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The Cult of Gāyatrī: A Study

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Abstract

There is no other mantra in this World like the Gāyatrī Mantra which can fulfill all the desires of man. Gāyatrī is the best-renowned mantra who possesses the magnanimous power to fulfill all. Gāyatrī is the Ṛgvedic Mantra, and this is very ancient like Ṛgveda. The meaning of this mantra 'Gāyatraṁ trāyate iti Gāyatrī' (Gāyatrī Mantra Sadhanā va Upāsanā.P.1.). Varāha Purāṇa says that Gāyatrī is Sarasvatī 'Kamalā sanaje devī Sarasvatī namostute'(Varāha Purāṇa.28/29). In Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, Gāyatrī Mantra is regarded as Sūrya Mantra and Sāvitrī. Aitereya Brāhmaṇa says Gāyatrī is Brahmā 'yā gāyatrī tad Brahmaiva, Brahma vai gāyatrī' (Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. 3/3/34/3).

This paper defines the Gāyatrī and Her power and utilization of Gāyatrī, etc. in a very lucid manner and briefly also.

Keywords. Gāyatrī, Mantra, Devī, Goddess.

Introduction

Gāyatrī concept is a concept of Vedic seers and that is unique. Gāyatrī is a meter and it takes an important place in Vedic mantras, and Gāyatrī is not only the mantra but she is worshipped as a renowned Goddess in Hindu religion. The Gāyatrī mantra is very pious and some people believe it as a protector mantra from evils. It is an amazing thing about reciting the Gāyatrī mantra, and one who chants this mantra can feel the temperature of his first within a few days. Gāyatrī mantra worship near standing the river, ocean, or a lake. And it is seen that sometimes the water level increases up to the knees or up to the chests. This is not physical but in another way, it is physical. And the Tibetan says it is Tummo. (The Hidden Power of Gāyatrī Mantra. P.42.). Gāyatrī Mantra possesses an important place among all other mantras. It has extraordinary power. Someone can gain Vedic rights after reciting ten times of this mantra in a Brahma Yajña. This Mantra plays a vital role at the time of Upanayana Saṁskāra in our Hindu family. Gāyatrī is called Vedamātā and repeller of all sins like Brahmahatyā, etc. (Gāyatrī Mantra Sādhanā Va Upāsanā. Preface).

Derivation of the word Gāyatrī

The word Gāyatrī derives from the word gai and trā. Yad gāyannatrāyata tad gāyatrātvam ¹. As per Chāndogyopaniṣad, Gāyatrī is called speech. Speech (Gāyati) or singing and protection means trāyate. So the speech is Gāyatrī. As per Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, Gāyatrī is protected of gayas, and the gayas are called the vital breaths. And Gāyatrī is the protector of the vital breaths. So it is said: gayān trāyate iti gāyatrī. So Gāyatrī refers to a meter and also a mantra.

Gāyatrī is called meter, and it appeared as a meter in Ṛgveda, and 2500 to 3500 years back. And this mantra compounded twenty-four syllables. Gāyatrī mantra is seen as Gāyatrī meter in the first mantra of the first maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda.

Goddess Gāyatrī is called Vedamātā, mother of the Vedas, and the birth of Gāyatrī is seen in Vedic literature. But the Gāyatrī meter contains three pādas meaning tripadā gāyatrī, which has eight letters in every pāda. So the meter of Gāyatrī contains twenty-four letters.

In Veda, the meter like Gāyatrī is praised as the glorious meter, although Gāyatrī meter is regarded as the smallest meter among all the meters ². The Gāyatrī mantra can enable the person to ascend to heaven. The meter like Gāyatrī is the mouth of all meters.

In this Gāyatrī mantra, the word om̐ which defines the God, Bhūḥ expresses the earth, and the word Bhuvaḥ represents the regions which are covered all subdivisions of semi-gods and also covered to all the demigods towards the sun. and the word 'svaḥ' which expresses. Gāyatrī is called meter, and it has appeared as a meter in Ṛgveda, and 2500 to 3500 years back. And this mantra compounded the twenty-four syllables. Gāyatrī mantra is seen as Gāyatrī meter in the first mantra of the first maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda.

Goddess Gāyatrī is called vedamātā, mother of the Vedas, and the birth of Gāyatrī is seen in Vedic literature. But the Gāyatrī meter contains three pādas meaning tripadā gāyatrī, and which has eight letters in every pāda. So the meter of Gāyatrī contains twenty-four letters. The meaning of the third dimension or region of gods which is known as svarga loka, the place of supreme and which is also situated above.³

The evil and darkness are also removed by chanting this Gāyatrī mantra, and the darkness of the night is also treated as evil.⁴ The Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa(8.10) describes the man who wants spiritual development he can chant the verses of Gāyatrī. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa ⁵ describes that Gāyatrī possesses eyes, wings, brilliance, and light, and also she brings heaven, and according to Atharva Veda.⁶ And Gāyatrī is called the origin of the immortal, and she gives offspring, cattle to the sacrificer.⁷

The Kāṭhaka Samhitā describes that Gāyatrī who gives nectar in the heaven has told to bring the gods to the sacrifice, and she is already known and invocation and as well as the respect should be paid to her in Aśvamedha Sacrifice. ⁸

Gāyatrī is described as a Mantra and its application

The mantra, Gāyatrī is described as a very famous mantra.

Tatsaviturvareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi

Dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt//⁹

This is seen in Ṛgveda along with the two other mantras, Viśvāmitra is described as the seer of this mantra.

Gāyatrī mantra is used as daily devotions in day to day life of all Hindus and also it acts as a special worshipping in social activities. It is seen to be used especially in the Upanayana ceremony of all Hindu families .¹⁰ Yajñopavīta or sacred thread is the symbol of purity, and it is a reminder for maintaining purity and it reminds the person of responsibility. It drives away all the evil from the human mind. And it reminds the man to lead a holy life.¹¹

Yajñopavīta has possessed the three symbols like Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva who are the Trinity in Hindu religion. It represents the three triads also like Mahāsarasvatī, Mahālakṣmī, and Mahākālī, and which are related to the three natures such as Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas; the past, present, and future, and the three states of human beings like a dream, awake, and sleep, and the three bodies gross, subtle, and casual. And it symbolizes the three lokas like heaven (Swarga), earth (Martya), and Pātāla.¹²

If someone dies at any home then the person has to change the old thread and make a new thread (yajñopavīta), and the same process is also adopted at the time of the birth of a new body at home. And, as per rules, the sacred thread should be changed once during the four months.¹³ Gāyatrī meditation in another word is known as Sandhyopāsanā or Sandhyāvandanā. The ancient genius of the Himalayas says that Gāyatrī is regarded as the highest meditation for brightness. If someone practices this meditation then he will be able to realize the god very soon. Hence, practicing this spiritual meditation can give brilliance quickly.

Sandhyā means the middle period of the day and night means dawn and dusk, and the meaning of Upāsanā is the meditation, which occurs during that moment. Practicing the meditation of Gāyatrī eradicates all the sins and the past karmas. The heart and the mind of the person became very purified by meditating on the Gāyatrī and it also reopens the third eye of illumination. Man can achieve long life, shining, and healthy body.¹⁴

Someone practices this Gāyatrī meditation four times a day like early morning, afternoon, and evening and at midnight also. Some practice this Gāyatrī three times during the day. And there is some problem that arises then man can practice it at least twice a day like in the early morning and evening also.¹⁵

Gāyatrī is described as Goddesses

In yājñavalkya smṛti, Gāyatrī is described as Vedajananī (the mother of the Vedas), and Pāpanāśinī (repeller of all sins). The description of Smṛti is like this.

Gāyatrīyāstu paraṁ nāsti Devī Ce ha

ca pāvanam//¹⁶

Bhagavad-gītā describes that He is the Gāyatrī in the Veda ‘ Gāyatrī chandasāmaham’

¹⁷ Gāyatrī is described as Devī in various places and various types. once Nārāyaṇa said to Nārada ‘O’ great sage, hear me which are the Śaktis of the 24 syllables of Gāyatrī Devī, and these are described as Vāma Devī, Jāyā, Śāntā, Sarasvatī, Durgā, Kāntā, Vyāpinī, Vimalā, Vidrumā, Viśālesā, Tamopahāriṇī, Viśvayoni, Jayā, Sūkṣmā, Parāśobhā, Bhadrā, Padmālayā, and Tripadā.¹⁸

Some puranic scriptures describe that Gāyatrī is different from Sarasvatī, and married to Brahmā, the creator of the Universe. And Gāyatrī is also a Gurjar girl who helps the creator, Brahmā in Yajña. The first wife of Brahmā is Sāvitrī, and the second is Gāyatrī. Gāyatrī Devī is further described as a fierce Goddess who slew a demon, Vetrāsura, and this story was described in Varāha Purāṇa and the Mahābhārat also.¹⁹

Garuḍa Purāṇa says in a passage that Gāyatrī possesses a fair complexion and she wears a silk garment and she holds a rose in her hand and she sears on a lotus also.²⁰ The Skanda Purāṇa ²¹ describes the heart of the divine word like omkāra and which produces the sound of vaṣaṭ. Gāyatrī which is very excellent and possesses the syllables of twenty-four, and she had three feet, five heads and six sides mean ‘Ṣatkukṣiḥ’, and also she has a very melodious voice and she became very famous and called Devī Sāvitrī.

In Padma Purāṇa of Sṛṣṭi Khaṇḍa, ²² describes Gāyatrī is called the mother of the Vedas, and she is sanctified with the eight letters and who has strong arms and is very soft like a banana stalk. She holds a deer horn in her hand and it also mentions that she is the wife of a sacrifice in a Vedic sacrifice.

Gāyatrī Devī in the early morning is described as a young girl who has a red complexion and dazzles like the morning sun and also she wears red garments and a garland of red color. Gāyatrī Devī possesses three heads and four hands and sits on a swan. She is always seated on Varadā Mudrā and who has Kāmadhenu in one hand and the other two hands are shown in Abhaya Mudrā. She is related to Ṛgveda and Brahmā, the creator of the Universe. She holds a conch, disc, and she bears four hands and she has existed in Abhaya Mudrā and is seated on Garuḍa and also. She connects with Viṣṇu and Sama Veda as Sarasvatī and also considers the Sarvaloka.

As per Liṅga Purāṇa ²³ Gāyatrī is known as Māheśvarī who is born from the mouth of Maheś, and she has four feet, four heads, four eyes, four breasts, four horns, and also she possesses thirty-two qualities. In another place of this Liṅga Purāṇa ²⁴ Gāyatrī is described as the daughter of Brahmā in the shape of a cow and she describes as the origin of this creation.

Conclusion

From the above discussions, it is concluded that Gāyatrī is the creator of the Universe in various forms as a Goddess. And she is the origin of all the mantras and like a mantra, she is the cause of the Upanayana Saṁskāra of all Hindus. Man can get success in his life and fulfill his desires

by reciting the Gāyatrī because she is the fulfiller of all desires. At last, it is said that the Gāyatrī Cult will exist in this creation till the existence of human society forever and there is no doubt.

Footnotes

1. Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa. I. III.
2. Taittirīya Saṁhitā. 6. 1. 6. 3-4.
3. Gāyatrī. P. 59.
4. Kaustakī Brāhmaṇa. 17. 6., Gopatha Brāhmaṇa. 1. 5. 15., Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. 2. 17. 5.
5. Aitereya Brāhmaṇa. 4. 2. 3.
6. Atharva Veda. 13. 3. 20.
7. Taittirīya Saṁhitā. 2. 6. 1. 7.
8. Kāthaka Saṁhitā. 43. 2, 51. 1.
9. Ṛgveda. 3. 62. 10.
10. Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra. 2. 10. 30., Hiranyakeshi Gṛhya Sūtra. 6. 6., Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra. 4. 11. 9., Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra. 2. 3. 3.
11. Gāyatrī. The Highest Meditation. P. 54.
12. Gāyatrī. The Highest Meditation. P. 54.
13. Gāyatrī. The Highest Meditation. P. 54.
14. Gāyatrī. The Highest Meditation. P. 56.
15. Gāyatrī. The Highest Meditation. P. 56-57.
16. Yājñyavalkya Smṛti. 2. 25.
17. Bhagavad Gītā. 10. 35.
18. Gāyatrī. The Secret Power. 19. Wikipedia.
20. Garuḍa Purāṇa. 1. 205. 70-72
21. Skanda Purāṇa. 2. 52. 8-10.
22. Padma Purāṇa. 17. 309-335.
23. Linga Purāṇa. 1. 13. 5-7.
24. Linga Purāṇa. 1. 16. 33.

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6. Padma Purāṇa. Gītā Press, Gorakhpur.
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11. Joshi, K.L., Trivedi, Bindiya, Bimali, O.N., 112 Upaniṣads, Parimal Publications, Delhi.