

Prayer

ओ३म् सहनाववतु । सहना भुनक्तु । सहवीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु । माविद्विषावहै ॥
ओ३म् शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

*Om Sahanāvavatu. Sahanau bhunaktu.
Sahavīryam karvāvahai. Tejasvināvadhītama-
astu. Māvidviṣāvahai. Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ.*

May the lord Self-existent, Self-refulgent, all blissful, dearest of all, destroyer of sufferings, giver of the freedom of bliss, protect and promote us both, speaker and his listener, teacher and disciple, writer and reader. May the Lord dedicate us both to the service of Divinity and humanity. May our study be bright, vigorous and enlightening. May we, by the Lord's grace, achieve the strength and vigour of life and never suffer from hate, jealousy and enmity. May we ever enjoy the life of love, cooperation and universal friendship, all together, extending knowledge, removing ignorance and making ourselves and the world noble and nobler.

ओ३म् विश्वानि देव सवितर्दुरितानि परा सुवा ।
यद्भद्रं तन्नऽआ सुव ॥५३॥

*Om Viśvāni deva savitarduritāni parā suva.
Yadbhadraṁ tanna ā suva. Yajur 30.3*

The Lord of life is omniscient, all watchful, He knows and sees all that is good and evil. He knows whoever is clever and pretender, He knows who is sincere, obedient and faithful. Omnipotent, all provident and absolutely self-sufficient, He does not need anything from anybody except that we should be good, loving and positive with ourselves and all others, Mother Nature too.

But we are limited in our vision, will and wisdom. Our body, mind and soul is not invulnerable the bitter appears sweet, and the sweet, bitter. We fall a prey to ourselves and to the temptations of the world. Our ignorance deceives us, our ego subdues our soul. Our selfishness damages ourselves and others. With all our wisdom we have, and with all our limitations, we need divine help to know, to discriminate, to decide and to do what is good and to show what is evil.

In such an honest mood of desperation, we surrender and call upon Savita: O Lord, we do not know. Give us all that is good. Ward off all that is negative and evil. The Lord is watchful. He loves, He listens, He responds to the seeker like a loving father

and mother, A never failing friend, He helps, He saves. May the Lord save us all.

ओ३म् यो भूतं च भव्यं च सर्वं यश्चाधितिष्ठति ।

स्वर्यस्य च केवलं तस्मै ज्येष्ठाय ब्रह्मणे नमः ॥ १ ॥

*Om Yo bhūtaṁ ca bhavyaṁ ca sarvaṁ
yaścādhitīṣṭhati. Svaryasya ca kevalaṁ tasmai
jyeṣṭhāya brahmaṇe namaḥ. Atharva 10.8.1*

He that presides over the past, present and future time, Who knows, rules and sustains all that has been, all that is, and all that ever shall be, Whose gift is pure joy, to that Supreme Brahma, homage of salutations and surrender to His will in faith.

There is none beyond, nothing above, that Supreme Lord of Existence. That is the Supreme Creator, Sustainer, and ultimately the Home to which everything returns. His vision and knowledge is Supreme and absolute. His Love is absolute and Supreme. His Love and justice is Supreme and absolute. His grace is Supreme, absolute and unconditional. The person who wants to achieve self perfection and freedom from suffering and ignorance should do the utmost in obedience to His will and win the Grace. The highest act is obedience to Him and

compassion for life, and the highest achievement is Grace.

ओ३म् यस्य भूमिः प्रमान्तरिक्षमुतोदरम् ।

दिवं यश्चक्रे मूर्धानं तस्मै ज्येष्ठाय ब्रह्मणे नमः ॥ ३२ ॥

*Om Yasya bhūmiḥ pramāntarikṣam-utodaram.
Divam yaścakre mūrdhānaṁ tasmai jyeṣṭhāya
brahmaṇe namaḥ. Atharva 10.07.32*

The earth is His foot stool. The sky is His belly space. He has created the stars and the starry regions of light as His head. The earth, the sky and the stars, for us in our direct experience, are proof of His existence. To that Supreme Brahma, thus experienced, homage of salutations and surrender to His will in faith.

This mantra is a poetic metaphor of the Lord's manifestation in the universe. Through this metaphor we have a direct living experience of the Lord's existence and presence. Though God is Spirit, no body, no senses, yet if He could be said to have a bodily presence, the universe is His body in which He pervades as the Spirit as described in Yaju. 40, 1, and in *Īsopaniṣad*. The mantra describes that physical presence on earth, in the sky and in the starry heaven of light. The metaphor continues in the next mantras:

ओ३म् यस्य सूर्यश्चक्षुश्चन्द्रमाश्च पुनर्णवः ।

अग्निं यश्चक्र आस्यं तस्मै ज्येष्ठाय ब्रह्मणे नमः ॥ ३३ ॥

*Om Yasya sūryaścakṣuścandramāśca punar-
ṇavaḥ. Agniṁ yaścakra āsyaṁ tasmai jyeṣṭhāya
brahmaṇe namaḥ. Atharva 10.07.33*

His eye is the Sun , and the moon renewed again and again. He made the fire and cosmic heat his very mouth into which He receives the yajnic offerings, and through which He carries on the cosmic dynamics of Rtam and Satyam for life and growth. To that Supreme Brahma, homage of salutations and surrender to His will in love and faith.

The metaphor of the Lord's Cosmic manifestation in form continues:

ओ३म् यस्य वातः प्राणापानौ चक्षुरङ्गिरसोऽ भवन् ।

दिशो यश्चक्रे प्रज्ञानीस्तस्मै ज्येष्ठाय ब्रह्मणे नमः ॥ ३४ ॥

*Om Yasya vātaḥ prāṇāpānau cakṣuraṅgirasō'
bhavan. Diśo yaścakre prajñānīstasmai
jyeṣṭhāya brahmaṇe namaḥ. Atharva 10.07.34*

Cosmic winds and waves of energy are his prana and apana. Radiations of the light of stars are the rays of his eye sight. He created the vibrations of space as the media of his immanent omniscience. To

that Lord Supreme Brahma, homage of salutations and surrender to His will divine in love and faith.

ओ३म् सनातनमेनमाहुरुताद्य स्यात्पुनर्णवः ।

अहोरात्रे प्र जायेते अन्यो अन्यस्य रूपयोः ॥ २३ ॥

*Om Sanātanam-enamāhurutādya syātpunar-
ṇavaḥ. Ahorātre pra jāyete anyo anyasya
rūpayoḥ. Atharva 10.08.23*

It, this Jyeshtha Brahma, is Sanatana, Eternal, Constant, the same, for ever: so say the voices of the Veda. And yet It manifests anew every moment of time, just as every day, as every night, is the same and similar, and yet every day is new in relation to the night and every night is new in relation to the day.

This mantra is a unique reflection of the nature and character of the Divine Reality of existence which is constant and yet 'changing'—dynamic.

Normally people say and believe that if something is constant, it does not change. And if something is changing, it is not constant, the constant is not mutable, and the mutable is not constant. But the Vedic view of the world's reality is that it is both constant and mutable at the same time. Constancy and mutability are two simultaneous dimensions of universal reality.

Take the case of a gold ornament: Today it is a necklace, tomorrow you have it changed into a pair of bangles and a ring. The gold remains gold but it is no more the necklace. The Substance remains the same, the form changes.

Take your own case: There was a time when you were a baby. Then you grew up into a child, a boy or girl, a young person, and adult, and may be you are a senior now. All through, you have been and you are now the same person, but you have been changing every day, every hour, every moment. Your soul is the same, your body is the same human form of Nature, but the reflection of your soul in the body, mind and intellect, in character, behavior and ideas, has been changing. You are the same person, but may be your personality is not the same. You may be even a different person, still you are the same, the same child of your parents, the same darling of God, the same your self and soul which you refuse to deny and refuse to alienate from yourself. Your identity in the essence is you. You are you and I am I, and both of us are the same two cells in the same Divine Personality whatever the changes in the body of this Purusha Brahma.

Veda describes the world of existence as 'Purusha', a living, breathing, intelligent, self-organising, sovereign system, the spirit of which is the Jyeshtha Brahma, Parameshvara, and the body is the world of Nature. The Spirit remains the same constant reality throughout time. Nature remains the same Nature all the time but its form and structure changes every moment without disturbing the equilibrium of its various forms.

The Vedic idea of God also is unique in its own way. The Vedic God is not a royal magisterial personality holding His court somewhere in a mysterious heaven other than the world itself. God is the omnipresent spirit immanent at the core in every particle of nature, in every wave of energy, in every vibration of thought and every beat of a living heart. It is the very soul of the cosmic body. Every one of the four Vedas pays homage to this Divine presence, Jyeshtha Brahma, God Supreme, Parameshvara. (Rgveda 10, 90, Yajurveda 31, Sama Veda 617-20, and Atharvaveda 19, 6.)

God is the Spirit, Nature is the Body. God's presence reflects in every particle of Nature, and as the form and structure of the world of Nature changes, every moment, so the manifestation of God too

changes every moment, though in essential terms God remains the same, Nature remains the same, constant in the continuous state of existential mutability.

Jyeshtha Brahma is the Supreme Purusha, the world of Nature is a Purusha, both are one together as Spirit and body, and you and I and all are intelligent cells in that Divine Purusha, participating, in our respective place, in the Divine Organismic System.

Homage of worship to Jyeshtha Brahma in all humility and total surrender to the Will Divine in love and faith.

ओ३म यऽआत्मदा बलदा यस्य विश्वऽउपासते पशिष यस्य देवाः। यस्य छायामृत यस्य मृत्युः कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम॥१३॥

Om Ya'ātmadā baladā yasya viśva'upāsate praśiṣaṁ yasya devāḥ. Yasya cchāyāmṛtaṁ yasya mṛtyuḥ kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema.
Yaju. 25.13

Parameshvara is the Lord Giver of life on earth. He is the giver of strength for body, mind and soul in life. The whole world sings songs of adoration in honour of His glory and grandeur. All divinities of nature and brilliant nobilities

do homage to Him and celebrate His glory in song. He is the shelter and shade of our peace and security in the state of immortality. He is the ordainer of life and death for all, indeed going off from His shelter and security is the real death.

Which Lord of glory shall we worship with yajna and yajnic fragrances? Surely the same One Lord who is the Supreme master, sustainer and saviour with the gifts of life, light of knowledge and the bliss of immortality.

ओ३म् द्यौः शान्तिरन्तरिक्षः शान्तिः पृथिवी शान्तिरापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिः। वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वेदेवाः शान्तिर्ब्रह्म शान्तिः सर्वःशान्तिः शान्तिरेव शान्तिः सा मा शान्तिरेधि॥१७॥

Om dyauḥ śāntirantarikṣaṁ śāntiḥ pṛthivī śāntirāpaḥ śāntiroṣadhayaḥ śāntiḥ. Vanaspatayaḥ śāntirviśve devāḥ śāntirbrahma śāntiḥ sarvaṁ śāntiḥ śāntireva śāntiḥ sā mā śāntiredhi.
Yaju. 36, 17

May the heavenly regions of light be full of peace and bring us peace. May the middle regions of vayu energy be full of peace and bring us peace. May the Earth Mother be full of peace and bring us peace.

May the regions of waters be full of peace and bring us peace. May the regions of greenery, herbs and trees be full of peace and bring us peace and good health. May the regions of biological beauty be full of peace and bring us peace. May all the divine forces of Nature and brilliant nobilities of the world be at peace and bring us peace. May the divine Word of Veda inspire our heart and mind with peace and universal love. May there be peace all around in nature and humanity of the world and in the entire world of life. May universal peace prevail over all, peace and peace alone. And may that universal peace bless me too.

There can not be peace anywhere in the world where fear prevails. Fear is the negation of peace and mother of violence.

ओ३म् यता यतः समीहसे तता नाऽअभयं कुरु।

शं नः कुरु पजाभ्योऽभयं नः पशुभ्यः॥२२॥

Om Yato yataḥ samīhase tato no'abhayaṁ kuru. Śaṁ naḥ kuru prajābhyo'bhayaṁ naḥ paśubhyaḥ. Yaju. 36, 22

O Lord of peace, destroyer of fear and terror, wherever your will prevails, as it does everywhere in omnipotent freedom, there from bless us with the peace and security of freedom from fear. Bring us

peace and freedom in security for all your children, and let fearlessness prevail all over in the human as well as in the animal world everywhere.

We have prayed for peace and freedom from fear. May peace, freedom and security prevail in the world. But even in that state of peace, freedom and security we shall not be at peace unless there is peace within, in our mind and soul. Let us be at peace in mind and soul.

ओ३म् यस्मिन्वृचः साम यजूंषि यस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठिता रथनाभाविवाराः।
यस्मिँश्चित्तः सर्वमोत प्रजानां तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु॥५॥

Om Yasminnrcaḥ sāma yajūṁṣi yasmin pratiṣṭhitā rathanābhāvivarāḥ. Yasmiñścittaṁ sarvamotaṁ prajānāṁ tanme manaḥ śivasankalpamastu. Yaju. 34, 5.

That in which the Rgveda, hymns of the Lord's praise, Samaveda, celebration of the Lord's glory in song, Yajurveda, hymns of yajnic guidance for practical action, and the Atharva veda, Brahma-veda, all are intertwined like the spokes of a wheel joined to the nave and the felly, may that mind of mine, I pray, be full of peace, noble thoughts, holy intentions and resolutions, fearless will for yajnic action.

Introduction

What is Veda?

This Introduction to Hymns of the Vedas is meant for an average English knowing reader who is keen to know:

What is Veda?

What is it all about?

Is it old or new? When did it come into existence?

If it is old, what is its relevance today?

And if it is relevant, is it relevant to me also?

Or is it relevant only to some particular community, in some particular country, and that too at what particular time?

These are relevant questions specially in an age of science, democracy and globalism.

Veda is knowledge. The very word means knowledge. 'Veda' is derived, as Swami Dayananda explains it in the Introduction to his Commentary on the Vedas, *Rgvedadi Bhashya Bhumika*, from the Sanskrit root 'vid' which means 'to be, to know, to think, and to gain and benefit from, And we might add further, as Dr. Parmananda has suggested in his translation of

Rgvedadi Bhashya Bhumika, the root also means 'to be aware, to express and communicate, and to live'.

So all that exists is Veda. The awareness of all that exists is Veda. The expression of that awareness through the medium of language is Veda because that expression of awareness in language, for us, is the knowledge of what exists. Then, further thinking on Vedic knowledge and the application of knowledge and thought in practical living is Veda in the sense that the thought and practice is an extension of knowledge for our purpose. Thus the knowledge, thought and practical living shows how we benefit from Veda. Living the Vedic way in awareness, thought and deed we add to the refinement, beauty and culture of our life in society. This refinement and culture too is a practical extension of Veda.

Let us understand this in the scientific way: We are living in an age of science. Science studies the world of existence as it shows itself through the medium of Nature. Science studies nature, the method of study is the scientific method: observation, analysis, formulation of hypothesis about the way nature works, testing and confirmation of the hypothesis, formulation of theory about the way nature works, then coming to the laws of nature. Thus

far science is pure knowledge. Then comes in the technologist, the engineer, the man faced with life's problems. And problems have to be solved. Science must have a value in terms of life. Knowledge after all is a value of high order for rational humanity.

Newton, as we know from the history of science, discovered the law of gravitation. Some one observed that water flows from higher to lower level. The town was faced with the problem of water supply. The engineers structured the water supply system and life became comfortable. In this sense and to this extent science is Veda: It is knowledge, the knowledge has a value, that knowledge can be extended and applied to life, and we can benefit from the knowledge and its application. It is knowledge of nature, it has a method, a purpose and a mission: to find the truth of nature and by extension and application, make life better.

Just in passing, let us ask ourselves a question: So far as the laws of gravitation are concerned, between Newton and the laws, which one is truly or comparatively more important? Are the laws true and universal, on their own, in themselves, as part of nature, or do they exist because Newton said so? Do the laws exist independent of Newton? Is the law of

Relativity true on its own or because Einstein brought it in and said so? Newton and Einstein are great in the history of science, they were great observers and discoverers but the laws exist on their own. They are not the creation or invention of any human being. Truth and knowledge exists on its own. There are so many things in nature and life whose discoverer or inventor we do not know. For example, the wheel moves round and round on the axle, but it does not move in terms of distance. Who invented the wheel and converted or turned the circular movement of the wheel into linear movement? We do not know. But the knowledge is there, the movement is there. The knowledge is there, its application, the benefit, is there, the giver is unknown, quite often forgotten. Knowledge does not rest on the giver's shoulders, except in the situation where knowledge itself would not exist without the giver, because in this exceptional situation the knowledge and the giver would be one and the same. In the case of science, the knowledge and the giver are not one and the same thing. But in the case of Veda, knowledge and the giver are the same. Remove the giver, in thought, and knowledge too disappears. Remember the giver, and knowledge follows. Know the knowledge and the giver reveals

himself. One who does not know the giver does not know knowledge either. God and Veda are one.

Veda is knowledge, science too is knowledge. There is a lot common between Veda and Science, but the lot of scientific knowledge, though it is a lot, is very limited in quality and quantity both. There is a great similarity between the two and yet a greater dissimilarity between the two.

Veda is knowledge, pure and simple, so is science, knowledge pure and simple. Science is knowledge of nature as nature is and as it works according to its own laws. Veda too is knowledge of nature as nature is and as it works according to its own laws, but Veda goes farther than that, to the source of these laws, in fact it goes to the source of nature itself. Science is pure knowledge; there is no story, no history. Scientific knowledge is knowledge in scientific language free from local colour and historical variations of meaning, so Veda too is knowledge in Vedic Scientific language free from local colour and historical variations of meaning. The structure of Vedic terms is logical, so is the structure of Scientific words logical.

But there is a difference between Scientific knowledge and Vedic knowledge: While science is knowledge of nature to the extent that man has been able to discover it, Veda is universal knowledge of existence as we would find it to be from a source which is infinitely greater and higher than human. For this reason Veda itself says that it is the voice of Divinity, articulation of the divine awareness of existence in metalanguage. The Source of Veda is the Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent Lord Brahma, the Supreme.

Science actually is an open ended approximation to truth. It is a growth. Every generation of Scientists takes up the pursuit of knowledge from where the earlier generation leaves off. The new generation continues the search for knowledge and makes its own contribution to the knowledge it inherits. This contribution sometimes is an addition, sometimes a correction, and sometimes even a negation of the old when a correction has been found. But the sum total of the knowledge thus created and consolidated is a simultaneous possession of the present time. It is a balance sheet of the total human awareness of the facts, processes, and the laws of the dynamics of nature at the present moment. In

other words, the total human awareness, the total knowledge and the total realities behind the knowledge and awareness, all is simultaneous.

Thus if it is possible to imagine one person watching the entire course of nature, the continuance of awareness and the development of knowledge from the first moment of human existence to the last moment, that person would be omniscient, having watched all that happens relentlessly without a wink of sleep or absent mindedness, he would have to be omnipresent so that he does not miss even the fall of a single leaf, and omnipotent over and above every thing that is and happens. In addition, he would have to be an absolutely uninvolved personality for objectivity of the knowledge. And over and above the details of what he has watched and knows, he would pronounce the essence of his entire observation and say: *This is and Thus is all that it is and all that happens, and these are the laws of things that happen the way they do.*

In that pronouncement, the particulars would be generalized beyond the time, beyond the space and even beyond the self. And yet the entire chronology of time and the entire cosmology of space would be concentrated and centred into a single moment, a

single point from which proceed uncountable lines and possibilities of what is, what can and what should happen. That moment would be the Eternal Now, that point, the Eternal Space, Mahakala and Mahadakasha, the time-space continuum, the eternal Presence, the Eternal Awareness, ever awake with its Eternal Potential, the Universal knowledge.

Could we have, at least imagine, such an articulation of such an awareness?

Yes we have such an articulation of awareness. That articulation is Veda. The mind behind the Veda is the Cosmic Mind, and the centre of that mind is the ever living, ever awake, Cosmic Presence, the Centre and Circumference of this expanding universe, this is Eternal Jyeshtha Brahma.

Veda is the articulation of the awareness of that Jyeshtha Brahma, the articulation or Omniscience. It is the quintessential knowledge of all that is, including nature, mind and spirit, all that happens, all that we are, all that we do and all that we reap in consequence of our action. It is the Original and Universal Knowledge of the reality of Existence and the Ideality of our aspirations, covering the facts and processes of existence, their interaction and the laws

that operate in the interaction. In short, Veda is the eternal articulation of Omniscience, the Voice of God.

Veda is Eternal

If you observe and feel that there is regularity in nature, that the sunrise and sunset are regular events, the cycle of the seasons is a regular phenomenon, that if something happens, or we do something, certain consequences follow, that there is some chain of cause and effect in nature and in life as well; then surely you are on way to find the mystery of this chain of life, that hidden power and presence which creates, sustains and winds up this whole show, this play called *Līlā*;

And then you will realize that the ‘*Līlādhara*’, the creator, director, producer, enactor and watcher of the play, so that it goes on and every actor plays his or her part well, That is one and the same.

The Veda calls that One by many names: His essential name is Aum, his functional names are many such as Savita, Prajapati, Shiva, Rudra, Vishnu, Brahma, and many many others. That Power and Presence is Existent, Intelligent, Blissful, formless,

omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, just and merciful, unborn, Eternal, beginningless, endless and infinite, unchanging, matchless, unique, all-sustaining, all ruling, immanent and transcendent, unaging, immortal, fearless, gracious, immaculate, pure, all time aware and awake with His potential; He creates, He sustains, and He winds up, and this same way He maintains the cycles of creation eternally. No beginning, no end, He maintains the steady state, cyclic as well as spiral, Parameshvara as He is.

If Parameshvara is eternal, His awareness is eternal, It is His awareness of the eternal cycle of existence. The articulation of that eternal awareness is Veda. Veda is eternal.

God’s manifestation thus, for our purpose in human terms, is threefold: He is self existent, He is Supreme, He is Parama Brahma. He manifests in the universe, reflects in every particle of it, He is Jagad-Brahma. He is Present in every word of the Veda, He is Shabda-Brahma. Veda is his Word, He is imperishable, His Word too is imperishable, Eternal.

Veda is God's gift

The question is often asked: Who is the author of the Veda?

The answer is simple and straight: He that is the creator of Jagad Brahma is also the author of Shabda-Brahma, Veda. Of this, we have evidence from the Veda itself.

ओ३म् तस्माद्यज्ञात्सवहुतऽ ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे।

छन्दाश्चसि जज्ञिर तस्माद्यजुस्तस्मादजायत॥७॥

Om Tasmādyajñāt sarvahuta'ṛcaḥ sāmāni jajñire. Chandāṁsi jajñire tasmād yajustasm-ādajāyata. Rg. 10, 90, 9; Yaju. 31, 7.

From That Lord Omniscient and Omnipresent, Vishnu, universally adored, were born Rgveda and Samaveda, and from that same Lord were born Atharvaveda and Yajurveda, all adorable knowledge divine.

ओ३म् यस्माद्दृचो अ॒पातक्ष॑न्यजु॒र्यस्माद्द॒पाक॑षन्। सामानि॑ यस्य
लोमान्यथर्वाङ्गिरसो॑ मुखं॒ स्क॒म्भं तं ब्रू॑हि क॒तमः॑ स्व॒देव
सः॑ ॥ २० ॥

*Om Yasmādrco apātakṣan yajuryasmādapāka-
ṣan. Sāmāni yasya lomānyatharvāṅgirasō
mukhaṁ skambhaṁ taṁ brūhi katamaḥ svideva
saḥ. Atharva 10, 07, 20*

Speak of that Lord Sustainer of the universe, Vishnu, from whom the verses of Rgveda were received in form, from whom the Yajurveda was fashioned forth, from whom the verses of Samaveda arose spontaneously as hair grows naturally from the body, and from whom the voice of Atharva Veda was received.

This is the internal evidence of the creation of the Veda. Veda is the voice of God. It is the divine articulation of Omniscience.

Of the divine origin of the Veda, there is ample external evidence also. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, for example, says (2, 4, 10):

*Om Yathā'radraidhāgnerabhyāhitāt pṛthagdhūmā
viniṣcarantyevaṁ vā are'syamahato bhūtasyaniḥśv-
asitam etad yadṛgvedo Yajurvedaḥ Sāmavedo'tharv-
āṅgirasā.*

“Just as smoke arises from green wood on fire, so from the Lord Almighty, Rgveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda arise as the very breath of the Lord.”

Similarly Svetashvataropaniṣad (6,18) says:

Yo brahmāṇaṁ vidadhāti pūrvam yo vai vedāṅśca prahiṇotitasmai, Taṁ ha devamātma-buddhi-prakāśaṁ mumukṣur vai śarāṅam-aham prapadye.

The Lord who creates Man in the beginning of human generation also speaks all the Vedas for him.

Sankhya Darshana says that the Vedas are ‘apaurusheya’, i.e., not created by any human being, and they are nothing exclusively by themselves because they are the expression of the creator’s own essential power (5,46 and 51). Yoga Darshana calls the Lord Creator as the first and original Guru of all the teachers that followed in human history because He is omniscient and not subject to time (1, 25-26). Kanada, author of Vaisheshika philosophy, describes the Veda as the Word of God (1,1,3). Vedanta philosophy describes Brahma as the very seed, root and origin of the Veda (1,1,3).

Thus from internal and external evidence we find that Vedas are created by the Omniscient Lord Creator at the beginning of human creation.

Here let us appreciate a simple question: God is formless, Nirakara. He is not a person in human-like body. How could He speak to the sages to whom he revealed the Veda?

Swami Dayananda gives a very interesting answer to this question: Does your mind have a mouth? No, yet talking goes on in your mind at your will. So God can talk to you in your mind, if you can listen.

God is omnipresent. He is present at the core of everybody’s mind. So if the person is pure at heart, the Lord’s presence within talks to the person. It is a silent communication between the divine cosmic consciousness and the divinely oriented individual consciousness in a state of Samadhi communion. This state of communion is described in Rgveda 8, 44, 23):

ओ३म् यदग््रे स्यामहं त्वं त्वं वां घा स्या अहम्।

स्युष्टे सत्या इहाशिषः ॥ २३ ॥

Om Yadagne syāmaḥam tvaṁ tvaṁ vā ghā syā aham. Syuṣṭe satyā ihāśiṣaḥ.

Agni, O Lord of love and life's bonding, if and when I were you and you were me, then would your love and blessings for me be truly realized here in this life itself.

This is how the cosmic awareness of Omniscience in the absolute metalanguage, *Idā*, becomes the mother stream of Sarasvati and flows into the seer's mind and consciousness.

The divine knowledge is always present in the cosmic mind. Listen, the Yajurveda says (34, 5) in a mood of prayer:

ओ३म् यस्मिन्ऋचः साम यजूंषि यस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठिता
रथनाभाविवाराः। यस्मिँश्चित्तं सर्वमोत प्रजानां तन्मे मनः
शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु॥५॥

*Om Yasminṛcaḥ sāma yajūṃṣi yasmin
pratiṣṭhitā rathanābhāvivārāḥ. Yasmiñścittaṃ
sarvamotaṃ prajānāṃ tanme manaḥ
śivasankalpamastu.*

The mind in which are inter-woven the Rks, hymns of adoration and cosmic knowledge, Yajus, hymns of Yajnic performance of karma, and Samans, hymns of devotion and communion, in songs of celebration of Divinity, as contained in Rks, and

Brahma Veda, i.e, Atharvaveda all interfixed like spokes in the nave of a wheel, may that mind of mine, I pray, be full of noble thoughts, intentions and resolutions.

Thus if man can concentrate his mind on Divinity at the same frequency as the Cosmic mind, he can experience the revelation of the Divine Presence and divine knowledge in his mind and soul. In the same state of mind and soul, the primal Rshis received the Revelation of the Vedas. They 'heard' the Voice within and recorded it in the mind. They passed on the Voice to others for the benefit of all mankind.

Veda is Shruti, internal the first and original gift of knowledge to man. This gift was given through the four Primal Rshis: Rgveda to Agni, Yajurveda to Vayu, Samaveda to Aditya, and Atharvaveda to Angira. From them Brahma received these and passed them on to other sages. Says Mahashi Yaska in Nirukta, 1, 19: The original seers were men of realization who saw and perfectly understood the Dharma. They taught it, i.e., taught the mantras to those who themselves had not so realized it or were not inspired persons.

Revelation V. Evolution

Swami Dayananda raises, rather suggests, a question in his Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas:

Why Revelation? Why not evolution? God has given to man natural intelligence and awareness. By virtue of natural intelligence and awareness, man has evolved science, poetry, poetics and grammar. Is it not possible, then, that over time, howsoever long it might have been, that man evolved and created the Veda as well? Evolution thus appears to be more intelligible and acceptable than Revelation.

Swamiji says, ‘No’. Evolution of knowledge cannot start without the first inspiration and original revelation of knowledge. God is the eternal cause and original seed and root of knowledge. All knowledge at the human level follows later. Keep a person from birth to death in seclusion without any social contact and communication, and the person will remain ignorant. In order to grow in intelligence and knowledge, social intercourse is necessary, indispensable. All social dialogue, educational training and tradition started after the Revelation.

To appreciate and understand Swami Dayananda’s view that the evolution of knowledge at the human level follows after the first original Revelation, let us refer to Veda itself. Yajurveda 40, 8 says that Parameshvara is the first and original poet seer, thinker, all-comprehending and free, independent, self-existent power that creates the world of existence and reveals the Laws of Existence in every cyclic phase of creation. Further we might refer to certain scientific discoveries and the Vedic view of the same: Matter and energy are inter convertible, says science. The Vedic view is that matter, energy and thought (intelligence, Buddhi) are mutations of one basic Prakrti and inter-convertible. Rgveda goes into the pre-creation, pre-Big Bang, state of existence or ‘nonexistence’—whenever it was or was not, but science has yet to be at least approximately sure about that. The point of discussion at a reasonable level in this age of reason and globalism is that we should have an open mind without falling a prey to what may be called homocentric dogma or even arrogance anywhere at any level.

Whether we subscribe to Revelation or to evolution of knowledge, it should be appreciated that the Vedic view of Revelation is liberal and

comprehensive and can accommodate any view you hold. If you insist that Veda is man made, not God revealed, the Veda would listen: Vedas were revealed to four Primal Rshis in their soul. They pronounced them to and for others. Whether you regard them as instruments of God in speech or you insist that they were the authors of this speech would depend on your faith and open-minded rationality. But in either case, the Vedic Word, if you understand it aright, will not fail to persuade you to the conviction that it is Super human in vision, thought and expression. God speaks to the soul, man speaks only to the ear, at best to the intellect. Without the divine inspiration and vision of Divinity, even evolution would not begin, and then evolution too would be only confirmation of the Revelation.

Devatā and R̥shi

As you open the text of the Veda, the Gayatri mantra for example, you find the words:

“Savita *Devatā*, Vishvamitra *R̥shi*”.

‘Devata’ here means the subject which is dealt with in the mantra. The subject of mantra may be God, the One Saccidananda Brahma as it is in Atharva-veda 10, 7 and 8, or it can be some attributive version of it such

as Agni, Indra, Soma, Aditya, etc., which in each case is the same one God, or it can be some other power or presence, the sun, for example, the moon, the earth, the dawn, rivers, ruler, parents, language, faith, intelligence, anything that has a positive quality, as the cloud for example, even a thing, or state of health that has a negative merit, fever for example. Devata is the subject of the mantra or the theme of a hymn. Devata in the Vedic tradition means a presence, a power, a force which is brilliant, illuminative and generous. But the Devata of the mantra can be not only these, but also something negative provided it is meaningful. The positives are to be attained, served or worshipped, and the negatives are to be cured or avoided. Gambling for example, is to be avoided, and fever is to be cured. In any case, the Devata of the mantra is meaningful by way of its value or disvalue in life, for our guidance.

The *R̥shi* of a mantra or of a hymn is not the author. The author, as already said, is the Omniscient God. The Rshi is the seer and exponent of the word and meaning of the mantra. As Maharshi Yaska says in the Nirukta, Rshis are the ‘seers of the mantras: They are the sages, who went into deep meditation unto the universal frequency of the Cosmic mind and

experienced the voice of Divinity speaking in the mantra, the mantra being a semantic correspondence of the Divine Voice, and the Divine Voice being a sound correspondence of Divine Awareness of the Reality of Existence in the modes of Being and Becoming.

The Primal *Rṣhis* entered into the life of the universe and therein heard the Spirit of life vibrating, speaking there from: That voice was the Veda. The exponent *Rṣhis* entered the spirit of the mantras and saw it subsisting in the life of the universe and thereby reached back to the source. Of this experience of living Veda they spoke to their disciples.

If we regard the *Rṣhis* as authors of the mantras, certain difficulties of practical and even funny nature arise: Of mantra 568 of Samaveda, which is the same as Rgveda 9, 104, 1, the *Rṣhis* are two, Parvata and Narada of the Kanva family. Of Samaveda mantras 511-522 which are common with Rgveda 9, 70, the *Rṣhis* are Saptarshis, seven sages. Of Samaveda 627, Rgveda 9, 66, 19, the *Rṣhis* are Satam Vaikhanashah, one hundred in their forest hermitage. Rgveda 8, 34, 16-18, the Rsis are

Sahasram Vasurocisah Angirasah, one thousand brilliant sages of the Angirus family.

Apart from the difficulty of multiple *Rṣhis* of the Samaveda mantras, there is the problem of different *Rṣhis* for the same mantra: Of Samaveda 564, the *Rṣhi* is Grtsamada Shaunaka, but of the same mantra in Rgveda 9, 86, 43, the Rsi is Atri Bhauma. The Rsi of Rgveda 10, 152, 1, is Sasa Bharadvaja, of the same mantra in Atharva 1, 20, 4, the *Rṣhi* is Atharva. Of Rgveda 1, 189, 1, the *Rṣhi* is Agastya Maitravaruni, but of the same in Yajurveda 40, 16, the Rsi is Dirghatama. Of Rgveda 1, 115, 1, the *Rṣhi* is Kutsa Angirasa, in Yajurveda 13, 46, it is Virupa, and in Atharva 132, 2, 35, it is Brahma.

This variety and multiplicity of *Rṣhis* in the case of the same mantras shows that the *Rṣhis* were exponents and not authors. Of the same one verse or poem, the exponents can be many, from one to two, hundred and even thousand, as has been shown, but the author is only one, and the author in the case of Veda is One, God; the recipients are four: Agni, Vayu, Aditya, Angira; the collector and compiler is one, Brahma; and the exponents many.

Lord Krishna sums up the authorship of the Veda in Gita (3, 15):

ओ३म् कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।

तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५ ॥

*Om karma brahmodbhavam viddhi brahm-
ākṣarasamudbhavam, Tasmātsarvagataṁ
brahma nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam.*

Karma is born of the Veda, Veda is born of the imperishable Lord Supreme. For this reason, the Veda and the Lord Supreme, the universal Word and the eternal Master, both are ever immanent in the Yajnic cycle of the universe and in its cosmic dynamics.

Veda, Shruti and Smrti

Veda is knowledge, Shruti ‘Sruti is Revelation. Smrti is the Reminder: Something has been lost and forgotten and we need to get it back on the rails by a reminder.

Veda, Shruti, and Smrti all three mean one thing: That we should never be self- dislodged, we must stay fast and strong in our essential place.

Veda, Shruti, Mantra and Chanda are synonyms. They refer to the Samhitas of Rgveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda, and not to the Brahmana works. Swami Dayananda makes it emphatically clear in his Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas.

Veda and Shruti is the same, all the four Vedas. The term ‘Veda’ is derived from the root ‘vid’, and ‘Shruti is derived from the root ‘Sru’. ‘Vid’ means to know and ‘Shru’ means ‘to hear’ The Samhitas are called Vedas because people learn all true knowledge of existence from them. They become learned, they think and research further and thereby receive benefit for a better and comfortable life. They are called Shruti because they were ‘heard’, received, in word and form from the Lord Omniscient, and later people hear them from the sages. In his note on Yajurveda 6, 21 Swami Dayananda writes that the four Vedas are called ‘Chhanda’ because they celebrate, adore, reveal and show God’s creation and its beauty and grandeur, and thus they energise and enlighten people with divine pleasure and joy. They are called ‘Mantra’ because the Samhitas reveal the overt and covert knowledge from the gross to the subtlest realities, knowledge from the earth to God. Thus the four

Samhitas, only these, are Vedas, Shruti Mantra and Chhanda. The Samhitas are also called Nigama because we derive all the essential knowledge of existence from them.

Eternal, comprehensive, divine as they are, the Vedas are authorities of Truth and Dharma on their own and not because of any other higher sanction and reference.

A question has been raised on the authority of Katyayana. Katyayana says: ‘Mantra-Brahmanayor Vedanamadheyam’, that is, the name of Mantra and Brahmana works is Veda: On this authority, should’nt the Brahmana works such as Shatapatha, Aitareya, Gopatha Brahmanas be accepted as Veda?

Swami Dayananda rejects, this contention. Brahmana works are interpretations, explanations and commentaries on the Veda. They are not Vedas. A commentary is not the original of the commentary. In addition they are called Itihasa Purana, Kalpa, Gatha and Narasamsi also.

Swami Dayananda then explains these terms: “Deva and the Demons prepared to engage in a fight,” such stories in the Brahmanas are ‘Itihasa’, history.

“In the beginning there was only Being”, such statements are Purana, statements, of pre-creation stage. “*Iṣe tvorjje tvā*”, “*iti vr̥ṣṭyai....*” Such statements are kalpa, because they describe the power of the mantra in practical application and use in life.

“*Gāthās* are dialogues etc. such as between Yajnavalkya and Janaka or between Yajnavalkya and Gargi or Maitreyi”, in *Ṣatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.

“Narasansi is Yajna according to Kathakya, because Yajna is praise and celebration of God by men in a congregation. “ According to Shakapuni, Narasansi is agni as it is praised by men.

So terms such as Itihasa, Purana, Kalpa, Gatha and Narashansi are the names of Brahmanas. And Brahmanas are not Vedas. They are of the nature of histories.

‘Particular Names’ in the Vedas?

The question raises a point: In Veda mantras there are names of persons. For example.

ओ३म् त्रायषं जमदग्नेः कश्यपस्य त्रायषम्।

यद्देषु त्रायुषं तत्राऽस्तु त्रायुषम्॥६२॥

Om Tryāyuṣam jamadagneḥ kaśyapasya tryāyuṣam. Yaddēveṣu tryāyuṣam tanno' astu tryāyuṣam. Yaju. 3, 62

Here are names of seers Jamadagni and Kashyapa, which shows that Vedas are historical documents too.

Swami Dayananda rejects this contention. He explains that in the Vedas words which appear to be proper names of persons are not names of seers. *Shatapatha Brāhmaṇa* itself is the evidence: 'Jamadagni' is the eye, it is a 'seer' because you see with it. (8, 1, 2, 3)

'*Kaśyapa*' is kurma, and kurma is prana, so kashyapa is pranic energy of the body system (7. 5, 5.7). The learned are Devas. (3, 7, 3, 10)

So the meaning of the mantra quoted above is not "Our age may be thrice the age of normal humanity as was the age of sage Jamadagni and the sage Kashyapa and as is the age of the gods."

The correct meaning is the prayer that "Our age may be thrice the age of normal humanity, with the vision of our eyes and our pranic vitality, as is the health and age of the learned and wise people."

The conclusion of this discussion is that according to Swami Dayananda, on the authority of the Brahmana works, Patanjali's Mahabhashyam and Panini's Ashtadhyayi quoted in detail in *Rgvedādi-Bhāshya Bhūmikā* only the Samhita form of the Veda is Veda, the original mantras revealed to the four Primal Rshis inspired by Jyeshtha Brahma. Only the Samhitas are pure knowledge, universal and eternal. All other literature of scriptural relevance, including the Brahmana works that followed, is exegetical, explanatory, expository and illustrative, it is in the Vedic tradition but not Veda. It is sacred, authoritative too, but subject to primal authority of Veda.

Mantra, Samhita, Veda, that alone is 'Shruti', Revelation, articulation of Divinity, the rest is Smrti, Reminder, created by sages other than the Primal Rshis. Smrti literature includes the Brahmanas, Manusmrti and other Smrtis, Sutra literature, Darshana literature, Upanishads, epic poems such as Ramayana and Mahabharata, History, etc.

Living in modern times we need to update our concept of Smrti literature and, in the light of that, re-affirm and confirm our faith in Sruti, Revelation, and Smrtis, accordingly.

Shruti is Revelation of Veda, divine knowledge of Omniscience revealed in the essence to Primal Rshis at the beginning of human creation. It is complete and final, Divine as it is. That is the Vedic view. All knowledge pursued at the human level follows from that. The original source of all true knowledge and of the subjects and objects known from and through that knowledge in the essence as well as in detail is the Supreme Lord of life and the universe.

However, knowledge in the essence is not the whole of life. Life is multifaceted and multiphased. So knowledge in the essence has to be worked out in detail for practical application in different fields. This work has to be done by sages and scholars dedicated, inspired and committed. All this work is Smrti, respectable and sacred in its own right but under the umbrella of Veda and the laws of Nature. Works such as the Brahmanas, Manusmrti, Grihyasutras, Niti works, law, Darshana, all these are practical knowledge for the guidance of humanity in everyday living in pursuit of the essential knowledge, values and life's purpose received through the Veda.

Change is the law of life. Progress is the direction normally speaking. But in the pursuit of

practicality we sometimes forget the original path and move away. The change of the ways in which we pursue the original and universal values over course of time comes to be regarded as change of the essential values, and then the means of value-realisation are confused for ends. Then we go astray. Such a time is described as the period of 'Dharma glani', deterioration of Dharma and life's values (Gita, 4, 7). At such a time we need an exceptional leader, a strong reformer, a visionary seer such as Krishna, to rehabilitate the values in the new context and put life back on the rails. Works created by leaders, reformers, saints and sages, dedicated and inspired with good intentions at such time are also Smritis. Even law books and legislative enactments are Smritis because their purpose is the pursuit of life's basic values. These Smritis do not necessarily depart from the essence of 'Shruti'. They are not rebellions either; they are Reminders of the Original Shruti. From the Original 'Shruti', Veda, through scriptures of the later Indian tradition, and Zoroastrian and Abrahamic tradition of religion we can trace the original thread of continuity.

We can find and trace this thread of continuity: from 'the Vedic concept of existence as integrated

play of purusha, Prakrti and Jivatma' to the Zoroastrian concept of Ahurmazda, creative play of purusha and Prakrti.' We can trace Manu's ten tenets of Dharma to the Ten Commandments of Moses in the Old Testament in the Jewish tradition. The same Ten Commandments with practical extension, we find in the Sermon on the Mount of the New Testament in Christianity. Jesus did not come, he says, to abrogate or replace the Law, he came so that the Law may be fulfilled. The Bible and the Quran both trace the history of Revelation back upto Adam, like the Indian tradition tracing the same to Brahma and the Primal Rshis. And if we compare the ethics of the Gita and the ethics of Christianity preached to Adam in the Christian epic poem *Paradise Lost*, the similarity is striking.

Come to the Islamic tradition and the pre-Islamic tradition in Arabia. There are ancient Arabic poems as far as four thousand years old written by Tarafa and others upto almost the time of Prophet Mohammad in praise of the four Vedas, Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna and the sylvan scenes of Brindaban where Krishna used to play with friends and play on the flute. Some of these poems, sometimes published in a collection titled '*Sair-al-akool*', are quoted by

Pandit Dharma Deva Vidyamartanda in his valuable book '*Vedon k̄a Yathartha Swroopa*' published by Gurukul Kangari University, Haridwar. The Quran itself describes itself more than once as a Reminder (Smriti) taken from the original Mother Book (43, 4) preserved and guarded as Master Register (36, 12) in the heart of Eternity (56, 77-78 and 85, 21-22).

This continuity of thought and vision in religious traditions, specially at a time when interfaith dialogue is more than openly possible, is valuable for mutual understanding and enlightenment so that humanity can live together happily and peacefully with mutual tolerance and respectful cooperation, without division into exclusive groups and militant organizations. We need to reach the root of our human history and culture instead of playing around on the leaves, at best waving about on the branches of the ancestral tree of life.

Swami Dayananda in the 19th century, last quarter, observed that there are good and positive values in all religions. Let all leaders and intellectuals come together, coolly and patiently think together, and workout a common code of universal values for all nations and religions to follow across the globe. This way peace can prevail. But this did not happen.

Still, there is time while we are sitting on top of an atomic volcano. Shruti and Smrti have to go on together for all God's children without forgetting the roots and the original universal values. That code of values would be the latest open ended Smrti guide for the people of the world.

The Date of the Vedas

No one can say on historical evidence what is the age of the Vedas, and no one can determine on scientific evidence what is the date of their 'composition'. For want of the same evidence, no one can say exactly when they were written. But it is a well known fact, accepted too in general, that since they were created, composed and communicated, they were committed to memory, meticulously, faithfully, with absolute reverence, without the loss of a single letter or word or phrase or accent, by the dedicated Brahmanas to whom we owe the highest possible degree of gratitude. For the same reason the Vedas are described as divine knowledge which is Apaurusheya, i.e., impersonal, not created or composed by any human being, but circulated by the Divine Godhead and received as Shruti by the Primal Rshis at the very dawn of the advent of humanity on earth.

However, historians play a very ingenious part characterized by inventive originality in the creation of history. It happened in the case of the Veda also, and so deep is the reverence of the human for the written word that whatever is proclaimed, is recorded boldly with self-assumed authority and is accepted as the divine word of fact.

Such a bold stroke of historical authority was made by Max Muller, a world renowned Vedic scholar and exegesist of the west. He pronounced a purely arbitrary date, without any proof at all, that around 1200 BC was the date of the composition of the Rgveda. Other Western scholars too suggest similar dates for the composition of the Vedas and other scriptural texts in Sanskrit: Vedas 1500-800 BC, Brahmanas 900-600 BC , Aranyakas 700-500 BC, Upanishads 600-400 BC , Mahabharata 360 Bc-350 AD, Ramayana 250 BC-200 AD, Purana, 200-1500 AD.

“Amazing”, says Graham Hancock, author of Underworld, the Mysterious Origins of Civilization (Anchor Canada, 2002), that these dates continue to be accepted as the dates of Indian texts of ancient time, specially of the scriptures, and he continues: “I feel it is essential to bear in mind that these dates are a

house of cards founded on the redundant hypothesis of an Aryan invasion of India in the Second millennium BC,” which is now “a thoroughly falsified and bankrupt idea”. He concludes that the Vedas are Scriptures of no known people composed at no known time (p.131). In other words, the Vedas are Scriptures of all people composed at the time beyond all calculated time. Even Max Muller himself admitted in his Gifford lectures (1890) that 1200 BC was a purely arbitrary date based on unproven assumptions: “Whether the Vedic hymns were composed in 1000 or 1500 or 2000 or 3000 BC no power on earth could ever fix.” The date of the Vedas was beyond human imagination. There was no such event as an Aryan invasion of India. There was no such race as an Aryan race. The Vedic word ‘Arya’ means ‘noble, educated, cultured, dynamic, anywhere in any community on the earth (Hancock). ‘Arya’ does not mean a race. It means the characteristic quality of a cultured human being.

Western scholars of present time are surprised at the universal nature of the Vedas and marvel on the way the Vedas have been preserved in their pristine purity. Gregory Possehl, professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, and one of the world’s

leading experts on ancient India and the Indus Sarasvati civilizations, comments as under:

“The Indian Brahmans took the memorization of the Vedas very seriously, and developed means to ensure accuracy and the careful reproduction of the same words and sounds from generation to generation. Careful, even exact oral replication of the Vedas was part of the Hindu faith, institutionalized during the learning process and was maintained through peer observation and pressure through the life of a Brahman.. Deviation from the path of exact replication would have brought powerful forces of censure to bear on the offender....

“The noted Sanskritist J.A.B. van Buitenen told me that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Europeans who were learning Sanskrit were impressed by the fact that no matter where they went on the subcontinent, when they heard Brahmans recite the Vedas they heard the exact same thing. From Peshawar to Pondicherry, or Calcutta to Cape Comorin, hundreds of thousands, even millions of Brahmans who have no direct contact knew these texts in precisely the same way.” These texts are remarkably close to those of deep antiquity. (Indus Age: the Beginnings, 1999, p. 6.)

Gregory Possehl in fact was emphatic in his view that “almost everything that was ever written about this civilization (i.e., Indus Sarasvati civilization and Vedas) before five years (i.e., before 1995) was wrong.”

In the midst of confusions, authoritarian surmises and baseless imaginations, who could possibly speak the truth about ancient Indian civilization and Vedic literature? Says Hancock (p. 105): “Perhaps we are coming to a time when ancient India will speak for herself after millennia of silence.” *It was Swami Dayananda who spoke for India, Indian civilization and the Vedas* in the Rishi’s tradition after millennia of silence to correct the distortions and even falsehoods of Indian history and about Indian civilization to redeem Vedic literature and the Vedic tradition.

If no history, no Science, no human imagination can help, better follow the sages’ tradition, Surya Siddhanta and the daily ‘Sankalpa’ of the dedicated Brahmans. And lastly, follow the internal evidence of the Vedas themselves: Vedas are the Original, Universal, Eternal articulation of Divinity, by Divinity, to Humanity through the Rishis, for Humanity, at the beginning of human creation

(Yajurveda, 26, 2; Rgveda, 10, 190, 1; Shvetashvataropanishad, 6, 22).

Swami Dayananda works out the age of the Vedas in *Rgvedādi-Bhāshya Bhūmikā* which he wrote in 1933 Vikrami, the age works out to be 1, 96, 08, 52, 976 (One arab (billion), ninety six crore, eight lacs, fifty-two thousand, nine hundred seventy six) years. It works out to be 1, 96, 08, 53, 110 years in the year 2010, approximately.

Question: How do you ascertain that this is the age of the Vedas? Are you sure it is not more nor less?

Answer: This time calculation of the age of the Veda, is done on the basis of the Vedic concept of time (Atharvaveda, 19, 54-5) and the time measure of the current cycle of existence (Rgveda, 10, 114, 6-8; Atharvaveda, 8, 2, 21), and later as in Surya Siddhanta, Mahabharata, Vishnu-Purana and Gita.

The concept of time in Vedic and post-Vedic scriptural literature is twofold: Existential time which is the fourth dimension of the world of existence, and trans-existential time, ‘Mahakala’ and ‘Mahadakasha’, eternal Time-Space continuum, synonymous with Brahman, the Supreme Consciousness. In relation to the age of the Vedas we

are concerned with existential time which is coeval with the human world in existence. Trans-existential time is transcendent, eternal and beyond all calculation. Existential time is calculated in terms of the things that change and it is, also, a measure of the things that come into existence, bide their time and go out. The Vedas too emerge from Divine Omniscience with the emergence of humanity and retire into Divinity when the human story is wound up in the process of the creative evolution and involution. (Atharvaveda, 19, 71, 1.)

In the Vedic tradition, the age of human creation is 4,32,000,0000 years (Four arab and Thirty-two crore years, or four billion and three hundred twenty million years). This age is divided into one thousand periods of 43,20000 years each. Each period of 43,20000 years is further divided into four ages. Each one of these four is called a ‘yuga’, and all the four together are called a ‘maha yuga’, literally a ‘chaturyugi’ (four yugas). The division and duration of time in relation to Yuga and chaturyugi is as follows:

Krita or Sat Yuga:	17,28000	Years
Treta Yuga:	12,96000	Years
Dwapara Yuga,	8,64000	Years

Kali Yuga	4,32000	Years
<u>Chaturyugi</u>	<u>43,20000</u>	<u>Years</u>

Multiply Chaturyugi by 1000

And you get 4,32,0000000 (Four arab, thirty-two crore) years, the age of human existence in one cycle of existence. This too is the age of each cycle of Vedic existence. The human Veda cycle continues eternally just like the day night cycle in existence. The age of the Vedas is the same as the age of humanity at the present time.

Now let us calculate the age of the Vedas at the present time:

The one thousand Chaturyugis are divided into fourteen ages of Seventyone chaturyugis each. Each one of these fourteen is called a ‘Manvantara’. Manvatara is a term, so named because it is supposed to begin with the advent of a Manu, the Great Petrarch of the age. The name of those Great Petrarchs are the following:

Svayambhuva, Svarocisha, Uttama (Autami), Tamasa, Raivata, Caksusha, Vaivasvata, Savarni,

Daksha Savarni, Brahma Savarni, Dharma Savarni, Rudra Savarni, Raucyadeva-Savarni, Indra Savarni.

The time duration of each manvantara is equal to Seventy-one chaturyugis, which comes to:

$43,20000 \times 71 = 306720000$ (thirty crore, sixtyseven lac and twenty thousand) years. There are fourteen manvantaras, their duration comes to: $306720000 \times 14 = 4,29,40,80000$ (four arab, twenty-nine crore, forty lac, eighty thousand years.)

Between each two manvantaras, there is a Sandhi, twilight or transition equal to the duration of krita yuga, which is 17,28,000 years. There are thus fifteen sandhis from the one before the first manvantara to the last after the fourteenth $= 2,59,20000$ years.

Thus the age of the manvantara cycle comes to:

14 manvantaras = 4,29,40,80000 plus 15 Sandhis of 17,28000 each $= 2,59,20000$.

Total $= 4,32,0000000$.

That is four arab thirty-two crore years.

Let us calculate the year when Swami Dayananda was writing his *Rgvedadi Bhashya*

Bhumika in 1933 V. Six manvantaras had passed, twentyseven chatur yugis had passed. Of the twenty eighth, Krita, Treta and Dwapara yugas had passed, and of Kaliyuga 4976 years had passed. So the calculation comes to:

Manvantaras:	$6 \times 306720000 =$	1840320000
Chaturyugis:	$27 \times 4320000 =$	0116640000
Yugas of 28 th:	Krita=	0001728000
	Treta=	0001296000
	Dvapara=	0000864000
	Kali=	0000004976
	Total:	1960852976

One arab ninety six crore, eight lac, fiftytwo thousand, nine hundred and Seventy six years.

Dr. Parmanand in his edition of *Rgvedadi Bhashya Bhumikā* adds a footnote (p. 28): According to ‘Sri’ Yudhishtira Mimansaka, this calculation omits seven sandhis (1728000×7) of 12096000 years to the above mentioned total.” This observation is correct in the light of Swami Dayananda’s acceptance of the *Surya Siddanta* also. So if we accept this amendment suggested by Rev. Mimansaka and approved by Dr. Parmananda, the age of the Veda in the year 1933 v. would be: 1,96,08,52,976

Plus: 1,20,96,000

Total: 1,97,29,48,976

That is, one arab, ninty-seven crore, twenty-nine lac, fortyeight thousand, nine hundred and seventy-six years in 1933 V. (1876 AD app.) Add one hundred and thirty-four from 1876 to 2010 and we have 1,97,29,49,110 years as the age of the Vedas in 2010.

Subjects of Veda

1. Jnana Vijnana

Shaunaka, master of a large household of teachers and students of ancient time went to Angiras, the Vedic sage, and with humble salutations asked him: “Holy Sir, what is that all comprehensive subject, that all embracing something, by knowing which you know everything, all this that is to be known?”

The sage pondered over the seeker’s question. Then replied: knowledge, Vidya, is twofold, Para Vidya and Aparā Vidya. These two ought to be known. Para is the Ultimate knowledge beyond which

there is nothing that remains to be known. Aparā is this side of the ultimate, from the particle to the penultimate.

The sage then enumerates: Aparā is Rgveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda, Shiksha (Phonetics), Kalpa (Practical applications of Vedic Knowledge), Vyakarana (Grammar), Nirukta (Etymological structure of words), Chanda (Meter and porosody), Jyotish (Astronomy). Para is that by which the Eternal, Infinite, Imperishable Param Brahma is known, the One that is unknowable, intangible, without colour or distinction, without eyes and ears, without hands and feet, eternal, infinite, omnipresent, subtler than subtlest, imperishable, original and ultimate cause of all forms of nature and life. That is Param Brahma. (Mundakopanishad, 1,1,1-6).

Having ‘known’ That One, the first and last Reality of existence, one knows everything else, because everything else is subsumed therein. That same One, Shaunaka had asked of the sage Angiras.

Swami Dayananda analyses the Vedic themes from the same point of view:

Four are the subjects of the Veda: Vijnana, karma, Upasana, Jnana. Of these four, Vijnana is of

the first and highest importance, because Vijnana means the direct self-realised knowledge and awareness of Parameshvara and all other things in existence, down from Prakrti to the particle, jiva and all living forms included. The main subject of the Vedas is the realization of God primarily, all other subjects are implied therein. Know that and you know all that is to be known. If you know not that, all else that you know is infructuous, mere words, self evaporative.

‘*Aum kham Brahma*’, says Yajurveda 40, I7: Aum is infinite, Aum is Brahma, the total reality.

The Mandukyopanisad states it beautifully:

*Aum ityetad akṣaram idam sarvam tasya upā-
khyānam. Bhūtam bhavad bhaviṣyad iti sarvam
omkara eva. Yaccanyat trikālāṭitam tadapi
omkara eva.*

Meaning: ‘Aum’, this is the name of Brahma, this is imperishable. This entire world of existence that is, is an extensive story of Its expansive manifestive Being. All that has been, all that is, all that shall ever be, all this and that is but Omkara only. Still more, all that may be or might be beyond the

three time-bound existences, that too is Omkara only, nothing other than That.

Aum is the Name-Word of God, correspondent with, and identical with God. Know Aum, know God, you know everything ---only when it is self realized.

Swami Dayananda quotes the words of Mundakopanisad: Vidya is twofold, Para and Apara. Apara is Rgveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, Shiksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chanda, and Jyotisha. Para is that by which the Imperishable Brahma is known by realization through direct spiritual experience.

Here arises one question: Are the Vedas Apara Vidya only? Is there nothing spiritual pertaining to Parama Brahma?

Swami Dayananda himself answers, in fact pre-empted this question in the explanation of the quoted verse of Mundakopanisad: In the Vedas both kinds of knowledge are there, Apara and also Para. Apara Vidya is that by which we come to know the nature, property and dynamics of things from earth and particle upto Prakrti, so that we take advantage from them through science and technology for a better quality of life. But Para Vidya is that by which we can

realize the cosmic presence of God immanent in the world of Nature and in the human spirit too. But in the Vedas too Para Vidya is the primary theme, and that way it is the dominant theme because the better quality of life in reality is that which leads us on beyond the materiality of life to spiritual well being so that we may achieve the goals of life: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (live a victorious life with observance of Dharma, enjoy material well being with a good and decent standard of life, enjoy individual, familial and social fulfillment with peace and happiness, and ultimately win the freedom of Moksha). Para and Aparā Vidya both are two sides of the Dharmic way of life as prescribed in the Vedas. The gift of Para Vidya and spirituality is the good and decent life of peace and happiness, and the end and aim of the good and decent life should be the enlightenment of the soul and realization of God in meditative experience through Samadhi.

In fact, every word of the Veda arises from the omniscience of God's presence in the universe, and every word of Veda reflects the same presence and power for the people of wisdom and vision.

For example:

तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः ।

दिवीव चक्षुराततम् ॥ २० ॥

Tadviṣṇoḥ paramam padam sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ. Divīva cakṣurātataṁ. (Rg. 1, 22, 20)

Sagely people of courage, vision and wisdom always see the supreme presence of Vishnu, Omnipresent and Self-refulgent like the sun in heaven, eye of the world, radiating its light everywhere.

Hence the sages, people of vision and wisdom, always look forward to and wish to attain that highest and ultimate state of Being which is the state of Moksha, paramananda, in the direct realized presence of Vishnu, which is the end of all human endeavour through knowledge (Jnana), action (karma) and Upasana (worship). Thus the knowledge of Brahma by direct realization is the primary as well as ultimate object of the Vedas.

There is nothing beyond, nothing higher than that All-pervading, All sustaining Vishnu.

Yasmānna jātaḥ paro'anyo'asti ya'āviveśa bhuvanāni visvā.

There is nothing born or manifested higher or beyond That who pervades all regions of the universe. That is the Divine Prajapati who pervades and plays with the created forms of Nature and life, giving them the joy of living and divine bliss. He pervades all the three regions of light and energy: earthly fire and magnetism, Vayu energy of the middle regions and the light of the solar region,. And He is the master, sustainer and creator controller of the sixteen structural and formal constituent elements ('kalas') of Purusha, the living universe, Jagad-Brahma:

These sixteen constituents are born of divine 'Ikshana', thought, awareness and desire; they are Prana, energy which sustains life and existence; Shraddha, faith in and commitment to truth; Akasha, space; Vayu, air, wind; Agni, fire, vital heat; Jala, water; Prthivi, earth; Indriya, senses; Mana, mind; Anna, food, nourishment for growth; Virya, vital energy, strength and courage; Tapa, discipline and austerity of relentless application to action; Mantra, Veda and principles of living; Karma, action and all activity of life; Loka, and Nama, name, identity, the specific distinction of what something is. (Prashnopanishad, 6, 2-7). They constitute the 'Purusha' in manifestation.

There are elements and attributes of the things existent in life, the human purusha, the Supreme Purusha, and His potential, Nature and natural laws, which the Lord 'creates', manifests, controls and sustains. And all that is, all that we do, all that is to be known and prayed for, all is subsumed in the term Shodashi Purusha. For this reason does Swami Dayananda say that the main subject of the Vedas is God, Lord Supreme. That Purusha, all the constituents of life and existence, individual and cosmic, all our karma, all our prayer and worship, all this is implied when it is said that He is to be known and realized directly through karma and Samadhi Yoga.

So Purusha is the primary subject of the Veda, all else is secondary. But the secondary is not insignificant because without the secondary, life and living is not possible. Though them, the Supreme Purusha manifests and reflects for us to know, to be and to do.

The Upanishad says the same in a very poetic, symbolic manner. Mandukyopanishad says it like this:

*Aum ityetaḍakṣaram, idam sarvaṃ,
Tasyopākhyānam, bhūtam blavad bhaviṣyad,
Iti sarvaṃ omkāra eva'yaccānyat,*

Trikālāṭitam tadapi omkara eva.

Aum: This is the Word. This is the Imperishable, Eternal. All this that is in existence, is the extensive, expansive story of Aum, the Eternal Imperishable God Supreme whose inalienable essential Name is Aum, the cosmic Word. All that has been, all that is and is happening, and all that shall ever be, all that is Aum only. And yet, all that may or might be other than this beyond the past, present and future time, all that possible and potential too is Onkara.

The One is One All. Hence, says Swami Dayananda: The Lord Supreme is the first and prime subject of the Veda.

And yet, though the One is One and only One, It is diverse too. The diversity too has to be known. Through the diversity, man has to know and realize the One, and this has to be through karma and worship. So we have to:

1. Know the One and the diversity, all these we should know and realize. This is Jnana.
2. Act in order to know and practically realize in life through living. This is Karma.
3. Pray in order to cross our limitations by the grace of God, and practice Yoga for

Sakshatkara, direct experience in Samadhi, i.e. practical realization.

Vijnana thus is the main subject of the Veda. It is direct realization (Sakshatkara) of Jnana. Without Vijnana, Jnana is only information. Moreover, without direct realization of knowledge, we cannot make practical use of the knowledge. So we should know what is to be known:

1. God: the Supreme Brahma and His attributes,
2. Jiva: the individual soul, its attributes, its powers and limitations,
3. Nature (Prakrti): its modes and diversities of forms and structures.
4. Karma: We should know what we ought to do. We should know our karma and its consequences.
5. We should know who to pray to (to the One God Supreme), and know how to pray.

So, next to Jnana and Vijnana, Swami Dayananda discusses the second subject of Veda which is karma and karma kanda, the way karma has to be performed.

2. Karma (Karma Kanda)

Though Jnana Vijnana is the primary and comprehensive subject of the Veda, karma, to begin with, is of first importance: it is the practical realization, in action, of the mission of life which is self realization, self fulfillment, and Moksha, i.e., the ultimate freedom from the wonderland of the world through a thorough passing through the wonderland. You can cross the stream through the stream, except that, in rare cases of exceptional souls, born fortunately with a very positive balance of karma from their earlier performance in previous births, they can fly over the stream. In fact, without karma, you cannot even get knowledge.

The human mind is both introvert and extrovert. Therefore human action also is twofold, introvert and extrovert. The introvert action is connected with the mind, intelligence, and the spirit or the soul. The deeper it is, the higher it is in value and result. The extrovert action is connected with the mind and will and the outside world in which the will operates with the instruments of action, karmendriyas. The inner action is for spiritual fulfillment of the self, and the outer action is for worldly success in terms of material well being and self fulfillment.

Karma in Darshan philosophy is called Purushartha, the purpose and mission of life through the observance of Dharma in action. By Purushartha we achieve both, material well being in the world here, and freedom of the spirit from the birth-death cycle hereafter in the state of Moksha.

Karma for the achievement of Moksha is 'Parama Purushartha'. In life time, God realization is the highest Purushartha which is achieved through stuti (praise), prarthana (prayer) and meditation on the Supreme Lord Brahma (Upasana). This divine and holy part of karma is called Nishkama karma, because it is free of any worldly involvement, being purely a spiritual exercise.

The other part of karma is called Apara Purushartha since it is performed for worldly success in terms of material and social well being. Of course, this part of karma too is performed in observance of Dharma with a sense of duty with dedication to social good. But still it has the worldly strings attached to it. And yet it saves the doer from the snares of bondage as is said in Yajurveda 40, 2: "Let man wish and plan to live a hundred years full life only by doing action with a sense of duty, without any selfish motive, this way only, and by no other way, does the doer remain

free from the snares of consequence and self pollution.” This way man gets the best of this world, but it falls short of ‘Nihshreyas’, the supreme freedom of the spirit because somewhere deep in the ‘Sanskaras’, desire might be lurking in the crevices of the unconscious.

Karma then is Parama Purushartha and Aparā Purushartha. From this theoretical discussion of karma, we come to the practical part: performance, the actual doing.

Performance of karma must be motivated by the observance of Dharma. Prayer and meditation is for the attainment of Moksha with God realization through Yoga; and worldly karma with Karma-yoga is for the achievement of Artha and Kama, i.e., material and emotional fulfillment.

Through karma of the worldly type with a sense of duty, we swim through the flood. Through meditation, we reach the shore.

We cannot reach the shore without swimming, and swimming has no end without the shore. Veda prescribes a synthesis of the two phases of karma through a fourfold formula: The purpose and mission of life is Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, all in

pursuit of obedience and dedication to God’s command and will.

We come now to ‘karma kanda’, karma sacred as ritual, practical, extrovert, social expression of the spirit, voice of the soul translated into action. Karma thus performed is Yajna.

Karma

Next: Karma, as the concomitant, direct application, of knowledge (Jnana) in our affairs of life.

Karma, action, doing alongwith knowing, performance here in life and hereafter, is the subject of Veda. Karma in fact is the most natural expression of life. Even the new born baby proclaims its being by doing something most naturally and spontaneously: breathing and crying. Shall we say: the baby proclaims the first and opening sound of life and the cosmos, A of AUM? U and M follow from birth to the last closing breath, terminating in the silence of the fourth Matra of the Divine Name?

Karma is both internal and external, internal in the mind and external in the wide open world. The mind is connected with both, the internal world of

mind itself and the spirit and the external world of perceptible objects.

In fact, life and living itself is karma: Every individual's life (Ekarat Purusha) is something like a business organization of living, breathing, intelligent, self-organizing nature, an autonomous organism structured by Nature with the infinite intelligence of her Master: the master spirit seated in the heart core, the Super Master in the centre of the heart core of the spirit, the business office in the brain with Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), chitta (memory and the record room), Ahankara (identity), and the senses (perceptual and volitional), eager for the objects of their love, and a vast system of communication and interaction between the person and the vast world. Endowed with vision and will, gifted with intelligence and emotion, inspired with an assertive will to live, man goes on perceiving, thinking, analyzing, deciding, ordering, executing, evaluating, recording, storing and carrying the final burden of achievement over a long journey of joy and sorrow, love and hate, ambitions and resolutions, old and new alike, peace or no peace, every moment and every particle is on the move, all in the midst of the 'Samrat Purusha' (society), and the virat Purusha (the universe and

Mother Nature) until the Ekarat Purusha, the individual, reaches the interminable destination (Supreme Purusha) as far and as long as it may. Therefrom Jiva comes, thereto it goes. Life goes on, karma goes on, it goes on and on in a circle, which too goes on and on in a spiral, timeless, eternal, no beginning, no end.

The knowledge of this boundless scenario, the Veda gives. The master register and the technique of movement and advance through this scenario also, the Veda gives. That is the knowledge of the science of karma. So knowledge is simultaneous with karma, and karma as performance is incumbent on knowledge. The two have to be together. Both have to be realized together. Knowledge without karma is infructuous, because it is mere information, inert as a piece of writing on paper. And karma without knowledge is nothing more than mere behavior, just like the instinctive behavior of any other, non-human, form of life. One who has knowledge, but only at the level of mere information, without acting it out in practice, lives in the dark. If you know the road to the city with an excellent guide map, but you do not move, you stay where you are, you never reach the city. On the other hand, even if you have an excellent car, but you

do not know the city nor the road map to it, you may start the engine, move round and round at maximum speed, you will not reach the city. Such a person also lives in the dark. In order to reach your goal, you must know the goal, you must have the guide map with the indication of where you are, you must have the means and power to move, and you must move by the correct route, then only you will reach your goal for self fulfillment.

Karma as Purushartha:

Right karma performed with knowledge of the meaning and purpose of life here and hereafter for the attainment of the goal of life is Purushartha: It is earnest, continuous and relentless action in observance of Dharma, Divine Law of life. It is for the purpose of Artha, material and all round worldly well being. It is for Kama, emotional, aesthetic and social fulfillment of the self, and it is for Moksha, ultimate freedom, enlightenment and bliss of the soul in the presence of Divinity directly experienced.

In the light of this Vedic concept of Purushartha, karma is twofold: Para (Parama) karma, and apara karma. Parama karma is action for the realization of God with spiritual fulfillment. Apara

karma is for worldly fulfillment, material prosperity, social prestige, familial joy, honour and fame.

Parama karma is wholly Nishkama, that is, it is totally free from all worldly strings attached to it. It comprises prayer, self study (Svadhyaaya) and Yoga sadhana through the eightfold path from Yama and Niyama, social and personal moral and ethical discipline upto Samadhi. Nishkama karma can be pursued in harmony with the pursuit of one's worldly duties too. Maharaja Janaka, Maharaja Ram Chandra, Yogiraj Krishna were such personalities. Some people such as saints and sages, Vedic seers, Mahatma Buddha, Bhakta Dhruva, Sant Kabir, Guru Nanak Dev were such seekers of Divinity. They renounced all worldly pulls and pressures, sacrificed all worldly pleasures, and dedicated themselves to the realization of Divinity and the mystery of God's creation. They served not only God, they dedicated themselves to the service of humanity and all other forms of life.

The other kind of karma is Apara karma, dedication to ones worldly duties according to the will of God, Vedic prescription and the dictates of reason and conscience. This kind of karma has been called Sakama karma also, because it has certain worldly strings attached to it. Such strings can be personal

well being and professional advancement, familial progress and prosperity, social position and power. But this progress, power and position must be creative, productive, and positively constructive. The strings attached to this kind of action are love of life, dedication to nature and society, respect for the social structure and civil law, with faith in the human community, respect for the environment and submission to the will and law of God.

Yajna: Nishkama or Sakama:

Swami Dayananda's classification of karma into Nishkama and Sakama needs further explanation for the reader.

The discussion of Karma and karma-kanda follows in *Rgvedādi-Bhāshya Bhūmikā* after the theme of Jnana. To recapitulate: The themes of the Veda are:

1. *Jnana*; knowledge of Ishwara, Jiva and Prakrti, knowledge of right karma and the knowledge of upasana,
2. *Karma*: practical pursuit of knowledge in action,
3. *Upasana*: worship of the One Divine spirit of the universe, God Almighty, Saccidananda,

omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, with stuti, prarthana and Upasana.

4. *Vijnana*: direct experience, sakshatkara, of all the three above. Vijnana is the umbrella experience and accomplishment of the three, by the human, of the Divine.

Coming to karma then:

Karma is Purushartha, human effort to achieve the meaning and purpose of life. Karma is two fold, in relation to the purpose, Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha:

Nishkama karma: It is Parama Purushartha, the highest and absolute karma without any worldly strings attached. The purpose is God realization and achievement of Moksha, absolute freedom of the soul and bliss in the Divine presence; this is deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. *The means*: the worship of God through stuti, prarthana and upasana, obedience to God's will and divine commandments, observance of Dharma and practical pursuit of knowledge without any worldly desire and selfish interest. The end of Parama Purushartha is Moksha,

realization of the highest meaning and purpose of life. This is one.

Sakama karma: The other, Aparā Puruṣārtha, is Sakama karma, ‘Loka-vyavahara’, worldly action in the social context, the purpose is worldly well being, the result is realization of Artha and Kama, worldly prosperity and worldly self fulfillment, not Moksha, not deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, even though the worldly ends are realized with the observance of Dharma.

The means of the achievement of Sakama Karma are provision of food and clothing, transport, arts and crafts and science and technology for the fulfillment of one’s social obligations, but mostly for personal welfare. The worldly strings are not snapped, they remain.

Yajña: Yajna has a very special place in Vedic ethics of living as an important part of the observance of Dharma, but it does not apparently fit into the categories of Nishkama or Sakama karma. The one distinctive and discriminative mark of difference between the two Nishkarma and Sakama, is the presence or absence of worldly strings and personal interest and welfare of the doer. In Nishkama karma

there are no worldly strings attached because the very purpose of the karma is freedom and deliverance of the soul from involvement with the world of pleasure and pain. In Sakama karma, the personal strings remain, they are not snapped. Yajna does not apparently fit into either of these categories. Whether it is performed for some special purpose of the doer (svasukhaya), or for the welfare of the entire world of humanity and the environment (sarva-jagat-sukhaya) without the doer’s personal purpose, the worldly strings still remain, they are not snapped. Probably for this reason, Yajna does not figure in Swamiji life of Nishkama karma except for the word ‘Dharmanushthana’, observance of Dharma. Shall we say then that yajna as a performance is neither wholly Sakama nor exclusively Nishkama, and yet at the same time it is both Sakama and Nishkama: If it is performed for the doer’s personal welfare, the fragrance cannot be restricted to the four walls of the performers home, the environment will have the fragrance any way; and if it is performed without any personal purpose of the doer, i.e., as Nishkama karma, the performer too will have his share of the fragrance as a gift of nature. Yajna is Dharmic karma, giving us the benefits of both ‘Abhyudaya’ and ‘Nishkreyas’, worldly well being and the freedom of Moksha.

In the context of knowledge Swami Dayananda uses the terms ‘Para’ and ‘Apara’, i.e., knowledge spiritual, and knowledge natural and worldly. In the context of karma, he uses the word ‘Apara’ for ‘Sakama’ karma, and ‘Parama’ for Nishkama karma. He does not use the word ‘Para’, ‘Parama’ is the word used by him for the highest karma. Para knowledge is that by which God is realized. Apara knowledge is that by which knowledge of nature and the world is attained and facilities for worldly well being are structured and received. Similarly Parama (knowledge word being ‘Para’) karma is that by which the supreme Purusha is realized and Moksha is attained, and ‘Apara’ karma is that by which worldly facilities are created and structured and worldly well being is attained. Further, within ‘Apara karma’, Nishkama karma is that in which exclusive selfist purpose of the doer is not involved at all, because the karma is performed for general and universal welfare, and Sakama karma is that which is performed by the doer specially for personal purposes. It is understood, of course, that from the benefits of an act of general welfare such as Yajna, the doer is not ruled out of the generality of humanity, nor is the doer ruled out of the benefits of the act. It is God’s dispensation that when you work for all, you are one, but just one of all.

Veda-prescribed Yajna is for all and every one, no one is excluded from the benefit. Hence the mantra: “Om Agnaye svaha, idam Agnaye idam na mama. It is for Agni, once given it is for Agni, no more mine nor for me (exclusively).” Yajna is for every one and all. The philosophy is: One for all, all for one. You too are one of the all.

In Satyarth Prakasha, Swami Dayananda discusses the role played by pretenders and vitiators of tradition. They scare simple and innocent people by performances of false Yajnas and fearful predictions. Such performances are done for un-Yajnic purposes which must be ruled out by well meaning noble people.

For this very reason of ignorance and exploitation of the simple and innocent people around, Swami Dayananda was more deeply committed to social, cultural and Dharmic reform than interested in his personal salvation, though he was a highly self realized Yogi and a great scholar.

Yajna: a comprehensive act: ‘Yajna’ as a noble act of piety, virtue and service is the name word of a personal and social act. The word is derived from the root ‘Yaj’, which means ‘Deva puja, Sangati karana,

and Dana', service of divinities and reverence of nobilities, joining socially together for holy action, and giving something for charity in noble, creative and constructive programmes. So Yajna as an act and a process of action means service of natural forces of Divinity such as air, water and the environment, reverence of noble and enlightened people, and worship of God, gathering and joining together as a human community for creative work and mutual support, and offering oblations into the fire for cleansing and replenishment of the environment and the home. This activity has to be performed most selflessly, without any thing of personal, social and familial interest.

The whole act of Yajna has to be dedicated to God, to nature and to humanity, to win the grace of God, good wishes and blessings of the divinities and receive the blessings of seniors. It blesses both the doer and the beneficiaries. It is individual and familial as daily agnihotra, it is social as weekly satsanga, and it is national as 'Ashvamedha'. It is personal as 'putreshti' Yajna and sanskara Yajna, and yet it is impersonal because the beneficiaries are unlimited, countless and cosmic.

Yajña: a universal process: Beginning with every single particle, beginning with every single individual, male or female, upto the bounds of this boundless universe, Yajna is going on continuously, relentlessly and indefatigably. So too it has gone on since the very beginning of this creation.

The creation began with the Yajnic ignition of the Divine fire, Tapas, cosmic heat of the Big Bang. That was the implosion of Divine consciousness into the creative Sankalpa. Says Rgveda:

ऋतं च सत्यं चाभीद्धात्तपसोऽध्यजायत ।

ततो रात्र्यजायत ततः समुद्रो अर्णवः ॥ १ ॥

Rtam ca satyam cābhīddhāttapaso'dhyajāyata.

Tato rātryajāyata tataḥ samudro arṇavaḥ.

(Rg.10, 190, 1)

By the arduous will and samkalpa of Divinity, Prakrti manifested into existence in her simultaneous modes of Rtam and Satyam, the constant and the mutable, under the eternal divine Law. Thence arose the night and darkness of the incubation or germination phase of no positive name. Then arose the ocean of indeterminate particles of existence. That was the existential emergence of the space time continuum.

The Yajna of creative evolution started. Taittiriya Upanishad (2, 1) summarises the creative process upto the evolution of man:

From that Eternal Atman, this omnipresent spirit, the closest One, arose space and time; from space arose energy (Vayu), from vayu arose heat and light (Agni), from heat (Agni) arose water (Apah), from water arose the earth (Prthivi), from earth arose herbs trees and vegetation (Oshadhayah),, from herbs arose food (Annam), from food arose creative vitality and vital fertility, from creative vitality and fertility emerged the human being (Purusha).

Thus the creative Yajnic cycle started and it continues in the same Yajnic form. This is Vedic creative evolution.

Bhagawan Krishna with his divine vision summarizes this Yajnic cycle in the Gita (3, 14-15):

अन्नाद् भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः ।

यज्ञाद् भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ १४ ॥

Annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaādanna sambhavaḥ. Yajñād bhavati parjanyo yajñāḥ karmasamudbhavaḥ.

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।

तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५ ॥

Karma brahmodbhavaṁ viddhi brahmākṣara samudbhavam. Tasmāt sarvagatam brahma nityam yajñe pratiṣṭhitam.

All beings are evolved from food, the production of food is from rain, from Yajna rain comes into being, and Yajna is born of divine karma. Know that karma originates from Veda, and Veda is born of eternal Brahma. Therefore the all immanent Brahma, all comprehending, is ever abiding in Yajna.

Having completed this Yajnic cycle of creation from Self manifestation and natural evolution upto man simultaneously with Yajna, the Lord High Priest of cosmic Yajna blest humanity thus (Gita 3, 10):

“Go forward, advance and grow, and this Yajna shall be your kama-dhenu, the Holy cow, which will fulfill all the desires you cherish at heart”.

The Yajna continues. It begins with the human individual itself. The body itself is Yajna. The soul is the Yajamana. Shraddha, commitment to truth and rectitude, is the consort. The body is Samidha. The heart region is the vedi. The hair is holy grass on the vedi, The crown of the head is Veda. The heart is the flag post. Karma is the ghrta. Passion is the food of

fire. Tapa is fire, self control, 'dama', is the pacifier. Speech is the hota, offerer. Prana is udgata, singer. Eye is the adhvaryu, supervisor. Mind is brahma, presiding authority. Ear is the fire manager. The heart content is Diksha, initiation. Food is samagri, materials for the fire oblations. Water is soma. This metaphor is often repeated in the Gita and the Upanishads. The five senses, mind and intellect, also the seven pranas are the sapta hota, seven priests. So are the seven senses.

The Yajna goes on in nature and society. The socio-economic system is a Yajna of consumption and production wherein the ideal is maximum production with minimum consumption, thereby providing a surplus budget for the human nation. A deficit budget is no yajna, it is overdraft which would burden the children of the nation for the sins of the parents.

In nature too the Yajna continues as the systemic process of life. Prajapati created 'prana' and 'rayi' as two forces which manage the evolution and continuance of life and society. Prana is energy, while rayi is food. Prana consumes food and produces energy. This produced energy, then, becomes food for higher energy which, with the consumption of energy

food, will produce higher energy. This cycle of Yajna continues.

Ultimately, the Lord creator and sustainer himself becomes the Yajamana of cosmic Yajna:

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाऽहमहमौषधम् ।

मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ १६ ॥

*Aham kraturaham yajñah svadhā'hamahamau-
śadham. Mantra'hamaham-evājyam-ahamagnir-
aham hutam. Gita 9.16*

I am the ritual as well as the performer, I am the ancestral oblation. I am the tonic herb, I am the sacred hymn. I am the melted ghrta, I am the fire, I am the offering myself. The yajna is cosmic, whole, nature, man and God all united in action.

Burnt, Destroyed or Resurrected:

Q. The innocent seeker, a novice in the act of living, asks a question: You offer ghrta and fragrant materials into the fire. They are burnt and destroyed for nothing. Is it not better and more advisable that instead of burning and destroying them, you give them to the poor and the needy so that they may eat and thank you?

A. Giving things to the poor and the needy is a noble act of charity, but not at the cost of Yajna. Things offered into the Yajna fire do get burnt but they are not destroyed, only their form is changed. What you call 'destruction' is not annihilation, it is change of form from a gross form to a new and refined form. The refined form is so subtle that you cannot see it with the naked eye. So when you offer holy materials into the fire, they are burnt and changed into some powerful fine form which actively supports the natural process of cleansing and replenishment of the atmosphere.

Nothing that exists is destroyed. Whatever is continues to remain in existence, whatever is not in existence never comes into existence out of nothing, only the forms of things in existence change. Forms of things come into existence and go out of existence, things remain in substance. Take for example a piece of clay, crush it into very very fine powder and throw it up into the wind, it goes out of sight. But does it go out of existence? No, its particles continue to float in the air and fly with the wind. The same way the ghrta and other holy fragrant materials remain after having been burnt in the Yajna. The fire reduces them to particles as fine as paramanus. A paramanu is the

smallest particle of matter which is not divisible any further, except that it can be conceptually analysed for scientific or philosophical study, just like tanmatras or subtle elements. So the particles of dust can be microscopically seen and conceptually recognized as the earth element.

The fragrant materials which are offered into the fire grow very powerful after they are refined into particles. They purify the air and vapours of water in the atmosphere. They fight out bad odour and make the air fragrant. Further, they enhance the rain and thus do good to all living beings.

Q. If yajna makes the air fragrant, we can achieve the same result by using fresheners and cleansers. Why be so elaborate as Yajna havan?

A. No. Air fresheners cannot achieve that result because air fresheners cannot dispel the bad air. They mix with the same air and give you a feeling of freshness although the odours remain where they are. The bacteria too continue to remain. The particles of materials refined and energized by the yajna fire dispel the bad air, destroy the bacteria, and thus cause a new process of cleansing. While the atmosphere around the Yajna fire is cleansed, perfumed and

reinforced, fresh air rushes in with new vitality and energises the whole atmosphere. And as the fragrant air rises into the sky, it cleanses the water vapours too and the clouds, thus causing precipitation and the rain process. Thus Yajna is of great benefit to all living beings on the earth. It is therefore the duty and also the privilege of human beings to perform Yajna and participate and cooperate with nature to make life better, comfortable and enjoyable. Moreover, when you perform Yajna and make the atmosphere fragrant, you not only enjoy the fragrant life yourself with your family and friends, you also send out the fragrant message far and wide outside to many others that life is really sweet and fragrant and that there are people around who love to make life and people happy and fragrantly good. Yajna therefore is a duty and our obligation. It is indeed a special responsibility of mankind to cleanse the air and water, in fact the whole environment.

Q. Why is it the special responsibility of man to cleanse air, water and the atmosphere? Other creatures also breathe and foul the air and water?

A. That's interesting. Yes, animals breathe, do other things too which people do. They do foul the air and water. But animals don't drive cars. They don't cook,

nor do they run factories which belch out clouds of smoke. They release no sewage into rivers, nor do they dump tons of garbage. They live in nature according to nature so that nature can look after them and look after itself without global warming. But men do many things to damage nature. Therefore it is an indispensable duty of humans to repair the damage we do to nature for our natural and unnatural comfort. This is one thing. We must stop global warming, and we must reduce our craze for comfort and luxury so that nature may have some relief.

Secondly, the real human privilege is God's gift of thought, intelligence and imaginative vision to humanity. It is our power and privilege to think and to envision things which other living beings can't. Power and privilege brings equal responsibility and obligations. Man is man, 'manava', because man can think. Therefore it is our duty and privilege to think and do things on our own, those things which are over and above and beyond those which nature dictates we must do. Choice is better and higher than force. If we don't do things by choice, nature will some day force us to do the same or punish us. In any case we must not leave a negative legacy for our children and further generations to pay the debts we owe of our

own making. Therefore think, simplify and make amends. Repair. Do Yajna to refresh and recreate.

Q. That is overwhelming,. All right, accepted. Let us do Yajna. But why chant Veda mantras? We don't understand them. Why not use other words, common ones?

A. Vedas are the first and original Scriptures of knowledge for mankind without exception and discrimination. God himself speaks through the Veda (Yajurveda, 26, 2).

यथमां वाच कल्याणीमावदानि जनेभ्यः । ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्याश्शुश्रू-
द्राय चार्य्याय च स्वाय चारणाय च । पियो देवानां दक्षिणायै
दातुरिहभूयासमयं म कामः समृध्यतामुप मादो नमतु॥२॥

*Yathemām vācam kalyāṇīmāvadāni janebhyah.
Brahmarājānyābhyāṁ śūdrāya cāryāya ca svāya
cāraṇāya ca. Priyo devānām dakṣiṇāyai
dāturiha bhūyāsamayam me kāmah samrdhya-
tāmupa mādo namatu. (Yaj, 26, 2)*

Just as this blessed word of the Veda I speak to you for all the people without exception or discrimination, for Brahmana, Kshatriya, Shudra, Vaishya, master and servant, for one's own and others, so do you too. Prayer: May I be dear favourite

of the divinities and the generous people for the gift of the sacred speech.

May this noble aim of mine be fulfilled here in this life. May the other gift of Moksha too follow and come my way beyond this life.

In the light of this divine commandment and this prayer we should not imagine that any other words can be a substitute for the Vedic words. Yajna is a holy act with more than a social purpose. It is for worship of the Supreme Lord of the universe, service and reverence of the divinities of nature and nobilities of humanity and gifts of charity with gratitude. Veda mantras are so comprehensive in their meaning that the same one mantra can be interpreted for worship of God, service and reverence for the divinities of nature and nobilities of humanity, and for gifts of gratitude to nature with the oblations, in addition to solicitations for the gifts of knowledge or any other thing we value and desire.

For an illustration: Take the opening mantra of Rgveda, “*Agnim īde.....*” Take only these two words. The word Agni can be interpreted as God, the giver of light, knowledge, energy, etc. It can be interpreted as the sun or fire in relation to nature. It can be

interpreted as the ruler, the leader, the teacher in relation to the social and organizational context. The meaning can be:

I worship God, giver of the light of knowledge.

I do homage of thanks and value light and energy, gifts of Mother Nature.

I do homage of obedience and gratitude to the ruler for the gift of peace and social order.

I do reverence to the Yajna fire and light it for inspiration to live and advance in society.

How can any other words be possibly a substitute even for these two words of the mantra?

Therefore with gratitude to God, with grateful homage to Nature, with reverence to saints, scholars and leaders of the human world, we should do yajna with correct and relevant chanting of Veda mantras only. The mantras are treasures of the wealth of comprehensive yet open ended possibilities of meaning and secrets of life. In fact, the more we know, the more we know the Veda, and the more we know the Veda, the more we know of life and the world. The Vedas are, in reality, a speech correspondence of the expansive universe. Just as

there can be no substitute of the universe in human language, there can be no substitute of the Veda in human language.

Q. Incidentally, if there can be no substitute of Veda mantras in human language, what is the sense and value of a translation in human language, be it English or Hindi or any other?

A. The question is very relevant. The ideal is that we study Veda and realize the meaning with our imagination and spiritual vision in the original. But situated as we are with our limitations and distance of language and awareness from the original voice of the Veda and the clairvoyant awareness of the Rshis, we have got to accept and recognize the value of compromise and translation in our language. At the same time we have to admit that any translation, whatever it be, the best imaginable, will fall short of the original. Just as with our human eyes we cannot see the light of Divinity, similarly with our human mind and intelligence we cannot get to the articulation of omniscience. And yet we cannot deny the value of honest effort, however limited or conditioned it may be. We must worship, pray and meditate and ask of Agni: O Lord of light, grant us the Grace, give us the celestial eye you gave to Arjuna. At least grant us the

vision your disciple gave to Sanjaya who reported the dialogue of the human and the Divine to the blind. Translation is no substitute, still it is valuable, although each and every translation, even the best, shall be, shall have to be, at the most, the last but one.

It may be worth while here to make an observation: If we accept a translation as a substitute for the Veda, howsoever 'authentic' it might be, the chances are that we shall never go back to the Veda. Most of those who have accepted a scriptural substitute, even though it is Smṛti, a Reminder, they have seldom gone back, they have generally drifted and lost touch with the Original. Therefore we should have the original too with the translation, and never use the translation wherever the original should be used. We must stick to the root because, without the root, the leaves and branches would wither away for want of nourishment. Howsoever beautiful a bouquet might be, it withers away and dries, thrown away ultimately.

Sprinklers are needed for the living plant too. Translations of the Veda and guides such as Yaska and grammarians such as Panini and Patanjali are all sprinklers, they keep the original alive, breathing and inspiring for us.

Truly says Manu: The four Varnas, the three lokas, regions of light, middling sky and the earth, and the three phases of time, past, present and the future, are all sustained and this knowledge as existent is maintained, by the Vedas. (12, 97)

Q. Should we perform Yajna strictly in accordance with ritualistic prescriptions regarding provision of pots and tools, and appointment of priests and the disposition of the seating order on the Vedi?

A. These practical details have to be taken care of according to the occasion and the situation. The preparation and structure of the vedi should be accomplished according to the science of Yajna. The dimensions and the formal structure of the vedi is important for the reason that the fumes and fragrance of Yajna soon and effectively reaches where it should reach for the specific purpose. Even the shape of the bricks is important in relation to the purpose. The pots and tools and instruments are important for the purity and freshness of the Yajna material and neatness of the vedi. You need grassy seats of kusha for the sanctity of the vedi and to keep insects away, because any violation desecrates the vedi and the holiness of the performance. You need a 'Yajnasala' in order to control the wind gusts and protect the vedi against

disturbance by birds. The appointment of priests and seat disposition is important for proper organization of the Yajna and the correct performance of the ritual. Moreover all Yajna materials such as ghrta, samagri, prasada etc. should be very carefully sifted, cleaned and prepared meticulously, because the deeper the faith and commitment, the more satisfying the accomplishment of Yajna as an expression of the spirit and purpose of the ritual. But all these details have to be looked after according to the purpose of the Yajna and conditions of the occasion and the situation. But one should not be superstitious and should not feel guilty or scared, feeling that any deviation from the rigid form would mean a sin and result in such and such consequence, even punishment. Love and faith, rather than fear, should be the spirit of Yajna. This does not also mean that one can be careless, casual and clumsy in the performance. One should never look at ritual as something casual, because ritual is a matter of faith (Shraddha), it is always an expression of the soul.

Devata

In Veda, specially in Yajna, the word ‘Devata’ is often used. Take for example the following mantra:

अग्निदेवता वातो देवता सूर्यो देवता चन्द्रमा देवता वसवो
देवता रुद्रा देवताऽऽदित्या देवता मरुतो देवता विश्वेदेवा
देवता बृहस्पतिदेवतेन्द्रो देवता वरुणो देवता॥२०॥

*Agnirdevatā vāto devatā sūryo devatā candramā
devatā vasavo devatā rudrā devatā”dityā devatā
maruto devatā viśve devā devatā bṛhaspatir-
devatendro devatā varuṇo devatā.* (Yaj 14, 20)

In this mantra the word devata has been repeated twelve times, each time repeated with another word, such as Agni, Vata, Surya, Candrama, etc.

What does the word ‘devata’ mean? What does it stand for?

The word stands for ‘Agni, Vata, Surya, Candrama, Vasus, Rudras, Adityas, Maruts, Visvedevas, Brhaspati, Indra, Varuna.

The word Agni is a combination of four sounds: a,g,n,i. This raises another question: Is Agni a mere word, an integration of sounds, or does it stand for something other than the word itself! What does it mean?

We have now three questions: What does the word devata mean? What does the word Agni mean? And what do we mean by meaning.

To find an answer to the devata and Agni question, we have to find an answer to the third question first. We have to refer to Patanjali's Yoga sutras, 3, 17:

*Śabdārtha pratyayānām itaretaradhyāsāt
sañkaraḥ....*

In communication through the medium of language, there is an integration of three: 'Shabda (word), artha (the thing or object for which the word or name is used), and pratyaya (the meaning, i.e., the association of the name word and the object, of which the word is the name'. Take, for example, the word 'pen'. The three letters p, e, n, make up the word 'pen'. This word is the name of an object which is used for writing).

Now you come to an interesting situation: Suppose a Hindi or Urdu speaking person asks a person knowing English and both these languages: What is the meaning of the word 'pen'? The person would reply: 'Kalam'. The questioner would understand. But suppose further that the questioner

does not know Hindi or Urdu either. He would again question: What is 'Kalam'? In this conversation, at the end you will have to pick up a writing instrument, show it to the questioner and say: This writing object is 'pen'. This is 'Kalam'.

Next time if you and the questioner of the above conversation were working together, and you needed a writing instrument, you would request the person: Please give me a pen. The person would pick up a pen from his drawer and give it to you. He would not repeat his original question. Why?

For answer to this question 'Why?' let us now remember three things"

1. The word for, or the name of (a thing, person, substance, etc.),
2. The thing or object or person for which the word stands,
3. And the association, togetherness, of the word/name and the thing or object or person.

In this analysis, in the language of Patanjali:

1. The word is 'Shabda',
2. The object is the 'artha',

3. The association, togetherness of the word and the object, is 'pratyaya', an image which exists in the mind of the speakers of a common language. In ordinary language we call it meaning.

In common conversation, though, specially between speakers of two common languages, the 'pratyaya' is understood as 'meaning'. Hence the conversation such as:

What is the meaning of 'pen'?

'Kalam', or 'a writing instrument.'

Between two bilingual speakers it is communication, i.e., meaningful dialogue. Between two speakers without the common language, it is mere play of words. Between the speakers of common languages it is real, meaningful dialogue. The association between the word and the object, and the association between the word (pen) and the word (Kalam) is a common state of the mind and memory. This association is 'samkara'.

A childish or child-like conversation can be a piece of wisdom for the grown ups too.

A child has not yet seen a pen. He sees a pen on the table of his big brother, or he sees a picture in his book. He points to the object or the picture of it: Says:

Mom, what is this?

It is a pen.

The child fixes up the association of the name and the object. The 'shabda' and the 'artha' are now together. Language learning is growing. This is how language is understood to be a sound correspondent of reality, and of the awareness of the two in memory. The triangle of 'shabda, artha and pratyaya is integrated in 'Samkara'

Now back to "Agnir devata..."

In Yajna, what does the word 'devata' stand for?

The word 'devata' stands for those objects which are stated in the Vedas. For example, in the mantra quoted, the word 'devata' stands for agni, vata, surya, candrama, vasus, rudra, adityas, maruts, visvedevas, brhaspati, indra, varuna, all those objects, powers and presences

And in Yajna, the word 'devata' stands for Veda mantras too. Mantras too stand for the word 'devata'.

‘Chhandas’ too, Gayatri and others, stand for the word ‘devata’, since the mantras are composed in these chandas and they reveal the technique of yajna karma.

Mantras, Chhandas, in ‘karma-kanda’, Yajna and other rituals, stand for ‘devata’, because the mantras composed in chandas reveal and explain the way in which the ritual should be performed. Also, the mantra in which the word ‘agni’ occurs, and the word ‘agni’ stands for agni (i.e., fire, light, leader, teacher, God, etc.). ‘*Agnimīle...*’ is the mantra of which agni is the devata, i.e. the subject or the theme of the mantra. So the ‘devata’ or the theme, the subject of the mantra quoted above is agni, vata, surya, candra, and others as has been said above. Whatever the name word stands for, that same thing, power, presence or object, or something else, whatever it is, that is the devata.

There are suktas, hymns, in the Veda in which in all the mantras, a particular subject, theme, object or power is celebrated. That subject, theme, object or power is the devata of that sukta. For example, all the mantras of the opening sukta of Rgveda celebrate agni. So that is called ‘agni sukta’, Agni being the devata.

To keep this discussion clear for understanding, let us understand what the word ‘devata’ as a word means in Vedic language.

The word devata is derived from the root ‘div’ which means ‘to give, to shine, to illuminate, to enlighten’. The Nirukta (7,15) says that Devas (the same as Devatas) are called Devas because they give, they shine and radiate, they illuminate, and they enlighten, instruct and educate.

The word ‘mantra’ is derived from the root ‘man’ which means ‘to think, to praise and appreciate, approve, meditate, to reflect upon, to examine and evaluate’. A mantra, therefore, is a sacred formula which makes us think, examine and appreciate, meditate upon and feel enlightened with knowledge.

The word ‘Chhanda’ is derived from the root ‘chad’ which means ‘to cover, to cover over, to protect, to spread the cover’. A Chhanda is a metrical composition which, in sacred literature, is a mantra. As a mantra, it means, in addition, ‘to praise, to energise, to inspire with joy, to beautify, beautify with grace and splendour. Veda mantras are Chandas because they inspire, energize and elevate us with the

knowledge of both, grace and goodness, and sanctify us with divine beatitude.

In the light of this meaning of the word 'Devata', let us refer to Rgveda, 1, 1.1:

अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् ।

होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥ १ ॥

Agnimīle purohitam yajñasya devamṛtvijam.

Hotāraṁ ratnadhātamam.

I worship agni, high priest of the Yajna of the universe, the Deity of the Yajna, the performer of the Yajna, the first cause that originally initiates and ultimately winds up the Yajna, the supreme treasure home where-from the jewels of life originate and wherein they terminate.

Here the mantra itself is Devata because it celebrates Agni and enlightens the reader. The name word (shabda) 'Agni' is Devata because this word signifies the artha, the power and presence named 'agni', and Agni, the power and presence, is the Devata because it is the power that conducts the cosmic Yajna of creative evolution and the terminative devolution of existence. This interpretation of 'Deveta' in the tradition of Maharshi Yaska and Swami Dayananda is justified by Swami

Dayananda's interpretation of Yaska: Dr. Permananda translates Swami Dayananda's interpretation of Nirukta (7.1) as under:

When the seer (Rshi, divine visionary and poet), desirous of a particular object praises a Devata (i.e., a Mantra, knowing it as) possessing that object, that Mantra is said to have that (particular) Devta.

A traditional interpretation of the same observation of Yaska by Durgacharya is translated as this:

When a seer desirous of (achieving) a particular object glorifies a particular Devata (a deity) knowing him as possessor of that (desired) substance (arthapatiti) (with a Mantra) that stanza (verse, hymn Mantra) is said to have that particular Devata).

In simpler words, the Divine Poet has a purpose when he as Divine Creator creates the world of existence. He communicates His omniscient awareness of the world of existence for the knowledge of mankind. For the purpose of the communication, He creates the cosmic Poem, the Veda. He has to describe, reveal and compose the poem in words and verses and hymns. So for every Verse (Mantra) and for every poem (sukta) He has a certain chanda (Metre such as

Gayatri and others). So He has a name word for every object, substance, process, power and presence, and He has words for the attributes of those objects, substances, processes, powers and presences. The words, their contents and the descriptive forms are Devatas.

To further simplify the matter:

1. There is the Creator and Poet, the omnipotent Maker, Parama Brahma,
2. There is the created objective world: Jagad-Brahma,
3. There is the creator-Poet's awareness, Omniscience, the words, names, evolving as the world is evolving.
4. As the design of the created world is accomplished by the omnipotent creator, so is the cosmic poem too completed by the omniscient Poet in words, verses, and poems. That creation in words is Shabda Brahma, the Veda in all its four volumes.
5. The whole Veda has a subject to celebrate: the world of existence, the cosmic Yajna in time and space. So the Devata of the whole Veda is Jagad Brahma and Parama Brahma, Yajna and Parameshwara.

6. The Devata of every poem (Sukta) is the power and presence which is a participant in the total process of the world of existence, for example, Akasha (Ether/space), Vayu (wind, Energy), Agni (Heat and light), Apah (Water and other liquids), Prithivi (Earth and other solids): all this at the physical level.
7. Then there is Mana (mind), Buddhi (intelligence and intellect), Citta (memory and sanskara) and Ahankara (the sense of identity, feelings, emotions, passions, etc.): This at the psychic level.
8. Then there is the Jivatma and all the living forms wherein the jiva abides in its karmic existence: This at the spiritual level of 'Ekarat purusha'.
9. Then there is the total humanity and the forms it takes in organization: this at the social level of 'Samrat purusha'.
10. Then the entire form of this universe of boundless dimension: This at the total Virat level, the 'Virat Purusha'.
11. Ultimately, the Spiritual, Creative, Dynamic Personality, the Lord Supreme, Parama Brahma, Param Purusha.

In Short: Parama Brahma, Jagad Brahma and Shabda Brahma, is the Devata of Veda, and every sub-system of jagad-brahma, every attribute of Parama Brahma and every verse of Shabda Brahma is the Devata of Veda at the relevant and relative level in correspondences: The word with the Word and the word with reality in existence.

To repeat: Every mantra is a Devata for us because it celebrates something of this divine existence. Every name word of the thing in existence is Devata of the mantra because it signifies a divine existence. Every fact or process signified by their name word is Devata of the mantra or Sukta because it celebrates existence and glorifies the creator.

Each one of these is Devata because each one enlightens us and saves us from ignorance and negativities.

There are, formally and thematically three kinds of mantras: Pratyakshakrta, Parokshakrta, and Adhyatmika.

Pratyaksakrta are those whose meaning is obvious and can be directly realized. Parokshakrta are those whose meaning is not obvious, it is secret or mysterious or far from direct realization, it requires

meditation to realise their meaning by retrieving it from the depth of the mystery of existence. And Adhyatmikas are those which deal with the science, technique and philosophical and meditative practice of realizing their meaning by rising to the frequency of the cosmic mind.

Yaska gives a structural distinction for classification of the mantras into these three classes:

Pratyakshakrta mantras are those in which the thematic subject is addressed in the second person. For example, according to this classification ‘Vasoh, pavitramasi shatadharam...’ (Yajurveda 1, 3) would be pratyakshakrta.

Parokshakrta mantras are those in which the thematic subject and anything else related is described in the third person, using all names in all cases and verbs in the third person (prathama purusha). For example:

यं रक्षन्ति प्रचेतसो वरुणो मित्रो अर्यमा ।

नू चित्स दभ्यते जनः ॥ १ ॥

*Yam rakṣanti pracetaso varuṇo mitro aryamā.
Nū citsa dabhyate janah. (Rg. 1, 41, 1)*

No man can injure, intimidate or terrorize the person whom the three, ever wise awake, Varuna, Mitra and Aryama protect and promote.

Adhyatmika mantras are those in which the first person speaks using the Veda in the first person (uttama purusha) and the theme is spiritual and meditative. For example:

अहमिन्द्रो न परा जिग्य इद्धनं न मृत्यवेऽव तस्थे कदा चन ।

सोममिन्मा सुन्वन्तो याचता वसु न मे पूरवः सुख्ये रिषाथन ॥ ५ ॥

*Ahamindro na parā jigya iddhanam na mrtya-
ve'va tasthe kadā cana. Somaminmā sunvanto
yācatā vasu na me pūravaḥ sakhye riṣāthana.*
(Rg. 10, 48, 5)

I am Indra, the powerful, never defeated, never subdued. None can deprive me of my Identity. I never submit even to death. O makers of soma, ask me for the wealth and peace of life. Men who abide in friendship with me never come to harm.

How to determine the Devata of a mantra:

In the matter of Yajna, from daily agnihotra upto the highest, i.e., 'Ashvamedha', for the prosperity and peaceful glory of the nation, the

mantras which are chanted in the Yajna, those very mantras are the Devatas: because through those mantras we learn the science of Yajna, and with those we perform the Yajna, for the accomplishment of our life's mission: Dharma, Artha and Kama on earth, extending to Moksha, the final achievement.

Where in a mantra, the name of the Devata is given in the mantra we should know that the mantra identifies and reveals the qualities of that Devata. Therefore the Devata of this name and those qualities and attributes is the deity of that mantra. At that very level, the mantra itself is the Devata for us because all such mantras reveal the science and technique of Yajna. Therefore by virtue of that instruction and revelation the mantra too is its own deity. Most of the mantras chanted in Yajna are clearly revelatory. Therefore the mantra itself is the devata, and the deity named and celebrated therein is the devata. Such is the case in mantras like 'Agnimīle....' in Rgveda 1, 1, 1 and others like that.

Secondly, there are mantras in which the name of the deity is not mentioned but the qualities and attributes are mentioned which help us to identify the particular deity as a presence and power. In others, even that is not clearly visible. Those mantras, in the

language of Nirukta, are parokshakrita, where the devata is not directly available.

Take for example the mantra for a full healthy and efficient life of a hundred years and more: “Taccakshur devahitam purastat-chukram uccarat....”

(Yajurveda 36, 24). It is chanted in Brahma Yajna. There is no deity mentioned by name except that you accept cakshuh as the deity. But that does not satisfy the mind for complete acceptance, unless you interpret it as the Sun. Swami Dayananda accepts this view but takes it to the logical conclusion with reference to prayer and determines the deity as “Surya or Parameshvara” because in Brahma Yajna, the deity is Parameshvara only.

Take another mantra from ‘Svasti-vacanam’ part of Deva-Yajna: “*Svasti panthāmanu carema sūryācandrama-sāviva. Punardadatāghnatā jānatā sam game-mahi.*” (Rg. 5, 51, 15).

The deity could be understood as sun and moon. But they are natural powers, not objects of worship, though they are divine powers of immense Yajnic gifts, giving us light and soothing soma for the eye and the herbs. So on the natural plane they are deities as members of the Vishvedeva family of the

cosmos or as agents of Lord Almighty. Moreover they would not have any light of their own unless the Lord Almighty vest the sun with light and the sun passes it on to the moon. So they are deity by virtue of shining, illuminating and giving, pointing to Lord Almighty as self-refulgent God for worship.

Take another mantra (Yajurveda, 36, 23): *Sumitriyā na’āpa’ośadhayaḥ santu durmitriyāstasmāi santu. Yo’smān dveṣṭi yaṁ ca vyaṁ dviṣmaḥ.*

‘May the fluent waters of health and herbs be good and friendly to us, and may they be unfriendly and enemies to those negativities of ill-health which injure us and our immunity and which we hate to suffer.’

You can work out the deity to be ‘Apah’ and ‘Oshadhis’, or good health, or take this mantra as a prayer to God with reference to our place in relation to nature. Swami Dayananda works it out to be Soma, the crown of herbs, and the God Almighty of the same name.

At any rate, in the context of Yajna, the Cosmic Yajna of creative evolution, the law of sustenance and the ultimate dissolution of the one cyclic phase of the

universe, God Almighty is the supreme Deity. So in mantras relating to Yajna, the mantras themselves are the deity for giving us and explaining the technique of Yajna for our self-illumination and enlightenment.

Where the deity is directly defined and characterized with its divine attributes, there the deity is mantra-provided.

Where the deity is not directly revealed in the mantra, the deity has to be explored, thought out and meditated upon for a spiritual discovery.

Where all this neither is, nor is it possible to determine, there Yajna itself is the deity.

In mantras which are not chanted in ritual 'karma kanda', there the Lord Supreme is the deity. In Yajna too the same Lord with the attributive name of 'Prajapati' is the deity.

In the general context of life, outside the field of Yajnic ritual, in personal, familial, social, professional, national and international living as a citizen of the world at the dharmic human level, we are indebted to many 'daivi' (divine) powers and presences in the natural and human world. They are all 'devas': In the first place each one of us has to be a

good and positive human individual. For that the Vedic injunction is "*manurbhava janayā daivyaṁ janam*": (Rgveda, 10, 53, 6). Of this the deity is Agni, giver of enlightenment through education. Thus the leader is the 'deity' in the field of education. In the matter of life and birth as a human being, God Almighty is the 'Janita', and mother and father are the deities at the biological level. The sun and moon, the space and time, and, heat and light, water, rivers and rain, oceans and mountains, mother earth, Sarasvati, mother nature, all these at the natural level; and other human beings from the ruler on top to the last person in the queue; all these are our friends, brethren, sustainers, helpers, assistants, in short, our life givers one way or another. They are deities too. All those people that do the cleansing and refining, refreshing and recuperative activity for nature in order to counter the consumption, pollution and damage done to nature and our immediate environment, all those are divine too. We must be grateful to them. In short the entire life and existence from the particle to the universe and from the individual to humanity across the globe and beyond is a mighty Yajna under the presiding Power of Parameshvara, with Mother Nature as Shakti, and ourselves as participants, every one receiving as well as giving in this real, breathing, intelligent, self-

organizing, organismic, Sovereign system. All these are sacred.

In this Yajanic system we must participate according to the philosophy and ethics of Yajurveda (40, 1) or Ishopanishad (1), and the theory of karma, again Yajurveda (40, 2) or Ishopanishad (2), worshipping, respecting, valuing gratefully what others are doing for us and doing what we can do for one and all.

To sum up before we move on:

1. Every Veda mantra is a devata because it is a revelation of something divine in existence.
2. Every name word of divine, human, pranic and physical, biological and material entities of positive and non negative entities is a devata.
3. Every existential correspondent of the name-word, with its qualities and its functions is a devata.
4. The Poet creator of the Veda and the world of existence, Mother Prakrti, and Jiva, each one is devata.
5. Everything and every person, generous, refulgent and illuminant is devata.

Which Devata to worship

kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema? Which deva of all shall we worship with stuti, prarthana and upasana? One, all, or some selected ones? The question is important because quite often the followers of Vedic tradition are described as polytheists, atheists, heinotheists, animists and even hedonists and idol worshippers. There are many who believe that God is ‘Sakara’, has a form, and His forms are many.

Q: Many Indians and Europeans say that the Vedas prescribe worship of many natural and inanimate objects such as earth and fire. Take the first mantra of Rgveda: “Agnimide...” I worship the fire God....

A: First understand what is meant by what you call ‘God’. In the Veda as in the context of Yajna, the word, the right word, is ‘deva’ which is the same as ‘devata’. First know what is deva/devata. As has already been described.

*Deva dānādvā dipanādvā dyotanādvā,
dyusthāna bhavatīti vā.* (Nirukta, 7, 15)

Deva is deva by giving generally, or by shining, or by illuminating, or by abiding in and radiating from

the regions of light like the sun. But it does not mean that all that shines, all that illuminates, all that gives, even a shining star, is God. It is a deva/devata of course, but the object of worship is God only. The other devatas can be objects of awareness, gratitude, appreciation and praise, yes, objects of stuti (appreciative description) also, but not of worship. Feel not disturbed, not offended. Worship is stuti, but stuti is not worship always. Stuti is worship only in the case of God. And that God is the God Supreme, only That, and That is One and only One without, a second.

Take the mantra earlier mentioned: “*Agnimide...*” If this mantra is chanted in Yajna, then, as Swami Dayananda explains in his commentary on this mantra, Yajna means:

1. Yajna from agnihotra to Ashvamedha,
2. Yajna of cosmic creation from Prakrti, life, upto God and the boundless bounds of the universe, the laws of the universe, Ritam, including the architectonics of the creative structure, of which the Yajamana is Lord Vishvakarma, the creator God, the material is prakrti, and the beneficiary is the world of humanity and other livings beings.

3. Yajna of the social and organizational world, satsanga, communication, communion with God and the creative cooperation between human beings and the other objects in existence.

In this threefold Yajna, there are countless powers, presences and objects which give, shine, radiate and illuminate. They are all devatas, the highest is only One, the God Supreme who is the object of worship. Worship of the one is supreme stuti, also to be followed by prarthana (prayer) and upasana (communion in meditation).

In the Yajna of human creativity when you chant “*Agnimide...*” the word Agni means God in the spiritual context, the ruler or teacher in the social context, and light, fire or any other form of energy which gives the warmth of life and light for guidance in the general context of living.

So in the spiritual context the meaning would be: ‘I worship Agni, Lord Giver of the light of life and wisdom.’

In the social context, the meaning would be: ‘I offer the homage of reverence and service to the

teacher, the father, mother and all other seniors and benefactors.’

In the context of our place in nature and our interaction with natural forces, the meaning would be: ‘I value the gifts of fire, light and the sun and try my best to serve and replenish nature and the environment with Yajna with the spirit of gratitude. This way I try to study the fire and light energy and take the maximum advantage from fire for humanity.’

Stuti, then, in the sense other than worship means to know the qualities of things, to advance knowledge, to celebrate the things for the relevant qualities and take the best advantage from them.

Taken this way, all our organs and senses, and our mind and intellect, are all devatas because they provide us the means of perception, thought and will for action. They are objects of value and we should develop them to the maximum efficiency, and thank God with worship, prayer and meditation for the gifts of all these generous things.

Still, whether we appreciate, or value, or admire, or praise and celebrate things of nature or

personalities, the ultimate object of worship remains the Lord Supreme because That is the first and ultimate giver.

Other than the Lord Supreme, all devatas of natural or human character are benefactors in our practical every day life. They give us physical, mental and intellectual nourishment and point the way to the Lord Divine. Then with their virtues, qualities and potentials they are divine but they are not God. God alone is to be worshipped.

In fact all other devas do homage to the Lord Supreme, reflecting His attributes and powers and participating in His cosmic Yajna with their service in union with His Natural law of Rtam:

ये त्रिंशति त्रयस्पुरो देवासो बृहिरासदन् ।

विदन्नहं द्वितासनन् ॥ १ ॥

Ye trimśati trayasparo devāso barhirāsadan.

Vidannaha dvitāsanān. (Rg. 8, 28, 1)

Thirtythree devas participate in the cosmic Yajna of the Supreme Lord and, blest with two, Satyam and Rtam, constancy of Prakrti and mutability under the law of Rtam, contribute to the dynamics of existence and do homage to the Lord.

त्रयस्त्रिंशतास्तुवत भूतान्यशाम्यन् प्रजापतिः
परमष्ट्यधिपतिरासीत् ॥ ३१ ॥
trayastrimśatā'stuvata bhūtanyaśāmyan prajā-
patiḥ parameṣṭhyadhipatirāsīt. (Yaj.14, 31)

Thirty three devas serve and do homage to the Lord Supreme, Prajapati, father sustainer of His children, whereby all forms of life and nature abide in peace.

यस्य त्रयस्त्रिंशद्देवा निधिं रक्षन्ति सर्वदा ।
निधिं तमद्य को वेदं यं देवा अभिरक्षथ ॥ २३ ॥

Yasya trayastrimśaddevā nidhiṁ rakṣanti sarvadā. Nidhiṁ tamadya ko veda yaṁ devā abhirakṣatha. (Ath. 10, 7, 23)

The Lord Supreme is He whose treasure hold of existence, thirty three devas constitute, secure, preserve, and promote. O devas, who here would know and realise that divine treasure which you protect and promote?

यस्य त्रयस्त्रिंशद्देवा अङ्गे गात्रा विभेजिरे ।
तान्वै त्रयस्त्रिंशद्देवानेके ब्रह्मविदो विदुः ॥ २७ ॥
Yasya trayastrimśaddevā aṅge gātrā vibhejire. Tānvai trayastrimśaddevāneke brahmavidō viduḥ. (Ath. 10, 7, 27)

In whose cosmic body thirty three devas abide and perform their part as constituent limbs of the system, those thirty three devas, may be, some brahma realised sages would know.

Thus it is that the devas are a part of the Lord's cosmic body system, and they serve the Lord and do homage to Him as our limbs of the body system serve the individual soul. None of the devas is independent of the cosmic body, and none of them is worshipped as God within the Divine and sovereign system of the Lord Supreme. Of course, all the devas, as powers of the Lord, do deserve and command our homage of stuti, done for their attributes which reflect but do not exhaust the omnipotence and supremacy of the Lord. They are great in their own right and place but within the Greatness of the Supreme. They are potent, they are refulgent, but they are potent and refulgent because they receive that potency and refulgence from the Omnipotence and Self refulgence of the Supreme sovereign.

Now the thirty three devas/devatas:

Q. Who are these thirty three devas?

Ans. Eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Adityas, Indra and Prajapati, that makes thirtythree.

Q. Who are the eight Vasus?

Ans. Agni, Prthivi, Vayu, Antariksha, Aditya, Dyau, Chandrama and Nakshatra. All these: Fire, earth, air, the sky, the sun, the region of light, the moon and the constellations of stars, these are the eight vasus. They are called Vasus because they provide the abode and sustenance of life for all.

Q. And the Rudras?

Ans. They are eleven: ten pranas: prana, the incoming breath; apana, outgoing breath; vyana, which causes the organs of the body to move; samana, which causes food to be digested and the circulation of blood; udana, which abides in the throat upto the head region, controls air discharge from the throat and mouth and leaves the body with the last breath. The sub-pranas are five too: naga, which causes eructation; kurma, which causes winking of the eye; krkala, which causes yawning; devadatta, which causes hunger and thirst; and dhananjaya, which stays with the subtle body even after death and moves it upto rebirth. The eleventh, Rudra, is the soul. They are called

Rudra because when they leave, they cause sorrow and wailing.

Q. What are the Adityas?

Ans. Adityas are the twelve zodiacs of the sun. They are called Adityas because they consume the time duration of the age of things in existence. They ‘calculate’ chronological time, and when the time is up for any particular creature, the call comes up and the play is over, the curtain falls.

Q. What is Indra, and what is Prajapati?

Ans. Indra is electric energy and the thundering cloud with lightning. Electric energy, thunder and lightning is called Indra because it is so mightily powerful. Prajapati is Yajna, because Yajna is the process of the dynamics of life and existence.

This detail is from *Shatapatha Brahmana* (14, 6) and *Nirukta* (9, 28). *Shatapatha* further asks:

Q. What are three devas?

Ans. The three lokas (regions) are the three devas: earth, the sky and the solar regions. In those three there is the immanent energy: agni in earth, vayu in the sky and light in the solar region.

Q. Further: What are the other two devas?

Ans. They are ‘anna’ and ‘prana’, food and energy of life. Food is consumed by prana to convert it into energy, and this energy product further becomes the food of higher energy. So this process of consumption and production continues the Yajnic dynamics of this living existence.

Q. Still, is there one premier deva in nature?

Ans. Yes, there is, the one ‘sutratma’, life energy which vibrates in the entire nature and keeps the evolutionary wave of life flowing. This is the living cosmic energy which keeps all specific energies going, feeding them ever anew and fresh.

The Nirukta says the same thing in a different idiom: This earthly region is Vak, speech, life expressed in tangible form; Sarasvati, life in flow,; Bharati, the burden bearer of all like the earth. The mind is the middle region, the psychic world in vibration below the conscious region, in the subconscious, the thought progenitor of speech. That highest loka, region, is prana, cosmic energy that flows in radiation from the sun. These three lokas have their names, their location and their birth and life span as anything else has its birth and

life span; The cosmic thread of life, divine energy, Sutratma, maintains the evolution and devolution of the dynamics of the expansive universe. (Nirukta, 9, 28, Shatapatha, 14, 4)

Q. Are all these devas (gods) to be worshipped?

Ans. No. only ONE, Parama Brahma, the thirty fourth over and above all these, That alone is to be worshipped, the One that is the creator of the whole universe, omnipotent, loved of all and all loving, to be worshipped by all, sustainer of all, omnipresent, the first, original, universal and eternal efficient cause of all, beginningless, true, good and beautiful, existent, omniscient and all-Bliss in the essence, unborn, just and merciful, omnipotent, celebrated by all the Vedas, self-refulgent, Lord Supreme, the One and Only One, that alone is to be worshipped. The good, educated, enlightened, cultured and virtuous people, ‘Aryas’ have always worshipped Him since time immemorial, they do worship Him at present, and they will always worship that One for all time in future. To worship anyone or anything else other than That is nothing but ignorance, it is ‘anaryatva’, fall from knowledge, karma and

virtue. Know this, follow this, all of you, for this is the Vedic injunction.

Q. There are people who say that on the basis of Vedas you can't say that only one God is to be worshipped, because Vedas prescribe the Puja of animate and of inanimate objects as well.

Ans. First know the difference between Puja and worship. Puja means proper valuation, appreciation, proper conduct towards the object of Puja. Reverence and respects also are synonyms of Puja. Worship means Upasana, communion in meditation. Worship can be called Puja also, but Puja does not always mean worship specially when the word is used for objects other than God, the one Parameshvara.

Whatever God has created, light, fire, air, water, earth, sun and moon, etc., each of those has certain qualities and great value. To the extent that those objects have that value and those qualities, they are divine, and we must recognize, value and respect these objects. We must not devalue and desecrate them, because for their value they are sacred. We must not devalue, pollute and desecrate nature either. To preserve, promote and

serve these objects as sacred is our 'Puja' in respect of them. But that 'Puja' is neither upasana nor prayer. We can call them sacred and divine, but they are not God. We must be grateful to God for the gift of these divine objects and pray that there may be peace therein and they may bring peace, prosperity and good health for us. Even with the Gayatri mantra the prayer that the 'bharga', tremendous light of Savita (the sun), may inspire us with brilliant intelligence, the prayer is to Savita, the Lord Creator, for the light of the sun. The mantra is celebration of the sun, but the prayer is to God.

Q. You have said that 'Indra' is the electric force, thunder, lightning and the cloud. You have said that 'Prajapati' is Yajna. And in Yajna you offer oblations saying, 'Prajapataye svaha, Indraya svaha'. Are you not worshipping the cloud and the Yajna.

Ans. That is a good question. You know Yajna is a ritual for 'deva puja, sangati karana and dana'. Admitted that the gift of oblation is for the cloud and the Yajna. But the gift to the cloud and the Yajna for the celebration, consecrative recognition and enrichment of those divine objects is for the

purification of the atmosphere and enhancement of rain. And even as it is, the act is in gratefulness to God for His gifts. Any service to nature is an act of ultimate worship to God. The devas are to be honoured and served, the Deva of the devas, Parama Deva, Devadeva, is to be worshipped. And that is only One and Supreme.

Further, know that the devas are 'murtta' and 'amurtta' both, i.e., devas with a concrete form and devas without a concrete form, corporeal and also incorporeal, seen and unseen.

For example:

*Mātr̥devo bhava, pit̥r̥devo bhava, ācāryadevo
bhava, atithidevo bhava:
(Taittiryopanishad, 11, 2)*

Reverence your mother, reverence your father, reverence your teacher, honour the visitor: they are devas. They are corporeal, they have human form, puja is due to them. This puja is reverence of the highest order. But this puja is not worship of the devas, it is puja of the devas toward the worship of the One Supreme God.

Devas: murtta and amurtta:

Devas/Devatas are 'divinities', human and natural. Father, mother, leader, visitor, seniors, saints and sages, they are human divinities, all worthy of puja, reverence and service with gratitude. Mother Earth (Prthivi), water (Apah), heat and light (Agni), air (Vayu), and such others are divinities of nature, worthy of service and gratitude. Over and above all those is Ishvara, the Lord Supreme, Parama Brahma, the One who is to be worshipped with meditation (upasana), prayer (prarthana) and praise (Stuti).

So Ishvara is the object of stuti, prarthana and upasana. The divinities of humanity are worthy of stuti (appreciation service and gratitude) and prarthana in the sense of request. And divinities of nature are objects of Stuti, awareness of their value and service through yajna. Yajna in fact is a comprehensive way of the service of all of them through reverence, devoted togetherness, and positive giving, without any selfish string, attached.

Of all those divinities, human and natural, mother, father, teacher, visitor, seniors, saints and sages, friends and neighbours, all are 'murtta', 'sakara', corporeal.

Of the divinities of nature, five of the Vasus are corporeal, these are fire, earth, sun, moon and stars. Twelve Adityas, mind, the middle region, the region of light, air and mantra, these are incorporeal. Of the senses, the faculties are incorporeal, and the organs are corporeal. Of Yajna, the fire and process is corporeal, and knowledge, faith and love are incorporeal.

Ishvara, God Supreme, is Nirakara, incorporeal. The expression of His presence, except in Samadhi, in the world of Prakrti is Sakara, corporeal, because the universe is figuratively called and described as His body by virtue of His manifestation and pervasion therein.

There is another and detailed way of understanding deva/devata: Swami Dayananda explains the word as derived from the root 'div'. Three meanings have already been discussed: dipana (Shining), dyotana (illuminating, enlightening), and dana (giving). He then gives ten meanings: Krida (play), vijigisha (desire to win), vyavahara (behavior, dealing, both internal and external), dyuti (shining), stuti (praise), moda (joy), mada (excitement), svapna (dream and sleep), kanti (beauty and lustre), gati (advancement

and attainment). These relate both to our worldly behavior and our worship of God. Of these, playing, winning, behaving, sleep and excitement relate mostly to our worldly part of living; and shining, praise, happiness, divine glow, and advancement in the spiritual sense relate to Divinity. All these qualities, wherever they are found, are divine, whether they are in nature or in humanity or Divinity. But the possessor of all, especially the latter five, is God, absolutely. The divinities of nature and humanity possess these relatively; and they are divine to the extent they possess them –which would, any way, be short of the absolute. Even those which are refulgent are refulgent because they receive their light from the Self-Refulgent God: Yo'savaditye purusha so'ham asmi, says the Lord. The one that shines in the sun is the Lord Himself.

The One Supreme that is self-Refulgent and shines and vibrates in all is the object of worship, the others are great, but not as great as the Greatest. They are respectable, adorable with love and high reverence. The One is the Object of worship.

Ishvara is One and Absolute

Q. Is Veda the Scripture of all knowledge?

Ans. Yes, Veda is the scripture of universal knowledge in the essence, and as has been said before, essential knowledge has to be further pursued through research in detail for scientific realization in experience for what Swami Dayananda calls 'Vijnana', for practical application in order to live the good life in peace and prosperity.

We know Einstein pronounced the theory of Relativity in 1905, and it is now more than a century that scientists have been working on the theory for detailed understanding and application. The pronouncement was the result of Einstein's 'thought experiment' which, in the language of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, would mean "Vichara Samadhi" of Sam-prajnata order (1, 17). Similarly Vedic knowledge is knowledge in the essence in the essential language of scientific formulaic character. To know it for ourselves in our language we have to meditate and work in the laboratory of our mind and extend our research to sophisticated centres of science and even beyond because the first and highest Vedic knowledge is Brahma

Vidya, knowledge of the Spirit and Life of the expansive universe.

That spirit is Brahma, Ishvara, Parameshvara:

तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः ।

द्विवीच चक्षुराततम् ॥ २० ॥

Tadviṣṇoḥ paramam padam sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ. Divīva cakṣurātataṃ. (Rg. 1, 22, 20)

The highest state of whose blissful presence is Moksa for humans which brave and brilliant sages realise in Samadhi and then always see directly, shining everywhere as the radiant sun, the very eye of Heaven in the regions of light. Let us too, therefore:

तमीशानं जगतस्तस्थुषस्पतिं धियंजिन्वमवसे हूमहे वयम् । पूषा नो यथा वेदसामसद् वृधे रक्षिता पायुरदब्धः स्वस्तये ॥ ५ ॥

Tamīśānaṃ jagatastasthuṣaspatiṃ dhiyaṃ jinvamavase hūmahe vayam. Pūṣā no yathā vedasāmasad vṛdhe rakṣitā pāyuradabdhāḥ svastaye. (Rg. 1, 89, 5)

For our protection and progress, invoke and prey to Lord Ruler and Master of the moving and the unmoving world, who inspires and illuminates

our reason and intelligence, so that Pusha, Lord giver of health and nourishment, irresistible and unresisted, be the protector and promoter of all our wealth and power for the well being of all.

महद्यक्षं भुवनस्य मध्ये तपसि क्रान्तं सलिलस्य पृष्ठे। तस्मिञ्छ्रयन्ते
य उ के च देवा वृक्षस्य स्कन्धः परित इव शाखाः ॥ ३८ ॥
*Mahadyakṣaṁ bhuvanasya madhye tapasi
krāntaṁ salilasya pṛṣṭhe. Tasmiñchrayante ya u
ke ca devā vṛkṣasya skandhaḥ parita-iva
śākhāḥ. (Ath. 10, 7, 38)*

Mighty adorable is He in the midst of the universe, boundless in tapas, power and endurance, ever higher and beyond the existence and bounds of space and time. In Him alone abide all the divine powers and forms of the world of life and Prakṛti just like the leaves and branches of the Tree, He being the Skandha, Burden Bearer Pillar of existence.

He is One and Absolute, without a second, equal to Him, more or higher, how can there be?

न द्वितीयो न तृतीयश्चतुर्थो नाप्युच्यते ।
य एतं देवमेकवृत्तं वेद ॥ १६ ॥
Na dvitīyo na tṛtīyaścaturtho nāpyucyate.

Ya etaṁ devamekavṛtaṁ veda.

न षष्ठो न सप्तमो नाप्युच्यते ।

य एतं देवमेकवृत्तं वेद ॥ १७ ॥

Na pañcama na ṣaṣṭhaḥ saptaṁ nāpyucyate.

Ya etaṁ devamekavṛtaṁ veda.

नाष्टमो न नवमो दशमो नाप्युच्यते ।

य एतं देवमेकवृत्तं वेद ॥ १८ ॥

Nāṣṭama na navama daśama nāpyucyate.

Ya etaṁ devamekavṛtaṁ veda.

तमिदं निगतं सहः स एष एक एकवृदेक एव ।

य एतं देवमेकवृत्तं वेद ॥ २० ॥

*Tamidaṁ nigataṁ sahaḥ sa eṣa eka ekavṛdeka
eva. Ya etaṁ devamekavṛtaṁ veda.*

सर्वे अस्मिन्देवा एकवृत्तो भवन्ति ।

य एतं देवमेकवृत्तं वेद ॥ २१ ॥

Sarve asmindevā ekavṛto bhavanti.

Ya etaṁ devamekavṛtaṁ veda.

(Ath. 13, 4, 16-18, 20, 21)

He is One, no second, no third, no fourth is said to be. No fifth, no sixth, no seventh is said to be. No eighth, no ninth, no tenth is said to be. That is the concentrated All-power, All force, That is One, One only, by Itself.

All the divine powers and forces of existence centre therein and be one.

How to get there?

परीत्य भूतानि परीत्य लोकान् परीत्य सर्वाः पदिशा दिशश्च।
उपस्थाय प्रथमजामृतस्यात्मनात्मानमभि सं विवेश॥११॥
*Parītya bhūtāni parītya lokān parītya sarvāḥ
pradiśo diśaśca. Upasthāya prathamajāmṛtasya-
ātmanā'tmānamabhi saṁ viveśa.* (Yaj. 32, 11)

Having known, thus covered, the material forms of existence, having covered the regions of the world, having covered the directions and sub-directions of space, and reaching the original voice of eternal truth in the Veda by the soul, the man of knowledge and vision attains to the supreme soul of the universe and, one with It in union, abides there.

Q. Many European scholars and even Indians with western orientation say that the Vedas sanction multi-god worship and even the worship of material objects, that the Aryans worshipped many varieties of gods in ancient times, and it was much later that they, developed in consciousness, realized that God is one, and only the one God

should be worshipped. Even today when we perform havan, we offer oblations to Agni, Soma, Prajapati and Indra.

Ans. This is not correct. First, there was no such race or community as Aryas or Aryans. It is now a rejected theory. The word 'Arya' means, and it meant the same in ancient times as it means today, that Arya is one who is educated, cultured and virtuous in manners, character and behavior. To be an arya is the Vedic ideal of a good educated person.

Secondly, the Veda says that God is one and only one as we have seen. God is one, His names are many: Take, for example, the following mantra from Rgveda, 1, 164, 46:

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान्।
एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ॥ ४६ ॥
*Indraṁ mitraṁ varuṇam-agnim-āhuratho
divyaḥ sa suparṇo garutmān. Ekam sad viprā
bahudhā vadantyanim yamaṁ mātariśvān-
amāhuḥ.* (Rg. 1, 164, 46)

God is one. The learned and the wise speak of Him in many ways (according to His attributes): They say He is Indra, the glorious, Mitra, universal

friend, Varuna highest adorable, Agni, light of life, Divya, heavenly, Suparna, supreme beautiful, Garutman, supreme dynamic. They say He is Agni, life and leader of existence, Yama, supreme controller, law and justice and the judge, and Matarishva, supreme energy of the universe that holds things together.

Similarly when we offer oblations to Agni, Soma, Prajapati and Indra, we make the offer to the same One God, His attributes being Agni, light and warmth of life, Soma, lord of peace, praise and joy, Prajapati lord of His creation, and Indra, lord of power and glory.

It is wrong to say that the followers of Veda in ancient times believed in many gods and later they realized that God is one. Take the following mantra, for example: Yajurveda, 13, 4:

हिरण्यगर्भः समवत्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः पतिरेकऽआसीत् ।

स दाधार पृथिवीं द्यामुतेमां कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥४॥

Hiranyagarbhaḥ samavartatāgre bhūtasya jātaḥ patireka'āsīt. Sa dādadhāra pṛthivīm dyāmutemām kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema.

In the beginning, before the creation began, Hiranyagarbha, the one Lord of golden glory existed alone, the sole creator who held within his deep and mysterious presence the golden seed of all the potential forms of existence like an egg. He was the sole father and master of the world to be. He held this earth and the heaven and the middle region and He holds and sustains the universe now as always.

For which One Lord God shall we offer the oblations of fragrant havi? For That One only (Agni, Soma, Prajapati and Indra by name and of infinite names further).

He was the sole One and He is the same One now as ever.

He was the Sole One not only at the beginning of creation, He was the sole one even long long before, something like an infinitesimal black hole of infinite energy: Rgveda, 10, 129, 2:

न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्न आसीत्प्रकेतः ।

आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्भान्यन्न परः किं चनासं ॥ २ ॥

Na mṛtyurāsidamṛtaṁ na tarhi na rātryā ahna āsīt praketaḥ. Ānīdavātaṁ svadhayā tadekaṁ tasmāddhānyanna paraḥ kiṁ canāsa.

There was neither death nor life immortal then, no sign of night or day. There was only that One, sole one Brahma, breathing prana without breath. That existed with His own potential, other than that there was none, nothing.

That one point of no dimensions with His infinite potential develops the one Prakrti seed into uncountable forms of matter, energy, Intelligence forms and vests them with life, giving them human and animal, herbal and natural forms of existence.

*Eko vāsi sarva-bhūtāntarātmā
Ekam rūpam bahudhā yah karoti .
Tamātmastham ye'nupaśyanti dhīras
Teṣām sukham śaśvatam netareṣām .*

(Kathopanishad 2, 2, 12)

One is the all controlling Master existing at the heart-core of all living beings. He gives an infinite variety of forms to one universal archetype of existence and abides therein. Those who see That abiding at the heart-core of the soul enjoy eternal happiness, not others.

Thus the one supreme God manifests in the uncountable forms of nature and humanity. So

when Yajnic adoration is offered to the fire in the Vedi, the oblation is offered to the fire, to the universal warmth of life and to the supreme God who is the fire, the light, and the life of life. The Yajna karta is not a worshipper of material fire, he feeds the fire, serves and replenishes the fire-element of nature by purifying the atmosphere, and he worships God. Similarly when you serve the parents, you serve the mother and father, you honour the family and the family institution, you do reverence to humanity and you perform an act of worship to God. And if you disrespect the parents, you degrade yourself, you desecrate the family, you disgrace humanity and offend God.

Another mantra from kathopanishad (2, 2, 9) speaks of the divine manifestation of one God in many forms of existence:

*Agniryathaiko bhuvanam praviṣṭo
Rūpam rūpam pratirūpo babhūva.
Ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā
Rūpam rūpam pratirūpo bahiśca.*

Just as agni, fire, as an element is one and universal but as it is present in every form of existence, it becomes various (in accord with the form), similarly the Divine spirit is one, universal

and omnipresent, but manifested in every form of existence, It appears vested and self-revealed in every form, even different and defined: So one who knows that It is One, universal and omnipresent, vested in different forms, is the one who knows.

विश्वतश्चक्षुरुत विश्वतामुखो विश्वताबाहुरुत विश्वतस्पात् ।
 सं बाहुभ्या धमति सं पतत्रैर्द्यावाभूमी जनयन्द्वऽएकः॥१९॥
*Viśvataścakṣuruta viśvatomukho viśvatobāhur-
 uta viśvataspāt. Saṁ bāhubhyāṁ dhamati saṁ
 patatrairdyāvābhūmī janayan deva'ekah.*
 (Yaju.17,19)

The spirit Divine is the Universal Eye that sees all. That is the universal Mouth with the tongue that speaks to all. That is the universal Arms and Hands which move and protect all. That is the universal feet that move everywhere and bear everything.

He moves all with His arms. He moves every particle of existence, and with His arms, through all and every particle, He creates the heaven and earth, creating them into forms thereby. Such is God, the sole Lord of the existence of infinite

variety. (This all He does from within everything, not from outside.)

One who knows the unity and Universality of the Spirit Divine, observes and understands the apparent diversity of existence, and not only understands but lives it through the diversity unto the central point of the unity, he is the person who achieves the purpose and the goal of his existence to reach the ultimate haven of his being:

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।
 तमव विदित्वाति मृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥१८॥
*Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam ādityavar-
 ṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt. Tameva viditvāti mṛtyum-
 eti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate'yanāya. (yaj. 31, 18)*

I know this great and glorious Purusha of the brilliance of the Sun beyond the dark. Having realized that One only, does man transcend the world of mundane existence, the cycle of birth and death. There is no other way than this for attaining to the final freedom of Moksha in the heaven of Divine Bliss.

Thus it is that the Veda enjoins the worship of only one supreme God. The one essential Name of

that supreme Lord is Om. This Name consists of three phonemes: A U, and M. It sums up the three modes of Prakṛti: matter, energy and thought. It sums up the three regions: earth, sky and the region of light. It sums up the body, mind and the soul, and it sums up knowledge, karma and upasana. If you pronounce the word, A stands for creation, U stands for sustenance and continuance, and M stands for the close. When M closes into silence, the silence symbolizes the eternal transcendence of the Lord over and above and beyond His existential immanence.

Veda: Sanatana and/or New?

Q. European scholars of Vedas say that there are verses in the Vedas which prove that at least certain portions of the Vedas are new. Take for example, the following mantra from Rgveda: (1, 1, 2)

अग्निः पूर्वेभिर्ऋषिभिरीड्यो नूतनैरुत ।

स देवाँ एह वक्षति ॥ २ ॥

Agniḥ pūrvebhīrṛṣibhirīḍyo nūtanairuta.

Sa devāñ eha vakṣati.

Agni is to be worshipped by Rsis of the ancient past as also by the moderns. He shall bring hitherward the gods. (adapted from Griffith)

Griffith's note on "Ancient seers:" is that the ancient seers are "said by Sayana to be Bhṛgu, Angirus and others. The expression indicates the existence of earlier hymns." So according to him, the mantra quoted above is one of the new ones.

In the same line of western views take the following mantra from Yajurveda: (18, 13)

अश्मा च मे मृत्तिका च मे गिरयश्च मे पर्वताश्च मे सिकता
श्च म वनस्पतयश्च म हिरण्यं च मे ऽयश्च मे श्यामं च मे
लाहञ्च म सीसं च म त्रपु च मे यज्ञेन कल्पन्ताम् ॥१३॥

*Aśma ca me mṛttikā ca me girayaśca me
parvatāśca me sikatāśca me vanaspatayaśca
me hiraṇyaṁ ca me' yaśca me śyāmaṁ ca me
lohaṁ ca me sīsaṁ ca me trapu ca me yajñena
kalpantām.*

Our gems and crystals, our gold and minerals, our iron and steels, and our sapphires and other jewels, and our copper and bronze, and our lead and its varieties, and our zinc and brass, may all these develop by yajnic treatment of science and metallurgy and be good and auspicious for us all.

These verses show that they relate to the age of science and metallurgical development. How could

these be composed and recorded when human life had just begun? They are of a much late date, says the western scholar of literary history.

Swami Dayananda does not agree with these views. According to him these observations are made from the historical point of view, specially with the belief that the Vedas are human creations evolved along with the evolution of human civilization. The Vedas, says he, are not creations of evolution, they are receptions of simultaneous revelation at the very dawn of humanity when human history had just begun. And they are human receptions and articulations of divine consciousness.

There is a difference between human consciousness and divine Consciousness. Human consciousness of things around grows with time. But divine consciousness of all things, facts and processes of existence is simultaneous, because time in God's consciousness is an eternal now. Time for humanity is linear and progressive through past, present and future. But for God, past, present and future all is present, constant and eternal. For Him, the entire history of mankind is contained in the present moment. Therefore, His 'revelation' too is simultaneous. For Him, even the entire creation,

evolution, devolution and dissolution is just the moment, the present, just similar to the way your life story of your hundred years past is simultaneous in your memory. Therefore the Vedic knowledge, Vedic verses, and their revelation all this is simultaneous and comes to the primal Rsis in a flash. It contains all that which for us is the content of past, present and future.

But with us, sometimes a misunderstanding arises: There are people who believe that one test of Revelation is that it predicts particular events which will follow. The Vedikas do not believe this. According to the Vedic view, Revelation is the knowledge of existence in the essence and not the knowledge of particular events. Science too gives us knowledge of nature, and when we apply the scientific knowledge, specially the knowledge of the laws of nature, then we, with our observation of nature and the application of our knowledge of the laws of nature to the events and processes around, predict the coming events. All our weather forecasts, all our hopes and apprehensions of coming events are the result of our application of the knowledge to the environment. All our predictions of the eclipses of the sun and moon are the results of our application of the knowledge of

the stars and planets received in general, in the essence, from the Vedas. Sages like Shankaracharya, Vyasa, Aurobindo, Swami Dayananda, even Maxmuller, accepted the universality of Vedic knowledge. Universal knowledge generalises, the particulars follow according to the general laws of nature and the human mind.

So the Vedic knowledge of gems and metals is purely scientific knowledge. It does not refer to the time when the first miner struck gold or when the artist polished the first diamond for the first lady.

The same general view applies to the “ancient and modern Rshis” of Rgveda (1, 1, 2) which says that “Agni (God) is to be worshipped by the sages of all time from the beginning to the end of human history.” When we apply the verse to our time we say that Agni is to be worshipped by the sages of our time as It was worshipped by the ancients. But it does not mean that because the verse speaks of ‘sages of ancient and modern time’, the verse was composed and written in recent time. The reality of Vedic interpretation is that when we apply this verse to our time we say that Agni should be worshipped by the sages of the present time as It was worshipped by the

sages of ancient time. The verse is general, relevant to all time old or new.

Swami Dayananda explains the same verse in a further and expanded way in the light of Nirukta: ‘Rshi’ means a “seer, mantra, prana, realm, logic.” So the mantra means: Agni is to be worshipped by seers of all time past, present and future with all their phonic vitality, reason and logic.

Swami Dayananda rejects Max Muller’s view of the mantra ‘Hiranyagarbhah Samavarttatagre...’ (Yajurveda, 13, 4): that the mantra is new. Swami ji points out that Max Muller did not understand the meaning of ‘Hiranya’ beyond one, gold. In fact, besides ‘gold’, ‘Hiranya’ also means light, lustre splendor, honour, knowledge, stars, soul, Indra, fire, etc. (Rgvedadi Bhashya Bhumika, tr. Parmanand, pp. 111-112), it does not mean ‘golden egg’, it means the source, origin and treasure hold of the light, glory, and grace of the cosmic beauty and grandeur of the coming up universe. So the mantra was not written after the discovery of gold, if at all, it speaks of the beauty and value of gold in general.

Veda does not open up its mystery of meaning through the dictionary and the fixations of history in

language development. To explain the meaning of a mantra, a clairvoyant vision and reasoning of high order is required. Mantras cannot be interpreted with mere knowledge of linguistic structure and grammar.

The Nirukta quotes a tradition to illustrate the nature and quality of reasoning required: Once when the Rshis were departing from the world, people went to the 'Devas', i.e., the wise and brilliant scholars among them and asked them who would be the Rshi among them. They said: "Now Tarka, reason and logic, would be the Rshi among you."

The man of exceptional reason and clarity of vision should discriminate between truth and untruth, between the eternal and the temporal. He should be a man of high ethical virtue with a clear understanding of right and wrong, observe austerity of conduct and habit with both faith and reason (Shraddha and medha), only then he can understand the Vedas as they should be interpreted in the context of the universal consciousness and the clair voyance in which they were received. An uncommitted man, howsoever great he may be in the scale of social acceptance and recognition, cannot interpret them as a Rshi would. The meaning of a mantra is to be realized at heart in the soul, not merely translated in another

language according to the popular, superficial play with words, exchanging the old with the new. Only a scholar saint of versatile intellect and imagination with self realized knowledge of existence such as Swami Dayananda or Aurobindo gives the right exposition of the Vedas and convinces us of their universality and constant, unchanging, ever fresh 'modernity'. The 'Sanatan' alone will stay ever modern, not the historical.

Dharma: One, Absolute, Sanatana

सनातनमेनमाहुरुताद्य स्यात्पुनर्णवः ।

अहोरात्रे प्र जायेते अन्यो अन्यस्य रूपयोः ॥ २३ ॥

Sanātanamenamāhurutādyā syātpunarṇavaḥ.

Ahorātre pra jāyete anyo anyasya rūpayoḥ.

(Ath. 10, 8, 23)

They say It is Senatana, this Brahma, Dharma, and yet right now as ever It renews Itself like the day and night rising anew in relation to each other.

Dharma, as Brahma, is Sanatan,---Eternal. It remains the same, Its own essence, forever, and yet it is dynamic, changing its manifestation every moment through its operation and reflection in nature, in

humanity, and in the human individual in thought word and deed.

Just as Nature (Prakrti) is constant in the essence, yet it is dynamic and mutable in form every moment, constancy and mutability being two versions of the same one essence, so is Dharma. Dharma, its Values, are eternal, yet the way they are realized remains ever dynamic every moment. Sanatanam and Punarnavanam (eternal and renewal) both are simultaneous, two aspects of the same one Reality in the state of existence. We should keep in mind this simultaneity of Constancy and Mutability of Dharma in life specially in this age of science, reason and democracy. The Eternal is dynamic, not static. It is living, not dead. Renewal is not replacement, nor is it a substitution of the one by another, with another. It is the latest form of the eternal universal in the new context of time and place and medium in the environment.

God, Dharma and Humanity

1. God is One. It is – It cannot be—two, three or more. It is – It has to be, logically speaking,— One, omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. It is formless (Nirakara) because It cannot be

contained in any form. It is Infinite. Logically also It is so, has to be.

2. If God is one, His creation is one. The law of creation is one. That law is Dharma.
3. Hence Dharma is one and universal for all, for Nature as well as for humanity.
4. Humanity as the creation of God is one. Hence the Dharma of humanity too is one. Human Dharma is universal too.
5. As God's children we are one family. All divisions of humanity are artificial, in violation of the laws of God.
6. The earth is our home. Nature is our mother. The world is given to us as our bigger home. But we have no right to pollute and exploit it. Pollution is sin equal to matricide.
7. We are all participants in the world. Nature gives us the means of subsistence for living, so we must serve nature in the renewal of her resources. Our life must be cooperative, creative, productive and contributive. Creative living together is Yajna.
8. As members of one family. We have the duty to help and support one and all, and all other living beings.

9. In short, the world is one real, living, breathing, intelligent, organismic, self-organising, self-conscious, sovereign system, the soul and governing spirit of which is God who operates, through His universal laws of Dharma. If we participate and observe the law, good. If we rebel, disobey, neglect or ignore, we suffer. That is the law of karma. The choice is ours. That is our freedom, subject to the law of Karma and Dharma. Freedom of choice is the human privilege.
10. The law of Karma and Dharma is one and the same. In this cosmic system, Nature is 'sat', real, constant as well as mutable. The soul is 'sat' and 'chit', conscious and intelligent, but in a limited degree. God is 'sat, cit and ananda', blissful, infinitely and absolutely. Humans have to try for higher intelligence and bliss.
11. In this system, nature acts naturally according to the laws computerized into it by the immanent spirit of God. Humans act naturally, instinctively and intelligently. Animals act instinctively, their intelligence too is instinctive. Humans' privilege is that they can rise to higher intelligence, awareness and bliss.
12. Humanity is intelligent, but their intelligence and knowledge is limited. Therefore God, being omniscient, loving and compassionate, reveals the knowledge of existence and karma to the exceptional Rshis of clairvoyant intelligence at the dawn of human creation for all mankind without exception or discrimination.
13. That original knowledge is the Veda. There are four Vedas. Rgveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda.
14. As God's revelation, Vedic knowledge is full and final, all-time true and universal, complete in the essence and absolute. There is no history in the Vedas, the language and style of the Vedas is scientific and general, because they were revealed at a time when human history was just beginning with the first rise of human consciousness and the Veda.
15. This knowledge is for all mankind without any discrimination. No particular individual, family, community or nation can have exclusive claim to it. It belongs to all, high or low, rich or poor, master or servant, man or woman, sage or sinner.
16. Vaidic knowledge is the knowledge of Nature, humanity and Divinity, Dharma and Karma,

science and spirituality, Sat-cit-ananda, and the attainment of Sat-cit-ananda through search for knowledge, exercise of yajnic karma and upasana (meditation through the eightfold path of yoga from ethics to samadhi).

This is, in short, the Vedic programme of the pursuit of dharma for mankind revealed at the dawn of creation.

Q. If Veda is full and final revelation of knowledge, does it mean that all human endeavour to know through science and philosophy, and all that man has discovered, invented, collected and recorded is superfluous, sheer waste of labour?

Ans. No. Veda is full and final revelation of knowledge in the essence but not in the details of evolution through time. All knowledge is there in the Veda in the seed form, given there as inspiration for further growth. Veda does not rule out observation, exploration and experimentation for further and specific growth of knowledge in the course of history for the betterment of life to live the Vedic way of Dharma.

Based on the Vedas and in pursuit of the Vedic ideas sages and scholars meditated on Vedic mantras

and explored the facts and processes of life and nature. They wrote the Brahmanas and realized the Vedic possibilities of yajna to explain the operations of nature for their application in practical life. They wrote the Dharma Shastras and Niti Shastras in detail for the Vedic pursuit of Sanatana Dharma. They meditated and wrote the Darshan works to explain the nature, structure and working of the various natural forces in time. They meditated and discovered the technique of yoga for God-realisation. They worked out moral, social and political philosophy for human organization under one world government with autonomous organizations under one supreme government. But all these works are detailed discoveries and confirmations under the Vedic umbrella. So Vedic knowledge is the Seed, human knowledge, approximate though, is knowledge of the Tree which is growing in time without end.

For example: Take the last words of Yajurveda: Om kham Brahma. The entire Vedanta philosophy is an exploration of these three words. The Mandukyopanishad is a detailed explanation of Om which comprises three phonemes, A, U, M. Ishopanishad is the closing chapter of Yajurveda, and all Upanishads are extensions of Ishopanishad. The

Gita is a practical discourse on the second verse of Ishopanishad. Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya and Vaisheshika philosophy is science, study of natural, moral and spiritual evolution with reason, logic and vision. Had even Einstein known the Vedic philosophy of Sankhya and Vedanta, he would have been able to discover and self-realise the sole-unity principle of the universe beyond the inter convertibility of matter and energy—which too falls short of the Sankhya philosophy of the diversified evolution of Prakrti from the equilibrium state into thought, energy and matter (satva, rajas and tamas).

Thus, Veda is full and final seed source and seed knowledge, but it does not rule out natural, social and moral sciences because knowledge, both essential and existential, like Brahma and Its existential manifest, is human under the divine umbrella. Divine knowledge is revealed, one, original and complete; human knowledge is divinely inspired, sometimes true, sometimes approximate to truth, corrected, revised, extended and accepted, depending upon the clairvoyance of the discoverer, earnestness of the seeker and the parametric variables of the situation.

Is Veda a religious book of the Hindus? Veda basically is knowledge, knowledge of God, Nature

and humanity. As knowledge, it contains knowledge of Dharma also. But that knowledge of Dharma is not for the Hindus only, it is knowledge for all, including every community. Whatever the gift of God, the gift is for all, for anyone who claims and subscribes to It.

What is Dharma?

Dharma is Law, the Law and the power that holds, sustains and supports the life and the universe together. The Shastriya definition of Dharma is “Dharayati iti Dharma”: that Law which holds and sustains is Dharma.

The law of Nature is Dharma because it holds the universe together, sustains and supports it. It is by the law of Nature that we live on the earth. The Power that sustains the Law by Itself is God who is the origin, Master and sustainer of the Law. If there were no God, there would be no Law either. It is because of God that the Law operates. There is nothing in Nature that can violate the power and force of God. As Yama says in Kathopanishad (2, 3, 3):

*Bhayādasyāgnistapati bhayāt tapati sūryah,
Bhayāन्द्राśca vāyuśca mrtyurdhāvati
pañcamah.*

By 'fear' (power) of this Lord Brahma, the fire burns, by fear shines and blazes the sun, by fear does the cloud rain in showers, by fear does the wind blow, and by fear does even Death call upon the departing soul to leave its abode. And the fear is not the fear of an external or alien agency. The 'fear' is the inner pressure of the essence of a thing, in the very identity of which the Lord is present. It means that the fear, obedience, and the characteristic behavior of the thing are natural synonyms, identical with Law, Dharma and the Divine presence. Nature and natural Law is the existential manifestation of the Lord of all time and space. Conflict in nature is un-natural. What appears to be conflict is cooperation, resolution and re-creation in the end. 'Contradictions' are complementarities, in reality.

In the Rgvedic language of creative evolution, (10, 190, 1-3) Rtam and Satyam are a two-in-one process, a simultaneity of change and constancy. Rtam is the Law of change, the dynamics of constancy, Satyam. Therefore whatever appears as conflictive in the process of change is a formative stage of the next homogeneous outcome. In simple words, in the Law of Nature, there is no violation, no violence, no crime, no sin. Every thing is simple,

straight, natural and spontaneous. The Law holds, sustains and supports the earth in position in her orbit round the sun, the moon in its orbit round the earth, the sun in the galaxy, and the galaxies spinning around the dimensionless centre point of Infinite Power: 'Anoraniyan mahato mahiyan'. Reference may be made to Yajurveda, 3, 6, and Shvetashvatar-
opanishad, 3, 20. That point is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest the expanding universe can even be, because the universe is but one-fourth manifestation of Its Being, three-fourths of It transcends in the unknown (Rg. 10, 90, 1-4). The same point in the golden core of the soul sustains the human being too. But there is some difference from the other living forms:

The cosmic Law of Divinity holds, sustains and supports the human being in position within the cosmic structure of existence so that the human being cannot go out of that Law and position, but still it has been given a space in which it can afford to play in its own way. In other words, the human being has been allowed a certain limited autonomy within the absolute sovereignty of the cosmic Being and the cosmic Law. This autonomy comes from the Divine will and the Divine Law of Existence. The human

being enjoys the divine gift and privilege of intelligence, awareness and the Revelation of the divine Law through the Veda: Knowledge of Divinity, Nature and humanity, structure of the universe, and the place and privilege of the human being in the universe and the universal law of Rtam. The Veda calls that Law ‘Yama’, a divine presence which holds, sustains, guides, judges and ordains the life of the humans, through the cycle of birth and death, in consequence of human karma, until the human attains to the Divine and transcends the karmic law by dharmic karma and divine grace.

The state of the Law then is (Shvetashvatara, 4, 15):

*Eṣā devo viśvakarmā mahātmā sadā janānām
hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ. Hṛdā maṇiṣā manasā’bhik-
lṛpto ya etad viduramrtāste bhavanti.*

This supreme Lord, Vishvakarma, maker and ordainer of the universe, always abides at the heart of the human beings. Those who know It with their heart and soul in deep meditation as abiding there and realize It, they become ‘immortal’, free from the cycle of birth and death, and enjoy divine bliss in the state of Grace.

Dharma with freedom of choice is man’s specific privilege.

*Ahāra nidrā bhayamaithunam ca, samānam etat
paśubhir narāṇām. Dharmo hi teṣām adhiko
viśeṣo dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ.*

Eating, sleeping, fear, sex: this is common with humans and animals (because humans too are animals, though with the exception of intelligence and awareness beyond the animal instinct). Dharma alone is the specific distinction of humans, which makes them superior to the animals. And therefore, by the same token, those who are self-deprived of Dharma are just animals, none better than animals. Therefore:

Dharyate iti Dharma, that which is adopted and pursued in practice, in thought, word and deed is Dharma.

Thus we have two versions of Dharma: Sanatana, Eternal which prevails in and rules the universe including the human world, and which is revealed in the Vedas for humans to follow, and Actual, temporal which is observed by humans. The temporal dharma is also called Yuga dharma, the one observed according to the state of time and place and the historical context. It is a timely version of the

Sanatan. The law of society also is a version of yuga dharma.

The Vedas give us knowledge of existence and the laws of existence, they give us the knowledge of karma and the way we should work, and they also give us the knowledge of how to break through our limitations and reach to the top of human freedom and divine bliss. Our freedom of choice and action is the progressive dimension of the Atman which refuses to go down under the pressure of circumstance. The Vedas thus give us the code of values (Dharma) and God gives us the potential to pursue those values freely.

Values are ‘sanatan’, permanent, the ways and forms of realizing them could be, and often are, different according to the historical context of time, place and tradition. For example: truth, goodness, beauty, piety, knowledge, justice, plenty and prosperity, love, life, nonviolence, unity, peace, progress, happiness, all these are values. These have been accepted as values ever since the world began and will continue to be accepted for all time in future. But people have worked to realise these in different ways, and sometime the difference has been so wide that one way has been the opposite of the other. For

example, one community may believe and hold that worshipping an idol is an act of piety, while another may believe that to destroy an idol is an act of highest piety. One community might kill the best animal to please God with sacrifice, while another might believe that such killing is sin. ‘Service of God’ and ‘piety of conduct’ is a value for both, but the ways to realize the value in actual life are contradictory. The different ways of value realization are history. The historical way is ‘Yuga dharma’ (religion). The essential value is part of universal Dharma.

The right way to realize the permanent values of Dharma is Yajna, a positive, creative, cooperative, productive and contributive way of living, acting and participating in the cooperative world of the Lord’s creation. Everyone should realize happiness and progress through the happiness and progress of all, the ideal principle being: one-for-all and all-for-one. Yajna is the best and highest way of all living, the one right way for all. Yajna thus is the value and also the way to realize the value. Yajna is the Vaidic Dharmic karma because it is creative and constructive, not destructive.

Going back to human nature: with freedom of choice, the human being has more than one way of

living to choose from. One way is creative, the way of service and surrender, piety and worship. The other way is possessive, the way of exploitation. This is the way of the ego, selfishness and destruction. The former is positive, yajnic. The latter is negative, unyajnic. The former is 'Daivi' (virtuous). The other is 'Asuri' (vicious, sinful), as the Gita says. The former is followed by the pious, the other is pursued by the vicious.

The Gita describes the nature of the virtuous as well as the nature of the vicious in chapter 16: Fearlessness, purity of mind, steadfastness in knowledge, unshaken dedication to yoga, charity, self-control, yajna, self study and Vedic study, austere discipline of body and mind, natural simplicity of mind and conduct, non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, non-calumny, compassion to living beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty and steadiness, no-frivolity, brilliance, forgiveness, fortitude, purity of character, freedom from malice and from pride, these are the characteristic virtues of Daivi nature. (Gita 16, 1-3)

Ostentation, arrogance, excessive pride, anger, harshness and ignorance, in short the negation of piety, reality, even Divinity, and desecration of

positive values, these are the characteristics of Asuri nature. People of this nature are ignorant even of their own selves and their ultimate ends. They deny even the existence of God, they flout the value of Dharma and they vitiate the sanctity of Nature and humanity. They are self-possessed and all possessive, and they pollute the piety of yajna too with violence.

The way Dharma is pursued in practice is 'yuga dharma', often called religion in modern language. Religion, specially historical religions, can be seen in organized forms, controlled, prescribed, enforced, and even fossilized at the end. All these religions have a lot of historical and geographical elements which persist even after they have been outdated in the course of history and look bizarre in a different environment.

Thus from the definition of Dharma given earlier (i.e. Dharayati iti Dharma), we have a practical definition of Dharma which is relative rather than absolute: And that is 'Dharyate iti dharma, that which is held, observed, practiced, no matter whether the way it is practiced is dharmic or non-dharmic, whether it holds and sustains the life and society of the time or it disturbs, divides and even destroys life and peace. When it reaches the height of negativity

(i.e. adharma) , history itself calls for a change. Again, the Gita proclaims the divine voice of History (4, 7-8): Whenever there is decline of Dharma and rise of adharma, unrighteousness, then comes forth a challenging soul for reform and rectification. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of wickedness, and for the re-establishment of righteousness: the very spirit of Divinity emerges from History and reasserts Itself.

History records the decline of Dharma in social practice and then the renewal of Dharma through the practice of a new yuga dharma:

Selfish people vitiated Yajna and the other ways of Dharma. They introduced blood, fear, violence, injustice and inequality into the pious act of Yajna and social custom. They created bizarre forms of God and sculpted them into icons and idols. Worship as an act of mind and heart from the depth of the soul became a mechanical ritual of baby sitting: The gods were made to sleep and wake and dance at special times for special people. Mahatma Buddha and Mahavira Swami revolted against this violence and vulgarity. They insisted on good karma as the essential form of Dharma for practical living. But under the pressure of circumstance and with insistence

on karma, they missed the original source of knowledge, the Veda, and ignored and even denied the existence of God in their world view. Ultimately, their disciples replaced Ishwara with human gods in a God-less world. The scene of degeneration and renewal with its consequent distortion is described in Satyartha Prakash chapters 11 and 12. Then followed Shankara Swami. He challenged the philosophy of Mahatma Buddha and Mahavira Swami to prove that “far from being a Godless world, there is nothing in existence but God (Brahma) only, except Maya which is merely appearance and illusion: “The world that looks real and objective is nothing but a mirage.” Swami Shankaracharya won the battle of philosophy for God, but the battle of karma for humanity was lost. India fell in karma to other nations and other religions. All this happened because, in response to the challenge of the time, they created a philosophy and ethics for the time without a reference back to the original source of Dharma, the Veda. The result was that in search for the new, the renewal of the Sanatan was lost.

The India of the Middle Ages and later especially of the 18-19th centuries was at the lowest ebb of human action, psychic vitality and cultural or

national identity. Dharma had become a wasteland of creeds and superstitions. National pride was crushed under the imperial boot. The roots of Dharma, culture and civilization were drying up and dying under the onslaught of English language and foreign culture in the name of reason and success. Humanity born with the eternal message of universal freedom was reduced to abject slavery. Reason, success and modernity became synonyms of slavery.

It was at this time that Swami Dayananda appeared on the scene. To understand and appreciate his life, his message and his work, we cannot do better than refer to another great man of modern time, Rabindra Nath Tagore:

“I offer my homage of veneration to Swami Dayananda, the great path maker in modern India, who, through bewildering tangles of creeds and practices, the dense undergrowth of the degenerate days of our country, cleared a straight path that was meant to lead the Hindus to a simple and rational life of devotion to God and service for man. With a clear-sighted vision of truth and courage of determination, he preached and worked for our self-respect and vigorous awakenment of mind that could strive for a harmonious adjustment with the progressive spirit of

modern age and at the same time keep in perfect touch with the glorious past of India when it revealed its personality in freedom of thought and action, in an unclouded radiance of spiritual realization.” Progressive dynamism of the spirit revealed in the freedom of thought and pursuit of action for a living purpose: this is modernity rooted in universality, ‘Sanatan that is nitya nutan’, Eternal ever renewing itself into the moment, new.

Modernity does not consist in the knowledge of any particular language, English or any other. Nor does it consist in the knowledge of any particular literature, English or any other. Nor does it mean dedication to any particular period of history such as the twentieth century, for example. Modernity is a dynamic attitude of the mind. It refuses to be bound by time, place or circumstance. It insists on initiative and on freedom of thought and action. It does not worship the past but it does not necessarily reject it either. With a broad vision of time, tradition and history, it values the universal constant in the variable and seeks to realize the permanent values of life in new emergent forms. Swami Dayananda rejected the outmoded forms of belief and action, referred back to the permanent message of the Vedas and exhorted the

Indians to renew and rebuild their life and culture in new forms relevant to the new age on the rock-bed foundation of the timeless universal.

Therefore in the light of the variations and vagaries of history, with deep understanding of the permanent values of Dharma, enunciated in the Vedas and realizable in modern forms in response to changing time, he reproclaimed the following definition of Dharma as stated in Vaisheshika Sutras of philosophy (1, 1, 2):

Yato' bhyudaya-niḥśreyasa siddhiḥ sa dharmah.

That whereby is achieved the peace, prosperity and progress of the good life in the world here, and the ultimate realisation, freedom and peace of the soul hereafter, that is Dharma.

That universal Dharma, ever renewable through dynamic yuga dharma for realization at any time, that universal code of permanent values of life ever renewable in forms and institutions with laws and practices relevant to the change of times can be found in the universal message of the Vedas, revealed for all men and women of the world without any distinction or discrimination whatsoever, and articulated in the language of the timeless.

Swami Dayananda's message is generally understood as Back to the Vedas. It is not so, it rather is: Up and Onwards from the Vedas. Cut off from its roots, newness loses its moorings, its modernity, it is lost in a maze of confusion and uncertainty. History without its central reference point is merely peripheral, blind and without direction. The pole star and the movement over the sea go together.

Swami Dayananda never said that he was starting a new religion: "It is not my purpose to start a new faith. I accept and believe only what is true and reject what is untrue. My purpose is to state the truth and persuade others to accept the truth and reject the untruth." He stood for a common code of universal values for the global community, based on the Vedas and the positive, non-conflictive universal values collected from all religions freed from dead wood, and meant for the guidance of the world community for the joint peace, progress and salvation of all people. That would be the Sanatan Dharma, Sarvatantra Siddhanta, for humanity, a basic common code of philosophy, ethics and practical conduct for all at the individual, social, national and international level. The U.N.O. and all U.N. bodies for the furtherance of world health, education, culture and cooperation,

human rights, freedom, peace and progress etc. is one step towards the realization of a common human dream of universal happiness and freedom. It is great and yet short of what Dayananda proclaimed in 1875.

On the positive and enthusiastic suggestion of some of his dedicated disciples, Swami Dayananda formed a social and cultural society of dynamic and enlightened people for social reform based on the positive and rational values of life so that the negative, violent and superstitious practices of the so-called religious people could be given a rational and creative direction for the rejuvenation of Indian society towards the building of a free and progressive world of peace and happiness. This society was the Arya Samaj, an association of noble, dynamic and enlightened people dedicated to the betterment and ennoblement of the world community as a family united in universal values and organized under one constitution. This he suggested and initiated in 1875 with a clear warning to his disciples at the time of the foundation: If you are able to achieve something for the good of mankind by a new Samaj, then establish a Samaj; I will not stand in your way, but if you do not organize it properly, there will be a lot of trouble in the future. As for me, I will only instruct you in the

same way as I teach others, and this much you should keep clearly in mind: my beliefs are not unique, and I am not omniscient. Therefore if in the future any error of mine should be discovered after rational examination, then set it right. If you do not act in this way, then this Samaj too will, later on, become just another sect.

Swami Dayananda was not founding a new religion, he was suggesting how one should follow one's own religion on the basis of positive and universal values. For the Arya Samaj, he formulated the principles which are true, rational and universal for any religion, any community and any organization. These are:

1. God is the first, primary and eternal cause of all true knowledge and of all things of existence which are known through knowledge.
2. God is existent, intelligent and blissful in His own essential nature, formless, omnipotent, just, merciful, unborn, endless, unchanging, beginningless, unique, all-sustainer, sole master of all, omnipresent, omniscient, unaging, immortal, fearless, eternal, pure immaculate, creator of the universe. Only that is to be worshipped.

3. Veda is the Scripture of all true knowledge. To read and teach, to listen and recite the Veda is the supreme duty of all enlightened people.
4. One should always be ready to accept the truth and give up the untruth.
5. All work should be done according to Dharma, that is, with careful consideration of truth and untruth.
6. To do good to the world (without any discrimination) is the main, mission of this Samaj.
7. One should treat all others with love, according to Dharma, with proper consideration as is due.
8. One should promote knowledge and remove ignorance.
9. No one should be satisfied with one's own progress and well being, instead, the measure of one's progress should be the progress and well being of all.
10. Strictly in the individual sphere, one should be free, but in the sphere of the social good of all, individual freedom should be subject to the laws of society.

These principles are rational and universal, except that they mention God and Veda. God is one, the God of all, by whatever name they call It.

If one does not believe in God, one cannot deny the one universal power--call it Nature, Law, or Karma, whatever you like—that power is God. If one does not believe in Veda, no one can deny the value of knowledge, and Veda means universal knowledge. Universal law and the power behind the Law, that is Veda, and that is God. The difference between the believer and the non-believer is only the difference of words. If one insists on total negation, one negates one's own existence, and that is self-contradiction. And even this negation is his dharma because he holds and observes it.

So in the language of reason, with liberal attitude to belief and faith in the cosmic reality, and with due appreciation of the place of the human being and the purpose of human life on earth, we should study the Do's and Don's of Dharma according to the Sanatana Dharma revealed there in, some of the themes being:

1. Man's relationship with himself
2. Man as individual, and society
3. Man and nature
4. Man's relation to God

Man unto himself:

Veda does not say: Be a good Hindu, nor does it say: Be a good Indian. It says: Be a good human being, that's what you are. Be that.

तन्तुं तन्वत्रजसो भानुमन्विहि ज्योतिष्मतः पथो रक्ष धिया कृतान् ।
अनुल्बणं वयत् जोगुवामपो मनुर्भव जनया दैव्यं जनम् ॥ ६ ॥
*Tantum tanvan rajaso bhānumanvihi jyotiṣ-
mataḥ patho rakṣa dhiyā kṛtān. Anulvaṇam
vayata joguvāmapo manurbhava janayā
daivyaṁ janam. (Rg. 10, 53-6)*

Extend the warp and woof of the Lord's creation. Follow the path of light and rectitude. Protect and extend the paths of light created by the enlightened with their divine intelligence. Extend the work and tradition, simple, rational and clear, in the footsteps of the men of action, wisdom and vision. Be Man, extend the life line of humanity, creating a community of the enlightened close to Divinity.

The human body is a gift of Nature. We grow in age by the law of Nature, day by day, month by month year by year. If we grow just like that, nothing more, nothing less, we end up as mere natural men, nothing better than animals. We waste away our gifts of intelligence, awareness and the love of humanity and gratitude to Divinity. Hence the commandment:

Be Man. That is our nature and character which should reflect in our thought, word and deed, and this specific quality must grow from day to day so that our last day of humanity be capped with the first awakening into divinity.

According to Veda, the entire humanity is one community, children of the same one God and the same one Mother Nature and we should be what we are, full and perfect in the human scale.

Develop your real self:

In order to be what we really are, we should develop ourselves to the full. That is the exhortation:

स्वयं यजस्व दिवि देव देवान् किं ते पाकः कृणवदप्रचेताः ।
यथायज ऋतुभिर्देव देवानेवा यजस्व तन्वं सुजात ॥ ६ ॥
*Svayaṁ yajasva divi deva devān kiṁ te pākaḥ
kṛṇavadapracetāḥ. Yathāyaja ṛtubhirdeva
devānevā yajasva tanvaṁ sujāta. (Rg. 10, 7, 6)*

O man, yearning for the light of Divinity, develop yourself, develop your body, mind and soul, develop your sense and intelligence towards the higher regions of divinity within you. What perfection would yours be if you end up in ignorance of yourself (development) and of the light giver at the core of

your heart? Just as you perform Yajna in honour of the divinities according to the seasons, so keep up your self-yajna too of the body, mind and soul according to the seasons of your growth to fullness of manhood. And remember, O fortunately born, you are a darling of God and of Mother Nature.

Man is not a fallen creature. Nor is the world a cursed place for a miserable race condemned to live by the sweat of its brow. True, man has to work, work hard with discipline and self-sacrifice. But this hard work and discipline is for the rise of the individual and the community to a state of paradise of plenty and freedom on earth itself. The march-on from humanity towards Divinity is the Vedic vision of human life, and Yajna is the Vedic programme of action both for the individual and the community on the onward path.

Remember your divine character and act for the realization of it to the full without relent, for yourself and for your children.

The Wonder world of Man

Man is fortunately born in a wonder world which is invincible, unconquered by any mortal, but gifted to everyone without discrimination:

अयं लोकः प्रियतमो देवानामपराजितः ।

यस्मै त्वमिह मृत्यवे दिष्टः पुरुष जज्ञिषे ।

स च त्वानु ह्वयामसि मा पुरा जरसो मृथाः ॥ १७ ॥

Ayaṁ lokaḥ priyatamo devānāmaparājitaḥ.

Yasmai tvamiha mṛtyave diṣṭaḥ puruṣa jajñiṣe.

Sa ca tvānu hvayāmasi mā purā jaraso mṛthāḥ.

(Ath. 5, 30, 17)

O man, this world is the dearest of the divinities, invincible, unconquered, for which you, O fortunate one, though sure to die, are born here. Such as you are, lucky yet mortal, loved of the Lord, we invite you, welcome you to the world, for sure you will not depart before your mission is accomplished.

Come and go, go and come, this is the passage of the human soul across this wonder-world of existence. If death is human destiny, achievement, accomplishment, fulfillment too is human privilege, and continuity, human distinction. Death is not the end, it is only a stage, life continues meaningfully.

Life-and-death, in fact, is a process. Death is a corrective and rebirth is a refresher, because without death man could commit hubris of claiming godhood. And death cannot take away man's spiritual immortality. So man's duty to himself is self-

development, full enjoyment of the beauty and glory of life in the world with discipline, creation of a noble humanity and rise unto the bliss of Divinity.

Faith, Reason and Superstition:

With all the human privileges of intelligence, freedom of karmic choice and a wonderful world for existence, man still needs caution and care to maintain faith in Divinity and in the Self in order to face the challenges of a world of trial and judgment. Right faith, faithful reason and a positive vibrant will is the condition of happiness and fulfillment: God provides a safety valve against deceit and self-deception:

दृष्ट्वा रूपे व्याकरोत्सत्यानते प्रजापतिः। अश्रद्धामनतेऽदधा-
च्छ्रद्धाऽसत्ये प्रजापतिः। ऋतेन सत्यमिन्द्रियं विपानः-
शक्रमन्थसऽइन्द्रस्येन्द्रियमिदं पयाऽमृतं मधु॥७७॥

*Dṛṣṭvā rūpe vyākarot satyānṛte prajāpatiḥ.
Aśraddhāmanṛte'dadhācchraddhāṁ satye prajā-
patih. Ṛtena satyamindriyaṁ vipānaṁ śukrama-
nḥasa'indrasyaendriyamidaṁ payo'mṛtaṁ madhu.
(Yaj. 19, 77)*

Having seen two aspects of created existence (with man placed in the midst of it with his gift of free choice), Lord Prajapati analyses it into two forms:

one, reality, truth, Dharma; the other, unreality, illusion, adharma. Then the Lord places faith and commitment (Shraddha) with truth, reality and dharma; the other, no faith, no commitment (ashraddha) with untruth, illusion and adharma.

The Vedic guidance for man is thus clear: Have faith with commitment to truth and dharma, because that is wisdom; no faith, no commitment with untruth and adharma. Faith and reason go together because the link between the two is truth. Without reason, faith is superstition because the link of truth is missing. It is true that reason cannot explain all the articles of faith, but the basic of that faith is the soul's vision which is higher than reason. The sages call that vision 'higher reason' or 'Intuitive Pratyaksha', as that of the yogis (see Sankhya Sutras, 1, 89-92). Keep faith in yourself in the family, nation, humanity, in Nature and in God.

Man and Society:

No one can live alone. In fact, no one is alone, only we do not know this basis and essential fact of the nature of life. Purusha eva idam sarvam: This entire world of existence is a purusha, a living, breathing, intelligent, organismic, self-aware, sovereign system, a cosmic 'Person', whose

beginning and end no one sees, no one knows. We are all cells in that Body. Parama-Atma is its soul, Nature is Its Body. We are not separate from It. There is none that can, that does, exist outside of It. The entire humanity with all other living beings, the earth, the atmosphere, the solar system, the galaxies, all this is but a tiny part of It. Therefore this all is one and you and I are in and with It. We should know this and live with It all. Thus says the Veda in the Sanghatana Sukta (Rgveda 10, 191, 2-4):

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।

देवा भृगं यथा पूर्वं संजानाना उपासते ॥ २ ॥

Sam gacchadhvam sam vadadhvam sam vo manānsi jānatām. Devā bhāgam yathā pūrve-samjānānā upāsate.

Live together in unison, move forward in unison, speak together in unison, knowing one another well without reservation and concealment, be united in mind, thought and will, and in resolution to act together in harmony without conflict or dissension, the same way as the noble people of all time thought, willed and acted together in the observance of Dharma with their rights and duties shared and performed in freedom.

Veda and Sanatan Dharma recognizes the rights and duties of all, integrated, in freedom for all. The laws of living together, thinking and working together in harmony, for the individual and society, are framed in the context of time and place, without conflict between the individual and society. But all laws and practices must be in consonance with the permanent values of unison, integrity and harmony. In other and short words, the ideal of society as an organization should be to live and act as a self-organizing organism. We should know that any organism, much more the human society as an intelligent body self-aware of its whole self and the individual members, is greater than the aggregate of its constituent parts. The spirit is Sanatan, it is constant, permanent, universal, its form is mutable, which means that the Sanatan is open ended too. So while framing the laws to suit any new needs of the time, we must remember that the universal spirit must not be violated in respect of divinity, Nature, humanity as whole, and the laws of conscience and conscientious reason. Ask yourself: Are you serving society as a whole or are you pleasing a particular section at the cost of the whole?

Veda continues:

स॒मा॒नो मन्त्रः॑ स॒मि॒तिः स॒मा॒नी स॒मा॒नं मनः॑ स॒ह चि॒त्तमे॑षाम् । स॒मा॒नं
मन्त्र॑म॒भि मन्त्र॑ये वः स॒मा॒नेन॑ वा ह॒विषा जु॒होमि ॥ ३ ॥

*Samāno mantrah samitiḥ samānī samānaṁ
manah saha cittameṣām. Samānaṁ
mantramabhi mantraye vaḥ samānena vo
haviṣā juhomi.*

Let your mind and mantra, thought, discussion, pros and cons of thought, and resolutions, be equal and united in harmony. Let your group discussions, committees and assemblies be equal and harmonious. Let your mind at any particular time, in any particular situation, and your mind in respect of the past, any memories sweet or, may be, bitter, any ambition, reservations, relationships personal or ideational, let all these be now open, equal, and united in harmony. Thus do I initiate and exhort you all with a union-mantra equally well, and I give you this common wealth of mantra and materials for a happy united and prosperous life together.

And take heed, all of you:

स॒मा॒नी व॒ आकू॑तिः स॒मा॒ना हृद॑यानि वः ।

स॒मा॒नम॑स्तु वो॒ मनो॑ यथा॒ वः सु॒स॒हास॑ति ॥ ४ ॥

*Samānī va ākūtiḥ samānā hrdayāni vaḥ.
Samānamastu vo mano yathā vaḥ susahāsati.*

Let your decisions be unanimous with fair and frank discussion. Let your hearts, feelings and attitudes toward one another and to the community be loving, harmonious and cooperative. Finally, let your mind and soul be united in perfect agreement and harmony so that, united and harmonious, you ever move forward, higher and higher, to achieve your common goal.

And then, there is the blessing for success which, if out of presumption and pride we fail to acknowledge in union, becomes a warning because, after all, with all our freedom of choice, we cannot ineffectualise the divine ordainment.

संस॒मि॒द्युव॑से वृ॒षन्न॑ग्रे वि॒श्वान्य॑र्य आ ।

इ॒ळस्प॑दे स॒मि॒ध्यसे॒ स नो॑ वसू॒न्या भर॑ ॥ १ ॥

Samsamidyuvase vṛṣannagne viśvānyarya ā.

Iḷaspade samidhyase sa no vasūnyā bhara.

O Lord self-refulgent, infinitely generous giver of light and wealth, you join together all the elements of nature and humanity together. With your refulgence you blaze on their earthly Vedi upto the sun and with your love you shine in the heart core of humanity. Such as you are, we pray, be gracious and bless us with all the

wealth and splendour of the world. (And we know that if we fail to win your blessings, still you would never allow that we scatter and waste away.)

Love and Friendship:

Dedicated to truth and Dharma together and individually, we need love and friendship with open eyes and open mind, having given up hate, jealousy and calumny:

दृते दृग्हा मा मित्रस्य मा चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षन्ताम् ।
मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे । मित्रस्य चक्षुषा
समीक्षामहे ॥१८॥

*Dṛte dṛgha mā mitrasya mā cakṣuṣā sarvāṇi
bhūtāni samīkṣantām. Mitrasyaāham cakṣuṣā
sarvāṇi bhūtāni samīkṣe. Mitrasya cakṣuṣā
samīkṣāmahe. (Yaj. 36, 18)*

O Lord of infinite love, destroyer of suffering and sorrow, bless me that all people and all living beings may look at me with love and friendly eyes. May I too look at all living beings with love and friendly eyes. Bless us that all of us may look at all and every one with friendly eyes and treat one and all with love.

Thus joined together in love and friendship as one family, we should dedicate ourselves to common and universal good, pursue common and universal values of truth and Dharma, and achieve our common goals of Truth, Beauty and Goodness in a world of peace, prosperity and freedom for all.

अग्ने व्रतपते व्रतं चरिष्यामि तच्छक्रेयं तन्मे राध्यताम् ।
इदमहमनतात् सत्यमुपैमि ॥५॥

*Agne vratapate vratam cariṣyāmi tacchakeyam
tanme rādhyatām. Idam-aham-anṛtāt satyam-
upaimi. (Yaj. 1.5)*

O Agni, Lord of Light, Truth and Dharma, master protector of vows of the observance of Truth, here I take the life time vow of discipline that I shall ever follow Truth and Dharma in thought, word and deed in life and conduct. Pray, help me to observe truth and Dharma. Pray give me strength to keep the vow. Here I pledge myself to give up untruth and follow truth and Dharma, come what may.

The dedication of the self is relevant to the individual as much as to any human institution such as family or any human organization from the local to the national and even the international level. No family, no organization, no nation can survive, much

less progress, without self-discipline and self-dedication. Even the earth and the global system cannot be sustained without truth, Dharma and total dedication:

सत्यं बृहदृतमुग्रं दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवीं धारयन्ति ।

सा नो भूतस्य भव्यस्य पत्न्युरुं लोकं पृथिवी नः कृणोतु ॥ १ ॥

Satyam bṛhadṛtamugraṁ dīkṣā tapo brahma yajñah pṛthivīm dhārayanti. Sā no bhūtasya bhavyasya patnyurum lokam pṛthivī naḥ kṛṇotu.

(Ath. 12, 1, 1)

Truth, the cosmic Law of Infinity, passion for rectitude, total self dedication, relentless austerity of discipline, Lord Brahma and divine Vedic Law of Dharma, Yajna as united creative performance of karma, these together sustain the Mother Earth and the globe. May she, Mother sustainer of past, present and future, inspire and create for us a higher, wiser and greater world of Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

Nothing can be achieved by idleness. Everything can be attained by dedication and hard work with discipline. By vrata, total self dedication, you get on to Diksha, you get Dakshina, expertise and high recognition, by Dakshina you get Shraddha, faith in yourself and the faith of others in you with, of

course, faith in God and your competence in Grace, by Sraddha you get on to the attainment of Truth and Dharma. You yourself become a human definition of Truth and Dharma:

वतेन दीक्षामाप्नोति दीक्षयाप्नोति दक्षिणाम् ।

दक्षिणा श्रद्धामाप्नोति श्रद्धया सत्यमाप्यते ॥३०॥

Vratena dīkṣāmāpnoti dīkṣayā'pnoti dakṣiṇām. Dakṣiṇā śraddhāmāpnoti śraddhayā satyamāpyate. (Yaj. 19, 30)

Such persons, by the Grace of God, are self-made by hard work and discipline of austerity. They are firm in God and the Vedic vision, and they rest and abide in truth and the law of Dharma. They are vested in truth and honesty, they are wrapped in honour and decency, and they shine in glory. They are masters of their own inherent power, they are fortified with unshakable faith, they are protected by the invisible armour of faith, they are established in Yajna with the spirit of self-dedication. And such is the mission of their life upto their last breath. (Ath., 12, 5: 42-70)

Consequently and rightfully, their reward as persons is vigor and virility with glow on the forehead, a brilliance of character and personality,

strength and patience with high forbearance, power of unflinching speech, clarity and sensitivity of sense and mind with penetrative intelligence and a grace of personality born of the observance of Dharma. As of persons, so is true of the nations, since nations are constituted of persons with their grace of personality and character. (Refer to Atharvaveda, kanda 12, sukta 5).

The reward of such persons and such nations is that they are blest with divine grace and the Vedic vision. Their intellectuals, teachers and researchers are brilliant, their rulers, administrators and defence forces are brave and invincible, their people are united, dedicated and creative with a strong economy. Their brilliance is spotless, their honour is impeccable, their glory is untarnishable, and their assets of wealth and achievement are undiminishable.

Their health and age is full and glowing. Their personality is handsome, their name is honourable, their reputation is respectable, their pranic energy is vigorous, their eyes are focused and clear, their ear is sensitive and far perceptive. The country flows with water and milk, their fruits overflow with juice and sweetness, their food grains and vegetables are nourishing, their food and drinks are delicious.

Established in the truth of reality and the law of Dharma, they achieve what they ought to and what they want to for social service. Their people are prosperous, their cattle wealth is healthy and productive (Refer to Atharva, kanda 12, Sukta 5)

Education:

For an enlightened, strong, prosperous and self-sufficient developing and developed nation, what kind of education is needed? Is professional education enough?

Professional education is necessary and indispensable for employment and maintenance of peace, law and order. An empty mind is the devil's workshop, therefore, if the people are well employed, it is expected that they would be busy with no time for mischief. But to have no time for mischief is not the whole reason for law and order. What we need for the nation is education for civilized living based on moral and spiritual values besides professional education. A nation of strong moral values can survive material hardship, but a prosperous nation with no moral values can go down as happened with certain nations which were on top in past history. Value education is the same as 'dharmic education' which means

education for the sustenance and progress of a nation. It should not be interpreted as religious education in any multi-religious and multi-cultural modern society. Value education means education for the observance of universal values acceptable to the people in general for social cohesion, peace and progress, through dynamic action with joint endeavour.

Taittiriyaopaniṣad states the programme of education for the right conduct in society. The method is cooperation between the teacher and the disciple, teaching by the teacher, self-study by the disciple in the process. The values: Rtam, righteousness; Satyam, truth as it is; Tapa, austerity in living, no indulging in luxury; Dama, control of the senses which love to play with the beauties and the seductives of the outside world; Sama, control and peace of the inner faculties of the mind such as desire, greed, ambition against others, doubt, fear, negligence of duty, anger, illusion, etc., Agnayah, fires, i.e., persistent maintenance and progress of creative and productive programmes from the individual to the national level; Agnihotra, daily Yajna and family's contribution to social productivity; Atithayah, hospitality to the visitors; Manusham, service of humanity; Praja, education and development of children of the family

for proper settlement; Prajana, family planning, birth and raising of children; Prajati, healthy procreation and knowledge of health system, for a happy life for all. Of all these, Truth is the essence, say the sages; Tapa, discipline with austerity, is the essence, say the sages. Tapa is the thing, Tapa is the essence of education, to the exclusion of idleness and indulgence. Idleness and indulgence is the bane of any nation of humanity. (1, 9, 1)

Having stated the practical educational needs for the new entrant of life, in addition to the relevant Vedic lore and professional training, when the disciple is to leave for home, the teacher speaks the last words of the graduate's commitment to life's obligations. These words are spoken today also at the university convocation ceremony.

The Precept (Taittiriyaopaniṣad 1.11)

Vedam anūchya ācārya ntevāsinam anuśāsti.

Having taught the Veda, the teacher instructs the resident pupil at the graduation:

Satyam vada. Dharmam cara. Svādhyāyānmā pramadaḥ. Ācāryāya priyam dhanamāhr̥tya prajātan̄tum mā vyavacchets̄h. Satyānna pramaditabyam.

Dharmānna pramaditabyam. Kuśalānna pramaditavyam. Bhūtyai na pramaditabyam. Svādhyāyaprawacanābhyām na pramaditabyam. Devapitrkāryābhyām na pramaditabyam.

Meaning: Speak the truth. Conduct yourself with Dharma in life. Don't neglect self-study. Having offered acceptable, respectable gift to the teacher with gratitude, continue the family line with progeny. Snap it not.

Truth must not be neglected. Dharma must not be neglected. Protection and welfare of life must not be neglected. Do not neglect happiness and prosperity. Do not neglect study and teaching. Never neglect your duties to the parents, seniors and the divinities.

Mātrdevo bhava. Pitrdevo bhava. Ācārya devo bhava. Atithidevo bhava. Yānyanavadyāni karmāṇi, tāni sevityāni, no itarāṇi. Yānyas-mākam sucaritāni tāni tvayopāsyāni, no itarāṇi. Ye ke cāsmacchreyānso brāhmaṇāḥ, teṣāṃ tvayā'sanena praśvasitabyam.

Meaning: Be one to serve and adore the mother as divine. Serve and adore the father as divine. Serve and adore the teacher as divine. Serve and reverence the

visitor as divine. Do all those acts only which are irreproachable, not others (which are despicable). Follow those acts and habits of ours which are good, positive, not others. Give rest and refreshments to those Brahmanas who are really good amongst us.

Śraddhayā deyam, aśraddhayā deyam, śṛiyā deyam, hriyā deyam, bhiyā deyam, samvidā deyam.

Meaning: One should give. Give with faith and reverence. Give not with no-faith and irreverence. Give with grace. Give with modesty and humility. Give for fear of God. Give with sympathy and compassion.

Atha yadi te karmavicikitsā vā vritti vicikitsā vā syāt, ye tatra brahmanāḥ sammarśinah, yuktāḥ, Āyuktāḥ, alūkṣāḥ dharma kāmāḥ syuḥ, yathā te tatra varteran, tathā tatra vartethaḥ.

Meaning: And if ever in a situation you are in doubt about some act, or about a line of conduct, then, if there be Brahmanas, intelligent, with discernment, men of judgement, competent to advise, dedicated to goodness of action and conduct, devoted to Dharma,

courteous and sympathetic, then in that situation, do as they would do in a similar situation.

*Athābhyākhyateṣu ye tatra brāhmanāḥ,
Sammarśinaḥ, yuktā āyuktāḥ, alūkṣā,
Dharmakāmaḥ syuḥ, yathā te teṣu
Varteran tathā teṣu vartethāḥ.*

Meaning: Now in respect of people of doubtful character and questionable reputation: If there be Brahmanas, intelligent, with discernment, wise men of social judgement, competent so as to be followed, dedicated to social good, devoted to Dharma, sociable and sympathetic, then in any situation, do as they would behave with people of similar character and reputation.

*Eṣa ādeśaḥ, eṣa upadeśaḥ, eṣa vedopaniṣat,
Etadanuśāsanam, evamupāsitavyam, evamu
caitadupāsyam.*

Meaning: This is the holy commandment. This is the holy instruction. This is the sacred gist of the Veda. This is the discipline of life and education. This is to be holily observed. This is to be followed as Divine precept.

This is the completion of formal education for every individual without discrimination. This is the

open ended completion of Diksha also, open-ended because Svadhyaya, self-study, study of Scriptures and extension of knowledge with self study and teaching, is one of the injunctions of the individual's Dharma prescribed by the teacher on the authority of Veda and Upanishad. With this equipment of knowledge and discipline the individual rejoins the family and the society to play his part for personal, familial and social fulfillment.

Man as Individual and Society:

The individual is an organismic member of society, and society is our organismic integrative structure of individuals, families, communities, nations and regions. In an organism, every unit is for all, and all, as a system, are for everyone of the units. The earth is my mother, I am a child of the earth's:

यत्ते मध्यं पृथिवि यच्च नभ्यं यास्त ऊर्जस्तन्वः । संबभूवुः । तासु
नो धेह्यभि नः पवस्व माता भूमिः पुत्रो अहं पृथिव्याः । पर्जन्यः
पिता स उ नः पिपर्तु ॥ १२ ॥

*Yatte madhyam pṛthivi yacca nabhyam yāsta
ūrjastanvaḥ sambabhūvuḥ. Tāsu no dhehyabhi
naḥ pavasva mātā bhūmiḥ putro aham
pṛthivyāḥ. Parjanyaḥ pitā sa u naḥ pipartu.
(Ath. 12, 1, 12)*