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वेदगायत्री

VEDAGAYATHREE

GAYATHREE IN VEDAS

by

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Narayanalakshmi (Maa Tejaswini)

Narayanalakshmi, also known as Tejaswini in her ascetic life spent most of her life in the Himalayan terrain, engaged in the penance of knowledge. She is well-versed in all philosophies and is a scholar in Sanskrit language. Her mission life is to retrieve the lost knowledge of the ancient Rishis and offer it unblemished to all the seekers of the Truth. She is from Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

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VEDAGAAAYATREE

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तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यं
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्

ॐ

भूर्भुवः स्वः
तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्

TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM
BHARGO DEVASYA DHEEMAHI
DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODAYAAT

OM

BHOOR-BHUVAH SVAHA
TAT-SAVITUR-VARENYAM
BHARGO DEVASYA DHEEMAHI
DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODAYAAT

INTRODUCTION

The Great Gaayathree Mantram

MahaaVyaahrti महाव्याहृति - Great utterance, because it leads an aspirant to his goal very fast.

The Great Gaayathree - so named because of the metre Gaayathree.

What is a Vedic metre?

A metre of Sanskrit verse or hymn is measured by the number of syllables.

The metrical unit of a verse is pada – foot (पद) or a line to express it more clearly.

There could be 8, 11, 12 syllables in each 'Pada'.

The Mantras usually are named based on their particular metrical characters.

Gaayathree metre has three Padas of eight syllables.

The most commonly used metre is Anushtup; it has four padas of eight syllables each.

Gaayathree Mantram is a Mantram; not a verse or hymn.

You cannot propitiate any deity by singing it daily.

You cannot mumble it all through the day and night and accumulate merit.

It is not a 'shloka' or verse written by some saint for singing it wherever and whenever, so to be branded as a religious symbol.

Gaayathree Mantram is a phonetic marvel revealed to Sage Vishvaamitra by the Great Goddess Kalki, the daughter of Shiva and Shivaa.

It is a verbal Praanaayaama technique as explained by Aadi Shankara.

It has to be recited in a prescribed manner with proper intonations.

It is a sound conglomeration created as a meaningful verse to benefit the Yogi who is after liberation.

It is an easy way to the open the door of knowledge.

Kalki is the Goddess who presides over the Mantra as Gaayathree Devi; but she is not the deity propitiated by this Mantram.

She just sees that the aspirant who practices sincerely gets his share of knowledge; that is all.

It is a Mantram that will fructify only if the proper understanding of the Mantram is there.

We have been given that understanding by Shankara.

Now let us analyze what the Upanishads say about this Mantram.

They have a more revealing explanation of Gaayathree.

Let us see how.

[The present section is selected from Brhadaaranyaka Upanishad based on Shankara's Bhaashya on Upanishads].

(1)

भूमिरन्तरिक्षं द्यौरित्यष्टावक्षराणि
 अष्टाक्षर ह वा एकं गायत्र्यै पदं
 एतदु हैवास्या एतत्
 स यावदेषु त्रिषु लोकेषु तावद्ध जयति योऽस्या एतदेवं पदं वेद ॥१॥

Bhoomi, Antariksa and Dyau make the eight syllables.

The first foot of Gaayatri has eight syllables.

Hence, the above three worlds constitute the first foot of Gaayatri.

He, who knows the first foot of Gaayatri as this, wins whatever is there in the three worlds.

FIRST PADA - FIRST FOOT - FIRST QUARTER OF THE MANTRA:

The first foot of Gaayathree – has eight syllables.

भूमिरन्तरिक्षं द्यौः BHOOMIRANTARIKSHAMDYAU

Earth-mid sky-heaven

These are the eight letters of the First Pada of VedaGaayathree

He who knows this wins all the worlds over.

How? Why?

What is the world made up of?

The three states of Jaagrata (waking), Svapna (dream), and Sushupti (Sleep state)

Or, Earth- intermediate sky- the space beyond

Or, Body - mind - intellect

Or, earthly beings, Gods in the heaven and the intermediate beings who keep on moving from earth to heaven and heaven to earth.

We can simplify all this more by saying that the Bhoomi, Antariksha and Dyau is a total picture of the perceived phenomenon presented by the mind through the senses.

Perceptions, the perceived world and the act of perceiving together make up the entire world.

Whether the worlds are three, or fourteen, or countless, all come under the word 'perceived'; even if the 'perceived' may include imagined ghosts and demons.

How do we win over all that is there in all the worlds?
 Just by reciting the first Pada of Gaayathree?
 Yes; through the knowledge hidden in the first Pada.

Suppose for example, in the empty sky a magician appears, and waves his wand without your knowledge. You find yourself in a splendid world of flowers and mountains and rivers instantly. One more wave of the wand; desert lands surround you burning you in the heat. Another wave of the wand and you are in a palace made of gold and precious stones. You cry, laugh, jump, enjoy, and suffer as the scenes keep changing every moment.

Suppose you understand that this was all the trick of the magician and so pounce on him and grab the wand...?

The wand, the magician, worlds - all vanish away...!

You are just what you are without getting fooled by the cunning magician.

You now know how the wand comes, how the worlds appear.

You own all the illusory worlds presented by the wand.

Now the wand-trick can no more fool you.

So contemplate on the unreality of Bhoomi, Antariksha and Dyau - unreality of perceived phenomena- you will attain all the objects of all the perceived worlds which are nothing but castles built in the empty sky.

If one understands that the three worlds are nothing but the Vaasanaa-fields experienced by the Jeeva, he will know the delusory nature of forms and names.

He will not be deluded by the sense perceptions. He will not be attracted towards the sense pleasures. He will not get excited by joyful experiences nor get distressed by painful experiences.

He destroys the Vaasanaas through sincere practice prescribed by the scriptures.

He sees the world as only a changing pattern covering up the truth.

As he crosses over the first foot of Gaayathree, he tears apart the curtain of the world-delusion covering the truth of the Self.

What does he win?

What do you win when you understand the trick presented by a magician?

Knowledge of how the trick is done.

The reward of understanding the trick is not winning the ruler ship of the worthless illusion called the world, but the freedom from getting tricked by the magician.

When you understand that the desert has no waters at all, you will not run behind the mirage waters and kill yourself like the foolish deer.

When you understand the unreality of the perceived world, you are the Master who throws that junk into the dust-bin and walks away. You will not be the ignorant fool who treasures the worthless piece of junk.

(2)

ऋचो यजूम्षि सामानीत्यष्टावक्षराणि
 अष्टाक्षरं ह वा एकं गायत्रै पदम्
 एतदु हैवास्या एतत्
 स यावतीयं त्रयी विद्या तावद् जयति
 योऽस्या एतदेवं पदं वेद ॥२॥

Rk, Yajur, and Saama make the eight syllables.

The second foot of Gaayatri has eight syllables.

Hence, the above three Vedas constitute the second foot of Gaayatri.

He, who knows the second foot of Gaayatri as this, wins whatever knowledge is there in the three Vedas.

SECOND PADA - SECOND FOOT - SECOND QUARTER OF THE MANTRA:

ऋचो यजूम्षि सामानि RCHOYAJOOMSHISAAMAA

These are the eight letters of the Second Pada of VedaGaayathree.

Rk, Yajur, Saama- The three Vedas
 Trayii Vidyaas - three sections of learning

What is a Veda?
 Knowledge! ('Vid' to know)

All the three Vedas constitute the one word for knowledge.
 If you know the Vedas, you know all that is to be known.
 How? That too, by just the second foot of Gaayathree?

After the first level of 'understanding the unreality of the perceived world', the aspirant goes to the next level of 'analysis' or thinking.
 'If all that is perceived is just a delusion produced by the magic of the mind, then why am I getting into some particular worlds only? Why do I suffer? Why I have such a life? Where am I? Who am I? How did the world come about? Is there a God? Is there some cruel demon out there making us all suffer?'

So many questions..!

Yes! That is the next step in the ladder to freedom.

He learns to ask questions. That alone is the next level.

By erasing the entire perceived world as a mind-created illusion, he has removed all the questions that were there and only one question remains left back.

That is- 'Who is asking the question?'

Now the aspirant turns inward and starts analyzing the 'I' which was always there as the center of his life.

When he searches for the source of all Vedas, he ends up in - silence'.

He attains the silent quiescent state of the Self (essence within) beyond the three Vedas. Vedas belong to the created world.

But he has turned his attention towards the Self and has gone to the source of all learning.

What more has he to know?

He knows now in the Self-state that knowledge and ignorance both have no meaning for him.

From (Rk) 'praising deities' begging for favor

From (Yajush) 'performing sacrifices' to please the deities

From (Saama) 'rhythmic songs of bliss' attained through contemplation,

he has now attained the silent state of the Self, where the three Vedas appear like the well-water inside the overflowing ocean of knowledge.

(3)

प्राणोऽपान व्यान इत्यष्टावक्षराणि
 अष्टाक्षरं ह वा एकं गायत्र्यै पदम्
 एतदु हैवास्य एतत्
 स यावदिदं प्राणि तावद्ध जयति
 योऽस्या एतदेवं पदं वेद

Praana, Apaana, Vyaana make the eight syllables.

The third foot of Gaayatri has eight syllables.

Hence, the above three worlds constitute the third foot of Gaayatri.

Hence, the above three forms of Praana constitute the third foot of Gaayatri.

He, who knows the third foot of Gaayatri as this, wins all the beings that are there in the world.

THIRD PADA - THIRD FOOT - THIRD QUARTER OF THE MANTRA:

प्राणोऽपानव्यान PRAANOAPAANAVYAANA

These are the eight letters of the Third Pada of VedaGaayathree;
 that which goes inside, that which goes outside, that which spreads all over.

What goes inside?

Perceived data

What goes outside?

Senses

What spreads all over?

Mind

And Mind vibrates because of Praana.

Praana is - Praana, Apaana and Vyaana.

Jeeva lives by breathing in, breathing out and because of the other functions of the Praana inside his body.

All beings depend on this 'Praana' the vibrating energy point, which keeps the body alive through various functions.

If you understand this, you own all the beings in the world.

How?

By finding the source of Praana...!

Search for the point inside the body where the Praana rises.

Search for the point outside the body where the Apaana ends.

Search for the point from which the Praana spreads out.

You will find the one single point of vibration where all Praanas rise and end.

By contemplating on the source of the Praanas in you, you will reach the point where the very body-idea vanishes; and you will be in the state which is the source of all Praana functions of all the beings in all the worlds.

You will be established in the Brahman state, from which originate all the vibrations of Praana of the entire world.

You are the Praana which makes the mind vibrate creating all the perceived phenomena. When you reach the source of all Praanas through the practice of subtle Praanaayama Yoga as described in the scriptures, your mind will die unable to stand apart. You alone will shine as the Self.

THE THREE-FOOTED GAAYATHREE MANTRAM

The First Pada revealed the illusory nature of the world.

The second Pada led you to the knowledge of the Self.

The third Pada made you reach the source of the Jeeva-hood.

But, this three-footed Gaayathree has another concealed foot - the fourth foot and becomes an Anushtup with four feet as it were.

How?

अथास्या एतदेव तुरीयं दर्शतं पदं परोरजा य एष तपति
यद्वै चतुर्थं तत्तुरीयम्

Now it is the state of Turyaa, apparently visible, above all the dust, and is the sun that burns.

That which is fourth is the Tureeyaa.

The Fourth foot is the Tureeyaa state.
 What is it?
 It is the 'beyond state'

It cannot be 'seen' yet one sees it.
 How?

In this Tureeyaa state, the student transcends the three states of waking, dream and sleep and remains as the Self.

There is no perception of the world outside, as his senses and mind are absent.

But it is not a state of empty darkness where nothing is seen.

One is aware of oneself as the Supreme Brahman, the source of all worlds, all learning and all vibrations.

It is seen; yet not seen; so it is apparently seen as it were.

It is the Supreme state beyond the dirt of the ignorant mind.

It is the state of the Sun, the witness state where the Self shines as all the perceived worlds.

This is the fourth foot of Gaayathree.

दर्शतं पदमिति ददृश इव ह्येषः
 परोरजा इति सर्वभु ह्यैवेष रज उपर्युपरि तपति
 एवं हैव श्रिया यशसा तपति
 योऽस्या एतदेवं पदं वेद ॥३॥

'Apparently visible' because he is seen as it were as the Supreme; and 'above the dust' means he burns above the whole world as the Supreme Lord.

He, who knows the fourth foot of Gaayatri as this, burns in the same manner with splendor and fame.

When the aspirant attains the state of Tureeyaa the supreme transcendental state, he shines as the Supreme. He owns all that the Brahman shines as; he shines as the renowned Self.

He no more identifies with the limited body; and remains always in the bliss of the Self, as a JeevanMukta, liberated while living.

(4)

सैषा गायत्र्यतस्मिन्स्तुरीये दर्शते पदे परोरजसि प्रतिष्ठिता
तद्वै तत्सत्ये प्रतिष्ठितम्

This Gaayathree is established in this state of Tureeyaa which is apparently seen and is above the dust.

That again rests on Truth.

So, this Gaayathree is established in the Tureeyaa State which is 'apparently seen', and which is 'above' all the taint of the mind and its fields of perceptions.

Gaayathree when recited with the proper understanding of this Veda Gaayathree, will result in the Tureeyaa state.

This Tureeyaa state is the essence of Gaayathree.

What is the essence of Tureeyaa state?

Truth of the Self or Knowledge of the Self!

चक्षुर्वै सत्यम् चक्षुर्हि वै सत्यम्
तस्माद्यदिदानीं द्वौ विवदमानावेयाताम् अहमदर्शम् अहमश्रौषमिति
य एवं ब्रूयादहमदर्शमिति तस्मा एव श्रद्धध्याम
तद्वै तत्सत्यं बले प्रतिष्ठितम्
प्राणो वै बलम् तत्प्राणे प्रतिष्ठितम्
तस्मादाहुर्बलं सत्यादोगीय इति
एवं वैषा गायत्र्यध्यात्मं प्रतिष्ठिता

Eye is the truth; for, the eye indeed is the truth.

That is why, when two persons come disputing, 'I saw' 'I heard'; we will trust the one who says 'I saw'.

That Truth rests on strength.

Praana is the strength.

That rests on Praana.

That is why they say that strength is more powerful than truth.

In this manner Gaayathree rests on the Praana within the body.

What is Truth?

That which is a direct experience; that which is seen.

When two persons describe an event, we believe a person who has seen the event directly and accept his statement; not the one who heard about it.

So, if the Tureeyaa state is only apparently seen, then how can it be the truth?

Yes. Eye is the truth.

But where does the power of vision rest on?

In the Praana.

Praana alone is the power behind all seeing or perceiving done by the mind.

Praana is powerful.

All the truths of the world rest on this Praana (Self).

It is more powerful than all, as it is the source of all truths.

So to attain the essence of Gaayathree, one contemplates on the source of all perceptions, all knowledge, and all Praana functions.

Gaayathree rests in that state of Tureeyaa, the transcendental state of the Self.

Self-state is the essence of Gaayathree.

सा हैषा गयांस्तत्रे

प्राणा वै गयाः

तत्प्राणांस्तत्रे

तद्गयांस्तत्रे तस्माद्गायत्री नाम

She saved the Gayas.

Praanas are the Gayas.

So she saved the Praanas.

Since she saved the Gayas, she is named as Gaayathree.

Why is this four-footed Gaayathree known by the term Gaayathree; since the Gaayathree metre has only three Padas to its credit?

That is because this contemplation of the Self-state through the recitation of Gaayathree Mantram - 'protects the Gayas (oxen)'.
What are 'Gayas'?

'Gayas' are the 'Praanas'.
She saved the Gayas. So she is Gaayathree.

How does she save the 'Gayas'?

She saves them by chasing them off to their source, the Self-state.

They no more go from body to body thus creating the varied experiences for the Jeeva.

They withdraw into their own source and remain as the Self.

Such a person, who has saved the Gayas through Gaayathree, never ever swerves from the state of the Self and never goes through births and deaths.

स यामेवाम् सावित्रीमन्वाह एवैष सा

स यस्मा अन्वाह तस्य प्राणांस्त्रायते ॥४॥

The Saavithree conveyed by the teacher to the student is only this.

It saves the Praanas of one to whom the instruction is given.

This Mantram of the Gaayathree leads to the state of the witness or Savitr (Sun) through the proper contemplation on its meanings.

This knowledge alone is taught to the student by the teacher.

The student who practices such a contemplation of Gaayathree Mantram has his Praanas saved. He is freed of the endless births and deaths caused by the out-going Praanas.

(5)

तां हैतामेके सावित्रीमनुष्टुभमन्वाहुः
 वागनुष्टुप् तद्वाचमनुब्रूम इति
 न तथा कुर्यात्
 गायत्रीमेव सावित्रीमनुब्रूयात्
 यदि ह वा अप्येवंविद्बहिव प्रतिगृह्णाति
 न हैव तद्गायत्र्या एकंचन पदं प्रति ॥५॥

Some convey to the student, the Saavithree that is Anushtubh.

'Speech is Anushtubh; let us teach the Anushtubh and so'.

It should not be done.

One should instruct the Saavithree, which is the Gaayathree.

If one who knows this, accepts abundant gift that is not enough for even one foot of Gaayathree.

Instead of this three-footed Gaayathree which leads to the knowledge of the Self, some ignorant teachers just train the student in the recitation of the four-lined Mantram without making him understand the true essence of the Gaayathree.

They do not know the fourth foot of Gaayathree.

They know only the four-footed Anushtubh (Verbal mastery in scriptures) which though with eight syllables ends up only in materialistic pursuits.

It is not correct.

The Guru should always explain the true essence (Saavithree) of Gaayathree.

He who attains such a Supreme state through the Gaayathree is above all the worlds and no bliss is equal to his ever. Even the ruler ship of the three worlds is just a piece of worthless grass piece for him.

(6)

स य इमांस्त्रींल्लोकान्पूर्णांन्प्रतिगृहणीयात्
 सोऽस्या एतत्प्रथमं पदमाप्नुयात्
 अथ यावतीयं त्रयी विद्या यस्तावत्प्रतिगृहणीयात्
 सोऽस्या एतद्वितीयं पदमाप्नुयात्
 अथास्या एतदेव तुरीयं दर्शतं पदं परोरजा य एष तपति
 नैव केनचनाप्यम्
 कुत उ एतावत्प्रतिगृहणीयात् ॥६॥

He, who accepts even the three worlds fully, will only be receiving the first foot of Gaayathree.

He, who accepts even the knowledge of the three Vedas fully, will only be receiving the second foot of Gaayathree.

He, who accepts even all the beings fully, will only be receiving the third foot of Gaayathree.

Whereas the fourth foot which is apparently visible and above the dust cannot be equal to any gift that is received.

How could any one even be capable of accepting so much?

What can you give one who 'is' everything?

What is there as a second object that he can enjoy?

(7)

तस्या उपस्थानम्
 गायत्र्यस्येकपदी द्विपदी त्रिपदी चतुष्पद्यपदसि न हि पद्यसे ।
 नमस्ते तुरीयाय दर्शतायपदाय परोरजसे

*This is the eulogy.
 Gaayathree!*

*You are one-footed, two-footed, three-footed, and four-footed.
 But you cannot be approached.*

Salutation to you!

You are the Tureeyaa state which is apparently visible and above the dust.

Gaayathree is the Self-state. Gaayathree is the essence of Tureeyaa state.
 This Self-state is not something that can be attained.
 It is always there as already attained.
 It is the supreme state far beyond the reach of the impure mind filled with ignorance.

असावदो मा प्रापदिति
 यं दिव्ष्यात्

May the enemy never attain his (its) object.

Which enemy is mentioned here that gets cursed to never attain his object?
 When Self (Reality essence) alone 'is', then what is there as the enemy, the second one that hurts you?
 What is the enemy which blocks the Self?
 Ignorance! The darkness is the enemy of the Sun, you can say.
 However, where the Sun 'is', darkness never 'is'.
 May the ignorance which deludes the mind and leads to endless existences in the world;
 may that enemy never attain its goal.

असावस्मै कामो मा समद्धीति वा
 न हैवास्मै स कामः समृद्ध्यते यस्मा एवमुपतिष्ठते
 अहमदः प्रापमिति वा ॥७॥

If the knower of Gaayathree has enmity towards any one, he should state-

'May not the desired object flourish for such and such a person'.

Then his desired object will not flourish.

Or he may state- 'May I attain the cherished object of his'.

Who is the enemy that is there standing next to the knower of Gaayathree?
 Duality!

If he ever sees anyone other than the Self, surely his enemy the delusion is overpowering him.

Hey Gaayatree!

May not that enemy ever flourish.

Let the duality-ideas of 'I' 'you' all vanish away by your contemplation.

(If you see anyone other than the Self...

If you are stuck by duality...

then think..)

Let me get his most cherished object.

(What is the most cherished object of anybody?

Self!)

'Hey Gaayathree!

Let me attain the Self-state by your contemplation'.

(8)

एतद्ध वै तज्जनको वैदेहो बुडिलमाश्वतराशिवमुवाच
यन्नु हो तद्गायत्रीविदब्रूथा अथ कथं हस्तीभूतो वहसीति
मुखं ह्यस्याः सम्प्राणविदांचकारेति होवाच
तस्या अग्निरेव मुखम्
यदि ह वा अपि बह्विवाग्नावभ्यादधति
सर्वमेव तत्संदहति
एवं हैवैवंविद्यद्यपि बह्विव पापं कुरुते
सर्वमेव तत्संप्राप्य शुद्धः पूतोऽजरोऽमृतः संभवति ॥८॥
इति चतुर्दशं ब्राह्मणम् ॥

An anecdote about this-

Janaka the king of Videha said to Budila, son of Asvataraashva-

'You declared yourself to be the knower of Gaayatri. Then why are you carrying me as an elephant?'

He said-

'Hey emperor- I do not know its mouth.'

He said-

'Fire alone is its mouth. However much fuel is offered to the fire, everything gets burnt up.

In this manner, even if one commits abundant sins, he consumes them all and remains pure, cleansed, un-decaying and immortal.

When Sage Budila declared that he knew Gaayathree and yet was after the material gifts offered by the king, the king chided him saying-

*'You are not a true knower of Gaayathree.
You see me as another person offering you wealth.
Your mind is still carrying the weight of the world.'*

Then Budila confessed that he was not aware of the true meaning of Gaayathree. He did not know how to get rid of all his Vaasanaas; he did not know the mouth which would swallow all his Vaasanaas.

The king explained-

'Fire is the mouth of Gaayathree'

Fire is the individual Self which keeps blazing high as a Jeeva consuming all the experiences in abundance.

Search for the source of the fire.

You will attain the state of 'Savitr' the Sun, who shines brighter than the fire; yet remains unaffected by the experiences of life.

Any sin, any action in the world of duality does not affect the Sun. He ever remains stable and unchanging and pure.

You remain established in the true essence of Gaayathree; and you will not be troubled by the experiences of the world, good or bad. Your mind will just act as a servant producing the scenes of the world; but you will shine as the Supreme, above all the taints of the duality'.

[THUS ENDS THE CATURDASHA BRAAHMANAM]

[BRHADAARANYAKA UPANISHAT]