



# ĪŚVARA & RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE

PŪRNA VIDYĀ VEDIC HERITAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME



# Homework

- Practice a few minutes of *mauna* (silence) every day and observe your mind
- Practice meditation every day for a few minutes
  - Chant “**Om! Namaḥ Śivāya...**” with your eyes closed
- Reflect on the meaning of silence when you are in meditation

# Review: The five daily sacrifices

- **Brahma** yajna: Recognizes the duty to study the **Vedas**
- **Pitr** yajna: Recognizes the duty to offer oblations to our **ancestors**
- **Deva** yajna: Recognizes the presence of the **deities** in the **laws** that govern the universe
- **Bhuta** yajna: Recognizes our connection to all **living beings**
- **Athithi** yajna: Recognizes Īśvara who appears in the form of an **unannounced guest**

**ĪŚVARA & RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE**  
**SANDHYĀVANDANAM**  
**AND**  
**THE GĀYATRĪ MANTRA**

# Sandhyāvandanam

- Recall that in the Vedic vision, worship of the *Surya Devata* is worship of Īśvara
- Sandhyāvandanam
  - Dhyai = meditate
  - Vandanam = salutation
- Sandhyāvandanam
  - Sandhi = junction of night and day (dawn and dusk)
  - Vandanam = salutation



# Sandhyāvandanam

- Sandhyāvandanam is considered a nitya karma according to the Veda śāstra
- What are the some major types of karmas?
  - Nitya = what one practice regularly
  - Naimittika = what one must practice on special occasions as the occasion demands (e.g., naming ceremony, yajna, etc.)
  - Nishiddha = forbidden actions (e.g., violence, speaking an untruth, etc.)

# Sandhyāvandanam

- Sandhyāvandanam is a ritual with several steps including
  - External and internal purification
  - Meditation on Lord Ganesa
  - Offering water to Sūrya-devata
  - Offering *arghya* (oblations) to the planets and other deities
  - Doing the *Gāyatrī japā*

# Gāyatri Mantra

- The Gayatri mantra or more accurately the Savitr Gayatri mantra is a Vedic mantra (Ṛg Veda 3.62.10), which is considered to be a highly efficacious prayer
- It's importance and significance is noted in all four Vedas
- It is traditionally chanted in the Gayatri meter
  - one of the seven musical meters mentioned in the Sandhyāvandanam prayer
  - there are 26 Vedic meters in all



# Gāyatrī Mantra

- What are the seven Vedic meters (chandās) mentioned in the Sandhyāvandanam prayer?
  - Gāyatri; Uṣṇika; Anuṣṭubh; Trisṭubh; Brhati; Pankti; Jagati
- The Gāyatri mantra has 24 syllables in three parts of eight syllables
- Chanted 108 times at dawn, 32 times at noon and 64 times at dusk

# Gāyatrī Mantra

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

Om! bhurbhuvassuvaḥ  
tat saviturvarye||ṇam  
bhargo devasya dhīmahi  
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayā||t

- **Om! bhurbhuvassuvaḥ** = Om is the basis for everything (not part of the 24-syllable mantra)
- **tat** = that Lord; **savituh** = of the sun; **varye||ṇam** = the most worshipped (or most worshipful)
- **bhargah** = who is all-knowing; **devasya** = of the Lord; **dhīmahi** = we meditate
- **dhiyah** = intellect; **yaḥ** = the one; **naḥ** = our;
- **pracodayā||t** = may he set in the right direction (or may he brighten)

# Gāyatrī Mantra

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धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om! bhurbhuvassuvaḥ  
tat saviturvaryeḥnam  
bhargo devasya dhīmahi  
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāḥt

Om is the basis for everything.  
That Lord is the one who is most worshipful. We meditate on that  
all-knowing Lord. May he set our intellects in the right direction  
(or may he brighten our intellects)

# Gāyatrī Mantra

- **Om! bhurbhuvassuvah**
  - This is technically not part of the 24-syllable mantra
  - Om is the basis for everything
  - Bhuh, Bhuvah and suvah represents “our” (seen) world, the worlds above (unseen) and the worlds below (unseen), respectively (i.e., everything that is seen and unseen)
- **tad varye||ṇam** = That (Lord) is most worshipful
- **(tasya) devasya savituḥ dhīmahi** = We meditate (on) that (all-knowing) effulgence of the deity of sun (Lord)
- **yaḥ bhargah naḥ dhiyah pracodayāḥ** = May that effulgent (one) illumine our intellects (note the emphasis on “our”)



# Gāyatrī Mantra as a Mahāvākya

- **What is a mahāvākya?**
  - A mahāvākya is a sentence that reveals the identity between the individual (jīva) and the Lord (Īśvara)
  - A mahāvākya predicates an equation between two variables (jīva & Īśvara)
  - Why is an equation needed? Discuss in class
- **The mahāvākya in the Gāyatrī mantra**
  - That which is the cause of everything is equated to Om
  - The essential nature of the Lord is equated to the self in the form of limitless awareness
  - By contemplating upon and understanding the Gāyatrī mantra, one can appreciate the identity of the individual with the Lord



# Gāyatrī Mantra as a Prayer

- **What is a prayer?**
  - A prayer is something we seek from someone who has it
  - The ultimate prayer is the prayer to the Lord (Īśvara) because He is everything!
  - In order to fulfil some desire we pray to Īśvara
- **The prayer in the Gāyatrī mantra**
  - “Give me the clarity of intellect so that my intellect may be an effective instrument for learning”

# Gāyatrī Mantra as a Prayer

- Why pray for clarity of intellect?
  - Learning can only take place in the intellect
  - A clear intellect helps us make intelligent choices
  - Intelligent choices lead us to a life (relatively) free of conflict because the mind is clear and uncluttered
  - We learn to see things as they are and not how we wish them (erroneously) to be
  - Intelligent choices ultimately help us recognize what is really important and let go of that which is not important

# Gāyatrī in the Upaniṣads & Purāṇas

- The Upanishads and the Puranas glorify the Gāyatri mantra as the greatest of the mantras
- The Chāndogya Upaniṣad (3.21.1) gives the meaning of the Gayatrī mantra and praises it as “*gāyati ca trāyate ca*” which translates as “it sings and it protects”
  - Gayatrī sings because it is a meter
  - Gayatrī protects because
    - As a prayer it protects a person by creating an attitude of devotion and acceptance
    - As a mahāvākya, it protects one from both sorrow and limitation by revealing the nature of the self as one with Isvara (i.e., it gives self-knowledge)

# Gāyatrī in the Upaniṣads & Purāṇas

- The Mahanarayana Upanisad (15.1) “*Gāyatrīm chandasām mātā*” or “*the Gayatrī is the mother of all chandas or meters*”
- In the 10<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita (Vibhuti Yoga), Lord Kṛṣṇa says “*Gāyatrī chandasām aham*” or “*...among the meters I am the Gāyatrī...*”



# Homework

- Reflect on the importance of a clear mind in your daily meditation practice
- *Chant the Gayatri mantra in the morning (remember that one should chant Vedic mantras with the proper svara etc.)*



DAKṢINAMURTHY STOTRAM  
DHYANA ŚLOKAS

# Lord Dakṣinamurthi

From Swami Tadatamananda Saraswati's Atma Bodha Ashram, New Jersey



# DAKṢINAMURTHY STOTRAM

- Contains the most profound teachings of *Advaita Vedanta*
- Set in a meter called “*Shardula Vikridita*”
- Superb piece of poetry
- The wisdom in the Dakṣinamurthy stotram is capable of destroying *mula-avidya* or “root-ignorance” (fundamental ignorance)
- The Dakṣinamurthy stotram is *mokṣa-sastra* – knowledge that can lead one to liberation

# DAKᅒINAMURTHY STOTRAM

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

॥ ॐ ॥

सदाशिव समारंभां शङ्कराचार्य मध्यमां ।  
अस्मदाचार्य पर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरम्परां ॥



# DAKṢINAMURTHY STOTRAM

मौनव्याख्या प्रकटित परब्रह्मतत्त्वं युवानं  
वर्षिष्ठांते वसद् ऋषिगणैः आवृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः ।  
आचार्येन्द्रं करकलित चिन्मद्रमानंदमूर्तिं  
स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥१॥

Mauna vyākhyā prakatita parabrahma tatvam yuvānaṁ  
Varṣiṣṭhānte vasadr̥ṣigaṇairāvrtam brahmaniṣṭaiḥ  
Ācāryendram karakalita cinmudramānanda rupam  
Svātmārāmaṁ muditavadanaṁ dakṣinamūrtimīde

**A young guru, imparting knowledge of Brahman through silence, surrounded by *rishis* who are firmly established in wisdom...**

**...teacher of teachers, whose gesture signifies wisdom, whose nature is fullness, smiling, reveling in himself, I worship that Lord Dakshinamurti**



# DAKṢINAMURTHY STOTRAM

वटवितपिसमीपेभूमिभागे निषण्णं  
सकलमुनिजनानां ज्ञानदातारमारात् ।  
त्रिभुवनगुरुमीशं दक्षिणामूर्तिदेवं  
जननमरणदुःखच्छेद दक्षं नमामि ॥२॥

Vatavitapisamipe bhūmibhāge niṣaṇṇam  
Sakalamunijanānām jñānadātaramārāt  
Tribhuvanagurmīśam dakṣinamūrtidevaṁ  
Jananamaraṇa duḥkhacchedadakṣam namāmi

Seated on the ground under the banyan tree, bestowing knowledge to all the *rishis* who have assembled near him...  
... teacher of the three worlds, destroyer of the miseries of birth and death, I bow to that Lord.

# DAKṢINAMURTHY STOTRAM

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।  
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तुच्छिन्नसंशयाः ॥३॥

Chitram vatatarormūle vṛddhāḥ śiṣyā gururyuvā  
Gurostu maunaṁ vyākhyānaṁ śiṣyā stu cchinasamśayāḥ

**Amazing! Under the banyan tree aged disciples sat around a youthful guru.  
He taught them in silence, yet their doubts were dispelled...**

# DAKṢINAMURTHY STOTRAM

निधये सर्वविद्यानां भिषजे भवरोगिणाम् ।  
गुरवे सर्वलोकानां दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥४॥

Nidhaye sarvavidyānām bhiṣaje bhavarogiṇām  
Gurave sarva lokānām dakṣiṇāmūrtaye namaḥ

Salutations to Lord Dakshinamurti, the abode of all wisdom, teacher of the whole world,  
healing those who suffer from the disease of *samsara* ...

# DAKṢINAMURTHY STOTRAM

ॐ नमः प्रणवार्थाय शुद्धज्ञानैकमूर्तये ।  
निर्मलाय प्रशान्ताय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥५॥

Om namaḥ praṇavārthāya suddhajñānaika mūrtaye  
Nirmālaya praśāntāya dakṣiṇāmūrtaye namaḥ

Salutations to Lord Dakshinamurti, who is the meaning of "Om", whose form is pure knowledge, who is taintless and utterly silent ...

# DAKṢINAMURTHY STOTRAM

ईश्वरो गुरुरात्मेति मूर्तिभेदविभागिने ।  
व्योमवद् व्याप्तदेहाय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥७॥

Iśvaro gururātmeti mūrtibhedavibhāgine  
Vyomavad vyāptadehāya dakṣiṇāmūrtaye namaḥ

**Salutations to Lord Dakshinamurti, who underlies all apparent forms of separation and pervades the universe...**



# Concluding Śānti Mantra

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम् पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते  
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

- Om pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam pūrṇātpurṇamudacyate  
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate ॥  
Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ॥

That is fullness, this is fullness. From that fullness this fullness came. From that fullness (when) this fullness (is) removed, what remains is fullness. Om peace, peace, peace