

[An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man](#)

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The Vedic Experience

## 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. And we have also published the entire text at our web site making it--[http://HinduismToday.kauai.hi.us/ashram/Himalayan Academy/Publications/ VedicExperience/VEIndex.html](http://HinduismToday.kauai.hi.us/ashram/HimalayanAcademy/Publications/VedicExperience/VEIndex.html)--the most extensive Vedic resource on the Internet. Motilal Banarsidas has published an Indian edition. This regular monthly column will feature excerpts from the work.

Jnana - Wisdom

This is the truth:

As a thousand sparks from a fire well blazing spring forth,  
each one like the rest, so from the Imperishable

all kinds of beings come forth, my dear, and to him return.

Divine and formless is the Person; he is inside and outside,  
he is not begotten, is not breath or mind; utterly pure,  
farther than the farthest Imperishable.

From him springs forth the breath of life,  
the power of thought and all the senses, space,  
wind, light and water, and earth, the great supporter of all.

Fire is his head, the sun and moon his eyes,  
the compass points his ears. The revealed Vedas are his  
word.

The wind is his breath, his heart is the all.  
From his feet proceeded the earth.  
In truth, he is the inner atman of all beings.

From him comes fire with its fuel, the sun;  
from the moon comes rain, thence plants on the earth.  
The male pours seed into the female; thus from the Person  
creatures are born.

From him come hymns, songs, and sacrificial formulas,  
initiations, sacrifices, rites, and all offerings.  
From him come the year, the sacrificer, and the worlds  
in which the moon shines forth, and the sun.

From him take their origin the numerous Gods,

the heavenly beings, men, beasts, and birds,  
the in-breath and the out-breath, rice and barley,  
ascetic fervor, faith, truth, purity, and law.

From him take their origin the seven breaths,  
the seven flames, their fuel, the seven oblations;  
from him these seven worlds in which the breaths are  
moving,  
each time seven and hidden in secret.

From him come the oceans, from him the mountains,  
from him come all plants together with their juices--  
with all beings he abides as their inmost Atman.

The Person is all this--  
work, ascetic fervor, Brahman, supreme immortality.  
Who knows that which is hidden in the [heart's] secret cave,  
he cuts here and now, my dear, the knot of ignorance.  
Mundaka Upanishad II,1,1-10

Still higher is Brahman, the Supreme, the great,  
hidden in the bodies of all these beings,  
the One, encompassing the All, the Lord--  
having realized him, men become immortal.

I have come to know that mighty Person,  
golden like the sun, beyond all darkness.  
By knowing him a man transcends death;  
there is no other path for reaching that goal.

Higher than him is nothing whatever;  
than him nothing smaller, than him nothing greater.  
He stands like a tree rooted in heaven, the One, the Person,  
filling this whole world.

That which is exalted high above this world --  
an absence of form, an absence of suffering--  
those who know this become immortal.  
The others merely enter upon sorrow.

Dwelling in the face, head, and neck of all,  
hidden in the heart of every being, all-pervading, the Lord is  
he.

Hence he is called the omnipresent, the Auspicious.

This Person indeed is the mighty Lord;  
it is he who impels all that is,  
inspiring to the purest attainment.  
He is Master and Light unchanging.

A Person of a thumb's size is the inner atman,  
ever dwelling in the heart of beings.  
He acts by and through the heart, mind, and spirit.  
Those who know that become immortal.

A thousand-headed is the Man with a thousand eyes,  
a thousand feet; encompassing the earth on all sides,  
he exceeded it by ten fingers' breadth.

The Person, in truth, is all this world,  
what has been and what yet shall be.  
He is the Lord of immortality, the ruler of every creature  
that is nourished by food.

On every side are his hands and feet, on every side his eyes,  
his head, and his face, on every side his hearing.  
He stands encompassing all in the world.

Reflecting the qualities of all the senses,  
yet himself devoid of all the senses, he is the Lord and God  
of all; he is the universal refuge.

The soul, embodied in the nine-doored city,  
playfully sports to and fro outside it.  
Controller is he of all the world, of all that moves and of all  
that moves not.

Without hands, he grasps; without feet, he runs;  
without eyes, he sees; without ears, he hears.  
What is knowable he knows, but none knows him!  
They call him the great primeval Person.

Subtlest of the subtle, greatest of the great,  
the atman is hidden in the cave of the heart of all beings.  
He who, free from all urges, beholds him, overcomes sorrow,  
seeing by grace of the creator, the Lord and his glory.  
Svetasvatara Upanishad III, 7-21

Contemplating him who has neither beginning, middle, nor end,

the One, the all-pervading, who is intellect and bliss,  
the formless, the wonderful, whose consort is Uma,  
the highest Lord, the ruler, having three eyes and a blue throat,

the peaceful--the silent sage reaches the source of Being,  
the universal witness, on the other shore of darkness.

Kaivalya Upanishad 7