes of animate and inanimate components of the cosmos - *Sat*, *Raj* and *Tam* are also known as *Vyahritis*. Though not part of the text of ‘*Gayatri Mantra*’, the ‘*Vyahritis*’ are considered as the fountainhead (*Shirsha*) of this *Mantra* and are used as its prefix.

Q.8. What is a *Beej Mantra*? How is it applied?

Ans. All religions of the world make use of a part of their scriptures as a representative *Beej Mantra*. Thus Mohammedans have their *Kalma* the Christians *Baptism*, and the Jains *Namonkar Mantra*. The *Gayatri Mantra* is the *Beej Mantra* for the Hindus.

An abbreviation of a *Ved Mantra* is also known as its *Beej Mantra*. Literally the word ‘*Beej*’ Means ‘Seed’. In the seed are inherent all the characteristics of the tree. The DNA of a person is also akin to the seed of a plant, since it contains all genetic characteristics of a living organism. *Beej Mantras*, like the microchips in the computer, are small but extraordinarily effective for invocation of specific streams of divine powers for particular objectives. The application of *Beej Mantras*, however, belongs to *Tantrik* System and these can only be made use of under the guidance of an expert. In *Gayatri Mantra* as a whole, there are *Beej Mantras* *Bhur*, *Bhuwaha* and *Swaha*, corresponding to each of its three segments. Besides, each of its 24 letters has a *beej Mantra* of its own. The *Beej Mantra* in *Gayatri* is applied after the ‘*Vyahriti*’ (*Bhur Bhuwaha Swaha*) prefixing “*Tatsaviturvarniyam...*” It is also used as a suffix (*samput*) after “*Prachodayat*. (Ref. “*Gayatri Ka Har Akshar Shakti Shrot*”).

Q.9. How is *rishi Vishwamitra* related to *Gayatri Mantra*?

Ans. *Vishwamitra* was the first *rishi* of this *kalpa* (the present cycle of creation) who could access all powers of *Gayatri*. In spiritual parlance, he was the first master of *Gayatri Sadhana*. *Rishi Vishwamitra* standardised the procedures of *Gayatri Sadhana* for the common man.

PART-4

FALLACIES ABOUT SCRIPTURAL RESTRICTIONS

Q.1. Is *Gayatri* worship conditioned? (Is *Gayatri* ‘*keelit*’)?

Ans. There are two methods for invoking powers of *Gayatri*. One the simple divine method for spiritual progress and the other an intricate method of ‘*Tantra Shastra*’ for immediate fulfilment of worldly desires. The *Mantras* of *Tantra Shastra* also have a destructive power. Unless, they are practised with a strict discipline and for proper objective, they are capable of inflicting harm on the practitioner. A person with an ulterior motive can inflict harm on others through the power obtained by invocation of occult powers through ‘*Tantra Sadhana*’. Hence specific key procedures are required to unlock the powers of *Tantrik Mantras*. This, too, is possible only with the help of an experienced *Guru*. As doses of a high potency medicine are to be decided by an experienced doctor, decoding or unlocking a *Mantra* (in the above discipline) depends on the spiritual status of the one practitioner. ‘*Durga Shaptshati*’ which requires ‘*Kavach*’, ‘*Keelan*’ and ‘*Argal*’ may be quoted as an example).

Vedic Mantras (such as *Gayatri*) are not bound by such strict restrictions, as they are practised exclusively for one’s inherent spiritual growth and for developing

god-gifted capabilities for performing noble deeds. *Vedic Mantras*, therefore, do not require any ‘unlocking keys’. Nevertheless, as a sick person or a student needs an experienced doctor or a teacher for proper treatment or teaching a beginner in this field too requires the guidance of an accomplished *Guru*, in the absence of which he wanders aimlessly without making any progress whatsoever in the path of *Sadhana*.

None should entertain any apprehension that in *Kalyug*, *Gayatri Mantra* has been accursed or that its *Sadhana* goes in vain. Who can curse God and what effect can it have? This is nothing but a ruse meant to undermine the faith of the people and to allure them to join some other sect.

Q.2. What is the truth in the belief that God *Brahma*, and *rishis* *Vashistha* and *Vishwamitra* had laid a curse (*shaap*) that success will elude the practitioner unless he/ she recites certain verses (*shlokas*)?

Ans. That this is baseless, is established by the following references from the scriptures:-

- a) *Gayatri* is well known as the inherent creative power of God. She is also at places referred metaphysically as spouse of God *Brahma*. Scriptures say that with the help of *Gayatri*, He (*Brahma*) created the universe and expounded the doctrines of *Vedas* (the four faces of *Brahma* symbolize the four streams of *Vedic* revelation).
- b) *Vashistha* inflicted a crushing defeat on *Vishwamitra* with the help of *Nandini*- the symbolical cow which

fulfils all wishes and is regarded as the counterpart of *Kamdhenu* of heaven (*Swarg*).

c) To *Vishwamitra* goes the credit of untravelling the mystery of *Gayatri*. Not only he practised *Gayatri* for a very long period with strictest of self-discipline, and acquired immense occult powers therefrom, but also developed the expertise and methodology for invocation of divine powers through practice of *Gayatri Sadhana*.

From the aforesaid, it is evident that the great spiritual personalities of yore had used the power of *Gayatri* to fulfil their objectives. There is, therefore, no logic in assuming that they had cursed it and deprived other human beings of its fruits.

It appears that the feudal lords of the medieval ages, propounded their independent cults and to establish their own doctrines found it necessary to discredit the traditional practice of *Gayatri*. The concocted story of ‘curse on *Gayatri*’ was the easiest and simplest way of striking at the roots of faith and confidence of the masses. This could have been one reason behind this baseless assumption. Otherwise, who in this universe has the capability to put a curse on divine manifestations like the sun, clouds, air, lightening, the earth etc. *Gayatri* is, in essence, the primordial energy of the Almighty. Hence, all are free to utilize it without any restrictions or apprehensions whatsoever. At the most, the concept of the so-called “curse” may be symbolically indicative of the need for a *Guru* of the status of *Vashistha* and

Vishwamitra, in absence of whom success eludes the worshipper.

Q.3. Is *Guru* mandatory for *Gayatri* worship?

Ans. *Gayatri* is also known as *Guru-Mantra* i.e. to achieve a higher level of spiritual accomplishment, one needs an experienced *Guru* as a spiritual guide and protector. Let us draw an analogy from other fields. Some fields of learning require only books, whereas for others like music, crafts, etc. direct help of an expert is needed. Similarly, though the daily rituals of *Gayatri* worship are quite simple, for higher levels of achievement when the worshipper, (depending upon his own personal spiritual status acquired through previous births) faces several ups and downs, an experienced *Guru* is needed just as a doctor is required during treatment of a disease. Thus, though one can take up *Gayatri* worship without a *Guru*, initiation by a proper experienced *Guru* is advisable. An accomplished *Guru* (who had acquired spiritual mastery under the guidance of his own *Guru*) is necessary for receiving instruction and direction for accelerating one's spiritual growth. The spiritual evolution of the soul is a prolonged process continuing through countless cycles of births and deaths. Sought in a hurry, an inexperienced person posing as *Guru* may do more harm than good to the disciple.

Q.4. I have already taken *Diksha* (initiation) from a *Guru*. Will it be proper for me to seek another *Guru* ?

Ans. There are no restrictions on choosing more than one *Guru*. It all depends on the type and level of achievement sought for. *Ram* had *Vashistha* as his family *Guru* and *Vishwamitra* for learning of martial and other branches of knowledge. *Dattatreya* is known for having twenty four *Gurus*. *Durvasa* was family-*Guru* of *Krishna* and *Brahaspati* was his *Guru* in respect of learning the specific branches of knowledge.

In schools, with the change in class, teachers also change. Village *Purohit*, *Teerth Purohit*, Family *Purohit*, *Dikcha Purohit*, *Sadhana Purohit* are all different. They do not contradict but supplement each other.

Q.5. Is audible chanting of *Gayatri* scripturally permissible?

Ans. Some people say that *Gayatri Mantra* being a “secret” *Mantra* should only be whispered in the ear during initiation. This may apply to *Tantrik Mantras* but not to *Gayatri Mantra*. According to scriptures the *Ved Mantras* should be chanted loudly with tune or accent according to specified notation. Whispering is needed only for secrecy and it is done in seclusion in conspiracies. There is nothing in *Gayatri Mantra* necessitating such a secrecy.

Nowhere in the scriptures, audible chanting of *Gayatri* is forbidden. The tradition of whispering the *Mantra* in the ears of the person being initiated owes its origin to the vested interests of the dark middle ages, when a particular class of society amongst the Hindus claimed exclusive rights to *Gayatri* worship and its initiation in order to prove its superiority in spiritual matters. Noth-

ing can be more ludicrous than preaching secrecy and advocating intellectual proprietary rights on worship of God. (During the medieval period the Popes in Europe indulged in similar corrupt practices.) In fact, the scriptures clearly emphasize the need to rhyme the *Gayatri Mantra*. In *Devi Bhagwat* (11.3.11) it is mentioned that “Since it protects its singer, it is known as *Gayatri*”. The ‘*Chandogyaupnishad*’ (*Shankar Bhasya*) too confirms this assertion. The ‘*Niruktam*’ says that since this *Mantra* was used by the *Devtas* for praying (*Stuti*), it came to be known as *Gayatri Mantra* (7.12). Besides, literally the word *Gayatri* is composed of two words- *Gai* and *Train*. In sanskrit *Gai* stands for ‘To sing’ and *Train* means ‘to look after’ or ‘to protect’, i.e. it protects the one who sings it.

Hence, arguments against audible chanting of this *Mantra* have no basis whatsoever.

Ordinarily *Jap* should be performed in such a way that throat, lips, tongue may go on moving but even a person sitting close by may not be able to hear. It is possible to have estimation of average time and number of *Japs* with the help of a *Mala*. Those who do not possess a *Mala* can estimate the number approximately with the help of time. Tulsi, Sandal-wood *Malas* are most appropriate ones for performance of *Jap*. For *Tantrik* applications *Rudraksh Malas* are used.

Ordinarily, words are pronounced by the movement of throat, palate, tongue, lips etc., According to spiritual science it is also mentioned that there are some subtle centres, channels etc. within the human body which vibrate along with utterance of words.

As soon as the key of a type-writer is pressed, there is a stroke on the paper and the particular letter is typed on it. The letters of *Gayatri Mantra* have been selected in such a manner that by utterance thereof spe-

cific ultrasonic sound waves are created and positive attributes of *Gun* (virtues), *Karma* (action) and *Swabhav* (nature) get activated. A *Sadhak* gains spiritually as well as materially by this *Sadhana*.

Mental *Jap* without moving the lips can be performed during illness or in a journey when a person cannot take a bath and during the period of *Sootak* when there is birth or death in a family. It can also be done while walking on a the road or lying on the bed at night.

PART -5

QUERIES ABOUT *JAP* AND DAILY *UPASANA*

Q.1. What is significance of correct pronunciation of the *Mantra*?

Ans. All *Ved Mantras* have a poetic composition (syntax) with specified musical notes. When a *Mantra* is recited acoustic vibrations surpassing ultrasonic frequencies are produced. These waves travel in an “extra-sensory telepathic medium” enveloping the cosmos and interact with the thought processes of all living beings. In order to strengthen the intensity of these waves, the *Gayatri Mantra* is recited in course of *Yagya-Havan*, on auspicious occasions and at the beginning of all religious ceremonies. Three different types of musical (phonetic) compositions are mentioned for the *Gayatri Mantra* in the *Vedas*. The one specified in the *Yajurveda* is recommended for the masses.

Q.2. What is the methodology of chanting of *Mantra* during *Jap*?

Ans. During the routine, solo *Jap*, the *Mantra* is pronounced in such a way that although there is a slight movement of lips, larynx and tongue, it produces a resonance inaudible to anyone except the worshipper. In a mass the *Mantra* is pronounced loudly in unison.

Q.3. How is it possible for illiterate persons and children to do *Gayatri Sadhana*, for whom the pronunciation of the *Mantra* is somewhat difficult?

Ans. Illiterate persons who cannot utter *Gayatri Mantra* correctly, can perform *Jap* of *Panchakshari Gayatri* “*Om bhoor Bhuvaha Swaha.*” If they cannot utter even these words correctly, they can perform *Jap* of “*Hari Om Tat-Sat.*” This also serves the purpose of *Panchakshari Gayatri Mantra*.

Q.4. What is the most suitable time of the day for *Upasana*?

Ans. *Brahm Muhoort* i.e. an hour before sunrise in the morning, and just before sunset in the evening to an hour thereafter bring forth maximum result. During day *Upasana* may be carried out any time according to one’s convenience. Although a fixed routine in timings is recommended yet it is not mandatory. As a matter of fact, mental *Jap* may be carried on even while walking, travelling or lying on the bed. (The movements of lips, vocal chord and tongue are forbidden in the latter case.)

Q.5. Is *Gayatri Jap* permissible during night time?

Ans. Sages had advised *Jap* during the day-time for two reasons. One: the nights are meant exclusively for rest. Any activity during the night (including *Upasana*) is likely to affect one’s health.

Two: since Sun is the deity of *Gayatri*, the radiations from the Sun are readily obtained from sunlight during day. Nevertheless, *Upasana* during the night is not a taboo. One may choose his own convenient time for *Jap* without any apprehension regarding the procedure.

Q.6. Is *Jap* permissible along-with other activities?

Ans. One may perform *Jap* even while walking or without taking a bath or during other physical activities. On such occasions, however, it should only be a mental process without movement of lips, larynx and tongue. Instead of taking the help of a rosary, a clock may be used for keeping a count.

Q.7. Should one deliberate on the meaning of the *Mantra* during the *Jap*?

Ans. As regards contemplation on the meaning of *Mantra* during the *Jap*, it is recommended that one should only meditate on the deity during *Jap*. The practical difficulty in thinking about meaning of *Mantra* at the time of *Jap* is that it takes time to form imaginary pictures in accordance with the meaning of every word and during this time *Jap* cannot be interrupted. *Jap* should be continuous, uninterrupted and non-stop like the flow of oil. Of course, the meaning of *Gayatri Mantra* should be thoroughly understood. If it is sought to form imaginary pic-

tures of the meanings of different words, this can conveniently be done at some other time but not with *Jap*.

Q.8. Is taking a bath essential prior to *Jap*? What should one wear during the *Jap*?

Ans. It is more appropriate to sit in front of an altar after taking bath, wearing clean clothes and perform worship in the morning with due salutations and reverence. It keeps the mind happily steady and helps in its concentration. But when duty hours are odd, a person is sick or where it is not possible to arrange for water, one can perform mental *Jap* without the help of *Mala*. Scriptures recommend cleanliness of body and clothes as a pre-requisite for any religious practice or worship. Since a routine of wearing freshly-washed clothes during each session of *Upasana*, is to be maintained, one is advised to be clad only in a two-piece garment, one each for covering the upper and lower parts of the body e.g. *Dhoti - Dupatta*. However, for protection against cold an additional under-garment can be worn.

Though the pundits prescribe cleanliness of body and clothes, it is not considered mandatory for all occasions. Situations may arise when the worshipper finds it difficult to adhere to this rule strictly. Under such circumstances, one should not discontinue the routine of worship. Otherwise, the aspirant is totally deprived of even the partial benefit. Besides cleanliness, the objective of these preparatory rituals is to help the worshipper in getting rid of lethargy. A sick or weak person

may wash his arms, feet and face, or if possible wipe the body with a wet cloth.

Woollen or silken clothes do not absorb dirt and perspiration to the extent cotton wears do. Nevertheless, these too require cleaning at certain intervals. Since, now-a-days silk is obtained by boiling live silk worms, silk wears are no longer considered appropriate for a spiritual practice. These are not recommended for *Upasana*. The same holds true for animal hides. The ancient sages used hides of animals who died a natural death. This is no longer true. Animals are being killed for their hides. Now-a-days a variety of other floor-spreads (woollens, synthetics) are available, which may be used; and cleaned by washing or through exposure to sun from time to time.

Q.9. On what should one concentrate during *Upasana*?

Ans. Those believing in Divinity ‘with form’ (*Sakar*) are advised to concentrate on an idol or picture of *Gayatri*, whereas those having faith in formless God (*Nirakar*) may concentrate in the central, part of the sun, all the while imagining that the ethereal solar energy is permeating and purifying the trio of, physical (*Sthool*) subtle (*Sooksham*) and causal (*Karan*) bodies of the *Sadhak*). During *Upasana*, it is necessary to concentrate one’s thoughts exclusively on the deity. Persistent attempts should be made to restrain thoughts from wandering. Extraneous thoughts should not be allowed to enter the mind.

Q.10. How does one meditate on Savita?

Ans. Spiritual tradition in India considers *Gayatri* as the most powerful medium for invocation of *Savita*, the omnipresent cosmic energy of God operating the natural functions in the animate beings (flora and fauna) and in the inanimate objects (e.g. as fission and fusion, magnetism and gravity in planets and stars). Since this energy is manifestly (visibly) received all over this planet through solar (and invisible stellar) radiations, it is logical to consider the Sun as the representative of *Savita*. Experience shows that there is maximum absorption of this energy at dawn.

While meditating on the rising Sun, the devotee has the advantage of interacting with *Savita* with each of his/her three bodies. The physical body (*Sthul Sharir*) is conceptualised as being purified by permeation of solar energy through the millions of pores in the body. The process of conceptualisation as *Savita* interacting with the subtle body (*Sukcham sharir*), purifies the “Ideosphere” and deeply meditating about integrating one’s individual identity with the cosmic existence of *Savita*, the devotee interacts through the causal Body (*Karan Sharir*). (Ref. *Upasana Ke Do Charan - Jap Aur Dhyam*).

Q.11. How can one derive maximum benefit from daily Gayatri Upasana during mornings and evenings?

Ans. Regularity in morning and evening *Gayatri Upasana* must be strictly adhered to. Although total involvement and concentration are essential ingredients of *Upasana*, this alone is not enough. For keeping good health, one is required to perform a minimum amount of manual labour to digest and assimilate the meals taken during the day. Likewise, to reap the fruits of worship, it is essential to adopt *Upasana* and *Sadhana* simultaneously.

To integrate *Upasana*, and *Sadhana* one is required to instill maximum degree of faith (*Nistha*) in *Upasana*. *Nistha* is reflected as steadfastness in keeping one's words and maintaining discipline and regularity in habits. Incorporation of *Nistha* in *Sadhana* enhances steadfastness, which in turn provides strength to the inherent power of resolution and sufficient spiritual strength. The cumulative effect of these attributes helps and inspires the *Sadhak* in adopting a strict self-discipline which is called *Tapascharya*. For *Anusthans*, these attributes are particularly essential. If these attributes are incorporated in the day to day routine of worship the level of *Sadhana* rises to that of an *Anusthan*.

Q.12. How can I raise the level of my day-to-day *Upasana* to get the benefit of *Anusthan*?

Ans. It requires five hundred thousand *Japs* a year at the rate of 15 *Malas* per day. *Sadhana* of this type is known as an *Abhiyan Sadhana*. Although this number is achievable simply by 15 cycles of *Mala* each day, it is customary to supplement it with two '*Laghu*

Anusthans’ of twenty four thousand *Japs* each during *Navratari* which falls in the month of *Chaitra* (15th March to 15th April)and *Ashwin* (15th August to 15th Sept.). Even otherwise, this practice is commonly followed by all *Sadhaks*. Additional *Sadhana* during *Navratris* (nine auspicious days occurring twice a year) further adds to the benefits of *Abhiyan Sadhana*.

Q.13 What are the rules of *Abhiyan Sadhana*?

Ans. The basic rules of *Abhiyan Sadhana* are given hereunder:-

(a) The time of commencement: All days are considered auspicious for initiating a good work. However, for this purpose a *Parva* (religious auspicious period) would be the best choice. Amongst the auspicious festivals, one may choose days like *Basant Panchami*, *Guru Poornima*, *Gayatri Jayanti* etc. As regards of “*Tithis*”, *Panchami*, *Ekadashi* and *Poornima* are considered auspicious and amongst the days, *Ravivar*, (Sunday) *Guruvar* (Thursday) are the best suited.

(b) Self control (*Samyam*): Involvement in *Upasana* should be a gradual process. In the beginning one attempts to adopt regularity in practice by doing a minimum number of *Malas* each day at a fixed convenient time. The same is true about other restrictions of self-control. In the beginning one may follow these on Thursdays. Later, if it is possible to adopt these self-controls for longer periods, greater benefits accrue. The basic rules of the *Sadhana* are the same as for any other *Anusthan*. Fasting (Half or full day), abstention from sex, self service, *Titikcha* (Tolerance of heat and

cold of natural weather cycles with minimum necessities) are adopted at least on Thursdays. During any form of fasting, mentioned earlier, refraining from unnecessary chattering and abstention from sex are must.

(c) Fasting : For food, liquid diets like milk, buttermilk, fruit juices etc. are the best. Otherwise, one may depend on vegetables. Even if this much is not possible only one meal may be taken each day. It should, however, be free of salt and sugar (*Aswad vrat*).

(d) Keeping silent : One aspect of control on tongue is through the control on taste. The other is by balanced and cultured speech. To adopt it, one has to get rid of the old habits of intemperate utterances. Maintenance of silence creates the ground for the change in speech habits. For a working man, it is difficult to keep quiet throughout the day. Nevertheless, it should not be difficult to find out two hours in the morning or at any other convenient time during the day for keeping silent. During the duration of silence, one should do an introspection (*Manan*) to identify one's weaknesses, vices and bad habits and think of ways to get rid of them. The void thus created should be planned to be filled with good constructive habits (*Chintan*).

Thus, refraining from speech does not simply mean keeping quiet anywhere. Seclusion is also necessary, where no communication is needed even through signs and gestures.

(e) Sex abstinence : Amongst all physical activities of entertainment, overindulgence in sex has the most disastrous consequences. One has to pay heavily for the sexual acts during which vital life force is

drained out of the human body, making one progressively weaker spiritually. On Thursdays, therefore, it is advised not only to refrain from sex but also avoid thoughts and actions arousing sexual impulse.

The above five principles are adopted on Thursdays only symbolically. The objective is to train oneself in self-control in day to day living so that one may ultimately persevere to follow them throughout life.

Q. 14. What is the purpose of self-control in *Abhiyan Sadhana*?

Ans. *Tap* is meant for conservation of life-force and utilising it for elevation of soul to higher levels of consciousness. The three outlets through which about 80% of this vital force continues to leak out of human body are: indulgence in delicious food, intemperate utterances and sexual distractions and actions. The moment these are controlled, the doors to progress open.

Self-control, however, does not simply mean control on sensory organs and the thought process. The field of self-control encompasses control on misuse of all types of resources. For instance, one is advised to utilize each and every moment of life judiciously right from leaving the bed in the morning till one falls asleep. Other self-controls are maintenance of balance in physical labour, honest earnings i.e. taking a livelihood based on just and lawful means of production and expenditure of earnings for noble purposes. Amongst all these, control on sensory organs is of prime importance.

Q.15. What are the rules of *Akhand* (unbroken) *Jap*?

Ans. *Akhand Jap* is performed on special auspicious occasions like *Gayatri Jayanti*, *Guru Poornima*, *Vasant Panchami* etc. There are two ways of doing it. It may be performed either for twenty-four hours or between sun-rise and sun-set. During the visibility of the sun (day-time) a vocal mass chanting with rosary may be performed.

The time of beginning and end of an *Akhand Jap* should be the same in the forenoon and afternoon. When it is meant for twenty-four hours, the period involved includes a day and night in equal proportion. Traditions permit a vocal chanting during the day and mental *Jap* in the night. Wherever this procedure can be conveniently adhered to, it may be adopted. Otherwise, mental *Jap* is generally more convenient for the sake of uniformity. *Dhoop-Deep* should be kept continuously burning during the period of *Jap*.

Q.16. What to do if there are disruptions during *Jap*?

Ans. If one is required to go to toilet in between a sessions, the *Jap* can be resumed after cleaning of hands and feet. Taking bath after each such disruption is not necessary. On sneezing, passing of wind, yawning etc., purification is achieved by taking three *Aachmans*.

Q.17. What are the restrictions on *Upasana* during the inauspicious days (birth or death in family etc.)?

Ans. On such occasions, although regular chanting of *Mantra* with rosary and standard rituals are forbidden, mental *Jap* and meditation may be done. The objective is two-fold. On the one hand, it protects the devotee from mental and physical exertion, on the other, a quarantine (*Sootak*) has to follow this rule. Members of such families should avoid touching the idols of the deity, rosary, implements of *Sadhana* etc. and do only mental recitations of the *Mantra*.

Q.18. Should women discontinue *Upasana* during menstrual periods?

Ans. While undergoing menstrual cycles, women are both mentally and physically under exertion. Besides, they are unable to maintain the required degree of physical cleanliness. As such, they are recommended to do mental *Jap* only. This rule is also applicable to other states of cleanliness (when there are discharges through sweat, nose, eyes, boils etc.). Proper cleanliness is a pre-requisite for any spiritual exercise.

Q.19. What is the posture recommended for turning the rosary (*Mala*) during *Jap*?

Ans. 1. For *Jap*, select a secluded, noiseless place beneath a tree, in a temple, or at the bank of a river.
2. Be seated in an upright position with crossed-legs (*Sukhasan*) or on a raised platform if there is some discomfort on sitting on ground. For sitting use a cot-

ton or woollen spread. Animal hides are prohibited. Let the spine be straight and relaxed. Now keep the left hand on the palm turned upwards on the right lap.

3. Hold the rosary in the right hand so that it hangs like a garland across the bridge formed by joining the thumb and ring finger.

4. Keeping the elbow of the right hand on the palm of the left hand and the arm in a vertical position, turn the beads of the rosary inwards (towards yourself) with the help of middle finger—beginning from the main knot (*Brahma Granthi*). (Use of little finger and index finger is forbidden).

5. On completion of each cycle of rosary, turn it backwards so that the main knot is not crossed, i.e. the *Jap* in the rosary is “unidirectional”. It can be done with the help of same fingers which are used for turning the rosary. Keep the body still. There is no harm in changing position if discomfort is felt after some time.

6. Pronounce the *Mantra* in whispers, so that it is audible to you only.

7. If there is difficulty in using a rosary, fixed time for *Jap* may be maintained with the help of a clock.

As far as practicable, uniformity of fixed time, duration and place should be maintained.

PART - 6

QUERIES ABOUT GAYATRI YAGYA

Q.1. What is the significance of *Yagya* in spirituality?

Ans. *Gayatri* has been regarded as the mother and, *Yagya* as father of Indian spiritual tradition. *Yagya* finds place in all sacred and auspicious ceremonies in Indian culture. In *Gayatri Upasana* too, it is essential. The number of oblations in *Havan* may preferably be one-tenth of the number of *Japs* in an *Anusthan* or *Purascharan*. However, if it is not found convenient, one-tenth of this number would also suffice.

The spiritual birth of a human being who is otherwise born as any other animal, takes place on his initiation by a *Guru*, whereafter he becomes a *Dwij* with *Yagya* and *Gayatri* as his parents. It, therefore, becomes obligatory for him to serve his spiritual parents.

Scriptures prescribe daily ritual of *Balivaishwa* which means initially offering a small morsel of everyday food as an oblation to fire. (Saying a prayer at the dining table too is a variant of this ritual) *Poornahuti* and *Brahmabhoj* are essential at the end of the *Yagya*. If one is not able to participate in a *Yagya* on account of some contingency, a coconut may be of-

ferred as oblation as *Poornahuti* somewhere else, where a large *Yagya* is being performed.

Q.2. Is it necessary to perform *Yagya* along with *Jap* of *Gayatri Mantra*?

Ans. *Gayatri* and *Yagya* form an inseparable pair. One is said to be the mother of Indian culture and the other, the father. They are inter-linked. *Gayatri Anusthan* cannot be said to be fully accomplished unless it is accompanied by *Yagya*. In old affluent times *Agnihotra* used to be performed with number of *Ahutis* equal to one-tenth of the quantum of *Jap*, but now, in view of the prevailing circumstances, *Ahutis* are given in one to hundredth ratio. Those lacking in requisite resources fulfil the requirement of *Yagya* by performing one-tenth additional *Jap*.

There is a reference in the scriptures to a famous ancient dialogue between *Janak* and *Yagyavalkya*. *Janak* went on pointing out the difficulties in daily performance of *Yagya* because of non-availability of required materials whereas *Yagyavalkya*, while emphasising the essentiality of performing *Yagya*, said that even if *charu* and other materials are not available, food grains of daily consumption can be offered in *Havan*. If they are also not available, mental *Yagya* can be performed by offering meditation and divine sentiments in the fire of reverence and devotion. It has thus been emphasized that not only

in *Anusthan*, but even in daily *Sadhana*, *Yagya* is essential along with *Gayatri Jap*.

In emergency, house-wives used to utter *Gayatri Mantra* and offer five morsels of first chapati in the hearth in the kitchen. The daily routine of food to God before taking meals was known as *Balivaishwa* (cf.. Saying Grace).

Q.3. Is it necessary to perform *Yagya* daily?

Ans. *Gayatri* and *Yagya* constitute a pair. *Gayatri* has been called righteous wisdom and *Yagya* as righteous act. Coordination of both gives wisdom to solve all problems. *Yagya* may be performed as and when it is convenient. It can suffice to utter *Gayatri Mantra* and offer ghee and sugar in fire. If it is sought to be more brief, the purpose of symbolic worship of *Agnihotra* can also be fulfilled if a *Ghrit* lamp is lighted, incense- stick is burnt and *Gayatri Mantra* is uttered. If even this brief ritual cannot be performed daily, it should be done once in a week or on any convenient day at least once in a month. Those who are not acquainted with the procedure, and facilitators and material resources are not available, can write to Shantikunj for performance of *Yagya* in requisite quantity. *Yagya* is performed daily in *Shantikunj* for two hours in three *Yagyashala* having nine *Yagya Kunds* each.

Q.4. How many *Kunds* are required in a *Yagya*?

Ans. On a small scale, the members of the family may offer 2400 (cumulative) *Ahutis* in a Single *Kund Yagya*. If neighbours, relatives and friends also wish to participate, a five *Kundiya Yagya* may be organised and five thousand oblations offered.

Q.5. What type of *Prasad* is recommended during *Poornahuti*?

Ans. In the existing circumstances, it is advised to replace *Brahmbhoj* with *Brahmadan*, wherein instead of sweets, literature pertaining to *Gayatri Sadhana* is distributed as *Prasad* to the deserving participants.

Q.6. What is the necessity of collective-*Yagyas*?

Ans. *Yagyas* at a larger scale are required to be performed to purify the subtle environment and destroy pollution permeating the atmosphere. It infuses religious sentiments and enthusiasm in persons who are present and those who participate in it get an opportunity to take a vow to abandon one vice by way of offering *Dev-dakshina* and adopt one virtue or righteous tendency. In this way big *Yagyas* help in uplifting the moral and ethical levels of the participants.

The meaning of the word *Yagya* is to do sacrifice, to give money in charity and do worship. Its practical

meaning is that one ought not to spend his entire earnings on himself and his family, but should also contribute a part of it for the welfare of others. It also implies that divinity and gentlemanliness should be respected and people should live together in mutual cooperation.

Q.7. Is ‘Agnihotra’ during the nights justified for matrimonial functions?

Ans. In fact scriptures advise performance of marriages and associated *Agnihotra (Yagya)* during the day only. However, it has become customary in India to perform marriages during the night because of the convenience and leisure of participants. *Agnihotra* associated with matrimonial functions performed during the night are, therefore, exceptions. Although marriages during the night have become a norm for this reason, the best period for the ceremony is considered as the dusk time.

Q.8. What type of clothes are recommended during performance of *Yagya*?

Ans. During a *Yagya*, the purifying energy emanating from the *Agnihotra* stimulates the outer skin and permeates the body through the physical perforations, bringing out sweat and other impurities from within. It is therefore, advisable to wear loose clothes to permit an easy intake of ‘*Pran*’- the life-force and excretion of impure elements (*Kalmash*). For this reason, in ancient

times a two-piece wear of *Dhoti* and *Dupatta* was recommended which permitted a free circulation of air in and around the body. Course, heavy and tight clothing is not advisable for this very reason, *Dhoti* and *Kurta* are cheap and convenient wears, which, besides meeting the above objectives, also serve the purpose of religious and cultural integrity. *Dhoti* and *Kurta* are also easily washable. In those regions where *Dhoti-Kurta* are not traditional wears, clean-washed *Pyjama* may be used. Socks should never be worn during the *Sadhana*. These are considered as dirty as shoes. (However, to ward off extreme cold, one may wear clean socks reserved exclusively, for this purpose).

Though traditionally a yellow *Dupatta* (*Angavastra*) on shoulders is recommended, it is not mandatory. Ladies may wear yellow *Saree* or a loose traditional wear.

For Group performance, it is advisable to keep stock of spare clothes for the visiting participants. Continuation of a *Yagya* in the night is not justifiable.

Q.9. Is *Akhand Yagya* permissible?

Ans. Scriptures do not permit *Akhand Yagya*. *Yagya* should be completed in a fixed time during the day only. The reason being the possibility of insects, worms etc. getting killed in the sacred fire, which makes it a violent and profane act.

Q.10. How are ‘Tantrik Mukhs’ different from Vedic Yagyas?

Ans. As opposed to *Vedic Yagya* performed during the day, *Tantrik Mukhs* are executed at night. ‘*Holika Dahan*’, burning of ‘funeral pyre’ etc. fall in the category of *Mukh*. *Mukhs* are performed during night for various reasons. The oblations consist of non-eatable and untouchable objects. The sight too is not pleasant. The associated rituals are predominantly full of *Tamogun*. There is also no consideration for violence or non-violence during the performance. For all these considerations and to avoid interference from prying, *Mukhs* are organized at solitary, unknown places in utmost privacy.

PART - 7

QUERIES ABOUT ANUSTHANS

Q.1. What is the difference between daily *Upasana*, *Anusthan* and *Purascharan*?

Ans. Daily worship is a part of routine day to day living. *Anusthan* is a worship of a higher order in which the devotee is bound by many restrictions and has to follow specified rules and regulations. Consequently, in the latter case, special benefits accrue. *Purascharan*, however, is a still higher specialised form of *Sadhana*. For *Purascharan* a number of specific *Mantras* and rituals are to be followed. Thus, only an individual with an advance of training is capable of performing a *Purascharan*. For a layman, therefore, *Anusthans* are recommended, which are easy to perform.

Q.2. What are the types of *Anusthans*? How much time is required for each?

Ans. There are three types of *Anusthans* small (*Laghu*) medium (*madhyam*) and Big (*Uchch*). The counts are as follows :

1) Small *Anusthan*: 24000 *Japs* to be completed in 9 days at the rate of 27 cycles of rosary per day. Time taken: on an average, 3 hours per day (with about 10 to 11 *Malas* per hour).

- 2) Medium *Anusthan*: 1,25000 *Japs* to be completed in 40 days at the rate of 33 *Malas* per day. Time taken: 3-4 hours per day.
- 3) Big *Anusthan*: 24,00,000 *Japs* to be completed in a year at the rate of 66 *Malas* per day. Time taken: about 6 hours per day.

Q.3. What are the pre-requisites for an *Anusthan*?

Ans. Cleansing of body, clothes and implements of worship; the six rituals; '*Panchopchar*'; *Jap*; Meditation ; '*Suryarghdan*'; (A small *Kalash* with water and incense are kept along with a photograph or idol of the deity.) Oblations of : water, '*Akchat*', '*Chandan*', '*Flowers*' and '*Naivedya*'. '*Avahan*' and '*Visarjan*' at the beginning and end are associated with *Gayatri Mantra*; *Yagya* and *Brahmbhoj*.

Q.4. What are the basic rules of an *Anusthan*?

Ans. The set of rules to be followed are :-

(1) As far as practicable, regularity of time and number in the *Jap* should be maintained in the routine with minimum possible deviations.

(2) The five basic principles i.e. (i) fasting (ii) abstention from sex (iii) self-service (iv) sleeping on ground (v) refraining from leather-ware like shoes etc., are to be followed. (One may instead use synthetics, rubber etc.) If sleeping on ground is not safe because of dampness, insects etc., a hard wooden bed may be used. Self service is essential in making shaves, (avoid

the barber) cleaning of clothes (don't send them to the laundry) personal and for other physical requirements. In case it is inconvenient to cook one's own food, help of a close family member- wife, mother, sister etc. may be taken. Prepared food items from market (restaurants, dhabas etc.) are strictly forbidden. Sex is taboo during an *Anusthan*. Not only one should avoid physical sex, stimulation of sex impulse through even casual thoughts and sight should also be checked. Ladies coming in contact should be treated as mother, sister or daughter. The same is applicable to the behaviour of women towards men.

Fasting can be done in one of the following ways:

(a) Only liquid food like buttermilk, milk, fruit juice etc.

(b) Subsisting on fruits and vegetables only (c) taking tasteless food items devoid of salt, sugar and spices (d) partaking only one meal a day (e) choosing only two food items during the period of *Anusthan*.

Q.5. Is it possible to have an *Anusthan* performed by someone else?

Ans. To get *Jap* performed by others on payment on one's behalf amounts to purchasing labour and deriving advantage out of it. This earns no merit. There are some important tasks which require to be carried out by one's own self. It becomes ridiculous if they are got done by others. Can a servant be appointed to study on one's own behalf? Can one entrust his sleep to some-

one else? Nobody appoints someone else to procreate children on his behalf. How can a disease be cured if a person other than the patient is paid and asked to take treatment on behalf of the patient? In the same way devotional worship of God has to be done in His proximity, attained by the devotee in person. Self-discipline, penance or endurance are required to be practised and friendship is nurtured by a person himself. Physical exercise is also done by a person himself. The same norm applies to *Sadhana*.

As far as practicable, one should perform his or her own *Anusthan*. In specific cases of contingency it can be entrusted to a qualified *Brahman*. The term *Brahman* here needs an elaboration. In ancient times individuals considered *Brahmans* were scholars of the science of *Brahma*. They possessed a high level of upright character, lived a virtuous life with minimum means of sustenance and comfort. Now-a-days, it is difficult to find such *Brahmans*, who besides having been born in a *Brahman* family (by caste and heredity) and wearing traditional costumes of *Brahmans* of yore also have the credibility of *Brahmanism* in their character, behaviour and thoughts. It is very difficult to find a true *Brahman* from amongst hordes of hypocrites masquerading as *Brahmans*.

It is, therefore, recommended that if at all necessary, irrespective of caste and creed, *Anusthan* may be entrusted to such an individual of high character who has an infallible faith in God and is not desirous of any worldly gains of name, fame or material gain.

Q. 6. Does one himself benefit by doing *Jap-Anusthan* for others?

Ans. It is true that like helping the needy through one's own resources, a person reaps spiritual benefits while performing *Upasana-Tap* for others ("Distant therapy"). The only condition is that it should be carried out to support a deserving cause. On the contrary, if divine powers are sought to further some misdeed, it becomes a sinful act. Purity of motive is, therefore, a pre-requisite for an *Anusthan*.

Q.7. Is acceptance of a donation or gift in cash or kind is permissible in lieu of an *Anusthan* done for others?

Ans. It is sanctioned to the extent of minimum amount for bare sustenance. Very little benefit accrues when an *Anusthan* is performed for others with an eye on deriving maximum personal benefit.

Q.8. What is the time of the day recommended for *Jap* during an *Anusthan*? Is it necessary to complete *Jap* at a stretch?

Ans. Mornings are best suited. Otherwise, one may complete the count in instalments at different periods of the day.

Q.9. What to do if there is some irregularity during the *Anusthan*?

Ans. There should not be any apprehension about incurring any divine displeasure as a consequence of an unavoidable irregularity during the *Anusthan*. Nevertheless, it is advisable to seek protection of a competent *Guru* toward off possible disturbances and to take care of advertent or inadvertent errors. This service is also provided free from **Shantikunj, Hardwar, Uttar Pradesh, India**. One is advised to send details of personal introduction and time proposed for the *Anusthan* for receiving spiritual protection and rectification of errors through the power of *Guru*. It will doubly ensure success of the *Anusthan*.

Q.10. What is the significance of *Havan* (*Yagya*) in an *Anusthan*?

Ans. *Jap* and *Havan* are basic ingredients of an *Anusthan*. After initiation (*Dikcha*) the worshipper (*Sadhak*) makes a total surrender to *Gayatri* and *Yagya* (his spiritual parents), which are inseparable. Invocation of both is done through specified procedures during the *Anusthan*.

Q.11. What are the number of ‘*Ahutis*’ prescribed for various types of *Anusthans*?

Ans. In ancient times, it was convenient to oblate one tenth of the total number of *Japs* in the *Havan* in an *Anusthan*. In the present circumstances, it is sufficient

to offer one hundredth number of 'Ahutis'. The number thus amounts to :-

- (a) Small *Anusthan* - 240 *Ahutis*.
- (b) Medium *Anusthan* - 1250 *Ahutis*.
- (c) Big *Anusthan* - 24000 *Ahutis*.

The number may however, be varied depending on circumstances.

Q.12. How are the number of *Ahutis* distributed during the *Yagya (Havan)* in course of *Anusthans*?

Ans. *Havan* may either be performed each day or on the last day of the *Anusthan*. Oblations required each day are equal to the number of 'malas', (cycles of rosary) whereas on the last day the number of 'Ahutis' should be equal to one hundredth of the total number of *Japs* (recitation of *Mantras*).

When more than one person participates in the *Havan*, the cumulative number (number of persons multiplied by number of *Ahutis*) is counted. (e.g. 100 *Ahutis* by 5 persons will be considered as 500 *Ahutis*; for 240 *Ahutis* 6 persons may offer together 40 'Ahutis' each etc.).

Q.13. What is the ideal '*Bramhabhoj*' after completion of the '*Anusthan*'?

Ans. In an *Anusthan* the last ritual is '*Brahmbhoj*' after *Poornahuti* in the *Havan*. Traditionally it requires feeding *Brahmans* or young maidens. Qualified, deserving *Brahmans* are not easily available, these days. Alter-

natively, maidens (who being symbolic of mother power of God the *Matri Shakti*, are fed to augment faith) are offered food, but at times they are not permitted by self-respecting parents to take food in a stranger's house. *Brahmbhoj* has, thus, ceased to have relevance in the contemporary society.

Under these circumstances, *Brahmdan* i.e. 'Dissemination of spiritual wisdom' (*Sadgyan*) can truly serve the purpose of *Brahmbhoj*. For each *Ahuti*, one is recommended to donate one paisa (one hundredth of local currency) for *Brahmdan* and with this amount procure literature pertaining to '*Yug Nirman*' (resurrection of moral values in the society) and distribute it to deserving persons. In this manner, one can sow seeds of spiritual wisdom in many hearts, the fruits of which are reaped by the readers and motivators alike.

Q.14. What should one do if some unfavourable unforeseen events occur during an *Anusthan*?

Ans. Under such circumstances one may discontinue the *Sadhana*, *Jap* etc. for the period and resume it later from the count of disruption. However, a mental recitation, without a rosary, is permissible in all circumstances.

PART - 8

MISCELLANEOUS

Q.1. Why is *Gayatri Mantra* regarded as *Guru Mantra*?

Ans. Every body knows that one can learn very well under the direct guidance of a capable teacher. This, however, does not mean that a person devoid of knowledge and character be accepted as *Guru*. Instead of accepting an illiterate person as teacher and suffer the consequences it is better to regard the scriptures or any *rishi* or *devatma* as one's *Guru* and for this purpose even a picture or an idol of the person concerned can be used. All human beings are born through the same biological process as other animals. Man is, therefore, in no way different from other species of animal kingdom, until he takes the first step towards his spiritual evolution by way of initiation in *Sadhana*. This ceremony of initiation amongst the Hindus is known as the *Upnayan Sanskar*. (Baptising amongst the Christians.) The newly initiated person is called a *Dwij* (i.e. born-again) in spiritual parlance. Each Hindu is traditionally required to undergo *Upnayan Sanskar*. In course of this ritual, the subject is made to wear a *Janeu* (sacred thread) across the body on the left shoulder as a constant reminder to follow the disciplines of *Gayatri* in life, (The Christians wear the crucifix for a similar purpose). During the *Upnayan* ceremony, the *Guru* initiates the person concerned exclusively in *Gayatri*

Mantra. This is why it is known as the *Guru Mantra*.

Literally too, the word ‘*Guru*’ in Sanskrit means ‘Heavy’, ‘powerful’ or ‘significant’. Since, this *Mantra* has been referred to in the scriptures as the very manifestation of omnipotence and omniscience of God it is justifiably called as *Guru Mantra*.

Q.2. Is *Diksha* necessary for *Sadhana*?

Ans. Aspiration for salvation is the birth right of all human beings. Scriptures say that in the biological kingdom created by God three phenomena are extremely rare. One - to be born as a human amongst the innumerable species of living beings; Two - a strong aspiration for salvation from bondage and three - the patronage of a spiritual preceptor and guardian (*Guru*). Coming in contact with a true *Guru* and a desire to be initiated are the greatest blessings of life.

The credibility of *Guru*, is however, the most significant aspect of “*Dikcha*”. According to scriptures the *Guru* must have four basic qualifications:

He must be:

- (1) “*Shrotiya*” - i.e. not only well-versed in scriptures but also the one who knows their subtle secrets and has realized their true import in his life.
- (2) “*Vrijino*” - with a spotless reputation; sinless.
- (3) “*Akamahata*” - i.e. he should have no other motive except that of purely doing good to others. He should be an ocean of compassion - without any ulterior motive of name, fame or any material gain.

(4) “*Brammavittam*” - The one who has himself realized God.

The *Guru* is not only a teacher. He transmits spirituality, by personal example. Thus, a grave risk is involved if one falls in the clutches of a fake *Guru*. If, because of ignorance, someone has taken a *Dikcha* earlier from an unqualified person, prudence demands seeking a true *Guru* for spiritual growth, Such *Gurus* are, of course, rare now-a-day.

Q.3. What are the rules to be followed after taking *Diksha*?

Ans. After initiation, the devotee is expected to maintain regularity in daily routine of worship (*Upasana*), a persistent endeavour for developing purity in thoughts words and deeds by studying scriptures and interacting with saintly persons (*Sadhana*) and by donating a part of one’s time and resources for welfare activities (*Aradhana*). Strict adherence to the routine of *Upasana - Sadhana - Aradhana* is essential. Nevertheless, if there are some momentary disruptions because of contingencies, one should not have any misgivings about divine displeasure, because God, like mother, is full of love, patience and forgiveness.

Though certain restrictions on diet (such as vegetarianism and abstention from hard drinks) are recommended for accelerating progress in *Sadhana*, these are not mandatory for the beginner. The devotee has free choice of time and period of *Upasana* to suit his / her routine.

Q.4. Will one incur divine displeasure if there are some inadvertent errors during worship ?

Ans. Absolutely not. The Creator is like our Mother. The Divine Mother has only love for her children. How can She punish unless the fault is deliberate? One may contemplate on God even while lying on bed (when one is sick) or without proper physical cleanliness or rituals. The benefits, however small, will definitely accrue. One should not have the least apprehension about harm or divine displeasure due to errors in worship. If any mistake is committed in the rituals of *Tantrik Sadhana*, the deities, who are mostly demoniac, may get annoyed and harm an errant *Sadhak*. However, *Gayatri* is the Divine *Shakti*, the affectionate mother, full of forgiveness and compassion. She loves her child who lisps and cannot even speak properly. *Gayatri* is such a *Kamdhenu*.

Even erroneous worship having righteous aims and objectives becomes fruitful, if it is faithfully done. It is said about *Valmiki* that he could not even utter *Ram* properly and by uttering ‘*mara, mara*’ attained godliness. In Rightist path of *Sadhana*, sentiments are more important than rituals. None has been harmed on account of any omission in the method of *Gayatri* worship. Still, if there is any apprehension, the guidance of a spiritual master in this path of *Sadhana* can be sought in the matter.

Q. 5. What are indications of progress in *Sadhana*?

Ans. After prolonged and persistent '*Sadhana*' with faith and dedication , the following characteristics appear in the devotee:-

1. Magnetism in personality; sparkling eyes; force in speech; a glowing countenance; gravity and stability in expression. These qualities deeply impress everyone coming in contact with the devotee. People interacting with a devotee of *Gayatri* behave in conformity with his / her wishes.
2. The devotee feels a new celestial energy operating from within.
3. The devotee progressively loses interest in improper (sinful) activities. If, some wrong is inadvertently committed by him, he feels extremely repentant. He neither becomes elated on favourable happenings, nor loses equanimity while facing unfavourable circumstances.
4. If he curses someone on becoming deeply hurt, the adversary encounters great misfortune.
5. On the other hand,, his good wishes always result in the welfare of the concerned person.
6. He develops the faculty of thought reading. None can hide his shortcomings, covert actions and motives from the penetrating gaze of a *Gayatri* devotee.
7. He can communicate telepathically with people living far away.
8. The environment around him is very quiet and serene. People find unusual peace, purity and serenity in his presence.

9. When at the zenith of his progress, he can paranormally transfer a part of the spiritual energy (collected by him in course of his *Sadhana* through ‘*Tapascharya*’), to any deserving individual, for which the latter need not make the required effort. This is called the process of ‘*Shaktipat*’ in *yoga*, which the *Guru* uses for grooming the best disciple as his successor.

10. While contemplating, during the waking hours or in course of meditation he may see emissions of multicoloured lights, other para-normal lights or hear celestial sounds or words.

These are some visible signs of progress in ‘*Sadhana*’ Besides, the devotee acquires many paranormal capabilities, which are much beyond normal human experience, knowledge and resources.

Q.6. I have been doing *Gayatri Sadhana* regularly. Nevertheless, at times, I feel depressed and dissatisfied with my progress. What is the remedy?

Ans. The feelings of occasional depression, dissatisfaction with progress and momentary loss of interest are not uncommon in course of *Sadhana*.

In order to understand this paradoxical phenomenon, it is necessary to understand three successively higher phases of spiritual evolution. These are known as :-

(1) **The *Mantra Diksha* or Initiation**

This is the initial Kindergarten stage - the ‘*Bhuha*’ stage of *Dikcha*, in which the ‘*Acharya*’ - a representative of

Guru, introduces the novice to the concept of *Gayatri* disciplines through '**Baikhari Vani**' (by speaking). Any contemplative, spiritually-wise, high-character, talented, person may assume the charge of an '*Acharya*'. Nevertheless, this is a great responsibility, since after establishing the spiritual relationship, sins and virtues of the disciple are shared by the *Guru*. Since the *Guru*, by definition, is sinless, his displeasure on any dereliction by the devotee is quite natural. Besides, it must also be very clearly understood, that merely admission to the school of *Sadhana* through *Mantra Dikcha* is not sufficient. The devotee must persistently endeavour to qualify for the higher stages of *Diksha*.

(2) *Agni Diksha or Pran Diksha*

This is the '*Bhuwaha*' stage of *Dikcha* carried out extra-sensorially, through '*Madhyama*' and *pashyanti Vani* (Telepathic and soul-to-soul communication). In this case the *Guru* undertakes refinement and development of the *Sukchma* Sharir - the conscious and supra-conscious levels of mind ('*Man*': '*Budhi*', '*Chitta*' and '*Ahankar*') of the devotee. When the devotee graduates to this next higher class of '*Agni Dikcha*', the *Guru* extra-sensorially transmits a part of the spiritual charge (*Pran*) to the devotee, from his own spiritual battery accumulated after prolonged *Tapascharya*. The 'concepts' planted and developed during the *Mantra Dikcha* are now translated into 'action' by this new acquisition of powerful energy (*Pran*). At this stage, there is a great turmoil in the inner-self of the devotee, which he/she apparently feels as a fast growing dissatisfaction with his / her progress, uneasiness and momentary de-

pression. These external symptoms are, in fact, an indication of the churning, taking place within deeper levels of the soul. Hence, unless the devotee feels this turmoil, it is to be assumed that the activation by the *Guru* has become feeble, because of some shortcomings in the devotee's *Sadhana*.

After *Agni Dikcha*, the devotee becomes more enlightened and is able to discern his / her personal faults, however trivial they are. The term *Agni Dikcha* owes its nomenclature to the process of 'Incineration in the inner-self by the fire of discernment'. The phenomenon is parallel to the exercise of *Tapascharya* for the purification of physical body.

There are three clear signs of a person undergoing *Agni Dikcha*. (1) A strong inclination to perform 'Tap' for self-purification, (2) A feeling of discontentment with one's progress and a desire for speedy innergrowth and (3) realisation of many shortcomings in one's thoughts, behaviour and nature.

Here, it must be emphasised that 'Only that *Guru* can give *Dikcha*, who has himself earned and conserved sufficient spiritual charge by performing *Tapascharya*'.

(3) *Pran Dikcha* ('Swaha' stage)

This is the highest level of *Dikcha* in course of which the transfer of spiritual energy takes place from the soul of the *Guru* to the soul of the devotee. This is the process through which the *Guru* hands over spiritual succession to the most deserving disciple. In other words, it means appointing the spiritual successor.

Q.7. Why is the *Sadhak* advised to keep the progress in *Sadhana* a secret?

Ans. The purpose of keeping *Sadhana* secret is only to avoid the possibility of confusion because of multiple interactions with people, so that after dispelling all doubts, one holds fast to it firmly and marches ahead on the chosen path. People try to criticise, find faults and suggest new methods and create doubts in the mind of the *Sadhak*, if he discusses the method of his *Sadhana* with several persons. Everyone who is consulted will suggest something new and the *Sadhak's* mind will get confused and he will lose faith. He will then change frequently his method of *Sadhana* and on account of doubt get deprived of its benefits. It is therefore, essential to have full faith in one's well settled method and it should be pursued with unflinching devotion, under the guidance of an accomplished *Guru*.

Q.8. How is *Gayatri* relevant for humankind in the present times ?

Ans. Each individual is born with certain characteristic traits and IQ., all of which can not be explained as genetic inheritance. For instance, genetics has no explanation for the rare birth of a saint, genius or an idiot in several generations of a family. It is also a fact that many of these exclusive personal traits change in course of growth of the person from childhood to adulthood. Modern scientists generally ascribe these changes to

social environment and education. The science of today is, however, unable to throw light on the reasons for presence or absence in an individual of characteristics like empathy, compassion, large-heartedness, tolerance, courage, equanimity and creativity. Nor has modern science succeeded in devising gadgets or courses for inculcating these virtues.

The spiritual masters in the East on the other hand, maintain that the Absolute Repository of all virtues, which we call as GOD, is that source from which it is possible to acquire positive traits by personal endeavour through specific *Yogic* exercises under the guidance of a *Guru*. This is the objective of all spiritual pursuits in the East.

Ever since the dawn of civilization in India, it has been emphasised that no amount of material progress in science and technology can bring about lasting happiness, peace and prosperity for humankind, unless the individual - the unit of family, society, nation and global population, is transformed by infusion of positive thinking. The so-called progress in the West is also responsible for two world wars, nuclear-proliferation, environmental pollution, disparity in living standards, conflicts, poverty and disease all-over the world.

Gayatri is a panacea for all problems - Personal, Family, Social, National or Global : The *Gayatri Sadhana* is a product of thousands of years of research. Following *Gayatri Yoga* any individual, irrespective of caste, class, colour, nationality, social status and religious affiliation can acquire strength from the Indwelling Divinity for solving all problems of life.

Q.9. What is “VAAM MARG”?

Ans. *Yogic Sadhanas* are carried out in two ways. These are designated as the ‘*Dakchin Marg*’ and ‘*Vaam Marg*’ or *Tantra*. References in this book pertain to the *Dakchin Marg* - which is the process (*Sadhana*) of attracting the omnipresent powers of divinity, interacting with them by developing spiritual magnetism and cultivating paranormal faculties therefrom. The *Vaam Marg*, on the other hand, is the technique of pulling out bio-energy from living beings and utilizing it for exercising psychic control over others and for exorcist activities.

The source of *Tantrik* power is not the universal divine powers, but the physical energy produced by friction of subtle particles of nature rotating around their axes at tremendous speeds. *Tantriks* call this energy as *Durga* or *Kali*. In practice, the *Tantrik* excites the bio-energy of an animate being by violently killing it or inflicting excruciating pain on it by extraction of flesh or blood. It is tempting for some highly egoistic and ambitious persons to acquire extraordinary powers through *Tantra*, But its practise is extremely complex and dangerous. Only an extraordinarily courageous and fearless person learning under an expert can achieve success in *Tantra*. There are numerous instances of persons becoming mentally deranged, permanently paralysed, sick, losing power of speech, sight or hearing in course of *Tantrik* practices. The details of *Tantra* have, therefore, been kept secret and out of reach of common man. In ancient times *Tantra* was used for welfare activities like

self-defence, espionage, treatment of terminally ill and for enhancing the intelligence quotient of mentally retarded. The practice is now extremely rare.

Q.10. According to the Law of *Karma*, everyone has to face the consequences of one's good or bad deeds. How is it then possible for *Gayatri* to absolve one from sins?

Ans. It has been described that *Gayatri* dispels the darkness of sin. It does not mean destruction of the result of sin. It means getting rid of sinful tendencies.

GLOSSARY

Abhiyān Sādhanā- An advanced level of *Upāsanā Sādhanā*.

Āchman - Three sips of water consecrated through specific *mantras* taken for imbibing tranquillity and piety in three aspects of mental activity. The first sip is taken for acquisition of a high level of character, righteous behaviour and congeniality in vocal communication, With the second sip, one seeks strength from Almighty to resist evil thoughts from entering the mind and for acquiring tranquillity. The third sip is taken to seek purification in living so that the ideal of simple living, high thinking and dedication towards duty remains uppermost in life.

Agnihotra - *Gāyatri* and *Agnihotra* are considered to be the very foundation stones of ancient Indian Culture. *Gāyatri* symbolises divine power behind noble thoughts and *Yagya* is symbol of noble deeds, the basis of which are sacrifice and benevolence. *Agnihotra* has many objectives of fundamental importance for human wellbeing:

(i) The smoke emanating from oblations in the fire has a very powerful bactericidal/germicidal effect on the atmosphere. This, in fact, is the only process known to humanity for the disinfection of the atmosphere for improvement of quality of biogenic/organic systems.

(ii) The vibrations produced by collective chanting of *mantra* during the *Agnihotra* being of frequencies much higher than the measurable supersonics, spread far and wide. These vibrations have a capacity to uplift and purify the '*samskārs*' (traits buried in the sub-conscious which trigger the instinctive behaviour, inclinations etc.) of the participants and of those around, in such a way that they effortlessly give up evil thoughts and practices.

(iii) The fire in the *Agnihotra* motivates us to utilize our resources for the social good, to identify with the downtrodden, to keep the level of one's determination and confidence high, to continue to work hard and remain duty-conscious throughout life and to constantly remember the ultimate fate of human body thus, make maximum use of its capabilities for social good. Synonymous with *Yagya* and *Havan*.

Āhuti - Oblations of mixture of special herbs, sugar and ghee (a form of dehydrated butter) made in burning fire in a *Yagya* (synonymous with *Agnihotra* or *Havan*).

Akchat - Oblations of a few grains of rice. It symbolises sharing of a fraction of resources required through personal efforts. Regular oblations of *Akchat* are a constant reminder that a part of one's personal resources should always be utilized for the good of society and culture. (c.f. Tithe amongst the Christians and *Zakat* in Islam.)

Akhand Yagya - Uninterrupted Yagya like *Akhand Jāp* (not recommended by scriptures).

Angavastra - A cotton shawl worn by *Sādhanaks* in India around the torso.

Anushthān - Special *Upāsana Sādhana* performed to invoke Divine grace for greater strength and his wisdom to achieve some specified purpose.

A-parā prakriti - Sensory elements of the nature (elements perceived by human senses) - Lower Nature

Arādhnā - Literally meaning “to please”. In spiritual parlance it means making the best utilization of one’s time, labour, money and talents for service of human-kind. Since the omnipresence of God is reflected in all beings, specially in man, who is the manager of HIS creation, appointed by HIM, *Arādhnā* means pleasing God through participation in deeds of human welfare.

Argal - *Mantras* to be chanted as a pre-requisites to chanting of certain *shlokas* e.g. *Durgā Shaptshati*. See *Durgā Shaptshati*.

Aswād Vrat- A vow to take food not for taste but for sustenance of the body, i.e. food without sugar, salt and condiment. (A kind of *Tapascharyā*).

Āvāhan - Invocation of Deity.

Balivaishva - The first morsels of cooked food offered in fire to express one’s gratitude to the Creator. (cf. saying of grace at meals).

Basant Panchami - The fifth lunar day of bright half of the eleventh month (*Māgh*) of ancient Indian lunar calendar is celebrated as the social festival of *Basant Panchami*. This day heralds advent of spring when multi-coloured flowers appear on the trees and plants; yellow flowers of mustard appear all around; the mango trees (in India) begin to spread fragrance of buds and Indian cuckoos begin to sing. The advent of spring affects all the biological systems including human beings. The influence is not only on the physical exterior but also (specially) on the mental state, which on this occasion becomes fully charged for future planning. In India, this occasion is considered most suitable for taking up new projects.

Brāhman - An individual of high character dedicated to simple living, utilizing maximum savings of time, labour, resources and talents for welfare of society. In scriptures, the word “*Brāhman*” has a different connotation than the one in vogue today for the caste *Brāhman*.

Brahmbhoj - In an *Anushthān*, the last ritual is *Brahmbhoj* after *Purnāhuti* in the *Havan*. It requires feeding *Brahmans* or young maidens. Now-a-days, *Brahamdān* i.e. dissemination of spiritual wisdom (*Sadgyān*) is considered a better substitute for *Brahmbhoj*.

Brahamdān - Dissemination of spiritual wisdom through sharing of soul-elevating literature amongst the deserving persons.

Brahmī - The motivating aspect of ‘*Shakti*’ governing creative powers of Almighty in the universe, symbolised as a female deity with four faces (the four streams of wisdom). An emanation of *Gāyatri*.

Brahm Parāyan - One who is fully dedicated to righteous living.

Chandan - It is oblation or application of sandalwood paste which symbolises utilisation of one’s capabilities for social good. Like a sandal tree, which spreads its fragrance all around and even as dead wood is used for incense sticks and germicides, a *Sādhak* is expected to constantly remember to use his physical and mental capabilities for social wellbeing.

Chintan (Ātm-chintan) - Introspection or self-reflection for inner purification and transformation.

Dattātreya - The name of an ancient Indian *Rishi*. See *Rishi*.

Dīkshā - Initiation by a *Guru*. During the initiation, the *Sādhak* pledges to follow the rules of *Sāadhanā* throughout his life. On the other hand, the *Guru* establishes an abiding extra-sensory link with the physical, astral and causal bodies of *Sādhak* for guidance.

Devis - Goddesses- Various emanations of the supreme Goddess - *Gayatri*.

Dhoti -Dupattā - Loose cotton garment worn by *Sādhaks*.

Durgā Saptashati - Seven hundred verses (*mantras*) sung in the praise of Goddess *Durgā* - an emanation of Supreme-Divine *Shakti*.

Gurukul - Ancient Indian residential school which all children of the society had to attend irrespective of their social status. In *Gurukuls*, they were given education and training in all aspects of life including religious doctrines.

Guru-Poornimā - The full-moon day of month of ancient Indian lunar calendar *Ashādh* (July). *Guru-poornimā* is commemorated each year to dedicate oneself to high ideals- i.e. to have a total and unshakable faith in eternal moral values and high ideals. Inculcation of these attributes transforms an ordinary person into an enlightened soul.

Havan - Same as *Agnihotra*, *Yagya*.

Havan Kund - A receptacle made of metal or earth for performing *Havan*.

Idol worship - Utilizing a symbol for meditating on God. (e.g., a picture or idol of a deity, a crucifix, a natural object like sun, moon, a piece of rock or earth from a sacred place). It is to be remembered that in each case the prayer is made to the omnipresent and impersonal God head.

Jāp - Uninterrupted chanting of a *mantra* or name of God for a specified period and number.

Kāran sharīr - Causal body.

Kāmdhenu - A cow in 'Swarga' (heaven) which grants all wishes. A symbolic representation of *Gāyatri*.

Kalash - Spherical vessel filled with water used during *Upāsana* ; symbolic of creative forces of divinity engaged in maintenance of harmony and protection of virtues.

Kalmash - Evil or immoral thoughts; evil habits.

Kalpavriksha - A tree in 'Swarga' (Heaven) All wishes made under its shade are fulfilled. A symbolic representation of *Gāyatri*.

Kavach-Kīlan - Mandatory *mantras* chanted at the beginning of certain scriptural texts like *Durgā Shaptashati*.

Kchatriya - In ancient Indian fourfold classification of society, the class which was responsible to work as administrators and warriors. Today, however, this refers to a particular caste.

Mālā - A rosary of 108 beads used for counting the number of *Jāps*.

Manan - Contemplation - reflection.

Mantra - A scientifically composed verse in Sanskrit with specific syntax and intonations for invocation of divine powers.

Muni - Person contemplating on ways and means for progressive evolution of human mind for temporal and spiritual wellbeing of society.

Mukh, Tāntrik - A specialised form of *Yagya*, at times performed for worldly gains. A *Tāntrik* practice.

Naivedya (prasād) - Sweets offered to the deity. A reminder to imbibe loving kindness in all situations and spread happiness all around.

Nirākār - Without shape or form, impersonal.

Onkāṛ - Pronounced as 'O-O-M' from deep down the larynx resonating like sounding of a large bell. An acoustic representation of God (Same as 'Amen' of Christianity or 'Aameen' of Islam). *Om* is used as a prefix or suffix to all *mantras*, as a mark of reverence.

Panchopchār - The five mandatory rituals preceding *Upāsana* are:

(i) Purification of body with consecrated water.

(ii) *Āchman*. See *Āchman*.

(iii) By touching *Shikhā* (see *Shikhā*) with consecrated water invoking support of divine powers for wise control over thoughts and emotions.

(iv) Through a timely coordinated procedure of inhalation and exhalation *Pranayam*, augmentation of *Prāṇ* (life force) and expulsion of vices from the mind.

(v) With the help of consecrated water, symbolic of purification of nerve centres controlling speech, respiration, audition, vision and locomotion.

Parāprakṛiti - Extrasensory phenomena elements of nature (ESP, Psycho kinetics, precognition etc.) fall in this domain - Higher Realms of Nature.

Parva - Days of socio-religious celebrations e.g. *Basant Panchami Dussehra, Diwali* etc.

Prāṇ - The unit of sum and total of all forces in the universe mental or physical, resolved to one unified force. The Hindu scriptures profess endless cycles of “*Shrishti*” and “*Pralaya*”. According to Hindu cosmology energy and matter are eternal, though inter-convertible (Cf. Einstein’s formula $E=MC^2$). At the end of each cycle of “Creation” all matter (Solid, liquid, gas, stars, planets, flora and fauna) becomes contracted into its unit “*Ākāsh*”, whereas all forms of forces and energy (gravitation, magnetism, electricity, bio-energy, thought, force etc.) become unified into the unit “*Prāṇ*”. At the end of each cycle of creation the energies in the universe merge back into the absolute. At the beginning of the next cycle they become ‘Kinetic’, strike down on the primordial “*Ākāsh*” which evolves into various animate and inanimate forms of energy. This concept of “creation” is compatible with modern science which regards matter and energy as inter-convertible and indestructible.

Prasād - See Naivedya.

Purṇāhuti - The last of the series of oblations in an *Agnihotra*. A pledge before Almighty (symbolized in the flame of *Havan*) is taken to work persistently and selflessly for highest good of society.

Purascharan - The highest level of *Upāsana Sādhanā* seeking Divine grace for some specific noble objective.

Associated with ten million times chanting of *Mantra* in a fixed time-frame.

Riddhī - Invisible boons showered by Divine grace such as social recognition, divine help in need, contentment etc.

Riṣi - Awakened souls performing *Tapascharyā* in their physical as well as astral bodies for the wellbeing of humankind.

Rishikā - A woman *rishi* (Seer scholar).

Sadgyān - Spiritual wisdom.

Sādhak - One who is engaged in *Sādhanā*.

Sādhanā- Literally meaning “Harnessing”. In spiritual parlance it means harnessing the inner faculties of mind and emotions which control the sensory organs, so that all thoughts, words and deeds of the *Sadhak* are righteous. In practice, it requires keeping a constant watch on one’s mental and emotional states and actions flowing therefrom (introspection) for progressive self -evolution. Also a synonym for worship or *Upāsanā* (since worship is also carried out for the same purpose).

Sākār - Having a shape or form.

Sandhyā Vandan- Performance of *Upāsanā* at dusk time.

Sanyam - Conservation and proper utilization of physical, emotional and mental energy; resources and time.

Sati - Shāmbhavi - The Transforming Power of Divine governing transformation of elements in the universe. Symbolised as a female deity. An emanation of *Gāyatri*.

Shikhā - The tuft of hair at the top of the head, knotted on the back of the cranium. This part of the hair on the head is known to be sensitive to extra-sensory transmissions of divine vibrations. Besides, *Shikhā*, being situated on top of the head is also symbolic of keeping the flag of ancient Indian culture high. *Shikhā* constantly reminds one of the pledge taken for keeping watchful eye on one's thoughts and emotions for righteous actions in life.

Siddhī - Paranormal faculties developed through *Upāsana*, *Sādhanā*, *Arādhnā* .

Sukchm -Subtle, extra sensory. Not perceivable by human senses.

Sootak - Periods of quarantine during births and deaths in the family.

Sthool sharīr - Physical body.

Suryarghyadān - Offering of consecrated water poured in a continuous stream while facing the Sun. Here, Sun symbolises Supreme Godhead and the stream of water - human life. It is a pledge made to God that just as the water evaporates and spreads as vapour all over the atmosphere returning later again in water to sustain life, the *Sādhak* seeks helps of the divinity in distributing his

inherent capabilities and worldly resources amongst the masses.

Tamogun - One of the three *Gun*as (qualities) of Nature. It is the quality of dullness, inertia and darkness. It results in ignorance.

Tantra Shāstrā / Tāntrik Mantra - The science of capturing and using bio-energy of living beings for creation, transformation and destruction of material things without the help of man-made objects. The practice is difficult and hazardous. Hence, not recommended.

Tāntrik - One who practices *Tantra Shāstra*.

Tap - Making the body accustomed to hardships through an austere way of living. An essential ingredients of *Upāsana Sādhanā*. An abbreviation of *Tapascharyā*

Tapascharyā - Literally means heat, motion, activity, friction, struggle. When purification of any object is required for fruitful utilization, it is subjected to one of the foregoing process. This also holds true for the human being. For purification of mind of animal instincts acquired from previous lives (which unknowingly motivate him to commit evil deeds), *Tap* is carried out. '*Tapascharyā*' stands for toleration of the inconveniences on being deprived of accustomed comforts.

Tilak-chhāp - Vermillion or sandal-wood paste applied on the forehead in a particular pattern. Used to distinguish various religious sects during the medieval period.

Tītkchā - A type of *Tap* in which the *Sādhak* endeavours to endure extremes of discomforts.

Trikāl-sandhyā - Performance of *Upāsanā* three times a day. During the day the periods recommended are: at sunrise midday and sunset.

Upāsanā - (Literally meaning “sitting in proximity”). Coming closer to God, ultimately becoming one with the Creator, like fuel, which on coming in contact with fire, loses its identity. Since God is considered as an “Repository of all virtues”, *Upāsanā* stands for expelling evil tendencies from one’s thoughts, words and deeds and imbibing virtues. In nutshell moral upliftment by personal endeavour and prayer.

Vashistha - A *rishi* who had performed fifteen million *Jāps* of *Gayatri mantra*. In ancient times, only a *Vashistha* was considered worthy of appointment as *Guru* of the royal family.

Vaishnavi - An Emanation of Supreme Divine *Shakti Gayatri* governing preservation of the universe. Symbolised as a female deity.

Ved Mantra - A *mantra* from the *Vedas* - the primary four doctrines revealed by the Creator. *Vedas* are the documentation of the most ancient spiritual doctrines. The *vedas* are divine revelations.

Visarjan - Taking leave of the deity.

Vishwāmitra - Literally, a friend of the universe. *Rishi Vishwamitra* made science and practice of *Gāyatri Sadhana* accessible to the masses.

Vrat - Literally meaning a pledge, a vow. Voluntary restrictions in kind and frequency of diet during *Tapascharyā*.

Vyahrītis - The primordial forms of energy manifesting at the beginning of each cycle of creation (*Shrishti*).

Yagyopaveet - A thin garland of threads worn across the torso on the left shoulder by the *Sādhak*. It is a symbolic representation of *Gāyatri*. The objective of wearing it near the heart is to consistently keep in mind the doctrines of *Gāyatri*. The three strands of *Yagyopaveet* represent the three clauses of *Gāyatri mantra*. Nine threads are representative of the nine words of the *mantra* comprising 24 letters. Three knots indicate three *Vyahrītis* (*Bhur, Bhuvaha, Swaha*)? And the principal knot the 'Prāṇ' (life force).

Yug Nirmāṇ - Plan for establishment of a NEW WORLD ORDER by moral, ethical and spiritual transformation of humanity.

Yajurveda - One of the four *Vedas*. It broadly encompasses all attributes related to heroic endeavour - industry (work), courage, bravery, leadership, fame, victory, status, honour, etc..
