

Aarti - Om Jaye Jagdish Hare

Aarti is the most important ritual performed by the masses of India. This prayer is said to have been penned by Pandit Shradha Ram Phillauri in 1888. The entire prayer is an attempt to praise the glory of the inexpressible God and surrendering oneself to Him. The Aarti can be a very soothing experience. Each person, however, will realize for oneself by listening, singing and contemplating upon this simple but divine prayer.

For my western friends and well wishers, I have reproduced the Aarti below, followed by my understanding about it.

*Om Jaye Jagdish Hare
Swami Jaye Jagdish Hare
Bhagt Jano Ke Sankat
Khshan Mein Dur Kare ... Om Jaye Jagdish Hare (1)*

*Jo Dhaywe Phal Pave
Dukh Vinshe Man Ka
Sukh Sampati Ghar Aave
Kasht Mite Tan Ka ... Om Jaye Jagdish Hare (2)*

*Maat-Pita Tum Mere
Sharan Gahun Kiskee
Tum Bin Aur Na Duja
Aas Karun Jiskee ... Om Jaye Jagdish Hare (3)*

*Tum Puran Parmatma
Tum Antaryami
Par-Brahm Parmeshwar
Tum Sabke Swami ... Om Jaye Jagdish Hare (4)*

*Tum Karuna Ke Saagar
Tum Palankarta
Mein Moorakh Khal Kami, Mein Sewak Tum Swami
Kripa Karo Bharta ... Om Jaye Jagdish Hare (5)*

*Tum Ho Ek Agochar
Sabke Pran Pati
Kis Vidhi Milun Dayamay
Tumko Mein Kumti ... Om Jaye Jagdish Hare (6)*

*Deenbandhu Dukh Harta
Thakur Tum Mere
Apne Hath Badao, Apni Sharan Lagao
Dwar Para Tere ... Om Jaye Jagdish Hare (7)*

*Vishay Vikaar Mitao
Paap Haro Deva
Shradha Bhakti Barao
Santan Ki Sewa ... Om Jaye Jagdish Hare (8)*

*Tan Man Dhan
Sab Hai Tera
Tera Tujhko Arpan
Kya Lage Mera ... Om Jaye Jagdish Hare (9)*

This simply worded prayer produces tremendous vibrations and literally compels a person to become quiet and poised. It can be a very relaxing experience.

I have attempted below to present my understanding of the prayer, followed by my humble interpretation.

Glory be to thy Name (Om)
the Sovereign of the Universe
With thy Grace
the evils of the worshipper vanish instantaneously (1)

This is the prologue of the Aarti. In it is revealed the power of the word "Om".

Om, is perhaps the only word that phonetically and logically signifies the primordial sound. The great masters and saints have for thousands of years contemplated upon this one Word. It has even been said that all the Vedas dissolve into Gayatri and Gayatri itself dissolves into Om. In the Yoga, experiments have been conducted extensively to assess the impact experienced by an aspirant by simply uttering Om in a particular manner or by chanting repeatedly (Simran). It is not a case of hypnotism or auto-suggestion, but an established fact that one's association with the word Om with understanding helps in attaining transcendence.

One can go on and on

Om, thus, simply stated is the Word that is unequalled and unrivaled, therefore Supreme. It is perhaps for this reason that almost all Vedic Shlokas (verses) begin with the word Om.

Thus establishing Om as the Supreme One, the prologue of the Aarti asserts that all evils of the worshipper get annihilated instantaneously.

Anyone who Contemplates on thy name is rewarded
Mind's misery gets eliminated
Bliss and prosperity ascends
Body's ailments are cured. (2)

In this verse the worshipper is being motivated to contemplate on the Name.

Reward is offered in the form of mental peace and healthy body, both essential ingredients to lead a harmonious life.

It is my understanding that all our mental chaos and ill-health is projection of our own ego. It is due to the neglect or the lack of understanding of our own unique individuality that we find ourselves dragged into comparisons both subjectively and objectively. This chaotic state can turn into order when we learn to accept ourselves the way we are.

Thou art my mother and my father
To who else should I surrender
Except You there is none else
That I may aspire for. (3)

God, the primordial seed, is the Creator. Thus God is both the mother and the father. This being so, I can only beseech You and surrender myself to You. Without God there is nothing, hence my highest aspirations can only be You.

We notice in our daily life that we neglect God and rely upon transient sources for our existence. Resultantly, our lives are chaotic and full of frustrations. However, by realizing that God is the sole Cause, one can understand one's true being.

Thou art the complete One
The all-pervading
Residing Beyond the cosmic limits
Thou art the Sovereign of all. (4)

In the fourth verse of the Aarti, the worshipper is guided to realize that only God is complete. It is like looking at Him in the form of an infinite canvas, without beginning and without end. The understanding of the emphasis on God being the only 'all-pervading' One guides us to treat all creation in reverence. This acceptance only brings about Love and compassion.

Thou art the compassionate Ocean
Thou the sole provider
I am ignorant and trapped by senses
I am the servant and thou the Master
Please liberate me. (5)

The fifth verse glorifies and accepts God as an ocean of compassion and the only provider. The worshipper humbly accepts his state of ignorance and his being entrapped in sensory perceptions. A confession of sort is being made by proclaiming God the Master and the worshipper as the servant to invoke a sense of humility. And in the end the seeker seeks fulfillment which is only possible if one is liberated.

Thou art the unmoving

The Lord of all vital force
What means shall I adopt to meet you
Reveal to me, I earnestly pray. (6)

The sixth verse deals with metaphysics. It seems to be projecting the underlying principle of the Upanishads. To the ancient Hindu sages, Sun seemed to be the only constant or immutable object cognizable by the naked eye. The Upanishads proclaimed that everything revolves around the Sun. Everything has manifested from the Sun. Thus Sun is the source of all life as known to us.

In this verse, the worshipper is cognizing God as the only immutable principle, the source of all creation. This cognition is realization of the worshipper. This proclamation is what Apostle Peter says in the Corinthians, "All that you see and hear is subject to change". Guru Granth Sahib says, "*Jo Dise So Chalaan Har...*" Shankara said, "*Brahm Satyam, Jagat Mithya*" ... Verily only God is Truth, all else is perishable.

Having realized that only God is immutable, the worshipper now seeks God's grace so as to be able to understand the technique, through which he can literally be able to "see" that Source.

This verse reveals the curiosity of the worshipper and his yearning to realize the Truth.

Friend of the meek, Annihilator of evils
Thou art my Master
Grant thy grace and take me into your fold
I pray knocking your temple door. (7)

In the seventh verse again the worshipper, accepting God as the supreme Sovereign, seeks Him and pleads for His grace.

Annihilate my sensory traps
Forgive me of my sins
Grant the boon of faith and worship
and desire to serve thy creation. (8)

The eight verse emphasizes the yearning of the worshipper to become compassionate and loving so that he can render service to mankind.

We know that when our actions are performed with a view of rendering service, then even our daily chores become an act of worship.

Body, mind and material wealth
All this belongs to you
My offerings to you are already yours
There is nothing mine. (9)

Since the worshipper accepts God as his Creator, the physical body thus already belongs to Him. Consequently, the mind, which is but a subtle part of the body, cannot be ours. It too belongs to Him. The acquired material wealth is a result of body's actions and mental plans. Since the body and mind do not belong to us, how can then we claim the material wealth to be our possession?

In this verse, it is a concrete admittance of the fact that body, mind and material possessions are all transient and subject to change.

Whatever the worshipper places on the altar of God is in actuality taken from God's own creation. To thus claim that "I" did this or "I" did that becomes redundant.

The entire Aarti revolves around the supremacy of God and educates the worshipper to realize this and surrender oneself to this Truth.