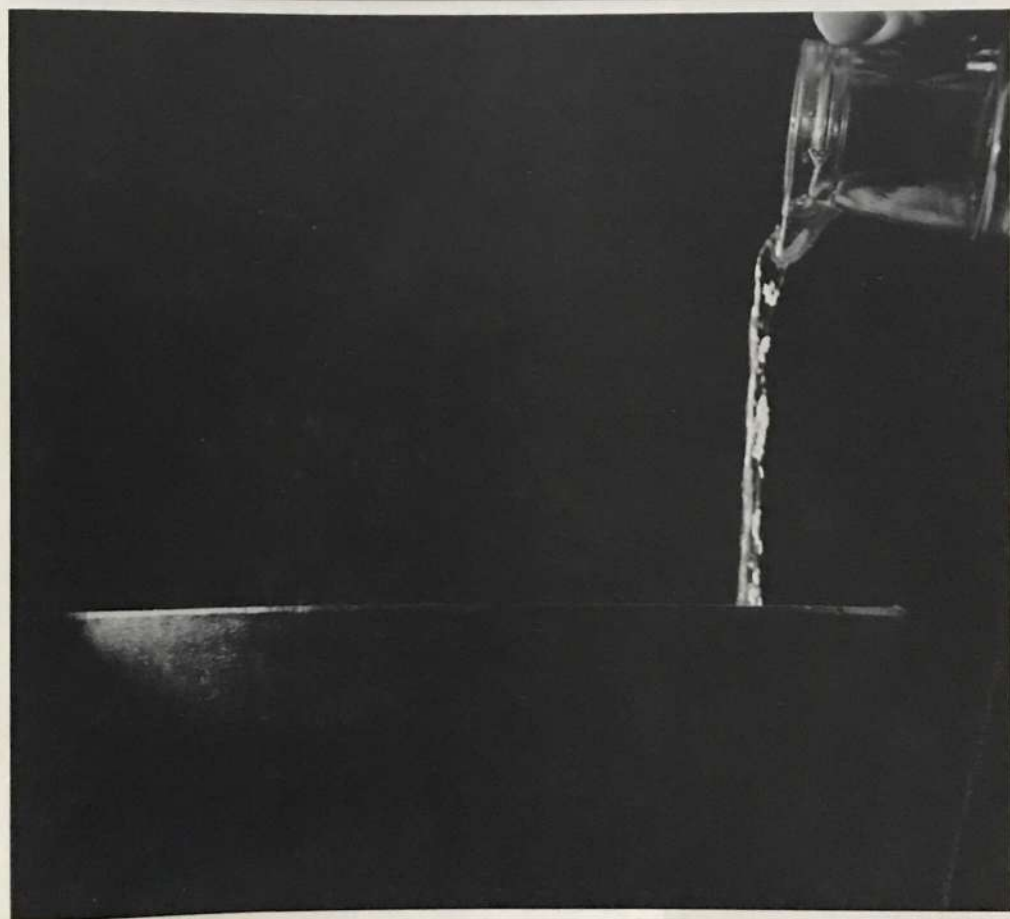


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Perform Agnihotra • Heal The Atmosphere

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From Vasant's Correspondence
How To Cook Your Food
Let Us Try
On Daily Homa
The Fivefold Path

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Cover

According to Ayurveda, ghee (clarified butter prepared from unsalted cow's butter) is the best cooking oil and sesame oil is second.

From Vasant's Correspondence

Avoid attachment to material things. This does not mean to get rid of your possessions. Nor does it mean you should not purchase necessary things of material value. Only do not become attached to them. Then you feel always the pulls of loss and gain and desire or want for more. One is never satiated when one hankers after desires, be they for food, sex, money, material possessions. Even if you desire to live in a certain place and you cannot live there due to your present circumstances do not become too attached to that idea. Let it come. These things come when you are ready to receive and appreciate them. Meanwhile stay where you are and be happy. If you are happy where you are you will be a more likely candidate for happiness in any place in the world. Then let the "dream house" or "dream place" you envision come to you. Thus you will appreciate but you will not have the dependence on it.

If you are attached to that desire, even when you get it you will not be satisfied. You will fear of losing it. So it is best to be happy as and where you are and allow the grace of God to place you where you are best of use to all. After all it is in service to others that we regain the freedom and joy which are our own birthrights, for which we have been born to inherit. So let life be a lesson but also let it be a joy to you always.

Be of service. Do not develop a holier than thou attitude. If people come to your house welcome them graciously. More and more people will come. Always be simple in mind.

"Thy will be done." Let nothing stand in the way. If someone is not doing what he/she is to do then say nothing. Let them find out

on their own. If you tell them what to do they will become defensive. Guard against that tendency in yourself.

If I have to let anyone take charge of an area or a place then humility must be there. Otherwise no one will come. If you are humble then people will come. If no one is helping you then help yourself but do not harbor resentment towards others. By improving your own attitude you will improve all those around you.

You have to recognize and understand the reason for your being here. You have to grasp it more consciously and express it clearly in your life. All trivialities should go so that the pure light shines.

Live the situations which are given to you without misusing them and in the right attitude.



How To Cook Your Food

*Lisa Powers
Madison, Virginia*

In this series much has been said about what to eat; but how we prepare food is equally important from the nutritional standpoint. Even the most vitamin-rich, fresh foods can lose much of their nutritional value if they are poorly prepared.

Generally foods are more nutritious when eaten raw. Many nutrients are highly perishable. They can decompose after exposure to light, air or heat. Legumes can be eaten raw if they are properly sprouted. Soy sprouts and some other sprouted legumes become more tender after light steaming.

When possible it is better to scrub rather than peel organically grown produce. Most of the vitamins in many fruits and vegetables lie just beneath the skin.

Vitamin C, B vitamins, amino acids and some minerals are water soluble so it is better to steam vegetables rather than to cook them directly in water. When vegetables are cooked in water, minimum water should be used. It is good to use the cooking water in soups, etc., as it contains many nutrients from the vegetables.

Frying food at high heat (400°F and above) destroys many nutrients and renders it practically worthless. Light sauteing at low temperatures is preferable.

Unfortunately in USA one common cooking ingredient is virtually unavailable – good quality cooking oil. There are several kinds of oil on the market and there are problems with all of them. Probably the worst is hydrogenated oil. It is made by shooting hydrogen into vegetable oil to make it harden. It is usually found in margarines which the advertisers extol for being “low cholesterol” or

“high in polyunsaturates.” However, once the oil becomes hydrogenated it reacts in the body like a cholesterol-rich saturated fat, so it is no improvement. Other vegetable oils are either refined or unrefined. Refined oils are usually extracted with solvents using chemicals which are not entirely removed before reaching your kitchen. They may also be degummed and deodorized, resulting in a product that will last unrefrigerated for years but is totally devoid of nutrients. Last are mechanically extracted oils. These may be the least refined oils available. In mechanical pressing some heat is usually used to improve extraction yield, which impairs the quality. Even in making “cold pressed” oils the machines can reach high temperatures. Less refined oils are highly reactive and decompose quickly. They should be used as soon as possible and stored in a cool place (preferably refrigerated) in an airtight, lightproof container. When these oils are partially decomposed they are harmful to the body before the oil shows signs of rancidity.

According to Ayurveda, ghee (clarified butter prepared from unsalted cow's butter) is the best cooking oil and sesame oil is second. Really good quality vegetable oil is made by a slow, low-technology process.

Whichever oil you use it is best to use the minimum. Most Americans need to seriously reduce their fat intake.

By applying knowledge and discipline to make the necessary changes in diet, we will reap a rich reward in improved health.

Let Us Try

Now that being on a "spiritual" path need no longer be kept a secret, and since it is no longer considered subversive to utter the word "metaphysical," perhaps we can examine some related aspects. This is not for speculative or philosophical purposes. It is too late for that kind of stuff. Our emphasis in these days must be on practical action.

Most of us raised in the Western world have ingrained in us from early age the concepts of competition and results. That the end seems to justify all kinds of means in our world is an unfortunate by-product some may feel but that is a separate issue.

The point here is that we have been trained and conditioned to measure "success" by dollars earned, cars sold, sweaters knitted and houses built. And since the figures themselves are not always meaningful in a market sense, the idea of "how does my output compare to my colleague's or neighbor's?" enters the picture.



All of this may be fine but it says nothing about the concept of *trying*, i.e., *effort*.

When we try to become instruments of the Divine, which may just be another way of saying "being a good person" or "doing right action," how do we measure the results? How do we know if we are progressing satisfactorily on this hitherto untravelled path?

If we look at the results of our actions invariably our "stinking ego" takes center stage and attempts to take credit for anything and everything except the mistakes.

A better way may be to concentrate only on the effort, the trying. How do we know if we are trying? How do we know if we are trying our best? *We know! We know!* That seems to be one area where self-deception does not enter the fray. Somehow consciously or subconsciously we know if and how hard we are trying.



How? If we try our best at something and fail, the pain doesn't seem so bad. If we don't try at something and succeed, the pleasure doesn't seem so great. So maybe it is not the results that matter as much as the effort put forth.

Vasant said in 1976, *"The effort is all that need be made. You cannot fail if you try. Try and it will come. You make the effort and Shree takes over all the rest for you. When you say simply 'I will try' all love is behind you."*

Many years later he said, "It is not only whether an action is done but how it is done." If there is devotion then the results may not be the end all and be all.

I have learned more about effort being in India where so many poor people must put forth so much effort merely to survive from day to day. The humility, gratitude and devotion that the poor show perhaps emanate from this.



I visited again in March, 1982 the School for Mentally Retarded Children in Ambajogai (Maharashtra, India) where daily performance of Agnihotra had begun in August, 1981. The physical and emotional changes in the twenty boys were remarkable – eating and toilet habits normalized/seizures stopped or reduced/ three boys spoke for the first time/chain-smoking habits stopped/tremors reduced, etc. as even greater truth revealed itself to me.

Thinking of the classic futility expressed by many people about such institutionalized children – "How can they ever be self-sufficient, live in the 'outside' world, etc.?" – I was struck by the following thought. These children are part of the same scene of which we all are a part. They can learn the same lessons we learn out here, how to be less angry, more loving, more compassionate. They have their Karma to fulfill as we have ours. *How- ever trying is just the main thing!*



On The Daily Homa

Should we believe Socrates, the great bulwark of western thought, that the unexamined life is not worth living, then it pays to take a closer look at the daily Homa. Homa is fire prepared in a copper pyramid under certain disciplines of biorhythms and sound vibrations.

We may hear much talk about the scientific value of the daily Homa, but here again, as in Agnihotra the scientific experiment is inseparable from the experimenter. Those of us who practice daily Homa in addition to Agnihotra soon learn to appreciate the disciplines involved. Time spent doing Homa automatically becomes the happiest and the most beautiful time of the day. It is, of course, a disciplined time, but when the unexamined life is worthless, how much value can the undisciplined one have?

It stands to reason that when we wish to receive goodness and kindness on a daily basis we have to give each on a daily basis. The quintessence of goodness or the most potent method for counteracting the effects of atmospheric and other forms of pollution is Homa.

Starting where we are, the daily Homa lifts us, taking us high above whatever obstacles or problems there may appear to be. It quickens the pace, causing the energy to flow at a rate that puts us in tune with good health, happiness, equilibrium, peace, etc., and then keeps us there.

The daily Homa is much more than a daily prayer. It goes beyond our daily bread. It even transcends the mere spiritual discipline. Besides intensifying the effects of Agnihotra – the diversified usefulness of which ranges from preventive medicine, catalyst to plant growth, controlling of pests, curing of

sick trees – the daily Homa safely facilitates a scientific way of life to "Self" realization. "Heal the atmosphere and the atmosphere heals you" is the basis of *Homa Therapy*.

Homa Therapy is good for all, you and also the environment. Vasant says, "Purification is described in three aspects in the Vedas. *Pushti*, *Tushti*, and *Shanti*. It is nourishment, contentment and tranquility."

Homa Therapy and Agnihotra ash purify the atmosphere, water and soil. Practice of Agnihotra, which is the basic Homa, also provides the mental clarity we often need to determine what is important and not so important. The daily Homa dissipates doubt, separating "the wheat from the chaff."

Furthermore, we are told that we are not the body. We are also told we are not the mind and that our senses are mere devices by which our real inner being perceives the external world of matter. For most of us there are simply notions, ideas as we have never penetrated to the innermost core where one realizes the Deathless. Daily Homa, however, shows one daily progress on the path to higher consciousness.

The whole individual is brought into service during the performance of Homa. The contact with the Healing Fire is very physical, thorough and real. Here, one sees the fire occupying the sense of sight. One smells the fragrance, inhaling deeply the distinctive aroma sensitive nostrils come to love and appreciate. One hears the swirling flames inside the copper pyramid, the crackling of the ghee and dungball. One feels the warmth upon the skin as the healing nutrients penetrate the pores to make a less-than-perfect body feel better. Finally, one tastes the puri-

*Ernest Collier
New York*

fied and enriched atmosphere while the mouth is opened during the continuous chanting of the Om Tryambakam Mantra.

Thus, all the senses are brought into use during Homa as the avenues of escape for an outgoing consciousness are filled. It is easier, therefore, to focus on the inner self.

Daily Homa not only scientifically demonstrates the inevitability of self-improvement of the race but it also appeals to the common sense of humanity. The clear logic and simple beauty of its truth are experienced both by the scientist and layperson

alike after spending a few minutes up close to the Homa fire.

The importance of daily Homa is such that every individual on earth should be familiar with its practice.

Omar Khayyam says:

"Come fill the cup and in the Fire
of Spring
Your winter garment of repentance
fling:
The bird of time has but a little way
To flutter – and the bird is on the
wing."



The Fivefold Path

The Fivefold Path is not just one more among the several spiritual institutions that dot the continent of North America. Fivefold Path constitutes the Eternal Principles of religion given at the time of creation through the Vedas. Man is first interested in material well-being although he has wrong notions about it. Entering the spiritual path is not like leaving your apartment in Washington in favor of another one in California. The discipline brings about the change in your attitudes whatever be the situation you are in. Material prosperity and spiritual growth are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A long face with a collapsing jaw is not the external outfit that spirituality wears. The spiritual path is an endeavor of joy taken to its very source.

The Fivefold Path is the basic code for happy living on earth, whatever be your formal religion. An atheist or an agnostic shall equally benefit from it. It treats the psychosomatic man as a whole. It insists on the search for the Kingdom of Heaven which is within you. It does not mistake charity for love.

One may be doubtful in his mind about the God that rules the universe, the soul or Spirit that resides within the bodily tabernacle or about reincarnation. Everyone, however, experiences the cycle of an ounce of happiness followed by a pound of misery. Everyone is familiar with the macabre dance of the volatile mind which flits about like an intoxicated monkey jumping from one tree to another. Everyone is familiar with the misery that surrounds us in the garb of disease, pain, old age and unfulfilled desires. Fivefold Path of ancient wisdom is offered like a TV dinner, like instant food, like a package deal to mankind engulfed in the swelling tide of problems created by a technological society. The

Fivefold Path offers material and mental aids to bring back the soothing rhythm of a tranquil mind. It offers healthy food to the searching intellect. Resuscitation of the Eternal Principles of religion for happy living is done under a Divine command. His will be done. The first step is purification of the atmosphere leading to the purification of the mind based on rhythms of nature.

The new era has already set in. The quarreling orthodoxy of religious beliefs will soon crumble like a house of cards when the invigorating breeze of science joins hands with the message of all the prophets and saints. At no time in known history were things as bad as they are today. Only a Divine incarnation can reset the energy cycle of the planet. Man has a right to be happy; nay, he has a duty to be happy. Since he is made "in the image of his Father" he possesses the wherewithal to be happy. The Fivefold Path fortifies his ability to do so.

In the pristine surroundings of nature an Ashram will be built to impart training in the science of Self-Realization. Fulfillment in life can come only from a level above the sensate.

"Pure consciousness is non-dual, ever self-luminous," state the Upanishads.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

— Luke 12:31

"May I be a lamp to those who need it, a servant of all. May I have the power to avail myself in diverse ways so that all living beings may lie upon me until they are liberated."

– A Buddhist prayer

"Let whatever suffering the world has come to me and may the merits of the Bodhisatwa make it happy." (ibid.)

"Turn steadfastly to the path of devotion, to the way of Allah, for which He hath fitted man. There is no altering in the way of Allah. That is the right religion but most people know it not."

– Quran-29

"As in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man."

– saying of King Solomon

Self-realization is the highest aim of human existence. Self-knowledge alone shall redeem man from the shackles of bondage to misery. Mere affirmation of a theist does not establish the reality of Self. Mere negation of an atheist does not obliterate it. The attitude of the Vedas is that of fearless and scientific search for reality. If traditional faith is disturbed by intellectual probings of modern science it may be well deserved. The Vedas state that the only way you can defy truth is by neglecting it through the blindness of intellect and indulgence in sensuality.

Profession of a spiritual creed and experiencing it are two different things. The spoon in the sugar bowl can never know what sweetness is like. The tongue alone knows.

[From *Satsang Volume One*, Vasant Paranjpe, 1976, Chapter 24, pgs. 113-114]

Vasant was asked to give a 30-second message at Monroe N.Y.

"Let us heal the atmosphere through the process of Agnihotra, the copper pyramid fire tuned to the biorhythm of sunrise/sunset. The planet is in the grips of disease, disasters, famine and hatred. Oxygen is running out. Plants have begun to disappear from the earth. The ancient science of healing through *Homa* fire needs to be practiced now on a mass scale. *If we do this Love will rise as a sound current to protect us.*"