

## [May the Gods Help Us!](#)

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FROM THE THE VEDAS

## May the Gods Help Us!

Swami Chinmayananda on an ancient student/teacher invocation

This peace chant is sung by the teacher and the taught, as well as during puja, traditional temple worship. It is a prayer from the Taittiriya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda raised in devotion to the recognized Gods of the Vedic Period.

These Deities invoked here are all delegates representing in Themselves one power or another given to Them by the All-Powerful. Thus, Mitra is the Guardian Spirit of the prana, or life-force, and the daytime. Varuna governs the "outgoing breath," apana, and the night.

Aryama is the presiding Deity of the Sun and the eyes. Indra is the governor of all might, and the physical strength in an individual. Though it cannot be located, we can at least say that its expression is generally through the instrument of the hands.

Brihaspati is an expression of the Divine which controls intelligence and knowledge. Vishnu, in His all-pervading nature, governs all movements and thus becomes the Deity of

the feet.

In invoking the blessings of Mitra, Varuna, Aryama, Indra, Brihaspati and Vishnu, the Vedic teachers and students are invoking healthy prana, apana, efficient eyesight, willing hands, wise speech and healthy limbs, so that day and night, with energy and strength, they may accomplish wise intellectual movement and fulfill the study in revolutionizing the gross in them to become the Divine.

The word shan means "well-being" and, therefore, the entire invocation is a prayer raised to these divine forces for their grace, so that in their blessings, all the above-mentioned instruments in us, may be assured of their well-being.

Brahman is a name uniformly used in the Vedas to address the Supreme, Infinite Truth. Vayu is called in Vedanta, sutratma, meaning the "evident expression of life," on the basis of which the entire kingdom of the living--the plant, the animal and the man--are bound together.

Ritam is a technical term which in its Vedic usage indicates the positive meaning of the shastra when correctly understood through an intellectual appreciation of the spirit of the scriptures.

May "That" bless me, so that my studies be fruitful. The student prays to the Supreme that his teacher also be blessed so that no obstacles may come during the sacred transaction

of the study. The invocation is rounded up with a thrice repeated "call for peace" to avert all possible obstacles.

Swami Chinmayananda (1917-1993), Vedantist writer, lecturer, translator, dynamic spiritual leader and Hindu renaissance founder of Chinmaya Mission International

The Vedas are the divinely revealed and most revered scriptures, sruti, of Hinduism, likened to the Torah (1,200 bce), Bible New Testament (100 ce), Koran (630 ce) or Zend Avesta (600 bce). Four in number, Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva, the Vedas include over 100,000 verses. Oldest portions may date back as far as 6,000 bce.

### Who Is a Hindu?

"Acceptance of the Vedas with reverence; recognition of the fact that the means or ways to salvation are diverse; and the realization of the truth that the number of gods to be worshiped is large, that indeed is the distinguishing feature of the Hindu religion." B.G. Tilak's definition of what makes one a basic Hindu, as quoted by India's Supreme Court. On July 2, 1995 the Court referred to it as an "adequate and satisfactory formula."