

**GĀYAKA.** A warrior of Subrahmaṇya. (Śloka 67, Chapter 85, Śalya Parva).

**GAYAPARVATAM.** A sacred mountain. Yamarāja honoured it on a particular occasion. Brahmasaras encircled by the Devas is on this mountain. To perform the Śrāddha rites of the dead at Brahmasaras is considered to be excellent. (See Gayātīrtha).

**GAYAŚIRAS.** A peak of Gaya Mountain; it is also known as Gayaśirṣa. (Vana Parva, Chapter 87).

**GAYAŚIRṢA.** See Gayaśiras.

**GAYĀTĪRTHA.** The following story is told in the Agni Purāṇa about the origin of this very reputed sacred place at Gayā.

An asura called Gaya was once performing tapas here. As the intensity of his tapas went on increasing, the Devas got nervous and they approached Viṣṇu with the request that he should save them from Gayāsura. Viṣṇu agreed to oblige them. Meantime the intensity of Gaya's tapas increased daily. Ultimately Viṣṇu appeared to Gaya and as requested by him granted him the boon to the effect that he would become more holy and sanctified than all the tīrthas in the world.

Brahmā and other Devas became afraid of Gaya's power and prowess and they complained about him to Viṣṇu, who advised Brahmā to request Gaya for his body in order to perform a yajña. Brahmā did so and Gaya lay down on earth so that the Yajña might be performed on his body. Brahmā began the yajña on his head, and made an offering when the body of Gaya was not stationary or quiet. When told about this fact Viṣṇu called up Dharmadeva (See Marīci, Para 3) and told him thus : "You please hold devaśilā (a divine stone) on the body of Gaya, and let all the Devas sit upon it, and I shall be seated on the stone along with the Devas, holding the gadā (club) in my hands."

Dharmadeva did as he was bidden by Viṣṇu. The body of Gaya stopped shaking as soon as Viṣṇu sat upon the stone, and Brahmā made the full offerings. Thenceforth the place became a holy tirtha under the name Gayā. After the yajña was over Brahmā gave the Gaya temple 20,000 yards (5 Krośa) in extent with 55 villages attached to it as dakṣiṇā (fee) to the masters of the ceremony. Brahmā presented the villages to them after creating therein hills purely of gold, rivers flowing with milk and honey, houses built of Gold and silver etc. But the brahmins who got these gifts stayed on there, their avarice only on the increase perhaps. Angry at this Brahmā cursed the people of Gayā, and according to it the brahmins became illiterate and evil-minded; rivers flowed with water instead of milk and honey. The brahmins lamenting over their evil fate submitted their grievances before Brahmā, who consoled them thus : Well, brahmins of Gayā, as long as there exist the sun and the moon you will continue to be dependent upon the Gayā tirtha for your sustenance. Whoever comes to Gayā and gives offerings to you and performs the due rites for the souls of the departed, the souls of hundred generations of his ancestors will be transferred from hell to heaven where they will attain final beatitude."

Thus did Gayātīrtha become famous. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 144).

**GĀYATRĪ I.** One of the seven horses of Sūrya. The other horses are Bṛhatī, Uṣṇik, Jagatī, Triṣṭubh,

Anuṣṭubh, and Paṅkti. (Chapter 8, Anīśam 2, Viṣṇu Purāṇa).

**GĀYATRĪ II.**

1) *General information.* A glorious Vedic mantra. This mantra has twentyfour letters. There are nineteen categories of movable and immovable things in this world and to this if the five elements are added the number twentyfour is obtained. That is why the Gāyatrī has got twentyfour letters. (Chapter 4, Bhīṣma Parva). At the time of Tripura dahana Śiva hung this Gāyatrī mantra as a string on the top of his chariot (Chapter 34, Karṇa Parva).

2) *The glory of Gāyatrī.* If one recites Gāyatrī once one will be freed from all sins done at that time; if one recites it ten times all the sins done on one day will be washed away. Thus, if one recites it a hundred times the sins of one month; thousand times, the sins of a year; one lakh times, the sins of his life time; ten lakh times, the sins of his previous birth; hundred lakh times, the sins of all his births, will be washed away. If a man recites it ten crore times he becomes a realised soul and attains mokṣa. (Navama Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata).

3) *How to recite Gāyatrī.* It should be recited sitting still with your head slightly drawn downwards with your right palm open upwards, with the fingers raised and bent to give the shape of the hood of a snake. Starting from the centre of the ring-finger and counting down and going up through the centre of the small finger and touching the top lines on the ring, middle and forefingers, count down to the base of the forefinger, you get number ten. This is how the number of recitations is counted. This method is called the Karamālā (hand rosary) method. This is not the only method that could be used. You can use a rosary made of lotus seeds or glass beads. If you are using lotus seeds you should select white seeds for the rosary. (Navama Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata).

**GĀYATRĪSTHĀNA.** A sacred place of northern Bhārata. If one spends one night here one will get the benefit of giving away as gifts a thousand cows. (Śloka 28, Chapter 85, Vana Parva).

**GERU.** A mineral obtained from mountains. (Śloka 95, Chapter 158, Vana Parva).

**GH (ꣳ).** This letter has two meanings: (1) Bell (2) a blow or assault; striking or killing. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 348).

**GHANAPĀṬHA.** A particular system of Vedic studies. There are four such systems. The system of separating each word from conjunctions and combinations and combining with the word just before and after it is called Jaṭāpāṭha. Jaṭāpāṭha means joined or combined Pāṭha. Ghanapāṭha is there to avoid errors in Jaṭāpāṭha. Ghanapāṭha consists of padapāṭha and Kramapāṭha. In Padapāṭha the split words are once more combined and Prātiśākhya lays down the rules to combine words. It is because of this scientific system of reciting that the Ṛgveda remains to this day pure in text without different readings.

**GHAṆṬA. I.** A brahmin born in Vasiṣṭha's family. He spent hundred years worshipping Śiva. Once Ghaṇṭa asked sage Devala to give his daughter in marriage to him. But Ghaṇṭa's ugliness stood in the way. So he abducted the daughter of the sage and married her. Enraged at this Devala cursed and turned him into an