

Apr 16, 1983 *Kirtan at Godalming (Nita and Sada Siva)*

Ambikananda had not been well for some time. Devotees were concerned about his health.

Arriving at the kirtan after a difficult drive through the centre of London, Swami Ambikananda announced that at this kirtan he would be concentrating especially on the Gayatri mantra and its meaning.

‘Worship of Mother Gayatri is very auspicious. It wards off hundreds of things, and even brings enlightenment. We will do *japa* on Gayatri mantra with beads 108 times, and with the proper way of breathing.

‘We have learned that you should breathe in with the mantra *So* which is very powerful, “I am She”, and breathe out *Ham*, “I am He”, Shiva and Shakti, which also matches very well the Gayatri *Bhu, Buva, Swaha*, Goddess of the three planes and spheres. Make your acquaintanceship with the Goddess and then you will know how good She is for everything, much more than we can say.

‘So, the Goddess blesses you. The spirit of the Goddess is here. It is a matter of faith, and of doing. When we do the mantra we want you also to meditate on your own Ishta Dev, and worship that Favourite Deity, whoever He or She may be. Worship the Feet of your Personal God as ‘*Bhu*’; and then ‘*Buva*’ in the form of a flower. The Goddess sits on a lotus, so mentally you have an eternal flower that doesn’t fade. Then ‘*Swaha*’ – when everything is destroyed it becomes ashes, *vibhuti*, the lotus feet crystalized - this is the *Swa* plane, the Earth, the ‘hemisphere’,¹ and the heavens.

‘But first we will have explanation of Gayatri mantra from Sathya Sai Baba.

A young Australian actress, Miriam, read from Sathya Sai scripture² about the meaning of the Gayatri mantra and the Pranava OM, while Sada Siva played sarod. During the reading Shiva Shakti, dressed in a red sari, was worshipped as Mother Gayatri:

‘...The Gayatri mantra is a prayer addressed to the universal intelligence that kindles the discriminatory power which enables a man to analyse himself and to realize his true nature... JBS Haldane³ wrote that the Gayatri mantra ought to be inscribed on the door of every laboratory in the world...

‘The exact meaning of the Gayatri mantra is as follows:

“OM. O divine power, you who illumine the great Sun and three worlds of Earth, Air and Heaven, we implore you for the discrimination that will lead us from darkness to light”

‘...The Gayatri mantra is considered the essence of the teaching of the Vedas. It is usually to be said at dawn, midday and at dusk, but God is beyond temporality and one can say it always and everywhere... It is a treasure you must guard all through your life, so that it guards you in its turn. It will protect you from harm...’

¹ By ‘hemisphere’ Ambikananda always referred to the Hindu *buva*, or intermediate sphere between earth (*Bhu*) and Heaven (*Swaha*)

² Reference needed

³ A British-born geneticist and evolutionary biologist. He was one of the founders of population genetics.

Ambikananda led devotees in chanting Gayatri mantra after dedicating to ‘Lord Ganesh, to Durga Mai, to Lord Narasimha the Man-Lion God, and of course to your Ishta Dev...’

A U M
Bhu Buva Swaha
Tat Savitur varenyam
Bhargo devasya dimahi
Diyo yo na prachodayat
A U M

‘...The Feet, *Bhu*; the Flower, *Buva*; the *vibhuti* ash of lotus feet, *Swaha*. Meditate on that with great love. Have the grace of your mind, have the grace of your self-effort, have the grace of the Goddess...

A U M
‘A is Brahma in the navel, *U* is Vishnu in the throat, and *M*, Shiva Maheshwara, on the tip of the tongue and back in the form of a flame in the heart.

‘A U M
Bhu Buva Swaha
Tat Savitur varenyam
Bhargo devasya dimahi
Diyo yo na prachodayat
A U M

After an extended practice of Gayatri mantra in this way, Swamiji led arati to (Shirdi) Sai Baba.

Mahaprasad followed, and then there were more bhajans, mainly Sathya Sai songs led by Gayatri on harmonium, such as

‘Antar jyoti namo, Paramatma jyoti namo...’,
and
‘Sambhu Mahadeva, Shiva Sambhu Mahadeva...’

In his talk with devotees Ambikananda warned: ‘If you expect too much you may not get anything. Just do what you do with a spirit of dedication and you will be surprised and astonished.’

Many devotees had been strongly affected by what they had recently heard and indeed witnessed regarding Swami Premananda and his miraculous activities, and some were even talking about visiting his ashram in Sri Lanka. It was possibly in reference to this feeling among the devotees that Ambikananda now said, rather sharply:

‘One place is not finished, how many places are you going?... Don’t waste time by being distracted... The mind gets tired. All this is sickening. My spiritual life must be healthy. I don’t need a sickening life...

‘Keep your mind healthy, that’s more important than the body... If you don’t have health, you cannot meditate. If you have headache, you cannot meditate. If you have worry, if there is material problem, you cannot meditate. That’s why these gurus and gods are coming and granting now even worldly boons so that they can get you to meditate a little bit for yourself...’

Then he added:

‘...We are only giving you our experience. So do what we say. A stitch in time will save a lot of worry, problem, catastrophe...’

[These proved to be prophetic words, since not long afterwards the terrible civil war between Sinhalese and Tamils broke out in Sri Lanka. Premananda's ashram was burnt to the ground, and the swami was forced to find refuge in India.]

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