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## The Scientific approach of *Yañja*

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### Introduction

The immense glory of *yañja* is depicted in Indian culture, Vedas and *Purāṇas*. *Yañja* is the main precept of the Vedas. The method to satiate the Lord of the world through *yañja* has been explained. Man should adopt *yañja-dharma* for all-round welfare of his life. In fact, the life of mankind begins with *yañja*. This subject has also been clarified in the *Gītā*-

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।  
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥  
देवान् भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।  
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥<sup>1</sup>

*Yañja* is full of philosophy, psychology as well as scientificity. This is a kind of scientific process, because as a result of this the environment becomes fragrant and free from germs and disorders. Water is considered sacred in sacrificial processes, the idea of purification is derived from water itself.

पवित्रं वाऽआपः पवित्रपूतो व्रतमुपायनीति तस्माद्वाऽग्रप उपस्पृशति<sup>2</sup> ।

From the medical and scientific point of view also, the idea of water purification and cleanliness is well known. Often fasting has special importance in sacrificial activities. Fasting is also a kind of scientific truth, because in the state of fasting, a system of balance develops in the human body, due to which his mental health develops. In *Satapatha-brāhmaṇa* too, there is such an idea in the context of fasting- अग्रे व्रतपते व्रतमाचरिषम्<sup>3</sup> ।

In fact, physical and mental purity was essential in *yañja*, that's why in *yañja*, fasting has been expressed strongly. Utensils and other things used in *darśpūrnamāsa yañja*, such as *śūrpa* and *agnihotra-havaṇī*, *sphya* and *kapāla*, *śami* and *kṛṣṇamṛgcarma*, *Ūlūkhal-musala*, two big and small stones etc. It shows the scientific approach of *yañja*. In the *yañja* of *darśpūrnamāsa*, the vegetation is ground with two broad stones, the name of these stones is *Adri*. The technical process of pounding the sacrificial material in mortar and pestle also shows the orderliness or scientificity of the *yañja* -अद्रिरसि वानस्पत्यो ग्रावासि पृथुबुध्यन्इति वा तद्यथैवादः सोम राजानं ग्रावभिरभिपुण्वन्त्यवमेवैतदुलूखलमुसलाभ्यां दृषदुपलाभ्यां हविर्यज्ञमभिपुणोत्यद्रय इति<sup>4</sup> ।

In the sacrificial act, the process of taking the sacrificial material and the food that is used at that time according to a certain standard, also shows the scientificity of the *yañja* - स यच्चतुर्जुह्वां गृह्णाति । अत्तारमेवैतत्परिमिततरं कनीयासं करोत्यथ यदष्टौकृत्व उपभृति गृह्णात्याद्यमेवैतदपरिमिततरं भूयासं करोति तद्धि ससृद्धं यत्रात्ता कनीयानाद्यो भूयान्<sup>5</sup> ।

The use of *śakati* in *yañja* also reveals the scientific and technical nature of *yañja*. In *Agnihotra yañja*, fire has been accepted as the main source of *śakti* i.e. energy. In this act, in the morning, by accepting the sun as fire, reciting सूर्योऽज्योतिर्ज्योतिः सूर्यः स्वाहा<sup>6</sup>, respect is shown to fire and in the evening, i.e. after sunset, अग्निर्ज्योतिर्ज्योतिरग्निः स्वाहा<sup>7</sup> is pronounced. Accepting fire as the main centre of power and energy in this act shows the spirit of scientificity. Science is a systematic and well organized knowledge. In the sacrificial process also, a definite date, time, place, material and *Brahmā*, *Adhvaryu*, *Udgātā*, *Hotā* and *Pratihartā* etc. are arranged.

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Under *somayāga*, when *nāpita* (barber) performs hair-cutting, at that time keeping *darbha* with the hair, he prays to the medicine in the form of *darbha* not to cause physical harm while doing hair-cutting, such an example is available in *somayāga*- अथ दर्भतरुणकमन्तर्दधाति । औषधे त्रायस्वेति वज्रो वै क्षुरस्तथो हैममेष वज्रः क्षुरो न हिनस्त्यथ<sup>8</sup> । In this act, the Ayurvedic use of *darbha* (use of medicine and *kṣura* represents the *yañja*.)

The use of bricks under the process of fire selection and the act of building altar with a certain number of bricks also presents the scientific and technical architecture style of *yañja*. In fact, the sacrificial process has been accepted as the navel of the world cycle.

अयं यज्ञो भुवनस्य नाभिः<sup>9</sup> ।

In *Rgveda* also there is evidence about the scientificity of *yañja* -

यत्पुरुषेण हविषा देवा यज्ञमतन्वत ।  
वसन्तोऽस्यासीदाज्यं ग्रीष्म इध्मः शरद्धविः<sup>10</sup> ॥

The natural form of *yañja* has been described in this verse. The details of the whole year cycle are obtained from the sacrificial materials. In this way, this technical analysis about *yañja* shows the scientificity of *yañja*. The process of *yañja* continues to influence every particle, molecule, atom, moon, sun and clouds and climate of the universe. The natural environment is also affected through the *yañja* process. In *Rgveda*, the description of automatic generation of clouds and rain through *yañja* is as follows-भूमिं पर्जन्यो जिन्वति, दिवं जिन्वन्त्यग्नयः<sup>11</sup> ।

In this way, formation of cloud through the process of *yañja* and subsequent rains reflects the scientificity hidden in the womb of *yañja*. In this sequence, this verse related to *Marudgāna* in *Rgveda* presents the indication of water rain-

यूयं धूर्ष प्रयुज्यो न रश्मिभिर्ज्योतिष्मन्तो न भाषा व्युष्टिषु ।  
श्येनासो न स्वयशसोरिशादसः प्रवासो न प्रसितासः परिप्रुषः<sup>12</sup> ॥

The system of measurement in *yañja* procedures also shows the scientificity of *yañja* -

यामश्चिनावमिमातां विष्णुर्यस्यां विचक्रमे ।  
इन्द्रो यां चक्र आत्मनेऽनमित्रां शचीपतिः ।  
स न भूमिर्विसृजता माता पुत्राय मे पयः<sup>13</sup> ॥

The measurement of the earth by the *Aświni-Kumāras* and the footsteps spread by *Viṣṇu*, it indicates the system of measurement.

Various verses in *Prithvī-sūkta* also reveal the style or thinking of geography and geology-

गिरयस्ते पर्वता हिमवन्तोऽरण्यं ते पृथिवी स्योनमस्तु ।  
वभुं कृष्णां रोहिणीं विश्वरूपं ध्रुवां भूमिं पृथिवीमिन्द्रगुप्ताम् ।  
अजीतोऽहतो अक्षतोऽध्यष्टां पृथिवीमहम्<sup>14</sup> ॥

It has been proved by scientific tests that some such gases emerge from *Agnihotra*, which purifies the atmosphere and pollution is destroyed by those, some of these gases are (Ethylene, propylene)<sup>15</sup> thus the purification of the environment by *yañja* is a scientific fact. With the purification of the environment, the person's mind, heart, feelings and

conscience become pure. Therefore, it is a very important act from the point of view of the mental health of the person. Sweet substances like sugar used in *yañja* have extraordinary power to purify the air<sup>16</sup>. Due to its effect, the germs of decay, smallpox, cholera etc. are destroyed. In chapter 18 to 20 of Atharva-vedic *Gopath Brāhmaṇa*, all the gods have been accepted as senses and the *asuras* as obstacles in the form of diseases. *Brāhmaṇa* is the form of life, *aśva*, *Vaiśvānara* and *Jātavedas* are the names of *Agni*. In this context, it can be clarified that fire keeps the body and mind healthy and happy by protecting it from diseases and obstacles.

In general, considering the culmination of the scientific principle of sacrificial action, it is known that a particle of a substance travels with only a small amount of electric power, then that particle with power is called an ion<sup>17</sup>. The lightning-powered ions generated from the *yañja* leave the flame and go up into the atmosphere along with the dust particles. These ions go to the sky and make clouds by freezing water vapour and dust particles etc. also help in condensation of water vapour<sup>18</sup>.

In the *Atharva-veda*, the different types of verses are relating to health and ending illness prove the scientificity of *yañja*.

आबयो अनाबयो रसस्त उग्र आबयो आ ते करम्भमद्गसि<sup>19</sup> ।

That means O mustard oil! You are eaten to destroy disease, your oil is of great strength. We invite and accept that oil-roasted green stuffs.

In *Atharva-veda*, the idea of curing different types of diseases, which cause sickness in the body, with the power of verses and sacrificial actions, shows the scientificity of *yañja*,

मुञ्चामि त्वा हविषा जीवनाय कमज्ञातयक्ष्यादुत राजयक्ष्मात् ।  
ग्राहर्जिग्राह यद्येतदेनं तस्या इन्द्राग्नी प्र मुमुक्तमेनम्<sup>20</sup> ॥

That is, I free you from the disease of tuberculosis that enters the body through ignorance. Protecting you from the *rāja-yakṣmā* who had consumed Soma, I make you a long life. O *Indrāgne* ! The demon who had established her dominance over this child, free him from that demon. In the context of longevity in *Atharva-veda*, this verse is said-

यदि क्षितायुर्यदि वा परेतो यदि मृत्योरन्तिकं नीत एव ।  
तमाहरामि निर्ऋतेरूपस्थदस्पाष्मेनं शतशारदाय<sup>21</sup> ॥

That is, due to illness, this man's age has decreased and he is about to leave the world or has reached *Yama*, then we bring him back and live for a century.

In this way, both the above verses appearing in *Atharva-veda* are related to the concept of medical science. The scientificity of *yañja* is clearly evident from these verses related to Ayurveda.

In naturopathic science, various physical diseases are resolved through water. At present, water is the soul of our life, even medical science accepts this. In this way, the statement of the end of disease with water is also found in *Atharva-veda*-

आप इद् उ भेषजीरापो अमीवचातनीः ।  
आपो विश्वस्य भेषजीस्तास्ते कृणवन्तु भेषजम्<sup>22</sup> ॥

In this way, when this above mentioned verse is associated with *yañja*, the scientificity of *yañja* naturally manifests. In general, it can be said that such a scientific environment is created through *yañja*, which organizes man physically and

mentally. *Yāñja* -process is a definite, well-organized and specific act, because in *yāñja* there is a definite arrangement of date, time, place and number of priests, verses and purpose related to *yāñja*. Therefore, the support of the scientific form of *yāñja* is self-evident.

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