Veda and Yajña in Indian tradition

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India is cradle of the world civilizations on the earth. It is the place of origin of Vedas and through them the place of origin of all other sciences of the world. The main theme of Vedas is Yajña. Yajña is recommended for well beings of human and for replenishing the nature. Yajña is essential foremost requirement to get rid of present anxieties and stress. In the paper, all above thoughts are discussed in detail.

Keywords: Brahmrā, Veda, Yajña, Agnihotra

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Brahmā, the earliest creator god of India was a pre-Vedic god. The name Brahmrā appears to have been the popular name of the creator god in the Āryavarta region. He assumed various forms and names in different parts of India in different ages. At the end of the Maharātrī, when the time for a new creation becomes imminent Lord Brahms creates the whole universe (brings it from the cause form to the effect form) out of His Infinite Omnipotence. All religions and sects, however, have to acknowledge their debts to and accept the authority of god Brahms. Even the Vedas are said to have been creation of Brahmrā. Thus, Brahmrā is the origin of Vedas and Vedas are the origin of all sciences and knowledge systems. It is said that Vedas contain the seeds of all modern science, but the difficulty in understanding Vedas by a common person gave birth to non-Vedic teachings, writings and ultimately the ignorance. Basically, the Vedic Dharma and science can not be distinct from each other. If one was to understand the true science, then one should look in to the Vedas because, Vedic way is the only way that one can ensure the survival of humanity. People now realize that the real pleasure comes from inside (within) not from outside getting materialistic achievements. The Vedic vision is in harmony with the universally accepted scientific principals1-3.

Vedas: the foundation of knowledge

Vedas, the divine treasure house of knowledge were gifted to mankind by the creator (Brahmrā), even at the very dawn of Creation1. The mantras of the Vedas are sound, having powers to inspire good thoughts in peoples’ minds. Chanting of Vedas is capable of nourishing unpolluted good as well as positive and creative thought forces. If the whole world and the whole of creation are filled with Vedic thought-vibration, negative influences may not be born even in thought. Cosmic peace is achieved. Vedas treasure that highest knowledge, the knowledge of the self or the knowledge of Brahman. Brahman is that omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient universal intelligence. This is the eternal principle, the Almighty. Parame Vyoman (Rg. 10/90, 10/121; Yaj. 13/4) is the high, supreme place of existence of the Supreme Being. Vedas and Vedic knowledge deserve respect and reverence on par with Divinity Itself. A mantra from Ishavasyopanishad (vfo\he`R;qa rhRokZ fo\kve`re"uqrs A11A) provides us an exceedingly important message: Overcome the cause of death through the physical sciences and attain higher consciousness (immortality) through spiritual science. This mantra gives us a glimpse of the basic philosophy life of Vedic seers. This tells us to adopt a holistic view of life for alleviating pain and achieving happiness. The Truth experienced by our Sacred Souls, the Rishis, was compiled first as one Veda, the Rig Veda, the store-house of Riks, or illuminated words. Purity of Soul of those sons Rishis enabled them to transcend the senses, intellect and this physical world. Selfless dedication to realize the ‘Truth’ led them to the very doorstep of that ‘One Truth’ – The Creator. Truth plane was tapped. This Truth revealed itself to its son, the Rishi. The Riks, illuminated words, flashed in the illumined consciousness, because of the Rishis’
highly developed Intuition. Before this power, ‘divine intuition’ even the highest intellect of human field is dwarfed⁶.

The Vedas are treasure house of knowledge of the material world, as well as of the spiritual life and goal⁵⁰. When man develops faith in Vedas and when he dedicatedly absorbs Vedic commands in his life stream, he can claim the whole world and Divinity itself. There were many saintly souls who are even today living monuments of Vedic way of life. Faith in God, faith in Vedas and faith in the Guru were the life-breath of our Great Souls. The success and achievements of our Rishis and saints, shine under different scales, these achievements belong to a transcendental plane. We cannot even understand their talents, efforts and achievements. Vedic knowledge embraces all kinds of subjects so far traversed by mankind, all over the globe. They also open new vistas relating to fields of knowledge not yet reached out by mankind. Only when we tune up and strengthen our power of Intuition, as the Rishis of yore did, The Supreme Truth will reveal itself. With modern concepts divorced from the faith-based concepts of the Vedas, we have to transfuse our intellect, reasoning and analysis with divine strength of faith. Thattransfusion alone will lead us near the Vedas. The Rishis were beyond caste, creed, race, religion, and territory. The Rishis embraced the whole of mankind, and the whole Creation in their loving fold. They worked for the welfare of mankind as a whole, for all living beings.

According to the Vedic thoughts sins ones committed cannot be destroyed; they remains a part of one’s inner self till one gets them washed away by actually going through the divine punishment as and when it comes. Aggravation of human ego is the main cause of all sinful tendencies. Man forgets that in this limitless creation of Lord Brahmā, he himself is a very tiny creature. The Rishis pray in different Suktas(Yaj. 36/17, 25/21; Rg. 1/7/6/1, etc.) to be blessed with generosity, love and affection between people who come under a single fold as relatives, friends, husband-wife, etc. In many Suktas (Yaj. 36/27; Rg. 1/7/19/3, etc.) the Rishi prays for eradication of evil, wickedness, greed, etc. Rig Veda 10/151/1 teaches the power of unflinching faith, which is capable of achieving the goal. So, this mantra stresses the importance of building up reinforced strong faith. One should keep the flame of faith burning. All the Suktas and mantras lay stress on eradication of evil from man’s heart, for Truth and goodness to fill that place. Which country in this Globe does not require eradication of evil and replacement with positive, creative, good forces? Six consecutive mantras in Yajurveda (34/1-6) have the common ending with tanme manah sivasankalpamastu, i.e. may my mind bear positive thoughts, (resulting in everyone’s well being). These mantras state that soul is the seat of consciousness. The mind is its subtle instrument, which enables the soul to play its role. The human body is union of four components:

\[
\text{Atman (Chetan) } \rightarrow \text{ Mana } \rightarrow \text{ Indriya } \rightarrow \text{ Body}
\]

This is a continuum where body proper is the non sentient and soul is sentient end. The atman (Chetan) is present in all of us as divine force ⁶.

Scientific studies show that properly chanting Vedic rhymes can stimulate anabolic activity and has antioxidant effect in the body. The secret and power of Vedic mantras lie not in just the text, not in just the meaning. The entire efficacy is treasured in the proper sound vibrations being spread over the whole earth and mankind. This Chandas’ in the divine Vedas should be preserved and chanted in the prescribed divine meter. The content in man who chants Vedic mantras makes all the difference. If one who chants Veda has no faith, the chanting is just noise! It cannot have any power dimension. Man’s real inner strength lies in developing higher talents like soul strength, willpower, taste for high grade of hard work, continuous undiminished enthusiasm, till the dawn of success, etc. When the source of divine strength is just ready to give a helping hand mankind has no inclination to qualify itself for the talent source offered. The solution to all our modern problems lies in developing our orientation around Vedic chanting, preservation and propagation of the study of the Vedas. The sound vibration of proper Vedic chanting will spread love, mutual help, and freedom from violence and evil thoughts, everlasting creativity and world peace. Unless the deeper dimensions are understood, the knowledge of the Vedas, Veda Parayanam, protection of Vedic knowledge as world heritage, tapping the creative resources, strengthening faith in Vedas, may not be possible. The multi-faceted strengths that Vedas, Vedic knowledge and Veda Parayanam can shower on mankind know no bounds.⁸¹⁰ Sri Aurobindo writes in his book “Hymns to the Mystic Fire”- “So understood Veda becomes the high aspiring song of humanity; its chants are
episodes of the lyrical epic of the soul in its immortal ascension."

**Concept of Yajña**

The main theme of *Veda* is *Yajña*. In fact *Vedas* were created out of *Yajña* performed as a pledge by the *Viraat-Purush* (*Brahmā*) as revealed in *Purushuktam* of the *Rig-Veda*\(^{11}\). Evil thoughts and deeds which is too prevalent in present times pollute the *Mahapralana* of the so called *Viraat-Purush*. Slowly and slowly it saturates which causes large-scale disturbances to living beings in the form of natural calamities some of them are referred as *Mahapralay* in ancient scriptures. To minimise these affects *Yajña* is performed. *Yajña* is a form of nutrition for *Devas* (*God*). The relationship between *Veda* and *Yajña* is inseparable. If we take, for example the *Karmakanda* rituals of *Yajña*, the recital of hymns from *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Athraveda* is a common practice. If we take *Yajña* in broader aspect, it was only *Yajña*, which was responsible for creation (*v:y a :Kks HkqouL:  ukfHk% Yaj. 23 /62*) and support of the universe as reflected in *Purushuktam*. *Gyan-Veda* was created from such a large *Yajña* for the support and nourishment of the universe.

*Te hi nakam mahimānah sachant yatra purve sādhyāḥ santi devāḥ.* (*Rg 10/90/16*)

**Yajna**

Kṣu ; Ke;tUr nsoKrLrfu /kekZf.k  
izFkekU;klu~A  
rs g ukda efgeku% lpUr := iwosZ lk; k% lfUr nsok%A  

*Devas* (*God*) prayed before the *Viraat-Purush* by doing *Yajña*. Those who follow this ritual, they will reach the heaven (*Swarga*). The hymns of *Vedas* reveal the mysteries of all the animate-inanimate objects of this universe. Without understanding the secrets, their fruitful utilization is difficult. For example, without understanding the properties of *Agni* (fire) or electric current, it is very difficult to utilize them properly. *Agni* can be handled only by non-inflammable objects and can be burned only by inflammable objects. Similarly, electricity can be saved by insulators and can be transported by conductors. *Vedas* reveal deep-secrets of nature. A *satya-purush* (true-man) can attain salvation by following strictrues of *Vedas* similar to *Devas* (*God*). Thus, *Agni* in *Yajña* is not just fire but it is the synergestic output of feelings, views, object and *Karma* in the form of distinguished *Purusharth*. This *Purush* (super-human or *Brahmā*) in *Vedas* have many faces: the first *Sankalp* (pledge) of this *Purush* in the *Yajña* is the creation of this universe; the second face of this *Yajña* is the creation of macro and micro objects, who follow the disciplined law allowing *shrishti-chakra* to go un-interrupted; the third face of this *Yajña* is all life form follow the natural course for their livelihood and do not allow nature flow to be disrupted, and the fourth form of this *Yajña* is *Karmakanda* in different form of *Puja* (prayer), which is completely scientific by which human-beings tries to enrich themselves by the energetic waves of the nature.

Now, the question arises why *Rishis* recommend it for human beings not for other life forms? The reason is simple-only human being is capable of exploiting nature, others cannot. That’s why *Yajña* is recommended for replenishing the nature. In present times man thinks of only exploiting nature and do not care about replenishment. This is the main cause of ecological imbalance causing natural disasters such as pollution, excessive rainfall eroding a large tract of land some of which are highly arable, draught, earthquakes, etc. *Yajña* can help replenish nature, thus minimizing human agonies caused by natural disasters of catastrophic scale\(^{6-8}\).
**Yajña in present time**

Like air filled in the sky gets polluted by all the excretes in ambient environment and is purified by godly rituals and Punyas. Similarly, the element called Mahapranas in unlimited Akash (sky) gets satisfied and unsatisfied by good and evil deeds. Like polluted air produces many diseases in living organisms, similarly evil thoughts and deeds creates many disturbances such as sorrow, anger, fear, jealousy, obstruction and anxiety, etc. by polluting Mahapranas. There are few elements in human body which purifies the air entering it, similarly there are only few thoughts and works which purifies Mahapranas rather the evil thoughts and deeds excites it and the result is large scale destruction in various forms. These are all because there are few people following the path of truth. The waves coming out of evil mind pollutes atmosphere as well soul sphere in the unlimited sky which slowly and slowly magnifies and builds up to create large scale destruction of various kinds. Devas (God) remain dissatisfied and creates nuisance, which is expressed in human world as epidemic, excessive rainfall, scarce rainfall, famine, cyclone, earthquake, world wars, tsunami, etc. Plantations are done to clean ambient air, similarly to purify polluted Mahapranas, Rishis and Maharishis discovered Yajñas as only and everlasting solution to purify the Mahapranas. Like we clean our body, clothes, bed sheet, home, road, etc. at regular intervals, similarly the evil deeds and thoughts can only be purified by Yajñas which is the responsibility of each and every individual. Therefore, Yajña is the foremost assignment of each human being in the present time of Kalyuga where the evil thoughts and deeds are predominant. That is the inherent reason why in India once upon a time every home used to do Yajña regularly. In India, large Yajña are celebrated frequently which not only made this country as the heavenly abode but also the whole world that continued for millions of years without much tussle among the people, society and nations.

The large scale Yajñas were very essential after Mahayudhas (destructive wars), this was because the wondering souls of the dead and grief stricken soul of their relatives cry foul indefinitely in the sky. The air is severely polluted by smoke coming out of explosives. All these along with the abnormal human behavior such as hate, jealousy, dirty politics like cheating, dodging, false propaganda, which pollute the Mahapranas create dangerous situation for the world. To cope up with this situation, the performance of the Brihad Yajña (large Yajña) was essential in the ancient times. Rama performed Aswamedha Yajña after his victory over Ravana of Srilanka. Pandavas performed Rajasya Yajña after Mahabharat. The evidence of this Yajña can be found in history where every war was followed by large scale Yajña for remorse for wondering souls to keep them in peace.

During foreign rule these fruit bearing rituals got disorganized. People forgot to recognize the significance of Yajña. Some wicked people introduced animal sacrifice along with Yajña, the Pandits demanded higher gifts to perform these rituals in Yajña which was purely selfish and made common people depart from Yajña. Buddhists appropriately opposed this for the inclusion of immoral activities. The people who were interested in Yajña could not defend themselves as to what benefit the people get by burning different objects. These all contributed to making Yajñas obsolete phenomenon. There were only few Rishis and Maharishis to spread the light of Yajña as a result, darkness prevailed and many spurious sects evolved who not only neglected Yajñas even started opposing it. Generation after generation the novel science of Yajña got neglected and science of the material world was promoted. Neither there was any scholar of learned eminence except to few, nor people who were interested in learning the science of Yajñas, the result was neglect and only neglect. Today’s world is gripped with several problems of fear, concern, misfortune, scarcity, and trouble, that has made the people worry. There are many direct reasons for it. Government, society, people are doing a lot to cope up with this situation which are certainly appreciable, but all that is seen with the naked eye is not true. There is something beyond it, which is so powerful that can affect the final outcome. The main reason why this world is passing through such a difficult situation is simple, there was no big effort made to purify and nourish Mahapranas by Yajña despite several evil deeds and Mahayudhas (world-wars).

Recently, attempts has been made to show that how to perform the Yajña for the different purpose. It can be said that the Yajña has a positive net beneficial effect and hence those performing or taking part in this, will benefit from it. It is also seen that this ritual has a scientific basis for its claims. Vedas are the fruits bestowed to this nation by the Mahapranas for innumerable large scale Yajña performed during times immemorial. The main theme of Veda is Yajña. Sastra’s proclaim-Vedas were created to disseminate...
the lights of Yajña. Yajña have been called Pratman. Out of ten incarnations of the almighty, one of them is Yajña. All these references prove that Indian Philosophers accept Yajña as essential and top-most requirement of the mankind. Yajña serves as nutrient to the almighty and is essential for his health. When Yajña becomes less and evil activities increases in the society, the almighty becomes weak. This imbalance in micro-world is expressed by severe natural calamities such as earthquake, cyclone, high and low rainfall, flood, famine causing fear, concern, anger etc. to the living organisms. This has been regularly indicated and cautioned by Rishis, Maharishis and many learned philosophers of various sects. Yajña, therefore is essential and foremost requirement to get rid of present anxieties and stress (Yaj. 17/16, Chandojña Upa. 4/16/1, Padma Purāṇ 3/132). There is no other way. No worldly solutions can ever solve this problem except Yajña. This is the only way by which Mahapranas in micro world can be purified and nourished for solving the miseries gripping the present world. May this brief exposition motivate all to benefit from these great discoveries of our Rishis – the super scientists- by learning and practicing these techniques earnestly!!

Conclusion

Vedic philosophy is a comprehensive approach, which can give better meaning to the creation, human life and its objectives. All the ideologies are based on a narrow view of a sub-set of the Vedic philosophy. Vedic Yajña (Agnihotra) is essential and top-most requirement of the mankind. In short, in modern era, man is looking back and turning over the pages of history in search of a method of maintaining physical, mental and social well being. Ancient Indian tradition of Veda and Yajña has taken lead largely due to the unsatisfied modern man and his mind that long for a source of lasting peace and happiness. Veda plays an important role in educating man and integrating various aspects of human personality and thereby prevents mental and physical illness. India is the land where the sacred Vedas were originated, practiced, preserved and propagated, though these Vedas belong to the entire humanity. The wonder that was India, the grandeur that is India and the glory that awaits India are all in the footsteps of Vedic Heritage.

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References