

## Yagna according to Bhagavad Gita – A Study

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**Abstract-** From the Vedic age as detailed in the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, the idea of Yagna has been somewhat common. It covers all from rigorous spiritual activities for self-purification to ceremonial acts like Agnihotra. Like other old customs, the gross knowledge of Yagna is highly valued nowadays. The Bhagavad Gita expands Yagna's three meanings—donation, organization, and worship of deities—into further detail. Within the Bhagavad Gita, Yagna is a "philosophy of life". Yagna is established as a pure and vibrant inspiration for the execution of deeds; the activities of the doer are offered as oblations into the great reservoir of compassion through "Yagna-oriented actions." A life free of desire, greed, and idleness becomes Yagna-like, releasing the discontent resulting from limited perspective. A Yagna-oriented life is an always flowing condition enhanced with the qualities of cooperation and coexistence, where acts are articulated and dissolved every second. The Gita presents Yagna in several forms.

**Key Words -**Yagna, karma, liberation, self-purification, Bhagavad Gita

The third chapter of the Bhagavad Gita titled "Karma yoga" addresses the idea of Yagna. The third chapter explains the form of ceremonies carried out in line with the Vedic sacrifice custom. It also shows the reciprocal interaction among the gods and the sacrifice.

Aurobindo claims that the principle of sacrifice in the Gita is presented in two separate places, the first description uses such words that if we accept those words in the same form, it would seem that he is only presenting the gross sacrifices performed depending on Vedic methods. (Aurobindo P 82)The Gita explores the knowledge element of sacrifice rather than its ceremonial character. The third chapter explains how Prajapati started sacrifice and how the gods are fed from it. Such connotations are explained here; the effect of the gods fed by sacrifice will enable the priest to reach desired joys.

From the angle of gross rituals, the idea of yagna has been applied as a pragmatic scientific element. According to the yagna philosophy, form in which

yagna is explained as an interconnected phenomenon resulting from individual and group activities.

The form of Yagna in Bhagavad Gita.

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्रलोकोऽयं कर्मबंधनः।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसंगः समाचर।। (Bhagavad Gita 3.9)

(Work must be done as a yagna to the Supreme Lord; otherwise, work causes bondage in this material world. Therefore, O son of Kunti, for the satisfaction of God, perform your prescribed duties, without being attached to the results.)

Action other than the one, one is engaged in for sacrifice binds one. Karma Yoga is the third chapter; before this, Lord Krishna showed the splendor of knowledge; but, here action is connected with knowledge. We discover what sensible person behavior ought to be. Actions carried out with any aim except the spirit of sacrifice entangle the doer. Though they act, these become like biological phenomena devoid of the underlying meaning. Their entanglement in different expectations starts. Sometimes expectations fit the situation; sometimes they run counter to it. In such situations, misplaced expectations bond a person even more to those activities. This results in mental turbulence and discontent. One should act by disconnecting attachment to the results of action - मुक्तसंगः समाचर - if one wants serenity and contentment via action.

Still, activities won't happen on their own. One does something for a cause; there is a reason behind it. Here the cause is regarded to be the sacrifice. One has to act for the sacrifice; then, one can stay free from the entanglement and consequences of acts. Here the sacrifice is defined as the driving force behind liberated activities.

According to Lokmanya Tilak everything a man does is for the sake of sacrifice; all actions have been divided into two categories: one is the sacrificial action which does not yield results independently, hence they are bound; the other is the action for

personal gain which is binding since it is beneficial to man. (Tilak P54)

According to Sri Aurobindo the entire existence, the entire world is a sacrifice to be offered by nature to man. We act differently from the intention of sacrifice for the satisfaction of the ego and in line with ego as long as we are under its sway. Ego is the binders' knot. (Aurobindo P 83)

Reluctance is one definition of sacrifice. Renunciation is carried out from "mine". Ignorance leads to this sensation, which shapes non-self-elements into self. The knot of ego that causes bondage is this imposed one.

Renunciation is usually seen to be connected to an object. The renunciation of a thing is just a crude emblem of renunciation. Whether with or without an objective or position, if the sense of self is abandoned from the three qualities and their activity, then this knot of imposition resulting from faulty knowledge is likewise broken and the activities committed in this mental state do not constitute a source of bondage.

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वापुरोवाच प्रजापतिः।

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेवोऽस्त्वष्टकामधुक्॥ (Bhagavad Gita

3.10)

(In the beginning of creation, Brahma created humankind along with duties, and said, "Prosper in the performance of these yagnas (sacrifices), for they shall bestow upon you all you wish to achieve.")

The sacrifice developed alongside the development of beings. The sacrifice turned into the brotherhood of the entities. The sacrifice served to raise the beings. By means of the sacrifice, those beings can grow; moreover, this helps one to reach enjoyment. Three points abound in this chapter: first, Prajapati Brahma produced creatures with the sacrifice at the start of the creation. The second is that there is a formula for guiding entities across the sacrifice. Thirdly, this sacrifice brings the intended delight. Here, the process of sacrifice is clarified as well as how welfare can be reached from it.

The process of Yagna reveals the Supreme Being's functioning shape. He will settle in the Yagna and carry out worldwide activities. The gross expression of the above described Yagna process in the ecological system is the inclination of mutual cooperation.

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवाभावयन्तुवः।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथा॥ (Bhagavad Gita 3.11)

(By your sacrifices, the celestial gods will be pleased, and by cooperation between humans and the celestial gods, great prosperity will reign for all.)

This means that by yagna, the interaction between the gods and humans (creatures) results in the development (growing) of both, and mutual nutrition helps to achieve ultimate welfare as well.

According to Indian tradition, yagna is an obligation; this is the religion shared by all people. Those who love dharma attain growth and all kinds of welfare as well. According to Aurobindo the Gita presents the ancient Aryan thought process of Yagna and considers it an exchange between the gods and humans," says Aurobindo. (Aurobindo P 84)

Cooperation is the second other basis proving the presence of the Supreme Being. This forms the foundation of the whole creative process. Cooperation is a legacy seen in both animate and inanimate objects. Although the animate and the inanimate differ, the two have a reciprocal interdependent relationship. One can only exist depending on the other. The survival of the great universe and the particular entities depends on the concept of "cooperation". An atom's protons and electrons keep attraction between them. Their mutual non-cooperative behavior shows as atomic explosion. The steady existence of the material is maintained by the cooperation of their atoms, so the orderly organization of creation is founded on cooperation.

The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita 3.12 states that the gods, formed by sacrifice, will most definitely present you with desired pleasures (the required tools for duty) without your asking for them. Therefore, someone who appreciates what the gods provide without returning the favour is really a robber.

The above line discusses the reaching of delight. That is so, by acting for the purpose of sacrifice, one releases the bondage of deeds and also keeps enjoying. How one eats and makes use of the delight acquired also reflects the sacrifice principle. Giving back to the gods from the pleasures is said to mean savoring the satisfaction with a selfless approach. This validates the "तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः (Isavasyopanishad -1) from the Isha Upanishad.

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः।

याज्ञयाचरतः कर्मसमग्रं प्रविलीयते॥ (Bhagavad Gita 4.23)

(They are released from the bondage of material attachments and their intellect is

established in divine knowledge. Since they perform all actions as a sacrifice (to God), they are freed from all karmic reactions.)

Here the yagna is formed as an activity in which the doer first has been free from the attachment of impurity, the ignorance of being rooted, and the sensation of bondage. Their activities will only serve to satisfy earthly bondage till this activity is finished; they will not be regarded as yagna performers. On the other hand, it is asserted in the field of dharma, and today it is often directly noticed that freedom denotes stopping to act, therefore becoming void of action. Renunciation has been developed by seeing activity as bondage; but, if renunciation lacks the yagna action, it will become a cause of blind renunciation and bondage instead of wholeness. Thus, here liberation is defined not as a goal but as a qualification for performing actions for the sake of yagnamुक्तस्य, and this liberated state is not a condition of being rooted but rather a state filled with knowledge; ज्ञानावस्थित ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः also indicates the proper establishment of the mind in true knowledge.

"His release does not prevent him from performing even the slightest action," Sri Aurobindo stated. His acts result from the liberated soul and disintegrate like waves rising and disappearing on the surface of the incomprehensible ocean of consciousness without upsetting anything there." (Aurobindo P 119)

Though Krishna is motivating him to act - "Determined for battle," Arjun hears from Krishna about the supremacy of intellect over action in Samkhya Yoga. Under such circumstances, Arjun finds himself in a conundrum about renouncing. Should knowledge yoga prove to be better, then why is action necessary? Why should I participate in such terrible earthly activity? Why would God criticize my lethargy? The way the technique of action explains the dualistic difficulties and the curiosity they generate helps to solve them so that actions never turn into a bondage. One makes a sacrifice by doing such thing. The wise act in line with sacrifice. Following understanding yoga's correct perspective will help one to restrain, certain, and free from attachment the activities carried out. It is stated that this lesson of sacrifice helps us to grow in understanding and develop our behavior. The sacrifice incorporates even knowledge, therefore stressing the value of knowledge sacrifice. In sacrifice, the art of life achieves its highest

level. True essence is found in it since man does not get satisfied by drinking it; rather, fresh sources of essence always surface from it.

Actually, the confirmation of the gods is accomplished by means of public welfare programs carried out in the course of charity. Great spirits have called life as a service yagna for the benefit of the public; so, dedicating one's intellect, riches, talent, and other abilities is regarded as equivalent to a yagna ceremony. A society full of selfish and foolish people can never advance a policy that benefits all. In actuality, superstition hinders personal and collective advancement. Beneficial and welfare works cannot be achieved when millions of people spend their cash, time, and effort on such regressive, anti-progress activities. All well-wishers of society must continue to fight these superstitions, which are disseminated throughout a broad population in the country. Those who are really curious about true happiness should make their life sacrifice by always serving the benefit of others so that they may always reach their intended target of happiness.

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनःसंतोमुच्यन्तेसर्वकिल्बिषैः।

भुञ्जतेतेत्वर्घपापायेपचन्त्यात्मकारणात्॥ (भगवद् गीता 3.13)

(The spiritually-minded, who eat food that is first offered in sacrifice, are released from all kinds of sin. Others, who cook food for their own enjoyment, verily eat only sin.)

Bhagavad Gita 3.12 says that a man who enjoys the pleasures given by those gods without giving them to him is a thief. Eating alone makes one a thief, a sinner. Sin is debt. The degree of delight attained depending on cooperation is only as great as our effort has been. The inclination to consume more than that gets one caught in the sin of debt.

#### TYPES OF YAGNA ACCORDING TO BHAGAVAD GITA

The Gita talks of several kinds of sacrifices made for the seekers purifying. Whatever the shape these sacrifices take depending on the seeker's eligibility, their main objective is self-purification. While delineating a thorough system of sacrifice, it is said in Bhagavad Gita 4.24 that in the sacrifice where the offering, such as the ladle, is also Brahman, and the substance to be offered is also Brahman, and the act of offering into the fire, which is also Brahman,

performed by the Brahman-like doer – the fruits attained by the yogi established in that Brahman action are also Brahman.

Aimed to guide man to the ultimate non-dual reality, this is an ideal premise of yagna that fits the ideas of Vedanta. One can understand using available gross or subtle power forms and capabilities to raise current consciousness to a more sacred and intense degree of awareness, or giving them in the fire of endeavor, as yagna. Levels of consciousness vary nowadays as well. From this angle, the several techniques of yagna have produced the identification of several forms of yagna. The means of yagna are several, and the presents likewise vary. In the fourth chapter of the Gita, 13 varieties of yagna—classified based on the kind of the recipient—are discussed.

While some yogis execute the Yagna of the self in the form of the imperceptible vision of the Supreme Brahman through the fire, other yogis do the worship of deities in the form of Yagna (Bhagavad Gita 4.25) appropriately. Those who perform divine Yagna vision God in their forms and powers and seek Him through various means or religions, that is, through a definite method of action, self-discipline, and excellent deeds.

For those wise ones who perform the sacrifice through the Yagna in the Brahmagni, the essence of the Yagna is to directly offer whatever actions they perform to God (Bhagavad Gita 4.25). Uniting all one's impulses and sensory processes and submerging them in the divine consciousness and power is the sole means—the only dharma.

The senses are presented in the fire of restraint. "Other yogis perform offerings of all senses like hearing in the fire of restraint." (Bhagavad Gita 4.26) One practice is to engage with the objects of the senses, but not to let the mind to be disturbed by that sensory activity. The intellect cannot be swayed by it. The senses themselves start to represent the pure fire of knowing. Knowledge mixed with restraint is the link of the senses with their objects. One of the forms of sacrifice is this one, in which the sensory activities satisfy a set objective so preserving the mental serenity.

The fires of the senses present the sensory shape of topics - "In which the senses are so startled that the soul emerges from behind the veil of mental activity in its pure, stable, and calm form," (Bhagavad Gita 4.26)

Other yogis perform offerings of all subjects, including words, in the sensory fires.

Offering the whole operations of the senses and the vital forces, the fire of self-control Other yogis brighten knowledge by offering the whole actions of the senses and all actions of the life forces in the fire of self-control. (Bhagavad Gita 4.27) It is a means by which, upon realizing the true nature of the self, all sensory actions and life actions are absorbed into that one stable, tranquil self. Here the description speaks about the state of pratyahara, in which accurate understanding helps one to easily assemble deeds.

Material sacrifice is proposed in Bhagavad Gita 4.28. Many men will perform material sacrifices. The activities carried out by a yogi searching for success can be either material in nature or devoid of any sort. The action presents a kind of material sacrifice. Here the offerings will be gross things, medications, ghee, etc. Object donations can fit within the notion of material sacrifice.

Tapoyagna s mentioned in Bhagavad Gita 4.28. There are many who perform yagna in the form of penance. Here penance is done with Yagna's feeling. Penance performed with an eye towards the basic ideas of yagna fits under this. Penance has been followed for the achievement of siddhis and the awakening of powers; the scriptures say it results in the elimination of impurities.

Yoga as a Sacrifice is mentioned in Bhagavad Gita 4.28. Many will practice yoga as a sacrifice. Like penance, the yoga practice here is one to be done as a sacrifice. Yoga practice has been underlined under the idea of sacrifice rather than as a separate entity. Yoga helps one to unite the soul with the Supreme Soul. The sacrifice will be this connection habit. In Bhagavad Gita 4.28 svadyaya or self-study is mentioned as the fire of knowledge. Many conscientious men bearing strong commitments like non-violence participate in the fire of knowledge in the form of self-study.

Bhagavad Gita 4.29 and 30 mentions Pranayama as Yagna. Many sadhakas offer the outgoing breath in the incoming breath, while some offer the incoming breath into the outgoing breath. Some arduously practice pranayama and restrain the incoming and outgoing breaths, purely absorbed in the regulation of the life-energy. Yet others curtail their food intake and offer the breath into the life-energy as sacrifice. All these knowers of sacrifice are cleansed of their impurities as a result of such performances. The use of

Prana Vidya, which increases the intensity of the seeker, extinguishes the vices, is called Yagna. The wide range of rituals is in fact full of variations from which one can choose the method according to one's interest and eligibility.

Though some of those scriptural techniques are referenced in the Bhagavad Gita, these kinds of yagnas are actually ways of sadhanas, which are defined in the scriptures. The seeker cleanses his inner self with their aid and benefits from knowing the higher truth. The result of all this is the cleansing of the foundation of the sadhaka; all sacrifices are measures to reach the Supreme.

#### Conclusion

Yagna is a deed carried out in line with a methodical, perfect aim. Although in its other form yagna is the practice of self-purification, this is only one feature of yagna. Yagna is a global and wide notion. It is ubiquitous in the occurrences of living entities and nature and existed from the dawn of creation. Awareness of this yagna system helps us to harmonize our way of life with the surroundings and grow personally.

Rising above simple activity, our acts must relate to the interests of the group; so, it is necessary to turn our actions into yoga. This helps our deeds to touch the idea of sacrifice and increase human consciousness. With the ideas of karma yoga, one can release the terrible bonds of small self-interests and choose a liberated sacrificial way of life, therefore participating in the play of universal consciousness.

The captivity of life is the narrow self-interest. The sages started with daily yagna-havan to impart the ideal of renunciation in life and explained the philosophy of yagna, therefore broadening this restricted viewpoint. How may one find enjoyment once more by means of this renunciation? Yagna also reveals the secret behind this. It is taught by tying the yagna action with karma yoga such that "whatever a person does, he does it for yagna."

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