

Appendix 1. Some frequently asked questions. I attach a question answer portion of an internet site on agnihotra, for reminder
<http://www.agnihotrausa.net/Agnihotra-FAQ.htm>.

1. Do I have to clean the pyramid everyday? Just shake off the excess burnt ashes and it is ready to use again, scrape off any cowdung chunks attached, do not alter the shape of the pyramid any way, do not hit the corners to make the dried ashes drop.

2. Does making a large fire give me more results? To have a blazing fire at the time of Agnihotra is important and chanting the mantra and offering is important, have a fire - the size of fire does not matter.

3. When do I perform Vyahruti Homa? Vyahruti Homa can be performed at any time of the day, any time before travel, an important event, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations etc.

4. How important is it to do the Agnihotra exactly at the sunrise and sunset times or a few minutes delay is fine? In the Vedas a specific description and definition is given. There are about four or five different versions of Sunrise & Sunset that are prevalent in the modern world. We follow the definition as given in the Vedas. Hence we have a program and can find co-ordinates to any specific location and produce a SR & SS time table. There is a short band of time called 'Sandhi Kaal' when Agnihotra must be done. The nature too responds to this time. This modern science calls it as 'Circadian Rhythm'. By virtue of deep conformity with the nature people in olden days were adept in identifying this rhythm. They stayed on this despite any atomic clock. I too when travelling follow this. At the outset it is difficult to know this precise time without a mastery over one's breath. There is no latitude of several minutes for agnihotra. Then it is not agnihotra. This is the 'Sandhya' that was always done in the Vedic times as per the Vedas.

5. Can it be done in any room in any direction or should there be a specific direction we have to face while doing it? There are no such requirements nor restrictions. You may choose to do in any room or outside in your back yard or your balcony. There are no restrictions. Observe the personal cleanliness as much as you can. That is 'Pavitrya' as you can.

6. Should we be using only brown rice or any rice would do..? Any rice is Ok. I personally avoid rice grains such as boiled or paraboiled rice. This is a staple item to some of our friends from S. India. Any dehusked rice grains as the nature has given us or the rice that we use for home cooking are Ok.

7. Can I use unsalted butter for making ghee or do I have to make butter at home and then prepare ghee? Making ghee from sweet unsalted butter is ok. Even cow's ghee that is available in the stores is ok as long as it is Cow's ghee and not the 'Shuddha Ghee as it is sold in India.

Which may be made of Buffalo milk or butter there of.

8. Can I chant my Guru mantra after Agnihotra? Can I also perform other yagnyas after Agnihotra? Yes, you may do all the yajnyas. Regarding the 'Beej Mantra' I hope you have received it from some preceptor. I know without agnihotra all the rest may be of little help. I will leave it to you to make your own decision.

9. What are the benefits of Agnihotra? The benefits are infinite. The Agnihotra benedictions are not only on a material level but envelope all the three levels that all creation exists and you are a part of that Total existence. I may speak for hours on end yet what good is it? The best thing is to experience it yourself. My personal experience is phenomenal. At least I may say I know what joy is, all my needs are fulfilled as also my desires. When speaking of joy happiness is a very crude word. If this may not be your wish or goal then perhaps Agnihotra may not be for you. There are thousands of Muslims, Christians, Jews that I have taught and are practicing Agnihotra for the last several years. This is a perfect science and can be empirically proven.