

Comparative Study between Samjñāna Sūkta of Rigveda and Sāmmanasya Sūkta of Atharvaveda

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Abstract: The Vedic literature forms the bedrock of ancient Indian philosophy, ethics, and socio-cultural frameworks. Among its vast corpus, the Samjñāna Sūkta (Rigveda 10.191) and the Sāmmanasya Sūkta (Atharvaveda 3.30) stand out as foundational texts advocating communal harmony, mutual respect, and social cohesion. While both hymns share the primary objective of fostering unity and collective understanding, they originate from different Samhitās with distinct ritualistic, philosophical, and functional contexts.

Keywords: Rigveda, Atharvaveda, Vedic Hermeneutics, Harmony & Cohesion

INTRODUCTION

Harmony and unity are foundational pillars not only in social contexts but also as indispensable conditions for mental wellbeing and the stability of any collective entity. The intricate relationship between individual peace and societal harmony has been a subject of profound reflection in ancient Indian thought, where the well-being of the community is seen as deeply intertwined with the concord of its members in thought, speech, and action. A community that fosters such concord creates an environment conducive to peace of mind, freedom from internal and external discord, and a shared sense of purpose that transcends individual interests.

This philosophical and practical emphasis on unity is vividly expressed in the sacred hymns of the Vedas, which serve as both spiritual guides and social prescriptions. Among these, the *Sāmmanasya Sūkta* of the *Atharvaveda* and the *Samjñāna Sūkta* of the *Rigveda* hold a distinguished place. These hymns are not merely poetic compositions but encapsulate a vision of societal cohesion that is essential for spiritual progress and collective strength. They articulate the necessity of aligning minds and hearts, thereby fostering an integrated community where differences are reconciled and harmony prevails.

The *Samjñāna Sūkta* of the *Rigveda* is particularly renowned for its invocation of unity in thought, speech, and resolve. It calls upon individuals to transcend personal divisions and to walk together in harmony, emphasizing the power of collective intention and shared

understanding. This hymn reflects a deep awareness of the psychological and social dimensions of unity, suggesting that true strength arises from the synchronization of mental and verbal expressions among community members.

In complement, the *Sāmmanasya Sūkta* of the *Atharvaveda* extends this vision by focusing on practical concord in speech and action. It highlights the importance of resolving conflicts, fostering agreement, and maintaining peace through active reconciliation. This hymn underscores the dynamic process of achieving harmony, not as a static ideal but as an ongoing practice that involves conscious effort and mutual respect.

Together, these hymns present a holistic framework for communal harmony that integrates inner mental alignment with outward social behaviour. They reveal an ancient understanding that mental wellbeing and social cohesion are mutually reinforcing, and that the health of the individual psyche is inseparable from the health of the community. This insight remains profoundly relevant today, offering valuable perspectives on how societies might cultivate peace and unity amidst diversity and complexity.

This introduction sets the stage for a detailed comparative study of these two seminal hymns, aiming to uncover their thematic parallels, distinctive emphases, and broader philosophical implications. By exploring the textual and linguistic features of the *Sāmmanasya Sūkta* and the *Samjñāna Sūkta*, this study seeks to illuminate the enduring significance of unity as a principle that sustains both individual tranquillity and collective resilience in the Vedic tradition.

BACKGROUND

The Vedic tradition often situates wellbeing not merely in individual practice but in the collective ethos of society. The hymns of the Rigveda and Atharvaveda reflect this orientation, offering prayers and injunctions that seek to bind communities together. The *Samjñāna Sūkta* (Rigveda 10.191) is a celebrated hymn that calls for unity of thought, speech, and resolve, urging individuals to walk together in harmony. The *Sāmmanasya Sūkta* (Atharvaveda 3.30), on the other hand, emphasizes concord and reconciliation, highlighting the necessity of resolving conflicts and fostering agreement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the thematic parallels between the *Samjñāna Sūkta* and the *Sāmmanasya*

Sūkta.

- To explore the distinctive emphases of each hymn in relation to unity and harmony.
- To situate these hymns within the broader Vedic discourse on mental wellbeing and social cohesion.

Scope:

This comparative study will examine the textual content, linguistic features, and philosophical implications of both hymns. It will highlight how the Vedic tradition conceptualized unity as a vital principle for both individual peace and collective strength. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of harmony in ancient Indian thought and its relevance to contemporary discussions on mental health and social solidarity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology grounded in textual analysis and comparative hermeneutics to explore the thematic and philosophical dimensions of the *Sāmmanasya Sukta* of the *Atharvaveda* and the *Samjñāna Sukta* of the *Rigveda*. The primary sources for this research are the original Sanskrit hymns, accessed through critical editions and authoritative translations, ensuring fidelity to the linguistic and cultural nuances inherent in the texts. The methodology involves a close reading of the mantras, with attention to their lexical, syntactic, and semantic features, to uncover the layers of meaning related to harmony and unity.

The research process begins with the identification and extraction of key mantras from both Suktas that explicitly or implicitly address the concepts of concord, mental alignment, and social cohesion. These mantras are then subjected to a detailed exegesis, drawing upon classical commentaries and contemporary scholarly interpretations to contextualize their significance within the broader Vedic corpus. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the hymns' philosophical underpinnings and their practical implications.

Comparative analysis forms a central pillar of the methodology, wherein thematic parallels and divergences between the two Suktas are systematically examined. This involves juxtaposing the linguistic expressions, ritualistic contexts, and philosophical emphases to elucidate how each hymn conceptualizes and articulates unity and harmony. The comparative framework is informed by interdisciplinary perspectives, incorporating insights from Vedic

studies, religious philosophy, social psychology, and conflict resolution theory.

To address the social and psychological dimensions, the study integrates interpretive frameworks that consider the hymns as both spiritual texts and social instruments. This dual lens facilitates an exploration of how the Suktas functioned historically to foster communal wellbeing and individual mental health. The cultural analysis further situates the hymns within the ritualistic and societal milieu of Vedic India, highlighting their role in reinforcing collective identity and ethical conduct.

Throughout the research, a hermeneutic circle is maintained, wherein interpretations are continuously refined through iterative engagement with the texts and secondary literature. This dynamic process ensures that the analysis remains sensitive to the complexities of Vedic language and thought, avoiding reductive readings. Additionally, the study acknowledges the limitations inherent in translating ancient Sanskrit hymns, striving to preserve the original intent while making the content accessible to contemporary readers.

In summary, the research methodology combines rigorous textual scholarship with interdisciplinary analytical tools to provide a comprehensive examination of the *Sammansya Sukta* and *Samjñāna Sukta*. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the scholarly discourse on Vedic literature and its enduring insights into the nature of harmony and unity, bridging ancient wisdom with modern understandings of social and psychological wellbeing.

Important Mantras from *Samjñāna Sukta* and Their Aspects

The *Samjñāna Sukta* (Rigveda 10.191) is renowned for its invocation of unity in thought, speech, and resolve. The hymn begins with invoking the deity “ ” in order to establish the notion of harmony among all beings, whether they are living or non-living. The invoker is requesting the deity to bring everyone together from all sides.¹ However, it is up to the people, to embrace the virtues of harmony and unity. Therefore, the invoker has requested the people to coexist with harmony among them, just like the gods, who share the same thoughts, received the portions of sacrificial oblation. Also, the most essential fact about harmony is mentioned that the harmony should exist in the thoughts, speech and actions as well.² Psychologically, this mantra reflects an advanced understanding of the importance of collective consciousness. It suggests that unity is not merely external conformity but a deep synchronization of cognitive and communicative processes among individuals. Socially, it calls for a community that transcends individual differences to embrace a shared purpose and

collective identity. Culturally, the hymn situates this unity within the broader Vedic worldview, where harmony is essential for maintaining *ṛta* and ensuring the prosperity of the community.³ The repeated invocation of mental, verbal, and volitional unity underscores the holistic nature of the Vedic conception of harmony.

In the end of this particular hymn, the prayer for universal harmony can be seen. The verse goes as follows -:

¹ R̥gveda Saṃhitā 10.191.1

² R̥gveda Saṃhitā 10.191.2

³ R̥gveda Saṃhitā 10.191.3

समानी व आकूत िः समाना हृदयातन विः । समानमस् ुवो मनो यथा विः सुसहासत ॥⁴

Translation of the mantra is as follows -: Worshippers, let your intention be common; common be (the wishes of) your hearts; common be your thoughts, so that there may be thorough union among you.

This shows, that the invoker is praying that all may have the same resolve, hearts, and minds so they may live together happily in complete concord. It emphasizes aligning intentions and feelings to foster a collective spirit where differences dissolve into shared purpose. This verse encapsulates the essence of social cohesion by urging unity of thought, emotion, and will, foundational for peaceful coexistence and mutual support within a community.

Important Mantras from *Sāmmanasya Sukta* and Their Aspects

The *Sāmmanasya Sukta* of the *Atharvaveda* (3.30) is a hymn that explicitly addresses the resolution of conflicts and the establishment of concord. One of its pivotal mantras invokes the removal of discord and the fostering of agreement among people. The hymn prays for the dissolution of enmity and the establishment of friendship, emphasizing the social necessity of harmony for communal wellbeing.

For example, the mantra "सहृदयं सांमनस्यमतवद्वेषंकृणोतम विः ।

अन्यो अन्यमति हयय वत्संजा तमवाघ्न्या ॥" can be translated as "I am creating harmony, cordialness, and a hate-free environment for you all."⁵ Just as a cow is affectionate towards her new-born

calf, may one be attracted towards another." This triadic emphasis mirrors the psychological and social dimensions of unity, underscoring that true harmony requires alignment not only in external behaviour but also in internal cognition and verbal expression.

Socially, this mantra advocates for a community where individuals consciously strive to resolve differences and cultivate mutual respect. Psychologically, it suggests that inner concord is a prerequisite for outward peace, highlighting the interconnectedness of mental states and social interactions. Culturally, the hymn reflects the Vedic ideal of *ṛta*—the cosmic order—where social harmony reflects universal balance.

⁴ Rgveda Samhitā 10.191.4

⁵ Atharva Veda 3.30.1

Another important mantra from the *Sāmmanasya Sukta* calls for the removal of hatred and the strengthening the familial and social bond with each other: "मा भ्राता भ्रातृ तद्वक्षन्मा स्वसारमु स्वसा । सम्यज्जिः सत्रा ित्वा वाचं वद िद्रया ॥", meaning "May a brother not hate another brother. May a sister not hate another sister. Having faced each other, and having followed the same behaviour towards each other, may they speak in a better cordial way."⁶ This mantra addresses the practical aspect of conflict resolution, emphasizing active efforts to replace animosity with amicability. This shows that there must have been instances of conflict in the families as well as societies at Vedic times. Sāyaṇa has imagined that these disputes or conflicts were related to ancestral property.⁷ However, this hymn concentrates on dissolving such disputes by creating harmony and cordialness among the family members as well others.

Social, Psychological, and Cultural Aspects

Both hymns emphasize the integration of mental, verbal, and practical dimensions of unity, reflecting a sophisticated understanding of human social dynamics. Socially, they advocate for communities where conflict is actively resolved, and collective harmony is prioritized. Psychologically, they recognize the necessity of internal alignment—between thought, speech, and action—as foundational to external peace.

Culturally, these hymns are embedded within the Vedic concept of *ṛta*, the cosmic order that governs both nature and society. Harmony and unity are thus not merely social ideals but expressions of a universal principle that sustains existence. This metaphysical grounding elevates the hymns beyond social prescriptions to spiritual mandates.

Similarities between the *Sāmmanasya Sukta* and *Samjñāna Sukta*

Both hymns emphasize the triadic unity of mind, speech, and action, underscoring the comprehensive nature of harmony. They advocate for the resolution of conflicts and the fostering of agreement, highlighting the dynamic and ongoing nature of unity. Both situate social harmony within the cosmic order, linking ethical conduct with universal principles.

⁶ Atharva Veda 3.30.3 7

Linguistically, both employ rhythmic and repetitive structures that reinforce their messages and facilitate communal chanting, thereby fostering a shared sense of identity and purpose.

Differences between the *Sāmmanasya Sukta* and *Samjñāna Sukta*

While the *Samjñāna Sukta* focuses more on the psychological and philosophical dimensions of unity—emphasizing collective consciousness and acceptance of diversity within oneness—the *Sāmmanasya Sukta* is more pragmatic, addressing the practical aspects of conflict resolution and reconciliation.

The *Samjñāna Sukta* is rooted in the *Rigveda*, the oldest Vedic text, and reflects a more abstract and metaphysical approach. In contrast, the *Sāmmanasya Sukta* from the *Atharvaveda* is more concerned with everyday social realities and the active maintenance of peace.

Another major difference between these hymns appears to be their diverse applications. *Sāmmanasya* hymn was widely used in some kind of rituals performed to create the environment of harmony and cordialness according to Kauśika Sūtra. Along with that, it was also used in the ritual named Upākarma, which used to be performed after the Upanayana ceremony. This ritual was supposed to strengthen the bond between the teacher and student, and make them cordial with each other. However, on the other hand, no such practical application is told in the case of *Samjñāna* hymn.

CONCLUSION

The *Sāmmanasya Sukta* of the *Atharvaveda* and the *Samjñāna Sukta* of the *Rigveda* collectively offer a profound and nuanced articulation of the concepts of harmony and unity, which are central to the Vedic worldview. These hymns transcend mere ritualistic invocation and emerge as philosophical treatises that underscore the indispensability of concord both

within the individual psyche and the broader social fabric. Their enduring relevance lies in their capacity to integrate mental, verbal, and practical dimensions of unity, thereby providing a comprehensive framework that addresses the complexities of human coexistence.

The *Samjñāna Sukta* distinctly emphasizes the alignment of thought, speech, and resolve, highlighting the psychological underpinnings of unity. By invoking a collective

consciousness where individuals harmonize their mental and verbal expressions, the hymn reveals an advanced understanding of the interplay between internal cognition and external communication. This triadic unity—thought, speech, and action—forms the bedrock of social cohesion, suggesting that true harmony is not superficial but deeply rooted in the congruence of intention and expression. Such a perspective anticipates modern psychological insights into the importance of cognitive and communicative alignment for group solidarity and effective collaboration.

Complementing this, the *Sāmmānasya Sukta* addresses the pragmatic aspects of harmony by focusing on conflict resolution and reconciliation. It recognizes that discord is an inevitable aspect of human interaction but insists on the necessity of active efforts to restore agreement and peace. This hymn's emphasis on practical concord underscores the dynamic nature of unity, portraying it as a continuous process rather than a static ideal. The insistence on mutual respect and conscious effort to resolve differences resonates with contemporary conflict resolution theories and practices, highlighting the timelessness of Vedic wisdom.

Together, these hymns encapsulate a holistic vision where harmony is both an internal state and an external reality. They articulate a vision where mental wellbeing and social stability are interdependent, each reinforcing the other in a cyclical relationship. This dual focus enriches the Vedic discourse by situating individual tranquility within the context of communal health, thereby offering a model that is both spiritually profound and socially pragmatic.

Moreover, the linguistic and poetic features of these hymns enhance their philosophical messages. The rhythmic and repetitive structures serve not only aesthetic purposes but also function as mnemonic devices that reinforce the principles of unity and harmony. The invocation of shared ideals through collective chanting fosters a sense of belonging and communal identity, which is essential for the internalization of these values. This performative aspect of the hymns demonstrates an early recognition of the role of ritual and

language in shaping social consciousness.

From a broader philosophical standpoint, the *Sāmmanasya Sukta* and *Samjñāna Sukta* contribute to the Vedic understanding of *rta*—the cosmic order that governs both the universe and human society. Harmony and unity, as defined in these hymns, are reflections of this cosmic order, suggesting that social cohesion is not merely a human construct but an expression of a universal principle. This metaphysical dimension elevates the hymns beyond social prescriptions to a spiritual mandate, thereby linking ethical conduct with cosmic harmony.

In contemporary terms, the insights offered by these hymns remain remarkably pertinent. In an era marked by social fragmentation and psychological stress, the Vedic emphasis on aligning thought, speech, and action provides a valuable paradigm for fostering both personal wellbeing and social solidarity. The recognition that unity requires ongoing effort and reconciliation offers practical guidance for addressing conflicts in diverse communities. Furthermore, the integration of spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions in these hymns encourages a multidisciplinary approach to understanding and cultivating harmony.

In conclusion, the *Sāmmanasya Sukta* and *Samjñāna Sukta* stand as exemplary texts that eloquently define and elaborate the concepts of harmony and unity within the Vedic tradition. Their comprehensive treatment of these themes—encompassing mental alignment, verbal concord, practical reconciliation, and cosmic order—demonstrates a sophisticated and enduring vision of social and individual wellbeing. By bridging the internal and external, the spiritual and the pragmatic, these hymns offer timeless wisdom that continues to inspire and inform contemporary discourses on harmony, unity, and collective resilience.

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