THE NEED FOR INTEGRATED LINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION OF ANCIENT INDIAN DISCOURSES AND OBJECTS OF CULTURE

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ABSTRACT
The possibility for the plurality of interpretations of ideas and concepts in ancient literature, classical darsanas and artistic objects belonging to ancient India becomes clear when they are examined by contemporary seekers having different orientations of intellect and inclination. Some seekers sing in praise of them but others look down upon them. The need of the hour is a balanced, incised and integrated approach lightened by the insight of scholarship. Conflicting nature of responses should be connected with the absence of the necessary attempt to comprehend the object under study in its totality. Once the precise significance of concepts, maya and objects of art is sought and properly comprehended, totality and wholeness of vision will become clear. Vedic hymns were direct expressions of religious rituals leading to spiritual awareness. Those who sidestepped from metaphysical implications and translate concepts and theories literally miss the precise significance. As a consequence, poetic sublimity and spiritual significance of vedic verses were ignored by European scholars who tried to find things of rational interest in them. Composers of vedic verses were seers and thinkers who had access to mystical and hidden truth. Using multisemicism of words, languages was handled by vedic sages to represent subtle mystical experience. The ingenious method of using language in vedic hymns made it linguistic representations having perennial freshness and lasting value. Hence, there is the necessity of integrated reading of ancient discourses and artistic objects for the comprehension of the totality existing as the undercurrent of Indian culture.

KEYWORDS: Culture, Literature, India, Vedic, Mauryas, Guptas, British, Civilization.

The culture and civilization during the Harappan and the vedic phases eventually resulted in a conglomeration of both, but minute aspects of this mixing of ideas, practices, forms of communication and social and religious rituals remain an area of enquiry fit for controversy. Vedic hymns might have been direct expressions connected with religious rituals. Europeans scholars as well as Indian scholars who have been trained in their tradition of pure and often literal scholarship have, knowingly or unknowingly, done a palpable injustice to the metaphysical implications embodied in the hymns of the Rigveda. In other words Indian pundits and priests regarded the Vedas as a source of mythology and sacrificial ceremonies and the European scholars tried to find in things of rational interest like history, myths and popular religious ideas. Hence the “spiritual interest and its poetic greatness and beauty” were not given due care, as Sri Aurobindo states in The Secret of the Vedas.

The composers of the Vedic hymns were not just shepherds and wanderers in search of medicinal plants, but they were thinkers and prophets. In fact they were rsi, dhira, that is, seers and thinkers. As Aurobindo states; “These singers believed that they were in possession of a high, mystical and hidden truth, claimed to be the bearers of a speech acceptable to a divine knowledge and expressly so speak of their utterance, as secret words which declare their whole significance only to the seer, and to those who come after them the Veda was a book of knowledge, and even of the supreme knowledge, a revelation”. As for the meaning of the expression secret words which reveal their significance only to the seer, it has to be understood as the fact that in ancient languages, words are multi sematic in meaning. That is, they have whole or undivided meanings which must be understood in its totality or wholeness. It is clear from the Latin word spirits which implies wind, breath, and spirit. The Vedic seers used words of this category with one of their meanings in the forefront and others being in the background. Hence, when others try to comprehend the meaning of it, only the initiated person can really comprehend the mystical or psychological meaning. In other words, by effectively using the multisemicism of words, language was handled in the secret way there by keeping the subtle and mystical experiences away from the uninitiated people. This ingenious technique of using language by the vedic seers have rendered ancient symbols and myths verbal artifacts having perennial freshness and enduring relevance. In reconstructing the History of the ancient India, this aspect of perception is to be always borne in mind for having a total and integrated picture of the subject of enquiry.

To take certain revealing examples, agni in the vedas is fire as well as the psychic fire within human beings. The gous or cows are the animals called cows as well as rays of divine light. Indra is a warrior god as well as divine will. Hence, it is easy to measure the sublime range of their
mystical poetry. Interpretation is the light of primitive anthropomorphism is a gross distortion of the implied significance of the sublime perception represented in these verses by the vedic sages.

The central features of Indian culture as it evolved down the centuries are the existence of unity and complexity. During the historic periods when India experienced absence of stability and consequent weakness as can be broadly seen from 1000 A.D to 1300 A.D, the social and political factors became so complex with the result that the sense of unity suffered serious decline. It is interesting to note that a sort of political unity was imposed on the complexity and variety of India during the colonial rule implemented in India by the British.

It is to be noted that during the days when India reached pinnacle of glory as exemplified in the ages of the Mauryas and the Guptas, Ashoka or Samudraguptha, that Indian culture experienced its full blooded growth, there by retaining a sense of unity and complexity. Now a days, it seems that India passess through historic period when the complexity and variety effectively pose challenge to the sense of unity. It is widely held that our constitution will provide necessary orientation and act as a beacon in giving a sense of direction to overcome challenges so that national unity will prevail. The constitution as a document embodying political vision and the principle of justice represented in modern idiom is the one sure anchor to overcome challenges and problems in order to realize the essential unity of India. Hence in India's search for unity, the document called the constitution of India effectively becomes the medium and the agency to realize the aim by providing the necessary foundation built in modern idiom and languages.

References