

Oam Bhur Bhavaḥ Swaḥ, Tatsaviturvarenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonaḥ Prachodayat

Reviving the Vedic Culture of *Yagya*

(*Hamarā Yagya Abhyiyāna*)

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The Foundation of Vedic Culture – *Yagya*

The foundation of the vedic culture emanates from the philosophy and science of *Yagya*. *Yagya* is the perennial symbol of this divine culture. No other topic is discussed so extensively in the Vedas as those pertaining to *Yagya*. The vedic religion is principally based on *Yagya*. The philosophy of *Yagya* appears to be the life of Indology. Talking of the vedic age automatically flashes in our memory, the images of the great *rishi-munis* performing *agnihotra-Yagya*. Not only the *rishi-munis*, but also the common men, the rich and the poor, the kings and the citizens, in those days all had deep faith and respect for *Yagya* and they used to sincerely participate and lend whole hearted support in different kinds of *Yagyas*. The saints and *sādhus* used to spend at least one-third of their lives in conducting *Yagyas*.

It was a common belief and an observed fact in the Vedic Indian society that *Yagya* is essential for refinement of human life from that of a *śūdra* (one which is driven by animal instincts) to a Brahmin's (sagacious, altruist), to a great personality of divine glory. *Yagyas* were pivotal in the all-round progress, prosperity and happiness in that Age. This was indeed natural, as the philosophy and science of *Yagya* and the different modes of performing *Yagyas* – were discovered and developed by the *rishis* based on their in-depth understanding and research of the human self, the intricacies of the social system and the mysteries of Nature.

In the vacillating tides of time we lost and forgot the originality, purpose, relevance and importance of *Yagya* in our life. It won't be an exaggeration or mistake (delusion) to conclude that this negligence and aberration has been a major cause of our fallen and miserable state today. Nevertheless, there is a hope, as we somehow remember *Yagya* as a holy custom and occasionally perform it – in some form at least, as a symbolic ritual. Although lifeless and deformed, the 'corpse' or the feeble and hazy image of this ancient tradition is still with us. Even this way, it is

an integral part of our religious customs. All the important ceremonies – including the *śodas samskāras* since birth till death, are conducted with some *Yagya* (or *havan*) in a minimal form at least.

The Vedic mode of *vivāha samskara* (wedding ceremony) takes place in the presence of the sacred flames of *yagyāgni*. As the melting heat of the fire welds and binds two metal pieces, the pious glow and spiritual warmth of the *yagyāgni* also conjugates the soul of the bride and her groom through the sacred knot of marriage.

The funeral process (*dāha samskāra*) is also a *Yagya*. The last rites – in whatever shabby form we find them today are somewhat related to those of a *Yagya*. The *kapāla-kriyā* marks the *pūrṇāhuti* (completion) of this rite and also of the *Yagya* of the life of the deceased. The shape of the funeral pyre is a kind of *Yagya-kunḍa* in which the last remains are sacrificed to *yagyāgni*, which transforms the constituents of the body into the basic elements and returns them in the original form to Nature.

The significance of *Yagya* in the thread ceremony (*upanayan samskāra*) is self-evident as the sacred thread – which is donned to symbolize the initiation of enlightened life is called “*yagyopavita*”. This thread is always worn in the auspicious vicinity of *yagyāgni*. *Yagya* – as *havan* or *agnihotra*, is also supposed to be performed with the devotional programs of *kathā-kīrtana*, religious celebrations and the occasions of special festivals, although what we now find in the Indian society is largely a deformed and superficial custom. Pouring some *ghee* and putting a little bit of sweets, cloves, dry fruits, etc on a piece of ember is what symbolizes daily *agnihotra* in most houses.

Holi, which is celebrated these days as a color-festival with a fuming of some dry leaves and wood-rubbish, was originally a festival of *Yagya* to celebrate the harvesting of new crop every year. Feast full of new grains is supposed to be sacrificed in the *holi-Yagya* as a mark of expressing gratitude to thy grace. The spirit of purifying the grain before using it in food-preparation is also associated with this *Yagya*.

Yagya or *homam (havan)* is also carried out with the religious functions like – *Satya Narayan Katha*, *Bhagvat Katha*, *Ramayana Parayan*, etc. Specific *Yagyas* (or *havans*) are also invariably linked with the *vedic* as well as the *tāntrika sādhanā-anuṣṭhānas*. *Gāyatrī Sādhanā* is regarded incomplete without *Yagya*. The number of *āhutis* offered in the *havans* or *Yagyas* organized with *Gāyatrī Anuṣṭhāna* or *Mahāpuraścaraṇas* should at least equal the tenth or hundredth fraction of the number of *japas* – completed everyday in these *sādhanās*. Worshiping of different manifestations of *thee* is also supposed to be adept if rendered with specific kinds of *Yagyas*, as described in the Holy Scriptures. The kindling of *dhūpa*, *dīpaka*, *agarbatti* etc during daily *upāsana* are symbols of *Yagya*, where the incense-sticks are made up of *havan sāmagri* and the *ghee* or oil is sacrificed in the *kunḍa* of the *dīpaka*.

The prominence of *tīrthas* – places of pilgrimage, is also associated with *Yagya* since the Vedic Age. The places where grand *Yagyas* were organized and conducted by the *rishis*, became *tīrthas* and are still revered as holy destinations of pilgrimage in India. “*Prayaga*” in Allahabad is known as *tīrtharāja* – the crown of all *tīrthas*. The word “*yaga*” here is derived from *Yagya*. The word “*prayaga*” implies large number of *Yagyas*. The *Dashashwamedha Ghata* of *Kashi -Varanasi* is said to be the place where Lord *Ram* had performed tens of grand *Yagyas* of the “*Ashwamedha*”

kind. Similarly, the names of the *tīrthas* like *Kurukshetra*, *Rameshwaram*, *Naimishyaranya*, etc are also based on those of some historic *Yagyas*.

Because of the prominence of *Yagya*, the Land of Vedic Culture – *Bharat* (India) is referred as *karmbhūmi* – the glorious soil of noble deeds. The *Brahm Puran* mentions that – “The *yatis* of *Bharat* endeavor *tapa-sādhanās*, perform *havans* and generously offer charities (for altruist service). Sainly people pay devotion to thy manifestation, *Yagya* in the *Jambudwipa* (the Indian subcontinent). Because of the noble culture of *Yagya*, God *Yagya Purūṣa* resides in the *Jambudwipa*. *Bharat* is the country of divine prestige in this land. While the other places could be the *yogabhūmi*, only this pre-eminent land of *Yagya* – *Bharat*, is revered also as *karmabhūmi*”.

Devotion of the limitless thy expansion in the form of *yagyāgni* is indeed a unique bequest of our ancestor *rishis* to the world. God is omnipresent and beyond the limits of our perception and conceptualization. We may realize thy presence in the divine virtues, spiritually illumined intellects and noble thoughts and deeds of human life. Thy manifestation is immanent everywhere in the world, in the expressions of Nature. We may worship thou through the service and welfare of this gigantic manifestation of thee.

The brilliance and purity of *agni* (fire) is found as the best symbol for thy-worship. The first *mantra* of *Riga Veda* – the most ancient scripture of knowledge on the earth, quotes – “*Agnimīde Purohitam*” – signifying *agni* as the sacred idol of God. This is what is referred in different religious and spiritual scriptures as the *Brahmteja*, Divine Flame, Sacred Glow, Divine Light, Latent Light, etc. The vedic hymn “*Agne Nay Supathā Rāye*” prays to this omnipotent, supreme power to enlighten and ennoble us to follow the righteous path. The same is inspired in the segment “*Dhiyo Yonaj Prachodayāt*” of the great *Gāyatrī Mantra*.

The Meaning of *Yagya*

In its gross form, *Yagya* is a spiritual experiment of sacrificing and sublimating the *havan sāmagrī* in the *yagyāgni* with chanting of *vedic mantras*. This is only the physical process or ritual of *Yagya*, which has scientific importance and beneficial effects. This *agni-Yagya* when performed at small scale is also known as *havan*, *homam* or *agnihotra*. However, the meaning of *Yagya* is not confined to this sacrificial fire-process. It has much wider and deeper meaning. Linguistically, the word *Yagya* is derived from the Sanskrit verb *yaj*, which means – *devapūjan* (worshipping divinity), *sangatikaraṇa* (harmonious association) and *dāna* (charity).

Spiritual implications of these are: *devapūjan* – recognition, respect, consecration (in the individual self) and expansion of the divine virtue; *sangatikaraṇa* – coherent conjunction (of the thoughts and deeds) with the divine disciplines; *dāna* – donation, sacrifice of one’s talents and resources for divine causes and noble purposes.

In terms of psychology the above meanings correspond respectively to the positive attitude of attitude of excellence, respect, cooperation and altruist service. In behavioral sense, honoring the elders is equivalent to *devapūjan*; constructive collaboration and amity with colleagues and

fellows of same age-groups is *sangatikaraṇa* and generous help for the progress of the youngsters and the downtrodden is *dāna*.

All efforts of selfless service, constructive contributions in noble missions and cooperation of virtuous personalities are *Yagya*. Sincere endeavors of divine worship, self-refinement and virtuous development are also glorious *Yagyas* in human life.

The rituals of *deva-āhvāna* (invocation), *devapujan* (worship) and *āhuti* in the physical process of *Yagya*, also involve the above aspects of *Yagya*. Invocation and worship of divine powers is performed by collective chanting of specific vedic *mantras* in specific rhythm. *Yagya* is performed collectively right from the initial preparation to sacrificing the *āhuti*s and *ārati*. This is the best example of cooperation.

The altruist effect of *Yagya* is most prominent as also implied in the chanting of “*idam na mam*” after each *āhuti*. The *havan sāmāgrī* sacrificed (as *āhuti*s) in *yagyāgni* sublimates and expands in open space energized by the sonic power of the *mantras* and enshowers multiple benefits in terms of purification of environment, soothing medicinal effects of the herbs and psychological strengthening. Some special *āhuti*s of dry fruits, homemade sweets and/or fresh grains also cause positive effects of vigorous health. More importantly, these account for the fact that – we should donate our resources, wealth, and potentials for expanded effects rather than storing them for selfish motives and luxuries. The feeling of “*idam na mam*” (this is not mine) is indeed the root of happy progress of any society. It teaches that all the materialistic resources, power and honor available to one are directly or indirectly earned with the help of the society; the talents, education, sagacity, etc too are also not attainable without thy grace. These should therefore be applied constructively for the betterment of the society, of all beings.

The central theme of *Yagya* that should be well understood and adopted by all of us could be summarized as – voluntary renunciation of self-centered, possessive and greedy tendencies and adoption of a wider attitude; observance of the *sādhanā* of divine love and altruism. The teaching of *Yagya* signifies that true progress and happiness of the individual self lies in that of the society. In *essence* *Yagya* means – virtuous actions inspired by altruist objectives. Vision, courage and sentiment of keeping the least for self-joy and sharing the maximum possible for the welfare of the society as a whole is the core of performing *Yagya* and adopting its philosophy in human life.

Yagya is The Axis of The Cycle of Nature

Yagya is pivotal in the existence and sustenance of the Cycle of Nature. Thy creation of Nature is an eternal *Yagya*. It is the genesis of the flourishing manifestation of Nature. The sentiment of *Yagya* indwells in the ecological balance and harmonious activities of Nature. The creation of all that exists in the visible and the invisible folds of Nature is thoroughly discussed in *Srimad Bhagvat*. Lord *Krishna* describes in the holy *Gita* that – the Nature is born out of *Yagya* and exists only by the motivating force of *Yagya*. God is described here as the supreme exponent of *Yagya*.

The continuum of *Yagya* is the nucleus of continuous activities in the world and the cosmic expansion. The oceans, the seas generously donate from their repository of water. Clouds formed by vaporization of the sea-water carry it across the globe and enshower the drizzles of rain-water

– which, flowing through the rivers, goes along fulfilling the thirst of soil, plants, trees and all beings..., and reaches back in the sea. This is a cycle of natural *Yagya*. The trees, plants, the entire vegetation willingly offer the fruits, flowers and grain-crops to all *without* any discrimination. The non-stop motion of the sun, the moon, the earth and the countless numbers of other planets and stars, the continuous flow of the rivers, the wind, etc are all there for others' benefits...

The synchronized network of body-functions is a vivid *Yagya*. The sustenance of life too is based on *Yagya*. The child is born in a helpless condition. It is the intrinsic impulse of *Yagya* in the mother's heart that enables his growth under her affectionate protection. How would the birth of her baby be possible if she does not sacrifice a portion of her flesh and blood to the fetus? The sustenance of his life would be impossible if she does not offer him breast feeding – squeeze out the vital strength of her own body; or refuses to bear the burden of fostering him. The selflessness of motherly love, its sacrifices and support is the basis of healthy growth and ideal development of the child. The same is true of the other facets in the gamut of life.

This is why the notion of *Yagya* is said to be crucial in the generation and regulation of life. Lord Krishna explains this fact in *Gita* as – “The eternal creator *Prajapati Brahma* gave rise to *Yagya* as the twin associate of human life. So that both the human being and *Yagya* could survive and grow *with* mutual support”. The ascent of man could emerge because of the motivating sentiment of *Yagya* immanent in his collective existence and social development. If man had forbidden or neglected the *inspirations* and adoption of *Yagya* and instead given prominence to narrow minded self-obsessive philosophy of life, his existence would *have* been wiped out long ago. Even today, in the unsafe world of all round terrors, tensions and misdeeds, all the hopes of peace, protection and progress towards bright future rely solely on the resurrection of the divine culture of *Yagya*.

The development of the individuals is not isolated from that of the society. Mutual respect, harmony and association – all expressions of the divine sentiment of *Yagya*, are inevitable in the ascent of personal, professional and social life. The collective existence of the planets, the galaxies in the ever-expanding universe is not a random consequence of cosmic force of attraction, rather, it is a colossal web of exchange and sharing which abides them in the consistent motion. The perennial cycle of Nature is revolving around the axis of *Yagya*. Without this foundation, all the order, beauty, and growth would have turned into chaos, deformity and calamities. The Upanishads rightly elucidate it as – “*Yagya* is the core of Nature. As a cart cannot move forward without its pivot, the progressive flow of life, development and rise of the individuals and the society, and evolutionary cycle too cannot proceed without the axis of *Yagya*”.

The Vivid Inspirations of *Yagyāgni*

Yagya is an absolute faculty discovered by the *rishis* that bestows distinct materialistic and spiritual bequests. It also generates the unique flow of *motivation* towards higher ideals and noble goals of human life. Its glorious place in the divine Indian Culture is derived from the pre-eminent teachings of virtuous and altruist life indwelling in the philosophy of *Yagya*. The *yagyāgni* encompasses incessant inspirations, which if pondered over and adopted thoroughly, would elevate our lives in eminent horizons. Each one of us could easily visualize and contemplate on the following as a determined attempt to march towards excellence.

1. The heat endowed in *yagyāgni* is a source of immense energy. As this fire inflames, melts or sublimates all the gross substances inside, *we* too should burn out all our vices, ill-tendencies, accidie, lethargy, dullness and despair and energize our personality with the warmth of new zeal, alacrity, awareness and hope. The heat and energy of the *yagyāgni* should be reflected in the active flow of our blood, our industriousness and our nimble and vigilant courage to fight against all evils.
2. The luminous glow of *yagyāgni* illumines the surrounding space. Its radiance expresses the eminence of divinity, which should *enlighten* every dimension of our life. We should grasp the message of “*tamaso mā jyotirgamaya*” from it and kindle the light of pure knowledge and prudence in our mind.
3. *Yagyāgni* sublimates the *havan sāmāgri* sacrificed in it and spreads the energized particles and medicinal vapors around for the benefit of all, rather than retaining the substances with it. The humans, plants and animals, the air, the surrounding atmosphere all gain from its purifying healthy effects. We too should learn not to keep our talents, our resources, our potentials confined to selfish domains. Rather, expand it for the upliftment and betterment of wider sections of society. Materialistic possession should also be limited only to what is most essential for the sustenance of self-reliance. Excessive resources, stocking of comforts and wealth are of no use unless applied for altruist projects. So we should detach from self-obsession and broaden our perspectives with generous sentiments.
4. *Yagyāgni* transforms whatever is put in it into its own form. We may also attain its eminent potentials and educe our virtues in all those who come in our contact.
5. *Yagyāgni* can ignite and illuminate the inert substances like wood and charcoal because it endows the immense power of heat and brilliance. We too could expect or inspire others to have certain qualities only if those are pervaded in our own personality. We should remember that deeds sound louder than words. We can hope for having a suitable ambience in our family or in the neighborhood only if our own conduct is compatible with it.
6. Fire would not be affected or maligned even if some rubbish or dirt is burn in it. Rather it transmutes those substances and sublimates their inner properties too. The pristine flames of *yagyāgni* inspire us to be insulated from the untoward influences in our interactions with people and from the vices and declining attractions of the ambience around. We should be firm and strong in adopting virtuous tendencies and attempt expanding them against immorality, illusions and perversions.
7. Whatever be the pressure on it, the flames of a blaze are always upward. The elevated *yagyāgni* motivates that the erected spark of our discerning determination and inner inspirations should remain unperturbed by the pressures of passions and fears.
8. The ash produced by fire reminds us of the ephemeral and transient nature of life. We tend to forget this eternal fact and continue entangling in the thralldom of varieties of cravings and attachments and adding to our mistakes, infirmities and sins too. While putting the *Yagya-bhasm* on our head after the *Yagya*, we should ponder over the end of our present life and realize the importance of the time and breaths *available* to us now. This should awaken us and invoke our inner resolution to stop piling up the blemishes and misdeeds and rather

choose the prudent path of piety, morality and amity that is going to lead to everlasting content, peace and beatitude in life.

9. The heat and brilliance of fire remain consistent till it is ablaze. The same is true of *yagyāgni*, which remains alive throughout the process of *Yagya*. Our strength, excellence, enlightened activities, religious conduct and efficient transaction of our duties towards the betterment of the world should also remain enliven and sparkling till the last moments of our *jīvana-Yagya*.

Scriptural Paeans for *Yagya*

The scriptures on Indology, the *shastras-puranas* and other religious volumes mention a great deal in the glory of *Yagya* and guide the human beings to adopt it in every aspect of life. The Vedas attribute supreme importance to *Yagya*. The *Rig-Veda* for instance cites – “Do not desist from the *anuṣṭhāna – upāsana* of *Yagya*. There could be no place for peace and happiness where *Yagya* is abandoned” (*Rig. 2/30/6*). ‘Commence every auspicious attempt with a *Yagya*. All the efforts that begin with a *Yagya* succeed gracefully” (*Rig. 10/10/2*). “*Yagya* is the paramount means of achieving global peace” (*Rig. 10/66/2*).

The *Yajurveda* expresses the divine grandeur of *Yagya* as – “Any aspirant of lasting peace and true joy in life would not shed or neglect *Yagya*. Divinity leaves the person who discards *Yagya*, which is a manifestation of thee” (*Yajur. 2/22*). “The *yagyāgni* enshowers good rains, prosperity and strength” (*Yajur. 3/40*). “How could the smog of ignorance, infirmity and evils remain in the heart where the brilliance of *yagyāgni* is glown. A devoted *yati* is eventually emancipated from all ignorance and darkness and attains the *state* of ultimate illumination in thy feet” (*Yajur. 3/8*). O *Yagya!* you are the divine asylum, the source of unalloyed happiness; all sufferings and ailments and the germs and causes of diseases are destroyed in your presence; like the skin (for the body) you are the unique protector of the earth” (*Yajur. 1/14*). “*Yagya* is the eternal religion” (*Yajur. 31/6*). O *Yagya!* you are the source of energy for the Gods. Ennoble this *havi* reach them so that thy grace would be bestowed for the beatified welfare of the *yājaks*” (*Yajur. 1/20*).

The *Athravaveda* cites that – “one who discards *Yagya*, loses all eminence and grace. Those who perform *havan* (*Yagya*) are blessed by the inculcation of divine glow in their hearts” (*Atharv. 6/15*). “One who consistently performs *Yagya* acquires heavenly bliss and glory” (*Yajur. 16/4/2*).

The *Shatpath Brahman* affirms *Yagya* as the supreme *karma*. According to *Tattariya Brahaman*, the beatitude of *Yagya* is incessant; wise men would continue gathering immense puñyas to the boons of *Yagya*. The section of “*Yam-Nachiketa Samvada*” in *Kathopanishad* describes *Yagya* as the angelic source of attaining heavens (divine goals). *Yagya* is adored as the eternal source of *prāṇa* (vital spiritual energy) for the devatās, pitars and *rishis* in the *Prashnopanishad*. The *Saraswati Upanishad* remarks – *Yagya* bestows eminence and glorious prosperity; *Saraswati*, the goddess of brilliance and knowledge could be worshiped only by *Yagya*.

The holy *Ramayana* also elaborates highly on the dignity of *Yagya*. The four noble sons of king *Dasharatha* were born as the grace of *Yagya*. Lord *Ram* attributes his divine incarnation as the beatitude of *Yagya*. *Ravana* was aware of the immense impact of *Yagya* and therefore used to incite the giant demons to obstruct the *rishis* from conducting *Yagyas* or spoil the continuity of

their *Yagya-anuṣṭhānas*. Seeing no other way to escape visible defeat and death in the hands of Lord *Ram*, *Ravana* had finally taken shelter of the *Brahmāstra Yagya*. *Shri Lakshman* and *Vibhishan* had stopped this *tantrika Yagya* initiated by *Ravana's* son *Meghanada* and thus prevented the victory of the demons.

Mahabharata affirms that – *Yagya* blesses enormous joy in this life as well as the lives beyond death. There is no charity above *Yagya*. There is no regulatory system like *Yagya*. The essence of all religions is incorporated in *Yagya*. The gods as well as the demons, all endeavor *Yagya* to assure good omens. All saintly men and women should adopt *Yagya* as a duty of human life. The support of *Yagya* ennobles divine evolution of such great personalities.

Gita presents comprehensive discussion on *Yagya*. It signifies that one who neglects *Yagya*, remains deprived of every thing in the present and the successive lives. It reveals that all the karmas except the *Yagya-karma* are the causes of the thralldoms that bind the individual self in the endless cycle of life and death, attachments and sufferings. The karmas of *Yagya*, charity and *tapa* purify and illuminate the human life. It guides the *yājakas* to edify the *divine realms* by *Yagya* and attain glorious heights by thy blessings. People are invited here to accomplish collective ascent and eminence by *Yagya*.

According to the *Padma Puran* – there is no karma that is pious like *Yagya*. The sinners can also eliminate the insidious bonds of their misdeeds and refine their lives by sincere transactions of *Yagya*. The *Shiva Purana* conveys that wise men should always worship the Almighty through *Yagya* to eliminate all adversities and hindrances. As cited in the *Agni Purana*, Lord Krishna advises *Yudhishthir* to do *Yagyas* for the sustenance and growth of peace and strength and accomplish noble goals thereby. He highlights – “one gains the desired effects for which he has performed a *Yagya*; one who conducts *Yagya* with selfless devotion attains the absolute realization of *Parabrahm*.”

Shrimad Bhagavata also mentions a great deal on adoration of *Yagya*. It affirms the origin of Nature from *Yagya*. The great nation “*Bhārata*” (India) got this name after the name of the great intrepid, king *Bharata*. The *Bhagavat Pancham Skandh* cites that king *Bharata* had successfully organized hundreds of *Ashwamedha Yagyas* several times as per the adept methods and scriptural guidelines. He had transformed this land into a pious *tapobhūmi* by the spiritual, purifying effects of the grand *Yagyas* performed by him in the auspicious guidance of the *rishis*.

The Lost Links of the Super Science of *Yagya*

It is said that whatever time, labor, wealth, and other resources is spent in completing a *Yagya* never goes waste. It is like a deposit in the ‘bank of gods’, that is refunded with huge interests at the right time. *Yagyas* performed adeptly under due disciplines are more significant. They could work like divine tools and arrows to accomplish specific targets that were otherwise beyond reach. In the times of yore, *Yagyas* used to enshower desired amount of rains, the warriors used to triumph over enemy’s attack after specific *Yagyas*, higher level *Yagyas* were the source of self-realization and spiritual illumination for the *yogis*. The *Vedas* term *Yagyas* as “*kāmadhuk*” – which removes all adversities and obstacles and fulfils all desires.

The annals of Indian history inscribed in the *Puranas* have ample examples depicting this miraculous facet of the science of *Yagya*. There is a mention of *Putrayeshti Yagyas* for having sons. Those not having any issues used to be blessed by healthy child by this *Yagya*, those having children also used to do this *Yagya* to have child endowed with distinct talents and valor. King *Dasharath* had performed the *putrayeshti Yagya* under the brilliant guidance of *Rishi Shrang* and was blessed by four beatified sons *Ram, Lakshman, Bharata* and *Shatrughna*. The *Bhagvat Purana* cites similar endeavor of King *Chitraketu*, who also was blessed by a glorious child by the effect of this *Yagya*, as per *Maharshi Angira's* advice.

Draupadi, the daughter of king *Drupada* was also born after *Yagya*. The six *kratikas* who looked after *deva Kartikeya* were manifested from six flames of *yagyāgni*. *Kartikeya* alone had defeated all the demons who were indomitable by all other devatās. *Bhagavan Manu* and his wife Queen *Shatarupa* had an urge to give birth to divine incarnation, have god in their lap as a little child. They endeavored a long *Yagya* for this purpose; their spiritually enlightened daughter *Ila* was the *purohita* (guide) of this *Yagya*. Lord *Brahma*, the eternal creator, is described in the Holy Scriptures to have gathered the absolute knowledge, potentials and means for the cosmic creation and manifestation of Nature with the help of *Gāyatrī Sādhana* and *Yagya*.

The medicinal effects of *Yagya* are also amazing. As per his own experimental research, *Chyavan Rishi* had conducted a grand *Yagya* in his old age to cure his blindness and regain the vigor of youth. He obtained a rare herbal pulp from this *Yagya*; eating this 'tonic' gradually turned him young with sharp vision. One chapter of *Gāyatrī Tantra* introduces large number of *Yagyas* (*havans*) with specific herbal medicines for specific effects.

When king *Parikshit* died of the bite of *Takshaka* Snake, his son *Janamejaya* arranged a *sarpa Yagya* in revenge. The *Puranas* describe the tragic and unbelievable effect of this *sarpa Yagya* which pulled the snakes from all directions and distances by an invisible force and triggered their self-sacrifice in fire. *Takshaka*, the king of snakes was some how protected by the intervention and supernatural power of Lord *Indra*. *Mahabali* had performed long series of rare *Yagyas* and had become the most powerful king of the universe. King *Nahusha* is described to have once won the heaven's throne from Lord *Indra* by the supreme effects of *Yagya*.

Shukracharya was the guru of the asuras – demons and dreaded giants. He used to conduct different kinds of *tāntrika Yagyas* to empower his disciples with supernormal might. The monkey king *Baali* of *Kishkindha* had acquired rare boons from *Yagya*, even Lord *Ram* could not have defeated him in a frontal attack, he had therefore targeted his arrows on *Baali* from behind the palm trees.

The above sample of scriptural citations indicates that the science of *Yagya* had indeed reached astonishing development that could provide miraculous effects and practically fulfill all wishes in the times of yore. The intricacies and details of this super science were shrouded in the mist of antiquity in the later ages and now seem to be lost forever. There is a need for rigorous research on the same in new scientific light. It may not be feasible to experiment on its esoteric and supernatural facets that rather appear mythological to the scientific community today. Still there is a lot of scope for investigating its faculties associated with perceivable effects in the physical world, in psychological treatment and spiritual enlightenment. Environmental purification, safe and viable cure of rare diseases and psychosomatic disorders and overall refinement of personality and of the social trends are among the promising applications of *Yagya* that should be

researched systematically as new scientific experiments. The research carried out in well-equipped *Yagyaśālā* and laboratories at the *Brahm Varchas* research center of *Shantikunj, Haridwar* (India) have shown fruitful results and definite directions in this regard.

Purification of Environment by *Yagya*

Purification of air is a prominent physicochemical effect of *Yagya*. Little dust, moisture and filth or stinking in or around the house is sufficient for growth of germs. The air circulation in our houses and regular cleansing of the same is therefore essential. Use of pesticides is harmful as it bears the negative effects of our inhaling the toxins. The harmless use of burning incense-sticks or dry powders of *gugal*, camphor etc is quite well known for this purpose. Inflaming mixes of jaggery, sugar and pure ghee (made up of cow's milk) also has good effect on destroying or repelling germs and insects. Kindling the *dīpaka* of pure ghee also renders such cleansing. Dry leaves of *neem* are fumed to remove germs and insects from within the house and from the surroundings. It is especially used for cleansing of filthy wet air around seepage or dirt that nurtures Malaria and risks epidemics.

In normal course, bright sunrays serve the purpose of eliminating the germs and insects and also provide the soothing dose of vitamin D to our skin. Keeping the windows open and drying up the clothes, mattresses and bed sheets etc is very helpful in the houses which have open space around and get substantial sunlight. The fragrance vapors and fumes generated by *Yagya* effectuate multiple positive effects of the above kinds. These also have extra medicinal and strengthening benefits of sublimation of healthy constituents in the *havan sāmāgrī*.

The heat of *yagyāgni* lightens and expands the surrounding air after purification. The latter moves upwards and is spread around in wider areas. New layer of air comes from the below and goes through the same cycle of purification. *Yagya* thus continues generating more and more pure air for larger and larger space around. The potency of the herbs and other healthy substances amplifies million times after sublimation in *Yagya* and these also reach miles ahead in the space with the spreading vapors and fumes of *Yagya*. Most importantly, these not only destroy the germs, but also eliminate the toxic particles and pollutants. The inspissation of *Yagya*-smoke on clouds goes deep in the earth with the rainwater and serves the dual purpose of eradication and worms and germs and nurturing the soil with healthy substances. The *Yagya*-vapors clustered on clouds are also enshowered on the rivers and ponds and purify and enrich the *water-resources* with vital elements. Thus, the 'smoke' of *yagyāgni* proves to have excellent purifying, nourishing and medicinal effect on the air as well as on soil and water. Notably, it risks no side effects and no perturbation of ecological harmony.

The relevance and need of grand scale *Yagyas* augments more in the present circumstances when every component of Nature is critically polluted. The toxic smoke continuously erupting from the chimneys of heavy factories, the ever-increasing volumes of poisonous gases and particles released by the flow of automobiles on every road of the world, by the rising aircrafts in the space, etc – have polluted the earth's atmosphere so much that we hardly get any fresh air to breathe... The rising levels of carbon, lead and other respiratory toxic particles are enhancing the instances of coronary, renal and other kinds of diseases. The situation is severe in the metro cities

where the suffocating and polluted atmosphere is adding to psychosomatic disorders. Larger proportions of residents here are living in a half-mad, weak or sick state of mind and body. Experts infer that if the air-pollution is not controlled, soon there will be no warbling of birds in the morning; as they would have either died or would find it difficult to open their mouth in poisonous air.

The single tracked machine-based, luxury oriented civilization has also led to scarcity and pollution of water and fertile soil along with that of air and has thus placed the world under the threat of gradual extinction. Polluted air has ruptured the protecting ozone layer and is also inviting acid rains together with harmful radiation. Paucity of drinking water is another frightening challenge before the global population. Cultivable land is fast losing its fertility. The reduced vital capacity of plants and trees is multiplying to the mal-nutrition of the living beings on the earth. The potency and quality of fruits, vegetables and grains produced with the help of synthetic fertilizers is sub-standard and detrimental in many respects.

Billions of dollars are being spent on gigantic pollution-controlling projects world-wide but with no satisfactory effect. *Yagya* provides an effective, eco-friendly, economic alternative in this respect. The sublimated herbs in *the* fumes and vapors of *Yagya* counter the toxins in air at an amazingly rapid rate and benefit all humans, birds-animals, trees and *plants* that inhale them through respiration and skin pores. As described earlier, the same energized and medicinal effects reach the soil and water-resources through the showers of clouds. Apart from purifying the soil and water, these also augment the fertility of land and vitality of the vegetation and other crops on it.

Scientific experiments in this regard have given encouraging results and shown *Yagya* as a promising means of eliminating global pollution with viable healthy effects...

Yagya Enshowers Sublime Streams of *Prāṇa*

The effects of *Yagya* are not confined to the removal of atmospheric pollution and medicinal purification. It is only the gross facet. Its sublime effects are more intensive and amazing prominent among these is the *parjanya*.

Parjanya implies sublime showers of streams of vital energy and spiritual strength from the cosmic layers (higher space). As the natural fertilizers add to the potency of soil, the unique confluence of *mantra-śakti*, thermal force and sublimated herbal energy in *Yagya* also elevates the vital energy in the atmosphere while purifying the air. This *prāṇa* is dissolved in the air. We inhale it with oxygen by inner determination during the deep breathing yoga-exercises of *prāṇāyāma*. The flow of fresh air in the morning is found to be rich in *prāṇa*. The larger the scale of *Yagyas* and longer their duration, the greater would be these sublime and gross effects.

The *parjanya* generated by *Yagya* augments the level of *prāṇa* in the air. This effect is dense around the *Yagyaśālā* and is also pervaded in the wider space and continues to expand with the flow of air with the process of *Yagya*. If we pour some oil drops in a pot containing water, soon the oil would spread on the entire surface of water. In a similar way, the energy of *Yagya* expands all around in the open space. Its *prāṇa* is also dissolved in the rain enshowered through the

energized space and thus gets absorbed in the soil and the crops and vegetation. The soil irrigated by it is found to be more fertile and the grains, fruits, vegetables grown there are tasty and have higher nutritious potency. The milk of the cows, which graze the grass grown on such land is also of excellent quality. Drinking the milk and eating the fruits, vegetables energized by *Yagya* increases our stamina, resistance against infections and diseases, our vital power, courage and mental trenchancy.

In fact the cosmic flow of *prāṇa* is omnipresent in the subliminal realms of Nature. This is what enables all activities, movements and evolution. Because of its presence, all creatures are called *prāṇī*. This is the source of our vital strength. If it were present in substantial amount in the body, a visible lean and skinny fellow would also be very strong and healthy. Its elevated levels are expressed in mental radiance, intellectual trenchancy and talents. Its alleviation on the contrary, would turn a chubby, fat, visibly healthy chap rather weak, lethargic and dull. Reduction of this subtle energy in the plants and trees would diminish the shining beauty of flowers, potency and nutritious power of the fruits, vegetables and grains. Decreased levels of *prāṇa* in the air, despite substantial amount of oxygen would lessen its vitality. Even deep breathing of this otherwise 'fresh' air would not have desired healthy effects. People living at such places are found to lack vital strength, resistance and mental trenchancy. The *parjanya* educed by *Yagya* compensates for this deficiency.

The *parjanya* of *Yagya* energizes the surrounding atmosphere with intense flow of cosmic *prāṇa*. The holy *Gita* mentions of this as the 'rain' of *parjanya* – generated by *Yagya*, which is enshowered from the sublime domains in cosmic expansion and which sustains the life and vigor of all living beings and induces new zeal and delight in every dimension.

Harmony of Divine Powers and Ecological Balance by *Yagya*

Devatās are the divine powers that are regarded to subliminally govern the manifestation and activities of Nature. All that exists in the cosmos, all the movements in the world, the ups and downs of human life, the sufferings the joys..., all have intimate relation with them. The accordance and happiness of *devatās* is described in the scriptures as the source of blissful progress and prosperity; their disappointment or nonconformity on the contrary obstructs one's fortunes; his hard labors and strive goes fruitless. As per the shastric literature, *Yagya* is the best among all the means of achieving the concordance and beatitudes of *devatās*.

In the rhetoric style of the shastric literature, the *Matsya Puran* writes – “The *devatās* survive on *Yagya*. All the living beings and creations are under the control of *devatās* and the latter are governed by *Yagya*. *Yagya* is Lord *Vishnu*, who encompasses and fosters all”. The same scripture further mentions that Lord *Vishnu* is pleased by performing *Yagya* and the whole world gains joy by the contentment of Lord *Vishnu*. The *Shiva Purana*, elaborates – “*Yagya* alone is the enlightened means of gladdening Lord *Shiva*. Therefore, you the *rishis* should organize a *grand Yagya* across the globe”. The *Kalika Puran* also elucidates – “The *devatās* are delighted by *Yagya*. The whole world is maintained by *Yagya*. The earth is hold by (the power) of *Yagya*. *Yagya* alone leads to evolution and salvation of the living beings”.

Similar views are expressed in the *Shatapath Brahman*; it refers *Yagya* as the ‘food’ (the source of energy) for the *devatās*. According to this scripture, the *devatās* are ennobled by *Yagya* to accomplish whatever they do. Lord *Krishna* states in the holy *Gita* – “*Devānbhāvaya Tānena Te Devā Bhāvayantu Yaḥ*”; meaning – You all (the humans) should worship the *devatās* by the *Yagya*-based deeds. They will be delighted and bestow their grace.

The assent of *devatās* has intense linkage with the ecological order along with the happiness and peace of human life. Nature is the medium of thy manifestations and the platform for the expressions of the *devatās*. The order and perpetual cycle of Nature is sustained on their boons. The different activities and perceptions of Nature are the displays of these sublime divine powers.

The phrases or statements like “*devatās* enshower boons when delighted by worship of the devotees”, or “humans should gladden the *devatās* for thy grace”, etc found in the shastric scripture are rhetoric descriptions. “Gladdening the *devatās*” should not be misinterpreted as pleasing them by worship, adoration or gifts, etc. There is no meaning of all this for the *devatās*, which are sublime powers; what will they do of the gross material things or flowers and other offerings of worship etc? The words of our praise, prayer or begging will also have no relevance for these cosmic forces.

Indeed thy grace could be realized and attained only by enlightened inner self and spiritual refinement of life. The latter could be achieved only by adopting thy disciplines of moral values, virtuous elevation and altruist service of the world. This is what the *jivana Yagya* is. The invocation and worship of *devatās* performed in front the *yagyāgni* are the means of recalling the eternal rule of omnipresent thy powers and strengthening our determination to comply with the ideals of *Yagya*. The gross effects of *Yagya* described earlier also play important role in maintaining the natural order and in healthy sustenance of natural creations (in concordance with the regulation of the *devatās* on gross elements).

Our neglect of the disciplines of *Yagya* disturbs the subliminal harmony of cosmic order (of *devatās*). This corresponds to perturbing the natural cycle (of ‘nurturing’ the *devatās* by *Yagya*) and directly or indirectly leads to insidious consequences in our lives too (this is what is the ‘annoyance’ or ‘disappointment’ of the *devatās*). The rising frequency of natural calamities, drastic variations in seasonal effects and disturbances in the ecosystems are evidences of these wrong doings. In this context we may consider what the *Vayu Purana* indicates. It says – “The lack of control (in the absence of *Yagya*) of the *devatās* over the gross basic elements of Nature like the air and water results in draughts, floods, disastrous cyclones, etc”. The *Nirukta* mentions – “The *devatās* are empowered by *agni-Yagyas* and thus preserve the properties and functions of air, water, fire etc, under natural order. This protects the creatures and other creations from untimely destruction. Rishi *Markandeya* also warns that – “Paucity of *Yagyas* reduces the energy-resources of the *devatās*. This hinders the production of clouds and thus blocks rain-fall. The lack of rains results in shortage of food grains and leads to draughts and famines”.

Today, we have not only forgotten the teachings of *Yagya* and ignored performing the *agni-Yagya* experiments, but also proceeded in the contrary direction. Deviated from the philosophy of *Yagya*, we are gradually being driven by animal instincts, perverted thinking and even declined to the level of ‘civilized demons’ and ‘living ghosts’. We have preferred excessive consumption and squeezing of natural resources rather than caring to maintain ecological order and thus invited the ‘fury’ of the *devatās* as a natural consequence. This is what is visibly expressed in the tragic

calamities of disastrous tremors, draughts, cyclones, floods, acid rains, climate shifts, etc that are threatening the extinction of very existence of life on our planet.

The attempts of setting the clock right appear superficial. Despite global efforts from the environmental scientists and the governmental and social agencies, the grandeur of the gigantic problems seems to be increasing at more rapid pace. It is time we look for other alternatives; consider the super-scientific vision of our ancestor *rishis* and give a chance to revival of the glorious tradition of *Yagya*. We should orient our talents and *resources* as per the philosophy of *Yagya* to invite the grace of the *devat*'s in harmonizing the natural order of the ecosystem and also attempt *scientific* experiments on *agnihotra-Yagya* to purify the environment and strengthen the regulating powers of Nature.

Increased Negative Ions and Health-Benefits of *Yagya*

It is observed that the places where *Yagya* is performed every day provide excellent support in improvement of health. Why and how it happens? Scientific investigations have revealed that elevated levels of negative ions enhance such possibilities.

We live in a gigantic ocean of air around. Breathing oxygen alone is not sufficient for us; we need negatively charged respirable particles too. Inspissation of positive ions in the air is not supposed to be good for health. It causes some kind of suffocation and sickness, as often found in the crowded spots of polluted cities and industrial areas. Despite undergoing same treatment, the patients get cured at a slower place in the hospitals and sanitariums surrounded by positive ions (in the air) as compared to those in other medical centers.

Air enriched by negative ions is proved to be exceptionally good for mental and physical (bodily) health. Such effects are found in the breezy atmosphere on the hills, in green villages, on cool sea- beaches and near natural waterfalls. This is why people are advised to go to such places for health-benefits and for refreshing the body and mind. In view of these scientific revelations, ionic therapy is gaining momentum in developed countries. However, in its present form it is too expensive and is being tried on at small scales – for few individuals or families. For wider impact the modes of such therapies should also be such that they could be easily applied in larger areas at low cost. By their in-depth research and acumen in the subtle science of Nature, our *rishis* had discovered such a universal therapy in the form of (*agni*)-*Yagyas*.

The *agni-Yagyas* were largely *regarded* as religious rituals until recently. However, ever *since the* scientific investigations on ancient Indian sciences and vedic culture have advanced in a systematic though limited manner, newer facets of super scientific potentials hidden in it are being unfolded. Of noted concern in the present context, is the increase of negative ions (in the surrounding atmosphere) after *agni-Yagya*. Dense clustering of negative ions is natural around the places where *agni-Yagyas* are performed every day. It is found to be of the order of 200 to 400 negative ions per cubic centimeter at such places on the average, which is comparable with that in green belts of forest and cool and green sea-beaches.

Yagya-Based Therapy for Total Health

Yagya (agni-Yagya) is not only an excellent process of environmental purification, but it could also be used as a powerful remedy against varieties of physical (bodily) and psychiatric diseases and psychosomatic disorders by proper selection of wood and *havan-sāmagri*. Appropriate selection of *mantras* and mode and timings of *Yagya* etc promise outstanding applications for total health. *Gurudev Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya*, the spiritual scientist and *rishi* of our times, had pioneered reinvestigating this lost science in the modern laboratories. He had named this *Yagya*-based universal therapy for total health as “*yagyopathy*” and established specialized laboratories at *Brahm Varchas Research Center of Shantikunj, Haridwar* for this farsighted purpose. He also inspired and engaged medical doctors and talents from different disciplines of biological, physicochemical and psychological sciences in this path-breaking research.

Let us broadly look at the fundamental principles and scientific basis, which make the research on *yagyopathy* so appealing and promising.

The Potency of Subtlization and Sublimation:

The herbal medicines in *yagyopathy* work on the principle of magnified potency by subtlization and sublimation. It is a well-known fact the oral medicines consumed in gross form (e.g. tablets or syrup) have lesser effect as compared to those infused in the blood stream directly by injections. If inhaled through breath and the skin pores in vaporized or gaseous form, the same medicine would have many-fold positive effects. Subtlization and sublimation increase their potency exponentially.

It's a simple fact; known to most of us that subtlization increases the potency of material substances. For example soaked and abraded almond has greater effect as tonic than the solid one. Its semi-liquid form obtained by scrubbing is even more effective than the paste prepared by grinding. Half-chewed, somehow gulped morsel of bread would not give that benefit as the properly chewed one. If one is forced to eat even a tiny piece of gold or silver coin, it would create serious problems for him. However, the same metal when powdered processed into fire and converted into a *bhasm* (medicinal ash) would become a part of a medicine or tonic.

The plant and herbal medicines of *Ayurveda* work on the aforesaid principle that finer grinding, patting, pounding and stirring result in greater extraction and concentration of the healing effects. Similar is the case of the homeopathic drugs. Here the potency of the drugs is increased by subtlization. Allopathic treatments by intravenous injections also work faster and more effectively as compared to giving the same medicines orally in grosser forms. In case of *Yagya*-based therapy, the coarse *havan-sāmagrī* sacrificed in the *yagyāgni* is subtlized, sublimated and transformed into gaseous or vapor form. How its potency and healing effects magnify in this process could be understood by the familiar case of red chilly. When a red chilly is kept in its solid one-piece form no one would experience or notice its existence. It might irritate and cause burning sensation in the hands of the one who grinds it. But if the same tiny piece is ignited in fire, we would find everyone around coughing, sneezing and pouring tears...; the irritation in throat, nose, breathing pipe and burning in the eyes would be unbearable in the large surrounding area wherever, its smoke is spread. The scientific process of *Yagya* makes maximum use of the marvelous effect of subtlization and sublimation in the carefully designed (for controlled gradual temperature variation) *Yagya-kuñḍas*.

When one takes an oral medicine (e.g. a tablet), it first reaches the stomach from where *only* a fraction of it goes to the blood after metabolism. The rest gets drained out with urine and faeces. Thus the effect of the drug materializes only partly; this is further reduced if the patient's digestive system is weak. The same drug if infused directly in to the blood stream by intra-venous injection, certainly shows rapid and better effect. However, here too its significant effect could be lessened by the deficiencies (of specific chemicals for instance) in the blood, problems of blood-flow etc. The risks of counter-reactions are more in this case as the entire dose reaches the blood almost instantaneously. Moreover, it is not certain, whether the drug reaches the subtle components of the body in the desired form? The healing offered by *Yagya* is free from all such limitations. The sublimated drug (healing substances) reaches each and every *component* of the body through the skin pore and breathing.

Respiratory system is most efficient and prominent among all the inlets (for energy and healthy substances) and outlets (for waste and harmful substances) of the body. We intake water and food through the mouth and expel the rejected and rotten portions through the urinary tube and rectum and through perspiration.... The most important source of our survival is given to us by our respiratory system. We all know the necessity of oxygen, which is inhaled by us through breathing. We might sustain our life for several days without food, could even continue to breathe without water for few days, but can't prolong it beyond few minutes in the absence of oxygen. The non-stop work done by the respiratory system alone in carrying the vital energy source to every particle of the body, is more crucial and heavier than that of the digestive system and accessory components and organs in maintaining the living body. The respiratory system and the galaxy of skin pores play the key role in enabling the absorption of the *prāṇa*, the energy and the healing currents (including the herbal drug effects) of *Yagya* in the blood, organs and the cellular, molecular and subtler units of our body.

Free From the Negative Effects of Allopathy:

The quick-treat magic of the allopathic medicines largely works on (i) stimulation of the nervous system or specific reactions in the body and (ii) antibiotic effects of direct killing of the infection or invader. The instant relief or rapid cure offered by these mechanisms is counter-productive in reality.

The sudden energy or stimulation imposed by these drugs is illusive. These appear like blessings initially but prove the contrary in the long run. This 'synthetic treatment' by allopathic drugs is like sending the weak and sick soldiers on the battlefield after boozing. They make an intrepid show in that excitation and attempt over-spending their already meek stock of stamina and energy. Their worsened state becomes visible soon after the effect of intoxication is waned. This is what happens to the fast 'improvement' in one's health by the so-called 'energy-boosters' and tonics.

The antibiotics are often referred as the curse of allopathy. These may provide excellent relief from disease initially but soon become ineffective on the same ailment; further, their side effects are more painful than the disease. Often the after-effects of their prolonged use make it clear that the antibiotics work like slow poisons and offer cure at the cost of natural vitality. The toxicity of these drugs is supposed to be killing the germs or infections; but they do not distinguish between friends and foes and destroy the life-saving agents too by their sharp and instant reactions. Thus,

despite the eradication of the bacteria and viruses of one disease, the immune system, vitality and resistance of the patient 'cured' by the antibiotics become so infirm that he bears greater risk of the attack of other diseases.

Despite knowing their negative effects, we have to take support of the allopathic treatment in want of the other easily accessible and scientifically acclaimed modes. The *Yagya*-based process of medical treatment as devised by the *rishis* of yore provides an excellent *alternative* in this context. It offers dual effects of destroying *the* germs and viruses and at the same time elevating the vitality and resistance of the body without any risk of side effects and without cost constraints. Adept processing of *Yagya* every day, ensures health and vigor for the *yājakas* and annuls the possibilities of the latter suffering any disease or ailment. Because of its *unique* support to mental health and trenchancy, *yagyopathy* is indeed a boon for Total Health.

Yagyopathy for Mental Treatment

Apart from the significant physical and medical applications like purification of the environment, curing bodily ailments and augmenting vitality and physical potentials, *yagyopathy* is also found to be of immense use in treatment of psychosomatic disorders and psychological and psychiatric problems. The domain of mental ailments, though invisible is much wider and intense than those of the varieties of bodily diseases. Almost the entire human society is suffering from these in one form or the other. The roots of over 90% of the somatic diseases too lie in the hidden folds of the patient's mind. Confusion, illusion, fear, suspicion, fury, excitement, whimsical attitude, etc are common mental deficiencies that are often found in most of us to some extent. If left unchecked, their persistence and silent growth turn an otherwise normal fellow into a sort of cranky or 'half-mad' one. Depression, insomnia, and varieties of puzzling psychiatric cases and insanity are more painful than the bodily sufferings. Accidie, aboulia, amnesia, dullness, inefficiency, etc are offshoots of mental illness of some other kinds that lead to sufferings like poverty, backwardness, insult, negligence, scorn etc.

The gamut of psychological and psychiatric ailments appears to have grown many-fold in the recent times. In spite of advancement of medical sciences and technologies, there is no effective remedy for any kind of mental problem or deficiency. Pain-killers, tranquilizers, steroids are tried frequently for somehow giving some kind of 'relief'. Soon their 'magical' effect is lost and puts the patient in greater mental (and also physical) suffering. The current practice of giving carbon dioxide based therapy and electrical shocks in case of psychiatric disorder are also far from being effective and scientifically perfect. Here again the side-effects owe high risk. The treasure of scriptural knowledge and the results of experimental studies on *yagyopathy* offer it as a light of hope with great potentials for mental treatment and enlightenment.

The sublimated vital elements and herbal medicines inhaled in *Yagya* first reach the brain and then to the lungs and other parts – the gross as well as the subtle components, of the body. Thus, it has a direct healing effect on brain-born diseases and complexities. The body absorbs the heat of its sacrificial fire and inhales – through the skin-pores and respiration – the vapors of sublimated herbs. This elevates the level of free radicals – antioxidants, and negative ions and thus upon reaching the brain and the nerves eliminates the major cause of mental tensions. The specific energy currents educed by *yagyāgni* and *mantra śakti* have significant remedial effect on the disorders and diseases ranging from headache, migraine, cold to mental dullness, intellectual

deficiencies, depressions, insomnia, intemperance, epilepsy, psychosis and varieties of manias.

The unique impact of *mantra śakti* in *yagyopathy* is of paramount importance. The configurations of special syllables in *mantra* and the *vedic patterns* of chanting them during *Yagya* are derived from absolute research (by the *rishis*) on the deeper sciences of - gross and subliminal sonic vibrations, music and consciousness. The *collective* chanting of *mantras* in adept rhythm in front of *yagyāgni* magnifies the *mantra-śakti* exponentially and expands the *mantra*-vibrations to unlimited heights in all dimensions. The superimposition of sound waves generates immense power in ordinary case too; there are many familiar examples that illustrate this fact in day-to-day life. The soldiers are advised to disrupt their march-fast while walking over a bridge; else, the vibrations produced by their joint footsteps would shake and might even break the bridge. The synchronized tunes of sound can break a glass cup; at greater intensities it can even quiver and crack the mountains. The explosive sound of dynamite often creates a tremor like vibrations in distant areas too. Such loud sounds in the nearby places are also found to cause abortions and sudden heart failures. The shrilling sound of a bugle kills the microorganisms on its way. The special tune of siren sparks new courage and enthusiasm in the hearts of warriors. The magical effects of music in increasing one's potentials and creative talents and its therapeutic applications are also well known.

The power of sound in *mantras* is far more refined, intense and deep. Apart from the gross impact of the specific patterns of sonic waves generated by *mantras*, the *mantra-śakti* is also endowed with the limitless subliminal force of the spiritually enlightened *consciousness* of the *sādhakas* and *yājñakas*. This spiritual effect is intensified by the purity of the mind and heart, devout determination and *śraddhā* of the latter. The esoteric science of *mantras* was so advanced in the times of yore that *mantras* were used as weapons and missiles; in transmutation of a sick and dying body into a youthful, *strong* one. *Mantras* used to effectuate timely materialization of the curses and boons of the *rishis* and great *sādhakas* who had attained mastery in this supernatural science.

The *Yagya*-energy induces unique force in expanding the effect of *mantra-śakti* almost instantaneously. The modern science affirms three basic streams of energy indwelling in Nature – sound, heat and light. Of these, the velocity of heat and light is unimaginably greater than that of sound. In the process of *Yagya*, the natural conjugation of the enormous heat and *Yagya*-energy with *mantra-śakti* and the collision of the superimposed sonic waves of collective *mantra*-chanting with the quivering flames of the *yagyāgni* induce infinite speed and amplification of the *mantra-śakti* and help it expand up to cosmic domains in feasible time.

Soft voice of a person is amplified and made audible to thousands of people around and at distant places with the help of loudspeakers via the power of electrical energy. The electromagnetic power enables the voice of a person reach every corner of the globe through the wireless radio signals. Television enables such transmission of photographs and three-dimensional images too. Similarly, the energy of *yagyāgni* works like the 'amplifier' and 'transmitter' for the sonic waves of *mantra*. The *mantra śakti* expressed by the spiritually purified voice of the *sādhakas* (*yājñakas*) thus works like a *Śabdabhedī Bāṇa* and induces intense impact deep inside the minds of people participating in the *Yagya*. Its divine vibrations spun a sublime aura of spiritual and sonic energy in the distant surroundings too and generate a unique ambience of blissful enlightenment and peace.

The splendid compounding of *mantra śakti*, *Yagya*-energy and intrinsic determination of the awakened inner self of the *yājñikas* during the process of *Yagya* erects a sublime furnace... that melts and evaporates the vices of the participants. It burns out their insidious instincts, evil tendencies, other mental weaknesses and aberrations including – erogenous passions, excitements, anger, jealous, hatred, fear, anxiety, whims, tensions, etc and refines and calms down their minds. Simultaneous with this refinement, there is a compensating energizing, elevation and molding of their mental body that enable enlightened development of their personality and arousal of their hidden talents and brilliance. *Yagyopathy* offered by accomplished *sādhakas* and experienced *yatis* thus appears to be offering the elixir for total health.

Refinement of the Sublime Environment by *Yagya*

It is perhaps for the first time in human history that the smog of pollution has so firmly entrapped all dimensions of life. Not only the pollution of the external environment and the associated threats of global warming, poisonous air, water and soil, but also the sublime environment of life – the delicate realms of thoughts and sentiments, has also been maligned and darkened. The latter, though invisible, is more threatening and has been the root cause of the universal ailments and perversion.

While the (external) environment encompasses air, water, soil and other components of Nature that are vital in physical expression and sustenance of living beings, the invisible flow of thought waves, mental and emotional impulses, and subtle reactions and inscriptions of karma constitute the subliminal environment or ambience of life. The ambience created by consistent presence of constructive thinking, piety of moral conduct and greater proportion of good and prudent people endowed with the ideals of humanity is naturally serene, soothing and induces a sacred peace. On the contrary, as we might have experienced in one way or the other these days, the corruption of intentions and deeds, perversion of thinking and the presence of people having such declining conduct and ignorance gives rise of some kind of restlessness, suffocation and dullness in the ambience.

The resultant effect of the attitude, thoughts, intrinsic nature, conduct and actions of the people generates the ambience around them. The dominating nature of the latter influences the weaker ones and expands with greater intensity, which at the global level erects what is broadly known as the trends of the time or the characteristics of an era (*yug*). The spiritually illumined flow of saintly sentiments, sagacious thoughts and ethical trends of the people in the vedic age had erected the divine era of *satyuga* (The Age of Truth) on this earth. The devil's age of *kaliyuga* that we face today also has not dropped from the skies, rather it is a reflection of our own egotist, self-obsessive, narrow, cruel, passion-blinded, perverted thoughts and deeds. If the external environment and atmosphere is the body of the global being, the sublime environment or ambience is its mind or consciousness. The sickness and weakening of the body has roots in the mind. Unless the mental ailments and impurities are cleared, no measure could overcome the other pollution and adversities.

Thus purification of the subtle environment or global ambience (*sukśma vātāvaraṇa*) appears to be the principal goal to be achieved towards universal remedy against the threat to the very

existence of humanity and life on the earth. Whatever projects at global and local levels are being tried towards the cleaning the toxic air, water etc could continue but it should be noted that purification of the *sukśma vātāvaraṇa* is more important. The spiritual acumen and clairvoyance of the *rishis* had realized this eternal fact ages ago and had therefore focused on the purity and illumination of the *sukśma vātāvaraṇa*, which ensured ideal environment on the gross fronts of life too. The flow of thoughts is more powerful than cyclones. It shapes the societies and global trends. This flow in the ambience at war times induces corresponding enthusiasm and intrepid wave in everyone.

When the waves of luxurious and pleasure oriented aptitude are on, we find enormous varieties of fashions, addictions and tides of lavishness and luxury and amorous and erotic trends in the society. The impact of the global ambience today has shades of self-absorbing, narrow-minded, comfort-driven ideology and sensuous passions that have waned and shrouded the humane values and converted the human society into an ensemble of mutually exploiting consumers and commodities. This is the hidden influence of the *sukśma vātāvaraṇa* that spreads in no time and grabs the wider and wider pools of the dormant, weak and unaware minds. The wave of communism triggered by influential thinkers and rulers of the USSR and Germany had gradually created an ambience in its support and molded the public interest accordingly. Their efforts were gross, mainly based on pressure, bribery and propaganda. This is why, despite embracing over one-third of the world, their system could not succeed too long and faced disintegration and invasion of the free-markets and consumerization. For deeper and viable impact, the sublime foundation of the ambience should also be firm, deep and far-reaching. The refinement of the *sukśma vātāvaraṇa* today demands such endeavors, but these cannot be achieved without spiritual means. Our *rishis* had recommended *Yagya* as an excellent spiritual mode for this purpose.

When *Yagyas* are adeptly performed with collective chanting of powerful *mantras* by spiritually refined *sādhakas* and using appropriate *havan sāmagrī* and wood, the spiritual waves of *mantra-śakti* and *Yagya-energy* so generated pervade in wider etheric domains. It sparks divine radiance in all those participating in *Yagya* and those, whose inner self is linked with these subtle domains of consciousness. The *sukśma vātāvaraṇa* thus created by *Yagya* induces benevolence, generosity, continence, austerity, moral virtues and divine faith. The currents of spiritual energy of *Yagya* pacify and diminish the untoward assimilation of vices and animal instincts of lust, ego, selfishness, jealousy, hatred, immorality, venality and other evils. This resolves most of the problems faced in the personal and social lives. Many worries, complications, problems and adversities are uprooted by this sublime illumination.

The grandeur and continuity of the astonishing effects of *Yagya* grow in proportion with the size, duration and frequency of the *Yagyas*. In the ancient times, the *rishi-munis*, the savants, the kings, the affluent and elite used to organize grand *Yagyas*, the common people too used to participate in these and daily *havans*. This way the sublime environment was purified continuously and an ambience of ideal ascent of all *was* maintained. This is what had allowed the descent of bright and happy era of divine culture.

Historical *Yagyas* for Sublime Refinement and Their Relevance Today

When the demonic actions of *Ravana* had begun terrorizing the world, *Maharshi Vishwamitra* – the beatified discoverer of the *Gāyatrī Mantra*, had guided large-scale *Yagyas* on war footing as remedial measures to annul the devil's acts and arouse the dormant and disintegrated strength of saintly people. He had assigned his disciples *Ram* and *Lakshman* the responsibility of protecting these experiments from the deadly attacks and obstruction from the demons.

The divine valor of *Shri Ram* and *Lakshman* had finally ruined the reign of *Ravan* and liberated the earth from all the tyrant giants like him. However, the trenchant acumen of the *rishis* could see the remains of the devil effects in the subtle environment that could have again perverted the ambience and given rise to the likes of *Ravana*. *Maharshi Vashishtha* was requested to lead the mission of pacifying and eliminating the evils and inducing spiritual purification of the *sukīma vātāvaraṇa*. Ten gigantic *Ashwamedha Yagyas* were organized by *Shri Ram* for this noble purpose under the auspices of the angelic guidance of the *Sapt-Rishis*. This epochal spiritual endeavor had accomplished the foundation of the golden era of *Rāma-Rājya*.

Similar impact of *Yagya* was seen in the times of *Mahabharata*. The *Pandwas*, with the divine support of *Shri Krishna* had destroyed the *Kauravas* and their cruel associates in the historic war of *Mahabharata*; however, the subtle impressions and disturbances of the misdeeds of the latter were still alive in the sublime environment. The ghostly echoes of the cruelty, hatred and the cries of the victims of the devastating war were reverberating in the ambience. The dark mist of the tyranny of *Kansa*, *Jarasadhana*, *Shishupal* had not yet been cleared. Overall purification of the *sukīma vātāvaraṇa* was crucial in those circumstances. The *Pandwas* had then organized grand *Rajsuya Yagyas* under the protection of Lord *Krishna* to effectuate this cosmic refinement.

Age after age, the Indian history has witnessed the savior role of the *dharmānuṣṭhāns* of *Yagya* in the purification and protection of the environment of life in the subtle and the gross horizons. The spiritual visionaries here have always advocated *Yagya* as the principal means for overall refinement and erection of enlightened ambience.

The twentieth century has encountered two bloodiest world wars. Mountains of explosives had charred millions of people; many millions had been killed on the battlefield, evincing the deadly heights of cruelty and ghastliness. The scenes of sheer barbarism were so hideous that even the devil's soul would have shivered seeing them. Apart from the two globally devastating wars, the world has bore hundreds of other local and regional wars of varied extent – e.g. that in Hungary, Korea, Vietnam, Israel, and Iraq-Iran etc. The division of India, the bombing attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki etc were other tragic events that have added to the horrifying cries and sufferings and the storms of heinous acts, which have terribly shaken, darkened and debauched the sublime environment of life. This has given rise to an unprecedented flow of evils in the subtle domains of thoughts and sentiments.

The thought-pollution pervaded in the *sukīma vātāvaraṇa* is the root cause of the all round devolution, threats and terrors found in human life today despite glorious advancement of science and technology and progressive movements on the materialistic and intellectual fronts. The devil flow of the subtle ambience erupted in the early centuries of the Modern Age has compounded and expanded in massive proportions by now. Every man and woman is breathing it; every mind is driven in this flow. This is what has engulfed humanness in the vicious web of sensuous lust,

greedy ambitions, mindless cravings and selfish egotism. Meat and wine seem to have become 'natural' meals of man and violence, eroticism, corruption, crimes, and terrorism, his 'natural' tendencies. The human race is entrapped in enormous mental turbulence, torture, restlessness, terror, anxiety and ailments. On the gross fronts too, the environmental pollution and natural calamities are challenging the survival of human population and even the existence of the earth.

No single government or scientific laboratory, nor even their collective efforts have achieved anything against the gigantic threats of our times. By the time they proceed with resolving one problem, many more crop up like mushrooms with bigger riddles and risks. It would be better if our evolved intellect accepts that the disease and disorders of the subtle could be treated and checked effectively only by compatible means. The sooner we realize that the demonic haze of the *sukśma vātāvaraṇa* could be countered and wiped out only by the sublime means empowered by a spiritual force and strive in this regard, the safer it would be. As demonstrated by the ancient history and affirmed by spiritual eminence of later times too, the system of *Yagya* as devised by the vedic *rishis* renders promising support with its unique scientific features and *spiritual* potentials.

The Role of *Gāyatrī Yagyas* in Meeting the Challenges of the Time

While *Yagya* is revered as the father of the divine vedic culture, *Gāyatrī* is worshiped as its Almighty mother. The conjunction of *Yagya* and *Gāyatrī* is eternal. Chanting of the *Gāyatrī Mantra* with the *āhuties* is an integral part of vedic *Yagyas*. The *anuśthāna* of *Gāyatrī Japa* is incomplete without *Yagya*. The number of *āhuties* recommended in the scriptures for such *purñāhuti Yagyas* was at least one-tenth of the number of *japas*. This could be relaxed to one-hundredth fraction of *japas* or at least one rosary-count in today's context.

The perennial conjunction of *Gāyatrī* and *Yagya* represents the absolute. The presence of both is fundamental for glorious accomplishment of life. One is the genesis and ultimate expansion of *gyāna* – pure knowledge, and the other encompasses the *vigyāna* – perfect science. *Gyāna* and *Vigyāna* both are sovereign for the progress and ascent of any society and nation. Absence of either initiates decline.

Gyāna implies – true knowledge, deep philosophy, enlightened wisdom, sagacity, benevolence and justice. *Vigyāna* includes – talents, prosperity, adept resources, vigor, and potentials of rapid success. Balanced and harmonious growth of both ensures righteous development. India was edified by both in the times of yore. From common masses to the royal houses, and the ashrams of the *rishis*, all revered *gyāna-vigyāna* and endeavored adopting these in their level best. This is why ancient Indian society was endowed with power, prosperity and glorious intellectual, cultural and spiritual eminence. The *rishis*, the mentors of *gyāna* and *vigyāna*, used to be engrossed in divine realms through devout devotion. They also used to attain supernormal potentials through dedicated spiritual endeavors of *tapa-sādhanās* and *yoga*.

In the Modern Age, the domains of *gyāna* and *vigyāna* have largely been confined to materialistic and external peripheries of life. The world is not short of brilliant scholars, researchers, savants in

multiple disciplines, but one hardly finds the great depths of generosity, altruism, and sagacious vision in them. In want of these qualities, the trenchancy of mind coupled with ego and jealous competition is making people more selfish, possessive, crafty and knavish. The advancement of science and technology too is giving only part benefits as compared to the direct or indirect harms caused by its shortsighted, commercial and quick-win type orientation and developments. Synthetic fertilizers for example, have brought rapid increase in harvesting but at the cost of reducing the natural nourishing potency of the vegetables, fruits and grains and gradual degradation of the fertility of the soil.

Moreover, the synthetic chemicals are found to add some toxic effects and mutations that could cause the dreaded diseases like cancer. Industrialization today has indeed revolutionized the mode of life by producing larger and larger comforts with greater sophistication. However, the consumption of natural resources and perturbation of ecological balance thereby, and the smoke, pollutants and noise infused in the environment at alarming rate in equal proportions have put a question mark on the very definition of development adopted by modern civilization. The hazards, sufferings, the social disharmony and the future risks caused by this single tracked 'materialistic' progress are a matter of great concern and approve that the blind *vigyāna* in the absence of the light of *gyāna* has put the world at the edge of untimely extinction.

The basis of *gyāna* and *vigyāna* were quite different in the ancient times. Today, the scientific search of the subtle power too revolves around the matter – the atomic and subatomic particles. In the times of the *rishis*, all dimensions of existence and life were deciphered in the cosmic domains of consciousness and its reflection in individual selves and the material manifestation of Nature. This research of the sublime was carried out with the help of their inner force and spiritually radiant intellect and acumen. Therefore the *rishis* – the scientists of yore, did not require any expensive high-equipped laboratory or advanced technology – like today, for this comprehensive research. Their experiments were conducted in the natural laboratories of their own body, mind and the cosmic expansion hidden in the inner self.

The peer-less discoveries and developments of *gyāna* and *vigyāna* in the vedic age were founded on *Gāyatrī* and *Yagya*. The latter are therefore referred at the genesis of the divine Indian culture – also known as the vedic or the *rishi* culture. *Gāyatrī* represents embodiment of absolute knowledge and *Yagya* is the symbol of total science. The *Gāyatrī Mantra* encompasses supreme knowledge of intellectual and spiritual evolution of mankind. The marvelous configuration of the twenty-four special syllables – carriers of the currents of *Śabda*, in the *Gāyatrī Mantra* is endowed with the astonishing potential to arouse the *sadbuddhi*, the Inner Light and virtuous potentials.

The integrated science of *Yagya* too is unique towards overall development of energetic and enlightened personality and ideal development of the world. The fumigation and sublimation of selected wood and *havana-sāmagrī* in the scientifically designed *Yagya-kuñḍa* offers enormous healthy effects and therapeutic and environmental purification applications. Apart from this gross impact of significant support in ecological balance and vigorous life, it bestows truly rare psychological benefits. The spiritually empowered sonic waves generated by collective chanting of the vedic *mantras* by the *sādhakas* and the immense energy of *yagyāgni* generate a sublime refinery that melts and burns out the vices and untoward tendencies rooted in the participants' conscious and the unconscious mind. It enlightens the inner mind and arouses the intrinsic elements of a *Brahmin*, a *rishi* hidden in the subliminal depths of the soul.

As described earlier, *Yagya* enshowers *parjanya* that purifies air, water and soil and elevates the vital energy of the living beings, trees and plants and all elements of Nature. The blessings of the divine powers regulating the cycle of life and Nature are intimately linked with the continuity of *Yagya* on the earth. When one follows the teachings of *Yagya* and thus regards his skills, powers and resources as thy bequests, he dedicates them all for ideal, altruist aims. On the contrary, when he claims egotist possession, he drains them in selfish, insidious acts — trenchant intellect in frauds and scandals, might and courage in terrorism, and wealthy means in addictions. The scientific process of *Yagya* inscribes this teaching and educes the sentiments of altruist, generous life that is pivotal to happy growth and progress of social development and civilization.

Thus the *vigyāna* of *Yagya* provides the effective methods and potentials to enable ideal development on all realms of life ranging – from the personal to social fronts, from the gross environment and ecosystem to the *sukśma vātāvaraṇa*. This is why *Yagya* is regarded as the origin of the divine culture of vedic India and it is an integral part of all aspects of the Indian Culture and all religious celebrations and spiritual *sādhanās*. The *gyāna* and *vigyāna* required to counter the adversities and problems of the present era and for the cultural evolution of human life are endowed in the *Gāyatrī Mantra* and *Yagya*. The supreme philosophy and science of *Gāyatrī-Yagyas* can resurrect the divine glory of Vedic Age if we prudently perform and adopt them in our heart, thoughts, deeds and conduct.

The *Yagya* Campaign of the *Yug Nirman* Mission

The *Yug Nirman Yojana* mission of All World *Gayatri Pariwar* is engaged in multiple reformative and reconstructive activities on the personal, familial, social, national and cultural fronts of life. Spiritual refinement of the *sukśma vātāvarana* has been the predominant focus of this mission and it has endeavored a *Yagya*-based movement on the lines of the vedic tradition to achieve this virtually impossible goal.

This historic mission has emerged from the rigorous *tapa-sādhanā* of the *Vishwamitra* of our times, the *rishis* of this age – *Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya*. The devout endeavors and supernormal spiritual eminence of this *yug rishi* enabled the epochal descent of the otherwise lost and forgotten super knowledge (*vidyā*) of *Gāyatrī* and accomplished it as the savior of the world. This visionary saint deciphered and propagated the divine light of *Yug Śakti Gāyatrī* to reach the masses and also pioneered the revival of the vedic culture of *Yagya* so that it could be adopted by every man and woman in the present times too.

Likewise the *rishis* of yore, his sagacious acumen and saintly heart had understood the enormous problems and crisis of the era through deeper depths. He therefore encouraged eroding of the root cause hidden in the *sukśma vātāvarana* and attempted colossal refinement in every dimension of the gross and sublime environment of life by the spiritual experiments of *Gāyatrī Sādhanā* and *Yagya*. Massive number of small and hundreds of grand *Yagyas* have been organized since the advent of his “*Yug Nirman*” campaign. The “*Sahastranshu Brahm Yagya*” performed on the *Gayatri Jayanti* 1953 was the first spiritual experiment of grand participation of people from all parts of the society. It was the auspicious commemoration of the glorious completion of the

twenty-four divine *mahā-puraicarañas* endeavored by *Gurudev Shriram Sharma Acharya* for twenty-four years. This also laid the foundation of the *Gayatri Pariwar*.

Series of distinct *Yagyas* in vedic tradition commenced in 1955 in which the *Mahāmratuójaya Yagya*, *Rudra Yagya*, *Viṣṇu Yagya*, *Śata Caṇḍī Yagya*, *Nava Graha Yagya*, *Gañapati Yagya*, *Saraswati Yagya*, *Jyotiṣṭoma Yagya*, *Agniṣṭoma*, and the *Gyāna Yagya* of the four Vedas, etc were performed with the participation of more and more *Gāyatrī Sādhakas*. Year 1956 marked the 108 *kuñḍīya Yagyas* and grand *Narmedha Yagya* to mobilize the collective power and enthusiasm of the *sādhakas* dedicated towards social reformation and welfare of the masses. Over 20,000 people from all walks of life had participated in these *Yagyas* conducted by *Acharyaji* in *Gayatri Tapobhumi Mathura*. Organization of 108 *Gāyatrī Yagyas* across the country was pledged on this occasion to propagate the *gyāna* of *Gāyatrī* and *vigyāna* of *Yagya* among the masses. This number increased to 1008 within a year, which included 5 and 9 *kuñḍīya* to 108 *kuñḍīya (mahā) Yagyas*.

Successful completion of these *Yagyas* and *mahāyagyas* had induced a gradually expanding churning of the sublime domains of Nature. The next major experiment of spiritual refinement in continuation under the angelic guidance of *Yug Rishi Pt. Shriram Sharma* was conducted as the “*Brahmāstra Anuṣṭhāna*” in 1957. This involved yearlong *mahāpuraicaraña* of twenty-four lacs of *Gāyatrī Mantra japa* and twenty-four lac *āhuti*s in *Yagyas* jointly performed by thousands of *sādhakas*. This was aimed at protecting mankind from the ill omens of adverse positioning of several planets and likely natural calamities, epidemics, regional wars, etc that year. The first congress of the All India *Gayatri Parwar* was organized this year to enlighten the members by details of *Gāyatrī Vidyā* and the true spirit and scientific aspects of *Yagya*.

The “*Sahastra (1000) Kuñḍīya Gāyatrī MahāYagya*” conducted in November 1958 to commemorate the *purñāhuti* (completion) of the *Brahmāstra Anuṣṭhāna* was a remarkable beginning in reviving the noble tradition of the *Rishi* Age. Over four lac devotees participated in this *mahāYagya*. This intensified and accelerated the spiritual purification of the *suksama vātāvaraña* and gave impetus to the missions of the *Gayatri Pariwar* in a big way.

Thereafter, a large number of novel experiments of vedic *Yagyas* have been performed under the auspices of this mission. These include the daily *Yagya* at the individual and familial levels, and collective *Yagya* at the level of colonies, towns and cities and the series of Grand *Dīpa Yagyas*, the *Bajpeya Yagyas* and *Ashwamedha Yagyas*. These experiments continue to expand — mass education and social reformation through religious platform, social upliftment and propagation of the relevance of *Yagya* in scientific light along with purification of the gross and sublime environment to set the atmosphere for reconstruction of a new era. Under this movement, the teachings of the philosophy of *Yagya* and scientific process of *agni-Yagyas* are made so simple and easily adaptable in today’s circumstances, that the rich and the poor, the erudite and the illiterate, everybody can adopt and perform them without any barrier of caste, creed etc. Even the people across different cults and religious faith would not have any doubt and hesitation in participating in these scientifically sound and spiritually enlightening experiments of *Yagyas*.

The 2400 *Gayatri Shaktipithas* and 24,000 *Pragya* Sansthanas – the distributed local centers of *Gayatri Pariwar*, established within the country and abroad have helped the propagation of this movement at the grass root level under the auspices of the mission’s fraternity at *Shantikunj, Hardwar*. Ever since its inception in 1970, the daily *Gāyatrī Yagyas* are continued in the nine-

kuñḍīya *Yagya*ālas of *Shantikunj*. *Yagya* is an integral part of all programmes of the mission in every corner of the country. Over 24 lacs of small and grand *Yagyas* have so far been performed countrywide under the guidance of the trained, devoted representatives of the *Gayatri Pariwar*. Lacs of people have successfully renounced their addictions and untoward habits as part of *deva dakṣiṇā* – in the last phase of *Yagya*, and have pledged to adopt at least one virtuous tendency and strive to improve their thinking and conduct. These instances of courageous expiation, penance and determination for positive orientation of life in front of the *yagyāgni* are evidential examples of the immense flow of inspirations and spiritual strength erected by *Yagya*.

As part of the aforesaid series of *Yagya*-based awareness and elevation, the glorious success of national integration programmes marked the year 1986-87; monumental *Yagyas* were performed simultaneously at thousand places during these celebrations. With the commencement of the twelve year long unique global spiritual experiment of *Yug Sandhi Mahāpurīcaraṇa*, the members of the *Gayatri Pariwar* vowed for performing one lac *Gāyatrī Yagyas* during this critical period (1988-2000) of transition of an era. This *dharmānuṣṭhāna* was also accomplished with wider expansion before the *Mahapurñāhuti Yagya* in November 2000.

In view of the ever-increasing growth of the *yug nirman* mission, Rev. *Gurudev Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya* introduced *dīpa Yagyas* as effective means to convey the knowledge of *Yagya* with inspiring impact on the masses. This was indeed a revolutionary development with significant practical relevance in the present circumstances of human life, when many people do not have the time, resources, faith and ability to perform *kundīya Yagya* or *havans*. The *dīpakas* play the role of *Yagya kuñḍas* here; the process of *agnihotra* works automatically with the ignition of incense sticks (*agarbatti*) made up of *havan sāmāgrī*. *Dīpa Yagyas* add sacred light in the congregations and gathering for mass-education, social awareness and thought-illumination campaigns of the mission that have mobilized at a grand scale since 1988. The *dīpa Yagyas* also became popular among all sections of the society as part of celebrating the *samskāras* of *janma diwasa* (birthday), *vivāha diwasa* (wedding anniversary), etc in holy atmosphere at negligible cost and without elaborate arrangements. Despite the easy mode of performance and minimal rituals, the inspirations imbibed in the *mantras* and method of *dīpa Yagyas* carry excellent impact in reaching the teachings and light of *Yagya* at people's heart and influencing the subtle domains of thought and sentiments.

After the voluntary *mahāprayāṇa* of H.H. *Gurudev* on *Gayatri Jayanti* in June 1990, the *Shraddhanjali Samaroha*, *Shapath Samaroha* and the series of twenty-seven *Ashwamedha Yagyas* of the *Deva Sanskrati Digvijaya Abhiyan* were accomplished under the divine grace of his subliminal protection and under the auspicious presence and guidance of Rev. *Mataji Smt. Bhagavati Devi Sharma*. These grand events proved to be the milestones in the ascent of the mission for the resurrection and expansion of the *Rishi* Culture in true light of science and spirituality. Even in the present circumstances of hatred, division and prejudices of castism and communal clashes, people participated in these *Yagyas* in millions wiping out all difference. This was a live illustration and majestic experience of how *Yagya* could 'charge' the ambience with divine flow and educe generosity, kind co-operation and amity amongst the masses and link their minds with the altruist ideals of *Yagya*. The scientific experiments set up by several teams of experts during these events verified that *Yagya* has notable effects of purifying air, water and soil at large scale.

The mission has continued its growth under the subliminal presence and the angelic blessings of the *Gurusatta* within India and rest of the world. The envoys of divine mission are carrying the

message of *Yagya*-based life in over eighty countries abroad. The achievements of the *Yagya*-movement of the *Gayatri Pariwar* so far appear to be equal and even greater — in view of the worst circumstances of the present era, than the visible and the sublime effects of the grand *Yagyas* of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* times. The epochal *mahāpūrñāhuti Yagya* of the global *Yug Sandhi Mahāpuraṣcaraṇa* organized by *Shantikunj, Hardwar* in November 2000 has added new chapters in these glorious annals of human history with the active participation of over five million people from across the globe.

This spiritual mission of inspiring the entire human race with the angelic spirit of *Yagya* would bestow physical health and vigor on upon people and illuminate every mind with immense peace and piety eventually arousing the divine force immanent in the human self. It will not be too long when we shall see that global expansion with at a wider pace and greater intensity of this *Yagya*-movement would harmonize the ecological balance, purify the gross and the subliminal environment of Nature and life and effectuate creation of heavenly atmosphere on the earth. As the prophecy of the visionaries also indicates, the future structure and values of the human society would emanate from the philosophy of *Yagya*. With the recognition and adoption of the *Yagya*-based culture in every house and every family, all villages, all towns would become *tirthas* and the nation, the motherland would regain its distinction of being sacred *tapobhumi*. The Indian soil will attain its lost glory and the future of humanity would blossom in its guiding light. This emergence of the Age of Truth would indeed be a reality in the coming decades. We would surely experience it alive, if we understand and realize the essence of the science and philosophy of *Yagya*, strive orienting our life accordingly and dedicate our whole hearted support to the historic mission of revival of the vedic culture of *Yagya*.

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Glossary of terms (in Sanskrit) from Shastrik Literature ¹

Agni: Fire.

Anuṣṭhāna: Determined ascetic endeavor aimed at noble spiritual purpose.

Dharmānuṣṭhāna: A sacred spiritual experiment, movement or a religious *anuṣṭhāna* organized with a divine mission.

Devatā (or *deva*): Thy expression, A manifestation of divine powers.

Dīpaka: Small lamps of *ghee* or refined oil.

Gyāna Yagya: Altruist endeavor for propagation of (righteous) knowledge.

Havan (*homaṁ* or *agnihotra*): The process of *Yagya* at small scale that could also be performed every-day at home.

Havan sāmagrī: A preparation of powdered dry herbs.

Japa: Rhythmic enunciation (of a *mantra*).

Japa Sādhanā: *Japa* accompanied by meditation and specific spiritual practices.

Jīvan-Yagya: The natural *Yagya* of life-cycle. Or, the life endowed with the virtuous teachings of *Yagya*.

Mantra-Śakti: power of *Śabda* generated by the *japa* of a *mantra*.

MahāYagya: *Yagya* organized at a gigantic scale.

Narmedha Yagya: The *Yagya* aimed at mobilizing and organizing people dedication towards altruist service and progressive welfare of the society.

Parjanya: Showers of vital energy and spiritual strength.

Prāṇa: The source of life-force, vital spiritual energy.

Puṇya: Good omen earned by good *karmas* (deeds).

Purāścaraṇa: A highest level *anuṣṭhāna* of 2400, 000 *japa sādhanās* of the *Gāyatrī Mantra* under distinct ascetic disciplines.

Pitar: Departed souls of saintly nature.

Rishis: The sages and scientists of the vedic age; the founders of *yoga* and the science of spirituality.

Sadbuddhi – the enlightened intellect that enables prudent distinction between the truth and the false, the right and the wrong and guides the righteous decision making

Sādhanā: Spiritual endeavor of self-refinement and inner elevation.

Sādhaka: Who sincerely performs a *sādhanā*.

Śabda: The eternal element of cosmic sound.

Śabda Śakti: The omnipotent, ever-existing force of *Śabda*.

Śabdabhedī Bāṇa: The unbreakable arrow that is empowered by the aroused force of *Śabda* and moves further in the desired direction after penetrating the focused target.

Śodas Samskara: The sixteen sacred ceremonies, rituals or methods of refinement, psychological conditioning and cultured training of body and mind during important transitional phases of personal and social life.

Tapa (tapasyā): Devout austerity and ascetic endeavors.

Tapobhūmi: A place glorified and spiritually charged by the long-term *tapa-sādhanā* of some great personalities, saints or *rishis*.

Yagya (agni-Yagya): The scientific process (or gross form) of *Yagya* in which specific herbal preparations are sacrificed and sublimated in the fire of some selected woods.

Yagyaśālā: Place where *Yagya* is performed.

Yagyāgni: The sacred fire of *agni-Yagya*.

Yagya-bhasm: Ash left in the *Yagya-kunḍa* after the (*agni-Yagya*.)

Yagya-kunḍa: The pit or small container of special design for *yagyāgni*.

Yagyopavita: Sacred thread or *sūtra*.

Yājaka (Yati): One who performs (or conducts) *Yagya*.

Yug Nirman: Reconstruction of era by social, cultural and spiritual enlightenment.

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¹The English letters and special symbols used here for the Sanskrit Script are in accordance with the international transliteration standards.

NEW BASIS OF NEW ERA

Gayatri is known as *Adya Shakti* because Brahma who was born from the Navel lotus of Vishnu was directed to take support of this *Maha Mantra* for creation. *Brahma* worshipped it and performed tap and brought forth all animate and inanimate creation.

This great power will now be known as the power of a new golden era because the deadly poisons permeating the atmosphere, environment and minds and hearts of human beings can be neutralised only with the help of collective *Sadhana* of this *Mantra*. The new era is also descending in the form of *Pragya* (Enlightened Intelligence) movement, or *Pragyavtar*. The next era will be known as *PragyaYug* (Era of Enlightenment). It can also be called *Satyug*.

What will prevail in the new era, what ideologies will be adopted, have all been described in detail in *Gayatri Geeta*, *Gayatri-Smriti* and *Gayatri Manjari*, which have been incorporated in Hindi Edition of *Gayatri Mahavigyan* Part II.

The sum and substance of this enunciation is that the people of the world will soon live like one family. There will emerge one unifying spiritual vision, making the earth a happy home for all the peoples and nations of the world, united in universal love, understanding and good will. It will be true unity in diversity Sovereign nation states will become obsolete .None will be poor or rich. This earth is mother of all. All humankind will unite together to use its bounties glaring. Economic and social disparities will be eradicated. Everybody will get according to his need and will have to work according to his capacity. Everyone will live on his own self-earned income. Nobody will subsist on ill-begotten money. None will get an opportunity to give unearned wealth through inheritance and indulge in riotous merrymaking.

No country will be allowed to subjugate a neighbouring country to fulfil its selfish ends. This one world organisation will have a combined judicial system and there will be one peace keeping force directly under the global government. Disputes will be settled by *Panchayats*. It will be the duty of the global government to check any infringement of universally accepted and acclaimed laws of harmonious collective living. Immorality, Atrocities, blind faith, evil traditions, foolishness etc. will become things of the past. None will be required to indulge in litigation to get justice. Women will command greater respect than men. Family planning will be strictly enforced so that the world population is stabilised . Universal education and health will be the responsibility of the state. Old persons will also work in accordance with their capacity. Everyone will have to adopt the principle of simple living and high thinking. Nobody will be allowed to usurp the fundamental rights of anybody else. Culprits will be given exemplary deterrent punishment.

People will earn money for livelihood in a limited time. The rest of the time will be utilized in self-refinement and in rendering selfless service for the good of others. Retirement a permit for illness. Not only his family but society as a whole will get benefit of the wisdom and talents of an old person. Scientific discoveries will be applied more in the field of spiritual upliftment rather than for increase of physical or material well-being. Spiritual super-science will get preference over material science.

This prediction of the advent of the new golden era is foretold in the scriptures of the world and has been foreseen by the seer-vision of mystic masters around.
