



The Vedic Doctrine of "Silence"

Then only will you see it, when you cannot speak of it; for the knowledge of it is deep silence, and suppression of the senses. Hermes, *Lib.* X.5

The general significance of "silence" in connection with rites, myths, and mysteries has been admirably discussed by René Guénon in *Études traditionnelles*.¹ Here we propose to cite other, more specific details from the Vedic tradition. It must be premised that the Supreme Identity (*tad eṣam*) is not merely in itself "without duality" (*advaita*), but when considered from another and external point of view is an identity of many different things. By this we do not mean only that a first unitary principle transcends the reciprocally related pairs of opposites (*dvandvau*) that can be distinguished on any level of reference as contraries or known as contradictory; but rather that the Supreme Identity, undetermined even by a first assumption of unity, subsumes in its infinity the whole of what can be implied or represented by the notions of the infinite and the finite, of which the former includes the latter, without reciprocity.² On the other hand, the finite cannot be excluded or isolated from or denied to the infinite, since an independent finite would be in itself a limitation of the infinite by hypothesis. The Supreme Identity is, therefore, inevitably repre-

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¹ René Guénon, "Organisations initiatiques et sociétés secrètes," and "Du Secret initiatique," *Le Voile d'Isis* (1934), pp. 349 and 429; "Mythes, mystères et symboles," *Le Voile d'Isis* (1935), p. 385. Since 1936 *Le Voile d'Isis* has been published as *Études traditionnelles*.

² "The Infinite (*aditih*) is Mother, Sire, and Son, whatever hath been born, and the principle of birth, etc." (RV 1.89.10); "Nothing is changed in the immovable Infinite (*ananta*) by the emanation or the withdrawals of worlds" (Bhāskara, *Bijaganita* [Benares, 1927], repeating the thought of AV x.8.29 and BU v.1, that "Though plenum (*pūrnam*) be taken from plenum, plenum yet remains."). The inclusion of the finite in the Infinite is expressly formulated in AĀ 11.3.8, "A is Brahman, the ego (*aḥam*) is within it."

On the relation of unity to multiplicity see Coomaraswamy, "Vedic Exemplarism" [in the present volume—ED.].

sented in our thought under two aspects, both of which are essential to the formation of any concept of totality *secundum rem*. So we find it said of Mitrāvaruṇau (*apara* and *para* Brahman, God and Godhead) that from one and the same seat they behold "the finite and the infinite" (*aditīm ditīm ca*, RV 1.62.8); where, of course, it must be borne in mind that *in divinis* to "see" is the same as to "know" and to "be." Or in like manner, but substituting the notion of spiration for that of manifestation, it can be said that "That One is equally spirated, despirated" (*tad eṣam ānid avātam*, RV x.129.2); or is at the same time "Being and Nonbeing" (*sadasat*, RV x.5.7).³

The same conception, expressed in terms of utterance and silence, is clearly formulated in RV 11.43.3, "Whether, O Bird, thou utterest weal aloud, or sittest silent (*tūṣṇim*), think on us with favor."⁴ And similarly in the ritual, we find that rites are performed either with or without enunciated formulae, and that lauds are offered either vocally or silently; for which the texts also provide an adequate explanation. Here it must be premised that the primary purpose of the Vedic Sacrifice (*yajña*) is to effect a reintegration of the deity conceived of as spent and disintegrated by the act of creation, and at the same time that of the sacrificer himself, whose person, considered in its individual aspect, is evidently incomplete. The mode of reintegration is by means of initiation (*dīkṣa*) and symbols (*pratiṣṭhā*, *ākṛti*), whether natural, constructed, enacted, or vocalized; the sacrificer is expected to identify himself with the sacrifice itself and thus with the deity whose primordial self-sacrifice it represents, "the observance of the rule thereof being the same as it was at the crea-

³ The "distinct operations" (*vivṛata*), interior and exterior (*tīra* or *guhya*, and *āvis*), of the Supreme Identity are represented by many other pairs, e.g., order and disorder (cosmos and chaos), life and death, light and darkness, sight and blindness, waking and sleep, potency and impotence, motion and rest, time and eternity, etc. It may be observed that all of the negative terms represent privations or evils if considered empirically, but absence of limitation, and good, when considered anagogically—the negative concept including the positive, as cause includes effect. [This is further illustrated by the two natures, *nirukṭānirukṭa*, mortal and immortal, like Mitrāvaruṇau in RV 1.164.38, the two Brahmins in BU 11.3.1, Prajāpati in ŚB x.1.3.2.]

⁴ Cf. RV x.27.21, "Beyond what is heard here, there is another sound" (*śrāva id ena paro anyad asti*); 1.164.10, "At the back of yonder Heaven the gods incant an omniscient word without outgoing effect" (*mantrayante . . . viśvavidam vācam avīśvaminvam*); JUB 11.7-9, where the initiate (*dīkṣitah*, regarded as one dead to the world) is said to utter a "nonhuman" word (*amānuṣim vācam*) or "brahma-dictum" (*brahmanvādyam*). Nothing but an echo of the veritable Word can be heard or understood by human ears.

tion." A clear distinction is drawn between those who may be merely "present" and those who "really" participate in the ritual acts which are performed on their behalf.

As already stated, there are certain acts that are performed with a vocal accompaniment and others silently. For example, in ŚB VII.2.2.13-14 and 2.3.3, in connection with the preparation of the Fire-altar, certain furrows are ploughed and certain libations made with an accompaniment of spoken words, and others silently—"Silently (*tūṣṇīm*), for what is silent is undeclared (*anirukṭam*), and what is undeclared is everything (*sarvam*). . . . This Agni (Fire) is Prajāpati, and Prajāpati is both declared (*nirukṭah*) and undeclared, bounded (*parimitah*) and unbounded. Now whatever he does with spoken formulae (*yajusā*), thereby he integrates (*samskaroṭi*) that form of his which is declared and bounded; and whatever he does silently, thereby he integrates that form of his which is undeclared and unbounded. Verily, whoever as a comprehensor thereof does thus, he integrates the whole totality (*sarvam kṛtsnam*) of Prajāpati; the *ab extra* forms (*bāhyāni rūpāni*) are declared, the *ab intra* forms (*antarāni rūpāni*) are undeclared." An almost identical passage appears in ŚB XIV.1.2.18; and in VI.4.1.6 there is another reference to the performance of a rite in silence: "He spreads the black antelope skin silently, for it is the Sacrifice, the Sacrifice is Prajāpati, and Prajāpati is undeclared."

In TS III.1.9, the first libations are drawn off silently (*upānsu*), the latter with noise (*upabdim*), and "thus one bestows upon the deities the glory that is theirs, and upon men the glory that is theirs, and becomes divinely glorious amongst the deities and humanly glorious amongst men."

In AB II.31-32, the Devas, unable to overcome the Asuras, are said to have "seen" the "silent laud" (*tūṣṇīm śansam apaśyam*), and this the Asuras could not follow. This "silent laud" is identified with what are called the "eyes of the *soma*-pressings, by means of which the Comprehensor reaches the Light-world." There is a reference to "these Eyes of *soma*, by which eyes of contemplation (*dhī*) and intellect (*manas*) we behold the Golden" (*hiranyam*, RV I.139.2, to wit, Hiranyagarbham, the Sun, the Truth, Prajāpati, as in X.121). It may be observed in this connection that, like the wine of other traditions, the *soma* partaken of is not the very elixir (*rasa*, *amṛta*) of life, but a symbolic liquor—"Of what the Brāhmins understand by '*soma*,' none ever tastes, none tastes who dwells on earth" (RV X.85.3-4): it is "by means of the priest, the initia-

tion, and the invocation" that the temporal power partakes of the semblance of the spiritual power (*brahmano rūpam*), AB VII.31.⁵ Here the distinction between the *soma* actually and the *soma* theoretically partaken of is analogous to that between the spoken words of the ritual and that which cannot be expressed in words, and similarly analogous to the distinction between the visible representation and the "picture that is not in the colors" (*Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* II.118).

The well-known orison in RV X.189, addressed to the Serpent Queen (*sarparājñi*) who is at once the Dawn, Earth, and Bride of the Sun, is also known as the "mental chant" (*mānasa stotra*), evidently because it is, as explained in TS VII.3.1, "chanted mentally" (*manasā⁶ stuvate*), and this just because it is within the power of the intellect (*manas*) not merely to encompass this (*imām*, i.e., the finite universe) in a single moment, but also to transcend it, not only to contain (*paryāptum*) but also to environ (*paribhavitum*) it. And in this way, by means of what has previously been enunciated vocally (*vācā*) and what is afterwards enunciated mentally, "both (worlds) are possessed and obtained." Precisely the same is implied in ŚB II.1.4.29, where it is said that whatever has not been obtained by the preceding rites is now obtained by means of the Sarparājñi verses, recited, as is evidently taken for granted, mentally and silently; and thus the whole (*sarvam*) is possessed. Similarly in KB XIV.1, where the two first parts of the Ājya are the "silent murmur" (*tūṣṇīm-japah*) and the "silent laud" (*tūṣṇīm-śansa*), "He recites inaudibly, for the attainment of all desires," it being understood, of course, that the vocalized chant pertains to the attainment only of temporal goods.

It may be noted, too, that the correspondence of the spoken words to the exterior and those unspoken to the interior forms of deity, cited above, is in perfect agreement with the formulation of AB I.27, where when the *soma* has been bought from the Gandharvas (types of Eros, armed with bows and arrows, who are the guardians of Soma, *ab intra*)

⁵ AĀ II.3.7, "By means of the form of Yonder-one one has being in this world" (*amuno rūpenemam lokam ābhavati*); the converse, "by means of this (human) form one is wholly reborn in that world" is stated here, and also in II.3.2 where a "person" (*puruṣa*) is distinguished from the animal (*paśu*) in that he "by the mortal seeks the immortal, that is his perfection." For example, in AB VII.31, cited above, it is by means of the *nyagrodha* shoots that the representative of the temporal power partakes of *soma* metaphysically (*parokṣena*). This doctrine of "transubstantiation" is similarly enunciated in ŚB XII.7.3.11, "By faith he makes the *surā* to be *soma*," cf. ŚB XII.8.1.5 and XII.8.2.2. See also Coomaraswamy, "Angel and Titan: An Essay in Vedic Ontology," 1935, p. 382, n. 12.

⁶ Hence Manasā Devī, the modern Bengali designation of the Serpent Goddess.

at the price of the Word (*vāc*, fem., called here "the Great Naked One"—the Nude Goddess—and represented in the rite by a virgin heifer), it is prescribed that the recitative is to be performed in silence (*upāñśu*) until she has been redeemed from them, that is to say, so long as she remains "within."

In BU III.6, where there is a dialogue on Brahman, the position is finally reached where the questioner is told that Brahman is "a divinity about which further questions cannot be asked," and at this the questioner "holds her peace" (*upararāma*). This is, of course, in perfect agreement with the employment of the *via remotionis* in the same texts, where it is said that the Brahman is "No, No" (*neti, neti*), and also with the traditional text quoted by Śaṅkara on *Vedānta Sūtras* III.2.17, where Bāhva, questioned regarding the nature of Brahman, remains silent (*tūṣṇim*), only exclaiming when the question is repeated for the third time, "I teach you indeed, but you do not understand: this Brahman is silence." Precisely the same significance attaches to the Buddha's refusal to analyze the state of *nirvāṇa*. [Cf. *avadyam*, "the unspeakable," from which the proceeding principles are liberated by the manifested light, RV *passim*.] In BG x.38, Krishna speaks of himself as "the silence of the hidden ones (*mauna guhyānām*), and the gnosis of the Gnostics" (*jñānam jñānavatām*); where *mauna* corresponds to the familiar *muni*, "silent sage." This is not, of course, to say that He does not also "speak," but that his speaking is simply the manifestation, and not an affection, of the Silence; as BU III.5 also reminds us, the supreme state is one that transcends the distinction of utterance from silence—"Without respect to utterance or silence (*amaunaṃ ca maunaṃ nirvidya*), then is he indeed a Brāhman." When it is asked further, "By what means does one thus become a Brāhman?" the questioner is told, "By that means by which one does become a Brāhman," which is as much as to say, by a way that can be found but cannot be charted. The secret of initiation remains inviolable by its very nature; it cannot be betrayed because it cannot be expressed—it is inexplicable (*aniruktam*), but the inexplicable is everything, at the same time all that can and all that cannot be expressed.

It will be seen from the citations above that the Brāhmaṇa texts and the rites to which they refer are not only absolutely self-consistent but in complete agreement with the values implied in the text of RV II.43.3; the explanations are, indeed, of universal validity, and could be applied as well to the Orationes Secretae of the Christian Mass (which is also a

sacrifice) as to the unvoiced repetition of the Indian Yajus-formulae.⁷ The consistency affords at the same time an excellent illustration of the general principle that what is to be found in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads represents nothing new in principle, but only an expansion of what is taken for granted and more "eminently" enunciated in the "older" liturgical texts themselves. Those who assume that quite "new doctrines" are taught in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads are simply placing unnecessary difficulties in the way of their own understanding of the Saṃhitās.

It will be advantageous also to consider the derivation and form of the word *tūṣṇim*. This indeclinable form, generally adverbial ("silently") but sometimes to be rendered adjectivally or as a noun, is really the accusative of a supposedly lost *tusṇa*, fem. *tusṇī*, corresponding in meaning to Greek *συγῆ*, and derived from \sqrt{tus} , meaning to be satisfied, contented, and at rest, in the sense that motion comes to rest in the attainment of its object, and indeed as speech comes to rest in silence when all has been said that can be said. The word *tūṣṇim* occurs as a real accusative (W. Caland, "*tūṣṇim* is equal to *vācamyamah*")—for to speak of "contemplating silently" would involve a tautology—in PB VII.6.1, where Prajāpati, desiring to proceed from the state of unity to that of multiplicity (*bahu syām*), expressed himself with the words "May I be born" (*prajāyeya*), and "having by intellect contemplated the Silence" (*tūṣṇim manasā dhyāyat*), therewith "saw" (*ādīdhit*) that the Germ (*garbham*, to wit, Agni or Indra, who as the Bṛhat becomes the "eldest son") lay hidden within himself (*antarhitam*), and so proposed to bring it to birth by means of the Word (*vāc*). [Cf. TS II.5.11.5, *yad-dhi manasā*

⁷ It may be added that while, from a religious point of view, silence and fasting and other acts of abstinence are acts of penance, from a metaphysical point of view their significance has no longer to do with the mere improvement of the individual as such, but with the realization of supra-individual conditions. The contemplative life as such is superior to the active life as such. It does not follow, however, that the state of the Comprehensor or even that of the Wayfarer should be one of total inaction; this would be an imperfect imitation of the Supreme Identity, where eternal rest and eternal work are one and the same. There is an adequate imitation only when inaction and action are identified, as intended by the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the Taoist *wu wei*; action no longer implies limitation when it is no longer determined by needs or compelled by ends to be attained, but becomes a simple manifestation. In this case, for example, utterance does not exclude, but rather represents silence ["It is just by sound that the nonsound is revealed," MU VI.22]; and it is in just this way that a myth or other adequate symbol, although an "expression" actually, remains a "mystery" essentially. In the same way, every natural function, when referred to the principle it represents, can properly be said to have been renounced even when it is performed.

dhyāyati, where *yad* is equivalent to "unspoken word," "unuttered concept."] *Tūṣṇīm manasā dhyāyat* then corresponds to the more usual *manasā vācam akṛata* (RV x.71.2) or *manasāivā vācam mithunam samabhavat* (ŚB vi.1.2.9), with reference to "the act of fecundation latent in eternity," for thus⁸ "He (Prajāpati) became pregnant (*garbhin*)⁹ and expressed (*asṛjata*) the Several Angels." The birth of the Son is, strictly speaking, not only a conception from the conjoint principles, in the sense of vital operation, but at the same time a conception intellectually, *per verbum in intellectu conceptum*, corresponding to the designation of the Germ (*garbham*, to wit, Hiranyagarbha) as a concept (*dīdhitim*) in this sense, RV iii.31.1.

The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, cited above, goes on to explain with reference to the intention of "bringing to birth by means of the Word" (*vācā prajānaya*) that Prajāpati "released the Word"¹⁰ (*vācam vyaṣṛjata*, in other words, effected the separation of Heaven and Earth), and She descended as Rathantara (*vāg rathantaram avapadyata*, where *avapad* is literally to 'step down,') . . . and thence was born the Bṛhat . . . that had lain so long within" (*vyog antar abhūt*); cf. RV x.124.1, "Thou hast lain long enough in the long-darkness" (*vyog eva dīrgham tama āśayīṣṭhāḥ*).¹¹ That is to say that Aditi, Magna Mater, Night, becomes Aditi, Mother

⁸ "Thus," i.e., as St. Augustine expresses it: having thus "made Himself a mother of whom to be born" (*Epiphanius contra quinque haereses*, 5). [See *A Coptic Gnostic Treatise Contained in the Codex Brucianus Ms. 96*, tr. Charlotte Baynes (Cambridge, 1933), xii.10 (p. 48), for Source and Silence.]

⁹ Cf. *Epiphanius contra quinque haereses* xxxiv.4, "The Father was in travail," and in folklore, the "couvade."

¹⁰ It is of interest to note the ritual parallel in ŚB iv.6.9.23-24 where, after sitting speechless (*vācamyamah*), the sacrificers are to "release their speech" (*vācam vistrjetan*) according to their desires, e.g., "May we be abundantly supplied with offspring." [Note *tūṣṇīm śansam tira iva vai retāmsi vikṛyante*, AB ii.39; cf. especially JUB iii.16.]

¹¹ *Dīrghatamas*, "Long Darkness," one of the blind "prophets" (*ṛṣi*) of the *Rg Veda*, is, accordingly, the designation of an *ab intra*, occulted form of Agni, whose relation to his younger brother *Dīrghasravas*, "Far Cry," is as that of Varuṇa to his younger brother Mitra or Agni, or, in other words, as of Death (*mṛtyu*) to Life (*āyus*). Of *Dīrghasravas* it is also said that he had "long been under restraint and lacking food" (*vyog aparuddho' śayānah*, PB xv.3.25), and all these expressions correspond to what is said of Vṛtra in RV i.32.10, namely, that "Indra's enemy lay in the long darkness (*dīrgham tama āśayat*) beneath the Waters"; the *ab intra* aspect of deity being that of the Dragon or Serpent (*vṛtra, ahi*), the procession of Prajāpati a "creeping forth from the blind darkness" (*andhe tamasi prāsarpat*, PB xvi.1.1), and that of the Serpents generally a "crawling forth" (*ati sarpana*), whereby they become the Suns (PB xxv.15.4). On this serpentine procession see Coomaraswamy, "Angel and Titan," 1935. The procession of *Dīrghatamas* requires a longer discussion.

Earth, and Dawn, to be represented in the ritual by the altar (*vedi*) that is the birth-place (*yoni*) of Agni: distinction is made between the Word that "was with God and was God" from the Word as Earth Mother, or in other words of "Mary ghostly" from "Mary in the flesh."¹² For, as we know from TS iii.1.7 and JB i.145-146, the Bṛhat (the Father brought to birth) corresponds to Heaven,¹³ the future (*bhaviṣyat*), the unbounded (*aparimitam*), and to despiration (*apāna*); the Rathantara (the Father's separated nature) corresponds to Earth, the past (*bhūtāt*), the bounded (*parimitam*), and spiration (*prāna*).¹⁴ The same assumptions are found in JUB 1.53 ff., substituting Sāman and Ṛc for Bṛhat and Rathantara: the Sāman (masc.) representing intellect (*manas*) and despiration (*apāna*), the Ṛc (fem.) the Word (*vāc*) and spiration (*prāna*). The Sāman is also *in seipso* "both she (*sā*) and he (*ama*)," and it is as a single luminous power (*virāj*)¹⁵ that the conjoint principles generate

¹² Otherwise represented mythically as the rape of the Word (RV i.130.9, where Indra "steals the Word," *vācam . . . muṣāyati*), or as an analysis of the Word (RV vii.103.6, x.71.3 and 125.3), or again as a measurement or birth of Māyā from Māyā (AV viii.9.5, "Māyā was born from Māyā," followed by the *Lalita Vistara* xxvii.12, "Inasmuch as her, i.e., the Buddha's mother's, likeness was modeled after that of Māyā, Māyā she was called.")

¹³ Agni, although the Son, is the Father himself reborn, and immediately ascends; moreover, "Agni is kindled by Agni" (RV i.12.6). It can be said of him, accordingly, not only that "Being the Father, he became the Son" (AV xix.53.4) and that He is both "the Father of the gods and their Son" (RV i.69.1, see ŚB vi.1.2.26), but also that "He who heretofore was his own Son now becomes his own Father" (ŚB ii.3.3.5), that he is "His Father's father" (RV vi.16.35), at once the Son and Brother of Varuṇa (RV iv.1.2 and x.51.6), and "Own-son" (*tanūnapat, passim*)—this last expression exactly corresponds to the Gnostic "αἰτρογενής." It is, then, easy to see how Agni, although a Son of chthonic birth, can in his identity with the Sun be regarded also as the Lover of the Earth Mother; the syzygy Agni-Prthivī being then an aspect of the parents Heaven and Earth, Savitṛ-Sāvitrī, and more remotely Mitrāvaruṇau (GB i.32 and JUB iv.27, etc.).

¹⁴ Cf. in AĀ ii.3.6 the distinction of spirit (*prāṇa*) from body (*śarīra*), of which the former is hidden (*tira*) and the latter evident (*āvis*), like "a" inherent and "a" expressed: ŚB x.4.3.9, "No one becomes deathless by means of the body, but whether it be by gnosis or by works, only after abandoning the body."

¹⁵ *Virāj*, from whom all things "milk" their specific virtue or character, is commonly a designation of the Magna Mater, but even when so regarded is a syzygy—"Who knoweth her progenitive duality?" AV viii.9.10. The terms *virāj* and *aditi*, although both usually feminine, may also have a masculine sense with similar reference to the first principle. To maintain, indeed, that any creative power considered in its creative aspect can be defined as exclusively "male" or exclusively "female" involves a contradiction in terms, all creation whatever being a *co*-gnition and *con*-ception; even in Christianity, the generation of the Son is "a vital operation from a conjoint principle" (*a principio conjuncto*, *Sum. Theol.* i.27.2), i.e., a principle that is both an essence and a nature—"That nature by which the Father

the Sun, and then immediately depart from one another, this division of essence from nature, Heaven from Earth, or Night from Day being the inevitable condition of all manifestation; it is invariably the coming of the light that separates in time the Parents that are united in eternity. Now *sāman* always has reference to the music, *rc* to the articulate wording of the incantations (*rc*, *mantra*, *brahma*), so that when words are sung to measured music this represents an analysis and naturing of a heavenly music that in itself is one, and inaudible to human ears.¹⁶ We may say,

begets." It is only when it is realized once and for all that the creative power on any level of reference—whether, for example, as God or Man—is always a unity of conjoint principles, that is to say, a syzygy and *mithunatva*, that the propriety can be seen of such expressions as "He (Agni) was born from the Titan's womb (*asurasya jatharāt ajāyata*)," RV III.29.14; "Mitra pours the seed in Varuna's womb (*varuno sīncati*)," PB XXV.10.10; "My womb is the Great Brahman, therein I lay the Germ," BG XIV.3, and many similar references to the maternity of a deity referred to by names grammatically masculine or neuter.

¹⁶ Just as in Plotinus, *Enneads* I.6.3, "Harmonies unheard in sound create the harmonies we hear and wake the soul to the one essence in another nature"; and V.9.11, "An earthly representation of the music that there is in the rhythm (= Skr. *chandānsī*) of the ideal world." It is precisely in this sense that the ritual music, like every other part of the Sacrifice, is an imitation of "what was done by the Divinities in the beginning" (SB VII.2.1.4 and *passim*), which holds good no less for the Christian Mass or Sacrifice.

It may be observed that in the operation of conjoint principles we necessarily conceive of one as active, the other as passive, and say that one is agent and the other means, or that one gives and the other receives. The apparent conflict with the Christian doctrine, which denies a "passive power" in God (*Sum. Theol.* I.41.4 ad 2), is unreal. St. Thomas himself remarks that "in every generation there is an active and a passive principle" (*Sum. Theol.* I.98.20). The fact is that a distinction of this kind is determined by the necessity of speaking in terms of time and space; whereas *in divinis* action is immediate, and there is no real, but only a logical distinction of agency from means. Savitr and Sāvitrī are both equally "wombs" (*yonī*, JUB IV.27). If "One of the perfections acts (*ṛartā*), the other fosters (*ṛndhan*)," RV III.31.2, and both of these are active operations; it does not mean that either "act" or "fostering" represents possibilities which might or might not have been realized, but merely refers to the co-operation of the conjoint principles, intention and power. There is no distinction of potentiality from act. It is only when the creation has taken place, and concepts of time and space are therefore involved, that we can think of a *puro atto* as divided from *potenza* by the measure of the whole universe (Dante, *Paradiso* XXIX.31–36), of Heaven and Earth as "driving apart" (*te vyadvavatām*, JUB I.54), or of "Nature as receding from likeness to God" (*Sum. Theol.* I.14.11). This separation (*viyoga*) is the occasion of cosmic suffering (*traiśoka*, the pain of the Three Worlds that had once been one, PB VIII.1.9, *loka-duḥkha*, *Weltschmerz*, KU V.11), and it is no wonder that "When the conjoint pair were parted, the Devas moaned, and said, 'Let them be wed again'" (RV X.24.5); it is, however, only "at the meeting of the ways," "at the worlds' end," that Heaven and Earth "embrace" (JUB I.5, etc.), only "in the heart" that the marriage of Indra and Indrānī is really consummated (SB X.5.2.11), that

accordingly, that the name "Great Liturgy" (*brhad ukṭhah*, where *ukṭhah* is from *vāc*, "to speak") applied to Agni, e.g., in RV V.19.3, represents the Son as a *spoken* Word, and *manifested* Logos;¹⁷ and in the same way Indra is "the most excellent incantation" (*jyesthāś ca mantrah*, RV X.50.4).

The spoken Word is a harmony. In KB XXIII.2 and XXIV.1, "Prajāpati is he whose name is not mentioned;¹⁸ this is the symbol of Prajāpati. . . 'Aloud' in 'Sing aloud, O thou of wide radiance' (Agni) is a symbol

is to say, in a silence and darkness that are the same as that "Night that hides the darkness of the conjoint pair" in RV I.123.7, the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* interpreting this condition of unconscious cognition (*samvit*), perfect beatitude (*paramānanda*), and sleep (*svapna*) as an "entering into, or being possessed by, what is one's very own" (*svāpyaya*) [cf. Mānd. Up. II, *apīti*].

¹⁷ The Sacrifice in its *liturgical* aspect is a "bringing to birth by means of the Word": one "sings the Sāman on a Rc," and this is a procreative coupling (*mithunam*), identical with that of Intellect and Word (*manas* and *vāc*), Sacrifice and Guerdon (*yajña*, *daṁṣinā*, i.e., Prajāpati and Dawn), and literally an *in-formation* of Nature, "for were it not for Intellect, the Word would be incoherent" (SB III.2.4.11), whereas it is in fact the "birthplace of Order." The Rathantara, for example, is a "means of procreation" (*prajananam*, PB VII.7.16, corresponding to *prajananam* as "mistress" *viśpāni*, the "mother" of Agni in RV III.29.1); *Sāvitrī* in this sense is identified with the meters (*chandānsī*) and called the "Mother of the Vedas" (*Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* I.33 and 38), which "meters" are commonly referred to as the means *par excellence* of reintegration (*samskāraṇa*, AB VI.27, SB VI.5.4.7, etc.), and in her conjunction with Savitr presents an analogy with the Gnostic Ecclesia ("Mother Church") and Gnosis as constituting with Man (*āvṛpovos* = Prajāpati, Agni, Manu) a syzygy. In this connection also there should be noted the close relationship of the words *mātrā*, *mātr*, and *māyā*, "meter," "mother," and "magical-means" or "matrix"; *mā* to "measure" and *nir-mā*, to "measure out" being constantly employed not only in the sense of giving form and definition, but in the closely related sense of creating or giving birth to, notably in RV III.38.3, III.53.15, X.5.3, X.125.8, AV VIII.9.5, and in the well-known expression *nirmāṇa-kāya*, denoting precisely the assumed and actually manifested and born "body" of the Buddha.

Sacrifice and birth are inseparable concepts; the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, indeed, proposes the *hermeneia*, "yajña, because 'yañ jāyate.'" Sacrifice is divisive, a "breaking of bread"; the product is articulated and articulate. The Sacrifice is a spreading out, a making a tissue or web of the Truth (*satyaṁ tanavāmahā*, SB IX.5.1.18), a metaphor commonly employed elsewhere in connection with the raying of the fontal light, which forms the texture of the worlds. Just as the kindling of Agni is the making perceptible and evident of a hidden light, so the utterance of the chants is the making perceptible of a silent principle of sound. The spoken Word is a revelation of the Silence, that measures the trace of what is in itself immeasurable.

¹⁸ [Prajāpati chooses *anirukṭam sāmno* . . . *svargyam*, the "indistinct (part) of the *sāman* which belongs to heaven," JUB I.52.6; cf. *manasā* "silently," opposed to *vācā*, as in JUB I.58.6; see SB IV.6.9.17 and Eggeling's note on *manasā stotra*, also JUB I.40.4.]

of the Bṛhat." In ŚB VI.1.1.15, the triumphant Jubilate of the spoken Word is described as follows: "She (the Earth, *bhūmi*, being *prthivi*, 'spread out'), feeling herself altogether complete (*sarvā kṛtsnā*), sang (*agāyat*); and because she 'sang,' therefore she is Gāyatrī. They say too that 'It was Agni, indeed, on her back (*pr̥sthe*)¹⁹ who, feeling himself altogether complete, sang; and inasmuch as he sang, therefore he is Gāyatra.' And hence whosoever feels himself altogether complete, either sings or delights in song."

We have thus briefly discussed the divine nativity from certain points of view in order to bring out the correspondences of the Vedic and the Gnostic references to the Silence. In both traditions the authentic and integral powers on every level of reference are syzygies of conjoint principles, male and female; summarizing the Gnostic doctrine of the Aeons (Vedic *amṛtāsah* = *devāḥ*) we may say that *ab intra* and informally these are *βυθός* and *συχή*, "Abyss," and "Silence," and *ab extra*, formally, *νοῦς* and *ἔννοια* or Sophia, "Intellect," and "Wisdom," and without going into further detail, that *συχή* corresponds to Vedic *tuṣṇī* and *νοῦς* to *manas*, *συχή* and Sophia respectively to the hidden and manifested aspects of Aditi-Vāc; and also that the "fall" of the Word (*vāg* . . . *avapadyata*, cited above), and her purification as Ṛc, Apālā, Sūryā (JUB 1.53 ff., RV VIII.91 and X.85) correspond to the fall and redemption of Sophia and the Shekinah in the Gnostic and Qabbalistic traditions, respectively. In what are really more academic rather than more "orthodox" forms of Christianity, the two aspects of the Voice, within and without, are those of "that nature by which the Father begets" and "that nature which recedes from likeness to God, and yet retains a certain likeness to the divine being" (*Sum. Theol.* 1.41.5c and 1.14.11 ad 3), the eternal and the temporal Theotokoi, respectively.

Let us repeat in conclusion that the Supreme Identity is neither merely silent nor merely vocal, but literally a no-what that is at the same time indefinable and partially defined, an unspoken and a spoken Word.

¹⁹ *Pr̥sthe*, i.e., either (1) with reference to Agni's being seated on the earthen altar (*vedī*) which is his birthplace (*yonī*), and/or (2) with reference to Agni's being supported by the *Pr̥sthastotra*, of which hymn the Gāyatrī is the mother by *Prajāpati*, PB VII.8.8.



Manas

In the words of ŚB X.5.3.3, Agni should be "intellectually laid and intellectually edified" (*manasaivādhiyanta manasāciyanta*).

"Intellectually laid and intellectually edified": for inasmuch as Agni Himself "performs an intellectual sacrifice" (*manasā yajati*, RV 1.77.2), it is evident that one who would attain to Him as like to like must have done likewise, without which a true "Imitation of Agni" would be impossible. *Manas* in the Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas, and sometimes in the Upaniṣads, is the Pure or Possible Intellect, at once a name of God and that in us by which He may be grasped. Thus RV 1.139.2, "We have beheld the Golden-one by these our eyes of contemplation and of intellect" (*apaśyāma hiranyaṃ dhibhiś cana manasā svebhir akṣibhiḥ*); RV 1.145.2, "What He [Agni], contemplative, hath as it were grasped by His own intellect" (*sveneva dhiro manasā yad agrabhīt*); RV VI.9.5, "Intellect is the swiftest of birds" (*mano javiṣṭhaṃ patayatsu antas*); RV VIII.100.8, "The Eagle cometh with the speed of intellect" (*mano javā ayamāna . . . suparnaḥ*; cf. Manojavas as a name of Agni, JB 1.50); RV X.11.1, "Varuṇa's knowledge of all things is according to His speculation" (*viśvam sa veda varuṇo yathā dhiyā*); RV X.181.3, "By an intellectual speculation they found the Godward-path" (*avindan manasā dīdhyānā . . . devayānam*); TS II.5.11.5, "Intellect is virtually Prajāpati" (*mana iva hi prajāpatiḥ*); ŚB X.5.3.1-4, where Intellect (*manas*) is identified with "That which was in the beginning neither Non-being nor Being" (RV X.129.1), and this Intellect emanates the Word (*vācam asṛjata*), a function usually assigned to Prajāpati; BU 1.5.7, "The Father is Intellect (*manas*); The Mother, Word (*vāc*); the Child, Spirit or Life (*prāna*)," in agreement with the usual formulation, according to which Intellect and Word, Heaven and Earth, as Knower and Known, are the universal parents of

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