Chapter – VI

Structural description of Gavāmayana Satrayāga

_Gavāmayana yāga_ is the _prakṛti_ of all _Satra yāgas_. The _Gavāmayana_ and the _Dvādaśāha yāgas_ are included in the _Somayāga_, but these two _yāgas_ have some different features. It is mentioned earlier that the _Somayāgas_ which takes more than twelve days for completion is called _Satrayāga_. These _Satrayāgas_ can be performed for one year, ten years and hundred years or even for thousand of years. The _Gavāmayana yāga_ as the model of all types of _Satrayāgas_ takes 361 days for completion. These ceremony is divided into three parts, such as – _Prathamārdha_ (1st half) 180 days, _Dvitiyārdha_ (2nd half) also 180 days and a day between these two half is called _Viṣuvān_ or _Viṣuvat_. The chronology which is followed in the first part of the 180 days is completely become opposite at the time of performing the second part of 180 days. This ceremony is performed in three parts, _Pūrvapakṣa, Uttarakapakṣa_ and one day between the two which is called _Viṣuvān_. The structure of the _yāga_ is as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pūrvapākṣa</th>
<th>No. of day’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st day <em>Atirātra</em></td>
<td>1 day (<em>Prāyaṇiya</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2(^\text{nd}) day <em>Ukthya</em></td>
<td>1 day (<em>Caturviṃśa</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four <em>Abhiplavaśaḍaha</em> (^1) <em>Yāga</em> (4 X 6)</td>
<td>24 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One <em>Prṣṭhyaśaḍaha yāga</em> (1 X 6)</td>
<td>6 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First month ceremony</td>
<td>30 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second month ceremony</td>
<td>30 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third month Ceremony</td>
<td>30 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth month ceremony</td>
<td>30 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth month ceremony</td>
<td>30 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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150 days

After that –

| | |
| Three *Abhiplavaśaḍaha* (3 X 6) | 18 days |
| One *Prṣṭhyaśaḍaha* (1 X 6) | 6 days |
| For *Abhijit* 1 day | 1 day |
| For *Svarasāma* 3 days | 3 days |

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28 days

Total in *Pūrvapakṣa* (1+1+150+28) = 180 days
Uttarapakṣa  |  No. of days
---|---
Three *Svarasāma* | 3 days
*Viśvajit yāga* | 1 day
One *Prṣṭhyaṣadaha* | 6 days
Three *Abhiplavaṣadaha* (3 X 6) | 18 days

After that in the first, second, third and in fourth month one *Prṣṭhya* and four *Abhiplavaṣadaha*
That means 30 days X 4 | 120 days
Three *Abhiplavaṣadaha* | 18 days
One *Goṣṭom* and one *Āyuṣṭom* | 2 days
Ten days of *Dvādaśāha* (*Daśarātra* | 10 days
*Agniṣṭoma* (*Mahābrata*) | 1 day
*Atirātra* (*Udayanīya*) | 1 day

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180 days

One day between the two *pakṣas* called ‘*Viṣuva*’

So, 180+180+1 = 361 days, means the *Samvatsarasādhyā* *Gavāmayana* *yāga*.

*Gavāmayana yāga* is performed to attain everything. ² The model of all one year long *Somayāga* is ‘*Gavāmayana*’ *yāga*. In the *Gavāmayana yāga* the *Prāyaṇīya* is performed in the first day and after doing the *Caturvimśa* ceremony in the second day, in every month four *Abhiplavaṣadaha* and
one Prṣṭhyasadaha should be performed up to the fifth month.⁴ After that in the sixth month Samgrathan is done by the priests.⁵ In the sixth month three Abhiplaba, one Prṣṭhya one Abhijit and three Svarasāma should be performed. It means twenty eight days of the sixth month. To complete thirty days of the sixth month the first two days of Prāyanīya and Caturvimśa are counted here. These two days are counted here only to maintain the calculation of the sixth month but the actual ceremony is performed at the starting of the Gavāmayana. This is called the Pūrvapāksa. In Gavāmayana yāga Pūrvapāksa means the one part that is the two months. After that comes the Viṣuva day which is Ekavimśastomayukta. This Viṣuva day is neither included in the Pūrvapāksa nor in the Uttarapāksa. This day’s function is performed after completion of the Pūrvapāksa and before starting the Uttarapāksa. So this is totally independent day.⁶

After that comes the Uttarapāksa. In the Uttarapāksa the three Svarasāma and Sadahas are performed totally opposite of the Pūrvapāksa. In the Pūrvapāksa there is total six month and in the Uttarapāksa also there are six months. In the seventh month that means in the first month of the Uttarapāksa, total number of days is twenty eight including the three Svarasāma, Viṣvajit, Prṣṭhya and three Abhiplavaṣadaha. To complete the month in thirty days two days should be credited from the eighth month. Like this two days are also credited from the ninth, tenth, eleventh and
twelfth month respectively because in the twelfth month there are thirty two days so there will be no problem in counting the days. Actually in the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh month one Prṣṭhyasaḍaha and four Abhiplavaṣaḍaha ceremonies should be performed and then the last month should be compared. In the twelfth month three Abhiplava, Goṣṭom, Āyuṣṭom, Daśarātra are performed. With Mahābrata and Udayanīya the seventh month is completed. Mahābrata and Udayanīya included in the last month and Goṣṭom and Āyuṣṭom are under the seventh month. Otherwise to construct the two months Goṣṭom and Āyuṣṭom should be placed in different places. Goṣṭom should be placed after Viśvajit and Āyuṣṭom should be placed before Daśarātra, or after doing the seventh savanamāsa after Viśvajit the Goṣṭom, Āyuṣṭom and Daśarātra should be replaced from the last month. It is also done in the way that the days of Uttarapakṣa should be applied oppositely and sadahas should remain accordingly or sadahas will become opposite and days will remain accordingly. This is the structure of the Gavāmayana satrayāga.

Priest and their functioning:-

Gavāmayana is a type of Somayāga, so it has similarity with the prakṛti of Somayāga that is Agniṣṭoma, in case of number of priests and the āhutidravyas. One specialty of this yāga is that the works of priests are performed by the yajamāna’s here. So in this Satra yāga ṛtvik-varaṇa and
dakṣiṇādāna ceremony are not performed. In Satrayāga the number of priests should be from seventeen to twenty four. Among these seventeen yajamānas one is considered as Grhapati and he should perform the duties of yajamāna and the rest sixteen brāhmaṇas performs the duties of the priests. In case of twenty four priests, sixteen performs the duty of priest and the rest are performs the works of Grhapati. Satrayāga is the only yāga performed by the brāhmaṇas.

Āhutidravyas:-

It is mentioned earlier that the havirdravyas or āhutidravyas are same like the Somayāga. In the Somayāga different types of things are given āhuti in the fire. These are – purodāsa, ājya, grta, honey, milk and curd. As it has similarity with the Somayāga, the Grhacamasāhutipradāna and stotrapātha happens in the same way.

From the above discussion it is found that if we notice the structure and the time division of the Gavāmayana yāga, then it has similarity with the yearly movement of the Sun. The entire yāga is divided into two parts and each part of six months is completed with the thirty days ceremony. Between this two parts there is one day ‘Viśuva’. The ceremonies or yāgas of these two parts are almost same, the difference is that the 180 days ceremony of the second part or the Uttarabhāga are performed in opposite manner from the first part or the Pūrvabhāga. In the yearly movement of
the Sun in two parts is also happened in opposite manner. In the Uttarāyana of the Sun the days become long and in the dakṣināyana the days became short. The Gavāmayana yāga has specialty in case of its time division for performing the one year long ceremony, its number of priest and its relation with the nature that means the Sun. In other yāgas the sacrificial ceremonies are performed by the traivarniks (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya), but here it is performed by the Brāhmaṇa caste only. Though, the Gavāmayana is different from other yāgas but it has structural affinity with other yāgas in terms of its priest numbers and āhutidravyas.
Notes and References:

1. Ṣaḍaha – Ṣaḍaha means the Somayāga which is performed in six days repeatedly

2. Āśv.Śs.11.7.1 – Ata Gavāmayanaṁ sarvakāmāḥ

3. Āśv.Śs.11.7.2 – Prāyaṇīyacaturvimśe upetya catur-abhiplavān prṣṭhyapaṇcāmān paṇca māsān upayanti

4. Āśv.Śs.11.7.3 – ‘Atha ṣaṣṭham sambhāranti. Sambharanti means’ collection from different place.

5. Āśv.Śs.1.7.8 – ‘Na pūrvasya pakṣasya nottarasya

6. Savanamāsa – Month which is constructed with ṣaḍahās is called Savanamāsa