

INTRODUCTION TO

25

**VEDAS, BRAHMANAS
AND ARANYAKAS**



DR. N. GOPALAKRISHNAN, Ph.D., D.Litt.
Scientist & Director IISH

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC HERITAGE
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Preface

Dhanyathman!

Indian Institute of Scientific Heritage is publishing the Introduction to Vedas, brahmanas and aranyakas with a mission oriented vision to learn and teach the true heritage of Bharath. Every Indian and also those who love and respect this ancient country should know what India was and what India is. For a clear understanding one should first go through the Vedas and related Vedic literature. Just like going through the map of India to understand something about India, we are bringing out the information on the Vedic literature in a nutshell. Those who would like to go deep into the ocean of ancient Indian knowledge, they have to do the thapascharya to learn and teach. Here is only an introduction. The first few steps for entering into the great palace of this great heritage of mankind. As Max Muller said " If we have to look for the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty the nature can bestow- in some parts a very paradise on earth- I should point to India"....The words of Dr. Thoreau will be worth remembering now "In the great teaching of the Vedas, there is no touch of sectarianism. It is of all ages, times and nationalities and is the royal road for the attainment of the great knowledge. It is, indeed, a remarkable circumstance that when western civilization discovers relativity, they applied it to the manufacture of atom bombs, where as Indian civilization applies it to the development of new states of consciousness"

Words of Dr. Arnold Toynbee " The vast literature, the magnificent, opulence, the majestic sciences, the great realized souls, the soul touching music, the awe inspiring gods. It is already becoming clearer that a chapter which has a western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self destruction of the human race. At this supremely dangerous moment in history the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way"

I do not want to write more than this !

With pranams and expecting your comments and blessings

15th August, 2008

N. Gopalakrishnan

INTRODDUCTION TO

VEDAS , BRAHMANAS AND ARANYAKAS

Foundation literature of Hindu dharma ; You know that for Christians the one and only one religious literature is the Bible and for the Muslims the Quran. For the Hindus the foundation literature are not one or one dozen. They are in hundreds The foundation literature of the Indian culture have been classified systematically. The ancient books are being continuously subjected to refining by addition, deletion, modification and correction, for updating by keeping the original books intact. The original contents are maintained as the base for all references. For those who are interested in learning the old versions, they can follow that and make their own contributions and commentaries. Those who want to study the modern books, produced by addition, deletion, modification and correction (by many scholars), have the freedom to do so. Thus we have authentic most commonly referred 10,000 commentaries in Sanskrit and 1,00,000 sub commentaries in other languages for 1280 (there may be difference of opinion about this number) authentic foundation literature of sanathana dharma

Date of composing these literature : Since Hindu dharma is actually of unknown origin, none knows clearly when these literature were composed. But there is a general agreement that these literature might have composed in the present style (even though they might have been existing earlier also) by 8000 BC onwards or so. The archeological evidence also agree to some extent to this figure. The Hindu literature is generally known as anaadi because its origin is not clearly known. It is also known as apourusheya which means beyond the capacity of human beings. Hence we cannot say when was exactly it started and when it was over. My opinion is that the composing of Hindu literature is still continuing and it is as per the rule of addition, deletion, modification and correction.

Authors of the literature : Unlike the literature of other religion & Hindu literature are composed by hundreds and thousands of Rishis from different places, at different period of time. Our Rishis knew pretty well that one book or one dozen books can not bring out all the knowledge required for human beings. Hence they decided to bring out literature on each subject and many Rishis contributed to make them up-to-date. Our Rishis knew that one or one dozen Rishis cannot bring out all the required knowledge of the choice of the people, because knowledge is so vast and many have to contribute. The knowledge created during a particular period of time, need not find application for all the time. Hence refining the existing knowledge is required. Otherwise it becomes obsolete. Hence the writing of Hindu literature is a process which continues even today and will have to continue for the coming many thousand years. No knowledge is final.

Ultimate aim of all these literature : All these Hindu literature are aimed to create iccha sakti, jnaana sakti and kriya sakti in each individual to lead a happy and useful life on earth and make heaven here itself. Among these, Vedas are the most important class of Hindu literature which include, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads. These are known as the direct Vedic literature. They are the base for all the Indian cultural books (Vaideeka saahitya)..

Vedas and their recensions : There are four Vedas . Rig Veda, Yajurveda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda . Rig Veda has 25 recensions (sakhas branches); Yajurveda has 108 (100) recensions; Sama Veda has 1000 recensions and Atharva Veda has 50 recensions. This type of classification under different recensions cannot be seen in any other religious books. Recensions means 'Sakhas'. (Since Yajurveda has two streams Sukla Yajurveda and Krishna Yajurveda, in discussions, we use the term four + one Vedas = Rig Veda + Sukla Yajurveda, + Krishna Yajurveda + Sama Veda + Atharva Veda)

Brahmanas and Vedas : Brahmanas are classified under these four + one Vedas. The Brahmanas word has nothing to do with the caste. It sometimes mean that 'prose' . We say that 'this book is composed in Brahminical style' means, it is composed as prose.

Brahmanas are books primarily written for conducting the yaagas. They are classified under each Veda. i.e. the Brahmanas connected with Rig Veda, Yajurveda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda.

Rigvedeeya Brahmanas: Aitareya brahmana composed by Rushi Maheedasa Aitareya. Sankhyayana Brahmana composed by Maharshi Sankhyayana. Kousheetaki brahmana is composed by Kousheetaki Maharshi.

Sukla Yajurvedeeya Brahmana: Sukla Yajurveda has only one brahmana namely Satha patha brahmana available in two versions. One with 100 chapters belonging to vaajasaneyee maadhyndina Yajurveda saakha and other having 104 chapters belonging to Kaanwa Yajurveda saakha.

Krishna Yajurvedeeya Brahmanas: Krishna Yajurvedeeya brahmanas are Thaithireeya brahmana and Maithraayaneeya brahmana. Thaithireeya Brahmana is supposed to be composed of Maharshi Yajnavalkya and the other one is composed by Maitreya Maharshi.

Samavedeeya Brahmanas : Samavedeeya brahmanas are many. Few among them are Jaimineeya brahmana, thaandya brahmana, aarsheya brahmana, shadvimsa brahmana, chaandokhya brahmana, saamavidhaana brahmana, abhootha brahmana, vamsa brahmana and samhithopanishad brahmana.

Atharva vedeeya brahmana : Atharva Veda has only one brahmana namely Gopatha brahmana. Gopatha word means deep / confidential / possessing in-depth meaning or message. It also means the foot step of Vedas because 'go' also has two meanings; cow and other meaning Veda.

Subject matter of the Brahmanas: The subject matter in almost all the Brahmanas is the explanation on how to perform yaagas. Some of the Brahmanas are part of the Vedas and some are separate books. As a continuation of the Brahmanas comes the aaranyakas.

The aaranyakas: Aranyakas are those literature which are very difficult to understand describing the rituals to be performed by the men who are moving to vanaprastha and sanyasa. For each Veda, there are separate aaranyakas. Some of the aranyakas are continuation of the brahmanas and hence separate aranyakas may

not be available for some Vedas. Aaranyakaas are also classified under each Veda like brahmana literature: Rigvedeeya aaranyakas are Aithareya aaranyaka and kousheethakee aaranyaka, Sukla Yajurveda has no aaranyaka, Krishna Yajurveda has Maithraayaneeya aaranyaka and thaithireeya aaranyaka. Sama Veda and Atharava Veda do not have aaranyaka, even though their brahmanas contain subjects dealt in aaranyakas .

Upanishads and Vedanta

The fourth part of Vedic literature is the Upanishad. Since they are coming as the end/ last part of Vedic literature, they are known as 'Vedaanthaas' (means which are coming in the end of Vedas) There are many Upanishads of which 108 Upanishads are important and they are classified under four + one Vedas as follows.

Rigvedeeya Upanishads: Aithareya Upanishad , Kousheethakee Upanishad , Naada bindu Upanishad, Aathma bhodha Upanishad, Nirvaana Upanishad , Mulgala Upanishad, Akshamaalika Upanishad, Tripura Upanishad, Soubhaagya lakshmi Upanishad, Bahvrucha Upanishad . (total ten Upanishads)

Sukla yajurvedeeya upanishads: Eesaavasya Upanishad, Bruhadhaaranyaka Upanishad, Hamsa Upanishad, Parama Hamsa Upanishad, Subaala Upanishad, Manthrika Upanishad , Thrisikhi Braahmana Upanishad, Niraalamba Upanishad, Mandala Braahmana Upanishad, Advaya Upanishad, Thaaraka Upanishad, Bhikshuka Upanishad, Adhyaathma Upanishad, Muktika Upanishad, Thaaraasara Upanishad, Yajnavalkya Upanishad, S'aatyaayana Upanishad, Thuriyaatheetha avadhootha upanishad (Total eighteen upanishads)

Krishna Yajurvedeeya Upanishads: Kata Upanishad , Thaithireeya Upanishad, Brahma Upanishad , Kaivalya Upanishad, Swethaaswethara Upanishad, Garbha Upanishad, Mahanaaraayana Upanishad, Amruthabindu Upanishad, Amruthanaada Upanishad, Kaalaagnirudra Upanishad, Kshurika Upanishad, Sarvasaara Upanishad, Sukarahasya Upanishad , Thejobindu Upanishad, Dhyaana bindu Upanishad, Brahmavidya Upanishad, Yogathathwa Upanishad, Dakshinaamoorthy

Upanishad, Skanda Upanishad, Saareerika Upanishad, Yogasikha Upanishad, Ekaakshara Upanishad, Akshi Upanishad, Avadhootha Upanishad, Katarudra Upanishad, Rudrahrudaya Upanishad, Panchabrahma Upanishad, Praanaagni hotra Upanishad, Varaaha Upanishad, Yogakundalini Upanishad, Kalisantharana Upanishad, Saraswathee rahasya Upanishad (Total thirty two Upanishads)

Saamavedeeya Upanishads: Kena Upanishad, Chaandokhya Upanishad, Aarunee Upanishad, Maithraayane Upanishad, Maithreyee Upanishad, Vajrasoochika Upanishad, Yogachoodaamony Upanishad, Vasudeva Upanishad, Mahopanishad, Sanyaasa Upanishad, Avyakta Upanishad, Kundika Upanishad, Saavitri Upanishad, Jaabaala Upanishad, Darsana Upanishad, Rudraaksha jaabaala Upanishad (Sixteen Upanishads)

Atharva vedeeya Upanishads: Prasna Upanishad, Mundaka Upanishad, Maandukya Upanishad, Atharvas'ira Upanishad, Atharvas'ikha Upanishad, Bruhadjaabaala Upanishad, Seetha Upanishad, S'arabha Upanishad, Mahaanarayana Upanishad, Raamarahasya Upanishad, Ramathaapini Upanishad, S'aandilya Upanishad, Paramahamsa Upanishad, Annapooma Upanishad, Soorya Upanishad, Aathma Upanishad, Paas'upatha Upanishad, Parabrahma Upanishad, Thripurathaapini Upanishad, Devi Upanishad, Bhaavana Upanishad, Bhasma Upanishad, Ganapati Upanishad, Mahaavakya Upanishad, Gopalathaapini Upanishad, Sreekrishna Upanishad, Hayagreeva Upanishad, Datthathreya Upanishad, Garuda Upanishad, Narasimhapoorva thaapini Upanishad, Narasimha utara thapini Upanishad, Naarada parivraajaka Upanishad (Thirty two Upanishads).

VEDAS , BRAHMANAS AND ARANYAKAS

RIGVEDA

Rig-Veda is the oldest literature of human race. It has been composed by many Rishies and not one Rishi. The Rig Veda is so known because it is composed of Riks. Riks means two lines of poems/ mantras with very stringent sruthies / tones to chant. Each suktha may have two or more Riks in it. Those who compose the Veda mantras are known as Mantra drushtara: means who could see the Veda mantra. Majority of the names of Vedic Rishies

are not known to us and we will definitely explain that. These mantras were composed in many years and not at a particular period. They might have got composed during a period of thousands of years. The first part of the Rig-Veda appears in old Vedic Sanskrit and last part appears to be modern Sanskrit. In short there is an opinion that the first part and second part of Rig Veda mantra were composed in slightly different Sanskrit style.

The composers of Vedas : Rushies who composed the Veda mantra are known as mantra drushtaara. These mantras were classified by the Rushies of Veda Vyasa kula (clan). I.e. they classified/ rearranged all the Veda mantra sookthas available during then, to the present form as seen now in Rig-Veda. Majority of the Veda hymns are composed by the Rushies of Viswamitra kula, Angeerasa kula, Athreya kula and Bharadwaaja kula and Kanwakula. All the hymns are adoring the Vedic devathas. Rigveda is composed almost fully in poetical style.

Sakhas of Rig-Veda : There are 25 sakhas for Rig-Veda . These sakhas are wrongly interpreted in English as branches . No ! They are recensions. Out of the 25 sakhas only four are available now, the remaining are lost for ever. Each saakha is known in the name of respective Rushies. They are Saakala saakha, Bhaashkala saakha, Saankhyaayana saakha, and Kousheethakee saakha are most important and they are composed or organized in the present status by Saakala, Bhaashkala, Saankhyayana and Kousheethakee Maharushies. Major difference among these Vedic recensions of Rig-Veda are in the arrangements of some mantras (Riks) and also in the organization of the Parisishta mantras. (parisishta mantras are those mantras which are not strictly part of Vedas but they are chanted in between Veda mantra sookthas as a custom. In different sakhas, in some places synonyms are also used like baahubhyam is changed to hasthaabhyam and like that.

Arrangements of the mantras in different sakhas: The Rig-Veda mantras are arranged in the saakala saakha as mandala krama. All the mantras of the Rig-Veda has been included in ten mandala. In Bhaashkala saakha the arrangement is in ashtaka as the bunch of eight chapters. There are totally 64 chapters and they are arranged in 8 ashtakas.

The Saakala saakha of Rig-Veda has 193816 words which are composed by 397265 letters. There are 10552 Riks (stanzas) which are composed using 193816 words and they are organized in 2024 vargas. These many vargas are included in 64 chapters (adhyaayaas) and eight each of this form ashtakas and hence Saakala saakha of Rig-Veda has 64 adhyaayaas or 8 ashtakas.

Arrangements of the sookthas in mandalas: All these mantras included in 64 chapters (8 ashtakas) of Saakala Saakha are classified in a different method in the Bhaaskala sakha of Rigveda (with minor variations) into 10 mandalas. The first mandala has 191 sookthas, then in the order from 2nd to 10th mandalas , respectively 43, 62, 58, 87, 75, 104, 103, 114 and 191 sookthas are present. The number of Riks in each suktha or each mandala is vary significantly. Say for example in the first mandala there are 2006 Riks included 191 sookthas and in the last Mandala has 191 sookthas but consists of only 1754 Riks.

Names of the Rishies of the Veda mantras : We might have heard the names of some of the Rishies who have composed our puranas, itihisas etc. But we might not have heard the names of majority of the Rishies who composed Veda mantra. Some of the names are special. However if a researcher would like to go deep into the subject of the 'names' of these Vedic Rishies, he can understand that these names have very special meaning or message. Given below are the names of Rishies who composed Rig Veda. The names are presented here just for information: Kanwa, Sunssepha, Aangeeras, Praskanwa, Savya Aangeeras, Nodha Gouthama, Gouthama rahoogana, Kuthsa angeeras, Kasyapa, Dhairghathamas, Romasa, Daivodaasi, Ouchadthya, Agasthya, Lopaamudra, Gurthsamada sounaka, Viswamitra gaadhina, Rushabha viswamitra, Utkeela kaathya, Katho viswamitra, Gaathee kousika, Bharatha, Prajapati viswamitra, Vamadeva gouthama, Thrasadasyu, Athreya, Kumara athreya, Vrushojaana, Vasusrutha, Isha athreya, Gaya athreya, Suthambhara athreya, Dharuna angeeras, Pururathreya, Vaprirathreya, Prayaswantha athreya, Sasa athreya, Viswasaama athreya, Gopayana, Loupaayana, Vasooyava athreya, Bharatha Raja, Viswamithrarathreya, Babhrurathreya, Gaathurathreya,

Prabhuvasurangeeras, Athri bhouma, Avathsaara kasyapa, Sadaavuruna athreya, Prathikshathra athreya, Achanaana athreya, Bharadhwaaja, Bharhaspathya, Suhotra bharadwaja, Bharadhwaja, Samyu bruhaspati, Gargya bharadwaja, (Many Rishies of Bharadwaaja kula, Maitravaruna, Vasisthaputra, Viswamanu, Vaivaswatha manu, Medhathithi kanwa, Syaavascha athreya, Naabhaka kanwa, Syaavascha athreya, Viroopa angeeras, Thrisoka kanwa, Vasosavya, Ghora karna, Bhaga praagaatha, Pragaatha kanwa, Purahanma angeerasa, Haryatha praaagaatha, Gopavana athreya, Kurusutri kanwa, Kruthsa bhargava, Ekadhyunoundhas, Kuseedikanwa, Krishna aangeeras, Nrumedha angeeras, Thirascheera angeeras, Repha kasyapa, Nomobhargava, Jamadagnir bhargava, Sobhari kanwa, Medhathithi kanwa, Hiranyasthoopa angeeras, Darddyachyutha, Bindhurangeeras, Nidhruvee kasyapa, Ambareesha, Yama, Yamee, Yamavaivaswatha, Yaamayatha, Vimada aindra, Vasuka aindra, Kavasha ailoosha, Lusadhana, Abhithaapa sourya, Ghosha kaakshivati, Suhashtya ghousesya, Saptha guru angeeras, Agni souchika, Gayaplaatha, Vasu karna, Vasukra, Aayaasya angeerasa, Sumitra Vandhyaswa, Beruhaspati Lounkhya, Viswakarma bhouvana, Manyuthaapasa, Suryasaavitri, Vrushtikaama, Vaikhanasa, Mulgala bharmaswa, Durmitra, Vairoopa, Agniyutha, Bhikshurangeerasa, Atharvana, Vasishta, Hiranyagarbha, Vagamdhruni, Kusika, Parameshti, Sakapootha, Pajavana, Aapsathya, Brahma, Nainruthi, Vairraaja, Vathayana, Aghamarshana, Samvanana, are the Vedic Rishies who composed Rigveda manthra (I habve tried to included almost all the names. Still there can be some omissions). Before chanting veda mantra everyone read/chant the names of the Rishi who composed the manthra, then the chandas (chandas is based on the number of letters in each Rik/ manthra in the suktha) and also the Vedic deity of adoration (the deity of the manthra). Example : Gaadhino viswamitra Rishi ,Anushtub chanda: mitro devata...then the Veda manthra is to be chanted. Here the author of the manthra is Gaadhina viswamitra, The chandas is anushtub and the Vedic Deity is mitra (Sun). Aapasthamba Rushi, Jagati chanda Agnirdevata... Here the name of the Rishi, the chandas and the devatha are given in the order. So it is easy to know the name of the composer of each manthra. There are many mantras com-

posed by the same Rishi. There are also mantras composed by the family members of the same Rishi. In the Rigveda text itself the names of the composer of each manthra are given.

Meaning and messages of Veda mantras : Every Veda mantra has three types of meanings and messages. These meanings are known as aadhtyaatmika, aadhibhouthika and aadhidaivatha artha. This is the reason why after chanting every Veda mantra we chant three times Om Santhi Santhi Santhi for aadhyatmika saanthi, aadhi bhouthika saanthi and aadhi daivathaa saanthi. Yaaskacharya has interpreted three meaning in a different way . Yaajnikam, daivatham and aathmeeyam. When you take the meaning as yaajneekam, then we consider that all whatever is ours we submit them to the divine power. We sacrifice them and get detached from them. The second daivatha meaning is that we are doing all these for making the god and divine power happy for the blessings as common man does. In the aathmeeya meaning we consider the aathma paramaathma relation and look into the spiritual aspect of the mantra. In a nutshell, if a line of mantra on the animal sacrifice is chanted it can have the three meaning. 1. In this meaning the Jeevathma of the animal is getting dissolved in the paramaathma chaitanya which is symbolically explained as animal sacrifice.(aadhi daivatha artha) 2. . The animal is the symbol of animal instinct like ego, anger, etc of the man and it is sacrificed or it is also the sacrifice of ignorance of human beings which is characteristics of the animals. (aadhyaathmika artha) there will not be any animal sacrifice according to this, it is only in explanation 3. Aadhi bhouthika artha in which the animal is sacrificed as offering to god / devatha for getting the benefits from the god. (In old testaments of Bible and also in Quran animal sacrifice is described in every place, including for Bakrid. It is known that in India also during the olden days animal sacrifice was common)

Chanting Veda mantras : Veda mantras are chanted in all the Vedic rituals where the materials are offered to fire. All the Vedic rituals are known as offering through Agni using the word swaaha. These mantras play very important role in Somayaga, Aswamedha yaga, Putra kameshti yaga, Vajapeya yaga, and many other yaagas. They are also chanted in some special rituals with the

thantra. There are some mantras which are very commonly used, like Purusha sukta, Bhagya sukta, Vishnu sukta, Sree Sukta, and so on. They are chanted always. Few mantras are chanted in every rituals.

Fundamental principles of Veda mantra chanting : All these mantras are expected to be chanted with ten sruthies (tones) known as udaattha, anudhaatta, swaritha, repha, hraswa, pracheya, anunaasikaa, kampa, deergha kampa and plutha. Three among these are present in Gayatri mantra. In all the three Vedas Gayatri mantra written by Viswamitra is included.

Examination of Vedic students: There are many Vedic scholars in India who know the Rig Veda by heart. In fact a person is known as a 'Vedic scholar' provided he can chant a Veda mantra, a line or a suktha from anywhere from the Vedic text, from any chapter at any part, when asked to do so without looking into the text. The question comes "chant the 9th sooktha of 3rd adhyaya of the 6th ashtaka". So learning Vedas is not done just like that. Excellent examination procedures like this is also adopted for verifying the knowledge by the examiners.

Siksha or method of chanting the Veda : The method of chanting the Veda mantra by Kerala Namboothiries is known as Sounaka siksha. The method followed by Tamil/ Karnataka/Telugu Vedic scholars is known as Yajnavalkhya siksha and the scholars from North India and Maharashtra chant Veda in Narayana Siksha. A person having no background of Veda mantra listens to these three ways of chanting can never know that all are chanting the same mantra in three different methods.

Few Vedic messages!

- * Bestow on us the brightest efficiency (RV. VI.44.9)
- * Endow me with spiritual vigor (RV.I23.24)
- * Win for us the mental power (medha sakti) (RV IX.9.9)
- * Oh. God may my intelligence be active (RV.X.42 –43)
- * Arouse our intelligence (dhi) (RV III.62; YV 36.3, SamV 1462)
- * O Varuna sharpen the intelligence , wisdom and insight of him, who is striving for enlightenment (RV.VIII.42.3)

* O Agni! Make us shine brightly like fire produced by friction.
(RV.VIII.48.6)

* Sharpen us like the razor in the hands (RV.VIII.4.16)

* Where the Brahma sakti and kshatra sakti both move together
in concord.(Y V)

That world I shall know as holy where gods with agni dwell.

* By self dedication (vrata) one obtains consecrations (Diksha)
(Yajurveda)

By consecration one obtains grace (Dakshina)

By grace one obtains reverence (Sraddha) and by reverence is
truth obtained (Satya)

* One ignorant of the land asks of one who knows it;
(Rigveda X.32.7)

He travels forward, instructed by the knowing one

This indeed is the blessing of instruction

One finds the path that leads straight onward

*May we hear for a hundred years and speak for a hundred years
And may we hold our heads high for a hundred years even more
than a hundred years. (Yajurveda)

* Sweet be my going forth from home, and sweet my return to it.
(R V X .24.6)

* Like a joyous streams bursting from the mountain (R V)

The hymn of prayer have sounded to the deity.

We worship, Oh Agni with joyous heart.

Make us the enjoyers of wide room and happiness

May we be masters of felicity now

Show your grace to us today and here

* Assemble , speak in harmony, May your minds be of one accord (RV)

May your prayer be common, Your assembly common

Common your mind united your thoughts

I counsel you to a common purpose and I worship with your com-
mon oblation

*I shall make you united hearts and be of one mind free from hate (AV)

Love one another as the mother cow loves her newly born calf.

Let the son follow the father in his noble endeavor.

And be of one mind with the mother

Let the wife speak sweet and beneficial words to the husband.
Let not brother hate brother, sister hate sister,
be all united and of one high purpose and speak words with friend-
liness..

May your water store be common And common your share of
food!

* Who is fit for work (karmanya) who is fit for home (sadanya) (RV)
Fit for the religious assembly (vidhathya) fit for the political council
(sabheya)

and a source of glory to his father .

* *Sametha viswa ojasa pathim divo Ya ek id bur athithirjanaanaam (SV)*
Sa poorvyo noothanam aajigheeshan Tham varthaneer anyu
vaavrutha ed ith

Come together , you all with power of spirit to the lord of heaven
who is the only one , the guest of the people , he the ancient de-
sires to come to the new. To him all path ways turn, really, he is
one. (any path way of worship is Ok and it shows the divine
power is one!

* *Yo na: pitaa yo janithaa yo vidhaathaa Dhaamaani veda*
bhuvanaani viswaa

Yo devanaam namdhaa eka eva Tham samprasnam bhuvanaa
yanthyannyyaa (RV)

The one who is our father, our creator, our disposer who knows all
positions, all things existing, who is the one and only one, bearing
names of different deities him other being seek the answers for
all questions.

* *Abhyoomoti yahhagnam bhishakti vism yath thuram*
premandha:khyanni:srono bhooth (RV VIII, 79)

He clothes all who are asked, He doctors all who are sick; through
him the blind man sees, the cripple goes about.

* *Utha vaatha pithaasi na utha bhrathotha na: sakhaa (RV X.186.2*
& S V 1841)

You are our father, our brother, our friends (and lead us.)

* *Srunvanthu viswe amruthasya puthraa aa ye dhaamaani*
divyaani thasthu (RV X.13.1) Oh. The children of immortal listen,
all the possessors of celestial natures, let us all pray together

* *Vayam ghaa they thve idvindra vipraa api shmacy Nahi thvadanya: puruhootha kaschana maghavannasti mardithaa* (RV VIII-66-13)

Truly God! We are yours. We worshippers depend on you. Except you, O much invoked, there is none, O mighty one, to show us the grace. (continued in the next few more issues)

**Nakha krunthanena sarwam karshnayasam vijnaatham kaarshnaaya- samithyeva sathyam.* : If anywhere something about nail cutter is told, one should know that all about nail cutter including the iron metallurgy was/is known. Like this when various aspects are discussed or described, in the vedic lines one should take the message of other parameters.

* *Aa sikshaayai prasninam upa sikshayaa abhiprasninam* (yaj. Veda 30.10)

For learning come and ask question! For learning from acharya come near and ask question from all sides! (this informs us that there was a system of education by asking questions and analyzing the answers)

* *Siksha na indra raaya aa puruvidaam rucheeshama* (RV VIII 92.9)
Oh God teach us to win wealth. You are adorable with our hymns. (the message of earning wealth)

* *Na thasya prathimaa asti yasya naama mahad yasa:* (Y.V. 32.3).
There is no parallel for the almighty. Whose glory, truly is great. (the concept of god in a different way is mentioned here— not god fearing but looking to the god in a glorious way)

* *Adithir dyou adithiranthareeksham adithir maathaa sa pithaa sa puthra: viswe devaa adithi: pancha janaa adithir jaatham adithir janithwa* (RV I.89.10; Y V 25.23 A. V 7.6.1)

The divinity is the heaven, the divinity is the mid region, the divinity is the mother, the father the son, the divinity is all deities, the divinity is the five classed men, the divinity is all that is born and will be born. (this gives the understanding of the omnipotent omnipresent divine power as the specific concept existed here)

* *Thasmaath vai purusham idam brahmeti manythe Sarvaa hyasmin devathaa gaavo goshta ivaasathe (A V XI.8.32)* : There fore one who knows the prapancha purusha as the brahmam . truly, all divine powers abide in him just like the cows are inside the cow's head. (we say the Vedas give the ultimate message of divinity. That is described here as prapancha purusha and also the self aware self conscious brahmam)

* *Devaso hi samaa manave samanyavo (RV VIII.27.14)* : Truly, the gods are one spirit with man. (In India we had only monotheism as described in Vedas. There are so many verses like this in all the Vedas.)

* *Thwam sthree thwam puman asi thwam kumara utha vaa kumaree thwam jeemo dandena vanchasi thwam jaatho bhavasi viswatho mukha: (AV 10:8;27)* : Oh Brahmam(n) (chaithanya) you are woman, you are man, you are boy, you are maiden, you are the old man wandering with a staff, you exist in all forms. (thus comes the one god, one explanation, the base of advaitham)

* *Sahasra soershaa purusha: sahasraaksha sahasra path sa bhoomim viswatho vruthwaa athyathishta dasaangulam* (in all the Vedas these lines are present known as purusha sukta) Oh that purusha has thousands of heads, thousands of eyes, thousands of feet . he pervading the earth on all sides, transcends the ten directions (means = that god is seeing, reaching, analyzing , what is happening anywhere in the universe).

* *Akaamo dheero amrutha: swayambhoo rasena thrupto na kuthaschanona:*

Thameva vidwaan na vibhaaya mruthyor aathmaanam dheeram ajaram yuvaanam (A V X.8.44) : Desire-less, firm, immortal, self existent, contented with the essence, lacking nothing, is the omnipotent power. One fears not death who has known him, the sour who is the athman which is serene, ageless and youthful always.

* *seesam cha me, syamam cha me, thrapuscha me, hiranyam cha me, naamayascha me,* as given in Yajurveda. The meaning is that let me have the zinc, silver, copper , lead, iron, gold.....

* *Roopam roopam prathiroopam bhabhoova Thad asya roopam prathichakshanaaya indro maayaabhi:puroroopa ieyathe yukthaa hyasya haraya: sathaa dasa: (R V VI.47-18)* : The god is in every

form, he has been the model, that form of his is visible everywhere. The god by his maaya (illusion) moves in many forms. Truly, his bay steeds are yoked a hundred directions.

* *yoasaavaadithyey purusha: soasaavaham* (Y.V 40.17): The same divinity present in the sun is present in me also.

* *vi me karnaa pathayatho vi chakshur vee idam jyothirhrudaya aahitham yath*

Vi me manashcarathi doora aadhee: kim swid vakshyaami kim u noo manishye (R.V 6.9.6) My ears open to hear, my eyes to see; this light with my spirit shines beyond; My mind roams with its thought in the distance; what shall I speak and what really shall I think?

* Savitha ! oh god! Send far away all evil; send us what is good (R.V 82.5. & Y V) - .

He who sees all beings separately and also sees them together, May he, be our protector. (RV 3.62.9)-

* I deem you as the holiest of the holy ! I deem you as the shaker of the unshaken ! I deem you o god! As the banner of heroes I deem you as the chief of the people (R.V 96-4)

* I saw the protector who never rests who moves forward and backward over the earth. He, wearing splendor that gather together and spreads out travels constant within the world (RV, YV & AV)

* *Bhadram karnabhi srunyaama devaa bhadram pasyema akshabhir yajathraa sthirairangai sthushtuvamsa sthanubhi vysema devahitham*

Oh Gods may we with out ears listen to what is good, and with our eyes see what is good and may we with firm body composed of healthy and strong organs, work the mission bestowed upon us as long as we are alive. (RV 89.8, S V & A V)

* *Indra sreshtaani dravinaani dehim chittim dakshasya subhagathwam asme*

Posham rayeenaam arishtim thanoonam swadmaanam vaacha sudintwam ahnaam (RV II21/6): Oh. God bestow on us the best treasures: the efficient mind and spiritual luster, the increase of wealth, the health of bodies the sweetness of speech and fairness of days.

* Oh mighty lord you are great. Your powers are great, gaining wealth, Oh ! Valiant one and conquering enemies.: The one king of the whole universe, you are You make battle and bring peace among the men (R V III.46.2)

* Inspirer of the truthful rouser of the good mind, May Saraswati accept our offering (RV 3.11, Y):

* *Apsu me somo abhraveeth atharviswaanibheshajaa agnim cha viswam sambhuvam aapascha viswabheshajee* (RV & A V): Water is the universal medicine and all medicines heals. Says soma. Agni is the one which blesses and water is the one which heals (R V 23.22)

* *yavaa schame, maashaschame, thilaascha me, mulgaascha me, ghalvaascha me, godhoomaascha me, masuraascha me, pringavascha menavascha me syaamaakaascha me neevaarascha me* (pronounce me = as may). Nine type of cereals and pulses are mentioned including barley,blackgram, greengram, gingely, wheat, rice, masoordial, fenugreek, and so on.....

* *Thejosi thejo mayee dhehi Veeryamasi veeryam amayi dhehi Balamasi balam mayee dehi Ojosi ojomayee ddhehi Manyurasi manyum mayee dhehi*

sahosi saho mayee dehi : You are the fiery spirit give me the fiery spirit you are vigor, give me manly vigor. You are power give me power you are energy give me energy you are battle fury give me battle fury you are conquering might give me conquering might (YV 19.9)

* "I take your hand with mine for good fortune (says the bridegroom to bride) that you may live to old age with me, your husband, let all gods bless us who gave you to me as the queen of my home." – this manthra is chanted during marriage, like this there are hundreds of manthras. (RV 85.36)

* *Sumangaleer iyam vadhoor imam pasyatha Soubhagyam asyai dathwaayaa athastham vi parethana* Hey married women/ sumangalees here is the bringer of good fortune standing as as this bride, come all of you and look at her, first wish her full happiness and then return home after giving your blessings to her.

* *Samrajnee swasure bhava Samrajnee swasruvaam bhava nanaandari bhava smarajnee samrajnee adhi devrushu.*: Be a

queen to your father in law, be queen to your mother in law, queen to your sisters in law, and a queen to your brothers in law.. (RV X.85.46 & AV

* "With sons and daughters by their side, may the two enjoy the full span of life, both decorated with ornaments of gold". (RV VIII.31)

"Let these women who are not widows and who have good husbands enter anointed with unguent and balm, let the women who are tearless, robust and well adorned with jewels, proceed to the house first". (RV X.18.7)

* "At the approach to the house and exist from it let the flowering durva grass grow. And there let a spring rise and let a lake lie with lotuses in bloom". (AV VI 106-1)

* "*Viso na rajaanam varunaanaa*": Like the people elect their ruler. (RV X 124.8)

* In us be your power. In us is your valor, your wisdom, In us be your mental splendors, Bow your head to mother earth This is your sovereignty You are the controller, ruler you are steady, firm You are culture and land You are for peace you are for wealth you are for nurture. (YV 9.22)

Learning method of Vedas and the paatas

There are eight methods (known as paatas) for learning Vedas. Of which the first is manthra or samhitha paata (paata means lessons). The paata which we all listen when the Vedic scholars chant them. Ashtau Vikruthaya – (eight ways) says the siksha book are the lesson in Vedas through which thorough study of the Vedas is undertaken.

Samhitapaatam is the first one in which the Veda mantra is just chanted without any sruthi. As we call the name of the people or read the newspaper the samhita paata is chanted.

One line of Rigveda is taken here as an example to narrate different paatas (the number denotes the word in the mantra which we will use through out later in this order)

oshadhya sam vadanthey somena saha raajnaa

(here the order words is oshadhya -1, sam -2, vadanthey -3, somena -4, saha -5, raajnaa - 6; here after wherever this number is written, corresponding word is to remembered)

In samhitha paata the words are just TOLD in the order 1-2-3-4- 5-6

Manthra paatam: In manthra paata, the above line is chanted with sruthies. Sruthies are ten in number. Udaattha, anudaattha, swartha, repha, hraswa, pracheya, anunaasika, kampa, deergha kampa and plutha are the ten sruthies in all the Vedas. The manthra paata will have the manthra dhvani.

Oshadhaya: sam vadanthey somena saha raajnaa:

In manthra paata the words are just chanted as 1-2-3-4-5-6

Pada paatam: In this method word by word, the manthra is separated as pada (word).

Oshadhaya: Sam. Vadanthey. Somena. Saha. Raajnaa.

Words are arranged 1.2.3.4.5.6.

Krama paatam : In this paata the order is twisted and chanted with sruthi. And here the sruthi is not vedic sruthi. It is the paata sruthi. Each word when we chant forward and then back ward as given below will have different sruthi, which should be studied under the guidance of a guru . (see the full stops given also)

oshadhaya: sam. sam vadanthey. vadanthey somena. somena saha. saha rajnaa. raajneti raajnaa.

1-2. 2-3. 3-4. 4-5. 5-6 (and ending in) 6 iti 6 (raajneti raajnaa)

Pancha sandhi krama paatam: From here onwards chanting the paata is difficult. All the lines are presented without sruthi. Very clear, strict grammatical rules are to be followed when the words are chanted forward and backward.

oshadhaya: sam. sam sam. samoshadhaya: oshadhaya oshadhaya . oshadhaya sam.

sam vadanthey. vadanthey vadanthey. vadanthey sam. sam sam. sam vadanthey.

vadanthey somena. somena somena. somena vadenathey. vadanthey vadnathey. vadanthey somena.

somena saha. saha saha. saha rajnaa. somena somena. somena saha.

saha raajnaa. raajnaa.raajnaa. raajnaa saha. saha saha . saha raajnaa. raajneti raajnaa. (the above lesson can be arranged word wise as given below. However each word has its sruti while chanting the paata)

1-2, 2-2, 2-1, 1-1, 1-2
 2-3, 3-3, 3-2, 2-2, 2-3
 3-4, 4-4, 4-3, 3-3, 3-4
 4-5 5-5 5-4 4-4 4-5
 5-6 6-6 6-5 5-5 5-6 6 iti 6

One cannot learn these paatas merely by knowing the words' arrangements without knowing the sruti

Jataa paatam. The arrangements of the words can be directly observed from below

oshadhayas sam, samoshadhaya, oshadhayas sam.

sam vadanthey , vadanthey sam, sam vadanthey.

adanthey somena , somena vadanthey, vadanthey somena.

somena saha, saha somena, somena saha.

saha raajnaa, raajnaa, saha, saha raajnaa, raajneti raajnaa.

1-2, 2-1, 1-2, 2-3, 3-2, 2-3.
 3-4, 4-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-4, 4-5
 5-6 6-5 5-6 6iti 6

Maalaa paatam

oshadhaya sam. raajneti raajnaa. sam vadanthey. raajnaa saha. vadanthey somena. saha somena

somena saha. somena vadanthey. saha raajnaa. vadanthey sam. raajneti raajnaa . somoshadhaya:

(remember the numbers denotes the Vedic words given in the order as 1,2,3,4,5,6)

1-2 6 iti 6. 2-3. 6-5. 3-4. 5-4
 4-5. 4-3. 5-6. 3-2. 6-6. 2-1

Pushpa maalaa paatam There are different methods for making mala /garland/. Like that there are different type of maala paata. One type of maala paatam known as pushpa maala paatam is different from the above style

oshadhaya: sam samoshadhaya: oshadhaya: sam . - iti
 sam vadanthey vadanthey sam sam vadanthey - iti

vadhanthey somena somena vadhanthey vadhanthey somena- iti
 somena saha saha somena somena saha - iti
 saha raajnaa raajnaa saha raajnaa - iti
 raajneti raajnaa

1-2 2-1 1-2 - iti
 2-3 3-2 2-3 iti
 3-4 4-3 3-4 iti
 4-5 5-4 4-5 iti
 5-6 6-5 5-6 iti

6 iti 6

Sikhaa paatam : Now we have to see sikhaa paata.

Oshadhaya sam, samoshadhya: , oshadhaya sam, - vadhanthey
 sam vadhanthey, vadhanthey sam, sam vadnathey, - somena
 vadhanthey somena, somena vadhanthey, vadhanthey somena, -
 saha

somena saha, saha somena, somena saha, - raajnaa
 saha rajnaa, rajnaa saha, saha rajnaa, - rajneti rajnaa

1-2 2-1 1-2 - 3 2-3 3-2 2-3 - 4
 3-4 4-3 3-4 - 5 4-5, 5-4, 4-5, - 6
 5-6, 6-5, 5-6 - 6iti 6

Rekha paatam

Oshadhaya sam. samoshadhaya. oshadhaya sam.

samvadnathey somena somena vadhanthey sam sam
 vadhanthey .

vadhanthey somena saha rajnaa rajnaa saha somena
 vadhanthey. Vadhanthey somena.

somena saha . saha rajnaa. rajneti rajnaa.

1-2, 2-1, 1-2
 2-3-4, 4-3-2, 2-3
 3-4-5-6, 6-5-4-3, 3-4
 4-5-6 6-5-4, 4-5
 5-6 6-6 5-6 6 iti 6

Here one can see that two words are composed together then three words, then four words and so on if five, six, seven, eight words are there in one line then it goes continuously without interruption to that extend.

Dwaja paatam : In this method of chanting and learning, all the words of one stanza are taken into consideration. Hence the example is taken as above. But the line altogether has 12 words thus, the arrangement of words with sruthi will be from word number 1 to word number 12.

Oshadhaya sam, paarayaamasi iti paarayaamasi
 sam vadanthey raajan paarayaamasi
 vadanehty somena, tham raajan
 somena saha, braahmanastham
 saha raajnaa, krunoti braahmana
 rajneti raajnaa, yasmai krunoti
 yasmai krunoti, rajnethi raajnaa
 krunoti braahmana, saha raajnaa
 braahmanastham, somena saha
 tham raajan, vadanthey somena
 raajan paarayaamasi, sam vadanthey
 paarayaamasi iti paarayaamasi, oshadhaya sam.

1-2,	12iti-12	2-3,	11-12
3-4,	10-11	4-5,	9-10
5-6	8-9	6-7	7-8
7-8	6-7	8-9,	5-6
9-10,	4-5	10-11,	3-4
11-12,	2-3	12iti 12,	1-2

The above method is known as dwaja paata: The numbers in all the above presentations show the words written in the manthra in the order from 1 to 12. Here the whole Rik having 12 words are taken, where as in the other paata first 6 words are taken.

We are discussing how the ancient Indian Vedic scholars learned and taught the Veda mantras, precisely and systematically. Through out India this method of study of Vedas is maintained.

Danda paatam

oshadhaya sam, samoshadhaya:

oshadhaya sam, sam vadanthey, vadanethy samoshadhaya:

oshadhaya sam, sam vadanthey. vadanthey somena. somena vadanthey samoshadhaya:

oshadhaya sam, sam vadanthey. vadanthey somena somena saha. saha somena vadanthey samoshadhaya:

oshadhaya sam. sam vadanthey. vadanthey somena. somena saha. saha raajnaa. raajnaa saha somena vadanthey samoshadhaya:

oshadhaya: sam. Sam vandanthey. vadanthey somena. Somena saha. Saha raajnaa. raajneti raajnaa.

1-2, 2-1

1-2, 2-3, 3-2-1

1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-3-2-1

1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-4-3-2-1.

1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-6, 6-5-4-3-2-1.

1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-6, 6 iti 6.

Ratha paatam

There is yet another very interesting paata. However it is impossible to write that in English nor give the order because it is very complicated. It is difficult for even to read with sruti. There are different types of ratha paata, dwichakra ratha paata, thri chakra ratha paata, chathuschakra ratha paata and so on. . It is difficult to write with the number as written for other paatas.

Ghana paata :

We shall see the Ghana paata applied to a manthra. We shall take another mantra for demonstating this paata "Gaayanthi thwaa gaayathrino archanthyarka markina." In Ghana paata this manthra lines are chanted as follows.

Gaayanthi thwaa, thwaa gaayanthi, gaayanthi thwaa, gaayathrino; gaayanthrinasthwaa gaayanthi. Gaayanthi thwaa gaayathrina; thwaa gaayathrino, gaayahtrinsthwaa, thwaa gaayahtrino archanthyarchnathi gaayanthrinasthwaa. thwaa gaayathrinorchanthi.

gaayathrino archanthya, archanthi gaayathrino,
gaayanthrinoarchanthyarkama- arkamarchanthy gaayathrino
gaayathrino. archanthyarkam.

archanthyarkama – arkamarchanthy- archanthyarkama- arkina;
arkino arkamarchanthy –archanthyarkamarkina:

arkamarkino – arkinnoarkama-arkama-arkamarkina: . arkina
ityarkina:

All the four Vedas have the above pattern of learning method. That means their own paataas. The rules do vary from Veda to Veda and the ten swaraas / sruthies (udaattha, anudaattha, swartha, repha, hraswa, pracheya, anunaasikaa, kampa, deergha kampa, plutha are the ten sruties) vary. The sweetest of the Vedas is the Saama Veda, which when chanted in the above mentioned paata bhedaas give an unexplainable experience in the mind

Pancha sandhi Ghana paata: The toughest among all the paatas is pancha sandhi Ghana paata: Let us see the method of arranging words. (Pronounce all me as may)- another Veda manthra is taken here for demonstrating the pancha sandhi Ghana paata.

"Paaa me yanthi dheethayo gaavo na gavyoothiranu". This is a line from Veda which when written in Pancha Sandhi Ghana Paata: (Always remember the essential sruthi of the paata is not included here.)

paraa me. me me . me paraa. paraa paraa paraa me. paraa
me, me paraa, paraa me, yanthi.

me yanthi. yanthi yanthi. yanthi me, me, me,. me yanthi.
me yanthi, yanthi me, me yanthi. dheethayo: dheethayo yanthi
me, me yanthi dheethaya:

Yanthi dheethaya: dheethayo: dheethaya:. dheethayo yanthi.
yanthi yanthi. yanthi dheethaya:

Yanthi dheethayo, dheethayo yanthi, yanthi dheethayo, gaavo;
gaavo dheethaya: yanthi, dheethayo gavo na.

gavo na. na na. na gava:. gavo gava:. gavo na.

gavo ha, na gavo, gavo na, gavyoothernu gavo, gavo na
gavyootheranu.

1-2, 2-2, 2-1, 1-1, 1-2
 1-2, 2-1, 1-2, 3; 3-2-1, 1-2-3
 2-3, 3-3, 3-2, 2-2, 2-3,
 2-3, 3-2, 2-3-4, 4-3-2, 2-3-4
 3-4, 4-4, 4-3, 3-3, 3-4
 3-4, 4-3, 3-4-5, 5-4-3, 3-4-5
 4-5, 5-5, 5-4, 4-4, 4-5
 4-5, 5-4, 4-5-6; 6-5-4, 4-5-6

Jataa paatam: There is another important paata which is known as jataa paata:

The above manthra is retold in jataa paata as follows. (pronounce all me as may)

paraa me, me me, me paraa, paraa paraa, paraa me,
paraa me, me paraa paraa me.

me yanthi. yanthi yanthi. yanthi me. me me, me yanthi.

me yanthi, yanthi me, me yanthi

Yanthi dheethaya. dheethaya dheethaya. dheethayo yanthi.

yanthi yanthi. Yanthi dheethaya:

yamthi dheethayo, dheethayo yanthi, yanthi dheethaya:

1-2, 2-2, 2-1, 2-2, 2-1. 1-2, 2-1, 1-2

2-3, 3-3, 3-2, 2-2, 2-3. 2-3, 3-2, 2-3

3-4, 4-4, 4-3, 3-3, 3-4 3-4, 4-3, 3-4 and so on

Thus we have presented the method of learning the Vedas to understand the status of Vedic scholar. As you might have understood by now that, it is impossible for learning all these unless you devote your whole life for this. The mentioned methods are not meant for priests who are doing the temples rituals or rituals family. They need to learn only Veda mantra chanting in the simple way with sruthi, either complete or some slokas.

All these paataas are for creating a very clear understanding about the Vedas/ literature /messages /meanings/rituals/etc. These lessons/ learning methods/ Paataas are taught at a very young age. So the student understands thoroughly about what is to be recollected, when further studies are undertaken to become a Vedic scholar. The grammar, prosody, the origin of the Sanskrit

words, synonyms, meanings, karma kaanda, philosophy, customs & rituals where (why /when /how/who/ what...) mantras are to be specifically used.....these are the application part of the Veda mantras which the students learn after a particular age. For the higher studies, understanding each and every line of the mantra, word by word is highly meritorious.

PAATAAS (THE ANCIENT METHOD) OF LERNING VEDAS COMPLETED

We were analyzing the composition, the method of learning and contents of the Rig Veda, the oldest text of world literature. Now we shall go through the Yajurveda samhitha which is the second Veda in the series of the Vedic literature . As mentioned in our earlier messages, the Rig Veda gives the Jnaana kaanda, Yajurveda, the karma kaanda , Sama Veda gives the arts /music and related subjects and the Atharva Veda gives the social and related messages / concepts/ bases. In short all the Indian literature connected with jnaana kaanda have their base on Rig Veda, and all the karma yoga based messages and literature can be seen directly linked with the Yajurveda. The saptha swara. thaala, vaadya, mela, raga, keerthana, gaana, sruthi, laya and so on have their basic principles in the Saama Veda chanting . All the social concepts, family bondages, nation, agriculture, diseases, medicines, satru naasana, success in the battles, etc are the subjects given as mantras in atharva veda.

YAJURVEDA

it is said that there are more than 100 recensions. Each of the recensions has further branched into branchlets. Hence yajurveda is known as yajurveda vruksha (Yajurveda tree). Even though it is not easy for a common man to understand, let us just glance through the names of the yajurveda texts recensions. They are Aalambi, kalinga, kamala, ruchaabha, aaruni, thandya, syaamaayana, kata, kaalaapi are the prime saakhas (recensions). From among this, the kata saakha has been further expanded by various rushies into charaka kata, aahwaraka kata, bhrajishtala kata, kapishtala kata, chaaraayaneeya kata, praapya kata swetha kata, swethaswethara kata, oupamanyava kata, paathaandineya kata and maithraayaneeya kata.

The above kata saakha is further expanded into pinjula kata, oudala kala, , sapicchala kata, mudgala kata, srungala kata, soubhara kata, mourasa kata chuchu kata, yoga kata hapila kata, bhousala kata ghosha kata, jrumbhakata kata.

The kaalaapi saakha has been further expanded into haaradraveeya, cchagalina, thoumburuvina, oulupina saakha. The above mentioned maithrayaneeya saakha has further grown into maanava, vaaraaha, dundubha, aikeya, syaama, syaamaayneeya, haaridraveeya. The above haaridraveeya saakha has further grown into aasurina, gaargya, saarkaraakshya, maarga, vaasaveeya.

It is difficult to understand these names and how the classification and sub classification of Yajurveda are done. However each of us should know that the Yajurveda book (samhitha) is not a single book. It is the series of books written by many rishies for many thousand years. For the common man's understanding. The yajurveda is classified into two saakhas as sukla yajurveda which has forty chapters and composed fully in the poetical style without prose. Only two books are known in this saakha: Vaajasaneyee madhyandina yajurveda samhitha and Kaanwa samhitha. All other saakhas come under Krishna yajurveda which are known to have both prose and poems. This includes thaithireeya samhitha, aapasthamba samhitha, kata samhithas and so on.. The kaanwa samhitha and vaajasaneyee samhitha do not differ significantly where as all the saakhas (recensions) of the Krishna yajurveda differ significantly in their composition. There are some mantras which are common in Rig Veda and Yajurveda. The number of Rigveda mantra varies in different yajurveda saakha.

In prose and in hymns, the mantras are presented in such a way that they are used directly for yaagaas or sroutha karmas. In Rig veda, Vedic hymns are presented as compilation for different purposes depending upon the message of the mantra. Here, depending upon the message of the mantra they are used for specific yagas;. The mantras do have a role in karma kaanda . Hence we say yajurveda is compiled for performing yagaas.

There are two recensions for sukla yajurveda known as Vaajasaneyee maadhyandina yajurveda samhitha and kaanwa samhitha. They do not vary significantly. Almost 95 % of the hymns remain the same in these two recensions. The vajasaneyee maadhyandina saakha followers are known as vaajasaneyins and those who follow kaanwa saakha are known as kaanwas. Both the Vedic recensions have forty chapters. In both the saakhas the last chapter is the well known Eesaavaasya Upanishad. The arrangements of the hymns in vaajasaneyee maadhyandina yajurveda samhitha is almost similar to Rig veda: It needs a thapascharya and a life long sacrifice of time, energy, money and brain to learn Vedas .

The first two chapters of Sukla Yajurveda are darsapoorna maasi yaaga, 3rd & 4th chapters chaathurmaasya customs, agnyaadhaanam and agniupasthaanam for the yaaga (making and consecrating the fire in yaaga saala). In the fifth chapter, the preliminary steps of extracting soma rasa are narrated as manthras. The reception of the guests and priests for consecrating the yoopa in yaaga saala are the hymns in 5th chapter. Then upto 9th chapter the hymns of extracting soma juice, savanaas for each day upto third day of yaaga are given. From the 9th chapter, special rituals connected with vaajapeya yaaga, raajasooya yaaga, soutraamani yaaga ritual , etc., are specially explained as manthras upto 14th chapter. After wards upto 22nd chapters the manthras of the most important rituals of the yaagas. From 23rd to 25th chapters , aswamedha yaaga manthras are compiled. Upto 30th chapter the fifth day rituals and a special ritual known as soutramani manthras are given. Then upto 39th chapter, various manthras connected with rituals like gharma, pravargya, sambharana proshana, prayaschitha, puroshaada kriya, pithrumedha, etc of various types of yaagas (which is beyond th scope of this abstract presentation) are given. The 40th chapter is the eesaavasya Upanishad, which is the most famous and essence of sanathana dharma both applied and basic message are included in the 18 hymns of the Upanishad. More than 50% of the Yajurveda mantra are directly or indirectly connected with Rig-Veda

How the mantras are selected for the yaagaas ? What is the relevance of these mantras today ? Why should we learn these mantras used for yaagaas ? These are the common questions asked by many, particularly by the students. In the mantras, the

spirituality and science integrate. It is good to learn atleast to read these lines because so many merits are being attributed to these mantras, based on the modern research. The most important effect is the influence of these mantras in the brain, lowering the tensions, controlling BP, normalizing brain waves, etc. It is also interesting to note that a new term like mantra therapy is also coming up. But in mantras, the faith is not influencing very much but concentration does. The melodious, smooth, method/ tone of chanting the Vedas create music therapy type of effect. Secondly the message of many manthras can be used for the psychological and physiological benefit; The message can also influence the national and cultural integration of the people.

Now the question is how we will know which / when / how / where/ these manthras are to be chanted . In Yaajurveda, when manthras are chanted in the yaaga / yajna, the message in each mantra is made clear directly or indirectly as in a prayer. Thus, if a systematic analysis of the yaaga customs and rituals is done and try to understand the meaning of that ritual, you will definitely get the application of the manthra.

These mantras are being learned and taught as the key words in conveying deep messages connected with management principles, health information, values in the family and society, scientific knowledge, psychological benefits, etc. Ancient Indian method of making the manthra by heart had an advantage of conveying excellent messages as subhashithas. So, learning mantra has many advantages provided it is used rationally, logically and scientifically.

In USA and Canada many doctors are advising the patients suffering from BP or psychosomatic problems, to listen to mantras while sleeping, working, driving, etc. It is also common to chant/ listen specific mantra while doing pranayama, yoga, morning or evening walk and even while doing exercises. The religion, caste, language, political background etc will not have any bearing on chanting or listening a mantra.

Chant Gayantri manthra, Mruthyunjaya manthra, the five saanthi mantras of Upanishads, purusha sookthas, Bhagya sookthas, Narayana sookthas, Rudra sookthas, Rudhra and chamaka , Upanishads, etc. Preferably listen those mantras before learning them. One can chant/ learn the mantras in the morning or evening, sitting on a clean place. Make it sure that the chanting is done with a clear sound, slowly and steadily.

Britishers who translated or interpreted the Yajurveda, translated the words sukla (Yajurveda) as white (Yajurveda) and Krishna (Yajurveda) as Black (Yajurveda). Unfortunately many publishers follow the same method even today. Remember that there is neither black nor white in Yajurveda. This is a glaring example of misinterpretation of Sanskrit words into English and vice versa.

Now we shall go to the explanations of the Vedas. In Vajasaneyee maadhyandina samhitha of Sukla Yajurveda has 1975 mantras/hymns composed in poetical style. Sree Rudra and Chamaka for performing Rudra yagas are the part of this book. In Kaanwa samhitha major variations are not seen except in the number of mantras. The number of chapters and other contents remain the same without much variations.

Thaithireeya samhitha is the part of Krishna Yajurveda which has both prose and poems chanted in Vedic sruthi. The thaithireeya samhitha is classified into eleven kaandaas (parts). Each kaanda has further classified into prapaataakaas. Each prapaataaka describes one ritual in a yaagas.

There are two type of yaagas. The yaagas performed for prosperity and fulfilling the expectations/wishes and happy life are known as kaamya yaagas or Kamyeshaties (Ishti means yaaga). Some of the yaagas are performed for attaining moksha (in other words for attaining heavenly abode) which are known as moksheshhti. Moksheshaties are for relinquishing the earthly life.

Through these rituals, the cooperation of every section of the society, right from the king to the pot maker, forest tribes, fishermen, soldier, trader, farm worker, hunter, and people from all walks of life were demonstrated. Here, the message of sociology, psychology, management, spirituality, traditional knowledge, etc works and interlinks well.

It also contributes for the benefits of individuals, family, society and nation, by way of strengthening the social bondage. It helps the economical, agricultural, industrial, scientific and technological aspects of villages directly or indirectly.

Yaagas are not meant merely for spiritual upliftment. But for social relations and bondage too, in concurrent with good mes-

sage for value based life. These messages are given as prayers, advise to people or as part of explanations, in Vedas. One may understand that these Vedas and Vedic composition and Vedic messages are no way comparable with the messages given in Bible, Koran or any other texts of any religion qualitatively or quantitatively or structurally or composition wise.

Maithrayaneeya samhitha is another important sakha of Yajurveda. Four major parts are well demarked in the text. Variety of yaagas and their manthrs are given. In this Veda, the shodasa acharas like anna prasana, jaatha karma, naama karana, vivaha, etc are also described with manthras which are not common in other Vedas (i.e. family rituals like sacred thread ceremony, marriage, birthday celebrations, naming ceremony, etc). The shodasa acharas are the 16 sacraments to be performed by every Hindu, right from the garbhaadhaana till death (anthyeshiti). Generally this type of subjects are described in Gruhyasutra part of Kalpasutra (the fifth vedanga)

There are many manthras which are common in Thaitheeya samhitha and maitrayaneeya samhitha. Many manthras are reproduced from Rigveda and Atharva veda.

There are more than a hundred recensions for Kumba Yajurveda . One among these recensions is the Kata (kaata /kaataka) samhitha . This yajurveda recension has been subdivided into four parts known as Itimika, Madhyamika, Orimika and Aswamedha vachana. Variety of yaga rituals are explained in this Vedic text having 3028 manthras. Kapishtala kata samhitha is a sub division of kata samhitha. Major part of this book is lost for ever and only a few pages are available.

Vedic scholars live in isolated places, as one or two families. However Sukla Yajurveda scholars and Rigveda scholars live in different cities and villages. But from among them, those who follow / know specific recensions may be a few. Those Vedic scholars who follow Maithrayaneeya samhitha live mainly in Gujarat and Andraparadesh, in the banks of Narmada and Godavari rivers. The Thaitheeya sakha Vedic scholars live almost everywhere in India where as Kata sakha followers are only in south-

ern banks of the Godavari river. The Kaanwa sakha followers are scattered in their huts on the banks of Krishna river. The Vajasaneyee madhyandina sakha followers are settled in the river banks of Sarayu, in UP .

Yajurveda manthras have the sruti almost similar to Rigveda manthras. One should learn the Vedas from the guru otherwise the sruti may go wrong while chanting. When some of the manthras are repeated in different Vedas , minor changes are also seen either in letters, or in words or sometimes in few lines.

Try to understand the messages of vedas for the marvelous feeling of Veda manthras. Whatever way we explain the Vedas. It will not give you the feeling/ experience of chanting or listening the manthras unless you directly enter into the subject . It will be just like explaining the taste of a fruit without your tasting it. So learn Vedas as a thapas with determination. Indian Institute of Scientific Heritage has digitalized and published all the four + one : five Veda mantras about about 200 hrs.

Let you be a Hindu, Christian, Muslim or atheist, believer or non believer, you may learn or try to listen before accepting or rejecting the Vedas.

Rigveda is considered as Jnaana kaanda, Yajurveda is focusing on karma kaanda. The 40th Chapter of Sukla Yajurveda is eesaavaasya upanishad is jnaana kaanda. This is the only Upanishad out of 108 upanishads, which is the part of a Veda. The 18 lines of eesaavaasya upanishad give 18 great messages of Hindu dharma. It is also chanted with sruti. There is a sakha of Yajurveda known as maitraayaneeya sakha. The Maitraayaneeya Upanishad and maithreyee Upanishad are also considered as the part of that sakha.

The vedic commentaries written in olden days by western scholars were aimed for religious conversion. Translation and commentary of Prof. Max Muller, William Moneir, Boden, Wilson and many western scholars were mainly to confusing the Indians for converting them to christianity. They have clearly mentioned in their own books/ letters directly or indirectly. Thus learning the Vedas using the translation by the earlier western scholars will give wrong meaning. Similarly the dictionary of Monier is nothing

but a nonsense which gives sexual and pornographic meaning for many vedic Sanskrit words. Translations of Vedas are available from Indian authors, who are well versed in the English, Sanskrit and regional languages.

The modern Sanskrit and Vedic Sanskrit are different. So learning the messages of Vedas using a modern Sanskrit dictionary also may not be appropriate. There are three types of meanings for Veda mantras. Aadhyaatmika- Aadhi bhoudhika and Adhi devata. (Perhaps for reminding us the three meanings/messages, we chant om saanthi, saanthi saanthi -three times). A good Veda text from Motilal Banarsidas publishers or Chaukhambha publishers or from Ramakrishna mission you can see special markings in each letter of the mantra. This marking denotes the Swaras like udaaata, anudaatta, swarita, repha ,hraswa, pracheya, anunaasika, kampa , deergha kampa and plutha of the mantra.

SAAMA (SAMA) VEDA

The Saama Veda is said to be the most interesting Veda. In Bhagavath geethaa Lord Krishna has said, " Vedaanaam saamavedoasmi" (I am the Saama Veda among vedas). It is the base of all Indian music /songs /ragas/ and arts. Gaandharva veda (sangeetha veda) is the upaveda of Saama veda. The saptha swara has its origin from saama veda. Sa-ri-ga-ma-pa-da-ni are the first letters of seven saama veda mantras. In Saama Veda the seven ragas are written as prathama, dwitheeya, thritheeya, chathurthi, panchami, shashti and sapthami . The equivalent Ragas in Karanatlc or Hindustani music are respectively madhyma (ma), gaandhaara (ga), rishabha (ri), shadja (sa), nishaada (ni), daivatha (da) and panchama (pa).

Saama veda mantras are compiled through a special and unique way of chanting the Rig veda and Yajurveda mantras with added tones /sruthies/words and letters. This makes the Saama (veda) gaana. The saama gaana – song- singing is the important part of yaagas. It is said that the yaaga devathas dance in the yaaga saala when they listen and enjoy this songs/ music and they bless everyone. Based on this saama gaana the Karnatik and Hindustani music /keerthans /bhajans /poems/ originated and developed . It is the toughest among the four Vedas.

Saama Veda has 1000 saakhas (recensions) majority of which are lost for ever. It is said that 13 recensions are available. They are : ranaayaneeya sakha, saatyā mugra saakha, vyaasa saakha, bhaguri saakha, oulundi saakha, goulguvi saakha, bhaanumaan saakha, oupamanyava saakha, kaaraati saakha, masaka saakha, gaargya saakha, kouthuma saakha, saalihotra saakha and jaimineeya saakha. It appears that now the vedic scholars can chant only the following three saakhas; Kouthuma saakha, Jaimineeya saakha and ranaayaneeya saakha. That means the other recensions have disappeared from the land of bharatha varsha for ever. Even if the text of the respective recensions may become available in future, the scholars who can chant/ sing may not be available. That means the sakha is dead. Have you ever heard the names of the above saama veda saakhas? 99.9% might not have heard these names. Many 'intellectuals' who make negative comments on Vedas have not even heard the names even for once in their life. They degrade, make fun off, belittle and denigrate, these Vedas even without knowing the first letter of vedas. The Vedas/ and vedic messages are universal in nature and they never never teach or preach anything biased or destructive. There are thousands of youngsters learning the Vedas outside India and abroad. Let us wish and hope that through them these Vedas may resurrect.

Let us now go through the brief description of sama veda. Total number of mantras in sama veda is 1549 (based on different sakhas there can be minor variations). Out of this 267 mantras should be repeated twice, when sama mantras are chanted. So these 267 mantras are known as punarukti (means repetition). Including these punarukti, the total number of sama veda mantra is $1549 + 267 = 1816$. Some scholars say Kouthuma sakha has 1875 mantras and Jaimineeya sakha has only 1693 mantras. The sama vedic mantras (except 105 mantras) are from Saakala sakha of Rigveda. It is also said that out of this 105 mantras, 30 mantras are present in Bhaashkala sakha of Rigveda. Thus the original mantras belonging to sama veda are only 75. All other mantras of sama veda are from Rigveda. In short the Rig veda mantras are chanted as songs (sama gaana) in sama veda. In

the kouthuma saakha of Sama veda, the total mantras are classified into poorvarchika, mahaanamnyarchika and uttararchika. These mantras are classified as agneya kanda, aindra kanda, pavamana kanda and aaranyakanda in uttarachika. In different sakhas the mantras are further classified and named differently. The sama gaanas (the songs of sama veda) are four types. Graama geya gaanas which are sung in village environment, when the yaagas are performed in villages(gramas). The aaranya geya gaanas are sama songs sung when the yaagas are performed in the forest. The third category of sama gaanas are those sung very confidentially /secretly without making much sound known as ooha gaanas. Those songs of sama veda which are sung only in the mind with full concentration are known as oohya gaanas.

There are 1232 grama geya gaanas, 291 aaranya geya gaanas, 802 ooha gaanas and 352 oohya gaanas in Jaimineeya sama veda sakha. One may remember that same mantra is sung in different gaanas in any one or more of the above method, Hence the number shown above which when added may go more than total number of sama veda mantras.

The subject matter in Sama Veda is almost the same as that mentioned in Rig Veda because, in Sama Veda, the Rigveda mantras are chanted with musical tones or ragas. There are only less than 75 mantras which originally belong to Sama Veda (remaining mantras are from Rigveda) The chanting method of Sama Veda is given in samhitanpanishad brahmana which is a small book.

ATHARVA VEDA

Atharva veda is also known as Brahma Veda, Atharva Angeerasa Veda, Angeerasa Veda, Kshatra Veda. It is wrongly commented that the Atharva Veda is inferior (or forbidden) to other three Vedas. Some of the cinemas / movies / serials strengthen this mis - understanding about Atharva Veda. It is wrong! The quality and all other parameters of Atharva veda are similar to the other Vedas. Veda thrayee, usage only means three qualities of each Vedas which are samhita, chandas and sruti. Atharva Veda has

all these three. Hence no way Atharva veda is inferior to other Vedas. Atharva Veda mantras are generally connected with common man's problems and prayers. They are sociology, agriculture, medicine, success and failures and so on in the life.

It is said that Atharva Veda has 50 recensions/ sakhas. Only nine sakhas are available, now. Their names are Pippalada sakha, thouda sakha, mouda sakha, sounakeeya sakha, jaajala sakha, jalada sakha, brahmavada sakha, devadarsa sakha, and charana vaidya sakha. Now only two sakhas are available. They are sounaka sakha and pippalada sakha. Unfortunately due to the wrong understanding (mis understanding / superstition that Atharva Veda is inferior to other Vedas) there are only few students to learn and few teachers to teach this Veda. Thus Atharva Vedic scholars are very few in number. In Kerala there may be two or three scholars who know the veda with sruti. Even the original sruthi of this Veda is also said to be almost lost (?).

There are some mantras which are falling under satru nasana, rashtra vijaya, roga nasana, raja vijaya, and so on. There are so many mantras which are chanted during ratha arohana, entering in palace, simhasana arohana, and for prosperity – health – long life – freedom from health problems – medicines for variety of diseases etc. These mantras are chanted exclusively for the benefit as prayer.

The Sounakeeya sakha of Atharva Veda has 750 sukthas compiled in 20 Kandas (parts) having 5987 mantras of which 1200 mantras are from Rigveda. There are many Yajurveda mantras too. Each suktha has a purpose and name. This arrangement of the suktha by mentioning the purpose is unique to Atharva Veda. It is said that the learning procedure of Atharva Veda has not been rigid as observed in other Vedas. Hence it is said that variations in chanting method, number of mantras etc are common.

There are 5987 mantras in Atharva Veda and they are included in 750 suktas. Each sukta is a prayer / explanation for fulfilling the desires. These prayers are for different purposes which reflect in the name of the suktha. Atharva vedic prayers focus for

prosperity and peaceful life on earth with all spiritual and physical comforts. Atharva Veda manthras are classified under adhyatmikam, adhibouthikam and adhidaivatham. The adhyatmika subjects are included in adhyathmika prakaranam: aathma thathwam, brahmacharyam – gruhastha-vanaprastha-sanyasa dharmam, description on jeevathma, paramathma, health, pancha bhootha, pancha prana and so on. Prayer for good health, medicines, curative effect, long life, relief from diseases / health problems like leprosy / fever/ small pox/ infections, and so on are also included in adhyathmika prakaranam .

Adhibhoothika subjects are described in adhibhootha prakaranam : the subject matters include the prayers/manthras connected with the role of kings, ministers, the victory in war, simhaasana arohanam, raajya vijayam, satru nasanam, anna vardhanam, prosperity and so on. In the third part of Atharva Veda, the Adhidaivatha prakaranam include the prayers towards vedic deities, yaga mantras, kaala sthuti, adoration of vaayu / agni / mitra / medicinal plants-oushadhee/ indra / vaiswanara/ mitra varuna and so on.

Name of some specific Atharva Veda mantras: medha janana, roga s'amanam, paasa vimochanam, yakshma naasanam, kanyaa vivaranam, pushti karmam, alakshmi naasanam, raktha chamkramanam, hrudroga nasanam, jwara nasanam, swasthayayanam, rashtraabhi vrudhi, madhu vidya, agni prarthana, abhaya praapthi, bala praapthi, pas'u samvardhanam, krimi nasanam, sreya praapti, rajaabhishekam, raja kruthyam, sala nirmanam, vanijyam, vanaspati vardhanam, ajaraksha, putra laabham, samaruddhi, athma raksha, pasuposhanam, brahma vidya, athma vidya, vaajeekaranam, paapa mochanam, mruthyusantharanam, vijaya prarthana, sarpavisha nasanam, garbhaadhaanam, kesavardhini oushadhi, swasti vachanam, abhaya yaachana, jala chikitsa, sarparakshanam, patilaabham, anna labham, dampathi prarthana, unmathamochanam, pasamochanam, sukrutha lokam, bhumi suktam, and so on.

VEDAS, BRAHMANAAS, ARANYAKAS

Let us open the books which come after the (four) Vedas in the vedic literature. These books are known as Brahmanas or brahminical literature. Majority of them explain the yaaga / yajna rituals which is practically difficult for anyone to understand without commentaries. The books are mainly meant for vedic scholars. Some of the brahmanas may contain different subjects also. These literature, in some cases form the continuation of the Vedas and some are separately available. Many of the information given in Brahmanas are the authentic references for the history of ancient India too books. Even some of the UGC approved history text are /were prepared based on the descriptions given in the brahmanas (particularly satha patha brahmana and gopatha brahmana). Generally brahmanas are composed as prose mixed with veda mantras.

The brahmanas are classified under each Veda. They are Rig vedic - Sukla yajurvedic – Krishna yajurvedic – Samavedic and Atharva vedic brahmanas. The yaagas are performed by the vedic scholars of respective Veda sakha based on the explanations given in their respective vedic brahmanas. If I belong to Rig Veda sakha, then I am expected to perform the yaga based on the brahmanas of Rigveda. How ever many Veda mantras from different sakhas will be used in yaagas. The chief priest and yajamana will follow the yaga karmas based on the respective brahmanas of the Vedas.

As mentioned earlier there are other subjects also in this text. Number of pages, contents, description methods, presentation styles, etc of each of the brahmanas vary. They also contain sometimes, social, psychological, historical, spiritual, religious, linguistic,.. subjects also.

Rigvedeeya Brahmana: Aithareya brahmana, saankhyaayana brahmana and kousheetakee brahmana are the three brahmanas of Rigveda of which aithareya and saankhyayana brahmana are available in full, where as kousheetaki brahmana is almost lost.

One of the important and the oldest Brahmanas is the Aithareya Brahmana. This book explains various aspects of yaagas. It was written by Maheedaasa Aitareya, of Kuru panchaala desa who was the son of a sudra woman namely Itara, belonging to the

working class. He has written Aithareya Brahmana, Aithareya aranyaka, Aithareya upanishad and Mahaitareya upanishad. As far the subject matter in this brahmana is concerned, it is primarily on yaagas performed for a day (ekaaha yajna) to twelve days (dwaadasaaha yajna). This book is composed in 162 khandas included in 40 chapters. Five chapters put together are known as panchikas. Thus Aithareya Brahmana has eight panchikas. The subject matter is given in a nutshell below

Explanations on the yaagasaala, the dimensions, fire altar, the cleaning and purification (suddhi karma) to be performed, reception to be given to the yaaga dravyas (materials for yaagas) and to the priests, the vedic names, quality , qualification and the role of the priests who are performing the yaagas, significance of the names of specific mantras, specific rituals to be performed each day, the materials to be used, receiving the soma latha for the soma rasa, praayaschitta to be performed for omissions and mistakes, the role of the king in yaagas, the coronation done after the yaagas, the simhasana arohanam performed, the crowning rituals done by the priests, qualification of the king described by narrating the examples of King Bharatha and Janamejaya, the pledge / oath taken by the king, raja purohita and ministers, and their qualities and qualifications.....!

Without a commentary (vyaakhyaana) understanding the contents of Aithareya Brahmana is not easy. However major part of this book is not relevant for a common man because they describe mainly yaagas. To some extent it may be of historical importance for the academicians and history students.

The second Brahmana of Rigveda is known as Saankhyayana Brahmana written many thousand years ago by Maharshi Saankhyaayana in 30 chapters. The yaagas performed by the Vedic scholars belonging to saankhyaayana Rigveda saakha are described in this book. Many descriptions of Aitareya brahmana are as such repeated in the Saankhyayana Brahmana also. It is said that this book is also known as Kousheetakee Brahmana which has only minor difference in presenting the yaaga descriptions. Kousheetakee brahmana might have been written with minor modification by Maharshi Kousheetakee. Detailed descriptions connected with the yaaga saala, description of various types of yaagas, producing the agni and doing the havans, etc.,

are given in the first five chapters of Saankhyaayana brahmana. The role of the priests, specialty of each yaaga karma etc are described upto 13th chapter. Further very elaborate yaagas like viswajith-atiraatra- shodasee- aswinam-etc, which are performed for many days, are described. The last three chapters describe three major rituals performed every day in every yaagas known as praatha – maadhyaanthina- saayam savanaas.

One should very specifically remember that * these braahmanaas can be studied/understood only with the help of commentaries * the language of the above brahminical literature is Vedic Sanskrit and hence need special knowledge to interpret the rituals * in modern days their relevance confine to the scholars who perform the yaagas * for the common man, there is not much to understand except historical information, if interested * simplified versions on the direction for performing yaagas are given in the fifth vedaangaa known as kalpa sutra (which we will be describing in detail later) * much research is to be done to understand what are the messages of braahmanaas beyond the description of performing the yaagas.

Yajurvedeeya Brahmana: We have already discussed the brahmanas of Rigveda and now we shall move to brahmanas of Yajurveda. The important among the brahmanas of vedic literature is Sathapatha brahmana. It is so called because it has hundred chapters. The satha patha brahmana has two versions / recensions. First one, has 100 chapters belonging to Vajasaneyee maadhyndina Sukla Yajurveda and the other has 104 chapters, belonging to Kanwa sakha. Both the texts resemble very much in their contents. They are also divided into 14 kaandas (parts) or 438 brahmanas (sub titles). Generally the book gives the explanations of yaagas to be performed by the Vedic scholars belonging to the Yajurveda saakha. How ever when deeply and systematically analyzed, one can get lot of information on the history of India. in fact many of the Indian history books quote a lot from this brahmana text.

The 14 kaandas of sathapatha brahmana are known as haviryajnam, ekapaadika, advaram, grahanamam, savam, ushasambharanam, hasthighatam, chiti, samchiti, agnirahasyam, ashtaadhyaayee, madhyamam, asvamedham and bruhadaaranyakam.

All these 14 kaandas have been further demanded into 438 brahmanas which are further divided into 7624 khandikas. There are 24,000 slokas (stanzas) composed using 768000 letters. (Rigveda has 10552 Riks / stanzas written using 397265 letters). Thus Satha patha brahmana is almost double in size compared to Rigveda. It is said that this book might have got composed during 3000 BC or so by Yajnavalkya Maharshi. This book is unique among the vedic literature because it is systematically composed using refined Sanskrit with all perfection. There will not be more than a few hundred people in the world who might have gone through the sathapatha brahmana text. The English session of the book is also available, which is a treasury of knowledge on ancient India. Foreign scholars have also published the translation of this brahmana. However, one should be very careful while following the translation of foreign scholars, as they might not have taken the spirit /message of the lines / mantras, instead they might have followed only the word by word translation. One should know that there are dozens of meanings for some Sanskrit words. The vedic meaning will be sometimes different from the modern meaning.

The Sathapatha Brahmana has another recension known as kaanwa Sathapatha brahmana, belonging to the Kanwa sakha of Yajurveda. Probably the scholars belonging to the Kanwa sakha of Yajurveda might have added some more information and rewritten the original Sathapatha brahmana in 104 chapters. Kanwa Sathapatha brahmana has 17 kandas which are distributed in 104 chapters. These many chapters are subdivided into 435 brahmanas and again subdivided into 6808 khandikaas. The number of kandas, chapters and khandikas has variation from the first Sathapatha brahmana. It is also said that Kanwa Sathapatha brahmana has better clarity in subject presentation. Kanwa Sathapatha brahmana has detailed descriptions on the historical facts of Kurupanchala Desa, Kosala, Videha, Ayodhya, Mithila, and so on. Lot of information on north Indian is given here. Hence this book has greater historical value which includes the history of many kings and kingdoms. Many information about Buddhism and Lord Budha has come from Sathapatha brahmana.

Text books on Indian history refer this ancient literature in detail. We can also get the historical perspectives of the scientific and technological knowledge existed during then. Stories of Dushyantha, Bharatha, Purooravas, Urvasi and so on are part of this book.

Thaithireeya brahmana of the Thaithireeya sakha of the Krishna Yajurveda has 24 chapters subdivided into prapaatakas and further divided in anuvaakaas. This book gives detailed descriptions of the yaagaas many of which we have not even heard of. It is also said that this brahmana is a part of Thaithireeya sakha of Yajurveda itself. (Krishna Yajurveda is so called because it has both prose and poems/hymns). In Thaithireeya brahmana too both prose and hymns are included and hence the Veda and brahmana are almost similar. Some scholars say that the same subject given in Veda is given in this brahmana in a different way.

Maithrayaneeya brahmana, belongs to the Maithrayaneeya sakha of Yajurveda and it is not available as full text. Hence some scholars say that such a brahmana is not existing as a brahmana. According to their opinion it may be a different version of Maithrayaneeya samhitha of Yajurveda itself. It is also said that the fourth part of the Maithrayaneeya Veda is considered as a separate brahmana, which is maithraayaneeya brahmana. It is observed that this brahmana has greater similarity with the Sathapatha brahmana in contents and structure.

At the end of the Thaithireeya brahmana comes Thaithireeya aaranyaka and as a continuation of the Thaithireeya aaranyaka comes three major Upanishads known as Thaithireeya Upanishad, Mahanaaraayana Upanishad and Yajjnikee Upanishad. These are the great Upanishads which give the essence of Indian message. Similarly at the end of Maithraayaneeya brahmana comes the Maithraayaneeya aaranyaka and as a continuation of this aaranyaka comes the Maithraayaneeya Upanishad.

Saamavedeeya brahmana: There are eleven brahmanas for the Sama Veda. They are Thaandya brahmana, Jaimineeya brahmana, Upanishad brahmana, Devathaadhyaaya brahmana, Jaimineeyopanishad brahmana, Samhithopanishad brahmana, Vamsabrahmana Aarsheya brahmana, Shadvimsa brahmana, Saamavidhaana brahmana and Chandogya brahmana.

Thandya brahmana is also known as panchavimsath (means 25) brahmana because it has 25 chapters. It is connected with the Kouthuma sakha of the Sama Veda. Each chapter of this big /great brahmana has again subdivided into khandas. This brahmana has elaborate explanations on all type of yaagas performed by the Vedic scholars belonging to the samaveda saakha. Here, various musical aspects of the samaveda are also given. That is known as saama gaana aalaapanam in yaga sala. The tones, ragas, and chanting methods are entirely different during the yaaga performance. It is something unimaginable for anyone who has not hitherto heard such chanting.

This brahmana gives in detail the saama gaana chanting methods by the udgaata priests in yaagas. Udgaata word means those who are singing in a glorious way in yaaga saala. The priests coming under udgata group are known, in yaaga saala as prasthotha, pratihanta and subrahmanya. Those who are coming under the advaryu class of priests who perform major rituals of yaagas are advaryu, pratiprasthotha, neshtri and unneti priest. Those who are coming under the hotru class of priests who also perform yaaga rituals with advaryu group priests are known as hota, maithraavaruna, acchavaaka and graavastut. The priests coming under the brahma class of priests who guide the whole yaaga karma are brahmanaachaamsi, agneedra and potha. Their roles are very specifically given in the Thaandya brahmana. - These information are only to inform that the yaagas are performed with utmost care and sincerity by allocating each duty to each priest and it is a group activity where spirituality and science combine.

The next brahmana of Sama Veda is **Jaimineeya brahmana** which has three kaandas and each kaanda has further been subdivided into khandas. In all the three kaandas various yaagas are explained as explained in prouda brahmana.

Upanishad brahmana is the third brahmana of Saama Veda which is said to be the part of the above brahmana itself and hence sometimes it is called Jaimineeyopanishad brahmana. Unlike other brahmana texts, this book is dealing with the philosophical aspects like mantras and Rishi parampara. The clan of two great Rishi families are given in this book and also the

greatness of the gaayatri mantra. As a continuation of this brahmana comes the Kenopanishad one among the great ten Upanishads

Devathaadyaaya brahmana is the 4th brahmana of Sama Veda which has four khandas. Major part of this brahmana explains the Vedic deities and their adoration given as samaveda sthuthy. It also gives the prosody / chandas of the Veda mantras. The sama gaana connected with the vedic deities like agni, indra, parajaapati, soma, varuna, twashta, aangeeras, pooshan etc are known as saraswatha saamam, indraagnisaamam, vasurudra-aadityasaamam and so on. The 'mother' and 'father' of each saama gaana are also explained which in Sanskrit is known maathru sthaana and pithru sthaana. Similarly there are prajaapati sthaana and devathaa sthaana for each saama Veda gaana (songs)

Jaimineeyopanishad brahmana: it is said that this brahmana is not the same as the above mentioned Jaimineeyoopanishad brahmana by some scholars. May be that there is yet another brahmana in this name which differs from the above brahmana mentioned in the previous paragraph. This brahmana has three chapters explaining the upanishadic subjects .

Samhitopaniahd brahmana belongs sama Veda explains mainly the samaveda manthra /samhitha (text). Nothing connected with the yaagas are explained in this brahmana,. Hence it is unique in its content. There are five khandas /parts in this brahmana each khanda gives deep information on the philosophical aspects sabda, Veda, sruti, raaga, gaana, samhita, upaasana of sama Veda and so on. The second khanda gives the rules of chanting sama Veda where the sruti like sthobham, anuloma-pratiloma swaras, repha sandhi, uddattha, anudaattha, roha, abhigeeta, visarga, upagrahaa, hraswa, deergha, prasthaava varnaas, vyanjanaas are explained which are practically impossible for a common man to understand. Next khanda explains the qualities and qualifications of the teacher and students and the method of learning sama Veda under a scholarly guru. Fourth khandas explain about the daana (offering) of materials to others and the merits of giving materials to poor /needy / and so on.

Vamsa brahmana is the Sixth brahmana of samaveda which also does not give much about yaagas. It explains in three small khandas the names of the Rishies as their parampara/ hierarchical order. One set of example is given here. The hierarchy begins from sivadatta-gaargya- draahyaayana- nigada -paanavalkya- girisarma- mitravarchas- supratheetha-bruhaspati- bhavatraatha- saakaraakshya- sravanadata- kouhala- susaarada- saalankaayana-oupamanya- bhaanumatha- aanandaja- saama- madakaara- susrava- vaarshaganya-keturvaabhya- sunnetha and so on in that order from generation to next. This type of vamsa parampara are given in the vamsa brahmana. In the next two chapters also similar explanations on the vamsa parampara are given specifically from generation about 50 generations or more.

Arsheya brahmana is associated with sama Veda. There are two Arsheya brahmanas. One is associated with Kouthumeeya sama Veda saakha and the other connected with Jaimineeya sakha. Both have many lines and messages in common, still they are two books with same name. There are five chapters which are further divided into khandas in this book. All the chapters give the descriptions of sama ganas connected with various vedic deities like Agni, Indra, and so on. It gives the mantras to be chanted as ooha gaanas, oohya gaanas, gramageya gaanas and aranyageya gaanas.

The next brahmana is **shadvimsa brahmana**. The word shad vimsath means 26th. It shows that this brahmana may be a separate one but a continuation of the pancha vimsa brahmana. It may be the 26th part of the pancha vimsa brahmana. There are five chapters in the shad vimsa brahmana. Unusually interesting and important descriptions of the sama gaana mantras are given in this book, which are connected with various yaagas and yajnas. Some of the great and very interesting sama gaana mantras are known as thrivrushasthoma, panchadasasthoma, sapthadasastghoma and so on. There are also descriptions connected with the origin of various mantras and deities in the sama Veda.

Samavidhaana brahmana is also connected with sama Veda which is unique among all the vedic literature. This is the only book describing the yaagas and rituals connected with the soul leaving the body after death. This brahmana gives the rituals connected the bhootha pretha moksha.

The last and one of very important brahmanas of Saama Veda is **chaandogya brahmana** having ten prapaatakas. This is also said to be the last part of thaandya maha brahmana. The first two prapaatakas of this brahmana describe the rituals to be performed by the family members, known as the Gruhastha karmas /acharas. All other brahmanas described hitherto, generally give the description of yaagas and yajnaas, but this is the brahmana which gives a different subject, in the first part. The remaining eight prapaatakas / parts are the famous Upanishad known as the Chaandogya Upanishad.

In the first two parts known as gruhastha karma part, the rituals connected with the marriage are described. Then the shodsa karmas (samskaraas/ sacraments) like garbhaadhaana, pumsavana, seemanthonnayana, jaatha karma of the newly born baby, choodaakama, nishkramana, upanayana etc., described in detail. In the second part, the yaagas / rituals connected with the prosperity moksheshti of the family are described. The gruhastha karmas mentioned above in two parts are also described in detail in the 268 sutras (messages) of Gobila gruhya sootra and ghaadira gruhyasutra. Since this brahmana was written earlier to the gruhya sutras, it may be appropriate to say that these 268 mantras of the of chaandogya brahmana are reproduced in the two gruhyasutras.

The remaining eight parts of this brahmana are the Chaandogya Upanishad which we shall be describing in detail when we discuss the Upanishads. Here, in Saama Veda the order of arrangement of the books is Veda, brahmana and Upanishad. Same is applicable for Atharva Veda also. However for Rig Veda and Yajurveda the order is Veda, Brahmana, Aaranyaka and Upanishad. The aaranyaka subjects are given in the braahmanaas itself and hence no separate aaranyaka is available for them. It is

interesting to note that all these books are written, classified, described and presented in a very systematic method. None will get any confusion provided he/she knows from where he starts the learning process.

Atharvavedeeya brahmana: Gopatha Brahmana is the brahmana connected with Atharva Veda. It is perfectly organized in content and literary beauty. Gopatha word is said to have the meaning guptha = deep / secret and it also, has another meaning 'following the footsteps of Veda' (Go means Vedas and patha means footsteps/ pathways). So gopatha means the footsteps of Vedas. It is almost similar in size to the sathapatha brahmana. It has been divided into two parts. In the first part there are five prapaatakas which is known as poorva brahmana and in the second part there are six prapatakaas which is known as utara brahmana.

In the first part of this brahmana , the greatness of Atharva Veda and that of the Atharva vedic Rishies are explained. The method of learning and teaching Atharva Veda and practicing the messages of this veda are also given in the first few prapaatakas of the poorva brahmana. These prapaatakas are further divided into kaandas. As mentioned in other brahmanas, the rituals and customs connected with the Yaagaas and yajnaas are also explained in detail. In the same way yaagas and yajnaas are explained in the second part also (utara brahmana). Every aspect connected with social, psychological, spiritual and anthropological life of the people and that of the yajnaa are included in the explanation in Gopatha brahmana. Variety of great yaagas performed in our itihasas are explained in this book like putra kameshti, vaajapeya, aswamedha, pasu bandha etc.

Even though the subject matter wise (of the Gopatha Brahmana), it may not be useful or relevant to learn the book, but the contents throw light on the great scientific, technological, spiritual, psychological, social, geographical, (and so on) aspects of ancient India. No other ancient book can be cited which gives such au-

thentic information and references on ancient India (of course satha patha brahmana does to a great extent). Those who are searching the information on ancient India for them, this book stands unique source for that of knowledge.

AARANYAKA (ARANYAKA)

The Brahmanas primarily focus on the yaagas and yajnaas. The subject matter is kamyeshaties which are meant for prosperity, wealth, power, and so on. In short these yaagas and yajnaas are for making the life happy and prosperous, for the family members, kings, village heads and also for great or rich men. The next branch of Indian knowledge is Aaranyakaas. Aaranyaka means 'that is connected with forest'. The rituals which are to be performed by those who are going to vaana prastha. (after the family life and giving the responsibility of the family to the grown up children). While living in forest, many rituals are to be performed with the available materials. These rituals are not for name, fame or prosperity. They are meant for leaving the life happily (moksha) without any bondage. Hence they are known as moksheshati. The yaagas which lead for moksha or detachment. Here comes the philosophy, the meaning, bondage, attachment, jnaana, bhakti, karma, dharma, Vedas, Upanishads, psychology, divinity, brahma saaakshaath kaaram, brahma jnaanam, ultimate truth and relative truth, sensory organs, functional organs etc., connected with life. Because these subjects are the part and parcel of Indian philosophy and hence leading to upanishadic knowledge through aaranyaka texts.

There are Rigvedic and Yajurvedic aranyakaas. There is no Aaranyaka for sama Veda and Atharva Veda. However subject matters of aaranyakas are dealt in the last part of the brahmanas of samaveda and also in the Gopatha brahmana of Atharvaveda.

Rigvedeeya aaranyakas. They are Aitareya aaranyaka and kousheetakee aaranyaka, Yajurvedeeya aaranyakas are maithraayaneeya aaranyaka and Thaithireeya aaranyaka. For the modern man, the aranyakas do not have much relevance, in the day to day life. They are meant for vaanaprasthaasrami and

almost the subject matters deal with yaagas to be performed in forest.

We have discussed about the Aithareya aranyaka which comes at the end of Aithareya brahmana. At the end of the Aithareya aranyaka comes the Aithareya Upanishad, mahaitareya Upanishad and Bahvrucha Upanishad in the first part of this aranyaka. In the second part of the Aithareya aranyaka comes the samhitopanishad. All the subject matters in this aranyaka, as mentioned earlier are connected with philosophy of life and moksha. Even few stories also appear here and there to inform the significance of the philosophical approach in our day to day life. In the Kousheetakee aranyaka too major part of the explanations are connected with the spirituality and philosophy. Out of the 15 chapters in this Upanishads, 3 to 6 chapters are known as kousheetakee Upanishad. Rest of the Upanishad discusses about the philosophy. The 13th to 15th chapters of this book discuss about rain, lightening, celestial bodies and their rising and setting.

Yajurvedeeya aranyaka: There are no aranyakas for the Sukla yajurveda. Maithraayaneeya aranyaka and thaithireeya aranyaka are the two aranyakas for the Krishna yajurveda. In the former, the first part discusses about the significance of the spiritual and sanyasa life by narrating the story of King Bruhadratha, who gave up all his belonging and country and went for sanyasa and attained moksha. The discussion between King Bruhadratha and Muni Sakaayana given in this book interesting for philosophy students. In the end of this aranyaka comes the maithraayaneeya Upanishad and maithreyee Upanishad. Thaithireeya aranyaka has almost full of descriptions of havans and sacrificial rituals to be performed by a vaanaprastee. Thaithireeya Upanishad is the part of the thaithireeya aranyaka.

Veda means knowledge. The source of unlimited knowledge. When searched deep one can get the essence, fact and truth of theoretical and applied knowledge for one and all. The Vedas can no-way be compared with other the religious in literature of, because the purpose, the method, the way, the content, the pre-

sentation, the concepts.....etc of the Vedas can never be imagined unless you learn it. Many of the commentaries written by foreign scholars are merely their visions without knowing what was and what is Indian culture. Many of the earlier foreign interpretations of Vedas are merely for denigrating them and creating a negative complex in the mind of Indians. Rig-Veda gives the Jnaana kaanda, Yajurveda gives the karma kaanda, sama Veda the arts and music aspects and Atharva Veda the social/scientific/.....contents. Many hymns are common for all the four Vedas. The method of chanting, the learning method, the approach of learning, their meanings, messages(of Vedas) are different from any other literature in the world. It also differs from other puranic or itihasa literature . Hence the readers should remember that what the Indians know about the Vedas from external sources are no way related or connected with the true Vedic knowledge. When we go further deep into Braahmana granthas, Aranyakas and Upanishads, we will know more about Vedas .

The ocean of knowledge available in our motherland is presented here as a theertham in a small spoon !

(All the Vedas have been published in the digitalized format as MP3 CDs and DVDs by the Indian Institute of Scientific Heritage, Trivandrum)

We have completed the discussion on Vedas, Brahmanas and Aranyakas

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