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At the Los Angeles Press Club Dr. Pranav Pandya, director of the Brahmavarchas Research Institute in Shanti Kunj, Hardwar, India, announced that the "recitation of the Gayatri mantra combined with yagna (Vedic fire ceremony) performed according to precise Vedic rules can cure physical illnesses, mental disorders and also has beneficial corrective effects on the environment." Touring the US and Canada through June and July to promote the institute's findings, Dr. Pandya exclaimed, "We have scientific clinical data to back up this statement. During the past ten years, over 8,000 people have gained well being at the institute, as a result of sanjeevani sadhana, incorporating Gayatri, yagna and spiritual and dietary regimens.'

Pandya, 41, is an M.D. in internal medicine. In 1974 gave up a residency job at Ohio State University to stay in India and work under his guru Sri Ram Sharma Acharya, to combine spirituality and science for the welfare of the Indian public. Utilizing a sophisticated laboratory full of mechanical and electronic gear to assess the biochemical and physiological changes in humans as a result of the sanjeevani sadhana. According to Dr. Pandya, the Gayatri/yagna therapy is successfully used in disorders ranging from high blood pressure to cancer, and is remarkably effective in treating mental disorders.

Pandya, who prefers to work at a grass roots level, plans to release his data to the global scientific community in about a year, "after all my findings are in perfect order for their perusal," he said. He anticipates that yagnopathy will earn a respectable place alongside homeopathy, naturopathy and allopathy. The institute asserts that the combination of Gayatri recitation (creating a complex sound energy) and yagna rites (generating heat energy and atmospheric/gas changes, including the burning of specific medicinal herbs) is also useful in combating environmental pollution and in bacteria and agricultural pest management.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Gayatri mantra has 24 syllables and when recited, those syllables address 24 different centers in the body. The mantra which occurs in the Rig Veda (3.623.10) reads as follows: Aum bhoor bhuvam swaha, tatsaviturvarenyam, bhargo devasya dheemahi, dhiyo yo nah prachodayat. That is sound therapy and the power of the sound vibrations have long been established by the scientists. The 24 syllables are bijamantras, and their ultrasonic wave patterns. They positively affect the subtle centers of the human body, and almost act like a password to human consciousness. The synergistic waves help open the door of the insight, and a spiritual treasure is unveiled. Thousands of Hindus who do not yet know the institute's findings have experienced very soothing and uplifting effects when they recipe the Gayatri mantra in their daily lives. Ideally, the mantra should be recited in the early morning sun and bharga is its new, golden luster. "If millions of people recite the Gayatri mantra at the same time, it can act as an invisible sound wave protection for those people, even in a nuclear holocaust," said Dr. Pandya.

Several scholars outside of India have understood the potent power of the sound vibrations of Gayatri. Arthur Koestler, the famous Hungarian author, had visited India and lived in Benaras in the 1950's. In an interview with Blitz periodical's B.K. Karanjia, as reported in the Navneet Hindi digest, he said, "The Gayatri mantra is like an antidote to the nuclear holocaust. It is a great resource and this powerful mantra can act as a great shelter to India. If millions of people recite the mantra at the same time, the collective consciousness can act as a septic guard for them." Scientific research has been done on the power of the Gayatri mantra in Japan and Japanese people are very receptive. In India, Mahayogi Aurobindo observed, "Very important work can be achieved with the power of Gayatri." Rabindranath Tagore had said, "It is the Gayatri mantra which has awakened India and which is so simple as can be chanted in one breath."

Etymologically, Yaskacharya's Nirukta explains the work Gayatri as the one that enlivens and protects the pranic energy. It is only fitting that such a prayer is addressed to the sun as an imploration to inspire and sharpen one's intellect.

YAGNOPATHY

If Gayatri mantra is the sound energy, the yagna is the heat energy. The Yajur Veda is a reservoir of precise formulas for (yajus = yagna formula) performing of several types of yagnas. In a yagna, specific types of medicinal herbs and woods are burned in specified amounts in a certain sequence. Precision is of importance here - even the size of the yagna kunda must be according to specifications. "Yagna is the scientific way of fumigating the medicinal herbs for the benefit of the individuals as well as the environment." Dr. Pandya explained. "When a medicine is inhaled, 80% to 90% of it is utilized by the body." When the mantras are recited along with the yagna, the sound energy and the light energy interact with one another to produce desirable effects. The right sounds must be uttered at the right points in the progress of the flames.

Yagna can help bring about a cure in mental disorders like depression, neurosis, psychosis, schizophrenia, depression, melancholia, etc. The stress and strain of modern life, degradation of social behavior, and fall in moral values all around are contributing to psychosomatic diseases. Yagna might offer a solution to this problem as well.

The following substances are fumigated in a yagna: wood (sandalwood, agar, tagar, deodar, mango, palash, bilva) cardoman, nutmeg, camphor, fruits and cereals (wheat, rice, barley, sesame seed) peas, sugar and honey, medicinal herbs like brahmi, shankhapushpi, nagkesar, somlata.

The temperature of yagna reaches between 250(C) to 600(C). Due to the steam volatilization of the odorous substances, other substances like thymol, eugenol, pinere, terpinelo are carried over to distances in the surroundings and the aroma can be smelled at a considerable distance. The vapors of yagna are antiseptic because the oxidation of hydrocarbons produce formic acid and acetic acid which are good disinfectants. The non-bacterial insects are either killed or driven away as they come in contact with volatile oils like camphor. Plants and vegetation become healthier because the harmful bacteria that can cause disease are killed.

BRAHMAVARCHAS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

This one of a kind institute, founded in 1979 near Hardwar in close proximity of the serne Himalayas, purports to establish the intercommunication of science with

spirituality. Its aims are to present in a new scientific light, through laboratory and clinical experiments, the age old truths that India's ancient rishis had discovered intuitively through intense tapasya.

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Sharma's SOUND Sadhana

In the late 1930's Pandit Sharma lived as a hermit in the Himalayas, reciting the Gayatri mantra 7,000 times a day, 365 days a year, for 24 years. He meditated on the dawning sun and ate only buttermilk and a handful of grains. Out of this continuum of Gayatri sound meditation he penetrated into the potency of the Gayatri's 24 syllables and its special amplifying relationship to the yagna ritual. He extensively studied the Vedas, and later translated the entire collection.

His catholic outlook for the Gayatri use by women was criticized, but he answered in his book, Gayatri, The Omnipotent Primordial Power: "The code of conduct in Hindu religion has equality of humans in all respects with unity and compassion as basic tenets. Hindu culture regards the female of human species as superior to its male counterpart. How could then the wise sages of India deprive women of super wisdom of practice of Gayatri? In ancient days, the rishikas (nuns) participated together with men in all religious and metaphysical rituals. Gayatri is symbolized by a female deity. Gayatri is accessible to each and every individual of the human species."

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