

6. The Gaayathree Path to God

Out of action arises the bondage of Delusion;

From Delusion grows a perverted mind;

Mental perversion leads to perverse deeds;

Such deeds again result in rebirth.

YOUNG embodiments of the Divine! The grand mansion of Hindhu thought has been raised on the four walls of *karma*, *janma*, *dharma* and *Brahman* (action, birth, righteous action, and Supreme Self or God). These four are interdependent. No one can escape the consequences of one's action, whether good or bad. No action goes in vain. Karma (action) is the primary cause of one's birth.

The jeevi is born in karma,

He grows through karma,

He ceases in karma.

Karma is the cause

Of happiness and misery.

It has been well said that "The body indeed, is the basis for the pursuit of *dharma*" (*Shareeramaadhyam khalu dharma saadhanam*). It is by the pursuit of *dharma* that *Brahman* is realised. The Geetha has declared that whenever *dharma* declines the advent of the *Avathaar* (Divine incarnation) occurs. This implies that the object of human existence is to uphold *dharma*. As creation is a projection of the Divine Will, the aim of every human being should be to live in harmony with that Will. One's life should be dedicated not for promoting one's selfish interests or to serve the interests of other fellow-beings but in the service of the Divine. Whatever is done to anyone, if it is done as an offering to the Divine, it will reach the Divine. Man should consecrate every action by regarding it as an offering to the Divine.

Gaayathree initiation gives one the Second Birth

From the moment of issuing from the mother's womb, one is involved in action. This natural state is common to all and may be described as *Shuudhrathwam* (the state of the *Shuudhra*, that is, one who is not subject to any regimen). After one receives the *Gaayathree* initiation, he is born again and becomes a *Dwija* (the twice-born). The *Gaayathree* is described as "*Chhandhasaam maathah*"---the mother of all the *Vedhas* (ancient sacred scriptures). One meaning of *Gaayathree* is that it is a *manthra* (sacred formula) which protects or fosters the "*Gayaas*" or *jeevis* (individual beings).

You must note that today you have all got a second birth by receiving the *Gaayathree manthra* (*Vedhic* prayer to illuminate the intelligence). By observing the disciplines of the *Brahmachari* (celibate) stage, you will qualify yourselves for the study of the *Vedhas*. When one begins to study the *Vedhas* he is known as "*Vipra*" (Brahmana). This is a third birth, as it were. At this stage, by the study and understanding of the *Vedhas* and living up to their precepts, one gets the opportunity to understand *Brahman* (Supreme Being). Once the *Brahman* principle is understood, one merges in *Brahman*. It is only when there is awareness of *Brahman* can one claim to be a real *Brahman*. It is not birth alone, but the realisation of *Brahman* which confers

real *Braahmanathwa* (Braahmana-hood) on a person.

Gaayathree mantra is the embodiment of all deities

The *Gaayathree mantra* has to be recited three times a day---in the morning at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset. These are called "*Sandhyaa Kaalam*"---the time of coming together of night and day, of morning and evening, and of day and night. Time, like man, has three qualities: *Sathwa*, *Rajas* and *Thamas* (poised, passion and inertia). The day is divided into three parts. The four hours between 4 and 8 a.m. in the morning and between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the evening have the *Sathwa* (equanimous) quality. The eight hours between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. are *Raajasik* (Passionate). The eight hours between 8 p.m. and 4 a.m. which are mainly used for sleep, are *Thaamasik* (inaction). The eight hours of the day (from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) are employed by all beings, including animals and birds, in the discharge of their day to day duties and are regarded as *Raajasik* (active pursuit).

When the four *Saathwik* hours of the morning (4 a.m. to 8 a.m.) are used for engaging oneself in good actions like worship, virtuous deeds, keeping good company, one is sure to raise, himself from the human to the Divine level. It is during the *Saathwik* period (from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.) the *Gaayathree mantra* should be recited. This *manthra* is the embodiment of all deities. It is not related to any particular sect, caste or idol or institution. It is said to embody nine "colours": (1) *Om* (2) *Bhuh* (3) *Bhuvah* (4) *Suvah* (5) *Thath* (6) *Savithur* or powers (7) *Varenyam* (8) *Bhargah* (9) *Dhevasya*. "*Dheemahi*" is related to the meditative aspect. "*Dhiyo-yo-nah prachodayaath*" relates to the aspect of prayer. The *manthra* as a whole thus contains three aspects descriptive, meditational and prayer.

Discover the Unity that underlies the Diversity

On the basis of differences in behaviour, the *antahkarana* (inner-psyche) has been accorded four names. When it is concerned with thoughts, it is called *manas* (mind). When it is restless and wavering it is called *chiththa* (consciousness). When it is concerned with enquiry and understanding, it is called *buddhi* (intellect). When it is associated with the sense of "mine" (possessiveness), it is called *ahamkaara* (egoism). Why are four different names and attributes given to one and the same entity (the *Antahkarana*)? The mind is pre-occupied with distinctions and differences. The *buddhi* is concerned with oneness and reveals the Unity that underlies the diversity. All our efforts must be directed towards discovering the Unity that underlies the diversity rather than seeking to divide the One into the many.

The Gaayathree mantra (*Vedhic* prayer to illuminate the intelligence) is a sacred *manthra* which demonstrates the unity that underlies manifoldness in creation. It is through the recognition of this unity that we can understand the multiplicity. Clay is one and the same thing, though pots of different shapes and sizes can be made from it. Gold is one, though gold ornaments can be multifarious. The *Aathma* (Divine Self) is one, though the embodied forms in which it resides may be many. Whatever the colour of the cow, the milk is white always.

There is no object in the world which does not have a form and a name. The Cosmos is made up of things with forms and names. While the forms are subject to constant change, the names remain unchanged. The form may change and even completely disappear but the name remains. Once we know the name, we can recognise what or whom it represents. In a large gathering, it will not be easy to trace a person merely from the description of his features. But when his name is called, he immediately responds and can be identified. Likewise, through the name of the

Lord; the form of the Lord can be visualised.

Five faces---Three deities

Gaayathree is described as having five faces. The first is "Om" The second is "*Bhurbhuvassuvah*" The third is. "*Thathsavithur Varenyam*". The fourth is "*Bhargo Dhevasya Dheemahi*". The fifth is: "*Dhiyo-yo nah Prachodhayaath*", *Gaayathree* represents in these five faces the five *Praanas* (life forces). *Gaayathree* is the protector of the five *Praanas* in man. *Gaayantham thraayathe ithi Gaayathree* -- "Because it protects the one who recites it, it is called *Gaayathree*." When *Gaayathree* acts as protector of the life-forces, she is known as *Saavithree*. *Saavithree* is known in the *puraanic* story as the devoted wife who brought back to life her husband, Sathyavaan. *Saavithree* is the presiding deity of the five *praanas*. She protects those who lead a life of Truth. This is the inner meaning.

When one's intelligence and intuition are developed by the recitation of the *manthra*, the activating deity is *Gaayathree*. When the life-forces are protected, the guardian deity is called *Saavithree*. When one's speech is protected, the deity is called *Saraswathee*. Because of the protective roles of *Saavithree*, *Saraswathee* and *Gaayathree*, in relation to life, speech and the intellect, *Gaayathree* is described as "Sarvadhevathaa-swaruupini"---he embodiment of all goddesses.

It is essential to recite the *Gaayathree manthra* at least three times during morning, noon and evening. This will serve to reduce the effects of the wrong acts one does every day. It is like buying goods for cash, instead of getting them on credit. There is no accumulation of karmic (result of action) debt, as each day's karma (action) is atoned for that day itself by reciting the *Gaayathree Manthra*.

Redemptive Power of the *Gaayathree manthra*

The plea that one cannot find time for reciting the *Gaayathree* thrice a day is specious and untenable. People waste so much of their time in worthless activities that they can easily find a few moments for reciting the *Gaayathree* when they wake up from bed and before they go to sleep, if only they have the will. The *Gaayathree* can be recited even when one is taking his bath. It will mean also offering ablutions to the goddess. At noon, if the *Gaayathree* is recited before taking one's meal, the food will get sanctified and become an offering to the deity.

The *Brahmacharis* (celebrates/religious students) should realise the redemptive power of the *Gaayathree* manthra. Through the *Brahmopadhesam* (initiation into sacred knowledge), the young boys have had a second birth. It is only when they have achieved the purposes of this second birth will they be qualified to enter on the sacred third stage of "*viprathvam*" (Brahmana-hood), which leads to the realisation of *Brahman*.

"One who is aware of *Brahman*, becomes one with *Brahman*" is the *Vedhic* saying. To recognise the *Brahman* principle, one has to understand one's own true nature. There is a story to illustrate how one can see whether he is qualified to realise *Brahman*. An unmarried girl acquires the right to a half-share in a man's property after she is married to him and he ties the *mangalasuuthra* (the auspicious marriage thread) round her neck. It is this sacred thread that confers the right on her. Likewise, one remains remote from God as long as one has not acquired the thread of "surrender to the Divine" (*Sharanaagathi- thathwa*). The moment one wears the *suuthra* (thread) of *Sharanaagathi* (total surrender), one acquires the right to a half share in the energy and authority of the Divine. We must strive earnestly to pursue the path of submission to the Divine

Will and offering everything to the Divine.

The attitude of surrender will grow in us as we recite regularly the *Gaayathree manthra*. This is the reason why boys are initiated into the *manthra* at an early age. There is also another reason for this early initiation. Boys, who have been indolent or dull before getting the *Brahmopadhesam* have been able to develop their intelligence and be more diligent in their studies after they have received the *Gaayathree manthra*. This is a matter of proven experience. Like sunrise after the night, the *Gaayathree manthra* dispels the darkness of ignorance: "*Dhiyo-yo-nah prachodayaath.*" The rays of the *Gaayathree manthra* illumine the mind and intelligence and promote knowledge, wisdom and discrimination.

I bless the young *vatus* (boys who have been initiated) so that from today they recite the *Gaayathree* regularly, lead exemplary lives and grow into good, god-fearing, educated and enlightened citizens of Bhaarith.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, Puurnachandhra Auditorium, 17-3-1983

The pain that another suffers from, which you seek to assuage, is really your own pain; when you stop his pain, it is your pain that stops. Service can be effective only when the feelings of 'I' and 'Mine' give place to 'God' and 'God's'. It is only when your attention is monopolised by the body and its needs, that egoism will grow in strength.

When you direct your attention to the Anthar-aathma (Inner-self) which is God, then, you find the same of God in all and a flood of reverence fills you and fertilises every act of yours.

Sri Sathya Sai