CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Like Sun and Moon may we pursue in full prosperity our path. And meet with one who gives again, who knows us well and slays us not."

- Griffith.
INTRODUCTION

In the history of man's search for better life in this world, the Rgveda occupies the glorious place. In this oldest record of ideal-seeking nature of our ancestors, we find the amicable solutions to the problems evolved even in this age of space-technology and computer-based microsciences. The mysticism of the Rgveda is the suitable answer to our spiritual crisis and social unrest. The blend of material progress and spiritual enlightenment is the prime necessity of our times. In the present context, the Rgveda may become the only refuge for the modern man caught into the havoc of egocentric philosophies of life and pseudo-ideologies of the social emancipation.

Here is an humble attempt to present a picture of the Rgvedic solution to the eternal problems of human being, in other words the VEDIC EXISTENTIALISM of its own type. The dogmatic term for this Rgvedic philosophy of life is 'the mysticism'. The research undertaken aims at presentation of the Rgvedic svasti that is perfect and lovable idea of human life full of glory and optimism.

'Take me from darkness to light' लम्बसौ मा ज्योर्तिमियः and 'Let brilliance of Savitar inspire our intellect' तलसिद्धिर्मिथ्य वर्ण देवस्य धीमीह धिष्यो यो न: प्रवृद्धात् are the tenets of Vedic thought.
Among the four Vedas, the Rgveda is the treasure-house of all types of human ideals. Indian people owe respect to the Rgveda for inspiring it for the ages. Our heritage accepts the evidence of Veda as apauruseya, hence unquestionable. This is all due to the sublime philosophy of life in the Vedic period. The rṣis or poet-seers of the Ṛgveda are treated as highly enlightened souls having realised the Truth. V.G. Rahurkar is of the opinion that "the subject-matter or the contents of the Veda are apauruseya, while verbal representation of these, in so far as it is brought about by the rṣis, is pauruseya." The orthodox opinion about the authority of the Veda is that as no knowledge can be imparted without word or language, hence the Vedic mantras or the language is also the gift of the divine Lord.

The modern approach to the Veda is inspired by comparative and critical knowledge of various disciplines of human sciences developed on the basis of Evolutionary theory of Darwin. But the Ṛgveda is no more the songs of the primitive herdsman and nor the records of nature-worship. Monotheism of Maxmiller too, has now lost its relevance. For a modern scholar, the Ṛgveda unveils a rich store-house of historical informations regarding ancient religion.

2. Brhadāranyaka Upanisad: II. 4. 10
society, of Aryan people who were highly civilized. For researches in Indo-European language and cultural anthropology and ancient history of early man, the Rgveda has proved its importance. In the World History of Mysticism too, the Rgveda can bestow a great riches of sublime thought for the modern student of ancient philosophy. We owe much to the efforts of Sri Aurobindo, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Raghveer, A.B. Keith, Griffith and others, who tried to unlock the treasure-house of mystical secrets of the seers.

The Rgveda

We need not invest our energies and time into finding date of the Rgveda and discerning the interpolated portions or retelling the story of four Vedas. For our investigation we accept the present form of the Rgveda samhitā as it is. The Śākala Samhitā can well be understood with help of Brāhmaṇa, Āranyaka and Upaniṣads. The seeds of ideas of Samhitā may be recognised very well in the Upaniṣads through Brāhmaṇas and Āranyakas. We see sequence of the four. Hence each samhitā has its own line of thought in its Brāhmaṇa, Āranyaka and Upaniṣad. The Upaniṣads are called 'Vedānta' — the climax of Veda. Therefore Rgveda alone can not serve the purpose. We have also made our study critically rich by tracing the growth of the mystical ideas of the Rgveda Samhitā. Aitareya Upaniṣads, Kaśitaki Upaniṣada and Aitareya Āranyaka and
Sāñkhāyana Āranyakā, Aitareya Brāhmaṇa and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas belong to the Sāmhitā of the Rgveda.

Subject-matter of the Rgveda

The subject-matter of the verses contained in the ten books of the Rgveda is classified into 35 heads by Saunaka in the Brhaddevatā:

"(1) praise (2) laudation (3) blame (4) doubt (5) plaint (6) desire (7) prayer (8) boasting (9) request (10) question (11) summons (12) enigma (13) commission (14) injunction (15) vaunt (16) lament (17) narration (18) conversation (19) prurifying narrative (20) lascivious verses (21) obeisance (22) obstacle (23) resolve (24) prattle (25) reply (26) prohibition (27) intoxication (28) denial (29) invitation (30) agitation (31) wonder (32) abuse (33) eulogy (34) invection (35) curse."

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Bṛhaddevatā

सत्तृति: प्रहर्षा निन्दा व सार्थः पारिवेदना व
सुश्वसी: कात्यन याच्छा प्रश्नः प्रेषः प्राणीलकाः ॥ 35 ॥
विश्वासवानुपोगश रक्षा विलिपिताः च यत् ॥
वाचवत्सलं सन्तानं: पौवनत्वालयनेष्व च ॥ 36 ॥
वाहस्या नामस्वर: प्रेषिनोधस्तत्त्याः च ॥
वनरूपप्राप्तवर्ण प्रतिवर्णस्य तदेव च ॥ 37 ॥
प्रेषिनोधपदेशः च प्रामादापुल्लोचः च ॥
उपप्रेषित्य य: प्रोक्त: स-वर्तम विविव्रयः ॥ 38 ॥
वाचवत्सलं सन्तानं: पौवनत्वाचेव श्रेष्ठ: वाहस्याः ॥
उपप्रेषित्य निपातलच्छ नाम वाहस्यालीमलयोः ॥ 39 ॥
The modern critics of the Vedas find the following material in the Rks.

1. Religious customs and beliefs.¹
2. Philosophical queries.²
3. Beautiful poetic pieces.³
4. Richness of language.⁴
5. Historical material.⁵
6. Geographical informations.⁶
7. Social and moral stage of life.⁷
8. Mystical thought and universal harmony.⁸

¹ Macdonell, Vedic Mythology; Hillebrandt; Vedische Mythologia; Bargaigne; Religion of the Ṛgveda; Bloomfield, Religion of the Veda; Potdar, Sacrifice in the Ṛgveda; Maxmuller etc.
² A.B. Keith, Religion and Philosophy of Vedas and Upaniṣads; J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts (5 Vols.)
³ T.G. Maihkar, P.S. Shastri and others.
⁴ Roth and Bothlingk; Geldner, Vedische Studien; Bloomfield, Grassmann and others.
⁵ A.C. Das, Ṛgvedic India; Macdonell, Vedic Index; J. Cunningham, K.S. Chattopādhya and others.
⁶ Unapādesaṇa, Age of the Ṛgveda; Tilak, Orion and Arctic Home in the Vedas; V.G. Raghukar, R.C. Majumdar and others.
⁷ Many scholars have studied the social status of women ethnical concepts, economy and administration of the Āryans in the Ṛgvedic Age.
⁸ There is a long legacy of Vedic Scholars who studied Vedic verses with mystic approach. Atmananda, Sri Aurobindo, V.S. Aggarwal, Dr. Fatah Singh and others. See Bibliography.
Mystical hints in the Vedic Literature

Here we find a number of commentators who accept the mystical material in the Rks. In the Rgveda itself, we find Bhavavrttam as the subject of the verses and also adhyātma in Atharvaveda. We have investigated a bulk of verses known as Mystical and Philosophical. Their terms denoting secret and mysterious and the mystical questioning have been dealt in succeeding chapters independently.

Yāśka's narration of the schools of Vedic interpretation clearly informs us of the Mystical school of Vedic interpretation known as ādhyātmika and parivrājaka schools. These interpretations were popular in Yāśka's time. Brāhmaṇa, Āranyaka, and Upaniṣads are full of such symbolic and mystical interpretations under the caption of 'Āthādhyātma'. Such spiritual hints were envisaged and unveiled by the Brāhmaṇic priests and saints.

Ancient schools of Vedic Interpretation

We have shown that the mystical material has been presented by Aitreya Brāhmaṇa, Aitreya Āranyaka, and Śākhāyana Āranyaka and Aitreya Upaniṣad. Yāśka has devoted fourteenth chapter to this material and he has accepted the adhyātma as fruit of the verses.

Regarding the Gods, Yāśka is of the opinion that

"एकै आत्मा बहुधा दूसरे परस्यात्मना जन्येदेवा प्रवर्तिता गार्थिन भवेत। "

[१४]
The ideas of Yāska plays a significant role in shaping the mystic school of the vedic interpretation. While treating seers, gods, synonyms, the spirituality of Yāska becomes clear. Considerable number of Ṛks have been presented with spiritual and mystical meanings therein.

(vi) Medieval period of Vedic Interpretation

Skandaśvāmi, Mādhva Bhatta, Venkata-Mādhava, Bhatta Govinda, Dhānuṣka-Yajyā, Ānandatīrtha and Ātmānanda are the pre-Sāyāna commentators. They accept the mystical meanings in a number of hymns well-known in the Rgveda. Particularly, Ātmānanda’s Asyavāmiya Hymn is an ideal example of mystical interpretation.

Sāyāna’s work indeed is a herculean task in the field of vedic exegesis. One cannot ignore his commentary to enter the vedic field of Aryan culture. He has quoted generously the passages from Brāhmaṇas, Nīruktas, Brhaddevatā, Sarvānukramaṇī, Pāṇini and others. Adopting a very wide range of informations, he has shown grammatical, accentual, metrical, ritualistic, theological and philosophical peculiarities of the vedic verses. For the modern vedic

1. See - Rgveda ke Bhāṣyakara, Bhagavaddatta.

2. A.C. Kunhan Raja, Asyavāmiya hymn, edited with Ātmānanda’s and Sāyāna’s commentaries, Madras.

3. The authors like Mādhava, Bhatta Bāskara, Bharataśvāmi, Skandavāmi, Udgītha, Mādhava Bhatta, Kapardī Svāmī and others have been mentioned by Sāyāna. See - Bhagavaddata, p.73.
scholarship he has the historic value and his key to the vedic interpretation is indispensable. Maxmuller has expressed his great indebtedness to him in the following words:

"They (the scholars) hardly know, how much we all owe to his (Swaņa's) guidance in effecting our first entrance into the fortress of Vedic language and Vedic religion and how much even they, without being aware of it, are indebted to that Indian Eustathius."\(^1\)

Among the post-Sāyana Vedic Interpreters, the commentaries of Rāvana,\(^2\) Mūdgala and Chaturveda Svāmī\(^3\) are noteworthy. Modern Indian commentators of the Veda are very much influenced with their forerunners in this field.

Modern Interpreters of the Rgveda: Mystical School

Modern age of vedic scholarship starts with the advent of Swāmī Dayānanda who opened the glorious dimensions of vedic interpretations and awakened a wave of self-prestige among the Indian scholars.

(1) Swāmī Dayānanda

Swāmī Ji followed the ancient lines of vedic interpretation. He anchored on Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka, Upaniśada and Nirukta in general. He established Monothesim in the vedic verses. He professed the vedas has a source of all knowledge.

He tried to interpret the apauruṣeyā Veda in three main orthodox and traditional lines of meaning as Ādhibhautikā, Ādhidevīka and Ādhyātmikā. He also sought the figures of speech and the inventions of modern age. He gave glory to the vedic thought by his scholarship and also initiated a school of interpretation in contrast with the western scholarship which was professing polytheism and henotheism and, Indo-European historical and linguistic studies and textual exegeses. Śrī Śaṅkara wrote enormous volumes of commentaries of the Rgveda and Yajurveda. The Rgveda could not be completed but was followed by his successor like Jayadeva, Satyakāma, Rāja Rāma and other Ārya Samājist scholars. His Rgveda-dībāṣya-bhūmikā is the key to his vedic thoughts.

(2) Śrī Aurobindo

Another giant scholar and a mystic-Yogi Śrī Aurobindo is well-known for his mystic interpretation of the vedic verses. His psychological and yogic interpretations unfolds the symbols and the hidden meanings of the language of the Rgvedic mystics. His 'Hymns to the Mystic Fire' and the 'Secret of the Veda' are two main works on vedic interpretation. His 'Life Divine' is a magnum opus of his theories. The symbolic depth of the vedic language was presented by him. He too founded a school of interpretation and his successors followed his line of thought and studied the Rgveda. T.V. Kapali Shastri, A.E. Purani and others are few names.
3. **Pt. Madhu Sudan Ojha**

M.M. Madhusudan Ojha was a wonderful personality in Vedic scholarship. The spiritual and cosmogonic science of the Vedas was unveiled by him. He elucidated 10 (ten) doctrines of creation in light of modern thought. He was followed by Pt. Moti Lal Sharma, Pt. Giridhar Sharma Chaturvedi and Vasudeva Sharana Agrawal. Among these scholars Dr. Aggarwal presented a good deal of Vedic symbology in his lectures on Vedic interpretations. His works 'Sparks from Vedic fire', 'Thousand-syllabled Speech', 'Hymn of creation', Asvavāmyya Hymn' and 'Vedic Lectures', etc. present his symbolic and mystic theory of Vedic interpretation applied in light of modern scholarship. He also founded Vedic vidya in light of Vedas and Upaniṣads.

4. **A.K. Ooomar Swami**

In presentation of metaphysical glory of the Vedas, Dr. Ooomar Swami cannot be ignored. In comparison with the western philosophical concepts, he put the Vedic ideas before the modern scholarship. His work 'New approach to the Vedas' is well-known in the field of Vedic interpretation.

5. **Dr. Fateh Singh**

A well-known indologist for suggesting Vedic clues to Indus Valley seal-script and also writing a 'Philosophy of Vedas' following the symbolic and mystic school of Vedic thought, has also been working in the same field for last two decades. His works and lectures
unveil the symbolic and mystic wealth inherited in vedic verses. His "Vedon ki Mānavatā ko Denā" is a dissertation published from Veda Samsthāna, Delhi. He has given depth to the line of thought propounded by Swami Vidyānanda Videha. Swamiji's 'Vedāloka' is a fine interpretation of Vedic verses in light of social, yogic and universal humanistic harmony. 'Vedic Etymology' of Dr. Fateh Singh has earned a good repute.

6. T.G. Mainkar

A prominent work presented by T.G. Mainkar is 'Mysticism in the Rgveda'. This is probably the first on its subject. The author has given a very legitimate idea of the Rgvedic mysticism. But he has not delved deep into the ocean of Rgvedic symbols, the key to the Rgvedic mysticism and the Rgvedic mystic Sādhanā. But it is a pioneer work dealing with the concept critically and scientifically.

7. S.A. Dange

Dr. Dange has laboured on Vedic Symbolism specially on Sexual symbols. His works 'Sexual Symbolism in Vedic Rituals' and 'Pastoral Symbolism in the Rgveda' are important for a particular trend of vedic studies based on Symbolism.

Recent works on the Rgvedic mysticism and symbolism are presented as Ph.D. Theses and Dissertations in the Universities in India and abroad. Dr. Deepak Bhattacharya, Dr. B.D. Dhawan, B.A. Parab, Badri Prasad Pancholi and few others are new entrants in the mystic interpretation of the Vedic Verses.
The present thesis is an humble attempt to present the Rgveda on the international map of World mysticism with its specific character that is most relevant in this age. Dr. Mainkar's works is a guideline but this thesis finds its perfection in presenting the complete picture of the Rgvedic Mysticism and adding many more things first time to such a study. The systematic study of the concept is the main purpose of the present research.