CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Each philosophy has certain practices that form the essence of that philosophy. Indian culture and tradition incorporate Yajña (fire ceremony involving offering selected substances) as one of the core performances for fulfillment of worldly desires. All the auspicious performances in Indian tradition admit worship of Agni (the sacred fire) in one form or the other. Throughout ages, fire has been venerated as a symbol of Brahman. The first hymn in Rig Veda is related to Agni: "I invoke and worship Agni, light of life, self-effulgent lord of the universe, foremost leader and inspirer, blazing light of Yajnic creation, high-priest of cosmic dynamics, controller of natural evolution, and most generous giver of the treasure of life" (Tulasi, 2013).

Ayurveda (Knowledge of Life and Science of Living) recommends Yajna for management of diseases through Japa (repeating a sacred name of a particular God), Homa (fire offering) and Surarchana (worship of God). A Mantra from Rig Veda comprehends the result of performing Yajña with a specific note: \[Yajāmahesaumanasāyadevān||\] (Rig Veda || 1-173-2) meaning ‘We perform Yajña in favour of Devatas for sanctification and bracing the Manas (an aspect of mind)’.

The Sanskrit word ‘Yajña’ etymologically means ‘to worship’, ‘to unite or connect’, ‘to do charity unconditionally (Dāna) in right manner to the deserved’ (Gyanashruti & Srividyanda, 2006). Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, one of the schools of Indian philosophy, proclaims that – “Devatoddeśenadravyatyyāgah” meaning ‘Yajna is an act of offering desired materials to aspiring Devas (deities). Yajña is a unique method of offerings to deities (Bheemacharya, 2011). One of the texts explains Yajña as a combination of offerings to Devatas, recitation of
Mantras from three Vedas with Ritviks (performers of Yajña), and Dāna (acknowledgements or respecting noble people) (Acharya, 1998).

Yajña is a systematic process in which herbs are offered along with recitation of Mantras to accelerate the process of harmonizing the creation and human life. This action purifies Mahāprāna (Krishnamurti, 2007). In addition to this, Yajña influences physical, psychological, spiritual and social conditions at large (Surendra & Nagendra, 2007). Chanting of Mantras produces vibrations which makes human body resonate to Mantras’ mystic powers and responds in a profound manner (Yogitha, Nagarathna, John, & Nagendra, 2010).

Sri Krishna in Bhagavad-Gita, says this with respect to Yajnas: “Serve the gods through Yajña and let the gods be gracious to us. Thus, each serving the other selflessly attains the highest good.” [Bhagavad Gita 3.11] (Goyandaka, 1988). “Oblations given to Agni reach the Sun, which in turn transforms into clouds through vaporization resulting in rainfall and gives back in the form of food grains which is the base for human progeny.” [Manu Smriti 3.76] (Sheshanavartna, 2011).

Vedas demonstrate three domains of living for betterment of process and they include karma (action), dhyana (meditation) and jnana (knowledge). As long as individuality continues as human being, actions will follow and this will eventually lead to knowledge. According to the Dhatupatha, the word Yajna derives from yaj* in Sanskrit language that broadly means, [a] worship of GODs (natural forces), [b] synchronization between various domains of creation and [c] charity.

The concept of God differs from religion to religion. The ancient Hindu scriptures conceptualizes Natural forces as GOD or Devatas (Deva that which enlightens [div = light]).
Commonly, in all ancient civilizations the worship of Natural forces as GODs was prevalent. Therefore any form of manifested (Sun, fire and so on) and or unmanifested (Prana, Manas and so on) form of energy is considered as GOD in Hindu tradition also.

Worship conceives the idea of request to the sources of energy forms from where the energy is drawn for the use of all life forms. Worshiping the Gods (Upasana) can be in the form of worship of manifest forms, prostration, collection of ingredients or devotees for worship, invocation, study and discourse, and meditation.

Sacrifice is also a ritualistic mode of connecting between various domains of creation and their respective deities through the eternal messenger AGNI (fire) (Sangatikaranam); the degree of freedom to think and act rests with the individual especially with human beings depending on how one connects to these realms spiritually through the mode of Yajna. That is considered as Loka where the Karmaphala (result of actions, either merit or demerit) are being manifested. One enjoys Svargaloka (heaven) on account of Punya, suffers in Narakaloka (hell) on account of Papa, and takes birth as human to pile up the Karmaphala for the next cycle of existence. Thus, new cycles of birth and death continue forever without an end until one realizes one’s false concept of eternity and the resultant deplorable repetition. In this regard, ritualistic sacrifice plays a major role by which beings in this world please the GODs for fulfillment of their cherished desires. Raghuvamsha of Kalidasa, gives specifically reference as to how the various realms were sustained just as King Dilipa, a great king who “performed great sacrifices by utilizing the treasures of earth to please the GODs and they drained the heavenly treasures in the form of rains. Thus by a mutual exchange between beings of various realms harmoniously, the sustenance of these worlds by sacrifice was ensured”. Bhagavad Gita [3.11 – 12] also upholds the similar view in mutual exchange for
sustenance. “Cherish the Devas with Yajna and may the Devas cherish you, thus cherishing one another you shall gain the intended wealth and maintain the cosmic harmony; factually natural forces are purified and energized by this system of Yajna.”

Appropriate Charity (Dana): every living being is a custodian of limited resources of vast Cosmos for a while to experience the results of action done in the previous birth. Depending upon the quantity of merits and demerits, longevity and quality of life will be decided so as to spend some time here on earth. In this span of time one has to look after the family, society and other living beings by default because of the support that one gets for such sustenance. As an obligatory action one should take care of others by sharing and caring. This is also Yajna.

SOCIAL CONDITION OF INDIA LEADING TO GROWTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In comparison to the rest of the world, Bharat contributed a lot to the field of knowledge. The social condition was very conducive to this development. Philosophy emerges and expands in a condition in society, when all common necessities are taken care. Quite often British have reported that when they entered India for the first time, they could not find people who were starving for food. Social conditions contributed to harness knowledge which supported India at any given point of time in history.

Vedic scriptures are the spiritual literature; the expression Vedic is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Veda’, which means revealed knowledge or intuitive knowledge. The Veda may be understood by simply accepting what the Veda says about itself. Since the Vedic self-understanding may be amazing or even unbelievable to the modern reader, it seems it’s important to dedicate a few sentences to clarify probable misunderstandings. The different
opinions about the origin and history of Vedic scriptures are due to the fundamental difference of world-views between the followers of the Veda and modern mundane scholars.

Modern Indology says Vedas are but a mere accumulation of texts from different sources, written over a long period of time, starting from about 1500 BC to 1000 AD, after the hypothetical Aryan invasion into the Indian Subcontinent. Only then, a ‘Vedic’ culture was formed through a mixture of several tribes. If we believe this scenario, then it is natural to think that the Indian scriptures are nothing but a collection of disorganized mythological texts. Maharshi Aurobindo says this reveals the shallow understanding of Vedas by Westerners.

Ignorance and deliberate demotion of Indian culture by few authors lead many to be misled by the Western view of point. Vedas refer to very ancient cultures, timeless revelations and divine incarnations. They also say that the entire saga of Vedic revelation has a systematic structure and a clearly defined goal, being compiled by the great Vedic Rishis (seers and sages), and headed by Veda Vyasa, about five thousand years ago. This knowledge was then systematically put into a written form in order to prevent it from being lost during the forthcoming ages.

The structure of the Vedic scriptures can be compared to a staircase with many steps, with specific scriptures corresponding to each step. The Vedic scriptures describe both the goal and the steps leading up to fixed goal.

Any individual’s evolution is not limited to one single life. Maharshi Aurobindo compares any life with a spiral movement; circular and upward. Vedic understanding is based on the concept of reincarnation, which declares that the steps of this symbolical staircase can also be understood as life times. From a superficial point of view, Vedic scriptures may appear to be
unsystematic and even contradictory, but this impression can easily be reconciled by finding out how each step is connected to the goal.

The ultimate goal of life is liberation from all types of bondages and enjoying eternal bliss, a state ‘devoid of varieties of sorrows and sufferings’ as it is popularly stated by a Sanskrit line,

Sukhapraptihkhaniyrttiśca

“Getting happiness and discordance of sufferings” is the focus of every endeavor by any living being”.

Indian scriptures have shown different paths to reach the same goal by different methods to aspirants of this goal, considering the fact that “Bhinnarucirhi lokah” meaning each one is different and likes and dislikes of each is of innumerable characters. So the path followed by each is obviously different.

This study is aimed at glancing at different techniques advised by ancient scriptures including Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Smritis and Itihasas. A good number of Spiritual aspirers go for Tantra for quick results, but end up with complex knots of immediate and intensive effects. Considering all these complexities, saints of yore showed the right path which has no side effects, Satvik and safe practices. Bhagavad Gita rightly divides faith into three: Satvik, Rajasik and Tamasik.

The rituals can be classified under three categories based on their origin, namely Shrauta (prescribed in Vedas), Smarta (prescribed in Smritis) and Tantra-Agama (prescribed in Tantra and Agamas). Experimental research in the present work is not related with two former categories; hence we suppose Bhaishajya Maha Yajna is a newly invented method by one of
the spiritual masters, Sri Narendra Ji, the founder of Shaktiveda Wellness Centre, Bangalore which resembles Tantra based ritual from his personal experiences based on scientific approach. The next chapter, literary research, elaborated about Shrauta and Smarta Yajnas. The present research work is connected with new invented method of performing Yajna. Experimental research work involved two modern techniques to measure effect of Yajna.

1. EPI (Electrophotonic Imaging) is a Bio-Photonic-Emission- Imaging-Processing technique developed by Dr Konstatine Korotkov, a Russian scientist and his team in collaboration with American scientists. It has innumerable applications in research. Human Psycho-Emotional alterations can be traced by capturing the photonic emission from all ten fingertips. The images captured through the camera are processed in software for further analysis.

2. EnviroTech measures pollution level in the environment due to Nitrogen dioxide and Sulfur dioxide and dust particle to observe if they increase or decrease during a process, here the Yajna.

In summary, Bhaishajya MahaYajna is entirely different in its approach than the conventional method having innovative ideas.