Sanskrit terms for Language and Speech

Foreword.

The first and the most fundamental difference in perception of the world within the Sanskrit Vedic language is that all the faculties and activities indicated in it, which can be met in life and beyond, are seen as the faculties and activities of Consciousness. In the pre-word to the Sanskrit textbook it was said that Sanskrit is ten times richer in psychological terminology than Ancient Greek and Latin.

One could say that it is altogether fundamentally psychological. Every word and expression was seen and understood to be the expression of consciousness. Sanskrit language has never claimed to represent any other reality then that of psychological one.

There is another great mystery of Sanskrit language, its system of etymons. Every word is related to the system of roots in a particular psychological way as the system of all possible articulations of meaning within the given apparatus of articulation.
There are also the shifts of meaning from the depth to the surface, from general to particular, and from one faculty of consciousness to another, for instance from seeing to hearing, thinking, speaking etc.
The first shift as for instance from the deeper psychological and spiritual significance to the more mental, emotional, and finally physical can be found in nearly all Sanskrit words. It shows that the meaning is seen as psychological and can be applied to any context.
For instance if we take famous word Yoga, which means 'union', but the meaning 'union' can be utilized on many levels of its significance and many different contexts:
  a) 'union with the divine'
  b) 'union or oneness in thought, perception, meaning or idea'
  c) 'union in feeling and sentiments'
  d) 'union in physical terms' as a sum in mathematics, or a syntactic construction in grammar etc. etc.
On all these levels the significance of 'union' can be easily found, therefore the word 'yoga' is used in different texts on astronomy, mathematics, medicine, psychology, metaphysics etc. etc. meaning the same 'union'.

This universal character of Sanskrit vocabulary is a fundamental feature of it; it is unique and deserves special attention. It is due to this system of primary roots that Sanskrit language could sustain over millennia; it is still strong and perceptible enough, influencing the usage of every word derived from it.
Therefore when we read the texts, for instance on Mathematics, Music, Philosophy, Jewelry etc., we come across the same vocabulary but framed in a different context and therefore translated differently in our mind. But it functions in the similar universal way.

The other shift of meaning is taking place within the differences of the faculties of consciousness:
  1) Seeing, Light, light-perception, color, shape, form,

2) Hearing, Space, space-perception, vibration, sound, name,
3) Touch, Substance, tactile-perception, substance, body,

Now any word derived from the universal root, can bare any meaning depending on the context and the faculty of consciousness it represents. The word 'yoga', 'union', for instance, on all these levels can have its own meaning, the same in its universal presentation, and not the same in its contextual application, taking on itself the meaning of the context. Like for instance 'yoking horses', 'equipping or arraying an army', fixing an arrow on the bow-string', 'mixing materials', or in a more mental way: (yogāt, Abl.) would mean 'according to', 'in relation with', 'by reason of', etc., or in Linguistics it would mean 'the connection of a word with its root', 'original or etymological meaning', (Nirukta); or even more subtle as 'an application or concentration of the thoughts', 'abstract contemplation', 'meditation', 'self-concentration', 'union with Ishvara or the Supreme Spirit', etc. etc. The list of such applications, of contextual meanings is open.

Now, as we understand such an ability of Sanskrit to remain universal and to become particular in a given context is due to the higher capacity of the mind it represented. This higher capacity of language was already noted by W. Humboldt at the beginning of 19th century in Europe: the ability to create in the process of speech within the given context new words and sentences in accordance with the universally available meaning-sounds, the roots or etymons. Such ability was lost in time or rather it was never fully developed by humanity, for it required a higher capacity of the mind. It was rather the ability of a few highly developed individuals and groups, which thus conceived humanity with such an ideal.

Sanskrit words indicating speech and language

First of all what is to be mentioned that the list of the words indication speaking is open, for all the verbs of action and behavior can also indicate the action of consciousness and therefore of the word, for instance vyākaroti, 'making it clearly distinct', or spaṣṭīkaroti, 'making it visible or obvious', nirdišati, 'pointing out' etc. etc.
Here we are giving the list of words directly indicating the process of speech with their first meanings:

vad, (vadati, speaks; anu-vadati, translates; prati-vadati, answers; vi-vadati, argues; saṃ-vadati, agrees, etc. etc.)
vac, (vakti, says; vāc/vacas, speech; vācaspati, the lord of the Word; ukti, uktha, the word; vaktṛ, speaker, teacher; etc.)
bhāṣ, (bhāṣate, speaks; paribhāṣate, explains; vibhāṣate, slanders; pratibhāṣate, answers, etc. etc.)
kath, (kathayati, converses, tells; parikathayati, mentions; prakathayati, pronounces; anukathayati, repeats; etc.)
gṝ, (gīr, a voice, a praise; etc.)
gai, (gāyati, sings, recites, chants; gītā, the song, chanting; etc.)
paṭh, (paṭhati, reads, recites, pronounces; pāṭha, recitation; etc.)
šaṃs, (šaṃsati, praises, points out, etc.)

hve/hu (hvayati, calls, invokes; hotṛ, summoner; etc.)
kū (kavate, sounds, cries aloud; kaviḥ, poet, etc.)
ṛc, (ṛcati, praises; ṛk, a verse of Ṛg Veda; etc.)
brū, (bravīti, speaks, says, proclaims; saṃ-bravīti, agrees; ud-bravīti, praises; etc.)
jalp, (jalpati, speaks inarticulately, chatters, speaks loose; vyati-jalpati, to gossip; anu-jalpati, entertains in conversation, etc.)
gad, (gadati, speaks articulately; etc.)
lap (lapati, chatters, whispers; abhi-lapati, talks; vi-lapati, laments, etc.)
bhaṇ, (bhaṇati, speaks, says; etc.)
mantr, (mantrayate, counsels, says;)
varṇ, (varṇayati, paints, pictures, tells;)
khyā (khyāti, relates, makes known; ākhyāti, informs, tells; vyākhyā, discusses, etc.)
ācakṣ, (ācaṣṭe, looks at, inspects, relates, makes known;)
ud-hṛ/udā-hṛ, (udāharati, declares, announces, etc.)

There is also a greate number of Causatives derived from simple verb stems, such as šru, to hear; vid, to know, dṛš, to see, etc., which in Causative sense would mean "to make someone hear, see, know' etc. Here we give some examples of such cases:
dṛš, anudaršaya, (anudaršayati, shows, tells, teaches);
vid, (vedayati, Caus., 'making to know');
šru, (šrāvayati, Caus. 'making to hear');
adhī, (adhyāpayati, Caus. from adhi-i, 'making someone to rise, learn', 'teaching');
budh, (bodhayati, Caus. 'making someone to wake up', 'educating', 'teaching');
cit, (cetayati, Caus. 'making someone to understand', 'teaching'); etc. etc.

Now all these roots and forms have their subtleties of meaning in the same way as the verbs of cognition do, and can be used with many different prefixes indicating different shades of meaning in relation to the speaker and the hearer.

Some of the major concepts of the Word in the Veda.

In the Veda
- the Word (uktha-, vacas, šastra-, stoma-, gir, vāk, vāṇi, brahman, mantra-, nāman) is a secret speech, (guhya-, guhā, gūḍha-, apīcya-, pratīcya-, niṇya-),[1] for it is seen as the Power of the Divine Consciousness emerging out of darkness of Inconscient, manifesting itself in the world.
- The Word itself belongs to the Lord, it is His Consciousness, and means of manifestation; and, when uttered by man in a form of a hymn as conscious offering, it is returning to its Master, Brahmanaspati, for it is the Word of the Lord which is uttered.[2]
- Thus the Word creates the world. It is coming down from the Lord and it is rising up back to his Master, manifesting him in the lower hemisphere. It is by this stirring within the creation of a triple being of mind, life and body that the Word brings into motion the Divine Consciousness and creates all in the being in a new fashion more suitable for the Divine expression.
- There is always a new word, a new name, which is to be found and uttered, expressing a new consciousness, changing the old being. This new word is opposed by those who carry the word of old.[3] The word which was once uttered and was true now is resisting the coming of a new consciousness. The forces supporting the resistance which are behind it are the forces of darkness, of the first creation, who want to preserve their habitual existence by rejecting the change coming with a new expression of a new word. They corrupt the consciousness of man, the 'ever-advancing pilgrim', and offer him the word of crookedness. The Aryan is looking for the word of straightness.[4]

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[1] apīcyam nāma, gūḍham nāma, etc;

[2] RV 5.12.1

[3] The Semitic and the Vedic approaches to the word differ in this particular aspect that there must be always a new word found for the expression of the growing within consciousness, whereas in the Biblical sense the Word of God is to be obeyed and followed, under the fear of punishment.

[4] RV 5.12.6. In the allegoric language of the Veda it is by the light of the Sun that the Sun itself is concealed and Rishi invokes the force of Indra to remove the formations of creative Knowledge, māyāḥ, made by the piercing darkness, and to break through the crooked light to the body of the Truth, thus recovering the Sun in the heaven of our mentality. (See RV 5.40 7-9).

Let us trace back some of the mentioned features of the Word in the selected texts quoted below from the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda.
<mark>RV 10.71.1</mark>
bŕ̥haspate prathamáṃ vācó ágraṃ   yát praírata nāmadhéyaṃ dádhānāḥ
yád eṣāṃ śréṣṭhaṃ yád ariprám ā́sīt preṇā́ tád eṣāṃ níhitaṃ gúhāvíḥ
"O Lord of the Word, that first movement of the Word at the beginning of creation when they [gods] moved establishing the Name that must be established, what was the best and the pure that they discovered by the power of love hidden in the cave of the heart!" [5]

The origin of the Word is hidden deep in the cave of Subconsient.
Sometimes it is added in the cave of the heart, hr̥di guhāyām. The Word is rising from that hidden place and it creates in us a new perception, a new consciousness, capable of perceiving the Divine.
This is one origin within the heart, which Sri Aurobindo comments on as brahman.
But there is also another perception of the Word as established in the highest heaven, parame vyoman. So let us examine some of the major Vedic texts.

<mark>RV 1.164.39-47:</mark>
r̥có akṣáre paramé víoman yásmin devā́ ádhi víśve niṣedúḥ
yás tán ná véda kím r̥cā́ kariṣyati yá ít tád vidús tá imé sám āsate 1.164.39
The hymns are in the highest heaven, where all the gods abide. The one who does not know that, what will he do with the hymn? But those who know they are perfectly united. [6]

gaurī́r mimāya salilā́ni tákṣatī ékapadī dvipádī sā́ cátuṣpadī
aṣṭā́padī návapadī babhūvúṣī sahásrākṣarā paramé víoman 1.164.41

*"She has created the streams of luminous waters, the Word, the Strongest among Lights (gauri).
She has fashioned all the creatures as one, two and four footed, who have become the eight and nine footed! The thousand aksharas [of the Word are] in the highest heaven!"* [7]

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[5] 'Namadheya', giving name, lit. 'the name which must be established', dheya, f.p.p. of root dhā, to establishe, to place, to put, "that Name which will/must be established".
There is an interesting note from Padoux: "the outset points to a major role of the Word (which will be greatly emphasized in Tantrism), that of the placing of names, *namadheya*; and giving a name, in mythic thought (not only in India), is giving being. For the word, the name, as early as the Rig Veda, is the very being of what is named, it is immortal (amr̥ta; cf. 10.139.6, where immortal [names] of the cows are the cows themselves)."
[6] Griffith's translation: "Upon what syllable of holy praise−song, as twere their highest heaven, the Gods repose them, − Who knows not this, what will he do with praise−song? But they who know it well sit here assembled."

tásyāḥ samudrā́ ádhi ví kṣaranti téna jīvanti pradíśaś cátasraḥ
tátaḥ kṣarati akṣáraṃ tád víśvam úpa jīvati 1.164.42

*"It is from her, the All-creating Word, that the waters of the upper Ocean
flow down in all directions. It is by that [movement] all live in every
corner of the world.*
*It is from that [movement of the Word] that Unchangeable is changing,
(or Being is becoming). It is from that [movement] that all Universe
lives."*

catvā́ri vā́k párimitā padā́ni tā́ni vidur brāhmaṇā́ yé manīṣíṇaḥ
gúhā trī́ṇi níhitā néṅgayanti turī́yaṃ vācó manuṣyā̀ vadanti 1.164.45

*"The Word has been measured in four quarters. Those quarters are
known to the knowers of the Word,* brāhmanaḥ*, who possess also the
power of the Mind,* manīṣiṇaḥ.[8]
*In the hidden place the three are established, which do not move. And
the forth one men speak."*[9]

kṛṣṇáṃ niyā́naṃ hárayaḥ suparṇā́ apó vásānā dívam út patanti
tá ā́vavṛtran sádanād ṛtásya ā́d íd ghṛténa pṛthivī́ ví udyate 1.164.47

*"Dark the descent, [and] golden the birds; thus wearing the robes of the
waters they are rising to heaven and again they return from that Seat of
the Truth, and all the earth is moistened with their golden clarity."* [10]

Who are these golden birds descending into the darkness and wearing
the form of waters (apas)? Why do the fly up to the sky again and again
return to the earth to moisten it with a clarified butter (ghṛta)?
It is on the way up they wear the waters of our offering, and on the way
back they carry the clarified butter to nourish the growth of Agni, the
luminous dweller within the substance. They descend into the darkness
as shining birds from heaven and they ascent carrying our unillumined
substance of consciousness (apas) for transformation up to heaven.[11]

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[7] ibid: "Forming the water−floods, the buffalo hath lowed, one−footed or two−footed or four−
footed, she, Who hath become eight−footed or hath got nine feet, the thousand− syllabled in
the sublimest heaven."

[8] This will become a reference to the later concept of fourfold Word: vaikharī, madhyamā,
pašyantī and parā vāk.

[9] Griffith's translation: "Speech hath been measured out in four divisions, the Brahmans who
have understanding know them. Three kept in close concealment cause no motion; of speech,
men speak only the fourth division".

[10] ibid. "Dark the descent: the birds are golden−coloured; up to the heaven they fly robed in the
waters. Again descend they from the seat of Order, and all the earth is moistened with their
fatness."

[11] Cf. the concept of apas and ambhas, as the lower and upper oceans, respectively in the AitUp
1.1.2,3

It is interesting to note in this regard another famous hymn where the symbol of the bird, pataṅga is mentioned again in the terms of speech and mind:

pataṃgám aktám ásurasya māyáyā hṛdā́ paśyanti mánasā vipaścítaḥ samudré antáḥ kaváyo ví cakṣate márīcīnām padám ichanti vedhásaḥ 10.177.01

"This Bird the wise see (discover) in their heart by the Creative Force of Maya of the Asura, by the Thought.
Inside the Ocean the seers distinguish it clearly; those who are brave are seeking the Seat of Light!"

pataṃgó vā́cam mánasā bibharti tā́ṃ gandharvó avadad gárbhe antáḥ tā́ṃ dyótamānāṃ svaríyam manīṣā́m ṛtásya padé kaváyo ní pānti 10.177.02

"This Bird, the Sun, carries the Word by the Thought. It is the Word that Gandharva spoke first seated within the Embryo.
The shining heavenly Word, full of Thought, the seers always protect in the place of the Truth."

ápaśyaṃ gopā́m ánipadyamānam ā́ ca párā ca pathíbhiś cárantam sá sadhrī́cīḥ sá víṣūcīr vásāna ā́ varīvarti bhúvaneṣu antáḥ 10.177.03

"I saw him, the Protector of Knowledge, uncreated, moving on his paths here and beyond. He moves in oneness, and in maniness; a luminous dweller within rotates within the worlds."[12]

yád vā́g vádanti avicetanā́ni rā́ṣṭrī devā́nāṃ niṣasā́da mandrā́ cátasra ū́rjam duduhe páyāṃsi kúva svid asyāḥ paramáṃ jagāma 8.100.10

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[12] Commentary of Sayana on RV10.177 is quite interesting: "The Sun carries the Word of all living creatures by his own Thought, holds and supports them, when He takes a form of Antaryāmin, sends the Word forward – that is the meaning originated in heaven, and is full of Thought, which means that it is a Master of Thought, the Creatrix of Delight, as it were. Such a Word the seers, the knowers of Shastra always protect and cherish in the Place of Truth, in the place of the Supreme Spirit."
[12] *Griffith's translation.*
"And thus sent by the Sun the Word [goes] in the Embryo, inside the body, and the vital force, called Gandharva, spoke this luminous Word, shining and heavenly, for it is originated in heaven, and is full of Thought, which means that it is a Master of Thought, the Creatrix of Delight, as it were. Such a Word the seers, the knowers of Shastra always protect and cherish in the Place of Truth, in the place of the Supreme Spirit."

"When Blissful Speech, speaking her unknown utterances, Queen of the gods, settled in the manifestation, and was milked by all the nourishing force of her four regions, where did she hide her highest part?"[13]

devī́ṃ vā́cam ajanayanta devā́s tā́ṃ viśvárūpāḥ paśávo vadanti
sā́ no mandrā́ íṣam ū́rjaṃ dúhānā dhenúr vā́g asmā́n úpa súṣṭutaítu
8.100.11

"The Goddess Speech was brought to birth by the gods. It is with her word that all the creatures speak here. It is she who is milked with the blissful draught full of power. This nourishing Cow, the Word, should come to us, perfectly affirmed by us!"

sákhe viṣṇo vitaráṃ ví kramasva diyaúr dehí lokáṃ vájrāya viṣkábhe
hánāva vr̥tráṃ riṇácāva síndhūn índrasya yantu prasavé vísr̥ṣṭāḥ
8.100.12[14]

"O Friend Vishnu, step into the open with your wide strides; O Heaven, give space for the lightning to leap out!
May we two strike the all-obstructing Vritra, may we two free the rivers!
May the rivers flow free, in the pressing of Indra."

<mark>Atharva Veda</mark> in the very first hymn starts with invocation to the Lord of the Word, *Vācaspati*, in the most mysterious way invoking him to manifest all the forms by the power of the Word:

ye triṣaptāḥ pariyanti viśvā rūpāṇi bibhrataḥ/
vācaspatir balā teṣāṃ tanvo adya dadhātu me/ 1

"Those three times seven, which are all over, carrying all the forms [of manifestation]; may the Lord of the Word now establish their powers and beings within me!"

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[13] Again the reference to the four parts of the Word: parā, paśyantī, madhyamā, vaikharī. The rishi asks where is hidden her transcendental part: parā vāk.

[14] Griffith's translation:

"When, uttering words which no one comprehends, Vak, Queen of Gods, the Gladdener, was seated, The heaven's four regions drew forth drink and vigour: now whither hath her noblest portion vanished?"10

"The Deities generated Vak the Goddess, and animals of every figure speak her. May she, the Gladdener, yielding food and vigour, the Milch−cow Vak, approach us meetly lauded." 11

"Step forth with wider stride, my comrade Visnu; make room, Dyaus, for the leaping of the lightning. Let us slay Vrtra, let us free the rivers let them flow loosed at the command of Indra."
12

punar ehi vācaspate devena manasā saha/
Vasoṣpate ni ramaya mayyevāstu mayi šrutam/ 2

"Come again, O Lord of the Word, together with the divine Mind! O Lord of the luminous dweller within the substance, enjoy being within me! May that which was heard by me (revealed to me) stay within me!"

ihaiva abhi vi tanu ubhe ārtnī iva jyayā/
vācaspatir ni yacchatu mayyevāstu mayi šrutam/ 3

"Here indeed spread both the ends, as if of a bow when the string is released.
O Lord of the Word, expand in me totally, may the revealed be always in me!"

upahūto vācaspatir upāsmān vācaspatir hvayatām/
saṃ šrutena gamemahi mā šrutena vi rādhiṣi/ 4

"Called upon by us is the Lord of the Word! May the Lord of the Word call upon us! May we become one with that what was revealed in us, may I never part from it!"

There are few fundamental conceptions here which have to be pointed out. First the Lord of the Word is to establish all the varieties of his manifestation in the consciousness of man, "the three times seven, which carry all the forms [in manifestation]". Second vācaspati, the Lord of the Word, is identified with the vasoṣpati, the Lord of the luminous dweller within the substance, which is a constant epithet of Agni, for he is the luminous dweller in the darkness of the subconscient material substance. He is also an auspicious guest of men, *atithiḥ šivo naḥ*, a luminous dweller within man and his guide.[15] So the Lord of the Word is to come with the divine Mind, devena manasā. It is through the relation of these two that the liberation of the soul can be achieved. "To turn thought and word – writes Sri Aurobindo, - into form and expression of the superconscient Truth which is hidden beyond the division and duality of the mental and physical existence was the central idea of the Vedic discipline and the foundation of its mysteries."[16]

Sri Aurobindo commenting on the legend of Angirasa Rishis explains this profound imagery of the three times seven in the Veda:
"They conceived in mind the first name of the fostering cows, they found the thrice seven supreme (seats) of the Mother; the females of the herd

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[15] See RV 5.1-12
[16] The Secret of the Veda, p. 433

knew that and they followed after it; the ruddy one was manifested by the victorious attainment (or, the splendour) of the cow of Light, "

te manvata prathamaṃ nāma dhenos triḥ sapta mātuḥ paramāṇi vindan/ taj jānatīr abhyanūṣata vrā āvirbhuvad aruṇīr yaśasā goḥ.

The Mother here is Aditi, the infinite consciousness, who is the Dhenu or fostering Cow with the seven rivers for her sevenfold streaming as well as Go the Cow of Light with the Dawns for her children; the Ruddy One is the divine Dawn and the herd or rays are her dawning illuminations. The first name of the Mother with her thrice seven supreme seats, that which the dawns or mental illuminations know and move towards, must be the name or deity of the supreme Deva, who is infinite being and infinite consciousness and infinite bliss, and the seats are the three divine worlds, called earlier in the hymn the three supreme births of Agni, Satya, Tapas and Jana of the Puranas, which correspond to these three infinities of the Deva and each fulfils in its own way the sevenfold principle of our existence: thus we get the series of thrice seven seats of Aditi manifested in all her glory by the opening out of the Dawn of Truth."[17]

The Vedic Concept of the Word in the light of Sri Aurobindo

"In the system of the Mystics", - writes Sri Aurobindo, – "which has partially survived in the schools of Indian Yoga, the Word is a power, the Word creates. For all creation is expression, everything exists already in the secret abode of the Infinite, guhā hitam, and has only to be brought out here in apparent form by the active consciousness.[18]
Certain schools of Vedic thought even suppose the worlds to have been created by the goddess Word and sound as first etheric vibration to have preceded formation. In the Veda itself there are passages which treat the poetic measures of the sacred mantras, *anuṣṭubh, triṣṭubh, jagatī, gāyatrī*, - as symbolic of the rhythms in which the universal movement of things is cast.
By expression then we create and men are even said to create the gods in themselves by the mantra. Again, that which we have created in our consciousness by the Word, we can fix there by the Word to become part of ourselves and effective not only in our inner life but upon the outer physical world.
By expression we form, by affirmation we establish. As a power of expression the word is termed *gīḥ* or *vacas;* as a power of affirmation, stoma. In either aspect it is named manma or mantra, expression of

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[17] The Secret of the Veda, p. 205
[18] See also Savitri, Book 10, Canto 3, lines-45-55

thought in mind, and brahman, expression of the heart or the soul,—for this seems to have been the earlier sense of the word brahman, afterwards applied to the Supreme Soul or universal Being."[19]

"Brahman in the Veda signifies ordinarily the Vedic Word or mantra in its profoundest aspect as the expression of the intuition arising out of the depths of the soul or being. It is a voice of the rhythm which has created the worlds and creates perpetually. All world is expression or manifestation, creation by the Word.
Conscious Being luminously manifesting its contents in itself, of itself, *tmanā*, is the superconscient; holding its contents obscurely in itself it is the subconscient.
The higher, the self-luminous descends into the obscure, into the night, into darkness concealed in darkness*, tamas tamasā gūḍham,* where all is hidden in formless being owing to fragmentation of consciousness, *tucchyenābhv- apihitam*. It arises again out of the Night by the Word to reconstitute in the conscient its vast unity, *tan mahinājāyataikam*. This vast Being, this all-containing and all-formulating consciousness is Brahman. It is the Soul that emerges out of the subconscient in Man and rises towards the superconscient. And the word of creative Power welling upward out of the soul is also brahman.
The Divine, the Deva, manifests itself as conscious Power of the soul, creates the worlds by the Word out of the waters of the subconscient, *apraketam salilam sarvam,*— the inconscient ocean that was this all, as it is plainly termed in the great Hymn of Creation. This power of the Deva is Brahma, the stress in the name falling more upon the conscious soul-power than upon the Word which expresses it. The manifestation of the different world-planes in the conscient human being culminates in the manifestation of the superconscient, the Truth and the Bliss, and this is the office of the supreme Word or Veda. Of this supreme word Brihaspati is the master, the stress in this name falling upon the potency of the Word rather than upon the thought of the general soul-power which is behind it. Brihaspati gives the Word of knowledge, the rhythm of expression of the superconscient, to the gods and especially to Indra, the lord of Mind, when they work in man as "Aryan" powers for the great consummation."[20]

The Vedic concept of the Word as an expression and affirmation of consciousness, hidden but seeking its expression is profound and unique. It introduces powerfully in a deeply psychological manner the creative aspect of the Word, which was somehow lost in the later treatises on

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[19] The Secret of the Veda, p. 270

[20] The Secret of the Veda, p. 318

Linguistics, focusing more on the communicative and sometimes on its cognitive aspects.

Sri Aurobindo defines the hierarchy of four levels of Speech: physical, vital, mental and supramental, which in Indian grammatical tradition resemble and can be identified with *vaikharī, madhyamā, pašyantī* and *parā vāk.*

"Let us suppose a conscious use of the vibrations of sound which will produce corresponding forms or changes of form. ... Let us realise then that a vibration of sound on the material plane presupposes a corresponding vibration on the vital without which it could not have come into play; that, again, presupposes a corresponding originative vibration on the mental; the mental presupposes a corresponding originative vibration on the supramental at the very root of things. But a mental vibration implies thought and perception and a supramental vibration implies a supreme vision and discernment. All vibrations of sound on that higher plane is, then, instinct with and expressive of this supreme discernment of a truth in things and is at the same time creative, instinct with a supreme power which casts into forms the truth discerned and eventually, descending from plane to plane, reproduces it in the physical form or object created in Matter by etheric sound. Thus we see that the theory of creation by the Word which is the absolute expression of the Truth, and the theory of the material creation by sound-vibration in the ether correspond and are two logical poles of the same idea. They both belong to the same ancient Vedic system."[21]

Sri Aurobindo writes about Mantra: "A supreme, an absolute of itself, a reaching to an infinite and utmost, a last point of perfection of its own possibilities is that to which all action of Nature intuitively tends in its unconscious formations and when it has arrived to that point it has justified its existence to the spirit which has created it and fulfilled the secret creative will within it. Speech, the expressive Word, has such a summit or absolute, a perfection which is the touch of the infinite upon its finite possibilities and seal upon it of its Creator. ... the Mantra is the word that carries the godhead in it or the power of the godhead, can bring it into the consciousness and fix there it and its workings, awaken there the thrill of the infinite, the force of something absolute, perpetuate the miracle of the supreme utterance. This highest power of speech and especially of poetic speech is what we have to make here the object of our scrutiny, discover, ..."[22]

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[21] The Upanishads, p.126
[22] Sri Aurobindo, Archives and Research, April 1979, v.3, No 1, p.19

Sri Aurobindo in his "Savitri", in "The Book of Birth and Quest", Canto Three "The Call to the Quest" depicts an experience of the transcendental Speech.

"This word was seed of all the thing to be.
A hand from some Greatness opened her heart's locked doors
And showed the work for which her strength was born.
As when the mantra sinks in Yoga's ear,
Its message enters stirring the blind brain
And keeps in the dim ignorant cells its sound;
The hearer understands a form of words
And, musing on the index thought it holds,
He strives to read it with the labouring mind,
But finds bright hints, not the embodied truth:
Then, falling silent in himself to know
He meets the deeper listening of his soul:
The Word repeats itself in rhythmic strains:
Thought, vision, feeling, sense, the body's self
Are seized unalterably and he endures
An ecstasy and an immortal change;
He feels the Wideness and becomes a Power,
All knowledge rushes on him like a sea:
Transmuted by the white spiritual ray
He walks in naked heavens of joy and calm,
Sees the God-face and hears transcendent speech:
An equal greatness in her life was sown." [23]

<u>On the Vedic Usage of the Word.</u>

Sri Aurobindo writes in the Secret of the Veda about the hymns and there utility:
"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. Still, all these high gifts have deliberately been exercised within one unvarying framework and always with the same materials. For the art of expression was to the Rishis only a means, not an aim; their principal preoccupation was strenuously practical, almost utilitarian, in the highest sense of utility. The hymn was to the Rishi who composed it <u>a means of spiritual progress for himself and for others</u>. It rose out of his soul, it became a power of his mind, it was the vehicle of his self-expression in some important or even critical moment of his life's

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[23] Savitri, p. 375

inner history. It helped <u>him to express the god in him, to destroy the devourer</u>, the expresser of evil<u>; it became a weapon in the hands of the Aryan striver after perfection,</u> it flashed forth like Indra's lightning against the Coverer on the slopes, the Wolf on the path, the Robber by the streams." [24]

SVĀDHYĀYA

svādhyāya, m. reciting or repeating or rehearsing to one's self, repetition or recitation of the Veda in a low voice to one's self ŠBr. &c. &c.; repeating the Veda aloud.

The Sacrifice by Knowledge, *jñāna-yajña*, which Sri Krishna speaks in the Gita, he calls also *svādhyāya*.[25]
Svādhyāya literally means self-learning or reading for oneself*.* It is a kind of recitation which one does for oneself as a means of spiritual quest, searching after the spiritual knowledge-realisation. It was of a sacrificial and meditative nature, different from the *pada-pāṭha-* and *krama-pāṭha-* recitations which were meant to preserve the Vedic text as such.

Svādhyāya is depicted as brahma-yajña in the TaitĀr, as a sacrificial act done by Rishis, who by desiring *yajña* - received it from Brahma Svayambhu. And by performing it they made gods again sinless (*apahata-pāpmānaḥ*), who thus went back to heaven (*svargaṃ lokam āyan*) and the Rishis themselves joined the abode of Brahman (*brahmaṇaḥ sāyujyam ṛṣayo 'gacchan).*[26]

It is distinguished from other kinds of sacrifice (five great sacrifices mahāyajña) and defined in this way:[27] "when one <u>reads for oneself even</u> one verse from Rigveda, Yajurveda or Samaveda, then the brahma-yajña is performed."[28]

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[24] The Secret of the Veda, p.11
[25] BhG 4: šreyān dravyamayād yajñāj jñāna-yajñam parantapa/ sarvam karmākhilam pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate// api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛttamaḥ/ sarvam jñāna-plavenaiva vṛjinam santariṣyasi// yathaidhāṅsi samiddho 'gnir bhasmasāt kurute 'rjuna/ jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute tathā [25]
"The sacrifice by knowledge is greater than by any material means,
O Arjuna. For all actions end in knowledge-experience!
Even if you are the most sinful in the world,
By the boat of knowledge you can overcome the misfortune of sin.
Like a flaming fire burns to ashes all the fuel,
the fire of knowledge burns to ashes all the actions!"

[26] TaitĀr 2.9
[27] pañca vā ete mahāyajñāḥ deva-yajñaḥ pitṛ-yajñaḥ bhūta-yajño manuṣya-yajño brahma-yajña iti
[28] TaitĀr 2.10

TaitAr quotes from the Rig Veda explaining the meaning of Svādhyāya:

ṛco akṣare parame vyoman yasmin devā adhi viśve niṣedur
yas tan na veda kim ṛcā kariṣyati ya it tad vidus ta ime samāsata iti

"The sacred verses are in the highest heaven, where all gods abide.
He, who does not know that, what is he going to do with that sacred
Speech? Those, indeed, who know that, they are perfectly united!"[29]

Later the text says: yāvatīr vai devatāḥ tāḥ sarvā vedavidi brāhmaṇe
vasanti, "All gods as they are, live in the brahman, who knows Vedas!"[30].
Sayana comments that they live in man, brahman, because of him
reciting and understanding the Vedic mantras, (pāṭhato'rthataśca). And
since the mantras exist in the Speech of the reader and in the Mind of
the knower, (mantrāḥ sarve 'dhyetur vāci veditur manasi ca vartante), all
gods therefore also live in him, given a life-space by those mantras
(ekaikasmin mantra ekaiko devaḥ pratipādyate).

Svādhyāya or jñāna-yajña, can be explained as a device which is creating
a space in ones own consciousness for the forces, which have to come
through the process of sounding the text connected with them, and by
observing its meaning silently, giving it a possibility to be fully
expressed, in terms of experience.

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[29] TaitĀr 2.11
[30] TaitĀr 2.15.1

The Post Vedic Conceptions of the Word

Nirukta,   (600 BC)
Aṣṭādhyāyī, (500 BC)
Mahābhāṣya, (200 BC)
Vākyapadīya, (400 AD)

This period is marked by the fundamental question of relation of the word to its meaning: the studies of semantics, since it got separated from it by the mental structure of grammatical categories in the shift from Vedic mythological structure of consciousness to the post vedic mental structure, and the word got a tendency to harden into its precise and rigid form, representing a particular formation of the mind, a concept.
In Vedic times (2000 BC) the creative aspect of speech was seen to be of major importance, so that the study of language was based entirely on this knowledge-experience and was therefore devoted mainly to this direction of thought[31].
But in time this experience was lost and the memory of this knowledge no longer appeared satisfying to the intellect, which is always seeking a new and authentic experience. So from the time of Yaska and Panini (6th century BC) onwards, a growing interest was taken in the cognitive and communicative aspects of language, which had not been studied earlier. This was a flourishing time in grammatical thought and the philosophy of language, when great treatises on Etymology and Grammar such as the Nirukta of Yaska (6th c. BC), Ashtadhyayi of Panini (5th c. BC), the Vartikas of Katyayana (4th c. BC), Mahabhashya of Patanjali (2nd c. BC), and Bhartrihari's Vakyapadiya (1st c. AD) were composed.

Nirukta's Epistemology of the Word

Yaska's discussion of the meaning of a word in relation to objective reality: [32]

The arguments of a critic are given as follows:
1) every being should be called by the same name when performing the same action, so if ašva-, "horse", means "running", than everyone who is running should be called ašva-;
2) every object should be called by as many names as actions are performed by it; for the designation of an object is anyhow not clear when it is determined only by its action, for it can perform any action, and exists in itself before and after the action;[33]

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[31] Cp. RV 10.125
32 Nirukta 1,12-14: yaḥ kaś ca tat karma kuryāt sarvam tat sattvam tathā ācakṣīran / yaḥ kaś ca adhvānam aśnuvīta, aśvaḥ sa vacanīyaḥ syāt/ atha api cet sarvāṇyākhyātajāni nāmāni syuḥ / …
[33] Actually these arguments show that the understanding of the word was not 'logocentric' in India, for the difference between the signified and signifier was clearly perceived.

Yaska answers:

1) not everyone gets the same name by performing the same action, not everyone who cuts wood is called takṣan-, "a carpenter", but only one who does it often and regularly;

2) though one is involved in many different activities, one gets his name from a particular action only. There are even many things which get their names from their subsequent actions. [34]

What we see here is that a critic by his arguments is trying to identify the image created by a word as it functions in linguistic reality with the image of an object as it functions in objective reality. He wants to establish a true correspondence between these two levels of reality, one of which lies beyond time and space [35], in the subjective realms, and the other - in the objective time and space. The critic seems to understand the problem very well when he says that an object cannot be defined by a word, for it exists before and after the action that the word indicates.[36]

But we may say that the word persists in its own reality beyond the reality of time and space. Since we live, act, see, understand the world using our linguistic reality, the name once given to the object, whether it was relevant or seemed to be relevant for a particular speaker, could remain for some time, even if it had very little to do with any action of the object. The reason why this or that name was given to the object was not in order to satisfy an objective reality but rather a subjective one; it was named by a speaker imposing his wish, opinion, knowledge, will on the object. Once the name has been used, it would persist in memory until a new name effaces or changes it.

Yaska only emphasizes the difference between these two realities, as well as pointing to the corrupted and conventional character of the word, without answering the critic's argument about the approximate character of definition itself. It is interesting to see these two views representing the transition from the Vedic understanding of the Word, based on transparent etymology,[37] which was now already becoming obscure and non-functional in the consciousness of a speaker, to the beginning of a

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[34] Nirukta 1.14. The relativity of application of name to the objective reality is clearly stated here.

[35] I think, that linguistic reality, the reality of structural semantic as well as of the 'signified', can be said to lie beyond the objective time and space; *"signified" is beyond actual time, 'it is never there'* by Derrida's definition, and the "*signifier is always in time and space, but 'it is never that'.* For it evidently belongs to a different order of time and space than physical reality, though still it belongs simultaneously to the realm of 'manifestation', and exists in a subtle space and time.

[36] The phenomenological treatment, see also Nietzsche's levels of metaphors.

[37] When the etymology of the word is transparent then the other meaning is known: the meaning-sound, the meaning-power. Therefore in the old times the names were kept secretly, for they were a key to the essence of the being. Cf.: Kena Up., etc.

new reasoning approach. The critic's arguments sound childish to the reason, because they are still focusing on the inner source of words, while the reason focuses on observing their outer applications.

Answering the question of how an object could be called by a certain name, when it is performing a different action than that indicated by the name, Durga, commenting on the Nirukta, says: "šabda-niyamaḥ svabhāvata eva loke", "in spoken language [in the world], the law of using the word follows its [the word's] own nature". According to him, this svabhāva- is an inherent characteristic of the word as a sound-meaningful entity. It has its own existence and can therefore be applied to any object at will by a speaker, thus creating a new contextual meaning, for the word in its semantic aspect continues to carry its own significance.

The word "carpenter" then, in the pragmatic sense, means a distinctive skill and style of living in a society. So when a speaker wants to denote this complex of knowledge-ability-life-style-activity by one word, he says: a carpenter. But in the linguistic reality this word does not refer to any particular carpenter, or a real person;[38] it evokes only an idea of someone who cuts wood for his living (pragmatic sense); at the same time it includes the formal semantic of the grammatical usage of the word (syntactic sense) - that is, how the word is used in relation to other words in grammatical structures; and above all it has its own hidden source of meaning - an etymon in the system of seed-sounds. [39]

When Durga says that word lives and acts in the world according to its own nature, he implies that any word not only reflects an image of objective reality but also introduces and implements an image of its own. For the hidden system of etymons (Semantics) and the relation of the word with other possible words (Syntactics) in the system of grammatical meanings, which we call language, influences the general contextual meaning on the pragmatic level.

Therefore even on the purely communicational level the word acts as a meaningful entity, influencing and creating the society of man, which is nothing but a product of this communication.[40]

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[38] Cp. with 'a signified', a concept;

[39] About which nobody speaks in the West, taking mistakenly the structural semantic, 'sign' or 'trace', for the meaning itself.

[40] This much is obvious even to modern science, but not connected with the etymon level.

Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini

Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini (5 century BC) can be considered a landmark in the history of Sanskrit Language and also in the history of Linguistics. The treatment of language which Pāṇini introduces here by developing his own metalanguage is unique and there is no other grammatical treatise of such a perfection and magnitude.

There are eight books (aṣṭa-adhyāyī) which deal with the widest scope of Sanskrit Grammar covering all the rules and possible exceptions to them within the four thousand short sutras. The sutras when published without the commentaries cover the amount of 25-30 pages (see the edition by Vasu) which is unimaginable for any Sanskrit grammarian to cover the content of all Sanskrit Grammar. How could Pāṇini find such a concise form to describe such a profound body of language. First of all he employed several techniques, some of which we would like to mention here:

- anuvṛtti, everything which was said before is implied after unless it is specified by exception (so the sutras are built in such a way that one does not need to repeat the grammatical rules they represent);
- anubandha, is an indicator in the word or stem, particle or ending, used to define the changes in grammatical operation in terms of accent and other phonetic and grammatical changes (*k*-ta, affix of ppp, where *k-* indicates that there will be no guṇa or vṛddhi in the stem when the affix is used, for instance: kṛ-ta, etc.).
- pratyāhara sūtras, the alphabet was invented in a particular way, which permitted him to use clearly and briefly all the phonetic changes in the grammar;
- paribhāṣā sūtras, the rules of interpretation; he invented the meta-language for the purpose of his grammar; (for instance: na vā iti vibhāṣā, 'whenever the phrase 'na vā' , 'or not' is used it implies the meaning of negative alternative.
- adhikāra sūtras, governing the topics and the set of following rules under one particular heading (for instance pratyayāḥ 3.1 is the adhikāra sūtra for the three following books dealing with suffixes);
- Panini uses the five-syllogistic logic in his Grammar: 'yes' – 'better yes' – 'either or' – 'better no' – 'no', which gives him many more options to describe Sanskrit language.

There are also two lists of words: verbs and nouns which are used by Pāṇini Grammar called Dhātu-pāṭha and Gaṇa-pāṭha. There are different views on the authors of these texts, some consider them to be composed before Pāṇini.

In his Grammar Pāṇini is looking at the language neither philosophically nor psychologically, he simply describes the language he knows in the most systematic and scientific way.

Mahābhāṣya

Patanjali and the Syntactic aspect of the word in the cognition of semantics.

Mahabhashya is a commentary on Aṣṭādhyāyī, written in an extensive prose (200 BC), and is quite different from the style of Sūtras of Pāṇini. Patañjali for the first time introduces the Theory of Sphoṭa. In his Mahabhashya he says that in order to know the meaning of a word one has to go not to the learned linguist, but to the market place, for the meaning of the word in its natural usage differs from the linguistic one. The life which the word as a 'signifier' has in the world is different from the conceptual or 'signified' part of it. This was a new approach to the human tongue in comparison to the Vedic theories of the origins of speech. Patanjali points out to a different value of speech, which had not been focused on before: a communicative aspect and the life of a 'signifier' in relation to the 'signified'.

Here I would like to quote one example, where Patanjali is discussing the topic of the simplest meaningful units, which is similar to the modern understanding of linguistics in regard to phoneme:[41]

There are three words kūpa-, a well, sūpa-, a soup, yūpa-, a sacrificial post, which differ in their first phonemes; therefore, concludes Patanjali, the k-, s-, y- are meaningful units, for these words are distinguished by their initial phonemes. But at the same time the meaning cannot be learned from these in isolation: k-, s-, y-; while the part -ūpa- is also meaningless alone. Thus Patanjali admits that phonemes have a <u>differentiating significance</u> within the units which bear the meaning.[42]

Such a unit he considers to be saṅghāta-, a single entity which is 'indivisible and one', it can be a word or a text. Patanjali here compares it to a chariot, as a single entity which consists of many parts that are incapable of moving, while the chariot as a whole is an entity which can move.[43] The sound of the word or a text is simultaneous in the mind of the speaker but it has to be pronounced in time and space and therefore it creates an illusion of the significance of the components.[44]

There are few remarks which I would like to make to clarify the shift from the Vedic intuitive approach to the mental and analyzing approach to the word.

Patanjali tries to discover the semantics of the word in a purely syntactic way, breaking up the semantic entity of the etymon into a formal, structural succession of sounds, presuming that they should be

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[41] Mbh, V 1, pp 31-32: anarthakās tu varṇāḥ/ … na hi prativarṇam arhā upalabhyante/ "the phonemes are meaningless … it is not from the phonemes that the meaning is gathered…."

[42] Saussure's fundamental discovery.

[43] It is a clear example of introduction of semantic into syntactic use: Sphota.

[44] Patanjali on the rule of Panini 1.4.109, p.356.

meaningful as such. This approach does not help us much, although it brings some clarity about how the etymon is to be approached - as a syllable only. If we examine carefully the nature of the sounds in speech, we will see that k- is not a sound, but only an articulating device, which can be meaningful only when a vowel sound is there, forming it into a syllable[45]. Of course it reflects the significance of its place of articulation, but in itself it has no sound, and cannot be pronounced. So kū is to be compared, which differs from sū and yū not only in form, but also in sense, at the primal layer of meaning. Thus a prototypal and original root *kū* has many parallels in other Indo-European languages: Engl., *"cave"* see also Lat.; Russ., "*ko-p-aty*" to dig; Engl. "*cup*", etc. *Sū,* is "to press out a juice", so *sū-pa-* is a "soup" in English, "*sup*" in Russian, etc., also *soma-*, the *"ambrosia"*, and *sū-nu-*, the "*son*", as a carrier of the essence. The root *yū* thus gives us different meanings: *to unite* and *to divide*, in other words *to hold the two in one*. From this root we have many derivatives: *yuj*, to *unite, to bind, to fix, to use* etc., *yuga-*, "*pair*"; cp: Engl. *"yoke"*; *yoga-, "union"; yūpa, " sacrificial post",* where the sacrificial animal is to be tied up.

The "single entity" of which Patanjali speaks should belong to the origins of the word, to its inherent and hidden semantic, - an etymon, and not to its conventional significance, supported by the mind examining the syntactic structure of the word.

But what is interesting that Patanjali for the first time proposes three different approaches in the studies of speech-utterance:

1) meaningful word;

2) dhvani, an uttered sound;

3) sphoṭaśabdaḥ, an impression of the sound in the mind.

So the meaningful word, arthasampratyāyakaḥ šabdaḥ, is perceived through the articulate sound, dhvani, by the listener as sphoṭašabdaḥ.

This was the beginning of the Sphoṭa theory.[46]

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[45] Not all human languages function syllabically, or even vocally. Isolated and Hieroglyphic types are based on vision rather than sound. Languages of the numbers, geometrical figures or colors are of the sight origin.

[46] This view of Patanjali most probably belongs to the linguistic tradition about which we don't have any earlier evidences. Panini though mentions in his Aṣṭādhyāyī the name of Sphoṭāyana among ancient grammarians, which may be the reference to this particular theory.

Vākyapadīya

Bhartrihari and the Theory of Sphota

Developing the thought of Patanjali, Bhartrihari goes farther and makes an overall survey of what "single entity" is and how it works on all levels of speech. For Bhartrihari a sentence is a single undivided speech-unit and not a single word. The whole world as it is has a Meaning which can be grasped only as an indivisible unity. This meaning is inherent in the consciousness of man from his very birth, with which he later finds its partial correspondence in his language and reproduces it through articulation, and that is Sphoṭa. Sphoṭa, literally means "sudden opening", "disclosure", it is taking place in both speaker and hearer, through the process of articulation in both. The sound of the speech (dhvani) simply evokes the Sphoṭa in the hearer, as varṇa-sphoṭa, pada-sphoṭa and vākya-sphoṭa, the phoneme/morpheme-articulation-cognition, the word-articulation-cognition and the text-articulation-cognition, respectively. The differentiation between sound and articulation is one of the fundamental features of the theory of Sphota. Sphota is not a sound we hear but the sound we articulate.[47] According to Bhartrihari Sphoṭa operates within universal sounds whereas dhvani within a particular sound. The opposition between sphoṭa and dhvani is also presented as the opposition of class to individual. In modern terms Sphoṭa can be understood as having constant distinctive phonetic features, whereas dhavi is of a phonic nature. Sphoṭa is that which is to be manifested (vyaṅgya-), and the dhvani is manifesting (vyañjaka-). Sphoṭa is not uttered but it is perceived by the hearer.

To make the distinction clearer Bhartrihari introduces two types of dhvani: prākṛta-dhvani, natural sound, and vaikṛta-dhvani, uttered or distorted sound; where sphoṭa is revealed through the former one only. The secondary vaikṛta sounds are only to indicate the primary ones, and thus to kindle up the Sphoṭa, which with a help of pratibhā, the flash of insight, reveals the meaning of the text.

On semantic level, as it was developed by latter grammarians, Sphoṭa makes the text correspond with a universal Text-Totality, šabda-brahman, and therefore the text can be easily understood as such. And once the inner perception (pratibhā) of the hearer flashes out, reflecting something from that totality, the Sphoṭa, the revelation of the meaning of the text, takes place in his consciousness.

So, the Sphoṭa can be seen as a communication-device based on recognition of the truth of existence through a word/text in the hearer-

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[47] It is Saussure's definition of 'signifier'.

speaker, (sattā). It is of a psychological nature, as any human speech is, for the recognition of the meaning of the text is perceived in the consciousness which is beyond any analytical capacity of the external mind to distinguish among the particularities and structures, and carries within itself all the meanings; so, it requires a psychological experience.
Even today this theory is widely recognised among modern linguists as the most complete investigation into the profundities of human language, making a considerable contribution to the Philosophy of Language, the Psychology of Speech, and especially Semiotics.

Sphota – the Disclosure of Meaning

General overview of all major theories of Sphota:

The general overview of the concepts and different approaches to Sphota must be made here in order to show the richness and the precision of the topics being discussed among ancient and medieval grammarians of India. There are eight major approaches to the theory of Sphota:
1)   varṇa-sphoṭa
2)   pada-sphoṭa
3)   vākya-sphoṭa
4)   akhaṇḍa-pada-sphoṭa
5)   akhaṇḍa-vākya-sphoṭa
6)   varṇa-jāti-sphoṭa
7)   pada-jāti-sphoṭa
8)   vākya-jāti-sphoṭa

Here is a brief outline of some of the most essential concepts and issues, especially related to the studies of meaning:

1) *Varna sphota* is defined as denotative, vācaka, when a single phoneme or a stem or affix is found to be so, and therefore the varna-sphota is taking place. This theory utilizes the analysis from "bottom-to-top', which is mainly found in grammatical treatises such as Panini's descriptive grammar.
Varna sphota has its own difficulties in the immediate application to the analysis of the word, especially when the synthetic forms of the word are examined such as ghaṭena, 'with the pot', for it cannot clearly define them into separate and meaningful units. [48]

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[48] Where the stem ends and suffix begins in this word? Is it ena, or ina, or na? And still it is none of them. So what is then this na- or ina-? It is a clear example of how the grammatical analysis is incapable to find out the meaning of grammatical units. It breaks down the oneness of the system of etymons into bits and pieces, demanding from every bit to be meaningful in itself without referring to its system of meaning.

2) *Pada sphota* maintains that the finished word, being a unique entity, conveys the meaning, and the division into the morphological components such as suffixes, stems etc. does not occur when the speaker or the hearer perceives it as meaningful. This theory claims that the text can be described by listening to the words and their meaning, as well as by perceiving the relation between them in a syntactic structure of a sentence. It is by listening to the meaning of every word and linking it with another word that the meaning of the sentence can be understood. But since the meaning of the sentence is the last to be grasped then the pada-sphota theory is found insufficient in the description of perception of meaning and leads to the next level of synthesis: vākyasphoṭa.

3) *Vākya-sphoṭa* maintains that the sentence is a unique entity which conveys the meaning. A sentence or a text itself is a unit of meaning. Vakya sphota however does not claim that the constituents of the sentence do not have any meaning. The main point of this theory is that the word should be always seen and understood in its context. The words have their meaning only when they form a part of a sentence.

4) *Akhaṇḍa-pada-sphoṭa* maintains that the word is perceived as undivided single meaning bearing unit. It is not perceived by its parts: suffixes, stems etc., but as a single and undivided meaningful entity.

5) *Akhaṇḍa-vākya-sphoṭa* states that it is insufficient to perceive the separate word, for in ordinary communications the sentence as the whole is perceived as meaningful and not a separate word in the sentence. Bhartrihari thinks that such division of a sentence into words and stems etc., does not exist in the ordinary perception of speech. In common use of speech-production the meaning is taken as a whole, including the context. It is only when the utterance is completed that the speaker can dwell on it and analyze it in parts (as words, stems etc.), but not during the speech. And if he is able to grasp the parts of speech, such as syllables, he will loose the meaning of it all. According to this theory the varna and pada sphota describe language in its functions, but not in its use.

6) Vyakti sphoṭa and Jāti sphoṭa
To answer the question whether Sphoṭa is particular or universal there are two different theories called Vyakti-sphoṭa-vāda and Jāti-sphoṭa-vāda.
The Jāti sphoṭa-vāda maintains that non-difference in the varied individual elements is generic, while vyakti-sphoṭa-vāda says that difference is associative. For the Jāti sphoṭa-vāda the meaning-bearing word is the class (as for instance: 'gotva', 'cowness') which is revealed

by the individual instances (vyaktis). The individuals are not meaning bearers.[49]

There was one more distinction important to mention here, which formulated the two different approaches to the understanding of Sphota: the *abhihitānvayavāda* and *anvitābhidhānavāda* theories.

The *abhihitānvayavāda* (stated [first by the words] and followed [then] in the sentence) theory maintains that the words and grammatical units have their own meaning and by joining together through their syntactic relation build up the meaning of the sentence.

The *anvitābhidhānavāda* (following after the statement) theory on the contrary affirms that the meaning of the word can be understood only in the context of the sentence.

All these theories of Sphota with many other variations and commentaries make a rich layout for the linguistic studies of meaning in the terms of structural semantics, and together represent a holistic view in defining all possible approaches to meaning within the grammatical structures (morphology and syntax).

The Four levels of Speech in Tantra

Parā Vāk,
Pašyantī Vāk,
Madhyamā Vāk,
Vaikharī Vāk.

Kashmirian Saiva tradition is utilising the Sphoṭa theory, and is trying to recapture the awareness of the Vedic Word, known in Tantra as Parā Vāk, which is seen as a part of the Supreme Consciousness, Cit. The studies of Linguistics was considered to be a path to liberation of Consciousness.[50]

Abhinavagupta following Bhartrihari and his own Tantric tradition defines the four levels of speech in his Tantrāloka in this way:[51]

"When she (parā vāk) is differentiating then she is known in three terms as pašyantī, madhyamā, and vaikharī." [52]

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[49] Against this Nāgeša says that individual member is the meaning conveyor which is revealed by the individual sounds associated with diverse features.

[50] Similarly it was seen by Bhartrihari and other grammarians as a path to the liberation of Consciousness. In this regard it is interesting to mention the statements by Wilhelm Humbold he made at the beginning of the 19th century, after discovering Sanskrit language, where he invites the scholars to see the studies of language as a way to increase mental capacities of men.

[51] TA 3.236, Bhartrihari speaks only about the three levels: pašyantī, madhyamā and vaikharī; but of course he speaks about šabda-bhrahman, VP 1.1.

[52] TA 3,236, and comm. vol. 2, pp 225-226

According to Abhinavagupta the differentiation on the phonemes, words and sentences is inherent in the pašyantī vāk.[53]

This definition is quite interesting for us, for we may find it fully corresponding with our scheme of the sign made earlier (see the chart of the sign).

Rāmakantha gives us a very valuable orientation commenting on Spandakārikāḥ [54]

Vaikharikā nāma kriyā jñānamayī bhavati madhyamā vāk/
Icchā punaḥ pašyantī sūkṣmā sarvāsāṃ samarasā vṛttiḥ//[55]

"The speech is indeed an action, the mediating part of the Word is made of knowledge, the will is its visionary part, which is subtle and is common essence in all [of them]."

Parā Vāk

Abhinavagupta describes the parā vāk as the transcendental Word, beyond creation, the very essence of the Supreme reality, ever-present and pervading all.[56] It is thus identical with pure consciousness, Cit, which is the ultimate reality. It is conceived of as a luminous vibration (sphurattā) of pure consciousness itself, carrying within itself the whole cosmic manifestation, which is shining within it without any differentiation.[57]

He also says that parā vāk "is indeed present on all the levels of pašyantī and others, for without her, darkness and unconsciousness, would prevail"[58]: pašyantyādi dašasv api vastuto vyavasthitā tayā vinā pašyantyādiṣu aprakāšatāpattyā jaḍatāprasaṅgāt/

"Everything, stones, trees, birds, human beings, gods, demons and so on, is but the venerable Supreme [Word] present in and consisting of everything, in the form of (that is, identical with) the supreme Lord."[59]

ata eva sarve pāṣāṇa-taru-tiryaṅ-manuṣya-deva-rudra-kevali-mantra tadīšatan mahešādikā ekaiva parābhaṭṭārikā-bhūmiḥ sarva-sarvātmanaiva paramešvara-rūpeṇāste.

This statement that Consciousness is pervading all the levels of creation and is an expression of all them is fundamental for Indian approach to language. And if this higher Consciousness would not be present within

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[53] We will come back to this important point later when we will be discussing the connection of artha and vāk, for it is precisely because of this that the sound, vaikṛta dhvani, maintains its meaningful expression.

[54] SpK 4.18 (pp.149-151)

[55] It resembles the semantic levels in semiotics: pragmatics is vaikharī kriyā, syntactics is madhyamā jñāna, semantics is pašyantī icchā.

[56] PTV, p.13 satatodita, 'ever-active', 'eternally present',

[57] Cp. to Atharva Veda 1.1.1-4.

[58] PTV, p.5

[59] PTV, p. 188

the creation, all would fall back into Inconscient. This view is clearly Vedic. The creation was conceived, according to the Veda, in two stages. First, out of himself the Supreme created all the worlds and then he entered them, ātmanātmānam abhisamviveša.[60] So if he would withdraw his Consciousness, the luminous Word, the creation would again fall into the darkness.

Andre Padoux comments on the nature of the Supreme Word in his book Vāc: "Thus we see the role played by the supreme level of the Word in this conception of the supreme consciousness. The letter is pure light, but in it the cosmos exists archetypically and undifferentiatedly prior to all manifestation: this results from its twin aspect of prakāša and of vimarša (or pratyavamarša), that is, from its being both consciousness or light, and Word or, to say it differently, both pure, luminous (prakāša), changeless consciousness and consciousness holding the paradigm of the cosmos in this Word which, as it were, whispers it to and within consciousness, and therefore makes it reflectively and introspectively aware – or brings about a representation (pratyavamarša) of the cosmos."[61]

Pašyantī Vāk

Abhinavagupta speaks about pašyantī in his Tantrāloka 3.236:

pašyantī hi kriyā tasyā bhāgau pūrvāparau sthitau/
etad drașțavyam ity etad vimaršaḥ pūrvato bhavet /

"Of that [parā vāk] the Seeing is indeed the active part. For She (parā vāk) has two parts: the first (its inner part) and the next (its outer part of manifestation).
'This should be seen!' – thus the vimarša [power of parā vāk] reveals itself from its origin [in the form of pašyantī vāk]."[62]

So, the vimarša part of parā vāk becomes an active part or pašyantī vāk on the next level of manifestation. It is conceived as the first moment of wanting to know. It is of non-dualistic nature, where the division on subject and object is not yet been made:
na hi prathamajñānakāle bhedo 'trāsphurat
yatra vācyavācakavišeșayor abhedaḥ /
'In this first moment of cognition there is no separation yet.
There is no distinction between the signified and the signifier.' [63]

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[60] TaiAr, 23., Tait Up 2.6 etc. etc.
[61] Andre Padoux, Vāc, p. 177-178.
[62] Cp. *"The Supreme"*, - says the Mother, - *"decided to exteriorise himself, objectivise himself, in order to have the joy of knowing himself in detail,... to be able to see Himself.*– says the Mother. Questions and Answers, 16 October 1957, CWM, Vol.9, p.205-206
[63] PTV pp 4-5

So, pašyantī vāk can be described as a transition from the stage of a total undifferentiation to the stage of differentiation; the supreme-nonsupreme state of the Word, parāparā, which connects pure subjectivity with objectivety: ahantā with idantā ('I-ness' with 'This-ness'). These two coexist in her with predominance of the subjective aspect of 'I-ness', ahantā, which already on the madhyamā level will change and both with be equalized, as it were.

Now, what is a cause of pašyantī? How is it invoked, set into motion? The explanation given by Abhinavagupta is quite interesting:

tatas tu pašyantī yad yad abhīpsitam tat tad eva samucita-karaṇa-niyama-prabodhitaṃ bodha-sūtraṇa-mātreṇa vimṛšati/[64]

'Whatever is thus aspired or wished for is indeed awakened by the necessity of a certain action, and it is by only following that awareness that Pašyantī gets the perception of it [and is set into motion].'

Abhinavagupta compares it to a psychological process of memorizing (smṛti), by which certain events recall certain images which appear in the consciousness, as if they were caused by this will to know or the will to remember something which was as if forgotten.[65] Here we can clearly see that the agent provoking the pašyantī vāk is within man, it is his own aspiration towards knowing or perceiving, abhīpsitam.

  The power of will, icchā šakti, which is the very characteristic of the pašyantī is carrying within herself the power of cognition, jñāna šakti, and the power of action, kriyā.[66] In fact the will to be aware, bubhutsā, in its nature is awareness itself, bodhasvabhāvā, says Abhinavagupta.[67]

It is interesting to mention here how the hierarchy of pašyantī vāk is being defined. According to Abhinavagupta, there is always a greater will (mahāpašyantī) and the smaller ones (pašyantīs). For instance:

'I go to the village', - says Abhinavagupta, - 'and it is my main will, mahāpašyantī, but 'I am leaving my house' – is a smaller pašyantī. Similarly one should see the plane of Sadāšiva as a great mahāpašyantī in comparison to which all other wills of individuals, being subjects to Maya, are smaller pašyantīs.'[68] Moreover all the greater mahāpašyantis can finally be seen as those included into the supreme para-mahāpašyantī, which is parā vāk herself.

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[64] ibid

[65] This will to know, to remember, to recollect, is in some sense similar to the Nietzsche's idea of the will to know, will to power.

[66] IPVV, 1.5.13: yad icchā-šaktir jñāna-kriyāšaktyor anugrāhikā

[67] Ibid, bubhutsā api bodhasvabhāvaiva

[68] IPVV 1.5.13: 'evaṃ grāmaṃ gacchāmīti mahāpašyantī, gṛhān niḥsarāmīti pašyantīm apekṣya tāvat yāvat sadāšivešvaradašā mahāpašyantī…'
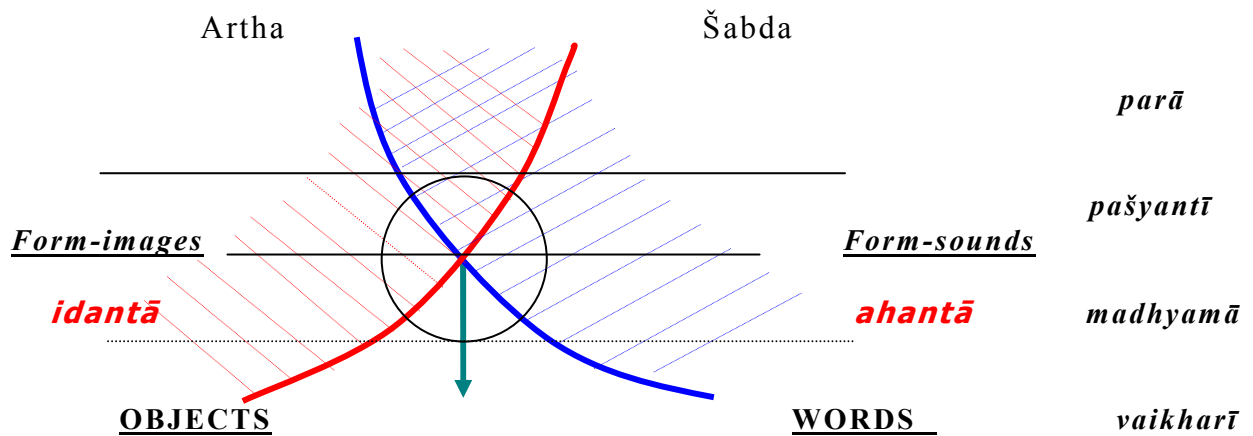
Madhyamā Vāk

Madhyamā, literary means 'mediating', which mediates between the undifferentiated and the differentiated levels of the word. It is still a projection of the parā vāk together with pašyantī, only on this level the language finally appears as the division on phonemes, words and sentences. If on the level of pašyantī it was still involved, enclosed, as it were, samvartita-, then on the level of madhyamā it is unfolded into the mental distinct categories of language: grammar. It is on this level only that the distinction between vācya- and vācaka-, the signified and the signifier, takes place. Now when these two are combined as the substance of sound, being a material of language, the expressive and creative element, vācaka, and the creation, that which is to be expressed by it, the vācya, they together represent the power of the goddess called parāparā, Supreme-Nonesupreme, which is the essence of Madhyamā Vāk.

These two elements are aiming at two different things, one aiming at objective content, idantā, and the other oriented towards subjective expression of it ahantā, and thus they create the whole physical universe, višva. The objective universe is born within and by the Word. On the individual level it is cognized as awareness in speech and language, as well as differentiation of šabda and artha, word and meaning. It is the level of Saussurean 'sign' and grammatical structure, which, according to him, is a proper subject of linguistics. The place of madhyamā, according to Abhinavagupta, is intellect, buddhi, where the element of impersonality still dominates the particularities of manifestation. It has a character of cognition: jñāna-shakti-rūpā,[69] and it utilizes the Parāparā Shakti, which dwells on the distinction of the subjective and objective content, of the infinite and the finite, of the transcendental and the non-transcendental. The objectivity is growing within the subject, as it were, and the subjectivity is still dominant.

Now when it comes to the level of vaikharī, the division on the vācya and vācaka elements becomes fixed by the cognitive aspect of madhyamā, where they are still superimposed on each other, therefore children, says Abhinavagupta, can learn language connected with objective reality.

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[69] IPVV 1.5.13

Artha　　　　　　　　Šabda

parā

pašyantī

Form-images　　　　　　　　　Form-sounds

idantā　　　　　　　　**ahantā**　　*madhyamā*

OBJECTS　　　　　　　**WORDS**　　*vaikharī*

Vaikhari Vak

Vaikhari is a manifestation of speech in time and space with all the distinct features of language: phonemes, words and sentences. According to Abhinavagupta, the vaikharī is only a completion of the process of parā vāk, which started with pašyanti led through the formulation of the elements in the madhyamā and manifested in vaikharī. The Parā Vāk is present throughout the process of manifestation and always there before and after its manifestation. The Word is not only manifested in terms of the speech-production but also in terms of the objective reality.

Some reflections on the nature of meaning of the fourfold Word.

When I was a student of General Linguistics in the University of Leningrad, I called this power of icchā for myself "imperativeness of name". I saw that every time the Word is spoken it is creating the ripples in the environment, constantly changing it. So every time the word is uttered it enters into a new environment, as it were. Therefore the word is always new, even if we pronounce the same word many times, it is always new, because the previous utterance has changed the environment already. So if we repeat the name of Rama, for instance: Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, etc. Every time it will appear as a new word in one part of our perception, for the consciousness has been already changed by the utterance of the same word. In this way the concentration on one thought can grow, which was the secret of the power of Japa in Yogic systems of Tantra.
Such a perception of the word being always new due to the always changing environment or context brings us to the understanding of its

creative power and especially to the hidden power of its intention, the icchā of the pašyantī vāk.

Here we shall give a scheme which is in a modified way taken from the Tantric texts, usually marked by the categories of the Krama of such a type as Supreme-Subtle-Gross. Here we modify them into the three levels of the Word:

Pašyantī Vāk:

1) **Meaning of meaning,**
(parā vāk expressed as pašyantī vāk, as the Will or Intention, icchā)

2) **Meaning of structure,**
(pašyantī, the Intention, projects itself into madhyamā vāk, structure of language)

3) **Meaning of expression,**
(pašyantī, the Intention, projects itself into vaikharī vāk, speech).

Madhyamā Vāk:

4) **Structure of meaning,**
vākya sphoṭa, (Sphoṭa or disclosure of Intention of pašyantī in the text as such, of its Idea)
5) **Structure of structure,**
pada sphoṭa, (Sphoṭa or disclosure of Intention of pašyantī through the structure of language, in-between words semantic, which is of nature of language, thought)
6) **Structure of expression,**
varna sphoṭa. (Sphoṭa or disclosure of Intention of pašyantī in sound, in-between phonemes, which is of nature of speech)

Vaikharī Vāk:

7) **Expression of meaning,**
(vaikharī expresses the Intention of pašyantī, as meaningful sound
suiting for the expression of it)

8) **Expression of structure,**
(vaikharī expresses madhyamā as prākṛta dhvani, articulated sound)

9) **Expression of expression,**
(vaikharī expresses itself as vaikṛta dhvani, natural sound).

It is this 'expression of meaning' (7) through sound which was denied by Patanjali and all the following linguists and finally by Saussure, defining the phoneme as having only differentiating significance but not meaningful in itself (see the chapter on Patanjali). Differentiating significance is an articulated sound in the mind, prākṛta dhvani, is in our scheme an 'expression of structure of sound' (8), and sound as such is the 'expression of the expression of sound' (9). It is because of pašyantī being present in the 'expression of meaning' (7) as the unifying presence of parā vāk that the sound which is beyond any articulatory definitions, being not a phoneme yet, can be a meaningful phonic representative of parā vāk. It is this part which was lost in the Western linguistic tradition and was preserved in India in Sanskrit as system of etymons. The very oneness of the system, or better to say, a regular character of the system of simple root sounds, points us to the meaningful sound as such prior to the mental articulation or creation of phoneme, to the speech of Brihaspati, parā vāk. The very substance of Vaikharī is a substance of that Parā Vāk, which comes down in the form of Intention of pašyanti to articulate the meaning within its own sound-field, which later will be articulated as a phoneme, prākṛta dhvani. This distinction between the three types of vaikharī is crucial for us to discover the meaningful part of the prākṛta dhvani, of that very signifier which was left without meaning for so long in all linguistic traditions.

The term 'parā vāk' was not introduced by Bhartrihari, but was introduced later in Tantras of Kashmirian Shaivism. The Para Vak is always implied, according to Abhinavagupta, on all the levels of speech. It is a transcendental Word which by its very projection into manifestation creates the flash of a seeing speech, pašyantī vāk. And since the parā vāk pervades all the levels of speech from the highest to the lowest it makes it coherent within all other possible texts already existing, which are the expressions of the same parā vāk. The meaning is coherent throughout the space and time.

In this scheme we can clearly see how certain realities of the Word correspond with each other, and how the parā vāk represents itself in manifestation.
The meaning is not a property of the mind but of the transcendental Consciousness, Cit, which is thus represented on all the levels of the Word, including all of them: the mental formation of its intention and vital formulation of its language and the expression of its sound in speech.

So meaning is present on all the levels of speech, language and intention, representing three major functions of language: communicative, cognitive and volitional (or creative), kriyā, jñāna, icchā. Though the creative aspect we can address to the Parā Vāk itself. So

these three are clearly corresponding with semiotics division on pragmatics, syntactics and semantics, for meaning is present on all the levels of expression, cognition and volition.

Now if meaning is present on all the levels, then what would be the meaning of expression? According to pragmatics it will indicate something without the text. But indication is like a pointing finger. Does pointing finger itself have any meaning? Or it is only bound to some other meaning? If it is so how come that it at all could come into being of meaningful relations without any meaningful correspondence to reality other than that of the other? It has only a differentiating significance, as it was already declared by the linguists of all times from Patanjali to Saussure. But that corresponds in this scheme to the "expression of/by/within structure", prākṛta dhvani, articulated sound, which is of the nature of syntactics of expression, as it were, but what about meaning of expression, the meaning of the sound?

The meaningful expression of the speech, or sound, is not easy to imagine for our over-structured mind. How can sound be meaningful in its expression of the Meaning-Intention other than through the structure of language? Does is mean that the sound per se has a meaning? And if suppose we hypothetically accept that the sound has a meaning what would it be? Is there any evidence of such sound and usage of it in a meaningful way?

But before we come to speak about the meaningful sound, we should have a glimpse into the meaning itself. What is meaning? If three levels of Vak represent three different functions of consciousness: icchā, Intention, Will, jñāna, Cognition, and kriyā, Action of the pašyantī, madhyamā, and vaikharī respectively, what is then artha, meaning?

The meaning is expressed through all the means of Intention, Cognition and Action or Expression of Consciousness.

ON SANSKRIT ETYMOLOGY

The scientific way of dealing with a subject today (not only in the field of linguistics) is to approach it in the most objective way, as something purely independent, existing by itself and as it is. But "*… the true method of Science* – says Sri Aurobindo, - *is to go back to the origins, the embryology, the elements and more obscure processes of things. From the obvious only the obvious and superficial results. The profundities of things, their real truth, can best be discovered by penetration into the hidden things that the surface of phenomena conceals, into that past development of which the finished forms present only secret and dispersed indications or into the possibilities from which the actualities we see are only a narrow selection. A similar method applied to the earlier forms of human speech can alone give us a real Science of Language.*"
"*Law and process must have governed the origins and developments of language. Given the necessary clue and sufficient data, they must be discoverable. It seems to me that in the Sanskrit language the clue can be found, the data lie ready for investigation.*"[70]
Sri Aurobindo gives us a key to studying language from a different point of view. He started it in his work "The Origins of Aryan Speech". Although he did not complete it, he has given us the principles and direction for farther studies:
"*... we can find an equal regularity, an equal reign of fixed process on the psychological side, in the determining of the relation of particular sense to particular sound.*"

Such a program of research is of the highest possible aim: to recover and recreate the meaning of the word in its highest sense as šabda brahman of Vakyapadiya, or parā vāk of the Tantra.

The Theory of Transparent Etymology (some basic views)

The theory of transparent etymology which we are going to propose here is an attempt to change our view on language, we are used to, from its present outer orientation to an inner, or rather a global one. It is based on a perception of meaning that is derived not from the conventional usage of the word/text, but from its own depth, the system of etymons, seed-sounds. This could perhaps make our use of speech more conscious and more creative.
Such a change in consciousness involves other changes in the mind and senses, in order to be in tune with both the outer applications and the inner domains of the Word, its true and original meaning, which has a much greater creative power than is usually recognised.

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[70] The Secret of the Veda, p.47

The misinterpretation and misconception of etymology in general today is based on a belief that the meaning and the form of any particular etymon or sound-idea can exist independently from the rest of the etymons, like any outer word. Modern Linguists understands etymon only as a parent of a word, which in time becomes detached from its source and lives its independent life, ignoring its origin as something existing without significance. The system of the primal roots is not considered as a meaningful whole, and the original roots are never examined systematically.

Our approach is based on Sri Aurobindo's view. It is to discover and to differentiate the significance of the primary roots, not independently but on the basis of their position in the system, in terms of regular patterns of change in Phonetics, Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics. This kind of study can be undertaken only with a language which has preserved its own original system of etymons, and has a transparent derivative system of Grammar. And this is Sanskrit. No other language today can provide a sufficient field for such an investigation.

In our research we follow Sri Aurobindo's guidance, who gives us a key to studying language from a different point of view.

The four first simple vowels a, i, u, ṛ of Sanskrit language: "indicate the idea of being, existence... A in its short form indicates being in its simplicity without any farther idea of modification or quality, mere or initial being, creative of space; i an intense state of existence, being narrowed , forceful and insistent, tending to a goal, seeking to occupy space; u a wide, extended but not diffused state of existence, being medial and firmly occupant of space; ṛ a vibrant state of existence, pulsing in space, being active about a point, within a limit." [71]

Similarly the simple sound a was seen by the Vedantic and Tantric traditions as an everlasting sound-basis for all the other sounds, which were considered to be only modifications upon it. These modifications formed an "Alphabet", not in an abstract way as happened with Western alphabets, which followed the occult traditions of the Middle East and unconsciously took up the order of an occult significance of the Mystery of Creation that was already unknown to them, but as a system of logical modulations of consciously articulated different modes of the Meaning of One.

Thus the sound a represented the basic utterance, pronounced without any special articulation. Psychologically it could be seen as an underlying substance of speech, from which all other sounds were derived with the help of articulation. When modified by the instruments of articulation this pure sound, symbolised by "a", signifying "existence as it is", could come to carry other meanings, as for instance: "intense state of existence"

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[71] Sri Aurobindo, Archives and Research, December 1978, v.2, No 2, pp. 155-156

(sound i) or "extended state of existence" (sound u) or "vibrant state of existence" (sound ṛ) and so on. Psychologically one could perceive this process as an attempt to articulate a specific sense-meaning through the given apparatus of articulation.

If the apparatus were different (non-human) than the sounds would also differ, in other words, specific <u>sounds are only representatives</u> of a specific articulation, or better to say <u>of a living and conscious attempt to articulate a specific meaning</u>. Therefore we could say that it is not really the sounds which are important, but the conscious effort to articulate a particular meaning. And because they correspond with an instrumentation - the human vocal apparatus - which is fixed, the significance of the sound-values must also be fixed, and therefore can be systematized and studied[72].

Sanskrit is the only language which has preserved its own original and the most complete system of etymons, simple sound-ideas, roots. Therefore it does not require any other language to explain its derivations, for all the evidence is contained in its own basic system, and refers to it alone. This system is based on the interrelation of meaning with sound.

 "The Rishis' use of language," - explains Sri Aurobindo – "was governed by this ancient psychology of the Word. When in English we use the word "wolf" or "cow", we mean by it simply the animal designated; we are not conscious of any reason why we should use that particular sound for the idea except the immemorial custom of the language; and we cannot use it for any other sense or purpose except by an artificial device of style. But for the Vedic Rishi vṛka meant the tearer and, therefore among other applications of the sense, a wolf; dhenu meant the fosterer, nourisher, and therefore a cow. But the original and general predominates, the derived and particular is secondary." (Secret of the Veda. p.51-52).

Here the difference between the etymological and contextual or conventional meaning must be mentioned. The word vṛka- is derived from the root vṛj, or as some propose from vrašc, to tear, to break asunder, which is a member of a simple vṛ-root family, where vṛ means 'to cover, to choose, to obstruct.' So to really grasp the etymological meaning of the root vṛ- one has to become aware of the significance of simple u and ṛ, and moreover about their significance in all other roots. That is what we mean when we speak about the system of etymons, which can be clearly perceived only in its fullness. It requires a perfect transparency of

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[72] The infinite variabiity of individual vocal apparatuses, and all that they express of the infinite variability of individual consciousness, and of states of consciousness at the instant of utterance is a proof that we get meaning not only through the means of language, but through the means of articulation also. This is that which makes the human voice the most expressive of all the means of expression of consciousness.

the mind. As Sri Aurobindo writes in his article "Philological Method of the Veda":

"The Vedic Sanskrit ... abounds in a variety of forms and inflexions; it is fluid and vague, yet richly subtle in its use of cases and tenses. And on its psychological side it has not yet crystallized, is not entirely hardened into the rigid forms of intellectual precision. The word for the Vedic Rishi is still a living thing, a thing of power, creative, formative. It is not yet a conventional symbol for an idea, but itself the parent and former of ideas. It carries within it the memory of its roots, is still conscient of its own history." [73]

In Indian grammatical tradition the alphabet is called varṇa-mālā-, a garland of colours, figures or qualities, or sometimes akṣara-mālā-, a garland of syllables, where akṣara- means unalterable or imperishable. So the alphabet is a garland of basics, which are the simplest elements or colors of Speech with which the Artist will paint on a sheet of Reality.

To start with, we may assume that this varnamala could be the basic system of etymons itself - which could be proved only if the meanings of the corresponding roots (in sound quality) are found to be changing systematically. Thus we presuppose that all the akṣaras were originally basic roots, some of which are still available in Sanskrit language and some of which have disappeared, leaving only a trace in members of their families to remind us about their past existence, or it would be better to say, about their hidden existence, for these sound-values are in fact imperishable[74].

Here we should point out that in our studies we have to ignore, for the time being, the whole range of scientific definitions in the field of Linguistics, such as the distinction between phoneme and morpheme, between phonemic, phonetic or phonic aspects of speech etc. We have a reason to do so, for in the Vedic language words were functioning differently, pointing to the significance of the etymon and the system of etymons rather than to the outer application, and thus each word "... had a general character or quality (guṇa), which was capable of a great number of applications and therefore of a great number of possible significances. And this guṇa and its results it shared with many kindred sounds. At first, therefore, word-clans, word-families started life on the communal system with a common stock of possible and realised significances and a common right to all of them; their individuality lay rather in shades of expression of the same ideas than in any exclusive right to the expression of a single idea. ...The principle of partition was

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[73] ibid, p.51.
[74] It is only on the highest subtle level that their origin is imperishable. The actual sound values are dependent on a particular manifestation of consciousness (in a particular context of manifestation) and b) a particular apparatus of expression.

at first fluid, then increased in rigidity, until word-families and finally single words were able to start life on their own account.... For in the first state of language the word is as living or even a more living force than idea; sound determines sense. In its last state the position has been reversed: the idea becomes all-important, the sound secondary." [75]

So, the words in Vedic Sanskrit were far from simply symbolizing objects and the relationships between them, as they mainly seem to do in modern languages; derived from their own system of seed-ideas, they were revealing quality, power and state of existence within their own system of Meaning. In the very source they were not to[76] imitate or project outer reality, as words are supposed to do by modern linguists, but to reveal the inner reality of the Word, and thus to create a new outer reality.

On the Vedic Prosody

The Vedic Meters are called Chandas. In RV there are few major varieties of chandas: 5 syllables in pada (foot), which rare, 8, 11 and 12.

1) 5 sillables in a pada: ◡ __ ◡ __ ◡ , combined in the tetrameter build dvīpadā virāj (very rare meter):
>   paśvā na tāyum | guhā catantam |
>   namo yujāntam | namo vahantam ||

2) 8 syllables meter, usually iambic, consists of two feet:

>   ◡ __ ◡ __ | ◡ __ ◡ ◡ | agnim iḻe purohitam |

   a) when combined in the trimeter gives Gāyatrī:
   agnim īḻe purohitam |
   yajñasya devam ṛtvijam |
   hotāraṃ ratnadhātamam ||
   b) when combined in four, tetrameter, then it builds anuṣṭubh (2 and 2 padas)
   c) when combined in five, pentameter, it gives pāṅkti (2 and 3 padas)
   d) when combined in six, hexameter, it gives mahāpāṅkti (2 and 4 padas);
   e) when combined in seven, heptameter, it gives śakvarī, (3 and 4 padas).

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[75] ibid. p.49.
[76] This is just a description of how sounds were originally used by an evolving humanity. The vast majority, who used words in this way, must have been as unaware of the psychological process they were involved in as most of us are today in using language.

1) 11 syllables pada, combined in the tetrameter is called triṣṭubh. It is the first most used chandas in RV (2/5 hymns). It is of two kinds:

   a) ∪ __ ∪ __ , ∪∪__ | __ ∪ __ ∪ | yahvā iva pra vayām ujjihānāḥ
   b) ∪ __ ∪ __ ∪, ∪∪ | __ ∪ __ ∪ | abodhi hotā yajathāya devān

2) Jagatī is the third most used meter in the RV. It has four padas and twelve syllables in a pada which are of two different kinds:

   a) ∪ __ ∪ __ , ∪∪__ | __ ∪ __ ∪ ∪ | tuvā́m agne átithim pūrviyám víśaḥ
   b) ∪ __ ∪ __ ∪, ∪∪ | __ ∪ __ ∪ ∪ | pratnám pratnā́sa ūtáye sahaskṛta

The caesura is falling after the fourth or the fifth syllable and the cadenza is always of five syllables. It has mainly iambic, and in this sense it differs from triṣṭubh where in cadenza it mainly trochaic.

Sometimes the term dimeter is used for metrical schemes based on the 8-syllable (gāyatrī) pada, there being a two-fold division of a pada into **opening and cadence**; and the term trimeter for schemes based on 11-syllable (triṣṭubh) or 12-syllable (jagatī) padas, the division being into **opening, break and cadence.** The principal difference between the two forms of trimeter is in the rhythm of the cadence: generally trochaic for triṣṭubh padas and iambic for jagatī padas. Except for one significant collection, gāyatrī padas are also generally iambic in the cadence.[77]

There are other more extended meters which are only a combination of the 8 and 12 syllabic padas:

   a) 8 8, 12 - uṣṇiḥ;
   b) 12 8, 8 - purauṣṇiḥ;
   c) 8 12, 8 - kakubh;
   d) 8 8, 12 8 - bṛhatī;
   e) 12 8, 12 8 - satobṛhatī;
   f) 8 8 8, 8 8, 12 8 – atiśakvarī;
   g) 12 12 8, 8 8, 12 8 - atyaṣṭi;
   h) 8 8, 12 8, 12 8, 12 8 – bārhata pragātha (comb. of bṛhatī with satobṛhatī);
   i) 8 12 8, 12 8, 12 8 – kākubha-pragātha (comb. of kakubh with satobṛhatī).

On the Meter a general note:

Iambic/iamb: two syllables with the stress on the second syllable
example: *Whose woods these are I think I know*. (Iambic tetrameter)

Trochaic/trochee: two syllables with the stress on the first syllable
example: *Double, double toil and trouble,* (trochaic tetrameter)
        Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

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[77] From Wikipediya.

Anapestic/anapest: three syllables with the stress on the last syllable
example: *With the sheep in the fold and the cows in their stalls.* (Anapestic tetrameter)

Dactylic/dactyl: three syllables with the stress on the first syllable
example: *Love again, song again, nest again, young again.* (Dactylic tetrameter)

Numbers of Meter:
monometer: one foot line, - *Thus I* (trochaic monometer)
dimeter: two foot line, - *Workers earn it.* (Trochaic dimeter)
trimeter: three foot line, - *The idle life I lead.* (Iambic trimeter)
tetrameter: four foot line, - *Whose woods these are I think I know.*
pentameter: five foot line, - *Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.* (Iambic pentameter)
hexameter: six, - *To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.* (Iambic hexameter)
heptameter: seven, - *It looked extremely rocky for the Mudville nine that day.* (Iambic heptameter)
octometer: eight, - *Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary*. (Trochaic octometer)

Rhyme: identical repetition between two different words
-position: end rhyme, internal rhyme
-kinds of rhyme:
-masculine: one syllable rhymed words, blend/send
-feminine: a stressed the unstressed syllable, lawful/awful
-triple: three syllable rhymed word, quivering/shivering