

Internal Yajña

Royal Path for Aspirants

S. K. Ramachandra Rao



Creative Life Series - 8

INTERNAL YAJÑA

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Chief Editor

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Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture

'INTERNAL YAJÑA', Royal Path for Aspirants. Essays about spiritual interpretation of Rig Veda and Krishna Yajur Veda.

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CREATIVE LIFE SERIES

The books in this series aim to spread a variety of knowledge needed for living a harmonious, progressive and satisfying life. Some topics considered are psychological and emotional aspects, inspiration and intuitions, happiness and its attainment, cultivation of beauty, various health sciences including pranayama, perfection in work, aesthetics, various yogas, the death and rebirth, origin of mathematics, sleep and dream etc. The knowledge is gleaned from the Hindu scriptures like Veda Samhita, Upanishads, Tantra, Gita and from the writings of modern savants like Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, Sri Ramana etc.

One may legitimately ask whether these Hindu 'religious' books would have significant knowledge on such a variety of topics. The answer is a resounding yes. The sages of the Veda and Upanishad believed that all aspects of life can be harmonised or divinised. They did not compartmentalise life into rigid compartments such as worldly life, spiritual life etc. Characteristics of Buddhist and post Buddhist society. Every man-made entity or branch of knowledge should be characterised by the triplet, Satyam, uniqueness or creative aspect, Shivam, auspiciousness or happiness and Sundaram, beauty. The sages felt that no action is complete till a connection is established with the cosmic powers who really carry out all the details leading to perfection.

We envision three broad classes of readers of our books. The first class consists of those who complain that the Hindu scriptures deal only with *moksha* or other worldly matters and leave little to say on the problems of everyday life. The call "Give up desire completely" is impracticable and it dampens any enthusiasm for reading the books. Our reply is that the Hindu scriptures are both numerous and voluminous, the Rig Veda Samhita having more than 10,000 verses. The traditional commentaries emphasise only a small number of verses in these books focussing on the so called *moksha* or pain in life. We focus here on the numerous verses which focus on leading a well-balanced and beautiful life. These most useful aspects have been ignored in most traditional commentaries.

The second group consists of those who are full of curiosity about the ancient Hindu books. They have heard about these sacred books being mentioned in the popular books printed or authored in the west, in glowing terms especially those dealing with health or relaxation. They are eager to read about these topics stripped of their exaggerations common in the western press.

The third group consists of the serious aspirants of yoga who want to know deeply about these ancient books, but do not know the Sanskrit language.

... Editor

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Many Hindus during their early years have an intuitive feeling that Veda books deal with wisdom or knowledge. Such a feeling often gets weakened after their exposure to the 'scholarly' commentaries of Sāyaṇa or their translations declaring that Veda mantrās deal only with rituals; for wisdom we are supposed to seek the Upanishads.

There are many Veda lovers who have greatly admired our books on Veda emphasising its wisdom; these persons requested us to publish a small booklet describing 'the spiritual interpretation'. The response is this booklet authored by Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao, a great scholar both in traditional *shāstrās* and in modern thoughts. This book is highly useful both to the novice as well as the scholar.

This book has two parts. The first part deals with the Rigveda mantra Samhitā, the second deals with the Kriṣṇa Yajurveda, supposedly, according to the ritualists, dedicated exclusively to rituals.

Let us first consider the Rigveda. There are many mantrās in the Rigveda Samhitā in all of its ten maṇḍalās declaring that there is a secret knowledge (*nitya vachāmsi*) in it. Professor Rao mentions the long list of commentators beginning with Yāska (Circa 1000 CE) down to our times (Sri Aurobindo & Sri Kapāli Sāstry) (20th Century CE). Sri T.V. Kapāli Sāstry wrote a magnificent introduction in Sanskrit

(*bhūmika*) espousing the spiritual part of view as a prelude to his commentary on the first 121 sūktās.

Professor Rao has chosen 30 pitty statement from this Sanskrit commentary as the aphorisms or *sūtrās* of the Secret in the Veda.

The second part dealing with Yajurveda handles skilfully a very difficult topic. Every mantra of the Kriṣṇa Yajurveda Mantra Samhitā is identified by its commentators with some aspect of the outer ritual; this viewpoint is accepted by almost all traditionalists and the western scholars (a strange case of identity of views!!). The author particularly deplores the traditional view of identifying the sacred mantrās with the cruel practice of animal sacrifice. He rightly points out that the mantrās deals not with the external ritual, but the inner yajña or contemplation involving the symbolic offering of our body which is mistakenly called as animal sacrifice.

He points out the need for understanding both the Rig and Yajur Veda in a single framework of Inner Yajña or Symbolism. The Veda mantrās themselves support this view since roughly one third of all the mantrās of Yajurveda (excluding the brāhmaṇa parts) are in Rigveda Samhitā.

One appendix gives a table explaining the symbolism. The second one gives a defense of the inner yajña by the famous savant and spiritual person Sri Sri Rangapriya Swami Srih.

We want to thank Prof. Rao and Swami Rangapriya for writing these essays.

September 3, 2002

Publisher

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1. Spiritual Interpretation of the Veda: An Introduction

Kapāli Sāstry himself has succinctly given expression to this framework in the Sanskrit *Bhūmikā* to his *Siddhānjana* [1947, Dipti-Publications, Pondicherry; Collected works of T.V. Kapāli Sāstry, vol.4 1983]. This framework acquires significance on the ground that the Veda has a secret meaning, which alone is of ultimate and real value. In contradistinction to this, there is the external meaning, the apparent one, consisting of word-meanings which are conventional and transactional in nature. The latter is meant for the common folk, to help them in their religious aspirations, while the former is deliberately intended to guide the advanced aspirants. The Veda employs this double-language method, because there are two distinct approaches prevalent among human beings: one that relies on the senses, employs reason, and holds the intellect in high regard; and the other that depends on revelation and inspiration, and employs intuition and insight. The two approaches may be designated 'practical' and 'spiritual'.

Sāyaṇā's interpretation of the Rig Veda Samhitā illustrates the 'practical' approach, while Sri Aurobindo, and Kapāli Sāstry after him, represent the 'spiritual' or 'mystical' line of interpretation. It is unfortunate that the decadent culture in the country during the middle ages held on to the 'practical' approach, to the detriment of

the other. As a result, the Veda was looked upon as a source-book for ritualism, as a sanction for intellectualism and as a justification for crude materialism. The *Mīmāṃsakās* had already encouraged this outlook, and their preference for the *Brāhmaṇās* books (ritualistic tracts, appendages to the Samhitā by the priests to the Samhitā) prevailed in the middle ages, and has continued till our own day. The Samhitā, by a curious reversal of values, became secondary to the *Brāhmaṇās*, like the proverbial tail wagging the dog. Sāyaṇa was an uncompromising votary of the *Mīmāṃsaka* ritualism, and his approach to Rig Veda Samhitā in his famous *Bhāṣya* is only through the *Brāhmaṇa* ideology. He did not accord an independent status to the Samhitā, but viewed it only as an appendage to the *Brāhmaṇa* tracts.

It is remarkable that he (Sāyaṇa) chose at all to write a commentary on Rig Veda Samhitā, for no *Mīmāṃsaka* had ever thought of writing a gloss, interpretation or annotation to the Samhitā. The *Mīmāṃsakās* paid lip-service to the greatness, glory and antiquity of the Veda, but had completely ignored its import. They were more concerned with 'dharma' than with 'mantrārtha' (meaning of mantrās), for they regarded 'dharma' itself as the 'vedārtha' (the meaning of the Veda). The words were all that was important for them in a mantra from the Samhitā collection, because the mantrās had to be recited as part of the rituals. The meaning of the mantra was of no interest or importance to them. Indeed, the great

Mīmāṃsaka, Jaimini, argued that the mantrās that were not prescribed or employed in the sacrifices were irrelevant and redundant. आम्नायस्य क्रियार्थत्वात् आनर्थक्यमतदर्शनाम् ॥ *āmnāyasya kriyārthatvāt ānarthakyam atadarthānām*. In the decadent tradition, therefore, there was no need for a *Bhāṣya* commentary on the Samhitā. Nevertheless, Sāyaṇa did write one, and unwittingly turned the attention of traditionalists to the meaning of the mantrās, although ritualism was for him, as for others around him, the main focus.

It is again unfortunate that the Western indologists took an interest in Vedic studies precisely at a time when the decadent culture held the ground. What they were exposed to was the ritualistic interpretation of Rig Veda Samhitā by Sāyaṇa. For them, Sāyaṇa was the traditional authority, although Sāyaṇa lived only in the fourteenth century A.D. and there were other and more trustworthy commentators earlier. Max Muller, who published the Rig Veda Samhitā for the first time in human history, published it along with Sāyaṇa's commentary, thus providing it a high academic acceptance value. Modern Vedic students and scholars, Western as well as Indian, have been brought up in the tradition of regarding the Rig Veda Samhitā only in the light of Sāyaṇa's *Bhāṣya*.

The first great person that raised his voice against this injustice, impropriety and outrage to the true spirit of the Vedic lore was Sri Aurobindo. He discovered that the

Veda had a hidden meaning, not by a scholarly study of Vedic mantrās, but by an inner vision; it was only later that his studies confirmed his direct perception. He was himself a sage, a *ṛṣhi*, and he had therefore the equipment in common with the sages who visualized the mantrās. Vedic hymns are not products of superior scholarly exercises, or of clever constructions of thought, diction and speech. They had wondrous powers within, which freely opened up and blossomed into charming poetic articulations. They were inspired by a profound encounter with reality as such. The hymns therefore are in the nature of mantra-perceptions (*mantra-dṛṣṭayah*).

According to this discovery, the central aim of the Vedic hymns is to help the seekers of truth (*satya*), immortality (*amṛta*) and light (*jyoti*). The truth that the Veda reveals is in effective contrast to the truth of this phenomenal world which is a 'mixed one' (truth hidden in a mass of false presentations), and which can be grasped by our senses and mind; it is most profound and transcendental. The immortality of the real revealed by the Veda is distinguished by being beyond space and time and being beyond dualities. And the light that one finds in the Veda is beyond the light that is signified by human intelligence. All the hymns in the Vedic corpus must be interpreted in accordance with this search; the hymns become meaningful only in the context of this search.

The supreme reality is described in the Veda as the beyond (*param*), the truth (*satyam*), the right (*ṛtam*) and

the vast (*br̥hat*). It is beyond the three realms of phenomenal existence, symbolized by the *vyāhrtis*: *bhūh* (earth), *bhuvah* (midregion) and *suvaḥ* (sky), and represented by the three luminous deities -Agni, Indra and Sūrya. The three realms together constitute the lower half of reality (*aparārdha*). Beyond this is the upper half (*parārdha*), where Sūrya (the Savitr of whom the Sūrya of the three realms is but an image) reigns supreme and shines brilliantly. This is the only reality (*ekam sat*) that the Veda recognises. All the deities and gods that the hymns refer to as having different names, forms and functions are but so many aspects of this one Sūrya, the supreme reality, the vast sky (*br̥had-dyauḥ*), the (*mahaḥ*), the beyond (*paraḥ*), the luminous (*svar*). The Veda shows the mystic path to reach this highest state:

अन्वेष्टव्यो बृहदिवः पन्था ॥ *anveṣṭavyo br̥haddivāḥ panthā*

[*Siddhañjana*].

It is well-known that the Vedic hymns are replete with symbolic language. They are altogether unlike the poetical compositions that we are familiar with; they tend to veil their speech. The seers who were responsible for these hymns were essentially mystics, having had the direct contact with the sole reality of all existence. The Veda is regarded in tradition as the treasury containing the secrets discovered by these knowers of mystic knowledge. Kapāli Sāstry defines Veda as the deliberately coded communications of profound mystic wisdom:

तेषां (मन्त्रद्रष्टृणां) गहनतत्त्वविदां

गूढभाषया गोपितानां गोप्यानां कोश ऋग्वेदः।

तेषां ऋक्सूक्तानां समुदायमेव ऋक्संहितामाचक्ष्महे ॥

teshām (mantradrashṭāṇām) gahanatatvavidām

gūḍhabhāṣhyā gopitānām gopayānām kosha ṛgvedaḥ.

teṣhām ṛksūktānām samudāyameva ṛksamhitām

āchakṣhmahe.

It is also recognised that the Vedic mantrās are especially potent in their verbal forms as well as in their meaning, nuances, and effective for securing welfare here as well as hereafter; and this is due to the fact that their origin is ascribed to the direct encounter with the ultimate reality (*prādurbhāva-prabhāvāt mantrānām vīrya-vattvam*). The words came out without effort from the seer, almost spontaneously; and the words concealed as well as revealed. The incorporation of two meanings in each mantra (the exoteric and the esoteric, the external and the internal) was by no means deliberate or calculated, but perfectly natural in the context of spiritual experience and its communication. The external sense is only a sign, a symbol (*sanketa*), and is intended to discern the real but internal import. This holds good also for rituals. The external rituals are only symbolic of the internal transformations that must take place.

In fact the external world is only a symbol of the internal world that is more real. The gods of the three realms (*adhyāṇḍa*) represent only the powers within the individual (*adhi-piṇḍa*). Tradition speaks of the three realms (earth, midregion and sky) as representing the three faculties: *anna* (gross waking state), *prāṇa* (powers, forces, energy) and *manas* (mind, knowledge), respectively. They are presided over by the gods Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya. Beyond the three realms indicated by the three *vyāhrtis*, *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah* and *suvaḥ* is the great expanse without limits (*mahaḥ*, *brhad-dyauḥ*), the domain of Sūrya (distinguished from the physical Sun, *laukika-sūrya*).

It may be recalled that there is a long-standing tradition, ignored however by Sāyaṇa, of seeing in the Rig Vedic passages a triad of meanings:

त्रयोऽर्थाः सर्ववेदेषु ॥ *trayoḥ arthāḥ sarvavedeṣhu*.

Yāska accepts the ritualistic sense (*adhiyajña*), the meaning relating to the deities (*ādhidaiva*) and the esoteric meaning (*ādhyātma*). Later thought spoke of '*ādhibhautika*' (the gross, external meaning, referring to the physical world and common transactions), '*ādhidaivika*' (in which *adhiyajña* is included) and '*ādhyātma*'. With reference to the Vedic passages, tradition also distinguishes between the conventional meanings of words used (*rūḍha*), which are superficial but symbolic (relating to *ādhibhautika*, *adhiyajña* and

ādhidaiva levels) and the meanings which are etymologically valid and significant (*yaugika*), which are the real and intended meanings (relating to the *adhyātma* level). It was *Ānanda-tīrtha* (Madhva Āchārya) who, in his *Rig Bhāṣya* resuscitated this tradition that was being side-lined by the votaries of ritualism, and attempted to explain the Vedic mantrās primarily at the *adhyātma* level. Rāghavendra Tīrtha's *Mantrārtha mañjari* followed this lead, and provided guidelines for Kapāli Sāstry's comprehensive reconstruction of the real import of the Vedic corpus. Kāpali Sāstry was inspired by the discovery of Sri Aurobindo, and his *Siddhāñjana* is true to the traditional line of interpretation and is a brilliant attempt to focus attention on the hidden meaning of the revelations of the ancient seers. I have gathered together the principal propositions from his introduction, known as *Bhūmikā* to his commentary on *Rig Veda*, and have prepared this garland of aphorisms which help in understanding the hidden import of the Veda. I have called it *veda-gūḍhārtha-bodha-sūtrāṇi*, taking the clue from his own expression. The aphorisms included here are in his own words; only the selection and arrangement is mine. This, I hope, would illustrate the general framework of Vedic interpretation accepted by Yāska, Saunaka, Kātyāyana, Durgāchārya, Ānanda-Tīrtha, Bhāskara, Rāghavendra-Tīrtha and, in recent years, by Sri Aurobindo and after him by Kapāli Sāstry.

The summary of the Secret of the Veda in aphorisms

1. The Veda is eternal, because it made its appearance from the highest space without limits, known as *parama-vyoma* or *bṛhad-dyauh*, beyond the three realms of existence (*bhūh*, *bhuvah* and *suvah*).
2. The Veda is primarily intended to aid spiritual study, contemplation and spiritual practices.
3. The Veda that is most ancient is but one; it is called Rig Veda, a collection of *riks* (mantrās).
4. For the sake of performing rituals, the mantrās of Yajur Veda and the *Brāhmaṇa*-texts were prepared at a later period.
5. The mantrās of the Rig Veda were direct perceptions of the seers.
6. The seers who perceived the mantrās dwell, before their birth and after their passing away, in the highest space (from which the Veda made its appearance).
7. The seers, abiding in a state of high austerity, encountered directly the mantrās (known by the name *brahma*), according to Yāska.
8. The Veda is not concerned with *dharma* (rules of good life) and Karma (rituals) only; there is in the Veda a hidden teaching which is spiritual in nature, pertaining to the Self.
9. This essential import of the mantrās was concealed by a secret (or coded) language; the seers hid the secret within the mantra.

10. The inner import it is that takes the form of symbols and abides in the mantrās.
11. The seers employed the symbols for the sake of preserving the real meaning of the Veda.
12. It is proper therefore that one must understand the significance of the symbols in order to determine the true import of the Veda.
13. The secrets indicated by the symbols pertain to the internal or esoteric mysteries.
14. One must attempt to comprehend the purport of the mantrās only in accordance with the inner meanings.
15. An understanding of the system of symbolism is the gateway to get at the secret of the Veda.
16. In all Veda there is but one system of symbolism.
17. For all the seers of the mantrās, there is but one goal, one hidden teaching and one tradition of symbolism.
18. The hidden teaching is this: The supreme and solitary divinity is *Sūrya*, the Supreme Person.
19. *Sūrya* abides bearing several names and assuming several deity-forms.
20. The real is but one, but bearing a multiplicity of names and forms.
21. The origin of all deities is but one, the nature of all deities is also one, and the goal of all of them is one too.

22. The differences among the deities are in accordance with their functions and their personalities.
23. The deities can be apprehended by one's inner perception.
24. The nature of the deities, however, are capable of being perceived by the eye that is opened by the divine or inner vision.
25. All the deities begin to function only at the level of the supreme reality (viz., the highest space, *br̥hat-dyauh*, from which the Veda makes its appearance, and in which the seers dwell); and their actions have a tendency to ascend.
26. The Veda presents the picture of the deities with their own names, qualities and actions, but who are all in reality so many aspects of the one great self, known by the name *Sūrya*.
27. The sacrificial ritual is also symbolic; the supreme purport of the Vedic sacrifice is but inner worship.
28. Whoever is the wise person, equipped with vision and learning, who becomes competent enough to realise the hidden teaching of the mantra, it is for him that the Veda reveals itself.
29. For him, the symbols of their own accord would reveal the secret import.
30. One must therefore make efforts to understand aright the true meaning of the mantrās.

॥ वेदगूढार्थबोधसूत्राणि ॥

- १ परमव्योम्नि समुद्भूतत्वाद्भेदो नित्यम् ॥
- २ कृत्स्नस्य वेदस्य स्वाध्याये जपे ध्याने एव सामान्य विनियोगे बोध्यः ॥
- ३ एक एव परो वेदः पुरातनः । स ऋग्वेदः ।
- ४ यज्ञकर्मकलापसमृद्धै यजुषां मन्त्राणानां च कल्पना उत्तरकालीना ॥
- ५ ऋचः ऋषीणां दृष्टयो भवन्ति ॥
- ६ मन्त्रदर्शिना ऋषेर्जन्मनः प्राक् मृतेः परं च सिद्धमेव परमं व्योम ॥
- ७ तपःस्थितानां ऋषीणां ब्रह्मपदवाच्यो मन्त्रः प्रत्यक्षोऽभवदिति यास्कः ॥
- ८ न केवलं धर्मकर्मपरो वेदः । अध्यात्मविद्यादिरहस्यमस्ति वेदे ॥
- ९ रहस्यभाषया मन्त्रार्थो गोपितो भवति । मन्त्रेषु ऋषिभिः रहस्यं निक्षिप्तम् ॥
- १० अन्तरर्थे एव सङ्केतरूपं धृत्वा मन्त्रे स्थितः ॥
- ११ ऋषिभिः प्रयुक्ताः सङ्केताः वेदार्थगोपनार्थम् ॥
- १२ वेदसूक्तार्थविचारे सङ्केतरूपार्थग्रहणं न्याय्यम् ॥
- १३ निण्यपदार्थभूतरहस्यानि ॥
- १४ मन्त्रतात्पर्यावगाहनं अन्तरार्थानुसारेण कर्तव्यम् ॥
- १५ सङ्केतव्यवस्थापरिज्ञानं वेदरहस्यावगाहनस्य द्वारम् ॥

- १६ समस्तेऽपि ऋग्वेदे एकरूपा सङ्केतव्यवस्था ॥
- १७ सर्वेषां मन्त्रदृष्टृणां एकमेव परमं लक्ष्यं, एकमेव रहस्यं,
एकमेव सङ्केतसम्प्रदायः ॥
- १८ रहस्यं त्विदम् । एक एव परो देवः सूर्यात्मा परमः पुमान् ॥
- १९ सः बहुदेवतात्मकतया बहूनि नामानि बिभ्रदवतिष्ठते ॥
- २० एकः परो नानामूर्तिनामस्वरूपधृक् ॥
- २१ देवानां एकमूलत्वं एकात्मत्वं एकलक्ष्यत्वम् ॥
- २२ तेषां पृथक्तत्वं तु नामतो व्यापारतो व्यक्तितश्च ॥
- २३ यच्चेतना एव देवाः अन्तर्दृष्टिगोचराः ॥
- २४ देवानां स्वरूपाणि तु दिव्येनाभ्यन्तरेण वा उन्मीलितेन
चक्षुषा ग्राह्याणि ॥
- २५ सर्वेषां देवानां कर्माणि परमाद्भ्यः प्रारम्भन्ते, ऊर्ध्वमूलानि च
भवन्ति ॥
- २६ एक एव महानात्मा सूर्यपदवाच्यः यस्यैव मूर्तिभेदाः
व्यक्तिविशेषाः अङ्गप्रत्यङ्गभूताः तत्तद्गुणक्रियोचितानि
नामानि बिभ्रते देवाः वेदे प्रतिपादिताः ॥
- २७ यज्ञोऽपि सङ्केतरूपः । वैदिकाध्वरस्य परमार्थं अन्तर्यजनमेव
व्याचक्षते ॥
- २८ यस्तु विज्ञः दृष्टिश्रुतिसम्पन्नः मन्त्ररहस्यं साक्षात्कर्तुमधिकारी
भवति तस्मै ऋगात्मिका वाक् स्वयं प्रकाशं भवति ॥
- २९ सङ्केताः स्वयमेव विवृतगूढार्थाः स्पष्टं लक्ष्यन्ते ॥
- ३० अतो मन्त्रार्थावगत्यै यत्तः कार्यः ॥

2. Spiritual Interpretation of Yajur Veda

(1)

There is a persistent confusion in the minds not only of indologists but also of the students of Indian culture in general about the correct interpretations of the Vedic passages dealing with animal sacrifice. Such passages occur not so frequently in the Rig Veda Samhitā as in the Brāhmaṇa texts; and this is natural because the Brāhmaṇa-texts focus their attention on rituals (*karma kāṇḍa*). Rituals are of numerous types and some of them accept or prescribe violent practices like killing animals and offering parts of the slain animal as offerings (*pashum ālabheta*). Some interpreters like Sāyaṇa, who reconcile themselves to animal sacrifices as Vedic rituals, are inclined to take the passages to mean exactly what they say, despite the general tenor of the Rig Veda respecting all life and condemning violence of any kind to animals (*na himsyāt sarvā bhūtāni*). Those who regard themselves as orthodox take Sāyaṇa as a reliable authority in Vedic matters.

This, however, is an error, and a grievous one at that. Sāyaṇa is by no means an advocate of the true spirit of the Vedic Corpus. The Veda is important because of the high human values it upholds, and because of its relevance to all mankind and for all

time. The true import of the Veda lies in its hidden teaching, the *nīṇya* or *rahasya*. The Veda itself indicates this. We are all familiar with the acknowledgement;

परोक्षप्रिया इव हि देवाः प्रत्यक्षद्विषः (Aitareya U 3.14, Br U 4.2.2)

The wise folk are disinclined to swallow what is apparent; they would rather get at the hidden, the mystical, the real meaning. The Veda is after all a book of mysteries. It emphasises the distinction between appearance and reality. Sāyaṇa has altogether ignored this; he hangs on to what appears on the surface. Pundits after him (he lived in the fourteenth century) have followed his line of thought, as if they are as authentic as the Vedās themselves! They have led indologists astray, and kept the common people in darkness about the true significance of the Vedic Corpus.

Āchārya Ānanda-tīrtha (Madhvā-chārya) in the thirteenth century struck the right note in his Rig Bhāṣya when he pointed out that the Vedic passages have three meanings: the common meaning referring to Gods (*adhidaivika*), the ritualistic import (*adhiyajña*) and more importantly the esoteric meaning (*adhyātmika*). The great yogin Swami Rāghavendra-tīrtha elaborated the last of these in his Mantrārtha-

mañjari. In recent times, it was Sri Aurobindo who insisted that the Veda is essentially a mystical text, elaborately spiritual in its connotation. His disciple, Kapāli Sāstry, undertook to write a commentary on the Rig Veda, highlighting the secret meanings of the Vedic passages. His attention was confined to Rig Veda Samhitā.

Following his lead, Dr. R.L. Kashyap, who is well-known for his work popularising Kapāli Sāstry's contributions, has now turned his attention to applying the same methodology to other areas of the Vedic Corpus. He has brought out in English a spiritual and mystical interpretation of Taittirīya Samhitā, belonging to Kṛiṣṇa Yajur Veda division. This is an important undertaking, pioneering and educative.

This text is distinguished by its predominant ritualistic involvement. It is well-known among the adherents of the *Karma Kāṇḍa* section of the Vedic protagonists; and is extensively relied upon by the priestly class, responsible for rituals of all sorts, including animal-sacrifices. It is therefore very difficult to provide mystical meanings for ritual prescriptions. Dr. Kashyap has understandably an uphill task to perform, and we are glad that he has accomplished his mission exceedingly well. It is by no

means easy to turn the orthodox attention away from the ritualistic framework. The conservatives are ill-disposed towards mystical overtones; they even took at devotion with suspicion. They stick doggedly to the time-honoured rituals, even if they are thoroughly incompatible with lay-life and changing times.

Dr. Kashyap's effort in this context may be termed valiant, heroic; it is also innovative. He has given in this work a succinct picture of Yajur Veda—the corpus as well as the spirit. After examining the claims of yajña as an external ritual (customarily resorted to), he emphasises the inner yajña as what the texts really imply. He has gathered evidence not only from the Samhitā but also from the Brāhmaṇa portion of the same division. He has sought to strengthen this position from referring to the Upanishads, especially Brhadāranyaka and Chhāndogya. An interesting feature of this work is the elaborate concordance that has been worked out between the inner yajña and the external yajña as a ritual.

The author's attempts to explain '*adhvara*' (a name for yajña) as the pilgrim's journey, and to interpret the conclusion of the external yajña with the '*ava-bhrta*' sequence as the consciousness of the spiritual progress are highly interesting. The aim of

inner yajña is the perfection of each and every part of the individual devotee (yajamāna) who is himself the sacrificial post (*yūpa*). The journey involves a search for the inner subtle *yūpa*, which supports the entirety of the inner being. The author has provided a new insight in the understanding of the mantrās which ask the organs to ascend into the higher realms (powers for purification).

He points out, rightly, that it is wrong to view the Upanishads (as is commonly done) as a revolt against ritualism. According to him, the Upanishads are intended to capture the fundamental thoughts of the Veda Samhitā. Upanishads, as the conclusions of the Vedic thought (as meant by the word Vedānta), abound in *upāsanās* which are alternative rituals (purely mental). Each of the thirty-two *upāsanās* is an inner yajña. The Upanishads, while rejecting the rituals of the outward type, respect the spirit of yajña. Chhāndogya (3, 17), for instance, describes the entire life as the performance of yajña. Mahānārāyaṇa provides an elaborate symbolism: *ātma* (the individual) is the yajamāna (one who is engaged in yajña); *shraddhā* (faith) is his consort in action; the body itself is the sacrificial fuel (*idhma*); the heart is the sacrificial post (*yūpa*); the desires

(*kāma*) are the offerings into the fire (*ājya*). Animal sacrifice also has its symbolism. Passions like anger are the *pashu* (animal to be sacrificed), and self-control (*dama*) is the person who is entrusted with the task of immolating the animal (*shamayitā*).

This is an important publication in more senses than one. It endeavours to present the Yajur Vedic text within the framework of Rig Vedic ideology, thus emphasising the fact that the Vedic viewpoint is one and undivided. The common misconception that the four Vedās provide four different *vinīyogās* stands here corrected. All formal divisions of the Vedic Corpus have alike a mystical meaning, which is the real import. The rituals that are prescribed in Yajur Veda (Samhitā and Brāhmaṇa) have been shown here to have a symbolic sense; they become valid only when viewed as details of inner yajña. The outward sacrifices become relevant only as suggestive of the inner insights. The book also shows that the esoteric approach which the Upanishads espouse is applicable equally to the Brāhmaṇa texts.

The author is to be warmly congratulated for this highly interesting and educative publication. It is almost unique in the field of indological reconstructions.

(2)

We may take note of some details, traditionally accepted, which would justify the position taken here.

1. Tradition holds that the Veda was originally one, in the *kṛta* age; and that it became three in the *tretā* age and four in *dvāpara*. Madhva cites from an earlier authority ('*evam purāṇa-vachanād uddhṛtam*') (*Rgbhāṣhya*, *Adhyāya* 1, *Sūkta* 4, *Varga* 1)

एको वेदः कृते ह्यासीत् त्रेताया स त्रिधाऽभवत् ।

He also explains that the original Vedic corpus (*mūla-veda*) consisted of three kinds of mantrās: *ṛchah* (laudations, *stuti*), *nigada* (loud incantations, *uchchhair japah*) and *sāman* (songs, *gīti*). The three collections of these mantrās, at a later period, resulted in the three Vedās: *Rg*, *Yajus* and *Sāma*. And at a still later period Atharva was added specifically to serve sacrificial ends:

ऋचः स च उद्धृत्य ऋग्वेदं कृतवान् प्रभुः ।

यजूंषि निगदाच्चैव तथा सामानि सामतः ॥

व्यदधात् यज्ञसन्तत्यै वेदमेकं चतुर्विधम् ।

ऋग्यजुः सामाथर्वाश्च वेदाश्चत्वार उद्धृताः ॥ (op. cit.)

In the original Veda, there was an uninterrupted flow of *ṛchah* ('*mūla-vede ṛcho nirantarāḥ*'). And this was the visualization of the seers. The one Veda, in other words, was Ṛgveda. Even in the sacrificial context, the primacy of *ṛchah* was recognized. The Yajurveda Samhitā itself says:

यद्वै यज्ञस्य साम्ना यजुषा क्रियते शिथिलं तद्यदृचा तद् दृढम् ॥

TS (6.5.10.12)

It is for this reason that Yajurveda and Sāmaveda (as also Atharvaveda) incorporate a large number of *ṛchah*. This suggests that the mystic approach of the *ṛchah* is valid even in sacrificial acts. The sacrifice becomes firmly established (*dr̥dham*), only when the esoteric import is underlined. The *ṛchah*, included in the Yajurveda Samhitā, must therefore, determine the spirit of the sacrifices described in this collection.

There is a pretty story in Taittirīya Samhitā (2.5.8) which illustrates this point. Once a dispute arose between two experts in the sacrificial lore, Nṛmedha and Paruchchhepa, concerning the practical efficacy of the mantrās. They agreed to test their competence by igniting moist wood merely by reciting the *sāmīdheni-mantrās*. Nṛmedha first recited the mantrās with all the fervour at his command. But the moist wood did not catch fire; only smoke came out.

Then it was the turn of Paruchchhepa. When he recited the mantrās, the moist wood at once began burning. Nṛmedha was astonished. He asked Paruchchhepa: "Friend, we are both alike experts in the *sāmidheni-mantrās*. We know the mantrās equally well. And we recited the mantrās exactly as prescribed. Yet, how is it that your recital became effective, while mine did not?" Paruchchhepa replied: "It is true that the knowledge of the two of us of the *sāmidheni-mantrās* is equal, alike and authentic. But the line of the *sāmidheni-ṛk* in which the expression 'ghṛta' (meaning clarified butter, mental clarity, essence) occurs is the significant part of the mantra. I had an understanding of this, and when I recited I brought this understanding to bear. This made the *sāmidhenī* fire-like (*sāmidhenīsheva taj-jyotir janayati*), and it was this that made the recital effective."

It is not the words of the mantra (*ṛchaḥ*) that are important, but the esoteric import, even when they are used in sacrificial sessions.

This idea is contained even in R̥gveda (1.164.39)

ऋचे अक्षरे परमे व्योमन् यस्मिन्देवा अधि विश्वे निषेदुः ।

यस्तन्न वेद किमृचा करिष्यति य इत्तद्विदुस्त इमे समासते ॥

“The *ṛchas* reach up to the highest reality, the luminous void, where all-gods are firmly established. If one does not know this, the mere recitation of the *ṛchas* would serve no purpose.” It is interesting that this *ṛk* is cited in Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa (3.10.9.14) and also in Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (2.11.1) with tacit approval. All Veda is only *ṛchas*, and the focus of attention is the imperishable Brahman.

2. The word “*yajus*” meaning sacrifice, is derived from the root ‘*yaj*’ which means “to worship gods”, “to establish contacts with gods”, and “to offer gifts and oblations to the Gods” (*deva-pūjā sangati-karaṇa dāneṣhu*). It may be noted that the word *yajña* also is derived from the same root in the same sense (यज्+नङ्, Pāṇini 3.3.90). Yāska speaks of *yajña* being important for *yajus* (*yajuryajateh*). The words emphasize the relation between human beings and the gods. And the nature of the relationship is well brought out by the Taittirīya Samhitā acknowledgement (1.8.4.3):

देहि मे, ददामि ते । नि मे धेहि, नि ते दधे ।

नीहारमिन्नि मे हरा, नीहारं नि हरामि ते ॥

“If you give me, then I shall give you. If you establish power in me, I shall place power in you. If you accept what I give you, then I shall accept what

you give me!’’ Bhaṭṭa-Bhāskara rightly points out that this transactional approach illustrates the normal human behaviour of give and take (*loka-vṛttānta*). Yajurveda rests on the principle of giving in order to receive. All rituals are applications of this principle. What is involved here is articulate talk of purposefully enticing the Gods (hence called ‘*nigada*’, the mantra-form from which Yajurveda evolved), and not hidden meanings which characterize the *ṛchah*.

In this context, it must be noted that there are *ṛchah* in Yajurveda, but not *yajus* in Ṛgveda. In fact, *ṛchah*, *yajus* and *sāman* are names of mantrās, and not of Vedic books. This becomes evident by what we read in Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (1.2.1.26):

अहे बुध्निय मन्त्रं मे गापाय ऋचः सामानि यजूंषि ॥

The mantrās that are *ṛchah* are characterized by stylized and constrained utterance (*mitatva*), the mantrās that are *yajus* are not so stylized or constrained (*amitatva*), and the mantrās that are *sāman* are musical (*svaratva*). The *ṛchah* that we find included in Yajurveda do not lose their *ṛchah*-character nor do they acquire *yajus* character; they continue to be *ṛchah*. There are some *ṛchah* which are present in the Yajurveda collection, but are not

found in R̥gveda itself. For instance, the mantra in Taittirīya Samhitā (1.1.5.1):

देवो वः सवितोऽनुनातु । अच्छिद्रेण पवित्रेण ।

वसोः सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिः ॥

This is in *gāyatrī chhandas* and therefore it is a *ṛk*. Merely because it has a *vīniyoga* (*vrihyavaghāta*) in the context, it does not become a *yajus*, even when it is found in Yajurveda and not in R̥gveda.

3. It is interesting that *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa* (34.8.13) and *Vāyu-purāṇa* (61.5.10) speak of Yajurveda as being 'constructed' (*vyakalpayat*), unlike the *ṛchah* (which constitute the '*mūla-veda*' mentioned above.)

वैशम्पायनगोत्रोऽसौ यजुर्वेदं व्यकल्पयत् ।

षडशीतिस्तु येनोक्ताः संहिता यजुषां शुभाः ॥

षडशीतिस्तथा शिष्याः संहितानां विकल्पकाः ।

The sage responsible for the 'construction' of Yajurveda was Vaishampāyana, whose other name was Charaka ('*charaka iti vaishampāyanākhyā*', *Kāshikā-vṛtti* 4.3.104), and who had 86 students, and thus there were 86 collections of teachings. Of them, however, we now have only four: Taittirīya, Maitrāyaṇīya (otherwise called *Kālāpa*), Kaṭha and Kāpishṭhala-kaṭha. The last three are counted as '*charaka-shākhās*'.

It is the first one that is important for us here. This collection (in seven kāṇḍās, 44 *prapāṭhakās* and 635 *anuvākās*) begins with इषे त्वोर्जे त्वा which is a mantra used in the rite of cutting a *palāsha* branch for driving-away the calf (*vatsāpakaraṇa*) and ends with समुद्र उदरमन्तरिक्षं वायुः , a mantra employed in *ashvamedha* ritual. Now why is this recension called 'Taittirīya'? Apart from the story of the *tittiri* birds swallowing up what Yājñavalkya, who was a disciple of Vaishampāyana vomited, which is little more than a story, it derives from the sage Tittiri, who was a disciple of Vaishampāyana (and also a brother). This lineage of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda as represented in this recension is given as follows: Vaiṣampāyana, Paiṅgi-Yāska, Tittiri, Ūkha and Ātreya.

वैशम्पायनो यास्कायैनं शाखां प्राह पैङ्गये ।

यास्कः पैङ्गिस्तित्तिरये ऊखाय प्राह तित्तिरिः ॥

ऊखः शाखामिमां प्राह आत्रेयाय यशस्विने ।

तेन शाखा प्रणीतेयमात्रेयीति च प्रोच्यते ॥

Tittiri is regarded as the 'central jewel' (*madhya - maṇi*) as he came after Vaishampāyana who originated the recension and before Ātreya who popularized it. He was a forceful person and gathered round him a group of adherents who were named

Taittirīyās (Ūkha, Āpastamba, Satyāshāḍha, Shraudheya, Hiranyakeshi, Bodhāyana and others). This was the recension of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda which was accepted by them.

4. This recension contains mantrās visualized by seers like Prajāpati (220 mantrās), Gautama (80 mantrās), Dīrghatama (67), Parameshthī (student of Prajāpati, 60), Ātreya (disciple of Vāmadeva, 57), Vāmadeva (55), Vasiṣṭha (53), Medhātithi (47), Madhuchchanda (son of Vishvāmitra, 47) Vishvāmitra (33), Varuṇa (30), Angirasa (29), Shunaḥ-shepa (Devarāta, 24), Agastya (19), Jamadagni (son of Rchika) and Bharadvāja (18).

Kātyāyana's *Sarvānukramanī*, which is affiliated to Shukla-Yajurveda, makes an interesting classification of the seers mentioned above: mantra-seers (*mantra-draṣṭāraḥ*) and mantra--rememberers (*mantra-smartāraḥ*). The *sūtra* runs: ऋषयो मन्त्रद्रष्टारः स्मर्तारः पारमेष्ठ्यादयः ॥ It mentions "Pārameṣṭhī and others" (*pārameṣṭhyādayaḥ*) of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda as illustrations of the latter category. What does this classification suggest? Such a division does not obtain in Ṛgveda; the seers of the *ṛchaḥ*, the entire collection, are in the real sense only '*mantra-draṣṭāraḥ*'. But when some of the *ṛchaḥ* came to be

included in the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda in various sequences of ritualistic significance, they were only remembered. By implication, the seers of Shukla Yajurveda are mantra-*drashtārah*. The contextual relevance thus became more important than the original visualization. There are five seers in Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda (called Kāṇḍarṣhis): Prajāpati, Soma, Agni, Vishvedevāh and Svayambhū. They are all mantra-*smartārah*, and were responsible for the five kāṇḍās of this Yajurveda known after them. Prājāpatya begins with (TS 1.1.1), Saumya (1.2.1), Āgneya (TA 1.2.1), Vaishvadeva (TS 1.8.1) and Svāyambhuva (TA 2.3).

Kātyāyana's Sarvānukramaṇī makes it clear that these Kāṇḍarṣhis only collected together some well-known mantrās visualized by other seers in Ṛgveda, brought together here for purposes of ritual (*karmānushthāna*). They cannot therefore be classed as 'mantra-*drashtārah*'; they are only 'mantra-*smartārah*'. When in such collections, the *ṛchah* occur the seers of them are precisely those that are mentioned in Ṛgveda. They are mantra-*drashtārah*, and the Kāṇḍarṣhis are only mantra-*smartārah*.

5. Along with the remembered *ṛchah*, there were also mantrās of application, explanation and prescription.

These were 'yajus' proper. They also included *brāhmaṇās* and *arthavādas*. And owing to the very nature of the addendum, these passages were in prose. They were not in the form in which the *ṛchah* appeared: the *chhandas*. *Chhandas* is not merely a metrical form, but is distinguished by its nature of concealment (*chhādanāt*). The *ṛchah* have a hidden meaning, which is not apparent to those who are not sages themselves or who have not undergone austerities ('*na pratyakṣham astyanṛṣhayo atapaso vā*'). Absence of *chhandas* indicates the meaning that is expressly expressed by words. This is what Jaimini means, when he formulates '*sheṣhe yajus shabdah*' (Mīmāṃsa-sūtra, 2.1.37). Shabara-svāmin's commentary on this:

या न गीतिर्न च पादबद्धः तत् प्रश्लिष्टपठितं यजुः ॥

points out that the distinguishing feature of the mantrās of Yajurveda is their not being either in poetic form or in a musical mould. Mādhava also in his *Jaiminīya-nyāya-mālā-vistara* says:

वृत्तगीतिवर्जितत्वेन प्रश्लिष्टपठिता मन्त्रा यजूंषि ॥

In the above definition of 'yajus' (ritualistic formulae), the descriptive expression '*prashliṣṭa-paṭhita*' must be noted. The word '*prasleṣha*'

signifies 'close contact', 'proximity', 'coalescence (of vowels)', 'entwining' and '*pāṭha*' is 'reading', 'recital', 'mention'. The expression therefore refers to what is recited in prose (without metrical or musical form) in close association with the passages that have metrical or musical form, viz. the *ṛchah*. Jaimini's '*sheṣhe yajuh-shabdah*' simply declares that what are not *ṛchah* are to be identified as '*yajus*'. But *yajus* cannot exist altogether independent of the *ṛchah*.

In this context, Yāska calling Yajurveda '*ādhvaryava*' (sacrificial in import) (Nirukta, 7.3) has been explained by Sāyaṇa himself as suggesting preponderance of '*yajus*', albeit the *ṛchah* are very much present there (Introduction to his *Bhāṣhya* on Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa):

तत्र यजुषां अध्वर्युवैदेऽति बहुलत्वात् क्वचित् ऋचां सद्भावेऽपि यजुर्वेद इत्याख्यायते ॥

6. The Mīmāsakās define the Veda as constituted by the mantrās and *brāhmaṇās* (Āpastamba-*shruta-sūtra*, 24.1.31)

मन्त्रब्राह्मणयोर्वेदनामधेयम् ॥

The mantrās are further defined as whatever is identified by the sacrificial experts (*yājñika*) as such;

and whatever are not *mantrās* are *brāhmaṇas* (*sheṣhe brāhmaṇa-shabdah*). It is obvious that these definitions are entirely circular and are partisan and are devoid of etymological or conventional justification. They make little sense. Further, Āpastamba's description of Veda suits eminently, if also exclusively, Yajurveda, more particularly Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. Even Shukla Yajurveda has mantra (40 *adhyāyas* consisting of *ṛchah* and *yajūmshi*) and *brāhmaṇa* (in Shatapatha Brāhmaṇa), set apart from each other. It must be remembered that Āpastamba was a disciple of Vaishampāyana, and that the Taittirīya-Samhitā is also known as Āpastamba-Samhitā. It is here that the *mantrās* (viz. the *ṛchah*) and the *brāhmaṇās* (viz. the *yajus*) occur in a mixed up manner. They are not distinguished either in the text or in employment.

The distinction of form between the mantra and the *brāhmaṇa* is obvious. The former has the facility for *samhitā* (words being combined grammatically) character, and therefore requires *pada-pāṭha* (recital of separated words). The mantra could be recited in several ways like *krama* and *jaṭā*. It is also studied in the *samhitā pāda* (prose and poetry), *vibhakta-pada-pāṭha* (separated words) and *krama-pāṭha* (orderly

arrangement). The *brāhmaṇa*, however, is distinct from the mantra in form as well as spirit. It lacks the *samhitā* character, and therefore *pada-pāṭha* is here ruled out. It is characterized by its prescriptive nature (*vidhi*). Even when the mantra occurs in the midst of *brāhmaṇa*, it never loses its original form; and likewise the *brāhmaṇa*. But their juxtaposition may cause confusion (*buddhi-mālinya*), as it happens in Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda.

It may also be noted that Yajurveda has come down in two traditional strands: *Brahma-sampradāya* and *Āditya-sampradāya*, according to Shatapatha Brāhmaṇa. The former is identified with Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda and the latter with Shukla Yajurveda. The usual explanation is that Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda is so called because it is dark in the sense that *mantrās* and *brāhmaṇas* (the two ingredients of Veda) occur in a thorough admixture, so thoroughly in fact, that it causes confusion (*buddhi-vyāmoha* by *viṣhaya-sāṅkarya*). In contrast, in Shukla Yajurveda the subject-matter is clear because the *mantrās* are neatly separated from the *brāhmaṇās*. Further, unlike in Shukla Yajurveda, in the Kṛṣṇa division, *rshi*, *chhandas* and *devatā* are not specified. For the same reason, Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda is regarded as stale, sapless and 'regurgitated' (*yātayāma*).

One wonders, however, whether this is the only possible explanation for the expression 'dark'. There is no doubt that the distinction between the two strands of Yajurveda is an ancient one. We read in Ananta-deva's *Pratijñā-sūtra-bhāṣhya* (and also in Mahīdāsa's *Charaṇa-vyūha-bhāṣhya*):

शुक्लं कृष्णमिति द्वेधा यजुश्च समुदाहृतम् ।

शुक्लं वाजसनं ज्ञेयं कृष्णं तु तैत्तिरीयकम् ॥

We find here that Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda is identified with Taittirīya Samhitā, ignoring the other recensions (like Maitrāyaṇīya, Kāṭha and so on), even as Vājasaneyā Samhitā is identified with Shukla Yajurveda. Also:

आध्वर्यवं कचिद् होत्रं कचिदित्यवस्थया ।

बुद्धिमालिन्यहेतुत्वाद्यजुः कृष्णमितीयते ।

व्यवस्थितप्रकरणं तद्यजुः शुक्लमितीयते ॥

the distinction is stated to have been made in the *smṛti*-texts (*ityādi smṛteshcha*) like the *shrāuta* and *smārta-sūtrās*. The work quoted speaks of *ādhvaryava*-mantrās (viz. *yajus*) and *hautra*-mantrās (viz. *ṛchah*) being mixed up in an unorganized manner; the text presents an odd assortment of extracts from R̥gveda (laudations and invocations) and passages from Yajurveda (useful for worship, offering of oblations and establishment of relation

with deities) without any order or system. That is to say, the *ṛchah* portion and the *yajus* portion are not related with each other in a sensible way: they are devoid of coherence and correspondence. Their occurrence is haphazard. This is what, is suggested by the rather strong expression '*buddhi-mālīnya*', "confusing and confounding the mind".

There is yet another idea that is prevalent among the authors on Taittirīya Samhitā. The *ādhvaryava*-mantrās (viz the *yajus*) are like the wall on which the *hautra*-mantrās (viz. the *ṛchah*) as well as the *mantrās* that the sacrificer (*yajamāna*) is required to recite are like pictures mounted upon the wall. This idea emphasizes the primacy of ritualistic passages, and the subordinate position assigned to the laudatory *mantrās* in Yajurveda. The ritualistic passages are illustrated in the first thirteen *anuvākās* of Taittirīya Samhitā (*prājāpatya-kāṇḍa*); the *mantrās* here have their specific purpose to serve (*vinīyoga*). They are to be recited while a ritualistic act is being done. The *mantrās* have no value when divorced from the ritual. They are described as only revealing the nature of the act that is prescribed (*anushtheyārthapakāshaka*). It is only the recital of the mantra that becomes relevant (it is productive of *adr̥ṣṭa-phala*), and not its meaning.

7. This whole line of thinking is the creation of the ritualistic community, and becomes irrelevant to the people outside. It is unfortunate that the inner meaning of the *ṛchah* has totally been sidelined in an attempt to overrate ritualism. To augment the ritualistic interpretation, Taittirīya Samhitā has been appended with its own *Shikṣhā*-texts, *pratishākhya*-grammar, *chhandas*, *kalpa-sūtra*, *jyotisha* manuals and its own *nirukta*; *svara*, *varṇa*, *mātrā*, *karaṇa* and other details have also been stylized. The only commentaries that are available on this Samhitā are by Bhaṭṭa-Bhāskara and Sāyaṇa, and both of them are ritual-oriented. However it must be conceded that the former commentator attempts now and then to draw attention to the esoteric meanings.

The whole text as presented and understood now smacks of involvement with yajña as a ritual. It is commonly believed that yajñas from the simplest kind like *agnihotra* to the most elaborate and long-drawn variety like *sattra-yāga* are dealt with here. It is also common to take the text as divided into five sections, dealing with *prājāpatya*, *saumya*, *agneya*, *vaishvadeva* and *svāyambhuva* rituals. There is no doubt that yajña is the central theme in this work. But we find in a large number of references that, yajña is

perceived as a *devatā*, holy and purifying, (TS 1.7.6-7), removing our sins and bestowing on us strength and power, knowledge of reality, (2.6.9-10), making us happy, (1.7.1-3). Yajña is in fact the *purohita* of the *rshis* (7.3.11); by rituals, it is the yajña that must be invoked (1.7.9); the gods beheld yajña, the great deity by performing yajñās (3.2.2). This is obviously not a ritualistic conception of yajña. When the yajña-vedi (altar) is looked upon as Brahma, Viṣṇu and Rudra, as the seat of freedom for Indra, the golden throne for Agni, the pleasure-grove for Soma, the place of rest for Varuṇa, the place of glory for the Gods, and as the leader for the ritualist to ascend to the high heavens, is it just a dry and meaningless ritual that is meant by yajña?

Viewed from a deeper insight, the yajña cannot in fact refer to the external rites involving priests, offerings and materials. The three principal features of the conventional yajña, viz., the eating of *puroḍāsha*-cakes, the drinking of the Soma juice and the ritual slaughter of animals (*pashvāmbhana*) must have an esoteric meaning, for this cannot be described as "the most-excellent work" inspired by the god Savitr (Taittirīya Samhitā, 1.1.1):

देवो वः सविता प्रार्पयतु श्रेष्ठतमाय कर्मणे ॥

The usual identification of the "most excellent work" is with yajña, after Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (3.2.3):

श्रेष्ठमाय कर्मण इत्याह यज्ञो हि श्रेष्ठतमं कर्म ॥

And the yajña viewed as the most excellent work cannot be just eating and drinking and wanton killing, if the Vedic corpus has to have an abiding value for mankind. The most important detail of yajña is giving up one's wealth for the sake of the deity (*devatoddeshapūrvaka-dravya-tyāgah*). After detailing the twentyone *samsthas* of yajña, Bodhāyana -grhya-sūtra (1.1.1.18-21) mentions four varieties of yajña which must be known and resorted to (स चतुर्धा ज्ञेय उपास्यश्च): *svādhyāya-yajña*, *japa-yajña*, *karma-yajña* and *mānasa-yajña*. The text itself says that each of them is ten times superior to the preceding one

तेषां परस्परादृशगुणो वीर्येण ।

We have here a clear reference to the sacrifice being really internal. All external rituals are bracketed in *karma-yajña*, which is inferior to *mānasa-yajña*. Yajña to be effective must needs be internal. When the sage Bṛhaspati is said to have reached the very source of all existence by yajña RV (10.71.3), yajña means the profound experience of

Brahman. The ritualistic interpretation which has debased the significance of Yajurveda has little justification in the text itself. For instance, take the very first line in the first *anuvāka* in Taittirīya Samhitā:

इषे त्वोर्जे त्वा वायवः स्थ उपायवः स्थ ।

The confusion among the ritualists starts with whether in the first three words there is one mantra or two mantrās (as *Āpastamba* offers a *vikalpa*). And it mounts with the realization that the mantra (or mantrās) has no verb, and therefore cannot be meaningful. It is obvious that the verbs have to be supplied (*adhyāhāra*). The verb must depend on the purpose of the mantrās (*vinīyoga*), which is given as:

इषे त्वेत्याच्छिनत्ति । ऊर्जे त्वे त्यनुमार्ष्टि ॥

So the verbs that the ritualist must supply are ‘*ācchinadmi*’ (I cut) for the first mantra, ‘*anumārjmi*’ (I purify, or alternately ‘*anusamnayāmi*’, I straighten) for the second.

इषे त्वा आच्छिनद्मि । ऊर्जे त्वा अनुमर्ज्मि ।

“I cut thee for food, I sanctify thee for vigour”. But the sentences are still meaningless, unless the context is provided. What is it that is cut, and sanctified? The ritualist looks for a *brāhmaṇa* injunction (*vidhi*):

यत्पर्णशाखया वत्सानपाकरोति ।

He seizes this straw and tries to cross over the mystery of cutting and purifying. He takes the mantrās as addressed to the *palāsha* branch, which is cut and sanctified to drive away the calf so that the cow may be milked. This indeed is an ingenious explanation. But how does it go with the next portion (another mantra, if you will), वायवः स्थ (‘‘you are like unto breezes’’, ‘‘you belong to Vāyu’’)? The ritualist suggests that this portion is addressed to the calves, which are about to be driven away by the *palāsha*-stick. And the expression ‘*vāyavaḥ stha*’ is taken to mean ‘‘you are going away’’. Even when Vāyu’s involvement cannot be easily brushed aside, the calves purify the atmosphere even as a breeze does.

How about the next phrase उपायवः स्थ? Another mantra, addressed now to the cows, asking them to return, for being milked. And subsequently in the same *anuvāka*, there is a return to the *palāsha* stick with a prayer that it should protect the sacrificer’s animals. Thus in the same *anuvāka* *palāsha*-stick, calves, cow and the *palāsha*-stick again are addressed. In the next *anuvāka*, the scythe (*ashva-parshu*) and the bunch of sacred grass (*darbha-samūha*) are addressed, followed in the following

anuvākās by the vessels and the carts, the pounding stick and the winnow basket, the paddy-husk and the rice-grains.

This is a sample of the anomalous and rather wild play of imagination, characteristic of the ritualistic interpretation. Needless to say that this is alien to the spirit of the Vedic corpus, at once austere and spiritual, mystic and magnificent. The real import of the Taittirīya Samhitā passages needs to be recovered so that this text is brought to the focus of the Vedic student's attention. It must be retrieved from the clutches of ritualists.

It may also be pointed out that whatever the Veda, the primary purpose (*vinīyoga*) is *svādhyāya* (study) *adhyayana*. We have injunctions like:

स्वाध्यायोऽध्येतव्यः ।

स्वाध्याय एव तपः । (Nāka-Maudgalya)

[Tai. U. (1.9)]

The *tapas* here is *brahma-yajña* (study of the sacred scripture) or *svādhyāya-jñāna-yajña* according to *Smṛtis*. By study alone is truly the *yajña* accomplished.

यं यं क्रतुमधीते तेन तेन हास्येष्टं भवति ॥

Extraneous ritual involvements become secondary or unnecessary. In this sense, Veda whether it is Rgveda or Yajurveda is the instrument of inner sacrifice, and has a mystic meaning.

Dr. Kashyap who has valiantly attempted to restore the mystic significance of Taittirīya Samhitā by this pioneering endeavour, is to be congratulated, and his efforts are to be commended.

[Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao who has been awarded several honours such as *vidyāṅkārā*, *shāstra-chūdāmaṇi*, *sangīta-kalāratna*, *vedānta-nidhi* etc., is an eminent traditional scholar having studied Veda and Vedānta in the traditional method under several orthodox pundits in Mysore. He is also well-versed in modern learning having been the Professor of Psychology at National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) and at other Universities. He is also an eminent painter, sculptor and musicologist. He has authored over fifty monographs on various aspects of Indian culture which includes art and architecture in Indian temples (three volumes), *āgama kosha* (twelve volumes), *pratima-kosha* (six volumes). His latest project is the *Rig Veda Darshana* which intends to bring into focus the traditional approach to Veda based on the early authorities like Yāska's *Nirukta* and Shaunaka's *Bṛhaddevata*. Eight volumes of this series have been published and twenty more are in the plan.]

3. Appendix

(i) Internal Yajña

With *Narāyaṇasmaranās* we express our appreciation of this masterpiece on Vedic literature, the *Kriṣṇa Yajur Vedīya Taittirīya Samhitā* with English Translation and commentary edited by a great devotee of Truth, Sri R.L. Kashyap.

The vast Vedic literature which is the bedrock of our culture, religion and philosophy is divided into four parts - *Samhitā*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka* and *Upanishads* on the basis of the subject matter and the medium of expression. In the opinion of Vedic scholars in general, the first two parts of this form *karma kāṇḍa* (ritual part), the last one is *jñāna kāṇḍa* (spiritual part) and the third one is a bridge between these two. The rituals dealt with in the first two parts consist of external sacrifices only dominated by animal sacrifices of various kinds and there is no place for *jñāna* in them. This view is held by traditional scholars of our country who base their thoughts on the commentary of the great scholar, *Sāyaṇa*, who in spite of his unbounded reverence for

'Ashirvachana' written for Dr. R.L. Kashyap's latest work *Kriṣṇa Yajurveda Taittirīya Samhitā*. Published by SAKSIVC, # 63, 13th Main, Jayanagar, IV Block, Bangalore - 560011

Vedās and the vast knowledge of Vedās and Vedāṅgās is satisfied with the external meaning of Vedic texts. The Western scholars and their spiritual sons in India who base their studies mostly on linguistics and comparative mythology have the same opinion on the meaning of the Vedās. The *mīmāṃsaka* school in our country see the Vedic sacrifices in the same light (as external exercises unrelated to the internal).

As observed by the author of this work and by the writer of the foreword, the erudite scholar, Sri S. K. Ramachandra Rao, the revered Āchārya Ānanda Tīrtha was the foremost among those who observed that in the Vedic text more is meant than meets the ear. The great yogi and the man of light and learning, Sri Aurobindo, visualised spiritual meaning in the text of the so called *karma kāṇḍa* also and this view was elaborated by his ardent devotee and scholar Sri Kapāli Sāstry. In continuation of this line Dr. R.L. Kashyap has interpreted this Samhitā part of the Vedās from a spiritual standpoint. He declares that the outer yajña in the *karma kāṇḍa* is closely connected with inner yajña which is the final import. The so-called animal sacrifice in the *karma kāṇḍa* means the sacrifice of beasts within our minds. The performance of the inner yajña leads to full and perfect health and this view is supported by Brāhmaṇa and Upanishad texts.

I agree with the views of the author on very many grounds:

(1) The Vedās being revealed to Vedic *riṣhis* who were yogins cannot be properly interpreted by those who lack that vision and are merely gerund grinders.

यामृषयो मन्त्रकृतो मनीषिणः अन्वैच्छन् देवाः तपसा श्रमेण ॥

yāmṛṣhayo mantrakṛto manīṣhinah

anvaichchhan devāḥ tapasā shrameṇa;

(Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 2.8.8.13)

The wise *riṣhis*, reciters of mantrās (*mantrakṛta*) desired to recover (the meaning) of the Divine Word (*devāḥ*) by means of great effort (*shrama*) and askesis (*tapas*).

(2) That the Vedic ritual properly performed ends in *jñāna* is supported by the declaration of great Āchāryās.

आत्मनि स्वप्रकाशाग्रौ चित्तमेकाहुतिं क्षिपेत्

ātmani svaprakāśhāgnau chittam-ekāhutim

kshipet

(In the fire of the Supreme Self which is Self-Lustre, the mind should be offered as the chief oblation.)

This view of the Āchārya can be best demonstrated by the *jayādi homa* which is found in

karma kāṇḍa. Mantrās chanted in this ritual are the different states of the mind; चित्त (*chitta*), चित्ति (*chitti*), आकूत (*ākūta*), आकूति (*ākūti*) definitely stand for mental oblation in the sacred fire of the Supreme Self.

The Taittirīya Āraṇyaka definitely declares the mind as the real sacrificial equipment.

चित्तिः सुक् (*chittiḥ sruk*), चित्तमाज्यम् (*chittam ājyam*)

[Taittirīya Āraṇyaka TA (3.1.1)]

(3) The names of Vedic Gods like Agni and Indra really find their rest in the Supreme Self as declared by Jaimini.

साक्षादप्यविरोधं जैमिनिः

sākṣhādapyavirodham jaiminiḥ

(Vedānta Sūtrās 1.2.29)

(4) That the so-called animal sacrifices really means the sacrifice of the animal forces on the altar of the mind was not taken note of even by great geniuses of the past;

पशुमारण कर्मदारुणः अनुकम्पामृदुरेव श्रोत्रियः

pashumāraṇa karmadāruṇaḥ anukampāmṛdureva shrotriyaḥ

(Though the Vedic devotee is cruel in the act of slaying the sacrificial animal, he is in heart very soft with mercy). (Śakuntala).

But the original intention of Vedic seers in such sacrifices was internal sacrifice only because the Vedās lay stress on the vow of non-injury very often as observed by the author of this edition. That the seers had compassion even for grass is clear from the second *anuvāka* of the very first chapter of Taittirīya Samhitā TS (1.1.2.7-10)

देवबर्हिर्मा त्वाऽन्वङ्मा तिर्यक् पर्व ते राध्यासम् आच्छेत्ता ते मा
रिषं

*deva barhir mā tvā anvangmā tiryak parva te
rādhyāsam āchchhettā te mā riṣham*

देवबर्हिः शतवल्दां वि रोह स्रहस्रवल्दा वि वयस्रुहेम

*devabarhiḥ shatavalsham vi roha sahasra valshā vi
vayam ruhema*

(sacrificial grass, may I not cut you either across or along. May I not cut you at the joints and segments. May you grow hundred fold and thousand fold.)

In brief I accord my agreement to the view of the author on the spiritual interpretation of the Vedic Texts and the relation between the internal and external yajñās. External worship is denounced in the *shāstrās* but external worship is that which begins in

the external and ends in the external. But the worship enjoined in our *shāstrās* starts in the internal, extends into the external and ends in the internal and it is internal worship only.

उपावरोह जातवेदः स क्षय एहि

upāvaroha jātavedaḥ sa kṣhaya ehi

जातवेदो भुव आजायमानस्सक्षय एहि उपावरोह पुनस्त्वम्

jātavedo bhuva ājāyamānas-sakṣhya ehi upāvaroha punastvam

TB (2.5.8.8)

My Lord, the divine fire, please descend here near me..... please come back to your original abode.

Srimate Rāmānujāya Namaḥ

Srimate Nigamānta Mahādesikāya Namaḥ

Srimate Srinivāsaranga Mahāyogine Namaḥ

Narāyaṇasmaranās

॥ श्री श्री रंग प्रिय श्रीपाद श्री श्रीः ॥

Bangalore June 25, 2002

[Sri Sri Rangapriya Swamiji:

Born in 1927 in Hedatāle, a village in Mysore District, he had his early education in Samskr̥t and Vedās at the feet of his revered father Sri Srinivāsa Deshikācharya, later Samskr̥t education in Maharaja Samskr̥t College,

Mysore, Graduation at the Mysore University and the Saugor University. He had Initiation in Yoga and Cultural education at the feet of the most revered master Sri Sriranga Mahāguru, the founder of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga Vijñāna Mandira and served as his disciple. He was the professor of Samskr̥t in National College, Bangalore for over two decades. He is the President of Bhārata Darshana Prakāshana which has translated the entire Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa and the Srimad Bhāgavata Puranam into Kannada. He was initiated into Sanyāsa at Brahma Tantra Parakāla Srimaṭham and into the esoteric truths of Veda and Darshanās, and tantra shāstrās by the master yogi Sri Sri Rangamahāprabhu; now in-charge of the Bangalore division of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga Vijñana Mandiram.]

(ii) Table of Symbolism

Symbolism of some proper nouns or names

- Agni:** Fire; It is the cosmic power of heat and light and the will power united with wisdom. Human will power is a feeble projection of this power. It can be strengthened by the RV chants to Agni.
- Indra:** He is the Lord of the Divine Mind and Action. In Indian tradition, mind is not a source of knowledge, it manipulates the knowledge to aid action. Indra battles the evil forces on behalf of the human.
- Vāyu:** Wind; He is the Lord of all the Life-energies, *Prāṇa* which represent the passions, feelings, emotions and abilities.
- Ashvins:** The Lords of Bliss and Divine Physicians who render the human body free of disease so that it can accept the divine *Prāṇa*, the life-energy.
- Mitra:** The Lord of Love and Harmony.
- Varuṇa:** The Master of Infinities who cannot tolerate restrictive thinking or actions. Only he can cut the three bonds which restrict the three aspects of every human being - physical, vital and mental.

Sarasvati: The Goddess of inspiration

Īla: The Goddess of revelation.

Sarama: The Goddess of intuition.

Sūrya: The Supreme Deity of Light and Force.

Symbolism of some common nouns

go: cow; each *go* stands for a particular type of Light or Knowledge.

ashva: Horse; stands for the vital energy which the *devās* can bestow.

adri: Hill; the force or beings of inconscience and ignorance.

āpah: Water; the divine energies flowing from the heights purifying all mankind.

nadi: River; the flowing current of energies.

Sri Aurobindo Kapāli Sāstry Institute of Vedic Culture
(S.A.K.S.I.V.C.)

The Institute was started in 1997 with the aim of disseminating the wisdom in the ancient Veda Samhita and related books such as Upanishads, so that the knowledge becomes easily accessible to all interested persons who are not necessarily knowledgeable in Sanskrit or even the Devanāgarī script. Most of the existing English translations of the Veda Samhita view the books as anthropological and ritualistic curiosities rather than as books of wisdom. Even though Hinduism contains many important religious books of later times, the wisdom of the Vedic age is relevant even today. The sages of the Vedas had an integrated and pragmatic attitude towards the pursuit of the supreme goals of the spiritual life and the demands of everyday life. Unlike some of the later books, the Vedic books do not exhort everyone to take up Sanyās or cessation from common daily professional activities for seriously pursuing a spiritual life.

Our institute draws its inspiration from the great spiritual savants and scholars, Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), Sri Kapāli Sāstry (1886-1953) and Sri Madhav Pandit (1918-1993). Their well-known books emphasize the need for harmonising both the spiritual and 'worldly' aspects of our life. We have to take seriously the notion, 'All is Brahman'. We should become conscious of every act or thought in us so that we can indeed lead a beautiful and harmonious life.

Our first publication was a new edition of the entire text of Rigveda Samhita in a beautiful format, published in 1998. We are apparently the first to publish an English translation of Rigveda Samhita giving the meaning of every Sanskrit word. Volumes 1 to 3 of Rigveda Samhita containing the first 1300 verses in this format were published in 2000-2001.

We have published also books giving the highlights of Rigveda relevant for the modern age. The book "Why read Rigveda" and its Kannada translation have been well received.

We have produced a computer web site <http://www.vedah.com> giving the knowledge contained in a thousand pages in an easily retrievable form; it includes the original text of some of the Veda Samhitā and the Upanishads.

A large number of booklets in both Kannada and English entitled "Creative Life Series" is in production. These books give the highlights of the Vedas, Upanishads and Gīta needed by everyone for leading a creative and happy life.

The Institute is part of the Sri Aurobindo Kapāli Sāstry Institute of Vedic Culture Trust, a non-profit organization. The contributions are partially exempted from Income Tax Act under the Section 80G.

The first great person that raised his voice against injustice, impropriety and outrage to the true spirit of the Vedic lore was Sri Aurobindo. He discovered that the Veda had a hidden meaning, not by a scholarly study of Vedic mantrās, but by an inner vision; it was only later that his studies confirmed his direct perception. He was himself a sage, a rishi, and he had therefore the equipment in common with the sages who visualized the mantrās. Vedic hymns are not products of superior scholarly exercises, or of clever constructions of thought, diction and speech. They had wondrous powers within, which freely opened up and blossomed into charming poetic articulations. They were inspired by a profound encounter with reality as such. The hymns therefore are in the nature of mantra-perceptions (mantra-drshtayah).



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Bangalore**