

SYNTHESIS OF YOGA IN THE VEDA

KIREET JOSHI

THE MOTHER'S INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH

Synthesis of Yoga in the Veda

This book is addressed to all young people who, I urge, will study and respond to the following message of Sri Aurobindo:

“It is the young who must be the builders of the new world, — not those who accept the competitive individualism, the capitalism or the materialistic communism of the West as India’s future ideal, nor those who are enslaved to old religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and transformation of life by the spirit, but all those who are free in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future. They will need to consecrate their lives to an acceding of their lower self, to the realisation of God in themselves and in all human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable labour for the nation and for humanity.”

(Sri Aurobindo, ‘The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth’ Vol. 16, SABCL, p.331)

Dedicated to

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

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KIREET JOSHI

Uday - Gopi

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First edition, 2009

ISBN: 978-81-89490-09-6

Distributor :

Popular Media, Delhi

E: popularmedia@ymail.com

www.popularmedia.in

Cover-design :

Macro Graphics Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi-110019

Printed by :

Popular Printers, Jhilmil Industrial Area, Delhi-110095

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Preface

It is extremely significant that the earliest records, in which we find statements of the awakened thought of ancient humanity, speak of five greatest ideals for which humanity has constantly aspired for throughout its long historical pilgrimage, namely, God, Light, Freedom, Bliss and Immortality. But even more significant is the fact that these earliest records, namely the texts of the Vedas, present to us a systematic account of the methods that were developed in ancient times by which these five great ideals were sought to be realised, even though the language of these texts is symbolic and needs to be interpreted meticulously by the contemporary humanity. Fortunately, Sri Aurobindo has, in his book '*On the Veda*', carried out this great and difficult task and explained to us the symbolic meanings of numerous terms which have been used in the Vedic texts.

In effect, we have available to us a comprehensive statement of what may be called a synthesis of Yoga that the Vedic texts contain. It appears that the future of humanity, in its evolutionary process, will lie through the path of Yoga, and therefore it is very important for the contemporary humanity to study the great science of Yoga, its history and how a new synthesis of Yoga has been developed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The significance of the synthesis of Yoga that is in the Veda will itself become more and more manifest in the light of the new synthesis of the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

This book aims at presenting the secret of the Veda and the

synthesis of Yoga of the Veda, as we can derive it from Sri Aurobindo's own exposition of the Veda and the Vedic Yoga. For the full understanding of the synthesis of Yoga in the Veda, one will be required to study Sri Aurobindo's book '*On the Veda*', and one needs to read also Sri Aurobindo's '*Synthesis of Yoga*', in order to understand how the Vedic Yoga has been assimilated by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in their new synthesis of Yoga. If this book leads the readers to study these two great books '*On the Veda*' and '*Synthesis of Yoga*', the labour of this book will have been rewarded.

Kireet Joshi

Introduction

There is no ascertainable history of the ancient beginnings of yoga. We are aware of traditions of esoteric practices in ancient Egypt, Chaldea, Greece, Persia, India and of other similar traditions. There was no doubt an age of Mysteries; there was, undoubtedly, even a pre-Vedic age and a pre-Chaldean age, during which there seemed to have developed experiences and explorations leading to discoveries which were important to the developments of yoga. The results of these discoveries seem, however, to have been lost in some developments of the past, or they seem to have been assimilated – probably very much diminished in the content and import – in some traditions of religion or of philosophy. It is thus difficult to determine what exactly was the knowledge that the ancients possessed, as also their real achievement and contribution to the advancement of humanity.¹

There is, however, available in India the most ancient record, known as the Veda,² a composition of a unique and accomplished character, the language of which is mysterious and ambiguous, betraying some possible secret. There is no doubt that the Vedic Samhitas preceded the Upanishads, which are themselves very ancient. There is no doubt also that the Vedas speak of *Pitrah*, of the forefathers, and of their achievements in glorious terms. It seems, therefore, that we have in the Veda a record of some very ancient times (supposedly of 10,000 B.C. or of 5000 B.C. or of 2500 B.C.?) which might give us a clue of at least the Indian age of

mysteries,³ and it might help us also in imagining or inferring what might have been the mysteries known and practised in other parts of the world.

There are, of course, historians who would like to convince us that the ancient times were barbaric, and that it will be in vain to look for “knowledge” or “wisdom” or any yogic shastra in the traditions or records of those barbaric times. They would, of course, grant that these barbarians had some kind of religion, but this religion, they would maintain, had no profundity in it. They treat the history of religion as a kind of logical development, of a gradual refinement and clarity, starting from animism, spiritism, fetishism, totemism and superstitious magic to the present day universal religions of monotheism, or theism or of existentialism. They would refuse to grant that there could have ever been in those ancient times anything better than any animistic or spiritist practices of beliefs or anything better than tribal polytheistic cults or traditions. According to them, a hierarchical and systematic polytheistic religion was itself a later development, parallel to the political developments of early kingdoms or early pre-national empires. To find, therefore, among the ancient records, beliefs comparable to civilized and developed notions of pantheism or deism or theism were, according to them, impossibility.

This interpretation of ancient history is being proved to be inadequate as larger data are being increasingly brought to light. It may be that the very ancient man was a barbarian and an infra-rational being, dominated almost exclusively by the needs of the physical, unilluminated impulses and mentality subject to physical senses. But at the same time, it is being increasingly conceived that the infra-rational man was not wholly infra-rational or that he had some kind of implicit

mysteries,³ and it might help us also in imagining or inferring what might have been the mysteries known and practised in other parts of the world.

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seem to be any other way of explaining the emergence of the composers of the Veda and the astonishing degree to which they were able to give a peculiarly and uniquely spiritual turn to the whole future trend of the civilization.

Admittedly, the ancient barbarians looked upon the universe with some kind of animistic or spiritist feeling. It is true that to them the most important things were the phenomena of Nature, the sun, the moon, stars, day and night, rains and storms and lightning. To them, the world must have seemed to be peopled by unseen powers and by the earthly animals and birds and creatures of various kinds. It was perhaps natural, therefore, that the wise ones living in the company of the primitive people, wishing to keep a safe line of communication with them, were led to express the results of their profound quests in a symbolic language. This would happen more imperatively, if the wise mystics knew that there was no fundamental contradiction between the real truth of the universe and the apparent manifestations of these truths through the physical phenomena of Nature. Some such thing again seems to have occurred in the age in which the Vedic Samhitas must have been composed.

PART ONE

Veda and Yogic Knowledge

There seem to be three main grounds on which we are led to conclude that the Veda contains a huge mine of wisdom and even a mature system of yogic knowledge.⁵ First of all, the Veda reveals its full consistent meaning only when its language is interpreted through certain key words, which are ambiguous, and while they mean something very ordinary, in one sense, they mean something very extra-ordinary in another sense. To take only one example, the word *go* means a cow, in one sense, but it also means light in another sense. Now it is found that if the word *go* is interpreted to mean cow in the Veda, it serves well up to a certain point, but the interpretation breaks down at some most crucial points, and thus on that line of interpretation, the Vedic Samhitas might seem to be incoherent, bizarre or meaningless. But, if this word is understood in the sense of spiritual light, it fits in fully and consistently in all the varied contexts. This is only one illustration but it has been possible to show, as has been shown by Sri Aurobindo in his book '*The Secret of the Veda*', that the Veda has a secret Wisdom, and that this secret pertains to the realm of deeper truths of existence. Secondly, the Upanishads, which are universally acknowledged to be records of deep knowledge, declare the Veda as the highest authority for their own sublime utterances. They quote the Vedic verses as supporting citations. Thirdly, the Veda has been regarded as the highest source of knowledge throughout the long history of the Vedic tradition, and it continues to be

so right up to the present day. The entire line of the orthodox systems of philosophy refers to the Veda as the highest indisputable authority of knowledge and truth.

It is also noteworthy that the poets of the Vedic verse were described by themselves as the hearers of the truth (*kavayaḥ satya śrutayaḥ*). They did not look upon themselves as a sort of superior medicinal-men, but as seers and thinkers, *Ṛsi, dhīra*. They themselves announced that their utterances had secret meaning, and that they revealed their whole significance only to the seers (*kavaye nivacānāni niṇyā vacāmsi*).⁶ The poetical rhythms and the poetical words in which the Vedic knowledge has been expressed are themselves consummate, and it is evident that their excellence, their force and their beauty betray some high and sustained inspiration. If one reads this poetry without any pre-suppositions, one will find that it is a sacred poetry sublime and powerful in its words and images, though with another kind of language and imagination than we now prefer and appreciate. We find that it is deep and subtle in its psychological experience and that it is stirred by a moved soul of vision and utterance.

Let us take the following examples:

“States upon states are born, covering over covering awakens to knowledge; in the lap of the Mother he wholly sees. They have called to him, getting a wide knowledge, they guard sleeplessly the strength, they have entered into the strong city. The peoples born on earth increase the luminous force of the son of the White Mother, he has gold on his neck, he is large of speech, he is as if by the power of this honey wine a seeker of plenty. He is like pleasant and desirable milk, he is a thing uncompanied and is with the two who

are companions and is as a heat that is the belly of plenty and is invincible and an overcomer of many. Play, O Ray, and manifest thy self.”⁷

Or, again, in the succeeding hymn, — “Those flames of thee, the forceful godhead, that move not and are increased and puissant, unclinging the hostility and crookedness of one who has another law. O Fire, we choose thee for our priest and the means of effectuation of our strength and in the sacrifices bringing the food of thy pleasure we call thee by the word... O god of perfect works may we be for thee felicity, for the truth, revelling with rays, revelling with the heroes.”

And finally, let us take the bulk of the third hymn that follows couched in the ordinary symbol of sacrifice: “As the human we set thee within us, as the human we kindle thee: O Flame, O Seer-Puissance, as the human, offer sacrifice to the gods for the seeker of the godheads. O Flame, thou burnest in the human creature when thou art satisfied with his offering; his ladles go to thee unceasingly, O perfect in thy birth, O presser of the running richness. Thee all the gods with one heart of love made their envoy; O seer, men serve and adore thee in their sacrifices as in the godheads. That mortal man adores the Will, the divine, by sacrifice to the powers divine; but thou, O Brightness, shine out high-kindled; enter into the home of the Truth, enter into the home of the bliss.”

The meaning of this third hymn will become clearer if it is gathered from the Vedic texts, when interpreted through the right key, that the godhead descending into man assumes the veil of humanity. The god is eternally perfect, unborn, fixed in the Truth, and Joy; descending, he is born in man, grows, and gradually manifests his completeness, as if by battles and difficult progress to the Truth and Joy. Man is a thinker, the god is the eternal seer; but the Divine veils his

seerhood in the forms of thought and life to assist the development of the mortal into immortality.

These are obviously stray examples of a mystic and symbolic poetry, and when we study passages after passages of the Vedic Samhitas, and if we apply the right key of interpretation, we shall find that these Vedic Samhitas are a testimony of a profound quest and a witness to secret wisdom and yogic shastra.

Esoteric knowledge contained in the text of the Veda can be said to be a record of a vast effort of Indian yoga, and considering that we find in this record a harmonized complexity and totality, it appears it must have been preceded by a number of specialized efforts. We find in the Veda an earliest synthesis of yoga. We find in these texts a close connection and even identity between the three main psychological interests, viz., thought, action and enjoyment. The symbolization of the cow refers to the powers of light, of the horse to those of will and action, and the symbol of soma-wine stands for the powers of joy. These are common figures of the Vedic triple sacrifice, *yajna*, — which, in the esoteric sense stands for yoga. (i) The offering of *ghrita*, the clarified butter, is the yield of the cow, (ii) the offering of the horse, and (iii) the offering of the soma are its three principal forms or elements. The synthesis of the powers of thought, will and feeling and the yoga of sacrifice of these three powers are related to the yoga-siddhi, the accomplishment that is attained by the processes of yoga, which consists of victorious illuminations, and highest spiritual ecstasies.

Veda and Symbolic Meaning of ‘Yajna’

The word *yajna* is of supreme importance in the Veda.

The word *yajna* has been used in the Indian tradition of spirituality and divine knowledge in many senses, and all these senses give us clues to the richness of the connotation of this important word. The root *Yaj* conveys swiftness, decisiveness, and rapid brilliance. It also means to love habitually and fervently, so to worship, and to adore. It also means to give freely, wholly or continuously; it also means to master thoroughly, habitually, with a continual repetition of the act of mastery. *Yaj*, as distinguished from *Yat* (endeavour), cannot mean mere endeavour; it is too decisive and triumphant and implies possession or mastery. *Yaj* means therefore to rule, govern, order and possess. That is why *Yajna* also means Almighty Ruler, the Master of man's action, body and thought, and that is why *yajna* has also come to mean Vishnu, the supreme Lord ruling from the higher faculty in man, the *parardha*. The word *yajna* is formed by the combination of *yaj* + *na*, and the suffix *na* carries a sense of action. It may therefore convey the actor, the instrument, the agent or the sufferer of the action. *Yajna* therefore came to mean, he who rules, the governor or master; loving, adoring, also who is loved; the man of mastery and so yoga, in its processes; the weaver of mastery and so dharma, a rule of action or self-government; adoration or an act of worship, giving, offering, sacrifice. The word *yajna* was closely connected with *yajuh*, which specifically means giving, offering, and sacrifice.

Although the ritualistic sense of the word *yajna* came to be restricted to the sacrifice connected with rituals and ceremonies, the inner sense of this word is very rich. The Vedas speak of sacrifice as a journey, — a journey in which the acts of self-giving of various processes of thought, feeling and action are gradually heightened, so that one can arrive in

a methodical manner to the Master of sacrifice. Sacrifice is a journey, a journey of yoga, and this journey is governed by a law or yoga. In the Indian tradition, the law of yoga or the law of sacrifice refers to the common decisive action that maintains the solidarity of the universe. It is contended that it is by the attraction of that law that a sovereign power descends to limit and correct and gradually to eliminate the errors of an egoistic and self-divided creation. It was this descent, which has been described as sacrifice of the Purusha in the Veda,⁸ whereby the Divine Soul has submitted itself to Force and Matter so that it may form and illuminate them. It is by the sacrifice of the Purusha that this world of Inconscience and Ignorance can be redeemed and transformed. In the Gita, the word sacrifice is used in a sense which is free from ritualistic connotation. It is even said that it is “with sacrifice as a companion, the all-Father created these peoples”.⁹ The law of sacrifice, which is the law of every act of thought, will and love, is the law of self-giving; the integral Karma Yoga of the Gita which is also a synthesis of the yoga of knowledge, of will and of love, is based on the recognition that the ego is neither alone in the world nor chief in the world, and that even in our fragmented existence, there is beyond itself and behind that which is not its own egoistic person, something greater and completer, a diviner All which demands from it obedience and service. The truth of the inner solidarity of the universe and the law of action that proceeds from this truth, which is termed *rita* in the Veda is a law that governs the journey of yoga. Hence, the law of sacrifice is law of the truth and the right, *satya* and *rita*, informing all the processes of thought, feeling and action. An action, when it is filled with truth and right, can rightly be called sacrifice.

Veda, Karma-Kanda and Karma Yoga

There is a view that the Veda is basically, karma-kanda, and that it consists of injunctions relating to performances of various kinds of sacrifices and to the prescribed procedures that are to be observed in those sacrifices. In this sense, the Veda is considered to be a book of religion, the prescriptions of which are binding on the adherents of the Vedic religion and which are to be scrupulously followed in the performance of rituals, ceremonies and prescribed acts. It cannot be denied that such a view of the Veda can be confirmed in the light of the vast literature of Brahmanas and various ritualistic interpretations of the Vedic texts. But when we come to understand the Vedic texts in their esoteric sense, we find in them a profound system of yoga, which is not confined merely to Karma Yoga but also to a synthesis of yoga. This yoga synthesizes the psychological being of man in its highest flights and widest ranging of divine knowledge, power, joy, life and glory with cosmic existence of the gods perceived behind the symbols of the material universe into those superior planes which are hidden from the physical sense and the material mentality. The highest achievements which have been described in the Vedic records of yoga consist of the experiences of the Vedic rishis that manifest the unity and integrality of the divine consciousness, transcendent and blissful. The ideal that was pursued by the rishis was that of increasing powers of the soul of man and attaining unity of the soul of man and the eternal divine fullness of the cosmic godheads in their synthesis and in their highest fulfillment. The Vedic yoga thus aimed at the divine perfectibility of man, and therefore of the divine integration or perfect integrality of human consciousness when it rose up to the divine consciousness.

As a stray illustration of this synthesis of this Vedic yoga, we may refer to the following verses. These verses constitute the third hymn of Madhuchandas in the first mandala, and it is a hymn of the Soma sacrifice. It is composed in movements of three stanzas, the first addressed to the Ashwins, the second to Indra, the third to the Vishvadevas, and the fourth to the goddess Saraswati. When these verses are translated in their esoteric sense, as we find them in Sri Aurobindo's translation, they read as follows:

“O Riders of the Steed, O Ashwins, swift-footed, much-enjoying lords of bliss, take delight in the energies of the sacrifice.

“O Riders of the Steed, male souls effecting a manifold action, take joy of the words, O holders in the intellect, by a luminously energetic thought.

“I have piled the seat of sacrifice, I have pressed out the vigorous Soma-juices; fulfillers of action, powers of the movement, come to them with your fierce speed on the path.”

“Come, O Indra, with thy rich lustres, these Soma-juices desire thee; they are purified by the subtle powers and by extension in body.

“Come, O Indra, impelled by the mind, driven forward by the illumined thinker, to my soul-thoughts, I who have poured out the Soma-juice and seek to express them in speech.

“Come, O Indra, with forceful speed to my soul-thoughts, O lord of the bright horses; hold firm the delight in the Soma-juice.”

“O fosterers who uphold the doer in his work, O all-gods, come and divide the Soma-wine that I distribute.

“O all-gods, who bring over to us the Waters, come passing through to my Soma-offerings as illumined powers to your places of bliss.

“O all-gods, you who are not assailed nor come to hurt, free-moving in your form of knowledge, cleave to my sacrifice as its upbearers.”

“May purifying Saraswati with all the plenitude of her forms of plenty, rich in substance by the thought, desire our sacrifice.

“She, the impeller to happy truths, the awakener in consciousness to right mentalisings, Saraswati upholds the sacrifice.

“Saraswati by the perception awakens in consciousness the great flood (the vast movement of the *ṛtam*) and illumines entirely all the thoughts.”¹⁰

These verses show the intimate connection between the yoga of the Vedic sacrifice and certain states of mind and soul, the interdependence between the offering of the clarified butter and soma juice and luminous thought, richness of psychological content, right states of the mind and its awaking and impulses with the truth and the light. This illustration will indicate the point that the Veda abounds with the statements of psychological states of consciousness and that various prayers indicate the processes by which lower states of consciousness were sought to be led or transmuted towards higher and diviner states of consciousness, and that these processes could be utilized in similar circumstances of yogic practices for attaining those higher states which have been described in the prayers.

PART TWO

Process and Methods of the Vedic Yoga

Is it possible to arrive at some precision in regard to the actual processes and methods of yoga, particularly when the Vedic texts are voluminous and also because ritualism of Vedic religion and esoteric knowledge of the psychological principles and methods of yogic realizations are intertwined in the language in which the Vedic texts are composed? Fortunately, Sri Aurobindo has written two great books, '*The Secret of the Veda*' and '*Hymns to the Mystic Fire*', which have developed the psychological theory based on the data available in the Vedic texts themselves, and a study of these works can help us in delineating the yogic system of the Veda. Even then, the subject is vast, and any attempt to present a summary is bound to do injustice to the wideness, depth and loftiness of the system of yoga that can be discerned in the Vedic texts. And yet a brief statement could be useful and may serve the limited purpose that we have in view.

Significance of Agni as the First Step

Among the four Vedas (Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda), Rig Veda is preeminent. In this Veda, the largest number of hymns are addressed and related to Agni, the mystic fire. This fact is significant, and it provides the central key to the treasure of the Vedic system of yoga.¹¹ Agni, like many other Vedic terms, has many meanings. It means fire; it means aspiration, force of consciousness and

urge, mounting and burning askesis. As we study the psychological theory of this Veda closely, we find that Agni is not only a principle of physical fire, but stands much more constantly and thoroughly for the psychological Will-Force. The Vedic poets make it abundantly clear that they have discovered a secret Will-Force to be constantly vibrant in the whole universe. According to them, physical fire is only one outer manifestation, which can be used as symbol in an attempt to bring the physical mind nearer to a sense and feeling for something that is deeply, profoundly and supra-physically present and dynamic in the universe.

Agni, according to the Vedic knowledge, is also the force of evolution, which pushes always forward, and breaks the tenebrous layers of Inconscience (*Tamas*) and Matter (*Annam*) and delivers the pulsating Life-Force. It is that which causes growth, and which increases the power, and which forges and welds relations among vegetations, plants and herbs, and which pushes forward the greater forces of Intelligence, which forms and builds complex organization in which mind can be evolved and lodged and made to vibrate effectively so as to make the material form not only conscious but even self-conscious. The original nature of Agni as a conscious will begins to manifest more and more evidently, and it begins to be experienced by self-conscious processes of yoga as a link between the physical world (*Bhur*) and the intermediate worlds (*Bhuvar*) and the higher worlds (*Swar*), and it is also found that there is a still higher world (*Turīyam Svid*)¹² in which it manifests itself fully, since it is its original home from which it has descended as an evolutionary force into the inconscience. Agni is described also as the messenger, who has a free access to all and communicates the intended message to any destination.

The Vedic seers affirm their discovery of Agni as not only an impersonal force of will or aspiration, but also as a being, a cosmic being, which is an aspect of the Supreme and Transcendental Reality. It is further affirmed that Agni presides over all the psychological activities that relate to will, force, action and energizing. According to the Vedic experience, Agni can be contacted, he can be approached, he can be invited, and he can be made active within us and within the universe. The Veda describes through various hymns not only the nature of Agni, but provides the exact vibratory sounds by which a dynamic contact with Agni can be established. For, according to the Vedic poets, a sound or a certain secret set of vibrations are appropriate to the vibrations of invisible psychological forces and entities. The Veda provides these secret sets of vibrations. The very hymns, their sounds, their specific measures are themselves those secret sets of vibrations. They are the mantras, the inevitable rhythmic expressions bearing the vibratory sounds packed with forces of realizations. These mantras invoke the deity and give knowledge by which one can submit in admiration and devotion and derive from the deity his help, his intervention and his effective manifestation.

Religions speak normally of God and gods and angels, and the myths and prayers connected with the divine being constitute substantive parts of religious doctrines. The Vedic texts also abound with materials which are associated with religious beliefs and practices. However, when the language of the Vedic texts is studied, we discover a double aspect. One belongs to the external part of the Veda; it weaves together its naturalistic and religious imagery of the Sun, the Flame, the Dawn, the Cow, the Horse, the Wine, and the sacrificial settings and activities; the other extricates from

that imagery the internal sense. A major theme of the Veda relates to the Angirasa Rishis,¹³ whose yogic practices and experiences have been described, and the meaning of these descriptions becomes evident when the internal sense is discerned by means of critical and scrupulous study and scrutiny as has been made by Sri Aurobindo in his great works, *'The Secrets of the Veda'* and *'Hymns to the Mystic Fire'*. In the religious and external garb of the Veda, the Angirases are sons of the Flame, lusters of the Dawn, givers and drinkers of the Wine, singers of the Hymn, eternal youths and heroes who wrest for us the Sun, the Cows, the Horses and all treasures from the grasp of the sons of darkness. But they are also seers of the Truth, finders and speakers of the word of the Truth and by the power of the Truth they win for us the wide world of Light and Immortality which is described in the Veda as the Vast, the True, the Right (*Brihat, Satyam, Rtam*)¹⁴ and as the own home of which they are the children. This physical image and this psychological indication are closely interwoven and they cannot be separated from each other. It is only by scrupulous effort of interpretation which derives its veracity and force by internal evidence that one can discern the truths and principles of the Vedic yoga.

Agni is recognizable as the power of aspiration that initiates man's journey. Agni is the all-pervading energy and heat in the earth and in the heaven and it has the secret power of uniting the light of the heaven and the heat of Matter. It is thus the secret power of physical transmutation at its highest; Agni is not merely the heat or the energy, not merely the illumined will working out evolutionary process in Matter and of the human soul, it is not merely a cosmic being in the multitude of various other cosmic beings, it is an aspect of the Supreme Godhead itself verily, it is one of the sacred

Names of the Supreme Divine Himself.

It is this Agni that is invoked by the Vedic seers at the beginning of the yogic journey, and throughout the journey. This is one of the deep secrets of the Vedic yoga. “Kindle Agni now, day after day and experience burning aspiration for the highest”, — this is the starting-point of the Vedic practice of yoga according to the Vedic knowledge, and it is the aspiration that has to burn in the seeker; to that aspiration, the supreme responds; and response leads to fulfillment and perfection.¹⁵

Agni and Indra: Next Step

Agni leads man in his search for the truth (*Satyam*). It is Agni that connects man with the cosmic forces and with all the gods of the three worlds (*triloka*), of earth (*Bhur*), middle world (*Bhuvar*) and heaven (*Swar*). At a height of the heaven is the functioning of Indra who is described as *gomat*, one who possesses light and one who presides over the clarity of the mind (*Vipaschita*). Indra represents a Mind-Power released from the limits and obscurations of the nervous consciousness. It is this enlightened and illumined Intelligence which fashions right or perfect forms of thought or of action,¹⁶ not the forms of the nervous impulses hampered by the falsehoods of sense. Indra has therefore been described as the fashioner of perfect forms. The activity of the pure illumined intelligence is sustained and increased by the conscious expression in us of the delight in divine existence and divine activity typified by the intoxicating wine of supreme delight, Soma-wine.¹⁷ Indra is connected with *sumati*, — light in the thoughts and a bright gladness and kindness in the soul and right sensibilities of consciousness. According to the Vedic psychology, Indra is not only the

illuminer, but also the fashioner of right thought-formations. It is Indra who shows man the path that leads him to the higher realms of knowledge and to the Supreme Reality. He cannot be overpassed, says Indra himself, in a colloquy between him and Agastya,¹⁸ a Rishi, who is impatient to shoot beyond to the Supreme but without the necessary preparation of illumined intelligence which has to be attained by the help of Indra. Agastya finds Indra obstructing his path. Agastya complains, "Why dost thou seek to smite us, O! Indra?" Indra explains that he was not obstructing his path but he stands on the path to take him to the Supreme. The Supreme, as explained by Indra, cannot be attained merely by the power of thought; beyond the thought is the illumined thought of which he is the guardian and it is through him that the powers of the mind can be transcended and made ready for the realization of the Supreme who is wonderful. Indra, describing the Supreme, says: "It is not now, nor is It tomorrow; who knoweth that which is Supreme and Wonderful? It has motion and action in the consciousness of another, but when it is approached by the thought, It vanishes" (Rig Veda, I.170.1). Agastya understands; he invites Indra and accepts to be led by him, and he is thus helped to move forward towards the Supreme.

Beyond Indra: Four Great Kings

But even the possession of the illumined mind is not, according to the Vedic yoga, sufficient to enable the seeker to be united with the supreme. It is not by development of only one faculty but by the development of four great powers by processes of a synthesis of the methods of yogic practices that one can enter into the realms of knowledge and action that lie between Indra and the Supreme. These four powers

are presided over by four godheads, — Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga. These four godheads have been described as Kings (*Rājānaḥ*). They are also considered to be the guardians of the light of the Sun,¹⁹ who presides over the realm of the supermind, the world beyond which is a triple world of the Supreme Conscious Being who is All-Delight (*Madhu*). The realm of the supermind is the realm of plenary light in which is the power of all-comprehending truth-consciousness (*rita chit*). It is at the gates of the realm of the supermind that one encounters the powers and beings of Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga, and it is only by an integral mastery of these powers and by their combined help that one can gain entrance into the all-comprehending truth-consciousness.

The Vedic gods are not mere physical Nature-powers, but the psychological conscious forces behind and within all cosmic things, is made clear enough in various Vedic texts. This clarity is also seen by the connection that is described between their cosmic character and their power of delivering the human consciousness from ignorance and from the stumbling blocks created by the powers of blindness and of evil. For instance, in Rig Veda X.63.8, we have the following prayer:

“Since ye are they who rule over the world by the power of their mind of knowledge, thinkers of all that is stable and mobile, therefore, O Gods, carry us beyond the sin of that which we have done and that which we have not done to the felicity”.

Varuna and Mitra

According to the esoteric knowledge attained by the Vedic seers, Varuna is the cosmic power that enables the seeker of

the Supreme to develop wideness and vastness as also to discover and obey the law of relations of cosmic forces by which harmony can constantly be maintained. Vastness and harmony accompany each other, and therefore we find in the Veda, Varuna always associated with Mitra, who is the lord of harmony.

We may take for instance, one of the many hymns in which Mitra and Varuna are addressed together:

1. Guardians of the Truth, you ascend your car and the law of the Truth is yours in the supreme ether or in the infinity of the superconscient being. He whom here you cherish, Masters of the Wideness and the harmony, for him increases full of the honey the rain of heaven.
2. O Samrats (emperors), having perfect kingship over the subjective and objective existence, you rule over this world of cur becoming, O Mitra and Varuna, in the getting of knowledge you are seers of the realm of Light; we desire from you the rain, the felicitous wealth, the immortality, and Lo! The Thundereres (Maruts, who symbolize Life-powers and Thought-powers who find out the light of truth for all our activities) range abroad through earth and heaven.
3. O Samrats, O Mitra and Varuna, O strong Bulls of the abundance, Masters of earth and heaven, universal in your working, you approach their cry with your clouds of varied light and you rain down Heaven by the power of the knowledge (the creative knowledge-will, which is termed Maya in Veda), of the Mighty One.
4. This is your Maya (creative knowledge-will) O Mitra and Varuna, that is lodged in heaven; it ranges abroad as your

rich and varied weapon. You hide it in heaven with a cloud and with the raining. O rain, full of the honey start forth thy streamings.

5. The Life-powers yoke their happy car for the bliss, even as might a hero for the battle, O Mitra and Varuna, in their seekings for the herds of Light; thundering they range the varied worlds, and you pour out on us, O imperial rulers, the water of heaven.
6. O Mitra and Varuna, the Rain speaks its language rich and varied and full of the light and the movement; the Life-powers have put on your clouds for raiment. Utterly by the knowledge you rain down Heaven ruddy-shinning and sinless.
7. O Mitra and Varuna, you who are illumined in consciousness, by the Law, by the knowledge of the Mighty One, you guard the workings or divine rhythms of work determined by the divine law of the Truth; by the Truth you govern widely all the world of our becoming; you set the Sun in heaven, a chariot of various splendour.²⁰

This hymn brings out, as always the Vedic verses do, when they are studied carefully by uncovering the algebraic and figurative forms in which psychological faculties and their workings have been imaged and expressed, the wideness of Varuna and harmony of Mitra. Universality and harmony work together in their psychological functioning. Varuna is a psychological name given to the cosmic working of consciousness that is infinite, puissant and pure, and Mitra is the psychological name given to the cosmic working of the psychological functioning that discerns distinctions in the complex working of forces and which harmonizes the truths of all the threads of relationships and weaves them in beauty

and perfection. Varuna is etymologically derived from a root which means to surround, cover or pervade. The word Mitra comes from a root which meant originally to contain with compression and so to embrace, and it has thus given us the ordinary Sanskrit word for friend, *Mitra*, as well as the archaic Vedic word for bliss, *Mayas*.

The above-mentioned hymn speaks of the union of universality and harmony and it points out that this union is a necessary condition for approaching the divine Truth (*Rtam*) and its divine Law (*Satya Dharma*). The goal of the Vedic yoga is to arrive at the divine truth by possessing it in consciousness and knowledge and to act faultlessly and harmoniously in accordance with the divine Law. The knowledge of the Truth and the Will which is guided by the truth and inspired by harmony and love manifests constantly, and when in the yogic process, one arrives in proximity to that knowledge and that will, universality and harmony are to be blended. And there is then the experience of the flow of that knowledge and that Will; that flow is imaged as the rain of heaven. And since in the state of universality and harmony, conflict and clash do not enter, there is in the experience of that rain, experiences of love and joy which are imaged as honey (*madhu*). In that state of yogic experience, the body, vital forces and the mind undergo a refreshing bath of purity and wideness and joy of fulfillment. The life-powers range with the voice of truth-seeking thought in physical consciousness and mental consciousness; Mitra and Varuna, the two emperors or *samrats*, come to their cry with the brilliant clouds full of the creative waters. There is then the manifestation of the divine truth-knowledge, *Maya*, and they bring down on the seeker the heavenly rain of joy and love and harmony. The divine knowledge is described as the Sun

and Light. It is imaged as the weapon of Mitra and Varuna ranging abroad to destroy the ignorance. Destruction of Ignorance and attainment of Knowledge is one of the highest aims of yoga, and the process by which this aim can be realized is difficult.

The Veda images three oceans, — the ocean of the light of knowledge, the ocean of darkness as the infinite potential zero, in contrast to the ocean of knowledge as the infinite plenary; between these two oceans is a third ocean of human consciousness,²¹ and this third ocean is imaged as a sort of boundless wave that surges up to climb and to flow up beyond the mental consciousness to the supreme ocean of knowledge.

Human life is thus visualized as this wave, and it is described as a perilous wave which we have to navigate. In one of the significant parables of the Veda, we have the story of Bhujyu, the seeker of enjoyment, son of King Tugra, the Forceful, hastening, who was navigating the perilous ocean in search of joy and bliss. He was cast into peril by his companions, and he was about to sink. But the perilous journey of human life is aided by helpful functioning of consciousness, which works not only subjectively but also objectively in the form of cosmic powers of Gods. A deep call and a forceful choice of the human traveler to seek the help of the gods constitutes summons for help. According to the parable, Ashwins, the psychological powers that have command over life-force in the Veda, (Ashwins are imaged as the horse riders, where horse is the image of life-force) are moved to hasten to the succour of Bhujyu. Ashwins rescue Bhujyu, as Ashwins came in their chariot-ship.

Varuna is the psychological cosmic power that pervades all the three oceans, — ocean of darkness, ocean of human

ignorance and ocean of divine knowledge, and he has the knowledge of the law that lifts the ignorant human consciousness from darkness and ignorance into the vast Right and Truth (*Ritam* and *Satyam*). The Veda, therefore, refers to Varuna as the teacher of vast Right and Truth.

This path from darkness and ignorance to knowledge is also described in the parable of Shunahshepa, which is also related to Varuna. Shunahshepa is a representative human voyager tied up by three ropes. For ignorance has the appearance of a triple cord of limited mind, inefficient life, obscure physical mentality, and these are the three ropes with which the Rishi Shunahshepa in the parable was bound as a victim to the sacrificial post. It is a bondage to these three cords that results in a struggle. There is then mortal undelight and the insufficiency of a being that collapses at every moment towards death. In that state of insufficiency and poverty, Shunahshepa seeks the help of Varuna. In one of his prayers, Shunahshepa cries: "Perfect in will, let the Son of Infinity make us by the good path and carry our life forward. Varuna puts on his golden robe of light and his scouts are all around."²² Varuna is a path maker, and when Varuna the Mighty comes, he sunders the three-fold cord. The upper cord of the mind flies upward releasing the wings of the Soul into superconscious heights; the middle cord of the vital being parts both ways and all ways, and the constrained life breaks out into a happy breadth of existence; the lower cord of the physical being collapses downward taking with it the alloy of our bodily consciousness and being to disappear and be dissolved in the stuff below the human ocean of consciousness in the Inconscient. Freedom from these three cords is liberation from human bondage, and this liberation is effected by a psychological consciousness and power that

is symbolized by Varuna in the Veda.

Varuna is conceived in the Veda as one who sleeps not, but is awake and mighty forever, and he works for the Truth and the Right. Varuna is the substance and the infinitely self-enlarging periphery; and Mitra is the constituent Light of the substance that Varuna represents, and Mitra effects the right unity. These two gods are described as samrats, emperors, and they are complementary to each other in their nature and their divine works. By their combined action, we become at once large and harmonious and gain harmony in largeness. These two are a great duo of the self-fulfilling Godhead, and they are called together to build the path that leads to the rain of divine knowledge, to the sweetness of the streaming and outpourings of immortalizing light and bliss that the sun, the symbol of the supra-mental light, can bestow. As a result of this intervention and aid of Varuna and Mitra, Thought-Powers range abroad seeking in all the world of the being, for the brilliant rays of the concealed knowledge to be gathered as a shining wealth. The rain to which reference is made is no ordinary rain; this rain has the voice that is full of the flashings of the Light and movement of the divine Waters; its clouds become robes for the Life-Powers by the formative knowledge of the mighty master of Truth, and they lead them to the sun. The sun is then revealed as a chariot of the richly varied splendour of the knowledge, and the journey leads inevitably to the highest heavens of Light and Bliss.

Aryaman

Aryaman, the cosmic being who represents the great power of upward endeavour and tapasya, has also to be fulfilled. The word *aryaman* is etymologically related to the words *arya* and *ari* which stand for the heroic traveller,

insistent aspiration and a warrior in the battle for the conquest of light. In the Vedic culture, the word *arya* signified the traveller on the Path and the aspirant to immortality by divine sacrifice, one of the shining children of Light, a worshipper of the Masters of the Truth, a fighter in battle against the powers of darkness who obstruct the human journey. Aryaman is the cosmic being or godhead in whose divine power this aryahood is rooted; he is the Force of sacrifice, aspiration, battle, journey towards perfection and light and celestial bliss by which the path is created, travelled, pursued, beyond all resistance and obstruction to its luminous and happy goal. Aryaman is complete in the will, in the works of sacrifice. The seeker or the yogin who aspires to attain to the workings of Mitra and Varuna is guarded in his progress by Aryaman. He has been described in Rig Veda, as the one “of the unbroken path, of the many chariots, who dwells as the sevenfold offerer of sacrifice in births of diverse forms.”²³ Each movement of the evolution of the yogin is a chariot of Aryaman, and these chariots are seven because the human being conducts his journey by the energy that is sevenfold corresponding to the sevenfold principle of integral existence, *Bhur*, *Bhuvar*, *Dyauh*, (with *swar* on its summit), *Mahar*, *Janah*, *Tapas*, and *Satyam*. It is Aryaman’s aid to the yogin to the sevenfold energy of human aspiration that leads to the fulfillment in integral perfection.

Aryaman works constantly with Mitra and Varuna. In the Vedic conception, the object of knowledge is the One, the One Existent, *Ekam Sat*, whose existence is all-embracing, infinite and pure; in that one but complex reality, Varuna brings to us the infinite oceanic space and ethereal and elemental purity. The Divine is boundless consciousness, perfect in knowledge, pure and therefore luminously right in

its discernment of things, perfectly harmonious and happy in its concordance of the law and nature; it is Mitra who brings us this light, harmony, right distinction and relation and friendly concord. The Divine is in its own being pure and perfect power and in us the eternal upward tendency in things to their source and truth; Aryaman brings to us this mighty strength and perfectly-guided happy inner upsurging. The divine is the pure, the faultless, the all-embracing, the untroubled ecstasy that enjoys its own infinite being and enjoys equally all that it creates within itself; *Bhaga* gives us sovereignly that ecstasy of the liberated soul, its free and unfallen possession of itself and the world.

The synthesis of yoga that is discerned in the Veda is presented in the image of many paths of the upward journey, which lead to the goal of the supramental Truth, Right and Vast and to the indescribable Joy, Delight and Ecstasy. The cosmic beings, Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga, are addressed in the Veda as solar powers (*Adityas*) and as Sons of Aditi, the infinite and undivided Power and Will of the supreme Reality. "O Sons of Infinite, effect for us the fearless peace, make us good paths of an easy going to the felicity."²⁴ "Easy of going to your path, O Aryaman, O Mitra, it is thornless, O Varuna, and perfect."²⁵ "By the Truth, O Sons of the infinite, great is the Vastness of yours, O Aryaman, O Mitra, O Varuna, great and beautiful. Three heavenly worlds of light they hold (the worlds of Sat, Chit and Ananda), the gods golden-shining who are pure and purified in the streams; sleepless, unconquerable they close not their lids, they express the wideness to the mortal who is straight."²⁶ "Charioted in light are they, aggressive in knowledge, sinless and they clothe themselves in the rain and abundance of heaven for the felicity."²⁷

Bhaga

Bhaga is a consummating fourth cosmic being, and Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga can be seen to be dominating the thought of the rishis in their aspiration that reaches in its culmination to apêx of the perfect truth and infinity. The joy and delight that is attainable by the fulfillment of the nature of Bhaga is unattainable except by intense aspiration, tapasya and purity that are demanded by Aryaman. The divine delight is the delight of immortality, and Soma, the divine drink or elixir, which has been the subject matter of the ninth Mandala of the Rig Veda, describes the lord of the divine drink as attainable only when the human body, the human life-force and the human mind are thoroughly purified. In one of the hymns of the Rig Veda,²⁸ the human system is imaged as the jar, and the strainer of purifying instrument is imaged in terms of the mind which is enlightened by knowledge. Soma, the wine of delight, can be safely invited to be poured in the human system only when the mind and heart have been enlightened and formed into a purified instrument. When the mind and heart are freed from all narrowness and duality, the consciousness becomes extended widely to receive the full flow of the sense-life and mind-life and turn it into pure delight of the true existence, the divine, the immortal Ananda. So received, sifted, strained, the Soma-wine of life turned into Ananda comes pouring into all the members of the human system as into a wine-jar and flows through all of them in their every part. It is not easy for every human system that can hold, sustain and enjoy the potent and often violent ecstasy of that divine delight: *Atapta tanur na tad āmo aṣnute*, he who is raw in his body, not heated, does not taste or enjoy that; *śṛtāsa id vahantas tat samāśata*, only those

who have been baked in the fire bear and entirely enjoy that. In other words, the raw earthen vessel not baked to consistency in the fire of the kiln cannot hold the Soma-wine; it breaks and spills the precious liquid. If the physical system of the yogin who drinks this strong wine of Ananda has not been prepared by enduring all the torturing heats of life, it will not be able to hold the secret and fiery heats of the Soma; without a long tapasya, Soma, if received or administered, will break down the yogin mentally and physically under its touch. Soma is not the ordinary wine; it is a river of the ocean flowing from the infinite consciousness, which is entirely pure and unbounded. Bhaga, the cosmic power and being conceived as the supreme enjoyer of the infinite reality and its creative power (*savitra*) opens the gate for the yogin to the supra-mental truth and divine bliss. Bhaga stands between the Infinite and the created worlds within us and without. According to the Vedic knowledge, all creation originates from delight, and all that flows directly from Bhaga is *suvitam*, it is a manifestation of felicity. In the ignorant consciousness, this Ananda is concealed, and there the human journey stumbles into error and things and relations are misapplied and wrongly arranged. Human action is therefore *duritam*, marked by error or stumbling or sin and perversion. That is why, the yogin prays to Bhaga: "O divine producer, dismiss all evils; what is good, that send forth on us. (*Viśvāni deva savitar duritāni parā suva, yad bhadram tanna āsuva*)". When Bhaga puts everything in its right place in the divine rhythm by the knowledge that listens to or receives the word as it descends, he looses it forth into the movement of things, *aśrāvayati ślokena pra ca suvāti*; then each movement becomes a creation of the active Ananda, the *prajavat saubhagam*, comes thus out of the

unmanifest, it is received and heard rightly in the faultless rhythm of things. In that state of attainment all creations are creations of Bhaga Savitri, and all the births of that creation, all our offsprings, *prajā*, *apatyān*, are things of the delight, *viśva vāmāni*.²⁹ This is the accomplishment of Bhaga in man, his full portion of the world-sacrifice.

When, by a long process of purification, — when intelligence is purified and illumined, when emotions are sieved through the strainer, the threads of which are wide spread, and when the body is well baked by various processes of endurance, when the powers of Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga (powers of wideness, harmony, upward aspiration and enjoyment) are synthesized, one attains to constant dwelling in the supramental consciousness and will, in *rita-chitta*, and one is stabilized in immortality.

Example of the Yoga of Angirasa Rishis³⁰

But in order to present a more adequate description of the Vedic system of yoga, it would seem necessary to refer to the yogic tapasya of Angirasa rishis who are frequently referred to as the human and divine Fathers and who built up the path of yoga by a long process of yajna, the sacrifice by which all activities of life are offered to the cosmic gods and the One Deva of whom the cosmic gods are manifestations or aspects, so that these activities of will, thought and feeling get filled by increasing growth by Truth and in Truth.

The Angirasa are pilgrims of light. They have been described as travellers towards the goal of attainment of the highest, of the supreme treasure, *abhinakṣanto abhi ye tam ānaśur nidhim paramam*.³¹ But this journey is a journey of quest of the hidden light but also a battle by the opposition of

the powers of darkness. These travelers are heroes and fighters, fighters for the cows or rays of light. Journey is inspired by Agni, the fire of will and the fire that fights on account of its light and knowledge. With the increasing aspiration of Agni, Indra, the cosmic being of illumined mind comes down and marches with the travellers on the path as their comrade (*sakhibhiḥ*). This journey or march is aided by Sarama, who in the esoteric interpretation, represents the psychological power of intuition. It is Sarama who discovers the path of the Truth, *ṛtasya panthāḥ*, the great path, *mahas panthāḥ*, which leads to the realms of the Truth. The journey is sacrificial in character, and its stages correspond to the periods of the sacrifice, and it is effected by the force of the soma-wine, the purified nectar of delight, and the sacred word, the word that expresses intensity of aspiration and increasing discovery of knowledge by the instrumentality of Saraswati, the river of flow of energy that expresses the higher faculty of inspiration.

The journey involves battles; and the power of intuition of the Rishis plays an important role. Sarama represents the power of intuition. Sarama encounters the panis, who are the enemies of light-seekers (cow-seekers) and who have stolen and concealed the light in the cave of the hill. Sarama threatens the panis with the coming of the Rishi Ayasya and the Navagwa Angirasas.³² Indra plays a decisive role. In Rig Veda,³³ we find a prayer which prays to Indra: "That rapture of the Soma we desire by which thou, O Indra, didst make to thrive the Might of Swar, that rapture ten-rayed and making a light of knowledge or shaking the whole being with its force by which thou didst foster the ocean; that Soma-intoxication by which thou didst drive forward the great waters like chariots to that sea, — that we desire that we may

travel on the path of the truth," *panthām ṛtasya yātave tam īmahe*. It is by the power of the Soma that the hill in which herds of treasures of light are concealed is broken open, and sons of darkness, Vala and Dasyus, are overthrown. But along with the Soma wine, it is the Word that the Angirasa possess. The Angirasa rishis are *brāhmanāsa pitraraḥ somyāsaḥ*,³⁴ the fathers who are full of the Soma and have the word and are therefore increasers of the truth. Indra provides fullness and force to the words of the Angirasa, *angirasām ucathā jujuṣvān brahma tūtod gātum iṣṇan*.³⁵ It is by singing the *ṛk*, hymn of illumination, that the Angirasa rishis find the solar illuminations in the cave of our being.³⁶

In the process of the battle and the conquest, the Angirasa rishis receive the aid of Ayasya, who has the seven-headed thought, and the world of the light of the supramental truth, *swar*, is attained. The seven-headed thought is the knowledge of the divine existence with its seven heads or powers, since the divine existence is seven fold. The seven headed thought of Ayasya enables him to become *viśwajanya*, and thus he becomes universal, as a result of which he is able to discover a certain fourth world (*swar* — the world other than the worlds of the Matter, Life, Mind), *turīyam svij janayad viśwajanyaḥ*.³⁷

The Veda speaks of five births for man, five worlds of creations where works are done, *pancajanah*, *panca kṛṣṭiḥ*. The mind and the body, *Dyauh* and *pṛithvi*, *rodasi*, our two firmaments; the third is *antariksha*, the intermediate or connecting level of the vital or nervous consciousness. These three worlds are to be overpassed, for then we find admission to another heaven than that of the pure mind — to the wide, the Vast, the supramental (*satyam*, *ṛtam*, *bṛhat*) which is the basis, the foundation (*budhna*) of the infinite consciousness,

Aditi. This Vast is the Truth which supports the fifth world, the supreme triple world, which in the later development of yoga came to be regarded as a triple world of Sachchidananda, those highest steps or seats, which are also described as the seats of Agni (*sadāmsi*), or three highest steps, *padāni*, of Vishnu, or those supreme Names of the Mother, the Cow, Aditi.

Turiyam svid, that fourth world, which was discovered by Ayasya by means of universalisation of consciousness by the knowledge of the seven-headed thought, may be regarded as the vast world of *swar*, which links the lower triple world of Matter, Life and Mind with the highest triple world, the world of delight or sweetness, *madhu*, of conscious force, *urj*, and self-existent substance (*vasu*).³⁸ The Vedic discovery is thus the discovery of the lower triple world, the highest triple world and of the intermediate linking world of *swar*. The Angirasa rishis have been described in the Veda as the first discoverers, and they are known in the Veda as sons of the Flame, luster of the Dawn, — givers and drinkers of the Wine, singers of the Hymn, eternal youths and heroes who wrest for us the Sun, the Cows, the Horses and all treasures from the grasp of the sons of darkness. But this is a symbolic description, and when these symbols are read in their inner meanings, Angirasas are seers of the word of the Truth, finders and speakers of the word of the Truth, and by the power of the Truth, they win for us the wide world of Light and Immortality which is described as the Vast, the True, the Right and as the own home of the Flame or Agni of which they are the children.

PART THREE

Role of the Higher Faculties

Faculties of Vastness of Light, Revelation, Inspiration, Intuition and Discrimination

The attainment of Surya Savitri, the supramental consciousness which is creative of the worlds, and which is the power of the manifestations of the highest triple world is a culminating victory of the Angirasa Rishis and of the Vedic system of yoga. The supermind is the highest creative faculty of the One, who unites multiplicity of manifestation with the original oneness. The development of this supramental faculty is prepared by the working of the seven rivers, the mighty ones of the heaven, which are also described as the seven Mares, seven Words, seven mothers and seven fostering cows.

Saraswati

Saraswati is prominently described as the one connected with these seven rivers and as one of the seven rivers. Madhuchhandas describes Saraswati³⁹ to be that power of Truth which can be called inspiration, since it is inspiration from the Truth which purifies by getting rid of all falsehood. Saraswati is thus *pāvaka*, the purifier, and she is full of her luminous plenitudes (*vājebhir vājinīvatī*). She is upholder of the sacrifice (*yajnam dadhe*); she is *dhiya vasuh*, rich in substance of thought. Saraswati is the impeller of truths and awakener of thoughts in accordance with that which is

beneficent. It is by constant awakening and impulsion that results in divine perception, *ketu*, that Saraswati brings into active consciousness of the human being the great flood (*maho arṇah*), the supramental Truth-Consciousness itself, which is for the Vedic Rishis a supramental plane, a level of the will of being (*adreḥ sānu*) which is beyond our ordinary reach and to which we have to climb with difficulty.

Ila, Mahi and Saraswati

The attainment of Savitri is also connected with other rivers or goddesses who are plainly psychological symbols. In Rig Veda Mandala I in the thirteenth hymn, Ila, Mahi or Bharati and Saraswati are associated together:

*Ilā Saraswatī Mahī tisro devīr mayo bhuvah, barhiḥ
sīdantvasridhah*

“May Ila, Saraswati and Mahi, three goddesses who give birth to the bliss, take their place on the sacrificial seat, they who stumble not.”

In hymn 110 of the tenth Mandala, all the three goddesses are invited, and their connection with consciousness, bliss and will to work are manifestly referred to:

“May Bharati come speeding to our sacrifice and Ila hither awakening our consciousness in human wise, and Saraswati, — three goddesses sit on this blissful seat, doing well the Work.”

In the first Mandala in the eighth Rik in the eighth hymn, Madhuchhandas speaks of Bharati under the name of Mahi as follows:

“Thus Mahi for Indra full of the rays, overflowing in her

abundance, in her nature a happy truth, becomes as if a ripe branch for the giver of sacrifice.”

All the three goddesses have connection with light and consciousness. As the light of the sun represents the supramental light which is *brihat*, luminous vastness of the Truth, Mahi or Bharati which means Largeness, can be seen to be connected with the *brihat* of the superconscient in us containing in itself the Truth or *ṛtam*. Ila, the power of revelation or truth-vision is also connected with Surya, the Sun, Lord of true Light being of one mind with Ila, *iḷayā sajoṣā yatamāno raśmibhiḥ sūryasa*.⁴⁰ It would seem that when Bharati or Mahi dawns on man's limited mind and bestows on it the largeness of the Truth-Consciousness, two sister Puissances, Ila and Saraswati, are also brought forth. These two sister Puissances can be identified with *dṛsti*, the truth-vision, and *śruti*, truth-audition or inspiration which expresses itself with truth-bearing Word. These two powers characterize the Rishi or the *Kavi*. It has, therefore, been suggested that Saraswati represents the truth-audition or inspiration and Ila represents truth-vision or revelation.

Saramā

Another power of the higher faculty of knowledge that we find in the Veda is Sarama. Sarama is the leader in the search for the radiant herd and discovers both the path and secret hold in the mountain; she is a forerunner of the dawn of Truth in the human mind. And the faculty which discovers truth in the darkness of the unknown in our being is what we call intuition. Sarama is distinguishable from Saraswati and Ila. Saraswati gives the full flood of the knowledge, and she awakens the great ocean, *maho arṇah*; but Sarama is a traveller and seeker on its path who does not herself possess

but rather finds that which is lost. Sarama is not Ila; Ila is a plenary word of revelation; Sarama seeks and finds by direct suggestiveness of truth and consciousness. Sarama does not possess the truth as Saraswati and Ila; even when what is sought and found, Sarama does not take possession but only gives the message to the seers and their divine helpers who have still to fight for the possession of the light that has been discovered.

Prati yat syā nîthā adarśi

Dasyor oko na acchā sadanam jānatī gāt, — this movement which has been described in I.104.5 brings out two essential characteristics of Sarama. When this guide (Sarama) became visible, she went, knowing, towards the seat that is as if the home of the Dasyus. The knowledge comes to her beforehand, before vision springs up instinctively at the least indication and with that knowledge, she guides the rest of the faculty and divine power. Sarama is the power descended from the superconscient Truth which leads us to the light that is hidden in ourselves, even in the subconscious; she is thus what can be properly be called power of intuition. In III.31.6, it is said: "When Sarama found the broken place of hills, she made continuous the great and supreme goal. She, the fair-footed, led him to the front of the imperishable ones; first she went, knowing, towards the cry." It is again the Intuition that leads; knowing, she speeds at once and in front of all towards the voice of the concealed illumination, towards the place where the hill so firmly formed and impervious in appearance is broken and can admit the seeker. Addressing Indra,⁴¹ it is said "When thou didst tear the waters out of the hill, Sarama became manifest before thee; so do thou as our leader tear out much wealth for us, breaking the panes, hymned by the Angirases." Here, again, intuition manifests before Indra, the

Divine Mind, as its forerunner, and it is by the means of intuition that Indra, the godhead of Illumined Mind, becomes the leader of the rescue of the Light and the conquest of the much wealth of spiritual light hidden within the rock.

Dakshinā

We have in the Rig Veda also the description of another supramental faculty, namely, Dakshina, the power of immediate discrimination or discernment, corresponding to the mental faculty of logical discrimination. The great Rishi, Vishwamitra, refers⁴² first to the Thought of the fathers, *pitryādhīh*, and it is described as the thought “which when it is being expressed, remains wakeful in the knowledge.” Vishwamitra next proceeds to speak of the ancient Fathers who first formed it and of the great victory by which they discovered “Truth, the sun lying in the darkness.” Then follows the images of the conquest; Vishwamitra then proceeds to indicate the real mystic sense of Dakshina: “He having Dakshina with him held in his right hand the secret thing that is placed in the secret cave concealed in the waters. May he, knowing perfectly, separate the light from the darkness, *jyotir vṛñīta tamaso vijānan*, may we be far from the presence of the evil.” Dakshina is thus the faculty that separates and discriminates light from the darkness.

In some passages, the goddess Dakshina seems to be a form or epithet of goddess Usha (dawn); in some other passages, she is the one who distributes the offerings in the sacrifice. Usha is the divine illumination and Dakshina is the discerning knowledge that comes with the dawn; that discerning knowledge enables Indra, the illumined power in the mind, to know the right and separate the light from the darkness, the truth from the falsehood, the straight from the

crooked. It is instructive to note that Indra is endowed with two bright horses, *Harî*, which are described as sun-eyed, *sūracakṣasaḥ*, and as vision-powers of the Sun, *sūryasya ketū*. Similarly, Indra is endowed with two arms, *gabhasti*, and the right and the left hand of Indra are his two powers of action in knowledge. Dakshina presides over the right-hand power, and therefore we have the description of Indra who held Dakshina in his right hand (*dakṣiṇe dakṣiṇāvān*). The role of Dakshina is seen also in the action of the rescuing of the sun out of the cave, since the separation or choosing of the light out of the darkness is to be done by Dakshina, the faculty of all-discerning knowledge.

In the legend of the Angirasa rishis, the rescue of the sun from the darkness is the culminating point of the yoga undertaken by them. The sun or surya is described in the Veda as Master of the Truth, as the Illuminator, the creator (Savitri), and as the Increaser (*pūṣan*). The rays of the sun are supramental activities of Mahi, widening consciousness, Ila, revelation, Saraswati, inspiration, Sarama, intuition, and Dakshina, luminous discernment, and they constitute the action of the principle of the light of the perfect knowledge, *ṛtam, satyam and bṛhat*, the trinity of the truth, the right and the vast. The rays of this light descend into the human mentality and form at its summit the world of luminous intelligence, *swar*.

Attainment of Surya-Savitri: Culmination of the Vedic Yoga

Attainment of Surya-Savitri, creator and increaser is the culminating point of the yoga of the Veda. Apart from many other descriptions, in the fifth Mandala of the Rig Veda, in the 81st Sukta, we have a brief but adequate description of the

nature, power and attributes of Surya-Savitri as also of the nature of the attainment of Surya-Savitri. Surya-Savitri is described as illumination and largeness and one who has clear perception; he not only knows all phenomena; but he alone orders the energies of the sacrifice; Savitri is vastly affirmed in all things and he is the divine creator. Savitri is a seer and he creates all forms for the good of all, those of the two-fold existence and of the four-fold existence. He is the supreme Good and with the dawning of the light, he manifests Heaven wholly and its light pervades all. With the increasing of his realization, all the cosmic beings are enabled to their highest greatness of divinity. Savitri is the brilliant one and by the light and power of its mightiness, he illumines and maps out the realness of earthly light. Savitri is expressed utterly by the rays of the Sun and Savitri reaches the three luminous heavens. The night of darkness becomes encompassed upon either side. His law of action manifests the lord of love. Savitri is powerful for every creation, and he becomes increaser by his movement. The entire world of becomings becomes illumined by him.

Example of Shyavashwa and his Yoga of Surya-Savitri

The sukta,⁴³ composed by Shyavashwa, marks his own attainment of the realization of Surya-Savitri, the creative supermind which is vast and omniscient and omnipotent as also omnipresent. While describing the yoga of the realization of the supermind, he refers to those who have reached the stage of illumination, and having reached that stage of illumination, they yoke their mind and they yoke their thoughts to Surya-Savitri. The sukta is thus a guideline for the yoga of the supermind. The yoga begins with Agni, the divine force, fulfiller of the Aryan sacrifice. In the Vedic yoga,

Agni is the beginning, and Agni accompanies the process of seeking and tapasya right up to the end. In answer to the aspiration kindled by agni, Indra arrives with his shining hosts, the Maruts, and it is by the aid of Indra and the Maruts that the initial conversion is effected. In the psychological sense of the Vedic symbol, the Maruts take our animal consciousness consisting of the impulses of the nervous mentality and drives them up with their illuminations so as to arrive at the world of swar and the truths of Indra, who is the lord of Swar. It is then that the seeker becomes illumined and it is at that stage that the thoughts and the mind are yoked to Surya-Savitri. The ordinary human mind is besieged by the wild impulses or animal troops, *paśus*; mind evolves when these impulses are aided by Maruts, shining forces that belong to the power of Indra, the cosmic being who represents the Illumined Mind. As one rises and as the truths of Indra convert our animal consciousness, our impulses become the brilliant herds of the Sun, *gāvaḥ*, rays, the divine consciousness of the Veda.

The human mind does not possess knowledge; it can receive and understand Truth by *dhi*, the faculty of understanding which receives, holds in place and settles the object of knowledge in a state of possession. In contrast, Surya-Savitri, *vijnana*, is a divine and not a human faculty; it possesses knowledge, and its action is to manifest knowledge. The light of knowledge that is inherent in *Vijnana* presents itself to the mind, and it leads up three successive worlds of mentality progressively to its own true nature. At the lowest level, the mind is sensational, and emotional; at a higher level is a realm of the pure intellect, and at a still higher level, the mind is able to possess divine intelligence by the illumining power of Indra. The fullness and perfection of these three

worlds of the mind exists above the three heavens, *tisro divaḥ*, as their three luminosities, *triṇi rocanāni*. When higher light descends upon the physical consciousness in the course of the yogic process, the earthly realms of consciousness become illumined and they become earthly realms of light, *pārthivāni rajāmsi*. This transformation is effected by the creative power of Surya-Savitri.

Surya-Savitri is the Lord of harmonious organization of all manifestations; our human energies are limited and in conflict with each other. But when these energies are offered in acts of sacrifice to Surya-Savitri, the truths of Surya-Savitri can act upon them, and Savitri creates order and harmony in all the human energies. According to the Vedic system, there are seven sacrificial energies in the human being, the energies of the body, life, mind, supermind, bliss, will and essential being. When these energies act in the mind, their action is irregular and causes wrong relationships. The result is stumbling and unhappiness, evil state and evil act. But Surya-Savitri knows all manifestations, comprehends their causes, contains their law and process and compels their right result. The process of sacrifice is a process of offering and a process of tapasya where the human mind does not allow interference of the conflicting agencies, and in a state of submission, it permits the power of Savitri to govern all the energies. Surya, Lord of Knowledge, puts each of them in its right place in the Sacrifice. As Shyavashwa observes:

“Knower of phenomena, soul, he arranges the sacrificial energies.”

A divine revolution is effected by this process of yoga. The Surya, the Seer, takes to himself all forms and he manifests good for all, — for the two-fold existence and the

four-fold existence, *kaviḥ prasavid bhadram dwipade catuṣpade*. Thereafter, the supramental force takes possession of the lower existence, and it manifests light in all faculties and potentialities. These faculties and potentialities are symbolized by various gods, and therefore all these gods reach the vastness of the divinity by the strength of the supramental force. Even the physical or earthly consciousness is developed to its full capacity, even the three luminous realms of the pure mind are pervaded by the supramental knowledge and will, and all the divine possibilities of the sensational and emotional mind, of the pure mind and of the intuitive reason are fulfilled. Savitri is thus perfectly expressed by the rays of the Sun, the Vedic Symbol of the Supermind.

The lower world of the earth of physical consciousness and the world of sensations, emotions, intellectual thought and intuitive mind are reconciled with their counterparts in the higher consciousness of the Supermind. The Ignorance in which one lives, the Night, is illumined upon both sides of our complete being. That state of complete illumination is the state of Beatitude or the principle of Love and Light, which is represented in the Vedic system by the cosmic power and being of Mitra. The Rishi, therefore, affirms: "And thou encompasseth Night upon both sides, and thou becomest, O god, Mitra by the laws of thy action."

It is by progressive development of this new creation that the whole world of our becoming becomes illumined. The process of yoga is a process of gradual increase of the action of Surya. Higher states of consciousness visit our lower members more and more frequently, and this increasing frequency of Savitri is termed in the Veda as the action of Savitri, the Pushan, the Increaser. As Shyavashwa testifies by

his personal experience and realization: “Thou becomest the Increaser, O God, by the goings; and thou illuminest entirely all this world of becomings.”

What Shyavashwa has affirmed in his attainment has been expressed in the Veda by several other Rishis, and if we study some of the prominent affirmations, we shall have some more details of the culminating points of the Vedic yoga and the methods and stages of this yoga. Attainment of the light of the Sun, the supramental consciousness and power, attainment of the Beatitude, and the achievement of immortality, — these are the interdependent attainments which are chanted by the Rishis in the Veda.

Example of Rishi Vamadeva and his Yoga⁴⁴

There is in the Veda symbolic opposition between the shining white purity of the One, on the one hand, and the variegated colouring of the Life manifested in the triple world of darkness and ignorance, the world of Matter, Life and Mind, on the other. Vamadeva, in the 4th Mandala, 3rd sukta presents briefly the entire process of the Vedic yoga. The hymn opens with a call to man to create Agni who sacrifices in the truth, to create him in his form of golden light before the Ignorance can form itself. The god is asked to awaken to the work of man and the truth in him as being himself “the Truth-conscious who places aright the thought”, *ṛtasya bodhi ṛtacit svadhiḥ*. Agni is prayed and all fault and sin and defect in man are offered to the various godheads or divine powers of the Divine Being, so that the same may be removed, and man may finally become blameless before the Infinite Mother — *aditaye anagasah*. Then Vamadeva expresses the idea of the united human and divine existence, *diti* and *aditi*, the latter founding, controlling and flooding with itself the

former. He expresses his aspiration:

“The Truth controlled by the Truth I desire, together the unripe things of the Cow and her ripe and honeyed yield; she (the cow) being black (*Diti*) is nourished by the shining water of the foundation, the water of the companion streams.

By the Truth, Agni the bull, the Male, sprinkled with the water of its levels, ranges unquivering, establishing wideness; the dappled Bull milks the pure shining teat.”

The image of the dappled Bull and the pure bright udder or source of the waters repeats the frequent idea of the Veda of the multiple manifestations of the human life when they are purified, tranquilized and fed by the waters of the Truth and the Infinity.

In the next two Riks,⁴⁵ Vamadeva presents four preliminary conditions for the great achievement of Immortality. These four conditions were those which were fulfilled by the Angirasa Rishis. These were the following:

1. Breaking the rigidity of the human consciousness by the pursuit of Truth and arriving at the union with the luminous rays (cows) proceeding from the Supramental Sun;
2. Dwelling in dawns of light bringing with them experiences of bliss;
3. Manifestation of swar, the world of the supramental light where the human aspiration symbolized by Agni becomes fully expressed;
4. Rush of divine immortal waters with their honeyed floods in their eternal flowing.

These four verses of these two Riks are:

“By the Truth the Angirases broke open and herd ascended the hill and came to union with the Cows; human souls, they took up their dwelling in the blissful Dawn, Swar became manifest when Agni was born. By Truth the divine immortal waters, unoppressed, with their honeyed floods, O Agni, like a horse breasting forward in its gallopings, reign in an eternal flowing.”

Vedic Yoga and Immortality

The attainment of Surya-Savitri is associated in the Veda with the attainment of immortality. But what is immortality?

In the first Mandala of Rig Veda, in the 71st sukta, Parashara speaks of the path to the great supramental consciousness, which is called the great heaven as distinguished from heaven or *dyauh*, signifying the realm of mental consciousness: “Our fathers broke open the firm and strong places by their words, yea, the Angirases broke open the hill by their cry; they made for us the path to the great heaven; they found the Way and Swar and vision and the luminous Cows,” *cakrur divo brhato gātum asme ahaḥ, svar, vividuḥ, ketum uśraḥ*⁴⁶. This great path is, according to Parashara, the path which leads to immortality. In I.72.9, he gives the brief formula describing the state of immortality:

“*ā ye viśvā svapatyāni tasthuḥ kṛṇvanāso amṛtatvāya gātum; mahnā mahadbhiḥ prithivi vi tasthe; mātā putrair aditir dhayāse veḥ.*”

“They who entered into all things that bear ripe fruits formed a path towards the immortality; earth stood wide for them by the greatness and by the Great Ones, the Mother

Aditi with her sons came or manifested herself for the upholding.”

The Vedic immortality, it appears, requires stabilization in those states of consciousness and powers which have been ripened fruitfully; fruitful ripening is prepared by (a) processes of thought and meditation, by (b) perfection in works by processes that lead the ascension of the soul from one level to higher level that stabilizes it in divine status of divine action, and by (c) the search and eagerness of the heart for beatitude.

(a) The role of the austerity of the practice of thought and meditation on the Truth and its dynamic diffusion in all parts of the being, is explained in I.71.33:

“*dadhan ṛtam dhanayan asya dhîtim, ādīdaryo didhiṣvo vibhṛtrāḥ*”

“They held the truth, they enriched its thought; then, indeed, aspiring souls (*aryah*), they, holding it in thought, bore it diffused in all their being.”

The word *vibhṛtrāḥ* is extremely important; it suggests the process of upholding the thought of the truth in all the seven principles of our being. This would mean that the thought of the Truth should become seven-headed thought, —the thought in the planes of the body, life, mind, supermind, bliss, conscious-force and essential being, so that one arrives at the state which was described of Ayasya, when by the power of seven-headed thought he became universal and discovered supramental consciousness, the fourth level of consciousness which transcends the triple state of physical, vital and mental consciousness.

In the next verse, (b) the other conditions of the ripening

of consciousness are described:

“atr̥ṣyantīr apaso yanti acchā, devān janma prayasā vardhayantīḥ”

“The doers of the works go towards the unthirsting waters which increase the divine birth by the satisfaction of delight.”

The emphasis here is on karma yoga by which work is constantly perfected by energies that are unthirsting and thus are devoid of desire. This movement of karma yoga results in the ascension of sacrifice whereby higher levels of works begin to operate and the activities of cosmic godheads rise up and establish a universal and immortal life in place of our present limited mortality. The ascension of sacrifice is effected by Agni, the divine Seer-will (*kavikratu*). And when Agni rises upwards “he becomes one God encompassing all the gods with the greatness of his being”.⁴⁷ The impulse of the Truth, the thinking of the Truth becomes universal, and in it all fulfill their workings, *ṛtasya preśā ṛtasya dhītir viśvayur viśve apāmsi cākruh*.

(c) The process of yoga implies the rising of the soul from the dryness of the material being, from the desert which is unwatered towards the increase of eagerness of the soul for beatitude, for the delight of the presence of the divine consciousness, which is the essence of Bhakti. The Soul is increased and satisfied when by the attainment of the truth and immortality, it enjoys the bliss. This is the state which Parashara describes in I.73.6:

“The fostering cows of the Truth nourished him, lowing, with happy udders, enjoyed in heaven; obtaining right thinking as a boon from the supreme, the rivers flowed wide and evenly over the hill.”

The three processes of knowledge, action and delight are synthesized in arriving at that condition of stabilization of consciousness which is the condition for the attainment of immortality. For this attainment, the yogic process is worked out on all the planes of being, including the physical being. The infinite consciousness, Mother Aditi (which is termed Para Prakriti or Shakti in later systems of yoga) intervenes, and she brings her sons with her, the cosmic gods or the divine Powers of the supreme Deva. The physical being is visited by the greatness of the infinite planes above; by the descent of the power of the great godheads, the limitations of the physical being are broken; the light of the infinite planes which reigns above enters into lower levels of being right up to physical being; the physical being opens out to the Light and is upheld in its new wideness by the action of Aditi, supreme power of the infinite consciousness.

We may take another example of the idea of immortality which is expressed in the 28th hymn to Agni in the Vth Mandala of Rig Veda. In this hymn, the Rishi celebrates the flame of Agni, the Will that rises high in the dawn of knowledge, and Agni is addressed as a king of immortality, since he gives to the soul its spiritual riches and felicity and a well-governed mastery of Nature. Addressing Agni, the Rishi asks of Agni the boon for a vast enjoyment of bliss by means of highest illumination, and the Rishi wants the creation of a well-governed union of the Soul and Nature. The Vedic immortality is seen here as a vast beatitude, a large enjoyment of the divine and infinite existence reposing on a perfect union between the Soul and Nature (*jaspadyam*) in that state of Immortality. The soul, by identity with the divine infinite existence and by enjoyment of that existence, becomes King of itself and its environment; the soul becomes conscious on

all planes of existence and gains mastery of them, and Nature, Prakriti, which was so far riddled with divisions and discords, becomes now the bride of the soul and partakes in the soul's enjoyment into an infinite and luminous harmony. The Rishi, in the course of the hymn, addresses Agni thus:

“When thou burnest high, thou art king of immortality and thou cleavest to the doer of sacrifice to give him that blissful state; he, to whom thou comest to be his guest, holds in himself all substance and he sets thee within in his front.

“O flame, put forth thy battling might for vast enjoyment of bliss; may there be thy highest illumination; create a well-governed union of the Lord and his Spouse, set thy foot on the greatness of hostile power.”⁴⁸

Example of Ribhus, the Artisans of Immortality

We have, in Rig Veda, a few hymns addressed to Ribhus who have rightly been described as artisans of immortality. They are called children of Sudhanwan, where the word *dhanwan* means desert field of Matter, and it has connection with an image of hill or rock out of which waters or rays representing the energies of supermind are delivered. Sometimes they are also addressed as offsprings of Indra, grandsons of luminous Force.⁴⁹ In the Vedic symbolism, Indra stands for divine mind in man, which is born out of *chit* as light, just as Agni is born out of *chit mḥśas* pure Force. The connection of Ribhus with Indra becomes clearer when it is suggested that Indra as the divine mind impels in the human being the human aspirations after immortality, and Ribhus represent the human aspiration for Immortality. Ultimately, Rishis attain the status of artisans of Immortality.

Ribhus are brothers, — the eldest is Ribhu or Ribhukshan,

the skillful Knower or Shaper in knowledge; the second one is Vibhu, the Pervading or the self-diffusing; and the third is Vaja, the Plenitude. In a hymn of Rigveda,⁵⁰ Ribhus, the ancient human beings, are addressed as those who had successfully accomplished those works and formations by which they worked out Immortality. These works and formations are described symbolically as the horses of Indra, the car of Ashwins, the Cow that gives the sweet milk, the youth of the universal Parent and the multiplication into four of the one drinking-bowl of the gods originally fashioned by Twashtri, the Framer of things. Let us explore these accomplishments in some detail.

(a) It is said that the Ribhus “fashioned by the mind for Indra his two bright steeds that are yoked by Speech, and they enjoy the sacrifice by their accomplishing of the work.”

Free movement of the luminous mind of Indra is a necessary condition for accomplishing immortalizing works. The free movement is indicated by horses; but horses are to be united, controlled and guided by knowledge, by the Word and by Speech. As a result, the horses are fashioned by the mind; hence, the nature of the horses is luminous. To develop the power of the divine mind, to convert the energies of action by the light of the divine mind and to control the movement of the horses by the Word, and to accomplish the work of the sacrifice, *yajna*, which symbolizes the upward journey in which human capacities and energies are offered for an upper evolution by means of progressive descent and manifestation of Truth, — all these formations and works, when successfully accomplished, prepare the state of immortality.

(b) It is further said that the Ribhus “fashioned for the twin lords of the voyage their happy car of all-pervading

movement, and they fashioned the fostering cow that yields the sweet milk.”

The chariot referred to here is the chariot of the Ashwins, who are described in the Veda as the twin lords of the human voyage who, on account of their all-pervading movement are able to help human beings in their journey, which is represented by the rising wave that emerges from the ocean of the inconscient. The movement of Ashwins is a movement of Ananda that always bestows health, youth, strength, wholeness to the physical man; it bestows capacity of action and enjoyment to the vital being; and it imparts energy of the light to the mental being. To fashion the chariot of the Ashwins is to provide to the physical, to the vital and to the mental members of the human personality with the force of the pure delight of the being. It is only by a tremendous training and cultivation of the body, life and mind, and it is only by a great purification of these parts of the being that the force of the pure delight, the boon of the Ashwins, can be brought in the instrumental personality. This is what Ribhus accomplished and fulfilled the condition of the attainment of the state of immortality:

(c) Ribhus again fashion the cow that gives sweet milk; this is a symbolic expression of the manifestation of the universal forms the light of Aditi, the Cow, the infinite Consciousness of the infinite conscious Being which is the Mother of the worlds. It is by the intervention of Aditi that the inferior nature of the man, which is mortal, is transformed into the higher nature of unity and infinity, which is immortal. That infinite consciousness of Aditi is the giver of sweet milk, since she is the Divine Shakti of Self-existent conscious Delight, Sachchidananda.

(d) Again, it is said: “O Ribhus, in your pervasion you made young again the Parents, you who seek the straight path and have the Truth in your mentalising.”

The Parents are, indeed, the Mind or Heaven who is the father, and the body or the Earth, who is the mother. These parents are aged, having lived long in the tasks of upward evolution. According to the Vedic parable, the Ribhus ascend to the house of the Sun where he lives in the unconcealed slumbering of twelve days, and then traverses the heaven and the earth, fills them with abundant rain of the springs of the Truth, nourishing them, restoring them to youth and vigour.⁵¹ The Ribhus pervade heaven with their workings; they bring divine consciousness and increase the divine mentality.⁵² They give to the mental being and the physical being fresh and young and immortal movement.⁵³ From the house of the Sun, which is the home of the Truth, they bring with them perfection; they fashion the straight path of the truth in contrast to the crooked path of the lower existence; and they bring the truth itself with its absolute effectivity in all the thoughts and words of the mentality. Carrying this power with them in their pervading entry into the lower world, they pour into it the immortal essence.

(e) The hymn⁵⁴ further states: “The raptures of the wine come to you entirely, to you with Indra companioned by the Maruts and with the Kings, the sons of Aditi”. To understand this statement it may be said that among the conditions of immortality, the following are repeatedly mentioned in Rig Veda: The attainment of the Divine mind represented by Indra, attainment of shining Thought-forces, represented by Maruts, attainment of purity resulting in the flow of Soma, divine delight, and synthesis of four powers of the great Kings or sons of Aditi, namely, the powers of Varuna (purity and

vastness of Truth-Consciousness), Mitra (law of love and light and harmony), Aryaman (upward aspiration and power of endurance and endeavour) and Bhaga (pure and happy enjoyment of things). All these conditions are fulfilled by Ribhus, and they have thus fashioned immortality.

(f) Ribhus have gone farther, and they have filled the physical consciousness, the single bowl which was framed by Twashtri, the Framer of things, with higher workings, and multiplied four-fold the original material body and perfected the four planes of the physical body, vital body, mental body and the causal or ideal body. These four bodies become the four-fold bowl for the pouring of the nectar, and thus these bodies partake of the nature of the nectar of Immortality.

The hymn is a prayer to Ribhus to bestow on the makers of *stoma*, who have illumined minds, the same delight and perfection which the Ribhus have attained. It is stated: "So established for us the thrice seven ecstasies, each separately by perfect expressings of them."

Thrice seven ecstasies refer to the ecstasies of supreme existence, which is triple in character, which in a later period came to be called Sat, Chit and Ananda, and the number seven refer to seven planes of Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind, Bliss, Conscious-force, and Essential Being. The prayer is that the thrice seven ecstasies are to be poured, each separately by perfect expressings of them, since each of these and all of them together constitute perfect perfection and in viable immortality. Ribhus are the object of the prayer because they have power to support and contain all these floods of delight of being in the human consciousness, and to use the language of the sacrifice, they are able to divide these floods in fashioning the perfection of their works and distributing them

among the gods, to each god his sacrificial share. Perfect work, perfect knowledge, perfect delight and perfect distribution of all and each in a complex harmony and synthesis; — these are the conditions of Immortality. Therefore, the hymn ends as follows:

“They (Ribhus) sustained and held in them, they divided by perfection in their works the sacrificial share of enjoyment among the gods.”

When we are able to discern the Vedic knowledge by unlocking symbols and figures which have been used by the Vedic seers, in the light of Sri Aurobindo, we find that the Vedic yoga was a synthesis of the psychological being of man in its highest flights and widest rangings of divine knowledge, power, joy, life and glory. We discover that the Vedic Rishis had measured and fathomed the heavens and earths within us; they had therefore spoken of three earths and three heavens. They had cast their plummet into the inconscient and the subconscious and the superconscient; they spoke of the triple world below, — the world of mind or heaven as they had called it, the world of matter or Earth, and the world of the intervening mid-region of Life or Antariksha. They spoke of a triple world above, the supreme and rapturous abodes of the highest godhead that came to be called in later developments Sat-Chit-Ananda.

PART FOUR

Vedic System of Cosmic Knowledge

The Vedic system of the cosmic knowledge is the same that we find behind the later Puranic symbols. Both in the Vedic system and the Puranic system, the cosmic existence consists of the unity of seven principles of existence and seven worlds corresponding to these principles, and they can be stated as follows:

<i>Principle</i>	<i>World</i>
1. Pure Existence — Sat	World of the highest truth of being (Satyaloka)
2. Pure Consciousness — Chit	World of infinite Will or conscious force (Tapoloka)
3. Pure Bliss — Ananda	World of creative delight of existence (Janaloka)
4. Knowledge or Truth — Vijnana	World of the Vastness (Maharloka)
5. Mind	World of light (Swar)
6. Life (nervous being)	World of various becoming (Bhuvar)
7. Matter	The material world (Bhur)

According to the Vedic sages, we live in physical consciousness, and we experience only this physical world of the Earth-Mother, and we are aware only of mortal

existence (*martyam*). It is by profound psychological methods that we can transcend the limitations of physical consciousness and enter into realms of supraphysical existence. They established close connection between our ordinary cognitive faculties of intelligence such as *Medhā*, *Manas*, *Mati*, *Dhī* and others and their final victorious illuminations; similarly, they established close connection between desire, will, and action, on the one hand, and their supreme all-achieving volitional puissance, on the other; and similarly they established close connection between our ordinary sense activities and their corresponding experiences of pleasure, pain and indifference on the one hand, and the highest spiritual ecstasies, on the other. The psychological efforts made by them to establish these connections appear to have been greatly methodized, so that hundreds of seekers could practise them and arrive at results or siddhis that can be compared, verified, modified, enlarged and perfected. It is in these methodized efforts that we find the luminous but synthetic beginnings of the later developments of Karma yoga, Jnana yoga and Bhakti yoga. In several passages,⁵⁵ we can read the secret of the accomplishment of action, knowledge and joy. Works are energies pressed for result, and the secret of the yoga of works is a sacrifice or surrender of our desires and volitions symbolized in the Veda by the Horse, *ashwa*. Attainment of perfection in works has been noted as a condition for the attainment of immortality, such as that found in the hymns related to Ribhus. The Veda celebrates Knowledge as illumination attained by meditation in which activities of thought, understanding and intellect are so concentrated on the highest source of knowledge that supramental faculties come to be developed such as those of revelations, symbolized by Ila, inspiration or Saraswati,

intuition or Sarama, and discrimination between truth and falsehood, between knowledge and ignorance and between good and evil — the faculty symbolized by Dakshina. The Vedic yoga of knowledge is seen to be the process of sacrifice or cultivation or surrender of our cognitive activities by means of intensities of clarities, symbolized in the Veda as *ghrita* or *ghritasya dhārāḥ*. In the Vedic yoga of Divine Love or Divine Delight, the method is that of transmutation of sense activities effected by means of intensities of purification, symbolized in the Veda as the pressings of the soma-plant and straining its juice through the widely spread strainer (*pavitram vitatam*) of the human system in the activities of purification. The climax is reached when the delight in our members is so sifted and strained that it is turned into honey-sweetnesses (*madhunah*) which pour into all the members of the human system and flow through all of them completely in every part (*prabhur gātrāṇi paryeṣi viśwataḥ*).⁵⁶ The three processes of cognition, volition and affection are so synthesized that the yogic results are synthetic and integral.

Psychological powers in this synthetic yoga of the Veda are sought to be purified, cultivated, developed and perfected by the constant aid sought and received from the cosmic powers in their individual or in their collective combinations. This is where the role of the Gods comes into our view prominently. Gods in their combination manifest the integrality of the one supreme Deva, one integral Divine Existent. The crown of this synthesis was in the experience of the Vedic Rishis of something divine transcendent and blissful in whose unity the increasing soul of man and the eternal divine fullness of the cosmic godheads meet perfectly and fulfill themselves.

The Supreme Object of Vedic Realisation

The highest object of knowledge, which the Vedic Rishis endeavored to discover through their methodized methods, has been described by them as the One with many names, who is revealed in many aspects and who approaches man in the mask of many divine personalities. This oneness can be seen to be complex oneness and integral oneness. On account of the varieties of godheads who are invoked by the Vedic Rishis, western scholars considered them as polytheists. But at the time of worshiping a given god, the rishis gave preeminence and even regarded him as in a way a sole deity; the word polytheism did not correspond to the actual position of the gods in the Veda, and therefore a new name was invented, and they called it henotheism. In reality, the Veda is not polytheistic, nor is it monotheistic in the modern sense of the word; the Vedic experience of the reality is that of one Divine Existence who manifests Himself in many names and forms, each of which is for the worshipper of that name and form, the one and supreme Deity. This idea was also continued in the Puranic religions of India. Actually, we find in the Veda the idea of ultimate reality, which is developed in Vedanta as a conception of One Brahman. In 170th hymn of the first Mandala of Rig Veda, the ultimate reality has been described as One but wonderful and unseizable by the ordinary mental understanding, and that One is described as surprisingly complex similar to later conception of Shiva-Shakti, both being one and yet capable of an otherness in motion. The hymn says: "It is not now, nor is It tomorrow; who knoweth that which is Supreme and Wonderful? It has motion and action in the consciousness of another, but when it is approached by the thought, It vanishes." That Reality is spoken of in the neuter as That (*tad ekam*); it is often spoken

of as He (*sah*) that is one with Aditi, the Divine Mother; it is identified with the Immortality, the supreme triple Principle, the vast Existence (*vasu*), Energy of Consciousness (*urja*), and Bliss (*Madhu*). That Reality is unmoving; it is the oneness of the gods that manifest from that Reality. It is said: "The Unmoving is born as the Vast in the seat of the Cow (Aditi),....the vast, the mightiness of the gods, the One."⁵⁷ Rishi Dhirghatamas speaks of that Reality as "the one Existent to whom the seers give different names, Indra, Matarishwan, Agni".⁵⁸

That Reality is also conceived as a Deva, the supreme Godhead, the father of things; He is the Blissful One to whom the movements of gods ascend; He is manifest as at once the Male and Female. Each of the gods is a manifestation, an aspect, a personality of one Deva. That Supreme Deva can be realized through any of his names and aspects, through Indra, through Agni, through Soma; for each of them is in himself that Supreme Deva, and only in its frontal aspect differs from the other frontal aspects; each god contains all the gods in himself. In the ninth Mandala of Rig Veda,⁵⁹ Soma is described as the Supreme Deva in the image of his multisided splendour and complexity as follows: "This is the supreme dappled Bull that makes the Dawns to shine out, the Male that bears the worlds of becoming and seeks the plenitude; the Fathers who had the forming knowledge made a form of him by that power of knowledge which is his; strong in vision they set him within as a child to be born. As the Gandharva he guards his true seat; as the supreme and wonderful One he keeps the births of the gods; Lord of the inner setting, by the inner setting he seizes the enemy. Those who are utterly perfected in works taste the enjoyment of his honey-sweetness. O Thou in whom is the food, thou art that divine

food, thou art the vast, the divine home; wearing heaven as a robe thou encompassst the march of the sacrifice. King with the sieve of thy purifying for thy chariot thou ascendest to the plenitude; with thou thousand burning brilliances thou conquerest the vast knowledge.”

Let us refer to the description of a similar description of Agni in Rig Veda:⁶⁰

“Thou, O Agni, art Varuna when thou art born, thou becomest Mitra when thou art perfectly kindled, in thee are all the gods, O son of Force; thou art Indra to the mortal who gives the sacrifice. Thou becomest Aryaman when thou bearest the secret name of the Virgins. They make thee to shine with the radiances as Mitra well-established when thou makest of one mind the Lord of the house and his consort. For the glory of thee, O Rudra, the Maruts brighten by the pressure that which is the brilliant and very birth of thee. That which is the highest seat of Vishnu, by that thou protectest secret Name of the radiances. By thy glory, O Deva, the gods attain to right vision, and holding in themselves all the multiplicity of the vast manifestations taste Immortality. Man set Agni in them as the priest of the sacrifice when desiring the immortality, they distribute to the god the self-expression of the being...”

The being is one, according to the Veda, but its self-expressions are many and varied. That reality is to be known, and when that Reality is known, both in self-being and its multiple expressions, and when that Reality is made to shine in all parts of the being, then Immortality is attained and enjoyed, since that Reality is imperishable, undecaying and immortal.

The Yogic Journey of the Seeker of the Highest

The human journey is a journey towards that goal, and in that journey the forces of darkness obstruct the progression; they have to be conquered with the help of the gods as Angirasa rishis did. This darkness and the sons of darkness who obstruct the journey have behind them, concealed in them, the light and the lost Sun. That darkness is not self-existent, nor is it eternal, since it has a beginning, and its end can be achieved by the pursuit of the path of Truth, the path of Immortality. The Aghamarshana mantra⁶¹ points out: "Out of the force of concentration of being (tapas), the Right and the Truth were born; then was the night born, and thence the dark inconscient ocean was born." It is when the light gets concealed that darkness is born, but concealment does not annul the light. It is by the process of yoga that the light that is concealed is recovered. From inconscience to Ignorance and from ignorance to Knowledge is the process of reversal, the process of self-finding, the finding of That and all that That contains, That which eternally is and which has become concealed but which is then recovered and brought forth for manifestation.

The Vedic Rishis, by their plummeting depths of the inconscient and by scaling the heights of consciousness up to the Superconscient, read the riddle of death and found the secret of Immortality. They sought for and discovered the One and worshipped that One and Him in the glories of His light and purity and, wisdom and power. These Rishis manifest confidence and joy and happy, equal friendliness with the gods. They claimed the realm of the Mind as the father and the realm of the Matter as their mother and these seers had delivered the Sun out of our material darkness. The

Sun that they delivered was “That One”, “That Truth”, (*“tad ekaṃ, tat satyam”*).

The Vedic knowledge and the Vedic system of yoga constitute the yogic heritage, and it invites the seeker to revisit the secrets that are discovered by the yogins of the Veda. But the Veda is not a closed book. The Vedic seers themselves have declared:

*“brahamāṇa tvā śatakrato
ud vamsam iva yemire.
yat sānoḥ sānum āruhad
bhūri aspaṣṭa kartvam,”*

“The priest of the word climb Thee like a ladder, O hundred-powered. As one ascends from peak to peak, there is made clear the much that has still to be done.”⁶²

The richness and complexities of Vedic system of yoga cannot be adequately captured within a brief compass that we have in our scope. But from whatever we have said so far we may be able to gather that,

- (1) The Veda is humanity’s earliest composition available, which may enable us to discern a well developed Yogashastra which consists of a systematic body of the knowledge of the truths, principles, powers and processes that govern realization or yoga-siddhi, the perfection that comes from the practice of yoga;
- (2) This shastra is illustrated in the examples of hundreds of Rishis, — not only those who have composed the hymns of the Veda, but also those forefathers like Angirasas, Ribhus and others whose yogic achievements have been variously described;

- (3) This shastra is not only a record of the subjective experiences of the composers or others, but owing to the fact that the symbols and figures which have been used by these Rishis are fixed and shared by the composers and their disciples, the objective veracity of contents of knowledge can be studied and can be objectively determined;
- (4) The quest contained in this yoga shastra is undogmatic and open ended, so that the yogic system presented in the Veda (yoga) can be continued to be developed in the light of new inquiries and new methods of quest and verification.

One of the important features of the Vedic pursuit is marked by intense goodwill and concern for universal welfare, spread of universal goodwill and openness to thoughts of goodwill that may come from all directions. The following verses from Rig Veda, Mandala I, sukta 89, bring out the emphasis that is laid in the Veda on universality, goodwill, well-being, selflessness and all-round good health: "May thoughts of goodwill come to us from all directions, without any obstruction or restraint, leading us to higher ideals, so that we may be recipients of divine protection without any hindrance, day to day, for our well deserved growth."⁶³

"May Indra, with the opulent power of divine hearing, be propitious to us. May the omniscient be propitious to us. May Garuda with his irresistible weapons, be propitious to us. May Brahaspati be auspicious to us."⁶⁴

"O Gods, may we hear with ears what is auspicious; may we see with eyes what is auspicious, O gods worthy of worship. May we sing songs of gratitude with all our bodies

endowed with firm faculties and live full span of our life devoted to the divine welfare.”⁶⁵

“Hundred autumns are assigned to us by the divine in this fleeting existence of bodies, subject to old age and decay. May we have no affliction or infirmities in the midst of our life-span.”⁶⁶

There are, in the Yajurveda, six verses⁶⁷ which are devoted to a prayer for the mind to be filled with Good Will. They are as follows:

“The mind, irrespective of whether one is awake or asleep, travels to far distant corners; this far distant-moving mind is a light of lights.

May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.”

“It is by virtue of this mind that the enlightened ones, endowed with deep insight and operative skills, perform actions as a sacrifice; the mind is extraordinary, highly dynamic and effective, hidden with creative powers.

May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.”

“The mind represents insight and awareness, patience, light and nectar of the Immortality within the human beings; without mind no action or sacrifice can be performed.

May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.”

“The mind, when seized by immortality, penetrates all the past, the present and the future; the mind itself extends into all actions of sacrifice that is performed by seven sacrifices (of seven planes).

May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.”

“The mind is the receptive plane of words of knowledge, prayers of worship and offerings of sacrifice; they are located in it just as spokes are contained in the centre of the wheel of a chariot; all the stuff of consciousness of all the beings is inter-locked in it.

May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.”

“As an expert charioteer mobilizes the horses with the reins, so does the mind mobilize human beings. It is the most dynamic and fast moving (director) located in the heart.

May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.”

Prayer and Bhakti Yoga

Among the four Vedas, Samaveda occupies a special place. According to Yaska, Sama has three alternative meanings:

- (1) Union of heaven, life-breath and song;
- (2) Union of knowledge and works;
- (3) Union of divine power and individual soul.

The mantras of Samaveda are recited as songs, and some of the best prayers of the Veda are to be found in the *Mahanamni Archika*, which occurs between the first and the second parts of the Samaveda. It consists of only ten verses, and these prayers can be seen to be the kernel of the Bhakti yoga of the Veda. It may, however, be asked whether a book of Prayers can rightly be regarded as a book of Yoga. The truth of the yogic relationship of prayer to the Bhakti yoga is not easily grasped, and, prayer, considered as a form of external worships and even as a form of ceremonial worship, it is thought to be a part of religionism rather than as a part of

yoga. The distinguishing feature of Yoga is a process of psychological methods of inner change of consciousness leading up to the total transformation of consciousness in which the individual stands united with the universal and transcendental Divine, which leads to a further step of the reign of the divine consciousness on the psychological and even physical instruments and limbs of the individual in their action of transformation. It is true that as long as the divine consciousness is only an idea of the godhead to which one renders reverence or homage, there is not yet the beginning of yoga. The beginning is marked by a seeking after the Divine, a longing after some kind of touch, closeness or possession. It is only at that stage that there comes about inner adoration of the Divine, an inner worship; one begins to make oneself a temple of the Divine; one's thoughts and feelings become a constant prayer of aspiration and seeking, and the whole life becomes a means of service and worship of the divine. It is as this change or this new soul-tendency grows that the movement of devotion becomes a yoga, Bhakti yoga, — a growing contact and union; and with this change, even the outward worship will increasingly become only a physical expression or outflowing of the inner devotion and adoration; that outward worship will be the wave of the soul throwing itself out in speech and symbolic act. The real distinguishing mark of the Bhakti yoga is the adoration that brings with it an increasing consecration of the being to the Divine who is adored, and this consecration must be a process of self-purification directed towards a growth towards the divine contact or for the entrance of the Divine into the temple of the inner being in order that the divine consciousness and divine being is revealed in the shrine of the heart. The process of purification may be only ethical, but at the point where yoga

begins to appear in its true spirit and form, purification begins to be a process of throwing away, catharsis, of all that conflicts with what is conceived to be the Divine in himself or the Divine in ourselves. One ceases to have in the outer act a mere imitation of the Divine, and one begins to grow into the likeness of the Divine in our nature. Bhakti yoga culminates in a sort of liberation by likeness to the Divine, liberation from our lower nature and a change into the divine nature.

It is in the context of this profundity of Bhakti yoga that the place and significance of prayer needs to be underlined. There may be in the ordinary religious approach to the divine consciousness by prayer many crudities such as that illustrated by the attitude which imagines the Divine as if capable of being propitiated, bribed, flattered into acquiescence or indulgence by praise, entreaty and gifts and has often little regard to the spirit in which the divine is approached. In the Bhakti yoga proper, prayer is only a particular form given to the upward will and aspiration and to the faith which does not rest in the state of belief but which is a dynamic force by which what is held in belief is irresistibly worked out so as to be transformed into knowledge, into living experience and realization. When a prayer expresses the will and aspiration of the seeker to come into a living experience of the touch with the divine will, one enters into the yoga of realization. One begins to understand that the divine will is universal will, and it cannot be deflected by egoistic propitiation and entreaty; one begins to understand that the divine is not only universal but also transcendent who expresses himself in the universal order with omniscience, where his larger knowledge must foresee the thing to be done, needing no direction or stimulation by the human thought; one begins to learn that the individual's

desires are not and cannot be in any world order the true determining factor. At the same time, the divine foreknowledge does not bind the omniscience and omnipotence of the divine consciousness, and in the working of the universe, the law of divine action is not a mechanical law and there is in that working a constant interaction of powers and forces, working from above and working from below, and through that interaction and, in the interaction between the human will and the divine will, Divine Events are created, and the world which was closed earlier is opened up by the transforming will in human consciousness and its offering and consecration; one then realizes that the world is not a mechanical working out of a vision but a spiritual unfoldment that permits new creation by virtue of the consecration of the individual will in order to become a vehicle of the divine's will, on the one hand, and the divine's omnipotent will that sanctions the occurrence of the creative action that brings about the transformation of all that continues to occur; consequently, new events are shaped which were willed by the divine omnipotent will but which were by the same will to be shaped by the human will, aspiration and dynamic faith. What is important in the Bhakti yoga is not the anthropomorphic approach to God that aims at flattering the divine for egoistic satisfaction but the development of the relationship between the human aspiration and the Divine Will. Prayer helps to prepare a conscious relationship between the human will and the divine consciousness. It is the contact of human life with God that is important, and this contact results in constant interchange with cosmic realities and the Supreme God. The essence of the prayer consists of its power to build up higher and higher forms of relationship until one reaches the highest motiveless devotion, which is

that of divine love, pure and simple, without any other demand or longing. The demand of the prayer is, in ultimate analysis, the demand for the closest union with the divine. As the Bhakti yoga rises higher, the one thing one asked for is the divine love, the one thing feared is the loss of love, the one sorrow is a sorrow of separation of love; for all other things either do not exist for the worshiper and lover or come in only as incidents or as results and not as objects or conditions of love. The greatest boon of yogic prayer is eternity and intensity of the divine love.

In the few examples which are taken below from Samaveda, various motives of prayers are discovered, but they express the intense need of the Rishis in their upward aspiration and effort to unite with the divine consciousness, and therefore they can be regarded as Yogic rather than religious in character:

1. O God, Thou art All-knowing; Guide us on the right path. Teach us how to reach our goal. O Lord of all powers, Most Opulent, teach us Thy Laws!
2. O most conscious and Glorious Lord, omnipresent like Sun, make us full of knowledge, with these spiritual meditations, for acquiring life and light of learning!
3. O Lord! Thou art greatest Giver, Remover of sins; Thou art verily the Mighty. O All pervading Powerful Lord, equip us with the fruits of knowledge and spiritual force. O Mighty Master, make us strong. Manifest Thyself in our heart. Accept our adoration. May thou ever remain blissful with the drink of our purity offered to Thee.
4. O God, grant us the force to acquire knowledge. Thou art most heroic amongst the heroes. O Mightiest, O sin-

destroyer, Thou art the Lord of all disciplines of knowledge and forces. Thou controlest thy subjects for their betterment.

5. He is the most charitable amongst all who possess possession. He is pure like the Sun. O Omniscient and Glorious God, lead us on for acquiring knowledge and strength. Praise Him alone, O man.
6. Verily, the Almighty Original Being rules over all. For our protection, we invoke that Unconquerable Conqueror. He totally destroys our feelings of enmity. He is full of knowledge and action. He is our protector from sins, the Supramental, Vast and Truth.
7. For acquiring prosperity, we invoke the Lord the Unconquerable Conqueror. He entirely destroys our feelings of enmity. He entirely destroys our feelings of enmity again.
8. O Indivisible God, O Settler of all, grant us for our felicity, the Immemorial All-pervading Gladdening nature. O Mighty Lord, the accomplishment of an action is alone praise-worthy. O Omnipresent Lord, Thou rulest over all. I adore Thee worthy of adoration!
9. O All-powerful, Vice-Destroying God, we sing Thy praise in man's pilgrimages for progress. Thou art Wise, who livest in rays of Light, the Friend, worthy of service and Fearless.
10. O Lord, Thou art resplendent Agni.
 O Refulgent Lord, Thou art that Indra.
 O Lord, Thou art the Increasing Sun!
 O Lord! Thou art those very Gods!"⁶⁸

Vedic Vision of Harmony

We may, finally, refer to the important verses, which appear at the close of the Rig Veda, since they bring out the futuristic vision of humanity and harmony, which can come about by intense aspiration for collective yoga that aims at highest welfare and solidarity of people. These verses express exhortation of Rishis for building up the future divine man. “Be, first, the mental being, and manifest, then, the divine being”, — so is the message of the Veda, — *manurbhav, janayā daivyaṃ janam*.

“Join together, speak one word, let your minds arrive at one knowledge even as the ancient gods arriving at one knowledge partake each of his own portion.

Common mantra have all these, a common gathering to union, one mind common to all, they are together in one knowledge; I pronounce for you a common mantra, do sacrifice for you with a common offering.

One and common be your aspiration, united your hearts, common to you be your mind, — so that close companionship may be yours.”⁶⁹

Notes and References

- ¹ These are general statements, and they can be regarded as tentative conclusions arrived at by the study of a number of books on history of India and of the world. The Vedas speak of the Rishis of the past and of the New Age (pūrvebhiḥ nūtanaiḥ, *Rig Veda* (RV), I.1.2).
- ² There are four Vedas, — Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. Among the Vedas the Rig Veda occupies a prominent place. It consists of ten books or Mandalas and one thousand seventeen hymns or suktas. The total number of verses in Rig Veda is ten thousand five hundred eighty. Yajur Veda is classified broadly into Shukla Yajur Veda and Krishna Yajur Veda. Shukla Yajur Veda has thirty chapters and Krishna Yajur Veda has five existing versions of which Maitrāyaṇī Samhita is prominent. It has four kandas which have prose compositions but also three thousand one hundred forty four verses of which one thousand seven hundred one have been taken from the Rig Veda. Sama Veda consists of one thousand five hundred forty nine verses, but only seventy five of them are independent of the Rig Veda. The Atharva Veda has twenty kandas and five thousand eight hundred forty nine verses. About one thousand two hundred of these verses are common with those of the Rig Veda. One sixth part of the Atharva Veda is in the prose style while the rest is poetry.
- ³ According to one of the Indian historians, Shri Avinash Chandra Das, Vedas could have been composed any time between 250th and 750th Century B.C. According to Lokmanya Tilak, the estimated period would be any time between 45th and 50th Century B.C. This coincides with the view of Prof. Han, Prof. Ludwig and Prof. Jacobi. Prof. Whitney places this period any time between 15th and 20th Century B.C., while Prof. Weber places it any time between 12th and 15th Century B.C. Prof. Max Muller believes that the Veda was composed during the 13th Century B.C.

Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, Vol. 15, Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (SABCL), 1972.

- ⁵ Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, Vol. 10, SABCL, 1972.
- ⁶ RV., IV.3.16.
- ⁷ RV., V.19.
- ⁸ Vide., The famous *Purusa Sukta*.
- ⁹ *Bhagavad Gita (BG)*, III.10.
- ¹⁰ RV., I.3.
- ¹¹ Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, Vol. 11, SABCL, 1972.
- ¹² Vide., RV. (*Turīyam Svid*), X.67.1
- ¹³ The Angirasa legend is to be found in various parts of the *Rig Veda*. References may be made in particular, to I.11.5, I.32.4, I.72.8, I.100.18, V.14.4, VI.60.2, VII.75.7, VII.90.4, VII.99.4. Refer also to II.15.8, III.43.7, III.31.15, VI.44.3 and VII.99.4, X.47.6.
- ¹⁴ *Atharva Veda*, 12.1.1, RV., X.190.1.
- ¹⁵ Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, Vol. 10, SABCL, 1972, pp. 54-64, 263-271, 351-419.
- ¹⁶ Vide., RV., I.4.
- ¹⁷ Vide., RV., I.4.8.
- ¹⁸ Vide., RV., I.170.
- ¹⁹ Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, Vol. 10, SABCL, pp. 421-64.
- ²⁰ RV., V.63.1-7.
- ²¹ RV., IV.58.11.
- ²² RV., I.25.12-3.
- ²³ RV., X.64.5.
- ²⁴ RV., X.63.7.
- ²⁵ RV., II.27.6.
- ²⁶ RV., II.27.8-9.
- ²⁷ RV., X.63.4.
- ²⁸ RV., IX.83.
- ²⁹ RV., V.82, 1-9.
- ³⁰ Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, Vol. 10, SABCL, 1972, Chs., XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX.
- ³¹ RV., II.24.6.
- ³² RV., X.108.8.
- ³³ RV., VIII.12.2-3.
- ³⁴ RV., VI.75.10.

- ³⁵ *RV.*, II.20.5.
- ³⁶ *Vide.*, *RV.*, X.67.1.
- ³⁷ *Vide.*, *RV.*, X.67.1.
- ³⁸ *Cf.*, *RV.*, I.154.4.
- ³⁹ *Vide.*, *RV.*, I.3.
- ⁴⁰ *RV.*, V.4.4.
- ⁴¹ *RV.*, IV.16.8.
- ⁴² *Vide.*, *RV.*, III.39.
- ⁴³ *Vide.*, *RV.*, V.81.
- ⁴⁴ *Vide.*, *RV.*, Mandala IV.
- ⁴⁵ *RV.*, IV.3.11-12.
- ⁴⁶ *RV.*, I.71.2.
- ⁴⁷ *RV.*, I.68.
- ⁴⁸ *RV.*, V.28.2-3.
- ⁴⁹ *RV.*, IV.37.4.
- ⁵⁰ *Vide.*, *RV.*, I.20.
- ⁵¹ *Vide.*, *RV.*, IV.33.2, 3, 7; IV.36.1, 3; I.161.7
- ⁵² *Vide.*, *RV.*, IV.33.1-2.
- ⁵³ *Vide.*, *RV.*, V.36.3.
- ⁵⁴ *RV.*, I.20.
- ⁵⁵ *Vide.*, *RV.*, I.1.3.
- ⁵⁶ *RV.*, IX.83.
- ⁵⁷ *Vide.*, *RV.*, III.55.1.
- ⁵⁸ *Vide.*, *RV.*, I.164.46.
- ⁵⁹ *RV.*, IX.83.
- ⁶⁰ *RV.*, V.3.
- ⁶¹ *RV.*, X.190.
- ⁶² *RV.*, I.10.
- ⁶³ *RV.*, I.89.1
- ⁶⁴ *RV.*, I.89.6.
- ⁶⁵ *RV.*, I.89.8.
- ⁶⁶ *RV.*, I.89.9.
- ⁶⁷ *Yajur Veda*, Shiva Sankalpa, 34.1-6.
- ⁶⁸ *Vide.*, *Sama Veda*, 641-50.
- ⁶⁹ *RV.*, X.192.2-4.

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