Rik Samhita

SOCIAL CONDITION

The Caste System

This Indian ideal is revealed in the Purusa sūkta of the Veda in a striking image, which conceives human society as a living organic being with the four orders as the organic parts of Purusa's body - the Brāhmaṇa as his Mouth, the Kṣatriya as his Arms, the Vaiśya as his Thighs, and the Śūdra as his Feet.

Let us look deeply and closely at the meaning and significance of this ancient Indian image of the Rigvedic society. The Brāhmaṇa according to the Purusa Sūkta is the Mouth of the Purusa symbolising the Word of Knowledge; the Brāhmaṇa is the seer, prophet, sage and thinker who provides the creative vision, thought and ideals and values for the progressive evolution of society. Society will sink into darkness and inertia if there is not the constant influx of light into its fabric by the Brāhmaṇa; the effectuating power, strength and energy of the Kṣatriya are needed to drive the idea into the social structure; so the Kṣatriya is imaged as the arms of the Purusa symbolising dynamic energy. Then the Vaiśya is conceived as the thighs of the Purusa. The thigh is the middle portion and the balancing limb of the human body and symbolises the harmonising force in Man and Nature. The natural temperament of the Vaiśya is that of mutuality and harmony; his inherent capacity is a keen intuition into the rhythms of the universal vital force which expresses itself in society as a rhythmic movement of mutual interchange of physical and vital energies. Is this not the essential basis of the economic, social and commer-
cical life of man? This is the reason why the Vaiśya is considered as the right person to organise the economic and commercial life of the society. And, finally, the Śūdra who is imaged as the feet of the Puruṣa -feet symbolising a firm anchorage and stability in the material foundation and visible mobility and progress. Brāhmaṇa may provide the creative ideas, Kṣatriyas may provide the driving energy and will to these ideas and the Vaiśya may provide the organising rhythm and harmony, but these ideas cannot take a visible material form in society without the Śūdra’s patient labour, dedicated service and minute skill in the details of execution. Can there be a more holistic, organic and humanistic vision of society?

So the Vedic social order is in its original idea not just a religious superstition but based on a sound psychological theory of organisation. We may summarise the principles behind the Rgvedic social order as:

(i) Outer social organisation must be an expression of the inner spiritual organisation of the human being.
(ii) Social occupation of individuals must be a means for their spiritual evolution by providing them with a field of work, which is in harmony with their natural and inborn temperament, qualities and capacities.
(iii) For the smooth, healthy and progressive evolution of the society the ideal condition is that Brāhmaṇas preside over the institutions of higher knowledge and culture-education, research, science, religion, scholarship, creative thought, literature and the press; Kṣatriyas wield the instruments of power-politics, administration and defense; Vaiśya organise the economy, industry, commerce, finance, and trade and Śūdras form the labour-force.
Marriage and the Position of Women

To understand the history of any nation it is essential to know about the socio-economic state of the people living at that period. Women constitute a major part of society, and to know about their condition during the Rgvedic period we have to rely upon hymns which show us the position of women, their status in the family, their rights for property and their rights for religious freedom.

To get a glimpse of the position of women a few instances are quoted—

In hymn VIII, 31, where a couple are depicted washing and pressing soma rasa and plucking sacred grass, we get the glimpse of domestic life in Rgvedic times. Here the couple lives in harmony and help each other in their daily routine work. The wife shares the burden of her husband not only in domestic life but also participates in the religious ceremonies.

The position of women can also be judged by the way in which the birth of the girl child is received. She was not considered as inauspicious, but certainly the birth of a son was much desired, and prayed for. But the birth of a daughter was not condemned. So we presume that the position of women was not very low.

The position of a girl in society and the measure of freedom she enjoyed are evident from the description of ‘Sāmana’ contained in the various hymns of the Rgveda. Sāmana has different meanings according to different scholars but they all seem to agree that it was a gathering of people whether religious in nature or social, or festive. It drew the participation of both the sexes and
people took the opportunity to display their talents and impress others - very much a part of human nature. Young unmarried girls utilized these occasions to seek their life-partners. Women took extra care of their appearance in order to appear pleasant and alluring.

A faint picture of a maiden’s life is reflected in the characterization of the goddess “Uṣā” the goddess of dawn, who has been described in many places as a maiden. In the earliest Maṇḍala, Uṣā is described as a pure and simple phenomenon of nature, sweeping away the darkness of the night. In the course of time, however, human feelings were introduced into the picture of Uṣā, and Dawn came to be personified as a maiden. Hence in many places the touches given to the picture of Uṣā are directly drawn from the life of a young maiden of Rgvedic society. She is described as marching in heaven, not with the hesitation of a shy girl, but radiant in the pride of her beauty. She is often described as inspiring admiration in the minds of all that looked at her. Surya is mentioned as her lover and he is described as pursuing her.

In the description and eulogies of this goddess, certain other phases of a maiden’s life and of society are revealed; some of the verses refer to the love of young people. The word for a lover here is Jāra, which has not acquired the sinister meaning, which it came to be invested with in later times. It reflects a society where there was freedom for both the sexes prior to marriage. Marriage was a union of two people of full development. There is no reference to age or its limitations such as are found in later works. There is no mention of child marriage during this time. The existence of the word Amajur, which meant a girl who grew old at her father’s house, and the references to the attendance of maidens and young women at the Sāmana festival, as well as
the unmarried female ḍrisis such as Āpala-Ātreya suggest that matrimony was not compulsory for a woman and that no limitation had been placed on the age of marriage. Ghoṣā can be cited as an example of this condition, and in the two hymns attributed to her, she is depicted as being unmarried and living in her father’s house.

There are different views regarding the origin of the institution of marriage. Some state that monogamy was the original state, and other forms of marriage have evolved from it, whereas some others believe that monogamy is the result of a higher civilization. During the Rgvedic period monogamy was prevalent.

Of the various kinds of marriages that came to be developed and classified, the rudiments of three kinds can be traced to the Rgvedic age. One is the Kṣātra type of marriage, the other Svayamvara the third Prājāpatya. The evidence is so slight and so infrequent, that it cannot be said with certainty whether they were largely prevalent in the society or not. The only instance of the first is the stealing of Purumitra’s daughter by Vimada, an account of whose story can be gathered from I, 116, 1.

The second type can be traced from the hymn embodying the marriage ritual. “Soma was he who desired her hand, but Aswins were selected as the bridegrooms. Surya was given away by Savita to the lord whom she chose.”

This verse by itself does not clearly describe the position. In I, 16, 7 we find a reference to this incident where Sūrya is said to have ascended the car of the
Aswins after gaining the approval of all the gods. There is no mention of any kind of ritual accompanying these kinds of marriages.

In the Prajapati kind of marriage we come across some kind of ritual for the first time. It consists of 47 stanzas. From the close study of these rituals we come to know that the ceremony took place in the brides house. The ceremony begins with a prayer to god Viśvāvasu who is the protector of virgins. Viśvāvasu is requested to depart and protect another one, and leave the bride in her husband’s custody. The decorated bride was then presented at the place of ceremony with her friends and attendants. The ceremony which follows is, the bridegroom taking the bride’s right hand and uttering the verses which were in the form of an oath. It is from this ceremony that the husband is called hastagrabha.

There is nothing in this ceremony to indicate that the ceremony took place in the presence of fire. The ceremony ended with the common prayer to all the gods, to shower their blessings on the newly weds.

The wife had many privileges and duties and few verses bring out those very effectively. A wife was addressed by different words jāyā, jani and 
apnī, each indicating a special aspect of the wifely duties. jāyā has the special sense of a sharer of the husband’s affections, jani, the mother of children and patnī the one who participates in the religious ceremonies. These three words are to be found in the Rgvedic texts; whether they existed side by side or followed one another, whether they were meant for the same person or for different ones is not known. In later times especially in a kings household there existed many queens and the eldest one alone had
the right to participate in the religious ceremony as a wife, the rest of them could not offer oblations to the *agni*.

Besides this, a wife along with her husband had the responsibility of tending the household fire. A woman was given a very honorable position in her husband’s household, and considered as the queen. She could offer oblations to the fire, could participate in the sacrifice, she was looked upon as the guardian of all, the young and the old. The wife of the eldest son was responsible for smooth running of the household. She looked after not only the physical needs of the occupants, but also the happiness of the family members. She was the object of reverence and compassion. Husband and Wife made a unit and were aptly referred to as a *dāmpati*.

The legal position of a woman is not clear from the available data. Though we gather that the gifts received by the couple at the time of the marriage ceremony were taken to the future home of the couple, and they both enjoyed them, and it was never ‘both’ it was always ‘all’, the marriage between two people meant marriage between two families.

It appears that monogamy was the prevalent practice for most, with exceptions for in the case of kings. There are few exceptions showing otherwise.

"As yearning wives cleave to they’re yearning husbands."

In this the word wife is used in plural inferring the presence of many wives at the same time. But it could be taken as the description of many couples, because the word husband is also used in plural. It could be many couples or
many wives of one husband as in the king’s case as shown in the hymn.

“As one common husband doth his spouses”
“Like a king among his wives”
“Like rival wives on every side”
“Kuvaya’s (two) wives have been bathed in milk”

All these refers to a jealous wife practicing a spell over her rival with the help of a plant.

It is upto scholars to judge the genuineness of these verses, that is whether they were originally in the Veda or are later additions. This is not within my province to comment upon, because we all see what we want to see, and that is where subjectivity can actually damage the real work of truth.

There are very few references to the life of a widow. It was not a life of torture and humiliation, restrictions and austerities as in later times. Nor was there any custom of sati. X, 18, 8 and X, 40, 2 convey that a widow was taken charge of by the brother of the deceased, who could marry her with the permission of the elders. This custom was in vogue for a long time, at least in Rgvedic India. It is also said that since she had a right of inheritance, the brothers did not want their property to go to anybody else, which would, happen were she to marry somebody else. This would have been the start of the ritual of niyoga as in later times.

The position of women in society can be known from some of the hymns of the second Manḍala of the Rgveda ascribed to Paruchchapa, son of Devadāsi.
Children were generally named after the name or title of their father. But this exception to the rule indicates the existence of the Devadási system—women dedicated to the service of gods, a system, which can be traced up-to the Indo-European period.

The instances, in which women over stepped the code of moral law, as we understand it today, are frequent in the Rgveda. The way in which they are introduced in the hymns shows that they were not looked at in askance by society.

The goddess of Dawn, for instance, is often described as a woman dressed in variegated colours, like a dancing maid, appearing on the stage to exhibit her beauty. References to the existence of illegitimate love and the abundance of off spring are also to be found in the Rgveda. That there were women who were professional dancers is evident from the description of the dawn.

Womanhood in the Vedic period had its heights and depths, its brighter and darker aspects. Women were regarded with due respect in every sphere of life, and she was not subject to any merciless laws of an unsympathetic society. Even when she overstepped moral laws, she was judged with sympathy. There was no discrimination between male and female. It was a much happier time for women to take birth and progress in life; there was no field denied to a women on the basis of her gender.
RIŚI AND SOCIETY

To the great seer families of the Angirasah, Bhṛgus, Atharvans, Atris, Kaṇvas, Bharadvājas, Gotamas, Vaśiṣṭhas, Viśvāmitras, Manu, Yama, Bhṛhaspati, Ayasya, Uśanas, Dirghatamas, Kakṣivān, Kutsa, Agastyā, Dadhyaka, Kāśyapa, Vāmadeva, Śyavaśva, Sobhari, Jāmadagni, Madhucchandhas, Parāśara, Ghora, and Virūpa, whose names merge into the eternal and infinite.

The great sages of the late Vedic age and the kings who took such great effort to compile and preserve the Vedas:
Tura, Kavasheya, Yājñavalkya, Uddālaka Āruṇi, Śāṇḍilya, Aitareya, Kauśitaki, Pippalāda, Vyāsa.

Originally there was one family of seers, the Bhṛgvāṅgirasas. This divided into two groups, the Āṅgirasas and the Bhṛgus. The Āṅgirasas were led by Bhṛhaspati (Jupiter) and the Bhṛgus by Śukra (Venus).

ĀNGIRASAS:-

"Our fathers by their words broke the strong and stubborn places, the Angiras seers shattered the mountain rock with their cry; they made in us a path to the Great Heaven, they discovered the Day and the sun-world and the intuitive ray and the shining herds." 7
Their main fall consisted in the practice of black magic or the negative use of the occult.

In the first place, the image and ideal of riṣihood was so strongly impressed upon the collective consciousness of society that the riṣi has been held throughout the ages as a being worthy of the highest reverence. The word of the riṣi, in the past had always an authority greater that that of any other leader of the society. Even the law of the state was very often obeyed and accepted by the people only when it received sanction from the riṣi. Often, the word of the riṣi had an automatic authority as a law of the state. Many rapid changes in society were effected in certain important periods of Indian history, not by any struggle of the people or by any legislative process, but simply by what the riṣi said or advised.

There was an explicit recognition in the society of a distinction between the riṣi and the priest. The mark of the riṣi is that he has lived in fullness the human life and experienced the truth of man and the universe. He lives in the truth and hears the truth and reveals the truth and the limitations of time and space do not apply to him. At the highest, the riṣi has the knowledge of the past, of the present and the future, is in possession of trikālajñāna and trikāladṛṣṭi (the knowledge of the three times, past, present and future, and the perception of the three times). The riṣi has not only the knowledge but he also has the wisdom. The riṣīs not only a man of contemplation but also a warrior, a hero, capable of handling the most difficult situations of human life and giving a sure guidance. The riṣi is not a mere transmitter of tradition, but he can, if necessary break the tradition and establish the new order. The riṣi was not merely a scholar, often he was not a scholar at all, but he could com-
mand knowledge whenever needed. He was not a mental being, but one who had transcended the limitations of the mental consciousness and had a direct access to superior modes of knowledge and action. All this was recognized by the masses throughout Indian history, it is a significant fact that India has produced a long and unbroken line of rishi of various orders even among the rishi there are recognized gradations, and there is hardly a period in which there has not been at least a few rishi recognized and revered by the people.

ĀCĀRYAS

Such has been the concept of the rishi as the teacher in the Vedic period. And those who practised teaching but did not reach the stage of riṣihood were not accorded the highest reverence that is due to the guru. They were ācāryas, but not riṣis. The ācāryas were respected for their learning, for their proficiency, for their special standing in their respective disciplines of knowledge and art, but they received the highest reverence only when they rose to riṣihood. The rishi was the ideal even for the ācāryas, and every teacher has been enjoined in Indian culture to grow progressively into the image of the rishi.

For the seers and people of Vedic society education was the preparation for life and the considered life itself a process of education. They applied religious principles and truth of life to education. Religion was for them a life long endeavour to achieve and realize.

"Asato mā sad gamaya
Tamaso mā jyotir gamaya
Mṛtyormā amṛtam gamaya"
The ancient seers made a distinction between religion and Yoga. Religion is a matter of belief, rituals and ceremonies, even though it may involve an inner practice of moral and spiritual discipline. Yoga, on the other hand, focuses on psychology and on developing those psychological faculties and powers by which the highest Object of Knowledge can be directly experienced and finally united within one’s consciousness.

The ancient seers also made a distinction between Yoga and philosophy. Philosophy was restricted to mean intellectual reasoning about the ultimate source of things or an intellectual transcription of spiritual experiences. It was recognized that Yoga destroys the ego and its thinking, feeling and action so as to arrive at a new and heightened functioning by union with the higher self, the Ātman or the Brahman.

The most important idea governing the vedic religion was that of perfection, for developing the mind and soul of man. Vedic religion aimed at helping the individual to grow in the power and force of larger universal qualities.

We meet in the vedic Indian conception of best, Śreṣṭha, the most varied qualities. In the heart - benevolence, beneficence, love, compassion, altruism, long-suffering, liberality, kindliness, patience, character, courage, heroism, energy, loyalty, continence, truth, honour, justice, faith, obedience and reverence where these were due, but power too to govern and direct, a fine modesty and yet a strong independence and noble pride; in the mind - wisdom and intelligence and love of learning, knowledge of all the best thought, openness to poetry, art and beauty, capacity and skill in works; in the inner being piety, love of God, seeking after the highest, the spiritual turn; in social relations and
conduct a strict observance of all social obligations as father, son, husband, brother, kinsman, friend, ruler or subject, master or servant, prince or warrior or worker, king or sage. This ideal is clearly portrayed in the written records of Vedic India. It was the creation of an ideal and rational mind, both spirit-wise and worldly-wise, deeply spiritual, nobly ethical, firmly yet flexibly intellectual, scientific and aesthetic, patient and tolerant of life’s difficulties and human weakness, but arduous in self-discipline. Pursuit of truth was a part of the discipline of Brahmacarya; so also was the pursuit of kindliness, harmony and love, ahimsā. Practice of renunciation of the sense of personal possession of things and relations, renunciation of covetousness that leads to theft and collection of personal possessions, were also part of a pupil’s self-discipline. In addition, the pupil was expected to develop purity – purity of the body, purity of emotions and purity of thought.

That the life of the pupil in Vedic age was vigorous and rigorous cannot be doubted. But it must not be supposed that there was any absence of mirth and joy. In some of the accounts of life in the Āśramas there is ample evidence to show that the system of education was flexible. A good deal of individual attention was paid to every pupil. In Abhijñāna Śākuntalam, Kalidasa gives a beautiful portrayal of the Āśrama of Kaṇva, a great rishi revered by common people and kings alike. In this Āśrama there were both boys and girls, and while the atmosphere was surcharged with tapasyā, self-discipline, there was also fun and frolic among friends. No feeling of rigidity is portrayed in this beautiful drama. The teacher, the rishi, was the seer who had lived the fullness of life and had often led the life of a householder. In some accounts the rishi’s wife was also a rṣi in her own right and lived in the Āśrama along with her husband, providing material care for the pupils. The Āśram was a veritable
Gurukula, where the pupils were loved and cared for as members of the Guru's family.

The system of education provided ample opportunities for the pupil to experience the significance of free choice, particularly the choice between the good and the pleasant, šreyas and preyas. What was discouraged was personal indulgence or undisciplined preference; but the very object of education implied free choice at every important stage of a pupil's growth. In other words, freedom of choice and an increasing experience of spiritual freedom blended together in that system of vedic education.

During the Vedic and Upaniṣadic periods, and even later, there was an emphasis on the pursuit of an integral aim of life, which determined the discipline of integral education. Both the material and spiritual poles of being had their place in this system. There was also a clear recognition that the fullness of physical, vital and mental culture was necessary for arriving at spiritual perfection. And if we study the Yoga of the Veda in its inmost possibilities of spiritual manifestation in physical life. There was a secret knowledge that the highest light is contained in the darkest caves of the physical or the inconscient, and that one must descend into the depths of darkness to recover that highest light. In practical terms, this implied not rejection of physical and material life but an intensive cultivation and transformation of that life.

**purah-hita**

By the very hymn of the Rgveda and its opening verse the rṣis of the Rgveda are warning all the coming generations not to be misled by the surface mean-
ing of the *Rgveda*. This warning is conveyed by bringing in too many apparent contradictions in this terse verse of eight words. Sāyāna’s paraphrase is “I praise the deity called Agni, the “priest of sacrifice “. As the Padapātha has dissolved invariably, ‘*purah-hita*’, is the phrase meaning ‘placed in front’. Even Sāyāna the great ritualist has to state that Agni is *Purohita* Or Agni is ‘*purah-hita*’ because he is the foremost be factor. At one place (1.94.6) some terms, undoubtedly meaning particular priests, *Adhvaryu, Hotṛ, Prasastr, Potṛ* are mentioned along with ‘*purah-hita*’ and Agni is said to be all of these as well as ‘*purah-hita*’ by birth. Tremendous scholarship is expanded on the meanings and functions of these terms and officiates designated by them. Agni is, so surface meaning has to be discarded. We cannot escape by saying, ‘Agni being God can be everything’. The simplest explanation is that the functions performed by these officiates in ritual are fully symbolised in the *Rgveda* and are attributed to the divine will. He is *Adhvaryu*, the leader of the inner pilgrimage. He is the Hotṛ, calling the humans and reminding them that they are divine, calling divine powers to manifest themselves, therefore, *dīta* also. He, it is who directs the other functions. He is the purifier. And he is ‘*purah-hita*’. Sāyāna explains: “Agni is the producer of *yoga* by residing in *Adhvaryu* i.e. man (*manuṣye*) as the digestive fire or as the tutelary of the organ of speech.” Even though a confirmed ritualist, he had to give symbolic meaning to a term undoubtedly of ritual import primarily. He had to do the same with regard to other terms: *hotṛ, prasastr, potṛ*.

As for the crucial term ‘*purah-hita*’, Sāyāna gives two meanings which by no stretch of imagination or semantics, can mean ‘priest’. Sāyāna says: *Agni* is by birth i.e. naturally ‘*purah-hita*’ because he conducts himself favourably in the matters of *svarga* etc. Which are imminent in future (*purastāt*) or Agni is
'purah-hita' because in all rituals he is placed in the Āhavahiya in the eastern direction (purah). Now, the fire that is placed in Āhavahiya i.e. as the Āhavahiya fire in any ritual is the deity and not a priest at all. Having done this, as if as an afterthought, Śāyāna tries to accommodate the meaning 'priest' by restricting the meaning, unwarrantedly, to a particular functionary, viz. Brahmā, but he is Brahmā as he is Adhvaryu etc. Beargigne would have called this 'merry confusion'. All confusion vanishes in the thin air if Agni is understood to be what he is spiritually for the Rgveda rṣis, viz god-ward aspiration that rises in man and not a heap of burning, spluttering, smoking coals and faggots in which ghee is thrown.

Thus, the term 'purah-hita' had not lost its derivative sense in the Rgveda. J.Gonda, therefore, is justified in opining that 'purah-hita' holds in front of the person to be protected the strength of the potencies attaching to his own person as the shield. This is so when the term refers to humans appointed for the specific function. When divine powers like Agni (predominantly) are 'purah-hita', they do provide a protective shield, but more than that they become the spiritual pilgrims, walking in front of him.⁹

**Brahmacārin**

As is known, in Vedic India, the concept of the rṣi connoted the highest ideal of the teacher. The teacher was a Yojin, one who had realized or was a seeker of true knowledge that comes through the practice of Yoga, which was at that time a developing science and art of psychological concentration and perfection. The Vedic rṣis described their aspirations and victories in the form of *Mantra*. The Vedic rṣis refer to their 'forefathers' as great pathfinders, and
spoke of them in legends and myths in order to describe what they had achieved. For example, Parāśara says:

“Our fathers broke open the firm and strong places by their words, yea, the Angirasas broke open the hill by their cry; they made in us the path to the great heaven; they found the Day and Swar and vision and the luminous Cows.”

One of the most important legends of the Vīdās is the legend of the Āṅgirasas. Its theme is the spiritual life of man but, to make it concrete to themselves and yet veil its secrets from the unfit, the Vedic poets expressed it in poetic images drawn from outward life. The Āṅgirasas are pilgrims of the lights. They are those who travel towards the goal and attain to the highest, “they who travel to and attain that supreme treasure”. Their action is invoked for carrying the life of man farther towards its goal. The journey is principally the quest of the hidden light, but through the opposition of the powers of darkness it also becomes an expedition and a battle. The Āṅgirasas are heroes and fighters of that battle, ‘fighters for the cows or rays of light and knowledge’ (goṣu yodhāḥ). They discover the supraphysical power or being, the king of the kingdom of illumined intelligence (Swar), and they seek his help. This being is Indra, who marches with them (saranyubhiḥ), travellers on the path (sakhibhiḥ), comrades, seers and singers of the sacred chant, and fighters in the battle. Strengthened by them he conquers during the journey and reaches the goal. The journey proceeds along the path discovered by Saramā, the hound of heaven, the intuitive power that sees that path directly, the path of the Truth, rāṣya panthāḥ, the great path, mahās panthāḥ, which leads to the realms of the Truth.
The drinking of the *soma* wine as the means of strength, victory and attainment is one of the pervading figures of the *Veda*. The *soma* wine is the sweetness that comes flowing from the streams of the hidden upper world, it is that which flows in the seven waters, it is that with which the *ghṛta*, the clarified butter of the mystic sacrifice, is instinct with, it is the honeyed wave which rises out of the ocean of life. Such images, as pointed out by Sri Aurobindo, can have only one meaning:

"It is the divine delight hidden in all existence which once manifest, supports all life’s crowning activities and is the force that finally immortalizes the mortal, the amritam, ambrosia of the gods. ‘The Angirasas are distinguished by their seerhood, rishihood. They are the fathers who are full of the soma, they have the word and are increases of the Truth. The Angirasas have been described as those who speak rightly, masters of the Rik who place perfectly their thought; they are heroes who speak the truth and think with straightforwardness and thus are able to hold the seat of illumined knowledge.‘"\(^\text{12}\)

The Vedic Indian idea of the teacher is conceived in the light of the image of the Āngirasas, and it is for this reason that the teacher came to be placed as supreme. The verses we have presented here give only a few glimpses of the aspirations and achievements of the ancient teachers.

"The verses we have chosen below are hymns addressed to Agni, a word which is translated as power, strength, will, the god-will, or the Flame according to the context. The Veda speaks of Agni, the divine Flame, in a series of splendid and opulent images. He is the rapturous priest of the sacrifice, the young sage, the sleepless envoy, the ever-wakeful flame in the house, the
master of our gated dwelling-place, the beloved guest, the divine child, the pure and virgin god, the invincible warrior, the leader on the path who marches in front of the human peoples, the immortal in mortals, the worker established in man by the gods, the unobstructed in knowledge, the infinite in being, the vast and flaming sun of the Truth, the sustainer of the sacrifice and discerner of its steps, the divine perception, the Light, the vision, the firm foundation. We experience Agni as our upward aspiration, the will towards Truth, and the force that uplifts us from our limitations by renunciation, purification and right enjoyment. This aspiration, when it reaches its acme, is what brings to us the victory—deliverance from falsehood into Truth, from darkness into Light, from death into immortality.”

Amusements and Entertainment

To begin with we have a series of musical instruments. Chief among these are vāna, vāni, bākura, bhṛtni, vanśa, kṣoṇi, nāli, karkuri, āghati and so on. There is the dhamani along with a predicate derived from this word, dham, constantly employed with these instruments. Most of them are applied to the Maruts, who are said undoubtedly to be the best songsters. There are orchestral bands of musicians made up of these Maruts too. Maruts were formed themselves into various groups, or gaṇas presided over by Brhaspati, the Gaṇapati. It is having song as the accompaniment that Brhaspati clef the rock or cave and killed Vala only to let lose the waters and light. The significance of this activity is that music opens the doors to light and freedom. Music is one, of the Fine Arts and like all other arts it is the revelation of the Spirit in a sensuous garb. This is the meaning of the exploits, of Brhaspati, who is also the lord of prayer. The same music is also cultivated by the human beings.
They sing their songs in a sweet voice. The melody of Śāmagāna is proverbial. If music was not an integral part of Rgveda, then there is no meaning in the compilation of Sāmaveda which is nothing but Rgveda set to music. Further the refrains of Rgveda are mostly lyrical. They were mainly meant to be sung. For instance in the dialogue hymn of Vṛṣākapi there is a refrain, ‘Viśvasmād indra uttaraḥ’. Now Indra too is one of the characters in the dialogue. Then how can he too glorify himself. It is evident that something like the chorus or the orchestra is necessary to sign it. Moreover coming in dialogue it demands, music along with dance. In the field of dancing we have better information. Dancing, was popularized by, the courtesans who were till recent times were best dancers in India. Uṣās was the prototype of these dancers. Dance brings forth rhythm. We are informed that the universe sprang out of dance, the dance of the gods. “When the gods lived in the pool, when the world was yet water, then a pungent particle went forth, as if they were dancing so that Indra might be pleased by the offerings. The Soma pressing stones too danced like the black deer in the stall.

Men danced holding their bamboo sticks aloft in the air. Even the battle provoked Indra danced because of the excitement and the consequent emotion, emotions are expressed in dance. Women of high birth too on public occasions danced wearing white garments. A funeral too was celebrated with dance. That is dance enlivens the spirit of man and consoles him. Uṣās appears like a dancer:

“adhi peśāni vapate nṛtur ivāporṇute vakṣa usreva
varjaham” 14
She decorates herself like a dancer and lays bare her breast as the cow does its udder to the calf. This reveals the existence of professional dancers in vedic times.

It is these dancers and the courtesans that took to Dance and became in due course professional, dancers. The Vedic society was full of this art.

From the foregoing it is evident, that the Vedic poet considered that dance has its origins in emotion or excitement. It must be harmonious and rhythmic. It is a great enlivening force of life. It consoles us, ennobles us and purifies us. It is to be accompanied by music. Ornamentation and decoration too figure therein. The immediate effect of this art is delight.

Painting was recognised early as a Fine Art. The great, painters of the Vedic period were Dyāvāprithivi. They paint the universe with colours. Tvaśtar was the great architect of the gods who fashioned the thunderbolt for Indra and carved out a cup for the gods to drink Soma. This cup was divided into four by the equally great artists Ṙbhus. Amongst the best painter was Varuṇa who paints the sky with stars. The Āśvins too had something to do with painting. On the, whole we can say that we have ample references to dancing and poetry alone. But it does not mean that the vedic poets did not know of the other arts, We have only a fragment of Rgveda.

As regards poetry they present a very modern theory poetry. They considered the form and matter of the poem as inseparably united. The work of art is a creation. It is a revelation. It is the inspiring force that signs for the poets. It has been said:
"indro brahmendra ṛṣih" 

Inspiration was an essential feature of their poetic faith. The poem must be a new one. It must be simple, sweet and transporting for as Yāska said the vedic seers were "sāksāt kṛta dharmāṇa ṛṣayāḥ". It is as poets that they had the mystic insight into the reality of the unseen.

"Kaviḥ kāvyenāsi viśvavit" 

"Kaviḥ kavītvā divi rūpam āsajat." 

Science & Technology

ratha

The word 'ratha' commonly gives the impression that it is crude, clumsy sort of a vehicle, a cart or a chariot pulled by bullocks, usually seen in villages. It is because we have seen only such vehicles called ratha. We have developed an idea that in old times the vehicles were pulled by bullocks or horses and no better. The vedic word ratha does not mean what we think of them today. The etymological meaning of this word is:-

"ramate yasmin yena, vā sa rathah "

it states that any contrivance in which you ride or go about, is ratha. This gives a very wide scope to the meaning of this word. RgVeda addresses an airplane as ratha.
“khe rathya khe anasaḥ kha yugasya Śtakrato”

It means space vehicles, which have powerful driving engines, and well constructed by very widely experienced engineers.

There is guidance to construct various vehicles in hymns.

Few hymns are given here:

“Sa uttisṭha prehi pradrava rathaḥ
sucakraḥ supaviḥ sunābhiḥ”

The hymn clearly suggests making very fast vehicles, which have very strong and well joined hubs, spokes, and rims to obtain strong wheels. Hymn suggesting the manufacture of mechanical vehicles driven by motors or engines:

“pra vo vayum rathayujam purandhim
stomaiḥ kṛṇudhvam sakhāya”

The hymn suggests that one should manufacture mechanical vehicles by designing a powerful contrivance which can develop great propelling force and cojoin in to the vehicle which should also be strong to sustain load and various forces, exerted on it like friction, air pressure and weight etc.

RgVeda states:

“susamidho na avaha devān agne haviṣmate”

This suggests applying strong driving contrivances, driven by powerful force, well supplied and replenished by the combustion of various materials.
NAVIGATION

There are suggestions of making boats and even ocean going ships navigating by mechanical means. Here a few are given:

"nāvena pāraya"\textsuperscript{23}

"sindhau iva preraya nāvam arakam"\textsuperscript{24}

"Ārohat savitur nāvam etam
sadbhir orvebhir amati tarema"\textsuperscript{25}

Meaning, the manufacturer should construct and drive a ship, make it move by strong rotating propellers and cross over the sea.

Also

"ā no matienām yatam paraya gantum
yunjatham aśvina patham"\textsuperscript{26}

The expert and experienced engineers, for crossing over the seas should join good movable vehicles by strong, powerful and fast engines. From all of these we are able to say how much modern technical suggestions the Vedas impart, regarding manufacturing various types of mechanical vehicles the rathas.

Electricity and its Production

It is surprising that even some of the native Indologist have stated in their works that the early Āryans did not know how to make fire, they therefore, ate raw meat and did not know cultivation of land. Out of the four Vedas, two of them open with the word Agni, which even in Sanskrit means fire.
Describes in electromagnetic form as mundane electricity which is named Urvasi, because the inner planetary space is called Uru, which means medium covering all over and vaśi means that what pervades in it. So Urvasi is the electromagnetic like force that pervades in the whole cosmic space. Mythologically Urvasi had been presented as a heavenly dancing girl, because it flashes itself dancingly at different places in the form of lightening, which shines sometimes here and some times there, like a dancing girl. Newton is supposed to have detected this space electricity, while flying a kite on a wet day, and it was called a great discovery, but Vedic literature teaches us about it from infinite times. It is a pity that no one has worked in these vedic hymns. Urvasi has been described in Vedas at many places and also its functions. Taking a hint from Veda, in later periods many legends were spun around Urvasi as a dancing girl of gods in mundane.

It is mentioned in one of such legends in Purāṇa that for some reason Urvasi was cursed by gods and was sent down to earth for a short period, as a punishment. There was a great king Pururavasa, ruling on earth at that time, who seeing her, fell in love with her. They lived together for some time and at the end of the cursed period she went away. The king pined for her in her absence, and did lot of penance to get her back. The gods due to the great suffering of the king, sent Urvasi back for a short period again. This process was repeated a few times, but the king, lastly did a lot of hard penance to get her permanently with him. The gods ultimately decided to send her back but cunningly imposed two conditions for her permanent stay on earth. The conditions were simple and silly, namely that two sheep kids shall always be tied down to her bed on each side and secondly the king would never see her naked. The king accepted the conditions and she stayed. But gods managed to get, one of the
condition (of seeing her naked) neglected by the king, and she went back to heaven.

Through this allegory, a great scientific idea is suggested. The mundane electricity as in clouds, having electricity of thousands of volts, is wasted in the atmosphere as thunderbolt. But this electricity can be caught and held up on earth under two suggested conditions. Firstly, there must be a very strongly insulated bed to hold it with two pole, anode and cathode, as the sheep kids, bound to that storage. The second condition is that the conducting wires should not be poor insulation as to make the wire naked, otherwise the electricity shall run away or ‘earth’ itself. The modern scientists know these two facts, but to hold the electricity one has to have an insulated storage bed and secondly, because the electricity leaks out, if naked and touches the earth, it should be well protected by proper insulation. The allegory requires a lot of research (penance) by the scientists, how to milk or induce the electricity out of the clouds, and build an insulated bed from where to conduct it for various purposes.

Besides mastering the natural electricity there are very many hymns in Veda, which describe the generation, the attributes and various uses of electricity. Here are a few hymns for to gauge the Vedic teaching.

There is a hymn occurring twice in prl (2)-2-10, U,pr VI (1) (10-I) and once in Rgveda (VII-1-1), that teaches how to generate electricity just as we produce it today, by dynamos etc. The hymn is:
"Agnim naro didhitibhir aranyor
hasta chyuti janayata praśastam "

(nara) by the help of some driving agent (janayata) generate (praśastam agnim) properly controlled electric energy from (didhitibhiḥ) well bound, and held up (arānyā) rotating agents like dynamo etc.

The word used by Veda, (nara) means a driving agent. In Sanskrit nara means a man, the head of the family, who drives or conducts the family. This driving agent can be an engine, air, water a cycle wheel etc. They are all nara in the meaning of Veda. (Araṇie) means, agent that rotates, like dynamo or turbines, which generate electric energy and which can be (praśasta) well controlled in potential, speed and be made use of in various praiseworthy purposes. Electricity today also is being generated by this principle of rotating dynamos or turbines and the agents that rotate the dynamos are engines, motors, flowing water and could be air etc. all are called nara.

"Hiranyayi arani yam nirmanthata aśvinā
Tam te garbha havāmahe dāhme māse sūtaye "

It teaches:-
(Ashvena) by the help of powerful driving agents (nirmantha) constantly churn out (hiranyaye) irradiating energy through (arāṇe) rotating agents etc., (tam) which energy (havāmahe) can be made use of (sūtaye) for various productions and can be graded (dashamemasse) in measures of tens, in potentials. This hymn also mentions that electric energy can be generated by churning or
rotators, driven by various forceful agents. It is again a system, which is followed in generating electricity by various dynamos like agents today. It also states that its potential is to be measured in degree of tens and its multiples.

Again in Rgveda mentions a similar method for production of electricity.

“Sahasā yo mathito jāyate nṛbhiḥ
prthivyā adhisanavi”

(ya) The electric energy (jāyāte) can be generated by (sahasā) powerful well bound up (nṛbhi) various driving agents, (prthivyā) by using various materials. (Sānavi) This can be made to contribute in many ways and in many fields.

“Aranyoh nihito jātaveda garbham
iva subhṛto garbhiniḥbhiḥ”

In (jātaveda) many ways generated electric energy (nihita) is, as if, contained or hidden in (garbha) the womb of (aranya) the rotating agents and (subhṛto) should be well replenished and stored in condensers etc., (garbhiniḥbhiḥ) just as a pregnant mother replenishes and develops her fetus in her womb. So, electricity and magnetism was not unknown to ancient Indians and they made use of it for various purposes in different fields. There are countless such hymns pertaining to electricity and its functioning.

Namah Paramāraṣṭibhyah!
Rik Samhitā

REligious Condition

Introduction

It is little wonder that the Vedas have always been the bedrock of Indian civilisation. Yet, even in our approach to a scripture as vast and profound as the Veda, we have to be clear in our mind of one thing. Every scripture has two elements, one that is eternal and of perennial value, the other local and temporal that is secondary and derivative. The present study is an attempt to understand both these aspects - the one on the basis of the other. The mistake made by some modern thinkers is to understand the line of Vedic thought based on scant glimpses of Vedic civilisation. This process is necessarily imperfect, we have little or no means to really know what humanity was like in the rgvedic age. All derivations are grossly imperfect as far as outer details of life are concerned. And to believe that those temporally anterior to us were necessarily primitive savages is only a scientific superstition and an arrogant presumption. The logic of the finite is constantly outdone by the magic of the Infinite.

The progress of a civilisation cannot be judged by its outer achievements of space-craft, genetic research and nuclear bombs but by the extent to which the mind of the race understood itself. The uniqueness of man is that he can reflect upon himself. For in the last analysis, it is our self-understanding that matters. What we can and therefore should do is to try and understand the thought process, the feelings and aspirations, in short the general tenor of the collective mind during the rgvedic epoch. The outer details as well as the
inner life and thinking of people shows the extent of progress of any civilization. In any case, the task of discussing outer details of organisation is best left to anthropologist and archaeologists. The *Vedic* scholar is more concerned about the social thought, the attitude and approach of the people in the *rgvedic* age and it is towards this end that we turn to the *rṣi* for help and guidance. But who were these *rṣi* handing down this vast storehouse of knowledge down to us?

"Codayitri suṇṭānāṁ cetanti sumatināṁ
Yajnam dadhe sarasvati
Mahō arnah sarasvati pra cetayati ketunā
Dhiyo viśvā vi rājati"\(^1\)

"She, the impeller to happy truths, the awakener in consciousness to right mentalisings, *Sarasvati*, upholds the sacrifice. *Sarasvati*, by the perception awakens in consciousness the great flood (the vast movement of the *ṛtam*) and illumines entirely all the thoughts."

We know *Sarasvati* as the Deity of Knowledge. So it is natural that the words *dhiyavasuh* (one whose wealth consists of pure intellect), *dhiya visvah* (universal intellect), or words like *sumati* (right movements of thought) should be applicable to *Sarasvati*. The Word *dhi* (pure intellect) is well-known. But such an obvious meaning does not serve Sāyaṇa’s purpose. So he used *karma* (action), i.e., the action of showering as a synonym for *dhi*. In another place concerning *Mitra* and *Varuna* it has been said that these two gods made up such *dhi*, as is *ghrtacim*, literally “be smeared with *ghṛta*” (*dhiyam ghrtacim*
sadhanta). But according to the interpreter Sāyaṇa, the phrase dhiyam ghṛtacin means the rain that pours water! In some other context Sāyaṇa himself says that the root ghṛ may also mean, “to make something shine;”, so the plain meaning of dhiyam ghṛtacin is the “enlightened intellect”. But Sāyaṇa preferred to interpret the word ghṛta (literally clarified butter) as water and rains. If we refer to the context where Sāyaṇa explains ghṛta as “effulgence” it will be clearer to us that this effulgence is not even the physical external light; it refers to the inner illumination. There Agni (fire) has been called ‘one with a blazing front’; along with this adjective another adjective, namely manoyujah has also been used; it means that Agni has to be brought under control with the help of the mind. This very truth has been expressed elsewhere by the sage Viśvāmitra: “Kindling the Vaiśvānara fire with the aid of the mind.” Agni is kavi-kratu. Sāyaṇa himself has explained the word kratu as making or action. We would like to call it the power of action – the Greek kratos. So kavi-kratu would mean one endowed with the power of action, the creative genius. It is well known that the Kavi, the poet, is a creator. The Veda has applied the epithet kavi to all the gods as well as to a man who has attained or realised the divine knowledge. Agni kavi-kratuḥ means the dynamic power of vision. But this plain meaning amounts to a profound spiritual concept and ceases to be the fire with which we are familiar; that is why Sāyaṇa explains ‘Kavi’ as ‘Kranta’ – and ‘Kavi-kratu’ as the one who performs the action of sacrifice. We cite-another instance. Familiar to most of us – I speak of the Gayatri Mantra:

“Tat saviturvareṇyam

Bhargo devasya dhimahi,

dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt”
Let our intelligence dwell on the beloved light of that creative godhead, the Sun who is the Creator, so that he may endow us with the right intelligence. It is clearly stated in the Upaniṣad;

"Savitre satyaprasavāya"

"The Sun is the origin of truth."

This will serve as a typical example as to what extent quite a simple idea can be twisted. And it will enable us to appreciate what a terrible injustice the Veda has had to suffer at the hands of the commentators. The phrase amṛtasyavāṇi that is found in the Veda should convey to all the essence of the Veda. But do you know what meaning Sāyana has ascribed to it? He has translated amṛtasya vāṇi (the message of immortality) as the current of water. Can we be at one with him? In fact, what we want to say is that the Veda is the expression of Yogic realizations, spiritual experiences, the knowledge of the ultimate Truth. It is thus that we can discover the fundamental concept and the esoteric mystery of the Veda. If we follow this course we shall find how easily and consistently the meaning of the whole Veda unfolds itself and becomes crystal-clear.

Contrary to the interpretation of several scholars, the Rgvedic religion was not a religion of primitive and superstitious people ignorantly worshiping natural phenomenon. This erroneous interpretation, as we have discussed earlier, is the direct result of a misconstrued philology and psychology out of sympathy with a race albeit less rational, yet more intuitive in its thought and intelli-
gence. Rational knowledge with its heavy leaning on reductionist processes is only one form of knowing. The *Vedic* cosmology depended more on intuition and a direct vision of truth. The *ṛṣis* were seers who saw rather than thought out the truth. They themselves allude to the different levels of thought processes (the *havagvas* and *daśagvas*) which speak of a rare psychological sophistication and a subtle understanding of inner processes. They communicated this understanding through the symbolism of material life to ensure two levels of meaning. The outer meaning was for the common man and the inner for the initiate. Such an arrangement is well understandable in an age where there were no formal degrees for qualification. In a way this arrangement of knowledge was superior since the qualification was inner (the *adhikāra* for being a *śiṣya*, *ācārya*, *muni*, *ṛṣis*, etc.) rather than outer. Besides this, the *Vedic* *ṛṣis*, indeed saw the world as a symbol where physical phenomenon and processes clumsily translate deeper realities (the *jāgrat* and the *svapna jagat*). The very word ‘*jāgrat*‘ meant all that is in motion, the entire range of dynamic forces and processes. And behind the *jagat* is *Jagannāth* the Lord of the world the one who is the master of all the forces and processes and motions of energy. These beings and forces were the different gods (the *devas*, sons of light) and the titans (*vṛtras* and *dasyus* and *paṇis* who stole the light and perverted it or simply concealed it in the subconscious parts of nature). The *Rgvedic* religion therefore saw world events as a product of the tussle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. The whole stress of *Rgvedic* religion was therefore to increase in a human being the psychological forces of light and truth and harmony and beauty and love and strength and vastness and peace and purity and delight. This was the human journey and the real labour of man so well symbolized in the *Rgvedic* myths of *Kutsa* and *Indra*, *Nara-Nārāyaṇa*, and many others like the legend of Āṅgirasa and of
Agastya. These psychological forces had forms too and domains which they governed. These domains or kingdoms were again not merely earthly ones but supraphysical planes (the worlds of antarikṣaḥ, dyu, svar, Mahā, goloka, etc.) These names are confusing to mere grammarian, but are self-revealing to those who have diverted even a little effort to the inner journey.

The man who undertook this evolutionary journey, was an Ārya an inner psychological type derived from root the Ārya a warrior farmer. The Āryan therefore was not an invader from outside- he was rather an inner conqueror. This religion was a constant growth towards inner freedom, light, unity, and love. He was willing to pay the price for this conquest: the sacrifice of his lower nature and the battle with the forces of psychological darkness. It is this, which was symbolized in the cult of the sacrifice (yajña). The fire was the fire of aspiration into which the Vedic type of man offered his mind (ghṛtam), life energy and activities (samidhā and haviṣa) and his very bodily existence (the ‘pātra’ to be baked in fire) to the gods. In return he expected a growth in him of the force of light (go) and of strength and power (aśva) and of delight (soma). This interchange between gods and men through the sacrificial fire is the other distinctive feature of the Rgvedic religion. Even more, the cult of sacrificial fire had another deeper significance.

It is a strong sense of inner oneness (ekaṁ sad viprā bahudā vadanti) that makes the Rgvedic religion a universal one and at once contemporary in spirit even though ancient in form and practice. It is the one religion that unites Nature and God in a simple embrace, and regards this world as a līla of Vasudevā the inner Divine dwelling in all beings. It is the one religion which can unite mankind without blurring the distinctions necessary for the creative
play. For it believes with the monist that there is indeed One Reality, the Supreme Truth behind the entire creation. But unlike the monist, this one reality is not a fixed formula encrusted in one form of outer ritual or embodied in a simple human created form. The distinctions of oral and motivational religions dissolve here since the One Divine dwells in all beings, in each particle of creation.

"pūrṇamidāṁ pūrṇamadāḥ pūrṇatpūrṇamadacyate...."

It is the whole of Himself that is there. The different names and forms (nāma rūpa) at once conceal him and manifest him in varying degrees. It is this, which is the basis of the Vedic hierarchy and reconciles at once the formless God and the form of God, the person and the infinite Personality. It is one religion which has anticipated the discoveries of modern science through a divine intuition and can reunite earthly life with the perfection of the heavens. The riśis indeed spoke of marrying the earth and the heavens as their goal and despite climbing to the high beyond remained rooted in the dream of terrestrial perfection. It is also the one religion that is futuristic for it sees the world as a progressive unfolding of the Eternal (the sanātana Dharma) whose full flowering is not yet over and towards which the vedic riśis constantly aspired.

Thus, the Rgvedic religion is neither mono nor polytheistic nor even henotheistic. It is a unique religion that defies the definition within the confines of religion. It is rather a spiritual vision and aspiration in relation to which the outer ritual is more a symbolic act rather than the whole truth. Nor is it a cult for the faithful few. For the Vedantin sees the One Divine in all, in
the high and the low, in the saint and the sinner and even in the believer and
the non-believer. Therefore the Rgvedic religion sees hope in all. No one is
disregarded, in their capacities and unique psychological approach to the Truth.
The different schools of philosophy the Śad-Darśanas, included the atheistic
school of Cārvāka. It shows clearly that Vedic lore is not a fixed formalized
and institutionalized system as has been made out by later theologians who
could not comprehend a religion without fixed boundaries and limits. In fact,
the formal parts of the Vedic lore (the Karmakāṇḍa) can again be read in a
double sense. The outer act veiled the inner meaning as we have seen in the
case of yajña. This arrangement served a double purpose. The outer cer-
emony served to preserve the truth and pass it down the generations. But
equally, and more importantly, those who were ready for the inner meaning
could discard the outer formal aspects. In fact, the word religion in its usual
sense does not apply to the Rgvedic religion at all. Nor did the riṣis ever
attempt to give it such a name. What the riṣis were seeking after all was not
creation of a cult but rather they wanted solely to grasp the Truth behind
appearances. The Veda indeed means knowledge. They were much like sci-
entists in quest of Reality and its nature, only they used different and inner
means for this discovery, means that have been validated down the ages. For
indeed, almost every religion can find its secret parentage in the Vedas. Uni-
versal Compassion, the sense of brotherhood and equality are so much em-
phasized in certain religions, but there are like tributary of the mighty
Brahmaputra which is the Veda. The Vedas are like the silent Himālayas
whose contact with the seer gives birth to the sacred rivers of religion, or, like
the Ocean into which the greatest streams pour themselves. And indeed it has
so happened. Different religions came to India but got readily assimilated into
it. Equally, the greatest thoughts of modern humanity can trace its origin to

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the Veda.

It is this, which is the greatest strength and uniqueness of the Rgvedic religion. It sees no psychological barriers, for the riṣis of the Rgvedic age were in search of universal truths and laws which can be applied to all mankind. The only boundaries that came in the way of the Rgvedic religion becoming universal were geographical boundaries. And unlike certain other religions, the Rgvedic religion never attempted to force its way or course and convert others into its own faith. How could they do that when they had experienced the oneness of all creation and the one divine in all beings. If God dwells in all and is leading all of them, then who does one convert? Yes, mankind is to be awakened to this divine Presence but for that there are no external methods— an inner discipline is needed. It is a psychological change much more than an outer profession of creed or a formal adherence to a ritual cult that the Rgvedic religion insisted upon.

Take for instance these verses with a clear psychological bearing and a symbolic significance.

“To thee, O Flame! We day by day, in the night and in the light, come, carrying by our thought the obeisance.”

It is this insistence upon the inner life that makes the Rgvedic religion so very contemporary, nay, even futuristic. For while mankind has changed dramatically in his outer life, the inner life of man is very much the same. The internal conflicts that tear us between evil and good, the aspiration for a better and fuller life, the search for pure and unmixed Bliss, truth, Freedom and a secret sense of Immortality continue to return again and again upon mankind. That
is why it is impossible to put temporal boundaries on the Rgvedic realizations. For the Rgvedic age in the deepest and true sense never ceases to exist. It only recedes into the background temporarily but returns again, often with a greater collective force and for a larger good of mankind. That is what we indeed see happening today. There is an increasing interest in the East and the West towards Vedantic thought and the Vedantic Ideal. Even Science, that is supposed to be in opposition to the religion, has by its most modern discoveries come to appreciate the vedic truths even better. For have we not discovered the three forms of Agni concealed in matter, - the last being Surya-Agni (solar fire, or the nuclear power in an atom)? And have we not discovered that it is the senses that weave reality and that all creation is born out of a single seed? And these are just some of the vedic intuitions that apply to every age. More truths await rediscovery in the future. The Rgvedic religion therefore extends itself to the manifold outer activities of man in art and administration, in polity in science and psychology. Indeed every sphere of life can be reorganized along Vedantic lines for the Rgvedic religion has something to contribute as the essential seed in all domains of human efforts. That indeed it is so can be seen from the diverse richness of Indian art and music and dance and architecture and science and law and administration and politics and commerce. These were organized under the guidance of the vedic seers along Vedantic lines. The Rgvedic religion and Rgvedic society were not two different things but one extending into and penetrating the other. Of course like all human systems there have been deficiencies between the truth realised within and its outer practice. But still there is a lot that can benefit mankind and to that we now turn our gaze.
Central Concept of the Veda

The invocation of the gods as powers of the Truth to raise man out of the falsehoods of the mortal mind. The inner sacrifice and offering of what one has and is by the mortal to the Immortal as the means of Divine attainment. The central idea of the vedic ṛṣis was the transition of the human soul from a state of death to a state of immortality by the exchange of the falsehood for the Truth. This is the ‘great passage’ discovered by the Ancestors, the ancient ṛṣis.

Battle in the Veda

Truth and Light are synonymous or equivalent words in the thought of the Vedic seers just as their opposites, Darkness and Ignorance, are the battle of the Vedic Gods and Titans is a perpetual conflict between Day and Night for the possession of heaven and earth and for the liberation of the mind, life and body of the human being, from his mortality in to his immortality. It is also the conflict between Knowledge and Ignorance.

The Central Idea of the Rgveda

The hymns were written centered around the idea and forms of the sacrifice. They are mainly chants in praise of Natural-gods, Indra, Agni, Surya, Savirti, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Bhaga, the Aśvins, Ribhus, Maruts, Rudra, Viṣṇu, Sarasvati. The object of praying is to get in return gifts of cows, horses, gold and the other forms of wealth, victory over enemies, safety in travel, sons,
servants, prosperity, and every kind of material good fortune.
The outer sacrifice is symbolic of the inner sacrifice of self-giving and communion with the gods. These gods are powers, outwardly of physical, inwardly of psychical nature. For example Agni is outwardly the physical principle of fire, but inwardly the god of the psychic flame, force, will, tapas. Sūrya is outwardly the solar light, but inwardly the god of the illuminating revelatory knowledge. Soma outwardly the moon or wine but inwardly the god of the spiritual ecstasy and Ananda.

The principle psychical conception of the inner Vedic cult was the idea of the Satyam, Rtam, Brhat. The sacrifice was represented by giving oneself, in worship, battle or journey. The battle was between the Gods on one side and the Titans or destroyer on the opposite side. Here the term refers to the Titan Dasyus, Vytras, Paṇis, Rākṣasas who are later called Daityas and Asuras. It was a journey because the sacrifice traveled from earth to the heaven.

**Vedic Knowledge – Its Method**

To enter indirectly into the thoughts of the old riṣis, allow their words to sink into our souls, mould them and create their own. Obedience, in short, to the sruti was the theory the ancients themselves practiced.

“giram upaśrutim cara, stomam abhi svara, abhi gṛṇihī a ruva.”
The important part of *Rgvedic* spiritual culture is the inner philosophical and spiritual discipline or in other words the life pursued by the Vedic seers. And this Vedic religion contains a treasure of philosophical insights. But the key to the riddle of Vedic philosophy lies in the symbolism of the Gods. We will examine some of the fundamental religious concepts of the Vedic Gods.

The hymn of the *Rsi Vamadeva* to the All-Gods shows with a clear lucidity the high-aspiring hope which these Vedic deities were invoked to favour and bring to a happy culmination.
Sri Aurobindo translates it thus:

"Who of you is our deliverer? Who our defender? O Earth and Heaven, free from division, deliver us; rescue, O Mitra, O Varuṇa, from the mortality that is too strong for us! Who of you, O gods, confirms for us the supreme good in the march of the Sacrifice? They who illumine our high original seats, they who limitless in knowledge dawn out putting away our darkness, it is they, imperishable all-ordinainers, who order them for us; thinkers out of the Truth, they shine forth in light, achievers. I seek for my companion by the words illumining the flowing river Aditi, she who is the divine felicity. O Night and Dawn unconquerable, so do ye make it that both the days shall utterly protect us. Aryaman and Varuṇa distinguish the Path, and Agni lord of the impulsion, the path of the happy goal. O Indra and Viṣṇu, affirmed, extend to us perfectly the peace in which are the Powers, the mighty protection. I embrace the increasing of Parvata and of the Maruts and of Bhaga, our divine deliverer. May the master of things protect us from the sin of the world and Mitra keep us far from the sin against Mitra. Now shall one affirm the goddess Earth and heaven with the Dragon of the foundation by all the things desired that we must obtain; as if to possess that Ocean by their wide ranging they have uncovered the (hidden) rivers that are voiceful with the burning Light. May goddess Aditi with the gods protect us, may the divine Deliv-
erer deliver us, unremitting; let us not diminish the foundation of Mitra and Varuṇa and the high level of Agni. Agni is the lord of that vast substance of riches and perfected enjoyment; he lavishes on us those abundance. O Dawn, voice of the Truth, queen of plenitude, bring to us the many desirable boons, thou who hast in thee all their plenty. To that goal may Savitri, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, Indra, move aright for us with riches of our felicity."

The Vedic Gods (devah) have this double significance. Externally they are the forces and objects of Nature in the outer world (ādhidāivika). In the inner esoteric sense they are not just external images but the living realities and forces of the internal experiences of man’s soul ādhyātmika. Ātman is the Sanskrit word for the Divine dwelling within man.

Gods are all born of the Ātman; the Ātman is their chariot, Ātman is their horses, Ātman is the weapon, Ātman is the arrows, in short, Ātman is everything of the Gods.

Soma is brown, a youth active with a golden ornament; Agni is a luminous sage among the Gods; Tvāṣṭṛ the artisan holds the knife in his hand; Indra has his thunderbolt; Rudra a pointed weapon strong with his healing medicines; Pusan watches all the ways like a thief; Viṣṇu with his mighty strides makes the Gods joyous; the Aśvins set their feet along with Uṣas.

In general then, the hymns of the RgVeda had a double meaning for the rṣis. They had a practical relation to both action and experience (mantras with power) and understanding (symbols or images of knowledge). Thought and feeling were in harmony. In later chapters Knowledge (or consciousness) and
Power will be pointed out as the two integral aspects of the Supramental Truth-Consciousness acting in the world.

It is interesting to think that originally the word for a God carried the sense of an appeal or invocation to that particular aspect of the Divine. In other words, the very name of a God itself is a mantra, an actual practical means of getting in touch with the power symbolised by that God. The Vedic hymn as a whole was important not only for the meaning of the ideas conveyed but also for the vibration-force of the sound itself. In his research A.B. Purani has found that:

“A study of the proper names amply demonstrates that most of them were used in their root sense, adjectival sense or sense of the psychological function before they became hardened into names of individuals.”

For example, if the God of a particular verse is Indra then the ṛṣi is invoking the power (Śakti) of Indra. The vibration connected with that mantra (both the verse and the name of the God) corresponds with the manifestation of the Indra sakti, and therefore the ṛṣi is able to arouse and make use of the power of Indra through that Vedic verse. The name of the God Indra as an earlier, less rigid, vibrational adjective was the Indriyas usually translated as “the senses” or “that which is of Indra.” In this case Indra and Indriyas would be originally sound-vibrations associated with the power of the mind for coordinating the higher perceptual faculties. Later Indra became a distant individual God-figure with vast conceptual and psychological significance.

But still the Vedic sages have made a simple and effective classification of the ordinary mentality which we have to know before proceeding to the philoso-
phy of the gods. There is a verse in the *Rgveda* which is an invocation to the *Māruts*:

"ḥṛdatasto manasa dhiya"⁴

Thus ḫṛḍa heart, manas mind, and dhi intelligence are the three distinct religious faculties of man recognised by the Vedic sages. They correspond to the citta—manas—buddhi of the later development in Indian philosophy. In a hymn of the *RgVeda*, ṛṣi Vāmadeva describes in detail. The Vedic gods are the powers of the superconscious Self in man. The Vedic ḫṛḍa or heart corresponds somewhat to the concept of citta in Rājāyoga; it is not merely the emotional being; it is the first, the most primitive aspect of human consciousness.

This is especially true of the state of consciousness of humanity in the Vedic age. The heart of the humanity of the Vedic age was much less conscious and nearer to the subconscious than the heart of the modern man. The emotional being of Vedic man was probably stationed somewhere near the abdominal center, the mulādhāra for the Tantric and not exactly at the chest center which is the seat of conscious emotions. From this stuff of subconscious and instinctive mentality of ḫṛda evolves the conscious mentality, which is made of two layers: first, the sensational vital mind, manas, which is predominantly the mind of sensations, feelings and desires, and second, the thinking and discriminating intelligence buddhi. For the mind in general the Vedic sages used the word mati which includes the whole of mental consciousness, the sensational, emotional and thinking mind. Total illumination of this mental consciousness of man and all its faculties is a part of the Vedic ideal of self-perfection.
This is the Vedic classification of the ordinary human consciousness. But as we have seen already, the Vedic sages were not interested in a minute analysis of the psychology of the ordinary mind. Their primary interest was in that which is beyond the ordinary mentality; how to enter into this higher consciousness, and bring down its powers into the lower mentality and enter into the superconscious kingdom of the Gods.

**Indra and Agni:** The Illumined Mind and Will

Among the *RgVedic* gods, two gods stand out prominently and are invoked constantly by the Vedic *ṛṣis*; they are *Indra* and *Agni*. They are the constant inner helpers and companions of the Vedic *ṛṣis* in their mystic sacrifice. They are also constantly praised by the Vedic *ṛṣis* in their hymns as the pathfinders in their inner journey and guides and helpers of humanity as a whole. What is special about these two gods which makes them so important to the Vedic *ṛṣis*? The reason will become apparent when we examine the religious significance of these gods.

In a cosmic sense *Indra* is the lord of *Svarga*, Heaven. *Svarga* or Heaven in the Vedic cosmology is the plane or the world of divine Mind. Thus Indra represents the universal divine Mind. And *Agni*, in a general cosmic sense represents the universal divine Will, more specifically the will which guides the evolutionary march of Nature from matter to life and from life to mind and from mind to whatever spiritual destiny awaits the future of man. In a philosophical sense *Indra* and *Agni* represent respectively their corresponding self-expressions in the individual human consciousness as the illumined Intelligence and the aspiring Will in man.
For his first function, the Rsis pray to him in the following manner:

अस्मे प्रणः श्रवो बृहद्द गृहन्न संहस्तात्मम् ।
इन्द्र ता रीतिनीतिः। ॥१५२:८ ॥

"Dispose to us knowledge of the large, a brilliance of utterly forceful steadfastness and, Indra, and those rapturous masteries."

Indra drinks freely the Soma-wine symbolising the divine ambrosia of delight. Here the seeker prays to Indra:

अर्प्य पीत्वा शंकरे देवो वृजार्णामभवः।
इशो वाजेषु वृजनितम्। ॥१५४:८ ॥

Now we can see why the Vedic Rsis gave the highest importance to these two gods. As cosmic godheads, Indra and Agni are the two divine powers who are directly involved in guiding the earth and humanity in its evolutionary march. And in a philosophical sense, Indra and Agni represent the two higher faculties, which are indispensable for success in the inner spiritual path. For in religious life it is not the thought and feeling of the ordinary or surface rational and emotional being which can lead the way. It is only the higher and deeper Will of the subliminal being illumined by an intuitive intelligence which can give the right lead and direction in the spiritual path.
Again it is not thought or emotion but Will that ignites the flame of aspiration which burns upwards, keeps it alive and burning, shatters the obstacles and purifies the being by burning away all the dross. The Will is the priest of sacrifice who ignites the sacrificial fire in the altar of our heart. Can there be a more appropriate symbol for this aspiring flame and force of the Will, the inner Fire in man than Agni?

If Agni represents the higher aspiring will, Indra represents the higher intuitive intelligence or the illumined mind beyond the intellectual, emotional and sensational mentality. Indra is called the Gopati. The word Go, which means cow, was used consistently by Vedic sages to symbolise inner illumination. Cows in the Vedic symbolism represent the herds of light. Indra is gopati or the lord or of the herds of light which means the lord of inner illumination. As Sri Aurobindo explains the philosophical significance of Indra:

"The principle which Indra represents is the Mind-Power released from the limits and obscurations of the nervous consciousness. It is this enlightened Intelligence which fashions right or perfect forms of thought or of action not deformed by the nervous impulses, not hampered by the falsehoods of sense. The image presented is that of a cow giving abundantly its yield to the milker of the herds. The word go in Sanskrit means both a cow and a ray of light. This double sense is used by the Vedic symbolists to suggest a double figure which was to them more than a figure; for light, in their view, is not merely an apt poetic image of thought, but is actually its physical form. Thus, the herds that are milked are the Herds of the Sun, Surya, God of the revelatory and intuitive mind, or else of Dawn, the Goddess who manifests the solar glory. The riṣi desires from Indra a daily increase of this light of Truth by his fuller
activity pouring rays in a rich yield upon the receptive mind."

The Marúts: The Storm troopers of Indra
Another set of important members of the Vedic celestial family are the Marúts or the wind-gods. The Marúts are the gods of the mind. For wind or air in the ancient traditions represent the principle of mind, as water the vital force and earth the principle of matter. So the Marúts are the powers of the higher illumined intelligence. But unlike Indra who represents more the aspect of light, knowledge and illumination, the Marúts represent the force and energy aspect of the higher mind. We can say that the Marúts are the storm troopers of Indra. They are described as fierce and violent gods who forcefully break through obstacles in the path. The Marúts symbolise the forceful, energetic, adventurous and courageous thought, the Kṣatriya energy in the mind which breaks down mental blocks, demolishes old and established mental formations and has the courage to venture into unexplored vistas of knowledge. The Brāhmaṇa force of knowledge of Indra will be incomplete without the Kṣatriya energy of the Marúts.

These are the three gods Indra, Agni and the Marúts who play an important role in the life of the Vedic rṣis. There are other equally important gods like Surya who represents the supreme Light, the Lord of the supramental world of Truth, Right and the Vast, satyam, ṛtam and brhat, the goal of the RgVedic life. Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga representing the four spiritual powers or qualities of Sūrya; we have also the very frequently hymned goddess of the Dawn Uṣā representing the dawn of inner illumination. These gods have more of a spiritual than a philosophical significance; they come into prominence during the later and more advanced stages of the RgVedic life.
If the purity, infinity, strong royalty of *Varuna* are the grand framework and majestic substance of the divine being, *Mitra* is its beauty and perfection. To be infinite, pure, a king over oneself and a master-soul must be the nature of the divine man because so he shares in the nature of God. But the Vedic ideal is not satisfied simply with a large, unfulfilled plan of the divine image. There must be noble and rich contents in this vast continent; the many-roomed tenement of our being contained in *Varuna* has to be ordered by *Mitra* in the right harmony of its utility and its equipment.

The name *Mitra* comes from a root which meant originally to contain with compression and so to embrace and has given us the ordinary Sanskrit word for friend, *mitra*, as well as the archaic Vedic word for bliss, *mayas*. Upon the current sense of the word *mitra*, the Friend, the Vedic poets continually rely for their covert key to the psychological function of this apparent Sun-god. When the other deities and especially the brilliant *Agni* are spoken of as helpful friends to the human sacrificer, they are said to be *Mitra*, or to be like *Mitra*, or to become *Mitra*,- as we should now say, the divine Will-force, or whatever other power and personality of the godhead, reveals itself eventually as the divine Love. Therefore we must suppose that to these symbolists *Mitra* was essentially the Lord of Love, a divine friend, a kindly helper of men and immortals. The *Veda* speaks of him as the most beloved of the gods.
The word is derived from the root Ag which conveys the sense of feeling, movement, action, light. It is in the last sense of a brilliant or burning light that it gives us Agni, Fire. In the physical world he is the destroyer, and is also the purifier. He is the heat of life and creates the Rasa in things.

He is equally the Will in Prāṇa, the dynamic Life-energy. Our passions and obscure emotions is the smoke of Agni's burning. He is also the will in mind. He is born everywhere and dwells in everything that is why he is the Truth and Infinity. Agni is the Light as well as Force; He is the Immortal in mortals, He is the mediator between earth and heaven. It caries what we offer to the higher Powers and brings back in return their force and light and joy into our humanity.

"Agnir hotā kavikrataḥ, satyas citraśravastamaḥ;
devo devebhir ā gamat.
Yad aṅga dāśuše tvam, agne bhadrāṁ karīṣyasi;
tavet tat satyam aṅgiraḥ.
Upa tvāgne dive dive, doṣāvastar dhiyā vayam;
namo bharanta emasi.
Rājantaṁ adhvarāṇāṁ, gopāṁ ṛtasya didivim;
vardhamānam sve dame."

Among the four Vedas the Rgveda is pre-eminent. According to one tradition, Atharvaveda was a later addition. The Rgveda consists of a number of 10 Mandalas and each Mandala consists of a number of sūktas, and each one of the sūktas consists of a group of verses.
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 knowledge. Agni, like many other Vedic terms, has many meanings. It means fire, it means aspiration, force of consciousness, and an urge, mounting and burning askesis. As we study the Veda deeply, we find that Agni is not only a principle of physical fire, but it stands much more constantly and thoroughly for the psychological principle of will-Force. The Vedic poets make it abundantly clear that they regard the whole universe vibrant with a secret Will-Force, of which physical fire is only one outer manifestation. That can be used as a symbol in an attempt to bring the physical mind nearer to a sense and feeling for something that is deeply and profoundly 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 (aînânam) and delivers the pulsating Life-Force. It is that which causes growth, and which increases the power, and which forges and welds relations among vegetation, plants and herbs, and which pushes forward the greater forces of Intelligence, which forms and builds complex organizations in which Mind can be lodged and made to vibrate effectively so as to make the material form not only conscious but even self-conscious. Agni is in itself a conscious will that act as intermediary between the physical world (bhoor) and the intermediate worlds (bhoovar) and the higher worlds (swar). Agni is described also as the messenger, who has a free access to all, and can communicate the intended message to any destination.
The Vedic seers have discovered that *Agni* is not only an impersonal force of will or aspiration, it is also a being, a God, who presides over all the psychological activities that relate to will, force, action, energizing. *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 its hymns not only the nature of *Agni*, but provides the exact vibratory sounds by which a dynamic contact with the *Agni* can be established. For, according to the Vedic poets, a sound or a certain secret set of vibrations tunes exactly with the vibrations which 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 these secret sets of vibrations. They are the *mantras*, the inevitable rhythmic expressions bearing the vibratory sound packed with forces of realizations. These *mantras* invoke the deity and give the knowledge by which one can submit in admiration and devotion to the deity.

In *Rgveda* II.1.12 the *agni* is depicted in its beauty and vastness. Oh *Agni*, when Thou Art well borne by us Thou becomest the supreme growth and expansion of our being, all glory and beauty are in Thy desirable hue and Thy perfect vision. Oh Vastness, Thou art a multitude of riches spread out on every side.

It is thus clear that *Agni* is recognised by the Vedic seers as of fundamental importance in man’s journey. *Agni* is the aspiration, and as such it is the priest (*purohit*) that kindles the fire of aspiration and initiates man’s journey. *Agni* is the soul, which guides from within and illumines the path of the 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 the
matter. It is thus the secret power of physical transmutation.

Agni is finally described as increasing in his own home: We can no longer be satisfied with the explanation of the own home of Agni as the “fire-room” of the Vedic householder. We must seek in the Veda itself for another interpretation and we find it in the 75th hymn of the first Maṇḍala.

Yajā no mitrāvarunā, yajā devān ṛtam brihat;
agne yakṣi svam damam.⁸

“Sacrifice for us to Mitra and Varuṇa, sacrifice to the gods, to the Truth, the Vast; O Agni, sacrifice to thy own home.”

Sūrya, Light and Seer

The RgVedic rises out of the ancient Dawn with the sound of a thousand-voiced hymn lifted from the soul of man to an all-creative Truth and an all-illumining Light. Like all the leaders of the Path, she is a destroyer of enemies. While the Āryans wake in the dawn, the Paṇis, misers of Life and Light, sleep unawakened in the heart of the darkness where there are not her varied rays of knowledge. Like an armed hero He drives away our enemies and dispels the darkness like a charging war-horse. The daughter of heaven comes with the light driving away the enemy and all darkness. And this Light is the light of the world of Svar, the luminous world that Sūrya Savitri shall create for us. For because she is divine Dawn of the luminous paths, vast with the Truth and bringing to us its bright world, therefore the illumined adore her with their thoughts. Removing, as it were, a woven robe the bride of the Lord of beati-
tude by her perfect works and her perfect enjoyment creates Svār and spreads wide in her glory from the ends of heaven over all the earth; she attains to a high-uplifted strength in heaven establishing the honey of the sweetness and the three luminous regions of that world are made to shine out by the delightful vision of this great Dawn.

Therefore cries the ṛṣis, “Arise, life and force have come to us, the darkness has departed, the Light arrives; she has made empty the path for the journey of the Sun; thither let us go where the gods shall carry forward our being beyond these limits.”

This can also aptly described in the following sūktas.

प्रस्तर । युनोऽन सुमिष्टा । उत्खृष्टकर्मिः सूनो सहसों ददासात् ।
स मत्यं ज्ञातम मथिता रूपा चिम्मनेन । अवसा वि भावति ॥ ६५५ ॥

“When man gives to thee with the sacrifice and the fuel and with his spoken words and his chants of illumination, he becomes, O Immortal, O son of force, a mind of knowledge among mortals and shines with the riches and inspiration of Light.”

नेष्टर । तमो दुःखित रोचत चौहुद । देव्य उपसों । भानुरं ।
आ सूनों । व्रतस्तिष्ठदान् । व्रुषु मर्तेषु वृज्ञमा च पर्व्यन ॥ ४४१७ ॥

“The darkness was wounded and vanished, Heaven shone out, up arose the light of the divine Dawn, the Sun entered into the fields of the Vast, looking on the straight and crooked things in mortals.”
"For, he knows the place of the possession of the riches, he knows the ascending slope of heaven, he shall bring here the gods"

"He is the Priest of the call, it is he who travels between aware of his embassy, knowing the ascending slope of heaven. Throughout the Ṛgveda Agni is assigned several names depending on his several functions."

Aditi

Aditi, in the vedic pantheon, is a preeminent and principal godhead, magnificent and dominant among the entire range of gods and goddesses. In fact, she is the mother and sustainer of them all. She personifies absolute freedom. She creates all the gods as well as contains and supports them. She is the earth, heaven and the mid-region, antarikṣa, the mother of all the graded levels of creation.

Aditirdyauraditirantarikṣamaditir
Mātā sa pītā sa putraḥ
Viśve devā aditiḥ pañca janā aditir
Jātamaditirjanitvam.
Aditi is heaven and the mid-region; Aditi is the mother, the father and the son; Aditi is the gods and the five classes of men. Aditi is all that has been and that which shall be born.

Elsewhere aditi is described as the thousand-syllable word stationed in the highest heaven, through which emerges the universe. The omniscient and omnipotent eternal Vāk was born in the abode of the Cow, says the rṣis, with the shining forth of the first dawn.

Psychologically, she is the Supreme or infinite Consciousness, mother of the gods, in opposition to Danu or Diti, the divided consciousness, mother of Vṛtra and other Danavas, enemies of gods and of man in his progress.

The two words are derived from two entirely different roots “ad” and “di”. Aditi is the Light that is Mother of all things.

Sūrya is said to be the second husband of his mother Aditi. Aditi is hymned as the wife of the all-pervading Viṣṇu who in cosmic creation, is one of the sons of Aditi and younger brother of Indra.

The Aśvin

Their common character is that they are gods of enjoyment, seekers of honey; they are physicians, they bring back youth to the old, health to the sick, wholeness to the maimed. They are the great riders on the horse, full of the life-force. They move rapidly and wildly and irresistibly in an invincible and impregnable chariot, and bring happiness and satisfaction to men. In their swift-
ness they are like the mind, the wind and the birds. As they are associated with the Sun and his daughter sūrya they bring to men the light of the Truth and the honey of divine delight.

\[
\text{Pra vam dansansyasyasvinavocamasya} \\
\text{Patiḥ syām sugavaḥ suviraḥ,} \\
\text{Uta paśyannasnusvandirghamayurastam} \\
\text{Ivejjarimanam jagamyam.}^{11}
\]

"I have proclaimed your wondrous exploits, O Āśvins; may I become the master of this place having abundant cattle and good progeny, let me retain good vision and enjoy a long life-span, and may I enter old age as a master enters his own house."

\[
\text{"eṣa sya bhānurudiyarti yujyate rathah} \\
\text{parijmā divo asya sānavi,} \\
\text{priķsāso asminmithunā adhi trayo} \\
\text{dritisturiyo madhuno vi rapshate."}^{12}
\]

"Lo, that Light is rising up and the all-pervading car is being yoked on the high level of this Heaven; there are placed satisfying delights in their triple pairs and the fourth skin of honey overflows."


**Bhrugas**

The *Bhrugas* in the Veda are burning powers of the Sun, the Lord of Knowledge. They are the powers of the revelatory knowledge, the powers of the seer-wisdom.

**Dawn**

The daughter of Heaven, the face or power of *Aditi*, is the constant opening out of the divine light upon the human being. She is the coming of the spiritual riches, a light, a power, a new birth, the pouring out of the golden treasure of heaven into his earthly existence.

"Lo, the Dawn than which there is none higher, opens out full of delight in the Heavens; O Aśvins, the Vast of you I affirm, ye of whom the Ocean is the mother, accomplishes of the work who pass beyond through the mind to the felicities and, divine, find that substance by the thought.... O Lords of the Voyage, who mentalise the word, this is the dissolver of your thinking, — drink ye of the Soma violently; give to us that impulsion, O Aśvins which, luminous, carries us through beyond the darkness. Travel for us in your ship to reach the other shore beyond the thoughts of the mind. Yoke, O Aśvins, your car, — your car that becomes the vast oared ship in Heaven, in the crossing of its rivers. By the thought the powers of Delight have been yoked. The Soma-powers of delight in heaven are that substance in the place of the Waters. But where shall you cast aside the veil you have made to conceal you? Nay, Light has been born for the joy of the Soma; — the Sun that was dark has shot out its tongue towards the Gold. The path of the Truth has come into being by
which we shall travel to that other shore; seen is all the wide way through Heaven. The seeker grows in his being towards increasing manifestation after manifestation of the Aśvins when they find satisfaction in the ecstatic of the Soma. Do ye, dwelling (or, shining) in the all-luminous Sun, by the drinking of the Soma, by the Word come as creators of the bliss into our humanity. Dawn comes to us according to your glory when you pervade all our worlds and you win the Truths out of the Nights. Both together drink, O Aśvins, both together extend to us the peace by expanding whose wholeness remains untorn."

The Ṛbhus
The Ṛbhus, to begin with are human and imaged as human faculties, but by their total dedication to perfection in their works become divine powers; and this becomes possible because of their constant sacrifices and self-offering. Ṛbhus help Indra in raising man towards the divine status which they themselves have attained by their perfection in works. In fact they are powers of Light and the Truth born as human propensities urging to grow divine.

"Indrasya sūno savaso napato nu
Vascetyagriyam madaya."  

O Powerful sons of Indra, grandsons of never failing luminous strength, this sacrifice is for your celebration and exhilaration.

"Tam nemumrbhavo yathā namasva sāhutibhih."

O Āṅgiras, with the Ṛbhus associated in the invocation, direct the sacrifice towards yourself.

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ayam devāya janmane stomo viprebhirāsayā, 
akāri ratnadātamah.¹⁶

"Lo, the affirmation made for the divine Birth with the breath of the mouth by illuminated minds, that gives perfectly the bliss”

“ya indrāya vacoyujā tatakshurmanasā harī, 
Śamībhīrīyajñamāśata.”¹⁷

Even they who 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.

*Rudra*

He is the Violent One who leads the upward evolution of the conscious being; his force battles against all evil, smites the sinner and the enemy; he is the most terrible of the gods. But he is the supreme healer. He is the violent and the Merciful, the Mighty One. He lifts forcibly the creation upward, smites all that opposes, heals all that is wounded and suffers and complains and submits.

*Soma*

Soma  humanises gods even as it divines men and creates conditions for the manifestation of a higher dimension of the Divine. *Soma* at some point of time was considered to be a plant which produced the mystic-juice for performing
the vedic yajña. Later, it became the moon-god, and came to appear as mind in man. Its psychological significance is

“the intoxication or the Ananda, the divine delight of being, in flowing upon the mind from the supramental consciousness through the ṛtam or Truth.” 18

He is the supreme master of ecstasies, destroyer of the demon and the bestower of prosperity and power. Soma is the lord of heavenly light and delight, most sacred and surpassing. Glory to him, sings the ṛṣis, who nourishes the seeders with the wine of bliss, and repels all their enemies.

“Pavamāna svarvido jāyamāno bhavo mahān,
Indo viśvān abhidasi.”19

“O purifying Soma, O heavenly light, grant us all boons; as soon as born you wax great, O blissful lord, and overcome all adversaries.”

Soma is the Lord of the wine of delight, the wine of immortality. Like Agni he is found in the plants, the growth of earth, and in the waters. The Soma-wine used in the external sacrifice is the symbol of this wine of delight. It is pressed out by the pressing-stone (adri, grāvan ) which has a close symbolic connection with the thunderbolt, the formed electric force of Indra also called adri. The Vedic hymns speak of the luminous thunders of this stone as they speak of the light and sound of Indra’s weapon. Once pressed out as the delight of existence Soma has to be purified through a strainer (pavitra ) and through the strainer he streams in his purity into the wine bowl (camū ) in which he is brought to the sacrifice, or he is kept in jars (kalaśa ) for Indra’s drinking. Or,
sometimes, the symbol of the bowl or the jar is neglected and Soma is simply described as flowing in a river of delight to the seat of the Gods, to the home of Immortality. That these things are symbols is very clear in most of the hymns of the ninth Mandala which are all devoted to the God Soma. Here, for instance, the physical system of the human being is imaged as the jar of the Soma-wine and the strainer through which it is purified is said to be spread out in the seat of Heaven, divas pade. With this hymn I close this series of selected hymns from the RgVeda. My object has been to show in as brief a compass as possible the real functions of the Vedic gods, the sense of the symbols in which their cult is expressed, the nature of the sacrifice and its goal, explaining by actual examples the secret of the Veda. I have purposely selected a few brief and easy hymns, and avoided those which have a more striking depth, subtlety and complexity of thought and image, — alike those which bear the psychological sense plainly and fully on their surface and those which by their very strangeness and profundity reveal their true character of mystic and sacred poems. It is hoped that these examples will be sufficient to reveal our earliest and greatest poetry. By other translations of a more general character it will be shown that these ideas are not merely the highest thought of a few Rṣis, but the pervading sense and teaching of the RgVedic times.

We have then this rendering for the first three verses or RgVeda:

"O Riders of the Steed, 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; fullfillers of action, powers of the movement, come to them with your fierce speed on the path." 20

Uṣa

Uṣa, the daughter of heaven, is the goddess of the divine Dawn; she is the lady of light and spouse of Śūrya sāvitri. She unites in herself a vision of new creation, a hope of man’s golden destiny and the establishment on earth of the kingdom of the Sun of Truth.

"Yoṅkte gavamarunanananikam."21

She is the mother of radiance who creates the vision.

"Gavam janitryakṛta pra ketum." 22

It is she who removes the darkness and guides the days.

"Vyusa avo divija ṛtenaviskṛṇvana
Mahimānamagāt
Āpa druhaustama avarajustam
Āṅgirastama pathya ajigah."23

Uṣā, the daughter of Heaven, has rolled out; she comes manifesting her glory in accordance with the law. She scatters the enemy - darkness; she illumines the paths of all living beings.
Varuna

The oceanic, wide knowledge and wide might. Manifestation of God’s omniscience and omnipotence. He is the guardian of the truth. Earth and Heaven and all the worlds are only his province. Varuṇa represents, largeness, right and purity in man; everything that deviates from the right, from the purity recoils from his being and strikes the offender as the punishment of sin. So long as man does not attain to the largeness of Varuṇa, he is bound by the mind, life and body and is not free as a possessor and enjoyer.

Varuna Mirtra

“Mitram huve pūtadakṣam, varuṇam ca ṛṣādasam;
dhiyam ghritācīṃ sādhantā.
Ritena mitrāvarunāv, ritāvridhāv ritasprśā;
kratum brhantam āśāthe.
Kāvī no mitrāvarunā, tuvijātā urukṣayā;
dakṣam dadhāte apasam.”24

The Vedic Fire

“yasmai tvamāyajase sa sādhatyanarvā kṣeti dadhate suvīryam,
sa tūtāva nainamaśnotyamhatiragnē sakhyē mā ṛṣāmā vayam tava.”25

Who so ever makes him his priest of the sacrifice, reaches the perfection that is the fruit of his striving, a home on a height of being where there is no warring and no enemies; he confirms in himself an ample energy; he is safe in his strength, evil cannot lay its hand upon him.
Vāyu: the Master of the Life Energies

Master of Life. It is the dynamic energy called Prana, which is represented in man by the vital and nervous activities. It also contributes to the system the ensemble of nervous activities that in man are the support of the mental energies governed by Indra.

"1. Beautiful Vāyu, come, for thee these Soma drops have been prepared: Drink of them, hearken to our call.
2. Knowing the days, with Soma juice poured forth, the singers glorify Thee, Vāyu, with their hymns of praise.
3. Vāyu, thy penetrating stream goes forth unto the worshipper, Far-spreading for the Soma draught.
4. These, Indra- Vāyu, have been shed; come for our offered dainties' sake: The drops are yearning for you both.
5. Well do ye mark libations, ye Vāyu and Indra, rich in spoils So come ye swiftly hitherward.
8. Mitra and Varuṇa, through Law, lovers and cherishes of Law, Have ye obtained your might power
9. Our Sages, Mitra-Varuṇa, wide dominion, strong by birth, Vouchsafe us strength that worketh well."²⁶

"Yoke, O Vāyu, thy hundred brilliant steeds that shall increase, or else with thy thousand let thy chariot arrive in the mass of its force.

"Vāyo śatam harinām yuvasva poshyānām,
uta vā te sahasriṇo ratha ā yātu pājasā."²⁷
Bṛhaspati, Power of the Soul."

“yastastambha sahasā vi jmo antān bṛhaspatistriśadhashtho ravaṇa,
tam pratnāsa ṛṣayo didhyānāḥ puro viṛā dadhire mandrajivam.”28

He who established in his might the extremities of the earth, Bṛhaspati, in the triple world of our fulfilment, by his cry, on him the pristine sages meditated and, illumined, set him in their front with his tongue of ecstasy.

Yama

In the later ages Yama is the god of Death and has his own special world; but in the Rg Veda he seems to have been originally a form of the Sun, even as late as the Iṣa Upaniṣad we find the name used as an appellation of the Sun, - and then one of the twin children of the wide-shining Lord of Truth. He is the guardian of the Dharma, the law of the Truth, satyadharma, which is a condition of immortality, and therefore himself the guardian of immortality. His world is Svar, the world of immortality.

Dark Force

The other significant psychological symbol of the Vedas is the battle between the gods and the demons. This Vedic image like many others was grossly misinterpreted by Western scholars as the war between the gods of the fair-skinned and long-nosed Āryan invaders and the dark-skinned and snub-nosed Dravidians natives. We have a separate chapter dealing with this controversy regarding the Āryan invasion theory. But from the psychological point of view the meaning of the symbol is obvious; it is the “inner war without escape” in
which every spiritual seeker has to fight and conquer in order to realise the higher aim of life. The image of war in the *Vedas* is the symbol of this inner war between the evolutionary powers of Light in man and the universe—which aspire and work for truth, strength, harmony, unity and light—and the anti-evolutionary force of Darkness in man and the universe. The terms used by Vedic sages for these dark powers are revealing. They are called by different names like *Vala* which means coverer, *Vṛtra*, tearer, and *Panis* who are described as misers traffickers and robbers.

The names very clearly indicate the method of working of these hostile forces. The gods or the powers of light work by an increasing inner illumination, which gradually unveils the undivided unity and wholeness of Truth and creates a progressive harmony and unification of the divided and conflicting elements in our own being and the universe. The dark powers, *Valas, Vṛtras* and *Panis*, work by the reverse process of covering, dividing and tearing the wholeness and unity of life and being, and stealing the redeeming light of Truth from man.

*Panis*: The Robbers of the Light

The *Panis* are the robbers of Light, the plunderers of the divine plenitude and the devourers. The *ṛṣis* implores that they be slain and he be protected.

"Apa tyam vṛjinam ripum stenam
Agne duradhyam,
Davisthamasya satpate kṛdhi sugam."
Grāvānāḥ soma no hi kam
Sakhitvanaya vavasuh
Jahi nyatrinam paṇim vṛko hi saḥ."²⁹

“Cast away utterly far from us the enemy, the thief, the crooked one who places falsely the thought; O master of existence, make our path easy to travel. Slay the Paṇis for he is the wolf, that devours.”

The Dasyus are a class of beings who in the Vedic symbolism set in opposition to the Āryans gods and the Āryans seers and workers. The Dasyus who withhold or steal the cows are called the Paṇis, a word that seems originally to have meant doers, dealers or traffickers. They are the sons of the Inconscient.

Traffickers in the limited activities of the senses, they are the lords of the lower sense mentality. They steal from us the rays of the illumined consciousness, the brilliant herds of the sun and pen them in the caverns of the subconscious in the dense hill of matter.

This word also means “misers”. One finds that the Dasyus are not human fighters. The Paṇis is the robber who snatches away the cows of light, the horses of the swiftness, and the treasures of the divine plenitude, he is the wolf, the eater. Dasyus are Brahmadviṣah haters and destroyers of the word and obstructers of the godhead. They are also described variously as Susnā i.e. one who is impure
Vṛtra

Vṛtra is the father asura; he is the shoulder less serpent whose arms and legs have been cut off by Indra in the fierce encounter in which both use or maya. Vṛtra is the dragon of chaos and falsehood who encloses the waters; he is the dragon of inconscient matter out of which the universe is shaped by the gods.

"Gaha hitam guhyam gulhamapsv
Apivṛtam mayinam kṣiyantam,
Uto āpo dyam tastabhvansam
Ahannahim sura viryena."\(^{30}\)

By the mighty power, O Indra, thou hast destroyed the serpent demon hidden in the vave, lurking in the Inconscient, blocking the flow of the Waters and arresting the rains in the sky.

"Vṛtram yadindra savasavadhir
ahimaditsuryam divy
arihayo dṛśe."\(^{31}\)

When, O Indra, you had destroyed the malignant Vṛtra, you made the sun visible in the sky.

Vala

Vala is the cause and producer of darkness. He primarily prions the Cows. To restore the stolen cows the seeker has to perform the sacrifice. It is Sharmā who first discoveries the cows. She finds them out in the cave and shows the
way. Indra, then, supported by the Āngirasas breaks open the cave, and delivers the cows. Vala is called in the Veda as svavrstim.

“Ayamusanaḥ paryadrimusra
Ṛtabhitibhīrtayugyujananah,
Rujabarugnam vi valasya sanum
Paṇinṝvacobhirabhi yodhadindrah.”

Dasyus

The undivine being who does no sacrifice. He, who cannot speak the word or mentalise the superconscient Truth, hates the Word, the gods and the sacrifice and gives nothing of himself to the higher existences but robs and withholds his wealth from the Āryans. He is the thief, the enemy, the wolf, the devourer, the divider, the obstructer, the confiner. The dasyus are powers of darkness and ignorance who oppose the seeker of Truth and immortality. They are powers of Darkness, the sons of Danu or Diti the divided being.

There are two great divisions of the Dasyus, the Paṇis who intercept both the cows and the waters but are especially associated with the refusal of the cows, the Vṛtras who intercept the waters and the light, but are especially associated with withholding of the waters; all Dasyus without exception stand in the way of the ascent to Svar and oppose the acquisition of the wealth by the Āryan seers.
Goddesses

There are also female energies; for the Deva is both Male and Female and the gods also are either activating souls or passively executive and methodizing energies. Aditi, infinite Mother of the gods, comes first; and there are besides five powers of the Truth-consciousness, — Mahi or Bharati, the vast Word that brings us all things out of the divine source; Ila, the strong primal word of the Truth who gives us its active vision; Sarasvati, its streaming current and the word of its inspiration; Sarama, the Intuition, hound of heaven who descends into the cavern of the subconscient and finds there the concealed illuminations; Dakshina, whose function is to discern rightly, dispose the action and the offering and distribute in the sacrifice to each godhead its portion. Each god, too, has his female energy.

Conclusion

Indra is not, then, the only god who can break up the tenebrous cave and restore the lost radiance. There are other deities to whom various hymns make the attribution of this great victory. Usha is one of them, the divine Dawn, mother of these herds.

“True with the gods who are true, great with the gods who are great, sacrificial godhead with the gods sacrificial, she breaks open the strong places, she gives of the shining herds; the cows low towards the Dawn!”

Thus Agni is hymned as the supreme and universal Deva. “Thou O Agni, art Varuna when thou art born, thou becomest Mitra when thou art perfectly kin-
dled, 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 radiance (the cows, *gobhiḥ*) as *Mitra* well-established when thou makest of one mind the Lord of the house and his consort. For the glory of thee, O *Rudrā*, the *Maruts* brighten by their pressure that which is the brilliant and varied birth of thee. That which is the highest seat of *Vīṣṇu*, by that thou protectest the secret Name of the radiance (the cows, *gonām*). By thy glory, O *Deva*, the gods attain to right vision and holding in themselves all the multiplicity (of the vast manifestation) taste Immortality. Men set *Agni* in them as the priest of the sacrifice when desiring (the Immortality) they distribute (to the Gods) the self-expression of the being.... Do thou in thy knowledge extricate the Father and drive away (sin and darkness), he who is borne in us as thy Son, O Child of Force”. *Indra* is similarly hymned by *Vāmadeva* and in this eighty-third *sūkta* of the ninth *Maṇḍala*, as in several others, *Soma* too emerges from his special functions as the supreme Deity.

> “yasya trī pūrṇā madhunā padānyakṣīyamānā svadhayā madanti,  
> ya u tridhātu prithivīmuta dyāme ko dādhāra bhuvanāni viśvā.”

He whose three steps are full of the honey-wine and they perish not but have ecstasy by the self-harmony of their nature; yea, he being One holds the triple principle and earth and heaven also, even all the worlds.
The Deeper Secret

There is in the Veda the legend of the Cow and of the Āṅgirasa rṣis. This legend, brings out a deeper secret. The legend is simple. The Cows have been lost and the Āṅgirasa rṣis are in search of these lost Cows. The sacrifice is to be performed, and the Āṅgirasas have to chant the true word, the Mantra. Indra is invoked, Indra comes down to help with his thunderbolt in which the powers of all the gods is concentrated. Indra is the hero and fighter, and the battle is waged against certain dark powers, the Dasyus and the Paṇis. Saramā, the heavenly hound runs forward and finds out the Cows in the cave of the Paṇis. Indra strong with the Some-wine and the Āṅgirasas, the rṣis, who are his companions, follow the track, enter the cave or violently break open the strong places of the hill, defeat the Paṇis and drive upward the liberated herds. The conquest is effected, and though Indra has defeated the adversary with the help of the Āṅgirasas, yet he repeats the feat continually even in the present. He is constantly the seeker of the Cows, 'gaveśanā', and the restorer of the stolen wealth.

In order to understand the deeper secret of the Veda, this legend of the lost Cows and of the Āṅgirasa rṣis seems to promise a key. Now, the important word that is used for the Cow is go. But the word 'go' has also another meaning, viz., light, and it is this meaning which gives us the clue. The legend of the lost Cow is really about the lost light. The Vedic rṣis seem to suggest that there has occurred in the world process an event whereby the spiritual light has become obscured or has become concealed, and that this event has a relationship with actions of paṇis, the sons of darkness. This concealment of light does not amount to the cancellation of light. There is no destruction of
light. But there is nonetheless an effective covering of light. This covering is the Night of Darkness, but there is in it a secret light, which is the cherished possession of the forces of darkness, described as Dasyus and panic, of whom Vtrra and Vala are the chief leaders. This is the distinctive feature of the Vedic idea of evil and darkness. For in this view, evil and darkness have in their deepest profundities their own cure. It is true that according to the Veda, evil and darkness have to be combated, but the end of the combat is not merely the destruction of evil and darkness, but also the recovery and manifestation of the light which is concealed in them. In other words, the light is not only to be discovered and possessed at the supreme height, in Svar and in Surya Savitri. The discovery of the light in Surya Savitri is followed and completed by the discovery and uncovering of the light in the very depths of darkness, of Inconscient, tamas. It seems that the legend of the Anjirasa riśis, who are described in the Veda as pitarah, forefathers, is a parable of a momentous effort and war waged by them in their search of the light that is at the end of the tunnel of darkness. It has been affirmed through this legend that one meets in the process of this discovery an opposition from the armies of Vtra and Vala, but also help from the gods. The gods, according to this legend, can be invited by a sacrifice, which in its inner significance means the kindling of the inner aspiration, Agni. Each god can be invoked by a specific word, a Mantra, operated effectively in a war with the forces of darkness. Gods are thus partners of men in their struggle and battle. This battle has not only an upward movement but also a downward movement. Every step of conquest presents a gate leading to a further and a darker depth, requiring a greater and intense help of the gods.
Thus, there is in the *Veda* the affirmation of the possibility of the recovery of the Sun that is lying in the darkness. It is said that the Sun, ‘that Truth’, was found by *Indra* and the Āṅgirasa in the cave of the *Paṇis*. By the rending of their cave, the veda declares, the herds of the divine dawn which are the rays of the Sun of Truth ascend the hill of being and the Sun itself ascends to the luminous upper ocean of the divine existence, let over it by the thinkers like a ship over the waters till it reaches its father shore.

In simple terms the light is one, it is the same everywhere. It is not merely there above, it is also here below. In fact, the distinction between the above and below is itself a false distinction. It is true that ignorance is an effective phenomenon, but is also something which can be effectively destroyed, so that the light above and the light below are both realized as the one identical light. Spirit above is not the only light, Matter below is also that very light, and matter too can be pierced by which the light which is concealed in its bosom can be made manifest. This is the deep secret of the *Veda*, and it is that which is held as a promise for an eventual realization in the history of the earth.

**Important Lines and Thoughts**

*aham bhūmimdadāmaryam*

Creator declares: *I have bestowed this land to Āryas.*

*Kṛṇvanto Viśvāryam*

*Make the entire world noble.*

Ā no bhadrā katavo yanto viśvataḥ

*Let noble thoughts come from all sides.*
Mātā Bhūmiḥ putrō ham prthivyāḥ

_Earth is my mother, and I am her son._

Vasudeva kutumbubakam

_The entire universe is one family._

**Central teaching of the Vedic Rṣis**

**SAPANTA ṚTAM AMṚTAM**

To be born into the Truth, to grow in it, to ascend in spirit into the world of Truth and to live in it. To do so is to unite ourselves with the Godhead and to pass from mortality into immortality. This is the first and the central teaching of the Vedic mystics.

**ṚTASYA PANTHĀN**

_To find out the path to the Great Heaven, the path of Truth. It is something called the way of the gods. This is the second mystic doctrine._

**ṚTASYA DHĀRAḤ**

The spiritual life is a battle between the power of Light and the power of Darkness. That is why there is a call for the aid of the Gods to destroy the opposition of the powers of Darkness who conceal the Light and obstruct the flowing of the streams of Truth. So it is necessary to invoke the Gods by the inner sacrifice, to offer them the gifts of the sacrifice and by that the ascend to the goal.
EKAM SAT OR TAD EKAM

This is the central word of Upaniṣads. The Gods, the powers of Light and Truth are powers and names of the One. Each God is himself all the Gods or carries them in him. There is one Truth, tad satyam, and one bliss to which one must rise.

TAD EKAM, TAD SATYAM

The Only One is the goal of the Āryan mind; therefore the seers worshipped him in the image of Sun. That One, One existent. "Tad ekam, tat satyam" occurs constantly in the veda. ‘Tad Ekam’ the seers called by various names, Indra, Yama, Matariśvān.

ṚTAM

Ṛtam, which is almost the key word of any psychological interpretation, is rendered by Sāyana sometimes as "truth", more often the "sacrifice", occasionally in the sense of "water".

EKAM TAT OR TAT EKAM

That One the Veda already contains in the seed the Vedantic conception of the Brahman: It recognises the unknowable, a timeless Existence, the Supreme, moving in the movements of Gods. The Brahman is the unmoving, the oneness of the Gods (mahat devānām asuratvam ekam). It is the one Existent to whom the seers give different names-Indra, Agni.