Invoking the Divine Vital Forces
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FROM THE VEDAS

Invoking the Divine Vital Forces

The Rig Veda Rishis pray for the blessings of Agni, God as Fire

The agni hotra fire ceremony is man's oldest religious ceremony. Altars prepared according to designs specified by the Hindu Vedas are to be found as far away as Iran, and some say, even in Northern Europe, near the Baltic Sea. This form of worship, also called Yajna ("Sacrifice "), lives on with the ever new and dynamic vitality of Fire itself. It is performed daily and weekly in homes and temples throughout the world by Hindus of virtually all denominations. Our most ancient scripture, the Rig Veda, has thousands of Vedic mantras dedicated to Agni, the Lord of Fire. The vision and spirit behind them are foundational to Hindu faith and practice. Here are excerpts from the Rig Veda, 1.19-22.

Earnestly we invoke you to dwell in the innermost chambers of our heart, to accept our loving devotions to you. Please come to us, O adorable God, with your vital forces.

No one except you is divine and devoid of malignity. No one knows who causes the great waters to come down and who presides over the eternal laws; please come to us, O adorable Lord, with the vital forces.

No one knows, who is fierce and mighty, who commands the rain to come down and who has unconquerable strength. Please come to us, O adorable God, with vital forces, to embrace us and enlighten.

O adorable God, may you come to us with vital forces, brilliant, terrific and yet benevolent and protective. O Lord of spiritual fire, may you be with us with vital forces working behind the luminaries in the radiant celestial regions beyond the sun.

O adorable God, please be with us with vital forces which scatter the clouds, and set in motion the cosmic forces. Please be with us with vital forces which work through the clouds, through the rays of the sun and with their vigour agitate the ocean.

O adorable God, may you be with us with your vital forces; I pour out the devotional prayers, sweet like elixir, which may lovingly be accepted by you and enjoyed. We invoke the resplendent, adorable Lord, the preserver of the devotees' spiritual fire, offering heartfelt expressions of devotion. Strengthened by that faith, we invoke the resplendent adorable Lord. May He be with us hither to awaken divine consciousness and happiness.

May the mighty resplendent and adorable presiding Lord render the fiends (men dangerous to society) powerless and make sterile the devourers of the virtuous.

O supreme and glorious God, preserver of the virtuous, may you continue to be the bestower of truth and justice, stationed in a position where you have a full knowledge of the consequences of our actions. May you bestow happiness upon us.

Awaken the pair of mental and vital powers. Yoke them every morning in work and worship. May they experience the joy of spiritual eminence. We invoke these divine vital powers animating the chariot of the human body. May they touch the height of spiritual radiance.

We call you, O vital powers; come with your swift and sweet controlling power, like a wet whiplash, to lead mankind to its ultimate destination. O vital powers, the innermost chamber of the prayerful devotee, to which you are proceeding in your car, is not far from you. For preservation, I invoke the divine creator, imbued with golden radiance. Only realization of His nature leads one to the final destination. Worship the eternal divine creator alone for protection; with the aid of His

imperishable laws we can achieve our noble aspirations.

We invoke the source of light, the divine creator, bestower of a wonderful home full of wealth and wisdom. May our friends assemble and sit down to pay homage to the divine creator, for only He can bestow divine wisdom.

O adorable God, may you depute all the vital virtues of cosmos and Nature's bounties to embellish our devotional prayers.

O adorable God, may all the lovable virtues, generosity, wisdom, knowledge and intellect gather here to promote our well-being and guidance.

May these divine virtues, full of infinite vigour and preserving faculties, be with us in all our activities for our protection and happiness.

I invoke all virtues, venerability, resplendence and adoration, O glorious God, for spiritual bliss and felicity.

Under the auspices of Veda Pratishthana, New Delhi, in the late 1970s, renowned Vedic scholars Swami Satya Prakash Sarasvati and Pandit Satyakam Vidyalankar completed the first ever Indian English translation of the entire four Vedas.

The Vedas are the divinely revealed and most revered scriptures, sruti, of Hinduism, likened to the Torah (1,200 bce), Bible New Testament (100 ce), Koran (630 ce) or Zend Avesta (600 bce). Four in number, Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva, the Vedas include over 100,000 verses. Oldest portions may date back as far as 6,000 bce.