

Rigveda ऋग्वेद, Selected Hymns
Translation and Notes by Subhash Kak

Rigveda 1.1

॥ ऋग्वेदः सूक्तं १.१ ॥

ॐ अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवम् ऋत्विजम् ।

होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥ १ ॥

अग्निः पूर्वेभिर्ऋषिभिरीड्यो नूतनैरुत ।

स देवानेह वक्षति ॥ २ ॥

अग्निना रयिमश्नवत पोषमेव दिवे-दिवे ।

यशसं वीरवत्तमम् ॥ ३ ॥

अग्ने यं यज्ञमध्वरं विश्वतः परिभूरसि ।

स इद्वेषु गच्छति ॥ ४ ॥

अग्निर्होता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चित्रश्रवस्तमः ।

देवो देवेभिरा गमत् ॥ ५ ॥

यदङ्ग दाशुषे त्वमग्ने भद्रं करिष्यसि ।

तवेत् तत् सत्यमङ्गिरः ॥ ६ ॥

उप त्वाग्ने दिवे-दिवे दोषावस्तर्धिया वयम् ।

नमो भरन्त एमसि ॥ ७ ॥

राजन्तमध्वराणां गोपाम् ऋतस्य दीदिविम् ।

वर्धमानंस्वे दमे ॥ ८ ॥

स नः पितेव सूनवेऽग्ने सूपायनो भव ।

सचस्वा नः स्वस्तये ॥ ९ ॥

Transliteration Rigveda 1.1

To Agni

1. agnim īḷe purohitam yajñasya devam ṛtvijam
hotāraṁ ratnadhātamam

2. agniḥpūrvebhir ṛṣibhir īḍio nūtanair uta
sa devān eha vakṣati

3. *agninā rayim aśnavat poṣam eva dive-dive
yaśasaṃ vīravattamam*
4. *agne yaṃ yajñam adhvaraṃ viśvataḥ paribhūr asi
sa id deveṣu gacchati*
5. *agnir hotā kavikratuḥ satyaḥ citra-śravas-tamaḥ
devo devebhir āgamat*
6. *yad aṅga dāśuṣe tvam agne bhadraṃ kariṣyasi
tavet tat satyam aṅgiraḥ*
7. *upa tvāgne dive-dive doṣā-vastar dhiyā vayam
namo bharanta emasi*
8. *rājantam adhvarānāṃ, gopām ṛtasya dīdivim
vardhamānaṃ sve dame*
9. *sa naḥ piteva sūnave agne sūpāyano bhava
sacasvā naḥ su-astaye*

Translation

I praise Agni, priest, sacrifice's deity, officiant,
invoker, best giver of treasures. 1

Agni, worshipped by earlier sages, and new also,
he brings the devas here. 2

By Agni was brought wealth and prosperity day by day,
glory and great heroes. 3

Agni, what worship and sacrifice you pervade on every side,
that indeed goes to the devas. 4

Agni is invoker, poet's power, truth, beauty, most fame,
may deva come with the devas. 5

Whatever is praised by you, Agni, is made auspicious,
and, through you, true, O Angirah. 6

To you, Agni, we come day by day, by dusk and dawn,
bringing praises and homage. 7

To you, O King over sacrifices, shining protector of the laws,
growing in our own house. 8

To us, like father to son, Agni, be easy to find,
accompany us to our well-being. 9

Notes

1. *Purohit*, *ṛvij*, and *hotṛ* are priests associated with the fire-ceremony. Formally, the *adhvaryu* is the performer of the material part of the sacrifice; the *udgātṛ* is the chanter of the hymns; and the *hotṛ* is the reciter of the sacrificial mantras; and the *brahman* is the superintendent of the sacrifice. The *hotṛ* is associated with the Ṛgveda, the *adhvaryu* with the Yajurveda, and the *udgātṛ* with the Sāmaveda, and they represent the earth (body), atmosphere (*prāṇas*), and the heavens (inner sun), respectively. The terms *purohita* and *ṛvij* can represent any priest at the ceremony.

The first verse appears to invoke the priest in three functions that parallel the tripartite nature of our objective and subjective worlds. It also indicates that, mystically, the priests as well as the physical fire and the deity (*agni*) are the same during the ceremony; *īḍ* means to praise or worship. The *yajña* need not be only the fire ceremony; it represents any transformative process, or any act that leads to transcendence.

2. The worship of Agni is described as part of an old tradition; *vakṣati* is from *vah*, which is “to lead, carry,” or from *vakṣa*, chest, that grows with the breath.
3. This repeats the promise of wealth and fame.
4. The ceremony is viewed as being essential to success.
5. The gods come with Agni; *kavikratuḥ* is the poet’s power.
6. Describes the auspicious power of Agni and equates him to the ancient *ṛṣi* Angiras.
7. Agni is compared with the sun; *doṣā-vastar*, dispeller of gloom or by dawn and dusk.
8. Described as the guardian of the laws (*gopām ṛtasya*).
9. Agni is approached as father and lord (*pitā*) by the supplicant, the son (*sūnu*), and asked to bless the participants in the sacrifice.

Rigveda 3.62

॥ ऋग्वेदः सूक्तं ३.६२ ॥

इमा उ वां भूमयो मन्यमाना युवावते न तुज्या अभूवन् ।
क्व तयदिन्द्रावरुणा यशो वां येन समा सिनं भरथः सखिभ्यः ॥ १ ॥
अयमु वां पुरुतमो रयीयञ्छ्वत्तममवसे जोहवीति ।
सजोषाविन्द्रावरुणा मरुद्भिर्दिवा पृथिव्या शृणुतं हवम्मे ॥ २ ॥
अस्मे तदिन्द्रावरुणा वसु षयादस्मे रयिर्मरुतः सर्ववीरः ।
अस्मान वरुत्रीः शरणैरवन्त्वस्मान होत्रा भारती दक्षिणाभिः ॥ ३ ॥

बृहस्पते जुषस्व नो हव्यानि विश्वदेव्य ।
रास्व रत्नानि दाशुषे ॥ ४ ॥
शुचिमर्केबृहस्पतिमध्वरेषु नमस्यत ।
अनाम्योज आचके ॥ ५ ॥
वृषभं चर्षणीनां विश्वरूपमदाभ्यम् ।
बृहस्पतिवरेण्यम् ॥ ६ ॥

इयं ते पूषन्नाघृणे सुष्टुतिर्देव नव्यसी ।
अस्माभिस्तुभ्यं शस्यते ॥ ७ ॥
तां जुषस्व गिरं मम वाजयन्तीमवा धियम् ।
वधूयुरिव योषणाम् ॥ ८ ॥
यो विश्वाभि विपश्यति भुवना सं च पश्यति ।
स नः पूषाविता भुवत् ॥ ९ ॥

तत सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥ १० ॥
देवस्य सवितुर्वयं वाजयन्तः पुरन्ध्या ।
भगस्य रातिमीमहे ॥ ११ ॥
देवं नरः सवितारं विप्रा यज्ञैः सुवृक्तिभिः ।
नमस्यन्ति धियेषिताः ॥ १२ ॥

सोमो जिगाति गातुविद देवानामेति निष्कृतम् ।
ऋतस्य योनिमासदम् ॥ १३ ॥

सोमो अस्मभ्यं द्विपदे चतुष्पदे च पशवे ।
अनमीवा इषस करत् ॥ १४ ॥
अस्माकमायुर्वर्धयन्नभिमातीः सहमानः ।
सोमः सधस्थमासदत् ॥ १५ ॥

आ नो मित्रावरुणा घृतैर्गव्यूतिमुक्षतम् ।
मध्वा रजांसि सुक्रतू ॥ १६ ॥
उरुशंसा नमोवृधा महा दक्षस्य राजथः ।
द्राघिष्ठाभिः शुचिव्रता ॥ १७ ॥
गृणाना जमदग्निना योनाव ऋतस्य सीदतम् ।
पातं सोमं ऋतावृधा ॥ १८ ॥

Transliteration Rigveda 3.62

To Indra and Others

- 1. imā u vām bhṛmāyo manyamānā yuvāvate ná tújyā abhūvan
kvà tyád indrāvaruṇā yáso vām yéna smā sínam bhārathaḥ sákhibhyaḥ*
- 2. ayám u vām purutámo rayīyāñ chaśvattamám ávase johavīti
sajóṣāv indrāvaruṇā marúdbhir divā pṛthivyā śṛṇutaṃ hávam me*
- 3. asmé tát indrāvaruṇā vásu syād asmé rayír marutaḥ sárnavīraḥ
asmān várūtrīḥ saraṇair avantv asmān hótrā bhāratī dákṣiṇābhiḥ*
- 4. bṛhaspate juṣásva no havyāni viśvadevya
rāsva rátnāni dāśúṣe*
- 5. śúcim arkair bṛhaspátim adhvaréṣu namasyata
ánāmy ója ā cake*
- 6. vṛṣabhāṃ carṣaṇīnāṃ viśvárūpam ádābhyam
bṛhaspátīṃ vāreṇyam*
- 7. iyāṃ te pūṣann āghṛṇe suṣtútír deva návyasī
asmābhis túbhyaṃ śasyate*
- 8. tāṃ juṣasva gíram máma vājayántīm avā dhíyam
vadhūyúr iva yóṣaṇām*

9. *yó víśvābhí vipásyati bhúvanā sáṃ ca pásyati
sá naḥ pūśāvitā bhuvat*
10. *tát savitúr váreṇyam bhárgo devásya dhīmahi
dhíyo yó naḥ pracodáyāt*
11. *devásya savitúr vayáṃ vājayántaḥ púraṃdhyā
bhágasya rātím īmahe*
12. *deváṃ náraḥ savitāraṃ víprā yajñáiḥ suvṛktíbhīḥ
namasyánti dhiyéṣitāḥ*
13. *sómo jigāti gātuvíd devānām eti niṣkṛtām
ṛtásya yónim āśadam*
14. *sómo asmábhyaṃ dvipáde cátuṣpade ca paśáve
anamīvā íśas karat*
15. *asmākam āyur vardháyan abhímātīḥ sáhamānaḥ
somaḥ sadhástham āśadat*
16. *ā no mitrávaruṇā ghṛtaír gávyūtim ukṣatam
mádhvā rájāṃsi sukratū*
17. *uruśáṃsā namovṛdhā mahnā dáκṣasya rájathaḥ
drāghīṣṭhābhīḥ śucivratā*
18. *gṛṇān jamádagninā yónāv ṛtásya sīdatam
pātáṃ sómam ṛtāvṛdhā*

Translation 3.62

Your ceaseless earlier acts needed no help from your friend,
where, Indra-Varuna, with glory you empowered those who loved you. 1

This best man, seeking riches, constantly invokes your favour,
so, Indra-Varuna and Maruts, with heaven and earth, hear you my invocation. 2

Let ours be, O Indra-Varuna, this treasure, let we have wealth and heroes, O, Maruts,
may our shelter be with the Varutris, and our language be our complete invocation.3.

Brhaspati, be pleased with our oblations, you loved of the gods
give jewels to him who brings you gifts. 4

The sacred sacrifices, O Brhaspati, with your hymns worship
I pray for power that none may diminish. 5

The best of men, whom none deceive, the embracer of each form at will,
Brhaspati, most excellent. 6

Divine, resplendent Pusan, this our newest hymn of eulogy,
By us is chanted forth to thee.7

Accept with favour my song, be gracious to my thought,
as a bridegroom to his bride.8

May he who sees all living things, see them all together,
may he, may Pusan, be our help. 9

That supreme light, divinity's splendour, may we embrace,
so our minds are inspired.10

May divinity's splendour make our understanding bountiful,
lead to our portion of prosperity.11

People worship the creative light with rites and proper hymns,
inspired by the impulse of their thoughts.12

Soma goes forth to the gathering place of gods,
let us seat him at the seat of law.13

To us and to our animals, may Soma give good energy,
to bipeds and to quadrupeds.14

Increasing our life, and conquering our foes,
may Soma, in our assembly take his seat.15

May Mitra-Varuna provide us meaning,
and honey for the regions of the air.16

Praised by many, more powerful, with dexterity you rule
with everlasting sacred laws.17

Praised by Jamadagni's song, sitting in the place of sacred law,
drink Soma, you who strengthens the law. 18

Rigveda 7.103

॥ ऋग्वेदः सूक्तं ७.१०३ ॥

संवत्सरं शशयाना ब्राह्मणा वरतचारिणः ।

वाचं पर्जन्यजिन्वितां प्र मण्डूका अवादिषुः ॥ १ ॥

दिव्या आपो अभि यदेनमायन वृतिं न शुष्कं सरसी शयानम् ।

गवामह न मायुर्वत्सिनीनां मण्डूकानां वग्नुरत्रा समेति ॥ २ ॥

यदीमेनानुशतो अभ्यवर्षीत तृष्यावतः प्रावृष्यागतायाम् ।

अख्खलीकृत्या पितरं न पुत्रो अन्यो अन्यमुप वदन्तमेति ॥ ३ ॥

अन्यो अन्यमनु गृभणात्येनोरपां प्रसर्गे यदमन्दिषाताम् ।

मण्डूको यदभिवृष्टः कनिष्कन पृश्निः सम्पृङ्क्ते हरितेन वाचम् ॥ ४ ॥

यदेषामन्यो अन्यस्य वाचं शाक्तस्येव वदति शिक्षमाणः ।

सर्वं तदेषां समृधेव पर्व यत सुवाचो वदथनाध्यप्सु ॥ ५ ॥

गोमायुरेको अजमायुरेकः पृष्णिरेको हरित एक एषाम् ।

समानं नाम बिभ्रतो विरूपाः पुरुत्रा वाचं पिपिशुर्वदन्तः ॥ ६ ॥

ब्राह्मणासो अतिरात्रे न सोमे सरो न पूर्णमभितो वदन्तः ।

संवत्सरस्य तदहः परि ष्ट यन मण्डूकाः प्रावृषीणं बभूव ॥ ७ ॥

ब्राह्मणासः सोमिनो वाचमक्रत बरह्म कृण्वन्तः परिवत्सरीणम् ।

अध्वर्यवो घर्मिणः सिष्विदाना आविर्भवन्ति गुह्या न के चित् ॥ ८ ॥

देवहितं जुगुपर्द्वादशस्य ऋतुं नरो न पर मिनन्त्येते ।

संवत्सरे परावृष्यागतायां तसा घर्मा अश्रुवते विसर्गम् ॥ ९ ॥

गोमायुरदादजमायुरदात पृश्निरदाद धरितो नो वसूनि ।

गवां मण्डूका ददतः शतानि सहस्रसावे पर तिरन्त आयुः ॥ १० ॥

Transliteration RV 7.103

Frogs

- 1 *saṃvatsarāṃ śaśayānā brāhmaṇā vratacārīṇaḥ
vācam parjanyaajinvitām prā maṇḍūkā avādiṣuḥ*
- 2 *divyā āpo abhi yād enam āyan dṛtiṃ ná śúṣkaṃ sarasī śáyānam
gávām áha ná māyúr vatsínīnām maṇḍūkānām vagnúr átrā sám eti*
- 3 *yād īm enām usható abhy ávarṣīt tṛṣyāvataḥ prāvṛṣy āgatāyām
akkkhalīkṛtyā pitáraṃ ná putró anyó anyám úpa vādantam eti*
- 4 *anyó anyám ánu gṛbhṇāty enor apām prasargé yād ámandiṣātām
maṇḍūko yād abhívṛṣṭaḥ kániṣkan pṛṣniḥ sampṛṃkté háritena vācam*
- 5 *yād eṣām anyó anyásya vācam śāktásyeva vādati śikṣamāṇaḥ
sárvaṃ tād eṣām samṛdheva párva yát suvāco vádathanādhy apsú*
- 6 *gómāyur éko ajámāyur ékaḥ pṛṣhnir éko hárita éka eṣām
samánām nāma bíbhtrato vírūpāḥ purutrā vācam pipiśur vádantaḥ*
- 7 *brāhmaṇāso atirātré ná sóme sáro ná pūrṇám abhíto vádantaḥ
saṃvatsarásya tād áhaḥ pári ṣṭha yán maṇḍūkāḥ prāvṛṣīṇam babhūva*
- 8 *brāhmaṇāsaḥ somíno vācam akrata bráhma kṛṇvántaḥ parivatsarīṇam
adhvaryávo gharmíṇaḥ siṣvidānā āvir bhavanti gúhyā ná ké cit*
- 9 *deváhitiṃ jugupur dvādaśásya ṛtúṃ náro ná prā minanty eté
saṃvatsaré prāvṛṣy āgatāyām taptā gharmā ashnuvate visargám*
- 10 *gómāyur adād ajámāyur adāt pṛṣhnir adād dhárityo no vásūni
gávām maṇḍūkā dádataḥ śatāni sahasrasāvé prā tiranta āyuḥ*

Translation RV 7.103

The Frogs

1. For one year quietly, like the Brahmins keeping their vow, the frogs have raised their voice that Parjanya (god of rain) has inspired.
2. From the heavens the waters came down like the dried leather sheet on the pool, then the cries of the frogs join in unison like the lowing of cows with calves.

3. As the rainy season has arrived, and it rains upon them who are waiting and thirsting for it, one approaches another who calls to him with satisfaction as a son approaches his father.
4. The one greets the other as they revel in the waters that came forth, and frogs leap about under the falling drops, the speckled joining his voice with the green.
5. As one repeats the words of the other, like a pupil of the teacher, they seem to expand, chanting with fine sounds over the waters.
6. One lows like a cow, the other bleats like a goat; one is speckled, another green. They have the same name but their forms differ vary, and as they speak they modulate their voices in diverse ways.
7. Like Brahmins at the overnight sacrifice who talk around the full bowl of Soma, so you frogs around the pool celebrate the first day of the year of the coming of rain.
8. Brahmins with Soma speak louder offering prayers for this year long rite; the Adhvaryus come forth with their kettles, sweating, and nothing remains hidden.
9. Having kept the sacred order of the twelve month, these people do not overlook the season. The period of the rains has come, after a year, and those with heated kettles gain freedom.
10. He who bellows like a cow has given, he who bleats like a goat has granted, the speckled one, the green one has given us riches. By giving hundreds of insights, the frogs have added to our life in a thousand Soma-pressings.

Rigveda 10.90

॥ ऋग्वेदः सूक्तं १०.९०॥

सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् ।
सभूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वात्यतिष्ठद दशाङ्गुलम् ॥ १ ॥

पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यद भूतं यच्च भव्यम् ।
उतामृतत्वस्येशानो यदन्नेनातिरोहति ॥ २ ॥
एतावानस्य महिमातो जयायांश्च पूरुषः ।
पादो अस्यविश्वा भूतानि तरिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥ ३ ॥
तरिपादूर्ध्व उदैत पुरुषः पादो अस्येहाभवत पुनः ।
ततो विष्वं वयक्रामत साशनानशने अभि ॥ ४ ॥

तस्माद विराळ अजायत विराजो अधि पूरुषः ।
स जातोत्यरिच्यत पश्चाद भूमिमथो पुरः ॥ ५ ॥
यत पुरुषेण हविषा देवा यज्ञमतन्वत ।
वसन्तोस्यासीदाज्यं ग्रीष्म इध्मः शरद धविः ॥ ६ ॥
तं यज्ञं बर्हिषि परौक्षन् पुरुषं जातमग्रतः ।
तेन देवा अयजन्त साध्या रषयश्च ये ॥ ७ ॥
तस्माद यज्ञात सर्वहुतः सम्भृतं पर्षदाज्यम् ।
पशून्तांश्चक्रे वायव्यानारण्यान् गराम्याश्च ये ॥ ८ ॥

तस्माद यज्ञात सर्वहुत रचः सामानि जज्ञिरे ।
छन्दांसिजज्ञिरे तस्माद यजुस्तस्मादजायत ॥ ९ ॥
तस्मादश्वा अजायन्त ये के चोभयादतः ।
गावो हजज्ञिरे तस्मात् तस्माज्जाता अजावयः ॥ १० ॥
यत् पुरुषं वयदधुः कतिधा वयकल्पयन् ।
मुखं किमस्य कौ बाहू का ऊरू पादा उच्येते ॥ ११ ॥
ब्राह्मणो अस्य मुखमासीद बाहू राजन्यः कर्तः ।
ऊरूतदस्य यद वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥ १२ ॥

चन्द्रमा मनसो जातश्चक्षोः सूर्यो अजायत ।
मुखादिन्द्रश्चाग्निश्च पराणाद वायुरजायत ॥ १३ ॥
नाभ्या आसीदन्तरिक्षं शीर्ष्णो दयौः समवर्तत ।
पद्भ्यां भूमिर्दिशः शरोत्रात् तथा लोकानकल्पयन् ॥ १४ ॥
सप्तास्यासन परिधयस्त्रिः सप्त समिधः कर्ताः ।
देवायद यज्ञं तन्वाना अबध्नन् पुरुषं पशुम् ॥ १५ ॥
यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्त देवास्तानि धर्माणि परथमान्यासन् ।
ते ह नाकं महिमानः सचन्त यत्र पूर्वे साध्याः सन्ति देवाः ॥ १६ ॥

Transliteration Rigveda 10.90

1. *sahásraśīrṣā pūruṣaḥ sahasrākṣāḥ sahasrapāt
sá bhūmim viśvāto vṛtvāty atiṣṭhad daśāṅgulām*
2. *pūruṣa evédam sārvaṃ yád bhūtāṃ yác ca bhāvyaṃ
utāmṛtatvásyésāno yád ánnenātiróhati*
3. *etāvān asya mahimāto jyāyāṃś ca pūruṣaḥ
pādo asya viśvā bhūtāni tripād asyāmṛtaṃ divi*
4. *tripād ūrdhvā úd ait pūruṣaḥ pādo asyehābhavat pūnaḥ
tāto viśvañ vy àkrāmat sāśanānaśané abhí*
5. *tásmād virāḷajāyata virājo ádhi pūruṣaḥ
sá jātó áty aricyata paścād bhūmim átho puráḥ*
6. *yát pūruṣeṇa havíṣā devā yajñám átanvata
vasantó asyāsīd ājyaṃ grīṣmā idhmáḥ śarát haviḥ*
7. *táṃ yajñám barhíṣi praúkṣan pūruṣaṃ jātám agratáḥ
téna devā ayajanta sādhyā ṛṣayaś ca yé*
8. *tásmād yajñāt sarvahútaḥ sámhṛtam pṛṣadājyám
pasūn tāṃś cakre vāyavyān āraṃyān grāmyāś ca yé*
9. *tásmād yajñāt sarvahúta ṛcaḥ sāmāni jajñire
chándāṃsi jajñire tásmād yájus tásmād ajāyata*
10. *tásmād áśvā ajāyanta yé ké cobhayādataḥ
gāvo ha jajñire tásmāt tásmāj jātā ajāvāyaḥ*
11. *yát pūruṣaṃ vy ádadhuḥ katidhā vy àkalpayan
múkhaṃ kím asya kau bāhū kā ūrū pādā ucyete*
12. *brāhmaṇò asya múkham āsīd bāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtáḥ
ūrū tād asya yád vaiśyaḥ padbhyāṃ sūdró ajāyata*
13. *candrāmā mánaso jātás cákṣoḥ sūryo ajāyata
múkhād índraś cāgníś ca prāṇād vāyúr ajāyata*
14. *nābhyā āsīd antárikṣaṃ śīrṣṇò dyaúḥ sám avartata
padbhyām bhūmir díśaḥ śrótrāt táthā lokāṃ akalpayan*

15. *saptāsyāsan paridhāyas trīḥ saptā samīdhaḥ kṛtāḥ*
devā yād yajñām tanvānā ábadhnan púruṣam paśúm

16. *yajñéna yajñám ayajanta devās tāni dhármāṇi prathamāny āsan*
té ha nākam mahimānaḥ sacanta yátra pūrve sādhyāḥ sánti devāḥ

Translation Rigveda 10.90

Thousand heads has Purusha, thousand eyes, thousand feet,
he pervades the universe and ten fingers-wide beyond. 1

Purusha is this all, what is past and what is to be.
He is the lord of the immortals, who grow by means of food. 2

Such is his greatness, and yet greater is Purusha.
One-fourth of him is the beings, three-fourths immortals in the heavens. 3

Three-fourths of him went above, but a quarter of him remained below.
From that he spread out everywhere, eating, without eating also. 4

From that Virāj was born; from Virāj, Purusha.
When born, he extended beyond the earth, behind and in front. 5

When with Purusha as offering the gods made a sacrifice,
spring was its ghee, summer the fuel, autumn the offering. 6

In the sacrifice, on the grass they sprinkled Purusha, born in the beginning.
With him the gods, the sādhyas and the rishis sacrificed. 7

From that sacrifice a total offering was brought together with ghee and milk;
it made the beasts: of the air, the forest and the village. 8

From that sacrifice and total offering, the hymns and chants were born;
the metres were created from it, and the *yajus* from it were born. 9

From it the horses were born and those with teeth in both jaws.
The cows were created from it; from it were born the goats and sheep. 10

When they divided out Purusha, how many portions did they make?
What did they call his mouth, his arms; what his thighs, his feet were named? 11

His mouth was the brāhmaṇa, of his arms was made the rājanya,
what were his thighs became the vaiśya, from his feet the śūdra was born. 12

The moon from his mind arose, from his eye the sun was born;
from his mouth both Indra and Agni, from his breath the wind was born. 13

From his navel came the atmosphere, from his head the sky was fashioned;
earth from his feet, the directions from his ear. Thus they created the worlds. 14

Seven were the altar sticks; thrice seven fire sticks were made,
when the gods, offering the sacrifice, saw Purusha tied. 15

The gods sacrificed with the sacrifice to the sacrifice; these were the first rites.
These reached the firmament, where the ancient sādhyas and the gods dwell. 16

Notes

1. Thousand implies uncountability, whereas ten-fingers width represents transcendence beyond the physical universe.
2. This idea of transcendence does not only cover the physical space, but also time.
3. The four parts of Purusha are the four divisions of the universe: earth, atmosphere, heavens that are paralleled in the body, prana, and consciousness, together with the transcendent principle beyond. It is also mirrored in the four kinds of language, which later texts call *vaikhari*, *madhyamā*, *paśyanti*, and *parā*, that is, language without context (*vaikhari*), increasing to higher levels with intermediate (*madhyamā*) and deeper context (*paśyanti*), with transcendent speech (*parā-vāk*).
4. The significance of the proportion is clear from the previous verse.
5. This presents the location and birth of Purusha as an insoluble riddle.
6. Purusha as representing the universe recursively, since the ritual is played out also at the cosmic scale.
7. This adds to the paradox of the gods who are already there invoking Purusha, their Source.
8. The universe as seen emerging out of cosmic ritual, which is recreated by the individual.
9. The paradox of creation in a universe with rules is stressed here.
10. Lists elements of the evolution, indicating that each of these animals –like others that are not named – is perfect at its task.
11. The rhetorical question seeks answer to the extent of the universe both at the personal and the physical levels.
12. This verse should be considered together with the earlier numbers 5 and 6. Although it speaks of the four great social classes (divided by natural inclination), it also implies that the four varṇa attributes reside within each individual. Just like the dance of Śiva occurs both at the universal or personal levels across time and space, so does the division of Purusha occur repeatedly within the individual. Thus the four varṇas are four colours of mind, born out of a mixing of the guṇas.
13. This indicates the correspondence between physiological and cosmic processes. Such correspondence has recently been confirmed by the science of biological cycles.
14. A further description of the equivalence of microcosm and macrocosm.
15. Here is a further numerical equivalence made between cosmic processes and the details of the altar ritual.
16. The phrase “the gods sacrificed with the sacrifice to the sacrifice” (*yajñēna yajñām ayajanta*) returns us to the central mystical and paradoxical aspect of the ritual as well as our reality.

Rigveda 10.129

॥ ऋग्वेदः सूक्तं १०.१२९ ॥

नासदासीन् नो सदासीत् तदानीं नासीद् रजो नो व्योमापरो यत् ।

किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्नम्भः किमासीद् गहनं गभीरम् ॥ १ ॥
 न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्न आसीत्प्रकेतः ।
 आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्धान्यन न परः किं चनास ॥ २ ॥
 तम आसीत् तमसा गूळमग्रे.अप्रकेतं सलिलं सर्वमा इदम् ।
 तुछ्येनाभ्वपिहितं यदासीत् तपसस्तन्महिनाजायतैकम् ॥ ३ ॥
 कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।
 सतो बन्धुमसति निरविन्दन् हृदि परतीष्याकवयो मनीषा ॥ ४ ॥
 तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरेषामधः स्विदासीद् उपरि स्विदासीत् ।
 रेतोधा आसन् महिमान आसन् स्वधा अवस्तात् प्रयतिः परस्तात् ॥ ५ ॥
 को अद्धा वेद क इह प्र वोचत् कुत आजाता कुत इयंविसृष्टिः ।
 अर्वाग् देवा अस्य विसर्जनेनाथा को वेद यताबभूव ॥ ६ ॥
 इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।
 यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन् सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा नवेद ॥ ७ ॥

Transliteration Rigveda 10.129 Creation

1. nāsad āsīn nō sād āsīt tadānīm nāsīd rájo nō vyòmā paró yát
kīm āvarīvaḥ kúha kásya shármann ámbhaḥ kīm āsīd gáhanaṃ gabhīrám
2. ná mṛtyúr āsīd amṛtaṃ ná tárhi ná rātryā áhna āsīt praketaḥ
ānīd avātāṃ svadháyā tát ékaṃ tásmād dhānyán ná paráḥ kíṃ canāsa
3. táma āsīt támasā gūḷhām ágre apraketaṃ saliláṃ sárvam ā idám
tuchyénābhv āpīhitaṃ yád āsīt tápasas tán mahinājāyataikam
4. kāmas tát ágre sám avartatādhi mánaso rétaḥ prathamáṃ yád āsīt
sató bándhum ásati nír avindan hṛdí pratīṣyā kaváyo manīṣā
5. tiraścīno vítato raśmír eṣām adháḥ svid āsī3d upári svid āsī3t
retodhā āsan mahimāna āsan svadhā avástāt práyatiḥ parástāt
6. kó addhā veda ká ihá prá vocat kúta ājātā kúta iyáṃ víṣṛṣṭiḥ
arvāg devā asyá visárjanenāthā kó veda yáta ābabhūva
7. iyáṃ víṣṛṣṭir yáta ābabhūva yádi vā dadhé yádi vā ná
yó asyādhyakṣaḥ paramé vyòman só aṅgá veda yádi vā ná véda

Translation RV 10.129 Creation

1. Not non-existence was it nor existence was it then; there was no air nor the heavens beyond. What covered it? Where? By who sheltered? Was water there, an abyss unfathomable?

2. Neither death was there nor immortality then, not of night or day was there distinction. That alone breathed without air by its own power; apart from that there was none else.
3. Darkness it was, by darkness hidden in the beginning, an ocean without signs. Through the seed of all things that was enveloped in void, through the force of meditation thought was born.
4. Upon that in the beginning arose desire, which was the first impulse of that thought. This desire the sages saw as the link between existence and non-existence, upon searching with the intuition of their heart.
5. Transversely was their vision extended: what was above it, what was below? They were givers of life, powers they were, linked to the above, with impulse for below.
6. Who this knows? Who here will declare whence it was born, whence this creation? Later are the gods to the world's creation. Who then knows whence it came into being?
7. This creation, whence it came into being, whether it was formed or whether not. He who is its lord in the highest heavens surely he knows, or perhaps he knows not.

Rigveda 10.191

॥ ऋग्वेदः सूक्तं १०.१९१ ॥

सं-समिद युवसे वृषन्नग्ने विश्वान्यर्य आ ।
इळस पदे समिध्यसे स नो वसून्या भर् ॥ १ ॥

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे संजानाना उपासते ॥ २ ॥

समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।
समानं मन्त्रमभि मन्त्रये वः समानेन वोहविषा जुहोमि ॥ ३ ॥

समानी व आकृतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।
समानमस्तु वोमनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥ ४ ॥

Transliteration

1. saṁ-samida yuvase vṛṣannagne viśvāni arya ā
iḷas pade sam idhyase sa naḥ vasūni ā bhar

2. saṁ gachadhvaṁ saṁ vadadhvaṁ saṁ vo manāṁsi jānatām
devāḥ bhāgaṁ yathā pūrve saṁjānānāḥ upāsate

3. samāno mantraḥ samitiḥ samānī samānaṁ manaḥ saha cittam eṣām
samānaṁ mantram abhi mantraye vaḥ samānena vo haviṣā juhomi

4. *samānī va ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ*
samānamastu vo mano yathā vaḥ susahāsati

Translation

Together and apart, mighty Agni, gather all that is good,
with the kindling of praises bring us treasures. 1

Walk together, speak together; let your minds know together;
the gods' share, as in ancient times, may you know in closeness. 2

With the same mantra, together in assembly, together in mind, their thoughts are united.
I approach you with the same mantra, and together worship you with offerings. 3

Let the intentions be joined, and your hearts be together,
Together be you in thoughts, so you may live in happiness. 4

Notes

- 1 *yuvase*, to separate; *idh*, to kindle; *arya*, good.
- 2 *devāḥ bhāgam*, the gods' share
- 3 *havis*, offering, *juhomi*, from *hu*, worship.
- 4 *ākūtiḥ*, intention.

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