

Agnihotra – The sacred daily havan



Fire (*Agni* in Sanskrit) is the only element of the five (*) physical forces of nature which is capable of purifying any substance into a refined form without it getting purified by it.

* in Sanatan Dharma (Hinduism) there is a system of five elements found in Vedas, especially Ayurveda, the *pancha mahabhuta*, or "five great elements", of which are *bhoomi* (earth), *jala* (water), *agni* (fire), *pavan* (air or wind) and *shunya* (space or zero) or *akash* (ether or void).

What is Agnihotra?

Agnihotra is the process of purifying the atmosphere through fire. This healing fire comes from the Vedas, the most ancient body of knowledge known to humans.

Agnihotra has three inputs:

- Specific organic substances burned in a copper pyramid shaped havan kund
- Timings Agnihotra is performed at, sunrise and sunset at one's locality.
- Vibrational input in the form of a short Sanskrit mantras

Agnihotra heals the environment. It can be used for personal healing, gardening and farming, and in psychotherapy. In performing Agnihotra, numerous individuals around the world have experienced various benefits, such as improved health, increased energy and less reduced levels of stress. Agnihotra only takes a few minutes per instance to perform.

Agnihotra is an ancient fire ceremony that is mentioned from the sacred Vedic scriptures. "AGNI" refers to the fire while "HOTRA" means healing. This sacred ritual has numerous purposes – purifying the environment, healing the person performing the prayer and many persons in the surrounding areas, among other benefits.

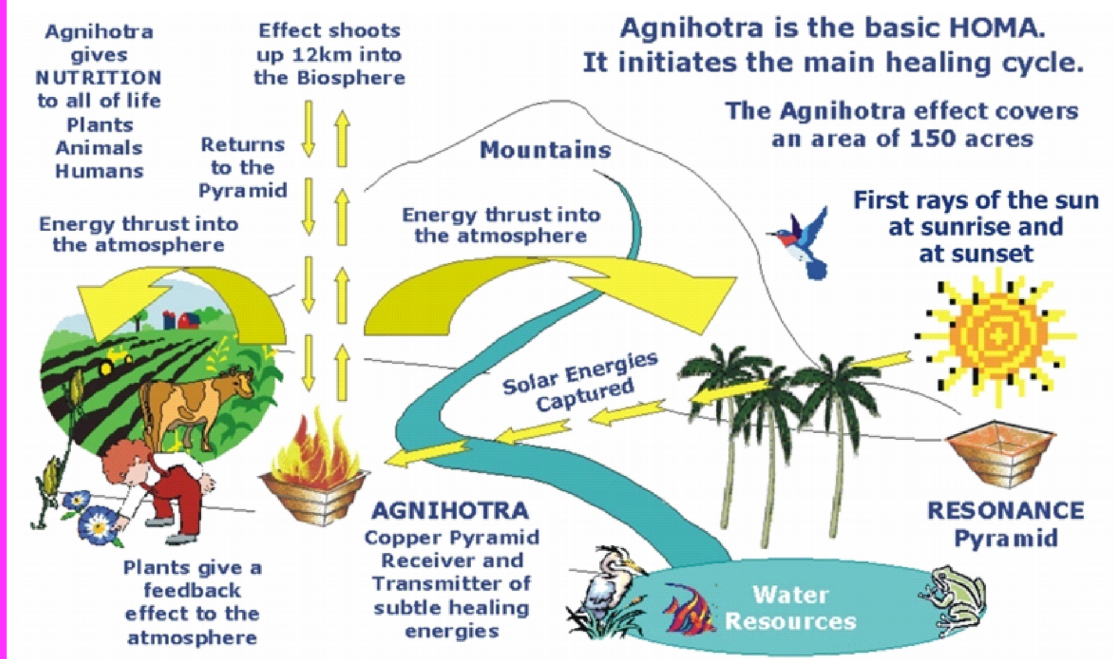
Agnihotra is a Vedic yajna/yagya (fire ritual or fire sacrifice) mentioned in various Vedic scriptures such as the Atharvaveda 11.7.9, the Yajurveda Samhita and the Shatapatha Brahmana 12.4.1 (in which this prayer is described in detail).

Agnihotra is a scientific process of purification of the atmosphere, as a cumulative effect of various scientific principles, harnessed, to give rise to an unparalleled purifying and healing phenomenon. The positive effects of Agnihotra are an outcome of simultaneous functioning of many subtle scientific principles such as the effect of chanting of specific sounds (mantras) on the atmosphere and mind, energies emanating from the pyramid-shape of the special copper havan kund that must be used for Agnihotra, the nutritional effect of medicinal ingredients and effect of bio-rhythm (a recurring cycle in the physiology or functioning of an organism, such as the daily cycle of sleeping and waking). There are no restrictions on those who like to perform the Agnihotra ritual. The Agnihotra ritual heals the atmosphere in his/her own home and the surrounding areas. Numerous persons from around the world have experienced numerous benefits, such as Agnihotra reduces stress, leads to greater clarity of thought, improves overall health, gives one increased energy, and makes ones mind more full of love.

One should refrain from non-sattwic things, before performing Agnihotra, such as non-veg, consuming alcohol, consuming narcotics, etc. . Agnihotra also nourishes plant life and neutralises harmful radiation and pathogenic bacteria. It harmonizes the functioning of *Prana* (life energy).

We can make changes in the atmosphere with Agnihotra, i.e. Sanskrit mantras and fire prepared with specific organic substances, timed to the sunrise/sunset biorhythm. The fire is prepared in a small copper pyramid of a specific size and shape. Brown rice (Unprocessed, long-grain, brown rice is preferable), dried cow-dung (cow manure) and ghee (clarified/refined unsalted butter) are the substances burned. At precisely sunrise or sunset, the mantras specific to sunrise, or sunset are chanted and a small amount of rice and mixed with ghee is offered into the fire onto the ignited piece of cow-dung. Energy is sourced not only from the fire; subtle energies are created by the rhythms and mantras. These energies are generated or thrust into the atmosphere by the Agnihotra fire. A significant amount of energy emanates from the Agnihotra havan kund. This, in addition to the qualities of the materials burned, produces the full effect of this healing homa (healing fire).

Tremendous quantities of energy surround the Agnihotra havan kund at/near the Agnihotra times (sunrise and sunset). A magnetic-type field is created, which neutralises negative energies and reinforces positive energies. Therefore, a clockwise positive pattern is created by one who performs Agnihotra, merely by his/her performance of the prayer. Agnihotra purifies the atmosphere of pollutants and neutralizes harmful radiation. The resultant atmosphere gives nourishment to plant life.



Agnihotra and plants: The ghee is thrust into the atmosphere by the Agnihotra fire and attaches itself to the molecular structure of the soil, allowing the soil to retain more moisture. Plants grown in an Agnihotra atmosphere are better able to withstand droughts. Agnihotra causes a change in the cellular structure of the plant which sends more nutrients to the fruit of the plant and less to the leaves, stem and roots. Many people have found that the size, taste, texture and yield of fruits and vegetables grown in an Agnihotra atmosphere are superior. Performance of Agnihotra in the garden reduces pest problems, and organic gardening and farming are made easier by using homa (healing fire) techniques.

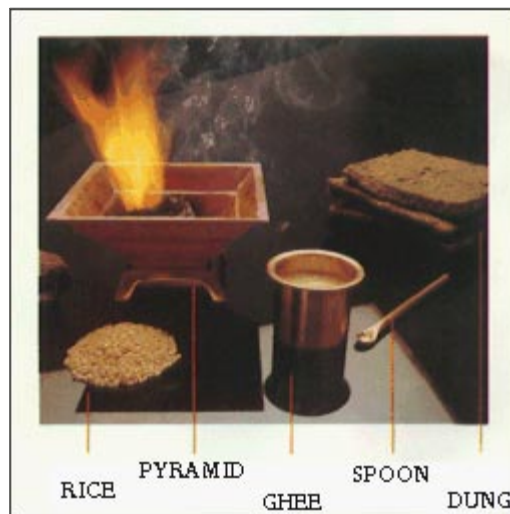
Medicinal properties of Agnihotra: Agnihotra renews the brain cells, revitalises the skin and purifies the blood. It is the holistic approach to life. Many people, who are normally allergic to smoke, experience a healing effect by sitting in Agnihotra atmosphere. The healing effects of Agnihotra are locked in the resultant ash. Numerous persons in different parts of the

world have experienced various benefits, such as wonderful healing of all types of ailments by using Agnihotra ash.

How to perform Agnihotra

To perform the Agnihotra prayer, the following is required:

- Copper pyramid of specific shape and size (pictured below)
- Dried cow dung (pictured below in the front)
- Ghee (clarified unsalted butter from cow's milk) (pictured below on the right)
- Whole grain raw brown rice (pictured below on the left)
- Agnihotra Mantras (a laminated page is advised)
- Timings of sunrise/sunset for your area (a laminated page is advised)



Why copper utensils are used?:- Copper enhances the *sattva* (purity) effects and is used to keep water. The water in copper water never goes stale. Ayurveda recommends the storing of water in copper vessels. Copper vessels have been believed to kill bacteria that cause food poisoning. Copper has antimicrobial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. It is a vital mineral for the body and helps heal wounds faster. Copper also helps to detox and flushes out toxins from one's body. It maintains a healthy digestive health and alleviates obesity by eliminating excess fats from the body. It works as a strong immunity builder and is a natural remedy for a healthy and fit body. Hence the consumption of water in copper vessels is considered an important habit to be inculcated.



Agnihotra timings:- An essential part of Agnihotra is the exact point in time of the performance – exactly at sunrise and exactly at sunset at one's locality. At morning Agnihotra it seems as though the sun has already risen and already stands above the horizon. At evening Agnihotra the sun can still be seen above the horizon. The difference between the actual and the visible sunrise can add up to several minutes.

Why exactly at sunrise and sunset? According to Vedic scriptures, this is what happens exactly at sunrise: At sunrise the many fires, electricities, ethers and more subtle energies emanating from the sun extend all the way to the Earth and produce a flood effect at those coordinates where the sun is said to rise. The flood enlivens and purifies everything in its path, destroying what is impure in its wake. This torrent of life-sustaining energies causes all life to rejoice.

Based on the aforementioned information, the importance of the specific time for the performance of Agnihotra should be quite clear. We have to catch the peak of this energy flood in order to be able to use its enormous energies. If you miss the exact point in time it is not Agnihotra and the healing effects of the fire and the ash won't occur.

In order to obtain Agnihotra times that are accurate and specific to one's location, one should use a precise source of time, and the website below. To obtain such times, visit the following website and enter your specific address. The website should provide sunrise and sunset times that are accurate for one's precise location.

https://www.homatherapie.de/en/Agnihotra_Zeitenprogramm.html

The Agnihotra timetable for the place in question. A program for the calculation of Agnihotra timings for every location is available for download on this page. The software was developed in Germany using the definitions of sunrise and sunset intended for Agnihotra.

Building the Agnihotra fire:- The main idea in building the Agnihotra fire is to arrange the cow dung piece/s to allow for good airflow. After the mantras (provided below) have been chanted and the rice offering offered, it is best not to disturb the fire, due to the interplay of subtle energies. If possible, avoid moving the pyramid until the next time you prepare for Agnihotra. A larger fire using more dried cow dung amplifies the healing effects and produces a greater quantity of healing ash.



Starting the fire:- Wooden matches are required to perform Agnihotra. Be cautious as to not ignite the cow-dung too early, as it is necessary for the cow-dung to be ablaze for Agnihotra – a small piece of cow-dung should be lit approximately two minutes before sunrise or sunset. More cow-dung may require more time to ignite. Any time shall suffice, so long as the Agnihotra cow-dung is ablaze during Agnihotra.



Exactly at the sunrise or sunset time utter the mantras and give the offerings of rice mixed with a little ghee to the fire, after each Swaahaa. Say the mantras once only. If you miss the timings you will not have the healing effect of Agnihotra. After each Agnihotra try to spare as many minutes as you can for meditation. You can sit in silence at least until the fire extinguishes itself. Collect the ash (at the next Agnihotra) and keep it in a container made of earthenware, glass or wood. DO NOT keep Agnihotra ash in a container made of plastic or metals other than copper or

gold. Agnihotra ash can be used as fertilizer for plants or for making folk medicines for animals and humans. In South America it is called "miracle ash".

Rice:- Use brown rice. Highly polished rice loses nutritional value. We recommend organic grain. Only unbroken grains of rice should be used for Agnihotra. If rice is broken, the subtle energy structure around the grain is altered; therefore the ash is not suitable for healing. The amount of rice for each offering is the amount you can hold in your fingertips.



Agnihotra Mantras:- There are vibrations that exist everywhere. Where there is vibration there is also sound. When we chant these mantras, the sounds we utter activate these special vibrations that will create certain atmosphere of effects. Then the desired results are realized. These vibrations exist for everything, so anything can be activated, controlled or changed by mantras. When one with a pure mind speaks the mantra into the Agnihotra pyramid at the correct time, the ash retains that energy and the healing properties of the ash become more powerful.

Agnihotra Mantras:-

At Sunrise:

Sooryaaya Swaahaa

(add the first portion of rice into the fire)

Sooryaaya Idam Na Mama

Prajaapataye Swaahaa

(add the second portion of rice)

Prajaapataye Idam Na Mama

Having a problem chanting/pronouncing the above mantras kindly click on this link to hear it chanted correctly. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWQoGV0Pf6U>

At Sunset:

Agnaye Swaahaa

(add the first portion of rice into the fire)

Agnaye Idam Na Mama

Prajaapataye Swaahaa

(add the second portion of rice)

Prajaapataye Idam Na Mama

Having a problem chanting/pronouncing the above mantras kindly click on this link to hear it chanted correctly. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGFzuef-mwg>

Light the fire several minutes before the time on the time sheet, so the dung will be fully ablaze at the exact time. A large fire will need to be started earlier than a small one. Thicker dung needs more time to fully ignite. At the time provided on the sheet, begin to chant the mantra, adding one of the portions of rice and ghee after "Swaahaa". Continue the mantras, adding the second offering after "Swaahaa". This completes Agnihotra. It is advisable to sit quietly or meditate until the fire goes out. For the maximum effect of the interplay of subtle energies of Agnihotra, one should not disturb the pyramid or add ghee after the mantras have been chanted and rice and ghee have been added to the fire. If circumstances permit, it is best not to disturb the pyramid until it is time to set up for the next performance of Agnihotra.

The rubbing of Agni-Hotra ash on your tummy to conceive a baby.

Performing Agnihotra at home daily relieves the mind from tension, stress, anxiety, leads to greater clarity of thought, improves overall health, gives one increased energy and makes the mind full of love. Agnihotra effects the mind by inducing greater calm and positive thought patterns. Agnihotra relieves the stress caused due to work and other related issues. This is one of the main problems for couples not being able to have children. Agnihotra ashes for conceiving: Combine ghee (clarified butter) with Agnihotra ashes. Ghee has special transport qualities to take the medicine to the exact location of the disease. Mix one part Agnihotra powder with nine parts per weight ghee in a suitable pot for preparing ointment. Apply this on the females tummy.

Proof of Agnihotra from Vedic scriptures

‘Agnihotra’ is a sacred tradition started by the ‘Rishis’ of ancient India. It is considered as the worship of the Lord Yajna Narayana. ‘Agnihotra’ then means worshipping the Lord Vishnu – Aadi Narayana – riding on the divine serpent and controlling the infinite cosmos, only by will.

The Sanskrit word for worship is “Upaasana” – ‘Upa’ (Near) ‘Aasana’ (Sitting) – Upaasana means sitting near the Lord. One who is initiated either by Guru or by the command of the Lord Himself to worship the sacred Fire by offering into it, is known as ‘Agnihotri’, and his ‘Upaasana’ is known as ‘Agnihotra’. In this view, ‘Agnihotra’ is the aggregation of – meditation, remembering the name of the Lord, act of devotion, surrender and Yoga. It is performed in the Vedic manner. Only a worthy person is selected as ‘Agnihotri’ by the Lord. In Agnihotra, the evening ‘Yajna’ performed by the ‘Agnihotri’ is offered to the Lord Agni Narayan and the morning ‘Yajna’ is offered to the Lord Surya Narayana (Sun).

Yajna Purusha:- The vessel or place which contains the sacred fire is known as ‘Yajnakunda’. This, ‘Yajnakunda’ is the very mouth of the Lord into which sacrificial offerings are offered in the morning and in the evening daily, according to the Vedic methods. The inner part of ‘Yajnashaala’ represents the Universe. ‘Yajna Kunda’ is considered the centre of the Universe.

Qualities of the Agnihotri:- The one who performs Agnihotra daily with faith and full trust in the Almighty can be called an Agnihotri. The one who means it when he says “idam, na mama” ((O Lord, all this is) Yours, NOT mine) is a true Agnihotri.

The hymn from the Atharvaveda says that the effect of the Agnihotra done at Sunrise will last till the evening and the effect of the Agnihotra done at the Sunset will last till the morning. The primary effect will be tranquility of the mind. This state will be achieved by the positive effects of the Agnihotra on the Prana and the Mind.

Once again the Atharvaveda 19.55.3, mentions “May the fire in the home give us happiness and peace in the morning and evening, a happy temperament, resolve and good health. May it give us fame and honour. May we awaken you through the yagya fire so that we may be robust and strong. Agnihotra promotes good health and mental contentment. It is a ladder to spirituality.”

In the Atharva Veda, 9.2.6, mentions “Agnihotra destroys enemies and promotes mental peace and gives contentment. It clarifies the air in the home, spreads fragrance, purifies the atmosphere and thus helps householders. It gives them energy and the power to concentrate. It releases mental tension. Through a cleaner environment it promotes good health for everyone and has innumerable other benefits.”

In the Kalika Purana, 23.7.8, mentions, “Yagyas (like Agnihotra) please the celestial deities. It was through a yagya that the entire world was established. Yagya supports the whole world. Yagya protects people from sin. People live on grains. Grains are produced from clouds that bring rain. Clouds emerge from the yagya. The whole universe depends upon yagya.

In the Bhagavad Gita, chapter 3 verse 15, mentions, “The all pervading Supreme Lord is eternally situated in the acts of yagya (fire sacrifice).”

The Maha Narayaniya Upanishad, mentions, “Through yagya the Celestials attains the heavens and overcame the demons. Through yagya even enemies become friends. Therefore outstanding people consider a yagya a special activity.”

Agnihotra and Microbes, A Laboratory Experience
by Dr. Arvind D. Mondkar M.Sc; Ph.D (Micro)

Our way of life has intensified the quantum of pollution. No place can be called safe from pollution. What varies is the type of pollutant and the degree of pollution. Pollution is of various types such as gaseous pollution, water pollution, food pollution, radioactive pollution and so on. Of these types microbial pollution is the most important type of pollution for people in the medical or paramedical field. Microorganisms are ubiquitous in nature.

There are mainly two types, namely non-pathogenic or saprophytic (harmless and not causing any disease) and pathogenic (disease producing). There are certain opportunistic pathogens which, given a chance, can produce disease in human beings. Thus the mere presence of these microorganisms in a definite strength in various media can produce contaminants. Microorganisms like Salmonellae, Shigellae or Vibrios contaminate water, eatables, milk and milk products. When the contaminated eatables are consumed the individual suffers from typhoid, bacillary dysentery or cholera. Similarly, organisms like Staphylococci cause food poisoning by increasing toxins in food.

This microorganism also causes wound infections with pus formation. Streptococci infect the respiratory tract after inhalation of the droplet nuclei on which they are settled. Hospital infections by Staphylococci and Pseudomonas are not uncommon. Recently, Pseudomonas aeruginosa has been reported to have entered the space age. This microorganism was isolated from the lining of the fuel tank of a jet engine and was found to be responsible for the corrosion of the tank.

It is stated that Agnihotra helps to undo the effects of pollution. In this respect it was decided to observe the last type of pollutant, i.e., microorganisms and the effect of Agnihotra on them. The present article restricts only to the effect of Agnihotra on microorganisms as observed in a microbiology laboratory.

Agnihotra Effect on Bacterial Population

A preliminary experiment was carried out to study the effect of Agnihotra on the bacterial population in a room where Agnihotra was performed. For this study, two rooms of equal dimensions (13¼' x 8' x 11') were selected. In both rooms fire was prepared from dried cow-dung cakes in copper pyramids and the basal reading of number of microorganisms in both the rooms was taken by exposing blood agar plates at four corners of the room for 10 minutes. This was done exactly half an hour before Agnihotra time. Agnihotra was performed exactly at sunset in one of the rooms. Bacterial counts were taken again in both the rooms in a similar manner at half hour intervals. Thus readings were taken in both the rooms up to two hours after performance of Agnihotra. It was quite interesting to note that microbial counts in the room where Agnihotra was performed were reduced by 91.4% whereas the room where only fire was generated did not show appreciable changes in the microbial counts. This leads one to think that it was the process of Agnihotra which was responsible for the reduction of bacterial counts and not the mere presence of fire.

Two other similar experiments revealed similar findings. The phenomenon could be explained by giving two reasons:

- Agnihotra fumes are rich in formaldehyde and other substances which have inhibitory effect on microorganisms.
- A phenomenon like smog formation and its diffusion in the upper strata might be a likely postulation.

In the regions of North and South poles, many times, carbon particles accumulate to form a layer called "smog". When fire is lit the hot currents push the smog into the upper strata and it is diffused in such a way that

the carbon particles are no longer harmful in the residual concentration. In the present study perhaps Agnihotra fumes might have dissociated the microorganisms in such a way that the residual population was no more harmful and was well within tolerable limit to human beings.

Agnihotra Effects on Bioenergetic Systems of Individual Microorganisms

This kindled our interest and it was decided to study the effect of Agnihotra on the bio-energetic systems of individual microorganisms. A strain of taphylococci pyogenes isolated from a pus sample was selected for the study. The strain showed all the characteristics of a pathogen. It was isolated from a lesion, produced beta haemolyses on blood agar, showed a positive coagulase test and fermented mannitol with the production of acid. The strain was inoculated on a pair of blood agar plates, one of which was kept away from the Agnihotra atmosphere (control plate). The other one was exposed to Agnihotra fumes for five minutes and was allowed to remain in that atmosphere till next Agnihotra was performed (approximately 12 hours). Agnihotra is to be performed on the biorhythm of sunrise/sunset. Surprisingly, it was observed that the plate exposed to Agnihotra (test plate) showed a tremendous reduction in the zone of haemolysis as against a wide zone of haemolysis in the control plate.

Organisms from both the plates were then subjected to coagulase test. The organisms from the test plate showed a negative coagulase test demonstrating their inability to produce coagulase. Finally, the organisms from both the plates were emulsified in one ml. of normal saline separately to give suspensions of equal strength. This was achieved by use of Brown's opacity tube no. 3. The suspensions were then injected intradermally into the thighs of an albino mouse. The mouse was kept under observation for five days.

It was very interesting to note that the suspension from the test plate failed to produce any lesion in the mouse whereas the suspension from the control plate produced typical abscess. These results suggest that Agnihotra played a pivotal role in controlling the metabolic activities of this microorganism. In this case, a pathogenic strain of Staphylococcus pyogenes showed characteristics of a nonpathogenic strain after exposure to Agnihotra atmosphere. This was just an observation and triggered quite a number of questions in the mind:

- Is this effect phenotypic or genotypic?
- Is it necessary to expose the strain for a prolonged time interval or will a short exposure cause a similar effect?

- Will the progeny of these microorganisms behave in a similar manner?

- Does the small or micro-dose of substances released from Agnihotra process boost the immunity mechanism of the patient to get rid of the infection or does the infecting agent lose its virulence? Perhaps both the effects go hand in hand.

Answers to these questions are still beyond sight and show a need for further experimentation in this field.

Therapeutic Effect of Agnihotra Ash

An attempt was then made to study the therapeutic use of Agnihotra ash against scabies in rabbits. Rabbits are quite often infected with scabies—marked by snow white crust formations on their nose, ear margins and skin. The infection then becomes systemic and the animal dies. Normally this sort of scabies is cured by daily application of benzyl benzoate and salicylic acid for about 6 to 8 days, depending upon the severity of the infection. In one study, Agnihotra ash was homogenized with an equal volume of cow's ghee (clarified unsalted butter) and applied over the infected area above the nostrils of a rabbit. Agnihotra ash worked extremely well and the crust was detached on the third day of application—and that too with a single application.

With benzyl benzoate and salicylic acid, it took five days for the crust to detach itself from the control rabbit. Another notable advantage of this was that the preparation was not irritating like benzyl benzoate or salicylic acid. The rabbits always lick that application because of irritation and the young ones die of poisoning. This risk could be avoided with Agnihotra ash.

These results promise a solution to microbial pollution by the performance of Agnihotra and ingestion of Agnihotra ash medicines.

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Questions and Answers regarding Agnihotra

Can a female in her menstrual cycle perform Agni hotra?

YES. For a very detailed reply to this question do follow this link on Dipika <http://dipika.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Hinduism-s-views-on-Menstruation.pdf>

Can one perform Agni Hotra during the 13 days of a passing of a family member?

NO, but also depends on the closeness to the deceased.

Can one perform Agni Hotra during the one year after a person passes away?

YES, once the Sapindi puja (12th / 13th days) puja is completed then all pujas commences thereafter.

Can a person perform Agni Hotra during Pitar Paksha and Adhik Maas?

YES, Agni hotra is an exception to the rule, hence it is allowed

Can Agni hotra be performed once or twice a day?

Due to the times we live in, performing Agni hotra havan twice a day has become a challenge. Hence I suggest at least once a day according to one's time schedules and work commitments.

Some Information on this article was procured from

www.spiritualresearchfoundation.org

<https://omshivam.wordpress.com/trikal-sandhya/agnihotra/>

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