

CHAPTER 7: VEDIC METRE

The fifth branch of the Vedāṅga is Chhandas, Vedic Prosody or Meter. His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has encapsulated the total knowledge of Chhandas in one word, *Measuring*. In his theme of dividing the whole Vedic Literature into streams of texts that are Ṛishi predominant, Devatā predominant or Chhandas predominant, he has identified Chhandas (prosody) as a Devatā predominant text. He writes:

Chhand is one of the structuring dynamics of Ṛik Veda. It highlights the MEASURING quality involved in structuring Ṛik Veda. With reference to consciousness, Chhand comprises the specific sets of Laws of Nature that are engaged in promoting the quality of Devatā within *Samhitā*, providing a structure to the eternally silent, self-referral, self-sufficient, fully awake state of consciousness, which is intimately personal to everyone.¹

H.M. King Nader Rām has correlated Chhandas with neurotransmitters and neurohormones. Neurotransmitters and neurohormones, as for example those produced by the pituitary gland, discussed in the previous chapter, function with great precision, targeting specific membranes, cells or organs in the body. Neurotransmitters move within the gaps between neurons; neurohormones move in the blood stream in order to reach their target organs. There are eight target organ systems whose activities are influenced by the action of neurohormones and neurotransmitters (Please refer to Figure 38): 1) The gastrointestinal-excretory system, 2) the pulmonary system (lungs), 3) the haematologic-immunologic system comprising the red and white blood cells, and their stems 4) the neurological system, 5) the cardiovascular system, 6) the musculo-skeletal system, 7) the endocrine-reproductive system, and 8) the dermatologic system. Hormones flowing throughout the body in the bloodstream reach their target organs because the organs have

receptors on the surface of the cell membrane that are specific to the molecular shape of that hormone. The hormone functions like a key fitting precisely into the lock, which is the receptor on the cell membrane. When the key fits into the lock, i.e. when the neurohormone reaches the cell membrane and combines with the receptor, then the channel governed by that receptor is opened, like the opening of a door in the cell. Depending on the type of receptor, the fitting of the key into the lock may result in the opening of an ion channel in the membrane, or in a cascade of activities inside the cell. Hart describes this phenomenon as follows:

The body's organs and cells have to communicate with each other in order to function and to survive. As their language, they use a great variety of specialized chemical messengers that include the neurotransmitters and the hormones. Serotonin and other messenger molecules pass signals from one cell to another by interacting with special gatekeeper molecules called receptors. It is a lock and key system, in which each messenger molecule can unlock and activate only a specific receptor type. When a messenger molecule attaches to the proper receptor, the receptor triggers a series of responses within the cell, which may then release its own messengers to pass the information on to yet other cells. . . .

About thirty neurotransmitters have been identified, some of them very specialized and others with a range of job duties in different parts of the brain and nervous system.²

Each of the eight organ systems has its own unique receptors that recognize the specific neurohormones and neurotransmitters intended for them. Some receptors are responsive not only to the specific endogenous hormone that fits like a key into a lock; their activity may also be triggered, or conversely, blocked by drugs. Chemicals that block the receptor site, keeping the neurohormone from reaching its destination and fitting into the lock, are called antagonists; chemicals that open the door by fitting into the lock, are called agonists.

H.M. King Nader Rām explains the transformation or Devatā quality of the neurotransmitters and neurohormones as follows:

The transmitter operates like a key that fits into a specific lock and allows the opening of the door. The receptor is the lock, and the response . . . is the opening of a channel (like opening a door). In this manner, Chhand has a value of transformation (opening or closing a channel); in addition, the term Chhand refers to the hiding quality (the transmitter covers the receptor). The receptors are located on the surface of the cells in the organ systems.³

Because of the precision with which the target organ is activated by the neurohormone, activating processes within specific cells, the number of transmitter molecules released into the blood stream will be in proportion to the number of cells activated, and hence to the overall level of activation of the target organ system. Thus a quantified or measured response is achieved, and this represents the measuring quality in the physiology.

Chhandas measures the number of syllables in the *richa* or verse of the Veda. The main textbook of Chhandas, Vedic metre, is *Piṅgalachhandahsūtra*. The text has eight chapters with a total of 315 *Sūtra*. H.M. King Nader Rām has correlated the eight chapters of the *Piṅgalachhandahsūtra* with the eight organ systems targeted by the neurohormones and neurotransmitters. Sastri summarizes the topics of the eight chapters:

The first chapter of the *Chhandahsūtra* contains definitions and the second chapter deals with number of syllables in the metres like *Gāyatrī* etc. The third chapter covers various characteristics of the Vedic metres and their feet etc. The fourth chapter contains *āryā vaitālīya Chhandas*. The fifth chapter covers ‘*ardhasamavṛtta*’ and the sixth contains metres with six syllable feet up to those with twelve syllabic ones. The seventh chapter covers thirteen syllabic feet up to twenty-six syllable feet and their characteristic features. The eighth chapter contains *gāthā* and *prastāra* etc.⁴

Beginning and ending *Sūtra* are as follows:

छन्दःशास्त्रम्

प्रथमोऽध्यायः ।

धीश्रीस्त्रीम् १ वरा सा य् २ का गुहा र् ३ वसुधा स् ४

सा ते क्व त् ५ कदा स ज् ६ किं वद भ् ७ न हस न् ८
 गृ ल् ९ गन्ते १० धादिपरः ११हे १२ लौ सः १३ ग्लौ १
 ४ अष्टौ वसव इति १५

इति प्रथमोऽध्यायः

अथ द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

छन्दः १ गायत्री २ दैव्येकम् ३ आसुरी पञ्चदश ४
 प्राजापत्याष्टौ ५ यजुषां षट् ६ साम्नां द्विः ७ ऋचां त्रिः ८
 द्वौ द्वौ साम्नां वर्धेत ९ त्रींस्त्रीनृचाम् १० चतुरश्रतुरः प्राजा-
 पत्यायाः ११ एकैकं शेषे १२ जह्यादासुरी १३ तान्युष्णि-
 गनुष्टुब्बृहतीपङ्क्तिष्टुब्जगत्यः १४ तिस्रस्तिस्रः सनाम्रय
 एकैका ब्राह्मयः १५ प्रग्यजुषामार्ष्य इति १६

इति द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

concluding chapter

अथ अष्टमोऽध्यायः

अत्रानुक्तं गाथा १ कुड्मलदन्ती भृतौ नृगौ गिन्द्रियरसाः २
 वरतनुर्नृजौ जौ षड्रसाः ३ जलधरमाला म्भौ स्मौ समु-
 द्रवसवः ४ गौरी नौ रौ ५ ललना भृतौ नृसाविन्द्रियर्षयः ६
 कनकप्रभा सृजौ सृजौ ग् ७ कुटिलगतिर्नौ तौ ग् स्वरर्तवः
 ८ वरसुन्दरी भृजौ स्नौ गौ ९ कुटिला म्भौ नृयौ गौ वेद-
 रससमुद्राः १० शैलशिखा भ्रौ नृभौ भृगौ भूतरसेन्द्रियाणि
 ११ वरयुवती भ्रौ

य्नौ न्गौ १२ अतिशायिनी सौ ज्भौ ज्गौ ग् दिक्स्वराः १३
 अवितथं न्जौ भ्जौ ज्लौ ग् १४ वस्विन्द्रियसमुद्राश्चेत्को-
 किलकम् १५ विबुधप्रिया र्सौ जौ भ्रौ वसुदिशः १६ नारा
 चकं नौ रौ रौ १७ विस्मिता य्मौ न्सौ रौ ग् रसर्तुस्वराः १८
 शशिवदना न्जौ भ्जौ ज् ज्रौ रुद्रदिशः १९ द्विकौ ग्लौ २०
 मिश्रौ च २१ पृथग्लौ मिश्राः २२ वसवस्त्रिकाः २३ लर्द्धे
 २४ सैके ग् २५ प्रतिलोमगुणं द्विर्लाघम् २६ ततोऽप्येकं
 जह्यात् २७ द्विरर्द्धे २८ रूपे शून्यम् २९ द्विः शून्ये ३०
 तावदर्धे तद्गुणितम् ३१ द्विर्घ्नं तदन्तानाम् ३२ एकोनेऽध्वा
 ३३ परे पूर्णम् ३४ परे पूर्णमिति ३५

इत्यष्टमोऽध्यः ।

समाप्तश्चायं ग्रन्थः ।^५

Notes:

¹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, (1994), p. 88.

² Hart, Carol, *Secrets of Serotonin*, (Griffin: St. Martin's Press, 1996). *National Association of Science Writers*, 26 May 2006 < <http://nasw.org/users/twoharts/serotonin.html>>, “Chapter 2, How One Little Molecule Can Do So Much,” paragraph 5.

³ King Nader Rām, (2000), p. 115.

⁴ Sastri, Asoke Chatterjee, ed., *Piṅgalachhandahsūtra: A study*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1987), p. 82.

⁵ Sastri, Asoke Chatterjee, pp. 1 ff.

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