

WE PRAY

Along with the meditational practices, Prayers and the chanting of Mantras form the main part of the spiritual discipline of Yoga. During the special spiritual courses conducted by Kaivalyadhama, lot of emphasis is given to this aspect along with the regular practice of Asanas and Pranayama.

There is a vast repertory available for this purpose; and out of this, very many different prayers, Mantras and Stotras are used on different occasions. In the present booklet, we are presenting a select few of them which are customarily being used during various Adhyatma Shibirs, Pranayama Sadhana Shibirs and Yoga Courses conducted by Kaivalyadhama.

In Chandogya Upanishad it is said :

“यदेव विद्यया करोति श्रद्धयोपनिषदा तदेव वीर्यवत्तरं भवति” (I. 1. 10)

-Whatever is done with knowledge, faith and attitude of Upasana becomes most vigorous and fruitful. It means that when done with proper attitude, it gives best results, and for proper attitude it is essential to have right understanding of whatever one is doing. Keeping in view this fact, we have tried to give as much information as is necessary regarding each of the 3 - Prayers, Mantras and Stotras included in this booklet. As the main objective of this information is to highlight their spiritual import, we have tried to keep it as simple as possible without any pretention to scholastic interpretation.

To make it easy for the Sadhakas who are not able to read Devanagari script, each Sanskrit Mantra is given in Roman script as well. Instead of using the conventional diacritical marks used by the scholars, we have followed a simple colloquial system of transliteration. One should remember that the correct pronunciation of any Mantra cannot be learned by merely reading it, but should be learnt from the knowledgeable person.

We have also included brief comments on the significance of Prayers and Mantra Japa, based on the discourses given by Swami Kunalayananda and Swami Digambarji to spiritual Sadhakas.

‘May the maker of all help us on the spiritual path. May He give us the courage to remain steady in our resolve. May He bestow on us the strength to realize our true nature’.

‘Om. Shantih. Shantih. Shantih.’

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYING

(From the Discourse on Prayers by Swami Kuvalayananda,
Yoga Mimamsa, Vol. VIII, Nos. 3 & 4.)

The place of prayer in Sadhana :

The efficacy of prayer has been universally accepted by all religions and even by the psychologists. It creates the power of faith and helps in achieving the objective. Naturally for the spiritual objective, prayer becomes all the more useful. A prayer offered with proper attitude gives peace of mind and leads the aspirant quickly to the goal of Samadhi.

A collective prayer:

A collective prayer has its own advantages as well as disadvantages. If such a prayer is offered with full accord of mind, the total power vastly increases and each one gets the advantage of the total power. On the contrary, if the participants have discordant minds, the power gets thwarted and disturbed. It is, therefore, absolutely essential that each one should properly understand the meaning of the prayer and try to establish contact with the Supreme Divine Power while offering the prayer.

One mind - One prayer:

In Rigveda (10. 191. 3 & 4), we find a great emphasis being laid on having a common accord while praying.

समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी
समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।
समानं मन्त्रमभिमन्त्रये वः
समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥

*Samaano Mantrah Samitih Samaani
Samaanam Manah Saha Chittameshaam.
Samaanam Mantramabbhimantraye Vah
Samaanena Vo Havishaa Jauhomi.*

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Common be the prayer, common the assembly,
Common the mind, so be their thoughts united.
A Common purpose do I lay before you and
Worship together with your common oblation.

समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।

समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥

*Samaani Va Aakootih Samaanaa Hridayaani Vah
Samaanamastu Vo Mano Yathaa Vah Susahhaasati.*

Common be your desires;
Unified be your hearts;
United be your intentions;

So that you may remain happily united.

* * * * *

SHANTI PATH: THE PEACE INVOCATION

Following are some of the important prayers from the Upanishads. Herein the Sadhaka prays, not for any material gains but for the inner peace, which pervades one's being as a result of realization of true nature of Self. They are, therefore, known as Shanti Path or the invocation for Peace. Usually they are recited at the beginning of each session of Pranayama Sadhana Shibir, Yoga Sadhaka Sangha meetings and Special Yoga Courses.

1

ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं
करवावहै । तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु । मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

*Om. Saha Naavavatu. Saha Nau Bhunaktu. Saha veeryam
Karavaavahai. Tejaswinaavadheetamastu. Maa Vidvishaavahai.
Om. Shaantih. Shaantih. Shaantih.*

Om - Brahman; *Saha* - together; *Nau* - to us; *Avatu* - protect; *Saha* - together; *Nau* - to us; *Bhunaktu* - accept or nourish; *Saha* - together; *Veeryam* - efforts with great vigour; *Karavaavahai* - we shall do; *Tejaswi* - bright; *Nau* - of us; *Adheetam* - knowledge gained; *Astu* - let it be; *Maa* - should not be; *Vidvishaavahai* - discord amongst us; *Om* - Brahman; *Shaantih* peace; *Shaantih* - peace; *Shaantih* - peace.

Om. May God protect us together.
May He accept and nourish us together.
May we work together with great vigour.
Let our learning shine brightly (without ever becoming
dull through our absent-mindedness).
Let there be no discord amongst us.
Om. Peace. Peace. Peace.

This Mantra which occurs in Katha and Shvetashvatara Upanishads emphasizes the importance of fruitful relationship between the teacher and the student. The feeling of togetherness and the unity of purpose enhances the efficacy of their efforts in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. The desire for having this relationship free of any discord arises from

the deep humility and the unbounded love felt in His presence- the presence of Divine energy within one's own self. The invocation of peace three times, at the end of Mantra refers to the desire of overcoming the misery from three sources:

(a) Adhidaivika - pertaining to higher forces or destiny,
 (b) Adhibhautika - pertaining to the material world surrounding oneself
 and (c) Adhyatmika -pertaining to the internal world, the operative field
 of the self or the individualized consciousness. Quite often, 'Om.
 Shaantih. Shaantih. Shaantih.' is recited independently also at the end
 of the session involving spiritual practices.

2

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः श्रुणुयाम देवाः

भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिः

व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥

*Om. Bhadram Karnebhiih Shrunuyaama Devaah
 Bhadram Pashyemaakshabhira yatraah.
 Sthirairangaistustuvaamsastanoobhiih
 Vyashema Devahitam Yadaayuh.*

Om - Brahman; *Bhadram* - auspicious; *Karnebhiih* - through ears; *Shrunuyaama* - let us hear; *Devaah* - O gods; *Bhadram* - auspicious; *Pashyema* - let us see; *Akshabhiih* - through eyes; *Yajatraah* - we who are engaged in sacrifice or the pursuit of spiritual knowledge; *Sthiraih* - stable; *Angaih* - limbs; *Tustuvaamsah* - engaged in praying; *Tanubhiih* - though the body; *Vyashema* - enjoy; *Devahitam* - in the service of the God; *Yat-* that; *Aayuh* - whole life.

Om. O gods, may we, who are engaged in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, hear only the auspicious with our ears and see only the auspicious with our eyes. Praying with steady limbs and bodies, may we enjoy whatever life is given to us by the God, in His service.

This Mantra occurs in Prashna, Mundaka, and Maandukya Upanishads. It highlights the very creative, constructive and positive attitude of the spiritual Sadhaka. All the energies which are responsible

for bringing in the information, about the external world through hearing and vision etc., are addressed as the gods. They are requested that they should allow entry only to those things which are auspicious, beautiful and would help in enlightening one's understanding of one's true nature. These energies are nothing but the Sadhaka's own discriminative faculty. In other words, the Sadhaka realizes and owns the responsibility for choosing those things which would help him in the process of spiritual integration and shunning those which would bring disintegration. He also prays for the strong and healthy body which could be engaged in the service of the God in the service of all that is created by the God by appreciating it, enjoying it and experiencing it as His creation.

3

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय ।

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।

मृत्योर्मामृतं गमय ॥

Om. Asato Maa Sadgamaya.

Tamaso Maa Jyotirgamaya.

Mrutyormaamrutam Gamaya.

Om - Brahman; Asato - from that which is unreal or false; Maa - to me; Sat - towards that which is Real. Tamaso - from the darkness of ignorance; Maa - to me; Jyotih - light of knowledge; Gamaya - lead. Mrutyoh - from that perishable or suffers from death; Maa - to me; Amrutam - towards that which is imperishable or eternal existence; Gamaya - lead.

*Om. From the unreal lead me to the Real.
From darkness lead me to Light.
From death lead me to immortality.*

This Mantra occurs in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (1, 3, 28). Here in the emphasis is laid on the need of constant vigilance which would keep the spiritual seeker on right path. There could be many concealed traps in his spiritual path which can lead him astray. But with the grace of God, he would surely be able to recognize them and would be able to avoid them. He prays that God should help him in knowing what is unreal and perishable so that he can chose only that which is Real and Imperishable.

This knowledge will lead him to the experience of this own Real, Eternal Self. This is the experience of 'Amruta'.

4

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं
 पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
 पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय
 पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

*Om. Poornamadah Poornamidam
 Poornaat Poornamudachyate.
 Poornasya Poornamaadaaya
 Poornamevaavashishyate.*

Om - Brahman; Poornam - Infinite; Adah - that invisible; Poornam infinite; Idam this visible; Poornat - out of Infinite; Poornam - Infinite; Udachyate - arises; Poornasya - from Infinite; Poornam - Infinite; Eva the same; Avashishyate - is left over.

Om. All that is invisible is verily the Infinite Brahman.
 All that is visible is also the Infinite Brahman.
 The whole universe has come out of the Infinite Brahman, and
 Whatever is left is still that Infinite Brahman.

This Mantra occurs in Ishavasya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads. In a very precise language of mathematics, it brings out the fact of Oneness of *Jeeva* (an individual), *Jagat* (the world) and the *Ishwara* (the God). All these three are the manifestation of the Infinite Brahman which remains beyond any measure, beyond any definition and beyond any description. The Sadhaka, through the unwavering Sadhana reaches the state, where he experiences the One-ness of the whole creation. He realizes the ground reality of Oneness behind all the apparent multiplicity and diversity present in the external as well as the internal world; and also realizes the true nature of his own self as the same all pervading Infinite Brahman.

ॐ शान्ति : शान्ति : शान्ति : ।

Om. Shantih Shantih Shantih.

MANTRA JAPA

MANTRA JAPA FOR CHITTASHUDDHI AND MANOLAYA

One of the Yogic disciplines is to develop the internal awareness of existence. All activities at the level of *Indriya* (the body), *Prana* (the internal functions) and *Manas* (the mind) can then be brought under control with the help of this internal awareness. As one becomes more and more adept in the Yogic discipline, this control becomes more and more perfect. For the sake of description this ability could be seen to progress through the following stages:

1. Stage of Shuddhi or purification

The first effect is that of purification. All the elements which bring the distraction or disturbance are seen for what they are and efforts are made to eliminate them. This requires constant vigilance. The aim is to see that each of the function reaches its full potential.

2. Stage of Sthairya or stability

The further progress in Yogic discipline brings in the perfection in each of the activity and develops an ability to maintain this activity undisturbed and unaffected even in the presence of most difficult situation.

3. Stage of Jaya or mastery

As all the activities at each level get stabilized and can function in integrated and harmonious way, one is able to direct them towards the single goal of self realization. All functions are brought under the full command and all the energies involved in its operation are channelized in one direction.

4. Stage of Laya or perfect silence

As through the perfectly clear and transparent glass one can see without any obstruction or distortion, one can realize the true nature of self when all the functions become absolutely pure, without any impurities that bring disharmony. The stage of perfect purity, perfect silence is the stage of Laya.

As the *Indriya*, *Prana* and *Manas* are interlinked and together form a whole, the process of purification at any of these three levels cannot be carried out separately. They have to be gone through together and simultaneously. *Ashtanga Yoga* as described by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras*, does advocate the same approach.

The regulated life pattern based on the guidelines of *Yama* and *Niyama*, complemented by the practice of *Asanas* leads to the *Ghatashuddhi* affecting all the physical activities.

The practice of *Pranayama*, on the other hand affects all the internal physiological activities leading to *Nadishuddhi*.

The meditational practices of *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*, preceded by *Pratyahara*, affect the mental activities, reducing all the mental disturbances, ultimately bringing the perfect inner silence known as *Manolaya*.

To enhance the purification process, it is necessary to reinforce the *Ashtanga Yoga* with *Kriya Yoga*. It acts as a propelling force for the vehicle of *Ashtanga Yoga*, taking the *Yoga Sadhaka* through the stages of *Shuddhi* upto *Laya*, in a steady, smooth and sure way. That is why, Patanjali has described *Kriya Yoga* before describing the *Ashtanga Yoga* in the second chapter of *Yoga Sutras*.

As described by Patanjali, *Kriya Yoga* is an action-oriented aspect of Yogic discipline and gives a broad framework within which the *Ashtanga Yoga* is to be followed for achieving Self-realization. *Tapas*, *Swadhyaya* and *Ishwara pranidhana* together form the *Kriya Yoga*.

Tapas

Tapas denotes the vigour and intensity of the efforts through which all the energies are channelized in the undertaking of spiritual discipline. It can be in the form of austerities, fasting, *Mauna* (complete silence) etc., which minimizes the usual wastage of energy taking place in unnecessary activities. It allows the inner awareness, necessary for spiritual development, to remain undiminished and undisturbed, ultimately ending up in unbroken stream of inner awareness known as '*Akhandana Anusandhana*.'

In Yogic tradition, *Pranayama* is described as the greatest *Tapas*: *Pranayamah Paramtaph*. It leads to inner cleansing and helps in

increasing the ability to remain undistracted in a meditative state for a long time. *Pranayama*, therefore, has been traditionally accepted as a very important part of the *Kriya Yoga*.

SWADHYAYA

In Yoga tradition *Swadhyaya* is considered as the most important practice, in the direction of knowing 'Who am I'. With the help of the scriptures, one tries to understand deeply within oneself all that is described in those Truth-revealing scriptures.

Swadhyaya has got three stages: *Pathanam* (recitation or reading), *Adhyayanam* (deep study) and *Chintanam* (constant reflection). In the beginning, recitation is the prominent factor. The chaste pronunciation of the various Mantras is considered as an indispensable factor. After one learns this, he has to devote himself for the deep study of what has been recited. It gives him knowledge about the Mantra, its meaning and its relevance, etc. It makes him learned but does not give him wisdom. That can come only through constant reflection and struggle for translating the percept into practice. It clears the hidden meaning behind each Mantra. This is known as *Chintanam*.

Swadhyaya becomes more effective and powerful when it is done with an attitude of '*Anusthana*'. It is an attitude of firm resolve backed up by the thorough discipline. Most often it is done for a specific period of time, from three days, extending to seven days, fifteen days, one month or even one year. At the beginning of the *Anusthana*, Sadhaka has to announce his commitment for undertaking specific spiritual activity in sincere, diligent and earnest way. This is known as *Sankalpa*. It is obvious that for this purpose one has to have free time, suitable place and congenial environment so that he can carry out the task in hand, without any distraction. His whole attention, enthusiasm and energy should revolve around the Sadhana alone. During this period he should be vigilant to follow a regulated daily life. He should get up from the bed before Sunrise. He must consume only the Sattvik food, preferably only once at noon. The evening meal is either skipped or some light liquid is taken. He should try to maintain *mouna* (complete silence) refraining from any type of communication with anyone.

There are varieties of practices which are undertaken in the form of *Anusthana*. Use of Mantra is one of it. In the tradition of Yoga, chanting

of Mantra known as Mantra Japa is given a lot of importance; so much so that one of the schools of Yoga uses it as the sole spiritual practice and is known as *Mantra Yoga*. For daily practice, the use of Savitru-Gayatri Mantra, Tryambaka Mantra and Pranava as well as Ajapa japa are considered as the most helpful ones for spiritual development. We have included them in the present work.

ISHWARA PRANIDHANA

It is an action in the form of *Archana* or worship, undertaken to strengthen the humility and to increase the inner awareness of presence of divine spirit within oneself. One's True nature is the nature of *Ishwara* - the SELF which is Pure, Blissful Consciousness, untainted by any *Kleshas*. Whether one uses the concept of Paramatman having a form or no form, one has to use some symbol to denote it. It may be a *Murti* (statue or figure), a *Jyoti* (sacrificial fire) or some *Yantra* (design pattern). By constant association with this symbol, through the action in the form of *Pujan*, through the speech in the form of japa and through reflection in the form of *Akhanda Anusandhana*, one realizes the one-ness with that which is represented by the symbol.

Thus for the spiritual seeker, it is necessary to perform some stipulated action as an obligatory discipline, everyday.

This action is called *Prayoga*, but as it is done with an attitude of *Upasana* it becomes *Samporayoga*, ultimately giving the blissful experience know as *Samprasada*. Thus the *Kriya Yoga* combines the powerful triad of '*Karma – Upasana - Jnana*' i.e. 'Action - Devotion -Self realization', as advocated all throughout the Vedic tradition and which forms the basis of most of the spiritual disciplines in India.

From the practical point of view, for the Yoga Sadhaka, *Kriya Yoga* means the daily practice of *Pranayama*, chanting of *Gayatri*, *Tryambaka* and *Pranava Mantras* and some *Archana* in the form of some simple act of worship. It forms a strong base for the spiritual development.

(The part dealing with *Kriya Yoga* is based on the various discourses given on this topic by Swami Digambarji, published in *Chidambaram* and *SKY* - periodicals)

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ॐ PRANAVA JAPA

In his Yoga Sutras, Patanjali says that Pranava i.e. 'OM' is the symbol or the verbal expression of the Ishwara- the unconditioned blissful Consciousness. Chanting of Om with the constant awareness of what it represents, leads to the realization by the Sadhaka that his individual self is the same as that pure blissful Consciousness. This chanting also helps in overcoming all the obstacles on the path of Self-realization, which arise because of waywardness of mind.

The Pranava Japa or the chanting of Om can be done either loudly or in a soft whispering way, or by verbalizing it in the mind. In Sanskrit it is known as *Vaikhari*, *Upanshu* and *Manasa* Japa respectively. In the initial period it is better to chant it loudly, so that one learns the proper pronunciation of it. After getting used to it for sufficient time, one should start the *Upanshu* Japa in low, soft whispering way. Ultimately one should learn to chant it in the mind. As it requires the *Akhanda Anusandhana* (constant inner awareness), success in it, is considered as great achievement. Quite often, during *Manasa* Japa, there is a likelihood of falling asleep, if the power of inner concentration has not been developed sufficiently. Therefore, it is better for the beginners to have loud recitation whenever the inner concentration wavers.

The syllable OM is formed of three letters: 'A', 'U' and 'M'. 'A' and 'U' together, when pronounced, become 'O'. While chanting Om, from the spiritual point of view, one should pronounce 'O' for a short period, say for three seconds, followed by 'M' prolonged as long as possible. In the beginning, one should take a deep breath and then should start exhaling with pronunciation of 'O', slowly tapering it to 'M...' and continuing it as long as the breath lasts. In this process the abdominal wall starts gradually going inward, to expel the maximum amount of air from the chest. At the end of 'OM', one would notice that the abdominal wall has gone in completely and is in fully contracted state. This contracted abdomen should be relaxed when the breathing out process is over. This relaxing of the abdomen is usually accompanied by a little inhalation. But thereafter, one should remain without taking any further breath, till the desire for taking the next breath arises. This stage of remaining without breathing should not be a forced one but should be in the form of observing the inner activities including that of breathing to function without our conscious interference.

It is advantageous to chant Om with each consecutive breath. But, in the initial period, one should be alert to avoid any feeling of fatigue and shortness in the breath, which may come with over enthusiasm. For this reason, it is better to take a few normal breaths between the chanting of two Oms, at least in the initial period. After one has developed sufficient practice of chanting Om for comfortably long time and is able to remain without breathing in immediately for at least a few seconds, one should start chanting Om with each consecutive breath.

Usually, Om is chanted for 10 or 21 times and counting it without creating much distraction in the process of chanting, one can use the fingers of the right hand in a traditional way as follows : Let the right hand rest on the knee with the fingers curled and the thumb free to touch any of the fingers as necessary. Begin with the middle part of the ring finger counting it as one, then its lower part as two, then lower part of little finger as three, middle part as four and tip as the five, then tip of the ring finger as six, tip of the middle finger as seven, tip of the index finger as eight, its middle part as nine and lower part as ten. Thus when one begins with the middle part of the ring finger and moving clock-wise ends up at the lower part of the index finger, one knows that he has completed ten counts. If one wants to count 21, one proceeds counting eleven with the lower part of the middle finger, twelve with the middle part of the same finger and then reversing the direction count thirteen with the lower part of middle finger, fifteen with the lower part of the index finger and all the way back up to lower part of the little finger, where the count twenty one gets over.

By chanting Om in this way, the mind gradually becomes tranquil and all the restlessness along with the tension and worries disappear. Sometimes one feels so peaceful that even the desire to continue the Japa further, just disappears. When it happens, one should not hesitate to stop chanting and immerse oneself in the inner blissful silence. The important thing is that one should do everything lovingly and in a relaxed manner, allowing the inner feeling of silence to emerge gradually without forcing the mind to concentrate too much. When the mind gets filled with tranquility, the individual self emerges out of it and transcending the limitations imposed by time and space, realizes one-ness with the unconditioned blissful Consciousness - the Self.

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THE SAVITRU - GAYATRI MANTRA

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः ।

ॐ तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यं । भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।

धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।

ॐ आपो ज्योती रसोऽमृतं । ब्रह्म भूर्भुवः स्वरोऽम् ।

असावादित्यो ब्रह्म ।

Om Bhoor Bhuvah Swah.

Om Tat Savitur Varenyam.

Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi.

Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayaat.

Om Aapojyoti Raso'mrutam.

Brahmabhurbhuvah Swaro'm.

Asaavaadityo Brahma.

Om - Brahman; *Bhoor* - outer world; *Bhuvah* - inner world; *Swaha* - innermost world; *Tat* - that; *Savituh* - the generator, creator; *Varenyam* - adorable; *Bhargah* - bright light that burns off ignorance; *Devasya* - of divine; *Dheemahi* - we meditate; *Dhiyah* - understandings; *Yah*-who, *Nah*-ours; *Prachodayaat* - should enlighten; *Aap*- water; *Jyoti*- energy; *Rasa*essence; *Amrutam*- eternal; *Brahma*- Brahman; *Bhooh*- outer world; *Bhuvah*inner world; *Swah*- innermost world; *Om*- Brhman; *Asou*- is verily; *Aaditya*the first one, the Sun *Brahma*-Brahman.

Om, the Infinite Brahman which pervades the outer, inner and innermost world.

Om. We meditate upon the bright luster of Lord Savita (represented by the orb of the Sun). May He enlighten our Understanding.

Om. He is the eternal presence behind the manifested world formed of energy and matter. He is the Brahman, pervading all the spheres of Bhuh-Bhuvah-Swah. The Sun, is verily the Brahman.

The Savitru Mantra is one of the most important Mantras found in the Vedic tradition. It occurs in all the Vedas except Atharva Veda and

we find a lot of discussion taking place around this Mantra in many of the Upanishads, especially the Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanishads. At one place it is described that as a honey in the flower and Ghee in the milk, this Mantra is the essence of all the Vedas. As it is composed in the specific form of poetic construction or meter known as Gayatri Chanda, it is more popularly known as Gayatri Mantra.

The first part of the Mantra: OM BHUR BHUVAH SWAHA, is known as *Vyahruties*. In Sanskrit, *Avyahrut* means that which is beyond expression and *Vyahrut* means that which could be expressed through words. The one which is beyond expression, beyond description, is also known as Brahman. Its first expression is in the form of 'OM' - the first word, out of which the whole creation came into existence. The words *Bhur-Bhuvah-Swah* express this creation and therefore, they are known as '*Vyahrutis*'. *Bhoo* indicates the external sphere or the '*Bahyakash*', the outer world full of material things and beings, which could be perceived through senses. *Bhuvah* indicates the internal sphere or the '*Antarakash*' - the world arises mainly out of mental conception. The *Swaha* indicates the innermost state of one's being, the '*Hrudayakash*' or '*Chidakash*', which is beyond the realm of perception and which could only be experienced or realized. The idea behind reciting the *Vyahrutis* is to remind oneself that the one supreme Lord- the only Reality- pervades everywhere.

The second part of the Mantra is the main body of Mantra. It is addressed to Lord Savita. He is represented by the Sun. The Sun is the starting point of the creation, the first manifestation of the un-manifested Brahman. Therefore, He is also known as Aditya, the first one. For us he is the Brahman, as our intellect cannot reach beyond him. He is *Varenyam*, the most adorable, worth all our adoration. By nature he is *Bhargah* with the bright luster and brilliant glow which burns off all the impurities arising out of ignorance. By meditating on this lustrous, bright, divine symbol of Brahman, one prays for enlightenment. This enlightenment brings the clear perception of the world, subtle discriminative power of the intellect and experience of the blissful unconditioned Consciousness within.

PRAYER & MANTRAJAPA

The last part of the Mantra is known as '*Shiras*'. It concludes the feelings evoked by the Mantra, saying that whole of the creation, whether experienced in the outer, inner or the innermost sphere is permeated by the same Reality and for us the Sun is the ultimate representation of it.

During the chanting of Gayatri Mantra, one recites the *Vyahrutis* only once at the beginning; followed by the repetition of main body of the Mantra as many times as one wants and then concluding the Japa with the recitation of the *Shiras*.

There are some who follow the injunctions given in the Mantra Shastra very strictly, as to where and when it should be chanted, who should or should not chant it and what other procedures should be followed along with the chanting. But this is not universal. There are many others who believe that for the spiritual purpose, which is aimed at transcending all the barriers created by the mind, these restrictions are not relevant. Anyone with pure intention and dedication can chant this Mantra, irrespective of sex, caste or creed and get its spiritual benefits.

* * * * *

TRYAMBAKA MANTRA

ॐ त्र्यंबकं यजामहे सुगंधिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् ।

उर्वारुकमिव बंधनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मा मृतात् ॥

*Om Tryambakam Yajaamahe Sugandhim Pushtivardhanam
Urvaarukamiva Bandhanaanmृत्यoर्मukshiya Maamrutat.*

Om - Brahman; Tryambakam - Lord of the three worlds; Yajaamahe - we worship; Sugandhim - fragrance; Pushtivardhanam - sustains and nourishes; Urvaarukam - cucumber; Iva - like; Bandhanaat - from bondage; Mृत्यoh - of the fear of death; Maa - not; Amrutat - from immortality.

Om. We worship the Lord of all the three worlds, who permeates everywhere like a fragrance and gives the sustenance to it.

May He detach us from the bondage of death just as the ripe cucumber gets detached from its stem, but may He not keep us away from immortality.

This Mantra, which occurs in Rigveda (VII, 59, 12) is second in importance after the Gayatri Mantra. It is addressed to the Lord Tryambaka, the Lord of three worlds, the same as expressed in the Gayatri Mantra by three *Vyahrutis* - the outer, the inner and the innermost world. He is the ground reality behind everything.

The Sadhaka prays for His help, so that the bondage of ignorance and the fear of death arising out of it disappear and he realizes his true nature which is the eternal blissful unconditioned Consciousness.

This Mantra is also known as *Maha Mrutyunjaya* Mantra as it helps the Sadhaka in overcoming the fear of death and leads him to the state which is beyond the birth and death.

Customarily this Mantra is chanted either alternately after the Gayatri Mantra or after completion of the full chanting of Gayatri Mantra.

AJAPA JAPA - SO'HAM JAPA

This is the Japa of *So'ham* linked with the awareness of the breath. 'So' i.e. 'SAH' stands for He, the all pervading Brahman and 'HAM' i.e. 'AHAM' stands for 'I am'. It is essentially a Manasa Japa and though in the initial period one has to 'do' it; later on it gets repeated without any conscious efforts. Off course, it does not mean that it happens mechanically or by unconscious habit rather with constant and total awareness of being 'That I am', without any need of some special efforts for doing it. That is why, it is called Ajapa Japa, the one which takes place on its own without any conscious efforts of chanting it.

In the initial stage, one has to become aware of his normal breathing, during both the phases of inhalation and exhalation. Thereafter, slowly the Sadhaka associates in his mind the pronunciation of the word 'SO' with inhalation and 'HAM' with exhalation. One has to feel it being chanted in his mind constantly with each breath.

When the chanting begins with inhalation, the Mantra becomes *So'ham* and when one begins with exhalation it becomes '*Humso*'. One may choose any one of this. In some traditions, chanting of this Mantra is associated with the concentration on different centers along the spine known as Chakras and with the help of this one tries to awaken the power of *Kundalini*. But without taking the recourse to this aspect one can still reap great spiritual benefit from this Japa.

The constant repetition of the *Sohum* in the mind, linked with the breath, helps in increasing the mental concentration and heightened perception of internal sensations. Using this increased awareness of internal field one can slowly enter higher stages of meditation and ultimately to the awareness of the Self as the blissful, unconditioned Consciousness. This Ajapa Japa is so important as a spiritual practice that some Sadhakas use it as a complete Sadhana by itself.

* * * * *

ATMASHATAK

This beautiful and melodious Stotra is composed by the Adi Shankaracharya. In it he describes the process of self-realization, wherein one makes an attempt to know who really he is and what he is not. Usually, what one identifies oneself to be is only the attributes or the outer coverings. One by one, when the Sadhaka overcomes the exclusive identity of oneself with these things, he reaches the inner essence of the SELF which is eternal, unchanging, unconditioned Consciousness, the same as the blissful, all-inclusive existence. This is described as *Sat* (existence), *Chit* (Consciousness) and *Ananda* (Bliss). This Stotra is called *Atmashatak* as it describes what the Atman (self) is in six stanzas. Sometimes it is also called as *Nirvanashatak* as it describes the state of *Nirvana* - the state of liberation from the identity of all that is non-self and realization of true Self.

1

मनोबुद्ध्यहंकाराचित्तानि नाहं
 न च श्रोत्रजिह्वे न च घ्राणनेत्रे ।
 न च व्योमभूमिर्न तेजो न वायुः
 चिदानंदरूपः शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम् ॥

*Manobudhyahamkaarchittaani Naaham
 Na Cha Shrotrajivhe Na Cha Ghraanetre
 Na Cha Vyomabhumima Tejo Na Vaayuh
 Chidaanadarupah Shivo 'ham Shivo' ham.*

I am not the mind, intelligence, ego or the individualized conditioned consciousness. Nor am I the sense organs of hearing, tasting, smelling or seeing. Nor am I the (body formed of) five great elements viz. earth, water, fire, air and space. I am the auspicious, blissful, Unconditioned Consciousness.

2

न च प्राणसंज्ञो न वै पंचवायुः
न वा सप्तधातुर्न वा पंचकोशः ।
न वाक् पाणिपादौ न चोपस्थपायू
चिदानंदरुपः शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम् ॥

*Na cha Praanasanjno Na Vai Panchavaayuh
Na Vaa Saptadhaaturna Vaa Panchakoshah.
Na Vaak Paanipaadou Na Chopasthapaayu
Chidaanandarupah Shivo'ham Shivo'ham.*

I am not the Prana or its five divisions (known as *Prana, Apana, Vyana, Samana and Udana*). Nor am I the seven basic tissue elements (known as *Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja and Shukra*, which form the physical body) nor the five *Koshas* (known as *Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya Kosha*, which wrap / entrap the Atman). Nor am I the five organs of action namely the hands, legs, mouth, anus and penis (which carry out the action of working, walking, speaking, excretion and procreation). I am the auspicious, blissful, unconditioned Consciousness.

3

न मे द्वेषरागौ न मे लोभमोहौ
मदो नैव मे नैव मात्सर्यभावः ।
न धर्मो न चार्थो न कामो न मोक्षः
चिदानंदरुपः शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम् ॥

*Na Me Dvesharaagou Na Me Lobhamohou
Mado Naiva Me Naive Maatsaryabhaavah.
Na Dharmo No Chaartha Na Kaamo Na Mokshah
Chidaanandarupah Shivo'ham Shivo'ham.*

I do not have the abhorrence of anything, nor the obsession, nor the greed, not the delusion, nor the arrogance, nor the jealousy. Nor is the need for me to pursue any more, any of the *Purusharthas* (objects of human life) namely the *Dharma*, (righteous behaviour), *Artha* (material prosperity), *Kama* (sensual enjoyment) and *Moksha* (liberation), as I have now realized that I am nothing but the auspicious, blissful, unconditioned Consciousness.

4

न पुण्यं न पापं न सौख्यं न दुःखं
 न मंत्रो न तीर्थं न वेदा न यज्ञाः ।
 अहं भोजनं नैव भोज्यं न भोक्ता
 चिदानंदरूपः शिवो ऽहम् शिवो ऽहम् ॥

*Na Punyam Na Paapam Na Soukhyam Na Duhkham
 Na Mantra Na Teertham Na Vedaa Na Yajnah.
 Aham Bhojanam Naiva Bhojyam Na Bhoktaa
 Chidaanandarupam Shivo'ham Shivo'ham*

I am not affected by merit and sin, nor pleasure and pain. Nor is the need for me of Mantra, pilgrimage, scriptures and sacrifice. Nor am I the enjoyment, the thing enjoyed or the enjoyer. I have transcended all these things as I have realized that I am the auspicious, blissful, unconditioned Consciousness.

5

न मे मृत्युशंका न मे जातिभेदः
 पिता नैव मे नैव माता न जन्मः ।
 न बन्धुर्न मित्रं गुरुर्नैव शिष्यः
 चिदानंदरूपः शिवो ऽहम् शिवो ऽहम् ॥

*Na Me Mrutyushankaa Na Me Jaatibhedah
Pitaa Naiva Me Naiva Maataa Na Janmah.
Na Bandhurna Mitram Gururnaiva Shishyah
Chidaanandarupah Shivo'ham Shivo'ham.*

I am not concerned by the fear of death or by the differences arising out of caste distinctions. I have no father or mother as I am that which has no birth and no death. Nor do I have any brothers, friends, Guru or Shishya. I am the auspicious, blissful, unconditioned Consciousness.

6

अहं निर्विकल्पो निराकार रूपो
विभूर्व्याप्य सर्वत्र सर्वेन्द्रियाणाम् ।
सदा मे समत्वं न मुक्तिर्न बन्धः
चिदानंदरूपः शिवो ऽहम् शिवो ऽहम् ॥

Aham Nirvikalpo Niraakaara Rupo
Vibhuryapya Sarvatra Sarvendriyaanam.
Sadaa Me Samatvam Na Muktima Bandhah
Chidaanandarupah Shivo'ham Shivo'ham.

I am beyond distinction and form. I am everywhere, in everything, in all that could be perceived and also in that apparatus which perceives. I am all that is unchanging and unaffected by time. I am the blissful, auspicious, unconditioned Consciousness.

OM STAVANA

This Hindi composition in a very simple and moving language describes the spiritual journey of a Sadhaka with the help of Pranava Japa. Sadhaka is invited to take a plunge into the holy Ganga, which is flowing within himself in the form of spiritual force. It flows along the path of Sushumna, from the Mooladhara Chakra at the base of the spine to the Sahasrara Chakra at the crown of the head. He is assured that with the help of Pranava, he can reach the highest point where the identification with the body disappears and one experiences the indescribable bliss emerging out of realization of one's true nature - the nature of all-pervading, eternal, unconditioned Consciousness.

This Om Stavana should be chanted in a low tone, in an un-hurried way. The chanting of Om at the end of each line should be enjoyed leisurely and one should not rush to the recitation of the next line. At the end of the Stavana, first two lines are repeated in a softer tone.

1

भृकुटि महल चढ देख पियारे, जागे ज्योति अपारा ॐ
सो ऽहम् सो ऽहम् जपते जपते, पहुँचे दशमे द्वारा ॐ

*Bhrukuti Mahala Chadha Dekha Piyaare
Jaage Jyoti Apaaraa Om.
So'ham So'ham Japate Japate
Pahunche Dashame Dwaaraa Om.*

O dear one, when you rise above the Bhrukuti Mahal i.e. the Ajna Chakra, You would see the inner light of Infinite wisdom. Through the constant chanting of 'That-I-am', 'That-I-am', you would reach the entrance of the tenth opening. (The rest nine open towards the outside or Bahyakasha, while the tenth one known as Brahmarandhra is a spiritual opening which opens inwards towards the Chidakash).

2

मेरुदण्डमे बंकनाल है, उलटी गंग कहावे ॐ
उसी गंगमे सुनलो प्यारे, जो कोई घुसकर न्हावे ॐ

*Merudandme Bankanaala Hai
Ulati Ganga Kahaave Om.
Usee Gangame Sunalo Pyaare
Jo Koi Ghusakara Nhaave Om.*

The stream of spiritual consciousness flows in a reverse way from the bottom to the top, through the serpentine spinal cord, situated within the backbone. O dear one, you should plunge yourself into this stream to ascend to higher consciousness.

3

प्रणवयानसे उंचा चढकर, सुखमनिगढमे जावे ॐ.
तनका भान भुलाके वहासे, सो ऽहम् सो ऽहम् गावे ॐ.

*Pranavayaanase Unchaa Chadhakara
Sukhamanigadhame Jaave Om.
Tanakaa Bhaana Bhulaake Vahaase
So'ham So'ham Gaave Om.*

Using the vehicle of Pranava Japa, You should ascend higher and higher reaching the top of Sushumna Patha. There, overcoming the identity of the self with the body, you would find your-self singing with joy, 'That-I-am', 'That-I-am'.

4

वहाँसे उँचा बेहद उँचा, ब्रह्मशिखरपै जावे ॐ.
ॐ, ध्वनीसे चढते चढते, निश्चल घुमरी आवे ॐ.

*Vahaanse Unchaa Behada Unchaa
Brhmashikharapai Jaave Om.
Om Dhwanise Chadhate Chadhate
Nischala Ghumari Aave Om.*

Even higher than that, to the highest peak of experience of Brahman within, reaching there with the sound of Om, you should enjoy the bliss of creative dynamism of the all-pervading Consciousness.

5

अपने आप आप अपनेमे, निर्विकल्प निरवाणी ॐ.
शिवानंद गुरु केवल चेतन, निजानंद आनंदी ॐ.

*Apane Aap Aap Apaneme
Nirvikalpa Nirvaani Om.
Shivaanandaguru Kevala Chetana
Nijaananda Aanadi Om.*

You would find yourself, spontaneously, in a state of indescribable joy, with an experience of blissful pure Consciousness. I pay my obeisance to Guru Shivananda, who has guided me to this experience.

* * * * *

PRAYER FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL

At the end of spiritual session, our heart is filled with the deep abiding peace, love and compassion; and out of this, emerges the strong desire to share this feeling with all the beings around us. With a deep conviction of oneness of all, this desire, like the spreading rays of the Sun, reaches out to all the beings around us. While reciting the following Mantra, one should have this feeling in his heart.

सर्वेतु सुखिनः सन्तु
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु
मा कश्चित् दुःख भाग् भवेत् ॥

Sarve' Tu Sukhinah Santu
Sarve Santu Niraamayah.
Sarve Bhadraani Pashyantu
Maa Kashchit Duhkhabhag Bhavet.

Sarve Tu-all; *Sukhinah* - happy; *Santu* - be; *Sarve*-all; *Santu* - be; *Niraamayah* - healthy; *Sarve* - all; *Bhadraani* - auspicious; *Pashyantu* - let them see; *Maa kaschit* - no one; *Duhkhabhag*- subject to misery *Bhavet*-become.

May all be happy.

May all be free from diseases.

May all realize what is auspicious

May none become subject to misery.

ॐ शान्ति : शान्ति : शान्ति : ।

Om Shaantih. Shaantih. Shaantih.
