



LVI-12

**Apauruseyatva of the Vedas (Eternity of the Vedas) - A Nirukta view**

By Dr.G.N.Bhat

Director, CIDS, Canara College,  
Mangalore-575 003

Traditionally, it is strongly believed that the Vedas are revealed to Seers, through their contemplation and self-perceptive nature inherent in them. So they are not supposed to be composed by the wise men or poets with their intellectual poetic caliber. This long-standing faith is continuously cherished in the Indian mind through the ages.

The Universal approach, spiritual thoughts liberative mood, non-barrier of geographic spheres, non-traces of racial boundaries etc. and omniscient nature of the Vedas substantiate the above argument.

The Apauruseyatva of the Vedas, to mention a few, have been supported and substantiated by the Nirukata of Yaska, Sanya, the commentator of the Vedas and Scholars like Arobindo and others.

This eternal mass of knowledge i.e. the Vedas whose origin is not known has been understood at the later stage with the help of Vedangas, the auxiliary of the Vedas at the later stage. They are *ikṣa* (science of phonetics), *Vyākaraṇa* (Grammar), *Chandas* (Prosody), *Kalpa* (Sacrificial alter engineering), *Jyotisa* (Astrology) and *Nirukata* (Etymology).

The Vedas themselves are treated and worshiped, traditionally as *Vedabrahma* or *Vedapurusa*. Allegorically *Vedangas* are described as various limbs of that *Vedapurusa* :

*Chandas* is the feet of the Veda and *Kalpa* is declared to be its hands; *Jyotisa* is called his eyes and the *Nirukata* his ears.

*ikṣa* is Vedas nose, Grammar is his face (*Paṇini ikṣa -14-42*)

Therefore, it is also said that he who studies the Veda along with these *angas* will happily live in *Brahmaloka*.

Among these the *Nirukta* is a Commentary on the *Nighantu*. The *Nighantu* is a well-established name for a work which mainly consists of Synonyms, homonyms etc. Selected from the Vedas on the basis of their obscure nature, difficult to understand the meaning.

The *Nighantu* consists of three parts in five chapters. The first part is named as *Nighantu Kṛta*, deals with synonyms, consisting of three chapters.

The second part, which consists of fourth chapter, deals with words, verbs occur in the Vedas. It is called *Naigamaka*.

The third part, which has fifth *adhyaya*, deals with the Vedic deities hence its named as *Diavataka*.

Yaska composed commentary on it in twelve *adhyayas*, beginning with *Samamneya* *Samamnetā* and ending with *tasyas tasyas tadbhavyam, anubhavati*. This commentary is called *Nirukta*, because the supposed elements of each work are here full (*nir*) set out (*Ukta*). Yaska interprets the word in various ways citing the suitable *śloka* from the *Ṛgveda* many a times. According to him "the *Nirukta* *śāstra*, the science is the essence of Grammar and establishes the proper sense of the words". Therefore, the *Nirukta* is useful towards the understanding of Vedas.

Yaska in his *Nirukta* while insisting upon the study of the Vedas with understanding their meaning states that 'at the dawn of the age, the seers had intuitive power to perceive themselves the eternal knowledge. They could reveal themselves the Vedas. There was no need to either express it vocally or to teach others. But as time passed they had to utter them for the lower intuitive seers, and they listened to it. Traditionally, it has been known as *ṛutis*. But the second category of seers had capacity of understanding the inner mean-

ing of the Vedas on their own. But as the passage of time passed the seers of the later age could not understand the meaning of the Vedas independently though the seers belong to *Sampradaya* chanted the Vedas for them. Further, the benefit of these lower capacity Vedic seers, six auxiliary books were prepared to assist the seers to understand the Vedic lore. Thus, these *Vedangas* are now inevitable to have the proper understanding of the Vedas.

The following is the passage quoted in support of the above theory from the *Nirukta* of Yaska :- (*Nṛu.1.20*)

'Seers had direct intuitive insight into duty. They by oral instruction handed down the hymns to later generations, who were destitute of the direct intuitive insight. The later generations, declining in power of oral communication compiled this work, the *veda* and the auxiliary Vedic treatises, in order to comprehend their meaning.

*Bilma* = *bhilma* (division) or illustrations.'

(Translation from Laxman Sarup's *The Nighantu and The Nirukta*. Page.20)

On the basis of the above passage the '*Nirukta* *loka Vṛtika*' of *Neelakantha Gargya* of 14<sup>th</sup> A.D. clearly explains that the first category of seers had direct intuitive power. The first category seers handed down the hymns with the meanings orally to the little lower intuitive power seers. As time passed the still later generation people due to the declension of intuitive power could not understand the Vedas with their inner meanings. Hence the supportive auxiliary works were compiled for the benefit of later generations. These are called *Vedangas*; they are classified in to six; one among them is the *Nirukta*.

The introductory part of *lokevartika* clearly classifies preferring to *Apauruseyatva*, on the basis of tradition of Vedic studies, which has comedown to us with the study of *Vedangas*, according to the intuitive power of Vedic seers<sup>4</sup>.

They are:-

- i) *Darshanakala*
- ii) *Sampradayakala* and
- iii) *Samamneyakala*.

During the *darshanakala* the seers had direct intuitive power. There were neither teachers nor the taught. Through their inherent competency they revealed themselves the eternal knowledge of the Vedas. The *Darshanakala* seers perceived the whole *Rk* mantras and some time a portion of the *Suktas* just like recollecting and remembering a dream after a sound sleep. The process of this *Veda Mantra darshana* is eternal even on the basis of reviving and recycling of the *Kalpa* concept of the Puranic age. There was no classification at all. *Sanya*, the commentator of the Vedas also supports this view. The various traditions of the study of the Vedas also never questioned the view of this *Nirukata* of Yaska, hence the *Apauruseyatva* of the Vedas has been clearly established<sup>5</sup>. However in the *Sampradayakala*, time (it may be grossly 5000 years before the B.C.) had no power of direct intuition to reveal themselves of the Vedic lore. But through their contemplation, they have been successful to understand only certain part of *Śks* and mantras including *Brahmanas*. For the benefit of those seers the first category of seers, who had direct intuitive power (*Saksat* *ta dharmāna*) chanted the *śks* with their secret meaning and by the single utterance the lower intuitive power seers (*asakṣat* *ta dharmāna*) who could able to remember and understand the Vedas divided as *Rk*, *Rgveda*, *Yajus* and *Sama* etc. So that age is called as *Sampradaya kala* and Vedas during that age are known as *ṛutis*. Since they herd it from seers who had intuitive power. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage there was a generation gap. No seer was capable enough to know the Vedas through their intuitive caliber. Therefore the Vedas are also divided into as





Sakhas according to the lineage and Vedāṅgas or auxiliaries to Vedas were prepared to assist the study of the Vedas. Without studying the Vedāṅgas no one could enter into Vedic studies with meanings. Padapatha, Ghana & Kramapathas were also prepared to save the purity of Vedic texts from all the points of view. So the end part of Vedic age is called Samamnayakala.

Further, Sayana in his Rgbhṛṣyaḥ, mika, while discussing the origin of the Vedas.

He states :

"A question is also posed by attracting the attention towards the statements like 'Has not the holy Badarayana laid it down that the Veda is the work of Brahma? 'Sastryonitvat'. Brahma is omniscient because he made Rgveda and all the other 'astras. But stating that this cannot be taken to consider the human origin of Vedas refutes this argument. A man did not make it. The same Badarayana has the non-human origin in view when he lays it down in the devata section, that for all who have not obtained final release; the veda is eternal like, the Sky. Ata Eva ca nityatvam." Both 'ruti and Smṛti can be cited here as internal evidence to support Vedas aupouruseyatva of Vedas. The Sruti is Vacavirupanityayṅ (Rg.8.75.5) and Anadinidhana Nitya Vagutsrusta Svayambhuva (m.m. 1.232/34) (Quoted in Brahmasutra Sankara Bhasya 1.9.72)

Therefore Sayana Concludes that possibility of a mistake on the part of the author or authors does not arise and the authority of the Veda, both mantras and brahmama, is subject to no dispute in respect of Apauruseyatva.

#### Foot Note

1. Chanda<sup>a</sup> padau tu vedasya, hastau kalpoStha pathyate |  
Jyotiṣṅmāyānā chakṣurniruktaḥ  
srotramuchyate ||  
ḥikṣṅghra-am tu Vedasya mukhamā vyekara am  
sm tam |  
Tasmetsangamadhityeva Brahmaloke mahayate ||

(Panini 1.1.41-42)

2. Vedic Nighaṅṅu by Dr.G.N.Bhat  
Published by Mangalore University 1992  
Konaje, Mangalore
3. The Nighaṅṅu and The Nirukta by Laxman Saru  
1984 Reprint, Motilal Banarasidas, New Delhi.
4. Trayo atra kelavibhega lakṣyante - Darṅṅanakela -  
Sampradṅṅyakela -  
Sa m e m n e y a k e l a ° c h e t i . . . p a d e r t h e n  
yathasvabhṅṅvam jananto  
vimalashemushika sayah...mantram dadrusuh sarthanam  
mantranam drstarah atrasan rsyah....

Nirukata Sloka vartika - Upodghatah

5. 1akṣṅṅetkṅṅtadharmṅṅa...uddhatmṅṅa...dadrṅṅu<sup>a</sup>  
vedṅṅvakyṅṅni  
kalpeSmin vividhani yat  
asekṅṅetkṅṅtadharaṅṅebhysteSparebhyo yathevidhi |  
upadeṅṅena samprṅṅduh mantrṅṅ brahma amevecha ||  
ityevamupadeṅṅena srthan vedṅṅ dadrṅṅuh kramet |  
apare ye tatoSnyuna glayantaste sakrshrutau ||

samyagbhyastavantastu vedṅṅsengan yathavidhi |  
prapedire tadarthanscha vedangaihi susamahiteih ||  
pratameṅṅa prativahanena dvitayast | padeṅṅata<sup>a</sup> |  
abhyṅṅsena tṅṅtiyastu vedarthan pratipadire ||

NirukataSlokavartika

First Cahpter.. Sixth Pada.

Sloka No. 179-211

Edited by Dr.Vijaypal 1972

(Distribution : Ramlal Kapoor Trust)

Bahalgad, Sonipat Haryana.

6.Tasmat nasti Vedasya Pauruseyatvam.

atretau samgraha sloku -

Pauruseya na va Vedavakyam syat pauruseyatva |

Kathakadisamakhyanaṅṅ Vakyatvacchanyavakyavat || .

Samakhyanam pravachanat vakyatvam tu parahatam |

Tatkartrainupalambhenasyattato Apauruseyata | |

- Jai.Nya.Ma.1.1.8

Nanubhagavata Badarayanena Vedasya Brahmakaryatvam  
sutrıtam sastryonitvad (Ve.1.1.3) iti.

Rgvedadisastrakaranatvad brahma sarvajnamiti  
Sutrarthah. badham.

Naitavata Pauruseyatvam bhavati

manusyanirmitvabhavat.

Idrsamapauruseyatvamabhipretya

vyavaharadasayamakasadivad nityatvam

Badarayanena devatadhikarane Sutrıtam -ata evacha

nityatvam iti' (Brahmasutra 1.3.19)

Srutismrtichatra bhavath.Vachanirupanityaya (Rg.8.75.5)

iti srutih.

Anadhinidhananitya vagutsrta svayambhuva

(ma.ma.sa.232/34) iti smritih.

Tasmat kartdosasankaya anudayat

mantrabrahmanatmakasya vedasya nirvighnam

pramanyam siddham.

-Rgvbhasyabhumika Page27.1991.

Vidyabhavana Sanskrit Series

Chaukambha, Varanasi 221001

"The Kavi or wates, poet and seer, is not the manishi; he is not the logical thinker, scientific analyzer or metaphysical reasoner, his knowledge is one not with his thought but with his being; he has not arrived at it but has it in himself by virtue of his power to become one with all that is around him. By some form of spiritual, vital and emotional oneness he is what he sees; he is the hero thundering in the forefront of the battle, the mother weeping over the dead, the tree trembling violently in the storm, the flower warmly penetrated with the sunshine. And because he is these things, therefore he knows them; because he knows this, spiritually and not rationally he can write of them."

- (Sree Aurobindo's Vyasa and

Valmiki)