

Origin of Yagya

The four Vedas signify the philosophy of the eternity and absolute complementary role of Gayatri and Yagya in the divine creation. Atharvaveda also deals with sound therapy aspects of Mantras for the treatment of the ailing human system at the physical, psychological and spiritual levels. The Samaveda focuses on the musical chanting patterns of the Mantras and the subtle form of Yagya by defining the latter as the process of mental oblation on the surface of internal emotions through the cosmic radiation of the omnipresent subtle energy of sound. The Yajurveda contains the knowledge of principles and methods of performing Yagyas as Spiritual and Scientific experiments for global welfare.

The teachings of yagya

Why do we regard the sacrificial fire of Yagya as purohit (priest)? It inspires us to imbibe its five idealistic qualities in our life.

1. Fire has the characteristic of always being hot and bright. We are inspired to lead bright, radiant, active lives like fire, full of wisdom and brilliance.
2. The flame of fire always goes upwards. One may apply any amount of pressure but its flame never goes downwards. It teaches us that despite immense pressures of fear and temptations our flame of wisdom, and foresight should ever be kept-alight and up-turned.
3. Anything coming in contact with fire becomes fire itself. We should also have such a quality of excellence in our character, so that anyone coming in our contact may become refined.
4. Fire accumulates nothing. Whatever is offered in the fire is vaporized. It is scattered throughout in the atmosphere and becomes universal. We should also not accumulate possessions for our selfish ends but utilize all our resources and qualities for advancing the good of the people. We should be generous and lovingly kind.
5. The residues of fire are ashes. Ultimately physical forms of all human beings are going to be reduced to a handful of ashes. The idea behind applying (ashes of Yagya) on the forehead is that man should always remember the inevitability of death and utilize each and every moment of his life in the best possible manner.

These five teachings are known as panchagnividya which the priest (purohit) in the form of fire teaches to every human being. A man is truly blessed if he imbibes these teachings in his daily life by performing symbolic worship in the form of Yagya.

The real purpose of Yagya is to imbibe virtues like self-sacrifice, self-restraint (sanyam), charity, beneficence, generosity, compassion etc. in our daily life. It inspires us to surrender everything, body, mind, ego and soul to God. A Sadhak on surrendering himself to God, who has been described as Yagya-purush in the scriptures, becomes one with Yagya, just as samidhas on being consumed in the sacrificial fire of Yagya become fire itself. In fact the real Yagya is to follow the directions and inspirations of our indwelling divinity and imbibe righteous tendencies. Constant remembrance of the Divine, keeping an attitude of detachment and remaining engrossed in regular sacred studies and devotion amounts to leading a Yagya life. Such a

person sees the presence of God in everyone, everywhere and becomes free of evil deeds and sins.

Scientific Aspects of Yagya

There are two basic energy systems in the physical world: Heat and Sound. In performing Yagya, these two energies, namely, the heat from Yagya's fire and the sound of the Gayatri and other Mantras, are combined to achieve the desired physical, psychological and spiritual benefits.

The fumigation of specific substances in the Yagya --- fire is a scientific method of subtulisation of matter into energy and expanding its potential and positive effects in the surrounding atmosphere. The electromagnetic waves generated thereby help in transmitting, at cosmic level, the desired sonic signals 'stored' in the Mantras, which are chanted during the process of sacrificing the special materials in the fire.

Types of Yagya

Apart from fire-based scientific experiment (or fire-ritual, as popularly known), other principal types of Yagyas signified in the Vedic culture are:

The Seva Yagna --- altruist service of the society is a noble example of Yagya.

The Gyan Yagya similarly implies the service of people by enlightening their lives in the glow of knowledge and education.

The Prana Yagya implies --- the service of saving the lives of people from suffering and agonies and inspiring liveliness and respect for life in them. A variety of such Yagyas are described in the Shastras.

Benefits of Yagya

Yagya is also glorified as "Yajóoaya® Sarvak³mdhuk" meaning, "Yagya is the source of fulfilling all desires". This appears to be true in view of the positive effects, at physical, mental and spiritual levels, of performing Yagya and ideal elevation of life by adopting the universal philosophy of Yagya in action.

"Agni M^ode Purohitam" The first revelation of Rig Veda of is said to have given knowledge of kindling fire to the first man on the earth. The knowledge of other powers of Nature is said to have descended afterwards. Fire and thermal energy are also the key sources of materialistic development. "Fire worship" is prevalent in one form or the other in almost every religion or cult. In Hindu religion and Indian culture, the sacrificial fire of Yagya is of auspicious importance.

Purification of Environment by Yagya

The industrial wastes, rapid urbanization, deforestation, air and water pollution, disturbances in the ozone layer -formation, radioactive waves etc., have destabilized the human, animal and plant life cycles. The ecological imbalance caused by these acts of 'civilized men' has resulted into disastrous threat not only to human survival but to the life as a whole on our planet.

Till recently it was accepted that research into science can furnish answer to all of man's problems. Today we find increasing number of diseases including malfunctioning of body organs due to increasing severity of pollution in the atmosphere. Ozone layer depletion has been causing ailments like sunburn, skin cancer, cataracts and weakening of the immune system. Viruses are becoming drug-resistant and showing consistent growth trends.

Experimental studies show that the incidence of physical ailments, sickness and disease are reduced in the houses, where the Yagya (Agnihotra) is regularly performed because it creates a pure, nutritional and medicinal atmosphere. It renews the brain cells, revitalizes the skin, purifies blood and prevents growth of pathogenic organisms.

Agnihotra is basically a healing process. 'Heal the atmosphere and the healed atmosphere will heal you' - is the Modus Operandi. Purification of environment through the constituent electrons of the substances fumigated in the Yagya is an obvious effect of this process. The observation of some distinguished scientists is note worthy in this regard.

Dr. Hafkine has mentioned that - "mixing ghee and sugar and burning them creates smoke which kills the germs of certain diseases and secretion takes place from some glands relate to the wind-pipe, which fill our heart and mind with pleasure.

Sugars present in Havishya have great power to purify the atmosphere. It kills the germs of T.B., measles, smallpox and cow-pox, remarks Prof. Tilward. According to Dr. Shirowich, a Russian scientist has remarked that (i) Cow's milk contains great power of protection from atomic radiation; (ii) Houses having cow-dung covered floors enjoy complete protection from atomic radiation; (iii) If cow's ghee is put into Yagya fire, its fumes lessen the effect of atomic radiation to a great extent.

The medicinal fumes emanating from Agnihotra have been observed by researchers in the field of microbiology to be clearly bacteriolethal in nature. These eradicate bacteria and other micro-organisms, which are the root cause of illness and diseases. This must be the reason why the incidence of physical ailments, sickness and diseases becomes less in the households, where Agnihotra is regularly performed.

Even without going into detailed chemical bacteriology, it can be stated that performance of Yagya leads to purification of air.

Therapeutic Benefits of Yagya

Amidst the fascinating achievements of the modern era of science and technology in improving our comfort levels, stress and pollution have posed the major challenge for man. The world is beginning to realize that the comforts provided to us by modern science and technology do not necessarily always make life easier. In fact, apart from greater stress and tension, more unknown diseases, untold anxiety and fear is caused by the highly polluted environment and ecological imbalance. This has raised alarming call for rethinking and guiding the common life style. Yagya appears to be a boon of the ancient Indian sciences for achieving this purpose.

In a physical laboratory, it might not be possible to demonstrate the spiritual effects of Yagya, but the physical and mental effects of Yagyas can be certainly tested, and the claims to cure physical and mental diseases through Yagya can be verified. The Brahmvarchas Shodha Sansthan (a scientific research centre in Hardwar, India) has taken up research on this aspect of Yagya. It is to be noted here that the traditional systems of treatment of physical diseases employ medicines which are mostly administered orally. They, therefore, produce effects only after they have been digested and absorbed into the system. Most part of the medicine taken orally neither is nor utilized by the digestive system. Such medicines may also upset digestion seriously. The same is more or less true medicines directly injected into the blood. They produce results quicker, but their adverse side effects are often more pronounced. White corpuscles of the blood resent intrusion of any foreign bodies into the blood, and sometimes the reaction of the system to the sudden, massive and direct intrusion of foreign matter into the blood through injection proves most serious, and even fatal. In a Yagya, medicines and herbs are vaporized by offering them into the sacrificial fire, and they enter the human body in a gaseous form through the nose, lungs and the pores of the skin. This might be proved to be easiest, least taxing, least risky and most effective method of administering a medicine so as to reach every single cell of the body.

The possibilities of curing mental diseases by Yagya are even more alluring. Diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders is still in its infancy in the modern systems of treatment. There are neither well established diagnostic aids, nor any recognized system of treatment of diseases like Neurosis, Psychosis, Schizophrenia, Depression, Tension, Melancholia, Mania, Hysteria etc. On the other hand, psychosomatic diseases are even more rampant than physical diseases and they wreck the man more than the latter.

Manifestation of psychosomatic diseases except in extreme and advanced cases is not so apparent, and that may explain why enough attention has not been paid to them. The stress and strain of modern life, degradation of social behaviour and fall in moral values all around are contributing to an alarming increase in psychosomatic diseases. Yagya might offer a solution to this serious problem as well.

The technique of Yagya for the treatment of physical and mental diseases does not comprise mere vaporization of the constituents or herbs to be employed, but various Samidhas are offered into the sacrificial fire of Yagya to create the desired effects. Research on all these aspects of Yagya is being conducted in the laboratory of Brahmvarchas. It might well lead to the development of a scientifically established yagnopathy, which may find not only an honoured but a leading place in other therapies of the world like Allopathic, Homeopathy, Chromopathy, Naturopathy, etc. Looking to the high intellectual calibre and attainments of those who are engaged in research, Yagnopathy may come into being sooner than expected, and it may rank a unique achievement of the modern age.