

SHREE RUDRAM- PRAVESHKA
Introductory Lesson Course on The Shri Rudram
LESSON 1

More than 30 rescensions of the Yajur Veda carry the Sri Rudram. Often minor differences are there in the choice of words and order of the rks (verses). Many scholars such as Yaska, Vishnusuri, Sayana, Bhatta Bhaskara, Abhinava Sankara and Ahobala have given various interpretations to the symbolic meaning of these rks. These approaches indicate a variety of personal leanings such as advaita, karma (ritualistic) and saguna moorthi upasana.

At AMBA HOUSE we have collected verses that directly relate to the ShriRudra from various rescensions and traditions of the Yajur Veda. The framework we have chosen is the Shukla Yajur Veda. Chamakas are not directly related to Rudra and therefore they are placed as a supplement (Lesson 12) to this course. Our approach is a Vedic one. We have interpreted the words (in our Gist) from the viewpoint of the Vedic man. We have taken into consideration the approach of Shri Aurobindo and Shri Kapali Shastriar. We are also indebted to the general approach taken by the revered Joseph Campbell with regard to the significance of metaphors in the language of the Divine. The practical application of these truths to our daily life is our main thrust which we reveal in our Explanation and Prayer Sections.

It is important to know that The Divinity of Rudra is addressed to by several rishis in the Rgveda. Even in the Yajurveda prior to the verses of the Srirudram, this divinity has been addressed to. For example the famous Mrtyunjaya mantra Tryambakam yajamahey.... in addition to occurring in The Rgveda it is found in the 3rd adhyaya of the Yajur veda and is the creation of Vasishta rishi and is addressed to Rudra.

This course concentrates **only on the popular Shrirudram**. The next level course to this which is planned to be released in 2003 will cover all verses on the Devata Rudra as it occurs in all the Vedas.

नमः रुद्रायी

Obeisance to the Commentary- Rudraayee

शुक्ल यजुर् वेद -१६ अदध्याय- परमेष्टि कुत्स ऋषि- रुद्रो देवता

नमस्ते रुद्र मन्यव उतो त इषवे नमः ।

नमस्ते अस्तु धन्वने बाहुभ्यां उत ते नमः ॥१॥

śukla yajur vēda -16 adadhyāya- paramēṣṭi kutsa ṛṣi- rudrō dēvatā

namastē rudra manyava utō ta iṣavē namaḥ .

namastē astu dhanvanē bāhubhyāṃ uta tē namaḥ ..1..

GIST

Salutations to Rudra, the riled up one. Salutations again to your arrows.

May salutations be to the bearer of the bow. Salutations to your arms.

EXPLANATION

We are shown a picture of a warrior here. His strong arms and the weapons of bow and arrow suggest his mighty power to inflict and protect. The prayer begins with a sense of awe, fear and respect.

PRAYER

Oh lord, may I be aware of your powerful presence. May I never lose sight of the capacity to inflict that thou hast. With respectful fear I bow down to your presence and your power.

या त इषु शिवतमा शिवं बभूव ते धनु ।
शिवा शरव्या या तव तया नो रुद्र मृडय ॥२॥

yā ta iṣu śivatamā śivaṃ babhūva tē dhanu .
śivā śaravyā yā tava tayā nō rudra mṛdaya ..2..

GIST

By your arrows which are peaceful, by your bow which is at peace
By your peaceful quivers, by these, render us happy.

EXPLANATION

A request is being made to Rudra based on a perfect understanding of what those weapons are capable of doing. The arrows sit quietly in the quiver. The bow is no longer being twanged. The quiver is the repository of inflictions. The arrows are the variety of inflictions and the bow is manner in which the infliction unfolds to render us afflicted. Thus may we be assured that they will not be used in action. For example there is an inherent fear of the gun in the hands of a policeman. We feel relieved if it is sitting in the holster. The need to be happy is a genuine universal need.

PRAYER

You are the Creator and I am the creature. As a creature I need reassurance from you as I do fear your powers. Be gracious to us, oh lord.

या ते शिवा तनूरघोराऽपापकाशिनी ।

तया नस्तन्वा शन्तमया गिरिशन्ताभिचाकशीहि ॥३॥

yā tē śivā tanūraghōrāyapāpakāśinī .
tayā nastanvā śantamayā girīśantābhicākaśīhi ..3..

GIST

Oh Rudra, by your body which is non-terrifying and not causing harm.
By that body itself that is at peace, oh mountain of peace, reveal to us everywhere.

EXPLANATION

From His capacity we move to the Body. His form is described as aghora. Ghora = terrifying. The very use of this prefix **a** before it points to the fact that one who is terrifying is now not terrible. Therefore one should never lose sight of that potential. Papa used here refers to the harm which is the result or effect issuing from one who can cause terror. Again the form being appealed to is the non-harming one. The impact of the divine is mountainous. The request is to see this condition of peace everywhere. He is everywhere!

PRAYER

Oh Mighty Lord may I be able to see thy Universal Peaceful Form, not just for now or here but forever and everywhere.

यामिषुं गिरिशन्त हस्ते बिभर्ष्यस्तवे ।

शिवां गिरित्र तां कुरु मा हि ँसीः पुरुषं जगत् ॥४॥

yāmiṣuṃ girīśanta hastē bibharṣyastavē .
śivāṃ giritra tāṃ kuru mā hi ṁsīḥ puruṣaṃ jagat ..4..

GIST

The arrows, oh mountain of peace, which in your hands can cause harm
Render that peaceful, oh mountain of protection, do not harm the world of men.

EXPLANATION

Arrows are meant to be discharged and meant to inflict hurt. The appeal here is to the sense of protection and therefore the means with which infliction is caused is to be made peaceful. The appeal is not to an insignificant individual but to the cosmic divinity - a mountain of protection. Jagat refers to the world of interactions which we human beings are engaged in everyday.

PRAYER

You are our protector oh Lord. Put your powers of infliction to rest. We as human beings request you not to hurt us.

शिवेन वचसा त्वा गिरिशाच्छा वदामसि ।
यथा नः सर्वमिज्जगदयक्ष्म ॐ सुमना असत् ॥५॥

śivēna vacasā tvā giriśācchā vadāmasi.

yathā naḥ sarvamijjagadayakṣma ॐ sumanā asat..5..

GIST

Peacefully we utter words to you that can concretise you (into being) , oh Mountain lord.

Whereby this entire world may be freed from disease, and be amiable for us.

EXPLANATION

The request made is done purposefully in a peaceful manner. There are no hostile or negative motives here. The utterer being a satyashrutah (* refer section on Vedic Thought) can bring into being the Divinity in a concrete way with his words. This is done so that we may live free of disease.

PRAYER

Help me oh Lord to live a truthful life. May my pleas for the welfare of the world come true.

अद्यवोचदधिवक्ता प्रथमो देव्यौ भिषक् ।
अही ॐश्च सर्वाज्जंभयन्सर्वांश्च यातुधान्यो अधराचीः परा सुव ॥६॥

adyavōcadadhivaktā prathamō dēvyau bhiṣak.

ahī ॐśca sarvāñjambhayansarvāṁśca yātudhānyō adharācīḥ parā suva..6..

GIST

The foremost to be addressed to and the foremost manifestation, oh First- Physician- Divine.

Snakes and all such fearful entities, rodents and all destructive creatures of the lower realms , distance them.

EXPLANATION

Creatures that are recognised as sources of diseases and pestilence are to be distanced from us by His power. This power comes from Rudra, the Divine Physician. These creatures may belong to the lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder but the harm they can cause is not to be ignored by man who occupies the higher realms.

Snakes represent disease as they can with their toxicity threaten a fuller life. Rodents are those that take away any goods accumulated with effort. Similarly those who cater to their lower nature can influence others to bring them down to their level. These cannot be eradicated totally from the world, they can only be distanced.

PRAYER

Oh Lord bless us with a healthy and good life by keeping us free of disease both physical and mental. Keep us away from influences that can take away all goodness achieved. May we be far away from destructive forces that may drag us to our lower nature.

रुद्रायी नमः ॐ
END of Lesson 1- Shubham

SHREERUDRAM-APPREHENSION QUIZ-1

I. Please answer as T-true, F- false or D- doubtful.

1. Vedic concept of Shiva/Rudra is exactly the same as the Pauranika.
2. Pauranik Sanskrit is in many ways different from Vedic Sanskrit in its usage.
3. Vedic rishis were in harmony with Rtm (cosmic order).
4. Suktas are found in Puranaas and Kaavyaas.
5. Vedic mantras have parallel values.
- 6.It is easy to translate Vedic Sanskrit into English.
- 7.We need to adjust our thinking to understand Vedic Suktas.
- 8.Knowledge of various philosophies of India is necessary to understand Vedic Suktas.
- 9.The significance of metaphorical language to explain Divinity is essential towards understanding the Vedic mind.
- 10.Sayana's Advaitic approach to the Shreerudram is the same as that of Amba House.
- 11.Amba House uses the framework of the Shukla Yajurveda for its selection of Shreerudram verses.
- 12.Suktas on the devata Rudra are found only in the Yajurveda.
13. The Shreerudram as chanted today have only suktas addressed to the devata Rudra.
14. The Shreerudram as chanted today include the namakas and chamakas.
15. The word devata means more a cosmic illumining principle rather than just a moorthi or god.

II. Please fill in the blanks.

1. The root *ru* means.....
- 2.The devata Rudra is the
3. The arrows of Rudra, the Warrior represent.....his bow stands for.....
..... his quiver is..... and his arms represent.....
4. a. Rudra as *meedushtama* can.....
b. Rudra as *shiva*
- c. Rudra as *aruna* (rising sun)
- d. Rudra as *giri* (mountain).....
- e. Rudra as *reerishah* (killer).....

Email response to vasanti.jayaswal@gmail.com

We will send you the next lesson only upon receipt of your response.

SHUBHAM