

# Explaining the Gods



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### Foreword

To translate the Veda is to border upon an attempt at the impossible. For while a literal English rendering of the hymns of the ancient illuminates would be a falsification of their sense and spirit, a version which aimed at bringing all the real thought to the surface would be an interpretation rather than a translation. I have essayed a sort of middle path, - a free and plastic form which shall follow the turns of the original and yet admit a certain number of interpretative devices sufficient for the light of the Vedic truth to gleam out from its veil of symbol and image.

The Veda is a book of esoteric symbols, almost of spiritual formulae, which masks itself as a collection of ritual poems. The inner sense is psychological, universal, impersonal; the ostensible significance and the figures which were meant to reveal to the initiates what they concealed from the ignorant, are to all appearance crudely concrete, intimately personal, loosely occasional and allusive. To this lax outer garb the Vedic poets are sometimes careful to give a clear and coherent form quite other than the strenuous inner soul of their meaning; their language then becomes a cunningly woven mask for hidden truths. More often they are negligent of the disguise which they use, and when they thus rise above their instrument, a literal and external translation gives either a bizarre, unconnected sequence of sentences or a form of thought and speech strange and remote to the uninitiated intelligence. It is only when the figures and symbols are made to suggest their concealed equivalents that there emerges out of the obscurity a transparent and well-linked though close and subtle sequence of spiritual, psychological and religious ideas. It is this method of suggestion that I have attempted. It would have been possible to present a literal version on condition of following it up by pages of commentary charged with the real sense of the words and the hidden message of the thought. But this would be a cumbrous method useful only to the scholar and the careful student. Some form of the sense was needed which would compel only so much pause of the intelligence over its object as would be required by any mystic and figurative poetry. To bring about such a form it is not enough to translate the Sanskrit word into the English; the significant name, the conventional figure, the symbolic image have also frequently to be rendered.

If the images preferred by the ancient sages had been such as the modern mind could easily grasp, if the symbols of the sacrifice were still familiar to us and the names of the Vedic gods still carried their old psychological significance, - as the Greek or Latin names of classical deities, Aphrodite or Ares, Venus or Minerva, still bear their sense for a cultured European, - the device of an interpretative translation could have been avoided. But India followed another curve of literary and religious development than the culture of the West. Other names of Gods have replaced the Vedic names or else these have remained but with only an



external and diminished significance; the Vedic ritual, well-nigh obsolete, has lost its profound symbolic meaning; the pastoral, martial and rural images of the early Aryan poets sound remote, inappropriate, or, if natural and beautiful, yet void of the old deeper significance to the imagination of their descendants. Confronted with the stately hymns of the ancient dawn, we are conscious of a blank incomprehension. And we leave them as a prey to the ingenuity of the scholar who gropes for forced meanings amid obscurities and incongruities where the ancients bathed their souls in harmony and light.

A few examples will show what the gulf is and how it was created. When we write in a recognized and conventional imagery, "Laxmi and Saraswati refuse to dwell under one roof", the European reader may need a note or a translation of the phrase into its plain unfigured thought, "Wealth and Learning seldom go together", before he can understand, but every Indian already possesses the sense of the phrase. But if another culture and religion had replaced the Puranic and Brahminical and the old books and the Sanskrit language had ceased to be read and understood, this now familiar phrase would have been as meaningless in India as in Europe. Some infallible commentator or ingenious scholar might have been proving to our entire satisfaction that Laxmi was the Dawn and Saraswati the Night or that they were two irreconcilable chemical substances - or one knows not what else! It is something of this kind that has overtaken the ancient clarities of the Veda; the sense is dead and only the obscurity of a forgotten poetic form remains. Therefore when we read "Sarama by the path of the Truth discovers the herds", the mind is stopped and baffled by an unfamiliar language. It has to be translated to us, like the phrase about Saraswati to the European, into a plainer and less figured thought, "Intuition by the way of the Truth arrives at the hidden illuminations." Lacking the clue, we wander into ingenuities about the Dawn and the Sun or even imagine in Sarama, the hound of heaven, a mythological personification of some prehistoric embassy to Dravidian nations for the recovery of plundered cattle!

And the whole of the Veda is conceived in such images. The resultant obscurity and confusion for our intelligence is appalling and it will be at once evident how useless would be any translation of the hymns which did not strive at the same time to be an interpretation. "Dawn and Night," runs an impressive Vedic verse, "two sisters of different forms but of one mind, suckle the same divine Child." We understand nothing. Dawn and Night are of different forms, but why of one mind? And who is the child? If it is Agni, the fire, what are we to understand by Dawn and Night suckling alternately an infant fire? But the Vedic poet is not thinking of the physical night, the physical dawn or the physical fire. He is thinking of the alternations in his own spiritual experience, its constant rhythm of periods of a sublime and golden illumination and other periods of obscuration or relapse into normal unilluminated consciousness and he confesses the growth of the infant strength of the divine life within him through all these alternations and



even by the very force of their regular vicissitude. For in both states there works, hidden or manifest, the same divine intention and the same high-reaching labour. Thus an image which to the Vedic mind was clear, luminous, subtle, profound, striking, comes to us void of sense or poor and incoherent in sense and therefore affects us as inflated and pretentious, the ornament of an inapt and bungling literary craftsmanship.

So too when the seer of the house of Atri cries high to Agni, "O Agni, O Priest of the offering, loose from us the cords," he is using not only a natural, but a richly-laden image. He is thinking of the triple cord of mind, nerves and body by which the soul is bound as a victim in the great world-sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Purusha; he is thinking of the force of the divine Will already awakened and at work within him, a fiery and irresistible godhead that shall uplift his oppressed divinity and cleave asunder the cords of its bondage; he is thinking of the might of that growing Strength and inner Flame which receiving all that he has to offer carries it to its own distant and difficult home, to the high-seated Truth, to the Far, to the Secret, to the Supreme. All these associations are lost to us; our minds are obsessed by ideas of a ritual sacrifice and a material cord. We imagine perhaps the son of Atri bound as a victim in an ancient barbaric sacrifice, crying to the god of Fire for a physical deliverance!

A little later the seer sings of the increasing Flame, "Agni shines wide with vast Light and makes all things manifest by his greatness." What are we to understand? Shall we suppose that the singer released from his bonds, one knows not how, is admiring tranquilly the great blaze of the sacrificial fire which was to have devoured him and wonder at the rapid transitions of the primitive mind? It is only when we discover that the "vast Light" was a fixed phrase in the language of the Mystics for a wide, free and luminous consciousness beyond mind, that we seize the true burden of the Rik. The seer is hymning his release from the triple cord of mind, nerves and body and the uprising of the knowledge and will within him to a plane of consciousness where the real truth of all things transcendent of their apparent truth becomes at length manifest in a vast illumination.

But how are we to bring home this profound, natural and inner sense to the minds of others in a translation? It cannot be done unless we translate interpretatively, "O Will, O Priest of our sacrifice, loose from us the cords of our bondage" and "this Flame shines out with the vast Light of the Truth and makes all things manifest by its greatness." The reader will then at least be able to seize the spiritual nature of the cord, the light, the flame; he will feel something of the sense and spirit of this ancient chant.

The method I have employed will be clear from these instances. I have sometimes thrown aside the image, but not so as to demolish the whole



structure of the outer symbol or to substitute a commentary for a translation. It would have been an undesirable violence to strip from the richly jewelled garb of the Vedic thought its splendid ornaments or to replace it by a coarse garment of common speech. But I have endeavoured to make it everywhere as transparent as possible. I have rendered the significant names of the Gods, Kings, Rishis by their half-concealed significances, - otherwise the mask would have remained impenetrable; where the image was unessential, I have sometimes sacrificed it for its psychological equivalent; where it influenced the colour of the surrounding words, I have sought for some phrase which would keep the figure and yet bring out its whole complexity of sense. Sometimes I have even used a double translation. Thus for the Vedic word which means at once light or ray and cow, I have given according to the circumstances "Light" "the radiances" "the shining herds" "the radiant kine", "Light, mother of the herds". Soma, the ambrosial wine of the Veda, has been rendered "wine of delight" or "wine of immortality".

The Vedic language as a whole is a powerful and remarkable instrument, terse, knotted, virile, packed, and in its turns careful rather to follow the natural flight of the thought in the mind than to achieve the smooth and careful constructions and the clear transitions of a logical and rhetorical syntax. But translated without modification into English such a language would become harsh, abrupt and obscure, a dead and heavy movement with nothing in it of the morning vigour and puissant stride of the original. I have therefore preferred to throw it in translation into a mould more plastic and natural to the English tongue, using the constructions and devices of transition which best suit a modern speech while preserving the logic of the original thought; and I have never hesitated to reject the bald dictionary equivalent of the Vedic word for an ampler phrase in the English where that was necessary to bring out the full sense and associations. Throughout I have kept my eye fixed on my primary object - to make the inner sense of the Veda seizable by the cultured intelligence of today.

When all has been done, the aid of some amount of annotation remained still indispensable; but I have tried not to overburden the translation with notes or to indulge in overlong explanations. I have excluded everything scholastic. In the Veda there are numbers of words of a doubtful meaning, many locutions whose sense can only be speculatively or provisionally fixed, not a few verses capable of two or more different interpretations. But a translation of this kind is not the place for any record of the scholar's difficulties and hesitations. I have also prefixed a brief outline of the main Vedic thought indispensable to the reader who wishes to understand.

He will expect only to seize the general trend and surface suggestions of the Vedic hymns. More would be hardly possible. To enter into the very heart of the mystic doctrine, we must ourselves have trod the ancient paths and renewed the lost discipline, the forgotten experience. And which of us can hope to do that



with any depth or living power? Who in this Age of Iron shall have the strength to recover the light of the Forefathers or soar above the two enclosing firmaments of mind and body into their luminous empyrean of the infinite Truth? The Rishis sought to conceal their knowledge from the unfit, believing perhaps that the corruption of the best might lead to the worst and fearing to give the potent wine of the Soma to the child and the weakling. But whether their spirits still move among us looking for the rare Aryan soul in a mortality that is content to leave the radiant herds of the Sun for ever imprisoned in the darkling cave of the Lords of the sense-life or whether they await in their luminous world the hour when the Maruts shall again drive abroad and the Hound of Heaven shall once again speed down to us from beyond the rivers of Paradise and the seals of the heavenly waters shall be broken and the caverns shall be rent and the immortalizing wine shall be pressed out in the body of man by the electric thunderstones, their secret remains safe to them. Small is the chance that in an age which blinds our eyes with the transient glories of the outward life and deafens our ears with the victorious trumpets of a material and mechanical knowledge many shall cast more than the eye of an intellectual and imaginative curiosity on the passwords of their ancient discipline or seek to penetrate into the heart of their radiant mysteries. The secret of the Veda, even when it has been unveiled, remains still a secret.





## The Colloquy of Indra and Agastya (RV 1. 170)

*na nunamasti no kastadveda yadadbhutam*

*anyasya chittamabhi sancharenyamutadhitam vi nashyati*

### INDRA

1. It is not now, nor is It tomorrow; who knoweth that which is Supreme and Wonderful? It has motion and action in the consciousness of another, but when It is approached by the thought, It vanishes.

*kim na indra jighamsasi bhrataro marutastava*

*tebhih kalpasva sadhuya ma nah samarane vadhih*

### AGASTYA

2. Why dost thou seek to smite us, O Indra? The Maruts are thy brothers. By them accomplish perfection; slay us not in our struggle.

*kim no bhrataragastya sakha sannati manyase*

*vidma hi te yatha mano asmabhyaminna ditsasi*

*aram krnvantu verdi samagnimindhatam purah*

*tatramrtasya chetanam yajnam te tanavavahi*

### INDRA

3. Why, O my brother Agastya, art thou my friend, yet settest thy thought beyond me? For well do I know how to us thou wilt not to give thy mind.

4. Let them make ready the altar, let them set Agni in blaze in front. It is there, the awakening of the consciousness to Immortality. Let us two extend for thee thy effective sacrifice.



*tvamishishe vasupate vasunam tvam mitranam mitrapate dheshthah*

*indra tvam marudbhih sam vadasvadha prashana rtutha havishi.*

## AGASTYA

5. O Lord of substance over all substances of being, thou art the master in force! O Lord of Love over the powers of love, thou art the strongest to hold in status! Do thou, O Indra, agree with the Maruts, then enjoy the offerings in the ordered method of the Truth.

## COMMENTARY

The governing idea of the hymn belongs to a stage of spiritual progress when the human soul wishes by the sheer force of Thought to hasten forward beyond in order to reach prematurely the source of all things without full development of the being in all its progressive stages of conscious activity. The effort is opposed by the gods who preside over the universe of man and of the world and a violent struggle takes place in the human consciousness between the individual soul in its egoistic eagerness and the universal Powers which seek to fulfil the divine purpose of the Cosmos.

The seer Agastya at such a moment confronts in his inner experience Indra, Lord of Swar, the realm of pure intelligence, through which the ascending soul passes into the divine Truth.

Indra speaks first of that unknowable Source of things towards which Agastya is too impatiently striving. That is not to be found in Time. It does not exist in the actualities of the present, nor in the eventualities of the future. It neither is now nor becomes hereafter. Its being is beyond Space and Time and therefore in itself cannot be known by that which is in Space and Time. It manifests itself by its forms and activities in the consciousness of that which is not Itself and through those activities it is meant that It should be realised. But if one tries to approach it and study it in Itself, It disappears from the thought that would seize It and is as if It were not.

Agastya still does not understand why he is so violently opposed in a pursuit which is the eventual aim of all being and which all his thoughts and feelings demand. The Maruts are the powers of thought which by the strong and apparently destructive motion of their progress break down that which is established and help to the attainment of new formations. Indra, the Power of pure Intelligence, is their brother, kin to them in his nature although elder in being. He should by their means effect the perfection towards which Agastya is



striving and not turn enemy nor slay his friend in this terrible struggle towards the goal.

Indra replies that Agastya is his friend and brother, -- brother in the soul as children of one Supreme Being, friends as comrades in a common effort and one in the divine love that unites God and man, - and by this friendship and alliance has attained to the present stage in his progressive perfection; but now he treats Indra as an inferior Power and wishes to go beyond without fulfilling himself in the domain of the God. He seeks to divert his increased thought-powers towards his own object instead of delivering them up to the universal Intelligence so that it may enrich its realizations in humanity through Agastya and lead him forward by the way of the Truth. Let the egoistic endeavour cease, the great sacrifice be resumed, the flame of the divine Force, Agni, be kindled in front as head of the sacrifice and leader of the march. Indra and Agastya together, the universal Power and the human soul, will extend in harmony the effective inner action on the plane of the pure Intelligence so that it may enrich itself there and attain beyond. For it is precisely by the progressive surrender of the lower being to the divine activities that the limited and egoistic consciousness of the mortal awakens to the infinite and immortal state which is its goal.

Agastya accepts the will of the God and submits. He agrees to perceive and fulfill the Supreme in the activities of Indra. From his own realm Indra is supreme lord over the substances of being as manifested through the triple world of mind, life and body and has therefore power to dispose of its formations towards the fulfilment, in the movement of Nature, of the divine Truth that expresses itself in the universe, - supreme lord over love and delight manifested in the same triple world and has therefore power to fix those formations harmoniously in the status of Nature. Agastya gives up all that is realised in him into the hands of Indra, as offerings of the sacrifice, to be held by him in the fixed parts of Agastya's consciousness and directed in the motion towards fresh formations. Indra is once more to enter into friendly parley with the upward aspiring powers of Agastya's being and to establish agreement between the seer's thoughts and the illumination that comes to us through the pure Intelligence. That power will then enjoy in Agastya the offerings of the sacrifice according to the right order of things as formulated and governed by the Truth which is beyond.





## Indra, giver of Light (RV 1.4)

*surupa krtnumutayesudhughamiva goduhe; juhumasi dyavidyavi*

1. The fashioner of perfect forms, like a good yielder for the milker of the Herds, we call for increase from day to day.

*upa nah savana agahi somasya somapah piba; goda it revato madah*

2. Come to our Soma-offerings. O Soma-drinker, drink of the Soma-wine; the intoxication of thy rapture gives indeed the Light.

*atha te antamanam vidyama sumatinam; ma no ati khya agahi.*

3. Then may we know somewhat of thy uttermost right thinkings. Show not beyond us, come.

*parehi vigram astrtam indram prchchha vipashchitam; yas te sakhibhya a varam.*

4. Come over, question Indra of the clear-seeing mind, the vigorous the unoverthrown, who to thy comrades has brought the highest good.

*uta bruvantu no nido nih anyatah chit arata; dadhana Indra it duvah.*

5. And may the Restrainers say to us, "Nay, forth and strive on even in other fields, reposing on Indra your activity."

*uta nah subhagan arih vocheyuh dasma krshtayah; syama it indrasya sharmani.*

6. And may the fighters doers of the work, declare us entirely blessed, O achiever; may we abide in Indra's peace.



***emashumashave bhara yajnashriyam rrmadanam; patayan mandayat sakham.***

7. Intense for the intense bring though this glory of the sacrifice that intoxicates the man, carrying forward on the way Indra who gives joy to his friends.

***asya pitva shatakrato ghano vrtranam abhavah; pravo vajeshu vajinam.***

8. When though hadst drunk of this, O thou of the hundred activities, thou becamest a slayer of the coverers and protectedst the rich mind in its riches.

***tam tva vajeshu vajinam vajayamah shatakrato dhananamindra sataye.***

9. Thee thus rich in thy riches we enrich again, O Indra, O thou of the hundred activities, for the safe enjoyment of our havings.

***yo rayo avanirmahantsuparah sunvatah sakha tasma indraya gayata***

10. He who in his vastness is a continent of bliss, --the friend of the soma-giver and he carries him safely through,- to that Indra raise the chant.

#### SAYANA'S INTERPRETATION

1. The doer of ( works that have) a good shape, Indra, we call daily for protection as (one calls) for the cow-milker a good milch-cow.

2. Come to our (three) libations, drink the soma, O soma drinker; the intoxication of thee, the wealthy one, is indeed cow-giver.

3. Then (standing) among the intelligent people who are nearest to the, may we know thee. Do not (go) beyond us (and) manifest (thyself to others, but) come to us.



4. Come to him and question about me, the intelligent one, (whether I have praised him rightly or not), -- to the intelligent and unhurt Indra who gives to thy friends (the priests) the best wealth.
5. Let of us (i.e. our priests) speak (i.e. praise Indra),-and also, O you who censure, go out from here and from elsewhere too, - (our priests) doing service all about Indra.
6. O destroyer [of foes], may even our enemies speak of us as having good wealth, --men (i.e. our friends will say it of course) may we be in the peace (bestowed) by Indra.
7. Bring this Soma, that wealth of the sacrifice, the cause of exhilaration to men, (the Soma) that pervades (the three oblations) for Indra who pervades (the Soma-offering), that attains the rites and is friendly to (Indra) who gives joy (to the sacrificer).
8. Drinking of this, o thou of many actions, thou becamest a slayer of Vritras (i.e. enemies led by Vritra) and didst protect entirely the fighter in the fights.
9. O Indra of many actions, for enjoyment of riches we make thee abundant in food who art strong in the battles.
10. Sing to that Indra who is a protector of wealth, great, a good fulfiller (of works) and a friend of the sacrificer.

### COMMENTARY

Madhuchchandas, son of Vishvamitra, invokes in the Soma-offering Indra, the Master of luminous Mind, for increase in the Light. The symbols of the hymn are those of a collective sacrifice. Its subject is the growth of power and delight in Indra by the drinking of the Soma, the wine of immortality, and the consequent illumination of the human being so that the obstructions of his inner knowledge are removed and he attains to the utmost splendours of the liberated mind.

But what is this Soma, called sometimes *amṛta*, the Greek ambrosia, as if it were itself the substance of immortality? It is a figure for the divine Ananda, the principle of Bliss, from which, in the Vedic conception, the existence of Man, this mental being, is drawn. A secret Delight is the base of existence, its sustaining atmosphere and almost its substance. This Ananda is spoken of in the Taittiriya Upanishad as the ethereal atmosphere of bliss without which nothing could remain in being. In the Aitareya Upanishad Soma, as the lunar deity, is born from the sense-mind in the universal Purusha and, when man is produced,



expresses himself again as sense-mentality in the human being. For delight is the *raison detre* of sensation, or, we may say, sensation is an attempt to translate the secret delight of existence into the terms of physical consciousness. But in that consciousness, - often figured as *adri*, the hill, stone, or dense substance, - divine light and divine delight are both of them concealed and confined, and have to be released or extracted. Ananda is retained as *rasa*, the sap, the essence, in sense-objects and sense-experiences, in the plants and growths of the earth- nature, and among these growths the mystic Soma-plant symbolises that element behind all sense-activities and their enjoyments which yields the divine essence. It has to be distilled and, once distilled, purified and intensified until it has grown luminous, full of radiance, full of swiftness, full of energy, *gomat, asu, yuvaku*. It becomes the chief food of the gods who, called to the Soma-oblation, take their share of the enjoyment and in the strength of that ecstasy increase in man, exalt him to his highest possibilities, make him capable of the supreme experiences. Those who do not give the delight in them as an offering to the divine Powers, preferring to reserve themselves for the sense and the lower life, are adorers not of the gods, but of the Panis, lords of the sense-consciousness, traffickers in its limited activities, they who press not the mystic wine, give not the purified offering, raise not the sacred chant. It is the Panis who steal from us the Rays of the illumined consciousness, those brilliant herds of the sun, and pen them up in the cavern of the subconscious, in the dense hill of matter, corrupting even Sarama, the hound of heaven, the luminous intuition, when she comes on their track to the cave of the Panis.

But the conception of this hymn belongs to a stage in our inner progress when the Panis have been exceeded and even the Vritras or Coverers who seclude from us our full powers and activities and Vala who holds back the Light, are already over- passed. But there are even then powers that stand in the way of our perfection. They are the powers of limitation, the Confiners or Censurers, who, without altogether obscuring the rays or damming up the energies, yet seek by constantly affirming the deficiencies of our self-expression to limit its field and set up the progress realised as an obstacle to the progress to come. Madhuchchandanda calls upon Indra to remove the defect and affirm in its place an increasing illumination.

The principle which Indra represents is 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* means in Sanskrit 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 re 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 Rishi 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 activity of the pure illuminated Intelligence is sustained and increased by the conscious expression in us of the delight in divine existence and divine activity typified by the Soma-wine. As the Intelligence feeds upon it, its action becomes an intoxicated ecstasy of inspiration by which the rays come pouring abundantly and joyously in. "Light-giving indeed is the intoxication of thee in thy rapture."

For then it is possible, breaking beyond the limitations still insisted upon by the Confiners, to arrive at something of the finalities of knowledge possible to the illuminated intelligence. Right thoughts, right sensibilities, - this is the full sense of the word *sumati*; for the Vedic *mati* includes not only the thinking, but also the emotional parts of mentality. *Sumati* is a light in the thoughts; it is also a bright gladness and kindness in the soul. But in this passage the stress of the sense is upon right thought and not on the emotions. It is necessary, however, that the progress in right thinking should commence in the field of consciousness already attained; there must not be flashes and dazzling manifestations which by going beyond Our Powers elude expression in right form and confuse the receptive mind. Indra must be not only illuminer, but a fashioner of right thought- formations, *surupakrtnu*.

The Rishi, next, turning to a comrade in the collective Yoga, or, perhaps, addressing his Own mind, encourages him or it to pass beyond the Obstruction of the adverse suggestions opposed to him and by questioning the divine Intelligence progress to the highest good which it has already given to others. For it is that Intelligence which clearly discerns and can solve or remove all still-existing confusion and obscuration. Swift of movement, intense, energetic, it does not by its energy stumble in its paths like the impulses of the nervous consciousness. Or perhaps it is rather meant that owing to its invincible energy it does not succumb to the attacks whether of the Coverers or of the powers that limit.

Next are described the results towards which the seer aspires. With this fuller light opening on to the finalities of mental knowledge the powers of Limitation will be satisfied and of them- selves will withdraw, consenting to the farther advance and to the new luminous activities. They will say, in effect, "Yes, now you have the right which we were hitherto justified in denying. Not only in the fields won already, but in other and untrod provinces pursue then your conquering march. Repose this action wholly on the divine Intelligence', not upon your lower capacities. For it is the greater surrender which gives you the greater right."



The word *arata*, move or strive, like its congeners *ari*, *arya*, *arya*, *arata*, *arani*, expresses the central idea of the Veda. The root *ar* indicates always a movement of effort or of struggle or a state of surpassing height or excellence; it is applied to rowing, ploughing, fighting, lifting, climbing. The Aryan then is the man who seeks to fulfil himself by the Vedic action, the internal and external *karma or apas*, which is of the nature of a sacrifice to the gods. But it is also imaged as a journey, a march, a battle, a climbing upwards. The Aryan man labours towards heights, fights his way on in a march which is at once a progress forward and an ascent. That is his Aryahood, his *arete*, virtue, to use a Greek word derived from the same root *Arata*, with the rest of the phrase, might be translated, "Out and push forward in other fields".

The idea is taken up again, in the subtle Vedic fashion of thought-connections by word-echoes, with the *arih krstayah* of the next verse. These are, I think, not the Aryan nations on earth, although that sense too is possible when the idea is that of a collective or national Yoga, but the powers that help man in his ascent, his spiritual kindred bound to him as comrades, allies, brothers, yoke-fellows (*sakhayah*, *yujah*, *jamayah*), for his aspiration is their aspiration and by his completeness they are fulfilled. As the Restrainers are satisfied and give way, so they too, satisfied, must affirm finally their task accomplished by the fullness of human bliss, when the soul shall rest in the peace of Indra that comes with the Light, the peace of a perfected mentality standing as upon heights of consummated consciousness and Beatitude.

Therefore is the divine Ananda poured out to be made swift and intense in the system and offered to Indra for the support of his intensities. For it is this profound joy manifest in the inner sensations that gives the ecstasy by which the man or the God grows strong. The divine Intelligence will be able to move forward in the journey yet incompleting and will return the gift by fresh powers of the Beatitude descending upon the friend of God.

For it was in this strength that the Divine Mind in man destroyed all that opposed, as coverers or besiegers, its hundred fold activities of will and of thought; in this strength is protected afterwards the rich and various possessions already won in past battles from the *atris* and *dasyus*, devourers and plunderers of our gains.

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## Explaining the Gods

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Although, continues Madhuchchhandas, that Intelligence is already thus rich and variously stored we seek to increase yet more its force of abundance, removing the Restrainers as well as the Vritras, so that we may have the full and assured possession of our riches.

For this Light is, in its entire greatness free from limitation, a continent of felicity; this Power is that which befriends the human soul and carries it safe through the battle, to the end of its march, to the summit of its aspiration.





## Indra and the Thought-Forces (RV 1.171)

*prati va ena namasahamemi suktena bhikshe sumati turanam*

*rranata maruto vedyabhirni helo dhatta vi muchadhvamashvan*

1. To you I come with this obeisance, by the perfect word I seek right mentality from the swift in the passage. Take delight, O Maruts, in the things of knowledge, lay aside your wrath, unyoke your steeds.

*esha vah stomo maruto namasvanhrda tashto manasa dhayi devah*

*upema yata manasa jushana yuyam hi shtha namasa idvrddhasah*

2. Lo, the hymn of your affirmation, O Maruts; it is fraught with my obeisance, it was framed by the heart, it was established by the mind, O ye gods. Approach these my words and embrace them with the mind; for of submission are you the increasers.

*stutaso no maruto mrlayantuta stuto maghava shambhavishtah*

*urdhvah nah santu komyavananyahani vishva maruto jigisha.*

3. Affirmed let the Maruts be benign to us, affirmed the lord of plenitude has become wholly creative of felicity. Upward may our desirable delights be uplifted, O Maruts, upward all our days by the will towards victory.

*asmadaham tavishadishamana indradbhiya maruto rejamanah*

*yushmabhyam havya nishitanyasantanyare chakrma mrlta nah*

4. I, mastered by this mighty one, trembling with the fear of Indra, O Maruts, put far away the offerings that for you had been made intense. Let your grace be upon us.

*yena manasashchitayanta usra vyushtishu shavasa shashvatinam*



*sa no marudbhirvrshabha shravo dha ugra ugrebhih sthavirah sahodah*

5. Thou by whom the movements of the mind grow conscient and brilliant in our mornings through the bright power of the continuous Dawns, O Bull of the herd establish by the Maruts inspired knowledge in us—by them in their energy thou energetic, steadfast, a giver of might.

*tvam pahindra sahiyaso nrbhava marudbhiravayatahelah*

*supraketebhih sasahirdadhano vidyame sham vrjanam jiradanum.*

6. Do thou, O Indra, protect the Powers in their increased might; put away thy wrath against the Maruts, by them in thy forcefulness upheld, who have right perceptions. May we find the strong impulsion that shall break swiftly through.

**COMMENTARY**

A Sequel to the colloquy of Indra and Agastya, this Sukta is Agastya's hymn of propitiation to the Maruts whose sacrifice he had interrupted at the bidding of the mightier deity. Less directly, it is connected in thought with the 165th hymn of the (First) Mandala, the colloquy of Indra and the Maruts, in which the supremacy of the Lord of Heaven is declared and these lesser shining hosts are admitted as subordinate powers who impart to men their impulsion towards the high truths which belong to Indra. "Giving the energy of your breath to their thoughts of varied light, become in them impellers to the knowledge of my truths. Whensoever the doer becomes active for the work and, the intelligence of the thinker creates us in him, O Maruts, move surely towards that illumined seer", - such is the closing word of the colloquy, the final injunction of Indra to the inferior deities.

These verses fix clearly enough the psychological function of the Maruts. They are not properly gods of thought, rather gods of energy; still, it is in the mind that their energies become effective. To the uninstructed Aryan worshipper, the Maruts were powers of wind, storm and rain; it is the images of the tempest that are most commonly applied to them and they are spoken of as the Rudras, the fierce, impetuous ones, - a name that they share with the god of Force, Agni. Although Indra is described sometimes as the eldest of the Maruts, - *indrajyestho marudganah*, - yet they would seem at first to belong rather to the domain of Vayu, the Wind-God, who in the Vedic system is the Master of Life, inspirer of that Breath or dynamic energy, called the Prana, which is represented in man by the vital and nervous activities. But this is only a part of their



physiognomy. Brilliance, no less than impetuosity, is their characteristic. Everything about them is lustrous, themselves, their shining weapons, their golden ornaments, their resplendent cars. Not only do they send down the rain, the waters, the abundance of heaven, and break down the things best established to make way for new movements and new formations, - functions which, for the rest, they share with other gods, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, -but, like them, they also are friends of Truth, creators of Light. It is so that the Rishi, Gotama Rahugana, prays to them, "O ye who have the flashing strength of the Truth, manifest that by your might; pierce with your lightning the Rakshasa. Conceal the concealing darkness, repel every devourer, create the Light for which we long" (1.86.9,10). And in another hymn, Agastya says to them, "They carry with them the sweetness (of the Ananda) as their eternal offspring and play out their play, brilliant in the activities of knowledge" (1.166.2). The Maruts, therefore, are energies of the mentality, energies which make for knowledge. Theirs is not the settled truth, the diffused light, but the movement, the search, the lightning-flash, and, when Truth is found, the many-sided play of its separate illuminations.

We have seen that Agastya in his colloquy with Indra speaks more than once of the Maruts. They are Indra's brothers, and therefore the god should not strike at Agastya in his struggle towards perfection. They are his instruments for that perfection, and as such Indra should use them. And in the closing formula of submission and reconciliation, he prays to the god to parley again with the Maruts and to agree with them so that the sacrifice may proceed in the order and movement of the divine Truth towards which it is directed. The crisis, then, that left so powerful an impression on the mind of the seer, was in the nature of a violent struggle in which the higher divine Power confronted Agastya and the Maruts and opposed their impetuous advance. There has been wrath and strife between the divine Intelligence that governs the world and the vehement aspiring powers of Agastya's mind. Both would have the human being reach his goal; but not as the inferior divine powers choose must that march be directed, - rather as it has been firmly willed and settled above by the secret Intelligence that always possesses for the manifested intelligence that still seeks. Therefore the mind of the human being has been turned into a battlefield for greater Powers and is still quivering with the awe and alarm of that experience.

The submission to Indra has been made; Agastya now appeals to the Maruts to accept the terms of the reconciliation, so that the full harmony of his inner being may be restored. He approaches them with the submission he has rendered to the greater god and extends it to their brilliant legions. The perfection of the mental state and its powers which he desires, their clearness, rectitude, truth-observing energy, is not possible without the swift coursing of the Thought-Forces in their movement towards the higher knowledge. But that movement, mistakenly directed, not rightly illumined, has been checked by the formidable



opposition of Indra and has departed for a time out of Agastya's mentality. Thus repelled, the Maruts have left him for other sacrificers; elsewhere shine their resplendent chariots, in other fields thunder the hooves of their wind-footed steeds. The Seer prays to them to put aside their wrath, to take pleasure once more in the pursuit of knowledge and in its activities; not passing him by any more, let them unyoke their steeds, descend and take their place on the seat of the sacrifice, assume their share of the offerings.

For he would confirm again in himself these splendid energies, and it is a hymn of affirmation that he offers them, the *stoma* of the Vedic sages. In the system of the Mystics, which has partially survived in the schools of Indian Yoga, the Word is a power, the Word creates. For all creation is expression, everything exists already in the secret abode of the Infinite, *guha hitam*, and has only to be brought out here in apparent form by the active consciousness. Certain schools of Vedic thought even suppose the worlds to have been created by the goddess Word and sound as first etheric vibration to have preceded formation. In the Veda itself there are passages which treat the poetic measures of the sacred mantras, - *anustuph*, *tristuph*, *jagati*, *gayatri*, - as symbolic of the rhythms in which the universal movement of things is cast.

By expression then we create and men are even said to create the gods in themselves by the mantra. Again, that which we have created in our consciousness by the Word, we can fix there by the Word to become part of ourselves and effective not only in our inner life but upon the outer physical world. By expression we form, by affirmation we establish. As a power of expression the word is termed *gih* or *vacas*; as a power of affirmation, *stoma*.

In either aspect it is named *manma* or *mantra*, expression of thought in mind, and *brahman*, expression of the heart or the soul, - for this seems to have been the earlier sense of the word *brahman*, afterwards applied to the Supreme Soul or Universal Being. The process of formation of the mantra is described in the second verse along with the conditions of its effectivity. Agastya presents the *stoma*, hymn at once of affirmation and of submission, to the Maruts. Fashioned by the heart, it receives its just place in the mentality through confirmation by the mind. The mantra, though it expresses thought in mind, is not in its essential part a creation of the intellect. To be the sacred and effective word, it must have come as an inspiration, from the supramental plane, termed in Veda, *rtam*, the Truth, and have been received into the superficial consciousness either through the heart or by the luminous intelligence, *manisa*. The heart in Vedic psychology is not restricted to the seat of the emotions; it includes all that large tract of spontaneous mentality, nearest to the subconscious in us, out of which rise the sensations, emotions, instincts, impulses and all those intuitions and inspirations that travel through these agencies before, they arrive at form in the intelligence. This is the "heart" of Veda and Vedanta, *hrdaya*, *hrd*, or *brahman*. There in the



present state of mankind the Purusha is supposed to be seated centrally. Nearer to the vastness of the subconscious, it is there that, in ordinary mankind, - man not yet exalted to a higher plane where the contact with the Infinite is luminous, intimate and direct, - the inspirations of the Universal Soul can most easily enter in and most swiftly take possession of the individual soul. It is therefore by the power of the heart that the mantra takes form. But it has to be received and held in the thought of the intelligence as well as in the perceptions of the heart; for not till the intelligence has accepted and even brooded upon it, can that truth of thought which the truth of the Word expresses be firmly possessed or normally effective. Fashioned by the heart, it is confirmed by the mind.

But another approval is also needed. The individual mind has accepted; the effective powers of the Cosmos must also accept. The words of the hymn retained by the mind form a basis for the new mental posture from which the future thought- energies have to proceed. The Maruts must approach them and take their stand upon them, the mind of these universal Powers approve and unite itself with the formations in the mind of the individual. So only can our inner or our outer action have its supreme effectivity.

Nor have the Maruts any reason to refuse their assent or to persist in the prolongation of discord. Divine powers who themselves obey a higher law than the personal impulse, it should be their function, as it is their essential nature, to assist the mortal in his surrender to the Immortal and increase obedience to the Truth, the Vast towards which his human faculties aspire.

Indra, affirmed and accepted, is no longer in his contact with the mortal a cause of suffering; the divine touch is now utterly creative of peace and felicity. The Maruts too, affirmed and accepted, must put aside their violence. Assuming their gentler forms, benignant in their action, not leading the soul through strife and disturbance, they too must become purely beneficent as well as puissant agencies.

This complete harmony established, Agastya's Yoga will proceed triumphantly on the new and straight path prescribed to it. It is always the elevation to a higher plane that is the end, - higher than the ordinary life of divided and egoistic sensation, emotion, thought and action. And it is to be pursued always with the same, puissant will towards victory over all that resists and hampers. But it must be an integral exaltation. All the joys that the human being seeks with his desire, all the active energies of his waking consciousness, - his days, as it is expressed in the brief symbolic language of the Veda, - must be uplifted to that higher plane. By *vanani* are meant the receptive sensations seeking in all objectivities the Ananda whose quest is their reason for existence. These, too, are not excluded. Nothing has to be rejected, all has to be raised to the pure levels of the divine consciousness.



Formerly Agastya had prepared the sacrifice for the Maruts under other conditions. He had put their full potentiality of force into all in him that he sought to place in the hands of the Thought-Powers; but because of the defect in his sacrifice he had been met midway by the Mighty One as by an enemy and only after fear and strong suffering had his eyes been opened and his soul surrendered. Still vibrating with the emotions of that experience, he has been compelled to renounce the activities which he had so puissantly prepared. Now he offers the sacrifice again to the Maruts, but couples with that brilliant Name the more puissant godhead of Indra. Let the Maruts then bear no wrath for the interrupted sacrifice but accept this new and more justly guided action.

Agastya turns, in the two closing verses, from the Maruts to Indra. The Maruts represent the progressive illumination of human mentality, until from the first obscure movements of mind which only just emerge out of the darkness of the subconscious, they are transformed into an image of the luminous consciousness of which Indra is the Purusha, the representative Being. Obscure, they become conscient; twilit, half-lit or turned into misleading reflections, they surmount these deficiencies and put on the divine brilliance. This great evolution is effected in Time gradually, in the mornings of the human spirit, by the unbroken succession of the Dawns. For Dawn in the Veda is the goddess symbolic of new openings of divine illumination on man's physical consciousness. She alternates with her sister Night; but that darkness itself is a mother of light and always Dawn comes to reveal what the black-browed Mother has prepared. Here, however, the seer seems to speak of continuous dawns, not broken by these intervals of apparent rest and obscurity. By the brilliant force of that continuity of successive illuminations the mentality of man ascends swiftly into fullest light. But always the force which has governed and made possible the transformation, is the puissance of Indra. It is that supreme Intelligence which through the Dawns, through the Maruts, has been pouring itself into the human being. Indra is the Bull of the radiant herd, the Master of the thought-energies, the Lord of the luminous dawns.

Now also let Indra use the Maruts as his instruments for the illumination. By them let him establish the supramental knowledge of the seer. By their energy his energy will be supported in the human nature and he will give that nature his divine firmness, his divine force, so that it may not stumble under the shock or fail to contain the vaster play of puissant activities too great for our ordinary capacity.

The Maruts, thus reinforced in strength, will always need the guidance and protection of the superior Power. They are the Purushas of the separate thought-energies, Indra the one Purusha of all thought-energy. In him they find their fullness and their harmony. Let there then be no longer strife and disagreement



between this whole and these parts. The Maruts, accepting Indra, will receive from him the right perception of the things that have to be known. They will not be misled by the brilliance of a partial light or carried too far by the absorption of a limited energy. They will be able to sustain the action of Indra as he puts forth his force against all that may yet stand between the soul and its consummation.

So in the harmony of these divine Powers and their aspirations may humanity find that impulsion which shall be strong enough to break through the myriad oppositions of this world and, in the individual with his composite personality or in the race, pass rapidly on towards the goal so constantly glimpsed but so distant even to him who seems to himself almost to have attained.





## Agni, the Illumined Will (RV 1.77)

*katha dashema agnaye ka asmai devajushta uchyate bhamine gih;*

*yo marteshu amrta rtava hota yajishtha it krnoti devan.*

1. How shall we give to Agni ? For him what Word accepted by the Gods is spoken, for the lord of the brilliant flame ? for him who in mortals, immortal, possessed of the Truth, priest of the oblation strongest for sacrifice, creates the gods ?

*yo adhvareshu shantama rtava hota tamu namobhih akrnudhvam;*

*agnih yat veh martaya devan sa cha bodhati manasa yajati.*

2. He who in the sacrifices is the priest of the offering, full of peace, full of the Truth, him verily form in you by your surrenderings; when Agni manifests for the mortals the gods, he also has perception of them and by the mind offers to them the sacrifice.

*sa hi kratuh sa maryah sa sadhuh mitro na bhut adbhutasya rathih;*

*tam medheshu prathamam devayantih visha upa bruvate dasmam arih.*

3. For he is the will, he is the strength, he is the effector of perfection, even as Mitra he becomes the charioteer of the Supreme. To him, the first, in the rich-offerings the people seeking the godhead utter the word, the Aryan people to the fulfiller.

*sa no nrrnam nrtamo rishada agnih giro avasa vetu dhitim;*

*tana cha ye maghavanah shavishtha vajajprasuta ishayanta manma.*

4. May this strongest of the Powers and devourer of the destroyers manifest by his presence the words and their understanding, and may they who in their extension are lords of plenitude, brightest in energy, pour forth their plenty and give their impulsion to the thought.



*eva agnih gotamebhih rtava viprebhih astoshta jatavedah;*

*sa yeshu dyumnam pipayat sa vajam sa pushtim yati josham  
achikitvan.*

5. Thus has Agni, possessed of the Truth, been affirmed by the masters of light, the knower of the worlds by clarified minds. He shall foster in them the force of illumination, he too the plenty; he shall attain to increase and to harmony by his perceptions.

### COMMENTARY

Gotama Rahugana is the seer of this Hymn, which is a *stoma* in praise of Agni, the divine Will at work in the universe.

Agni is the most important, the most universal of the Vedic gods. In the physical world he is the general devourer and enjoyer. He is also the purifier; when he devours and enjoys, then also he purifies. He is the fire that prepares and perfects; he is also the fire that assimilates and the heat of energy that forms. He is the heat of life and creates the sap, the *rasa* in things, the essence of their substantial being and the essence of their delight.

He is equally the Will in Prana, the dynamic Life-energy, and in that energy performs the same functions. Devouring and enjoying, purifying, preparing, assimilating, forming, he rises upwards always and transfigures his powers into the Maruts, the energies of Mind. Our passions and obscure emotions are the smoke of Agni's burning. All our nervous forces are assured of their action only by his support.

If he is the Will in our nervous being and purifies it by action, he is also the Will in the mind and clarifies it by aspiration. When he enters into the intellect, he is drawing near to his divine birth-place and home. He leads the thoughts towards effective power; he leads the active energies towards light.

His divine birth-place and home, - though he is born everywhere and dwells in all things, - is the Truth, the Infinity, the vast cosmic Intelligence in which Knowledge and Force are unified. For there all Will is in harmony with the truth of things and therefore effective; all thought part of Wisdom, which is the divine Law, and therefore perfectly regulative of a divine action. Agni fulfilled becomes mighty in his own home - in the Truth, the Right, the Vast. It is thither that he is



leading upward the aspiration in humanity, the soul of the Aryan, the head of the cosmic sacrifice.

It is at the point where there is the first possibility of the great passage, the transition from mind to supermind, the transfiguration of the intelligence, till now the crowned leader of the mental being, into a divine Light, - it is at this supreme and crucial point in the Vedic Yoga that the Rishi, Gotama Rahugana, seeks in himself for the inspired Word. The Word shall help him to realize for himself and others the Power that must effect the transition and the state of luminous plenitude from which the transfiguration must commence.

The Vedic sacrifice is, psychologically, a symbol of cosmic and individual activity become self-conscious, enlightened and aware of its goal. The whole process of the universe is in its very nature a sacrifice, voluntary or involuntary. Self-fulfillment by self-immolation, to grow by giving is the universal law. That which refuses to give itself, is still the food of the cosmic Powers. "The eater eating is eaten" is the formula, pregnant and terrible, in which the Upanishad sums up this aspect of the universe, and in another passage men are described as the cattle of the gods. It is only when the law is recognized and voluntarily accepted that this kingdom of death can be overpassed and by the works of sacrifice Immortality made possible and attained. All the powers and potentialities of the human life are offered up, in the symbol of a sacrifice, to the divine Life in the Cosmos.

Knowledge, Force and Delight are the three powers of the divine Life; thought and its formations, will and its works, love and its harmonisings are the corresponding human activities which have to be exalted to the divine level. The dualities of truth and falsehood, light and darkness, conceptional right and wrong are the confusions of knowledge born of egoistic division; the dualities of egoistic love and hatred, joy and grief, pleasure and pain are the confusions of Love, perversities of Ananda; the dualities of strength and weakness, sin and virtue, action and inaction are the confusions of will, dissipaters of the divine Force. And all these confusions arise and even become necessary modes of our action because the triune powers of the divine Life are divorced from each other, Knowledge from Strength, Love from both, by the Ignorance which divides. It is the Ignorance, the dominant cosmic Falsehood that has to be removed. Through the Truth, then, lies the road to the true harmony, the consummated felicity, the ultimate fulfilment of love in the divine Delight. Therefore, only when the Will in man becomes divine and possessed of the Truth, *amrtah rtava*, can the perfection towards which we move be realised in humanity.

Agni, then, is the god who has to become conscient in the mortal. Him the inspired Word has to express, to confirm in this gated mansion and on the altar-seat of this sacrifice.



"How must we give to Agni?" asks the Rishi. The word for the sacrificial giving, *dasema*, means literally distribution; it has a covert connection with the root *das* in the sense of discernment. The sacrifice is essentially an arrangement, a distribution of the human activities and enjoyments among the different cosmic Powers to whose province they by right belong. Therefore the hymns repeatedly speak of the portions of the gods. It is the problem of the right arrangement and distribution of his works that presents itself to the sacrificer; for the sacrifice must be always according to the Law and the divine ordainment (*rtu*, the later *vidhi*). The will to right arrangement is an all-important preparation for the reign of the supreme Law and Truth in the mortal.

The solution of the problem depends on right realization, and right realization starts from the right illuminative Word, expression of the inspired Thought which is sent to the seer out of the Vast. Therefore the Rishi asks farther, "What word is uttered to Agni?" What word of affirmation, what word of realization? Two conditions have to be satisfied. The Word must be accepted by other divine Powers, that is, it must bring out some potentiality in the nature or bring into it some light of realization by which the divine Workers may be induced to manifest in the superficial consciousness of humanity and embrace openly their respective functions. And it must be illuminative of the double nature of Agni, this Lord of the lustrous flame. *Bhama* means both a light of knowledge and a flame of action. Agni is a Light as well as a Force.

The Word arrives. *yo martyesu amrtah rtava*. Agni is, pre-eminently, the Immortal in mortals. It is this Agni by whom the other bright sons of Infinity are able to work out the manifestation and self-extension of the Divine (*devaviti*, *devatati*) which is at once aim and process of the cosmic and of the human sacrifice. For he is the divine Will which in all things is always present, is always destroying and constructing, always building and perfecting, supporting always the complex progression of the universe. It is this which persists through all death and change. It is eternally and inalienably possessed of the Truth. In the last obscuration of Nature, in the lowest unintelligence of Matter, it is this Will that is a concealed knowledge and compels all these darkened movements to obey, as if mechanically, the divine Law and adhere to the truth of their Nature. It is this which makes the tree grow according to its seed and each action bear its appropriate fruit. In the obscurity of man's ignorance, - less than material Nature's, yet greater, - it is this divine Will that governs and guides, knows the sense of his blindness and the goal of his aberration and out of the crooked workings of the cosmic Falsehood in him evolves the progressive manifestation of the cosmic Truth. Alone of the brilliant Gods, he burns bright and has full vision in the darkness of Night no less than in the splendours of day. The other gods are *usarbudhah*, wakers with the Dawn.



Therefore is he the priest of the offering, strongest or most apt for sacrifice, he who, all-powerful, follows always the law of the Truth. We must remember that the oblation (*havya*) signifies always action (*karma*) and each action of mind or body is regarded as a giving of our plenty into the cosmic being and the cosmic intention. Agni, the divine Will, is that which stands behind the human will in its works. In the conscient offering, he comes in front; he is the priest set in front (*purah-hita*), guides the oblation and determines its effectiveness.

By this self-guided Truth, by this knowledge that works out as an unerring Will in the Cosmos, he fashions the gods in mortals. Agni manifests divine potentialities in a death-besieged body; Agni brings them to effective actuality and perfection. He creates in us the luminous forms of the Immortals.

This work he does as a cosmic Power labouring upon the rebellious human material even when in our ignorance we resist the heavenward impulse and, accustomed to offer our actions to the egoistic life, cannot yet or as yet will not make the divine surrender. But it is in proportion as we learn to subjugate the ego and compel it to bow down in every act to the universal Being and to serve consciously in its least movements the supreme Will, that Agni himself takes form in us. The Divine Will becomes present and conscient in a human mind and enlightens it with the divine Knowledge. Thus it is that man can be said to form by his toil the great Gods.

The Sanskrit expression is here *a krnudhvam*. The preposition gives the idea of a drawing upon oneself of something outside and the working or shaping it out in our own consciousness. *A kr* corresponds to the converse expression, *a bhū*, used of the gods when they approach the mortal with the contact of Immortality and, divine form of godhead falling on form of humanity, "become", take shape, as it were, in him. The cosmic Powers act and exist in the universe; man takes them upon himself, makes an image of them in his own consciousness and endows that image with the life and power that the Supreme Being has breathed into His own divine forms and world-energies.

It is when thus present and conscient in the mortal, like a "house-lord", master in his mansion, that Agni appears in the true nature of his divinity. When we are obscure and revolt against the Truth and the Law, our progress seems to be a stumbling from ignorance to ignorance and is full of pain and disturbance. By constant submission to the Truth, surrenderings, *namobhih*, we create in ourselves that image of the divine Will which is on the contrary full of peace, because it is assured of the Truth and the Law. Equality of soul created by the surrender to the universal Wisdom gives us a supreme peace and calm. And since that Wisdom guides all our steps in the straight paths of the Truth we are carried by it beyond all stumblings (*duritanī*).



Moreover, with Agni conscious in our humanity, the creation of the gods in us becomes a veritable manifestation and no longer a veiled growth. The will within grows conscious of the increasing godhead, awakens to the process, perceives the lines of the growth. Human action intelligently directed and devoted to the universal Powers, ceases to be a mechanical, involuntary or imperfect offering; the thinking and observing mind participates and becomes the instrument of the sacrificial will.

Agni is the power of conscious Being, called by us will, effective behind the workings of mind and body. Agni is the strong God within (*maryah*, the strong, the masculine) who puts out his strength against all assailing powers, who forbids inertia, who repels every failing of heart and of force, who spurns out all lack of manhood. Agni actualises what might otherwise remain as an ineffectual thought or aspiration. He is the doer of the Yoga (*sadhu*); divine smith labouring at his forge, he hammers out our perfection. Here he is said to become the charioteer of the Supreme. The Supreme and Wonderful that moves and fulfils Itself "in the consciousness of another", (we have the same word, *adbhuta*, as in the colloquy of Indra and Agastya), effects that motion with this Power as charioteer holding the reins of the activity. Mitra also, the lord of Love and Light is even such a charioteer. Love illuminated fulfils the harmony which is the goal of the divine movement. But the power of this lord of Will and Light is also needed. Force and Love united and both illumined by Knowledge fulfill God in the world.

Will is the first necessity, the chief actualizing force. When therefore the race of mortals turn consciously towards the great aim and, offering their enriched capacities to the Sons of Heaven, seek to form the divine in themselves, it is to Agni, first and chief, that they lift the realizing thought, frame the creative Word. For they are the Aryans who do the work and accept the effort, - the vastest of all works, the most grandiose of all efforts, - and he is the power that embraces Action and by Action fulfils the work. What is the Aryan without the divine Will that accepts the labour and the battle, works and wins, suffers and triumphs?

Therefore it is this Will which annihilates all forces commissioned to destroy the effort, this strongest of all the divine Puissances in which the supreme Purusha has imaged Himself, that must bestow its presence on these human vessels. There it will use the mind as instrument of the sacrifice and by its very presence manifest those inspired and realizing Words which are as a chariot framed for the movement of the gods, giving to the Thought that meditates the illuminative comprehension which allows the forms of the divine Powers to outline themselves in our waking consciousness.

Then may those other mighty Ones who bring with them the plenitudes of the higher life, Indra and the Ashwins, Usha and Surya, Varuna and Mitra and



Aryaman, assume with that formative extension of themselves in the human being their most brilliant energies. Let them create their plenty in us, pouring it forth from the secret places of our being so as to be utilizable in its daylight tracts and let their impulsions urge upward the divinising thought in Mind, till it transfigures itself in the supreme lustres.

The hymn closes. Thus, in inspired words, has the divine Will, Agni, been affirmed by the sacred chant of the Gotamas. The Rishi uses his name and that of his house as a symbol-word; we have in it the Vedic *go* in the sense "luminous", and Gotama means "entirely possessed of light". For it is only those that have the plenitude of the luminous intelligence by whom the master of divine Truth can be wholly received and affirmed in this world of an inferior Ray, -*gotamebhir rtava*. And it is upon those whose minds are pure, clear and open, *vipra*, that there can dawn the right knowledge of the great Births which are behind the physical world and from which it derives and supports its energies, -*viprebhir jatavedah*.

Agni is Jatavedas, knower of the births, the worlds. He knows entirely the five worlds and is not confined in his consciousness to this limited and dependent physical harmony. He has access even to the three highest states of all, to the udder of the mystic Cow, the abundance of the Bull with the four horns. From that abundance he will foster the illumination in these Aryan seekers, swell the plenty of their divine faculties. By that fullness and plenty of his illumined perceptions he will unite thought with thought, word with word, till the human Intelligence is rich and harmonious enough to support and become the divine Idea.





**Surya Savitri, creator & increaser (RV 5.81)**

*yunjate mana uta yunjate dhiyo vipra viprasya brhato vipashchitah.*

*vi hotra dadhe vayunavideka inmahī devasya savituh parishtutih .*

1. Men illumined yoke their mind and they yoke their thoughts to him who is illumination and largeness and clear perceiving. Knowing all phenomena he orders, sole the Energies of the sacrifice. Vast is the affirmation in all things of Savitri, the divine Creator.

*vishva rupani prati munjate kavīh prasavidbhadram dvipade chatushpade.*

*vi nakamakhyatsavita varenyo anu prayanamushaso vi rajati.*

2. All forms he takes unto himself, the Seer, and he creates from them good for the twofold existence and the fourfold. The Creator, the supreme Good, manifests Heaven wholly and his light pervades all as he follows the march of the Dawn.

*yasya prayanamanvanya idyayurdeva devasya mahimanamojasa.*

*yah parthivani vimame sa etasho rajamsi devah savita mahitvana.*

3. In the wake of his march the other gods also reach by his force to the greatness of the Divinity. He has mapped out the realms of earthly light by his mightiness,-the brilliant one, the divine Creator.

*uta yasi savitāstrini rochanota suryasya rashmibhih samuchyasi.*

*uta ratrimubhayatah pariyasa uta mitro bhavasi deva dharmabhih.*

4. And thou reachest, O Savitri, to the three luminous heavens; and thou art utterly expressed by the rays of the Sun; and thou encompassst the Night upon either side; and thou becomest by the law of thy law of thy actions the lord of Love, O God.



*uteshishe prasavasya tvameka iduta pusha bhavasi deva yamabhih.*

*utedam vishvam bhuvanam vi rajasi shyavashvaste savitah  
stomamanashe.*

5. And thou art powerful for every creation; and thou becomest the Increase, O God, by thy movings; and thou illuminest utterly all this world of becomings. Shyavashwa has attained to the affirmation of thee, O Savitri.

### COMMENTARY

Indra with his shining hosts, the Maruts, Agni, the divine force, fulfiller of the Aryan sacrifice, are the most important deities of the Vedic system. Agni is the beginning and the end. This Will that is knowledge is the initiator of the upward effort of the mortal towards Immortality; to this divine consciousness that is one with divine power we arrive as the foundation of immortal existence. Indra, lord of Swar, the luminous intelligence into which we have to convert our obscure material mentality in order to become capable of the divine consciousness, is our chief helper. It is by the aid of Indra and the Maruts that the conversion is effected. The Maruts take our animal consciousness made up of the impulses of the nervous mentality, possess these impulses with their illuminations and drive them up the hill of being towards the world of Swar and the truths of Indra. Our mental evolution begins with these animal troops, these *pasus*; they become, as we progress in the ascension, the brilliant herds of the Sun, *gavah*, rays, the divine cows of the Veda. Such is the psychological sense of the Vedic symbol.

But who, then, is Surya, the Sun, from whom these rays proceed? He is the Master of Truth, Surya the Illuminator, Savitri the Creator, Pushan the Increaser. His rays in their own nature are supramental activities of revelation, inspiration, intuition, luminous discernment, and they constitute the action of that transcendent principle which the Vedanta calls Vijnana, the perfect knowledge, the Veda Ritam, the Truth. But these rays descend also into the human mentality and form at its summit the world of luminous intelligence, Swar, of which Indra is the lord.

For this Vijnana is a divine and not a human faculty. Man's mind is not constituted of the self-luminous truth, like the divine mind; it is a sense-mentality, Manas, which can receive and understand Truth, but is not one with it. The light of knowledge has to present itself in this human understanding tempered so as to suit its forms to the capacities and limitations of the physical consciousness. And it has to lead up progressively to its own true nature, to



manifest successive evolutionary stages for our mental development. Therefore the rays of Surya, as they labour to form our mental existence, create three successive worlds of mentality one superimposed on the other, - the sensational, aesthetic and emotional mind, the pure intellect and the divine intelligence. The fullness and perfection of these triple worlds of mind exists only in the pure mental plane of being, where they shine above the three heavens, *tisro divah*, as their three luminosities, *trini rocanani*. But their light descends upon the physical consciousness and effects the corresponding formations in its realms, the Vedic *parthivani rajamsi*, earthly realms of light. They also are triple, *tisrah prthivih*, the three earths. And of all these worlds Surya Savitri is the creator.

We have in this figure of various psychological levels, each considered as a world in itself, a key to the conceptions of the Vedic Rishis. The human individual is an organized unit of existence which reflects the constitution of the universe. It repeats in itself the same arrangement of states and play of forces. Man, subjectively, contains in himself all the worlds in which, objectively, he is contained. Preferring ordinarily a concrete to an abstract language, the Rishis speak of the physical consciousness as the physical world, earth, Bhū, Prithivī. They describe the pure mental consciousness as heaven, Dyau, of which Swar, the luminous mind, is the summit. To the intermediate dynamic, vital or nervous consciousness they give the name either of Antariksha, the intermediate vision, or of Bhuvar, - multiple dynamic worlds formative of the Earth.

For in the idea of the Rishis a world is primarily a formation of consciousness and only secondarily a physical formation of things. A world is a *loka*, a way in which conscious being images itself. And it is the causal Truth, represented in the person of Surya Savitri, that is the creator of all its forms. For it is the causal Idea in the infinite being, - the idea, not abstract, but real and dynamic, - that originates the law, the energies, the formations of things and the working out of their potentialities in determined forms by determined processes. Because the causal Idea is a real force of existence, it is called *satyam*, the True in being; because it is the determining truth of all activity and formation, it is called *rtam*, the True in movement; because it is broad and infinite in its self-view, in its scope and in its operation, it is called *brhat*, the Large or Vast.

Savitri by the Truth is the Creator, but not in the sense of a fabrication or mechanical forming of things. The root of the word means an impulsion, a loosing forth or sending out, - the sense also of the ordinary word for creation, *srsti*, - and so a production. The action of the causal Idea does not fabricate, but brings out by Tapas, by the pressure of consciousness on its own being, that which is concealed in it, latent in potentiality and in truth already existent in the Beyond.



Now the forces and processes of the physical world repeat, as in a symbol, the truths of the supraphysical action which produced it. And since it is by the same forces and the same processes, one in the physical worlds and the supraphysical, that our inner life and its development are governed, the Rishis adopted the phenomena of physical Nature as just symbols for those functionings of the inner life which it was their difficult task to indicate in the concrete language of a sacred poetry that must at the same time serve for the external worship of the Gods as powers of the visible universe. The solar energy is the physical form of Surya, Lord of Light and Truth; it is through the Truth that we arrive at Immortality, final aim of the Vedic discipline. It is therefore under the images of the Sun and its rays, of Dawn and day and night and the life of man between the two poles of light and darkness that the Aryan seers represent the progressive illumination of the human soul. It is so that Shyavashwa of the house of Atri hymns Savitri, Creator, Increaser, Revealer.

Surya enlightens the mind and the thoughts with the illuminations of the Truth. He is *vipra*, the illumined. It is he who delivers the individual human mind from the circumscribed consciousness of self and environment and enlarges the limited movement which is imposed on it by its preoccupation with its own individuality. Therefore he is *brhat*, the Large. But his illumination is not a vague light, nor does his largeness come by a confused and dissolved view of self and object; it holds in itself a clear discernment of things in their totality, their parts and their relations. Therefore he is *vipascit*, the clear in perception. Men, as soon as they begin to receive something of this solar illumination, strive to yoke their whole mentality and its thought-contents to the conscious existence of the divine Surya within them. That is to say, they apply, as it were, all their obscure mental state and all their erring thoughts to this Light manifested in them so that it may turn the obscurity of the mind into clearness and convert the errors of thought into those truths which they distortedly represent. This yoking (*yunjate*) becomes their Yoga. "They yoke the mind, and they yoke their thoughts, the enlightened, of (i.e. to, or so that they may be part of or belong to) the Enlightened, the Large, the Clear-perceptioned."

Then the Lord of Truth orders all the human energies offered up to him in the terms of the Truth; for he becomes in man a sole and sovereign Power governing all knowledge and action. Not interfered with by conflicting agencies, he governs perfectly; for he knows all manifestations, comprehends their Causes, contains their law and process, compels their right result. There are seven of these sacrificial energies (Hotras) in the human being, one corresponding to each of the seven constituents of his psychological existence, - body, life, mind, supermind, bliss, will and essential being. Their irregular action or wrong relation, caused and maintained by the obscuration of knowledge in Mind, is the source of all stumbling and unhappiness, of all evil act and evil state. Surya, Lord



of Knowledge, puts each of them to its right place in the Sacrifice. "Knower of phenomena sole he arranges the sacrificial energies."

Man thus arrives at a vast and all-embracing affirmation in himself of this divine Creator. It is implied in this passage and indicated more clearly in the next. verse that the result is a right and happy creation - for all our existence is a constant creation .-of the universe of man's whole being. "Vast is the comprehensive affirmation of the god Savitri."

Surya is the seer, the revealer. Ms Truth takes into its illumination all forms of things, all the phenomenal objects and experiences which constitute our world, all the figures of the universal Consciousness within and without us. It reveals the truth in them, their sense, their purpose, their justification and right use. Ordering rightly the energies of the sacrifice it creates or produces good as the law of our whole existence. For all things have their justifiable cause of being, their good use and their right enjoyment. When this truth in them is found and utilized, all things produce good for the soul, increase its welfare, enlarge its felicity. And this divine revolution is effected both in the lower physical existence and in the more complete inner life which uses the physical for its manifestation. "The Seer takes to himself all forms, he brings out (creates or manifests) good for the twofold (two-footed), for the fourfold (four-footed)."

The process of this new creation is described in the rest of the hymn. Surya, as the creator, as the supreme good, manifests in our human consciousness its concealed heavenly summit on the levels of the pure mind, and we are able to look up above from the earth of our physical existence and are delivered from the obscurities of the night of Ignorance. He follows, sunlike, the march of the Dawn, illuminating all the regions of our being on which falls its light; for there is always needed the precursory mental illumination before the Truth itself, the supramental principle, can take possession of this lower existence. "The creator, the supremely desirable, manifests all heaven and shines pervadingly following (after or according to) the movement forward of the Dawn."

All the other gods follow in this march of Surya and they attain to his vastness by the force of his illumination. That is to say, all the other divine faculties or potentialities in man expand with the expansion of the Truth and Light in him; in the strength of the ideal supermind they attain to the same infinite amplitude of right becoming, right action and right knowledge. The Truth in its largeness moulds all into the terms of the infinite and universal Life, replaces with it the limited individual existence, maps out in the terms of their real being the realms of the physical consciousness which, as Savitri, it has created. This also is in us a creation, although in reality it only manifests what already exists but was concealed by the darkness of our ignorance, - just as the realms of the physical earth are concealed from our eyes by the darkness, but reveal themselves as the



sun in his march follows the Dawn and measures them out one by one to the vision. "Following whose march the other gods too reach the vastness of the divinity by his strength, he who maps out entirely - that brilliant one - the earthly realms of light, the god Savitri, by his greatness."

But it is not only the full capacity of our physical or earthly consciousness that this divine Truth illuminates and forms for a perfect action. It pervades the three luminous realms of the pure mind (*trini rocana*); it puts us in contact with all the divine possibilities of the sensations and emotions, of the intellect, of the intuitive reason and liberating the superior faculties from their limitation and constant reference to the material world fulfils our entire mental being. Its activities receive their completest manifestation; they are gathered up into the life of the complete Truth by the rays of the sun, that is to say, by the full splendour of the divine Super mind manifested in us. "And thou goest, O Savitri, to the three luminousnesses, and thou art perfectly expressed by the rays of the Sun (or, art gathered together by means of the rays)."

Then it is that the higher kingdom of the Immortality, Sachchidananda revealed, shines out perfectly in this world. The higher and lower are reconciled in the light of the supramental revelation. The Ignorance, the Night, is illumined upon both sides of our complete being, not only as in our present state upon one. This higher kingdom stands confessed in the principle of Beatitude which is for us the principle of Love and Light, represented by the god Mitra. The Lord of Truth, when he reveals himself in the full godhead, becomes the Lord of Bliss. The law of his being, the principle regulating his activities is seen to be Love; for in the right arrangement of knowledge and action everything here comes to be translated into terms of good, felicity, bliss. "And thou encompassst Night upon both sides, and thou becomest, O God, Mitra by the laws of thy action."

The Truth of the divine existence becomes eventually the sole Lord of all creation in ourselves; and by his constant visitations or by his continual progressions the Creator becomes the Increaser, Savitri becomes Pushan. He aggrandizes us by a constantly progressive creation until he has illumined the whole world of our becoming. We grow into the complete, the universal, the infinite. So has Shyavashwa, of the sons of Atri, succeeded in affirming Savitri in his own being as the illuminative Truth, the creative, the progressive, the increaser of man - he who brings him out of egoistic limitation into universality, out of the finite into the infinite. "And thou hast power alone for creation; and thou becomest the Increaser, O God, by the goings; and thou illumineest entirely all this world (literally, becoming). Shyavashwa has attained to the affirmation of thee, O Savitri."





## The Divine Dawn (RV 3.61)

*usho vajena vajini prachetah stomam jushasva grnato maghoni .*

*purani devi yuvatih purandhiranu vratam charasi vishvavare.*

1. Dawn, richly stored with substance, conscious cleave to the affirmation of him who expresses thee, O thou of the plenitudes. Goddess, ancient, yet ever young thou movest many-thoughted following the law of thy activities, O bearer of every boon.

*usho devyamartya vi bhahi chandraratha sunrta irayanti.*

*a tva vahantu suyamaso ashva hiranyavarnam prthupajaso ye.*

2. Dawn divine, Shine out immortal in thy car of happy light sending forth the pleasant voices of the Truth. May steeds well-guided bear thee here who are golden-brilliant of hue and wide their might.

*ushah pratichi bhuvanani vishvordhva tishthasyamrtasya ketuh.*

*samanamartham charaniyamana chakramiva navyasya vavrtsva.*

3. Dawn, confronting all the worlds thou standest high-uplifted and art their perception of Immortality; do thou move over them like a wheel, O new Day, travelling over an equal field.

*ava syumeva chinvasi maghonyusha yati svasarasya patni.*

*svarjananti subhaga sudamsa antaddivah papratha a prthivyah*

4. Dawn in her plenitude like one that lets fall from her a sewn robe moves, the bride of the Bliss; creating Swar, perfect in her working, perfect in her enjoying, she widens from the extremity of Heaven over the earth.



*achchha vo devimushasam vibhatim pra vo bharadvam namasa suvrktim .*

*urdhvam madhudha divi pajo ashret pra rochana ruruche ranvasamdrk.*

5. Meet ye the Dawn as she shines wide towards you and with surrender bring forward your complete energy. Exalted in heaven is the force to which she rises establishing the sweetness; she makes the luminous worlds to shine forth and is a vision of felicity.

*rtavari divo arkairabodhya revati rodasi chitramasthat.*

*ayatimagna ushasam vibhati vamameshi dravinam bhikshamanah.*

6. By heaven's illuminings one perceives her a bearer of the Truth and rapturous she comes with its varied light into the two firmaments. From Dawn as she approaches shining out on thee, O Agni, thou seekest and attainest to the substance of delight.

*rtasya budhna ushasamishanuanvrsha mahi rodasi a videsha.*

*mahi mitrasya varunasya maya chandrevva bhanum vi dadhe purutra .*

7. Putting forth his impulses in the foundation of the Truth, in the foundation of the Dawns, their Lord enters the Vastness of the firmaments. Vast the wisdom of Varuna, of Mitra, as in a happy brightness, orders multitudinously the Light.

## COMMENTARY

Surya Savitri in his task of illumination follows the progress of the Dawn. In another hymn the movements of the mind have been described as growing conscient and brilliant by the bright power of the continuous Dawns. Throughout the Veda Usha, daughter of Heaven, has always the same function. She is the medium of the awakening, the activity and the growth of the other gods; she is the first condition of the Vedic realization. By her increasing illumination the whole nature of man is clarified; through her he arrives at the Truth, through her he enjoys the Beatitude. The divine dawn of the Rishis is the advent of the divine Light throwing off veil after veil and revealing in man's activities the luminous



godhead. In that light the Work is done, the sacrifice offered and its desirable fruits gathered by humanity.

Many are the hymns, indeed, in which rich and beautiful figures of the earthly dawn veil this inner truth of the goddess Usha, but in this hymn of the great Rishi Vishwamitra the psychological symbolism of the Vedic Dawn is apparent from beginning to end by open expressions and on the surface of the thought. "O Dawn rich of store in thy substance," he cries to her, "conscient cleave to the affirmation of him who expresses thee, O thou who hast the plenitudes." The word *prachetas* and the related word, *vichetas*, are standing terms of Vedic phraseology; they seem to correspond to the ideas expressed in later language by the Vedantic *prajnana* and *vijnana*. Prajnana is the consciousness that cognizes all things as objects confronting its observation; in the divine mind it is knowledge regarding things as their source, possessor and witness. Vijnana is comprehensive knowledge containing, penetrating into things, pervading them in consciousness by a sort of identification with their truth. Usha is to occupy the revealing thought and word of the Rishi as a power of Knowledge conscient of the truth of all that is placed by them before the mind for expression in man. The affirmation, it is suggested, will be full and ample; for Usha is *vajena vajini, maghoni*; rich is the store of her substance; she has all the plenitudes.

This dawn moves in her progression always according to the rule of a divine action; many are the thoughts she brings in that motion, but her steps are sure and all desirable things, all supreme boons, the boons of the Ananda, the blessings of the divine existence, - are in her hands. She is ancient and eternal, the dawn of the Light that was from the beginning, *purani*, but in her coming she is ever young and fresh to the soul that receives her.

She is to shine wide, she that is the divine Dawn, as the light of the immortal existence bringing out in man the powers or the voices of Truth and Joy, (*sunrtah*, - a word which expresses at once both the true and the pleasant); for is not the chariot of her movement a car at once of light and of happiness? For again, the word *chandra* in *chandraratha*, - signifying also the lunar deity Soma, lord of the delight of immortality pouring into man, *ananda* and *amrta*, - means both luminous and blissful. And the horses that bring her, figure of the nervous forces that support and carry forward all our action, must be perfectly controlled; golden, bright in hue, their nature (for in this ancient symbolism colour is the sign of quality, of character, of temperament) must be a dynamism of ideal knowledge in its concentrated luminousness; wide in its extension must be the mass of that concentrated force, *-prthupajaso ye*.

Divine Dawn comes thus to the soul with the light of her knowledge, *prajnana*, confronting all the worlds as field of that knowledge, - all provinces, that is to say, of our universal being, - mind, vitality, physical consciousness. She stands



uplifted over them on our heights above mind, in the highest heaven, as the perception of Immortality or of the Immortal, *amrtasya ketuh*, revealing in them the eternal and beatific existence or the eternal all-blissful Godhead. So exalted she stands prepared to effect the motion of the divine knowledge, progressing as a new revelation of the eternal truth, *navyasi*, in their harmonised and equalized activities like a wheel moving smoothly over a level field; for they now, their diversities and discords removed, offer no obstacle to that equal motion.

In her plenitude she separates, as it were, and casts down from her the elaborately sown garment that covered the truth of things and moves as the wife of the Lover, the energy of her all-blissful Lord, *svasarasya patni*. Full in her enjoyment of the felicity, full in her effectuation of all activities, *subhaga sudamsah*, she brings into existence in us by her revelations Swar, the concealed luminous mind, our highest mental heaven; and thus from the farthest extremities of mental being extends herself over the physical consciousness.

As this divine Dawn pours out widely its light upon them, so have men by submission to the law of her divine act and movement to bring forward for her the fully energized completeness of their being and their capacities as a vehicle for her light or as a seat for her sacrificial activities.

The Rishi then dwells on the two capital works of the divine Dawn in man, - her elevation of him to the full force of the Light and the revelation of the Truth and her pouring of the Ananda, the Amrita, the Soma-wine, the bliss of the immortal being into the mental and bodily existence. In the world of the pure mind, *divi*, she rises into the full force and mass of the Light, *urdhvam pajo asret*, and from those pure and high levels she establishes the sweetness, *madhu*, the honey of Soma. She makes to shine out the three luminous worlds, *rochana*; she is then or she brings with her the beatific vision. By the effectual illuminations of the pure mentality, through the realizing Word, *divo arkaih*, she is perceived as the bearer of Truth and with the Truth she enters from the world above Mind, full of the delight, in a varied play of her multiple thought and activity, into the mental and bodily consciousness, those established limits between which man's action moves. It is from her, as she comes thus richly laden, *vajena vajini*, that Agni, the divine Force labouring here in body and mind to uplift the mortal, prays for and attains to the Soma, the wine of the Beatitude, the delightful substance.

The supramental world in us, foundation of the Truth, is the foundation of the Dawns. They are the descent upon mortal nature of the light of that immortal Truth, *rtam jyotih*. The Lord of the Dawns, Master of Truth, Illuminer, Creator, Organiser, putting forth in the foundation of Truth, above mind, the impulsion of his activities, enters with them by this goddess into a bodily and mental existence no longer obscured but released from their limits and capable of vastness, *mahi rodasi*. The Lord of Truth is the sole Lord of things. He is Varuna,



## Explaining the Gods

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soul of vastness and purity; he is Mitra, source of love and light and harmony. His creative Wisdom, *mahi mitrasya varunasya maya*, unlimited in its scope, - for he is Varuna, - appearing, *candeva*, as a light of bliss and joy, - for he is Mitra, - arranges, perfectly organises, in multitudinous forms, in the wideness of the liberated nature, the luminous expansions, the serene expressions of the Truth. He combines the various brilliancies with which his Dawn has entered our firmaments; he blends into one harmony her true and happy voices.

Dawn divine is the coming of the Godhead. She is the light of the Truth and the Felicity pouring on us from the Lord of Wisdom and Bliss, *amrtasya ketuh, svasarasya patni*.





**To Bhaga Savitri, the enjoyer (RV 5.82)**

*tatsaviturvrnimahe vayam devasya bhojanam.*

*shreshtham sarvadhatamam turam bhagasya dhimahi .*

1. Of Savitri divine we embrace that enjoying, that which is the best, rightly disposes all, reaches the goal, even Bhaga's, we hold by the thought.

*asya hi svayashastaram savituh kachchana priyam.*

*na minanti svarajyam.*

2. For of him no pleasure in things can they diminish, for too self-victorious is it, nor the self-empire of this Enjoyer.

*sa hi ratnani dashushe suvati savita bhagah.*

*tam bhagam chitramimahe.*

3. This he that sends forth the delights on the giver, the god who is the bringer forth of things; that varied richness of his enjoyment we seek.

*adya no deva savitah prajavatsavih saubhagam.*

*para duh shvapnyam suva.*

4. Today, O divine producer, send forth o us fruitful felicity, dismiss what belongs to the evil dream.

*vishvani deva savitarduritani para suva. yadbhadram tanna asuva.*

5. All evils, O divine producer, dismiss; what is good, that send forth on us



*anagaso aditaye devasya savituh save. vishva vamani dhimahi.*

6. Blameless for infinite being in the outpouring of the divine Producer, we hold by the thought all things of delight.

*a vishvadevam satparti suktairdya vrnimahe. satyasavam savitaram.*

7. The universal godhead and master of being we accept into ourselves by perfect words today, the producer whose production is of the truth-

*ya ime ubhe ahanipura etatyaprayuchchhan svadhirdevah savita.*

8. He who goes in front of both this day and night never faltering, placing rightly his thought, the divine Producer.

*ya ima vishva jatanyashravayati shlokena. pra cha suvati savita.*

9. He who by the rhythm makes heard of the knowledge all births and produces the, the divine producer.

## COMMENTARY

Four great deities constantly appear in the Veda as closely allied in their nature and in their action, Varuna, Mitra, Bhaga, Aryaman. Varuna and Mitra are continually coupled together in the thoughts of the Rishis; sometimes a trio appears together, Varuna, Mitra and Bhaga or Varuna, Mitra and Aryaman. Separate Suktas addressed to any of these godheads are comparatively rare, although there are some important hymns of which Varuna is the deity. But the Riks in which their names occur, whether in hymns to other gods or in invocations to the All-gods, the *visve devah*, are by no means inconsiderable in number.

These four deities are, according to Sayana, solar powers, Varuna negatively as lord of the night, Mitra positively as lord of the day, Bhaga and Aryaman as names of the Sun. We need not attach much importance to these particular identifications, but it is certain that a solar character attaches to all the four. In them that peculiar feature of the Vedic gods, their essential oneness even in the



play of their different personalities and functions, comes prominently to light. Not only are the four closely associated among themselves, but they seem to partake of each other's nature and attributes, and all are evidently emanations of Surya Savitri, the divine being in his creative and illuminative solar form.

Surya Savitri is the Creator. According to the Truth of things, in the terms of the *rtam*, the worlds are brought forth from the divine consciousness, from Aditi, goddess of infinite being, mother of the gods, the indivisible consciousness, the Light that cannot be impaired imaged by the mystic Cow that cannot be slain. In that creation, Varuna and Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga are four effective Puissances. Varuna represents the principle of pure and wide being, Sat in Sachchidananda; Aryarman represents the light of the divine consciousness working as Force; Mitra representing light and knowledge, using the principle of Ananda for creation, is Love maintaining the law of harmony; Bhaga represents Ananda as the creative enjoyment; he takes the delight of the creation, takes the delight of all that is created. It is the Maya, the formative wisdom of Varuna, of Mitra that disposes multitudinously the light of Aditi brought by the Dawn to manifest the worlds.

In their psychological function these four gods represent the same principles working in the human mind, in the human temperament. They build up in man the different planes of his being and mould them ultimately into the terms and the forms of the divine Truth. Especially Mitra and Varuna are continually described as holding firm the law of their action, increasing the Truth, touching the Truth and by the Truth enjoying its vastness of divine will or its great and uncontracted sacrificial action. Varuna represents largeness, right and purity; 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 Varuna's Truth, he is bound to the posts of the world-sacrifice by the triple bonds of mind, life and body as a victim and is not free as a possessor and enjoyer. Therefore we have frequently the prayer to be delivered from the noose of Varuna, from the wrath of his offended purity. Mitra is on the other hand the most beloved of the gods; he binds all together by the fixities of his harmony, by the successive lustrous seats of Love fulfilling itself in the order of things, *mitrasya dhamabhih*. His name, mitra, which means also friend, is constantly used with a play upon the double sense; it is as Mitra, because Mitra dwells in all, that the other gods become the friends of man. Aryaman appears in the Veda with but little distinctness of personality, for the references to him are brief. The functions of Bhaga are outlined more clearly and are the same in the cosmos and in man.

In this hymn of Shyavashwa to Savitri we see both the functions of Bhaga and his oneness with Surya Savitri; for it is to the creative Lord of Truth that the hymn is addressed, to Surya, but to Surya specifically in his form as Bhaga, as



the Lord of Enjoyment. The word *bhaga* means enjoyment or the enjoyer and that this sense is the one held especially appropriate to the divine name, Bhaga, is emphasised by the use of *bhojanam*, *bhaga*, *saubhagam* in the verses of the hymn. Savitri, we have seen, means Creator, but especially in the sense of producing emitting from the unmanifest and bringing out into the manifest. Throughout the hymn there is a constant dwelling upon this rootsense of the word which it is impossible to render adequately in a translation. In the very first verse there is a covert play of the kind; for *bhojanam* means both enjoyment and food and it is intended to be conveyed that the "enjoyment of Savitri" is Soma from the same root *su*, to produce, press out, distil, Soma, the food of divine beings, the supreme distilling, highest production of the great Producer. What the Rishi seeks is the enjoyment in all created things of the immortal and immortalising Ananda.

It is this Ananda which is that enjoyment of the divine Producer, of Surya Savitri, the supreme result of the Truth: for Truth is followed as the path to the divine beatitude. This Ananda is the highest, the best enjoyment. It disposes all aright:, for once the Ananda, the divine delight in all things is attained, it sets right all the distortions, all the evil of the world. It carries man through to the goal. If by the truth and right of things we arrive at the Ananda, by the Ananda also we can arrive at the right and truth of things. It is to the divine Creator in the name and form of Bhaga that this human capacity for the divine and right enjoyment of all things belongs. When he is embraced by the human mind and heart and vital forces and physical being, when this divine form is received into himself by man, then the Ananda of the world manifests itself.

Nothing can limit, nothing can diminish, neither god nor demon, friend nor enemy, event nor sensation, whatever pleasure this divine Enjoyer takes in things, in whatever vessel or object of his enjoyment. For nothing can diminish or hedge in or hurt his luminous self-empire, *svarajyam*, his perfect possession of himself in infinite being, infinite delight and the vastnesses of the order of the Truth.

Therefore it is he that brings the seven delights, *sapta ratna*, to the giver of the sacrifice. He looses them forth on us; for they are all there in the world as in the divine being, in ourselves also, and have only to be loosed forth on our outer consciousness. The rich and varied amplitude of this sevenfold delight, perfect on all the planes of our being, is the *bhaga*, enjoyment or portion of Bhaga Savitri in the completed sacrifice, and it is that varied wealth which the Rishi seeks for himself and his fellows in the sacrifice by the acceptance of the divine Enjoyer.

Shyavashwa then calls on Bhaga savitri to vouchsafe to him even today a felicity not barren, but full of the fruits of activity, rich in the offspring of the soul, *prajavat saubhagam*. Ananda is creative, it is *jana*, the delight that gives birth to



life and world; only let the things loosed forth on us be of the creation conceived in the terms of the truth and let all that belongs to the falsehood, to the evil dream created by the ignorance of the divine Truth, *duhsvapnyam*, be dismissed, dispelled away from our conscious being.

In the next verse he makes clearer the sense of *duhsvapnyam*. What he desires to be dispelled is all evil, *vivani duritani*. *Suvitam* and *duritam* in the Veda mean literally right going and wrong going. *Suvitam* is truth of thought and action, *duritam* error or stumbling,, sin and perversion. *Suvitam* is happy going, felicity, the path of Ananda; *duritam* is calamity, suffering, all ill result of error and ill doing. All that is evil, *visvani duritani*, belongs to the evil dream that has to be turned away from us. Bhaga sends to us instead all that is good, - *bhadram*, good in the sense of felicity, the auspicious things of the divine enjoying, the happiness of the right activity, the right creation.

For, in the creation of Bhaga Savitri, in his perfect and faultless sacrifice, - there is a double sense in the word *sava*, "loosing forth", used of the creation, and the sacrifice, the libation of the Soma, - men stand absolved from sin and blame by the Ananda, *anagasah*, blameless in the sight of Aditi, fit for the undivided and infinite consciousness of the liberated soul. The Ananda owing to that freedom is capable of being in them universal. They are able to hold by their thought all things of the delight, *visva vamani*; for in the *dhi*, the understanding that holds and arranges, there is right arrangement of the world, perception of right relation, right purpose, right use, right fulfilment, the divine and blissful intention in all things.

It is the universal Divine, the master of the Sat, from whom all things are created in the terms of the truth, *satyam*, that the sacrificers today by means of the sacred *mantras* seek to accept into themselves under the name of Bhaga Savitri. It is the creator whose c'reation is the Truth, whose sacrifice is the outpouring of the truth through the outpouring of his own Ananda, his divine and unerring joy of being, into the human soul. He as Surya Savitri, master of the Truth, goes in front of both this Night and this Dawn, of the manifest consciousness and the unmanifest, the waking being and the subconscious and superconscious whose interaction creates all our experiences; and in his motion neglects nothing, is never unheeding, never falters. He goes in front of both bringing out of the night of the subconscious the divine Light, turning into the beams of that Light the uncertain or distorted reflections of the conscient, and always the thought is rightly placed. The source of all error is misapplication, wrong placing of truth, wrong arrangement, wrong relation, wrong positing in time and place, object and order. But in the Master of Truth there is no such error, no such stumbling, no such wrong placing.



Surya Savitri, who is Bhaga, stands between the Infinite and the created worlds within us and without. All things that have to be born in the creative consciousness he receives into the Vijnana; there he puts it into its right place in the divine rhythm by the knowledge that listens and receives the Word as it descends and so he looses it forth into the movement of things, *asravayati slokena pra ca suvati*. When in us each creation of the active Ananda, the *prajavat saubhagam*, comes thus out of the unmanifest, received and heard rightly of the knowledge in the faultless rhythm of things, then is our creation that of Bhaga Savitri, and all the births of that creation, our children, our offspring, *praja, apatyam*, are things of the delight, *visva vamani*. This is the accomplishment of Bhaga in man, his full portion of the world- sacrifice.





**Vayu, master of life energy (RV 4.45)**

*esha sya bhanurudiyarti yujyate rathah parijma divo asya sanavi.*

*prkshaso asminmithuna adhi trayo drtisturiyo madhuno vi rapshate.*

1. 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.

*ud vam prkshaso madhumanta irate ratha ashvasa ushaso vyushtishu*

*apornuvantastama a parivrtam svarna shukram tanvanta a rajah .*

2. Full of honey upward rise the delight; upward horses and cars in the wide-shinings of the Dawn and they roll aside the veil of darkness that encompassed on every side and they extend the lower world into a shining form like that of the luminous heaven.

*madvah pibatam madhupebhirasabhiruta priyam madhune  
yunjatham ratham.*

*a vartani madhuna jinvathasthaspatho drtim vahethe  
madhumantamashvina.*

3. Drink of the honey with your honey-drinking mouths, for the honey yoke your car beloved. With the honey you gladden the movements and its paths; full of honey, O Ashwins, is the skin that you bear.

*hamsaso ye vam madhumanto asridho hiranyaparna uhuva  
usharbudhah.*

*udapruto mandino mandinisprsho madhvo na makshah savanani  
gachchhathah*



4. Full of the honey are the swans that bear you, golden winged, waking with the Dawn, and they come not to hurt, they rain forth the waters, they are full of rapture and touch that which holds the Rapture. Like bees to pouring of honey you come to the Soma-offerings.

*svadhvaraso madhumanto usra jarante prati vastorashvina.*

*yanniktahastastaranirvichakshanah  
madhumantamadribhah.*

*somam*

*sushava*

5. Full of the honey the fires lead well the sacrifice and they woo your brightness, O Ashwins, day by day, when one with purified hands, with a perfect vision, with power to go through to the goal, has pressed out with the pressing-stones the honeyed Soma-wine.

*akenipaso ahabhirdavidhvatah svarna shukram tanvanta arajah.*

*surashchidashvan yuyujana iyate vishvan anu svadhaya  
chetathaspathah.*

6. Drinking the wine near them, the fires ride and run and extend the lower world into a shining form like that of the luminous heaven. The Sun too goes yoking his steeds; by force of Nature's self-arranging you move consciously along all paths.

*pra vamavochamashvina dhiyandha rathah svashvo ajaro yo asti.*

*yena sadyah pari rajamsi yatho havishmantam taranim bhojamachchha*

7. I have declared, O Ashwins, holding the Thought in me, your car that is undecaying and drawn by perfect steeds, -your car by which you move at once over all the worlds towards the enjoyment rich in offerings that makes through to the goal.



### COMMENTARY

The hymns of the Rig Veda addressed to the two shining Twins, like those addressed to the Ribhus, are full of symbolic expressions and unintelligible without a firm clue to their symbolism. The three leading features of these hymns to the Ashwins are the praise of their chariot, their horses and their rapid all-pervading movement; their seeking of honey and their joy in the honey, *madhu*, and the satisfying delights that they carry in their car; and their close association with the Sun, with Surya the daughter of the Sun and with the Dawn.

The Ashwins like the other gods descend from the Truth-Consciousness, the *rtam*; they are born or manifested from Heaven, from Dyau, the pure Mind; their movement pervades all the worlds, - the effect of their action ranges from the body through the vital being and the thought to the superconscient Truth. It commences indeed from the ocean, from the vague of the being as it emerges out of the subconscious and they conduct the soul over the flood of these waters and prevent its foundering on its voyage. They are therefore *nasatya*, lords of the movement, leaders of the journey or voyage.

They help man with the Truth which comes to them especially by association with the Dawn, with Surya, lord of the Truth, and with Surya, his daughter, but they help him more characteristically with the delight of being. They are lords of bliss, *Subhaspati*; their car or movement is loaded with the satisfactions of the delight of being in all its planes, they bear the skin full of the overflowing honey; they seek the honey, the sweetness, and fill all things with it. They are therefore effective powers of the Ananda which proceeds out of the Truth-Consciousness and which manifesting itself variously in all the three worlds maintains man in his journey. Hence their action is in all the worlds. They are especially riders or drivers of the Horse, Ashwins, as their name indicates, - they use the vitality of the human being as the motive-force of the journey: but also they work in the thought and lead it to the Truth. They give health, beauty, wholeness to the body; they are the divine physicians. Of all the gods they are the most ready to come to man and to create for him ease and joy, *agamistha*, *subhaspati*. For this is their peculiar and perfect function. They are essentially lords of weal, of bliss, *subhaspati*.

This character of the Ashwins is brought out with a continual emphasis by Vamadeva in the present hymn. In almost every verse occurs with a constant iteration the words *madhu*, *madhuman*, honey, honied. It is a hymn to the sweetness of existence; it is a chant of the delight of being. The great Light of lights, the Sun of Truth, the illumination of the Truth-Consciousness is rising up out of the movement of life to create the illumined Mind, *Swar*, which completes the evolution of the lower triple world. *Esa sya bhanur udiyarti*. By this rising of Sun in man, the full movement of the Ashwins becomes possible; for by the



Truth comes the realized Delight, the heavenly beatitude. Therefore, the chariot of the Ashwins is being yoked upon the height of this Dyau, the high level or plane of the resplendent mind. That chariot is all-pervading; its motion goes everywhere; its speed runs freely on all planes of our consciousness. *Yujyate rathah parijma divo asya sanavi.*

The full all-pervading movement of the Ashwins brings with it the fullness of all the possible satisfactions of the delight of being. This is expressed symbolically in the language of the Veda by saying that in their car are found the satisfactions, *prksasah*, in three pairs, *prksaso asmin mithuna adhi trayah*. The word *prksa*, is rendered food in the ritual interpretation like the kindred word *prayas*. The root means pleasure, fullness, satisfaction, and may have the material sense of a "delicacy" or satisfying food and the psychological sense of a delight, pleasure or satisfaction. The satisfactions or delicacies which are carried in the car of the Ashwins are, then, in three pairs; or the phrase may simply mean, they are three but closely associated together. In any case, the reference is to the three kinds of satisfaction or pleasure which correspond to the three movements or worlds of our progressive consciousness, - satisfactions of the body, satisfactions of vitality, satisfactions of the mind. If they are in three pairs, then we must understand that on each plane there is a double action of the delight corresponding to the double and united twinhood of the Ashwins. It is difficult in the Veda itself to distinguish between these brilliant and happy Twins or to discover what each severally represents. We have no such indication as is given us in the case of the three Ribhus. But perhaps the Greek names of these two Dioskouroi, *divo napata*, sons of Heaven, contain a clue. Kastor, the name of the elder, seems to be Kashitri, the Shining One; Poludeukes may possibly be Purudansas, a name which occurs in the Veda as an epithet of the Ashwins, the Manifold in activity. If so, the twin birth of the Ashwins recalls the constant Vedic dualism of Power and Light, Knowledge and Will, Consciousness and Energy, *go*, and *asva*. In all the satisfactions brought to us by the Ashwins these two elements are inseparably united; where the form is that of the Light or Consciousness, there Power and Energy are contained; where the form is that of the Power or Energy, there Light and Consciousness are contained.

But these three forms of satisfaction are not all that their chariot holds for us; there is something else, a fourth, a skin full of honey and out of this skin the honey breaks and overflows on every side. *Drtis turiyo madhuno vi rapsate*. Mind, life and body, these are three; *turiya*, the fourth plane of our consciousness, is the superconscient, the Truth-Consciousness. The Ashwins bring with them a skin, *drti*, literally a thing cut or torn, a partial formation out of the Truth-Consciousness to contain the honey of the superconscient Beatitude; but it cannot contain it; that unconquerably abundant and infinite sweetness breaks out and overflows everywhere drenching with delight the whole of our existence.



With that honey the three pairs of satisfactions, mental, vital, bodily, are impregnated by this all-pervasive overflowing plenty and they become full of its sweetness, *madhumantah*. And so becoming, at once they begin to move upward. Touched by the divine delight all our satisfactions in this lower world soar upward irresistibly attracted towards the superconscient, towards the Truth, towards the Beatitude. And with them, for, secretly or openly, consciously or subconsciously it is the delight of being that is the leader of our activities, - all the chariots and horses of these gods take the same soaring upward movement. All the various movements of our being, all the forms of Force that give them their impulsion, all follow the ascending light of Truth towards its home. *Ud vam prksaso madhumanta irate, ratha asvasa usaso vyustisu.*

“In the wide-shinings of the Dawn” they rise; for Dawn is the illumination of the Truth rising upon the mentality to bring the day of full consciousness into the darkness or half-lit night of our being. She comes as Dakshina, the pure intuitive discernment on which Agni the God-force in us feeds when he aspires towards the Truth or as Sarama, the discovering intuition, who penetrates into the cave of the subconscient where the niggard lords of sense-action have hidden the radiant herds of the Sun and gives information to Indra. Then comes the lord of luminous Mind and breaks open the cave and drives upward the herds, *udajat*, upwards towards the vast Truth-Consciousness, the own home of the gods. Our conscious existence is a hill (*adri*) with many successive levels and elevations, *sanuni*, the cave of the subconscient is below; we climb upwards towards the godhead of the Truth and Bliss where are the seats of Immortality, *yatramrtasa asate*.

By this upward movement of the chariot of the Ashwins with its burden of uplifted and transformed satisfactions the veil of Night that encompasses the worlds of being in us is rolled away. All these worlds, mind, life, body, are opened to the rays of the Sun of Truth. This lower world in us, rajas, is extended and shaped by this ascending movement of all its powers and satisfactions into the very brightness of the luminous intuitive mind, Swar, which receives directly the higher Light. The mind, the act, the vital, emotional, substantial existence, all becomes full of the glory and the intuition, the power and the light of the divine Sun, - *tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya*. The lower mental existence is transformed into an image and reflection of the higher Divine. *Apornuvantas tama a parivrtam, svar na Sukram tanvanta a rajah.*

This verse closes the general description of the perfect and final movement of the Ashwins. In the third the Rishi Vamadeva turns to his own ascension, his own offering of the Soma, his voyage and sacrifice; he claims for it their beatific and glorifying action. The mouths of the Ashwins are made to drink of the sweetness; in his sacrifice, then, let them drink of it. *Madhvah pibatam madhupebhir dsabhih*. Let them yoke their chariot for the honey, their chariot



beloved of men; *uta priyam madhune yunjathamh ratham*. For man's movement, his progressive activity, is made by them glad in all its paths with that very honey and sweetness of the Ananda. *A vartanim madhuna jinvathas pathah*. For they bear the skin full and overflowing with its honey. *Dr̥tim vahethe madbumantam asvina*. By the action of the Ashwins man's progress towards the beatitude becomes itself beatific; all his travail and struggle and labour grows full of a divine delight. As it is said in the Veda that by Truth is the progress towards the Truth, that is to say, by the growing law of the Truth in the mental and physical consciousness we arrive finally beyond mind and body to the superconscious Truth, so here it is indicated that by Ananda is the progress towards the Ananda, -by a divine delight growing in all our members, in all our activities we arrive at the superconscious beatitude.

In the upward movement the horses that draw the chariot of the Ashwins change into birds, into swans, *hamsasah*. The Bird in the Veda is the symbol, very frequently, of the soul liberated and upsoaring, at other times of energies so liberated and upsoaring, winging upwards towards the heights of our being, winging widely with a free flight, no longer involved in the ordinary limited movement or labouring gallop of the Life-energy, the Horse, *asva*. Such are the energies that draw the free car of the Lords of Delight, when there dawns on us the Sun of the Truth. These winged movements are full of the honey showered from the overflowing skin, *madhumantah*. They are unassailable, *asridhah*, they come to no hurt in their flight; or,, the sense may be, they make no false or hurtful movement. And they are golden-winged, *hiranyaparnah*. Gold is the symbolic colour of the light of Surya. The wings of these energies are the full, satisfied, attaining movement, *parna*, of his luminous knowledge.

For these are the birds that awake with Dawn; these are the winged energies that come forth from their nests when the feet of the daughter of Heaven press the levels of our human mentality, *divo asya sanavi*. Such are the swans that bear the swift-riding Twins. *Hamsaso ye vam madbumanto asridho hiranyaparna uhuva usarbudhah*.

Full of the honey these winged energies shower on us as they rise the abundance of the waters of heaven, the full outpouring of the high mental consciousness; they are instinct with ecstasy, with rapture, with the intoxication of the immortal wine; and they touch, they come into conscious contact with that superconscious being which is eternally in possession of the ecstasy, rapturous for ever with its divine intoxication. *Udapruto mandino mandinispr̥sah*. Drawn by them the Lords of delight come to the Rishi's Soma-offering like bees to tricklings of honey; *madhvo na maksah savanani gacchathah*. Makers themselves of the sweetness, they like the bees seek whatever sweetness can serve them as their material for more delight.



In the sacrifice the same movement of general illumination already described as the result of the ascending flight of the Ashwins is now described as being effected by the aid of the fires of Agni. For the flames of the Will, the divine Force burning up in the soul, are also drenched with the overflowing sweetness and therefore they perform perfectly from day to day their great office of leading the sacrifice progressively to its goal. For that progress they woo with their flaming tongues the daily visitation of the brilliant Ashwins who are bright with the light of the intuitive illuminations and uphold them with their thought of flashing energy. *Svadhvarso madhumanto agnaya usra jarante prati vastor asvina.*

This aspiration of Agni happens when the Sacrificer with pure hands, with a perfectly discerning vision, with power in his soul to travel to the end of its pilgrimage, to the goal of the sacrifice through all obstacles, breaking all opposers, has pressed out the immortalising wine with the pressing-stones and that too becomes full of the honey of the Ashwins. *Yan niktahastas taranir vicaksanah, somam susava madhumantam adribhah.* For the individual's delight in things is met by the Ashwins' triple satisfactions and by the fourth, the delight pouring from the Truth. The cleansed hands of the Sacrificer, *niktahastah*, are possibly symbolic of the purified physical being; the power comes from a fulfilled life-energy; the force of clear mental vision, *vicaksana*, is the sign of the truth-illuminated mind. These are the conditions in mind, life and body for the overflowing of the honey over the triple satisfactions of the Ashwins.

When the sacrificer has thus pressed out the honey-filled delight of things in his sacrifice, the flames of the Will are able to drink them from near, they are not compelled to bring them meagrely or with pain from a distant and hardly accessible plane of consciousness. Therefore, drinking immediately and freely, they become full of an exultant force and swiftness and run and race about over the whole field of our being to extend and build up the lower consciousness into the shining image of the world of free and luminous Mind. *Akenipaso ahabhir davidhvatah, svar na Sukram tanvanta a rajah.* The formula used is repeated without variations from the second Rik; but here it is the flames of the Will full of the fourfold satisfaction that do the work. There the free upsoaring of the gods by the mere touch of the Light and without effort; here the firm labour and aspiration of man in his sacrifice. For then it is by Time, by the day, that the work is perfected, *ahabhih*, by successive dawns of the Truth each with its victory over the night, by the unbroken succession of the sisters of which we have had mention in the hymn to the divine Dawn. Man cannot seize or hold at once all that the illumination brings to him; it has to be repeated constantly so that he may grow in the light.

But not only the fires of the Will are at work to transform the lower consciousness. The Sun of Truth yokes also his lustrous coursers and is in



movement; *surascid asvan yuyujana iyate*. The Ashwins too take knowledge for the human consciousness of all the paths of its progress so that it may effect a complete, harmonious and many-sided movement. This movement advancing in many paths is combined in the light of the divine knowledge by the spontaneous self-arranging action of Nature which she assumes when the will and the knowledge are wedded in the perfect harmony of a fully self-conscious, intuitively guided action. *Visvan anu svadhaya cetathas pathah*.

Vamadeva closes his hymn. He has been able to hold firmly the shining Thought with its high illumination and has expressed in himself by the shaping and fixing power of the Word the chariot, that is to say, the immortal movement of the delight of the Ashwins; the movement of a bliss that does not fade or grow old or exhaust itself, - it is ageless and undecaying, *ajarah*, - because it is drawn by perfect and liberated energies and not by the limited and soon exhausted, soon recalcitrant horses of the human vitality. *Pra vam avocam asvina dhiyamhdhah, rathah svasvo ajaro yo asti*. In this movement they traverse in a moment all the worlds of the lower consciousness, covering it with their speeding delight, and so arrive to that universal enjoyment in man full of his offering of the Soma-wine by which they can lead him, puissantly entering into it, through all opposers and to the great goal. *Yena sadyah pari rajamsi yatho havismantam taranim bhojam accha*.





**Brihaspati, power of soul (RV 4.50)**

*yastastambha sahasra vi jmo antanbrhaspatistrishadhastho ravena.*

*tam pratnasa rshayo didhyanaah puro vipra dadhire mandrajihvam .*

1. He who established in his might the extremities of the earth, Brihaspati, 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.

*dhunetayah supraketa madanto brhaspate abhi ye nastatasre.*

*prshantam srpramadabdhmurva brhaspate rakshatadasya yonim.*

2. They, O Brihaspati, vibrating with the impulse of their movement, rejoicing in perfected consciousness wove for us abundant, rapid, invincible, wide the world from which this being was born. That do thou protect, O Brihaspati.

*brhaspate ya parama paravadata a ta rtasprsho ni sheduh.*

*tubhyam khata avata adridugdha madhvah shchotantyabhito virapsham.*

3. O Brihaspati, that which is the highest supreme of existence, thither from this world they attain and take their seat who touch the Truth. For thee are dug the wells of honey which drain this hill and their sweetnesses stream out on every side and break into overflowing.

*brhaspatih prathamajayamano maho jyotishah parame vyoman.*

*saptasyastuvijato ravena vi saptarashmimaradhamattamamsi .*

4. Brihaspati first in his birth from the vast light, in the highest heavenly space, with his seven fronts, with his seven rays, with his many births, drives utterly away the darkneses that encompass us with his cry.



*sa sushtubhasa rkvata ganena valam ruvoja phaligam ravena.*

*brhaspatirusriya havyasudah kanikradadvavashatirudajat .*

5. He with his cohort of the rhythm that affirms, of the chant that illumines, has broken Vala into pieces with his cry. Brihaspati drives upward the Bright Ones who speed our offerings; he shouts aloud as he leads them, loving they reply.

*eva pitre vishvadevaya vrshne yajnairvidhema namasa havirbhih.*

*brhaspate supraja viravanto vayam syama patayo rayinam.*

6. Thus to the Father, the universal Godhead, the Bull of the herds, may we dispose our sacrifices and submission and oblation; O Brihaspati, full of energy and rich in offspring, may we become masters of the felicities.

*sa idraja pratijanyani vishva shushmena tasthavabhi viryena.*

*brhaspatir yah subhrtam bibharti valguyati vandate purvabhajam.*

7. Verily is he King and conquers by his energy, by his heroic force all that is in the worlds that confront him, who bears Brihaspati in him well-contained and has the exultant dance and adores and gives him the first fruits of his enjoyment.

*sa itksheti sudhita okasi sve tasma ila pivate vishvadanim.*

*tasmai vishah svayameva namante yasminbrahma rajani purva eti.*

8. Yea, he dwells firmly seated in his proper home and for him Ila at all times grows in richness. Tho him all creatures of themselves submit, the King, he in whom the Soul-Power goes in front.

*apratito jayati sam dhanani pratijanyanyuta ya sajanya.*

*avasyave yo varivah krshnoti brahmane raja tamavanti deva h.*



9. None can assail him, he conquers utterly all the riches of the worlds which confront him and the world in which he dwells; he who for the Soul-Power that seeks its manifestation creates in himself that highest good, is cherished by the gods.

*indrashcha somam pibatam brhaspate asminyajne mandasana  
vrshanvasu.*

*a vam vishantvindavah svabhuvo asme rayim sarvaviram ni  
yachchatam .*

10. Thou, O Brihaspati, and Indra, drink the Soma-wine rejoicing in this sacrifice, lavishing substance. Let the powers of its delight enter into you and take perfect form, control in us a felicity full of every energy.

*brhaspata indra vardhatam nah sachasavam sumatirbhutvasme.*

*avishtam dhiyo jigrtam purandhirjajastamaryo vanushamaratih .*

11. O Brihaspati, O Indra, increase in us together and may that your perfection of mind be created in us; foster the thoughts, bring out the mind's multiple powers; destroy all poverties that they bring who seek to conquer the Aryan.

### COMMENTARY

Brihaspati, Brahmanaspati, Brahma are the three names of the god to whom the Rishi Vamadeva addresses this mystic hymn of praise. In the later Puranic theogonies Brihaspaiti and Brahma have long become separate deities. Brahma is the Creator, one of the Three who form the great Puranic Trinity; Brihaspati is a figure of no great importance, spiritual teacher of the gods and incidentally guardian of the planet Jupiter; Brahmanaspati, the middle term which once linked the two, has disappeared. To restore the physiognomy of the Vedic deity we have to reunite what has been disjoined and correct the values of the two separated terms in the light of the original Vedic conceptions.

*Brahman* in the Veda signifies ordinarily the Vedic Word or Mantra in its profoundest aspect as the expression of the intuition arising out of the depths of the soul or being. It is a voice of the rhythm which has created the worlds and creates perpetually. All world is expression or manifestation, creation by the



Word. Conscious Being luminously manifesting its contents in itself, of itself, *atman*, is the super-conscient; holding its contents obscurely in itself it is the subconscient. The higher, the self-luminous descends into the obscure, into the night, into darkness concealed in darkness, *tamah tamasa gulham*, where all is hidden in formless being owing to fragmentation of consciousness, *tucchyenabhvapihitam*. It arises again out of the Night by the Word to reconstitute in the conscient its vast unity, *tan mahinajayataikam*. This vast Being, this all-containing and all-formulating consciousness is Brahman. It is the Soul that emerges out of the subconscient in Man and rises towards the superconscient. And the word of creative Power welling upward out of the soul is also *brahman*.

The Divine, the Deva, manifests itself as conscious Power of the soul, creates the worlds by the Word out of the waters of the subconscient, *apraketam salilam sarvam*, - the inconscient ocean that was this all, as it is plainly termed in the great Hymn of Creation (10. 129). This power of the Deva is Brahma, the stress in the name falling more upon the conscious soul-power than upon the Word which expresses it. The manifestation of the different world-planes in the conscient human being culminates in the manifestation of the superconscient, the Truth and the Bliss, and this is the office of the supreme Word or Veda. Of this supreme Word Brihaspati is the master, the stress in this name falling upon the potency of the Word rather than upon the thought of the general soul-power which is behind it. Brihaspati gives the Word of knowledge, the rhythm of expression of the superconscient, to the gods and especially to Indra, the lord of Mind, when they work in man as "Aryan" powers for the great consummation. It is easy to see how these conceptions came to be specialised in the broader, but less subtle and profound Puranic symbolism into Brahma, the Creator, and Brihaspati, the teacher of the gods. In the name, Brahmanaspati, the two varying stresses are unified and equalised. It is the link-name between the general and the special aspects of the same deity.

Brihaspati is he who has established firmly the limits and definitions of the Earth, that is to say of the material consciousness. The existence out of which all formations are made is an obscure, fluid and indeterminate movement, - *salilam*, Water. The first necessity is to create a sufficiently stable formation out of this flux and running so as to form a basis for the life of the conscient. This Brihaspati does in the formation of the physical consciousness and its world, *sahasa*, by force, by a sort of mighty constraint upon the resistance of the subconscient. This great creation he effects by establishing the triple principle of mind, life and body, always present together and involved in each other or evolved out of each other in the world of the cosmic labour and fulfillment. The three together form the triple seat of Agni and there he works out the gradual work of accomplishment or perfection which is the object of the sacrifice. Brihaspati forms by sound, by his cry, *ravena*, for the Word is the cry of the soul



as it awakens to ever-new perceptions and formations. "He who established firmly by force the ends of the earth, Brihaspati in the triple seat of the fulfilment, by his cry."

On him, it is said, the ancient or pristine Rishis meditated; meditating, they became illumined in mind; illumined, they set him in front as the god of the ecstatic tongue, *mandra-jihvam*, the tongue that takes joy of the intoxicating wine of Soma, *mada*, *madhu*, of that which is the wave of sweetness, *madhuman urmih* (IX. II 0. II), hidden in the conscient existence and out of it progressively delivered. But of whom is there question? The seven divine Rishis, *rsayo divyah*, who fulfilling consciousness in each of its seven principles and harmonising them together superintend the evolution of the world, or the human fathers, *pitara manusyah*, who first discovered the higher knowledge and formulated for man the infinity of the Truth-Consciousness? Either may be intended, but the reference seems to be rather to the conquest of the Truth by the human fathers, the Ancients. The word *didhyana* in the Veda means both shining, becoming luminous, and thinking, meditating, fixing in the thought. It is constantly being used with the peculiar Vedic figure of a double or complex sense. In the first sense it must be connected with *viprah*, and the suggestion is that the Rishis became more and more luminous in thought by the triumphant force of Brihaspati until they grew into Illuminates, *viprah*. In the second it is connected with *dadhire* and suggests. that the Rishis, meditating on the intuitions that rise up from the soul with the cry of Brihaspati in the sacred and enlightening Word, holding them firmly in the thought, became illuminated in mind, open to the full inflow of the superconscient. They were thus able to bring into the front of the conscious being that activity of the soul-thoughts which works usually in the background, veiled, and to make it the leading activity of their nature. As a result Brihaspati in them became able to taste for them the bliss of existence, the wine of Immortality, the supreme Ananda. The formation of the definite physical consciousness is the first step, this awakening to the Ananda by the bringing forward in mind of the intuitive soul as the leader of our conscious activities is the consummation or, at least, the condition of the consummation.

The result is the formation of the Truth-Consciousness in man. The ancient Rishis attained to the most rapid vibration of the movement; the most full and swift streaming of the flux of consciousness which constitutes our active existence, no longer obscure as in the subconscious, but full of the joy of perfected consciousness, - not *apraketam* like the Ocean described in the Hymn of Creation, but *supraketam*. Thus they are described, *dhunetayah supraketam madantah*. With this attainment of the full rapidity of the activities of consciousness unified with its full light and bliss in the human mentality they have woven for the race by the web of these rapid, luminous and joyous perceptions the Truth-Consciousness, *rtam brhat*, which is the womb or birth-



place of this conscient being. For it is out of the superconscient that existence descends into the subconscient and carries with it that which emerges here as the individual human being, the conscious soul. The nature of this Truth-Consciousness is in itself this that it is abundant in its outflowings, *prasantam*, or, it may be, many-coloured in the variety of its harmonised qualities; it is rapid in its motion, *srpram*; by that luminous rapidity it triumphs over all that seeks to quell or break it, it is *adabdham*; above all it is wide, vast, infinite, *urvam*. In all these respects it is the opposite of the first limited movement which emerges out of the subconscient; for that is stunted and grey, slow and hampered, easily overcome and broken by the opposition of hostile powers, scanty and bounded in its scope. But this Truth-Consciousness manifested in man is capable of being again veiled from him by the insurgence of the powers that deny, the Vritras, Vala. The Rishi therefore prays to Brihaspati to guard it against that obscuration by the fullness of his soul-force.

The Truth-Consciousness is the foundation of the superconscient, the nature of which is the Bliss. It is the supreme of the supraconscient, *parama paravat*, from which the being has descended, the *parama parardha* of the Upanishads, the existence of Sachchidananda. It is to that highest existence that those arise out of this physical consciousness, *atah*, who like the ancient Rishis enter into contact with the Truth-Consciousness. They make it their seat and home, *ksaya*, *okas*. For in the hill of the physical being there are dug for the soul those abounding wells of sweetness which draw out of its hard rigidity the concealed Ananda; at the touch of the Truth the rivers of honey, the quick pourings of the wine of Immortality trickle and stream and break out into a flood of abundance over the whole extent of the human consciousness.

Thus Brihaspati, becoming manifest first of the gods out of the vastness of that Light of Truth-Consciousness, in that highest heavenly space of the supreme superconscient, *maho jyotisah parama vyoman*, presents himself in the full sevenfold aspect of our conscious being, multiply born in all the forms of the interplay of its seven principles ranging from the material to the purest spiritual, luminous with their sevenfold ray which lights all our surfaces and all our profundities, and with his triumphant cry dispels and scatters all powers of the Night, all encroachments of the Inconscient, all possible darknesses.

It is by the powers of the Word, by the rhythmic army of the soul-forces that Brihaspati brings all into expression and dispelling all the darknesses that encompass us makes an end of the Night. These are the "Brahma"s of the Veda, charged with the word, the *brahman*, the *mantra*; it is they in the sacrifice who raise heavenward the divine Rik, the Stubh or Stoma. *Rk*, connected with the Word *arka* which means light or illumination, is the Word considered as a power of realization in the illuminating consciousness; *stubh* is the Word considered as a power which affirms and confirms in the settled rhythm of things. That which



has to be expressed is realized in consciousness, affirmed, finally confirmed by the power of the Word. The "Brahma"s or Brahmana forces are the priests of the Word, the creators by the divine rhythm. It is by their cry that Brihaspati breaks Vala into fragments.

As Vritra is the enemy, the Dasyu, who holds back the flow of the sevenfold waters of conscient existence, - Vritra, the personification of the Inconscient, so Vala is the enemy, the Dasyu, who holds back in his hole, his cave, *bilam, guha*, the herds of the Light; he is the personification of the subconscious. Vala is not himself dark or inconscient, but a cause of darkness.

Rather his substance is of the light, *valasya gomatah, valasya govapusah*, but he holds the light in himself and denies its conscious manifestation. He has to be broken into fragments in order that the hidden lustres may be liberated. Their escape is expressed by the emergence of the Bright Ones, the herds of the Dawn, from the cavern below in the physical hill and their driving upward by Brihaspati to the heights of our being whither with them and by them we climb. He calls to them with the voice of the superconscient knowledge; they follow him with the response of the conscious intuition. They give in their course the impulsion to the activities which form the material of the sacrifice and constitute the offerings given to the gods and these also are carried upward till they reach the same divine goal.

This self-expressive Soul, Brihaspati, is the Purusha, the Father of all things; it is the universal Divinity; it is the Bull of the herds, the Master and fertilizer of all these luminous energies evolved or involved, active in the day or obscurely working in the night of things, which constitute the becoming or world-existence, *bhuvanam*. To the Purusha under the name of Brihaspati the Rishi would have us dispose in the order of a sacrifice all the materials of our being by sacrificial action in which they are given up to the All-Soul as acceptable ablations offered with adoration and surrender. By the sacrifice we shall become through the grace of this godhead full of heroic energy for the battle of life, rich in the offspring of the soul, masters of the felicities which are attained by divine enlightenment and right action.

For the soul's energy and overcoming force are perfected in the human being who bears in himself and is able to bear firmly this conscious Soul-Power brought forward as the leading agency in the nature, who arrives by it at a rapid and joyous movement of the inner activities as did the pristine sages, compasses that harmonious bound and gallop of the steed of Life within and adores always this godhead giving it the first fruits of results and enjoyments. By that energy he throws himself upon and masters all that comes to him in the births, the worlds, the planes of consciousness that open upon his perception in the progress of the being. He becomes the king, the *samrat*, ruler of his world-



environment.

For

such a soul attains to a firmly settled existence in its own proper home, the Truth-Consciousness, the infinite totality, and for it at all times Ila, the highest Word, premier energy of the Truth-Consciousness, she who is the direct revealing vision in knowledge and becomes in that knowledge the spontaneous self-attainment of the Truth of things in action, result and experience, - Ila grows perpetually in body and richness. To him all creatures of themselves incline, they submit to the Truth in him because it is one with the Truth in themselves. For the conscious Soul-Power that is the universal creator and realiser, leads in all his activities. It gives him the guidance of the Truth in his relations with all creatures and therefore he acts upon them with an entire and spontaneous mastery. This is the ideal state of man that the soul-force should lead him, Brihaspati, Brahma, the spiritual light and counsellor, and he realising himself as Indra, the royal divinity of action, should govern himself and all his environment in the right of their common Truth, *brahma rajani purva eti*.

For this Brahma, this creative Soul seeks to manifest and increase himself in the royalty of the human nature and he who attains to that royalty of light and power and creates in himself for Brahma that highest human good, finds himself always cherished, fostered, increased by all the divine cosmic powers who work for the supreme consummation. He wins all those possessions of the soul which are necessary for the royalty of the spirit, those that belong to his own plane of consciousness, and those that present themselves to him from other planes of consciousness. Nothing can assail or affect his triumphant progress.

Indra and Brihaspati are thus the two divine powers whose fullness in us and conscious possession of the Truth are the conditions of our perfection. Vamadeva calls on them to drink in this great sacrifice the wine of immortal Ananda, rejoicing in the intoxication of its ecstasies, pouring out abundantly the substance and riches of the spirit. Those outpourings of the superconscious beatitude must enter into the soul-force and there take being perfectly. Thus a felicity will be formed, a governed harmony, replete with all the energies and capacities of the perfected nature which is master of itself and its world.

So let Brihaspati and Indra increase in us and that state of right mentality which together they build will be manifested; for that is the final condition. Let them foster the growing thoughts and bring into expression those energies of the mental being which by an enriched and multiple thought become capable of the illumination and rapidity of the Truth-Consciousness. The powers that attack the Aryan fighter, would create in him poverties of mind and poverties of the emotive nature, all infelicities. Soul-force and mental-force increasing together, destroy all such poverty and insufficiency. Together they bring man to his crowning and his perfect kingdom.





**Ashvins, lord of bliss (RV 4.45)**

*esha sya bhanurudiyarti yujyate rathah parijma divo asya sanavi.*

*prkshaso asminmithuna adhi trayo drtisturiyo madhuno vi rapshate.*

1. 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.

*ud vam prkshaso madhumanta irate ratha ashvasa ushaso vyushtishu*

*apornuvantastama a parivrtam svarna shukram tanvanta a rajah .*

2. Full of honey upward rise the delight; upward horses and cars in the wide-shinings of the Dawn and they roll aside the veil of darkness that encompassed on every side and they extend the lower world into a shining form like that of the luminous heaven.

*madhvah pibatam madhupebhirasabhiruta priyam madhune  
yunjatham ratham.*

*a vartani madhuna jinvathasthaspatho drtim vahethe  
madhumantamashvina.*

3. Drink of the honey with your honey-drinking mouths, for the honey yoke your car beloved. With the honey you gladden the movements and its paths; full of honey, O Ashwins, is the skin that you bear.

*hamsaso ye vam madhumanto asridho hiranyaparna uhuva  
usharbudhah.*

*udapruto mandino mandinisprsho madhvo na makshah savanani  
gachchhathah*

4. Full of the honey are the swans that bear you, golden winged, waking with the Dawn, and they come not to hurt, they rain forth the waters, they are full of



rapture and touch that which holds the Rapture. Like bees to pouring of honey you come to the Soma-offerings.

*svadhvaraso madhumanto usra jarante prati vastorashvina.*

*yanniktahastastaranirvichakshanah somam sushava  
madhumantamadribhah.*

5. Full of the honey the fires lead well the sacrifice and they woo your brightness, O Ashwins, day by day, when one with purified hands, with a perfect vision, with power to go through to the goal, has pressed out with the pressing-stones the honeyed Soma-wine.

*akenipaso ahabhirdavidhvatah svarna shukram tanvanta arajah.*

*surashchidashvan yuyujana iyate vishvan anu svadhaya  
chetathaspathah.*

6. Drinking the wine near them, the fires ride and run and extend the lower world into a shining form like that of the luminous heaven. The Sun too goes yoking his steeds; by force of Nature's self-arranging you move consciously along all paths.

*pra vamavochamashvina dhiyandha rathah svashvo ajaro yo asti.*

*yena sadyah pari rajamsi yatho havishmantam taranim bhojamachchha*  
.

7. I have declared, O Ashwins, holding the Thought in me, your car that is undecaying and drawn by perfect steeds, -your car by which you move at once over all the worlds towards the enjoyment rich in offerings that makes through to the goal.

## COMMENTARY

The hymns of the Rig Veda addressed to the two shining Twins, like those addressed to the Ribhus, are full of symbolic expressions and unintelligible



without a firm clue to their symbolism. The three leading features of these hymns to the Ashwins are the praise of their chariot, their horses and their rapid all-pervading movement; their seeking of honey and their joy in the honey, *madhu*, and the satisfying delights that they carry in their car; and their close association with the Sun, with Surya the daughter of the Sun and with the Dawn.

The Ashwins like the other gods descend from the Truth-Consciousness, the *rtam*; they are born or manifested from Heaven, from Dyau, the pure Mind; their movement pervades all the worlds, - the effect of their action ranges from the body through the vital being and the thought to the superconscious Truth. It commences indeed from the ocean, from the vague of the being as it emerges out of the subconscious and they conduct the soul over the flood of these waters and prevent its foundering on its voyage. They are therefore *nasatya*, lords of the movement, leaders of the journey or voyage.

They help man with the Truth which comes to them especially by association with the Dawn, with Surya, lord of the Truth, and with Surya, his daughter, but they help him more characteristically with the delight of being. They are lords of bliss, *Subhaspati*; their car or movement is loaded with the satisfactions of the delight of being in all its planes, they bear the skin full of the overflowing honey; they seek the honey, the sweetness, and fill all things with it. They are therefore effective powers of the Ananda which proceeds out of the Truth-Consciousness and which manifesting itself variously in all the three worlds maintains man in his journey. Hence their action is in all the worlds. They are especially riders or drivers of the Horse, Ashwins, as their name indicates, - they use the vitality of the human being as the motive-force of the journey: but also they work in the thought and lead it to the Truth. They give health, beauty, wholeness to the body; they are the divine physicians. Of all the gods they are the most ready to come to man and to create for him ease and joy, *agamistha*, *subhaspati*. For this is their peculiar and perfect function. They are essentially lords of weal, of bliss, *subhaspati*.

This character of the Ashwins is brought out with a continual emphasis by Vamadeva in the present hymn. In almost every verse occurs with a constant iteration the words *madhu*, *madhuman*, honey, honied. It is a hymn to the sweetness of existence; it is a chant of the delight of being. The great Light of lights, the Sun of Truth, the illumination of the Truth-Consciousness is rising up out of the movement of life to create the illumined Mind, *Swar*, which completes the evolution of the lower triple world. *Esa sya bhanur udiyarti*. By this rising of Sun in man, the full movement of the Ashwins becomes possible; for by the Truth comes the realized Delight, the heavenly beatitude. Therefore, the chariot of the Ashwins is being yoked upon the height of this Dyau, the high level or plane of the resplendent mind. That chariot is all-pervading; its motion goes



everywhere; its speed runs freely on all planes of our consciousness. *Yujyate rathah parijma divo asya sanavi.*

The full all-pervading movement of the Ashwins brings with it the fullness of all the possible satisfactions of the delight of being. This is expressed symbolically in the language of the Veda by saying that in their car are found the satisfactions, *prksasah*, in three pairs, *prksaso asmin mithuna adhi trayah*. The word *prksa*, is rendered food in the ritual interpretation like the kindred word *prayas*. The root means pleasure, fullness, satisfaction, and may have the material sense of a "delicacy" or satisfying food and the psychological sense of a delight, pleasure or satisfaction. The satisfactions or delicacies which are carried in the car of the Ashwins are, then, in three pairs; or the phrase may simply mean, they are three but closely associated together. In any case, the reference is to the three kinds of satisfaction or pleasure which correspond to the three movements or worlds of our progressive consciousness, - satisfactions of the body, satisfactions of vitality, satisfactions of the mind. If they are in three pairs, then we must understand that on each plane there is a double action of the delight corresponding to the double and united twinhood of the Ashwins. It is difficult in the Veda itself to distinguish between these brilliant and happy Twins or to discover what each severally represents. We have no such indication as is given us in the case of the three Ribhus. But perhaps the Greek names of these two Dioskouroi, *divo napata*, sons of Heaven, contain a clue. Kastor, the name of the elder, seems to be Kashitri, the Shining One; Poludeukes may possibly be Purudansas, a name which occurs in the Veda as an epithet of the Ashwins, the Manifold in activity. If so, the twin birth of the Ashwins recalls the constant Vedic dualism of Power and Light, Knowledge and Will, Consciousness and Energy, *go*, and *asva*. In all the satisfactions brought to us by the Ashwins these two elements are inseparably united; where the form is that of the Light or Consciousness, there Power and Energy are contained; where the form is that of the Power or Energy, there Light and Consciousness are contained.

But these three forms of satisfaction are not all that their chariot holds for us; there is something else, a fourth, a skin full of honey and out of this skin the honey breaks and overflows on every side. *Drtis turiyo madhuno vi rapsate*. Mind, life and body, these are three; *turiya*, the fourth plane of our consciousness, is the superconscient, the Truth-Consciousness. The Ashwins bring with them a skin, *drti*, literally a thing cut or torn, a partial formation out of the Truth-Consciousness to contain the honey of the superconscient Beatitude; but it cannot contain it; that unconquerably abundant and infinite sweetness breaks out and overflows everywhere drenching with delight the whole of our existence.

With that honey the three pairs of satisfactions, mental, vital, bodily, are impregnated by this all-pervasive overflowing plenty and they become full of its



sweetness, *madhumantah*. And so becoming, at once they begin to move upward. Touched by the divine delight all our satisfactions in this lower world soar upward irresistibly attracted towards the superconscient, towards the Truth, towards the Beatitude. And with them, for, secretly or openly, consciously or subconsciously it is the delight of being that is the leader of our activities, - all the chariots and horses of these gods take the same soaring upward movement. All the various movements of our being, all the forms of Force that give them their impulsion, all follow the ascending light of Truth towards its home. *Ud vam prksaso madhumanta irate, ratha asvasa usaso vyustisu.*

“In the wide-shinings of the Dawn” they rise; for Dawn is the illumination of the Truth rising upon the mentality to bring the day of full consciousness into the darkness or half-lit night of our being. She comes as Dakshina, the pure intuitive discernment on which Agni the God-force in us feeds when he aspires towards the Truth or as Sarama, the discovering intuition, who penetrates into the cave of the subconscious where the niggard lords of sense-action have hidden the radiant herds of the Sun and gives information to Indra. Then comes the lord of luminous Mind and breaks open the cave and drives upward the herds, *udajat*, upwards towards the vast Truth-Consciousness, the own home of the gods. Our conscious existence is a hill (*adri*) with many successive levels and elevations, *sanuni*, the cave of the subconscious is below; we climb upwards towards the godhead of the Truth and Bliss where are the seats of Immortality, *yatramrtasa asate*.

By this upward movement of the chariot of the Ashwins with its burden of uplifted and transformed satisfactions the veil of Night that encompasses the worlds of being in us is rolled away. All these worlds, mind, life, body, are opened to the rays of the Sun of Truth. This lower world in us, *rajas*, is extended and shaped by this ascending movement of all its powers and satisfactions into the very brightness of the luminous intuitive mind, *Swar*, which receives directly the higher Light. The mind, the act, the vital, emotional, substantial existence, all becomes full of the glory and the intuition, the power and the light of the divine Sun, - *tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya*. The lower mental existence is transformed into an image and reflection of the higher Divine. *Apornuvantas tama a parivrtam, svar na Sukram tanvanta a rajah.*

This verse closes the general description of the perfect and final movement of the Ashwins. In the third the Rishi Vamadeva turns to his own ascension, his own offering of the Soma, his voyage and sacrifice; he claims for it their beatific and glorifying action. The mouths of the Ashwins are made to drink of the sweetness; in his sacrifice, then, let them drink of it. *Madhvah pibatam madhupebhir dsabhih*. Let them yoke their chariot for the honey, their chariot beloved of men; *uta priyam madhune junjatham ratham*. For man's movement, his progressive activity, is made by them glad in all its paths with that very



honey and sweetness of the Ananda. *A vartanim madhuna jinvathas pathah*. For they bear the skin full and overflowing with its honey. *Drtim vahethe madbumantam asvina*. By the action of the Ashwins man's progress towards the beatitude becomes itself beatific; all his travail and struggle and labour grows full of a divine delight. As it is said in the Veda that by Truth is the progress towards the Truth, that is to say, by the growing law of the Truth in the mental and physical consciousness we arrive finally beyond mind and body to the superconscious Truth, so here it is indicated that by Ananda is the progress towards the Ananda, -by a divine delight growing in all our members, in all our activities we arrive at the superconscious beatitude.

In the upward movement the horses that draw the chariot of the Ashwins change into birds, into swans, *hamsasah*. The Bird in the Veda is the symbol, very frequently, of the soul liberated and upsoaring, at other times of energies so liberated and upsoaring, winging upwards towards the heights of our being, winging widely with a free flight, no longer involved in the ordinary limited movement or labouring gallop of the Life-energy, the Horse, *asva*. Such are the energies that draw the free car of the Lords of Delight, when there dawns on us the Sun of the Truth. These winged movements are full of the honey showered from the overflowing skin, *madhumantah*. They are unassailable, *asridhah*, they come to no hurt in their flight; or,, the sense may be, they make no false or hurtful movement. And they are golden-winged, *hiranyaparnah*. Gold is the symbolic colour of the light of Surya. The wings of these energies are the full, satisfied, attaining movement, *parna*, of his luminous knowledge.

For these are the birds that awake with Dawn; these are the winged energies that come forth from their nests when the feet of the daughter of Heaven press the levels of our human mentality, *divo asya sanavi*. Such are the swans that bear the swift-riding Twins. *Hamsaso ye vam madbumanto asridho hiranyaparna uhuva usarbudhah*.

Full of the honey these winged energies shower on us as they rise the abundance of the waters of heaven, the full outpouring of the high mental consciousness; they are instinct with ecstasy, with rapture, with the intoxication of the immortal wine; and they touch, they come into conscious contact with that superconscious being which is eternally in possession of the ecstasy, rapturous for ever with its divine intoxication. *Udapruto mandino mandinisprah*. Drawn by them the Lords of delight come to the Rishi's Soma-offering like bees to tricklings of honey; *madhvo na maksah savanani gacchathah*. Makers themselves of the sweetness, they like the bees seek whatever sweetness can serve them as their material for more delight.

In the sacrifice the same movement of general illumination already described as the result of the ascending flight of the Ashwins is now described as being



effected by the aid of the fires of Agni. For the flames of the Will, the divine Force burning up in the soul, are also drenched with the overflowing sweetness and therefore they perform perfectly from day to day their great office of leading the sacrifice progressively to its goal. For that progress they woo with their flaming tongues the daily visitation of the brilliant Ashwins who are bright with the light of the intuitive illuminations and uphold them with their thought of flashing energy. *Svadhvarso madhumanto agnaya usra jarante prati vastor asvina.*

This aspiration of Agni happens when the Sacrificer with pure hands, with a perfectly discerning vision, with power in his soul to travel to the end of its pilgrimage, to the goal of the sacrifice through all obstacles, breaking all opposers, has pressed out the immortalising wine with the pressing-stones and that too becomes full of the honey of the Ashwins. *Yan niktahastas taranir vicaksanah, somam susava madhumantam adribhih.* For the individual's delight in things is met by the Ashwins' triple satisfactions and by the fourth, the delight pouring from the Truth. The cleansed hands of the Sacrificer, *niktahastah*, are possibly symbolic of the purified physical being; the power comes from a fulfilled life-energy; the force of clear mental vision, *vicaksana*, is the sign of the truth-illuminated mind. These are the conditions in mind, life and body for the overflowing of the honey over the triple satisfactions of the Ashwins.

When the sacrificer has thus pressed out the honey-filled delight of things in his sacrifice, the flames of the Will are able to drink them from near, they are not compelled to bring them meagrely or with pain from a distant and hardly accessible plane of consciousness. Therefore, drinking immediately and freely, they become full of an exultant force and swiftness and run and race about over the whole field of our being to extend and build up the lower consciousness into the shining image of the world of free and luminous Mind. *Akenipaso ahabhir davidhvatah, svar na Sukram tanvanta a rajah.* The formula used is repeated without variations from the second Rik; but here it is the flames of the Will full of the fourfold satisfaction that do the work. There the free upsoaring of the gods by the mere touch of the Light and without effort; here the firm labour and aspiration of man in his sacrifice. For then it is by Time, by the day, that the work is perfected, *ahabhih*, by successive dawns of the Truth each with its victory over the night, by the unbroken succession of the sisters of which we have had mention in the hymn to the divine Dawn. Man cannot seize or hold at once all that the illumination brings to him; it has to be repeated constantly so that he may grow in the light.

But not only the fires of the Will are at work to transform the lower consciousness. The Sun of Truth yokes also his lustrous coursers and is in movement; *surascid asvan yuyujana iyate.* The Ashwins too take knowledge for the human consciousness of all the paths of its progress so that it may effect a



complete, harmonious and many-sided movement. This movement advancing in many paths is combined in the light of the divine knowledge by the spontaneous self-arranging action of Nature which she assumes when the will and the knowledge are wedded in the perfect harmony of a fully self-conscious, intuitively guided action. *Visvan anu svadhaya cetathas pathah.*

Vamadeva closes his hymn. He has been able to hold firmly the shining Thought with its high illumination and has expressed in himself by the shaping and fixing power of the Word the chariot, that is to say, the immortal movement of the delight of the Ashwins; the movement of a bliss that does not fade or grow old or exhaust itself, - it is ageless and undecaying, *ajarah*, - because it is drawn by perfect and liberated energies and not by the limited and soon exhausted, soon recalcitrant horses of the human vitality. *Pra vam avocam asvina dhiyamhdhah, rathah svasvo ajaro yo asti.* In this movement they traverse in a moment all the worlds of the lower consciousness, covering it with their speeding delight, and so arrive to that universal enjoyment in man full of his offering of the Soma-wine by which they can lead him, puissantly entering into it, through all opposers and to the great goal. *Yena sadyah pari rajamsi yatho havismantam taranim bhojam accha.*





**Ribhus, artisans of immortality (RV 1.20)**

***ayam devaya janmane stomo viprebhiraaya akari ratnadhatamah***

1. Lo, the affirmation made for the divine Birth with the breath of the mouth by illumined minds, that gives perfectly the bliss;

***ya indraya vachoyuja tatakshuh manasa hari shamibhih yajnam ashata***

2. 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 accomplishings of the work.

***takshannasatyabhyam parijmanam sukham ratham***

***takshandhenum sabardugham***

3. They fashioned for the twin lords of the voyage their happy car of the all-pervading movement, they fashioned the fostering cow that yields the sweet milk.

***yuvana pitara punah satyamantra rjuyavah rbhavo vishtyakrata***

4. O Ribhus, in your pervasion you made young again the Parents, you who seek the straight path and have the Truth in your mentalisings.

***sam vo madaso agmatendrena cha marutvata adityebhih cha rajabhih***

5. The raptures of the wine come to you entirely, to you with Indra companioned by the Maruts and with the Kings, the sons of Aditi.

***uta tyam chamasam navam tvashtuh devasya nishkrtam***

***akarta chaturah punahh***



6. And this bowl of Twashtri new and perfected you made again into four.

*te no ratnani dhattana trira saptani sunvate ekam ekam sushastibhih*

7. So establish for us the thrice seven ecstasies, each separately by perfect expressings of them.

*adharayanta vahnayo abhajanta sukrtiyaya bhagam deveshu yajniyam.*

8. They sustained and held in them, they divided by perfection in their works the sacrificial share of the enjoyment among the Gods.

### COMMENTARY

The Ribhus, it has been suggested, are rays of the Sun. And it is true that like Varuna, Mitra, Bhaga and Aryaman they are powers of the solar Light, the Truth. But their special character in the Veda is that they are artisans of Immortality. They are represented as human beings who have attained to the condition of godhead by power of knowledge and perfection in their works. Their function is to aid Indra in raising man towards the same state of divine light and bliss which they themselves have earned as their own divine privilege. The hymns addressed to them in the Veda are few and to the first glance exceedingly enigmatical; for they are full of certain figures and symbols always repeated. But once the principal clues of the Veda are known, they become on the contrary exceedingly clear and simple and present a coherent and interesting idea which sheds a clear light on the Vedic gospel of immortality.

The Ribhus are powers of the Light who have descended into Matter and are there born as human faculties aspiring to become divine and immortal. In this character they are called children of Sudhanwan, a patronymic which is merely a parable of their birth from the full capacities of Matter touched by the luminous energy. But in their real nature they are descended from this luminous Energy and are sometimes so addressed, "Offspring of Indra, grandsons of luminous Force" (IV.37.4). For Indra, the divine mind in man, is born out of luminous Force as is Agni out of pure Force, and from Indra the divine Mind spring the human aspirations after Immortality.

The names of the three Ribhus are, in the order of their birth, *rbhu* or *rbhuksan*, the skilful Knower or the Shaper in knowledge, *vibhva* or *vibhu*, the Pervading,



the self-diffusing, and *vaja*, the Plenitude. Their names indicate their special nature and function, but they are really a trinity, and therefore, although usually termed the Ribhus, they are also called the Vibhus and Vajas. Ribhu, the eldest is the first in man who begins to shape by his thoughts and works the forms of immortality; Vibhwa gives pervasiveness to this working; Vaja, the youngest, supplies the plenitude of the divine light and substance by which the complete work can be done. These works and formations of immortality they effect, it is continually repeated, by the force of Thought, with the mind for field and material; they are done with power; they are attended by a perfection in the creative and effective act, *svapasyaya*, *sukrtyaya*, which is the condition of the working out of Immortality. These formations of the artisans of Immortality are, as they are briefly summarised in the hymn before us, the horses of Indra, the car of the Ashwins, the Cow that gives the sweet milk, the youth of the universal Parents, the multiplication into four of the one drinking-bowl of the gods originally fashioned by Twashtri, the Framer of things.

The hymn opens with an indication of its objective. It is an affirmation of the power of the Ribhus made for the divine Birth, made by men whose minds have attained to illumination and possess that energy of the Light from which the Ribhus were born. It is made by the breath of the mouth, the life-power in the world. Its object is to confirm in the human soul the entire delight of the Beatitude, the thrice seven ecstasies of the divine Life. This divine Birth is represented by the Ribhus who, once human, have become immortal. By their accomplishings of the work, the great work of upward human evolution which is the summit of the world-sacrifice, - they have gained in that sacrifice their divine share and privilege along with the divine powers. They are the sublimated human energies of formation and upward progress who assist the gods in the divinising of man. And of all their accomplishings that which is central is the formation of the two brilliant horses of Indra, the horses yoked by speech to their movements, yoked by the Word and fashioned by the mind. For the free movement of the luminous mind, the divine mind in man, is the condition of all other immortalizing works.

The second work of the Ribhus is to fashion the chariot of the Ashwins, lords of the human journey, - the happy movement of the Ananda in man which pervades with its action all his worlds or planes of being, bringing health, youth, strength, wholeness to the physical man, capacity of enjoyment and action to the vital, glad energy of the light to the mental being, - in a word, the force of the pure delight of being in all his members.

The third work of the Ribhus is to fashion the cow who gives the sweet milk. It is said elsewhere that this cow has been delivered out of its covering skin, - the veil of Nature's outward movement and action, - by the Ribhus. The fostering cow herself is she of the universal forms and universal impetus of movement,



*visvajuvam visvarupam*, in other words she is the first Radiance, Aditi, the infinite Consciousness of the infinite conscious Being which is the mother of the worlds. That consciousness is brought out by the Ribhus from the veiling movement of nature and a figure of her is fashioned here in us by them. She is, by the action of the powers of the duality, separated from her offspring, the soul in the lower world; the Ribhus restore it to constant companionship with its infinite mother.

Another great work of the Ribhus is - in the strength of their previous deeds, of the light of Indra, the movement of the Ashwins, the full yield of the fostering Cow - to restore youth to the aged Parents of the world, Heaven and Earth. Heaven is the mental consciousness, Earth the physical. These in their union are represented as lying long -old and prostrate like fallen sacrificial posts, worn-out and suffering. The Ribhus, it is said, ascend to the house of the Sun where he lives in the unconcealed splendour of his Truth and there slumbering for twelve days afterwards traverse the heaven and the earth, filling them with abundant rain of the streams of Truth, nourishing them, restoring them to youth and Vigour. They pervade heaven with their workings, they bring divine increase to the mentality, they give to it and the physical being a fresh and young and immortal movements. For from the home of the Truth they bring with them the perfection of that which is the condition of their work, the movement in the straight path of the Truth and the Truth itself with its absolute effectivity in all the thoughts and words of the mentality. Carrying this power with them in their pervading entry into the lower world, they pour into it the immortal essence.

It is the wine of that immortal essence with its ecstasies which they win by their works and bring with them to man in his sacrifice. And with them come and sit Indra and the Maruts, the divine Mind and its Thought-forces, and the four great Kings, sons of Aditi, children of the Infinite, Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, the purity and vastness of the Truth-Consciousness, its law of love and light and harmony, its power and aspiration, its pure and happy enjoyment of things.

And there at the sacrifice the gods drink in the fourfold bowl, *chamasam chaturvayam*, the pourings of the nectar. For Twashtri, the Framer of things, has given man originally only a single bowl, the physical consciousness, the physical body in which to offer the delight of existence to the gods. The Ribhus, powers of luminous knowledge, take it as renewed and perfected by Twashtri's latter workings and build up in him from the material of the four planes three other bodies, vital, mental and the causal or ideal body.

Because they have made this fourfold cup of bliss and enabled him thereby to live on the plane of the Truth-Consciousness they are able to establish in the perfected human being the thrice seven ecstasies of the supreme existence poured into the mind, vitality and body. Each of these they can give perfectly by



## Explaining the Gods

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the full expression of its separate absolute ecstasy even in the combination of the whole.

The Ribhus have power to support and contain all these floods of the delight of being in the human consciousness; and they are able to divide it in the perfection of their works among the manifested gods, to each god his sacrificial share. For such perfect division is the whole condition of the effective sacrifice, the perfect work.

Such are the Ribhus and they are called to the human sacrifice to fashion for man the things of immortality even as they fashioned them for themselves. "He becomes full of plenitude and strength for the labour, he becomes a Rishi by power of self expression, he becomes a hero and a smiter hard to pierce in the battles, he holds in himself increase of bliss and entire energy whom Vaja and Vibhwa, the Ribhus foster.... For you are seers and thinkers clear-discerning; as such with this thought of our soul we declare to you our knowledge. Do you in your knowledge moving about our thoughts fashion for us all human enjoyings, - luminous plenitude and fertilizing force and supreme felicity. Here issue, here felicity, here a great energy of inspiration fashion for us in your delight. Give to us, O Ribhus, that richly-varied plenitude by which we shall awaken in our consciousness to things beyond ordinary men."





## Vishnu, the all-pervading godhead (RV 1.154)

*vishnornu kam viryani pra vocham yah parthivani vimame rajamsi*

*yo askabhayaduttadam sadhadtham vichakramanastredhorugayah*

1. Of Vishnu now I declare the mighty works, who has measured out the earthly worlds and that higher seat of our self-accomplishing he supports, he the wide-moving, in the threefold steps of his universal movement.

*pra tadvishnuh stavate viryena mrgo na bhimah kucharo girishtha.*

*yasyorushu trishu vikramaneshvadhikshiyanti bhuvanani vishva.*

2. That Vishnu affirms on high by his mightiness and he is like a terrible lion that ranges in the difficult places, yea, his lair is on the mountain-tops, he in whose three wide movements all the worlds find their dwelling-place.

*pra vishnave shushametu manma girikshitu urugayaya vrshe*

*ya idam dirgham prayatam sadhasthameko vimame gribhiritpadebhih.*

3. Let our strength and our thought go forward to Vishnu the all-pervading, the wide-moving Bull whose dwelling- place is on the mountain, he who being One has measured all this long and far-extending seat of our self-accomplishing by only three of his strides.

*yasya tripurna madhuna padanyakshiyamanasvadhaya madanti*

*ya u tridhatu prthivimuta dyameko dadhara bhuvanani vishva.*

4. 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.

*tadasya priyamabhi patho ashyam naro yatra devayavo madanti.*



*urukramasya sa hi bandhurittha vishnoh pade parame madhva utsah.*

5. May I attain to and enjoy that goal of his movement, the Delight, where souls that seek the godhead have the rapture; for there in that highest step of the wide-moving Vishnu is that Friend of men who is the fount of the sweetness.

*ta vam vastunyushmasi gamadhyai yatra gavo bhurishrnga ayasah.*

*atraha tadurugayasya vrshnah paramam padamava bhati bhuri.*

6. Those are the dwellings-places of ye twain which we desire as the goal of our journey, where the many-horned herds of Light go traveling; the highest step of wide-moving Vishnu shines down on us here in its manifold vastness.

## COMMENTARY

The deity of this hymn is Vishnu the all-pervading, who in the Rig-veda has a close but covert connection and almost an identity with the other deity exalted in the later religion, Rudra. Rudra is a fierce and violent godhead with a beneficent aspect which approaches the supreme blissful reality of Vishnu; Vishnu's constant friendliness to man and his helping gods is shadowed by an aspect of formidable violence, - "like a terrible lion ranging in evil and difficult places", - which is spoken of in terms more ordinarily appropriate to Rudra. Rudra is the father of the vehemently-battling Maruts; Vishnu is hymned in the last Sukta of the fifth Mandala under the name of Evaya Marut as the source from which they sprang, that which they become, and himself identical with the unity and totality of their embattled forces. Rudra is the Deva or Deity ascending in the cosmos, Vishnu the same Deva or Deity helping and evoking the powers of the ascent.

It was a view long popularized by European scholars that the greatness of Vishnu and Shiva in the -Puranic theogonies was a later development and that in the Veda these gods have a quite minor position and are inferior to Indra and Agni. It has even become a current opinion among many scholars that Shiva was a later conception borrowed from the Dravidians and represents a partial conquest of the Vedic religion by the indigenous culture it had invaded. These errors arise inevitably as part of the total misunderstanding of Vedic thought for which the old Brahmanic ritualism is responsible and to which European scholarship by the exaggeration of a minor and external element in the Vedic mythology has only given a new and yet more misleading form.



The importance of the Vedic gods has not to be measured by the number of hymns devoted to them or by the extent to which they are invoked in the thoughts of the Rishis, but by the functions which they perform. Agni and Indra to whom the majority of the Vedic hymns are addressed, are not greater than Vishnu and Rudra, but the functions which they fulfill in the internal and external world were the most active, dominant and directly effective for the psychological discipline of the ancient Mystics; this alone is the reason of their predominance. The Maruts, children of Rudra, are not divinities superior to their fierce and mighty Father; but they have many hymns addressed to them and are far more constantly mentioned in connection with other gods, because the function they fulfilled was of a constant and immediate importance in the Vedic discipline. On the other hand, Vishnu, Rudra, Brahmanaspati, the Vedic originals of the later Puranic Triad, Vishnu-Shiva-Brahma provide the conditions of the Vedic work and assist it from behind the more present and active gods, but are less close to it and in appearance less continually concerned in its daily movements.

Brahmanaspati is the creator by the Word; he calls light and visible cosmos out of the darkness of the inconscient ocean and speeds the formations of conscious being upward to their supreme goal. It is from this creative aspect of Brahmanaspati that the later conception of Brahma the Creator arose.

For the upward movement of Brahmanaspati's formations Rudra supplies the force. He is named in the Veda the Mighty One of Heaven, but he begins his work upon the earth and gives effect to the sacrifice on the five planes of our ascent. 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; intolerant of defect and stumbling he is the most terrible of the gods, the one of whom alone the Vedic Rishis have any real fear. Agni, the Kumara, prototype of the Puranic Skanda, is on earth the child of this force of Rudra. The Maruts, vital powers which make fight for themselves by violence, are Rudra's children. Agni and the Maruts are the leaders of the fierce struggle upward from Rudra's first earthly, obscure creation to the heavens of thought, the luminous worlds. But this violent and mighty Rudra who breaks down all defective formations and groupings of outward and inward life, has also a benigner aspect. He is the supreme healer. Opposed, he destroys; called on for aid and propitiated he heals all wounds and all evil and all sufferings. The force that battles is his gift, but also the final peace and joy. In these aspects of the Vedic god are all the primitive materials necessary for the evolution of the Puranic Shiva-Rudra, the destroyer and healer, the auspicious and terrible, the Master of the force that acts in the worlds and the Yogin who enjoys the supreme liberty and peace.

For the formations of Brahmanaspati's word, for the actions of Rudra's force Vishnu supplies the necessary static elements, - Space, the ordered movements of the worlds, the ascending levels, the highest goal. He has taken three strides



and in the space created by the three strides has established all the worlds. In these worlds he the all-pervading dwells and gives less or greater room to the action and movements of the gods. When Indra would slay Vritra, he first prays to Vishnu, his friend and comrade in the great struggle (1.22.19), "O Vishnu, pace out in thy movement with an utter wideness", (IV.18.11), and in that wideness he destroys Vritra who limits, Vritra who covers. The supreme step of Vishnu, his highest seat, is the triple world of bliss and light, *paramam padam*, which the wise ones see extended in heaven like a shining eye of vision (1.22.20); it is this highest seat of Vishnu that is the goal of the Vedic journey. Here again the Vedic Vishnu is the natural precursor and sufficient origin of the Puranic Narayana, Preserver and Lord of Love.

In the Veda indeed its fundamental conception forbids the Puranic arrangement of the supreme Trinity and the lesser gods. To the Vedic Rishis there was only one universal Deva of whom Vishnu, Rudra, Brahmanaspati, Agni, Indra, Vayu, Mitra, Varuna are all alike forms and cosmic aspects. Each of them is in himself the whole Deva and contains all the other gods. It was the full emergence in the Upanishads of the idea of this supreme and only Deva, left in the Riks vague and undefined and some- times even spoken of in the neuter as That or the one sole existence, the ritualistic limitation of the other gods and the progressive precision of their human or personal aspects under the stress of a growing mythology that led to their degradation and the enthronement of the less used and more general names and forms, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, in the final Puranic formulation of the Hindu theogony.

In this hymn of Dirghatamas Auchathya to the all-pervading Vishnu it is his significant activity, it is the greatness of Vishnu's three strides that is celebrated. We must dismiss from our minds the ideas proper to the later mythology. We have nothing to do here with the dwarf Vishnu, the Titan Bali and the three divine strides which took possession of Earth, Heaven and the sunless subterrestrial worlds of Patala. The three strides of Vishnu in the Veda are clearly defined by Dirghatamas as earth, heaven and the triple principle, *tridhatu*. It is this triple principle beyond Heaven or superimposed upon it as its highest level, *nakasya prsthe* (I. 125.5), which is the supreme stride or supreme seat of the all-pervading deity.

Vishnu is the wide-moving one. He is that which has gone abroad, - as it is put in the language of the Isha Upanishad, *sa paryagat*, - triply extending himself as Seer, Thinker and Former, in the superconscient Bliss, in the heaven of mind, in the earth of the physical consciousness, *tredha vicakramanah*. In those three strides he has measured out, he has formed in all their extension the earthly worlds; for in the Vedic idea the material world which we inhabit is only one of several steps leading to and supporting the vital and mental worlds beyond. In those strides he supports upon the earth and mid-world, -the earth the material,



the mid-world the vital realms of Vayu, Lord of the dynamic Life-principle, - the triple heaven and its three luminous summits, *trini rocana*. These heavens the Rishi describes as the higher seat of the fulfilling. Earth, the mid-world and heaven are the triple place of the conscious being's progressive self-fulfilling, *trisadhastha* (I. 1 56.5), earth the lower seat, the vital world the middle, heaven the higher. All these are contained in the threefold movement of Vishnu.

But there is more; there is also the world where the self- fulfillment is accomplished, Vishnu's highest stride. In the second verse the seer speaks of it simply as "that". "That" Vishnu, moving yet forward in his third pace affirms or firmly establishes, *pra stavate*, by his divine might. Vishnu is then described in a language which hints at his essential identity with the terrible Rudra, the fierce and dangerous Lion of the worlds who begins in the evolution as the Master of the animal, Pashupati, and moves upward on the mountain of being on which he dwells, ranging through more and more difficult and inaccessible places, till he stands upon the summits. Thus in three wide movements of Vishnu all the five worlds and their creatures have their habitation. Earth, heaven and "that" world of bliss are the three strides. Between earth and heaven is the Antariksha, the vital worlds, literally "the intervening habitation". Between heaven and the world of bliss is another vast Antariksha or intervening habitation, Maharloka, the world of the superconscient Truth of things.

The force and the thought of man, the force that proceeds from Rudra the Mighty and the thought that proceeds from Brahmanaspati, the creative Master of the Word, have to go forward in the great journey for or towards this Vishnu who stands at the goal, on the summit, on the peak of the mountain. His is this wide universal movement; he is the Bull of the world who enjoys and fertilizes all the energies of force and all the trooping herds of the thought. This far-flung extended space which appears to us as the world of our self-fulfillment, as the triple altar of the great sacrifice has been so measured out, so formed by only three strides of that almighty Infinite.

All the three are full of the honey-wine of the delight of existence. All of them this Vishnu fills with his divine joy of being. By that they are eternally maintained and they do not waste or perish, but in the self-harmony of their natural movement have always the unfailling ecstasy, the imperishable intoxication of their wide and limitless existence. Vishnu maintains them unfaillingly, preserves them imperishably. He is the One, he alone is, the sole-existing Godhead, and he holds in his being the triple divine principle to which we attain in the world of bliss, earth where we have our foundation and heaven also which we touch by the mental person within us. All the five worlds he upholds." The *tridhatu*, the triple principle or triple material of existence, is the Sachchidananda of the Vedanta; in the ordinary language of the Veda it is *vasu*, substance, *urj*, abounding force of our being, *priyam* or *mayas*, delight and love in the very



essence of our existence. Of these three things all that exists is constituted and we attain to their fullness when we arrive at the goal of our journey.

That goal is Delight, the last of Vishnu's three strides. The Rishi takes up the indefinite word "*tat*" by which he first vaguely indicated it; it signified the delight that is the goal of Vishnu's movement. It is the Ananda which for man in his ascent is a world in which he tastes divine delight, possesses the full energy of infinite consciousness, realises his infinite existence. There is that high-placed source of the honey-wine of existence of which the three strides of Vishnu are full. There the souls that seek the godhead live in the utter ecstasy of that wine of sweetness. There in the supreme stride, in the highest seat of wide-moving Vishnu is the fountain of the honey-wine, the source of the divine sweetness, - for that which dwells there is the God-head, the Deva, the perfect Friend and Lover of the souls that aspire to him, the unmoving and utter reality of Vishnu to which the wide-moving God in the cosmos ascends.

These are the two, Vishnu of the movement here, the eternally stable, bliss-enjoying Deva there, and it is those supreme dwelling places of the Twain, it is the triple world of Sachchidananda which we desire as the goal of this long journey, this great upward movement. It is thither that the many-horned herds of the conscious Thought, the conscious Force are moving - that is the goal, that is their resting-place. There in those worlds, gleaming down on us here, is the vast, full, illimitable shining of the supreme stride, the highest seat of the wide-moving Bull, master and leader of all those many-horned herds, - Vishnu the all-pervading, the cosmic Deity, the Lover and Friend of our souls, the Lord of the transcendent existence and the transcendent delight.





## Soma, lord of delight (RV 9.83)

*pavitram te vitatam brahmanaspate prabhurgatrani paryeshi  
vishvatah.*

*ataptatanurna tadamo ashnute shrtasa idvahantastatsamashata .*

1. Wide spread out for thee is the sieve of thy purifying, O Master of the soul; becoming in the creature thou pervadest his members all through. He tastes not that delight who is unripe and whose body has not suffered in the heat of the fire; they alone are able to bear that and enjoy it who have been prepared by the flame.

*taposhpavitram vitatam divaspade shochanto asya tantavo vyasthiran*

*avantyasya pavitaramashavo divasprshthanti chetasa.*

2. The strainer through which the heat of him is purified is spread out in the seat of Heaven; its threads shine out and stand extended. His swift ecstasies foster the soul that purifies him; he ascend to the high level of Heaven by the conscious heart.

*aruruchadushasah prshniragriya uksha bibharti bhuvanani vajayuh.*

*mayavino mamire asya mayaya nrchakshasah pitaro garbhama dadhuh*

3. This is the supreme dappled Bull that makes the Dawns to shine out, the Male that bears the worlds of the becoming and seeks the plenitude; the Fathers who had the forming knowledge made a form of him by that power of knowledge which is his; strong in vision they set him within as a child to be born.

*gandharvah ittha padamasya rakshati pati devanam janimanyadbhutih*

*grbhpati ripum nidhaya nidhapatih sukrttama madhuno  
bhakshmashata.*



4. As the Gandharva he guards his true seat; as the supreme and wonderful One he keeps the births of the gods; Lord of the inner setting, by the inner setting he seizes the enemy. Those who are utterly perfected in works taste the enjoyment of his honey-sweetness.

*havirhavishmo mahi sadma daivyam nabho vasanah pari  
yasyadhvaram.*

*raja pavitraratho vajamaruhah sahasrabhrshtirjayasi shravo brhat.*

5. O Thou in whom is the food, thou art that divine food, thou art the vast, the divine home; wearing heaven as a robe thou encompassed the march of the sacrifice. King with the sieve of thy purifying for thy chariot thou ascended to the plenitude; with thy thousand burning brilliances thou conquerest the vast knowledge.

### COMMENTARY

It is a marked, an essential feature of the Vedic hymns that, although the Vedic cult was not monotheistic in the modern sense of the word, yet they continually recognise, sometimes quite openly and simply, sometimes in a complex and difficult fashion, always as an underlying thought, that the many godheads whom they invoke are really one Godhead, - One with many names, revealed in many aspects, approaching man in the mask of many divine personalities. Western scholars, puzzled by this religious attitude which presents no difficulty whatever to the Indian mind, have invented, in order to explain it, a theory of Vedic henotheism. The Rishis, they thought, were polytheists, but to each God at the time of worshipping him they gave pre-eminence and even regarded him as in a way the sole deity. This invention of henotheism is the attempt of an alien mentality to understand and account for the Indian idea of one Divine Existence who manifests Himself in many names and forms, each of which is for the worshipper of that name and form the one and supreme Deity. That idea of the Divine, fundamental to the Puranic religions, was already possessed by our Vedic forefathers.

The Veda already contains in the seed the Vedantic conception of the Brahman. It recognizes an Unknowable, a timeless Existence, the Supreme which is neither today nor tomorrow, moving in the movement of the Gods, but itself vanishing from the attempt of the mind to seize it (1.170.1). It is spoken of in the neuter as That and often identified with the Immortality, the supreme triple Principle, the vast Bliss to which the human being aspires. The Brahman is the Unmoving,



the Oneness of the Gods. "The Unmoving is born as the Vast in the seat of the Cow (Aditi), ... the vast, the mightiness of the Gods, the One" (3-55.1). "It is the one Existent to whom the seers give different names, Indra, Matarishwan, Agni" (1.164.46).

This Brahman, the one Existence, thus spoken of impersonally in the neuter, is also conceived as the Deva, the supreme Godhead, the Father of things who appears here as the Son in the human soul. He is the Blissful One to whom the movement of the Gods ascends, manifest as at once the Male and the Female, *vrsan*, *dhenu*. Each of the Gods is a manifestation, an aspect, a personality of the one Deva. He can be realised through any of his names and aspects, through Indra, through Agni, through Soma; for each of them being in himself all the Deva and only in his front or aspect to us different from the others contains all the gods in himself.

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 kindled, in thee are all the Gods, O Son of Force, thou art Indra to the mortal who gives the sacrifice. Thou becomest Aryaman when thou bearest the secret name of the Virgins. They make thee to shine with the radiances (the cows, *gobhih*) as Mitra well-established when thou makest of one mind the Lord of the house and his consort. For the glory of thee, O Rudra, the Maruts brighten by their pressure that which is the brilliant and varied birth of thee. That which is the highest seat of Vishnu, by that thou protectest the secret Name of the radiances (the cows, *gonam*). 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" (V.3). Indra is similarly hymned by Vamadeva and in this eighty-third Sukta of the ninth Mandala, as in several others, Soma too emerges from his special functions as the supreme Deity.

Soma is the Lord of the wine of delight, the wine of immortality. Like Agni he is found in the plants, the growths 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*, *gravan*) 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 (*camu*) in which he is brought to the sacrifice, or he is kept in jars (*kalasa*) 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 that 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, *divaspade*.

The hymn begins with an imagery which closely follows the physical facts of the purifying of the wine and its pouring into the jar. The strainer or purifying instrument spread out in the seat of Heaven seems to be the mind enlightened by knowledge (*cetas*); the human system is the jar. *Pavitram te vitatam brahmanaspate*, the strainer is spread wide for thee, O Master of the soul; *prabhur gatrani paryesi visvatah*, becoming manifest thou pervadest or goest about the limbs everywhere. Soma is addressed here as Brahmanaspati, a word sometimes applied to other gods, but usually reserved for Brihaspati, Master of the creative Word. *Brahman* in the Veda is the soul or soul-consciousness emerging from the secret heart of things, but more often the thought, inspired, creative, full of the secret truth, which emerges from that consciousness and becomes thought of the mind, *manma*. Here, however, it seems to mean the soul itself. Soma, Lord of the Ananda, is the true creator who possesses the soul and brings out of it a divine creation. For him the mind and heart, enlightened, have been formed into a purifying instrument; freed from all narrowness and duality the consciousness in it has been extended widely to receive the full flow of the sense-life and mind-life and turn it into pure delight of the true existence, the divine, the immortal Ananda.

So received, sifted, strained, the Soma-wine of life turned into Ananda comes pouring into all the members of the human system as into a wine-jar and flows through all of them completely in their every part. As the body of a man becomes full of the touch and exultation of strong wine, so all the physical system becomes full of the touch and exultation of this divine Ananda. The words *prabhu* and *vibhu* in the Veda are used not in the later sense, "lord", but in a fixed psychological significance like *pracetas* and *vicetas* or like *prajnana* and *vijnana* in the later language. "Vibhu" means becoming, or coming into existence pervasively, "Prabhu" becoming, coming into existence in front of the consciousness, at a particular point as a particular object or experience. Soma comes out like the wine dropping from the strainer and then pervading the jar; it emerges into the consciousness concentrated at some particular point, *prabhu*, or as some particular experience and then pervades the whole being as Ananda, *vibhu*.

But it is not every human system that can hold, sustain and enjoy the potent and often violent ecstasy of that divine delight. *Ataptatanur na tad amo asnute*, he



who is raw and his body not heated does not taste or enjoy that; *srtasa id vahantas tat samasata*, only those who have been baked in the fire bear and entirely enjoy that. The wine of the divine Life poured into the system is a strong, overflowing and violent ecstasy; it cannot be held in the system unprepared for it by strong endurance of the utmost fires of life and suffering and experience. The raw earthen vessel not baked to consistency in the fire of the kiln cannot hold the Soma-wine; it breaks and spills the precious liquid. So the physical system of the man who drinks this strong wine of Ananda must by suffering and conquering all the torturing heats of life have been prepared for the secret and fiery heats of the Soma; otherwise his conscious being will not be able to hold it; it will spill and lose it as soon as or even before it is tasted or it will break down mentally and physically under the touch.

This strong and fiery wine has to be purified and the strainer for its purifying has been spread out wide to receive it in the seat of heaven, *tapospavitram vitatam divaspade*; its threads or fibres are all of pure light and stand out like rays, *Socanto asya tantavo vyasthiran*. Through these fibres the wine has to come streaming. The image evidently refers to the purified mental and emotional consciousness, the conscious heart, *cetas*, whose thoughts and emotions are the threads or fibres. Dyau or Heaven is the pure mental principle not subjected to the reactions of the nerves and the body. In the seat of Heaven, - the pure mental being as distinguished from the vital and physical consciousness, - the thoughts and emotions become pure rays of true perception and happy psychical vibration instead of the troubled and obscured mental, emotional and sensational reactions that we now possess. Instead of being contracted and quivering things defending themselves from pain and excess of the shocks of experience they stand out free, strong and bright, happily extended to receive and turn into divine ecstasy all possible contacts of universal existence. Therefore it is *divaspade*, in the seat of Heaven, that the Soma-strainer is spread out to receive the Soma.

Thus received and purified these keen and violent juices, these swift and intoxicating powers of the Wine no longer disturb the mind or hurt the body, are no longer spilled and lost but foster and increase, *avanti*, mind and body of their purifier, *avantyasya pavitaram asavah*. So increasing him in all delight of his mental, emotional, sensational and physical being they rise with him through the purified and blissful heart to the highest level or surface of heaven, that is, to the luminous world of Swar where the mind capable of intuition, inspiration, revelation is bathed in the splendours of the Truth (*rtam*), liberated into the infinity of the Vast (brhat). *Divasprstham adhi tisthanti cetasa*.

So far the Rishi has spoken of Soma in his impersonal manifestation, as the Ananda or delight of divine existence in the human being's conscious experience. He now turns, as is the habit of the Vedic Rishis, from the divine manifestation to



the divine Person and at once Soma appears as the supreme Personality, the high and universal Deva. *Arurucad usasah prsnir agriyah*, the supreme dappled One, he makes the dawns to shine: *uksa bibharti bhuvanani vajayuh*, he, the Bull, bears the worlds, seeking the plenitude. The word *prsnih*, dappled, is used both of the Bull, the supreme Male, and of the Cow, the female Energy; like all words of colour, *sveta, sukra, hari, harit, krsna, hiranyaya*, in the Veda it is symbolic; colour, *varna*, has always denoted quality, temperament, etc., in the language of the Mystics. The dappled Bull is the Deva in the variety of his manifestation, many-hued. Soma is that first supreme dappled Bull, generator of the world of the becoming, for from the Ananda, from the all-blissful One they all proceed; delight is the parent of the variety of existences. He is the Bull, *uksan*, a word which like its synonym *vrsan*, means diffusing, generating, impregnating, the father of abundance, the Bull, the Male; it is he who fertilizes Force of consciousness, Nature, the Cow, and produces and bears in his stream of abundance the worlds. He makes the Dawns shine out, - the dawns of illumination, mothers of the radiant herds of the Sun; and he seeks the plenitude, that is to say the fullness of being, force, consciousness, the plenty of the godhead which is the condition of the divine delight. In other words it is the Lord of the Ananda who gives us the splendours of the Truth and the plenitudes of the Vast by which we attain to Immortality.

The fathers who discovered the Truth, received his creative knowledge, his Maya, and by that ideal and ideative consciousness of the supreme Divinity they formed an image of Him in man, they established Him in the race as a child unborn, a seed of the godhead in man, a Birth that has to be delivered out of the envelope of the human consciousness. *Mayavino mamire asya, mayaya, nrcaksasah pitaro garbham a dadhuh*. The fathers are the ancient Rishis who discovered the Way of the Vedic mystics and are supposed to be still spiritually present presiding over the destinies of the race and, like the gods, working in man for his attainment to Immortality. They are the sages who received the strong divine vision, *nrcaksasah*, the Truth-vision by which they were able to find the Cows hidden by the Panis and to pass beyond the bounds of the *rodasi*, the mental and physical consciousness, to the Superconscient, the Vast Truth and the Bliss (1.36.7; TV.1.13-18; 4.2.15-18 etc.).

Soma is the Gandharva, the Lord of the hosts of delight, and guards the true seat of the Deva, the level or plane of the *Ananda*; *gandharva ittha padam asya raksati*. He is the Supreme, standing out from all other beings and over them, other than they and wonderful, *adbhutih*, and as the supreme and transcendent, present in the worlds but exceeding them, he protects in those worlds the births of the gods, *pati devanam janimani adbhutih*. The "births of the gods" is a common phrase in the Veda by which is meant the manifestation of the divine principles in the cosmos and especially the formation of the godhead in its manifold forms in the human being. In the last verse the Rishi spoke of the Deva



as the divine child preparing for birth, involved in the world, in the human consciousness. Here he speaks of Him as the transcendent guarding the world of the Ananda formed in man and the forms of the godhead born in him by the divine knowledge against the attacks of the enemies, the powers of division, the powers of undelight (*dvisah, aratih*), against the undivine hosts with their formations of a dark and false creative knowledge, Avidya, illusion, (*adevir mayah*).

For he seizes these invading enemies in the net of the inner consciousness; he is the master of a profounder and truer setting of world-truth and world-experience than that which is formed by the senses and the superficial mind. It is by this inner setting that he seizes the powers of falsehood, obscurity and division and subjects them to the law of truth, light and unity; *grbhñati ripum nidhaya nidhapatih*. Men therefore protected by the lord of the Ananda governing this inner nature are able to accord their thoughts and, actions with the inner truth and light and are no longer made to stumble by the forces of the outer crookedness; they walk straight, they become entirely perfect in their works and by this truth of inner working and outer action are able to taste the entire sweetness of existence, the honey, the delight that is the food of the soul. *Sukrttama madhuno bhaksam asata*.

Soma manifests here as the offering, the divine food, the wine of delight and immortality, *havih*, and as the Deva, lord of that divine offering (*havismah*), above as the vast and divine seat, the superconscient bliss and truth, *brhat*, from which the wine descends to us. As the wine of delight he flows about and enters into this great march of the sacrifice which is the progress of man from the physical to the superconscient. He enters into it and encompasses it wearing the cloud of the heavenly ether, *nabhas*, the mental principle, as his robe and veil. *Havir havismo mahi sadma daivyam, nabho vasannah pari yasi adhvaram*. The divine delight comes to us wearing the luminous-cloudy veil of the forms of mental experience.

In that march or sacrificial ascent the all-blissful Deva becomes the King of all our activities, master of our divinised nature and its energies and with the enlightened conscious heart as his chariot ascends into the plenitude of the infinite and immortal state. Like a Sun or a fire, as Surya, as Agni, engirt with a thousand blazing energies he conquers the vast regions of the inspired truth, the superconscient knowledge; *raja pavitraratho vajam aruhah, sahasrabhrstir jayasi sravo brhat*. The image is that of a victorious king, sunlike in force and glory, conquering a wide territory. It is the immortality that he wins for man in the vast Truth-Consciousness, *sravas*, upon which is founded the immortal state. It is his own true seat, *ittha padam asya*, that the God concealed in man conquers ascending out of the darkness and the twilight through the glories of the Dawn into the solar plenitudes.



With this hymn I close this series of selected hymns from the Rig-veda. 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 show the reader who cares to study them with an open mind the real sense of this, 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 Rishis, but the pervading sense and teaching of the Rig Veda.

