



LVI-7

VEDAS ARE WORLD HERITAGE - A REVIEW

Mrs. Padmavathy Ramanathan,
637, Anna Nagar West Extn.,
Chennai-600 101

Introduction

Vedas and Vedic knowledge deserve respect and reverence on par with Divinity Itself. That one Supreme Power is also the Supreme Intelligence that became the whole cosmos. The 'mantras' of the 'Vedas' are sounds, having powers to inspire good thoughts in peoples' minds. Chanting of Vedas (Veda Parayanam) is capable of nourishing unpolluted good as well as positive and creative thought forces. If the whole world and the whole of creation are filled with Vedic thought-vibration, negative influences may not be born, even in thought. Cosmic peace is achieved. Vedas treasure that highest knowledge, the knowledge of the Self or the knowledge of *Brahman*, which is that omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient Universal Intelligence. This is the eternal principle, the Almighty. '*Parama Vyoman*' is the high, supreme place of existence of the Supreme Being. With that Supreme Being, Vedas as well as the *Rishis* or Seers exist.

The 'Riks'

Seers lived in union with the whole Cosmos, since they experienced the presence of Almighty in each iota of the whole Creation. Just as a lover of art identifies an artist in all his paintings, so also the seers recognized and worshipped Divinity in and through each beautiful aspect in Creation. Beauty lies in the fact that all the Vedic Seers were able to see that one Truth (Creator) everywhere in Nature. Their thought forces totally converged to shed eternal light on that 'One Truth'. This 'Eternal Light' took the shape of the Vedas. The '*Riks*' (illuminated words) of the Vedas flashed in the plane of Consciousness of the Seers. These Seers led a very humble, simple life, totally absorbed with that one 'Truth'. They were purified souls who were completely drenched by God consciousness. That 'One Truth' revealed itself to these purified Seers, as Vedas / Vedic *Riks*. Unless and until one becomes a *Rishi*, one cannot grasp the vastness, potency and the power-dimensions of these Vedas.

Vedas came to exist 5 million years before the birth of Christ. Treating Vedas on par with any intellectual work, and trying to fix the date cannot lead us anywhere. Divinity and Vedas are inseparable. Since they are divine in origin, they are called '*Apourushēja*' - i.e. not authored by any single person. When Divinity manifests as the Whole Creation, Vedas are manifest in the Supreme Space ('*Bruhath Vyoman*'). They are hidden back, when the whole Creation is withdrawn into Divinity, (*Maha Pralaya*). For each cycle of *Srushti*, *Sthithi* and *Layam*, (Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution), Vedas become manifest and are withdrawn. Like Divinity Itself, Vedas are eternal, beginning-less and endless. They cannot be destroyed.

Around 400 *Rishis*, by their penance, purity of soul and dedicated search for Truth, were able to contact that 'One Truth' as 10,552 *Riks*. Before Sage *Vyasa* compiled and divided the then existing one '*Rig Veda*' as *Rig*, *Yajur*, *Sama* and *Atharva*

Vedas, the Vedas were more vast, they contained many more *Sakas*, than the 1118 *Sakas* that were available to *Vyasa*. *Vedavyasa* divided the Vedas, before the advent of *Kali Yuga*. Total Vedic knowledge can be compared to the vast ocean. Our Sacred sons of the Sacred Soil, the *Rishis*, dedicated their entire life span for the study, preservation, learning and teaching of Vedas. Whatever skills they acquired, whatever efforts our *Rishis* undertook, were offered as Service to the Supreme Being. The poison of selling (marketing for profit) anything and everything was not born then. The whole mankind of that Age was humble, simple, elevated in thought, word and deed. They breathed Truth alone; no evil or devil's tendencies could come to exist. The poor and the rich alike did not tolerate evil. That was the spirit of that age.

The 'Chhandas'

'Vedas' existed as eternal, divine, vibrations, in the Supreme Space. The Divine Vibration was called '*Chhandas*'. So Vedas existed in the form of *Chhandas*. It should be pointed out here that the Vibrations of the Self-balancing, unfailing perfect movements and laws in divine Nature conform to this Eternal *Chhandas*. That is why they are unchanging.

The Power of Intuition

Vedas are the divine Treasure house of Knowledge. They were gifted to mankind, even at the very dawn of Creation. The Truth experienced by our Sacred Souls, the *Rishis*, were compiled first as one Veda, the *Rig Veda*, the store-house of *Riks*, or illumined words. Purity of Soul of those sons *Rishis* enabled them to transcend the senses, intellect and this physical world. Selfless dedication to realize the 'Truth' led them to the very doorstep of that 'One Truth' - The Creator. Truth plane was tapped. This Truth revealed itself to Its son, the *Rishi*. The *Riks*, illumined words, flashed in the illumined consciousness, because of the *Rishis*' highly developed Intuition. Before this power, i.e., 'divine intuition', even the highest intellect of human field is dwarfed.

Supra physical Vision is the keyword to understand the *Rishis* and the Vedas. Human Intellect, analyzing mind and powerful reasoning fail miserably before this power of divine Intuition. Hence the *Rishi* prays for this power of Intuition to take birth in himself and grow strong. '*Atharva Veda*', in the *Suktham* 4.10.41-44 called '*Medha Suktham*' prays for this divine Intuition to dwell and flourish in the aspirant. We find many men talented in different fields. The source point of these talents is only the power of Divine Intuition. The cream layer of successful men, scientists, artists, musicians, men of achievement had only this power of intuition as the foundation for their success. The cream of perfection in any field of knowledge or achievement is founded only on this power of intuition.

Indispensable Faith

The Vedas are treasure house of knowledge of the material world, as well as of spiritual life and goal. When man develops faith in Vedas and when he dedicatedly absorbs Vedic commands in his life stream, he can claim the whole world and Divinity Itself. There were many saintly souls who are even today living monuments of Vedic way of life. Faith in God, faith in Vedas and faith in the Guru were the life-breath



of our Great Souls. The success and achievements of our *Rishis* and Saints shine under different scales; these achievements belong to a transcendental plane. We cannot even begin to understand their talents, efforts and achievements.

Vedic knowledge embraces all kinds of subjects so far traversed by mankind, all over the globe. They also open new vistas relating to fields of knowledge not yet reached out by mankind. Only when we tune up and strengthen our power of Intuition, as the *Rishis* of yore did, The Supreme Truth will reveal Itself. With modern concepts divorced from the faith-based concepts of the Vedas, we have to transfuse our intellect, reasoning and analysis with divine strength of faith. That transfusion alone will lead us near the Vedas.

Faith is the mantra to tap the potency and benefits of Vedic chanting and the study of the Vedas. Kumarila Bhatta, a contemporary great soul of Sri Adi Sankara mingled with Buddha Bikshus to learn their secrets. His disguise was found out and an attempt was made on his life. 'If Vedas are true, let them protect me' was a *stotra* he composed then. His life was saved. But his eyes were pierced by two stones. That 'if' in his faith robbed him of his eyes. Therefore total surrender and pure humility should also be charged with this faith.

Why Learn Vedas?

The Vedas first introduce varieties and multiplicities. Then they lead us to that unifying Truth. Vedas also awaken the divinity within each man. This divinity in man ever tends to merge in its source – Almighty.

Learning the Vedas and mastering them were hard tasks, but these hard tasks were undertaken with enthusiasm and undiluted dedication by our ancestors. They had faith in Vedas and divinity. Never was faith reposed in titles, possession, wealth, name and fame. They lived to enrich Vedic studies, and adopted the spirit 'Work is Worship'. We have heard 'Man cannot live by bread alone'. We can confidently proclaim 'Man can live and flourish protected by worship of the Vedas and spreading Vedic knowledge'. *Veda Dharma* has been and is essential for man to become a real man. Terrorism, territorialism, national ego, power-drunk ego, hatred, violence, spirit of vengeance, greed etc are the order of the day among people and among nations. We see all these evil forces ruling. As per the secret meaning of the Vedas, if the whole world is to live, bound by love and peace, mankind should develop the power to tap that divine force of truth, which is the deity to usher in love, harmony and peace in the world. National will and Global will should work in harmony, and attract that deity of peace to pervade the earth and establish itself. Without that divine contributive force, peace will not come to reign on earth. This same principle is applicable in all fields of efforts. Human effort alone cannot suffice. With Divinity and faith in divinity thrown in dust, how can we expect divine contribution? This is not any negative talk. After demolishing one's roof, how will one be protected from sun, rain, cyclone and the like? Most of us behave like this foolish resident.

Veda Parayanam, *Mantra Japa*, sacrifice, different kinds of *homa* and *yajna*, are all based on the affect of the good vibrations on the mind of mankind, atmosphere, trees and plants around, the living beings around. Dedicated worship of these kind spread around for the deeper dimensions of the potency

of the Vedas; their sound vibrations can achieve individual perfection, conversion of thought at mass level, transfusion of all positive thought forces at any required levels. Even changes in environmental thought forces, including materialization of forms are efficaciously possible.

Sri Aurobindo, in his work "The Secrets of the *Rig Veda Samhita*" brings out, step-by-step, the greatness, the depth and other positive eternal forces that exist with Vedic knowledge, studies, *Parayanam*, etc. Going even deeper, Sri Aurobindo explains the three-tire stream of meanings – first surface layer (gross) meaning (*Sthoola*) meaning meant for the impious or irreverent, second, the inner discipline for the initiated, and third, the deeper stream of spiritual meaning for the purified in soul and who are awakened in knowledge. Thus all kinds of men among humankind, according to their mental development, can draw requirements at their respective levels.

True Universal Spirit

The *Rishis* were beyond caste, creed, race, religion, and territory. The *Rishis* embraced the whole of mankind, and the whole Creation in their loving fold. They worked for the welfare of mankind as a whole, for all living beings. The *Rishis* pray in different *Sukthas* to be blessed with generosity, love and affection between people who come under a single fold as relatives, friends, husband-wife etc. In many *Sukthas* the *Rishi* prays for eradication of evil, wickedness, greed etc.

Rig Veda 10/151/1 teaches the power of unflinching faith, which is capable of achieving the goal. So this mantra stresses the importance of building up reinforced strong faith. One should keep the flame of faith burning. All the *Sukthas* and mantras lay stress on eradication of evil from man's heart, for Truth and goodness to fill that place. Which country in this Globe does not require eradication of evil and replacement with positive, creative, good forces?

The secret and power of Vedic mantras lie not in just the text, not in just the meaning. The entire efficacy is treasured in the proper sound vibrations being spread over the whole earth and mankind. This '*Chhandas*' in the divine Vedas should be preserved and chanted in the prescribed divine meter. The content in man who chants Vedic mantras makes all the difference. If one who chants Veda has no faith, the chanting is just noise! It cannot have any power dimension.

The Vedangas

All the ancient traditions of India have their roots in the Vedas. The *Vedanta*, *Puranas*, *Tantra Sastra*, the philosophical schools and the great Indian Religions do go back in their source to Vedic origin. It is possible to totally explain any *apparent* incoherencies existing in the Vedic texts. They will just disappear. The real thread of the sense is to be found in the inner meaning of the Vedas. Thus Sri Aurobindo presents material about the Vedic source of anything and everything of Hinduism, which had spread its creative wings. This Hindu way of life was originally known as *Sanatana Dharma*. Unfortunately, these noble, lofty gifts to mankind were not understood properly or thoroughly. Instead, they were misunderstood and underestimated. '*Sanatana Dharma*' along with its source – the Vedas became veiled, ignorant, half-informed crowd of followers with no faith in what they tried to follow.



Only in this chaotic condition, Sri Aurobindo with his spiritual wisdom gave the inner meaning of the Vedas. He revealed the inner dimensions of the secrets of the Vedas.

One birth may not be enough for any of us to understand the multi-faceted treasure troves – the Vedas. This ocean-like theme is the pulsating Truth. We have to go a long way, with strength of enthusiasm and undiminished power of intuition, 'Medha'.

Vedas are *Śruti*, revealed to the illumined consciousness of the *Rishi*. *Smṛiti* are commentaries on *Śrutis*, given by enlightened great souls. Vedas are personified as one *Veda Puruṣa*, who has six important limbs. *Sikṣa* is the face, the totally perfect form of the Vedas. *Vyākaranam* the grammar of the word forms the mouth. *Niruktham* – dictionary is the ear of the *Veda Puruṣa*. The schedule of practical aspects in the *Veda*, *Kalpam*, forms the hands. *Chhandas*, the science of the metre, forms the feet. The other limb is *Jyotiṣa* (science of astronomical calculation meant to help in fixing auspicious moments for propitiatory works etc) - *Astrology*, the science of the celestial bodies being one eye; *astronomy*, study of positions of planets, stars in any timeframe being the other. The study of these six sciences is absolutely necessary for the study of the Vedas. These six branches of knowledge are called *Vedāṅgas*. The study of *Veda* itself, the *swara*-level perfections, grammar, vocabulary, practical performance of *Yagna*, the science of the metre (*Chhandas*) and the study of astronomy and astrology – all these form the scaffolding for the palatial structure of Vedic studies. The aim and goal of our Vedic *Rishis* have always been to achieve highest, all-round perfection. The standard of one's shining goal defines the caliber of the one who fixes such a goal. All the *Sukthas* silently proclaim the deeper dimensions even at the level of formulating ideals, goals and targets. The *Rishis* left no stone unturned to achieve the goal of realizing that 'One Truth', the Creator.

The *Rishi* prays "to go near that one Truth, I must qualify myself to confidently contact the plane of Truth". Which nation, which group of mankind, will not welcome assurance of success, highest perfection, untiring labour, high spirit of industry, undiminished enthusiasm, love and service to all mankind? Our *Rishis* never depended on a fluctuating intellect and tricky mind. They transcended these two tenets of the lower strata. They ascended higher, to talents that are actually 'chips off the bigger block' - Divinity. They contacted the Divine Source – cosmic counterpart of their talent-powers, through chanting of divine mantras. Invoking the source power, the *Rishis* built up a reservoir of talents within themselves. These concepts are new to the modern mind, which has deified the five senses and the individual mind. These two are servants of the soul.

Vedas are called '*Veda Mata*' the Universal Mother of the whole Creation. She is the eternal divine Mother waiting to protect one and all beyond creed, caste, colour, gender, nation and other known dividing rocky barriers. Purity of heart, unpolluted goodness at heart, equal love towards all, form the criteria for entering the protecting fold of the Divine Mother. The water charged with the power of the *Veda* mantra will bring back life; even a deteriorated tree will put forth fresh sprouts. Even materialization of forms is possible. There have been many great souls who remained immune to material wealth, but they basked in Divine Grace and could justly claim anything to their credit.

Conclusion

Man's real inner strength lies in developing higher talents like soul strength, willpower, taste for high grade of hard work, continuous undiminished enthusiasm, till the dawn of success, etc. Unfortunately, when the source of divine strength is just ready to give a helping hand mankind has no inclination to qualify itself for the talent source offered. The solution to all our modern problems lies in developing our orientation around Vedic chanting, preservation and propagation of the study of the Vedas. The sound vibration of proper Vedic chanting will spread love, mutual help, and freedom from violence and evil thoughts, everlasting creativity and world peace. Unless and until the deeper dimensions of the knowledge of the Vedas are understood, *Veda Parayanam*, protection of Vedic knowledge as world heritage, tapping the creative resources, strengthening faith in Vedas, may not be possible. The multi-faceted strengths that Vedas, Vedic knowledge and *Veda Parayanam* can shower on mankind know no bounds.

Acknowledgements:

I offer this humble presentation at the lotus feet of the Almighty. To all the great souls, teachers and learned, enlightened individuals who have been endeavouring to pass on the treasure to lesser mortals like me, I offer my salutations and prostrations.

References:

1. Ramprakash – "*Hindu Madam Oru Arputham*" (in Tamil)
2. Swamy Ashutoshananda – "*Veda Mantrāṅgaḥ*" (in Tamil)
3. Pandit Sri Ram Sarma – "*Divine Message of the Vedas*"
4. RL Kashyap – "*Rig Veda Rahasya*"
5. RL Kashyap – "*Rig Veda Mantra Samhita*"
6. Ra Ganapathy – "*Deivathin Kural*" (in Tamil).
English translation by Sri RGK: "*Voice of the Guru Pujya Chandrasekarendra Swamy*"
7. Sri Aurobindo – "*The Secret of the Veda*"
8. Commentaries of Sri Lalitha Sahasranama Stotram, Vishnu Sahasranamam, Soundarya Lahari