

## Impact of *Gayatri Mantra* Chanting on *Manas Prakruti* and Stress

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### Abstract

*Ayurvedic treatment focusses* on treating a diseased person and also maintaining the health of normal individuals. In *Ayurveda*, diseases are defined as there which on conjunction cause pain. They are located in mind and body. *Rajas* and *Tamas* are considered as the two *doshas* of the *manas* (mind). The balance of *tamas* and *rajas* are disturbed by stress condition, desires and negative thoughts. To maintain a healthy body and mind, one should try to balance the three *gunas*. Stress is a state of tension that is created when a person responds to the demands and pressures that come from work, family and other external sources, as well as those that are internally generated from self-imposed demands, obligations and self-criticism. The *Gayatri* mantra chanting is a form of meditation to protect one from all human sins, physical dissipation and to bestow knowledge, health and longevity.

### Keywords

*Manas, Trigunas, Stress, Gayatri Mantra*



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## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is the divine science of life being practiced since time immemorial and which deals with *Ayu* (life). Therefore every research done in the field of *Ayurveda* also gives- emphasis to health prophylaxis along with treatment.

The aim of *Ayurveda* emphasizes on treating a diseased person and also maintaining the health of normal individuals<sup>1</sup>. Diseases are defined as there which on conjunction cause pain. They are located in mind and body.

*Ayurveda* divides persons according to *prakruti*. They are of two types:

- *Sharir Prakruti*
- *Manas Prakruti*.

*Sharirprakruti* belongs to *vatta, pitta, kapha* and *manas prakruti* belongs to *Sattva, Rajas and Tamas*.

*Rajas and Tamas* are considered as the two *doshas* of the *manas* (mind)<sup>2</sup>.

*Sattva*: The illuminating, pure or good quality which leads to clarity and mental serenity *sattva* is full of love. *Sattva* is light, full of knowledge.

*Rajas*: The quality of mobility or activity which makes a person active and energetic, tense and willful.

*Tamas*: The dark and restraining quality which obstruct and counteracts the tendency

of *rajas* to work and of *sattva* to reveal. *Tamas* is full of destruction. *Tamas* is heavy, covering and obstructing light.

Inspite of this different nature they help mutually in creation. The quality of *sattva* leads towards the divine and *tamas* towards the demonic while in between these two stands *rajas*. Thus, due to the predominance of any the above *gunas* determines the psychological constitution of mind. Imbalance in any kind of *gunas*, result in various mental disorders. The balance of *tamas* and *rajas* are disturbed by stress condition, desires and negative thoughts. To maintain a healthy body and mind, one should try to balance the three *gunas*.<sup>3</sup> According to *Ayurveda*, stress is a state where the mind is imbalanced. The mind is considered to be balanced when it is not agitated, and is firm and stable. When the mind is in a stable state, the individual has the maximum potential to act or behave in ways that continue to keep the mind in a balanced state.

Worries have always been a constant companion of human life. In ancient texts, *Acharya Charak* while explaining about *sadatura*(constantly ill person)says that worries are the main reason of a constantly ill person<sup>4</sup>. *Acharaya Charak* further

explains that one who indulges in activities which are above ones performing capacity, puts too much strain on oneself in excess perishes like a lion trying to drag an elephant. i.e., putting too much of stress on a system leads to disastrous effects on the body<sup>5</sup>. State of *mana* is related to stress.

For years it has been “common knowledge” that people who are under a lot of stress have an increased risk of various disorders. How people respond to stress may be more important than the stress itself. People respond according to their *Manas gunas*<sup>6</sup>.

Mental disorders or imbalances are caused when “*sattva*” decreases and “*rajas*” and “*tamas*” increase. As “*sattva*” decreases, mental strength, determination, and the power to distinguish right from wrong also decrease. When such a state is prolonged, the mind becomes stressed. This may then lead to other mental disorders like anxiety, depression, fear, and nervous debility.

In this jet age, each one of us is exposed to some amount of stress. Some of us can handle stress in a better way than others. In our own lives we come across situations when we can efficiently deal with high amount of stress. When situated in a state of high “*sattva*” a person is calm, thoughtful,

patient, and tolerant and demonstrates a high positive attitude. On the other hand, high level of “*rajas*” and “*tamas*” leads to a state of hopelessness, despair, impatience, fear, and anxiety. In such a situation, a person becomes confused, lazy and weak in mental power<sup>7</sup>.

Stress is a state of tension that is created when a person responds to the demands and pressures that come from work, family and other external sources, as well as those that are internally generated from self imposed demands, obligations and self-criticism.

Stress is both additive and cumulative. It adds up over time until a state of crisis is reached and symptoms appear. These symptoms may manifest themselves psychologically as irritability, anxiety, impaired concentration, mental confusion, poor judgment, frustration and anger. They may appear as physical symptoms. Common physical symptoms of stress include: muscle tension, headaches, low back pain, insomnia and high blood pressure. Untreated, these symptoms may lead to physical illness and sometimes death<sup>8</sup>.

According to the Oxford medical dictionary, stress is a state of affair involving demand of physical and mental energy. It is a condition, which can disturb

normal physical or mental health of an individual.

According to Wikipedia, Stress may also be defined as the sum of physical and mental responses to an unacceptable disparity between real or imagined personal experience and personal expectations. Thus in short any stimulus that causes any imbalance in the internal environment of an organism is called stress.

Stress itself might be a risk factor, or it could be that high levels of stress make other risk factors (such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure) worse. For example, if we are under stress, our blood pressure may go up, we may overeat, we may exercise less, and may be more likely to smoke. People respond in different ways to events and situations according to their *Manas gunas*. One person may find an event joyful and gratifying, but another person may find the same event miserable and frustrating. Sometimes, *Tamas and Rajas* dominant people may handle stress in ways that make bad situations worse by reacting with feelings of anger, guilt, fear, hostility, anxiety, and moodiness. Others may face life's challenges with ease.

It is impossible to change sharir prakruti but a person can definitely change the

percentage of satva, rajas and tamas in his manas prakruti<sup>9</sup>. He can achieve more powerful and superior quality of mind with the help of self-psycho analysis and by evolving oneself with philosophic thoughts by nurturing self mind with positive emotions.

Various means to overcome rajas and tamas are described in Upanishads, allied literature and even in *charak samhita*. One of such effective means is to chant the Gayatri mantra. The Gayatri mantra chanting is a form of meditation to protect one from all human sins, physical dissipation and to bestow knowledge, health and longevity<sup>10</sup>.

#### Origin of Gayatri Mantra

According to ancient scriptures, god gifted Sage Vishwamitra this Gayatri mantra for his eons of deep meditation and penance. This was to be a gift for all humanity. The Gayatri Mantra was first written in Sanskrit in the Rig Veda, 8000 B.C<sup>11</sup>.

#### The Gayatri Mantra

“Aum Bhoor Bhuvah Swah Tat Savitur Vareniam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayat”.

*Aum* : The divine sound of Aum teaches us that our individual consciousness is a subset of the Universal Consciousness, that

pervades this Universe. Therefore we should live life in a manner that upholds the flag of Universal Consciousness.

“*Bhoor*”: teaches us to identify and modify those traits that destroy us and replace them with those that uplift us in an all round manner.

“*Bhuvaha*”: tells us to carry out our appointed duties very meticulously and after having done the same and accept the results as God’s grace. We should engage in actions and Karma that uphold the welfare of all.

“*Svaha*”: emphasizes the importance of developing a balanced thought process where we can face both joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, profit and loss, good and bad with equanimity of character.

“*Tat*”: signifies that we should not look upon the pleasures attained via the body and senses to be the be all and end all of our life. Sensory pleasures and their benefits are transient in nature (short term feel good pleasures) and spiritual pleasures in contrast are lifelong and eternal.

“*Savitur*”: emphasizes that we gain wisdom,

righteous intellect, good health, righteously gained wealth, righteously gained name and fame etc.

“*Varenyam*”: tells us to imbibe only those traits that are truly exalted.

“*Bhargo*”: tells us to imbibe purity in our body, mind, wealth, health, home, dress and behavior .

“*Devasya*”: signifies developing a generous, divine and farsighted thought process.

“*Dhimahi*”: signifies developing the ability to imbibe good qualities, great character, divine glories and high thinking.

“*Dhiyo*”: refers to development of our intellect . It signifies to us that we should not blindly follow an individual, ritual, literature or sect just because a crowd of people is doing so. Instead we should apply discriminating intellect to understand what is just and right and follow the same.

“*Yonaha*” : signifies to us that we should imbibe all good qualities for not just our well being but also for the benefit of those around us.

“*Prachodayaat*”: signifies the quality of Inspiration. It signifies to us that we live our life in such a way that we are a source of inspiration to others, so that they too may live life in the same righteous, wise way.

#### Meaning of the Gayatri Mantra in Summary:

It is a form of meditation(prayer) to the Almighty Supreme God, the Creator of the entire Cosmos, the essence of our Life Existence, the remover of all our pains and sufferings and the One who grants us our happiness. We beseech his divine grace to imbue within us his divinity and brilliance which may purify us and guide us on the path of righteous wisdom and intellect.

#### GLORY OF GAYATRI MANTRA

OM is the primordial spanda (vibration). All mantras have emerged out of it. OM is nature of pure light. All other mantras are also of the nature of light waves. “GAYATRI – MANTRA” is called as supreme medicine (manaushadhi) because it heals all diseases. Any sick person may be cured of his disease by just regularly reciting Gayatri mantra.

OM is the first syllable of gayatri mantra which the ancient Vedic seers used to recite. Pure consciousness is the source of gayatri

mantra. Gayatri mantra symbolizes the sun. Anybody who habitually recites the gayatri mantra gets purified in his mind and body because the radiant energy of the mantra burns all the blemishes in his personality.

Gayatri mantra has a dynamic force and enjoins the brahmachari (bachelor), the grahasthas (house holder) and the vanaprastha (forest dweller), all to repeat this sanctified mantra at least 108 times a day. Gayatri Mantra is the first mantra to be taught in schools in the olden days as it enabled the students attain righteous and far sighted wisdom and energized them to absorb the studies ahead of them. The Gayatri Mantra is a part of the Rig Veda Samhita, Mandala III, 62 – 10. The Maithrayani Upanisad explains the meaning and importance of meditation of Gayatri mantra. Mantra chanting is a scientific process of inward orientation of mind. The vibrations induced by the repeated chanting of mantra generate specific pulsation of prana<sup>12</sup>.

#### SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF GAYATRI CHANTING

The syllables of Gayatri mantra are uttered by different parts of the mouth such as throat

(larynx), tongue, teeth, lips and the root of the tongue. During speech, the nerve-fibres of the particular parts of the mouth from which sound emits stretch up to various parts of the body and exert pressure on the corresponding glands. There are various large, small, visible and invisible glands in the body. Uttering of different words has its impact on different glands and by such impact the energy of these glands gets stimulated.

The chanting of Gayatri Mantra activates the network of nerves in the mouth and stimulates specific glands. The twenty-four letters in Gayatri-Mantra are related to twenty-four such glands located in the body which, on getting stimulated, activate and awaken the powers of mind for righteous wisdom (satva guna). This modifies the individual's personality out of the rajas and tamas pradhan prakruti towards satva pradhan prakruti (It removes ignorance from the subconscious and thus helps in the emergence of light of spirit within the individual soul)<sup>13</sup>. A Vedic symphony is created which spreads in the ether, takes a round of the entire universe, coming back to the source with its energy augmented manifold, capable of fulfilling the desired purpose.

## DISCUSSION

*Ayurveda* is the science of life which contains all the references pertaining to life and meditation is a scientific process of inward orientation of mind. The Gayatri mantra chanting is a form of meditation to protect one from all human sins, physical dissipation and to bestow knowledge, health and longevity. It enhances the, Atma Shakti and protects them from the devastating effects of stress<sup>14</sup>. The performance of Gayatri mantra chanting serves as a primary route for self purification (increasing *satva guna* and decreasing *rajas and tamas*). This mantra is supercharged with power and has been suggested to mankind under the Vedas.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that chanting of Gayatri mantra can modify individual's *manas prakruti* from *rajas pradhan* and *tamas pradhan prakruti* to *satva pradhan prakruti*. Thus, it is significant that the chanting of the Gayatri mantra has a cumulative effect on our body and our mind. Mind becomes sharper and immune system is stronger. Our energy centers, including our main Chakras, are activated by the vibrations of the Gayatri mantra and this has

a positive and healing effect on our mind and life (Prana)<sup>15</sup>. Thus, it enables the individual to follow the path of *satva guna* and hence least affected by ill-effects of stress.

Today, this mantra is chanted and sung not only in Indian subcontinent but all around the world with devotion and love. This mantra has soothing and beautiful flow of sounds with various rhythmic patterns making it the most powerful mantra for spiritual enlightenment and purification of mind.

Gayatri mantra has a universal meaning and is applicable to whole mankind irrespective of their faith and religious beliefs.

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