

Tamayva vidwān na vibhāya mrityo

(Atharva Veda 10: 8: 44)

The lasting happiness, joy or bliss comes only from God and it is available to everyone free of charge. The mantra emphasizes that without truly knowing God i.e. having deep abiding faith in Him, surrendering to God and following His path through meditation, and finally the Grace of God, one can not find bliss in one's life.(Page-13)

*Ya eeshay mahato mahān tayna grahnāmi
tvām aham mayi grahnāmi tvām aham.*

(Yajur Veda 20 : 32)

A devotee after acknowledging God's Supreme qualities and his/her own limitations states, "Dear God, I accept You as my Supreme Master, I meditate on You and make a conscious home for You in my soul. I seek Your grace to follow the right path so that I may get consciously close to You i.e. I may always be blessed by You."(Page-32)

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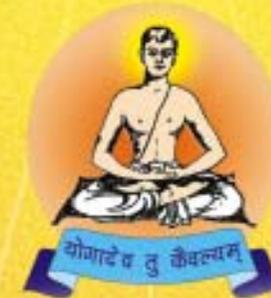
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Eeshwar Stuti Prārthanā Upāsanā

(Worship of God Based on the Vedas)

Sudhir Anand

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Vaanaprasth Saadhak Aashram

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PREFACE

The English word worship according to various dictionaries means the following : 1. reverent honor and homage paid to God or a sacred personage, or to any object regarded as sacred. 2. formal or ceremonious rendering of such honor and homage. The worship rituals for many Hindus consist of one or more of the following: going to the temple, prostrating before the *moorti*-icon of the deity, saying a prayer, meditating, lighting an earthen oil lamp, making an offering of money or sweets, singing devotional songs, listening to a sermon, receiving *Prasäd* (holy food) from the priest, and perhaps ringing the prayer bell. In my observations, Christians especially Catholics practice similar worship rituals by respectfully bowing or making a symbolic cross on their chest before a statue or picture of Christ or Mary (or other saints), singing devotional songs, listening to a sermon, reading the bible, sometimes lighting a votive candle and receiving a communion with consecration of bread.

The worship rituals in Islam are prayer to God five times daily while prostrating towards Mecca, and if possible actually go to Mecca to circle the *Kaaba* and kissing or pointing to the black sacred stone in the eastern corner. In addition, many Muslims bring offerings at the shrines of Muslim Holy-men in India in the same tradition as Hindus bring offerings at the temples or Christians light votive candles in the churches.

Most Hindus, Christians and Muslims believe that by virtue of worship rituals described above they have demonstrated their piety and humility before God. Moreover, in return they may seek God's favor

for fulfillment of some or all of their wishes and desires.

According to the Vedas (the root scripture of all Hindus) and related scriptures, worship of God in contrast to what is stated in the above paragraph is not a ritualistic prayer to God, making an offering in a house of worship, or repeating God's name over and over. Instead worship of God is an opportunity to appreciate and contemplate on the essence of God, His attributes, and how they inspire the person to follow virtue in life so that he/she becomes a better, peaceful and happier person. Further, after one knows and understands an attribute of God, then true worship means incorporating at least a small element of the attribute (where ever possible or applicable) into the fabric of one's life. As God is Benevolent, be benevolent and helpful to others in your life. As God is Just, be just in your life. As God is the Ultimate Truth, be truthful and honest in your life. Also, worship can mean incorporating life practices that do not pollute God's creations such as the earth.

Worship of God based on the Vedic scriptures is called *Eeshwar-stuti-prärthanä-upäsanä*. The word *Eeshwar* means Supreme Master of all of the spiritual and physical wealth of the universe; *stuti* implies appreciating and understanding the attributes of God; *prärthanä* is prayer to God to be our guide and adopting virtuous practices in life; and *upäsanä* literally means getting close to God through the practice of spiritual yoga (i.e. meditation).

The purpose of this short book is help the reader understand in some depth various aspects of *Eeshwar-stuti-prärthanä-upäsanä* based on the Vedic teachings. Translation of several Veda mantras is included in the text to validate the statements being made. The book is divided into two sections. The first section introduces the reader to the basic beliefs of the Vedic dharma to help him/her acquire a background to better understand the subsequent discussion in the second section on *Eeshwar-stuti-prärthanä-upäsanä*. A brief discussion of select aspects of Patanjali's *Yog Darshanam* is included at the end of this booklet as an appendix.

This book is dedicated to honor Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati, who about 140 years ago, re-introduced in India, the true message of the Vedas and other Vedic scriptures by translating them in simple language. He refocused Indians to the understanding of One God as described in the Vedas and Upanishads and the appropriate way to worship God. He also personally spent his life spreading this message.

This book is also dedicated to Swami Satyapati Parivrajak and Acharya Gyaneswararya. Swami Satyapati Parivrajak was born to a Muslim family but in his youth earnestly started his search for truth. After reading Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati's works and learning Vedas and related scriptures decided to devote his whole life to promote God, Vedas and Patanjali's spiritual yoga. Swami Satyapati Parivrajak has published several books on yoga and founded Darshan Yog Mahavidyalaya for training of students and aspirants. Acharya Gyaneswararya Ji is now Acharya (Director) of Darshan Yog Mahavidyalaya and is continuing to promote God, Vedas and Patanjali's spiritual yoga in the tradition of Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Satyapati Parivrajak. He is also the author of several books on yoga and worship of God.

Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Satyapati Parivrajak and Acharya Gyaneswararya's books (in Hindi language) and their exemplary lives to promote God, Vedas and true yoga have inspired me to write this book in English for readers who are unfamiliar with the Hindi language. I want to give my deep thanks to Acharya Gyaneswararya Ji for encouraging me to write this short book and for publishing it. I also want to give my deep thanks to my brother Subodh Anand for his generous help in critiquing the book and giving useful suggestions.

What qualifies me (Sudhir Anand) as an author on *Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsanā*? Professionally I am a pediatrician and a kidney specialist for children and currently a Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at David Geffen School of Medicine, at University of California at Los

Angeles (UCLA) and Vice-Chair of Pediatrics at Harbor/UCLA Medical Center, in Torrance, California. My interest in the Vedic Dharma began when I was a young child. My mother, the late Shrimati Sushila Anand completed the equivalent of Master level Sanskrit education in the early 1930's. She memorized most of the Yajur Veda and recited Veda mantras daily. Thanks to her, by my adolescent years I had memorized a little over 100 Veda mantras along with their meanings and in addition knew many other mantras. During my years at medical college I spent part of my summer vacations at a *Gurukul* in Jhajjar, Haryana, India. I also had the good fortune of learning from eminent Vedic scholars Pandit Harisharan Sidhantalankar Ji and Swami Satyam Ji.

I came to the USA in 1966 for further medical training and subsequently decided to settle in the United States. During the past 18 years my interest in Vedas and related scriptures has been rekindled. In year 2000 I wrote my first book *The Essence of the Hindu Religion: with an introduction to Vedas and Yoga*, which is in its third printing. The book is based on the Vedas and other Vedic Scriptures and is written in plain English. The book has tried to make the essential beliefs about the Vedic Hindu religion understandable to the reader so that they do not get lost in the trivia. In year 2009 I wrote a second book, *Who is God? Does God have Shape or Form?* This latter book discusses the Attributes of God based on the Vedas and compares and contrasts them with those described in the Bible, Quran and later Hindu scriptures (e.g. Puranas and Bhagvad Geeta). Small segments of the present book have been reproduced from these two books by permission of the publisher.



Basic Beliefs of the Vedic Dharma

The fundamental beliefs in the Vedic Dharma are discussed briefly here to help the reader better understand the worship of God that will be described in the next section. **According to Vedas there are three things that are eternal: God, the Soul and Prakriti (physical matter in the subatomic state)**¹ (Rig Veda 1: 164: 20, 22 and 44, 10: 82: 7, Yajur Veda 40: 1, 40: 15, Atharva Veda 4: 35: 1, 10: 8: 2-4, Shvetashvatra Upanishad 1: 10). God is the *agentive* cause for the creation of the universe, prakriti is the *material* cause of universe, and souls are the *consumers* for whose benefit the universe is created. God is the Creator, the Supreme Spirit or Consciousness, and the Eternal Bliss. On the other hand prakriti, while eternal, by itself is inert. Though, the soul is eternal and conscious (aware), it usually lacks bliss.

The soul has a choice, it can aim towards reaching God-the Eternal Truth, the Supreme Consciousness and the Supreme Bliss and it-self acquire bliss, or it can be lost in the distractions of prakriti (universe) and remain unfulfilled and lacking in joy.

The description of God, soul and prakriti may be summarized as

1. Please note that this belief in three eternal is based on the Vedas and Upanishads is also called *Traitvad* (three eternal) and in many ways is quite different than the commonly held views of the Hindu Religion based upon the Purana's and/or Vedanta's *advaita*-monism beliefs which state that Brahman-God and jiva-the soul are identical and prakriti the physical matter is maya-an illusion.

follows :

God is Sat-Chit-Änand (Sachidänand) :

Sat = Eternally Exists, Eternal Truth

Chit = Supreme Consciousness

Änand = Supreme Bliss

Soul is Sat-Chit :

Sat = Eternally Exists

Chit = Conscious, aware

— Prakriti is only Sat

Sat = Eternally Exists

GOD

There is but One God. God alone is Almighty, the Supreme Power of the universe. God is the Universal Protector and Benefactor. God is everywhere. God is all-powerful and God knows everything: God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. God is the Source of all knowledge that is known by truth. God is Supreme Bliss and the Source of all bliss. God is the Ultimate Judge who judges us and based upon our karma (deeds) gives appropriate awards. God is Perfection and devoid of any deficiencies. God, however, is also far more than what can be described by words alone and must be experienced within the soul through the practice of spiritual yoga.

People refer to God by different names: Based on the Vedic scriptures Hindus call God *OM*, *Brahman* and by many other names; Jews refer to God as *Yahweh* and *Adonai*; Christians use the words *God* and *Lord* and Muslims the word *Allah* and *Khuda* and all religions have ascribed similar and different attributes to God. In the Vedas there are hundreds of mantras which describe various attributes of God as well as hundreds of names of God based on His various attributes.

The attributes of God are described below in considerable detail to help the reader learn who the devotee is worshipping. Who is Eeshwar whose stuti-prarthänä-upäsanä this book is describing? The following two mantras summarize attributes of God

succinctly (for details on the attributes and names of God see the following two books titled *Satyartha Prakash* by Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati and *Who is God?* by Sudhir Anand):

Mantra #1: Omnipresent God is Pure Radiance and has no Shape or Form

*Sa paryagät shukram akäyam avarnam
asnäviram shudham apäviddham.*

*—Kavirmaneeshee paribhuh svayambhuh
yähätathyatoarthän
vyadadhät shäshvatibhyah samäbhyah.*

(Yajur Veda 40: 8)

<i>Sa paryagät</i> God, is located everywhere,	<i>shukram</i> is Pure Radiance, Supreme Light	<i>akäyam</i> is bodiless, without form or shape
<i>avarnam</i> is without any bodily vulnerability, like hunger and disease	<i>asnäviram</i> is devoid of any nerves or sinews, is not made of flesh	<i>shudham</i> is completely pure and holy
<i>apäviddham</i> is untouched by sin or evil.	<i>Kavir</i> God is Omniscient and knows the minutest details of everything,	<i>maneeshee</i> Wisest, Seer, Most knowledgeable Storehouse of knowledge
<i>paribhuh</i> transcends time,	<i>swayambhuh</i> Self-existent, never born nor dies,	
<i>shäshvatibhyah</i>	<i>vyadadhät</i>	

since eternity	has been distributing, providing	
<i>yähätathyato</i> appropriate, based on our deeds	<i>arthän</i> all provisions	<i>samäbhyah</i> for all beings.

In this mantra God is described as the Total Master of the Universe. Attributes of God that are evident in this mantra are as follows :

- **God is everywhere; God is omnipresent; it is impossible to hide oneself or one's actions from God.**
- **God is Pure Radiance, the Supreme Light that enlightens our soul. God is the Source of all enlightenment and knowledge that is known through truth.** It is only by knowing God that one can achieve enlightenment and true wisdom in life.
- **God has no physical body; God is not flesh and blood. God has no bodily vulnerabilities such as hunger and disease. Further, God is neither masculine nor feminine but simply God.** Of course, it is possible to address God as either Father or Mother, and He or She, but this does not make God either male or female. **God is devoid of shape and form. God does not exist in any anthro-pomorphic form; at best, He can only be symbolically described in such form. Therefore, it is not possible to depict God in a painting, idol, icon or a statue because God is Supreme Consciousness and not a physical entity.**
- **God is neither ever born nor will ever die.** The Vedas disagree with the concept of God being incarnated in human form or directly fathering a child. Although, most Hindus believe that God was born as Rama and Krishna, just as Christians believe Jesus is God. The Sanskrit word for God's incarnation is *Avatar*. Avatar means something that descends from heaven. God being omnipresent, is already present everywhere, therefore,

how can he descend from anywhere? Moreover, **if God were to incarnate or father a child, what percentage (fraction) of Him incarnates and what fraction is left behind?** Everything that is born must die and end, but as stated above God is eternal and has neither a beginning nor an end.

- **God transcends time. God always has been and always will be.** God existed before time and before eternity and will exist after the end of time and beyond eternity.
- **God knows everything; God is omniscient.** God the Seer has the ultimate vision and knows the smallest details about everything that exists, seen or unseen.
- **God is pure and holy, thus devoid of any evil and any sin.** It is only by following God's path that one can overcome evil and find holiness in one's own life. Pilgrimages to "Sacred or holy places" or shrines are only important in that they remind a person about God and help him/her to find God, otherwise pilgrimages are tantamount to sightseeing of the historic (or legendary) holy places of the different faiths. Bathing in the river Gangä (Ganges), being sprinkled with holy water in a Hindu temple, being baptized with holy water in a Christian church, or going to Mecca and circling *Kaaba* do not provide salvation; salvation is only found by good deeds and devotion to God.
- **God alone is the Ultimate Master and Karmaphaldätä-Final Judge in the Universe.** He possesses all the riches in the universe and distributes them appropriately to all depending upon the past and present *karmas*-deeds. God alone is omnipotent.
- **God is the Ultimate Benefactor and Provider.** God alone nurtures and cares for the earth and the universe. God provides for the needs of all living things whether man, bird, animal or other creature. Therefore, God will always provide for our needs if we make the necessary effort.
- **Therefore, it is essential that we pray only to God the**

Ultimate Reality and the Supreme Consciousness and no one else.

Manta #2: God is Embodiment of Bliss, Wisdom, Virtue and Perfection

***Akämo dheero amritah swayambhuh
rassayn tripto na kutashchnonah.***

***Tamayva vidwän na vibhäya mriityo ätmänam
dheeram ajaram yuvänam.***

(Atharva Veda 10: 8: 44)

<i>Akämo</i> God is without any desires	<i>dheero</i> and is Embodiement of wisdom and virtue,	<i>amritah</i> Immortal Supreme Bliss,
<i>swayambhuh</i>	<i>rassayn tripto</i>	<i>na</i>

kutashchnonah.

Self-existent, never born never dies,	saturated with bliss, Supreme Bliss,	has no deficiencies i.e. is Embodiment of Perfection.
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<i>Tamayva vidwän ätmänam</i> A person who knows God, the Supreme Soul,	<i>dheeram</i> God, all knowing Supreme Virtue,	<i>ajaram</i> God, who never ages or withers,
<i>yuvänam</i>	<i>na vibhäya mriityo.</i>	

God, who like youth is always full of vitality,	that person has no fears especially fear of death.
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In this mantra God is described as all knowing and the Source of Ultimate Wisdom and Virtue. Also, God is eternal, unaging, and

unchanging. God is self-existent, He is never born and never dies for He is immortal. He always has been and always will be. God unlike humans does not age or wither, or get tired; like youth God is full of vitality. God has no deficiencies or shortcomings of any kind. He is **Ultimate Perfection**. Finally, **God is Supreme Bliss** and by only knowing Him, one loses all fears in life especially the fear of death and finds bliss in one's own life.

All human beings want happiness and joy (*sukham*) and nobody wants miseries or fears (*dukham*) especially fear of death, even though we all know, try as we may, one day we will die. Where do human beings look for happiness (*sukham*)? They seek it in worldly goods and pleasures, as well as in wealth. The pleasures of the worldly goods, however, are usually short lived and their loss leads to unhappiness (*dukham*). Even the continued presence of worldly goods or pleasures does not give lasting happiness and people look for something new and more exciting to renew their happiness. If worldly goods could give lasting happiness, the super-wealthy of the world would have lasting happiness or joy. However, most super-wealthy do not have lasting contentment or happiness in life.

The lasting happiness, joy or bliss comes only from God and it is available to everyone free of charge. The mantra emphasizes that without truly knowing God i.e. having deep abiding faith in Him, surrendering to God and following His path through meditation, and finally the Grace of God, one can not find bliss in one's life. Attainment of God and such pure bliss removes all the fears of a person, especially the fear of death because when one has God's constant companionship and bliss, the question of fear becomes superfluous.

God has no deficiencies, **He is Perfection**. God's attributes such as eternity, immortality, agelessness, can only occur in an entity that is perfect. **People from various faiths often say that they pray to please God; alternately others state that they pray so that God would be pleased with them. Is God a person like human beings,**

who is at times happy and at other times unhappy? Also, is a fraction of God happy with a few persons and a different fraction unhappy with other persons simultaneously? **Vedas say that God is always full of bliss and perfection. Happiness and unhappiness are characteristics of humans and not of God.**

Many preachers (belonging to all faiths) have cajoled their parishioners by stating, "If you do such and such, God will get angry with you and punish you and at times even add that God will punish your children and progeny." **Anger is a human emotion not God's emotion. God is beyond emotion. God does not get angry. God is a loving benevolent God and not a vengeful tyrant. In God's view there are no Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jews or Buddhists; instead we are all human beings and He loves all of us. God is not prejudiced and does not favor one religious or racial group over the other despite the contrary claims of various religions.** God, being a Perfect Judge, based upon our karma gives us appropriate rewards, or punishments that we may characterize as misery or God's anger. An advanced devotee on the other hand accepts whatever miseries come his/her way with joy recognizing that finally he/she is getting over the results (*bhoga*-bondage) of previous bad karmas, and therefore, based on the present good karmas he/she is getting closer to God. **This is true surrender to God, when one accepts what comes in life with equanimity and without a hint of complaint.**

The purpose of spiritual yoga is to make mind tranquil, whereby the soul is not distracted by the senses or the mind and becomes consciously aware of God (Who being inside the soul is the closest entity to the soul but without us usually being aware), and gets closer and closer to God. **It is only by knowing God, the Ultimate Source of wisdom, we can aim at gaining perfection and greater harmony in our lives.**

Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati summarized the attributes of God succinctly in the first two principles of Arya Samaj and they are as follows

:

The first principle of Arya Samaj states :

God is the primordial root source of all true knowledge and all things that are known by that knowledge. We human beings think that knowledge is a purview of human beings because it is one of the main characteristic which differentiates us from animals or other living forms. However, Vedas state that God is the source of all true knowledge (Yajur Veda 7: 15). **He creates the universe by His eternal rules (Rig Veda 10: 190: 1-3), man merely discovers some aspects of those eternal rules and is capable of utilizing them in his creations in a limited manner.** When one advances in yoga, one develops an immense ability to concentrate and acquire knowledge directly from God, knowledge that sprouts from within the soul.

The second principle of Arya Samaj states :

God is *Sat-chit-änand-swaroop* (Personification of Eternal Existence and Truth, Supreme Consciousness, and Supreme Bliss), *niräkär* (He has no shape or form), *sarvashaktimän* (Almighty, Omnipotent), *nyäyakäri* (Ultimate Judge, Just), *dayälu* (Kind and Benevolent), *ajanmä* (never born), *anant* (never ends, Infinite), *nirvikär* (has no deficiencies, unchangeable), *anädi* (without beginning), *anupam* (incomparable, there is no other entity like Him), *sarvädhär* (Sustainer and support of all), *sarveshwara* (Master or Lord of all), *sarvavyäpak* (Omnipresent), *sarva-antaryämi* (Omniscient who resides inside everything including the soul and knows what is going on there), *ajjar* (One who does not age or wither), *amar* (Immortal, Imperishable), *abhaya* (Who has no fears and who alone can remove all our fears), *nitya* (Unchangeable Reality, Eternal), *pavitra* (Holiest), and *srishtikartä* (Creator of the universe). **To HIM alone prayer, worship, and meditation are due.**

Sat-chit-änand-swaroop : God is the Personification of Eternal Existence and Truth, Supreme Consciousness and Supreme Bliss. As stated earlier on page # 7, God, souls and prakriti (physical matter), all are eternal, however, God alone can provide bliss to the souls because he is the Source of all bliss (see page # 13, mantra # 2 above).

Niräkär : God has no shape or form. He is not made of flesh or sinew (see page # 10, mantra # 1 above). **Therefore, God cannot**

be represented by a *Pratima* (idol, icon or a picture) Yajur Veda 32:3. In contrast to the Vedas, God in the Abrahamic scriptures and later Hindu scriptures (e.g. *Purānas*) clearly is anthropomorphic who has a human-like figure and lives in and rules the universe from heaven. The lack of shape or form makes God appear rather abstract to many human beings, and this has led them to represent God with various types of images. However, any image we make, at best will contain what we want to represent in God and invariably limit the Infinite.

Therefore, the author of this book strongly believes that **to worship God by meditating on attributes of God which He does not even possess is illogical and will not get us close to God. Therefore, one must meditate on attributes which God has and directly pray to the Almighty God even if He may initially appear distant and abstract rather than limit God and make artificial images of Him.** With the pursuit of truth, faith, devotion, surrender and finally grace of God, one would find God within oneself in the soul. (See a gem of a booklet titled *Niräkär Eeshwar Ki Upāsana* by Acharya Gyaneshwararya which succinctly discusses how to worship God who has no shape or form.)

Sarvashaktimän : God is Omnipotent. God alone is Almighty the Most Powerful One. He alone creates, maintains and causes dissolution of the universe. **In most religions, the omnipotence of God is usually described as, ‘God can do whatever He wants to, desires or feels like doing’.** This, however, according to the Vedas is not a correct interpretation of the omnipotence of God. Who in the universe has desires? We, as human beings desire various things in life because we lack them or want them (or at least we think we lack many things whether we need them or not).

God, however, is considered to be the Master of all riches and Perfection-complete in every possible manner. Therefore, God does not desire in the manner we human beings do, He already has everything. According to the Vedas and Upanishads God has *EEKSHAN* which means He in His kindness offers all souls the opportunity to

progress in life and get closer to Him and find bliss.

Moreover, God cannot do everything. God cannot make another God. God in the Vedas is called **akshara-Imperishable or Indivisible** i.e. God is the Eternal Unchangeable Ultimate Reality. Thus, God who is Eternal cannot create another God who is, simultaneously, both eternal as well as without prior existence. Also, if one were to test God's omnipotence by asking God to create a universe where He is not present and whose dissolution He cannot accomplish, He would lose His omnipresence as well as omnipotence as the creator and the dissolutioner.

God cannot make $2 + 2 = 5$ because this would be against the rules of arithmetic. God cannot print the book you are reading, nor make the machine by which it was printed. These are works of humans. Man, however, cannot create the raw materials (*prakriti* see pages # 27) of which the book or the machines are made; we can utilize prakriti in the present form only because it has been activated by God.

In the Vedas God is called Perfection and Vratpatay-Masterkeeper of vows, even He abides by His rules. God does not perform 'miracles' and change His own attributes and rules to convince the righteous of His omnipotence. The best definition of God's Omnipotence that I have found has been given by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in his books *Satyarth Prakash* and *Poona Lectures*. He states that **God's omnipotence implies that God is perfectly capable of doing His work alone e.g. creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe, rewarding or punishing individual souls perfectly based upon their karma; in such tasks God does not need others' help in completing them because God is self-sufficient.**

Nyayakäri : God is the Ultimate Judge who is always just. According to the Vedas God's justice is perfect in every manner. He judges us by our deeds (karma) and the intent of those deeds. **God gives us exactly what we deserve, no more and no less. He cannot be bribed.** Opposing warring groups often invoke God's help for their side. God, however, only helps just causes and truth (Rig Veda 10: 42: 4, Atharva Veda 20: 89: 4).

Dayälu : God is Kind and merciful. He loves everybody. In God's universe there is a place for everybody. God is not prejudiced and he does not discriminate. He does not kick any one out of the universe, from the most virtuous to the sinner. **God in his immense kindness is always giving us new opportunities to move closer to Him and find bliss.** He gives new opportunity even to the sinner, to change him/herself on to the right path. There is always an opportunity for personal improvement and redemption. God's other kindnesses are in the form of sunshine, air, water etc. He gives these things to us free of charge. All of the naturally beautiful things in the world or the universe e.g. the snow covered high mountains, the vast oceans, the moon, the stars are all God's creations and they remind us of God and His infinite power as well as of our infinitesimal power (Rig Veda 10: 121: 4, Yajur Veda 25: 12).

Ajanmä : He is never born. Vedas strongly disagree with the concept of God incarnating in human or other forms (Rig Veda 7: 35: 13) or directly fathering children. Although, most Hindus believe that God was born as Rama and Krishna, just the way Christians believe God directly fathered Jesus. Everything that is born must die and end, but as stated below God is eternal and has no birth or beginning whereby He also has no end (see mantra #1 above).

Anant : God has no end. He is infinite. Even after the dissolution of manifest universe-*pralaya* (see page # 27) God remains as before unchanged.

Nirvikär : God has no deficiencies-He is Perfection (Poornam) (Atharva Veda 10: 8: 29). **He does not have any body vulnerabilities** (see mantras # 1 and # 2 above). Therefore, God does not get hungry, cold or ill (unlike humans beings). Hence, the rituals of feeding sweetmeats to the deities (idols of God), or offering them money in a temple are ludicrous. Does God who is Master of all riches of the universe and feeds the whole world needs to be fed by devotees or needs their offering of money? These rituals are the livelihood of temple priests who often fool the public with all kinds of wild claims on behalf of God, but otherwise the rituals defy common sense and logic. Similarly, God being perfect does not become angry, sad or happy like we humans do (see

mantra # 2 above).

Therefore, the ritual of sacrificing of an innocent lamb in the Abrahamic religions to please God is equally ludicrous. Is one to believe that God, the personification of kindness (see above), becomes happy with the cruel ritual? If the offering or the sacrifice is a gesture of humility before God and a commitment to follow Him and a path of virtue, then one should offer and sacrifice one's own life in the service of God for the welfare of others and not killing of others in the name God because some paragraph states that in somebody's holy book. Moreover, if the intent of the offering or sacrifice is to bribe God or barter with God for something in return, then it is futile and doomed to failure. God judges us for our deeds as well as for the intent of the deeds and not superficial gestures.

Anādi : God has no beginning-He has always been and always will be. He is eternal.

Anupam : God is incomparable. There is no other entity like Him. God is unique. As stated above (page # 8) words alone cannot adequately describe Him because He is beyond words. He must be experienced by the soul.

Sarvadhār : He sustains and supports everything in the universe. He alone maintains order in the vast universe. God provides for the needs of all living things whether man, bird, animal or other creature. God will, therefore, always provide for our needs if we have faith and make the necessary effort.

Sarveshwara : Master of all physical and spiritual wealth of the universe (also see page # 11 and 29).

Sarvavyāpak : Who is present everywhere i.e. Omnipresent (also see page # 11 and 29).

Sarva-antaryāmi: Who resides inside everything including the soul and knows what goes on there (Rig Veda 8: 101: 14, Atharva Veda 10: 8: 13, Mundakopaniṣad 3: 1: 5). **God, residing inside the soul, is everybody's most intimate companion-a personal God, looking after each and every individual's welfare.** God as the inner voice

to our soul is constantly giving us enlightenment and inspiration to lead us on the correct path and to do the right thing. **The inner joy and inspiration that we feel when we do the right thing comes from God.** When we follow the right path, despite pressures and temptations to do otherwise, we will hear God's voice (our inner voice) speak to us and inspire us. Similarly, when we think evil thoughts or plan to do something wrong (lying, stealing, hate) God creates doubt, fear, shame or an aversion in us toward such thoughts and behavior. The reason people fail to follow the right course and commit wrong or sometimes even heinous acts is that they have ceased listening to God's voice.

Ajar : He does not age or wither because he is timeless and beyond time.

Amar : He is immortal. Anything that is born must die. Because God is eternal He is neither born nor dies.

Abhay : God has no fears that limit Him in any manner in performing His tasks. It is only by knowing God that all our fears are removed especially the fear of death, the ultimate fear. When the fear of death is removed one is not afraid to follow the path of virtue irrespective of the obstacles along the way.

Nitya : God is unchangeable Reality or Constant. He is always Blissful. God does not go through mood swings, develop anger or become emotional. These are human characteristics not of God. One can always count on God and His justice.

Pavitra : God is Pure and Holy thus devoid of any evil and any sin. It is only by following God's path that one can overcome evil and find holiness in one's own life. Pilgrimages to "Sacred or holy places" or shrines are only important in that they remind a person about God and help him/her to find God.

Srishti Kartā : God is the Creator of the universe and He does not need others help to create the universe. God also maintains the universe and when universe's current cycle is completed He would destroy it back to its primal state. (See page # 27 for details).

SOUL

All living things have souls. Soul is the principle of life. It is the possession of a soul that differentiates living things from inanimate objects or physical matter. While there is only one God, there are many souls. **Like God, the soul is eternal and has conscious energy, but its energy is very limited when compared to God. A major difference between God and the soul is that only God is Supreme Bliss; souls usually have no or minimal bliss.** Also, where as God is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent (Yajur Veda 40: 1 and 8), the soul's similar capabilities are quite limited. Whereas God is All-Knowing-*Sarvajna* the soul is *alpagna*-limited knowledge. Whereas God is Omnipresent the soul at any given time is *ekdeshi*-exists in one place only. Whereas God is the Creator of the universe, the soul's capability to utilize prakriti-physical matter to create material things is quite limited.

Despite the limitations of the soul described above, the individual soul can be enlightened by living according to dharma, practicing spiritual yoga and being devoted to God. This will gradually kindle its dormant potentials and through the grace of God allow it to ultimately experience bliss-attain *moksha* (see below). **Soul like God is also innately pure in the state of moksha**, however, when the soul acquires a physical body and takes a birth it acquires other characteristics also such as happiness, unhappiness, jealousy, attachments to others. According to

Nyāya Darshan souls have the following six characteristics :

***Ichchhä dvesh prayatna
sukha dukha jñāna ätmeno lingamiti.***

(Nyāya Darshan 1: 1: 10)

<i>Ätmeno lingamiti</i>	<i>ichchhä</i>	<i>dvesh</i>	<i>prayatna</i>
The characteristics of the souls are	desires, wishes,	jealousy, covetness,	effort, karma,
<i>sukha</i>	<i>dukha</i>	<i>jñāna.</i>	
happiness,	unhappiness, and misery,	knowledge, awareness.	

In humans, the soul is the ultimate center of all learning (thought and knowledge); desires and feelings (jealousy, happiness, suffering); and karma (actions or deeds). Only human souls are considered to have free will and hence are responsible for their actions (see below under karma).

Karma¹ (pronounced kurm): **Karma means deed and every deed has consequences.** Because human beings have free will they may perform any karma they choose, however, the judgement as to rewards or outcome of karma is solely in the hands of God. As a judge of our actions, God in the Vedic scriptures is called *Aryamä* or *Karmphaldätä*. Good karma secures good rewards and bad karma produces misery. It is said, “As you sow, so shall you reap.” Or “What goes around comes around.” Both are expressions of the same truth. Sometimes the rewards of karma are almost instant: Putting your hand into a flame will yield almost immediate results. In other cases, however, the results may be delayed, perhaps even for a very long time.

The rewards of karmas are called *bhoga* not karma and they may occur in this life or future lives. At times, it may seem that a person

1. The word karma implies **action** not fate. However, the word is often misused in the West in statements such as “This is my Karma” implying “this is my fate.” Fate is the result (fruit) of the past Karma. The good or bad results of previous karmas are called *bhoga* not karma. All new karma is in the present and future.

who performs good deeds is suffering (this is *bhoga*-the product of previous bad karma), while a person committing sinful acts may appear to be doing well or to be happy (this is *bhoga*-because of past good karma). However, a person’s current bad deeds will not remain unpunished forever. The consequences of his/her actions will eventually take effect. Ultimately all karmas have good or bad results depending on the nature of the act. The accumulation of good deeds brings us closer to God, peace and bliss both in this life and in the next in the form of rebirth on a higher spiritual plane of existence.

The accrual of bad karma produces misery in this life and the next in that one will emerge as a lower life form, such as an animal or plant where one has no free will and is bearing consequences of previous bad karma. Animals and plants are living but a life of bondage-*bhoga*, only bearing the consequences of previous bad karma. Once, the *bhogas*-result of previous bad karmas are exhausted God will return one to the human form and give the person another chance to perform new karma and seek bliss.

This cycle of birth, death and rebirth will continue until the soul has attained *moksha* the infinite bliss (see below). The joining of the soul with a physical body is birth, and the separation from the body is death. The physical body grows and perishes, the soul, however, is eternal. The soul comes and goes i.e. it changes physical bodies, but it has always existed, it was never born and never dies (Yajur Veda 40: 15, Kathopanishad 2: 18, Geeta 2: 20-25).

Moksha (pronounced Moksh): **Moksha means that the soul attains God and is liberated from the cycle of rebirth for a very prolonged time but not eternally.** In moksha the soul experiences infinite bliss and deep enlightenment. According to the Vedas and Upanishads after the death of the physical body, almost all souls are reborn as a human being or some other life form, however, a select few are liberated and attain moksha. In the state of moksha, the soul is always consciously aware of God who is *Änandswaroop* (Supreme Bliss), and *Jñänswaroop* (True Knowledge). The soul, in moksha in the company of God, enjoys

infinite bliss, deep enlightenment and God's benevolence. **The primary and absolute goal of all souls is to eventually attain *moksha* and also help others strive for the same.**

The phrase 'the soul attaining God' as used throughout this book means that super-conscious state where the individual soul is one to One with God-the Supreme Soul in a state of bliss and enlightenment. The soul attains God but does not merge with God nor becomes God and always remains a separate entity. The relationship of the soul and God in this stage is compared to that of an iron ball superheated in the fire to a red hot/golden yellow glow and the fire itself, respectively. The iron ball, looking like a fire ball, is one with the flame but still is an iron ball and not the fire itself. **This is the state of perfection of soul. The soul attains this state of bliss and enlightenment both in *moksha* as well as during life** (living in physical body) in the state of *asamprajnāta samādhi* the highest state spiritual yoga: a superconscious state of meditation where God is eventually revealed and the soul is consciously aware of God.

The means for attaining *moksha* is to live according to dharma (see below), practice meditation with faith and devotion (also, see page # 42 under *upasana*), further one's spiritual knowledge and do selfless deeds. Together these things constitute the path of spiritual yoga-*upasana*. Over time, when these practices become so intense that a person totally surrenders to God and devotes his or her life to seeking God and helping others and not doing any deeds for personal gratification, then the person's soul is liberated, or *moksha* is attained. As stated above, the soul attains God but does not merge with God or become God, but remains a separate entity and after a very long time will again be born as a spiritually endowed human being, such as rishis (sages, holy seers, or wise men). Having been born again though, the soul is nevertheless subject to all the rules and conditions that apply to all human beings.

Dharma (pronounced dhurm): The word dharma is often translated in English as religion but actually **refers to a moral or virtuous way of living. This path requires adherence to moral principles in all**

aspects of one's life and includes a devotion to truth in thought, word and deed as well as love and compassion for other beings.

It involves the practice of truth, forgiveness, cultivation of inner and outer purity, directing one's mind and senses towards virtuous deeds and away from sin, not coveting those things that belong to others, reducing attachments to worldly things, controlling anger, and completing all actions in a thoughtful and patient manner (Manusmriti 6: 92). In addition, it is not enough to be content with one's own self-improvement; one must be generous and help others to improve their lives too. The dharma principles are based on teachings found in the Vedas and other related scriptures.



PRAKRITI (Physical Matter)

Prakriti (pronounced *prukriti*) means **physical matter**. Physical matter is also eternal but it is neither conscious nor bestows bliss because **it is innately inert**. From time to time, physical matter is either activated and transformed by God's creative power into the manifest universe as we know it (*srishti*), or inactivated and dissolved (*pralaya*) back into its dormant primal state (Rig Veda 10: 190: 1-3). A single cycle of activation and dissolution of the universe is referred to as Brahma's (God's) One Day. Such cycles of creation and dissolution go on forever in an infinite series of universes. The energy needed for the constant motion of the universe (movement of the stars and galaxies as well as the movement of water and wind on the earth) is not spontaneous but was provided by God at the beginning of each creation (the equivalent of *Big Bang*). **God is the Master Architect and the Power that maintains order in the universe.**

All nonliving objects, as well as physical bodies of all living things, are composed of *prakriti* i.e. matter, the material cause of the universe. **Without the soul, however, our physical body is inert.** Once the soul leaves at a person's death, the physical body made from matter begins to disintegrate. Metaphorically, the physical body arose from the ashes (physical matter) and will end as ashes (either by cremation or burial).

As to the question why God created the universe is that God provides a place for the souls to move closer to Him and eventually attain bliss. It is only in the context of the universe (*prakriti*) that a person can live and grow and learn right from wrong.

Karma and the exercise of free will are only possible within the setting of the universe. Hence, prakriti is essential; however, the soul must learn to utilize the resources of the universe wisely so that the soul moves towards God and does not get lost amid the distractions of the material world. God is perfection, He does not need the universe for Himself, but the universe is a necessity for the souls, the consumers of prakriti. This is the only reason for God's periodic creation of the manifest universe. Suggestions that God created the universe for personal pleasure (because He was bored) or for an audience of human beings, angels or elders seem illogical and amusing.

Relationship of God, Souls and Prakriti

The following four mantras from the Vedas explain the relationship of God, souls and prakriti in a succinct manner.

*Eeshä väsyamidam sarvam
yadkincha jagatyäm jagat.
Tayna tyaktayna bhunjeethä mä
gridhah kasya swidhanam.*

(Yajur Veda 40 : 1)

Human beings, listen!

<i>Eeshä</i>	<i>väsyam</i>	<i>idam</i>	<i>sarvam</i>
God, the Master	dwells	here around	everywhere,
of all riches		you	
in the universe			

yadkincha
in every spot you
can imagine,

Tayna
Therefore, you should

jagatyäm jagat
in every region of this vast
and changing universe.

tyaktayna
without attachment or
craving (share with others),

bhunjeethä

enjoy the riches
which God has
given you and
which you have
earned by your
actions.

mä gridhah

do not be greedy
and do not covet

kasya

swidhanam
those riches
which belong
to others.

This Veda mantra is a message to various human beings i.e. individual souls to always remember that **Eesha-God, the Supreme Master is present everywhere in the vast universe which is made of prakriti.** When a person develops a deep inner faith that God is present throughout the universe including inside one's soul as his/her closest companion, and that God protects and guides him/her (through the inner voice of the soul), **then he/she will never feel alone. This creates a sense of inner security and integrity within the person. A person with this belief becomes fearless in the pursuit of truth and does not sway from the correct path. Such a person always seeks God's approval rather than that of other people.**

The other meaning of the word *Eesha* in this mantra is that God is the Master of the entire spiritual and the physical (material) wealth in the universe i.e. God is the Master of abundance. All wealth belongs ultimately to God. **God is the Universal Benefactor and Protector.** Only God can fulfill both our physical and spiritual needs. We need to ask only God for His blessings and do not need to ask others.

The last three words of the first line of this mantra (*yadkincha jagatyam jagat*) make it clear that the omnipresence of God refers to every last place in the universe (prakriti), whether or not it can be imagined. It also reminds us that **God's universe is in constant motion and undergoing continuous change. We too, then, must remain active and forever try to improve ourselves.** This mantra encourages us to always make the effort and to try to do good deeds that are explained in the second line of this mantra.

The second line of this mantra counsels us, as individual souls, to live, prosper and enjoy the things of this physical world (prakriti) without being attached to them. It is useless to covet earthly riches since you will not be able to take them with you when you die; only the results of your deeds (karma) will accompany you. Above all, we are told not to be greedy and desire those things that belong to others. Instead, we should be content with those things that we have earned through our honest labor. In the Vedas greed is considered to be one of the root causes of unhappiness and misery in life. We are also counseled to share what we have with others, to **be generous and giving**, which in contrast to greed, brings peace and happiness in life. We are only stewards of those things that are given to us on earth since all things really belong solely to God. Our goal is to attain God and find bliss and not to get enmeshed in transitory worldly pleasures and riches.

Dvä suparnä sayujä sakhäyä

samänam vraksham pari shsvajätay.

Tyoh anyah pippalam swädu ati

anashnan anyah abhi chäksheeti.

(Rig Veda 1: 164: 20)

Dvä suparnä

Two beautiful
birds

sayujä sakhäyä

who are intimate
friends,
i.e. companions

pari shsvajätay

are sitting
intimately close
to each other

*samänam
vraksham.*

on the same tree.

Tayoh anyah

Among them, one

*pippalam
swädu ati*

is eating and
enjoying the
fruits of the tree

anyah

While the
other bird

anashnan

is not eating, but

abhi chäksheeti.

is observing the
first bird, as a

supervisor.

This mantra uses the allegory of two birds and a tree to beautifully represent the relationship of God, the soul and the material world (prakriti). The first bird represents the soul that is enjoying the fruits of the tree i.e. prakriti. While the first bird is free to pluck the fruit and enjoy it, the bird is being observed and supervised by the second bird **God who is the most intimate companion of the soul**. As stated in the previous mantra and page # 23, **God, by being the inner voice to the soul, guides the soul to do the right thing, but at the same time God allows the soul freedom (free will) to do what the soul wants**. God as the supervisor observes and judges the karmas of the soul and gives appropriate awards but does not impose or use force on the soul like a tyrant to do something.

Yo bhootänäm adhipatih

yasmin lokah adhi shritah.

Ya eeshay mahato mahän tayna grahnämi

tväm aham mayi grahnämi tväm aham.

(Yajur Veda 20 : 32)

Yo adhipatih bhootänäm yasmin adhi shritah lokah.

He, God is the Master and Protector of all living beings, Who governs and sustains, all abodes, i.e. stars, galaxies.

Ya eeshay mahato mahän tayna aham grahnämi tväm
He, God is the Master, Master of all riches He is Greater than the greatest therefore, I accept You (God) as my Master,

mayi aham grahnämi tväm.
inside me with meditation, I make a conscious home for You.

The mantras describe God as the Master of all living beings as well as the whole universe. It is God who governs and sustains all the stars and galaxies that may be home to living beings. In this mantra, like the first mantra God is addressed as the Master of the entire spiritual and the physical wealth in the universe i.e. God is the Master of abundance. Next, God is described as Greater than the greatest i.e. God alone is Almighty or Omnipotent.

A devotee after acknowledging God's Supreme qualities and his/her own limitations states, "Dear God, I accept You as my Supreme Master, I meditate on You and make a conscious home for You in my soul. I seek Your grace to follow the right path so that I may get consciously close to You i.e. I may always be blessed by You."

Vayur anilam amritam

ath idam bhasmantam shariram.

Om krato smara kilve

smara kritam smara. (Yajur Veda 40 : 15)

Vayur anilam amritam
The soul is always doing deeds. It is not made up of physical matter. It is immortal.

ath idam shariram bhasmantam Krato
On the other hand, this, body turns to ashes. O human being, ceaseless performer,

Om smara kilve smara kritam smara
always remember Almighty God, our Protector and Benefactor. Remember God to gain strength perform your appropriate duties

This mantra describes the relationship between the physical body, the soul and God and gives advice on how one should live until the end of one's life. The mantra affirms that the soul is

immortal; the soul does not contain physical matter and does not die with the death of the physical body. The soul has conscious energy and is always active performing one or the other karma. It is the soul that keeps us alive. At the time of the death of our physical body, depending on our karma, God gives our soul a new body and this cycle continues until moksha is obtained.

The body, on the other hand, is made of physical matter (prakriti) and is prone to destruction and disintegration. This physical body on which we spend hours meeting its need for food, decorating it and providing it with sensual pleasures is nothing without the soul and will decay without it. It arose from ashes (physical matter) and will end in ashes (either by cremation or burial).

The mantra next addresses the soul as the ceaseless performer of one or the other deeds and reminds it to **always remember God, OM.** “God alone is your Protector and Master and your goal is to reach Him and not to focus on physical pleasures. **Remember God to gain strength.** Whenever you are discouraged, remember God your Protector and Benefactor, and your troubles will disappear. You will find the courage and strength to go on and will feel revitalized.” It then says to the soul, “Remember God while doing your deeds. God will help you find the difference between virtuous and bad deeds and will guide you along the right path.”

In all the four mantras described above, God, soul and the material world are clearly described as three separate entities. This belief in the three eternal based on the Vedas and Upanishads is also called *Traitvad* (three eternal) and in many ways is quite different than the commonly held views of the Hindu Religion based upon the Vedanta’s *advaita*-monism beliefs which state that Brahman (God) and jiva (the soul) are identical and prakriti the physical matter is maya-an illusion or is illusory.

These four mantras describe God (in the singular) as the Master of all souls (in the plural) and the universe. In these mantras, the soul is seeking God’s guidance to follow the right path and get consciously

close to Him but no where do the mantras state or imply that the soul and God are identical. The mantras also state that God is Omnipresent and all knowing. However, **neither these four mantras, nor for that matter any mantra in the Vedas has ever stated that the soul is Omnipresent, all knowing or same as God.**

The soul’s abilities as stated earlier in this section have always been recognized as quite limited. The four mantras also imply that in contrast to God and the souls, the matter by itself is innately inert. God is the Master of the universe and it is God who activates the changes in the universe. The soul on the other hand can utilize prakriti (matter) only in a limited manner for its needs and enjoyment, but is cautioned to use prakriti wisely and not get lost in its distractions, instead it should aim towards reaching God-The Eternal Truth, Supreme Consciousness and Supreme Bliss and it-self acquire peace and bliss.



Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana

Worship of God (*Eeshwar*-the Supreme Master of the universe) based on the Vedic scriptures is called *Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana*. The worship of God or prayer to God is not a rote performance of rituals or recitation of mantras or hymns from the Vedas or other Vedic scriptures but implies incorporating components of the prayer in the fabric of one's life. Worship is divided into three interconnected components: *Stuti*, *Prārthana* and *Upāsana*.

Stuti

Stuti is usually translated in English as praise or glorification of God or singing about God's glory. Stuti, however, is not repeating God's name over and over to praise Him, nor is it flattery of God. **True stuti on the other hand is sincere and implies knowing and appreciating God's various attributes, a thoughtful reflection upon them, understanding their significance and finally based on the correct understanding of the attribute, doing appropriate virtuous deeds in daily life.** For example one can recite over and over 'God! You are Omnipresent' but derive no benefit from it. True stuti on the other hand would mean recognizing in life that God is everywhere in the universe from the closest to the farthest including inside our soul and watches all our *karmas* i.e. actions at all three levels: thought, word and action. God even knows what goes inside our mind, nothing is hidden from Him.

Moreover, God as *Karmphaldata* judges us based upon our actions and we will not escape His judgment as well as the good or bad reward

of our actions. Most humans are far more afraid of being caught committing a sin than actually performing the sin. When people do something wrong purposely, they usually want to ensure that there is no witness to their bad deed, which may result in them being caught. But **the person doing true stuti of God, realizes that even if one could hide from other persons or electronic monitors, he/she cannot hide from God, therefore, the only reasonable course is not to carry out any bad deed and remembering God's omnipresence one must do virtuous deeds all the time.**

The following parable is often told in India to illustrate the omnipresence of God and how to do God's proper stuti: There was once a Guru who taught many students in his *Gurukul*-hermitage school (i.e. a monastery). One day he gave to each one of his pupils a mango, and told them to eat it at a place where nobody was watching them. Some students locked themselves inside their room where nobody else was watching them and ate the mangoes. Others hid in the thickets of bushes and trees surrounding the Gurukul and ate the mangoes. One lonely student, however, came back to the teacher and returned the mango and stated, "Sir, I could not find any place where at least God was not watching me." The Guru was delighted with the student and blessed him while stating, "Dear son you alone have been listening and learning what I have been teaching, others are only hearing. May God bless you and protect you."

Stuti at a deeper level also implies intense love of God for his benevolence towards us as well as full faith in His judgment. Stuti of God can be performed contemplating on any of the God's attributes previously mentioned on pages # 8 to 21 e.g. God alone is Perfection (*Poornam*), **God has no deficiencies and He does not need anything from human beings. We as human beings, however, are imperfect and need God's grace as well as our personal effort to improve in our lives.** God alone is Almighty and the Master of the universe, none else and only by knowing God and recognizing His shelter we can become fearless in life to pursue truth. As we progress in stuti we will recognize that while one can hurt or kill our physical

body but no one can hurt our soul and the closer we are to God less and less will be our fears including the fear of death.

From the above discussion of God's stuti, it should be clear that one must perform stuti of attributes which God possesses and not of those which God does not have e.g. an image of God in the form of a moorti (icon, idol). Similarly, replacing Stuti of God with worship of God's alleged incarnations Rama, Krishna or Christ is equally erroneous because God does not incarnate. The Veda mantra below states the following about stuti:

*Ya eka it tamu shtuhi krashtinäm visharshanih.
Patirjajnay vrashkratu.* (Rig Veda 6 : 45 : 16)

Human beings listen !

Tamu shtuhi it ya eka visharshanih krashtinäm.
You should Who Alone Omniscient activities of all
praise God is, and human beings.
only perfectly knows

Patirjajnay vrashkratu.
He is the Master and is Almighty and showers us
of the Universe with beneficial riches.

In summary, stuti implies that while praising God and reciting God's various names and/or attributes we should reflect upon and understand the meaning of the God's name or attribute recited, and then progressively incorporate a component of it (where ever possible or applicable) in our own personal lives e.g. stuti reminds us that God is kind, just and loving, qualities that we need to acquire if we are to come close to God.



Prärthanä

Prärthana means prayer to God to be our guide. Prayer is asking for God's inspiration and help so that we may gain spiritual knowledge, wisdom, strength and determination to acquire virtuous qualities in ourselves as well as live a virtuous life, learn humility and with our abilities help fellow human beings. After making one's best effort, it is asking God, the Universal Benefactor, for His blessings so our requests are fulfilled. **Praying teaches us humility** and reminds us that we are not all powerful like God. It also helps us acknowledge our limitations and our vanity so that we learn where we need to improve. Praying also reminds us of our moral duties (dharma) both to ourselves and to others and further shows us that we should seek God's counsel first and then that of our fellow humans, not the other way around. The following Veda mantra is an example of prayer to God :

*Tayjo asi tayjo mayi dayhi,
viryam asi veeryam mayi dayhi,
Balam asi balam mayi dayhi,
ojo asi ojo mayi dayhi,
Manyur asi manyur mayi dayhi,
saho asi saho mayi dayhi.*

(Yajur Veda 19 : 9)

Tayjo asi tayjo mayi dayhi,
God, You are fill me with radiance,
Supreme Radiance, help make me radiant,

veeryam asi *viryam mayi dayhi,*
You are fill me with vigor,
Infinite Vigor, help make me valiant,

Balam asi *balam mayi dayhi,*
You are Infinite give me also strength,
Strength i.e. Almighty, help me acquire strength,

ojo asi *ojo mayi dayhi,*
You are endow me with vitality,
Infinite Vitality,

Manyur asi *manyur mayi dayhi,*
You are Supreme give me courage to fight
Mettle¹ against wrong, what is wrong or unjust,

saho asi *saho mayi dayhi.*
You are Infinite fill me with fortitude,
Fortitude, courage and endurance.

This manta describes six of God's attributes and is a prayer to God to help us acquire at least elements of some of the same attributes in our lives. The mantra starts by stating that God is the **Radiance that enlightens everybody because He is the source of all knowledge that is known by truth.** God is the Supreme Light that leads us forward in our life, towards brightness and away from ignorance and darkness. After acknowledging that God is the Supreme Radiance, we pray for radiance in our own lives also. Similarly in this mantra, **God is addressed as the Almighty and the storehouse of Infinite Strength, Vigor and Vitality, Mettle and Fortitude followed by prayer that we may also acquire an element of the same attributes in our lives.**

When we pray to God, or ask God for something, it is not a passive

1. Manyur is often translated as God's wrath or anger towards wrong doers, but as stated earlier on page # 14, God is Perfection and does not get angry or vengeful like human beings. God, however, does punish wrong doers; this ability of God is Manyur. If Manyur is to be translated as 'Wrath against wrong doers,' then it must be kept in mind that it is not emotional anger or vengefulness. The Sanskrit word for anger is *krodha*, not manyur.

request. **When we ask for God's grace and also make an active commitment to change our life, we become deserving of God's gifts. Giving is God's attribute and He gives all of us what we deserve based upon our karma.** When we pray, our actions should not contradict our prayers. A person praying for good health is not expected to eat six doughnuts and/or drink six beers daily. **Moreover, if we ask God to give us something (i.e. share with us), then we must be willing to share what we have with those who are less fortunate.**

Lastly, as acknowledged in this mantra, God is the Foremost Power and we should only ask Him when we need something. We should, therefore, not seek protection or shelter from those who seem to be powerful but are actually quite vulnerable themselves. Such shelter or protection from other humans, in the long haul is doomed to failure. **Therefore, one must first and foremost ask God, the Giver of all givers with humility and generosity. An advanced aspirant who has completely surrendered to God does not ask anything for himself or herself but only for the welfare of others. Such aspirants leave the responsibility of their welfare, shelter and protection to God and trust that God will meet their needs one way or another.**

There are a few things one should remember about praying:

- One must never pray for impossible things (such as asking that the sun rise in the West). It is wrong to test God.
- One must never pray for the harm or the destruction of others just because we disagree with them but it is wise to ask God's help and grace when one is fighting for truth and righteous causes.
- As stated above one should never pray for help without first having made one's best effort. Prayer is not a substitute for action (karma). God helps those who help themselves.
- Prayer does not mean chanting God's name over and over but requires one to make an improvement in his/her character

and conduct of life. Prayer is also a time for self-reflection and to think about whether or not one has become more virtuous by discarding personal vices. Without an attempt to change one's life, prayer is not only useless but also hypocritical.

- One must pray for oneself and not ask a priest to pray on one's behalf. The role of a priest is that of a teacher, guide and confidante to help a person understand the spiritual aspects of life and to teach someone how to pray and meditate.
- While one should not ask others to pray on one's behalf, it is perfectly appropriate to pray for the well-being of others, nation and the universe. It is a generous and unselfish gesture and may include praying for wisdom for your enemy so that the two of you may reconcile your differences.

In summary, one prays not only for one's personal spiritual, mental and physical welfare but also for that of others, extending one's requests to all mankind and nature as well. Most of the prayers in the Vedas are for "us" rather than for "me," with great deal of emphasis on being generous and giving to others because this allows one to receive God's blessings.



Upāsana

Upāsana implies meditation and through the practice of spiritual yoga, gradual realization of God i.e. 'attainment of the Supreme Being'. The word *upāsana* literally means getting close to God *up*=close, *āsana*=sit down, exist. How does one get close to an entity such as God, who as stated above under the heading *Stuti*, exists everywhere in the universe including all around us as well as inside our soul and is already the closest entity? Why the need of *upāsana*?

Vedic scriptures consider three types of separation between two entities. The first is that of physical distance: one person is in the United States and the other in India, however, this separation does not apply to the soul and God. The next separation relates to time: Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati lived 150 years ago we are alive in 2010, however, this separation also does not apply to the soul and God. The third separation is that of awareness : the separation of the soul and God is that of awareness on the part of the soul. It is only during deep meditation when all of the mind's external activities are suspended, and the mind is fully focused inwards, **the soul consciously perceives and joins God- this is true upāsana or yoga.**

The phrase the soul joining God or 'attaining the Supreme Being' as stated above and on page # 25 means that superconscious state of *samadhi*-the final stage of *upasana* or spiritual yoga where the mind is completely tranquil and the individual soul is one to One with God-the Supreme Soul and enjoys infinite bliss, deep enlightenment and God's benevolence. The soul is consciously aware of God who is *Ānandswaroop* (Supreme Bliss), and *Jnānswaroop* or *Prakashswaroop* (True Knowledge).

Upasana as previously stated in the context of stuti also

implies intense love and awareness of the attributes of God as well as progressive incorporation of them (where-ever possible or applicable) in one's own personal life if one is to come close to God. For example upasana requires that just as God is kind and loving, we are both making an effort to acquire kindness and love in our life as well as have progressively actually acquired kindness and love respectively. Our life actually reflects true kindness and love for other beings.

The best method to practice upasana is to follow Maharshi Patanjali's *Yog Darshanam* (yoga aphorisms) which has organized the practice of yoga in a systematic manner and is also called *Ashtanga* (the eight-step) Yoga, Raj Yoga, and Dhyana Yoga (the yoga of meditation or concentration) (see page # 74 for details). When upasana/yoga is regularly practiced with sincerity, one gradually acquires concentration in meditation. While progress may be initially slow, success is certain in the long run. Perfection occurs gradually as *dhyana* in yoga-meditation practices become so intense that a person totally surrenders to God and devotes his or her life to seeking God and helping others and not doing any deeds for personal gratification. The following Veda mantra is an example of upasana:

*Yunjatay manah ut yunjatay dhiyo
viprä viprasya brahato vipashyachitah,
Vi hoträ dadhay vayunavid eka
it mahi devasya savituh parishtutih.*

(Rig Veda 5: 81: 1)

Human beings listen, and then act accordingly.

<i>Viprä</i>	<i>yunjatay</i>	<i>manah</i>	<i>ut</i>	<i>yunjatay</i>	<i>dhiyo</i>
Sages, wise persons	join their	mind	and	join their	intellect with

<i>brahat viprasya vipashyachitah.</i>	<i>Vi hoträ dadhay</i>
Supreme Sage or Consciousness i.e. God, who is the Source of all selfless deeds in true knowledge.	Sages perform their

<i>eka it</i>	<i>vayunavid</i>
that One's (i.e. God's) service	who knows karma (deeds) of every person.
<i>savituh</i>	<i>devasaya mahi parishtutih.</i>
He is the Creator God, who inspires us,	Supreme Divine Being and praiseworthiness is endless.

The message of this mantra is for all human beings desirous of attaining God and bliss. Who am I? Am I my soul, my mind, or my intellect? According to Vedic scriptures as previously stated on page # 22, I am my imperishable soul that interacts with the environment through the mind via sense and action organs guided by the intellect. The mind and intellect, however, through the practice of yoga can also be directed inwards towards the soul and God.

This mantra states that sages, **wise persons and those desirous of bliss join their soul including the mind, and intellect with the Supreme Sage God so that the mind becomes tranquil and the person becomes blissful and enlightened with spiritual knowledge directly from God, the Source of all true knowledge. This conscious joining of the soul with Supreme Consciousness i.e. God is true upasana or yoga, everything else promoted as yoga both in India and the West is misdirected** (also see page # 74). Sages and wise persons have been doing such upasana since time immemorial. Therefore, are we ready to initiate and make a similar effort?

This mantra emphasizes that **joining both the mind and the intellect to God is important. Why?** This is so, because the mind is prone to all kinds of flights of imaginations and ideas as well as prone to blind faith and belief in all kinds of miracles promoted in the name of religion. Such blind faith in religion, however, often takes people astray and away from the truth, unless one also exercises intellect (*dhiya*) and common sense to differentiate right from wrong as well as what is plausible and what is unbelievable. **The politically correct thing regarding religion, in many circles these days, is not to critically look at anyone's**

beliefs regarding God, especially one's own religion. However, until one starts to combine wisdom and common sense with faith and devotion, one is very likely to be misdirected in one's journey towards God i.e. Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana.

In the second line, this mantra **emphasizes there is only One God** who may be called by different names but nevertheless remains only One. In this mantra, God is called Savita-the Creator of the universe and who as the inner voice of the soul, inspires us to follow the right path (also see pages # 50-53 below). He alone is the Supreme Divine Being who alone knows the karma (deeds) of every person and appropriately judges and rewards them. **His greatness and praiseworthiness is endless**, words are inadequate to describe it all. Sages (yogis) completely surrender themselves to God and do all their deeds in His service in a selfless manner. They do not get attached to money or material wealth but share it with others in a generous manner. **This is the path to attain God and bliss, the aim of upāsana-meditation or true yoga.** (See page # 74 for a brief discussion of Patanjali's Yog Darshanam.)

Traditionally, Eeshwar-stuti-prarthana-upasana are performed two times a day, at dawn as well as at dusk. If dusk is not a suitable time, then the bedtime hour is acceptable. It is recommended that one should try to spend at least half an hour at each session in a quiet area of the house and avoid all distractions. If a person thinks that he/she cannot even spare half an hour from daily affairs, this individual needs to review his/her priorities to determine why it is not possible. If he/she determines that certain personal or financial responsibilities are too great so that he/she cannot genuinely spare the half-hour of time, then any amount of time is worthwhile.

The personal spiritual rewards gained from the limited time spent in earnest Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana will usually far outweigh those obtained from time devoted to secular affairs. As a person advances in upasana he/she is able to spend many hours at a stretch meditating about God. Also, He/she remains aware of God's

presence even while performing the daily activities of life.

In summary, sincere Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana, when performed in quiet solitude with faith and devotion, will help one obtain God's grace and he/she will find peace, joy and bliss in life. One's self-confidence and courage are also tremendously strengthened but not in an egotistical way. Stuti-prārthanā-upāsana helps one distinguish right from wrong and to follow the right path as well as seek truth without fear.

– Praying will often open a clear path when one is lost in a jungle of choices and distractions. A true devotee makes constant effort to improve his/her spiritual knowledge, contemplate on it and then live accordingly in a virtuous manner. A spiritually advanced person only prays for God's grace and the well-being of mankind. He/she does not pray for specific personal gains or for material wealth because God will give all of us what we need. Therefore, such a person prays only to follow God's will and to do God's work with a prayer such as, "Dear God, Thy will be done."



Mantras for Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana

There are many Veda mantras that incorporate one or more of the all three components of Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana. One can pray or worship God with any one of the mantras. This book includes the *Gayatri* mantra and the traditional eight Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana mantras chanted before Yajna at Arya Samaj Satsangs, people's homes, or at various Vedic ceremonies. The *Gayatri* mantra is discussed in greater detail than others to elucidate how all three components of Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana are included in various mantras.

Gayatri Mantra : Creator God is the Giver and Sustainer of Life and Wisdom

Om Bhur bhuvah swah.

Tatsavitur varaynyam

Bhargo devasya dheemahi.

Dhiyo yo nah prachodyāt.

(Yajur Veda 36: 3; Rig Veda 3: 63: 20 and
Sām Veda 6: 3:10:1)¹

Om Bhū

Dear God, You are the
Giver and Sustainer
of all life,

Tat savitur

bhuvah

the Remover
of all sorrows,

varaynyam bhargo

swah.

the Bestower
of bliss

1. In the Rig and Sām Veda, the first three words of this mantra are not included, but the rest is same.

He, who always
God, inspires us,
the Creator of
the Universe
devasya
You are the
Divine
Supreme Giver,

You
Alone are
worthy of
worship
dheemahi.
we
meditate
on Thee.

You are the Supreme
Radiance that enlightens
us and removes our
evil desires
yo
You who have all these
qualities,

prachodyāt

Please inspire us, our
move forward

nah

intellect so that we may

dhiyo

be able to tell right from
wrong and always follow
the right path.

This mantra is called *Gayatri* (chant or sing) mantra because it's chanting or singing with devotion, reflection on its meaning, and adoption of the message in one's life leads to salvation, as well as attainment of God and bliss. This is the first and most common mantra from the Vedas learned by most Hindus. This mantra is included in three of the four Vedas. It is recited and chanted both as a daily prayer as well as on special occasions. The word **Om**, and **this mantra** are commonly used for silent chanting during yoga meditation.

In the first four words of this mantra **Om bhū, bhuvah** and **swah** God is described as the Supreme Being who gives us everything such as life, happiness and when we become deserving ultimately bliss. In addition, He removes our sorrows. The word **Om** in Vedic scriptures stands only for God, the Supreme Being or Supreme Spirit, like the personal name of a person. Even Hindus who believe in incarnations of God or in deities have never called any one of them as Om. **The word Om in the simplest means God who is the Universal Protector and Nurturer.**

The word **bhū** reminds us that God alone is the giver of life and breath (*prana*) and in our life should remain dearer to us than any other entity in our life. We encounter many types of love in life such as love of parents, spouse, children, friends and others but all such love eventually terminates with the death our physical body. However, God's love for

us is eternal, the only issue is do we reciprocate it in kind. As mentioned earlier on page # 36, true stuti implies true love of God.

The word **bhuva** means God removes our sorrows by giving us the wisdom to find its causes and solutions. The word **swah** means God gives us happiness and bliss in life because He is the Storehouse of bliss. **All human beings want happiness and joy (sukham) and nobody wants miseries or fears (dukham) especially fear of death, even though we all know, try as we may, one day we will die.**

Where do human beings look for happiness (*sukham*)? They seek it in worldly goods and pleasures, as well as in wealth. The pleasures of the worldly goods, however, are usually short lived and their loss leads to unhappiness (*dukham*). Even the continued presence of worldly goods or pleasures does not give lasting happiness and people look for something new and more exciting to renew their happiness. If worldly goods could give lasting happiness, the super-wealthy of the world would have lasting happiness or joy. However, most super-wealthy do not have lasting contentment or happiness in life. **The lasting happiness, joy or bliss comes only from God and it is available to everyone free of charge.**

Stating these four names of God Om bhu, bhuvah and swah as well as acknowledging the attributes they represent is God's stuti and making a sincere effort to acquire elements of these qualities in our own life is God's upāsana. At a personal level it means finding contentment in life, being generous and sharing what we have with those who are less fortunate instead of being selfish and hoarding. If your needs truly exceed that which you have, then pray only to God and not anyone else for more. God fulfills our worthwhile wishes in His unique ways, sometimes by fulfilling the wish and at other times by giving the wisdom to deal with our circumstances.

In the next four words of this mantra God is described as **Savita, Deva, Bharga** and **Varanyam**. God as **Savita** is the Creator of the whole universe and all living beings as well as God who inspires our soul to do the right thing. **God as Savita residing inside every soul is everybody's most intimate personal God**, who looks after each and everyone's welfare and showers His Grace upon us all the time.

As the inner voice to our soul, God is constantly inspiring us to follow truth and virtue in life. The inner joy and inspiration that we feel when we do the right thing comes from God. The word **Deva** means one who gives for the welfare of others without asking something in return. God of course is the **Supreme Giver**, Giver of spiritual and material wealth and Giver to all givers, whereby, He is called Deva. In other contexts, the word deva is used for persons who are most generous as well as for physical entities such as fire, air etc.

God is next addressed as Bharga the Supreme Radiance that illuminates our soul and mind and takes us away from sins. When we make effort to get close to God the Supreme Radiance, we are enlightened and our evil desires burn away. When we think evil thoughts or plan to do something wrong (lying, stealing, hate etc.) God creates doubt, fear, shame or an aversion in us toward such thoughts and behavior advising us to change our course. As Savita, Bharga and Deva-**the Supreme Giver and Well-wisher, He always steers us towards the right path but does not make choices for us.** As independent souls we have freewill and we may follow a virtuous or sinful path in life. Also, God does not become angry or unhappy because of human follies. God is always Perfection and Supreme Bliss, who judges us based upon our karmas not because he favors one group of people over the others in a prejudicial manner. Lastly, God is called **Varanyam** which means God alone is worthy of worship and we choose Him as our object of worship.

The word **dheemahi** in the mantra means that we meditate to God and make an effort to adopt and acquire elements of these attributes of God in our own life-as such **dheemahi** means **God's upāsana**. **This segment of the mantra thus elaborates that God is the Creator, Inspirer, Enlightener and Supreme Giver as well as He alone is worthy of worship (stuti) and meditation (upāsana).** Therefore, we **worship and meditate to God only and no one else.**

The last four words of this mantra **dhiyo yo nah prachodyāt** are a **prayer to God to inspire our intellect so that with the Grace of God we may always follow the path of truth and virtue in life.** People when they pray to God often ask for wealth or physical well being. Vedas say that while wealth and health are important and that

we should earn as much as we can (Rig Veda 10: 121: 10), but **when praying it is far more important to ask for wisdom, because health and wealth without wisdom can lead to one's downfall.** The word *dhee* and *dhiya* refer to intellect with the power to discriminate and separate right from wrong, truth from falsehood, and propaganda from correct information. It also helps one understand moral responsibility and the need to act accordingly. **Dhee/dhiya is the intellect and wisdom that helps a person follow the path of virtue even when tempted to do otherwise.**

As explained above, Gayatri mantra thus incorporates all three components of Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana. This is the reason its silent chanting during yoga practice/meditation is very useful in contemplating on the attributes of God and progressive incorporation of elements of them in one's personal life. With gradual practice **when the mind becomes tranquil during samadhi, the soul perceives God in His true glory. The individual soul is one to One with God-the Supreme Soul and enjoys infinite bliss, deep enlightenment and God's benevolence.**

Mantra #1: Dear God Inspire Us and Help Remove our Vices and Instill Nobleness

***Om vishwāni deva savitar dūrītāni parā suva.
Yad bhadrām tanna ā suva.***

(Rig Veda 5: 82 :5, Yajur Veda 30 : 3)

<i>Om</i>	<i>deva</i>	<i>savitar</i>
God, Our Protector	Divine Giver Supreme Giver	the One who inspires us, Creator of the Universe,
<i>parā suva</i>	<i>vishwāni</i>	<i>dūrītāni.</i>
please help remove from us	all forms of	vices and sorrows,
<i>Yad</i>	<i>bhadrām</i>	<i>tanna ā suva.</i>
and those	qualities which are noble	please help us acquire.

All religions of the world that believe in God would agree with the prayer in this mantra which in simple words states as follows: Dear God, You are Divine Giver and the Creator of the universe, please remove my vices and give me virtuous qualities. Let us see what the mantra states in detail.

God in this mantra is addressed as Deva and Savita and the object of our stuti. **The word Deva as stated in the previous mantra means one who gives for the welfare of others without asking for anything in return. God of course is the Supreme Giver, Giver of spiritual and material wealth and Giver to all givers, whereby, He is called Deva.**

The word *Savita* means **God who inspires our soul and is Creator of the universe.** The root for word Savita is *sav* which according to Monier William's Sanskrit-English dictionary means 'One who sets in motion, impels, an instigator, a stimulator' and the word savita itself means 'A stimulator, rouser, vivifier'. **This is why, God who inspires all of us as human beings and activates prakriti-primordial matter to create the manifest universe in the Vedas is called Savita.**

God as the inner voice to our soul is constantly inspiring us to follow the correct path and to do the right thing. The inner joy and inspiration that we feel when we do the right thing comes from God. When we follow the right path, despite pressures and temptations to do otherwise, we will hear God's voice (our inner voice) speak to us and inspire us. Also, when we think evil thoughts or plan to do something wrong (lying, stealing, hate etc.) God creates doubt, fear, shame or an aversion in us toward such thoughts and behavior advising us to change our course towards the right path. In this manner **Savita i.e. God-the Supreme Being who resides inside every soul, is everybody's most intimate personal God,** who looks after each and everyone's welfare and showers His Grace upon us all the time. Since, on the earth, the physical sun directly or indirectly provides the energy so that all the living things can live, our physical sun in Sanskrit is also called *savita*. This mantra has often been mistranslated as a prayer to sun or 'sun-god' called *savita*

but as explained above and in the explanation of the Gayatri mantra, it is actually a prayer to God and not to sun or 'sun-god'.

What do we ask God when we pray to Him? Do we ask God for the fulfillment of wishes that do not deserve to be or are unlikely to be fulfilled such as 'God make me the king of the world'? Or, should we ask for things that are going to make us a better human being and take us closer to God? The mantra recommends that we first ask for God's inspiration and help, so that we become more introspective to enable us remove all vices and bad habits from our life.

In the Vedic Dharma the cardinal sins (called *duritani* in this mantra) are lying (untruth), lust (*kama*), morbid affection (*moha*-blind attachment to others and material objects), greed (*lobha*), anger (*krodha*), envy (*ersha*) and vanity (*ahankar* or *ghamand*). The very worst sins, however, are suicide and killing others (except in self-defense or in a morally justifiable war). Other vices include laziness, gambling and drinking or getting intoxicated. These various sins and vices can exist at the level of thought, word or deed. They are all considered to be self-destructive and a setback in life's spiritual progress.

The word *vishwani* in this mantra is usually translated as all, however, its root word *vish* also means things that have settled and made a home in us (our mind) and are not going to be dislodged easily just by wishing them away. Our prayers therefore must not be empty rituals for the fulfillment of our wishes, in order to be successful they require our active effort in removing vices from our daily lives. Whenever, there is the temptation to do something wrong or follow a vice, by analyzing or contemplating on them, as well as listening to the inner voice of God-Savita and finally refraining from the temptation, we will make gradual success in uprooting the vices.

In this manner, as we remove the vices from our mind, **we also gradually make room there for acquiring noble qualities such as truth, honesty, integrity, strength, courage, wisdom, forgiveness, kindness, love etc.** The last four words of the mantra are then a prayer to God for His grace so that we may achieve success in acquiring what is genuinely noble and good for us.

Mantra #2: Creator God Alone is the Supreme Master of the Universe

Hiranyagarbhah samavartata agray

bhootasya jätäh pati eka äseet.

Sa dadhär prithvim dyämutaymäm

kah asmaï deväya havishä vidhayma.

(Yajur Veda 13: 4)

Hiranyagarbhah

God is the Creator
Of the Universe

*bhootasya pati
eka äseet.*

He Alone was
and is the.
Supreme Master of
all living beings

kasmaï deväya
to that Blissful
Giver who gives
us everything,

samavartata agray

He, God exists
as before,

Sa

He, God

havishä vidhayma.
we worship with
selfless service,
and self-sacrifice.

jätäh

God is the most
prominent entity,

*dadhär prithvim
dyämutaymäm*

sustains the earth,
the sun and the
stars

This mantra states that **God is the Creator and Sustainer of all stars and galaxies. God has always existed, He existed even before the creation of the universe. God alone is the Master of all living beings. God alone is the most prominent entity in the universe. Lastly, God in this mantra is called the Giver of Bliss.**

The literal meaning of word *Hiranyagarbhah* in colloquial Sanskrit is the womb of luminous things and lustrous bodies. In context of God, at the physical level it means the Creator who makes shining stars and galaxies from the primordial physical matter called *prakriti* and at the spiritual level it means God the Source of all true knowledge that illuminates our mind and soul.

The root word *kah* in *kasmaï* in the second line of the mantra means God who is Supreme Bliss and who gives us bliss in life (Yajur

Veda 36:5). When we get close to God by practice of yoga-meditation it makes our souls blissful, full of universal love, peace, serenity and joy. There are no miseries or fears left, especially the fear of death. Therefore, to seek God who is the Master of Bliss and who gives us everything, **we worship God by offering ourselves to Him i.e. surrender to Him.** We become the *havi* i.e. surrender and sacrifice to God. We dedicate all our deeds in His service by performing all our actions in a selfless manner to the service of God without any desire whatsoever for any kind of return or personal gratification.

Mantra #3: Blissful God Bestows Us Spiritual and Physical Strength

*Ya ätmadä baladä yasya vishvaupäsatay
prashisham yasya deväh.*

Yasya chhäyä amritam yasya

mrityuh kasmai deväya havishä vidhayma.

(Yajur Veda 25: 13)

Ya ätmadä
God is Supreme Spirit who
enlightens us gives
us spiritual strength,

yasya vishvaupäsatay
Whom wise persons worship,
pray and meditate to,

Yasya chhäyä amritam
God, whose shelter and protection
is bliss and immortality,

kasmai deväya
to that Blissful Master
who gives us everything,

baladä
Supreme Power who
gives us physical strength,

prashisham yasya deväh.
whose commands even the
wise and the physical forces
of the universe follow.

yasya mrityuh
lack of whose shelter
is misery and death,

havishä vidhayma.
we worship with selfless
service, self-sacrifice and
surrender.

God in this mantra is described as the Supreme Spirit and Power who gives us both spiritual and physical strength, moves

us away from miseries and eventually provides us with bliss and moksha-liberation of Soul and attainment of God. Most of us on the earth are so busy either trying to meet our daily needs or fulfilling sensory pleasures that we forget who we really are and what are our true goals in life. Are we just physical beings or are we our eternal souls temporarily housed in our physical bodies that will eventually wither away? This mantra says that **God, the Supreme Spirit enlightens our soul and gives us spiritual strength to do what is right and avoid temptation.** Similarly, God gives us physical strength and good health so that we can live a productive life and be helpful to our fellow beings. God by bestowing us with both spiritual and physical strength inspires us to solve problems ourselves in our life journey, and not become dependent on others.

Next God is addressed as the Supreme Master whose commands are followed not only by all the wise persons but even the physical elements of the universe e.g. the sun follows God's rules and rises in the east and sets in the west. **Since time immemorial all truly wise persons have worshipped, prayed to and meditated to God and not other entities.** Less wise persons on the other hand pray and worship a variety of entities such as God's alleged incarnations, icons or *moortis*.

In the second line, the mantra states God's shelter and protection makes a person acquire equanimity, joy, love, peace and bliss in life where as the lack of God's shelter results in misery and eventually unhappy death instead of a death that leads to the liberation of the soul and bliss. Therefore, to seek God who is the Master of Bliss and who gives us everything, **we worship God by offering ourselves to Him i.e. surrender to Him.** Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati in *Sanskar Vidhi* states that worship of God means following God's commands eagerly. Our deeds are undertaken in His service by the dedication of all our actions in a selfless manner to the service of God without any desire whatsoever for any kind of return or personal gratification.

Mantra #4: God Alone is the King of all Beings and the universe

Om yah prä nato nimishato

mahitwaika idraja jagato babhuva.
Yah eeshay asya dwipadashchatushpadah
kasmai deväyay havishä vidhayma.

(Yajur Veda 23 : 3)

Om Yah mahitwa eka idräjä babhuva
 God He, by the virtue of His Greatness, He Alone is The King of all

pränato nimishato jagato.
 living and inanimate things of the universe.

Yah eeshay asya dwipadah
 He, God is the Master of us human beings (bipedal)

chatushpadah kasmai deväyay havishä vidhayma.
 and quadrupeds, to that Blissful we worship with
 i.e. animals, Master who gives selfless service, self-
 us everything, sacrifice and surrender.

God in this mantra is described as the Greatest Entity in the Universe. Nobody can fully know or understand His Greatness. God alone is the Supreme King of all living beings which in this mantra are described as human beings (bipedal) as well as animals (quadrupeds). God is also the Master of the universe and all the inanimate things in it and as such God is the Master of the entire spiritual and the physical wealth in the i.e. God is the Master of abundance. All wealth belongs ultimately to God. God is the Universal Benefactor. Only God can fulfill both our physical and spiritual needs. Therefore, we need only ask God for His blessings and do not need to go asking from others. **The mantra re-emphasizes that God is One and He Alone is the Supreme King or Master, none else.**

The words *kasmai deväyay havishä vidhayma* (as in the previous two mantras) mean that to seek God who is the Master of Bliss and who gives us everything, **we worship God by offering ourselves to Him i.e. surrender to Him.** Our deeds are undertaken in His service

by the dedication of all our actions in a selfless manner to the service of God without any desire whatsoever for any kind of return or personal gratification.

Mantra #5: God Alone is the Sustainer of the Universe and Provider of Bliss

Om yayna dyuorugrä prithivi cha drdhä
yayna svah stabhitam yayna näkah.
Yo antarikshay rajaso vimänah kasmai
deväyay havishä vidhayma.

(Yajur Veda 32 : 6)

Om yayna drdhä dyuo ugrä
 God Who firmly supports glorious and mighty
 (God) and sustains sun and stars

cha prithivi yo vimänah
 and the earth He, God has created and moves

rajaso antarikshay yayna
 various (heavenly) in the vast space God,
 bodies, abodes of the universe. Who

stabhitam svah yayna näkah
 bears, is the of bliss, Who provides liberation
 repository happiness (God) from miseries.

kasmai deväyay havishä vidhayma.
 to that Blissful Master we worship with selfless service,
 who gives us everything, self-sacrifice and surrender.

The mantra is a prayer to God who is addressed as the Sustainer and Principal Support of the whole universe. It is God who creates and maintains the universe and its components such as the stars, galaxies and space. His creations like the sun give us not only light to see but also heat to keep warm. The mantra also reminds us that God's universe is in constant motion and undergoing continuous change. We too, then, must remain active and forever try to improve ourselves. Moreover, **God**

in this mantra is addressed as the Repository or Source of Bliss and by only knowing Him, one can move away from miseries or unhappiness in life and find liberation and bliss in one's own life.

The words *kasmai deväyay havishä vidhayma* (as in the previous three mantras) mean that to seek God who is the Master of Bliss and who gives us everything, **we worship God by offering ourselves to Him i.e. surrender to Him.** Our deeds are undertaken in His service by the dedication of all our actions in a selfless manner to the service of God without any desire whatsoever for any kind of return or personal gratification.

Mantra #6: God Alone is the Master of All Persons and the Provider of Wealth

Prajäpatay na tvat-aytäni-anyo

vishvä jätäni paritä babhuva.

Yat kämastay juhümastannoastu

vayam syäm patayo rayinä.

(Rig Veda 10 : 121 : 10).

<i>Prajäpatay</i>	<i>na tvat anyo</i>	<i>paritä babhuva</i>
Master or Lord of all people, God	none other than protecting and You is i.e. You controlling Alone are,	
<i>aytäni</i>	<i>vishvä jätäni.</i>	<i>Yat käma tay juhüma</i>
these stars, galaxies and	the entire created universe.	With needful desire we what- worship you ever
<i>tat nah astu</i>	<i>vayam</i>	<i>syäm patayo rayinä.</i>
may that our desire be fulfilled	May we	become masters of both spiritual and material wealth.

This mantra addresses God as Prajäpatay meaning that God is Protector and Master of all persons. The Sanskrit word *prajä* means

all persons in a community or a nation and *päti* means master. In colloquial Sanskrit *päti* also means protector as well as husband or master of the household. Therefore, God who is the **Protector and Master of all persons** is called Prajäpäti. **The word Master, however, does not mean a slave master or a tyrant but rather somebody who as the Protector looks after the welfare of all His subjects.** In God's vocabulary there are no Hindus, Christians, Muslims or Buddhists; these divisions have been created by mankind. In God's eyes we are all human beings and He is the Master for all whether or not we are good or bad in our deeds. The type of human being we choose to be is entirely our decision. **The mantra then states that God, none other than You i.e. You alone control and protect the entire universe.**

The second line of the mantra is a prayer for the fulfillment of our needful desires so that we may acquire prosperity and become masters of both spiritual and material wealth. The word *käma* means fulfillment of desires, but in the context of dharma. Vedic scriptures recognize that as human beings we are all at different stages of spiritual progress, and we have many desires and wishes that we want to fulfill. Also, we have many shortcomings and sufferings that we want to overcome. As children we asked our parents to help us meet these needs, and as adults we seek help from friends and relatives. In the Vedic Hindu religion, God is considered not only the Ultimate Father but also our Ultimate Mother and Friend. It is therefore quite natural after making one's best effort to pray to God, the Ultimate Benefactor, for help and assistance. The word *käma* both in India and the West is often mistranslated as sexual desire, such as in *Kämasutra*; however, the correct definition is stated above.

The last part of the mantra is a prayer for us to become masters of both spiritual and material wealth. Vedas have always encouraged one to earn as much material wealth (prosperity) as possible but always in the context of dharma, by honest and fair means. Once wealth is acquired we are not to become so attached to it that it becomes a burden in life's journey. Material wealth does not travel with us to our next life. Also, prosperity is to be shared with others (also see page # 29-30). **Thus material wealth is to be used to advance spiritual**

progress in life and find peace and harmony in life.

Mantra #7: Creator God is Our Closest Companion and Provider of Bliss

*Sa no bandhur janitā sa vidhātā
dhāmāni veda bhuvanāni vishvā.
Yatra deva amrtamanashanah
tritiyay dhamann adhyairayanta.*

(Yajur Veda 32 : 10)

Sa no bandhur sa janitā
He, God our closest kin He, the Creator of
(alone) is (relation), God is universe, and
vidhātā veda dhāmāni bhuvanāni vishvā.
the Sustainer of He knows all of the universe's abodes
universe, and our i.e. stars and galaxies.
Karmphaldata,

Yatra deva anashanah amrtam
Where, in the souls of enjoy prolonged bliss
God's divine learned and
company persons after
the death of
physical body

adhyairayanta tritiyay dhamann.
move freely everywhere in the third abode i.e. moksha
(in the company of God).

In the first line of this mantra God is addressed as **Bandhu, Janita and Vidhata and the mantra further states that omnipresent God knows every nook and corner of the universe and all its abodes i.e. stars and galaxies.** The Sanskrit word *bandh* means to bond or bind and the word *bandhu* in colloquial Sanskrit and Hindi languages means somebody who is our kin or relative. Generally, we think of our parents, spouse, siblings or children as our closest relatives, however,

at the time of our death or their death, these close relations are all broken. When we call **God as Bandhu, it signifies that God residing inside the soul is our most Intimate Companion, Closest Relative or Kinsman and Consistent Well-wisher with whom our bonding is never broken.**

Next God is addressed as **Janita the Creator of the universe** and all the creatures including us. God in this mantra is also addressed as **Vidhata the Sustainer of universe** and *Karmphaldata* who judges our karmas and gives appropriate rewards. God knows every nook and corner of the Universe known or unknown. He is present in all of the universe's abodes i.e. stars and galaxies.

According to the Vedas and Upanishads (also see page # 24-25) after the death of the physical body, almost all souls are reborn as a human being or some other life form, however, a select few who live a divine life i.e. *deva* persons are liberated and attain *moksha*. In the second line of this mantra *moksha* is called *tritiya dhām*. **In Vedic Dharma there is no physical place called moksha or swarga** (like heaven in Abrahamic religions and later Hindu scriptures such as *Puranas*), instead *moksha* means that the soul attains God and is liberated from the cycle of rebirth for a very prolonged time but not eternally. The 'soul attains God' means that soul is one to One with God, but the soul does not merge with God nor becomes God and always remains a separate entity.

In the *moksha* state, the soul is always consciously aware of God who is *Ānandswaroop* (Supreme Bliss), and *Jñānswaroop* (True Knowledge) and in the company of God, enjoys infinite bliss, deep enlightenment and God's benevolence. The absolute goal of all souls is to eventually attain *moksha*. The means for attaining *moksha* is to live according to dharma, practice meditation with faith and devotion, further one's spiritual knowledge and do selfless deeds. Together these things constitute the path of spiritual yoga.

Over time, when these practices become so intense that a person totally surrenders to God and devotes his or her life to seeking God and helping others and not doing any deeds for

personal gratification, then the person's soul is liberated, or moksha is attained. As stated above, the soul attains God but does not merge with God or become God, but remains a separate entity and, after a very long time, will again be born as a spiritually endowed human being, such as rishis (sages, holy seers, or wise men). Having been born again though, the soul is nevertheless subject to all the rules and conditions that apply to all human beings.

Mantra #8: Prayer for Living a Virtuous Life and Obtaining God's Grace

*Om agnay naya supathä räyay asmän
vishvani deva vayunäni vidvän.*

Yuyodhyasmaj juhuranam ayno

bhuyishthän tay nama uktim vidhayma.

(Yajur Veda 40: 16)

<i>Agnay</i>	<i>naya asmän</i>	<i>supathä</i>	<i>räyay</i>
Luminous God,	lead us	right and	to obtain
Our Ultimate	to the	noble path	prosperity
Leader			and Thy grace.

<i>Deva</i>	<i>vidvän</i>	<i>vishvani</i>	<i>vayunäni</i>
Supreme Being,	You know every one	and all our	deeds.

<i>Yuyodhyasmaj</i>	<i>juhuranam</i>	<i>ayno</i>	<i>bhuyishthän</i>
Please help us	devious habits	sins.	With our
remove from	and		deepest
ourselves,			regard

tay nama uktim vidhayma

Dear God we thank You and
praise You.

In this mantra God is addressed as *Agnay* (also spelled *Agne*) which means that **God alone is the Supreme Light and the Ultimate Source of Enlightenment** The word *Agnay* also means that it is God who takes us forward in the right path and as such stands for our **Ultimate Leader**.

This mantra reminds us that it is God alone who is our Ultimate Leader and we must pray only to God for guidance. When we find failure in our lives, when we are in darkness, we ask God to be the Light to guide us so that we do not follow the path of temptation.

The word *Agnay* refers to God the Ultimate Power that helps us rise higher in life. It is because of this quality that the word *agnay* or *agni* in the physical world is used to denote fire. Fire has the power to bring out the manifold characteristics of an object. For example, spices in a spice bottle have only a faint odor, but when roasted in the fire or used in cooking fill the house with their fragrance. Similarly, a person has more success when he makes God his leader instead of another human. The word *agnay* in this mantra does not mean *fire* or *fire-god* as it has been sometimes called because of mistranslation.

The mantra then says, Dear God, bless us with both material and spiritual wealth." In the Vedas, both wealth and prosperity are actually encouraged so long as they are honestly achieved. The acquisition of wealth and prosperity requires that one not get attached to it. One is to be generous and have the responsibility of sharing it with those less fortunate. "While enjoying our physical wealth may we never forget You. **May we always remain steadfast in our pursuit of You and find Your grace, peace and bliss.** You, Supreme Lord, are omniscient and know all our deeds; none of our karmas are hidden from You. Dear God, You know we are far from being perfect and have many weaknesses and vices and are falling victims to various new temptations in life. Please help us to remove these vices from ourselves. Dear God, whenever we deviate from the righteous path, be our inner voice and remind us and guide us so that we not become the victims of vice and sin. Help us to abandon the old, crooked sinful ways and adopt virtuous ways in our lives.

Dear God, for all Your blessings and loving-kindnesses to us, we thank You from the bottom of our hearts in every way possible. We praise You, we bow before You, and we give You our homage

so that we may always remain Your humble servants.”



Role of Satsang (Congregation) and Ceremony in Eeshwar-stuti-prārthana-upāsana

The focus of the book so far has been on individual Eeshwar-stuti-prārthana-upāsana (worship). As stated in the preface I (the author) have been somewhat critical of prayer rituals observed at various religious ceremonies. This, however, is not to say that rituals have no useful purpose in prayer and worship. **Rituals can serve as powerful reminders of one’s obligations to follow truth and virtue (dharma) in life and refrain from vices and distractions.** They can help people develop good personal habits such as self-discipline which is so necessary for meditation. Moreover, children and the uninitiated are often initially attracted to the performance of the religious rites and ceremonies. Thus, rituals can be a wonderful way to introduce Eeshwar-stuti-prārthana-upāsana (prayer and worship), which gradually pave the way for deep meditation.

Children, however, must be taught that the intent of the ritual is prayer to God; the ritual is not an end in itself or a substitute for following dharma or meditation. Ultimately, one must remember that it is far more important to incorporate the message of the genuine prayer in the fabric of one’s life rather than correctly perform the ritual since the latter is only symbolic and not the essence of Eeshwar-stuti-prārthana-upāsana (prayer and worship).

Organized group religious activities and ceremonies in Vedic Dharma (and Hindu religion) are called **Satsang**. **This Sanskrit word literally means the company or gathering of truth seekers and truth**

followers. It is the equivalent of a congregation or a prayer service in the West. This gathering can be at a temple, some other place of worship or a person's home as long as the purpose is to promote God, truth and dharma. At some religious institutions in India, Satsang is a daily event, while at others it is a once weekly activity. Vedic Dharma (like many other religions) has always recognized that as humans we are social beings. **We learn from each other and are likely to follow the habits and customs of the company we keep. It is at a Satsang where one is likely to hear an inspiring sermon, find a guru or meet a peer devotee.** In his simple, yet descriptive words, Kabir said the following about Satsang :

The company of the good and wise is like fragrance emanating from a perfumery,

Wisdom comes like the fragrance, whether one is a perfume buyer or a passerby.

Thus, the Satsang can assist in attaining spiritual advancement, but it must not become a replacement for personal Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana (prayer and meditation) or following dharma i.e. virtuous life.

Vedas place great emphasis on being generous and working together with other persons for the welfare of all human beings.

Most of the prayers in the Vedas are for “us” rather than for “me,” with great deal of emphasis on being generous and sharing with others, this allows one to receive God's blessings. While one should make all possible effort in making personal physical, mental and spiritual progress in life, **one should never be completely satisfied in one's personal progress only, but should also make an effort for the physical, mental and spiritual well being of the society at large. Satsang offers an outstanding opportunity for accomplishing this objective.** Rig Veda has 10,522 mantras divided in 10 mandalas (chapters) and 1,028 suktas (hymns). The last sukta (hymn) of Rig Veda has four mantras, in which God instructs human beings to think, discuss and work together for the betterment of mankind. One Veda mantra from this hymn states the following :

*Sam gachchhadhvam sam vadadhvam
sam vo manāmsi jānatām.*

*Devā bhāgam yathā poorvay
samjānānā uapāsatay.*

(Rig Veda 10 : 191 : 2)

God's Message to human beings, listen !

<i>Sam gachchhadhvam</i>	<i>sam</i>	<i>sam vo</i>
May you move ahead together, united to do good deeds,	may you speak with one united voice,	may your minds and thoughts be united for pursuit of truth and common good.
<i>Yathā poorvay devā</i>	<i>samjānānā</i>	<i>bhāgam uapāsatay.</i>
Just as in the past sages and generous people	united in thoughts, words and actions that personal are based on truth	have worshipped God and pursued fulfillment of worthy personal and societal goals.

This Veda mantra is a message from God to all human beings and states that, just as in the past *deva* i.e. sages and generous persons united in thoughts, words and deeds (that are based on truth), have worshipped God and pursued fulfillment of worthy personal and societal goals, so should you. May all of you move ahead united to do good deeds for others, may all of you speak with one united voice, and may all of your minds and thoughts be united for pursuit of truth and common good.



What are the Benefits of Eeshwar-stuti-prārthana-upāsana?

It has often been asked, 'What are the benefits of belief in God, prayer, and meditation'? According to Vedic traditions **true Eeshwar-stuti-prārthana-upāsana provides a person inner joy and strength to do the right thing and follow the path of virtue in life. One's spiritual knowledge expands and deepens. Ability to concentrate is increased and the intellect becomes sharp both in spiritual and secular affairs so that one can easily solve knotty problems. One is able to see things clearly as they are and differentiate right from wrong. The will power is tremendously strengthened and the person learns to complete tasks instead of finding excuses. Vanity is removed; one becomes humble and develops love and compassion for others instead of hate and jealousy. One's fears in life are removed and the ability to withstand setbacks or even extreme miseries is in life are markedly enhanced. One becomes willing to die for the sake of truth or freedom.** This is in contrast to dying as a terrorist who kills innocent people while one is brain washed by the exhortations of fanatic religious leaders; such person is committing suicide and squandering a precious life given by God.

A person does not need praise or accolades from others to do the right thing rather the virtuous path becomes one's inner conscious. **Finally a person enjoys bliss and peace in life with God as one's constant Companion. If one does not attain moksha after this cycle of life and death despite living a virtuous life, one is born at a higher station in next life to have opportunity to get even closer**

to God and attain moksha.

Patanjali's Yog Darshanam (2: 3-9) describes five types of miseries of mind because they cause mental pain and suffering as well as agitation of the mind. They are ignorance, arrogance (prompted by vanity), indulgent attachments (those that bind the soul), jealousy and/or hate, and fear (especially the fear of death). **Eeshwar-stuti-prārthana-upāsana gradually allays these miseries and directs the mind towards virtue whereby the mind becomes tranquil and enjoys peace and bliss.** Also, the mind acquires virtues such as spiritual knowledge; kindness and forgiveness; generosity and unselfishness; love, caring and compassion; fearlessness and bravery.

As one progresses in upāsana (i.e. spiritual yoga, meditation to God) and one gets closer and closer to God, the person's soul starts to acquire an element of the attributes of God based upon the person's effort and abilities. The soul acquires true knowledge from Omniscient God the Source of true knowledge. The soul acquires strength and courage from Omnipotent God. However, **the soul's abilities even in the most advanced stages of yoga (*asamprajñāta samādhi*) remain limited** (also see page # 22-25). Whereas God is All-Knowing-*Sarvajna* the soul always has limited knowledge i.e. is *alpagna*. Whereas God is Omnipresent the soul at any given time is *ekdeshi*-exists in one place only. Whereas God is the Creator of the universe, the soul's capability to utilize prakriti-physical matter to create material things remains quite limited.

The relationship of the soul and God in the advanced stages of yoga practice is often compared to that of an iron ball and fire respectively. The closer the iron ball gets to the fire, progressively hotter the iron ball becomes because heat is the innate nature of fire. Also, all objects that are close to the heated iron ball also perceive the heat. **Similarly, an advanced upasana practitioner acquires true knowledge directly from God, as well as he/she is able to teach and enlighten others the same knowledge especially the pupils who are close to him/her.** In the final stages, when the iron ball is totally surrounded by fire for a long time, the ball acquires a red hot/golden yellow glow like the fire itself. The iron ball, looking like a fire ball, is one with the flame but still is an iron ball and not the fire itself. However, if the iron ball

was to move away from the fire, it will initially lose its glow and then will gradually become cold metal and unable to impart any heat to surrounding objects. Similarly, an upasana practitioner when he/she moves away from God, then on is unable to enlighten his/her pupils with true knowledge. In the same vein, **even an advanced yogi (a yoga master) who has many abilities is advised to remain humble and always remember God who is the Master of the universe and whose capabilities are endless. Moreover, he/she is cautioned never to become vain about his/her abilities and compare them to that of God.**

The following three additional examples are often cited to explain the benefits of Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana and true faith in God:

One's inner strength and will power are tremendously increased and help a person deal with difficulties in life even when a great calamity befalls. One has the fortitude to deal with problems calmly and try to find solutions instead of drowning in sorrow and lamentations. In Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati's words, **'True faith and devotion in God give a person the courage to forbear even a huge misery the size of a giant mountain, and this is not trivial but an immense accomplishment in life'**.

A person who has lost a job or other measures of earning livelihood often becomes depressed and fearful; some such persons become even paralyzed to take any action. However, a person who perceives God as his constant companion and protector would not become fearful and lose courage. He would ask for God's guidance, use his common sense and keep on making every effort to find a new path out of his misery and with God's grace usually will succeed.

A person who is feeling chilled and miserable because of cold weather and not having adequate clothing would find that when he finally manages to reach the warmth of a fire, his chill, discomfort and misery disappear. **God is that Ultimate warmth in life that removes miseries. Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana is the path to God the Ultimate Bliss and with total surrender and devotion to Him one ultimately attains God and finds joy and bliss in life.**

The following Veda mantra as an example describes the benefits

of Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana.

**Veda aham aytam purusham
mahāntam ādityavarnam tamasah
parastāt.**

**Tameva veditvā ati mṛityumayti na
anyah panthā vidyatay ayanāya.**

(Yajur Veda 31 : 18)

Veda aham	aytam purusham	mahāntam
I know	God, the Supreme Being, who is Perfection,	who is Greater than the greatest,
ādityavarnam	tamasah parastāt.	
who is Supreme Light and Pure Radiance,	tamasah parastāt.	where there is no darkness or ignorance.

Tameva veditvā	ati mṛityumayti
By knowing Him Alone,	one overcomes misery and death and finds bliss

na anyah	panthā vidyatay ayanāya.
there is no other	path known to find moksha or bliss.

According to a great sage or yogi who has mastered Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana and truly surrendered to and finally attained God, in that exulted state may say I know God, I see Him, and I experience Him. This is more than mere book knowledge or parroted recitation but **this is true knowing of God, the personal experience of a yogi or a true sage-this is true darshana¹ of God where one experiences immense enlightenment and bliss as well as God as one's constant Companion.** A true sage or yogi as the mantra declares would acknowledge that **God is the Supreme Being who is Perfect in every**

1. The Sanskrit word *darshana* means seeing, vision or truly experiencing God. In contrast to true darshana described in the text above, many Hindu temple priests have corrupted the word darshana by showing *moortis*-icons of deities to the devotees after elaborate rituals and ceremony as the equivalent of their *darshana* of God.

manner and has no deficiencies or shortcomings (also see pages # 13). **He is Greater than the greatest; He Alone is Almighty, Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. God is the Supreme Light that enlightens the soul from within. God is the Pure Radiance in whose presence there is no darkness or ignorance and a person can find the right path to follow in life.** God is the Final Shelter of all. God is Guru of all gurus (Patanjali Yoga Sutra 1: 26) i.e. Teacher of all spiritual teachers.

In the second line of the mantra the sage who knows God goes on to state that by **knowing God alone, one overcomes misery and unhappiness in life.** The word *mrityum* in Vedic Sanskrit stands both for death of the physical body as well as misery or unhappiness in life. People usually think that they can overcome unhappiness or misery in life by acquiring wealth and worldly goods or pleasures. However, as stated earlier on pages # 13, if worldly goods could give lasting happiness, the super-wealthy of the world would be the happiest persons but they are not. Also, the mantra implies that while one who is born will always have death of the physical body but by attaining God (moksha) one is not reborn for a very prolonged time and thus one conquers death. **The mantra ends by the sage telling other fellow human beings that there is no other path to accomplish bliss and enlightenment except through Eeshwar-stuti-prārthana-upāsana, total surrender to God and truly knowing Him.**



Appendix : Patanjali's Yog Darshanam Yama and Niyamas

There are currently hundreds of books on Yoga published all over the world, however, **most of them have deviated far from the original Yog Darshanam described by Maharshi (sage) Patanjali** a few thousand years ago in India. The purpose of yoga (pronounced without the final *a* as *yog*) as previously discussed on pages # 44 is the union of the soul with God where the soul is consciously aware of God. **Yoga is a path of personal spiritual development that utilizes upāsana (meditation) to bring enlightenment, self-realization and, ultimately, the attainment of God and bliss.**

Patanjali's Yog Darshanam has 195 aphorisms (sutras) divided into four chapters to describe various aspects of yoga. The best comprehensive commentary on Patanjali's Yog Darshanam that I have found is by Swami Satyapati Parivrajak titled *Yog Darshanam* (in Sanskrit and Hindi) which includes Maharshi Vyasa's commentary on Yog Darshanam as well as Swami Satyapati Parivrajak's explanation of each of the 195 aphorisms based on his more than 40 years of intense practice and teaching of true yoga.

The purpose of this appendix is not to explain the whole Patanjali's Yog Darshanam but to help the reader **appreciate how integrally interconnected is Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana (worship of God) with true yoga as described in Yog Darshanam.** Patanjali's yoga follows eight progressive steps that teach how to turn the senses and the mind away from their normal interest in outside things and other

distractions to focus inwards towards God. Patanjali's Yoga is primarily a spiritual method; however, it includes attention to physical and mental well-being through the practice of the eight steps. Because there are eight progressive steps in Patanjali's yoga, it is also referred as Patanjali's *ashtanga* yoga. The eight steps are as follows :

- I *Yama*: Self control, abstention from vices
- II *Niyama*: Moral practices and discipline
- III *Āsana*: Postures for the practice of yoga
- IV *Prānāyama*: Control of the breathing and the body's vital energy
- V *Pratyāhāra*: Withdrawal of the mind from sensory stimuli
- VI *Dhāranā*: Concentration
- VII *Dhyāna*: Deep meditation
- VIII *Samādhi*: The superconscious state of enlightenment

The focus of yoga in the West has been expressed in yoga exercises that are contained in a limited manner in step three (āsana) of the eight-step yoga. The first two steps, yama and niyama, are almost totally ignored. **Nevertheless, genuine yoga teachers in India have always strongly emphasized that mastering the first two steps is absolutely essential for any type of advancement in yoga practice or upāsana, no matter how useful the exercises may be for health. It is in these first two steps that the pupil begins to learn to concentrate the mind away from distractions, which is necessary to accomplish upāsana (deep meditation) to attain God during the last three steps dhāranā, dhyāna and samādhi of Pātanjali's ashtanga yoga.** Steps three to five which are Asanas, Prānāyam and Pratyāhāra help the aspirants to focus and steady their practice during meditation and when practiced properly advance the person to the last three steps.

The following discussion is focused on **three aspects of Patanjali's Yoga: the first four aphorisms that describe the purpose of yoga; detailed discussion of yamas and niyamas the first two steps of**

yoga; and the description of God in Patanjali's Yog Darshanam to validate and help the reader appreciate the integral interconnection between Eeshwar-stuti-prārthanā-upāsana (worship of God) and true yoga. For a deeper understanding of the steps three to eight and other aspects of Patanjali's Yoga the reader is referred to texts by Swami Satyapati Parivrajak (see bibliography).



The First Four Aphorisms of Patanjali's Yog Darshanam

Aphorism #1 : *Atha yoga anushāsnam.*

Atha (here is a discourse on) on the *yoga anushāsnam* (discipline of yoga).

The Sanskrit word *atha* in Vedic scriptures is used at the beginning of a text and implies that the discourse is for the benefit and well-being of the reader and mankind. **The emphasis in this aphorism is on the word discipline**, because no advancement in yoga is possible without discipline. The most important element is a strong commitment to follow the eight steps of yoga in a progressive manner. It would be unreasonable to expect success in the later steps if the first ones were ignored or treated lightly.

A commitment must be made to incorporate the first two steps of yoga into one's life on a 24-hour basis each day. For the remaining six steps, the duration of practice begins small and gradually increases. It is said that progress in yoga is easy for certain aspirants. The reason may be based upon their deep faith in and devotion to God, as well as the sum result of their karma in this and previous lives. However, **most persons initially find following the first two steps of yoga to be a slow and difficult adventure because they often require a major transformation in one's way of thinking and living.** Many either simply give up or spend time searching for short cuts. **The short cuts form the basis of many misdirected and deviant practices under the guise of yoga that have proliferated all over the world**

but actually at core have nothing to do with true yoga.

This aphorism reminds us that discipline and practice are essential for progress in true yoga. Sustained practice in yoga is called *abhyāsa*. **Instructions from a guru, whose life reflects Patanjali yoga's true teachings, are both desirable and extremely helpful, but it is not absolutely essential for progress, should no true guru be available.** Aphorism 1: 26 reminds us that **Guru of all gurus is God. If no true guru is available, one can directly seek God's guidance.**

Aphorism # 2 : *Yogah chitta vritti nirodhha.*

Yogah (yoga is) *nirodhah* (stopping or removing) *chitta* (mind's) *vritti* (those activities or inclinations that cause agitation of the mind).

The second aphorism of Patanjali's Yog-Darshan states that **the purpose of yoga is to stop and finally uproot those activities, propensities and activities of the mind that cause agitation so that the mind can become tranquil and pass into a state of perfect peace.**

The word *vritti* in yoga refers to activities and inclinations of the mind. The purpose of yoga is not to suppress the mind because, when suppressed, the mind's activities continue to smolder. Rather, **the aim of yoga is to re-channel mind's activities towards God and virtue whereby all of mind's usual distracting activities cease, mind becomes calm and finally the superconscious state of samadhi is attained** (also see pages 24-25).

The activities of the mind according to Vyasa's commentary on Patanjali's Yog Darshanam are divided into the following five states :

1. Agitated, restless, indulgent
2. Dull, inert, lazy, disinterested
3. Active, interested and directed but without sustained resolve; easily distracted
4. Resolute, concentrated, pointed, focused
5. Tranquil, calm

These states of mind are mainly thought of in their spiritual context,

but a secular interpretation is equally possible. Most persons exist in the first three states, especially in the first. However, none of these three states is fit for advancement in yoga. **Real yoga begins when the mind is resolute (state 4) and becomes more established in state 5.** Even when a person's mind exists mainly in states 4 and 5, it may be distracted. Every practitioner of yoga therefore (as stated earlier in aphorism # 1 needs both discipline and sustained practice (*abhyāsa*)).

Aphorism #3 : *Tadä avasthānam drushtuh swarupay.*

Tadä avasthānam (in that state the soul abides in) *drushtuh swarupay* (its essential form of spirit as well as in the Supreme Self or God).

The third aphorism describes what happens when the mind is made completely tranquil. The words *drushtuh swarupay* in this aphorism have been translated in two different ways. The translations are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. **The first translation is, “The soul sees its true eternal self” as completely distinct from body and mind, free of all attachments to items made of matter (prakriti). This is the state of self-realization.** This state is not, however, an end in itself. **In the next stage, the soul remains steadfast on a one-to-One basis with God (the Supreme Self/Spirit, the Self who pervades even our soul). This manages to form the basis for the second translation, “The soul abides in the Supreme Soul”** because it is only then (when the mind is completely tranquil) that the soul finds bliss in God who alone is the Supreme Bliss (also see pages # 13 and 24-25).

Aphorism #4 : *Vrittisāroopyam itratra.*

Itratra (In other states) *vrittisāroopyam* (the mind is attracted to its indulgent activities, inclinations and tendencies).

This aphorism reminds us that **each of us has a free will and choices to make on life's journey.** It is certainly possible to indulge one's mind in the distractions of the material world and identify one's soul with the gratification of sensual pleasures. Unfortunately, the continued

fulfilling of the mind's indulgent tendencies only leads to increased attachments and further bondage of the soul to the material world with the accompanying spiritual emptiness and profound unhappiness.

On the other hand, it is possible to choose the spiritual path of aphorism # 3, which leads to enlightenment, the attainment of God and immense bliss. For those desiring spiritual elevation, there is but one choice, the path of yoga. Unfortunately, only a few persons choose this avenue.



Patanjali's Yog Darshanam : Steps I and II: Yama and Niyama

The word *yama* in yogic parlance means self-control in the conduct of life with emphasis on virtuous conduct and refraining from vices. The word *niyama* refers to the various moral disciplines of life that must be observed in order to progress further in yoga. Because these two are interrelated, they are being discussed together. There are five yamas (2: 30) and five niyamas (2 : 32) as described in detail below.

The five Yamas are as follows :

AHIMSĀ (or Ahinsā) : Nonviolence, absence of doing harm (2 : 35)

The usual English translation of the word ahimsā is nonviolence, but **the word actually implies the controlling our tendencies for jealousy, anger, desire to do harm to others, cruelty and killing as well as their replacement with love, compassion and forgiveness.** The word nonviolence has often ended up implying being passive or powerless, lacking sufficient strength to fight back. Quite the contrary, ahimsā is an act of courage, a commitment to avoid hurting, fighting with or killing others in thought word and deed and is an attribute of the strong and brave. Ahimsā does not mean avoiding the fight against injustice, but rather the fighting of injustice by nonviolent means whenever possible. Also, ahimsā does not mean that one should just “take it” when attacked and not fight back, although it forbids attacking and harming others for personal pleasure or advantage.

One of the most difficult things to achieve in life is the

overcoming of doing harm at the level of thought. How is it possible to accomplish this? This is only possible when the soul of every other being is seen to be the same as one's own soul; when there is true brotherly love for others. When anyone deliberately tries to harm us, we usually develop a sense of enmity toward that person and start to plan retaliation, which often involves violence. By learning compassion and forgiveness and treating others with love and kindness, it is possible to overcome violence: it takes two to fight. A yoga aspirant must learn to behave in a saintly manner. The punishment of the sinner or evil doer belongs to society and ultimately God, not to the yoga student. The idea of being a vegetarian is also based upon the concept of ahimsā, the avoidance of bringing harm and death to animals when food needs could be met by nonviolent means.

All that has been said about ahimsā refers to behavior on the personal level. Ahimsā does not forbid the state from punishing a criminal or a nation from fighting back when attacked or when its security is threatened. In the Bhagwad Geeta, Krishna (a master yogi) advises the brave warrior Arjuna on his duty to kill and vanquish the evil Kaurava brothers who had repeatedly refused to resolve their differences by just and peaceful means.

SATYA : Truth (2 : 36)

Truth is that value that transcends all other moral values. Truth is the foundation on which all human interaction is based. Even liars use the pretense of truth in their dealings with others. It is necessary to always be willing to accept that which is true and discard that which is not in every aspect of life. To be scrupulously honest may require giving up financial or personal security or social position. Discarding cherished beliefs may be necessary, and in the final analysis, sacrificing one's life. Because of the fear of giving up their security or beliefs, most people at times are willing to lie. **The inner joy and strength that a completely honest person feels can never be experienced by a liar.**

Truth in the Vedic Hindu religion is considered at three levels:

- a. Thoughtmental intent
- b. Word verbal expression