

Holistic Approach of The Vedas

Prof. Dayanand Bhargava

Ex-Prof. & Head, Department of Sanskrit
Ex-Dean, Faculty of Arts, Education & Social Sciences, University of Jodhpur, Jodhpur
Chairman, Veda-Vachaspati Pandit Madhusudan Ojha (Veda Vijnāna) Peeth,
Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, Jaipur

Editor

Prof. Vachaspati Upadhyaya

Vice Chancellor

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth
(Deemed University) New Delhi-110016
Secretary, Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, Ujjain
Former President, Association of Indian Universities



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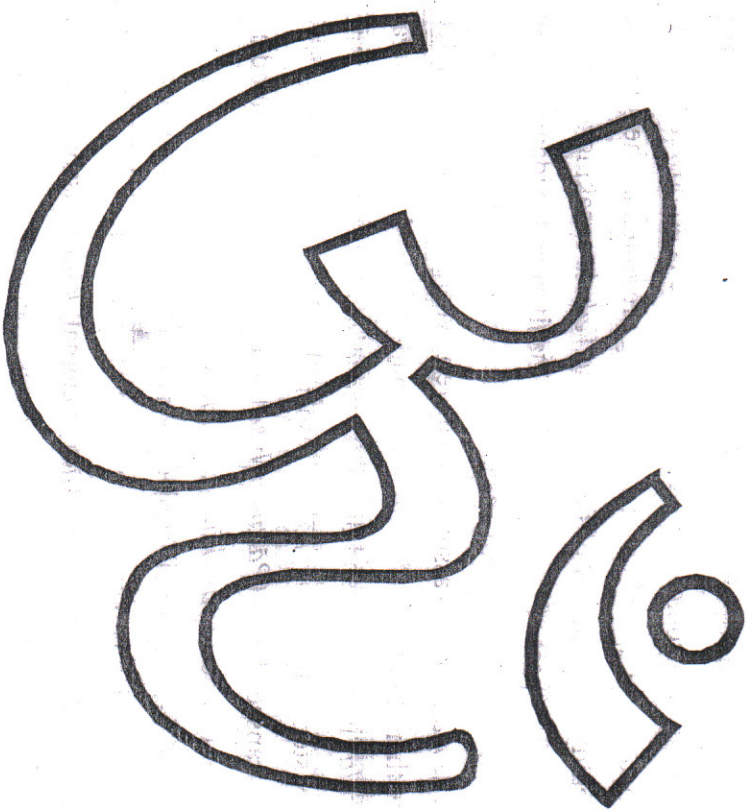
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Glory to

Mahā-Kāla

When *Atharvaveda* (19.53.4) says that 'kāla sustains the worlds, it encompasses them all there is no power superior to *kāla*', it appears as if *kāla* is being presented as the supreme reality. As a matter of fact, here, the *Veda* is speaking about the eternal aspect of *kāla*, which is un-manifest and is identical with *brahma*. The *Purāṇas* speak of this aspect of *kāla* as *mahākāla*. The *mahā kāla* is associated with rest, where as *kāla* is associated with movement; *mahā kāla* is un-manifest and indivisible, whereas *kāla* is manifest and divisible; *mahākāla* is identical with pure existence, the *Being*; *kāla* is responsible for *Becoming*; *mahākāla* is transcendental (*Paramārthika*), *kāla* is a part of the mundane experience (*Vyavahāra*); *mahākāla* is non-dual—beyond enumeration, *kāla* is subject to enumeration; *mahākāla* leads to bliss, which is beyond pain and pleasure, whereas *Kāla* leads to pain and pleasure; *mahākāla* is eternal, *kāla* is associated with creation and deluge; *mahākāla* is associated with *svayambhū*, the self-born, *kāla* is associated with the moon and the sun; *mahākāla* is supra-physical, *kāla* is physical.

— Quoted from Pages 281-282 of the present work.

Editor's Note

Notwithstanding the difference of opinion regarding the date of the Vedas and the entitlement of the *Brāhmaṇa-texts* to the status of the Veda, the Vedas represent the oldest literature of the world and the *Brāhmaṇa-texts* represent the earliest attempt to interpret that literature. Admittedly the interpretation of the *Brāhmaṇa-texts* is ritual oriented but the latest researches have shown it beyond doubt that the Vedic rituals have strong spiritual foundation. The *Brāhmaṇa-texts* thus form a bridge between the *karmakāṇḍa* of the Vedas and *jñānakāṇḍa* of the *Upaniṣads*. This approach of the *Brāhmaṇa-texts*, providing a formidable bridge between the active and the spiritual life, defined by the term *viñāna* by the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* — 'विज्ञानं यज्ञं तज्ज्ञे' *Yajña*, which is a Vedic ritual, is amplified by *viñāna* so as to bring out its hidden spiritual significance. The *Brāhmaṇas* do it by means of *arhāvāda-vākyas*, which explain the logic of a *vidi* or prescription of the Vedic ritual.

It was on the basis of this *viñāna* aspect of the *Brāhmaṇa-texts*, that an eminent scholar of Jaipur, Pandit Madhusudan Ojha, wrote about a hundred works in chaste Sanskrit during the last century. Some of his important works, along with some other work written on the same line, have been surveyed in the present work. Not only did tradition stalwarts like Mahamahopādhyāya Pandit Giridhar Sharma Chaturvedi, Pandit Motilal Shastri and Svāmī Surjana Dass expressed their views following this line of approach, but modern scholars like Dr. V.S. Agrawal also devoted a large part of their scholarly work to the development of this school of thought.

In recent times Shri K.C. Kulish, the founder-editor of *Rajasthan Patrika*, a Himachal Pradesh Daily, did a lot to propagate the above mentioned literature. Professor Dayanand Bhargava, an old friend of mine, came into contact with Shri K.C. Kulish and felt the need of presenting the essence of the *viñāna* aspect of the *Brāhmaṇa-texts* through modern scientific research methodology. The present work embodies the result of his rigorous followed studies of the last two decades.

Dr. Bhargava has also been following the latest researches in the field of science along with his Vedic studies. Only the other day, he was talking about the efficacy of *mantra* by support of the scientific researches carried by a Japanese scholar, Masa

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Emoto, who wrote four volumes under the title 'The Hidden Messages of the Water', in which it has been shown how water responds to our words of praise and condemnation. If we speak in terms of praise to water, it forms beautiful crystals when frozen, but if we condemn it, it forms ugly crystals in a haphazard manner. It means that water, air, fire etc., which are profusely addressed in the Vedas, are not blind to our prayers. Vedic mantras assume a new significance in the light of such findings.

In the present work such parallels as that of the famous formula $E=mc^2$, with the definition of *yajña* as the process of inter-change of consciousness and matter into each other (*वाक्क्षेत्रज्ञोत्तरोक्तिर्माया*) have been frequently drawn. This and many other findings, well documented with about 1000 quotations from the Vedic literature, make the present work valuable not only for the orientalists but also for the scientists who are interested in such problems as tracing the origin of the universe.

The *Brahmana* texts are known for the obscurity of their philosophical expositions. It is not easy to decipher the recondite thoughts enshrined in them but what is heartening is that Prof. Dayanand Bhargava has not only fathomed their depths by delving deep into these primary sources but has also presented his findings in a style which is at once fascinating and illuminating. Many western scholars like Prof. Capra have written copiously on these lines but their writings are normally shorn of reference to the primary sources. Viewed from this standpoint, Prof. Dayanand Bhargava's work is a significant contribution to the cause of interpreting the Vedic thought in a modern idiom which scholars all over the world will find useful and interesting.

Needless to say that this work is very much relevant to the modern times as it propounds a holistic paradigm which is eco-friendly, based on concept of sustainable development which combines peace with prosperity for the whole humanity at a global level.

I am confident that this work will prove to be a welcome addition to the already existing literature of the East and the West on the Vedas.

Om Namo

Vachaspati Upadhyaya

Vice Chancellor

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MY HUMBLE OBEISANCE

To

SAVITĀ DEVA

Whose

Lovely luster, that pervades the three regions of earth, atmosphere and heaven, has inspired my thoughts and actions — nay, my very being — at every moment of my life, whether I know it or not.

I sincerely acknowledge the guidance and help that I received from the following:

1. The seers/ authors of all those works that have been quoted for more than 1000 times in this work. Special mention must be made of two of them:
 - i. Pandit Madhusudan Ojha's works that have been enlisted in the classified bibliography and that have shown me the way to organise my thoughts in the present form.
 - ii. Pandit Motilal Shastri's works, that have been enlisted in the classified bibliography and that have gone a long way in clarifying things in areas of difficulties. The illustrated charts in this work specially owe inspiration to the charts prepared by Pandit Motilal Shastri.

2. Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, Ujjain, (An autonomous organisation of the Ministry of HRD Govt. of India) for awarding Senior Research Fellowship for this project.

3. **Shri Kireet Joshi**, the then Vice President of **Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, Ujjain** for his illuminating guidance and constant encouragement.
4. **Prof. Vachaspati Upadhyaya**, Secretary **Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, Ujjain** for editing the work as a token of love for the Vedas.
5. **Rajasthan Patrika** and **Manavshrama** of Jaipur for providing the rare literature, which I needed for preparing this monograph.
6. **Prof. Ramesh Kumar Pandey** for seeing the work through press in Delhi.
7. **Dr. S.C. Goswami** for going through the whole of the work as a scientist and **Dr. T.R. Sharma** for seeing the final proofs.
8. **Dr. S.L. Gandhi** and **Shri Mahendra Kumar Jain** of Pt. Madhusudan Ojha Vedic Adhyayan Exam Sodh Peeth Sansthan, Jaipur for their valuable guidance.
9. **Shri Ramavater Sharma** for composing and formatting the work.
10. My sons, **Dr. Varun Bhargava M.Ch.**, **Shri Anant Bhargava M.E.** and **Shri Pranav Bhargava B.E.**, M.B.A. and daughter-in-laws **Dr. Mrs. Anu Bhargava M.B.B.S.**, **Dr. Mrs. Reena Bhargava M.D.** and **Mrs. Mani Bhargava M.B.A.** for their constant help during the period of preparation of their work. **Dr. Mrs. Reena Bhargava** took special pains in checking the final proof of the work.
11. Last but not the least, my wife, **Mrs. Lakshmi Bhargava M. A.**, for her invaluable support, suggestion and assistance at every stage, in the composing of this work.

दयानन्द भार्गव

DAYANAND BHARGAVA

Scheme of Transliteration

Vowels

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū
ऋ	ॠ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ
r	l	e	ai	o	ai

Consonants

क्	ख	ग	घ	ङ	च	छ	ज	झ	ञ	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	त	थ	द	ध	न	प	फ	ब	भ	म
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ	c	ch	j	jh	ñ	t	th	d	dh	n	p	ph	b	bh	m	y	f	v	ś	h
च्	ख्	ग्	घ्	ङ्	च्	छ्	ज्	झ्	ञ्	ट्	ठ्	ड्	ढ्	ण्	त्	थ्	द्	ध्	न	प्	फ्	ब्	भ्	म
ट्	ठ्	ड्	ढ्	ण्	त्	थ्	द्	ध्	न	प्	फ्	ब्	भ्	म	स	र	ल	व	श	ष	ह	ः	म्	or ṁ
ष	स	ह	ः	म्	or ṁ	ल	व	श	ष	ह	ः	म्	or ṁ	ल	व	श	ष	ह	ः	म्	or ṁ	ल	व	श

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- THE DIVINE TRIAD AND THE FOUR VEDAS
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- THE TRADITION OF THE BRĀHMAṆA-TEXTS
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विश्वा हि वो नमस्यानि वन्द्या नामानि देवा उत यज्ञियानि वः ।

- ऋग्वेद १०.६३.२

O devas! All your names are worthy of our obeisance, homage and oblation in the *yajña*

को अद्वा वेद क इह प्र वोचद् देवाँ अच्छा पथ्यार का समेति ।

ददृश एषामवमा सर्दांसि परेषु या गुह्येषु ब्रतेषु ॥ - ऋग्वेद ३.५४.५

Who knows it with certainty, who shall speak it out—which path leads to *devas*, who reside in the supreme secret places (and) whose lower abodes (only) are seen.

नाहं तन्तुं न वि जानाम्योतुं न यं वयन्ति समरेऽतमानाः ।

कस्य स्मिक् पुत्र इह वक्त्वानि परो वदत्यवरेण पित्रा ॥

- ऋग्वेद ६.१.२

I do not know the warp or the woof or how they weave together. Whose son will speak it out, (so that) later on the father may speak it.

स इत् तन्तुं स वि जानास्योतुं स वक्त्वान्युतुथा वदति ।

य ई चिकेतदमुतस्य गोपा अवश्चरन् परो अन्येन पश्यन् ॥

- ऋग्वेद ६.१.३

He alone knows the warp and the woof. He in due seasons speak it out. Moving below (but) looking beyond. He, the protector of immorality, knows it.

यथेमां वाचं कल्याणीमावदानि जनेभ्यः । ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां शूद्राय चार्याय च स्वाय चारणाय च ।

- यजुर्वेद २६.२

As I may speak this auspicious speech to the people, to *bṛāhmanas*, *kṣatriyas*, *śūdras*, *vaśīyas*, our own men and outsiders.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

AN OVERVIEW OF THE APPROACH OF THE VEDAS

"*There was neither non-existence nor existence at the beginning of this universe at that time*",¹ exclaims the creator of universe himself². This statement has been recorded in the oldest book of the world, the *Rigveda*, the date of which still remains undecided, and yet, there is absolute unanimity amongst scholars of the West and the East that this is the oldest book of the World.

I

THE MYSTERY

There have been attempts to explain as to what this statement means: "The *was neither non-existence nor existence at the beginning of the universe.*" This is a statement, which describes the situation before the creation came into being. The statement on the face of it, does not convey anything sensible, because, logically speaking, if there was no 'non-existence' then there must be 'existence' and if there was 'no existence' then there must have been 'non-existence', according to the law of excluded middle of Logic. Obviously, the statement is paradoxical. But when one tries to trace the origin of creation, in other words, the origin of existence itself, one is likely to meet many more such paradoxical statements.

In the present work we shall describe in as simple a way as possible, how the secrets of yore explained such a paradoxical situation with keen insight. The understanding of the mystery of creation is important, not only for its own sake, but also for a profound understanding of 'what we are to do with our lives'. The purpose of an individual's life

¹ नासदासीनो सदसीत्तदानीम्- ऋग्वेद १०.१२९.१

² Though all the hymns of the Vedas are supposed to be of divine origin according to orthodox tradition, yet all the hymns of the Vedas give the names of the seers who 'saw' particular hymn. In most of the cases these names are of human beings like *Viśvāmitra*, *Vasiṣṭha*. But some of the hymns mention divine beings as their seer (*divya*). For example, the particular hymn, to which this line belongs, has the Lord of the creation, the highest, (*prajāpati paramesiṭhī*), as its seer.

micro level is to be understood in the light of the nature of the universe at macro level, of which he is only a small part.

CONSCIOUSNESS: THE ORIGIN OF UNIVERSE

Let us take, for example, how the above quoted sentence of the creator was explained by a seer, *Yājñavalkya*, who wrote the oldest commentary on another Veda, *Yajurveda*, known by the name *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (i.e. the commentary of the Vedas in one hundred chapters). “*Consciousness is neither non-existent (like the horn of a hare) nor existent (like the piece of a stone)*,”³ explains *Yājñavalkya*. The implied meaning according to his explanation would be that in the beginning there was only consciousness, which unfolded itself into the universe. How and why it happened are some of the interesting questions to which we shall address ourselves in the present work. In general, the whole of the first part, consisting of nine chapters of this book, deals with the mystery of creation in one way or the other, whereas, the second part consisting of three chapters, deals with the purpose of human life in the light of the way of functioning of the forces that control the universe, because, it has been ordained that we should act just as the divine forces act. The divine scheme of actions provides a model for human behaviour - यद् देवा अकुर्वन्स्तत्कुरुवाणि ।

THE WHOLE AND THE PART

Why should we be interested in this mystery of creation is a pertinent question. The answer, in short, is that unless we know the nature of the universe, we cannot know what should we do with our lives. After all, we are an inseparable part of the universe, and, a part of the whole can be understood fully only if we know the whole. We are free to think that man is the center of the universe and he does occupy the central place—न हि मनुष्यादुच्चतरं हि किञ्चिद्—but he does not exist in isolation. He has the sky over his head and the earth beneath his feet. Not only this, his whole personality is made of the same elements, which constitute the universe. He, in fact, is the universe at micro level and the universe is the man at macro level; both of them, having been made after the same model, help understanding each other- यथापिण्डे तथा ब्रह्माण्डे

Thus, the creator has expressed his desire, not through any of his messenger but through the very functioning of the universe. The universe is ruled by certain laws.

3 नैव वा इदमग्रेऽसदासीनैव सदासीत् । आसीदिव वा इदमग्रे नैवासीत्क तन्मन एवास । नासदासीनो सदासीत्तदानीमिति नैव हि सम्मनो नैवास्मिन् - शतपथ १०.५.३.१.२

An overview of the approach of the Vedas

Naturally, these laws are not made by man; he only discovers them. This is what science does. That we should follow these laws in our lives, is told by the Vedic religion. The Vedic religion is thus inter-related with science. The part of the *Brāhmaṇa* (the oldest commentaries on the *Vedas*) that states the laws, is known as *arhāvā* and the part that deals with human duties is called *vidhi*. Unrī *Pandita Mahasv* *Ojha* (a scholar of 20th century), appeared on the scene mostly the ancients thought that only the *Vidhi* is relevant for human beings⁴. A proper study of *arhāvā* therefore, generally neglected. *Pandita Ojha*, however, opined that it is necessary to know the *arhāvā* for understanding the rationale of the *Vidhi*. His approach therefore, becomes scientific rather than ritualistic. Some of the observations on *bhūtarhāvā*, part of *arhāvā*, impart information that are not known otherwise. Take, for example, the statement that ‘man is the conglomeration of all the *devas* divine powers’ — नरो वै देवानां ग्रामः⁵

II

ESOTERIC STYLE

The seers, whose statements are recorded in the oldest literature of the two couched their experiences in a language which is esoteric—अचक्षते परोक्षेण. The famous of such statements was made by a seer *Viśvāmītra* (literally meaning a friend of all and the friend of universe). This statement, famous by the name *Gāyatrī mantra*, is prefixed by three words “earth, atmosphere and heaven”⁶. Now the three words, ‘earth, atmosphere and heaven’ are spoken of in connection with the universe. But we have also our own earth, atmosphere and heaven; our body is our earth⁷, our mind is our atmosphere⁸ and our intellect⁹ is our heaven, we ourselves being beyond all these three—यो ब्रह्मः परतस्तु सः ।

A parallel is thus drawn between the macro and the micro, the universe and the individual, thus connecting the physical (*adhibhūta*) with the spiritual (*adhyātma*). The implication is that we cannot understand the physical unless we understand the spiritual and vice-versa. This parallelism is to be kept in view while trying to understand the Vedic approach. The *adhidaiva* i.e. the psychic energy is the connecting link

4 आत्मायस्य क्रियार्थत्वाद् आनर्थक्यमनदर्थानाम्- जैमिनीयसूत्र, १.२.१

5 ताण्ड्यब्राह्मण ६.१.२

6 धृषुवस्स्वरिति त्रयो विद्या-जैमिनीयोपनिषद् २.३.३.७

7 यच्छरीरं सा पृथ्वी-ऐतरेयारण्यक, २.३.३

8 मनोऽन्तरिक्षलोकः- शतपथ, १४.४.३.११

9 ब्रह्मा वै देवः सविता-तैत्तिरीयसंहिता, ५.५.४.४.

between the two—the *adhibhūta* and the *adhyātma*. In the daily performance of *Agnihotra-sacrifice*, one recites three formulas which clearly show this three-fold parallelism as follows:

भूर्वाययेऽपानाय स्वाहा
भूतनये प्राणाय स्वाहा
स्वसृष्टिनाय व्यानाय स्वाहा

<i>Adhibhūta</i>	<i>Adhidiva</i>	<i>Adhyātma</i>
The earth (<i>bhūti</i>)	The <i>agni</i>	The in-breathing (<i>prāṇa</i>)
The atmosphere (<i>bhuvah</i>)	The <i>vāyu</i>	The out-breathing (<i>apāna</i>)
The Heaven (<i>svah</i>)	The <i>āditya</i>	The sustaining breath (<i>vyāna</i>)

THE DIVINE TRIAD

This brings us to the triad or *trayī-vidyā*, a name given to the Vedic knowledge. The earth, atmosphere and heaven are not without their respective energies—सोऽग्निमेवास्माल्लोकादसृजत वायुमन्त्रिक्षित्वा आदित्यं दिवः। The *agni* is the embodiment of the terrestrial energy, *vāyu* is the embodiment of the atmospheric energy and *āditya* is the embodiment of the celestial energy. Fire, Air and Sun, as we know them, are only the bodies; their essence is far subtler than these gross visible bodies. This essence is known as *agni*, *vāyu* and *āditya* for which we have no words in English or any other language and they have to be taken as technical terms, which should not be translated but should only be understood. In the present work, the *fifth chapter* has been devoted to clarify the concept denoted by these three terms.

THE DIVINE TRIAD AND THE FOUR VEDAS

For the present, what is significant is this: of the oldest literature of the world, three primary works deal mainly with these, *agni*, *vāyu* and *āditya*. The work dealing with *agni* is the *Rgveda*, *vāyu* forms the subject matter of *Yajurveda* and *āditya* is glorified in *Sāmaveda*¹⁰. There is a fourth *Veda*, *Atharva-Veda*, also which deals with another concept called *soma*, which is also quite important and, therefore, needs a little explanation.

TRAYĪ AND ATHARVA-VEDA

The *agni*, *vāyu* and *āditya* are, in fact, three forms of *agni*. *Agni* itself is the gross form, *vāyu* and *āditya* are subtle and subtler forms respectively. These three, and the *Vedas* dealing with these three, are, therefore, grouped together as one triad or *trayī*; *soma* is a different element. *Agni* has the assimilating power to preserve itself where as

An overview of the approach of the Vedas

soma is the element which is assimilated by *agni*¹¹. Unless *agni* gets *soma*, it can survive. This brings us from *trayī* to a duad of *agni* and *soma*.

III

THE DUAD OF AGNI AND SOMA

There is a universal formula¹², all over the universe, *agni*, necessary life, is being fed by *soma*. In simple terms it means that any *agni* needs fuel to keep alive. This fuel is *soma*. *Agni* is the life force and *soma* is its food. This duality of *agni* and *soma* is expressed at different levels in different terms like mortality and immortality and wetness, expansion and contraction, stay and movement and so on; so forth.

Whereas *agni*, *vāyu* and *āditya* form the subject matter of *Rgveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Sāmaveda* respectively, *soma* forms the subject matter of the fourth *Veda*, *Atharvaveda*¹³. These four form the basic texts of the oldest literature of the world¹⁴. How these four texts deal with the four elements which constitute the universe at large and also all the objects that it contains, has been given in some detail in **fourth chapter**. In short, all gross bodies are formed by *agni*, the terrestrial energy and the subject matter of *Rgveda*, all movements are inspired by *vāyu*, the atmospheric energy and the subject matter of *Yajurveda* and all luster is the creation of *āditya*, subject matter of *Sāmaveda*. All life, having a body with all movements and luster, thus, formed by the three energies. Of course, the energy, symbolised by *agni* is a fuel and that fuel is *soma*, the subject matter of *Atharvaveda*, which upholds all. How this position of *Atharva-Veda* is explained by the followers of *Pandit Ojha* given in Appendix III, which has been taken from the 'Introduction' by *Swami Suddhas*, of the collection of the various recensions of the four Vedas, compiled by K. C. Kulish under the title *Śabda-Veda*.

11 सोमोऽन्ममिन्ननादः- काठकसङ्कलन, १४०

12 अग्निरोमानकं जगत्- बृहज्जाबालोपनिषद्, २.४

13 अथर्वणाञ्चरमा देवतम् । तदेव ज्योतिः- सर्वाणि छन्दस्याप्यः स्थानम्- गोपधन्वाहाण १.२९ and ओमः is सोम- 3

सोमः - शातपथ ७.१.१.२२, सोम मयी हस्यं वेदः- ९ Appendix

14 चत्वारो वा इमे वेदा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदः ब्रह्मवेदः- गोपधन्वाहाण १.२९

15 ऋग्वेदो जातो सर्वशो मूर्तिर्मातुः सर्वा गतिर्याजुषी हैव शशवत्

सर्वं तेजः सामरूपं ह शशवत् सर्वं हेतुं ब्रह्मणा हैव सृष्टम्- तैत्तिरीयब्राह्मण ३.२.९

IV

SYMBOLISM IN THE VEDAS

Now to understand this all, we must be able to decode the symbolic language in which the oldest literature of the world speaks. Why this literature uses symbols is a question, which can be appreciated by pondering over the difficulty in using the ordinary language in the field of modern science. *W. Heisenberg* explains this difficulty. He has been quoted by Frijof Capra e in his famous book, *Tao of Physics*. This is what he says:

The problem of language here is really serious. We wish to speak in some way about the structure of atoms. But we cannot speak about atoms in ordinary language¹⁶. The knowledge about matter of this level is no longer derived from direct sensory experience, and, therefore, our ordinary language, which takes its image from the world of the senses, is no longer adequate to describe the observed phenomena¹⁷.

If this is so in the field of modern science, it is all the more so with the Vedas, which, according to *Sāyana* (the most famous commentator of the *Vedas*) deals with matters which are neither the subject of perception nor of inference—*प्रत्यक्षेणानुमित्वा वा यदुपायो न विद्यते एतं विदन्ति वेदेन तस्माद्वेदस्य वेदता*¹⁸. Naturally, how can we perceive or infer the situation to which we have referred to in the beginning of this chapter—the state beyond existence and non-existence? The seers, of course, 'saw' the supersensuous truth through their spiritual powers—*साक्षात्कर्तव्यमण ऋषयो ऋषूः*; but when it came to expressing the truth, they had no other way but to use the symbols which they deliberately employed for conveying the truth, which, they had experienced in that great silence, where all activities of senses and mind had ceased to work¹⁹. The matter of the fact, is that the real meaning of that language can be understood only by those who themselves are in that state of mind, others may listen to their words but do not understand them. The Vedic seers have spoken about this problem in these words:

Some perceive the speech but perceive it not, some listen to it but listen it not. For others it reveals, its secrets just as finely clothed faithful wife displays her body to her husband²⁰.

¹⁶ Quoted by Frijof Capra in *Tao of Physics*, P.53

¹⁷ Ibid, P.60

¹⁸ *Sāyana- bhāṣya* on *Alharavaveda* XIX 72.1

¹⁹ यत्र शीतो मनसा वाचमक्रत- ऋग्वेद १०.७९.२

²⁰ उत त्व परयन् दर्शो वाचमुत त्वः श्रुत्वा श्रुणोत्येवम्, उत त्वस्मै त्वत्वं विसृजे जायेव फल उज्जो सुवासा- ऋग्वेद १०.७९.४

An overview of the approach of the Vedas

The Vedic seers are conscious, throughout, of the fact that they are speak in a mystic way. *Dirghatamas*, for example says: Only wise men of spiritual attainm know the measured four grades of speech. Three of them are kept in secrecy and notm over; men speak only the fourth grade of speech²¹. Similarly, another *Vāmadeva* says: All these musical and secret words I have spoken to you, who know I have uttered these hymns and praises as a seer to a seer—*निष्ठा वर्चसि निवचना व काष्ठाणि*²²

Merely a knowledge of grammar and dictionary meaning of words does take us very far. The seers, anticipating the difficulty, themselves explained the statements of the Vedas in the body of texts called *Brāhmaṇas*. We have s above how a phrase 'there was neither non-existence' has been explained to m consciousness by one of the *Brāhmaṇas*. These *Brāhmaṇas* are undisputedly oldest interpretations of the Vedas, and, give us a deep insight into the mystic the *Vedas*.

V

THE TRADITION OF THE BRĀHMANA-TEXTS

Pandita Madhusudan Ojha, a pioneer in the field, draws our attention to the importance of the *Brāhmaṇas* for understanding secrets of the Vedas. He w profusely in the modern form of the same language, viz Sanskrit, the older form which is used by the Vedas and which is the eldest sister, if not the mother, of all European languages. His direct disciple *Pandita Motilal Shastri* carried his mess through a modern language, Hindi, the national language of India. A disciple of *Pan Motilal Shastri*, *Prof. Vasudeva Sharama Agrawala* wrote in Hindi as well a English. But still the message remained sealed for the scholars. *Shri Karpurachan Kulish*, the founder- editor of *Rajasthan Patrika*, a leading daily of Hindi, t keen interest in this new-yet-old interpretation of the Vedas with the result th started attracting the attention of a few scholars in the last decade. Still much remi to be done. A brief survey of the work done by some modern scholars, in this fi has been seperately given in the third chapter.

The present work is also a humble step in this direction. Some of the sal features of *Pandit Ojha's* method of interpretation of the *Brāhmaṇas* are as follo

1. The *Vedas*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Upaniṣads* and *Gītā* are to be taken as represent

²¹ चत्वारि वाक् परितिता पदानि तानि विदुर्ब्राह्मणा ये मनीषिणः, गुहा शीघ्रं निहिता नेद्वयार्त्तं तुरीयं वाचो मनुष्या वर्दन्ति ऋग्वेद १.१६४.४५

²² ऋग्वेद ४.३.१

- one school of thought, though emphasizing this different aspects.
2. Knowledge of the ultimate reality and science of action are inter-dependent.
3. **The tenth, eleventh and twelfth chapters** deal with the subject. *Rk. Yajus* and *Sāma* are elements, which constitute any object. The **Fourth chapter** elaborates this statement.
4. The triad of *manas*, *prāṇa* and *vāk* constitute *ānman*. This is dealt with in the **Sixth chapter**.
5. The *mana* desires, the *prāṇa* is inspired to become internally active (which is known as *tapas*), and the *vāk* becomes externally active (which is known as *śrama*). Thus we have the creation. The **Eighth chapter** deals with this theme.
6. *Devas*, *Rsis* and *Pitrs* are basically the vital forces (*prāṇa*). The **Fifth chapter** is devoted to this theme.

COSMOS-ORIENTED APPROACH

The difficulty about understanding the Vedas comes from one of their special characteristics. The Vedas adopt a cosmic-oriented approach. This is their unique feature. We have three possible approaches:

- (i) *Cosmic - Oriented approach*, covering the whole range of existence, conscious and unconscious.
- (ii) *Society - Oriented approach*, dealing with human beings in groups.
- (iii) *Individual - Oriented approach*, dealing with individuals in isolation.

Correspondingly, we have three types of literature of India. The Vedas adopt a cosmic-oriented approach. The second category of literature is known as *smṛiti*, which is society - oriented. The individual-oriented approach is adopted by the philosophical literature of India called *darsana*.

The later two types of literature i.e. *smṛiti* and *darsana*, also claim that they follow *śruti* i.e. the Vedas. The implication is that the society and the individual should base their ethos on the divine working of the cosmos. Any act of the individual or any social organization is bound to fail, if it does not fall in line with the divine scheme of the cosmos, which is much more powerful than any man made-scheme.

THE DIFFICULTY OF TERMINOLOGY

For the latter two types of literature, the society-oriented and the individual - oriented, we have the corresponding literature all over the world. Therefore, it is easy to find the terms in other languages for expressing ideas contained in *smṛitis* and philosophical literature. But we hardly have anything elsewhere corresponding to the cosmic-oriented Vedic literature. Therefore, it becomes very difficult to find suitable synonyms for Vedic

words. The readers will, therefore, kindly bear with us if they find that we are using the original terms in transliterated form rather than taking the risk of translating them inadequately. For example, it would be almost impossible to translate the simple word "*dharma*", because of a holistic approach, which takes the physical world and the spiritual world together. The word "*dharma*" would stand simply for any characteristic of an element, say, for cooling in the case of water or heat in the case of fire, if we were dealing with physics; but when we are dealing with ethics, it would mean "duty". In the third context, it would mean the basic quality of an object, which upholds it e.g. law and order for the society. It is just an example. The Vedic word '*agni*' has such a wide ramification that a novice is perplexed the first sight and in his endeavour to give an equivalent to every word, he may simply translate it as 'fire' with the result that the spirit of the original is lost in toto. We have therefore, used the original Sanskrit terms in the internationally accepted transliterated form. A scheme of transliteration is given in the beginning.

THE MODEL OF NATURE

The *Brāhmanas* do not paraphrase such terms, rather they try to clarify the concept. The sentences clarifying such concepts are met with in *arthavāda*. The *Brāhmanas* deal with the working of the natural forces in the universe. They hold that the nature's way of working provides a model for human behavior—स्वस्ति यथागन्तुं सूर्याचन्द्रसर्गाविव प्रकृतिवद्विकृतिः कर्तव्या। So they deal with both—the nature's way of working is dealt with under *arthavāda* and the path to be followed by human beings is elaborated under *vidhi*. Under *arthavāda* we find an explanation of what going on in the cosmos and under which rules. In short, it is an inter-play of *agni* consuming *soma* at a different level. This process of consumption of *soma* by *agni* technically known as *Yajña*, which is constantly being followed in nature. We, the human beings, are to follow it in our own lives. The *Yajña*, at nature's level goes spontaneously, whereas, human beings are to perform it with great care and exertion throughout their lives. This is obligatory and there is no alternative to it²³. We shall speak about it in some detail in the **Eleventh Chapter**.

THE ART OF LIVING

The method of performance of *Yajña* is such that by its performance we achieve everything—mundane and super mundane²⁴, but we are not bound by the vagaries of our pride and prejudices, we remain truly free and yet enjoy all the blessings of nature—delicious food, heroic progeny, animals and men at our service, fame and, and above a

23 तदङ्गः यद्यप्येवं-मैत्रायणी संहिता २.४.१ Cf यज्ञो दानं तपः कर्म न त्वान्नं कार्ययेव तत्-गीता १८.५

24 सर्वेष्वपि हि कामेष्वपि यज्ञः प्रयुज्यते-मैत्रायणीय संहिता २.४.१.२

the glory of knowledge—अन्वान् अन्नादो भवति । महान् भवति प्रज्ञया पशुभिः ब्रह्मवर्चसेन । महान् कीर्त्या । We relish all this, and much more, but we do not get attached to them²⁵. This is the true art (or science, if you so like) of life. The best minds of India, right from the seers of the Vedas up to Mahatma Gandhi in our own times, have been developing this art for the benefit of humanity without any discrimination of cast, creed or colour²⁶. We shall elaborate this point in the Eleventh and Twelfth chapters.

ARYA IS NOT A RACE

There is a belief that the Vedas are the sacred books of the Hindus, but this belief is not supported by the Vedas themselves.

It is true that the Hindus preserved the Vedas, held them in high respect and tried to follow them through the ages, yet, as far as the Vedas are concerned, they do not speak of Hindus but give a message for all mankind. In fact, anybody and everybody can follow that message without conversion to any specific form of religion. That is why the followers of the Vedas did not believe in conversion of religion like the missionary religions, but in the conversion of heart from ignobility to nobility; the Vedic word for nobility being Arya. Western scholars, in the beginning, thought that Arya is a race, but later they said that Aryan stands for those all who speak the languages of an Aryan family²⁷, which covers almost all the modern and classical languages of Europe as also of Iran. The tradition, however, is firm that Arya means nothing but noble. Throughout the literature, a noble man is addressed as Arya (just as we use the English term 'Sir') without any discrimination of his cast, creed or colour or ethnic or linguistic group. The message of the Vedas is for all who wish to be noble. All of us are sons of the same mother, the Earth²⁸. For more details, the reader may refer to the Third chapter.

25 न कर्म लिप्यते नरे-यजुर्वेद ४०.२

26 The Jains and the Buddhists also held the Vedas in high esteem as is clear from the terms वेदान् (=वेदज्ञ) in Jaina literature and वेदगु (=वेदज्ञ) and वेदपरागु (=वेदपराज्ञः) in Buddhist literature. Dr. *Mamgaldava Shastri*, भारतीय संस्कृति का विकास, वैदिक धारा, भारतीय ज्ञानपीठ प्रकाशन, वाराणसी, 3rd Edition, १९७०, P. १२४

27 I have declared again and again that if I say Aryan, I mean neither blood nor bones, nor skull nor hair. I mean simply those who speak the Aryan language—Max Muller quoted by Rishi Kumar Misra in his 'Before the beginning and after the End' Rupa & Co., New Delhi, 2000, P.487.

28 माता भूमिः पुत्रोऽहं पृथिव्याः - अथर्ववेद, १२.१.१२

VII

KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

Life has two aspects—knowledge and action. Knowledge leads to freedom and action leads to success in life. Knowledge belongs to the sphere of unity, action to the sphere of diversity. We have to involve ourselves in activities of diverse fields—physical, mental and intellectual but at the same time have to remain steadfast in the knowledge of our consciousness where all diversity dissolves into one. The activities fall under the domain of science, the realisation of unity of all existence is the fruit of knowledge par-excellence.

The word '*Veda*' has many meanings—precisely four meanings²⁹—but the most important of them is 'knowledge'. *Veda* is the book of knowledge. It contains knowledge of two types—mundane knowledge and supra mundane knowledge—*विद्ये वेदितव्ये-परा चैवापरा चैव । अथ परा यथा तदक्षरमभिप्रास्यते*. Supra mundane knowledge is knowledge par-excellence whereas mundane knowledge is pragmatic. The latter must be based on the former, but it is also equally important, rather more important than the former. If we do not possess knowledge par-excellence, we miss immortality but if we do not have mundane knowledge we meet death now and here.

This division of knowledge is based on the structure of our brain. *Fritjof Capra* describes this structure in the following manner in his book, *The Turning Point*.

Left hemisphere, which seems to be more specialised in analytic, linear thinking which involves processing information sequentially, the right hemisphere, controlling the left side seems to function predominantly in a holistic mode that is appropriate for synthesis and tends to process information more diffusely and simultaneously³⁰.

The diversified activities are controlled by linear thinking; the knowledge par-excellence of the underlying unity is the outcome of the holistic mode of thinking. Combination of the two leads to perfection.

HOLISTIC APPROACH NEGLECTED

What happened during the last three thousand years or so is that the Indians made a blunder by neglecting the mundane knowledge under the false notion that it

29 See chapter IV of the present work.

30 Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point* P.293

leads to bondage, and concentrated on knowledge par-excellence in the hope that it alone will lead to freedom. It made the nation physically and materially weak. One who is devoid of power cannot achieve the fruits of freedom also—*तापमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः*. This is the root cause of *India's* present plight. This happened in spite of the clear warning given by the *Yajurveda* in following words:

Those who stick to mundane knowledge alone grope in darkness, but, those who confine themselves only to knowledge par - excellence are led to a still thicker darkness.

The fruits of both these kinds of knowledge are different. This have we heard from those who have delivered the secret to us.

Those who combine the mundane as well the supra-mundane knowledge, cross over the death through mundane knowledge and attain immortality through knowledge par-excellence³¹.

VIII

THE DIVINE SCIENCE

*It is very interesting to note that the word for mundane knowledge in Vedic literature is science (jñāna)*³². Any knowledge, which provides practical guidance to facilitate our worldly activities, is science. The knowledge, which leads to efficient cooking of food, is nothing short of science. The science could be divine as well as devilish. When science is backed by the knowledge of unity not only of mankind but also of all existence, it is divine, when it is based on the duality of 'one's own' and 'the other', it is devilish. The *vedjina* is a divine science दैवी ज्ञानं स्वर्गज्ञानागमसम्बन्धीमा रुहेमा स्वस्तये ।

The *Gītā*, the most popular work of Vedic tradition, laid equal emphasis on action and knowledge³³ and yet its message was lost to those who declared the world to be an illusion—*जगन्मिथ्या*—and, hence, all worldly activities as reprehensible. The Vedic literature declared in unequivocal term that names and forms are true³⁴ and, therefore, the world is not an illusion but an embodiment of the creator.

31 अथान्तमः प्रविशन्ति यो विद्यामुपासते । ततो भूय इव वे तमो य उ विद्यायां ततः ॥
अनन्देवाहुर्विद्यायाऽनन्दो विद्यायाः । इति युष्मः श्रोतॄणां ये मस्तद्विचक्षिरे ॥

विद्यायाऽविद्याञ्च यस्तद्विदो भूयः सह । अविद्याया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्यायानुममजुते ॥ यजुर्वेद ४०.१०-१२

32 विज्ञानं यज्ञं तनुते कर्माणि तनुतेऽपि च - तैत्तिरीयारण्यक ८.५.१
33 ज्ञानं तेऽहं सा विज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः - गीता ७.२

34 नामरूपे सत्यम् - शतपथ १४.४.४.३

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

With unity of the universe, the Vedic literature is undoubtedly monotheistic but it speaks of one reality under many names in accordance with its various aspects³⁵. The forms of reality under different names also differ, but, this difference is not of fundamental nature. Fundamental is the unity of all existence³⁶. This concept leads to identification of one name and form of reality with all other names and forms of reality. The difference of names and forms is due to the difference of activities that characterize the reality.

It is the grandeur of reality that so many activities are associated with it³⁷. Reality is throbbing with life at every minutest point. This is due to the omnipresent vital forces (*prāṇa*). These vital forces are termed as *devas*³⁸, if associated with solar system and *devatās*, if not associated with solar system. As performer of different activities these *devas* or *devatās* are different but as vital force they are one. An *deva*, therefore, can be identified with any other *deva*. We shall deal with this subject in the Fifth chapter.

When we speak of one *deva*, we extol him as superior to all other *devas* with reference to the performance of a particular activity. In reality, there is no superiority or inferiority of one *deva* over the other³⁹.

The *devas* or vital forces work at all levels—physical, mental or intellectual *agni*, for example, not only cooks the food at physical level as simple fire of the kitchen, but also digests the food within the body as life giving force (*vaśvānara*)⁴⁰ and inspires the intellect as seer⁴¹. The simple truth is that energy is one which works at all levels, physical as well as supra-physical.

IX

MIND AND MATTER

This energy is psychic, a living force, and not a blind force of dead nature. Therefore, we have cosmos and not chaos. In fact, there is nothing dead in the cosmos

35 अपि वा कर्मभूयकत्वात् - निरुक्त ७.२

36 एकं वा इदं विबभूव सर्वम् - ऋग्वेद ८.५.८२

37 महाभागादेवस्य योगादेकात्मनामनेकधा बहूनि नामधेयानि भवन्ति - दुर्गाचार्य OM निरुक्त ७.२

38 प्राणाः वै देवाः - तैत्तिरीय संहिता ६.१.४.५

39 न हि वो अस्त्यर्भको देवासो न कुमाराकः । विश्वे सतो महान्त इतः ऋग्वेद ८.३०.१

40 अग्र्यामिन्वाँनातः योऽयमन्तः पुरुषे येनेदमन्नं पच्यते - शतपथब्राह्मण १४.८.१०.१

41 अग्निर्ऋषिः - मैत्रायणी संहिता १.६.१

otherwise how could it obey the laws, which are not blind, but meaningful? Every particle of the universe is proceeding on a purposeful journey. The difference between mind and matter is that of degree and not of fundamental nature.

Mind and matter no longer appear to belong to two fundamentally separate categories, as Descartes believed, but, can be seen to represent merely different aspects of the same universal process. We realise that the environment is not only alive but also mindful, like ourselves⁴².

Whereas some thinkers of the West once believed animals not as living beings but as 'crying machine', Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose proved scientifically, what *Manu* had declared thousands of years ago, that even plants have the feeling of pain and pleasure—अन्तःसंज्ञा भवत्येते सुखदुःखसम्वित्त्वतः। Vedas go a step further and declare that even stones have a soul, which means that they have not only a body, but also a life-force and a mind. It is, therefore, meaningful to address the stones like, 'O stones! listen'⁴³.

CREATOR AND CREATION

All this is the byproduct of what we have said in the beginning - the consciousness has unfolded itself as universe. No part of the universe can, therefore, be without mind.

"God is not the creator, but the mind of universe. A living organism is a self organising system which means that its order is not imposed by the environment but is established by the system itself"⁴⁴.

In short, the Vedic literature summarises the position when it says "the creator created the creation and himself entered into it"⁴⁵. The *Vedas* do not preach animism of the primitive man but livingness of everything of the universe, which saves it from being a chaos.

THE RELATION OF THE WHOLE AND ITS PARTS

We have to appreciate the difference between the two approaches—the approach of the materialist and the approach of the spiritualist. The materialist believes that the whole is composed of parts just as a car is composed of its different

An overview of the approach of the Vedas

parts. The tyres of a car may be made somewhere else in a different factory, engine in a different factory and the body of the car in a third factory and all three may be joined together to make a car. This cannot happen with a tree, i.e., cannot create its trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits at different places & join them together to make a tree. This is so because a car has no life whereas tree has life. The question is—whether this universe is a living organism, or machine, having diverse parts. If it is a living organism, it must have one origin & that one may assume diversity; if it is a machine, its various parts should fundamentally different. The Vedic seers hold that the universe is a living organism and, therefore, it has one origin of all, whether living or non-living⁴⁶. How one becomes many and that too of diametrically opposite nature is the central theme of the Vedic literature. Therefore, let us deal with this process, which has been dealt with in so detail in the present work and in short, in this introductory chapter also.

ONE BECOMES MANY

The one consciousness has an inherent power, and, just as heat is not differ from fire, this inherent power is not different from consciousness⁴⁷. This power consciousness expresses itself in the form of activity through which the un-manifest consciousness becomes manifest⁴⁸. This manifestation of consciousness is universe. This is comparable to our state of awakening after sleep⁴⁹. This activity the consciousness starts covering the consciousness gradually with the result that there starts a journey from the subtle to gross. This power is called the power limiting (*māyā*) the unlimited.

X

FOUR QUADRUPLT

Consciousness has no limit, but as this power, *māyā*, starts working a limit is put to it. Unlimited consciousness cannot create, only the limited consciousness (called *puruṣa*) can create. There is movement—centrifugal & centripetal: centrifugal movement gives birth to *agni* which expands and centripetal movement gives birth to *soma*, which contracts. *Soma* is the food to be consumed (*bhojya*) and *agni* is the consumer (*bhoktā*)⁵⁰. *Agni*, again, assumes three forms gross, subtle and subtler i.e. *agni*, *vāyu* and *āditya*. Added to this triad, *so*

⁴² *Frtilof Capra*, The Turning Point P. 290-291

⁴³ श्रुवन्तु प्राजापः - तैत्तिरीयसंहिता १.३.११.१

⁴⁴ *Frtilof Capra*: The Turning Point p.११०-१११

⁴⁵ तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत् - तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् २.६

⁴⁶ एकं वा इदं विबभूव सर्वम्- ऋग्वेद ८.५८.२

⁴⁷ ज्ञानं शिवः कर्म च तच्छक्तिः शक्तिशक्तिमतोऽपराधविनाभावः - महर्षिमुल्लूकभूषणः प.५

⁴⁸ उभयं वैतत्प्रजापतिर्निरुक्तश्चातिरुक्तश्च - शतपथ ६.५.३.७

⁴⁹ अथकाद व्यक्तय सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहं गामे यात्रागमे प्रतीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके - गीता ८.१८

⁵⁰ स्वधा अवस्तात्, प्रयतिः परस्तात्- ऋग्वेद १०.१११.६

form the quadruplet. These four-*agni*, *vāyu*, *āditya* and *soma* form the subject matter of the four Vedas.

At the physical level also, we have the triad of earth, atmosphere and heaven to which is added the region of undisturbed energy (called *āpah*), thus making a quadruplet at the physical level⁵¹.

At the micro level, first we have the duality of soul and body. The body is again three fold—the gross, the subtle and the causal. The gross is made up of flesh, blood and bones etc. The subtle body consists of five sensory senses, mind, intellect, five vital forces and five motor nerves (*karmendriyas*). The causal body carries the impressions of our activities. These three bodies coupled with soul make another quadruplet at micro level.

At the level of nature, we have a three-fold division of nature—the dormant, the dynamic and the illuminating. The dormant part of nature forms the body, the dynamic part imparts movement and the illuminating part forms the intelligence. Added to this triad is the soul beyond nature and we have yet another quadruplet.

FOUR DUADS

(i) Now, let us first of all understand the nature of duads. A part of the consciousness is manifest, another part remains un-manifest, but the consciousness basically remains undivided. Manifest and un-manifest are apparently opposed to each other but fundamentally they are one.

(ii) Let us take another duad of *agni* and *soma*. *Agni* moves from the center towards circumference but only up to a mark and then it starts moving back to the center i.e. it converts itself into *soma*. Similarly, *soma* moves from circumference to the center but after a limit it turns back to circumference thus playing the role of *agni*. This means that though apparently opponents, yet *agni* and *soma* are inter-convertible. They supplement each other. Without this duad helping each other, creation is just impossible. If *agni* were to have only centrifugal movement, things will go on expanding infinitely, reducing themselves to naught. If *soma*, on the other hand, were to have infinite centripetal movement, things will go on contracting to a point when they become zero. Similarly, the duads of soul and body, and consciousness and nature, help each other.

(iii) We can have a familiar example of men and women. They are basically one. That is why sex-change is possible. But they play a different role in

procreation. Manu says that same self bifurcated itself into two⁵²—man and woman.

(iv) This is how, by realizing the basic unity underlying duality, we can establish harmony in contradiction. The basic duality is that of being and becoming, the continuity and change. The body, for example, changes, the soul remains unchanged and both of them go together.

TRIADS

Coming to triads, there are basically three forms—gross, subtle and subtler—of the self-same element. All these three go together. This produces not only plurality but also the diversity.

When we come to quadruplets, we find that the first three constituents of each quadruplet are immanent whereas the last one is transcendental. Nature, with its three constituent attributes, for example, is changeable, whereas the soul is immutable. The Vedic seers did not neglect either the immanent or the transcendental aspect of life. Worldly prosperity and spiritual peace must go together.

Having dealt with some hints about how one becomes many, it would be appropriate now to fitness of things to go into some details of *Yajña*, which is the pivot on which the whole Vedic thought rotates.

THE PROCESS OF ASSIMILATION

We have said that the oblation of *soma*, the food, into *agni*, the consumer, is *Yajña*. A little thought will reveal that this process of assimilation and elimination is the cause of all changes from birth to death. The quality and the quantity of *soma* decide the form of an object. It varies from time to time and object to object. Hence the difference between one object and another object and the change in self-same object. The *soma* helps *agni* and is, as it were, its junior partner⁵³. This process of *Yajñ*, then brings about six modifications—the birth, existence, growth, change, decay and destruction. This is how *Yajña* becomes all pervading in the universe.

Now, when *agni* consumes the *soma*, it cannot assimilate the whole of it. The portion, which is assimilated by it, becomes its part and parcel (*Brahmadana*)⁵⁴. The rest of the portion is ejected away by it, which becomes the food of another object (*pravargya*)⁵⁵. The cow eats grass, a portion of which is absorbed by her

52 द्विधा कृत्वात्मनो देहमर्थेन पुरुषोऽभवत्। अर्थेन त्रीं स तस्यां विद्वज्मसृजतः। - मनुस्मृति १.३२

53 अग्निर्जागार तमसं सोम आह तवाहमस्मि सखे न्योकाः। - ऋग्वेद ५.४४.१५

54 यत्ततोऽयमहर्निशं तेन ब्रह्मदत्तः। - ऋग्वेदीयब्राह्मण २.३०

55 अथ यत्प्रवर्ग्यत तस्मात्प्रवर्ग्यः। - शतपथ १४.१.१०

51 अस्ति वै चतुर्थो देवलोका आगः - कौषीतिकब्राह्मण १.२.२ This *āpoloka* is also known as *paramesīhi*.

body, but another portion is ejected as milk or cow-dung. Milk becomes the food for the calf and cow-dung becomes food for the plants. This is the natural process of give-and-take, which is imitated in the society—ददाति प्रतियुहणति एष धर्मः सनातनः।

XI

THE SEASONS

At the physical level, the earth revolves round the sun, not in a circle but in an elliptic form. This is known as the crooked movement of the earth, (*sarvasara*) which makes the year (*samvatsara*) to consist of different seasons which again are nothing but a combination of hot and cold, hot being the *agnī* and cold being the *soma*⁶⁶. Thus, seasons are also the result of *Yajña* through which the year regulates the universe⁶⁷ and the seasons become creative⁶⁸. The seed is sown at a particular temperature and the crops ripe at another temperature. Seasons thus become important in the creative process. That is why seasons play a deciding role in the performance of *Yajñas*, and therefore, they are spoken of as *Pitaras* i.e. having the energy to procreate.

The food grain is prepared through a natural *Yajña* going on in the nature. The plant assimilates four elements from earth, atmosphere, heaven and *āpoloka*—the solid part from the earth (known as *dadhī*), oiliness from atmosphere (known as *ghṛta*) sweetness from heaven (known as *madhu*)⁶⁹ and tastefulness from *āpoloka* (known as *soma*)⁶⁰. (See figure no. 1 on page 19).

THE COW

In milk of the cow, all of these four elements are available, because she is the abode of the *devas* of earth (i.e. *vasu*)⁶¹, of atmosphere (i.e. *rudra*)⁶², of heaven (i.e. *āditya*)⁶³ and is the center of nectar⁶⁴. She is not to be tortured. Her milk should

56 यच्छुक्कं तदानेयं यदाद्रं तसौम्यम् - शतपथ १.६.३.२३

57 संवत्सरो वै यज्ञः प्रजापतिः - Ibid ११.१.१

58 पितरो वा ऋतवः - मैत्रायणी संहिता १.१०.१७

59 एतद् परममत्रं यद् दधि मधु घृतम् - शतपथ १.२.१.१२ and दधि हैवास्य लोकस्य रूपम् घृतमन्त्रिक्षस्य। मध्यमुष्य - शतपथ ७.५.१.३

60 रस इव खलु वा अन्नम् - तैत्तिरीय संहिता २.१.७.५

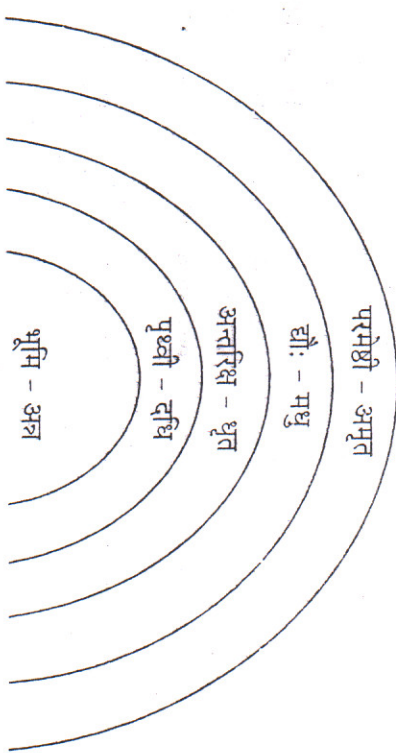
61 वसवः पृथिवीश्रतः - तैत्तिरीयसूक्त १.१२.४.१

62 रुद्राः पितामहा अन्तरिक्षाधिपतयः - काठकसंस्कृतन १४.१४

63 दिवं लोकानां जयत्यदित्यम् - जैमिनीय ब्राह्मण ११.२७

64 माता रुद्राणां दुहिता वसूनां स्वसदित्वानाममृतस्य नाभिः। प्र तु वोषं चिकितुषे जनान्य मा गाननागामदिति वधिष्ठ - ऋग्वेद ८.१०.१५

Formation of food



The food derives four constituents from four *lokas* - the solid part comes from earth, the oily part from atmosphere, the sweetness from heaven and satiating factor from *parameshthi*

FIGURE No.1

rather be used, which is tasteful, invigorating and above all having medicinal qualities—

स्वादु पाकरसं स्निग्धमोजस्वं धातुवर्धनम् । प्रायः पयस्तत्र गव्यं तु जीवनीयं रसायनम् ॥

This factor made cow an object of worship for the Vedic people.

OUR BODIES

When milk of the cow or any other food-grain, is consumed by us, another *Yajña* starts in the digestive system (*vaishvānara* form of *agni*). A part of it is assimilated; the other part is eliminated as excreta. The assimilated part is again offered as oblation and the eliminated part is retained as liquid and the assimilated part is converted into blood. The process continues and we have flesh, fat, bones, marrow and semen—रसादृक्त्वं ततो मांसं मांसान्मेदस्ततोऽस्थि च । अस्थिनो मज्जाः ततः शुक्रं शुक्राद् गर्भः । So far the terrestrial portion (called *dadhi*) of the food is active. The atmospheric part of the food (called *ghṛta*) changes into luster of halo and the last, super-most celestial, part (called *madhu*) becomes mind. Thus the oblations of the whole universe work in the production of a single food grain and that food grain makes our total personality from body to mind. It is because of this that the Vedic people took special care about the food they ate—अनामयं हि सौम्य मनः ।

XII

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DYNAMISM

The Vedas attribute a very high place to the active worldly life because it is only a householder who can perform *Yajña*. It takes two to perform a *Yajña*, a husband and a wife, both of whom are replica of *agni* and *soma*; one is incomplete without the other. A student (*brahmachārī*), a recluse (*vānaprastha*) or an ascetic (*sannyāsi*)—all depend on a householder not only for food but for knowledge also⁶⁵. The Sanskrit word for wife (*patni*) is a synonym for one who shares the *Yajña* with her husband—पत्न्युर्नो यज्ञसंयोगे.

DESIRES

Desires cover a very wide range. In fact, sex is a small part of one of the four ends of human life i.e. fulfillment of desires (*kāma*). Desires are a part of the universal scheme. Man is a psychosomatic creature—he has both the body and the

An overview of the approach of the Vedas

mind. Desire is the essence of mind⁶⁶. We cannot eliminate it. In fact no *Yajña* can be performed without a desire. The first *Yajña*, which created the universe, is called *yielder of desires (kāmapra)*⁶⁷.

Desires, as we know, take us a stray but they are the essential parts of being. *Manu* says that desires, therefore, are to be sublimated and not to be uprooted. They can be controlled by limiting them to the study of the Vedas and to performance of the activities prescribed therein. It is not a dogmatic assertion but a call for going to the roots of our existence. We perceive the gross physical existence through our senses. So do the animals. The roots of this existence lie in the statements of the seers having super-sensory powers. Those seers prescribed a course of action also for all of us, which we should follow. It is a course of action based only on the common - sense understanding of the worldly necessities of the individual or the society, but also, on the deep understanding of the ultimate destiny of the Man, amongst all creatures, has a special target to achieve for which even they are not entitled, and that is to obtain liberation here and now.

THE MAN

There is a story in the *Śatapatha*. Creatures—demons, gods, and the departed souls having ethereal bodies, men and animals—approached the Lord to enquire to what their food should be. The Lord ordained that the gods should take offerings to them in *Yajña* (*svadhā* by name) once in a year, in the bright half (*uttarā*) of the year. Moreover, solar light shall be their food. For the departed soul prescribed the taking of food (*svadhā* by name) once in a month. Moreover, light shall be their food. For men, he prescribed taking of food (*namah* by name) twice a day, morning and evening. Moreover, light of fire shall be their food. For animals, no timings for food were prescribed. Men shall be their food. For demons, deceitfulness was prescribed as food. Moreover, ignorance itself shall be their food. The story continues that every creature followed the order of the Lord, except men—मनुष्य एवैके अतिक्रामन्ति. It is a symbolic story. All creatures, except men, are bound by the laws of nature. It is only men who violate the laws and pollute nature. All *devās* reside in the laws of nature. The reason is that he is nearest to Lord⁶⁸. All *devās* merely exist collectively. God made man after his own image. All other creatures merely exist alone has a life because he seeks some purpose of his existence. He is not satisfied with the laws of nature.

65 कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तन्ति मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदसीत् - ऋग्वेद १०.१९१.४

66 शतपथ ११.१.६, १२-१९

67 पुरुषो वै प्रजापतेरिच्छम् - शतपथ ४.३.४.३

merely with food, clothing and housing but seeks the Truth, the Good and the Beautiful. In other words, he seeks his identification with the creator, which no other creature does. He can do so because he can apply his mind (*Mana*, from which the word 'man' is derived)⁶⁹.

The universe is an expansion of the creator (*sarvagṛāpatī*) but he himself stays immutable at the center (*yoni*) (*nabhya grāṇipātī*)⁷⁰. All creatures dwell at the circumference, man alone can approach the center. He can, therefore, attain perfection. The true life (*prāṇa*) lies at the center, name and form only cover it⁷¹. It is this center, by knowing which one knows everything, just as, by knowing clay one knows everything made of clay, the pitcher, the pot etc. The center is abstract (*Rta*) and the circumference is concrete (*satya*). This centre is known by various names - *agni*, *manu* and *grāṇipati*, *Indra*, *prāṇa* and *Brahma*⁷². Man is the only creature who can attain perfection by getting into touch with the centre and yet, he violates the laws of nature because he is afflicted by ignorance and its offshoots—ego, attachment, aversion, and prejudices. The only saving clause is that he can overcome ignorance and its effects by knowledge and by following the path of action prescribed by the Vedas. He has the choice to remain in ignorance or to dispel it by knowledge; this is his freedom of will.

XIII

THE EVOLUTION

The Vedas have a theory of evolution of their own which is different from that of Darwin because it does not start from amoeba but from matter and minerals. We have spoken of *agni*, *vāyu*, *āditya* and *soma*. They indicate the different stages of evolution. *Agni* is omnipresent; it is present even in a piece of stone. Earth, in fact, is said to contain *agni* in its womb. The terrestrial form of life is the lowest. A piece of stone touches the earth with its whole body. It has no awareness (*asajñā*), though it is living; just as we have no awareness when we are unconscious. Then comes the vegetable kingdom. It raises its body from the earth in the atmosphere, touching the earth with one foot i.e. its trunk. The *vāyu*, the *deva* of atmosphere becomes active. Thus we have plants that are inwardly conscious (*anāh-sajñā*) but outwardly unconscious. Then comes the animal kingdom. Insects touch the earth with more than

69 सः प्रजापतिः देवान् सृष्ट्वा मनस्येव, तेन मनुष्यामुज्जत। तन्मनुष्याणां मनुष्यत्वम्। स यस्तन्मनुष्याणां मनुष्यत्वं वेद। मनस्वान् ह भवति - मैत्रायणीसंहिता ४.२.१

70 प्रजापतिरचरति गर्भे अन्तरजायमानो बहुधा विजायते। तस्य योनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीरास्तस्मिन् ह तस्युर्ध्वनानि विख्या ॥ - यजुर्वेद ३१.१९

71 प्राण वा अभूत्। नामरूपे सत्यम्। ताभ्यामयं प्राणश्चक्षतः - शतपथ १४.४.४.३

72 एतमेकं वदन्त्यनिं मनुमन्ये प्रजापतिम्। इन्द्रमेकं परं प्राणमपरे ब्रह्म शाश्वतम् - मनुस्मृति १२.११९

two feet, four, six or even more in the case of centipedes. Here, the gravitational force of earth has started diminishing, the celestial *deva*, *sūrya*, has started expressing itself.

The animals become conscious outwardly also, (*bahih saññā*) yet, they still face the earth, their backbones remain parallel to earth. In the case of man, the gravitational force of earth becomes weaker still. He stands erect, perpendicular to earth. We see that with the effect of the gravitational force of earth growing weaker and of sun becoming stronger, the pattern of the body also shows the corresponding change, and with the change of body, intellect also evolves gradually; man being at the top of such evolutionary ladder.

But the process of evolution does not stop here. There is something beyond intellect which remains un-effected by the up and down of life—असृष्टो ह्ययं पुरुषः। is the soul. Those amongst men, who transcend the intellect, realise this soul and by which realization, they approach the centre of which we have spoken above. This state is the state of *soma*, beyond *āditya*. Thus corresponding to the four *devas* we have four stages of evolution, as shown in the chart given below:-

DEVĀ	VEDA	POWER	CREATURE
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Rgveda</i>	To have basic life force	Stones Minerals etc
<i>Vāyu</i>	<i>Yajurveda</i>	To feel inwardly	Plants
<i>Āditya</i>	<i>Sāmaveda</i>	To feel and to express outwardly	(i) Insects touching the earth with maximum part of their body. (ii) Animals facing the earth. (iii) Birds with face little above the earth. (iv) Men - Standing erect.
<i>Soma</i>	<i>Atharvaveda</i>	Transcending intellect	Realized soul.

At the level of the creator (*puruṣa*) also, we have these four stages; the first stage (called *kṣara*) is *agni*-predominated. The second stage (called *akṣara*) is *vāyu* predominated. The third stage (called *avyaya*) is *āditya*-predominated and the last stage (called *parāpara*) is *soma*-predominated. Now, because the creator (*puruṣa*) has these four stages, which have their correspondence in man alone, therefore, man and creature have been given a common name—*puruṣa*. It is not that men have imagined God in the own image, God has really fashioned man in his own image. This is elaborated in the Sixti chapter.

XIV

THE ENDS OF HUMAN LIFE

These four stages of development constitute the body, the mind, the intellect and the soul of a man. Each of these constituents has its own requirement. The body requires the material things (*artha*), the mind requires fulfillment of desires (*kāma*), the intellect require justice (*dharma*) and the soul demands freedom (*moksha*). These are the four ends of human life (*puruṣārtha*), which make it perfect. None of them is to be neglected. This is the holistic approach of the Vedas. Thus we have the following quadruples corresponding to the four Vedas.

VEDA	END OF HUMAN LIFE	PORTION OF LIFE IN WHICH THE END IS TO BE ACHIEVED	CLASS OF SOCIETY WHICH MEETS THE REQUIREMENT
<i>Rgveda</i>	Material objects	First 25 years of student life.	The working class.
<i>Yajurveda</i>	Desires	Second portion of life (25-50): house holder's life.	The business community.
<i>Sāmaveda</i>	Justice	Third portion of retired life of contemplation (50-75).	The administrators.
<i>Atharvaveda</i>	Freedom	The last of life: Ascetics (75-100)	The philosophers.

We shall elaborate it in the **twelfth chapter**.

THE FIVE LAYERS AT MICRO AND MACRO LEVEL

This holistic approach has another dimension also. We understand our existence through the understanding of the universe and vice-versa. That takes us to the unity of micro and macro, leading ultimately to non-duality of all. Every statement of Veda, therefore, has to be applied at micro (*adhyātma*) and macro (*adhibhūta*) level, as also, to the third level which relates the two (*adhidaiiva*) Let us start from the micro level. Body, mind and intellect are three levels, which are manifest. The sub-conscious mind is the fourth level, which is semi-manifest. The fifth, is the un-manifest level of nature, which is all pervading. Now at the macro or physical level, we have earth corresponding to body, water corresponding to mind, fire corresponding to intellect, air corresponding to sub-conscious mind and space corresponding to the all-pervading mother nature.

In between these two, lies the five-fold (*Pañca-Parvā*) universe. The earth, the moon and the sun are manifest. But that is not the end of the universe. The sun rotates around another body, which we have called the fourth region (*apolaka*), which is semi-manifest. At the end, is the un-manifest self-born body of the origin of the universe. Thus, we get the following three pentads:

MICRO LEVEL	MACRO LEVEL OF PHYSICAL ELEMENTS	THE CORRESPONDING LAYER OF THE FIVE FOLD UNIVERSE
Un-manifest nature (<i>avyakta</i>)	Space	The self-born creator (<i>Svayambhu</i>)
Sub conscious mind (<i>Māhan</i>)	Air	The region of <i>Soma</i> (<i>Parameśthi</i>)
Intellect (<i>Buddhi</i>)	Fire	The Sun
Mind (<i>Mānas</i>)	Water	The Moon
Body (<i>Śarīra</i>)	Clay	The earth

This theme is elaborated in the **ninth chapter**.

In this introduction, we have just touched upon some of the concepts, which we are going to deal with, in some detail, in the present work. As we proceed things will get clarified.

XV

THE YAJÑA AND OUR LIFE

Before concluding, we would like to give a quotation from an ancient Vedic work, so as to show how deep and wide is the understanding of Vedic seers regarding *Yajña* which constitutes the central theme of the Vedic literature.

The soul is the performer of the *Yajña*. Faith is its wife. The body is the fuel. The chest is the altar. The hair on the body is the sacred grass (*kusa*). The knowledge is the turf. The heart is the sacrificial post. The desires are the purified butter. Anger is the animal to be sacrificed. Penance is the fire. Self-control is the pacifier. Speech is the fee. The life force is the priest specializing in the *Rgveda*. The eyes are the priests specialising in the *Sāmaveda*. Mind is the priest specialising in the *Yajurveda*. Ears are the priests specialising in the *Atharvaveda*. The performer is initiated for the

This makes it abundantly clear that *yajina* means something deeper than a mere mechanical ritual.

Body (Soma)	Clay	The earth
Mind (Manas)	Water	The Moon
Intellect (Buddhi)	Fire	The Sun
Atma (Soul)	Air	The region of storm (The atmosphere)
	Ether	The region of storm (The atmosphere)

[illegible]

ЭЛЛ РНО ДИД АЙЛАҢ ЭНЭ

[illegible]

आ ब्राह्मणो ब्रह्मवर्चसी जायतामाराष्ट्रे राजन्यः शूद्र इषव्योऽतिव्याधी
महारथो जायतां दोग्धी धेनुर्वोढानङ्गानाशुः सदिः पुरिध्वर्योषा
जिष्णू रथेष्टाः सभेयो युवास्य यजमानस्य वीरो जायतां निकामे
निकामे नः पर्जन्यो वर्षतु फलवत्यो न ओषधयः पच्यन्तां योगक्षेमो
नः कल्पताम् । - यजुर्वेद २२.२२

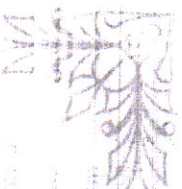
अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।

युयोध्यस्मज्जुहराणमेनो भूयिष्ठां ते नम उक्तिं विधेम ॥ यजुर्वेद ४०.१६

O agni deva! You know all the objects, lead us to prosperity through the correct path. Separate us from the crooked sins, we pay greatest homage to you.

द्यौः शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं शान्तिः पृथिवी शान्तिरापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिः ।
 वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वे देवाः शान्तिर्ब्रह्म शान्तिः सर्वं शान्तिः शान्तिरेव
 शान्तिः सा मा शान्तिरोधि - यजुर्वेद २४.१७

May there be peace in heaven, peace in atmosphere, peace on earth, peace in waters, peace in plants, peace in trees, peace to all devas, peace in knowledge, peace everywhere, peace in peace, may that peace come to me.



Chapter Two

HARMONY

THE VEDIC ETHOS

Before we deal in depth with the topics which have been touched upon in the introductory chapter, it would be in the fitness of things that we get acquainted with the general ethos of the Vedic people.

The Vedic people or the Aryans had a positive attitude towards life. They very much valued spiritualism and moral code of conduct but never overlooked physical and material well being, an attitude which prevailed throughout the Indian tradition where *abhyudaya* or material prosperity is held as much the object of observation of righteousness (*dharma*) as *nistreyasa* or spiritual emancipation - यतोऽयुदयानिः श्रेयससिद्धिर्दस धर्मः

I

WORLDLY WELL BEING

Efficiency of the power of sight, hearing and speech are the main aids to a happy life — पश्येम शरदः शतम्, शृणुयाम शरदः शतम् प्रब्रूयाम शरदः शतम्, But more than that, is the freedom from humiliation — अदीनाः स्याम शरदः शतम्. Next to health comes wealth, for which, along with agriculture, other professions including business, are recommended.

इमामन्ते सरिपं मीनुषो नो यमश्चाममाम दूस्म।

शुभं नो अस्तु प्रपणो विक्रयश्च प्रतिपणः फलितं मा कृणोतु।

इदं हव्यं सविदानो जुषेथां शुभं नो अस्तु चरितमुत्थितञ्च ॥ - अथर्ववेद ३.१५.४

Our purchase and sale be profitable, the exchange of goods may be fruitful for me. You two (*Indra* and *agni*), in harmony while accepting this oblation, may make my every move and exertion prosperous.

येन धनेन प्रपणं चरामि धनेन देवा धनमिच्छमानः।

तमे भूयो भवतु मा कनीयोऽग्ने सातञ्जो देवान् हविषा नि षेथ ॥ अथर्ववेद ३.१५.५



O *Devas* ! Seeking wealth through wealth, the wealth by which I do my business, in that wealth of mine may *indra*, *prajapati*, *soma* and *agni* bestow luster.

अर्वाची सुभगे भव सीते वन्दामहे त्वा ।

यथा नः सुभगाससि यथा नः सुफलाससि ॥ - ऋग्वेद ४.५७.६

O *Furrow*! Be near to us and be gracious; we bow before you, so that you may be gracious and full of fruits.

शुनं नः फाला वि कृषन्तु भूमिं शुनं कीनाशा अभि यन्तु वाहेः ।

शुनं पर्जन्यो मधुना पयोभिः शुनासीय शुनमस्मासु धत्तम् ॥ - ऋग्वेद ४.५७.८

The plough-shares may plough the soil with ease, the farmer may proceed with the oxen without any difficulty, may the clouds sprinkle the earth with honey and water, let the plough-share and the plough bestow all prosperity on us.

काररहं ततो भिषगुपलप्रक्षिणी नना ।

नाना भियो वसूयोऽनुगा इव तस्थिमेन्द्रायेन्दो परिस्रव ॥ - ऋग्वेद १.११२.३

I am a carpenter, my father is a doctor, and my mother grinds the crops with grinder of stones. We pursue different professions. *Soma* ! Flow freely for *indra*.

Life is a constant struggle. We, therefore, need good nourishment, vigor and valor. Let there be no escape or defeatism. Good people should stand united against the evil.

While praying for an all round prosperity, the Vedic people knew the importance of austerity and hard work for any progress. *Tapas* and *śrama* are two pre-requisites of any orderly life.

अग्ने तपस्यायामह उप तय्यामहे तपः श्रुतानि शृण्वन्तो वयमायुष्मन्तः सुमेधसः ॥

- अथर्ववेद ७.६१

O *agni*, We perform *tapā*, we observe *tapā*. May we, possess long life and bright intellect listening to the knowledge of the sacred lore.

ब्रह्मचर्येण तपसा राजा राष्ट्रं विरक्षति ।

आचार्यो ब्रह्मचर्येण ब्रह्मचारिणमिच्छते ॥ - अथर्ववेद ११.५.१७

It is through *brahmacarya* and *tapā* that the ruler protects his *śra* through *brahmacarya* the teacher desires a student.

यः श्रमात् तपसो जातो लोकान्सर्वान्स्मानसो ।

सोमं यश्चक्रे केवलं तस्मै ज्येष्ठाय ब्रह्मणे नमः ॥ - अथर्ववेद १०.७.३६

Obeisance to the eldest *brahman*, who being born of *śrama* and *tapā* filled all the regions (and) who made *soma* for him alone

तम आसीत् तमसा गूळहमग्रेऽप्रेकतं सतितं सर्वमा इदम् ।

तुच्छेनाच्यमिहितं यदासीत् तपसस्तन्महिनाजायतैकम् ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.१४०.३

In the beginning, there was darkness encompassed by darkness, it was water. The one being, which was covered by the negligible became manifest through *tapā*.

Miserliness is condemned and liberality is praised in very high terms.

न स सखा यो न ददाति सख्ये सचाभुवे सचमानाय पितृः ।

अपस्मात् प्रेयाज तदोको अस्ति पूणन्तन्ममरणं चिदच्छेत् ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.११७.४

One who does not give to a friend, is not a friend; one who does not give to him who implores food; leave such a man, he is no shelter. One should rather follow a stranger who comforts him.

पूणीयादिनाभमानाय तय्यान् द्राधीयांसमनु पश्यतेऽपय्याम् ।

ओ हि वर्तन्त्ये रथ्येव चक्राऽन्मन्मपुतिष्ठन्तः प्रयाः ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.११७.५

Let the prosperous give to him who seeks help. Let him be far-sighted take a long view of life. Wealth revolves like the wheels of a chariot, you from one to another.

मोषमनं विन्दते अप्रचेताः सत्यं ब्रवीमि त्रय इह स तस्य भिन्नाग्निर्धियाः श्रुतानि शृण्वन्तो वयमायुष्मन्तः सुमेधसः ॥

An ignorant man acquires food in vain, tell the truth, that food is verily in death. He who eats alone is only sin incarnate, he neither cherishes friend nor a co-traveller.

II

Education

इयं समित् पृथिवि द्यौर्द्वितीयोतात्तरिक्षं समिधा पृणाति ।
ब्रह्मचारी समिधा मेखलाया श्रमेण लोकांस्तपसा पिपाति ॥ - अथर्ववेद ११.५.४

Brahmacārī satiates the atmosphere with the *samidhā*, the earth is the *samidhā*, the second *samidhā* is the heaven. With *samidhā*, belt, *śṛavā* and *tapas*, *brahmacārī* satiates all the regions.

Good education is the first requisite of a successful life. The Vedic term for education is *Brahmacarya*, which is significant for two reasons: in the first place it means acquisition of knowledge, *Brahma*, but more than that it means self-realization through a life of self-control.

III

FAMILY LIFE

इहैव स्तं मा विर्यौष्ठं विश्वमायुष्यंशुतम् ।
क्रीळन्ती पुत्रैर्नृभिर्मोदमानौ स्वे गृहे ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.८५.४२

May you two (husband and wife) live here together, enjoying full length of your life, playing with your sons and grandsons, rejoicing in your own abode.

It was after leading a life of sublimation of animal instinct, as *brahmacārī*, that a happy union of men and women was anticipated as a bed-rock of a happy worldly life of a householder. The very fact, that no Vedic ritual was complete without wife, speaks high of the position of women in those days. The verse, which is still recited at the time of a Hindu marriage, is not only poetically beautiful but philosophically significant also — सामाहं, ऋक् त्वम्, द्यौरहं, पृथ्वी त्वम् । It is only the Vedic people, amongst all ancient people, who declared that the wife, verily, is the home and wished that she could be the queen of all the members of her husband's family. The Vedic *ṛṣi* could be poetic, if occasion demanded it. Here are some of the *mantras* recited at the time of *śūrya's* departure for her husband's house after her marriage.

HARAMONY The Vedic Ethos

१२भ्यासीदनुदेयो नारायंसी न्योचनी ।

सूर्याया भद्रमिद्विदासी गाथयैति परिष्कृतम् ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.८५.६

When *śūryā* went to her husband (from the house of her father) *raibhryā* was her maid servant, *nārāśāmsī* was her girl friend. Her garments were auspicious, she was decorated by *gāthā* चित्तिरा उपवर्हणं चक्षुरा अभ्यञ्जनम् ।

द्यौर्भूमिः कोश आसीद् यदयान् सूर्या पतिम् - ऋग्वेद १०.८५.७

Thought was her pillow, eyes were the Collyrium, heaven at earth were her treasure-box.

स्तोमा आसन् प्रतिधयः कुरीरे छन्द ओपशः ।

सूर्याया अश्विना वरा श्रित्नासीत् पुरोगवः ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.८५.८

Stomas were the crossbars, her chariot-pole and *kurāra* met was its decoration, *aśvins* were the brides-men of *śūryā* at *agṛā* was the leader of the party.

सोमो वधूयुरभवदश्विनास्तामुभा वरा ।

सूर्या यत् पत्ने शंसन्ती मनसा सविताददात् ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.८५.९

Soma chose the groom and *aśvins* his best men, *saviā* gave *śūryā* to a husband whom she admired from her heart.

मनो अस्या अन आसीद् द्यौर्मासीदुतच्छदिः ।

शुक्रावनद्वाहावास्तां यदयान् सूर्या गृहम् ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.८५.१०

Mind was the chariot of the bride, and heaven were the canopy. When *śūryā* went to her husband's home, the two white oxen were drawing her.

A householder's life is supreme, a path towards immortality. The sage pray 'May I be immortal through my children?'. The members of a joint family have the food and store of water to be in common and gather round the domestic fire worship, like the spoke of a wheel round its move³. Home is a place where marriage, *sojourning*, contemplates, in which, there is much love⁴.

2 ऋग्वेद ५.४.१०

3 अथर्ववेद ३.३०

4 यजुर्वेद ३.४२

IV

COW

आ गावो अममृतं भद्रमक्रन् तसीदन्तु गोष्ठे राण्यन्वत्समे ।

प्रजावती: पुरुरूपा इह स्युरिन्द्राय पूर्वाश्रयसो दुहनाः ॥ - ऋग्वेद ६.२८.१

Cows have come from all sides and have given us prosperity. May they stay in the stall and be pleased with us. Along with their progeny, variegated, they may stay here. May they yield milk for *indra* on many a dawn.

Cattle were valuable for the agricultural society formed by the Vedic people. Cow was specially loved. She has been asked to make the house happy with her pleasant lowings. She should graze on good pastures and drink pure water. Her milk makes the ugly look beautiful. The cows are *Bhaga*, they are *Indra*⁵. That the cows are looked upon as sacred today by the *Hindus*, is not the result of a later development but goes back to the Vedic times.

V

HARMONY

We hear of *Jñāna* and *Vijñāna* in the *Gītā*, but there is also a third concept, of *sam-jñāna* in the Veda. *Sam-jñān* means an understanding attitude towards each other. Whereas, the ideal of a family life is represented in *Rgveda* 10.85, the ideal of society is represented in *Rgveda* 10.191, where, it has been ordained that our aims be common and our hearts of one accord. Here are some *mantras* praying for all round harmony.

समानी प्रपा सह वोऽन्नभागाः समाने योक्त्रे सह वो युनाज्म ।
सम्यञ्चोऽग्निं सपर्यवता नाभिमिवाभिमतः ॥ - अथर्ववेद ३.३०.७

Let your water reservoir be common, your share of food be common. I yoke you to a common yoke. Stay united around the fire just as spokes stay united around the navel of a wheel. सधोचोनात् वः संमनसस्कृणोम्येकसुग्रीन्संवन्नेन सर्वात् ।

देवा इवानुतं रक्षमाणाः सायंत्रतः सौमनसो वो अस्यु ॥ - अथर्ववेद ३.३०.८ ?

I make you all with common desire, with common aim, common mind, having one leader. Be like *devas*, who preserve their immortality, full of love in your heart, morning and evening.

5 यजुर्वेद ५.२८

HARAMONY The Vedic Ethos

समानी च आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि चः ।

समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहसति ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.१९१.४

Let your aims be common, let your hearts be of one accord, your minds be united so that you may live happily together.

सं जानीमहे मनसा सं चिकित्वा मा युष्महि मनसा दैव्येन ।

मा घोषा उत स्युर्बहुले विनिहते मेघुः पसदिन्द्रस्याहन्त्यागे ॥ - अथर्ववेद ७.५.२

Let our minds be united, let our knowledge be common, let not fight with the divine mind. Let there be no cry in the battle field where many have been slain at the beginning of the day. Let not the arrows of *indra* fall.

दूते दूह मा मित्रस्य मा चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षन्ताम् ।

मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे । मित्रस्य चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे ॥ - यजुर्वेद २४.

O strong one! Make me strong. May all beings look upon me with friendly eyes; may I look upon all beings with friendly eye. May we look upon each other with friendly eyes.

VI

ARYANS

With a powerful social ethics at their back, the Vedic people were leading prosperous life but not without trouble. There are references to mighty wars between them and their foes. Herein crops up an important controversy as to whether the Aryans invaded India and conquered the aboriginals of this country. No scholar has been able to point out any such reference where it might have been hinted that the Aryans migrated from any other country to India. Muir, who edited 'Original Sanskrit Text' series accepted that there is no such reference in any Sanskrit Text where Aryans are held to be of foreign origin. Moreover, we do not have any evidence show that the words like *Dāsa*, *Asura* or *Dasyu* are used for the non-Aryan aboriginals of India⁶.

Still, some scholars insist that such references where *Dasyus* are spoken of as *anāṣṭ*, (literally 'nose-less' and 'flat-nosed' by implication) suggest that *Dasyu*

6 Quoted in आयौ का मूल निवास-स्थान by Prof. Yogesh Chandra Sharma, an article which appears in राजभाषा भारती (vol.94) July-September, 2001 published by भारत सरकार गृहमंत्रालय, राजभाषा विभाग, पृ. ३

7 ऋग्वेद ५.२९.१०

were non-Aryans having different physical features from Aryans, who had a raised nose. Such arguments fall to ground when just after three *sūktas* we find that *Dasyus* are spoken of as 'foodless', which by no stretch of imagination could have indicated any physical feature of any ethnic group. *Anāsa* would, therefore, simply mean that those enemies, whom the Aryans fought, had no sense of self-esteem and *apāda* would simply mean that they could not withstand the fury of war.

Pandit Ojha made a very elaborate study of the problem and came to two important conclusions on the basis of the evidence of primary sources:

- (1) The boundaries of India or *Bhāratavarṣa* were far more extended in Vedic times than what they are today. Lands, like Asia Minor, from where the Aryans are supposed to have migrated, were not the foreign countries in Vedic times but a part of India or *Bhāratavarṣa*.

- (2) The Aryans did not invade any country but were themselves invaded by non-Aryans against whom they had to defend themselves. Of course, there were fights amongst themselves also, but in no case, the Aryans invaded people of any other race or any other country.

Pandit Ojha wrote two books, *Indra-vijaya* and *Jagadgurur-vaibhavam*, to demonstrate the validity of these two conclusions.

First of all, let us find out the boundaries of *Bhāratavarṣa* as given by the *Purāṇas* and propounded by *Ojha*. In the first place, *Bhāratavarṣa* was originally divided by Indus river into Eastern and Western *Bhārata*; its Eastern boundary being Formosa (Taiwan) on the coast of the sea where as Afghanistan, Iran, Mesopotamia and Arab up to Red sea formed the Western boundary. The Eastern part was known as *Aryāvarta* whereas the Western part was known as *Aryāvāna* (Iran of modern times). The Aryans inhabited this whole area. Being across the Indus river, the people of Iran were called Parsees (*Para* = across) and the people on this side of Indus were called *Hindus* (*Sindhu* = Hindi). There was a conflict of faith between the two, the *parsees* worshipping *Varuṇa* and the *Hindus* worshipping *Indra*; but both of them following the Aryan culture. This led to a battle between the *Asuras*, the worshippers of *Varuṇa*, and *Indra* in which *Indra* was victorious and was praised lavishly. Some, however, praised *Varuṇa*. Then we have the reconciling view giving an equal importance to both of them. Consequently, there were *sūktas* that were addressed commonly to *Indra* and *Varuṇa*. The conflict is amongst the Aryans themselves and not between *Aryans* and non-Aryans. Both, *Devas* and *Asuras*, were the offsprings of *Prajāpati*.

VII

PAURANIC GEOGRAPHY

The Purāṇas speak of the earth as a lotus having eight petals. Each of the petals is represented by a different *Varṣa*; *Kuruvārṣa* in the North, *Ketumālā varṣa* in the West, *Bhadrāśva varṣa* in the East and *Bhāratavarṣa* in the South. *Hiranyakimpurṣa*, *hari* and *raṇyaka* are in the *īśāna*, *āgneya*, *nairṛtya* and *vāyava* direct respectively (See figure One).

Ujjayini is the centre of *Bhāratavarṣa*, which extends up to 45° degree east the Eastern and Western side of it, which means that on the West it extends up to territory where Nile river falls in the ocean and up to Pacific ocean in the East. It has following Islands.

Sanskrit Names	Modern Names
इन्ददीप	Andaman
नगदीप	Nicobar
सौम्य	Sumatra
गान्धर्व	Java
वारुण	Bornia
वशेरमान	Selevisia
गभीरमान	Malukka
तम्रपर्ण	Srilanka
कुमारिका	Bharuta Khanda

All this is based on the authority of the *Purāṇas*. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* has given the name of eight Islands of *Jambudvīpa* as follows:

Possible identification

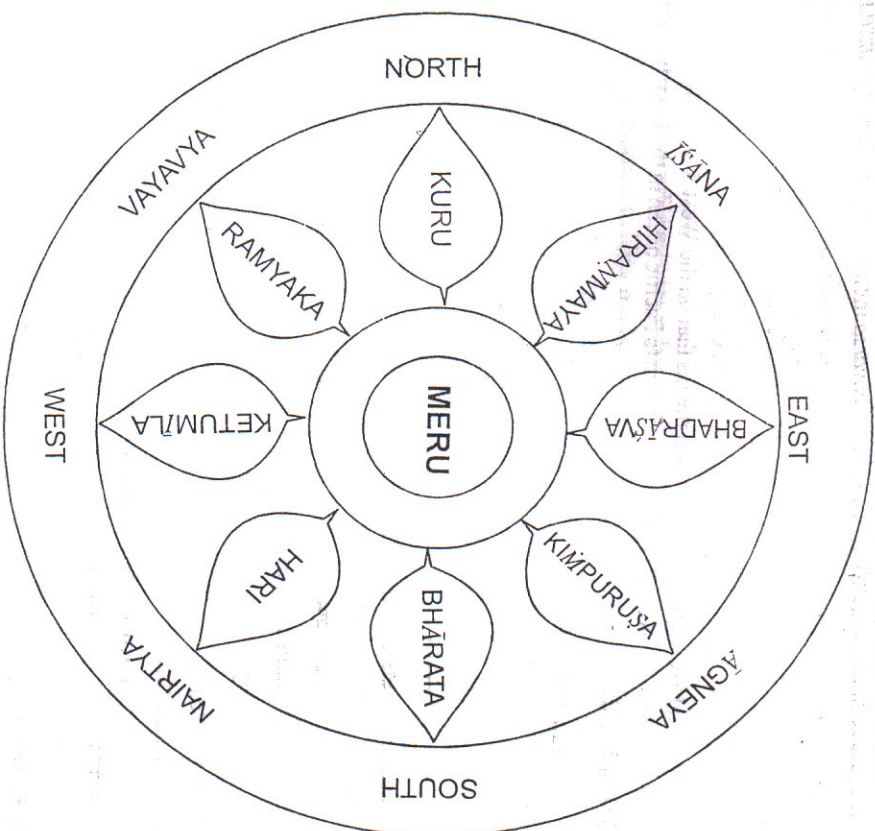
1- आर्कतन	Britain
2- नारमणक	Norway
3- मन्दरहरिण	—
4- पाञ्चजन्य	Japan
5- चन्द्रशुक्ल	Philippines
6- स्वर्णप्रस्थ	The Islands of Srilanka
7- सिंहलीदीप	Srilanka
8- लंकादीप	Maldiva

VIII

WARS

With this geographical background, *Pandit Ojha* speaks of the wars

Eight-Fold Division of Earth



This eight-fold division of earth has been given under the heading *bhuvanakośa* of the *pūrāṇas*.

अथ

Figure No. 1

HARMONY The Vedic Ethos

took place in Vedic period. These wars can be classified into five categories: (i) War with the *panis* regarding cows (ii) War with the *Daityas* regarding *soma* (iii) War with *Dāna* regarding land (iv) War with *Dasyus* and (v) War amongst *Aryans* themselves.

It was not that the *Aryans* attacked the non-*Aryans*; the non-*Aryans*, on other hand, had been attacking the *Aryans*. The *Asuras* were originally allotted the regions by *Brahmā* - (i) *Amarāṅka* (America) (ii) *Aparāṅka* (Africa) and *Yavari* (Europe). They, however, conquered other territories also - Asia Minor, Rome and *Assa* being some of them. There had been twelve such wars between the *Devas* and *Asur*

Some important names involved in these wars are *Śambara*, *Divodāsa*, *Sudāsa*. It is not possible to frame a systematic picture of the historical events; Vedic times, but it is clear that the *Aryans* had to face invasions on a large scale; they faced them bravely.

Naturally, the warrior class got a respectable position in such a situation. They defended the liberty of the society from the invasions of those who were against order of world — *Rta*. *Kṣatriya* is identified with *Rta*⁹.

IX

SPIRITUALISM

The *Brāhmaṇas*, represented spiritual power and were, therefore, above control of the *kṣatriyas*. The ideal was to have a harmony between the two—representing mundane power and the other being the epitome of spiritual power. It is another dimension of holistic approach.

यत्र ब्रह्म च क्षेत्रं च सत्यं च तत्र सः ।

तत्त्वोक्तं पुण्यं प्रशंस्य यत्र देवाः सहायिताः ॥ - यजुर्वेद - १०. १५

Where knowledge and power reside and move in unity, that region I know to be holy, there the *deva* dwell with *agni*.

इदं मे ब्रह्म च क्षेत्रं च सत्यं च तत्र सः ।

यत्र देवा दधुः श्रियुः तत्र देवैः स्वाहा ॥ - यजुर्वेद - ११. १६

Let me have the luster of spiritualism and administration. Let the *devas* bestow the best luster on me. Obeisance to that luster

MORALITY

The Vedic people had a very high sense of morality.

⁹ ऋग्वेद ५.६.६ - ॥ यजुर्वेद १०.१५ - ॥ अथर्ववेद १०.१५ - ॥

मधु वाता ऋतायते मधु क्षरति सिन्धवः ।

माध्वीर्नः सन्त्वोषधिः ॥ - ऋग्वेद १.१.६

The breeze blows pleasantly for him who follows the divine law, rivers pour honey for him. Let the plants be sweet for us.

सत्यं बृहदृतमुग्रं दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवी धारयन्ति ।

सा नो भूतस्य भव्यस्य पत्न्युरे लोकं पृथिवी नः कृणोतु ॥ - अथर्ववेद १२.१.१

Satya, vastness, rita, consecration tapa, knowledge and yajña uphold the earth. May she, the mistress of the past and the future, widen our world.

The Vedic people had an idea of transcendental morality also.

अपक्रामन् पौरुषेयाद् वृणानो दैव्यं वचः ।

प्रणीतीरभ्यावर्तस्य विश्वेभिः सखिभिः सह ॥ अथर्ववेद ७.१.०५ ?

Amongst all your friends establish your leadership advancing through exertion and wooing the divine word, transcend what is human.

It is also a myth that the Vedas do not speak of ascetics (sannyāsa). In fact they give a very vivid picture of the ascetic way of life.

मुनयो वातरशनाः पिशंगा वसते मत्ता ।

वातस्यानु श्रिञ्जं यन्ति यदेवासो अविक्षत ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.१३६.२

Munis, having air as their girdle, wear the soiled yellow clothes. They go in the direction of the wind, where the devas reside. In a mood of ecstasy, the ascetics exclaim:

उन्मदिता मौनेयेन वार्ता आ तंस्थिमा वयम् ।

शरीरिदस्माकं यूयं मर्तसो अभि पश्यथ ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.१३६.३

We have ascended the wind, in the ecstasy of silence (or munitva), you mortals see only our bodies (and not our spirit).

XI

MONOTHEISM

The Vedas are quite vocal about monotheism, which underlies the apparent polytheistic outlook.

प्रजापते न त्वदेतान्यन्यो विश्वा जातानि परिता बभूव ।

यत्कामासो जुहुमस्तन्नो असतु वयं स्याम फतयो रयीणाम् ॥ - ऋग्वेद १०.१२१.१०

O Prajapati! None else than you pervades all the creatures. We get that for which we offer oblation. May we be the masters of all treasures.

तदेवानिस्तदादित्यस्तद्वायुस्तद् चन्द्रमाः ।

तदेव शुक्रं तद्ब्रह्म ता आपः स प्रजापतिः ॥ - यजुर्वेद २२.१

That is agni, that is āditya,

That is vāyu, that is candmā,

That is śukra, that is brahman,

That is āpahi, that is pṛajāpati

एषो ह देवः प्रदिशोऽनु सर्वाः पूर्वा ह जातः स उ गर्भे अन्तः ।

स एव जातः स जनिष्यमाणः प्रत्यङ् जनोस्तिष्ठति सर्वतोमुखः ॥ - यजुर्वेद २२.४

He is the deva who pervades in all directions, he was the first to take birth from within the womb. He is that who is born an who is yet to take birth. He faces people on all sides.

XII

CONCLUSION

We may conclude with the remarks of Prof. S.P. Singh which he made in his article 'PHILOSOPHICAL POSSIBILITIES OF THE VEDA' (pp.1-2) :—

The division of the Veda into karma-kāṇḍa- and jñāna-kāṇḍa did rather disservice to the cause of philosophy as well as the Veda itself. As per the division, the Vedic Sanhitās, Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas came to be categorised together as the karma-kāṇḍa while only the Upaniṣads could get the status of jñāna-kāṇḍa. Consequently, the seekers of knowledge, particularly of the philosophical variety, concentrated the attention almost exclusively on the Upaniṣads, leaving the rest of the Veda to be dealt with only by the karma-kāṇḍin. The latter, on the other hand leaving everything metaphysical to the mute care of the Veda itself, had confined himself almost exclusively to the Brāhmaṇas, no matter be performance of the sacrifice or creation of a system of philosophy, namely, the Mīmāṃsā system. The Vedic mantras are treated as relevant in the performance of the sacrifice only to the extent as the Brāhmaṇic injunctions concerned calls for their recitation on particular occasions.

It is in the light of these remarks that the importance of Pandit Madhusūda Ojha's approach, which we are following in the present work, is to be appreciated.

विष्णुः सवित्रोऽयं विष्णुः सवित्रोऽयं विष्णुः सवित्रोऽयं
विष्णुः सवित्रोऽयं विष्णुः सवित्रोऽयं विष्णुः सवित्रोऽयं



नमः पूर्वभ्यः पश्चिद्भ्यः

Salutations to the Path-makers, the pioneers
of Vedic Studies

