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## **Homa Therapy: A Step Towards Sustainable Agriculture**

Niharika Khurana\*

Maitreyi College, University of Delhi, Chanakyapuri, Delhi, India

\*Correspondence: [niharikakhurana99@gmail.com](mailto:niharikakhurana99@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

The world is going through numerous climatic, economic, and environmental changes and agriculture is facing a major crisis due to the processes of modernization. Food produced is heavily loaded with pesticides, hormones, and different chemicals which can be very toxic to both human beings and nature. There is a need to revisit our traditional methods and practices in search of alternatives that are sustainable. One such traditional practice in India, prevalent since the Vedic era is 'Homa Therapy'. Homa therapy has two aspects- it is a technique that rejuvenates the land with the use of yajñas in practical life, and also has a therapeutic value by eradicating toxic substances from the environment. This technique purifies the air, eradicating harmful bacteria present in the atmosphere and the ashes contain medicinal properties. This brief report on indigenous practices describes Homa Therapy, a practice that originated in India and is now practiced worldwide, that can contribute to sustainable agriculture.

**Keywords:** Homa Therapy, agnihotra, vyarthi homa, trayambakam homa

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In India, agricultural practices can be traced back to the early Vedic era. This system was rich and the techniques focused on the natural ways of farming, which also took care of the environment in the process. The primary aim was to bring the farmers, the process of farming and the environment in complete harmony with each other (Naresh et al. 2018). Rigveda, the first ancient text, describes agriculture as the real source of wealth and prosperity. It also states farming as superior to all other occupations-

*akshairmā dīvyah kṛiShimitkṛiShasva vitte ramaṣva bahu manyamānaḥ |*

*(Rigveda 10.34.13)*

(Don't gamble; instead, devote yourself to agriculture and generate money in a rational way. Agriculture is the foundation of human life, providing prosperity and respect in society)

Vedic agricultural system was many layered, involving the use of eco-friendly and natural techniques of cultivation. The Rig Veda makes several references to different tiers of cultivation – ploughing, sowing, harvesting, threshing etc.; different sorts of farmers; different kinds of fields – *urvara*, *irina*, *sasya* etc. It also defines different food crops and different agricultural seasons.

## 2. HOMA THERAPY

‘HOMA’ is a Sanskrit word which is generally known as *Yajñas*, which means fire rituals. Homa Therapy is a technical term from the Vedic science of bioenergy, denoting the technique of eliminating the poisonous conditions of the surroundings with the aid of using ‘Fire’ (Paranjape, 1989). This technique is primarily based on *Yajñas* and sources its energy from the sun. These *Yajñas* need to be executed in a very precise manner in order to get the best possible results. In the ‘Mundakopanishad’ it has been prescribed that-

*Eteshu yashcharate bhrājamāneshu yathākālaṃ chāhutayo hyādādāyan |*

*Taṅ nayantyetāḥ sūryasya rashmayo yatra devānaṃ patirekodhivāsah ||*

*(Mundakopanishad 1.1.5) (Jalan, 1935)*

(If the person conducting this sacrifice (havan), puts in the offerings in these resplendent flames of fire, in due course of time, it (the offerings) will be carried by the rays of sun, to the place where the king of the deities (Indra) resides)

The most crucial factor about this agricultural approach is that it recognizes the force of the fifth element *Akash* (sky), the other four elements being *Prithvi* (Earth), *Jal* (Water), *Vāyu* (Air) and *Tej/Agni* (Fire). Śrī Vasant Paranjape in his book “Homa Therapy – our Last Chance” says “whilst those precise mantras are uttered at the particular instances of sunrise/sunset, “resonance” takes place within the pyramid. The word “SVĀHA,” has the maximum impact. It is the resonance which heals (Paranjape, 1989).

In this technique, one tries to rejuvenate the farm or the area with the help of sacrificial fire or the Vedic sacrifice. When we speak of the Vedic sacrifice, it primarily refers to the three simple forms of fire sacrifices: *agnihotra*, *vyāhṛtihoma* and *tryambakahoma*. As these are simple processes they could be performed by anyone, regardless of their belief.

### 2.1. Agnihotra

One of the most prominent techniques in Homa Therapy used across the globe is *Agnihotra*. The one performing this sacrifice is referred to as ‘*Agnihotri*’. In ancient times, *agnihotra* was conducted to purify the atmosphere from all kinds of pollutants and to replenish the nutrients for a healthy crop. The fire of *Agnihotra* is prepared in a small pyramid-like vessel of precise length and shape. Brown rice, dried cow dung (manure) and ghee (clarified unsalted butter) are the materials burned in order to execute this *havan/ Yajña*. As prescribed by the Vedas, it should be performed daily at the time of dawn and dusk-

*sāyaṅ– sāyaṅ ḡṛihapatirno agniḥ  
prātaḥ prātaḥ saumanasasya dātā |  
(Atharvaveda 19.7.13)*

*prātaḥ prātaḥ ḡṛihapatirno agniḥ  
sāyaṅ– sāyaṅ saumanasasya dātā |  
(Atharvaveda 19.7.14)*

(The above hymn says that, the impact of the Agnihotra carried out at the time of sunrise will last till the night and the impact of the Agnihotra executed at the time of sunset will last until the next morning. The primary impact could be *Saumanasya* or tranquillity of the mind. This state can be achieved due to the positive effects of the Agnihotra on the *Prana* and the mind)

The inverted semi-pyramid-shaped agnihotra pot should preferably be crafted from a single piece of copper. Copper is an excellent conductor of heat and electricity and hence is essential for the transportation of the energies emanating from the agnihotra (Sharma et al., 2015). Śrī Vasant Parāñjpe emphasized that cow dung is the most important fuel for every Vedic sacrifice (Paranjape, 1976). The amount of sacrifice is twice the amount of offering that can be held by the agnihotri with their thumb, middle and forefinger (Heigl & Heigl, 2011).

During the sacrifice the practitioner (Agnihotri) starts reciting the appropriate *Mantras* and whenever the word ‘svāha’ is uttered, offerings are put in the flame with the help of his/her right hand. At the time of sunrise, the following mantras are recited-

*sūryāya svāhā | sūryāya idaṃ na mama |  
prajāpatayesvāhā | prajāpataye idaṃ na mama ||*

(O Sun, the giver of Energy, I salute you and offer unto you what is given to me by you, that which is not mine but thine. O lord, the almighty Creator, I salute you and offer unto you that what is given to me by you, that which is not mine but thine.)

And at the time of sunset, the following mantras are uttered-

*agnayesvāhā | agnayeidaṃ na mama |  
prajāpataye svāhā | prajāpataye idaṃ na mama ||*

(O Agni, the Primordial element, I salute you and offer unto you that what is given to me by you, that which is not mine but thine. O lord, the almighty Creator, I salute you and offer unto you that what is given to me by you, that which is not mine but thine.) (Rajimwale, n.d.)

## 2.2. Vyāhṛtiḥoma

This act of sacrifice is very similar to agnihotra, although the sacrifice can take place at any point of time, except sunrise and sunset. The sacrificial pot is also identical to that used in agnihotra, but the offerings are limited to clarified butter, which is provided in a copper vessel so that it can be easily liquefied with heat. Śrī Vasant Parāñjpe in his book ‘Homa Therapy- Our Last Chance’ reported that through regular performance of the vyāhṛtiḥomas at one place, a special energy is generated which can be used to increase agricultural produce as well as to eliminate physical or mental ailments (Paranjape, 1989).

The main ingredient used in this approach is ‘clarified butter’ or ‘ghee’, which has extraordinary beneficial properties. This ghee when burnt produces herbal fumes that are claimed to heal the respiratory system and remove blood clots, and bacteria in the nasal cavity, lungs and veins. In the Bible, the Book of Samuels, Chapter 2, “the burning of sins, using the sticks and clarified butter” infers that ghee was often used for fire rituals in biblical times. Essential oil components penetrate the nasal passages, pores and skin, or lungs and can directly affect the autonomic nervous system. This may relax or stimulate the fundamental responses such as heart rate, blood pressure and respiration, and might also locally act on dermal and bronchial systems (Bansal et al., 2015).

In vyāhṛtiḥoma, the practitioner takes a seat in front of the pot, lights a fire and, as soon as it burns, begins the recitation of following mantra:

*bhūḥ svāhā | agnaye idaṃ na mama ||*  
*bhuvah svāhā | vāyave idaṃ na mama ||*  
*svah svāhā | sūryāya idaṃ na mama ||*  
*bhūrbhuvah svah svāhā | prajāpataye idaṃ na mama ||*  
 (Gobhil Griha Sutra 1.8.15) (Achari, 2018)

(O Lord, I salute you. O Agni, the Primordial fire, I offer unto you that what is given to me by you, that which is not mine but thine. O dispeller of miseries, I salute you. O Vāyu, I offer unto you that which is given to me by you, that which is not mine but thine. O ultimate form of light, I salute you. O Surya, the giver of energy, I offer unto you what is given to me by you, that which is not

mine but thine. O omnipresent, dispeller of miseries and the ultimate form of light, I salute you. O lord, the almighty Creator, I offer unto you that which is given to me by you, that which is not mine but thine.)

It has been prescribed in the *Griha Sutra* of *Hiranyakesin* that sacrifices are made with the *vyarthis*, ‘Bhūh! Bhuvah! Svah! ‘ —with each (*Vyarthis*) and with the three altogether (Müller 1892). It is believed that, the offerings of *vyāhṛtihoma* are directed to the three worlds (*triloka*), which condition and interact with one another. In the Vedic sacrifice, these are purified and thus initiate a healing process that encompasses all three worlds as well as the body, soul and spirit of the person. Hence, the practitioner is advised to sit by the fire until it goes out.

### 2.3. Tryambakahoma

‘Trayambakamhoma’ or ‘Om Trayambakam Homa’ is one of the major techniques used in Homa Therapy. ‘Tryambaka’ is considered to be the ultimate power that can lead a believer beyond life and death and grants salvation. Ideally, Trayambakamhoma should be performed daily for several hours. But special importance is given to the new and full moon. It is said that it would be optimal to perform this Vedic sacrifice over a period of twenty-four hours on these days, to achieve the best possible effect. The following are the mantras recited during this ritual-

*om tryambakam yajāmahe, sugandhimpūṣṭivardhanam /  
urvārukamiva bandhanān, mṛtyormukṣīya mā ‘mṛtāt svāhā ||  
(Rigveda 7.59.12)*

(We worship the fragrant three- eyed One, who confers ever-increasing prosperity; let us be saved from the hold of death, like the cucumber freed from its stalk; let us not turn away from liberation)

(Roopak, 2013; Siddhantnakar, 2013)

It is believed that with the help of these mantras, harmful substances can be destroyed that significantly improve the quantity and quality of agricultural plants and also increase their resistance to unfavourable environmental elements and pests. Heigl and Heigl (2011) assert that in some cases, the fields get rejuvenated in a period of just two weeks by regularly performing ‘Om Tryambakam Homa’.

### 3. EFFECTS OF HOMA THERAPY

Vedic sacrifice (yajña) can help people avoid negative impacts of environmental pollution and help fight impulses. Homa Therapy can be applied to agriculture, forestry or medicine. A positive effect can be accomplished via the sacrificial fire. Horst Heigl and Birgitt Heigl emphasize that the carbon dioxide released in the yajña increases the oxygen production by plants which causes purification at numerous levels. Heigls proved with the help of experiments conducted in India that on the one hand, the Vedic sacrifice purify the air and on the other hand it results in a reduction in pathogenic bacteria. Microbiologists from Ferguson College in Puna tested the air before and after performing the agnihotra and observed that 77.5% of the air within the room was purified through a single agnihotra and 96% of the microorganisms present there were eliminated (Potdar, 1990). While the fumes help in enhancing the air quality, the ashes obtained replenishes the nutrients in the soil. As the ashes obtained from this sacrificial fire contain various medicinal properties, it can be used for diverse purposes. When mixed with water, it can be used as an organic fertilizer and when used as an aerial spray, it can strengthen the plants as well. The ash can also purify water sources. Thus, when Homa Therapy is performed regularly using the correct method, it rejuvenates the farm, cleans the atmosphere and enhances the soil quality and crop production as well (Heigl & Heigl, 2011; Bechler, 2013).

### 4. PRACTICES ACROSS THE GLOBE

Although Homa Therapy originated in India, this approach has been embraced globally. Various homa farms are located throughout the world like *Bhrugu Aranya* in Poland, Haldenhof in Germany, *Om Shree Dham* in Australia, *Tapovan* in India, Ancient Oaks in the USA, *Shreedham* in Spain, *Satsang* in Chile, and Tenjo in Colombia. Moreover, special events are held worldwide every year to spread awareness about this ancient technique. In Germany, a summer festival is held at the Homa Farm called ‘Homa Hof’ at Heiligenberg (southern Germany). This Homa farm was founded in 1988 and is administered by over 60 honorary members. Besides morning and night Agnihotra, various other disciplines are practiced here as endorsed by Shree Vasant (five o’clock morning mantra, Vyarthi Homa at 10,12,15,18, and 21 hours and Om Tryambakam Homa is performed for at least four hours daily). In addition, on many occasions, the

Tryambakam Homa is practiced for over twenty-four hours or more. In a total area of 20 hectares, around eight hectares are used for agriculture that is managed with Homa Therapy techniques (Bruce, 2011).

Some years back, in Three Sisters Aucayacu (homa farm), Huanuco Region, Peru, South America, a farmer named Edgar Arevalo Patow was disgusted as his farms were affected by “Panama evil” (a more potent fungus than “Black Sigatoka”). Agronomists, specialists, doctors, etc. told him that the specific disorder has no solution due to the fact that the fungus lived within the soil. He tried everything, however the yield of the crops steadily decreased. He then tried Homa Therapy. First, the Homa resonance factor was installed in the field and then the farmer received training for performing Homa Therapy. As soon as he became trained, he commenced Homa Therapy. After a week he observed that his plantain trees began to develop green healthy leaves. He continued with Homa Therapy, especially Agnihotrat at sunrise and sunset, along with the application of Agnihotra ash as a solution to the whole plantain plantation. It was recorded that after 6 months of Homa Therapy his farms were entirely rejuvenated (Aleta, 2011).

In 1999, the ‘Planeta Homa’ project was launched as ‘*BOTICA DE LA ABUELA*’ in response to the earthquake that severely affected the coffee region of Quindio. Later in 2014, it was named as BOTICASOL. There are various other successful stories all over the world that reiterates that implementation of Homa Farming Techniques stabilize ecosystems in agriculture, even in arid lands and with unfavorable soil, weather and / or altitude conditions (Aleta, 2021)

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The author hereby declares no conflict of interest.

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