

IMPORTANCE OF RITUALS TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN CULTURE*

Subash Chandra DASH

0. Introduction

The Indian culture is the basic foundation to which the Vedic literature contributed much for the growth and development of human life. It is quite interesting to know and study how it is relevant today and how one performs even now various rituals. The Vedic sacrifices were performed in various ways which later on changed into different forms by the changing influence of Tantric Practices. The common feature in all the performances is to incur *Dharma* which is the basis of Indian Culture. In the Vedic time *ṛta* was the chief goal which was considered nothing but *Dharma* and *Satya*.

It is mentioned that, if one performs rituals then the fruit he gets is heaven. This is the highest type of bliss. Afterwards the rituals influenced by *Śrautasūtras*, *Grhyasūtras* and *Āgama* texts confined the tradition towards making simplification slowly in a continuous manner. Whatever the case may be the rituals still continuing and forming a major force in binding people at large.

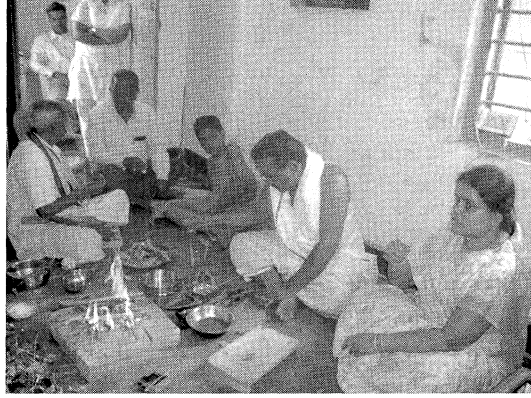
This paper will highlight all the above points to show how the ritual culture contributed much towards the development of Indian culture.

1. Fire Rituals

Starting from the first verse of the *Ṛgveda* to that of the last of the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, fire has taken a prominent place in the sacrificial culture. Since the dawn of civilization man is related with fire in various spheres of life. Agni is associated with other natural

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phenomena like Varuṇa, Mitra, Uṣas, as the protector of Cosmic law. In order to propitiate them, the Vedic Literature eulogized them by various invocations. Sacrifices were attached also through invocations befitting to each one of them and sometimes jointly. The verses like Indra and Agni, Agni and Varuṇa, Agni and Soma, Mitra and Varuṇa stand a proof towards this performance.



Agni is invoked with much importance separately as it is the prime God through which all Gods get the oblation. Hence, Agni is called as *mukha* in which all types of sacrificial oblations are offered. Agni is invoked in the sacrifice in order to purify the entire universe. It is pure by itself and hence called as *śucikratu*. When fire lit in the sacrifice it goes upward and purifies that place as well as the environment.¹ Agni is produced from the rubbing of two wood and stones etc. It is available even in water.² Agni takes the oblations to the Gods through his mouth.³ This Agni is regarded as the tongue of Gods.⁴ Agni spreads the offered oblations in *dyuloka* and *prthvīloka*. Agni functions in two types namely — purifying and transforming the oblations into small particles which are easily transformed in air and water vapours. The Vedic tradition informs us that Gods first of all created the materials like ghee, *havirdravyas* (oblations), *puroḍāśa*

¹ See *Rgveda* 2.5.53.

² *tvam agne dyubis tvam āśuśukṣanis tvam adbhyas tvam aśmanas pari*. Ibid. 2.1.1.

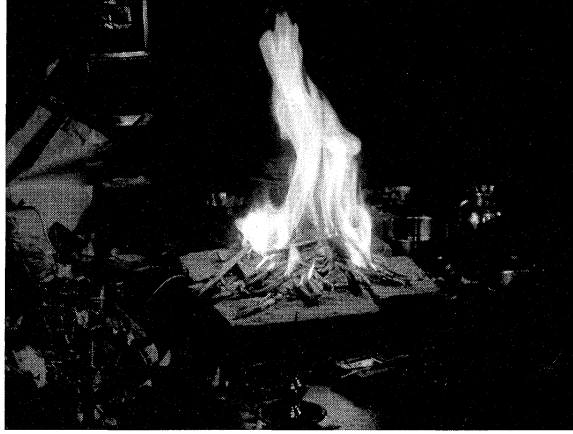
³ *tvam agna ādityāsa āsyam*. Ibid. 2.1.13.

⁴ *jīhvām śucayaś*. Ibid. 2.1.13.

(sacrificial cake), *śruva* (ladle) and other utensils for sacrificial purpose.⁵

Agni is regarded as the soul of all the Gods, it is the illumination and that is why should be protected and illuminated in home regularly.⁶ Since time immemorial, *yajña* was introduced. This was spread throughout and was associated with wealth, growth and prosperity. It became the source of knowledge and constant growth. The purpose of sacrifice was to bring balance in all beings and peace for which the *śāntimantras* were introduced so that everybody will be in peace and harmony. Sacrifices create innumerable energy in human beings and offers long life, air, vital energy (*prāṇa*), progeny (*prajā*), animals (beings: *paśu*) and fame. Those who perform sacrifices are endowed with progeny and growth and those who don't become vigourless.⁷

That is why *yajña* fire was regarded as the central path of the entire creation.⁸



As the deities invoked in the Vedic literature are related with the cosmic law '*Rta*', they regulate the movements of everything in the Universe. So it is necessary to propitiate them for growth and

⁵ *Atharvaveda*, 18.4.2.

⁶ *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, 14.3.2.5; 7.4.1.14.

⁷ *Atharvaveda*, 19.63.1.

⁸ *ayaṃ yajño bhuvanasya nābhiḥ. Ṛgveda*, 1.164.35.

protection. Though they are different forms of One Cosmic Power that is omnipresent and omniscient, they manifest differently. This has been recorded in the *Rgveda* with much emphasis.⁹

Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa of Lagadha opines that the *Vedas* are dedicated to sacrifice (*veda hi yajñārtham abhipravṛttau*). Jaimini in his *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* also supports this view saying — *āmnāyasya kriyārthatvāt ānarthakyam atadarthānām* which suggests that the *Veda* is meant to prescribe action — the sacrifice. So ritual is again becoming the central focus of incurring *dharma*. This *dharma* is nothing but the action which leads one to attain *svarga* i.e. the eternal peace. *Dharma* and sacrifice are used identically in the Vedic Literature as well as *Mīmāṃsā śāstras*. That is the reason why Jaimini introduced the enquiry with *dharma* in his first *sūtra*. (*athāto dharmajijñāsā*, 1.1.1).

Not only in the first *sūtra*, he has dealt this in the next twelve chapters. The deities first performed *Yajña* in honour of the deity and that a *Yajña* forming the first act of *dharma*.¹⁰ This meaning is understood as the elements of nature which integrate and disintegrate through a process and that is the medium of sacrificial performance. This is a cosmological aspect which informs us regarding the unity of the natural forces through disintegrality. Hence, in the above *mantra*, we can know that, *yajña* and fire have been used as instruments in transforming the void into a universe of matter and the same fire formed the fundamental force for cosmic creation.

The *Bhagavadgītā* also refers that, the human beings were created simultaneously with that of the fire ritual and asked to gain prosperity with it, for *yajña* (like the mystic cow) is the best over of all desires.¹¹ The simultaneous creation of man and *yajña* is according to the desire of the supreme lord as the man wants to satisfy his outer and inner desires. The outer desire is fulfilled by physical pleasures and inner one by pure knowledge arising out of pure action. That is why the sacrifices are the sources of pure action which may lead one to blissful state of *atman*. This is nothing but *Svarga* itself. *Yajña* has to be performed for stimulating this inner

⁹ *Rṣi Dīrghatamas* declares — *Indraṃ mitraṃ Varuṇaṃ agniṃ āhur atho divyaḥ sa suparṇo garutmān ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanty agniṃ — yamaṃ mātariśvānam āhuḥ*. (I.164.46)

¹⁰ *yajñena yajñam ayajanta devāstāni dharmāni prathamāny āsan*. (*Rgveda*, I.164.50; X.90.16)

¹¹ *sahayajñah prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā puro 'vāca prajāpatiḥ, anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo 'stv iṣṭa-kāmadhuk*. 3.10

urge. The word *iṣṭakāmadhuk* mentioned here in the *Bhagavadgīta* refers to its capability of preparing oneself for fulfilling both the requirements as it releases positive energy inside and outside as well. So, *yajña* and fire go hand in hand with that of the process of creation and progress of humanity. With fire no ritual can be performed. Even Śābarasvāmin in his commentary also informs us that — the sacrifices joins a person with *niḥśreyasa* i.e. the ultimate bliss.

The *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* (1.1.2) of Kaṇāda also describes *dharma* which brings property (through true knowledge). Here also right action means that which is performed not causing harm to others rather making some kind of merit to others and for one-self as well. The Vedic sacrifice means in the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* and commented by the *bhāṣyakāra* in the same manner.¹² Sacrifice is action which is unavoidable. It is the rule of life and inevitable for everybody, one dedicates his action to the ultimate source of energy called when “God” gets everything positive and incurs merit out of it. The Sanskrit *śāstras* interpret the Vedic view of sacrifice in Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika systems which brings ultimate bliss.¹³ One can call it *Svarga* and afterwards *niḥśreyasa* or *mokṣa* or *apavarga*. All these words have a link to the thought developed in the Vedic literature. The difference is between performance of right action and knowing or experiencing it. By this way, the *karmakāṇḍa* and *jñānakāṇḍa* are divided to realize the same ultimate reality. The Vedic literature discriminates between a pure action and impure one. The same is explained in the *Śābarabhāṣya*.¹⁴ Sacrifice is called as the ideal action described in *Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa* and *Maitrāyaṇī-Saṃhitā*.¹⁵

The sacrifices reveal ultimate bliss which is again called truth in Vedic literature. The performance of a *yajña* depends on the whole-heartedness and dedication of a person one who believes in it. The preparedness to devote ones life to do daily sacrifice (*agnihotra*) or occasional *homa* depends on the activity of a devoted householder.

12 *sa hi niḥśreyasena puruṣam samyunakti iti pratijānīmahe* I ... *ya eva hi śreyaskaraḥ sa dharma — śabdena ucyate. ... yajati śabda vācyam eva dharma samāmanati / ... tasmāt codanā — lakṣaṇaḥ arthaḥ śreyaskaraḥ ... Śābarabhāṣya on Jaimini Sūtra 1.1.1-2.*

13 *Svarga* is a kind of eternal feeling, a state of internal happiness which is beyond expression. Nobody is able to explain what exactly it is. The translation of heaven may not be exactly what it means but if we say heavenly bliss it may be appropriate.

14 See *Śābarabhāṣya* on 1.1.2.

15 *yajño hi śreṣṭhatamo karma. (Tai. Brā. 3.2.1 and Mai. Saṃ. 4.1.1)*



Then one gets the eternal truth which is again designated as *rta*. *Rta* in Vedas is known to be the cosmic law in which all of us in this creation are interlinked. This *Rta* is *Satya* and it is again called as *Dharma*. The sacrifice is the cosmic order in which one performs the action, *Satya* is the dedicatedness called mental preparedness and *dharma* is action performed in the form of sacrifice *yajña*. Regarding these concepts of *Rta*, *satya*, *dharma*, the sacrificial literature describe in great detail. The description in *Maitrāyaṇi Saṃhitā* is the following – ‘the cosmic law is the truth which is also the cosmic sacrifice (*rtam vai satyam yajñāḥ*) MS 1.10-11 ‘the cosmic law is truth’. The Agnihotra is also Truth (*rtam vai satyam agnihotra*) MS 1.8.7. Here Agnihotra is equated with the eternal truth which is the cosmic law and which is also divine. It is again described in the same text that this is the path leading to the knowledge of truth i.e. the sacrifice (*eṣa va rtasya panthāḥ yaj jajñāḥ*) MS 4.8.2. As we have discussed earlier that the ways and means of attaining eternal knowledge is through sacrifice which is the (royal) road leading towards the highest truth. All people believed at that period of time that if one performs sacrifices he will get unseen result which is *apūrva*. The Mīmāṃsā philosophy vividly explained this concept in all the discourses in the tradition. The *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* (1.3.4.16: *yajño va rtasya yoniḥ*) says that sacrifice is the foundational source of cosmic laws. Here, the use of the word *yoniḥ* is very significant which refers to the base (Source) of the cosmic order. The same type of description is also related to sacrifice and becoming pure is a way

leading to cosmic law.¹⁶

A similar statement occurs in the *Bṛhadārāṇyakoṇiṣad* (1.4.11.15) which is commented upon by Śankarācārya as related to the actions performed by the people in general and whatever is accepted commonly by people and that is *Satya* 'Truth'. Whatever is *satya* prescribed by the *śāstras* is also performed through Sacrifice is called as *dharma* and being known through the scriptures, is also known as *satya*.¹⁷ There is a similar type of elaboration in *Māṇḍūkyaṇiṣad* which informs as about the performance of good actions prescribed in the *mantras* of the Vedas which the seers could visualize and transformed that knowledge to us. Those actions are controlled by *nitya* Sacrifices with almost purity as a result which leads to the eternal path of *Satya* and regarded as the royal road leading to the knowledge of *Rta*. Here, the continuation of the cosmic law is ordained by the daily sacrifices as prescribed in the Scriptures governed by the eternal Truth (*Satya*) and it is realized again through the actions performed daily leading to the knowledge of *Rta* and *Satya*.

The *Taittirīyāranyaka* 10.63.1 eulogises *dharma* as the living creating force of the Creation, due to the emergence of *dharma* the creation continues and people take birth, one removes his evil (*pāpa*) through this *dharma* only, everything is established in *dharma* and that is why *dharma* is called as supreme in the Scriptures.

Whatever descriptions are cited above, it is clear that the ancient Vedic Seers discovered *Rta* which is the Cosmic order and identified with *dharma* and *Satya* afterwards. So *dharma* is manifested through the foundation for sustenance. This *dharma* became the supporter or force for upholding life in continuity. And again through that performance of actions which was considered as the deciding factor for *puṇya* or *pāpa*, *ahiṃsā* or *hiṃsā*, good or bad, right or wrong in the history of mankind. Hence, Vedic rituals became the mode of daily practice for all and also turned to be the criterion for eternal happiness 'Svarga'.

The Vedic sacrifices represented in the scriptures are many in number like, *rājasūya vājapeya*, *agniṣṭoma*, *jyotiṣṭoma* and so on.

¹⁶ *yo vai yajñīyo medhyāḥ sa ṛtasya panthāḥ.*

¹⁷ *yo vai dharma vyavahāralakṣaṇo laukikair vyavahriyamānaḥ satyam vai tat, satyam iti yathāśāstra sa eva anuṣṭhīyamāno dharma nāma bhavati, śāstrārthatvena jñāyamāneṣu satyam bhavati.*

Among the varieties of *yajña* also with the applicative *mantras* sacrifices were performed according to each branch of the Vedic texts. The process and days and some special materials were also highlighted in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts and the performance was done accordingly. Many things including style and preparations were common. The three *savanas* namely *prātaḥ*, *mādhyandina* and *sāyam* represented the three dimensions of time in the day of a human being.

The name of the basic ritual is called as *iṣṭi*. *Pavitreṣṭi* is also a modified form of *Darśpūrṇamāsā* sacrifice which is an expiatory rite prescribed. To be performed by the *Ahitagni*, who went on a journey for a period of one year or less, while the sacred fire was maintained and worshipped at home by his wife.

Many *Śrautasūtras* recommend this and the *Bauddhāyana-Śrautasūtra* (28.2) is the oldest one who records this in the *prāyaścitta* section. The same is also regarded as *atipavitreṣṭi* insome *Śrautasūtras*, in the case of a performer who has gone for, more than one year. So *pavitreṣṭi* which is not described in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts is prescribed in some *Śrautasūtras* for achieving purification.



Domestic rites (*Grhya* rituals):

There are many domestic rites mentioned in the *Grhyasūtras*. The *saṃskāras* are generally described in the *Grhyasūtras* and they form the basic subject matter of the domestic rites. The complete method of performance of each *saṃskāra* is described in those texts. The daily ritualistic performances have been recorded in the *Grhyasūtras* and they differ sometimes according to their Vedic schools. The

differences are found while actually performing the rituals. It is due to three levels of following the traditions and those are — i) *deśācāra* 'regional custom', ii) *kulācāra* 'family custom' and iii) *lokācāra* 'practice by the people of the locality'. Because of these variations in the performances, many supplementary texts were written called *Prayāga* texts, *Paddhati* texts and *Parīśiṣṭas*. These were supplementary texts added to the respective *Gr̥hyasūtras*. In Vedic sacrifices *udakaśānti* is prescribed which has been traditionally accepted by all Vedic schools. From the manuals of various Vedic schools it is observed that many procedures of the rituals and expiatory rites have undergone modifications under the influence of geographical, social and economical conditions.

Darśapūrṇamāsa (The new moon and the Full Moon Sacrifices):

It is one of the most basic Vedic rituals.¹⁸ The Sacrifices are normally divided into two types:

1. *Śrauta*: It means sacrifices described in the *Śruti*, *Samhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Śrautasūtras* and a part of the *Kalpasūtras*.
2. *Gr̥hya* (Domestic rites): *Gr̥hya* is otherwise called as *smārta*. It is based on *smṛti* 'remembrance' as laid down by the *Gr̥hyasūtras* and another part of *Kalpasūtras*. The *Kalpasūtras* guide rituals in various forms referring to various schools of the Vedas.

The Sacrifices are —

- 1) *nitya* — 'obligatory' — to be performed daily or on certain days of the lunar calendar throughout the life.
- 2) *naimittika* — 'incidental' — to be performed on certain events.
- 3) *kāmya* — 'optional' — to be performed for certain special ends and
- 4) *prāyaścitta* — 'expiatory' — to be performed in the case of any ritualistic deficiency.

The Sacrifices were performed in accordance with the *mantras*

¹⁸ In the *Darśapūrṇamāsa* (New and Full moon rites), there are two types of offerings called as *prayājas*, 'the fore-offerings' and the *anuyājas* 'the after-offerings'. There sequences are like the following. At the first *prayāja* (P)-offerings are made to the *samidhs* (kindling), second P — to Tanunapād or Narāsaṃsa, the third P — to the *iḍs* (Priests' refreshment), fourth P to the *barhis*, fifth P — to Agni, Soma, the gods of the *Upāṃśu* rite, the gods of 2nd *pradhāna* and the butter receiving gods. Then the first *ājyabhāga* to Agni, second to Soma, first *pradhāna* a *puroḍāśa* cake to Agni, *upāṃśu* to Visnu, Agni-Soma, or Prajāpati only at the new moon rites, a *puroḍāśa* cake to Indra — Agni at the Full Moon rites.

Then *nāriṣṭhahoma* to the fire and to the wind, *sviṣṭakṛt* to Agni — *sviṣṭakṛt* who brings the worship to the deities of fifth *prayāja*. The first *anuyāja* offerings are made to the *barhis* second to *Narāsaṃsa* third to Agni *sviṣṭakṛt*.

performing *trisanthyā* in daily practice is also seen while performing *trisanthyā* everyday by the priests and Brahmins which is compulsory for everybody. Apart from the strict Vedic performances, the later developments in the daily performances can be noted as a part of regular practice in attaining that eternal Truth. The Vedic rituals highlight many points which afterwards became a regular practice among later rituals. In every ritual, *Prāṇāyāma* is a vital performance. One has to hold the breath for sometime while doing performances. An Ahitāgni, before offering any oblations to *āhavanīya* fire, should stop his breath for sometimes in Agnihotra.¹⁹ He should do *Prāṇāyāma* once after keeping a kindled stick of *palāśa* wood in to the fire. A student of Vedic practices, one should perform three times *prāṇāyāma* before uttering the *Sāvitrī mantra* one thousand times in his *Sandhyā* performances. The *sandhyā vandana* instructs this practice of *prāṇāyāma* to every student. For the householder, when he performs an *atithiyajña*, he also does *prāṇāyāma* in *gārhapatya* fire before uttering the *Sāvitrī mantra*. The *prāṇāyāma mantras* are described in various ways while doing the *upanayana* of a child.



In *agnyādhāna*, also the performer has to concentrate on any object or a deity while doing *prāṇāyāma* after making ready the fire places ready as a part of *agnyādhāna*. Here slowly and slowly

¹⁹ In the *śrauta* ritual there are three main fires viz. the *āhavanīya*, the *gārhapatya* and the *dakṣiṇa*. These are situated in an enclosure named as *prāgvamsa* which has an opening to the east.

concentration on a deity or object developed in the Vedic rituals which later on turned to be the source of important Gods and Goddess. The *Vaikhānasaśrautasūtra* 1.4 mentions the preparatory ritual of doing *prāṇāyāma* and meditating on the deity called Nārāyaṇa.

This practice became acceptable to all afterwards and worshipping to God or Goddess in *smārta* rituals. So, it can be said that, it had a strong base in the Vedic ritual which is still now a practice in all types of ritualistic performances.

1.1 Results of Yajña

The Vedic texts have recorded in many ways the results of *yajña*. In the sacrifices, the Almighty or Supreme Energy is the vital force which is responsible for beginning and continuity of this creation. It is necessary to devote our indebtedness to the Supreme Being. Hence we should convey our indebtedness to the Supreme Being (Cosmic energy) through oblations. The entire universe is full of one force. The sun is seen in his form of energy in sky and Agni is manifested in earth of the same energy. It is therefore necessary to offer oblations or offering to the Agni which is present with us and daily it is to be lit in the home in order to come in contact with that energy for our betterment in totality. When Agni is lit, he dispels darkness and pollutants from that area. So, the air becomes pure and as a result we get a better environment to live in. The entire environment becomes *sāttvic* 'possessing good qualities' and all those who come to that place become good with that environment. It is the process of vitalization to the person who performs the sacrifice and also for entire humanity. Fire has the energy as that of sun which also gives vitalization and nourishment. So Sun also is invoked in the daily performances. One gets nourishment, progeny, happiness, purity, animals (beings), prosperity and bliss. The quantum of joy and happiness cannot be described in words and hence called as *svarga*.

2. Mode of Change

The Vedic sacrifices of the *Upaniṣadic* period has gone tremendous change. In the mean time, different *pūjās* and *Upāsanaś* developed in India. It is due to the influence of *Pañcarātra āgama* texts which were developed in the southern parts of India and also in other parts.

In these *āgamas* mostly the *Ṣoḍaśa-upacāra-pūjā Vidhānas* are prescribed. Accordingly the priests used to do as per the prescriptions. These practices have their origin in the *Smṛti* texts such as Manu, Yājñavalkya, Nārada, etc. Due to the emergence of *āgama* texts and the sixteen *saṃskāras* starting from birth till death, all performances were designed accordingly. The sixteen *saṃskāras* are treated as the store house of *smārta* ritualistic performances. But they have a common source which is followed every where in India. Slowly, the Vedic sacrifices lost its importance as it were very costly to gather all the items used for the sacrifices. The Vedic sacrifices were partitioned by the kings as it was easy for them to collect all required materials and arrange. Hence, the *Smṛti* writers afterwards gave importance to daily *pūjā* in this style. Those who were performing Vedic sacrifices were also slowly turned into *mantra* priests as the concept of personal god was introduced.

The varieties and characteristics of Hinduism slowly transformed into Bhaktism. This concept of *bhakti* was also fully developed into various sects i.e. Śaivism, Śaktism and Vaiṣṇavism. The Śaivism was accepted by those who followed the tradition of Śiva which also was based on *Śaivāgamas*. These texts were very much prevalent in Kashmir and Himalayan region and so also in the Southern India. The Śaktism became famous in the Eastern part of India and *Śaktāgamas* were written for doing such performances. The Tantric texts were written in the eastern belt of India which dominated the performances and many goddesses emerged as described in such texts. The sixty-four *yoginīs* and the mother Goddess who became (Durgā), Kālī, Sarasvatī and Mahā Lakṣmī with the varieties alongwith *tantrapūjā* got importance. Many *purāṇas* were composed with their sacrificial performances respectively with reference to this dichotomy and various temples in India were constructed in this regard.

Side by side, the Vaiṣṇavism emerged as a sect which later on emphasized on various forms of Lord Viṣṇu in ten *avatāras* called The Matsya, The Kūrma, The Varāha, The Narasiṃha, The Vāmana, Parśurāma, Rāma, Kriṣṇa, Buddha and Kalkī. These *avatāras* became very famous in the famous text *Gītagovinda* of Śrī Jayadeva of Orissa. Taking different gods and goddess, various *Purāṇas* were composed in ancient India where we get different methods of rituals and performances. The tantric way of worship and performances dominated in the society. Hence the Vedic way of rituals slowly lost

their importance. Many *stotras*, *kavacas*, short performances with *bīja-mantras* are found in such texts. This also influenced the local ritualistic variations afterwards and therefore vary in respect of small changes in the styles of regional influences. Simultaneously, the kings used to patronize the Vedic rituals as well as the *Smārta* rituals. However they were not free from the tantric mode of worshipping their deities and with the rituals. These involved the *pañca-upacāra* and *Ṣoḍaśa-upacāra* performances. Later on many manual texts of worship and rituals were written following the tradition which was commonly acceptable throughout India. As India is a very vast country with a lot of linguistic and socio-cultural dimensions, the rituals were accepted with great enthusiasm and magnitude among people and became a daily practice. The aim of such practice is to incur *dharma* and ultimately leading to *svarga* i.e. peace. Such belief is still continuing in Indian society and people are ready to perform *puja* and rituals at any cost. It has become a part of their life which cannot be separated either by any outside force or any pressure. This is the importance of rituals towards Indian culture.

3. Conclusion

From the above the following concluding remarks can be made:

- i) The Vedic literature described various rituals in order to get merit.
- ii) *Dharma* was the central focus of all types of rituals.
- iii) The Vedic *Ṛta* changed into *dharma* afterwards and also changed to *satya*.
- iv) The journey of this concept along with the performances is unique which is found in *Śrautasūtras* and *Grhyasūtras*.
- v) The process went on tremendous change and the rituals became *smārta* type.
- vi) The *āgama* texts highlighted each sect and accordingly the deities became the focus for worship.
- vii) The concept of *bhakti* became predominant to evolve a personal God.
- viii) The *saṃskāras* mentioned in the *smṛti* works became also famous regionally with a common code of performance.
- ix) The rituals and its practices still continue in every walk of life in India.
- x) The *Śrauta* rituals are slowly diminishing in Indian society.

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Senior Lecturer
Dept. of Sanskrit
Utkal University
Orissa