



Research Article

Balivaishva Yagya: Significance And Importance in Daily Life

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Abstract. Gayatri and Yagya have a unique position and constitute the foundation of the Vedic Culture. Rishis gave concepts of Gayatri and Yagya to practice in daily life to refine animal instincts to divine personalities with the purpose of universal welfare. For this, one of the methods given by Rishis in Vedic time was Balivaishva Yagya. Vedic scriptures described elaborately the practice of it in daily life. The present study aimed to explore the meaning, philosophy, procedure, and utility of Balivaishva Yagya in the present time. ‘Balivaishva Dev’ Yagya is defined as a divine offering for the welfare of the universe. The five offerings of Balivaishva Yagya is represented as Panch Maha (Five Great) Yagya i.e. Brahma-Yagya, Dev-Yagya, Rishi-Yagya, Nar-Yagya, and Bhoot-Yagya. Respectively, they symbolized for 1) inspiration of the self-knowledge of Brahman, 2) progression from animal instincts to divine qualities, 3) having a compassionate life for the upliftment of the backward, 4) creation of environment and social order according to human dignity, 5) extension of intimacy to all living beings including even vegetation. Thus, practicing these five principles through Balivaishva Yagya in the family can help in obtaining harmony in the family by creating a spiritual environment. The five inspirations and messages are hidden in Balivaishva Yagya can create a spiritual environment in the family as well as to solve all the problems of the individual and the world – opening door to all-rounded progress by uprising divine culture in society.

Keywords. Balivaishva Yagya, Panchshil, Five Principles

Introduction

Gayatri and Yagya have a unique position and constitute the foundation of the Vedic Culture. Gayatri is the symbol of purity of thought and Yagya is the symbol of selfless action. While Gayatri imparts wisdom and pure intelligence, Yagya inspires corresponding creativity and actions. Gayatri and Yagya work in coordination and cooperation with each other for universal welfare.

The scope of universal welfare not only includes humans but also covers every creature of the whole habitation and environment including subtle aspects. It is reflected in scripture as ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वेपि सुखिनः सन्तु; it means let happiness prevail everywhere [Brihadaranyak Upanishad 1.4.14). To practice this in society, Rishis used concepts of Gayatri and Yagya in daily life.



Vedic age brings the instant image of the great rishis performing agnihotra or Yagya and they used to spend at least one-third of their lives conducting Yagya. Yagya played an essential role in the comprehensive progress, prosperity, and happiness in the Vedic era. This was indeed natural, as the philosophy, science of Yagya, and the different modes of performing Yagya were discovered and developed by the rishis based on their deep understanding and in-depth research of the human psyche, the intricacies of the social fabric, and the mysteries of nature (1).

In Vedic times not only Rishis but all - the rich, the poor, the kings, and citizens had equal deep faith and respect for Yagya. They all used practice concepts of Gayatri and Yagya in daily Itor to refine animal instincts to divine personalities with the purpose of universal welfare. One such method by Rishis given to society in Vedic time was Balivaishva Yagya (बलिवैश्व).

The present study aimed to explore the meaning, philosophy, need, procedure, and utility of Balivaishva Yagya in the present time.

Definition of Balivaishva Yagya

The word Yagya is derived from the Sanskrit verb *yaj* (यज्) which has a three-fold meaning: worship of deities (*devapujana*), unity (*sangatikarana*), and charity (*dana*). The philosophy of Yagya teaches a way of living in a society in harmony. A life with Yagya philosophy promotes and protects higher human values in the society, which is indeed the basis of an ideal human culture (2).

Balivaishva Yagya ritual makes 5 oblations from the daily meal. However, the meaning of Yagya is not confined to this sacrificial ritual. It has a much

wider and deeper meaning. The word Balivaishva is a popular abbreviation. The actual term is 'Balivaishva Dev'. The phrase is a combination of three words as follows. First is 'Bali', which means 'offerings or sacrifices to fire' and the ritual of offering the eatables reverentially is called Bali. The second is 'Vaishva', which means 'for all, for the whole universe'. The third word is 'Dev', which means 'for divinity'. Thus 'Balivaishva Dev' is defined as a divine offering for the welfare of the universe. In the Bali Vaishva Yagya, Yagya Purusha (supreme power) is invited and the first portion of the meal prepared is offered five times to the five dimensions of the existence as defined in Indian scripture; thus balancing ecosystem and divinity to have a healthy and harmonized society (3).

Philosophy of Balivaishva Yagya

The five offerings of Balivaishva Yagya is represented as Panch Maha (Five Great) Yagya in the scripture i.e. Brahma-Yagya (ब्रह्म यज्ञ), Dev-Yagya (देव यज्ञ), Rishi-Yagya (ऋषि यज्ञ), Nar-Yagya (नर यज्ञ), Bhoot-Yagya (भूत यज्ञ).

The visual form of the five oblations of Balivaishva may seem mere but the inspiration behind these five offerings are the basis for ideal society as well as divine individuals. These five offerings or five great Yagyas are for the promotion of five different virtuous tendencies as described in Figure 1 and Table 1 (4).

The five ideals of Balivaishva Yagya (Panchsheel) Balivaishva Yagya can also be termed as 'Panchsheel' – five ideals or five principles. These five virtuous tendencies are also perceivable in the picture of Goddess Gayatri. In Buddhism, there is an elaborate discussion on the term 'Panchsheel',



where they are considered of great importance. These Panchsheel have also been classified in different forms in different areas of lifestyle and social system. In this way, the class, sub-classes of Panchsheel play an important role in solving all the problems of the individual and the world – opening the door to all-around progress as described in Table 2 (5).

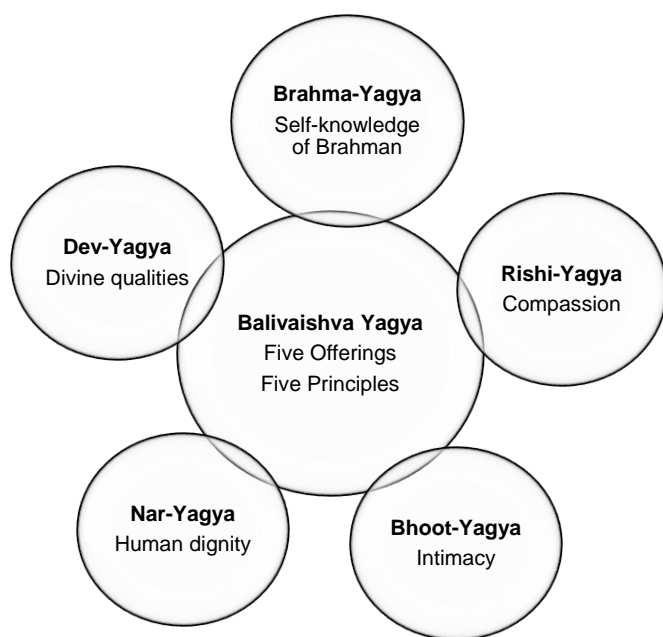


Figure 1. Schematic representing five principles of Balivaishva Yagya

Five Great Yagya / offering	Representing Deity	Inspiration or virtuous tendency
Brahma-Yagya	Brahma	The meaning of Brahma-Yagya is the inspiration of the self-knowledge of Brahman. It represents that there is a mutual exchange going on between God and the soul.
Dev-Yagya	Vishnu	The purpose of Dev-Yagya is to progress from animal instincts to humans with divine qualities, expansion of self, and greater promotion of purity and generosity.
Rishi-Yagya	Mahesh	Rishi-Yagya means to have a compassionate life policy engaged in the upliftment of the backward. It also represents the penance required for virtuous promotion.
Nar-Yagya	Agni	(4) Nar-Yagya inspires the creation of environment and social order according to human dignity. It also inspires for protection of human dignity and the making of great personalities for humanity.
Bhoot-Yagya	Varun	The spirit of Bhoot-Yagya is the extension of intimacy to all living beings with goodwill towards other living beings including even trees and vegetation.

Table 1. Summary of five principles of Balivaishva Yagya along with their virtuous tendencies

Areas of lifestyle and social system	Panchsheel (Five Principles) for all-round progress
Physical Health	(1) Sattvic and limited diet (2) Adequate use of clean water (3) Deep breathing in the open air (4) Proper labor (5) Night rest without worry
Mental Health	(1) Player-like attitude (2) Constant smile (3) Sense control (4) Passion and pride in work (5) Satisfaction in achievement, enthusiasm in progress.
Social Health	(1) Honesty (2) Responsibility of citizenship (3) Humble, courteous and sweet behavior (4) Following the promise (5) Generous cooperation.
Family life	(1) Cooperation, Gratitude, Service spirit towards the parents (2) Careful support to the little ones (3) Intense friendship in marital relations (4) Considering and increasing the virtuous tendencies (5) Minimum number of children.
Religious Panchsheel	(1) Support and promotion of good tendencies (2) Non-cooperation, opposition, struggle against evil tendencies (3) Extensive contribution in the prevention of suffering and downfall (4) Strongly adopting high-level beliefs (5) In performing duty Apathy, indifference in getting authority.
Spiritual Panchsheel	(1) Unwavering faith in God's system of actions (2) Self-reliance. (3) Life standard to that of the average Indian living and use of rest resources for welfare (4) Intense readiness in life practice (5) Extreme expansion of affinity
Universal Panchsheel	(1) Unity (2) Equality (3) Federalism (4) Tolerance (5) Liberal loyalty

Table 2. Panchsheel (Five principles) is based on the philosophy of Balivaishva Yagya for different areas of lifestyle and social system in solving all the problems of the individual and the world for all-round progress

Methodology to perform Balivaishva Yagya

Vedic scriptures describe the utility and procedure of Balivaishva Yagya in detail. All Gruhya Sutra (guidelines for married life) such as Shankhayan, Ashvalayana, Parasara, Gobhil, Khadir, etc., and Brahmana scriptures such as Shatapatha, Gopatha, etc. have given detailed descriptions of Balivaishva Yagya in married (Gruhya) life. They described it as an essential requirement for harmony in family life.

The principle of procedure of Balivaishva Yagya includes offerings of five morsels of a fresh meal prepared to fire every day before taking the meals in the morning and evening. In the previous days, these offerings are typically given in the fire lit using cow dung-cake in Yagya Kund. For the performers of ritualistic Agnihotra, there is a provision of many mantras, many legislations given in scriptures, but for the common man, a simplified procedure needs to be adopted. The detailed procedure as per the scripture is hard to be followed nowadays (6).

However, a socio-spiritual organization like All World Gayatri Pariwar revived the Vedic tradition of Balivaishva Yagya in modern time, keeping its spiritual core and motto to be followed; the meaning of offering for the sake of Brahma, God, Rishi, etc., who are mentioned in the Panch Mahayagya, is not to treat them as invisible persons but to give their offerings for the promotion of the divine instincts behind these words (7).

The simple procedure of Balivaishva Yagya recommended by All World Gayatri Pariwar

The simplest procedure for Balivaishva is as follows - (1) The earthen or metal vessel should be kept ready in advance to be used as a havan kund. (2) Roti, rice, etc., whatever salt-free substances are



made in the kitchen, take out equal five morsels from them and mix them with ghee and sugar. The first cooked roti or food item should be used for offerings. (3) For wood-stove: After taking out the fire from the wood-stove, it should be placed on the prescribed altar (kund). It is necessary to clean the altar every day before setting up the fire. For gas-stove, the copper or metal altar can be placed on flame. (4) Put some ghee on the fire and ignite the flame with the burning fire of the stove (5) The offering of every grass along with the Gayatri Mantra should be put on the burning fire. In this way, five offerings should be completed with five grains. (6) The water vessel should be placed near the altar in advance, and taking water from it should be rotated around the fire like a circumambulation. (7) When the fire cools down, ashes should be kept safe in a pitcher, etc. and as per convenience, it should be immersed in a holy reservoir or on land. (8)

The simple procedure promoted by them is to offer five morsels of fresh meal to fire (using copperplate / kund using kept on fire of stove) chanting Gayatri Mantra as described in Table 3 (9).

Discussion, importance, and need in daily life

As per Vedic tradition, the performance of daily Yagya is very essential for life. Scriptures describe the importance of the Balivaishva Yagya very elaborately. Balivaishva Yagya places a very important role in human life that is explained with the help of some specific scriptural references as follows.

Shatpath Brahman 2/6/4/8 described that whoever performs Balivaishva Yagya [स यद्वैश्वदेवेन यजते] would attain salvation [सायुज्य और सालोक्य] (10).

Brahma-Yagya	Om Bhur Bhuva Swaha Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayat svaha Idam <i>Brahmney</i> idam na mam
Dev-Yagya	Om Bhur Bhuva Swaha Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayat svaha Idam <i>Devebhya</i> idam na mam
Rishi-Yagya	Om Bhur Bhuva Swaha Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayat svaha Idam <i>Rishibhya</i> idam na mam
Nar-Yagya	Om Bhur Bhuva Swaha Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayat svaha Idam <i>Narebhya</i> idam na mam
Bhoot-Yagya	Om Bhur Bhuva Swaha Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayat svaha Idam <i>Bhootebhya</i> idam na mam

Table 4. Mantras used for offering five sacrifices in Balivaishva Yagya as referred by All World Gayatri Pariwar for a simplified procedure for daily practice.

Scriptures also described that Balivaishva Yagya should be in the morning and before the evening meal to avoid the sin of the inaction of the pious act [सायं प्रातर्वै श्वदेवः कर्त्तव्यो बलिकर्म च। अनश्रतापि कर्त्तव्यमन्यथा किल्बिषी भवेत् ॥]. Scripture also described that meals taken without offerings to Yagya are considered as an act of theft (6).

Manu 4/21 described that five Yagyas (Balivaishva) should be done daily [नृ यज्ञं पितृ यज्ञं च यथा शक्ति न हापयेत् ॥].

Manu 3/70 also described that these five Yagya's are not mere rituals; they represent five virtuous tendencies and have extraordinary use in the advancement of the individual and the society (3).

Nowadays familial disharmony is becoming very common. As a result, the personality of children are becoming distorted with destructive thoughts and shattered hopes. Their minds are getting overshadowed by insecurity and fear. A family always needs a healthy, happy, and harmonious



home environment for maintaining culture in society (11). The five principles of Balivaishva Yagya (Table 2) can address family disharmony. With this respect, Balivaishva Yagya is a very powerful Vedic tradition that can help in obtaining harmony in the family by creating a spiritual environment. In addition, it is not a time and resource-consuming process and can be easily adopted in society by every person in their day-to-day life.

Conclusion

Yagya and Gayatri simultaneously complete the process of Sadhana – self-refinement. In the tides of time, the original purpose, relevance, and importance of Yagya in human life became secondary. It won't be an exaggeration to conclude that this negligence and deviation from this principle of virtuous tendencies has been a major cause of the fallen and miserable state today.

In daily life, the involvement of Gayatri mantra chanting and some of Yagya is essential in Vedic tradition. The five principles of the five offerings of Balivaishva Yagya can be, however, easily incorporated into busy daily life schedules. This is a very short and fruitful process that everyone can incorporate into their daily routine. The five inspirations and messages are hidden in Balivaishva Yagya along with its capacity to create a spiritual environment in the family, it has an important role in solving all the problems of the individual and the world – opening the door to all-round progress by uprising divine culture in society.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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