

**Meaning :** The state of equilibrium of the integration of Satva (mind, sensitivity), rajas (motion), and tamas (mass) is Prakriti (i.e., matter). When the equilibrium is disturbed by the will of the Divine, then Prakriti assumes the form of Mahan, i.e., tangible matter; from Mahan arises Ahankara. I-sense on the sense of definition, from Ahankara arise the five subtle elements, and senses of both types, i.e., five senses of perception and five senses of volition with mind as the eleventh; from the five subtle elements arise the five gross elements akasha, vayu, agni, jala and prthivi), and the soul is the twenty fifth. This group of 25 in the total cause of the universe. From the five gross elements are created all the physical form in the universe—all forms organic and inorganic, animate and inanimate, bodies of men, animals, birds, fishes and vegetation, mountains, stars and planets, everything. Prakriti (Nature), although it is so mighty that one cannot imagine where it ends, cannot by itself do anything. The presence and will of God, imminent in it, causes it to evolve into myriad forms. It is for us to live in the midst of this variety and enjoy it, but we must remember that this enjoyment is not the end, it is only a means of experiencing the world of nature. Our end is to rise above this experience to freedom and release so that we enjoy the bliss of God. The experience of the world is secondary, freedom (Moksa) is primary. Abhyudaya (experience, enjoyment, living) is a value, but Nihreyasa (rising higher, freedom) is the ultimate goal. The travel is a means to the destination.

Daily prayer, morning and evening, is a reminder, a regular exercise in thought and meditation that we must not go astray, that we must keep to the right path and move towards the destination.

### Thoughts on the Hymns of Prayer

**Sankalpa :** Sankalpa is a collection and concentration of the thoughts and energy of the mind, a conscious decision that you are going to do such and such thing. When you sit down on a comfortable asana (seat) in a comfortable erect posture to pray, you chant the Gayatri hymn and collect and tie the sika (the tuft of hair on top of the head). It is a symbolic act, meaning that you collect your scattered thoughts to concentrate on prayer and meditate on God.

**Acamana :**—Acamana means sipping of water. The sadhaka sips water once with “Om sanno devi.....” etc. Sipping of water is an act of physical and symbolic purification. It cleans the throat and restores the balance of body-humors (vata, pita and kaffi, air, bile and phlegm, the balance of these three maintains the physical and mental health of the body. It is said in the Rgyveda :—

अप्सु मे सोमो अब्रवीदन्त्विश्वानि भेषजा ।  
अग्निं च विश्वशंभुवम् ।  
apsu me soma abravīdantar-vīśvāni bheśajā ।  
agnim ca vīśvasāmbhuvam ॥

Rg. 10, 9, 6.

That is, the waters reflect all the peace, energy and recuperative powers of the world for me.

Water, thus, is symbolic of peace, energy, health and renewal. Therefore the prayer begins with sipping of water. Rightly too. Life begins in peace and ends in peace, health and energy being the dominant middle stabilized in peace. Life is a large-scale yajna and prayer is a constant reminder of the need for peace, energy and action in the shadow of God. Yajnavalkya says in Satap. ha Brahmana.

तेन हि पृतिरन्तरतः शेष्या ढ वै आपः शेष्यो भूत्वा व्रतमुपयानि ॥  
Tena hi pūtir-antarataḥ medhyā ha vai āpāḥ medhyo bhūtvā  
vratam-upayāni ॥

“Water is pure, full of peace. It is good for the intellect. May I also abide in peace at heart, so water is sipped for the sake of peace.” When the sadhaka sits for prayer and sips the water, it appears that he is saying: “Water cleanses. It gives peace. Let me too sit in peace and pray for peace.” The Veda also indicates the spiritual side of the symbolic meaning of acamana. “Ta apah sa prajapatih”, says Yajurveda (32. 1). The Lord Prajapati, father of all the forms of life, is apah (water). The Lord blesses the world with peace and bliss. Water too blesses us with peace and bliss. Hence the water—God symbolism is poetically correct.

### Touching the organs

Health according to the vaidic view means health of the body, mind and soul. A sickly person cannot have spiritual realization. The upanishad says: “Nayamatma balahinena labhyah” (Mundaka upanishad 3, 2, 7), i.e., “God cannot be realized by one who lacks vigour and vitality.” Hence the hymns of prayer underscore the need for health of the body and mind and the vigour and energy of the various organs of the body. Hence the hymn “Om vak vak.....” etc. prescribes that the sadhaka should pray for the health of the system, and, touching the various organs energize them with faith and autosuggestion. Even the honour and reputation of a person depends on his performance, and performance depends on the health and efficiency of the organs of sense and action. The hymn says that the tongue and the sense of speech, the respiratory

organs and the pranic system, the eyes and the sense of sight, the ears and the sense of hearing, the navel and the digestive system, the heart, the throat, the head, the arms and hands, all should be healthy and strong in function. We should also take care that we should do nothing which is a matter of shame and dishonour. If our health is good and we are virtuous, we are in a paradise on earth. There is an important part of the hymn : "karatala karapristhe", meaning that we should look both to the palm and the back of the palm. We should do good, that's fine but not enough. We should also review our actions and know how the others review them in our absence—on our back. Touching the organs with water is symbolic.

### Purification of the organs (Marjana)

Health and vigour of the organs is not enough. For a virtuous living, their purity too is important. In the hymn "Om bhuh punatu sirasi....." etc., we pray that the Lord may bless us with purity of the organs and senses and purity all round, sprinkling the organs with water is symbolic, as if the sedhaka is practically washing off all impurities, and doing so at his/her level, is praying to God for the bliss of purity—because without Him nothing can be achieved only on the human level. The word "punatu" (may purify) is a prayer to the Lord.

Marjana means cleansing and purifying. If the senses and organs are strong and healthy but not pure, a person may act like a devil. The senses are active and restless, and the mind is volatile. The mind and the senses require control and direction. The Gita says :—

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हृस्वन्ति प्रसमं मनः ।  
2, 60.

**Indriyāni pramāthīni hṛsvanti prasamam manaḥ ।।**

That is the senses are powerful and they mislead the mind by force to their objects outside. Hence the prayer in the Veda :—

भद्रं कर्णाभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

शिर्यैरङ्गैरसुखासक्तन्निर्व्यसोमहि देवहितं यदायुः ।। यजु० 25, 21.

**Bhadram karṇebhiḥ śṛṇuyāma devā bhadram paśyemākṣabhir**

**yajatrāḥ । Śhirair-angais-tustuvānsas-tanūbhir-vyasaḥmahi**

**devahitam yādāyuh ।।**  
*Yaj. 25, 21.*

**Meaning :** Ye wise and the virtuous! worthy of company, may we hear with our ears what is good, may we see with our eyes what is good. Strong and healthy in our body and its organs, and praying to the Lord, may we attain a full life worthy of noble people.

Manu says about the mind and the senses :—

इन्द्रियाणां विचरतां विषयेष्वपहसिषु ।

सयमे यत्नमातिषेढ् विद्वान् यन्तेव वचिन्नाम ।।

**Indriyānām vicarātām viṣayेष्वapahāsiṣu ।**

**sanyame yatnam-atisiṣṭhed vidvān yanteva vacinām ।।**

Just as an intelligent charioteer keeps the horses under the reins, so should an intelligent person control his mind and soul and restrain them from going astray into the temptations of the senses.

According to the Veda, Manu and Svami Dayanand, a virtuous life is possible only when the mind and the senses are pure. One can then alone attain Dharma (virtue), Artha (wealth), Kama (pleasure/happiness), and Moksa (union with God).

### Pranayama

Pranayama means control of the vital pranic (breath) energy. It begins with breath control and goes beyond to the control of the currents of vital energy across the system.

Control of the mind, next to the control of the senses, depends on the control of pranic energy. While we silently chant the pranayama hymn "Om bhuh Om bhuvah.....", we should concentrate on God, the controller of the entire universal energy. We should, at that time, withdraw our mind entirely from the external world and its experience with the senses. Even the memory of experience should be shut out.

**How to do Pranayama :—**When you wish to do pranayama, and that is normally during Sandhya (prayer) morning and evening, you must have a light stomach, very clear indeed. No heaviness should be there. You should not do pranayama if your stomach is full, because in that condition, pranayama is harmful, the simple way of pranayam is this :—

Sit in a straight, erect, comfortable posture, no strain please—because strain distracts the mind. Breathe out silently, slowly, lightly, so lightly that even you don't hear the sound of the breath. While you are breathing out, chant the hymn for pranayama quietly with an awareness of its meaning. When the breath is out, stop it there and continue chanting the hymn. Hold as long as you can hold conveniently, without strain, then breathe in, again slowly, silently, lightly. Continue chanting the hymn. When the breath is full and in, hold it there. Chant the hymn. If you chant the hymn twice while breathing in, chant it four times while holding it in. This makes one pranayama. Do three pranayams at least. Increase the practice by one per week. You can do it before starting the prayer also. It will help in concentration of the mind.

While you are holding the breath out, withdraw the abdomen, specially the lower part, as far inward as comfortable possible. While you are breathing in and holding the breath, let the lungs and the abdomen give you a feeling of fullness.

**The Benefit :—**Pranayama is highly beneficial to the health of the body and mind. It cleanses the internal system, as if it burns the impurities just as the fire, worked on by the bellows, hums the impurities of metals.

Says Manu :—

दह्यन्ते अयमनानां धातूनां च यथा मलाः ।

तथेन्द्रियाणां दह्यन्ते दोषाः प्राणस्य निग्रहात् ॥ मनु० ६, ७१.

Dahyante dhmāyāmānānām dhātūnām ca yathā malāḥ ।

tathendriyāṇām dahyante doṣāḥ prāṇasya nigrahāt ॥

Manu, 6, 71.

Just as the impurities of metals are burnt away while they are heated in the fire, so are the impurities of the body-organs burnt away by the control of prana.

When you swallow a morsel of food or take a draught of water, you hold the breath. Similarly, when you lift a weight off the ground, you hold the breath. If the hold is broken, the weight falls through. So pranayama collects the energy, increases the vitality, purifies the working of the system, and gives concentration of mind for meditation and general performance. It burns away the impurities such as cholesterol in the system and prevents ailments of the blood/heart system, specially blood-pressure, palpitation and ailments of the liver, pancreas and spleen, and hardening of the intestines and the muscles of the abdomen. If the system is clean, flexible and efficient, the mind and senses are at peace, in control, and you can concentrate on the supreme Reality of the Universe and experience ananda, heavenly bliss which transcends all pleasures of the senses.

### Aghamarsana—purging yourself of the sin of pride

The fall of man through pride is sure. Guard against that, because pride is the gravest sin. How does pride come in?

You have purified your senses and organs. You have collected your senses and controlled your mind. You are a master of yourself and you feel, naturally, that your potential is great. Man has been called the highest of all creatures. On Looking to the lowest creatures, you confine yourself to your

greatness and forget those who are greater. You forget God too. His creation evaporates, because you remember only yourself and your grandeur. Stop here to think.

Think of the creation, the vastness, the grandeur and the sublimity of it! Think of yourself in comparison with it! Think of the earth itself of which you may be proud—because you say you possess a thousand acres of it. The earth is 8000 miles in diameter and 25000 miles in circumference. Yet it is but a tiny part of the sun. The sun is 1300,000 times greater than the earth, 450,000 times as heavy, yet how small it looks in the sky! There are billions of suns and solar systems in the suns. Our sun is 9.5 crores of miles away from the earth. There are suns and galaxies whose light has not yet reached us. Recently the scientists have discovered a galaxy which is 200 million light years away! The mind gets baffled at this vastness and grandeur of the universe! Think then of the glory of the Creator! There is only one word—unthinkable. He is beyond words, Infinite! Man too is good, even great in his own little place, but he is nothing more than a tiny speck in a Universe which is immeasurable, therefore know what you are. You are endowed with understanding and speech. Think of the Lord and His Creation. And yet you are not nothing. You are His child gifted with knowledge. Cultivate knowledge in humility, and the highest knowledge is : Thine is the glory, thine is the power! Bless me with a glimpse of it!

The subject ('God' of the three aghamarsana mantras (Om rañcha satyañcha.....suryacandramasan.....) is Bhava-vrta,i.e., the reality of the universe. God alone is the creator of the Universe which includes the sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, the constellations, the earth, the heaven and the middle region, the air and water, etc. etc. The Lord creates the universe according to the previous actions of the souls. When we meditate on these mantras, our pride is dispelled and we have a proper perspective of our place in the universe, our potential as well as its limitations.

God creates the universe and ordains our life according to our actions. We cannot escape the consequences whether they are good, bad or indifferent. Let us be aware of His presence and justice, and let us refrain from evil. Let us not commit sin. This is really the redemption from sin and pride. We ought to know God, realize the vastness of creation, know our place, its potential and its limitations, do good, fear and refrain from sin. This is real redemption.

Real knowledge is knowledge of the self, the reality of the universe, our place in it, action and its consequence, and the creator ordainer and the dispenser of justice. Ignorance is contrary to this. On the nature of Ignorance Maharsi Patanjali says in the Yoga-sutras 2., 5.

अनित्यशुचिदुःखानामसु नित्यशुचिखान्धारिरविद्या ।।

Anityāsuci-duḥkhānāmasus nity-suci-sukhātamaḥyati-  
avidyā ।।

That is, ignorance is the sense of eternal in the transitory, of purity in impurity, of pleasure in pain, and of the soul in the non-soul (body). So indulgence in pleasure which is passing, feel the thrill of exciting experience and miss the oncoming pain, to do dirty acts and believe that they are good and pure, in short, to run after the body and miss the soul, this is ignorance, this is sin too. Keep the perspective. Follow the right and you will be saved.

Svami Dayanand says that one gets freedom from pain and death only through right action, right knowledge and right worship. If your knowledge is false, your action is evil and your worship is misdirected to other object than the One universal Spirit, salvation is impossible. False speech, false action, false knowledge and worship of idols etc. should be given up. Keep your mind at peace, meditate on God, do good to others and pray for God's help and blessing in doing good to all.

Prayer is of two kinds, Saguna and Nirguna. In Saguna prayer, you meditate on the nature and character of God in relation to the universe. He is Omnipotent, merciful, just, intelligent, all pervasive, all-knowing, all creator, sustainer, giver of all happiness, blissful, pure, eternal, all knowledge and bliss. He is the father, mother, brother, friend, ruler and justicer of all. To concentrate and meditate on these characteristics of God is Saguna upasana. Nirguna upasana means meditation on the absolute and transcendent nature of God—the beginningless, endless, unborn, undying, unchanging, formless, object of no sense, thought or language, one who is beyond all, the one supreme. It is difficult to understand this, because He is not an object of understanding. The transcendent can only be apprehended in the soul. If you feel just the fringe of the experience of the Infinite, you are redeemed.

### Mansa Parikarma

Manasa Parikarma means mental circumambulation, a mental exploration of the power and presence of God in all directions. There are six mantras dealing with six directions, each direction presided over by the Lord Saviour and Protector. In each mantra, there is a prayer for justice and mercy. The mantras prescribe love and non-violence towards all creatures: love means you give up all fear, hate and enmity. Maharshi Patanjali says in *yoga sutras* that once a person is established in love and non-violence, the life around him is free of enemies.

There is only love around. Manu too says :—

इन्द्रियाणि निरोधेन रामहे, क्षयेण च ।  
अहिंसा च भूतानामृत्त्याय कल्पते ।। 6, 60.

Indriyāṅām nirodhena rāgadvesa-ksayena ca ।  
ahinsayā ca bhūtānām-amṛtatvāya kalpate ।। 6, 60.

This is, the person who serves all creatures with the control over senses, without prejudice or preference, and with love for all, attains salvation.

**Thoughts on the term 'Raksita' :**— All the six mantras adore In these, three mantras speak of the Lord's qualities—*asita* (free), *svaja* (self-existent), and *svitra* (the pure). The other three speak of God's creations—*tirasciraji* (moths, insects, etc.) The created beings and objects maintain the balance of nature by consuming poisons and gases and releasing life-giving substances.

**Namah :**—Each mantra uses the word 'namah' which means salutations. Why salutations to creatures? Svami Dayananda says that the word *namah* in these contexts means utilization with intelligence and a feeling of gratefulness to God.

### Upasthana (Communion)

After the mental experience of God's presence in all the directions, the next four mantras speak of closeness to God. The first "udvayam tamasas-pari...." speaks of 'ut' and 'utama'. Nature is 'ut' (high), we should go higher (utara) and attain to the *utama* (highest). How do we recognize Him? This is answered in "Udutyam jatavedasam....." "Chitram devanam" says that there are innumerable lights which reveal Him for our direct experience. "Tachaksub" says that He stands directly in front. See Him, walk in His light, live and be free.

### Samarparana (Submission)

You have been in the company of God. The result, surely is purity of mind and soul. The light of God is in you, you know Him directly, there is no room for selfishness, pride and evil. You are just ripe to offer yourself in surrender to Him and His will. This is *Brahma-dana*, self-sacrifice. Surrender first to Sambhu, the One who is good, then to *sankara*. One who does good, and then to Siva, who is pure love and mercy. The Lord is the first and ultimate source and cause of physical, mental and spiritual good. Those who surrender to Him find their goal of peace and happiness, the ultimate salvation.

**Prayer—the process**

**Concentration** : The first preparation for prayer is concentration of mind. So first in a mood of purity of body and mind, sit in a comfortable posture on a convenient and comfortable seat which should be firm. Then sip water thrice with the following mantras (Take water in the right palm and sip once with each mantra) :—

ॐ अमृतोपस्वरणमसि स्वाहा ॥

ॐ अमृतापिधानमसि स्वाहा ॥

ॐ सत्त्वं यशः श्रीर्षसि श्रीः श्रयतां स्वाहा ॥

Om amṛtopastaranam-asi svāhā ॥

Om amṛtāpīdhānam-asi svāhā ॥

Om satyam yaśah śvīr-mayi śrīḥ śrayatām svāhā ॥

**Meaning** : Lord Almighty! You are the source and you are the giver of Happiness!

Lord Almighty! you are the source and giver of Ananda, supreme bliss! Lord Almighty! Bless me with truth, honour, and wealth! Truly, all that is, and all that I have is only by your Grace! Grant in the Grace and Compassion.

**Concentration—with Pranayama**

Pranayama (breath control) leads to mind control. It immediately helps in concentration of attention. For Pranayama, you should be sitting in a clean place where the air is clean and freely blowing. Sitting comfortably, breathe out the air of the lungs slowly without strain. Withdraw the belly inward as far as possible, empty out the lungs. Hold while you can. Then breath in, again slowly and steadily to fill the lungs to the depth and top of both. Hold. Concentrate on God. Repeat the process thrice or more if you like. Chant the pranayama mantra during this practice of concentration. If some other mantra helps you, chant that.

**Achamana mantra**

ॐ शन्नोदेवीरभिस्य आपो भवन्तु पीतये । संयोरभिर्यवन्तु ऋः ॥

Om śanno devīrabiśtaya āpo bhavantu pītaye ।

śam yorabhisravantu nah ॥

**Meaning** : May the Lord Almighty who pervades all, and is the source and giver of all happiness and bliss, be kind and compassionate for our good and shower a rain of beneficence from all around.

**Indriya-Sparsa mantra**

This mantra is for energization of all the organs of perception, volition and understanding. Take water in the left palm, and with the middle and ring fingers of the right hand touch the organs as given below :—

ॐ वाक् वाक् ॥ (the right and left side of mouth)

ॐ प्राणः प्राणः ॥ (the right and left nostrils)

ॐ चक्षुः चक्षुः ॥ (the right and left eyes)

ॐ श्रोत्रं श्रोत्रम् ॥ (the right and left ears)

ॐ नाभि ॥ (the navel)

ॐ हृदयम् ॥ (the heart)

ॐ कण्ठः ॥ (the throat)

ॐ शिरः ॥ (the head)

ॐ बाहुभ्यां यशोबलम् ॥ (the right and left shoulders)

ॐ करतल करपृष्ठे ॥ (both the palms and the back of chest).

ॐ वाक् वाक् ॥ (touch the right and left of mouth)

Om jprāṇaḥ prāṇaḥ ॥ (the right and left nostrils)

Om cakṣuḥ cakṣuḥ ॥ (the right and left eyes)

Om śrotṛam śrotṛam ॥ (the right and left ears)

Om nābhīḥ ॥ (the navel)

Om hṛdayam ॥ (the heart)

Om kaṇṭhaḥ ॥ (the throat)

Om śīraḥ ॥ (the head)

Om bāhubhyāṃ yaśobalam ॥ (the right and left shoulders)

Om karatala karapṛṣṭhe ॥ (the palms and the back of chest).

**Meaning** : Lord Almighty! By your kindness and grace, may all the parts of my body be healthy, strong and active so that I may do good deeds—my organs of speech, breath, sight, hearing, my navel, the heart, the throat, the head, shoulders and arms, the palms and their back.

**Mariana (Sanctification) mantra**

It is not enough that the organs of the body be strong and healthy. They ought to be pure. They ought to be sanctified.

Take water in the left palm and, with the middle and ring fingers of the right, sprinkle water on the organs :—

ओम् भूः पुनातु शिरसि ।। (the head)

ओम् भ्रुवः पुनातु नेत्रयोः ।। (the eyes)

ओम् स्वः पुनातु कण्ठे ।। (the feet)

ओम् महः पुनातु हृदये ।। (the heat)

ओम् जनः पुनातु नाभ्याम् ।। (the navel)

ओम् तपः पुनातु पादयोः ।। (the feet)

ओम् सत्यं पुनातु पुनः शिरसि ।। (the head)

ओम् खं ब्रह्म पुनातु सर्वत्र ।। (all over the body).

Om bhūh punātu śīrasi ।। (the head)

Om bhuvah punātu netrayoh ।। (the eyes)

Om svah punātu kaṅthe ।। (the throat)

Om mahah punātu hrdaye ।। (the heart)

Om janah punātu nābhyaṁ ।। (the navel)

Om tapah punātu pādayoḥ ।। (the feet)

Om satyam punātu punah śīrasi ।। (the head)

Om kham brahma punātu sarvatva ।। (all over the body).

**Meaning :** May the Lord Existent, worthy of Love and devotion, purify and sanctify my head. May the Lord Intelligent, who wards off all sin and pain, purify and sanctify my eyes. May the Lord all Bliss and giver of happiness purify and sanctify my throat. May the Lord of all greatness and glory purify and sanctify my heart. May the Lord Supreme, the Creator, purify and sanctify my navel. May the Lord Almighty, cause and origin of ceaseless action, purify and sanctify my feet, May the Lord Almighty, Lord of Truth, again sanctify my head. May the Lord Omnipresent, imminent and transcendent, purify and sanctify me all over.

**Pranayama mantra**

ओम् भूः । ओम् भ्रुवः । ओम् स्वः । ओम् महः ।

ओम् जनः । ओम् तपः । ओम् सत्यम् ।।

Om bhūḥ । Om bhuvah । Om svah । Om mahah ।

Om janah । Om tapah । Om satyam ।।

**Meaning :** Lord Almighty, Lord of Existence and dearer than life because He is the giver of life, Lord of Intelligence who saves from sin and pain, Lord of Bliss and giver of all happiness, Lord of greatness and glory, Lord creator and progenitor, Lord of action and justice, Lord all Truth and Lord of all Reality. May the Lord be kind and compassionate!

**Aghamarsana mantras**

These are three hymns of self-valuation for the inculcation of active virtue and humility in the interest of achieving the right perspective in life.

ओम् ऋतञ्च सत्यञ्चभीदथात्पसोऽस्थजायत ।

ततो रात्रजायत ततः समुद्रो अर्णवः ।।

समुद्रार्णवदशिसंवत्सरो अजायत ।

अहोरात्राणि विदधद्विश्वस्य शिषतो वशी ।।

सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ धाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत् ।

दिवं च पृथिवी चान्तरिक्षमथो स्वः ।। ऋ० 10, 190, 1-3.

Om śtañca satyam caḥhidhātātapaso' adhyājayata ।

tato rātrajāyata tataḥ samudro arṇavaḥ ।।

Samudrād-arnavād-adhisamvatsaro ajāyata ।

ahorātrāṇi vidadhadvishvasya miśato vaśī ।।

Sūryācandramasau dhātā yathā pūrvam-akalpayat ।

divam ca pṛthivim cāntarikṣamatho svah । IRg. 10, 190, 1-3.

**Meaning :** Under the self-generated creative force of the Absolute Divine Will came into existence the cosmic law and the subtle matter (which became the material cause of the universe emerging simultaneously with the eternal law. Thence evolved Night and Darkness, the conceivable but intangible existence. Thence arose the cosmic ocean of nebulous matter all indistinct and formless.