

Shree Sukta

A Treatise on Creation and
Preservation of Wealth



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NAGESH D. SONDE

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A TREATISE ON CREATION AND
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I

There is queer dichotomy in the affairs of the world. Everyone wants wealth, prosperity, contentment and happiness. But very few know the Path that leads to the desired goal. Consequently they wander on various avenues and accumulate money, assuming that is to be the end which is to be achieved. But surely money is not wealth but only the means and a symbol (a dominant one at that) of wealth and prosperity. The assumption that acquisition of money, material possessions and economic prosperity leads one to happiness and contentment is soon shattered. They become disillusioned with life having no pleasure in possessing what they have, since it neither brings satisfaction nor contentment in life.

This has been the perennial proposition. Civilizations have arisen and civilization have perished which depended on acquisition of wealth and satiation of the senses. Sensitive souls of every generation and of every age, therefore, have inquired insight in this sensitive subject and sought solution to these problems. They have come to the inevitable conclusion that conscious life of human being demands a sense of discrimination for deeper understanding of the meaning of wealth and a reappraisal of the means of acquiring as well as method of preserving the same. The time was when the Seers of Vedic times expressed their vision, which gave India the sense and substance for generations to come until the excess generation and conservation of wealth lead to degeneration of human values and corrosion of the vision of the soul.

Human beings are often obsessed with the apparent than with the real. They are dazzled by the perceived fruits of science and technology than by the concealed force of moral, ethical or the social values. While the redeeming features of science and technology should certainly inspire imagination of every human being, one should also be aware of the awesome power which science and technology has placed in the hands of those who have neither supra-sensual vision nor moral compassion needed for elevating human values in furtherance of happiness and contentment.

The Seers of the Vedas and the intellectuals of the Upanishads therefore laid the four-fold objectives of human endeavor :धर्म (Perennial Principles) अर्थ (enterprise) काम (desire) and मोक्ष (deliverance). Unless human enterprises and desires are based on the Perennial Principles, the human being will not have deliverance from sense bound attachments and the travails of संसार , the Primordial world.

Unfortunately the human being has failed to learn from history that the Nations are hopelessly guided by depend upon empirical considerations and economic activities, inspite of the fact civilizations after civilizations who relied on these shaking concepts have floundered and vanished from the face of the world. When the Egyptian civilization fell under its own weight, there was no power (temporal or spiritual) to lament and come to its rescue. Neither a Socrates, Plato nor an Aristotle could not save Greece from being doomed when the majority in the society was relying more on the gross and the material prosperity than on the ethical and moral values. Rome fell prey to the unrestrained greed and avarice consequent upon economic prosperity, it was left to Augustine to remark : “The whole world groaned at the fall of Rome”.

Even though India and China were not spared of the economic and political degradation, their civilizations and social structures nevertheless continued to have the resilience and strength to retain their historical tradition and identity. The Communist ideology has only affected the outer crust leaving the people as proud of their ancient civilizations. In India alien races, one after the other, came to plunder its wealth only to stay and be influenced by the fundamental principles of Indian spirituality, leaving Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zarathronian faiths tempered by the soil of India. India and China are, thereof, still influenced by the principles of Dharma and the Confucian ideal of morality and ethics. Poverty and economic backwardness has not made them yet barter away their civilization for the pot of gold.

However, the countries like Japan who have adopted the western concepts and life style at the expense of their own integral and integrated cultural values have come to be neurotic and psychologically and pathologically weak to meet the challenges of the alien society, inspite of the immense wealth and technological advancement they have made during last fifty years or so. Japan is the classical example of such cultural aberration. Unmindful of its own rich and varied psyche, it adopted western economic and cultural living styles much to their woe and desperation.

What was that they adopted which did not attune to their ethos or the psyche ! In the egalitarian society to which the Western Nations are wedded to, the social and economic responsibility of the citizens has been largely taken over by the State. The State looks after the elementary education, the medical needs, the social security in terms of employment guarantee, security for the older citizen to be met by the State. With the improved medical facilities the life span of the people has lengthened, result-

ing in the increase in the percentage of the old men to be looked after by the State. With the cost of social security increasing year after year due to the inflationary conditions in the economy, the cost which the younger generation has to contribute to the State exchequer has been increasing year after year. With the family bonds being broken the younger generation is reluctant to work for the sake of the older generation.

To this has contributed the economic theories that economic development depends not on saving what one earns or possesses but on spending even what one does not presently possess. The inevitable momentum for creating something new has contributing to the need to destroy what one possesses. An economy which depends on continuous destruction of scarce wealth is surely a sick society. It creates a generation of debtors at the cost of the frugal few. The new generations have lost their faith in their own traditions and many of the developing countries not having been able to inculcate alien social, ethical and moral traditions are floundering in emotional trap.

These concepts are not new to Indian history. There were those who called themselves materialists, like Charvaaka, who held the specious view that “यावत् जीवेत् सुखात् जीवेत्। ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत्॥ भस्मोभूयात् देहस्य पुनरागतां कुतः॥” - so long as one has life let him live pleasant life. Even incurring debts let him have butter and sweets. For once the body comes to be burned where is the assurance for return to this world ? They also held substantive view that the Vedic Seers were buffoons, knaves, and spirits of darkness. They contended that if sacrifices could bring bliss of heavens and if the animals slain in *Jyotishtoma* sacrifice go to heaven, why don't these priests offer their own father as sacrifice ? Such arguments were considered by the sensitive seers and the intellectuals and rejected.

Now the similar materialists in new garb and vocabulary have come to influence and induce the humanity. And we find in India young and old generations following the worst that the West offers without picking the best the West possesses. That is, indeed, the height of insanity and depth of immorality.

The great and exceptionally receptive Seers of the Vedas had discerned the subtle secrets which influenced the gross physical world. They spoke of the uncompromising **ऋत**, the Cosmic Law, all too powerful **धर्म**, the Perennial Principles and **सत्यम्** that which Ever Exists unchanged. These fundamental principles brook interference neither from human beings nor from the divine, even though the latter had earlier fashioned them and later continued as their custodians.

It was noticed that where the values were deteriorating and ethics and morals had no place, **ऋत**, the Cosmic Law would remain at low ebb. Even in the pristine Vedic Age, such departure was noticed by the seers. For instance we find in 105th Hymn of the Tenth Chapter, the Seer pleading with *Agni*, the Path-finder, in desperation about the degeneration of morality and the depression through which he was passing.

“Where is the eternal Cosmic Law, O *Agni* !
Who is its present Controller ?
Be witness to my woe, O Heaven and Earth.

O Gods who have homes in the three pure heavens,
what is Truth and, verily, is un-Truth ?
And where is that ancient appeal to you ?
Be witness to my woe, O Heaven and Earth.

What is the firm support of your Law ?
Where is *Varuna*’s observant eye ?

How may we pass this wicked world,
on the path of mighty *Aryaman* ?”

Finally he prays for direction,

“ *Varuna* fashions the holy prayer.
To him, who finds the way,
we shall offer our prayers”.

Whenever the धर्म becomes obscure and there is rise in unrighteousness, the Lord is said to descend himself and comes to destroy the unrighteousness and to re-establish the Perennial Principles. The Divine manifestation has thus two-fold aspect. The social pattern in India has assumed distortion in many aspects. The class (*varna*) was replaced by caste, bringing down the pristine purity of the vision of the Vedic seers as expressed in the Purusha Sukta (X.9011.12) -यत्पुरुषं व्यदधुः कतिधा व्यकल्पयन्। मुखं किमस्य कौ बाहू का दूरू पादा उच्येते॥ ब्रह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः। दूरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पभद्यां शूद्रो अजायत॥ - When they divided *Purusha*, how many portions did they make ? What do they call his mouth, his arms ? What do they call his thighs and feet ? The Brahmin was his mouth, of both his arms was the *Rajanya* made. His thighs became the *Vaishyas*, from his feet the *Shudra* was produced.”

When the sensitive seers had put before themselves सत्य, कृत and धर्म as their guiding principles, the crude and archaic transliteration does not fit with the temper or the Vision of the Seers. The one who truly understands the inner and mystical meaning of the particular *Mantras* would translate it in line with the entire conceptual process of the *Sukta*.

“When they (the gods) separated the *Purusha*, in what parts and numbers did they separate ? What did they find as his mouth, as his arms, as his thighs and as his feet ? They found Wisdom to be his mouth, Valor to be his

arms; Industriousness his thighs and sense of Service became his feet”.

Brahmin is not the one who traces his birth to pro-creation and parentage but to wisdom, knowledge, source of enlightenment. *Brahmin* is the knower Brahman. *Kshatra* means power, strength, dominion. *Vaishya* signifies industriousness, the productive arm of the Society. *Shudra* symbolizes the sense of service. All human beings are made up of these four qualities even as the *PURUSHA* was made up of them. This is what the Gods discovered when they separated *Purusha*.

Every sacrifice needs to be performed keeping these four inalienable attributes in mind. It is not sufficient if only the wisdom, or only the valor, or only industriousness or even only service is offered at the altar. It is absolutely necessary that all these four attributes, to the extent capable of, should be surrendered to the Lord. Only then the word शरणागति -surrender will have the true meaning and the person so surrendering will be qualified to be called the *PURUSHOTTAM* .

The thinking populace over the centuries of spiritual history have considered good conduct, ethical, moral temperament of the person as pointer to his being considered as a Cultured Person. Economic control or unlimited possession of resources by themselves have not evoked respect in Indian society as much as fear. A man may belong to any family or to any caste, if his actions are of worth being lauded, he will be so respected - as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or a Shudra, irrespective of the wealth or the power he possessed. Ravana's immense wealth and power did not evoke as much respect as the wisdom and humility of a Hanuman.

The economic position of a person in the society, or the possession of wealth by him, or his outward endowment to art and culture by themselves did not assure him

respect and honored place in the established society, if he did not have at the same time the sense and sensitivity to use the wealth and power gained by him.

Charity, धनान्नदान्, is recommended strongly in the Rigveda (X.117.) - “ उतो रयिः पृणतो नोप दस्यत्युतापृणन्मर्डितारं न विन्दते ।... पृणीयादिनाधमानाय तव्यान्द्राधीयासमनु पश्येत पन्थाम् । ओ हि वतृन्ते रथ्येव चक्राऽन्यमन्यमुप तिष्ठन्त रायः ॥ . . . समौ चिद्धस्तौ न समं विविष्टः संमतिरा चिन्न समं दुहाते । यमयोश्चिन्नसमा वीर्याणि ज्ञाति चित् सन्तौ न समं पृणीतः ॥ ” - The riches of the Charitable never waste away, while he who will not give finds none to comfort him . . . Let the wealthy one satisfy the poor implore and bend his eye upon the longer pathway. Wealth comes now to one, now to another, and like the wheels of a car ever rolling . . . The hands are both alike ; their efforts differ. The yield of a sister milchkine also is unequal. Even twins differ in their strength and vigor ; two, even though kinsmen, differ in their bounty.

In *Brihad Aranyak* Upanishad (V.2) we have the legend of men being instructed by *Prajapati* when he uttered the single syllable “द”. And when asked the man replied : व्यज्ञासिश्म इति होवाच । दत्त न आत्मेति । ॐ इति होवाच व्यज्ञासिश्टेति - “We have understood. You said to us to give. He said : ‘Yes. You have rightly understood’. Therefore we find in recorded scriptures that the Kings of the Raghu race used to distribute their wealth among the poor and the needy once in every fourteenth year of their life.

In olden times when the economy was largely agricultural and people depended on the forces of Nature for their living, the people had a sense of reciprocity. They did consider giving to Nature as much if not more than they received. Hence Sri Krishna put it before Arjuna in *Bhagavad Gita* (III.10-11) : “ सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः । अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ देवान् भावयतानेन

ते देवा भावयन्तु वः। परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ॥” - In the earlier days, *Prajapati* created creatures along with sacrifice and declared “By this you shall fulfill and the sacrifice shall in turn yield your desires’. In that manner you commune with the Gods and the Gods shall commune with you. Thus being in communion with each other, attain the Supreme Good”.

In modern times, science and technology, whose achievements have been ascribed with increasing emphasis entirely on the intellectual capabilities of human being, there has been placed power not only to shatter the bodies but also to control and warp the minds of men. The selfish and self-centered men have more power than their discriminating mind could contain. In his prophetic words Sir Winston Churchill, at the end of the World War II wrote, “Projects undreamt by the past generations will absorb our immediate descendants; forces terrific and devastating will be in their hands; comforts, activities, amenities, pleasures will crowd upon them, but their hearts will ache, their lives will be barren, if they have not the vision above material things. And with the hopes and powers will come dangers out of all proportions to the growth of man’s intellect, to the strength of his character or the efficacy of the institutions. Once more the choice is offered between Blessing and Cursing.”

Continuing he said: “Without an equal growth of mercy, pity, peace and love, science itself may destroy all that makes human life majestic and tolerable. There never was a time when the inherent virtue of human beings required more strong and confident expression in daily life; there never was a time when the hope of immortality and disdain of earthly life and achievements were more necessary for the safety of the children of men.”

No words could have been better couched the danger of consumerism and misplaced egalitarian economy than

these words of Winston Churchill. Since then the world has often stood on the brink of disaster. The societies of the world, whether economic, political, social, cultural or religious, have been put in a melting pot and one does not know what will history cook for us in future for our daily bread.

The Soviet Empire with its Communist ideology has doomed, without replacing a better or alternate philosophy to live by. It would, however, be great mistake to assume the Death of Communism to be due the success of Capitalist Society. It has been more due to the poverty of a sustaining moral and spiritual values of Communist theory than any thing else.

We see strange spectacle where the so-called dominant, developed, democratic societies crumbling under their own weight. United States of America, which considers itself the master of all that she sees and the arbiter of the new order for the world, herself has lost her soul and her economy is mortgaged to the very forces which they are seeking to defeat.

Living beyond one's capacity to generate wealth, with more emphasis and enthusiasm on consumerism than on the conscious development of moral values, the future of the highly literate countries of Europe, former Russia and yonder Canada are floundering in the search of their identity. It has made them aware that coming together for collective improvement of economic wealth and human standard itself would not suffice, if one has lost one's soul on the way.

Sri Aurobindo certainly seems to be right in his assessment when he cautioned that India would not and in fact should not ever compete to come to the level of economic achievements which the western societies have acquired, but on the other hand it should surely has the spiritual wealth and moral sensitivity to fall back upon, which

it can and should share with the western societies. Therefore, or perhaps because of that, the sensitive souls in western nations are forced to look for the leadership of India, when the scales of their economic prosperity and seeming well-being fall from their eyes, which alone shows the strength of the spiritual values even in the absence of the economic progress. Let us therefore, hearken to our ancients Seers who seem to have unlocked the mystery of the relationship between the possession of wealth and possession of economic power perse.

II

Man finds immense satisfaction in his ability to imagine, think, organize thoughts in forms, ideas and concepts. The Seers were visionaries before they were poets and poets before they became communicators. Even though in their poems they used symbols and suggestions, their imagery or the myths were not mere allegories. For them they constituted carefully chosen concepts for their abstract thoughts. When words do not fulfill the role for which they were designed, then readers have to grope for the intention of the communicator and the meanings for the words which he sought to use. But as *Taittiriya* Upanishad laments they the words invariably return along with mind not attaining the truth. But he who knows that Bliss of Brahman fears not at any time - “ यतो वाचो निवर्त्तते अप्रप्य मनसा सः आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् न बिभेति कदाचन च।”

Myths by their very nature cannot have universal application, though the Seer after the Seer has sought to use the same or commonly accepted symbols and suggestions for expressing their experiences. They are constrained by the context, the place and the people to whom they were addressed. They have sought acceptance by the receptive, the initiate and the believer. They seek to convince neither the agnostic nor justify their experiences before the critical. Because their experiences are not the product of intellectual domain but of the supra-conscious regions. Therefore, to search cogency, rationality, clarity or scientific proof in their utterances would be unreasonable and futile. The Seer's visions, therefore, project a sense of poetry and an aura of mysticism.

Mystery would have continued to remain mystery had the seers not endeavored to give glimpse to their experience and form to their visions. What would have appeared esoteric to the profane or to ordinary, they tried to make clear and vivid with their concepts and imagery. Popular beliefs and cults in the popular religions were accepted by the Seers only to be elevated to the high pedestal of Vedic mysticism. Even as the fairy stories were to the tiny toddler so were the legends and mythology was to the uninitiated masses. To make religion acceptable as the living palpable proposition, parables were as important as were the intellectual discussions of the men of wisdom. Their objective was unequivocal, कृष्णन्तो विश्वम् अपघनन्तो राणवः - May we aryanise all riving away lawlessness. Vibrant visions of the serene Seers and the Yogic practices of the austere *Munis* as well, had equal importance for both the intellectual as for the ordinary. Aspiring for deliverance from humdrum life in this primordial world, they spread the message of the Eternal Truth (सत्य), Cosmic Law (ऋत) and Perennial Principles (धर्म).

It is in this back ground that we are required to study the origin, the development and spiritualisation of the worship of Shree or Lakshmi. Prosperity, whether material or spiritual, has always been the motivating factor of the human kind all the world over. According to the Indian concept, Shree or Lakshmi came to be accepted, first as an independent deity and later as the consort of Vishnu. Myths came to be woven around her manifestation from the Eternal and Primordial Waters. Her declaration as *Vak Ambhrani* in Rigveda (X.75), “योनिरप्वन्तः समुद्रे” - My home is in the waters in the ocean, identifying herself with Lakshmi, the consort of Sri Vishnu of the *Puranic* legends. Her declaration in the same hymn that “अहं राष्ट्री संगमनी वसूना चिकितुषी प्रथमा यज्ञीयानाम्। तां मा देवा

वयदधुः पुरुत्रा भूरिस्थान्नां मूर्यवेशायन्तीम्॥ - I am the queen, the gatherer of treasures, most thoughtful, first of those who merit worship. The Gods have established me in many places with many homes to enter and abide in.” make her to be associated with wealth, prosperity, glory and grandeur. Her association with Sun came to her identification with *Ushas*, symbolizing the dawn of wisdom in men given to reflection.

The germinal concepts in the Vedas became expanded in the *Puranas* which gave her important role as the consort of Vishnu. “समुद्रवसने देवी पर्वतस्तन मण्डले विष्णुपत्नि नमस्तुभ्यं पादस्पर्शं क्षमस्व मे।“ Vibrant beauty that she was, as she arose from the sea, standing amidst the full blossomed lotus, with lotus in each of her hands, the four well-capanisoned elephants standing in the four corners showering the sacred waters of the Ganges from the golden jars. The ocean gave her a wreath of ever blooming lotuses, while *Vishvakarma* fashioned her ornaments. Wearing celestial garlands and garments of gold, she was shining like the brilliant Sun in the heavens. With great exultation did the gathered Seers recite the hymn, *SHREE SUKTA*, even as she ascended and occupied the expansive chest of Sri Vishnu to make it her ever lasting abode.

Thus did the Seers fashion her form and described her grandeur as Shree rose up from the Primordial Waters, the waters which signified movement, progress, evolution.

The Seers gave comprehensive meaning to the word Shree or Lakshmi. Even as they emphasized the importance of economic activity rooted in wealth, in their vision, they also realized that the economic development should go along with the spiritual development. Only those who succeed in striking the correct balance between these two were venerated as *Rajarshis*, the philosopher

kings. Janaka was one such ideal of Indian Royalty, who was philosopher as well as a king.

Vedic Seers considered Shree as Mother. Therefore, for them she could never be an instrument for satiation of senses. She can only be the medium of spiritual regeneration. Mother can always be the object of worship (पूज्य) and not of pleasure (भोग्य). One who considers her as Mother will neither be selfish, rude nor arrogant when she comes to his residence. His eyes will not be blinded by greed, avarice or self aggrandizement. He will not roll in the fire of insatiable craving but will be calm and contented like the child who has the satisfaction on his face while sucking the mother's breast. Shree is Lakshmi. Lakshmi is one who symbolizes Grace - लक्षणवन्ति. Lakshmi symbolizes splendor, progress. Whoever offers his intellectual capacity, physical accomplishments, material possessions and sense of service for the welfare of the society, he alone is entitled to be called the cultured, civilized, noble human being, लक्ष्मीपुत्र, the child of goddess Shree.

Man is intrinsically emotional. Even though the strength of his innermost energy does give movement to his economic, social or spiritual advancement yet he has to depend on the environment in which he is reared. The fire in his heart needs to be stirred and kindled. Even though in nature's expansive scheme, human being appears immensely insignificant and small, yet in him he has the intensity and insatiable energy to shape and influence the environment in which he lives and rise above the limitations of the environment and of the life. Yet more often than not, his desire, his greed, his sense of ego makes him surrender his energy to satiate his senses and become bound by the miseries and travails of the world.

The true aspirant of wisdom, as against the votary of

collected information, knows the difficulties, the limitations within which he has to operate. He has to have the strongest of the will and a determination to rise above the external inducements, rise every time he falls, because the path is narrow, deep and sharp as the edge of a sword. He knows that “नाविरतो दुश्चरितान् नाशान्तो नासमाधितः नाशान्तमनसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैनम् आनुयात ॥” - Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has no concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can reach this (Self). Therefore he can no more remain idle or docile when he is required to urge himself onward in search of the Divinity, which is to be the source of all his endeavors.

Therefore, the scriptures say: “अस्ते भग आसीनस्य तुष्टं तिष्ठति । शेते निषधामानस्य चरति चरतो भगः । चैरवेति चैरवेति चैरवेति” The man who rests, his fortune also rests. The one who rises, his fortune also rises. One who sleeps his fortune also sleeps. Therefore keep pursuing, keep pursuing, keep perusing.

Sri Krishna tells us in *Gita* that he has no desires to be fulfilled or anything to acquired which He does not possess. Therefore, no actions need to be performed by Him, yet He performs actions relentlessly lest his non-performance may put the Cosmic Order, ऋत, in confusion. No man can remain even for a moment without action. His attributes induce him to action. But if his actions have to have the fragrance of righteousness, and benediction of the Supreme Grace, then his life has to become a sacrifice, as it were. “योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्” - Yoga is excellence in action. If the actions are not done in the spirit of sacrifice, they become negative and harmful for spiritual development. Therefore, without being attached to actions or the rewards thereof, the action should be performed.

During Vedic era, it was consciously recommended that man's spiritual and temporal life has to be organized as a sacrifice. It was believed that the very act of creation is the result of sacrifice. It was accepted that the very act of Creation was the result of sacrifice where the Lord, the Creator offered Himself as the oblation. “यत्युरुषेण हवि देवा यज्ञमतन्वत। वसन्तो अस्यासीदाज्य ग्रीष्म इध्मः शरद्विः॥ तं यज्ञं बहिष्ठ प्रौक्षन्पुरुषं जातमग्रतः। तेन देवा अयजन्त साध्वा ऋषयश्च ये॥” - When, with the *Purusha* as oblation, the Gods performed the sacrifice, spring was the oil, autumn was the oblation and summer was the wood. In the sacrifice, they offered *Purusha*, born of earlier years. With Him, the Gods sacrificed together with aspirants and the seers' (Rigveda X.90).

There was a time when it was considered obligatory for each one of the human being to share a part of what he has earned through his wisdom, through his wealth, through his industriousness and through his sense of service for the welfare of others. Rigveda speaks eloquently about liberality. “They call him *Rsi*, *Brahman*, *Sama*-Chanter, receiver of praises, leader of worship. He knows the three forms of the brightly shining gods, who first bestowed gifts on him...The liberal die not, nor are they ruined; the universe above us -- all these, the sacrificial gift gives them”

Creation, preservation and distribution of wealth is considered to be the objective of sacrifice. In defining the Word यज्ञ, Yaska includes in defining the elements of devotion and invocation of gods in a congregation. “देवपूजा संगति कारण दानेषु”. Sacrifices are accompanied by invocation of mantras, gathering of noble souls and on completion of the sacrifice, the *Yajamana*, the officiating householder, holding the fruits of sacrifice makes this declaration “इदं न मम” - this is not mine, but that which is or-

dained by the Lord as bounty for the benefit of the creatures of the world.

It is not mere coincidence nor an accident that the first of the Hymns in Rigveda or the first of the verse of *Shree Sukta* should be addressed to *Agni*, *Jatavedas*. *Agni* is not the elemental fire, gross in form, but the symbol of power, energy, the spiritually concentrated aspiration, the Seer-will. He is known as जातवेदस्, the knower of the Vedas, the Wisdom; the पावकः, the purifier; the पुरोहितः, the one who leads us in our pathway to the Goal.

Fire worship is fully endorsed by scientific temper. Without sacrifice the warmth of the fire cannot be generated. Wealth cannot be generated without sacrifice. Acquisition of wealth through proper means as well as its distribution through proper avenues connotes sacrifice. Even modern science and economic principles will endorse that wealth acquired illegally through devious means does not really contribute to a healthy economy. Turnover of money in simple terms, without generation of wealth cannot really be called economic activity. Manipulation of prices whether on the stock exchanges or in the markets does not signify creation of wealth but only reorganization of the economic opportunities. Only the wealth directed toward motivation of industriousness and economic advancement can be called creation of wealth.

Wealth which is concealed and not put to use in industrial or economic development does not create further wealth nor does it bring prosperity. Shree is the symbol of wealth and prosperity. It is splendor. Splendor illuminates the surrounding area only when it is put in circulation in open. Wealth is not created, if it remains or is kept hidden in the bowels of earth or in enclosed boxes. Therefore, to bring the splendor to the wealth, the Seer prays for *Agni*. For it was *Agni* which shining in its glory over

the years was brought down to life from the waters and earth and trees of the forests and the herb that grows on the ground says the Seer in Rigveda (II.1.1).

It is for this reason that the Seer addresses the hymn to *Agni*, the fire, the energy, the power which is pure, radiant, resplendent so that he may drive out sloth, impurity, ignorance and the forces of darkness. “हे जातवेदस् मे लक्ष्मीम् आवह।“ - O *Agni*, the knower of Vedas, bring to me the goddess Lakshmi. The Gods respond and respect the words of the Seers, because in his words, there is sincerity of intent and purity of purpose, earnestness of austerity and clarity of the Vision. And they, the manifestations of Eternal Energy and of the Power that is Truth, Gods, descend to descend, at the request of the aspirant : “like the father to his son, like friend to the friend” (RV.I.26.3).

III

SHREE SUKTA

हिरण्यवर्णं हरिणं सुवर्णरजतस्त्रजाम्।
चन्द्रं हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं जातवेदो म आ वह ॥ १ ॥

1. AUM HARI ! O KNOWER OF THE VEDAS, RING UNTO ME, LAKSHMI, THE GOLDEN COLOURED, EVER VIBRANT, ADORNER IN GOLD AND SILVER ORNAMENTS, AND THE PEACEFUL OF GOLDEN FORM.

Explanation:

It is believed that the Seers had direct perception of the Truth, which makes them the repository of the Reality behind the Appearances. Therefore, with assurance and supreme confidence he declares, 'वेदाहम् एवम् पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्य वर्णं तमसः परस्तात्' - I have known the Supreme Person, of radiant color of the Sun beyond obscurity. The Seer's experience is self-realized (स्वयंसाक्षी), self-certified (स्वयंसिद्ध). It needs no corroboration nor any confirmation. It is beyond तमस् - obscurity and doubts. It is not subject to analysis of color, texture, form or shape but is the experience that gives substance and meaning to the existence as to a flower.

Pure experience is not possible for a person who is burdened with ज्ञान, knowledge and information of the things of empirical experiences. It is not possible for a person whose heart is tied in knots of variety of वासना, at-

tachments or the inherent tendencies. *Brihad Aaranyak Upanishad* (III.5.1) declares, “Let a *Brahmana*, after he has done with learning, desire to live as a child. When he has done with the state of childhood and with learning, then he becomes silent mediator Having done with the non-meditative and the meditative states, then he becomes the knower of Brahman”. Only when one removes from the mind and from the heart layer by layer the influences of senses or is freed from them even for a moment, only then he is open to receive the Grace of the Lord, which alone cuts the knot of the heart, and dispels all the doubts and his deeds terminate. As *Mundaka Upanishad* (III.1.3) further assures, ‘When a seer sees the creator of the golden color, the Lord, the Person, the source of Brahman, then being a Knower, shaking off merit and de-merit and free of stain, he attains supreme equality with the Lord’.

There are innumerable symbols of the Brahman. While these symbols could be the instruments or vehicles for the lay and the ordinary, to cross over the river of life, for the initiate and the adept they are the symbols, communicated in confidence, secret and mystical, forceful pointers, energizers for pushing them for their spiritual regeneration. ओ - AUM is one such symbol. “ॐ इति एतद् अक्षरं इदं सर्वम्... सर्वम् हि एतद् ब्रह्म” says *Mandukya Upanishad*, the one of the most mystical and secret of the Upanishadic Teachings.

The word is potent with powerful impulse because it is the Primal Sound, शब्द ब्रह्मन्, which contains the Seed-Form of all the four stages of speech - परा (speech which is supremely mystical), पश्यन्ति, (speech which is seen) मध्यमा (speech which is intermediate between mystical and the spoken) and वैखरी (speech which is spoken) ‘चत्वारी वाक् परिमिता पदानि तानि विदुर् ब्रह्मणा ये मनीषिणः। गुहा त्रीणि निहिता नेंगयन्ति तुरियं वाचो मनुष्या बदन्ति॥’ clarifies Rigveda (I.164.45).

The speech which is secret and mystical is 'seen' by the Seers, experienced in heart and reflected and meditated in the mind before it is spoken, for the ordinary person to receive the suggestions of the ineffable.

ॐ हरिः - AUM Harih ! The name of the Lord is spoken before any assignments is commenced. This shows that the Seer had a noble, cultured, auspicious and spiritually awakened mind. When the supra-conscious experience of the formless form of the Lord is to be communicated to others who had no such experience, then it cannot be explained in words fashioned by the humans for their empirical communication. Yet when the Seer descends from his supra-conscious level to the empirical level then he has to use the words and the language of the humans if his desire is to communicate the bliss of the Lord to the humans. Only then would the human being would be able to grasp at least intellectually and emotionally the vision of the Resplendent Lord. The communication may be conclusive and fulfilling, if the faculties of the humans are keen and receptive. श्रद्धा is the receptivity which is needed for spiritual and supra-sensory communication.

Since Sound is more subtle than the Form, ॐ- *AUM*, the अक्षर, the immutable, is uttered by the aspirant before he can seek to pass over from the gross to the subtle. मंत्र - *Mantra* becomes the potent form for transmitting the indescribable experience of the Seer to the human being because it is surcharged with the intrinsic energy of the Word. As Sri Aurobindo says: 'In the system of Mystics, which has partially survived in the schools of the Indian Yoga, the Word is power, the Word creates. For, all creation is expression; everything already exists, already in the Secret Abode of the Infinite, गुह्य हितम्, and has only to be brought out here in apparent form by the active consciousness...By expression we form; by affirmation we

establish... Fashioned by heart, it receives its first place in the mentality through confirmation by the mind. The *Mantra*, though it expresses thought in mind, is not in its essential part the creation of the intellect. To be the secret and effective word, it must have come as an inspiration from the supra-mental plane, termed in Veda as ऋतं (the Cosmic Order), सत्यं (the Truth').

In adoration of the Lord, the ethical and moral standards have their basis. Therefore, the mind has to be free from sense- bound attractions and be austere, charitable, have clarity, morality, compassion, intellect and wisdom so that his receptivity (श्रद्धा) may unveil the divinity dwelling in human Self. Once the human being has the purity of heart and clarity of vision, then the seer can fill the gaps of his supra-conscious experience with the adornments of power, symbols of compassion, descriptions of beauty and marks of auspiciousness, so that what he beholds will be worth being cherished and worshipped.

Therefore the Seer as well as the Seeker pray the Lord at the start of instruction and communication, “ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममांगानि वाक् प्राणश्चक्षुः श्रोतमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि। सर्वं ब्रह्मौपनिषदं माहं ब्रह्म निराकृर्या मा मा ब्रह्म निराकरोत्, अनिराकरणमस्त्वनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु। तदात्मानि निरते य उपनिषत्सु धर्मास्ते मयि सन्तु, ते मयि सन्तु॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः॥” - *AUM*. Let my limbs be perfect : Let my Speech, my Breath, my Hearing and also the strength of the Senses. May the entire Secret Lore (*Brahman*) and the entire Secret Doctrine (*Upanishad*) be mine. May I not desert the Secret Lore: Let there be no breach in (learning) the Secret Lore. Let there be no breach of that (Secret Lore) by the Self, which (Self) ever be reposed in that Secret Doctrine, The Truths be auspicious to me. Let the blissful peace descend on me, peace on me, peace on me.

It is uncontested acceptance that before the Truth is sought the seeker should have competence to receive the result of such search. Let the entirety of one's Being be receptive to receive, because what is sought is the Secret Lore. For receiving such Wisdom, which is secret, guhyam, ninyam, let there be continuity in the flow of that learning. Let there be mutuality of acceptance between the Teacher and the Taught, between the Teaching and the Taught. Let there be consistency in the continuance of the communication, vibrancy in the resonance of the Speech. Let the Mind be receptive to receive, the heart to retain what is received. Let Peace descend on me, peace descend on me, peace descend on me.

ॐ - AUM is the Primal Sound and Hari is Sri Vishnu who destroys तमस् - obscurity and reveals his true form to the seeker. It was Sri Vishnu who with his three strides upheld and protected धर्म, the Perennial Principles and the world. 'त्रीणि पदा वि चक्रमे विष्णुर् गोपा अदाभ्यः। अतो धर्माणि धारयन्॥' (Rigveda. I.22.18). It is to Him that the eternal chant is addressed. "असतो मा सद्गमय, तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय, मृत्युर्मा अमृतम् गमय" (Brihad Aaranyak Up.I.3.28) - Lead me from Non-Existence to Existence. from Obscure to the Luminous, from Mortality to Immortality.

The vision of Shree as the Resplendent Divinity is difficult for the human beings to be approached. Therefore, the Seer seeks an intermediary, one who can lead one to the godhead. He prays अग्नि, the presiding deity over Fire, who is जातवेदस् - the knower of the Vedas, 'पुरोहित' - the forerunner, 'ऋत्विज' - the chosen priest, "गोपाम् अमृतस्य" - the protector of the cosmic law. At the outset, therefore, the Seer calls upon अग्नि, 'जातवेदो म आवह'.

It is neither mere tradition nor bare ritual to call on अग्नि. Traditions are based on clear reasoning, though they

may not be responsive or clear to the un-initiated. When the mystical traditions came be handed over, they were kept secret from the profane and ordinary. lest they be misused through greed and avarice for personal gain. In this attempt, the traditions lost in course of Time the mystical vibrancy to become mere rituals to be followed by the un-initiated and the confused human being. The actions lost their validity and superstition came to rule the day. - Action superseded even ज्ञान - wisdom about the mystical content of performance of the कर्म, the action.

The Seers use words with clarity of mind with significant purpose. The very word 'अग्नि' has 'अग्' as the root, meaning power, light, burning. It also means that which leads, directs. The Seer, therefore, seeks the assistance of अग्नि as the path finder, the leader, friend, as a father unto the child, so that with his energy we will be able to burn the dross that is in the body, and with his illuminating light seek the vision of the Lord in the dark recesses of his heart. It is not the elemental Fire which is sought to be propitiated but the presiding deity on this element - Fire.

अग्नि is the ever vigilant divinity. While other gods are far and had to invited to partake the oblations even in यज्ञ -Sacrifices, अग्नि Agni is ever at hand to keep the flame of life ever alive. The fire principle is scientific in temperament. Lighting the sacrificial fire, the human activities become initiated. When अग्नि is propitiated, he brings out the energy which had remained hidden in the woods as well in the waters; the power that was dormant becomes vibrant and active. The formless becomes formed.

When such is the forerunner, the energizer, the concept of Shree, Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, prosperity, resplendence, progress becomes crystallized with clarity. And as Sri Krishna assures , divinity comes in the very form which the aspirant visualizes. 'ये यथा माम् प्रपद्यन्ते

तां तथैव भजाम्यहम्' - says Sri Krishna in Gita (IV.11) . The Seer sought Shree in likeness of a mother, kind, compassionate, beautiful, resplendent and captivating.

And when Shree did come, she came with all these embodiments.

हिरण्यर्थी golden coloured. Gold is the symbol of splendor, resplendence and glory. The color of her body is yellow tinged with red color. When the *Rik* 'दिवी रूक्म उरुचक्ष उदेत् अर्थस्तरणिभ्रचमान्' was to be commented, *Sayanacharya* (13th Century) Commentator of Vedas and other texts said: 'अयं सूर्यः रूक्मः रोचमानः दिवः अंतरिक्षम् उदेति यद् वा दिवा अंतरिक्षसय रूक्म आभरणस्यनीहः। -- the resplendent Sun rises in the sky or shines like an ornament, he is referred to as रूक्मम्, combining energy of Agni, Marut and the Sun. Rukmini, who weds Sri Krishna, is thus embodiment of glory and resplendence, which Lakshmi essentially is. The Seer desires such resplendent Lakshmi to come to his house.

हरिणीम् means that which is green of color. Green color signifies cool environment of the Nature, freshness and fragrance and the pleasant satisfaction born out of contentment. Nature is नित्य नूतन- eternally new, fresh, vital and vibrant. When the hot winds of the summer pass over and the drops of monsoon moist the dust and the cool breeze wafts the fragrance of the earth and soon thereafter the green grass spreads across the bosom of Mother Earth, one basks in the benediction of the Divine Grace of Shree, Lakshmi. 'समुद्रवसने देवी पर्वतस्तनमण्डले'. The nature's bounty after the farmer's industry brings wealth which is the breath of man's honest endeavor.

The reason why most agricultural communities are deeply religious in temperament is because of the following fundamental truism. The man tills the land, sows the

seeds, manure the soil. Then his activity having thus completed, he rests in contemplation and adoration of the compassionate Lord. As ordained, He will receive the rains, the Sun shines instilling warmth in the seeds, so that they shall germinate and form the sprout and bloom into flowers and then turn to become the grains, the gift of the Gods. 'तस्माद् वा एतस्माद् आत्माना आकाशः संभूतः, आकाशात् वायुः, वायोर् अग्निः, अग्नेर् आपः, अदाश्यः पृथिवी, प्रिथिव्यः औषधयः, औषधीभ्योः अन्नं, अन्नात् पुरिषः' - thus says *Taittiriya Upanishad*. (II.1.1) The human being is conscious of his initiation, limitations and the extent of partnership with the compassion of the Lord.

The modern man, who believes having won over intransigence of nature for the creation of wealth, sees the cycle from the ore to the finished product to his ingenuity and individual enterprise, taking shape, as it were, before his very eyes. While he should certainly have the pride of his achievement, he should also at the same time accept the possibility of some un-seeable power or energy working behind his every move have and the humility to accept that he was not the contributor for the formation of the ore nor for the process of transformation which takes place from ore to the finished product.

It is the tragedy of the modern man that his achievements have not made him humble or noble in character but made himself to believe that he is the master of his destiny and the nature is his tools of trade which he can manipulate at his will. Even after the total collapse of his dreams when he see his dreams falling by the way side with the environment and ecological balance at cross roads, he has neither the intelligence nor the humility to accept responsibility for interference with the laws of nature or the ordained order of the Cosmic Laws. He is yet busy at his petty games of creating genes and generations of ill informed and un-intelligent masses of human beings.

In Indian languages, हरिणीम् also means a deer, an animal which is alert to the environment, having keen perception of faculties and quick movement of position. There is neither laziness nor tardiness in its demeanor. The wealth which remains dormant and inactive, wealth which has not kept pace with the economic and social environment, wealth which is has not been kept in motion is the wealth which is neither productive nor one which contributes to human development. Modern economic theories also will substantiate this statement.

सुवर्ण is gold; रजत is silver. The goddess is adorned with gold and silver ornaments. While gold glamorizes the glory of achievement, silver symbolizes the sentiments of contentment. The Seer desires Lakshmi which comes to his residence not only to bring glory in his life but also make him satisfied and content with the achievements obtained with her Grace. Wearing golden ornaments on the body suggests the possession of wealth, eating in silver plates signifies contentment with what one has achieved. Tradition, therefore, tells us that the fortunate son of the Goddess of Wealth should eat in silver plates, wearing golden ring in the right finger, so that the gold in the finger touches the food in the plate. It is auspicious combination to have glory with contentment.

चन्द्र, the moon, is always cool and pleasant. Therefore, he became the symbol of satisfaction and contentment. He is neither elated with achievements nor disturbed by vicissitudes. The moon has neither energy nor illumination of his own. Yet he reflects sincerely the brilliance of the Sun. He possesses inner poise. The human being should be like the moon, preferring to reflect the light from Shree, the Sun of Life. He should surrender his innate capabilities at the feet of the Lord, to be the instrument of his intention, desire and the Will.

चन्द्र, the moon is the Lord of the herb and of the tender plants. He secretes the drops of dew that rejuvenates the juice in the tender shoots to be transformed in honey, the elixir of the gods.

हिण्मयीम् means being the form of gold, resplendent within as well as and without, in all respects.

तां म आ वह जातवेदो लक्ष्मीमनपगामिनीम्।
यस्यां हिरण्यं विन्देयं गामश्वं पुरुषापहम् ॥ २॥

2. MAKE HER ACCESSIBLE TO ME , O KNOWER OF THE VEDAS, LAKSHMI WHO DOES NOT TURN HER BACK ON ME, BY WHOM SHALL BE GRANTED WEALTH TO ME, THE WISDOM, THE POWER, AND ALSO THE PEOPLE

Explanation:

The Seer has given deep thought about the goddess who should come to his abode. He wants her to be one who, having come, will not turn her back on him in future times to come. अनपगामिनीम् means one who does not turn back. The Seer does not want Lakshmi to come as a guest to his residence and who, having come once, will return after staying for few days. He wants her to come and stay at his place permanently, as a mother who comes with her hands full of gifts. But a mother stays as long as the son treats her with due respect and consideration. When a mother comes to her son's residence, she is not bound by any restrictions where she should go and where she should not. She makes her presence felt in the outer rooms as well as in the kitchen. When Shree comes to his house, he knows that she will illumine every nook and corner of the house with her benevolence and grace.

हिरण्याम् means glory, brilliance, illumination; it is the attribute of gold. Gold which is accumulated through

wrong and improper means, is never kept open. It is hidden from the prying eyes. Therefore, it does not shine but gathers dust, unseen and unutilized. The Seer does not desire wealth which does not shine like gold.

When mother comes over to his house, the entire neighborhood also comes to know of her arrival. The wealth which cannot be spoken of is not the wealth which one should desire. Because, it needs to be concealed. It neither illuminates the house nor elevates the moral or ethical status of the person. It is as good as non-existent, even when it is ostensibly in one's possession. It corrodes one's cultured life, instead of cultivating it.

It is great deception of human mind which considers money and possessions gathered through immoral and unethical means is Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. In fact such money is known as अ-लक्ष्मी, the immoral money. The acquisition and possession of such money corrupts happiness and peace of mind of the person. Such person has money but not the wealth.

गो - अश्वाम् . These two words गो and अश्व are invariably used together in Vedic texts and scriptures. The word गो or गाम् means the ray of illumination, of Light, of Wisdom. अश्व is power which is productive, energy which is creative. In times to come these symbols lost their mystical relevance and came to be associated with the animals, cow (गो) and the horse (अश्व). Consequently, the uninitiated worshipped the animal, cow and the horse without realizing they they are symbols and not the principle which they represent.

The animal cow is noble, humble, gives plentiful, nourishing milk; therefore, became the visual representation of all those qualities which inculcate moral and ethical values. Cow became the visual symbol of spiritual experience. The horse represents power, energy, the pride of

honest achievement since it has all the attributes of power and material advancement.

The Vedic seers were not mere poets and singers of hymns. They were also great warriors. We see Angiras (I.83) Vishwamitra (IV,36) Vashishtha (VII.33 and VII.83) Kutsa (I.33) as great warriors who took active part in worldly affairs of the period. Consequently the symbols used by them arose from their empirical life they lived. Their constant objective was “That world would I know where spiritual power (*Brahma*) and ruling power (*kshatra*) move together in harmony and where gods with Agni dwell” (Yajurveda 20.25).

Wealth and Power are beneficial if they are harnessed for the good of humankind. The same would be destructive if they are used for selfish, unethical and immoral purposes. The Universe is so interconnected that the balance could be maintained only through humble, compassionate consideration of the needs of each segment of the Society. Acquisition, possession, utilization and distribution of wealth, therefore, should be done with discrimination.

The child of Shree is cultured, therefore, he cannot be greedy, sensual, ill-mannered or immoral. On his face will shine the brilliance of righteous power and not unrighteous scorn. Sri Krishna is censorious in his statement: “The good people who eat what is left from the sacrifice are released from all demerits but those wicked people who prepare food for their own sake, verily eat their (own) demerits” (Gita.III.13).

Much earlier we find the Vedic Seer imploring: “Bounteous is he who gives to a beggar who comes to him feeble and in want of food. Success attends to him with shouts of joy of battles...Let the rich satisfy the poor and be humble on the extended pathway. Riches come now to one

and now to another and like the wheels on the vehicle turn ever rolling."

However, indiscriminate distribution of wealth or being liberal without intelligence is not an attribute. One should not be wasteful nor be a spendthrift. Thrift is an attribute which the Goddess Shree values most, because in this manner one venerates Shree Even the wealth earned through right and noble means, if utilized for wrong or ignoble causes brings as much demerit as an evil-doer would get. Therefore, after distributing part of the wealth, one should be prudent to save the rest for future utilization. He would then be a person who knows the value of wealth. That one is the wise. Only in the house of that person does Lakshmi reside and does not turn her back on him. She is then अनपगामिनीम्.

It is not sufficient if wealth is gathered. One should have the strength of men to put that wealth for judicious use as well. If wealth comes, glory comes, splendor comes and there are none to protect it, to use it, to enjoy it, then of what use is such wealth ? So the Seer asks for human beings, sons and daughters, family and friends, relations and well-disposed comrades, associates, servants and members of society. When wealth comes in the house, there should be devoted and well desposed spouse, sons and daughters to receive and utilise the same. There should be honest and devoted servants to safeguard it. Otherwise wealth gathered through honest endeavor becomes accessible to dishonest dissipation, whether by one who is loved or by one who is employed.

It is great deception on a person's mind that human devotion could be hired with the help of money. Money is but a means. People are the real asset. If persons are honest, hard working, devoted and conscious of the responsibility assigned to those who have reposed confidence in them, by persons, by the family, by the society or

by the humanity, then the wealth would be duly honored. Every human being is, verily, wealth. Therefore, the Seer asks the goddess for the wealth of human beings.

Unfortunately, in the present days, where possession rather than proper utilization of money is considered to be the ultimate goal of life, the true appreciation of the quality of human life is lost sight of. People are not worried about the honesty of the people nor about their devotion, as long as they feel they are capable of manipulating them through money.

Consequently, the people who are thus employed are also not inclined to be honest to the employers because the employers themselves have been neither devoted nor honest to them. Just as the people are used as commodity which can be purchased with money, so do the people, the employees and the people in general have come to be selfish and self-centered in their relation towards the employer. Society becomes a cess-pool, where each one gives rise to a breed of adversaries with conflicting interests, each one pulling the other down in an attempt to rise one over the other. This cannot be called even the law of the jungle because even in a jungle there is certain sense of proportion and natural selection which maintains of ecological balance. Not so in the world of human beings, where greed and avarice corrode the moral fibre of the individual.

A popular verse says: “यस्याति वित्तं स कुलिनः, स पंडितः, स श्रुतवागणज्ञः, स एव वक्ता स च दर्शनीयः। सर्वे गुणः कांचनमाश्रयन्ते।” This verse is not spoken as a tribute but as a derision. The present society is guided by the lure of the lucre, with the cardinal principle that the one who has money, he alone has culture, wisdom, eloquence and beauty. All attributes take, verily, shelter in gold.

The human being is impressed by the seeming success and glory, fame and happiness which these people appear

to enjoy, without waiting to consider that they live in the den of vices and vicious associates. The God's mills, even though they grind slowly, they grind exceedingly well. The result of such ill gotten money catches them fast and they live to rue their life.

When people have neither control over his senses nor power of discrimination, then there is no particular mark of distinction in one considering himself a human being. For “आहार निद्रा भय मैथुनं च सामान्यं एतद् पशुभिः नराणाम्। धर्मौ हि तेषां अधिको विशेषो धर्मेण विना पशुभिः समानः॥” - Eating food, having sleep, fear and need for sex are common for both men and the animals. But it is only Dharma, the Perennial Principles, that is distinctive to men. If there be no sense of discrimination then both the men and animals are but similar.

Men of wisdom had further this to say: “येषां न विद्या न तपो न दानम् ज्ञानम् न शीलम् न गुणो न धर्मः। ते मृत्युलोके भुवि भारभूता मनुष्यरूपेण मृगाश्चरन्ति॥”- In whom there is neither knowledge nor austerity, neither wisdom nor conduct, neither attributes nor Dharma, they wander in the world as beasts of burden in the form of human beings.

The Seer has no need for such human beings. His aim is elevation of the human soul and not the degradation of the senses. His attention is not towards the scum of earth but the stars in the sky that guide the travelers in the dark nights. The seer wants supra-sensitive, supra-conscious human associates around him.

अश्वपूर्वं रथमध्यां हस्तिनादप्रबोधिनीम्।
श्रियां देवीमुपह्ये श्रीर्मा देवी जुषताम्॥ ३॥

3. WITH HORSES IN THE FRONT , THE CHARIOT IN THE CENTRE, WITH CLARION CALL OF THE ELEPHANT'S TRUMPET, THE GLORIOUS GODDESS, I DO HERALD. LET MOTHER GODDESS SHREE, BE PLEASED WITH ME .

Explanation:

The goddess conceived by the Seer is one who is basically glorious and resplendent. Her very presence spells the brilliance of her benevolence. Therefore he uses all the words used in common parlance so that the intent behind his words may flash in imagination of the aspirant. The moment one thinks of a wealthy person, one thinks of the things associated with the wealthy person -- the mansions, vehicles, animals, men and various materials of richness and glory. In like manner, the Seer expresses his vision by using the chariot, the horse, the elephant as visible symbols of Shree. Suggesting these symbols, the Seer asks Shree to come to his home, not stealthily like the wealth robbed and stolen, but like the wealth earned with honest endeavor and pure perseverance. Let her come in such manner that the people from all sides may be aware that the goddess Lakshmi has come to his place.

How should she come ?

अश्वपूर्वम् with horses in the front, रथमध्याम् with the chariot in the centre, हस्तिनादप्रबोधिनीम् with the clarion call of the elephant announcing the arrival of the goddess Shree. Let mother Lakshmi be pleased with me. Let her not come as one who is dragged to come to my place. Let her come with pleased countenance. जुष्टाम् pleased countenance.

The Seer does not desire a weak Lakshmi, who is docile, dull, inactive, non-progressive. He wants her to be bold, enterprising, ever active like the horse harnessed to the chariot, like the elephant which is royal in dignity and calm in disposition. The harnessed horse is never still; it neighs, it grunts ever ready to take the first trot. The elephant which is caparisoned can never stand still; it heaves itself to and fro with its trunk twirling up and down. Both the horse and elephant symbolize Royalty. Seer wants a Royal Lakshmi, राजलक्ष्मी. चतुरंग बलोपेताम् धन धान्य सुखस्थिथः अश्वारूढाम् अहं चन्दे राजलक्ष्मीम् हिरण्मयीम्॥. I adore the Royal Lakshmi riding on a horse, endowed with the four-fold strength and satisfactory position of wealth and food.

Just imagine the vast vision of the Seer ! He desires her to come with power चतुरंग बलोपेतां, with fullness of wealth and grains - धनधान्य सुखस्थितीम्, riding on the horse, the symbol of energy and power, अश्वारूढाम्. Only the wealth which is ever in motion, circulation contributes to prosperity not the wealth which lies hidden in the closed quarters. The turnover and circulation of money brings wealth, says even the modern economist. The ancient seer did not seem to have forgotten this concept.

With wealth should come pride, not arrogance. Pride is healthy sign, which recognizes one's worth as well as one's obligation. The wealth is not mere gold, silver, diamonds and rubies; it also is grain, water, wind as well as the people. The Seer assures us that Shree is not mere money but the wealth which is powerful, energetic, bold, enterprising, combative, self-confident, assertive -- a combination of temporal and spiritual forces. The Seer is votary of शक्ति, Power, Energy. In fact all the noble, moral and ethical values are required to be guarded with higher responsibility. Therefore all the gods are endowed with many arms, armaments and weapons. He beckons the gods

with energetic disposition towards the devotees. सशक्तिकाम् आह्वायामि - I welcome the one endowed with power and energy.

But the weapons which are seen in the hands of the gods and goddesses are not just for exhibiting the immense power of the gods. They are for destruction of the unrighteous and protection the righteous. Kautilya, the wise Brahmin statesman of the Emperor Chandragupta, remarks: धर्मस्य मूलं अर्थः। अर्थस्य मूलं राज्यं। राजस्य, मूलं इन्द्रिय निग्रहः - The foundation of धर्म (Perennial Principles) is अर्थ (Enterprise, the Goal); the foundation of the Enterprise or Goal is Power; the foundation of the Power is restraint of the senses. Absolute, intemperate power of wealth corrupts the vision and corrodes the soul. The power which is not under control can never be the power which is beneficial. The world needs power as well as the good sense to use it with benevolence, goodwill, peace and contentment.

कां सोस्मितां हिरण्यप्राकरामाद्राम् ज्वलन्तीं तृप्तां तर्पयन्तीम्।
पद्मेस्थितां पद्मवर्णं तामिहोपहृये श्रियम् ॥४॥

4. WHO IS DAWN OF THE BLISS OF BRAHMAN, ENCIRCLED WITH GOLDEN HALO RESPONSIVE, EVER-CONCERNED, CONTENTED, EVER EAGER TO SATISFY, DWELLING IN THE LOTUS, OF LOTUS COLOR, TO HER TO SHREE I HERALD.

Explanation:

कां is the symbol of Brahman. स्मित is the smile which hovers on the lips of क, prior to the fullest illumination of the Supreme Brahman. It is the stage when the seed is ripe and about to burst out. It is the smile which the mother

has on her lips when the baby is still in the womb, ready to emerge soon. It is the moment when the aspirant is about to realize but has not realized. Lakshmi is the Unmanifest Prakriti and beyond her is The Supreme, says Bhagavad Gita “परस्तस्मात् भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः। यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति” (VIII.20). Beyond this, verily, there exists another un-manifest which is Eternal Unmanifest, which even after the destruction of all the Beings does not perish. Shree, Lakshmi is the unmanifest, the अव्यक्त; अन्यो अव्यक्तो अव्यक्तात्, the Un-manifest other than this un-manifest is Brahman, the Supreme Being. The smile on the lips of Shree denotes the coming events in the life of the Seer.

हिरण्य प्राकारम् encircles with golden halo. Since she is the very embodiment of the resplendence, there is the halo of golden brilliance. She is आदित्य वर्णं तमसः परस्तात् as the Veda puts it. She is the luminous form beyond obscurity .

आद्रम्- responsive. It is not sufficient if mother comes to our house. She has to be loving and responsive to the needs of the child. When the child is hungry and crying for food, the mother's bosom becomes full of milk, आद्रम् - moist with motherly affection. When Mother is moist with monsoon rains, the seeds planted therein become filled with milk, which basking in the warmth of the sun solidify as the grain. The food which we eat is the conclusive proof of the mother's affection to the children of the world.

ज्वलन्तीम् - ever concerned and conscious. As mother, Shree is ever concerned, ever eager, ever impatient about the welfare of her children. She is never satisfied with the things she has bestowed on them. She is eager and therefore impatient to see her offspring healthy, wealthy and contented.

तृप्ताम् - contented. She has no desires for herself to be satisfied. An unsatisfied person is not eager to satisfy the desires of others. Shree is ever self-satisfied. Her satisfaction lies in the satisfaction of her children. Being satisfied and contented is the sure sign of being rich and wealthy. A wealthy person is not one who has amassed wealth which he is not capable to enjoy but one who has the capacity to enjoy the wealth which he has amassed. Further the emphasis should not be on the enjoyment of the wealth but being content with what has been ordained for him.

Isha Upanishad says, “ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंचं जगत्याम्। तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथाः मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम्॥” All this, verily, which exists in the primordial world, is pervaded by the Supreme Lord. Therefore तेन त्यक्तेन - in the spirit of non-attachment (to what has been ordained), भुंजीथाः - enjoy. मा गृधः do not covet, कस्यस्विद्धनम् - the wealth of others (which is ordained for others).

The modern economic theory also recommends that the rupee saved is rupee earned. Limiting one's needs according to one's possession is the sure key to happiness. The concept of happiness is closely connected with the concept of renunciation. Sri Krishna is eloquent about performance of actions without expectation of the fruits thereof. “He whose desires enter as the waters in the sea, which is ever calm, though is ever filled, attains peace; not he who hugs the desires”. The waters which stay stagnant smell bad. Even so is the stagnant wealth.

पद्मेस्थिताम्- dwelling in lotus flower. पद्मवर्णम् - of the lotus color. The legend says that when the oceans were churned Shree arose sitting in the blooming lotus flower, pink of color. Pink is also the sign of being healthy and content. It is also the color of the early dawn. When the Sun rises on the eastern horizon, it does not rise all of

sudden. So also is the case of wealth. When wealth comes it does not come in an uncontrollable flood. In fact, it is not desirable that it should come all in abundance at one time. Immeasurable wealth, even when it is earned by honest labor or received by luck will be difficult to digest. The mother, therefore, feeds the child in small morsels or measures even when the vessel is full to the brim. Too much food may be difficult to be digested. He will in all probability become ill-tempered, arrogant, greedy, avaricious, capricious, cunning, more eager to safe guard the wealth than enjoy it. Such wealth brings him more misery than contentment.

Pink symbolizes the dawn of the auspicious moments to come. Wealth is not an end in itself. It is only the means for fulfilling the Purushartha, the goals of human development. धर्म, अर्थ, काम and मोक्ष are said to be the four पुरुषार्थ of human endeavor. Unless अर्थ - enterprise or goal and काम - desire in any form are based on धर्म - the Perennial Principles, मोक्ष - deliverance is not possible. It is for this reason that अर्थ and काम are placed in between धर्म and मोक्ष. No wise person will speak of human endeavour, पुरुषार्थ, in confused order as काम, अर्थ, धर्म and मोक्ष.

The petals of the lotus open as soon the brilliance of the Sun spreads in the firmament. So should our life be enlivened with the grace of the Lord. Knowing well this eternal truth, and that on this chosen path there are likely to be pitfalls and likely to be assaulted by the forces of darkness, we should keep the Light in our heart always burning bright, always steady and unwavering. Then we are sure to see the brilliance of the Light at the end of the tunnel.

चन्द्रां प्रभासां यशसां ज्वलन्ती श्रियं लोके देवजुष्टामुदारम्।
तां पद्मिनीर्मी शरणं प्रपद्येऽलक्ष्मीर्मे नश्यतां त्वां वृणे ॥५॥

5. CONTENTED, RESPLENDENT, GLORIOUS, ENERGIZING IN THE WORLD EULOGIZED BY THE GODS, TO HER, SITTING IN THE LOTUS, I BOW DOWN IN SURRENDER. THE IN-AUSPICIOUS LAKSHMI BE DESTROYED FROM ME. TO YOU I PROPITIATE.

Explanation:

चन्द्राम् - contented and therefore peaceful. Mother's face is always peaceful and contented. When the child is assailed in his life by the forces of darkness, she sheds her graceful, soothing sight on the child.

प्रभासाम् means resplendent. Mother's grace does not only soothes the feelings of the child, it also nourishes, energizes and expands the glory to the child. From time immemorial the Seer has seen this aspect of the Lord, इदम् श्रेष्ठाम् ज्योतिषां ज्योतिः. When she shines every thing else shines reflected in her glory. तस्य भासां सर्वमिदं विभाति. In its luminosity all this becomes luminous. The Light is Eternal. When there is light, there is no occasion for darkness to be. Sun, it is said, has not encountered darkness any time.

यशसाम् ज्वलन्तीम् - luminous in success . Whenever she arrives, the brilliance and success is sure to follow. Wealth which does not shine is not the wealth that should be eulogized or cultivated.

लोके देवा जुष्टाम् उदाराम् - in the world eulogized by the gods. It is not only the human beings that need Shree but even the gods need her. Shree in her aspect as Vak Ambrani declares, “अहं राष्ट्री संगमनी वसूनां चिकितुषी प्रथमा यज्ञीमानाम्। तां मा देवा व्यदधुः पुन्ना भूरिस्यात्रां भूर्योशयन्तीम्॥ मया सौ अन्नमति यौ विपश्यति यः प्राणिति य ईं श्रुणोत्युक्ताम्। अमन्तवो मां त उप क्षियन्ति

श्रुधि श्रुत श्रद्धिवं ते वदामि ॥ अहमेव स्वयम् इदं वदामि जुष्टं देवेभिर् उत मानुषेभिः । यं कामये तं तभुग्रं कृणोमि तं ब्रह्माणं तं ऋषिं तं सुमेधाम् ॥ (Rigveda X.125) - I am the Queen, the one who gathers wealth, most thoughtful, first of those who merit worship. Therefore the Gods have established Me in many a place, in many homes, to enter and reside therein. Through Me alone all beings eat the food...I make the man I desire exceedingly mighty, make him a sage, a Seer, a Brahman."

It is for this reason that the gods in unison considered her fit to be adorned by Sri Vishnu, the Brahman . Coming out of the primordial waters after the churning of the oceans, she ascended the expansive chest of Sri Vishnu. Because Sri Vishnu is adorned by Shree he is referred to as Bhagavan, Shree-pati, Shree-niwas. Sri Vishnu is referred to as Bhagavan because of his splendor. ऐश्वर्यस्य समग्रसय धर्मस्य यशमाः श्रीयः ज्ञान वैराग्य एति षण्णं भग इतीरण-, Bhaga is भाग्य good fortune.

Vedic society never discounted the importance of wealth in the life of a human being. Sanyasi (the recluse) is not the one who renounces the wealth, but is the one who renounces the desire and attachment for wealth. The wealth which is received from honest labor and the grace of the Lord has divine fragrance. If a human being has to be happy and contented then he has to be receptive to the resonance of the soul and not be influenced and succumb to the attraction of the material possessions. Then the wealth which is acquired will be देव जुष्टाम् - pleasing to the gods.

पदिमनीम् means the one who dwells in the lotus. And the lotus, which ever remains pure even when surrounded by mire, became the symbol of unattached purity of soul. The Seer is clear in his mind that his life should be clean and clear like the lotus leaf, untouched by the dirt or the

water. He does not welcome a-Laksmi. अ-लक्ष्मीम् नश्यताम्
destroy the inauspicious symbols of wealth in me.

आदित्यवर्णं तपसोऽभिजातो वनसपतिस्तवं वृक्षोऽथ बिल्वः।

तस्य फलानि तपसानुदन्तु मायान्तराश्च बाह्या अलक्ष्मी॥ ६॥

6. OF THE COLOR OF SUN, BORN OF AUSTERITIES, IN THE FORM OF VEGETATION OF BILVA GROVE, BY ITS FRUITS, AND AUSTERITIES DESTROY, THE INAUSPICIOUS WEALTH AND ITS OSTENTATIOUS ILLUSION.

Explanation:

The Sun has the illuminating, energizing power. When Sri dawns like the Sun, it drives out forces of darkness and she puts in the human hands the means for their moral, spiritual and economic regeneration. When she comes, she cannot be hidden under the bushel; she shines like the Sun. Therefore she is called आदित्यवर्णं, having the color and characteristics of the Sun.

बिल्व - Bilva tree has great significance, because it has soothing, cooling effect. When the Lord Shiva destroyed the evil forces with all his ferocity, his anger could not be controlled except when he was showered with bilva leaves. Shiva the auspicious one, and bilva the harbinger of auspicious qualities go together. The legend tells us that when the Lord Vishnu in his descent in the form of Nara-simha had to be smeared with the juice of the Bilva leaves to assuage the burning sensation of his nails after they has torn apart the heart of the evil demon, Hiranyakasipu.

Even though Shree adores those who are intense, earnest, active and austere, she also desires that they should be peaceful in their temperament and meek and humble in their achievement.

अ-लक्ष्मी has all the charms and attractions to lure the human mind. It creates worlds which are non-existent so

that the human soul may lose its sight and wander in the forest of human desires. She is like a mirage, which beckons abundance of waters but when approached near, leads the person to his damnation. Therefore the Seer emphasizes the fruits of austerities so that the illusion of अ-लक्ष्मी, which spells inauspiciousness may not over-power him from his chosen goal.

उपैतु मां देवसखः कीर्तिश्च मणिना सह ।
प्रादुर्भूतोऽस्मि सुराष्ट्रेऽस्मिन् कीर्तिमृद्धिं ददति मे ॥ ७ ॥

7. MAKE ACCESSIBLE TO ME COMRADE OF THE GODS, AND FAME, WITH EXCELLENCE, BECAUSE BORN AM I IN THIS NOBLE LAND. FAME AND SUCCESS DO GRANT ME.

Explanation:

She is closely associated with the gods. In Vishnu Purana (VI.5.74) भग is said to be the representative term for six auspicious marks. Whoever possesses these auspicious marks came to be considered as भगवान्. In Bhagavad Gita, while each participant is referred to by their name, Sri Krishna is referred to as भगवान्. Every speech spoken in the Text, whether by Sri Krishna or by others, is included in the all-inclusive term Bhagavad Gita, since all those happen to be associated with the Resplendent Lord. Nothing ever comes to happen except when it so prompted by Bhagavan. The listener as well as the speaker, the seeker as well as the Teacher, the one who has doubts as well as the one who removes the doubts - all are but the manifestations of the Lord.

The statement is not कृष्ण उवाच or श्री कृष्ण उवाच but श्री भगवान् उवाच. Here the Lord speaks from the pedestal of one who is endowed with all the auspicious marks, as a

divine person. Sri Shankara refers to his role at the very outset of Srimad Bhagavad Gita Bhashya, “स च भगवान् ज्ञान ऐवर्य शक्तिबलवीर्यतेजोभिः सदा संपन्नः” He is the Resplendent Lord ever endowed with Wisdom, Resplendence, Energy, Power, Courage, Luminosity. Therefore, when the Lord Vishnu is prayed in his aspect of Bhaga, the Seer prays in Rigveda (VII.41.2), “प्रतर्जितं भगमुग्रं हुवेम वयं पुत्रमदितेर्यो विधत्ता। आधश्चिद् यं मन्यमानस्तुरश्चिद् राजा चिद् यं भग भक्षीत्याह ॥” - The son of Aditi, Aditya-Bhaga is stern, victorious and the protector of the entire world. Both the poor and the wealthy pray Him for wealth.”

The Seer further declares, “भग एव भवान् अस्तु देवसतेन वयं भगवतः स्याम् ॥ (VII.41.5) - O Gods, the Lord Bhaga, (Sri Vishnu) is Bhagavan. Therefore by his grace let us also become Bhagavan. Sayana in his commentary on this mantra specifies, “हे देवाः भग देव एव भगवान् धनवान् अस्तु। तेन भगेन देवेन धनेने वा वयं भगवन्तं स्यां धनवन्तः भवेन ”. From this it would be seen how close is the affinity which was seen by the seer between the Gods and wealth.

The Seer is neither selfish nor self-centered. It is not even his individual case that he is pleading. He is proud of his society, community and of the nation. He is proud of his history and heritage. He desires success, fame and wealth because after all he is the son of this noble land and therefore deserves special attention. प्रादुर्भूतो सुराष्ट्रे अस्मिन् - born am I, in this noble nation. He is conscious of the noble worth of his land and its people. In the present age where money is equated with wealth, where material possession and immoral and unethical power is equated with prosperity, how many can claim to be proud of their nation to refer it as *su-rashtra* ?

क्षुत्पिपासामलां ज्येष्ठामलक्ष्मीं नाशयाम्यहम्।
अभूतिमसमृद्धं च सर्वं निर्णुद भे ग्रहात्॥ ८ ॥

8. SINFUL THIRST AND DESIRE AND YOUR ELDER A-LAKSHMI, I AM HEREBY DESTROYING. INDOLENCE AND LACK OF PROSPERITY ALL THESE BE REMOVED FROM MY HOME.

Explanation:

Even before Shree, with all लक्षण - attributes comes to his house, the Seer seeks to cleanse his surroundings of all the evil and sinful traits, so that she, who is Mother to all, may decide to reside permanently with him. He desires his self to be freed from greed, arrogance, pride, hypocrisy, indolence, delusion, cruelty and hatred -- all the traits of a-Lakshmi. This body is the temple of the Lord where he dwells in the core of the heart. How many of us realize this essential fact and keep our divine home clean and clear so that the Divine Mother be pleased with her residence to make it her permanent abode !

गन्धाद्वारां दुराधर्षां नित्यपुष्टां करीषिणीम्
ईश्वरीं सर्वभूतानां तामिहोपद्धये श्रियम्॥ ९ ॥

9. EVER FRAGRANCE, EVER INVINCIBLE, EVER ENERGIZING, EVER LUMINOUS, THE SUPREME AMONG ALL CREATURES TO SUCH SHREE, I HERALD.

Explanation:

The seer is the son of the soil. Around him he sees spread in abundance the manifested form of Mother Nature, with all the colors and fragrances. Like a child of nature, he smells the presence of his mother with every wisp of breeze. अदिती, who appears to him, verily as अ-द्वैती, pervades all his being. The Seer sees the presence

of the Mother in every particle of dust and grain of sand. Shree as the Mother incarnate has blossomed the earth with green grass, opulent trees, flowing streams and ever re-generating environment. We the people hankering for the greed and avarice to possess what is not ours have created an imbalance in this ecological diversity.

With great difficulty the Gods had churned out Shree from the deepest of the waters so that she may dwell with the creatures and bless them with abundance. The worlds in the galaxy which are not so fortunate are barren with neither waters nor any vegetation to sustain the life. But we, the people, are neither grateful nor graceful in our approach to this bounty which is laid before us.

She lived in the Seas, symbolizing the ever pulsating, restless energy in motion. By motion she creates the seasons to change, contributes the rains to fall on the parched earth, for the plants and vegetation to grow and be the food for the people and the creatures of the world. Her every action is an act of sacrifice and also a lesson to the people in furtherance of the sacrificial cycle, which is *ऋत*, the Cosmic Law. There is an evocative sukta in Atharva veda (XII.2), which associates the Mother Earth with all the wealth and splendor:

"Truth, Cosmic Order, that is great and
stern Consecration, Austerity, Prayer and
Ritual - these uphold the Earth.

May She, the Queen of what has been
And what shall be in future, make this Earth boun-
tiful for us.
Earth which has many heights and slopes,
and unconfined plains that bind humans together,
Earth that bears herbs of various healing powers,
May She spread wide for us to thrive.

Earth, which is at first was in waters of the ocean,
 And which the sages sought with wondrous pow-
 ers,
 Earth whose heart was in Eternal waters,
 Wrapped in Truth, the immortal.
 May She give us splendor and strength
 In the most exalted state.

Every fragment of the earth has its own fragrance born of the environment, nurtured by the morals, ethics, arts, cultures and ethos of the lands. It is seeped with penance and is stern with austerity. Such nation cannot be tempered or taken lightly, even though it lacks material comforts and economic well-being. For here dwells the Mother, Shree in all essential all pervading character. The place where she dwells the fragrance is sure to spread, which is not the product of force, nor arrogance, nor of vengeance nor even of misplaced patriotism. One who has no respect for the things which Mother has ordained for others cannot expect respect from others in equal measure. In mother's place all are equal. As the Atharvan Seer prays, "May the Earth that bears people speaking varied speech, with various rituals according to their place of abode, enrich me with wealth in thousands of streams, like the milch-cow that never fails."

मनसः काममाकूतिं वाचः सत्यमशीमही।
 पशूनां रूपमन्त्रस्य मयि श्रीः श्रयतां यशः॥ १० ॥

10. IN MIND, SATISFACTION OF FULFILLED DESIRES, , IN SPEECH GRACE OF THE TRUTH, IN ANIMALS THE FORM OF FOOD, IN THE SUCCESS SHALL BE MY WEALTH.

Explanation;

An extra-ordinary vision is placed before us by the Seer. He does not only need the satisfaction of his desires

but needs the satisfaction of the fulfillment of desires. In his Speech he seeks the fragrance of achievement, in his possessions the form of contentment, in wealth the presence of mother's grace.

मनसः काम आकृतिम्- in mind the Impulse, the desire for progress of human kind. The impulse could be Proper or Pleasant. Katha Upanishad says that before very person the Proper and the Pleasant approach to be received and accepted. The wise one, धीरः, after discriminating between the two, selects the Proper as against the Pleasant and consequently reaches the Supreme abode (परमम् पदम्) of happiness. The un-wise selects the Pleasant and is thereby lead by the forces of sense-objects. These lead him to the bondage of worldly life and the cycle of birth and death.

The Seer desires the arousal of such desires in mind as are propitious for his spiritual development. Indian moral precepts lay emphasis on Dharma, the Perennial Principles of human behavior, where the human objectives are laid before him. धर्म, अर्थ, काम and मोक्ष. मोक्ष is the ultimate deliverance from the bondage of संसार - primordial world. धर्म represents the Perennial Principles which support and elevate the human endeavor. अर्थ is the endeavor of human objectives in life for fulfilling the need for deliverance. काम is not restricted only to carnal desires but to all desires and impulses which arise in mind.

Maitri Upanishad (X.5.2.30) declares: "It is with the mind, verily, that one sees. It is with mind that one hears. Desires, concepts, doubts, receptivity or lack of receptivity, steadfastness or lack of steadfastness, shame, meditation, fear and all these are truly the Mind...In thinking 'I am he' or 'This is mine', he binds himself with himself, as the bird in a snare...Therefore, stand free from thoughts, concepts, from self- love"

Yet the human being has to Will, Desire and Create concepts in Mind. If such is the absolute case then let the desires and concepts be graced by Truthful intentions. Another Rigvedic Seer prays: "Let a man think well on wealth and strive to win it by means of **ऋत** and worship. Let him take counsel with his inner wisdom and grasp with spirit still greater felicity" (X.31.2).

Man is enamored with abundance of speech. They are busy in collecting and collating information while their effort should have been cultivation of wisdom. They have collected-information of more and more things of the world than they can have any occasion to make use of. They desired to be well informed when all that was required for one to be wise. Sri Shankara, therefore, warns the aspiring student, "शब्दजालम् महा अरण्यम् चित्त भ्रम कारणम्" - the web of words is like great forest, the cause for confusion in mind. Therefore, even Chhandogya Upanishad cautions: "Let the wise Brahmana after knowing Him alone, practice wisdom. Let him not reflect on many words, for that is mere weariness of speech".

Therefore, in the pursuit of human goal emphasis is sought to be placed on धर्म to achieve the desired goal of मोक्ष, the deliverance or liberation.

आकृतिम् is the intention, Impulse, emotion that arises in the mind. Therefore, in mind he seeks the well satisfied intentions or emotions. वाचः सत्यशीमहि - in speech the grace of the Truth.

पशुनां रूपमन्तस्य. This does not suggest that animals should be treated as food. But the animals are the instruments or source for food for humans in as much as the Cows give us the milk and the horses give us power to plough the fields. In mystical sense the cows suggest the rays of illumination and horses, the energy, industrious-

ness needed for fulfilling the four पुरुषार्थ, or Objectives of Human Endeavor.

Food is not something that can be brought with money. If the man is not so blessed, then even with all the wealth in the world, the food that is placed before a person can neither be eaten nor can it be digested. Taittiriya Upanishad, therefore, speaks eloquently of food. "Do not speak ill of food. That shall be the rule व्रत. Life, verily, is food. The body is the eater of food. In life is the body established; life is established in body. So food is established in food. He who knows that food is established in food, becomes well-established. He becomes an eater of food, possessing food. He becomes a great in offspring, cattle, splendor and sacred wisdom. Great will be his fame" (III.7.1).

There is great inter-dependence and inter-action between the eater and the thing eaten. The modern scientist calls it to be the ecological balance.

कर्दमेन प्रजाभूता मयी संभव कर्दम।
श्रियं वासय मे कुले मातरं पद्ममालिन ॥ ११॥

11. ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE BECAUSE OF KARDAMA, BE UNTO ME EVEN AS YOU WERE TO KARDAMA. O SHREE DO DWELL IN MY FAMILY, O MOTHER, CLUSTER OF LOTUSES.

Explanation:

Kardama was one of earliest Seers who made the goddess श्री known to people at large, whereupon she became a Mother to all. As such, Kardama became one of her dearest child. The Seer of this Sukta also wants to be like Kardama, a dear child to the mother so that Shree may come to his house and make it her dwelling place. Mother prefers to dwell with the child whom she chooses. "यां एष वृणुते तेन लभ्यसतस्यैष..."

By saying that he too would like to be Kardama, the Seer seeks to establish his kinship with Kardama and Shree. कर्दमेन प्रजाभूता does not mean 'descended from Kardama' but 'became accessible because of Kardama'. Her being the Mother of the creatures came to be known because of Kardama. Therefore be towards me, even as you are towards Kardama. Dwell in my house as you have been dwelling in his place.

पद्ममालिनीम् as would the cluster of lotuses. The pink color of the lotus symbolizes the opulence of happiness and the contentment of the soul. Pink is the color which rises on mother's cheek, even as she fondles and holds the child to her bosom.

आपः सृजन्तु स्निग्धानि चिक्लीत वस मे गृहे।
नि च देवी मातरं श्रियां वासय कुले ॥१२॥

12. LET THE WATERS ENERGIZE WITH CLOSENESS. O CHIKLEET, DO DWELL IN MY HOME AND MAKE GODDESS MOTHER SHREE DWELL IN MY HOME.

Explanation:

आप सृजन्तु स्निग्धानि. Mother's affection is not dry and unproductive but is moist like the living waters. आपः is not mere water; it is moisture in all its varieties and moods. Mother's affection should not be only close but also should be energizing. The Seer calls *Chikleet*, another devotee of Shree to come and dwell in his family. Once these children are in his home, then their Mother is sure to follow, like the cow following her calf.

आद्रां पुष्करिणीं पुष्टिं पिंगलां पद्ममालिनीम्।
चन्द्रां हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं जातवेदो म आवह॥१३॥

*13. AFFECTIONATE, FRAGRANT LIKE LOTUS,
WELL ENDOWED, RADIANT LIKE AUSPICIOUS
COLOR, BY THE CLUSTER OF LOTUS, TRAN-
QUIL, OF GOLDEN COLOR, LAKSHMI, O
KNOWER OF VEDAS, MAKE HER ACCESSIBLE TO
ME.*

Explanation:

Mother's heart is always affectionate आद्राम्, moist with motherly love. She appears in the cluster of lotuses, which is the sign of her happiness and contentment which also makes her पुष्टीम् full of milk, energy, glory and wealth. Seer is clear and careful in his pleas. He does not want a mother who is arrogant because of her accomplishments or her endowments. She should be चन्द्राम् tranquil, affectionate, cool and soft like the autumn moon.

He implores अग्नि the presiding deity over fire, Agni, the Seer-Will among the Gods, who acts the पुरोहित, the Leader on the Path and Messenger to the Gods. The emissary of the people to deliver the adoration and the gifts of sacrifices to the Gods in heaven. He does not want an ordinary emissary to herald and accompany Shree to his house.

As explained by Sri Aurobindo, Agni is no random fire; his is the flame of force-instinct with the light of divine will. His mission is to purify all that he is associated with and to energize and raise the soul, struggling in संसार upwards to the worlds of divine. Seated among mortals, he initiates movement and action. "Our sacrifice is a journey, a pilgrimage and a battle - a travel towards the Gods and we also make that journey with Agni, the inner Flame

as our path-finder and leader. Our human things are raised up by the mystic Fire into the immortal being, into the Great Heaven and the things divine come down to us".

आद्रा यः करिणी यस्ति सुवर्णा हेममालिनीम्
सूर्या हिरण्मयी लक्ष्मीं जातवेदो म आवह ॥ १४ ॥

14. WHO IS AFFECTIONATE EVEN WHILE ENDOWED WITH RIGHTEOUS WEAPON GLOW, WITH THE AURA OF GOLD, LIKE THE LUMINOUS SUN, WITH GOLDEN GLOW THAT LAKSHMI, O KNOWER OF THE VEDAS MAKE HER ACCESSIBLE TO ME.

Explanation:

The Seer's desire for excellence makes him seek Shree which is unsurpassable. He is not satisfied with immature, inefficient, insufficient benediction. The Grace should be as clear and complete as his vision is. He does not need wealth which cannot be controlled, that which cannot be disciplined, that which does not shine in its potential capability, that which does not have the brilliance of its existence. He has the necessary sense of discrimination to realize that all that shines need not necessarily be gold. Like unbridled horse, the wealth which is unmanageable, which is neither disciplined nor controlled will take a person to perdition.

Therefore he wants his mother to be not only kind and compassionate but also strict in controlling the wayward senses of her child. The child should be made wise in controlling the mind in a disciplined manner. The Lord takes upon himself the task of not only the establishment of righteousness but also the destruction of unrighteousness. Indian Gods and Goddesses are, therefore, endowed with weapons in their arms.

तां म आवह जातवेदो लखीमनपगामिनीम्।
यस्यां हिरण्यं प्रभूतं गावो दास्योऽश्वान्विन्देयं पुरुषानामहम्॥ १५॥

15. I HERALD HER, O KNOWER OF THE VEDAS, LAKSHMI, WHO WILL NEVER RETURN, BY WHOSE, BRILLIANCE, GREATNESS, WISDOM SERVICE, ENERGY, AND HUMAN BEINGS I WILL HAVE ACCESS

Explanation:

The seer does not need uncertain solace nor impermanent pleasures. His needs are those which are Eternal, all-pervading, omnipresent, exceedingly subtle, undecaying,. Therefore he seeks intervention of Agni, the Divine Fire, the Supernal Energy. Because he is worthy of his task, this rapturous priest of sacrifices, beloved guest, ever vigilant, the flaming force of knowledge and energy.

॥ इति भी सूक्तम् समाप्तम् ॥

THUS ENDS THE HYMN TO SHREE,
THE GODDESS OF WEALTH.

IV

PHALA SHRUTI

फल श्रुति means the fruits of listening to the Hymns. It is believed that unless the फल श्रुति is recited, the benefit of the Hymn is not available.

It appears that in the course of generations, as the form of Shree as Lakshmi became more and more crystallized and legends started gathering around the deity. Many additional verses came to be added to those which were already in existence in the subsidiary portions - खिल पर्व of the Rigveda. These are mentioned here because they have come to be venerated and accepted in common psyche of worshippers of Shree.

यः शुचिः प्रयतो भूत्वा जुहुयादाज्यमन्वहम्।
सूक्तं पंचदशार्चं च श्रीकामः सततं जपेत्॥ १॥

I. HE WHO IS DESIROUS OF RESPLENDENT SHREE AFTER BECOMING CONSCIOUSLY PURE, AND OFFERING OBLATIONS IN THE FIRE, SHOULD RECITE CONTINUOUSLY THESE FIFTEEN HYMNS.

पद्मानने पद्मउरू पद्माक्षी पद्मसंभवे।
तन्मे भजसि पद्माक्षीयेन सौख्यं लभाम्यहम्॥ २॥

II. HAVING FACE LIKE LOTUS, BREASTS LIKE LOTUS, EYES LIKE LOTUS, BORN OUT OF LO-

TUS, I PROPITIATE YOU, THE BEAUTIFUL LOTUS EYED ONE, FROM WHOM I WILL OBTAIN HAPPINESS.

अश्वदाये गोदाये धनदाये महाधने।
धनं मे लभतां देवी सर्वकामांश्च देयी मे ॥ ३॥

III. BESTOWER OF ENERGY, BESTOWER OF WISDOM, BESTOWER OF WEALTH, POSSESSOR OF WEALTH, ENDOW ME WITH WEALTH, O GODDESS, GRANT ME ALSO ALL THE DESIRES.

पद्मानने पद्मविपद्मपत्रे पद्मप्रिये पद्मदलायताक्षी।
विश्वप्रिये विष्णुमनोनुकूले त्वात्पादपद्मं मयि सत्रिधत्स्व ॥ ४॥

IV. HAVING FACE LIKE LOTUS, LOVER OF LOTUS, EYES LIKE LOTUS LEAVES, UNIVERSALLY ADORED, ATTUNED TO THE MIND OF SRI VISHNU, YOUR LOTUS LIKE FEET BE ESTABLISHED IN MY PRESENCE.

पुत्रपौत्रान् धनधान्यं हसत्यश्वादिगवेरथम्।
प्रजानां भवसि माता आयुष्मन्तं करोतु मे ॥ ५॥

V. WITH SONS AND GRANDSONS, WEALTH AND GRAINS, SPLENDOR, ENERGY, WISDOM AND THE MEANS TO USE THEM AND OFFSPRING, O MOTHER, MAKE ME LONG LIVING.

धनमग्निर्धनं वायुर्धनं सूर्यो धनं वसुः।
धनमिन्द्रो बृहस्पतिर्वर्णो धनमस्तु मे ॥ ६॥

VI. AGNI BE MY WEALTH, VAYU BE MY WEALTH, SURYA BE MY WEALTH, VASUS BE MY WEALTH, INDRA BE MY WEALTH AND LET BRIHASPATI AND VARUNA BE MY WEALTH TOO.

१. वैनतेय सामं पिब सोमं पिबतु वृत्रहा।
सोमं धनस्य सौमिनो महां ददातु सोमिनः ॥ ७ ॥

VII. VAINATEYA SAVOUR DEEP THE ETERNAL BLISS, VRITRA SAVOUR DEEP THE ETERNAL BLISS, ETERNAL BLISS OF WEALTH, LET THAT BLISS ALSO BE GIVEN TO ME BY THAT BLISSFUL GODDESS.

न क्रोधो न च मात्सर्यं न लोभो नाशुभास्तिः।
भवन्ति कृतपुण्यानां भक्तानां श्री सूक्तं भजेत् ॥ ८ ॥

VIII. NEITHER ANGER NOR EVEN ENVY, NEITHER GREED, NOR IN-AUSPICIOUS THOUGHTS, SHALL BEFALL ON THE MERITORIOUS DEVOSEE WHO RECITES SHREE SUKTA.

सरसिजनिलये सरोजहस्ते ध्वलतांशुक गन्धमाल्याशोभे।
भगवति हरिवल्लभे मनोज्ञे त्रिभुवनभूतिकरी प्रसीदमहाम् ॥ ९ ॥

IX. DWELLING IN LOTUS LAKE, HOLDING LOTUSES IN HANDS CLOTHES, ADORNED WITH GARLAND OF SCENTED FLOWERS, THE RESPLENDENT GODDESS, CONSORT OF HARI ATTRACTIVE TO THE MIND, BESTOWER OF WELL BEING IN THE THREE WORLDS, BE PLEASED WITH ME.

विष्णुपत्निं क्षमां देवी माधवीं माधवप्रियाम्।
लक्ष्मीं प्रियसर्हीं देवीं नमाम्यच्युतवल्लभाम् ॥ १० ॥

X. CONSORT OF SRI VISHNU COMPASSIONATE TO THE GODDESS, CONSORT OF MADHAVA, DEAR TO MADHAVA, TO LAKSHMI, DEAR COMPANION, GODDESS, I MAKE OBEISANCE TO THE DARLING OF ACHYUTA.

महालक्ष्मीं च विदमहे विष्णुपत्निं च धीमही।
तन्मो लक्ष्मीः प्रचोदयात् ॥ ११ ॥

*XI. I KNOW SUPREME LAKSHMI. I MEDITATE
ON THE CONSORT OF SRI VISHNU. LET
LAKSHMI ENERGIZE MY MIND.*

श्रीर्वचस्वमायुष्टरारोग्यं विद्याच्छोभमानं महीयते।
धान्यं धनं पशुं बहुपुत्रलाभं शतसंवत्सरं दीर्घमायुः॥ १२ ॥

*XII. AUSPICIOUS, ESSENCE OF ENERGY, OF
HEALTH, OF SPLENDOR OF FOOD, OF WEALTH,
OF ANIMALS, BENEFIT OF LARGE PROGENY,
LONG LIFE OF HUNDRED YEARS BE GRANTED
TO ME..*

॥ ॐ तत्सत् ॥

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