

Rudrābhishekam & Chandi Homam at SAMBODH CENTER FOR HUMAN EXCELLENCE

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The avowed mission of Sambodh Society is to activate individual's inner spiritual power. The society draws upon the Vedic wisdom, which forms the basis for this path. The first step is *Yajna*, a Sanskrit term for worship.

Yajna symbolizes man's acknowledgement that his life and living are larger than selfish ends. To help clearly identify his role in the scheme of creation, our scriptures have recommended '*Nishkama Karma*', self-less work, consisting of five-fold actions. They are *Deva Yajna* (worship of gods), *Brahma Yajna* (study of scriptures), *Pitru Yajna* (worship of elders and the elderly), *Manushya Yajna* (service to fellowmen) and *Bhuta Yajna* (service to animal kingdom and preserving the environment). Sambodh Society is vigorously promoting all of these globally.

The performance of *Rudra Homa* which commenced on August 16-17, 2003 is a profound expression of *Deva Yajna*.

Why Perform Rudra Homa ritual?

1. It assures that the *Purusharthas* (goals of life) are fulfilled. Rudra Homa is considered as the most exalted Vedic ritual. When Sage Yajnavalkya was asked 'Which prayer gives one liberation, health, heaven, riches and makes one transcend mortality?' he replied 'By worshiping Rudra'. The very word *Rudra* means 'one who melts away the sorrows of *samsara*'.
2. For the sake of '*Rita*'. *Rita*, the highest purpose of creation, means 'right'. It signifies the eternal and immutable universal and existential order. The *Yajna* brings in this *Rita* to the individual's awareness. Such an expansion of one's being destroys all sin and sinful tendencies.
3. This is a powerful *Maha Yajna*. It encompasses three of the *Nishkama Karmas*, namely, *Deva Yajna* (worship of Rudra, the regents of directions, and other divinities), and *Manushya Yajna* (by congregation of devotees who partake *prasada* or grace of the Lord).

4. It is very rare that a *Homa* of this significance and magnitude can be witnessed. Equally rare is the opportunity for the uninitiated to actually participate in the process of worship.
5. This powerful *Homa* consecrates the newly acquired land for the Ashram and sets the stage for creation of a totally serene environment for meditation.

Essential Requirements

For a Vedic ritualistic sacrifice, there must be four entities.

1. Yajamana and his wife
2. Adhvaryu the chief priest along with Hotr, Udgatr and Brahma
3. Dravya or Havis the material for sacrifice and
4. Agni

The Yajamana is the sponsor of the ritual. He, his wife and his children are the beneficiaries of the sacrifice.

The priests

Four classes priests are invited at the ceremony. The Hotr invokes the gods using Rig Vedic hymns. The Udgatr (one who raises his voice and sings) chants the Saman hymns. The Adhvaryu is the priest directly responsible to conduct the sacrifice. He is the specialist in Yajur Veda and at his behest the other priests chant the appropriate mantras. He is the one who can bring forth the body of the Yajna - Yajna Shareera. The fourth priest is known as Brahma and his role is that of the master of ceremonies. He is to be well versed in Rig, Yajus and Sama Vedas. His responsibility is to make sure all the mantras (chanting) and tantras (method of performing the ritual) are properly followed.

The place of Yajur Veda

The derivation of the word *Yajus* is '*yajur yajanaat*' - yajus is for the sake of yajna - the ritual of sacrifice.

The Havis

Havis is the offering of the oblation. The attitude in offering is *sradha*, devotion.

Agni

There is no sacrifice without Agni. Agni is the giver of prosperity and happiness. He is also known as JATAVEDAS or 'all-possessor', 'all knowing'. Everything born or created is His property. He is the One having innate wisdom.

AGNI is made up of three syllables. A + GA + NI. GA means to move. AGA means that which cannot move. Ni means to move. Hence Agni is the ONE who can make our inert body function. Thus Agni is indeed Brahman.

He is the leader of gods, the fore-runner, the first divinity to arrive in sacrifices. He is the god of sacrifice, ready to secure the welfare of all of us. All the gods come to the sacrifice only in the form of Agni.

Agni is also known as Rudra. In this homa, Agni is the deity. He is invoked with his consort 'SWAHA'.

Swaha is the daughter of Daxa Prajapati. She is the presiding deity over the Havis or burnt offerings.

Her body consists of the four Vedas. Her limbs are the six Vedangas. The vedangas are:

1. Shikshaa - the science of proper pronunciation
2. Chandas - metre
3. Vyakarana - grammar
4. Nirukta - explanation of difficult vedic words
5. Jyothisha - the vedic calendar to fix auspicious days for the yajna
6. Kalpa - the proper ceremonial method

Shiksha and Chandas assure correct recitation

Vyakarana and Nirukta ensure correct understanding

Jyothisha and Kalpa guide in the proper employment of the sacrifice

The aim of the Homa is to beget, among other things, power of memory and wisdom.

The RUDRA HOMA is the ship that bears the Yajamana and the devotees to the heaven of bliss.

The partaking of the prasada, the Yajna Shishta, lets the Lord into our being and the being becomes Shiva.

In short, this meaningful and mystic ritual brings material prosperity and well-being of the devotees and uplifts them to the path of *Rita*.

It is in Yajna that all things in the world are founded; it is by Yajna that the world is supported and it is Yajna that preserves the people.