

Is there an actual formula that can help us navigate through life with greater ease, poise and grace?

Is the law of *karma* iron clad with no escape clause?

Do the scriptures contain a secret code that provides an invisible and invincible weapon for self-protection, for cutting the bonds of cause and consequence, for enhancing one's hidden talents and creativity, for overcoming individual phobias and shortcomings, for creating a sense of harmony to one's environment and changing the mind set of others as well as oneself?

Three panellists from three continents (Asia, Europe and North America) representing two generations, share their stories of how they hit the bull's eye by following Bhagawan's call to chant the mother of all *mantras*, possibly the most potent 24 syllables that can change one's emotional, mental and spiritual outlook and even alter one's destiny.

Welcome to a Radio Sai's special discussion on the Gayatri *mantra*. A communications specialist from BBC India, Sai School alumna and currently a teacher from Toronto, Canada and a mental healthcare worker from Scotland, UK explore the power of the Gayatri *mantra*. This discussion was recorded at the Radio Sai studio on October 27, 2013.

The panel consisting of Angela Dickson (AD) of Scotland, Pradakshana Kaul (PK) of New Delhi, India and Sai Amrita Kaul (SAK) of Toronto Canada, was moderated by Radio Sai's Karuna Munshi (KM).

Reproduced below are edited excerpts from the discussion that was first aired on Morning Glory, Thursday Live on 31 October 2013.

KM: Sai Ram. Let us start with the fundamental question. What is the source of the Gayatri *mantra*?

SAK: The Gayatri *mantra* originally appears in the Rig Veda and it does appear pretty much in all four of the Vedas. So it is a very important *mantra* historically within the history of Hinduism. Some refer to it as being the oldest *mantra* that was imparted within the Hindu tradition. And the important thing to note here is that Gayatri itself is actually a meter, this refers to a certain way that a mantra is chanted. Many of us know that there are different kinds of Gavatris including a Sai Gayatri Sayeeshwaraya Vidmahe, Sathya Devaya dheemahi, Thannah Sarvah Prachodayat.

So a regular Gayatri has three lines of eight syllables in each of them. This Gayatri mantra is the Gayatri to the Sun or to Savitur - the word appears within this



Gayatri *mantra*. This is known to be the oldest one that is one of the first Gayatri *mantras* that has ever appeared.

KM: Angela Dickson - spiritually what does the Gayatri *mantra* do for us?

AD: Spiritually the Gayatri *mantra* does everything for us. There are so many positive aspects related to the Gayatri *mantra*, but one important one is - Swami's teaching to Love all Serve all and lot of us struggle with loving all. By chanting the Gayatri *mantra* - it helps us to open up the heart *chakra* as never before enabling us to love all and serve all. Also the Gayatri *mantra* enables us to cleanse and energise all the *chakras* within our body. *Chakras* are the energy centres within our body. The Gayatri *mantra* does all the clearing, does all the work. All we have to do is sincerely chant the Gayatri *mantra* on a regular basis.

All of us Sai devotees are very keen to do meditation. But this monkey mind as Swami called it very often prevents us from achieving a pure meditative state. Chanting Gayatri *mantra* strengthens the mind. It relaxes and purifies it and enables the individual to achieve that meditative state.

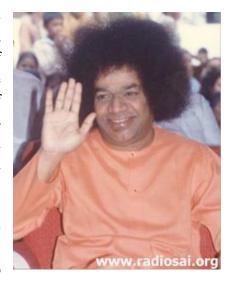
Also if we regularly chant Gayatri *mantra* and allow it to work on us, it takes some time but we achieve the ultimate goal and that is merging with the Supreme Being which is the goal of all humanity.

KM: I would like to quote something from Late Pundit Sri Ram Sharma Acharya who has very well summed up exactly what you have just said. And he says, "Very simply Gayatri

tells us that - We meditate on that most adorable, desirable and enchanting lustre and brilliance of the Supreme being, our source energy, our collective consciousness who is our creator, inspirer and source of eternal joy. May this warm and loving light inspire and guide our mind and open our hearts." And he goes on to say - "The sacred prayer spirals through the entire universe from the heart of the chanter appealing for peace and divine wisdom for all. The Gayatri *mantra* inspires wisdom in us. In very basic but beautiful language it says - May the Divine light of the Supreme Being illuminate our intellect to lead us along the path of righteousness... But this *mantra* does more - it opens up our heart and our mind so that we open ourselves to new possibilities.

PK: I would also like to add that, Narada Muni is supposed to have said that chanting this *mantra* once a day eradicates all our sins committed during the course of day. If we chant it ten times a day then it eradicates all the sins committed during the course of the day and night. If we chant it hundred times then it eradicates all the sins committed during the whole month and if we chant it ten million times, it will liberate us from the cycle of birth and death.

KM: Makes it sound so easy. The purpose of life is to overcome the cycle of birth and death. Now Sai Amrita and Pradakshana you represent two



young women in their twenties. You are both professional women. Have you incorporated the Gayatri in your lives?

PK: Yes we have. Every day I start my day with Gayatri *mantra* and it gives me an energy that really helps me to keep going through the day. Most of us think that we have very busy lives and we don't have time for things like spiritual practice. But something as simple as a Gayatri *mantra*, takes less than ten minutes. You can even chant it in the shower, like performing an *abhishek* to the body or while eating – that way our food becomes sacred *prasadam*. If we are able to find time for social networking, why not just a few minutes to focus on the Gayatri *Mantra*?

KM: If we spend five minutes less on Facebook, texting or checking out things on Pinterest or what our friends are doing all over the world, who is tweeting what, we can easily incorporate a few minutes of Gayatri in our schedule. Sai Amrita your perspective?

SAK: I definitely agree that the Gayatri *mantra* is certainly not difficult. The wonderful thing about it is it is very convenient. Personally I find that it becomes a part of my moving meditation. It is one thing to sit down and meditate and that does require a lot of consistency and requires a lot of commitment. But for those of us who lead very busy lives, we have to

try and find that meditation, those moments of meditation in our movement and in everything that we are doing.

When you are walking from your car through the parking lot into your building, while you are cleaning or washing dishes, while you are moving if you constantly remain in a state of remembrance of chanting or thinking of the *mantra* or meditating upon something. You also incorporate it into your body, into your movements.

I remember when I was younger I often chanted Gayatri *mantra* while walking up the stairs at our school here in Prasanthi Nilayam. Because we had several stairs in our school and our dormitories were on the top floor, every time I was climbing the stairs, I would chant the Gayatri *mantra* and then just out of habit anywhere else I was climbing stairs, automatically I would go straight to chanting Gayatri *mantra*. We create these little habits, we create these little pathways in our brains and it is not hard to do. It is just one small thing to incorporate into your regular routine.



And if I may also add here, the concept of *ajapa-japa*. It is a little bit unrelated but on a side note that we see Lord Shiva - He appears with the *damaru* (a little drum) in His hand, which He can shake and it constantly keeps doing tap tap tap tap - the funny little sound. And the significance of that instrument in his hand is that of *ajapa-japa* which is chanting all the time without even chanting wherein a person doesn't need to consciously think about what they are thinking about because it is always on the mind.

Whether we are doing it with the Gayatri *mantra* or any *mantra* - we would strongly suggest the Gayatri because it is a very very powerful and potent *mantra* which we will speak about further. Just have it constantly going on underneath your breath and it doesn't take very long to create that practice in ourselves for that to become very normal. At first it may seem you have to remind yourself repeatedly. Give yourself, I would say ten days, and it is already happening.

KM: Talking of moving meditation, for me Gayatri is the driving meditation because driving in India is very challenging. So as soon as I start the car, in order to keep myself safe and more importantly others on the road safe, I chant the Gayatri. So it also can be a driving meditation I guess.

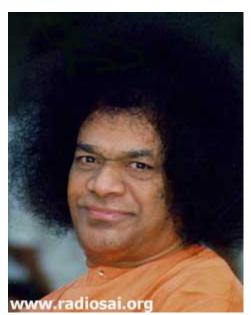
SAK: I have a little counter which fits on my finger like a ring and I use that as my little counting *japa mala* (rosary). Though there is really no need to keep counting. You don't have an accounting relationship with God. But I try and keep count while I am driving. That is the

other thing which I do, because Gayatri chanting helps me concentrate while I am on the road.

KM: Now Angela Dickson, who should chant the Gayatri *mantra*? Who is eligible for it?

AD: Everyone is eligible to chant the Gayatri *mantra*. Gayatri *mantra* is a universal *mantra*. So there are no barriers to any human being at all to chanting Gayatri *mantra*.

Swami has also stated - I wish that everyone chants the Gayatri *mantra*, which I think is a very important statement for us all to take on board. And as you said all these positive things about chanting Gayatri, it also strengthens our wellbeing. When there is so much misery in the world and sometimes we get bogged down and the mind is very very heavy again it is another positive aspect of chanting Gayatri. It lifts the heaviness, it lifts our miseries it strengthens our bodies and I am going to turn the tables here. Karuna yourself have had a positive experience on your own health through chanting Gayatri *mantra*.



KM: Yes indeed. I can vouch with absolute confidence because till about two and a half months ago I had lot of health issues and I was quite a regular visitor to Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital where I would have to be rushed in the middle of the night to the Emergency. I was experiencing all kinds of difficulties with my health. The nurses and the doctors would administer the necessary treatments and I would spend a few hours there, come home and get on with my work. It was getting very laborious.

But ever since I started chanting the Gayatri and actually applying the power of Gayatri *mantra* to specific parts of my body and focussing my mind on those parts and visualising the effulgence of Gayatri

penetrate through those parts of my body into the *Chakras* involved, I seem to have overcome all my aches and pains and all my health issues. I have never felt fitter, healthier or more energetic than I do now since the last may be twenty years. And all that I have done differently is to focus very religiously on my Gayatri practice for last two and a half months or so.

AD: So you are proof of Gayatri's healing properties.

KM: Yes I am. Absolutely. And I find the Universe cooperates even better with me ever since I started chanting the Gayatri. I download thoughts straight from a very higher source and as soon as I have a thought I am looking for help to translate it into action, people just walk into me and they offer help or they are just the right person to seek guidance from and I

find there is so much of synchronicity. I have always chanted the Gayatri since my childhood because when I was a student, Swami at one time held a mass *Upanayanam* and He made all of us, not just the boys who were being initiated into the sacred thread, but the entire Poornachandra auditorium, chant with Him. So Bhagawan personally initiated us into the Gayatri. But ever since I started chanting for my health by directing the *mantra* to specific trouble spots and energy centres - the outcome has been tremendous.

AD: And I have been very privileged to witness this divine miracle, strength and power of the Gayatri time and again simply by watching people overcome pains by chanting this special wonderful Mother *mantra* - the Gayatri into their body. And Gayatri *mantra* as well as being a *mantra* is also a prayer and sometimes we forget to pray to the Gayatri for a specific condition before we chant. In praying to Gayatri f or a specific condition and then chanting



the *mantra*, very often that condition, difficult, painful condition is eased almost instantly by chanting Gayatri *mantra*.

KM: At this point in time I would really like to quote Pundit Sri Ram Sharma Acharya once again because he has summed up with what I want to express but lack the perfect words, and he says - "The sages of ancient times selected the words of Gayatri carefully and arranged them so that they not only convey meaning but also create very specific vibrations and powers of righteous wisdom through their utterances. The rishis and the sages of the

Vedic age had experienced and experimented on the enormous, extra sensory energy pools, the *chakras*, the *upchakras*, *granthis*, *koshas*, *matakas* and *nadis* which are hidden in the subtle cores in the endocrine glands, nerve bundles and ganglions. It is said that the activation of these rekindles rare virtuous talents and super normal potential. Scientists, Meta physicists, Spiritual practitioners and others are studying and rediscovering these ancient approaches towards self-realisation.

"The secret of the super natural impact of the Gayatri *mantra* in the physical domains of life lies in the unique configuration of the specific syllables of the *mantra*. The cyclical enunciation of this *mantra* stimulates the subliminal powers and enters in the subtle body. The pressure on tongue, lips, vocal cord, palette and the connecting regions in the brain generated by continuous enunciation of the twenty four special syllables of the Gayatri *mantra* creates a resonance or a vibration in the nerves and the threads of the subtle body. The musical flow thus induced titillates the extra sensory energy centres. The latter begin to stimulate a sublime magnetic force and they arouse in the *sadhaka* the vital currents of Gayatri *Shakti* immanent in the infinite domains. This magnetic charge induced by the continuous repetition of the Gayatri *mantra* attunes the seekers mind to link with the super natural power currents."

This sums up how our minds become sharper, our immune system stronger and our hearts open when we chant the Gayatri by creating this vibration.

SAK: I would certainly agree for the analogies I often use is that the Gayatri *mantra* is like sunshine for your soul. It is a *mantra* but it is also a prayer asking for illumination, asking to help illuminate our mind that we also become as effulgence as that brilliant one. And it really is like sunshine for the soul and the way I see it is especially what you were referring to with the regards to your health.

If we chant the Gayatri *mantra* with integrity of intention, you can consider your intention to be a seed which then the Gayatri *mantra* provides the sunshine for it to grow. And if our consciousness is really the soil bed within which we are planting the intention of good health

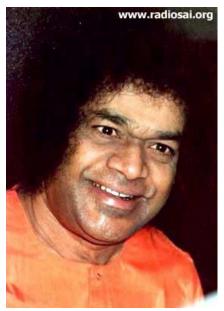
or healing or clearing and the Gayatri *mantra* is the sunshine - it is the source of life for everything that we set our intention for. And there are many times where I feel almost helpless when I hear of another person's condition. And I set my intention to be for whatever is good should happen and I chant the Gayatri *mantra* for that person or that situation or that place. So really the Gayatri *mantra* is the food or nourishment for whatever we want to set as our intention.



PK: Yes. Even for the self - we deal with daily stresses but we also have to keep our soul's need in mind. While money can probably get us physical comfort but what Gayatri brings to us is physical, mental, and spiritual comfort. And it can really make you agile and take care of both your physical and spiritual well-being.

KM: Swami has said something very similar - supplying the calories for the spirit is as necessary a process for happy living as supplying calories for the body. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, morning worship, noon worship, evening worship all six are equally essential. You miss any one of the six; you are at your peril.

Swami also said - do not sing cheap and defiling film songs instead recite the Gayatri mantra. When you bathe the body is being cleansed, let your mind and intellect also be cleansed. Make it a point to repeat it when you bathe and as well as before every meal because the meal becomes prasadam, when you wake up, when you go to bed, every time and also repeat shanti three times at the end to give peace to the three entities within you - the body, mind and the soul.



PK: Gayatri *mantra* also provides you with a layer of protection. You know, I live in Delhi and Delhi has been...

KM: And it concerns all of us to read about the dangers young women face in the Indian capital.

PK: Absolutely and I chant the Gayatri *mantra* every day. And I feel it gives me a protection, like an invisible weapon in my hand. Gayatri *mantra* can give anybody the protection that can safeguard them from danger. It is like our *vajra* or weapon in our hands, that makes us invincible and it is invisible and one can carry it anywhere with us without anyone noticing it. So I would suggest to every woman to chant Gayatri and then only move out of the house. It will give them protection, the kind of comfort that

they want always with them. Gayatri *mantra* creates a force field within your aura so nobody can violate it. And your auric field gets reinforced and you carry this security shield around you that no one enters cross into.

KM: Very well said. Angela with your years of experience - do you concur with Pradakshana Kaul?

AD: Yes. About twenty years ago when I was given the Gayatri *mantra* I had no idea of its power and effulgence. I began chanting the Gayatri *mantra* in complete ignorance. I didn't fully appreciate it then but I still benefited.

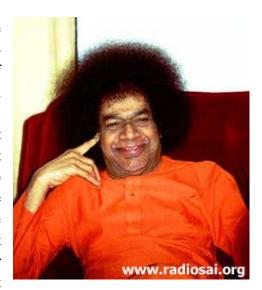
At this point in time many human beings throughout the world are all praying for help for humanity - to change the negative aspects of humanity, to change the aggressiveness. And by getting family and friends to chant it, we are all becoming a part of the effulgence of Gayatri and this benefits the entire human race and all other beings when we chant Gayatri together.

Recently many Sai devotees got together in 45 countries and participated in the global chanting of the Gayatri *mantra*. And I am sure the effulgence; the light of that chanting affected every human being in a positive way. So we also have a duty to the self as well as to all others. If we gather family and friends and work colleagues and chant Gayatri regularly for the sole purpose of helping all globally, I am sure we can bring about really positive change in our world at many levels.

KM: And I guess if we do it as a group activity, the impact just grows exponentially as opposed to just doing it individually and I just want to also remind all of us that Gayatri can be listened to, chanted or even just thought about or contemplated upon. There is power and potency in all three approaches. Choose the approach that you are most comfortable with.

So you can think about it, you can listen to it, if somebody is ailing, you can just play it on a *mantra* box or just loop it on Radio Sai's website - we have loop able 'Baba teaches Gayatri', to play for a patient. I read somewhere that playing the Gayatri *mantra* or chanting it together affects our environment much as an antibiotic works on an internal infection in the body. If the environment around is negative or very unpleasant and there is dark energy around and you are not happy in a situation, there are health issues and such, just chanting or playing the Gayatri *mantra* can actually combat all the negativity like eliminate an infection from the environment.

SAK: One thing that I find very interesting about the Gayatri *mantra* is that it is symbolised by woman - we have the Goddess Gayatri who is representative of the Gayatri *mantra*, who represents the Gayatri *mantra*. And that is also in part for many reasons. And the way we speak of the Gayatri *mantra* is that it is a *mantra* love, it gives us a sense of safety, and it gives us a sense of security. And really it is also referred to as the Mother of the Vedas and so the Gayatri *mantra* really is a loving Mother. It is the *mantra* that is there to nurture us, it is a *mantra* that is there to protect us, that provides us with whatever we need and of course there are many reasons that



the Gayatri Devi herself is represented in certain ways - she seems to have five heads which I guess would be ten sets of eyes looking in all the various directions and the number five also represents the elements and represents the various races on the planet, she signifies all kinds of learning, she represents wealth, she represents understanding. So from another standpoint as well if you were to take this *mantra* and personify it, it is a loving Mother whom you can entrust every thought, every desire that you have and know that she will take it from there and she will carry it out as she sees best. So the *mantra* is not just a set of words - feel free to create that association with it and have a true relationship with it not just as a sound but as something that actually touches you and moves you and is a part of your regular daily life.

KM: Very well said and there are so many ways to understand the meaning of the Gayatri *mantra* because people like to break it word by word and at one point in time Swami just demystified it and said - At the end of the day if you can say no prayer except the Gayatri *mantra*, you are fine because in it lies the sum total of every prayer, every aspiration of the human soul and he also simplified its meaning to say 'Dear Supreme Divine Mother please fill our thoughts, our words and our actions with divine love'.

SAK: That's all. So simple.

KM: And the end of the day it is a prayer to the Supreme Divine Mother to fill our thoughts, words and deeds with her divine love. So whatever we do is suffused with divine love, not selfishness, not personal motive, not worldly love, or any self-interest.

SAK: That is really all there is to it.

PK: I would strongly recommend to everyone to chant the Gayatri *mantra* and once they do it for about ten days, they will personally feel the kind of vibrations it has and the kind of divine grace it bestows.

SAK: And maybe try and set the intention. Just set the intention that I want to chant this *mantra* and I want to truly feel its effect within my body, within my life. And then allow yourself to be open to how this may happen and how it may appear within your life.

KM: So as young women who practice the Gayatri and you are recommending it to many others who are listening to Radio Sai right now. Sai Amrita Kaul and Pradakshana Kaul how has the practice of Gayatri benefited you?



PK: I live in Delhi...

KM: And that alone calls for special survival skills.

PK: Yes indeed and I chant this every day and I know I am protected. I work in the development sector. I go to remote villages of Bihar. I go to Naxalite areas, meet Naxal families and talk to them about topics they may not be comfortable discussing. But I have had a wonderful experience with everything. I have people ask me don't I fear the dangers of the situation. I have never ever even felt or sensed anything like that. And I think that is because I have this Gayatri protection with me. Everywhere I go, I am surrounded by women talking to me about their problems in relation to the

goal that my project has set - better health. Because I chant the Gayatri *mantra* every day, I have protection and everything falls into the place. Naxal women, tribal women, everybody comes to me to talk about things like family planning which in those rural areas is a controversial topic.

KM: Culturally they are very sensitive. They don't generally talk about planning their families. But now that you have the opportunity to educate them in neo-natal health, pre-natal health, and maternal health - maybe you should talk to them about spiritual health by encouraging those women to chant more Gayatri. It will really help them. Tell them it is a universal prayer that will help them feel more secure and make better choices and better decisions.

PK: Yes I will try and do that.

SAK: Personally I often chant Gayatri to clear my mind. I find if I am very tired after a day at work or my mind is very full and I want to clear it out then the Gayatri *mantra* specifically the version that we have here of Swami chanting and then we are allowed to repeat - that I listen to very often just to calm myself down and to clear out my head space.

The rest of the time it is an active thing that is going on all the time but when I listen to the *mantra* specifically it is often just so that I allow myself to be centred again because there are times that you are not your best and more likely to not react that well with people that are around you and it is likely to affect everything else around you so I try to use the Gayatri *mantra* just to make sure that I can be calm and centred with myself and in my interactions with everyone around me as well.



PK: It also wards off all negative energies. Some office situations may involve politics, ego clashes and such unpleasantness. When you chant the Gayatri *mantra*, none of that impacts you in any way.

KM: Very good survival skill. Excellent pointers from the young lady from Delhi. Angela Dickson?

AD: Gayatri *mantra* for me is a journey from darkness to light. And through the grace of Swami I watch with a great deal of love the transformation in many other souls that is happening due to the powers of the Gayatri *mantra*. We have all been in a dark space. We have all prayed, we have all been lost, we have all suffered pain, we all wonder how can we get ourselves out, and how can we lift ourselves up? Through chanting Gayatri *mantra* with sincerity and from the heart we can overcome.

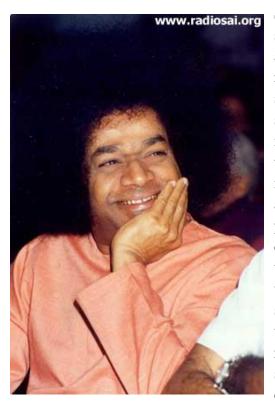
KM: Is there a specific place one should chant? Is it necessary to sit in front of your altar or in a temple or any place else where can one possibly chant? We talked about while having a shower, if you are in a rush and before eating a meal so that the food is purified, while driving and where else? Walking I guess.

AD: Everywhere.

KM: Everywhere and anywhere and there is no specific spot that anyone needs to confine this to. Initially thousands of years ago it was limited to the Brahminical tradition and it was

only passed from a guru to a male disciple. But now Swami has opened it to men, women, children of all races, all cultures, all classes and everybody is benefiting from it.

SAK: With regards to when it should be chanted and how I will refer back to Swami's saying - God is as close to you as you are as close to God.



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So really whatever your relationship is with your spiritual practice, let that determine where and when and how you want to chant the mantra. My relationship with Swami and my relationship with spirituality are pretty informal. I don't have a specific time for my spiritual practice. My practice is every day, all day and all the time. So that means that this is happening and I am carrying it on with me wherever I go. Sometimes I do choose to set aside a small portion of time so that for my own personal benefit because I feel like I need to sit down and allocate an hour just to meditate and just to calm my mind and do certain practice. But I would definitely encourage all our listeners as I am sure they are well aware that Swami is with you all the time. The universe is constantly listening and responding. So don't ever feel like you have to schedule an appointment or you have to schedule a date and time to do something like this because it is

If you have to clean a carpet, knowing exactly the right spot to hold the carpet and dust it, you can get it cleaned in one move. That is what the Gayatri *mantra* is. It is that perfect spot where you can, with one swift movement, achieve maximum results.

KM: Very nice analogy.

SAK: That is what the Gayatri *mantra* is for your soul and the mind. And if you do it with that intention it will surely have that result. You just have to put it into practice somehow or the other in your life.

KM: Without quite consciously recognizing that fact every time we chant the Gayatri even with the intent of personal healing, we are praying to the universal power to bless the entire universe. What a blessing it is! What a multiplier effect it has!

SAK: I think when you think about that and pay attention to how large scale and how grand the *mantra* is - it does give you goose bumps. Because you realise that it is very humbling.

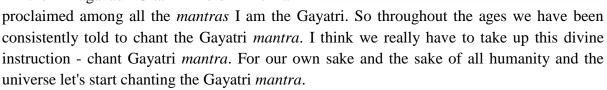
You realise that really I am part of something so large and in asking for myself I am asking for everybody and in asking for everybody I am asking for myself and you do feel like you are part of something and you do feel like you are part of a community. So the Gayatri *mantra* is as I said earlier it really is that she is our Mother and we are all her children. So have that faith, have that trust and establish that relationship with the *mantra* because it is not just words.

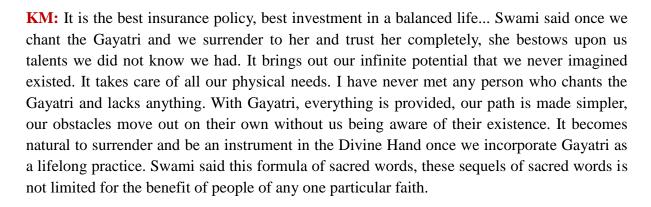
KM: And it constantly reinforces the sense of inter connectivity with everything around us. None of us can live in isolation in our own little bubbles.

PK: The Gayatri *mantra* really does take care of our mind and soul. We don't have any fear from anything and success in any aspect of life whatever it may be will be assured with this *mantra* because it is a mother that takes care of everything. Just chant and surrender to the *mantra* and life is good.

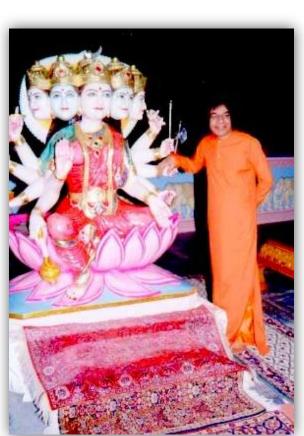
AD: At the recent Kumbh mela, all the great sages, wise yogis were asking people to chant the Gayatri *mantra* to bring about positive transformation in our world.

In the Bhagavad Gita - Lord Krishna





Your final thoughts - we will start with Sai Amrita?



SAK: Just chant the Gayatri *mantra*. No excuses.

KM: And if I may add, do so with love and faith in Her glory and generosity.

PK: After this interview I am so inspired that I am going to be doing Gayatri Mala morning, afternoon, evening and in between.

KM: Angela Dickson?

AD: I hope the love that has gathered in and around us all will reach out and touch each and every listener in their hearts. Be inspired to chant the Gayatri. Be inspired to share it with many others specially those who are lost and sick and suffering. Jai Sai Ram.

KM: Thank you all and Sairam.

