

Sarasvati in the Veda - Part 2

Some quotes from "The Secret of the Veda" on the language and poetic style of the Vedic hymns.

"THE RIG VEDA is one in all its parts. Whichever of its ten Mandalas we choose, we find the same substance, the same ideas, the same images, the same phrases. The Rishis are the seers of a single truth and use in its expression a common language. They differ in temperament and personality; some are inclined to a more rich, subtle and profound use of Vedic symbolism; others give voice to their spiritual experience in a barer and simpler diction, with less fertility of thought, richness of poetical image or depth and fullness of suggestion. Often the songs of one seer vary in their manner, range from the utmost simplicity to the most curious richness. Or there are risings and fallings in the same hymn; it proceeds from the most ordinary conventions of the general symbol of sacrifice to a movement of packed and complex thought. Some of the Suktas are plain and almost modern in their language; others baffle us at first by their semblance of antique obscurity. But these differences of manner take nothing from the unity of spiritual experience, nor are they complicated by any variation of the fixed terms and the common formulae. **In the deep and mystic style of Dirghatamas Auchathya as in the melodious lucidity of Medhatithi Kanwa, in the puissant and energetic hymns of Vishwamitra as in Vasishtha's even harmonies** we have the same firm foundation of knowledge and the same scrupulous adherence to the sacred conventions of the Initiates.¹

From the historical point of view the Rig Veda may be regarded as a record of a great advance made by humanity by special means at a certain period of its collective progress. In its esoteric, as well as its exoteric significance, it is the Book of Works, of the inner and the outer sacrifice; it is the spirit's hymn of battle and victory as it discovers and climbs to planes of thought and experience inaccessible to the natural or animal man, man's praise of the divine Light, Power and Grace at work in the mortal. It is far, therefore, from being an attempt to set down the results of intellectual or imaginative speculation, nor does it consist of the dogmas of a primitive religion. Only, out of the sameness of experience and out of the impersonality of the knowledge received, there arise a fixed body of conceptions constantly repeated and a fixed symbolic language which, perhaps, in that early human speech, was the inevitable form of these conceptions because alone capable by its combined concreteness and power of mystic suggestion of expressing that which for the ordinary mind of the race was inexpressible. We have, at any rate, the same notions repeated from hymn to hymn with the same constant terms and figures and frequently in the same phrases with an entire indifference to any search for poetical originality or any demand for novelty of thought and freshness of language. No pursuit of aesthetic grace, richness or beauty induces these mystic poets to vary the consecrated form which had become for them a sort of divine algebra transmitting the eternal formulae of the Knowledge to the continuous succession of the initiates.

The hymns possess indeed a finished metrical form, a constant subtlety and skill in their technique, great variations of style and poetical personality; they are not the work of rude, barbarous and primitive craftsmen, but the living breath of a supreme and conscious Art forming its creations in the puissant but well-governed movement of a self-observing inspiration."²

¹ Page 59 VOLUME 15 THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO. © Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust 1998

² Page 10-11 *ibid.*

E. V. Arnold on the metrical skill of the Vedic Rishis.

"To whatever conclusions we may further be led in detail, it must be plain that as works of mechanical art the metres of the Rigveda stand high above those of modern Europe in variety of motive and in flexibility of form. They seem indeed to bear the same relation to them as the rich harmonies of classical music to the simple melodies of the peasant. And in proportion as modern students come to appreciate the skill displayed by the Vedic poets, they will be glad to abandon the easy but untenable theory that the variety of form employed by them is due to chance, or the purely personal bias of individuals: and to recognize instead that we find all the signs of a genuine historical development, that is of united efforts in which a whole society of men have taken part, creating an inheritance which has passed through the generations from father to son, and holding up an ideal which has led each in turn to seek rather to enrich his successors than to grasp at his own immediate enjoyment. If this was so, then the Vedic bards also are to be counted amongst 'great men, and ... such as sought out musical tunes, and set forth verses in writing'.³

Sri Aurobindo on the imposition of rules of the later literary tongue on the poetic ancient text.

"It is not ... at all improbable that we have the Sanhita of Vyasa substantially as it was arranged by the great sage and compiler. Substantially, not in its present written form. Vedic prosody differed in many respects from the prosody of classical Sanskrit and, especially, employed a greater freedom in the use of that principle of euphonic combination of separate words (*sandhi*) which is so peculiar a feature of the literary tongue. The Vedic Rishis, as was natural in a living speech, followed the ear rather than fixed rule; sometimes they combined the separate words, sometimes they left them uncombined. But when the Veda came to be written down, the law of euphonic combination had assumed a much more despotic authority over the language and the ancient text was written by the grammarians as far as possible in consonance with its regulations."⁴

Sample of restoration of Vedic metre in Rig-Veda II.41.17

As Sri Aurobindo mentioned the Sanhita text as it has come down to us through the ages (in its present written form and the way it is chanted, for both are in fact identical) applied to the Vedic poetry rules of later classical Sanskrit which the Vedic poets had not yet imposed on themselves in the same systematic manner. Many euphonic combined words have therefore to be resolved again in order for the proper metre to be restored. Sri Aurobindo does not go into more details but observes that "Vedic prosody differed in many respects from the prosody of classical Sanskrit". E. V. Arnold in his more than 300 pages strong book tries to show in full detail all possible amendments to the Sanhita text so as to restore the metre in full. I give here along with the resolution of Sandhi only one of these procedures, which is the reading of the two semivowels "ya" and "va" along with their respective vowels as "iya" and "uva". It is important to note that these changes are not only made in a purely mechanical way but manifest spontaneously, as it were, to the readers once they have become familiarized with the Vedic poetry. One could almost say the text asks for its own

³ Page 21, VEDIC METRE IN ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT, BY EDWARD VERNON ARNOLD, Litt.D., PROFESSOR OF LATIN IN THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NORTH WALES, FORMERLY FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. Cambridge University Press 1905

⁴ Page 17-18 VOLUME 15 THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO. © Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust 1998

restoration. Here a sample from a verse to Sarasvati that we have already chanted in the previous session. The verse is in Anushtup Chandas, a metre with generally 4 x 8 syllables. In the traditional way of writing and chanting out of the supposed 32 syllables as much as 4 are missing, which in the metrical reading come naturally to the fore.

त्वे विश्वा॑ सरस्वति॑ श्रितायूंषि॑ देव्याम् ।

शुनहोत्रेषु॑ मत्स्व प्रजां देवि॑ दिदिद्धि॑ नः ॥ २-४१-१७

Way of writing in the Sanhita text and its traditional chanting:

tvé víśvā sarasvati, śritāyūṃṣi devyām |
śunáhotreṣu matsva, prajāṃ devi didiḍḍhi naḥ |17|

Way of metrical recitation (with the restored syllables highlighted):

túvé víśvā sarasvati, śritāyūṃṣi deviyām |
śunáhotreṣu matsva, prajāṃ devi didiḍḍhi naḥ |17|

Interpretation:

In you the divine, O Sarasvati, all forms (or, energies) of life are set. Take delight in the Shunahotras (in us, who have joy in the sacrifice); O Goddess bestow progeny (inner offspring) on us. (17)

Selected verses in relation to the Goddess of the Word.

From Rig-Veda I.164

The radiant One has expressed herself in the forming of the flowing Waters. From one plane (of existence) she has manifested herself in two, in four, in eight, in nine planes. She is the imperishable with thousand (syllables) in the Transcendent Ether. (41)

From her flow out the oceans; by that live the four directions. From that moves the unmoving; by that lives the universe. (42)

The Word has been measured out in four planes. The possessors of the Word of the soul, who have the intuitive intelligence, know them. Three are hidden in the secret cave and give (outwardly) no sign; the fourth (material) plane of the Word speak the humans. (45)

Your breast that continuously flows and manifests the bliss, by which you nourish all supremely desirable things, which establishes the ecstasy, finds the luminous treasure and which gives itself liberally, – O Sarasvati, make it here for our drinking. (49)

From Rig-Veda X.125

I am the shining queen, the gatherer of the luminous treasures, the original Consciousness-force of all powers that take part in the sacrifice. The gods established me widely at many places as the one who is present manifold and lets them enter multiply. (3)

... Whom I desire, I make him strong; I make him the possessor of the Word of the soul, a seer, one wise of understanding. (5)

On the head of this (manifestation) I bring forth the Father; my birth-place is in the Waters within the Ocean. From there I spread out along all the worlds of becoming and with my top touch the transcendent Heaven. (7)

Verily, I blow like the Wind and take into my rapturous grasp all the worlds and their beings. I have become manifest in a measure of greatness that is beyond this earth and beyond heaven. (8)

Study of Rig-Veda, Hymn I.3, verses 10-12 to Sarasvati.

Sri Aurobindo's introduction to this hymn.

"THE THIRD hymn of Madhuchchhandas is again a hymn of the Soma sacrifice. It is composed, like the second before it, in movements of three stanzas, the first addressed to the Ashwins, the second to Indra, the third to the Vishwadevas, the fourth to the goddess Saraswati. In this hymn also we have in the closing movement, in the invocation to Saraswati, a passage of clear psychological significance, of a far greater clarity indeed than those that have already helped us to understand the secret thought of the Veda.

But this whole hymn is full of psychological suggestions and we find in it **the close connection and even identity which the Vedic Rishis sought to establish and perfect between the three main interests of the human soul, Thought and its final victorious illuminations, Action and its last supreme all-achieving puissances, Enjoyment and its highest spiritual ecstasies.** The Soma wine symbolises the replacing of our ordinary sense-enjoyment by the divine Ananda. That substitution is brought about by divinising our thought-action, and as it progresses it helps in its turn the consummation of the movement which has brought it about. The Cow, the Horse, the Soma-Wine are the figures of this triple sacrifice. The offering of *ghṛta*, the clarified butter which is the yield of the cow, the offering of the horse, *aśvamedha*, the offering of the wine of Soma are its three principal forms or elements. We have also, less prominent, the offering of the cake which is possibly symbolic of the body, of Matter."⁵

पावका नः सरस्वती वाजेभिर् वाजिनीवती । यज्ञं वष्टु धियावसुः ॥ १-३-१०

pavākā naḥ sárasvatī vājebhir vājīnīvatī | yajñám vaṣṭu dhīyāvasuḥ |10|

Sri Aurobindo's translation in "The Secret of the Veda":

"May purifying Saraswati with all the plenitude of her forms of plenty, rich in substance by the thought, desire our sacrifice."

From Sri Aurobindo's comments:

"And, finally, in the last movement of the hymn we have the clear and unmistakable indication of the Truth-consciousness as the goal of the sacrifice, the object of the Soma-offering, the culmination of the work of the Ashwins, Indra and the All-gods in the vitality

and in the mind. For these are the three Riks devoted to Saraswati, the divine Word, who represents the stream of inspiration that descends from the Truth-consciousness ...⁶

"The sense of the first two verses is clear enough when we know Saraswati to be that power of the Truth which we call inspiration. Inspiration from the Truth purifies by getting rid of all falsehood, for all sin according to the Indian idea is merely falsehood, wrongly inspired emotion, wrongly directed will and action. The central idea of life and ourselves from which we start is a falsehood and all else is falsified by it. **Truth comes to us as a light, a voice, compelling a change of thought, imposing a new discernment of ourselves and all around us. Truth of thought creates truth of vision and truth of vision forms in us truth of being, and out of truth of being (satyam) flows naturally truth of emotion, will and action. This is indeed the central notion of the Veda.**"⁷

With Sanskrit:

"May purifying (pavākā) Saraswati with all the plenitude of her forms of plenty (vājebhir vājīnīvatī), rich in substance by the thought (dhiyāvasuḥ), desire (vaṣṭu) our sacrifice (yajñām)." (10)

Vocabulary:

vāja, m. (fr. vaj; cf. ugra, uj, ojas &c.) *strength, vigour, energy, spirit, speed (esp. of a horse; also pl.)* RV. AV. VS. SankhSr. (vājebhis ind. mightily, greatly; cf. sahasā); a contest, race, conflict, battle, war RV. VS. GrSrS. the prize of a race or of battle, booty, gain, reward, any precious or valuable possession, wealth, treasure RV. VS. AV. PancavBr.; food, sacrificial food (= anna in Nigh. ii,7 and in most of the Commentators) RV. VS. Br.; (?) a swift or spirited horse, war-horse, steed RV. AV.; vājīnīvat, mfn. *possessing or driving swift mares, rich in horses (applied to various gods, and to the rivers Sindhu and Sarasvati)* RV. AV. TBr. (accord. to others "strong", "spirited", "rich in sacrifices" &c.); m. the sun AV.; pl. the steeds of the gods ib.;

SA: ... a substantial, firm and copious condition of being, well-grounded and sufficient plenty in anything material, mental or spiritual, any substance, wealth, chattels, qualities, psychological conditions.

vaś, cl. 2. P. vaṣṭi, (1. pl. uśmasi, or śmasi RV.; 3. pl. uśanti ib.); *to will, command* RV. AV.; *to desire, wish, long for, be fond of, like (also with inf.)* RV. &c.; "willing, glad, eager, zealous, obedient";

Old Translators:

10 Wealthy in spoil, enriched with hymns, may bright Sarasvati desire,
With eager love, our sacrifice.

10. Die lautere Sarasvati, an Belohnungen reiche, soll nach unserem Opfer verlangen, die durch Weisheit Schätze gewinnt.

चोदयित्री सूनृतानां चेतन्ती सुमतीनाम् । यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती ॥ १-३-११

codayitrī sūnṛtānām cētantī sumatīnām | yajñām dadhe sárasvatī |11|

Sri Aurobindo's translation in "The Secret of the Veda":

"She, the impeller to happy truths, the awakener in consciousness to right mentalisings, Saraswati, upholds the sacrifice."

Sri Aurobindo's comments:

"She upholds the Sacrifice, the offering of the mortal being's activities to the divine by awakening his consciousness so that it assumes right states of emotion and right

⁶ Page 90 ibid.

⁷ Page 100 ibid.

movements of thought in accordance with the Truth from which she pours her illuminations and by impelling in it the rise of those truths which, according to the Vedic Rishis, liberate the life and being from falsehood, weakness and limitation and open to it the doors of the supreme felicity."⁸

Interpretation with Sanskrit:

The inspirer (**codayitrī**) of happy truths (**sūnṛtānām**), the awakener (**cétantī**) of right thinkings (**sumatīnām**), the Stream of inspiration (**sárasvatī**) upholds (**dadhe**) the sacrifice (**yajñām**). (11)

Vocabulary:

codayitr, mf(trī)n. *one who impels or animates or promotes RV. 1.3.11;*
sūnṛta, mf(ā) n. *joyful, glad RV.; friendly, kind Mn. (iii,150) MBh. &c.; pleasant and true (in this sense supposed to be fr. 5. su + rta) Yajn. MBh. &c.; (am) n. joy, gladness, delight RV. AV. (with Jainas) pleasant and true speech (one of the five qualities belonging to right conduct) Sarvad.;*
sūnṛtā, f. *gladness, joy, exultation, song of joy, glee (instr. pl. "joyfully") RV. TS. ParGr.; truth (opp. to an-rta) personified as a goddess RV. AV. &c.;*

Old Translators:

11 Inciter of all pleasant songs, inspirer o all gracious thought,
Sarasvati accept our rite

11. Schenkungen anregend, auf Wohlwollen bedacht, hat Sarasvati das Opfer angenommen.

महो अर्णः सरस्वती प्र चेतयति केतुना । धियो विश्वा वि राजति ॥ १-३-१२

mahó árṇaḥ sárasvatī prá cetayati ketúnā | dhíyo víśvā ví rājati |12|

Sri Aurobindo's translation in "The Secret of the Veda":

"Saraswati by the perception awakens in consciousness the great flood (the vast movement of the Ritam) and illumines entirely all the thoughts."

From Sri Aurobindo's comments:

"By this constant awakening and impulsion, summed up in the word, perception, *ketu*, often called the divine perception, *daivya ketu*, to distinguish it from the false mortal vision of things, — Saraswati brings into active consciousness in the human being the great flood or great movement, the Truth consciousness itself, and illumines with it all our thoughts. We must remember that this truth-consciousness of the Vedic Rishis is a supra-mental plane, a level of the hill of being (*adreḥ sānu*) which is beyond our ordinary reach and to which we have to climb with difficulty. It is not part of our waking being, it is hidden from us in the sleep of the superconscient. We can then understand what Madhuchchhandas means when he says that Saraswati by the constant action of the inspiration awakens the Truth to consciousness in our thoughts."⁹

Interpretation with Sanskrit:

The Stream of inspiration (**sárasvatī**) by the perception (**ketúnā**) makes conscious (**prá cetayati**) the great flood (**mahó árṇaḥ**) and entirely (**ví**) rules luminously (**rājati**) all (**víśvā**) the thoughts (**dhíyo**). (12)

⁸ Page 100-101 ibid.

⁹ Page 101 ibid.

Vocabulary:

arṇa, (as, am) m. n. a wave, flood; stream RV. BhP.;

pra-cit, P. A. -ciketti, -cikitte, to know or make known RV.; to become visible or manifest, appear ib.; Caus. -cetayati, to make known, cause to appear RV.;

ketu, m. (fr. 4. cit), bright appearance, clearness, brightness (often pl., "rays of light") RV. VS. AV.; lamp, flame, torch ib.; day-time SankhBr. (Naigh. iii,9); apparition, form, shape RV. ParGr.; sign, mark, ensign, flag, banner RV. AV. MBh. &c.; intellect, judgment, discernment (?) RV. v,66,4 AV. x,2,12;

vi-rāj, P.A. -rājati, -te, to reign, rule, govern, master (gen. or acc.), excel (abl.) RV. AV. Br.; to be illustrious or eminent, shine forth, shine out (abl.), glitter ChUp. Mn. MBh. &c.;

Old Translators:

12 Sarasvati, the mighty flood,- she with the light illuminates,

She brightens every pious thought.

12. Mit ihrem Banner offenbart Sarasvati ihr große Wasserflut; sie beherrscht alle frommen Gedanken.

Study of Rig-Veda VII.96, second hymn to Sarasvati by the great seer Vasishtha.

Text in Devanāgarī.

ṛṣiḥ: vasiṣṭho maitrāvaruṇiḥ; devatā: sarasvatī, 4-6 sarasvān; chandaḥ: 1-2 pragātha (1 viṣamā bṛhatī, 2 samāsato bṛhatī) 3 prastara paṅkti, 4-6 gāyatrī.

बृहद् उ॑ गा॒यिषे॑ वचो॑ ऽसु॒र्या॑ नदीनाम् ।
सर॒स्वती॑म् इन् मह॒या सु॒वृ॒क्तिभिः॑ स्तोमै॑र् वसिष्ठ॑ रोदसी ॥ ७-९६-१
उभे॑ यत् ते॒ महि॑ना शु॒भ्रे अ॒न्धसी॑ अधि॒क्षिय॑न्ति पू॒र्वः ।
सा नो॑ बो॒ध्य अ॒वित्री॑ मरु॒त्सखा॑ चोद॒ राधो॑ मघो॒नाम् ॥ ७-९६-२
भद्र॑म् इद् भद्रा॑ कृणवत् सर॒स्वत्य् अ॒कवारी॑ चेतति॒ वाजि॑नीवती ।
गृणा॑ना जमदग्नि॒वत् स्तु॒वाना॑ च वसिष्ठ॒वत् ॥ ७-९६-३
जनी॑यन्तो न्व् अग्र॒वः पु॒त्रीय॑न्तः सु॒दान॒वः । सर॒स्वन्तं॑ हवामहे ॥ ७-९६-४
ये ते॑ सर॒स्व उ॒र्मयो॑ मधु॒मन्तो॑ घृ॒तश्चु॑तः । तेभि॑र् नो ऽवि॒ता भ॒व ॥ ७-९६-५
पी॒पिवा॑सं सर॒स्वतः॑ स्त॒नं यो॑ वि॒श्वदर्श॑तः । भ॒क्षीम॑हि प्र॒जाम् इ॒षम् ॥ ७-९६-६

Text in Transliteration.

bṛhád u gāyīṣe váco asuríyā nadīnām |
sárasvatīm ín mahayā suvṛktībhiḥ stómair vasiṣṭha ródasī |1|

ubhé yát te mahinā śubhre ándhasī adhikṣiyánti pūrávaḥ |
sā no bodhi avitrī marútsakhā códa rādho maghónām |2|

bhadráṃ íd bhadráḥ kṛṇavat sárasvatī ákavārī cetati vājínīvatī |
gṛṇānā jamadagnivat stuvānā ca vasiṣṭhavát |3|

janīyánto nú ágravaḥ putrīyántaḥ sudānavaḥ | sárasvantaṃ havāmahe |4|

yé te sarasva ūrmáyo mádhumanto ghṛtaścútaḥ | tébhir no avitā bhava |5|

pīpivāṃsaṃ sárasvataḥ stánaṃ yó viśvadarśataḥ | bhakṣīmáhi prajám íṣam |6|

Text, Translations and Vocabulary:

बृहद् उ गायिषे वचो ऽसुर्या नदीनाम् ।
सरस्वतीम् इन् महया सुवृक्तिभिः स्तोमैर् वसिष्ठ रोदसी ॥ ७-९६-१

bṛhád u gāyīṣe váco asuríyā nadīnām |
sárasvatīm ín mahayā suvṛktībhiḥ stómair vasiṣṭha ródasī |1|

Interpretation:

I sing a vast word (to her), who is almighty among the rivers. Greaten the divine Stream (Sarasvati) with your perfectly purifying affirmations, O Vasishtha, (greaten) Heaven and Earth (the two shining goddesses of the physical and mental consciousness). (1)

With Sanskrit:

I sing (gāyīṣe) a vast word (bṛhád váco) (to her), who is almighty (asuríyā) among the rivers (nadīnām). Greaten indeed (ín mahayā) the divine Stream (sárasvatīm) with your perfectly purifying (suvṛktībhiḥ) affirmations (stómair), O Vasishtha, (greaten) Heaven and Earth (ródasī) (the two shining goddesses of the physical and mental consciousness). (1)

Vocabulary:

gai, cl. 1. P. gāyati, rarely A. -te (1. sg. gāye [RV. viii,46,17] & gāyise [RV. VII.96.1] Laty. MBh. &c.); to sing, speak or recite in a singing manner, sing to (dat. RV.), praise in song (with acc.), relate in metrical language RV. AV. &c.;

vacas, 1 n. speech, voice, word RV. &c.;

asuryā, 1 (4) mfn. incorporeal, spiritual, divine RV. (Pan. 4-4,123) demoniacal, belonging or relating to the Asuras AitBr. SBr.; (ās) m. (= asura m. q.v.) the supreme spirit RV. ii,35,2;

SA: the mighty one, almightiness;

mah, 1 (orig. magh; cf. also mañh) cl. 1. 10. P. mahati, mahayati (Ved. and ep. also A. mahate, -hayate; to elate, gladden, exalt, arouse, excite RV. Br. Kaus. ChUp. MBh.; to magnify, esteem highly,

honour, revere MBh. Kav. &c.; (A.) to rejoice, delight in (instr. or acc.) RV. iii,52,6; vi,15,2; to give, bestow ib. i,94,6; 117,17; v,27,1 &c. [Lat. magnus, mactus; Old Germ. Michel; Eng. mickle, much.] suvr̥kti, f. (accord. to some for su-r̥kti = su-rc; cf. su-vita for su-ita) excellent praise or hymn of praise (also a form of instr.) RV.; mfn. singing or praising excellently ib. well praised , praiseworthy , glorious ib. TS.;

SA: with complete purification, by its utter cleaving away of all evil, with acts of purification, by clear cuttings of speech;

Old Translators:

1. I SING a lofty song, for she is mightiest, most divine of Streams.

Sarasvati will I exalt with hymns and lauds, and, O Vasistha, Heaven and Earth.

1. Ich will ein hohes Wort singen: Sie ist die Asurische unter den Flüssen. Die Sarasvati verherrliche mit Preisliedern, mit Lobgesängen, o Vasistha, und die beiden Welten!

उ॒भे॒ यत् ते॑ म॒हि॒ना शु॒भ्रे॑ अ॒न्ध॒सी॑ अ॒धि॒क्षि॑यन्ति पू॒र्वः॑ ।
सा॒ नो॑ बो॒ध्य् अ॒वि॒त्री॑ म॒रु॒त्स॒खा चो॒द् रा॒धो॑ म॒घो॒नाम् ॥ ७-९६-२

ubhé yát te mahinā śubhre ándhasī adhikṣiyānti pūravaḥ |
sā no bodhi avitrī marútsakhā códa rādho maghónām |2|

Interpretation:

O brightly shining one, when the Pūrus (the souls with multiple capacities?) by (your) greatness take their dwelling on both your nourishing pastures, then awake as our furtherer (or, increaser) and the friend (or, companion) of the Thought-Energies (Maruts). Impel us towards the rich achievement of the powers (gods) of fullness. (2)

Comments:

The greatness here could perhaps be connected with the greatening of Sarasvati in the first verse (both words have the same root), and the two pastures as well with Heaven and Earth, as if she is bridging these two worlds (of the physical and mental existence) and nourishes both shores. This makes also sense in her association with the Maruts, which according to Sri Aurobindo are in the esoteric sense the life-powers that have attained to the action of thought and connect to the other shore to make the action of Indra, the divine Mind possible.

With Sanskrit:

O brightly shining one (śubhre), when (yát) the Pūrus (pūravaḥ) (the souls with multiple capacities?) by (your) greatness (mahinā) take their dwelling on (adhikṣiyānti) both (ubhé) your (te) nourishing pastures (ándhasī), then awake (sā bodhi) as our (no) furtherer (or, increaser) (avitrī) and the friend (or, companion) of the Thought-Energies (marútsakhā). Impel (códa) us towards the rich achievement (rādho) of the powers (gods) of fullness (maghónām). (2)

Vocabulary:

andhas, 2 as n. a herb; Soma juice RV. VS.; juice SBr.; grassy ground RV. vii,96,2 food MBh. iii,13244 BhP.;

SA: andhānsi, pastures 1.28.7;

adhi-kṣi, 1. (3. pl. -kṣiyanti) to be settled in or over, be extended over or along (acc. or loc.) RV. MBh. i,722 and 730; to rest upon SBr.;

SA: adhikṣiyanti, find their dwelling-place 1.154.2;

pūru, m. (orig.= puru, and connected with puruṣa, pūrvṣa) a man, people. RV.; N. of a tribe (associated with the Yadus, Turvasas, Druhyus) ib.; of an ancient prince (the son of Yayati and Sarmishtha) MBh. Sak. Pur. (cf. Pan. 4-1,165 Vartt. 3 Pat.) of a descendant of Atri and author of RV. v,16;

SA: the man of multiple soul 5.17.1;

avitṛ, mf(avitṛī)n. a favourer, protector RV. BhP.;

Old Translators:

2 When in the fullness of their strength the Purus dwell, Beauteous One, on thy two grassy banks, Favour us thou who hast the Maruts for thy friends: stir up the bounty of our chiefs.

2. Da durch deine Macht die Puru's bei beiden Getränken wohnen, du Schöne, so sei du unsere Helferin, die mit den Marut befreundet ist. Sporne die Freigebigkeit der Lohnherren an!

भद्रम् इद् भद्रा कृणवत् सरस्वत्य् अकवारी चेतति वाजिनीवती ।

गृणाना जमदग्निवत् स्तुवाना च वसिष्ठवत् ॥ ७-९६-३

bhadrám íd bhadrā kṛṇavat sárasvatī ákavārī cetati vājínīvatī |
gṛṇānā jamadagnivát stuvānā ca vasiṣṭhavát |3|

Interpretation:

The bliss indeed may the blissful one create. The divine Stream without (any) deficiency is conscious, full of substantial energy, expressed in the manner of Jamadagni and affirmed in the manner of Vasishtha. (3)

Comments:

If we translate the names of the two Rishis we get the following more significant meaning: "... expressed by one who has kindled the Flame and affirmed by one who is most luminous."

In connection to the previous verse one could say, after the growth of the mental consciousness and the increase of the higher powers of fullness, Sarasvati is able to create the bliss for she is uninterruptedly conscious in us. This phrase one could not only relate to the two "pastures" before but also to verse two of hymn V.95: "Of (all) the rivers Sarasvati alone became conscious, flowing pure from the mountains (of the higher hemisphere of existence) to the ocean (of the lower hemisphere)".

With Sanskrit:

The bliss indeed (bhadrám íd) may the blissful one create (bhadrā kṛṇavat). The divine Stream (sárasvatī) without (any) deficiency (ákavārī) is conscious (cetati), full of substantial energy (vājínīvatī), expressed in the manner of Jamadagni (gṛṇānā jamadagnivát) and affirmed in the manner of Vasishtha (stuvānā ca vasiṣṭhavát). (3)

Vocabulary:

akavāri, mf(ī)n. not selfish, not stingy RV. iii,47,5 and **VII.96.3** [Say. explains by a-kava-ari, "not contemptible as an enemy, or to his enemies, not having weak enemies"].

kavāri, mfn. (fr. 2. kava), selfish, stingy RV. x,107,3;

kava, 1 a form substituted for ka, kā, and 1. ku, to express depreciation or deficiency Pan. 6-3,107, 108 Vop. vi,97;

2 mfn. (1. ku) "miserly" (perhaps originally "provident"), "selfish", in a-kava q.v., and kavā-sakha [cf. kavatnu and kavāri];

Sri Aurobindo relates kava in some of these forms with kavi and kavya, the seer and the seer-knowledge;

vāja, m. (fr. vaj; cf. ugra, uj, ojas &c.) *strength, vigour, energy, spirit, speed (esp. of a horse; also pl.) RV. AV. VS. SankhSr.; (vājebhis, ind. mightily, greatly; cf. sahasā); a contest, race, conflict, battle, war RV. VS. GrSrS.; the prize of a race or of battle, booty, gain, reward, any precious or valuable possession, wealth, treasure RV. VS. AV. PancavBr.;*

SA: plenitude, plenty, a substance of plenty, wealth, wealth of mind, the plenitude of the infinite and immortal state, the riches, substance, stable strengths;

vājīnivat, mfn. *possessing or driving swift mares, rich in horses (applied to various gods, and to the rivers Sindhu and Sarasvati) RV. AV. TBr.; (accord. to others "strong", "spirited", "rich in sacrifices" &c.); m. the sun AV.; pl. the steeds of the gods ib.;*

SA: energy of the plenty; thou who hast in thee all their plenty 1.92.13; 4.55.9; with all the plenitude, plentiful; opulent; full 1.3.10;

m. (cf. 2. jam) N. *of a Rishi (descendant of Bhrigu RAnukr. RV. VS. AV. &c.);*

jamadagni, m. (cf. 2. jam) N. *of a Rishi (descendant of Bhrigu RAnukr.; son of Bhargava Ricika and father of Parasu-rama MBh. &c.;) RV. VS. AV. &c.;*

jam, 2 (derived fr. jamad-agni) cl. 1. jamati, *to go Naigh. ii,14 Nir. iii,6; to eat Dhatup. xiii, 28: Intens. p. jājamat consuming continually MBh. xiii,4495;*

Wilson (Sayana-Translation): Jamadagni = Viśvamitra, he by whom the fire has been kindled.

Old Translators:

3 So may Sarasvati auspicious send good luck; she, rich in spoil, is never niggardly in thought, When praised in jamadagni's way and lauded as Vasistha lauds.

3. Glück soll uns die glückbringende Sarasvati schaffen. Die Stutenreiche tut sich als Freigebig hervor, wenn sie wie von Jamadagni gepriesen und wie von Vasistha besungen wird.

जनीयन्तो न्व् अग्रवः पुत्रीयन्तः सुदानवः । सरस्वन्तं हवामहे ॥ ७-९६-४

janīyānto nú ágravaḥ putrīyāntaḥ sudānavaḥ | sárasvantaṃ havāmahe |4|

Interpretation:

Now advancing and seeking the energies of generation (or, creation), seeking offspring, as perfect givers we invoke the divine Flow. (4)

Alternative rendering:

We call him, the (divine) Flow, (whose) liberal (or, gift bestowing) advancing streams are now seeking the mothers, are seeking children (or, offspring).

With Sanskrit:

Now advancing (nú ágravaḥ) and seeking the energies of generation (janīyānto), seeking offspring (putrīyāntaḥ), as perfect givers (sudānavaḥ) we invoke (havāmahe) the divine Flow (sárasvantaṃ). (4)

Vocabulary:

janīya, 1 Nom (p. -yat) = -niya RV. iv,17,16; **VII.96.4** (cf. Pan. 7-4,35 Siddh.) AV. vi,82,3;

janīya, Nom. (3. pl. -yanti) *to wish for a wife AV. iv,2,72;*

jan-, m. (Pan. 6-4,53) *a progenitor, father RV. VS. AV. ChUp. SvetUp. Pancat.; (janitrī) f. a mother RV. AV. TS. iv Gobh. MBh. VarBrS.;*

janī, f. *a woman, wife RV. (pl. also fig. "the fingers") VS.; birth, production Sarvad. KapS. i,97; birth, i. e. life AgP. xxxviii,1;*

SA: janayaḥ pl., mothers, wives, women;

agru, m. *unmarried RV. v,44,7 and VII.96.4; AV.; (ū) f. a virgin RV. AV.; nom. pl. agruvas; poetical N. of the ten fingers RV.; and also of the seven rivers RV. i,191,14 and iv,19,7;*

Sayana: approaching;

agrū, pl. agruvaḥ, SA: rivers; the advancing streams of life; who move flowing 1.140.8; 3.29.13; 7.2.5; 9.1.8;
sarasvat, mfn. *abounding in or connected with ponds &c. BhP.*; m. N. *of a divinity belonging to the upper region (considered as offspring of the water and plants, as guardian of the waters and bestower of fertility) RV. AV. TS. PancavBr.; of a male deity corresponding to Sarasvati TS. SBr.;*

Old Translators:

4 We call upon Sarasvan, as unmarried men who long for wives,
As liberal men who yearn for sons.

4. Frauen wünschend rufen wir Ledige, Söhne wünschend, wir mit reichen Gaben den Sarasvat an.

ये ते सरस्व उर्मयो मधुमन्तो घृतश्रुतः । तेभिर् नो ऽविता भव ॥ ७-९६-५

yé te sarasva ūrmáyo mádhumanto ghṛtaścútaḥ | tébhir no avitā bhava |5|

Interpretation:

Your waves, O (divine) Flow, which are full of honey and drip clarified butter, through them become our furtherer (or, increaser). (5)

With Sanskrit:

Your (te) waves (ūrmáyo), O (divine) Flow (sarasva), which (yé) are full of honey (mádhumanto) and drip clarified butter (ghṛtaścútaḥ), through them (tébhir) become (bhava) our (no) furtherer (or, increaser) (avitā). (5)

Vocabulary:

ūrmi, mf. *a wave, billow RV. AV. VS. KatySr. MBh. Ragh. &c.;*

avitr, mfn. *a favourer, protector RV. BhP.;*

madhumat, (madhu-) mfn. *possessing or containing sweetness, sweet; pleasant, agreeable RV. AV. VS. &c.;*

ghṛtaścūt, mfn. *sprinkling or distilling ghee RV. AV.;*

Old Translators:

5 Be thou our kind protector, O Sarasvan, with those waves of thine
Laden with sweets and dropping oil.

5. Deine süßen, schmalztriefenden Wellen, o Sarasvat, mit denen sei uns ein Helfer!

पीपिवांसं सरस्वतः स्तनं यो विश्वदर्शतः । भक्षीमहि प्रजाम् इषम् ॥ ७-९६-६

pīpivāṃsaṃ sárasvataḥ stánaṃ yó viśvadarśataḥ | bhakṣīmáhi prajāṃ iṣam |6|

Interpretation:

May we enjoy the overflowing (or, nourishing) breast of the (divine) Flow, which is visible to all, (enjoy its) progeny and invigorating energy. (6)

Alternative rendering:

May we enjoy the nourishing breast of the divine Flow, which has a universal vision; (enjoy) the offspring of a vigorous energy.

Comments:

The symbolic character of the breast can also be seen in verse I.164.49 to Sarasvati. Therefore instead of rendering *viśvadarśata* only as "visible to all", we might as well give Sri Aurobindo's deeper meaning of "seeing with a universal vision".

With Sanskrit:

May we enjoy (*bhakṣīmāhi*) the nourishing (*pīpivāṃsam*) breast (*stānaṃ*) of the divine Flow (*sārasvataḥ*), which (*yó*) has a universal vision (*viśvadarśataḥ*); (enjoy) the offspring (*prajāṃ*) of a vigorous energy (*iṣam*). (6)

Vocabulary:

pīpivas, mf(*pipyuhī*)n. *swelling, overflowing, exuberant, flowing with (gen. or acc.) RV.;*

viśvadarśata, mfn. *visible to all RV. ApSr.;*

SA: all-seeing, who has the vision of all things; seeing with a universal vision 1.25.18; 5.8.3; 10.140.6;

bhaj, cl. I. P. *bhajati*, -te (2. sg. as Impv. *bhakṣi* RV.; *to divide, distribute, allot or apportion to (dat. or gen.), share with (instr.) RV. &c.; A. (rarely P.) to obtain as one's share, receive as (two acc.), partake of, enjoy, possess, have (acc., Ved. also gen.) ib.;*

Old Translators:

6 May we enjoy Sarasvat's breast, all-beautiful, that swells with streams,
May we gain food and progeny.

6. Die schwellende Brust des Sarasvat, die allsichtbare, Kinder und Speisegenuß möchten wir erlangen.