Vedic Experience
Category : February 1996
Published by Anonymous on Feb. 02, 1996

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An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man

Professor Raimon Panikkar

The Vedas are mankind's oldest scriptures, Revered by Hindus as direct revelation from God. One of the finest translations to English was done by Professor Raimon Panikkar, a renowned theologian who now lives in a mountain village in Spain. Himalayan Academy has been commissioned to publish his 1,000-page anthology in a special edition in the West. Motilal Banarsidas has produced the Indian edition. This regular monthly column will feature excerpts from the volume.

OM agnim ile purohitam
yajnasya devam ritvijam
hotaram ratnadhatamam

Om. I magnify God, the Divine Fire,
the Priest, Minister of the sacrifice,
the Offerer of oblation,
supreme Giver of treasure.

RV I, 1, 1

Our first verse is the opening of the whole Vedic Revelation: the invocation to Agni, the mediator par excellence, the sacrificial Fire, who transforms all material and human gifts into spiritual and divine realities so that they may reach their endless destination. Agni has a priestly role and a threefold composition, his nature being the anthropocosmic (i.e., divine, human, and earthly at one and the same time). Or, in traditional Vedic terms, Agni has a threefold aspect: adhidaivika, adhyamika, and adhibhautika. This opening verse contains as in a nutshell the whole of Man's sanatana dharma or primordial religiousness: praise, mediation, sacrifice, commerce with the divine, and also remuneration for man, all caught up in an atmosphere of invocation. The last sukta of the Rig Veda is also dedicated to Agni.

Agni

Uplift your prayer! He comes! He knows! His wisdom is implored. In him are counsels, in him requests, his Lord of power.
Men pray to him, yet he needs no asking; as his mind has grasped all things. He goes as one who knows the first word and the last, with mind composed.
To him ascend these hymns, these steed-swift prayers. He alone hears my words. All-mover, all-conqueror, conveyer of sacrifice, the Child, ever aiding,
he assumes great power.
What he meets he grasps and, newly born, advances vehemently, darting with his fellows. He brings to the weary, pleasure and great joy, accepting their gifts.
He is a being; of flood and forest who passes aloft. Knowing the Law, he inspires to right action, this wise,
true Lord.
RV I, 145, 1-5

Agni resides on earth, within the plants. The Waters contain Agni; in the stones is he. Agni abides deep in the hearts of Men. In cattle and horses there are Agnis.

Agni blazes and flashes from the height of heaven. To the God Agni belong all airy spaces, Agni it is whom mortal men enkindle, conveyer of offerings, lover of the clarified butter.

May she who is clothed with Fire, whose knees are blackened, grant me sharpness of wit and furnish me
with splendor!

AV XII, 1, 19-21

Worthy is the Lord to be praised by living as by ancient seers. He makes present for us the Gods.

The Lord brings us riches, food in daily abundance, renown, and hero sons to gladden our hearts.

Only that worship and sacrifice that you, Lord, guard on every side will reach the heavenly world of the Gods.

May the Lord, wise and true offerer, approach, most marvelous in splendor, encircled with his crown of Gods!

Whatever gift you may choose to give, O Lord, to your worshipper, that gift, refulgent One, is true.

To you, dispeller of the night, we come with daily prayer offering to you our reverence.

For you are Lord of sacrifice, enlightener, shepherd of the world, who wax mighty in your own abode.

RV I, 1, 3-9

Agni Vaisvanara

The day is dark and also bright. These two hemispheres, thanks to their own intelligence, revolve. Once born, the Universal Lord, the Monarch, thrust back by his own light the
encroaching darkness.

I know not how to stretch the threads or weave or discern the pattern of those who weave in the contest. Whose son will be the one to speak so well as to surpass, advancing from below, his father?

He who knows how to stretch the thread and weave in their due time the proper words will speak. He, the Shepherd of Immortality, knows it. Though moving below he sees beyond any other.

Behold, then, the Priest, the first to perform the priestly function. He is for mortal men the immortal Light. He is born and is seated among us, not to be shaken, the immortal, increasing constantly in his own body.

A steady light is set for men to gaze on, of all the moving things the swiftest Mind! All spirits divine with but one thought and intention proceed unerring toward that unique Splendor.

My hearing fades away, my eyes grow dim. The light that dwells within my heart grows brighter. Far roams my mind, its confines overleaping. What shall I utter, what my mind envisage?

In fear and trembling all the Gods hailed you, O Lord, when you abode amidst the darkness. O Universal Lord, accord us your grace. May the Immortal now bestow his grace upon us!

RV IV, 9, 1-6

Jyotisha

By Sri Chakrapani Ullal

The magnificence of Vedic astrology and its power to change the conscience of people and nations is, due to ignorance, hardly understood by the vast majority of Asian Indian people. This is the greatest loss to the humanity of kaliyuga. Vedic astrology has not achieved the status it deserves. This is due

to a lack of professionalism, which has enabled the quack and charlatan to thrive. It is important, therefore, that informed and enlightened astrologers collaborate, have a united front and create a college-level educational organization. This group would promote Vedic astrology by collecting, translating and publishing existing ancient literature and undertaking research work for business institutions and governments.

In India of yore, astrology occupied a unique and important place in the culture of the society until the advent of the British, whose influence on the intellectual community made them look down on astrology as unscientific and superstitious. In Western countries religious dogmatism has, among other things, played an important role in undermining astrology, motivated by some clergy's fear that they may lose their authority over people. Fear and ignorance play a major role in keeping people away from this knowledge. Today, fortunately, desire for serious study of astrology has taken over both the young and the intellectual. This shows promise for the future.

With this in mind, it is necessary that astrologers clean their house and come together with the noble objective of gaining the rightful place for this Divine knowledge in this world.

The ancient Vedic dictum Sarvam Kalvidam Brahman, "The whole cosmos is nothing but consciousness" is slowly dawning on the scientific community. They have begun to see the possibility that there could be cosmic intelligence dwelling within the galaxies in some mysterious way. When this principle is finally understood, science will be at the doorsteps of the Vedic knowledge.

March Highlights

Since the Saturn moved into Pisces on February 16th, the sobering influence of this planet will gradually have some bearing on world events. As the negative influences of Saturn in Pisces manifest, the resultant suffering will persist, and resolutions will not be reached quickly. In the new moon chart, 5 planets in Pisces (Saturn, Sun, Mars, Moon and Ketu) create a Pancha Graha Yoga with all the attendant malefic influences. This will plant a seed that will gradually manifest over time. Saturn is in conjunction with Mars, which is malefic; Sun, which is its enemy; Moon, no friend of Saturn; and Ketu, the most cruel planet. Fortunately, Ketu is in the nakshatra of Mercury; in turn Mercury is well-placed in Aquarius and occupies the Jupiter nakshatra. Therefore, Ketu is not in a hurry to throw its poison into the atmosphere. However, these malefic planets in Pisces do have the potential to create a lot of mischief. Fortunately, to some extent the malefic nature of this configuration is reduced considerably because:

1) This malefic combination of 5 planets occupies the house of Jupiter, which is the most benevolent planet. And Jupiter is strongly occupying its own sign, Sagittarius. Therefore it is acting as a guardian, trying to stall the struggle which is otherwise inevitable in different areas of the world, the effects of which depend on the specific country's chart.

2) Mercury is well-placed in Aquarius and occupies the nakshatra of Jupiter, the most benevolent planet, thereby enhancing positive influences.

3) Most important is the placement of Venus in Aries, which occupies its own nakshatra, thereby becoming a strong benevolent planet. Further, Venus is aspected powerfully by Jupiter, thus increasing the power of the natural benefics, Venus and Jupiter.

4) The five malefic planets in Pisces are to some degree further contained by the position of two benevolent planets, Venus and Mercury, which are placed on either side of Pisces (creating Shubha Kartari Yoga) adding to the power of positive influences. This does not mean that the heat of the fire will not be felt. On the contrary, we can still expect, in various places around the world, to a certain degree suffering by disease, political turmoil, war-like threats, terrorism, religious conflict, and so on, which will gradually increase during the last quarter of 1996 and the first 6 months of 1997.

In this context, perhaps we will see lots of turmoil on the level of the United States government. Rule of law will be subject to other influences that cause question in the minds of the people. The truth and justice is at a discount, and religious fanaticism will increase. Added to that in the chart of the USA is the major dasa of Sun, Sub-dasa of Saturn which is operating from August, 1995, to July, 1996. And Saturn, the enemy of the Sun, aspects the Sun powerfully. What we have seen in the USA since then, in the senate, congress and presidency, is the testimony of this influence. It is the presence of Jupiter in Sagittarius, which is powerful, expansive, benevolent, that has been holding the fort to reduce the malefic influences of negative planets.

The only antidote for the negative influence is trust in God and performing good karmas. It is important for us to remember that the results of malefic conjunctions taking place in a sign at a particular day does not mean that when that day is complete malefic influences are over. They may continue longer.

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