

Homam as a Tool for Spiritual Evolution

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Representative of the nascent “**Do Homam Yourself**” Movement
(Free resources at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/homam>)

2010 August 4

NOTE: This article tries to capture the presentation I made at the WAVES (World Association of Vedic Studies) conference in Port of Spain, Trinidad on 2010 August 4.

Objections to Ritualism

When it comes to performing rituals on a regular basis, many people of this age have objections or reservations. On the two *extremes*, one sees the following viewpoints:

- (1) All that is there in this universe is Brahman only. All one needs to do is to *realize* that *all* is Brahman. What is the use of an external ritual in realizing this internal truth?

Another variation: Real yajna and rituals are supposed to be performed in the inner cosmos that is inside one and not in the outer cosmos.

- (2) The ritual is very important and needs to be done properly and perfectly. Then things will magically happen. Instead of doing it with errors, one is better off not doing a ritual altogether.

The first pseudo-Vedantic viewpoint trivializes external rituals and the second ritualistic viewpoint takes external rituals too seriously and that creates a fear of even taking one up. The result in either case is that one stays away from performing rituals. What we need is a balanced approach.

On “All is Brahman”

Pretension vs True Realization

Knowing and being are different. Knowing intellectually that all is Brahman does not mean that that understanding drives one’s instincts, thoughts and actions.

To give an analogy, one watching a movie may get scared when a scary scene comes, feel sad when a sad scene comes and so on. Even if one intellectually knows that it is just a movie, still one may end up getting scared in a scary scene. Only after the understanding that “it is just a movie” becomes perfectly ingrained in one’s consciousness can one watch the movie without such reactions. That requires practice.

Though all is indeed Brahman as Veda and Upanishads declare, one's individualized consciousness perceives a field of duality and experiences various opposites such as happiness and sadness, pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, good and bad, *etc.*

A mere statement of the fact that all is Brahman or a mere intellectual understanding that pleasure and pain are both Brahman does not necessarily make one view, experience or react to pleasure and pain in the same way. Then one is not free. There is no use in pretending as though one is free.

One is free only when the understanding that all is Brahman becomes *perfectly ingrained* in one's very consciousness and guides all of one's instincts, thoughts and actions. What blocks one from it is the conditioning accumulated over many lives in the field of duality. One needs to use the tools within the field of duality to overcome that conditioning. That requires practice.

Not Empty Symbols

Rituals are symbols, but not empty symbols. They serve a purpose. They slowly ingrain the desired understanding on the consciousness and rid it of its conditioning. Just as a person whose leg is fractured uses a walking stick while the leg cures, one focuses the mind on rituals while the consciousness cures from its conditioning. Ritual is like a walking stick.

Field of duality may be dismissed by some as an illusion. However, it is the only reality that a normal mind perceives. It cannot be dismissed. Tools within it should be used for navigating it.

Karma and Jnana (not "karma vs jnana")

As Maharshi Vasishtha tells at the beginning of "Yoga Vaasishtham", **action** and **knowledge** are the **two wings** with which the bird of individualized consciousness (limited self) flies into the infinite sky of unlimited Self. A bird with a single wing cannot fly stably and will fall down. Though today's scholars make the mistake of seeing karma and jnana as two alternative paths, they are actually two aspects of a single path. Both are needed for spiritual progress.

To give an analogy, a person who keeps walking a mountain path, but not realizing that reaching the top of the mountain is the goal, may end up walking around the mountain forever. Similarly, if one engages in actions without correct knowledge (that all is Brahman), then one may become attached to the actions and keep performing them forever.

On the other hand, one who keeps staring at the top of the mountain without walking will remain at the base of the mountain. Similarly, if one knows that all is Brahman, but does not engage in the right actions, that intellectual knowledge does not get ingrained in one's consciousness firmly and deeply enough to remove one's conditioning completely and make one enlightened.

To give another analogy, a person who engages in karma that is not driven by jnana is like a blind person who keeps running fast when a forest fire approaches. He may run into the fire. On the other hand, a person who has jnana (that all is Brahman) but does not engage in right karma

(actions) is like a person without legs who can see the forest fire coming at one, but unable to run and save oneself. To save oneself from the forest fire (samsara), one needs both eyes (jnana) and legs (karma).

Thus, actions in the field of duality, with the knowledge that all is Brahman forming the backdrop for all those actions, are needed to overcome the conditioning. Karma and jnana work hand in hand.

Internal vs External Cosmos

One may say that rituals such as yajna are supposed to be performed in the inner cosmos that is within one, rather than the outer cosmos. Intellectually, it is an attractive position to take. But, how can one perform actions in a space that one is unable to perceive or identify with?

Only after Kundalini is awakened and the senses are turned inwards can one perceive the inner cosmos. Until then, talking about inner cosmos is meaningless.

Most people are unable to perceive and control their inner cosmos and their identification is only with the outer cosmos, to be more specific with the part of the outer cosmos that can be perceived by one's *external* senses.

Perfect Ritual Syndrome

The notion that a ritual needs to be proper and perfect, stops many people from performing external rituals. Rituals are not bribes to gods. Rituals in the outer cosmos are meant for causing slow transformation in the inner cosmos through resonance.

We compared ritual earlier to a walking stick used while the fractured leg gets cured. Whether the stick is made of teak wood or oak wood is not that important. Whether the stick is gold-plated or not is not that important. The key is to use *some* stick that is strong enough and to walk in such a way that there is no stress on the fractured leg. Similarly, a lot of details about the ritual are not that important. The key is to do *some* ritual that engages the mind enough and to do it with such an attitude that it aids in weakening the conditioning of the mind.

There are many factors that contribute to the effectiveness of something, but they are all not equally important. Suppose eating certain number of calories, certain amount of protein *etc* is recommended everyday and one does not have access to such a balanced meal. Will one starve indefinitely waiting for a perfect meal or will one just eat whatever is available? Suppose one needs to drink 8 cups of water every day and a person lost in a desert has access to only 2 cups. Will one remain thirsty and wait till 6 more cups are found or will one drink the 2 cups that are available? Suppose one's breathing is imperfect. As one learns and tries to improve one's breathing, will one stop breathing or will one continue to breathe faultily?

Though people do not consider spiritual sadhana to be as fundamentally important as food, water and air, it in fact is as important if not more. The purpose of the physical body we sustain by

giving it food, water and air is to help us progress spiritually and become enlightened. Body is a servant that carries us as we try to climb the hill of enlightenment.

Thus, any rituals that enable one to progress spiritually should be performed to the best of one's ability without waiting for "perfection". In fact, ritual perfection is an end target and should not become an excuse for not doing a ritual.

In rituals performed for spiritual upliftment and reasonable material goals to enable spiritual progress, errors do not block one or cause harm, as some are afraid.

How Rituals and Mantras Work

Mind, by nature, is pre-occupied with the limited self and with so many things related to it. When one engages in a ritual with a deity and a mantra, one tries to focus the mind on the deity or the mantra. One's focus with the mantra increases gradually, as one performs a ritual with a mantra regularly.

Conditioning of one's mind is a direct result of the actions performed by one's free will in the *past*. One is constantly *reaping* the *fruits* of the *previous* actions of one's own free will and those fruits, desirable or undesirable, form the backdrop in which one's free will is forced to perform *current* actions. One's conditioning places limitations on what one's free will can do *now*.

With good mental focus on a mantra or a ritual, one overcomes some conditioning and reduced conditioning means more possibilities for current action by one's free will. Though rituals do not make things happen magically, they free one from more and more conditioning and empower one's free will more and more.

The ultimate goal, however, is that oneday one's mind should cease to think of thousand things and should be filled with the sound of the mantra or a seed thought or an image one visualized. Except the mantra or deity, there should be no other object being contemplated by the mind. If (when) such a yoga (oneness) with the mantra occurs, one will experience a kind of bliss that is modulated by the mantra or the deity used.

It is Brahman that manifests as all objects, including oneself and even the deities. However, mind perceives infinite objects and keeps contemplating so many objects continuously. Such an over-activity of the mind is un-conducive to overcoming the field of duality and seeing the underlying Brahman in all. If mind calms down and has a union with just one object, it is far closer to seeing the underlying Brahman in all.

Mantra or ritual is like a pole to which the monkey of mind is tied. The nature of the monkey is to jump here and there. When it is tied to the pole, it will still jump but in a small area around the pole. After jumping around the pole for a long time, monkey may become tired and stop jumping around. Similarly, mind may stop thinking about various objects of its field of duality. Mantra is just an instrument, an anchor for the mind.

It is possible to use any combination of sounds as a mantra and obtain union with it, *i.e.* achieve the state where mind reverberates with it and with no other thoughts. However, the exact dual experience when mind reverberates with that mantra will vary from one mantra to another. It is wise to use one of many mantras that have already been tested by our seers.

How to Get Focus

One can get focus through practice. How densely a mind is conditioned will determine how difficult it is for the mind to focus on one object, such as a mantra or a deity or a ritual. The more effective one's meditation, the better one's focus becomes. The better one's focus, the more effective one's meditation becomes.

This can be said differently. Unless one's focus is good, meditation is not effective. Unless one does effective meditation, one will not get good focus. This is an "egg first or chicken first" scenario. One can keep meditating to the best of one's ability and wait to break through into the groove.

Use of External Fire

Fire is called "pāvaka", *i.e.* the one that purifies. Fire purifies whatever it comes in contact with.

It is interesting to note that fire ritual is an ancient practice and several religions taught worshipping gods in fire. Hindus adhering to Vedas as well as Tantras and Aagamas worship fire. Some Buddhists worship fire. Zoroastrians worshipped fire. Some ancient Greco-Roman civilizations also worshipped fire and made offerings to gods in fire.

Mind has infinite abilities and resonates to its company. When one spends much time with a film buff, the film buff within one becomes strong and gets activated. When one spends much time with a politics buff, the politics buff within one becomes strong and gets activated. Mind resonates to its company. Similarly, spending much time with an external fire rekindles the internal fire. When the internal fire burns strongly, it burns unneeded conditioning and weaknesses. It burns weakly in most people, but external fire can activate it over time.

RigVeda 1.77.1 says about Agni: "yo martyeṣu amṛtaḥ ṛtāvā". Fire is the imperishable essence within perishable objects, *i.e.* immortal essence within mortals, and it is a representation of the divine Will and rhythm (ṛtam).

The fire within a mortal is immortal and this immortal fire devours and purifies perishable objects, qualities and conditioning which are present within a mortal and which make one a mortal. By slowly reducing perishable objects within one, such as conditioning, to ashes, strengthened internal fire removes conditioning and obstacles and purifies one. That increases one's focus on mantra.

In a fire ritual, fire represents Brahman. Play of the fire represents Shakti. Those two are inseparable. Offerings in fire represent the conditioning that one is trying to overcome. Actions

in the outer cosmos (macrocosm) resonate in the inner cosmos (microcosm) and facilitate an internal transformation over time.

While the elements of earth and water are corrupted with impurities in Kali yuga, the element of fire remains pure always and has a direct resonating influence on one's internal fire. When one invokes god in a normal idol or a kalasha, one is projecting energy from one's own inner cosmos and the success of the ritual is dependent on one's own internal purity. In case of fire, the external fire brings energy of its own to the table. That is why fire is considered a living representation of god on earth and fire ritual considered superior to other rituals. Fire ritual is the sadhana of rishis.

Japam vs Homam

In Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna said, " yajñānām japayajño'smi", *i.e.* I am japa among all sacrifices. Some people use this line to suggest that japam (meditation) is superior to homam/yajna. Let us put that in perspective.

In the line just above that line, Sri Krishna also said, "I am Om among all mantras". However, do we only meditate with the *supreme* mantra "Om" and leave all other mantras?

What Krishna described as "I" is the Supreme Self. It is akin to the pinnacle of a mountain. Though sitting on the pinnacle is the final goal of climbing a mountain, one needs to first climb its slope using various kinds of gear.

Om *is* the supreme of all mantras being the source of all and meditating and absorbing consciousness in the Supreme (japa) *is* the supreme sacrifice. However, it requires purification and preparation by engaging in other kinds of mantras and sacrifices (homam).

When one does homam, one is engaging in external actions and at least some minimal awareness of body will be left. One is unlikely to reach a samadhi (absorption in the Supreme). On the other hand, when a perfectly purified person does japam (*i.e.* sits still and contemplates on the mantra), one may overcome awareness of the body and other pre-occupations of the mind and reach samadhi. From that point of view, japam is superior for reaching the final goal.

However, to purify oneself and prepare oneself for it, one may need different kinds of sadhana and homam is far more effective than japam as a sadhana that purifies one.

Doing Rituals by Oneself

Dharma Shastra Guideline

Manu Smriti was the authority for Satya yuga. Maharshi Parasara, father of Veda Vyasa, is considered the dharma shastra authority in Kali yuga. A classic dharma shastra called "Parasara Madhaveeyam" says that a ritual such as homam performed in one's name by one's own disciple is 100 times more powerful than a ritual performed in one's name by a priest; a ritual performed in one's name by one's own progeny is 100 times more powerful than a ritual performed in one's

name by a disciple; and, a ritual performed by oneself is 100 times more powerful than a ritual performed in one's name by one's progeny.

In other words, a ritual such as homam performed by oneself is 1,000,000 times more powerful than a ritual performed in one's name by a priest! The bottomline is that one is on one's own as Kali deepens and priests will be limited in their ability to give a material and spiritual uplift to others.

Need of Regularity

Just as a twenty course meal eaten once every six months does not give much energy to one, a "big" homam or another ritual done once every six months or a year does not boost one's spiritual or material pursuits. Just as a small bowl of rice and dal (lentil soup) eaten *everyday* gives more energy to one, a small 20-30 minute homam done everyday gives a boost to one's spiritual evolution.

Wise Tradeoffs

Doing a short homam daily or weekly requires wise tradeoffs.

Suppose the president of the country is visiting one for lunch with 100 associates. One can invite all the 100 associates of the President by name and seat them in the room individually, following various protocols. Then one can exchange long pleasantries with the President and then offer lunch.

Suppose one is in a hurry and has very little time. If one still invites all the 100 associates by name and seats them in the room individually following the protocol and does not have enough time to let the President eat lunch in the end, is it a wise tradeoff? Or is it wiser to invite all the 100 associates together and seat them together by violating the protocol and use that time to let the President eat in peace?

Similarly, is it wise if one exchanges long pleasantries and gives very little time to eat? Or should one cut short on the pleasantries and give more time to eat?

In a fire ritual, making offerings to the main deity is the primary part. Various upacharas (services) done to the deity before the offerings commence are secondary. Various preliminary and final steps and offerings to associate deities are tertiary. If one has a few hours for the fire ritual, one can do everything given in scriptures leisurely. If one has only 20-30 minutes, one needs to make wise tradeoffs and maximize the benefit. It is far better than doing nothing.

Command of the Divine Mother

When we were performing a Shata Chandi Homam in the first week of March 2006 at the Kalikambal temple in Chennai, my spiritual master Dr Manish Pandit had a darshan of the Divine Mother and was commanded by Her to teach in the world a simplified homam ritual to various deities, without considering the caste, class and race barriers. She told him that many

thousands of people would start performing homam on a regular basis and that it would increase dharma in the world. It would also smoothen a big transformation about to take place in the world.

Homam as a spiritual sadhana is very appropriate in Kali yuga. As spiritually inclined people have fewer and fewer hours to spend on spiritual sadhana everyday in a more and more corrupted environment with the progressing Kali yuga, safe sadhanas that work fast are more relevant. Homam works much faster than japam and other spiritual sadhanas. He was assured that the practice of homam would transform into a movement that would reach across caste, class and race barriers and increase dharma in the world.

Detailed homam manuals for a short procedure that is suitable for performing daily or weekly are available at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/homam>. Nearly one thousand people are doing homam daily or weekly at this time, in various countries around the world. Some perform Ganapathi homam, some Chandi homam, some Vishnu sahasra naama homam, some Shiva homam, some Krishna homam and so on. Slowly this movement is gaining legs and we invite anybody who has some interest to check out the manuals. In addition to various manuals, MP3 audio and youtube video are also available for a free download for the Ganapathi homam, so that interested seekers can practice the mantras and the procedure. A super-short 10 minute procedure is also available for an easy start. Some people start off with it and slowly add more and more mantras.

What Homam Can Do

Homam activates the internal fire by resonance and burns one's conditioning. Depending on the density of conditioning, it can empower one's free will, give calmness and clarity, speed up spiritual progress, or even give experience of god.

When blockages are removed, self-awareness (Kundalini) rises from the physical realm (mooladhara chakra) and mind experiences unlimited. Allness (*aka void aka seed of all*) is the final goal and is atop the sushumna nadi. Deities are close approximations and they reside in the sushumna nadi. All lokas (worlds or realms of consciousness) are also in sushumna nadi.

Optimizing the Experience

In order to optimize the experience, one should not eat anything in the one or two hours before homam. One should also stick to vegetarian food. Eating meat or eating just before homam will make the digestive fire burn strongly and this will limit the amount of energy left for the internal fire needed for burning conditioning. After all, one may notice that the fire in brain that facilitates thinking and digestion of ideas slows down immediately after a heavy meal, as digestive fire uses up a lot of energy.

During homam, one should visualize to the best of one's ability that god is in fire and receiving one's offerings and removing one's conditioning.

After homam is done, a local maximum in one's level of purity is created. One should sit still with a straight back and closed eyes and meditate for a while.

Can Non-Brahmanas Do Homam

Today's rigid caste system is flawed. Caste shows one's aptitude and attitude. Brahmana is one who pursues knowledge and liberation. Kshatriya is one who pursues power and authority over others and protects others. Vaisya is one who deals with others tactfully and pursues money. Sudra is one who pursues hard work and physical pleasures. One gets father's caste as that is what one is exposed to as one grows up, but one gets one's own caste later on.

Brahmarshi Viswamitra was born as a kshatriya, but became a brahmana. Maharshi Valmiki was born as a sudra, but became a brahmana. There are many such examples.

If one does homam on a regular basis for spiritual progress and for reasonable material results that enable one's spiritual progress, then one *will* eventually become a brahmana.

Is Guru Needed

If one receives a mantra or a procedure from the mouth of a master, it is analogous to a millionaire opening a bank account in his son's name with a high starting balance. The son is lucky, as he is starting off with a big balance. Similarly, some of the siddhi (attainment) the master has in the mantra or procedure is transferred to the disciple even as (s)he starts out.

If one does *not* receive a mantra or a procedure from the mouth of a master, it is analogous to starting off with a zero bank balance. While it is useful to start off with a positive balance, it is neither necessary nor sufficient. There are sons of millionaires who used up the millions earned by parents and reduced them to zero, while there are some self-made men who made millions purely with self-effort. Similarly, one taught by the greatest guru can fall while one not taught by a guru can reach the ultimate. While it is desirable to have a guru, it is by no means compulsory.

NOTE: If one is the kind who needs to have a guru figure behind every mantra or procedure, one can think of me or my spiritual master, Dr Manish Pandit, as the guru for the homam procedure taught in the manuals. I am willing to take punishment for any mistakes committed by people who use this procedure.

Can Women Do Homam

Though gross bodies of men and women are different, their subtle bodies are identical. The need of purifying the subtle body is identical. Women can also do homam.

However, there is a reason for the traditional bias against women doing homam and other serious rituals such as Gayatri mantra japam. Intense spiritual practices can awaken Kundalini (self-awareness) and make it flow in the nadis (channels in which awareness flows) through chakras (realms of consciousness). While that is desirable normally, Kundalini flow in a pregnant lady

has the potential to harm a fetus if the soul in it is unprepared. Of course, if the soul is prepared, it can result in the birth of a siddha also.

Ugra devatas vs Soumya devatas

Those who are interested in doing homam to an ugra devata (fierce deity) such as Chandi or Narasimha should remember one thing.

Suppose there is a basket containing fruits [results of one's previous actions]. A deity is akin to someone who takes out rotten fruits from the top of the basket, throws them in trash can and extracts a nice fruit that is stuck under them in the basket.

A soumya devata (gentle deity) is akin to a gentle person who removes the bad fruits slowly and reaches out for the nice fruit gently. The spillage of bad fruits on the floor is minimal.

An ugra devata (fierce deity), on the other hand, is akin to an aggressive person who removes the bad fruits in a hurry so that the nice fruit can be extracted faster. This may result in some spillage of bad fruits on the floor.

Worship of ugra devatas gives good results faster, but there can be some suffering before that. Of course, this suffering is a result of one's own bad karmas from the past. But, if one wants to go slow, one should worship soumya devatas. This is true for any sadhana, but it is more prominent in a sadhana such as homam that works fast.

Vedic vs Aagamic Rituals

Maharshi Parasara taught various types of homam as remedies to various horoscopic problems in his Jyotisha magnum opus "Brihat Parasara Hora Sastra". He did not specify how to establish fire and how to do the initial and concluding portions. He only mentioned the main mantra to be used in pradhana homam (core offering). He specifically said that one could start fire and do homam using the method taught by one's gurus and use the mantra given by him for pradhana homam. This shows that the differences in procedure are not that important and the main mantra used in pradhana homam is the key.

Today, different styles of homam known as Vedic methods and Aagamic methods are well-known.

Though some people may believe that Veda describes the specifics about various external yagyas, the fact is that Veda is supposed to be absolute, timeless and uncreated knowledge that is not bound by deśa-kāla-pātra. How can descriptions of specific external rituals be unbound by deśa-kāla-pātra?

Though Sayanacharya's celebrated commentary on RigVeda is ritualistic in nature, Sri Aurobindo had a different take in his "Secret of the Veda". His view is that Veda talks about absolute truths about the inner self and not relative truths about external matters. Agni or Fire

symbolizes the divine Will. That is why it is the immortal in mortals. Its rhythm will devour everything that is perishable and purify all.

From that perspective, there is nothing superior about one Vedic homam procedure compared to another Vedic homam procedure or an Aagamic homam procedure.

Metaphor: Vedic vs Aagamic Homam

Notions that so and so yagya ritual is sanctioned by Veda and so and so aagamic yagya ritual is not sanctioned by Veda can be put in perspective using a metaphor.

Once there were many people who lived near the sea [Brahman]. They regularly sat by the sea and enjoyed the sight and sound of the sea [absorbed in Brahman most of the time]. They described the sea in some nice cryptic poems [Veda].

As people started living a little away from the sea [less spiritually evolved], someone had to put together some instructions on how to reach the sea. He said, “keep walking towards east” and the instructions grew with time. People faithfully followed the instructions [rituals].

People started moving further and further inland and started living in a landlocked desert far away from the sea. This generation had never seen a pool of water like a lake, let alone a sea. They faithfully performed the ritual of walking towards east, but did not find sea. They debated endlessly whether one had to walk one mile or two miles or three miles and formed different schools of thought. Some walked their chosen distance, found a tree or a building or some interesting object and even became satisfied that that was sea!

Then came some great person, whose instincts led him to take a horse instead of walking and ride it for a long distance [use of other tools]. He did find the sea after a few months. He put together newer instructions to reach the sea, which included riding a horse [new āgama and tantra].

People performing the old rituals objected to this and said “but then this horse thing is not granted by the book of sea. This is a new path and different from the ‘pure’ sea ritual” [pure Vedic ritual]. By now, people did not even understand what the cryptic poems of the original “book of sea” mean, but they simply believed that those poems taught the old “pure” sea rituals (pure Vedic rituals) that they were used to. They were blissfully unaware that the original instructions were meant for someone already close to sea and the newer instructions came from someone who actually saw the sea and knew where they currently lived and how to get to the sea from there!

Slowly many new sets of instructions involving horses, chariots etc were taught and many new paths to the sea were outlined instead of just instructing people to walk towards east [evolution of mantra/tantra/yantras].

As time progressed, people started fighting too much about whose path was superior. They were foolish, not smart enough to adopt the original instructions, of either the so-called “pure” sea

path or the so-called “new” path or other variations, for the changed geography and changed times. Many followed the instructions blindly, hit roadblocks and did not reach sea. Many did not even know that “reaching the sea” was the actual goal of all their journeys. They even condemned those who actually went to sea, came back and gave updated directions for their place and time, for violating tradition.

Veda is about realizing self. Veda describes various aspects of the state of self-realization. That is why it is considered the highest knowledge. Other allied subjects throw some light on possible ways to reach that state. While definitive and absolute statements can be made on the actual state of self-realization itself, no definitive statements can be made on how to reach it. Only relative statements can be made based on *deśa-kāla-pātra*. The path depends on one’s current position!

In case the analogy is not clear, here is a brief summary of its points. Vedic seers are akin to people who lived by the sea. Vedas are akin to their chronicles of what they saw and heard. Associated literature is akin to simple instructions to reach the sea. Aagamas, tantra *etc* are akin to instructions for people who dwelled more inland.

Veda-Aagama is not really a conflict. It is a continuum.

Stop Arguing and Do Sadhana

As the metaphor above illustrates, arguments about various paths are irrelevant and distracting. What is important is to pick a path and follow it. Whether one does a Vedic homam or an Aagamic homam is a secondary issue. The primary issues are whether one does homam or not, how focused one is, how one’s focus is improving and how one is being transformed internally. Those who already know *a* homam procedure can use that. Those who do not can use the procedure taught in our manuals.

Call for Action

At this time, nearly one thousand people are doing a homam to some deity or the other, on a regular basis. Spending time worshipping god in fire for 20-30 min (or more) everyday, with an attitude of surrender and with some basic intellectual understanding of the absolute truths expounded by Veda and Upanishads, can do a world of good to one’s spiritual evolution. The proof of the pudding is in eating it. One can try to perform a short homam everyday for a few months and see for oneself if there is a difference in one’s attitude, focus and clarity of thinking.

Manuals for a short homam procedure that takes 20-30 min and a super-short procedure that takes 10 min are available at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/homam>. MP3 audio and youtube video are also available there. Though manuals for homam to various deities are available, it is advisable for one to do Ganapathi homam for a few months, before moving on to another homam based on one’s taste. Manuals for homam to many deities exist on the website.

These manuals are detailed and in a “for dummies” style. Many people who did not even light a lamp in their life and did not do any rituals before are doing daily homam using these manuals. These manuals can be used by *anybody*, of Indian origin or not, initiated into rituals or not.

“I Still Have Responsibilities”

Some people say that they still have some responsibilities and not ready for serious spiritual sadhana. This fear stems from a misunderstanding that equates spiritual progress with external *sannyasa* or renunciation. Influence of traditions that came during Kali yuga such as Buddhism and Christianity may have created this misunderstanding.

Spiritual progress and realization are not anti-dharma. One *must* fulfill one’s dharma and pay off kaarmik debts, before one becomes self-realized. Spiritual progress does *not* take one away from one’s responsibilities in the world, but will enable one to fulfill those responsibilities *better!*

One spends a high percentage of one’s time and energy worrying about what is not in one’s control and engaging in inconsequential actions. With spiritual progress, one learns to shed unnecessary baggage, use one’s time and energy more effectively, focus on what one can control and engage in actions that have a consequence.

Conclusion

Homam is far more effective as a spiritual sadhana, compared to japam. An external fire strengthens by resonance one’s internal fire, which burns one’s conditioning and purifies one. Free homam manuals are available and nearly one thousand people are performing homam regularly. If one is interested, one can check out the manuals and give a try to the 10 minute super-short procedure.