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ANALYSIS OF ŚRAUTA AGNYĀDHĀNA AND AGNIHOTRA APPLYING THE LOGIC OF JAIMINĪYA DHARMAMĪMANSĀ

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ABSTRACT

śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra are the two important rituals explained in the Vedic texts. The aim of this study was to explore the tangible, intangible and metaphysical aspects of the rituals per Jaiminiyadharmamīmānsānyāya as well as to enumerate the applied aspects of the rituals explained by modern research. Intensive literature study and interview with scholars was the method applied. It was found that applying the logic of Jaiminiyadharmamīmānsā the śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra can be regarded as the best tool for the attainment of self-realization in metaphysical domain. They are also the tool to purify the doer by enhancing the virtues. They are also found to be helping in improving the environment as per modern scientific research.



KEYWORDS: *śrautāgnyādhāna, Agnihotra, Jaiminiyadharmamīmānsānyāya, Mimansa Philosophy, Self-realization*

INTRODUCTION

Śrauta yajñas are the yajñas described in the Vedas. Dharmamīmānsā Śāstra is devised for clarifying the confusions and removing misconceptions in understanding the meaning of the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. Thus, the rules explained by Dharmamīmānsā Śāstra, also known as Mimansa Philosophy, are very useful in analyzing the process of rituals. This research is based on application of those rules put forth in the Dharmamīmānsā Śāstra in understanding the process of śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra. śrautāgnyādhāna is the process by which the Agni (sacred fire) is newly established as prescribed by the Vedas. Agnihotra is the first of the Śrauta yajñas, which involves offering havi (cow's milk etc.) into the Agni and performed daily at sunrise and sunset.

OBJECTIVE

This study aims to explore the tangible, intangible and metaphysical aspects of the śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra based on the format of śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra according to the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas as per the logic of Jaiminiyadharmamīmānsānyāya. This study also aims to elucidate the applied aspects of the śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra in the context of current situation.

METHODOLOGY:

Critical and comparative analysis of the classical texts with various commentaries along with modern texts, journal articles and interview with Veda and Mīmāṃsā scholars was the method used in this research.

FINDINGS:

Correct pronunciation of the mantras according to the śikshā śāstra (Vedic phonetics and phonology) is necessary. Other Vedangas like Kalpa (Rituals), Vyākaraṇa (Grammar), Nirukta (Etymology), Chhanda śāstra (Prosody) and Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa (Vedic astronomy) are also needed for correct understanding and performance of the rituals. Mīmāṃsā is based on the logics (Nyāyas) and it follows the mental concepts and human behaviors to give rules for logical conclusions for interpretation of the statements of the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. These rules are very useful in analysis of the details of the Yajñas including Śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra. Though Mīmāṃsā is often taken as a philosophy, it should also be taken as an Upāṅga of the Vedas that is inevitable in deciphering the difficult to understand statements regarding the Yajñas. Those who have studied the Vedas, the Vedāṅgas with traditional method, and have performed the Ḡṛhya Agnyādhāna and compulsory Pāka Yajñas are authorized for Śrauta Agnyādhāna. Only a married adult can establish śrauta Agni (Vedic fire). Timing of the Agnyādhāna according to Varṇa is again based on the respective Veda Śākhās. The combination of prescribed Seasons, Tithis (lunar days) and Nakṣatras are not always applicable as they do not coincide all the time.



**Figure1 : Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*, in the family Linaceae.)
Habitat and Fiber**

Some of the rites like taking fire from the house of a Vaiśya are optional. Analogy of shedding the placental membranes during birth from the uterus of mother and shedding the clothe made up of linen (flax plant fiber) after the Agnyādhāna to take a new birth can illustrate the important metaphysical concept in simpler manner. The practice of remaining awake in various rites or penance may have originated from the same rule followed in Śrauta Agnyādhāna. The three types of Agni named as Gārhapatya Agni, Āhavanīya Agni and Dakṣiṇāgni represent the three Lokas i.e. Bhūloka, Antarīkṣhaloka and Dyuloka. After the Agnyādhāna the Yajamāna must stick to vows including speaking only truth which also help in spiritual upliftment. Even if some authors have tried to show disagreement in Śrautasūtras e.g., Baudhāyana śrautasūtra and Mīmāṃsā, this research shows absence of such disagreement. Sandhyopāsana ritual, being very important as per Smritis, can be inserted within the Agnihotra rites. Agnihotra helps in the attainment of self-realization as it purifies the doer by enhancing the virtues required for self-realization. The Concept of Agni as the representation of Ātmā is found in the Vedas. The Yajñas have direct and indirect positive effect in all spheres of health (physical, mental, social) of the doer. It helps in improving the environment as per scientific research done by various modern scientists too.

DISCUSSION:

This study is based in śukla Yajurveda Samhitā, śtapatha Brāhmana and Kātyāyana śrautsūtra. The prerequisite of performing Gṛhya Agnyādhāna and compulsory Pāka Yajñas before the śrautāgnyādhāna has been established and necessity of the same in practice has been emphasized. Application of Jaiminiyadharmamīmāṃsānyāya for the first time for in depth analysis of śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra to put forward some new perspectives.

Analysis of the symbolism as well as tangible, intangible and metaphysical aspects in the Śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra and proposal to include such aspects in Dharmamīmāṃsānyāya system.

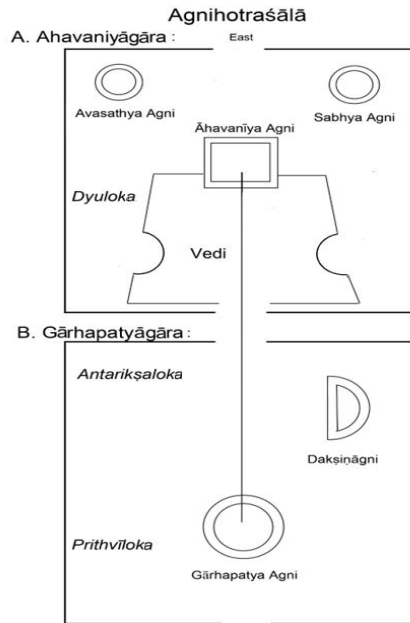


Figure 2 : Space for Agnihotra Ritual (Kātyāyana śrautsūtra 4.7)

Gārhapatyā Agni is symbol of Prithviloka, Dakṣiṇāgni is symbol of Antarikṣaloka and Āhavanīya agni is the symbol of Dyuloka :

इमान् वा एष लोकाननुवितनुते योऽग्नी आधत्ते तस्यायमेव लोको गार्हपत्यः अन्तरिक्षलोकोऽन्वाहार्यपचनः असीं लोक आहवनीयः। (Śatapatha Brahmana 12.4.1.1)

Wearing and taking off the cloth made up of flax fiber in Agnyādhāna is a symbol of getting out of the chorion and getting another birth. We can say surely this third birth is a spiritual birth.

In Agnihotra, the cow is the symbol of speech while calf is the symbol of mind :

वाग्ध वा एतस्याग्निहोत्रस्याग्निहोत्री । मन एव वत्सः । तदिदं मनश्च वाक् च समानमेव सन्नानेव । तस्मात् समान्या रज्ज्वा वत्सं च मातरं चाभिदधति । (Śatapatha Brahmana 11.3.1.3)

Establishment of the fact that the benefits as per modern scientific studies and the benefits stated or implied in the Vedas and other scriptures are largely congruent.

Modern research has also concluded that there is increase in human harmony with Agnihotra.

The effects of Agnihotra, experienced in varied environments being similar, one is inclined to find out the scientific basis for identical effects. In the scriptures, the effect is mentioned as *Saumanasya*, a pleasant state of mind. Unless ailments are cured, stresses are relieved and attitude towards life is radically changed, *Saumanasya*, would not be possible (Parkhe, p.63)

The current research shows that the increase of mental peace and mutual harmony through Agnihotra is also indicated in the Vedas. In the śukla Yajurveda, there is a mention of happiness of mind and family harmony on the return of Agnihatri from his stay :

गृहामा बिभीत मा वेपध्वमूर्ज बिभ्रत एमसि।

ऊर्ज बिभ्रद् वः सुमनाः सुमेधा गृहानैमिमनसा मोदमानः ॥

येषामध्येति प्रवसन् येषु सौमनसो बहुः।

गृहानुपह्वयामहेते नो जानन्तु जानतः॥ (Śukla Yajurveda Sanhita 3.41-42)

Theory of congruence of Dharmamīmānsā and the Kalpasūtras is propounded with traditional logic. Elucidation of the concept that many of the customs and rituals according to Smritis and Puranas may have seeds in the Śrauta Yajñas. Value of the study also lies in applicability of the new findings and conclusions for academic, ritualistic, and spiritual purposes.

CONCLUSION:

Hence, it can be concluded that applying the logic of Jaiminīyadharmamīmānsā-nyāya the śrautāgnyādhāna and Agnihotra can be regarded as the best tool for the attainment of self-realization in metaphysical realm whereas, they are also the tool to purify the doer by enhancing the virtues. They are also found to be helping in improving the environment as per modern scientific research.

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