Compiled with blessings and under instructions and guidance of
Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharya Jagadguru
Sri Sri Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Sri Sankaracharya Swamiji
69th Peethadhipathi and
Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharya Jagadguru
Sri Sri Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Sri Sankaracharya
Swamiji 70th Peethadhipathi of
Moolamnaya Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham

Offered with devotion and humility by
Sri Atma Bodha Tirtha Swamiji (Sri Kumbakonam Swamiji)
Disciple of Pujayasri Kuvalayananda Tirtha Swamiji
(Sri Tambudu Swamiji)

Translation from Tamil by
P.R.Kannan, Navi Mumbai
DEDICATION

We dedicate this book ‘AGNI UPASANA’ with devotion, faith and humility at the divine lotus feet of All Acharya Swamijis decorating the Moolamnaya Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham continuously from Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpadacharya who pours the divine shower of compassion on all of us even today in form unseen and particularly Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharya Jagadguru

Sri Sri Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Swamigal 68th Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham the Great Gnani who penanced for 100 years and showed the path of virtue to all people.

Further we dedicate this book in the Sathabhisheka Varshika Mahotsavam of

Sri Sri Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal 69th Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham who incarnated solely to remove our darkness.

The book has been prepared under instructions of

Sri Sri Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamigal 70th Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham.
SRI AGNI BHAGAVAN

I worship Hari, of the form of Yagna, who is in the middle of Fire, who shines brilliantly like molten gold and who is accompanied by Svaha and Svadha (Consorts of Agni Bhagavan).

Once there was a large Vidvat Sadas (seminar of Vedic scholars) under the presidency of Sri Kanchi Mahaswamigal. Hundreds of Sastra scholars with Mahamahopadhyaya title and other masters in Vedas and Sastras, who were all Grihasthas, had assembled. All lectured wonderfully on the import of Sastras. All were eagerly expecting Sri Mahaswamigal to bless them with nectarine words of Sastra and Advaita. Sri Swamigal briefly said: “All should perform Aupasana at least every day; you can obtain all benefits.” Is it not clear as to how much importance was given by Sri Mahaswamigal to Agni Upasana (Worship of Holy Fire), Nishkamya Karma Yoga (performance of karmas with no desire for fruit and dedication to Iswara) and performance of Vedic rituals.

या ब्रह्मणॊ निश्विसिंतं युदुक्ति: सत्या अनिश्चं यज्जपतोबिमुक्ति:।
सैव प्रमाणं ननु मादृशानां श्रुते नमस्ते भवति गतिन्।

“That Veda, which is the very life-breath of Brahman, whose utterances are Truth, and by whose continuous chanting Liberation is attained— that Veda alone is proof for people like us. Hence O Sruti! Prostrations to you; you alone are our refuge.” (Padavakya Pramana, Paravara, Sarvatantra Svatantra, Aptavajapeyayaji, Advaita Vidyacharya Srimad Appaiya Dikshitar)

विद्वानाद्यः अनवलिन्निश्चित निम्नामृतमूत्ये।
स्वात्तुभूत्येक्समानाय नमः शान्ताय तेजसे॥

“I prostrate to that brilliant Light of Peace, which is not limited by directions and time, which is of the form of Consciousness alone, and which can only be perceived through direct experience.” (Raja Bhartruhari)

सर्वत्र हि शास्त्रप्रापिता एव धर्मम उपास्या न विच्छिन्ना अप्यशास्त्रीया:।
“Dharmas should be observed only as directed in Sastras. Even if Dharmas are seen being followed in the world in practice, they should never be observed, if not in accordance with Sastras.” (Sri Adisankara Bhagavatpada’s commentary on Chandogya Upanishad, 2:2:1)
INTRODUCTION

We worship the Mahapitha of Devi Kamakshi’s lotus feet, the originator of ‘Kamakala’ in the world, the supreme navel-spot of the earth.

We worship the Guru tradition, starting from Sadasiva, having Sankaracharya in the middle and coming down upto our present Acharya.”

These six karmas – Sandhya after Snana (ritual bath), Japa, Homa, worship of Devatas, hospitality (offering of food etc. to guests) and Vaisvadeva – should be performed every day.”

Through the untiring efforts taken by Jagadguru Sri Acharyas of Moolamnaya Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, today we have in our midst masters of Vedas with Shadangas (Rig, Krishna Yajus, Sukla Yajus, Jaiminiya Sama, Kouthuma Sama and Atharva and other branches with six parts of Veda) in thousands. Veda and Sastra Pathasalas are functioning in the entire country as per the ancient traditions. Similarly there are hundreds of scholars in Sastras like Vyakarana, Tarka, Mimamsa and Vedanta and in Bhashyas (commentaries) of all four Vedas. Students of Samskrit are to be found in lakhs all over the country.

Sri Kanchi Acharyas have been travelling all over Bharata desa, protecting our ancient traditional branches of knowledge, encouraging their study and establishing Pathasalas. Thousands of students are studying their Veda Sakhas (branches). Many are the efforts made by Srimatham for protecting Vedas even in remote areas like Kashmir, Nepal etc. Similarly Sri Kanchi Acharyas are according due importance to observance of traditional Vedic rites; they are instrumental in producing hundreds of Nityagnihotris and encouraging them. Many persons all over the country, who could not observe daily Vedic rituals in toto during the period of their service in offices, but nonetheless performed the rites to the extent possible, have been keenly and properly observing them afer retirement.
Agni Upasana is common to all people. However it is the instruction of Veda Matha that brahmanas should compulsorily observe this with no desire for fruit. The only Vedic property of brahmana women is Aupasana and Agnihotram alone. Our Maharishis have given importance to women alone in protecting Vedic dharmas. Women only should persuade the men to perform Aupasanam, Vaisvadevam etc. They should make their male children perform Samidadhanam. Our ancestors have shown by practice that if we keep performing Agni Upasana every day in the morning and evening without fail, our minds will be purified and we can experience Bhagavat Sakshatkara (direct vision of the Lord) in this life itself. This is known as ‘Single file path’.

In response to the request of thousands of people to enable them to get the knowledge of the benefits accruing by praying to Agni Bhagavan and the greatness of Agni Upasana, and noting their interest in performing the upasana, Sri Kanchi Acharyas instructed that this book on Agni Upasana be compiled and presented. Accordingly, Sri Atma Bodha Tirtha Swamigal (Sri Kumbakonam Swamigal), disciple of Pujyasri Kuvalayananda Tirtha Swamigal (Sri Tambudu Swamigal), has written this book and dedicated it with devotion and humility at the divine lotus feet of Sri Kanchi Acharyas.

Reading this book will inspire many people to perform the daily Agni Upasana rites with no desire for fruit and in a spirit of dedication to Bhagavan. In fact our ancestor Maharishis have laid down procedures for daily rituals to be performed with the attitude of dedication to Bhagavan only.

By wiping a mirror with a soft cloth, the dirt will go away and the reflection in the mirror will be clear. Similarly the impurities in the mirror of mind are many like desire, anger, greed, delusion, conceit, jealousy etc., accumulated over many lives. By performing the daily Karmas as laid down by Bhagavan and followed by our ancestors with dedication to Iswara, the impurities in the mind will go away and Bhagavat Sakshatkara will result and we can attain the high state of no rebirth. This has been pledged by our ancients by way of तप्तपरशुग्रहणम् - “holding axe heated red hot”. Sri Suta Samhita says: “विशुद्ध ब्रह्मिज्ञानं विशुद्धस्येव सिद्ध्यति”- “Pure experience of Brahman will be attained only by one whose mind is extremely pure.”
Hence we pray to Sri Tripurasundari sametha Sri Chandramouliswara to bless that all should perform as far as possible Agni Upasana by way of daily observances like Samidadhanam, Aupasanam, Vaisvadevam, Agnihotram etc. and attain benefits here and hereafter.

Moolamnaya Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham
Kanchipuram
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Adoring Guru Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada for long and after he attained Videhamukti through his own power, Sri Sankaracharya wrote commentaries to establish Advaita philosophy, won over opponents in all directions and finally rested in Kanchipuram, where his Avatara period concluded. (From ‘Patanjali Charitram’ of Sri Ramabhadra Dikshitar)

I pay obeisance every day with great happiness to Sri Chandrasekhara Guru, who is the embodiment of unlimited compassion, the bestower of Gnana, the very form of peace. (From ‘Guru Stuti’ of Jagadguru Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal)

Period of Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpadacharya
Kaliyuga 2593 – 2625 (B.C.509 – 477)
स्वस्तिवाचनम् - गुरुवन्दनम्

श्रीकाञ्चीकामकोटि पीठाधिपति
जगद्गुरु श्री शंकराचार्य श्रीचरणयो: प्रणामः।

श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः।
श्री महाशियपुर-सुन्दरीसंस्थान श्री चन्द्रमौली-श्रीराय नमः।

स्वस्ति श्रीमद्-अखिल-भूमिकालंकार- वच्चिंशकोटि-देवतासेवित- श्रीकाञ्चीदेवीसनाथ- श्रीमद्-एकाङ्कनाथ- श्रीमहादेवीसनाथ - श्रीमहानिमित्तिगिरिनाथ- साक्षात्कार- परमाधिष्ठान- सत्यतवतामण्डित- कांलोद्विद्यक्षेत्रे शारदामठ-सुत्रितानां अतुलित सुधारस-माधुर्य- कमलासन कामिनी- ध्रुवमल्ल संफूल-मलिका मालिका निप्न्द मकरन्दसरी- सौवस्तिक- वाढ़ निमुफ विजुम-भणानन्द- तुन्दिलित मणीप-मण्डलानां अनवरताद्वैत- विच्छ-विनोद-रसिकानां निरंतरालंकृतीमृत शारित-दार्त्ति-भूल्लां सकल भुजनचंक्र प्रतिष्ठापक श्रीचंक्रप्रतिष्ठ विख्यात यशोजलंकृतानां निखिल पाण्ड पण्ड कण्टकोंडन्तनेन विशदीकृत वेद वेदान्तमार्ग षण्मत प्रतिष्ठापकाचार्याणां श्रीमुः-परमहंस-परिभाजकाचार्यायर्य श्रीजगद्गुरु 
श्रीमुः-शंकर भगवत्-पादपाचार्याणां अधिष्ठाने सिंहसनाभिषिक्ष श्रीमुः-चन्द्रशीर्षकेन्द्रसरस्वती 
संयमीन्द्राणां अन्तेवासिवर्य श्रीमुः-जयेन्द्रसरस्वती श्रीपादानां तदन्तेवासिवर्य श्रीमुः- 
शंकरविजयेन्द्रसरस्वती श्रीपादानांच चरणनलिनियोः सप्रथयं सांज्ञिलब्दः च नमस्कृतः।

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Swasti Vachanam – Guru Vandnam
Obeisance at the holy feet of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peethadhipati
Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya
Obeisance to Gurus
Obeisance to Sri Chandramouliswara and Sri Maha Tripurasundari

The divine town of Kanchipuram is an ornament to all the auspicious worlds; it is adored by the thirtythree crores of Devatas; the visible abode of Sri Kamakshi Devi and Sri Ekamranatha, also of Sri Mahadevi and Sri Hastigirinatha; and named as Satyavrata. Here in Sarada Matham are seated Srimad Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharyavarya Sri Jagadguru Srimad Sankara Bhagavatpadacharya, who is surrounded by wise persons immersed in the bliss of garlands of words like streams of nectar, of unparalleled sweetness, dripping from garland of blooming jasmine at the crown of Devi seated in Kamalasana; who is ever in the bliss of the realisation of Advaita; who is ever high, with the ornaments of the virtues of self-control of body and mind; who is decorated with the fame from installation of Srichakra, which bestows stability to all the chakras of worlds; who established Shanmatha (six philosophies of six Devatas for worship) on the path laid down by Veda and Vedanta, thus clearing the path free of the thorns of non-believers of Vedas; coronated in his throne are Jagadguru Srimad Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Sripada; his disciple Srimad Jayendra Saraswathi Sripada; his successive disciple Srimad Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Sripada. At the lotus feet of these Gurus we prostrate with all humility, with folded hands.
1. Teachings of Sri Kanchi Mahaswamigal

From ‘Voice of God’ (Deivattin Kural) - Part 6:
"वेदो नित्यमधीयतां तदुद्वितं कर्मस्वतुष्णायताम्"

The first priority is 'Karmanushthanam', performance of Karmas without violating instructions of Sastras. Nowadays ‘Advaita’ is interpreted as abdication of Karmanushthanam and of rules of achara (conduct). They interpret ‘Advaita’ as free licence to escape the rules of achara (conduct) and to advise 'conservatives' like me on 'What is there in all this ritual and conduct'! It is found in practice that without even a little bit of Advaita experience, Jiva-Brahma Abheda (non-difference) experience, and without making any effort in that direction, people argue vainly and say “Where is Karma for Atma? Where is Achara (conduct) restriction? Is observance of Varnasrama difference not opposed to Advaita?” This is nothing but invoking Advaita in a wrong way to justify abandoning Sastras and acting as you like. In order to avoid becoming party to this sin, I refrained from lecturing about Advaita. Let nobody take Advaita Sadhana (effort) as something to be seriously taken up immediately. In the depth of your mind, keep the principle that Jiva and Brahman are one and the same; it will work. What you should practise now is performance of Karmas laid down in Sastras. In the Advaita sastra experienced and taught by masters, you are advised to take up Vedic karmas first and after attaining perfection there, to move on to Advaita Sadhana. In Vivekachudamani Adi Sankara teaches that the bondage of samsara will be got rid of only through this method.

श्रुिप्रमाणैकमतेः स्वर्गमनिष्ठा तैवावत्मविशुद्भिनस्य ।
विशुद्भुबद्धे: परमात्मवेदनं तेनेवं संसारमूलनाश: ॥ (150)
"If one, who is convinced of Vedas being the sole authority, is engaged in performance of duties assigned to him therein, his mind will become purified. For him, whose intellect is thus purified, the experience of Paramatma will occur; thereby the roots of samsara will be destroyed."

Let us follow this good path shown by our ancestors and attain the fruit of our birth. This path can be termed as ‘Single file path’. Sri Bhagavatpada calls this path राजमार्गः: ‘Rajamarga’ (the royal way) and teaches this firmly.

From ‘Voice of God’ (Deivattin Kural) - Part 2:
Grihashasrama (householdership) is called ‘Illaram’ in Tamil; Griham is ‘il’ (home). Tamil scholars have also glorified Grihasthasrama as in Dharma Sastras, saying ‘Illaramalladu Nallaramalla’ (position other than householder is not good dharma). The housewife is called ‘Grihini’. This means she administers the home. She is called in Tamil ‘Illattarasi’, ‘Manaivi and ‘Manaiyal’.

Agni karma is the most important for Vedic religion. Aupasanam means related to Upasana (worship). Aupasanam is the Agni karma prescribed for all Hindus in Veda; it is for all castes. I criticise brahmana for having fallen. I pull him to the Vedic path.

Aupasanam is the karma common to both husband and wife. When the husband is out of station, it is the wife who has to offer the Akshata for Homam in the Aupasanagni. Veda has given her this right. Can women give up their right?

There is a lot of Agni at home – for food preparation, for hot water for bath! Should we allow the Agni, which was the witness for the marriage, to be put off without Aupasanam? If Aupasanagni is kept up, problems from goblins, ghosts etc. and diseases will not come near us. It is only due to the absence of Aupasanagni that even in brahmanas’ homes, tapping with neam leaves, tapping with stick, blowing in mosque, praying to me etc. (to ward off difficulties) are common. If Agni shines in every brahmana’s house and the fragrance of ghee, milk and Havis added in the Agni as per Sastras wafts in the air, good health and high thoughts will be attained by people of all castes. Aupasana Agni should be kept up throughout one’s life without getting extinguished.

One should not look for differences between Grihya karmas and Sroutha karmas. As per Sanatana Dharma, now known as Hinduism, both these should be protected as two eyes.

The daily routine prescribed by Sastra for brahmana should be followed. The schedule is tight; there is no respite even for a second. Though it was brahmanas who wrote the Sastras and protected them, they have not prescribed a lazy routine for themselves. They have laid down rules of heavy physical work as well as mental involvement such that there is no chance for the mind to waver on extraneous matters. Where there is a will, there is a way. On return from office in the evening, karmas can be done as per Sastras. On holidays, all karmas can be completed comfortably. During periods of shift duty, rituals should be done as far as possible. **There should be regret at not being able to perform karmas. There should be eagerness to do karmas. Even that has some value. The compassionate Lord will not ignore that.** Instead of regretting
retirement from job, one should welcome retirement so that rituals can be performed properly. One in a lakh of people can still be found, who, after retirement, studies Veda and performs karmas properly. All efforts should be made to avoid discontinuance of our karmas, which have come down to us from times more ancient than any religion in the world. It will generate benefits for us as well as for the entire world.

The very root of our Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism is the Achara (conduct) and daily observance of karmas of the individual. It is not an exaggeration to say that the reason for the unity of Hindus without any special propagation is the individual’s daily observance of karmas. This is the truth. The purpose of emphasising the need for everyone to perform his daily karmas is that the human birth should not go waste.

Note: Sri Kanchi Acharya Sri Mahaswamigal’s teachings in Tamil were compiled by Brahmasri Ra.Ganapathi in ‘Deivattin Kural – 7 volumes. These volumes are available also in English and various other Indian languages. Brahmanas should read at least the second part definitely. They will then understand the greatness of performing Svadharma; they will be driven to perform the same.
2. Description of Bharata Desa in Agni Puranam

Description of Bharatavarsha in Agni Purana, chapter 118 (Karma, Gnana Bhumi – Land of Karma and Gnana):

अभिन्नवाच
उत्तरं यत्समुद्रव्य हिमालेश्वरे दक्षिणम् ।
वर्षं तत् भारतवर्ष नाम नवमाहविश्वुतम् ॥
कर्मभूमिरिक्ष्णमपवर्गेच गच्छताम् ।
महेन्द्रो मलयः सह्यः शुक्तिमान् हृदपवेतः ॥
विन्ध्याश्च पारिपात्रेः समावकुलपवेतः ।
इन्द्रीयः कसेरूश्च ताम्रपामचें गन्धितमान् ॥
नागद्वीपस्तथा सौभ्यो गान्धवास्तवारणः ।
अर्थं तु नवमस्तेपारिधारपत्र: सागरसंभवः ॥
योजनानां सहस्राणि द्वीपोऽयं दक्षिणोऽतरात् ॥
नवभेदा भारतस्य मध्यभेदेऽथपूर्वतः ॥
किरीता यवनाध्याते ब्राह्मणाश्च मध्यतः ।
वेदस्मृतिमुखन्यः पारिपात्रोद्भिास्तथा ॥
विन्ध्याश्च नर्मदायः स्यूः सम्यास्तापी परोणिकाः।
गोदारी भीमरथी कसेः सस्यास्तापी परोणिकाः।
मलयात् कुमारश्च सरस्त्रसा महेन्द्रजः ।
कुमारश्च: शुक्तिमातो हिमालेश्वरन्याचारः ॥
पिश्चमे कुरुपः मध्यदेशादयः स्थिताः ।
इत्यादि ॥
महापुराणे आंग्रे: भारतवर्ष नाम अष्टाध्यायः ॥

In Atmapurana by Srimad Sankarananda Saraswathi Swamigal:

आः! पाप भवन्त स्वामलेख्या सुदुल्लभम् ।
मानुयं भारते वर्षेन स्वर्गमेक्षप्रदं सुखात् ॥
धिकू! त्वं भारते जातो नरस्ते पुनर्गतः ॥
“After being born in Bharatadesa as a human being, the rare birth bestowing comfortably Svarga and Moksha, it is condemnable that you have come back to Naraka.”

The greatness of Bharatadesa has been described in many Puranas.
3. Greatness of Bharata Desa – Foreign Scholars

From Collected Works of Rt.Hon.F.Maxmuller

India – What it can teach us

I should point to India

1) If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow in some parts, the very paradise on earth, I SHOULD POINT TO INDIA.

2) If I were asked under what sky he human mind has most freely developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life and has found solutions of some of them, which will deserve the attention even of those who have asked Plato and Kant, I SHOULD POINT TO INDIA.

3) And if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we, who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans and of one Semitic race the Jewish, may draw that corrective, which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact, more lively, human - a life not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life - again I SHOULD POINT TO INDIA.

4) That very Sanskrit, the study of which may at first seem so tedious to you, and so useless, if only you will carry it on, as you may carry it on here at CAMBRIDGE better than anywhere else, open before you large layers of literature, as yet almost unknown and unexplored, and allow you an insight into strata of thought deeper than any you have known before and rich in lessons that appeal to the deepest sympathies of the human heart. India occupies a place second to no other country.

5) Whatever sphere of the human mind you may select for your special study, whether it be Language or Religion or Mythology or Philosophy, whether it be Laws or Customs, Primitive Art or Primitive Science, everywhere You have to go to INDIA, whether you like it or not, because some of the most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are TREASURED UP IN INDIA and “IN INDIA ONLY”.

6) In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and elevating as that of upanishads. It has been the solace of my life. It will be solace of my death also. A true paradise on earth, I would designate India under which sky the human mind has been developed. I would designate India,
from which literature we need most to render our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal.

Dr. Annie Besant’s Sayings:
Make no mistake, without Hinduism India has no future. Hinduism is the soil into which India’s roots are struck, and, tornout of that, she will inevitably wither, as a tree torn out from its place. And if Hindus do not maintain Hinduism, who shall save it? If India’s own children do not cling to her faith, who shall guard it? INDIA ALONE CAN SAVE INDIA, AND INDIA AND HINDUISM ARE ONE.

Warren Hastings (Ex Governor General of India) thus speaks of the Hindus in general.
They (Hindus) are gentle and benevolent, more susceptible of gratitude for kindness shown to them, and less prompted to vengeance for wrongs inflicted than any people on the face of the earth, faithful, affectionate, submissive to legal authority.
Europe has also profited by this revival of the study of Sanskrit.
4. The emotional connect between Agnihotri and Agni Bhagavan –
Nerur Vidvan Nityagnihotri Sri Ramana Sarma

1) In many places in the Vedas the emotional connect between Agnihotris and Agni Bhagavan, whom they worship, has been indicated. For instance,

"तस्य त्राता भवसि तस्य सखा यस्त आतिथ्ययम् आनुपग् जुजोपत्" (३.१/२/१४)
It says: ‘You are his friend and you protect him, who worships you always.’

2) In Apastamba Srouta Sutras, while referring to the occasion when Agnihotri leaves Agni (in his wife’s care), goes out of station and returns home, the emotional connect between him and Agni is shown. Just as there are emotions when one returns home from an outstation trip and meets a very dear relative, similar emotions are referred here.

"प्रवत्स्यन् सम्प्रेष्यति अप्रीन् समाधेहीति। ज्वलत उपतिष्ठते" (आप.श्रौ.सू.१/२४)
At the time when the Agnihotri is leaving his home, he asks his disciples to keep the Agni burning. He prays to the Agnis.

"पशून् नःशंस्य पािह, तान् नो गोपाय, आस्माकं पुनरागमाद् इत्याहवनीयम्"

He entreats Ahavaniya Agni to protect the cows and animals in his home till he returns. Similarly he implores Garhapatya Agni to take good care of the children and Dakshinagni to protect the food.

"प्रजां नो नयन पािह तां नो गोपाय आस्माकं पुनरागमाद् इति गाह्यपत्यम्। अश्रों नो वद्य पािह तथो गोपाय आस्माकं पुनरागमाद् इत्यत्वाहायवपचनम्। अन्तराराव्र तित्तिन् जपिति इमानं नो मित्रावरुण गृहाञ्च गोपायतं युवम्। अविनायानं अविनासानं पूर्णानं अभिरक्षतु आस्माकं पुनरागमाद्"

He stands between the Agnis and prays to Mitra- Varuna and Poosha to take care of the house. All this is like requesting the elders in the family to take care of the young wife and the children in his absence.

3) Before leaving the home, the Agnihotri chants a mantra, which is like addressing a friend.

"सम नाम प्रथमं जातवेदः। इत्यत्यं मन्त्रः। (३.५/१/७)
Just as one would consider his friend as his substitute at home and allow him to use his clothes etc., he talks to Agni:
"मम नाम प्रथमं जातवेदः पिता माता च दधुतुर्यद्रेः।
तत्त् लं बिभूषि पुनर् आ मद्य-प्रयोः; तवांह नाम विभराण्याये॥"

"May my name, which my parents gave me at birth, be yours till I return. I shall carry your name. (That is, may visitors, who come looking for me in my absence, pay respects to you; when people refer to me in the new place, they will call me Aahitagni with your name.) When the Agnihotri returns, he says the mantra:

"मम नाम तवं च जातवेदं वाससी इव विवसानसं ये चरावः।
आयुपे तं जीवसं वयं यथायथं वि परि दधावहे पुनस्ते॥"

"We exchanged our names earlier just like clothes. Now that I have returned, let us get back to our normal state."

4) During the period he is away, at all Agnihotram times, the Agnihotri should prostrate in the direction of the Agnis in his home and pray:

"प्रिसन् काले विहाराभिमुखः: अग्न्युपस्थानं जपित। इहैव सन्तं तत्र सतो वा अग्रायः: प्राणेन
वाचा मनसा विभर्मिः। तिरो मा सन्तम् आयुर्मा प्रहासीतु, ज्योतिः सो वैश्वानरें रोपितात्ते॥"

'While I am here, I bear you with my life-breath, speech and mind. While I am separated from you, may my life-breath not leave me. I pray to you through the all-pervasive Vaisvanara Jyoti. (Vaisvanara Jyoti is the light present everywhere, or the light present in all human beings, or the Agni in one’s belly).’ Just as one says he feels like losing his life-breath in separation from his dear one, the Agnihotri feels similar emotion. In Srimad Ramayanam, the high-souled Hanuman says about Sita and Rama:

"अस्या देव्या मनस्तिस्मन् तस्य चास्यां प्रितिष्ठतम्। तैसों स च धर्मात्मा महूत्तमानं जीवितं॥"

'Because this Devi’s mind is with Rama and Rama’s mind with her, they both are able to live at least for a short time.' By use of the words, ‘with life-breath, speech and mind’, this kind of close relationship is referred. Is this not the emotion between the husband and wife?

5) Further the emotion of looking at Agni like a child on the Agnihotri’s return is also expressed by Apastamba. He says:

"संिध्यः कृत्या प्रत्येक्यत। यथा ह वा इत्य पितरं प्रेषिवांसं पुजा:प्रत्याधावन-स्यवहाराप्यातः अग्रायः:
प्रत्याधावन्त। स शक्तलाजं दारुणं वा आहरनं एति यथेष्ठ तत्तु पुजे आहरनं एति। ताप्त्यं तद् इति
विज्ञायते॥"
“Agnihotri should carry ‘Samit’ (sacrificial faggots). Just as children expect their father to bring some eatables and run up to him, the Agnis expect the Aahitagni to fetch Samit and run up. Hence the Aahitagni should bring wooden blocks or pieces. This is similar.”

6) Respect higher than what is shown to king, father and Acharya is also accorded to Agni. While departing from home, the Aahitagni takes leave of everybody and finally the Agnis in the Agnisala. Till the time the roof of Agnisala is visible during the time he walks away, he should not speak to anyone. Similarly when he returns home, from the time the roof of Agnisala becomes visible, he should refrain from speaking to anyone. At this time even if the king, father or Acharya comes, he should not speak to them. Only after worshipping Agni, he should speak to them.

“यदि एनं राजा पिता आचार्यों वा अन्तरेण अग्रीन् स्वात् छदिर्दिश्च नैनम् आद्रियेत्” इति।

7) While praying to Agni on his return, the Agnihotri takes back the responsibility of children etc. from Agni, just as one would resume his duty of looking after wife etc. from elders. He says the mantra:

“प्रजां मॆ नयन अजूगुपः, तां मॆ पुनर्द्विठि इति गाह्पत्यम्, अन्तं मॆ बुध्याजूगुपः ततमॆ पुनर्द्विधित्यत्वाहार्यपचनम्, पशून् मॆ शंस्याजूगुपः तान् मॆ पुनर्द्वीत्याहार्यनीयम्”॥

The ninefold bhakti, which is famous in the world between the devotee and the Lord, is there hidden in Veda. That bhakti is mentioned between the Aahitagni and the Agni he worships.

Sri Ramana Sarma
Agniswara kshetram, Nerur
Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra Sannidhi
5. Verses of Meditation and Prayer to Agni

The following verses of meditation and prayer to Agni are found in the book of Mantra Sastra titled ‘Sri Sarada Tilakam’ written by Sri Lakshmana Desikendra.

1. Agni Bhagavan should be meditated upon as: holding in his four long hands the signs of boon, Sakti, Swastika and freedom from fear (abhaya); with splendour of java flower (China rose); with ornaments of gold; seated on lotus flower; having three eyes; with tresses tied on the head.

2. I pray to Agni Bhagavan who: has golden garlands on shoulders; is decorated with red coloured garlands and sandal paste; is with brilliant tresses on head; is dressed in white; has in his hands Sakti, Swastika, handful of darbha grass, rosary of beads, ladles ‘sruk’ and ‘sruvam’ used in oblations, and signs of abhaya and boon; is with three adorable eyes; is brilliant in red.

3. (Sri Ganeswara Vimarsini)

4. (Srimad Bhagavad Gita 4:24)
शिवायाहवनीयाय शक्ति वेदी नमो नमः ॥
यज्ञशाख्यत गोविन्द माधवानन्त केशव ।
कृष्ण विष्णु हरिकिश मासुदेव नमोऽस्तु ते ॥
अग्नि मां नय मार्गेण दुःखीनेन सर्वदा ।
उज्वलेन सदा सर्वसिद्धजस्वमिह भो ॥
वहिनमण्डलसीधस्यं तस्माजाभूनद्यभम् ।
स्वाभा स्वधा समायुतं वदे यजुतं हरीम् ॥
यत् सर्वेण क्रतुफलं यदखिलयादिना महितम् ।
यत् सकलदेवरूपं ज्योतिष्ठुतपास्महें सोमम् ॥

श्रीयजुसामधामां दशांस्यविरात्मकम् ।
थं सततत्त्वं तत्तवं तस्मै यजात्मने नमः ॥
चर्चितं चतुर्मिश्व द्वायां पञ्चभिरेव च ।
हृणेत्व च पुनं पञ्चभीम्यों तस्मै हृणात्मने नमः ॥
प्राणान्तं धारणाश्रयं योठं भुवं चतुर्विधम् ।
अन्ते: पत्यप्रभंस्यमेन पञ्चाकात्मने नमः ॥
योगावास्य नमस्त्वं सर्वश्वसवहरद ।
यजगर्भं हिरण्याङ्ग पञ्चयज नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

10
11
12 (Atma Puranam: 589)
13
14 (Sri Sivamahimakalika Stotra by Sri Appayya Dikshitar)
15
16 (Sri Bhishma Stavarajam: 42,43)
17
18 (Anusmriti: 30)
6. Some Rigveda Agni Sukta Mantras

Rigveda is divided into eight Ashtakas or ten Mandalas. The following Suktas there have been grouped together as Agni Suktas:
1. Paruchchepa’s 127 Suktas in Mandala 1
2. Parasara’s Suktas (65-73) in Mandala 1
3. Bharavaja’s 16 Suktas in Mandala 6
4. Gritsamada’s 10 Suktas in Mandala 2

A few of the Agni Suktas are given below for contemplation. By knowing the meaning of the Veda mantras, there will be eagerness to learn the Veda from a Guru.

Paruchchepa’s Agni Suktas

1. अन्नित्र्व होतारं…….शोचिषाजपुर्वानस्य सर्मपषः । (2.1.12.1)
I meditate on Agni Bhagavan, who is called by Dikshitahs (who perform yagnas), who gives things away liberally, who is capable of destroying everything created and who knows all. Agni Bhagavan shines with brilliant flame.

2. स नॊ नॆह्लदष्टं ददृशान ……..न शिसा । (2.1.13.1)
O Agni Bhagavan, you are visible to our eyes. Please bless us by bringing the wealth of Devas and giving us. O Agni Deva, glorious one, in response to our hymns of praise, please grow strong and bring all strength and valour and bless us.

Gritsamada’s गृत्समदः: Agni Suktas

3. त्वम्प्रेण राजा वरुणो…….देवभाजयुः ॥ (2.5.17.4)
O Agni Deva, you are also Varuna, who possesses the processes for doing all acts. You are also Mitra, who has great power and is loved by all. You are also Aryama. You are the owner of all things. All the pleasure in the world is with you. O Lord, you are also Amsa, who give us our share of Gnana.

4. त्वम्प्रेण पितरं ……..सूशेव: पास्याधृषः ॥ (2.5.18.9)
People worship you with yagas like they would their father. You complete their acts well. You shine brilliantly with your own light. People worship you and pray to you to be their brother. You are also son for one who worships you. Being his friend, you protect him from his enemy’s cruelty.
It is to be noted that in this mantra, Agni Bhagavan acts as a father, son and friend to one who worships him and blesses him at various times accordingly.

5. त्िमिॆ सुभृत ईत्तमं……..विभ्रतस्पूः ॥ (2.5.19.12)

O Agni Deva, while we worship you well during yagas and every day Homas, you represent the high growth of our life. In your wholesome sight, all beauties and glories are there. In your attractive colour also, your beauty and glory are seen. O immeasurably great one, you are the whole, who guides and takes us to the last destination of our path. You are also the accumulated wealth spread in all directions.

6. यज्ञेन िधनत जातेदसमह्ऴि …….बृजनेपु धूर्पदम् ॥ (2.5.20.1)

Agni Bhagavan knows everything that takes birth. May we grow him by performing yagas. Worship him by offering Havis etc. in yagas and chanting Veda mantras loudly. Agni Bhagavan is a very happy Deva. He is the male in Suryaloka; he is the priest Hota, who calls all Devas to yagas. Worship Agni Bhagavan, who drives the chariot and protects the Devas. Obtain his blessing easily.

7. होताजनिष्ट चेतनः……..वाजिनो यमम् ॥ (2.5.26.1)

Agni Bhagavan is born for our sake as a good natured priest who calls Devas to yagas. He is born as the father of our fathers in order to protect them. May we perform yagas through his grace and succeed in getting the power to obtain wealth and subdue the mind, which runs fast.

Bharadwaja’s Agni Suktas

8. पदं देिस्य नमसा……ते रणयन्त संदृष्टौ ॥ (4.4.35.4)

O Agni Bhagavan, those, who take refuge in you and proceed to divine realms, seek out and obtain the Gnana which gets your grace to them. They obtained the divine Gnana with no blemish. They had your divine yaga names in mind and were happy to see your auspicious form.

9. पुरुण्यिे पुरुधा……राजजिनि त्वे ॥ (4.4.36.13)

O king, Agnideva, May I enjoy in many ways the manifold wealth through you and your privilege as the king of wealth. O Agni Bhagavan, who is extolled in many ways; o king, there is a lot of wealth with you for your worshipper, who adores you.
10. समिधा यस्त……शतायुषम् ॥ (4.5.1.5)
O Agnideva, the dying person attains the way of giving Samit and the sharpness of your strength. He then grows his house (body), which grows in many branches and is a hundred years old.

11. विद्य्यासीतुहि वर्धयेन मद्यम शतहिमा:सुवीराः ॥ (4.5.12.7)
Destroy our enemy and make him run away broken. Grow the mantras which make you visible. May we attain the strength of the valorous and live a hundred years happily.

12. अग्नि यो मत्या  तुरितावेसे ॥ (4.5.16.1)
The dying person thinks deeply and happily about service to Agni and meditating on him and shines brightly and attains greatness. He gets the motivation to remain secure.

13. अग्नीर्विद्वना …….रथवांज्ञवृत्तः ॥ (4.5.16.5)
Agni Bhagavan is the Lord, who rescues the dying person from his shackles by his intellect. The wealth of Agni Bhagavan is powerful. His wealth has not been surrounded and attacked by enemies.

14. वयमुत्त्त्वा गृहपते …….तेजसा सं शिशादि (4.5.20.19)
O Agnideva, the lord of householders! We grew your form by giving oblations with Samit. Bless such that the Grihastha’s acts are performed continuously without break. Make us completely wise with your sharp brilliance.

15. अग्नि आ याति वीतये गुणानो हव्यदाते ।
नि होता मसिस बर्हिपि ॥ (Sama Samhita 1.1)
O Agni Bhagavan, come for a new beginning. Being worshipped through the Veda mantras we chant, accept our oblations. Come for receiving the oblations. Fulfiller of our prayers! Sit down on the sacred seat of darbha grass on the altar of yaga and bless us.

16. त्वं न: पाह्यंकसः:…… ब्रह्मणस्के । (4.5.26.30)
O Bhagavan who knows all births, save us from evil deeds and the acts of those who cause danger. Perceiver of the import of mantras! Save us and bless us.

17. यो नो अग्नि दुरैव आ मत्याव दश्यति तस्माँ: पाह्ये: ॥ (4.5.27.31)
O Agnideva, save us from evils of evil-mongers, which will make us suffer.
7. Greatness of Human birth and Brahmanas’ importance and duty –
Ancient Tamil and Samskrit Works

In ‘Sivapuranam dedicated by Sri Manikkavachka Swamigal’ to Sri Atmanatha of Tirupperundurai (Avudaiyarkoil), he says: “I have taken crores of births – grass, worm, tree, many classes of animals, birds, snakes, stone, human being, ghost, goblin, asura, ascetic, Deva – in this world of moving and non-moving objects. O Siva, I have taken all births and I am tired.”

In ‘Tiruvammanai’ sung by him in Tiruvannamalai, in the 14th song, he says that Siva blessed him with thirst for God’s grace in this human birth, obtained after crores of births. He repeats that human birth is a very high birth.

Sri Thayumanava Swamigal has sung in ‘Siddhar Ganam’: “Of innumerable births, human birth is the rarest indeed. If this birth is missed, what will be the next, I do not know.”
All great sages speak of the greatness of human birth.

Avvaiyar, the great Tamil woman saint, says by way of reply to the question put by Sri Muruga (Subrahmanya): “In response to your question as to which is rare, O Subrahmanya, I say human birth is rare. Even as human, it is rare to be born without disabilities like blindness, deafness, hunchback etc. Rarer is to receive knowledge and education. Still rarer is to give charity and engage in penance. If we do charity and engage in penance, the realm of Devas will open.”

Prahlada speaks to Asura children in Srimad Bhagavatham, Skandha 7, chapter 6:
कौमार आचरेत्प्राज्ञॊ धर्मानूः भागवतानिति
दुर्लभं मातुपं जन्म तदप्यध्रुवमर्थदम्
“Human birth is rare indeed. It is unstable, but purposeful. Hence in young age itself a wise person should practise dharmas leading to attainment of Bhagavan.”

Sri Jagadguru Adisankara Bhagavatpadacharya, incarnation of Parameswara, says in his book ‘Viveka Chudamani’:
जन्तूं नरजन्म दुर्लभमतः पुंस्त्वं ततो विप्रतः
तस्मादौ-वैदिकधर्मार्गार्गे विद्रतव-मस्मात्तरम्

“Of all births, human birth is difficult to get; rarer is birth as male and that too as brahmana, well versed in Vedas. Hence it is essential to practise the path of dharma (Pravritti and Nivritti) as laid down in Vedas and to attain mastery in that field. Then one should practise discrimination between Atma and non-Atma, leading finally to establishment in the state of Brahman; this is not attainable without the merit acquired in hundreds of crores of births.”

“The quality of a good human being, insatiable desire for Liberation and refuge in great masters – these three are difficult of attainment; they are attainable only with Bhagavan’s grace.”

“Having attained human birth somehow, and that too birth as male and mastery of Vedas, if one, being of foolish intellect, does not strive for his own Mukti, he verily kills himself, clinging to unreal things.”

Saint Tirumular in his ‘Tirumandiram’ says on the greatness of brahmanas:

“There is no dharma greater than Veda. Wise men learnt and chanted Vedas, performed all dharmas laid down in Vedas, and attained Mukti. (51)

Through the Ahutis (oblations) of brahmanas in Agni, the upper worlds, the earth, quarters and Devas of quarters – all of them get energised. (214)

Brahmanas, who perform the prescribed six duties, worship Agni and perform rites during the three specified times every day. They stick to their routine and chant the six Angas of Veda. (The six duties of brahmana are: study and teaching of Veda, performing and guiding performance of yagas, and giving and receiving Danam. The six Vedangas are: Siksha, Chandas, Nirukta, Vyakarana, Kalpa and Jyotisha). (224)

Brahmanas chant Gayatri mantra out of love of the world and go beyond Maya. (227)
Our ancestors have thus emphasised in their works the greatness of birth as human being and there too the rarity of birth as brahmana. Masters have shown the way for brahmana to attain in this birth itself the state of no rebirth.

**In Srimad Bhagavatham**, Skandha 7, chapter 14, Dharmaputra asks Narada: “O Maharshi! Please teach me the dharma which should be followed by a Grihastha like me for attaining Moksham.” Narada taught him the dharmas:

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gृहेष्िििस्थतॊ राजिन्क्रयाः क ु िनन्गृहॊिचताः ।
िासुदेिापनणं साक्षादुपासीत महामुनीन् ॥
देिानृषीन् नृभूतािन पितुनात्मान-मन्वह्म ।
स्ववृत्यागत-विचिन यजेत पुरुण ग्रुथकृ ॥
यह्यानत्मनॊऽिधकाराद्याः सिानः स्युयनज्ञसमपदः ।
स्यैतािनक न िििधना ऄििहॊत्राह्लदना यजॆत् ॥
पुरुषेष्िािप राजेन्र सुपात्रं ब्राह्मणं ििदुः ।
तपसा ििद्यया तुष्या धत्ते िेदं हरेस्तनुम् ॥
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“O king, Grihastha should perform duties of his Asrama, dedicate all his acts to Bhagavan Sri Vasudeva and worship great Munis. With the wealth he earns through his proper occupations, he should perform yagnas of Devas, Rishis, humans, other beings and Pitrus, and Atma (Iswara in oneself) every day separately and worship the Lord. In case he has the necessary riches, age etc. for performing yagas, he should perform yagnas, Agnihotram etc. O best among kings! Brahmana is the best among humans, as he has austerity, knowledge and contentment and thus holds Veda, the very body of Hari.”

**In Sri Vishnu Puranam** written by Sri Parasara Maharishi, Yamagita contains the teaching of Yama Dharmaraja to Yamadutas. He says:

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न चलित निजवर्णधर्मतो यः ।
“The true devotee of Vishnu will not swerve from his asrama dharmas. He will perform them for the pleasure of Bhagavan” (Amsam 3, chapter 7, verse 20).
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वर्णाधिकारवता पुरुषेण पर: नमान् ।
विण्युराराध्यं पन्था नाम्यस्ततोपकारकः ॥
यज्ञज्ञान्यज्ञोऽज्ञोऽज्ञ: जप्येन: जपनु ।
निविण्यान्त्यस्य: सर्वभूतो यतो हरिः ॥
तस्मात्सदाचारवता पुरुषेण जन्मदेनः ।
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One, who performs duties of his varna and asrama, and none else, pleases Vishnu. Every day brahmana should do Agni Upasana, yagas, Pitru yagnam, Vedic study, Danam, hospitality to guests, Vaisvadevam etc.; he attains to meritorious worlds."

Varnasrama dharmas have thus been emphasised in many ways; Agni Upasana has been mentioned as important. The impurities in mind should be removed by doing karmas laid down in Vedas for the pleasure of Bhagavan. Hence in the sankalpa said at the beginning of karmas every day, the masters have laid down:

मम उपात्त समस्त दुरिंत क्षयद्वारा श्रीपरमेश्वर प्रीत्यथं ||
"for the pleasure of Sri Parameswara through the removal of all the sins earned by me". Similarly at the close of the karma we say:

कायेन वाचा मनसेन्निर्यावर्न बुद्ध्यात्मना वा प्रकृते:स्वभावात् ||
"I dedicate to Narayana all the karmas performed by me through the body, speech, mind, sense organs, intellect, ego or natural inclination." There is also a prayer for forgiveness of all defects committed during performance of karma:

विसर्गाबिन्दुमात्राणि पदपादाक्षराणि च ||

When we look at various Puranas, it is clear that 18 Puranas, 18 Upapuranas, many kshetra stories etc. have come down to us by way of narration by Suta Pouranika to Rishis like Sounaka.
during yagas performed over many, many years in Naimisaranyam. Thus karmas do not exist without invoking Bhagavan. Our Kanchi Mahaswamigal calls our Sanatana Dharma as ‘Single file path’. The following Rigveda mantra was cited for this purpose:

सह स्तोमाः सह छन्दसं आवृतः सह प्रमाः ऋषयः सम् दैव्यः I
पूविणां पुर्खानुष्ठाय धीरा अन्वालेषिरे रथ्यो ३ न रश्मीन् II

Here the phrase ‘Purvesham pantham’ (on the way shown by our ancestors) should be noted. If we perform the Asrama karmas laid down in Vedas as an effective instrument for attaining Gnana, following the path of our ancestors and with due dedication to Iswara, the mind will be rid of impurities; and Bhagavan will shine in the cleansed mind like the reflection in a clean mirror.

In Vivekachudamani Sri Adisankara Bhagavatpadacharya says: विचस्य शुद्धे कर्म - “Karma is performed for purifying the mind.” This is elaborated in Upadesa Panchakam (or Sopana Panchakam):

वेदो नित्यमधीयतां तदुदितं कर्मस्वनुष्ठीताताम्
तेनेशस्य विधियता-मपचितः काम्ये मतिस्वम्भ्यताताम् II

One should study the Vedic Sakha (branch) of his lineage and perform the karmas laid down therein with no desire for fruit and with dedication to Iswara. That is the Puja for Iswara. Even if we do not expect the fruit, Bhagavan does bless us with the fruit of karmas. Whether we have desire for fruit while performing karma, or not, the effort is the same. But if we perform the karmas with no desire for fruit and with the attitude ‘this is the order of Vedamatha; I do this as dedication to Iswara’, and if we say so, Bhagavan grants us in addition the great fruit of purity of mind. This is the royal Vedic path shown by our ancestors.

In Tattvopadesa, a Prakarana grantha, Sri Adisankara Bhagavatpadacharya says:

वर्णाश्रमाचार-परो-स्वासुपण्य-महोदयः I
ईश्वर-नुग्रहालब्ध-न्युवबिद् गुरस्तम् II

“One, who conducts himself according to the rules of varna and asrama, gathers great merit; he knows Brahman by Iswara’s grace; he is the greatest Guru.” In Svarupanusandhanam, Sri Acharya begins by saying: तपोजजड्यान्तिमि: शुद्धवृद्धि: - “One whose intellect is purified by penance, yagna, Danam etc. In Aparokshanubhuti, he says:

स्वर्णाश्रमधर्ममि तपसा हृतियोऽपि: I
“By performing the penance of one’s own varna and asrama dharma and by meditating on Hari, man gets the four main instruments of Gnana, viz. dispassion etc.” In Sarvavedantasiddhanta Sarasangraham, Sri Acharya says:

“By performing the penance of one’s own varna and asrama dharma and by meditating on Hari, man gets the four main instruments of Gnana, viz. dispassion etc.” In Sarvavedantasiddhanta Sarasangraham, Sri Acharya says:

“One should do karma suited to his varna and asrama, if he wishes to ascend yoga.”

“The wise say that the food of those of good conduct, worship of Iswara, pilgrimage to holy places, commitment to control of sense organs, and following the rules of control of mind help in happiness and clarity of mind.”

In Brahmasutra Bhashyam, Sri Acharya says in pararamashaikadhyayam, in the commentary for the Sutra vishitaahdayavanasu (3.4.2.20), “Svastham-vishita-karma-nitrah varna pratyavahavatham” “Srutis say that if people do not follow their karmas of varna and asrama, sin will result.”

In Asthamakarmaadhyayam, in the commentary for the Sutras vishitaahdaya (32), sthakaritvena (33), sahayendriya (34), anubhavam ch durjyayati (35), he says:

“Svastham-vishita-karma-nitrah varna pratyavahavatham”

“Hence the 48 Vedic samskaras (purificatory rituals) and karmas are instrumental in empowering the person of mind purified thus, in obtaining Brahmaidya. It is certain that yagnas and other karmas of asrama are indeed helpful in obtaining Brahmaidya.” He further says:

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The daily Vedic karmas like Agnihotram etc. should all be performed as prescribed asrama dharmas; they also lead the performer to Gnana.” He says that this is indeed the purport of Sruti.

In Brahma Sutra Bhashya, in the third chapter, Sadhanadhyaya, he has theorised many such principles.

Karmayoga established by Sri Krishna Paramatma (Srimad Bhagavadgita)
While teaching Srimad Bhagavadgita to Arjuna, Sri Krishna Paramatma lets him into the secrets of Brahmavidya and Jiva - Brahma unity. He then stresses that for the jiva to attain the state of Brahma, he has to obtain the true knowledge of his self from Guru; prior to that, he has to perform dharmas of his varna and asrama with the spirit of dedication to Iswara. While commenting on the verse

यावानथर उदयाने संस्कृतं संपतु एव
tāvān sarvēpya bālānārya viśayā
dharmānām satānaṁ svādhyāya
tāvān सर्वेञ्ये वेदेता व्राह्मणस्य विज्ञानतः।

Sri Sankaracharya writes:

तस्मात् प्राक्तं ज्ञानिन्तष्ठाधिकारप्राप्तेः
कमनण्यिधक ृ तेन क ू पतडागाद्यथन-स्थानीयमिप कर्म कर्त्तव्यम्॥

Before attaining Gnana, everyone should definitely perform his assigned karmas. Doing these karmas and enjoying their fruit is like bathing in well, tank etc. Brahmagnana is like bathing in the sea. Though Brahmagnana no doubt is the ultimate truth, purity of mind is a must in order to experience it. That purity of mind will only come by karmayoga practised with dedication to Bhagavan.

Bhagavan taught Brahmagnana in many ways to Arjuna; he said to him: “You are now not fit for Gnanam; Do karmayoga; thereby your mind will get purified and you will become eligible for Gnanayoga. You will then attain Gnana and supreme peace. If you resort to ego and decide not to fight, it will be a wrong decision, as your kshatriya nature will goad you to karma. Kshatriya svadharma involves fighting, isn’t it?

यद्यहंकारमािश्रत्य न योत्स्य आित
tyānta pāṭah kṣītīsibhāṁ tāṁ
निनयॊक्षयित

In chapter 3, sloka 18, Gnanis characteristics are brought out; there Bhagavan tells Arjuna that he is fit for karma alone and not Gnana as yet. While commenting on this, Sri Acharya says this clearly in his commentary:

न लब्धावतस्मि नर्त्तत्त्वतः संपतुतोदकस्थानीयं सम्प्रद्धीम वर्त्तसे॥

“You are not in that position where water is abundant everywhere.”

न हि कुष्प श श्राणमिप जातु तिग्रषित्कर्मकृत्तः

“None can remain without karma or thoughts even for a second, because one’s innate nature will keep prodding him every second.”

नियतं कुरु कर्म लब्ध द्वेयो ह्यकर्मणः॥
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्धेदकर्मणः।
(3-8)
Sri Acharya’s commentary says that one who does karmas as taught by Sastras is superior to one who does not do.

नियतं नित्यं शास्त्रोपपद्यम्।
यो यस्मिन् कर्मणि अधिकृतं। फलाय च।
कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्यता जनकादयः।
(3.20)
"Kings like Janaka and Asvapathi attained Liberation by doing karmas." They are known as karmayogis.

श्रेयान्वध्रमों विगुणः।
स्वर्थमा स्त्वचनुक्षितात्।
(18-47)
(3.35)

स्वधर्मे निन्दन श्रेयं।
परधार्मो भयावहः।
(5.2)

आरूर्खोप्युगेनों कर्मकारणमुच्यते।
(6.3)

"Svadharma, even if not well done, is more meritorious than another’s dharma, well done. To die doing one’s svadharma is better; another’s dharma is fraught with fear."

"Doing one’s karma as karmayoga is better than abandoning karma."

"For one, intent on Liberation, karma is said to be the cause for going higher."

सिद्धि प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्र्यौति निवोध मे।
Sri Acharya in his commentary says about ‘Siddhim praaptah’

सिद्धि प्राप्त: स्वकर्मणा ईश्वरं समवच्च तत्प्रसादजां कायनिष्ठायां ज्ञानिनष्ठायोग्नयता।
सिद्धि प्राप्त:।
(17-11)

“That yagna is Satvika, which is done as per Sastras and with the attitude that it must certainly be done and without expectation of fruit.” Here by saying यष्टव्यमॆिेित, Bhagavan shows that yagna has to be compulsorily performed.

Further Bhagavan says that his final teaching is as follows:

नित्यं शृणु।
यज्ञ दानं तपं। कर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत्।
"Karmas like yagna, danam and penance (tapas) are never to be discarded, but should certainly be performed." न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव। The reason is:

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चेति पावनाति सनीपणाम्।
Yagna, danam and tapas are purifying for those, who do them as svadharma without expectation of fruit and only for the pleasure of Iswara.

"It is my conclusive and best opinion that these karmas like yagna etc. should certainly be performed, but with no regard for fruit and with no attachment." The use of words 'Nischitam' and 'Uttamam' by Bhagavan here is to be noted. Brahmanas should perform yagnas and other svadharma acts as karmayoga with the sole thought that these acts are laid down in Veda. These are all Agni Upasana. That Agni Bhagavan gets pleased with these acts and grants all benefits is our ancestors’ experience. Bhagavan further warns emphatically:

"One, who acts in violation of rules of Sastra and as per his own volition, will not attain either fulfilment of desire, or happiness, or higher state. Therefore Sastra is your authority in deciding whether an act is fit to be done or not done. Knowing the rules of Sastra, you should perform karma in this world." Here karmas for brahmanas as laid down in Sastra, which is Veda, are all Agni Upasana.

It is the order of Veda that starting with Samidadhanam twice a day in Brahmacarya asrama and continuing with Aupasanam (Agni Sandhanam as required), Vaisvadevam (twice a day) etc. in Grihasthasrama, brahmana should go on with Nityagnihotram twice a day after performing Agni Aadhanam, and perform Somayaga etc. as per one’s capacity.

Sri Sankaracharya says in his commentary on Taittiriya Upanishad, Sikshavalli, Anuvaka 4, while writing on यथार्थादशनं विद्वत्र प्रकाशते -

श्रीकामोस्मिन्त्विधायप्रकरणेः भिष्मेऽयमानो धनार्थः धनं च कर्मार्थं कर्म च उपात्तदुरितिधयाय, तत्वं हि विद्या प्रकाशते। तथा च स्मृति: -
ज्ञानमुत्सरते पुंसोऽयत्सापस्य कर्मणं।
यथावदशश्रीतलप्रक्ष्ये पश्यत्यादात्मानस्यमेव। (Mahabharata) (12-196-8)
“One should be Srikama, i.e. desirous of wealth; wealth for what purpose? For performing karmas laid down in Veda with no desire for fruit. Doing such karmas will in due course result in sins being driven away, vidya and Gnana increasing. This is like the reflected image in a mirror being clear, once the dirt is removed.

Sri Sureswaracharya also says in his Vartikam of Taittiriya Upanishad:

मुमुक्षॊः तत्परस्यैिं श्रौतस्मातॆषु कमनसु आर्थ च प्रातिबं ज्ञानमाविभंवति मोक्षद्मृ। (तै.उ.वार्तिकं. श्री.१०-१६०)

नित्यकर्माः नु च ज्ञानाच्छुद्धान्तः करणः पुमानः॥ (तै.उ.वार्तिकं ब्रह्म-१-६)

“For one, who is intensely keen on attainment of Moksha and who earnestly performs karmas specified in Sruti and Smriti, the ancient Gnana of Rishis shines in him by itself and leads him to Moksha. By performing the daily karmas, one's mind gets purified.”

Sri Adisankara Bhagavatpadacharya thus in his Bhashyas and Prakarana Granthas has clearly laid down that Yagna, Agnihotram etc. and other Asrama dharmas should be compulsorily performed. The ordinary Grihastha should perform them as mandatory Asrama dharmas. The grihastha, intent on Moksha, should perform them as instruments for Vidya. This he has established with the authority of Sruti, leaving no doubt.

In Srimad Bhagavatham Sri Nrisimha Bhagavan teaches Prahlada:

कथा मदीया जुषमाः प्रयाः त्वमाविश्व नामात्मसन्तमेकम्।
सर्बपुरुषविव्याहसमीखं यजस्य योगेन च कर्म हिन्नी || (7-10-12)

“Listening lovingly to my stories and perceiving me in your Atma, perform yagnas with the spirit of yoga, thus weakening your Prarabdha karma, and worship Iswara who resides in all beings as the lord of yagnas.”

In Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavan teaches Karmayoga to Arjuna:

कर्मणेऽवधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलं भूतं सङ्ग्गं ते सहगोऽस्तकर्मणि || (2:47)

योगस्तः कुरु कर्मणि सद्गं त्वक्त्वा धनः भृय।
सिद्धश्चिदंक्षम: समो भूतवा समस्तं योग रच्यते || (2:48)

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केबलेनिन्द्रियेरपि।
“You are duty bound to do karmas; do not claim right to fruit of karmas. Do not become a cause for getting the fruit of karma; nor become attached to abandonment of karma.”

“Dhananjaya! Do karmas, established in yoga, without any attachment and retaining equanimity in success and failure. Yoga is indeed equanimity.”

“Yogis do karma with their body, mind and intellect and sense organs, without any attachment and only for cleansing the mind.”

“Set your mind on me; be my devotee; do yagyas for me; worship me. With me as refuge, devoting yourself to me, you will attain me.”

“Set your mind on me; be my devotee; do yagyas for me; worship me. You will definitely attain me; I promise you; you are dear to me.”

Sri Krishna Bhagavan thus teaches all of us through the medium of Arjuna that karmas should be done with the spirit of dedication to Iswara.
8. Poems in Sangakala Literature on Veda, Brahmanas and ‘Three Agnis’

Tamil Sangakalam (Sanga period) is said to be about 2300 years earlier from now. The Tamil poets of Sangakalam have assembled poems composed by different poets in different places into eight books, called “Ettuttohai” and ten books of poems called “Pattuppattu”.

The eight books of ‘Ettuttohai’ are:

The ten books of ‘Pattuppattu’ are:

In Ainkurunooru, in the first chapter of ten poems, in the 4th poem, the poet Oram Pogiyar complements the Chera king. He says first that the enemies stand defeated. Defeat of enemies strengthens the king; it is good for the country. With brahmanas (the poet uses the term ‘Parppar’, which actually refers to brahmanas, who have vision of Bhagavan in their heart-cave) chanting the Veda, the lifespan of the king grows. Let brahmanas chant Vedas and perform yagas.

In the 6th poem, ‘Thozhi Kootruppattu’, the poet extols a place called Thenur in the Pandya kingdom. He says that with brahmanas performing many yagas, the Agni makes the daytime more brilliant.

‘Paripadal’ of Ettuttohai had 70 poems originally at the time of compiling it. Those were: in praise of Vishnu- 8, Muruga- 31, Kotravai (Durga) -1, River Vaigai- 26; Madurai- 4. But we have only 22 poems available now. In the 2nd poem on Vishnu, the poet Keerandaiyaaar says:

“O Lord whose high flag has the red-mouthed Garuda! you are the substratum in the shining gem and other materials. Your form and your food consist of the words of the lord of yaga uttered in the Veda; the sacrificial animal tied to the sacrificial post (yupasthambha) in yagas, each higher than the other; the brilliant flame from the Agni in the yaga, intensified by pouring ghee and other Havis. Parimelazhagar’s commentary explains that Bhagavan appears in the form of sculpture to ordinary persons, as the flame in the yaga to brahmanas, in their minds to yogis and at all places to Gnanis.
In the 3rd poem on Vishnu, the poet Kaduvanin Eyinanar praises Vishnu: “You are the inscrutable import of the Veda; the substratum of the five elements.”

In the 10th poem on River Vaigai, poet Karumpillaippoodanar says: “Some women rolled on the roller stone red coloured saffron liquid, pasty perfume mixes, camphor etc. such that the desired intensity of the red colour, similar to the flame from the yaga Agni on adding Havis, was achieved.” In another poem (3rd), there is clear reference to brahmanas protecting the sacred Veda.

In the 7th poem Madurai city is extolled by saying: “The people of the city of Madurai get up from bed by hearing the sound of the chant of Vedas and not that of the cock as people in Vanji and Uraiyyur do.”

In the beginning of the prayer song in Kalittohai, it is said: “The Lord taught the sacred Veda with the six Angas to brahmanas.” The six Angas (Shadangas), as noted earlier, are Nirukta, Jyotisha, Vyakarana, Kalpa, Chandas and Siksha. The Tamil term ‘Andanar’ used for brahmanas means those who have loving compassion. Nachchinarkkiniyar, the scholar, in his commentary, writes that ‘Andanar’ actually means those who have realised ‘Antha’, i.e. Vedanta, vision of the Lord.

In the 3rd part of Kalittohai, viz. ‘Marudakkali’, it says: “Like the Veda-chanting brahmana, who circumambulates the Agni with his bride with doe-like vision during marriage, the hero also does the same.”

In Purananooru, poet Muranjiyur Mudinaganar, while praising the king Cheraman Perunchotru Udiyan Cheraladan, refers (2-22, 23) to ‘Muththi’ (three Agnis) worshipped by brahmanas twice a day. Poet Avur Mulankizhar, in 166th poem in Purananooru, says about king Gowniyin Vinnandayan that he performed many yagas and obtained many victories in wars. He adds that he adopted Diksha during yaga period and his wife acted as yagnapati and that the king fought against the nihilism of Buddhists and followed Vedic religion keenly. He says: “O king, the ancient Veda of four branches and six Angas talks only about dharma and is ever the speech of Siva. You countered the false propaganda of Buddhists and others, opposed to Veda. You have come in the lineage of kings who performed the 21 yagas grandly. When you sit for yaga wearing deerskin and yagnopavita, your wife performs her role in the yaga. May you, with such a wife, live long like the Himalayas.”
The author of *Tirumurugatruppadai*, one of the ‘Pattuppattu’ compilation, is Nakkeerar, son of poet Madurai Kanakkayanan. He debated with Siva himself and obtained his grace. Having got the grace of Muruga, he composed this poem for others to similarly attain his grace. He was the first poet in Tamil Sangam. *Tirumurugatruppadai* is included in 11th *Tirumurai*. While praising Muruga of Swamimalai (Tiruveragam), Nakkeerar sings the greatness of brahmanas. He says: “Brahmanas perform the prescribed six karmas. They come from the lineage of truth and dharma; they live such that their father's and mother's lineages are proud. They perform yagas of the three types. Wearing yagnopavita, they worship Bhagavan at proper times with hands joined over their heads. They pray to Muruga chanting the Shadakshara mantra and offer flowers. Sri Muruga of Tiruveragam is pleased with their prayers with Veda mantras. They perform Agni Upasana every day.”

In *Maduraikkanchi*, the 6th in the Pattuppattu compilation, poet Mangudi Marudanar praises king Talaiyalanganathu Cheruvendra Pandian and the city of Madurai. He refers to the transience of the human birth and explains like ‘gooseberry in palm’ the Advaita principle of how Mukti can be attained in this birth itself. While describing the people of Madurai and their modes of living, he says about brahmanas that they live in ‘Andanar palli’; they always chant the three Vedas; with a view to merging with Bhagavan, they practise the principle of dharmic conduct and perform yagas etc. He adds that brahmanas have vision of Bhagavan in their hearts and act accordingly; hence they cross the samsara and attain Mukti in this birth itself. He extols the king and says that he should perform many yagas like the earlier king ‘Palyagasalai Mudukudumip Peruvazhudi’. This is seen in ‘Nalvelvitturai also. In Paditruppattu, Tirumurugatruppadai, Kalittohai, Perumpanatruppadai and Ahananooru, we find many references to brahmanas performing yagas and various details relating to yagas.
9. Greatness of Grihasthasrama

Ancient Literature

Maharishi Goutama praises Grihasthasrama thus:

देवैश्च मनुष्यैश्च निर्मितिः भवनिलोपजीव्यते ।
गृहस्थः प्रत्येकं यस्मात् तस्माच्छेद्यान्तु गृहाश्रमी ॥

“As Grihastha supports Devas, humans and animals every day, he is the most meritorious.”

Manu says in Manusmriti:

यथा मातरमापितिः सर्वं जीवनं जन्तव: ।
तथा गृहस्थामापितिः सर्वं जीवनं भिक्षवः ॥ (मनुस्मृतः)

यथा मूलप्राणं भवन्तकल्याणं स्तन्धातु शाखाः सपल्लवः ।
मूलेन्निविन्दन्तिः सम्भवितत्वमिष्यति ॥

तथा चतुर्विंशतिः सर्वं जीवनं योगिङ्क्षणं ।
तस्मात्सिनप्रयत्नेन रक्षणि गृहाश्रमी ॥

यथा मूलप्राणं भवन्तकल्याणं स्तन्धातु शाखाः सपल्लवः ।
मूलेन्निविन्दन्तिः सम्भवितत्वमिष्यति ॥

“Just as all living beings depend on their mother for living, all mendicants (brahmachari, vanaprastha and sanyasi) depend on the Grihastha for living.”

“For a tree, the the root-stem at the base is the fundamental vital breath; from it, the branches with blossoms are held. If the base stem is destroyed, the entire tree is destroyed. Similarly, for all the four asramas, Grihastha is the basic support. Hence Grihastha should be protected at all costs.”

“Just as all rivers (flowing east or west) find their final destination in ocean, people of all asramas find their support in the Grihastha.”

Jagadguru Sri Kanchi Mahaswamigal says in Voice Of God (Deivattin Kural) - Part 2 on the aims of marriage:

“In Brahmacharya asrama one absorbs Vedas theoretically. To gain practical insight, he has to perform the karmas, yagnas as instructed in Vedas. For this purpose he has to take up a companion as an inseparable asset. She is called yagnapatni or dharmapatni. She must be with him and encourage him in performance of dharma including yagna. She thus acts as the backbone of karmas, which make divine powers favourable to the world. Even when she is his cook and she provides physical comfort to him, she does well for the world. This is because the
food cooked in his home is not just for him; but he has to feed guests, poor persons and even other living beings through Vaisvadevam. So his wife’s cooking serves this purpose.

In order for Vedic dharma to remain perpetually in this world, she has to procreate children for performing Vedic rituals. It cannot be seen in any other religion that even procreation is made into a samskara for future dharmic life. If the present day people understand the Sastric aims of marriage as explained by me, it will pave the way for improvement. May Sri Chandramouliswara bless people to understand the right way.”

**Importance of Grihasthasrama in Tirukkural**

Tirukkural has been praised by many scholars like Avvaiyar, Idaikkadar and Velliveediyar. They have compared it to Veda and admired its brevity and comprehensiveness in explaining dharma, saying that the seven seas have been, as it were, compressed in a mustard seed. Tiruvalluvar has spoken about Grihasthasrama in ‘Illaraviyal’ in ten stanzas. He says:

1. Grihastha (Ilvaazhvan in Tamil) is one who supports his parents, relatives and others.
2. Grihastha is the support for those abandoned by relatives, the poor and those who die as orphans.
3. It is Grihastha’s bounden duty to protect as per dharma the five entities – his dead ancestors, Bhagavan, guests, relatives and himself.
4. If Grihastha gathers wealth with fear of blame for evil sources, and enjoys the same after distributing it among others, his lineage will never be destroyed.
5. The characteristic of Grihasthasrama is love; the benefit is to follow the dharma of helping others.
6. If one conducts Grihasthasrama as per dharma, there is nothing he would gain by taking recourse to Sanyasa.
7. One, who lives as Grihastha with its characteristics intact, is the best among all those who strive to succeed.
8. Grihasthasrama, conducted through enabling others to live life as per dharma and himself living without violation of dharma, is more powerful than austerity conducted with discipline.
9. Dharma is Grihasthasrama; it is best if it is lived without attracting blame from others.
10. One, who lives on earth as per the principles of life, will be treated as a Deva of heaven even while on earth.
Deepa worship is also Agni Upasana

Traditionally women used to sing in praise of Devi enshrined in Deepa (lighted lamp) while lighting and placing lamps of different kinds – earthen, brass with Devi design etc., in homes at various locations – both sides of entrance, Bhagavan’s sannidhi, Tulasi plant platform etc. both in morning and evening. Those songs praise the flame in the deepa and convey prayers for longevity, prosperity, progeny, fame, Gnana etc. While elderly women lighted the lamps and worshipped, they used to train the girl children. Their minds and the homes were bright and blissful. Agni Bhagavan himself shines in the flame of the Deepa and blesses. With the lighting and worship of the external lamp, the inner light will brighten up. Worship of Deepa has been the life-breath of our nation. It has been common in all parts of our country to worship Deepa in different festivals on different days in different months. Deepa going off has been considered as a bad omen.

Tiruvannamalai has been called Agni kshetra. The Karthikai Deepa festival there is world famous. Sri Parameswara shines as flaming Agni in the form of Light there. Kanchipuram is known as Prithvi kshetra. People worship Mahavishnu here as ‘Deepaparakasa’. Connoting this, this sthala is known as Tiruttanga and Tooppul. Tirumangaiyazhvar sings of Mahavishnu shining as ‘Deepaparakasa’ in his poem Tiruneduntandagam.

An old Tamil song avers that all gods are present in Deepa Jyoti: The flame is Siva; the heat is Ambika; the red colour is Ganesha; the light is Muruga; Jyoti is Vishnu and Surya. The light that is Muruga actually came out of the sparks of Agni of the eye in the forehead of Sri Parameswara. There is no poet or scholar, who has not eulogised the greatness of Deepa.

Kalidasa, who wrote Raghuvamsa, was known as ‘Deepasikha Kalidasan’. He generally uses Deepa as illustration. In Raghuvamsa, while describing Indumathi’s svayamvara, the poet says (6:67):

मध्यार्घिणी दीपशिखेत्र रात्रि यं यं व्यतीयाय पुरितिरा सा ।
नरेन्द्रमागाष्ट्र इत्व प्रपेदे विवर्णमावं स स ‘भूमिपाल-॥

When Indumathi walked with the garland in hand near the kings, their faces would brighten with her radiance like the Deepa flame. When she goes past the kings, their faces would darken, like the houses in the street in the night. In Meghadootam, the yaksha describes the lamps in the bedroom as ‘star lamps’.
Sri Vidyaranya Swamigal names chapters 6 to 10 in his monumental work ‘Panchadasi’ as Deepas – Chitradeepa, Kootasthadeepa, Dhyanadeepa and Natakadeepa. It is to be noted that at the present time in the whole world there is Deepayuga because of use of electricity.

Among the 63 Nayanmars, Kaliyanayanar, performed Deepa seva to Sri Parameswara in Tiruvotriyur and merged with the Lord. Another Nayanar, Kanampullar, similarly did Deepa seva in Chidambaram and merged with the Lord. Kings in ancient times created endowments for Deepa seva in temples. All books of Veda and Vedanta, and Tamil hymns say that Bhagavan shines as the light of Deepa in every jiva’s heart.

Tirumular in his Tirumandiram says:
Siva is the inscrutable light of virtue in the human body. It is only Bhagavan who can unveil the light in the heart and kindle it to brighten. That is indeed the light which brings the outside world to light. If we worship Bhagavan, he will kindle the light. By following the steps of Charya, kriya, yoga and gnana, one can attain the ultimate fruit of this birth, viz. the state of no rebirth.

Tirunavukkarasu Swamigal and Poygai Alwar also describe Bhagavan as the light which brings all objects to light. Bhutattalwar describes Gnana as the light, in which love is the lamp, zeal is the ghee and meditation is the wick.
10. Agni Upasana in Festivals

Though many are the materials created by Bhagavan in the world, there are a few chosen ones in which Bhagavan’s presence is perceived intensely, as also accepted in Sastras. If we invoke the respective gods in these materials through appropriate mantra Japa, the gods appear and bless us. This is stated in ‘Smritimuktaphalam’ (Vaidyanatha Dikshitiyam), the celebrated book of Dharma Sastra, in Aahnika Kanda:

अप्न्याय हृदये सूये स्थ्रण्डले प्रतिमासु च।
पदस्वेतेव हरेस्मायतार्थं मुनितिम्व स्मृतम् ॥

“Munis recommend invoking and worshipping Bhagavan in the following six articles:
1. Pure water from rivers like Ganga, Kaveri, Yamuna, Krishna, Godavari, Narmada etc.
2. Agni established through due Vedic process.
3. The hearts of yogis, who constantly meditate on Bhagavan.
4. Surya, the visible God.
5. Altar like yantra etc.
6. Images of gold, silver, brass, bronze, Panchaloha etc.”

That Agni is included in the articles of worship here should be noted.

Agni Upasana, commenced as Samidadhanam in Brahmacharyasrama, grows into Aupasana, Vaisvadevam, Nityagnihotram and many Srourtha and Smartha karmas in Grihasthasrama; it becomes an important part of our life and leads us higher.

Women clean the entrance to the home with cowdung, put ‘kolam’ (flour design) and light the lamp; they also light the lamp in the Pooja room in morning and evening. Traditionally this Agni Upasana has been observed in every household with no barriers of caste, lineage etc. In every month there are important occasions when we light the lamp and worship.

Yamadeepa

अस्थिरन्यासिते पश्चे चयोदश्यां निशामुखे ।
यमदीपं बिहदनद्यात् अपमृत्युर्मिति ॥

“Yamadeepa is lighted in Asvin month, Krishna paksha, in the night on Trayodashi, the night before Deepavali; this wards off untimely death.”

Skanda Puranam extols Yamadeepa in glowing terms:

मृत्युना पाश्चण्डलाभ्यं कालेन श्यामया सह ।
“May Yama Dharmaraja, the son of Surya, who holds rope and staff in his hands and shines with Mrityu, Kala and Syamaladevi, be pleased with me through this Deepadana on this Trayodashi day.” So praying, women should light earthen lamps with til oil in every home and worship. This will destroy sins committed by us unknowingly and fear of untimely death, and grant us long healthy life; there is no doubt.

Deepavali

This festival, where Deepas are lighted and kept in a row (Avali), is celebrated merrily throughout Bharatadesa. In ‘Nirmayasindhu’, a book of Dharmasastra, we are asked to light lamp with four wicks on the evening of Deepavali day and keep in Pooja room and entrance of homes and in Siva and Vishnu temples. The prayer is:

दत्तॊ दीपश्चतुदनश्यां नरकप्रीतये मया ।
चतुिनर्मत समायुतः सर्वपापायुत्तये ॥

“On Chaturdashi day, this Deepa with four wicks is offered for destruction of all sins and removal of fear of Naraka.” This will grant us good health, long life, happiness etc.

Karthigai Deepa

Deepa offered during the entire Karthik month is called ‘Akasadeepa’. The special Deepa on the days of Bharani and Karthik stars in Karthik month is known as Bharani deepa and Karthigai deepa. This Deepa festival is observed in all homes and Siva temples. In Tiruvannamalai, the Agni kshetra, Karthigai Deepa has been celebrated as a grand festival for many centuries. The Tiruvannamalai hill itself is worshipped as the form of Agni and Sri Parameswara.

दशननात् अभ्रसदिस जननात् कमलालये ।
काश्यां तु मरणान्मुितः स्मरणात् अरुणाचलम् ॥

Our ancestors have said that by having darshan at Chidambaram, by taking birth in Kamalalaya (Tiruvur), by dying in Kashi and by thinking of Arunachala, Mukti is attained.

Arunagiri shines indeed as the form of Jyoti.

Akasa Deepa

Every year in Kartikai month, for 30 days from Sukla paksha Prathama tithi to Amavasya day, every day in the evening, Deepa should be lighted in earthen lamp with 8 wicks and with til oil at
home on top level or in temples on a high staff. This is called akasadeepa. Nirmayasindhu says that one who does this will obtain good wealth, handsomeness and good luck.

कार्तिक तिलवैले नायक्कोले समागेते।
आकाशदीपं यो दयालु मासमेकं हृद्रं प्रति॥
महतीं धिमाप्रीति रूपसोभायसंपदम॥
The prayer to be said is:

दामोदराय नमसि तुलायं लोलया सह।
प्रदीपं ते प्रवध्यामि नमोजन्ताय वेधसे॥

On Karthik Pournima day, it has been the practice to burn ‘Chokkappanai’ in front of Siva temple and in a common remote place. A tall staff or tree is covered with straw, and palm leaves are tied at top and that is put to fire. The term ‘Chokkappanai’ is perhaps derived from ‘Chokkan’, meaning Siva and ‘Appan’ meaning father. Mahakavi Kalidasa calls Siva and Parvathi as the father and mother of the world – जगत: पितारि बने पार्वती परमेश्वरी।

One should think of the burning ‘Chokkappanai’ as Parameswara shining in the form of Jyoti and pray to him. When it burns, one should throw Guggula (fragrant gum resin) in it thinking of Mahabali the king. The prayer to be said is:

उज्जवल्योतिराकाशे दीप्यां विभावसी।
गुग्नुलं प्रक्षिपाम्यने प्रीतो भव महावले॥

We pray to Agni Bhagavan for cleansing of the mind, saying:

कीटाः पत्राः मध्यकाश्य वृक्षाः जले स्थले ये विचरन्ति जीवाः।
दृष्ट्वा प्रदीपं न च जनमागिनः भवन्ति नित्यं श्रपन्ताः हि विप्रा॥

“Worms, birds, insects, trees etc. existing in water and on land, on seeing the lamp, get released from the cycle of births; so do humans from brahmanas down to the eaters of dog’s flesh.”

Deepa Worship in Holi Festival

Holi festival is widely celebrated in north India by all people on Magha month’s Pournima day. The story behind this festival is told in Bhavishyottara Puranam. In order to protect children from a Rakshasi named Dundika who troubles children in secret, it is the practice to create an image of a sleeping Rakshasi with firewood, cowdung cakes etc and put it to fire. This is done on Magha Pournima evening at home or in a common place. People circumambulate the raging fire, while saying the verse and praying to Holika, the demoness for prosperity:

अस्माभिर्मय-सन्तव्ये: कृतात्वं होळिके यतः॥
अतस्त्वा पूजयिष्यामी भूते भूतिप्रदा भव॥
The book Smriti Koustubha further says that people should make noise, clap hands, laugh and sing while going round the fire:

ततः किलकिला शब्दे: लालशब्दे: मनोरमे:।
तममः त्रि:परिक्रम्य गायत्रु: हसन्तु: च॥

This is followed that night or the next day by saying this prayer to the ash:

वन्दितांसि सुरेन्द्रर्ष्ण: श्रृद्धार्षण: च।
अतस्वं पाठि नो देवि: भूते: भूतिप्रादं भव॥

This will lead to removal of all diseases, dullness of intellect, fear of untimely death etc. and grant long life, good health, sharp intellect etc.

Smriti Koustubham also says that on Magha Sukla Dvadashi day, Sri Mahavishnu created black til from his own body after performing severe tapas as per a Puranic account. Hence lighting lamp with til oil and offering til rice to Bhagavan will destroy all sins and bestow benefits. The verse is:

माघै: तु: शुक्लद्वादश्यां यतो: हि: भगवान: पुरा।
तिलानु: उत्पादयामास: तपः:कृत्वा सुदारुणम्॥
तिलतैले: दीपाश्च देयाः: देवगृहेशु: च॥
11. Greatness of Agni Upasana in Upanishads

Kathopanishad

Kathopanishad belongs to Katha Sakha (branch) of Krishna Yajur Veda. There are two chapters, each having three sections, called Vallis (creepers). In the first Valli, the story of Nachiketas and the dialogue between him and Yama Dharmaraja find a place. Nachiketopakhyanam is also found in Taittiriya Brahmanam. Yama is one of the Brahmadidyacharyas; Kathopanishad is an important Upanishad stressing Agni Upasana. Sri Adisankara Bhagavatpadacharya has written a commentary based on a sage’s experience. With the very first mantra of the first Valli, the story of Nachiketas starts.

When he saw his father giving away cows, which were old and incapable of consuming grass, drinking water and giving birth to calves, he was worried that this might lead to his father being deprived of the good benefits from the yaga and attaining to miserable realms.

Out of compassion he asked his father three times: ‘To which Ritvik are you going to give me instead of dakshina’. The father was furious at the boy not behaving his age and said, ‘I am going to give you to Yama Dharmaraja, son of Surya.’

In order to make his father’s statement true, Nachiketas set out happily to Yamaloka and waited at Yama’s abode for three days as Yama had gone out. (Nachiketas, the brahmachari, could go to Yama’s abode by the power of his Agni Upasana, viz. Samidadhanam.)
The brahmana, who comes as guest, is Agni himself. Virtuous people offer him Argyam, Padyam, Asana etc. (water for washing hands and feet, and seat) and make him comfortable, as if they try to put off the heat of Agni. Hence Yama’s wife or minister advised Yama to offer him these hospitalities. Srimad Bhagavatham also says अग्निभ्यागतो मूर्ति: - ‘Agni, who came as guest in the form of human being’.

Yama said to Nachiketas: “Brahman! You, who ought to have been worshipped as guest, spent three nights in my home without even food. Hence I seek your forgiveness and plead that all may be well with me. Please ask me for three boons, one for each of the three nights you spent here.”

ितस्रो राज्याला यदवालालिग्रहेण मेंजन्ष्टन्त्रब्रह्मतिथियग्न्य-नमस्त: ।
नमस्तेन्त्तु ब्रह्मनुस्तत्त्वित्तित्वान्वरानुवर्तितारणीयव ॥

Nachiketas agreed and asked for the following three boons:
1. My father’s anger towards me should subside. He should feel at home when he sees me again. Yama granted this first boon.
2. There is no fear of disease etc. in Svarga. You, Yama, also do not go there normally. People there do not fear you. Please teach me that Agni Vignana, which is the means of attaining to Svarga. Yama agreed and taught him Agni Chayanam, the method of preparing Srouthagni.
3. चापि तत्तत्ववद्ययोक्तम्
Nachiketas learnt it and repeated it correctly to Yama.

मृत्युः पुनरेवा हुष्टः
Yama was pleased and said: “I offered you three boons. Impressed by your sharp intellect, I am now offering you a fourth boon too. Let this Vidya of ‘Agni Chayanam’ be known hereafter as ‘Naachiketa Chayanam’.

If Trinaachiketa, guided by three entities (mother, father, teacher; or, Sruti, Smruti, virtuous ritualists; or, three authorities- Pratyaksham, Anumanam and Agamam – direct perception, inference and scripture), performs the three karmas, viz. Yaga, Vedic study and Danam, he crosses the cycle of births and deaths. He comes to know through Sastra, the self-luminous Virat Purusha (Cosmic Person), who emerges out of Brahman, is omniscient and adorable in the form of Naachiketagni Chayanam. He experiences that Brahman as his own Self and attains the highest peace. Sri Sankaracharya further says in his commentary:
“Now the Upanishad concludes the subject of Agni Upasana, Agni Chayana yaga and its fruit.”

A Trinaachiketa, who learns the three aspects, viz. the classes of bricks, the number of bricks and the method of placing them for construction of altar, and worships Naachiketagni as his own Self, gets rid of Adharma, ignorance, desire and hatred etc., rides over mental grief and enjoys bliss in the world of Virat Purusha.

Yama further said: “Naachiketagni Chayana was performed by me. I thus attained the eternal state through use of ephemeral materials.” After Yama completed his discourse on the greatness of Naachiketagni thus, Nachiketas asked Yama for the third boon as granting knowledge of Brahmavidya. Though Yama initially tested Nachiketas’s sincerity and qualification, he taught him Brahmavidya after convincing himself of Nachiketas’s ability and sincerity.

While commencing the commentary of Kathopanishad, Sri Sankaracharya pays obeisance to Bhagavan Yama, the son of Surya, the Brahmavidyacharya as well as Nachiketas.

Agni Upasana, if done without looking for fruit and by way of fulfilling Sruti’s instructions, will lead one to supreme state.

Chandogya Upanishad

Chapter 4, Khanda 4 to 15

Sri Sankaracharya’s commentary on Jabala’s reply:

Satyakama Jabala asked his mother Jabala: ‘I wish to study at Gurukulam; which is my Gotram?’

Sri Sankaracharya’s commentary on Jabala’s reply:
Jabala said: “O child, I do not know your Gotram. As I was busy with many household activities, with many guests coming in, I had no opportunity to find out your Gotram. You were born in my youth; your father also expired at that time. With none to take care of us, I was very busy. My name is Jabala. Your name is Satyakama. Hence you tell your Acharya that your name is Satyakama Jabala.” This shows that women in ancient India gave importance to dedicated service to the husband and the household, and had no inclination to get to know many other extraneous matters.

Satyakama went to the Goutama Acharya named Haridrumata and told him the truth. The teacher appreciated his truthfulness and accepted him as his disciple. He got upanayana samskaras done for Satyakama and gave him 400 cows and asked him to look after them. Satyakama took to serving the cows with one-pointed attention. He performed Agni Upasana regularly; he did Samidadhanam in morning and evening. When the cows grew to 1000 in number, Satyakama started on his return to Gurukulam. On the way a bull among the herd of cows taught him that the four directions are four arts, forming a fourth part of Brahman; it is called प्रकाशिन् ‘Prakasavan’ and that Agni Deva would teach him further. The next day in the evening Satyakama was meditating on the bull’s teaching during Agni Upasana. Agni then taught him that earth, intermediate zone, the heaven (Dyourloka) and the ocean are four arts, forming a fourth part of Brahman; it is called अनन्तवान् ‘Ananthavan’ and that Hamsa (swan) would teach him further. The next day during Samidadhanam, a Hamsa appeared and taught that Agni, Surya, Chandra and lightning are four arts, forming a fourth part of Brahman; it is called ज्योतिषवान् ‘Jyotishman’ and that Madgu (diver-bird) would teach him further. The Madgu taught Satyakama that Prana, eye, mind and ear are four arts, forming a fourth part of Brahman; it is called आयतनवान् ‘Ayatanavan’.

When Satyakama finally reached the Gurukulam with 1000 cows, Guru Haridrumata said: “O child, you appear to have received teaching on Brahman. Your face is bright. Who taught you?” Satyakama explained what had happened and asked the Guru to teach him saying आचार्यंछेव विच्य विदिता साधित्रं प्रापत ।
“I have heard from venerable persons like you that knowledge acquired from the teacher alone surely becomes the best. The Guru then taught him the very knowledge imparted by the Devatas and blessed that it might be complete.

This shows that in case of Satyakama, who performed Agni Upasana conscientiously, Agni Bhagavan himself blessed him with Brahmavidya.

Later Upakosala, the son of Kamalayana, came to Satyakama’s Gurukulam for study. He served the Agnis of Satyakama in the Agnisala and the Guru for 12 years with great concentration. Guru Satyakama taught Vidya to other students, had Samavartanam (ceremonial completion) performed and sent them home; but he did not teach any Vidya to Upakosala. Satyakama’s wife pleaded with him: “Please teach Vidya to Upakosala also. He has been performing regular Poojas to Agnis. If you do not teach him, Agnis would get angry.” Still Satyakama did not listen and went out. Upakosala, who was mentally very agitated, did not eat properly and was stricken with anxiety. Guru’s wife consoled and fed him. Sastras do bring out the greatness of Gurus’ wives. They treat the disciples in the Gurukulam as their children.

The three Agnis were very happy and taught Upakosala the Vidya of Brahman. They said:
\[ते होँचुरुपकोसलैषा सौम्य तेऽस्मिद्वद्या ।
आत्मविद्या च आचार्यस्तु ते गति वत्ता इति ॥
\]
“She has taught you Agni Vidya and Atma Vidya; Acharya will show you the way.”

When Acharya Satyakama returned and said:
\[ब्रह्मििद आि सौम्य ते मुखं भाित कॊनु त्वा अनुशशास इति ॥
(4.14.2)
\]
“You face shines like a Brahmagnani’s; who taught you?”

Upakosala pointed to the Agnis that the Guru worshipped and said that they only had taught him. Satyakama was happy and taught him the full knowledge of Brahman leading to Moksha. Satyakama had indeed blessed that the Agnis he served should teach Upakosala the Vidya. If the Guru’s full blessing is there, Devatas will teach. It is the principle of Sruti that Jiva can attain fulfilment only with Guru’s blessing. Agni Upasana brought fruition of his penance to Upakosala through his Guru.

\[इम्म मानबमार्त नास्वर्तन्ते नास्वर्तन्ते ॥
One who takes this route does not come back to this cycle of births created by Manu.
Panchagni Vidya
Raja Pravahana, the son of Jivala, taught Panchagni Vidya to Aruna, the grandfather of Svetaketu. Pravahana says that this was the first time that the Vidya, preserved in the royal lineage, was being taught to a brahmana, Aruna.

1. When Jiva returns after moving about in higher realms, he is offered as Ahuti first in the Agni of Akasa.
2. Secondly he dissolves in the Agni of rain.
3. Thirdly, at the time rain water gathers on earth, he is offered as Ahuti in it and mixes with plants, creepers, trees and fruits.
4. Fourthly, depending on his karmaphala (destiny – fruits of accumulated karma), he is offered as Ahuti in the Jaatharagni (Agni in stomach) of a human male or other animals and is converted in course of time to the virya (semen) of that person/animal, i.e. he mixes as essence with the virya.
5. Fifthly, through union with woman, he is offered as Ahuti in the Agni of her uterus and then obtains his body.

Thus the travel of the jiva is picturised as Agni and is presented as Panchagni Vidya. The point is that there is nothing unrelated to Agni.

अथ ह य एतानेवं पञ्चािीन्िेद न सह तैरप्याचरन्पाप्मना लिप्यते शुद्धः पूतः पुण्यलोको
भित य एवं वेद य एवं बेद ॥

One, who studies Panchagni Vidya and worships Agni, becomes pure and free of association with sins, and attains to meritorious world. Chandogya Upanishad declares this as the Phalasruti of Panchagni Vidya. This is also taught in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (chapter 6).

Pranagnihotram
Five great Grihasthas, adept in Vedic rituals, called ‘Mahasalas’ once debated on Atma (Chandogya Upanishad 5.11). They were Prachinasala (son of Upamanyu), Satayagna (son of Pulushha), Indradyumna (son of Bhaallavi), Jana (son of Saarkaraakshya) and Budila (son of Aasvataraasva). They approached Uddalaka Aruni and pleaded with him to teach Vaisvanara Atmavidya. Aruni said he was not aware of that vidya and suggested to go to Asvapathi, king of Kekaya, who was worshipper of that vidya. All six of them went with samith in hand to Asvapathi. Asvapathi then related the greatness of his country to them.

न में स्तेनी जनपदे न कदर्यों न मद्यपी
“In my kingdom there is no thief, greedy person, drunkard, person not performing Agni Upasana, uneducated person, adulterer, adulteress etc.” By using the term नानाहिताशिि, the king conveys proudly that all persons performed Agni upasana. It is seen that everybody has been Agni Upasaka in our Bharatadesa. Asvapathi then taught that if we perform the Ahutis before eating food, viz. ‘Pranaya Svaha’, ‘Vyanaya Svaha’, ‘Apanaya Svaha’, ‘Samanaya Svaha’, ‘Udanaya svaha’ and ‘Brahmane Svaha’, with proper understanding, they will then become ‘Pranagnihotram’.

“The action of one, who performs this Agnihotram without knowing this principle, is like his offering oblation on ashes unfit for receiving oblations. If Pranagnihotram is performed with knowledge of the far-reaching principle, the oblation becomes offered in all the worlds, in all the creatures and in all constituents of a person (body, mind, organs, and intellect).

As the fibre at the tip of a blade of reed becomes completely burnt when thrown into fire, so all sins of him, who, having knowledge of the principle, performs this Pranagnihotram, become completely burnt. Just as hungry children wait on their mother in this world, all creatures wait on the Agnihotram, i.e. Agni Upasakas.”

An illustration of the universal effect of Pranagnihotram is found in Mahabharatam. The moment Sri Krishna partook of a piece of greens from the food vessel of Draupadi, Sri Durvasa and his disciples, who had gone for bath and rituals, felt satiated with food. Sri Krishna thus showed how Pranagnihotram is done with the attitude of satisfying all creatures.

Out of 108 Upanishads, there is one called ‘Pranagnihotra Upanishad’. It is taught therein that yagna should be deemed to be performed in our body.

स्वे शरीरे यज्ञं परिवर्त्यामीति।
Yagna should be deemed to be performed and Ahutis given in four Agnis in the body. Which are those Agnis and where are they in the body?

At the crest of the head, Agni called Surya is present. It is also called ‘Ekarshi’; it is of the form of Suryamandala; it has a thousand rays (sahasradalam). In the face, Darsanagni is present in four-sided form with the name of Ahavaniyam. In the heart, Dakshinagni shines in the form of semi-circle (Ardhachandra). In the navel is present Koshtagni, which digests food that is eaten, chewed, masticated and drunk, and spreads it in the entire body; it has the name of Garhapatyagni. This is also mentioned in Garbhopanishad.

The Upanishad also teaches us to deem all Karmendriyas and Gnanendriyas and limbs as parts of a Yagnapurusha. All components participating in a yagna are present in the body.

For this yagna performed in the body, the yajamana (sacrifice) is Atma; the intellect is his wife (yagnapatni); Vedas are the superior Ritviks; Ahamkara (sense of I) is Adhvaryu; Chitta (mind storing impressions) is Hota; Prana is Brahmanachchamsi; Apana is Pratiprastata; Vyana is Prastota; Samana is Maitravaruna; Udana is Udgata; body is the altar (yagavedi).

The nose is Uttaravedi; head is Dronakalasam; leg is chariot; right hand is Sruva (ladle); left hand is the ghee vessel; ears are Samit called Adhara; eyes are Ajyabhaga (two portions of ghee).

The Upanishad also teaches us to deem all Karmendriyas and Gnanendriyas and limbs as parts of a Yagnapurusha. All components participating in a yagna are present in the body.
The neck is Dharapatra (vessel from which ghee flows); Tanmatras are those present; Mahabhutas in causal state prior to Panchikaranam are Prayajakas; Bhutas after Panchikaranam are Anuyajas; tongue is Ida; teeth and lips are Suktavakas; Palate is Samyuvaka; memory power is compassion; forbearance and non-violence are the assistants to the wife; Omkara is the yupasthambha (sacrificial post); desire is rope; mind is chariot; desire is the sacrificial animal; hair is darbha grass; Gnanendriyas are the vessels used in yagna; Karmendriyas are the Havis; Ahimsa is Ishti (yagna); sacrifice is dakshina; death is Avabhruta snana. All Devatas are enshrined in this body.

Agni Upasana performed as yagna gets one Moksha in this birth itself with no rebirth, says the Upanishad.
12. Greatness of Agnihotram

Verses of Prayer to Agni in Agnihotram

नमस्ते गाहिःपत्याय नमस्ते दक्षिणायः।
नम आहवनीयाय महावेदः नमो नमः॥
क्राण्ड्रोपपाद्याय कर्मब्रह्मस्वरूपिणे।
स्वारुपस्वरूपाय यज्ञशयाय नमो नमः॥
यज्ञशानन्त गोविन्द माधवानन्त केशव।
कृण विष्णू हरपीके वासुदेव नमोःस्तु ते॥
ब्राह्मणम गाहिःपत्याय विष्णवे दक्षिणायः।
शिवाय आहवनीयाय शक्ते वेदः नमो नमः॥

Agnisuktam अग्निसूक्तम्

Prayers to Agni Bhagavan

अङ्गे नय सुपथा राये अस्मातु विभानि देव वचनानि विद्वानू।
युयोध्यमज्जुहुराणमेनो भूियष्ठां ते नम उक्ति विधिर।
“O Agni Deva, you, who are aware of all paths, please lead us on the path of virtuous karmas resulting in wealth. Keep us away from hordes of sins. We pay obeisance with many prostrations.”

प्रवश्चुकाय भानवे भरुद्धवे हत्वं मति चाप्रेये सुपूतम्।
यो दैव्यानि मानुषा जरूः ध्यानविश्वानि विजना जिगाति॥
“O Ritviks, please prepare pure Havis for offering to the sacred Agni, who knows everything related to Vedas and humans, who is the progenitor of Devas and humans, who accesses all of them, and who is very pure and shines with bright rays.”

अच्छा गिरा मतये देययतीरप्तः यति द्रविण विक्षयाणाः।
सुसन्दृशं सुप्रतीकं स्वरं हत्यवादारति मानुपाणाम॥
“Our words of prayer and thoughts of meditation are directed to Agni Bhagavan and show our desire for wealth from Devas. Agni looks at us with eyes of blessing, is handsome and has a nice gait; he carries Havis offered by those, who perform yagas, to Devas.”

अङ्गे त्वमसप्रदूयोध्यमीवा अनप्रित्रा अभ्यमन्तकुशी।
पुनरस्मभ्यं सुविताय देव क्षां विश्वेश्वरजयज्ञज्ञ॥
“O Agni Deva, rid us of diseases like sluggishness of Agni (in the body) and those which largely affect humans. O Agni worshipped by yagnas, render us free from all diseases. Through herbs curing us of old age, rid us of diseases like tuberculosis etc.”
O Agni Deva, make our homas fulfilling and grant us lofty fruits by removing all obstacles. May this earth be spacious for our living. Please make our children and grandchildren comfortable and remove their suffering and grief.

नमस्ते अस्तु भगिः । सकृते अंगे नमः ।
द्विस्ते नमः । त्रिस्ते नमः । चतुर्स्ते नमः ।
पञ्चकृत्स्ते नमः । दशकृत्स्ते नमः । शतकृत्स्ते नमः ।
आसहस्त्रकृत्स्ते नमः । असहस्रकृत्स्ते नमः ।
नमस्ते अस्तु मा मा हह सीः ॥

After marriage, every brahmana should do Aadhanam in spring season (vasantha ritu) and commence Agnihotram yagna.

अगिन्होत्राहुित परिणाममुप्लवातुकृत्स्तय प्रपञ्चस्य
As per this authority, whoever does Agnihotram karma, it is for universal wellbeing. The entire world shines as a result of Agnihotram yagna.

ते वा एते आहुति दिवमाविशतः
Ahutis (oblations) offered in Agnihotram reach the world of Devas and come back to us in the form of rains, doing the world well. As cited earlier, just as hungry children wait on their mother for removal of hunger, all creatures wait on Agnihotram (Ch.Up. 2.5.24.5).

यथेह लुप्तिता बालाः मातं पर्युपासते ।
एवं सर्वाणि भूतानि अगिन्होत्रमुपासते ॥

Agnihotram is performed using Yajurvedam. Agnihotra prayers etc. are covered in Krishna Yajurveda Samhita, 1st Kandam, 5th Prasnam, 5th Anuvakam from उपप्रयन्तॊ to अगिन्होत्रं जुहॊित. Agnihotram is explained with small stories in 2nd Ashtakam, 1st Prasnam.

यावजीवं अगिन्होत्रं जुहॊिति सायं प्रातंस्त्रिहोंचं जुहॊिति
Veda stipulates that Agnihotram should be performed throughout one’s life. Agnihotram should be performed in the morning and evening without fail. One, who performs Agnihotram throughout his life, becomes of the form of Brahman himself. Prostrating to the Agnihotri after he completes Agnihotram bestows all benefits.
Veda extols Agnihotram in very high terms. (Arunam, 10th Prasnam, Anuvakam 79). The main benefit of study of Vedas is Agnihotram.

In Haaritha Smriti, Haaritha Maharishi also says:

“There is no dharma, no tapas (austerity), no attainment, no vrata (discipline) greater than Agnihotram.” Other Smritis also say: “Agnihotrasmo dharma ne bhooto ne bhavishyati.”

Bhagavan Vyasa says in Mahabharatam, Anusasanika Parva:

Mahabharata, Aasvamedhika Parva, third chapter says:

“Brahma created all materials on earth, moving and non-moving, for Agnihotram alone. This entire world has been created for Agnihotram alone.”

Bhagavan says: “The world is sustained by yagnas like Agnihotram.”
While creating people, Brahma created yagnas also along with them for their wellbeing - सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्िा. Bhagavan says in Gita: एष्टोऽस्तु इष्टकामधुक् || “Yagnas are the Kamadhenu granting all the wishes of people.”

Manusmriti says: यज्ञॊऽस्तु मृत्यॊऽस्तु मृत्यॊऽस्तु सर्वस्य ॥

“Yagna is the benefactor of the entire world.”

Mahabharata, Aasvamedhika Parva says:

यज्ञॊऽस्तु तपिता: यज्ञ: लोकानूं संवधयति उत ॥

उभयोलॊक्योऽव भूति: यज्ञ: प्रदृश्यते ॥

“Devas, satisfied with yagna offerings, help in developing the worlds. Both the worlds - earth and heaven, are wealthy through yagnas.”

It is said that in Yajurveda, five mantras with a total of 17 letters - आश्रिय, अस्तु श्रौषि्, यज, येयजामहे, चोपद् - are of the form of Brahman and are very powerful and capable of producing rain.

It is further said:

आश्रियॆित पुरॊिातमजनयत् ।
अस्तु श्रौषेडत्यभ्रंसप्लाियन् ॥
यजेत विभूतमजयन् ।
येयजामह इति प्रावर्ष्यन् ।
अभ्यस्तनयन् वपषूकरिण ।

“Devatas generated forewind from the first mantra ‘Aasravaya’; they brought together clouds from the second mantra ‘Astu Sroushat’; they generated lightning from the third mantra ‘Yaja’; they poured rains from the fourth mantra ‘Yeyajamahe’; they spread the rain waters everywhere from the fifth mantra ‘Voushat’.” Bhagavan Sri Krishna also says the same in Gita:

अप्राप्त भवति भूतानि पर्जन्यातु अन्नसम्भवः ।
यजातु भवति पर्जन्यः ॥ (3-14)

“Rains are caused by yagna; food is generated by rains; beings are created through food.”

Manusmriti also reiterates this:

अप्राप्त भवति पर्जन्यातु अन्नसम्भवः ।
आदित्यात्र जायते वृष्टि: वृष्टेर्वः ततःप्रजा: ॥ (3:76)

Veda also contains many statements forming the basis of the above assertions.

सौम्या खलु वा आहृति: दिवो वृष्टि च्यावयतिः ।

“Homa, well done in Agni, generates rain from the heavens.”

दिवो वृष्टिर्मेय - Prayer for pouring rains from heaven.
कृषिविधुताकल्याणकल्याणम्। - Prayer for rains and development of agriculture for yajamana (sacrificer).

Mahakavi Kalidasa says in Raghuvaṃśam that the kings of the Raghu lineage were all committed to yagas and they protected the country by continuous performance of yagas – यथाविधिहृताश्रीनामः.

King Raghu says to Indra that his father Emperor Dilipa remained always pure with Yaga diksha.

अमोच्यमध्यं यदि मन्यते प्रभो ततःसमासे बिधिनेत्र कर्मणि।
अजस्रीधक्षेरवतः स मद्गुरुः क्रतौरशेषा फलेन युज्यताम्॥ (3.65)
“O Lord Indra, if you consider that the horse (which has been captured by Indra) should not be let off by you, please grant my father Emperor Dilipa, ever pure with yaga diksha, the fruit of this Asvamedha yaga, though not completed as per rules.” He also says that as his father has been with yaga diksha, he has Siva’s presence in himself- त्रिनोचनैकाश्चतया। Kalidasa says further:

दुधोह गां स यज्ञाय समाय मधवा दिवम्।
संपद्रिनिमेयेनौ दधुकुपवनद्रयम्॥
“Dilipa obtained materials for yaga from the earth and made Devas happy. Indra poured good rains in Dilipa’s kingdom as a fruit of his yaga. Indra and Dilipa thus helped each other and protected Svarga and the earth.” Kalidasa describes the scene witnessed by Dilipa and his wife Sudakshina on their way to Kulaguru Vasishtha’s asrama:

ग्रामेष्वातात्मविसृणेण यूपिचननेषु यज्जनाम्।
अमोचा: प्रतिगुल्लात अर्ध्यात्तुपदाणियिः॥
“There were many villages given in charity by Dilipa. The brahmanas there performed yagas as laid down. Many yupasthambhas were seen in the villages as a sign of these yagas. The brahmanas offered Argya and blessed the king on arrival. The king and his wife received these unfailing blessings.”

At the time Dilipa and Sudakshina came to sage Vasishtha’s asrama, the ascetics there were returning from nearby forests, having collected Samith etc. required for yagas. The asrama was getting filled with such ascetics. Agni Deva welcomed them unseen.

वनात्तरादुपावृः समितकुशगाहरे।
पूर्वमाणमुश्याप्रि प्रत्युद्योततपस्विभिः॥ (1-49)
Veda states that just as children welcome their father returning from abroad, the unseen Agni welcomes performers of yaga on their return from outside places.
Kalidasa further says:

अभ्युित्थतािििपशुनैः अितथीनाध्रमोन्मुखान्।
पुनाः पवनीदशृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृृों

“Homa was in progress in the asrama when Dilipa reached there. In the smoke emanating from the Homagni, the scent of ghee etc. used in Ahuti was felt. The scent wafting in the surrounding air purified the guests coming to the asrama.”

नििािसतमरुन्धत्या स्िाहयॆि हििभुनजम्॥

“Dilipa saw Muni Vasishtha, the seat of austerities, along with Arundhati at the close of the evening rituals, just as he would see Agni Deva accompanied by Svaha Devi.” (सायं संयिमनस्तस्य महषेमनिहषीसखःप्रापत्॥)

Dilipa praised Maharishi Vasishtha saying:

हििरािर्मजतं हॊतः त्िया ििििधिदििषु।
िृिष्टभनिित सस्यानां अिरहििशॊिषणाम्॥

“(1-53) Devas are pleased with the Havis offered by you in Homa as per Sastras and they pour rain. If you do not perform Homa, there will be no rain; crops will wither away.”

It is clear from the above cited various references that the Vedic principle that yagn a generates rain was founded deeply in the psyche of our people, strengthened by faith and experience. Rain and food are essential requirements of men. As Vedic scholars of virtuous conduct and discipline performed yaggas as laid down in Sastras, people led long and healthy lives with no complaint.

Agni Upasana has been the backbone of our Bharatadesa from times immemorial. People have been performing Agni Upasana all over the world as per their local practices.

Yaga, Homa etc. are essentially Agni Upasana only.

तत्र प्रजाभ्यॊ यॊगक्षॆमः।
यत्रैतेन यज्ञेन यजन्ते॥

At the place where yagas are performed, the ‘yogakshema’ of people is fulfilled. ‘Yohakshema’ has been interpreted by Sri Sankaracharya in his commentary on Gita (9.22):

यॊगक्षॆमं, यॊगः अप्राप्तस्य प्रापणं, क्षॆमः तद्रक्षणम्।
‘Yoga is getting something not already with us; kshema is safely preserving the newly acquired thing’. There are prayers in Veda for yogakshema of even four-legged animals like cow, goat, horse etc. - शन्ो अस्तु द्विपदे शञ्चतुष्पदे॥

For Surya’s rays to be strong, yagnas like Agnihotram performed in this world are the means. This is stated in Mahabharata:
Yagna is indeed a form of Bhagavan. Sruti says: यज्ञो यज्ञः
Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita: अहं क्रतुः अहं यज्ञः - 'I am Kratu; I am yagna.'
Statements like अः तिथ्यति विश्राणाम् confirm that Bhagavan is of the form of yagna and is present in Agni.

In Srimad Bhagavatham, Sri Yagnavaraha avatara is described. Brahma and others praise Sri Yagnavarahamurthy as the form of yagna.

"Bhagavan was blue-coloured like Tamala tree and lifted the earth sportingly with the tip of his teeth like elephant’s. Brahma and others praised Bhagavan with folded hands with hymns of deep import."

Rishis said: ऋषय ऊः:
O Lord, known by yagnas and conquered by none! Obeisance to you, who are shaking your body made of the Vedas. Prostrations to you, in whose hair pores are yagnas hidden and who have taken the form of boar in order to retrieve the earth. Deva, it is impossible for sinners to have a vision of this form of yours, it being formed of yagnas. In your skin are the chandas like Gayatri; in your hair are darbhas; in eyes, ghee; in your four feet, the karmas of the four Ritviks of yagna, viz. Hota, Adhvaryu, Udgatha and Brahma. Lord, in the front part of your face is the ladle Sruk; in your nose is the ladle Sruva; in your belly is Ida, the vessel; in your ears is Chamas, the Soma
vessel; in your mouth is Praasitra, the vessel of Brahmabhaga; in your throat are Grahas, the Soma vessels. Bhagavan, the food you chew is Agnihotram; your frequent manifestation is Dikshaniya Ishti; your neck is the three Ishtis called Upasad; your large teeth are the Ishtis called Praayaniya and Udayaniya; your tongue is Pravargya karma; your head is the two Agnis called Sabhya and Aavasathya; your five Pranas are Chayanas of five layers of Ishtakas (bricks); your Retas is Somarasa; your three stages of life like childhood etc. are the three Savanas. Bhagavan, your seven dhatus (elements) are Agnishtomam, Atyagnishtomam, Uktyam, Shodasi, Vajapeyam, Atiratram and Aptoryamam; Satrayagas are your joints in body. You are of the form of all Yagnas and Kratus. (Yagna is without Somarasa; Kratu is with Somarasa); Ishtis like Darsa Poornamasam are the ligaments in the joints in your body.

Thus goes the prayer to Sri Yaganvaraha form of Mahavishnu in Srimad Bhagavatha.

Sri Vishnu Sahasranama also mentions many names of the Lord connected with yagna:

यज्ञभृद् यज्ञकृद् यज्ञी यज्ञभुग् यज्ञसाधनः ।
यज्ञान्तक ृ द् यज्ञगुह्यमन्मन्ाद एि ॥
महाक्रतुमनहायज्िा महायज्ञॊ महाहििः ॥
सॊमपॊऽमृतपः सॊमः ॥

Sri Sankaracharya interprets ‘Somapa’ in sloka 67 as सोम: - सोमं पिवति सर्वयज्ञेषु यष्ट्य देवतारूपेण इति सोम: - “As Bhagavan drinks Somarasa in all yagnas in the form of the Devatas invoked, he is Somapa.” He interprets ‘Havirhari:’ in sloka 52 as हविर्हरि: - यज्ञेषु हविर्हरिः हर्तीति हविर्हरि: - “Bhagavan takes the oblations in yagnas.”

In Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavan conveys the same:

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ॥ यज्ञ इज्ञो महेष्यथः

Thus Yagnas, which are of the form of Bhagavan himself, have been performed carefully with great devotion by our ancestors as Agni Upasana only.
Agni used for Aupasanam during marriage should be used for Aadhanam and divided into two parts: Grihyagni or Aupasanagni; and, Srouthagni. Grihyagni is used for performing Grihya karmas and also called 'Ekagni'; details of this are found in 'Ekagni Kandam' or 'Mantra Prasnam' in Krishna Yajurveda; it contains Veda mantras for Grihya karmas. Srouthagni is used for Sroutha karmas; as it is used in three kundas or altars, it is called ‘Tretagni’. The three Agnis are Garhapatyam, Dakshinagni and Ahavaniyam. One who worships Ekagni as well as Tretagni is known as ‘Aahitagni’. From Garhapatya Agni, Agni has to be taken chanting mantras and placed in Dakshinagni and Ahavaniyam. After the karmas of the day are over, these two Agnis will become Loukikagni.

ऊषीणां अग्निकल्पानां अग्निहोत्र समुचित:।
आदते रक्षसां तेजो धूमः व्याप्य दश ॥

Agnihotra Mahatmyam states that the smoke emanating from Agnihotra Agni of Rishis spreads in ten directions and robs Rakshasas of their power and brightens Brahmaloka etc.

Let us now look at some of the prayers said at the close of Agnihotram (Upasthanam). When Agni Bhagavan is in a happy mood after the Homa is over in the morning and evening, prayers to him are very fruitful. Taittiriya Samhita, 1st Kandam, 1st Prasnam, 6th Anuvakam says:

संपश्याम जातमिक्षम यज्ञसी मानवी:। सर्वां भवन्तु नो गुहे ॥

This means: ‘Just as children approach their father rightfully and pray for whatever they wish, we, who are like sons to you, are approaching you, O Agni Deva, and praying to you. We should attain all wellbeing; you should always stay at our home with us and grant us all wealth. When prayer is offered with the अग्निमूर्ध्यम I mantra, the devotee is blessed to become the head among his equals and he becomes very famous in this world of humans. When prayer is offered with the 8th Anuvaka mantra संपश्याम जातमिक्षम अहम्, it means: ‘May the humans, cows and calves in my home be comfortable’. Through Ahavaniya Upasthanam (prayer), one attains to Svargaloka, and through Garhapatya Upasthanam (prayer), he gets stable Brahmic brilliance.

In the 9th Anuvaka, Veda says अग्निहोत्रं जुहोति I and makes Agnihotram mandatory. It is as if the Havis offered in Agni becomes the property of the worshipper. Just as plants burnt in fire grow ten times during rainy season, the worshipper attains wealth many times his offering and also good
children. He should offer prayers every day to Agni. Agni liberally confers good benefits on his worshipper. The compassionate Veda teaches us the prayers. अग्रय इदं न मम.
13. Greatness of Agni in Itihasas and Puranas

**Srimad Ramayananam**

In Srimad Ramayananam in Sundara Kandam, reference is made to Sri Hanuman’s darshan of Sri Sita Devi. Later Ravana set fire to his tail. Devi prayed to Agni Bhagavan to become cool to Hanuman and ensure that no suffering is caused to him.

On hearing those cruel words (of news of fire in Hanuman’s tail), Vaidehi, overcome by sorrow, as if she had been harmed, prayed to Agni Deva.

The wide-eyed Sri Sita, became favourable to that great monkey. She devotedly prayed to Agni Deva.

**Sri Sita Devi’s Prayers:**

O Agni, if my service to my husband has been true, if my austerity has been true and if I have been single-mindedly sincere to my husband, you please become cool to Hanuman.

If my wise husband has any tenderness for me and if there is any good luck left in me, you please become cool to Hanuman.

If the noble and mighty-armed Sugriva, who is wedded to truth, will rescue me from this misery, you please become cool to Hanuman.

If that virtuous husband of mine is aware of my good conduct and my eagerness to join him, you please become cool to Hanuman.

Agni Bhagavan blessed.
Agni Bhagavan, who had intense flames of circular movement, shone without any inconvenience to Hanuman and, as if conveying this to the dow-eyed Sita Devi, he was burning peacefully.

Vayu, the father of Hanuman, in conjunction with the fire in Hanuman’s tail, blew cool snowy air, thus bringing tranquillity to Sita Devi.

Yuddhakandam
On Sri Rama asking Sri Sita Devi to enter fire, she prayed to Agni Bhagavan (Yuddhakandam, 119th Sargam):

As my heart never swerves from Sri Rama, may Agni Bhagavan, the witness of the world, protect me in all ways.

As my character is pure, though Sri Rama thinks otherwise, may Agni Bhagavan, the witness of the world, protect me in all ways.
As I have never been insincere in thought, word and deed to Sri Rama, who knows all dharmas, and as Surya Bhagavan, Vayu, the quarters, Chandra, day time, the Sandhyas, night time, earth and all others know that my character is pure, may Agni Bhagavan protect me in all ways.

Saying thus, Vaidehi went round Agni and entered the blazing Agni with mind free from any attachment.

As Sita Devi entered Agni, loud and unparalleled cry of shock emanated from the Rakshasas and monkeys.

Brahma then appeared in person and praised Sri Rama.

Listening to the auspicious words spoken by Brahma, Agni Bhagavan came out, with Vaidehi on his lap.

Agni, the witness of everything in the world, said to Sri Rama:

Sri Rama, here is your Vaidehi; there is no sin in her.

Sri Rama, established in virtue! Sita of virtuous conduct has not been insincere to you in word, thought, desire and eyes.

She was abducted and taken prisoner by the conceited Ravana from the forest, when she was alone and helpless and in a pitiable condition.

Raghava, please accept her; she is sinless and very pure in heart. There is nothing adverse; I assure you.
In Yuddhakandam, 35th Sarga, Malyavan advises Ravana to return Sita Devi to Sri Rama and speaks about the omens at that time.

Your wanton action, prompted by lowly desire, has generated much intolerable restlessness in Munis, who are like Agni.

Their power is like blazing Agni's and unconquerable. Having experienced the Self through austerity, they are keen on growth of dharma.

These brahmanas always worship Devas through various yagnas and offer Ahutis in Agni and also chant Vedas in a loud tone.

The smoke emanating from the Agnihotram performed by Rishis, shining like Agni, diffuses in all the ten directions and robs the Rakshasas of their power.

The signs, appearing when Agni shines with no smoke after Homa is done once, indicate victory.

**Sri Halasya Mahatmya**

There are 16 slokas in which Kulasekara Pandian praises Sri Minakshi Sundareswara. These slokas end with the words:

"I worship Sri Sundareswara, the consort of the sweet Minakshi". In the 10th sloka, it is said that the Dikshita performing Agni Upasana and Agni itself, both are the forms of Sri Parameswara.
“I worship Sri Sundareswara, the consort of the sweet Minakshi, Mahadeva, who is of the eight forms – earth, water, Agni, air, Chandra, space, Surya and the Dikshita performing yaga, whose speech is more delicious than Amrita, the food of Devas, and who bestows happiness.”

**Sri Madhaviya Sankara Vijayam**

In this book in the 2nd Sarga titled ‘Acharya Janmadikathanam’, while describing Sri Aryamba, who carried in her womb Sri Adisankara Bhagavatpadacharya, the Avatara of Sri Parameswara, it is said that Sri Parameswara, who takes the form of Ashtamoorthy, shone in the womb of Sri Aryamba.

गभानलसा भगवती गतिमान्यमीषद्
आपेति नाद्मुतमिदं धरते सिवं या ।
यो विष्णुपाणि ब्रम्हैिे हि चतुर्दशाििि
यन्नापि मूर्तिः इमा बसुधाजलायः ॥

“The gait of that pregnant woman became slow. What is surprising about it? She is the refuge of Sri Parameswara, who sustains the fourteen worlds and who takes the eight forms – earth, water, Agni, air, space, Surya, Chandra and the Dikshita performing yagna.” It is mentioned clearly in this context that Agni and the Dikshita who worships Agni are the forms of Sri Parameswara.
14. Agni Upasana in Grihya Prayogas

Vivaha (Marriage)

In Vivaha Prayoga (rules for rituals of marriage), the bride and the groom go round Agni and sit for Homa. The bridegroom sits on the north side and the bride sits next to him on the south side. With the bride touching him, the groom performs Homa by offering Ahutis chanting the mantras सोमायजिनििदे स्िाहा. Many mantras are in the form of prayers to Agni. If Homa is done with knowledge of the meaning of the mantras, the fruit is greater. One can feel unspeakable peace also.

In Mantraprasnam called Ekagnikandam, 1st Prasnam, 4th Kandam, 5th mantra:

(1) प्रेतॊ मुञ्चाित नामुतस्सुबद्धा ममु तस्करत् ।
    यथेयमिन्न्र मीदवस्सुब्रासुभगाःसति ॥
    “O Indra Deva bestowing fulfilment of desires! I perform this Homa with Ahuti of ghee in Agni with the prayer that this bride should drop her attachment to her father’s lineage and develop pride in my family and be blessed with good progeny of male issues, wealth, foodgrains, cows and such other auspicious things.”

(2) अस्त्रिरेतु प्रथमो देवतानां सो उत्थिय प्रजायं मुञ्चतु मृत्युपाशात् ।
    तदरेण राजावरुणोऽनन्तु यथेऽैँही पौत्रमघनरोऽदात् ॥
    I perform this Homa with Ahuti of ghee in Agni with prayers to Agni and Varuna that the offspring of this bride shall be free from the misfortune of untimely death and that this bride shall not have to shed tears owing to grief of progeny’s death.

(3) इमामिस्त्रायताङ्ग्गाहनपत्यः प्रजामस्यै नयतु दीर्घमायः ॥
    अशून्योपस्त्या जीवतामस्तु माता पौत्रमानन्दमभि प्रबुद्धयतामियम् ॥
    This Agni of Vivaha homam shall protect this bride from all kinds of dangers and grant long life to her children. She should beget many children, decorating her lap and become mother of progeny with long life. She should wake up in the morning with the happiness coming from her son; she should fondle her son on her lap in the morning and enjoy that happiness. I perform this Homa with Ahuti of ghee in Agni with this prayer.

(4) माते गृहे निशिश घोष उद्यादन्यत्र त्वुद्युद्यास्विंशन्तु ।
    मा त्वं विकेश्युर आवशिष्ठ जीवपत्नी पतिलोके विराज पश्यत्ती प्रजाः सुसमस्मानाम् ॥
O bride, separation from husband or children will lead to your shedding of tears. Let this not happen to you. With husband of long life, may you shine in your husband’s home looking after favourable children. I perform this Homa with Ahuti of ghee in Agni with this prayer.

(5) द्यौस्ते पृष्ठरक्षतु, वायुरू अध्नीनौच स्तनं, ध्रवन्तः सविताउरिकर्षतु॥

May Devata of Svarga (Dyuloka) protect the rear of your body; Vayu Deva, both thighs; Asvini Devas, your bosom; Savita, your son; Brihaspathi, everything else. May all Devas protect you. I perform this Homa with Ahuti of ghee in Agni with this prayer.

(6) तत्वा यामि ब्रह्मणा वन्दःस्तदाशास्ते यजम्नोहिरिमीः।

O Varuna Bhagavan, I take refuge in you for my protection, chanting Veda mantras. Dikshitas performing yagas wish for their protection by performing Homa with Charu, Purodasa etc. (ritual offerings of flour). I do the same with stotras. O Varuna, who has been praised by many performers of yaga, please do not become angry with me for faults of omitting mandatory acts and performing prohibited acts. Please grant me long life. I perform this Homa with Ahuti of ghee in Agni with this prayer.

(7) त्लस्स्य अयास्यास्समनसा हितः। अयास्सु हय्यमूहिज्यान्तोहि हि भेषजम्॥

Agni Bhagavan, you are attained by devout worshippers, or you reach worshippers yourself. You are attained by their minds. As you are easily accessible for worshippers, I meditate on you. Please convey the Havis we offer to the respective Devatas. Please grant us wellbeing. You, who are easily attainable, should rid us of our sins and bless us.

(8) इयं नायुनपब्रूते कुल्पायायप्यिता की दीर्घायुरस्तु मे पतिरीव्रातु शरदश्शतम्॥

The bride prays for her husband’s long life through Laaja Homam (offering of parched paddy grain in Agni with mantra).

This bride, performing Laaja Homam, prays to Agni Deva that her husband should live long, for a hundred years.

(9) अर्यमणशु वेदस्सक्या अप्रिमिक्षत्॥

The girls adored the brilliant Agni Deva, who is quickly attained by worshippers. May that Agni Deva, who deserves not to be troubled by anyone, disengage this bride from her father’s lineage. She should not be disengaged from her husband’s lineage. She should be made to develop great love for her husband’s family.
O Agni Deva, many brides have attained benefits by worshipping you with Laaja Homam earlier. In the same manner this bride also performs Laaja Homam with a view to attaining benefits. We perform this Homa with Ahuti of ghee in Agni with this prayer.

(10) त्वमर्यमा भवसि यत्कीनां नाम स्वधावत्त्वर्य विभर्षः।
अष्टुनि वृक्षसुधितं न गोभि: यदंपती समनसा कृणोपि॥
For performing karmas like yaga and attaining to Swargaloka, the bride – yagnapatni – is important. O Agni, you are empowered in enabling 'Kanyaka Prapanam' (attaining bride), which is the means of attaining to Swarga etc, and which enables plenty of foodgrains. We therefore call you ‘Daata’. As you bring about harmony between the bride and the groom, the couple perform Homa for you with cow’s ghee, like watering the roots of tree profusely for the tree’s good growth. Hence, o Agni deva, you should establish complete harmony among the two of us, bride and the groom.

The newly married couple commence Agni Upasana thus as per rules on the day of marriage. Veda tells us by way of instruction with compassion that this Agni should be protected throughout one’s life. If Agni is worshipped in this manner, benefits like good health, unlimited wealth, long life, good progeny etc. will accrue. This Agni Upasana has been practised by successive generations till recently. That is why we live good lives with plenty of wealth. We should also continue with Agni Upasana like Aupasanam, Vaisvadevam etc. Those who have the means can undertake Agnihotram also and continue to perform the same.

Veda teaches us the prayers to be chanted to Agni Deva in the Aupasanagni and makes them fruitful. Let us now look at some of them.

Apastamba Grihya Sutra, 6th Kandam, Sutra 10 says:
उत्तरपूर्वे देशे अग्रास्य अग्रेषुसमधानायाज्यभागता
अन्वार्धामुत्तरा आहुतीहुन्ति जयाधिप्रतिष्ठते परिचेनान्तं कुलवा
Grihastha should establish Agni in the Easana (north east) part of his house and perform 13 Ahutis with the wife touching the husband and then perform Jayadi Homam. He should then do Parishechanam.

(11) आगन्योच्छ महिषिप गोभिरस्नेरायुपमत्वज्जया स्वर्तित्॥
अग्नि, मैंने मेरी पत्नी को दाता दिए गए पत्नी का कुशलता के साथ आया है। उन्होंने अद्वैत यज्ञ के धारण के साथ अद्वैत यज्ञ का हनुम नुकसान और समुदाय का स्वतंत्रता और सुधा और समुदाय का स्वतंत्रता और सुधा

(12) प्रजाया आत्मां प्रजायत इन्द्राय्मी श्रम वज्जालम्।
यथैनयॊनन प्रमीयाता उभयोंजीवितोः प्रजा॥

यथैनयॊनन प्रमीयाता उभयोंजीवितोः प्रजा॥

We should not face a situation of grief owing to death of our progeny while we are alive. O Prajapatis, O Indragnis, I perform this Homa with Ahuti of ghee in Agni with this prayer.

13. O Agni, please accept our Ahuti of ghee and make this woman full of breastmilk and good fortune of house, wealth etc. We should have wealth enough to support many. Please grant us sufficient wealth such that we do not have to seek from others.

14. O Agni, we should live in this house together without separation. We should have long life. Please grant us all wellbeing.

Vedamatha blesses us to live comfortably throughout our lives by praying to Agni Bhagavan in the above manner. Let us live life of ease, health and peace by following the path shown by our ancestors.

Aupasanam

Every couple, married through vivaha of Brahma etc. type, should protect throughout their lives the Agni which was witness to their marriage. Ahutis must be offered to Surya in the morning and Agni in the evening. Svishtakrut is the second Devata. Maharishis state that it is from Aupasanagni that Aadhanam should be performed in order to do Sroutha karmas and start yagas. After performing Homa in Aupasanagni, Agni Gayatri should be chanted. Agni Gayatri:

Aupasana should be learnt from those who are of good Aachara (Vedic conduct), have studied Vedas properly and who perform all rituals; it should be commenced only in their presence. Aupasana takes a maximum of 15 minutes. Great fruits can be reaped easily here and in the hereafter.

(Veda mantras should be learnt only from a Guru with proper Svara and correct pronunciation.)
Sthalipaka स्थालीपाकः:

Maharishi Aapastamba mentions the rules of performing Sthalipaka in his Grihya Sutra, 3rd Patala, 7th khanda. अपैत्यामाप्रवेश स्थालीपाकेन याजयति। He calls it Aagneya Sthalipaka, started after marriage and performed with wife for pleasing Agni Devata. There are prayers to Agni in this rite. If one performs with Vedic purity, he can live a healthy life, with plenty of food. After marriage, the wife is taught to cook food with chant of mantra.

With Aupasana being performed continuously, Sthalipaka should be started within six months of marriage in Uttarayana on Krishnapaksha Prathama day. This is called Pournamasa Sthalipaka. Similarly Darsa Sthalipaka is done on Suklapaksha Prathama day.

Aagrayana Sthalipaka, which is one of the seven Pakayagnas to be performed, should be done in Sarad ritu (months of Aippasi, Karthik) on Pournami or Amavasya day using paddy freshly harvested.

Vaisvadeva वैष्वदेवः:

Violence to living beings happens knowingly or unknowingly in the course of our household work. Sastra identifies five such sources of violence. पञ्चसूना गृहस्थस्य वर्तन्ते

1. Kandini: The cutter used for cutting vegetables. Vegetables also have life.
2. Peshini: The mill-stone, pestle, the modern day grinder etc. used for grinding various foodgrains.
3. Chulli: Fire, which causes death of small insects etc. When we place fire in any place, it may kill some worms.
4. Jalakumbham: When we place the waterpot anywhere, small beings at the bottom may lose their lives.
5. Upaskaram: The broom, when used on the floor, causes small beings to die in its sweep.

The Prayaschittta, to be done for the sins committed in the above processes even unwittingly, is called Vaisvadevam. Here bali (offering of food) is given with chanting of mantra for the satisfaction of all living beings with the prayer that the beings, which died because of us, should attain to good state and that Bhagavan should forgive us. Bali is offered in Vaisvadevam for all
living beings in the world like dog, crow and even those expelled by society. This is also called Bhutayagna. All Devas are worshipped in this.

In Vaisvadeva, bali is offered to various categories of beings: 14 beings consisting of Devas, humans, Pitrus etc.; 8 Devaganas including Siddhas, Guhyakas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Pannagas, Vidyadharas and Pisachas; 5 Tiryakyonis, i.e. animals including crawling ones, four-legged, monkeys, animals and birds; Patangas – small insects; trees. Thus Agni Bhagavan grants us the fruits and merits of feeding all beings. With chant of 72 mantras of Simhanuvaka, we get rid of our sins. The karma gets completed with this prayer to Agni Deva:

आयुरारोपयमेर्यम्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यय्यaya.

“O bestower of wealth, please grant me all benefits including long life, good health, plenty of wealth, steadfastness, power, strength, fame, brilliance, good innate nature, cattle wealth, fertility, Vedic knowledge, power to seek Brahman, good fortune, success in efforts, greatness of lineage and performance of svakarma.”

See how our ancestors have shown the way to easily attain all good desirables. The above sloka of prayer is found in the book ‘Karmadipa Prakasam’ in Vaisvadeva Prakaranam. Vaisvadevam is to be performed twice a day – in the morning and evening. Even now many people are performing this rite in our country. There is no doubt that performing Vaisvadevam as learnt from Guru as per one’s family tradition will get all good and virtuous things.

**Upanayanam**

Brahmacharis should perform Samidadhanam in Agni in morning and evening every day with 13 mantras. The mantras starting with अग्रे समिद्रमाधारे ब्रह्मणे जात्वेदेरे । and ending with समिद्रमाधाराः सर्वार्थो भूयास्वांस्वां ॥ are prayers to Agni Bhagavan. The meanings of the mantras are as follows:
1. O Agni Deva, I place this Samit in you, Agni, who are in a lofty position, who know all objects originating in the world and who place all your worshippers in lofty states. I have offered this Samit with chant of ‘Svaha’.

2. O Agni Bhagavan, in the way you shine well with the Samit, please bestow on me long life, radiance, attainment of requisite objects, power of retention in memory, progeny, cattle, Brahmic brilliance and power of Jatharagni (Agni in stomach for digestion). I place this samith with this prayer.

3. Prayer to Samith: O Samith, The way Agni grows because of you; I should also grow the same way; I should attain greatness in many ways.

4. O Samith, you give bright shine to Agni; we, who are placing you in Agni, should also attain bright shine. We are therefore uniting this Samith to Agni with ‘Svaha’.

5. O Samith, as you are the instrument of brightness in Agni, you are also shining with bright flame. Please bestow brightness on me also. I am offering this Samith in Homam for this purpose.

6. I am doing the karma of Samidadhanam properly now. This should engender faith and attitude in me for Vedic karmas. Agni Bhagavan, I should perform Homam every day with Havis of ghee, milk etc. and worship you. I should get Brahmic brilliance. The obstacles in my path should vanish.

7. O Agni Deva, I am performing Homa with this Samith with prayer that you should grant me Brahmic brilliance, progeny and limitless wealth.

8. O Agni Bhagavan, Devas like Indra and Brahmarishis like Vasishtha should bear witness to this Samidadhanam I am doing and bless me.


10. I offer this Samith in Homa for Devatas of Dyuloka (Svarga) and Bhuloka (earth).

11. O Agni Deva, Please get happy with the Homam with this Samith and make me free from all wants. I should be complete in all respects.

12. O Agni Deva, if someone tries to take away and enjoy something which is due to me, please bless me to get that object and deprive the other person of it.

13. O Agni Deva, please bless me to complete my brahmacharya vrata. Even if some deficiency occurs in it, please remove it and grant me fulfilment.

Then Parishechanam is done without mantra; a Samith is placed in Agni; after chanting अऽिेरुपस्थानं कह्ऱरष्ये he should get up and pray with the mantra यत्ते अििे.

“I should become full of brilliance from your brilliance; I should get vigour from your vigour; from your power of removing sin, I should get that power. May Agni Bhagavan grant me knowledge,
progeny and powerful sense organs. May Surya grant me knowledge, progeny and glowing vigour."

In the end the following mantras of obeisance to Agni Bhagavan are chanted:

मन्त्रहीनं ह्लक्रयाहीनं भितहीनं हुताशन ।
यद्धृतन्तु मया देव परिपूर्णं तदस्तु ते ॥
प्रायश्चित्तानु-वशेषाणि तपः-कर्मोत्पकानि वै ।
यानि तेषां-अशेषाणां कृष्णानुस्मरणं परम् ॥

"O Agni Deva, though my observance of mantra, kriya and bhakti might have been deficient, this Homam performed by me may become complete by your grace."

"Of all Prayashchittas (expiations) of the form of tapas or karma, meditating on Sri Krishna is the best."

Saying this, if Samith of Peepul or Palasa is offered as Ahuti to Agni Bhagavan in morning and evening, it is great Agni Upasana. Agni Bhagavan gets pleased and grants us all our wishes and wellbeing. Agni Upasana is a simple observance practised by our ancestors. It starts with Samidadhanam in Brahmacharya asrama. We should teach our children to do Samidadhanam and attain wellbeing.

Upanayanam means leading the disciple to Veda (Upa-near; Nayanam - leading to Guru or Veda). Only after this samskara, the person attains the state of Brahma or Dvija, the second birth. He attains third birth while starting to perform yaga. Manusmriti (2:139) says so:

मातुर्र अधि जनतं द्वितीयं मौश्लेन्द्रनात् ।
तृतीयं यज्ञदीक्षायां द्विजस्य श्रुतिचौधनात् ॥

Brahmachari is one who who studies Veda well and practises all regulations for retaining Veda firmly in his mind. Aapastamba Grihya Sutra says: गभानष्ट्मेषु ब्राह्मणमुपनयीत।

As per the commentary of Sri Sudarsana, brahmanas should perform upanayanam in the 6th, 7th or 8th year from the date of conception.

उपनयनं विद्यार्थ्यं श्रुतिं संस्कारः ॥

Upanayanam is mandated in Veda. It is a samskara karma prescribed in Veda for learning Vedic rules. As it is prescribed in Veda itself, there is great importance for it among brahmanas.

आयुर्दी देव जरसं गृहानो घृतप्रतिको घृतपृष्ठो अर्गे ।
घृतं विभ्रममुन्तं चारुगच्च सिद्धेव पुत्रं जरसे नयेमम् ॥
“O Agni Deva, You, who grant us long life and have glowing limbs and grow with ghee, please accept our prayer. Consuming this ghee, having the fragrance of cow and equal to nectar, be pleased with this Homa with Samith and lead this student towards old age like a father would his son.” When this mantra is chanted by the Guru, the disciple performs Homa at the close of the mantra.

इमममण्य आयुषे वर्चसे कृष्ठि
“O Agni Deva, grant this student long life and brilliance (good health).

अग्नि आयुः दधात्यविन्ने पुष्टि प्रतरां कृणॊतु
“May Agni grant you long life and physical strength.”

Those meritorious jivas, who practise their respective asrama karmas as laid down in Veda in the spirit of karmayoga with discipline and devotion to Bhagavan without looking for fruits, will get relieved from the cycle of saṃsara in this birth itself or in the coming births, depending on their Prarabdha karma.

**Sanyasasramam**

If one performs karmas with faith in Sastras and devotion to Acharya, he can absorb the Agni, which he worshipped outside (Samidadhana Agni, Aupasana Agni or Tretagni consisting of Garhapatya, Ahavaniya and Dakshinagni), on his own Atma and perform Ahuti of the entire world in the Agni of Gnana in his Sanyasasrama. Upanishad calls him Atmayaji.

आत्मन्यित्वम् समार०प्य सौंग्रहिति महायति: (सत्यासोपपितः)
Bhagavan Krishna says the same thing in Gita – ज्ञानांग्रि: भस्मसात् कुरुते अर्जुन
He burns away all karmas – merits and sins – and their fruits in the Agni of Gnana and attains Mukti. Sri Manu also says:

वेदाभ्यासोजनवं शक्त्या महायज्ञक्रिया क्षमा ।
नाशयत्त्वाथू पापं महापात्तकजान्यपि ॥
If one performs Vedic study, Agni Upasana with the five great yagnas etc. as per his capacity, it will destroy all his sins including sins classified as great. Hence Agni Upasana is very important for the brahmana. (Manusmriti 11:245).

यथैधस्तेजसा वहिन: प्रासं निर्देहति क्षणात् ।
तथा ज्ञानांग्रिना पापं सर्वं दहति वेदविद् ॥
Just as Agni burns away firewood etc. in a second and reduces them to ashes, Gnanagni burns away the sins of those who study Veda. Gnanagni removes all karmas root and branch and grants the state of no rebirth. (11:246).
15. Traditional Vedic Agni Upasana in Kashmir –
Sri Laugakshi Grihya Prayoga

Our Vedic religion is known as Sanatana Dharma. Vedic dharmas are found spread all over the world even to this day. Especially in our Bharatadesa, Vedic rituals including Agni Upasana have been practised from Kashmir to Kanyakumari for ages, and crores of people have enjoyed their benefits here and hereafter. Kashmiri Pandits, who are brahmanas, have been performing Vedic rites including Agni Upasana to this day. Katha Sakha (branch) of Krishna Yajurveda must have been mostly in practice there.

Grihyasutras of Maharishi Laugakshi in palm leaves were first found and printed in Sarada Lipi (script) in 1927 and published by Pratapa Simha, the then Maharaja of Kashmir. The famous Veda book titled ‘Kashmira Mantra Kalpadruma’, also known as ‘Mantra Ratnakara’ written by Maharishi Laugakshi was found in 1835 in the form of palm leaves and was preserved carefully since then.

Jagadguru Sri Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Sankaracharya Swamigal, the 69th Peethadhipathi of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham and Jagadguru Sri Sri Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Sankaracharya Swamigal, the 70th Peethadhipathi have been organising with great effort Rigveda Samhita Homam, Chaturveda Parayanas, Chandi Homam etc. every year in remote places like Jammu, Leh (Ladakh) etc. for wellbeing of the world, specially of Bharatadesa and for removal of the misery of Kashmiri Pandits. Jagadguru Sri Acharya Swamigal personally attends these proceedings. On one such occasion, Kashmiri Pandits handed the above two rare books to Sri Swamigal and prayed that the books be printed and published. The Jagadgurus very happily got the books published in 2011 through Sri Venkateswara Vedic University of Sri Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam. Kashmiri Pandits have been praising the great and rare efforts of Srimatham for protecting Vedas. They claim with happiness that it would not be an exaggeration to say that for the first time in the history of Bharat, Chaturveda Parayana was held in Kashmir through Srimatham’s efforts.

Grihya Sutras of Maharishi Laugakshi
This book was published through Srimatham’s efforts in 2011 with the commentary of Devapala.
Vivarana (gloss) for the Grihya Sutras was written by Sri Aditya Darsana. Another explanatory text called Panchika or Paddhati written by Sri Brahmanapala, son of Sri Madhavadhvuryu, is also there. Sri Devapala’s commentary is also available.

Gobhila Grihya Sutras and Agastya’s Sloka Darpana are in use in Kashmir even today. Laugakshi Grihya Sutras are known variously as Kataka Grihya Sutras, Charaka Grihya Sutras and Charayaniya Grihya sutras. It is noteworthy that these Grihya Sutras are worded in the same way as those in practice in South India like Aapasthamba, Aasvalayana, Bodhayana or Draahyayana Grihya Sutras.

In the first part of Laugakshi Grihya Sutras, there are 73 kandikas. We have given below a few of them used in Agni Upasana in Poorva Karmas. This shows how Agni Upasana is well established even in the Himalayan area of Kashmir, the head of Bharatadesa.

At the beginning of 1st kandika, the Sutra starts with Upanayana vrata:

उपनयनप्रभृति ब्रतचारी स्यात् (१-१)
सायं प्रातः सन्ध्यामुपासीत (२-६)
सायं प्रातः सन्ध्यानि:मरणं भैक्षाचरणमिन्धनम्॥

The tem ‘Agnindhanam’ shows that brahmacharis must do Agni Upasana called Samidadhanam in the morning and evening.

In the 13th kandika, after vivaha:

चतुर्मिधःपाकयज्ञो भिित 
हुतःऽहुतः प्रहुतः प्रािशतश्चेित ॥ (१३-२)

दशनपूणनमासप्रक ृ तयः पाकयज्ञाः। (१३-७)

In the 20th kandika, it is stated that in the night before marriage, Devatas like Agni should be worshipped.

स्थालीपाकस्य जुहोत्यिये सॊमाय…..इति (२१-१)

In the 41st kandika, upanayanam:

सममे वर्षेब्राह्मणस्योपयायनम् (४१-१)
जन्मत:प्रभृति सममे वर्षेगर्मादष्ठमेब्राह्मणस्योपयायनम्।
नवमे राजन्यस्य॥
एकादशे बैश्यस्य॥
Brahmacharlis should pray to Samidadhana Agni:

हे अग्नि! त्वप्रसादात् सर्वबाध्यं भवामि भूयासम्।
“O Agni, with your grace, I shall observe all discipline properly.”

In the 49th kandika, details of Nakshatra Ishti are given:

नक्षत्रयज्ञेषु नक्षत्रदेवतानामृतस्ताभिमियजेतानिः……यमी दाधारेति प्रत्यृचम्।

In the 63rd kandika, Sutras giving procedures for Sraaddham are given:

अश्रू कर्मवाणीस्युक्तवः॥ (६३-८)
अभिः परिस्तीर्थेऽति सोमाय पितृमते स्वदानमोऽवृष्ये।
कल्यावहनाय स्वथा तम इत्यश्रू हुतवः॥ (६३-७)

Is it not clear that Poorva and Apara Karmas (rituals observed during life and post-death) prescribed in Sruti and Smriti have been the same all over Bharatadesa? It is the motiveless compassion of Veda Matha that humans and, specially brahmanas, should live their lives as per the Grihya Sutras given by Maharishis, applicable to their own Veda Sakha and Sutra, please Bhagavan through that process and develop purity of mind and have direct vision of Bhagavan. Agni upasana has been at the root of this scheme of karmas.

In the second part of Laugakshi Grihya Sutras, Apara karmas are covered.

In the same manner, Maithili brahmanas of Bihar and those in all other Indian States including U.P., M.P., Odisha, A.P., Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra have all along been engaged in Agni Upasana through Sroutha and Smartha karmas prescribed in Vedas.

(Reference: The Grihya sutras of Laugakshi Maharishi with Bhashya of Devapala published by Sri Venkateswara Vedic University, Tirupati and edited by S.Sudarsana Sarma, Vice-chancellor.)
16. Agni Upasana all over the world

People of Stone Age worshipped fire. Initially they were afraid on seeing sparks of fire emanating when two particular stones were struck against each other. Gradually they overcame the fear and knew how to put the fire to productive use and started to worship fire. Then they found out how to make fire by rubbing and churning two pieces of wood. They therefore came to be known as Prometheans (from प्रमन्था Pramantha in Sanskrit, meaning one who churns). This practice is prevalent in China even today under the name of Suy-Jin. People gradually started to worship and protect fire throughout their lives. Fire is protected even today in many traditions in different parts of the world. In Korea, the fire worshipped by the ancestors is preserved through generations. As civilisation developed, the belief that by protecting the fire continuously people’s wishes get fulfilled, took deep roots.

In Europe there are said to be separate temples for fire. Greeks, Latins, Persians, Mexicans, Peruvians and others have been protecting flames of fire on top of pyramids and worshipping them. ‘Akhanda Deepa’ (uninterrupted light of lamp) like in our country is being practised there in the form of continuously burning flame. It is noteworthy that the governments in those countries appoint officials to protect the flames. In case the flame gets put out, work is stopped in homes and government offices. All people right from children to elders fast. After completing some prayers, the flame is lit again. It is to be noted that except for natural calamities, the flame is truly maintained in uninterrupted manner.

Agni is worshipped in many countries. Romans are the most important of them. Impure and unnecessary materials should not be dropped and lit in the vessels of fire or lamps; the flame should never be put out by blowing air from mouth. This is practised as a sacred requirement in Albania, the Galtchas of Ferghana and Tadjikas of Bokhara. (This is in accordance with our Sastras). All family members and government officials are maintaining separate fire altars with uninterrupted flame. Hundreds of fire altars appear to exist in northern countries. These practices do remind us of rituals like Samidadhanam, Aupasanam, Nitya Agnihotram etc. prescribed in Veda.
In our yagas, we plant yupasthambhas (sacrificial posts) and offer prayers. In western countries, they plant oak trees and light fire on top. The fire gradually travels down till the entire oak tree is reduced to ashes. This takes about a year from Christmas of a year to Christmas next year. Farmers believe that by sprinkling those ashes in the fields, good harvest is achieved. Kings considered that worship of fire increased their strength.

Mongolians practise a tradition that however much a girl is scolded or abused, she should not be touched if she stands between her bed and the place where fire is kept and worshipped. Just as we go round Agni three times during marriage and worship, girls in Germany and neighbouring countries go round the fire altar three times on returning home after marriage in the church. They also apply the ashes from the altar on their forehead, or, sprinkle ash water on their bare feet. People think that their families, government etc. are prosperous because of this type of Agni worship. In Olympic games, we find that Olympic torch is carried from country to country. The Olympic torch lighting ceremony is celebrated as a big festival in western countries. Activities related to Agni are thus practised in various ways all over the world.

Courtesy: “Agnihotram (The Vedic Solution for Present day problems)” by M.S. alias Baburao Parkhe, Vaidika Samsodhana Mandal, Pune.

Savants in our country proclaim that it can be established with proof that our Veda dharma is indeed worldwide.

Agni karma is prescribed for people of all castes. All people should perform Aupasanam during marriage and protect the Agni for all time. Parsis do protect Agni now. Their religion is known as Zend Avastha. The part of Veda called Chandovastha has turned into that religion. Their founder Zoroastra’s name is derived from Sourashtra. Their country’s name Iran is muted form of Aryan. In case Agni gets put out, they do Prayaschitta at great expense. Aryans were known as ‘Fire worshippers’. (from Voice of God-Part II of Sri Maha Swamigal).
17. Antyeshti – Purusha Ahuti to Agni Bhagavan

In the Pooja performed in the morning and evening, it is usual to remove Nirmalyam (old flowers) from the deity by chanting the mantra:

देहो देवालयं प्रोक्तःजीवो देवं सनातनः।
त्यजेतू अज्ञानिनिर्माणं सोहंभावेन पूजयेतु॥

“Our body is said to be temple; the Jiva in the body is the eternal Bhagavan. We should remove the Nirmalyam of Agnana (ignorance) and worship with the attitude of ‘I am He’.” Here our body is extolled as Devalaya, temple. As Bhagavan resides in the human body, it is called Devalaya. Though Bhagavan resides in the bodies of all creatures, it is only in human form that one has the ability to have vision of Bhagavan. Many savants have glorified the human form’s greatness in many ways. Manu also says: शरीरमायं खलु धर्मसाधनस् - “This body is the prime instrument for performing all dharmas”. The Saivaite Nayanmar, Appar sings of ‘body as temple’. Kathopanishad says: आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरिं रथमेव तु। “Consider the body as chariot and Atma as the charioteer”. Bhagavan Krishna preaches to Arjuna in Bhagavadgita:

ईश्वरः सिनभूतानां हृद्देशे अरुजु निद्रिति।
प्रामयन्सिनभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया॥

“Iswara is seated in the heart of all beings and revolves them through his Maya, as if mounted on a revolving machine.” Bhagavan also says in the Gita:

ईश्वरः कौतेयं कौतेयं क्रेत्रमित्यस्मिनसीधियते।
क्रेत्रम्ब चापि मां विद्धि सर्वं क्षेत्रं भारत॥

The body is ‘kshetra’ (field of action) and Bhagavan present in the body of all beings is ‘kshetragna’ (knower and controller of kshetra).

Tirumular in his Tirumandiram extols the greatness of the human body in the 3rd Tantra: “If body deteriorates, life will ebb. If you do not have a strong body, you will not be able to have access to firm spiritual knowledge. Hence I have found the means of looking after the body and thus caring for life. Earlier I used to think that body is inferior. Then I found the Eternal Truth inside the body. As Bhagavan resides in the body, I look after the body now.”

Veda Matha instructs that the human body of such importance, where Bhagavan resides, should be disposed of in Vedic karma after death by burial or consigning to Agni. Maharishis have
therefore handed to us the procedures of Antyeshti, similar to a yaga, with proper chanting of
mantras and performance of kriyas. These rites should be observed as per one’s respective Veda
Sakha and Sutra. This is also spoken of very highly in Tamil literature as a sacred duty of human
beings.

On separation from the body, the Jiva does not reach Pitruloka, nor does it take another birth
immediately. It takes one year for it to travel to reach the other world. Our Sastras declare that the
Jiva crosses Vaitarani river and goes to the city of Yama. Greeks also believe that the Jiva
crosses the river Styx and reaches the city called Hades, where watch-dogs called Cerberus are
present. The monthly post-death Vedic rites practised by us are also observed by Christians as
rites with the name of Viaticum. In addition to the last rites performed on death, they also observe
All Souls Day for the satisfaction of all departed Jivas on 2nd November every year all over the
world. They have modelled their acts on the Sraadhas with offering of Pindas that we perform in
places like Rameswaram, Badri, Gaya, Kashi, Prayag, Kurukshetra etc. In our Bharatadesa, all
people observe Uttarakriyas for departed Jivas in their hour of grief. We observe that the dead
body is bathed, decorated with sandalpaste, Vibhuti, garland etc. and placed on a bedstead and
last rites performed to the playing of instruments. That this practice has been in vogue for ages is
clear from the commentary of Sri Adi Sankaracharya on Chandogya Upanishad (8:8:5):

एषोपिनषतः प्रेतस्य शरीरं भिक्षया वसनेनालङ्कारेण तिं
संस्कृतेन ह्यमुं लोकं जेष्यन्ते मन्यन्ते ॥

Virochana, the king of Asuras, thought of the body as Atman. Hence his followers glorified the
body and performed the last rites elaborately on death as mentioned here in Chandogya
Upanishad.

On close scrutiny of Sastras, it can be seen that on the Jiva departing from the body, the deities
presiding over the sense organs like Surya in the eyes, Agni in the mouth, Indra in the arms etc.
do not go back to their original abodes immediately. We send these deities back to their abodes
only through Preta Samskaras. The meaning of the mantras chanted in the rites makes this clear.
‘Samkara’ means making good and pure. Sastras direct that 40 Samskaras should be performed for purifying the Jiva at every stage from conception onwards. These 40 samskaras are intended in Sastras as yagas with Ahuti to Iswara. Similarly the relatives perform Antya Ishti (last yaga) to the corpse after death. That Agni is called Chitagni. Just as the materials offered in Homa are purified before use, the body is bathed, ghee is applied all over and then the body is cremated. The body is offered as Ahuti to Agni Bhagavan. Even if buried in earth, it is also an offering to Bhagavan.

The Antyeshti of brahmanas is practised in two ways: Brahmamedha samskara and Pitrumedha samskara. The antyeshti karma is superior to all yagas. Sruti, Smritis and Puranas preach that these karmas are means to the lofty state and help in attainment of Iswara Sayujya (union with Iswara). This Purushahuti samskara is laid down in Sruti and the relevant mantras are found in all the four Vedas. Maharishis, who have written Kalpa Sutras, like Aapasthamba, Bodhayana, Bharadvaja, Draahyayana, Aasvalayana, Katyayana and Satyaashada have handed to us Pitrumedha Sutras covering Apara Prayogas. In our Sanatana Dharma we have been taught from ancient times to associate Vedic spirit and Bhagavan with Samskaras connected with Apara Kriyas and this has set the tone for the whole world to follow.

The story of Prahlada is told in Srimad Bhagavatham in skandha 7. After the killing of Hiranyakasipu, Nrisimha Bhagavan instructs Prahlada:

श्री भगवानुवाच :-
भवति पुरुषा लोके मद्युक्तास्वामनुव्रता:।
भवानु में खलु भक्तानां सर्वेऽः प्रतितुपदधृक्॥
कुरु ल्वं प्रेतकायार्णि पितुःपूरत्र सर्वशः।
मद्यास्पद्यनां लोकानु यास्यति सुप्रजा:॥
पित्यं च स्वातन्त्र्यिति यथोक्तेष्मवादिमिः।
मद्यावेश्य मनस्तात कुरु कर्माणि मत्तरः॥
“Your followers become my devotees in this world. You are the best among my devotees and are an example for others. Your father became pure in all respects by contact with me. You do the Uttarakriyas for him. Child Prahlada, he will attain to good realms as he has been the father of a good child. You assume your father’s position as king. With your mind directed to me, perform karmas as directed by Vedic scholars and dedicate them to me.”
Prahlada performed Antyeshti for his father accordingly. As instructed by Bhagavan, he was anointed king by the best of brahmanas.

All Srouttha and Smartha karmas are being performed for ages as detailed in Sastras. We know from Itihasas and Puranas that numerous people have performed the karmas as laid down in Vedas, attained purity of mind thereby and broken off from the cycle of birth and death.

In Sri Ramayanam, Sri Vasishta instructs Bharata to perform Antyeshti karmas of Emperor Dasaratha on his death (Ayodhya Kandam):

Rishi Vasishta, the best among speakers, said to Bharata, who was agonising in grief.

“O Reputed Prince, enough with grieving. Perform the best Apara Kriyas for the emperor in time. May you be well.”

Bharata, who knew Dharmas, acted on Vasistha’s instructions and, resuming mental balance, performed all Apara Kriyas.

“The Agnis maintained by Dasaratha were brought from his Agnisalas and Homa was performed in them by Ritviks and Dikshitas as per Sastras.”

“Ritviks chanted mantras and performed Homam in those Agnis. Singers of Sama mantras sang them as per Sastras.” Thus Aahitagni Samskara was performed for Emperor Dasaratha by Bharata.
Led by Sri Vasishtha, Bharata and Satrughna, accompanied by mothers Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi and people of Ayodhya, met Sri Rama, Lakshmana and Sita at Chitrakoot. They conveyed to Sri Rama the news of the death of Dasaratha. Sri Rama and Lakshmana fell unconscious for a moment owing to grief. Ayodhya kandam, 102\textsuperscript{nd} Sarga says that they then performed Tarpanam, Pindadanam etc. Sri Rama said to Lakshmana:

अनयेंग्गुह्लद्िपण्याकं चीरमाहर चोतरम् ।
जलक्रियार्थ तातस्य गमिष्यामि महात्मनः ॥ (102-21)
सीता पुरस्तादृ बजतु त्वमनाभिमितो ब्रज ।
अहं पश्चादृमिष्यामि गतित्वाऽपुदारणा ॥ (102-22)
सिपिचुस्वूदंकं राजे तत एत्तुवत्तिति ॥ (102-26)

प्रगृह्यच महीपालो जलपूरितमेऽलिम्
दिशं याम्याभिमुखो रुद्वचननम्रवीत् ॥ (102-27)

“I am going to the Mandakini river for performing Tarpanam to the high-souled father. Bring the upper dress of bark and bring also oil-cake of Ingudi. Let Sita go in front; you follow her; I shall come at the end. This is the order during Apara Kriya.” After the three took bath in Mandakini, they performed Tarpanam facing south, saying “May this Tarpanam reach Emperor Dasaratha.”

Sri Rama, the king, raising his joined palms full of water and looking towards south and weeping, said:

एततेऽराजशार्दूल विमलं तोयमक्षयम्
पितुलोकानां त्वस्य महात्ममपतितं ॥ (102-28)
ततो मन्दाह्लकनीतीरात्प्रत्युत्तीयन स राघिः।
पितुह्लकार तेजस्वी निवाप्स्य श्रावुष्टः सह ॥ (102-29)
ऐङ्ग्गुदं बदरीमश्रं बद्धम्याकं दर्शवसंतरे ।
न्यस्य रामः सुदुःखात्यम् रुद्वचनमचवीत् ॥ (102-30)

यदं पुरुषोपाति तद्वास्तस्य देवता: ॥ (102-31)

“O best among kings, may this pure water be inexhaustible for use by you, who are in Pitruloka. The radiant Sri Rama came out of the river to the bank and, accompanied by brothers, offered Pindas to his father. Sri Rama made an offering of oil-cake mixed with jujube fruit on darbha bed and said with grief: O Emperor, Whatever a man eats, the same is offered to Devatas, who accept it. We are offering you the oil-cake of Inguna, which we eat; please accept it happily.” Thus Sri
Rama, the very incarnation of Dharma, performed Antyayeshti karma for his father Dasaratha as laid down in Sastras.

In Yuddhakandam in Srimad Ramayanam, after killing of Ravana, Sri Rama instructs Vibhishana to perform Antya karmas for Ravana.

“Enmity is only upto death; our action is completed. This Ravana is same for me as for you; let his Antyayeshti be done.”

Similarly in Aranya kandam, Sri Rama grants Moksha to Jatayu and himself performs Antya samskaras for Jatayu. He says:

“Lakshmana, I shall place this bird, killed by the cruel Rakshasa Ravana, on funeral pyre myself and cremate him.”

“Sri Rama chanted the mantras, chanted by brahmanas during Pitru karmas for human bodies, mantras which would reach the jiva to Svarga.”

“The two Raghavas, Rama and Lakshmana, took bath in river Godavari and offered Tarpanam to the eagle king Jatayu as prescribed in Sastras.”

“Jatayu, who had fallen in the fight after performing an illustrious and very difficult act, attained to the lofty and meritorious state, after Uttarakriyas were performed by Sri Rama and Lakshmana in accordance with Kalpasutras of Maharishis (the sixth Vedanga).”

Antyayeshti is in practice for ages. By worshipping Pitrus as said in Sastras, we attain good health, long life, progeny, plenty and prosperity, strength, power, all types of wealth, high status in this world and the next etc. Our ancestors have enjoyed all this directly. Meanings of only some of the
mantras of Antyeshti karma used for giving Ahuti to Agni Bhagavan have been given here. This will enlighten people on the importance of the karmas and interest in performing them. The importance can be noted from the Dharma Sastra text, Smritimuktaphalam in Sraaddha kandam.

Sri Vriddha Manu and Yagnavalkya have said:

अहितािियनथान्यायं दग्नधव्यिस्त्रिभरिििभः ।
अनाहिताििरेक े न । ।

Here the usage of the type of Agni is defined. “The cremation of Aahitagnis (Nityagnihotris) should be done with three Agnis as said in Sastras. Anaahitagnis, i.e. those who have not been performing Agnihotram should be cremated in Aupasanagni. The others should be cremated in Loukikagni.”

Sri Vriddha Vasishtha has classified Agni in the following categories:

1. **Uttapanagni** उत्तपनाप्रि

दर्भष्वळो वसारोण्य पुनर्देशेषु संस्थित: ।
पुनर्देश तृतीयेपु वहिनस्पनः स्तुतः: ॥

"Take three fistfuls of Darbhas. Introduce one in Agni. Introduce the second cluster in the Agni of the first. Show the third cluster in the Agni of the second. The Agni from this third cluster is called Uthapanagni." In the case of male, whose wife is no more, and female, whose husband has expired, they should be cremated with this Uthapanagni.

2. **Tushagni** तुषाप्रि

कपालमग्री विक्षिप्य तसे चैव तुषं क्षिपे ।
करीयं वा समुद्भूतस्तुषे तु तुषपािकः: ॥

"Put some husk of grain in a heated clay vessel (kapala) and generate Agni in the husk. This Agni is called Tushagni." This is to be used in cremation of unmarried girl, and boy for whom upanayanam has not been done.

3. **Kapalagni** कपालाप्रि
“After heating clay vessel (kapala) well, put some cow-dung cake pieces in it and generate Agni. It is called Kapalagni.” Cremation of brahmachari is to be done with this Agni.

Bodhayana says: “Aahitagni should be cremated along with his yagna vessels in his Agnis; Grihastha in Aupasanagni; brahmachari in Kapalagni; others in Uthapanagni.”

Sastras declare that one who has deserted Agni should do ‘Vichinna Agni Sandhanam’ while starting again. Maharishi Vishnu says:

\[ \text{“Vaidikagni should not be abandoned even if wife expires. The Agni karma should be performed throughout one’s life with Prakriti at least.”} \]

Meanings of some of the Veda mantras chanted while giving Ahuti (offering) of Purusha (dead body) to Agni are given below for the purpose of generating interest in Agni Upasana.

1. May this Havis of Purushahuti be to Agni Bhagavan, who fulfils the karmas performed earlier and being performed now.

2. O Agni, go on a good path avoiding the two dogs of Yama, as they are obstacles in the path of the jiva. They keep watch over the dog called ‘Sarameya’. Give this body to them.

During Asthi Sanchayanam (collection of bones)

3. O Corpse, the Agni which we created by churning (sticks) during Pasubandham (yaga) and which we used for preparing you, we put off with milk and water.

4. O Agni, now that you have cremated the dead body, you may please return.

5. O Agni, the body, which was offered on the pyre as Ahuti with mantras, is moving about with the water and Pindam offered with chant of ‘Svadha’. Please send that jiva to Pitruloka. O Agni, may that jiva unite with a body and enjoy the rest of the pleasures with long life.

Prayer to Agni in Tenth day Homas
6. O Agni, man did not commit any cruel act for your satisfaction. O Agni, please burn so as to destroy our sins. Please purify our wealth. Burn so as to remove sins again. May this good Ahuti be for Mrityu Deva for that purpose.

7. O Agni, you are associated with barley (yava). Please remove our sins and enemies.

8. O Agni, may we, who praise you specially, beget good progeny.

9. O Agni, for our welfare, you cross miseries and reach us beyond suffering. Just as we are led to cross the ocean here in a boat, please lead us across the ocean of sorrow. Shine so as to remove our sins.
18. Gnanagni – Splendour of Great persons who perform Gnanayagna

The ancient text named *Sarva Vedanta Sara Sangraham* says:

"Brahmana, who possesses Agni of Consciousness, which he has worshipped well, and who performs yagna in Atma, drinks Soma juice called Bliss of (presence) of Atma in himself and attains Moksha."

"The wise Atma Dikshita should perform Ahuti of the complete creation from Iswara to Virat Purusha, and Purnahuti of Atmavidya."

"The Atmayaji brahmana, shining with the tapas of Self-enquiry, and performing Gnanayagna with great efforts, enjoys the Bliss with the Apsara Rambha called Mukti."

"The courageous Atmayaji should burn the yagnasala of body with Gnanagni, or give it away to the poor brahmana called Prarabdha."

In *Srimad Bhagavadgita*, Bhagavan Krishna teaches Arjuna about the greatness of Atmagnani. There he refers to the Gnana of Atmagnanis, who are Jivanmuktas, as Gnanagni. Refer to chapter 4, Gnanakarma Sanyasayoga, where he uses the terms Gnanayagna and Gnanagni.
“Brahman is the act of oblation; Brahman is the Havis of ghee etc.; by Brahman is the Havis poured into the Agni of Brahman. Brahman shall be verily reached by him who always sees Brahman in all actions.”

“Some yogis perform yagas to Devas. Some others offer Homam of Atma by Atma in the Agni of Brahman.”

“Some offer hearing and other senses as Homam in the Agni of restraint. Some others perform Homam of sound and other objects of sense in the Agni of senses.”

“Others offer Homam of all activities of senses and vital breath energy in the Agni of yoga of sublimation of mind in Atma, the Agni shining with brilliance of Gnana.”

“Others offer wealth, austerity and yoga as Havis, while the ascetics of self-restraint and firm vows offer study of scriptures and Gnana as Havis.”

“Others offer as Havis the outgoing breath in the incoming, and the incoming breath in the outgoing, restraining the courses of the outgoing and incoming breaths, solely absorbed in the restraint of breath.”

“Others, with well-regulated diet, offer vital airs in the Vital Air. All these are knowers of yagna, whose sins are destroyed by yagna.”

People have to perform different types of yagas depending on their innate attitude. Performing yaga is the only appropriate means of release from the sin of shackles of samsara.
“O best of Kurus, Arjuna, those who partake of the remnants of yagna as Amrita attain to the eternal Brahman. For those who do not perform yagna, even this world is not available (for enjoyment), how then the other world?”

“Thus many types of yagnas are described in Veda. Knowing them all as born of karma, you shall be liberated.”

All naturally occurring karmas can be transformed into yagna. One who does so has realised the true principle of Veda. Though karma tends to bind man, the same karma, by being converted into yaga (performing karma without desire for fruit and dedicating it to Bhagavan), will bestow Moksha.

“Gnana-yagna is superior to yagna where materials are offered as Havis. Partha, all karmas in their entirety culminate in Gnana.”

“Yagna, charity and austerity should not be abandoned, but should be performed. Yagna, charity and austerity are the purifiers of the wise.”

“Control of mind, control of sense organs, austerity, purity, forgiveness, straightforwardness, knowledge of Sastras, Self-experience of Gnana and faith in Bhagavan are the actions of brahmanas, born of their innate nature.”

“Devoted, each to his own karmas, man attains perfection. How, engaged in his own duty, he attains perfection, listen, Arjuna.”
“From whom is the evolution of all beings, by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping him with one’s own karma, man attains perfection.”

“Better is one’s own duty though devoid of merits, than the duty of another well-performed. He, who does the duty ordained by his own nature, incurs no sin.”

बुद्धध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियमय च। (18-51)
The purified intellect is devoid of doubts and confusion. Pure intellect results only from performance of karmas ordained by Bhagavan with dedication to Bhagavan and no desire for fruits; this is Bhagavan’s teaching.

In Mahabharata in Santi Parva in the chapter on Moksha dharma, Sri Vishnu Divya Anusmriti Stotram has been told. When Maharishi Satanka asks Maharishi Sounaka regarding the qualities of thinking of Bhagavan, Sri Sounaka recalled Sri Bhishma Pitamaha’s teaching to Emperor Yudhishthira of Anusmriti Stotram taught by Sri Mahavishnu to Maharishi Narada. In that stotram Bhagavan is praised:

अनुस्मृति स्तोत्र रचनम्
योगावास नमस्तुभ्यं सर्वावास वर्गं ॥
यज्ञगर्भ हिरण्याङ्ग्ग पञ्चयज्ञ नमोऽशु ते ॥ 30
Here Bhagavan is praised as Yagnagarbha (one who created yagnas) and Panchayagna (Lord of five yagnas) associating him with Agni Upasana through yagnas.

एकान्तिनो हि निर्दोषा निराशी: कर्मकारिण: ।
जानास्मिन्द्यक्षराणस्तवं विशति विनिर्विताः ॥ 47
“Those, who perform karmas while they are alone, beyond the pairs of opposites, free from expectations, and whose karmas are burnt in the fire of Gna, enter into you with determination.”

Here we find the term ‘Gnanagni’ used in Srimad Bhagavadgita by Sri Krishna in chapter 4 in verse 19. Sri Mahavishnu then teaches Maharishi Narada:

अभ्यर्थयत्वृत्तौ देवानां पदानां ज्ञातं ज्ञातव्यं वलिः ददत् ।
ज्ञलप्रिन्द्र स्मरे धर्मो मां स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ 76
यज्ञ दानं तपोश्च पावनानि मनीपिणामू ।
यज्ञ दानं तपस्तस्मात्कुण्ड्यदाशीविन्खित: ॥ 77
नम इत्येव यो बुधग्रामदृश्च: श्रद्धाश्चिन्तित: ।
तस्याश्च भवेन्लोकः धपाक्ष्यापि नारद: ।
कि पुनर्यो यजन्ते मां साधका विशिष्पूर्वकम् ॥ 78

Bhagavan asserts that those, who perform the five great yagnas as per rules laid down by Maharishis in the Prayogas of their Sutras, merge themselves in ‘Gnanagni’ and attain the supreme state of Jivanmukti. All karmas right from birth upto death are Agni Upasana only.
19. Some Special Notes on Agni Upasana

Various Names of Agni
Agni has the duty to convey the Homas we perform in it as per Vedic principles, to the respective Devas. Srutis therefore call Agni by the name of Havyavahana. The Havis we offer to Pitru Devatas is called Kavya. As Agni conveys the Sraadha and Pitru related Havis in subtle form to Pitrus, he is called Kavyavahana.

If a word denotes a thing, it will certainly refer to the special feature of that thing. As Agni carries forward, he is called Agni. As he conveys Havirbhaga to Devas, he is Vahni. As he burns all, he is Dahana. As he is not satisfied with any amount of offering and devours everything, he is Anala (Alam means enough; Anala means not enough). Saradatilakam, the Mantrasastra text assigns eight types of names to Agni (21-47):


Saradatilakam gives yet another 10-12 names of Agni:

Srimad Bhagavatham, 5th Skandha tells us that the names of the ten sons of Emperor Priyavrata were all Agni’s names:

अग्निध्रेध्मिजनियज्ञबाहुमहािीर हिरण्येरतोघृतपृष्ठ।
सिनमेधाितिथिीितहॊत्रकिय आित ।

In Sri Devi Mahatmyam Sri Devi is praised as being of the form of Svaha, Svadha and Vashatkara:

व्यद्राय व्यद्राय व्यद्राय हि वपुकारस्वरासिका ।

Notes on Agni Upasana

In the book on abridged Dharma Sastra, in Varnasrama Dharma kandam, the following notes on Agni Upasana have been given:

1. If one’s father and elder brother are not performing Agni Hotram, he has no right to perform the same. If elder brother permits, he can do it. But if father is not performing, even if he permits, he cannot do it.

2. Aupasanam should be done in the morning and evening after performing Sandhyavandanam. Yajamana Grihastha should worship Agni with Yava (barley) or rice.

3. If Yajamana Grihastha is unable to perform, his son, brother, Guru, nephew, son-in-law or disciple may do Agni Upasana on his behalf.

4. Wife can do Agni Upasana without mantra; only kriyas to be done by her.

5. Agni should not be merged with another Agni.

6. Agni should not be put out with water or by blowing air with mouth. Agni can be made to blaze with blowpipe.

7. Aupasanam done after Sunrise is called Udita Homam; if it is done before Sunrise it is Anuditha Homam. It should be performed as per the Sutra of the Sakha to which the karta belongs.

8. A. Rites to be performed in Aupasanagni:
   11. Kushmandahomam

B. Rites to be performed in Loukika Agni:
8. Samitkaryam.
10. Agni should not be kept on earth.
11. One should not cross Agni.
12. Homa should not be performed in Agni which has smoke.
13. Agni should not be made to blaze using hand, face, hand fan, winnowing basket, leaf and wooden stick.
14. Homa should be done in Agni with good flames caused by many wood pieces, and no smoke.
15. After doing Homa in Agni with smoke, it should not be made to blaze.
16. While doing Homa in Agni, the material offered should be touched with left hand.
17. Cow's ghee is good for Homa; if unavailable, buffalo's ghee may be used.

Samiths for Homam

Prayer to be chanted while gathering Samith:

समिधःपावना: पूज्याः चर्मयुत्कः परात्पराः ।
युष्मान् हरािम होमायथ अस्मान् रक्षत सर्वंदा ॥

Samith should be with skin, of proper shape, of same dimensions, dried from green state, similar to one another, of the girth of index finger, unbroken, not with two branches, not tainted by worms etc., with green leaves, and strong.

For Sroutha karma, Samith should be 10 to 12 inches long, twice that for Idhmam and thrice that for Paridhi. For Smartha karma, Idhmam should be 5 inches and Paridhi should be 10 inches long.

The limbs of Agni are said to be:
Where Agni is thick: Ear;   Smoke: Nose;   Small flame: Eye;
With heavy ash: Head;     With flame: Tongue.

Homa performed in flame of blue colour in Agni with light ashes is equal to Homa for Brahman.

Pleasure of Devas
The divine face of Agni Bhagavan is that part of Agni where the flames have subdued to a minor presence; Homam done there pleases Devas.

Where Agni blazes with flames on all four sides, Agni is of the form of Visvedevas; Visvedevas are pleased with Homa there.

Where Agni shines with good red flames, he is of the form of Indra; Indra is pleased with Homa there.

Where the wood is red with fire, Homa in that place pleases Prajapathi.

By performing Homa in specified forms of Agni, Vasus, Rudras, Adityas, Visvedevas, Indra, Prajapathi and Bhagavan are all satisfied.

**Agni’s Seven Tongues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Agni</th>
<th>Place of Ahuti</th>
<th>Karmas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suvarna</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaka</td>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>Yagas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raka</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Upanayanam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Pitrukaryas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suprabha</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Kamya Karmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atirakta</td>
<td>Southeast (Agni corner)</td>
<td>Santhi karmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahurupa</td>
<td>Northeast (Isana corner)</td>
<td>Karmas related to Enemy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mundakopanishad gives the following names for the seven tongues of Agni:

काली कराली च मनोज्वा च सुलोहिता या च सुधूमर्वर्णा।
स्पुलिङ्गनी विश्वरुची च देवी लेलायमाना इति समिज्ञ्वा।


Agni’s names are listed thus in Namalinganusasanam, also called Amara Kosam:

अग्निर्वेशानारो वहिन्यतिहितोंत्रो धनम्यः।  105
कृष्णांकराणां नातनेदास्तनूनपातः।  106
वर्तिः शुभ्मा कृष्णवर्मां शोचिश्वेप उपवर्धः।  107
आश्याश्च बुभुद्धानु: कृष्णानु: पावकोर्णः।  108
रोहितान्यो वायुसः शिखापालाशुशुक्षणः।  109
1. Agni – Having tongues of fire growing upwards or in bent form.
2. Vaisvanara – Son of Muni Visvanara.
4. Vitihotra – Acceptor of Ahutis of various foods.
5. Dhananjaya – Wins wealth and gives to worshippers.
9. Tanunapat – Does not protect wood, which forms his body.
11. Sushma – Dries up.
12. Krishnavartma – Leaves a black trail wherever he goes.
13. Sochishkesa – Has flames as hair on head.
14. Usharbudha – Appears in Yaga altars in morning when Dikshitas and worshippers offer Ahutis.
15. Aasrayaasa – Consumes his own foundation.
16. Brihadbhanu – Has large rays.
17. Krisanu – Grows from a small spark, or Agni who thins down by burning.
18. Pavaka – Purifier.
19. Anala – Never says ‘enough’; Agni who always needs more and more Ahutis.
20. Rohitasva – Agni whose vehicle is red horse; or deer.
21. Vayusakha – Agni whose friend is Vayu.
22. Sikhavan – Has tuft of hair of flames of fire.
23. Aasusukshani – Dries up fast.
24. Hiranyareta – Melts gold and gives out as molten liquid.
27. Havyavahana – Receives Ahutis and conveys them to Devas.
28. Saptarchi – Has seven types of rays: 1. black/ ash coloured (in peaceful time) 2. hot (not soft) 3. spreads faster than mind 4. has also good red colour 5. of colour of smoke 6. flies as sparks 7. spreads everywhere.
29. Damuna – Depresses all (those who take refuge in him).
30. Sukra – Gives sorrow; or Shines.
31. Chitrabhanu – Has rays of different colours.
32. Vibhavasu – Has wealth of shine.
33. Suchi – Pure; or makes people sad.
34. Appittam – Drier of water.

Further names of Agni:
35. Ourva – Agni produced by Mahamuni Urva in the middle of the sea. As the sea water increases, Agni dries up correspondingly more.
36. Badava
37. Badavanala – Badava is mare (female horse). Agni is in her face. At Devas’ prayer Siva calmed and made his anger into a mare and drowned it in the sea and asked her to have sea as food; so says Kalika Purana.
38. Jvala – the flame of fire.
40. Archi – Fit to be worshipped.
42. Sikha – Tuft of Agni.
43. Sphulinga – Spark f fire.
44. Agnikana – Particle of fire.
45. Santapa – Heats up nearby materials.
46. Sanjvara – Troubles the body much.
47. Ulka – Fire-torch.

By merely knowing the various names of Agni, mind gets a kind of Samskara of peace.

In Chandogya Upanishad, chapter 2, kandam 12, mantra 2 (rik):

न प्रत्यङ्गांचामेन निष्ठीवेतुः व्रतम् ॥

Sri Sankaracharya’s commentary for this is:
Chandogya Upanishad mentions certain rules to be observed in Agni upasana: doing achamanam, eating, blowing the nose, spitting phlegm etc. in front of Agni Bhagavan should not be done.

Agni Bhagavan lives in our tongue. That is why there is driness of mouth when we talk for long. When we drink water, also born of Agni, the tongue returns to normalcy. This is our everyday experience. Sometimes people talk without any control over words in times of anger and come to grief. Tiruvalluvar says that the wound caused by fire will be cured, but the mark of wound left by words from tongue will never be cured.

In Srimad Bhagavatham, skandha 1, chapter 18, Emperor Parikshit reached the asram of Maharishi Samika to quench his thirst. The Maharishi was in deep meditation of Bhagavan at that time. Parikshit thought that the Maharishi disregarded him and threw a dead snake around his neck and returned to his palace. The Maharishi’s son Sringi, on coming to know of this, cursed the offender by his power of brahmacharya tapas. His words, uttered after touching the water of river Kausiki, were let out like Vajrayudha.

In the commentary of Kalpavalli of Prayoga Chintamani, three Mudras are mentioned as Homa mudras. They are Mrigi, Hamsi and Sookari. Mrigi mudra is used in Homa of ghee or til; Hamsi in Homa of Samit; Sookari (or Varahi) mudra in Homa of Charu.

When all fingers are joined together, it is Sookari mudra; joining all fingers except the small finger is Hamsi; joining the three fingers other than the small and index fingers is Mrigi mudra.

Some government servants about to retire are obliged to go for training in pursuit of the instructions of their superiors. They cannot avoid training simply because they are anyway about to retire in a few days; they have to undergo training compulsorily. Similarly we should obey the instructions of Veda Matha, who is compassionate and intent on our welfare, and perform svadharma rites properly. All should try to learn their respective Sutra Prayogas (procedures for rites). Importantly, Sandhyavandanam thrice a day, Samidadhanam if brahmacharis, and...
Aupasanam and Vaisvadevam if grihasthas should be learnt and performed; Sri Acharyas are pleased with this. Many in Chennai even today perform these rituals without fail even while attending office. They collect materials for Homam religiously. Cowdung cakes etc. required by them are supplied as required by:

Nityagnihotri Vajapeyayaji Kalancheri Brahmrasri Lakshmi Venkataramana Dikshitar, Vedasastra Gurukulam, Soliappan Street, 4th Paditturai, Kumbakonam – 612001.
Tel: 0435-2424135, 2403999, 9842442413, 9443188245.

As instructed by Sri Kanchi Acharyas, he supplies materials and motivates many to perform Svadharma rites. Everyone should utilise this opportunity and fulfil the aim of the brahmana birth.

**Jagadguru Sri Kanchi Acharya's Discourse**

Shall we find out how our ancestors spent time? Sri Adi Sankaracharya says in his Durvasana Pratikaram:

प्रातिैह्लदक
कमनतस्तदनुसद्
िेदान्तसंिचन्तया
पश्चाद्
भारतमॊक्षधमन
मननात्
िािसष्ठ
रामायणात्
॥

सायं
भागिताथन
ह्लदव्यकथया
रात्रौ
िनह्लदध्यासनात्
कालॊ
गछछित
नः
शरीरमरणं
प्रारब्धकण्ठार्मपतम्
॥

They perform Vedic karmas in the morning; study and listen to Sri Sankara Bhashyas of Prasthanatraya Granthis with deep thoughts on Vedanta. (Prasthanatraya Granthis are Ten Upanishads, Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Brahmasutras). They then read Moksha Dharma Parva in Mahabharatam and Yoga Vasistham (which contains essence of Vedanta and Upanishads taught by Maharishi Vasishtha to Sri Rama). They would read at least five sargas of each of these texts. They then perform rites of midday including Vaisvadeva and take food. After some rest, they take bath and perform Vedic rites in the evening. This is followed by giving or listening to discourses on Puranas like Srimad Bhagavatham containing Bhagavan’s lilas and qualities. They thus organise their lives in a divine manner till the body caused by Prarabdha karma drops.

People should perform svadharma rites as far as possible while in service, and proper Grihya karmas after retirement instead of looking for another job, by handing over household responsibilities to the next generation. In this way their future generations will attain great benefit. Family members should all extend full cooperation in this.
20. ‘Santhi Vilasam’ by Sri Nilakantha Dikshitar (Yatiswara)

Let us look at some of the slokas from the book ‘Sri Santhi Vilasam’ by Advaita Vidyacharya, Kavi Sahridaya Brahmasri Nilakantha Dikshitar (Sri Nilakantha Yatiswara, Palamadai Adhishthanam, Tirunelveli), grandson of the younger brother of the famed Padavakya Pramana Paravara, Sarvatantra Svatatra, Advaita Vidyacharya, Apta Vajapeyayaji Brahmasrimad Appayya Dikshitar. This book was written about 300 years ago. If we study all the slokas in that book, devotion to Bhagavan as well as interest in performing Svadharma rites will well up in us.

नानोपाये दिशि धनन्यजरित्वा व्यित्वा
समयं संपादित-सिद्धमणि स्थोल्येवेकं शरीरे ।
श्रुत्वा श्रुत्वा बहुजनमुखोद-आयुपेतातातानि
प्रांसं दर्शित्वम-तिमिरवद-गाढमजामेकम् ॥

“Having earned wealth by many means from many directions and spent it also, what we have attained quite well is the stoutness of this body alone, o Bhagavan! Having heard frequently all these years from many people many matters of Sastras (like the greatness of Dharma and the transience of the body), what we have attained is the dense Agnana (ignorance) enveloping us like the darkness growing upto Amavasya.”

कृत्याल्पलब्धं धनमिप
पनेकिदिनिकलिक-मुपलैव सर्वं त्यजामः ।
शास्त्रैः सिद्ध सतगुणाधिस्तयलाभे
व्यथात्संग्काक्षमनसॊ-नॊत्सृजाम्यऽथनलेशम् ॥

“Driven by the avarice of earning interest higher than one percent, we give away all the wealth earned with great effort in exchange of a piece of paper on which something is written. We do not give even a small amount of wealth for dharma for which Sastras promise benefit many hundreds of times in the next world, as we have minds tainted by fruitless suspicions. What foolishness!”

को तु व्यासः क इव स मनुः कौनसी यात्रवल्क्यो
यैवद्युंघं हितमकुंडसामु पित्रेव पुत्रे ।
पश्याम्-स्तासिरपांि-कृपासागरा-ल्लोकवल्घून्
पश्यामयस्मा-सिरवांििमि: क्षमात्मरान्नदाश्वन्धून् ॥
“Who is Vyasa, Manu and this Yagnavalkya; by these unmotivated oceans of compassion and friends of the world, Sastra has been explained in many ways for our wellbeing, like a father would advise a son. But, look at us, who are unparalleled in lack of discrimination and conduct; we are the lowest brahmanas.”

सर्वनर्मप्रथमकरणे सर्वभावैर्जिन्ताम्ये
देहं मोहोऽ यदि परिणतः पोषणीयो महेति।
आत्मामवं बपुरिदमिवागामि चास्माकमेव—
त्वेषाव्यास्तां मतिरिति परं धर्मशाख्येपु घोषः॥ 25

“If you think in ignorance that this body, the cause of all troubles, and detestable in all respects, is indeed to be nourished, you should consider the bodies to be acquired in future also as yours and that it is necessary to nourish them too. Dharmasastras declare that in order to nourish the future bodies it is essential to perform acts of dharma right now.”

साध्या शंभोः मथमपि देवत्यपसाध्योपदेशः—
कौं पि तस्य प्रथममपनुदेव साध्यः प्रसादः।
कोपो वर्णधर्म-नियमिताचार-निर्वियनोत्यः—
शास्ति नेयः सक्तमधुनाम्येवस्थाप्नुहृते॥ 42

“It is futile to advise that Bhagavan’s grace should somehow be earned. We are totally unfit to receive his grace, as we have incurred his wrath by transgressing the dharman of varna and asrama and committing evils. We can expect Bhagavan’s grace only after removing this deficiency. As we are bent upon transgressing even now the rules of varna and asrama, how can we expect to overcome his wrath?”

दिष्ट्या लब्धं द्विजवर्कुले जन्म तत्रापि दिष्ट्या
धर्माधर्म-स्थितित-रवगतेऽव प्रसादाद्वुसुरुणाम्।
जम्मन्यस्मिनिपि यदि न मे संबिबदांस्तिकतम्—
निस्तारः किं निरघ्नभवनात् सर्वमोक्षेऽपि लभ्यः॥ 47

“We have been fortunate to get the birth of brahmana. We have also been fortunate to know the distinction between dharma and adharma through the grace of Gurus. If we do not develop faith in the next world even in this fortunate circumstance, how can we be rescued from naraka even when all jivas are granted Moksha?”
“I do not seek the positions of Chandra, Indra, Brahma and other leaders of the worlds, not to speak of other minor positions. Will one, who desires another's position and wealth, attain good state? What I seek is my own true state of bliss. Sambhu, please grant me.”

“O Lord, Consort of Gowri, you alone, you alone are my refuge.”
21. Rigveda Agni Ashtottara Satanamavali

Rigveda Agni Ashtottara Satanamavali compiled by Gokarna Brahmasri Samba Dikshitar:

॥ अग्नि: अष्टोत्तर शतनामावलि: ॥

ॐ अजाय नमः
ॐ अजराय नमः १-५ ८-२
ॐ अजिराय नमः ७-१ १-२
ॐ अजुराय नमः १-६ ७-२
ॐ अतन्द्राय नमः १-७ २-७
ॐ अन्येय नमः १-२ १-२
ॐ अद्वृत्तक्तवे नमः ८-२ ३-८
ॐ अंकूलते नमः ६-२५ २७
ॐ अगिरसे नमः १-३ १-१७
ॐ अर्णे नमः ६-१ २-६ १०

ॐ सम्होत्तमिर्ज्ञानाय नमः ३-१ ०-४
ॐ आशृणवे नमः ४-३ ३
ॐ आशुहेमाय नमः २-३५ १
ॐ अप्याय नमः १-१ ४५-५
ॐ आस्ते नमः ६-७ १
ॐ असुराय नमः ४-२ ५
ॐ आहुताय नमः २-८ २
ॐ आदित्याय नमः ४-१ २
ॐ आपये नमः १-३ २-१६
ॐ आबाधाय नमः ८-२ ३-३ २०

ॐ आकृत्ते नमः
ॐ आघृणिसे नमः ८-६ ०-२ ०
ॐ इथानाय नमः १-७ १५-५
ॐ इश्वराय नमः १-६६-९
ॐ इन्नानाय नमः १-१४३-७
ॐ इषः महास्मिनीद्वितीये नमः १-१८८-२
ॐ इष्वाय नमः १-१-२
ॐ इष्वाननाय नमः १-७९-५
ॐ इशानाय नमः ७-१५-११
ॐ इष्वयते नमः ६-१-२ ३०
ॐ इष्वाय नमः १-१३-४
ॐ इष्वाननाय नमः १-१३९-७
ॐ इष्वानाय नमः
ॐ उष्वाय नमः:
ॐ उष्वानाय नमः ७-१५-११
ॐ उष्वयते नमः ६-१-२ ३०
ॐ उष्मानाय नमः १-१३-४
ॐ उष्मा नमः १-१३९-७
ॐ उष्मानाय नमः १-१३-५
ॐ पृथ्विविद्यानाय नमः १०-८८-१
ॐ उष्मानाय नमः १-६५-३
ॐ भृतिविद्याय नमः ३-२९-१०
ॐ भृतिविद्यानाय नमः १-६५-३
ॐ भृतिप्रवीताय नमः ४-१-२
ॐ भृतिते नमः १०-५३-१०-२
ॐ भृतिमियाय नमः ८-२३-३ ५०
| ओं क्रपूणांपुत्राय नम: | 5-25-1 |
| ओं क्रहिपुःते नम: | 1-3-19-16 |
| ओं क्रहतुवृधे नम: | 3-2-1 |
| ओं क्रहतुपे नम: | 3-20-4 |
| ओं क्रहभवे नम: | 3-4-6 |
| ओं क्रपीणां पुत्राय नम: | |
| ओं क्रपभाय नम: | |
| ओं क्रहभने नम: | 10-20-5 |
| ओं क्रहतुपते नम: | 10-2-1 |
| ओं क्रहपये नम: | 60 |

| ओं ओषधीनांगभाय नम: | 3-1-13 |
| ओं एक्याय नम: | 10-1-5 |
| ओं चर्पणीसदामोजिः नम: | |
| ओं ककुदे नम: | 8-4-8-16 |
| ओं ककुदे नम: | 10-8-2 |
| ओं क्रलुबिदे नम: | 10-2-5 |
| ओं कृष्णयामाय नम: | 6-6-1 |
| ओं कनिक्रदते नम: | 1-12-8-3 |
| ओं कन्चतमाय नम: | 10-115-5 |
| ओं कन्चसखाय नम: | 10-115-5 70 |

| ओं केवलाय नम: | 1-13-10 |
| ओं कृष्णवर्तनये नम: | 8-23-19 |
| ओं रपये नम: | |
| ओं कबये नम: | 1-12-6 |
| ओं कवितमाय नम: | 3-14-5 |
| ओं कबिश्चत नम: | |
| ओं कबित्रते नम: | 1-1-5 |
ओं कविधश्चतो नमः ५-१-८
ओं कृष्ण्यातो नमः २-५-६
ओं क्र्यायानिधि नमः ८०
ओं क्र्यवाहिनिः नमः १०-१६-११
ओं क्षत्रणिः धारये नमः १-७०-५
ओं क्षत्रभृते नमः ३-२-१३
ओं क्षयाय नमः ३-२-२०-३
ओं गणश्रये नमः ८-२३-४
ओं चरथानि गर्भाय नमः १-६०-३
ओं अपांगन्निः नमः १-६०-३
ओं गातुविनिधि नमः ८-१०३-१ ९०

�ं ब्रह्मगृहपतिः नमः ३-२-११
�ं गृहपतिः नमः १-९५-४
�ं गृहपतिः नमः १-६०-३
�ं गृहपतिः नमः ४-६-६
�ं गृहपतिः नमः ३-२-१६
�ं गृहपतिः नमः १-९५-४
�ं गृहपतिः नमः १-६०-३
�ं गृहपतिः नमः ४-६-६
�ं गृहपतिः नमः ३-२-१६
�ं जातवेदसे नमः १-४४-१ १००

�ं तपुमूनन्निः नमः ७-३-१
�ं दीर्घतत्त्वे नमः १०-६९-७
ॐ धृत्रताय नमः  
ॐ बृहद्भानवे नमः  १-२७-१२  
ॐ मधुचरसे नमः  ४-६-५  
ॐ यज्ञाय नमः  ७-१६-२  
ॐ रण्वाय नमः  १-६५-५  
ॐ वस्मपतये नमः  १०६-११  १०८
22. Purnahuti
अग्नि उपासन यज्ञ यज्ञ पूणाहिति

Let us now pray to Agni Bhagavan for removal of deficiencies in this Gnana yagna called “Agni Upasana”. The following mantra should be chanted at the close of all Homas and Ahuti of ghee performed.

अनाज्ञातं यताज्ञातं यज्ञस्य ह्लक्रयते िमथु ।
अन्ये तदस्य कल्पय त्वैंहि वेत्व यथातथं स्वाहा - अप्रय इदं न मम ।

"Agni Deva, please make this Yaga complete by filling in any mistake that might have been committed by me knowingly or unknowingly in this Yaga (Homa – Agni Aradhana). You alone are aware of the truth as it prevails."

Those who helped by donating the required paper, books etc. for this Gnana yagna called “Agni Upasana” (Tamil book):
3. Brahmasri M.Sabarigirisa Srouthigal, Kanchipuram
4. Kallur Sri Rudrapathi, Vastu Sastra Expert, Nanganallur, Chennai
5. His son Kallur R.Swaminathan, Auditor, Nanganallur, Chennai
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7. Brahmasri E.Vasudeva Sastrigal, Delhi
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10. Sri G.Sriram, S/o (Late) V.Ganesa Iyer, Kumbakonam
11. Avadi Sri Krishnan, Avadi Sri Krishnamurthy Aiyer and friends

अग्रय इदं न मम
॥ ओऽ ततै सतै ब्रह्मार्पणमस्तु ॥