

Rig Veda Samhitā

Mandala - 1 (Part One)

(Suktā-s 1 - 50)

(Text in Devanāgari, Translation and Notes)



R L Kashyap



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Rig Veda Samhitā: Maṇḍala-1 (Part One)

(Text in Devanāgari, Translation and Notes)

- **50 Sūkta-s or 599 mantra-s: Titles and Deities**
- **Text & Translation of 599 mantra-s**
- **Spiritual Interpretation of Veda:
Essay and Aphorisms**
- **Appendices including Subject Index**

R. L. Kashyap



SAKSI

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**Offered Gratefully to
The Mother & Sri Aurobindo**

(i) Foreword

I am indeed happy to pen this 'Foreword' to the Rig Veda Samhita: First Maṇḍala (Part One), published by SAKSI.

Many of you all know that Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture (SAKSI) is primarily engaged (among other objectives) in disseminating the Vedic (traditional) knowledge to the common man for harmonizing both the spiritual and worldly aspects of life in a humble way. As of now the number of their publications has crossed 130.

The important aspect to be noted here is that the target reader is the common man and not the well-read scholar. Further the institution has drawn inspiration from the great spiritual savants and scholars like Sri Aurobindo, Sri Kapali Sastry and the like, all of whom were the strong advocates of enabling the most as the must of the hour.

We, at the Academy of Sanskrit Research, Melkote, (which is also engaged in similar tasks and has to its credit of over 75 publications) take pride in associating with the noble task of SAKSI through our contribution in the form of printing the research/translation works of the Professor Emeritus Vedanga Vidwan Dr. R. L. Kashyap related to different 'Samhitas' of Rig & Yajur Vedas in English & Kannada to begin with.

This book contains the text and translation and notes on all the mantra-s in the first fifty sukta-s of the First Maṇḍala of Rig Veda Samhita. These 599 mantra-s introduce the main topics in the entire Rig Veda. The basis of Kashyap's work is the well known Bhashya in Samskr̥t on these 50 sukta-s with the title, Siddhanjana, by Sri T. V. Kapali Sastry. I am sure this publication will be well received by the readers who have inclination to join the great spiritual movement individually and collectively.

For the kind information of the readers of the series, we wish to inform that it is our joint endeavour that all the 10 Mandalas will be released one by one. There are several interesting essays in this book dealing with the symbolism of the Gods, Yajña and the overview of Rig Veda based on the ideas of Sri Aurobindo.

Dr. Prof. Bhashyam Swamy
Director & Joint Secretary,
ASR, Melkote-571431

(ii) Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao for not only writing a very encouraging foreword to the preliminary edition of a part of this book but also providing a luminous introduction to the spiritual (*adhyātma*) interpretation of Veda. His essay should open the eyes of those who disregard the spiritual interpretation because it is ‘not traditional’.

His untimely demise in 2006 was a great loss to me and to all Veda-lovers. He offered me great support in all my writings.

I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Bhashyam Swamiji for his *āśhīrvachanam* and for graciously agreeing to establish a partnership between SAKSI and the Academy of Sanskrit Research (ASR) to aid the publishing of this book.

In preparing this work, I have used the translation of the first thirty two Sūkta-s based on Kapāli Sāstry’s commentary by Sri M. P. Pandit and Sri S. Shankaranarayan and the summary translations of the remaining Sūkta-s by Sri M.P. Pandit. I have also used the works in English on the Veda by Sri Aurobindo, Sri Kapāli Sāstry and Sri M.P. Pandit. Sri Aurobindo Glossary of A.B. Purāṇi has been very helpful. Please see also the essay (xv) on the sources of this translation.

All the quotations of Sri Aurobindo are from his Collected Works whose Copyright is with Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust. We express our gratitude for using these quotations.

My thanks to the staff of SAKSI for preparing the typescript with its many revisions and to ASR for the beautiful print of this book.

I am grateful to the readers who had kind words for the first two versions of this book published in 2001 and 2003. I am grateful to the Divine for the completion of the translation of all the ten manḍala-s of Rig Veda and all the seven kāṇḍa-s of the Kṛiṣṇa Yajur Veda.

Bangalore

November, 2009

R. L. Kashyap

(iii) The Uniqueness of this book

This book is designed to satisfy the needs and curiosities of a variety of readers, not limited to academics or scholars. It responds to a strong need felt by many lovers of Veda for a translation of Rig Veda which focuses on the psychological/spiritual messages contained in it. In particular the translation of a mantra refers to mantra-s elsewhere having a similar message echoing the saying, 'Rig Veda reveals its own secrets'.

The English translation is accessible to one who may not know Sanskrit at all. The innovation in this third edition is to recognize that every Veda mantra in Sanskrit can be divided into 3 or 4 parts known as pādā-s; usually each pāda has its own well-defined share of the meaning of the mantra. What is done in this edition is to number the pādā-s in each mantra and give the separate translation of each *pāda* separately. Moreover the translation of each *pāda* is done so that it takes no more than one line of the page. Thus the translation of each mantra has a sort of poetic structure with three or four lines, without any rhyme. The text of the mantra in devanagari script is displayed in its numbered parts. An interested person can connect the Sanskrit text and translation, since each *pāda* has four or five words or less, and one can figure out to see the meaning of the various words in the *pāda*.

In the earlier editions, the *pāda* structure was not recognized, and the word by word meaning was given.

This book has several essays which introduce the contents of Rig Veda to the beginner, but is of great help to the proficient also.

The essay (v) has been an eye-opener to many persons. Rig Veda was regarded as a book of rituals by some so-called traditional scholars who read the Veda casually. Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao's essay (v) highlights the reasons for regarding Rig Veda as a preeminently spiritual document or revelation. The next essay (vi) gives 30 aphorisms which crisply state the secrets in the Veda. In framing the Samskr̄ta aphorisms, S.K.R. is using the language used by T.V. Kapali Sāstry in his *Siddhanjana*, mentioned below in the essay (xv). The aphorisms in Samskr̄ta are given in the appendix 2 at the end of the book.

The essay (vii) gives a brief overview of Rig Veda clarifying the roles of devata and metre. Essay (x) details the role of riṣhi-s and those occurring in this book. Essays (xi) and (xii) give an overview of the principal Gods or Cosmic powers of Rig Veda, as delineated by Sri Aurobindo and Kapāli Sāstry. For a serious understanding of Rig Veda as a book of psychological and spiritual wisdom a minimal understanding of the powers of Gods is absolutely necessary. Needless to say that these Gods should not be confused with their namesakes in the Purāṇa books. Essays (xiii-xiv) discuss briefly the some keywords in Rig Veda.

The format of the book is designed to be user-friendly. Every sūkta is assigned a title. Every mantra is assigned a title to reflect its content. All the titles of sūkta-s are given in essay (viii).

For many verses, there is a section entitled, “Details”, which gives more information on the meaning of some of the phrases in the translation, comparison with other translations and the reason for assigning the particular meanings to words in the verse.

Regarding the methodology of assigning the meanings of words, we refer to the book, ‘Semantics of Rig Veda’ (SAKSI).

The list in essay (ix) groups the sūkta-s, by deity. Thus a reader who is interested in Agni can go directly to the relevant sūkta-s. Moreover at the end of each Sūkta, we give the pathway to the next Sūkta of the same deity.

In this book we have used certain English words omitted in today’s abridged dictionaries. For instance consider the word, ‘summon’, i.e., ‘to call a person’. The person who summons is summoner; however this word is absent in today’s dictionaries. Similar words used are chanter (one who chants), showerer (one who showers gifts) etc.

This book has 597 mantra-s of the Maṇḍala One. The work on the remaining 1409 mantra-s of Maṇḍala is in two books, ‘Rig Veda Samhita, Maṇḍala One (part two)’ and ‘Rig Veda Samhita, Maṇḍala One (part three).’

(iv) Foreword
(to the Preliminary edition)

There was without doubt a good reason for Dr. Kashyap to have planned this publication. While books on Vedas are flooding the market, wisdom in most of these books is conspicuous by its absence. The discernable approach in them is mainly intellectual, savoured generously by critical and analytical tendencies. They treat the Vedas as merely literary pieces or as little more than aids to reconstruct a bygone age; the language has been studied, the narration has been pressed for historical or cultural information, and the religious or philosophical overtones have been noted. But the most distinguishing feature of the Vedas has largely been missed: the Vedas by their very intent are coded documents of mystic visions. The one modern authority that emphasized this aspect of Vedic study was Sri Aurobindo: and the one saintly scholar who commented in Sanskrit on the Veda-s, inspired by Sri Aurobindo, is T.V. Kapāli Sāstry. Dr. Kashyap has here undertaken to present to the English-knowing world the approach of Sri Aurobindo and Kapāli Sāstry, which is not only characteristically Indian but in close conformity with the visions of the seers themselves.

The present publication has been planned meticulously. It presents the first *ashtaka* of Rig Veda Samhitā for which Kapāli Sāstry prepared his excellent commentary known as '*Siddhāñjana*'. After an elaborate, erudite and insightful introduction, individual mantra-s have been taken up: the text has been given in the original (with *svara*-markings), the words have been separately translated in English, and a running translation of the entire mantra based on Kapāli Sāstry's Sanskrit commentary has been appended. The significance of special words used in the mantra is also indicated. But the most useful guide to the reader here is the title which prefaces the running translation of each mantra. Short, cryptic and appropriate, the title suggests the general import, the hidden meaning and the essential spirit. The book therefore is a valuable contribution towards understanding the Vedic wisdom aright.

It may not be improper here to recall briefly the esoteric framework in which Kapāli Sāstry's commentary becomes relevant, for this is the principal justification for the present publication. The appended essay entitled, "Spiritual Interpretation of the Veda: an Introduction" is based on the Sanskrit work of T.V. Kapāli Sāstry entitled *bhūmika* to his commentary *siddhāñjana*. I have also expressed the key ideas in the form of thirty Sanskrit aphorisms *Vedagūdārthabodha sūtrāṇi* using Kapāli Sāstry's own words. An English translation of three aphorisms is also included in this essay.

It remains for me to express once again my sincere appreciation for the present publication, planned and prepared by Dr. R.L. Kashyap, and which will greatly benefit the earnest students and the discerning scholars and which aims to reveal the mystic teaching of the Veda as discovered by Sri Aurobindo in the words of Kapāli Sāstry.

S.K. Ramachandra Rao

[This foreword was written to the Preliminary edition of the book, published in 2001]

**(v) Spiritual Interpretation of the Veda: an
Introduction**

(Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao)

Kapāli Sāstry himself has succinctly given expression to this framework in the Sanskrit *Bhūmikā* to his *Siddhāñjana* [1947, Dipti-Publications, Pondicherry; Collected works of T.V. Kapāli Sāstry, Vol.4, 1983]. This framework acquires significance on the ground that the Veda has a secret meaning, which alone is of ultimate and real value. In contradistinction to this, there is the external meaning, the apparent one, consisting of word-meanings which are conventional and transactional in nature. The latter is meant for the common folk, to help them in their religious aspirations, while the former is deliberately intended to guide the advanced aspirants. The Veda employs this double-language method, because there are two distinct approaches prevalent among human beings: one that relies on

the senses, employs reason, and holds the intellect in high regard; and the other that depends on revelation and inspiration, and employs intuition and insight. The two approaches may be designated ‘practical’ and ‘spiritual’.

Sāyaṇā’s interpretation of the Rig Veda Samhitā illustrates the ‘practical’ approach, while Sri Aurobindo, and Kapāli Sāstry after him, represent the ‘spiritual’ or ‘mystical’ line of interpretation. It is unfortunate that the decadent culture in the country during the middle ages held on to the ‘practical’ approach, to the detriment of the other. As a result, the **Veda** was looked upon as a source-book for ritualism, as a sanction for intellectualism and as a justification for crude materialism. The Mīmāṃsaka-s had already encouraged this outlook, and their preference for the Brāhmaṇa books (ritualistic tracts, appendages to the Samhitā by the priests) prevailed in the middle ages, and has continued till our own day. The Samhitā, by a curious reversal of values, became secondary to the Brāhmaṇa-s, like the proverbial tail wagging the dog. Sāyana was an uncompromising votary of the Mīmāṃsaka ritualism, and his approach to Rig Veda Samhitā in his famous Bhāṣhya is only through the Brāhmaṇa ideology. He did not accord an independent status to the Samhitā, but viewed it only as an appendage to the Brāhmaṇa tracts.

It is remarkable that he (Sāyana) chose at all to write a commentary on Rig Veda Samhitā, for no Mīmāṃsaka had ever thought of writing a gloss, interpretation or annotation to the Samhitā. The Mīmāṃsaka-s paid lip-service to the greatness, glory and antiquity of the Veda, but had completely ignored its import. They were more concerned with ‘dharma’ than with ‘mantrārtha’ (meaning of mantra-s), for they regarded ‘dharma’ itself as the ‘vedārtha’ (the meaning of the Veda). The words were all that was important for them in a mantra from the Samhitā collection, because the mantra-s had to be recited as part of the rituals. The meaning of the mantra was of no interest or importance to them. Indeed, the great Mīmāṃsaka, Jaimini, argued that the mantra-s that were not prescribed or employed in the sacrifices were irrelevant and

redundant¹. In the decadent tradition, therefore, there was no need for a (*Bhāṣhya*) commentary on the *Samhitā*. Nevertheless, Sāyaṇa did write one, and unwittingly turned the attention of traditionalists to the meaning of the mantra-s, although ritualism was for him, as for others around him, the main focus.

It is again unfortunate that the Western Indologists took an interest in Vedic studies precisely at a time when the decadent culture held the ground. What they were exposed to was the ritualistic interpretation of *Rig Veda Samhitā* by Sāyaṇa. For them, Sāyaṇa was the traditional authority, although Sāyaṇa lived only in the fourteenth century A.D. and there were other and more trustworthy commentators earlier. Max Muller, who published the *Rig Veda Samhitā* for the first time in human history, published it along with Sāyaṇa's commentary, thus providing it a high academic acceptance value. Modern Vedic students and scholars, Western as well as Indian, have been brought up in the tradition of regarding the *Rig Veda Samhitā* only in the light of Sāyaṇa's *Bhāṣhya*.

The first great person that raised his voice against this injustice, impropriety and outrage to the true spirit of the Vedic lore was Sri Aurobindo. He discovered that the Veda had a hidden meaning, not by a scholarly study of Vedic mantra-s, but by an inner vision; it was only later that his studies confirmed his direct perception. He was himself a sage, a rishi, and he had therefore the equipment in common with the sages who visualized the mantra-s. Vedic hymns are not products of superior scholarly exercises, or of clever constructions of thought, diction and speech. They had wondrous powers within, which freely opened up and blossomed into charming poetic articulations. They were inspired by a profound encounter with reality as such. The hymns therefore are in the nature of mantra-perceptions (*mantra-dṛṣṭayāḥ*).

¹ आम्नायस्य क्रियार्थत्वात् आनर्थक्यमतदर्थानाम् ॥

āmnāyasya kriyārthatvāt ānarthakyam atadarthānām.

According to this discovery, the central aim of the Vedic hymns is to help the seekers of truth (*satya*), immortality (*amṛta*) and light (*jyoti*). The truth that the Veda reveals is in effective contrast to the truth of this phenomenal world which is a ‘mixed one’ (truth hidden in a mass of false presentations), and which can be grasped by our senses and mind; it is most profound and transcendental. The immortality of the real revealed by the Veda is distinguished by being beyond space and time and being beyond dualities. And the light that one finds in the Veda is beyond the Light that is signified by human intelligence. All the hymns in the Vedic corpus must be interpreted in accordance with this search; the hymns become meaningful only in the context of this search.

The supreme reality is described in the Veda as the beyond (*param*), the truth (*satyam*), the right (*ṛtam*) and the vast (*bṛhat*). It is beyond the three realms of phenomenal existence, symbolized by the *vyāhṛtis*: *bhūḥ* (earth), *bhuvaḥ* (midregion) and *suvaḥ* (sky), and represented by the three luminous deities -Agni, Indra and Sūrya. The three realms together constitute the lower half of reality (*aparārdha*). Beyond this is the upper half (*parārdha*), where Sūrya (the Savitṛ of whom the Sūrya of the three realms is but an image) reigns supreme and shines brilliantly. This is the only reality (*ekam sat*) that the Veda recognizes. All the deities and gods that the hymns refer to as having different names, forms and functions are but so many aspects of this one Sūrya, the supreme reality, the vast sky (*bṛhad-dyauḥ*), the (*mahaḥ*), the beyond (*paraḥ*), the luminous (*svar*). The Veda shows the mystic path to reach this highest state.¹

It is well-known that the Vedic hymns are replete with symbolic language. They are altogether unlike the poetical compositions that we are familiar with; they tend to veil their speech. The seers who were responsible for these hymns were essentially mystics, having had the direct contact with the sole reality of all existence. The Veda is regarded in tradition as the treasury containing the secrets

¹ अन्वेष्टव्यो बृहदिवः पन्था ॥

anveshṭavyo bṛhaddivah panthā [Siddhāñjana]

discovered by these knowers of mystic knowledge. Kapāli Sāstry defines Veda as the deliberately coded communications of profound mystic wisdom.²

It is also recognized that the Vedic mantra-s are especially potent in their verbal forms as well as in their meaning, nuances, and effective for securing welfare here as well as hereafter; and this is due to the fact that their origin is ascribed to the direct encounter with the ultimate reality (*prādurbhāva-prabhāvāt mantrānām vīryavattvam*). The words came out without effort from the seer, almost spontaneously; and the words concealed as well as revealed. The incorporation of two meanings in each mantra (the exoteric and the esoteric, the external and the internal) was by no means deliberate or calculated, but perfectly natural in the context of spiritual experience and its communication. The external sense is only a sign, a symbol (*sanketa*), and is intended to discern the real but internal import. This holds good also for rituals. The external rituals are only symbolic of the internal transformations that must take place.

In fact the external world is only a symbol of the internal world that is more real. The gods of the three realms (*adhyānta*) represent only the powers within the individual (*adhi-piṇḍa*). Tradition speaks of the three realms (earth, midregion and sky) as representing the three faculties: *anna* (gross waking state), *prāṇa* (powers, forces, energy) and *manas* (mind, knowledge), respectively. They are presided over by the gods Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya. Beyond the three realms indicated by the three *vyāhṛti-s*, *bhūḥ*, *bhuvaḥ* and *suvaḥ* is

² तेषां (मन्त्रद्रष्टाणां) गहनतत्त्वविदां

गृधभाषया गोपितानां गोप्यानां कौश ऋग्वेदः।

तेषां ऋक्सुक्तानां समुदायमेव ऋक्संहितामाचक्षमहे ॥

*teshām (mantradraṣṭāṇām) gahanatattvavidām gūḍhabhāṣhayā
gopitānām gopyānām kosha ṛgvedaḥ.*

teshām ṛksūktānām samudāyameva ṛksamhitām āchakṣhmahe.

the great expanse without limits (*mahāḥ, bṛhad-dyauḥ*), the domain of Sūrya (distinguished from the physical Sun, *laukika-sūrya*).

It may be recalled that there is a long-standing tradition, ignored however by Sāyaṇa, of seeing in the Rig Vedic passages a triad of meanings.³

Yāska accepts the ritualistic sense (*adhiyajña*), the meaning relating to the deities (*ādhidaiva*) and the esoteric meaning (*ādhyātma*). Later thought spoke of ‘ādhibhautika’ (the gross, external meaning, referring to the physical world and common transactions), ‘ādhidaivika’ (in which *ādhiyajña* is included) and ‘*adhyātma*’. With reference to the Vedic passages, tradition also distinguishes between the conventional meanings of words used (*rūḍha*), which are superficial but symbolic (relating to *ādhibhautika*, *ādhiyajña* and *ādhidaiva* levels) and the meanings which are etymologically valid and significant (*yaugika*), which are the real and intended meanings (relating to the *adhyātma* level). It was Ānanda Tīrtha (Madhva Āchārya) who, in his *Rig Bhāṣhya* resuscitated this tradition that was being side-lined by the votaries of ritualism, and attempted to explain the Vedic mantra-s primarily at the *adhyātma* level. Rāghavendra Tīrtha’s *Mantrārtha mañjari* followed this lead, and provided guidelines for Kapāli Sāstry’s comprehensive reconstruction of the real import of the Vedic corpus. Kapāli Sāstry was inspired by the discovery of Sri Aurobindo, and his Siddhāñjana is true to the traditional line of interpretation and is a brilliant attempt to focus attention on the hidden meaning of the revelations of the ancient seers. I have gathered together the principal propositions from his introduction, known as *Bhūmikā* to his commentary on Rig Veda, and have prepared this garland of aphorisms which help in understanding the hidden import of the Veda. I have called it *Veda-gūḍhārtha-bodha-sūtrāṇi*, taking the clue from his own expression.

³ त्रयोऽर्थाः सर्ववेदेषु ॥

trayoh arthāḥ sarvavedeṣhu

The aphorisms included here are in his own words; only the selection and arrangement is mine. This, I hope, would illustrate the general framework of Vedic interpretation accepted by Yāska, Shaunaka, Kātyāyana, Durgāchārya, Ānanda Tīrtha, Bhāskara, Rāghavendra Tīrtha and, in recent years, by Sri Aurobindo and after him by Kapāli Sāstry.

(vi) The Secret of the Veda in Aphorisms [Veda gūḍhārthabodha sūktāni]

[These aphorisms have been prepared by Shāstra-Chūḍāmani, Veda Kamala Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao based on the *bhūmika* of the Rig Vedic commentary *Siddhāñjana* of Sri T.V. Kapāli Sāstry using TVK's own words. S.K.R. hopes that these aphorisms illustrate the general framework of Vedic Interpretation accepted by Yāska, Shaunaka, Kātyāyana, Ānanda Tīrtha, Rāghavendra Swāmi and in recent years, by Sri Aurobindo.]

1. The Veda is eternal, because it made its appearance from the highest space without limits, known as *parama-vyoma* or *bṛhad-dyauḥ*, beyond the three realms of existence (*bhūḥ*, *bhuvaḥ* and *suvah*).
2. The Veda is primarily intended to aid spiritual study, contemplation and spiritual practices.
3. The Veda that is most ancient is but one; it is called Rig Veda, a collection of riks (mantra-s).
4. For the sake of performing rituals, the mantra-s of Yajur Veda and the Brāhmaṇa-texts were prepared at a later period.
5. The mantra-s of the Rig Veda were direct perceptions of the seers.
6. The seers who perceived the mantra-s dwell, before their birth and after their passing away, in the highest space (from which the Veda made its appearance).
7. The seers, abiding in a state of high austerity, encountered directly the mantra-s (known by the name *brahma*), according to Yāska.

8. The Veda is not concerned with dharma (rules of good life) and Karma (rituals) only; there is in the Veda a hidden teaching which is spiritual in nature, pertaining to the Self.
9. This essential import of the mantra-s was concealed by a secret (or coded) language; the seers hid the secret within the mantra.
10. The inner import is that it takes the form of symbols and abides in the mantra-s.
11. The seers employed the symbols for the sake of preserving the real meaning of the Veda.
12. It is proper therefore that one must understand the significance of the symbols in order to determine the true import of the Veda.
13. The secrets indicated by the symbols pertain to the internal or esoteric mysteries (*ninya*).
14. One must attempt to comprehend the purport of the mantra-s only in accordance with the inner meanings.
15. An understanding of the system of symbolism (*sanketa*) is the gateway to get at the secret of the Veda.
16. In all Veda there is but one system of symbolism.
17. For all the seers of the mantra-s, there is but one goal (*ekameva*), one hidden teaching and one tradition of symbolism.
18. The hidden teaching is this: The supreme and solitary divinity is Sūrya, the Supreme Person.
19. Sūrya abides bearing several names and assuming several deity-forms.
20. The real is but one, (*ekah para*) but bearing a multiplicity of names and forms.
21. The origin of all deities is but one, the nature of all deities is also one, and the goal of all of them is one too.
22. The differences among the deities are in accordance with their functions and their personalities.
23. The deities can be apprehended by one's inner perception.
24. The nature of the deities, however, are capable of being perceived by the eye that is opened by the divine or inner vision.
25. All the deities begin to function only at the level of the supreme reality (viz., the highest space, *bṛhat-dyauḥ*, from which the Veda

- makes its appearance, and in which the seers dwell); and their actions have a tendency to ascend.
26. The Veda presents the picture of the deities with their own names, qualities and actions, but who are all in reality so many aspects of the one great self, known by the name Sūrya.
 27. The sacrificial ritual is also symbolic; the supreme purport of the Vedic sacrifice is 'but inner worship.'
 28. Whoever is the wise person, equipped with vision and learning, who becomes competent enough to realise the hidden teaching of the mantra, it is for him that the Veda reveals itself.
 29. For him, the symbols of their own accord would reveal the secret import.
 30. One must therefore make efforts to understand aright the true meaning of the mantra-s.

S.K. Ramachandra Rao

[The aphorisms in Sanskrit are in the appendix 2.]

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(vii) Overview of Rig Veda

The Rig Veda has 10,552 mantra-s, each of which is in one of several specific metres like Gāyatri, Anuṣṭup etc. They are grouped into 1028 Sūkta-s or hymns, each having roughly ten mantra-s. The Sūkta-s are further grouped into ten Maṇḍala-s. Maṇḍala 1 has 191 Sūkta-s or 2006 mantra-s, roughly a fifth of the entire text. Maṇḍala 2 has only 43 Sūkta-s or 429 mantra-s.

These hymns deal with all aspects of wisdom, such as different cosmic powers and the ways of manifesting these powers in our everyday life, difficulties faced by a spiritual seeker and the ways of overcoming them, the paths of devotion, knowledge, etc. Even though RV is not a book on mathematics or science, it has a wealth of information on arithmetic, astronomy, Āyurveda, chariot-making etc.¹ Some persons associate the word wisdom only with the knowledge of the transcendental state of the Supreme, completely separated from the life on earth. Obviously, the Seers of Rig Veda do not have such a narrow view of wisdom.

Regarding the date of Rig Veda, see the references.²

Every Sūkta or hymn of RV has several mantra-s or verses and a header having three items namely:

- (a) Rishi (or Rishi-s) to whom the Sūkta was revealed
- (b) The metres of the various mantra-s
- (c) The cosmic powers or Gods or (*deva-s* or *devīs*) with whom the Rishi communes using these mantra-s.

We will first give brief definitions or descriptions of some of the terms introduced above such as mantra, metre, Rishi and Gods (or cosmic powers or *devata-s*). We also mention briefly the message or essence of the RV. Detailed discussions of these terms such as *devata* will be clarified in the next several sections.

¹ See Kak et.al; Krishaji, M.D., Pandit; Vartak; Sarma, Kalyanaraman; Kashyap, 'Why Read Rig Veda'.

² See Frawley (1991); Kashyap, *ibid*.

Mantra: A mantra of the Rig Veda is outwardly a poetic verse. At a deeper level, it is the expression of the intuition arising out of the depths of the soul of the Rishi. It is the voice of the rhythm which has created the worlds and is still creating perpetually several of its aspects. A mantra is packed with the power of the askesis (*tapas*) of the Rishi to whom it was revealed. Even a person who has no earlier exposure to the Veda can feel its power when it is chanted in the proper mode. Note that the poems or epics of famous poets like Kālidāsa are melodious and full of aesthetic beauty, but they are not mantra-s. Every mantra in Rig Veda is called as a rik or ṛk, which means a Word of illumination. It is in one of several metres such as Gāyatrī, Anuṣṭup etc. The number of syllables or akṣara-s in the mantra determines the metre to which it belongs. For instance a mantra in Gāyatri metre should have 24 akṣara-s.

Every mantra in the Rig Veda is either a prayer or an adoration addressed to a devata (cosmic power) such as Agni to manifest in the Rishi or a call for an action by the devata. Many mantra-s are celebrations of the actions of the devata including the gifts of powers of light and might. We have more to say on the mantra-s in another subsection.

For a brief explanation on the role of the Rishi-s and a listing of the names of the Rishi-s associated with the sūkta-s in this book, please see the essay (x).

Deva or Gods: ‘*deva*’ means a luminous power. *deva* or *devata* is usually translated as Gods. These words and their relatives occur in the text in more than 1300 mantra-s. It is a mistake to regard the *deva*-s or Gods as mere personifications of qualities. They are incarnations or emanations of cosmic forces endowed with a high level of consciousness. By reciting the mantra-s and performing meditation, human beings can enter into concrete touch with these powers; they can help man and show him the way to a Divine Consciousness and immortal life. These Gods can literally take birth in human beings and guide him or her from within.

Every *deva* represents an outward aspect and an inner or psychological power. For instance Agni is the physical fire or the fire

of digestion. At a deeper level, Agni is the Divine Will. Indra is the Lord of the Divine Mind. Sarasvati is the Goddess of inspiration. By getting in touch with these Gods, a human being can develop the psychological powers associated with them. See also the essays (xi) and (xii).

Message of the Rig Veda: The aim of both the Rishi-s and the *deva-s* or Gods is to systematically lead every human being to higher and higher levels of perfection. This journey never stops till it culminates in all round perfection of every person, not only at an individual level but also at the level of interaction between human beings and at the level of society. Even to imagine such a condition of all round perfection is hard. To illustrate, many of us have familiarity with several professions say cooking, computer software, animal handling, health and healing, several physical sciences, electronic gadgets for audio and video etc. The experts in each field can suggest various changes for improvement. We can envision integrating all these changes. This is only a step towards perfection. There are many more steps which cannot be envisioned. The Seers realised that such a radical goal of all round perfection cannot be intellectually described. According to them there already exists the plane of *satyam* *ṛtam* *bṛhat*--the Truth, the Right, the Vast--which incorporates in itself the seed of the all-round perfection to come. To attain this state, we have to get in touch with the consciousness in that plane, Truth-Consciousness (*rta chit*). Rig Veda Samhitā gives detailed hints about the paths to be followed so that each one of us can become perfect and achieve this state of consciousness and the status of a Rishi (RV 1.164.40; 7.41.4,5). Such a great task cannot be achieved by human effort only. In every human task the Gods are the collaborators who do actually most of the work.

Every time a human being does a task with some consciousness, he can see or feel the collaboration of the Divine Powers. The human journey towards perfection is compared to climbing a mountain from peak to peak (RV 1.10.2) or to a journey in the uncharted waters of the ocean in a boat. After a certain stage, the human being feels that all the work is being done by the Gods themselves.

There are also adverse cosmic powers in nature which pose obstacles in the path of the human seeker after perfection. These are the forces of darkness and falsehood called as Dasyu, Vṛtra, Ahi, Vala etc. The Veda has numerous references to the symbolic battles between the Forces of Light headed by Indra and Agni and the forces of darkness. The victory of the Gods is celebrated by the Rishis with hymns to the deities.

Finally Rig Veda has several references to the realization of the Supreme One which encompasses everything in the universe. Upanishads describe some sādhana-s or vidya-s using mantra-s which are also in the Rig Veda Samhitā¹. Even though most Indologists and Indian Philosophers writing in English² declare that, ‘Upanishads are expressions of revolt against the ritualism of the Vedas’, no such statements are found in the major Upanishads. On the contrary, ancient Upanishads like Chhāndogya quote Rig Vedic mantra-s to support their intuitions³.

¹ Kapali Sastry, T.V., Collected Works: Volumes 1,4,5,6,10; Light on the Upanishads, (SAKSI).

² Radhakrishnan, S., ‘The Principal Upanishads’.

³ Kapali Sastry, T.V., ‘Unveiling the Light in the Veda’; Kashyap, *ibid*.

(viii) Titles of Sūkta-s: 1-50

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|---|--|
| 1.1: Adoration of Agni/9+ | 1.21: Indra and Agni: Givers of Refuge/6 |
| 1.2: Vāyu, Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa/9 | 1.22: Goddesses, Ashvins, Viṣṇu and Savitṛ/21 |
| 1.3: Ashvins, Indra, All-Gods and Sarasvatī/12 | 1.23: Waters, Pūshan and Other Deities/23 |
| 1.4: Indra, Giver of Light/10 | 1.24: O Varuṇa: Release from the Three bonds/15 |
| 1.5: Yoga and the Arrival of Indra/10 | 1.25: Varuṇa: His Grace and Wrath/21 |
| 1.6: Indra and Maruts/10 | 1.26: Intimacy of Agni/10 |
| 1.7: Indra Breaks the Hill and Removes the Cover/10 | 1.27: Agni as Universal Life/13 |
| 1.8: Help Given by Indra/10 | 1.28: Life, Mind and Body: the Yogic Symbolism/9 |
| 1.9: Descent and Ascent/10 | 1.29: The Commoners given Light and Might/7 |
| 1.10: Creation and Progress of Seers/12 | 1.30: Indra, Ashvins and Uṣha/22 |
| 1.11: Indra, the Destroyer of Evil-Forces/8 | 1.31: Agni Dwells in Human Beings/18 |
| 1.12: Agni, The Envoy/10 | 1.32: Indra-Vṛtra Encounter, the Release of Rays, Waters and Soma/15 |
| 1.13: Agni, The Powers that Fill/12 | 1.33: Indra's Victory and Other Deeds/15 |
| 1.14: Agni, All-Gods, Soma and Spouses/12 | 1.34: Ashvins: The Three Modes of Help/12 |
| 1.15: Divine Timing and Other gods/12 | 1.35: Savitṛ Establishes the Worlds/11 |
| 1.16: Indra Accepts Soma and Showers the Light/9 | 1.36: Agni: Kindled with Words by Gods/12 |
| 1.17: Indra and Varuṇa/9 | |
| 1.18: Brahmanaspati and Others/9 | |
| 1.19: Maruts and Agni/9 | |
| 1.20: Rbhūs Make Four out of One/8 | |

* This line indicates that the sūkta (1.1) has 9 mantra-s; the title is assigned by us.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1.37: We are Yours/15
1.38: Thunder and Windless Rain/15
1.39: Delight in Trees and Hills/10
1.40: Brahmanaspati/8
1.41: Aryamā, Mitra and Varuṇa/9
1.42: Pūṣhan, the Guide/10
1.43: Rudra and Soma/9
1.44: Agni Nourishes and Pervades Us/14 | 1.45: Agni Worships Men/10
1.46: Ashvins: Leaders of Journey/15
1.47: Ashvins: Car with Abundant Gifts/10
1.48: Uṣha: Speak the Happy Truth/16
1.49: Uṣha Comes to Soma Within Man/4
1.50: Sūrya: The Highest Light/13 |
|--|---|

(ix) Deities in Sūkta-s: 1-50

- Agni: 1, 12, 13, 21, 26, 27, 31, 36, 44, 45
- Ashvins: 3 (1-3), 34, 46, 47*
- Indra: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 28, 29, 32, 33
- Indra-Vāyu: 2 (4-5), 23 (2-3)
- Uṣhā: 48, 49
- Rtavah: 15
- Rbhu-s: 20
- Devīḥ (Goddesses): 22 (9-15)
- The waters: 23 (16-23)
- Pūṣhan: 23 (13-15), 42
- Brahmanaspati: 18, 40
- Maruts: 19, 37, 38, 39, 23 (7-12)
- Mitra and Varuṇa: 2 (7-9), 23 (4-6), 41
- Varuṇa: 24, 25
- Vāyu: 2 (1-3), 23 (1)
- Viṣṇu: 22 (16-21)
- Vishvedevāḥ or All-gods: 3 (7-9), 14
- Shiva-Rudra: 43
- Sarasvati: 3 (10-12), 13 (9)
- Savitṛ: 35, 22 (5-8)
- Sūrya: 35, 50

* Notation: 3 (1-3) means mantra-s 1 through 3 in sūkta 3.

(x) Rishis in the Sūkta-s (1-50)

All these 50 sūkta-s have been revealed to seven rishi-s as indicated below.

Madhuchchhandā Vaishvāmitrah	Sūkta-s (1-10)
Jetā Mādhuchchhandasah	11
Medhātithih Kāṇvah	12-23
Shunahshepa Ājigartih	24-30
(or Kṛtrimo Vaishvāmitraḥ Devarataḥ)	
Hiranyastūpa Angirasa	31-35
Kāṇvah Ghaurah	36-43
Praskaṇvah Kāṇvah	44-50

The second or last name of the rishi indicates his lineage. For instance Ghaurah is the lineage of Kāṇva. Praskaṇva is the son or disciple of Kāṇva.

The rishi Shunahshepa Ājigarti has other names such as Devarata or Kṛtrimo Vaishvāmitra indicating his teacher Vishvāmitra.

Many of the rishis listed here have sūkta-s in other Maṇḍala-s also. For instance Hiranyastūpa is also associated with 9.4 and 9.69; Praskaṇva with 8.49, 9.95; Kāṇva Ghaurah with 9.94; Medhātithi with 8.1.3-29; 8.2, 9.41-43; Madhuchchhandā with 9.1.

A Rishi in the Rig Veda is a person who has the revelation of at least one ṛk mantra of the Rig Veda. The Rishi literally hears the mantra by supra-physical methods. Sometimes the Rishi hears the inspiration and he may coin the phrases and choose the metre to complete it. Since the Rishi has also supra-physical visions of the Truth, he/she is also called a Seer (*draṣṭāra*). There are about 400 Rishi-s in the Rig Veda of whom at least 25 are women⁴. Note that no

¹ Kashyap, R.L., (editor), 'Rig Veda Mantra Samhita (text)'; Sontakke, N.S. and Kashikar, C.G., (editors), Rig Veda with Sayana's commentary, volume 5, Vaidika Samshodhan Mandala.

one is born as a Rishi. Being a son or a daughter of a Rishi does not automatically give the person the powers of the Rishi. A person performs intense spiritual practices including askesis (tapas) to become a Rishi. There is no specific procedure for becoming a Rishi. One becomes a Rishi by the grace of the cosmic powers or devata-s. In RV (1.31.16) deva Agni is said to create or form a Rishi. (*r̥shikṛt*). Similarly RV (9.96.18) declares that Soma, the Lord of Delight, creates Seers. A Rishi is identified by two names, his own name and that of his lineage or teacher. The first Sūkta of RVS was revealed to Madhuchchhandāḥ Vaishvāmitrāḥ, a disciple or son of Vishvāmitra. The famous Gāyatri mantra RV (3.62.10) was revealed to Vishvāmitra Gāthīn, i.e., Vishvāmitra, son of Gātha. The name of the Rishi indicates clearly the gender. The daughter of the Rishi Kakshīvān is Ghoṣhā Kakshīvatī, who is herself the Seer of RV (10.39) and (10.40). There are about 25 women Seers of RV, such as Aditi Dākshāyanī, (RV 10.72), Apāla Ātreyī (RV 8.91), Dakṣinā Prajāpatyā (RV 10.107), Yamī Vaivasvatī (RV 10.10), Vāgambriṇī (RV 10.125) etc. A Rishi can be either celibate or married. A Rishi is not only a man of contemplation, but also a man of action. Even though Rishi-s advised the kings and helped them and their priests in the performance of the rites or rituals of the outward yajña, the Rishi-s were not priests. In the Vedic period, Rishi alone was considered as the teacher who gave his teaching both orally as well as by occult methods as stated explicitly in the Atharva Veda.

The seven Rishi-s (*sapta r̥shayah*) are mentioned explicitly by name in RV (10.137) and Brh.U. (2.2.4) namely Bharadvāja, Kashyapa, Gotama, Atri, Vishvāmitra, Jamadagni and Vasiṣṭha. YV (34.55) and Brh.U. regard these seven rishi-s as the seven prāṇa-s in the human body. Chakravarti Gopalacharya mentions 14 lists corresponding to 14 manvantaras.

The Rishi-s and the devata-s work harmoniously for the welfare of not only the human beings but of the entire earth. Many legends in the Purāṇas which deal with the quarrels among the devatās do not find a place in RVS. Note that Purāṇa books were composed thousands of years later than the Rig Veda Samhitā.

(xi) Overview of the 50 Sūkta-s

Riṣhi Vedavyāsa, the compiler of the text of the Rig Veda Mantra Samhitā, arranged all the Sūkta-s of the first Maṇḍala into fifteen Sections so that all the Sūkta-s in one Section were revealed to only one Riṣhi (with some minor exceptions). Obviously this arrangement has many advantages from the point of view of study. Every Riṣhi has a unique style of his (her) own, unique experiences and revelations. Each Riṣhi uses similar phrases in many mantra-s. Some Riṣhīs use symbolism sparingly, some resort to it frequently. All in all, an integrated study of all the hymns of the same Section is highly instructive.

In a later method the first 121 hymns of Maṇḍala 1 are divided mechanically into roughly 8 equal parts, each called an Adhyāya. There is no coherence of ideas in an Adhyāya. For instance Adhyāya 2 ends with Sūkta 32 and Adhyāya 3 begins with Sūkta 33, even though both of them deal with the symbolic battle between Indra and Vṛtra and both were revealed to the same Riṣhi.

In our books we have preserved the ancient tradition and organised 121 Sūkta-s into 12 Sections. Section one has 11 Sūkta-s, ten of which were revealed to the Riṣhi Madhuchhandā Vaishvāmitra (i.e., belonging to the lineage of Vishvāmitra) and the other one was revealed to his disciple Jeta. The Sūkta-s in the ten Sections, II through X and XII, were revealed to one Riṣhi. Section XI has 22 Sūkta-s; 19 were revealed to Kutsa only, (1.105) was revealed jointly to Kutsa or Trita Aptya, (1.100) was revealed to 5 Riṣhīs (Vārshagira-s) and (1.99) was revealed to Kashyapa Maricha.

Much later, additional information was appended to each Sūkta describing the metre of the Sūkta, name of Riṣhi and the devata or deity of Sūkta. This information is not a part of the text of RVS, compiled by Vedavyāsa. The first Sūkta of the Rig Veda Samhitā has 9 mantra-s; its deity is Agni, Riṣhi is Madhuchchhandā of the lineage of Vishvāmitra and all its mantra-s are in the Gāyatri metre.

The first three Sections associated with the Riṣhīs Madhuchchhandā, Medhātithi and Shunahshepa involving 30 Sūkta-s give concise reviews

of the powers of the various deities. The first Sūkta gives a brilliant overview of Agni, the Lord of Divine Will. The second Sūkta reviews the power of Vāyu or the life-energy (*prāṇa*); Indra-Vāyu, the coordinated activity of the Prāṇa and Mind; Mitra, the God of harmony and friendship, and Varuṇa, the Lord of all infinities who removes all narrowness within us. The third Sūkta gives an overview of Ashvins, the Gods of Bliss associated with the famous doctrine of Madhuvidya; Vishvedevāḥ or the collective of all the Gods, and Sarasvatī, the Goddess of Inspiration. The fourth Sūkta gives an excellent overview of Indra, the Lord of Divine Mind and the giver of Light. Rishi Medhātithi in the Second Section begins with the hymn to Agni (Sūkta 12) and reviews the characteristics of the Āpri deities, the All-Gods, Mitra-Varuṇa, the giver of physical and physiological wealth (Dravīṇoda), Indra and Varuṇa, Brahmanaspati or Gaṇapati, Agni and Maruts, the Ṛbhūs, the Divine Artisans who fashion the subtle body in man, the deity Savitṛ (or Savitri), the all-pervading Viṣṇu, the earth, the dynamical energies or waters, Goddesses and Spouses of the Gods, and Pūshan who guides us in our spiritual journey.

In the third Section, the Rishi Shunahshepa uses heavy symbolism. He unveils the secrets of Varuṇa and the associated three cords of bondage in the subtle bodies of human beings known as the knots of Brahma, Viṣṇu and Rudra in the Tantra. His Sūkta-s give us an excellent view of the concept of sin in the Veda which is quite different from the notion in Purāṇa or in the Semitic religions like Christianity. Shunahshepa discusses in hymn 28 in detail the yoga occurring in our subtle bodies. In Sūkta 29 he gives the prayers of commoners. In hymn 30, he discusses briefly the powers of Uṣha, the spiritual Dawn.

Thus in these three Sections made up of 30 Sūkta-s (or 350 mantra-s) all the major deities are covered except for Surya (1.50, 1.115), Rudra (1.43, 1.114) and Soma (1.91, 1.93).

In the remaining nine Sections, more detail is given on the psychological powers associated with the Gods and how we can develop them in our subtle bodies.

Riśhis Kanva and Praskaṇva in Sections V and VI describe the actions of the Goddess Uṣha and the Gods Ashvins and Maruts. They

employ long metres like Bṛhatī (with 48 letters) whereas the Rishi-s of earlier Sections like Madhuchchandas use the short metres like Gāyatri. Rishi Savya in Section VII focuses on the work of Indra. In Section VIII, Rishi Nodha focuses on Agni, Indra and Vaishvānara, the Universal Divine Will and Force.

The hymns of Parāshara to Agni in Section IX are the most lyrical in the Rig Veda Samhitā. The Sections X and XI due to Gotama and Kutsa are relatively long; they include several mantra-s widely quoted in Upanishads. Even though a human being, Rishi Kutsa is a companion of Indra in all actions. The Sūkta-s of Rishi Kutsa in Section XI emphasize the collaboration between the God Indra and man in all actions. There is no demarcation of activities into ‘worldly’ and ‘spiritual’ as in later Hinduism. The last Section gives the hymns of Rishi Kakṣhvān. As the name *kakṣhi* (secret) indicates, his Sūkta-s detail the miraculous deeds performed by the Ashvins to help several human beings.

All the hymns of the Seers of Rig Veda share a common language. Most of them use the symbolism of fire-ritual. For instance, Kutsa says, ‘may we be able to kindle thee, may we collect the fuel’, (1.94.3). In the same *rik*, the Seer makes clear that he is not referring to the physical fire, ‘Perfect our thoughts....’ Still each Rishi approaches the Gods in a different way. Rig Vedic hymns are records of spiritual experiences of the Rishi-s. Just as we do not find any two human beings identical (or for that matter, any two trees or stones), similarly spiritual realizations of two Rishi-s are distinct from one another. Different Rishi-s deal with different aspects of spiritual realization and there is no end to it. Still just as each poet has his/her own style of writing, each Rishi has his/her own unique realizations and unique style for expressing them. In addition, the compiler of Rig Veda has made sure that the contributions of the different Seers are complimentary and that each Seer makes some unique spiritual observations not made by others.

All in all, a careful reading of all these 121 Sūkta-s given in our two books Rig Veda Samhita: Maṇḍala One, Part One and Part Two gives us a good idea of the basic ideals and practices of the entire Rig Veda.

(xii) Overview of the Powers of the Gods¹

“O Gods, between you and us (humans), there is the ancestral friendship and we are equal as relatives; remember and regard it” RV (7.72.2).

The Gods are not poetical personifications of abstract ideas. To the Vedic seer, they are living realities. They are born in the human beings, empower them in their journey towards the supreme perfection. It is the gods who protect the human beings in their journey from the attacks of anti-divine demonic forces.

Among them Agni is the first, he is the power of the divine will, a force of god instinct with knowledge. This conscious and forceful will is the immortal guest in our mortality, the mediator between the earth (the realm of matter) and the heaven (the realm of mind). It carries what we offer to the higher powers and brings back in return their force and light and joy into our humanity.²

Indra, is the power of pure existence, self-manifested as the Divine Mind as mentioned in (2.12.1). Agni is one pole of force instinct with knowledge that sends its current upward from earth to heaven, Indra is the other pole of light instinct with force which descends from Heaven to Earth. He comes down into our world as the Hero with the shining horses and slays darkness and division with his lightnings, pours down the life-giving heavenly waters, makes the Sun of truth mount high in the heaven of our mentality.

Sūrya, the Sun, is the master of the supreme truth, the truth of being, truth of knowledge, truth of process and act and movement and function. He, the Savitar, is the creator or the manifester of all things. He releases the illuminations we seek, termed as Ray-cows.

¹ Based on Sri Aurobindo’s essay in, ‘The Doctrine of the Mystics’ reproduced in ‘The Hymns to the Mystic Fire’.

² For some more information on Agni, see the SAKSI compact book, ‘Secrets of Effective Work: Agni’s Guidance’. See also the epithets to Agni in the Subject Index.

Soma is the bliss which is generated by work just as the crushing of the Soma-herb releases the Soma-juice. The Soma is not a physical liquid. It is the joy of work. When a human being experiences the joy in the work he/she is doing, then that experience is Soma. What a human being should do is to offer the delight to the gods, especially Indra since in any work, the final result is due mostly to the efforts of the cosmic powers and the role of human being is very small, though vital. Indra and others pleased with the Soma increase the capacity of the human aspirant to do work with more and more perfection.

Each of these primary deities has others associated with them to fulfil related functions. For the establishment of the truth of Sūrya in mortals, a vast purity and clear wideness is indispensable; this is Varuṇa who destroys all sin and crooked falsehood. Also required is a luminous power of love forming into harmony all our thoughts; this is Mitra. Also required is a right enjoyment in all things; this is Bhaga.

For the whole bliss of Soma to be established in us, a happy and unmaimed condition of mind, vitality and body are necessary. This is given to us by the twin deities wedded to the daughter of Sun.

As the giver of the light of truth and the slayer of Vṛtra, Indra is aided by the powers of will and vital force, the Maruts.

There are female energies. Aditi, the infinite mother of the gods comes first. There is the triple Ilā, Sarasvati and Mahī, and also Dakṣhiṇa, the goddess of discernment.

Three great Gods, origin of the Purāṇic trinity make possible this grand development. Brahmanaspati is the creator of Word. Rudra smites all that opposes and heals all that is wounded and suffers. Viṣhṇu of the vast pervading motion holds all these worlds in his triple stride.

Our earth, shaped out of the dark inconscient ocean of existence lifts its ascending peaks upward; heaven of the mind has its own formations, the clouds that give their lightnings and the waters of life. Thus the Vedic poets sing the hymn of our spiritual ascension using the images of physical nature.

(xiii) Symbolism of the Gods⁺

Powers of the Gods

Aditi:	The Goddess of Infinity.
Agni:	Fire; It is the cosmic power of heat and light and the will-power united with wisdom. Human will-power is a feeble projection of this power.
Aryamā:	The lord of exalted power
Ashvins:	The Lords of Bliss and Divine Physicians who render the human body free of disease so that it can accept the divine Prāṇa, the life-energy.
Bṛhaspati:	The power of the soul; closely related to Brahmanaspati
Bhaga:	Enjoyer and the Distributor of Delight.
Brahmanaspati:	Lord of Mantra-s, Gaṇapati.
Ila:	The Goddess of revelation.
Indra:	He is the Lord of the Divine Mind and Action. In Indian tradition, mind is not a source of knowledge, it arranges the knowledge to aid action. Indra battles the evil forces on behalf of the human.
Mahī:	Goddess of the vast
Maruts:	Life Energies
Mitra:	The Lord of Love and Harmony
Pūshan:	The deity of nourishment
Parjanya:	The deity of descending dynamic energies
Rudra:	The Force of Evolution
R̥bhu-s:	The Divine Artisans
Sarama:	The Goddess of intuition
Sarasvati:	The Goddess of inspiration
Soma:	The Divine Delight
Sūrya-Savitr:	The Supreme Deity of Light and Force

⁺ Even though the information here is covered in the earlier essay, it is appended for quick reference.

Tvaṣṭṛ:	Divine form maker
Uṣha:	The goddess of dawn
Vāstu:	Dwelling
Vāyu:	Wind; He is the Lord of all the Life-energies, Prāṇa which represent the passions, feelings, emotions and abilities
Vaishvānara:	Universal Divine Will and Force
Varuṇa:	The Master of Infinities who cannot tolerate restrictive thinking or actions. Only he can cut the three bonds which restrict the three aspects of every human being - physical, vital and mental
Vasu:	The master of riches
Viśhṇu:	The Lord of all Space

Compact books from SAKSI are available on the gods and goddesses such as Agni, Indra, Soma, Sarasvati, Gaṇapati or Brahmanaspati etc.

(xiv) Yajña

Let us understand yajña by studying the epithets ascribed to it in more than one thousand verses. It is a fundamental mistake to regard yajña merely as a ritual or rite. Veda describes yajña as journey, as climbing a hill, as a battle and also as worship or rite. The worship or rite is not that done by a human being. Agni the *deva* is called upon to perform the rite; Agni is requested to do all the functions associated with the various priests. Agni is called upon to worship on behalf of the Rishi not only the *deva-s* but also the human beings who have attained perfection (1.45.1).

According to the Rig Vedic mystics, a human being performs an action only because of the assistance s/he gets from the *deva-s*. As a matter of fact, the contribution of the human in each action is nominal. Even great poets like the Vedic poets obtained inspiration from superior planes and their main contribution is in transcribing the revealed verses in appropriate metres. Yajña is that activity which recognises the collaboration between the *deva* and the human. Yajña is not a mere rule or ritual. A Rishi is conscious of the Divine's Hand in

the performance of all activities. The later scripture *Bhagavad Gita* (4.28) specifically mentions the different *yajña-s* by names such as *yajña* of obtaining material objects, *yajña* of obtaining knowledge, *yajña* involving self-study and so on. The sages are also conscious of the role of the *deva*, especially of Agni, so that they request him to perform the *yajña* (or the activity) on their behalf, (RV 1.26.1, 1.1.1).

Let us discuss the various epithets assigned to *yajña* beginning with *adhvara*, journey. *Adhvara* is derived from *adhva* path and *ra* to move. Ritualists regard this word as a synonym for rite since one of the principal priests in the rite is called *adhvaryu*. The function of the priest is to direct the rite and this function is in tune with the meaning assigned to *adhvara*. What is this journey? Every action in our life is a step in our journey towards realising the goal, namely bliss, an all-sided perfection of not only the physical body, but the vital and mental bodies, not only an individual perfection but perfection of the entire society. Veda uses the imagery of voyage for *yajña*. Just as merchants go in their boats to distant countries and bring valuable treasures from these countries, a person who does *yajña* reaches different states of consciousness, gets priceless experiences and brings them back to the ordinary living conditions and thus makes the human life Divine.

The *yajña* is also climbing from one peak to another, from one degree of perfection to another, (1.10.2). It is explicitly stated that we are not consciously aware of the entire journey. We can know only of what can be done at that stage. Whenever help is needed in this climbing, the *deva-s* again manifest and help us along.

Yajña is also a battle. We have mentioned only helpful powers of the nature, the *deva-s*. There are also the powers that hinder our journey towards perfection. These powers are called *dasyu-s*, the thieves or destroyers, *Vṛtra* and *Vala* being prominent among them. These *dasyu-s* impede our progress. They are called *ayajvānah*, people who do not recognise the principle of collaboration or *yajña*. They foster in human beings, who come under their influence, the qualities like jealousy, greed etc. The human collaborators call upon the *deva-s* to battle against these adversaries. Hence *yajña* is also a battle.

Yajña is a rite or ritual too, which is a symbolic physical representation of the inner yajña involving various steps involved in collaboration. The ritual begins with the invocation of Agni by lighting the physical fire. The dry fuel *samit* is fed to the fire as representing all the qualities which are not necessary or not appropriate. The fire is nourished by the ghee which symbolises mental clarity. The Soma herb which stands for the bliss released in all actions is also offered to Agni as well as rice and grains. These are some of the steps in the famous Soma rite. For a concordance of the inner and outer yajña, see Kashyap^{1,2}. For a discussion of the importance of inner yajna, see the booklet³ and the Review by S. Sankaranarayanan⁴.

Every rite has four priests namely *hotṛ*, *adhvaryu*, *udgāṭṛ* and *brahma*, whose names indicate their functions. *Hotṛ* is the *deva* who calls all the other *deva-s* to come and participate in the divine activity yajña. *Adhvaryu* lays down the various steps in the successful performance of the yajña. *Udgāṭṛ* is the *deva* who chants the prescribed mantra-s in the appropriate metres at requisite times. In RV there is no mention of the four faced creator-God of that name, *Brahma*. In the Veda *brahma* always stands for the *mantra*, the potent Word. *Brahma* is the priest who presides over the entire yajña and makes sure that everything is performed in the correct manner. In the RV, it is the *deva* Agni who performs all these functions in the psychological yajña, the collaborative and co-creative actions of the *deva-s* and the humans.

Yajña is intimately connected with mantra. We have to invoke the Gods in the inner sacrifice by the Voice potent with the power of the mantra. To them offering of whatever is ours is made; receiving all that is given by them in return, we shall be enabled and made competent to ascend the path of the goal.

¹ Kashyap, R.L, 'The Essentials of Shukla and Krishna Yajur Veda', Chap 13., published by SAKSI (2004, 2006).

² Kashyap, R.L, 'Krishna Yajur Veda Taittiriya Samhita', (text, Transliteration and translation) (3-volumes) (SAKSI);

³ Exploring the core of Krishna Yajur Veda Taittiriya Samhita by S.K. Ramachandra Rao, Rand Hicks and others, (SAKSI), 2002.

⁴ S. Sankaranarayanan, Review of the book in footnote 2, 'Brahma Vidya'; Adyar Library Bulletin, volume 67, 2003.

(xv) The Sources of this Translation

This translation is based on the detailed Sanskrit commentary of Rig Veda Samhitā entitled, ‘*Siddhānjana*’ or ‘*mystic collyrium*’, by Sri T.V. Kapāli Sāstry published in 1947. The commentary follows closely the clues to the understanding of Rig Veda provided by Sri Aurobindo in his books [SV, HMF] who also approved the commentary in toto. Kapāli Sāstry has been aptly termed a versatile genius with his mastery over the traditional *shāstra-s* in Sanskrit including grammar and his excellence in composing poetry and the mastery over the modern English works. Even though Sāstry has great admiration for the work of Āchārya Sāyaṇa, he has shown that, even from the purely grammatical point of view, the hymns have a spiritual interpretation different from the naturalistic-ritualistic view of Sāyaṇa.

Kapāli Sāstry’s works in both English and Sanskrit⁵ answer in great detail the criticisms of the spiritual interpretation of the Veda made by several persons in the academia, both in Sanskrit *pāṭhashālās* and in Universities. They do not want to accept the spiritual interpretation of the Veda on the grounds that it is opposed to the “tradition”, which is supposed to be the opinion of medieval ritualists (*mīmāṃsakās*) and that of Sāyaṇa. These critics are unaware that there is a long-standing tradition of the spiritual interpretation of the Veda, going back to the first known commentator Yāskā circa 200 B.C.E. who is 1500 years prior to Sāyaṇa.

I started this work with great trepidation acutely aware of my limitations in Sanskrit. T.V. Kapāli Sāstry’s style is so majestic that I may not have captured many of the subtle nuances in his book. My aim is to bring the spiritual interpretation of the Veda to the attention of the wider audience of Veda lovers who may not be experts in Sanskrit.

Sri Aurobindo, in his concluding chapter of *The Secret of the Veda* written in 1917, declared, “our object is only to see whether there is a *prima facie* case for the idea with which we started that the Vedic

⁵ Collected Works, Vols. 1,4,5,6.

hymns are the symbolic gospel of the ancient Indian mystics and their sense spiritual and psychological. Such a *prima facie* case we have established.... More we cannot at present attempt . . . (its meaning) has been obscured by ages of oblivion and misunderstanding to be adequately dealt within a single work”.

Kapāli Sāstry’s work is the major one to date to follow up on Sri Aurobindo’s call. I am happy to present his case to the English knowing public.

I am aware of the complete English translations of Rig Veda done by Griffith, Wilson, Satyaprakash Sarasvati and Satyakam Vidyalankar (1977-84). The most extensive commentary on Rig Veda in Kannada in 30 volumes ($\frac{1}{4}$ demy) is due to Venkat Rao, done in 1945-55. In recent times those who have translated several sūkta-s with a spiritual bent are: Bose, Findley, Frawley, Vasishtha Ganapati Muni, Gonda, Raimundo Panikkar, M.P. Pandit, A.B. Purani, S.K. Ramachandra Rao among others.

(xvi) Some Common Words

“The popular Vedic Symbols are the horse (*ashva*), cow (*gau*, *go*), son (*praja*, *toka*) and hero (*vīra*). The sons or children are the new soul-formations which constitute the divine personality, the new births within us. The heroes (*vīrah*) are the mental and moral energies which resist the assaults of ignorance, division, evil and falsehood. The vital powers (the power of *prāṇa*) are the motive forces that bear us on our journey and are therefore symbolised by horse (*ashva*). The herds of the cows are the illuminations that come to us from the supramental truth, the rays of the Sun of light. These rays symbolised by cows are often indicated by the word Ray-cow.” (SA)

Sri Aurobindo has a detailed discussion on assigning the meanings to word in (SV, pp 491-501; pp 551-581; and pp 163-179 in CW, vol. 27).

adhvara: pilgrim-rite; *yajna* regarded as a pilgrimage journey. *adhva* is path

adhvaryu: leading priest in the rite; *Agni*

(xvii) Abbreviations

- Ar.: Aranyakā
 Br̥h. U: Br̥hadāraṇyaka U.
 Chh. U.: Chhāndogya U.
 HMF: Hymns to the Mystic Fire, by (SA)
 KS: Sri Kapāli Sāstry, T.V. (1886-1953)
 CW: Collected Works
 Ritualists: These persons, followers of the tenet of Pūrva Mīmāmsa, believe that Rig Vedic hymns are meant only for use in rituals and they have no other meaning.
 Ṛk, rik: A metrical mantra
 RV: Rig Veda Samhitā (the Shākala recension)
 RV (4.6.10): Mantra 10 of Sūkta 6 of Maṇḍala 4
 S: Sāyaṇa Āchārya, (1315-1387 CE)
 SA: Sri Aurobindo, (1872-1950 CE)
 SB: Shatapatha Brāhmaṇa
 SAKSI: Sri Aurobindo Kapāli Sāstry Institute of Vedic Culture
 SV: The Secret of the Veda, by (SA)
 SYV: Shukla Yajur Veda
 Shvet. U: Shvetāshvatara U.
 TA: Taittirīya Aranyakā
 Tai.U.: Taittirīya Upaniṣhad
 TS: Taittirīya Samhitā
 TS (4.6.5.3): Mantra 3, Anuvāka 5, Prapāṭhaka 6, Kānda 4 of TS
 U: Upaniṣhad
 Uṣṇik (8/8/12): Uṣṇik metre with three pāda-s with the numbers of syllables in them as indicated, to a total of 28.
 VS: Vājasaneyi Samhitā of SYV
 VS (15.7): Mantra 7 in adhyāya 15 of VS
 A (b,c): The metre with name A, having 'c' pāda-s, each with 'b' syllables
 Triṣṭup (11,4): Triṣṭup metre with 4 pāda-s, each having 11 letters, a total of 44.

Section I: Sūkta-s (1.1-1.11)

Riṣhis: Madhuchchhandāḥ Vaishvāmitrah: Sūkta-s: (1.1-1.10)

Jetā Mādhuchchhandasah: Sūkta (1.11)

Metre: 1.1-1.9, Gāyatrī; 1.10, 1.11, Anuṣṭup

Sūkta	Hymn title
1.1:	Adoration of Agni (9)
1.2:	Vāyu, Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa (9)
1.3:	Ashvins, Indra, All-Gods and Sarasvatī (12)
1.4:	Indra, Giver of Light (10)
1.5:	Yoga and the Arrival of Indra (10)
1.6:	Indra and Maruts (10)
1.7:	Indra Breaks the Hill and Removes the Cover (10)
1.8:	Help Given by Indra (10)
1.9:	Descent and Ascent (10)
1.10:	Creation and Progress of Seers (12)
1.11:	Indra, the Destroyer of Evil-Forces (8)

The eleven Sūkta-s of this Section give an excellent introduction to the two main cosmic powers of Veda namely Agni and Indra and also the other principal deities such as Vāyu, Ashvins, Sarasvatī etc. In the Veda Agni is the power of will who introduces all other powers into our subtle body. Meditation on the first hymn is essential for understanding the secrets of the Veda. Indra is the lord of the Divine Mind. The Sūkta-s (1.4-1.11) deal with this cosmic power. Indra of the Veda has no relation to his namesake in the Purāṇa-s. Sarasvatī in the Veda is the Goddess of Inspiration and she makes that power available to her devotees.

The hymn (1.10) brings out the idea that spiritual progress is like climbing a hill from one step to another. The goal is overall perfection of not only the individual, but also of the society as well.

The hymn (1.11) by Riṣhi Jeta is in the same style as others in this Section. Note (1.11.2) emphasizes Indra's friendship with the Seers.

Several mantra-s from (1.1) and other hymns are also in Yajur Veda Samhitā. For details, see concordance in the appendix.

The number in parenthesis in boldface following the title of the Sūkta refers to the number of mantra-s in the Sūkta. For instance Sūkta 1.3 has 12 mantra-s.

1.1: Adoration of Agni

Seer: Madhuchchhandāḥ Vaishvāmitraḥ

1: Leads the Yajña

2: Ancient and Modern Seers

3: Endows Inner Plenitude

4: Yajña as a Journey

5: Agni is Seer-will

6: The Truth of Agni

7: Obeisance by Thought

8: Agni's Own Home

9: Agni as Father

Metre: Gāyatrī

This hymn describes some principal characteristics of the God Agni. Clearly Agni is the most prominent God in the Vedic hymns along with Indra. A careful study of this hymn reveals the secret of the RV to us. In addition, the books of Veda, like RV or Upanishads, use the first hymn (or a phrase of the first mantra in the shorter Upanishads) to set the tone for the theme underlying the entire chapter or text.

The first step in the Yoga practiced by the Seers of the RV is the development of the will-power which gives an intimation of the higher realms. In the RV, the God Agni is the Seer-Will who lights up the flame along the path towards attaining all-around perfection, including physical riches, spiritual felicities of the will in the yajamāna, human aspirant, and leads him/her attainment of Supreme Beatitude.

It is a hymn of nine verses in the Gāyatrī metre. It is made of three parts each of eight syllables. I will give the paraphrase of each verse:

1. I adore Agni placed in front; he the *deva* of the *yajña*, the invoker or the summoning priest in the *yajña* and the carrier of felicities.
2. Agni, adored by the ancient Seers, is also adorable to the later Seers. He brings here the *deva-s*.
3. The treasure obtained from Agni is full of strength, calmness, happiness and other felicities; it increases day by day, not subject to dwindling like ordinary wealth.
4. Only the *yajña* which is guarded by Agni on all sides reaches the *deva-s*.
5. He is endowed with the capacity to invoke supernormal powers of vision and audition in the human aspirants; he is wise and firm of will; Agni can make the other cosmic powers, *deva-s*, manifest in the aspirant.
6. Agni's special Truth is his power of conferring auspicious happiness (*bhadra*) which averts Falsehood.
7. We approach you day by day, in the night and in the light, carrying our surrender by our thought.
8. The (vast) Truth is the own home of Agni. There he increases for the human aspirant and protects him/her.
9. O Agni, cling to us like a father to the son; be of easy access to us.

This hymn, which employs very little symbolism, contains the seeds of the Bhakti tradition, particularly in the ninth and seventh verses. Agni is not a mere flame or even the deity of flame. He is a special aspect of the Divine whom the Rishi loves with intensity comparable to the supreme Bhakti described in later devotional literature. The development of a personal relationship such as that of a father, mother, son, daughter, spouse etc., with the Divine is one of the key ideas of Bhakti Yoga of Bhagavad Gīta. In the ninth verse Agni is approached as if he were a father.

The seventh verse indicates that the Rishi-s were familiar with the techniques of meditation, i.e., directing the thoughts. The idea of surrender, developed later in the Bhakti literature, is already present here. Here we see the mingling of Knowledge and Bhakti.

The first verse merits careful attention. There is no mention of the ritual performed by human priests on behalf of a human patron. Agni carries out all the functions of the priests which are mainly psychological in character. If we study all the verses in RV where the word 'kindling' occurs, we see that the kindling of Agni is not done by human beings but by the Gods themselves, often by the pair, the solar powers, Mitra and Varuṇa. Thus, the *yajña* in RV is not a mere rite. RV uses ritualistic words to describe spiritual practices and experiences.

The third verse clearly indicates that the opulence bestowed upon us by Agni increases day by day and thus it is non-physical.

The fourth verse regards *yajña* as a pilgrimage which takes the inner being of the aspirant to the secret divinity inside.

The fifth verse declares that Agni is the power of Divine Will endowed with wisdom and vision.

The sixth verse reveals the special truth of Agni. He bestows the happiness (*bhadra*) endowed with goodness which discriminates between Truth and Falsehood. This interpretation of *bhadra* is inescapable if we study all the verses involving the word *bhadra* namely (5.82.4), (5.82.5), (4.19.20), (5.1.10), (10.25.1), (10.104.9) etc.

This Sūkta contains several keywords of the Rig Veda such as *satyah* (Truth), *ṛtam* (Right or Truth-in-Movement), *ṛtvijam* (one who performs the *yajña* in the right order and at the right time), *hotāram* (the summoning priest or one who calls the Gods), *Riṣhi* (the Seer), *rayi* (internal and external felicity), *adhvara* (the journey or the pilgrimage of *yajña*), *kavi* (the Seer), *kratu* (the divine will), *bhadra*, (auspicious happiness or happy-good), *vardhamānam* (increasing), *sve dame* (own home), etc. A proper understanding of these words goes a long way in understanding the secret of the entire Rig Veda.

1.1.1: Leads the Yajña

Agni I adore, placed in front (1),
 the God of yajña, *r̥tvik* or one who has the ecstasy of Truth (2).
 He, the summoning priest (3),
 activates (in human beings) the dormant ecstasies excellently (4).¹

Details: The purport of this important mantra is: “I aspire intensely for Agni, the adorable, the leader who carries out the yajña. He does and gets done the yajña in due season. He, as the summoning priest, is capable of bringing the Gods to the yajña performed here. He establishes excellent felicities in the aspirant.”

We also see in this Sūkta, composed several millennia earlier, the seeds of the later Vedāntic thought. For instance, in the yajña, Agni is himself the priest and Agni is also the deity called for. He actively helps the human aspirant in the march toward perfection. We see here the idea of, ‘worshipping the spirit by spirit’, later developed extensively as the Yoga of Knowledge. For instance, Bhagavad Gita (4.24), states that, ‘Brahman, the supreme principle, is the offering in yajña, Brahman is the sacrificial fire, Brahman is the thing offered....’

agni: It is derived from *añg* which indicates a strong and luminous movement. *īle*: Indicates an act of adoration, aspiration, etc.

purohitam: There are two words here meaning ‘placed in front’. It is incorrect to equate it with the modern or classical *purohit*, a person who directs the performance of rituals. Even in the times of the epic Rāmāyaṇa, *purohit* meant the spiritual director of the king who not only advised the king on both temporal and spiritual matters, but also went ahead of the king in the procession (leader or placed in front) when the king wanted to meet other kings. (Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa, 69.4,5). In the esoteric sense, Agni is the Divine Will in a person who leads him/her towards the higher goals. Agni as the Divine Will is mentioned explicitly in (1.1.5) to be discussed presently.

¹ अग्निमीक्षे पुरोहितं (1), यज्ञस्य देवम् कृत्विजंम् (2), होतारं (3), रत्नधात्मम् (4)

deva: God, a cosmic power endowed with Light; derived from *div*, to illumine. The word God is used here even though it may mislead the reader because of its sense in semitic religions. *Deva-s* in Veda are harmonious without any quarrels among them as in the Greek Gods. *Deva-s* are always beneficial to the human beings helping them to achieve overall perfection.

yajñasya devam: Lord of the *yajña*. *Yajña* is the collaborative activity between the human aspirant and the cosmic powers, happening both in the subtle body of a person and the cosmos. It is the offering of all works and gains to the divinity inside. Through the right *yajña* a person can achieve perfection in all actions. An outward rite or ceremony is the physical symbol of this inner *yajña*. Agni is the Divine Will in a person who prompts him/her to do all the actions in a spirit of offering, churn the Delight out of all actions and offer it to the Gods. Agni makes the aspirant participate in the inner *yajña*, even if the person is unconscious of the divine presence in his/her surface activities.

One school of traditionalists, *mīmāmsaka-s*, claim that *yajña* is nothing but the outward ritual and characterize Rig Veda Samhitā and other Veda Samhita-s as part of Karma-Kāṇḍa, the ritual-book. However, out of the 1028 hymns in RV Samhitā, not even one hymn gives details of any physical rite. In the text there are only words such as *yajña*, *adhvara*, *yaja* connected with rites. These words have spiritual meanings.

ṛtvik: According to (SA), *ṛtvik* is made of *ṛt* (Truth) and *vi* (ecstasy). Hence it is rendered as the one who has the ecstasy of Truth. Also, *ṛtu* in the Veda is the Order of the Truth, its arrangement of time, and circumstance. Agni is the representative cosmic power or priest who sacrifices according to the law, order, and season of the *ṛtam*. Note all actions are viewed as sacrificial.

hotāram: summoning priest or one who invites all the *deva-s* or cosmic powers to the *yajña* in progress; *hotṛ* and its variants occur more than 200 times in RV. The traditional commentaries identify this word with the special priest, *hotṛ*, who offers the libation (*havis*). One of the meanings of the root *hu* in *hotṛ* is to cry or shout. Agni

calls the other Gods or Powers for helping the human aspirant in their respective ways.

ratnadhātamam: *ratna* in Veda means happiness or ecstasy; *rathnadha* means one who bears the happiness. The suffix *tam* means excellent. The happiness is the fruit of the offerings of the Rishi or the aspirant in the *yajña* and Agni establishes the happiness in him/her. Only in later Sanskrit does *ratna* refer to jewels or wealth. The commentators, who view the *yajña* as a ritual of propitiation to the deities, render this Word as, ‘the donor of the cows and horses’.

1.1.2: Ancient and Modern Seers

Agni, adored by the ancient seers (1),

is adored by the new sages too (2).

He brings the Gods here (3).²

Details: *r̥ṣi*: the seer, one who has found the divine Word of the supra-intellectual, supra-mental spiritual Truth expressed in the form of *rik*, the mantric verse. The person is not an intellectual composer of the hymn, but the Seer (*draṣṭa*) of the Eternal Truth; the impersonal knowledge comes to him/her vibrating out of the Infinite. Since the person has the complete inner knowledge, he/she can guide the world humanly as God guides it divinely.

pūrvēbhīḥ: ancient. It is impossible to determine the age of these Seers, who are labelled ancient by the Seer Madhuchchandas. The phrase indicates that the worship of Agni had a long tradition. The reference to, ‘the ancient and modern Seers’ is in other hymns like (8.11.10).

iha: here. The word is often misinterpreted to mean the Vedic altar in the house of the Rishi. *iha* means our world, this Earth or in the esoteric interpretation, the inner body of the sacrificer.

ā + vakṣhati: brings. The function indicated here is a continuation of the one indicated in the epithet *hotṛ* (summoning priest) in (1.1.1); Agni brings the Gods located in Heaven to a location on Earth which is the body of the human aspirant.

² अग्निः पूर्वभिर्कृषिभिः इड्यो (1), नूतनैः उत् (2), स देवाँ एहं वक्षति (3)

1.1.3: Endows Inner Plenitude

By Agni one enjoys an inner plenitude (1),
that increases day by day (2).

It is glorious and full of hero-power (3).³

Details: *rayim*: indicates inner plenitude or felicity. Only an inner treasure can have the descriptor ‘increases day by day’. *yashas* (glory) is an adjective to the treasure. The inner treasure is endowed with a force so powerful that it enables the human to overcome the obstacles, caused by adverse powers, that prevent the enjoyment of bliss. The aspirant obtains this treasure by the grace of Agni who summons other Gods and makes way for the manifestation of their powers in man.

vīra: the hero-power which battles the assaults of ignorance and falsehood. S translates it as a son.

yashasam: conquering glory. It is derived from *yash*, to strive. S translates it as, ‘fame coming from charities’.

1.1.4: Yajña as a Journey

O Agni, the yajña-pilgrimage (1),
that is surrounded by you on all sides (2),
that alone reaches the Gods (3).⁴

Details: *yajñām adhvaram*: yajña-pilgrimage. Agni gives the path of ascent to the Rishi or the aspirant. The yajña or sacrifice is viewed in the Veda as a pilgrimage or a sacred journey that begins with our material body, the destination being *svar*, which is the Heaven or the habitation of the Gods. The concept of *svar* has a counterpart in the inner body of the *yajamāna*. The human aspirant joyously gives all he has in the yajña to attain the condition, *svar*. In such an endeavour there will always be adverse forces which can be overcome only by Agni who insures that the attempt to reach the inner world of Gods will be successful. So in the esoteric interpretation, the word *adhvara*

³ अग्निना॑ रथिमश्वत्॒ (1), पोषमेव॑ दिवेदिवे॒ (2), यशस॑ वीरवत्तमम्॒ (3)

⁴ अग्ने॑ यं यज्ञमध्यरं॒ (1), विश्वतः॑ परिभूरसि॒ (2), स इद्वेषु॑ गच्छति॒ (3)

has a fixed meaning of journey or pilgrimage throughout the Veda. Agni is said to be the guide or charioteer of this journey in (1.44.2). In the traditional commentaries however, the word is given different meanings such as journey, free from harm, free of killing, etc., in different mantra-s.

adhvara: gives or makes the path for *yajamāna*; *adhva*: path; *rā*: to give.

1.1.5: Agni is Seer-will

Agni, the summoning priest, the Seer-will, a God, is the Truth (1); he has the power of granting super-normal powers of audition to the aspirant (2).

May he come with the Gods (3).⁵

Details: *kavi*: Seer. This keyword with its variants occurs more than two hundred fifty times. *kavi* in classical Sanskrit means a poet, but in the Veda it denotes a Seer, one who sees beyond the realm of senses (*krānta-darshi*). *kavi* is open to the action of felicities of inspiration, intuition, revelation and audition. This meaning is consistent with the meanings of related words like *akavi* or *kāvya*. *akavi* occurs in RV (7.4.4) where it can only mean, ‘one without vision’, the prefix ‘a’ denoting negation. The word *kāvya* occurs about fifty times in the RV and the generally-held meaning, ‘literary composition’ is inappropriate. The correct meaning for *kāvya* is Seer-wisdom, the wisdom revealed by supraphysical visions or auditions. For instance, RV (10.87.21) reads, ‘protect us by thy Seer-wisdom, (*kāvyena*)’. An ordinary literary composition or poetry is not endowed with any power of protection. RV (4.3.16) states, ‘*nivachana kavaye kāvyanī*’, ‘Seer wisdoms that utter their inner meaning to the Seer.’ Only the supraphysical Seer-wisdom has the power of protection and the secret inner meaning. RV (8.79.1) defines the *rishi* as a sage (*vipra*) who has the revelation of a mantra (*kāvyena*).

kratuḥ: It is explained by ritualists as intelligence, act or sacrifice. In the esoteric interpretation, it is given the fixed meaning of,

⁵ अग्निर्होता कविक्रतुः सत्यः (1), चित्रश्वस्तमः (2), देवो देवेभिः आगमत् (3)

'unshakable or a determined conscious force capable of execution'. *kratuh* is the will associated with wisdom or vision and the force which makes its execution possible. The related Word *sukratum* occurs about ten times in the RV and it means 'strong of will' as in RV (8.19.3). In addition, the word *kratuh* occurs in the Upanishads. For instance, in the Shāndilya Vidya of the Chhāndogya U. (III.14), there is the phrase '*sa kratum kurvita*' which is interpreted by the great commentator Sri Shankara as, 'he should make the resolve or he should make up his will'.

kavikratuh: This word, which occurs about ten times in the RV as an epithet for the deity Agni, has the meaning 'Seer-will'. Thus Agni is the Divine Will who has not only the vision of suprasensible realms, but is also endowed with the force to manifest that vision of perfection in the worlds within us and without. Since the knowledge comes by Truth-Consciousness, there is no possibility either of misapplication or error in Agni's actions.

satyah: Truth of the Divine Being; True in knowledge. This Word and its variants occur about two hundred times. See (1.1.8) for the distinction between *satya* and *ṛtam*.

shravas: power of suprasensual audition or hearing. The Word *chitra* indicates an infinite variety and *tamah* indicates excellence. Thus *satyash-chitra-shravas-tamah* means that Agni whose audition is suprasensible and is of many types can make the seeker hear wonderful audition. Obviously Agni can be contacted by lauds and chants. Recall that the first mantra began with the phrase *agnim īle*, 'adore Agni.' If Agni were a mere physical fire, contacting him through chanting would not make much sense.

1.1.6: The Truth of Agni

The auspicious happiness (*bhadra*) you shall create (2),
for the giver, O Dear Agni (1),
that is the truth of you alone, O Aṅgiras (3).⁶

⁶ यद्गं दाशुषे त्वमग्ने (1), भद्रं करिष्यसि (2), तवेत् तत् सत्यमङ्गिरः (3)

Details: *aṅga, aṅgiras:* These epithets of Agni indicate the quality of pre-eminence, flaming or glowing.

dāshuṣhe: giver. The person who performs the *yajña* gives offerings and hence is called the ‘giver’. He gives not only material gifts but also the results of his actions and enjoyments to the appropriate cosmic powers. *yajña* is an arrangement for the distribution of the activities.

bhadra: It is a keyword in the Veda. Griffith translates it as blessings. According to S it signifies wealth in the form of progeny, animals, etc. *Bhadra* and its variants occur more than one hundred times in the RV and its precise meaning can be grasped by studying all these mantra-s. Such a study has been done in [KS, CW, Vol.4]. The present mantra states that *bhadra* is the auspicious happiness that Agni creates for the sacrificer or the human aspirant and that is the Truth of Agni alone. What could that Truth be? In many mantra-s, *bhadra* is used as something exalted connected with Truth in contradistinction to the evil and calamities associated with false knowledge. For instance, RV (5.82.5) declares, ‘O Savitṛ, send far away all calamities, send us only what is *bhadra*, good’. *Bhadra* is used as a power of Truth (*satya*), which opposes all the misfortunes arising out of evil and false knowledge signified by the deity Nirriti. In RV (10.164.2), *bhadra* is used to ward off the effects of evil dream, ‘*bhadra* or auspicious happiness do they elect’. *Bhadra* is used as an adjective to signify Agni’s own home: ‘vast, great and happy, *bhadra*, is thy house of refuge’, RV (5.1.10). *Bhadra* is frequently used as an adjective for mind, ‘Send us a happy mind, *bhadram mano*’, RV (10.25.1). This mantra, RV (1.1.6), states that this *bhadra* is Agni’s truth alone. *Bhadra* confers both happiness and spiritual Good and hence is called here as auspicious happiness. Note that what is pleasing may not necessarily bring us near to the Spirit. Recall the distinction made in Kāṭha U. (1.2.2) between *shreyas*, the good and *preyas*, the pleasing, which yields only momentary happiness. *Bhadra* has the same connotation as *shreyas*.

1.1.7: Obeisance by Thought

O Agni, day by day, in the night and in the light (1),
we approach you (3),
carrying our obeisance (*nama*) by our thought (*dhiya*) (2).⁷

Details: The purport is that the means to seek Agni is through spiritual practice which is rooted in meditation; a meditation that continues under all conditions, those of illumination or otherwise. Note that the ritual or rite is not mentioned, clearly indicating the esoteric nature of the *yajña*. The adoration of Agni and the constant meditation on him, while engaged in all activities, is the definitive sign of contact with Agni.

dhiyā: plural of *dhi*, meaning thought, understanding or intelligence. This corresponds to the later word *buddhi*. It is given a variety of meanings like, 'water', 'work', 'sacrifice', 'food', 'thought', etc., by S. But its natural interpretation given here fits in all the verses of Veda where it occurs.

nama: obeisance or a spirit of self-surrender. It is not a physical act, but an act of thought. S translates it as 'food' most of the time. It occurs more than 250 times in the RV.

upa + emasi: we approach;

1.1.8: Agni's Own Home

Agni reigns over pilgrim-*yajña*-s (1),
he is the luminous guardian of Truth (2).

His power of manifestation is increasing in his own home (3).⁸

Details: This mantra affirms the association between Agni and Truth mentioned earlier in mantra-s RV (1.1.5) and RV (1.1.6).

sve dame: Agni's own Home. It is not the altar of the ritual fire as the ritualists and the moderns claim. Agni's abode is characterized in RV (1.75.5) and other verses of RV, and also in Atharva Veda (12.1.1) by three phrases: Absolute Truth (*satyam*), Truth-in-action, Right

⁷ उपे त्वाग्ने दिवेदिवे दोषावस्तः (1), धिया वृयम् नमो भरन्त् (2), एमसि (3)

⁸ राजन्तम् अध्वराणां (1), गोपाम् कृतस्य दीदिविम् (2), वर्धमानं स्वे दमै (3)

(*ṛtam*) and Vast (*bṛhat*). Every aspect of manifestation in this universe and others are characterised by a truth, all of which are included in the Word *ṛtam*. This abode has absolutely no limitations of any sort, physical, psychological, etc. Hence, it is characterised as Vast. In this verse, Agni is described as the guardian of the Truth in manifestation. In RV (1.12.7), Agni is described as, ‘he whose law of being is Truth’, *satyadharmaṇam*.

Wilson, following S, gives the following explanation for *sve dame*: ‘the chamber in which the fire worship is performed and in which the fire increases by the oblations poured upon it’.

ṛtam: Truth-in-action, Truth-in-movement. *ṛtam* is the Truth in manifestation, the projection of the Truth-in-Being (*satya*) into the plane of becoming, the plane of time and space. It is the Truth of divine being both in seeing, hearing and conscious action without any touch of falsehood. This word occurs more than 500 times. *ṛtam* is sometimes mistranslated as the ‘lower Truth’. In Veda, both *satya* and *ṛtam* have equal weight. *ṛtam* has gone out of currency in the post-vedic literature.

vardhamānam: increasing. Agni is described as increasing in his own home. Clearly the physical flame cannot increase forever, even by consuming all the ghee. The phrase ‘Agni increasing in his own home’ implies that Agni’s power, both physical and psychological, increases in all aspects of manifestation including human beings.

rājantam: king. By means of the path (*adhvara*) of the *yajña*, Agni takes the human aspirant to the home of Truth, the plane of the Vast. Thus, Agni is described as the king of these paths. Agni himself carries out the sacrifice or *yajña* because he wants to establish the supreme Truth in the *yajamāna*.

1.1.9: Agni as Father

As a father onto his son (1),
be of easy access to us, O Agni (2).
Cling to us so that we can maintain our happy state (3).⁹

⁹ स नः पितेव सूनवे (1), अग्नै सूपायनो भव (2), सचस्वा नः स्मस्तयै (3)

Details: The human aspirant prays to Agni like a son appealing to a loving father, with the hope that Agni would eliminate all false consciousness, the basis of misery. This is the profound Truth of Agni mentioned earlier in RV (1.1.6). The seed of the yoga of devotion elaborated in later texts like Bhagavad Gīta, Bhāgavatam and other Purāṇa-s, is evident here.

svasti: the good or happy state. It is similar to the word *bhadra* discussed earlier in RV (1.1.6).

Hymn 1.2: Vāyu, Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa

- 1: Handsome Vāyu
- 2: Knowers of the Chant of Light
- 3: Vāyu Accepts Soma
- 4: Gifts to the Seeker
- 5: Become Conscious
- 6: Perfect Gift of the Soma
- 7: Purified Understanding
- 8: Increase of Truth
- 9: The Discrimination in Activity

The hymns of the Rig Veda Samhitā have been arranged so that the first three or four hymns serve as an introduction to the entire text.

Hymn 1.1 indicates the goal of the yajña namely the attainment of Truth and the gain of supreme beatitude. Hymns 1.2 and 1.3 deal with the work of deities Vāyu, Indra, Ashvins, Mitra, Varuṇa and Sarasvatī and the collective of All-Gods, in culturing the body and the mind of man so that it is fit to bear the pressure of the work of Agni and accept the supreme Delight, Soma.

This hymn is made up of three sub-hymns addressed to the deities Vāyu, Indra-Vāyu and Mitra-Varuṇa, each having three riks.

We will summarise the purport of hymn 1.2. In the first sub-hymn, the Soma or the delight of existence is activated by the acts of yajamāna and it is purified by the declaration, 'It is not mine'. To receive the Soma, the delight of existence in the nervous regions or

vital being of man, the lord of the vital being, Vāyu, is lauded in the first three riks.

Then comes the preparation of the mental plane for which Indra and Vāyu are jointly lauded.

The third sub-hymn deals with culturing of the mental being so that the *rta*, the manifestation of Truth, can take place. For this Mitra and Varuṇa, who are capable of establishing luminous intelligence in our subtle bodies are lauded.

Vāyu: (1.2.1 - 1.2.3)

Vāyu is the lord of life-energies, inspirer of the breath or the dynamic energy called Prāṇa. He is also known as Mātarishvan since he breathes or acts (*shva*) in the midregion (*mātari*). He supports the organisation of the nerve channels and the *chakra-s* mentioned in *tāntrik* books and their activities in human beings which are the basis of the mental energies. See also the introduction to (1.2.4-1.2.6).

Since all the mantra-s deal with Soma, we give a brief explanation.

Soma: It is the distilled essence (delight) of all experiences (*sarvam anūbhūti rāsam*). It is the delight of existence, Ānanda, whose home is *rta-chit*, Truth-consciousness. Soma juice which is produced from the Soma-creeper in the rituals is only an external symbol of the eternal Soma. The Soma as essence of Delight, the *rasa*, is hidden in the sense objects and sense experiences, in the plants and growths of the Earth-nature. By his actions, the sacrificer extracts the *rasa* or the Delight in the experience of the sense objects, purifies them and offers them to the Gods. Purification means divesting these actions or experiences from any personal claim. This purified Soma is the food of the Gods. Indra and other Gods are energized by this Soma and conquer the realms of inconscience controlled by the titans who cover the knowledge. We may recall the Bhagavad Gita verse (15-13) ‘Becoming the Godhead of Soma, full of *rasa* (the sap in the Earth-mother), I nourish all the plants and herbs.’ The classic book on ancient Indian herbs is the Sushruta Samhitā and it describes twenty-four varieties of the Soma plant in its Chapter 27. But nowhere is its

intoxicating property mentioned [KS, CW, vol. 4, p. 169]. It is only the modern imaginative minds who assume that Soma is an intoxicating beverage and that the Seers, intoxicated with the Soma drink, laud the deity. Even a casual perusal of all the hymns on Soma will indicate its symbolic character.

We will quote here a verse on Soma from RV (10.85.3):

“One thinks one has drunk the Soma, after one has crushed the herb;
None ever drank of the Soma, known to the men of wisdom”

Another quotation from RV (8.79.2):

“He clothes the naked, doctors the sick,
By his grace, the blind see and the lame walk.”

arankṛtāḥ: the word *alam* or *aram* has 2 meanings: a sense of enough and a sense of decoration or purification. In this context, purifying is appropriate i.e., divesting it of all personal claims.

1.2.1: Handsome Vāyu

O Vāyu, handsome, come (1); the Soma is purified and ready (2).
Drink it; hear our call (3).¹

Details: Vāyu is lauded as handsome because he endows humans with a harmonious development of nervous energies which renders their physical and vital bodies beautiful.

shṛudhī: hear; the Gods are not abstract entities but are concrete personalities who hear our calls made through the chants and render the appropriate help.

1.2.2: Knowers of the Chant of Light

O Vāyu, with their chants (1),
the lovers laud you turning to you (2).

They, the Soma-pressers and the knowers of light, (laud you) (3).²

Details: *uktebhīḥ*: lauds, which have the power of manifesting the particular God in the seeker *yajamāna*.

¹ वायुं याहि दर्शते मे (1), सोमा अरकृताः (2), तेषां पाहि श्रुधी हवम् (3)

² वायुं उक्थेभिः (1), जरन्ते त्वामच्छा जरितारः (2), सुतसौमा अहर्विदं (3)

jaritārah: a synonym of a singer who pines for the deity. This usage is common in RV.

sutasomā: persons who press or release the Soma; the *rasa* or delight in all objects or growths of Earth is released by actions done in a spirit of dedication. Without action, Soma is not released. The ritualists translate the phrase as those who crush the Soma-herb.

aharvida: knowers of the Day or Light (*ahāḥ*). This phrase clearly indicates the esoteric character of Soma. Anybody can press the Soma-herb. But only the illumined persons know how to release the concealed Delight in nature.

1.2.3: Vāyu Accepts Soma

O Vāyu, your filling stream of speech (1),
moves towards the giver (2). (It is) widening to drink the Soma (3).³

Details: Even though the chant is coming out of the mouth of the giver or *yajamāna*, it is inspired by the God Vāyu who himself is moving towards the giver to drink the Soma prepared by the *yajamāna*. Thus the mantra recitation invokes the Gods and also simultaneously serves as the medium through which the Gods accept the offering in the inner sacrifice.

dhenā: it is a synonym of speech. But it retains the sense of flow having nourishing properties. In the esoteric sense, the meaning of a nourishing stream of speech is valid throughout the Rig Veda. Ritualists translate it in various ways in different places as speech, women, river, etc.

Indra-Vāyu: (1.2.4 - 1.2.6)

This hymn deals with the preparation of the mental plane for the manifestation and play of the Truth-consciousness. The deity Indra is the lord of the Divine Mind which has many planes in it including the sense-mind, i.e., the aspect of mind that interacts with the five senses of touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. The word Indra is derived from *indriya*, sense. The activity of Vāyu who represents life-energies

³ वायो तवे प्रपृञ्चती धेना (1), जिगाति दाशुर्वे (2), उरुची सोमपीतये (3)

is not complete without the sanction of the God of the mind. It is said that Indra is the charioteer of Vāyu. The Muṇḍaka Upanishad (2.2.8) states, ‘*manomaya prāṇasharīra neta*’ “mind leads the body of life-energies, *prāṇa*”. This indicates the guidance given by Indra and the sharing of Soma by the life-force embodied in the physical nervous organism.

Vāyu works in conjunction with Indra. Hence there is a sub-hymn jointly to Indra-Vāyu since Indra, being the lord of mental activities, actively supports the work of Vāyu as the following mantra (5.7.6) states: “Him the mortal man must come to know as one who holds the multitude of his desires so that he may establish in him all; He takes the taste of all foods and builds a house for the being.” The house is the life-sheath or *prāṇamaya kosha* of man. Its counterpart in the macrocosm is the midregion *antarikṣha*.

1.2.4: Gifts to the Seeker

O Indra-Vāyu, here are the Soma pressings (1);
come with your satisfying things (2).
The gladdening Soma-s desire you (3).⁴

Details: When Indra and Vāyu come to accept the Somas which eagerly await their partakers, they also come with gifts (*prayobhiḥ*), things or glories that are pleasing to the *yajamāna*. A continual exchange between the Gods and man is a characteristic feature of the Veda.

1.2.5: Become Conscious

O Vāyu and Indra, who have the plenitude (1,3),
become conscious of the Soma pressings (2).
You both approach us speedily (4).⁵

⁴ इन्द्रवायु द्वये सुता (1), उप प्रयौभिरा गतम् (2), इन्द्रो वामुशान्ति हि (3)

⁵ वायुविन्द्रश्च (1), चेतथः सुतानां (2), वामिनीवसू (3),

तावा यात्मुपै द्रवत् (4)

Details: The earlier mantra states that, ‘the Soma-s desire you (the Gods)’. This mantra states, ‘become conscious of the Soma.’

vājinīvasū: plenitude of wealth, plenty of all types of wealth, like physical wealth, health, emotional felicities, mental abilities etc. In the esoteric interpretation, vāja means always fullness or plenty of objects such as food, wealth or qualities like strength, generosity, kindness, etc. See also (1.4.8). vasu is always taken as wealth namely spiritual, material, aesthetic, etc. For S, vāja has ten or more different meanings, including food, battle etc.

1.2.6: Perfect Gift of the Soma

O Vāyu and Indra, the Soma-presser (1),
is ready with the perfected gift; come soon (2),
along with the right intelligence, O leaders (3).⁶

Details: When the Soma is accepted both by Vāyu and Indra as co-partners, the Soma flows both in the life-body and mind-body of the seeker (yajamāna) and there commences the play of the consciousness of Immortality in the mortal. This activity is fully accomplished or perfected as declared in the mantra.

niṣhkṛtam: *niḥ-kṛtam*: fully accomplished, perfected;
dhi: thought or intelligence. It is roughly equivalent to *buddhi*, the discriminating mind of the Upanishads. See (1.1.7)

Mitra and Varuṇa: (1.2.7 - 1.2.9)

This sub-hymn deals with the accomplishment of the activity of *rta*, the Truth in the mental being by which the intellect shall be cultured and the activity rendered ample.

After the birth of the Seer-will, Agni, in the seeker, Indra and Vāyu have been prayed to come with the luminous and sustaining thought.

* वायुविन्दश्च सुन्वत् (1), आ यातम् उपै निष्कृतम् (2),
मुख्यित्या धिया नरा (3)

But in the manifestation of Truth-consciousness, *rta-chit*, there are two obstructions. The first one is the obstruction in the seeker yajamāna caused by his inability to discriminate between Truth and Falsehood, good and evil. Varuṇa is the God of the Vast and purity who destroys all evil. The second obstacle is the disharmony in the yajamāna which strikes at the well-coordinated activities of the intelligence and thus causes futility in its operations. The God Mitra brings about the state of harmony and benevolence, consequent to the establishment of purity by Varuṇa.

Varuṇa is the God of all infinities, the ocean, space etc. His characteristic is vastness (*bṛhat*) which does not allow for any narrowness. According to the Vedic sages, all impurities are caused by narrowness, narrow outlook such as limiting the benefits to a limited circle of friends etc. Varuṇa removes all the impurities.

1.2.7: Purified Understanding

I call Mitra of purified understanding (1),
 (I call) Varuṇa who destroys our hurters (2),
 together effecting a clear and luminous intelligence (3).⁷

Details: *dakṣham*: discernment, discrimination, understanding. Even though its usual meaning is strength, still it is the strength or skill in discernment, i.e., an intelligence which discriminates between good and bad, truth and falsehood, etc. See also (1.89.3).

ghṛtāchīm: luminous. The root *ghṛ* has also a sense of flow from which its common meaning of ghee or clarified butter is derived. In this mantra, it is the adjective of *dhi*, sustaining thought or intelligence and hence can take only the meaning of luminous. Throughout the Veda in the esoteric interpretation, this word *ghṛta* has this fixed meaning of clarity, mental offering of light.

⁷ मित्रं हुवे पूर्वदक्षं (1), वरुणं च रिशादसम् (2), धियं घृताचीं साधन्ना (3)

1.2.8: Increase of Truth

Mitra and Varuṇa increase the manifestation of truth (1),
(they) are in touch with truth (2).

They enjoy a vast will-power by the truth (3).⁸

Details: Mitra and Varuṇa effect the manifestation of one or more aspects of Truth. They increase the beauty, harmony, degree of perfection and wideness in every aspect of manifestation such as a flower, a painting, a prāṇāyāma exercise, a computer, bravery, calmness etc. Since their habitation is in the Truth-world, they are said to be in touch with the Truth. They enjoy a vast will-power to effectuate the manifestation of Truth.

rta: Truth in movement. Discussed in (1.1.8). It is a keyword in the Rig Veda. Its distinction from *satya* which is also translated as Truth should be noted. *Satya* stands for the Truth in Being. *rta* stands for Truth in manifestation, Truth as it manifests in this and other worlds. *rta* is translated also as Right. *rta-chit* is Truth-consciousness.

kratu: power of will accompanied by wisdom which effectuates action as discussed earlier in RV (1.1.5).

bṛhantam: vast, an adjective of *kratum*.

1.2.9: The Discrimination in Activity

Mitra and Varuna are Seers (1),
they are born in many ways and dwell in wideness (2).

They uphold the discriminating intellect in activity (3).⁹

Details: Gods manifest themselves in many ways in the yajamāna, in their own form or in their activities. The beginning of the manifestation of the power of a God in a human being is stated as the birth of that God in that person. The person, in whom the God is born, regards the God as his child. The power of the God in a human being is like a seed which grows into a complete plant. Just as a seed

⁸ कृतेने मित्रावरुणौ कृतावृथौ (1), कृतस्पृशा (2), कृतुं बृहन्तम् आशाये (3)

⁹ कृवी नौ मित्रावरुणा (1), तुविजाता उरुक्षया (2), दक्षं दधाते अपसंम् (3)

grows into a plant, the seed of the God is said to grow in the person. *tuvī* means many.

tuvijātā: born in many ways; they take birth in human beings and also in places where friendship is prominent.

kavī: always stands for a Seer of extended vision which transcends the senses. *kavī* can be translated as a poet who hears or sees things beyond the range of the physical senses, as discussed earlier in RV (1.1.5). *dakṣham*: see RV (1.2.7).

urukṣhayā: *uru* means wide or spread out. The dwelling of the Gods is in the plane of *bṛhat*, vast, with no narrowness or constriction.

Hymn 1.3: Ashvins, Indra, All-Gods and Sarasvatī

- 1: Superb Enjoyers
- 2: Manifold Action
- 3: Rapid Movement
- 4: Purified Delights
- 5: Luminous Thinkers Move Indra
- 6: Hold the Delight Firmly
- 7: Apportion the Soma
- 8: Speeding the Waters
- 9: Moving Everywhere in Knowledge
- 10: Sarasvatī, Full of Plenitude
- 11: Awakener of Right Thoughts
- 12: Vast Flood of Truth

It consists of four sub-hymns addressed to Ashvins, Indra, the All-gods and the Goddess Sarasvatī, each sub-hymn having three riks. In the last sub-hymn, a laudation on Sarasvatī, "we have the clear and unmistakable indication of the Truth-consciousness as the goal of the sacrifice, the object of Soma-offering and the culmination of the work of the Ashvins, Indra and the All-Gods, in the vitality and the mind [Sri Aurobindo, SV].

Ashvins: (1.3.1 - 1.3.3)

The name Ashvins is derived from *ash*, which is also the root for *ashva*, horse, a symbol of strength, energy and life force. They are described in the Veda as full of capacity for enjoyment and drinkers of the honey of Soma. They are known for their speed. Their primary function is to effect action and enjoyment; they are performers of action with luminous and energetic understanding. They hold in the mentality the delight of life by a special thought power or power of understanding. They ferry the human seeker (*yajamāna*) across all obscurities. They are also divine physicians who cure humans of ailments, physical, vital and mental.

Since both *Vāyu* and Ashvins deal with life-force, it is important to distinguish their roles in the inner sacrifice. In the second hymn the God *Vāyu* is declared as one who collects and makes ready the steeds representing the powers of life. The Ashvins are called to mount the steeds of life-power and harness them so that they can speedily accept the Soma, sap of delight which is being prepared by the *yajamāna*. The Ashvins preside over the energies relating to the sacrifice and are instruments for the execution of the sacrifice. In (1.3.2) they are called upon, 'to take joy in our words' because they have the ability to make speech one in nature with thought abounding with the strength. They are known for rendering any activity fruitful.

1.3.1: Superb Enjoyers

Ashvins are the executors of *yajña* (1); are abundant enjoyers (4), (are) lords of bliss; and swift in their movements (3).

They take delight in the impelling energies (2,5).¹

Details: The Ashvins are called upon to preside over the energies that impel the human and which are the instruments for the execution of the inner *yajña*.

ishah: impelling energies of *yajna* (everywhere in RV); food (S);

¹ अश्विना॒ यज्ज्वरी॑ः (1), इषो॑ (2), द्रवत्याणी॑ शुभंस्यती॑ (3), पुरुभुजा॑ (4),
चनस्यतम्॑ (5)

1.3.2: Manifold Action

O Ashvins, you are leaders effecting manifold action (1),
with the firm and brilliant intelligence (2).

O upholders, may you take joy in my words (3).²

Details: The yajña happening in our subtle bodies is complex involving numerous steps. Only Ashvins with their capacity for many-sided action can preside over the yajña.

shavirāya dhiyā: sustaining thought throbbing with strength.

damsa: action, deed;

dhiṣhnyā: master of knowledge; upholders;

1.3.3: Rapid Movement

O Fulfillers of action, the potent Soma is prepared (1);

O powers of rapid movement, the seat is ready (2).

Come with fierce speed (to our yajña) (3).³

Details: The purport of the sub-hymn is as follows: The seat of yajña is ready, the Soma is pressed and is potent. Ashvins should come in order to enjoy the Soma and the words of praise. Ashvins establish words in thought, give them a thought form, endow them with strength and accept them. They render activity fruitful speedily.

nāsatyā: of rapid movement; root is *nas* meaning movement. It is a common name for Ashvins.

yuvākava: vigorous, potent; root is *yuva*, potency.

vṛktabarhiṣhah: the seat of yajña emptied of all unholy material. *barhi* is the sacred seat of the yajña; it is the altar in the outer ritual; the inner being in the esoteric interpretation. *vṛkta* means emptying. The word indicates the readying of the inner being for the arrival of Gods by emptying all useless thoughts.

² अश्विना पुरुदंससा वरा (1), शवीरया धिया (2), धिष्या वनतं गिरः (3)

³ दस्ता युवाकवः सुता (1), नासत्या वृक्तवर्हिषः (2), आ यातं रुद्रवर्तनी (3)

Indra: (1.3.4 - 1.3.6)

Here the Seer desires the favour of Indra, the God of pure mentality, after obtaining the grace of Ashvins. For the performance of right action in the right place, entry into the domain of pure thought is indispensable. Hence Indra is prayed to. First of all, the Soma, the delight in action, has to be cleared of such impurities such as attachment, ill-will, etc. Indra is prayed to purify them with the subtle powers of thought. The Seer prays to Indra to accept the mantras, come to the Rishi and to uphold and make others uphold the Delight in the Soma offerings.

1.3.4: Purified Delights

Come, O Indra of manifold lustres (1);
desiring you is this pressed Soma (2).

(This) pure Soma is extended by subtle powers (3).⁴

Details: Soma, the delight, released or pressed out by our actions has psychological impurities such as attachment. Hence it has to be purified before being offered to Indra. The purification is done by the subtle powers of thought. Further, they have to be extended to reach our outer physical consciousness. Similar ideas are in (9.26.1), (9.15.1), (9.15.2), (9.1.6), (9.1.7). *aṣṭvi*: subtle; fingers (S).

tvāyavah: desiring you; clearly the physical Soma juice pressed from a plant cannot desire. The symbolism of Soma is obvious.

Line 3: The delight Soma has to be extended to reach the outer consciousness.

1.3.5: Luminous Thinkers Move Indra

Impelled by thought, urged by the illumined thinkers (2),
come to the chants of mine, singer and the Soma-preparer (1,3).
I seek to express the soul-thoughts in speech (4).⁵

⁴ इन्द्रा याहि चित्रभानो (1), सुता इमे त्वायवः (2),

अण्वीभिः तना पूतासः (3)

⁵ इन्द्रा याहि (1), धियेषितो विप्रजूतः (2), सुतावतः उप ब्रह्माणि (3),
वाघतः (4)

Details: Indra is lauded to accept the mantra-s of the chanter who has prepared the Soma. Impelled by the illumined thought and its force, Indra comes to the mantra-s of the Seer.

vipra: illumined thinker; one whose mind is pure, clear and open.

brahmāṇi: mantra-s. *brahma* in the Veda means only mantra. The Purāṇik deity Brahma is not mentioned in Rig Veda.

vāghatam: lauder, one who expresses his soul thoughts in the form of *vāk*, the potent speech.

1.3.6: Hold the Delight Firmly

O Indra, come, speedily (1),
with your steeds, to my praises (2).

Hold firm for us the delight in the Soma (3).⁶

Details: Ashvins establish the delight of Soma in the vital being and nervous systems sustained by the life-force Vāyu. Now it is to be delivered to Indra in the mental Heaven. He holds it firmly so that it permeates all the levels of the human mind. *chana*: delight;

hari: Indra's steeds. For its esoteric interpretation, see RV (1.5.4).

All-Gods: (1.3.7 - 1.3.9)

Vishvedevāḥ is the name for the collective of all the Gods. When the human seeker (*yajamāna*) sets forth on his inner journey or sacrifice, every God is called upon to perform a particular task such as the preparation of the life-substance, to be done by Ashvins, mental substance to processed by Indra, etc. It is not possible to list all the functions of all the deities individually. All the Gods, mentioned or not mentioned, known or unknown, are invited to the inner *yajña* and support it so that the inner sacrifice is completed. Hence the reference is to the collective of the Gods. The goal of the *yajña* is the attainment of Truth-Consciousness. See also (1.89) and (1.90).

* इन्द्रा याहि तृतुजान् (1), उप ब्रह्माणि हरिवः (2), सुते दधिष्व नः चनः (3)

1.3.7: Apportion the Soma

Come here, O All-Gods (2), fosterers, you uphold the strivers (1).
You apportion appropriately the Soma prepared by the giver (3).⁷

[*omāsah*: fosterers;]

1.3.8: Speeding the Waters

O All-Gods, who pour the waters (1),
come hastening to the Soma offering (2),
like cows to their place of rest (3).⁸

Details: *apturah*: givers of waters; “those who lead across the waters or oceans”. Waters include the gifts of lustre, strength, enjoyments, etc., not merely rain.

1.3.9: Moving Everywhere in Knowledge

O All-Gods, who never err (1),
are harmless, free-moving in your forms of knowledge (2),
Take delight in this sacrifice as its upholders (3).⁹

Details: A characteristic of Vedic Gods is that they never harm nor deceive those that are devoted or open to them. They fight only the titans or those persons under their influence. The stories in the Purāṇa-s about Gods like Agni or Indra are inappropriate to describe the Vedic Gods, even though they have the same name. Many of the Gods of the Purāṇa-s belong to the vital world, whereas the Vedic Gods reside in the world of Truth and Light.

The Gods are typal beings; hence they are never exhausted. They move freely as needed since they are endowed with an all-sided knowledge.

ehimāyāso: endowed with an all-round intelligence capable of movement everywhere. *adruhah*: without treachery.

⁷ ओमासः चर्षणीधृतो (1), विश्वे देवास् आगत (2),

दाधांसौ दाशुषः सुतम् (3)

⁸ विश्वे देवासौ असुरः (1), सुतमा गन्त तूर्णयः (2), उसा इव स्वसराणि (3)

⁹ विश्वे देवासौ अस्मिध् (1), एहिमायासो अद्रुहः (2), मेधं जुषन्त वहयः (3)

Sarasvatī: (1.3.10 - 1.3.12)

Sarasvatī in RV is the Goddess of inspiration or the Goddess of speech, Vāk, who gives the inspiration needed in all our activities. She manifests as poetry or inspired speech from the mouth of the Rishi. For more details, see the compact book, “Sarasvati, the Goddess of Inspiration” (SAKSI) for understanding all the mantra-s on Sarasvati in Rig Veda.

1.3.10: Sarasvatī, Full of Plenitude

May the purifying Sarasvatī, desire our yajña (1,3).

(She has) plentiful types of riches and felicities in plenty (2),

(She is) rich in the substance made by the thoughts (4).¹⁰

Details: The above translation and the word meanings imply that Sarasvatī is a Goddess of knowledge or a Goddess of speech, vāk or vāg devata. By using only the first line, we can declare that Sarasvatī is a river; reading all the lines gives a different impression.

pāvaka: purifier. The central idea of life and ourselves from which we start is a falsehood which contaminates everything. Sarasvatī, the Goddess of speech and inspiration, is full of luminous plenitudes and rich in the substance by thought-movements. Sarasvatī purifies us by inspiring in us the true inspiration as mentioned in the next mantra.

vāja: plenitude, plenty of opulences; discussed in (1.4.8) and (1.4.9).

dhiyā: thought or intelligence everywhere in Veda.

The translation by Wilson, following S: ‘May Sarasvatī, the purifier, the bestower of food, the recompenser of worship with wealth, be attracted by our offered viands to rite’. The word-meanings assigned are: *vajinīvatī*: bestower of food;

dhiyā vasuh: giver of wealth (*vasuh*) in return for worship, (*dhiyā*).

vājebhīh: offered viands or offerings in the yajña.

¹⁰ पा॒वका नः सर॑स्वती (1), चाजैभिः वा॒जिनी॑वती (2), य॒ज्ञं वं॒षु (3),

धि॒यावं॒सुः (4)

The variety of meanings offered by S for *vāja* mentioned here and in (1.4.8) and (1.4.9) and the meaning to *dhi* are to be noted. His aim was to get somehow or the other a ritualistic interpretation.

1.3.11: Awakener of Right Thoughts

She is the impeller of auspicious truths (1),
the awakener of all happy thoughts (2).
May that Sarasvatī uphold the yajña (3).¹¹

Details: *sūnṛtānām*: speech that is both pleasant and true. She nourishes the sacrifice which is a form of the surrender of all human activities as a result of which all human actions, words, feelings would follow in accord with the Truth. This is what is meant by the phrase, “awakener of right mental movements.”

1.3.12: Vast Flood of Truth

Sarasvatī awakens the great flood (of truth) (1),
by the perception of revelation (in the consciousness) (2).
She illumines entirely all the thoughts (3).¹²

Details: In the first mantra of the sub-hymn, she effects the purification by elimination of sin. In the second, she nourishes and upholds the sacrifice which is a form of surrender of all activities of humans as a result of which all human actions are in accord with Truth (impelled to happy Truth, awakener to right mentalisings). At the end, she pours her own revelation, impelling the human with the illumination of *arṇam*, the flood of Truth-consciousness.

arṇah: flood or sea, the vast movement of Truth or *rtam*. Sri Aurobindo has discussed at length the related words like *samudra* (ocean), *urmih*, (wave), etc., and has shown their psychological character, (SV, SA, Ch. X).

¹¹ चोद्यित्री सुनृतानां (1), चेतन्ती सुमतीनाम् (2), यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती (3)

¹² महो अर्णः सरस्वती प्र चैतयति (1), केतुना (2),

धियो विश्वा वि राजति (3)

ketu: ray, perception that reveals. This is a keyword in the Rig Veda and this meaning is fixed throughout. S assigns several different meanings to it including banner. See (1.6.3).

The translation by Wilson, following S: "Sarasvatī makes manifest by her acts a mighty river and enlightens all understandings". He interprets *arṇah* as the river. He translates *prachetayati* as 'to manifest', even though *chetayati* always means 'to awaken in the consciousness'.

Thus S regards Sarasvatī in the first two verses as the Goddess of speech and in the third as a river.

Hymn 1.4: Indra, Giver of Light

- 1: Fashioner of Perfect Forms
- 2: Indra Showers Light
- 3: Show not Beyond Us
- 4: Ask the God of Clear-seeing Mind
- 5: Restrainers
- 6: Collaborators
- 7: Indra Gives Joy as a Friend
- 8: Vṛtra-Slayer
- 9: We Enrich Indra
- 10: Indra as Friend

This Sūkta of ten verses is the first in the Rig Veda devoted entirely to Indra. Consequently, it summarizes some of the key qualities of Indra, the Master of Luminous Mind. The Rishi invokes Indra in the process of the offering of Soma for obtaining the growth of the Indra-power in the Rishi or the human aspirant.

In the first Mantra the Seer calls Indra, 'the fashioner of perfect forms' who is capable of effecting good mental movements or good actions and increasing them day by day. Indra is invoked every day.

Nourished and joyous by accepting the Soma, Indra, the Lord of Divine Mind showers his Rays of spiritual Light [Mantra 2].

In Mantra 3, the Seer prays to Indra, 'not to show beyond us.' This is a key idea of the Veda that every practitioner of yoga can

only benefit from a teaching which is appropriate to his station in the many-tiered hill of progress. Giving a teaching beyond the comprehension of the student is not beneficial. This teaching is the basis behind the concept of fitness of a candidate to study particular books, *adhikāra vāda* of later times.

In Mantra 4, the Rishi addresses his own mind or a fellow worshipper and asks it or him to pass beyond the obstruction and question the Divine intelligence, Indra, to attain the right path already given to others.

In Mantra 5, he prays that the restrainers in the path of yoga themselves may assent to his progress to the next higher peak and state, "you are competent to go higher strive on, entrusting the work to Indra".

In the next mantra 6, the divine collaborators are prayed to bless the Seer in his endeavor.

In Mantra 7, the Seer calls himself Indra's friend, who carries forward Indra, the source of Delight.

Mantra 8 indicates two important acts of Indra, namely the destruction of the demonic force, Vṛtra, the coverer, who holds up the divine energies from reaching the Earth and the protection of the opulences of all the worshippers.

Mantra 9 calls upon Indra to enjoy the riches of the Seer.

The final Mantra declares Indra as a continent of bliss and a friend of man.

It should be noted that each verse is related to its successor and the hymn is not a jumble of disparate ideas, as alleged in the translations of modern indologists. We also give excerpts from the commentary of S indicating its shortcomings.

For more information on Indra and the Divine Mind, see the compact books, 'The Essentials of Rig Veda', (SAKSI), and 'Indra: the Lord of Divine Mind' (SAKSI).

1.4.1: Fashioner of Perfect Forms

O Fashioner of perfect forms (1),
 everyday we call you for (your) growth (in us) (2,4),
 like a milkmaid calls a well-yielding milch-cow (3).¹

Details: The Rishi prays for the growth of the powers of Indra such as the Divine intelligence in himself. The phrase used is *ūtaye*, to increase, which occurs frequently in the Veda. In other hymns, the Seer calls upon Indra to plant a seed of his power in himself (Seer), so that the seed continuously grows into a full-fledged plant of his power. Since the Rishi carries in himself the seed of the Indra-power, Indra is said to be born in the Rishi in many verses. For example, see (1.11.4) where the word *ajāyata*, born, is used.

The illustration is important. The person who milks the of the cow (*go*) is the caller or *yajamāna*. Indra is the milch-cow being milked. The resultant milk serves to increase the spiritual knowledge or the Indra-power in the *yajamāna*. The same type of illustration is used in several places. RV (8.1.10) states, ‘Today I call the yielder of milk, Indra, the easily yielding milch-cow’. RV (8.52.4) (or *Vālakhilya* (4.4)) states, ‘Like milkers of cow, we call you, desirous of hearing.’

Also note that just as a cow will not yield milk without pressing its teats, Indra does not release the knowledge without effort. The laud indicates the effort.

go stands for the animal cow as well as a Ray of spiritual Light. Similarly *sudugham* stands for milk and the product of knowledge.

ūtaye: it is derived from *av*, meaning increase everywhere, even though occasionally the meaning of protection is possible. The increase refers to the Indra-power of knowledge and not to any physical wealth. See (1.33.1) where it is stated, “Indra increases our needed thought, *pramati*”.

surūpakṛtnu: *kṛtnu* means a doer or a craftsman. The phrase means the fashioner of perfect forms, particularly fashioner of perfect thought forms. Recall that Indra is the master of the Luminous Mind

¹ सुरूपकृत्म् (1), उत्तर्ये (2), सुदुघामिव गोदुहै (3), जुहूमसि द्यविद्यवि (4)

without the nervous obstructions characteristic of the human mind. Hence, Indra creates perfect thought forms which are later transformed into material objects. Even though this word occurs only once in RV, the idea occurs in several places in RV. For instance, consider (6.47.18): "To every form, he has remained the counter-form: that is for us to face and see. Indra by his *māya* powers (creative conscious powers) moves on endowed with many forms; for yoked are his thousand steeds". This mantra is reproduced in the Brh.U. (2.5) in the Section on Madhu Vidya, the doctrine of the Delight. It declares that all Form is himself, Indra, his creation, a mould of his substance. He is the Divine counterpart of every form.

1.4.2: Indra Showers Light

Come to our Soma offerings (2);
drink the Soma, O Soma drinker (1).

The increase in us of Indra in his rapture is light-giving (3).²

Details: In the first mantra, the greatness of Indra is mentioned. Here he is invited to accept the Soma. The God Indra's power in the human aspirant increases with the intake of Delight, signified by Soma. As a consequence, Indra showers the Rays of spiritual Light on the human aspirant. Spiritual commerce is happening continuously between the *yajamāna* and the God in the Veda.

(Alt.) (S): "The intoxication of you, wealthy one, is cow-giving", i.e., Indra, getting intoxicated by the drink of Soma, gives away plenty of cows just as an intoxicated man gives away gifts easily.

Soma is the Delight of existence and not a physical drink of intoxication. The intoxication is not physical, but spiritual and symbolic. See (1.2.1)

godā: the giver of *go*, spiritual knowledge or Light, not a mere giver of the cattle. In the Veda, *go* or *gau* always stands for a ray of light, not cattle. *revataḥ*: you who have increased. Indra's power in the *yajamāna* increases as Indra accepts the delight poured out by the caller.

² उप॒ नः सव॑ना गंहि॒ (1), सोमस्य सोमपाः पिब॒ (2), गोदा इद्रेवतो॒ मदः॒ (3)

1.4.3: Show Not Beyond Us

Then may we know a little of your innermost right-thinkings (1).

Show not beyond us (2); come to us (3).³

Details: *vidyāma*: may we know. The human aspirant can never know all the thinkings of the God Indra. S/he is praying for Indra to reveal at least a small portion of his thoughts.

mā no ati khya: reveal thyself only as far as our vision permits. Do not show yourself beyond our limited capacity.

Translation of S: 'Do not show thyself to others, come to us alone'. It is not only grammatically inappropriate, as discussed in (CW,KS, Vol.4), but gives a low opinion of the Vedic Seer which is unwarranted.

mati in Veda means thinking, including its emotional aspects. *sumati* is a thought endowed with Light accompanied by gladness and kindness in the soul. Indra not merely dazzles us with his Light but is also a fashioner of right thought-formations.

1.4.4: Ask the God of Clear-seeing Mind

Go far; the speedy and unharmed Indra is to be questioned (1), he is with the clear-seeing mind (2).

He brings the highest Good to your comrades (3).⁴

Details: Note the systematic way in which the Rishi-s approach Gods. The Gods are concrete powers who can be contacted and questioned systematically, obtaining from them the required answers. The Gods are not tardy or vague in their answers. They are speedy and have clear-seeing mind. They regard Rishi-s as their comrades and bring them the highest Good.

The translation of Wilson who closely follows S: "Come and question me (the singer) whether I have praised him (Indra) correctly

³ अथा ते अन्तमानां विद्याम् सुमतीनाम् (1), मा नो अति स्य (2),

आ गहि (3)

⁴ परेहि विग्रम् अस्तृतम् इन्द्रं पृच्छा (1), विपश्चितम् (2),

यस्ते सखिभ्य आ वरम् (3)

or not." The impression of Indra conveyed by S is that of a petulant human being who becomes angry even if there is a slight variation in the praise.

vipashchitam: clear-seeing intelligence that can recognise the forces, favourable or otherwise in the inner yajña and take appropriate action. This phrase indicates that Indra is the lord of Divine Mind.

1.4.5: Restrainers

May those who restrain us declare (1),
 "Strive on, even in other fields (2),
 reposing in Indra alone your activity (3)."⁵

Details: Line 3: "reposing in Indra alone your activity," indicates the seeds of the Karma yoga or the yoga of work completely offered to the god, which was developed in detail in later scriptures like Bhagavad Gīta.

nidah: A class of censurers in the path of yajña. They are the forces who pose obstructions in the path of yajña so that the yajamāna may become more perfect in his actions. Unlike the titans, Vṛtra or Vala, the Nidah are not purveyors of falsehood, stealers of Light or revilers of the path of yajña. The Nidah impede the Rishi in his journey by bringing to light the defects in his personality and declare, 'we will not allow you to go forward till you correct all these defects.' Only Indra can give the additional light, or power which removes these defects.

1.4.6: Collaborators

O achiever of action, may the collaborators declare us (2),
 entirely blessed (1).

May we abide in Indra's peace and happiness (3).⁶

⁵ उत् ब्रुवन्तु नो निदो (1), निरन्यतः चित् आरत (2), दधाना इन्द्र इदुवः: (3)

⁶ उत् नः सुभगाँ (1), अरिः वोचेयुः दस्म कृष्टयः: (2),

स्यामेत् इन्द्रस्य शर्मणि (3)

Details: Note the connection with the previous mantra which states, ‘strive on, reposing in Indra your activity.’ This mantra states, ‘may we abide in Indra’s peace and happiness.’

ari krṣṭayah: collaborators; *ari* means one who fights (for us), capable of *arana*, fight. Typically it means *yajamāna* or the seeker as in (1.9.10). Veda rarely has the meaning of enemy for *ari*. *krṣṭayah* means doers of actions. The two words together refer to the collectivity of powers or emanations of the Divine who help humans in their ascent. Hence the two words together have been translated as, ‘collaborators.’

dasma: achievers of action;

S translates the mantra as, “may even our enemies speak of us of having good wealth”, translating *ari* as enemy.

1.4.7: Indra Gives Joy as a Friend

To the intense Indra bring the Soma (1),
the glory of *yajña*, blissful to the Gods (2).
(Soma) carries forward the friend Indra who gives joy (3).⁷

Details: Here the Rishi who offers the inner sacrifice is also the companion to Indra and he carries forward (*patayan*) Indra. RV (1.4.10) explicitly states that Indra is the friend of the one who offers Soma and he carries him safely.

In the earlier two mantra-s, it is seen that the Rishi has overcome his/her defects and the divine collaborators have blessed his yoga-journey. The quality of the Soma, the Delight of Existence, pressed by him in his actions is also much more intense than before and Indra is eager and intense to accept the Soma to give ecstasy to all.

nrmādanam: intoxicating to the Gods. *nr* or *nara* in Veda refers to both God and humans. The intoxication caused by Soma has nothing to do with the effect felt on imbibing alcoholic drinks. Recall the note in (1.2.1) on Soma. The gradations of the effects of bliss are detailed in the Taittirīya Upanishad (2.8).

⁷ एम् आशुम् आशवै भर (1), यद्गुश्रियं नुमादनम् (2),
पतयन् मन्द्यत् सखम् (3)

"Let there be a young man, excellent and lovely in his youth, a great student; let him have fair manners, and a most firm heart and great strength of body and let all this wide Earth be full of wealth for his enjoying. That is the measure of bliss of one human being".

"Now a hundred and a hundredfold of the human measure of bliss is the one bliss of men that have become angels in Heaven. This is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not. . . . "

1.4.8: Vṛtra-Slayer

O Indra of a thousand activities, drinking this Soma (1),
you become a slayer of the Vṛtra-s (2).

(You) protect the opulent in their opulences (3).⁸

Details: Vṛtra-s: a family of demonic or evil forces. They cover the Truth with falsehood. They hold up the divine energies or waters from reaching the humans. They are enemies of persons doing the yajña.

The destruction of Vṛtra is achieved by all the divine powers together, with Indra being the prominent one. In this action, Soma, the Delight of Existence, plays a key role. The delight enhances Indra's might and makes the killing possible. *ghanaḥ*: destroyer;

RV (1.32) gives a detailed account of the symbolic battle between Indra and Vṛtra.

vāja: always indicates fullness or plenitude, plenty of all types of riches, especially the Rays of Spiritual Light, luminous Might, etc. It is closely related to the word *rayi* or *rādha*, mentioned in RV (1.1.3). This word stands for all types of riches, physical as well as psychological or inner felicities like happiness, appreciation of beauty, good thoughts about others, absence of the six 'foes' like anger, greed, jealousy, arrogance etc. See also (1.2.5).

shatakratuḥ: Doer of thousand activities, a common epithet for Indra. *kratuḥ* is will or action. Here action is appropriate.

⁸ अस्य पीत्वा शतक्रतो (1), धनो वृत्राणाम् अभवः (2),

प्रावो वाजेषु वाजिनम् (3)

1.4.9: We Enrich Indra

You opulent in the opulences, we enrich you again (1),
O doer of a thousand activities (or willings) (2).

May we enjoy our riches (guarded by you), O Indra (3).⁹

Details: *vājayāmaḥ*: (we) increase or enrich you; obviously a human being cannot enrich Indra who is a cosmic power. Whenever such phrases are used, they mean that the Rishi strives to increase the degree of manifestation of Indra in the Rishi's subtle body or increases the Indra-power within himself. The idea of Gods increasing in humans occurs frequently in Veda.

In the earlier verse (1.4.8), S explains *vājinam* as 'fighter in the fights'. The same word *vāja* which occurs three times in this verse, he translates in three ways, namely 'battle', 'strength', 'food'. This is a typical example of the deliberate inconsistency in the method of S. In this book *vāja* is explained as fullness, plenitude, plenty of everything.

sātaye: for enjoyment (KS); for recovery of riches, (SA);

1.4.10: Indra as Friend

He, in his vastness, is a continent of bliss (1);
(is) a friend of the Soma-giver whom he carries safely through (2).
To that Indra raise the chant (3).¹⁰

Details: *sakhā*: friend (of Indra):

rāyah avaniḥ: first word means inner wealth or bliss, the second means continent of support, a common name for Earth. Together it is translated as a continent of bliss. See *rayi* in (1.1.3).

⁹ तं त्वा वाजेषु वाजिनं वाजयामः (1), शतक्रतो (2),
धनानामिन्द्र सातयै (3)

¹⁰ यो रायो अवनिः महान् (1), सुपारः सुन्वतः सखा (2),
तस्मा इन्द्राय गायत (3)

Hymn 1.5: Yoga and the Arrival of Indra

- 1: Carrier of the Chants**
- 2: Indra Becomes Manifold**
- 3: Yoga**
- 4: Horses of Indra**
- 5: Indra Manifests in the Human Aspirant**
- 6: The Happy Doer, Indra**
- 7: Forward-acting Awareness**
- 8: The Stoma and the Rik**
- 9: Unimpaired Growth in Man**
- 10: Indra Wards off Destruction**

[SA, SV] (pp.491-501) has a detailed commentary discussing the meaning of words occurring in this sūkta.

1.5.1: Carrier of the Chants

Come quickly here and be seated (1); sing forth to Indra (2),
O companions, conveyors of the chants (3).¹

Details: *stoma vāhasah*: They are the carriers of the lauds, the suprasensible powers who reach the lauds to Indra. They are also companions of the Rishi.

stoma is an affirming laud whose definition will be clarified in (1.5.8).

ā tvetā: ā + tu + ā + itā; ā ā ita: come. *tu* denotes the sense of quick.

1.5.2: Indra Becomes Manifold

Indra becomes manifold (in the human aspirant) (1),
is the lord of many cherished bounties (2).

Him I call when the Soma is prepared (3).²

Details: Indra becoming manifold means that many different aspects of Indra-power manifest in the human aspirant.

The first verse calls the ‘friends’ to sing the song and the second states the object of the singing.

purūtamam: becomes manifold. S translates this phrase in (6.6.2) this way, whereas in this verse he translates it as “subdues or exhausts the foes”. There is no mention of foe in this verse.

¹ आ त्वेता निषीदत् (1), इन्द्रमभि प्र गायत् (2), सखायः स्तोमवाहसः (3)

² पुरूतम् पुरूणाम् (1), ईशानं वार्याणाम् (2), इन्द्रं सोमे सचा सुते (3)

1.5.3: Yoga

May he be favourable to us in yoga (1);
 (favourable) in riches and in abundant knowledge (2).
 May he come to us with plenty of all riches (3).³

Details: *yoga*: Union with the Divine. *Yoga* in Veda is the reaching out of the being in us to unite itself with the being expressed in other persons, objects or forces (SA, SV, p. 493). It also refers to the methods of attaining the unattained objects, forces, ideals, etc.

1.5.4: Horses of Indra

In his presence in battles (1,3),
 the horses are not restrained by the enemies (2,4).
 To that Indra chant forth (5).⁴

Details: *hari*: the two horses of Indra. The root is *har*, in the sense of gain, charm and lustre. They are not the four-legged animals but denote special powers of inner sight, the divine manifestations of knowledge which are intimately connected to the Word, *brahma* in the Veda. This viewpoint is explicitly mentioned in RV itself in several mantra-s. RV (2.11.6) has the phrase ‘*sūryasya ketu*’ intuitive rays of the Sun (‘we laud your steeds, intuitive rays of Sūrya’). Again, hymns RV (1.84.3) and (1.7.2) state, ‘the steeds are yoked by the Word’; RV (3.35.4), states ‘These friendly horses that are yoked by Word, I harness by Word.’ RV (8.2.27) states, ‘Bring the steeds yoked by the Word.’ Another relevant reference is RV (4.51.5) with the phrase *ṛtayugbhir ashvaiḥ*, (horses yoked by Truth). The steeds are also mentioned in the hymn RV (1.16).

samsthe: the site or meeting place;

Regarding the symbolism of the tail of a horse, see RV (1.10.3).

³ स धां नो योग् आ भुवत् (1), स रुये स पुर्ण्याम् (2),
 गमत् वाजेभिः आ स नः (3)

⁴ यस्य संस्थे (1), न वृणवते हरी (2), समत्सु (3), शत्रवः (4),
 तस्मा इन्द्राय गायत (5)

1.5.5: Indra Manifests in the Human Aspirant

To Indra, the Soma recipient, goes this purified Soma (1),
for his advent (in the *yajamāna*) (2),
the Soma, mixed with subtle intellect (3).⁵

Details: By drinking the Soma, the God Indra spreads or grows in the human seeker i.e., the power of Indra manifests in the human seeker by his offering of Soma, the Delight of Existence, after it is purified and assimilated with Knowledge.

dadhi-āshirah: mixed with curds, *dadhi*.

In the ritual, Soma juice is mixed with milk, curds and barley the so-called *āshirah*. The esoteric meaning of the three are the rays of the original knowledge, subtle intellect and dense external knowledge, respectively.

sutapāvne: to the drinker of Soma namely Indra. It has the alternate meaning of 'distilled for purification' (SA). The Soma is purified in the sense that all the claims of the individual for the work involved are given up.

1.5.6: The Happy Doer, Indra

By the drink of the prepared Soma (1),
you become increased in us at once (2),
for the pre-eminent work (in us), O Indra, O happy doer (3).⁶

Details: The growth of the Indra-power in the Rishi or seeker is referred to as the increase of Indra in the first line. In (1.5.5) Indra manifests in the seeker. In this verse he carries out the pre-eminent work (*jyeshṭhaḥ*). *ajāyathaḥ*: to be born, to become;

1.5.7: Forward-acting Awareness

May the pervading Soma-s enter you, O Indra (1),
you are adored by lauds (2).

May they be happy and peaceful to you in your awareness (3).⁷

⁵ सुतपाव्ने सुता इमे शुचयो यन्ति (1), वीतयै (2), सोमासो दध्याशिरः (3)

⁶ त्वं सुतस्य पीतयै (1), सुद्यो वृद्धो अंजायथाः (2), इन्द्र ज्यैष्ठाय सुक्रतो (3)

⁷ आ त्वा विशन्तु आशवः सोमास इन्द्र (1), गिर्वणः (2),

शं तै सन्तु प्रचेतसे (3)

Details: In the earlier mantra, Soma empowered Indra for eminent work. Here Soma-s enter Indra forming superb knowledge.

prachetase: forward-acting awareness. “The epithet is not merely ornamental The most serious obstacle of the *sādhaka* or Rishi is the difficulty in combining action with a basis of calm; when intense forces enter the system and is put out in activity, it brings eagerness, disturbance. . . . It is easy to avoid this when *ānanda* is merely enjoyed, not utilised [for work]. Indra, as mental force, has to be *prachetas*, consciously active, putting his consciousness forward in thought and action; he has to absorb the Soma and lose nothing of its fire, yet preserve the peace of the liberated soul.” [SA, SV, P.498.]

1.5.8: The Stoma and the Rik

Stoma chants have increased you and so the rik (1),
O doer of a hundred deeds (2).

May our words of praise increase you (3).⁸

Details: Sri Aurobindo and Kapāli Sāstry clearly differentiate the several terms dealing with lauds or chants namely *stoma*, *ukthā*, *shamsa* and *gāyatra*, some of which appear in this hymn, some later. *stoma* is derived from *stu*, to establish firmly. *stoma* is the expression of these qualities in the deity which the Seer aspires to bring out in his own being and activity. *Stoma* is the hymn which establishes or confirms in habitual action the desired power or qualities.

The texts for the *stoma*-chant are the verses from the Sāma Veda, they are sung in the musical format associated with Sāma Veda. The texts of most of the verses of Sāma Veda are same as those of the corresponding RV mantra-s.

ukthā is the prayer which desires or wills, involving a particular type of a rik or mantra from Rig Veda called *shāstra*. *gāyatra* is a hymn which is sung, typically in the fashion of Sāma Veda chanting. It brings up an idea and sets it in motion. *Shamsa* is used for other

⁸ त्वां स्तोमा अवीवृथन् त्वाम् उक्था (1), शतक्रतो (2),
त्वां वर्धन्तु नो गिरः (3)

verses whose purpose is to bring the thought into the field of expression.

arkam appearing in (1.10.1) is a rik, a verse from the RV, which also means a verse of illumination. *arch* means to shine.

A common idea in the Veda is that the chants in the form of mantra-s increase the occult growth or manifestation of Gods in the worshipper. See also (1.7.1).

1.5.9: Unimpaired Growth in Man

Unimpaired in his expansion in us (1),
may Indra enjoy (in us) this myriad wealth (2),
in which all our strengths (are established) (3).⁹

Details: The translation of S is, 'Let Indra, whose protection is undamaged, enjoy this food (*vāja*) thousand-numbered, in which food are all strengths.'

akṣhitotih: *akṣhitā* + *utiḥ*, unimpaired growth in the *yajamāna* or seeker.

sanet: to enjoy (KS); to conquer (SA, 1.73.5)

1.5.10: Indra Wards-off Destruction

May not our enemies harm our bodies (1),
O Indra, adored by chants (2).
O lord, may there be no harm (to our bodies) (3).¹⁰

Details: Vedic Seers had a high regard for the human body because it is an instrument in the attainment of immortality. The Seers call upon Indra to ward off death or harm to their bodies caused by any agent, human or non-human. Note the connection of this rik to the earlier one (1.5.9) which mentions Indra's energies.

⁹ अक्षितोति: सनेत् इमं वाजुम् इन्द्रः सहस्रिणम् (2),

यस्मिन् विश्वानि पौस्या (3)

¹⁰ मा नो मर्ता अभि द्रुहन् तनूनाम् (1), इन्द्र गिर्वणः (2),

ईशानो यवया वधम् (3)

According to Sri Aurobindo, we see here the source of the *tāntrik* idea of the prayer *stoma* or *stotra* acting as a *kavacha* or mental armour around the body which keeps off the attacks of suffering, calamity, diseases, death, etc. The Rishi prays to Indra, the lord of mental force, to enable us to isolate ourselves from the forces of destruction by the force of mantra.

martā: mortals; it also could mean slayer according to Sri Aurobindo.

yavayā: to separate (us from injury); (root, *yu*);

mā abhi druham: not harm;

Hymn 1.6: Indra and Maruts

1: Eternals Yoke Indra's Car

2: They Yoke the Steeds

3: Gives Knowledge

4: Birth of Maruts

5: Actions of Maruts

6: Seekers and Seers Laud Indra

7: Laud to the Maruts

8: The Seeker Gets a Special Light

9: Prayer for Indra's Presence Everywhere

10: Praise of Indra

Mantra-s four through seven are addressed to Maruts or Maruts and Indra together. The rest of the mantra-s are dedicated to Indra. In (1.6.5) is the first mention of the great symbolic battle between the Gods and the titans like Vṛtra, Vala etc. See also the note at the end of this hymn.

1.6.1: Eternals Yoke Indra's Car

They (the eternals) yoke the broad and shining (car) (1);
they stand around as it moves (2).

The luminous stations gleam in Heaven (3).¹

¹ युजन्ति ब्रह्मरूपं (1), चरन्तं परि तस्थुषः (2), रोचन्ते रोचना दिवि (3)

Details: The car or chariot symbolizes the movement of the Divine energy which moves to the human to do his work or moves towards the psychological hostiles to vanquish them. The mantra itself does not say who yokes the car. Again the word 'car' is to be understood from the words like yoke, moving etc. Note that the (Indra's) chariot signifies a divine movement, both broad and bright for his advent in man. The next mantra deals with the horses yoked to the car, horses symbolising the special powers of insight. The details of the advent of Indra is described in the third mantra (1.6.3).

1.6.2: They Yoke the Steeds

They (the eternals) yoke Indra's charming horses (inner sight) (1),
 (The horses) stand on either side of the chariot (2),
 deep red, vehement, carrying the God (3).²

Details: As in the earlier mantra, 'they' stand for the eternals of shining wisdom residing in Heaven who can yoke these horses, not physically, but by the power of the Word.

hari: the horses of Indra; see (1.5.4).

1.6.3: Gives Knowledge

O Strong one, you manifest knowledge for one who has it not (1),
 (manifest) form, for one who has no form (2).

You are born with the rays of the dawn of knowledge (3).³

Details: *ketu* means ray or banner in the external sense, but in the spiritual sense, it signifies the vision or the eye of knowledge born of inner understanding, intuition. Indra is the lord of divine mind. He gives the vision of the supraphysical to the Rishi, thus manifesting knowledge for the Rishi who earlier had no knowledge, *aketu*. Rayless or bannerless does not make much sense for *aketu* in this mantra or others. This mantra is used in the Navagraha worship for invoking the deity Ketu, conveying the symbolism of this deity. See also (1.24.12), (1.3.12).

² युजन्ति अस्य काम्या हरी (1), विपक्षसा रथे (2), शोणा धृष्णू नुवाहसा (3)

³ केतुं कृष्णन् अकेतवे (1), पेशो मर्या अपेशसै (2), समुषन्दिः अजायथा: (3)

Line 3 of the mantra clearly states that Indra manifests himself or Indra is born in the sacrificer with the subtle body, *rūpa*, made up of the rays of the divine illumination. Indra manifests the subtle body in the seeker. The subtle body can sustain the divine revelation and the Rishi can feel Indra's vision continuously.

uṣhabdhīḥ: Uṣha is the Divine Dawn, not merely the physical; her rays are the illuminations of the dawning divine consciousness.

This mantra with its straightforward spiritual meaning can be explained in the context of nature-god theory, only with great difficulty. For instance, Wilson's translation is silly, "Indra is here again identified with the sun whose morning rays may be said to reanimate those who have been dead in sleep through the night".

Maruts: (1.6.4 - 1.6.7)

The following four mantras deal with Maruts. "Maruts are the powers of will and thought characterized by fierce speed and brilliance. They impel all thought and speech and they battle towards the Light, Truth and Bliss of the supreme consciousness" (Sri Aurobindo). (1.31.1) declares that Maruts are Seers acting by knowledge and they are born as a result of the great deeds of Agni. We should not confuse them with the Purānic deities of the same name.

The Indologists regard Maruts as storm-Gods. The adjective 'storm' is to be understood in the psychological sense. Their fury against the titans in the symbolic battle is one of their characteristics.

1.6.4: Birth of Maruts

According to their own self-law (1), the Maruts were born later (2), upholding the sacrificial name (3).⁴

Details: The Rishi seeks the help of Maruts, after the birth of Indra and hence they are born, i.e., they manifest their power in the Rishi.

⁴ आत् अहं स्वधाम् अनु (1), पुनः गर्भत्वम् एरिे (2),
दधाना नाम यज्ञियम् (3)

Note the birth of Maruts in man is the second birth of Maruts, their first birth being in the collective creation of all Gods.

svadhā: denotes the law that promotes each entity in existence to uphold its own nature. All the varieties of existence, physical or otherwise, put forth their action according to their own self- law.

āt aha: later; *nāma*: name; it denotes the personality of the Godhead. The godhead responds when called by that name in the *yajña*. It is regarded both as sacred and secret, because its power is not revealed to anyone arbitrarily.

Line 2: (literal): came again to embryonic birth;

1.6.5: Actions of Maruts

The breakers of strong places (1),
carry you to the caverns (2),
for finding the (hidden) knowledge, O Indra (3).⁵

Details: Here is the first mention of the symbolic battle against the titanic hostiles headed by *Vṛtra* and others. This myth has been mentioned in numerous mantra-s of the Rig Veda. This mantra deals only with one aspect of the battle. Refer to *Sūkta*-s 1.32 and 1.33 for details.

Consciousness in the Veda is described using two different sets of images. One is that of a river or a stream signifying a movement of consciousness. It is also described as a ray, symbolised by the cow. Each ray or cow contains the unique power of the divine.

A common spiritual experience is one of consciousness trapped by the matter making its manifestation in other realms like life, mind difficult. This trapping of the consciousness in matter is done by adverse forces represented by demons like *Vṛtra* and this act is symbolically represented as the imprisonment of cows or rays in the cave signifying the inconscient. Indra represents the divine mind and one of his chief tasks is break the trap and allow the rays to fully

⁵ वीळु चित् आरुजतुभिः (1), गुहा चिदिन्द्र वहिभिः (2),
अविन्द उस्मिया अनु (3)

manifest in the realms of life and mind in every individual. This task is physically symbolized by the breaking of the cave and releasing of the cows or the rays of consciousness. Maruts help Indra literally in carrying him to the cave, help him battle the adversaries like Vṛtra, Vala, break the cave and release the cows.

vahnibhiḥ: carriers, helpers, (1.44.13)

usriyah: *usrāh*, rays, is derived from the *vaṣṭi*, in the sense of lustre. Another, more popular, meaning is cows. In the Veda, cow is a symbol for rays of knowledge. *ārujatnubhiḥ*: the breakers; the Gods Maruts break the strong places (*vīlūḥ*).

vahnibhiḥ: bearers (of divine birth), capable of bearing you;

vīlūḥ: strong; refers to the strong places or the hill which symbolizes the consciousness completely submerged in matter, the socalled material inconscient.

1.6.6: Seekers and Seers Laud Indra

The seekers of the Gods laud the great One (1,3),
perceivable by inspiration (4),

just as Indra is praised in front for obtaining (inner) riches (2).⁶

Details: *devayanta*: seekers of the God; *matim*: thinker, Indra;
girah: words of praise;

1.6.7: Laud to the Maruts

(O Maruts), you are fully seen with the fearless Indra (1,3),
with whom you collaborate well (2).

Rapturous are you both and equal in splendour (4).⁷

Details: Here both Indra and Maruts are lauded together. Laud of Maruts is appropriate in view of the help received from them in

⁶ देवयन्तो (1), यथा मतिम् अच्छां विदद्वसुं गिरः (2), महाम् अनूषत (3),
श्रुतम् (4)

⁷ इन्द्रैण सं हि दक्षसे (1), संजग्मानो (2), अविभ्युषा (3),
मन्दू संमानवर्चसा (4)

breaking the mountain. Maruts, deities of the vital domain, work closely with Indra in his forceful actions dealing with mind.

1.6.8: The Seeker Gets a Special Light

Enveloped with the all-pervading light (2),
the seeker forcefully chants the riks to Indra (3),
along with the desirable and faultless Maruts (1,4).⁸

Details: By the sight of Indra with the Maruts, the Seer or *yajamāna* receives a special light and he utters a rik in praise as part of *yajña*. *abhidyubhiḥ*: the light, signified by *dyu*, is spread around the sacrificer.

makhaḥ: sacrificer, seeker;

1.6.9: Prayer for Indra's Presence Everywhere

O All-pervading, come to us from the Heaven (1),
or from the luminous world beyond (2).

Fulfill our words of praise (3).⁹

Details: Indra is All-pervading and is present in all the stations. Indra's advent along with the glories of each station promotes the divine's advent in the inner being of the Seer.

1.6.10: Praise of Indra

For obtaining the enjoyable felicities (1),
we desire Indra (to manifest in us) either from Heaven or Earth (2),
Or from the great midworld (3).¹⁰

[*sātim*: what is to be attained or enjoyed;]

⁸ अनंवैः: (1), अभियुभिः (2), मूखः सहस्रत् अर्चति (3),

गौणैः इन्द्रस्य काम्यैः (4)

अतः परिज्ञन् आ गंहि दिवो (1), वा रोचनात् अर्थि (2),

समस्मिन् ऋज्ञते गिरः (3)

¹⁰ इतो वा सातिम् (1), ईमहे दिवो वा पार्थिवात् अर्थि (2),

इन्द्रं महो वा रजसः (3)

Review of this hymn:

KS demonstrates the style of the Rishi-s in his commentary on this hymn. Each Sūkta reveals much and also conceals much. A teacher explained the concealed part orally to his disciples in the Vedic days.

In the first rik, the Seer states “They yoke”. Who are the persons or beings who are standing? What is moving? In the third rik, what is the connection between the birth of Indra and the ‘rays of knowledge’?

What is the ‘birth’ in the 4th rik?

In the fifth, what is the connection between the ‘breakers’, ‘carriers’ and the gain of cows by Indra? In the sixth who are those ‘desirous of God’ who adored the great one?

In the seventh who is addressed as, “seen along with Indra”, ‘of like splendour’. In the eighth rik, who are the hosts dear to Indra? In the ninth, who is invited, ‘who goes everywhere’? Only in the tenth verse, it is explicitly stated that we desire Indra.

The answers to all these questions has been guarded intentionally by the Seer. Without deep meditation and *tapas*, it is not easy to arrive at the correct answers. Hints have been scattered here and there in the riks, covertly or overtly. Ancient works like Br̥hatdevata or Anukramaṇīka give some hints. Even among ancients, there is difference of opinion. The great time-lag between the ages of the Seers of the mantra-s and the later authors of the aphorisms of Shrauta and Kalpa is the main cause of controversy.

In the Anukramaṇīka or existing RVS texts, the verses 1,2,3 and 10 are to Indra, verses 4,6,8,9 to Maruts and verses 5 and 7 to both. Our assignment is given earlier.

Hymn 1.7: Indra Breaks the Hill and Removes the Cover

- 1: Three Types of Mantra-s**
- 2: Steeds Yoked by the Word**
- 3: Indra Bursts the Hill and Raises the Sun**
- 4: Indra's Protection**
- 5: Call to Indra**
- 6: Remove the Cover on Our Consciousness**
- 7: No Adequate Praise for Indra**
- 8: Indra, the Impeller**
- 9: The Lord of the Five Worlds**
- 10: Our Sole Object of Worship**

This hymn, among other things, brings out the symbolic character of Indra's horses and Indra's breaking the hill of the adversaries. The deep meaning of the last mantra is diluted in the translations of both S and the moderns.

1.7.1: Three Types of Mantra-s

Indra is glorified by the Sāma chanters with the Br̥hat-sāma (1), (glorified) by the reciters of the rik mantra-s with the riks (2), (glorified) by the singers of the remaining verses (yajus) (3).¹

Details: This is the first mention in the Rik Samhitā of the three types of persons who chant in three different ways, namely Hotṛ, Advaryu and Udgatṛ and of the three types of mantra-s, namely Rk, Yajus and Sāman. Riks (ṛks), the verses from the Rig Veda Samhitā, are mantra-s in metrical forms. When the Rik mantra is set to music and chanted, it is Sāman. The rest of the mantra-s in rhythmic prose are Yajus. But all the mantra-s are in one or more of the four collections or Samhita-s namely Rig Veda Samhitā, Yajur Veda Samhitā, Sāma Veda Samhitā and Atharva Veda Samhitā. There is substantial overlap among these four collections. Almost all the mantra-s in the Sāma Veda Samhitā are in the Rig Veda Samhitā.

¹ इन्द्रमित् गाथिनौ वृहत् इन्द्रम् (1), अर्केभिः अर्किणः (2),
इन्द्रं वाणीः अनूषत (3)

In the esoteric interpretation, Rik is the Word which brings illumination, Yajus is the esoteric or inner Word which guides the sacrificial act, and Sāman is the Word which gives ecstasies. See also (1.5.8).

1.7.2: Steeds Yoked by the Word

Indra comes along with his steeds (1),
which are yoked by the Word (3).

Indra, the thunderer with his golden (radiance) (4),
is the harmoniser (2).²

Details: Vajra: Indra's divine weapon made of the potent Word and Light. Thunderbolt is a symbol of this divine weapon. Vajra is not a physical weapon with which Indra fights the enemies, as repeatedly mentioned by several indologists for over a century. Vajra is derived from *vraj* meaning to go. Verse RV (1.121.12) states, "Vajra, which Uṣhana, son of Kāvya, gave you (Indra)". Uṣhana is one of the pre-eminent Seer-poets of RV, mentioned in the Bhagavad Gīta as supreme among Seer-poets. It is hard to imagine a great poet fashioning a material weapon. Uṣhana can only fashion an occult weapon with his potent Words. (6.39.2) explicitly states that -Indra fights the Paṇi-s (demons) with Words, '*paṇin vachobhiḥ abhi yodad indra*'. Several more references can be given to confirm the occult character of Vajra.

vajrī: holder of Vajra, an epithet for Indra. It can be translated also as one who thunders, with the understanding that the thunder is the potent Word which breaks obstacles.

haryah: steeds; see (1.5.4). The horses clearly are not the four-footed animals in view of the phrase 'yoked by the Word'.

sammishlaḥ: He whose integration, *mishlaḥ*, is good. Indra integrates all things properly.

² इन्द्रं इत् हयैः सचा (1), संमिश्लु (2), आ वचोयुजा (3),
इन्द्रौ वृश्चि हिरण्ययः (4).

1.7.3: Indra Bursts the Hill and Raises the Sun

For the eternal vision (of the truth-light) (1),
 Indra raised the Sun in Heaven (2).
 By the rays he burst the hill of ignorance (3).³

Details: This is the first reference in the RV to the great deed of Indra in destroying the forces of ignorance. It is clear in the mantra that the word *go* stands only for Rays of Knowledge or spiritual Light and not for cows. With cows one cannot burst a hill.

adri ordinarily means hill. It is difficult to see how one can burst a hill, a structure of hard matter, by using the animal cow. Hence the translators assign arbitrary meanings to words to get the meaning they like to get. Griffith mistranslates *gobhiḥ*, which is in instrumental case, by the phrase, 'for getting the cows' and states Indra burst the hill for getting the cows. In Griffith's translation there is no connection between the two parts of the verse. Wilson following S translates *adri* as cloud and *gobhiḥ* as waters and states that Indra charged the clouds with the waters. To connect the whole paragraph, S states 'after the rain, the Sun became clear'. The pattern should be evident. These translators are taking complete liberty with the text to convey the impression that the Vedic verses have no deep meaning.

The line 3 means 'Indra destroys the forces of ignorance using the Rays of spiritual Light.'

This task is appropriate for Indra since all the epithets in the Veda for him imply that he is the Lord of the Divine Mind, i.e. the possessor and controller of all the mental aspects in their purity unmixed with other turbidities. This destruction of ignorance is especially relevant to the individual i.e., the power of Indra, established in the subtle body of Rishi with the aid of spiritual practices, destroys the structure of ignorance and falsehood inside the subtle body of the Rishi.

³ इन्द्रौ दीर्घायु चक्षस् (1), आ सूर्यं रोहयत् दिवि (2),
 वि गोभिः अद्रिम् ऐरयत् (3)

Now there is a natural connection between the first and the second halves of the translation of (1.7.3). Sun, Sūrya, in the RV is at the peak of the hierarchy of Vedic Gods. There is a Supreme Sun, within each one of us, within the microcosm. When the ignorance is destroyed, the Sun inside becomes visible and illuminates all the aspects of our inner life. Thus, the Sun is raised so that all the aspects inside can have the vision of Sun and can be influenced by the Sun.

In all cultures, hill (*adri*) represents something having no flexibility, no subtlety, something very difficult to change. It is the natural symbol for representing the result of the forces of ignorance, both at the individual level as well as the cosmic level. Recall the meaning of a Ray of spiritual Light or experience for the word *go*. Each different spiritual experience is different and distinct a ray of the Spiritual Light (*go*).

In (1.7.3) there is the bursting of hill. In (1.51.4) there is the killing of Vṛtra, the demon embodying the force of ignorance and in conscience.

"O Indra, when you slew Vṛtra, the coverer, with your luminous strength, You raised the Sun in Heaven for vision. (1.51.4)

The hill *parvata* was within the inside, *jathareśhu*, of Vṛtra". (1.54.10)

Note that the hill is within the titan Vṛtra, indicating that it is not physical. Only the force of ignorance is trapping the flow of the dynamical energies in human beings. In the hymns to Indra there are many references for bursting the hill, (*adri* or *parvata*).

1.7.4: Indra's Protection

O Indra, unassailable, protect us in our plenitudes (1,3),
even in the thousandfold treasures (2),
with your unassailable protections (4).⁴

Details: *pradhaneśhu*: excellent treasures. These are the spiritual felicities like knowledge, vision, power.

⁴ इन्द्र वाजेषु नो अव (1), सहस्रप्रधनेषु च (2), उग्र (3), उग्राभिः उतिभिः (4)

ava: to protect. The protection requested is from the Pani-s and others who steal the spiritual treasures of seers and gods.

1.7.5: Call to Indra

We call Indra for the great wealth (1),
and also call Indra for the little wealth (2).

He joins us along with his Vajra for battling Vṛtra-s (3).⁵

Details: The wealth (*dhana*) is both psychological as well as physical.

See (1.1.3) and (1.4.8). *havāmahe:* call, take refuge in every way.

Vṛtra-s: adversaries: derived from the root *vṛ* to tear, to envelop. They are not the physical clouds or members of another tribe, but supraphysical beings, demons, opposed to both the humans and the Gods. Recall notes in (1.4.8).

1.7.6: Remove the Cover on Our Consciousness

O showerer and donor (1,3),
remove the cloudy movements of mind and life seen in front (2,4),
(Reveal yourself) O one who cannot be covered (5).⁶

Details: This mantra is echoed in Īsha U. (15). The Upanishad uses *apāvṛṇu* instead of *apāvṛdhi*, used here in line one. The prayer is “remove the cloudy movements caused by our mind and emotions and make us see you, who are ever present in our front”.

charum: literally means cloud. In the esoteric sense, it stands for the constantly active movements of mind and life which cover the inner Light like a cloud covering the Sun.

satrādāvan: *satra*, together; *dāvan*, donor; simultaneous donor of power, knowledge, etc.

vṛṣhan: Indra, who showers all that is desired. Ritualists and others interpret it as the power behind the shower of rain, the rain-god. See the explanation of *vṛṣhabha* in (1.59.6).

⁵ इन्द्रैऽवयं महाधन् (1), इन्द्रमर्भै हवामहे (2), युजं वृत्रेषु वृज्जिणम् (3)

• स नौ वृषन् (1), अमुं चरुं (2), सत्रादावन् (3), अपा वृधि (4),

अस्मभ्यम् अप्रतिष्कुतः (5)

1.7.7: No Adequate Praise for Indra

At each impulsion, superb lauds arise in me (1),
for Indra, one who thunders (2).

Still I can find no adequate praise for him (3).⁷

Details: The purport is that every time the impulsion seizes me, I laud superbly. Still these praises are not adequate to describe Indra. The mantra is the seed for similar ideas abundant in later devotional literature. For instance, 'O Devī, how can we describe your form which cannot be grasped by the mind'. (Mārkandeya Purāṇa, Devī Mahātmya, 4.6)

tuñje: force of impulsion or inspiration received by the Rishi.

uttare: superb; stoma: laud of affirmation;

1.7.8: Indra, the Impeller

Indra impels the strivers with his potent power (1,3),
just as the bull of charming stride excites the herd (2).

(Indra is) the lord who cannot be covered (4).⁸

1.7.9: The Lord of Five Worlds

(Indra), the Sole Lord of the strivers (1),
rules over the varied wealth (2).

He is the king of all the five worlds (3).⁹

Details: The wealth is of many types, physical, emotional, intellectual, psychological etc. Indra rules over all the types of wealth and gives them to his devotees.

pañcha kṣhiti: five worlds or planes: There are five worlds or planes such as matter, prāṇa, mind, the fourth world (*svar, mahas*) and bliss

⁷ तुञ्जेतुञ्जे य उत्तरेस्तोमा (1), इन्द्रस्य वृज्ञिणः (2),

न विन्धे अस्य सुषुप्तिम् (3)

⁸ वृषा (1), यूथेव वंसंगः (2), कृष्टीः इयर्ति ओजंसा (3),
ईशानो अप्रतिष्कृतः (4)

⁹ य एकः चर्षणीनां (1), वसूनाभिरञ्जति (2), इन्द्रः पञ्चक्षितीनाम् (3)

as described in the Taittirīya Upanishad, with our Earth or matter as the foundation. Alternately, the five worlds could be the three Earths, the midregion (*antarikṣha*), and Heaven (*dyaus*) [Sri Aurobindo, HMF, p.24].

S regards the five peoples, as the four castes with the fifth being the forest dwellers, *nīshāda-s*. This is doubtful to say the least. The commentator Yāska gives several meanings for this word. This topic about the supposed reference to the outcaste has been extensively discussed and is considered to be invalid by the great poet Vāsiṣṭha Gaṇapati Muni, (CW, Vol. 5, chap. 21, 26).

charṣhanīnām: strivers, workers; seers, those who observe and act with wisdom.

1.7.10: Our Sole Object of Worship

We invoke for you Indra above all beings (1).

May he be the exclusive object of our worship (2).¹⁰

Details: This mantra is addressed by the Rishi to his fellow aspirants. Wilson following S translates the second half as, “May he be exclusively our own”. Griffith translates this phrase as “Ours and none others, may he be.” Such a translation portrays the Rishi-s as narrow and petty.

Line 1: (alt.): We call Indra in everything for the people.

The Seer prays that Indra may be the exclusive object of his worship and that nothing (no other thought) may come between him and his worship. The Seer wants to have a unique relationship with the Lord among all his other relationships. Mantra-s like this are the seeds of the mode of adoration which later became *Bhakti* yoga, the yoga of devotion. Note the close connection between the second foot of this mantra and the second foot of (1.4.3), ‘Do not show beyond us.’

This mantra is used for invoking the deity Shukra in the Navagraha worship. *janebhyaḥ*: people, beings including gods.

kevalah: uncommon, adorable, exclusive object of worship.

¹⁰ इन्द्रं वो विश्वतस्परि हवामहे जनेभ्यः (1), अस्माकमस्तु केवलः (2)

Hymn 1.8: Help Given by Indra

- 1: Indra Brings the Wealth**
- 2: Foes are Deterred**
- 3: We Wield the Vajra**
- 4: Missile Throwers**
- 5: Adoration of Indra**
- 6: Benefits of the Worship**
- 7: Soma and Indra**
- 8: Indra and the Goddess Mahī**
- 9: Increase the Human Aspirant**
- 10: Sāma Mantra-s**

1.8.1: Indra Brings the Wealth

O Indra, bring the felicities that are delightful (1,4),
enduring, and which overpower the foes forever (2).
(He) matures them for our growth (3).¹

Details: *rayim*: the wealth or felicities of Indra, in the form of Light and strength, which conquers and overpowers all the enemies; hence it is mature or full grown, *varṣhiṣṭam*.

1.8.2: Foes are Deterred

With that (wealth), using the fist-blows (1),
we shall completely deter the Vṛtra foes (2).

We (guarded) by you, are well-powered with steed-energies (3).²

Details: fist-blow: the phrase symbolises the use of an intense psychological force to overcome the psychological foes, Vṛtra-s.
yena: by which, referring the wealth of light and strength described earlier.

vrtra: the foe of that name, the darkness which covers the light of Sun.

arva: steed; always symbolises life-energies.

¹ एन्द्रं सानुसिं रयिं (1), सुजित्वानं सदासहम् (2), वर्षीष्टम् ऊतर्यै (3), भर (4)

² नि येन मुष्ठिहृत्यया (1), नि वृत्रा रुणधामहै (2), त्वोतांसो न्यर्वैता (3)

1.8.3: We Wield the Vajra

O Indra, guarded by you, may we (wield) the Vajra completely (1),
(may we) conquer the foes in battle completely (2).³

1.8.4: Missile Throwers

Yoked to you, may we conquer the brave missile throwing (foes) (1).
May we overpower the foes desiring battle, O Indra (2).⁴

Details: *astra*: missiles; from the root *asu*, to throw. It is not a physical weapon, but an occult one, powered by the potent Word. Even a casual look into the later epics like Rāmāyaṇa or Mahābhārata reveals the occult character of these missiles (*astra*).

1.8.5: Adoration of Indra

Indra the thunderer mighty and supreme (1,3),
May the greatness be his (2).

May his luminous might be as ample as the Heaven (4).⁵

Details:

Line 2: This is the traditional way of invoking a god, mentioning the God's greatness. The prayer is, "may he bestow on us his luminous might."

1.8.6: Benefits of the Worship

The heroes attain victory in battle (1), also obtain progeny (2).
The wise ones aspiring for intelligence (are also fulfilled) (3).⁶

Details: *toka*: literally, progeny. In the esoteric sense, line 2 indicates the birth of the Godhead in the Rishi. When the Indra-power or Agni-power becomes manifest in the Rishi or yajamāna and begins to grow in him/her, then Indra or Agni is said to be born in him/her. Hence Gods like Agni or Indra who manifest their power in the Seer

³ इन्द्र॑ त्वोतास् आ व॒यं वज्र॑घुना दैदीमहि (1), जयेम् सं युधि स्पृधः (2)

⁴ व॒यं शूरैभिः अस्तृभिः इन्द्र॑ त्वया युजा (1), व॒यम् सासह्यामि पृतन्यतः (2)

⁵ महाँ इन्द्रः परश्च नु (1), मंहित्वमस्तु (2), व॒ज्ञिणे (3), द्यौर्न प्रथिना शब्दः (4)

⁶ समोहे वा य आशत् नरः (1), तोकस्य सनितौ (2), विप्रासो वा धियायवः (3)

are described as the children of the Seers. Only this meaning coheres with the latter part of the verse.

1.8.7: Soma and Indra

Superbly drinking the Soma (2), his belly swells like a sea (1,3). It is (fresh) like the divine waters from the summits (4).⁷

Details: Indra's power in the human aspirant increases by his partaking of the Soma, the Delight of Existence, prepared by the human aspirant through his actions and this increase is metaphorically represented by the growth of the belly. His belly has a sense of freshness and wideness like the divine Waters from the summits.

Just as a human belly swells with the intake of food or drink, Indra's powers in the yajamāna also swell with the intake of Soma, the delight of existence.

Indra is not the greedy God portrayed in the Purāṇa-s, eager for the drinking of Soma. The acceptance of the Soma by Indra promotes the growth of Light in the seeker and Indra himself takes birth in the inner being of the seeker and promotes an overall spiritual growth of the Rishi or the seeker.

See also the note on Soma and Delight in (1.2), (1.4.2), (1.4.7).

1.8.8: Indra and the Goddess Mahī

With happy speech, flowing freely, full of rays of knowledge (2), she, goddess Mahī (comes) to Indra (1,3),

like the branch of a ripe fruit to the giver (4).⁸

Details: *sūnṛta*: speech that is both happy and true.

⁷ यः कुशिः (1), सौम्पातमः (2), समुद्र इव पिन्वते (3),

उर्वीरापो न कुदः (4)

⁸ एवा ह्यस्य (1), सूनृता विरप्ति गोमती (2), मही (3),

पका शाखा न दाशुषे (4)

Mahī: a Goddess. Also named Bhārati. She is frequently associated with the other two Goddesses, Ilā and Sarasvatī. She denotes the vastness of the Light of Truth. See (1.13.9).

gomatī: full of rays of knowledge. *go* stands for a ray of spiritual Light.

1.8.9: Increase the Human Aspirant

O Indra, your glories increase persons like myself (1),
And other givers (or sacrificers) at once (2).⁹

Details: When the Rishi adores Indra, Indra takes birth in the human adorer and manifests his powers in a variety of ways. The lauder is said to increase with the onrush of the Indra-power in him/her.

māvate: persons like me.

1.8.10: Sāma Mantra-s

The desirable Sāma chants and riks are to be sung for Indra (1), so that he may drink the Soma (2).¹⁰

Details: *stoma*: denotes the affirmative lauds to be sung, the Sāma chants. *uktham*: denotes riks, the words of illumination. See (1.5.8).

Hymn 1.9: Descent and Ascent

- 1: Soma-limbed Gods
- 2: Soma Capable of Good Action
- 3: Gladdening Sāma Chants
- 4: Three Steps in the Chants
- 5: Descent of Consciousness
- 6: Ascent of Consciousness
- 7: Universal Life in the Individual
- 8: Light Enjoyable by Many
- 9: Increase of Felicities (in us)
- 10: The Fixed Dwelling in Svar

⁹ एवा हि ते विभूतय उतय इन्द्र मावते (1), सद्यश्रित् सन्ति दाशुषे (2)

¹⁰ एवा ह्यस्य काम्या स्तोम उक्थं च शंस्या (1), इन्द्राय सोमपीतये (2)

1.9.1: Soma-limbed Gods

O Indra, come and be delighted with the Soma-food (1),
and with all the Soma-limbed Gods present here (2).

Overcome the foes with your strength (3).¹

Details: *somaparvabhiḥ*: literally those whose limbs are full of Soma,
parva: limb. *andhasa*: foods constituted of Soma;

1.9.2: Soma, Capable of Good Action

To Indra the doer of all actions (3),
pour the purified and delightful Soma (1).

It impels actions and is the cause of delight (2).²

Details: This verse is addressed to the colleagues of the Rishi. Soma, the essence of Delight, is also the cause of good action. In Rig Veda (9.96.5), the Delight is said to be the cause of the manifestation of all universes, both subtle and gross. By offering the purified Soma to Indra, the sacrificer allows Indra to make him ascend to the higher levels in his inner being.

Indra does all actions, using the human aspirants as instruments. This idea is the forerunner of similar ideas in Karma-yoga.

Both *mandine* and *chakrim* in line 2 are adjectives of Soma.
sute: Soma which is pressed out and purified

1.9.3: Gladdening Sāma Chants

O Fair of face, be delighted with these felicitous Sāma chants (1).
O Seer of all (2), come to this yajña along with the Gods (3).³

Details: For the Seers, the primary mode of contacting the Gods is the laud or recitation. The chants gladden Indra and other Gods and they manifest themselves in the inner being of the reciter along with their powers of knowledge, work, etc.

¹ इन्द्रेहि मत्सि अन्धसो (1), विश्वेभिः सोमपर्वभिः (2),

मृहाँ अंभिष्ठिः ओजसा (3)

² एमैनं सृजता सुते मन्दिम् इन्द्राय (1), मन्दिनै चक्रिं (2), विश्वानि चक्रये (3)

³ मत्स्वा सुशिष्र मन्दिभिः स्तोमैभिः (1), विश्वचर्षणे (2), सचैषु सवनेष्वा (3)

1.9.4: Three Steps in the Chants

I have created the chants for you, O Indra (1),
which went upwards to you (2).

You have accepted them, O protector and generous giver (3).⁴

Details: Note the three steps. The Seer creates the chants, they seek Indra and he accepts them. The idea of the chants seeking Indra occurs in many other places in RV such as (3.39.1) “The thought expressing itself from the heart, becomes the *Stoma* and goes towards Indra, its Lord.”

Another way of interpreting the three steps is in (1.10.9).

The word (*ut*) upwards is used in the psychological sense. The creation is said to be in seven planes; the lowest plane, the Earth, is gross, being made of matter. Going to the higher plane means taking our inner being to the higher realms of this ascending ladder. Once we reach a certain plane, we are endowed with the properties of that plane. There is a suggestion of going from one psychic centre or *chakra* to the higher one, common in many yogic methods.

ajōsha: accepted (them); *vṝshabha*: Indra: one who showers the currents of Light and might (on the seeker); the mighty one.

1.9.5: Descent of Consciousness

Indra, impel toward us your varied and superb riches (1),
(They are indeed) pervasive and intense (2).⁵

Details: Note that the wealth (*rādhah*) is not merely material, like cows. It is both supreme and also pervades everywhere. The wealth cannot be obtained unless Indra himself impels the wealth towards the Seer or the *yajamāna*. The descent of wealth is described in later literature, especially *tāntrik*, as the descent of consciousness (*sudhā - sarābhi - varṣinī*, one who showers the torrents of nectar, *Lalita Sahasra Nāma*, 39). Further, the descent does not take place all at once; it occurs in several steps.

prabhu: intensity associated with lordship; lord, (8.11.8);

⁴ असृग्रम् इन्द्र ते गिरः (1), प्रति त्वाम् उद्धासत (2), अजोषा वृषभं पतिम् (3)

⁵ सं चौदय चित्रम् अवर्ग् राधं इन्द्रं वरण्यम् (1), असदित् तै विभु प्रभु (2)

1.9.6: Ascent of Consciousness

Impel us well to the riches (1),
 which is rapid in movement and celebrated (2,4),
 O many-lusted Indra (3).⁶

Details: The two adjectives ‘rapid in movement’ and ‘celebrated’ refer to the ‘wealth’ and not to *asmān*, us, as stated by some commentators. The correctness of this assignment is clear from the next mantra also.

In the earlier mantra, the prayer was to impel the wealth towards us. In this mantra the Seer prays that he may be impelled towards the supreme wealth located in the high planes of *svar*, i.e., may the Seer ascend towards the high regions of his inner being. This ascent will not happen unless Indra impels the Rishi to move upwards.

Thus, both in the descent of consciousness and in the ascent of consciousness, Indra’s help is necessary. Note again that the wealth has the capacity for rapid movement. It is not merely static peace, but retains its celestial character even in movement which gets reflected in the outward dynamic actions of the Seer.

The next mantra also deals with this process of ascent and descent.

Some may say, ‘What is the need for the distinction between ascent and descent? The final result is that we should be united with the wealth.’ Sri Aurobindo has answered this question in great detail. The ascent and descent are two completely different processes and they involve different strategies for attainment. The first step is the aspiration of man towards the higher goal. This aspiration is typified by the God Agni, who is active even when the outward being does not seem to care about any of the so-called spiritual matters. When the fire of aspiration burns owing to the spiritual practices, Agni himself becomes the leader and leads the *jīva*, the inner being, towards the higher being. Then he impels the *jīva*, to be in a mode of

* अस्मान् सु तत्र चोदय इन्द्रं राये (1), रभस्वतः (2), तुविद्युम् (3),
 यशस्वतः (4)

surrender, often termed *namobhiḥ* in the Veda, and prays for the descent of the higher consciousness so that every part of the being of man can be divinised.

1.9.7: Universal Life in the Individual

O Indra, join us to the luminous and opulent wealth (1),
the extensive and the mighty sound of divine inspiration (2).
Join (us) to the undecaying life of all (3).⁷

Details: The Seer prays that Universal Life (*vishvāyuh*), may be established in him. This phrase and its variants occur more than twenty-five times in the Rig Veda Samhitā. This universal life is characterised by continuous divine inspiration. No community can function successfully unless each member has this force in him, at least to some extent. The ideal of human society is well described in the last hymn, RV (10.191). *sam dhehi*: join

1.9.8: Light Enjoyable by Many

Manifest in us the power of hearing the vast inspiration (1),
and the light enjoyable by thousands (2).

(Manifest in us) the fast-moving divine impulsions, O Indra (3).⁸

Details: *rathinīḥ iṣṭah*: fast-moving impulsions; *ratha*, chariot indicates the fast movement. Ritualists translate the Word *iṣṭah* as food. *iṣṭah* is translated as impulsions everywhere in this book.

bṛhat shravah: vast inspiration, inspired knowledge, (1.73.8, 5.7.9);

1.9.9: Increase of Felicities (in us)

Indra, the protector of wealth, is called by us with chants (1),
and worshipped with riks (2).

We call Indra, eager to come to us the increasings (3).⁹

⁷ सं गोमत् इन्द्र वाजवत् अस्मे (1), पृथु श्रवौ बृहत् (2),

विश्वायुः धेहि अक्षितम् (3)

⁸ अस्मे धेहि श्रवौ बृहद् (1), चुम्पं संहस्रसातमम् (2), इन्द्र ता रथिनीः इषः (3)

⁹ वस्तोः इन्द्रं वसुपतिं गीर्भिः (1), गृणन्ते क्रग्मियम् (2),

होम गन्तारम् ऊतयै (3)

1.9.10: The Fixed Dwelling in Svar

Wherever there is Soma preparation (1),
for Indra, the mighty one (*bṛhate*) with the fixed dwelling (2),
the seeker lauds the mighty (*bṛhat*) strength of Indra (3).¹⁰

Details: The fixed dwelling of Indra is *swar*, the world of the dwelling of all the Gods, also called the Sun-world. It is above the lower triple worlds consisting of Earth or matter (*bhūmi*), the midworld of vital energies (*antarikṣhaḥ*) and Heaven or the plane of Mind. (*dyu*).

ariḥ: the spiritual seeker or sacrificer; the meaning of foe is rare in RV; see also (1.4.6). *shūsham*: strength;

Hymn 1.10: Creation and Progress of Seers

- 1: Seers Ascend Indra
- 2: The Vistas of Progress
- 3: Hear Our Words
- 4: Cry Out Your Response
- 5: Mantra-s Increase Indra
- 6: Strong by Giving Wealth
- 7: Release the Knowledge
- 8: Impel the Rays Towards Us
- 9: Three Steps of the Chant
- 10: Outpouring of Plenitudes
- 11: Increase Our New Life and Create Seers
- 12: Love is the Secret

1.10.1: Seers Ascend Indra

The singers hymn you with Sāma chants (1);
other singers worship with rik mantra-s (2).
O thousand-powered one (4),
the Seers climb you like a ladder (3,5).¹

¹⁰ सुतेसुते (1), नि औक्से बृहद् बृहत् (2), एत् अरिः इन्द्राय शूषमर्चति, (3)

1 गायन्ति त्वा गायत्रिणो (1), अर्चन्ति अर्कम् अर्किणः (2),

ब्रह्माणः त्वा (3), शतक्रत् (4), उद्गंशमिव येमिरे (5)

Details: Indra is like a vast bamboo stairway with many steps. Every spiritual experience is like climbing one step in this stairway. This meaning is confirmed in the next mantra.

arkam: rik mantra-s. For distinction between rik and *stoma* see (1.5.8).

brahmāṇah: Seers who have realized the mantra-s; *brahma* in Veda means always a mantra. There is no mention of the hereditary brahmin caste in the Rig Veda; brāhmins as a group are mentioned only once in RV (10.90.12), in a symbolic manner.

Griffith thinks that the mantra is obscure. The commentator S or the indologist Wilson translate it as follows: "They elevate Indra or the clan just as acrobats raise a bamboo." Where is the word in the text for acrobat?

1.10.2: The Vistas of Progress

When the worshipper climbs from peak to peak (1),
he realises the progress that is yet to be achieved (2).

Then Indra awakens in him the purpose of the journey (3),
(he) manifests with his troop to aid (the devotee in the journey) (4).²

Details: This is a key mantra of RV. The intimate connection between this mantra and the earlier one becomes clear. When one starts the spiritual journey, called *adhvara* in the Veda, one has only vague intimations of the final goal. The devotee gets spiritual experiences one by one. He does not see far. Each step indicates that he is far from the state of perfection and much remains to be done. Then the God Indra awakens in him the nature of his final objective and personally manifests to lead the devotee to the final destination.

Only when the devotee aspires towards the spiritual goal, even though he may be unaware of the nature of the goal, does Indra come forward to lead him. Here is the Vedic view of connection between grace and effort. The devotee should take the first step. Based on his sincerity, the God himself comes to help him in the journey.

² यत् सानोः सानुम् आरुहद् (1), भूरि अस्पष्ट कर्त्त्वम् (2),

तदिन्द्रो अर्थं चेतति (3), यूथेन वृष्णिरेजति (4)

vr̥ṣṇih: one who shower knowledge and power, Indra who aids the devotee in various ways.

1.10.3: Hear Our Words

Yoke the powerful, maned horses with well developed limbs (1,3),
who increase (the strength of the singer) (2).

O Indra, drinker of Soma (4),
come within the hearing of our words (5).³

Details: Indra's hearing of the Word (*upashruti*) is basically a response, the divine Mind answering with its Word of Truth to the human Word that seeks the Truth. The next verse (1.10.4) makes this idea clear with the phrase, "cry out the response". In (1.82.1) the phrase used is, "*mā atathā iva*" meaning, "do not seem to give another than the right answer"; "do not confuse our minds with error."

keshinā: mane of the horse. Just as a quadruped uses the mane to ward off irritating objects like flies, the mane in the inner sense shakes off the forces of inertia. See also (1.5.4). Horses are powers of inner sight endowed with force, who pour their strength on the singers. Hence the adjective *vr̥ṣhaṇa*, to pour or to increase, (the strength of worshipper).

1.10.4: Cry Out Your Response

O Indra, come and approve our praises (1),
speak them out on all sides and cry out the Word of approval (2).

O Treasure, increase (the power of) our mantra (3),
(increase) that of our *yajña* also, O Indra (4).⁴

Details: There are three actions of Indra. First, Indra is called upon to sound the Word of approval for the laud (*stoma*) of the

³ युक्ष्वा हि केशिना हरी (1), वृष्णा (2), कक्ष्यप्रा (3),
अथो न इन्द्र सोमपा (4), गिराम् उपश्रुतिं चर (5)

⁴ एहि स्तोमां अभि स्वरा (1), अभि गृणीह्या रुव (2),
ब्रह्म च नो वसो (3), सच इन्द्र यज्ञं च वर्धय (4)

worshipper. Secondly, the Rishi realises that Indra himself is chanting the hymn through the mouth of Seer, hence he is asked to speak the Word or hymn. This idea is reminiscent of the one in (1.1.1) where the Seer recognises the God Agni himself as the one who conducts the yajña. Next, the Seer calls upon the deity Indra to cry out the response (*āruva*).

The devotee prays to Indra to increase both mantra as well as yajña. Mantra is the means of acquiring knowledge. Mantra is also obtained by means of knowledge. Yajña is the continual self-giving, done both ritually and otherwise also, following the discipline of inner yajna, termed Karma Yoga in the later literature.

abhi gr̥ñihī: speak the Word on all sides; a similar phrase occurs in (1.15.3), (2.9.4), etc., *āruva*: cry out the response.

brahma: mantra (not the Purāṇik deity).

svara: a special Word of approval, like the mantra *om*.

abhisvara: facing us, sound your approval.

1.10.5: Mantra-s Increase Indra

Indra, the foe-killer, should be praised with rik mantra-s (1,3), that increase the Indra-power (in the seeker) (2).

May Indra, the capable, be delighted with us (4,6),
(as we do) among our sons and friends (5,7).⁵

Details: Indra accepts the Soma prepared by the singers through their actions. *suteṣhu*: sons. The alternate meaning of Soma pressings is also valid in the context. *shakra*: the capable one (from root *shak*); *puruṇiṣhṣidhe*: foe-remover;

⁵ उक्थम् इन्द्राय शंस्यं (1), वर्धनं (2), पुरुणिष्विधे (3),

शक्रो यथा (4), सुतेषु (5), णो रारण्त् (6), सुख्येषु च (7)

1.10.6: Strong by Giving Wealth

We desire Indra in friendship (1),
 him in riches and him in his hero-strength (2).
 He, the mighty Indra, becomes strong (3),
 distributing his wealth to us (4).⁶

Details: A characteristic of Vedic Gods is that they become strong by distributing their powers to man. Power never decays. This is in contrast to the myths in Purāṇa books where the power obtained by askesis (*tapas*) decays by the giving of boons.

1.10.7: Release the Knowledge

Your glory has been thoroughly cleansed by you, O Indra (2);
 (your glory) is patent and able to manifest well (1).
 Open the gate of the home of the knowledge (3);
 get the riches for us, O Master of the hill (4).⁷

Details: *tvādātām*: cleansed by you. Indra has cleansed the atmosphere by the removal of the purveyors of evil like Vṛtra.
yashah: the glory; the spiritual Light or Delight that is spread around.
adrvah: master of the hill; it refers to Indra since he has captured it from the titans. *adri*, hill, denotes the Inconscient, the source of all inertia and ignorance. Recall (1.7.3).

apavṛdhī: open (the doors); *rādhah*: riches; achievement;

⁶ तमित् संखित्व ईमहे (1), तं राये तं सुवीर्ये (2),

स शक्र उत नः शकुदिन्द्रो (3), वसु दयमानः (4)

⁷ सुविवृत्तं सुनिरजम् (1), इन्द्र त्वादातमित् यशः (2),

गवाम् अपं ब्रजं वृथि (3), कृषुष्व राधो अद्रिवः (4)

1.10.8: Impel the Rays Towards Us

Indra, both Heaven and Earth, cannot encompass you (1),
when you are formidable (2).

You win the luminous waters of the *svar*-world (4).

Impel towards us the rays of knowledge (5).⁸

Details: Indra breaks the hill of inertia (*tamas*) in the form of the titan Vṛtra and releases the hidden luminous powers, symbolised by Waters. The Rishi prays that may Indra impel the Rays of knowledge towards all the parts of his being.

jeṣṭhaḥ: wins. It is in the present tense because the conquest is going on continuously in every individual at all times.

svarvatīr-apah: Waters from *svar*; the Divine energies belonging to the *svar* world discussed in (1.9.10), the fixed dwelling of Indra and other Gods.

1.10.9: Three Steps of the Chant

O Indra, who listens from everywhere, hear my call (1);
hold (in your mind) my praises (2).

Stay near this laud of mine (3,5), who is attached to you (4).⁹

Details: There are three steps in the laud: first Indra hears the call, next he accepts the praise and bears it in his mind; third, he comes to the place where the laud is recited. Recall the notes in (1.9.4) and (1.10.4).

antaram: near, close;]

⁸ नहि त्वा रोदसी उभे (1), क्रेष्टायमाणम् (2), इन्वतः (3),

जेषः स्वर्वतीरपः (4), सं गा अस्मभ्यै धूनुहि (5)

⁹ आश्रुत्कर्णं श्रुधी हवं (1), नूचित् दधिष्व मे गिरः (2),

इन्द्र स्तोममिमं मम कृष्वा (3), युजः चित् (4), अन्तरम् (5)

1.10.10: Outpouring of Plenitudes

O Indra, we know you as the superb giver of plenitudes (1),
you hear our calls (2).

We invoke you who gives plentifully (causing) (3),
the thousandfold increase (of your powers in us) (4).¹⁰

1.10.11: Increase Our New Life and Create Seers

Indra, son of Kushika, come quickly to us (1),
drink the delightful Soma (2).

Increase superbly our new life (3);
create the Seer and the thousandfold enjoyer (4).¹¹

Details: Note that Indra is called upon to, “increase our new life” and “create the Seer”. When Indra takes birth in the poet, he gives him new life. Indra manifests in him the various powers such as extended Vision and Hearing, etc. Hence Indra creates a Seer.

Line (3): (alt.) Give us a wholly new being.

Riṣhi is a person to whom a ḥk is revealed; he is a seer or poet (*kavi*). The human aspirant, *yajamāna* and a patron of the *yajña*, is a seeker of the spiritual riches who has not attained the status of a Seer.

Kaushika: Son of Kushika. In many of the hymns of the Rig Veda, the Seer or poet calls the deity by his own name. Since the adored deity takes birth in the inner being of the Seer, the deity is regarded as the son of the Seer and hence the deity is given the same family name. In this hymn, the family name of the poet is Kushika and hence Indra is addressed by that name.

S quotes the story of the prayer to Indra by Kushika, son of Eshiratha. Responding to the prayer, Indra himself is born as a son to Kushika. This son is Vishvāmitra.

¹⁰ विद्मा हि त्वा वृषन्तम् वाजेषु (1), हवनश्रुतम् (2),

वृषन्तमस्य हूमह (3), ऊर्ति संहस्रसात्माम् (4)

¹¹ आ तू ने इन्द्र कौशिक (1), मन्दसानः सुतं पिब (2),

नव्यमायुः प्र सूतिर (3), कुधी संहस्रसाम् क्रष्णम् (4)

1.10.12: Love is the Secret

O One who delights in our lauds (2),
 may my chants attain to you on every side (1,3).
 We, with lengthened life, being increased follow you (4).
 May the chants, accepted with love, become the cause of love (5).¹²

Details: The love of the deity for us is the cause of our love for the deity. This is the secret.

The Gods want the human beings to progress perpetually. Hence, they bestow a long life on the seeker. Early death of the seeker happens when his/her body is unable to bear the force bestowed by the Gods.

vrddhayah: increasing, more and more; *anu*: to follow;

Hymn 1.11: Indra: Destroyer of Foes

Rishi: Jetā Mādhu-chchandasah

- 1: Lord of All Existence
- 2: Indra's Friendship
- 3: Growths Diminish Not
- 4: Destroyer of Cities of Titans
- 5: Open the Cave of Vala
- 6: Flowing with the Eternal Sap
- 7: Shuṣhma who Dries up Sap
- 8: Indra's gifts are Plentiful and Varied

1.11.1: Lord of All Existence

All lauds have increased Indra (1,3),
 pervading like the sea (2).
 (He is) superbly speedy among the chariooted (4),
 the lord of riches and the lord of all existence (5).¹

¹² परिं त्वा (1), गिर्वणो (2), गिरं दुमा भवन्तु विश्वतः (3),
 वृद्ध-आयुम् अनु वृद्धयो (4), जुष्टा भवन्तु जुष्टयः (5)

¹ इन्द्रं विश्वा अवीवृधन् (1), समुद्रव्यचसुं (2), गिरः (3),
 रथीतमं रथीनां (4), वाजानां सत्पति पतिम् (5)

Details: *ratha*: derived from *ramh*, it indicates movement in the psychological sense.

1.11.2: Indra's Friendship

O Indra, opulent in your friendship (1),
 may we have no fear, O lord of luminous strength (2).
 We laud you excellently from all sides (3).
 You are a conqueror and undefeated (4).²

Details: *jetāram*: Rishi uses his own name as an epithet for the deity being praised.

1.11.3: Growths Diminish Not

Plentiful are the gifts of Indra (1),
 the growths (of wealth) diminish not (2),
 even if the treasure a part of plenty bright with rays (3,5),
 is given to the singers (by Indra) (4).³

Details: *na vidasyanti*: do not diminish. There is no diminution in the riches of Indra, in spite of his daily gifts, since they are ever-increasing. The nature of the wealth is stated by the use of the word *gomat*, luminous with knowledge, and *vāja*, plenitude, plenty of everything. *rātayah*: gifts; derived from *ra* to give.

1.11.4: Destroyer of Cities of Titans

He, the destroyer of cities (of evil forces), young, Seer (1),
 (he) unlimited in strength, was born in the seeker (2).
 Indra is the sustainer of all actions in the universe (3);
 he, the thunderer is praised by many (4).⁴

² सूर्ये तं इन्द्रं वाजिनो (1), मा भैम शवसस्पते (2),

त्वामुभि प्रणौनुमो (3), जेतारम् अपराजितम् (4)

³ पूर्वीः इन्द्रस्य रातयो (1), न वि दस्यन्ति ऊतयः (2),

यदी वाजस्य गोमतः (3), स्तोतृभ्यो मंहते (4), मुघम् (5)

⁴ पुरां भिन्दुः युवा कुविः (1), अमितौजा अजायत (2),

इन्द्रो विश्वस्य कर्मणो धर्ता (3), वज्री पुरुषुतः (4)

Details: *ajāyata*: born in the seeker: This phrase is discussed in (1.4.1) and (1.8.6). It means that Indra-power is born in the seeker.

purām: cities of the rākṣasa-s like Vṛtra, also called *adri*. These cities are not physical, but formations in our vital body (*prāṇamaya kosha*).

kavi: Seer, an epithet usually given to Agni.

dhartā: sustainer of the inner yajña in humans. *yuva*: ever young.

1.11.5: Open the Cave of Vala

You thrust open with the rays the cave of Vala (1,3),

O breaker of the hill (2).

The fearless Gods came to you speeding (4).⁵

Details: Vala literally means enclosure. The titan Vala stole the Rays of spiritual knowledge (*gau*) and lodged them in mountain caves completely dark, denoting the inconscient. These caves are within the subtle body of every human being.

Vala's followers are *Pani*-s, the traffickers in sense-knowledge. Indra destroys Vala and releases the hidden spiritual Light.

The adjective *gomataḥ* for Vala is not out of place. Vala's body is made of Light as mentioned later in (10.68.9) (*go-vapusho valasya*). Translating *valasya gomataḥ* as Vala of the cows is misleading as the meaning of the word *gomataḥ* is misrepresented. Note *go* is a ray of Light. See chap. 11 of 'Semantics of Rig Veda' which discusses all mantra-s in RV dealing with *gau*.

After Indra's victory, the other Gods enter the subtle body of *yajamāna* and manifest their respective powers. The victory over Vala is a joint activity of all the Gods. There are many verses, for instance (1.62.3), which declare that Brhaspati slew Vala and attained the Rays (*gām*). (1.62.4) indicates different names for Vala like *adri*, *phaliga*. *adrivah*: The owner of hill, Indra; derived from the fact that Indra destroyed the hill *adri*.

⁵ त्वं बुलस्य गोमतो अपावः (1), अद्रिवो (2), बिलम् (3),

त्वां देवा अविभ्युषः (4), तुज्यमानास आविषुः (5)

1.11.6: Flowing with the Eternal Sap

O Hero, by your grace, chanting, I come towards you (1,3).

You are flowing like a river (2).

O Adorable by praise, serving you (4),

are the chant-creators who know your (glory) (5).⁶

Details: The purport is: I have the need of the strength and valour obtained by your grace; I have attained to you who are ever flowing with the eternal sap like the river, unscorched by the titans who dry up the Soma-essence in our body, life and mind.

sindhum: a river or a ocean; Indra is flowing like a river.

rātibhiḥ: gifts indicative of grace;

prati āyam: come to you;

1.11.7: Shuṣṭha who Dries Up Sap

O Indra, with your varied intelligence (1),

you have slain the cunning Shuṣṭha (2).

The wise Rishi-s know this (your glory) (3);

increase their divine hearings (4).⁷

Details: The repetition of the phrase, ‘*viduh te tasya kāravah*’, in (1.11.6) and (1.11.7), with *medhirāḥ* replacing *kāravah*, provides the continuity.

Shuṣṭha: a demon who dries up the essence or sap of all things.

māya: intelligence which could be used in any way.

shrava: hearing, the sound of Divine inspiration.

• तवाहं शूर रातिभिः प्रत्यायं (1), सिन्धुम् (2), आवदन् (3),

उपातिष्ठन्त गिर्वणो (4), विदुः ते तस्य कारवः (5)

’ मायाभिः इन्द्र (1), मायिनं त्वं शुष्णुम् अवातिरः (2),

विदुषे तस्य मेधिराः (3), तेषां श्रवांसि उत् तिर (4)

1.11.8: Indra's Gifts are Plentiful and Varied

Indra rules by his might (1).

He is praised by the stoma-chanters in front (2).

Thousands are his gifts (3),

which are also variedly abundant (4).⁸

Details: His gifts of wealth are of various types, none of which diminish.

"The time-limit allowed for the growth of civilization [by the theory of a straight-line progression from a primitive age] is still impossibly short.... We can no longer argue that no ancient civilizations can have existed of which the traces have entirely perished and that prehistoric means, necessarily, savage and undeveloped.... Everything tends to show that there must be the remains of other civilisations yet undiscovered. We cannot have exhausted all that the earth contains."

(Sri Aurobindo)

⁸ इन्द्रम् ईशानम् ओजसा (1), अभि स्तोमा अनूषत (2),
सुहस्त्रं यस्य रातयं (3), उत वा सन्ति भूयसीः (4)

Section II: Sūkta-s (1.12-1.23)

Riṣhi: Medhātithih Kāṇvah

Metre: 1.12-1.16, 1.18-1.22, Gāyatrī

Sūkta Hymn title

- 1.12 Agni, The Envoy (10)**
- 1.13 Agni, The Powers that Fill (12)**
- 1.14 Agni, All-Gods, Soma and Spouses (12)**
- 1.15 Divine Timing and Other Gods (12)**
- 1.16 Indra Accepts Soma and Showers the Light (9)**
- 1.17 Indra and Varuṇa (9)**
- 1.18 Brahmaṇaspati and Others (9)**
- 1.19 Maruts and Agni (9)**
- 1.20 Ṛbhūs Make Four out of One (8)**
- 1.21 Indra and Agni: Givers of Refuge (6)**
- 1.22 Goddesses, Ashvins, Viṣhṇu and Savitṛ (21)**
- 1.23 Waters, Pūshān and Other Deities (23)**

The Seer Medhātithih continues the work of the Seer Madhuchchandas in introducing the deities. He introduces the deity associated with *ṛtu*, the divine timing of events, Brahmaṇaspati (or Gaṇapati), Varuṇa, Maruts, Ashvins and Ṛbhu-s, the Divine artisans. In the *āpri* Sūkta (1.13), various deities are mentioned including the three famous Goddesses Ilā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī in (1.13.9), and the divine doors who manifest through Agni. In (1.16), he explores the relationship between Indra, the Lord of Divine Mind and Soma, the Lord of Delight. The spouses of Gods like Agnāyi, the God Savitṛ and Ashvins are mentioned in (1.22) and (1.23). Of special interest are the six mantra-s in (1.22) to Viṣhṇu, the all-pervading deity, known as *śadvaishṇavam*. In (1.23), the Divine Energies or Waters are adored. In the same Sūkta, are three mantra-s to Pūshān, the nourisher and the one who leads the yajamāna on the right path. In (1.20) is the first Sūkta to Ṛbhu-s, the divine artisans who fashion the subtle body in man.

In the ‘Essentials of Rig Veda’, p.39-43, we discuss the relationship among the famous trio of Brahmanaspati, Viṣṇu and Rudra-Shiva. Note Brahmanapsati mantra-s are in (1.18), (and 1.40 in Section V), those of Viṣṇu in (1.22) in this Section, and those of Rudra are in (1.43) in Section V and (1.114) in Section XI.

Three mantra-s in this Section namely (1.22.15), (1.22.17) and (1.23.20) are used in Navagraha worship.

Hymn 1.12: Agni: the Envoy

Seer: Medhātithih Kāṇvah

- 1: Performer of Yajña**
- 2: Carrier of Offerings**
- 3: Born in the Human Aspirant**
- 4: Agni Awakens the Gods**
- 5: Burn the Demons**
- 6: Agni is invoked by Agni**
- 7: Destroyer of Afflictions**
- 8: Increases the Human Aspirant**
- 9: Purifier**
- 10: Bring the Gods**
- 11: Bestow Felicity**
- 12: Accept this Hymn**

Metre: Gāyatrī

1.12.1: Performer of Yajña

We serve Agni, who as our envoy invites the Gods (1).

He is the all-knower (2);

(He is) the auspicious performer of yajña (3).¹

Details: *kratu*: will accompanied with knowledge and power to accomplish a desired task. Since the adjective all-knower is present, *kratum* is translated in the sense of action and *sukratum* as auspicious performer. It can be understood as the effective will behind yajña.

¹ अग्निं दूतं वृणीमहे (1), होतारं विश्ववेदसम् (2), अस्य युजस्य सुक्रतुम् (3)

dūtam: envoy or messenger to the Gods. Agni goes as envoy on behalf of the human aspirant and invites the Gods to the *yajña* happening in the subtle body of the seeker. It occurs about one hundred times in RV.

vishvavedasam: all-knowing or omniscient. Agni knows entirely all the beings in all the worlds, especially all their previous births. This epithet occurs about twenty times. A closely related epithet is *jātavedas*, one who knows of all things born, discussed in RV (1.44.1). This mantra is used in Navagraha worship for invoking Āditya.

1.12.2: Carrier of Offerings

Agni himself is invoked with hymns continuously (1),
he, the guardian of the people (2).

(He is) the conveyor of offerings and the beloved of many (3).²

Details: *havīmabhih*: by hymns of call. *havi* or *havis* has also the meaning of oblation or offering almost everywhere. In the inner worship, *havis* is the work offered as offering according to (SA).

havyavāham: conveyor of offerings; *havya* according to ritualists is the material offering like ghee presented to the fire. In the esoteric sense, the offering is always the actions of mind and body (*karma*) offered to the Gods for their enjoyment. Agni conveys all the offerings to the respective Gods or cosmic powers.

1.12.3: Born in the Human Aspirant

O Agni, you are born (in the seeker) (2).

Bring the Gods here to him who has the seat ready (1,3).

You are our adored summoning priest (4).³

Details: *jajñāna*: Agni first takes birth or manifests in the subtle body of the aspirant. Then he summons all the other Gods or powers to the body of the seeker.

² अग्निमृग्नि॑ हवीमभि॒ः सदा॑ हवन्त् (1), वि॒शपतिम्॑ (2),
हृव्यवाह॑ं पुरुप्रियम्॑ (3)

³ अग्ने॑ देवाँ॑ इहा॑ वंह (1), जज्ञानो॑ (2), वृक्तवर्हिषे॑ (3) असि॑ होता॑ न॑ ईड्यः॑ (4)

bārhi: literally means grass and *vrkta* means shearing or plucking. In the external ritualist process, *vṛktabarhiṣhah* means readying the altar with the blades of grass, shorn of roots. In the inner *yajña*, it means preparing the seat in our inner being by removing unwanted thoughts for the manifestation of Gods.

1.12.4: Agni Awakens the Gods

Awaken the lovers of *yajña* (1),
when you go as our envoy, O Agni (2).

Take your seat on the (inner) altar along with the Gods (3).⁴

Details: *vibodhaya*: awaken. In the inner *yajña*, Agni is the first power to manifest in man and all the other powers or Gods are dormant as it were. Agni awakens these powers or Gods.

ushata: The Gods, lovers of mankind and lovers of offerings.

āsatsi: sit; Agni takes his seat in the subtle body of the seeker and directs all the activities.

1.12.5: Burn the Demons

O Shining One, you are invoked by luminous thought (1).

O Agni, you burn up (3),
the opposing foes, the demons (2,4).⁵

Details: *ghṛta*: This word along with its case variants occurs more than 100 times. In addition it occurs at least 50 more times compounded with other words. In classical Sanskrit, it means ghee or clarified butter, i.e., the melted butter with impurities removed. However, this meaning does not fit in most of the places in the RV. Its correct meaning is derived from the root *ghṛ* meaning shining or luminous. Its generic meaning is clarified or illumined thought and this fits all throughout the Veda. The ghee is a material that has a luminous property. See also (1.2.7).

ghṛtāhavana: one who is called by luminous thought. *havana* always means 'to call by hymns'. It, along with its variants, is a popular

⁴ तां उशतो वि बौध्य् (1), यदग्ने यासि दृत्यम् (2), देवैः आसृत्सि वर्हिषि- (3)

⁵ घृताहवन दीदिवः प्रति ष्मि रिषतो दह अग्ने त्वं रक्षस्विनः

Word in the Veda. *havana* is often mistranslated as oblation or offering. The coupling of these two words, *ghṛta* and *havana*, again confirms the assigned meaning of *ghṛta*.

daha: burn. Burning human enemies is never mentioned in any book dealing with Indian culture. This phrase again indicates that the foes are not human, but demons as explicitly mentioned by the phrase *rakṣasvinah*.

1.12.6: Agni is invoked by Agni

Agni is perfectly kindled only by Agni (1),
the Seer, the lord of the house, youthful and the courier (2).
(He) has the flame-tongue for his mouth (3).⁶

Details: Agni is obtained from Agni just like *tapas* is obtained from *tapas* as stated in the Taittirīya Upanishad (*tapas* is Brahman, seek to know it by *tapas*; 3.3.1, 3.4.1, 3.5.1; Atharva Veda (7.61)).

grha: house, a symbol for the gross and subtle human body.

juhva: tongue, symbol for speech. Agni, becomes the speech and intones the mantra-s on behalf of the human singer. 'Agni becoming speech' is in the Aitareya Upanishad (1.2.4).

grhapati: Agni becomes the master of the entire being of *yajamāna* including his physical body.

yuvā: Agni is described as the eternal youth.

havyavāt̄: courier of the offerings; Agni carries the offerings of the aspirants and conveys them to the various cosmic powers. For ritualists, Agni is the fire which carries the oblations *havya* like ghee to the other Gods.

1.12.7: Destroyer of Afflictions

Approach and chant the praise to Agni, the seer (1).
His law is the Truth; he shines in the pilgrim-sacrifice (2);
he destroys afflictions (in the seekers) (3).⁷

⁶ अग्निनाग्निः समिध्यते (1), कृविः गृहपतिः युवा हृष्यवाद् (2), जुहूस्यः (3)

⁷ कृविम् अग्निम् उपस्तुहि (1), सृत्यधर्माणम् अध्वरे देवम् (2),

अमीवचातनम् (3)

Details: *satyadharmaṇam*: one whose *dharma* is the Truth; *dharma* is the divine Law which upholds everything. The phrase occurs in the Isha Upanishad (15), *satyadharmaṇaya dṛṣṭaye*.

amīvachātanam: destroyer of diseases, (7.8.6). In RV, Ashwins are the Divine Healers. But that does not exclude Agni from having the function of healing. *adhvara*: see (1.1.4)

1.12.8: Increases the Human Aspirant

The sacrificer worships you, Agni, the god, the envoy (1),
you profusely increase in him (2).⁸

Details: Agni is responsible for the manifestation of the various powers in the seeker. In addition to manifesting his own power, Agni goes as envoy on behalf of the aspirant to the Gods to bring them to the *yajña*.

havīḥ: oblation or offerings. *havīshpati*: sacrificer;

Line 2: Agni-powers increase in him; (alt.): Become his protector;
ava: to protect, to increase;

1.12.9: Purifier

O Purifier, have grace on him (4),
who approaches Agni, with offerings (1,3),
for the advent of the Gods (2).⁹

Details: *pāvaka*: purifier. As he knows of all our births, Agni purifies our entire being. This is a common epithet for Agni. The entire hymn (1.97) is dedicated to Agni, the purifier.

deva vītaye: the *yajña* in which the Gods arrive, i.e., the Gods manifest in the inner being of seeker. The arrival of Gods is same as their manifestation.

⁸ यः त्वाम् अग्ने हुविष्टति: द्रूतं देव सपर्यति (1), तस्य स्म प्राविता भव (2)

⁹ यो अग्निं (1), देववीतये (1), हुविष्टाँ आविवासति (3), तस्मै पावक मूल्य (4)

1.12.10: Bring the Gods

O Agni, purifier, luminous One (1),
bring the Gods here to us (2),
to our yajña and to our offerings (3).¹⁰

1.12.11: Bring Felicities

Adored by fresh Gāyatri rhythms (1,3),
you bring us the felicities (2,4),
the heroic strength and the power of impulsion (5).¹¹

Details: *isham*: force of impulsion;

1.12.12: Accept this Hymn

O Agni, with your white lustres (1),
and all your divine rhythms that calls the Gods (2),
come and accept this hymn of affirmation (3).¹²

Details: “*stuh* or *stoma* is the Word considered as a power that affirms and confirms the settled rhythm of things. That which has to be expressed is realised in consciousness, affirmed, and finally confirmed by the power of the Word. Ṛk is connected with the word *arka* which means Light or illumination; it is the word considered as a power of realization in the illuminating consciousness” (SA, SV, p.310).

¹⁰ स नः पावक दीदिवो अग्ने (1), देवाँ इहा वंह (2), उप॑ यज्ञं हुविश्वं नः (3)

¹¹ स नः स्तवान् (1), आ भर (2), गायत्रेण नवीयसा (3),
रुयं (4), वीरवतीम् इष्म् (5)

¹² अग्ने शुक्रेण शोचिषा (1), विश्वाभिः देवहूतिभिः (2),
इमं स्तोमं जुषस्व नः (3)

Hymn 1.13: The Powers that Fill

- 1: Well-kindled**
- 2: Born in the Body of Yajamāna**
- 3: He Creates the Offering**
- 4: Established by Mantra**
- 5: Vision of the Eternal God**
- 6: Divine Doors Open**
- 7: Night and Day**
- 8: Two Powers Conduct Yajña**
- 9: Ilā, Sarasvatī and Mahi**
- 10: Tvaṣṭṛ**
- 11: May the Giver have Knowledge**
- 12: Call the Gods**

Metre: Gāyatrī

This hymn belongs to the *āpri* family. There are ten such hymns in the entire RV, all having similar structures. This hymn is traditionally recited in the Agnistoma rite. Even though several deities like Indra, Tvaṣṭṛ, the three Goddesses, etc., are explicitly mentioned, they are all invoked through the mouth of Agni. Agni, the Divine Will in man, the force of aspiration in the seeker, assumes in the inner life of the Rishi the forms of the other Gods; hence the Gods are said to be Agni-faced. This development is a special feature of Agni. "For it is characteristic of him to become in his heavenward activity endowed with the attributes that distinguish severally the other Gods of the Vedic system, while retaining his distinguishing feature as the Divine will" [CW,KS, Vol.1]. This description of Agni appearing as different Gods is a general feature of the Vedic hymns and explicitly stated in several riks such as RV (5.3.1) and RV (5.3.2).

The sacrificer or the aspirant is always the soul of man, the *jīva* or *puruṣha*. When the aspiration expressed through hymns and *tapas* is acute, Agni himself takes birth in man. He is the Seer-will or the *kavikratu*. He himself takes over the burden of the progress of the *yajña* offered by the *jīva* and summons all other Gods, who then not only manifest but also give their powers to the seeker.

The root of the Word *āpri* is *pr*, to fill up; the different deities fill up the *yajamānā* or the seeker with appropriate powers. The *āpri* mantra RV (2.6.8) states: “May Agni, who knows everything, fill us from all sides with his powers”. An extensive English commentary on this hymn can be found in [CW, KS, Vol.1].

1.13.1: Well-kindled

O Well-kindled Agni, bring the Gods to us (1),
who have the offerings (2).

O Summoning-priest and purifier, perform the *yajña* (3).¹

Details: *su* denotes auspicious. *samit* means fuel, both physically and symbolically. The flame of Agni, the flame of aspiration, is slender in the beginning, but fuelled by chanting, meditation, *tapas*, surrender, etc., it grows in size.

1.13.2: Born in the Body of Yajamāna

O Son of the body of the aspirant (2),
lead our delightful *yajña* (1,3),
among the Gods now for their advent in us, O Seer (4).²

Details: Because Agni is born in the body (*tanu*) of the human aspirant he is termed as his/her son (*napāt*). Agni grows in the *yajamāna* and manifests his powers.

vītaye: for advent; for enjoyment. We have used the first meaning. (SA) uses the second meaning and his translation is, ‘make the *yajña* honeyed for the gods for their enjoyment, O Seer’.

1.13.3: He Creates the Offering

I call here to this *yajña* (2), the beloved *Narāshamsa* (1).
(He) has the honeyed-speech and creates the offerings (3).³

¹ सुसंमिद्धो न आ वंह देवाँ (1), अग्ने हृविष्मते (2),

होतः पावक् यश्चि च (3)

² मधुमन्तं (1), तनूनपाद् (2), यज्ञं (3), देवेषु नः कवे अद्या कृणुहि वीतयै (4)

³ नराशंसम् इह प्रियम् (1), अस्मिन् यज्ञ उपं हये (2), मधुजिह्वं हृविष्कृतम् (3)

Details: Narāshamsa: a name of Agni, one who lauds the leading Gods.

priyam: delight (both to the Gods and to the human aspirant).

madhujihvam: honeyed speech; Agni becomes the speech by which the delightful hymns are chanted. See *jihva* in (1.12.6).

haviṣhkṛtam: The offerings made by the seeker are rendered fruitful by Agni alone. Agni, by means of the luminous path, *adhvara*, has the power to reach the offerings to the Gods. Here he creates the offerings. This phrase complements the phrase honeyed-speech, showing Agni's main role in the *yajña*.

1.13.4: Established by Mantra

O Adorable Agni, bring the Gods here in your delightful car (1).
You summon the Gods (2),
and establish them in us by the mantra (3).⁴

Details: *ratha:* car: always denotes rapid movement. The car is said to be delightful because its sight causes delight to the seeker and it contains the felicities which causes delight in the aspirants.

īlita: one adored; *manurhitah:* Even today, *manu* is well-known as mantra in the books dealing with the tantra-s. Agni has been established for the conduct of *yajña* by the potent Word, mantra, arising from the speech in the heart. *mana:* knowledge; *manu:* is that which is known.

1.13.5: Vision of the Eternal God

In the true order is spread the holy seat (1),
with a luminous surface (2).

O wise comrades, here is the vision of the God eternal (3,4).⁵

Details: The seat on the inner altar in the heart becomes the station for the vision of the immortal God Agni.

⁴ अग्ने सुखतमे रथे देवाँ ईळित आ वह (1), असि होता (2), मनुर्हितः (3)

⁵ स्तूपीत बहिरानुषग् (1), घृतपृष्ठं (2), मनीषिणः (2),

यत्र अमृतस्य चक्षणम् (4)

barhirānuṣhak: the seat inside the heart arranged in the appropriate order. For ritualists, it is the seat of grass. See also (1.12.3).

ghṛtāprṣṭham: one with luminous surface, see (1.14.6), (1.12.4).

1.13.6: Divine Doors Open

O Gods, may the Divine Doors in the seeker remain open (1);
may they not be stuck up (2).

Open them now without fail for the *yajña* (3).⁶

Details: The doors, also referred to as the knots or bonds, are located in the subtle body; they also appear in RV (1.25.21), a hymn to God Varuṇa, ‘Release our upper bond, loosen our middle, untie those below for our living’. The bottom bond is that of our physical body, the middle bond is that of our emotional conflicts and cravings, the upper bond is that of the narrowness of our mental conceptions, ideas, goals etc. The doors inside the subtle body of the person who does not perform *yajña* are closed. The opening of the doors indicates the upward journey of the *yajamāna* himself, symbolized by *yajña*. The sacrifice or *yajña* always goes upwards to the cosmic Gods. In all the *āpri* hymns, the phrase, ‘open the divine doors’, occurs. The opening of the doors is discussed extensively in the yogic and tāntrik texts.

ṛtāvṛdha: Gods; those who increase the manifestation of *ṛta*, the Truth-in-movement; *vishrayantām*: remain open, (1.142.6);

sashchataḥ: to cling, (3.9.4)

asashchataḥ: not stuck up, (doors) not cling to each other, (1.142.6);

1.13.7: Night and Day

Night and day, beautiful of form (1), I call in this *yajña* (2),
to come and be seated on our *barhi* (grass seat) (3).⁷

‘ वि श्रयन्ताम् कृतावृधो द्वारौ देवीः (1), असूश्चतः (2),

अद्या नूनं च यष्टवे (3)

’ नक्तोषासा सुपेशसा (1), अस्मिन् यज्ञ उपं हये (2), इदं नौ बहिरासदै (3)

Details: *nakta*, the night, indicates our normal unilluminated consciousness, while *uṣhas*, the Day, indicates the Divine Consciousness. All that manifests in the day (Divine Consciousness) is in the womb of the night. *barhi*: a type of grass, a sacred seat of grass;

1.13.8: Two Powers Conduct Yajña

I call the two deities of auspicious speech (1).

Divine, invokers and Seers (2). May they conduct the yajña (3).⁸
[*jihva*: tongue indicates speech]

1.13.9: Ilā, Sarasvatī and Mahī

Ilā, Sarasvatī and Mahī (1),

the three Goddesses, are the creators of delight (2).

(May they) come unharmed to the *barhi* seat (3).⁹

Details: Ilā is the Goddess of sight or revelation. (She has no connection to Ilā, the male head of lunar dynasty mentioned in Purāṇa-s). Ilā confers on the sage the power or the consciousness to envision all the different planes of manifestation.

Sarasvatī is the Goddess of Inspiration who bestows on the Seer the capacity capable of hearing the Truth. In the purely physical interpretation, she is a river.*

Mahī is the Divine Power associated with the concept of vastness which does not allow any limitation at any level, aesthetic, emotional, psychological, mental, etc. According to the Vedic sages, all conflict is due to a limitation of one or more powers. Removal of these conflicts ushers an overall harmony. She brings the Seer the sense of vastness. Her vastness is mentioned in several hymns.

⁸ ता सुजि॒हा उप॑ ह्ये॑ (1), होता॑रा॑ दैव्या॑ कृवी॑ (2),
य॒ज्ञं नौ॑ यक्षतामि॑मम्॑ (3)

⁹ इला॑ सरस्वती॑ म॒ही॑ (1), ति॑स्रो॑ देवी॑ः॒ मयो॑भुवः॑ (2), ब॒हिः॑ सीदन्तु॑ अ॒सिधः॑ (3)

* See the book, 'Sarasvati' SAKSI, 2002, which contains all RV mantra-s on Sarasvati with translation; it discusses also the drying up of the river.

The three Goddesses appear in all the *āpri* hymns and several others: 1.142.9, 1.188.9, 2.3.8, 3.4.8, 5.5.8, 7.2.8, 9.5.8, 10.70.8, 10.110.8.

The last line, ‘come to our seat, unharmed’ means, ‘may their power manifest in full in us’. Dasyus and other titans harm the ability of the person to accept the manifested powers. Goddesses by themselves cannot be harmed.

1.13.10: Tvaṣṭṛ

I call here the author of all forms (2), Tvaṣṭṛ, the supreme (1).
May he (Agni) be the sole object of our adoration (3).¹⁰

Details:

Tvaṣṭṛ fashions not only all the forms of the universe, but is also the material of all the forms. He removes from the human being all elements that are obstinate and fashions the being so that the person is capable of holding the power which is trying to manifest in him/her.

Griffith translates the last line as, “May he be ours and ours alone”, portraying the Rishi-s as selfish. The correct meaning is, “May we adore only the Divine, Agni, and not other persons or objects.”

1.13.11: May the Giver have Knowledge

O Soma, O God (2),
present our offerings to the Gods (1,3).
May the giver have knowledge (4).¹¹

Details: vanaspati: Soma: The Lord of the plants or Lord of Delight in all things since *vana* means both delight and plant-growth. The principle of delight is essential in the worship of the Gods. Soma is mentioned to make sure that the offering is made with delight.

chetanam: direct knowledge obtained by the aspect of mind that interacts with senses, the so-called sense-mind (derived from *chiti samjñāne*). This knowledge is the result of making the offerings imbued with delight.

¹⁰ इह त्वष्टारम् अग्नियं (1), विश्वरूपम् उपं ह्वये (2), अस्माकम् अस्तु केवलः (3)

¹¹ अवं सृजा (1), वनस्पते देवं (2), देवेभ्यो हृविः (3), प्र दातुः अस्तु चेतनम् (4)

1.13.12: Call the Gods

With *svāha*, offer the *yajña* to Indra (1),
in the home of the worshipper (2).

There I call the Gods (3).¹²

Details: The first line is a call to the friends and others engaged in the task of seeking the Truth. It indicates that *yajña* is undertaken for the arrival of Indra. But Indra is not to come alone. The Rishi proclaims that he would also call the other Gods, the powers that attend on Indra. *svāhā*: that which is offered whole-heartedly; a sacred utterance used to appeal to the Gods when offerings are given. *grha*: the physical home as well as the mind-life-body embodiment in which the *jīva* or the soul of the aspirant is housed.

Hymn 1.14: Agni, All-Gods, Soma and Spouses

- 1: Welcome to Agni
- 2: Thought
- 3: Welcome to Other Gods
- 4: Soma Settles in the Body
- 5: Offerings Ready
- 6: Life-powers Bring the Gods
- 7: Spouses of Gods
- 8: Gods Drink the Soma Through Agni
- 9: Gods Waking at Dawn
- 10: All-Gods
- 11: Agni Conducts the *Yajña*
- 12: Gods Indicated by their Colours

1.14.1: Welcome to Agni

O Agni, come to our hymns of praise and to our endeavour (1),
and drink the Soma (2).

Come along with all the Gods, to conduct the *yajna* (3,4).¹

¹² स्वाहा॑ यज्ञं कृणोत्‌न इन्द्रो॒य (1), यज्वनो॑ गृहे॒ (2), तत्र॑ देवाँ॑ उर्प॑ ह्ये॒ (3)

१ ऐमिरग्ने॑ दुवो॑ गिरो॑ (1), विश्वेभिः॑ (2), सोमपीतये॑ (3),

देवेभिः॑ याहि॑ यक्षि॑ च॑ (4)

1.14.2: Thought

O illumined one, Kāṇva-s call you (1);
 they praise your thought (2)
 Come with the Gods, O Agni (3).²

Details: *kāṇvā*: followers of the sage Kāṇva; men of understanding. In the Veda, name of a Rishi has an associated spiritual meaning indicating his attainments.

1.14.3: Welcome to Other Gods

I call Indra-Vāyu, Bṛhaspati, Mitra and Agni, Pūshan, Bhaga (1),
 the host of Maruts and all children of Aditi (2).³

Details: Aditi represents the collective of all manifestation. All devas are her children, Āditya-s. *bṛhaspati*: lord of the Vast, (*bṛhat*); closely connected to Brahmaṇaspati or Gaṇapati. *bhaga*: solar deity; also known as Bhaga Sāvitri, the deity who apportions the enjoyments among all.

1.14.4: Soma Settles in the Body

For your sake is carried the Soma (1),
 which is exhilarating and satisfying (2).
 (His) drops are blissful, sweet and settle in the body (3).⁴

Details: The Soma, essence of delight, is collected drop by drop, as it were, in the body of the Rishi and offered to the Gods.

drapsa: moving drops (of Soma), draught-drops (from *dru*, movement); *chamū*: vessel; the extended body (body-life-mind) of the sacrificer which collects the Soma drop by drop generated by the actions of the Rishi. See also (1.28).

² आ त्वा कण्वां अहूषत् (1), गृणन्ति विष ते धियः (2),
 देवेभिरग्न्य आ गहि (3)

³ इन्द्रवायू बृहस्पतिं मित्राग्निं पूषणं भगम् (1),
 आदित्यान् मारुतं गणम् (2)

⁴ प्र वौं ग्रियन्ति इन्द्रवो (1), मत्सरा मादयिष्णवः (2), द्रप्सा मध्वः च मूषदः (3)

1.14.5: Offerings Ready

The Kaṇva-s, desirous of growth, adore you (1).

(They) have seats ready for you (2).

The offerings are adequate and pure (3).⁵

Details: *aranyakṛtaḥ*: discussed in (1.2.1). Here *aram* has both the meanings of enough or adequate and that of being purified psychologically, i.e. divesting it of personal claims.

1.14.6: Life Powers Bring the Gods

With luminous bodies which are yoked by the mind (1),
the carriers bear you (2).

By them, you (Agni) bring the Gods to drink the Soma (3).⁶

Details: *vahnayah*: carriers or the steeds. They denote the life-powers. Clearly they cannot be the four-legged animals since they are, ‘yoked by the mind of the Rishi’.

[*ghṛta-prṣṭam*: one with back of light, one with luminous back, (1.13.5). For ritualists, ‘back smeared with ghee’.]

1.14.7: Spouses of Gods

O Agni, to their spouses join the Gods (2).

They are the masters of yajña and increase the truth (1).

Make them drink the sweet Soma, O one of happy speech (3).⁷

Details: In the Veda, each God like Agni or Indra is regarded to as a male and the power or *shakti* associated with each God is regarded as his spouse. A God like Indra can battle the demonic forces like Vṛtra only when he is empowered by his *shakti* or spouse. Agni is called upon, not only to bring the Gods to the yajña being performed, but also to unify the God with his spouse so that the empowered God may do the allotted work in the yajña.

⁵ ईळते त्वाम् अंवस्यवः कण्वासो (1), वृक्तबर्हिषः (2),
हुविष्यन्तो अरुकृतः (3)

⁶ धृतपृष्ठा मनोयुजो (1), ये त्वा वहन्ति वह्यः (2), आ देवान् सोमपीतये (3)

⁷ तान् यजत्रां क्रतावृथो (1), अग्ने पत्नीवतः कृधि (2), मध्वः सुजिह्व पायय (3)

1.14.8: Gods Drink the Soma Through Agni

O Agni, the Gods are the masters of *yajña* and hymn (1).

May they drink with your speech (2),

the sweet Soma along with the exclamation *vaṣṭhaṭ* (3).⁸

Details: Gods are said to get their offerings via the speech of Agni whose outward symbol is the flame.

jihva: literally tongue; the speech of Agni in the form of flame.

vaṣṭhaṭ: exclamation made while making the offerings to Gods.

1.14.9: Gods Waking at Dawn

From the shining realms of Sūrya (1),

let all the Gods, who wake at dawn (2),

be brought here by the summoning priest, the wise one (3).⁹

Details: At the spiritual dawn when the time of manifestation of Truth-Light is near, the Gods get ready to manifest in the Rishi.

ākim: a particle with the sense of 'ā' to be connected with the verb, *vakṣhatī*.

1.14.10: All-Gods

O Agni, drink the Soma along with all the Gods (1),

with Indra and with Vāyu (2).

Drink it along with the radiance of Mitra (3).¹⁰

Details: Mitra bestows harmony on the event.

1.14.11: Agni Conducts the Yajña

O Agni, the summoning priest, who is established by mantra (1),

you abide in our *yajña* (2).

You conduct our pilgrim-journey (3).¹¹

⁸ ये यजत्रा य ईड्याः (1), ते तै पिबन्तु जिह्वाः (2), मधौः अग्ने वषट्कृति (3)

⁹ आकीं सूर्यस्य रोचनाद् (1), विश्वान्देवाँ उष्वर्दुधिः (2), विप्रो होतेह वंशति (3)

¹⁰ विश्वेभिः सोम्यं मध्व अग्न् (1), इन्द्रैण वायुना (2),

पिबा मित्रस्य धामभिः (3)

¹¹ त्वं होता मनुर्हितो (1), अग्ने यज्ञेषु सीदसि (2), सेम नौ अध्वरं यज (3)

Details: *manurhitam*: established by mantra, discussed in (1.13.4). *manu* means mantra.

1.14.12: Gods Indicated by their Colours

O God, yoke the red glistening steeds to the car (1,3), capable of carrying the Gods (2).

Bring here the Gods with them (4).¹²

Details: The prayer is to bring the Gods Uṣha, Indra and Agni indicated by the colours and powers, characteristic of their vehicles; *aruṣhī*: glistening; red hue of dawn, Uṣha. *rohitāḥ*: steeds of Agni in red. *harita*: capable of carrying, also indicates the yellow colour associated with Indra.

Hymn 1.15: Divine Timing and Other Gods

- 1: Indra Drinks Soma
- 2: Maruts Drink the Soma
- 3: Brighten the Yajña
- 4: Seat the Gods in Three Places
- 5: Indra's Friendship
- 6: Mitra and Varuṇa
- 7: Surrender, General and Specific
- 8: Enjoy with the Gods
- 9: Devotee Speeds towards the God
- 10: The Fourth Station
- 11: Soma at the Right Time
- 12: House-master

This hymn is said to have *ṛtu* for its Deity; the other Gods mentioned are Indra, Soma, Mitra, Varuṇa and others. *ṛtu*, in classical Sanskrit, means season; there are six seasons in the Indian calendar. But *ṛtu* is derived from *ṛtam*, the Truth-in-movement. A better translation of *ṛtu* is Divine Timing. Just as the growth and decay of each entity from tree to man is effectuated according to divisions in time like day, night, month, season, etc. characterised by

¹² युद्धा हरुषी रथे (1), हरितो देव (2), रोहितः (3), ताभिर्देवां इहा वह (4)

different activities and results, so also in the inner sacrifice the events unfold according to a definite time sequence. The special manifestations of Indra and other Gods follow the appropriate conditions of time and work out the corresponding fruitions in the sacrificer. He is bent upon total self-offering, aspiring for the plenary Home of Truth and hence devoted to union with the many Gods who are its limbs. The term *ṛtu* signifies the time-factor in the acts being done by the Gods within us, a secret within the keeping of the Gods dependent upon the state of development of the sacrificer.

ṛtu: the right time; the order of the truth (SA); Divine Timing.

1.15.1: Indra Drinks Soma

Indra, drink the Soma at the right time (1);
may Soma enter you from all-sides (2).

The Soma-s satisfy you and dwell in you (3).¹

Details: This mantra coheres with RV (1.8.7) with its statement on Indra, “drinking superbly the Soma”.

1.15.2: Maruts Drink the Soma

O Maruts, drink in season from the purifier's cup (1);
sanctify the yajña (2).

O lavish givers, you are well-established (3).²

Details: *potr*: a priest of that name; in the inner sacrifice he denotes a deity whose special purpose is cleaning or purifying.

Maruts are well known for sanctifying and purifying the sacrifice. Hence they are called as auspicious givers (*sudānavah*). *dānu* means givers. *su* denotes auspiciousness. In later Sanskrit, *dānava* denotes a class of demons. All the Gods are called as *sudānava* as in (1.106). Sri M.P. Pandit's comments on this verse. “It is not enough for the yajamāna to make the offering of Soma. He must do it at the

¹ इन्द्रं सोमं पिवत् कृतुना (1), आत्मा विशन्तु इन्दवः (2),

मृत्सरासः तदौकसः (3)

² मरुतः पिवत् कृतुना पोत्राद् (1), यज्ञं पुनीतन (2), यूयं हि षष्ठा सुदानवः (3)

appropriate moment. Each of the Gods responds and accepts the drink only when his appropriate time has arrived i.e., when his separate and several requirements by way of equipment in the Sadhana of the mystic are met. Otherwise the effort is barren. . . .”.

1.15.3: Brighten the Yajña

O Neṣṭā, one with the spouse, drink the Soma in season (2).

Make our yajña worthy of praise (1).

You establish ecstasies (in all) (3).³

Details: Neṣṭāḥ: a special deity whose function is to brighten (or cleanse or nourish) the yajña. He has become the priest or *ritvik*.

1.15.4: Seat the Gods in Three Places

O Agni, bring the Gods here (1), seat them in the three places (2).

You adorn all the sides; drink the Soma in season (3).⁴

Details: *triśhu yoniśhu*: three places or houses. The three principles of existence, the three *vyahṛti* namely matter-life-mind are located in the three worlds namely Earth, mid-world (*antarikṣha*), and the Heaven (*dyuloka*). These three principles also have their counterparts within a human, either concealed or partly manifest. In the inner yajña, these three abodes are made ready for the respective Gods to manifest.

1.15.5: Indra's Friendship

O Indra, the fount of treasure (2),

drink the Soma in season (3).

from the knower of Word (1).

Your friendship alone is unafflicted (4).⁵

Details: For the aspirant who is awake within, yearning for the Godhead, the friendship of Indra is constant.

³ अभि यज्ञं गृणीहि नो (1), ग्रावो नेष्टः पिबं कृतुना (2),
त्वं हि रत्नधा असि (3)

⁴ अग्ने देवाँ इहा वह (1), सदया योनिषु त्रिषु (2), परि भूष पिबं कृतुना (3)

⁵ ब्राह्मणात् (1), इन्द्र राधसः (2), पिबा सोमम् कृतून् अनु (3),
तवेद्धि सुख्यम् अस्तृतम् (4)

brāhmaṇa: one who knows the Word, *brahma*; this word rarely refers to the caste of that name or the four-faced deity.

1.15.6: Mitra and Varuṇa

O Mitra and Varuṇa, who are unassailable (2),
Enjoy the yajña in season (3),
you uphold the laws with discrimination (1).⁶

Details: The Gods, Mitra and Varuṇa, uphold all the activities and laws (*vrata*) conforming to the Truth.

dūlabham: the *pada pāṭha* has *durdabham*, difficult to burn; it is derived from *duḥ* to burn. *dakṣham*: see {1.2.7}.

1.15.7: Surrender, General and Specific

The God, wealth-bestower, is lauded in the *yajna* (1,3),
by the seeker of riches with the vessels in hand in the pilgrim-journey (2).⁷

Details: Often these two words *adhvara* and *yajna* are regarded as synonymous; but they are different in meaning. *adhvara* denotes the pilgrim-journey or the general surrender of the sense of self by the *yajamāna* to the supreme Godhead; *yajña* denotes the separate offering of each and every part of one's being to the Divine. This is the symbolism of the *anganyāsa* ceremony used in worship even today where each limb of the worshipper is offered to a particular deity stating it is not mine. In the external sense, *adhvara* denotes the general ceremonies like *agnisthoma*; *yajña* denotes its specific forms like *uktha*. See also (1.1.4). The mortars or vessels in hand indicate the instruments used for getting the Soma, the Delight. *dravipasah*: those who are desirous of treasure. It is the Gods themselves as priests who are desirous of the wealth, on behalf of *yajamāna*.

The various Gods acting as priests impel Agni to give the riches such as psychological felicities, wealth or strength etc.

⁶ युवं दक्षं धृतब्रत् (1), मित्रावरुण दूळभम् (2), क्रतुना यज्ञमाशाथे (3)

⁷ द्रविणोदा (1), द्रविणसो ग्रावहस्तासो अध्वरे (2), यज्ञेषु देवमीळते (3)

1.15.8: Enjoy with the Gods

May the treasure-giver Agni give us the renowned wealth (1), which will be enjoyed among the Gods (2).⁸

Details: The Rishi-s seek the wealth on behalf of the Gods and enjoy them along with the Gods in man. *śṛṇvire*: renowned;

1.15.9: Devotee Speeds towards the God

The wealth-donor desires to drink (1), from the bowl of Neṣṭā priest in season (4).

(O comrade), you place the offering (in the bowl) (2), and speed towards the station of the God (3).⁹

Details: The wealth-donor is the God who likes to drink the Soma from the bowl of the Neṣṭā priest. The Rishi calls upon his comrades to cast the offering in the bowl and speed towards the station where the God resides so that they can enjoy together as mentioned in the earlier verse. *Neṣṭā* : see (1.15.3).

1.15.10: The Fourth Station

To attain the fourth station (*turyam*) at the right time (1), we worship you, O Giver of wealth (2).

You become the donor of treasure to us (3).¹⁰

Details: The giver of wealth, Agni, is lauded thrice earlier so that the human worshipper may attain the three stations, i.e., the three *vyahṛti* of matter, life and mind. Now Agni is lauded the fourth time to secure the highest station, the fourth named as *svar* in Veda which transcends the three planes mentioned earlier.

⁸ द्रविणोदा दंदातु नो वसूनि यानि शृण्विरे (1), देवेषु ता वनामहे (2)

⁹ द्रविणोदाः पिपीषति (1), जुहोत् (2), प्र च तिष्ठत (3),
नेष्टात् कृतुभिः इष्यत (4)

¹⁰ यत् त्वा तुरीयम् कृतुभिः (1), द्रविणोदो यजामहे (2)
अथ स्मा नो ददिभीव (3)

turiyam: it is used in the Veda in two senses: (1), the fourth station *svar*, mentioned above; (5.40.6) states, ‘By means of this fourth (*turiyam*), Atri found the hidden Sun’. It is used in a similar way in (9.96.19). ‘Soma proclaims access to the fourth plane’; also in (8.80.9); (2), the fourth (or lowest) grade of speech below the three others, (1.164.45).

1.15.11: Soma at the Right Time

Drink at the right time the sweet Soma, O Ashvins (1,3).

You are delightful and your actions are pure (2).

(You are) the carriers of *yajña* (4).¹¹

Details: Ashvins are the Lords of Bliss and also the Divine Physicians who mitigate the effects of ageing and sickness.

dīdyagnī: literally, they who have the blazing bowl. Ashvins churn the Fire of aspiration in their bowl; the Rishi Vimada mentions this feature in RV (10.24.4). In the esoteric sense, this word is interpreted as delightful which is consistent with the functions of Ashvins.

1.15.12: House-master

As a house-master, be good in the gifts (1).

You prepare (preliminaries for) the *yajña* at the right time (2).

Perform *yajña* for him who desires the Gods (3).¹²

Details: The house is the body of the sacrificer. Agni becomes the master of this house and he becomes competent to give the gifts; therefore Agni alone is capable of performing the *yajña* to the Gods on behalf of the human aspirant or seeker. *santya*: one who is present in the gift or one who is good in giving. Either way Agni is the giver of gifts. He is present in every aspect of *yajña* including gifts.

¹¹ अश्विना पिबतं मधु (1), दीर्घनी शुचित्रता (2), कृतुना (3), यज्ञवाहसा (4)

¹² गार्हपत्येन सन्त्य (1), कृतुना यज्ञनीरसि (2), देवान् देवयते यज (3)

Hymn 1.16: Indra Accepts Soma and Showers Light

- 1: The Luminous-eyed Steeds
- 2: Powers Endowed with Clarity
- 3: Indra Called at all Times
- 4: Long-maned Steeds
- 5: Come to the Soma-offering
- 6: Soma on the Inner Altar
- 7: May our Hymn Touch Your Heart
- 8: Yajña with Soma
- 9: Riṣhi is Full of Contemplation

1.16.1: The Luminous-eyed Steeds

May the steeds bring you to drink the Soma (1,3),
 O showerer Indra, (your steeds) have luminous eyes (2,4).¹

Details: *sūrachakṣhasāḥ*: those with vision like that of the Sun. S states that they are the priests who bring the Gods. Clearly the ordinary priests do not have the vision of the Sun. It is the function of Agni to bring the Gods. Hence this phrase refers to the steeds of Indra. See also (1.5.4).

1.16.2: Powers Endowed with Clarity

Here are the powers of body endowed with clarity (1).
 May the steeds bring Indra in his happiest chariot (2).²

Details: The central idea is that the body is ready to accept the mental power to be given by Indra on his arrival or manifestation.

ghṛta: the common meaning is ghee or purified and melted butter. But this meaning is inappropriate in most of the verses numbering more than a hundred where it occurs. *ghṛta* is derived from *ghr*, to shine. *ghṛta* is something endowed with clarity or luminosity. Note the discussion of *ghṛtāchi* in (1.2.7).

¹ आ त्वा वहन्तु हरयो (1), वृष्णं (2), सोमपीतये (3), इन्द्रं त्वा सूरचक्षसः (4)

² इमा धाना घृतस्तुवो (1), हरी इहोर्प वक्षतः इन्द्रं सुखतमे रथे (2)

dhānām: literally it means grains, barley or rice, which are eaten by horses. Many verses declare that these *dhānām* are meant for Indra and received by him. Recall that the steeds for Indra are symbolic and do not need to eat grain. *dhānām* are the special powers of the intellect lodged in the material body. The epithet *ghṛtasnuvo* means these powers drip with luminosity. Hence, these *dhānām* are ready to receive the pure divine mental powers of Indra. Thus, there is continuity between the two lines of the verse. The meaning given here is appropriate in (3.35.3), (4.24.7) and others where *dhānām* appears. *sukhatame rathe*: happiest car. The felicities or gifts brought by Indra in his car bring happiness to the devotees.

1.16.3: Indra Called at all Times

We call Indra at morn (1), to drink the Soma (3);
we call him when the yajña-journey is in progress (2).³

Details: The essence of all our experiences, denoted by Soma, is offered to Indra. When the yajña is started, when it is in progress and ended, at all times, our means and refuge is to call Indra.

1.16.4: Long-maned Steeds

Come to our purified Soma (1), with your steeds with long mane (2).
O Indra, we call you as the Soma is pressed (3).⁴

Details: *keshibhiḥ*: mane which swats off obstacles like flies. It is a symbol of the power which wards off minor irritations in life.

1.16.5: Come to the Soma-offering

Indra, come to our chant, come near this offering of Soma (1).
Drink copiously like a thirsty stag (2).⁵

³ इन्द्रं प्रातहैवामह् (1), इन्द्रं प्रयुत्यध्वरे (2), इन्द्रं सोमस्य पीतये (3)

⁴ उपं नः सुतमा गंहि (1), हरिभिः इन्द्र केशिभिः (2), सुते हि त्वा हवामहे (3)

⁵ सेमं नः स्तोममा गुहि उपेदं सर्वनं सुतम् (1), गौरो न तृष्णितः पिब (2)

1.16.6: Soma on the Inner Altar

These succulent Soma are pressed on the inner altar seat (1).
Drink them for strength, O Indra (2).⁶

1.16.7: May Our Hymn Touch Your Heart

May this excellent stoma-hymn of affirmation touch your heart (1).
May this hymn invoke peace in all (2).

Please drink the Soma (and spread the delight) (3).⁷

Details: The image of, “words touching the heart” is common in devotional literature. We see the use of this phrase in Rig Veda for the first time. *hṛdi*: the emotional heart, or the centre of all emotions in the esoteric sense. The Nirukta of Yāska gives a modern definition of *hṛdaya* (heart): *harater adadāter ayater hṛdaya shabdah*; *harate* (to receive), *adadāter* (to give or propel), *ayater* (to circulate).

A later book, ‘Nādijñānam’ states heart is that which expands and contracts again and again.

1.16.8: Yajña with Soma

To every yajña where Soma is offered (1),
Indra comes for getting the delight (2).

He, the Vṛtra-killer, comes for drinking the Soma (3).⁸

1.16.9: Rishi is Full of Contemplation

Fulfil this desire of ours with the rays of light and life-energies (1),
O Indra of a hundred deeds (2).

Full of contemplation, we laud you (3).⁹

Details: According to the gross interpretation, cows (*gobhiḥ*) and the horses (*ashvaiḥ*) are desired. For us, *go* indicates Rays of

⁶ इमे सोमास् इन्दवः सुतासो अधि बृहिर्षि (1), तां इन्द्रं सहसे पिब (2)

⁷ अयं ते स्तोमो अग्नियो हृदिस्पृक् (1), अस्तु शंतमः (2),

अथा सोमं सुतं पिब (3)

⁸ विश्वमित् सर्वनं सुतम् (1), इन्द्रो मदाय गच्छति (2), वृत्रंहा सोमपीतये (3)

⁹ सेमं नः काममा पृण गोभिरश्चैः (1), शतक्रतो (2), स्तवाम त्वा स्वाध्यः (3)

Consciousness; *ashva*, horse, indicates carriers of life-strength, originating the energies of action, and endowed with capacity for enjoyment.

svādhyāḥ: derived from *dhyai*, to contemplate.

Hymn 1.17: Indra and Varuna

- 1: Increase in Us
- 2: Call of Seers
- 3: Closeness to the God
- 4: Donors of Plenitude
- 5: Indra, the Will to Give
- 6: Wealth Unlimited
- 7: Perfect Victory
- 8: Participation in Thoughts
- 9: You Increase the Laud

Metre: 1-3, 6-9, Gāyatrī; 4-5, Pādanichṛt

1.17.1: Increase in Us

O Resplendent Indra and Varuṇa (1),
I pray for your increase (in us) (2).
As such, you two make us happy (3).¹

Details: Indra is the lord of the divine Mind. Varuṇa is homed in the Truth, touches the Truth (*ṛtasprsha*), increases the Truth (*ṛtavṛdha*), (1.2.8). The Rishi prays for the increase of their powers in him.

[*avah*: increase;]

1.17.2: Call of Seers

Respond to the call for (your) increase (1),
in an illumined Seer, like me (2).

(You are) upholders of the Seers of truth (3).²

¹ इन्द्रावरुणयोः अहं सम्राजोः (1), अव आ वृणे (2), ता नौ मूळात ईद्वशे (3)

² गन्तारा हि स्थो अवसे हवं (1), विप्रस्य मावतः (2), धुर्तरा चर्षणीनाम् (3)

Details: *charṣhanīḥ* is the act of seeing. Hence the word *charṣhanīnām* can only mean Seers or enlightened persons. It cannot mean ordinary persons or workers.

māvataḥ: one like me, (1.18.9)

1.17.3: Closeness to the God

After the fulfilment of desire (with the Soma offered) (1),
make us completely satisfied with riches, O Indra and Varuṇa (2).
We seek your closest proximity (3).³

Details: *nediṣṭham:* closeness in space or relation (Skandaswami). The prayer is for the close proximity (or *sāyujyam* in later literature) of the Gods. The proximity is in the mystical or spiritual sense. Commentators have conflicting views on this word.

ātarpayetham: make us completely satisfied;

1.17.4: Donors of Plenitude

Let us attain the strength (virility) of the powers (1),
(attain) the strength of right thinkings (2),
which belong to the deities who gift plenitude (3).⁴

Details: *yuvāku* in both places is being translated as strength or virility. In (3.62.1), S translates *yuva* as strength. However in this verse, he gives two different meanings associated with rituals.

shachi: energies, *shakti*,

1.17.5: Indra, the Will to Give

Of the donors of plenty, Indra is the will to give (1,3).

Of the laudable, Varuṇa is the excellently laudable (2,4).⁵

Details: Varuṇa is the deity of wideness. He can be lauded or hymned in many different ways, each laud signifying a particular trait. Hence he is excellently laudable among all the Gods who are all laudable.

kṛtuḥ: will; *ukthyah:* supremely laudable;

³ अनुकामं (1), तर्पयेथाम् इन्द्रवरुण राय आ (2), ता वां नेदिष्टम् ईमहे (3)

⁴ युवाकु हि शर्चीनां (1), युवाकु सुमतीनाम् (2), भूयाम् वाजदान्नाम् (3)

⁵ इन्द्रः सहस्रदान्नां (1), वरुणः शंस्यानाम् (2), क्रतुः भवति (3), उक्थ्यः (4)

1.17.6: Wealth Unlimited

By the increase of Indra and Varuṇa in us (1),
 we obtain (the riches) regarded as a perpetual treasure (2).
 (May the wealth received) be unlimited (3).⁶
 [ni dhīmahi cha: to be placed inside (ni); let us lay it as a store for
 perpetual enjoyment, since it is vast.]

1.17.7: Perfect Victory

O Indra and Varuṇa, I call you for the variegated wealth (1).
 Bestow on us the perfect victory (2).⁷

Details: The perfect or complete victory is one in which the person has mastery over all the elements of all the planes, physical, mental, vital and emotional etc. S/he has conquered all the inharmonious foes.

1.17.8: Participation in Thoughts

O Indra and Varuṇa (1),
 we are desirous of your participation in our thoughts (2).
 Give us an all-sided happiness soon (3).⁸

Details: The prayer is for happiness which is infinite in every way, i.e., all-sided happiness. nu: soon;

1.17.9: You Increase the Laud

May my happy laud attain to you; O Indra and Varuṇa (1),
 for this I call you (2).
 may you increase the laud and the inner yajna (3).⁹

⁶ तयोरित् अवर्सा (1), बृं सनेम् नि चं धीमहि (2), स्यादुत प्रेरेचनम् (3)

⁷ इन्द्रावरुण वाम् अहं हुवे चित्राय राधसे (1), अस्मान् सु जिग्युषः कृतम् (2)

⁸ इन्द्रावरुण (1), नूनु वां सिषासन्तीषु धीषु (2),
 आ अस्मभ्यं शार्म यच्छतम् (3)

⁹ प्र वाम् अश्रोतु सुषुतिः इन्द्रावरुण (1), यां हुवे (2),
 याम् क्रधायै सधस्तुतिम् (3)

Details: *sadhaṣṭuti*: laud with the inner yajna in the subtle body (KS), laud of perfect affirming (SA). See (CW, KS, Vol. 4) for the relevant grammatical viewpoints.

ṛdhāte: to increase; “You increase the laud”, means that you increase the degree of the manifestation of the laud and that of the deity in our subtle body.

Hymn 1.18: Brahmaṇaspati and Others

1: Make Me Come to the Light

2: Unification with Him

3: Guard Us

4: Hasten Us

5: Dakṣhiṇa, the Discernment

6: United with Intelligence

8: Harmony of Thoughts

8: Speeds the Yajña-journey

9: I Have Seen Him

In the Veda, *brahma* means mantra; *man*, to measure, *brah* is the Vast, thus *brāhmaṇa* is the rhythm or mantra which measures the vast. Brahmaṇaspati means the Lord of mantra-s. He is also called in the Veda as Gaṇapati, the Lord of the hosts of powers or mantra-s. He is same as the later Purāṇic deity of the same name, the Lord of speech and learning who presides over the basic psychic centre or *chakra*, the *mūlādhāra*.

There are many hymns in the RV which describe that Brahmaṇaspati brings out or manifests the Word by means of sound. The simile given is that of a blacksmith, (10.72.2). Just as a blacksmith gives specific shapes to objects, Gaṇapati gives a specific form for every aspect of our subtle body. When the mantra is recited in the appropriate manner accompanied by both devotion and knowledge, it enters our subtle bodies and releases the concealed forces in it and leads them towards perfection.

For more details, see the introduction to (1.40).

1.18.1: Make Me Come to the Light

O Lord of the mantra-s (2),
make me, who pours the Soma, well-known (1),
me who knows the mystery and who is born of lustre (3).¹

Details: *kakṣhīvanta*: one who knows the Supreme mystery; *kakṣha*: secret; Aushija is son of Ushik, i.e., born of lustre since *ushik* is lustre. S regards both Kakṣhīvan and Aushija as names of Rishi-s and translates the line 3 “like Kakṣhīvan, son of Ushik”. *svaraṇam*: to be well-known (from *svṛ*: to sound); good fighter (*su-araṇam*) (SA);

1.18.2: Unification with Him

(He is) opulent, he is the destroyer of afflictions (1).
He makes persons attain wealth; he increases nourishment (2).
May we be united with him who is (also) swift (3).²

1.18.3: Guard Us

Let the calumny of one who gives not (1),
or the intended harm of the mortal not touch us (2).
Guard us, O Lord of mantra (3).³

Details: *araruṣhaḥ*: one who gives not; one who does not worship; derived from *rātiḥ*, to give.

Translation of S: “May not the afflicting curse of the mortal touch us.” He translates *shamsa* as curse. *mā praṇak*: not touch (*pṛch*, to touch)

1.18.4: Hasten Us

Only that hero does not perish (1), who is hastened (3),
by Brahmaṇaspati, Indra, and Soma (2).⁴

¹ सोमान् स्वरंणं कृणुहि (1), ब्रह्मणस्पते (2), कक्षीवन्तं य औशिजः (3)

² यो रेवान् यो अभीवहा (1), वसुवित् पुष्टिवर्धनः (2), स नः सिष्कु यः तुरः (3)

³ मा नः शंसो अररुषो (1), धूर्तिः प्रणङ् मत्यस्य (2), रक्षा णो ब्रह्मणस्पते (3)

⁴ स धो वीरो न रिष्यति (1), यमिन्द्रो ब्रह्मणस्पतिः सोमो (2),

हिनोति मत्यम् (3)

Details: In the Vedic yoga, denoted by *yajña*, progress of yoga journey is possible only for a hero, a striver. Even then the co-operation of the deities such as Indra, Soma etc., is needed. *hinoti*: to urge, to hasten;

1.18.5: Dakṣinā, the Discernment

May all of you, the lord of mantra, Soma, Indra and Dakṣinā (1,3), protect the mortal from evil (2,4).⁵

Details: Dakṣinā is the Goddess of intuitive power of discrimination between Truth and Falsehood. She is an emanation of the Goddess of dawn, Uṣha. *amha*: evil of falsehood.

Sadasaspati (1.18.6-1.18.9)

1.18.6: United with Intelligence

The God Sadasaspati, the mighty one, dear to Indra, is desirable (1). He is the giver of wealth; is understanding (2).

Him I have attained (3).⁶

Details: God Sadasaspati is a special form of Agni as indicated by the epithet *adbhutam*, wonderful, which is used only for Agni in RV. The devotee has attained the deity or realised the deva's presence in his subtle body. *sanim*: giver; *medhām*: intelligence; the God's form or *svarūpa* is characterised by the power of understanding.

1.18.7: Harmony of Thoughts

Without him, no success is possible in the *yajña* (1), even for the wiṣe Seer (2).

This God brings about the harmony of thoughts (3).⁷

५ त्वं तं ब्रह्मणस्यते सोम् इन्द्रश्च (1), मत्यैम् (2), दक्षिणा (3), पात्वंहसः (4)

६ सदस्यतिम् अद्भुतं प्रियम् इन्द्रस्य काम्यम् (1), सुनि॑ मेधाम् (2),
अंयासिषम् (3)

७ यस्मात् कृते न सिध्यति यज्ञो (1), विपश्चितः चन (2),
स धीनां योगम् इन्वति (3)

Details: Here *yoga* means mutually harmonious relation. This God makes the devotee develop the harmony of all the thoughts. *Yajña* is a journey where there are many bypaths. The God allows the devotee to make the right choice and see the harmony in all the thoughts happening.

1.18.8: Speeds the Yajña-journey

Later he increases the sacrificer (1),
and speeds the *yajña*-journey (2).
The speech reaches the Gods (3).⁸

Details: *hotra*: speech or invocation, derived from *hu*, to call. The chant of the Seer, empowered by the deity, reaches all the Gods.
āt: after, after the harmonisation of all the thoughts in the seeker or sacrificer. Only the harmonious invocation reaches the Gods.

havishkṛtim: one engaged in the inner *yajna*

1.18.9: I Have Seen Him

I have seen Narāshamsa, the most-daring (1),
(He is) highly celebrated (2).

He looks like the priest in the household of Heaven (3).⁹

Details: *sada*: the home; the inner realm of many planes where the Gods arrive. *makhasa*: the *yajña* happening in the inner realms.

narāshamsam: one who is distinguished among *nara*, including both Gods and human. Agni shines like the performer of the *yajña* in the household of Heaven.

⁸ आत् ऋद्धोति हुविष्कृतिं (1), प्राञ्चे कृणोति अध्वरम् (2),
होत्रा देवेषु गच्छति (3)

⁹ नराशंसे सुधृष्टम् अपश्यं (1), सप्रथस्तमम् (2), दिवो न सद्ब-मखसम् (3)

Hymn 1.19: Maruts and Agni

- 1: Accept the Light**
- 2: None Exceeds your Will**
- 3: Knowers of the Midworld**
- 4: Unconquered**
- 5: Form both Radiant and Awful**
- 6: Gods in the Luminous World**
- 7: Move the Mountains**
- 8: Spread the Knowledge**
- 9: I Pour the Soma**

All the nine verses in this hymn end with the refrain, “O Agni, come here along with the Maruts.” The association between Agni and Maruts is cited in many verses such as (3.24.5). “The glory of Maruts is Agni”; also see (1.38.13).

For translators like Wilson, this association is stated as, “an obvious metaphor expressing the action of wind upon fire.”

1.19.1: Accept the Light

To the desirable yajña you are ardently called (1,3),
to drink the milky yield, O Agni (2).
Come here along with Maruts (4).¹

Details: Agni being the first deity is prayed to come and accept the offering of Light given by the yajamāna and give it to the other Gods like Maruts. Maruts impel or move the activities of intelligence illumined by the Light and strength of Indra.

Agni also energises the Maruts to break out of the domain of nervous mentality and leads them to the regions of thought.
go: milk of knowledge; Soma juice (S).

¹ प्रति॑ त्यं चारुम् अध्वरं (1), गोपीथाय् (2), प्र हूयसे (3),
मरुद्धिः अग्न आ गहि (4)

1.19.2: None Exceeds your Will

No other God or mortal exceeds your will, O mighty Agni (1).
Come here along with Maruts (2).²

1.19.3: Knowers of the Midworld

The knowers of the great midworld, the All-gods, do not deceive (1).
Come here along with the deities Maruts (2).³

Details: The Maruts are the deities of the mid-world between Earth and Heaven, matter and mind; there are seven kinds of Maruts with different functions. The phrase ‘All-gods’ refers to the Maruts here.

1.19.4: Unconquered

The brave Maruts worship the laudation (1),
(they are) unassailed by the might of others (2).
Come here along with the deities Maruts (3).⁴

Details: Brave Maruts, brothers of Indra, are able to make the laudation full of valour to reach Indra, and impel him to release the currents of Divine power denoted by Waters.

Line 1: The maruts are able to impel the lauds to reach Indra, the showerer or impel the divine power of lauds to bring the divine power to us. *ojase:* might;

ugra: brave, forceful. It does not always have the connotation of ‘fearsome’ or ‘terrible’ as in classical Sanskrit.

1.19.5: Form both Radiant and Awful

These Maruts are radiant, awful in form (1),
powerful and they devour the foes (2).
Come here along with the deities Maruts (3).⁵

² नहि देवो न मत्यौं महस्तव क्रतुं परः (1), मरुद्विरग्न आ गंहि (2)

³ ये महो रजसो विदुः विश्वे देवासौ अद्रुहः (1), मरुद्विरग्न आ गंहि (2)

⁴ य उग्रा अर्कम् आनृचुः (1), अनाधृष्टासु ओजसा (2), मरुद्विरग्न आ गंहि (3)

⁵ ये शुभा घोरवर्पेसः (1), सुक्षुत्रासौ रिशादसः (2), मरुद्विरग्न आ गंहि (3)

Details: Even though the Maruts are awful in form and they literally swallow the foes, they are described as radiant to indicate the result of their actions, namely establishment of Truth which is luminous. See (1.37.5).

1.19.6: Gods in the Luminous World

In the luminous world above the Heaven reside these Gods (1).

Come here along with Maruts (2).⁶

Details: *nākam*: *na* + *akam*: no + unhappiness; it is the third station in the lower triple world, called also Heaven.

divi: a particular part of the higher world.

1.19.7: Move the Mountains

These Gods move the mountains (1),
and cross (or scorn) the oceans, full of waters (2).

Come here along with Maruts (3).⁷

Details: The phrase, “move the mountains”, is enigmatic for ritualists, but its meaning is straightforward in the esoteric sense. Mountains symbolize the inert physical body, full of *tamas* or inertia. The Maruts, life-forces, supply the requisite energy to overcome the *tamas* and make possible the movement in the physical body i.e., the blossoming of knowledge, power, etc. The Maruts enable the energized body to be able to journey and cross the ocean of existence, which is full of waves symbolising the obstacles of the journey.

“The amount of speculation into which the Western scholars have been led by a rik of this kind is indeed amusing. As it is rather typical of the manner in which they draw inferences, construct history and geography and pass verdict on the men and times of the Veda-s, on data whose slenderness is matched only by the inadequacy of their own understanding, we reproduce extracts from the copious remarks of Max Muller on this Rik: ‘Wilson remarks that the influence of the

⁶ ये नाकस्याधि रोचुने दिवि देवास् आसते (1), मरुद्धिरश्च आ गंहि (2)

⁷ य ईङ्घयन्ति पर्वतान् (1), तिरः संमुद्रम् अर्णवम् (2), मरुद्धिरश्च आ गंहि (3)

winds upon the sea, alluded to in this and the following verse, indicates more familiarity with the ocean than we should have expected from the traditional inland position of the early Hindus, and it has therefore been supposed by others that, even in passages like our own, *samudra* was meant for the sky, the waters above the firmament. But although there are passages in the Rig Veda where *samudra* must be taken to mean the welkin, this word shows in by far the larger number of passages the clear meaning of ocean⁷* The quotation of Max Muller is extensive and only a small part of it is quoted here.

1.19.8: Spread the Knowledge

The Gods spread the knowledge with their rays (1),
and scorn the ocean in their might (2).

Come here along with Maruts (3).⁸

[*tirah*: crossing, which itself indicates scorn;]

1.19.9: I Pour the Soma

O Agni, for you, I pour the sweet Soma to drink first (1).

Come here along with Maruts (2).⁹

Details: The worshipper prepares and pours the Soma, the Delight of Existence generated by his activities and offers it to Agni first before he does it to the other Gods. Hence the Soma offering is called an early drink.

* M.P. Pandit, Vedic Deities, Dipti Publications

⁸ आ ये तन्वन्ति रश्मिभिः (1), तिरः समुद्रम् ओजसा (2),
मरुद्धिरग्न् आ गंहि (3)

⁹ अभि त्वा पूर्वीतये सुजामि सोम्यं मधुं (1), मरुद्धिरग्न् आ गंहि (2)

Hymn 1.20: Rbhū-s Make Four Out of One

- 1: Affirmation for Establishing Ecstasy**
- 2: Speech-yoked Steeds**
- 3: Fashioned the Nectar-yielding Cow**
- 4: Remove Old Age**
- 5: Soma Joins Maruts and Āditya-s**
- 6: The Fourfold Body**
- 7: Thrice-seven Ecstasies**
- 8: Distributed by a Perfect Method**

Metre: Gāyatrī

Rbhū-s are the artisans of Immortality. Their work deals with the details of establishing the ecstasies in the seekers. “The Rhbū-s are powers of light who have descended into matter and are there born as human facilities aspiring to become divine and immortal” (SA, SV, p.326). For more details, see the relevant essay in the ‘Essentials of Rig Veda’.

1.20.1: Affirmation for Establishing Ecstasy

To this God who is being born (in the Seers) (1),
this *stoma* is sung through the mouth of the Seers (2),
to establish the superb ecstasies (in man) (3).¹

Details: This hymn is chanted by the illumined Seers to facilitate the manifestation of Rhbū-s in man; their work deals with all the details of establishing the ecstasies in humans. *stoma*: see (1.8.10).

1.20.2: Speech-yoked Steeds

For (achieving the goals of) Indra, the speech-yoked steeds (1),
were fashioned by the Rhbū-s using their mind (2),
By their actions the Rhbū-s attain (or enjoy) the *yajña* (3).²

Details: Attaining the *yajña* means the fulfilment of special powers in man which exalt him/her. The Rhbū-s perform the divine actions in order to uplift the humans who are ripe to attain perfection. Among

¹ अयं देवाय जन्मने (1), स्तोमो विष्णेभिः आसुया (2), अकारि रत्नधातमः (3)

² य इन्द्राय वचोयुजा (1), तत्क्षुः मनसा हरी (2), शमीगिः यज्ञम् आशत (3)

these actions, the chief one is to fashion in man the steeds of Indra, the life-forces speeding the Divine Mind. The means for their action are their Truth-Willed Mind. The horses are yoked by the speech itself. Line 2 declares that using their mind the Rbhu-s fashioned the steeds.

1.20.3: Fashioned the Nectar-yielding Cow

They fashioned for the Ashvins (1),
the happy car of all-pervading movements (2).
Fashioned also the nectar-yielding cow (3).³

Details: Ashvins are the Gods presiding over the yajna-journey of man and offer their benefits in many directions namely longevity and youth for the material man, capacity of enjoyment for the vital man, the power of light full of joy for the mental man. They help the development of man in all the possible ways. Here Ashvins need a car which goes in all directions in all the worlds and the Rbhu-s fashion such a car for Ashvins.

Another action cited here is the fashioning of the cow. This is not merely the four-footed animal yielding milk. This cow is the primal light, Aditi. RV (4.33.8) explicitly states that the Rbhu-s fashion the cow of all-form (*vishvarūpām*) and all-impelling (*vishvajuvam*). Mother Aditi is the impeller of the Universe. Her son is the *jīva*, the soul of man, who is separated from the mother by the enclosing skin, the product of ignorance. Rbhu-s remove this skin and cleanse the cow, “By your thinkings, you have freed the cow from the skin”, RV (4.36.4). Thus the Rbhu-s effectuate in man the formation of the primal consciousness which yields immortality.

sabardugham: yielder of milk of immortality (*amṛta*), (3.6.4, 10.69.8);

1.20.4: Remove Old Age

Rbhu-s seek the straight path; their mantra-s are full of Truth (2).
They render the parents youthful again (1),
by pervading them (with the Light) (3).⁴

³ तक्षन् नासत्याभ्यां (1), परिज्मानं सुखं रथम् (2), तक्षन् धेनुं संबुद्धाम् (3)

⁴ युवांना पितरा पुनः (1), सृत्यमन्त्रा क्रज्जूयवः क्रभवो (2), विष्टि अक्रत (3)

Details: The parents are Earth and Heaven, fields of physical and mental consciousness. The Rbhū-s remove the wornout condition of both Heaven and Earth and bring about a freshness in them. Recall that Ashvins also remove old age; the work of Ashvins is at the level of individual whereas the work of Rbhū-s is at the cosmic level, i.e., level of Earth and Heaven.

viśhṭi: to pervade;

Line 2: The Rbhū-s are endowed with thoughts permeated with Truth and they are dedicated to straightness i.e., they never swerve from the path of Truth.

1.20.5: Soma Joins Maruts and Āditya-s

The Soma meets (1), Indra along with the Maruts (2),
and the shining sons of Aditi (Āditya-s) (3).⁵

Details: The Rbhū-s release the Soma, the essence of bliss, and bring it to the inner sacrifice of the human. Along with them come Maruts, the life-powers, Indra, Lord pure mind and sons of Aditi like Mitra and Varuṇa signifying the powers of friendship and purification.

madāsaḥ: that which gives delight, Soma; *sam agmata*: meets

1.20.6: The Four-fold Body

That vessel of the God Tvaṣṭṛ is new and perfected (1).
You again made it fourfold (2).⁶

Details: Tvaṣṭṛ, the Divine Architect of the forms in the Universe, gave humans only one form or body, called *chamasa*, the physical body, the holder of the waking consciousness. It contains the essence of Soma, the All-Delight, meant for the Gods. The Rbhū-s make the one body, fourfold namely the physical body or *annamaya kosha*, the body of life-energy, *prāṇamaya kosha*, the mental body, *manomaya kosha* and the supramental body, *vijñānamaya kosha*. Some call the fourth as the causal body (*kāraṇātmaka*) which causes the other three.

⁵ सं व्रो मदासो अग्मत् (1), इन्द्रैण च मरुत्वता (2), आदित्येभिश्च राजभिः (3)

⁶ उत त्यं चमसं नवं त्वष्टुः देवस्य निष्कृतम् (1), अकर्त चतुरः पुनः (2)

The same interpretation of *chamasa* is found in the Upanishad also. “The *chamasa* with its base or bottom above and opening below; the Glory that is the Universe of forms or the All-Forms is laid in it”, (Brh. U. 2.2.3). Commenting on this verse, Sri Shankara remarks, “What is this *chamasa* with hole below and base above? It is the head that is above like a *chamasa* bowl and the mouth is the aperture below.” [KS, CW, Vol.1, p. 120]. In the rituals, *chamasa* is the vessel holding the Soma juice.

1.20.7: Thrice-seven Ecstasies

O Ṛbhu-s, you establish for the sacrificer (2,4),
the seven principles in the three (bodies) (1,3);
Each is distinct with perfect expression (4).⁷

Details: By giving the fourfold body for man, the Ṛbhu-s render him qualified for residing in the plane of Truth Consciousness and establish in him the seven universal principles of existence associated with seven worlds namely the Earth, mid-region (*antharikṣha*), the Heaven (*dyau*), the *svar* and the triple Divine Worlds (*sat-chit-ānanda*).

Moreover the Ṛbhu-s establish the seven principles in each of the three bodies: physical, vital and mental.

sunvati: sacrificer; *ratnāni*: enjoyable felicities, principles;

1.20.8: Distributed by a Perfect Method

The carriers held in themselves (1),
the sacrificial share of enjoyment among the gods (3).

(The shares) were apportioned perfectly by their happy actions (2).⁸

Details: When the human consciousness is ready, the Ṛbhu-s are able to sustain certain currents of *ānanda*. They are able to distribute to each God in the sacrifice his/her appropriate share replete with

⁷ ते नो रक्तानि (1), धत्तन् (2), त्रिरा सासानि (3), सुन्वते (4),
एकमेकं सुशस्तिभिः (5)

⁸ अधारयन्त् वह्यो (1), अभजन्त् सुकृत्यया (2), भागं देवेषु यज्ञियम् (3)

ānanda. sukṛtyaya: the happy or perfect action of fashioning a single bowl out of the four mentioned earlier. *vahnayah:* bearers; Ṛbhu-s.

Hymn 1.21: Indra and Agni: Givers of Refuge

- 1: Call Indra and Agni
- 2: Laud Superbly
- 3: Advent of Mitra
- 4: Valiant Gods
- 5: The Rākṣhasa-s
- 6: Give us the Refuge

Metre: Gāyatri

1.21.1: Call Indra and Agni

Here I call Indra and Agni (1).

We desire to laud them alone with *stoma* (2).

May the superb drinkers of Soma accept the Soma (3).¹

Details: Indra is stationed in the Heaven, Agni on the Earth. They are called to come to the inner yajña happening in the subtle body of the aspirant. *iha:* here, the inner yajña; ritualists interpret this word as referring to the house of the aspirant. *stomam:* the hymn which affirms.

1.21.2: Laud Superbly

Laud superbly these Gods, Agni and Indra, in the yajña (1); glorify them, O men (2).

Chant the praise (with verses) in the Gāyatri metre (3).²

Details: *naraḥ:* men or souls. Here the Rishi is asking their souls to glorify the Gods.

¹ इहेन्द्राग्नी उपं ह्वये (1), तयोरित् स्तोमं मू उमसि (2),
ता सोमं सोमपातमा (3)

² ता यज्ञेषु प्र शांसत इन्द्राग्नी (1), शुभ्मता नरः (2), ता गायत्रेषु गायत (3)

1.21.3: Advent of Mitra

For the (advent of the) famous Mitra we call Indra and Agni (1).
(We call) the Soma drinkers, to drink Soma (2).³

Details: Mitra, an aspect of the God Sūrya, is the friend who brings about equal delight in all aspects of yajña by eliminating all the inequalities. When Indra and Agni are satisfied, the atmosphere is ripe for the advent of Mitra who effects companionship, friendliness etc.

1.21.4: Valiant Gods

We call the valiant Gods (1),
to (accept) the pressed Soma in the yajña (2).
May Indra and Agni come here (3).⁴

Details: *ugra*: valiant; the Gods overpower and destroy the yajña-haters. It has the meaning of attracting persons into the higher regions by splitting it into *u* and *gra*. *santā*: gods;

1.21.5: The Rākṣhasa-s

May the great guardians of the house of yajña, Indra and Agni (1),
kill the rākṣhasa-s (2). May the fiends be progenyless (3).⁵

Details: *sadaspatī*: guardians of the house of yajña namely the body of the sacrificer, both the inner and outer.

aprajāḥ: progenyless: one having no successor (for propagating the evil force). *atrināḥ*: eaters (of being), rākṣhasa-s; *rakṣha*: rākṣhasa-s, demons;

1.21.6: Give Us the Refuge

By the truth may you be awake in the station above (1,3),
instilling perceptive knowledge (2).

O Indra and Agni, give us the refuge (4).⁶

³ ता मि॒त्रस्य प्रशं॒स्तय इन्द्राश्नी ता हंवामहे (1), सो॒मपा सो॒मपीतये (2)

⁴ उग्रा सन्ता॑ हवामहे (1), उपेदं सर्वनं सुतम् (2), इन्द्राश्नी एह गच्छताम् (3)

⁵ ता महान्ता॑ सदुस्पती॑ इन्द्राश्नी॑ (1), रक्ष उज्जतम्॑ (2), अप्रजाः॑ सन्तु अत्रिणः॑ (3)

⁶ तेन सुत्येन जागृतम्॑ अधि॑ (1), प्रचेतुनै॑ (2), पुदे॑ (3), इन्द्राश्नी॑ शर्म॑ यच्छतम्॑ (4)

Details: Only in a condition of complete surrender, the perceptive knowledge in the highest station can be awakened in us. This is possible only by the grace of Agni and Indra.

adhi: above; *prachetune pade*: supreme station; same as the supreme state of Viṣṭhṇu in (1.23.20).

Hymn 1.22: Goddesses, Ashvins, Viṣṭhṇu and Savitṛ

- 1: Awake the Ashvins
- 2: We Call Ashvins
- 3: Yajña Moist with Speech
- 4: The House of Yajña is not Far

Sub-hymn to Savitṛ

- 5: Savitṛ is the Knower and the Goal
- 6: Child of Waters
- 7: Sees Inside All Persons
- 8: Felicities Arise in the Giver

Sub-hymn to Goddesses

- 9: Spouses
- 10: Bhārati and Speech
- 11: Freedom of Goddesses
- 12: Indrāṇi, Varuṇāni
- 13: Vast Heaven and Earth
- 14: Station of Gandharva, Soma
- 15: Wide Refuge

Sub-hymn to Viṣṭhṇu

- A. Nature of Viṣṭhṇu
- B. 12 meanings of Viṣṭhṇu
- C. Summary of 6 mantra-s
- 16: Viṣṭhṇu Strode the Seven Stations
- 17: All were Firmly Established by Viṣṭhṇu
- 18: Viṣṭhṇu Upholds the Laws
- 19: Viṣṭhṇu Manifests the Laws by his Deeds
- 20: Supreme Step Seen Eternally
- 21: The Seers Light Well the Path

Metre: Gāyatrī

Ashvins (1.22.1 - 1.22.4)

1.22.1: Awake the Ashvins

Awake the Ashvins who join us at morn (1).
May they come here to drink the Soma (2).¹

Details: The call to awake the Ashvins is addressee to one's inner self or to Agni as he is the caller of the Gods, *hotr*.

1.22.2: We Call Ashvins

In the superbly charioeted and auspicious (or shining) car (1),
are the Gods dwelling in Heaven (2).
We call them, O Ashvins (3).²

1.22.3: Yajña Moist with Speech

With your speech, which is sweet and is of happy Truth (1),
moisten the yajña, O Ashvins (2).³

Details: The Ashvins moisten the sacrifice with their speech so that the yajña drips with delight.

kashā: the usual meaning is the whip by which the horse is goaded. In this context the speech has the capacity of guiding, and hence, *kashā* is translated as speech.

1.22.4: The House of Yajña is not Far

O Ashvins, may you go in your car (2),
to the house of the sacrificer offering Soma (3),
which is not far for you (1).⁴

Details: The house of the sacrificer is the physical body. The delight of existence, the Soma, has to be extracted from this body. The house cannot be far for Ashvins with their swift car.

¹ प्रातर्युजा विबोधय अश्विनौ (1), आ इह गच्छताम् अस्य सोमस्य पीतये (2)

² या सुरथा रथीतमा (1), उभा देवा दिविस्पृशा (2), अश्विना ता हवामहे (3)

³ या वां कशा मधुमति अश्विना सूनृतावती (1), तया यज्ञं मिमिक्षतम् (2)

⁴ नहि वामस्ति दूरके (1), यत्रा रथैन् गच्छथः अश्विना (2), सोमिनौ गृहम् (3)

Savitṛ: (1.22.5 - 1.22.8)

1.22.5: Savitṛ is the Knower and the Goal

I call Savitṛ, the golden-armed, for increase (1).
He is the knower, the God and the goal (2).⁵

Details: Savitṛ, the Sun, is the golden person; he himself is the knower, himself the deity, himself the goal to be reached. Note that hands, feet, arms, etc. denote the rays. It is the perception of the Rishi-s and a long settled doctrine that the golden form of Savitṛ, the Person Highest, the God of all Gods can be realised directly.

padam: goal to be attained. *chettā*: knower; makes the seeker know him (Savitṛ).

ūtaye: increase. The God or his power increases in the seeker.

1.22.6: Child of Waters

Approach and adore him, Savitṛ, the son of waters, for increase (1). We long for his deeds (2).⁶

Details: Though Savitṛ has really no birth as such, his description as the child of the Waters is in the context of the creation of the universe. The basic material existing at the time of manifestation of the Universe is said to be fluid or waters as in RV (10.154, 10.190). Hence Savitṛ is said to be the son of waters.

The word *napāt* means son, also son's son. Like Agni, Savitṛ is born in the subtle body of the seeker in the midworld which is often symbolised as waters. Thus Savitṛ is spoken of as the son of the Waters both in the macrocosm and the microcosm.

In the gross view, the sun comes to birth by rising from the ocean in the morning; hence Savitṛ is the son of the Waters.

⁵ हिरण्यपाणिम् ऊतये सवितारम् उपहये (1), स चेत्ता देवता पदम् (2)

“ अपां नपातम् अवसे सवितारम् उपस्तुहि (1), तस्य ब्रूतानि उश्मसि (2)

1.22.7: Sees Inside All Persons

We call the distributor of felicities (1),
 (the giver) of the treasure of accomplishments of various kinds (2).
 Savitṛ sees inside all persons (3).⁷

Details: Though both *vasu* and *rādha* mean riches, their distinction is to be noted. *rādha* is derived from *rādh*, *sādh*, to accomplish. Thus *rādha* means the treasure of all accomplishments, artistic, mental etc. *vasu* is the wealth of the substance characterizing the luminous *svar* world. Since Savitṛ is the creator, he creates the power of all accomplishments in the subtle bodies of human beings. Hence by praising Savitṛ with mantra-s like the famous Gāyatrī mantra (3.62.10), the potential accomplishments manifest in us.

1.22.8: Felicities Arise in the Giver

O Comrades, sit around in adoration (1),
 Savitṛ is soon to be lauded (2).
 the giver manifests the treasures (3).⁸

Details: The aspirant manifests the spiritual and worldly felicities (*rādhāmsi*), bestowed by Savitṛ.

Goddesses: (1.22.9 - 1.22.12)

1.22.9: Spouses

O Agni, bring here the spouses of the Gods (1),
 desiring (the offering) (2).
 (Bring) also Tvaṣṭṛ also to drink the Soma (3).⁹

Details: In the Vedic parlance, the God causes the work to be done or presides over it. It is the spouse who executes the work, she is the doer.

⁷ विभक्तारं हवामहे वसौः (1), चिन्त्रस्य राधसः (2), सवितारं नुचक्षसम् (3)

⁸ सखायु आ निर्षीदत (1), सविता स्तोम्यो नु नः (2),

दाता राधांसि शुभ्मति (3)

⁹ अग्ने पत्नीः इहावह (1), देवानाम् उशतीः उप (2), त्वष्टरं सोमपीतये (3)

1.22.10: Bhārati and Speech

O Agni, bring here for increase in us, the spouses of Gods (1), most youthful, Bhārati and Speech (2).

The Goddesses are conscious and envelop all (3).¹⁰

Details: Bhārati is the Truth-lustre of the Vast Light (*mahas*), the foundation of Ila (Revelation) and Sarasvati (Inspiration). The three epithets *hotrā*, *varūtri* and *dhishanā* indicate their powers or qualities, namely *hotrā* is the caller of speech, *varūtri* is the enveloper and *dhishanā* is consciousness. S states Hotrā is spouse of Agni, Bhārati, spouse of Āditya, and Varūtri Dhishanā is Sarasvati. *gnā*: spouses of gods. See also (1.13).

avase: for increase; for increasing the power of the Goddesses in the sacrificer or aspirant.

1.22.11: Freedom of Goddesses

May the Goddesses, spouses of the Gods, favor us (1,3,5), with increase and great happiness (2).

Their wings are not clipped (4).¹¹

Details: Line 4: ‘wings not clipped’, refers to the complete freedom in movement possessed by these Goddesses. The Goddesses are not human, but typal beings. *abhi sachantām*: favours;

1.22.12: Indrāṇī and Varuṇāṇī

For our happy state, here I call spouse of Varuṇa (2), the spouse of Indra and spouse of Agni to drink the Soma (1,3).¹²

Details: These spouses are invoked in the subtle human body. They need to imbibe the delight of existence (Soma) to carry out their specific tasks.

¹⁰ आ ग्रा अग्न इह अवसे (1), होत्रां यविष्ट् भारतीम् (2), वरूत्रीं धिषणां वह (3)

¹¹ अभि नौ देवीः (1), अवसा मृहः शर्मणा (2), नृपतीः (3),

अच्छिन्न-पत्रा: (4), सचन्ताम् (5)

¹² इह इन्द्राणीम् (1), उप ह्ये वरुणानीं स्वस्तये (2), अग्नार्थीं सोमपीतये (3)

Heaven, Earth and Soma

1.22.13: Vast Heaven and Earth

May the vast Heaven and Earth sprinkle this our yajña (1).

May they fill us with nourishments (2).¹³

Details: *pr̥thivī*: the gross matter-centered Earth consciousness.

dyauḥ: the subtle mind-centered Divine consciousness.

Line 1: sprinkle this yajna with happiness

1.22.14: Station of Gandharva, Soma

The wise taste the lustrous sap of Earth and Heaven (1),

capable of bearing the faculties of thought (2),

in the stable station of Soma, the Gandharva (3).¹⁴

Details: *gandharva*: The commentator Yāska states that 'go' in Gandharva stands for the ray of the Sun. He who bears this Ray is Gandharva. He is Soma, the lord of Delight. Because of the association with Delight, Gandharva is also known as moon. Gandharva has been rendered here as Soma, the essence of all Delight. There is no need to bring in the typal beings called Gandharva-s appearing in the Purāṇa. The interpretation given above is consistent with verses such as RV (1.84.15) discussed later. A complete Section in Taittirīya Samhitā (3.4.7.1-12) is devoted to the pair Gandharva and Apsara-s. There the pair play the role of Purusha-Prakṛti of later Indian Philosophies.

Note also the continuity offered by this meaning with the verses 16 through 21 addressed to Viṣṇu which have the statement, "the supreme station of Viṣṇu seen continuously by the wise."

ghṛta: that which is shining or lustrous; *payah*: sap;

tayor: the two, Heaven and Earth; *rīchanti*: lick, taste;

¹³ मृही यौः पृथिवी च न इमं यज्ञं मिमिशताम् (1), पिपुतां नो भरीमभिः (2)

¹⁴ तयोरिद् धूतवत् पयो विष्णा रिहन्ति (1), धीतिभिः (2),

गन्धर्वस्य धूवे पदे (3)

1.22.15: Wide Refuge

O Earth, be happy and be a thornless dwelling for us (1).

Give us a refuge which is wide (2).¹⁵

Details: This mantra is used for invoking the deity Angāraka in the *navagraha* worship. *niveshani*: dwelling; refers both to the body and the house.

(1.22.16-1.22.21): Viṣṇu, the All-pervading (*shad vaishnavam*)

A. Nature of Viṣṇu

In the Rig Veda there are forty-five mantra-s to the deity Viṣṇu spread over seven Sūkta-s.

Viṣṇu creates or manifests the Universe of seven planes, unveils its laws and maintains the Universe under these laws. This happens not only in the macrocosm, but also in the microcosm, the subtle body of man. “Viṣṇu paces out the vast framework of the inner worlds in which our soul-action takes place. It is by him and with him that we rise into his highest seats where we find waiting for us the Friend, the Beloved and the Beatific Godhead.” [Sri Aurobindo]

Each plane, manifested by Viṣṇu, is based on a particular principle. For instance this world, earth, is dominated by matter. The midworld, *antarikṣha*, is dominated by life-energies, emotional energies etc. The world of heaven, *dyu*, is dominated by the mental energies. The highest station is said to be Viṣṇu’s supreme step. He creates the path by which the mortals can reach the supreme station after traversing the intermediate worlds. Upholding the Universe with his three steps, Viṣṇu creates for Indra a wide station amongst us mortals by which we can reach the supreme station above.

“When Viṣṇu is said to sleep on the folds of the snake *ananta* upon the ocean of sweet milk, *ananta* is clearly seen to be not the common serpent, nor the milk the material sweet milk, nor the ocean an expanse of milky liquid. The symbolic meaning is that the All-pervading Viṣṇu rests on the coils of the Infinite in the blissful ocean

¹⁵ स्योना पृथिवि भव अनृक्षरा निवेशनी (1), यच्छां नः शर्मं सप्रथः (2)

of Eternal Existence. Some persons who believe that Veda has no wisdom in it say that, 'the authors of the purāṇa-s were priests, gross minds who knew not even the truth of the solar and lunar eclipses; how could they be in the know of profound varieties? They mean only the usual physical serpent and the material ocean of real milk and it is we who read into them the symbolic meaning. We could point out that there is no necessity for us to imagine so. These poets themselves have imprinted the symbolic thought by means of figures and words and made known impenetrable truths for the benefit of all. Note, those words are: Viṣhṇu means all-pervading, the serpent *sheṣha* is *ananta*, the infinite; sweet milk is a symbol of bliss; the ocean is a symbol of the Eternal Existence". [CW, KS, Vol. 4, P. 180]

B. Viṣhṇu: 12 Meanings of the word

All the Samskr̥t quotes associated with these 12 meanings are reproduced from the book of Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao quoted below.*

1. Viṣhṇu is so-called because he pervades over everything, the universe inside and out.¹
2. Viṣhṇu is so-called because he causes rainfall to cool the earth and nourish all life.²
3. Viṣhṇu is so-called because he liberates the devotees from the troubles of rebirth.³

* 'Rig Veda Darshana, Volume 6', pp. 75-79, published by Kalpataru Research Academy. See also the note at the end of this section (B).

¹ वेरेष्टि व्याप्नोति विश्वं यः विष्णुः ॥ बहिरन्तश्च सर्वेशः व्यापत्वाद् व्यापको विष्णुः ।

The root 'vishalṛ' (juhotyādi-gaṇa, ubhavapadi) signifies the sense of 'pervasion', the ṣu-suffix (according to Uṇādi-sūtra, 3.37, 'sthonuh') is added to it, thus making the word 'vishṇu' (cf. also Uṇādi-Sūtra, 3.39 'visheh kichcha').

² वेषति सिञ्चति, आप्यायते विश्वमिति वा विष्णुः ॥ (Halāyudha-kosha)

The root vishu' (or vish, parasmaipadi) has the sense of 'sprinkling', 'making wet' (jishu vishu mishu sechane), the nu-suffix is added to it.

4. Viṣṇu is so-called because he enters into all beings as their inner controller, or all beings enter into him (viz. are dependent upon him for their existence and sustenance).⁴
5. Viṣṇu is so-called because he helps the devotees reach the state of liberation.⁵
6. Viṣṇu is so-called because he is exceedingly luminous.⁶

³ विष्णाति वियुनक्ति भक्तान् संसारादिति वा विष्णुः । (ibid.)

The root ‘vish’ (*ktyādi-gaṇa, parasmai-padi*) signifies ‘separating’ (*visha viprayoge*), the nu-suffix gets added to it.

⁴ विशति सर्वाणि भूतानीति वा । विशन्ति सर्वाणि भूतान्यत्रेति वा विष्णुः । सर्वस्य हृदये अन्तर्नियामकत्वेन प्रविष्टत्वाद्विष्णुः ।

(cf. *Tattva-samkhyāna-ṭīka* of Satyadharma: विश प्रवेशन इत्यस्मात् उणादयो बहुलम् (Pāṇini, 3.3.1) इति क्सुप्रत्यये पृष्ठोदरादित्वात् शस्य षत्वे णत्वे च रूपम् ॥ विश् + वसु becomes विष् + वसुः and तु becoming णु (Pāṇini, 8.4.1 we get the form विष्णुः ।

We also read in Viṣṇu-purāṇa (3.1.45)

यस्माद्विश्वमिदं सर्वं तस्य शक्त्या महात्मनः ।
तस्माद्विष्णुरिति ख्यातो विशेषातोः प्रवेशनात् ॥

The root ‘vish’ (*tudādi-gana, parasmai-padi*) has the sense of ‘entrance’ (*vish-praveshane*).

⁵ वियन्त्यनेन मोक्षं प्रति जना इति वा विष्णुः । गत्यर्थाद्वीघातोः करणे क्सु प्रत्यये पृष्ठोदरादित्वात् वीकारस्य हस्तत्वे किल्वाद् गुणाभावे आदेश प्रत्ययोः (Pāṇini 8.3.51) इति सस्य षत्वे रषाभ्यां नोणः समानपदे (Pāṇini 8.4.1) इति नस्य णत्वे रूपम् ॥

The root ‘vi’ has the sense of ‘going’, ‘moving’, ‘leading’, ‘pervading’, (*gatvartha, ‘vi’ gati-vyāpti-prajanakāntya-sana-khādaneshu*).

‘वेति अतिशयेन प्रकाशते इति वा विष्णुः ।

The root is ‘vi’ which signifies, ‘to shine’ (*kānti, prakāshane*); ‘veti’ is shining exceedingly brilliantly. (*vasha kāntau iti dhātor vā ksnu prat�ayah*).

7. Viṣṇu is so-called because he transported himself beyond everything, or because he attained sovereignty over all the worlds. The reference is to the incarnation of Viṣṇu as Trivikrama. The root is ‘vi’ meaning ‘to go’ and pervade (*ākramane, gati-vyāpti*).⁷

8. Viṣṇu is so-called because he makes all living beings and created things move and have their being. The root is ‘vi’ in the sense of ‘movement’ (*gatyartha*).⁸

9. Viṣṇu is so-called because he desired to provide origin, sustenance and dissolution for all beings. The root is ‘vi’ in the sense of shining brilliantly (viz. desiring, resolving) (*vaśha-kāntau, kāntir ichchhā*).⁹

10. Viṣṇu is so-called because he inspires or moves all beings in an especial manner.¹⁰

11. Viṣṇu is so-called because he gifts away or satisfies the longings of his devotees (from the root ‘*shaṇu dāne*’).¹¹

⁷ वेति आक्रामतीति वा । विशेषेण क्रामतीति वा विष्णुः । (गत्यर्थाद्वयते: कर्तरि कस्तुः)

⁸ वेति गच्छत्यनेन सर्वभूतजातं ब्रह्मादि प्रजागणश्चेति वा विष्णुः । (गत्यर्थाद्वयते: कस्तुप्रत्ययः)

⁹ अधिभूताधिसम्बन्धि जन्मादिविषयेच्छावत्वाद्वा विष्णुः ।
(वशकान्तौ, कान्तिरिच्छा इत्युक्तेरिच्छार्थाद्वशधातोर्बहुलके नु प्रत्यये निर्वचनत्वादुपथा अकारस्य इकारे शस्य षत्वे रूपम् ॥)

¹⁰ विशेषेण प्रेरयतीति वा विष्णुः ।

The expression ‘vi’ is a prefix (upasargarūpa upapada) to the root ‘sha’ which has the sense of ‘movement’ (*shadal* visharaṇa-gatyavasādaneshu); the ‘na’ in the word signifies ‘power’, ‘strength’ (*nakāro bala-vāchi*), and its ‘u’ termination augments this sense.

¹¹ विशेषेण सनोति ददाति भक्ताभीष्टम्, विशेषेण स्तौति प्रस्तपति फलं यस्मात् इति वा विष्णुः ॥

12. The letter ‘*sha*’ in the word Viṣṇu refers to ‘power’ (*bala*) and the letter ‘*nu*’ to life (*prāṇa*). Viṣṇu inspires power and life in all beings.¹²

[The great scholar and devotee Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao has discussed at length all the 45 mantra-s of Viṣṇu in his three books, ‘Rig Veda-Darshana’, ‘Viṣṇu Sūktāni, Volumes 5, 6, 9’, published by Kalpataru Research Academy. All these books have a wealth of information for a student knowledgeable both in Sanskrit and English. He gives extensive quotations from the works of the great teacher Ānanda-tīrtha, Shri Raghavendra Swāmi and other luminaries.]

C. Summary of the six mantra-s

In the first it is stated that the place of origin of Viṣṇu’s stride is also that of the Gods.

In the second, it is declared that Viṣṇu’s stride is the cause of the birth of the Universe.

In the third and fourth, it is stated that the Laws of the Universe are unveiled by the stride of Viṣṇu.

The last two declare that even in the striding of the three worlds, the supreme step of Viṣṇu, denoted by the term *tat*, is visible to the eye of the wise Seer. Viṣṇu means all-pervading.

For more information on Viṣṇu and his relation to Shiva, see our compact book: ‘The Essentials of Rig Veda’ (SAKSI).

1.22.16: Viṣṇu Strode the Seven Stations

May the Gods manifest their power in us (1),
from that place where Viṣṇu strode (2),
the seven stations or planes of the Earth (3).¹⁶

Details: According to RV, Universal existence is arranged in seven planes or stations consisting of the lower three, made of matter (or

¹² घणौ बलप्राणप्रेरकत्वाख्यगुणौ यस्य स विष्णुः ॥

¹⁶ अतौ देवा अवन्तु नो (1), यतो विष्णुः विचक्रमे (2),

पृथिव्याः सप्त धार्मभिः (3)

Earth), midregion and Heavens, the upper three, made of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss and the fourth (middle) plane called as *svar* which links the two triples. It is called as Earth in the Vedic usage of indicating the whole by a part.

Viṣṭhṇu's manifestation of the three cosmic worlds is described symbolically as, "Viṣṭhṇu strode the three planes".

"The source of Light, from which station Viṣṭhṇu extended and strode over the seven planes of the Earth is also station of the Gods who have that one fount. May they, severally, manifest their powers, both in the cosmos and within us, according to their difference in function and give us the progress in their power." This is the prayer. [KS, CW, Vol. 4]. There is no need to bring in the story of Viṣṭhṇu as Vāmana, the dwarf, and the emperor Bali.

1.22.17: All were Firmly Established by Viṣṭhṇu

This Viṣṭhṇu strode (1); thrice he placed his foot (2).

In the dust of his feet was all firmly established (3).¹⁷

Details: Viṣṭhṇu's stride is the cause of the birth of the Universe. This rik is used for invoking the deity Budha in the *Navagraha Pūja*.

1.22.18: Viṣṭhṇu Upholds the Laws

Viṣṭhṇu, the unassailable and the guardian (2),
strode superbly the three steps (1).

He upholds the laws from here (3).¹⁸

1.22.19: Viṣṭhṇu Manifests the Laws by His Deeds

Behold the deeds of Viṣṭhṇu (1),
by which the laws of the Universe are patent (2).
Friend, be yoked to Indra (3).¹⁹

¹⁷ इदं विष्णुर्वि चक्रमे (1), त्रेधा नि दधे पदम् (2), समूळहमस्य पांसुरे (3)

¹⁸ त्रीणि पृदा वि चक्रमे (1), विष्णुः गोपा अदाभ्यः (2),

अतो धर्माणि धारयन् (3)

¹⁹ विष्णोः कर्माणि पश्यत् (1), यतौ ब्रतानि पस्पते (2), इन्द्रस्य युज्यः सखा (3)

Details: This verse is addressed by the Rishi to his fellow aspirants.

This verse and the preceding one state that Viṣṇu unveils the laws of the Universe by his stride and Viṣṇu upholds these laws.

1.22.20: Supreme Step Seen Eternally

The supreme step of Viṣṇu (1),
is seen continuously by wise persons (2),
like an eye extended in Heaven (3).²⁰

Details: The line of sight connecting the vision of the wise persons to the supreme step of Viṣṇu is itself like an eye which extends from Earth to Heaven. *tat*: that supreme step; the use of *tat*, that, to denote Supreme occurs frequently in Veda Samhita-s and Upanishads.

1.22.21: The Seers Light Well the Path

The illumined Seers chant superbly and are continuously awake (1). They light well that Supreme step of Viṣṇu (2).²¹

Details: The Seers create the path from the Earth to the Supreme station and light it excellently so that other mortals can follow the path and attain the world of *svar*. The continuous manifestation of the light is termed, “lighting the path excellently”. The supreme step is same as the fourth world, world of light, *mahas* (Tai.U. 1.5), or *turyam svid* (10.67.1). See (1.15.10). Clearly the phrase winkless indicates continuity. *vipanyavah*: those who laud, (from *pan*, to praise); those who have light, (3.10.9) (SA);

Hymn 1.23: Waters, Pūshan and Other Deities

- 1: Delight is Ready to Flow
- 2: Indra and Vāyu
- 3: Wide Vision
- 4: Purity and Discrimination
- 5: Truth-light
- 6: Auspicious Wealth
- 7: Satisfied at All Levels

²⁰ तद्विष्णौः परमं पुदं (1), सदा पश्यन्ति सूर्यः (2), दिवीवृच्छुराततम् (3)

²¹ तद्विष्णोसो विपन्यवौ जागृवांसः (1), समिन्धते विष्णोर्यत्परमं पुदम् (2)

- 8: Nourishment**
- 9: Destroy the Forces of Ill-will**
- 10: Maruts and Priṣṭhṇi**
- 11: Journey to the Luminous Station**
- 12: Give Happiness**
- 13: The Hidden Soma**
- 14: Hidden in the Cave**
- 15: The Glories of the Six worlds**
- 16: Mothers and Sisters**
- 17: Waters and the Sun**
- 18: Knowledge is Nourished**
- 19: Healing Powers**
- 20: Medicines for All**
- 21: Continuous Vision of Sun**
- 22: Falsehood**
- 23: Waters and Agni**
- 24: Know Our Needs**

Metres: 1-18, Gāyatrī; 19, Purauṣṭhnik; 20, 22-24, Anuṣṭhup;
21, Pratiṣṭhā (Gāyatrī)

1.23.1: Delight is Ready to Flow

Come, O Vāyu to these intense Soma-s (1,2);
they are pressed out mixed with grain and curds (3).
Drink them which are set to flow all over (4).¹

Details: When Vāyu accepts the Soma, he manifests himself in the body of the devotee; the Soma, the essence of Delight, starts to flow and fill the entire body, both the inner and outer, making it fit to accept the energies mentioned in other mantra-s of this hymn.

āshih: curds and grain; in the ritual, three types of āshi are mentioned namely milk, curds and barley symbolizing the original knowledge, subtle intellect and the dense or gross knowledge of the external world can be rendered as 'aspiration' as in (8.95.7). See RV (1.5.5.).

¹ तीत्राः सोमास् (1), आ गैहि (2), आशीर्वन्तः सुता इमे (3),
वायो तान् प्रस्थितान् पिब (4)

1.23.2: Indra and Vāyu

We call both the Gods dwelling in Heaven, Indra and Vāyu (1), to drink the Soma (2).²

Details: Even though the deity Vāyu belongs to the midworld (*antarikṣha*), he is lauded as dwelling in Heaven because of his association with Indra. *sprṣh*: to touch, (dwell);

1.23.3: Wide Vision

Indra and Vāyu who are swift as mind (1), are called by wise persons for increase (2); endowed with wide vision, they protect the intelligence (3).³

Details: The Rishi-s call upon the Gods to increase their presence and power in the human devotees or the Seers.

sahasrākṣha: thousand-eyed; indicates one with wide vision; no need to introduce the Purāṇik stories of Indra having thousand eyes.

Mitra and Varuṇa

1.23.4: Purity and Discrimination

We call Mitra and Varuṇa to drink Soma (1).

They, full of understanding, are born (in the yajña) pure (2).⁴

Details: *jajnānā*: being born; the Gods take birth in the human seeker performing the inner yajña. *dakṣha*: intelligence which can discriminate between good and bad, truth and falsehood etc., (see RV (1.2.7)).

1.23.5: Truth-light

They increase the Truth by the Truth (1), (they are) the guardians of the Truth-Light (2). Them, Mitra and Varuṇa, we call (3).⁵

² उभा देवा दिविस्पृश इन्द्रवायू हवामहे (1), अस्य सोमस्य पीतये (2)

³ इन्द्रवायू मनोजुवा (1), विष्णा हवन्त ऊतये (2), सहस्राक्षा धियस्पती (3)

⁴ मित्रं वर्यं हवामहे बरुणं सोमपीतये (1), जज्ञाना पूर्वदक्षसा (2)

⁵ क्रतेन यौ क्रत्तावृथौ (1), कृतस्य ज्योतिषस्पती (2), ता मित्रावरुणा हुवे (3)

Details: The truth in the Veda is not a monolithic entity, but made of several levels or grades. Even the apparently unconscious stone possesses a truth, the truth of physical matter. However these different levels of truth cover each other. For instance when we are emotionally disturbed, the truth of the mental level or the truth of discrimination is hidden by the emotion, and thus its own effect is curtailed. When the cover of the lower truth is removed, the effect of the higher truth is increased as mentioned in (5.62.1) and others. This is the work of the Gods, Mitra and Varuṇa. Varuṇa symbolises vastness and all infinities who does not tolerate narrowness or compartmentalisation. Mitra is the lord of friendship and harmony. These two Gods harmonise the various levels of truth removing the apparent barriers. It is only by cultivating Truth in all movements that the content of truth in oneself can grow. Truth is dynamic and where truth is there, the light of truth spreads and makes the other elements ready to absorb and grow in the manifesting truth. See RV (1.2.8).

1.23.6: Auspicious Wealth

May Varuṇa become the supreme increaser (1);
 may Mitra (come) with all prosperities (2).
 May they endow us with perfect achievements (3).⁶

Details: Both Mitra and Varuṇa grant an all-sided increase in our faculties and make them harmonious.

Maruts and Indra

1.23.7: Satisfied at all Levels

We invite Indra, superb among Maruts, for the drink of Soma (1).
 Satisfied uniformly at all levels (2),
 may he be seated along with the host of Maruts (3).⁷

⁶ वरुणः प्राविता भुवन् (1), मि॒त्रो विश्वाभिः॑ ऊ॒तिभिः॑ (2),
 करतां॑ नः सु॒राधसः॑ (3)

⁷ मरुत्वन्तं॑ हवामहू॒ इन्द्र॒मा सो॒मपीतये॑ (1), स॒जू॒ः॑ (2), गुणेन॑ तृम्पतु॑ (3)

Details: Maruts are primarily born of life-force and they increase all types of strength. They also possess mental energies as evidenced by the epithet, 'Indra as their eldest'. Indra is the lord of the illumined mind. *sajūḥ: jush* indicates satisfaction; the prefix *sa* indicates equality; the phrase indicates an all-sided satisfaction appropriate to every member of the host. Recall that in the Veda equality means appropriateness, not identical treatment.

1.23.8: Nourishment

O Host of Maruts with Indra as the eldest (1),
O Pūṣhan and other Gods, the givers (2), you all hear my call (3).⁸

Details: Pūṣhan is a solar deity who nourishes all.

1.23.9: Destroy the Forces of Ill-will

O lavish givers, yoked with forceful Indra, destroy Vṛtra (1).
May not ill-will master us (2).⁹

Details: Vṛtra is the demonic force which sows the seeds of ill-will in man and tears human beings apart. Root of Vṛtra is *vṛ*, to tear. By destroying Vṛtra, we also destroy the forces of ill-will.

1.23.10: Maruts and Prishṇi

We call all the Gods to drink the Soma (1);
and also Maruts of fiery strength who have Prishṇi as their mother (2).¹⁰

Details: Prishṇi is the cow of many colours signifying the powers of various manifestations. See (1.37.9), (1.85.2).

1.23.11: Journey to the Luminous Station

When you go to the auspicious station, O Leaders (2),
O Maruts, your forceful voice, like a conqueror's, spreads wide (1).¹¹

⁸ इन्द्रज्येष्ठा मरुदण्णा (1), देवांसः पूर्ष-रातयः (2), विश्वे मर्म श्रुता हवम् (3)

⁹ हृत वृत्रं सुदानव इन्द्रैण सहस्रा युजा (1), मा नौ दुःशांस ईशत (2)

¹⁰ विश्वान् देवान् हवामहे मरुतः सोमपीतये (1), उग्रा हि पृथिव्मातरः (2)

¹¹ जयतामिव तन्यतुः मरुताम् एति धृष्णुया (1), यत् शुभं याथना नरः (2)

Details: The journey of the Maruts to the higher station is accompanied by their powerful voice. This journey happens in the subtle body of the yajamāna. *dhr̥ṣṭhnu*: to be bold, forceful; *tanyatuh*: the Word that spreads; the thunder-chant, (5.25.8)

1.23.12: Give Happiness

With their revealing illumination here (in the midregion) (1),
may the Maruts manifest everywhere and increase in us (2).
May they render us happy (3).¹²

Details: *haskārāt*: laughter; here it means luminous.

vidyuta: lightning; that which reveals; *ataḥ*: here; *pari*: everywhere;

Pūshān

1.23.13: The Hidden Soma

O Luminous Pūshān, the seat of Soma is of many colours (1),
he (Soma) sustains the Heaven (2).

Recover him as if he were a lost animal (3).¹³

Details: The God Soma, the essence of Delight, is the sustainer of all the Gods in Heaven. As mentioned in several hymns, Soma is hidden everywhere. The prayer for Pūshān is to find the hidden Soma just as one finds a lost animal from its tracks or footprints.

āghṛṇe: luminous; *ā āja*: to bring;

1.23.14: Hidden in the Cave

Luminous Pūshān found in the cave (1,3,5),
the deeply hidden Soma of the many-hued seat (2,4,6).¹⁴

¹² हस्कारात् विद्युतः (1), परि अतो जाता अवन्तु नः (2),
मुरुतौ मृल्यन्तु नः (3)

¹³ आ पूषन् चित्रबहिष्म् आधृणे (1), धरुणौ दिवः (2),
आजां नष्टं यथा पशुम् (3)

¹⁴ पूषा (1), राजानम् (2), आधृणिः (3), अपगूळहं (5),
गुहा हितम् अविन्दत् (5), चित्रबहिष्म् (6)

Details: The Soma is hidden in the places difficult to reach by the demon Vṛtra. Hence the Delight is not easily accessible. Soma is imaged as having a many-hued seat since he embodies multiple powers.
rājānam: the king Soma;

1.23.15: The Glories of the Six Worlds

He brings me (the Rishi) the (glories of) the Soma-filled six worlds (1), effecting in due order (2), just as farmer ploughs with the bulls for the grain (3).¹⁵

Details: The six worlds are the seven worlds excluding the Earth, the station of the sacrificer. Just as a farmer collects the grain and feeds it to the bulls repeatedly, similarly Pūshan attains to the glory of the six worlds other than Earth and brings this glory to the sacrificer again and again. The glory he brings includes the food of the gods, immortality and the Soma.

charkṣhat: to plough; *yavam*: grain;

Waters

1.23.16: Mothers and Sisters

The motherly waters go on the ordained paths (1), to those desiring the yajña and so do the sisters (2).

(They) mix the honey (of Delight) with the milk of knowledge (3).¹⁶

Details: The streams of consciousness-force or Divine Energies coming from Heaven are called *āpah*, the Divine Waters. Since they are both nourishing and purifying, they are called mothers, *amba*. Since they come from the same source or womb, they are called sisters *jāma*. They flow towards the sacrificer enveloping him/her with both Delight and knowledge.

¹⁵ उतो स मह्यम् इन्दुभिः षड्युक्ताँ (1), अनुसेष्ठिधत् (2),
 गोभिः यवं न चर्कृष्टत् (3)

¹⁶ अम्बयौ यन्ति अधर्वभिः (1), जामयौ अधरीयताम् (2),
 पुञ्चतीः मधुना पयः (3)

1.23.17: Waters and the Sun

The waters that are near the Sun (1),
or together with the Sun (2), may they increase our yajña (3).¹⁷

Details: Recall that RV (1.10.8) explicitly mentions the Waters (*āpah*) coming from the luminous world *svar*, (*svarvatirāpah*). These energies strengthen the yajña happening in our subtle body. *amuh*: waters;

1.23.18: Knowledge is Nourished

I call the Waters and Goddesses (1),
in whom our knowledge is nourished (2).

From the streams (of energies) the offering is to be made (3).¹⁸

Details: The offering that is made by us is really given to us by these divine energies. *gāvah*: rays of knowledge; *pibanti*: drink, nourish;

1.23.19: Healing Powers

Immortality is the middle of Waters (1);
the healing powers are in the Waters (2);
O Gods, become full of plenitude (so that) (4),
the Waters become praiseworthy (3).¹⁹

Details: Waters, the streams of consciousness, have automatically the powers of relieving the distress due to disease or other affliction, both physical or otherwise. Some commentators believe that earthly waters also have these curative properties.

The Gods get satisfaction by accepting the waters just as they do with Soma. If there is a deficiency in the wholeness of the Gods, then the greatness of the waters may not be appreciated. Hence the Gods are called upon to be full of plenitude i.e. be plentiful in everything so that the waters are perfect and well-known (*prashastaye*).

¹⁷ अमूः या उप सूर्ये (1), याभिः वा सूर्यः सुह (2), ता नो हिन्वन्ति अध्वरम् (3)

¹⁸ अपो देवीरुपे ह्वये (1), यत्र गावः पिबन्ति नः (2),

सिन्धुभ्यः कर्त्त्वं हविः (3)

¹⁹ अप्सु अन्तः अमृतम् (1), अप्सु भैषजम् (2), अपामृत प्रशस्तये (3),

देवा भवत वाजिनः (4)

1.23.20: Medicines for All

Soma has said to me (1), all medicines are in the Waters (2).
 Agni is the bestower of happiness for all (3).
 Waters are medicines for all (4).²⁰

Details: This verse is spoken by the Rishi about his personal experience, his contact with the deity Soma. This rik is used for invoking the deity Soma in the Navagraha Pūja.

1.23.21: Continuous Vision of Sun

O Waters, fill with healing powers (1),
 my body, enclosing it like an armour (2),
 for the continuous vision of the Sun (3).²¹

Details: The streams of consciousness enable the Rishi to have a continuous vision of the Supreme Light, the Sun. Thus the Waters are not merely physical. These Waters act like an armour and protect us from subtle adverse forces.

1.23.22: Falsehood

O Waters, carry away completely (1), whatever sin is in me (2),
 Or any betrayal by me or cursing or falsehood done by me (3).²²

Details: The prayer is to wash away the effects of all kinds of wrong-doing which cause harm to others.

²⁰ अप्सु मे सोमौ अब्रवीत् (1), अन्तर्विश्वानि भेषजा (2),

अग्निं च विश्वशंभुवम् (3), आपश्च विश्वभैषजीः (4)

²¹ आपः पृणीत भैषजं (1), वर्षथं तन्येऽ मम (2), ज्योक् च सूर्यै हृशे (3)

²² इदमापः प्र वहत् (1), यत् किं च दुरितं मर्यि (2),

यद्वा अहम् अभिदुद्रोह यद्वा शेष उतानुतम् (3)

1.23.23: Waters and Agni

I have now completely attained the waters (1).

We are united with their essence (2).

O Agni, full of rays of wisdom, come (3),

join me with your splendour (4).²³

Details: The prayer is: O Agni, I have experienced the identity with the essence of waters; hence I am pure and fit for the fulfilment of the union with your splendour. *payasvān*: full of milk, full of rays;

1.23.24: Gods Know Our Needs

O Agni, unite me with the Divine brilliance (1),

succession and long-life (2).

May the Gods know of our needs thus (3),

may also Indra and Rishis know (our needs) (4).²⁴

Details: Rishis are human beings who have attained perfection; they help the God Indra so that other human beings can also attain perfection. *praja*: The successors of the knowledge of the inner *yajña*; ritualists translate it as children.

sam in two other places indicates *samsṛja*, unite.

²³ आपौ अ॒द्य अनु अ॑चारि॒षं (1), रसै॒न् समंगस्महि (2),

परंस्वान् अ॒ग्रा आ गंहि॑ (3), तं मा॒ सं सृज॑ वर्चसा॑ (4)

²⁴ सं मांग्रे॑ वर्चसा॑ सृज॑ (1), सं प्रजया॑ समायुषा॑ (2),

विद्युर्मै॑ अस्य देवा॑ (3), इन्द्रौ॑ विद्यात्सुह॑ क्रष्णिभिः॑ (4)

Section III: Sūkta-s (1.24-1.30)

Riṣhi: Shunahshepaḥ Ājigartih

Sūkta	Hymn title
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- 1.24 O Varuṇa: Release from the Three bonds (15)
- 1.25 Varuṇa: His Grace and Wrath (21)
- 1.26 Intimacy of Agni (10)
- 1.27 Agni as Universal Life (13)
- 1.28 Life, Mind and Body: the Yogic Symbolism (9)
- 1.29 The Commoners given Light and Might (7)
- 1.30 Indra, Ashvins and Uṣha (22)

The Riṣhi of these seven Sūkta-s is also known as Kṛtrimo Vaishvāmitra Devarātah. The last ten riks of RV (1.24) and all the twenty-one of RV (1.25) are dedicated to Varuṇa and deal with the liberation of the Riṣhi Shunahshepaḥ from the three cords of bondage. And all the Indologists regard these verses as referring to the parable of the person Shunahshepaḥ being offered as a substitute for the missing sacrificial horse; even in the parable appearing in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Purāṇa-s, the immolation does not take place since the supposedly disappeared sacrificial horse appears mysteriously at the altar in response to the prayer of Shunahshepaḥ to the God Varuṇa asking for his release.

We give below the symbolic/psychological interpretation of the three cords of bondage and of their release, due to Sri Aurobindo [SV, p.452]. “Ignorance, this matrix of sin, has in its substantial effect the appearance of a triple cord of limited mind, inefficient life, obscure physical animality, the three ropes with which the Riṣhi Shunahshepaḥ in the parable was bound as a victim to the sacrificial post. The whole result is a struggling or inert poverty of being; it is the meagreness of a mortal undelight and the insufficiency of a being that collapses at every moment towards death. When Varuṇa, the Mighty, comes and sunders this threefold restraint, we are freed towards riches and immortality. Uplifted, the real man arises to his true kingship in the undivided being. The upper cord flies upward releasing the wings of the Soul into superconscious heights; the

middle cord parts both ways and all ways, the constrained life breaking out into a happy breadth of existence; the lower cord collapses downward taking with it the alloy of our physical being to disappear and be dissolved in the stuff of the inconscient.” See also the comments on sin in the introduction to Section XI and the sūkta (1.97) in ‘Rig Veda Samhita: Maṇḍala 1, (part 2)’, (SAKSI).

Shunahshepah means a ray of delight, is derived from *shunah* meaning delight and *shepah*, a ray.

Since some Indologists such as Rajindarlal Mitra, A.B. Keith etc. are eager to claim the presence of human sacrifice in Vedic India, see the refutation given in the appendix of the book, “Unveiling the Light in the Veda”, by KS, a compilation of his works on Veda in English: This appendix gives several quotations from several Brāhmaṇa books also in refuting the views of the indologists.

Hymn 1.24: Varuṇa: Release from the Three Bonds

- 1: Which Deity Shall we Call?
- 2: Agni, the First
- 3: Our Appropriate Share
- 4: Portion Beyond Censure
- 5: God Bhaga
- 6: Varuṇa’s Matchless Strength
- 7: The Radiance Established in Us
- 8: Repeller of Affliction
- 9: Liberation from Sin
- 10: Laws of Varuṇa
- 11: Long-life
- 12: Knowledge of the Heart
- 13: Bound in Three Places
- 14: Freedom by Surrender
- 15: Live in the Law of Aditi

Metre: 1-2, 6-15, Trīṣṭup; 3-5, Gāyatrī

1.24.1: Which Deity Shall We Call

Being in doubt, (I ask): Among the immortals (2),
which deity with a blissful name shall we call (1,3)?

Who is that God who will restore us to the mighty Aditi (4),
so that I may behold again the Father and the Mother (5)?¹

Details: Finding himself in the bonds of ignorance, Rishi Shunaḥshepa asks which God should he invoke by name for release so that he may be delivered to the infinite Mother Aditi and thus see both his spiritual parents. Note the use of the word *punar* in line 4. He is originally from Aditi and he wants to return to her.

The answer is mentioned in the next mantra and the mantra 12. Heaven, the Father, represents the consciousness of pure Mind; Earth, the Mother, represents the consciousness of the physical world, the waking state. By regaining the infinite Mother Aditi, it will be possible to have the sight of Heaven and Earth.

Aditi: Goddess of Infinity; see (1.72.9) and (1.89.10).

nūnam: in doubt; *manāmahe*: to utter, (from man, to worship);

nāma: name of deity, (from *nam*: to bend down);

1.24.2: Agni, the First

We will utter the auspicious name of Agni (1,3),
the first among the immortals (2).

He will restore us to the mighty Aditi (4),
(so that) I may behold again the Father and the Mother (5).²

Details: His intuition or the grace of Gods or teacher indicates that he has to contact Agni, the manifestation of other Gods comes later.

¹ कस्यं (1), नूनं कंतमस्य अमृतानां (2), मनामहे चारुं देवस्य नामं (3),
को नौं मृद्या अदितये पुनः दात् (4), पितरं च दृशेयं मातरं च (5)

² अग्नेः वर्यं (1), प्रथमस्य अमृतानां (2), मनामहे चारुं देवस्य नामं (3),
स नौं मृद्या अदितये पुनर्दात् (4), पितरं च दृशेयं मातरं च (5)

Savitr-Bhaga (1.24.3 - 1.24.5)

1.24.3: Our Appropriate Share

O God Savitṛ, lord of desirable things (2),
you offer sustained protection (3).

We seek from you the portion appropriate for us in all ways (1,4).³

Details: By the grace of Agni, the Rishi approaches the God Savitṛ with this mantra. The portion asked for is not merely of life-span, wealth etc. This wealth is in the hands of God. When it is desired by those who are not competent for it, it causes problems. Hence the phrase, 'portions appropriate for us'. This idea is amplified in the next verse. *sadā avan:* with protection all the time

1.24.4: Portion Beyond Censure

The share which is devoid of inconsistency (1),
which is lauded beyond censure (2),
and which is free from hate is placed in your hands (3).⁴

Details: The share of riches is in the hands of God and he gives it to us directly. He gives that part which does not cause hate, cavil or inconsistency. The hate or ill-will, caused by human or non-human agencies, will happen only if the gift is given at the wrong time or place. *itthā:* devoid of inconsistency; *shashamāna:* lauded; *nidah:* those who censure, see in (1.4.5).

1.24.5: God Bhaga

We, devotees of the lord Bhaga, are yours (1).
Increased by you, we attain the highest station (2),
and enjoy your felicities (3).⁵

³ अभि त्वा (1), देव सवितः ईशानं वार्याणाम् (2), सदा अवन् (3),
भागम् ईमहे (4)

⁴ यः चित् हि तं इत्था भगः (1), शशमानः पुरा निदः (2),
अद्वेषो हस्तयोः दधे (3)

⁵ भगंभक्तस्य ते वृयम् (1), उद्देशेऽतवावसा मूर्धनीं (2), राय आरम्भे (3)

Details: Bhaga: denotes both the share in the yajña and also the deity of that name. He apportions to each devotee his share of the felicities. Here the God Savitṛ is in the form of the God Bhaga. *ut ashema*: attain (the station) above;

Varuṇa: (1.24.6 - 1.24.15)

1.24.6: Varuṇa's Matchless Strength

Your might, your strength of endurance or your fury (1),
cannot be attained even by the soaring birds, visible in the world (2).
Neither the incessantly flowing rivers (3),
nor the wind can affect your might (4).⁶

Details: The powerful might of Varuṇa exceeds whatever is distinguished in the world by its speed or strength.

The ten mantra-s beginning with this are addressed to Varuṇa, the lord of infinities.

nahi āpuḥ: not attain; *vayah*: birds; *amī*: visible;
abhvam: might; *praminanti*: cause pain;

1.24.7: The Radiance Established in Us

The resplendent king Varuṇa in the supportless (heaven) (1),
who is pure in discernment (3),
holds aloft a mass of delight-giving radiance (2).
Its rays stream below with their base above (4).
May these rays of radiance become established within us (5).⁷

Details: *stūpa*: mass of Light. This mass of Light with its source above is borne by Varuṇa who pervades all, but himself stands above. This mass of Light is full of consciousness and spreads its rays of knowledge. These rays are full of delight and they stream

‘नहि तै क्षत्रं न सहो न मन्युं (1), वर्यः चन अमी पृतयन्त आपुः (2),

नेमा आपौ अनिमिषं चरन्तीः (3), न ये वातस्य प्रमिनन्त्यभ्वम् (4)

अबुद्धे राजा वरुणो (1), वनस्य ऊर्ध्वं स्तूपं ददते (2), पूतदक्षः (3),

नीचीनाः स्युः उपरि बुध (4), एषामस्मे अन्तर्निहिताः केतवः स्युः (5)

downwards towards the Earth and get established within all the seekers on Earth.

1.24.8: Repeller of Afflictions

The regal Varuṇa prepares (1),
the wide (*urum*) pathway for the Divine Sun to follow (2).
In the unlit parts, he prepares for the treads of his feet (3).
He is the refuter of whatever afflicts the heart (4).⁸

Details: Spiritual experiences cannot take place in a human body without preparation. The spiritual energies need specific pathways. The deity Varuṇa prepares these pathways in the space which is untrodden or unlit. The heart is the dwelling place of the inner self of man. Even that place is struck by the powers of darkness. Varuṇa repels these forces of evil and darkness afflicting the heart.

apade: inaccessible part, unlit parts in a human being

The meaning of path (*panthāḥ*): “The path is a continuous making and building of new Truth, new powers, higher realizations, new worlds. All heights to which we can climb from the basis of our physical existence are described symbolically as mountain summits on Earth (RV, 1.10.2), and Varuṇa of the vision holds them all in himself.” (Sri Aurobindo, SV, p. 455).

apavakta: one who refutes;

1.24.9: Liberation from Sin

O Lord, plentiful are your healers, a hundred, a thousand (1).
May your profound thoughts flow wide and deep (towards us) (2).
Turn away and remove far from us the demon of evil and death (3).
Liberate us completely from the sin done by us (4).⁹

⁸ उरुं हि राजा वरुणः चकार (1), सूर्योऽपन्थाम् अन्वेत्वा उ (2),

अपदे पादा प्रतिधातवे अकः (3), उत अपवक्ता हृदयाविधः चित् (4)

⁹ शृतं तै राजन् भिषजः सहस्रम् (1), उर्वी गंभीरा सुमतिः तै अस्तु (2),

बाधस्व द्युरे निर्कृतिं पराचैः (3), कृतं चिदेनः प्र मुमुग्ध्यस्मत् (4)

Details: Nirṛti is the Universal force of death and sin, the root cause of all evil in the world. Sin is any action, physical, verbal, mental, done knowingly or unknowingly, contrary to the law of Truth. Elimination of both is possible by the grace of Varuṇa. Varuṇa wards off the effects of sin and heals through healers or physicians.

Line 2: may your thoughts flow to us through your healers.

1.24.10: Laws of Varuṇa

These stars which are high above are seen at night (1).

Where do they go during daytime (2)?

Unobstructed are the laws of Varuṇa (3),

and so does the moon shine superbly at night (4).¹⁰

Details: Due to the laws of Varuṇa in this Universe, the stars are not seen during the day in the light of the Sun; the moon lights up the nights. The regulations of the physical nature are but one aspect of the laws of Varuṇa.

1.24.11: Long Life

I implore you with the mantra adoring That, (the Supreme) (1).

yajamāna prays for That with the offerings (2).

Do not be disdainful (3).

O Varuṇa, awake here, make wide your region (4).

Do not let our longevity be robbed (5).¹¹

Details: Sacred is the life consecrated to God. Taking that life away is equivalent to obstructing the Divine's actions.

tat: That, the Supreme.

Line 4: Varuṇa is prayed to become awake in the body of the aspirant.

We can live in Truth only if we widen ourselves more and more.

¹⁰ अमी य कक्षा निहितास उच्चा नक्तं ददृशे (1), कुह चिद् दिवा इयुः (2),

अदब्धानि वरुणस्य ब्रतानि (3), विचाकशत् चन्द्रमा नक्तमेति (4)

¹¹ तत् त्वा यामि ब्रह्मणा बन्दमानः (1), त् आदा शास्ते यजमानो हविभिः

(2), अहैलमानो (3), वरुण इह बोधि उरुशंसु (4), मा न आयुः प्र मौषीः (5)

1.24.12: Knowledge of the Heart

That itself becomes the night (1).
 That becomes the day, this they tell me (2).
 This too illumines the knowledge of the heart (3).
 May the king Varuṇa release us (from bondage) (5).
 (He was) invoked by Shunahshepa held in bonds (4).¹²

Details: Lines 1,2 are akin to the famous passage in Brh. U. (2.4.14), and (4.5.15), “yatra vā asya sarvam ātmaivābhūt”, “where ātman has become everything.”

Line 2 has the phrase, ‘they tell me’. The Rishi is not satisfied. He wants experience. This is given in the second line. The knowledge illumines the heart. The knowledge is that, “everything including himself have descended from Aditi”. Hence there should be a method for returning to that state of consciousness.

Line 3: The mind can only probe the surface aspects. In the soul (heart), centre of being, is a faculty of intuition (*keta*) which perceives the truth directly, without having to think. See also (1.6.3).
grbhītāḥ: held (captive); *ahvāḥ*: to call;

Line 5: us: includes the Rishi Shunashepa

1.24.13: Bound in Three Places

Held captive and bound to the tree (of life) in three places (2,4), Shunahshepa invoked the son of Aditi (Varuṇa) (1,3).

May the king Varuṇa, unassailable, knower, deliver him (5).
 May Varuṇa release him from the cords of bondage (6).¹³

Details: The tree is the tree of life on Earth. The Rishi is bound to it in three places, namely physical body, life and mind. The Ray of Delight, Shunah-shepah, is imprisoned in these three realms. This aspect has been mentioned earlier in the introduction to this hymn.

¹² तदित् नक्तं (1), तद् दिवा मह्यम् आहुः (2), तदयं केतो हृद आ वि चैषे (3), शुनःशेषो यम् अहंत् गृभीतः (4), सो अस्मान् राजा वरुणो मुमोक्षु (5)

¹³ शुनःशेषो हि अहंद् (1), गृभीतः त्रिषु (2), आदित्यं (3), द्रुपदेषु वज्रः (4), अवैनं राजा वरुणः ससुज्याद् विद्वाँ अदंव्यो (5), वि मुमोक्षु पाशान् (6)

1.24.14: Freedom by Surrender

O Varuṇa, we avert your disregard by surrender (1),
(avert by) by yajña and by offerings (2).

O Supreme Knower and Mighty One, dwelling in us (3),
loosen for us the bonds of our sins (4).¹⁴

Details: There are three steps in the liberation. First is surrender. The second is to offer all we have to the Divine. The third is to recognize the principle of yajña as the collaboration in all activities between the Divine powers and us humans.

ava in line 1: *avemahe*: to avert;

1.24.15: Live in the Law of Aditi

O Varuṇa, loosen for us the cord of bondage above (1,3),
(loosen) the one below and the one in the middle (2).

O Son of Aditi, in your law may we live faultless (4),
for the sake of Aditi (5).¹⁵

Details: After the release from the cords of bondage, the Rishi continues to live; but his life is for the sake of the infinite Aditi. Since he is living in her consciousness, it is faultless. This verse is similar to (1.25.21). *ut + shrathāya*: pull and loosen.

vishrathāya, avashrathāya: loosen; *āditya*: son of Aditi

Hymn 1.25: Varuṇa: His Grace and Wrath

1: We Suffer

2: Your Wrath

3: Getting Relief

4: Attain Felicities

5: Turn to Varuṇa

¹⁴ अवे ते हेलो वरुण नमौभिः (1), अवे यज्ञेभिः ईमहे हुविभिः (2),

क्षयन् अस्मध्यम् असुर प्रचेता राजन् (3), एनांसि शिश्रथः कृतानि (4)

¹⁵ उदुक्तमं वरुण पाशम् अस्मत् (1), अवाध्यमं वि मध्यमं (2), श्रथाय (3),

अथा वयम् आदित्य ब्रते तव आनागसो (4), अदितये स्याम (5)

- 6: Mitra and Varuṇa**
- 7: Thought Movements as Birds**
- 8: Thirteenth Month**
- 9: Path of Life-forces**
- 10: Divine Abode**
- 11: Beholds All**
- 12: Lead Us and Prolong Our Life**
- 13: Radiant Armour**
- 14: Beyond the Reach**
- 15: Greatness in Our Bodies**
- 16: Desire Varuṇa**
- 17: Confidence in Varuṇa**
- 18: Vision of Varuṇa**
- 19: Have Cried for You**
- 20: Respond to My Call**
- 21: Destroy the Three Cords of Bonds**

Metre: Gāyatrī

1.25.1: We Suffer

O God Varuṇa, whatever may be your Law of workings (2),
we commoners suffer hurt day by day (1,3).¹

Details: “We transgress your laws often unknowingly and are hurt nevertheless.”

1.25.2: Your Wrath

Subject us not to your blows (1,3),
the killer showing no consideration (2).

O Irate One, (subject us) not to your wrath (4).²

¹ यत् चित् हि ते विशौ (1), यथा प्र दैव वरुण ब्रूतम् (2),
मिनीमसि द्यविद्यवि (3)

² मा नौ वृधार्य (1), हृत्वै जिहीळानस्य (2), रीरधः (3),
मा हृणानस्य मन्यवै (4)

Details: The mantra-s 1, 2 and 3 should be treated as one unit. All of them will be discussed at the end of next mantra. The interpretation of this mantra without considering the context is misleading.

[*mā rīradhah*: subject not;]

1.25.3: Getting Relief

Just as the charioteer binds a horse (to the car) (3),
we bind our mind to you with hymns of praise, O Varuṇa (2,4),
for getting relief (from our miseries) (1).³

Details: (1.25.1) states that most of us spend our lives transgressing the Divine Laws set up by Varuṇa for the entire cosmos including our Earth. Consequently we reap the consequences of our acts. Varuṇa's wrath against transgression is well known. Varuṇa will not give any one special dispensation from the effects of transgression of the laws. (1.25.2) is a prayer for Varuṇa to indicate the method by which one may escape the wrath of Varuṇa. The third mantra (1.25.3) is the answer. By the power of the mantra-s or chants, we bind our minds to Varuṇa just as a charioteer binds the ready horse to the chariot. We bind ourselves to Varuṇa by the cords of devotion. Then the Lord himself points out the way for us in the world and the transgression is avoided since Varuṇa himself is the leader.

Note that the mantra does not simply say, “obey the laws of Varuṇa”, because the code of Varuṇa is too deep for our superficial understanding. Only Varuṇa's grace can keep our mind in the right direction. It is mentioned elsewhere that one of the characteristics of Varuṇa is wideness. There is no sin apart from falsehood in the Veda. All our sins happen because of our attachment to a narrow vision of life. Varuṇa's wideness removes this narrowness.

Sri Aurobindo on Sin

“The crude conception of sin as a result of natural wickedness found no place in the thought of these deep thinkers and subtle

³ वि मृळीकार्यं (1), ते मनौ (2), रथीरश्वं न संदितम् (3),
गीर्भिः वरुण सीमहि (4)

psychologists. What they perceived was a great insistent force of Ignorance, either a non-perception of right and truth in the mind or a non-seizing of it in the will, or an inability of the life-instincts and desires to follow after it or the sheer inefficiency of the physical being to raise to the divine law. Verses (7.89.3,4) are similar.

'It is from poverty of the will we have gone contrary to thee;
Be gracious to us, have grace, O Pure and puissant one.' (7.89.3)
Thirst found thy adorer, though he stood in the middle of the waters.
Be gracious, O Puissant Lord, be gracious.' (7.89.4)

Varuṇa is not simply the punisher. He is also the purifier. Dwelling in us as the thinker, he cleaves away the sin we have committed; he abolishes by his royal power our debt to ignorance." (SV, pp. 452)

1.25.4: Attain Felicities

My thoughts soar high to attain the riches (1),
like birds to their nests (2).⁴

Details: KS states the phrase, "thoughts soaring like birds" is not a mere metaphor. The movements of the mind taking place in the higher regions are perceptible to the eye of the yogin and have been testified by both ancient and modern yogins. See verse 7.

vi manyavah: mental movements; *vasya*: riches; *vayah*: birds;

1.25.5: Turn to Varuṇa

Varuṇa is the refuge of the hero and the leader (2).
He sees widely (4).

When can we turn him towards us for relief (from our misery) (3)?⁵

⁴ परा हि मे विमन्यवः पतन्ति वस्य इष्ये (1), वयो न वस्तीः उर्प (2)

⁵ कुदा (1), क्षत्रश्रियं नरमा वरुणं (2), करामहे मूलीकाय (3),
उरुचक्षसम् (4)

1.25.6: Mitra and Varuṇa

Desiring (the welfare) of the giver who upholds Divine Laws (2,4), they both pervade (the giver) with That (Truth-Light) equally (1); (they) do not fail him (3).⁶

Details: The pronoun ‘they’ refers to the twin deities, Mitra and Varuṇa. They never disregard the sacrificer who upholds the Law. They help the Seer attain the state of That, the Truth-Light.

tat: That, the Supreme; *venantā*: desiring;

1.25.7: Thought Movements as Birds

He knows the position of the birds that fly through the sky (1). Dweller in the sea, he knows the position of the boat (2).⁷

Details: Birds denote thought movements. Boat-journey is a standard symbol of the movement of life-energy. Varuṇa knows the origination and destination of all thought movements and the life-movements.

Varuṇa is the lord of all infinities, spatial, time etc.; thus, he knows everything. This idea is continued in the next few riks.

1.25.8: Thirteenth Month

The upholder of the law, Varuṇa (2), knows the twelve months of the human beings (1,3). He also knows the additional (thirteenth) (month) (4).⁸

Details: Periodically an additional or thirteenth month is added to the lunar year to make the solar and lunar calendars consistent. This thirteenth is known as the intercalary month. Facts such as this help one to date the Rig Veda and study the outward civilization in that age.

A human astrologer also knows this thirteenth month; so what is special? Varuṇa is also the master of the infinity of time, *kāla*. Time

⁶ तत् इत् समानम् आशाते (1), वेनन्ता (2), न प्रयुच्छतः (3), धूतत्रैताय दशुर्वै (4)

⁷ वेदा यो वीनां पदम् अन्तरिक्षेण पतताम् (1), वेदं नावः संमुद्रियः (2)

⁸ वेद मासो (1), धूतत्रैतो (2), द्वादश प्रजावतः (3), वेदा य उपजायते (4)

is not limited to the physical time of the clock. All movements, both in the microcosm as well as in the macrocosm happen according to the law of Varuṇa.

1.25.9: Path of Life-forces

He knows the path of the life-forces (1);
the extensive, the best and the great (2).

He knows the Gods seated above (3).⁹

Details: Varuṇa knows all the forces and the associated personalities who are great and the best, not only in power but in vastness. Recall that Varuṇa, the master of infinities, knows the infinity in each category of vastness, wideness, greatness in power etc.

r̥̄shvasya: the best;

1.25.10: Divine Abode

Varuṇa, the upholder of law (2),
is seated in the Divine Dwellings, all-pervading (1,3),
(He is) firm in will for the conduct of sovereignty (4).¹⁰

Details: Varuṇa is an emperor (*sāmrāt*). He has been described earlier in verses like (1.24.6) using words that have both an outward and inner significance. “Behind the vast universality of force and being, there watches and acts a vast universality of knowledge. The epithet of kinghood is constantly coupled with that of Seerhood.” [SA, SV, p.453] ā: all-pervading;

1.25.11: Beholds All

From here the knower (Varuṇa) beholds from all sides (1,3),
all the wonderful actions (2),
that are done and that are yet to be done (4).¹¹

⁹ वेद् वातस्य वर्तनिम् (1), उरोः कृष्वस्य बृहतः (2), वेदा ये अध्यासते (3)

¹⁰ नि षसाद् (1), धूतब्रतो वरुणः (2), पस्त्यासु आ (3), साप्नाज्याय सुक्रतुः (4)

¹¹ अतो (1), विश्वानि अन्दुता (2), चिकित्वाँ अभि पंश्यति (3),

कृतानि या च कर्त्वा (4)

Details: *ataḥ*: from here, from the dwellings in the Heaven mentioned earlier. *chikitvān*: knower; derived from *kīta*, knowledge.

1.25.12: Lead Us and Prolong Our Life

May Āditya, the perfect doer (2),
lead us always along perfect paths (1,3).
May he prolong our life (4).¹²

Details: The prayer is that Varuṇa should guide us at every instant of time. *vishvāhā*: on all days, always;

1.25.13: Radiant Armour

Wearing the golden armour Varuṇa covers his own pure form (1).
The rays touching the armour are all-pervading (2).¹³

Details: The second line indicates that Varuṇa covers his own form, i.e., the gleam of armour hides his radiance. It reminds one of the famous mantra of Īsha U. (15) beginning with *hirṇmayena patreṇa*. *spasha*: rays which touch; for S it is secret spies who report all wrong doings to Varuṇa. *nirṇijam*: of pure form;

1.25.14: Beyond the Reach

This God the hurters do not strike (1,4),
not the enemies of humans, nor the sins (2,4).¹⁴

Details: Varuṇa is beyond the reach of the demons and their influences which cause sin. The enemies could be human or demons.

¹² स नौ विश्वाहा॑ (1), सुकृतुः॒ आदि॒त्यः॑ (2), सुपथा॑ करत्॒ (3),
प्रण॑ आयूषि॒ तारिषत्॑ (4)

¹³ बिभ्रत्॑ द्रुपि॑ हिरण्ययं॒ वरुणो॒ वस्त निर्णिजम्॑ (1),
परि॑ स्पशो॒ निर्वेदिरे॑ (2)

¹⁴ न यं॑ दिप्सन्ति॑ दिप्सवो॑ (1), न द्रुहाणो॒ जनानाम्॑ (2),
न देवम्॑ (3), अभिमात्यः॑ (4)

1.25.15: Greatness in Our Bodies

Among all human beings Varuṇa has established glory (1),
which is complete in all respects (2).

(Specially) he has established greatness in our bodies completely
(3).¹⁵

Details: Varuṇa has not only established the human race with its many-sided achievements, but also established the greatness of the Rishi-s. Body does not mean only the physical.

S translates *udara* as ‘belly’ and *yasha* as ‘food’ and declares, ‘food is obtained to fill the belly by the grace of Varuṇa.’ Even for a ritualist interpretation, such a crude translation is not necessary.

Line 1: ā āchakre; made complete;

1.25.16: Desire Varuṇa

My thoughts go far (1), like the cows to their stalls (2),
desiring the One with wide-vision, (Varuṇa) (3).¹⁶

Details: The analogy of cows going to stalls is in RV (1.3.8) and others.

1.25.17: Confidence in Varuṇa

Let us converse again soon (1).

You have accepted the desirable Soma brought by me (2,4)
like the invoking priest in the yajña (3).¹⁷

Details: Rishi Shunahshepa has complete confidence in Varuṇa who easily accepts the Soma prepared by the Rishi. Rishi feels that he will get the required teaching on the inner plane.

¹⁵ उत् यो मानुषेषु आ यशः चक्रे (1), असाम्या (2), अस्माकम् उदरेषु आ (3)

¹⁶ परा मे यन्ति धीतयो (1), गावो न गव्यूतीरनु (2), इच्छन्तीः उरुचक्षसम् (3)

¹⁷ सं नु वौचावहु पुनः (1), यतो मे मध्वाभृतम् (2), होतैव (3),

क्षदसे प्रियम् (4)

1.25.18: Vision of Varuṇa

On earth, I beheld the car above and also Him, the all-seeing (2,1),
He accepted my lauds with love (3).¹⁸

Details: This verse describes a vision had by the Rishi.

1.25.19: Have Cried for You

O Varuṇa, listen to this call of mine (1);
be gracious to me now (2).

I have cried to you seeking protection (3).¹⁹

Details: This mantra is an example of *bhakti* or devotion to the deity which later developed into the elaborate system of Bhakti Yoga.

1.25.20: Respond to My Call

You are resplendent among (the beings of) Earth and Heaven (2),
and also among all, O wise one (1).

In your voyage around, respond to my call (3).²⁰

Details: Varuṇa goes around the universe watching all. The prayer is for Varuṇa to respond to the call of the rishi.

1.25.21: Destroy the Three Cords of Bonds

Pull out and free our upper cord of bondage (1),
loosen the middle one, and the one below (2),
so that we can follow the Divine Living (3).²¹

Details: The verse is similar to RV (1.24.15).

¹⁸ दर्शनु विश्वदर्शतं (1), दर्शन् रथमधि क्षमि (2), एता जुषत मे गिरः (3)

¹⁹ इमं मै वरुण श्रुधी हवम् (1), अद्या च मूल्य (2),
त्वाम् अवस्थुः आ चके (3)

²⁰ त्वं विश्वस्य मेधिर (1), दिवश्च गमश्च राजसि (2),

स यामनि प्रति श्रुधि (3)

²¹ उदुत्तमं मुमुग्धि नो वि पाशौ (1), मध्यमं चृत अवधमानि (2), जीवसे (3)

1.26: Intimacy of Agni

Riṣhi: Shunashepaḥ Ajigartih

- 1: Conduct Our Yajña
- 2: Full of Wise Thoughts
- 3: Agni like the Father and Friend
- 4: Gods Seated on the Inner Altar
- 5: Agni Listens to the Chant
- 6: Agni as all Other Gods
- 7: May we be Dear to Agni
- 8: We Chant with Agni
- 9: Intimacy of Riṣhi with Agni
- 10: Establish Happiness in Us

Metre: Gāyatrī

1.26.1: Conduct Our Yajña

O master of all abounding mights (2),
 O one worthy of yajña, wear the robes (1),
 and conduct this, our yajña (3).¹

Details: The robes in the inner yajña indicate the qualities of purity, calmness, etc. *miyedhya*: worthy of sacrifice, master of sacrifice; Line 3: same as a part of (1.14.11)

1.26.2: Full of Wise Thoughts

O Agni, ever-youthful, full of wise thoughts (2),
 our adorable priest of call, be seated (1),
 (to hear) our luminous words (3).²

[*sadā*: always, ever;]

¹ वसिष्ठा हि मियेध्य वस्त्राणि (1), ऊर्जा पते (2), सेमं नौ अध्वरं यज (3)

² नि नो होता वरेण्यः (1), सदा यविष्टु मन्मभिः (2),
 अग्ने दिवित्संता वचः (3)

1.26.3: Agni like the Father and Friend

Agni (sacrifices) like the father on behalf of his son (1),
 the kinsman sacrifices for the kinsman (2),
 the best friend for the friend (3). (therefore is he the supreme
 offerer).³

Details: *a + yajati*: conducts the yajña in all ways, i.e., on behalf of
 son, etc.

1.26.4: Gods Seated on the Inner Altar

May the destroyers of the foes of yajña (2),
 the Gods Varuṇa, Mitra and Aryamā (3),
 take their seats on our inner altar like human beings (1,4).⁴

Details: Just as humans come and take their assigned seats, may the
 Gods come and take their appropriate seats in our inner bodies for
 conducting the esoteric yajña.

1.26.5: Agni Listens to the Chant

O Agni, ancient priest of call (1),
 be pleased with our sacrifice and friendship (2).
 Listen well to the chants (3).⁵

Details: Agni is within us in our subtle body; only if we chant with
 concentration and awareness, does it register inside and reach Agni.
 The prayer is, ‘listen to our chants even if it is done with incomplete
 awareness’.

1.26.6: Agni as All Other Gods

Whatever we incessantly offer (1), as worship to God and God (2),
 that oblation is offered to you only (3).⁶

³ आ हि ष्मा सूनवै पिता (1), आपि: यजति आपये (2),
 सस्वा सस्ये वरेण्यः (3)

⁴ आ नौ बृही (1), रिशादसो (2), वरुणो मित्रो अर्यमा (3),
 सीदन्तु मनुषो यथा (4)

⁵ पूर्व्यं होतः (1), अस्य नो मन्दस्व सख्यस्य च (2), इमा उषु श्रुधी गिरः (3)
 • यत् चित् हि शश्वता तना (1), देवदेवं यजामहे (2), त्वे इत् हूयते हृविः (3)

Details: ‘Whatever you offer to the Gods, I only accept them.’ (Bhagavad Gīta verse (7.21)). Agni as Indra, Varuṇa, etc., is in RV (2.1.3-2.1.11). *tana*: to spread, to offer.

1.26.7: May we be Dear to Agni

Dear to us be the lord of the people, the priest of call (1),
who is full of delight and is adorable (2).

May we be endowed with auspicious Agni and be dear to him (3).⁷

1.26.8: We Chant with Agni

The Gods have borne for us (2),
the auspicious Agni along with the desirable felicities (1);
with auspicious Agni, we chant (or worship) (3).⁸

Details: Only by the grace of gods along with Agni are we, human beings, able to laud (*stotum*), think (*dhyātum*) and know (*jnātum*) (KS).

1.26.9: Intimacy of Rishi with Agni

Among both of us (1), (me) the mortal and the Immortal (you) (2),
may the Words be uttered in intimacy (3).⁹

1.26.10: Establish Happiness in Us

O Agni, with all other Agni-s (1), accept the yajña and this chant (2). Establish (or enrich) happiness, O son of strength (3).¹⁰

Details: Though Agni is a single power, he becomes manifold in dealing with the beings of Earth; hence the mention of the phrase, ‘other fires or other Agni-s.’

⁷ प्रियो नौ अस्तु विशपतिर्हीता (1), मन्द्रो वरेण्यः (2)

प्रिया: स्वग्रयो वयम् (3)

⁸ स्वग्रयो हि वार्य (1), देवासौ दधिरे च नः (2), स्वग्रयो मनामहे (3)

⁹ अथा न उभयैषाम् (1), अमृतं मत्यानाम् (2), मिथः सन्तु प्रशस्तयः (3)

¹⁰ विश्वेभिरग्ने अग्निभिः (1), इमं यज्ञमिदं वचः (2), चनौ धाः सहसो यहो (3)

1.27: Agni as Universal-life

- 1: We Bow to Agni**
- 2: Pours the Light**
- 3: Universal-life**
- 4: Announce Our Gifts to Gods**
- 5: Awareness of Plenitudes**
- 6: You Flow Easily to the Giver**
- 7: Becoming Self-controlled**
- 8: None can Overpower a Devotee**
- 9: Enjoyer of Knowledge**
- 10: Laud to the Visible Agni**
- 11: Agni Impels us towards Understanding**
- 12: His Radiance Becomes Wide in us**
- 13: Salutations to All Persons**

Metre: 1-12, Gāyatrī; 13, Trīṣṭup

1.27.1: We Bow to Agni

We bow with surrender to Agni (2), who has a tail like a steed (1);
He is the sovereign ruler of the yajña-journey (3).¹

Details: The flames of Agni are compared to the tail; just as a horse brushes away insects, flies, etc., with its tail, similarly Agni with his flames of divine powers removes the enemies of God who are the destroyers of sacrifice.

1.27.2: Pours the Light

May he himself shower (the light) on us (3),
He is our son, and has luminous strength (1);
he has extensive and superb gait, and felicitous happiness (2).²
[mīḍvān: showerer;]

¹ अश्वं न त्वा वारवन्तं (1), वृन्दध्या अग्निं नमोमि: (2),
सप्राजन्तम् अध्वराणाम् (3)

² स धा नः सुनुः शवसा (1), पृथुप्रगामा सुशेवः (2),
मीदवाँ अस्माकं बभूयात् (3)

1.27.3: Universal-life

Protect us always, O Universal-Life (3),
from persons who do us evil (2),
living near or afar (1).³

Details: *vishvāyuḥ*: Universal-Life; all the life in the universe is from Agni. *aghāyoh*: one who would do us evil; *agha* means evil. See also (1.97.1).

1.27.4: Announce Our Gifts to Gods

O Agni, proclaim to the Gods (3), this gift from us (1),
and our fresh praise in Gāyatrī metre too (2).⁴

Details: *sanim*: gift, self-giving in the form of the inner yajña.

1.27.5: Awareness of Plenitudes

Make us share in the plenitudes of the highest world (1),
of the midregion and of the Earth (*antamasya*) (2,4).

Impart to us the riches (of the three worlds) (3).⁵

Details: Three worlds: RV mentions often the seven worlds. Here only the three are mentioned. The highest world is characterized by Truth, Right and Vast, *satyam ṛtam brhat*. The mid-world is characterized by the life-energies, emotional energies, etc. The lowest is the world of matter, being low in the level of consciousness. The consciousness of mid-world is midway between that of the highest and the lowest.

vāja: plenty of everything, plenitude; *antamasya*: the near one (earth); *ā bhaja*: completely share; *vasvah*: felicities, riches;

³ स नौं दूरात् च असात् (1), च नि मत्यात् अघायोः (2),
पाहि सदमित् विश्वायुः (3)

⁴ इमम् षु त्वम् स्माकं सुनिं (1), गायत्रं नव्यांसम् (2), अग्ने देवेषु प्र वौचः (3)

⁵ आ नौं भज परमेषु आ वाजेषु (1), मध्यमेषु (2), शिक्षा वस्वो (3),
अन्तमस्य (4)

1.27.6: You Flow Easily to the Giver

O One of diverse Lights, you are the distributor (1).

Like the river in tides (2), you flow easily to the giver (3).⁶

Details: Just as a river in tide flows out naturally to fill the canals and neighbouring tanks, Agni comes to the giver.

chitrabhāno: one with rays of different colours, each ray is a particular power of Agni.

1.27.7: Becoming Self-controlled

He is able to control plentiful impulsions (3),

whom you protect in the battles (1),

and him you urge to the plenitudes, O Agni (2).⁷

Details: The idea is that the person who is protected by Agni and urged by him is not swept away from his lofty goal by wayward impulses; he becomes self-controlled, impelled by God towards opulences. *prtsu*: battle in the psychological sense, the inner battle.

1.27.8: None Can Overpower a Devotee

O Forceful Agni, none can overcome (your devotee) (1);

his (strength and) plenitude are well known (2).⁸

Details: *asya*: him, the self-controlled person mentioned in the earlier verse. *shravāyyah*: well-known; inspiration;

sahantya: forceful one; *kayasya*: another; *paryeta*: invader;

Line 2: (alt.): his plenitude is full of inspiration.

⁶ वि॒भृत्ता॒सि॑ चित्रभानो॑ (1), सि॒न्धौ॑ः ऊ॒र्मा॒ उपा॒क आ॑ (2),
स॒द्यो॒ दा॒शुषु॑ पै॒ क्षरसि॑ (3)

⁷ यमंगे॑ पृ॒त्सु॑ मर्त्य॒मवा॑ (1), वा॒जेषु॑ यं॑ जुनाः॑ (2), स॑ यन्ता॑ शश्वती॑ः इ॒षः॑ (3)

⁸ नकि॑ः अस्य॑ सहन्त्य॑ पर्य॑ता॑ कथंस्य॑ चित्॑ (1), वा॒जौ॑ अस्ति॑ श्रवाय्यः॑ (2)

1.27.9: Enjoyer of Knowledge

May he ferry us along with the life-force (2),
towards the plenitude, he the all-seeing (1).

May he be the enjoyer of the knowledge through the wise ones (3).⁹

Details: Agni allows for the attainment of opulence by ferrying himself the devotee to these riches. Agni also enjoys the plenitude of the luminous knowledge.

1.27.10: Laud to the Visible Agni

O Agni, who becomes awake by the hymns (1),
enter the place (of chant) for the benefit of the people (2).

The stoma-chant goes to the visible Agni of formidable strength (4).
who is the master of yajña (3).¹⁰

Details: *tat*: the inner altar in the subtle body self. Agni is requested to enter the cave of the heart. The altar inside is visible to the inner eye. Vedic mystics do not pray for a God in absentia. They see Agni in the heart and to him the laud goes.

Note that in line 4, the epithet Rudra is used for Agni, denoting his extreme strength, characteristic of the God Rudra. *yajnyāya*: the master of yajña, (6.16.4).

1.27.11: Towards Understanding

May Agni, great, unlimited (1),
many splendoured, and with the special knowledge (2),
impel us towards understanding and plenitude (3).¹¹

Details: *dhūmaketu*: smoke-bannered; possessing a knowledge (*ketu*) of a special vibratory feeling (*dhūma*); see (1.94.10);
chandra: pleasing light or splendour;

⁹ स वाजं विश्वचर्षणि: (1), अर्बद्धिः अस्तु तरुता (2),

विप्रेभिः अस्तु सनिता (3)

¹⁰ जरागोथ् (1), तत् विविद्धि विशेविदो (2), यज्ञियाय (3),

स्तोमं रुद्रायू दृशीकम् (4)

¹¹ स नौ महां अनिमानो (1), धूमकेतुः पुरुषन्द्रः (2), धिये वाजाय हिन्चतु (3)

1.27.12: His Radiance Becomes Wide in Us

May Agni, hear us with his divine knowledge (2),
like an opulent lord of people (1).

His radiance becomes wide in us by the hymns of praise (3).¹²

Details: Just as an affluent person hears the submission of the needy and does the needful, Agni hears us and takes the necessary steps.

His radiance removes the narrowness in us and widens our subtle body. *vishpati*: Guardian of people, Agni.

1.27.13: Salutations to All Persons

Salutations to the great (1), salutations to the infants (2),
salutations to the young (3), salutations to the old (4).

May we worship the Gods to the best of our ability (5).

O Gods, may I not disturb the praise of the Supreme (6).¹³

Details: Here is the seed of the famous statement in the Chhāndogya Upanishad (3.14), 'Everything in manifestation is Brahman or Divine'. Hence one has to treat all human beings (and animals too) with respect.

The verse mentions four classes of persons, two based on the physical age and the other two based on experience. Whether wise or not, young or old, we should respect all.

In this verse, worship is spoken of in three ways, salutation (*namah*), the sacrifice or worship (*yajña*), and hymns of praise or chant (*shamsa*). We should use salutation at all times. Ritual worship can be done only if one has the necessary facilities. The Rishi prays that the habit of prayer may not cease.

māvṛkṣhi: may I not cut asunder (or destroy, disturb)

¹² स रेवां इव विशप्तिः (1), दैव्यः केतुः शृणोतु नः (2),

उव्यैः अग्निः बृहद्भानुः (3)

¹³ नमो महदभ्यो (1), नमो अभक्तेभ्यो (2), नमो युवभ्यो (3), नमं आशिनेभ्यः (4), यजाम देवान् यदि शक्वाम् (5), मा ज्यायसः शंसमा वृशि देवाः (6)

Hymn 1.28: Life, Mind and Body: the Yogic Symbolism

- 1: Human Body as a Mortar
- 2: Mind and Life, the Two Platters
- 3: Paths of Ascent and Descent
- 4: Churning of the Body
- 5: The Body and the Victory Sound
- 6: The Life is Spurred to Action
- 7: The Life and Mind, the Two Steeds
- 8: Pressers of Soma
- 9: Yogic Secret

Metre: 1-6, Anuṣṭup; 7-9, Gāyatrī

The traditional Anukramaṇika (index) assigns the first 4 mantra-s to Indra, 5 and 6 to the mortar (*ulūkhala*), 7-8 to the mortar and pestle (*ulūkhala musala*), the mantra 9 to several deities like Prajāpati, Soma etc. In the text there is no such word as *musala* (pestle). The ritualist explanation is incoherent.

1.28.1: Human Body as a Mortar

The broad-based stone is placed high above (1),
for pressing the Soma (2).

There, O Indra, drink with eagerness (3),
the pourings of mortar (subtle body) (3).¹

Details: Since S and other commentators interpret this hymn as dealing with the extraction of Soma juice, we will first briefly describe the extraction of Soma juice from the herb in a ritual. There are three steps. First the Soma is struck with stone, then the crushed Soma is pressed between two platters to extract the Soma juice; then the Soma juice is purified using a strainer or filter. Finally it is offered to the *deva-s* either using fire or water. Note Soma is not extracted in the mortar; it is done only between the two platters. Again the phrase broad-based (*pṛthubudhna*) is completely inappropriate in a ritual context. There are similar discrepancies in the ritualistic interpretation in all the nine riks.

¹ यत्र ग्रावा पृथुबुधं ऊर्ध्वो भवति (1), सोतवे (2),

उलुखल-सुतानाम् (3), अवेत् उ इन्द्रं जल्युलः (4)

In the ritual both the pestle and mortar used in pressing the Soma herb are made of wood. However this hymn begins with the word 'grāva' or stone. Hence the Rishi of this hymn is hinting at an esoteric interpretation.

The stone in this verse refers to Indra's weapon Vajra, and the epithet, 'high above', is appropriate for it. The word mortar (*ulūkhala*), in the first four riks, refers to the human body which presses out the Soma or bliss or *ānanda* whenever action is done.

The purport is: Indra, as well as the Vajra, is high above, in the world *dyu* or *svar*. He is called upon to come down and drink the Soma dripping from the mortar or the subtle body of the seeker. *jalgulah*: to drink; note *grāvāṇa* in (10.94.10) has the same interpretation. More details are at the end of this hymn.

1.28.2: Mind and Life, the Two Platters

The two platters are placed closely like two hips (1).
O Indra, drink with eagerness the Soma-pressed out of the body (mortar) (2).²

Details: The two platters symbolize Heaven and Earth or the mind and life in the body or knowledge and activity. These two together receive the *rasa* or Soma given by the mortar of the material body and offer it to the Gods. The second halves of all verses 1-4, 'ulūkhala . . .' are same. *adhiśhavanya*: two platters; *jalgulah*: drink; *āvet*: with eagerness;

1.28.3: Paths of Ascent and Descent

The woman (power of soul) learns (1,3),
the paths of the ascent and descent of the yogic forces (2).
O Indra, drink with eagerness the pressings from the body (4).³

² यत्र द्वाविंव जघना अधिष्वर्ण्या कृता (1),

उलूखलसुतानाम् अवेत् इन्द्र जल्गुलः (2)

³ यत्र नारि (1), अपच्यवम् उपच्यवं च (2), शिक्षते (3),

उलूखलसुतानामवेद्विन्द्र जल्गुलः (4)

Details: *nāri*, the woman, stands for the conscious power of the soul, *nara*. This power watches the yogic process of the force getting down from above, *upachyava*, and the force of the being going up or above, *apachyava*. Thus the divine force is distributed allover. The soul of the sacrificer, the woman, here learns (*shikshate*) the secret of the yogic action. This secret is fulfilled in pressing out the juice, the delight of all experience, to be offered to the great God Indra. There is no need for the crude interpretation offered by ritualists.

1.28.4: Churning of the Body

They fasten the churning staff with a rope (1),
as one controls (the horse) with reins (2).

O Indra, drink with eagerness the Soma from the body (3).⁴

Details: In the external rite, the Soma juice is churned by a churning staff and rope so that it is mixed with milk, curds or corn, *yava*. Even today the butter is churned out from the curds in this way in some houses in India. In the inner sacrifice, the spinal cord in the human body acts like a churning rod and it helps in the preparation of Soma.

The body is to be controlled so that it can hold the Soma of delight pressed out. Thus the first four riks mention the implements and the actions ending in the extraction of the pure delight from the subtle body of the sacrificer, the mortar.

As noted earlier the pestle is not mentioned indicating that *ulukhala* cannot be the usual vessel (mortar) used for crushing the herbs in rituals.

1.28.5: The Body and the Victory Sound

O body (mortar), even though you are set in every house (1),
you give forth the resplendent sound, like the drum of a victor (2).⁵

⁴ यत्र मन्थां विबृधते रश्मीन् (1), यमितवा इव (2),

उलूखलसुतानामवेद्धिन्द्र जल्गुलः (3)

⁵ यच्चिद्धि त्वं गृहेगृह उलूखलक युज्यसे (1),

इह द्युमत्तमं वद् जयतामिव दुन्दुभिः (2)

Details: This and the next four riks celebrate the ritual of pressing out the Soma juice. As before the mortar is the body.

The purport is: O body, though you are inert, you bring to birth the Soma. Let there be a cry of victory since you have acquired knowledge. In the ritualist interpretation, the phrase, “resplendent sound like that of a victor” has no meaning. Where is the victory? In the esoteric sense, the sound of victory is appropriate in view of the great action namely the release of the Soma or delight.

1.28.6: The Life is Spurred to Action

O Lord of the forest, the wind blows fast in front of you (1).
 O body (mortar), press forth the Soma (3),
 for Indra so that he may drink it (2).⁶

Details: Human body is called as *vanaspati*, lord of the woods, since the products of the forest like bulbs, roots, fruits, etc., maintain the body.

The purport is: your powerful, executive, life is spurred to action in front; *Vāyu* denotes the executive aspect of life and he blows fast. Therefore press out or release the Soma, the essence of all experience, hidden in the dense regions of the body.

1.28.7: The Life and Mind, the Two Steeds

All over the sacrifice (1),
 the life and mind in the body, exceedingly powerful (2),
 sport like the two horses eating the foods (3).⁷

Details: Note that which sports again and again is not mentioned explicitly. In particular, pestle is not mentioned. Here they are the life and mind in the body, *vanaspati*.

‘उत स्म ते वनस्पते वातो विवाति अग्रमित् (1),

अथो इन्द्राय पातवे (2), सुनु सोममुलूखल (3)

‘आयजी (1), वाज्सातमा ता हि उच्चा विर्जर्भुतः (2),

हरी इवान्ध्यांसि बप्सता (3)

The two are compared to the horses to Indra. They are exultant and are endowed with the power of enjoyment. *vijarbhṛtah*: sport;

1.28.8: Soma Pressing

O Lords of the forest, O mighty ones (1),
with the mighty pressing (platters) (2),
press out today the most sweet Soma for Indra (3).⁸

Details: The life and mind in the body (*vanaspati*) are endowed with high strength. They are called upon to press the Soma for acceptance by Indra.

1.28.9: Yogic Secret

Hold the remains in the *chamasa* bowls (1);
pour the Soma in the filter (2).
Set the residue on the cow hide (3).⁹

Details: *go tvachi*: physical frame of a human being

I will quote here the commentary of KS on this verse appearing in the [CW, Vol.1, pp. 119].

"In the inner sacrifice, the *chamu* or the *chamasa* is a bowl, and the two bowls are nothing but the vital body and the mental body which were referred to by the symbolic platters, *adhiśhavāṇīya*, which were used for the extraction of the essence of Soma *rasa*. But now, when the process is complete, they are referred to as separated vessels or bowls to signify the yogic secret that though life and mind function in the body as a part of it, they are really separate entities and are separated by the yoga force for adjustment in the new set-up for the consummation of the yoga. The juice of delight is taken up in the two bowls of life and mind and is then poured into the *kalasha* which is the material body. The residue of Soma, with the juice

⁸ ता नौ अ॒द्य व॑नस्पती कृ॒ष्वौ (1), कृ॒ष्वेभिः स॒तृभिः (2),
इन्द्रां॒य मधु॒मत् सुतम् (3)

⁹ उच्छि॒ष्टं च॒म्बोः (1), भर॒ सोमं प॒वित्र आ॒ सृज (2),
नि॒ धैहि॒ गोः अ॒धि॒ त्वचि॒ (3)

churned out, is kept in the hide of the cow, *go tvachi*, which is the covering and protection of the Ray of Light in the physical frame of man.”

Note: A natural question is whether the interpretations offered by KS for the keywords like *grāvā*, stone, *ulūkhala*, mortar, *adhiṣhavaniya*, platters, *chamasa*, bowls etc., have any basis in our tradition? or are these only imaginations of KS?

The answer to this question is considered in great detail by KS in [CW,KS, Vol.1, pp. 108-123], in English and [CW,KS, Vol.5, pp. 63-73] in Sanskrit. We give below only brief excerpts.

chamasa: bowl: It occurs in the Brh. U. (2.2.3), “a bowl *chamasa* with its base, *budhnah*, above, *ūrdhva*, and the opening below.” The great commentator Shankara states in his commentary of this verse, “what is this *chamasa* with hole below and base above? It is the head which is above like a *chamasa* bowl and the mouth is the aperture below. In this bowl is placed the All-form. Just as Soma is kept in the bowl, the Universe of the forms or the All-form is set on the head”. [CW,KS, Vol.1, p.120]; *budhna*: foundation or base; KS quotes four or five references in RV (4.2.5, 1.169.6, 10.47.3) where this word can be interpreted as only foundation.

grāvā, stone: KS quotes about ten references in RV where this word is regarded as Indra’s Vajra which is the symbol for the thunder-voice of Indra. ‘Stone’ voices with the sound of singer’s chant (1.83.6). It is called as a voiceful stone laid on the altar (5.31.4), a variegated stone set in the midst of Heaven (5.47.3).

kalasha, beaker: Vāmadeva hymn RV (4.27.5) clearly states that the *kalasha* refers certainly to the body. This verse is quoted in the Upanishads also; Prāṇāgnihotra U., “*sharīra yajñasya. dṛopokalashah*”. This refers to the yajña or sacrifice of the body and the anointing of the body with the rays of Light.

These excerpts are sufficient for establishing the fact that the ancient scriptures, Upanishads and Brāhmaṇa books, indicate the spiritual interpretation of the Vedic hymns. Recall the famous passage in Brh. U. (4.2.2), that “the Gods like symbolic or indirect reference”, “*aparokṣa priyah devaḥ*”.

The purport of the entire hymn is: Let the Soma juice be deposited for Indra in the pure body, the perfect vessel, denoted by the wooden jar. The pressed Soma in the platters of life and mind, is taken, poured into the bowls and poured into the pure place (*pavitra*) above the body for purification. This sap so purified and cultured should be deposited in the material body denoted by the wooden jar.

Hymn 1.29: The Commoners given Light and Might

- 1: We Devotees are Commoners
- 2: All-capable is Your Action
- 3: Let the Dualities Sleep
- 4: May the Givers be Awake
- 5: Discordant Speech
- 6: Evil Forces
- 7: Destroy the Pandemonium

Metre: Pañgktih

1.29.1: We Devotees are Commoners

O Truth, drinker of Soma, even though we are the commoners (1),
O opulent Indra, make us special (2,4),
among thousandfold luminous ray-cows and the life-energies (3).¹

Details: *satya*: Truth. This appellation is given to Indra since he is formed completely by the Supreme Truth. *āshamsaya*: make us celebrated; *shubhrishu*: luminous (5.34.8); that producing happiness;

The second halves of all verses 1-7 are same.

¹ यच्चिद्धि संत्य सोमपा अनाशस्ता इव स्मर्ति (1),

आ तू ने इन्द्र शंसय (2), गोषु अश्वेषु शुभ्रिषु सहस्रेषु (3), तुवीमय (4)

1.29.2: All-capable is Your Action

O auspicious - faced, lord of plenitudes and the strong one (1),
all-capable is your action (2).

O opulent Indra, make us special among thousandfold luminous ray-cows and the life-energies (3).²

Details: *shiprin*: literally a jaw; one with handsome face. Gods have forms which can be perceived by our subtle senses.

1.29.3: Let the Dualities Sleep

Make the dualities sleep (1);
let them sleep without awakening (2).

O opulent Indra, make us special among thousandfold luminous ray-cows and the life-energies (3).³

Details: *mithu*: Vedic form of *mithuna*, couple.

1.29.4: May the Givers be Awake

May the unseen non-givers be asleep (1);
may the givers be awake, O brave one (2).

O opulent Indra, make us special among thousandfold luminous ray-cows and the life-energies (3).⁴

Details: non-givers: They are the demons or their followers who do not give freely to others. Even if they give, they place restrictions. These persons are averse to the *yajña* which is a collaborative activity.

tyā: those unseen by us even though they may exist.

bodhāntu: awake, be aware or conscious.

² शिप्रिन् वाजानां पते शर्चीवः (1), तर्वं दंसना (2),

आ तू न इन्द्र शंसय गोष्वशेषु शुभ्रिषु सुहस्तेषु तुवीमध (3)

³ नि ष्वाप्या मिथूहशा (1), सृस्ताम् अवुध्यमाने (2),

आ तू न इन्द्र शंसय गोष्वशेषु शुभ्रिषु सुहस्तेषु तुवीमध (3)

⁴ सुसन्तु त्या अरातयो (1), बोधन्तु शूर रातयः (2),

आ तू न इन्द्र शंसय गोष्वशेषु शुभ्रिषु सुहस्तेषु तुवीमध (3)

1.29.5: Discordant Speech

O Indra, destroy this ass who praises you with discordant speech (1).
 O opulent Indra, make us special among thousandfold luminous ray-cows and the life-energies (3).⁵

1.29.6: Evil Forces

May the wild reptile fall far away (1),
 in the forest along with the(unfavourable) wind (2).
 O opulent Indra, make us special among thousandfold luminous ray-cows and the life-energies (3).⁶

Details: *kundṛṇāchi* is a wild reptile of the lizard family. Her appearance in a home is an ill-omen, it is said. This word *kundṛṇāchi* indicates some special wicked force bringing evil. The purport is to let all wind that is unfavourable to us go to its natural habitation, the forest, along with the forest creature, *kundṛṇāchi*.

1.29.7: Destroy the Pandemonium

Destroy every kind of pandemonium (1);
 slay him who does harm (2).
 O opulent Indra, make us special among thousandfold luminous ray-cows and the life-energies (3).⁷

⁵ समिन्द्र गर्दुभं मृण नुवन्तं पापया अमुया (1),

आ तू ने इन्द्र शंसय गोब्बथैषु शुभ्रिषु सहस्रैषु तुवीमध (2)

⁶ पतांति कुण्डुणाच्या दूरं (1), वातो वनात् अधि (2)

आ तू ने इन्द्र शंसय गोब्बथैषु शुभ्रिषु सहस्रैषु तुवीमध (3)

⁷ सर्वं परिक्रोशं जंहि (1), जम्मया कृकदाश्म् (2),

आ तू ने इन्द्र शंसय गोब्बथैषु शुभ्रिषु सहस्रैषु तुवीमध (3)

Hymn 1.30: Indra, Ashvins and Uṣha

- 1: Indra Nourishes like a Well
 - 2: Comes Effortlessly
 - 3: Indra's Rapture
 - 4: Indra Eager for Soma
 - 5: Speech Manifests the Riches
 - 6: O Indra, Let Us Both Converse
 - 7: Friends of Indra
 - 8: Hears Our Call and Comes
 - 9: Comes to Many Seekers
 - 10: Friend Cherished by All
 - 11: Handsome-faced Powers
 - 12: Indra, Do the Yajña
 - 13: We Rejoice with Indra
 - 14: You Support the Singers
 - 15: The Effort Comes from You
 - 16: Gives a Divine Body to the Rishi
 - Ashvins
 - 17: Life-force of Gleaming Might
 - 18: Your Car in the Vast Midregion
 - 19: One Wheel is on the Summit
 - Uṣha
 - 20: Who is Fit to Enjoy You?
 - 21: Our Thoughts are on You
 - 22: Establish the Inner Felicities in Us
- Metre: 1-10, 12-15, 17-22, Gāyatrī; 11, Pādanichṛt Gāyatrī;
16, Triṣṭup

1.30.1: Indra Nourishes like a Well

Indra is the hero of hundred deeds and of manifold powers (2),
We sprinkle you (Indra) with Soma (3),
seeking plenitude from you as if from a well (*krivim*) (1).¹

¹ आ वृ इन्द्रं क्रिविं यथा वाज्यन्तः (1), शतक्रतुम् मंहिष्टं (2),
सिञ्च इन्दुभिः (3)

Details: By filling Indra with Soma, we become opulent just as a well filled with water brought from a big channel gives us perpetual nourishment.

mamhiṣṭham: one with manifold powers, from *mahi*, growth;

1.30.2: Comes Effortlessly

To the purified Soma-s, a hundred or a thousand (1),

well-mixed with *āshira* (2),

Indra comes effortlessly like waters to a low spot (3).²

Details: *āshira*: materials such as *dadhi* to be mixed with Soma; see (1.5.5);

Soma-s: plural is used in the sense of different types of delight flowing from different actions.

1.30.3: Indra's Rapture

That Soma gets collected for the rapture of the strong Indra (1), which extends in his belly and is held there like the sea (2).³

Details: Just as a sea spreads everywhere and holds water without limit, Indra's belly also holds the Soma juices plentifully. The idea is similar to that in RV (1.8.7). *vyacha*: extends;

1.30.4: Indra Eager for Soma

You come repeatedly to the Soma which is yours (1),

like the he-pigeon to the pregnant mate (2).

You come (eagerly) to accept our laud (3).⁴

Details: Indra's desire for Soma is so strong that he repeatedly returns to the place of offering and the offerer like the pigeon which desires its mate all the time. The reference to the sexual attraction in a pigeon pair is common in Sanskrit.

² शतं वा यः शुचीनां सुहस्तं वा (1), समाशिराम् (2), एदु निष्ठं न रीयते (3)

³ सं यन्मदाय शुभ्मिण् (1), एना हि अस्य उदरै सुमुद्रो न व्यचौ दृथे (2)

⁴ अयमु ते सम् अंतसि (1), कपोतं इव गर्भधिम् (2), वचः तत् चिंत् नः ओहसे (3)

1.30.5: Speech Manifests the Riches

O Lord of treasures, borne by the Words of prayer (1),
 may the happy and true speech (3),
 manifest the manifold riches to the worshipper (2).⁵

1.30.6: O Indra, Let Us Both Converse

Stand high for our increase in this prosperity (1),
 O hero of hundred deeds (2).
 Let us both converse in other things too (3).⁶

Details: By Indra's strong support for our increase, he will facilitate our reaching the high state of consciousness by his will. Note also the close relationship between the divine powers and the Rishi-s in the phrase, 'let us converse'.

1.30.7: Friends of Indra

For fulfillment of every desire and for all plenitudes (1,3),
 we call the exceedingly strong Indra (2,4).
 We, as friends, call him for our increase (5).⁷

Details: We call Indra, our friend, for any help we may need.
yoga: union or fulfillment of desire.

1.30.8: Hears Our Call and Comes

If he hears our call, he will come near us (1,3),
 with the thousandfold increase (of riches) and plenitudes (2).⁸

⁵ स्तोत्रं राधानां पते गिर्वाहो वीर् यस्य ते (1), विभूतिः अस्तु (2), सूनृता (3)
 ‘ऊर्ध्वस्तिष्ठा न उतयेऽस्मिन् वाजे (1), शतक्रतो (2), समन्येषु ब्रवावहै (3)
 ७ योगेयोगे (1), तुवस्तरं (2), वाजेवाजे (3), हवामहे (4),
 सखाय इन्द्रमूतये (5)

⁸ आ धा गमत् यदि श्रवत् (1), सहस्रिणीभिरुतिभिः वाजैभिः (2),
 उप नो हवम् (3)

1.30.9: Comes to Many Seekers

I call the hero from the ancient station (1,3),
so that he comes to the many seekers (2),
You whom the father called before (4).⁹

Details: Indra comes towards the many persons engaged in spiritual practices. Father: the Rishi himself, who regards Indra as his son.

prati: one who represents, shortened form of *pratinidhi*. Here it represents the seekers.

1.30.10: Friend Cherished by All

O Friend, O treasure (4),
who is cherished by all and who is called by many (1,3),
we pray to you, our comrade (2),
on behalf of the singers of your praise (5).¹⁰

1.30.11: Handsome-faced Powers

O Soma-drinker (2), friend of handsome Soma-drinkers (1,3),
O One with Vajra, (we resort to you) dear to us like friends (4).¹¹

Details: Vajrin: one with Vajra, Indra; Vajra is the weapon of divine sound and light. Soma drinkers in the line 2 are the other Gods who are dear to the seeker or yajamāna as friends.

1.30.12: Indra, Do the Yajña

O Soma-drinker, O friend, O Vajrin (2),
please perform that (yajña) (1,3),
so that the yajña for you will be according to our desire (4).¹²

⁹ अनुं प्रत्नस्य ओक्सो हुवे (1), तुविप्रति॑ (2), नरम् (3),
यं ते पूर्व॑ पिता हुवे (4)

¹⁰ तं त्वा वृयं विश्ववारा (1), आ शास्महे (2), पुरुहूत (3),
सखै वसो (4), जरितृभ्यः (5)

¹¹ अस्माकं शिप्रिणीनां (1), सोमपाः (2), सोमपान्नाम् (3),
सखै वज्रिन् सखीनाम् (4)

¹² तथा तत् अस्तु (1), सोमपाः सखै वज्रिन् (2), तथा कृणु (3),
यथा त उश्मसि इष्टये (4)

Details: The idea is that the yajña should be performed according to the high ideals of the seeker, and not be marred by his (her) momentary desires and ambitions. *ushamsi*: (our) desire; *iṣṭaye*: sacrifice;

1.30.13: We Rejoice with Indra

When Indra enjoys with us (2),
(may the powers), wealthy and of varied strengths, be ours (1,3).
May we rejoice endowed with plentiful felicities (4).¹³

Details: The mantra does not mention the identity of powers who are, “wealthy and of varied strengths.” They can only be divine powers. S states that they are the cows. *kṣhumantah*: with plentiful provisions

1.30.14: You Support the Singers

Like a person of trust, like your own self (1),
(you support) the needful singers (2).
You bring the wealth sought by them, O daring one (3),
just as an axle supports the wheels of a car (4).¹⁴

Details: Just as the wheels of a carriage become fit for movement only by the axle, you support the singers with strength and wealth. Without that superhuman strength, the singers cannot move on their own. Of that strength, you alone are the master and you act like your own self. A similar idea is in other verses such as (10.29.4), “O Indra, with what shining power, with what thought-force do you make men like thyself.” The idea is that the Rishi becomes strong like Indra only by Indra’s grace and not by his own effort.

tmanā: ātman, self. *dhr̥ṣṇa*: daring one;
iyānah: riches desired; *ā ṛṇoh*: bring and scatter;

¹³ रेवतीः नः (1), सधुमाद् इन्द्रैः (2), सन्तु तुविवाजाः (3)

क्षुमन्तो याभिः मदेम (4)

¹⁴ आ घु त्वावान् त्वना आसः (1), स्तोतृभ्यौ (2), धृष्णो इयानः

ऋणोः (3), अक्षं न चक्रयोः (4)

1.30.15: The Effort Comes from You

O hero of a hundred deeds or willings (2),
you bestow on the singers the effort and aspiration (1,3),
just as the axle is cast with the strengths (4).¹⁵

Details: The aspiration and chanting of the hymns automatically yield the desired objects. But it is Indra who bestows on the singers the aspiration in them for attaining the divinity, just as the strength of the axle of a car comes from the strong materials used in its construction. Similarly the praise by the chanters is not possible except for the grace and power bestowed by Indra.

duvah: effort; *kāmam*: aspiration;

1.30.16: Gives a Divine Body to the Rishi

Indra always won the riches (1,3,5),
with the self-renewing, neighing and panting horses (forces) (2,4).
He has given us a golden car for our benefit (6,8),
he who is a donor and also dynamic (7).¹⁶

Details: The horses in lines 2 and line 4 are the dynamic forces of Indra by which he wins the riches for the devotee.

Neighing denotes the sound of satisfaction on achieving the task.

sanaye: benefit; *sanitā*: donor;

¹⁵ आ यद् दुवः: (1), शतक्रत्वा (2), कामं जरितुणाम्

कृणोः (3), अक्षं न शर्चीभिः (4)

¹⁶ शश्वदिन्द्वः (1), पोष्टुथदभिः (2), जिगाय (3), नानंददभिः शाश्वसम्भिः (4),
धनानि (5), स नौ हिरण्यरथं (6), दंसनावान् त्स नः सनिता (7), सनये स
नौऽदात् (8)

Ashvins

1.30.17: Life-force of Gleaming Might

Come to us, with the steeds of rapid impulsion (2),
gleaming might, O Ashvins (1,3).

O achievers, you are full of lusture and have knowledge (4).¹⁷

Details: The life force symbolized by steeds has both rapid impulsions and a might which is clearly visible. Ashvins come both with knowledge and lustrous might.

1.30.18: Your Car in the Vast Midregion

Your car is yoked alike for you both, O achievers and immortals (1).
O Ashvins, your car moves in the vast midregion (2).¹⁸

Details: The movement of the Ashvins car in the vast midregion of the macrocosm corresponds to its movement in the subtle body of the human, *prāṇa-maya kosha*, conferring health and bliss on the humans.

1.30.19: One Wheel is on the Summit

On the summit of hill you placed one wheel of the chariot (1).
The other wheel goes around the Heaven (2).¹⁹

Details: The hill refers to the formation of the subtle body. The summit of the hill denotes the peak of ripened consciousness in man. Ashvins place one wheel on that summit and they welcome the Goddess Uṣha, discussed in the next mantra, who ascends the car and ascends to Heaven.

The other wheel of the car goes to the Heaven, the divine station.
Ashvins move both in Heaven and Earth. For instance RV (7.70.3) states, “the Ashvins have stations in the Heavens, in the growths of earth and in men; they rest on the summit of the hill.”

¹⁷ आ अश्विनौ (1), आश्वावत्या इषा यातं (2), शरीरया (3),

गोमद् दस्मा हिरण्यवत् (4)

¹⁸ समानयोजनो हि वां रथो दस्मौ अमर्त्यः (1), समुद्रे अश्विना ईयते (2)

¹⁹ नि अष्ट्यस्य मूर्धनि चक्रं रथस्य येमयुः (1), परि द्याम् अन्यत् ईयते (2)

Uṣha, the Dawn of Divine Consciousness

1.30.20: Who is Fit to Enjoy You?

O Uṣha, lover of praise (2),
which mortal is fit to enjoy you, the immortal (1,3)?
Whom do you attain; O wide-shining dawn (4)? ²⁰

Details: This mantra clearly indicates that Uṣha does not signify merely the physical dawn. Any person can look at the physical dawn every day and the phrase, “which mortal is fit to enjoy you,” is superfluous. Clearly Uṣha signifies the dawn of divine consciousness. The phrase, ‘whom does thou attain’, suggests the prayer of the Rishi to make him competent to receive her grace. The Rishi-s obtained the grace of the God by hearty lauds.

Just as the physical dawn indicates the onset of physical light from the dawn, the Divine dawn Uṣhas, indicates the onset or beginning of the divine consciousness in a person. It indicates our early spiritual experiences. For more details, see (1.4.8) and (1.4.9) in this book.

1.30.21: Our Thoughts are on You

We meditate on you, who is far or near or from the beyond (1),
O rosy dawn, richly hued, standing like a horse (2).²¹

Details: We meditate on you whether you are far from us in our thoughts or near us or you are in the station beyond.

Line 1: (alt.): We have filled ourselves with the thought of you from our last depths to our highest summits.

1.30.22: Establish the Inner Felicities in Us

Come with those shining divine plenitudes (1),

O daughter of Heaven (2).

Establish well in us the divine wealth (3).²²

Details: The physical dawn cannot establish any wealth in us. Only the divine dawn can establish us the spiritual felicities which are the real wealth.

²⁰ कः तं (1), उषः कथप्रिये (2), भुजे मर्तों अमर्त्ये (3), कं नक्षसे विभावरि (4)

²¹ वृयं हि ते अमन्महि आ अन्तादा पराकात् (1), अश्वे न चित्रे अरुषि (2)

²² त्वं त्येभिः आ गंहि वाजेभिः (1), दुहितर्दिवः (2), अस्मे रथ्यं नि धारय (3)

Section IV: Sūkta-s (1.31-1.35)

Sūkta Hymn title

- 1.31 Agni Dwells in Human Beings (18)
- 1.32 Indra-Vṛtra Encounter, the Release of Rays, Waters and Soma (15)
- 1.33 Indra's Victory and Other Deeds (15)
- 1.34 Ashvins: The Three Modes of Help (12)
- 1.35 Savitṛ Establishes the Worlds (11)

Riṣhi Hiranyastūpa, whose name means, 'a mass of golden radiance' shines his light in revealing some of the difficult aspects of Rig Veda. He gives a clear picture of the secrets behind four important deities namely Indra, Savitṛ, Ashvins and Agni. In some sense, Savitṛ is the highest deity in Rig Veda and is closely related to Sūrya. However the number of hymns dedicated to Savitṛ and Sūrya is relatively small.

This hymn (1.32) and the next one (1.33) are important in Rig Veda because they describe in detail the conflict between Indra and Vṛtra, the conflict itself being mentioned in several other verses. There are three different interpretations of the conflict: (i) as a natural phenomena, viz., the production of rain, (ii) as the fight between two opposing tribes or clans, known as *deva-s* and *dasyus*, led by Indra and Vṛtra or Ahi respectively, and (iii) as a symbolic battle between the forces of Light led by Indra and the forces of darkness and in conscience led by Vṛtra.

Under hypothesis (i), there are two views: (i)(a) that Vṛtra is a cloud which is cut up by Indra to produce rain-water, '(i)(b) that Vṛtra-Ahi is a block of ice on the snow-clad mountain which is made to move by Indra resulting in the glacier, the movement of the glacier being snake-like, indicated by the name Ahi.

A careful perusal of every verse of the hymn (1.32) and the next (1.33) will reveal that there is no support at all for hypothesis (ii), which regards the encounter as a battle between two tribes. Isolated phrases in a small number of verses offer support for hypothesis (i), either (i) (a) or (i) (b).

All the mantra-s in these two hymns together support the third hypothesis that the encounter is a symbolic battle between the forces of Light and the forces of Darkness or Evil. See also the related essays in Part I on the symbolism of demons, events and the battle.

In the Veda, the deity Sūrya plays a very important role. He is often closely coupled with the deity Savitṛ. Often the name Sūrya-Sāvitri is used to denote them together. Since this Section has a hymn 1.35 to Savitṛ, we will describe the role of Savitṛ and Sūrya.

Sūrya-Sāvitri is the Godhead of the Supreme Truth and knowledge hymned as *ekam sat*, One Truth. He represents the truth of being, truth of knowledge, truth of process and act and movement and functioning. He is therefore the creator or one who manifests all things for creation is releasing *sṛj* or expressing what is present in the Truth-will; He is the father, fosterer and enlightener of our souls. Thus the luminous vision and luminous creation are the two functions of Sūrya Sāvitri.

He is present both in the microcosm and the macrocosm. He is the Light of the Truth rising in the human consciousness. We may recall that the *devī* Uṣha, Dawn, represents the onset of the first rays of Light in our night-ridden consciousness, the consciousness covered by the forces of darkness, ignorance and inconsciousness. So Sūrya Sāvitri comes after the Dawn, and follows and expands the path traced for him by her. Hence it is said that Sūrya pursues the Dawn just as a lover follows after his beloved, (1.115.2).

All the Gods follow in the march of Sūrya, i.e., all other Divine faculties or potentialities in man expand with the expansion of Truth and Light. This is the reason for the widespread use of the mantra for Sūrya-Sāvitri known as Gāyatri of Vishvāmitra (3.62.10).

The name Sūrya is rarely used when there is a question of creation. Sūrya is reserved for his passive aspects as the body of infinite Light and the revelation. In his active power he is addressed by various names like Sāvitri, Tvaṣṭṛ etc. Sāvitri is used whenever the Rishi is concerned with the idea of creation i.e., the manifestation of the powers both in humans and cosmos; Savitṛ and Sūrya come from the same root. Sāvitri again manifests himself especially in the

formation of the Truth in man through the four great and active deities, Mitra, Varuṇa, Bhaga and Aryamān, representing the Lords of pure Wideness, luminous Harmony, divine Enjoyment and exalted Power respectively.

Sūrya and Savitṛ appellations are used sometimes as if identical and as if distinct at others. In the Veda, there is only one deity, *ekam sat*, one existence of which all other powers are aspects connected to one another by an intricate web. We cannot partition this web into several separate rigid parts so that each part is a separate deity.

See also the hymns to Sūrya, 1.50 and 1.115. The mantra-s (1.22.5-8) in Section II deal with Savitṛ.

1.31: Agni Dwells in All Human Beings

Riṣhi: Hiranyastūpah Āṅgirasa

- 1: Seers Born from You**
- 2: Agni Dwells in Man in Many Ways**
- 3: Endure the Burden**
- 4: Superb Doer of Good**
- 5: The Sole Person**
- 6: Agni Leads Him to Knowledge**
- 7: Grant Immortality to the Mortal**
- 8: Gain of Divine Wealth**
- 9: Fashion Our Divine Body**
- 10: We are Your Relatives**
- 11: The First Man**
- 12: Guard Our Bodies**
- 13: Four-eyed**
- 14: Types of Aspirants**
- 15: Please the Guest**
- 16: Maker of Seers**
- 17: Visit Our Home**
- 18: Grow in Us by Mantra**

Metre: 1-7,9-15,17, Jagatī; 8,16,18, Triṣṭup

1.31.1: Seers Born from You

O Agni, you are the first of the Āṅgira-s, a Seer and God (1),
you become a beneficent friend of Gods (2).

By your actions were born the Seers who act by knowledge (3),
and the Maruts of shining-arms (4).¹

Details: The Vedic mantra-s come out of the mouths of the Rishi-s by the grace of Agni. Hence Agni is said to create the Seers or the Seers were born by his deeds.

Maruts: special deities, fast in speed, belong to the life-plane or mid-region. They give a divine motion to the activities of the intelligence illumined by the Light and Strength of Indra. Maruts are not mere gusts of wind, but they are Seers who act by knowledge. See the hymns (1.6) and (1.19).

Āṅgira-s: A family of Seers also known as Āṅgirasa-s who have contributed to both Rig Veda and Atharva Veda. For more information, see (1.71.2), (1.33.6). [KS,CW, Vol. 6] and [SA,SV, Chap. 14]

1.31.2: Agni Dwells in Man in Many Ways

O Agni, you are the first (1),
the most excellent among the Āṅgirasa-s (2).

Seer, you adorn the deeds of the Gods from all sides (3).
You manifest in multiple ways for the world (4);
you are wise; you measure the two worlds (5).
In how many ways do you dwell in man? (6).²

Details: The last line of the verse indicates that the modes of manifestation of Agni in humans are as numerous as the human beings.

mātā: measurer derived from *ma*, to measure, the same root as in the word *māya*.

¹ त्वमग्ने प्रथमो अङ्गिरा॑ ऋषिदेवो (1), देवानांम् अभवः शि॒वः सखा॑ (2),
तवं ब्र॑ते कृ॒वयौ विद्वनापुसो अजायन्त (3), मरुतो॑ भ्राजहृष्यः (4)

² त्वमग्ने प्रथमो (1), अङ्गिरस्तमः (2), कृ॒विः देवानां॑ परि॒ भूषसि ब्र॑तम् (3),
वि॒भुः विश्वस्मै॒ भुवनाय् (4), मे॒धिरो द्विमाता॑ (5), श्॒युः कृ॒तिधा॑ चिंदायवै॒ (6)

dvi: two, always stands for the two worlds, Heaven and Earth. Agni establishes in the aspirant a vast knowledge of the dual form of Heaven and Earth. *shāyu*: dwell (in man)

1.31.3: Endure the Burden

O Agni, you are important for Vāyu (1);
 manifest for the one desiring to do good deeds, O shining one (2).
 In the yajña done by Agni as the hotṛ-priest (4),
 Heaven and Earth trembled (3); you endure that burden (5);
 O treasure, you worship the great Gods (6).³

Details: Vāyu is the God of life described in (1.2.1) – (1.2.3). He purifies the nervous system of the seeker, aspiring to ascend to the world of Gods; he also fills the body with life-strength. Manifestation of Agni, the Seer-will, is necessary before the play of Vāyu in a human can begin. The phrase ‘trembled’ refers to the initial movement in the consciousness of Heaven and Earth, mind and matter, which are dormant before Agni enters.

Mātarishvan: the deity Vāyu. *māta* is the midregion, the realm of the life - energies, *prāṇa*. There he breathes, *shva-s*.

bhāram: the burden of managing the entire yajña.

vivasvate: the shining one; the human aspirant shining with the desire for doing good deeds.

hotṛvūrye: *hotṛ* is Agni, the summoning-priest who calls all the Gods to the yajña, *vūrye* means to choose to do the yajña-action.

rodasī: Heaven and Earth.

³ त्वमग्ने प्रथमो मातृरिश्वन् (1), आविः भव सुक्रतूया विवस्वते (2), अर्जेतां रोदसी (3), होतृवूर्ये (4), असंश्लोः भारम् (5), अयंजो महो वंसो (6)

1.31.4: Superb Doer of Good

O Agni, you have proclaimed to the thinker (1,3),
that Heaven (can be attained) (2).

To the performer of good actions who laments much (4),
(you motivate him) to do good deeds (5).

You were released by quick churning of Heaven and Earth (6);
they brought you in front (and established you) (7),
and also from behind (8).⁴

Details: Agni has proclaimed that the divine station has to be attained
and can be attained by the thinker.

The person performing the yajña is called *purūravas* because he
laments much about his efforts to attain the divine station or
consciousness. To such a person, Agni is the superb motivator who
pushes the sacrificer to greater heights. S introduces the story of the
Purānic person, Purūravas, for which there is no need. Purāna-s
came into existence much later than the Veda.

Agni is released all around by the parents (*pitroḥ*), the forces of
consciousness denoted by Heaven and Earth. *muchyase*: released;
they in line 7: heaven and earth; *avāshayah*: sounded;
Line 8: ā: *ānayan*, brought. *shvātreṇa*: churning;

1.31.5: The Sole Person

O Agni, you are the one who showers knowledge (1),
and nourishes (2).

You are praised (with mantra-s) (4),
by those having the luminous clarity of thought (3).

O Sole One, first illumine the one (6,8),
who offers on all sides, *vaśhat* along with knowledge (5),
and (illumine) the others too (*visha*) (7).⁵

⁴ त्वम्_ग्रे मनवे_ (1), धाम् (2), अंवाशयः (3), पुरूरवसे सुकृतैं (4), सुकृत्तरः (5),
श्वात्रेण यत्_पित्रोः मुच्यसे परि (6), आ त्वा पूर्वम् अनयन् (7), आपरं_पुनः (8)

⁵ त्वम्_ग्रे वृषभः (1), पुष्टिवर्धन्_ (2), उद्यतसुचे (3), भवसि श्रवाय्यः (4)

य आहुंति_ परि_ वेदा_ वर्षद्वृतिम् (5), एकायुः अग्ने (6), विशा (7), आविवाससि (8)

Details: *vāṣṭaṭ*: A word used extensively in rituals while making offerings. In the inner sacrifice, the use of this word while making the offering after the invocation gives the notion of firmness. The hymn states that Agni gives illumination to the persons who with *vāṣṭaṭ* give offerings to the Gods.

ekāyuh: *eka* + *āyu*, the Sole Person. The word *āyu* is well known in Veda to mean a living being in general and a human in particular. Agni represents the soul or essence of the *prāṇamaya kosha* in all humans. Recall the second rik which states, ‘In how many ways do you dwell in man?’

udyatasruche: for the ritualists it is “one who lifts the vessel used to pour ghee.” In the esoteric sense it signifies the person with luminous clarity of thought.

vṛṣhabha: One who gives or showers all the knowledge and power; it is a popular word in the RV occurring with its inflections and variants more than 200 times. It is a common epithet for Indra. The common meaning of the word, the animal bull, is applicable only in a few instances. It is also a common epithet used to describe the might of kings, *puruṣha vṛṣhabha*. See notes on *vṛṣhabha* in (1.59.6).

1.31.6: Agni Leads Him to Knowledge

You direct the person away from the crooked path (1),
and unite him with knowledge, O all-seeing Agni (2).

In the intense contest for wealth by the brave (3),
you defeat (the opponents), superior in strength (5),
to bestow wealth on the inferiors in the contest (4).⁶

Details: The purport is that Agni, the seer-will, takes the devotee away from the crooked path and leads him to the centre of knowledge (*vidatha*). Agni’s grace on his devotees is such that the devotees always win in the contest with others, even though the opponents may be superior (*bhūyāsaḥ*) in numbers and strength.

samṛta: contest; test of strength;

• त्वम्‌ग्रे वृजि॒नव॑र्तनि॒ं नरं (1), सक्मन्॒ पिपर्षि॒ वि॒दधै॒ विचर्षणे॒ (2),
यः शूरसाता॒ परितक्ष्ये॒ धनै॒ (3), दुभ्रेभिः॒ चित्॒ समृता॒ (4), हंसि॒ भूयसः॒ (5)

1.31.7: Grant Immortality to the Mortal

You establish the mortal in the excellent of law of immortality (1),
for hearing the divine inspiration daily, O Agni (2).

For the wise who thirst for two-fold lives (3),
you create both happiness and pleasure (4).⁷

Details: *janmane ubhayāya*: two-fold birth; refers to the human and divine birth, i.e., the birth of Gods in man.

prayas: all things pleasing. Note that the Vedic Seers do not espouse asceticism.

S translates *shravase* as food and *ubhayāya* as getting bipeds and quadrupeds, meaning sons and animals. S assigns different meanings to *shravase* in different places. KS translates ‘*shravase*’ everywhere as inspiration or Divine Hearing.

amṛtatva: immortality; The Vedic *amṛta*, the immortality is a state of consciousness characterized by complete Light and Knowledge. Our ordinary consciousness is *mṛta*, or mortal. Death, for the Vedic mystics, is not a simplistic affair beginning with the stoppage of heart. It is possible to establish ourselves in a state of consciousness of Light and Knowledge, so that we are not controlled by decay or death. Persons who have attained this state of consciousness can give up their bodies as per their wish.

By becoming conscious of our source above in the world of Truth, we do not forfeit our right to live on earth a life of fulfillment. For those aspiring both for heaven and earth, Agni finds them both the divine bliss and human joy.

⁷ त्वं तमग्ने अमृतत्वं उत्तमे (1), मर्तैः दधासि श्रवसे दिवेदिवे (2), यस्तातृष्णाणं
उभयायु जन्मने मर्यः (3), कृणोषि प्रयु आ च सूरये (4)

1.31.8: Gain of Divine Wealth

O Agni, for the gain of divine wealth (1),
let me become a superb doer of works by praising you (2).
May we prosper by new acts (3).
May Heaven and Earth with other Gods promote our worship (4).⁸

1.31.9: Fashion Our Divine Body

O Agni, seated near the parents (1),
(you are) unsullied, wakeful and the God among Gods (2).
Become active in us (ā) and fashion our divine body (3);
provide excellent knowledge to the doer of works (4).
O Auspicious one, in the one who praises (5),
you sow all the wealth (6).⁹

Details: The parents are the Heaven and Earth, signifying divine and Earth consciousness.

Line 3: Agni is capable of fashioning a new body for the sacrificer, a body fit for the birth of the Gods and fit for bearing the powers of immortality. Agni is called as a maker of the Rishi in RV (1.31.16). RV (9.83.1) states that, ‘if the body is not fit or not baked, *atāptataṇu*, then it may not attain the goal’. Also an epithet for Indra in RV (1.4.1) is, ‘fashioner of perfect forms’.

opishe: to sow; *kārave*: one who lauds;

⁸ त्वं नौ अग्ने सुनये धनानां (1), यशसं कारुं कृणुहि स्तवानः (2),

क्रथ्याम् कर्मपिसा नवैन (3), देवैः यावापृथिवी प्रावतं नः (4)

⁹ त्वं नौ अग्ने पित्रोः उपस्थ (1), आ देवो देवेषु अनवद्य जागृविः (2),

तनुकृद् (3), बौधि प्रमतिश्र (4), कारवै त्वं कल्याण (5),

वसु विश्वम् ओपिषे (6)

1.31.10: We are Your Relatives

O Agni, you are the possessor of excellent knowledge (1),
and our protector (2).

O Bestower of strength, we are your relatives (3).
Riches in hundreds and thousands reach you (4,6).
you are endowed with hero-strengths (5).

O Unassailable One, you protect the law of workings (7).¹⁰

Details: *vrata*: law of workings, not the usual human ritual observances.

sam yanti: reach you.

1.31.11: The First Man

Among the born, the gods made you (2),
the first person, O Agni (1), and the king of men (3).

When my father's son (Agni) was born (5),
he became Ilā, the seeing Word, the instructress of man (4).¹¹

Details: The purport of this hymn is that the Gods managing the affairs of the world make Agni the first living being endowed with the life-energy, *prāṇa*. Hence he is called the first person. Afterwards, they make Agni the protector of the humans. Agni is called my father's son since he is the portion or son of the divine Father of all, *pita*.

nahuṣha is a synonym for man, like *āyu* and *manuṣha*. *nahuṣhasya vishpatim* means king of men. S also interprets *nahuṣha* in this sense in RV (1.122.8). It occurs about 15 times in RV; the meaning 'man' fits everywhere. Nahusha here has nothing to do with his Purāṇic namesake.

¹⁰ त्वमग्ने प्रमतिः (1), त्वं पितासि नः (2), त्वं व॒यस्कृत् तवं जा॒मयौ व॒यम् (3),
सं त्वा रायः श॒तिनः सं संहृष्णिणः (4), सुवीरं (5), यन्ति (6), ब्रतपाम्
अंदाभ्य (7)

¹¹ त्वामग्ने प्रथमम् आयुम् (1), आयवै देवा अंकृण्वन् (2), नहुषस्य विशपतिम् (3),
इळाम् अकृण्वन् मनुषस्य शासनी (4), पितुर्यत् पुत्रो ममकस्य जायते (5)

॥ā: the instructress. ॥ā is the Goddess of vision, the seeing Word or *pashyanti vāk*, mentioned by the *tāntriks*. Agni himself becomes ॥ā, the instructress of the divine man. ॥ā is discussed in RV (1.13.9).

1.31.12: Guard Our Bodies

O God Agni, with your protections (1),
guard our riches and bodies, O adorable one (2).
You are the protector of knowledge and its successors (3),
since your law of workings is to guard them continuously (4).¹²

Details: Progeny (*toka*), and son (*tanaya*), refer to the creation and the extension of the spiritual knowledge provided by the teacher. Agni guards not only the physical wealth but also the spiritual knowledge. The Seers pray for the welfare of everyone, not just their children.

gavām: Rays of illumined consciousness or spiritual knowledge; this meaning fits throughout the RV, whereas the meaning of cows fits in only a few places.

animesham: unwinking, continuous; *pāyubhiḥ*: protections;

1.31.13: Four-eyed

You are the intimate protector of the unattached sacrificer (1).

Four-eyed, you shine forth, O Agni (2).

You are both gentle and nourishing (4);
you will request the giver of offerings (3,6),
the lauder, to utter secretly the mantra (5).¹³

Details: Agni is said to have four eyes, one in each of the three lower stations of matter, life and mind and one in the fourth station, the *svar*. Agni is watching the human aspirant from all these stations. The chanting by the seeker is so dear to Agni that, in secret, he encourages the seeker to chant.

¹² त्वं नौ अग्ने तवे देव पायुभिः (1), मधोनौ रक्षतन्वश्च बन्ध (2),

त्राता तोकस्य तनये गवाम् असि (3), अनिमेषं रक्षमाणः तवे ब्रते (4)

¹³ त्वम् यज्यवे पायुरन्तरो अनिष्टज्ञाय (1), चतुरक्ष इथ्यसे (2), यो रातहब्यो (3),
अवृकाय धायसे (4), कीरेश्चिन् मन्त्रं मनसा (5), बनोषि तम् (6)

avṛkāya: unhurting, gentle. The generic meaning of *vṛka* in the entire Veda is one who tears or hurts. The common meaning in classical Sanskrit for *vṛka* is wolf; however, this meaning is valid only in a few instances in the Veda. *avṛka*, with the negation particle *a*, means one who does not hurt; otherwise its literal meaning, non-wolf, conveys no sense.

vanoshi: entreat or request; *antaro*: intimate;

dhāyase: nourish; *kireḥ*: lauder, singer;

manāsa: secretly;

Lines 3,5,6: The laud in the form of mantra is so important that you request the giver of offerings to recite the mantra.

1.31.14: Types of Aspirants

O Agni, for the intelligent and the great singer (1),
you grant the supreme desirable wealth (2).

Like a father, you bestow (3),
on the weak aspirant the necessary knowledge (4).

All-knowing, you instruct the immature in all directions (5).¹⁴

Details: Agni helps the three different types of aspirants, namely the intelligent (*urushamsa*), the weak (*ādhra*) and the immature (*pākam*) in appropriate ways. The weak sacrificer (*adhra*) is one who is sincere, but lacks the will-power for sustained action. Agni acts accordingly.

The wealth, *rekṇah*, is the divine wealth and not merely the material one.

¹⁴ त्वमंग्र उरुशंसाय वाधते (1), स्पृहै यद् रेकणः परमं बनोषि तत् (2),
आग्रस्य चित् प्रमत्तिः (3), उच्यते पिता (4), प्र पाकं शास्ति प्र दिशौ
विदुष्टरः (5)

1.31.15: Please the Guest

The giver who gifts properly is linked to you (1),
 You protect him from all (dangers) like an armour (2).
 One who pleases the guest, by giving tasty dishes (3),
 carries on the worship of living beings all through her life (4),
 and is close to Heaven (5).¹⁵

Details: Agni is popularly referred to in the Veda as the guest. By treating all the guests in the house with tasty offerings (or the guest in his own body), the seeker worships the God Agni continuously all through his life. Being generous to all persons creates a link to Agni which serves as an armour to ward off dangers.

svādu: tasty dishes, *syona*: happiness;

Line 1: (Alt.): one intent on the practice of discernment, (6.53.2);
dakṣhiṇam: A gift made with discrimination and without expecting returns. It is related to the word *dakṣha*, discernment. For the ritualists, it is the fee for the priests. Recall that the gift can be *satvik*, *rajasic* or *tamasic* (BG. 17-22).

1.31.16: Maker of Seers

O Agni, pardon our offence (1), in straying far from your path (2).
 You are our ally, the protector of the superb knowledge (3),
 the impeller of Soma-drinking Gods (4).
 (You) transform mortals into Seers (5).¹⁶

Details: Having deviated far away from the spiritual path, the path of *yajña*, the person recognizes his/her offence and asks Agni's pardon. Agni is called as the maker of Seers because he guides the mortals in all possible ways so that they may advance on the spiritual path and develop the vision also. He impels the Gods and summons them to the *yajña*.

¹⁵ त्वम् ग्रे प्रयतदक्षिणं नरं (1), वर्मेव स्युतं परि पासि विश्वतः (2),
 स्वादुक्षिणा यो वस्तौ स्यौनुकृत् (3), जीवयां यजते (4), सोपुमा दिवः (5)

¹⁶ इमामग्रे शरणिं भीमृषो न (1), इमम् अध्वानं यम् अगामं द्वात् (2),
 आपि: पिता प्रमतिः (3), सोम्यानां भूमिः असि (4), ऋषिकृन् मत्यानाम् (5)

āpiḥ: a relative or ally, one who inspires us to attain our goals.

r̥ṣhikṛt: Agni transforms ordinary mortals into Seers, Rishi-s, endowed with visions of the supraphysical. Recall (1.31.9).

1.31.17: Visit Our Home

O Agni, like Manu, Aṅgiras, Yayāti (1),
and other ancient Seers, visit our house (2).

Bring all the Gods (3),
seat the dear ones on the altar and worship them (4).¹⁷

Details: Manu, Yayāti and Aṅgiras are all the Seers of mantra-s, and the Vedic index ascribes many mantra-s of the RV to these Seers. Moreover, these three are also regarded as Gods; they have been transformed into Gods. Manu is the thinker, the first among men. Angirah is the God with the glory of Agni and Yayāti is the God whose yate, movement, is like that of Vāyu, the God of life-energies.

For Aṅgiras, see (1.71.2).

sadane: the home of yajña; the subtle body of the aspirant.

shuche: luminous; seers.

1.31.18: Grow in Us by Mantra

O Agni, grow (in us) by the mantra (1),
chanted with our (limited) capability and knowledge (2).

You lead us to riches (3),
you connect us to right thinking, full of plenitude (4).¹⁸

Details: vāja: In the Veda, it has the meaning of plenitude or fullness, plenty of everything. It gives to this word several widely different meanings, like food, strength and battle in a single verse (1.4.9). Again this popular word occurs more than two hundred times with the meaning of plenitude and its variants valid everywhere.

¹⁷ मुनुष्वदग्ने अङ्गिरस्वत् अङ्गिरो ययातिवत् (1), सदने पूर्ववत् शुचे (2),
अच्छं याहि आ वंहा दैव्यं जनम् (3), आ सादय बहिषि यक्षि च प्रियम् (4)

¹⁸ एतेनाग्ने ब्रह्मणा वावृथस्व (1), शक्ती वा यत् तै चकृमा विदा वा (2), उत्
प्रणेषि अभि वस्यौ अस्मान् (3), त्सं नः सृज सुमत्या वाजवत्या (4)

Hymn 1.32: Indra-Vṛtra Encounter and the Release of Rays, Waters and Soma

Rishi: Hiranyakstupah Āngirasah

- 1: Struck Ahi and Broke the Hill
- 2: The Vajra from the World Svar
- 3: Three Rites in the Subtle Body
- 4: Destruction of the Deceptive Knowledge
- 5: Superb Coverer Vṛtra
- 6: Remover of Foes
- 7: Vṛtra Rendered Partially Inactive
- 8: Waters Mounting the Mind
- 9: The Mother of Division Covers Vṛtra
- 10: Vṛtra's Body is Hidden in Darkness
- 11: Removed the Cover on the Aperture
- 12: Released the Light and Delight
- 13: Obstacles to Indra in the Battle
- 14: Doubt about Vṛtra's Death
- 15: All-powerful Indra

Metre: Triṣṭup

For the symbolism of demons, events and the battle, see 'Essentials of Rig Veda' (SAKSI).

1.32.1: Struck Ahi and Broke the Hill

I relate the exploits of Indra (1),
 which the Vajrin mainly performed (2).
 He struck the serpent Ahi injuring the waters (3),
 broke the hill which obstructed the rivers in their flow (4).¹

Details: Vajrin: Indra, holder of Vajra or the thunderer. The thunder is the symbol of the potent sound of Vajra, which overcomes all obstacles.

¹ इन्द्रस्य नु वीर्याणि प्र वौचं (1), यानि चकारं प्रथमानि वृजी (2),
 अहन् अहिम् अनु अपः ततद् (3), प्र वक्षणा अभिन्त् पर्वतानाम् (4)

Ahi: Literally a snake, a common synonym for Vṛtra. Snake is the standard symbol in Indian mythology for life-energies enmeshed with greed, anger, destruction, etc., qualities characterizing Vṛtra. S states that the name Ahi is used because the cloud has the shape of a snake. Ahi indicates a generic name for titans as in (1.32.3) (*ahinām*).
 tatarda: injured. Releasing suddenly the waters whose flow has been stopped or obstructed is figuratively represented by this phrase.
 vakṣhaṇaḥ: flowing rivers.

parvata: The hill symbolizing the forces of inertia and in conscience. Sometimes used for the demon itself.

glacier: Ahi is also said to indicate a glacier because of the epithets, the mountain and the snake. In the next verse, it is said Ahi is hidden in the mountain. It is said that the zig-zag movement of the massive blocks of ice melting because of the Sun is compared to the movement of a massive snake causing fear.

1.32.2: The Vajra from the World Svar

He struck Ahi hidden in the mountain (1).

For him Tvaṣṭṛ fashioned the Vajra of the luminous world (2).

Like lowing cows reaching the calves (3),
 the flowing waters straight reached the ocean (4).²

Details: Tvaṣṭṛ: divine sculptor; *svaryam*: from the fourth world, *svar*, the world of Light. Vajra belongs to this realm.

anjah: straight path. Ordinary rivers flow by meandering paths. Obviously these rivers are not physical. Note the phrase, ‘waters mounting the mind’, occurring in (1.32.8) of this hymn.

² अहन् अहिं पर्वते शिश्रियाणं त्वष्ट (1), अस्मै वज्रं स्वर्यं ततक्ष (2),
 वाश्रा इव धेनवः स्यन्दमाना (3), अञ्जः समुद्रम् अवं जग्मुः आपः (4)

1.32.3: Three Rites in the Subtle Body

Like one showering gifts, he chose Soma (1),
and drank it in three infusions (on behalf of all) (2).
Opulent, he wielded the killer Vajra (3),
and struck the first-born of the Ahi-s (demons) (4).³

Details: The idea is that Indra, acting like one who showers of gifts, drinks the three Soma infusions, denoting the three inner yajñas or rites performed on behalf of all. The three yajñas symbolise the actions on the three planes, namely the physical or matter, the life-energies and the mind.

trikadrukesuḥ: denotes the three yajñas, namely *jyotiḥ*, (illumination), *gauḥ* (Ray of Light) and *āyuḥ* (Life). The ritualists give the meaning of three days of rites in which the infusion of the Soma is done.

prathamajām ahinām: Vṛtra is the eldest or the premier titan among the Ahi-s.

1.32.4: Destruction of the Deceptive Knowledge

O Indra, when you struck the eldest Ahi (1),
you also destroyed the deceptive knowledge of the fraudulent (2).
Even though the Sun, the Heaven, and the Dawn, were revealed
(3),
the enemy is not yet fully destroyed at that time (4).⁴

Details: Notice the symbolic character of the killing of Vṛtra, especially the phrase, ‘deceptive knowledge of the fraudulent’. This aspect is heightened by the latter half of the verse, ‘revealing the Sun and Dawn’, discussed in (1.7.3).

³ वृषायमाणो अवृणीत् सोमं (1), त्रिकद्रुकेषु अपिबत् सुतस्य (2);
आ सायकं मध्वा आदत्त् वज्रम् (3), अहन् एन प्रथमजाम् अहीनाम् (4)

⁴ यत् इन्द्र अहन् प्रथमजाम् अहीनाम् (1), आत् मायिनाम् अभिनाः प्रोत
मायाः (2), आत् सूर्य जनयन् धामुषातः (3), तादीत्रा शत्रुं न किल
विवित्से (4)

The second half indicates that the destruction of the evil forces has not been completed, even though dawn, Sun etc., which were covered earlier were now seen.

māyinām māyāḥ: deceptive knowledge of the fraudulent.

1.32.5: Superb Coverer Vṛtra

Striking the superb coverer Vṛtra (1),
with a mighty blow from his Vajra (3),
Indra cut off its shoulders (2).
Like tree trunks cut by an axe (4),
Ahi lay inert close to the Earth (5).⁵

Details: *vṛtrataram*: most Vṛtra, superb coverer Vṛtra. *tara* and *tama* are suffixes indicating comparison of abstract qualities. Thus Vṛtra or Ahi should not be construed as a particular person or animal with a physical body, but a type of force. The being battling Indra is pre-eminent in this group. Recall the phrase, ‘first among Ahis’. Recall that the battle takes place in the midworld (*antarikṣha*). When Ahi is killed, its subtle body drops to the Earth.

Ahi, Vṛtra and Vyamsa refers to the same non-human entity. Vyamsa is one whose shoulders are cut off. These forces have a detailed structure, parts of which are referred to as arms, shoulders etc.

1.32.6: Remover of Foes

Like one without a rival, the haughty one, Vṛtra, challenged (1),
the great warrior, who is the oppressor and remover (of the foes) (2).
He (Vṛtra) could not avoid the impact of the blows (3);
the foe of Indra (Vṛtra) had ground to a halt the rivers (4).⁶

Details: *rujānāḥ*: rivers, derived from the root *ruj*, to break.

⁵ अहंन् वृत्रं वृत्रतरं (1), व्यंसम् इन्द्रो (2), वज्रेण महुता वृधेन (3),

स्कन्धासीवु कुलिशेना विवृक्णा (4), अहिः शयत उपुपुक् पृथिव्याः (5)

⁶ अयोद्धेव दुर्मद् आ हि जुहे (1), मंहावीरं तुविबाधम् कर्जीषम् (2),

न अतारीत् अस्य समृतिं वधानां (3), सं रुजानाः पिपिषु इन्द्रशत्रुः (4)

rijisham: remover of foes, derived from *isham* and *ija*. S interprets it as the possessor of the Soma, left over from the earlier ritual.

1.32.7: Vṛtra Rendered Partially Inactive

Bereft of feet and hands, he (Vṛtra) still desired to fight Indra (1), who struck him (Vṛtra) at the crown (2).

Like an eunuch desiring to act virile (3),
Vṛtra fell on the ground with his limbs shattered (4).⁷

Details: *vyastah*: *vi + astah*, devoid of hands and feet. Even though hands and feet are mentioned, it does not imply that Vṛtra is a human being. In Indian tradition hands and feet are organs of action. Thus the phrase means that the force symbolized by Vṛtra was immobilized by Indra.

1.32.8: Waters Mounting the Mind

Like a river breaking the banks (1),
the waters flow over Vṛtra who was lying down (4,2),
and ascended back to the mind (of man) (3).

Vṛtra, had besieged with his might these waters (5),
(now) he came to lie at their very feet (6).⁸

Details: *mano ruhāñāḥ*: (waters) mounting the minds (of men). Just as when rain comes the water of the river overflows its banks, the force of Indra makes the divine energies (waters) cross over the restrictions placed by Vṛtra and ascend directly to the mind of men, thus illuminating and energizing them. Obviously the rivers cannot be physical.

patsutah shih: lying under their feet;

⁷ अपादंहस्तो अपृतन्युत् इन्द्रम् (1), आस्य वज्रमधि सानौ जघान (2),

वृष्णो वधिः प्रतिमानं बुभूषन् (3), पुरुत्रा वृत्रो अशयद् व्यस्तः (4)

⁸ नदं न भिन्नम् (1), अमुया शयानं (2), मनो रुहाणा (3),

अति यन्ति आपः (4), याश्चिद् वृत्रो महिना पर्यतिष्ठत् (5),

तासामहि: पत्सुतः-शीः बभूव (6)

1.32.9: The Mother of Division Covers Vṛtra

Dānu, the mother of the evil force, Vṛtra, lowered her arms (1);
Indra flung the striking weapon below her (2).

The mother was above, the son below (3).

Dānu lay asleep like a cow with her calf (4).⁹

Details: This verse states symbolically that Dānu, the mother of the forces of ignorance, protects her son during the son's fight with the children of Light.

nichāvayā: with her arms down;

dānu: the divided nature (*prakṛti*), the mother of Division, the mother of Vṛtra and other titans. She is also called Diti. She is to be contrasted with Aditi, the infinite Nature, unslayable cow, mother of the Gods, Indra and others mentioned in RV (1.89.10) and in other verses. Both Diti and Aditi are mentioned together in one verse RV (4.2.11), clarifying their symbolism.

"Let the knower discriminate Knowledge (*chitti*) and Ignorance (*achitti*), the straight open levels and the crooked that shut the mortals;

O Agni, for the right birth of the Son,

Lavish on us the (finite) Diti and guard the (infinite) Aditi".

1.32.10: Vṛtra's Body is Hidden in Darkness

Amidst the changing current of waters, devoid of habitation (1),
Vṛtra's body was deposited (2).

The waters flowed over the concealed Vṛtra (3).

He, the foe of Indra, lay in perpetual darkness (4).¹⁰

Details: *nīnyam*: hidden, concealed, a mystery. This is a keyword in Veda used often to indicate the knowledge or power which is hidden.

⁹ नीचावया अभवद् वृत्रपुत्र (1), इन्द्रौ अस्या अव वधः जभार (2),

उत्तरा सूः अधरः पुत्र आसीद् (3), दानुः शये सहवत्सा न धेनुः (4)

¹⁰ अतिष्ठन्तीनाम् अनिवेशनानां काष्ठानां मध्ये (1), निहितं शरीरम् (2), वृत्रस्य
निष्यं वि चरन्ति आपो (3), दीर्घं तम् आशयत् इन्द्रात्रुः (4)

In this case the Mother of ignorance hides the body of Vṛtra in her bowels and hence it is unseen.

a-niveshanānām: devoid of a place to enter;

S translates *nīnyam* here as nameless. The Nighantu or lexicon of Yāska does not mention it as a meaning of *nīnyam*. If it is asked how this adjective is given to Vṛtra, S states that Vṛtra was so thoroughly dead that his name was forgotten totally. But S translates *nīnyam* as concealed elsewhere, for instance in (1.95.4). In (1.164.37) this word is used to describe the *jīva* or soul, 'I know not if I am this; a mystery, *nīnyam*, am I, and bound, I move about the mind.' Other references are (7.33.9), (7.56.4), (7.61.5), (4.3.16), where the meaning given by us is appropriate.

aniveshanānām: without fixed dwelling, flowing.

1.32.11: Removed the Cover on the Aperture

The waters, subdued and constrained by Vṛtra (1),
stood fettered like the light confined by Paṇi (2).

The closed aperture blocking the waters (3),
was uncovered by the striker of Vṛtra (4).¹¹

1.32.12: Released the Light and Delight

Like the tail of a horse (warding off a fly) (1),
with the Vajra you (chased) Vṛtra (2),
who struck you back (3), O Indra, the God absolute (4).
You won the light, won the Soma-delight, O hero (5);
you released the seven rivers to flow again (6).¹²

Details: This verse refers to the three benefits obtained from Indra's action, namely the release of the Rays of Light (*gāh*), the release of

¹¹ दासपत्नीः अहिं-गोपा (1), अतिष्ठन् निरुद्धा आपः पृणिनैव गावः (2),
अपां बिलम् अपिहितं यदासीद् (3), वृत्रं जघन्वाँ अप तद् वंचार (4)

¹² अश्यो वारौ अभवः तत् (1), इन्द्र सुके यत् (2), त्वा प्रत्यहन् (3), देव
एकः (4), अजयो गा अजयः शुर सोमम् (5), अवासृजः सत्वि सप्त सिन्धून् (6)

the Soma and the release of the Waters in the form of seven rivers (*sindhūn*). Regarding these rivers, see the note in (1.35.8).

Usually it is the demon Vala and the Paṇi-s who steal the Rays, *gāh*, and imprison them in the cave. They are released by the Aṅgirasa Seers. Indra releases the Waters stopped by Vṛtra. In the Veda these two events are not separate, but one event, described together or separately in several places. The seven rivers refer to the energies in the seven planes, namely Earth, midregion, Heaven, *svar* and the supreme triplet, *tridhātu*.

It should be noted that cows cannot be stored in a cave like gold; without water and other necessities, they die quickly. There is no mention in the Veda of Vala or Paṇi-s caring for the cows, clearly indicating the symbolic nature of the cows. The phrase, ‘release of Soma’, indicates the symbolism of the entire event. The Vṛtra-Vala complex imprisons the Rays of Light, energies or Waters, the ecstasy or Delight or Soma and also the Sun and Dawn as mentioned in other verses. The purpose of Vṛtra and other Rākṣhasa-s is to hide the Light and Delight from all human beings. Indra releases the Light and Delight for all mankind.

1.32.13: Obstacles to Indra in the Battle

Neither the lightning, nor the roar (1),
nor the rains nor the thunderclap (3),
could reach Indra (2), as he battled Ahi (4).
Indra surmounted other obstacles as well (5).¹³

Details: Lightning, rains, etc., are all symbolic.

¹³ नास्मै विद्युतं तन्यतुः (1), सिंघेधु न (2), यां मिहुम् अकिरद् ध्रुदुनिं च (3), इन्द्रश्च यद् युयुधाते आहेः (4), च उत अपरीभ्यो मघवा वि जिंग्ये (5)

1.32.14: Doubt about Vṛtra's Death

“Who else is the slayer of Atri (1), but you have seen” (2),
 this fear (doubt) arose (4),
 in the mind of Indra who had earlier struck the Ahi (3).
 Ninety-nine rivers and worlds, he traversed (5,7),
 like a bird in fear (6).¹⁴

Details: A doubt arose in Indra, who had earlier struck Vṛtra, whether Vṛtra was dead or not. Therefore he crossed the psychological rivers and traversed the worlds to make sure of Vṛtra's slaying. This fear was compounded by the fact that Dānu covered Vṛtra's body.

If Vṛtra were a human being, how can his body be lost? Vṛtra represents a cosmic force and its destruction is not easily pinpointed. Hence the need for Indra's search.

There is no need to introduce the Purāṇic legends that Indra was fleeing from the sin of killing Vṛtra.

1.32.15: All-powerful Indra

Indra is the king of the mobile and the immobile (1),
 king of the quiescent and the forceful, he the Vajra-armed (2).
 He as the king rules over all people (3),
 and is all around them (5),
 like the rim encircling the spokes (4).¹⁵

Details: This verse summarizes the sovereignty of Indra.

[Adhyāya 3 begins. The subject matter of the Sūkta (1.33) here is a continuation of that in (1.32).]

¹⁴ अहैः यातारं कम् (1), अपश्य (2), इन्द्र हुदि यत् तै जघ्नोषे (3),
 भीरगच्छत् (4), नवं च यन्नवतिं च स्ववन्तीः (5), श्येनो न भीतो (6),
 अतरो रजासि (7)

¹⁵ इन्द्रौ यातो अवसितस्य राजा (1), शमस्य च शुक्लिणो वज्रबाहुः (2),
 सेदु राजा क्षयति चर्षणीनाम् (3), अरान् न नेमिः (4), परि ता बभूव (5)

Hymn 1.33: Indra's Victory and Other Deeds

- 1: Aspirants for Knowledge
- 2: Invoked in Yajña-Journey
- 3: Gives the Light to whom he favours
- 4: Ungiving Foes and their Wealth
- 5: The Foes Scattered
- 6: Vṛtra-s Run Away
- 7: Victory in the Midworld
- 8: Spies of Vṛtra
- 9: Defeats the Dasyu
- 10: Waters Cannot Move Up or Down
- 11: Vṛtra's Thoughts Turn to Indra
- 12: Ilibisha and Shuhṇa Demons
- 13: Rent the Cities
- 14: Kutsa, the Object of Love
- 15: Protection for the Son of Shvitra

Metre: Triṣṭup

1.33.1: Aspirants for Knowledge

Aspirants for knowledge (2), come here; let us reach Indra (1,3).

He fully increases our needed thought (4).

Invincible (5), he bestows on us in plenty (7),

the supreme knowledge of the wealth of the rays of light (6).¹

Details: This verse is addressed to *gavyanta*, the fellow aspirants of the Rishi towards the Rays. The nature of Indra as the Lord of the illumined mind is confirmed by the phrase that he increases the thought needed for getting the Rays of Light (*pramatih*). Only Indra can give us this knowledge. Note the last line, 'rāyo gavām ketam param', 'the supreme knowledge of the wealth of the Ray of Light'.

¹ एत अयाम् उपं (1), गव्यन्त (2), इन्द्रम् (3), अस्माकं सु प्रमतिं वावृधाति (4), अनामृणः (5), कुवित् आत् अस्य रायो गवां केतं परम् (6), आवजति नः (7)

The word wealth qualifies knowledge because it can be accumulated and stored.

Translating *gavyanta* as 'desiring for cattle', renders the phrase out of context with the other parts of the verse.

eta: come; *upāyāma:* reach; *kuvit:* in plenty;

1.33.2: Invoked in Yajña-journey

To the bestower of wealth, the unassailable (2), I dart swiftly (1,4), like the bird soaring to its cherished nest (3).

I bow to Indra with choice hymns of praise (5).

He is invoked (for protection) in the yajña-journey by the singers (6).²

Details: *yāman:* journey which is happening in the inner realms of the Rishi. Protection is needed against the hostiles. Recall the word *adhvara* in (1.1.8).

shyena: bird, hawk, falcon. Even though it is a part of the simile, the bird is the standard symbol for the soul of man which is eager to fly to its natural habitation in the high Heavens.

1.33.3: Gives the Rays of Light to Whom He Favours

Lord of the armies, he has fastened the quiver (1).

The lord gives the rays to him whom he favours (2).

O Indra, in giving your plentiful wealth of delight (3), be not a Paṇi (miser) (4); manifest in us more (5).³

Details: Here the name of the titan Paṇi is used as an adjective. Paṇi-s are known for their qualities of greed and miserliness. Indra is prayed not to be a miser, like Paṇi, and generously bestow the wealth of delight.

Indra bestows the Rays of Light on those whom he favours. This phrase is interpreted in the narrow sense of a person helping his

² उपेत् अहं (1), धनदाम् अप्रतीतं (2), जुष्टां न श्येनो वस्ति (3), पंतामि (4), इन्द्रं न मस्यन् उपमेभिः अकैः (5), यः स्तोतृभ्यो हव्यो अस्ति यामन् (6)

³ नि सर्वसेन इषुधीः असक्तं (1), सम् अर्यो गा अजति यस्य वाष्टि (2), चोष्कूयमाण इन्द्र् भूरि वामं (3), मा पणिः भूः (4), अस्मन् अधिं प्रवृद्ध (5)

admirers. But this phrase is the seed of the widely quoted Mundaka Upanishad verse (3.2.3). ‘The Self reveals itself to one whom it chooses.’

Notice the phrase, ‘manifest in us’. Indra’s giving is not physical, but Indra’s power increases in the Rishi. *samajati*: gives;

1.33.4: Ungiving Foes and their Wealth

The wealthy Vṛtra has been struck down with the Vajra (1),
O Indra Supreme, who is moving along with heroes amidst foes (2).
To your bow, from all sides come (3),
the Sanaka-s, the ungiving foes, who meet their end (4).⁴

Details: It is said in the Brāhmaṇa texts that Vṛtra’s body of darkness and ignorance enveloped everything, all the deities, all the knowledge, all the strength, etc. This is the wealth of Vṛtra mentioned in line (1). The character of these demons, also called Sanaka-s, is not to share their wealth with others. Indra strikes their leader, Vṛtra, recovers the knowledge and gives it to the Gods for distribution to the humans.

ayajvānah: Those who do not give, non-performers of yajña in which the most important act is giving. The person who performs yajña is called *dāshuṣhe*, the giver.

upashākebhīḥ: those (heroes) near by; *preti*: end, death;

1.33.5: The Foes Scattered

O Indra, the foes of yajña who were contesting with the sacrificers (2), ran away, with their heads turned away (1).

When you, Indra, with tawny horses, firm of poise and heroic (3), scattered from the midregion, Heaven and Earth, the foes opposed to Divine Laws (4).⁵

⁴ वधीर्हि दस्युं धनिनं धनेन् (1), एकः चरन् उपशाकेभिः इन्द्र (2),

धनोरधि विषुणक् ते व्यायन् (3), अयज्वानः सनकाः प्रेतिम् ईयुः (4)

⁵ परा चित् शीर्षा वृवृजुः (1), त इन्द्रा अयज्वानो यज्चभिः स्पर्धमानाः (2),

प्र यद्विवो हरिवः स्थातः उग्र (3), निः अब्रतान् अथमो रोदस्योः (4)

Details: The battle between Indra and the demons takes place in the midregion or midworld, both in the microcosm (subtle body of Rishi) and the macrocosm.

avratān: riteless persons, those who do not perform the works which uphold the *dharma*. *Vrata* is not merely a religious act. It is the name for all actions conducive to the integration, both at the level of the microcosm and macrocosm.

1.33.6: Vṛtra-s Run Away

Urged by the Navagva Seers and men (2),
the army of blameless (Indra) fought (Vṛtra-s) eager for battle (1).
The weak (Vṛtra-s) ran away by steep paths, dispersed by Indra (4),
like an emasculate before a potent hero (3).⁶

Details: Both Navagva-s and Dashagva-s are Aṅgirasa Seers who help in the recovery of the stolen Rays of Light, as revealed by a study of all the mantra-s having these two names (about 30). As mentioned earlier, this and other verses imply that the two events, the recovery of the Rays of Light with the help of Aṅgirasa Seers and the release of Waters, are really aspects of one vast event.

chitayantah: thinking (on their weakness);

nih-aṣṭā: not pervading, weak;

1.33.7: Victory in the Midworld

O Indra, beyond the midregion, you fought them (2),
who were both in tears and in laughter (1).

You have burnt down Vṛtra from the high Heaven (3).

You have superbly protected the Soma-offerers lauding you (4).⁷

Details: Even though the residence of the demons Vṛtra-s and Vala, is in the midregion (*antarikṣha*), they had occupied even parts of the

⁶ अयुत्सन् अनवद्यस्य सेनाम् (1), अयातयन्त क्षितयो नवंगवाः (2),

वृषायुधो न वध्यो (3), निरेषाः प्रवद्धिः इन्द्रात् चितयन्त आयन् (4)

⁷ त्वमेतान् रुद्तो जक्षतः च (1), अयौधयो रजस इन्द्र परे (2),

अवादहो दिव आ दस्युम् उच्चा (3), प्र सुन्धतः स्तुवतः शंसम् आवः (4)

Heaven beyond the midregion (*rajasa pāre*). Indra chases them away. Indra protects particularly the offerer of Soma.

1.33.8: Spies of Vṛtra

Surrounding the Earth on all sides (1),
shining with the golden jewels (2), and hastening (to fight) (3),
they could not overcome Indra (4),
who covered the spies of Vṛtra with the Sun (5).⁸

Details: The spies of Vṛtra, shining bright, had enveloped the Earth with their darkness. The spies are the inimical psychological forces who pose to be friendly. Indra covers these coverers.

Line 1 can be translated as, ‘Even though they were flying round the Earth’s periphery’. This indicates that the global shape of Earth was known to the Vedic sages.⁺

pari + adadhāt: covered on all sides.

1.33.9: Defeats the Dasyu

Enjoying completely the Earth and Heaven (1),
by encompassing everything with your vastness (2),
You have scattered the foes with the aid of your devotees, O Indra (3).
By the mantra-s you have cast down the *dasyu* (4).⁹

Details: Note here the weapon Vajra is not mentioned. By the mantra-s the *dasyu* Vṛtra is defeated.

nīḥ + adhamah: cast down, scatter.

brahma: in the Veda, it always means the mantra, not the four-headed Purānic God.

⁸ चक्राणासः परीणहैं पृथिव्या (1), हिरण्येन मणिना शुभ्मानाः (2),
न हिन्द्वानासः (3), तितिरुः त इन्द्रं (4), परि स्पशो अदधात् सूर्येण (5)

⁺ K.V. Sharma, Vivekananda Kendra Patrika, Feb. 1983, pp. 101.

⁹ परि यदिन्द्र रोदसी उभे अबुभोजीः (1), महिना विश्वतः सीम् (2),
अमन्यमानाँ अभि मन्यमानैः (3), निर्ब्रह्मिः अधमो दस्युमिन्द्र (4)

1.33.10: Waters Cannot Move Up or Down

They (waters) from Heaven could not reach the end of Earth (1). Under Vṛtra's magic, they could not reach Indra, the bounteous (2). Indra, the generous giver, with his luminous Vajra (3), milked the rays of light out of the darkness (4).¹⁰

Details: The waters are not, of course, physical, but divine energies in streams, with their origin in Heaven. Line 1 says that Vṛtra blocked their entry to Earth. Also by his occult powers, Vṛtra made the waters unable to reach Indra, who is in Heaven (line 2).

The last line is very interesting. Just as a milker obtains milk from a cow by squeezing its udders, Indra obtains the Rays of Light by milking or squeezing the Darkness or Inconscient.

Even though RV speaks of the pair of opposites like good and evil in everyday life, it contains the deep Truth popularized by later Vedānta that there is only one Godhead, the ONE from which all have come out. Hence, even Darkness or the Inconscient must have the presence of the ONE in it. Thus, by squeezing the Darkness, one can get spiritual knowledge. Recall the mantra RV (4.2.11) quoted in the explanation in (1.32.9), describing the knowledge and ignorance as complementary.

The idea of knowledge, present amidst ignorance is symbolically expressed in many places in the RV by phrases such as, “the Sun lying in darkness”, RV (3.39.5) or RV (1.130.3).

In the last line, S regards *tamasa* as cloud and *gā* as waters and declares that waters are released from the cloud. This interpretation is completely arbitrary and renders a chaotic meaning to the verse.

¹⁰ न ये दिवः पृथिव्या अन्तमापुः (1), न मायाभिः धनुदां पर्यभूवन् (2),
युजं वर्जं वृषभः चक्र इन्द्रो निर्ज्योतिषा (3), तमसो गा अदुक्षत् (4)

1.33.11: Vṛtra's Thoughts Turn to Indra

The waters flowed according to the self-law of Indra (1).

Vṛtra waxed mighty (though fallen) in deep waters (2).

Vṛtra, whose thoughts were turned towards him (Indra) (3),
was smote by Indra with his mighty Vajra, days later (4).¹¹

Details: Note that the line 3 mentions Vṛtra as one whose thoughts were turned to Indra. This is reminiscent of the stories in the Purāṇas like Bhāgavatam, where the thoughts of the demon-foes are always on the Supreme One, even though they hate the One and are happy to be killed by the Great One. Vṛtra having thoughts of Indra, the Lord of the Divine Mind, is another instance of the Presence of Light in darkness or conscience referred to earlier.

nāvyānām: literally it means waters which are deep or navigable.

Waters are a standard symbol for energies. Even though Indra released a vast amount of energy to drown or overcome Vṛtra, Vṛtra was not drowned. Rather, he appears to have waxed using this energy.

1.33.12: Ilībisha and Shuṣhṇa Demons

Indra stormed the firm dwelling of Ilībisha (1),
he pounded the haughty Shuṣhṇa (2).

O Lord of riches, with your swiftness and might (3),
you slew the battle-eager foe, Vṛtra, with your Vajra (4).¹²

Details: Ilībisha: the evil force who can assume any form.

Shuṣhṇa: the evil force who sucks up or dries up the sap or essential energies both in humans and the world.

Even though Vṛtra has been slain, his followers are still active.
Indra has to fight them.

¹¹ अनु स्वधाम् अक्षरन् आपो अस्य (1), अवर्धत मध्य आ नाव्यानाम् (2),
सद्रीचिनैन मनसा तमिन्द्र (3), ओजिष्ठेन हन्मना अहनभि द्यून् (4)

¹² नि अविद्यत् इलीबिशस्य द्वङ्गा (1), वि शुङ्गिणम् अभिनत् शुष्णमिन्द्रः (2),
यावत् तरौ मध्यन् यावत् ओजो (3), वज्रेण शत्रुम् अवधीः पृतन्युम् (4)

1.33.13: Rent the Cities (of Vṛtra)

His Vajra confronted his enemy (1).
 He rent the cities of foes on all sides (3),
 with his sharp and powerful Vajra (2).
 Indra reached Vṛtra with his Vajra (4).
 He achieved his purpose, slaying him (Vṛtra) (5).¹³

Details: *pura*: city (of Vṛtra), formations in the subtle body of the yajamāna.

1.33.14: Kutsa, the Object of Love

O Indra, you have guarded Kutsa, the object of your love (1).
 You have protected in battle the showerer Dashadyu (2),
 The dust released by the feet of your steeds reaches Heaven (3).
 Son of Shvitra stood up to be rescued by strong men (4).¹⁴

Details: The names of Rishi-s like Kutsa indicate their original spiritual achievement and victory.

Kutsa: One who looks down on the enemies of Gods or enemies of yajña.

Dashadyu: One whose Light is spread in ten directions.

Shvitra: one who is drowned in the chores of livelihood before attaining knowledge. He was rescued by Indra from his sickly nature and he subsequently became fearless.

¹³ अभि सिध्मो अजिगात् अस्य शत्रुन् (1), वि तिगमेन वृषभेणा (2),
 पुरो अभेत् (3), सं वज्रेण असृजद् वृत्रमिन्दः (4), प्र स्वां मृतिम् अंतिरत्
 शाशदानः (5)

¹⁴ आवः कुर्त्समिन्द् यस्मिश्चाकन् (1), प्रावो युध्यन्तं वृषभं दशयुम् (2),
 शफच्युतो रेणुः नक्षत् याम् (3), उत् श्वैत्रेयो नृषाह्याय तस्थौ (4)

1.33.15: Protection for the Son of Shvitra

O Indra, you guarded the son of Shvitra (4,1).

He remained serene even amidst impelling currents (*tugra*), a hero (2).

He is a shaft of light and the conqueror of Earth (3,5).

You have inflicted pain on those hostiles (7),

who fostered enmity for long (6).¹⁵

[*tugra*: impelling currents;

shamam: serene; *gām*: shaft of light;]

Hymn 1.34: Ashvins: The Three Modes of Help

1: Entreaties of Wise

2: Car with Honey

3: Faultless Yajña

4: Dwellings and Protection

5: Felicities and Inspiration

6: Happiness and Medicines

7: You Come from a far-off Place

8: Guard the Sun

9: Where is the Car?

10: Sun Impels your Car

11: You Stay with Us

12: The Conquest of Plenitude

Metre: 1-8, 10, 11, Jagatī; 9,12, Triṣṭup

1.34.1: Entreaties of Wise

O Knowers, be ready for us in three ways (1).

Your vehicle is all-pervading and so is your gift, O Ashvins (2).

Your union is regulated as that of day and night (3);

do yield to the entreaties of the wise (4).¹

¹⁵ आवः (1), शमं वृषभं तुग्यांसु (2), क्षेत्रजेरे (3), मंघवन् शित्र्यं (4), गाम् (5), ज्योक् चिदत्रं तस्थिवांसौ अक्रन् (6), शत्रूयताम् अधरा वेदना अकः (7)

1 त्रिश्चिन् नो अद्या भवतं नवेदसा (1), विभुर्वा याम उत रातिः अश्चिना (2), युवोः हि युन्नं हिम्येव वासंसो (3), अभि-आयुंसेन्या भवतं मनीषिभिः (4)

Details: In the inner sacrifice, the figure three signifies the triple world and its corresponding trio within, e.g., body, life and mind, their respective attributes. Here it denotes the different divisions of time for the performance of the inner sacrifice.

navedasa: The meaning according to Yāska is, “those who do not know the Veda”. The meaning given here is: those know what to do at the right time.

himyeva vāsasah: like night and day; it is translated by some Indologists as, “like a garment worn in winter season”. This translation is not correct as the word, ‘regulator’ (*yantram*) has no place. The relationship of the two Ashvins is compared elsewhere with a pair of nostrils, two hands etc., (2.39.6,7), so that the comparison with day and night is appropriate.

1.34.2: Car with Honey

Three are the firm fellies of your car carrying honey (1);
all know of its travel to the Light, the beloved of Soma (2).

Three pillars of support are fixed on the car (3);
O Ashvins, you travel in three ways by day and by night (4).²

Details: Vena is that which is enjoyable or it is Supreme Light; it is the beloved and the goal of Soma. Hence the car travels to Vena.

S states that Vena is the spouse of Soma and the car is going to the marriage of Soma with Vena. But no Purāṇa book mentions such an incident.

Night associated with darkness or Ignorance denotes the triple world below, Day denotes the ever-lit triple world above.

ārabhe: support;

² त्रयः पूर्वयो मधुवाहने रथे (1), सोमस्य वेनाम् अनु विश्व इद्धिदुः (2),

त्रयः स्कृम्भासः स्कृमितास आरभे (3), त्रिः नक्तं याथः त्रिर्बधिना दिवा (4)

1.34.3: Faultless Yajña

O Ashvins, every day you render the yajña faultless in three ways

(1). Today sprinkle our yajña in three ways with Soma (2).

O Ashvins, the plentiful and forceful impulsions (3),
are sprinkled by you day and night for us (4).³

Details: Line 2: *triḥ*: may refer to the three bodies.

mimikṣhatam: sprinkle (with Soma); make our yajña full of the sap or Soma-delight.

avadya-gohana: tracing and removing defects; Ashvins make the yajña faultless by doing so.

1.34.4: Dwellings and Protection

Come in three ways to our dwellings (1),

(come) in three ways to those who are favourable to us (2);

come in three ways to our sacrifice deserving protection (3).

Teach us the three ways of (protection in the inner yajña) (4).

Reach to us in three ways the gratifying fruit (of yajña) (5);

Shower in three ways on us the satisfactions like rain (6).⁴

Details: *akṣhara*: a synonym for water;

prkṣhah: satisfactions, (1.71.7)

³ समाने अहुन् त्रिः अवद्य-गोहना (1), त्रिः अद्य यज्ञं मधुना मिमिक्षतम् (2), त्रिः वाजंवतीः इषौ अश्चिना (3), युवं दोषा अस्मभ्यम् उषसः च पिन्वतम् (4)

⁴ त्रिः वर्तिः यातं (1), त्रिः अनुक्रते जने (2), त्रिःसुप्राव्यै (3), त्रेधेवं शिक्षतम् (4), त्रिर्नान्यं वहतमश्चिना (5), युवं त्रिः पृक्षौ अस्मे अक्षरैव पिन्वतम् (6)

1.34.5: Felicities and Inspiration

O Ashvins, you reach us the riches in three ways (1);
 come in three ways for the formation of Gods (2),
 and increase (our) thoughts three-fold (3).
 Increase in three ways our good fortune (4);
 bring us inspiration in three ways (5).
 The daughter of Sūrya has mounted your car of three wheels (6).⁵

Details: Sūryā, the daughter of Sun, is the beloved of Ashvins.
devatātā: formation of gods, (6.4.1), (1.58.1), (1.95.8)

1.34.6: Happiness and Medicaments

Ashvins, give us the Divine healing in three ways (1),
 in three ways the earthly medicines and those of the midregion (2).
 Give to my successor the protective happiness of the Rishi Shamyu
 (3);
 give us the happiness of the three planes, O blissful Guardians (4).⁶

Details: Terms like son, offspring, progeny signify the opulences that accrue to the yajamāna engaged in the inner sacrifice. Medicaments remove illnesses of various kinds.

tridhātu: three planes: the physical, vital, mental. See next verse.

shamyu: a historical figure, a model of peaceful felicity.

sham: happiness and peace.

⁵ त्रिः नो रुयि वैहतमश्चिना युवं (1), त्रिः देव-ताता (2), त्रिः उत अवतं धियः (3),
 त्रिः सौभग्नत्वं (4), त्रिरुत श्रवांसि नः (5), त्रिष्ठं वां सूरै दुहिता रुहद्रथम् (6)

⁶ त्रिः नो अश्चिना दिव्यानि भेषजा (1), त्रिः पार्थिवानि त्रिरु दत्तमद्भ्यः (2),
 ओमानं शंयोः ममकाय सूनवै (3), त्रिधातु शर्म वहतं शुभस्पती (4)

1.34.7: You Come from a Far-off Place

O Ashvins, adorable day by day, going around our Earth (1),
repose in the substances of the three planes (2).

O Ashvins, come from far-off places to our three-fold Earth (3),
just as the life-force (*ātma*) resorts to its dwelling (4).⁷

Details: May the Ashvins come from their station far away to the Earth-altar of our body even as the life-breath comes to its body.

ātmeva vāta: life-breath or life-force associated with the soul *ātma*.

nāsatya: lords of journey; *rathyā*: lords of the car;

tridhātuḥ: triple law of working, (7.5.4); the three are *vasu* (substance), *ūrje* (abounding force), *priyam* (bliss), of the Triune highest world (*tisrah parāvataḥ*), corresponding to the *sat-chit-ānanda* of later Vedānta. (SA)]

1.34.8: Guard the Sun

O Ashvins, in three ways (1),
(is the Soma distilled) by the seven mother-streams (2);
Soma offering is done in three ways (4),
has three receptacles (3).

Moving above the three Earths (5),
you guard the Sun in the Heaven, established by day and by night (6).⁸

Details: Soma, the essence of delight of all existence, is prepared by the radiant powers of the sevenfold Being. Its three receptacles of matter, life and mind are ready.

Purport: O Ashvins, drinkers of honey, accept this Soma and travel above the three worlds and guard there the supreme Light. Working day and night, the high Heaven, (*nākam* or *svar*) has been formed for us and in us by the (inner) sacrificers. Guard it for us.

⁷ त्रिः नो अश्विना यजता दिवेदिवे परि (1), त्रिधातुं पृथिवीम् अंशायतम् (2),
तिस्रो नासत्या रथ्या परावत (3), आत्मेव वातः स्वसंराणि गच्छतम् (4)

⁸ त्रिरश्विना (1), सिन्धुभिः सूसमातृभिः (2), त्रये आहावाः (3), त्रेध
हविष्कृतम् (4), तिस्रः पृथिवीरूपरि (5), प्रवा दिवो नाकं रक्षेथे द्युभिः अक्तुभिः
हितम् (6)

Seven mother streams: Sevenfold Being made of the three lower planes of matter, life, mind, the three higher planes of *sat*, *chit*, *ānanda* and the link-world between them, *mahas* or *svar*.

1.34.9: Where is the Car?

Where are the three wheels of your triangular car (1)?

Where are the three pillars which support the seats in the car (2)?

When will the powerful ass be yoked (to the car) (3),
to arrive at the *yajña*, O Ashvins (4)?⁹

Details: The idea is: we are ready, but your car is yet to be seen; be quick of grace, may the car come with you.

Ass is the carrier (*vāhana*) of Ashvins.

saniла: good seats, *nida* is seat; interchange of *l* and *d* is common.

1.34.10: Sun Impels your Car

O Ashvins, you come (now); the offering calls you (1,2);
with your honey-drinking mouths, drink the sweet Soma (3)

Before the (onset of) the dawn, God Savitṛ (4),

Savitṛ impels your wonderful luminous car to the Truth (*rtam*) (5).¹⁰

Details: The God Sūrya, Sun, impels you; hence drink the Soma quickly.

1.34.11: You Stay with Us

O Ashvins, come here to accept the sweet Soma (2),
along with the thrice-eleven Gods (1). Increase our life-span (3).

Completely efface the powers of evil (around us) (4),

repel the haters: you stay with us (5).¹¹

⁹ कत्री चक्रा त्रिवृतो रथस्य (1), कत्रयो वन्धुरो ये सनीळाः (2),

कदा योगो वाजिनो रासभस्य (3), येन यज्ञं नासत्या उपयाथः (4)

¹⁰ आ नासत्या गच्छतं (1), हूयते हुविः (2), मध्वः पिबतं मधुपेभिः आसभिः (3),
युवोः हि पूर्वं सवित उषसो (4), रथम् ऋताय चित्रं धृतवन्तम् इष्यति (5)

¹¹ आ नासत्या त्रिभिः एकादशैः (1), इह देवेभिः यातं मधुपेयम् अश्विना (2),
प्रायुः तारिष्टं (3), नी रपांसि मृक्षतं (4), सेधतं देषो भवतं सञ्चभुवा (5)

Details: (1.139.11) mentions the eleven gods in the three planes, totaling thirty three. The exact identity of these Gods is not known. The totals of thirty three gods are mentioned in (1.45.2) and others. (3.9.9) mentions the total number as 3339.

1.34.12: Our Plenitude

O Ashvins, in your car which traverses the three worlds (1),
brings us the wealth endowed with hero-powers (2).
For our protection I call you and pray that you listen to us (3).
May you be present in our conquest of plenitude and increase (4).¹²

Details: The car traverses the three worlds and hence the Ashvins can bring us the wealth from all these worlds. In the last line there is a prayer for the Ashvins to be present in all the activities of the Seers which bring in various types of felicities but also cause an overall increase or heightening in their spiritual awareness.
vṛdha: increase (of the divine powers in us)

Hymn 1.35: Savitṛ Establishes the Worlds

- 1: I invoke Savitṛ, Agni and Night
- 2: Savitṛ Comes Beholding the Worlds
- 3: The Ascent and Descent of Savitṛ
- 4: The Car of Savitṛ
- 5: Steeds of Savitṛ
- 6: The Three Worlds of Light
- 7: Who Knows Where is Sūrya Now?
- 8: Illumines the Desert
- 9: He Dispels Distress
- 10: Repels the Demons
- 11: The Paths Well-laid by Ancients

Metre: 1,9, Jagatī; 2-8, 10, 11, Triṣṭup

[For the relation between Savitṛ and Sūrya, the spiritual Sun, see the introduction to this Section (IV).]

¹² आ नौं अश्विना त्रिवृता रथैना (1), अर्वाञ्चं रथिं बहतं सुवीरम् (2),
शृण्वन्ता वामवसे जौहवीमि (3), वृथे च नो भवतं वाजसातौ (4)

1.35.1: I Invoke Savitṛ, Agni and Night

First I invoke Agni for our happy state (1).

I invoke Mitra and Varuṇa to guard the yajña (2).

I invoke the night, the support of the mobile world (3).

I invoke Savitṛ for our increase (4).¹

Details: Night: the opposite of day, womb of all creation, foundation of all that is unmanifest. See (1.13.7) and (1.113.1).

Savitṛ: luminous Sūrya, the impeller of all.

ūtaye: for increase of the Savitṛ power in all.

1.35.2: Savitṛ Comes Beholding the Worlds

Moving along the dark path (1),
duly establishing the immortal and the mortal (2),
God Savitṛ comes in his golden car (3),
beholding the worlds (4).²

Details: God Savitṛ moves in the lower triple world of matter, life and mind which is dark and lacks the spiritual Light. The movement is both in macrocosm and microcosm.

Golden hue is the opposite of the dark. The Sun or Savitṛ of golden radiance lights up the immortal and the mortal and establishes them in their due places. By his beholding the world, the functions of both are regulated. The work of the mortal is sacrifice leading to immortality. The work of the immortal Gods is to help the mortals.

This mantra occurs in other Veda Samhita-s with *satyena* replacing *kṛṣṇena*. This mantra is used in the Sandhya worship and also in *Navagraha Pūja* for invoking Āditya.

¹ ह्यामि अग्निं प्रथमं स्वस्तये (1), ह्यामि मित्रावरुणौ इह अवसे (2),

ह्यामि रात्रीं जगतो निवेशनीं (3), ह्यामि देवं संवितारम् ऊतये (4)

² आ कृष्णेन रजसा वर्तमानो (1), निवेशयन् अमृतं मर्त्यं च (2),

हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेना देवो याति (3), भुवनानि पश्यन् (4)

1.35.3: The Ascent and Descent

The God Savitṛ moves by the downward path (1),
and the upward (2).

Master of yajña, he comes with his two white horses (3).
The god Savitṛ comes from the realm of beyond (4),
destroying all evils (5).³

Details: The ascent and descent of the Truth-Light in the inner sacrifice happening in the subtle body is well known. God Savitṛ radiates the world-impelling Light.

The Divine Sun comes down by the downward path to illuminate the Earth. He returns by the upward path to his original station.

parāvataḥ: from the world (*dyu*) beyond the lower triple world;

pravatā udvatā: downward, upward.

1.35.4: The Car of Savitṛ

Savitṛ, the master of yajña (2),
rich in lustres mounts the vast car (3).

The golden car with universal form, with golden yoke is nearby (1).
He bears the might to disperse the inertia of the worlds (4).⁴

Details: It may be recalled that even though the names Savitṛ and Sūrya are considered as synonyms, Savitṛ is used to represent the active aspect of the deity whereas Sūrya, the passive. The three lower worlds are full of the psychological powere of inertia, *tamas*, which is dispersed by Savitṛ with his Light. See the essay on Sūrya and Savitṛ in the beginning of the Section.

kr̥shanai: golden; *abhibṛtam*: stationed nearby;

³ याति देवः प्रवता याति (1), उत् वता याति (2), शुभ्राभ्यां यज॒तो हरिभ्याम् (3),
आ दे॒वो याति सविता परा॒वतो (4), अप् विश्वा दुरिता बाध्यमानः (5)

⁴ अभीवृतं कृशनैः विश्वस्तुं हिरण्यशम्यं (1), यज॒तो (2), बृहन्तम् आस्थाद् रथं
सविता चित्रभानुः (3), कृष्णा रजांसि तविर्षीं दधानः (4)

1.35.5: Steeds of Savitṛ

The tawny steeds with white feet reveal the light (1),
to the peoples who stand continuously near the divine Savitṛ (3,5);
the persons in all other worlds (continue to be in the darkness) (4).
The steeds draw the car with the golden yoke (2).⁵

Details: The peoples and worlds to whom the Light has been brought by the white steeds reach and abide in the source of all light. Worlds and the peoples who have not obtained the light continue to be in the dark. These are the ‘sunless’ worlds, mentioned as *asūrya loka* in the Isha Upanishad (2).

upasthe: near; *vi akhyan*: to reveal;

1.35.6: The Three Worlds of Light

Of the three worlds of light, two are in the proximity of Savitṛ (1).
The third is the dwelling of the all-ruling Sūrya (2).

The immortal Gods stay resorting to Savitṛ (4),
as the car on the linchpin (3).

Let him who knows declare the secrets of Savitṛ (5).⁶

Details: Like the three Earths, the three Heavens are well-known in the Veda. Of these, two are proximate to Savitṛ, the third is his own dwelling; only the heroes can attain to it; they need not return from there.

Yama: In the Veda, this epithet refers to the Divine Sun, Sūrya and not the God of death mentioned in the Purāṇa-s.

virāshāṭ: all-ruling; dwelling of heroes according to S; this meaning is not warranted as discussed in detail in [KS, CW, Vol.5].

tat: That, the nature of the Divine Sun, Sūrya.

⁵ वि जनान् श्यावाः शितिपादौ अख्यन् (1), रथं हिरण्यप्रजगं वहन्तः (2),
शश्त्रविशाः सवितुः दैव्यस्य उपस्थे (3), विश्वा भुवनानि (4), तस्युः (5)

⁶ तिस्रो वावः सवितुः द्वा उपस्थ्याँ (1), एका यमस्य भुवने विराषाट् (2),
आणिं न रथ्यम् (3), अमृताधिं तस्युः (4), इह ब्रवीतु य उ तत् चिकैतत् (5)

1.35.7: Who Knows Where is Sūrya Now?

The happy-winged ray (of Sun) lights up the higher region (1).

(Rays are) profound of sight, powerful (2),

and lead to the felicities of light (3).

Where is now Sūrya? Who knows (4)?

What heavenly regions are pervaded by this ray (5)?⁷

Details: Lines 4-5 do not refer to the disappearance of the Sun in the night as some commentators allege. The Rishi is aware of the Divine Ray lighting up the higher worlds, but his own physical body has not been lighted up. The ray is evidently not the common ray of the physical Sun. The Rishi queries, “Who knows why my subtle body is not lighted by the Sun.”

suparṇa: happy-winged ray (of Sun)

1.35.8: Illumines the Desert

He lighted up the eight quarters (1);

illumined the three terrestrial desert regions (2),

and the seven streams (3).

Thus arrived, God Savitṛ with the golden sight (4),

gives special ecstasies to the giver (5).⁸

Details: *dhanva*: desert regions of matter, life and mind bereft of the nourishing waters of light and strength. The seven rivers are activised to fertilize these dry fields.

ratna: happiness or ecstasy. Discussed in the mantra (1.1.1).

sapta sindhūn: the seven rivers; those frequently mentioned in RV and having the largest stature, as noted by Frawley,⁺ are:

Sindhu (Indus); Asikni (*chenaḥ*),

Parushni (Ravi); Sarasvatī;

Yamana; Ganga; Sarayu;

⁷ वि सुपर्णो अन्तरिक्षाणि अख्यद् (1), गभीरवेपा असुरः (2), सुनीथः (3), केदार्नी सूर्यः कः चिकेत (4), कतमां द्यां रश्मिः अस्या ततान (5)

⁸ अष्टो व्यर्ख्यत् ककुभः (1), पृथिव्याः त्री धन्वं योजना (2), सप्त सिन्धून् (3), हिरण्याक्षः संविता देव आगाद् (4), दधत् रत्ना दाशुषे वार्याणि (5)

⁺ Frawley, David, ‘Rig Veda and the history of India’, pp. 133

RV (10.75) specifically mentions the ten rivers by name and their seven tributaries. The river Sarayu is not mentioned here, but is mentioned in (5.53.9) and (10.64.9). The latter mantra groups Sarayu with the two vast rivers Sindhu and Sarasvati.

1.35.9: He Dispels Distress

Golden-handed, all-beholding, God Savitṛ (1),
moves between the Earth and Heaven (2).

He dispels distress and attains the supreme Sun (3).

From the dark lower worlds, he attains the supreme station (4).⁹

Details: The God Savitṛ comes to the lower triple worlds covered with darkness and unconsciousness, dispels the inertia by his Light and returns to his native supreme station in the higher triple world. Hence he is said to travel between the Earth and Heaven.

rajasā: worlds;

abhi ṛṇoti: completely attains

1.35.10: Repels the Demons

May the golden-handed and mighty person, well-guiding and rich (1), come in front, making us happy (2).

Repelling the demonic Yātudhāna-s (3),
the God is present (in the house) accepting the lauds every night (4).¹⁰
[svavān: having riches (svam: riches)]

1.35.11: The Paths Well Laid by Ancients

O Savitṛ, (come) now to us by the ancient paths (1,3),
(which are) in the midworld, perfected and dustless (2),
well-laid and easy to traverse (4).

O God, guard us and speak to us (5).¹¹

⁹ हि॒रण्यपा॒णि॑ः सवि॒ता॑ वि॒र्चर्षणि॑ः (1), उ॒भे॑ द्या॒वा॒पूथि॒वी॑ अ॒न्तरी॒यते॑ (2),
अपा॒मी॒वां॑ बा॒धते॑ वेति॑ सूर्य॒म् (3), अ॒भि॑ कृष्णो॒न् रजसा॑ द्या॒म्॑ क्रणो॒ति॑ (4)

¹⁰ हि॒रण्यहस्तो॑ अ॒सुरः॑ सुनी॒थः॑ (1), सु॒मृली॒कः॑ स्ववा॒न्॑ या॒तु॑ अ॒र्वाङ्॑ (2),
अ॒पसे॒धन्॑ रक्षसौ॑ या॒तुधाना॒न्॑ (3), अ॒स्थाद्॑ देवः॑ प्रतिदोषं॑ गृणा॒नः॑ (4)

¹¹ ये॑ ते॑ पन्था॑ः॑ सवि॒तः॑ पूर्वा॒सौ॑ (1), अ॒रेणवः॑ सुकृता॑ अ॒न्तरिक्षे॑ (2),
तेभिः॑ नो॑ अ॒द्य॑ प॒थिभिः॑ सुगेभी॑ (4), रक्षा॑ च॑ नो॑ अ॒धि॑ च॑ ब्रूहि॑ देव॑ (5)

Details: The paths by which Savitṛ comes to us and returns have been already laid by ancient Seers like Aṅgiras. These paths are in the subtle body of the Seers.

arenavah: dustless, clean in all its aspects;

"Europe has formed certain views about the Veda and the Vedanta, and succeeded in imposing them on the Indian intellect.... When a hundred world-famous scholars cry out, "This is so", it is hard indeed for the average mind, and even minds above the average but inexpert in these special subjects not to acquiesce....

Nevertheless a time must come when the Indian mind will shake off the darkness that has fallen upon it, cease to think or hold opinions at second and third hand and reassert its right to judge and enquire in a perfect freedom into the meaning of its own Scriptures. When that day comes we shall, I think, discover that the imposing fabric of Vedic theory is based upon nothing more sound or true than a foundation of loosely massed conjectures. We shall question many established philological myths,—the legend, for instance, of an Aryan invasion of India from the north, the artificial and inimical distinction of Aryan and Dravidian which an erroneous philology has driven like a wedge into the unity of the homogenous Indo-Afghan race; the strange dogma of a "henotheistic" Vedic naturalism; the ingenious and brilliant extravagances of the modern sun and star myth weavers. ."

(Sri Aurobindo)

Section V: Sūkta-s (1.36-1.43)

Riṣhi: Kaṇvah Ghaurah

Sūkta	Hymn title
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1.36 Agni: Kindled with Words by Gods (12)

Maruts: (1.37-1.39)

1.37 We are Yours (15)

1.38 Thunder and Windless Rain (15)

1.39 Delight in Trees and Hills (10)

1.40 Brahmaṇaspati (8)

1.41 Aryamā, Mitra and Varuṇa (9)

1.42 Pūṣhan, the Guide (10)

1.43 Rudra and Soma (9)

In five of these eight hymns, the Riṣhi Kaṇva (the wise one) clarifies the functions and the connections of the deities Rudra, children of Rudra. In the later Purāṇa-s, Gaṇapati, a synonym of Brahmaṇaspati, is a son of Rudra. Recall that Maruts are usually regarded as fierce being the storm-gods or powers of nervous mentality. Riṣhi Kaṇva stresses that these Maruts have a benevolent aspect also as declared in the mantra (1.37.15), “O Maruts, we are yours”. The three Sūkta-s here consider their ability to cause windless rain, their association with delight and their closeness to their devotees. Recall that Rudra supplies the force of evolution. Brahmaṇaspati is the lord of mantra-s. All creation starts with the mantra. ‘The Word creates the World’, is the Vedic precept. Hence the prayer to Brahmaṇaspati begins with the request, ‘Rise up (*uttishtha*)’. See also the essay, ‘Brahma-Viṣṇu-Rudra’ in ‘The Essentials of Rig Veda’. See also the introduction to (1.18) and (1.40).

In the hymn (1.36), Kaṇva gives some secrets regarding the relation of Agni to the Word. Only Gods kindle Agni by means of the potent Words. He is from the World of Truth and all the laws are in him. Agni also destroys the psychological foes like Vṛtra and Vala and releases the hidden knowledge and energises the humans.

This Section has Sūkta-s to Pūshan and the deity Aryamā. These are the only Sūkta-s in the entire Rig Veda for these deities. See the introduction to (1.42).

1.36: Agni: Kindled with Words by Gods

Seer: Kanvah Ghaurah

- 1: Words with Perfect Expression
- 2: You Increase in Us
- 3: Your Powers are Everywhere
- 4: Gods Kindle Agni
- 5: All Laws are in You
- 6: Agni of Happy Mind
- 7: Kindled with Words
- 8: Word for Winning the Rays
- 9: Be Well-seated
- 10: Placed Here by Indra and Others
- 11: Agni: Brought from the World of Truth
- 12: Wealth of Inspired Knowledge
- 13: Steady in Help
- 14: Raise Us for High Living
- 15: Protection from All Enemies
- 16: Agni Destroys Our Foes
- 17: Agni With Perfect Energy
- 18: Agni Calls Various Powers
- 19: A Light for All Times
- 20: Agni's Flames Irresistible

Metre: Odd numbered mantra-s, Brhatī (8/8/12/8);
even numbered mantra-s, Satobṛhatī (12/8/12/8);

1.36.1: Words of Perfect Expression

Agni is invoked by many great assemblies (1),
aspiring for the Gods (2).
We seek Agni with Words of perfect expression (3).
Others too laud Him everywhere (4).¹

¹ प्र वौ युहं पुरुणां विशां (1), दैवयतीनाम् (2),
अग्नि सूक्तेभिः वचौभिः ईमहे (3), यं सीमित् अन्य ईळते (4)

Details: This verse is an address to the fellow aspirants of the Rishi.

1.36.2: Increase in Us

Men hold Agni in them as the increaser of strength. (1),
With offerings we humbly approach you (2).
Today, for us, may you be perfect-minded (3);
may you increase here in us (the Agni-power) (4),
O generous one, who is endowed with plenitude (5).²

Details: *iha*: here, the subtle body of the singer in which Agni will manifest or increase. *santya*: generous one; from *shāṇ*, to gift;

1.36.3: Your Powers are Everywhere

We seek you ardently, the messenger (1),
the summoning-priest who has universal knowledge (2);
Great and constant, your flames range wide (3).
Your lustres touch the Heaven (4).³

Details: Agni's powers range over both Earth and Heaven and this power is constant or steady in time (*sata*).

Line (3): *mahaste sataḥ*: (alt.) when you are greateated in your being

1.36.4: Gods Kindle Agni

The Gods, Āruṇa, Mitra and Aryamā (1),
fully kindle you, O Agni, the ancient envoy (2).
The mortal who makes an offering to you (4),
wins all wealth through you (3).⁴

Details: Mitra: the God of harmony and friendship.

² जनासो अग्निं दधिरे सहोवृथैँ (1), हुविष्मन्तो विधेम ते (2),

स त्वं नौ अ॒य सुमना॑ (3), इहावि॒ता भवा॑ (4), वाजैषु सन्त्य॑ (5)

³ प्र त्वा॑ दूतं वृणीमहे॑ (1), होतारं वि॒श्वैदसम्॑ (2),

महस्तै॑ स॒तो वि॑ चरन्ति॑ अ॒र्चयौ॑ (3), दि॒वि॑ स्पृशन्ति॑ भा॒नवः॑ (4)

⁴ देवासः॑ त्वा॑ वरुणो मि॒त्रो अर्यमा॑ (1), सं॑ दूतं प्रत्नम्॑ इन्धते॑ (2),

विश्वं॑ सो अंगे॑ जयति॑ त्वया॑ धनं॑ (3), यः॑ तै॑ ददाशा॑ मर्त्यैः॑ (4)

Varuna: the God who destroys all aspects of narrowness in human beings. He is said to cut the subtle knots in the human body which limit the flow of the divine energy in man.

samindhate: kindle (you) fully or utterly. The word in isolation is interpreted as the kindling of the physical fire in the rite. The mantra states that Gods kindle Agni, clearly indicating that the entity Agni is not physical. The wealth, which the worshipper wins through Agni, is of all types, spiritual and worldly.

1.36.5: All Laws are in You

O Agni, you are the rapturous priest of the sacrifice (1),
master of this house and the envoy of creatures (2).

In you come together all the steadfast laws of action (3),
which the gods have made (4).⁵

Details: *grha*: home. In Veda, as in the Upanishad, it symbolizes the subtle and gross bodies of the aspirants.

vratāni: laws of workings of the Gods. All actions of all the powers.

1.36.6: Agni of Happy Mind

It is to you alone, O Agni, young and rich in joy (1),
that every oblation is offered (2). Sightless, oblation night, Se-well-scated (1).

With a happy mind towards us, everyday (3),

you convey the offerings made here (4), haze (3),

to the Gods with perfected energies (5).⁶

५ मन्द्रो होता (१), गहर्पतिः अग्रे दूतो विशामसि (२),

त्वे विश्वा संगतानि ब्रह्म ध्रुवः (3) यानि देवा अकृष्णतः (4)

‘त्वे इद्युगे सभगेऽयविष्ट्य (1) विश्वम् आहंयते हविः (2).

स त्वं नौ अद्य समना॑ (३), उतापरं यक्षि॑ (४), देवान् सवीर्या॑ (५)

1.36.7: Kindled with Words

Men who have attained submission (2),
adore him alone as the self-ruler (1,3).
Mortals light you with words of invocation (4),
and entirely overcome their (psychological) foes (5).⁷

Details: To light the physical fire in the altar there is no need either to bow or to overcome foes. Clearly the enemies are the psychological obstacles impeding the progress of the seeker. Agni is the flame of aspiration kindled in the inner being with the words of invocation, *hotrābhīḥ*, which are the seven speeches corresponding to the seven planes. *hotrābhīḥ* is also translated as oblation. See also RV (1.36.4).

ati titirvāmso: overcoming; *sṛdhah*: foes (non-physical);

1.36.8: Word for Winning the Rays

Smiting, the Gods overcame Vṛtra (1);
they made the dwelling wide (3),
for the Earth, the Heaven and the Waters (2).
May the mighty One become in Kanwa (4),
a luminous energy fed with the offerings (5),
(He is the conqueror of) life-energies (7);
He utters the Word for winning the Ray-cows (6,8).⁸

Details: *gau*: a cow; a symbol for a Ray of spiritual Light or knowledge. There are over nine hundred of its occurrences in the RV. All these words in their context imply that *gau* cannot be cattle, but a Ray of Light. Hence we use the word Ray-cow.

Vṛtra: A demon or a titanic force that covers and holds back the Waters or streams of divine energies. He is also named as Ahī, the

⁷ तं धैम् इत्या (1), नंमस्विन् (2), उपं स्वराजंम् आसते (3),

होत्राभिः अग्निं मनुषः समिन्धते (4), तितिर्वासो अति स्मिधः (5)

⁸ घन्तौ वृत्रमंतरन् (1), रोदसी अप (2), उरु क्षयाय चक्रिरे (3),

भुवत् कण्वे वृषा (4), द्युम्न्याहुतः (5), क्रन्दत् (6), अश्वो (7), गर्विष्ठिषु (8)

serpent, who obstructs with his coils of darkness all possibility of divine existence. The battle between Vṛtra and Indra is described in some detail in (1.32).

With the death of Vṛtra, the Heaven, Earth and Waters become free of the veil of demoniac presence and hence fit for the dwelling of Gods and Rishi-s. The dwelling has to be *uru*, wide, for the Gods are beyond any narrowness. With the removal of darkness and ignorance, following the death of Vṛtra, the streams of Energies or Waters are released and the Rays of knowledge obtained. To secure the Rays of knowledge, life-energy is necessary, which is why the appellation *ashva*, life-energy, is given to Agni.

apah or *āpah*: waters that symbolize the streams of divine energies, referred to as *Kundalini* in later literature. The streams can be released in a human being by the practice of yoga. The sub-hymn to *āpah* in the RV verses (1.23.16) through (1.23.23) clearly indicates that *āpah* is not ordinary water.

uru: wide: the Gods remove all the constrictions in our subtle body and make it wide or capable of bearing the energies to be manifested. Recall Chhāndogya Upanishad (7.23.1), ‘In wideness or vastness is happiness, not in narrowness.’

1.36.9: Be Well-seated

O Agni, you are mighty; be well-seated (1).
 You shine brightly in us who desire the Gods (2).
 O Lord of sacrifice, release the ruddy haze (3),
 that is beautiful to behold (4).⁹

Details: *dhūma*: smoke, a feeling of vibration associated with speed and strength.

sam sīdasva: well-seated. Agni is requested to be seated in the heart of the yajamāna and perform his actions.

Line 2: (alt.): shine in thy purity revealing utterly the godhead;

⁹ सं सीदस्व मुहान् अंसि (1), शोचस्व देववीतमः (2),
 वि धूममग्ने अरुषं मियेष्य सृज (3), प्रशस्त दर्शतम् (4)

1.36.10: Placed Here by Indra and Others

O carrier of offerings, most worshipful One (2),
the Gods bear you here in themselves on behalf of Manu (1).

Him Medhyātithi Kaṇva made the source of wealth (3),
him Indra established here, and he is praised by others also (4).¹⁰

Details: The names of Rishi-s are indicative of their spiritual nature.

Manu: the original man regarded as the supreme Being, Puruṣha; the mantra;

Kaṇva: name of Rishi or the ideal of the wise.

Medhyātithi: son of Kaṇva; he whose guests are worthy.

vṛṣha: showerer of gifts, Indra.

Line 1: (alt.): The gods have set you here for man.

1.36.11: Agni: Brought from the World of Truth

Agni, kindled here by Medhyātithi Kaṇva (1),
(was brought here) from the plane of truth high above (2).

His impelling flames blaze forth (3).

O riks, you increase Agni (4).¹¹

Details: Agni's station is always in the plane of Truth high above. Both the factors, the aspiration of the seeker and the riks themselves, lead to the growth of Agni in the seeker.

rta: the Truth in manifestation.

īdha: kindled, Agni is not merely physical. Agni is brought from the plane of Truth.

preshāḥ: urgings, (1.68.5);

Line 4: (alt.) may these fulfilling words (ṛchāḥ) increase Agni; may we increase Agni.

¹⁰ यं त्वा॑ देवासो॒ मनवे॑ दुधुः॒ इह॑ (1), यजिष्ठं॒ हव्यवाहन॑ (2),

यं कण्वो॑ मेध्यातिथिः॒ धनस्पृतं॑ (3), यं वृषा॑ यमुपस्तुतः॑ (4)

¹¹ यमग्निं॑ मेध्यातिथिः॒ कण्व॑ ईध॑ (1), क्रतात्॑ अधि॑ (2),

तस्य॑ प्रेषो॑ दीदियुः॒ तमिमा॑ (3), क्रच॑ः॒ तमग्निं॑ वर्धयामसि॑ (4)

1.36.12: Wealth of Inspired Knowledge

O one who has self-fixity, make our wealth complete (1),
for you have kinship with the Gods (2).

You rule over the wealth of inspired knowledge (3);
make us happy, you are great (4).¹²

Details: *svadhā*: one's self-law, one's inner potentials;
svadhāva: one who is fixed in his self.

1.36.13: Steady in Help

Utterly high uplifted (1), stand up for our growth (2),
like the God Savitṛ (3).

From the heights, bestow on us the plenitudes (3).

With revealing hymns we invoke thee in multiple ways (4).¹³

Details: In RV, the God Savitṛ is the supreme deity. See the hymns 1.22 and 1.35 to Savitṛ.

añjibhiḥ: revealing; the hymns reveal the secret of Agni.

1.36.14: Raise Us for High-living

O great one, protect us from evils by the perceiving mind (1).

Completely burn every destroyer within (2).

Raise us aloft for movement and high-living (3).

Bring to the attention of the Gods our efforts (4).¹⁴

Details: Line 5: "make us conscious of the appropriate Gods when we are doing the corresponding actions." Our offerings do not reach the Gods because we are not conscious of them.

¹² रायस्पूर्धि स्वधावो अस्ति (1), हि ते अग्ने देवेषु आप्यम् (2),

तं वाजस्य श्रुत्यस्य राजसि (3), स नौ मृळ महान् असि (4)

¹³ ऊर्ध्वं ऊ पु (1), णं ऊतये तिष्ठा (2), देवो न सविता (3),

ऊर्ध्वो वाजस्य सनिता (4), यदञ्जिभिः वाघिभिः विहयामहे (5)

¹⁴ ऊर्ध्वो नः पाहि अंहसो नि केतुना (1), विश्वं समत्रिणं दह (2),

कुधी न ऊर्ध्वान् चरथाय जीवसे (3), विदा देवेषु नो दुवः (4)

jīvase: high-living, living in a high state of consciousness. Agni has to prepare the body of the seeker for his spiritual experience; otherwise the body will crack like an unbaked jar, as mentioned in RV (9.83.1).

ketu: intuitive vision, perceiving mind;

atrinam: eater of our being; destroyers, raksha-s;

amhasa: the forces of evil and falsehood which oppose the aspiration of the Vedic Seers.

1.36.15: Protection from All Enemies

Protect us from the Rakshasa-s (1),

protect us from the injurer who gives not (2).

Protect us from the relentless harmer and the killer (3),

O Agni, resplendent and youthful (4).¹⁵

Details: (alt): ‘Protect us, O Agni, from the Rakshasa, protect us from the harm of the undelight, protect us from him who assails and him who would slay us, O Vast of lustres, O mighty and young.’’ (SA)

Protection is requested both from human and non-human enemies.

arāvṇah: one who gives not; one with no delight;

rakṣasa: a class of non-physical beings (demons) who are intent on destroying the yajña. It is curious that the word *rakṣha* or *rakṣaka* means a protector in classical Sanskrit.

1.36.16: Agni Destroys Our Foes

As with thick falling blows, scatter utterly our hurter (1,3).

Use burning rays as weapons to destroy those with undelight (2).

May the foe not have mastery over us (5),

who degrades us with the weapons of darkness (4).¹⁶

¹⁵ पा॒हि नौ॑ अग्ने॒ रक्षसं॑ः (1), पा॒हि धूर्ते॑ः अराव्णः॑ (2),

पा॒हि रीषत् उ॒त वा॒ जिघाँसतो॑ (3), बृह॑द्भानो॒ यविष्ट्य (4)

¹⁶ धूनेव॑ विष्वुक्॑ वि॒ जहि॑ (1), अराव्णः॑ तपुर्जम्भ॑ (2), यो॒ अस्म॒ध्रुक्॑ (3),

यो॒ मर्त्यः॑ शिशीते॑ अति॒ अकृभिः॑ (4), मा॒ नः॑ स॒ रिपुः॑ इ॒शत (5)

Details: Note that the battle is not physical but occult, involving weapons of darkness.

asmadhruk: hurter, (5.4.2);

aktubhiḥ: nights, weapons using occult forces;

arāvñah: one who does not give; a characteristic of the evil forces is that they want to hoard the wealth of Delight and not distribute it.

1.36.17: Agni with Perfect Energy

Agni has won perfected energy for Kaṇva (1),
has won him perfected enjoyment (2);

So has he protected our friends as well as Medhyātithi (3),
and protected the singer in the conquest (4).¹⁷

[*sātā*: conquest (of hostile powers);

upastutam: the singer who confirms (Agni) by the song of praise]

1.36.18: Agni Calls Various Powers

By Agni we call Turvasha, Yadu (1,2),
and Ugrādeva from the upper kingdom (3).

May Agni bring Navavāstu, Bṛhadhratha and Turvīti (4),
to subdue the dasyu foes (5).¹⁸

Details: Turvasha, Yadu, etc., are usually interpreted as names of kings in the Rig Vedic period.* In the esoteric interpretation, according to the derivative significance of the names, these words indicate special powers which were possessed by the corresponding persons.

Turvasha: of conquering speed.

Yadu: is mentioned elsewhere; he along with Turvasha received Indra's favour.

¹⁷ अ॒ग्निः व॒न्ने सुवीर्य॑म् अ॒ग्निः कण्वांय् (1), सौभंगम् (2),

अ॒ग्निः प्रावंन् मि॒त्रोत मेध्या॑तिथिम् (3), अ॒ग्निः स॒ता उपस्तुतम् (4)

¹⁸ अ॒ग्निना॑ तुर्वशं यदुं (1), परा॒वत् उग्रा॑-दैवं (2), हवामहे (3),

अ॒ग्निः नयुत् नववास्त्वं बृहद्रथं तुर्वीतिं (4), दस्यवे॑ सहः (5)

* See Frawley, David, *op.cit.*

Ugrādeva: one whose God is terrible.

Bṛhadratha: mentioned elsewhere also, along with Navavāstva.

Turvīti: fast-gaited, of conquering brightness.

Navavāstva: whose dwelling is new, i.e., whose body is newly made. Seer Vaikunṭha describes in RV (10.49.6) how Indra lifted up this Rishi, Navavāstva, carried him across the shining world of light and established him on the other side. S is inconsistent. He regards Navavāstva as a king here in this verse, but regards him as a demon, an *asura*, in the sixth Mandala, RV (6.20.11).

dasyu: generic name for all forces of darkness.

1.36.19: A Light for All Times

O Agni, Manu has established you (1),
a light for people of all times (2).

you burn brightly to Kaṇva manifested in the truth (3).

You are increased in being (4);
to you, the doers of action bow down (5).¹⁹

Details: Manu is the original Man or Mantra. See RV (1.36.10). Manu has established Agni as spiritual Light for the benefit of mankind of all times. Just as light guides a traveler, Agni with his spiritual Light provides guidance.

1.36.20: Agni's Flames Irresistible

The blazing flames of Agni are powerful (1),
terrible, not to be approached carelessly (2).

O Agni, always burn out the Yātudhāna-s (4,6),
and also those with the power of rakṣhasa (3),
and every eater of being (5).²⁰

¹⁹ नि त्वामग्ने मनुर्दधे (1), ज्योतिः जनाय शश्ते (2),

दीदेथ कण्वं कृतज्ञात (3), उक्षितो (4), यं नमस्यन्ति कृष्यः (5)

²⁰ त्वेषासौ अग्नेः अमवन्तो अर्चयो (1), भीमासो न प्रतीतये (2),

रक्षस्विनः (3), सदमिद् यातु-मावतो (4), विश्वं सम् अत्रिणं (5), दह (6)

Details: Yātudhāna-s are a group of demons who are particularly opposed to the performance of yajña.

rakṣhasa: see (1.36.15);

atri: eater of being;

Maruts: (1.37-1.39)

Hymn 1.37: Maruts: We are Yours

- 1: Steedless
- 2: Weapons of Speech
- 3: Manifest Wonders
- 4: Of Flaming Light
- 5: Play in Light
- 6: Can Shake Heaven
- 7: Human Support
- 8: Earth in Fear
- 9: Mental Energies
- 10: Spread the Energies (Waters)
- 11: The Coverer
- 12: Impel Humans
- 13: Subtle Noise
- 14: Rituals
- 15: We are Yours for All Life

Metre: Gāyatrī

1.37.1: Steedless

The hosts of Maruts are sportive (1),
steedless and resplendent in their chariots (2).
Celebrate them, O Kanva-s (3).¹

Details: The cars of the Maruts move by their own power; hence there is no need for steeds to drive the car; hence the epithet 'steedless'.

This prayer is addressed to the fellow Rishi-s.

¹ क्रीळं वः शर्थो मारुतम् (1), अनुवर्णं रथेशुभ्रम् (2),
कण्वा अभि प्र गायत (3)

1.37.2: Weapons of Speech

The Maruts (are borne by) spotted deer (1),
along with the decorative weapons of speech (2).

They are born full of luminosity created by themselves (3).²

Details: *pr̥shatibhiḥ*: the spotted deer carrying the host of Maruts
anjibhiḥ vāshibhiḥ: with words that reveal (decorate). Words arising from their tempestuous movement bring out what is hidden or profound. With such speech do the Maruts, with their natural radiances, manifest to the inner sacrificant.

r̥ṣhti: weapons; those who gaze, derived from the root *r̥shata*, to gaze. The two different meanings merge into one by noting that their very gaze becomes their weapon of strike.

1.37.3: Manifest Wonders

I hear instantly here what is uttered by Maruts (1,3),
for whom the Words are their whips in their hands (2).

(Their Words) manifest wonders abundantly in my journey (4).³

Details: *kasha* is both a whip and a name of speech. Just as a whip guides the horses of the car appropriately in a journey, the Words of Maruts guide us in our subtle journey.

yāman: journey (inner yajna)

1.37.4: Of Flaming Light

For the host of Maruts, you sing well (1,4),
The mantra obtained by (the grace of) God (3).

(The) Maruts, are forceful, powerful and of flaming Light (2).⁴

[*brahma devattam*: the mantra (*brahma*) given by the grace of gods;]

² ये पूर्षतीभिः (1), क्रृष्टिभिः साकं वाशीभिः अञ्जिभिः (2),
अजायन्त् स्वभानवः (3)

³ इहेवं शृण्व (1), एषां कशा हस्तैषु (2), यद् वदान् (3),
नि यामन् चित्रम् क्रञ्जते (4)

⁴ प्र वः शर्धाय॑ (1), घृष्यये त्वेष-युमाय (1), शुभ्यिणे (2), देवतं ब्रह्म (3),
गायत (4)

1.37.5: Play in Light

The Maruts are unslayable and sportive amidst the radiances (2).

Praise these hosts (1,3);

(their might) has grown in the womb of the Soma- delight (4).⁵

Details: The Rishi is addressing himself. S translates the phrase *goṣhu aghnyam* as ‘unslayable cows’, whatever that may mean. In the esoteric interpretation, *go* always stands for Rays of spiritual Light or knowledge.

rasa: the Soma delight, see (1.91)

When the Maruts manifest in a human being referred to here as *jambhe*, in the womb, there is clearly an increase in the delight everywhere.

1.37.6: Can Shake Heaven

O Heroes, who among you is the mightiest (1)?

You shake Heaven and Earth (2).

You can easily shake everything like garments (3).⁶

Details: The Maruts can overcome anything even if it is strong as easily as shaking a piece of cloth.

antam: a piece of cloth

1.37.7: Human Support

The mortal provides a firm support for your gait (1),

which is forceful and violent (2).

Even the many-ridged mountain would give way (3).⁷

Details: The sacrificer or the aspirant has to provide a firm support in his subtle body. Otherwise his body may collapse at the furious approach of the Maruts.

ni dadhra: firm support; *yāmaya*: gait;

५ प्र शंसा (1), गोषु अश्यैं क्रीळं (2), यच्छर्धो मारुतम् (3),

जम्भे रसेस्य वावृथे (4)

६ को वो वर्षिष्ठ आ नरो (1), दिवश्च गमश्च धूतयः (2),

यत् सीम् अन्तं न धूनुय (3)

७ नि वो यामाय मानुषो दध्र (1), उग्राय मन्यवे (2), जिहौत पर्वतो गिरिः (3)

1.37.8: Earth in Fear

At their tempestuous approach (1,4),
the Earth, like an enfeebled king (2),
trembles in fear (3,5).⁸

Details: The Earth trembles at their approach like an old and enfeebled king who trembles at the approach of enemies.

1.37.9: Mental Energies

Their source is indeed firm (1).

They, as mental energies (birds) (2),
are able to exit from the world of life-energies (3).

Their luminous prowess follows as a double everywhere (4).⁹

Details: The power of Maruts is twofold: action and knowledge; hence their prowess is spoken of as double. Since they are mental energies, the symbol of bird is used. Though they are primarily life-powers, they attain the form of mental powers, i.e., they can easily exit from their natural home which is the mid-world or the world of life-energies and enter the world of mind.

Their double strength comes from their mother, Prishni, the cow of variegated hues as indicated in (1.23.10). Like Aditi, she is the field for the manifestation of the life-powers, and is source of the mental energies. Stationed in the infinite Life-region, capable of various manifestations, this substantial Shakti is the mother of the Maruts.

mātuḥ: world of life-energies; *jānam*: source of birth;

⁸ येषाम् अज्मेषु (1), पृथिवी जुजुवान् इव विश्पतिः (2),

भिया (3), यामेषु (4), रेजते (5)

⁹ स्थिरं हि जानम् (1), एषां बयो (2), मातुः निरैतवे (3),

यत्सीम् अनु द्विता शब्दः (4)

1.37.10: Spread the Energies (Waters)

Impellers of speech (2),
they throw up the water in their paths (1,3),
and spread out (4).

They impel the lowing cows to proceed ahead on their knees (5).¹⁰

Details: The verse describes the prowess of the speech of the Maruts. It has been described how they can make even mountains crash. Here it is said how they spread out the waters. The kine are urged to obtain the water by bending down on their knee.

Symbolically, the cows or knowledge needs energy for propagation. It can get the energy only when it is humble or in a state of surrender.

The Maruts are well-known as brothers of Indra. Following the action of Indra, they spread out the energies of nourishment (symbolized by waters) and thereby promote and impel the currents of consciousness symbolized by cows.

Just as cows have to bend down on their knees to drink the water which is spread out, the rays of consciousness need to be in a spirit of surrender as they absorb the energies of nourishment given by the waters.

kāśhtha: waters, *ajmeṣhu:* paths; *vāshrā:* cows making a sound (lowing);

1.37.11: The Coverer

The cloud is downed forcefully by the Maruts by their motion (1,5).
He (water) is spread out for a long time (2).

He is the offspring of the cloud (the coverer) (3),
is uninjurable (4).¹¹

¹⁰ उदु त्ये (1), सूनवो गिरः (2), काष्ठा अज्मेषु (3), अत्वंत (4),
वाश्रा अभिज्ञु यातवे (5)

¹¹ त्यं चिद् धा (1), दीर्घं पृथुं (2), मिहो नपातम् (3), अमृत्रम् (4),
प्र च्यावयन्ति यामभिः (5)

Details: At a purely physical level, the Maruts, the powers of storm, hit the rain-bearing cloud and release its progeny, the rain.

In the symbolic interpretation, the cloud (*gha*) represents the concentrated force of darkness and inertia which covers the life-sustaining energies symbolised by the waters. Thus water is the child of the cloud.

napāta: progeny, the standard meaning; S. however translates it as 'cloud' since it can be understood as, 'one, who does not release'.

gha: massive cloud of inertia (*tamoghana*).

1.37.12: Impel Humans

Because of your might, O Maruts (1),
you impel men (to do their work) (2).

(You) impel the clouds (to release the waters) (3).¹²

1.37.13: Subtle Noise

Maruts talk loudly everywhere in motion on their way (1).
Someone (with subtle hearing) hears their sound (2).¹³

Details: Because there exists a host of Maruts the interchange among them causes noise. The sound is not physical and hence all cannot hear it. Only the aspirant whose subtle sense is awake can hear the sound.

1.37.14: Rituals

Come quick, O Maruts, with your swift vehicles (1);
strenuous rituals for you done by Kanya are in progress (2).
Rejoice fully among them (Kanya-s) (3).¹⁴

¹² मरुतो यद्धं वौ बलुः (1), जनां अचुच्यवीतन (2), गिरिन् अचुच्यवीतन (3)

¹³ यद्धं यान्ति मरुतः सं ह ब्रुवते अच्युना (1), शुणोति कश्चिदेषाम् (2)

¹⁴ प्र यांत् शीभम् आशुभिः (1), सन्ति कण्वैषु वौ दुवः (2),

तत्रो षु मादयाध्वै (3)

1.37.15: We are Yours for All Life

Certainly for your rapture is the offering (1);
 we know that we belong to you (2).
 We are yours for all life (3).¹⁵

Hymn 1.38: Thunder and Windless Rain

- 1: Hold Us like a Father**
- 2: Come to Us wherever You Are**
- 3: Felicities and Happiness**
- 4: Born in Yajamāna**
- 5: Insatiable**
- 6: Evil-spirit**
- 7: Windless Rain**
- 8: Lightning**
- 9: Darkness in Day**
- 10: Dwellings Shake**
- 11: Embanked Stream**
- 12: Reins of Knowledge**
- 13: Speak to Agni**
- 14: Spread the Prayer**
- 15: Intelligence**

Metre: Gāyatrī

1.38.1: O Maruts, Hold Us like a Father

O Lovers of praise (2),
 when will you hold us in both hands as a father does his son (1,3)?
 (When will you hold) us who have prepared the sacred seat (4)?¹

¹⁵ अस्ति हि ष्मा मदाय (1), वः स्मसि ष्मा बृयमेषाम् (2),
 विश्वं चिदायुः जीवसै (3)

¹ कर्ष नूनं (1), कंधप्रियः (2), पिता पुत्रं न हस्तयोः (3),
 दधिष्वे वृत्तबर्हिषः (4)

1.38.2: Come to Us wherever You are

Where indeed have you gone (1)?
 When will you arrive at the goal (2)?
 Move either from Earth or Heaven (3),
 to where you are called first as the cows do (4).²

Details: Maruts are the deities of the mid-world. It is easy for them to come from the Heaven as requested. Because of the many obstacles associated with the material of Earth due to its *tamasic* nature, it is difficult to move from one place on Earth to another. The prayer is that the Maruts should come here, wherever they are.

Sāyaṇa translates “*na*” in second line as negation stating, “do not come from Earth”.

1.38.3: Felicities and Happenings

Where are your new and happy felicities (1)?
 Where are your happy movements (2)?
 Where is all the wealth which brings happiness (3)?³

Details: The idea is that we do not know your felicities or wealth unless you come to us and show them.

1.38.4: Born in Yajamāna

O Sons of Pṛshni, may you become mortals so that (1),
 the *yajamāna* (singer) may become immortal (2).⁴

Details: The second half of the verse is a request for the Maruts to be born in the *yajamāna* so as to help him in the march towards immortality. Maruts are the powers of will and thought characterized

² कं नूनं (1), कद्मो अर्थं (2), गन्ता दिवो न पृथिव्याः (3),
 कं वो गावो न रण्यन्ति (4)

³ कं वः सुम्भा नव्यासि मरुतः (1), कं सुविता (2),
 को विश्वानि सौभेगा (3)

⁴ यद् यूयं पृथिमातरो मर्तासःस्यात्न (1),
 स्तोता वौ अमृतः स्यात् (2)

by fierce speed and brilliance. They work together with Indra, the lord of the Divine Mind. Prishni is described in (1.37.9).

1.38.5: Insatiable

Like a deer in its pasture (1),
may the person who praises you not become insatiable (2).
May he walk in the path of the Controller (3).⁵

Details: A deer eats grass greedily without any limit. May your praiser not act like the deer. May he be contented with what felicities he has. Then he can walk in the righteous path of the great controller, Yama.

Yama in the Veda is rarely the God of Death. S translates the second half as, "may he not tread the path of God of Death, Yama".

1.38.6: Evil-spirit

May not the evil spirit hurt us in anyway (1,3,5).
It is highly powerful and difficult to overcome (2-4),
May the evil-spirit be destroyed by its own desires (6).⁶

Details: Note that the line 3 of the earlier verse (1.38.5) should be read along with the lines (1,3,5) of this verse. "A person walking along the path of the Supreme One cannot be hurt by the power of evil-māya or evil-spirit."

Evil persons or forces, however powerful they may be, cause their own end.

1.38.7: Windless Rain

True indeed that these Rudra-s are luminous and strong (1,3),
(They) cause windless rain even in the desert (2,4).⁷

⁵ मा वौ मुगो न यवसे (1), जरिता भूत् अजौष्यः (2), पृथा यमस्य गदुपं (3)

⁶ मो षु णः (1), परापरा (2), निर्वैति: (3), दुर्हणा (4), वधीत् (5),
पदीष्ट तृष्णया सुह (6)

⁷ सृत्यं त्वेषा अमवन्तो (1), धन्वन् चित् (2), आ रुद्रियासः (3),
मिहैं कृणवन्ति अवाताम् (4)

Details: The outward meaning is that these Maruts avoid the rain-dispelling wind, and pour down rain. Rain symbolizes all the energies which enliven the sapless and inert body which is symbolized by desert.

There is no wind nor stray evil-force to blow away the downpour.

1.38.8: Lightning

Like the bellowing cow, the lightning roars (1).

Maruts serve us just as the mother-cow tends its calf (2).

Hence the Maruts release the rain (3).⁸

Details: In the outward sense, Maruts are the storm powers and they release the lightning and rain etc. In the progress of the inner or subtle yajña happening in our body, one hears celestial sounds, sees visions and there is the downpour of bliss caused by the grace of Maruts and other Gods.

1.38.9: Darkness in Day

They cause darkness even during the day-time (1),
by means of the rain-bearing clouds (2).

These inundate the Earth (3).⁹

Details: Even though there is constant illumination in the inner sacrifice, at times, due to the excessive shower of bliss, all appears covered with darkness; this is due to the fast movement of the Maruts at the moment. Rain refers to the shower of bliss.

⁸ वाश्रेव विद्युत् मिमाति (1), वत्सं न माता सिंषक्ति (2),

यदैषां वृष्टिः असर्जि (3)

⁹ दिवा चित् तमः कृष्णन्ति (1), पर्जन्यैन उदवहेन्ते (2),

यत् पृथिवी व्युन्दन्ति (3)

1.38.10: Dwellings Shake

Later due to the reverberation of the Maruts (1),
every earthly dwelling (body) shakes profusely (2).
Men too (tremble excessively) (3).¹⁰

Details: At the onset of the Maruts in the inner yajña, the subtle bodies of the aspirants tremble. It is not merely the physical bodies.

1.38.11: Embanked Stream

Strong-armed Maruts follow the beautiful embanked streams (1).
(They) come towards the sacrifices with unhindered motion (2).¹¹

Details: The embankment is the human body. The streams are the life or prāṇic energies. Maruts, being the deities of the world of prāṇa, come along this path.

1.38.12: Reins of Knowledge

May the fellies of the wheels be firm (1);
May the cars and the steeds be steady (2).
May the reins be well-fashioned (3).¹²

Details: The reins stand for rays of consciousness which control the movement of life-forces signified by horses attached to the carriage.
May they be polished and clean.

abhishavaḥ: reins;

1.38.13: Speak to Agni

Speak directly the revealing words of speech to Agni (1),
His presence is charming like that of a good friend (2).¹³

¹⁰ अधे स्वनान् मरुतां (1), विश्वमा सद् पार्थिवम् अरेजन्त् (2), प्र मानुषाः (3)

¹¹ मरुतो वीलुपाणिभिः चित्रा रोधस्वतीः अनुं (1), यातेम् अखिद्रयामभिः (2)

¹² स्थिरा वः सन्तु नेमयो (1), रथा अश्वास एषाम् (2),
सुसंस्कृता अभीजवः (3)

¹³ अच्छां वदु तना गिरा जुरायै ब्रह्मण्स्पतिम् (1),
अग्निं मित्रं न दर्शतम् (2)

Details: The Rishi calls upon himself to utter the speech that is vouchsafed by Agni, companion of the Maruts, to reveal the unique form of the host of Maruts.

Though Agni is especially the voice of the summoning-priest, he is the deity of all speech. Agni is called the lord of the Word, Brahmanaspati, in this specific mantra.

tanā: spreading; the words reveal the form of the deities in their wideness.

1.38.14: Spread the Prayer

Manifest the prayer with the mouth (1);
spread it out like a shower of cloud (2).

Chant the expressive Word of Gāyatri (3).¹⁴

Details: Here too the Rishi addresses himself. The meaning of line 1 is, “Manifest the prayer (arising in the heart) by the mouth”.

ukthyam: expressive speech which brings out the glory of the utterance of praise, and pleases the deity.

1.38.15: Intelligence

Glorify the host of Maruts with illuminated chants (1).

They are shining and are desirous of praise (2).

May they increase (in this inner yajna) of ours (3).¹⁵

Details: This verse is an exhortation to all God-lovers.

¹⁴ मिमीहि शोकम् आस्ये (1), पर्जन्य इव ततनः (2),

गाय गायत्रम् उक्थ्यम् (3)

¹⁵ वन्दस्व मारुतं गणं त्वेषं (1), पनस्युम् अर्किण्म् (2),

अस्मे बृद्धा असन् इह (3)

Hymn 1.39: Delight in Trees and Hills

- 1: Whose Words do You Favour?**
- 2: Praiseworthy Victory**
- 3: Delight and Hills**
- 4: Foes Only in Midworld**
- 5: Shakers of Hills**
- 6: Red Deer**
- 7: Protection from You**
- 8: Threats to Us**
- 9: Come with Full Protection**
- 10: Whole Life-force**

Metre: 1,3,5,7,9, Br̥hatī ; 2,4,6,8,10, Satobr̥hatī;

1.39.1: Whose Words do You Favour

O Maruts, from the region beyond (1),
 you place here your cherished thought like Light (to us) (2).
 O Maruts, whose inner yajña do you prefer (3)?
 Whose form? to whom do you go (4)?
 Whom (do you) favour, O shakers (5)?¹

Details: The Maruts grace the chosen aspirant by casting or placing their thought from the regions beyond into his/her subtle body.

The purport is: impelled by whose sacrifice, attracted by whose form, do you place your intelligence in them? What is the nature of the devotee to whom goes your willed thought?

shochih: light; *asyatha:* to throw, to place;
māna: cherished thought;

¹ प्र यदित्या परावतः: (1), शोचिः न मानम् अस्यथ (2),
 कस्य क्रत्वा मरुतः (3), कस्य वर्षसा कं याथ (4), कं है धूतयः (5)

1.39.2: Praiseworthy Victory

May your weapons be strong to drive away the foes (1);
 may they (mortals) be strong to resist (the foes) (2).
 May your strength be praiseworthy (3),
 unlike that of a deceitful mortal (4).²

Details: The victory of a mortal is not praiseworthy if it is based on deceit and falsehood. The victory given by Maruts is glorious because it is based only on Truth.

1.39.3: Delight and Hills

When you overthrow what is stable (1),
 you make your way through the trees in Earth (3).
 (When you) move what is heavy, O Leaders (2),
 (you make your way) to the regions in the mountains (4).³

Details: The entry of the Maruts on the material Earth becomes possible through physical bodies. Then the Maruts enter the ascending planes of matter, life etc. on the many-plateaued mountain. Note that the line 1 is connected to line 3, the line 2 to line 4.

By shaking the stable material world, Earth, the delight *vana* is released. Using this delight, the Maruts climb to the higher regions in the mountain representing the world of *prāṇa* or life-energies.

vi: in line 4 refers to *viyāthana:* to make way

parā hatha: overthrow;

² स्थिरा वः सन्तु आयुधा परा-णुदै (1), वीक्षु उत प्रतिष्कर्मे (2),
 युष्माकंमस्तु तविष्ठि पर्नीयसी (3), मा मत्यैस्य मायिनेः (4)

³ परा हृ यत् स्थिरं हृथ (1), नरो वर्तयथा गुरु (2),
 वि याथन वनिनेः पृथिव्या (3), वि आशाः पर्वतानाम् (4)

1.39.4: Foes Only in Midworld

No enemy of yours is known (1),
 to be above the Heaven or on the Earth, O Consumers of foes (2).
 May your combined strength spread everywhere quickly (3),
 for the destruction of the foes, O Terrible Ones (4).⁴

Details: The enemies of the Gods are in the midworld which is in between Earth and Heaven.

rudrāsaḥ: terrible ones, Rudra-s;
ādhr̥ṣhe: destruction;

1.39.5: Shakers of Hills

They shake the mountains, and tear apart the trees (1,2).
 The Maruts go mightily along with their progeny (3,5),
 as though in intoxication (4).⁵

Details: See (1.19.7) for an explanation of, “shaking the mountain.”

1.39.6: Red Deer

You have harnessed the spotted deer to your car (1);
 the red deer in the middle leads the car (2).
 Earth itself listens to your arrival in front (3).
 Men are fearful (awaiting your fierce arrival) (4).⁶

Details: The red deer denotes the life-energy united with the capacity for work. This leads the car of Maruts. The three spotted deers drawing the car stand for the three types of energies: physical, life and mental.

⁴ नहि वः शत्रुः विविदे (1), अधि चवि न भूम्याँ रिशादसः (2),
 युष्माकंमस्तु तविष्ठि तना युजा (3), रुद्रासो नूचिं आधृष्टे (4)

⁵ प्र वैपयन्ति पर्वतान् (1), वि विश्वन्ति वनस्पतीन् (2),
 प्रो आरत मरुतो (3), दुर्मदा इव (4), देवासः सर्वया विशा (5)

⁶ उपो रथेषु पृष्ठतीः अयुग्धं (1), प्रष्टिः वहति रोहितः (2),
 आ वो यामाय पृथिवी चित् अश्रोत् (3), अर्वीभयन्त मानुषाः (4)

1.39.7: Protection from You

For your speedy extension everywhere (1),
 and for increase (in us), we pray to you, O Rudra-s (2).
 Even as of old, you come to us for our protection (3);
 do come to the frightened Kaṇva (4).⁷

1.39.8: Threats to Us

O Maruts, should one of giant might, either impelled by your might (1),
 or promoted by some men, threaten us (2),
 strip him of his fiery strength, life-force and your protection (3).⁸

[All the gods, including Maruts are friends of human beings. They do not urge one human being to fight another. Puranic stories where gods pose obstacles to human beings doing tapas has no relevance here. Line one refers to persons who have obtained their strength from the Maruts. If such a person threatens a devotee, the devotee asks protection as mentioned in line 3.]

1.39.9: Come with Full Protection

O Wise Ones, who carry out the yajña-actions (1),
 perfectly uphold Kaṇva (2).

O Maruts, come to us with full protection (3),
 just as lightnings come with the rain (4).⁹

Details: You come to us naturally just as lightning follows the rain.
asāmi prayajyavah: those who perform perfectly the yajña-actions or cause them to be done perfectly.

⁷ आ वौ मक्षु तनाय् (1), कं रुद्रा अवौ वृणीमहे (2),

गन्ता नूनं नो अवसा यथा पुरेत्था (3), कण्वाय बिभ्युषे (4)

⁸ युष्मेषितो मरुतो (1), मर्त्येषित आ यो नो अभ्य ईषते (2),

बि तं युयोत शवसा व्योजसा बि युष्माकाभिः ऊतिभिः (3)

⁹ असामिः हि प्रयज्यवः (1), कण्वं दद प्रचेतसः (2),

असामिभिः मरुत आ न ऊतिभिः गन्ता (3), वृष्टिं न विद्युतः (4)

1.39.10: Whole Life-force

O perfect givers, you possess the whole life-force (1);
O Shakers, you bear the perfect might (2).
O Maruts, upon the wrathful haters of the Rishi-s (3),
release the opposing force like an arrow (4).¹⁰

Hymn 1.40: Brahmanaspati

- 1: Rise Up, O Brahmanaspati
- 2: Prayer for Hidden Wealth
- 3: May the Gods Lead Us
- 4: Undecaying Inspiration
- 5: Gods Reside in the Mantra
- 6: Brighten the Word
- 7: Treasure Within
- 8: None Can Cross Him

Metre: 1,3,5,7, Br̥hatī; 2,4,6,8, Satobr̥hatī

The deity Brahmanaspati is same as the deity Gaṇapati residing in the *mūlādhāra* chakra mentioned in the tantra, the presiding deity of the supreme speech (*parā vāk*), the Om-faced one with the elephant head.

In the Veda, the three terms – Brahmanaspati, Br̥haspati and Brahma – relate to one Deity.

We will focus on the two aspects, Brahma and Br̥haspati. Brahmanaspati represents their unification and harmonization.

In the Veda Brahma stands for mantra, Brahma presides over it. Vāk, speech, is the creator of the universe. This is not the original intense vibration, *spanda*. It is the power that manifests in Word, the truth seen or intuited in the heart of the creature. The meaningful sound thus expressed is the Vedic Mantra known by the term Brahma. This is the metrical speech by which the universe is impelled from within and without and goes on incessantly.

¹⁰ असामि ओजौ विभृथा सुदान्‌बो (1), सामि धूतयःशवः (2),
कृषि॒द्विषै मरुतः परिमन्यव (3), इषुं न सृजत् द्विष्म् (4)

Though the infinite consciousness designated by *sat-chit-ānanda* upholds the universe from its supreme superconscious station, (*supraketam*, 5.10.2, 10.36.5) yet it enters the inconscient and works to release the concealed truths of existence from the insentient waters (*apraketam salilam*, 10.129.3) and lead them upwards in manifestation.

The power of the Supreme Being which carries out this task is called the soul-power. Its master is Bṛhaspati. In this activity the creative power, the word is also involved, but the stress is on the soul-power and not on the power of the word or *brahma*. The manifestation of the different world-planes in the conscient human being is due to Bṛhaspati using the power of the word.

Bṛhaspati gives to the Gods, especially Indra, the word endowed with knowledge, manifesting the higher consciousness. Indra is the king of the gods of the triple world, lord of the divine mind. Bṛhaspati aids the Maruts who are the associates of Indra.

We will mention here two mantra-s from the sūkta (4.50) addressed to Bṛhaspati.

“He (Bṛhaspati) is the king in whom the soul-power goes in front, (4.50.8)”¹

“He creates in himself the highest good (*varīvah*) for the soul power that seeks its manifestation, (4.50.9)”²

The presence of the word *brahma* or *brahmana* indicates that Bṛhaspati is connected with the Word. He manifests the world-planes in man using the potency of the Word (*brahma*).

Brahmanaspati represents the harmonization of the aspects of Brahma and Bṛhaspati.

Brahmanaspati is stationed within man, as if asleep. In (1.40), there is first a prayer to him to awake. By the power of his word, the happy speech of truth, the Maruts, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Aryama and other gods take their positions in the sacrificer. He himself takes his dwelling in the sacrificer.” (KS, CW, vol. 5, 11).

¹ *yasmin brahmā rājani pūrva* etc. (4.50.8)

² *yo varivah kṛṇoti brahmaṇe rājā*, (4.50.9)

See also the introduction to (1.18), and the essay ‘Bṛhaspati and Brahmaṇaspati’, in pages (xiv-xvi) in ‘Rig Veda Samhitā: Maṇḍala 2’ (SAKSI).

1.40.1: Rise Up, O Brahmaṇaspati

O Brahmaṇaspati, rise up (1).

Aspiring for Gods, we pray to you (2).

May Maruts come here with blissful gifts (3).

O Indra, be swift to come with him (4).¹

Details: The beginnings of the manifestation of Brahmaṇaspati’s power in a human being is described by the phrase, ‘rise up’ (*uttishtha*). Just as a person’s movement begins with his getting up from his seat, Brahmaṇaspati is prayed to begin his action by getting up. When he rises, the other Gods or powers follow.

Brahmaṇaspati: lord of mantra-s, same as Vināyaka or Gaṇapati as indicated in (2.23.1)

prāshūḥ: be swift, (8.32.16, *prāshūnam*; 4.25.6, *prāshūshāt*). KS compares the meanings offered by various persons in (KS,CW, Vol. 5, p.185)

1.40.2: Prayer for Hidden Wealth

O Son of Strength, mortal calls you (1),
for obtaining the hidden felicities (2).

O Maruts, perfect might and hero-strength (3),
is obtained by him who praises you (4).²

[*su-ashvyam*: perfect life-energy, perfect steed-power]

¹ उत्तिष्ठ ब्रह्मणस्पते (1), देवयन्तः त्वा ईमहे (2),

उप प्र यन्तु मरुतः सुदानव् (3), इन्द्र प्राशूर्भीवा सचा (4)

² त्वाम् इत् हि संहसस्युत्र मर्त्ये उपब्रूते (1), धनै हिते (2),

सुवीर्यं मरुत् आ स्वश्यं (3), दधीत् यो व आचुके (4)

1.40.3: May the Gods Lead Us

May Brahmanaspati arrive (1).

May the Goddess of Speech endowed with the form of truth arrive (2).

May the Gods lead us to the yajña in front (3,5),

for obtaining the manifold wealth placed with the heroic leaders (4).³

Details: In the Vedic thought, all actions are begun and fulfilled by the potent Word, *vāk*; humans are only instruments. Hence, the Goddess of Speech also manifests her power along with Brahmanaspati in the human aspirant for the fulfillment of the actions.

Note that the yajña is performed for obtaining the wealth of felicities for all persons, not merely those participating in the inner yajña. Yajña is termed mighty because it is capable of overcoming all obstruction. Recall that yajña is a journey-pilgrimage.

pangkti: plenty, manifold;

1.40.4: Undecaying Inspiration

The aspirant, bears the undecaying aspiration (2),

who chants the mantra offering riches gladly (to the gods) (1).

For him, we invoke with sacrifice (the goddess) Ḫā (3,5).

She is unhurtable, has hero-force, and acts swiftly (4,6).⁴

Details: Ḫā is the Goddess of revelation, known as *pashyanti vāk*, the Word that sees and fulfils, in the tāntrik terminology. See (1.13.9)

sūnaram: gladly, (10.115.7); *vāghate*: one who chants; as indicated in the next verse, it is Brahmanaspati who himself chants through the human aspirant.

³ प्रैतु ब्रह्मण्यस्पतिः (1), प्रदेव्येतु सूनता (2),

अच्छां (3), वीरं नर्यं पङ्किराधसं (4), देवा यज्ञं नयन्तु नः (5)

⁴ यो वाघते ददाति सूनरं वसु (1), स धत्ते अक्षिति श्रवः (2),

तस्मा इळां (3), सुवीराम् (4), आ यंजामहे (5), सुप्रतूर्तिम् अनेहस्म् (6)

1.40.5: Gods Reside in the Mantra

Brahmaṇaspati proclaims indeed the worthy utterance (1),
in which the Gods Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryama (2),
make their dwelling (*oka*) (3).⁵

Details: Note it is Gaṇapati who chants or proclaims the mantra. This mantra itself is a structure in which the Gods Indra etc., take up their respective positions. These Gods bless the aspirant from their positions in the mantra.

1.40.6: Brighten the Word

We utter in the yajña the mantra, felicitous and faultless, O Gods (1).
Accept and brighten this Word, O leaders (2).

May the speech which gladdens everyone reach you (3).⁶

Details: The deity is requested to endow the Word or mantra coming out of the devotee's mouth with Light and power.

vidatheśhu: in the inner yajna leading to knowledge (KS), in the discoveries of knowledge (SA)

1.40.7: Treasure Within

Who can approach the seeker aspiring for the Gods (1),
him who has readied the inner altar (2).

The giver has gone through the abode of the rays of knowledge (3).
He has attained the treasure within his inner being (4).⁷

Details: S interprets the line 4 as, “the yajamāna enters the house full of children and grandchildren”, translating *pastyābhiḥ* as human beings. But the Word *antarvāvat* clearly indicates that the treasure has become internalized.

pastyā: a synonym for home; *prapra:* a filler for metrical purposes.

⁵ प्र नूनं ब्रह्मणुस्पतिः मन्त्रं वदति उक्थ्यम् (1),

यस्मिन् इन्द्रो वरुणो मित्रो अंर्यमा देवा (2), ओकासि चक्रिरे (3)

⁶ तमित् वौचेमा विदथैषु शंभुवं मन्त्रं देवा अनेहसम् (1),

इमां च वाचं प्रतिहर्येथा नरो (2), विश्वेद् वामा वौ अश्ववत् (3)

⁷ को दैव्यन्तम् अश्ववत् जनं (1), को वृक्तबर्हिषम् (2),

प्रप्रं दाशान् पस्त्याभिः अस्थिता (3), अन्तवर्वात् क्षयं दधे (4)

1.40.8: None can Cross Him

May he gather strength in himself (1).

Along with the kings, he slays (the hostiles) (2).

Though there may be cause for alarm, he holds his station (3).

When Vajrin grants the wealth, great or little, to the seeker (6),
there is none who can move him (the mighty one) (4),
or cross his intentions (5).⁸

Details: This verse describes the role of the ‘Ganapati-power’ in the seeker. This power enables the person to pursue his goals even though there may be a cause for alarm. No other person or power can cross the human seeker in his endeavour to obtain the wealth or felicities, great or small, as the case may be. No task is deemed trivial by the Divine.

Vajra usually means the mighty weapon of sound and light wielded by Indra. Usually *vajriṇah* means the mighty one, Indra. Here it is Ganapati.

Line 2: *rājabhiḥ*: kings such as Indra.

Hymn 1.41: Aryamā, Mitra and Varuṇa

1: The Wise Powers

2: Fill with Strength

3: Destroy the Calamity

4: Make the Path-of Truth Easy

5: Lead by Straight Paths

6: Progress in All Ways

7: Prepare a Hymn

8: Do not Condemn Anyone

9: Four Powers

Metre: Gāyatrī

* उपे क्षत्रं पृश्चीति (1), हन्ति राजभिः (2), भये वित्सुक्षितिं दधे (3),

नास्य वर्ता (4), न तरुता (5), महाधने नाभैः अस्ति वज्रिणः (6)

1.41.1: The Wise Powers

He, who is guarded by the wise Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryamā (1),
he, the yajamāna, swiftly subdues (his foes) (2).¹

Details: Aryamā (or Aryaman) is the third of the four solar deities Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryamā and Bhaga. There is no separate hymn to him in the Rig Veda. His name is mentioned along with Mitra and Varuṇa. There are half a dozen ṛks describing his powers in addition to the powers common to all solar deities. In RV (10.64.5), he is the deity of the human yajña-journey who carries it forward in its irresistible progress against the attacks of hostiles.

1.41.2: Fill with Strength

When the Gods fill a person with their own strength,
and protect him from the foes (1,2),
he is not hurt; he increases in all ways (3).²

1.41.3: Destroy the Calamity

In front of these persons, the kings destroy (2),
the foes and their inaccessible cities completely (1).
They cause the destruction of the calamity (3).³

[*rājānah*: kings, Mitra, Varuṇa and others;
duriṭā: the calamity which may hurt the yajamāna;]

1.41.4: Make the Path of Truth Easy

O Āditya-s, the path is easy and devoid of obstacles (1),
for your advance to the Truth (2).
Here there is no unworthy offering for you (3).⁴

¹ यं रक्षन्ति प्रचेतगो वरुणो मित्रो अर्यमा (1), नूचित्स दंभते जनः (2)

² यं वाहुतेव पिप्रन्ति (1), पान्ति मत्यं रिषः (2), अरिष्टः सर्वं एधते (3)

³ वि दुर्गा वि द्विपः (1), पुरो ग्रन्ति राजान एषाम् (2), नयन्ति दुरिता तिरः (3)

⁴ सुगः पन्था अनृक्षर आदित्यास (1), कृतं यते (2),

न अत्र अवस्थादो अस्ति वः (3)

Details: Āditya-s: the sons of the Infinite mother Aditi; in particular the four solar powers, Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryamān and Bhaga.

avasvāda: unworthy or tasteless offering;

1.41.5: Lead by Straight Paths

O heroes, the yajñā which you lead by the straight paths (1),
is for your enjoyment, O Āditya-s (2).⁵

Details: *dhītaye*: enjoyment or nourishment in general; For S it refers to drink only. *dhīti* means nourishment also.

pra nashat: to obtain;

1.41.6: Progress in All Ways

Such a mortal attains all riches causing delight (1),
and also obtains successors of his own (2).

He progresses unhurt (in all ways) (3).⁶

Details: By the grace of Gods, not only does the yajamāna himself become vast in his prowess but he can also build or prepare the successors who embody these accomplishments.

astṛtah: unhurt;

1.41.7: Prepare a Hymn

O Friends, how can we prepare an affirmative laud (*stoma*) (1),
appropriate to Mitra, Aryamā and Varuṇa (2,4),
that vastly nourishes them (3).⁷

Details: By hymns of praise, the Gods increase in the yajamāna. In this sense, the hymn is said to be food (*psara*) for the Gods. Just as the food nourishes the physical body of man, the hymn nourishes the body of God in the yajamāna and makes it grow.

This mantra like many others contradicts the popular view, 'Veda was not composed by human beings', the so called *apaurusheya*

⁵ यं यज्ञं नर्यथा नर आदित्या क्रुजुना पृथा (1), प्र वः स धीतये नशत् (2)

⁶ स रक्तं मत्यो वसु विश्वं (1), तोकमुत त्पना (2), अच्छा गच्छति अस्तृतः (3)

⁷ कथा राधाम सखायः स्तोमं (1), मित्रस्यार्यम्णः (2),

महि प्सरो (3), वरुणस्य (4)

doctrine. Rishi-s receive the inspiration from higher planes and give the inspiration an appropriate body in the form of letters and metre to yield the hymn or laud. *psara*: food;

1.41.8: Do Not Condemn Anyone

(The evil one) who hurts or reviles a person aspiring for God (2,4,6), even him I do not denounce (1,3,5).

I glorify you with happy hymns (7).⁸

Details: It is not necessary to complain to the Gods about the hurters or revilers since the Gods are ever awake to the needs and welfare of the aspirant. *devayantam*: an aspirant for god;

mā prativoche: not denounce;

1.41.9: Four Powers

The four powers are given by the one who supports all (1,3); there is no need for (mental) agitation (2).

May we not use abusive speech in reply (4).⁹

Details: The Supreme One is continuously watching the devotee and allots him the four Gods or powers. Hence, there is no need for the devotee to counter the evil speech or acts of the foe with abusive language.

The four powers or Gods mentioned here are Mitra, Varuṇa, Bhaga and Aryamān. Even though the name of Bhaga does not explicitly appear in this hymn, the four names, often termed four kings, appear together elsewhere and they are supposed to have a common dwelling in (1.136.2). Bhaga is specifically mentioned in (7.41.2-6), (1.24.5), (7.38.6) and (5.82).

S interprets the whole verse as referring to a game of gambling involving four cowrie shells, *kapardaka*. This word is not here. The

⁸ मा (1), यो प्रन्तं (2), मा (3), शपन्तं (4), प्रति वोचे (5), देवयन्तम् (6),
सुम्भैरित् वा आ विवासे (7)

⁹ चतुरः चिद् वद्मानाद् (1), विभीयादा (2), निधातोः (3),
न दुरुक्ताय गुणेत् (4)

Sanskrit word for game of dice is *akṣha* and it does not occur anywhere. Wilson's translation following S is: "For he (the worshipper) loves not, but fears to speak evil (of any one), as a gamester fears (his adversary) holding the four (dice *kapardaka*) until they are thrown". Yāska also suggests the same meaning as S. But this meaning has no basis in the text.

Hymn 1.42: Pūṣhan, the Guide

- 1: Remove the Obstacles**
- 2: Foes Who Want to Master Us**
- 3: The Deceiving Forces**
- 4: Evil-speech**
- 5: Protection**
- 6: Give Riches to Others**
- 7: Right Tasks**
- 8: Abundant Growth**
- 9: Make Us Sensitive**
- 10: Celebrate Pūṣhan**

Metre: Gāyatrī

Pūṣhan is one of the Āditya-s. He nourishes both the *yajamāna* and the Earth. Though the home of all the Gods is high above (*ürdhvam āyatanaṁ*), yet their main station or field of action differs. Thus the abode of Indra, Lord of the Divine Mind, is the Mind Station, *svar*. Agni is stationed on Earth. The Maruts belong to the mid-region, the Life-world. Similarly the other Gods preside over their respective places and carry on their activities. Pūṣhan belongs to the third station; still his station is taken as the Earth because he is the lord of mother Earth. He supports and nourishes her. By nourishing the earth, he himself becomes nourished. Nourished thus, Pūṣhan showers the bounty of Indra and becomes his brother (6.55.5). Ultimately he becomes the brother of Earth and the space (divided into quarters), (6.58.4). By nourishing earth, he makes it ready for the manifestation of Uṣha, the Dawn of higher consciousness. And when the Ashvins espouse Uṣha, he adopts these health-givers who effect increasing nourishment as parents (10.85.14).

Even after the slaying of Vṛtra, the demons or Panि-s obstruct the path of the sacrificer, steal or cover the knowledge (cows); other enemies of the Gods harass the devotee in his upward course, directly or indirectly, by robbing him of his wealth-Rays, veiling the path, showing wrong directions etc. It is here that the work of Pūshan is specially seen. The traffickings of the *Pani* and the like do not affect God Pūshan. He is the lord of the Paths (*pathaspati*). He does not lose cattle. Pūshan aids in the effort of the sacrificer to reach the sun-world, even while living (10.17.4). In (6.53.3), (6.53.6), he is prayed to soften the hearts of misers and goad the hearts of greedy.

Pūshan nourishes the sacrificer as well as the Earth. He is the progeny of Āditya as Indra who showers the wealth of knowledge, light, strength; elder to Uṣha, he protects the Earth; brother of Indra, master of the route of the sacrificer, he guards the path, searches out the sacrificer, urges his effort.

[Recall the sub-hymn 1.23.13-1.23.15 to Pūshan.]

1.42.1: Remove the Obstacles

O Pūshan, convey us safely across the path (1);
eliminate the evil-forces in the path (2).
O Son (of Indra), be close to us, ahead of us (3).¹

Details: Line 2: *vi*: in stands for *vitira*, destroy;
vimucho napāt: the son (*napāt*) of one who releases gifts (Indra).

1.42.2: Foes Who Want to Master Us

Pūshan drives away from our path (1,4),
the wicked and the wolf-demon who causes misery (2),
who wants to be our master and order us (3).²

¹ सं पूषन् अथ्वनः तिर् (1), वि अहौ विमुचो नपात् (2),
सश्वा देव प्रणः पुरः (3)

² यो नः पूषन् (1), अघो वृक्तो दुःशोव (2), आदिदैशति (3),
अप स्म तं पथो जहि (4)

Details: In the inner journey there are obstacles caused by the demons, such as Vṛtra, symbolized by wolf. It is easy for Pūshan to drive away the foes; hence the prayer.

1.42.3: The Deceiving Forces

Him, who causes obstruction in the path of yajña (2),
and who is a thief and a deceiver (3),
drive him to a place far from the path (1,4).³

Details: The psychological foes deceive us by increasing our ego.
apa aja: drive away; *sruṭeh*: path, derived from *sru*, movement;

1.42.4: Evil-speech

Trample (him) with your feet wherever he may be (2),
who is a two-fold robber with evil speech (1),
and whose body burns others (3).⁴

Details: The psychological foes rob the faculties already present in us; they also rob the faculties which are in the nascent state and do not allow them to manifest yet. The speech of these foes is tinged with evil. *dvayāvino*: (two-fold) robber of powers that are present and that yet to manifest.

1.42.5: Protection

O Knower, who eliminates the foes (2),
we pray for your all-sided protection, O Pūshan (1,3).
You did impel our fore-fathers (with that protection) (4).⁵

[*dasra*: one who eliminates foes]

³ अप् (1), त्वं परिपन्थिनं (2), मुषीवाणं हुरश्चितम् (3), दूरमधि स्रुतेः अज (4)

⁴ त्वं तस्य द्रव्याविनो अघरांसस्य कस्य चित् (1), पुदाभि तिष्ठ (2), तपुषिम् (3)

⁵ आ तत् ते (1), दस्य मन्तुमः (2), पूषन् अवो वृणीमहे (3),

येन पितृन् अचौदयः (4)

1.42.6: Give Riches to Others

O Lord of all prosperity, one with weapons of golden radiance (2),
grant us the riches (1,3,5),
which we can give to others easily (4).⁶

Details: When a person gets riches, usually he/she becomes greedy also. The prayer is that we may share our riches with others.

vāshī: weapon; adhā: after (our prayer for riches);

1.42.7: Right Tasks

Lead us past our enemy (1).

Conduct us along the happy paths easy to traverse (2).

O Pūshan, make us know the right tasks to be done in this path (3).⁷

[supatha: happy paths, suga: easy to traverse;
kratuh: the right tasks; the right willings;]

1.42.8: Abundant Growth

Lead us to the fertile region (1).

May we not face fresh hardship in the path (2).

O Pūshan, make us know the right tasks to be done in this path (3).⁸

Details: Pūshan leads us to a condition or state of mind conducive to an overall development of our faculties.

sūyavasam: place with luxurious growth of grass; fertile region.

1.42.9: Make Us Sensitive

Be mighty, fill us (with all felicities) (1).

Give us generously; make us sensitive (2).

Feed us in all ways (physically and mentally) (3).

O Pūshan, make us know the right tasks to be done in this path (4).⁹

- अधा नो (1), विश्वसौभग् हिरण्यवाशीमत्-तम (2), धनानि (3),
सुषणा (4), कृधि (5)
- अतिं नः सञ्चरतो नय (1), सुगा नः सुपथा कृणु (2), पूर्णचिह्न क्रतुं विदः (3)
- अभि सूर्यवर्सं नय (1), न नवज्वारो अध्वने (2), पूर्णचिह्न क्रतुं विदः (3)
- शार्मि पूर्धि (1), प्र यैसि च शिशीहि (2), प्रासि उदरम् (3), पूर्णचिह्न क्रतुं विदः (4)

Details: Be mighty for our benefit, make us bright, fill us with thyself, give us well-being, fill us with enjoyable felicities.

1.42.10: Celebrate Pūshan

We do not blame Pūshan (1).

Him we celebrate with hymns of praise (2).

We solicit mighty Pūshan for riches (3).¹⁰

Hymn 1.43: Rudra and Soma

1: Most Wise

2: Rudra-s Grace for All

3: All the Gods

4: Rudra as a Healer

5: Luminous like the Sun

6: Happiness for All

7: Prayer to Soma

8: Soma Gives Plentiful Strength

9: Cherish the Devotees

Metre: 1-8, Gāyatrī; 9, Anuṣṭup

Rudra: (1.43.1-1.43.6)

The commentator S translates the name Rudra, as one who makes everyone cry, based on the word, *rud*, to cry. In this hymn there is no mention of his tendency to make one cry. Rudra is beneficent and a healer who showers his grace on all.

Hence Kapāli Sāstry in his Sanskrit book states, ‘that Rudra causes only the evil forces to cry’, by warring with them and forcing them to leave our bodies. When one is very much attached to one’s favourite selfish ends, he/she feels Rudra-s wrath since the person is identifying with the evil-forces. Hence the prayer in some verses, ‘Save our progeny etc.’

Regarding the trio *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra* in the Veda, see pages, 39-43, in ‘The Essentials of Rig Veda’ (SAKSI).

¹⁰ न पूषणे मेथामसि (1), सूक्तैरभि गृणीमसि (2), वसूनि द्रस्मम् ईमहे (3)

1.43.1: Most Wise

To Rudra, who is most wise, most generous and mighty (1),
when shall we utter this hymn, exceedingly pleasing to his heart (2)?¹

1.43.2: Rudra-s Grace for All

May our animals, our people cows (2),
and our progeny have Rudra-s grace (3).

May Aditi facilitate (the process) (1).²

Details: The prayer is that all entities connected to us be the object of Indra's grace.

Aditi: The Goddess of infinity. See (1.89.10). Only Aditi can facilitate the acceptance of the grace or energy of Rudra by animals and other beings. These entities cannot bear Rudra-s force directly.

1.43.3: All the Gods

May Mitra, Varuṇa and Rudra wake us to knowledge (1),
even as all the Gods who take common delight (2).³

Details: May these gods bestow graciously the knowledge to us.

1.43.4: Rudra as a Healer

Rudra is the lord of hymns and the master of yajñā (1).

His healing balms have the delight (of higher worlds) (2).

Through him, we seek the felicity of Shamyu (3).⁴

Details: Shamyu is a Rishi of Bṛhaspati lineage. He desires happiness for all seekers and prays to Rudra.

Line 2: *jalāśham*: happiness (of higher worlds);

¹ कदुद्राय प्रचेतसे मीळ्हुष्माय तव्यसे (1), वोचेम शंतमं हुदे (2)

² यथा नो अदिति: करत् (1), पश्चे नृभ्यो यथा गवै (2)
यथा तोकाय रुद्रियम् (3)

³ यथा नो मित्रो वरुणो यथा रुद्रः चिकैतति (1), यथा विश्वे सजोषसः (2)

⁴ गथपतिं मेथपतिं रुद्रं (1), जलाषभेषजम् (2), तत् शंयोः सुममीमहे (3)

1.43.5: Luminous like the Sun

Rudra is luminous like the sun, gratifying like gold (1).

(He is) best among the Gods and the giver of homes (2).⁵

Details: *vasuh*: giver of homes: Rudra chases away all the evil forces from our subtle bodies and thus makes them the delightful dwellings for our souls.

1.43.6: Happiness for All

He makes for easy well-being of our steeds, rams and ewes (1), our men, women and kine (2).⁶

Details: Steeds, rams, ewes and kine refers to classes of human beings who have qualities similar to these of these animals. Steed refers to those having an abundance of life-energy. Kine refers to those human beings who are soft with no powers of resistance; rams refers to those who are sexually active etc.

Soma (1.43.7-1.43.9)

See the introduction to Soma in the sūkta (1.2) and the notes on Soma in (1.2.6), (1.3.4), (1.91), (1.93) etc. Recall that Soma is the deity of bliss who gives happiness to all. Soma, the delight in all objects is released by sacrificer by doing works consciously. Thus he gives riches in abundance.

1.43.7: Prayer to Soma

O Soma, grant us wealth in abundance (1),
to suffice for a host of human beings (2).

Also grant us a vast and mighty inspiration (3).⁷

⁵ यः शुक्र इव सूर्यो हिरण्यमिव रोचते (1), श्रेष्ठो देवानां वसुः (2)

⁶ शं नः करुति अर्बते सुगं मेषाय मेष्ये (1), नृभ्यो नारिभ्यो गवे (2)

⁷ अस्मे सौम श्रियमधि नि धैहि (1), शतस्य नृणाम् (2),

महि श्रवः तुविनृम्णाम् (3)

1.43.8: Soma gives Plentiful Strength

May the non-givers not overpower us (2).

May those who obstruct the Soma-offering (not overpower us) (1).

O Soma, give us plentiful strength (3).⁸

Details: The psychological foes obstruct our releasing the delight through actions by encouraging our selfish instincts. The prayer is to overpower these foes.

1.43.9: Cherish the Devotees

(Soma is) immortal, stationed in the Supreme Plane of Truth (2).

O Soma, cherish (vena) your servitors (1,4),

for whom you are the head like the axel (for wheel) (3).

They decorate you; know them, O Soma (5,6).⁹

[vena: to cherish;]

"I seek not science, not religion, not Theosophy, but Veda — the truth about Brahman, not only about His essentiality, but about His manifestation, not a lamp on the way forest, but a light and a guide to joy and action in the world, the truth which is beyond opinion, the knowledge which all thought strives after — yasmin vijnate sarvam vijnatam [which being known, all is known]. I believe that Veda to be the foundation of the Sanatan Dharma; I believe it to be the concealed divinity within Hinduism, -but a veil has to be drawn aside, a curtain has to be lifted. I believe it to be knowable and discoverable. I believe the future of India and the world to depend on its discovery and on its application, not to the renunciation of life, but to life in the world and among men."

"I write for those who acknowledge reason but do not identify reason with Western materialism; who are skeptics, but not unbelievers; who, admitting the claims of modern thought, still believe in India, her mission, her gospel, her immortal life and her eternal rebirth. . . ."

(Sri Aurobindo)

⁸ मा नः सोम-परिबाधो (1), म अरातयो जुहुरन्त (2),

आ न इन्दो वाजे भज (3)

⁹ यास्ते प्रजा (1), अमृतस्य परस्मिन् धामन् क्रतस्य (2),

मूर्धा नाभा (3), सोम वेन (4), आभूषन्तीः (5), सोम वेदः (6)

Section VI: Sūkta-s (1.44-1.50)

Riṣhi: Praskaṇvah Kāṇvah

Sūkta	Hymn title
1.44	Agni Nourishes and Pervades Us (14)
1.45	Agni Worships Men (10)
1.46	Ashvins: Leaders of Journey (15)
1.47	Ashvins: Car with Abundant Gifts (10)
1.48	Uṣha: Speak the Happy Truth (16)
1.49	Uṣha Comes to Soma Within Man (4)
1.50	Sūrya: The Highest Light (13)

The Riṣhi here belongs to the lineage of Kāṇva. This Section has seven hymns, two each to Agni, Ashvins and Uṣha, and one to Sun or Sūrya. Even though the Gods in the Veda do not constitute a hierarchy, Sūrya--savitṛ is clearly at the apex. The relation between Sūrya and Savitṛ has already been given in Section IV. The hymn 1.50 has several often-quoted mantra-s.

The esoteric nature of the Gods is clearly stressed. Agni worships both Gods and men who are spiritually advanced, (1.45.1). Agni worships with words. Agni is established within us (1.44.11). The home of Soma is within the yajamāna, (1.49.1).

Note that Ashvins are twin-gods. They are never mentioned individually. They are close friends of the Uṣha, the Divine Dawn. Uṣha is not a mere physical Dawn, but a harbinger of the spiritual dawn. Uṣha is sometimes identified as the daughter of Sūrya. Ashvins have a three wheeled car so that they can easily travel in the three worlds.

The number 14 in boldface in the title of (1.44) indicates the number of mantra-s in the Sūkta.

1.44: Agni Nourishes & Pervades Us

Seer: Praskanvah Kāṇvah

- 1: Knower of All Things Born
- 2: Bestows Vast and Powerful Hearing
- 3: Glory of Yajña
- 4: Ever-worshipful Guest
- 5: Nourishes and Enjoys
- 6: Increase Our Life-span
- 7: Gods of Conscious Intelligence
- 8: Bring the Gods
- 9: Messenger of the People
- 10: Blazed After Many Dawns
- 11: We Establish Agni in Us
- 12: Agni Pervades Within and Blazes
- 13: Hear with Listening Ears
- 14: Laud for Maruts and Other Gods

Metre: 1,3,5,7,9,11,13, Bṛhatī ; 4,6,8,10,12,14, Satobṛhatī

1.44.1: Knower of All Things Born

O Agni, all-knower and immortal, bring to the giver (1,3),
the diverse and luminous wealth from Uṣha (2).
(Bring today) the Gods who awaken at dawn (4).¹

Details: The Goddess Uṣha is the spiritual dawn. Just as the physical dawn indicates the onset of the light of the physical Sun, the advent of Uṣha in the inner being of man indicates the outbreak of Truth-Light. It is Agni's function in the inner sacrifice to bring the Gods or manifest their powers at Dawn. The Gods manifest or awake in man only after Agni's birth.

jātaveda: one who knows about all entities which are born. Agni, from his seat in the heart, is aware of the entire history of persons in

¹ अग्ने (1), विवस्वत् उषसः: चित्रं राधौ (2), अमर्त्य आ दृशुषे जातवेदो
वहा (3), त्वमद्या देवौ उषबुधः: (4)

all their previous births and guides individuals incessantly. This word occurs about one hundred twenty times in RVS.

dāshushe: giver, patron of yajña;

1.44.2: Vast and Powerful Hearing

O Adorable Agni, you are indeed the messenger (1),
the bearer of our offerings (to gods) (2),

and the charioteer of the yajña-journey (3).

Along with Ashvins and Uṣha (4),

establish in us the vast inspiration with hero-strength (5).²

Details: Ashvins: They are the twin Gods endowed with life-energies. They are the divine physicians and they accompany Uṣha. The healing powers of Ashvins are discussed in several hymns such as 1.112, 1.116-1.120.

adhvara: Pilgrim-yajña in which Agni is the charioteer.

shravah: inspiration; it is the power of hearing the sounds of Truth characterized by a vastness which breaks down all limitations or artificial barriers. It also has the power of making us aware of the Truth which overcomes all obstacles.

1.44.3: Glory of Yajña

Today we pray to the messenger (1),

Agni, the treasure, beloved of many (2),

He gives the feeling of vibratory perception and straight-in-lustre (3);

he is the glory of the yajña at the onset of dawn (4).³

Details: *vyuṣṭiṣhu*: vi + *uṣṭiṣhu*, Dawn, the onset of the Goddess Uṣha or the beginning of divine manifestation in the inner being.

dhūmакetu: see (1.27.11)

² जुष्टे हि दूतो असि (1), हव्यवाहुनो (2), अग्ने रथीः अध्वराणाम् (3),
सजूः अधिभ्याम् उषसा (4), सुवीर्यम् अस्मे धैहि श्रवौ बृहत् (5)

³ अद्य दूतं वृणीमहे (1), वसुम् अग्निं पुरुष्प्रियम् (2),
धूमकेतुं भाक्तजीकं (3), व्युष्टिषु यज्ञानाम् अध्वरश्रियम् (4)

1.44.4: Ever-Worshipful Guest

To bring the Gods in our front (3),
 at dawn, I pray to Agni, one who knows all things born (4).
 (He is) excellent, the most youthful, guest (1),
 well-fed with offerings, dear to the generous sacrificer (2).⁴

Details: *atithim*: a guest, a popular epithet used only for Agni.

svāhutam: *su-āhutam*: well-fed with offerings, (3.27.5)

1.44.5: Nourishes and Enjoys

I praise you, Agni, the immortal guardian (1,3).
 He eternally enjoys and nourishes the universe (2).

(He is) worthy of yajña, superb at yajña, conveyer of offerings (4).⁵

Details: Agni both nourishes and enjoys (*bhojana*) the immortality (*amṛta*) latent in the universe. Agni is worthy of yajña performed for him and he is superb at performing the yajña. Yajña is not merely a ritual, but is the collaborative action between human beings and Gods, supervised by the latter. The Gods are the actual performers of all actions with the Rishi-s or the seekers being their conscious instruments.

bhojanāni: enjoyments (5.4.5); *miyedhya*: worthy of yajna;

1.44.6: Increase Our Life-Span

With flames that cause delight, youthful, well-worshipped (2),
 be attentive to the singer, perfect in expression (1).

Increase the life-span of Praskaṇva so that he may live consciously (3);
 glorify the heavenly host of Gods (4).⁶

⁴ श्रेष्ठं यविष्टुम् अतिथिं (1), स्वाहुतं जुष्टं जनाय दाशुर्वै (2),
 देवाँ अच्छा यात्वे (3), जातवैदसम् अश्चिम् इळे व्युष्टिषु (4)

⁵ स्तविष्यामि त्वामहं (1), विश्वस्य अमृत भोजन (2),
 अग्ने त्रातारम् अमृतं (3), मियेध्य यजिष्ठं हव्यवाहन (4)

⁶ सुशंसौ बोधि गृणते (1), यविष्ट्य मधुजिह्वः स्वाहुतः (2),
 प्रस्कणवस्य प्रतिरन् आयुः जीवसै (3), नमस्या दैव्यं जनम् (4)

Details: Agni is requested to be attentive to the prayers of the Rishi. *sushamsa*: perfect in expression, (7.16.6);

Praskaṇva: a son of the Seer Kaṇva or one who is superb in knowledge. Since Praskaṇva's life is dedicated to the Gods, therefore, increase of his life-span can only lead to further glorification of the Gods.

1.44.7: Gods, the Conscious thinkers

O Agni, summoning priest, omniscient (1),
people kindle you well (2). (You are) invoked by all (4).
Swiftly bring here the Gods, the conscious thinkers (3,5).⁷
[dravat: swiftly]

1.44.8: Brings the Gods

(Bring) the Gods Savitṛ, Uṣha, Ashvins, and Bhaga (1),
at dawn and night (2).

The Kaṇva-s who prepare the Soma kindle you (3).
(You are) perfect in yajña, the carrier of the offerings (4).⁸

Details: The Rishi prays to Agni to grant him the presence of the Gods at all times. The yajña is always a happy one.

kshapah: night, period with no apparent spiritual progress or that where the spiritual knowledge is being digested or stabilised. Since the physical rite is never conducted at night, the yajña here has to be symbolic.

svadhvara: *su + adhvara*; perfect yajna-journey or yajna-rite;

Bhaga: the Divine enjoyer who assigns the share of Delight to each person; he is the brother-power of Mitra, the Divine power of harmony and friendship. The Sūkta (5.82) which describes this God is discussed in detail in 'Divinizing Life: the path of Atri Rishi', SAKSI, 2004, containing all mantra-s of Maṇḍala 5 of RV. See also, (SA, SV), pp. 287-293 for the analysis of RV (5.82).

⁷ होतारं विश्ववेदसं (1), सं हि त्वा विश इन्यते (2),
स आ वह (3), पुरुहूत् (4), प्रचैतसो अग्ने देवाँ इह द्रवत् (5)

⁸ सवितारम् उषसम् अथिना भग्म् अग्निं (1), व्युष्टिषु क्षपः (2),
कण्वासः त्वा सुतसौमास इन्यते (3), हव्यवाहैं स्वध्वर (4)

1.44.9: Messenger of the People

O Agni, you are the guardian of the yajna-s (1),
the messenger of the people (2).

Bring the Gods, who awake at dawn (3),
to behold the sun and to drink the Soma today (4).⁹

Details: Sun, indicated by the word *svar*, is of course the Truth-Light of the Self. Agni, the force of aspiration, conveys the prayers of worshippers and is instrumental for the manifestation of the various powers, the Gods, in the seekers.

Soma: It is the Delight of Existence apparent in all things. When a human performs any activity consciously as a self-offering or *yajña*, the Soma is released. It is offered to the Gods who in turn increase their powers in us. See also the Sūkta (1.91).

1.44.10: Blazed after Many Dawns

O Agni, after many preceding dawns you have blazed (1,3),
with riches of light and universal in vision (2,4).

You are the protector among warring clans (5).

Placed in front during the *yajña*-s, you are the friend of man (6).¹⁰

Details: In the esoteric sense each dawn is an indicator of a spiritual experience which naturally ends; with a new experience, a new dawn comes in. Many dawns proceed before the full manifestation of the Truth-Light.

grāma: clan; each clan represents a partial viewpoint of Truth; the clans dispute one another. Agni supports the appropriate one at each time, leading to the vision of the complete Truth.

grāma: village, place of human residence according to S. However, in RV (3.33.11) and RV (10.27.18), he translates it as clan.

vibhāvasu: riches (*vasu*) of light, (3.2.2);

dīdetha: blazes (the vision of truth);

⁹ पतिहि अध्वराणम् अग्ने (1), दूतो विशामसि (2),
उषर्बृथ आ वंह (3), सोमपीतये देवान् अद्य स्वर्दशः (4)

¹⁰ अग्ने पूर्वा अनुषसौ (1), विभावसो (2), दीदेश (3), विश्वर्दशतः (4),
असि ग्रामेषु अविता (5), पुरोहितो असि यज्ञेषु मानुषः (6)

1.44.11: We Establish Agni in Us

We establish you within us as Manu did (3).

O Performer of the yajña, O Agni (1),
summoning and ritvik priest (2).

Conscious thinker, you are a speedy messenger and immortal (4).¹¹

Details: The phrase ‘like Manu’ occurs in RV (1.31.17). Just as Manu, the first among thinking persons, established Agni in himself, we follow his example.

ṛtvijam: Agni, the priest sacrifices according to the law and season of the *ṛtam*, truth in movement. See RV (1.1.1). *ṛtu* is the order of truth arranged in time, place, etc.

ni + dhīmahi: establish inside in our subtle body.

1.44.12: Agni Pervades within and Blazes

When you, cherished by friends, are placed in front (1),
you exist within and become a messenger of the Gods (2).

Like the resounding billows of the ocean (3),
your flames blaze, O Agni (4).¹²

Details: The word *antara* (within) provides a clue to the subtle nature of the sacrifice.

1.44.13: Hear with Listening Ears

Hear with ears that listen (1).

Along with the carriers of energies and the other Gods, O Agni (2),
come and take the sacred seat along with (3),

Mitra, Aryamā and other Gods attending the morning-yajña (4).¹³

¹¹ नि त्वा यज्ञस्य साधनम् अग्ने (1), होतारम् कृत्विजम् (2),

मनुष्वद् दैव धीमहि (3), प्रचेतसं जीरं दूतम् अमर्त्यम् (4)

¹² यत् देवानां मित्रमहः पुरोहितो (1), अन्तरो यासि दृत्यम् (2),

सिन्धौः इव प्रस्वनितास ऊर्मयोः (3), अशेः भ्राजन्ते अर्चयोः (4)

¹³ श्रुधि श्रुत्कर्ण (1), वहिभिः दैवैः अग्ने स्यावभिः (2),

आ सीदन्तु बर्हिषिं (3), मित्रो अर्यमा प्रात्यर्थाणो अध्वरम् (4)

Details: *vahnibhiḥ*: the other Gods who accompany Agni, bearing various types of energies.

1.44.14: Laud for Maruts and Other Gods

May this affirming laud (*stoma*) be heard (1),
by the munificent Maruts (2).

They are flame-tongued and increase the truth (3).

May the Soma be drunk by the law-upholding Varuṇa (4),
along with Uṣha and Ashvins (5).¹⁴

Hymn 1.45: Agni Worships Men

Riṣhi: Praskaṇvah Kāṇvah

1: Agni Worships Gods and Men

2: Bring the Thirty Three Gods

3: Agni of Mighty Action

4: Pure Lusture

5: Luminous Intelligence

6: Richly-Varied Listenings

7: Knower of Excellent Wealth

8: Wise Ones Lead Agni to the Seeker

9: Agni Leads the Gods

10: Agni Worships with Words

Metre: Anuṣṭup

1.45.1: Agni Worships Gods and Men

You worship here Rudra-s and Aditya-s (2),
and the Vasu-s, O Agni (1).

You also worship thinking men who perform the sacrifice sincerely (3),
and anoint (or diffuse) them with the light of truth (4).¹

¹⁴ शृण्वन्तु स्तोमं (1), मरुतः सुदानवो (2), अग्निजिह्वा क्रतावृथः (3), पिंडतु सोमं वरुणो धूतव्रतो (4), अश्विभ्याम् उषसा सज्जः (5)

¹ त्वमग्ने वसून् इह (1), रुद्रान् आदित्यान् उत यजा (2), स्वध्वरं जनं मनुजातं (3), धूतपृष्ठम् (4)

Details: Worship not only Gods like Vasu-s, worship also the illumined men who adore the Gods through the offerings of knowledge. Such men are like Gods, their lives dedicated to the Gods. Since Agni is the priest (as mentioned in (1.1.1) and other places), he is requested to worship these men along with the Gods.

Vasu-s, Rudra-s and Aditya-s are the Gods of the three stations, namely Earth, midregion and Heaven.

ghrtaprusham: anointing or diffusing with *ghṛta* which is clarity or the Light; this word occurs about five times in the RV and is translated by ritualists as, 'pouring ghee'. Note that the human priest may pour ghee, but not Agni. Elsewhere there is the phrase *ghrtaprusha manasā* (2.3.2), which translated as ghee-pouring-mind does not make sense; it is the mind which diffuses the light.

manujātām janāḥ: human beings, who have some power of Manu, the original human being.

1.45.2: Bring the Thirty-Three Gods

O Agni, the omniscient Gods joyfully listen to the offerer (1).

O Agni with red horses who is adored by chants (2),

bring the three and thirty Gods (3).²

Details: The thirty-three Gods mentioned in the Purāṇa-s and Brh. U. are eight Vasu-s of the Earth region, eleven Rudra-s of the midregion, twelve Aditya-s of the Heaven, Prajāpati and Vashatkāra. Such a listing is not mentioned in RV.

vichetas: "It is comprehensive knowledge of things obtained by pervading them by a sort of identification with their truth. This word should be compared with *prachetas* which is the consciousness that cognises all things as objects confronting its observation." (SA, SV, p.283)

shruṣṭīvānāḥ: those who enjoy listening and doing the follow-up actions swiftly; those having inspiration, (3.27.2) (SA);

² श्रुष्टीवानो हि दाशुर्षे देवा अग्ने विचैतसः (1),

तान् रौहिदश्च गिर्वणः (2), त्रयस्मिंशतमा वह (3)

1.45.3: Agni of Mighty Action

O One who knows all births (2),
 Hear the call of Praskaṇva (4),
 even as you (did hear) the chants of Priyamedha, Atri (1),
 Virūpa and Angirasa of mighty action (3).³

Details: Priyamedha, Atri, Virūpa, etc., are well-known historical persons who are Seers of some of the Rig Vedic hymns. The names indicate their spiritual attainments.

Priyamedha: one to whom yajña is dear.

Virūpa: one with many forms.

1.45.4: Pure Lustre

Agni has been called by the Priyamedha seers (2),
 the superb singers, for increase in his manifestation (1).

Resplendent amidst pilgrim-yajña-s (3),
 he shines along with (the beings of) pure lustre (4).⁴

Details: *shukrena shochiṣhā*: refers to the helpful powers of the yajña who make easier the journey of the performer or seeker to the higher realms by dispelling the powers of darkness. It is indicated as ‘beings of pure lustre’ in line 4.

ūtaye: increase; this meaning fits in all places. There is a similar word in Tamil with the same meaning. Agni is requested to reveal himself more fully and increase his degree of manifestation in the Rishi. This word is commonly rendered as ‘protection’.

mahikerava: those who excellently recite the hymns;

³ प्रियमेधवत् अत्रिवत् (1), जातवेदो (2),

विरूपवत् अङ्गिरस्वत् महित्रत् (3), प्रस्कणवस्य श्रुधी हवम् (4)

⁴ महिकेरव ऊतये (1), प्रियमेधा अहूषत (2),

राजन्तम् अध्वराणाम् (3), अग्निं शुक्रेण शोचिषा (4)

1.45.5: Luminous Intelligence

Invoked with luminous intelligence, O Giver (1),
listen also to these chants (2).

With these, the sons of Kanya (3), call for your increase (4).⁵

Details: *ghṛtāhavana*: invoked with luminous intelligence; see (1.12.5) and (1.45.1). *santya*: giver;

1.45.6: Richly Varied Listenings

O Agni, most full of richly varied listenings (1),
the people call you (2), to bear the offerings (4).

With hair of flaming light you are the beloved of many (3).⁶

1.45.7: Knower of Excellent Wealth

O Agni, summoning and *r̥tvik* priest (1),
you are aware of excellent wealth (3);

O Agni, far-renowned and quick of hearing (4),
the wise place you in yajña-s of heavenly impulsions (2).⁷

Details: Agni, who has the knowledge of the wealth that leads to allround perfection, grants this treasure to humans. Yajña is the activity in the subtle body and not merely a rite. The impulse to perform the yajña comes from Heaven.

r̥tvijam: one sacrificing according to the divine timing or season, see (1.1.1).

⁵ घृताहवन सन्त्य (1), इमा उ पु श्रुधी गिरः (2),
याभिः कण्वस्य सूनवो (3), हवन्ते अवसे त्वा (4)

⁶ त्वां चित्रश्रवस्तम् (1), हवन्ते विश्वु जन्तवः (2),
शोचिष्कर्ण पुरुप्रिया अग्ने (3), हव्याय बोङ्हवे (4)

⁷ नि त्वा होतारम् कृत्विजं (1), दधिरे (2), वसुवित्तमम् (3),
श्रुत्कर्ण सप्रथस्तम् (4), विप्रा अग्ने दिविष्टिषु (5)

1.45.8: Wise Ones Lead Agni to the Seeker

Towards the delectable Soma which is pressed out (2),
 the wise ones hasten you (1),
 and to you, bear the offerings of the human giver (4),
 O Vast lustrous Agni (3).⁸

Details: The wise ones (*viprāḥ*), who themselves know the secrets of the inner *yajña*, come forth to help the human aspirant and hasten the vast and luminous Agni to manifest in the human seeker. They are not ordinary human priests.

Soma: see (1.44.9); *prayaḥ*: the delectable; whatever may be pleasing to the seeker, things or glories.

1.45.9: Agni Leads the Gods

Lead the Gods who arrive at dawn (1),
 to drink the Soma, O Strong and bounteous one (2);
 Lead to the sacred seat, O treasure (4),
 the Gods and other heavenly hosts also, now (3).⁹

1.45.10: Agni Worships with Words

The heavenly hosts are seated near you (1);
 make a joint invocation with the other Gods, O Agni (2).
 O lavish givers, partake of the Soma here (3),
 which was ready yesterday (4).¹⁰

Details: Line 4: In the inner *yajña*, the Soma is offered to the delayed Gods by the waiting sacrificer although it was ready a day earlier.
sahūtibhīḥ: with invocations to other Gods also.

⁸ आ त्वा विप्रा अचुच्यवुः (1), सूतसोमा अभि प्रयः (2),
 वृहद् भा (3), विभ्रतो हुविः अग्ने मर्ताय दाशुषे (4)

⁹ प्रात्यर्थिणः (1), सहस्रूत सोमपेयाय सन्त्य (2),
 इह अद्य दैव्यं जनं (3), बृहिः आ सादया वसो (4)

¹⁰ अवर्च्चं दैव्यं जनम् (1), अग्ने यश्च सहूतिभिः (2),
 अयं सोमः सुदानवः तं पात (3), तिरोअंड्यम् (4)

Hymn 1.46: Ashvins, Leaders of Journey

- 1: Ashvins, Leaders of Journey**
- 2: Source of Thought**
- 3: Glory Proclaimed**
- 4: Oversees the Body**
- 5: Sharpen the Mind**
- 6: Overcoming Ignorance**
- 7: World Beyond Mind**
- 8: Vast Boat**
- 9: Ocean or Heaven**
- 10: Agni Lights Up**
- 11: Flow of Bliss**
- 12: Delight of Soma**
- 13: Abode in Sun**
- 14: Night and the Truth**
- 15: Your Protection**

Metre: Gāyatrī

1.46.1: Fresh Spiritual Experience

Uṣha, who is fresh and is the beloved of Heaven (1,3),
is lighting up (the worlds) (2).

O Ashvins, I laud you with great hymns (4).¹

Details: Uṣha is the spouse of Ashvins and also the daughter of Sun, the Lord of Heaven. Ashvins are known for their love for Uṣha.

Uṣha is the harbinger of the spiritual dawns. Every dawn is symbolic of a fresh spiritual experience. Hence the epithet 'fresh' (*apūrvya*).

bṛhat: vast; the hymns create the sense of vastness in the listener.

¹ एषो उषा अपूर्व्या (1), व्युच्छति (2), प्रिया दिवः (3),
स्तुषे वामशिना बृहत् (4)

1.46.2: Source of Thought

Ashvins, children of the ocean are skilled in their tasks (1).

(They) make felicities available beyond the mind (2).

These Gods know the primary source of thought (3).²

Details: Ashvins know the source of the substance from which the thought arises. They obtain the felicities or riches beyond the reach of mind and make it available to the humans.

vasuvida: know (*vida*) the source (*vasu*);

1.46.3: Glory Proclaimed

Your glories are proclaimed (1),

when your car with its steeds (3),

reaches the celebrated Sun-World (2,4).³

Details: The idea is that as the car nears the *svar* world in its upward path, the force which impels the car to reach the Sun-World is felt and thus leads to the hymns, i.e., the glories of Ashvins are proclaimed by the Rishi-s on seeing the car.

adhi viṣṭapi: the Sun-world, *svar*; the established world above, (8.97.5).

jūrṇāyām: that which is lauded by the wise Seers; occurs in (1.127.10).

vibhi: birds, steeds, Maruts; derived from *vi*, which goes.

1.46.4: Oversees the Body

O Ashvins, the lover of Waters (Agni) (2),

fills the Gods with offerings (1,3,5).

Then the guardian (Agni) oversees the home being filled (4,6).⁴

Details: The word lover *jāra* usually refers to Agni as in (1.69.1), lover of Dawn; (1.69.5), lover of maidens (unmanifested powers).

² या दृस्मा सिन्धुमातरा (1), मनोतरा रथीणाम् (2), धिया देवा वसुविदा (3)

³ वृच्यन्ते वां ककुहासौ (1), जूर्णायाम् अधि विष्टपि (2),

यत् वां रथो विभिः (3), पतात् (4)

⁴ हृविषा (1), जारो अपां (2), पिपर्ति (3), पपुरिः (4), नरा (5),

पिता कुटस्य चर्षणिः (6)

kuta: home, the body of yajamāna; The translation in line 6 with *kuta* is appropriate for Agni since he is called master of house (*grhapate*) in many verses in RV. However S, following Yāska, gives it as *kṛta* or work.

narā: leaders, Ashvins; *apām*: divine energies, waters;

Line 4: The body of yajamāna is filled with divine energies;
charṣhani: oversees;

1.46.5: Sharpen the Mind

You drink the Soma which gives intense rapture (2).

O Ashvins, lovers of lauds, (the drink) renders the mind sharp (1).⁵

Details: *ādārah*: to make intense or sharp; *matavachasā*: lovers of lauds;

1.46.6: Overcoming Ignorance

O Ashvins, to carry us beyond the ignorance which hides (1,3), grant us the luminous impulsion (2,4).⁶

Details: The Seer prays for the forces of impulsion (*isha*) to overcome the forces of ignorance (*tamas*). S translates *isha* as food (*anna*) and *tama* as poverty. The translation is: give us food to overcome our poverty. The word meanings given here are consistent in the entire text. *tirah*: that which hides everything;

piparat: to carry us beyond;

1.46.7: World Beyond Mind

Come to us in a boat to reach the world beyond the thoughts (1).

O Ashvins, yoke your car (2).⁷

⁵ आदारो वा॑ मतीनां नासत्या॒ मतवचसा॑ (1),

पातं॑ सोमस्य॒ धृष्णुया॑ (2)

⁶ या॒ नः॑ पीपरत्॒ अश्विना॑ (1), ज्योतिष्मती॑ (2), तमस्तिरः॑ (3),
तामस्मे॑ रासाथाम्॒ इष्म॒ (4)

⁷ आ॒ नौ॑ नावा॒ मतीनां॑ यातं॑ पाराय॒ गन्तवे॑ (1), युजाथाम्॒ अश्विना॑ रथम्॒ (2)

1.46.8: Vast Boat

Your boat is vaster than the Heaven (1);
your car is on the shore of the oceans (2).

By the thought, the Soma-s have been yoked (3).⁸

Details: Soma, the delight of existence, unites with the thought or intelligence.

aritram: boat or vehicle; root is *r* to move. It is not a physical vehicle, but a spiritual force which makes one move along that road.

1.46.9: Ocean or Heaven?

O Kaṇva (Ashvins), Soma proceeds from the Heaven (1);
the treasure of substance is in the world of waters (2).

Where do you wish to manifest your form (*vavri*), (O Ashvins) (3)?⁹

Details: Here Kaṇva means Ashvins. It is a common convention in the Veda for a Rishi to indicate the name of a God by his own name.

As is well-known, the origin of Soma is the *dyu* Heaven as indicated in (9.61.10) and others. The ocean is rich with the infinite substance. Ashvins are known as the sons of waters (*sindhumātarah*) in many places including this Sūkta. They know the treasure in the ocean and also drink Soma. Hence the Rishi asks them: “Where do you seek to manifest and establish yourself, — in the ocean where the treasure lies or in the Heaven which has Soma?”. The Rishi prays to them to swiftly come and manifest their form to him. This mantra is connected to the next few verses where the drinking of Soma is lauded with the arrival of Uṣha.

⁸ अरित्रैं वां दिवस्पृथु (1), तीर्थे सिन्धूनां रथः (2), धिया युयज्ञ इन्दवः: (3)

⁹ दिवः कण्वास इन्दवो (1), वसु सिन्धूनां पदे (2), स्वं वत्रि कुहू धित्सथः: (3)

1.46.10: Agni Lights Up

The Light became manifest to make each ray luminous (1);
Sun became golden (2).

Appearing dark, Agni lighted up with his flame-tongue (3).¹⁰

Details: The Light which was invisible till now becomes manifest in its ray. The hour of the onset of the Truth-Light has arrived. Hence the Ashvins are invoked to be ready to take their appropriate station in the next few verses. Agni, always the first God, lights up the place to usher the dawn.

bhā u: the light luminous but unnoticed till now;
amshave: rays; *asitah*: dark;

1.46.11: Flow of Bliss

The perfect path of the truth for our journey (2),
to the other shore beyond darkness has come into being (1).
The flow (of Soma) from the Heaven was conspicuous (3).¹¹

Details: The verse indicates that the conditions were ready for the advent of Ashvins. To tread this path, one must have eliminated from oneself all the elements of falsehood and darkness which blind the vision. The Soma flow has markedly increased waiting for Ashvins to partake the same. (SA) quotes this verse in Chap. 27 of 'The Life Divine'.

sādhuyā: fit, perfect; *etave*: journey;

1.46.12: Delight of Soma

Whatever is done by the Ashvins for the increase (of Soma) (1),
is extolled in gratitude by the yajamāna (2).

And the delight of Soma fills the yajamāna (3).¹²

¹⁰ अभूदु भा उ अंशवे (1), हिरण्यं प्रति सूर्यः (2),
वि अर्ख्यत् जिह्वया असितः (3)

¹¹ अभूदु पुरम् (1), एतवे पन्था कृतस्य साधुया (2),
अदर्शि वि स्मृतिः दिवः (3)

¹² तत्तत् इ अश्विनोः अवौ (1), जरिता प्रति भूषति (2),
मदे सोमस्य पिप्रितोः (3)

1.46.13: Abode In Sun

O Luminous Ones with your abode in the Sun (1),
kindly come like Manu, O Givers of felicity (3),
to drink the Soma and accept our praise (2).¹³

Details: *manushvat*: like Manu; like men;

1.46.14: Night and the Truth

Following the radiance surrounding you (1,3),
the dawn Ushas has arrived (2,4).

You have shared with the nights the glories of the Truth (5).¹⁴

Details: Nights are the states of incubation or obscurity which hide the felicities of Truth in their wombs. The function of Ashvins is to liberate these hidden felicities or glories of truth. Hence they gladly participate with the nights in this task and the yajamāna is also delighted at the revelation of the glories of Truth.

ṛtam: the truth-in-movement

1.46.15: Your Protection

O Ashvins, you two drink the Soma (1);
grant us the happiness (2),
through your inviolable protections (3).¹⁵

¹³ वा॒वसा॒ना वि॒वस्वति॑ (1), सो॒मस्य पी॒त्या गि॒रा (2),
मनुष्वत् शंभू॒ आ गंतम् (3)

¹⁴ यु॒वोः (1), उ॒षा (2), अनु॒ श्रियं परिज्मनोः (3), उपाच॒रत् (4),
ऋता वंनथो अ॒क्तुभिः (5)

¹⁵ उ॒भा पिंवतम् अ॒धिना॑ (1), उ॒भा नः॒ शर्म॑ यच्छतम्॒ (2),
अ॒विद्रियाभिः॒ ऊ॒तिभिः॒ (3)

Hymn 1.47: Ashvins: Car with Abundant Gifts

- 1: Delightful Felicities**
- 2: Superb Chant**
- 3: Come to Us**
- 4: Kaṇva-s Invoke You**
- 5: Guard Us**
- 6: Wealth from the Ocean and Heaven**
- 7: Come to Us Wherever You Are**
- 8: Impel the Yajamāna**
- 9: Wealth to the Giver**
- 10: Home of Kaṇva**

Metre: 1,3,5,7,9, Bṛhatī; 2,4,6,8,10, Satobṛhatī

1.47.1: Delightful Felicities

O increasers of Truth, O Ashvins, drink the sweetest Soma (1).

It has been pressed out yesterday (2).

You hold the ecstasies for the giver (3).¹

1.47.2: Superb Chant

O Ashvins, come here in your beautiful car (2),
with three pillars moving in the three worlds (1).

The sons of Kaṇva hymn you in the pilgrim-yajña (3);
listen to their superb chant (*suhavam*) (4).²

1.47.3: Come to Us

O Ashvins, who increase the Truth, drink the sweetest Soma (1).

O Strong workers, bearing the wealth in your car (2),
come today near the sacrificer who gives (3).³

¹ अ॒यं वां मधुमत्तमः सुतः सोमं क्रतावृथा तमश्चिना पिबतं (1),
तिरोअंहृयं (2), ध॒तं रत्नानि दा॒शुषें (3)

² त्रि॒वन्धुरेण त्रि॒वृता॑ (1), सुपेरसा॑ रथेना यात्मश्चिना (2),
कण्वासो वां ब्रह्म कृण्वन्ति अध्वरे (3), तेषां सु शृणुतं हवम् (4)

³ अश्चिना॑ मधुमत्तमं पातं सोमम् क्रतावृथा (1),
अथाद् देसा॑ वसु विप्रता॑ रथे (2), दा॒शांसुमुपं गच्छतम् (3)

1.47.4: Kaṇva-s Invoke You

Seated on the prepared seat in the triple-seated (car) (1),
sprinkle our yajña with the sweet sap, O all-knowers (3,2).
The illustrious sons of Kaṇva prepare the Soma (4),
and invoke you, O Ashvins (5).⁴

Details: *triṣhadhasthe*: triple seat: in the external ritual it is the thrice-heaped grass; in the inner context it refers to the three planes of matter, life and mind, (5.11.2).

1.47.5: Guard Us

With those appropriate aids with which you guarded Kaṇva (1),
O Ashvins, guard us also (2).

May the Lords of bliss who increase the Truth, drink the Soma (3).⁵

1.47.6: Wealth from the Ocean and Heaven

O Ashvins, O Strong workers, to Sudāsa you brought (1,3),
the abundant riches carried in your car (2).

Likewise bear for us the wealth from the ocean (4),
or the much-coveted wealth from the Heaven (5).⁶

Details: *sudāsa*: one who gives in plenty, name of a sage.

samudrāt: the superconscious ocean which is the source of all.

⁴ त्रिष्ठस्थे वर्हिषि (1), विश्ववेदसा (2), मध्वा यज्ञं मिमिक्षतम् (3),
कण्वासो वां सुतसौमा अभिद्यवो (4), युवां हवन्ते अश्विना (5)

⁵ याभिः कण्वम् अभिष्टिभिः प्रावतं युवम् (1), अश्विना ताभिः सु अस्मान्
अंवतं (2), शुभस्पती पातं सोमम् क्रतावृथा (3)

⁶ सुदासै दस्मा (1), वसु विप्रता रथे पृक्षौ (2), वहतमश्विना (3),
रथिं समुद्रात् उत (4), वा दिवः परि अस्मे धत्तं पुरुस्पृहम् (5)

1.47.7: Come to Us Wherever You Are

O Ashvins, whether you are far away (1),
 or close to the hero-worshipper Turvasha (2),
 you come to us in your car of happy movement (3),
 along with the Truth-Light of the Sun (4).⁷

Details: Turvasha: name of a Rishi. Symbolically he is one who desires godliness and fights the enemies of Gods, i.e., a hero shining with the rays of consciousness or knowledge. Thus *adhi-turvashe* means, ‘close to the hero-worshipper’;

1.47.8: Impel the Yajamāna

Let the steeds which serve the yajña (2),
 bring you here facing us to our yajña-libation (1,3,4).
 May you anoint with the right impulsions the yajamāna (5),
 who does good works and gives readily (6).
 (He) prepares sacred seats (for you), O leaders (7).⁸

Details: *arvāñcha*: facing us: this phrase occurs in many verses indicating that the human Seers perceive the Gods sitting facing them.
ā sīdatam: prepare, arrange

1.47.9: Wealth to The Giver

O Ashvins, come in your Sun-clad car (1).
 You have always carried in it the felicities to the giver (2);
 come to drink the sweet Soma (3).⁹

⁷ यत् नासत्या परावति (1), यद्गा स्थो अधि तुर्वशे (2),
 अतो रथैन सुवृता न आ गतं (3), साकं सूर्यस्य रशिमभिः (4)

⁸ अर्वाञ्चा वां (1), सप्तयो अध्वरश्रियो (2), वहन्तु (3), सवनेत् उर्प (4),
 इष्ट पुञ्चन्ता (5), सुकृतै सुदानव् (6), आ ब्रह्मः सीदतं नरा (7)

⁹ तेन नासत्या गतं रथैन सूर्यत्वचा (1),
 येन शश्त् ऊहथुः दाशुषे वसु (2), मधुः सोमस्य पीतयै (3)

1.47.10: Home of Kaṇva

We ardently invoke you, facing you, with chants and lauds of riks (1,3),
for our increase, O masters of many riches (2).

In the loved home of the Kaṇva (5),
you take the Soma-drink, all the time, O Ashvins (4,6).¹⁰

Details: The loved home of Kaṇva is the subtle body of the Rishi.
hi kam: indicates emphasis on the action mentioned.

Hymn 1.48: Uṣha, Speak the Happy Truth

- 1: Delight and Felicities
- 2: Speak Directly to Us
- 3: Hearing the Inspired Word
- 4: Names Celebrated in Giving
- 5: Upward Movement
- 6: Knowledge-seeking Thoughts
- 7: Stationed Beyond
- 8: Removes the Malevolent
- 9: Impelling of the Sun
- 10: Actions of All
- 11: The Path to Perfection
- 12: Establish in Us Knowledge and Energy
- 13: Treasure Cherished by All
- 14: Increase the Seers
- 15: Inner Doors
- 16: All-conquering Light

Metre: 1,3,5, . . 15, Br̥hatī ; 2,4,6,8, . . 16, Satobr̥hatī

¹⁰ उक्षेभिः अवर्क् (1), अवसे पुरुषस् (2), अकैश्च नि हयामहे (3),
शश्वत् (4), कण्वानां सदसि प्रिये (5), हि कं सोमं पुपथुः अश्विना (6)

1.48.1: Delight and Felicities

O Uṣha, dawn on us with delight, O Daughter of Heaven (1).
 O Luminous One with great glory and felicities, dawn on us (2),
 O Bounteous Goddess (3).¹

1.48.2: Speak Directly to Us

Uṣha has the life-energy, Ray-cows and all the perfect knowledge (1).
 She has arrived in profusion to reside in us (2).
 Speak to me directly the happy Truths (3).

Impel towards us the felicities of the opulent ones, O Uṣha (4).²

Details: *vastave*: for her divine residence in us;

ashvāvatī: the life-energies for doing the actions resulting in delight.

sūnṛtāḥ: words containing the happy or auspicious Truth; even though the Truth is one, the plural refers to its aspects which are many.

rādhāḥ: achievements in the form of felicities, see (1.9.5).

1.48.3: Hearing the Inspired Word

The Divine Uṣha has dawned and dawns again (1).

She is the impeller of the cars (2).

(The cars) are eagerly readied at her coming (3),
 like the Rishi-s who are keen to have the inspiration (5),
 and ready to go to the ocean (of consciousness) (4).³

Details: Note that in Veda all the objects or felicities like cars associated with the Gods are also conscious. Hymn (1.47) deals mainly with the car. Desirous of hearing the Divinely Inspired Word, the Rishi-s are keen to reach and stay in the waters of the Infinite,

¹ सुह वामेन न उषो व्युच्छा दुहितर्दिवः: (1),

सुह द्युम्भेन बृहता विभावरि राया (2), दैवि दास्वती (3)

² अश्वावतीः गोमंतीः विश्वसुविदो (1), भूरि च्यवन्तु वस्तवे (2),

उदीरय प्रति मा सूनूता (3), उषः चोद राधो मधोनाम् (4)

³ उवासोषा उच्छात् च नु (1), देवी जीरा रथानाम् (2),

ये अस्या आचरणेषु दग्धिरे (3), समुद्रे न (4), श्रवस्यवः: (5)

(*samudra*); similarly the cars are expectant and ready for the arrival of Uṣha because their own desires are about to be fulfilled. Hence the eagerness of the cars is compared to the eagerness of Rishi-s.
samudra: the infinite ocean of Consciousness.

uvāsa: to dawn;

1.48.4: Names Celebrated in Giving

O Uṣha, at your coming (1),
 the wise impel their minds to render the offerings (to the Gods) (2).
 Then the seer Kaṇva, superb among the seers (3),
 proclaims that (*tat*) famous name among the human aspirants (4).⁴

Details: Kaṇva, the wisest, the best among those who have attained divinity, knowing the art of offering, proclaims at the break of the dawn the names celebrated for offerings. Hearing them, the sacrificer, fired with the spirit of offering, becomes ready for action. The glory of this praise at dawn is such that it renders fruitful the impulse to offer among the sacrificers. *prayunjate*: to impel; *tat*: that;

1.48.5: Upward Movement

The Goddess Uṣha certainly arrives and takes good care of all (2),
 like a glad and able matron of the house (1).
 She ends the unwanted (forces of ignorance) (3),
 stirs the footed, and flies the winged (4).⁵

Details: Outer sense: at dawn, creatures waking up from sleep turn to their tasks, birds fly etc.

Inner sense: at the dawn of the Divine Knowledge, the motion of the inner sacrificer gains speed; though he stays here on Earth, his upward movement (*utpātayati*) to the other worlds fructifies.

sūnari: happy leader;

⁴ उपो ये ते प्र यामैषु (1), युञ्जते मनौ दानाय सूर्यः (2),

अत्राहु तत् कण्वं एषां कण्वतमो (3), नाम गृणाति नृणाम् (4)

⁵ आ धा योषेव सूनरी (1), उषा यांति प्रभुञ्जती (2),

जर्यन्ती वृजनं (3), पद्मत् ईयत् उत्पातयति पक्षिणः (4)

1.48.6: Knowledge-Seeking Thoughts

She impels the active persons and those who aspire (1);
 she gladdens all with her rays (3).
 She desires not a fixed place (2).
 The soaring birds rest not at thy raising (4),
 O one full of plenitude (5).⁶

Details: *vayah*: birds in the outer sense. In the inner sense, *vi*, the root of *vayah* denotes the thoughts or seekings for knowledge that soar upwards, as mentioned in (1.24.4) and (1.24.6).

vājinīvati: see (1.3.10).

visṛjati: forcefully impels;

1.48.7: Stationed Beyond

She yokes her hundred cars (1,3),
 from the station beyond that of the Sun-rise (2).
 Felicitous Uṣha advances with her cars towards the mortals (4).⁷

1.48.8: Removes the Malevolent

The entire world of living beings prostrates for her sight (1).
 She, a superb leader, manifests the Truth-Light (2).
 The opulent daughter of the Heaven, Uṣha (4),
 by releasing her Light removes the malevolent beings (3,5),
 and those who dry up the essence (6).⁸

⁶ वि या सृजति समन्वि वि अर्थिनः (1), पुरं न वेति (2), ओदती (3),
 वयो नक्षिष्ठे पस्ति वांसं आसते व्युष्टौ (4), वाजिनीवति (5)

⁷ एष अयुक्त (1), परावतः सूर्यस्य उदयनात् अर्थि (2),
 शृतं रथैभिः (3), सुभगा उषा इयं वि याति अभि मानुषान् (4)

⁸ विश्वमस्या नानाम् चक्षसे जगत् (1), ज्योतिः कृणोति सूनरी (2),
 अप् द्वेषो (3), मधोनी दुहिता दिव उषा (4), उच्छ्रत् (5), अप् सिधः (6)

1.48.9: Impelling of the Sun

O Uṣha, shine around with thy delightful lustre (1),
 O Daughter of Heaven (2).
 Bring to us ample felicities of the sunlit days (3,5),
 and beam them forth (4).⁹

Details: *diviṣṭiṣhu*: the impellings (*iṣṭi*) of the Sun, the days lit by the inner Sun in the inner yajña.

1.48.10: Actions of All

The life-breath and actions of all living beings rest in you (1); hence you dawn (manifest) everyday, O Happy Leader (2).

O Lustrous One, you come to us in your large and mighty car (3).
 O Uṣha, who has variegated wealth, hear our call (4).¹⁰

1.48.11: The Path to Perfection

O Uṣha, you accept the plenitude (of felicities) (1), in its variegated form, which is in the thinking aspirant (2).

Show to the doer of good deeds (path of) inner yajña (3).

These (human aspirants) who carry your grace, laud you (4).¹¹

Details: Uṣha accepts the plenitude offered by the yajamāna and leads him to the heavenward path (*adhvarān*) leading to perfection. *chitra*: variegated wealth which is cherished by the yajamāna and stays with him. *vamsva*: accept; *upa āvaha*: to grant, to show; Line 2: it: the felicities or plenitude, cherished by the mortal.

⁹ उष आ भाहि भानुना॑ चन्द्रेणा॑ (1), दुहितर्दिवः (2),
 आवहन्ती॒ भूरि॒ अस्मभ्यं॒ सौभंगं॒ (3), व्युच्छन्ती॒ (4), दिविष्टिषु॒ (5)

¹⁰ विश्वस्य॒ हि प्राणन्॒ जीवन्॒ त्वे॒ (1), वि॒ यत्॒ उच्छसि॒ सूनरि॒ (2),
 सा॒ नो॒ रथैन॒ बृहता॒ विभावरि॒ (3), श्रुधि॒ चित्रामधे॒ हवम्॒ (4)

¹¹ उषो॒ वाजं॒ हि॒ वंस्व॒ (1), यः॒ चित्रो॒ मानुषे॒ जने॒ (2),
 तेना॒ वंह॒ सुकृतौ॒ अच्वरान्॒ उप॒ (3), ये॒ त्वा॒ गृणन्ति॒ वहयः॒ (4)

1.48.12: Establish in Us Knowledge and Energy

You bring the collective of All-Gods (1),
from the Heaven to drink the Soma, O Uṣha (2).

O Uṣha, establish in us the rays and the life-energies (3),
the words of praise, plenitude and hero-strengths (4).¹²

Details: *antariksham*: Even though it usually refers to the midworld, here it means the Heaven (*dyu*) which is the home of all the Gods.

1.48.13: Treasure Cherished by All

Her resplendent and blissful lustres are seen all around (1).
May Uṣha grant us the riches cherished by all (2,4),
which are fair of form and easy of access (3,5).¹³

1.48.14: Increase of the Seers

The celebrated ancient Seers invoke you by mantra-s (1,3),
for their protection and increase, O Mighty One (2,4).

O Uṣha, voice your acceptance of our lauds (5),
accompanied with the felicities and luminous lustre, O Uṣha (6).¹⁴

Details: *ūtaye*: increase of the Uṣha-power in the subtle body of the human Seer. *avase*: protection;

1.48.15: Inner Doors

O Uṣha, now with your Light (1),
open the twin doors of the Heaven (2).

You give us a divine home which is wide and inviolable (3).

O Goddess, you give us in plenty the impellings of Rays (4).¹⁵

¹² विश्वान् देवाँ आ वहु (1), सोमपीतये अन्तरिक्षात् उषः त्वम् (2),

सास्मासु धा गोमत् अश्वावत् (3), उक्थयम् उषो वाजं सुवीर्यम् (4)

¹³ यस्या रुशन्तो अर्चयः प्रति भद्रा अदृक्षत (1),

सा नौ रथिं विश्ववारं (2), सुपेशासम् (3), उषा ददातु (4), सुगम्यम् (5)

¹⁴ ये चिद्धि त्वामृषयः पूर्व (1), ऊतये (2), जुहूरे (3), अवसे महि (4),

सा नः स्तोमान् अभि गृणीहि (5), राधुसः उषः शुक्रेण शोचिषा (6)

¹⁵ उषो यत् अद्य भानुना (1), वि द्वारौ क्रणवौ दिवः (2),

प्र नौ यच्छतात् अवृकं पृथु च्छदिः (3), प्र देवि गोमतीः इर्षः (4)

Details: *dwārah*: In the inner context, they are the doors in our subtle body opened by Uṣha, the dawn, see (1.13.6).

vi ḫnavaḥ: to open; *avṛkam*: inviolable; *vṛkam*, wolf, is the symbol of hostile power which tears. Hence, *avṛkam* is an entity which cannot be harmed. *pra*: in abundance; *gomatī*: Ray-cows, knowledge-rays;

1.48.16: All-conquering Light

O Uṣha, completely sprinkle us with the wealth (1,3), which is abundant and variegated in form (2).

Bring to us the seeing speech (4).

O great Uṣha, sprinkle on us the all-conquering Light (5).

O One full of plenitude, sprinkle on us the plenitude (6).¹⁶

Details: Ḫa: the deity of speech which sees, (*pashyanti vāk* in the tantra-s), discussed in verse (1.13.9). It is the speech that completely envisions the things to come.

sam + mimikṣha: completely sprinkle.

Lines 4,5,6: *sam*: sprinkle; give;

Hymn 1.49: Uṣha

1: Home of Soma in the Yajamāna

2: The Car's Help

3: Two-Stationed and Four Steps

4: Kaṇva Invokes You

Metre: Anuṣṭup

1.49.1: Home of Soma in the Yajamāna

O Uṣha, come here by the blissful paths (1), from the Heaven (*divaḥ*) above the (current) luminous station (2).

May the ruddy rays of consciousness bring you (3), to the home of Soma (in the yajamāna) (4).¹

¹⁶ सं नौ राया (1), बृहता विश्वपैशसा (2), मिमिक्ष्वा सम् (3), इळाभिः आ (4),
सं द्युम्नेन विश्व- तुरा उषो महि (5), सं वाजैः वाजिनीवति (6)

१ उषो भद्रेभिः आ गंहि (1), दिवः चित् रोचनात् अधि (2),
बहन्तु अरुणप्सव उपं त्वा (3), सोमिनौ गृहम् (4)

Details: The home of Soma is within the yajamāna.

arunapsavah: the ruddy cows. Symbolically it represents the rays of consciousness. The ruddy colour denotes the onset of the dawn of knowledge. *psa*: that which drink;

Lines 1,2: She comes to accept the worship indicated by *chit*.

1.49.2: The Car's Help

You ride in the felicitous car with beautiful form, O Uṣha (1).

You increase today the yajamāna having inspired knowledge (2),
O Daughter of Heaven (3).²

Details: The two parts in this verse are connected. For the sacrificer with Divine Hearing, the car of Uṣha is the means for speedy ascension. This fast movement heavenward is his increase.

adhi astha: to sit, to ride;

1.49.3: Two-stationed and Four Steps

One capable of going up swiftly with high-soaring energies (birds) (1), is twin-stationed and has four steps, O fair one, O Uṣha (2).

He follows the timings (of your Divine advents) (4);
he moves swiftly beyond the border of the heavenly regions (3,5).³

Details: In the outward sense the verse describes the activities of the living beings, humans, four-footed animals and birds activated by the energies of the dawn. The translation given above brings out the symbolic meaning of the verse.

vayah: birds, in the outer sense; waves of thought and intelligence.

dvipat: twin-stationed; persons who think in terms of 2 states only, good/bad, mind/matter, day/night, two-footed human beings in the outer sense;

chatushpat: four-stepped; the four-footed animals in the outer sense; in the inner sense, the human beings (aspirants) who have access to

² सुपेशसं सुखं रथं यम् अधि अस्था उषः त्वम् (1),
तैर्ना सुश्रवसं जनं प्राब अद्य (2), दुहितर्दिवः (3)

³ वयः चित् ते पत्रिणौ (1), द्विपत् चतुष्पत् अर्जुनि (2),
उषः (3), प्रारन् कृतूर् अनु (4), दिवो अन्तेभ्यः परि (5)

all the four planes namely Earth or matter (*bhuḥ*), the plane of life-energies (*bhuvaḥ*), the plane of mental energies (*suvah*) and the plane of the vast (*mahaḥ*); the aspirant has attained all these steps in his inner life.

Time of advents: many dawns have occurred and many more will occur before the rise of the sun of Truth.

ṛtūn: the season or the divine timing (of her advents).

prārān: gives swiftly;

1.49.4: Kāṇva Invokes You

Dawning with your own lustres (1),
you illumine all the radiant realms (2).

Desirous of felicities (4),
the Kāṇva Seers invoke you with hymns, O Uṣha (3,5).⁴

Hymn 1.50: Sūrya: the Highest Light

- 1: The Rays of Wisdom Carry the Sun
- 2: Lesser Lustres Depart
- 3: Rays Illumine the Peoples
- 4: The Creator of Wisdom and the Ferrier of the People
- 5: Sun Rises in All the Worlds
- 6: Nourishes by Merely Looking at Them
- 7: Measures the Days with the Rays
- 8: Seven Rays Bear you
- 9: Seven Mares are Yoked to the Car
- 10: The Highest Light Beyond the Realm of Ignorance
- 11: Disease of the Heart
- 12: Transfer of the Yellow-pallor
- 13: Complete Surrender

Metre: 1-9, Gāyatrī; 10-13, Anuṣṭup

For the relation of Sūrya to Savitṛ, see the introduction to Section IV.

⁴ व्युच्छन्ती हि रश्मिभिः (1), विश्वम् आभासि रोचनम् (2),
तां त्वाम् उषः (3), वस्युवौ (4), गीर्भिः कण्वा अहूषत (5)

1.50.1: The Rays of Wisdom Carry the Sun

The all-knowing Sun, the God (1),
is carried up by the rays of wisdom (2),
so that all may behold him (*sūrya*) (3).¹

Details: The Seers use the orb of the physically visible Sun as the symbol of the great Godhead, the beginning and end of all the Gods. The spiritual Sun, Sūrya, carries the human to the highest states of consciousness. He rises from the ocean of unconsciousness, *tamas*.

We are not dealing with seeing the solar orb in the sky. Sūrya in the Veda primarily stands for the Supreme Divine Sun.

Veda makes a distinction between the rays of the Sun, also termed as Sun's steeds, and the Sun itself. Each ray is an aspect of the Divine Sun. Hence it is said that the Rays of wisdom bear the Sun high so that all may behold the mighty Sun. This event happens both in the microcosm (subtle body of the Rishi) as well as the macrocosm. *ketavāḥ* are the rays of the Divine Sun, not merely those of the physical Sun. See also (1.50.4).

u: filler

1.50.2: Lesser Lustres Depart

Like thieves, the stars depart with the nights (1),
before the rise of the all-beholding sun (2).²

Details: The stars symbolise the lesser lustres present in the state of consciousness of the yajamāna obscured by darkness and inertia symbolised by the nights. Examples of these lesser lustres are the limited ideals, narrow conceptions, thought formations on the popular topics of the day etc. These lustres depart in a hurry at the advent of the Lord of all lustres.

1.50.3: Rays Illumine the Peoples

His rays of intuition illumine the peoples in succession (1),
like blazing fires (2).³

¹ उद्दु त्यं जातवैदसं देवं (1), वहन्ति केतवः (2), द्वरो विश्वाय सूर्यम् (3)

² अप् त्ये तायवौ यथा नक्षत्रा यन्ति अक्षुभिः (1), सूर्य विश्वचक्षसे (2),

³ अहश्चरमस्य केतवो वि रङ्गयो जनान् अनु (1), भ्राजन्तो अग्रयौ यथा (2)

Details: The peoples are illumined according to their states of consciousness. *ketavah*: the rays of intuition; they announce the intention of illumination, to herald as it were; *vi + adṛshram*: see; by seeing the peoples, these rays illumine them.

1.50.4: The Creator of Wisdom and the Ferrier of the People

You are the ferrier, object of all sight (1),
and the creator of light, O Sūrya (2). You shine illumining all (3).⁴

Details: Sūrya is the ferrier who makes the yajamāna cross the ocean of ignorance. He is the creator of Light; recall the Upanishad stating:

“tameva bhānti anu bhāti sarvam . . .” [Kaṭha Upanishad (2.2.15)]
“Everything shines only after that shining Light. His shining illumines the world.”

jyotiṣhkṛt: Creator of Light;

See the note at the end regarding this verse and the speed of light.

1.50.5: Sun Rises in All the Worlds

Fronting the host of Gods, fronting mankind (1,3), you rise (2).
(You rise) fronting the world of *svar* (4),
so that all may behold the light (5).⁵

Details: Sūrya is the source of all the Light which illumines the mankind, the *deva-s* of the *dyu* world like Maruts, the *deva-s* of the *svar* world etc. When Sūrya rises, all the different peoples behold the Light for which they are aspiring.

1.50.6: Nourishes by Merely Looking at Them

O Purifier, with your eyes (1),
you nourish the mortals in succession (2).
By (merely) looking at them, O Varuṇa (you nourish) (3).⁶

⁴ तरणि: विश्वदर्शतो (1), ज्योतिष्कृत् असि सूर्य (2),
विश्वमा भासि रोचनम् (3)

⁵ प्रत्यङ् देवानां विशः प्रत्यङ् (1), उर्देषि (2), मानुषान् (3),
प्रत्यङ् विश्वं स्वः (4), हशे (5)

⁶ येना पावक चक्षसा (1), भुर्ण्यन्तं जनान् अनु (2), त्वं वरुणं पश्यसि (3)

Details: Varuṇa is the God of vastness, the master of all infinities who dissolves all impurities caused by narrowness. Here Sūrya is addressed as Varuṇa.

bhuranyantam: to nourish;

1.50.7: Measures the Days with the Rays

Measuring the days with your rays (2),
and beholding all the mortals, O Sūrya (3),
You traverse the vast midregion and the Heaven (1).⁷

Details: *ahāḥ*: days; they are not merely physical, but symbolize the periods of spiritual illumination. It is the Rays of the spiritual Sun that can measure the progress made in our inner spiritual life. Just as the physical rays of sun cause the physical day and make all the usual activities possible, the Rays of consciousness of the Divine Sun brings forth all the spiritual potential in each one of us and the associated experiences become possible.

aktubhiḥ: rays; *mimāna*: measuring;

1.50.8: Seven Rays Bear You

Seven steeds carry you in your car, O God Sūrya (1),
far-seeing, with hair-like lustres (2).⁸

Details: Seven denotes the seven principles of existence. The steeds are the Rays of the Sun. The radiance of the Sun looks like a mass of radiant hairs, each hair being distinct. *haritāḥ*: steeds of Sun, rays;

1.50.9: Seven Mares are Yoked to the Car

Sūrya has yoked the seven pure daughters to the car (1).
With these self-harnessed, he goes forth (2).⁹

⁷ वि द्याम् एषि रजः पृथु (1), अहा मिमानो अक्तुभिः (2),

पश्यन् जन्मानि सूर्य (3)

⁸ सप्त त्वा हुरितो रथे वहन्ति देव सूर्य (1), शोचिष्केऽं विचक्षण (2)

⁹ अयुक्त सप्त शुन्ध्युवः सूरो रथस्य नस्यः (1),

ताभिः याति स्वयुक्तिभिः (2)

Details: Seven stands for the seven principles. The daughters are the mares who are pure and purify the atmosphere. These mares are yoked by their own solar power. Hence they are self-harnessed.
naptrayah: daughters, mares; *shundhyuvah*: pure (mares);

1.50.10: The Highest Light Beyond the Realm of Ignorance

Beholding a higher light (2), that springs up above this darkness (1),
 we have come to the most excellent light, Sūrya (4),
 God among Gods (3).¹⁰

Details: This verse, with slight variation, occurs in the Chhāndogya Upanishad (3.17.7). This verse is used in the Sandhya worship of all persons belonging to all Veda-s. Beyond all the darknesses which surround a man, there is a Light of Truth always beckoning him upwards. The ancient seers kept this vision before their eye and reached the highest Light of all, the divine Sun of Truth.

S quotes from the Brāhmaṇa-s in explaining the word *tamas* as sin, not the absence of physical light. Interpreting the last line, S states that the Seer Praskaṇva speaks of conscious union (*sāyujyam*) with the Sun.

Obviously the light referred to here is not the morning sunlight after the night. It is the Light of the Supreme.

This verse and others show that the hypothesis that sun etc. appearing in the Veda are mere forces of external nature have no basis.
ut uttaram: risen and excellent.

1.50.11: Disease of the Heart

O one radiant with benevolent light (2), rising this day (1),
 you ascend to the supernal Heaven (3).
 O Sūrya, you remove the malady of my heart (4,6),
 and the yellow pallor (of my body) (5).¹¹

¹⁰ उत् वृयं तमसः परि (1), ज्योतिः पश्यन्तु उत् तरम् (2),
 देवं दैवत्रा (3), सूर्यम् अग्नं ज्योतिः उत् तमम् (4)

¹¹ उत्-यन् अद्य (1), भित्रमह (2), आरोहन् उत्तरां दिवम् (3),
 हृद्रोगं मम सूर्य (4), हरिमाणं च (5), नाशय (6)

Details: Well-being, inner and outer, is attained by the grace of Sūrya rising towards the great Heaven. The Seers hold that some perfection of the external body is also needed. The material body is the foundation for the God-aspiring mortal. Hence the Rishi prays to be cured of the heart disease which causes the yellow pallor.

1.50.12: Transfer of the Yellow-pallor

Place my yellowness in parrots and starlings (1).

In trees of this colour cast this yellow hue (2).¹²

Details: In humans yellow colour is inappropriate; but it is beautiful in some (mobile) birds and (immobile) trees.

1.50.13: Complete Surrender

Here is Āditya arisen with all might (1).

On my behalf, he destroys my foe (2).

I strike not at the enemy (3).¹³

Details: “The lord it is who does what is needed. I have placed all burdens on him.” Here is the seed of the idea of complete-surrender to the Divine developed in detail; in the philosophy of Sri Rāmānuja.

Mantra (1.50.4) and the Speed of Light

Sāyaṇa in his Rig Veda commentary gives the following quotation without giving any source.

*tatha cha smaryate yojanānāṁ sahasre dve dve shate dve cha yojane
ekena nimishārdhena kramamāṇa*

“Thus it is remembered: [O Sun], you who traverse 2202 yojana-s in half a *nimeṣha*”.

¹² शुकेषु मे हरिमाणं रोपणाकांसु दध्मसि (1),

अथो हरिद्रवेषु मे हरिमाणं नि दध्मसि (2)

¹³ उत् अंगात् यम् आदित्यो विश्वैन् सहसा सुह (1),

द्विषन्तं मह्यं रन्धयन् (2), मो अहं द्विषते रधम् (3)

Vartak⁺ has shown that a *yojana* is 48,000 ft or roughly 9 miles. A similar statement is in the dictionary of Monier-Williams. A *nimesha* is equal to 16/75 second. Sāyaṇa's statement implies that, "you traverse 186,000 miles per second" which is the modern speed of Light! Such an ancient knowledge of this number does not sound credible to moderns. The speed of light was determined only in 1675 C.E. by Roemer. But Professor Subash Kak has studied this topic in great detail and has shown that this statement is consistent with several other statements in Āryabhaṭa's work and Purāṇic cosmology. For details, see Kak's paper in the compilation by Kak and Rao.⁺⁺

"Men set up an authority and put it between themselves and knowledge. The orthodox are indignant that a mere modern should presume to differ from Shankara in interpreting the Vedanta or from Sayana in interpreting the Veda. They forget that Shankara and Sayana are themselves moderns, separated from ourselves by some hundreds of years only, but the Vedas are many thousands of years old. The commentator ought to be studied, but instead we put him in place of the text. Good commentaries are always helpful even when they are wrong, but the best cannot be allowed to fetter inquiry. Sayana's commentary on the Veda helps me by showing what a man of great erudition some hundreds of years ago thought to be the sense of the Scripture. But I cannot forget that even at the time of the Brahmanas the meaning of the Veda had become dark to the men of that prehistoric age.... I find that Shankara had grasped much of Vedantic truth, but that much was dark to him. I am bound to admit what he realised; I am not bound to exclude what he failed to realise. Aptavakyam, authority, is one kind of proof; it is not the only kind: pratyakṣa [direct knowledge] is more important."

(Sri Aurobindo)

⁺ Vartak, P.V., *Scientific knowledge in the Vedas*, Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1995.

⁺⁺ Kak, Subash and Rao, T.R.N., *Computing Science in Ancient India*, Munshiram Manoharlal, 2002.

Appendices

1. References
2. Aphorisms: Veda gūḍhārtha bodha sūtrāṇi
3. Subject Index
4. Index of Sanskrit Words
5. Note on Transliteration
6. Concordance with Other Veda Samhitās

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| [2] <i>Aitareya Āraṇyaka</i> | [15] <i>Prashṇa Upaniṣad</i> |
| [3] <i>Atharva Veda Samhitā</i> | [16] <i>Purāṇa, Viṣhṇu</i> |
| [4] <i>Bṛhad Devata</i> | [17] <i>Rāmāyaṇa</i> |
| [5] <i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad</i> | [18] <i>Rig Veda Samhitā</i> |
| [6] <i>Bṛahgavatam, Sri</i> | [19] <i>Sāma Veda Samhitā</i> |
| [7] <i>Chhāndogya Upanishad</i> | [20] <i>Shatapatha Brāhmaṇa</i> |
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| [13] <i>Nrisimhapūrva tāpani Upanishad</i> | |

2. Aphorisms

Veda gūdhārtha bodha sūtrāṇi

॥ वेदगूढार्थबोधसूत्राणि ॥

1. परमव्योम्नि समुद्भूतत्वाद्वेदो नित्यम् ॥
2. कृत्स्नस्य वेदस्य स्वाध्याये जपे ध्याने एव सामान्यविनियोगे वोध्यः ॥
3. एक एव परो वेदः पुरातनः । स ऋग्वेदः ।
4. यज्ञकर्मकलापसमृथै यजुषां मन्त्राणां च कल्पना उत्तरकालीना ॥
5. ऋचः ऋषीणां दृष्टयो भवन्ति ॥
6. मन्त्रदर्शिन ऋषेर्जन्मनः प्राक् मृतेः परं च सिद्धमेव परमं व्योम ॥
7. तपःस्थितानां ऋषीणां ब्रह्मपदवाच्यो मन्त्रः प्रत्यक्षोऽभवदिति यास्कः ॥
8. न केवलं धर्मकर्मपरो वेदः । अध्यात्मविद्यादिरहस्यमस्ति वेदे ॥
9. रहस्यभाषया मन्त्रार्थो गोपितो भवति । मन्त्रेषु ऋषिभिः रहस्यं निश्चिप्तम् ॥
10. अन्तरर्थे एव सङ्केतरूपं धृत्वा मन्त्रे स्थितः ॥
11. ऋषिभिः प्रयुक्ताः सङ्केताः वेदार्थगोपनार्थम् ॥
12. वेदसूक्तार्थविचरे सङ्केतरूपार्थग्रहणं न्यायम् ॥
13. निष्यपदार्थभूतरहस्यानि ॥
14. मन्त्रतात्पर्यावगाहनं अन्तरार्थानुसारेण कर्तव्यम् ॥
15. सङ्केतव्यवस्थापरिज्ञानं वेदरहस्यावगाहनस्य द्वारम् ॥
16. समस्तेऽपि ऋग्वेदे एकरूपा सङ्केतव्यवस्था ॥
17. सर्वेषां मन्त्रदृष्टृणां एकमेव परमं लक्ष्यं, एकमेव रहस्यं, एकमेव सङ्केतसम्प्रदायः ॥

18. रहस्यं त्विदम् । एक एव परो देवः सूर्यात्मा परमः पुमान् ॥
19. सः बहुदेवतात्मकतया बहूनि नामानि बिभ्रदवतिष्ठते ॥
20. एकः परो नानामूर्तिनामस्वरूपधृक् ॥
21. देवानां एकमूलत्वं एकात्मत्वं एकलक्ष्यत्वम् ॥
22. तेष। पृथकृत्वं तु नामतो व्यापारतो व्यक्तितश्च ॥
23. यच्चेतना एव देवाः अन्तर्दृष्टिगोचराः ॥
24. देवानां स्वरूपाणि तु दिव्येनाभ्यन्तरेण वा उन्मीलितेन चक्षुषा ग्राह्याणि ॥
25. सर्वेषां देवानां कर्माणि परमाद्वासः प्रारम्भन्ते, ऊर्ध्वमूलानि च भवन्ति ॥
26. एक एव महानात्मा सूर्यपदवाच्यः यस्यैव मूर्तिभेदाः व्यक्तिविशेषाः अङ्गप्रत्यङ्गभूताः तत्तदगुणक्रियोचितानि नामानि बिभ्रते देवाः वेदे प्रतिपादिताः ॥
27. यज्ञोऽपि सङ्केतरूपः । वैदिकाध्वरस्य परमार्थं अन्तर्यजनमेव व्याचक्षते ॥
28. यस्तु विज्ञः दृष्टिश्रुतिसम्पन्नः मन्त्ररहस्यं साक्षात्कर्तुमधिकारी भवति तस्मै ऋगात्मिका वाक् स्वयं प्रकाशं भवति ॥
29. सङ्केताः स्वयमेव विवृतगूढार्थाः स्पष्टं लक्ष्यन्ते ॥
30. अतो मन्त्रार्थाविगत्यै यत्रः कार्यः ॥

3. Subject Index

[The references are to the mantra-s of RVS. (1.6.3) means, 'mantra 3 of sūkta 6 of Maṇḍala 1'. 'int. sec X', means, 'introduction to section X'. The index covers both volumes 1 and 2, having 121 sūkta-s]

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- proficiency in all, 1.64.14
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 - as Indra, 1.59.6
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 - as messenger, 1.12.1, 1.44.9
 - as son, 1.68.9, 1.69.2
 - as summoning priest, 1.1.1,5,
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4. Index of Sanskrit Words

[The meanings of these words or phrases are in the subsection entitled, “Details”, in each mantra. The words are in English lexical order.]

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5. Note on Transliteration

We have mostly used the relatively common convention for transliterating the Devanāgari text into Roman script, avoiding some of its obvious shortcomings. For instance the Samskr̤t च is written in it as 'ca' which most people pronounce as 'ka' as in 'cat' or 'car', whereas च should be pronounced as 'cha' as in chug or charcoal. च is assigned 'cha'. Similarly श is 'sha', ष is 'sha'.

Devanāgari Examples	Symbol
------------------------	--------

◎

Short Vowels

अ	a	cut, but, run
		Never as English a
इ	i	pit, sit, fit
उ	u	put, full

Long vowels:

आ	ā	cop, mar, bar, car
ई	ī	need, see
ऊ	ū	soon, moon

Other vowels:

ए	e	say, may
ओ	o	more, sore, toe
ऐ	ai	site, might, light
औ	au	pout, out,
ऋ	ṛ	comment below

Consonants:

क्	k	kick, kite, cut
ग्	g	gut, gig, go
च्	ch	chug, church

ज्	j	jug, jig, jar
ट्	t	tub, tiger
ड्	d	deed , dog
त्	t	math, thin
द्	d	mother, gather
प्	p	pun, pat, peet
ब्	b	bin, bar, bun
म्	m	man, me, mist
न्	n	net, nose
य्	y	yes, yet
र्	r	red
ल्	l	life, lid
व्	v	water, wood
स्	s	sing, sit
ष्	sh	ship, sheet, dish
श्	sh	comment below
ह्	h	hut, hit

Aspirated Consonants:

The first ten consonants above have their aspirated associates given below indicated by adding a letter 'h'. These letters have to be pronounced with more air i.e., exhaling.

kh खः gh घः chh छः jh झः th थः dh धः ṭh ठः dh ठः

ph फः bh भः ng (ङ्) as in sing.

Special cases

jñ (ज्ञ) is as in ज्ञानम् (jñānam).

ɳ (ण्) is with the tongue in the upper palate.

sha (श) is something between sa and ūha.

ञ occurring in यञ्च is simplified denoted by 'jna' omitting the accent on n.

r (ऋ) is neither 'ra' nor 'ru' but something in between. However we write 'Rgveda' as 'Rig Veda' because of its popular usage in earlier books. Similarly ṣk is written as rik.

ḥ (h with a dot below) indicates the samskr̤t visarga symbol: pronounced with exhalation. For instance: कः is kah, चः is chaḥ, रिः is riḥ, नुः is nuḥ नोः is noḥ. Note that there is no letter following ḥ even though the ending sounds of रिः नुः etc., are all different; the different sounds are indicated by the vowel previous to the symbol 'ः'.

'ṁ' is pronounced as half 'm'.

स is a conjunction that indicates 'अ'; Example:

māśmṛtāt् माऽमृतात् = मा + अमृतात्

6. Concordance with Other Veda Samhitās

[This concordance gives the mantrās in the first Aṣṭakā of RV are found in the Kṛiṣṇa Yajur Veda Taittirīya Samhitā (TS) and the Shukla Yajur Veda Vājasaneyā Samhitā. (v) means a variant differing in a word or two.]

RV	TS	VS	RV	TS	VS
1.1.1	4.3.13		1.24.3	3.5.11	
1.1.3	4.3.13		1.24.8	1.4.45	
1.1.4	4.1.11		1.24.9	1.4.45	
1.1.7	1.5.6	3.22	1.24.11	2.1.11	18.49
1.1.8	1.5.6	3.23	1.24.14	1.5.11	
1.1.9	1.5.6	3.24	1.24.15	1.5.11	12.12
1.2.4	1.4.4	7.8	1.25.1	3.4.11 (v)	
1.3.7	1.4.16	7.33	1.25.10	1.8.16	10.27
1.3.11	4.1.11	20.85	1.25.19	2.1.11	
1.5.6	3.4.11		1.27.7	1.3.13	6.29
1.7.1	1.6.12		1.30.7	4.1.2	11.14
1.7.10	1.6.12		1.30.13	1.7.13	
1.8.1	3.4.11		1.35.2	3.4.11	33.43
1.10.1	1.6.12		1.36.9	4.1.3	11.37
1.11.1	4.6.3	12.56	1.36.13	4.1.4	11.42
1.12.1	2.5.8		1.37.1	4.3.13	
1.12.2	4.3.13		1.38.8	3.1.11	
1.12.6	1.4.46		1.38.9	2.4.8	
1.12.10	1.3.14	17.9	1.41.20	4.1.11	
1.13.10	3.1.11		1.45.6	4.4.4	15.31
1.17.1	2.5.12		1.50.1	1.2.8	7.41
1.18.1	1.5.6	3.28	1.50.4	1.4.31	
1.22.1	1.4.7 (v)		1.50.8	2.4.14	
1.22.3	1.4.6	7.11	1.50.10	4.1.7	20.21
1.22.5	1.4.25	22.1	1.61.9	2.4.14	
	2.2.12		1.64.6	3.1.11	
1.22.13	3.3.10	8.32	1.71.8	1.3.14	
1.22.17	1.2.13	5.15	1.72.1	2.2.12	
1.22.19	1.3.6	6.4	1.74.1	1.5.5	3.11
1.22.20	1.3.6	6.5	1.74.3	3.5.11	
1.23.19	1.7.7 (v)	9.6	1.79.1	3.1.11	
1.23.23	1.4.45 (v)	20.22	1.79.2	3.1.11	

RV	TS	VS	RV	TS	VS
1.79.4	4.4.4	15.35	1.107.1	1.4.22	
1.79.5	4.4.4	15.36	1.109.2	1.1.14	
1.79.6	4.4.4	15.37	1.109.6	4.2.11	
1.82.2	1.8.5	3.51	1.113.11	1.4.33	
1.82.3	1.8.5	3.52	1.114.1	4.5.10	16.48
1.84.1	1.4.39		1.114.2	4.5.10	
1.84.2	1.4.38	8.35	1.114.7	4.5.10	16.15
1.84.3	1.4.37	8.33	1.114.8	3.4.11	16.16
1.84.16	4.2.11		1.114.8	4.5.10	
1.85.7	4.1.11		1.114.10	4.5.10	
1.85.12	1.5.11		1.115.1	1.4.43	7.42
1.86.1	4.2.11	8.31			
1.86.2	4.2.11				
1.86.6	4.3.13				
1.87.2	4.3.13				
1.87.3	4.3.13				
1.87.6	2.1.11				
1.90.6	4.2.9	13.27			
1.90.7	4.2.9	13.28			
1.90.8	4.2.9	13.29			
1.91.1	2.6.12	19.52			
1.91.4	2.3.14				
1.91.5	4.3.13				
1.91.6	3.4.11				
1.91.8	2.3.14				
1.91.9	4.1.11				
1.91.12	4.3.13				
1.91.16	3.2.5	12.112			
1.91.17	1.4.32	12.114			
1.91.18	4.2.7	12.113			
1.91.19	1.2.10 (v)	4.37			
1.93.5	2.3.14				
1.93.6	2.3.14				
1.96.5	4.1.10	12.2			
1.98.1	1.5.11	26.7			
1.98.2	1.5.11	18.73			

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(ಕಲ್ಪ ಭಾರತೀಯ ಭಾಷೆಗಳ ಶ್ರುತಿಪರ್ವ ಬಂಪ್ರಾಗಿ ನಮ್ಮೆನ್ನು ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಿ.)



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