

## **THE VEDIC CONCEPTION OF THE GODHEAD**

In the previous lectures a brief idea of the religious Object as an integral existence was given. God was shown to have multiplicity of qualities such as omni-pervasiveness and creatorship and beneficence and others. It was also shown that all religions, in one manner or other, subscribe to the view that God has the above mentioned qualities or has one or more of these above mentioned attributes. The emphasis on power or wisdom or beneficence or Oneness or Transcendence is due in all cases to partial visions and practical considerations. God is Nature in so far as He is its inward truth and self and creator. But God in Soul in so far as soul is also another truth of God which he seeks to attain in terms of Nature. Nature is mother of man in so far as it is in and through her he and come into being as a creature who has to recognize the inward Lord and Intelligence, which means so much to Nature and to man. Nature is finite and the phenomenal appearance of a deep reality that it seeks to exhibit or to attain to through the creatures who are children finitude (*Diti*). But the infinite (*Aditi*) too is the mother (the other mother) and she too creates children of light, and of both, the truth is the infinite Godhead. Thus man's voyage is from the mother of finitude, from *Diti*, to *Aditi* as it may be said, though it must be confessed that the meaning of *Diti and Aditi* may be much deeper than what we have given above. Anyway the struggle is clearly envisaged<sup>1</sup> and an exaltation from the finitude to infinitude is also planned, sine it is seen to be possible. But it entails a gradual orientation of the consciousness of man from its limited vision to the unlimited multi-dimensional vision, which is possible only when man is reborn in and of the infinite Mother.

There is always a danger of interpreting highly advanced religious literature which is revelation and symbolic (because integral) in terms of our studies of primitive civilizations and cultures and symbols. Attention has already been drawn to this fact. The Veda occupies a unique place in the history of

Spiritual realization and revelation. Undoubtedly naturalistic interpretations. Biological and geological interpretations, sacrificial interpretations, pragmatic and psychological interpretations are possible in respect of a literature that refers simultaneously to all the levels of experience and leads man from the lowest natural to the highest spiritual, whilst yet keeping up its integral spiritual supremacy. Thus there can be said to be, as Indian Psychologists have from the very beginning maintained, at least three fundamental ways of interpreting, namely, the natural (*ādhībhautika*). Swami Dayananda Sarasvati has refuted all ways of interpretation except the Nirukta or etymological. Modern savants belonging both to the West and the East have been trying to interpret the Vedic figures and

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<sup>1</sup> Daityas or Asuras, Dasyus, etc. typified by Vṛtra, Vala, Panis etc were the Lords or powers of finitude which opposed the Ādityas, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, Indra etc, who were deities of Light or Ascent and of Infinity.

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processes and struggles in a naturalistic or pastoralist manner. The gods of the Veda are stated to be of the natural order, namely of the earth atmosphere and sky; Thus Varuṇa, Indra, Agni, Sūrya, Rudra, Mitra, Aryaman, Maruts, Aśvins, and the goddesses, Uṣā, Sarasvati and others are all said to typify certain natural and geographical events and occurrences. Prof. Max Muller writes “All Vedic gods, nay all Aryan gods, were in the beginning physical. I say in the beginning, for there came no doubt a time when the concept of deity being once formed and giving become familiar, invisible and purely abstract objects were also raised to a divine status”.<sup>1</sup>

In Modern times there are certain writers who are not satisfied with the simple natural phenomena of elemental deities<sup>2</sup>, and abstract deities, as expounded with conspicuous success by Max Muller, Roth and others. They saw in these mythological presentations of astronomical phenomena, only planetary conjunctions eclipses, occultations and others. Thus a whole science of

mythological astronomy was started. It was begun in one sense by Mr. Nārāyaṇa Aiyangār<sup>2</sup> and was continued with unabated vigour by Mahāmahopadhyāya

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<sup>1</sup> *Science of Mythology*: p.817, “It is true that the conception of all ancient Aryan gods was suggested by what we call real objects, by the great phenomena of nature, but they were fashioned as divine personalities by the mind of man..” The truth is that man is imaginative and perceives more dimensions of reality than the eye perceives. And investigators into primitive culture find it to be more complex than simple for more reasons than one.

<sup>2</sup> *Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology 2 Vols*

<sup>3</sup> Pañcajanas: Poona Orientalist: 1942; *Agni in the Vedas*: New Indian Antiquary. 1942 etc.

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Dr. Sharma Sastri till the time of his death. The value of this approach consists in showing that the Vedic seers were well acquainted with celestial phenomena and were not merely observers of the terrestrial phenomena. Their interest in stellar phenomena was due to their belief in the rites of the Brāhmaṇas which exacted precise time – determinations. In fact, creation was construed by them to be an act of Sacrifice, as an act of a year which comprises seasons that are determined by the movements of the Sun, Moon and nodes and elliptical shifts that make changes in the seasons. The Sacrifice instead of being merely propitiatory became a science of celestial phenomena. A knowledge of the celestial helped the agricultural and pastoral vocations. Interdependence between planes began to be accepted as a fundamental truth.

A geological explanation of the Vedic Gods and their universe was undertaken by the late Mr. T. Prameśvara Aiyer<sup>1</sup> who tried to show that the Vedic R̥ṣis were conversant with subterranean phenomena and the subterranean products such as petroleum, and other volcanic products. Interesting though this interpretation is, that too appears to be rather novel and ingenious than correct. It is just possible that there always occurred phenomena of the volcanic kind, and the story of the flood found in all the ancient literatures of the world is a standing

testimony to the knowledge of the geological formations. But that the Gods of the Veda were just powers in the purely geological sense it is into possible to accept.

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<sup>1</sup> Rg Veda: cf. for a physiological account: *Vedic Gods*: Dr.V.Rele For Geographico – Geological account: See *Rig Vedic India*: A.C.Das(2vols)

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While therefore all efforts to discover in these hymns otherthan naturalistic meanings and prayers to nature-gods are welcome, the naturalistic meanings and prayers to nature-gods are welcome, the naturalistic tendency is very strong in man and man knows about God only through his knowledge of the World of Nature. Pantheism is the first step in religion, but pantheism is essentially perceptive in character. But it is by the psychological that man transcends the naturalistic pantheistic statement.

Before we proceed we can remark that the Veda is more than a mere naturalistic document. Not without justice was it described as document that intimates the three qualities or guṇas, namely, the natural (tamas), sacrificial (rajas) and divine and moral (sattva), which are represented by the three ways of approach the *ādhībhautika*, *ādhidaivika* and *ādhyātmika*.<sup>1</sup> The *ādhidaivika* rendering is a deistic rendering, or else it is merely an interpretation of the fruits that accrue to man when he sacrifices to the Gods or powers of Nature or supernature (in so far as most results are said to accrue after death). If we can think of two kinds of worship or Sacrifice, one would be for immediate fruits an the other would be for fruits after death. Man believes more in life after death than in immortal life, death or no death.

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<sup>1</sup> As I will have occasion to state later, the meanings of the two terms *ādhībhautika* and *ādhidaivika* have not been clearly established. I suggest that the *ādhībhautika* means that which refers to nature, whereas *ādhidaivika* refers to the powers behind the natural phenomena, the elements and senses and others. These powers are cosmic and get their strength an dynamism from the

One Supreme or source i.e. Brahman. Cf. My article *Adhidaivatvam and Adhyātmam in the Kenopaniṣad* JSVOI

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The great Sāyanācārya following the footsteps of earlier writers on the *karma-Kaṇḍa* of the Vedas and the Pūrva Mīmāṃsa Sūtras of Jaimini, commented upon the Vedas. This gigantic task has performed with such ability that he is even today held as the authority on Vedic interpretation. His reading of the Veda was strictly limited to the sacrificial meanings. The reasons ofr this procedure were obvious; firstly succeeding generations usually lose touch with the significance of rites and the details of performance of the several rites. Once this traditional knowledge is lost, even as in many practical and sculptural sciences have been then there arises great difficulty. The details are all important in this science of sacrifice even as is the case with laboratory work. Especial is the difficulty when symbolic references are involved. We owe it to Sāyanācārya that he preserved for us the great treasures of Vedic technique of sacrifices. It is not for moderners to belittle the great work of that master. The limitations of his commentaries were definitely set by himself .The ādhyātmika rendering was not to his purpose. The established usage of the practical performance of rites and places of the several hymns in the respective places and times at the sacrifices were fixed by him as they had been handed down. He knew perfectly well that the ādhyātmika interpretation was always available to any Yogi who was granted the vision of the Mantras. Secondly, Karma, when it is done without desire or terrestrial gain would *ipso facto* lead to jñāna, the transcendent truth of the Veda, the Brahman.

The unorthodox schools<sup>1</sup> were many even during the times of the Vedas but this so-called unorthodoxy was mainly due to differences in the standpoints between the ādhibhautika – ādhidaivika schools and the ādhyātmika schools. These denied the need for outer sacrifices to so called gods of Nature and Sacrifice especially of the great wealth in cows and children and others: and secondly the sacrifice of living beings was very repellent to them. Whatever the

reasons, we can see that these schools began to think of sacrifice as an offering of the very best and the very loved things to God. And speculating in this manner, the best that has to be sacrificed is our selves. But this too meant a gross version of the sacrifice. Sati or self – sacrifice may be quite all right in love but the true sacrifice that is sought after is firstly of the desires and greeds, the movements of the outward-turned motor organs and of the sensory organs; then of the egoism, and then of everything that means to stand between the fullest self-offering to the Universal Consciousness, Brahman<sup>2</sup>. Sacrifice itself became not a ritual in the outward sense of sacrificing others but of one's organs of action and knowing of one's mind, one's knowledge and intellection and will finally of oneself to the Divine through *tapasya*-fire. Thus sacrifice became an act of

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<sup>1</sup> Sāṅkhyas, Buddhists, Cārvākas, Jains, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Sātvatas, Pāñcarātra Āgama followers all refused to subscribe to the doctrine and practice of actual killing of animals etc. Śunaśśepa Hymns and Aitareya Brāhmaṇa story have to be read symbolically. Equally important is it to distinguish between the materialistic reaction of the Cārvākas and the yogic or ādhyātmic reaction of the Sāṅkhya, Buddhist, Jaina and Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva and other Āgamas.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tirumangai, the ālvār, has shown the method of Maḍal or self-offering in Love (Kāma) to God: Dr. K.C.V. Complete works vol5 p.317

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transmutation through directing everything towards God. Thus the law of growth was evolved on right lines of dharma, discrimination, Sāṅkhya, in close conjunction with yoga. Ādhyātma Yajñā became Yoga.

Any serious Yogi or occult student can discover the symbolic meanings of the terms *paśu*, *gau*, *aśva*, in their lower character to mean the lower motor organs and sense – organs, but those swift steed verily lead men godward when offered to the Divine Godhead. Thus Paśu-Medha or Yajñā, Aśvamedha, Rājasūya and others are deep spiritual sadhanas whose culmination is the Puruṣa-medha and Brahma-medha<sup>1</sup>.

The clear meanings of the rituals and sacrifices got lost due to a variety of causes. And the symbolisms enshrined in them got sequestered and esoteric, being communicated only to those who had by their training and experience become fitted to get admission into such secrets. But we know that not all the efforts even of esoteric sections have been able to keep the symbolisms alive, for any symbolism lives and becomes a creative instrument only when the consciousness of the seeker is able to grasp and utilize its meanings for his own ascent into

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<sup>1</sup> Puruṣa-medha and Brahma-medha samskāras are performed after death to very eminent scholars or knowers of Brahman. *Medha* means both sacrifice and intelligence. To sacrifice means to recognize and to offer to the Divine the powers of the several portions of our psychophysical being and thus grow into the consciousness of transcendence. Puruṣamedha is ātma-sākṣātkāra-consciousness, even as Brahma-medha means Brahma-sāyuja consciousness. Cf. Puruṣa-Sūkta Conception of the Divine's Sacrifice and Śrī's Sacrifice in *Satapatha Brāhmaṇ*

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many worlds. For the one thing that is more than anything clear to any deep student of mysticism is that the mystic or adept or arhat, or yogi or siddha is capable of dwelling in more planes of consciousness than the one the ordinary human being is aware of. And it is precisely the business of the symbol to interpret one words to the others and *vice versa*. Those who only conceive of symbols in the manner of mathematical formula are stating the very fringe of the truth of student of Veda can do justice to the figures and personalities of the many worlds<sup>1</sup> unless he is aware of their correspondence between themselves. This obviously is beyond him for no yogi has so far undertaken the task of rendering the truths of such a multi-dimensional consciousness amenable to the modern mind, barring Sri Aurobindo. Indeed even the rites and sacrifices would gain unique recognition only when the details of the outer representations are

seen to be symbolic correspondences in the inward consciousness as it ascends the many planes of universal experience that more and more begins to appear to be integral. The hidden side of Yoga will get strengthened when it is compared with the sacrificial rites prescribed by the ancients in the Bāhmaṇas, and comprehended esoterically by the Upaniṣads and annotated by the Purānic half-mythological

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<sup>1</sup> cf. *Secret of the Veda and Hymns of the Atris*: Sri Aurobindo. For a recent attempt, diffuse and not yet systematic, see the *Secrets of Spiritual Life*: Dr. Mohan Singh and by the same author: *New Light on Krishna and Gita and Mysticism of Time in the Rg Veda*.

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and half – imaginative accounts of historical tradition<sup>1</sup>.

Thus it is we find the Upaniṣadic view gained ground. Rational presentation of the intuitive truths and figures was attempted. Instruction was granted by teachers of wisdom, whether from the sacrificial or the *ādhyātmika* or psychological angle did not matter very much at the beginning. Later on the principles of growth of psychological awareness of the Supreme Consciousness and Delight, transcendent to all processes were taught to the discerning. Even the Sāṅkhyan and Buddhist schools found substantial source-texts from this most significant literature. Thus if we can call the Hymns the *ādhidaivikam*, the Brāhmaṇas the *ādhibhautikam* and the Upaniṣads from the *ādhyātmika*. It is true, however that the *ādhyātmika* holds the key to the entire literature. It is therefore that *ācāryas* have called the Upaniṣads, Vedaśiras or Vedānta, and have given it the primal place. But it must also be clear that even the esoterics of the Upaniṣads can never be penetrated by any one who has not the equipment and training in Yoga nor can rituals and sacrifices get clarified and promote the integral knowing of the



<sup>1</sup> History has to be understood psychologically if it has to appear as a ectype of the archetypal truth which seeks to have that solid character of freedom in the manifestation Cf. *meaning of History*: Nicolas Berdyeav for the view that History is the phenomenal manifestation of the supreme truth of the Subjective Divine, eternal and archetypal. Symbolisms correspond to these manifold concrete phases of the essential tragedy of Christ-Love.

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Divine as Seld and Being of all<sup>1</sup>.

Swāmi Dayānanda Sarasvati held that the Vedas taught Vijñāna, knowledge, Karma and Upāsana. Swāmi Dayānanda Sarasvati was the first among the moderns to challenge the interpretations of Sri Sāyanācārya and the naturalistically minded Western savants who for want of better guides followed the footsteps of Sāyanācārya. Indeed there was a tradition which Sāyanācārya followed, as ancient as the other method undertaken by Swāmi Dayānanda Saravati. It was the ritualistic method of interpretation made rich by the Mīmāṃsā tradition. There was the recognition on his part of the ādhyātma interpretation. But that was not emphasized by him nor did he have recourse to it except when the ritual interpretation flailed to be meaningful the *laukika* method of interpretation or the ordinary sense of the Vedic words could not be of any help. Nor could naturalistic interpretations of them help. We have to understand words in their *yagika* sense, philological or root – sense. This the Nirukta supplied. As Yāska stated<sup>2</sup> “Withoug the aid of Nirukta the Vedas cannot be understood.” Grammar or Vyākaraṇa must be fully understood for that protects the meaning of the Veda. Even here the Vyākaraṇa that has to be mastered is not the *laukika* but the philological (*yaugika*). The great Yāska again stated that all the words in the Veda have only *yaugika* meanings. That is

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<sup>2</sup> For Laukika interpretation see Yāska's Nirukta I.15.I.2; Mahābhāṣya of Patanjali III. 3.1.

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precisely the reason why the Vedic mantras resound with varied meanings and simultaneously refer to several planes of experience Swāmi Dayānanda Sarasvati on the Strength of the statements of the Nirukta and Mahābhāṣya of Patanjali undertook to expound the Vedas in the *yaugika* sense. The second factor about his methodology consisted in the acceptance of the Mantra portion alone as the Veda. The Brāhmaṇas or the ritual and liturgical portions, the Upaniṣads, the Itihāsas, Purāṇas, all were, according to him, of the Smṛit-order not the śruti order. These have accordingly secondary value as testimony. Of the Bhāṣya of Dayānanda, Sri Aurobindo writes, "it is a remarkable attempt to re-establish the Veda as a living religious scripture. Dayānanda took as his basis a free use of the old Indian philology which he found in the nirukta. Himself a great Sanskrit scholar, he handled his material with remarkable, power and independence. Especially creative as the use of that peculiar feature of the old Sanskrit language which is best expressed by a phrase of Sāyana's 'the multi-significance of roots'. We shall see that the right following of his clue is of capital importance in understanding the peculiar method of the Vedic Rishis<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bankim, Tilak, Dayānanda: Sri Aurobindo and Ārya* 1.218. The method of interpretation of Dayānanda has the sanction of the ancient grammarians. But the fact remains that whilst the contributions of Swami Dayānanda Sarasvati are invaluable, the general theory of reality extracted by him does not reveal the document to be of a powerful spiritual literature that leads Upaniṣads man to the summit of his consciousness. The realism of Swāmi Dayānanda. Sarasvati establishes the existence of the Personal Creator God, the reality of phenomenal creation in space time – causal scheme of strictest determinism saturated with

the moral principle of freedom and deserts. The acceptance of the triple eternal the Godhead, the souls and Nature or matter is all in keeping with the Monotheism of the Vedas. The godheads were all one alone even as the Veda states. But for him there were no Avatārs, no manifestations of the Godhead in icons, idols and temples. Cf. *Life of Dayananda Sarasvati*: Har Bilas Sarada 1946

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It is therefore clear that provided we are prepared to concede to the Vedas a real and complete revelation of the phenomenal, provided we are not biased in our native sense or corrupted by the 'sceptical modes' of modern thought that grant to their own insignificant consciousness a science that they are incapable of, we shall see that Swāmi Dayānanda had laid the world under the deepest debt of obligation for giving to mankind the treasure that was lost or hurled under the debris of confusing ideologies and interpretations. But as Sri Aurobindo remarks such a complete philological attempt is very difficult to establish.

Sri Aurobindo, the greatest among the modern psychological interpreters of the Vedic hymns is a Yogi. He differs from Sāyana, not indeed about the interpretations made in the sacrificial manner, for that may indeed be the truth in that direction, but about the interpretations he makes in respect of hymns and passages that are definitely psychological states of Supramental Consciousness. So thoroughly are the keys to interpretation from the psychological angle imbedded in the very literature or the Hymns that it is surprising that no psychological attempt was ever made by those who swear by the Veda. Sri Aurobindo differs indeed from the method of Roth and his followers who abjured the lead of Sāyana for naturalistic interpretations. Sri Aurobindo's thesis has not been entertained by modern scholars, whether Eastern or western for obvious reasons<sup>1</sup>. But it may not be long before it will gain the recognition it deserves.

According to Sri Aurobindo "Vedic deities are names, powers, personalities of the Universal Godhead and they represent each some essential puissance of the Divine being. They manifest the cosmos and are manifest in it.

Children of light, sons of the infinite, they recognize in the soul of man, their brothers and ally and desire to help and increase him by themselves increasing in him so as to possess his world with their light, strength and beauty. The gods call man to divine luminous fraternity, invite his aid and offer theirs against the Sons of darkness and division. Man in return calls the gods to his sacrifice, offers them his swiftnesses, and strengths, his clarities and his sweetnesses, milk and butter of the shining Cow, distilled juices of the plant of Joy, the Horse of the sacrifice, the cake and wine, the grain for the God mind's radiant coursers. He receives them in his being and their gifts into his life, increases them by the hymn and the wine and forms perfectly as a smith forges iron; .. All this Vedic imagery is easy to understand when once we have the key, but it must not be mistaken for mere imagery. The gods are not simply poetical personifications of abstract ideas or of psychological and physical functions of Nature. To the Vedic seers they are living realities: the vicissitudes of the human soul represent a

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<sup>1</sup> The obvious reason for the neglect is surely the materialistic and naturalistic bias of the modern scholars, who have lost themselves in naturalistic and philological speculation..

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cosmic struggle nor merely of principles and tendencies and tendencies but of the cosmic powers which support and embody them. These are the Gods and the demons. On the world – stage and in the individual soul the same real drama with the same personages is enacted<sup>1</sup>”.

Such a key of course had been provided by many mystics through the ages, but the truth seems to be that while some of these imageries could be favorably interpreted by the mystics, Gnostics, Āḷvārs, Nāyanmārs, Sufis, Neoplatonists and others, the major part of them has been beyond them too, impervious and impregnable. A systematic understanding of the whole Veda with the help of any one single key seems to be beyond most mystics. But we can see that they do reveal certain segments of the Supramental Consciousness that

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<sup>1</sup> *Hymns of the Atris: "Ārya"* II, pp. 106 Sri Aurobindo has translated and annotated the Hymns addressed to Agni in the Rg Veda. These are contributions which no student of the Veda should miss. See also his *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*: (which has his new introduction). A Dr. C. G. Jung in his *Psychological Types*. Brahman, according to him, "is a factor; it is also a definite psychological state characterized by detachment from emotional fluctuations. Release from the fluctuations of affects which means from the tension of opposites is synonymous with the way of redemption that leads to the state of Brahman. Brahman is not only state but also a process, a *duree crreatirce*. It is therefore not surprising that the symbolical expressions of this Brahman concept in the Upaniṣads make use of all those symbols which I have called 'libido symbols' (p.246). the entire chapter must be read to have a clear view of the psychoanalytical treatment of the Brāhmaṇa-Upaniṣadic concepts.

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belonged to the Ṛṣis those denizens of Absolute Reality.

The ādhyātmika interpretation is not merely of the processes, internal or intrinsic to the embodied self as some writers assume but it is more truly the mystical view which is also cosmically the intuition of the divine nature, integral and organic, supra-personal and characterized by unity- multiplicity in respect of powers, principles, energies and perfections. Thus the ādhyātmika view is not purely psychological or psychophysical or psychoanalytical but integral, total intuition of the nature of the divine reality in manifestation and beyond manifestation, in time eternity and in timeless eternity. It is capable of explaining the ādhibhautika-activities as well as the ādhidaivika powers and perfections, rites and sacrifices, yajñās and yāgas, and with all that, it alone can offer an abiding solution by clearing partial views and emphases. The ādhyātma-interpretation reveals that there are several planes of existence corresponding to several levels of consciousness which are known by the individual in his evolutionary or yogic progress with the help of appropriate organs which come

into being or else directly by means of awakened consciousness which is called the supermind of vijñāna. Thus true subjectivity of the spirit is attained. When attained it tends to reveal the unitas-multiplex nature of reality and divine in every sense of the term, and its infinity, eternity, ubiquity and inexhaustible fecundity are apprehended in the manifestations of that in space time nexus called creation of Līlā. All these are real planes but their unique or organic being is synthesized in the vision of the all integral Brahman or Spirit, the vision which is called rightly the *Viśva-rūpa-darśana* in the Gītā, Bhāgavata and other Purāṇic literature, the vision of Nārāyaṇa who is the *Sarva, sarvam khalvidam Brahma*.

The above is not pantheistic statement as such. god, the Supreme Person, is more than Nature which is supported by Him. In as much as He is transcendent to its as self and ground. He is not capable of being fully comprehended by it or even the human mind. The deistic view that the Divine is absolutely apart from Nature and outside it is also replaced by a higher theism, which counsels the doctrine of the immanent deity who is not exhausted by those in whom He is immanent, and who continues to be transcendent as ruler, ordained and ground of all processes of Nature. But this being not merely in the whole but in every part of the Reality, that is to say, it has to arrive at an immanence that shall truly be immanence in the sense of Self or Brahman of whom the entire Nature in its totality and in its manifold division, is but a body(śarira). Thus the ādhyātmika view will culminate in the view that God is the self of all, of myself too and is my Self. This is the Self – doctrine, the Ātman doctrine of the Upaniṣads, which reveals that all the Gods, men and nature have Brahman as their Self which enables them to state that their self and the self of all is One only, or identical.

A comprehensive understanding of the mythology behind the Veda is unfortunately not to be had. Recent interest in comparative religion and mythology has largely helped in this respect to illuminate the dark secrets of Vedic mythology. The creation theories instead of being just speculative stories are

seen to have a rationale. The evolution of the gods who are stated to belong to several spheres such as the earth, atmosphere and sky and the beyond, and the constant fights between the powers of darkness (asuras) and the powers of light (devas) are seen to have a different significance and an eternal significance. Both are indeed seen to be the powers of the One Divine.

The most outstanding presentation of the Myth of the Veda in recent times is undoubtedly that given by Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy which is so fully documented and so closely written that it is almost impossible to give a summary of it. Those who are interested should read his 'Hinduism and Buddhism'. But the general idea is clearly that there is only Supreme identity at the beginning without differentiation of being from non-being, light from darkness or separation of sky from earth." The All is for the present impeded in the first principle which may be spoken of as the Person, progenitor: Mountain, Tree, Dragon, or Endless Serpent." The second principle; which indeed is its alter ego is the dragon slayer, born to supplant the Dragon, in one sense its Father, in order to take possession of its kingdom, and to distribute the riches. Though this appears to be represented by a dismembering of the Dragon which makes it cease to be, either in accordance with the Father's will or against His will. Thus this act is an act of sacrifice which releases the potencies or potentialities of the Father, the Cause. This is the passion that is both an exhaustion and a dismemberment. But this does not mean that the Dragon can ever be destroyed. It now seeks to restore itself in and through its slayers or its children; it "in whom we were imprisoned is now our prisoner: as our inner man he is submerged in and hidden by our outer man. It is now his turn to become the Dragon-slayer." This process of building Upanishads, or discovery of the Self is thus a continuous or incessant multiplication of the inexhaustible One and unification of the indefinitely Many." Thus Dr. Coomaraswamy shows that the myth is an act of self – division of the One into the Many contained within it and an act of resorting the many to the Oneness in and through the surrender of each of the many to the One that is central and inner. This process is easily perceived of course from the outer or

objective side as a war between the One and its supporters the Titans or Asuras, the binders or hold-fasts, and the supporters of the releasers of the bonds. Later it can be seen that these releasers are those who construct the One out of its members, who build the fire-altar and the mansions of the One, and their opponents are those who prevent this building Upaniṣads. Thus a constant war goes on the surface whilst deep down there is no essential dualism<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The point to note is that the word '*Asura*' is used in tow different senses. Asuras appear to be in every case the opponents of dismemberment as well as rememberment and seem to take the side of reaction or possession or inertia unwilling to release their hold on what they have. The Devas again are always the forces of change, release. But we may also note another possibility, thanks to the knowledge we have of comparative religion,. Devas seem to have become the forces of reaction in the Avesta of Zoroaster. The forces that dismembered refused to remember and have thus continued to function in the old way and thus became forces of the Asura type, whereas the Asuras who opposed the dismemberment having been defeated at first in due course accepted and achieved the task of rememberment.

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The Myth narrated by Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy is essentially a narration of the creation and evolution of the individual, an evolution which indeed is a process by which the individual, an evolution which indeed is a process by which the individual identifies himself with the central Being whose *amśa*, ray, emanation, diversification or the many, he is. The eternal archetype of this story is of the Sacrifice of the Puruṣa, to whom the individuals in their turn have to sacrifice in order to become united in a deeper manner. Vṛtrahan, is to only Indra but also Br̥haspati and other Gods also. The stories of Paṇis and their dispersal and defeat, of Vala and his defeats are all representative of the self-same figure of conquest, of victory, of sacrifice of the forces of obstruction to upward ness and realization of the Oneness of all planes and existences. This fact is intimated by the most pregnant of utterances of the Upaniṣads such as



“He who perceives all creatures in the Self and Self in all creatures<sup>1</sup>.” “He who perceives nowhere difference” and others; such then is the myth. But then it is not quite enough to find this grand identification of all the exploits of Agni-Rudra, Viṣṇu, Indra, Varuṇa and Bṛhaspati and others in the One Figure of the Transcendent who has become the many. We have also to consider the fundamental natures or qualities of the *Sacerdotium and Regnum*<sup>2</sup>(the phrases are

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But from a historical account of the Asuras who were the earliest warriors we find that they were as highly advanced as any and were quite conversant with the same mythology as is exhibited in the Veda. Cf. *ura* India: Anantaprasad Banerji Sastri Patna. 1926 which discusses fully the Assyrian and Chaldean ancestry of Asuras and points out how Mohenjodaro civilization is Asuric. Cf. Rāmāyaṇa: Sundara and Yuddha Khāndas

<sup>1</sup> Īśa Upaniṣads.6

<sup>2</sup> *Hinduism and Buddhism*: Ananda K. Coomaraswamy p. 12-3

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Ananda K.Coomaraswamy’s) in each of the associate personalities just in each of these figures as Agnidrau, Rudramarutau, Viṣṇusūryau, Aśvinau, and it is necessary to bear in mind that this polarization in twin personalities of the Sacerdotium and Regnum, Priest and King, is very clearly intimated in the Pāñcarātra Āgama where the six qualities of the Supreme Godhead are paired in the fulgurations which are three, namely Sankarṣaṇa. Pradhymna and Aniruddha, a fact which is of capital importance though little noticed by Modern Scholars<sup>1</sup>.

Let us begin with the God Agni, who is stated to belong to the Earth though an arrival from heaven. “Born from the floods of Heaven (clouds) He came to earth as lightning, and when he disappeared and hidden, Mātariśvan a demigod, another Prometheus, brought him back and gave him to the tribe of Bhr̥gu”<sup>2</sup>. He is a form of the Supreme being, a lowest

<sup>1</sup> Dr Coomaraswami does not refer to this unique significance of Pāñcarātra theory of bipolar fulguration characterized by the *Sacerdotium and Regnum* characteristics. Cf. God in the Pāñcarātra. *Jñāna-bala, Aśvarya-śakti, Tejas Vīrya*, the three triads, are in fact the Sacerdotium and Regnum couples. Further even as in his chapter on Buddhism it has been shewn the Avatāra doctrine or the Myth of Solar Deity descent and the Agni Sūrya and Agni are indeed the basis of the philosophy of the Trinity. Cf. New India Antiquary. August-Sept. 1943.

<sup>2</sup> In *R̥g. Veda*: Keigi: (trans. Arrowsmith), however it is stated that Agīrasa Atharvan is said to have brought doen Agni to the earth. Kena Upaniṣads. States that Brahman appears to us even as *Vidyut* as lightning. Thus we have to take it hat the supreme Brahman is what is really meant by Agni and not the gross material fire or even the fire godhead defeated by Brahman in Kena cf. Bhāgavata III.12.10.12. cf.A. Āranyaka: which speaks of lightning as ādhidaiva and the heart as *ādhyātma* aspects of one reality

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or most material 'form' or pattern of the supreme, who has hidden himself in the waters, (the gross matter from which the other Gods drag him out<sup>1</sup>. Eight<sup>2</sup> are the names given to him, he born of Brahma-Prajāpati of Uṣas; these names are Rudra. Śarva, Paśupati, Ugra, Asanai, Bhāva, Mahān Devaḥ, Īśāna, and Kumarā is the ninth name. agni is the mos auspicious name<sup>3</sup> and Agni resides everywhere. He is spoken of as having six forms<sup>4</sup> as Jātavedas, Vaiśvānara, Samiddha, Narasmā, Svāha, and as bring in the doorways and the Sacrificial post. He as auspicious is the bringer of the Śrī or wealth goddess<sup>5</sup>, the granter of supreme felicity. Agni is the leader on the path of Realization<sup>6</sup>. He it is who as sacrifice carves the offering to the several Gods. He is the most important figure in the Vedic Rite<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ait Brāh.* I.Agnir va devānām avamaḥ Viṣṇuḥ Prathmaḥ... Sat. Brāh. 1.2.3 Agni is stated to be fourfoid and when the gods took possession of the trhee he entered into the waters and hid himself there. Buut he was forced out by the

gods, the waters having betrayed him so to speak. Then he spate out on it thrice and Ekata, Dvita and Trita Āptya gods were bon as a result.

<sup>2</sup> Śat Brāh.VI.1.3.9-18 Śat Brāh 1.7.3.8. The yogic significance is very important.

<sup>3</sup> Śat Brāh.1.7.3-8 “Agni is the gentle name of Rudra” cf. Rg.V.X

<sup>4</sup> cf. *Vedic Metre*; E. Vernon Arnold.p.260ff. He considers that Agni may well mean a clan as there are six different Agnis mentioned.

<sup>5</sup> Śrī Sūkta

<sup>6</sup> Rg. V.I.183.1; Y.S.I.1.1.14; cf. *Vaj.Sam.* IV 28; Śat Brāh. III.3.3.18

<sup>7</sup> Rg V 1.1.1. Agni as the absolute principle of sacrifice is so well known that along with Viṣṇu the *Kratu* all the other gods are indeed between them. Viṣṇu is stated to be the Lord of Sacrifice, and so much so, Agni is stated to be his body.

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Agni is a Vasu<sup>1</sup>. It may be pointed out also that being an issue of Prajāpati, as stated in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Agni yet is in essence the Son, Kumāra of the Trinity in one sense, and is identified with Rudra-Śiva in the self – same Brāhmaṇa. Mr. Narayana Aiyanaagar in his work on Mythology has tried to show that all the myths in one form or other in the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Purāṇas and itihāsas represent varying emphases on the Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa), Brahma Prajāpati and Agni-Rudra-Śiva as representative of God, Son and Holy Ghost trinity of the later Christianity. The Pāñcarātra version of the philosophy of Avatāras or descents for the purpose of Ascent is capable of being described in the language of Hinduism as *kṛidā* or *līlā*. It is clear from a careful reading of the myth of Agni that Agni is the Sacerdotium, the one Religious-Mystic Object throughout all types of worship whether it is ādhibhautika or ādhyātmika or ādhidaivika, the foremost of the powers of light brought to the Earth by the Atharvaṇa-Bhr̥gu. He has, as it were, hidden himself in the earth, waters and self as the indwelling secret of their life, light and knowledge and as the Sacrifice as the representative vehicle of the Cosmic powers of the Supra-cosmic Being who is eternally a multiple – unity. The understanding therefore of Agni Jāta-Vedah reveals that in Him, in the terrestrial as in the celestial, there are knowledge,

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. Upaniṣads. III.vi.1. *Tad yat prathamam ṛtam tad vasava ūpajīvantyagninā mukhena...* Agni thus belongs both to the group of Vasus of whom Sūrya is one as also is Rudra. We will find that Indra is a Rudra whilst Varuṇa is an Āditya. Cf. Ch. Upaniṣads. III. VIII. 1. cf. *Rudra inkriṣhna Yaju Veda*: K.Srinivasapatracharya (Gopalakrishnamacharya Com. Vol. 1942)

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power, mercy, lordship, creation, destruction and preservation, law-giving and law-maintaining, and all other attributes that really pertain to the True Religious Object. Indeed it is true to say that Agni considered in the fullest sense as having the import of the truth of the Ultimate not as the grandson or Son or creature so to speak, may well represent the Ultimate Being itself since Brahman is the sarva-vācaka-śabda.

Śrī Venkaṭanātha describes the essence of Godhood to consist in the following introductory verse to his Īśāvāsyopaniṣādhyātmika-Bhāṣya.

Sarveśānas saha mahimā sarbhūtantarātmā  
Sarvān doṣaṇ svayam atipatan sarvaidyaikavedyaḥ |  
Karmādhyakṣaḥ kaluṣaśamaṇaḥ kopi muktopabhogyaḥ  
Siddhopāyas sphurati Puruṣo vājnām samhitānte ||

And in one sense the last mantra of Īśāvāsyopaniṣad is addressed to Agni. It is a mantra that is common to all the Vedas, and appropriately it can be shewn that Agni, whether as the descent, *vyūha* or emanation of the Supreme Being, is as complete a manifestation as ever there can be

I shall show later that technically Agni and other Gods as cosmic powers cannot but be creatures and not emanations or descents. Even though the introductory Mantra of the Vājasaneyā Samhitā or Śukla Yajur Veda may lend colour to Agni being an emanate and thus perfect manifestation of the Supreme yet it does not shew anything beyond the fact that Agni when understood will

lead one onward and upward to the synthetic understanding simultaneously of all the higher planal representations of Himself and thus finally to the Original Source or Supreme Godhead denoted by the words Brahman, Nārāyaṇa etc.

Pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idam  
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate |  
Pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya  
pūrṇam evāvaśisyate ||

So if the sacerdotium is Agni, we shall see that Indra is the Regnum the King. If the latter is the king of the Gods the former is the Priest, Purohita of the Gods. The exploits of Indra are his ascendancy over Vṛtra, his knowing of Brahman first as seen from the Kena Upaniṣad; his supplanting Varuṇa in the supremacy of the Rulership, a fact that has been rather strangely explained by one writer as shewing that the moral sovereign had to yield ground before a superman concept, the real Deva, and by another writer as due to the fact that Varuṇa was in fact a moral Vṛtra, an asura, and therefore surpassable<sup>1</sup>. Whatever may be the idea behind the concept of Indra we find that the pure Regnum, however much of light, had to seek another figure who could combine both the attributes of Agni and Indra. It is true that Indra's exploits in releasing the forces

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<sup>1</sup> An ingenious explanation of the resonance of the Vṛtra, Varuṇa etc was made by Prof. Thadani on the lines of his letter meaning or significance theory of correspondence or identity. See his *Mystery of the Mahabharata* Vol I. but it appears to be far fetched and much too strained. So too is the vrātya-Vṛtra identification. Cf. Sri Aurobindo: Secret of the Veda and Hymns of the Atris.

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of good and the destruction of evil forces of construction are too important to be passed unnoticed. Indeed the majority of Hymns seem to be addressed to Indra, the power principle of Divine Action, the executive head of the functions of the Avathārhood, which are classically expressed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Saving of the Good and the destruction of the Evil and the establishment of Dharma.

The creative process has always attracted the speculation of all thinkers and poets. Creation Myths abound in plenty. The geological myth of the flood is an accepted fact in all mythologies<sup>1</sup>. The origination of the world at any one time has been given the go-bye except by the fundamentalists of Christian Faith. When all is said, it remains a fact that logically we shall have to speak of the prime cause as revealing a creative process or constructive activity in the world which obviously is in the making. The latter theory of building Upaniṣads of the universe out of bricks or atoms or wood even as is so extensively spoken of as the piling of the Fire Altar or Puruṣa of Sacrifice, has been rejected by many moderners as too mechanical a representation<sup>2</sup>.

The Vedic seers indeed spoke of the world as a building process since they speak about the measuring of the ground and the six regions by Varuṇa (R̥g V.V.85.5) by Indra (R̥g V. VI 47. 3-4) and by Viṣṇu (R̥g V.I. 154.1). The material cause of the World is stated to be Brahman, he being compared with Wood (R̥g V.X.31.7) and Tait. Brāh. (II.8.9.5) says, “Brahma

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mahārata Vana Parva for the Story of Mārkaṇḍeya.

<sup>2</sup> *Religion in Vedic Literature*: P.S. Deshmukh p.325.

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was the forest, Brahman was that tree from which they fashioned heave and earth.” The Kena Up. calls Brahman *Tad-Vanam*. The world is spoken of as having been forged by Brahmaṇaspati even like a smith (R̥g.V.X.72). Thus the efficient and material causality are stated to be identical since Brahmaṇaspati is indeed Brahman alone<sup>1</sup>.

It is true also that late the Cause is stated to be something undefinable as Sat or Asat, though the meanings of these two words are started to be the Conscients and the inconscients rather than mere Being and Non-being; in which case we shall find that the Cause is that which is other than the Sould and

the Matter, namely Brahman, the Purusottanm. Varuṇa, Indra and Viṣṇu thus form significant formation or triad of the Regnum who perform the functions of Prajāpati, Brahmaṇaspati or Brahman; in addition to the former two, the last figure has a unique exploit that reveals His perfect sovereignty over the Process.

References to Viṣṇu thus form significant formation or triad of the Regnum, who perform the functions of Prajāpati, Brahmaṇaspati or Brahman; in addition to the former two, the last figure has a unique exploit that reveals His perfect sovereignty over the Process.

References to Viṣṇu in the Rg Veda and other Vedic literature form an interesting development in the notion of the Nature of the Religious Object<sup>2</sup>. his tremendous strides are the most characteristic feature of Viṣṇu, which makes many thinkers identify Him with the Sun. of all the Vedic Gods Viṣṇu, is the only God whose name is predominantly preserved in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Vedic Mythology*: A.A.Macdonell. pp.11.ff. "Before Brahman became a potent formula it was perhaps force". Foreword by Henri Burr to Masson Oursel's *Ancient India and Indian Civilization*.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. Viṣṇu in the Veda*: R.N.Dandekar Festschrift Prof. P.V.Kane pp.98-9r

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later Hindu Trinity<sup>1</sup>. It is mentioned that he assisted Indra in the destruction of Vṛtra, a fact which made several scholars attribute a secondary place Viṣṇu but which must be considered to be otherwise in the light of the Kena-gloss. But these facts indeed by themselves only show that he was associated with Indra, the Regnum, in a way different from that of Agni for Viṣṇu is greater than Indra in so far as the Trivikrama-nature is unique to Viṣṇu is recognized as the Highest Form of Divinity. The Rg Vedic Hymns themselves, though fewer in number than those addressed to Indra or Varuṇa, are of the most exalted kind. Viṣṇu is related by many to Varuṇa, to Pūsan, the herdsman's God, to Savitar etc., and as *Gopa* he is later identified with the Kṛṣṇa of the Epic and the *Bhāgavata*.

His identity with the Surya-nature is expressed in the Rg Veda by such epithets as the following “The common epithets of Viṣṇu in the Rg Veda are *urugāya* (wide stepping), *eṣa* or *evayāvan* (full of motion), *dharmāni dhārayan* ṛtasya garbha, Vedah (upholding the ordinances) and *pūrvya* and *navya* (ancient and new). The Sun God is observed to be traversing the whole atmosphere from horizon to horizon through his wide strides: he completes the whole extensive course just during one day; he never swerves away from the path and never misses the tim: he is ancient because he has been since times immemorial and at the same time, he is young because he appears newly every morning<sup>2</sup>. “Thus the

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<sup>1</sup> Brahmā and Rudra as Śiva are not yet of great importance though Rudra is.

<sup>2</sup> cf *Viṣṇu in the Vedas*

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four prominent characteristics suggested by the above epithets of Viṣṇu, namely wide-steppingness of motion, regularity of Course and new and ancient forms of the same day are found together only in the Sun God<sup>1</sup>.”

These characteristics, it may be pointed out at once, do not refer primarily to Sūrya but rather to the Being who is spoken of as the Self of the Sun, since Viṣṇu’s *trivikramanature* is something much more important than the movement from horizon to horizon; for it means something supremely transcendent. The Pauranic version of the *Trivikrama avtār* is a clearer representation of the inner meaning of the transcendence. Further it is also seen that Sūrya and Candramas are spoken of as the two eyes of the Divine<sup>2</sup>, the Day and Night, Further it is also clear that Sūrya and Candramas are spoken of as the two eyes of Divine<sup>2</sup>, the Day and the Night, Further it is also clear that Sūrya and Agni<sup>3</sup> are nearer to one another than any other deity since they share the same qualities of heat and light, and both of them are the objects of the Religious Seer5s in the sense of Purohitas or Priests who in a significant sense form the Eyes of the Divine,



<sup>1</sup> ibid

<sup>2</sup> See Bh. Gītā. XV.12

*Yadādityagatam tejojagad bhāsayate akhilam*

*Yaccandramasi yaccāgnau tat tejo viddhi māmakam*

<sup>3</sup> The Sandhyāvandana of the Brāhmaṇas and other castes contains an invocation to Sūrya in the morning and Viṣṇu in the afternoon and Agni in the evening.

Idam Viṣṇur vicakrama tredhā nidadhe padam

Samūdhamasya pāmsure

‘Yad idam kim ca tad vikramate Viṣṇu tridhā nidhatte padam tredhā bhāvāya pṛthivyām antarikṣe divīti Śākaūṇih, Samārohane Viṣṇupade gayaśirasītyaurnāvābhaḥ’.

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Even as the Purohitas are the eyes of kings.

The nature of Viṣṇu further embraces in itself, as shewn already, the dynamism of Indra, the wide-ruler ship of the moral universe of Varuṇa who is only the wide-seer *urucakṣus*, and the might and power of transcendence revealed by his going beyond the three spheres of the terrestrial, atmospheric and Heavenly, a fact which reveals Him to be the *turya*-Lord, the *paramapadam*. It is this power of being omnipresent, and capable of enfolding everyghing by His actual touch and presence and light, that grants Him the status of being the preserver of Dharma, of Creation, of sustaining the righteousness and as the granter of freedom of the highest mansions of His supra-cosmic Existence. That He did descend with Agni and ascend in and through Cosmos shews His supreme powers of being unaffected by the bonds of the microcosmic and the limited. I have already pointed out that no Godhead who has not the perfect Consciousness and perfect power of omnipotence and omnipresence can descend at all into the cosmic scheme of History.

That the nature of Viṣṇu is sufficiently solar is clear also from the consistent application of the solar characteristic in the *sandhyāvandana* practices of the Hindus has also been shewn by Dr. Dr. Dandekar. He further shews that the description of Viṣṇu as the wearer of the *Sudarśaṇa* (Discuss or flaming wheel or the Good Eye-piece), as wearer of the Yellow robe (pītāmbara), as having padma (Lotus), even the imagery of His having plenteous hair, Keśava, Hṛṣkeśa, which represent the rays of the Sun issuing from Him also the terms RaviLocana and Shasrāciyih, clearly show that He is the indwelling Lord of the Surya, through whom alone all can enter into Svar and the Higher Viṣṇu's Abode, a fact made clear or revealed by the *Mahābhārta*. It appears clear that any attempt to reduce Viṣṇu to an extra-Vedic God will be futile, since His nature is obviously beyond the comprehension of the Gods of the other regions, whom He assists and upholds and indwells as their Self. The Purāṇic view that Viṣṇu is seated on the Waters of the Ocean beyond the six Oceans, that he is beyond the three spheres, that He indeed incarnates in a superior manner for the upward movement of Creation whenever necessitated by His Plan of Cosmic Love and Play, cannot be overlooked, though these may be considerably later additions to Hindu Theology.

Rightly too, the avatārhood of the Divine is especially the province of the divinity who has the Sunjas His Eye. Viṣṇu it is who incarnates, uplifts and gives meaning and value to the terrestrial scheme of regeneration of man. All this He does out of supreme love for all the creatures. So have the South Indian Āḷvārs<sup>1</sup> constantly referred to the *trivikrama* nature of the Divine as the one fact of supremest value which determines which God we shall adore. This wide understanding of the fundamental nature of the Divine can be more appropriately an understanding by the mass of men. The lordship of all planes and worlds belongs not to a restricted circle of the classes but

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<sup>1</sup> *Mudal, Irandām, Mūrām and Nāngām Tiruvandādis* and the *Tiruvāśiriyam* are devoted to the exposition of the greatness of Trivikrama in the following verses, 3,8,13-14; 5;4,5,9,18,47; and the entire seven of the last respectively.

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to the masses. The Godhead Viṣṇu reveals this total democratic acceptance of the people of His supreme nature. Thus it is that the future development of Viṣṇu in the general life of the people lies mostly in the universality of outlook, the realization that in his worlds and grace there is not a whity of difference between class and class, men and women; all alike share the possibility intimacy of the Divine Viṣṇu's grace. All participate in the life of Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa, the dark protector of the Cows, the Gopa<sup>1</sup>. Āḷārs, who have belonged to all castes and to the mass, have shown that Viṣṇu in His transcendence as well as in His descents as avatār, belonged to all as the indweller of all and as the Host of the supreme abode. It is by Him and with Him that we rise into His highest seats, where we find waiting for us "the Friend, the Beloved, the Beatific Godhead"<sup>2</sup> It is this supremacy that has been the cause of Viṣṇu's supremest place in the Pantheon. We find that the other Gods,, Savitar, Pūan, Prajāpati, Sūrya and Varuṇa finally being united in the single Personality of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, of whom they are but the subordinate powers or personalities. Viṣṇu more than Agni-Rudra reveals the beneficent grace and uplifting sustainership, for Rudra is the destroyer and powerful vengehead Godhead<sup>3</sup>, who is by no means void of features of

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<sup>1</sup> Rg.V.I.22.18

<sup>2</sup> *Hymns of the Atris*: Sri Aurobindo. Arya Vol.II.p.111.

<sup>3</sup> No doubt attempts have been made to make Rudra-Śiva a Dravidian Godhead, just as some thinkers have sought to make Viṣṇu an extra-vedic Being. The inner implications of the Agni Rudra equation clearly reveal that. The fact that the Śaiva Āgamās of the South and the Śaiva Mystics of the South have seen and enjoyed the Śiva aspect of Rudra-Agni will not justify the referring of Śiva cult or Rudra cult to the South Indian Dravidianism. The Agni-Rudra equation clearly points out the beneficent nature of Rudra as well as the terrible wrathful aspect of Him when disobeyed. Yet the fact remains that Rudra-aspect belongs to the Mid-air whereas the gentle nature of him as Agni proceeds from the terrestrial to the

spaces of the celestial Godhead. In the Epic Trinity we have the Rudra Viṣṇu powers of Godhead co-operating through force and guidance, so as to achieve the Victory of Cosmic Evolution. Like Viṣṇu Śiva Rudra too goes to the succour of all his devotees, and grants them their desires; but the highest seat and all cosmic descent into veriest matter is of Viṣṇu for the latter have supracosmic evolutionary import to the life of Man and Manifested Reality. Cf. Rudra Śiva: Dr. N. Venkata Raamanayya, Madras University. As already pointed out Agni is a Vas unto a Rudra whilst Indra is more a Rudra than a Vasu or Āditya. Varuṇa is an Āditya whilst Indra, the dionysic warrior goes with Rudra. That Rudra drank poison for the sake of Humanity is according to O.C.Gangoly referred to in Rg.V.X.136.7

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soul which has surrendered, itself to it or has given its sole and entire allegiance to it. This is achieved, metaphorically speaking, through a rebelling against the powers and stable personalities of the lower plane albeit divine personalities, and may, metaphorically again, be spoken of as a fight between the gods of the higher and the lower, the individual being their playground or battle-ground (*kṣetra*). Even the geographical place names signify the *ādhyātmic* figures and the *ādhidaivic* personalities of the Divine One, who is All, indwelling all, enveloping all.

The apparent confusion in the mixing up of appellations that specifically refer to one deity or god with another planal deity or god means nothing other than the existence of all the personalities of the Divine in each and every one of the personalities of the Divine. As has been pointed out there is an integral completeness in each manifestation of the Divine, whether it is noticed and praised and sung as such or not. The Ṛṣis sing the glory of that aspect of the Deity they perceive whether it be Sacerdotium or Regnum or both; it is always the Seers that sing. If the Brahman is One Ṛṣi (*Eka Ṛṣi*) as the Īśvāsyopaniṣad says in the 16<sup>th</sup> Mantra, the Deity is One indeed as the Rg sing of many Gods, and Goddesses, their benevolent powers or functional dynamous.

There is only one god and He has many functional godhead-personalities, seer-personalities called the Ṛṣis, and maternal – personalities inseparably with Him, the devīs who are counter parts of the devas. Each of these divine personalities is capable of being and giving everything. True as the Gita emphasized all worship of other Gods also leads to Him: but as sri Kṛṣṇa Himself has stated that worship is beneficent, effective and unfailing which is of Kṛṣṇa the total Personality in whom are combined all the powers of Ṛṣis and devas, for He is Viṣṇu, whose is the supreme transcendent Place, *paramam padam*. The sāvika Godhead, the sāvika worship without selfishness or desire for self. Sāvika-knowledge that leads up to the total integral experience of the One Supreme as containing within himself all the rest of the Gods and Ṛṣis is the requisite factor in religious consciousness. Such an experience of oneness with that total and integral Godhead alone can lead to liberation, to the feeling and knowledge and effective enjoyment without limitation of the richness of the world of the Supreme Reality without fear of return into the limited, constricted world of struggles. Thus it is also a fact that when we drop out all sectarianism by which we mean the conflict that is raised between the worshippers of the several gods or functional aspects of the One Supreme Divine, and seek through the disinterested sāvika-form any one of personalities of the One Divine, in its highest form, that divine personality will act as the realtor with the Total All. It will itself reveal that aspect of its own nature, however veiled by the functional disguise incident on the Cosmic function of the Godhead which is always one of splendid providence and beneficence on the plane and for the plane at which it is specifically located out of its own will. This revelation is surely likely to make the worshipper transfer his adoration from the image of God or idol, which the Deity he had so far worshipped had revealed to Him to that All Form. This does not mean anything more than an enrichment of the knowledge of the nature of the Deity interrelated with His own higher form and higher orientations. Thus Agni, Sūrya, Candāmas, Yama, Indra, Varuṇa, Aśvins, Prajāpati, Tvaṣṭṛ, Viṣṇu, Brahmaṇaspati, Soma, Rudra, Maruts, Vāyu, even Vṛtra, Vāli; etc., figures, are

all functionaries of the One Divine in the three planes Bhūh, Bhuvah, Svar, Viṣṇu passing beyond all. Thus when Śrī Kṛṣṇa announces that the Vedas deal mainly with the *triguṇas* and *triviṣayas*, and that He is beyond them He is revealing the fact that He is the integral Godhead, the one in all manifestations and in all births, even as the Āḷvār syas. He is the one Being of whom all Vedas speak.

In this context, before we proceed to the conception of the Godhead in the Upaniṣads which deal with this in a metaphysical manner, we may remark that the conception at which we have arrived is capable of being considered from the stand point of the Organic Philosophy which seeks to integrate all the functions of the Divine as Godhead's personalities in special relation of dependents or bodies of the Divine. Thus whilst Agni, Indra, Vāyu, Sūrya, Rdura, and Aśvins are really functions of the Divine One, yet they are sufficiently stable in their *ādhibhautika* nature and for common-sense experience so as to intimate som stable pattern of God's functions. This is what has given them a *rūdhi*-meaning. But when the worship of the total divine is made, not for any benefit in respect of that particular aspect of which that divinity is the governing or presiding authority, as in the sacrificial rites prescribed in the Brāhmanas for worldly happiness, then that divinity becomes the door to Infinity, and the meaning of the world designating that divinity has to be etymologically applied to the One Supreme Godhead, the Godhead of Gods. It is in this sense that these Gods. It is in this sense that these Gods, functionally presiding divinities over some particular domains or planes or elements or sues, become bodies of the Divine One, and the names that they have got have to be etymologically<sup>1</sup>, that is to say, functionally referred to that Supreme One Being. In either case, all worship when doen with the knowledge of that supreme Divinity will help the realization of liberation and integral revelation.

We have surveyed the galaxy of the Rg Vedic Gods comprising Varuṇa Viṣṇu, Agni, Rudra, Indra, Sūrya and Soma, and found that in each we have a Personality characteristic of the Godhead which we have found to be the Religious Object. In Varuṇa we have found to be the Religious Object. In Varuṇa

we have the Ṛta-lord, the Lord of Truth; in Agni the supreme puissance and power of Tejas and Will; in Indra, Pure intelligence, Supramental might and Lordship and richness; in Sūrya, we have the all encompassing jñāna; and in Viṣṇu, the transcending triple movement of the Divine Godhead who has reached the Highest abode after encompassing all. These personalities of the Divine are indeed One Godhead only (R̥g. V.1.165.46). His manifold personalities or perfections expressed in the places of Earth, Bhūḥ, Midregion, *bhuvuḥ* and sky, *Svar* and beyond (the *parama* pada). Brahman and Prajāpati reveal the creative activity of the Divine

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<sup>1</sup> Etymology arrives at root meanings, and all rotos are verbs according to Pāṇiṇi and this has been realized by modern philogists also. A name is a functional reality, and the importance of mediation or Japa of names of God reveals the growth of the planal consciousness as integrated with other and higher planes. Sātvikopāsana is the necessity.

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and as the Vast Infinite Being. No doubt even in the Vedic hymns we come across the supreme accessibility of the gods through prayer and offering of oblations which reveals their responsiveness and goodness. Thus we have even in the personalities of the Divine, the six appellations or guṇas that are ascribed as specially perceivable in addition to any infinity of adorable qualities, namely *jñāna*, *bala*, *aiśvarya*, *vīrya* and *śakti* as enumerated in the Purāṇas and Āgama. Beause of the possession of these six attributes the Godhead is called Bhagavān.

The Upaniṣads however reveal the self same personalities of the Divien at first in three terms of Sat, Cit and Ānanda, later amplified as Īśa, Adbhuta-vīrya, Madhu, Transcendent or Paramapuruṣa, Antaryamin, Akṣara, Ānandamaya, Jyotis, AkṣI, Ātman, (śarīri), Embodied Supreme personality.