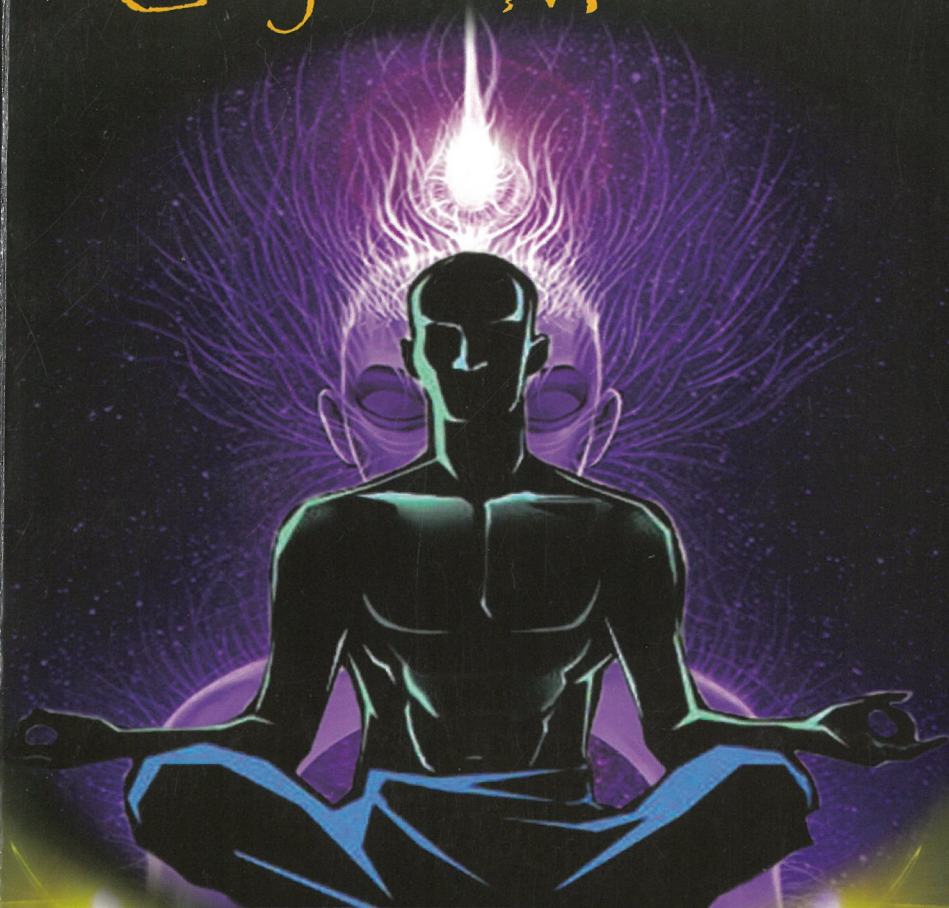


Gāyatrī Mantra



S. K Ramachandra Rao



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SAKSHI

**Sri Aurobindo Kapālī Sāstry Institute of Vedic Culture
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Gāyatrī Mantra

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Note to the Readers

We are pleased to present to our readers the book authored by the eminent savant and scholar, Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao. It appeared originally in 1998 as volume 3 of the multi volume series entitled, 'Rig Veda Darshana'. SKR states in the prelude, 'traditionally the study of Rig Veda begins with the Praṇava (*omkara*) and proceeds with the Vyāhṛti-s (Bhuḥ, Bhuvah and Suvah), the Gāyatrī Mantra and Puruṣha Sūkta. Hence the first mantra he chose from Rig Veda for commentary is this Gāyatrī Mantra. We have rearranged the chapters to make the book user friendly.

This book is aimed both at the beginners and at those already familiar with the mantra. The book explicitly and distinctly gives the twentyfour syllables of the mantra and also the associated deities. SKR wants us to meditate on each syllable before beginning the study.

When I ask some of the students about the message of the Gāyatrī mantra, the common answer is that it is a prayer to impel the right thoughts. This is only a part of the answer. Chapter 5 gives the answers. The answer given above is the second part of mantra. But the first part is more important. We have to become conscious of the great power of the deity, Sun or Savita, by doing meditation, indicated by the word *dhīmahi*. Then the right thoughts will manifest systematically, but not instantly.

This is a part of the answer to those who claim that they have not had any benefit by reciting the mantra.

For advanced traditional readers, there are three interpretations in chapters 7, 8 and 9, namely Adhiyajna, Adhidaivata, and Ādhyātma.

The Gāyatrī mantra given here is the tenth mantra of the last sūkta of Maṇḍala three, due to the rishi Vishvamitra Gāthinaḥ. All the 3 mantra-s, 10 through 12 are prayers to Savitā.

There are many reasons for the widespread popularity of this mantra indicated in chap. 1. Another mantra of this Maṇḍala 3 (3.53.12) due to the same rishi declares that 'the mantra (*brahma*) of Vishvamitra protects the Bharata people. Bharata also means persons who take delight (*rata*) in the Light, those with affinity for light. Of course this mantra refers to the power of the mantra-s of Vishvamitra in general, not specifically to the Gāyatrī mantra. But Chhandogya U. (3.12.1) mentions the protection given by this mantra.

A common question is: how many times do we have to repeat the Gāyatrī mantra in a day? Traditionally, the mantra is repeated 36 times at the three worships, with a total of 108 per day. Now this is rarely done, since many do recitations of Veda mantra-s only once a day. One possibility is to repeat 18 times a day so that the total is 108 in 6 days. On the seventh day (perhaps a holiday), repeat it 108 times, or 36 each in 3 sessions.

The three appendices provided by SKR are very useful, especially, 'the methods of chanting'. For some more details on chanting, see the SAKSHI book, 'Widely used Veda Mantra-s', Chap. 19. This book has the text, translation and explanation of the Puruṣha Sūkta mentioned by SKR in his prelude.

The book answers most of the questions asked such as 'What is *bhuḥ*, *bhuvah*, *suvaḥ*?

SKR has assisted SAKSHI in so many ways that it is an honour for us to publish this book.

We are grateful to K. Sreedhar (Tulasi Matha), who has provided us the original book.

We are grateful to the honourable trustees of Sri S.K. Ramachandra Rao Memorial Trust for permitting us to publish this booklet. Our thanks to M/s. Kalpataru Research Academy, which has published 'Rig Veda Darshana' (1998) and several other books written by Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao.

02-05-2014

Akshaya Tritiya

Part - I

Chapter 1

Introduction to Gāyatrī Mantra

Tradition accords unrivalled importance to the Gāyatrī Mantra, which is the tenth rik in the third maṇḍala of the *Rik-samhitā*. It is the mantra that is most frequently recited in the country by those who are spiritually inclined; it is among the texts that are daily recited by the devout. This has been so for several thousands of years. There, is no Vedic hymn which is regarded as more sacred, or more efficacious, by laymen or masters of scripture. In the Vedic literature itself, it is repeatedly mentioned, explained and annotated. Its prescription comprehends both ritualistic involvement and philosophical inquiry.

Although the text of this mantra, containing not more than twenty-four letters, is originally found in *Rigveda* as mentioned above, it also occurs in *Sāma-veda* (2,812), *Vājasaneyī-samhitā* (*Shukla Yajurveda*, 3,35;22,9;30,2 and 36,3), *Taittirīya-samhitā* (*Krishna Yajurveda* 1,5,6,4 and 84;4,1,11,1), *Maitrāyaṇīa-samhitā* (4,10,3 and 14,9,14), *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* (4,32,2;5,5-6; 13,8 and 19,8) *Kaushītakī-brāhmaṇa* (23,3 and 26,10), *Gopatha-brāhmaṇa* (1,1,34), *Shatapatha-brāhmaṇa* (2,3,4,39; 13,6,2,9 and 14,9,3,11), *Taittirīya- āraṇyaka* (1,11,2 and 10,27,1), *Sāma-mantra-brāhmaṇa* and (1,6,29), *Daivata-brāhmaṇa* (3,25). Several upanishads like *Bṛhadaraṇyaka* (6,3,11), *Muṇḍaka* (6,7,34), *Shvetashvatara* (4,18), *Kaushītakī* (91,6) and *Mahānārāyaṇīya* (15,2), seek to explain the import

of this mantra, which is prescribed prominently in all the mediaeval *Shrauta* and *Gṛhya* texts (e.g. *Āshvalayana-shrauta* 7,6,6, *Apastamba-gṛhya* 4,11,9 and *shrauta* 20,24,6, *Baudhāyana-dharma*, 2,10,17,14, *Shāṅkhāyana-shrauta* 2,10,2;2,12,17;5,5,2;10,16,17 and 10,9,16 and *Mānava-shrauta* 5,2,4,43). Other ritual texts also (like *Rigvidhāna* 1,12,5 and *Āpastamba-mantra-pāṭha*) eulogize this mantra. Several purāṇa-s contain explanations of the mantra, legends about the goddess Gāyatrī, and prescriptions concerning the employment of the mantra in rituals and meditation. There are also *Sāṅdhyābhāshyas* (like *Khaṇḍa-rājadīkshita's Taittirīya-sandhyā-bhāshya*, Sāyaṇa's *Taittirīya-sandhyāmantra-vyākhyā*, and anonymous *Sandhyāmantra-vṛtti*), which explain the meaning of the Gāyatrī-mantra both ritualistically and philosophically.

Gāyatrī is actually the name of one of the metrical forms (chhandas) adopted in Rigveda. And this metrical form is an important one. In Rigveda-samhitā, out of the total 10,552 mantra-s, as many as 2,456 mantra-s (including the seven *Vāḷakhilya-sūkta-s*) are in Gāyatrī chhandas. This is only next to the trishṭup-chhandas, which has the largest number of mantra-s (4,251); after Gāyatrī comes Jagatī with 1,346 mantra-s. It is also to be noted that the samhita-s of all the Vedas (excepting *Krishna Yajurveda*) begin with mantra-s in the Gāyatrī-metre. And among the numerous metrical forms used in the Vedic lore, Gāyatrī is the shortest (with twenty-four letters) and is also regarded as the most basic, the very first.

We can see that Gāyatrī even as a chhandas is credited with great sanctity, and all mantra-s in this chhandas are of especial significance. It is especially so because this chhandas is associated with Agni, the first and foremost of devata-s in the vedic corpus, and the devāta without whom no ritual can be performed. Trishṭup-chhandas is likewise associated with the devatā Indra, and Jagatī-chhandas with the Vishvedevas. Shatapatha-brāhmaṇa (6,1,3,19) says that this mantra in the gāyatrīchhandas is Agni himself ('*gāyatrī vā agniḥ*'; cf also Taittirīya-samhitā, 2,2,5, '*agnir vai gāyatrī*'); the gāyatrī-chhandas is particularly suited for eulogizing Agni ('*gāyatram agneshchhandah*'). This is why in all sacrificial rituals, the mantra-s that are first recited are in this chhandas.

The mantra that is now celebrated as the Gāyatrī is no doubt in the gāyatrīchhandas with all these associations. But this is not its only claim to the extraordinary importance that this mantra has acquired in tradition. The real significance of the mantra is that it articulates, as few other mantras do, the special merit of the gāyatrī-chhandas.

'This mantra called Gāyatrī has the gāyatra-chhandas, but it also protects one who chants it, and that is why it is called Gāyatrī'. We have in Chhāndogya U. (3.12.1)¹ a statement to this effect: the Gāyatrī-mantra is indeed the most fundamental

¹ गायत्री वा इदं सर्वं भूतं यदि दं किं च । वाग्वै गायत्री ॥

वाग्वा इदं सर्वं भूतं । गायत्रि च त्रायते च (3.12.1)

gāyatrī vā idam sarvam bhūtam yadi dam kim cha vāgvai gāyatrī vāgvā idam sarvam bhūtam gāyatrī cha trāyāte cha

speech; and this speech is all this, and Gāyatrī is so named because it articulates effectively as well as protects.

The root of the word 'gāyatrī' is 'gai' (*shabde*), which has the sense of making sound, of speaking and of singing. That is why the riks in the gāyatrī-chhandas are amenable to being musically rendered (*gānānukūla-rik*), and Sāman-chants are mostly riks in gāyatrāchhandas (hence RV 1,10,1, 'gāyanti tvā gāyatrīṇaḥ', where 'gāyatrīṇaḥ' means sāmagāḥ or udgātārah, the singers of the Sāman -chants). 'Yāska (7,12,5) also explains 'gāyatrī' in terms of singing of eulogies ('gāyateḥ stuti-karmaṇaḥ'). The word has also another root 'traing' (*pālāne*) which means 'to protect'. The grammatical construction of the word involves 'gāyopapadāt trāyateḥ; atonupasarge kaḥ (3,2,3) iti kaḥ; gaurāditrānīsh'.

There is another ancient explanation given by Yāska, which is rather intriguing. Gāyatrī is merely a camouflaged expression for *trigāya*. The expression 'trigāyā' means "having three modes of articulation, mind, speech and body". That is to say, Gāyatrī finds expression in, or inspires, our mental processes, speech behaviour and physical activities.² Further, *Shatapatha-brāhmaṇa* (14,8,15,7) interprets 'gāyatrī' to signify that it protects the life-principles (*prāṇa*), which are called 'gayā'.

Bṛhad-yājñavalkya-smṛti explains that by reciting this mantra, one gets protected from various evils (like accepting gifts and

² 'trigamanā vā viparītā'; 'trigamanā trishu rūpeshu, manasi vachasi vapushi cheti gamanam gatim dadāti sā').

consuming impure or improper food) and from major and minor sins:³

This idea is repeated in all Smṛti texts and purāṇa-s, so much so that the present understanding of the merit of the Gāyatrī-mantra is that it is capable of protecting the person who recites it.⁴ In fact, the Smṛti texts tell us that if one repeats this mantra ten times, all the minor unbecoming omissions and commissions done during the day and that night will be eliminated;⁵ ; if a hundred times, a host of sins will be destroyed ('*pāpaughashamani* '); if a thousand times, even the great sins, committed knowingly or unknowingly, will be rendered null and void; and if a lakh times, the sins of seven lives will be undone; and if a crore of times, whatever one desires will be secured. One of the texts pointedly asks what it is that would be impossible to achieve when the mantra is well recited.

³ प्रतिग्रहान्नदोषाच्च पातकादुपपातकात् । गायत्री प्रोच्यते तस्माद् गायन्तं त्रायते यतः ॥
pratigrahānnadoṣhāchcha pātakādupapātakāt gāyatrī prochyate tasmād
gāyantam trāyate yataḥ

⁴ *gāyantam trāyate yasmād gāyatrīti smṛtā budhaiḥ*

⁵ *rātryahnoḥ yat-kṛtam laghu pāpam praṇudati*

Chapter 2

The Praṇava

The mantra celebrated as the Gāyatrī, which occurs first in Rigveda (3,62,10), occurs in two forms; without the vyāhṛti-s (*bhūh*, *bhuvah* and *svah*, to be explained shortly) in Rigveda referred to above, in Shukla-yajurveda (Vājasaneyi-samhitā, 3,35; 30,2). Sāma-veda (uttarārchika 13,3); and in Atharva-veda, (3,10,2); with vyāhṛti-s in Krishṇa-Yajurveda (Taittirīya-samhitā, 1,5,6), Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka (1,11,2) and also in Vājasaneyi-samhitā (36.3). The form of Gāyatrī without the vyāhṛti-s is often known as Brahma-gāyatrī, while the form with vyāhṛti-s is Vishvamitra-gāyatrī. Both forms, however, are involved in the Sandhyā ritual although the one with vyāhṛti-s is preferred. According to Manu, Gāyatrī (or Sāvitrī) to be effective must always be accompanied by praṇava and the vyāhṛtis:¹

Bodhāyana-dharma-sūtra insists that in the prāṇāyāma-portion of the Sandhyā-ritual, the Gāyatrī-mantra recited thrice must be preceded by the praṇava and the vyāhṛti-s and followed by the formula 'om āpojyoti', (called Gāyatrī-shiras or head of the Gāyatrī-mantra, to be explained later):²

¹ओंकारपूर्विकास्तिस्रो महाव्याहृतयोऽव्ययाः । त्रिपदा चैव सावित्री विज्ञेयं ब्रह्मणो मुखम् ॥

omkārpūrvikāstisro mahāvyāhṛtayo avyayāḥ tripadā chaiva sāvitrī vijneyam brahmaṇo mukham

²ओंकारपूर्वमुच्चार्य भूर्भुवःस्वस्त्यैव व । गायत्रीं प्रणवं चान्ते जप एवमुदाहृतः ॥

omkārpūrvamuchchārya bhūrbhuvahsvastathaiva va gāyatrīm chānte japa evamudāhṛtaḥ

Similarly in 'japa', which is the most important sequence of the Sandhyā-ritual³.

Shaunaka commends that the Gāyatrī-mantra with the praṇava and the three vyāhṛti-s must be brought to mind before undertaking any sacred ritual, including the study of the Vedas:⁴

Even Tantrik texts like *Shāradārīlaka* describe the Gāyatrī mantra with the praṇava, the seven vyāhṛti-s and the Gāyatrī-shiras as the essence extracted from all the Vedas.

Chapter 3 The Vyāhṛti-s

The Gāyatrī-mantra is said to be four-footed (chatushpāda, or having four lines), when praṇava accompanies it; when, however, the praṇava is omitted, it is only three-footed.¹ The three pādas of the mantra in gāyatrī-chhandas, evolve out of the three vyāhṛtis, according to traditional understanding. The three vyāhṛti-s are Bhūḥ (earth), Bhuvah (mid-region) and Svaḥ (the upper region yonder), which here have their origin in the mātra-s of praṇava, a-kāra, u-kāra and ma-kāra respectively.

The expression *vyāhṛti* (or *vyāhāra*) literally means a perfect

³ praṇava-vyāhṛtiyutām gāyatrīm vai japet tatah

⁴ ओंकारं व्याहृतीस्तिष्ठो गायत्री त्रिपदां तथा । मनसैवानुस्मृत्य वेदादिकमुपक्रमेत् ॥
omkāram vyāhṛtistimno gāyatrīm tripadām tathā
manasaivānusmrutya vedādikamupakramet

¹ 'chatushpāda-gāyatrī praṇavena saha; praṇavam vīnā tripadā'

utterance, well-articulated speech, or considered statement. The background myth is that the creator at the beginning of creation, uttered the ejaculation 'bhūh', and the earth came into existence:² then he articulated 'bhuvah', and thus brought into being the mid-region;³ and subsequently he uttered 'suvaḥ', and the upper realm got formed.⁴ Thus the three vyāhṛti-s correspond with the three worlds ('*etā vai vyāhṛtaya ime lokāḥ*', Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa, 2,2,4,2). The vyāhṛti character of the Vyāhṛti-s consists in the three worlds being occasioned by the three ejaculations.

According to *Maitrī-upanishad* (6,6) existence was at first inarticulate. Then Prajāpati (the creator and protector of all existent things and beings) ejaculated after deep contemplation 'bhūh', 'bhuvah' and 'suvaḥ'. This three-fold utterance came to constitute his gross body: 'suvaḥ' became his head (upper organ), 'bhuvah' constituted his navel (middle part) and 'bhūh' his feet (the lower part); these are the three worlds. And the Sun became the eyes for them:⁵

² 'sa bhūr iti vyāharat, sa bhūmim asṛjata':

³ 'a bhuvā iti vyāharat, santoniksham asṛjata'

⁴ 'sa suvaḥ iti vyāharat, sa divam asṛjata'

⁵ अथाव्याहृतं वा इदमासीत् । स सत्यं प्रजापतिः तपस्तप्त्वाऽनुव्याहरत् भूर्भुवः सुवरिति । एषैवास्य प्रजापतेः स्थविष्ठा तनूर्यालोकाविति । स्वरित्यस्य शिरो नाभिर्भुवो भूपादा आदित्यश्चक्षुः ॥

athāvyāhṛutam vā idamāsīt sa satyam prajāpatiḥ tapastaptvā anuvyāharat bhūrbhuvah suvariti eṣhaivāsya prajāpateḥ sthaviṣṭhā tanūryālokāviti svarityasya shiro nābhirbhuvo bhūhpādā ādityaschakshuḥ

To these three, *Taittirīya-Upanishad* (1,5) adds 'mahah' as the fourth, symbolic of the very Brahman being, the inmost self of all beings and having the other vyāhṛti-s as its limbs, and tells us that this is the view of Mahāchamasya.

This text provides the following correspondences:

(A) The Loka-s:

bhūh-ayam lokah (this world which we see here in front of us)

bhuvaḥ-antariksham (the mid-region)

suvaḥ-asau lokah (the world beyond, up there, yonder)

mahah-āditya (the sun)

(B) The devata:

bhūh - agni (the fire principle)

bhuvaḥ - vāyu (the principle of wind)

suvaḥ - āditya (the sun)

mahah - chandra (the moon)

(C) The Veda-s:

bhūh - Rik (the hymnology of *Rigveda*)

bhuvaḥ - Sāman (the chants of *Sāmaveda*)

suvaḥ - Yajus (the sacrificial formulae of *Yajurveda*)

mahah - Brahma (the yajna)

(D) The Prāṇa-s:

bhūh - prāṇa (the vital principle; the ascending breath)

bhuvaḥ - āpana (the principle of elimination; the descending breath)

suvaḥ - vyāna (the principle of circulation; the spreading breath)

mahaḥ - anna (food)

Shri Shankara expresses the above compactly:⁶

Maitrī upanishad (6,5), which takes the three vyāhṛti-s as synonymous with the three *mātra*-s of praṇava, works out further correspondences:

- (1) masculine, feminine and neuter (by way of gender) (*linga*);
- (2) Agni, Vāyu and Āditya (by way of lights) (*bhāsvat*);
- (3) Brahmā, Rudra and Viṣṇu (by way of overlords) (*adhipati*);
- (4) Gārhapatya, Dakṣiṇa and Āhavanīya (by way of fires) (*makha*);
- (5) Rik, Yajus and Sāman (by way of Knowledge) (*vijnāna*);
- (6) Bhūḥ, Bhuvah and Suvaḥ (by way of regions) (*loka*);
- (7) past, present and future (by way of time) (*kāla*);
- (8) *prāṇa*, agni and sūrya (by way of energies) (*pratāpa*);
- (9) food (anna), water (āpa) and moon (by way of satisfactions) (*āpyāyana*).
- (10) buddhi, manas and ahamkāra (by way of consciousness) (*chetanā*).
- (11) *prāṇa*, apāna and vyāna (by way of vital currents) (*prāṇa*).

⁶ इतराश्च व्याहृतयो लोकाः देवाः वेदाः प्राणाश्च । महः इत्यनेन व्याहृत्या आत्मना आदित्यचन्द्रब्रह्मान्नभूतेन व्याप्यन्ते यतः ॥

itarāścha vyāhṛtayo lokāḥ devāḥ vedāḥ prāṇāścha mahaḥ ityanena vyāhṛtyā ātmanā ādityachandrabrahmānnabhūtena vyāpyante yataḥ

Gāyatrī-tantra (paṭala 2) explains that the first vyāhṛti denotes the power of mental resolution (*icchā-shakti*), the second the power of energetic action (*kriyā-shakti*), and the third the power of transcendental gnosis (*jnāna-shakti*). The same text also points out that the first vyāhṛti, bhūḥ, represents in the organism, the basal lotus or *mūlādhāra* (below the navel) as the chakra; the second vyāhṛti symbolizes the *vishuddha-chakra* (at the throat), while the third represents the *sahasrāra* or the thousand-petalled lotus (on top of the head):⁷

⁷भूःकारं तु भूर्लोको भुवर्लोको भुवस्तथा । स्वःकारः सुरलोकश्च गायत्र्याः स्थाननिर्णयः
 इच्छाशक्तिश्च भूःकारः क्रियाशक्तिर्भुवस्तथा । स्वःकारो ज्ञानशक्तिश्च भूर्भुवःस्वः स्वरूपकः
 मूलपद्मं च भूर्लोको विशुद्धं च भुवस्तथा । सुरलोकः सहस्रारो गायत्रीस्थाननिर्णयः ॥
bhūḥkāram tu bhūrloko bhuvarloko bhuvastathā svaḥkāraḥ
suralokascha gāytryāḥ sthānanirṇayaḥ
ichchhāshaktischa bhūḥkāraḥ kriyāshaktirbhuvastatha svaḥkāro
jnānashakthischa bhūrbhuvāḥ svaḥ svarūpakāḥ
mūlapadmaṁ cha bhūrloko vishuddham cha bhuvastathā suralokaḥ
sahasraro gāyatrīsthānanirṇayaḥ

Chapter 4

The Gāyatrī Mantra (Samhitā and Pada Pāṭha)

The rishi of this mantra is Vishvamitra; the devatā is Savitr; and the chhandas gāyatrī. This is the tenth mantra in the sixty-second sūkta of the third maṇḍala of *Rigveda*. This sūkta comprises eighteen mantra-s, and constitutes the last sūkta in the third maṇḍala, the whole of which is ascribed to the sage Vishvamitra.

The mantra-s 10 to 12 are dedicated to the devatā Savitr, while the others have Indrāvaruṇau, Bṛhaspati, Pūshā, Soma and Mitrāvaruṇau as the devata-s. Excepting the first three mantra-s in this sūkta (which are in the trishṭup-chhandas), the chhandas of the sūkta is gāyatrī. While the seer for the entire sūkta is given as 'gāthino vishvāmitrah', the last three mantra-s are alternately ascribed to the sage Jamadagni.

Vishvāmitra is among the most celebrated sages of the country. He is the ancestor of many families that have continued to this day. Many brāhmaṇa families trace their lineage (*gotra-pravara*) from this sage and his descendents *Madhuchhandas*, *Aghamarshana*, *Kaushika*, *Devarāta* and others. He figures prominently in the epics (*Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*) and in the purāṇas. However, most of the accounts pertaining to him in these works is in the nature of fanciful legends, which are not relevant in the context of *Rigveda*. All that we glean from the Vedic sources is that he belonged to the Gāthi lineage, that he was a contemporary of another illustrious sage Vasishṭha (who is the seer of as many as 104 sūkta-s in *Rigveda*), and that he

adopted Shunahshepa-ājigarti (to whom the hymns 24 to 30 in the first maṇḍala and the third hymn in the ninth maṇḍala in *Rigveda* are ascribed) as his son (hence described as '*kṛtrima vaishvāmitro-devarātaḥ*'). Vishvāmitra himself is the seer of forty-six sūkta-s and a number of other mantra-s in *Rigveda-samhitā*.

The *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Shaunaka gives in the prelude to the third maṇḍala the following details about the seer: The *Anukramaṇī* merely mentions that *Kushika-aushīrathi* desired a son who would be as mighty as Indra and performed austerities for this reason; and his desire was fulfilled when Vishvamitra was born to him.¹

The information given in *Mahābhārata* (*anushāsana-parva*, *dānadharma-parva*, *adhyāya* 4) corroborates with this detail and provides some more particulars. The epic traces Vishvāmitra's lineage to Bharata (*bharatānvaya*), after whom an entire ethnic group or dynasty was named. It was a Kshatriya family, ruling over Kānyakubja. The ancestors of Vishvamitra in that line were Ajamīdha, Jahnu, Sindhu-dvīpa (who was a sage and a seer in his own right), Balākāshva (reputed as a royal sage, '*rājarshi*'), Vallabha (who was popular among the people

¹कुशिकस्त्वौषीरथिरिन्द्रतुल्यं पुत्रमिच्छन् ब्रह्मचर्यं चचार । तस्येन्द्र इव पुत्रो जज्ञे गाथिनो विश्वामित्रः । स तृतीयं मण्डलमपश्यत् ॥

kushiksastvaushīrathirindratulyam putramichchhan brahmacharyam chachār tasyendra iva putro jajne gāthino vishvāmitraḥ sa trutīyam maṇḍalamapashyat

as the very incarnation of righteousness, 'dharma, 'ivāparah'), *Kusha-ushīratha* and *Kushika-aushīrathi*, (who was also Gāthi). This Kushika was valourous like Indra himself ('*sahasrākshadyuti*'), but retired to a jungle-retreat for performing austerities. It was in this retreat that Vishvaratha (who later became famous as Vishvamitra) was born. A daughter was also born to him, Satyavatī by name; and she married the sage Ṛchika, son of the well-known sage Chyavana of the Bhārgava clan.

Vishvaratha, although a scion of a royal family, preferred the life of a sage, and became a seer of mantra-s; he then became known as Gāthina Vishvamitra. His son Madhuchchhandas was also a sage of renown; and the very first sūkta of *Rigveda* is credited to his vision. He is the seer for the first hundred and two mantra-s, and is therefore described as a 'shatarchina'. Vishvamitra's descendents were also some of them eminent sages. Among them were *Akshīṇa* (*Aghamarshaṇa*), *Shakunta*, *Babhrū*, *Yajnavalkya*, *Ulūka*, *Saindhavāyana*, *Gālava*, *Vajra*, *Sālankāyana*, *Nārada*, *Vaksho-grīva*, *Naika-dṛk*, *Ashvalāyana*, *Jābālī*, *Sushruta*, *Karīshi*, *Kapila*, *Sūta*, *Samshrutya*, *Bābhravāyaṇī*, *Bhūti*, *Chāṁpeya*, *Seyana*, *Hiraṇyāksha*, *Ūrjayoni*, and *Udāpekshi*.

The Gāyatrī-mantra that he envisioned is celebrated as Vishvamitra-gāyatrī. This form is distinguished by the accompaniment of the vyāhṛti-s (*bhuh*, *bhuvaḥ* and *suvaḥ*) at the beginning, as distinct from *Brahma-gāyatrī*, which is bereft of the vyāhṛti-s.

The mantra in Rigveda-samhitā (3,62,10) reads:

Samhitā - Pāṭha

तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Gāyatrī-sāra-samgraha identifies the twenty-four letters of the mantra with dieties presiding over the letters (*abhimāni-devatā*) and names of Vishṇu:

1.	त <i>ta</i>	Agni	Keshava
2.	त्स <i>tsa</i>	Prajāpati	Nārāyana
3.	वि <i>vi</i>	Soma	Mādhava
4.	तु <i>tu</i>	Īshāna	Govinda
5.	र्व <i>rva</i>	Savitṛ	Vishṇu
6.	रे <i>re</i>	Bṛhaspati	Madhusūdana
7.	णि <i>ṇi</i>	Paitṛ-deva	Trivikrama
8.	यं <i>yam</i>	Bhaga	Vāmana
9.	भ <i>bha</i>	Aryamā	Shrīdhara
10.	र्गो <i>rgo</i>	Sāvitri	Hṛshīkesha
11.	दे <i>de</i>	Tvashtṛ	Padmanābha
12.	व <i>va</i>	Pūshan	Dāmodara
13.	स्य <i>sya</i>	Indra	Samkarshaṇa
14.	धी <i>dhī</i>	Agni	Vāsudeva
15.	म <i>ma</i>	Vāyu	Pradyumna
16.	हि <i>hi</i>	Mitrā - Varuṇa	Aniruddha
17.	धि <i>dhi</i>	Bhrātṛdeva	Purushottama
18.	यो <i>yo</i>	Vishvedeva	Adhokshaja

19.	यो <i>yo</i>	Vishṇu	Nārasimha
20.	नः <i>naḥ</i>	Vāsava	Achyuta
21.	प्र <i>pra</i>	Tusṭāba	Janārdana
22.	चो <i>cho</i>	Kubera	Upendra
23.	द <i>da</i>	Dasra	Hari
24.	यात् <i>yāt</i>	Brahma	Shrī-Krishṇa

Gāyatrī-tantra (1,214) insists that each letter must be contemplated upon:²

This mantra has Savitr as its devatā.

PADA - PĀṬHA

तत् । सवितुः । वरेण्यम् । भर्गः । देवस्य । धीमहि । धियः । यः । नः ।
प्रचोदयात् ॥

The Sama Veda version is in footnote.³

The chhandas of the mantra is gāyatrī, which has twenty-four letters (akshara or phonemes, varṇa) arranged in three lines, each of which has eight letters. But the first line has only seven letters. So the last letter 'ṇyam' is split into two letters, in

²वर्णानां चिन्तनं ध्यानं सम्यक् पापप्रणाशनम् (*varṇānām chintanam dhyānam samyak pāpapraṇāshanam*)

³Sama Veda (text) (1462) is same as the Samhita Pāṭha of Gāyatrī mantra in RV.

The Sāma Gana called Gayatra- sāma from Kauthuma-shākha:

ओं तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यो भर्गो देवस्य धीमाहि २

धियो यो नः प्रचोद१२१२ही आ२२ दायो आ२३४५ ॥

accordance with a grammatical provision '*vlaṅg sambhaktaṇya-prātyayah*'⁴ Likewise, the third line ends with 'yāt', which is taken as one letter.⁵

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
त	त्स	वि	तु	र्व	रे	णि	यं
भ	र्गो	दे	व	स्य	धी	म	हि
धि	यो	यो	नः	प्र	चो	द	यात्

⁴'in' is the dhātu, vara-ṇyam as chhāndasa-lakṣhaṇa) (cf. also Patanjali (*Mahābhāṣya*, 6,4,76 अचिञ्चु धातुभ्यां प्योरिय डुवडौ ॥ explained as follows: तन्वं पुषेम read as तनुवं पुषेम ।

⁵'ta' is *ākhyāta* or *ach-pratyaya* and therefore not counted as a separate letter

Chapter 5

The three Key phrases, the Word Meanings and the Essence of Mantra-s

The three key-phrases are:

(A) तत् देवस्य सवितुः (*tat devasya savituh*):

(B) वरेण्यं भर्गः धीमहि (*varenyam bhargah dhīmahī*)

(C) यः नः धियः प्रचोदयात् (*yaḥ naḥ dhiyaḥ prachodayāt*)

We will first give the meanings of the ten words here and then consider the 3 phrases.

The words found in the mantra acquire varying nuances of meaning in accordance with the different approaches. No general translation of the mantra in English would therefore be possible or acceptable. This is true of any mantra in *Rigveda-samhitā*. The mantra is expressly stated to belong to the devatā, Savitṛ (hence the name Sāvitrī for the mantra). But it is not addressed directly to the devatā Savitṛ. The word Savitṛ occurs here only in its genitive form, viz. 'savituh' ('of Savitṛ'), the main reference being 'bhargah' ('savituh bhargah').

Meanings of words

(1). *tat*

It can be understood in 3 ways.

(i) *tat* (a relative pronoun) assumed to refer to its corresponding word in the genitive case (possessive case) namely *tasya*. Here it refers to Savituh.

(ii) the relative pronoun could refer to *bhargah* (the effulgence) of Savituh, which is important because it is visible.

(iii) There is a third sense in which 'tat' is taken. It is well-known that the Supreme, absolute, undifferentiated Brahman is designated as तत् (in statements like 'tat tvam asi'; 'tad brahmā', 'tad vāyuh', 'tad iti brahmābhīdhānam'; 'om tat sad iti nirdeshah trividho brāhmaṇas smṛtah', *Bhagavad-gītā*, 17,23, 'tat-shabdo hi brahma vācī prasiddhah' etc.). The suggestive word 'tat' may refer either to Savitṛ (*jagat-preraksya brahma-rūpasya savituh*) or to his 'bharga' (effulgence) (*savituh jagat-prasiddham brahma-rūpa-jyotih*). तत् in this sense is cognate with तत् which signifies pervasion (*vyāpta*), permeated with all auspicious qualities (*guṇaiḥ tatam vyāptam*). The word symbolizes also Agni, or Parashurāma who is the inner ruler of Agni. The word *tat* construed along with Savitṛ would indicate Brahman, who is well-known in scriptures as the inner controller of all beings (*sarvāntaryāmi*), the creator of all beings (*jagat-sraṣṭā*) and the inspirer or prompter (*preraka*).

(2). Savituh

Savitu illumines the world by sun-rise and sun-set, and makes possible all worldly transactions during the course of the day;¹ he provides light and he himself shines ('*dīvyati prakāśhāta iti*'); he abides in the heart of the devotee, and is perceived only there in meditation, which is in reality the upper realms or dyus-sthāna, and plays about in the heart-lotus.²

¹ 'dīvyati udayāstamgamanābhyām loka-yātrām pravartayan deshāntaram yātīti'

² 'dyuloka- vartitvāt, dhyātātāt hṛdayāravinda-madhye krīḍatīti' vā

The word Savitṛ has already been explained in some detail in the earlier chapters.³ Savitṛ procreates (*sūte*) the rains which are the instruments of welfare of all beings (*sakala-jana-nirvṛti-hetum vṛshṭim*), and makes for (*sauti*) the around welfare of his devotees (*'sakala-shreyāmsi dhātṛ-nām'*), (*Yogi-yājñavalkya*).

Savitṛ also inspires his devotees to engage themselves in the right actions and tread the correct path (preraṇā), being the inner controller (antaryāmi).

As the producer of rains (*sūte 'ṇvul tṛchau'*), Savitṛ is responsible also for the production of all beings. (*Jayatīrtha*)

(3). *varenyam*

The word '*varenyam*' (generally meaning excellent, best, most adorable) qualifies '*bhargah*', which signifies effulgence, splendour, lustre, light, power.

(4). *bhargah*

It is derived from the root '*braj*' (meaning "to cook", to ripen", "to heat up", *pake* with the '*asun*' *pratyaya sarvadhātubhya asun*) in accordance with Pāṇini (6.4.47).⁴

The word thus derived acquires the sense of burning up (*'bhrj dāhe'*, '*bhrasja pāka ity asmād asuni rūpam dāhakam tat*'); the reference is to the sins (*sarva-pāpānām*), the misery

³As relevant to the mantra that is being considered, the word's derivation from the root '*shū*' (or '*shu, prasavaishvaryayoh*') in the sense of procreation and lordship, or from the root '*shūng*' (*'prāṇi-garbha-vimochane'*, in the sense of making manifest what is hidden, is frequently referred to.

⁴*'bhrasjoropadhayo ramanyatarasyām' 'iti ropadhayor lopo ramāgamah'*

in life (*duhkhānām*), the tree of transmigration (*samsāra*), darkness of ignorance (*avidyātamah*). As the destroyer of the world, Rudra is called Bharga (*bharjayati jagat samharati*). Bhaṭṭa-bhāskara (*Taittirīya- samhitā-bhāshya* 1,5,6).

And we read in *Yogi- yājñavalkya* that this burning up also means resplendent appearance.

There is the extended sense of burning up the nescience (*avidyā*) which is responsible for the ever-recurrent transmigratory involvement, so that the own-nature of radiance or self-effulgence is brought out. In this sense, the word stands for Brahman, and agrees with the pronoun 'tat' ('*tat bhargah*'). This effulgence is associated with Savitga.

Sāyaṇa also says:⁵

It has been pointed out that the word 'bharga' also has the meanings of '*annam*' (food) and '*dhanam*' (wealth), besides '*tejah*' (splendour, effulgence).

An interesting explanation of the word has its source in *Maitrāyaṇīya-upanishad* (6,7). Bharga here means the sun-god, the lustre of which, according to *Chhāndogya* (1,7,5), is not only in the solar orb but also in eyes of the individual. The visual faculty is made possible by the light within. The sun-god moves by his rays of light.

The same text presents another interpretation, ascribed to the exponents of the Brahman, to the effect that the word 'bharga' really means Brahman. This interpretation takes the letters constituting the word (*bha*, *ra* and *ga*) separately, and shows that each of the three letters has its own meaning.

⁵ '*avidyā-tatkāryayor bharganāt bhargah; svayam-jyotiḥ parabrahmātmakam tejah*'

The letter 'bha' indicates that the worlds are illumined (*bheti bhāsayate lokān*) by the effulgence contained within the solar orb; the letter 'ra' suggests that all beings are made happy (*reti ranjayate prajāh*) by the power of consciousness and bliss inherent in life; and the letter 'ga' indicates that all the creatures are recurrent in their involvement in the transmigratory existence (*ga ityāgachchhate ajasram*): they appear during the moment of creation, and disappear during dissolution.⁶

This is also the explanation justified by etymological considerations offered by Madhvāchārya in his *Rigbhāshya*, except that he takes the letter 'ga' in the sense of knowledge.

Bharga also means food (anna); the devatā Savitr will bestow on the devotee the benefits of abundant food and wealth. In this context, 'dhīmahi' would mean 'may we become recipients of this gift' (*dhārayāmah*).

This 'bharga', which is the supreme effulgence which bestows the bliss of liberation is naturally most eagerly desired and much sought after by all beings who are intent on the higher values of life and emancipation, hence described as 'varṇyam' (*varaṇīyam*).⁷

⁶ ब्रह्मवादिनोऽथ भ इति भासयतीमान् लोकान् (*tejo-maṇḍalāntargata-chit-prakāshena*) र इति रञ्जयतीमानि भूतानि (*prāṇānugata-chidānandātmanā - sukhatmakam karoti*) ग इति गच्छन्ति (*layam prāpnuvanti*) अस्मिन् आगच्छन्ति (*āvirbhavanti prabodha-sṛshtyoh*) अस्मादिमाः प्रजाः (*sthāvarajangamāh*) तस्माद् भरगत्वाद् भर्गः (Maitri Upanishad, 6.7)

⁷ The word *varaṇīyam* is derived from the root 'vṛn' (*varaṇe*, meaning 'to choose', 'to opt for', 'to select') and acquire the *ṇya-pratyaya* (*vṛn ṇyah*, *Upādi-sūtra*, 328, *vṛnoteḥ karmaṇi ṇyah*).

Sāyaṇa explains that the word indicating the solar effulgence is most sought after (*sambnajanīyam*), as something worship-worthy (*upāsyatayā*) and something that must be known perfectly (*jneyatayā*), by all those who are eager to fulfil all the four values of life (dharma, artha, kāma and moksha).⁸ What is most sought after is also the best (*shreshṭam*).

Madhvāchārya (*Rigbhashya*) takes vareṇya in the sense of being worthy of being contemplated upon by all people (*dhyeyokhilair janaih*). And Jayatīrtha (*Rigbhashya-tīkā*) explains that what is most adorable is so because of the excellence of the qualities possessed.

There is another derivation of the word, from the root *vṛjñā* ('to receive' to accept), which emphasizes the sense of grateful acceptance.⁹ There is a third possible interpretation: he, adoring whom, the gods become powerful is vareṇya (from the root *īd stutau*; *varāḥ īshate aneneti*; the gods because of this superior status are known as *varāḥ*).

(5). *deva*

deva is distinguished by the nature of playfulness, luminosity, brilliance, light, and transcendence (from the root '*divu*').¹⁰ He shines with dazzling light in the sky, and is adored by all the gods:

The devā is also a symbol of supreme and uninterrupted happiness, which expresses itself as shining light.¹¹ The happiness is that of the one, undifferentiated and pure consciousness (*akhaṇḍānandaika-rasah*).

⁸ *varaṇīyam sarvair api purushārtha - kāmibhih, mumukshubhih*

⁹ *vṛīyate iti vareṇyah*, with *kṛt-pratyaya nyanta*

¹⁰ *kṛīḍādishu* with *ach-pratyaya*; *dyotana-svabhāvaḥ*; 'devo dyuloka-vartitvāt devanat dipanāt; dīptasya; dīpti-kṛīḍāyuktasya

¹¹ 'devasyeti sarvādyotanātmakā khaṇḍa-chideka-rasah'

'Savitṛ is qualified by 'devaḥ' meaning 'the luminous god') and 'bharga' by 'vareṇyam' (meaning 'most adorable'). The association of 'deva' with 'Savitṛ' is very frequent in *Rigveda-samhitā*; in fact, Savitṛ is rarely mentioned without the epithet 'deva'. The first word of the mantra 'tat' (meaning 'that'), may refer to Savitṛ or to his 'bharga'.

(6). *dhīmahi*

'We contemplate, meditate, settle our thought' on the adorable effulgence of the divinity in Savitṛ.¹² Adorability is of universal relevance (*dhyeyaḥ akhilaḥ*), and the expression is significantly in the sense of prayer by the teacher and his associates.

The word 'dhīmahi' has been taken by some authorities in the sense of worship, service (*upāsmahe; sevām kurmah*). There is also an extended meaning attached to the resolve to contemplate (*dhyāyāmah*). Dhyāna here is the identification of ones own inner being with the self-luminous Brahman as the inner controller.¹³ The foundation for phenomenal existence, but devoid of all involvement with it.

The very implication of the resolve in the expression 'dhīmahi' is that it is only this Brahman as the inner controller (*antaryāmi*) that is worthy of contemplation.¹⁴ This expression occurs with reference to Savitṛ in another mantra of *Rigveda* (5,82,1), which is almost identical with the celebrated Gāyatrī in content as well as import.

¹² *dhyāyema, dhyāyāma, chintayāmah, manasā dhārayāmah*

The word is derived from the root *dhyai* (*chintāyam*) in ling, with *mahing-pratyaya* of *ātmanepada*, first person is in the plural number.

¹³ *soham asmīty anena prakareṇa chintayāmah,*

¹⁴ *dhīmahi iti asya tātpariyam dhyeya iti '.*

(7). *dhiyaḥ*

The key-word in the mantra is 'dhiyaḥ'. Like 'dhīmahi', this word also is derived from the root 'dhyai' (*chintāyam*, with *kvip-pratyaya*, *Vārtika*, 21,51, 'dhyāyateḥ *samprasāraṇam cha*). The original word is, 'dhīh', and it is modified (*halah*) to give the sense of plural number and accusative case. The word has different meanings : knowledge, thoughts, actions, rites. Yāska lists the word under names of knowledge as well as under names of actions ('*dhīriti prajñākarma-nāmasu paṭhitam*'). Thus it suggests not only contemplation with thought - processes but with appropriate rites or actions. It is in this sense that we read in *Taittirīya-upanishad* (2,1) the following:

'One engages himself in actions only after fully understanding, and resolving.'

Sāyaṇa takes this word in the sense of ritualistic actions and thoughts concerning dharma (*karmāṇi dharmādi-vishayā vā buddhih*).

In this sense, 'dhīh' is different from 'manas' (mind or thoughts): it represents a higher view-point or vision, a power to raise the mind to a higher level, which function is peculiarly associated with Savitr. So *Shvetāshvatara-upanishad* (2,1) speaks of this.

(8). *yaḥ (yo)*

'yaḥ', the relative pronoun (masculine) may refer to Savitr, the devatā of the mantra, '*yaḥ Savitā Sūryah*', (Savita as Sūrya) or in the form of 'yat' (neuter) to the 'bharga' of Savitr¹⁵ (Sāyaṇa). The change, in the word's gender (as 'yat') also suggests

¹⁵ *yaḥ iti lingavyatyayah, yad bhargah dhiyaḥ prachodayāt, tad dhyāyema iti samanvayah*

that it should agree with the initial word 'tat': it refers to the Brahman who is the very self of all beings (*pratyag-brahma*).

(9). *naḥ*

The word 'naḥ' means 'for us' (*asmākam*), referring to the individual souls conditioned by their own specific body-mind equipments¹⁶ or to all of us involved in the transactional world.

(10). *prachodayāt*

The expression '*prachodayāt*' literally means: May he prompt us, inspire us, impel us to undertake the ritualistic actions or to entertain good thoughts (*dhiyah*). The root of the word is 'chud' (*preraṇe*) with the prefix 'pra' giving the sense of 'prerayet' (or the form *prerayati*).

Savitṛ or his lustre inspires all our good thoughts and actions in actuality; and so the word is to be construed as '*prochadayati*' (*prerayati*).

Note that the two most important words are *dhimahi* and *prachodayāt*.

The three key phrases

We begin with the Key phrase (B)

B) *vareṇyam bhargah dhīmahi*

We contemplate (*dhīmahi*) on the most adorable (*vareṇyam*) effulgence.

Whose effulgence is it? The answer is in the key phrase A.

A) *tat, devasya savituh*

It is that (*tat*) effulgence of the luminous (*deva*) Savituh. Here we are using *tat* in the sense of *tasya* (genitive case).

¹⁶ *tattad antahkaranādyupādhi-bhinnām jivānām asmākam*

Combining (A) and (B) we get

‘we contemplate upon the most adorable lustre of the deva *savitu*’.

Key phrase C

yah nah dhiyah prachodayāt

Relative pronoun *yah* may refer either to deva *savitu*; or it may refer to the lustre or effulgence (*bharga*) of *Savitu*.

May the deva *savituh* or his effulgence impel (*prachodayāt*) us in our attempts to have the right knowledge and thoughts and to do the appropriate actions.

We focus on the lustre of *Savitu* because this lustre in the form of the rays of Sun is most concrete and visible. *Savitu*, by himself may be abstract.

Chapter 6

Turiya-Pāda (*darshata*)

Although the Gāyatrī mantra has traditionally only three lines (*tri-padā*), each of the lines having eight letters (*ashṭāksharā*), there is also a fourth line, called *turiya-pāda*, which is said to be hidden or unmanifest. This is called ‘*darshata*’, and the source for this reckoning is *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upanishad* (5,14,7)

It represents the spirit (or person) who is hidden in the solar orb (*maṇḍalantargata-purusha*), and who is beyond our normal faculties of knowing. This *pāda* is itself considered a mantra which has liberation as its purpose and it has its own *rishi*, *chhandas* and *devatā*.¹

¹अस्य श्री दार्शतस्य गायत्रीतुरीयपादमहामन्त्रस्य विमलऋषिः, तुरीयं छन्दः, परमात्मा देवता । मोक्षे विनियोगाः ॥

*asya shrī dārshatasya gāyatrīturiyapādamahāmantrasya vimalaṛṣhiḥ
turiyam chhandaḥ paramātmā devatā mokshe viniyogāḥ*

The mantra given in Br. U. (5.14.7) itself runs thus:

Samhitā-pāṭha :

परो रजसेऽसावदोमा प्रापत् ॥

Pada-pāṭha :

परः । रजसे । असौ । अदः । मा । प्रापत् । इति ॥

Meaning: May I attain the yonder World beyond.

The fourth pāda represents the Purusha which is the internal essence or core of the solar orb. It may be noted that Ānanda-tīrtha (Madhvāchārya) who identifies the three pāda-s of Gāyatrī as Shveta-dvīpa, Anantāsana and Vaikuntha respectively, regards the fourth pāda as the heart of all souls (*sarva-jīvanta*). The other three pāda-s are outside the svarūpa of the soul (*svarūpa-bāhya*), while the fourth is the inner controller (*antaryāmi* or *bimba*).

Part – II

Chapter 7

Adhiyajna

This mantra is required to be recited on the sixth day of the ten day ritual known as *dasha-rātra*, a variety of Soma-yāga (*saumika*, one of the three principal varieties of sacrificial rituals, the other two being *ishṭi* and *pashu*).*

Savitṛ, the solar deity is identified ritualistically with Agni as well as Sūrya (*agnir jyotiḥ jyotis sūryaḥ svāhā*). This deity is invoked in the course of the ritual to purify the water meant for ceremonial sprinkling (*prokshaṇe*), kept in the vessel called *agnihotra-havaṇi*¹ or to prevent the offering in the form of powder (*pishṭa*), poured on the deer-skin, from getting blown away² This deity is invoked also for the successful completion of sacrificial ritual being performed by the *devas*³. He it is that facilitates the performance of all ritual actions⁴, where the expression ‘sava’ is in the sense of ‘sati’, “there being the presence of the god Savitṛ, all actions are done”). And all ritualistic praise becomes great and effective when addressed to the all-knowing Savitṛ, the one god that is.⁵ Savitṛ in the context

*The two mantra-s RV (3.62.10) (*Gāyatrī*) and RV (3.62.11) are also recited on the second day of the rituals known as *abhiplaya*, *shashtyaḥ* and *shaḍaha* (in the course of *Vaishvadeva* - *shastra*) (cf. *Āshvatlāyana - shrauta-sūtra* 7,6 ‘*tat saviturvareṇyam iti dve ā vishvadevam*’).

¹Taittirīya-samhitā, 7,2,5 ‘*devo vaḥ savitotpunātu*’,

²*ibid*, 5,8 ‘*devo vas savitā hiraṇya-pāṇiḥ pratigrhṇātu*’

³TS (1,1,12) ‘*devasya savitā hvayati deva-yajyāyai*’

⁴TS (1,1,9) ‘*devasya savituḥ save karma kṛṇvanti*’

⁵*ibid.*, 1,2,13 ‘*vayunāvid eka in mahī devasya savituḥ parishṭutih*’

of yajna performances is the inner controller (*antaryāmi*) and prompter (*preraka*) dwelling in the heart of the sacrificing priest (*adhvaryu*), as well as the inspirer and purifier of all things on earth.

Savitṛ is the deity who is frequently invoked in the fire-ritual known as agnishtoma, which follows the course of the year. During this ritual, the cake-offering called puroḍāsha is specially made over to Savitṛ in twelve kapālas, representing the twelve months of the year.⁶ In fact, the dvādashāha-yajna (which is a satra) is the prototype of the year (Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa, 1,1,6,7 'samvatsara-pratimā vai dvādasa-rātrayah') and is conducted at the end of the year; the gods are supposed to take up residence here in this period. The Vaishvadeva-shastra begins with the adoration of the deity Savitṛ with the offering of a *graha* for him (Sāvitrā-graha), where all the seasons of the year are represented.⁷ In the ashvamedha-yajna, oblations to Savitṛ are offered every day of the entire year.

The yājñika-s conceived Savitṛ as a visible representation of the year. In the centre of the place assigned for *uttara-vedi* (north altar) on the sacrificial ground, a peg is driven on the earth, and a circle is drawn around this peg, the size of a normal chariot-wheel. This circle represents Savitṛ⁸ And the construction of the altar involves the bricks (*ishṭakas*), symbolic of fifteen days of the *pūrva-paksha* (the first half of the month) or of the *apara paksha* (the latter fortnight), or directly twelve earlier and later fortnights.

⁶cf. *Shatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, 12,7,2,19 'dvādasha-kapālaḥ sāvitrō bhavati; dvādasha vai māsāḥ samvatsarasya'; also *Taittirīya-samhitā*, 1,8,10,1 'Savitṛe satyaprasavāya puroḍāsham dvādasha-kapālam āshūnām vihiṇām.

⁷cf. *Shatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, 4,4,1,3 'esha vai savitā ya esha tapati; esha veva sarva- ṛtavas tad ṛtavaḥ samvatsarah'

⁸'sarovataḥ parimaṇḍalam ratha-chakra-mātram savitāram parilikhya'

Savitṛ is also involved in the Soma-yajna, where he is invoked to inspire the stones used in crushing the Soma-leaves to produce in profusion the ritual-juice RV (10.175.1), and alongside this impelling the stone, is also a prayer to inspire the priest who is engaged in this task (RV (10,175.4).

It may also be mentioned here that Savitṛ is the deity who is especially associated with all acts of yajna, (RV 4,54,2 and 3,54,11). *Shatapatha-brāhmaṇa* (6.3,1,19-21) identifies Savitṛ with the sun-god Āditya, and describes him as the impeller or inspirer of all effective rituals.

This is a prayer to Savitṛ to expedite and lead to early and successful completion of the ritual that is undertaken; and is preceded by the formula in *Vājasaneyi-samhitā* (11,7).

Savitṛ is the chief of all the rituals that the gods and human beings engage themselves in ; for he purifies the mind of the performers and impells them to move along in the right direction. It is he who gives the command for sacrificial offerings to be made three times during the day, and rules over the 'vidatha' in whose sacrificial jurisdiction (sava) all the gods rejoice.⁹ He is himself looked upon as a sacrificer (celestial householder, *karṭṛ*) and also as a prompter and impeller (*chodayitr*). All the gods follow him.¹⁰

The sacrificial rites are said to take place only at the command of this deity ('*devasya savituḥ prasave*'), who is implored to accomplish the enterprise successfully (*Taittirīya-samhitā*, 4,1,1).

⁹(RV 3,54,11) '*hiraṇya-pāṇiḥ savitā su-jihvas trir ādivo vidatha patyamānah*'

¹⁰(RV 2,38,9; 5.81,3; and 10,100,1) '*devebhir nas savitā prāvatu*'

Chapter 8

Adhi-Daivata View

The deity Savitṛ is in the Rigvedic hymns (especially in 5.81 and 5.82 and 4.53) identified with Agni as well as Sūrya. Savitṛ is sometimes described as the uplifted rays of the sun¹ or the ascending flames of Agni (as in 4,6.2 'ūrdhvam ketum'). In *Shatapatha-brāhmaṇa* (5,3,1,7), Savitṛ is the progenitor of all the gods.² The Ṛbhūs are explained as the rays of Sun. They receive adoration and oblation in the course of the Vaishvadeva-shastra where the pitṛ-devata-s (or the manes) and the Vishvedevas including Savitṛ and Ṛbhūs are invoked. They are assigned to the third savana in agnishtoma-ritual, where Savitṛ receives a graha-offering in the company of their disciples (*antevāsa*), the Ṛbhus. It is only impelled by Savitṛ that the gods are said to have prepared the third savana (*Aitareya-brāhmaṇa*, 3,29). Savitṛ thus is not only a god of light, but a vivifier and impeller.

It is interesting to note that Savitṛ is also associated with the cult of ancient Fathers. The Vaishvadeva-shastra in honour of Savitṛ makes the first offering to the manes (*pitṛ-devatā*, ancestral spirits). RV (10,17,4) speaks of the god Savitṛ as looking after the spirits of departed good folk.

Atharvaveda (12,2,40) describes Savitṛ as the ship for the departing spirits.

¹ as in 4,13,2 'ūrdhvam bhānum savitā devo ashred'

² *savitā vai devānām pra-savitā*; also in *Taittirīya samhitā*, 1,1,9 'savitā vai devānām prasavitedam'

The expression '*amati*' (meaning manifestation, image, vision, likeness, form, cf *Nighaṇṭu*, 3,7, '*rūpam*') is often used exclusively with Savitr. (cf. RV 3,38,8; 7,38,1 and 2; 7,45,3). Savitr is thus the visible representation of divine power, force and majesty. He is in this sense closely associated with Tvashtṛ, the fashioner of all forms, and with Vishvakarmā, the maker of all things. Yāska interestingly includes Savitr among the divinities of the middle realm (*madhyama-sthāna*) and also among those of the upper realms (*dyus-sthāna*). In the former case, he is classed among Tvashtṛ, Vishvakarma, Tārkshya, Agni, Prajāpati and Ahirbudhnya (cf. *Nirukta* to, 3 and 4). In the latter case, he is mentioned alongside Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Varuṇa, Vaishvānara, Āditya and Vishvedeva-s (ibid, 12, 2-4).

Yāska explains that the word Savitr has the major meaning of 'progenitor of all things'³. The root of the word '*shū*' is taken in the sense of procreation and power ('*prasava ishvaryayah*'); the dhātu gets the tṛṇ pratyaya and thus has the avādesha-guṇa). Yāska 'illustrates the meaning in terms of '*dadhikrāh*', who, like Sūrya, pervades, spreads and holds the different things and beings. He cites RV (10,149,1) to the effect that Savitr, as the devatā of the middle region, holds in perfect control⁴ the earth, keeping it stable (*sthīrām akarat*), and holds aloft the sky without a visible support (*askambhane*).

The reference here is to the beneficial rains which sustain the people.⁵ This is the power (*bala*) of Savitr, which makes him the

³*Nirukta*, 10,31 '*savitā sarvasya prasavitā*'.

⁴*aramṇāt, ramṇātiḥ samyamana-karmā*

⁵Durgāchārya, '*varshopakāreṇa pṛthivī-lokavāsino dhārayati; tad asyāḥ samyamanam*'

most effective devatā of the middle realm (having control over the earth-realm as well as the upper realm). And in the words of Yāska, which other devatā of the middle realm can be so powerful?⁶ He is associated with the clouds, the mind and the earth. The seer of this hymn RV (10.14.9) is Archan, the son of the sage Hiranya-stūpa who too was a devotee of Savitṛ.⁷ Hiranya-stūpa means the monumental pillar of gold which is lustrous, or a braid of golden locks, and has an obvious reference to the sun-god; and Savitṛ is but an aspect of this god,⁸ He is of the same form or of the same function.

Yāska cites in this context (10,34) another mantra from RV (3,55,19), identifying Savitṛ, with Tvashṭṛ. The seer of this mantra is Vishvamitra's son Prajāpati (Prajāpatiḥ Vaishvāmitra); and 'prajāpati' literally means the procreator and protector of all beings (identical thus with Savitṛ). Tvashṭā is the provider of all form,⁹ and in this he is the most skillful among the skilled (10,53.9. 'apasām apastamo'). He projects the earth and the sky alike (10,110,9), and in this function he is closely associated with Savitṛ. He represents fertility in creation.¹⁰ He is juxtaposed with earth and sky (10,46,9) and with Savitṛ (9,81,4). The earth is described as having all forms and shapes (vishva-rūpa) (cf. also AV 12,1,11), and this Vishva-rūpa is the chariot on which Savitṛ as Tvashṭṛ rides, and protects all beings that he has brought into being.

⁶ *'kam anyam madhyamā devam avakshyat'*

⁷ *'archan nāmā hairanya-stūpa-rishih'*

⁸ cf. Yāska: *'ādityo pi savitā uchyate'*

⁹ RV (10,184,1) *'tvashṭā rūpāni pimshatu' 'tvashṭā rūpānām janitā'*

¹⁰ hence called as *retodhā*, *bhūri-retas*, *su-retas* and *puru-retas*

Savitṛ is to be viewed as the god of light, who combines in himself the functions of a 'vivifier' and 'impeller'. In the Vedic texts, the Savitṛ's 'sava' (creative sacrifice) is frequently mentioned (as, for instance, in RV, 5,81.2), which is addressed to Savitṛ by the seer Syavasva-ātreya).

But this 'sava' is one of infusing energy and life, of waking the being up to his role in existence and guiding him along. The deities of Sūrya's realm, mentioned in *Bṛhad-devatā* (2,12), are all engaged in the self-same task : the Ādityas, Keshins, Sādhyas, Savitṛ, the Vasus, Manu, and Dadhyāṅ-ātharvaṇa. They all 'propel', 'impel' (prasauti), while illumining. Savitṛ along with Tvashtṛ, and Prajāpati, the god of gods, invites all the shining gods, and confers on them immortality (ibid., 12.62).

Bṛhad-devatā (2,61-62) expressly gives Savitṛ as the name of Sūrya in his aspect of dawn. It is Savitṛ that is responsible for bringing forth the sun-god who causes the day; he dispells darkness and makes dawn appear. It is Savitṛ's own light that flashes forth and spreads all over, illumining the worlds.

It is Savitṛ alone (*ekah*) that has the power to propel, impell, inspire and flash forth (*pra-sauti*). In this role as an usherer of dawn as the prelude to the day, the solar-spirit is called Savitṛ (the propeller, impeller, vivifier). The same Savitṛ, as the morning breaks after dawn illumining all the worlds that are there, is called Bhaga the morning sun by the sage Vasishṭha.

In the same manner, the Solar-spirit is called by different names signifying several aspects and functions: Pūshan (for he nourishes all beings on earth as well as the earth itself, by driving away darkness,¹¹ by the sage Bharadvāja (RV 6,53-56

¹¹ 'pushyan kshitim poshayati pra-ṇudan rashmibhis tamam'

and 58); he is called Vishṇu by Medhatithi (as he envelops and permeates all the three worlds)¹². He is called Keshi (for he makes for daylight by his splendid rays),¹³ he is called Vishvānara (for he is perceived by each of the beings in a distinctive way),¹⁴ and Vṛshākapi (for he becomes red and ascends the sky like a bull, 'vṛshaisha kapilo bhūtvā yan nākam adhirohati'). The Vedic mantra-s adore him by these and other names; and the divinities of the upper-realm (*dyus-sthāna*) are all in essence the solar-spirit.

Sāyaṇa mentions that Savitṛ is the deity who presides over the daylight after the appearance of dawn and before the emergence of Sun (RV 10,139,1).

But he explains the expressions Sūrya and Savitṛ alike as the deity that impells all beings.¹⁵ The mantra that he comments upon says that Pūshan, all knowing (the nourishing aspect of the sun-god), who is also the protector of all beings (*gopāh*), moves about in the mid-region, looking at (*viz.* permeating with his rays) all the worlds (and their inhabitants); and the seer ascribes this ability to the inspiration of Savitṛ (*tasya prashave*), who although arises in the East illumines all quarters alike.

Savitṛ by, implication, is the ground on which the sun's rays take shape, the prior condition for the sun-rise at dawn, and immediately succeeding the darkness of the night. Another mantra (1,25,1) invokes Savitṛ soon after invoking the night.¹⁶

¹² *idam vishnum vichakrame (1.22.1)*

¹³ *prakāsham kiraṇaiḥ kurvan'*

¹⁴ *sampratyakaikashas-tvenam yan manyante pṛthang-narāḥ'*

¹⁵ *sūryasya sarvasya prerakasya ādityasya'; 'savitā sarvāsya prerako devaḥ'*

¹⁶ *hwayāmīrātrīm jagato niveshanīm, hwayāmi devam savitāram ūtaye'*

The same mantra mentions Agni as the light of the night-time. Savitṛ, in other words, is the original form of Sūrya, and Sūrya is the more developed form of Savitṛ. Savitṛ in this sense is both unmanifest (*avyakta*) and manifest (*vyakta*); night is unmanifest and daylight (*Sūrya*) is manifest.

As mentioned earlier, the divinity specifically known as Savitṛ is intimately associated with the Vishve-devas (all-gods). In RV (10,36,13), the Vishve-devas are said to partake of the functions of observances (*sava*, 'ye *savitus satya-savasya*'). And Savitṛ is adored exclusively in a sūkta ascribed to the Vishvedevas (10,36,14): Savitṛ is in front of us, behind us, above us and beneath us; he is the one god that is capable of fulfilling all our heart-felt desires, and bestowing on us long life.

This all-pervading character of Savitṛ is eulogized also in RV (10,139, 2).

[Mantra-s exclusive praise of Savitṛ are to be found in many mantra-s of Rigveda-Samhitā. Illustrations are 1,24,5; 2,38; 4,53 and 54; 5,81-82; 6,50-9, and 71;7,38,45 and 66; 10,36,1 14;139,149].

The three lines of the Gāyatrī in the Vaishṇava ideology are said to represent the three realms of Viṣṇu each signifying also a form of Viṣṇu, and a form of Sūrya:

1. तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं - Shveta-dvīpa - Aniruddha - Vāsudeva regulating the outer body of the devotee - All-pervading form (*sarva-gata-rūpa*) - Sūrya as revealed in *Rigveda*.

2. भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि - Anantāsana - Pradyumna - Vāsudeva regulating the heart (*hṛdgata*) - The spirit inside the Sun. (*Sūryāntargata-rūpa*) - Sūrya as revealed in *Yajurveda*.

3. धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् - Vaikunṭha - Samkarshaṇa - Vāsudeva regulating and supporting the own-form of the soul (*jīva-svarūpa-deha*) - The spirit inside the soul (*jīvāntargata-rūpa*) - Sūrya as revealed in *Sāmaveda*.

This is also an adhyātma approach inasmuch as it holds, as can be seen from the above account, that Gāyatrī represents the soul's structure and constitution. We read in *Gāyatrī-tantra* (2,16):¹⁷

Gāyatrī is essentially symbolic (*sanketavidyā*) and formulates the Supreme Reality ('*para-brāhma - nirūpaṇe*') (ibid., 2,152).

¹⁷ यत्र तिष्ठति गायत्री तत्रैव ह्यात्मनः स्थितिः *yatra tiṣṭhati gāyatrī tatraiva hyātmanah sthitiḥ*

Chapter 9

Adhyātma view and the role of Soma

There is in the tenth maṇḍala of Rigveda a hymn (149th) that is especially associated with the god Savitr.¹ As already mentioned, the seer of this hymn Archan was the son of another celebrated seer Hiranya-stūpa (son of yet another important seer Angirasa, from whose family there were more than forty seers of Rigvedic mantra-s). Archan, whose devotion to Savitr earned him the name Savitārchan, recalls his parent's devotion to the god Savitr (10,149,5), and resolves to follow his model.

He makes here a reference to Hiranya-stūpa's hymns RV (1,31-35) addressed to Savitr, and hymns (9,4 and 9.69) addressed to Soma-pavamāna (a total of seven sūkta-s seen by Hiranya-stūpa, consisting altogether of 91 riks). It is interesting to note that both father and son, who are devotees of Savitr, mention Soma along with Savitr. The father has sought Soma to lead him to Sūrya², and the son resolves to be awake with regard to the role of Soma in his own adoration to Savitr³ where 'amshu' means the rays, the nature, or lustre, indicating the role, impact or involvement). And the father thinks of Soma in terms of light (*jyoti*), bliss (*svar*), strength (*daksha*), wisdom (*kratu*) and protection (*ūti*) (cf. 9,4,1 and 3); Soma it is that procures for us the wealth of earth as well as heaven (ibid, rik 7 'dvibarhasam rayim').

Elsewhere in the Rigvedic corpus, the all-knowing Soma is said to be responsible for the brilliance of the sun-god,⁴ and for

¹ 'Savitṛ-pratipādaka hairanyastūpa-mantra'; 'savitārchan-hairanyastūpas Savitram iti' Sāyaṇa

² (or Savitr) (9,4,5 'tvam sūrye na ā bhaja')

³ above, 'somasyevāmshum prati jāgarāham',

⁴ (9,28,5 'esha Sūryam arochayat pavamāno vicharshiṇih'),

the ascent of the sun-god to the higher realms;⁵ he is hailed as the protector of Brahmā (6,52,3 '*brāhmaṇas soma gopam*'), the procreator, and king of the worlds⁶ the owner of the sun-god and all the celestial luminaries⁷ bestower of infinite riches (5,47,3 '*samudro*') and omniscient ruler.⁸

In the very sūkta which contains the Gāyatrī mantra ascribed to Savitṛ, we have the two mantra-s (3.62.14 and 3.62.15) which also extol Soma. Soma is invoked to provide us and our beasts with food, that is free from danger and disease.

Soma is also invoked to prolong our lives by driving away whatever obstructs and threatens.

That Savitṛ is closely associated with Soma becomes thus evident.

What then is Soma? We will have occasion to deal with the problem of Soma in some detail when introducing the ninth maṇḍala, which is exclusively devoted to the devatā, Soma-pavamāna. Suffice it to mention here that the different senses in which Soma is taken in the Vedic context indicate different approaches: the plant (*ādhibhautika*), the drink (*adhi-yajna*), moon (*adhi-daivata*) and mind (*adhyātma*). It is to be noted that in the Rigvedic passages, Sūrya and Soma are always intimately associated with each other: Soma shining along with the sun,⁹ Soma purifying himself and running in the atmosphere along with the sun-god;¹⁰ Soma ascending the sun's

⁵(9,107,7, '*a Sūryam rohaya divi*');

⁶(9,97,40,; '*janayan prajā bhuvānasya rājā*'),

⁷(9,86,29 '*tava jyotīmshi pavamāna Sūryah*');

⁸Kāthaka-brāhmaṇa, 7,10, '*somo rājā vichakshaṇas chandramāh*'

⁹(9,2,6 '*sam sūryeṇa rochate*'),

¹⁰(9,27,5 '*esho sūryeṇa hāsate adhi dyavi*');

chariot¹¹ and Soma's brilliance moves unto the sun-god's.¹² The moon is as antagonistic to the darkness of night as the sun is¹³ it is the light in the night. The lightning born of the waters in the cloud (*apām napāt*) is a form of Agni, and is the abhimāni-devatā of Soma. It opens up the gates of understanding with insight and radiant eyes¹⁴ Soma is described frequently as bright, fascinating and luminous (*aruṇa*, *babhru*, *shoṇa* and *hari*, cf. 9,114; 8,29,1; 9,78,4 and 9,107,19, etc.).

The moon's association with mind, wisdom and insight is well-known in Vedic literature. There is the famous mantra (RV, 10,90,13) which makes the moon an offspring of the Spirit's mind, even as the sun was born from the spirit's eyes.¹⁵ The juxtaposition of mind with Chandra, eyes with Sūrya, vital current with Vāyu, and brilliance with Agni is also famous (AV, 19,43). And of the pair, if the Sungod is the eye of the gods, the moon-god is the eye of the ancient Fathers¹⁶ If one is the sight, the other is insight. He is also the eye (9,5,4, '*ekam akshi vāvṛdhuḥ*'). The moon (Soma) is described as the parent of all mind-processes (cf. 9,76,4 '*pitā matīnām* : 9,96,5 '*janitā matīnām*'), the leader of thoughts and protector of wisdom¹⁷ and the master of mind (9,75,2 '*manasas patih*'); he is the true and never failing knower of all things here and beyond; hidden

¹¹ (9,75,1, '*ā Sūryasya ...adhi....ratham....aruhat*');

¹² (9,100,8 '*chitrebhir yasi rashmibhiḥ*').

¹³ (9,108,12 '*pratapam jyotishā tamah*');

¹⁴ (9,86,23 and 9,102,8 '*soma gotram angirobhyo-vṇor apa*').

¹⁵ ('*chandramā manaso jātah, chakshos sūryo ajāyata*').

¹⁶ Maitrāyaṇī-samhitā, 4,2,1 '*asau vā āditya devānām chakshuh, chandramā vai pitṛṇam chakshuh*'

¹⁷ (9,76,4, '*netā matīnām patir dhiyah*'),

and revealed (manīshi, medhira, vipra, vishvavid, dhīra, kratu-vid and kavi-kratu). He is the lord of all speech.¹⁸ He is also the soul of sacrifices, the lord of the sacrificers, and the assigner for gods their shares in the yajna.¹⁹

In all these references, Soma represents the evolved, well-ordered, profound and far-reaching mind, the mind that helps us have the vision of Savitṛ, the hidden aspect of Sūrya (or the sun-god) that vivifies all things and impels all beings to their respective functions. It is the sure source of inspiration.²⁰ It is only in the sense of being the mind that Soma is described as the 'abiding, efficient and over-reaching power of the sense-functions, (9,85,2 '*daksho devānām asi*'), and as the very soul of sense-function²¹ the secrets of all the sensations are laid bare by the shining Soma.²²

The seer Archana described in (10,149,3) that Soma as 'the' other- principle' ('*anyad abhavaṭ*', Sāyaṇa, "*anyat Savitṛ-vyatiriktam idam devatāntaram*") which came into being at the instance of, and subsequent to (*pashchā*), the Savitṛ, and became adorable and worthy of worship (*yajatram*, Sāyaṇa "*yashtavyam*"). The mythical bird of golden wings, Suparṇa (or Garutamān), which is said to have brought Soma from immortal and high heavens to the firmament, was the first offspiring of Savitṛ, acting without doubt in perfect accordance with Savitṛ's

¹⁸ *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa*, 6,3,3 '*vāg vai subrahmaṇyā, tasyai somo rāja vatsah*'

¹⁹ (10,85,19, '*bhāgam devabhyo vidadhātyāyan*')

²⁰ *preraṇā*, cf. 9,85,2 '*asmāntsamaye pavamāna chodaya*'

²¹ (9,85,3, '*ātmendrasya bhavasi dhāsir uttamah*');

²² (9,95,2, '*devo devānām guhyāni nāmāvishkṛṇoti*').

own nature ('*asya anu dharma*'). Suparṇa is also often identified with Soma (e.g., 9,81,2; 9,97,7; 9,108,3, etc.). This is a figurative manner of indicating the inspired mind, which is Soma, and the source of such inspiration, Savitr̥.

It is by the restraining instruments such as the Soma (viz. disciplined, profound and inspired mind, described in the mantra, 10,149,1 as '*yantraiḥ*') that Savitr̥ establishes the earth (*pr̥thivīm*) firmly easily and happily, and holds aloft the high heavens (*dyām*) that is devoid of all visible supports²³. Savitr̥ also has settled in the mid-region, beyond interference from ought (*atūrte*, "*kenapy ahimsite*"), Soma (viz. mind) called here '*samudra*' (meaning not only ocean and cloud, but ever-active mind). Soma is described as '*samudra*' in several passages in *Rigveda* (e.g. 5,47,3; 9,86,29 '*tvam samudra asi vishvavit-kave*'; 9,97,40) in the sense of being the bestower in profusion of riches; the reference is to a vast, almost infinite, field in which mind operates creatively and incessantly. The image of an unruly impetuous horse also is significantly presented²⁴

It is important to note that the earth which is firmly established by Savitr̥ (10,149,1) symbolizes matter, and the heavens which Savitr̥ holds aloft without any other support is spirit. And in between the two is midregion, where Savitr̥ has settled Soma ('*atūrte baddham savita samudram*' (10.149.1)). This is obviously the mind, which is guided on the right path by Savitr̥ (who is therefore called '*sunītha*', '*sushtu netā*' 1,35,10).

²³ askambhane, "*patana-pratibandhakam ālambanam, tad-rahite*

²⁴ *ashvam ivādhukshat dhunim*' (10.149.1)

Savitṛ, in association with this Soma, is variously described as 'asura' (giver of life, 'prāṇa-dātā'), 'vi-suparṇa' (possessor of splendid forms), 'svāvān' (with unending possessions), 'vicharshaṇī' (knower of all), 'chitra-bhānu' (glorious and multitudinous in expression), 'hiraṇya-pāṇi' (golden-handed), 'yajata' (adorable) 'gabhīra-vepā' (inscrutable in his ways) and 'sumṛlika' 'provider of great happiness' (all in the hymn of Hiranya-stūpa, RV, 1,35). Archan, the son of the Hiranyastūpa, has in his mind this picture when he speaks of 'somasyeva amshum' (10,149,5) when he resolves to be firm in his adoration of the devatā Savitṛ.

Yāska, in the course of his interpretation of the mantra (RV, 5,81,2) dedicated to the devatā Savitṛ, takes the adhyātma approach. Savitṛ is the seer (kavi in the sense of 'medhāvi', Nighaṇṭu, 3,15,10) one who cognizes alike the past, present and future, the seer of the beyond, omniscient. The forms that he releases, or flashes forth, are the thought-processes; they are brought to light from the womb of obscurity or darkness. They are shown up by Savitṛ for the welfare of all beings, bipeds as well as quadrupeds. He becomes most adorable (vareṇya), when he 'inspires us to move upwards towards the heavens (viz.the spirit). Below is the passage containing Yāska's comments (12,13), with Durgāchārya's annotations within brackets.

Savitṛ is hailed as the most real, source of all order and true-principle (satya-dharmā, RV, 10,34,8); and in this sense he is one with Varuṇa, who represents the cosmic order (ṛta, cf.RV 2,38,2; 3,33,6; 4,53,4; 10,34,8; 10,139,3; and 10,85,24). The

human beings must follow the course of Savitr and accomplish his task (AV, 6,23,3):

However, he is not to be looked upon only as a devatā symbolized by the solar orb and as the sun-god who has created the world and who is preserving it;²⁵ he is the very soul (or self) of all that moves and all that stays in the world.²⁶ He is the sight of the human beings who can see (nṛchakshā), and he abides in the midst of the heart-sky, filling with his presence and illumines the earth as well as the atmosphere and the higher realms (10,139,2).

Savitr is really ones own self, vivifying the body, the sense-functions and the mind, providing the wealth for total welfare; and lighting up all the thoughts, resolves and aspirations. He is the one spirit that prompts all our actions, and inspires all our efforts (*sū prerāṇe*). He releases functions and actions from their unmanifest states (*shūṅg, prāṇi-garbha-vimochane*).

It may be recalled that *Gāyatrī-tantra* (2,152) suggests that the mantra dedicated to Savitr is essentially symbolic, it formulates the nature of one's own self and also the nature of the Supreme Spirit (Brahman).

²⁵(RV 4,53,6) 'bṛhat-sumnaḥ prasavītā niveshano jagatah'

²⁶(RV 1,115,1) 'Sūrya ātmā jagatas tasthushaḥ cha'

Chapter 10

Gāyatrī in the Upanishads

There is an esoteric interpretation of Gāyatrī given in the *Bṛhadāranyaka-upanishad* (5.14.1-6), focussing attention on upāsana.

(1) The first pāda of Gāyatrī, consisting of eight letters, is bhūmi, (2 letters); antariksha (4 letters) and dyauh (2 letters), which are the three realms (loka).

(2) The second pāda consists of eight letters, referring to the three branches of learning (*vidyā*): rik (2), yajūmshi (4), sāma (2):

(3) The third pāda consists of eight letters, signifying the three vital currents in the living human body (*prāṇa*): prāṇa (2), apāna (3), vyāna (*vi-yāna*) (3).

(4) If these are the three pādas of the classical Gāyatrī-chhandas, there is a fourth pāda, which is mystical in import, in the Gāyatrī-mantra. This refers to Savitṛ or the solar person (*maṇḍala antargata-puruṣha*), who comes to light, or becomes visible, in the heart of the devotee (hence called 'darshata'). This is the transcendental presence, beyond the three worlds (*paro rajasā*), and illumining the worlds (*tapati*), lording (*ādhipatya-bhāvena*) over them. This pāda also may be taken to have eight letters: paro (2), rajas (2), ya (1), tapati (3). The Gāyatrī of three pādas in fact rests on this fourth pāda (pratishtita). This is how it is established in the real (satye).

(5) The real (satya) is Savitṛ, for it is the very essence of all things with form and without form, of the world of living beings and material things:

(6) Gāyatrī is explained as the protector of the vital currents and sense-faculties (*prāṇah*)

The formation of the word 'Gāyatrī' is from the two constituents : (i) 'gavaḥ' (the prāṇas or the vital currents and all sense-faculties including mind), and

(ii) 'tattre' (it protects, saves, preserves) ('*gayāns tattre, tasmad Gāyatrī nama*).

In fact, Gāyatrī is itself the prāṇa, and in prāṇa all the divinities (the spirits activating the faculties) become one; and so do all knowledge, action and the consequences thereof. Being the prāṇa, Gāyatrī is the very self of all phenomenal existence (*jagatah ātmā*).

Thus Gāyatrī has four pādas; and a pāda is etymologically significant as that which moves, goes, activates, and enlivens (*padya*). If all this is conditioned by the worlds, branches of learning, the vital currents and the spirit which is transcendental, there is another aspect to the mantra which is not so conditioned (hence called '*apad*') and this is Savitṛ in its real nature, unconditioned by aught, and altogether unapproachable. For the devotee therefore, the fourth pāda (*darshata*) is worthy of worship and contemplation.

Another early Upanishad, *Chhāndogya* (3,12,1) (quoted in P. 3) also refers to this mantra. Gāyatrī signifies all beings, past, present and future. It is vāk, representing the vital currents (*prāṇa*). It is speech (*vāk*) in the sense of recitation of the mantra (*gayatī*), which recitation facilitates protection of the one who recites (*trāyate*):

(2) Gāyatrī is the very earth (*pr̥thivī*), which is the foundation for all beings and all things; no being or thing can

ever go beyond the earth. All beings and things are indeed related to the earth, by having been established on it.

(3) The earth (*pṛthivī*) is represented by the human body, on which are established all the vital currents and sense-functions, and which they do not ever transcend.

(4) When the human body is referred to as the very foundation, the heart (*hṛdaya*) is what is actually meant, for all the vital currents and sense-functions are in fact established in the heart of a being.

Gāyatrī therefore represents the heart-lotus, which is in the centre of being.

(5) Gāyatrī has four pādas, and is of six kinds. The four pādas suggest six letters in each pāda, thus making a total of twenty-four letters, characteristic of the Gāyatrī-chhandas. The six kinds of the mantra refer to (i) *vāg* (speech); (ii) *bhūta* (living beings), (iii) *pṛthivī* (earth); (iv) *śarīra* (body); (v) *hṛdaya* (heart), and (vi) *prāṇa* (vital currents).

(6) This idea is derived from a mantra in Rigveda (10,90,2), well-known as Purusha-sūkta, where the majesty of the Purusha (viz. Savitṛ) is described: all that exists, as the phenomenal and transactional world is but one quarter of this Purusha; and three quarters of him are in the upper realms, beyond our ken or reach:

(7) This Savitṛ or Purusha is in fact the Brahman, the supreme and absolute spirit, who is settled in the heart of all beings, causing the three states of existence; wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. He is complete and perfect in the last state.

Appendices

1. The Text of Rig Veda and its Recensions
2. The Gāyatrī Mantra of Rishi Ātreya
3. Methods of Chanting

1. The Text of Rigveda and its Recensions

Rigveda-samhita constitutes a collection of single stanzas or verses called *riks* (*ṛchām samūho vedaḥ Rigvedaḥ*). The expression 'rik' etymologically means praise or eulogy (*stutyarthā ṛch dhātu*, in *sampadādigaṇa* with *kvip-pratyaya*).

Nirukta (2.23) gives it as one of the fifty-seven synonyms of 'vāk' (word, expression). It is closely associated with the word 'svara' (*svaryate anayā*, "the gods are invited by it"), which is inspired by the life principle (*prāṇa*) while uttering.

Another synonym 'sarasvati' means the speech at the *mādhyamika* level (*sṛ gatyarthe, mādhyamikā vāk*). A rik is thus different from ordinary speech (called *vaikharī*); and is nearer to the visions in trance (*pashyantī*).

The text of *Rigveda-samhitā*, that is presented here follows what is known as the *Shākala* (or *Shākalaka*) recension. It is one of the two major recensions that has had a wide-spread appeal through the centuries in the country. And there are ancient and mediaeval '*anukramanīs*' (tables of content, indices of mantra-s, anuvāka-divisions, the rishis responsible for the mantra-s, the devata-s that are eulogized and invoked in the mantra-s, the *chhandas* or metrical forms assumed by the mantra-s, and other particulars regarding the chanting and practical employment of

the mantra-s) concerning the *Shākala* recension of the Rigvedic corpus. The oldest and the most authentic of these 'anukramaṇis' are those by Shaunaka, who is credited with having prepared ten works meant exclusively to preserve the tradition of Rigveda ('*shaunakīya dashā-grantha-s tadā Rigveda-guptaye*'). This Shaunaka is also the author of *Bṛhad-devatā*; Kātyāyana, his student, has compiled a comprehensive and extensively informative *anukramaṇi*, known as *Sarvānukramaṇi*. This work, with an excellent gloss on it by Shadguru Shishya (a vṛtti called *Vedārtha-dīpika*), whose date is given as 1187 A.D., has been in the main utilized here for providing the preliminary particulars. About this work, details will be given later.

Tradition holds that there as many as twenty-one recensions for *Rigveda-samhita*. Patanjali, for instance, explicitly states so (*Mahābhāshya, paspashāhnika*):

एकविंशतिधा बाहृच्यम् (*ekvimshatidhā bāhruchyam*)

Charaṇa-vyūha, which accepts this estimate, enumerates five main divisions: (1) *Shākala*, (2) *Bāshkala*, (3) *Shāṅkhāyana*, (4) *Muṇḍukeya*, and (5) *Āshvalayana*. Each of these divisions, barring the last, had five branches (*shākha-s*), thus making twenty-one recensions. *Atharva-parisishta* adds two more: *Sāndhyāyana* and *Audumbarāyana*. However, we have at present only *Shākala* and *Bāshkala* recensions, and some portions of *Āshvalāyana* recension. Others are no longer extant. And of the two recensions that are extant almost in their entirety, *Shākala*-recension is what is generally prevalent.

The recensions are named after the sages, who took it upon themselves to correct, codify, organize, preserve and perpetuate the text of the Vedic-corpus as they had received it. The communication of the text was from teacher to pupil, who was not infrequently the teacher's own son or descendent. The recensions differed amongst themselves only in matters of minor importance (as may be gathered not only from the extant recensions but from the details provided in the *anukramaṇīs*), such as the inclusion or exclusion of what are known as the *Khila*-passages (to be explained presently), the order of the hymns in recitation (*pāṭha-krama*) and addition of supplementary texts (*parishisṭas*). The main text of the Samhita was preserved intact and in its pristine purity, irrespective of the periodical recensions, thanks to such well-considered contrivances as the standard metrical form (*chhandas*), the precise, discrete and meaningful word-structures (*pada-pāṭha*, the multi-dimensional methods of recitation (*veda-pārāyaṇa-goshṭhī*). This is extraordinary, especially when we realize that the samhita-s were all along communicated only in oral tradition (which is even now the case) and were never committed to writing until recent years.

Significant among the details that distinguish the recensions is the incorporation or otherwise of the *Khila-sūkta-s* in the very body of the text. The *Khila-sūkta-s* are hymns that belong elsewhere in actuality but introduced on purpose as additional matter into a regular collection of hymns in a recension ('*para-shākhīyam sva-shakhāyām apekshā-vashāt paṭhyate, tat khilam uchyate*'). They may be with some justification regarded as

interpolations. Examples of these are the *Vāḷakhilya-sūkta-s* (RV 8.49-59), *Shrīsūkta* (RV, at the end of the fifth maṇḍala), *Rātri-sūkta* (RV, after 10, 127) and *Medhā-sūkta* (RV, after 10, 151). There are about thirty-five such Khila-hymns in the *Rigveda-samhitā* recensions. In the *Shākala*-recension, for instance, the *Vāḷakhilya-sūkta-s* (eleven in number) are altogether excluded from the text, thus making the total number of sūkta-s in the corpus 1018 (or 1017), whereas in the *Bāshkala*-recension eight of these sūkta-s (described as *Vāḷakhilya*) are integral parts of the text, thus the total number of sūkta-s in the corpus is given as 1025.

These are the two prominent recensions of the Rigvedic corpus among the twenty-one traditionally counted. Shaḍguru-shishya says as much:¹

As was mentioned earlier, it is the *Shākala*-recension that is popular, persistent and prevalent. Shaḍguru-shishya explains the expression 'Shākala' as the text handed down by the sage *Shākalya* ('shākalyochchāraṇam Shākalam'). This sage, also known as *Deva-mitra* (or *Veda-mitra*), came in the lineage of *Indra-pramati*, who was a disciple of *Paila*, the universally

१एकविंशतिशाखस्य बहुचस्य महर्षिभिः । कल्पितः कल्पितारोऽभूद् ऋग्वेद
इव पारगः ॥ शाकलस्य संहितैका बाष्कलस्य तथाऽपरः । ते संहिते
समाश्रित्य ब्राह्मणान्येकविंशतिः ॥

*ekavimshatishākhasya bahuchasya maharṣhibhiḥ kalpitāḥ kalpitāro
abhud ṛgveda iva pāragaḥ shākalasya samhitaikā bāshkalasya tathā
aparaḥ te samhite samāshritya brāhmaṇānyekavimshatiḥ*

recognized ancient authority on the Rigvedic corpus. Paila had another student, *Bāshkala*, whose name is associated with the other recension, and whose lineage continued in four branches (through his disciples Baudhya, Agni-māthara, Parāshara and Jatūkarnya). However, it is *Indra-pramati*'s lineage that is credited with immense antiquity and impeccable purity. *Indra-pramati*'s direct disciple was Māṇḍukeya, a resident of the Magadha country and an influential master. The adherents of his school came to be known as '*Bahvṛchas*' (a term synonymous with the Rigvedic corpus). After him, *Satya-shravā*, *Satya-hita* and *Satya-shrī* continued the tradition.

Satya-shrī had three brilliant disciples of whom *Shākalya* was one. *Rathītara-Shākapūṇi* (author of a pre-Yāskan *Nirukta*) and *Bāshkali-Bhāradvāja* (who owed allegiance to the *Bāshkala-shākhā*) were the other two. *Shākalya*, in turn, had five disciples, who were responsible for the spread of this recension: *Mudgala* (who lived in the Anga country, the presentday Bihar), *Bābhavya* (who hailed from the Pāṇchāla-desha, the modern Uttar-pradesh), *Gvāliya*, *Gārgya* and *Shaishiri*.

The last-mentioned disciple of *Shākalya*, *Shaishiri* or *Shaishari*, whose other name was *Maitreya*, according to *Vishṇu-purāṇa*, 3,4), was closely associated with *Vyādi* of the *Vyākaraṇa* celebrity. A student of his was *Shākātāyana*, who made a mark for himself in the Vedic exegesis. *Shaishiri* is credited with a recension of his own (called *Shaishirīya-samhitā*), but within the general framework of his master's; hence the statement in *Riksarvānukramaṇī*, '*shākalye*

shaishirīyake'. Uvaṭa's commentary on this work explains: '*shākalaka iti, tad dṛṣṭatvāt; shaisharīyakamity abhidhīyate*'. It is probable that this recension evolved a science of metrical forms in which the Rigvedic hymnology was put (for we read in *Chhandonukramaṇī*: '*shāstram chākhilam shaishirīye*'). Shaishirī's work was so important that the *Shākala*-recension came to be known only after Shaishirī's edition (with amendments) of it. *Anuvākānukramaṇī*, for instance, speaks of '*rigvede shaishirīyāyām samhitāyām*'. And it is this *Shāishirī-shākhā* that the versatile Vedic commentator, Sāyaṇa, generally follows.

In the *Shākala* recension as settled by Shaishirī, the Rigvedic corpus is arranged in ten books (called maṇḍala-s), sixty-four chapters (adhyāya) and 2006 sections (varga). The text consists of 10,580 ṛchas (stanzas), 21,232 ardharchas (half stanzas), 1, 53, 826 padas (separate words) and 4,32,000 aksharas (individual letters). There are two ways in which the text of Rigveda is arranged. The earlier and the more systematic arrangement is in terms of maṇḍala-s. Maṇḍala strictly means round or a circle. In the Rigveda text, the word maṇḍala refers to the collection of hymns according to the sages who were the seers, or to the families of such sages (ṛshi-maṇḍala). Each maṇḍala is distinguished by a single sage or members of the family of that sage. And each Maṇḍala-s (or book) consists of a large number of sūkta-s ('well said', 'properly recited',) collection of individual hymns, or songs of praise or prayers, each sūkta being usually associated with one or more devata-s. The sūkta is defined in *Bṛhaddevata* (1,13) as the complete

statement of a seer, a comprehensive verbal expression of his vision. If the maṇḍala is 'ṛshi-specific', the sūkta may be described as 'devata-specific' (e.g. Agni-sūkta, Indra-sūkta, Vāyu-sūkta, Viṣṇu-sūkta etc.), though there are exceptions to this. In between 'maṇḍala' and sūkta', there are 'anuvākas' (or lessons), which are chapters having sūkta-s as sections thereof. And a sūkta in its turn is a collection of riks (or mantra-s), which are in the nature of stanzas or verses, addressed to one or several devata-s and in one or more metrical forms (*chhandas*). Given below is the table of maṇḍala-s, sūkta-s and riks that we find in the standard *Shākala* recension of *Rigveda-samhita*.

2. The Gāyatrī Mantra of Rishi Ātreya

[SKR mentions this mantra in Chap. 8 while explaining the key phrase *dhīmahi*; The Rishi is Shyāvāshva Ātreya, a son or disciple of the Rishi Atri Bhauma, one of the seven seers.]

5.82.1: Gāyatrī Mantra of Rishi Atri

Of Savitri divine (1), we embrace that (*tat*) enjoying (2), that which is the best, rightly disposes all (3), which reaches the goal of Bhaga, we hold that by the thought (4).¹

[*bhojanam*: enjoying; *vr̥ṇīmahe*: embrace;

dhīmahi: hold by the thought, meditate;

"It is to the divine creator in the name and form of Bhaga that

¹तत् सवितुः वृणीमहे (1), वयं देवस्य भोजनम् (2), श्रेष्ठं सर्वधातमं (3),
तुरं भगस्य धीमहि (4)

*tat savituh vr̥ṇīmahe vayam devasya bhojanam shreshṭham
sarvadhātamam turam bhagasya dhīmahi*

this human capacity for the divine and the right enjoyment of all things belongs. When he is embraced by the human mind and heart and vital forces and physical being, when this divine form is received into himself by man, then the Ānanda of the world manifests itself. By this Ānanda, we can arrive at the right and truth of all things. Thus this Ānanda carries man to his goal. See also (5.82.6) which mentions, 'holding all the things of delight (*vāmāni*) by thought'. (M.P.P.)"

This mantra RV (5.82.1) is mentioned in Chhāndogya U. (5.2.7), next to a famous prayer in prose in (5.2.6) of the same Upaniṣhad. (5.2.7) is given to support (5.2.6). Both these are given as a part of the famous *upāsana* entitled, 'Prāṇa Vidya'. The prayer (5.2.6) mentions the Supreme One who is most senior and excellent. The devotee prays for share and enjoyment in His supremacy and overlordship. All existence is for the enjoyment of the Supreme One. The devotee prays for a share in this enjoyment. This verse should put to rest the false notion that 'enjoyment' has no place in the Upaniṣhad thought.]

3. Methods of Chanting

Correct recitation of Vedic texts is described as 'sa-svara', viz., accompanies by the proper enunciation of vowels or tone in recitation (*svara*). Vowels were given great importance, for they are like the thread which holds together the beads of consonants:¹

¹ मणिवद्व्यञ्जनान्याहुः सूत्रवत् स्वर उच्यते । व्यञ्जनान्यनुवर्तन्ते यत्र तिष्ठन्ति स्वस्वम् ॥ (Yājñavalkya-shikshā, 32)

maṇivad vyanjanānyāhuḥ sūtravat svara uchyate
vyanjanānyanuvartante yatra tiṣṭhanti svasvam

The 'svara' (association of which with rik has already been indicated) is so called because they can operate on their own ('*svato rājanti*' ye varṇa-s te svarāḥ'), and do not depend on consonants for their articulation. But the 'vyanjana' (viz. consonants) are incapable of being pronounced unless the vowels help in their expression or manifestation. The consonants are dependent upon vowels in Sanskrit; vowels are therefore all important in language. This explanation is credited to Patanjali:²

The explanation for 'sa-svara' is that although words are necessarily composed of consonants, the modulations of vowels are more important ('*svara-pradhānam taiḥ svaryam, vyanjanātena sa-svaram*'). (Yajnavalkya-Shikshā, 31). The involvement of vowels in words normally assumes three variants in pitch during articulation of the words: low (*nīcha* or *anudātta*), high (*uchcha* or *udātta*), and normal (*svarita*). In respect of time, the vowels may be short (*hrasva*, duration of one mātrā unit), long (*dīrgha*, two mātrā-s) or longer (*pluta*, three mātrā-s). We read in Pāṇinīya-shikshā:³

It may also be noted that Yāska gives the sense of worship for the word 'svara' ('*svaryate anayā*', *svṛ pūjārthe*): the devata-s are worshipped by it (cf. *Vāijasaneyi-samhitā*, 18,1, '*svarashcha shlokas cha me*'). Svara etymologically signifies that which has excellent progression (*ṛ gatau, ir gatau, supirvād arter iyate vā*', *su arānah, su*

²यः स्वयं राजते तं तु स्वरमाह पतञ्जलिः । उपरिस्थायिना तेन व्यङ्ग्यं व्यञ्जनमुच्यते ॥

yaḥ svayam rājate tam tu svaramāha patanjaliṁ uparisthāyinā tena vyangyam vyanjanamuchyate

³उदात्तानुदात्तश्च स्वरितश्च स्वरास्त्रयः । ह्रस्वो दीर्घः प्लुत इति कालतो नियमा अपि ॥

udāttānūdāttascha svaritascha svarāstrayaḥ hrasvo dīrghaḥ pluta iti kālato niyamā api

iranah). The word 'svara' is cognate with 'svaḥ' (Pāṇini 8,3,10), 'svar' (Pāṇini, 2, 4, 7), 'sura' (sur aishvarye) and 'svarga' (cf. RV, 3, 5, 10).

In Vedic recitation, the modulations of svaras become important. The Rigvedic mantra-s usually have three modulations, udātta, anudātta and svarita, with prachaya, the fourth modulation, also counted sometimes. Anudātta is accentless, not raised; it is called nīcha or low, and is said to be produced below the level of palate ('tālṡādishv adhobhāge nishpannah'). Udātta is called high (uccha), lifted up, upraised and accented, produced by the vocal organs above the palate ('pūrvokteshu sthāneshūrdhvhāge nishpannah'). The 'svarita' is produced by a combination of high and low tones (hence called 'samahara', cf. Pāṇini, (1,2,31) somewhat like the Greek circumflex. ('udāttānudanāttayos samāhārah svaritah'). When they are all evenly involved, it is prachaya (teshām aikye prachayah').⁴

Keshava's Lakshana-grantha refers to musical notes and relates them to the three vedic svaras. According to this text, the notes Nishāda and Gāndharā (Ni, Ga) are udātta in tonal value, Rishabha and Dhaivata (Ri, Dha) are anudātta; and shadja, madhyama and panchama (Sa, Ma and Pa) are svarita:⁵

⁴ नीचैः स्वरोऽनुदात्तः स्यादुच्चैश्चोऽदात्त उच्यते । स्वरितस्तत्समाहारः तदैक्यं प्रचयः स्मृतः ॥

nīchaiḥ svaro anudāttah syāduchchaischo adātta uchyate svaritastatsamāhārah tadaikyam prachayah smṛtah

⁵ गान्धर्ववेदे ये प्रोक्ताः सप्त षड्जर्षभादयः । त एव वेदे त्रियास्रय उच्चादयः स्वराः ॥ उच्चौ निषादगान्धारौ नीचौ ऋषभधैवतौ । शेषास्तु स्वरिता ज्ञेयाः षड्जमध्यमपञ्चमाः ॥

gāndharvavede yc proktāḥ sapta ṣhaḍjarṣhabhādayaḥ ta eva vedc vriyāstraya uchchādayaḥ svarāḥ uchchau niṣhādagāndhārau nīchau ṛṣhabhadhaivatau sheṣhāstu svaritā jneyāḥ ṣhaḍjamadhyamapanchamāḥ

Pāṇinīya-Shikshā also has this verse:⁶

There is also a tradition regarding how the Vedic tones are produced. Shaunakīya-shikshā (55) says that the anudātta (low) tone is produced from the heart, the udātta (high) from the head, more specifically around the eyebrows (according to Yajñavalkya-shikshā, 'udāttam tu bhuvah prānte', the svarita from the temples above the ears, and the prachaya from all the organs associated with production of voice (according to Yajñavalkya, from the tip of the nose 'prachayam nāsikāgratah'):⁷

The custom of indicating the svaras by the movement of the right hand while reciting the mantra-s ('svarochedhāraṇa-kāle hasta-prakṣepah') also attends to these origins of the tones.

There are other details given in texts Sarva-sammata-shikshā, Varṇochchāraṇa-dipikā and Shaunakīya-shikshā, such as the castes, colours, devatā and chhandas of the Vedic tones. Udātta is said to belong to the brāhmaṇa caste, white in complexion, has Agni as devatā and Gāyatrī as chhandas. Anudātta is Kshatriya in caste, red in complexion, having Soma as devatā and Trishṭup as chhandas.

६ उदात्ते निषादगान्धारावनुदात्त ऋषभधैवतौ स्वरितप्रभवा ह्येते षड्जमध्यम
पञ्चमाः ॥

*udātte niṣhādagāndhārāvanudātta ṛṣhabhadhaivatau svaritaprabhavā
hyete ṣaḍjamadhyama pañchamāḥ*

७ अनुदात्तो हृदि ज्ञेयो मूर्धन्युदात्त उदाहृतः । स्वरितः कर्णमूलीयः

सर्वस्मिन्प्रचयः स्मृतिः ॥

*anudatto hṛdi jñeyo mūrdhnyudāta udāhṛtaḥ svaritaḥ karṇamūliyaḥ
sarvasminprachayaḥ smṛtiḥ*

Svarita is Vaishya in caste, dark in colour, having Savitr (Sūrya) as devatā and Jagatī as chhandas.⁸

In Yājñavalkya-shikshā, it is said that the Vedic tones are primarily two: udātta and anudātta; they are distinct from each other. The svarita is but a modification of udātta, and prachaya is a variation of svarita.⁹

Normally, Vedic recitation involves three tonal levels: udātta, anudātta and svarita, (1) When the letter is pronounced normally without any modulations, it is udātta, and the letter as it is written will have no mark distinguishing it; (2) anudātta is indicated by a short horizontal line at the bottom of the letter; it is low tone; (3) the svarita is distinguished by a short vertical line above the letter. The first rik of Rigveda with these marks is taken here as an illustration:¹⁰

⁸उदात्तो ब्रह्मजातिः स्यान्नीचो राजन्य राजन्य उच्यते । स्वरितो वैश्यजातिश्च
प्रचयः शूद्र ईरितः ॥ शुक्लमुच्चं विजानीयान्नीचं लोहितमुच्यते । इयामस्तु
स्वरितं विद्यादग्निरुच्यस्य दैवतम् ॥ नीचे सोमं विजानीयात्प्रचरिते सविता
तथा ॥ विद्यादुदात्तं गायत्रं नीचं त्रैष्टुभमुच्यते । जागतं स्वरितं विद्यादेक एव
नियागतः ॥

*udātto brahmajātiḥ syānnīcho rājanya rājanya uchyate
svarito vaishyajātischa prachayaḥ shūdra īritah
shuklamuchcham vijānīyānnīcham lohitamuchyate
shyāmastu svaritam vidhyādagniruchchasya daivatam
nīche somam vijānīyātpracharite savitā tathā
vidhyādudāttam gāyatram nīcham traiṣṭubhamuchayate
jāgatam svaritam vidhyādeka eva niyāgataḥ*

⁹स्वरौ चैवात्र दृश्येते भिन्नोदात्तानुदात्तकौ । उदात्तान्निहितः स्वारः स्वरितात्
प्रचयो भवेत् ॥

*svarau chaivātra dṛश्यete bhinnodāttānudāttakau udāttānnihitah
svāraḥ svaritāt prachayo bhavet*

¹⁰अग्निमीळे पुरोहितम् यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥

agnimīle purohitam yajnasya devamṛtvijam hotāram ratnadhātamam

उदात्त : गि । रो । व । त्वि । हो । धा ।

अनुदात्तः अ । पु । य । दे । मृ । ल ।

स्वरितः मी । हि । स्य । जम् । ता । त ।

And ऌ । तम् । रम् । र । मम् ।

are called prachaya (tones)

Another device, not only to preserve and perpetuate the correct recitation of the Vedic mantras but to preserve the correct text, was to separate out the words of the mantra and provide fixity for them, Known as pada-pāṭha, this was also an early attempt, going back to the days of Shakalya (Devamitra-Shakalya, also known as Vidagdha-Shakalya or Sthavira-Shākalya), not later than 3000 B.C. The samhitā form of the mantra has the chhandas to govern the arrangement of words; and the words here are joined up closely ('paras-samnikarshas samhitā'). But pada-pāṭha would break up the samhitā into its constituent words; and the words are given separately, and with their individual grammatical identities. This arrangement would not only help the recitation but also the understanding of the mantra. Each word in the rik is here given so as to facilitate the identification of the prakṛti, the pratyaya, the sandhi, the samāsa and other details of individual words. Hence the definition given in Kātyāyana's Prātishakhyā-sūtra:

पदच्छेदोऽसंहितः (padachchhedo asamhitah)

This device is there only for the Vedic texts like Rik-samhitā; and not for Brāhmaṇa, or Āraṇyaka-texts, And the study of Rigveda would necessarily involve perfect acquaintance with the pada-pāṭha of the mantras. And pada-pāṭha is not a mechanical device either, for the pada-pāṭha varies with the shākha-s, and needs to be altered

when the meaning of the mantra varies; the tonal values of the letters (udātta, anudātta and svarita) in the individual words also get altered.

It is conjectured that the Rik-samhitā had several pada-pāṭhas; but what has held the field till our own day is the pada-pāṭha provided by the sage Shakalya to all the mantras in Riksamhitā except for the mantras included in Vālakhilya-sūktas in the eight maṇḍala, Another pada-pāṭha referred to by later writers on the Vedic lore was by Rāvana, about whom nothing has been known.

It has been said that only the student who knows perfectly well the circumstance leading to the order of words, the conditions governing the sequence of letters, and the distinctions between the tonal values of letters in recitation can dare to enter the assembly of vedic scholars. These are indispensable for acquiring mastery over the vedic corpus, and to understand the precise meaning of the Vedas. We read in *Sarva-sammata-shikshā* of Lakshmana:¹¹



¹¹पदक्रमविशेषज्ञो वर्णक्रमविचक्षणः । स्वरमात्राविभागज्ञः गच्छेदाचार्यसंसदम्

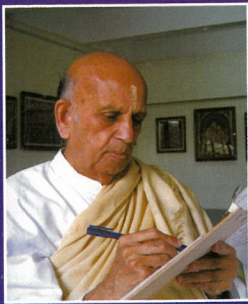
*padakramavisheṣhajno varnakrama vichakshaṇaḥ
svaramātrāvibhāgajñaḥ gachchedāchāryasamsadam*

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In his professional career, however, he was a Professor of Psychology. He has headed the Department of Clinical Psychology in the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience, Bangalore. and the Department of Indian Culture in the Collision College Study Center of the University of the Pacific (U.S.A.).

He has written more than sixty books in Kannada, a play in Sanskrit, and a Pāli commentary on a Buddhist classic. One of his books on Iconography in Kannada has won the State Sahitya Academi Award, as also another of his books on the Tirupati Temple.

Among his numerous English Publications are : three volumes of Encyclopaedia of Indian Medicine (Popular Prakashan, Mumbai), Tibetan Tantrik Tradition and Tibetan Meditation (Arnold Heinemann, Delhi), Consciousness in Advaita, and a series of six books on Indian temples (IBH Prakashana, Bangalore) and Origins of Indian Thought (Bangalore University); Kalpatharu Research Academy has published his Pratimā-Kosha in six volumes. Āgama-Kosha in Twelve volumes, Art and Architecture of Indian Temples in three volumes.

His detailed translation and essays on the highlights of Veda is in Ṛgveda-Darśana, published in 18 volumes.

He was also musicologist, sculptor and painter.