

CHAPTER – IV

The concept of *Moksa* or Freedom

Quest after Perfection

Man is not satisfied with finite and goals. He is not only conscious of the world around him but he also reflects upon himself and his destiny in the total divine scheme. Soon he reflects of his limitations and imperfections. He has never been consulted as to when he is to be born and he will never be consulted as to when he is to die. But die he must one day. This consciousness of his helplessness or limitations makes him aware of his bondage.

He feels spiritually restless and tries to get at the possible ways to remove the imperfections. Attempt to transcend human limitations is sometimes treated as a form of escapism. In this connection, Julian Huxley's criticism of those who condemn art as a means of escapism is worth quoting.

“We all need escape; apart from our modern need to escape from the dullness of routine and from the over mechanized life of cities, there is the universal and permanent need to escape from the cage of a practical and actual present in which we have of necessity to spend, so much of our life and above all from the prison of our single and limited selves. The question is where and how shall we escape. We can escape downwards through drinks or drugs or dissipations but that is not the best way. We can escape sideways through sport or pastime or entertainments that is within wide limits through sport or pastime or entertainments that is within wide limits desirable and indeed necessary or we may escape upwards into a new world (Blake's mental traveler) which comprises new levels of Being. Something more enduring and satisfying is contacted. We may contact

with some thing higher than is to be found in the world of material needs and everyday routine".¹

Man is also attracted towards the world. He gets several pleasures, pursues happiness. But to his disillusionment he finds that notwithstanding that he is materially rich, he is not yet happy. Firstly, things can give him only temporary pleasures. Secondly, there is no certainty in this object-generated happiness. Thirdly, it involves servility and dependence when he becomes aware of the futility or creature comforts and then he turns to seek eternal or permanent happiness or bliss. He is also dissatisfied with dependence and slavery involved in object- dependent happiness. This makes him more self-introspective. He wants to know about himself and his destiny in this universe and herein lays man's humanity. Even the great utilitarian thinker John Stuart Mill, once spoke of the profound truth about human nature.

"It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied, better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied".²

Socrates was dissatisfied not because he was economically poor or politically without position. He was a saint who was dissatisfied with human ignorance and weakness. His motto was. 'Know thyself'. Human soul itself is the highest spiritual value. In the words of Arnold Toynbee,

"There is absolute value in the human spirit quite apart from its material effects on society".³

Hence it must be realized that this soul is not a petty empirical little ego but it is, as expressed by the Vedic sages, the divinity in man and that the Divine in man are the same. They are not two entities. The *Yajurveda* identifies the true self in man with the Universal Self – 'Yo' savasau puruso so'ham asmi'. The spirit (*purusa*) that is in the Sun that spirit am

I. (*Yajurveda* 40-17). Axiologically, the realization of this ontological fact leads to bliss or eternal felicity. In other words, it is the same as realizing immortality –*Amaratva*, *Amrtava* (spiritual liberation). According to Swami Dayanand, immortality is synonymous with emancipation.⁴ The Vedic sages are not pessimistic. Yet, they are not satisfied pigs or satisfied fools. They are progressive idealists. They are not satisfied with a little. They would try to ascend higher and higher on the ladder of perfection. Therefore, their approach is positive and optimistic. It is never negativistic or defeatist.

The Vedic concept of *Moksa* is not a term of escapism because they did not preach the doctrine of running away from the life and the world. Their outlook towards the world is affirmative and positive. One has to realize what Julian Huxley calls, ‘the higher levels of Being’ which gives man greater fulfillment and deep satisfaction. This spiritually developmental approach gives direction and meaning to the whole of human life. Mere material prosperity either of the individual or of the society and even the maintenance of the society cannot constitute the highest ideal of human life. It, ultimately, consists only in self-realization or the direct knowledge of the ultimate Reality. Hence, the final or consummatory value consists in spiritual realization in which one finds complete fulfillment and plenitude of joy. Man cannot be fully satisfied by power or pelf. He has to clad the life of spirit, which consists in pursuing the realization of higher values. This approach makes even the pursuit of secular values geared to the achievement of moral perfection and spiritual liberation in which one gets the fulfillment of one’s spiritual aspirations. In this connection, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the great champion of activism, writes,

“Although we accept the maintenance of society as being the chief outward use of dharma yet we never loose sight of the *Ama Kalyana* or *Moksa* (spiritual realization or emancipation) which is the highest ideal according to the Vedic religion and

which is the special feature of our viewpoint. Further emphatically stressing the importance and supremacy of the spiritual value of self-realization, he writes, ‘whether it is maintenance of the society or material welfare of all, if these principles obstruct the *Atmalogical* Realization, we do not want them’.⁵

Thus, the spiritual perfection is the highest duty of every man. Realization of this supreme value does not come in the way of the pursuit of other values. It also is not escapism from social duties and responsibilities. It, on the other hand, can be realised through the pursuit of the socio-ethical duties and meditation practices. Thus, it synthesizes the active life with the life of contemplation. This approach is well developed and delineated in the 40th chapter of the White *Yajurveda*. It is the famous *Isavasya Upanised*.

Some times, it is said that the concept of *Moksa* is conspicuous by its absence in the Vedas. This objection is not correct and is even baseless if we accept *Moksa* in a particular and comprehensive sense. The word *Moksa* and *Mukti* may not be found in the Vedas, but the idea of *Moksa* in the sense of *Amaratva*, *Amrtatva* - self-realization or realization of the Ultimate Reality by being one with it, is definitely present in the Vedas.

The Vedas speak the language of freedom from dependence, servility, disease and disability, humiliation and defects, etc.- *Adinasyama saradah, satam, ajtah syama saradah satam*. These considerations show that the Vedas despised the state of dependence and servility or bondage. Hence, the well-known Mrtyunjaya verse: *Tryambakam yajamahe sugandhim pustivardhanam, urvaurkamiva bandhanat mrtyoh muksiya ma amrtat* (*Rgveda* 7.59.12). Here, the sage wants to be freed from the clutches of death, but he does not want to be deprived of immortality. There are different kind of references to the concept of *amrtatva* and *amaratva*. There are prayers in which the sages want to be immortal and crave for the eternal felicity. The Vedas also refer to those who achieved immortality through noble and

altruistic deeds. Others got immortality through self-sacrifice. *Yama*, as already seen was a great spiritual pioneer who attained immortality (*Rgveda* 10.13.4). In the verse, *Yama* is said to have embraced death (*avrñita mrtyum*) for the good of humanity. Mention is also made of the self-offering on the part of *Visvakarman* (*Rgveda* 10.81.1). In this verse, *Yama* is said to have made of the self-offering on the part of *Visvakarman* (*Rgveda* 10.81.1). In this verse, *Visvakarman* is said to have entered into the sacrificial fire. He is also described as one who pursued the welfare of the world. Similarly, the *Ribhus* attained immortality and reached godhood (*Rgveda* 1.20.1). Those who worshipped divinity in the form of *Agni* attained divinity (*Rgveda* 1.87.6). These verses definitely show that spiritual liberation in the form of *Sarupyata* (becoming Divine-like) was one of the spiritual ideals of the Vedic people. One of the sages expresses his experience of reaching union with the essence of water (*Rgveda* 10.9.9). One must get liberated from sins as well as ill-will, hatred, malice, etc. which are our spiritual enemies. They must be eliminated from the life of a spiritual seeder (*Rgveda* 10.9.8). O Waters, wash away sins, malicious or malevolent intellect and bad speech. The Vedic man wants to be free from both ill-will and various greed's. Thus, the Vedic sages were aware of the imperfections of the little ego. They would like to be psychologically free from the influences of anything attached with this ego. This idea is very well expressed in the *upanisadic* statement: *Yo vai blama tat sukham nalpe sukham asti* (*Chhandogya Upanisad* 7.23). The real happiness lies in realizing the infinite (*Bhūman*). It does not consist in possessing the finite things. According to R.D. Ranade, *Bhūman* is that infinite happiness which arises by the vision of the divinity all-around. When anything else is seen, that is a'pa.⁶

This *Bhūman* or ultimate Reality is not a Kantian thing-in-itself which lies beyond lies beyond human comprehension. In this connection, the *Svetasvatara Upan'sad* states:

Tamatmastham ye'nupasyanti dhirastesam sukham sasvatam netaresam. (It is only to those who regard the universal Being or God as immanent in their own selves, to them belongs eternal happiness, to none else.) (*Svetasvatara Upanisad* 6.12). The same Upanishad quotes the famous *Rgvedic* verse: *Dva suparna.* (*Rgveda* 1.164. 20).

The two birds reside on the same tree (body). One of them enjoys the fruits of the tree (individual soul) and the other (the Universal Self) merely looks on. According to Kunhan Raja, this traditional interpretation is incompatible with the general trend of the *Rgveda* thought. For him Geldner's interpretation of this verses (*Rgveda* 1.164.20) is more correct because the two birds are the seekers after knowledge. The tree according to Geldner is the tree of wisdom. Whereas, Kunhan Raja takes this tree to be the universe. The two birds are two individual souls one ignorant and the other wise.⁷ On page 32 of his *Asya vamsya hymn*, and opines that it is compatible with Geldner's meaning of the phrase 'two birds' Mudgal does not agree with Kunhan Raja.⁸ According to him, it is wrong to accept this position because (i) in order to draw the conclusion that Pippaland was wise and happy, we will have to risk the universal premise, viz., all those who eat berries are wise and happy and hence, the name of Pippalad has nothing to do with the wisdom of the sage; (ii) Kunhan Raja translates '*Abhikasiti*' as merely 'looks on' in amazement whereas it means 'shines' and even Monier-Williams gives its meaning as that 'shines brightly'. The 'one bird' without eating shines' refers to the Universal Self. In this regard, we also cannot ignore the tradition and, therefore, the sentence '*anasnan anyah abhikasiti*'. The other one without eating shines point to the detached, contented, self-shining, perfect Being. Thus, the *Rgveda* refers to the Universal Self and the realization of this Universal Self, within and without, is the highest value. Therein lies the realization of immortality.

Commenting on the ultimate category of the Upanishads, Ranade writes:

“It seems as if the ultimate category of existence to the Upanisadic philosophers is God-Atman”.⁹

This can also be spoken of the ultimate category of the Vedas. Unless we do so, we cannot understand the mystical experiences of the vedic sages such as: *Dirghatamas*, *Vamadev*, *Vagambhrini*, etc. There are three important hymns attributed to these three sages. They are highly mystical in character. They also show that the Vedic sages. They are highly mystical in character. They also show that the Vedic sages had also reached the concept of *fivanmukti* (liberation while alive) by realizing the Divine both within and without. Only such a view can explain the philosophical hymns like *Purusasukta* and *Nasadiyasukta* etc. Secondly, such a concept of ultimate reality and ultimate goal can rightly explain the Vedic doctrine of universal patriotism or friendship (*Mitrasya caksusa*). Only such kind of doctrine can explain Vedic activism that has a social content. Only a man who has realized the divine in himself and universe can properly do, to borrow a phrase from the Gita, *Lokasangraha*. It is the concept of affectionate and selfless altruism in the all-around upliftment of the humanity at large. Before dealing with which a social content of high significance, we will deal with some hymns which are philosophical in character and those which are of mystical import.

Some Philosophical Hymns and their Significance

Let us take for instance, the famous *Hiranyagarhha* (*Rgveda* 10.121) sukta. It is a hymn that states that Reality is supreme splendence and bliss (Ka). The last line of each verse of this hymn states: *Kasma iddevaya havisa vidhema*. It is not a question as is understood by the Westerners. It says that one is offering one's oblations to the Godhead who is of the nature of bliss. This Godhead is the lord of the whole creation (*Prajapati*). Paradoxically, the second verse of this hymn states, ‘He contains both immortality and

mortality'. It may mean, He is the source both of the mortal and the immortal in this universe. In other words, He is the substantial basis of joy both eternal and physical.

The famous *Purasasukta* (*Rgveda* 10.90) is well known for its religious as well as social significance. It definitely speaks about the immanence-transcendence of the Godhead. The visible universe is only a manifestation of the ultimate Reality. The laws of the power of manifestation became the first ordinances (*Yajnena yajnamayajanta devah tani dharmani prathamanyasan*) (*Rgveda* 10.90.16) for men to abide by. The second verse of this hymn says that this Universal Self is the Lord of the immortality. According to Satavalekar, this verse states that immortality is far higher and richer than the finite world and its pleasures (*Yat annena atirohati*). The hymn also gives us the organic and holistic theory of the universe and human society, according to which all are interrelated organically. We are aspects of the whole. Hence, the ultimate truth is a whole and it also is the ultimate criterion of value. Hence, the realization of the whole is the ultimate value. Therefore, one has to realize this in his life.

In social life, one cannot escape from social responsibilities. One has to develop oneself by doing social duties. Survival of the fittest may be a natural law. But morally speaking, it is the law of the jungle. Even the principle of 'live and let live' is not praiseworthy. From the moral and social point of view, each man must strive for the good of others. Live and let live may imply an attitude of indifference towards others. *Purusasukta* and other ontological as well as cosmological hymns give a philosophical foundation of social dynamism and cooperative good will.

The *Nasadiya sukta* gives us a purely ontological theory of the ultimate Reality. According to it, ultimate reality is beyond any characterization. It defies all descriptions. It is 'that is all'. It is the ontological foundation of everything in the universe. It doubts even the

capacity of the deities and the learned to wholly and fully comprehend the ultimate truth about the positive existence of it. It is beyond the ordinarily real and the unreal, the mortal and the eternal in this universe. According to Will Durant, this astonishing ‘creation hymn’ is the loftiest of the poems of the Vedas.¹⁰ Commenting on the import of this hymn, A.C. Bose writes,¹¹

“This takes to the loftiest heights of philosophy. It is doubtful whether the human mind ever surpassed these heights”.

This single absolute is all pervasive. Mystical realizations of the Vedic sages must be understood in the light of this philosophical background. This philosophical hymn gives us the Vedic idea of the metaphysical doctrine of Reality. The Vedic sages were never polytheists i.e., they never believed in the reality of many Gods. They were also not henotheists because henotheism accepts the position of polytheism and adds to it the view that one of the Gods or the Deities is held in high esteem at the time of worship. The Vedic sages explicitly state that Reality is one and they called it by various names *Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti* (*Rgveda* 1.164.46 and *Atharvaveda* 9.10.28). It gives us the concept of one Absolute Existence. Similarly, another hymn says: *Ekam santam bahudha kalpayanti* (*Rgveda* 10.114. 15. One Reality is conceived variously. In another verse, the seer emphatically asserts the existence of the one in many forms and names: *Mahat devanam asuratvamekam* (*Rgveda* 3.55.1). Great is the single Godhood or Divinity of all gods. Thus, one God is spoken of in many ways by the sages and the poet philosophers. In one of the *Atharvaveda* verses (134.21.) plurality of gods is deliberately denied and the unity of all gods or deities is affirmed: *Sarve Asmin Devah Ekavrtto bhavanti* (in Him all deities become one alone). There is no equal or parallel to Him. It is in the words of the Veda itself the non-

parallel (*Na tasya pratima asti*) one of the sages confidently and clearly expresses his experience of the Absolute or Supreme Reality:

*Vedaham etam purusam mahantam Adityavarnam tamasah parastat Tameva viditva
atimrtyumeti Nanyah panthah vidyate ayanaya (Yajurveda Vaja. 31.18)*

(I have known this Mighty Being effulgent like the Sun beyond darkness. Knowing Him alone one transcends death; there is no other way to do so.) *Svetasvatara Upanishad* also quotes this verse. The second line of this verse is also found in the *Gita (Gita 8.9)*.

The statement of the sages' experience is a fair statement of the liberated state of the soul. Commenting on its spiritual significance, A.C. Bose writes,¹²

“If religion means the overcoming of the limits of finite life and projecting the soul into the infinite, then there can be no real religion without this spiritual realization”.

Thus, Reality is all-pervasive and is everywhere (*Atharvaveda 4.16.2*). It is in all directions (*Rgveda 10.36.14*). We have already seen that the ‘two birds doctrine’ states that this divinity is within man. The *Atharvaveda* nicely puts this idea of the Divine in man:

Tasmat vai vadvan purusa idam brahmeti manyate

Sarva hi asmin devata gao gosta evasate. (Atharvaveda 11.8. 37)

(Thus, one who truly knows man regards him as this Brahman.

Truly all deities abide in him as cows in the cow pen.)

World Family

Realisation of this Absolute in man is the highest kind of immortality or spiritual liberation. When one realizes the Divinity in himself and in all, one knows the underlying unity of all existence. Thus, there is no vision of divided and fragmented humanity and existence. With the realization of the unity of all one realizes God in nature, God in man and God in all forms and names of God. Then one realizes how all are due to God, how all

convergence in Him and all diverge from Him. He belongs to all. He is both divine and human (*Atharvaveda* 4.16.8). Implication of this *Atharvavedic* verse leads to reverence and respect for makes them irreligious heretics. Only such a realization truly makes man a global man, nay a universal man. For such a man, ultimate Reality is the source of all beings. For him the earth is one home. Hence, the Yajurveda says:

Venas tat pasyan hihitam guhasad

Yatra visvam bhavati ekanidam

Tasminnidam sa ca vidhu prajasu (*White Yajurveda* 32.8)

(The loving sage beholds that Being hidden in mystery, wherein the universe comes to have one home. Therein unite and therefrom emanate all. The omnipresent one is warp and woof in created things.)

Translation by A.C. Bose

This verse beautifully and nicely expresses the concept of one world family (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*). This ideal of universal fellowship can be realised only on the basis of spiritual unity of all existence. Poets, saints and mystics have always set this ideal before the people. Rabindranath Tagore chose the second line of this verse as the motto in the insignia of Visva Bharati founded by him. Because nests are the meeting places or resting places of birds.¹³ To the Vedas, the most ancient literature of the world, goes the credit of visualizing the concept of one-world society on the foundation of philosophy and spirituality. Thus, the final goal of man was not egoistic or individualistic. In spite of the fact that liberation or realization of final truth or the beatitude is to be achieved by the individual through his incessant striving, it has a social import and significance. It is not only cognitive insight in the truth but also a widening or expansion of human personality. In this sense, the

liberated soul was a universal man who selflessly and lovingly strove for the betterment of the people at large. In this connection, Sri Aurobindo says,

“The aspiration of the vedic seer was the enrichment and expansion of man’s being, the birth and the formation of the godheads in his life-sacrifices, the increase of force, truth and light and joy of which they are the powers until through the enlarged and ever opening worlds of his being the soul of man rises, sees the divine doors (Devidvarah) swing open to his call and enters into the supreme felicity of a divine existence beyond heaven and earth. this ascent is the parable of Angirasa Rsi”.¹⁴

Hence, the objection that the spiritual goal of liberation is conspicuous by its absence in the Vedas is unjustifiable and baseless. This objection dissolves itself as we study the esoteric or mystical meaning of the Vedas. Even traditional writers like *Katyayana* accept that *Asya Vamasya* hymn contains liberation. He suggests that apart from the literal meaning of this hymn it has a spiritual meaning. Hence, even *Sayanacarya* writes:

Evam uttatatrapi adhyatmaparataya yojayitum sakyam

Yatra dvasuparna ityadau adhyatmiko arthah pratiyate.

While another medieval writer Atmananda says of the *Asya Vamasya sukta* as: *Sarvam etat suktam adhyatmaparam nanyarthata vaktum sakyate*. The whole hymn is spiritual in its import. No other meaning can be derived from it.

Various writers on the Vedas have accepted the fluidity and multi-valence of Vedic words and myths. For instance, dragon and mountains in the Vedas stand for the obstructive evil forces, which come in the way of expansion of human personality or liberation. The value of expansion or spiritual liberation is conveyed through the phrases like release of the cows, the downward flow of the cows, the downward flow of the rivers, etc. the famous episode of Shunahshepa embodies the human aspiration for liberation. Thus, the idea of

Moksa in the sense of liberation is suggested in the Vedas. But the idea of *Moksa* in the sense of realization of Godhead, immortality, ultimate reality, eternal felicity, etc. is definitely present in the Vedas. It stands for positive realization. This aspect of *Moksa* has become amply clear by now.

Sri Aurobindo has interpreted the concept of *Adhvarayajna* as a journey or traveling. *Vala*, the circumscriber or the encloser, and *Vrtra*, the obstructor, or enfolding coverer, are the great obstacles on the path towards perfection. According to Sri Aurobindo '*Adhvata*' is connected with '*Adhvan*' - path or journey from the lost root, 'adh' to move to extend, to be wide.¹⁵ Thus, *Yajna* becomes a way of self-offering. One has to offer one's has tended, to be wide. Thus, *Yajna* becomes a way of self-offering. One has to offer one's possession and power to the Lord and receive the divine help, which consists in spiritual journey or spiritual struggle. It is a journey towards the conquest of final immortality and beatitude. This journey or struggle consists in perfecting oneself progressively so that eventually it finds its final consummation and destination in the realization of the Godhead or Truth-consciousness. This realization is the ultimate, final and con-summatory value.

In the words of Sri Aurobindo, the whole of the *Rgveda* is practically a constant variation on the double theme, the preparation of the human being in mind and body, the fulfillment of Godhead or immortality in Him by his attainment and development of the truth and the beatitude.¹⁶ The Vedic seers emphasize the role of truth in the realization of final emancipation and beatitude. Truth liberates us from falsehood, weakness and other limitations or imperfections. It also opens to us the door of the Supreme Bliss. In this connection, Sri Aurobindo writes, "The conception of supra-mental consciousness is the condition of the state of immortality or beatitude."¹⁷ The metaphysics of the soul itself points to the higher ranges of mystical experiences. Writing on this Sri Aurobindo says,

“Substance of being light of consciousness, active force and possessive delight are the constituent principles of existence, but their combinations in us may be either limited, divided, hurt and obscure or infinite, enlightened, vast whole and unhurt. Limited and divided being is ignorant. It is darkness and weakness. It is grief and pain and in the vast, in the integral, in the infinite we must see for the desirable riches of substance, light, force and joy. Limitation is mortality. Immortality comes as an accomplished self-possession in the infinite and the power to live and move in firm vastness”.¹⁸

This is not something imposed on the Vedic word. *Atharvaveda* has to say the following about the self or Atman:

Akamo dhiro amrto svayambhuh

Rasena trpto na kutascanonah

Tameva vidvan na bibhaya mrtyor

Atmanam dhiram ajaram yuvanam (Atharvaveda 10.8.44)

(Desireless, firm, immortal, self-existent, contented with the essence, lacking nothing, is He. One fears not death who has known Him, the Soul (Atman) serene, ageless, youthful. (Translation by A.C. Bose)

Thus, the Atman is the dwelling spirit who is ever young and not subject to the process of decay. The attributes of the Atman can be said to be the attributes of the man of realization. It also shows that the Atman is *Sat-Cit-Ananda* (Existence, Consciousness and joy). So the *Taittiriya Upanisad* says: *Raso vai sah. Rasam hyevayam lubdhva anandi bhavati (Taittiriya Upanishad 34.17)*. He is essence or the source of flavor and felicity and by realizing him one is filled with joy or bliss. In another verse, the *Atharvaveda* states: *Purnat purnam udayati, purnam purnena sicyate. Uto adya tata vaidyamayatah tat*

parisicyate. (This whole has emerged out of the Whole. It is watered by the whole.) (*Atharvaveda* 10.8.29). Let us try to know this 'Spring' of this universe.

This verse also shows that perfection is latent in the soul. One has simply to realize this. In another verse, the Atman is called Brahman (*Atharvaveda* 10.8.43). The body is called a nine-protalled city. The individual soul lives with the Universal Self in the mortal body having limitations imposed on it. One has to transcend these limitations and attain immortality. Reality is the source of all – *Suryo atma jagatah tasthusasca*. (*Rgveda* 1.115.1, *Yajurveda* 7.42; *Atharvaveda* 13.2.35). It is within us. One has only to realize this and one becomes a liberated or perfect soul: *Yo' savasau puruso so'hm asmi* (The spirit that is in the Sun that spirit am I.) (*Yajurveda* Vaj.40.16).

On this background, mystical utterances of sages like *Vamadeva*. *Vagambrini* become intelligible. *Vamadeva* claims that he has realised his previous birth. According to *Chitravshastri*. It is the sign of *Vamadeva's* self-realisation. *Vamadeva* expresses himself thus: *Aham manurbhavam suryah ca aham* (I had been Manu and *Surya* in previous births.) (*Rgveda* 4.26.1). Hence, *Vamadeva* claims that one who realizes the 'True Self' becomes one with all. To such a man, according to Ranade, the past is like an eternal now. Hence, *Vamadeva* broke forth in the exclamation that 'He it was who had lived in Manu and that he it was who had given light to the Sun.'¹⁹ Commenting on the hymns as that of *Vamadeva's*, Shri Aurobindo says,

"In such hymn as this (*Rgveda* 4.58) of *Vamadeva's*, the ritualistic veil, so elaborately woven by the vedic mystics, vanishes like a dissolving mist before our eyes and this encourages the vedantic truth".²⁰

Vamadeva describes the essence of *Agni* as *Catvari sringa trayo asya pada* (*Rgveda* 4.58.3). It is a symbolic description of all-pervading *Agni*. According to Chitravashastri, the hymn has five optional deities. Therefore, it can be explained in five ways.²¹

The grammarians give their own explanation of it. According to Swami Dayananda, 'the four horns may be the four goals of human life or the four stages of consciousness (*visva, taijas, prajnd, turiya*). The three *padas* are the *Karma, Bhakti* and *Jnana* or mind, body and speech. The two heads are the five sense organs, mind and body or soul and body. It is liable to be differently interpreted. Nevertheless, it is the description of mystical experiences. Take the *Vagambri* hymn. *Vagambri* expresses her mystical identification with the whole of the universe including the deities. She says, 'I am the sustainer of *Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Agni* and others' (*Rgveda* 10.125. 4.). The mystic becomes one with the ultimately real and consequently becomes a man of the universe. His little ego vanishes and he becomes a genuine and active friend of the universe. Hence, the fortieth chapter of the White Yajurveda says:

Yastu sarvani bhutani atmanyevanupasyati

Sarva bhutesu catmanam tato navijigupsate

Yasmin sarvani bhutani atmaivabhudvi janatah

Tatra ko mohah sokah ekatvam anupasyatah

(*Yajurveda Vajasaneyi* 40.6. and 7)

(He who sees all beings in the very Self and Self in all beings feels no hatred or contempt or revulsion towards any object or being because self, there is no other. For the man of realization all beings become the self, for such a man of unitary experience there is no delusion or sorrow. Such a man of realization becomes free from ignorance and sorrow.)

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10. Quoted in Bissondayal: *Message of the four Vedas*, New delhi; Orient Longman, 1972, p. 17.
11. A.C. Bose, *Op. Cit.*; p. 135.
12. *Ibid*; p. 134.
13. B. Bissondayal, *Op. Cit.*, p. 68.
14. Sri Aurobindo, *The secret of the Vedas*. Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. Pondichery; Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1971, Vol. 10, p. 133.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 73-74.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

18. Sri Aurobindo. *Hymns to the mystic fire*. Aurobindo Birth centenary Library. Pondichery; Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1971, Vol. 1, p. 25.]

19. R.D. Ranade, *Op. Cit.*, p. 256.

20. Sri Aurobindo, *The secret of the Vedas*, p. 98.

21. Chitravashastri Siddheswar. *Rgveda* (Marathi translation). Poona; Bharatiya Charittrakosha Mandala, 1969, p. 312.