PREFACE

Our present society succumbs easily to the influence of the materialistic western culture because it is ignorant about our invaluable scriptural heritage. A large number of Indians, brain-washed by the current trend of rationalism, consider the Vedas as incomprehensible, ritualistic and not really pertinent to the modern times. Inspite of having forgotten and neglected, the Vedas have survived these vast aeons of time, unchanged, still potent and regarded as one of the most important gospels of our culture. The obvious question then to be asked is whether the Vedas are truly irrelevant as claimed by the modern minds, or is there some deeper everlasting significance, which escapes us? I have tried to explore this, and the journey has taken me through various stages in the life of an ordinary Hindu and the evolution of his consciousness from materialistic to spiritual (fulfilling life, not negating life).

The Veda is the fountainhead of Indian civilization. Social, political and religious ideas of the Vedas are still in the air. Much research has been done in the last two centuries, both by Indian and Western scholars, to unravel the hidden treasures. There are, however, many difficulties that a serious student will encounter.

The project I have taken is very vast. It deals with socio and religious aspect of Vedic period. The vastness of the work has made the thesis very elaborate and created the difficulty in cohesiveness.

In the introductory chapter, the attempt has been made to understand two main difficulties: the first difficulty belongs to the sphere of philology (the study of language), the other to psychology (study of mind and behavior).
The second chapter describes the core of Vedic literature the Mantras, Samhitas, Brähmanaś, Āranyakas and the Upaniṣads. A critical but objective study of vedic literature has been undertaken.

The myth of Āryan Invasion has been exposed in the third chapter.

Who were the authors of the Rgvedic hymns? Their families? What is the symbolic interpretation of those hymns? Who were the Vedic Gods? What is their function? How far were the Vedic people developed in the study of Science and Technology? These and other queries of similar kind are raised and answered in the Fourth chapter. This chapter is the foundation of my work.

The fifth chapter deals with the later samhitās, which is contained, in the study of Atharvaveda, Sāmaveda, Yajurveda, Brähmana and Āranyakas texts.

The sixth chapter of this thesis describes the unbroken continuity between the Vedas and Upaniṣads. Upaniṣads express the Vedic spirit through the intellectual thinking mind in the form of a compact, luminous and intuitive thought. We have discussed how all the major Upaniṣads handle the idea of the fundamental problem of life. The third part of the sixth chapter deals with the relevance of Śūtras in the present society.

The last chapter sums up the ideas given in all the previous chapters and establish the importance of Vedas in the present day society, the importance of transforming our lives towards the realisation of The Divine.

After bibliography, a section for appendix has been presented.