
samskaaram
Practice & Preserve for Posterity

WHAT?

SmRuti rAtnAkaram says:

मकारं मन इत्याहुस्त्रकारं त्राणमेव च

मनस्त्राणसमायुक्तो मन्त्र इत्यभिधीयते.

जकारो जन्मविच्छेद : पकार : पापनाशान :

जन्मकर्महरो यस्मात् तस्माज्जप इति स्मृत :

makAraM mana ityaahustrakaaraM trANameva cha

manastrANasamAyukto mantra ityabhidheeyate.

jakAro janmavichCheda: pakAra: pApanAshaana:

janmakarmaharO yasmAt tasmAjjapa iti smRuta:

" ja " means that which releases one from janma (birth) and " pa " means that which destroys one's sins. So "japa" releases one from the bondage of birth and karmA.

" ma " means "mana "as in mind and " tra " means protection. So mantra means that which protects the mind or facilitates the mind to meditate without any obstacles.

The gAyatree japa is the japa of the most powerful gAyatree mahAmantra. The word "gAyatree" is derived from the phrase "gAyantam trAyatE it" which means "that mantra which protects the reciter".

The reciter has to learn this gAyatree mantrA from his guru/pandit at the time of the upanayana samskArA.

This gAyatree mantra is the essence of the 3 vEdAs, the Rig, yaju: and the sAma. Hence it is called "tripAda gAyatree". gAyatree is regarded as vEda mAtA, the mother of the vEdAs. She is called gAyatree at dawn, sAvitree at noon and saraswatee at dusk. The gAyatree mantrA has 24 aksharAs divided

into 3 pAdAs of 8 aksharAs each. It is however recited preceded by praNava "Oum" and the 3 vyAhrutis bhoo, bhuva and suva. This mantrA was revealed to Rushi vishvAmitrA, in the chandas (meter) gAyatree by savitA dEvatA (sun God).

The gAyatree mantra is found in the Rig vEda samhitA 3.62.10.

"Om bhUrbhuvassuva: tatsaviturvarENyam bhargO dEvsya dheemahi dhiyOyOna: prachOdayAt". "We meditate upon that supreme effulgence (savitu:) which enlightens our intellect and shows us the supreme truth"

WHY?

1. Shankha Rishi says in this dharmasootra, Chapter 11, gAyatree japa vidhi varNanam:-

गायत्री चैव जननी गायत्री पापनाशिनी ।

गायत्रीयास्तु परं नास्ति दिवि चेह च पावनम ॥

gAyatree chaiva jananee gAyatree pApanAshinee ।

gAyatreeyAstu paraM nAsti divi chEha cha pAvanam ॥

gAyatree is the mother, gAyatree absolves all sins. There is nothing more purifying in heaven or earth than gAyatree.

2. In the Devi bhAgavata purANA, skanda 9, chapter 26, verses 14 – 17

सकृज्जपश्च गायत्र्या : पापं दिनभवं हरेत् ।

दशवारं जपेनैव नश्येत्पापं दिवानिशम् ॥

शतवारं जपश्चैव पापं मासार्जितं हरेत् ।

सहस्रधा जपश्चैव कल्मशं वत्सरार्जितम् ॥

लक्षौ जन्मकृतं पापं दशलक्षौन्यजन्मजम्

सर्वजन्मकृतं पापं शतलक्षाद्विनश्यति ॥

करोति मुक्ति विप्राणां जपो दशगुणस्तत : ।

sakRujjapashcha gAyatryA: pApaM dinabhavaM harEt।

dashavAraM japEnaiva nashyEtpApaM divAnisham।।

shatavAraM japashchaiva pApaM mAsArjitaM harEt ।

sahasradhA japashchaiva kalmashaM vatsarArjitam ।।

lakShO janmakRutaM pApaM dashalakShOnyajanmajam

sarvajanmakRutaM pApaM shatalakShAdvinashyati ।।

karOti mukti viprANAM japO dashaguNastata: ।

One japA of gAyatree destroys a day's sins.

10 japAs of gAyatree destroys a day and a night's sins.

100 japAs of gAyatree destroys one month's sins.

1000 japAs of gAyatree destroys one year's sins.(that explains why it is done every year)

1 lakh japAs of gAyatree destroys the sins of the present birth.

10 lakh japAs of gAyatree destroys the sins of the previous births.

100 lakh (1 crore japAs) japAs of gAyatree destroys the sins of all births.

10 times the above liberates one from birth and death.

3. Sage ushna: says in his smRuti, 3.53

यॊधीतॆ ह्न्यहन्यॆताम् गायत्रीं वॆदमातरम् ।

विज्ञायार्थं ब्रह्मचारी स याति परमां गतिम् ॥

yOdheetE hanyahanyEtAm gAyatreeM vEdamaataram |

vigyAyArthaM brahmachaaree sa yaati paramaaM gatim||

The brahmachAree (bachelor) who understands the meaning of the gAyatree mantrA and recites the gAyatree, the mother of the vEdAs, attains the absolute goal.

4. gAyatree hOmam as a secret penance:

Sage YAgyavalkya says in Chapter 3.309:

यत्र यत्र च सङ्कीर्णमात्मानं मन्यते द्विज :

तत्र तत्र तिलैर्होमो गायत्र्या वाचनं(जपं)तथा ॥

yatra yatra cha sangkeerNamAtmAnaM manyate dvija:

tatra tatra tilairhOmO gAyatryA vAchanaM tathA ||

A dvija (twice born) should recite the gAyatree mantrA and offer oblations of til (sesame seeds) to agni, whenever he thinks or realizes that he has sinned.

WHO?

Both brahmachAris and married men (gruhastas) who have been initiated with the gAyatree mantrA by a guru/pandit/priest at the time of upanayana samskArA should do the gAyatree japam. They can also do it as a hOmA.

WHEN?

1. gAyatree japA is done daily 3 times during the trikAla sandhyAvandanA or sandhyOpAsanA.

Sage ushana: says in his smriti 3.47

गायत्रीं वै जपेन्नित्यं जपश्च त्रि: प्रकीर्तित :

गायत्रीन्चैव वेदांश्च तुलया तुलयन् प्रभु :

gAyatreeM vai japEnnityaM japashcha tri: prakeertita:

gAyatreenchaiva vEdAMshcha tulayA tulayan prabhu:

The gAyatree must be recited thrice daily. (nityam). Lord brahma shows the superiority of the gAyatree mantra by keeping gAyatree on one side of the weighing scale and the four vEdas on the other side.

2. A special gAyatree japa is done on the day following the pourNamee of the ShrAvaN/AvaNi month. (i.e) on the prathama tithi. On this prathama tithi, 1008 gAyatree japAs are done with special sankalpa. The gAyatree japa performed on this day is in the form of an atonement (dOsha prAyashchittam) for having wronlgy recited (mithyAdheeta) or not having done the japa properly during the previous year. This japa must be performed after mAdhyAhnikam.

All rig vEdis, yajur vEdis, sAma vEdis and atharva vEdis do this special japa on the same day, i.e. shrAvan month prathama tithi after pourNamee.

GAYATREE HOMAM AS PENANCE FOR WRONGFUL DEEDS

आपस्तम्बधर्मसूत्रम् प्रथम प्रश्ने नवम : पटल : प्रथम कण्डिका Apastamba dharma sootram, prashna 1, paTala 9, Part 2, kaNDikA 1

श्रावण्यां वा पौर्णमास्यां तिलभक्ष उपोष्य वा श्वो भूते महानदमुदकम् उपस्पृश्य सावित्र्या समित्सहस्रम् आदध्याद् जपेद्वा ॥१ ॥

shrAvaNyAM vA pourNamAsyAM tilabhakSha upOShya vA shvO bhootE mahAnadamudakam upaspRushya sAvitryA samitsahasram AdadhyAd japEdvA ||1||

One should do a fasting of items made of til (sesame) on the shrAvan pournamee evening and the next day (shrAvan prathama tithi) he should have a snAnam (bath) in a sacred river and offer 1000 samid sticks into agni chanting the gAyatree mantra or he must do the gAyatree japa 1000 times.

WHERE?

bruhadyOgi yAgyavlakya smriti, 7.143 says:

ग्रुहेत्वेकगुणं प्रोक्तं नद्यां तु द्विगुणं स्मृतम् ।

गवां गोष्ठे दशगुणं अग्न्यगारे शताधिकम् ॥

सिद्धिक्षेत्रेषु तीर्थेशु देवतायाश्च सन्निधौ ।

सहस्रशतकोटिस्स्यात् अनन्तं विष्णुसन्निधौ.

gruhEtvEkaguNaM prOktaM nadyAM tu dviguNaM smRutam ।

gavAM gOShThE dashaguNaM agnyagaarE shatAdhikam ।।

siddhikShEtreShu teerthEshu dEvatAyAshcha sannidhou ।

sahasrashatakOTissyAt anantaM viShNusannidhou.

1. *A japa done on the banks of a river/lake gives twice the results of that done in a house.*
2. *A japa done in a cow's shed is 10 times fruitful than that done in a house.*
3. *A japa done in a agni shAlA or yAga shALA is 100 times more fruitful.*
4. *A japa done in a siddhi kshEtrA or a puNya kshEtrA or a temple is a crore times more fruitful.*
5. *A japa done in the sanctum sanctorum of viShNu sannidhi is more than a crore times fruitful.*

Stealing every opportunity to do gAyatree japam in any of the above places would be very satisfying. Otherwise, home sweet home is always there.

HOW?

1. Sage bOdhAyanA says in his smriti 2.5.22

प्रणवो व्याहृतय : सावित्री चेत्येते पञ्च ।

ब्रह्म यज्ञा : अहरहब्राह्मणं किल्बिशात् पावयन्ते ॥

praNavO vyAhRutaya: sAvitree chEtyEtE pancha ।

brahma yagyA: aharaha brAhmaNaM kilbishAt paavayantE॥

gAyatree mantra has to be recited slowly pausing at 5 places.

1. *After praNavam (Oum)*
2. *After the 3 vyAhrutis*
3. *After tatsavitur varEnyam*
4. *After bhargO dEvasya dheemahi*
5. *After dhiyO yO na: prachOdayAt.*

There are 3 ways of doing mantra japa.

1. vAchikam वाचिकम्- Reciting the mantra loudly with its intonations so that others can here.
2. upAmsu उपांशु- Reciting the mantra softly within oneself so that the lips touch each other.
3. mAnasam मानसम्- Mediting on each akshara and pada quitely in the mind.

Of all the above, doing mAnasa japam of the sAvitree (gAyatree mantra) is the best and most beneficial. upAmsu japam can also be done if mAnasa japam is difficult to do. But vAchika japam is not advised by the smRutis.

2. Sage ushanA says about the **count of gAyatree mantra** in his smriti ; 3.46

गायत्रीमप्यधीयीत गत्वारण्यं समाहित : ।

सहस्रपरमां देवीं शतमध्यां दशापराम् ॥

gAyatreemapyadheeyeeta gatvAraNyaM samAhita:

sahasra paramAM dEveeM shata madhyAM dashA parAm.

Reciting the gAyatree a 1000 time is the most divine, a 100 timE is medium and 10 times is lesser.

3. A gAyatree hOmA/havan by offering samidh sticks to agni is also done

instead of a japa

shankha smruti, Chapter 11, Verse 19.

हुता देवि विशेषण सर्वकाम प्रदायनी।

सर्वपापक्षयकरी वनस्थभक्तवत्ला॥

hutA dEvi vishEShaNa sarvakAma pradAyanee

sarvapApakShayakaree vanastabhaktavatsalA

When oblations are offered to gAyatree dEvi in a hOmA by repeating the gAyatree mantra, She grants all boons to the offerer. She who is kind to the forest dwellers, causes expiation of all sins.

4. gAyatree hOmam as a secret penance:

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Both gAyatree japam and gAyatree hOmam procedure is given in “My gAyatree japam” tab. Please update your profile according your sect and get your pdf.


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