



Proceedings of the 17th World Sanskrit Conference, July 9-13, 2018

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, VANCOUVER, CANADA

Similes and Metaphors in the Agnihotra of *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* Mau Das Gupta

Proceedings of the 17th World Sanskrit Conference, Vancouver, Canada, July 9-13, 2018, Section 1: Veda.

Section Convenors: Shrikant Bahulkar and Joanna Jurewicz
General Editor: Adheesh Sathaye

Published by the Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia, on behalf of the International Association for Sanskrit Studies.

DOI: 10.14288/1.0380178.

URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/2429/74489>.

Suggested Citation Format:

MLA:

Das Gupta, Mau. "Similes and Metaphors in the Agnihotra of *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*." *Proceedings of the 17th World Sanskrit Conference, Vancouver, Canada, July 9-13, 2018, Section 1: Veda*. Edited by Shrikant Bahulkar and Joanna Jurewicz, 2019. DOI: 10.14288/1.0380178.

APA:

Das Gupta, M. (2019). Similes and metaphors in the Agnihotra of *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*. In S. Bahulkar and J. Jurewicz, (eds.) *Proceedings of the 17th World Sanskrit Conference, Vancouver, Canada, July 9-13, 2018, Section 1: Veda*. DOI: 10.14288/1.0380178.

Chicago:

Das Gupta, Mau. 2019. "Similes and Metaphors in the Agnihotra of *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*." In *Proceedings of the 17th World Sanskrit Conference, Vancouver, Canada, July 9-13, 2018, Section 1: Veda*, edited by Shrikant Bahulkar and Joanna Jurewicz. DOI: 10.14288/1.0380178.

Copyright © 2019 by the author. Content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>



वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SANSKRIT STUDIES
अन्ताराष्ट्रियसंस्कृताध्ययनसमवायः



Similes and Metaphors in the Agnihotra of *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*

Mau Das Gupta

Dept. of Sanskrit, University of Calcutta,
Kolkata, India.

Abstract

The discussion on Agnihotra in *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* is strewn with numerous similes and metaphors, quite comparable to those used in other *Brāhmaṇas* during similar discussion. According to the Vedas, asceticism and sacrifice can give the gods and the sages the extraordinary ability to see the secret and enigmatic realities – such as sacred texts, rituals, and identities – that ordinary mortals cannot see (e.g., TS V.3.5.4, KS VIII.3; MS I.8.1; III.6.3; ŚB IV.2.1.26; AB I.6). The magic identifications are the central objects of the “pre-scientific science” of Vedic rituals (Oldenberg: 1919, 110ff.). In the Prāṇāgnihotra sacrifice, the concrete ritual acts are replaced by corresponding psychic acts in the mind of the sacrificer (Bodewitz: 1973, 211ff). In the journey from the actual Agnihotra to the mental Prāṇāgnihotra, similes and metaphors play an important part in symbolizing the offering, the deities, the sacrificer, and the fire. Comparisons formed with particles like *yathā* or *iva* often occur in the *Brāhmaṇas*, and point to the use of similes and metaphors as tools to build the ritual symbols that serve as keys to know the secret identity. This, according to the *Brāhmaṇas*, enables the knower overpower the entities concerned. The present paper attempts to estimate the role of similes and metaphors in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* in symbolizing the actual Agnihotra ritual to the mental sacrifice called “Prāṇāgnihotra.” It also tries to explore the innovative similes and metaphors in *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* that eventually were forgotten in the clichéd lists of *upamās* and *rūpakas* of classical Sanskrit literature.

Keywords: Agnihotra, *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, metaphor, simile.

The *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, belonging to the *Sāmaveda*, deals primarily with different kinds of Soma rituals. Its prime objective is to show the chanting variations for the Udgātr, the Sāmavedic priest, and his assistants. The *Brāhmaṇa*, however, begins with the Agnihotra, the daily evening and morning offering made to

Sūrya, Agni, and Prajāpati. The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, the closest to the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* among Sāmavedic *Brāhmaṇas*, does not have a section on Agnihotra, which prompts Bodewitz (1973: 10) to refute Caland's (1931: xviii ff) contention that the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* is older than the *Pañcaviṃśa*.

The section on Agnihotra in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* is somewhat unique. No other Sāmavedic *Brāhmaṇa* offers a similar discussion. This ritual is systematically discussed in the *Yajurveda*, viz., in the *Kāṭhaka* and *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitās* as well as in the *Taittirīya* and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇas*. In the Ṛgvedic tradition, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* does not discuss the Agnihotra in a systematic way. The *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa*, however, in its later section provides a comparatively elaborate enumeration of the concerned daily rite. Bodewitz (1973: 10) observes that the Agnihotra section of the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* seems to form a later Sāmavedic attempt to join the discussion and play a role among the other *Brāhmaṇas*.

The Agnihotra is a daily offering performed lifelong every evening and morning by a sacrificer who has established holy fire in his household through the Agnyādhāna ritual. The first performance begins in the very evening of the day of Agnyādhāna and ends in the next morning. Milk, curd, or rice gruel is generally offered in this ritual. Uncooked rice, boiled rice, or ghee is often offered by the sacrificer depending upon his desire to get special results from the sacrifice. The deities of the Agnihotra are, respectively, Agni and Prajāpati in the evening and Sūrya and Prajāpati in the morning.

The *Brāhmaṇas* record a number of debates regarding the right time of the pair of offerings in the Agnihotra. Yajurvedic *Samhitās* like *Kāṭhaka* (6,5: 54.4 f.) and *Maitrāyaṇī* (1,8.7: 125.9) narrate such debates. Both the Ṛgvedic *Brāhmaṇas*, viz. *Aitareya* (5.29-30) and *Śāṅkhāyana* (2.9), and the Yajurvedic *Brāhmaṇas* like *Taittirīya* (2,1.2.7-12) and *Śatapatha* (2,3.1.1-9), as well as the *Vādhula Sūtra* (3.26) discuss the matter elaborately. The *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (1,5-6) too, in course of elaborating the Agnihotra, brings in such discussion. Whether the offerings are to be made after or before dark in the evening and prior or after sunrise in the morning is the bone of contention in all these debates¹. In this regard, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (5.29) and the *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa* (2.9) refer to a deliberation of a girl possessed by a Gandharva (*kumārī gandharva-gṛhitā*). "Night and Day are an ocean (with low and high tide) which carries away everything. The two

¹ The *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* are in favour of *anudita-homa* (offering before sunrise), while the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* and the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* favour the *udita-homa* (offering after sunrise).

twilights are the fords where one may cross the water.”² The *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (1.5), without mentioning the *kumārī gandharva-grhītā*, narrates almost verbatim (with a little addition of comparing Night and Day with two alternating footprints)³ what she has said and arrives at this symbolic conclusion that the Agnihotra (oblation) is food and where the Night and Day meet is their facing point. When one offers the Agnihotra at twilight it is like placing the food before the mouth of Night and Day. In this way he escapes from the two deaths (*punarmṛtyū*) in yonder world which are Night and Day.

The preceding example shows that symbolism was adopted by the *Brāhmaṇas* as a mode to expound their esoteric theories on the rituals prescribed. The Vedas suggest in various ways that asceticism and sacrifice can give the gods and the sages the extraordinary ability to see the secret and enigmatic realities like sacred texts, rituals and identities. The ordinary mortals cannot see⁴ these (e.g., TS 5.3.5.4, KS 8.3; MS 1.8.1; 3.6.3; ŚB 4.2.1.26; AB 1.6). In this line Gonda (1963: 63) observes that in ṚV 10.129.4, the heart (*hṛd*) is spoken of as the place where the sages discovered the secret connection (*bandhu*). The strange symbols used in the Vedas are often crafted to signify the enigma to establish the secret connection in macrocosmic (*adhidaivam*) as well as microcosmic (*adhyātmam*) life and their ritualistic (*adhiyajñam*) equivalent.⁵

In Semiotics – the modern study of symbols – a symbol is called “a sign without either similarity or contiguity, but only with a convention a link between its signifier [in this case a word] and its denotata [an object referred to by the signifier or word in the present context], and with an intentional class for its designatum [here, the object referred to by the signifying word].”⁶ “The abundance of symbolic manifestation in the Vedas,” contends Parpola (1979: 145), “is connected with the central position occupied by the idea of integrity and wholeness in the Vedic thought.” The magic identifications are the central object of the “pre-scientific science” of Vedic rituals (Oldenberg 1919: 110ff). The symbolic sac-

² See Keith 1920: 356.

³ *dvau samudrāv acaryau vitatau mahāntāv āvarīvartete caryeva pādaū* (JB 1.5), the verse with some variations occurs at TS 3.2.2.1; also see below, p. 9.

⁴ Parpola 1979: 149.

⁵ For the English terms, see Bodewitz 1973, chapter 2; Witzel 1979: 8; Witzel 1996: 8, 13.

⁶ Sebeok 2001: 55.

rifices like Prāṇāgnihotra⁷ sometimes replace the actual sacrifice, here the Agnihotra, on the basis of identification. The representative nature of symbols, as “a link between its signifier and its denotata,” changes into total identification in such cases. Parpola, however, is a bit reluctant to fit the Vedic symbols as they are used, exactly into the definition offered by the modern semiotics. “Modern semiotics,” he argues, criticizing Sebeok (1974: 246ff), “defines ‘symbols’ as signs which have no denotata in the phenomenal world but in the mind only. The distinction between extensional and intensional is, however, in semiotics limited to the denotatum, while the Vedic ritualists have extended it even to the ‘form’ of the sign” (Parpola 1979: 147).

In the journey from the actual Agnihotra to the mental Prāṇāgnihotra,⁸ from “representation” to “total identification,” similes and metaphors play important roles to symbolize and further identify the offering, the deities, the sacrificer and the fire, which may be summed up as the sacrificial ritual, with the macrocosmic and then the microcosmic life (“Ritual is the mesocosm that links and affects the macrocosm of the universe and the gods with the microcosm of humans and their immediate surroundings,” [Witzel 1996: 8]). Parpola observes that comparisons formed with the particles *yathā* or *iva* often occur in the *Brāhmaṇas*; which points to the use of similes and metaphors as tools to build the ritual symbols as the key to know the secret identity which, according to the *Brāhmaṇas*, enables the knower to overpower the entities concerned (Parpola 1979: 142ff).

We may, for example, understand the metaphors used in the aforementioned passage of JB 1.5, and their role in the cognition of a hidden truth unattainable by perception or inference, as estimating the modern theory of metaphor as a device of cognition in Cognitive Linguistics. The word “metaphor” comes from the Greek word *metaphora*, denoting “transfer” or “carrying over.” This connotation implies an act of substitution, involving the transmission of a word to a new sense by comparing or juxtaposing two apparently unrelated entities. Classical theories of language regarded metaphor as a stylistic device. George Lakoff’s (1980) *Contemporary Metaphor Theory* redefined the way that the human cognition had been thusfar viewed. Lakoff offered his model as an alter-

⁷ In a strict sense it refers to a definite rite in which food is offered twice a day within the sacrificer himself.

⁸ It is also called *mānasa-yajña*. Bodewitz (1973: 218) explains that “the original link between agnihotra and prāṇāgnihotra, however, seems to be the identification of the fires with the *prāṇāḥ* of the *āhitāgni*.”

native to Chomskian generative grammar and it came to be known as Cognitive Linguistics. It opts for a more general process of cognition of language. On this account, conceptualization is defined as the unconscious treatment of mental imagery of our embodied experiences. We use our most basic concepts to deal with our ever-changing environment and our relation to it. Paul Ricoeur (1978) holds that metaphor reveals the basic operations of the mind in its creative potential. The general idea transpiring of these theories is that metaphors are basic conceptual devices that pave the paths towards understanding ourselves and the surrounding world. Our verbal instantiations of a universal or abstract concept represented by an actual example, may range from the hackneyed to the highly poetic and even cryptic, directly reflect our conceptual structures.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 23) describe ontological metaphors in the following way: “Understanding our experiences in terms of objects and substances allows us to pick out parts of our experience and treat them as discrete entities or substances of a uniform kind. Once we can identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can refer to them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them – and by this means, reason about them.” If the target domain is rather abstract and not perceivable by direct experience of common people, the source domain is exploited for substitution needed for the cognition.

In light of this cognitive linguistics theory, we may understand that in the abovementioned passage of JB 1.5 the target of cognition is the hidden truth present in the apparently known Night and Day, and the source or vehicle (metaphor) of this cognition is the two impassable oceans which are nothing but Death for one who might try to cross them unaware of their impassability. The known world is exploited for substitution needed for the cognition of the abstract hidden truth about Night and Day. The absolute separateness of Night and Day, a hidden truth, is also a target of cognition for a ritual performer in this passage, who, not knowing this secret reality, may offer both his oblations of Agnihotra at night, or vice versa, and eventually will fail to get his desired result from the sacrifice.⁹ Here, the metaphor of two alternating footprints has been used as the source or vehicle for the required cognition. In order to avoid this peril, after providing the cognition of these secret realities through metaphors, JB 1.5 and 6 unfold the secret knowledge with another metaphor: there is a ford or connecting crossway (the source domain) as an opportunity to cross these two deaths, and that is to offer the pair of oblations of Agnihotra at the twilights, at the point where Night and Day face (*evaṃmukham*) each other (the target domain), and to

⁹ See *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* 2.9; see also Keith 1920: 356.

offer at those two twilights would be like offering food before the mouths of both of them (the source domain). In this way, JB 1.6 sums up that the sacrificer “escapes from those two repeated dyings which are Night and Day”¹⁰ (the target domain of the hidden secret).

In post-Vedic literature, the simile, the principal constituent of metaphor, is termed as *upamā*. We may consult the first available definition of *upamā* attributed to Gārgya, an ancient grammarian and etymologist, quoted by Yāska in his *Nirukta* at about the fifth century, BCE:

athāta upamāḥ | yad atat tatsadyśam iti gārgyaḥ | (Nirukta 3.13.23,24).

“Now, therefore, the similes. ‘When an object bears (some) resemblance to another which is otherwise dissimilar (it is denoted by a simile),’ says Gārgya.”¹¹

Gārgya’s definition recalls Mammaṭa Bhaṭṭa’s (11th century CE) similar dictum: *sādharṁyam upamā bhede (Kavyaprakāśa 10.1)* - “When there is similarity of properties, while there is difference (between the object themselves), it is simile.”¹² And, the view of the 14th century Sanskrit rhetorician Viśvanātha Kavirāja may also be considered in this context: *sāmyam vācyam avaidharṁyam vākyaikya upamā dvayoḥ (Sāhityadarpaṇa 10.14)* - “Simile is the resemblance between two things expressed in a single sentence and unaccompanied with the statement of difference.”¹³ It transpires from the above definitions of *upamā*, distanced by nearly two millennia, the essence of simile in Indian thought lies in the likeness of two objects which may have some difference as well.

Simile evolves into metaphor when there is a complete identity of “the object compared to” and “the object compared.” From its usage it appears as an act of substitution, involving the transmission of a word to a new sense by comparing or juxtaposing two apparently not related entities.¹⁴ We may check the later literary stylistic device termed as *rūpaka* in Classical Sanskrit aesthetics to get an idea how the use of metaphor lost its magic essence found in the Brāhmaṇa literature for the cognition of the hidden Truth. In the era of Vedāṅga literature,

¹⁰ Tr., Bodewitz, o.c., p.31.

¹¹ Tr., Sarup 1920: 47.

¹² Tr., Jha 1967: 349.

¹³ Tr., Kane 1956: 89.

¹⁴ See above, p.5.

among the five types of upamā classified by Yāska (*Nirukta* 3.14-18). *luptopamā* (the suppressed simile) alias *arthopamā* comes last; it is equivalent to the rūpaka of later theorists.¹⁵ *tad rūpakam abhedo ya upamānopameyayoḥ* - “Where there is non-difference between ‘the object compared to’ and ‘the object compared,’ it is metaphor”¹⁶, says Mammaṭa (*Kāvya prakāśa* 10.93). Viśvanātha (*Sāhityadarpaṇa* 10.28) defines *rūpaka* in other words: *rūpakam*¹⁷ *rūpitāropāt viṣaye nirapahnave* - “Metaphor consists in the representation of the subject of description, which (subject) is not concealed, as identified with another (a well-known standard).”¹⁸ As seen from the above definitions, a rūpaka involves identification of two objects which are mutually exclusive. Yāska’s *luptopamā* lacks the particles (e.g. *yathā* or *iva*) manifesting likeness, thereby the two objects in question, i.e., the *upamāna* (“to be compared to”) and the *upameya* (“to be compared”) become identical and can supposedly be replaced by one another. The later definitions, too, emphasize on the identification of two objects on basis of their similarity. In later literature the rūpaka is used as a stylistic device in constructing compound-ed words like *śoka-sāgara* (the ocean of grief), where the unfathomable ocean is identified with the unfathomable grief. Through their common attribute, “unfathomable-ness,” ocean and grief, two semantically different words, may actually replace one another.

A few cases of unusual simile and metaphor selected from the Agnihotra section of the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* will be examined here to understand the identification of the upamāna (the source domain or vehicle of cognition) and upameya (the target domain) in the ritual context. We may take for example the following identifications found in the first passage of JB 1.1 in the context of kindling the fire to perform the Agnihotra. The churning of fire here is identified with the producing of life-breaths of the sacrificer. Moreover, his food, mind, and sight are described to be generated respectively as *bhasman* (boring dust of

¹⁵ Cf., De 1923: 5.

¹⁶ Tr., Jha 1967: 369.

¹⁷ Cf., Parpola 1979: 143: “In the classical Sanskrit, the derivative *rūpa-ka* has, as an adjective, the signification ‘designating figuratively,’ and as a technical term of the poetics, ‘metaphor’ as well as ‘drama.’” Parpola also traces the term *rūpa-ka* back to the use of *rūpa* in the *Brāhmaṇas* as a post-position to signify identification.

¹⁸ Tr., Kane 1956: 114.

the firewood),¹⁹ smoke, and (a glowing spot of) charcoal being stepwise produced during the churning with two churning sticks (*araṇi*). The identification of objects related to the sacrificer's person with the kindled fire takes a turn when the creeping of the glowing charcoal in an oblique direction²⁰ (*tiryāṅ visarpati*) to devour the boring dust is identified with the reaching out of a newborn baby for the feeding breast (*yathā kumāro jātas stanam abhipadyeta tathā tiryāṅ visarpati*). The process, furthermore, gets equated with generation of the sacrificer's hearing (*śrotram evāsyā taj jāyate*). Bodewitz rightly points out that the *tertium comparationis* is not the creeping but eating, the first action of a child and a newly produced fire. Apparently the metaphor of the newborn baby reaching out for the feeding breast may appear odd against its preceding set of metaphors that identifies the process of fire-kindling gradually with the process of generating various organs of the sacrificer. Bodewitz (1973: 22) here points out that hearing (*śrotram*) is frequently equated with quarters in Indian thought as sound is considered the unique feature of space. The creeping of fire in all directions represents its spatial extension²¹ and that is why it has been associated to hearing in this passage. The comparison, however, is not a very usual one since it is not to be found in the cliché lists of *ārthī upamā* or *kriyotprekṣā* (poetical fancy involving similarity of action) in later Sanskrit literature.

The concerned section is rich with such equations, unique in comparison to the equations generally found in later literature,²² like the equation of Night and Day (JB 1.5) with two impassable, wide, and large oceans that come and go in a revolving, alternating movement like two footprints on a path.²³ Here an earlier concept might have influenced the outcome of the second equation men-

¹⁹ See Bodewitz 1973: 21.

²⁰ Bodewitz (1973: 22) translates it as "all directions," keeping the importance of the prefix *vi-* before the verb *sarpati*.

²¹ Cf., Bodewitz (1973: 22), "The spatial extension (the quarters represent space as the seasons represent time in Vedic India), is compared to hearing."

²² Cf., Witzel 1996: 13: "Brāhmaṇa prose is explicit enough to provide us with an inkling of the possible range of mental connections made for each word, although we may be surprised time and again about the enormous range, the seemingly strange links, and the unusual shades of meanings that are employed by the authors."

²³ See Bodewitz 1973: 30; see also, Caland 1970: 5, "zwei unzugängliche ausgedehnte weite seen bewegen sich beständig wie zwei...Fusse, so heisst es. die Nacht und der tag sind die zwei unzugänglichen seen."

tioned in this JB passage, such as *R̥gveda* 3.55.15 where it says: *pade iva nihite dasme antas / tayor anyad guhyam āvir anyat /* – “Like two footprints set down with- in the wondrous one [=Agni? Ritual ground?], the one of the two is hidden, the other visible [=Night and Dawn].”²⁴

Microcosmic symbolism, a regular feature in the *Brāhmaṇas*, is captured in one of its best examples in the Agnihotra section of JB 1.19, where the *agnihotrī* cow is identified with Speech and her calf is with the Mind. When the Speech is fastened with the Mind, it gives desired results (*manasā vai vācaṃ pṛktām duhre*) as the cow gives milk when she is tethered with her calf. The *Brāhmaṇa* goes on identifying the cow and calf with Speech and Mind by saying that as the Mind comes first and Speech follows it likewise the calf walks in front while the moth- er follows it. There are two more symbols used in the same context to equate the whole milking process with the microcosmic affair, i.e. the milk-post identified as the Heart and the rope as Breath. The passage asserts that with Breath indeed the Speech and Mind are tied up to the Heart. With a rope the calf and its moth- er are fastened to the milk-post. It becomes so that when the sacrificer milks the *agnihotrī* cow tied up with her calf, causing the milk flow, he actually derives his desired results from Speech that is fixed firmly with Mind²⁵ and there too, the latter causes the former flow.

To understand the purpose of this metaphor we may again seek help from the modern theory of cognitive linguistics, where the term “metonymy” stands for using one entity to refer to another which in some way is related with the former.²⁶ Metonymy operates within one concept: Its one element (the vehicle) provides access to the whole concept or another of its elements (the target).²⁷ Usually, the vehicle is a salient feature of the concept.²⁸ Like metaphors, metonymic concepts configure not only our speech but our thoughts, attitudes, and actions as well. Like metaphoric concepts, metonymic concepts too, are grounded in our worldly experience. In fact, the grounding of metonymic con- cepts is in general more obvious than is the case with metaphoric concepts, since

²⁴ Tr., Jamison and Brereton 2014.1: 545.

²⁵ See Witzel 1996: 15.

²⁶ Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 29ff.

²⁷ Radden and Kövecses 1999: 21.

²⁸ See Jurewicz 2011: 14.

it usually involves direct physical or causal associations.²⁹ There are various kinds of conceptual metonymies, but in our context the metonymy which operates as “producer for product” is relevant. This kind of metonymy is based on the causal (and typically physical) relationship between a producer and his product. In the *Brāhmaṇa* literature, Speech, for instance, is often found to be identified with a milking cow (ŚB 2.3.1.1, JUB 2.5.1.3), and Mind, with its calf. Or maybe vice versa, as Bodewitz (1976 [2003]: 139, 141) has pointed out that sometimes the difference between real expiation, esoteric interpretation and substitution is difficult to ascertain. Symbolism found in cultural and religious usage features special cases of metonymy. Symbolic metonymies that are grounded in our physical experience provide an essential means of comprehending religious and cultural concepts.³⁰

In this regard, JB 1.19 may be examined where Vaideha Janaka asks Yājñavalkya whether he knows the Agnihotra. Yājñavalkya replies in affirmation and Janaka starts checking whether he knows the appropriate substitution of the oblation when the regular prescribed material is unavailable. In course of discussing the substitution of substitutions of the offering, the question-answer session gradually reaches its climax when Yājñavalkya is asked in absence of any kind of substitution what should be offered. Truth (*satya*), he answers, is to be offered in faith (*śraddhā*). Janaka salutes Yājñavalkya at this and accepts that he really knows Agnihotra. Here, substitution turns ultimately into an esoteric interpretation of the ritual concerned, as from material offerings it shifts to a mental action.

In JB 1.20 another esoteric explanation of the actual ritual is ascribed to Vājasaneyā aka Yājñavalkya. When asked how a sacrificer should offer his daily offering when he is abroad, he answers that his actual Agnihotra is performed at home by his men when he performs a mental sacrifice away from home. Mentally there is no leaving home for him, since he is connected with his fires by his mind, the quickest among the beings. But, when he is at a journey and forgets his duty of performing a mental Agnihotra, then too, according to Vājasaneyā his *prāṇa* (breath), the ever-awakened among all beings, substitutes the fire and he offers his inhalation as oblation in the breath. That is why breath is called Agnihotra. For as long as he breathes, he keeps on offering Agnihotra. The symbolic Agnihotra shifts the microcosmic ritualistic rite to a macrocosmic affair.

²⁹ Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 39-40.

³⁰ Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 39-40.

Abbreviations

AB	<i>Aitareya Brāhmaṇa</i>
JB	<i>Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa</i>
JUB	<i>Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad</i>
KB	<i>Kāṭhaka Brāhmaṇa</i>
KS	<i>Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā</i>
MS	<i>Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā</i>
PB	<i>Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa</i>
ṚV	<i>Ṛgveda Saṃhitā</i>
ŚB	<i>Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa</i>
TS	<i>Taittirīya Saṃhitā</i>

Bibliography

- Bergaigne, A. 1881. "Quelques observations sur les figures de rhétorique dans le Rig-veda." *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*, 4.
- Bodewitz, H. W. 1973. *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa I, 1-65: Translation and Commentary with a Study of Agnihotra and Prāṇāgnihotra*. Leiden: Brill.
- . 1976. *The Daily Evening and Morning Offering*. Leiden. 2003. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers. (1st Indian edition)
- Caland, W., tr. 1919. *Das Jaiminīya-brāhmaṇa in Auswahl: Text, Uebersetzung, Indices*. Amsterdam: Johannes Müller.
- , tr. 1931. *The Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa: The Brāhmaṇa of Twenty Five Chapters*. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- De, S. K. 1923. *Studies in the History of Sanskrit Poetics*, vol.1, London: Luzac & Co.
- Gonda, J. 1963. *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*. Berlin: DRT. 1984. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Private Ltd. (1st Indian edn.)
- Jamison, S. W. and J. P. Brereton, tr. 2014. *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*. 3 vols. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Jurewicz, J. 2011. "Fortress (púr, pura) in the Veda as a Metaphor for the Self (ātmán)." In D. Statik & A. Trynkowska, eds., *The City and the Forest in Indian Literature and Art*. Warsaw: Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, 13-35.
- Jha, G. 1967. *Kāvya prakāśa of Mammaṭa with English Translation (Revised): Chapters I to X*. Varanasi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan.
- Kane, P. V. 1956. *The Sāhityadarpaṇa of Viśvanātha (Paricchedas 1,2,10 arthālaṅkāras)*. Bombay: Nirnaya Sagara Press. (4th edn.)
- Keith, A. B. 1920. *Rigveda Brahmanas: The Aitareya and Kauṣītaki brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda translated from the original Sanskrit*. Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 25. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Lakoff, G. & M. Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Oldenberg, H. 1919. *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft*. Göttingen.
- Parpola, A. 1979. "On the Symbol Concept of the Vedic Ritualists." In: *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, Vol. 10: *Religious Symbols and their Functions*. Finland: Donner Institute for research in Religious and Cultural History.
- Radden, G. & Z. Kövecses. 1999. "Towards a Theory of Metonymy." In K. Panter & G. Radden, eds, *Metonymy in Language and Thought*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 17-60.
- Ricoeur, P. 1978. *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. R. Czerny, with K. McLaughlin, K. Costello. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Sarup, L. 1920. *The Nighaṅṭu and the Nirukta*. England: Oxford University Press. 2nd reprint, 1984 [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass].
- Sebeok, T., ed. 1974. *Current Trends in Linguistics*. Vol. 12. The Hague: Mouton Press.
- Sebeok, T. 2001. *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics*. 2nd Edition. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press. (1st Edn. 1994)
- Witzel, M. 1979. *On Magical Thought In The Veda*. Leiden: Universitaire Pers.
- . 1996. "How to Enter the Vedic Mind? Strategies in Translating a Brāhmaṇa Text." In E. Garzilli, ed., *Translating, Translations, Translators from India to the West*. Harvard Oriental Series, Opera Minora, 1. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Dept. of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, 163-176.