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The Death of Death: An Analysis of the Pavana Mantra in terms of Vedic Chant, the Myth of Indra, and Transhumanism

Stephen Crimi

*There once was a note Pure
and easy
Playing so free, like a breath rippling by*

*The note is eternal
hear it, it sees me
Forever we blend
And forever we die*

There once was a note, listen . . .

“Pure and Easy” Pete Townsend

*had i not known
that i was dead
already
i would have mourned my
loss of life*

Japanese Samurai

There is a deceptively simple mantra that manifests from and points toward the heart of *Rgvedic* culture. Vedic people left few artifacts, built temporary structures, wrote hardly any linear history; they left us an empty archeology and wide temporal uncertainty. Were they active 4500 years ago, contemporary with (some say identical to) the hydraulically advanced and urbane Indus Valley Civilization? Or even a post- Atlantean backwash much, much older, as some of the Vedic astrology and archeo- geography indicates? Their only viable legacy is aural, a Sanskrit language and collection of poetry dedicated to and sonant with the sacred font of being and



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creation. Sanskrit is the only ancient language we know the actual sound of, thanks to the generations of dedicated chanters adhering to circuitous sacrificial rituals, whose origins are foggy and drift is obscure.

The word 'Sanskrit' contains within it the root \sqrt{kr} , which gives us that problematically ubiquitous word, karma. Sanskrit most often translates as 'well-made', or 'perfectly-done', which works, as long as we remember that karma originally referred to action done during the sacrificial ritual, long before it was glommed by the Theosophists and given a biblical white-washing. Good karma originally meant a well-performed and efficacious ritual, bad karma the opposite.

Language either has a sacred origin or it does not. Either it evolved from proto-Darwinian grunted utterings, or it came as a gift of the gods—in the case of Sanskrit, the goddess Vāc (pronounced 'vuch'). Favoring the latter possibility, archeology overwhelmingly demonstrates that civilizations arrive in full flower, followed by a slow declination which nostalgically looks back to that incipient golden age. With language it's the same. The earliest Sanskrit is the most mysterious, elastic, poetic, multivalent, and alive.

Sanskrit, the language of Vedic ritual, is 'well-made' from the sacrifice itself, the origin of language. The well-performed ritual connects to this ground of language. Sanskrit emerges from and returns the poet to this ground. The origin of the R̥gveda, the origin of Sanskrit, and the origin of the sacrifice are this same unfathomable root. The result of a 'well-made' sacrifice is the perpetuation of good activity/karma accordant with it.

Sacrifice, from the Latin sacre, means 'to make sacred', while yajña, the Sanskrit equivalent, in Vedic times included worship, devotion, prayer and praise. All sacrifice is traced from the original sacrifice, that is, the One into the manifest. Unless the Absolute sacrifices its unity, there can be nothing else. How that happens is the open mystery sung in the 10,800 R̥gvedic poems.

One such song, called the Pavamana Mantra, resounds Vedic wisdom in tiers of nested relationships. The name Pavamana carries the sense of straining something to purify it, as part of the soma ritual. Soma, or what little we know of it, is described as a milky substance that is itself strained, and certainly the first identified and deified entheogen. There is soma the drink, and Soma



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the lord of the power of the drink. It became scarce even in Vedic times—and we can only throw guesses as to what it was, based on limited descriptions, and by projections backwards from the present based on tribal usage. Such speculation rarely takes into account the entirety of the ritual within which soma was ingested, and normally looks at the isolated physical effects of the plant and the individual experience of the journeyer. But soma was only taken during a ritual, never in isolation, and in that ritual many varieties of priests chanted sustained Sanskrit verses, sometimes for days, while the vibration of that intonation potentized not only the soma, but the also taker of the soma and the witnesses to that sacrifice.

असतीमा सद् गमय
तमसी मा ज्योतिर् गमय
मृत्योर् मा अमृतं गमय

Here is the chant under explication:

asatomā sad gamaya
tamaso mā jyotir gamaya
mr̥tyor mā amṛtaṁ gamaya

Here is the standard translation:

Lead me from the unreal to the real.
Lead me from darkness to light.
Lead me from death to immortality.

The verb in all three lines, gamaya, from the root √gam, is the causative tense of ‘go’, while the mā refers to ‘me’, thus the loose meaning ‘causing me to go’. This is really not the same as saying ‘lead me’, where the speaker is asking for beneficial direction from an outside deity. That is the typical understanding of prayer in most current cultures, through which religion matters little. The tendency is to pray for; rarely do we pray from. This R̥gvedic mantra is inside the ritual: the chant is descriptive of what the chant does. Intoning this chant, we pray within. The chant carries¹ me from someplace to someplace else. But where?

Three movements—from asat to sat; from tamas to jyoti; from mṛtu to amṛtaṁ— correspond to



three levels of meaning or embodiment: the cosmic, the personal and the community.

Another working translation might serve better at this point:

Carrying me from the unmanifest to existence;

Carrying me from concealment to illumination;

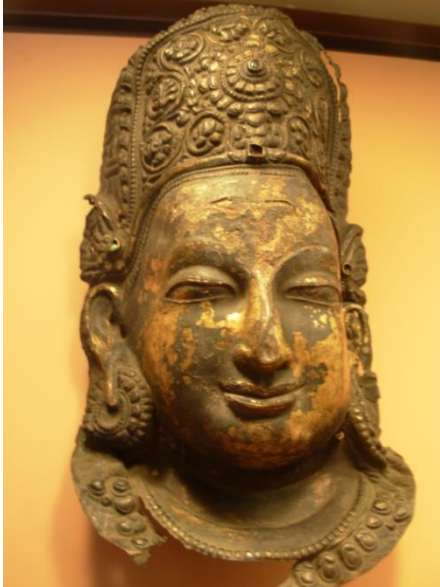
Carrying me from death to the movement of Life.

From *asat* to *sat*

Sat comes from the root $\sqrt{ās}$, ‘be’, ‘exist’, and has a constellation of meanings that include ‘real’, ‘truth’, and ‘actual’. On one level we are going from non-truth to truth, unreal to real, which sounds like gaining some kind of clarity or knowledge. One of the ten classical Yoga observances, *satya*, is a practice of truthfulness, not in the sense of avoiding the moral shortcoming of falsehood, but to have speech and being at root the same. Gandhi caught the sense of this by calling his project *Satyagraha*, ‘truth- grasping’, as a process, a movement.

Then to take the chant deeper, the movement from *asat* to *sat* proceeds from non- being to being. How does ‘non-being’ make any sense? Can anything not be? If we think or say it, it is, even in thought. A better translation for *asat* is ‘ground of being’, or ‘unmanifest’, the hidden waters from which all of experience emerges and falls back into, moment by moment. The ocean, the Gnostic *pleroma*, absolute fullness and potent potential of everything: nothing in fact could be more full.

To approach an understanding of this we need myth, in this case the central *Ṛgvedic* story of *Indra* and *Vṛtra*, with help from *Soma* and *Viṣṇu*. Remember that real (*sat*) myth lives outside of historic time, and is ever-occurring, not an event in the past done and gone. *Isis* always reassembles *Osiris*; *Inanna* continuously descends to the underworld of her sister, dies and returns; *Athena* always bursts forth from *Zeus*, the original splitting headache; and concerning us here, *Indra* always slays *Vṛtra*, ‘over and over’, releasing the waters.



Indra, 13-14th century

A particularly powerful asura, or evil presence—a snake or dragon of some sort—holds back the waters, or holds back the cows. Its name is Vṛtra, from the root √vṛt, which can mean either conceal or turn. Both work here, as the dragon covers the waters by wrapping around them. Indra privileges himself from among the storm deities—his weapon is the vajra or thunderbolt—and with the help of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇu’s superpower is the ability to stride, that is, generate space), grows powerful by ingesting the soma he brings. Interestingly, Vṛtra’s power to hold back creation also comes from soma. Vitalized, Indra slays Vṛtra with the flash from his vajra, the waters flow, the cows emerge, and heaven and earth, sun and sky are set. The ‘seven pregnant cosmic streams’ are released, which could refer to the chakras, or the septet of known tuning systems, as the Ṛgvedic mantras are all musical song-poems. They are pregnant because they can birth all the possible Ṛgvedic song-poems. The cows are often described as ‘loo-ing’, indicating the image is associated with emerging sound. And of course, one can invert moo to om, the absolute origin of all sound.

Soma (from √su, ‘press’) is certainly a mystery, extracted from some plant matter, sometimes depicted as a stalk or called a leafless vine, grown in the Himalayas, milky when pressed out, and scarce even in Vedic times before an unknown substitute was used. It definitely had



entheogenic qualities, but these have to be understood in context of the sacrifice. None of the usually proposed plants—*Amanita muscaria* (fly agaric mushroom), *Asclepius acida* (milkweed), or *Ephedra sinica*, for example—are satisfying, and it may be that the original plant/deity pressed served its purpose for a time and is now simply gone.

Several millennia later Indian texts such as the Yoga Sutras of Patañjali and Saṅkhya Karika of Īśvarakṛṣṇa discuss sound as producing the first element, space or *akāśa*. As sound generates space, they arise simultaneously in experience. The Indra- Vṛtra myth enacts this cosmogonic movement from *asat*, the unmanifest ground of being, to *sat*, a meaningful creation of the cosmos regulated by the sacrificial chant.

This proceeds moment to moment, eternal release and reabsorption and release and reabsorption from and back into oneness. This living myth expresses the cosmic level of the Pavamana Mantra.

From *tamas* to *jyoti*

The next line of the mantra, going from *tamas* to *jyoti*, darkness to light, works on the level of the ṛṣi or *kavi*—the Ṛgvedic poet—and the human inspirational aspect. The ṛṣi ingests soma, and through its power literally becomes Indra. Thus, he re-enacts the myth, and by connecting to the ground of being, *asat*, opens the waters of inspiration that are held in the unmanifest.² For the ṛṣi, the power of soma released becomes *Vāc*, the goddess of creative speech, sometimes called ‘the mother of the Ṛgveda’. The ṛṣi in RV 1.164.37 sings:

Concerning what it is I am, I do not know.

I wander wrapped and concealed in thought. Then *Vāc* came to me, first born of ṛta.

I received a portion of her.



Saraswati, 12th century, Gujarat.

The poet's own mind, like Vṛtra, conceals his connection to Vāc. She precedes the gods: the vibration of her voice, which is the cosmos-ordering of the Ṛgveda, brings them into existence. The poet does not know who he is until he connects with her. Vāc embodies the vibrational stirrings emerging from the ground of being, what later Kashmir Shaivism philosophy calls spanda, the initial inchoate quivering and sounding note of all manifestation. The power of the poet, the ṛṣi, is the power of Vāc, the power to generate a cosmos through the chant, through the song of poetry. This chant then occasions a cosmos resonant with the ṛta from which it comes (vāc is also the sound of the pressing stones, connecting this back to the soma ritual). Ṛta is a close functional correlate of the logos of Ancient Greece, the correct ordering of manifest experience in resonance with the chant, resulting in a moral and natural cosmos. The ṛṣi becomes Indra, breaking open the sacred springs with the thunderbolt flash of inspiration, then able to put the worlds in order through the song. And like Indra, the ṛṣi must accomplish this over and over in continuous mythic recreation, preventing another static concealment and descent into inertia.



Darkness, *tamas*, conceals and is stuck (from the root \sqrt{tam} : ‘exhausted’, ‘suffocated’, ‘out of breath’, ‘immovable’). This moves in the chant to *jyoti* (from \sqrt{jyut} , ‘shine upon’), illumination, wisdom.

This movement in the chant occurs within the poet, in simultaneous reenactment of the cosmic movement from *asat* to *sat*, *Indra* slaying *Vṛtra*.

The obvious correlate in the West is the Gospel According to John, by far the most cosmic of the synoptic gospels, where *logos* functions nearly identically to *ṛta*.

In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with *Theos*, and *Theos* was *Logos* . . . in him was life, and the life was the light of all humanity; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it. (1.1, 4, 5)

Also in *The Corpus Hermeticum*, where *logos* again equates to light:

“That light,” he said, “is I, *Nous*, your *Theos*, who was before the watery substance appeared out of the darkness, and the light-*logos* from *Nous* is the Son of *Theos* . . . that which sees and hears within you is the *logos*.” (1.6)

So much was lost when unimaginative Roman-Christians concretized *logos* in translation to the Latin *verbum*, thence in the King James Bible to ‘word’. That declination of subtlety is responsible for the even more unimaginative biblical literalism ruining far more lives than it has saved. But here in the *arche*, the beginning, where *logos* is still with *Theos*, *God-logos* is the divine formative principle of the cosmos. It contains *ratio*—thus ‘rationality’, ‘oratorio’ and ‘reasons’—but which ratios used determine the type of cosmos generated. This comes into play with musical tuning, architecture, and for the Vedic people, construction of the sacrificial altar, where certain ratios are evocative of the divine and harmonize with our human divine aspect. The *logos* generates the blueprint of creation from the place of unmixed light and vibration.

Going back to *Vāc*, ‘first born of *ṛta*’, she is at the source of creation, ordering and pervading all of it:

From *Vāc* flow the oceans,



By her live the four directions
The entire universe stands
on the imperishable vibration flowing from her. (10.164.42)

I give birth to the father on the brow of the cosmos. My womb is in the waters of the deep ocean.
From there I spread out over all creatures,
And touch the sky with the crown of my head. (10.125.7)

Vāc is sound, speech, and language, and as a goddess bespeaking the ṛta she orders space and time through the vibration of her speech. She is the inspirational font for the Vedic ṛṣi, the arche of the entire pantheon chanted into being. And just as light and sound come together in the logos, the movement from the darkness of tamas to the light of jyoti is the speech of Vāc come through the poet's chant, overcoming the inertia of a rigid perspective, a concealment of life by Vṛtra. Through the power of soma, the ṛṣi performs the heroic activity of Indra over and over.

This movement is recast in the Bhagavad Gītā a few thousand years later. The earliest Sanskrit texts—the Ṛgveda, the Upaniṣads and the Āraṇyakas (forest texts commenting on Vedic ritual)—are all classified as śruti, or 'heard': not surprising, since the chant brings the cosmos into existence and aligns Vedic culture supernally. This original 'vision' is actually aural. Later texts such as the Bhagavad Gītā, Yoga Sūtras, and the Purāṇas (recast myths and cosmogonies), and the epics Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa, are all considered smṛti, 'remembered', a re-remembering of that earlier foundational 'aural' vision.

The Bhagavad Gītā, currently the central spiritual text for India, tells the tale of the warrior Arjuna, to whom Kṛṣṇa gives a deep extended spiritual talk and vision on the brink of an epochal dharmic battle Arjuna falters in the face of. In a word, this battle is fought over dharma. Dharma is, among many things, the lawful sacred ordering of civilization, a close correlate to Vedic ṛta. Arjuna is the son of Indra; Kṛṣṇa is the eighth avatar of Viṣṇu,³ and Vṛtra amounts to adharma, or 'anti-dharma'. Kṛṣṇa incarnates when there is an increase in this adharma. These characters in the Bhagavad Gītā renovate the Vedic myth, acting the same roles. Just as Viṣṇu brings soma to help



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Indra overcome the concealer Vṛtra, Kṛṣṇa helps Arjuna overcome his inertia, his tamas, through the power of the vision he prepares and grants through giving his 'divine eye'. In both cases the result is a culture generated concordant with a sacred vision, expressed through sacred chanted text.

And just as the power of soma later becomes internalized as śakti coiling about the spine, Vāc, power of speech, becomes the goddess of music and the arts Sarasvati. In fact, there exists a soma chakra, to be meditated upon, midway between the ājñā chakra, the 'third eye' between the eyebrows, and the sahasrāra chakra at the crown of the head. The earliest śruti/heard chants ordered the cosmos without, and the later smṛti/remembered texts and practices order the same, only within the body of experience.

The mystic unifies within and without.

Thus, this Ṛgvedic performance is not just for the poet as an individual. In fact, one certainly cannot call a ṛṣi an individual in any modern imaginable sense. The ṛṣi has an astonishing memory, internalizing probably all 10,800 poems in the Ṛgveda and then countless other texts and rituals. His whole sensorium is structured of the bricks of these chants, the vibrations of which have hummed within him since before the beginning of memory. His whole life circles about the continuation and innovation of these chants which structure the sacred life of the Ṛgvedic community.

From mṛtu to amṛtaṁ

The third line of the Pavamana Mantra sings mṛtyor mā amṛtaṁ gamaya, usually translated as 'Lead me from death to immortality'. On the surface it seems to make sense. Except that the starting point is death, normally the terminus. It only makes sense reading back from current doctrines of reincarnation or eschatology. But there is little in the Ṛgveda concerning the afterlife, and it will be several thousand years before one's reincarnation becomes calcified and predictable through the Laws of Manu. In fact, the earliest post-Vedic discussions concerning death, found in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, ultimately find death's avoidance in correctly chanting and



performing the ritual sacrifices. The texts display no interest in some sort of continuous day-by-everlasting-day vampiric immortal incarnation, but rather how to meld with what is numinous and timeless in life itself.

The words *mṛta* and *mṛtyū* (from $\sqrt{mṛ}$ —die, decease, be gone) contain the meanings of death, deathlike, departed, gone, stiff and rigid, later to be associated with Yama, the Lord of Death, and cognate with English words like mortician and mortal. Given the other two first terms of this chant—*asat*/unmanifest ground of being and *tamas*/ concealment in darkness—there is uncertainty in understanding *mṛtyū* as referring to an individual's death. And since the reading here sees this third section as the Vedic cultural level of the chant, death for this culture means an ineffective, torporous chant, one that does not penetrate into the heart of the sounding vision generating it, with *Vṛtra* concealing it. Death is the dearth of inspiration.

Which leads to a question of where the morphing from this death then goes in the chant. Normally the shift translates as 'from death to a-*mṛta*', literally 'not-death'.

Amṛta expresses 'immortality', 'imperishable', 'nectar which confers immortality'—*soma*—and the 'root of a plant', which depicts the unseen aspect producing life on the surface, a metaphor for the occult ground of being. This is a perfectly reasonable translation and works. But we can go deeper and sideways.

In fact, one does not chant a-*mṛtam*, but *am-ṛtam* (*ṛ* is a slightly voiced vowel, like 'ri' with a short 'i' and a gentle breath). *Am* means 'go toward', 'sound', 'honor'. This way, following the chant itself, one sings 'toward *ṛta*' instead of 'not death'. Although no one translates it that way, this interpretation follows the actual chant as it is sung. Again, *ṛta* is a foundational Ṛgvedic concept. Earlier we saw *Vāc*, mother of all the Vedic gods, as the first born of the *ṛta*, which certainly makes her an early expression out of the unity of the unmanifest.

Ṛta is untranslatable, with some of the attempts 'norm', 'cosmic order', 'world order', 'truth' or 'correct ordering', from the root $\sqrt{ṛ}$, 'go', 'move'. Even more than *vāc*, it measures up to *logos*, and the *tao*. Later *ṛta* gets enfolded into another busy word, *dharma*, where dharmic activity lawfully



(√dr̥, 'hold to') abides by the ṛta. Ṛta as a Vedic concept contains both, this cosmic order and all activity in accord with it.

Everything lawful then happens through the ṛta. Ṛta encapsulates the cosmic, ethical and liturgical correct order, the norm on which Vedic chant hangs. The chant, as sung tones using specific tuning systems, itself creates this ordering of experience.⁴

The contrast with Indic traditions as they are marketed here now has the current emphasis on some sort of personal enlightenment: self-realization, or an enlightened ego, which from the mystic perspective is an impossibility. The ego is the concealer. Unfortunately this is what is left in this broken world where the sounding note of every sacred tradition is unrecognizably distorted by its lost progeny.

The Ṛgvedic ṛṣi fashioned new songs over and over, connecting to the original sound-ground, the unmanifest *asat*, through the power of *soma*. These songs, because of their emergence from the original tone of the Vedic civilization, necessarily express the sacred order of the ṛta, and these chants themselves organize experience in accord with it, expressed through the power of divine speech, or the goddess *Vāc*. This chanting not only structured the experiential body of the ṛṣi, but the body of the whole community. It is essential to remember that for the mystic, the body is the unitive entirety of experience, including the senses and the elements felt as 'out there' in what is now ordinary human consciousness.

This is the movement from death toward the ṛta expressed in the chant. This is the holding together of sacred community. Death is stagnancy, clinging to immovable rigid perspectives. The ṛta is life aligned to the grounding vision en-chanted. Global correlates might be the perpetual Druidic choirs of Britain, the songs holding the wisdom of just about any aboriginal culture, and the katabatic incubational practices of ancient Greeks, connecting to goddesses and gods in underworld stillness, bringing back laws, chants and cures for mortals, cities, and cultures.

Where and how does the sacrifice, *yajña* (√yaj, consecrate, worship, very similar to *sacre-facere*, 'make sacred') originate? Even before the sacrifice of *Vṛtra* by Indra allowing for manifestation,



there is the original sacrifice, 'beyond sat and asat'. The original sacrifice is always the movement of the Absolute to the Ten Thousand Things. The Absolute is alone and wants to be known. A longing desire beats the heart of all creation. In the Vedas they call this tapas: heat, friction, vibration. Sound is vibration. The Absolute sacrifices absoluteness to allow the many to be. What kind of a cosmos ensues depends on the efficacy of the chanted vibration. A harmonious cosmos sings from a vibration closer to the original note; a violent angry cosmos issues from distortions along the pitch continuum. All sacrifice, any time someone acts selflessly, recapitulates the original sacrifice.

Vedic death is culture not born from the sacred vibrations of the ṛta. According to the hymns even the gods become immortal through tapas, through sacrifice. The way to go beyond death, as attested to in the texts, is to perform the sacrifice, that is to live the sacrifice. Immortality for Vedic people cannot be something as mundane as living linear time without end. It is the continuous merging with the timeless ground of being and emerging from it, over and over, manna baked fresh momentarily.

Germane?

Surprisingly, the language of this mantra remains relevant to Indian culture thousands of years on. A recent example written by exemplary philosopher and environmental activist Vandana Shiva, "The Food Dharma",⁵ forms the argument against GMO's in terms of dharma, adharma, and ṛta. For Dr. Shiva, dharma:

. . . signifies the "right way of living", aligned with the ṛta—the order that sustains life and maintains the universe . . . and all creation, from the microcosm to the macrocosm, from the tiniest microbe to the largest mammal . . . dharma arises from the interconnectedness of all life, and our duty to care for all humans and all species alike.

The opposite of dharma is adharma, the violation of ṛta, of the ecological laws of the planet, and of the duty to care for the planet . . . Whatever separates us from nature and each other, every action that leads to the disintegration of societies and ecosystems is adharma.



Not being ‘carried from death toward the ṛta’, and instead perpetuating inert cycles of stagnancy, sadly describes too well the current farming situation in India. Death is the 300,000 farmer suicides, often by ingesting the herbicides that no longer work on the GMO plants foisted upon them by Monsanto and its ilk. Death is the quality of the produce grown by these poisonous methods, the cancerous termination from eating them, and the toxic run-off no living water supply can avoid. And death is co-option of the divine miracle of the creation process in seed: as Dr. Shiva writes, “Instead of seeing food as the creator, corporations and scientists developing GMO’s are taking over the role of ‘creator’ through ‘patents’ on life.”

These corporations and their government abettors are Vṛtra, concealing the waters of life, holding the power of soma for themselves, in spite of the Indra-inspired ṛta- guided efforts of Vandana Shiva and her kindred activists.

Corporate Vṛtra is still held together by a chant, by the power of speech, a language distorted from vision to avarice. The chant of corporate media upholds the chant of corporate personhood; the chant of bought scientists whoring their credentials; the chant of legal advertising lies chanting false credence; the chant of wage slavery and institutional poverty; and the chant of malignant food and industrial pollution sickening billions and funneling them into the chant of the corporate medical profit machine.

There is an original tone, a foundational song to every civilization. Each emerges from the sacred, born of a numinous vision. How can we find that tone for our western culture? At least for Vandana Shiva a living language of ṛta and dharma exists for her and her culture. It might only be a pale echo of the original chant informing the Ṛgveda, but it’s still easier to trace these aural tones to their source than in the West. For the West, the only audible sounding tone left lauds the drone of relentless war, the ultimate incorporation of senseless death.

Yet the original tone has to still exist, if only because the arias of violence and ego and acquisition need it to exist in order to be an aberration of it. Who has the guts and the desire to do the inner archeology in stillness and silence to hear it?



AI is still artificial

Taking this to yet another level, one of current ‘understanding’ of the brain, consciousness and artificial intelligence: when ‘futurist’ Ray Kurzweil joined Google, which then bought a slew of robotics companies, there was only one possible reason. Mr. Kurzweil would like nothing better than to be able to upload his brain—what he

thinks is his consciousness—into a machine and live forever: going from death to immortality in the most mundane, egoic way possible.

Another ‘prophetic futurist’,⁶ Michio Kaku, loves AI and its putative possibilities, like recording dreams, experiences and consciousness itself. The essence of their unrealized presuppositions runs thus: when computers were being formulated, basically one thing was known about the human brain: neurons fired or didn’t—a binary system. Even the most ‘evolved’ computers today run on binary coding. As computers became more sophisticated, neurologists were able to use them to model brain behavior on them. Now, AI uses computer models formed on theories of how brains work, which were derived from computers themselves, which were derived from a very basic and incomplete understanding of how brains work. None of it is based on anything real, and all you can get is more and more derivative complex patterns. In other words, Siri will sound more and more like how someone thinks a human sounds like. In more other words, the brain is not a really intricate convoluted computer.

But those are just surface presuppositions, getting away from the fact that no one knows what intelligence is, let alone what a full human is.

And there is more basic presumption to this discussion. Simply put, every prediction of the likes of Kurzweil and Kaku evolves from the premise that our consciousness, memories and awareness all arise from the ‘meat brain’ and the brain only. Human creativity, emotion and ego, are all the epiphenomena of neurons firing in patterned sequences and amalgams. ‘All’ we have to do is map the patterning of the brain, replicate the circuitry, and voila!—we have conscious AI. This is of course not to deny electro-chemical activity within the brain, of the effect altering that chemistry

has on the experience of consciousness, but it begs the question of the origin of all experience. For these people it is obvious that experience is exclusively physical.

To the mystic, the Vedic ṛṣi, and even the occasional physicist, the inverse is true. Consciousness is prior and gives rise to the gross, the brain included—being carried from *asat* to *sat*. This is not the prediction or theory of the mystics, this is their direct unassailable experience. To reduce their insight to some ‘God neuro-receptor’ is the ego of science, which subsumes everything to its limited purview. Like corporations, this form of science cannot be satisfied working within the qualified realms in which it can succeed, but hubristically extend itself beyond its relevance. Their adharmic activity does not support the *ṛta*, because they have no connection to the divine sounding that brought even their displaced logic into being. They are not happy making a living; they need to make a killing.

In a full inversion of the myth of Indra slaying the demon to release the cosmic waters, they continuously hold back access to the divine by worship of the material, and *Vṛtra* wins. And what could be closer to living death than aspiring to have your consciousness transistorized and encased in heavy metal? What sort of *logos* ensues from there?

The way to elude death is not to live forever. The way to trick death is to die before you die, to still the ego out of vibration so that the original note shines forth, singing death’s final secret: there is no death.



Yama’s dance of death. Mongolia 18th Century.



1. Thanks to Peter Kingsley's book *Reality* and his translation of Parmenides' poem as an incantatory experience at the foundation of what is now the lost sacred tradition of the West. The word 'carry' is repeated four times in the opening lines to actually transport the listener/chanter to where the poem goes:

The mares that carry me as far as longing can reach rode on, once they had come and fetched me onto the legendary road of the divinity that carries the man who knows through the vast and dark unknown. And on I was carried as the mares, aware just where to go, kept carrying me straining at the chariot; and young women led the way.

2. The Old Testament correlate is fiat lux, "let there be light," moving across the waters; And the New testament's in the beginning was the logos.

3. Avatars of Viṣṇu one through six are mainly mythological animal deities, seven is Rama, eight is Kṛṣṇa, nine is either Kṛṣṇa's brother Balarama for the orthodox Hindu, or Gautama Buddha. The Buddha is seen either as a bringer of a valid teaching for some, or as a test by Viṣṇu according to some Vedantists to find out who would be duped by such a false teaching. The tenth is called Kalki, a future avatar for the end of this Kali Yuga, for whom there are many current claimants.

4. Extensive, dense, important work on tuning theory and numbers in the Ṛgveda was done by Ernest G. McClain, especially in his groundbreaking book *The Myth of Invariance*.

"The numbers Ṛgvedic man cared about define alternate tunings for the musical scale. The hymns describe the numbers poetically, distinguish "sets" by classes of gods and demons, and portray tonal and arithmetical relations with graphic sexual and spacial metaphor" (p.3).

Chant 1.164 offers many clues:

The twelve-spoked wheel of ṛta rolls in the sky without diminishing. Seven hundred and twenty sons in pairs rest on it Agni. (1.164.11)



Twelve spokes, one wheel, three navels. Who has understood this?

Three hundred and sixty rest on it like poles that do not loosen. (1.164.48)

Seven horses draw the seven-wheeled chariot, Sounding seven sacred notes . . .

Wise ṛṣis have woven a seven-stranded web about the calf above (the sun). (1.164.3,5)

There are often five or six or twelve spokes to the wheel; seven wheels or riders or sisters or sons—remembering that the original creators of Vedic culture are the seven ṛṣis forming Ursa Major and their mates, the seven sisters in the Pleiades—with lots of twins and pairings. It takes a mathematician and musicologist the caliber of McLain to unstrand these webs with a ring of truth.

The twelve-spoked wheel, which most will read as the year, can also be the twelve-note scale derived from whole number ratios. Five or seven spokes are the different tuning systems. For McLain, Vṛtra is the undifferentiated pitch continuum that Indra/ṛṣi 'slays' to create an original hymn with a particular tuning specific for it. Numbers like the 360/720 pairing reflect the invariant octave, where if one doubles a string length, the same note occurs an octave lower. Halve the string and the note is an octave higher.

The ratio of 1:2 (360:720 is the same as 1:2) keeps us with the same note in different octaves. It takes the whole number integer string length ratios—such as 3:2, 4:3 and

5:4, which give the fifth, fourth and major third respectively—to give us music. All of this can only hint at the depth of cosmogenic knowledge embodied in the Ṛgvedic hymns and the ṛṣis whose vision birthed them.

5. The Asian Age, 10 September, 2015.

6. See here the degradation of the original meaning of 'prophet', who is one who can speak for the Divine, understanding the past and future contained in the present moment.