

Hymn to Brahma

ancient Sanskrit temple chant

arranged for choir by David Nelson Miller

Program notes

Three traditional melodies from India are brought together in this choir arrangement, sometimes without accompaniment, sometimes accompanied by keyboard, and sometimes accompanied by the recorded sounds of tanpuras. A tanpura is a traditional Indian string instrument which typically drones on 3 notes.

One possible translation of the Sanskrit text is below. The text beginning “Brahmanandam...” is sung to two different melodies, at the beginning and end of the arrangement. The central section is a setting of the traditional chant *Twameva Mata*, sung in Sanskrit and English.

Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu,
Guru Deva Maheshwara,
Guru sakshyat, parabrahma,
Tasmai Sri Guruve namaha.

*Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu,
Guru is the Maheshwara (Shiva),
Truly Guru is the supreme spirit –
Salutations therefore to the Guru.*

Brahmanandam parama sukhadam,
Kevalam gyana murtim,
Dwandwa titum gagana sadrisham,
Tattwam asyadi lakshyam.

*Full of transcendental bliss, giving supreme joy,
The sole Image of Wisdom,
Beyond duality, clear as the heavens,
Whose motto is: “Thou Art That.”*

Ekam nityam vimalam achalam,
Sarvadhi sakshi bhutam,
Bhawa titum triguna rahitam
Sadgurumtam namami.

*One, permanent, pure, immovable,
The everlasting Seer of all things,
Beyond thought, free from the three qualities –
My good Guru, I bow to Thee.*

Twameva mata cha pita twameva,
Twameva bandhu cha sakha twameva,
Twameva vidya dravinam twameva,
Twameva sarvam mama deva deva.

*You truly are my mother and my father,
You truly are my friend and my beloved companion,
You truly are my knowledge and my wealth,
O Supreme Lord, You truly are everything to me.*

Rehearsal notes

The recorded sounds of tanpuras are provided on a compact disk and as an mp3 file – either may be used. The sound technician plays Track 1 at measure 1, beginning at full volume. The recording itself fades in. At the conductor's cue, the sound technician fades out Track 1 from measure 98 to 109. At measure 252, the sound technician plays Track 2, beginning at full volume. The recording itself fades in. At the conductor's cue, the sound technician fades out Track 2 from measure 328 to 332. Dear Sound Technician: please play the recordings through two speakers in stereo, not mono!

The recording doesn't determine the conductor's tempo. Both tracks are much longer than needed, so the tempo can be flexible, and the recording can be faded out at any point. Nothing in the live performance needs to sync up with the recording. The notation marked "Recording Cue" shows when the recording is playing, but the recording should be thought of as a background texture, not something to sync to.

The conductor may cue the choir by holding up 1 finger at Rehearsal 1, and 2 fingers at Rehearsal 2. It's possible to conduct the first page in a large 3-pattern, like 3/2 (three measures of 2/4 = one measure of 3/2).

The soloists can be fairly free rhythmically. The square fermatas at measure 76 may be felt as lingering briefly, or may be disregarded.

The humming should be at a comfortable volume for the singers – no need to try to "hum softly."
Dear Conductor: please don't substitute "ooh" – the humming sound *should* be a very small percentage of the overall sound at letters A, B, and C.

Please do use a microphone for the solos, and rehearse with one. The recording of tanpuras should also be used in rehearsals. There's no sense in waiting until the day of the concert to find out how it sounds. Words to live by: "A rehearsal is as important as a concert."

It would be nice if the Gong were in G, or at least not in conflict with G. A large Tam-Tam with indefinite pitch would be fine. It shouldn't be as loud as anyone thinks it should be.

Other possible options to add quietly when the recording of tanpuras is playing –

- Continual roll with soft mallets on a large suspended cymbal or a second gong.
- Occasional harp or autoharp glisses. Not colliding with the melody, but between the phrases of the singers.
- An occasional finger cymbal note on G or D. Not a rhythmic pattern, just a pinch of color here and there.
- Live tanpura in G.
- Small windchimes (tinkly metal, not clunky wood). They may enter at measures 50 and 283 (marked in the score).

At measure 108 and similar places where there are six parts, please balance the number of singers per part. There should be some Sopranos and some Altos on the Mezzo part, and some Tenors and some Basses on the Baritone part. It's the Conductor's job to assign those middle voices, and the Singer's job to see such an assignment as a promotion.

The English translation of the text from the title page is also in the score in italics (not to be sung). A word-by-word translation and a pronunciation guide are on page 26. Particularly unguessable pronunciations are written in parentheses under the text in the score. Singers are encouraged to write in other pronunciations – the Sanskrit isn't consistent.

Optional cuts: From measure 361 to 374, which isn't traditional text. The English at letter R may be replaced by the Sanskrit from letter F, or that section may be cut. The ending at letter U is optional.

Twameva Mata (pages 10 through 16) may be sung as a separate piece. Please resist any urge to add metronomic guitar picking. It could be performed as written with the notated keyboard part, or *a cappella* with the sections in this order –
Letter K sung twice, the first time in Sanskrit, the second time in English.
Letter I (English).
Letter L (Sanskrit, with English closing).

The total duration is approximately ten minutes. *Twameva Mata* by itself is approximately 2:30.

Hymn to Brahma

ancient Sanskrit temple chant
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Freely, one beat per measure, ♩ = 54
Sempre legato

1

0:05

0:10

1

The keyboardist plays the first measure with the keyboard volume all the way down, then fades in the drone.

Silence

Str.

ⓧ

The sound technician starts playing the recording at full volume, and the recording itself fades in.

Tanpuras recording

Gong Δ

p

2

0:15

0:20

0:25

13

S

A

T

B

all Tenors of the Choir
(staggered breathing)

p

Mm

2

Kbd.

p

(The recording continues to add Tanpuras...)

(rec)

p

Δ

25 0:30 (A) Solo Tenor (at microphone)
mf

Solo 

Gu-ru Brahm - a, Gu-ru Vish- nu, 3
 (hah)

(A) Translation: *Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu,*
 (not to be sung)

S A *p* *Mm* all Altos of the Choir (*staggered breathing*) 


T B *p* *Mm* all Basses of the Choir (*staggered breathing*) 

Kbd. 

(rec) 

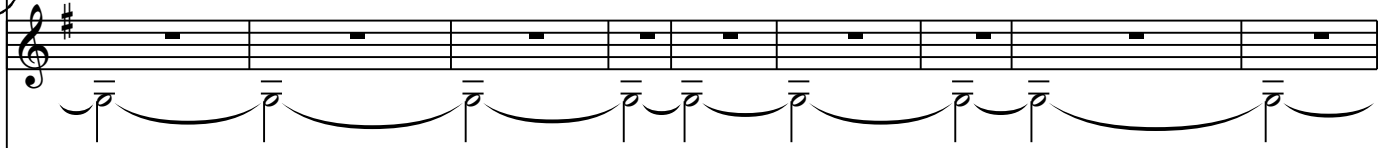
(Gong) Δ


37 3


Solo 


Gu-ru Dev- a Ma- hesh - wa- ra, Gu- ru sak- shyat, pa- ra- brahm - a,
 (haysh) (shahk) (hah)

Guru is the Maheshwara (Shiva), Truly Guru is the supreme spirit,

S A 

T B 

Kbd. 

(rec) 

46

B Solo Soprano (at microphone) *mf*

Solo
 tas - ma - i Sri Gu - ru - ve na - ma - ha. — Brah - ma - nan - dam
 (hah)
salutations therefore to the Guru. Full of transcendental bliss,

S
 A
 all Sopranos of the Choir *p* (staggered breathing)

T
 B
 Mm

Kbd.

B

(rec) * *And.* (Add continuous quiet small metal Wind Chimes. Fade at measure 104.)

55

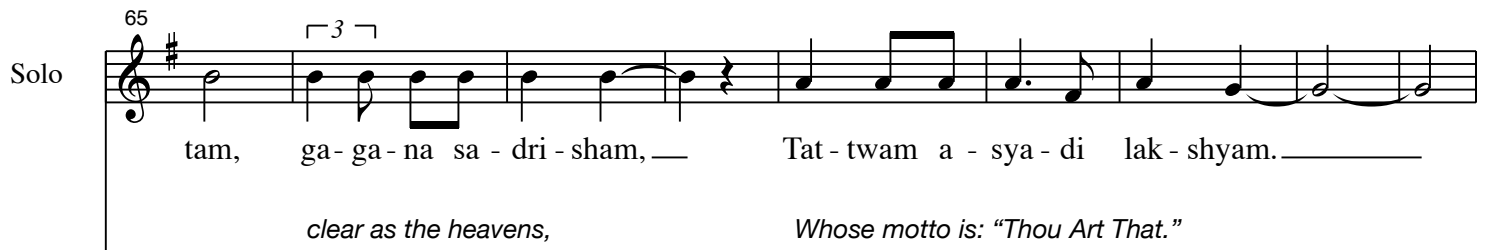
Solo
 pa - ra - ma su - kha - dam, — ke - va - lam gya - na mur - tim, Dwan - dwa — ti -
 (Dahn)
giving supreme joy, the sole Image of Wisdom; Beyond duality,

S
 A

T
 B

Kbd.

(rec) * *Gong* Δ *p* Δ

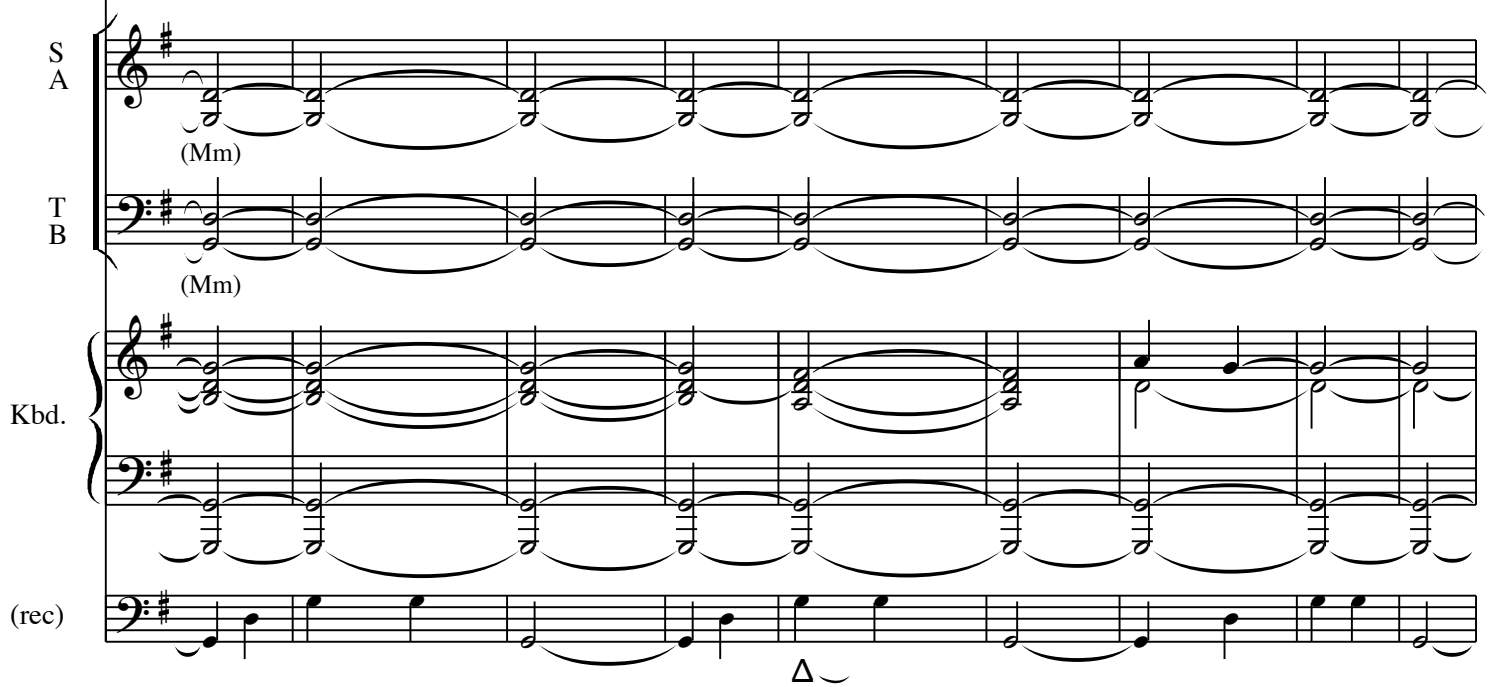
65 

S
A
(Mm)

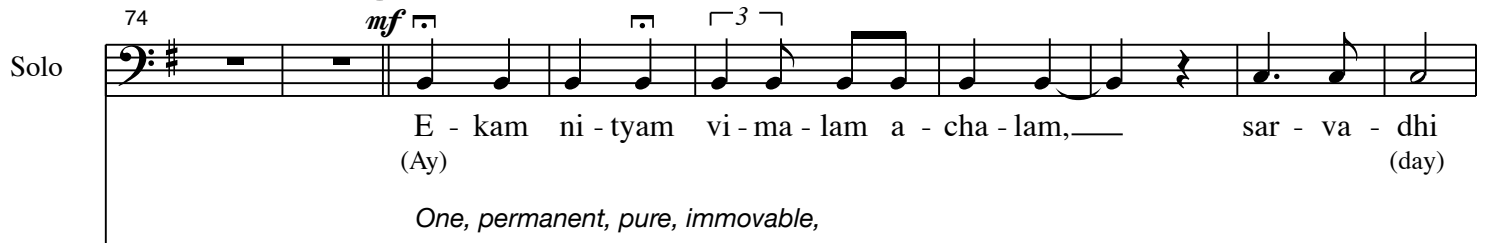
T
B
(Mm)

Kbd.

(rec)



C Solo Bass (at microphone)

74 *mf* 

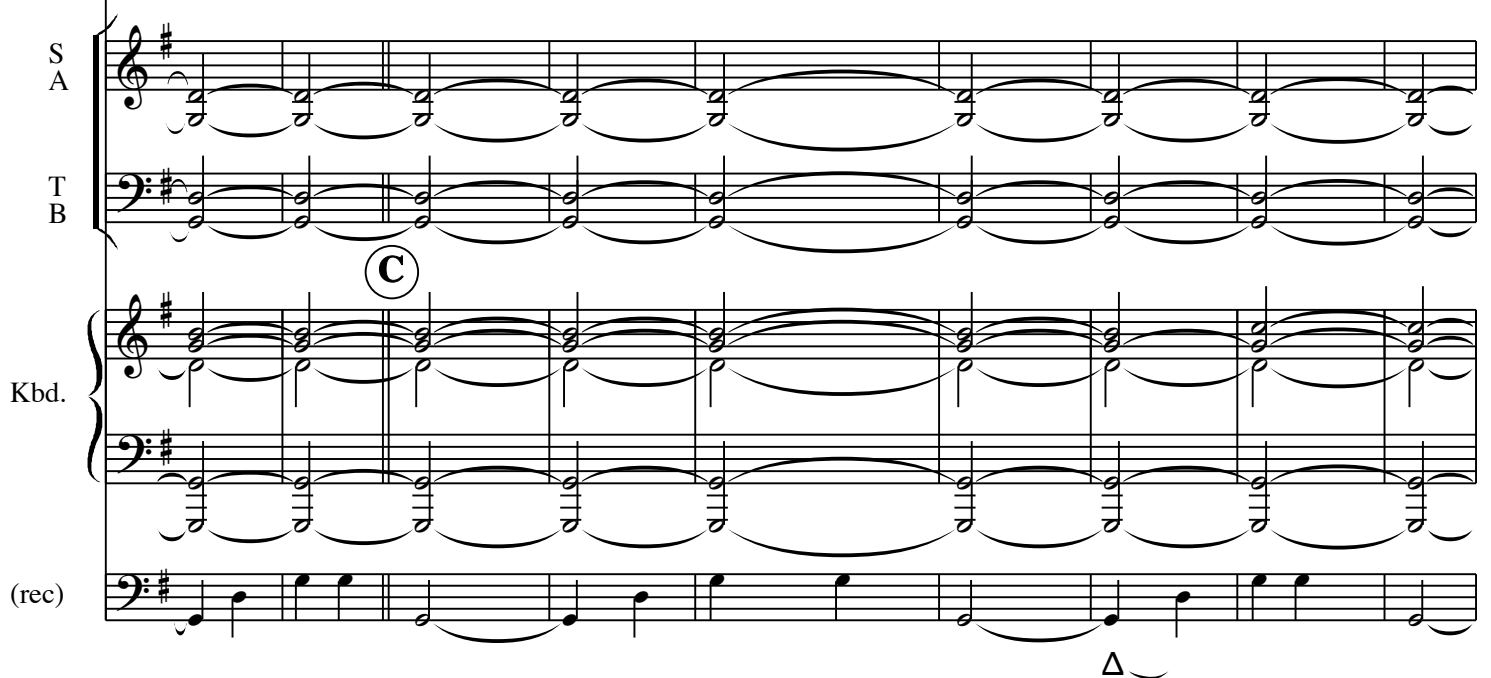
S
A

T
B

C

Kbd.

(rec)



83 3 3

Solo

sak - shi bhu - tam; Bha - wa — ti - tam tri - gu - na ra - hi - tam, —
 (shahk)

The everlasting Seer of all things, Beyond thought, free from the three qualities,

S
A

T
B

Kbd.

(rec)

△

(D)

92

Solo

Sad - gu - rum - tam na - ma - mi. —
 (twahm)

My good Guru, I bow to Thee.

S
A

T
B

Kbd.

(rec)

△

Keyboardist fades out the keyboard.

Sound technician fades out the recording.

△ △ △ △ △

E

mp

104

S
A

Brahm - a - nan - dam — pa - ra - ma su -
(hah)

T
B

Translation:
(not to be sung) *Full of transcendental bliss, giving supreme joy,*

E

Kbd.

(rec)

Gong *pp* Δ

115

S
A

kha-dam, — ke - va - lam — gya - na mur - tim; — Dwan-dwa ti - tam, —
(Dahn)

T
B

the sole Image of Wisdom;

Beyond duality,

127

S
A

ga - ga - na sa - dri - sham, — Tat - twam a - sya - di lak - shyam. —
(no breath)

T
B

mf *mp* (no breath)

clear as the heavens,

Whose motto is: "Thou Art That."

F

139 *f*

Sopranos
Mezzos
Altos

E - kam nit - yam — vi - ma - lam a - cha - lam, — sar -
(Ay)

Tenors
Baritones
Basses

One, permanent, pure, immovable,

148

S
M
A

- va - dhi — sak - shi bhū - tam; — Bha - wa ti - tam —
(day) (shahk)

T
B
B

The everlasting Seer of all things,

Beyond thought,

158 *ff* *f*

S
M
A

tri - gu - na ra - hi - tam, — Sad - gu - rum - tam — na - ma - mi. —
(twahm)

T
B
B

free from the three qualities,

My good Guru,

I bow to Thee.

Kbd.

169 $\text{♩} = 92$ **G** Solo Alto (at microphone) *mp*

Twam -

$\text{♩} = 92$ **G**
(sempre legato)

Kbd. *mp*

174 **H**

Solo

ev - a ma - ta cha pi - ta twam - ev - a, Twam - ev - a ban - dhu cha sa -

Translation, not to be sung:

You truly are my mother and my father,

You truly are my friend and my beloved companion,

H

Kbd.

180

Solo

kha twam-ev - a, Twam-ev - a vi - dya dra-vi - nam twam-ev - a, — Twam -

You truly are my knowledge and my wealth,

Kbd.

186

S
A

Full choir **I**

mf

ev - a sar - vam ma-ma dev - a dev - a. Thou art my Moth- er, my_

T
B

O Supreme Lord, You truly are everything to me.

Kbd.

192

S
A

fa - ther Thou art, Thou art — my broth - er, my — friend — Thou art. Thou

T
B

Kbd.

198

S
A

art my wis - dom, my wealth — Thou art, — Thou art — my all, Light of

T
B

Kbd.

204

(J)

S
A

lights — art Thou. —

T
B

(J)

Kbd.

mp

210

(K)

Sopranos *mp*

ooh

Mezzos *mp*

Altos *mp*

ooh

Tenors and Basses
in unison *mf*

Thou art my Moth-er, my — fa-ther Thou art, Thou

(K)

Kbd.

p

216 *delicatissimo*
(mp)

S
M
A
T
B

ooh
ooh

art— my broth-er, my— friend— Thou art. Thou art my wis-dom, my

Kbd.

222 *mf*

S
M
A
T
B

(ooh) ooh Twam-
(ooh) ooh Twam-
wealth— Thou art,— Thou art— my all, Light of lights— art Thou. Twam-

Kbd.

228 **L**

S
A

ev - a ma - ta cha pi - ta twam - ev - a, Twam - ev - a ban - dhu cha sa -

T
B

Translation, not to be sung:

You truly are my mother and my father,

You truly are my friend and my beloved companion,

L

Kbd.

234

S
A

kha twam - ev - a, Twam - ev - a vi - dya dra - vi - nam twam - ev -

T
B

You truly are my knowledge and my wealth,

Kbd.

239

S
A

a, Twam - ev - a sar - vam ma-ma dev - a dev - a. Thou art my

T
B

O Supreme Lord, You truly are everything to me.

Kbd.

245

S
A

all, Light of lights art Thou.

T
B

Kbd.

mf

N Opening tempo (♩ = 54)

251

N Opening tempo (♩ = 54)

Kbd.

The sound technician starts Track 2 of the recording.

(rec)

O

mf All Sopranos

261

Gu - ru Brahm - a, Gu - ru Vish - nu, _____
(hah)

mf All Tenors

Translation: *Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu,*
(not to be sung)

O

Kbd.

(rec)

270

Gu - ru Dev - a Ma - hesh - wa - ra, — Gu - ru sak - shyat, pa - ra - brahm - a, (haysh) (shahk) (hah)

Guru is the Maheshwara (Shiva), Truly Guru is the supreme spirit,

Kbd.

(rec)

Δ

279

tas - ma - i Sri Gu - ru - ve na - ma - ha. — Brahm - a - nan - dam (hah) *mf* All Altos *mf* All Basses

salutations therefore to the Guru. Full of transcendental bliss,

Kbd.

(rec)

(Add continuous quiet Wind Chimes. Fade at measure 328.)

Δ

288

A

pa-ra - ma su - kha-dam, — ke - va - lam gya - na mur - tim, Dwan - dwa — ti -
(Dahn)

B

giving supreme joy, the sole Image of Wisdom; Beyond duality,

Kbd.

(rec)

298

A

tam, ga - ga - na sa - dri - sham, — Tat - twam a - sya - di lak - shyam. —

B

clear as the heavens, Whose motto is: "Thou Art That."

Kbd.

(rec)

Q Full choir
f

307

E - kam ni - tyam vi - ma - lam a - cha - lam, — sar - va - dhi
(Ay) (day)

One, permanent, pure, immovable,

Q

Kbd.

(rec)

316

S
A

sak - shi bhu - tam; Bha - wa — ti - tam tri - gu - na ra - hi - tam, —
(shahk)

T
B

The everlasting Seer of all things, Beyond thought, free from the three qualities,

Kbd.

(rec)

325

S
A

Sad - gu - rum - tam na - ma - mi. Stead - fast and

(twahm)

R *f*

T
B

Kbd.

Keyboardist fades out keyboard. **R**

(rec)

* *Ad.* *

Sound technician fades out recording.

Δ Δ Δ Δ *mf*

(Gong crescendo)

334

S
M
A

true... — per - ma - nent, un - chang - ing... — Om - ni - cient One... — the

T
B
B

343

S
M
A

Seer of all... — Tran - scend - ing form... — as clear as the

T
B
B

352 *ff* *f* *mp*

S
M
A

heav - ens... — Gu - ru - ji, we bow to — Thee. — Gu - ru -

T
B

363 *mf* *mf* *mf*

S

ji, we bow to Thee. — We love Thee,

M
A

ji, we bow to Thee. — We love Thee, —

T
B

368 *rit.* *a tempo* *p* *p* *rit.* *a tempo* *p*

S

Gu - ru - ji, — We love Thee, Gu - ru - ji. —

M
A

Gu - ru - ji, — We love Thee, — Gu - ru - ji. —

T

Gu - ru - ji, — We love Thee, Gu - ru - ji. —

B
B

374

T

mf *mp*

S
— Aum, — Aum, — Aum; — Aum, — Aum, —

M
mf *mp*
A
— Aum, — Aum, — Aum; — Aum, — Aum, —

T

mf *mp*

T
— Aum, — Aum, — Aum; — Aum, — Aum, —

B
mf *mp*
B
— Aum, — Aum, — Aum; — Aum, — Aum, —

379

rit. *p*

S
— Aum; — Aum, — Aum, — Aum. (mm)

M
p
A
— Aum; — Aum, — Aum, — Aum. (mm)

rit. *p*

T
— Aum; — Aum, — Aum, — Aum. (mm)

B
p
B
— Aum; — Aum, — Aum, — Aum. (mm)

385 (U)

S 1 *p* Aum, _____

S 2 *p* Aum, _____

S 3 *p* Aum, _____ Aum, _____

S 4 *p* Aum, _____ Aum, _____

S 5 *p* Aum, _____ Aum, _____

(U)

S 6 *p* Aum, _____ Aum, _____ Aum; _____

S 7 *p* Aum, _____ Aum, _____ Aum; _____

S 8 *p* Aum, _____ Aum, _____ Aum; _____

S 9 *p* Aum, _____ Aum, _____ Aum; _____ Aum, _____

(U)

A (staggered breathing – re-enter on AUM and close to mm)
 (mm)

T (staggered breathing – re-enter on AUM and close to mm)
 B (mm)

Repeat and fade to silence.

396



Musical score for voices S1 through S9, A (Alto), and T/B (Tenor/Bass). The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "Aum," and "Aum;". The score includes vocal cues (V in a circle) at the beginning of staves S1, S6, and A. The music features long, flowing lines with many ties, indicating a continuous, meditative vocal line. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with some notes having ties that span across the lyrics. The score concludes with a repeat sign and a double bar line.

Below are a word-by-word translation and a pronunciation guide based on the singing of Nayaswami Kriyananda. There is a wide world of differing pronunciations! If you have a connection with Nayaswami Kriyananda, use these. You can hear the accent of the syllables in the traditional melodies. For subtleties of pronunciation, listen to Kriyananda's recordings. Notation of the *Hymn to Brahma* melody and a Sanskrit pronunciation key are printed on page 44 of *Cosmic Chants* by Paramhansa Yogananda. A description of the threefold Aum is printed on page 26 of *Cosmic Chants*.

Guru Brahma	Gooh - rooh Brahm - hah	Guru is Brahma
Guru Vishnu	Gooh - rooh Vihsh - nooh	Guru is Vishnu
Guru Deva	Gooh - rooh Day - vah	Guru Divine
Maheshwara	Mah - haysh - wah - rah	Maheshwara (Shiva)
Guru sakshyat	Gooh - rooh shahk - shyah	Guru embodies
parabrahma	pah - rah - brahm - hah	supreme spirit
Tasmai	Tahs - mah - ee	to Him
Sri Guruve	Shree Gooh - rooh - vay	Beloved Guru
namaha	nah - mah - ha	I bow
Brahmanandam	Brahm - hah - nahn - dahm	joy in Brahma (ananda = joy)
parama	pah - rah - mah	supreme
sukadam	soo - kah - dahm	giving pleasure or delight
Kevalam	kay - vah - lahm	sole, only
gyana	gyah - nah	wisdom
murtim	moohr - teem	image
Dwandwa	Dahn - dwah	(dvandva) duality
titam	tee - tahm	(atitam) beyond
gagana	gah - gah - nah	heavens
sadrisham	sah - dree - shahm	appears like
Tattwam	taht - twahm	Thou art that (twam = You)
asyadi	ah - syah - dee	you are
lakshyam	lahk - shyahm	known as, indicating
Ekam	Ay - kahm	One
nityam	neeh - tyahm	permanent
vimalam	vee - mah - lahm	pure, without blemish
achalam	ah - chah - lahm	immovable
Sarvadhi	Sahr - vah - day	all-knowing
sakshi	shahk - shee	seer
bhutam	bhoooh - tahm	all things, Creation
Bhawa	Bhah - wah	state of being, existence, thought
titam	tee - tahm	beyond
triguna	tree - gooh - nah	the three gunas (qualities, forms)
rahitam	rah - heet - tahm	without, beyond
Sadgurumtam	Sad - gooh - room - twahm	My good Guru
namami	nah - mah - mee	I bow
Twameva	Twahm - ay - vah	You truly (Twam = You. eva = truly)
mata	mah - tah	Mother
cha	chah	and
pita	pih - tah	Father
bandhu	bahn - dooh	relative, kindred
sakha	sah - kah	friend
vidya	vih - dyah	knowledge
dravinam	drah - vih - nahm	wealth
sarvam	sahr - vahm	all
mama	mah - mah	my
Deva	Day - vah	Deva, God