

PREFACE

Fire or Fire-worship is an inseparable part of human life. We cannot imagine human life without fire. Not only in ancient Indian civilization but also in almost all other civilizations, fire has significant position. This significant position of fire turns into its worshipping in due course of time and fire into Fire God. A step beyond is pondered over in the ancient Indian literature where fire is imagined as the connector or mediator who communicates with other world or the life after death. A large number of *Sūktas* of the Vedas have been ascribed to Agni. They all are very fascinating and mysterious in manner. Ancient Indian seers or intellectuals have eulogized fire by composing various metrical compositions thereon. But, unfortunately a systematic research that covers all aspects, has not been so far conducted on Fire or Fire-worship. That is why I have decided to do a research on this particular topic. In my journey of Ph.D. research I found vast material on fire in general and fire-worship in particular. I have referred selected Samhitā, Brahmanas, Śratasūtraa, Gṛhyasūtras, Upaniṣads, etc. I have also referred Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Purāṇas for knowing the position of Fire-worship in the respective time. I have collected and summarized these discussions into four chapters. The first chapter gives an introduction to the trend of Fire-worship known as Yajña. the second chapter discusses the place and position of Yajña in vedic and post vedic era. Apart from these sacred texts I have given a detailed account of the sacrifices which I have performed in my life. This has been specially stated in the third chapter of my thesis. The last chapter is the concluding one that gives brief detail of my research findings.

I have adopted critical, comparative and analytical methods of research in my thesis. I have collected data from the available sources then I critically and logically examined the data and compared it to the present day concept and philosophy of Yajna.

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