The Puruṣa-sūkta of Rg Veda
—The Agony and Ecstasy of being Universal—

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1. Introduction

Rg Veda is the oldest religious, spiritual and cultural

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document of India and Hinduism. The general understanding among scholars is that the earlier hymns of *Rg Veda* might date back at least to 1500 BCE. It contains around 1017 hymns addressed to different gods, who were mostly personifications of the powers of nature. *Rta* (harmony), *Yajña* (sacrifice), etc., are some of the most important concepts and themes of *Rg Veda*. Gods, the transcendent-immanent, celestial-terrestrial beings: humans, the sacrificers and worshipers; and nature, the stage on which gods and humans celebrated life and worship, were equally co-responsible to generate, protect and sustain the harmony in all spheres of the existence and functions of these three realities. *Rg Veda* has ten sections. The tenth section (*mandala*) is a later addition. However, it contains some of the finest, philosophically and religiously richest, hymns of this *Veda*. Nasadiya-sūkta (Hymn of Creation) and puruṣa-sūkta (Hymn of the puruṣa-sacrifice) are two among them. We are dealing here with the puruṣa-sūkta.

2. Puruṣa-sūkta (*Rg Veda* X.90)

puruṣa-sūkta recounts a creation story in sixteen verses. At least six hymns of *Rg Veda* deal with cosmogonies, or creation narratives. In puruṣa-sūkta the material cause of creation is the cosmic body of the puruṣa; the efficient cause or instrumental cause of this creative act is the gods; and the effects naturally are the entire cosmos with all its manifold varieties objects. This creation is depicted as a sacrificial act in which the victim is the puruṣa, the officiating the priests are the gods, the sacrificial altar is this earth to which the great puruṣa descended, and the summer season is the fire. Members of the body of the puruṣa are cut and sacrificed, and these parts become corresponding objects of the universe.

For the first time the three *Vedas* are indirectly mentioned in this hymn. For the first time the division of the society into four castes, *Brahmana*, *Ksatriya* (*Rajanya*), *Vaisya* and *Sudra*, are also mentioned in verse ten of this hymn.

2.1. The Puruṣa: *etavan asya mahimato jyāyams ca puruṣah*

The first three verses of the hymn describe the puruṣa and his incarnated manifestations. Cosmic puruṣa is said to be thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, and thousand-footed. He pervaded everything, and stands beyond and above everything (v.1). He is this all, all that have been and all that will be, He is the lord of immortality (v.2). This is concluded by the words *etavan asya mahimato jyāyams ca puruṣah*, meaning such is his greatness, and greater than that is, in fact, the puruṣa (v.3).

By stating symbolically that this puruṣa is thousand-headed, thousand-eyed and thousand-footed, the hymn would like to

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1) Verse 9 makes mention of: *Rcah* meaning *Rg Veda*: *Samani* meaning *Sama Veda*: and *Yajṣa* meaning *Yajur Veda*.
express that this cosmic purusa is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He cannot be measured and circumscribed by human standards and human intelligence. He pervades and permeates the entire cosmos and stands out beyond it (bhunim visvato vrtra atyatistat - v.1). He overlaps the created cosmos both in space, earth, mid-space and heaven, and in time, past, present and future (yad bhutam yac ca bhavyam v.2). This is very much reminiscent of the first verse of Isha Upanishad, namely, this entire ephemeral world is pervaded by God (isavasyam idam sarvam yad kinca jagatyam jagat).

Would it be possible to compare this purusa with the Brahman of the Upanisads? Brahman is definitely an advanced concept of the ultimate and absolute Being. It is the source of the cosmos and all entities therein, it is the unifying principle of all beings and objects, the inner controller of all lives, the ultimate goal of all beings. The Upanisadic Brahman has no name, no form and no attributes, and is preeminently a spiritual principle. It is the only really real Reality and is the cosmic Self. Perhaps we may conceive the purusa as the embodied Brahman. Some translate the word purusa as the primeval man or the primordial giant. I presume nobody would dare to compare the ethereal and absolute Brahman with the material and dimensional purusa, except for the one point of contact, namely, Brahman is ultimate cause of all animate and inanimate beings, likewise purusa is the mother and matrix of all created realities. It is to be noted here that in the Vedic times the concept of an ultimate cause of all, and unmoved and immutable mover of all changes, was unknown. Similarly the doctrine of karma and rebirth, and the idea of immortality and eternal liberation from the cycle of births, deaths and rebirth, etc., were not yet developed in the Vedic theology of religion. But at the same time the purusa is characterized as the lord of immortality, anumrttvasya isanah (v. 2), and by this he transcends all beings (atirohati).

An old Sanskrit text gives very interesting interpretations of the word purusa. He is purusa, because of his purapurna-nature (purapunjatvat purusah). Purapura here means eternal. He is purusa, because he is complete in himself and all-perfect (purapunjatvat purusah). He is purusa, because he resides in the city that is the body of individual self (sairakhya-puri sayanat purusah). God dwells here as the inner controller (antaryamin). This text gives some further interpretations also to the word purusa.

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2) Cf. Kennedy, Upanisat-purusasukt-avisukta-bhashya. Srngara-
manasa-vrata, ed. by Uttamur Viraaghabacarya (Madras:
3) Chandogya Up. VIII.1.1 narrates the body of a living being as the city
of God (brahma-pura). In this city there is a small abode in the form
of a lotus flower: within it is a small space (dakshinakasa).
4) It is to be noted here that this commentary of the purusa-sukt is
written by a Vaisnava scholar, and his preoccupation is to establish
that the purusa is Visnu himself. The commentator evidently has
religious compulsions to make the text Vaisnavite.
2.2. The Descent of the Purusa

Verses four and five of the purusa-suktta describe the descent of purusa. Three quarters of the cosmic purusa rose upwards and remained there, But the fourth quarter of him remained here on earth (padah asya iha abhavat). From this uninformed one-fourth the Virat was born, Virat literally means the shining one. From Virat the personal purusa was born. It is this purusa who was sacrificed for the sake of creation. One fourth of the Cosmic purusa extends himself as the whole universe through a sacrificial act. The melted butter used in the sacrifice was the spring season; the fire was the summer season; and the oblation that accompanied the body of purusa to fire was the autumn season (v.6). The ordinary gods, gods called Sandhyas and the ancient sages were the sacrificers and witnesses of the immolation of the purusa.

2.3. The Process of Creation

Verses eight to fourteen narrate the creative process. Each member of the purusa is cut and offered into the sacrificial fire, this in turn produced corresponding objects of the universe. The purusa mixed with clotted butter produces the birds of the air, beasts of the forest and animals of the village (v.8). From this sacrifice were born the Rg Veda, Sama Veda and Yajur Veda (v.9). From him were born the horses and all the animals with two rows of teeth (jaws). Cattle, goats and sheep were also born from him (v.10). Verses eleven and twelve narrate the origin of the four castes of human society. From the mouth of the sacrificed purusa the Brahmin was born, from his two arms the Kshatriya (Rajanya) was born, from the two thighs of the purusa the Vaisya was born, and from his feet the Sudra, the fourth caste was created. From the mind of the sacrificed purusa the moon was born, from his eye the sun was created, from his face Indra and fire came out, from his breath the wind was created, from his navel the vital breath was produced, from his head came out the sky, his two legs became the earth and his ear became the four quarters (directions) of the earth. Thus they formed the worlds (tatha loken akalpayan) (vv.13-14).

Verse fifteen speaks about the circumstances in which the gods tied the purusa, the victim (purusam pasum), to the sacrificial pole for sacrifice. They use twenty-one sacrificial sticks for the sacred fire (5) and purusa, the victim, is enclosed and closed by seven poles (6). The last verse (v.16), which is

5) Samit: samidhyatega mir anaya iti samit, that which fuels the fire is samit (Amarakosa). Vaigayani-brahmana symbolically speaks about the twenty-one fuel sticks as five gross elements, five subtle elements, five senses of knowledge, five organs of activity and mind (Cf. Kenady upanisat-purusa-suktta-sri-stikta-bhasyan, p.783).

6) Paridhi means a wall or fence, (parito nishthayate iti). In the sacrificial context they are poles, here seven in number, placed around the sacrificial altar. Uttara-vedi-paridhayah traya, abhayaniyasya paridhayah traya, adityah sapta mah, three poles are posted on the northern side of the altar, three poles are around the abhayaniya fire, and the seventh one is the sun above (Kenady
a repetition of *Rg Veda* 1.164.50, says with the sacrifice gods sacrifice to the sacrifice, and the powers of this sacrificial act reached and pervaded everywhere. There are scholars who think that these two verses were originally verses six and seven, and thus an introduction to the real act of sacrifice of the *purusa* by gods.

2.4. Some Incongruities and Inconsistencies

Who is the sacrificer? It is said that gods offered the *purusa* as a sacrifice. But inherent in the hymn is that the *purusa* is the sacrificer, the victim and the sacrifice. Secondly, creation takes place by the self-sacrifice of the *purusa*. Then how should we explain the existence of gods, who are supposed to be the sacrificers, and this world to which the *purusa* descended? Three-fourths of the *purusa* remained above, and one-fourth of him came down. This one-fourth in turn becomes *Virat*, and then again transforms himself to *purusa*. Is this *purusa* the same as the ultimate original *purusa*? These are some queries that may prop up in the mind of the reader of this hymn. However, the overall purpose of the hymn, namely, to inculcate the doctrine that this whole universe is the body of the sacrificed *purusa*, is evident and obvious.

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3. Cosmos as the Ontological Extension of the *Purusa*

One of the existential as well as theoretical problems that vexed philosophers of old was the issue of one and many. The phenomenal world of multiplicity is subject to change in the form of birth, growth, decay and death. Behind this fragmented, finite and mutable conglomerate of multiplicity there should be a reality that is beyond all the exigencies of embodied existence. The Semitic religions solved the problem by the doctrine of creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). In the beginning God alone existed: there was nothing besides him. Out of this nothing the omnipotent God created the multiplicity. In the post-*Upanisadic* Indian philosophy all the three great principles (*tattva-traya*) are eternal and uncreated, namely, the supreme Being, the individual selves and the world of matter. Matter, of course, is subject to changes like origin, growth and transformation. But the causal form of the elemental world is eternal, unchangeable and uncreated.

But in the *Vedic* age, before Indians developed the doctrines of *karma*, rebirth and eternal liberation, the cosmosconies were more mythical than philosophical. The dismemberment and self-immolation of the *purusa* for the sake of creation is a prototype for later philosophical, especially *Vedantic*, concept of projection of the universe. *puruskas* body is the material cause of the cosmos; he extends himself to the diverse objects of this elemental world. The logical conclusion would be that this
universe is the body of the purusa. purusa is the microcosm, and from this microcosm, through its self-emptying and self-sacrifice, the macrocosm, the universe at large, was evolved. The purusa-substratum can be qualified as unicity of differentiated multiplicity.

3.1. World and God: The Body-Soul Relationship

This concept that God is the soul and the world, which includes individual selves and matter, is the body is later taken up and developed by the Upaniṣads. Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad narrates a debate between Yaśñavalkya and Uddalaka. Uddalaka asked Yaśñavalkya about the inner Controller of all beings. Yaśñavalkya replied by enumerating a long list of things and said that Brahman is the inner Self and Controller of all and that all these things form the body of Brahman. He begins with the earth and says: "He who dwells in the earth and is within it, but whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth and who controls the earth from within, He is the inner Controller: He is your SELF, the Immortal". The philosopher then repeats this sentence and says that God is the inner Controller and inner SELF of water, fire, mid-space, air, heaven, sun, all the directions, moon and stars, ether, darkness, light, all beings, vital breath, speech, eye, ear, mind, skin, intellect and semen. Yaśñavalkya concludes his

long discourse with the following statement:

He is never seen, but is the Seer; He is never heard, but is the Hearer; He is never thought of, but is the Thinker: He is not known, but is the Knower. There is no other hearer than He, there is no other thinker than He, there is no other knower than He. He is the inner Controller - your own Self and the Immortal. Everything else besides him is sorrowful" (Bṛh. Up., III.7.22).

In short Yaśñavalkya was saying that all the great elements by which the universe is constituted, all the sense organs of knowledge, all the organs of activity, and finally all the individual selves, all these things, form the body of God.8) God is the inner Self of everything, beginning from the non-conscious, changeable matter and ending in the conscious, immutable individual selves.

The same paradigm is a theme of serious discussion in the Epics and Puranas, Mahabharata, the great Epic poem of India, states:

The father of all creatures, God, made the sky. From the sky he made water and from water he made fire and air. From fire and air the earth came into existence. Mountains are his bones, earth is his flesh, sea is the blood, sky is his abdomen. Air is his breath, fire is his splendour, rivers are nerves. The sun and moon which are called Agni and Soma, are the eyes of Brahman. The upper part of the

8) In the following section of the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (III.8.3-12), Yaśñavalkya answering a question of Gargi states that this God pervades everything in the universe.
he sky is his head. The earth is his feet and directions (disa) are the hands.\textsuperscript{9)}

Therefore, the concept of the cosmos as God's body is not an invention of Ramanuja or Visistadvaita. Ramanuja's predecessor and teacher Yamunacarya proposed this body-soul relation between world and God as a reasonable and balanced worldview and a sound theological framework to situate a spiritual seeker in his pilgrimage to the ultimate goal of his life.

3.2. Ramanuja's Vision

Ramanuja [1017-1137] took up this line of theological thought and developed it into a solid system of Indian philosophy, Visistadvaita-Vedanta, and into a very popular branch of Vaisnava religion. The very foundation of this system of thought and religion is the concept of God as the Self of all entities and all entities as the attributive body of God. The spiritual path advised by Ramanuja and his school of Vedanta for liberation also is based on this fundamental understanding of God and world. Ramanuja said that the basic awareness and acceptance of the fact that one is part of God's body, and therefore is radically dependent on him, is the beginning of real spiritual life. It is the key to the doors of total liberation. His vision of cosmos as God's body is not just a means for a philosophical or metaphysical or ontological understanding of the structure of the cosmos. It is above all the motive force for the sadhana, the spiritual means, for liberation. Body-soul doctrine should not be reduced to a mere cosmological metaphor or an allegorical way of explaining the dependence of the universe on God. In Ramanuja it is very much real. This worldview provides, according to Ramanuja, a rational, reasonable and a theologically sound model to apprehend the supreme Reality and our existence in the world as psycho-physical beings and the eschatological goal of all contingent realities. The meaning, dignity and destiny of nature and all entities of nature are also eminently safeguarded.

3.3. The Global Implications of this Weltanschauung

What are the implications of the painful dismemberment, disintegration and self-emptiness of the purusa for the sake of origin, life and growth of other entities of the elemental cosmos and embodied consciousness?

(i) All Entities are Members of One Organic Whole

We form part of the divine purusa, and therefore, we are strictly related to every animate and inanimate objects,
conscious and non-conscious beings of this cosmos, even to a speck of dust. All these together constitute one organic whole, the attributive body of God/puruṣa. Consequently, we are responsible for the well-being of the body, namely, of this cosmos with all its wonderful varieties of beings, living and non-living, moving and stationery.

Hinduism on the whole, when speaking about spirituality and means for liberation, does not give adequate importance to the social dimension of spiritual life. But a person who knows puruṣa/Brahman as the inner Self of all, cannot harm a living being knowingly. Cosmos is not only the locus where humans live, but they are part of this cosmos. Individual selves and world of matter are to be perceived as ontological extension of the supreme Self. Body of God is understood in terms of relations, relation between God, conscious selves and non-conscious matter. This worldview and this awareness should radically influence our understanding of and rapport to the world and objects of this universe. We will no more evaluate the created world good and positive, simply because it is useful to humans, but because the world and humans are equally the integral constituents of the body divine.

This relatedness has further theological and spiritual implications. Unless and until every member of this body, every life, including the life of plants and trees, is happy, my own happiness is incomplete. I am responsible for the well-being of all the things in the universe, including the elements. Unless and until every being is liberated my own liberation lacks its fullness. If any member in this body suffers, be it animate or inanimate, it is also my own suffering. There is mutual dependence; but this dependence is not of subordination. It is a mutually supporting unified whole held together by the puruṣa.

(ii) The Inherent Demand of Justice

Abuse of earth and nature is associated with and accompanied by abuse of persons, especially poor persons. Justice to persons is very often related to justice to nature. Justice is one of the cardinal and basic virtues which is conspicuous today more by its absence and violation than by its presence and practice. Justice is definitely a promoter of life and is universally life-enhancing and life-reinforcing. This moral virtue and supreme value is brutally breached when unjust violence is meted out to the earth and environment. The devastation and pollution of the earth and elements are perpetrated predominantly by the potentates of this world at the expense of the sustenance, conditions and quality of life of the poor and marginalized persons and nations. The virulent and fatal results of ecological disasters are borne also mainly by the poor people. This man-made injustice is irreconcilable in the body–divine paradigm of the puruṣa-sūktas.
(iii) A Sadhana for Mukt

The puruṣa-world or ‘body of God’ symbology was later developed by Rāmānuja as a tool for God-realization. Rāmānuja proposed bhakti, loving devotion to God, as the surest means for total liberation. Bhakti-yoga is ultimately the supreme knowledge (para-vidya) of the Divine. For Rāmānuja the path of knowledge (jñāna-marga) denotes the true knowledge of one’s own self and its nature (atma-jñāna), and this knowledge consists in the radical awareness that one is mode of Brahmān and therefore, totally dependent on him. This is the starting point of bhakti, which should ultimately lead the seeker to direct seeing, which is the highest form of knowledge, the direct, intuitive, experiential knowledge of the divine form in liberation.

(iv) Creation as the Vehicle to Salvation

This leads us to another consideration. The seeker/sadhaka has to use matter and body in his pilgrimage to the Divine centre. He/she has to use it, at the same time transcend it for the final liberation. Therefore, body and matter is an important instrument for salvation. Poet Kālidāsa says, sarīram adyam khalu dharma-sadhanaṃ, ‘body is indeed the first instrument (sadhana) for performing the dharma’ and thus for liberation. Therefore, body, on the one hand is seen as the result of karman and as something negative and as evil to be renounced and rejected. On the other hand body is the vehicle through which the seeker of spiritual perfection has to attain the final liberation. The creative act of puruṣa produces multiplicity and diversity in an evolutionary movement: but the redemptive act re-integrates all the creation in an involutionary process. The final liberation is in a way the re-assembling of the dismembered body of the puruṣa (Cf. Taittiriya Brahmana I.2.6).

(v) Divinity in Matter

If the universe is the body of puruṣa/God, then it is to some extend divine. Of course, attributing divinity to nature may not be easily reconcilable with the religious beliefs of some. However, universe as the body-divine scheme necessarily assigns and attributes certain amount of sacrality and sacramentality to nature. Violence to it, therefore, is an act of sacrilege and desecration.

4. Puruṣa-sūktā in the Context of Globalization

What is the relevance of puruṣa-sūktā in a discussion on globalization? We have seen that the embodied puruṣa in a sacrificial act extended himself and became the objective
universe. We have also seen that the entire universe is the body of purusa, permeated, pervaded and animated by his spirit. Consequently all entities of the earth are related to each other, and all, being members of one organic whole, are responsible for the well-being of others. There is a universalism in globalization: but it is based on market economy, exploitation and financial gains. The body-soul paradigm projected by purusa-sūkta may serve as a catalyst for corrective attitudes and action plans.

4.1. Dynamics of Globalization

Globalization is a phenomenon of recent origin, which inaugurated a new world order with social, cultural, political, and especially economic implications. This is being supported and sustained by the western neo-liberal capitalistic ideology centered on the market economy. The economic needs and need for commercial relationships with wealthy nations pressurize developing nations to opt for globalization. Political and territorial colonialism is extinct; but globalization is another shrewd form colonialism by which poorer nations are tricked into the power of transnational market forces and western capitalism. The agents of this type of colonialism are the gigantic multinational business corporations, and the governments, which support them.

The ideology of globalization is the creation of a seamless, borderless global order which is bound to de-nationalize the involved nation-states. The sovereignty and national individuality of nations are subtly eroded and altered through aggressive interventionist and mighty investmentalist drives of the potentate capitalist agents. In this world order nations and countries are reduced to the status of economic territories to be exploited by the transnational capital without any legal accountability or moral obligation to these countries.

4.2. Adverse Effects of Globalization

Driven by money power and market forces, globalization has least regard for ethical principles and moral codes of conduct. Offer maximum and take maximum seems to be the underlying force of this phenomenon. The concern of consumerist ideals and market culture is profit at any cost, and not persons and communities. Every sphere of human life is viewed from the point of money and profit. Ordinary people are pressurized to opt for a commodified and consumerist style of life and culture.

The operational dynamics of globalization is bound to neglect the poor and the marginalized. If profit is the supreme mantra of globalization, then the penniless poor would never attract its attention. The globalized society conveniently erases the poor and poverty from its conscience. Globalization entails cuts in social spending, removal of state control on prices of essential commodities, unlimited privatization, easing of labour laws, etc.;
and all these are harmful to the poor.

This neo-liberalism associated with globalization encourages the plundering of eco-resources for immediate gains. Weaker nations are compelled to put their natural resources for unlimited exploitation by profit-obsessed multinationals. And the losers of this rage of destruction of eco-system are always the poor, the farmers, forest-dwellers, fisher folks, etc.

Globalization is a great leveler. Commodifying life through consumerist value-system means also cultural homogenization. Local cultures, little traditions and indigenous cultural values are altered or annihilated. Younger generation becomes estranged from their cultural heritage, spiritual patrimony and social customs and practices. The craze for western life style alienates people from their roots.

5. Damage Control

The process and progress of globalization are inexorable and irreversible. It has taken deeper roots in the community of nations and greater hold on the psyche of peoples. There is no going back now from this global reality. Our attention is called to make the process more human and ethically acceptable. In this endeavour the ideals of the puruṣa-sacrifice for the existence, functions and wellbeing of all entities, animate and inanimate, may provide some inspirational insights.

Humans should become the centre of globalization agenda, and not money-oriented profit obsession. Humans should not be regarded simply as producer and consumer.

There should be a positive conscientization process through which peoples should be enlightened on the values of human dignity, freedom, truth, solidarity with the whole humanity, and the worth of each individual.

There should not be any absolutization of profit-based economic order. Wealth and wealth-based pleasure are only one dimension of human life. Social responsibility, mutual love and trust, mutual enrichment, rootedness in ones own cultural milieu, individual and local creativity, etc. are important dimensions of human life. According to the ancient Indian values system, artha (wealth) and kama (pleasure) are values or goals of human life (puruṣartha). But these should be procured, possessed and experienced in the correct perspective and proportions. Otherwise they become greed and lust, which are detrimental to oneself and to the societal life in general.

Liberalization and privatization are not inviolable dogmas of polity. They should be exercised according to the need of the country and good of the people.

6. The Agony of the Puruṣa

The cosmic puruṣa should feel extremely happy, because by his voluntary dismemberment and total self-sacrifice he gave rise to a magnificent universe of manifold splendors and
They were untouchables, unapproachable and sometimes even unseeables. Discrimination on the basis of birth, caste and occupation is prohibited in the Constitutions of India. But it is still practise aggressively by members of the higher castes. Gandhi called the untouchables Harijans, meaning the people of God. But this hapless community of Indians would like to call themselves Dalits, meaning the oppressed, broken and fallen people. In the 2001 census of India out of the 1000 million inhabitants, 170 million are Dalits.11 The barbarous social ostracism, economic oppression and cultural discrimination to which the Dalits are subjected to are succinctly enumerated by a Jesuit Priest:

We have been segregated and forced to live on the outskirts of villages. Non-Dalits have restricted our movements. They did not allow us on the roads and streets within a prescribed distance of persons of higher castes. If we fail to take these prescriptions seriously, we are beaten up, lynched, or done away with.12

This is the agony of purusa. A big part of his body suffers and is subjected to brutal and inhuman maltreatment and abuse by the other part of the same body. Instead of a harmonious and peaceful co-existence and mutually enriching and enhancing collaboration between the two sections, there reigns distrust, bitterness and enmity between these two parts.

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10) It is commonly accepted that the Atharva Veda is a later addition.

In fact, an old designation for the Vedas is traya, meaning The Three, signifying the three Vedas only, namely, Rg Veda, Yajur Veda and Saman Veda.


This is the agony of the purusa.

A similar problem and enigma exist in the global macrocosm level in the context of globalization. Economically weaker, industrially underdeveloped and militarily fragile nation-states are really the Dalits of the one confederate body of nations. Through the subtle mechanism of economic enticement and sophisticated and shrewd policies of market power, these Dalits are exposed to unjust exploitation and immoral economic subjugation. The Dalit part of the cosmic purusa is in the agony through division and divisive forces of his own body.

7. Conclusion

The specific worldview of Indian philosophy right from the Vedic times emphatically declares the unity of Being and resolutely supports the vision of totality of all existence. It uses different paradigms and symbols to illustrate this vision and enlighten the readers about its implications. Body-soul paradigm is an archetype of this unity vision. The entire universe conceived as a wheel (cakra) is yet another model of this Weltanschauung. The hub (nabhi) is the source of energy, the axial point (apih) is the link of the centre with other realities, the spokes (arañ) are the manifold existences and the rim (nemi) is the power of the centre which unifies all (Cf. Rg Veda I.55.6; I.164.2.11-14. & 48). Another powerful symbol is that of the tree which has its roots above and which grows downward (Cf. Katha Up. II.3.1). The Reality as a five-layered complex (pātra-kośa) consisting of matter, life, senses and mind, consciousness and the Self too is a powerful paradigm of the unity in diversity of Being (Cf. Taittiriya Up. II & III).

As has been elucidated above, purusa-sakti depicts the cosmos as the body of the cosmic purusa. The members of the body are different and their functions are diverse; but all exist and operate in the spirit of unity and community. In a wider context this is applicable to a society. There is of course a hierarchy of functions and duties: but this hierarchy is not of prerogative, privilege and position, but of diversity of functions and services. All are equally important and all work for the harmonious existence and progress of the community. This body-soul paradigm is equally applicable in the global context and in the process of globalization. The global body consists of weak and strong, poor and rich, small and big nation-states. The sense of belonging to one body should guide the advocates and executors of globalization. Then there will be less exploitation and more collaboration, less craze for profit and more readiness to share, less self-centred hankering for domination and more eagerness to serve. Mahatma Gandhi once said: Politics without principles, pleasure without conscience, wealth without work, knowledge without character, business without morality, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice will destroy us. We need a globalization process with positive principles, clean conscience, hard work, upright character, genuine morality, altruistic
humanity and readiness to sacrifice. Our motto should be *udara-caritam tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, the whole earth is the family of generous people; and prayer should be *lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu*, may the universe be happy.

The *Purusa-sūkta* (*Rg Veda* X.90)\(^1\)

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<tr>
<td>sahasraśā puruṣāḥ sahasraśāḥ sahasaśapād/ sa bhūmim viśvato vṛtvātyatīṣṭad dasāṅgulam //</td>
<td>Thousand-headed was puruṣa, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed. He, having pervaded the earth on all sides, extended beyond it by the length of ten fingers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puruṣa evedam sarvam yad bhūtām yac ca bhāvyām / utāṁrtatvasyaścana yad annemiṣṭiḥ //</td>
<td>puruṣa is this all, that has been and that will be. And he is the lord ofimmortality. He grows beyond through food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elāvan asya mahimāto jyāyamā ca puruṣāḥ / pāḍo 'syā viśvā bhūtāni tripāḍa asyāṁṛtam divi //</td>
<td>Such is his greatness, and more than that is puruṣa. A fourth of him is all beings, three-fourths of him are what is immortal in heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tripāḍ ardhaṃ ut ait puruṣaḥ pāḍo 'syābhāvāt punah / tato viśvān vyakramātā sāsācānahāne abhi //</td>
<td>With three quarters puruṣa rose upward. One quarter of him here came into being again. Thence he spread asunder in all directions to all that eats and that does not eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tasnād virāl aśvātā vir ātī puruṣāḥ / sa jāto aśi aricyata paścad bhūmim ahā punaḥ //</td>
<td>From him Viraj was born, from Viraj puruṣa. When born he reached beyond the earth behind and also before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yat puruṣena haviṣa devā yajñam ātanaṃ //</td>
<td>When the gods performed a sacrifice with puruṣa as an obliteration, the spring was its melted butter, the summer its fuel, the autumn its obliteration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vasanto asyāsīd ājyam grīma idhmah śarad dhaviḥ //</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) This translation of the *Purusa-sūkta* is based on the translation of this text by Arthur A. Macdonell.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tam yajñam bariṣi praṇkṣan puruṣam jatam agrataḥ / tena devā ayañjanta sādhyā srayās ca ye //</td>
<td>That puruṣa, born in the beginning, they besprinkled as a sacrifice on the strew; with him the gods, the Sadhyas and the seers sacrificed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tasmād yajñāt sarvaḥūtah samiḥṛtām prṣad āyām / paśuṁ tāṁ ca ṛc̄re vayavyas āravanyām grāmyās ca ye //</td>
<td>From that sacrifice completely offered was collected the clothed butter; he made that the beasts of the air, of the forest, and those of the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tasmād yajñāt sarvaḥūta ṛc̄re sāmāṇī jāhire / chandaṁeci jāhire tasmād yajūs tasmād aṭāvata //</td>
<td>From that sacrifice completely offered was born the Rg; the Sama was born from that and the Yajus was also born from it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tasmād aśvā ayañjanta ye ke cobbhāyād atah / gāvo ha jāhire tasmāt tasmāj jālā aṭāvasyāḥ //</td>
<td>From that arose horses and all such as have two rows of teeth. Cattle were born that; from that were born goats and sheep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yat puruṣam vyadadhiḥ katidhā vyakalayān / mukham kim asya kau bāhu kā uta pada ucyete //</td>
<td>When they divided puruṣa, into how many parts did they dispose him? What did his mouth become? What are his two arms, his two thighs, and his two feet called?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brāhmaṇa 'syā mukham āśīd bāhu nānyah kṛtah / uta tad asya tad vaśyāḥ padbhyaṁ śādīro aṭāvata //</td>
<td>His mouth became the Brahmin, from his two arms were made the Ksatriya, his two thighs became the Vaisya; and from his two feet the Sudra was born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>candramā manasa jatam caksuḥ śārṣyā aṣṭiyā / mukhād indraś ca aṇ̄aś ca prānād vāyuḥ aṣṭiyā //</td>
<td>The moon was born from his mind; from his eye the sun was born; from his mouth Indra and Agni were born, and from his breath air was born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nabhyā āśīd antarikṣaṁ śīrhpa dyau samavartata / padbhyaṁ bhūṁir diśah śoṭrāḥ tatha lokam aṣṭāyana //</td>
<td>From his navel was produced the air; from his head the sky was born; from his two feet the earth was created; from his ear the quarters. Thus they fashioned the worlds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saptasyaṁ paṁidhyas triḥ sapta samidhā kṛtah / devaḥ yad yajñam tanvānā abadhan puruṣam paṁ /</td>
<td>Seven were his enclosing sticks; thrice seven were the sacrificial fire sticks were made, when the gods performing the sacrifice bound puruṣa as the (animal) victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yajñena yajñam ayajanta devas tāṁi dharmāṁ prathāṁ añan / te ha nākām mahimānaḥ sacanta-yatra pārve sādhyāḥ santi devah //</td>
<td>With the sacrifice the gods sacrificed to the sacrifice. These were the first ordinances. These powers reached the heaven where the ancient Sadhyas, the gods exist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>