

SECTION III. (*Continued.*)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE AṬHARVA-VEĎA.

The *Aṭharva* as the summation of the other three *Veḍas*.—The partless unity of the Whole appearing as uniformity amidst endless variation and detail of parts.—The realisation of non-separateness the one final goal.—The contents of the *Aṭharva*.—Endless successions.—The significance of *saṭ* and *asaṭ*.—Why *saṭ* corresponds with *kriyā*, *ānanda* with *ichchhā*, and *chit* with cognition.—The explanation of the symbology connected with *Shiva*.—*Saṭ-chit-ānanda* and the nerve currents of *iḍā-piṅgalā-suṣumnā*.—Reproduction of trinity in each.—Endless permutations.—Further contents of the *Aṭharva*.

The fourth *Veḍa* is the *Aṭharva*, and its place as the fourth notifies us of its character; it is the summation of the preceding three. In the summation we find at once the seeds which expand into the three, and the expression of their fundamental unity. In the *Aṭharva* the World-process is seen as a whole, as a method, rather than as expressed in its separate characteristics. Its *Mahā-vākya* is therefore that which sums up in a single phrase the whole World-

process—I-this-Not. It expounds the Self, the Not-Self, and the nexus between them, the Negation which implies a previous affirmation; it contains the workings of all activity, the marks of all knowledge, the repletion of all desire, the whole of life, the whole of Brahma-vidyā, the inmost science of the Whole. To know the *Aṭharva* is to know the essence of the World-process, and the essence of the activity of the atom, the junctions, disjunctions, interjunctions and conjunctions which make up that World-process. The *Rk*, telling of cognition, the *Yajuh*, of action, the *Sāma*, of desire, are but parts of this, which sums them up in one great generalisation. As the *Rk* is reflected in all *Mantras*, the *Yajuh* in all *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Sāma* in all *Upaniṣads*, so is the *Aṭharva* reflected in the *Tantra*, the great science, by which worlds are built.

While, in the Whole, everything is compacted in one partless consciousness and everything is equal and simultaneous, in the sequence of the parts of the World-process is seen the succession of cognition, desire and action, all again reaching unity in the summation. As say some ancient shlokas:

All living things have knowledge, though their avenues of knowledge vary; some are blind by day and some by night, and some can see alike in both; all animals, all birds and

beasts, have knowledge, and the knowledge of men is similar to theirs; so is their knowledge also similar to that of men; and similar also are human ways to theirs.¹

Such statements indicate the essential unity, the equality, the in-difference, in nature, of all knowledge and all activity. The one goal of all beings is knowledge—of the One and All. Yet this is realised in ever different places and ever different cycles, for in these differences consists the nature of the World-process, and blindness and vision, day and night, have larger meanings in larger cycles, for large and small repeat each other.² Some *jīvas* 'see by night' being blind in the day of manifestation, and learning to see by passing through the night of *pralaya*. Others are 'blind by night' not gaining knowledge even after passing through *pralaya*; for such pass fruitless many creations and many dissolutions, and numerous are such *jīvas*. Yet is the quest the same, and the goal is reached by all.³

¹ These verses occur in the current *Durgā-saptāśatī*.

² "As above so below," "As the small so the large," "History repeats itself," "There is nothing new under the sun," etc.

³ This important statement has a direct bearing on the burning question as to whether *jīvas* make progress when incarnate. The text seems to imply

That separateness is pain and unity peace, that all is AUM, this is the essence of all sacred teaching; this, this alone, is Truth. To be liberated is to conquer separateness, for Samsāra arises from cognition, desire and action separated,¹ in endless permutations and combinations; this is the knowledge of all knowledges.

The *Aṭharva Veda*, as the summation, instructs us in the principles which equally underlie the methods of the World-process and of the atom-process—a world in miniature. Whether 'World-process' or 'atom-process'—depends on the speaker and his point of view. As every manṭra of this *Veda* reflects the operations of the World-process, so does it reveal to us cognition within cognition, memory within memory, power within power, world within world, fact within fact, action within action, duty within duty, sin within sin, individuality within individuality, ascending and descending from every point in space, endlessly, ceaselessly. (Atoms make up molecules, molecules compounds, compounds cells, cells what has been elsewhere taught that "we must work while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work". (John, ix. 4) (E. H. B.)

¹When equality is restored between wish and thought and deed, when wish is no longer father to thought, but the two are mere aspects of a unity, peace is reached. (E. H. B.) गुणानाम् समता लयः ।

tissues, tissues organs, organs bodies, bodies communities; communities classes and races; classes and races kingdoms; kingdoms of many grades and varied linkings make up a planet, planets make up a solar system, solar systems a vaster system, and so on, unending; nowhere is found simplicity indivisible; nowhere complexity final. All is relative.)¹

The World-process is not one succession but many, everywhere beginnings, everywhere endings, each beginning the ending of an old order, each ending the beginning of a new one. The successions in the Logion give the successions in the World-process. I-Not-This is cognition-desire-action; Not-This-I is desire-action-cognition; I-this-Not is cognition-action-desire. The activities of Brahmā, Shiva, Viṣṇu, have herein their record, with the summation in Mahā-Viṣṇu, wherein their separation vanishes. Saṭ, chit and ānanda, inseparate and yet in succession, are in their unity Brahman,

¹Western science is endorsing this ancient teaching in the most complete fashion. The atom is now spoken of as a complex body, resembling a solar system; the 'little' as revealed by the microscope is as infinite as the 'great' revealed by the telescope; the limit of knowledge in both cases is the strength of the lens not the bankruptcy of nature. Science would justify us in seeing in the atom a solar system, and in this planets, and in the planets communities and so on, down to the minuter atom again. (A. B.)

and yet, since inseparable, any one of them may be said to be Brahman, as in various *Veda*-texts. In succession, saṭ is kriyā, and Brahman, the creator; chiṭ is jñāna, and Viṣṇu, the preserver; ānanda is ichchhā, and Shiva, the dissolver into peace. In saṭ, asaṭ is included, for although it be true that only that is defined to be saṭ, which is not limited by time, nor space, nor substance, such a definition cannot arise without the recognition of time and space and substance by the definer, and hence without the recognition of asaṭ. The unlimited is that which cannot be defined or measured by, or in, time, space and substance; it is that the beginning or ending of which is inconceivable. Yet can it only be recognised in innumerable be-ings, within numberless beginnings and endings, which in endless multiplicity strive to mirror unity. We cannot point to a 'this' and say, 'This, in this place, is saṭ, being.' (Neither can we say, 'This is asaṭ,' for saṭ is there, making possible the manifestation.) Because we cannot say 'This is saṭ,' wholly (nor 'This is asaṭ,' wholly) therefore is the Samsāra, the World-process, called mithyā, mythical, false; that which is neither existent nor non-existent, but both, is false, and hence the World-process itself is false, illusive. The *Nyāya* declares: The very nature of the world is existence and non-existence, the World-

process consisting in this verily. So also the *Brahma-Sūtra* speaks of 'the saḍasaṭ, the many, or the false,' these terms being synonymous. Asaṭ means 'not-being,' 'no-thing,' and signifies space and time, the two illusions and creators of illusions. To be connected with space and time is to be asaṭ, non-existent, unreal; yet inasmuch as asaṭ appears, therefore it always includes an element of saṭ also. For the World-process being saḍasaṭ, and being made up of space, time and substance, and space and time being asaṭ, the third element in the World-process, vaṣṭu, substance, must be (that which corresponds to) saṭ. These three make up the 'procession'. Hence saṭ is connected with action, active or actual process being impossible without substance, without which space and time were mere emptinesses.¹

¹ The following triplets are frequently met with: time-space-motion, time-space-causality, time-space-substance. Eliminating the two common factors, it would appear that motion, causality and substance correspond with each other. And in a sense they do so; causation is the work of force or energy which is desire; and substantiality is, in one aspect, the power of self-maintenance and other-resistance (which characterises Saṭtā, see p. 12 *supra*), and it manifests by vibration or motion etc. But this would make substance correspond with desire. Here however the aspect of motion or action is emphasised. Again, elsewhere, time is said to correspond with desire, Kāla,

Sat̐ thus corresponds with kriyā, presided over by Brahmā. Chit̐, or chaitanya, similarly corresponds with jñāna, presided over by Viṣṇu, and ānanda belongs to Shiva, the lord of ichchhā, full of all bliss, self-willed, turned inwards away from all outer things, and the cause of the dissolution of all things into the Self. Hence does the hymn sing of Shiva :

I bow to him, who sleeps within all beings :

I bow to him, who re-absorbeth all ;

Three-eyed, five-faced, bedecked with linked skulls,

Wreathed round with serpents, lord of Pārvaṭī.

I bow to him, the source of all the worlds.

Ichchhā, desire, is hid in all things, hence is Shiva said to sleep in all beings. He re-absorbs all, as well as is the source of all, because of his nature, the Negation—the Negation which first affirms and then denies, ichchhā first coveting with greed and then rejecting with satiety. He is called the Three-eyed because he protects and carries out the triple Negation, triple because covering cognition, desire and action, and again because the Negation is not only itself, but is ever inseparably connected during the World-process with the Aham and the Eṭaṭ. For this reason also is Shivā, the feminine Shiva etc. We can reconcile these apparent differences as the result of differences of point of view.

aspect of Shiva, said to be tri-guṇā, possessed of three attributes. There is no World-process possible without this trinity; if there were no Aham and no Eṭaṭ the Negation could not apply to anything, and in their mutual annihilation the Negation vanishes.

Aham is the right eye of Shiva; Eṭaṭ the left; the third eye above both is Na. By this third, Aham and Eṭaṭ are destroyed, and hence comes the tradition that the third eye of Shiva is and causes pralaya. In the Logion also the Na is placed after the Aham and the Eṭaṭ, and in the written symbol of the *Prāṇava* ॐ, it is the dot placed above the A and U.

The 'five-faced' Shiva has a similar interpretation. In the creative thought, 'I am This—I am Brahman taking form,' the Aham is one aspect; the desire to create is the second; the shining forth is the third; the performance of actions is the fourth; the result of the actions is the fifth. So in the destructive thought, 'I am not This,' i.e., 'I will destroy this,' the faces are: the Aham; the consideration of the nexus between the Aham and the Eṭaṭ; the desire to disunite the two; the breaking of the link and the consequent disappearance of the Eṭaṭ; and, lastly, the disappearance also of the Aham. Yet again may the faces be translated as jñāna, ichchhā, kriyā, and samāhāra, and their destruction.

The string of skulls, emblem of those changes which are summed up in death, signifies the *pralaya*-nature.

The wreath of serpents indicates the regulation of time-cycles. Everywhere the World-process proceeds by time-cycles, and the time of *pralaya*, the Negation, is called *vyāla*, a serpent.

Again *Mundā* is the aspect of *Māyā* which destroys all things, and hence the name of Shiva as "the lord of *Chāmundā*."

Hence, finally, by the destruction of all limitations and distinctions, the destruction of all separate things, is Shiva identified with *ānanda*, bliss, which is the absence of all separateness.

Time is triple, following the M, the A and the U. The first, of the nature of M, is the bringer of *pralaya*, and is called *vyāla*. These *vyālas* are represented by the sacred thread, the wrist-chaplets, the ear-rings, and the other ornaments of Shiva, and these ornaments, again, indicate the actions or functions(?).¹ The wrath, the disintegrating energy, necessary for the work of destruction, for the bringing about of *pralaya*, is the *hālāhala*, the deadly poison. When the ocean of *Brahman* is churned, of the gems that come forth, *Viṣṇu* takes those

¹ In allegory, serpents usually signify spiral currents of energies, vital forces, and also time-cycles.

that are of the nature of *Aham*; those of the nature of *Eṭaṭ* are claimed by *Brahmā*; that of the nature of *Na*, the *hālāhala*, is finally taken by Shiva, who by drinking it, declares his readiness for the bringing about of *pralaya*.

Many expressions scattered in the descriptions of Shiva are to be explained in similar fashion; the epithet *Chandra-shekhara*, the moon-crested, means he who delights, *chandaṭe*, or illuminates all. And so explanations may be given of other symbols, such as: the *aghora-mantras*, each issuing from one of the five mouths; the *bhasma* or purifying ashes; the destruction of *Kāma*, Cupid; the effacement of the scroll of *Destiny*; the *vibhūti* or sovereign powers, also ashes; the peak of *Kailāsa*; the *mṛga-charma*, or deer-skin; the *māṭaṅga-charma*, or elephant-skin; the retinue of daimons; the *triśūla*, or trident; the epithet *Nata-rāja-rāja*, the king of dancers; the double-headed drum, etc. In connexion with *Viṣṇu*, the four arms, the conch, the discus, etc., have been already explained. The lotus-seat of *Brahmā* is also significant; he is the basis, *Dhātā*, and has also the names of *Viḍyā*, *Mahaṭ*, *Buddhi*, etc.¹

Saṭ-chiṭ-ānanda is the summation into one of action, cognition and desire. The reason of this order is as follows. *Kriyā*, action, is all

¹ Here regarded as the *active* sub-aspect of intelligence.

pratyakṣha, sense-cognisable; pratyakṣha, sense-cognition, comes first. Vichāra, thought-inference, is based on and follows after that; on beholding action, the thought arises that there must be some one who is the manifestor, the regulator, of this activity; this thought is bodha, awareness, which is *chit*. Finally comes the question; what is the connexion between these two, by what force do these two, *saṭ* and *chit*, hold together? As answer, there becomes manifest *ichchhā*, of the nature of *ānanda*. But in truth there is no invariable order, since in the One all is simultaneous, and in succession any may be first or second or third. Only the conjoint triune AUM is universal, and the permutations of its factors, A, U, and M, vary in different universes, albeit for our universe the order is that of the Logion, Aham—Eṭaṭ—Na. Hence even here, at certain times or places, the beginning may be action, or cognition, or desire, for at each point is a beginning and an ending, an effect and a cause, and each is either, according to the relations under review. The *Saṭ-chit-ānanda*, the triune, is present in every atom, and according to the function required one or other manifests predominantly, while all is Brahman. This tri-unity of *Saṭ-chit-ānanda* is the all-auspicious *Trikuṭi*, the true *Trivenī*. For Gaṅgā, who bringeth *mukṭi*, is the *Shakṭi*,

the Necessity, flowing forth from the Tri-unity; while the separate *shakṭis* are Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī, corresponding¹ to *saṭ*, *chit*, *ānanda*, and also to the three *nāḍīs*—(spinal nerves and vital currents in the body) *idā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣhumnā*. Each of the several manifestations, Viṣṇu, Shiva and Brahmā, is at times indifferently called *saṭ*, *chit*, or *ānanda*, because all three are present in each atom.

On this same principle, *kriyā*, action, motion, involves the idea of space, in which actions begin and end; and space thus involves time; and time involves both motion and space. Thus all involves all. That one attribute is assigned to one, and another to another—as, *saṭ* is Brahmā, *chit* Viṣṇu, *ānanda* Shiva—is due simply to the predominance of one attribute at a special time and in a special space and a special individual.

It is important to note that the trinity reappears in each of its members. Thus in *saṭ*, the *a* is the immortal (the creator), the *s* the mortal (the destroyer), while the *ṭ* (Viṣṇu) protects. In *chit*, the *i* is the Aham-*shakṭi*, the power of the Self, (Viṣṇu); the *ch* is that which moves, *i.e.*, the *samsāra*, the world, (and Brahmā); and the *ṭ* is that which con-

¹ Whether respectively, in the order given, or otherwise, the text does not make clear.

sumes¹ (Shiva). In ānandam, the *a* is the Aṭmā, together with the Anāṭmā, (Brahmā); the *nan* is the cognition or the conjunction of Anāṭmā and Āṭmā (Viṣṇu); the *dam* is that which bestows all, necessity, desire, (Shiva).

The knowledge of the permutations and combinations of these is the end and aim of all shāstras, of all teachings, and the practice thereof, the actual formation of spaces, times and movements corresponding therewith, is the practice of the true Sanātana Vaiḍika Dharma, the Ancient Religion of Knowledge, is the performance of all yajñas, is the attainment of the nature of Brahman.

The *Atharva Veda* expounds these permutations and their summation as saṭ-chiḍ-ānanda. Thus there may be: ānanda, chiṭ, saṭ; saṭ, ānanda, chiṭ; saṭ, chiṭ, ānanda; ānanda, saṭ, chiṭ; and so on. Brahman is not saṭ alone, nor chiṭ alone, nor ānanda alone. It is all three at once, as conjoined in the AUM.

So also are the other three *Vedas* summed up in the *Atharva*, and when this has been mastered, they are seen to be subject to similar

¹ Change of situation may explain change of function; like the change of appearance of an object with change of standpoint of observer, so often referred to. An army is a 'destroyer' to the enemy, a 'preserver' to its own nation.

permutations of order. The permutations of their logia are likewise shown in the *Atharva*. The expansion and coming forth of all the processes of the world, the origination of one from another, the combination of diversity and unity and the results thereof, the interdependence of all things, the co-ordination of all things into unity, the causes which lead to the distinction between things to be avoided and to be accepted, and the tracing of all kinds of kriyās through all these operations and processes in the world—all this is expounded in the *Atharva Veda*. What enterprise remains to be undertaken after the acquirement of the knowledge of the Self, the Not-self, and Desire—this also is explained in the *Atharva*, as are also the many manifestations and functions of Brahmā, Shiva and Viṣṇu, their endless operations, the experiencing of cognition, desire and action, the functioning of Shakti, etc.; in short, the details of the expanding and evolution of the universe. Here, too, we learn of the gradual transformation of atoms into ākāsha, of ākāsha into vāyu, of vāyu into agni, of agni into āpas, and finally of āpas into pṛthivi, and also of the reverse process at pralaya. Here, also, of the connexion between the hierarchies and their powers and corresponding works, times, spaces and numbers.

Such is the *Aṭharva-Vidyā* yet, in the study of details, must never be forgotten that the *Ātmanā* is ever untrammelled by and ever free from all such limitations.
