

## ṛṇavati

ni gramāsō- the villagers have ni padvantō- the footed have

ni pakṣiṇaḥ- the winged have ni śyēnāsaścidarthinaḥ- the ambitious hawks have avikṣataḥ - closed their eyes.

The people of the village, the cattle, horses and the birds have gone to sleep. Even a bird such as the hawk which is so doggedly ambitious in its pursuits is asleep.

### Reflections

*The fact that the spokesperson separates himself from the villagers indicate stratification of society. The villagers do not engage in work at night. Most animals and birds too have gone to sleep. Even the tough hawk has the sense to sleep.*

*We too must learn to rest. As we retire we cannot hold on to the excitements nor the disappointments, not even the routines of the day. The residual impressions left over by the experiences of the day must be put to sleep too!*

yāvayā vṛkyaṃ vṛkaṃ yavayastēnamūrmyē .athā na sutarā bhava .. 6

## ṛṇavati

ūrmyē- oh speedy night yavayaḥ tēna- may we be distanced from them yāvayā -the invaders vṛkyaṃ-the shewolf vṛkaṃ- the wolf athā- then naḥ- certainly sutarā bhava- become well crossed

The night is said to be well crossed if it is free from any injury or harm done by invaders such as the male wolf and the female wolf. An appeal is made to the power of night to speedily distance such invaders.

### Reflections

*In an agricultural society it is easy to understand the fears felt by those who own domestic animals. Under the stealth of night wolves come in packs to seek their prey. The mother wolf is feisty and desperate to feed her cubs. The pens and the stockyards are not meant for wolves who belong in the woods.*

*Therefore they are called invaders. At night the farmer feels that he is at a disadvantage without light. He cannot study the moves of these invaders. When he accounts for all his animals the next day he can claim to have crossed the night safely.*

*Night is the most susceptible period particularly for those who are on a path of self-improvement. It has taken many sacrifices and trials before any spiritual gain is obtained. In the absence of any illumination all these gains are open to the wolves like the cattle. Darkness then refers to periods of non-enlightenment. We are very vulnerable to hostile forces at this time. These forces can tear our integrity apart.*

*They can seize our gains and render them unavailable to us. During the day very many distractions keep us on the go. We have no time to handle our deeper selves. The depth surfaces at night and at those times when we say we have hit an all time low. The darkest waters of our nature come to the surface then. We wish that these low periods will be over soon. We wish that these low periods will be over soon.*

*We must appeal to the divinity that guards these periods to help us cross this juncture safely and come out of this unscathed and ready to face life with vigour.*

upamāpēpiśattamaḥ kṛṣṇaṃ vyaktamasthita .upa ṛṇēva yātaya .. 7 ..

**ṛṇavati**

tamaḥ- darkness kṛṣṇaṃ- black vyaktaṃ- clearly upa asthita- has assumed mā pēpiśaktamaḥ- do not subjugate ṛṇa iva- like the mother of the divine upa yātaya- come to as

The night has moved to a time of intense darkness. The saturation point of darkness has arrived. The appeal to Raatri is to refrain from overpowering or subjugating us. The appeal is to be as a mother divine instead.

### Reflections

*There is an element of fear in these lines as well as a clear recognition of the power of darkness. Darkness is to be looked upon as a mother. A mother in whose womb light exists.*

upa tē gā ivākaraṃ vṛṇīṣva duhitardivaḥ . rātrī stōmaṃ na jigyuṣē .. 8 ..

**ṛṇavati**

iva- like tē gā- your cows/your praises upa ākaraṃ- expressed/offered to you duhitardivaḥ- daughter of the day vṛṇīṣva- please accept rātrī- rātrī stōmaṃ- this praise na jigyuṣē- may be rejoiced

Raatri is referred to here as the daughter of the day. The giver of this praise belongs to Raatri just as the cows belong and yield to the milker of the cows. The word duhitre for daughter means one who milks the cow. The word gā also means praise, There is a sense of humility in the phrase -please accept. The offerer of this praise and the subject of this praise

### Reflections

*The eighth sukta is a summary. A beautiful relationship typical of the Vedic culture is drawn between the praise giver and the divinity selected to be the subject.*

ऋणवती जयतु ॐ

शुभम्

## RATRI SUKTAM-RESPONSE

**QI Please choose the right word to fill in the blank.**

1. Rgvedic concept of the divine was..... a. planned b. spontaneous
2. The sanskrit language as seen in the vedas is ..... a. the same as in the purana-s b. different from the itihasa-s and purana-s.
3. A single vedic sanskrit word has.....a. various meanings b. just one meaning c. various meanings with the essential meaning remaining the same.
4. To explain the divine, the vedic rishis used gender and number..... a. freely b.carefully c. spontaneously
5. Vedic suktas have ..... a. double value b. only an utilitarian value

**QII Please add T for true or F for False or D for doubtful for the following statements.**

1. It is better to paraphrase Sanskrit words while translating into English rather than restrict to word to word translations.
- 2.Aakaasa just means space just as Agni means just fire.
3. Any one can become a rishi by acquiring knowledge of scriptures.
4. Sanskrit is a devabhasha best suited to explain the divine.
5. Ratri means night.
6. Illuminative periods are short lived for most of us.
7. Pralaya stands for deluge both external and internal.
8. Introspection is necessary for growth.
9. Human beings increasingly seem to ignore the separate roles of day and night in our daily lives.
10. Standard of living has improved whereas standard of life has not.
11. Man can learn from Nature inspite of technological progress.
12. Vedic concept of the divine was free from having" anyone born to represent God".

**Qiii WRITE A SHORT ESSAY ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF " THE DIVINITY OF NIGHT" AS UNDERSTOOD FROM THIS SUKTA.**