

Om Aim Hreem Srim Shivarama Anaghaa Dattaaya Namaha

This is a propitious *Maha Mantra*¹, whose incantation enables devotees to experience divine grace and mercy, effortlessly and swiftly. This *mantra* consists of sixteen syllables in four sections. The first section contains the *beejaksharas*² *Om*, *Aim*³, *Hreem* and *Sreem*. The second section has two *Naama mantras*, namely, *Shiva* and *Rama*. The third section refers to *Anaghaa Datta*; and the final section comprises of the salutation *Namaha*, which connotes the offering of respect, devotion and similar emotions. By chanting *Namaha*, devotees display their total devotion to God.

Albeit, there are four sections, the first letter *Om* constitutes the basis for all letters and *mantras*, and is in effect the essence of all the *mantras* and creation. *Om* is also known as *Pranava*. The *Sikshaavalli* in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*³ defines and describes the importance of *Om*. The entire world consists of the important elements, matter and sound. Speech is a manifestation of sound; and matter or material things are represented by their related word or phrase. Thus, that word or phrase indicates fundamental matter or some material object.

The universe in its entirety consists of the same matter, which exists throughout the universe. Matter is omnipresent in the universe, and the former's ubiquitous nature is termed as *Param Brahma*. Moreover, the *Upanishads* describe matter as *Param Brahma*. Hence, Param Brahma permeates each and every thing and force ranging from the Lord *Chathurmukha*⁴ Brahma (Creative Force) to tiny micro organisms. It is also the reason, why Param Brahma is called as Sat, or *Sat Chid Aananda*⁵.

Let us examine a simily: A gold bar is moulded into various ornaments like bangles, necklaces, waistbands, or other ornaments. Whatever the ornament, the principal element in it is gold. Similarly, common factor in rivers, wells, lakes, and seas is water. Though the matter (Substance) appears in a multitude of forms, the essence remains the same. (The forms and shapes are temporal.) This is the relationship between Param Brahma and all other appearances in the Universe.

The Vedas declare that the Universe is that nothing but a representation of Sachchidananda Para Brahma. This is the ultimate philosophy of the Vedas and can consequently be termed as the principle of the *Vedanta*⁶. The *Para Brahma* is an eternal and holy potion that constitutes the essence of life and the life force. It cannot be destroyed and it is everlasting.

As that *Para Brahma* or omnipresent matter is very powerful and all – pervasive, the word that represents it must also be equally very powerful and omnipresent. That word is the *Pranava* or *Om*⁷. As a result, the *Om* is bestowed with all the

¹ Great Vedic hymn

² Seed letters

³ The inner or mystic teaching

⁴ Four faced

⁵ Ai in Aim, like Ice

⁶ Truth, consciousness and bliss

⁶ The philosophical foundation of the Sanatana Dharma

⁷ Symbol representing Om

attributes of the *Para Brahma* and for that reason it is a very powerful and eternal *mantra*⁸. This fact has been reiterated by the *Upanishads*.

This sacred *Om* is the progenitor of the vocabulary of each and every language in the world. Moreover, scholars have accepted that all languages have emerged from *Om*. Accordingly, *Om* can be termed as the holy repository of sound; and it constitutes the armour of *Para Brahma*.

Genesis of OM:

Param Brahma has neither a beginning nor an end and hence omni present. Similarly, the word denoting Param Brahma – OM does not have genesis. This is one school of thought among *Pundits*⁹. Hence, literally OM is ever – ready syllable.

Another school of thought defines that OM has an origin. This is similar to the metamorphosis of the Creation. Param Brahma (Nirguna Brahma) in conjunction with *Maya*¹⁰ becomes the *Saguna Brahma*¹¹ and assumes the forms of Five Elements, a number of deities and innumerable creatures of the universe. These creatures are living beings formed by the five principal elements, namely, Ether, Air, Energy, Water and Earth. According to this theory of grammar, the sound *Om* manifests itself in several ways, as it is the resonance of *Param Brahma*.

Omkara is formed by the sounds *Akara*, *Ukara* and *Makara*. These sounds constitute the foundation for the formation of the *vyahrutis*¹², the verses of the *Gayatri mantra*, the three Vedas and several other important branches of science. In fact, *Om* is the first and foremost basis for every sound and every science, and it is the quintessence of the Universe.

Each and every form of matter has a name. As such, the more the types of matter, the more the names. Similar to the manifestation of Param Brahma in various shapes and forms of deities and life forces, its representative term OM also conveys several meanings. There are several names that have been formed from the *Omkara*, which constitutes their essence.

According to etymology, OM derives from Verb *Ava* (with the suffix of Man). This *Ava* verb (in Samskruta) has several meanings, in accordance with the context. Some of its more common meanings are protection, state, light, affection, satisfaction, informed, entering into, listening, ownership, begging, working, wish for, radiance, possession, embracing, seeking asylum, violence, division, increment, and becoming powerful.

Param Brahma performs various acts, through the deities, human beings, life forces and other creatures. In reality, He pervades them and conducts all the chores. As, *Om* represents the *Param Brahma*, it also implies several meanings and duties; and such is its significance. For this reason, *Om* is known as the *Ekakshara*¹³ *Brahma*. In accordance, with established principle, only seekers in advanced stages of practice such

⁸ Vedic hymn

⁹ Scholar

¹⁰ Divine power of illusion

¹¹ Qualified Lord

¹² Pronouncement of mystic words

¹³ Single letter

*Yateeswaras*¹⁴ are permitted to indulge in the practice of *Omkara*. It has also been proclaimed that without the *upadesha*¹⁵ of a Guru, no one should chant the *Omkara* or *Pranava*. Therefore, only those practitioners who had obtained their Guru's *upadesha* are eligible to chant the *Pranava*. As such, the holy scriptures prohibit those who had not obtained such *upadesha* to exclusively chant the syllable, from chanting the mantra *Om*.

From this it can be construed that *Pranava* or *Omkara* is a very powerful *mantra*. In order to chant this mantra as *Upasana*¹⁶, the aspirant should have satisfied the aforementioned criterion. Those who fail to fulfil this eligibility criterion should abstain from the practise of *Omkara*; otherwise, they could be prone to dire consequences.

As an illustration of this all important concept, electricity is not supplied directly to houses from the place of its generation. The various Hydel and Thermal Power projects produce high – voltage electricity, which is unsuitable for domestic use, since the voltage of the electricity used in homes is much less. A step down transformers reduces the voltage of the electricity from the point of generation, before supply it to the houses. Failure to do so would have fatal consequences.

Therefore, *Sadguru*¹⁷ directs His disciples to either chant the *bijaksharas* of deities or the *Omkara*, depending on their eligibility and capacity. A religious aspirant who has completed the rigorous practises of the *Brahmacharya*¹⁸, *Gruhastha*¹⁹ and *Vaanaprastha*²⁰ stages of life is deemed to have acquired the required eligibility to proceed further along the spiritual path. Such an aspirant becomes the best practitioner and his *Sadguru* will impart the required precepts and instruct him to chant the *Pranava* **exclusively**, during meditation or *Japa*²¹. Our hoary *Shastras*²² have established this tenet. Therefore, spiritual aspirants must perform chant the *bijaksharas* taught by their *Sadguru*, to the extent prescribed by the Latter.

However, *Pranava* is the cornerstone of every sound or mantra. In practice, we prefix *Omkara* to every mantra, while chanting them. This has become the universal practice; and *Sadgurus* prefix the *Omkara* to the *mantra* that they teach their disciples. Accordingly, Sri Swamiji has also prefixed this mantra with the *Omkara*. This practise constitutes the best means of teaching mantras to disciples.

Moreover, this beneficial practise will fulfil their earthly desires and enhance their spiritual development. That is the ultimate objective of this *Mantra*.

Aim Hreem Sreem

We have understood that *Param Brahma* has donned several forms and characters, due to the mysterious alignment with Maaya. If a task has to be completed, a

¹⁴ Lord of the Yatis or sages

¹⁵ Spiritual advice

¹⁶ Systematic practise

¹⁷ True Guru

¹⁸ Celibate Student

¹⁹ Householder

²⁰ Forest dweller

²¹ Repetition of a mantra

²² Scriptures

corresponding aspiration should exist. This can be termed as a desire - ICHCHHAA; whose fulfilment depends on the possession of complete knowledge about the manner in which that goal can be attained. One should thoroughly examine the available methods, tools and other essential considerations. One should also possess a better understanding of the merits and demerits of the task on hand. This constitutes knowledge – GNAANAM.

After acquiring such knowledge, one should have the ability to successfully carry out the task. This is termed as KRIYAA SAKTI or will power and capacity to execute a task. Therefore, in order to fulfil a task, the performer should possess desire, knowledge and competence to perform it. In the absence of these qualities, no one can perform any task or attain any objective.

If a person is desirous of performing a task or attending to duties, then such a person should chant the mantras that are connected to the *bijaksharas Aim, Hream and Srim*. These *bijaksharas* are reflections of Knowledge, Competence and Fortune.

In the science of *Mantras*, the *bijakshara Aim* implies a demonstration of education and refers to the goddess of education *Saraswati Devi*.

The *Hreem bijakshara* refers to the Goddess *Durga Devi* or *Para Sakti*²³ who is the provider of the necessary power to complete tasks and achieve success in any endeavour.

The Goddess *Lakshmi Devi* is the provider of prosperity and everlasting fortune; and the *bijakshara Sreem* refers to Her.

Shiva, Rama

In the second section of this mantra, there are two important words, namely, Shiva and Rama. The word Shiva signifies Goodness and prosperity; whereas the word Rama denotes beauty and bliss. The underlying objective of this mantra is to bestow upon the person who chants it, all the good qualities implied in the meaning of the words Shiva and Rama.

Shivaaya Vishnu Rupaaya Shivarupaaya Vishnave|

Shivasya hrudayam Vishnur Vishnoscha hrudayam Shivah||

Yatha Shiva mayo Vishnu revam Vishnu mayassivah|

Yathaantaram na pasyaami tathaa me swastiraayushi||

The true nature in the Form of Lord Shiva is to provide emancipation from worldly bondages; this is known as Moksha²⁴. The essence and philosophy of Manifestation of Lord Vishnu is to ensure prosperity and to provide protection. For this reason, those who worship both these Gods, without any discrimination, definitely procure all the virtues in both of them and never undergo any suffering. As such, these persons obtain unbounded prosperity.

²³ The Omnipotent Divine Mother

²⁴ Liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth

According to the *Vedas*, those who worship Lord Hari in the form of Lord Shiva, and Lord Shiva in the form of Lord Hari, obtain prosperity that persists throughout their entire life. To render this concept easier to understand, recourse can be had to an anecdote in the *Puranas*²⁵, which clearly describes the importance of abstaining from differentiating between Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.

To further elucidate this concept, it has been recorded in the *Puranas* that Lord Shiva continually chants the name of Lord Rama, which constitutes His most favoured name for the purpose of chanting. For instance, *Eswara*²⁶ chants:

Sri Raama Raameti Rame Raame Manorame

Sahasra Naama Tattulyam Raamanaama Varaanane||

This is the exalted *Raama Nama*, which is a combination of the eight letters of the *Narayana Maha Mantra*. It is empowered with the beneficial effects of the *ashtaakshari*²⁷. The holy *mantra* Rama resulted from the combination of the letters of *Raa* from the Vishnu *mantra* and *Ma* from the Shiva *Panchaakshari*²⁸.

Consequently, the holy word Raama eliminates differentiation between Lord Hari and Lord Shiva. It vehemently declares that both of them are one and the same. Moreover, Raama integrates all the qualities of the mantras related to these two Gods. Therefore, the chanting of this mantra is more than adequate for religious aspirants and worshippers. Lord Shiva had declared that the chanting of the Rama *mantra* was equivalent to chanting the thousand names of Lord Vishnu. Thus, Lord Shiva had recommended this *mantra* to scholars and laymen, alike. This is a simple and convenient method of worshipping these Gods, and its importance lies in the fact that it was taught by Lord Shiva Himself.

Another gratifying attribute of this Shiva Raama mantra is that Lord Rama alone provides Shiva or *moksha*, and other fortunes. Hence, Lord Rama is also known as Jagadabhi Rama or Aatmaa Rama. Therefore, every devotee has to worship Lord Rama. This is the fundamental import of this *mantra*.

In fact, both the words Hari and Hara have originated from the same root verb or *Dhaatu*²⁹. The *Hru* Dhaatu implies elimination; and in its application, it should be understood that the Dhaatu would eliminate the sins of devotees, remove the effects of their sins from their life, purify them and direct them toward *Aatma Tattva*³⁰.

The third section of this *mantra* includes the term *Anaghaaa*.

Anaghaaa Dattaaya

Anaghaa represents the Goddess Lakshmi Devi. She is the bestower of everlasting fortune, prosperity, lustre and beauty. She also provides enormous wealth to her devotees.

²⁵ Mythological narratives

²⁶ Lord Shiva

²⁷ Eight letters

²⁸ Five letters

²⁹ Principle

³⁰ Realisation of one's self

An object loses its erstwhile splendour on being stained with dirt or covered with dust. When such contamination is removed, that object would shine with all of its former glory and radiance. This is a natural phenomenon.

If we chant this *mantra*, it will eliminate our sins and the contamination caused by these sins. Thus, we stand to regain that which we had lost; furthermore, we would receive all the prosperities of this world and in addition, our spiritual awareness would be significantly enhanced.

An examination of the inner meaning of the word Anaghaa reveals that the naama mantra destroys the sins of devotees. A perusal of the events related to Lord Datta establishes that, in the *Kritayuga*³¹; the Lord demonstrates His wealth of peace, and *Siddhi* or, through the medium of Goddess Anaghaa.

In fact, Lord Dattatreya revealed this Anaghaa form to the leader of celestials Indra and his minions, and the *Maharshis*³² during a war with the demon Jambhaasura.

Subsequently, He made this revelation to His staunch devotee Kaartaveerya arjuna, and imparted knowledge about the philosophy and essence of Anaghaa to him. In His discourse He had stated that human beings commit sins through their thought, speech and action of body. As a result of these sins, they experience several difficulties and undergo untold suffering. The power of Anaghaa protects them from the consequences of their sins. In essence, the Goddess Anaghaa prevents the attitude of sin; emends their pitiable mental condition and coaxes them onto the path of righteousness. This is the fundamental objective of Goddess Anaghaa who protects devotees and reveals to them the right path to reach their goal.

The sole requirement for humans to get relief from their sins is pure knowledge. In the absence of such pure knowledge, no person can avoid evil thoughts and sinful acts. In order to procure such knowledge, all it requires is to seek the protection and guidance of the *Sadguru*, for it is only He who can save humans from the outcome of their sins. As such, Lord Dattatreya is the *Sadguru* for all human beings.

He is the first Guru in the lineage of Gurus; and He is the Guru of Gurus. Seeking the protection of Lord Dattatreya absolves human beings of their sins and eliminates the sinful acts that contribute to their sins.

Every human being constantly is trapped in the continuously revolving giant wheel of ignorance, lust, desires and deeds. In order to achieve liberation from this wheel of *Karma*³³, a factor external to this, shall help the humans to escape.

Lord Dattatreya comes to the rescue of humans who wish to liberate themselves from ignorance. The Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva³⁴ comprise the divine incarnation of Lord Dattatreya. This incarnation is the embodiment of pure knowledge; and the true purport of this *mantra* is the offering of one's heartfelt obeisance to Lord Dattatreya for emancipation.

³¹ Righteous age

³² Great Sages

³³ Law of moral causation

³⁴ Great God or Lord Shiva

It is a well-known fact narrated in Datta Puranam, that the mere chanting of the letters of *Da tta* provides devotees with indescribable prosperity and fortune. Another important feature of this mantra is that it establishes the unity of Godhood in the Supreme Self and *Sadguru*.

The Gist of the Mantra

Lord Dattatreya is the representation of *Para Brahma* and signified by *Omkara*. He is the bestower of will, knowledge and executive capacity upon his devotees. Moreover, He provides them with happiness and contentment, destroys their sins and corrects their sinful behaviour. Let us offer our genuflections to such great *Sadguru* Dattatreya. This is the meaning of this versatile *mantra*.

Resolving Confusion

There is every possibility for a person to entertain doubts and to get confused, as under: If the Param Brahma (*Paramaatma*³⁵) is omnipresent, He should reside within us also. If such be the reality, why should we pray to him? A deeper inquiry could further enhance such doubts and misgivings. The fact of the matter is that we are the representatives and reflections of that Eternity called *Paramaatma*. Hence, it is not necessary to offer our salutations to it. This beginning of retrospection is the basis of all knowledge and the underlying principle of this mantra.

Namaha

To resolve the predicament, the meaning of the word *Namaha* is now taken up for discussion. In language, the word *Namah* falls under the category of *Avyaya*, (the unchangeable). Literal meaning of the term *Avyaya*³⁶ is that which does not perish. Hence, the term *Namah* connotes the immutable. It has neither a beginning nor an end, and it is everlasting.

In Sanskrit grammar, a word that has no gender, number or which cannot be shared is termed as *avyayam*. Therefore, the last word of this mantra *Namaha* is related to the first word *Om*. We have come to know that the *Pranava* is the representation of Param Brahma. Similarly, the word *Namah* is also an *Avyaya*.

Thus, it depicts the characteristic of *avyayam*. Consequently, those who chant this mantra with this constant feeling and without any distraction, undeniably attain the highest exalted stage of wisdom, which is imperishable and unchangeable. This is the spiritual meaning of this mantra.

In language, some *Avyayas* pre-exist naturally, and they are known as *Nipaata*. Other category of *Avyayas*, are the outcome of the conjoining of two or more words with different interpretation. Furthermore, there is another interpretation of this word *Namah* ; derived from the verb *Na Ma – Prahvi Bhave*. This derivative form denotes

³⁵ Universal soul

³⁶ Immutable

bowing down or prostrating respectfully to another person. This act by the devotee should be construed as a deed of veneration, whereby the devotee displays respect towards his favourite deity.

The underlying meaning of this concept is that the *Jeevatma*³⁷ is offering its salutations to the *Paramaatma*. However, the initial doubt remains unresolved; if both these *aatmas* are one and the same, then who salutes whom.

The most suitable answer to this doubt was provided by Sage Sankaracharya Swamy in his inimitable poems.

Satyapi bhedaapagame Naatha tavaaham na mamakeenastwam/

Saamudro hi tarangah Kwachana Samudro na Taarangah//

O! God! I possess the same consciousness that resides in You too. This is the truth. For instance, there are waves generating from the sea and receding to it. The ebb and flow of the waves recedes after sometime. The element in the sea is water. The waves are composed of this very same element - water.

However, they are called the waves of the sea and never the sea of waves. In the same manner, I belong to you and end in you, not otherwise. This is the clarification provided by this great hymn; to disentangle the quagmire in our mind.

Every individual experiences three types of emotions and behavioural patterns according to the level of his spiritual practice, consciousness and the results of his past *karma*. Sometimes, we like to worship God wholeheartedly and perform physical service to Him. At other times, we obtain great pleasure by listening to discourses about God. We convince ourselves that we are successfully performing various activities, due to the will of the Almighty. Sometimes, on account of very great devotion, we attain a super sensuous state, which is replete with vastly enhanced pleasure. At such times, we may lose awareness of our physical body. A religious dictat must be properly comprehended; otherwise the aspirant would be exposed to the danger of developing pride and arrogance.

This aspect of devotion is much better understood by scrutinising a discussion between the Lord Anjaneya and Lord Sri Rama. The great devotee, Sri Anjaneya made a supplication to Lord Rama in the following couplet:

Deha Buddhyaasmi Daasaste Jeevabuddhyaa Tvadamsakaha/
Aatmabuddhya tvamevaham thridha me nischitha mathihi//

O! Lord! When I have conscious of my body, when I presume that this body is mine, I am Thine devoted vassal. When I indulge in philosophical thinking, I recognize myself as the reflection of Your consciousness. By Your grace, when I have attained the highest level of the *Samadhi*³⁸ state after obtaining *kaivalya*³⁹, I recognize that you and I

³⁷ Individual Soul

³⁸ A supernatural state in which the consciousness of the experiencer and the experienced become one

are the same and there is no difference between us. There is no duality in that state; and only oneness is experienced, which is *Advaita*⁴⁰. In this manner, I undergo three stages of devotion.

This is also equally applicable to all of us; and the *Namah* word teaches us the three types of devotion, namely providing bodily service, contemplation of the reflection of the almighty within us and contemplation of oneness in the *Advaita* state. We should deeply inculcate these Characteristic virtues in our mind and be mindful of this distinction. Thus one can redeem the benefits of the Mantra Japa to its fullest extent.

Each and every devotee must always chant this *Maha Mantra*, in order to attain the highest stages of devotion and spirituality. It can be chanted individually or collectively with a group of devotees. Such chanting will bestow excellent results upon the participants. Furthermore, this mantra not only provides positive outcomes to those who chant it, but it also enriches our nation and serves to establish world – wide peace. Till the next Dattatreya Jayanthi, each family must chant this Maha Mantra, for at least 16,00,000 times.

May the mercy and grace of Lord Dattatreya Sadguru descend upon you.

Jaya Guru Datta!

³⁹ Freedom from all bondage

⁴⁰ Absence of duality