

# Editorial

Ashwamedha holds a very special place in the extensive history of Yagya in the Divine culture (Dev Sanskriti) of India. From Vedic times to the modern era, the performance of Yagya has been central to the journey of Indian civilization and culture. Among them, Ashwamedha Yagya is considered the king of Yagyas due to its purpose and vastness. Ashwamedha Yagyas are, in essence, spiritual experiments for the upliftment of mass consciousness, which is only possible when a united mass is involved in a specific ritual and lifestyle.

A special edition is being released on the auspicious occasion of the Ashwamedha Yagya being performed in Mumbai, the economic capital of India, from February 21-25, 2024 CE. In the present modern era, All World Gayatri Pariwar has conducted 46 Ashwamedha Yagyas, and the Mumbai Ashwamedha Yagya will be the 47th. The special edition of the Dev Sanskriti Interdisciplinary International Journal introduces unique research pertaining to Ashwamedha Yagya.

In the first article, Rajani Joshi provides a scientific opinion on the investigation of the science of Yagya in the context of Ashwamedha Yagya. The second article, by authors Saurabh and Alka Mishra, describes the basis of mass consciousness upliftment by Yagya, i.e., the philosophy and scientific rationale of the purification of the subtle realm by Yagya.

Moving ahead, evidence of Ashwamedha Yagya has been observed since Vedic times. An article by Batham and Singh delves into Vedic mantras specifically mentioning Ashwamedha Yagya. Ashwamedha gives 'Rit,' the ultimate truth, and the highest form of intellect, 'Pragya.' Additionally, Vedas are the oldest form of literature known to humanity. Hence, the presence of Ashwamedha Yagya in this literature signifies the importance of Ashwamedha Yagya. The subsequent article by Satish Kaiwart further supports this with Vedic literature such as Shatpath Brahman and others, providing the real meaning of 'Ashwa' and 'Medha,' and logically concludes the importance of Ashwamedha Yagya in nation-building.

Not only in Vedic times, but Ashwamedha Yagyas were also predominant in medieval times. A paper by Ekta Chandel delves into archaeological evidence for the performers and sites of Ashwamedha Yagyas in medieval India. From the 1st century BCE to the 11th century CE, more than 25 kings performed over 80 documented Ashwamedha Yagyas. Although there is no evidence of Ashwamedha Yagyas from the 12th century to the 17th century, it was performed by the Jaipur king during the British era in the 18th century. However, the vastness, purpose, social impact, and scriptural implications of these Ashwamedhas are points of research, as dedicated chapters in the scriptures on Ashwamedhas are only available in pre-medieval scriptures such as Mahabharat, Ramayan, Shatpath Brahman, Taitariya Samhita. King Pushyamitra Sung performed Ashamedh under the divine guidance of Maharshi Patanjali.

Since 1992, the All World Gayatri Pariwar has been performing Ashwamedha Yagyas across the world, not only in India but also in the USA, Canada, UK, New Zealand, and Australia. In ancient times, as per Puranas, many Ashwamedha Yagyas were performed in other subcontinents as well. Puranas cover even the pre-history of the Vedic, Ramayana, and Mahabharata eras. The last paper by Manisha Bhardwaj provides us with the perspective of Ashwamedha Yagyas performed in ancient and Puranic history. In essence, the history, philosophy, science, and journey of Ashwamedha Yagya continue.

Indeed, in February 2024, the Ashwamedha Yagya is of interest and necessity to humanity. The form, purpose, and significance of such a large-scale Yagya, especially Ashwamedha Yagya, can be understood through the visionary sage scholar Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya as follows:

*“Let us begin with the collective chanting of the Gayatri Mantra:*

*// Om bhūr bhuvah svaḥ tatsavitúrváreṇyam bhárgo devásya dhīmahi dhíyo yó naḥ pracodáyāt //*

*Sisters and Brothers,*

*As you might be aware, in the ancient times, people used to solve all their problems by collective discussions and efforts. They were hardly dependent on the emperors, governments or any other administrator. Even now the role of society is more prominent than the government or executive bodies in many respects. The latter can administrate broad issues pertaining to the gross system of life — including defense, transport, taxation, economic growth, civil-legislation, etc.*

*However, they cannot 'govern' the mentality and sentiments of the people. For example, the disciplines of chastity, integrity and moral conduct are also cultivated and maintained by the prevailing social norms and people's personal trait and cannot be imposed or nurtured by any governmental machinery. The philosophers, religious leaders and thinkers can influence people's faith and hence the social trends, to a great extent, if their objectives are devoted to people's welfare and their missions associated with the grass-roots.*

*The human nature is such that it is allured by worldly attractions and pleasures and often gives rise to varied degrees of fluctuations and deformations in the socio-cultural values and customs. The leaders, the savants who care for people's good bear the responsibility to provide effective solutions for control and improvement. Looking at the ancient history and traces of the divine Indian Culture, we find that Grand Yajnas (Mahayajnas) like the "Rajsuya" and "Ashvamedha" used to provide the medium and ambience for brain storming sessions towards meeting the challenges of the present, rectifying the wrongs and planning and implementing the desired plans of action for better future. You must have heard of these in the context of Mahabharata and Ramayana.*

*King Yudhisṭhira had conducted a "Rajsuya Yajnas" after the devastating war of Mahabharata. The purpose of this grand yajna was to rebuild a united, sovereign, strong nation*

*with collective participation of all the heads of the states within and around the country*

*Lord Rama had organized a "Ashvamedha Yajnas" to eliminate the evils and expand the divine values in the social and national system and in people's life at large. By sending the symbolic horse (Ashva) all over the Indian Territory, he had spread the message of this epochal refinement and had also invited the saints, sages, savants, reformers, rulers and all the awakened souls to gather at one place for mutual exchange of views and to chalk out what was necessary for accomplishing this gigantic transformation.*

*Agnihotra or Havana (small scale yajna that could be performed even by one person) was an integral part of people's daily chores those days. One would not eat without doing Gayatri Upasana and Havana. All of us, who aspire for our inner refinement and spiritual progress, should also adopt this discipline in our lives today.*

*Mahayagyas like Ashvamedha and Rajsuya were organized rarely for superior aims of social and spiritual revolution. Another kind of grand Yajnas that used to be performed in the ancient times annually or once in 2-3 years, at a very large scale were the Vajpeya Yajnas"—these were like religious assemblies. All these Yajnas were conducted with collective participation of people – including the spiritually elevated personalities, seers, eminent talents, experts and heads of various sections of the society, leaders and all those who could influence the cultural and social trends. Apart from them, large sections of the masses also used to participate in these Yajnas and be blessed by the multiple benefits of Yajna and enlightening discussions there. They used to get the rare opportunity of meeting the great saints and receiving guidance for their personal and familial problems as well. Organization of these Yajnas used to be independent of any governmental or royal patronage.*

*The latter used to respect such gatherings and also participate in the Yajna and relevant meetings on administrative or defense related issues.*

*The religious congregations of Kumbha are well known examples of Vajpeya Yajnas. These used to be organized alternatively (every 2-3 years) in different parts (e.g. Hardwar, Nasik, Ujjain) of the country. Although the tradition*

*of organizing Kumbha is followed to some extent in the present times too, its nature and purpose seem to have lost the originality and have got confined mostly to the mass-rituals of worships and dipping in over-polluted rivers.*

*The series of 25 Kundiya Yajnas at large scale in different parts of the country being organized under the auspices of Gayatri Pariwar, are an attempt to revive the spirit of Vajpeya Yajnas at local levels in a manner most suitable to the modern times. Many of you might have participated in some of these. Our focus is mainly centered upon social reformations and improvement with special reference to the local problems faced by the people at the place where the Yajna is being conducted. The social evils of dowry, intoxication, cultural devolution and economic problems of poverty, unemployment, etc were not there in the ancient times, you may not therefore find reference to any solution to these in the scriptures. The rishis (seer-sages) are born in every age; they provide the necessary direction, inspiration and lay the foundation for ascent and welfare of the masses. Mass education and social and moral upliftment through religious platform is an essential component of our —shi Culture, we have attempted reviving it via these kinds of collective Yajnas.*

*Apart from the objectives of social awareness and reformation through collective striving and environmental purification, the mahayajnas also serve the purpose of moral elevation of the masses. For this, we remind the participants of the divine philosophy and*

*teachings of Yajna, viz., altruistic attitude and noble deeds. Unless you adopt moral disciplines in life; La purity of thoughts, integrity of conduct, benevolence and cooperation for others' welfare, you can't expect the world to be good to you Immorality is like an infectious disease spread through exhalation; if we are polluting the environment, we can't breathe in fresh, healthy air. This is truer in the case of subtle ambience of thoughts and sentiments. You must therefore inculcate the teachings of Yajna in your heart and mind. For example, when you are taking meal, you must remember and thank all those known or unknown people who have directly or indirectly contributed in making it possible. The bread you eat is prepared from wheat flour, the grains of which were grown in some field; think of the hard labor put in by the farmers, labors, cattle, without whose help the existence of your bread, despite your money and powers, would not have been possible! You owe something to your family, society, nation and the world at large, for all your successes, comforts and possessions in the worldly life. You should not be ungrateful and ignore your responsibilities towards others.*

*Mahayajnas are not like any other congregation or grand event that could be organized by spending lots of money and employing labors.... No. It is not the money or worldly resources, but the sadhana, the will, dedication, devotion and noble aims of many people focused collectively that lead to initiation and successful completion of these Yajnas. The first 1000 Kundiya Yajna of our mission was arranged only with the support of divine inspiration and order of my noble Guru on completion of my mahapurushcarana sadhana. People found it miraculous to see how such an event of historic grandeur could take place with the help of my personal meager resources. Then how could such a gigantic event be organized with participation of thousands of people and adequate arrangements for their stay and food?*

*It is beyond understanding at worldly levels. This is the scheme of God; this is what expresses the plans of divine incarnation of Prajnavatara.*

*Noble deeds motivated by God's Will never remain unaccomplished howsoever difficult they might appear. Be that in the form of — tiny contributions of millions of people, unexpected help from unknown quarters, enormous collective labor put in by the devotees, and miracles like limited amount of food remaining unfinished in spite of feeding 'unlimited numbers' of people...”, etc, but it happens.*

*You all should recognize the importance of sadhana required for the Yajnas of this kind. It is not the mere act of sacrificing the herbal preparation with some chanting of mantras that makes the Yajnas so important for spiritual purposes. God is not hungry for your offerings. The rituals of worship or chanting devotional songs and prayers alone do not serve the purpose of upasana-sadhana. What would please God is — your moral conduct, virtues, sincerity, kind, compassionate, generous attitude, duty-bound character and altruistic deeds. Your participation in Yajna will enshower on you preeminent benefits if you are sincere in your approach of self-refinement and moral transmutation.*

*For resurrection of the Vedic tradition of Yajna today, there is also a great need to reestablish the science of Yajna. The Brahmavarchas Research Centre of our mission is founded to make pioneering contributions in this regard. You should look at the yajnopathy and other labs and the scientific instruments available*

*here to measure the clinical, physiological and inner functioning of the body and the state of brain and mind, and to analyze the outputs of Yajna, etc. This, as per the Will of Mahakala (the Time Spirit) will gradually lead to expansion of the scientific applications of Yajna for physical and mental wellbeing of the people and balancing of the disturbed ecosystem.*

*Some of our Mahayagyas have also been parts of unprecedented spiritual experiments towards refinement of the subtle world. Our Yajnas are aimed at the noble objective of awakening the divinity indwelling the individual selves. These are parts of the epochal plans of Mahakala for preeminent reconstruction of the present era and revival of the 'Age of Truth" on the earth. Indeed it is a divine opportunity bestowed upon us to be the associates of Prajnavatara in making the dawn of this bright era a visible reality by organizing and participating in the Yajnas and mahayagyas of this Mission."*

*// Om Śānti//*

**Reference:** Pandya P (Editor). The Purpose and Significance of Grand Yajnas - Amritvani (Translation of excerpts from the discourse of Pujya Gurudev on: "Mahayajnon Ka Svarupa Va Uddeshya"). AkhandJyoti Magazine. July-Aug 2005.

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