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Yajna: The First Aspect Of The Fivefold Path

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The essence of the Vedas could be explained in the form of the fivefold path: yajna, daan, tapa, karma and swadhyaya. This could be described as the royal path of liberation. The five principles of happy and peaceful living are:

1. Performance of agnihotra or yajna for purification of the atmosphere. 2. Practice of dana for cultivating non-attachment. 3. Practice of tapa for fruition of your aspirations. 4. Practice of karma for self-purification. 5. Practice of swadhyaya for liberation.

These are the fundamental principles of satyadharm found in the Vedas.

Yajna: Along with creation the Supreme Father ordained the practice of agnihotra or yajna to mankind. He said that yajna is Kamadhenu, the infinite giver. Practise yajna with utter devotion using your body, speech and mind.

Yajna is for your happiness and welfare. Your life is dependent on the five elements of nature. By the practice of yajna the cycle of nature is balanced. Thus, even your life will be happy. If nature bestows abundance upon you, you must repay it with a feeling of gratitude in the form of yajna. One who does not perform yajna is selfish.

Yajna is first principle of fivefold path. It is the process of purification of atmosphere with the agency of the fire element. Yajna involves offering of specific organic substances into the fire accompanied by chanting of mantra vibrations and nurturing the feeling of total surrender to the will of the Almighty. This is the secret of practice of yajna, based on the various rhythms of nature, of two types: Nitya or daily and Naimittika or coinciding with special occasion.

Some yajnas are performed on full moon and no moon days or on the advent or rise of various stars - Nakshatra Ishti - or the advent of

specific seasons such as summer. During some yajnas the juice of the medicinal herb Soma is offered to the fire, which has tremendous purifying and healing effect on the atmosphere. Agnihotra is to be performed daily and hence it is Nitya Yajna. It is performed at sunrise and sunset times which are the two most important circadian biorhythms of nature. Agnihotra is ordained to be performed to coincide exactly with these vitally important transitional movements.

The performance of agnihotra creates pure, clean and medicinal atmosphere. It cleanses the negative effects of pollution on Prana. It

relaxes the mind and unburdens it of all stress and strain. Regular practice of agnihotra activates a healing cycle, making plants and animals happy and peaceful in it. Agnihotra is the simplest and easily practicable discipline for nurturing total surrender

or Ishwar Pranidhan, which is regarded as an alternative to the practice of yoga and all other disciplines aimed at liberation. This is stated by the great seer Patanjali.

The performance of agnihotra involves actually little time and expenditure. Exactly at local sunrise and sunset timings a small fire is prepared out of dried cow dung cakes in a semi-pyramid shaped copper or clay pot. Two offerings of raw rice smeared with a few drops of cow's ghee are offered into the fire with the chanting of following mantras.

At sunrise: 1. Sooryaya Swaha, Sooryaya Idam Na Mama: First offering. 2. Prajapataye Swaha, Prajapataye Idam Na Mama: Second offering.

At sunset: 1. Agnaye Swaha, Agnaye Idam Na Mama: First offering. 2. Prajapataye Swaha, Prajapataye Idam Na Mama: Second offering.

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