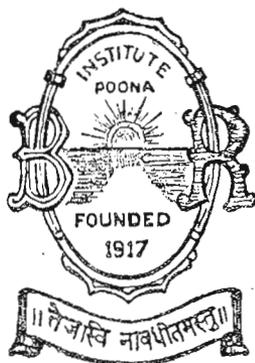


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SÁRAS, SÓMA AND SIRÁ

by

SURYAKANTA

Worship of Sárasvatī has been common in Indian Aryan homes; but few scholars have cared to appreciate the real significance of this name. The present essay is an attempt at this.

Sárasvatī as river, is mentioned several times (40) in the ṚV., and scholars have identified it with the Sárasvatī of the Kurukṣetra. In some stanzas, Sárasvatī is glorified as a mighty river; and this has led some scholars to identify her with the Indus, which may be right. But Sárasvatī of the Kurukṣetra region may have been once as mighty as she was sacred as is clear from RV. II 42.16, which invokes her as "the best of mothers". From this it would follow that the region watered by Sárasvatī was the cradle of the Aryan ritual and culture.

As for the etymology of the word, Sāyaṇa has uniformly explained it from Sáras meaning 'water'. But as water is the common constituent of all the rivers it may be pointless to connect this name with water. Bṛhaddevatā VI. 109-114 throw some light on the meaning of the Sáras. The context is :

Upakramya tu devebhyaḥ somo vṛtrabhayārditaḥ /
nadīm Amśumátīm nāmnā abhyatiṣṭhat Kurūn prati //
tam bṛhaspatinaikena abhyayād vṛtrahā saha /
yotsyamānaḥ susamhr̥ṣṭair marudbhir vividhāyudhaiḥ //
dr̥ṣṭvā tān āyataḥ somaḥ svabalena vyavasthitaḥ /
manvāno vṛtram āyāntaṁ jighāmsu arisenayā //
vyavasthitaṁ dhanuṣmantaṁ tam uvāca bṛhaspatiḥ /
marutpatir ayaṁ soma ehi devān punar vibho //
śrutvā devaguror vākyam anarthaṁ vṛtraśānkayā /
so'bravīn neti taṁ śakraḥ svarga eva balād balī //
iyāya devān ādāya taṁ papur vidhivat surāḥ //

The purport is clear. Sóma, frightened by Vṛtrá, fled to the Amśumátī, flowing in the Kurukṣetra region. He settled there and the gods too settled there along with him. They used Sóma, and thereby evolved Soma-sacrifices.

Three historical implications stand out clear :—

- (a) that the Aryans once lived in a region noted for Sóma, high up in the Himālayas. The R̥jīká (= beaming) is mentioned as the home of the Sóma.
- (b) that Sóma was the chief characteristic of their religion and culture; and
- (c) that pressed from behind the Aryans moved forward and settled in the Kurukṣetra region which was watered by the river Amśumatī. (Those who lingered on in the Himālayas were called Uttara-Kurus, while those who moved on to south-east became Kuru-Pañcālas).

An analysis of the geographical data given by Vendidād, Fargard I makes out the Himālayas to be the original home of the Aryans; and this is exactly what is suggested by the Indian tradition incorporated in the Kumāra-Sambhava by Kālidāsa and also in the Meghadūta, where the Yakṣa, representing the Indian Aryan, gone far away from home, traces his march back from the southernmost part of India to the Himālayas, characterised by the Meru-lake-Māna-Sarovara [Brāhmaṇ Sarah : Raghuvamśa 12.60]. The high praise and divinity bestowed on the Kailāśa and other peaks of the Himālayas by the Purāṇas and other literature confirms it; and this is exactly what Hoernle suggested on philological grounds.

The word Amśú occurs several times in the ṚV. and generally in all the passages it means Sóma. Amśumatī would, therefore, mean the river rich in the Sóma, i.e. the river on whose banks great Soma-sacrifices were performed. In the Brāhmaṇic as well as post-Vedic literature Kuru-pradeśa is noted for Soma-sacrifices and so it is described by the Kuru-dhamma Jātaka, and Mahābhārata in Vanaparva 129-130. Amśumatī may, therefore, be located in the Kuru-region as suggested by the Bṛhad-devatā; and if this conclusion is right its identification with Sārasvatī is irresistible.

The above Soma-legend is referred to in the ṚV. VIII. 96. 13-15 which read :—

áva drapśo amśumatīm atiṣṭhad
 iyānāḥ Kṛṣṇó daśábhiḥ sahásraiḥ /
 ávat tám índraḥ śácyā dhámantam
 ápa snéhitir nṛmāṇā adhatta //

drapsám apaśyaṃ viṣuṇe cārantam
 upahvaré nadyò amśumátyāḥ /
 nábho ná kṛṣṇám avatasthivámsam
 íśyāmi vo vṛṣaṇo yúdhyaťájáu //
 ádha drapsó amśumátyā upásthé-
 'dhārayat tanvāṃ titviśāṇāḥ /
 víśo ádevîr abhyācārantîr
 bḥhaspátinā yujéndraḥ sasāhe //

The purport of the legend is as clear as that of the one told in the Bṛhad-devatā. Śāyana is, therefore, wrong when he rejects it saying : "etad anārsatvenādaraṇīyam". But the words to be noted in these stanzas are : drapsá and Amśumátî, We have identified Amśumátî with the river Sārasvatî and this is confirmed by the word drapsá. Śāyana explains drapsá by "drutaṃ saratîti" taking recourse to the license "pṛṣodarādîni yathopadiṣṭam". To me this explanation seems to be a little strained ; and I should prefer to have it from √drā 'run' and √psā (√bhas 'eat'), explaining the shortening of ā of √drā through the shift of accent on the suffix -á. The proposed derivation aptly brings out the integrated import of the term : the root √dra signaling Sôma's extreme dynamism and the verb √psā typifying its supreme food value.

Surely the Vedic Aryans had something very deep in their mind when they coined this term ; for, ultimately Sôma was inter-

1. For a similar derivation of rud-dra cp. Vāyu-Purāṇa I. 9.73 :—
 evam uktās tu rurudur dudruvúś ca samantataḥ /
 rodanād dravanāc caiva rud-drá nāmneti víśrutāḥ //

From √rud alone cp. Kúrma-Purāṇa 10, p. 90.

I should now derive the word sū-drá also from √śvi + √drā explaining it as 'one who runs after material things' which are gross. Taking clue from sū-drá I should now derive pañí from √pṛ 'fill' as is clear from ita cognate pelnas 'reward' in Lithuanian. That pañí had some such significance becomes clear from Bhāgavata-Purāṇa III. 6.28 :—

ātyantikena sattvena
 divaṃ devāḥ prapedire /
 dharāṃ rajaḥsvabhāvena
 paṇayo ye ca tān anu //

This derivation from √pṛ well explains cerebralization. This should also suggest derivation of mañí from √mṛ signifying 'the stone which is unusually hard' fully fossilized and dead for which cp. Dharmasamhitā :—

cakraṃ ratho mañiḥ khaḍgáś carma ratnaṃ ca pañcamam /
 ketur nidhíś ca saptaiva prāṇahināni cakṣate //

preted by them as Bráhmaṇ, (= élan vital, Bergson), which lets out of itself the Saṁsāra ($\sqrt{sṛ}$ 'gó) or jágat (\sqrt{gam} , 'evermoving') and through his essential savor (rása) sustains it (cp. RV. IX. 113). The Vedic Aryans prized this Sóma uppermost; and stimulated by this they broke into accents the parallel of which is seldom found in world literature.

There occur not a few stanzas in the RV. which sing of the glories of the Sóma; but its ninth Book is wholly devoted to its rapturous glorification. In the hymns of this book the poet's intuition reaches high watermark—for it is here that we find real intuitive knowledge i.e. that 'knowledge of act' which spontaneously flows into poetic activity as God does into what it creates (X. 82.5); and a poet is indeed a miniature Prajāpati whose intuition is like God's creative urge purely formative and forming. It is such a state of the poet's mind which flows into real poetry and it is this virgin poetry, at once pictorial and eloquent, which we find in the ninth book of the RV.

This intuition and the spiritual ecstasy created by it reach their highest when the Vedic sages sing of the glories of Sóma not as a drink, nor as a plant, but as the supreme symbol of the settled order (ṛtá= Tao; see Tao Te Ching ch. XXV. op. r-ā-tha $\sqrt{ṛ}$ 'go') and the vigour that sustains it. This is indeed what constitutes the fundamental dhárman or dhárma, and this is Vedic ṛtá or krátu (= cracy) or power "that keeps the great churn going" and the aptest symbol of this creative force is Sóma.

The Aryans have expressed the principle of 'motion' by the root $\sqrt{sṛ}$; and it is from this root that they have derived words like saṁsāra (= jágat 'ever-moving'), Sarít 'river', Salilá 'water', Saranyú 'quickly moving', sárapas 'fast-running', Sarámā (dūtī/ \sqrt{du} 'run') and Saráyu (= Sarít, name of a river). On RV. III. 53.15-16 Sāyaṇa is right in explaining Sasarparī by "sarpaṇasīlā vāṇī"; and in doing so he has aptly hinted at an unbroken Indian tradition regarding the nature of sound for which cp. Bṛhaddevatā IV. 115-116. We derive the word Sáras from $\sqrt{sṛ}$ and equate it with Sóma that "sets the great churn going". The term drapsá hints at this meaning and the legend referred to in the RV. and Bṛhaddevatā implies it.

The foregoing discussion insures for us the equation: Amśu-mátī = Sárasvatī and the meaning of the word Sárasvatī as 'rich in

Sóma' and not 'rich in waters', which perhaps she never was. And the moment we seize this import of the word Sárasvatī the real basis of the name Brahmāvárta becomes clear to our mind—for it was truly in this region of the Kúrus that the Aryan ritual, based upon Sòma, was evolved; and it was this characteristic Aryan dhárma that bestowed on this holy region the name Dharmakṣétra, with which the first verse of the Bhagavad-Gītā opens. There is clear evidence that it was in the country of the Kúrus that the great Brāhmaṇas were composed. According to ŚB. III. 2.3.15 speech has its real abode in the land of the Kúrus, and according to ŚB: 1.7.28, Śāṅkhāyanaśrautasūtra XV. 3.15 and Lātyāyanaśrautasūtra VIII. 11.18 the mode of sacrifice among the Kurupañcālas was the best in the country. According to ṚV. III. 23 Devásravas and Devávāta, the two Kauravá Kings, kindled fire on the Dṛṣadvatī, the Āpayá, and the Sárasvatī, that is in the sacred region of the Kurukṣétra about which is said in the Mahābhārata:—

trayāṇām api lokānām Kurukṣetram viṣiṣyate /
 pāmsavo'pi Kurukṣetrād vāyunā samudiritāḥ //
 api duṣkṛtakarmāṇam nayanti paramāṃ gatim /
 dakṣiṇena sarasvatyā uttareṇa dṛṣadvatīm //
 ye vasanti Kurukṣetre te vasanti triviṣṭape /
 Kurukṣetre gamiṣyāmi Kurukṣetre vasāmy aham //
 apy'ekām vācam utsrjya sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyate /
 brahmavedī Kurukṣetram puṇyam brahmarṣisevitam //
 tasmin vasanti ye martyā na te śocyāḥ kathamcana //
 tarantukārantukayor yad antaram
 rāmahradānām ca macakrukasya ca /
 etat Kurukṣetrasamantapañcakam
 pitāmahasyottaravedir ucyate //

Vana-Parva 83.203-207.

See also :—

vedī prajāpater eṣā samantāt pañcayojanā /
 kuror vai yajñāśīlasya kṣetram etan mahātmanah //
 Vana-Parva 129.22; 129-130.

And it was again this dharmakṣétra, where king Náhuṣā, wishing to consecrate himself for a thousand years, settled on the bank of the holy Sárasvatī after the rivers of other regions had expressed their inability to help him in his mighty venture as is narrated by Bṛhaddevatā (VI. 20-24 + RV. VII 95-96):—

rājā varṣasahasrāya
 dikṣiṣyan Nahuṣaḥ purā /
 cacāraikarathenemām
 bruvan sarvāḥ samudragāḥ //
 yakṣye vahata bhāgān me
 dvandvaśo vāthavaikaśaḥ /
 pratyūcus taṁ nṛpaṁ sadyaḥ
 svalpavīryāḥ kathāṁ vayam //
 vahema bhāgān sarvāṁs te
 sattre vārṣasahasrike /
 sarasvatīm:prapadyasva
 sā te vakṣyati Nāhuṣa //
 tathety uktvā jagāmāsu
 āpagām sa sarasvatīm /
 sā caināṁ pratiagrāha
 duduhe ca payo ghṛtam //
 etad atyadbhutaṁ karma
 sarasvatyā nṛpaṁ prati /
 vārunaiḥ kīrtayāmāsa
 prathamasya dvitīyayā //

Bṛhaddevatā (VII. 155, 157, VIII. 1-9 RV. X. 198) has immortalized the holy legend of Devāpi and Śāntanu, the two great kings of this region with the emphasis on the extraordinary spirit of renunciation shown by Devāpi for which cp. Viṣṇu Purāṇa IV. 20.24-30.

And I insist on this conclusion on the basis of the term Kūru, which, to my mind, is singularly apt and illuminating. I derive it from the root √ku 'sing', which gives us also kavī meaning 'a sage', an artist who, being bitten by Poetry cryingly bursts into music. How apt is it then that the Kūrus, the wise men of the north, resorted to Sōma or Amśú, as the source of divine animation; or to put it still better in the words of the RV. and Bṛhad-devatā that the Sōma itself sought shelter among them—for they were a people gifted with high imagination and knew how to handle, with reason-gloved hands, the burning accents of rhythm and rhyme.

And there is purpose behind this legend. The location of Sōma, the symbol of striving, among the Kūrus implies a stress upon their gift of practical intellect, which worked itself into that syncretistic medley of beliefs and rituals into which, in the later centuries, was poured the more potent leaven of the Upaniṣadic

message, that arose in the east further from the region of the Kúrus, as is clear from the anecdotes regarding Videha Janaka of Mithilá and other saints mentioned in the Upaniṣads.

And it is by the net of these new connections which the two words Sáras and Sóma have thrown over things in recalling them, that we arrive at this enchanting vision of the Kúrus and their region, flooded and fertilized by the Sóma, that flashing stream of "song and sanctity". How thought shines and glows in this virile region. From generation to generation, a succession of Kúrus, the very breath of the people's imagination, till we arrive at the Bhagavad-Gītā which was not, in reality, the native voice of the Kúrus, and yet was spoken in their region by a man, who stole from nature herself, her secrets of life, and set them into songs that put heart into Ārjuna, when he found himself challenged by his own kith and kin, compelling him to see his perilous instant as a particle in the flow of time. This is Gītā, the 'Song celestial' that has been a guide and solace to struggling humanity, saving them from doubt and swerving and ringing them in as actors by the glorious light of the coming ever-lasting world.

III

From the point of view of motion sound may be as fast as light and sound is the attribute of the sky which is all-pervasive. In order to make the connection between sound and sky more intimate Sanskritists have termed the sky as nábhās, which means "producer or transmitter of the sound". The word is derived from √nabh 'sound' and it is from √nabh that we get abh-rá meaning 'cloud producing thunderous sound and raining', the reduction of syllabic nasal ṇ into a being due to the shift of accent on the suffix—rá. Taking into consideration the quick motion of sound Yāska, followed by others, has explained Sárasvatī by "Sarṇaśīlā vāṇī" and in this he is right.

But if Sáras means Sóma in Sárasvatī, meaning a river, it should have the same meaning in Sárasvatī as a name of speech. And the moment we realize this meaning of Sárasvatī (speech) a most propitious and purposeful aspect of speech heaves before our eyes, an aspect which the sages have rendered by such epithets of unmistakable significance as sūnṛta (=su-ṛta), sūnára (beautiful), ṛtambhará (sustaining settled order), Viśvárūpā (all-formed), viśvam-invá (actuating all), and Sasarpārī (fast-moving); for it was

such an inspired speech with which the sages worshipped their gods (RV. I. 1137); and it is this Sárasvatī, saturated with Sóma, and therefore acting like a refreshing, rejuvenating and purifying flood, that has been the sole vehicle of the Brahmanic thought throughout these ages in contrast to the Prakrits that are poor in force, in colour, and in variety and are stubbornly fixed in the least connotations of their meaning and are, for that reason, used by the common man of the land. It is this Sárasvatī, the goddess of speech inspired by Sóma, which we have been annually worshipping since time immemorial.

The foregoing observations have raised a new issue of vital significance. The same is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The RV. is noted for its grand invocations to Agni, Ādityá, and Indra, but it is in the glorification of Indra that it captivates us for ever. I'ndra is one of the oldest Aryan gods and he stands for all that is grand and glorious. He is the husband of Śací (force and glory) and is the lord of Sóma (typified in X. 119) the exhilarating nectar of the gods. The sages attribute Indra's heroic exploits to Sóma, invigorated with which he slays the demons Vṛtrá, Śámbara and Áhi and lets loose rivers for the service of the Aryan settlements.

Sárasvān is one of the well-known epithets of Indra where again Sáras should mean Sóma and not 'water' as has been wrongly taken by the author of the Bṛhad-devatā in :—

“Sarāmsi ghṛtavanty asya
santi lokeṣu yat triṣu /
sarasvantam iti prāha
vācam prāhuḥ sarasvatīm” //

Obviously, Sóma is the chief source of I'ndra's strength and it is this Sóma (= Sáras) that characterizes this particular name of Indra as does vājra his other names : Vájrabāhu, Vájrahasta, and Vajrín.

In RV. VIII. 38.10 :—

“āhām sárasvatīvator indrāgnyór ávo vṛṇe /
yábhyām gāyatrám ṛcyáte” //

The word “sárasvatīvator” is explained by Yábhyām gāyatrám ṛcyáte” and this also is a hint at the real meaning of Sáras (= Sóma).

The discussion about Sóma necessitates a few words about its dynamic vitality that leads its devotees to transreality.

RV. IV. 26 stands out as a unique contribution to Indian philosophy. It begins :—

“ahám mánur abhavam sūryas cā
 ’hám kakṣivām ṣir asmī vípraḥ /
 ahám Kútsam ārjuneyám ny ṣñje
 ’hám kavír usánā páśyatā mā” //
 ahám bhúmim adadām áryāyā—
 ’hám vṛṣṭím dāsúṣe mártýāya /
 ahám apó anayám vávasānā
 máma deváso ánu kētam āyan //
 Ahám púro mandasānó vy airám
 náva sākám navatīḥ sámbarasya /
 śatatamám veśyám sarvátātā
 dívodāsam atithigvám yád ávam //

These stanzas, by virtue of the exceptional force of their gaze turned inwards, typify the deepest philosophy of non-dualism; and there could be nothing more in the sphere of spiritualism than these assertions of the highest confidence and self-respect. “Máma deváso ánu kētam āyan” is a veiled hint at the historical event referred to above. In course of his search I’ndra finds out Sóma, drinks him to his heart’s content, and thereby becomes unconquerable singing :—

“the winds that awakened the stars
 are blowing through my blood.”

And all this is keyed up in RV. IV. 26.7 :—

ādāya śyenó abharat sómam
 sahásram savám ayútam ca sākám /
 átrā púramdhir ajahād árātīr
 máde sómasya mūrā ámūrah //

After finding Sóma, the wise Indra leaves the niggardly mortals far behind (in the race)—for then he is inspired by Sóma.

And imbued with that spiritual revelation, the poet Vāmádeva grasped the ultimate unity of his self with the God-made universe in a flash of reality bursting forth in its unforgettable individuality, but infinite in its import and echoing capacity, a perception of infinity in a tiny atom which we find in the famous English verse:—

“To see a World in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower”.

And I would hate to be too systematic about these high matters. Nevertheless they call forth to my mind the famous statement of Rimbaud “Je est un autre”, “I is another”. Curiously enough there is another saying of Lantreamont just the contrary, “si j’ existe, je ne suis pas un autre”, “if I exist, I am not another”. The poetic philosophy of the Veda meditates between these two and ṚV. IV. 26 is the noblest expression of it—for it implies that subtle invasion of things into the spirit, near the centre of the soul, through Somatic emotion and effective union, by means of which real poetic intuition is born; and it knows all things as one—intentionally one—but one with the self, as resounding in the subjectivity. It is here, in this “widening oneself to be one with mankind” that we have to locate the compelling grandeur of the ṚV. IV. 26.

ṚV. IV. 26 then signalizes the high potency of the Sóma and hints at the vital significance of the term. We have proposed the equation of Sáras with Sóma and have seen that it is on account of the Sóma that Indra is called Sárasvān, and it is also on its account that Sárasvatī (= Amśumātī) has received this appellation.

We have now before us the antecedents and components of Sóma. There remains a word about its derivation. The one from √su ‘press’ is obvious; but we may also have it from √sū ‘impel’, which gives us words like ‘Savitár’ and ‘Sāvitrī’. The two roots may have originally been one and it was perhaps later that the same root diverged into two; the root √su, becoming restricted to the action in the form of ‘pressing’ and conjugated in the—nu-class (su-nó-ti), while √su remained generalized in the sense of ‘impelling’, having its inflection in the accented -á- class that is ‘suváti’ and so on. Besides these two, we have yet another root √sū meaning ‘beget, give birth to’ or the same root in a different class which is conjugated in the root class, that is sū-te, suvāte and so on.

I should strike a fusion of the three roots in the word Sóma and as a consequence should read a sublimated and integrated meaning of the term, such as should make it possible for the expression of it to rise into poetry. And the moment we arrive at this integrated meaning of the three roots encompassed in the word

Sóma, an enlarging change in our spiritual vision takes place, when Sóma reveals itself not as a mere plant, nor as mere fluid, but as the "right principle of action", (cp. X. 85, 1-5) which generates the universe, which keeps it going, and which is brewed or distilled from it through the poetic or mystic fervour in the form of basic savour which is signalized in :—

"Raso vai saḥ / Rasam hy evāyam labdhvānandī bhavati /

This is Sóma, the real spark of life about which I may quote :—

"It lies like the one warm spark
in the heart of an arctic crystal".

This fusion of the roots in the word Sóma has been underlined by the RV. X-85 which opens :—

Satyénóttabhitā bhūmih
sūryenóttabhitā dyáuḥ /
ṛténādityās tiṣṭhanti
divī sómo ádhi śritáḥ //
Sómenādityá balínaḥ
Sómena pṛthivī' mahī' /
átho nákṣatrāṇām eṣām
upáste sóma áhitaḥ //
Sómam manyate papiván
yát sampimśanty ósadhim /
sómam yám brahmāṇo vidúr
ná tásyāśnāti káścaná //
āchádvidhānair gupitó
bárhataih soma rakṣitáḥ /
grávnām ic chrṇván tiṣṭhasi
ná te ásnāti párthivaḥ //
yát tvā deva prapibanti
táta á pyāyase púnaḥ /
vāyúḥ sómasya rakṣitá
sámānām mása ákṛtiḥ //

These stanzas graphically signify the compact meaning of the term Sóma as spiritual elan and plant in one; but the real dash is for the Absolute, which is beyond the reach of the worldly man. Yet, the point I wish to make clear, is, that stanzas 1st and 5th have a patent reference to the moon as Sóma; and this is because it impels the world into animation and sends a flow of emotion in the

fabric of the dreaming world, as seems implied in Vāyu Purāṇa I. 23.82-83 :—

Somaś ca mantrasamyukto
yasmān mama mukhāc cyutaḥ /
jīvaḥ prāṇabhṛtām brahman
sarvaḥ pītvā stanair dhṛtam //
tasmāt somamayam caitad
amṛtam caiva saṁjñitam /
catuṣpādā bhaviṣyanti
śvetatvaṁ cāśya tena tat //

(For details of Soma's birth cp. Vāyu Purāṇa II. 18.)

And the moment we signalize this aspect of the moon we at once bring it nearer to the sun, which is called Sav-itār 'impeller'; and thereby evolve a unity of the two based upon the significance of the root √su 'impel'; and it is this unity of the two, which is typified in ṚV. X. 85.19 :—

nāvo-navo bhavati jāyamāno
'hnām ketúr uśāsām ety āgram /
bhāgām dévebhyo ví dadhāty āyān
prā candrāmās tirate dīrghām āyuh //

(He, born afresh, is new and new forever; ensign of days he goes before mornings. Coming, he orders for the gods their portion. The moon prolongs the days of our existence.)

And this moon, rhythmically expanding and contracting, is, perhaps the best illustration of the Chinese philosophy of K'ai-ho, according to which when you expand (K'ai) you must think of the gathering up (ho) or else you will fly apart through the explosive tendency of creativity, and your structural harmony will vanish; and when you pull the parts together (ho) you should think of the vital force, which gave them birth (K'ai) or else the result will be a dead thing, devoid of spirit.

And, if, in ṚV. X. 85.19 it is the moon, that symbol of Ṛtā (= tao + K'ai-ho) which is praised as revealing itself into the moon and the sun, in ṚV. I. 115.5 it is the sun, who assumes this role :—

tān mitrásya váruṇasyābhicākṣe
sūryo rūpām kṛṇute dyór upásthe /
anantām anyád rúśad asya pájaḥ
kṛṣṇām anyád dharítaḥ sám bharanti //

(In the sky's lap the sun this form assumeth, that Váruṇa and Mitrá may behold it. His Bay steeds well maintain his power eternal, at one time bright and darksome at another.)

And so the 'impelling sense' which is immanent in both the sun and the moon, is a step that leads to their ultimate unity; and this is so aptly mirrored in the word só-ma.

Sóma's identification with Mádhu (IX. 50.3; 51.3; 72.2) is a favourite topic with the Védā, while, conversely, Mádhu has been frequently called Sóma, because it is pressed out of the hive and has therefore received this appellation.

And it is this Sóma, the supreme ideal of action in love, from which existence proceeds, and which is in things, as it were, the secret of creative sources, that has inspired the saints of all lands and ages, and it is this dynamic savour that has quickened their utterances into life eternal. Even a tiny drapsá (drop) of this savour is enough to invest everything the poet sees with an inexhaustible fullness and value; and it is only then that the poet's eye, grafted on his heart, begins to read deeply into the bosom of the universe, and enables his rapturous imagination to comprehend the order of all things and every thing in the light of the Whole.

Let us now pass on to the next paragraph, where this meaning of Sóma and Sáras is made still more unmistakably clear.

VI

RV. II. 3.8 is a unique landmark in the history of Indian philosophy;—

“Sárasvatī sād́háyantī dhíyam na
idā devī' bháratī vísvátúr̥tiḥ /
tísró devī'ḥ svadháyā barhír édám
áchidram pántu śaranám niśádyā” //

This invocation divides speech into three varieties, i.e. Idā, Sárasvatī and Bháratī and calls upon them to participate in the sacrifice of the worshipper.

In RV. I. 188.8 :—

“bháratīde Sárasvatī
yá vaḥ sárva upabruvé /
tá naś codayata śriyé” //

a request is made to the three goddesses for wealth and welfare. RV. I. 13.9; 142.9. II. 1.11; 32.8 constitute a prayer to the three

varieties of speech, while RV. II. 1.11d seems to establish a close relation between Vṛtrahá (=Sárasvān=Indra) and Sárasvatī, which becomes clear in RV. III. 4.8 (VII. 2.8):—

“á bháratī, bháratībhiḥ sajoṣā
 íḍā devaír manuṣyēbhir agníḥ /
 Sárasvatī sárasvatébhir arvāk
 tísró devír barhír édám sadantu //

This stanza invokes the three goddesses along with the deities belonging to the terrestrial, atmospheric and celestial spheres. It should be easy to interpret Íḍā as the terrestrial speech, symbolizing that knowledge which enables us to earn our livelihood; and this is exactly the connotation of íḍā, írā, ílā, íṣ all meaning nourishment. A connection between Sárasvatī and the atmospheric Sárasvatī (+ Indra) was suggested by RV. II. 1.11d; this is now confirmed by d of the stanza under discussion, according to which Sárasvatī represents the atmospheric speech and symbolizes the knowledge of diverse rituals, which, when rightly performed, lead us to heaven for a temporary spell of bliss. Bháratī represents the celestial speech and she symbolizes the knowledge par excellence. This knowledge being derived from the Sun is a sort of illumination, an awakening, which leads us to niḥśreyasa or nirvāna; for bharatá means Sun and Sun is the embodiment of light and life divine.

In order to attain material advancement men have developed diverse sciences; Íḍā denotes all these—for objects obtained through these sciences bedew our senses with physical pleasures and enable us to live this earthly life with satisfaction. Indian sages have never included such sciences in the knowledge par excellence, so much so that the Ísopaniṣat passes them over in silence mentioning only two: Apará vidyá and pará vidyá. By apará is meant Karmakāṇḍa and this is exactly the sphere of Sárasvatī, the goddess of speech dealing with Sáras, i.e. the Sóma. the Muṇḍakopaniṣad I. 14 too lays down a similar division of knowledge and includes in the Apará vidyá the four Védas together with their subsidiary texts; in fact, all what administers to Karma-kāṇḍa. By pará vidyá is meant Bháratī, the knowledge par excellence obtained from the Sun as the source of light, the exclusive vehicle of the gods, the real devayána, travelling by which men never return to the physical life again.

The threefold ' gradation of I'dā, Sárasvatī and Bháratī should explain the corresponding threefold divisions of the Vēda (Brāhmaṇá), Āraṇyáka and Upaniṣad and should afford an insight into the Aryan mind which had an ingrained preference for the number three and its multiples (see R̥V. 1.34; III. 56) and accordingly conceived the idea of God as Brahmá, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa, of Kālá as past, present, and future, of attributes as Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas; of loká as terrestrial, atmospheric, and celestial, and of the ultimate principle as Satyá, Śivá, and Sundara.

Iḍā, Sárasvatī and Bháratī are symbolized in the three Vyāhṛtis, i.e. Bhūh, Bhúvaḥ, Svāḥ of the Gāyatrī stanza, which therefore becomes the supreme essence of the Vēda² and is so much prized in the spiritual field. For standing at the confluence of the three streams of bhūh (Iḍā), bhúvaḥ (Sárasvatī), and Svāḥ (= Bháratī), this holy triped Gāyatrī cleanses our sins and grants us boons to our heart's desire. This Gāyatrī is the sign and token par excellence of the holy word, which is called 'gó' in the Vēda and is glorified with an array of imagery and eloquence seldom met with elsewhere. R̥V. I. 164 illustrates the point I have in mind—for it is here that the Vedist has soared "to Paradise to ease his breast of melodies" and has tried to grapple with the source of speech, its form, and music, which begins where the word stops.

1. Cp. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 23.34-37:—

katham tvayi sthitam brahma jagac cedam aśeṣataḥ /
 Omkārákṣarasamsthānam yat tu devi sthirāsthiram //
 tatra mātrātrayam sarvam asti yad devi nāsti ca /
 trayo lokās trayo vedās traividyaṁ pāvakatrayam //
 trīṇi jyotiṁṣi varṇās ca trayo dharmāgamās tathā /
 trayo guṇās trayāḥ śabdās trayo vedās tathāśramāḥ //
 trayāḥ kālās tathāvasthāḥ pitaro'harniśādayaḥ /
 etan mātrātrayam devi tava rūpaṁ sarasvatī //

See also 43.8-14.

2. Cp. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 101.23.27:—

tanmukhād om iti mahān abhūc chando mahāmune /
 tato bhūs tu bhuvās tasmāt tatas ca svar anantaram //
 etā vyāhṛtayas tisraḥ svarūpaṁ tad vivasvataḥ /
 Om ity asmāt svarūpāt tu sūkṣmarūpam raveḥ param //
 tato mahar iti sthalaṁ ganaṁ sthūlataram tataḥ /
 tatas tapas tataḥ satyam iti mūrtāni saptadhā //
 sthitāni tasya rūpāni bhavanti na bhavanti ca /
 svabhāva-bhāvayor bhāvaṁ yato gacchanti samśayam //
 ādyantam yat param sūkṣmam arūpam paramam sthitam /
 Om ity uktaṁ mayā vipra tat param brahmā tadvapuh //

The Vāyu Purāṇa (I. 23) gives a beautiful description of this gó :—

tato dhyānagatas tatra
 brahmā māheśvarīm parām /
 apaśyad gām virūpaṃ ca
 maheśvaramukhacyutām // 5 //
 catuṣpadām caturvaktrām
 caturhastām catuḥstanīm /
 caturnetrām catuḥṣṛṅgīm
 caturdaṃṣṭrām caturmukhīm /
 dvātrimśallokasamyuktām
 īśvarīm sarvatomukhīm // 6 //

* * * *

Brahmā lokanamaskāryaḥ
 prapadya tām maheśvarīm /
 gāyatrīm tu tato raudrīm
 dhyātvā brhmā suyantritaḥ // 11 //
 ity etām vaidikimṛ̥vidyām
 raudrīm gāyatrīm arpitām /
 japitvā tu mahādevīm
 rudralokanamaskṛtām /
 prapannas tu mahādevaṃ
 dhyānayuktena cetasā // 12 //
 tatas tasya mahādevī
 divyaṃ yogaṃ punaḥ smṛtā /
 aiśvaryaṃ jñānasampattīm
 vairāgyaṃ ca dadau punaḥ // 13 //

See also 23.40 and 49 :—

ṣadvimśat tadguṇā hy eṣā
 dvātrimśākṣarasamjñitā /
 prakṛtiṃ viddhi tām brahman
 tvatprasūtiṃ maheśvarīm // 49 //
 saiṣā bhāgavati devī
 tvatprasūtiḥ svayambhuvaḥ /
 caturmukhī jagadyoniḥ
 prakṛtir gauḥ prakīrtitā // 50 //
 ajām ekām lohitaṃ śuklakṛṣṇām
 viśvaṃ samprasṛjamānām surūpām /
 ajo'ham vai buddhimān viśvarūpām
 gāyatrīm gām viśvarūpām hi buddhvā // 51 //

To-day we take our language as an instrument of exploration and communication, a very delicate instrument, liable in all sorts of subtle ways to break down and we are also flexibly aware of what tricky and slippery creatures our words in reality are. That is not so with the Vedists. For them speech is an end in itself, the ultimate reality speaking forth its soul through these sparks of audible sound; the ultimate pattern of music residing at the single root of the powers of the universal soul. And, it is, thus, that Prayer, that potent instrument of the Vedist is couched in speech; and the Lord of Prayer and Speech alike is Bṛhaspáti, ' who is significantly invoked in the "Knowledge Hymn" of the RV. X. 71 which begins :—

bṛhaspate prathamam vācō ágram
yat prairata nāmadheyam dadhānāh /
yad eṣām śréṣṭham yád ariprám áśīt
preṇá tád eṣām níhitam gúhāvīh //

O Bṛhaspáti, when men, giving names to objects, sent out Vāks first and earliest utterances, all that was excellent and spotless, treasured in secret, became manifest through their affection.

1. Bṛhas-páti, as lord of the winged word is explained by Chāndogya (II. 2.1) as :—

tena tam ha bṛhas-pátir udgītham upāsām cakre / etam u eva bṛhas-pátim
manyante / vāg vai bṛhati / tasyā eva patih //

This is confirmed by Bṛhadāraṇyaka III. 20 :—

eṣa u eva bṛhas-pátih / vāg vai bṛhati tasyā eṣa patih / tasmād u bṛhas-
pátih //

See also Bṛhaddevatā I. 39-40 :—

bṛhantau páti yal lokāv
eṣa dvau madhyamottamau /
bṛhatā karmaṇā tena
bṛhaspátir itīritaḥ //
Brahma vāg brahma satyam ca
brahma sarvam idam jagat /
pātāram brahmaṇas tena
śaunahotraḥ stuvan jagau //

Bṛhas-páti is the lord of all the three varieties of speech, which are called his three seats in RV. IV. 50 1 (triśadhassthāh) for which cp. Bṛhad-devatā III. 14 :—

saiṣā tu trividhā vāg vai
divi ca vyomni ceḥa ca /
vyastā caiva samastā ca
bhajaty agnīm imām api //

Bṛhad-devatā V. 98-102 conceives Bṛhaspáti's birth from Aṅgiras, who was born out of the contents of vāk, thrown into fire.

Now, this origin of speech, this evolving relationship between name and form is a thing of the utmost wonder and mystery for the Vedist and he has tried all possible words to unravel it, if words can ever reveal what is beyond form and feeling. ṚV. X. 108 is apt in this respect, where Sarámā, the emissary of the gods, goes out in search of the gós, but is slighted by the pañís, who guard the enclosure of these cows.

This legend of the cows, Pañís, and Bṛhaspáti is a favourite topic of the Vedists and it raises a question of the utmost importance: what these cows in reality are?

And here the one fact that in all these contexts the god of the cows is Bṛhaspáti, who comes to their rescue and liberates them from their gúhā, (enclosure) should be enough to clear the point—for it establishes the fact that the cows under reference are none else than the speech presided over by Bṛhaspáti, in its diverse forms and patterns and that a study of its origin and growth and also of the art of its handling is the highest aim of life for a Vedist.

Remember that gó of the Vedist is, strictly speaking “the speech of the song, the speech of poetry”; that flesh-and-blood of our daily idiom, which is rarest—for it is also the closest to our soul. It arises in the deepest depths of our soul, “the quiet mysterious depths” about which Carlyle spoke so illuminatingly in his *Essays* (page 9). For, in poetry the man concentrates or retires into the inmost depth of human reality. There he penetrates through quietude: not indeed through the illusory quietude of idleness and void of thought but through that infinite quietude in which all energies and relations are at play. It is from that inmost depth that the music of poetry arises, that spontaneous outburst of words which we hardly recognize as our own—for it is released in a moment of glow when we get free from our strong habitual barriers, which quickly reform themselves the moment that poetic glow is over. We feel in our poetical moments as if some heavy obstruction is momentarily whisked away from the spring of our life. This is what is meant by the gúhā, this cave of the inmost depth, where we repose ourselves before bursting into poetic bloom; and this is exactly what is meant by the release of the cows from the cave or enclosure in ṚV. IV. 50.5 (see also AV. XX. 8.91):—

sá suṣṭúbhā sá ḥkvatā gaṇena
valam̐ ruroja phaligám̐ ráveṇa /
bḥhaspátir usrīyā havyasúdaḥ
kánikradad vávasatīr údājat //

But if in these contexts—and they are many and vital, the word *gó* signifies *Vák*, there are contexts in which its patent meaning is cow, the animal. In this latter sense the word *gó* is to be derived from the root $\sqrt{gā}$ 'go'; and the moment we arrive at this fusion of the roots meaning 'sing' and 'go' in the word 'gó' a peculiar image of an animal representing 'harmony of music in motion' heaves before our eyes and we get at the real basis of the universal veneration that is accorded to the cow, the animal par excellence.

Só-ma, as source of speech is recurrently hymned in the 9th book of the *RV.*, and his sound, in its various forms, is the favourite topic of the Vedists. *Sav-itár*, as source of life, represented by the speech-world, is frequently worshipped by the *Véda*; and this aspect of his is so beautifully typified by the word *rav-í* (\sqrt{ru} 'make sound') meaning 'one who creates sound'. The word *rav-í* throws light on the very source of sound i.e. the sun in its ceaseless march of creation and recreation. It is this *ráv-a* or *rav-átha* (*RV.* I. 100.13) of harmony, integration, and perfection, which is called "the song of the settled order" in *RV.* IV. 23.8:—

ṛtásya ślóko badhirá tatarḍa
kárṇā budhānāḥ śucámāna āyóḥ //

which is explained by *Bṛhad-devatā* II. 43 as:—

raveṇāntārasaiḥ kṣiptaiḥ
sthito vyomny eṣa māyayā /
ṛtásya ślóka ity eṣa
punaś cainam̐ tatobravīt //

The same mystic sound of the sun is referred to again in *Bṛhad-devatā* (II. 59-60):

ruvan vyomny udayam̐ yāti
kṛntatrād visrjann apah /
purūravasam̐ āhainam̐
svavākyenoruvāsini //
yat tu pracyāvayann eti
ghoṣeṇa mahatā mṛtam /
tena mṛtyum̐ imam̐ santam
stauti mṛtyur̐ iti svayam̐ //

It is this mystic holy speech to which a pointed reference is made in RV. X. 177.2 :—

patan̄gó vācam̄ mánasā bibharti
tām̄ gandharvó'vadad gārbhe antāḥ /
tām̄ dyótamānām̄ svaryām̄ maniṣām̄
ṛtāsya padé kaváyo ni pānti //

Thus, the seed of the speech, in the form of the holy writ, is said to be residing in the Sun (Ra)v-í who actuates speech in the womb or interior of the man, whom when she has become manifest, the poets arrange melodiously in the seat of the holy order, i.e. the true divine beauty, pure, and clear, and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality or the colours and vanities of human Life; i.e. the beauty of the Absolute. The same idea is repeated in RV. X. 189.3 (=AV. VI. 31.3) as :—

trimśád dhāma ví rājati
vāk̄ patan̄gāya dhīyate //

And with a higher import in AV. X. 8.33 as :—

apūrvéṇeṣitā vācas
tā vadanti yathāyathām /
vādantīr yātra gácchanti
tád āhur bráhmaṇam̄ mahát //

Thus the Rav-í, as source of the holy speech, is hymned in the Vēda; and it is to this ráv-a or sound of ṛtá that reference is made by Bṛhad-devatā II. 81 :—

sūryām̄ eva satim̄ etām̄
gaurīm̄ vācam̄ sarasvatīm̄ /
paśyāmo vaiśvadeveṣu
nipātenaiva kevalāḥ //
yadā tu vāg bhavaty eṣā
sūryāmuṁ lokam̄ āśrittā /
tathā sūktam̄ uṣā bhūtvā
sūryā ca bhajate'khilam //

It is this ráv-a which appears as sūryā in RV. X. 85. The sun, as embodiment of śabda-Brahma is hymned in the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa (II. 11) as :—

yathā saptagaṇe'py ekaḥ
pradhānyenādhiko Raviḥ // 6 //

sarvasáktiḥ parā viṣṇoḥ
 Ṛgyajuḥsāmasamjñitā /
 saiṣā trayī tapaty amho
 jagataś ca hinasti yā // 7 //
 saiṣa viṣṇuḥ sthitaḥ sthityām
 jagataḥ pālanodyataḥ /
 Ṛgyajuḥsāmabhūto'ntaḥ
 Savitur dvija tiṣṭhati // 8 //
 māsi māsi Rav-ir yo yas
 tatra tatra hi sā parā /
 trayīmayī Viṣṇuśaktir
 avasthānaṃ karoti vai // 9 //
 Ṛcaḥ stuvanti pūrvāhne
 madhyāhne'tha yajūṃṣi vai /
 Bṛhadrathamtarādīni
 sāmāny ahnaḥ kṣaye Rav-im // 10 //
 aṅgam'eṣā trayī viṣṇor
 Ṛgyajuḥsāmasamjñitā /
 Viṣṇuśaktir avasthānam
 sadāditye karoti sā // 11 //
 evaṃ sā sāttvikī śaktir
 vaiṣṇavī yā trayīmayī /
 ātmasaptagaṇastham taṃ
 Bhāsvantam adhitiṣṭhati // 14 //
 evaṃ sā vaiṣṇavī śaktir
 naivāpeti tato dvija /
 māsānumāsam bhāsvantam
 adhyāste tatra samsthitam // 20 //

See also III. 5.15-29.

And it is this "music of harmony" which is praised by Shakespeare in the following lines :—

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !
 Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
 Creep in our ears : soft stillness and the night
 Become the touches of sweet harmony.
 Sit, Jessica : look, how the floor of heaven
 Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold :
 There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
 But in his motion like an angel sings,

Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins ;
 Such harmony is in immortal souls ;
 But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
 Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Merchant of Venice, Act V. 54-65.

And still more beautifully by Goethe in the opening lines of his Faust as :—

The sun-orb sings, in emulation,
 'Mid brother-spheres, his ancient round :
 His path predestined through Creation
 He ends with step of thunder-sound.

See also Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 78.1-2, 10-15 ; 101.20-27 ; 102.1-22 ; and chapters 103-111 all hymning the glories of Rav-i as source of the holy Vedic Vāk.

It is, thus, a unique method of the Vedist to compress vast and varied meanings in a word ; this way of fusing more than one roots of diverse meanings into one word and then make it a symbol of more than one aspect of life as is clear from a study of the cognate word gā-tú meaning 'song' and 'way' in one.

The connection of Karmakāṇḍa, based upon Sāras (= Sōma) with agriculture and cow was early, long-continued, and at times intimate (RV. III. 55). A few observations regarding these may clear the point I wish to emphasize.

VII

RV. IV. 57.5 deals with the basis of human civilization :—

“Śúnāsīrāv imām vācam juṣethām
 yád divi cakráthuḥ payah /
 tenémām úpa síñcatam” //

The stanza refers to the good earth, the heavenly milk, the plough-share, and prayer as requisites of agriculture, which leads mankind to civilization and social advancement. The word Sīrā is strikingly apt in its meaning—for derived from √sī 'bind' it means the ploughshare, which ties the peasant to the earth, keeping him constantly busy with the seasonal round of toil on his plot of land, year in and year out, from generation to generation, and thereby distinguishes him from the food-gatherers and from the nomadic tribes, who because they are not attached to any special place, have left few footprints on the sands of time.

Imám of the RV. IV. 57.5d may as well refer to speech. If that is allowed, we shall be invoking Śuná and Sírā—the two presiding deities of agriculture—to bedew our speech with savour, for it is men endowed with sweet speech who are prompted to perform righteous acts as is implied in RV. III. 55.7 :—

prá rányāni raṇyaváco bharante /

The mutual relationship between speech and action is as immediate and as noiseless, as communication among mirrors; and it is this intimacy of connection between speech and act what is implied by RV. III. 55.7.

To what purpose am I submitting these observations about speech and agriculture? What is the conclusion they lead us to?

The one conclusion that follows from them is the intimate relationship between Sasarparī (= cow), agriculture, and prosperity. RV. III. 53.15 purports to describe Sasarparī as dispelling famine and bringing fame to the peasants (kr̥ṣ-tí, √kr̥ṣ 'plough') of the Fivefold Race. According to RV. III. 53.16 Sasarparī loudly bellows while bestowing imperishable fame on the gods. The latter expression clearly identifies Sasarparī (= Oserpis?) with the Cow (Hesis 'Isis' of later times), the divine incarnation of 'word' and the symbol of fertility and personal immortality. It is this cow banishing famine and bellowing immortal notes of life, which appears as Kāmadhenu in the famous Vaṣiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra legend and is the one real object of Gāthín's longing prayers in the III book of the RV. To be sure this Sasarparī is Sárasvatī (√sṛp 'move', extension of √Sṛ 'move') the second variety of speech expressing man's practical intellect in the form of Karmakāṇḍa; and Karmakāṇḍa has been pointedly described by our Dharma-śāstras to be the prime basis of agriculture embodying fruition and fertility; and it is for the requisites of agriculture that a prayer is addressed in the remaining stanzas of RV. III. 53.

And I repeat that the enduring fabrics of history are built only on the bowed shoulders of the peasant, stooping over space or plough, and that India's vital history has been the history of the plough's march from north to the south, an history of the art of working well coupled with the art of playing well; and our national literature is nothing if not an impassioned echo of the joyous shouts of this march and an image of all the colours of its possible happiness.

And when the primeval poet, charged with the eros which carries the dream of the world along to ceaseless births, renewals and swarming productivity, sang the glories of the wedlock of Sītā and Rāma he actually glorified the union of Sīrá and Śunā (welfare=Rāma) and revealingly described the march of the rural Aryan culture from north to south. Vyāsa, the consummate compiler of the Purāṇas too rapturously rendered the same union of work and prosperity through the wedlock of Viṣṇu (√viṣ, 'be active') and Lakṣmī (=Śrī=prosperity), while Mahābhārata's account of Śrīkṛṣṇa's dalliance with Rādhā (√rādh 'prosper') is an apt illustration of the intimate relation that exists between agriculture and human advancement.

Surely, it was not by accident that Vyāsa depicted Śrī-Kṛṣṇa as a cowboy and that our national poet Kālidāsa attributed the birth of Raghú, the greatest Indian Emperor, to a boon from Nandinī, the cow immortal. The two poets were never juster than in this masterly stroke, for they realized the vast potentialities of the cow as basis of agriculture, and as source of creative impulses. To the orderly man and to the tidy-minded woman cow is the one embodiment of the principle of selfless service on which alone the rule of a true democracy should rest. And what is more; the cow has patiently taught us the lesson of forbearance, simplicity, serenity and sanity which are lacking in modern life, in spite of its infinite power and variety. And although to a modern man it would all seem very elementary, yet, for us, Indians, this conception of the cow has been extraordinarily potent and fruitful—for out of it came an ideal of man, a perfect man, and a great moral system based upon charity, sanity and selfless service.

To be sure Vyāsa had a prophetic genius; and he looked away from what he was to what mankind was to become in the future cycles of civilization; and it was on this account that he warned mankind repeatedly emphasizing that an empire, which did not respect cow and agriculture would not flourish; while due regard to these was sure to win prosperity for both the ruler and the ruled. It was this rural universalism that led to the worship of Kṛṣṇa (√krṣ 'plough') as a cow-boy, ever longing to mingle with the lowly and ever expanding the implacable fecundity of becoming; and a rational study of the Kṛṣṇa-cult may prove to be of special assistance at this crucial point in the cultural evolution of our country.

The most significant point yet remains to be made. The root √si 'bind', from which we derive the terms Si-rá and si-ná (property) is highly significant—for while it typifies the 'binding' aspect of the 'plough-share' and 'property' it always carries a hint of the longing for liberation from them as bondage and ultimately leads to the ideals of renunciation and disinterested action i.e. Karmayoga. Imbued with these ideals a man turns away from matter and pursues with undistracted ardour the search for good, in all its forms, not for result or accidental advantages but for itself, disregarding the lesser ideals of money, position, and power and content with nothing less than the best of which human nature is capable.

And who was it that propounded this magnificent philosophy? It was Śrī-Kṛṣṇa the cow-boy, the brother of Haladhara ("wielder of the ploughshare") a man of intense action with no longing for its reward; indeed a true child of the cow immortal.

Sáras, Sóma, Sárasvatī, Bháratī and Sírā are an epitome and explanation of our national achievement; and if any one wanted a motto for a history of our stable civilization, they might serve his purpose—for it was indeed through their integral totality that we have sought to attain Śu-ná, Viṣ-ṇu, Ráma and Kṛṣṇa, the true representatives of universal prosperity based upon selfless labour.

Here, then, are some of the bold outlines of the traditional Indian philosophy of life. All this is in danger to-day. Let us learn from it. Let us preserve its spirit—for it is here that "You are going to visit men who are supremely men".
