

# Psychological Sūktas in Veda

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## ABSTRACT

The Indian tradition of thousands of years has revered the Vedas as the utterance of revealed knowledge connoting highest spiritual truth which the human mind is capable to receive. The Vedic Mantras found in the Samhitā are psychological symbols full of imageries underlying some spiritual import. The often- discussed three hymns such as *Mana- āvartana- sūkta* (RV-10.58), *Śivasamkalpa- sūkta* (YV-34), *Śraddhā- Sūkta* (RV-20.151) and so many others, which are expressly devoted to analyze mind and its problems. This paper aims at analyzing three such *Sūktas* in the light of modern Psychology. The hymns of the Vedas have dealt with the understanding of the mental processes.

**KEYWORDS:** Upanishads, *Mana- āvartana-*, *Śiva-samkalpa*, *Śraddhā*, *Sūkta*, psychology

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## INTRODUCTION

The Vedas, considered as the oldest texts in the world, are regarded as the Fountainhead of Bhāratiya culture. The ancient texts pre- eminently the Veda in all kinds of its composition such as *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas*, *Upanishads*, the different systems of Orthodox philosophy primarily *Samkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyaya- Vaishesika*, even the Unorthodox *Buddhist*, *Jain* systems of philosophy. The epics the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas*, the branches of technical sciences such as *Ayurveda*, *Kamasutra*, the *Natyasastra* etc. At many places provide courses of psychology, very much relevant for the human society and acceptable for all ages and places. The *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads* critically examine the constitution of mind, its nature and function. The Vedic mantras found in the *Samhitas* are psychological symbols full of imageries underlying some spiritual import. It provides ample scope to explore the depths of inner world. There was no special discipline as in modern time to study epistemological and logical problems. The *Samhitas* consists of many Mantras within their invocatory structure that provides relevant orientation to the mind. Psychology being a subject generally dealing with nervous system, sensation, perception, attention, learning, forgetting, frustration, stress etc.

### Mantras prescribing *Mana- āvartana- sūkta*

The *Mana- āvartana sūkta* referred to speak about the mind as wandering all over the world. The first mantra is addressed to one who is with much depressed mind and who thinks of going to meet Yama, the death God, committing suicide. To such a person dejected and emotionally upset, it is counseled- let the mind run away with depressing emotion.

यत्ते यमं वैवस्वतं मनो जगाम दूरकम्।  
तत्त आ वर्तयामसीह क्षयाय जीवसे॥ RV 10.58.1

This mantra is considered to be a call not only to save one's life but also to come back and face the struggles of life. Similarly, all the following 11 mantras present the situations that prompt mind to wander here and there due to emotional imbalance and all the time the same sentence is repeated- 'I bring back your mind to live a practical life here'. The subsequent Mantras enumerate and describe the destinations where the mind may wander being distressed by the compelling situations, such as far away heaven and the earth (*yet te divam yat prhivīm mano jagāma dūrakam- RV-10.58.2*). This implies an impractical mind, which instead of thinking issues in hand, flies in imagination and builds castles in the air. The next *Mantra* speaks of the mind, which has gone far away to the earth decaying on four sides and which points to the materialistic life pervading every nook and corner of the earth (*yat te bhūmim caturbhrstim mano jagāma dūrakam, RV- 10.58.13*).

In all these twelve verses, the last two repeated lines that 'te a vartayamasi iha ksayaaya jivase' signify the self- fulfilling prophecy of modern day psychotherapy, where by a mentally depressed subject is administered with consoling words to improve his mental condition.

### Mantras prescribing *Śraddhā Sūkta*

*Śraddhā- Sūkta* (RV-10.151) containing five mantras preaches about the efficacy of faith. For spiritual gain, besides reposing faith on the scriptures, the words of the preceptor, the divine power is most essential a quality. Faith

works there, where personal efforts fail. Thus, it alone guides the destiny of man. The present day psychology has also accepted its positive role in the therapeutics. Faith creates a definite mindset and accordingly ushers in the change of hormones and other internal conditions where by the states of health improve. The first mantra of the Śraddha- sūkta

श्रद्धयाग्निः सध्यते श्रद्धया द्यूते हविः।

श्रद्धां भगस्य मूर्धनि वचसा वेदयामसि॥ RV-10.151.1

Fire is enkindled by faith, by faith is offered oblation. We declare by our speech that faith is at the head of all success in life. The act of offering oblation through faith, may similarly be purported to mean making sacrifices in the faith within, which becomes the instrument for overcoming even the hardest of situation met in life.

यथा देवा असुरेषु श्रद्धामुग्रेषु चक्रिरे।

एवं भोजेषु यज्वस्वस्माकमुदितं कृधि॥ ( RV-10.151.3)

As all the men of noble qualities have faith in the worst of men, so in spite of our enjoying the world, we do so treating it as *Yajva*.

### Mantras prescribing Śiva samkalpa sūkta

Śiva samkalpa sūkta emphasizes the characteristic powers of mind and its working. Mental powers are the real powers. They point out that everything in the world is the outcome of the mind. It is prayed with the repetition of the same expression- Let my mind be of noble resolve- '*tan me manah Śvasamkalpam astu*'. Its meaning is to be reflected every time the expression is uttered to oneself. The seers have devised it as a tip of auto- suggestion. All the mantras invoke the powers and uniqueness of mind enumerating its characteristic.

सुषारथिरश्वा निव,न् मनुष्यान् नेनीयतेऽभीशुभिर्वाजिन इव।

हृत्प्रतिष्ठं यदिजरं यविष्ठं तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु॥ (YV 34.6 )

A modern psychologist hangs about wonder- struck having thorough and graphic details of the nature of mind, its powers and functions, which the Vedic seers have experienced intuitively. Mind, unlike physical outer organs is not restricted to a particular activity.

### Conclusion

Thus, it is evident that the modern concepts of psychology relating to mind management mostly provide for repairing or remedial role for some mental problems of the persons, or in the other words, the concept of modern psychology providing psychotherapeutic treatment in the stress- prone society are certainly not new discoveries. Vedas being the knowledge- pool of the contents of varieties of disciplines also implicitly contain the psychoanalytic phenomena. The seers of the Vedic mantras have intuitively visualized the facts of nature not only of their external dimensions, but also of the inner happenings going on in the living and non- living objects. To those benevolent souls, came revelations as several subjects, which are really the tips of welfare majors of this world including the management of the internal world of the man. All the concepts such as Insight Therapy, Self-fulfilling prophesies, Placebo Effects, Experiencing and Humanistic Treatment discussed above are but the partial echo of the traditional Indian heritage enshrined in the Vedic Literature. What we need at this moment is to integrate the ancient and modern viewpoints of Psychological analysis. It is no doubt rewarding to view the reality from a culturally congruent perspective and to enrich the theoretical analysis of Psychological concepts.

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