

RV 1.170

r̥ṣi: 1,3 indra; 4 indra or agastya, 2,5 agasya maitrāvaruṇi; devatā: indra;
chanda: 1 br̥hati, 2-4 anuṣṭup, 5 triṣṭup

न नूनम् अस्ति नो श्वः कस् तद् वेद यद् अद्भुतम् ।
 अन्यस्य चित्तम् अभि संचरेण्यम् उताधीतं वि नश्यति ॥ १-१७०-०१
 किं न इन्द्र जिघाँससि भ्रातरो मरुतस् तव ।
 तेभिः कल्पस्व साधुया मा नः समरणे वधीः ॥ १-१७०-०२
 किं नो भ्रातर् अगस्त्य सखा सन्न अति मन्यसे ।
 विद्वा हि ते यथा मनो ऽस्मभ्यम् इन् न दित्ससि ॥ १-१७०-०३
 अरं कृण्वन्तु वेदिं सम् अग्निम् इन्धताम् पुरः ।
 तत्रामृतस्य चेतनं यज्ञं ते तनवावहै ॥ १-१७०-०४
 त्वम् ईशिषे वसुपते वसूनां त्वम् मित्राणाम् मित्रपते धेष्ठः ।
 इन्द्र त्वम् मरुद्भिः सं वदस्वाघ प्राशान ऋतुथा हवीषि ॥ १-१७०-०५

The Colloquy of Indra and Agastya¹

Interpretation:

This dialogue is the key concept to the Vedic Knowledge on which Sri Aurobindo also built his understanding, and all his concepts of Integral Yoga. The Beyond is here in the form in which it wants to be known and by the means which it created for this purpose. Where the Beyond is there are no means of knowing and no means of realizing it, for all the means of knowing and experiencing it are being manifested here. The Beyond wants to be known and experienced and therefore it creates this world. The world itself is the evolutionary process in discovering and experiencing the Beyond here.

¹ Volume: 10 [SABCL] (The Secret of the Veda), Page: 239 Author's Note:

These translations are offered here only in their results for the interest of the general reader and as an illustration of the theory advanced. Their philological and critical justification would be interesting only to a limited circle. A few indications, however, may at a later stage be given which will illustrate the method.

न नूनम् अस्ति नो श्वः कस् तद् वेद यद् अद्भुतम् ।
 अन्यस्य चित्तम् अभि संचरेण्यम् उताधीतं वि नश्यति ॥ १-१७०-०१

ná nūnám ásti nó śuváh kás tád veda yád ádbhutam
 anyásya cittám abhí saṁcaréṇiyam utādhītaṁ ví naśyati 1.170.01

Indra

1. It is not now, nor is It tomorrow; who knoweth that which is Supreme and Wonderful? It has motion and action in the consciousness of another, but when It is approached by the thought, It vanishes.

Interpretation:

This is a description of the Transcendental Reality beyond time and space, adbhuta, which Sri Aurobindo translates as the Supreme and Wonderful, and elsewhere as 'transcendental', ad-bhuta. It is altogether questioned here to be knowable by the means which it projected for its manifestation. There is another consciousness, anyasya cittam, which is active and interferes, as it were, when we try to access it by the mind.

The action and motion is placed in the consciousness of another, therefore, being the consciousness of another, it cannot reach it directly. The supreme with its power of motion and action covers up the involved supreme (second creation) by the consciousness of another (the first creation), so when the mind which evolved out of the first creation, out of the darkness, tries to reach the supreme beyond it cannot do it directly. It needs an intermediary: Svar. Otherwise it will have to annihilate itself and plunge into the Unknowable. Therefore Sri Aurobindo says that our mind can never know the beyond, however hard it will try, it is only by the Grace from above that the Beyond can be known here, in other words Indra is to come and to take charge of our thinking here and bring light into it from the Beyond.

In other hymn RV 10.82.6-7 Hymn to the Creator, Vishvakarman, it is also said that one cannot know him directly, for there was the veil between the two:

tám íd gárbham prathamám dadhra āpo yátra devāḥ samágachanta víśve
 ajásya nábhāv ádhi ékam árpitaṁ yásmin víśvāni bhúvanāni tasthúḥ 10.082.06

"That indeed is the First Embryo, which the Waters bore, where all the gods come together, - in the navel of the Unborn, the One was placed, where all the beings stood."

ná tám vidātha yá imā jajāna anyád yuṣmākam ántaram babhūva
 nīhāreṇa prāvṛtā jálpiyā ca asutrīpa ukthasāśas caranti 10.082.07

"You will not find him, who created these (worlds)! Another thing has come up between you (and him). The chanters of hymns are wandering around, covered in mist, speaking rubbish, never fully satisfied [with what they say]." It means that they 'never reach him in their words'.

किं न इन्द्र जिघाँससि भ्रातरो मरुतस् तव ।

तेभिः कल्पस्व साधुया मा नः समरणे वधीः ॥ १-१७०-०२

kíṃ na indra jighāṃsasi bhrātarō marútas táva
tébhiḥ kalpasva sādhuya mā naḥ samāraṇe vadhīḥ 1.170.02

Agastya

2. Why dost thou seek to smite us, O Indra? The Maruts are thy brothers. By them accomplish perfection; slay us not in our struggle.

Interpretation:

Here we have clearly defined the difference between Indra and Maruts. Maruts are the thought-powers which are coming from the lower hemisphere and trying to reach the Supreme. Agastya asks Indra not to stop them but to collaborate with them for this purpose, for they are Indra's brothers.

किं नो भ्रातर् अगस्त्य सखा सन्न अति मन्यसे ।

विद्महि ते यथा मनो ऽस्मभ्यम् इन् न दित्ससि ॥ १-१७०-०३

अरं कृण्वन्तु वेदिं सम् अग्निम् इन्धताम् पुरः ।

तत्रामृतस्य चेतनं यज्ञं ते तनवावहै ॥ १-१७०-०४

kíṃ no bhrātar agastya sakhā sann āti manyase
vidmā hí te yáthā máno asmábhyam ín ná ditsasi 1.170.03
áram kṛṇvantu védiṃ sám agníṃ indhatām puráḥ
tātrāmṛtasya cétanam yajñam te tanavāvahai 1.170.04

Indra

3. Why, O my brother Agastya, art thou my friend, yet settest thy thought beyond me? For well do I know how to us thou willest not to give thy mind.

4. Let them make ready the altar, let them set Agni in blaze in front. It is there, the awakening of the consciousness to Immortality. Let us two extend for thee thy effective sacrifice.

Interpretation:

But Indra says that the gods know well how Agastya doesn't want to give his mind to them, but only to the Supreme. Instead they [Maruts] should

fully ignite the fire here on the altar in the lower hemisphere, for there is a consciousness of Immortality there! Let us both work for it and expand it in manifestation, realising Immortality.

This is a profound statement which orients the seeker of the Divine to the manifestation of the Divine rather than to the beyond salvation. Moreover in the first verse Indra explains that the Supreme Consciousness cannot be approached by the mind, which is itself a manifestation of 'its movement in the consciousness of another'. There is gap between the two which has to be bridged by Indra, the Lord of Svar. It is he who comes here from the beyond bringing and settling the higher Consciousness here. It is only thus this work of manifesting the Supreme here in the consciousness of another can be done.

So if Agastya is reaching beyond manifestation with his thought powers to find there the Supreme he will arrive at nowhere, for that is another consciousness which he can't perceive with his thought powers.

In this light other famous statements of Upanishad get their deeper significance: andham tamaḥ praviśanti ye 'vidyām upāsate, tato bhūya iva te tamo ya u vidyayā ratāḥ ĪśUp 9

"Into a blind darkness enter those who worship Ignorance here, but to a greater darkness those who are happy with Transcendental Knowledge alone."

na tatra cakṣur gacchati na vāg gacchati no mano na vidmo na vijānīmo yathaitad anuśiṣyāt/
anyad eva tad veditād atho aviditād adhi/ iti ſuśruma dhīrāṇām ye nas tad vicacakṣire// Kena Up 1.3

"There the sight goes not, nor speech goes there, nor mind! We do not know, we do not distinguish how to speak about it. For it is different from the known and it is different from the unknown. Thus we heard from the wise, who explained it to us."

त्वम् ईशिषे वसुपते वसूनां त्वम् मित्राणाम् मित्रपते धेष्ठः ।

इन्द्र त्वम् मरुद्भिः सं वदस्वाध प्राशान ऋतुथा हवीषि ॥ १-१७०-०५

tvām īśiṣe vasupate vāsūnām tvām mitrāṇām mitrapate dhāyiṣṭhaḥ
indra tuvām marúdbhīḥ sám vadasva ádha prāśāna ṛtuthā havīṣi 1.170.05

Agastya

5. O Lord of substance over all substances of being, thou art the master in force! O Lord of Love over the powers of love, thou art the strongest

to hold in status! Do thou, O Indra, agree with the Maruts, then enjoy the offerings in the ordered method of the Truth.

Interpretation:

So Agastya finally agrees to follow the path of manifestation of the Divine rather than leaving the manifestation to the beyond, which is a more difficult path but truer in its purpose and meaning.

The word ṛtuthā means 'in accordance with ṛtu', where ṛtu is a season of the sacrificial year. There is another word ṛta, the dynamic truth of the Supermind, of which ṛtu can be seen as derivation: 'a particular dynamic portion of the truth in time and space'. So the whole word ṛtuthā can be read as 'in accordance with the needs of manifesting the Truth', for these needs are different in different times of the evolution of consciousness.

Vocabulary:

dheṣṭha, mfn. (superl.) *giving the most, most liberal* RV.

prāṣ, P. prāśnāti (rarely A. -nīte), *to eat, consume, devour, taste, enjoy* RV. &c. &c.

Commentary

The governing idea of the hymn belongs to a stage of spiritual progress when the human soul wishes by the sheer force of Thought to hasten forward beyond in order to reach prematurely the source of all things without full development of the being in all its progressive stages of conscious activity. The effort is opposed by the Gods who preside over the universe of man and of the world and a violent struggle takes place in the human consciousness between the individual soul in its egoistic eagerness and the universal Powers which seek to fulfil the divine purpose of the Cosmos.

The seer Agastya at such a moment confronts in his inner experience Indra, Lord of Swar, the realm of pure intelligence, through which the ascending soul passes into the divine Truth.

Indra speaks first of that unknowable Source of things towards which Agastya is too impatiently striving. That is not to be found in Time. It does not exist in the actualities of the present, nor in the eventualities of the future. It neither is now nor becomes hereafter. Its being is beyond Space and Time and therefore in Itself cannot be known by that which is in Space and Time. **It manifests Itself by Its forms and activities in the consciousness of that which is not Itself and through those activities it is meant that It should be realised.** But if one tries to approach It and study It in Itself, It disappears from the thought that would seize It and is as if It were not.

Agastya still does not understand why he is so violently opposed in a pursuit which is the eventual aim of all being and which all his thoughts

and feelings demand. The Maruts are the powers of Thought which by the strong and apparently destructive motion of their progress break down that which is established and help to the attainment of new formations. Indra, the Power of pure Intelligence, is their brother, kin to them in his nature although elder in being. He should by their means effect the perfection towards which Agastya is striving and not turn enemy nor slay his friend in this terrible struggle towards the goal.

Indra replies that Agastya is his friend and brother, — brother in the soul as children of one Supreme Being, friend as comrades in a common effort and one in the divine love that unites God and man,—and by this friendship and alliance has attained to the present stage in his progressive perfection; but now he treats Indra as an inferior Power and wishes to go beyond without fulfilling himself in the domain of the God. He seeks to divert his increased thought-powers towards his own object **instead of delivering them up to the universal Intelligence so that it may enrich its realisations in humanity through Agastya** and lead him forward by the way of the Truth. Let the egoistic endeavour cease, the great sacrifice be resumed, the flame of the divine Force, Agni, be kindled in front as head of the sacrifice and leader of the march. Indra and Agastya together, the universal Power and the human soul, will extend in harmony the effective inner action on the plane of the pure Intelligence so that it may enrich itself there and attain beyond. For it is precisely by the progressive surrender of the lower being to the divine activities that the limited and egoistic consciousness of the mortal awakens to the infinite and immortal state which is its goal. Agastya accepts the will of the God and submits. He agrees to perceive and fulfil the Supreme in the activities of Indra.

From his own realm Indra is supreme lord over the substances of being as manifested through the triple world of mind, life and body and has therefore power to dispose of its formations towards the fulfilment, in the movement of Nature, of the divine Truth that expresses itself in the universe,—supreme lord over love and delight manifested in the same triple world and has therefore power to fix those formations harmoniously in the status of Nature. Agastya gives up all that is realised in him into the hands of Indra, as offerings of the sacrifice, to be held by him in the fixed parts of Agastya's consciousness and directed in the motional towards fresh formations. Indra is once more to enter into friendly parley with the upward aspiring powers of Agastya's being and to establish agreement between the seer's thoughts and the illumination that comes to us through the pure Intelligence. That power will then enjoy in Agastya the offerings of the sacrifice according to the right order of things as formulated and governed by the Truth which is beyond.