AN INTRODUCTION TO THE VEDAS
in the light of Sri Aurobindo
Facilitator: Vladimir Yatsenko, PhD
Credits: 16. One Semester. Code: IV

Dr. Vladimir Yatsenko is a Russian scholar and teacher of Sanskrit and the Indian scriptures, settled in Auroville (an international township for human unity), since several years.

Program Objectives
- Psychological interpretation of the Veda in the light of Sri Aurobindo, its relevance to the modern life and the evolutionary process of humanity.
- The revival of Indian Spirituality.
- A deeper understanding of Sri Aurobindo’s and Mother’s Works.

Course 1
An Introduction to Shruti Literature and the Vedic Symbolism (6 Credits)

1. Shruti and Smriti: The Structure and the general content of the Veda (10 days)
   - To understand the structure of the Vedic Canon
   - To understand the social life of man and its relation with the sacred texts and rituals
   - To define the difference between the Vedic and Post Vedic periods in terms of shift of epistemological paradigms (use Sri Aurobindo’s or Gebser’s scheme)
   - To understand the definitions given by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother about the Vedic Knowledge and Vedic Rishis, and to be able to discuss these issues

2. The Vedic Vision (10 days)
   - To understand the picture of the Vedic Vision of Creation
   - To be able to relate it with the Integral Yoga Psychology
   - To define the difference between the Vedic and Post Vedic approaches to
Knowledge: from Vedic to Vedantic and Sankhyaic paradigm

- To be able to relate and discuss the triple transformation of the Integral Yoga and the three stages of the Vedic Creation

3. **Night and Dawn** (10 days)
   - To understand the symbolism and function of the Vedic Night, to be able to define the distinction between the Utter and lesser Nights in the Veda
   - To understand the relation between Dawn and Night in the Vedic Vision of evolution of Consciousness
   - To relate it with the Upanishadic concept of Vidya and Avidya, and the Integral Yoga Psychology
   - To define the concept of the Vedic Dawn in relation with Aditi and Adityas and the role of the Dawn in the Post-Vedic literature
   - To define the difference in the concept of the Dawn and the Dawns in the Veda
   - To be able to comprehend the multiple and many-facetted relations of the Dawn and Agni

4. **The Myth of the Lost Herds of Light and the Angirasa Rishis** (10 days)
   - To understand the symbolism of the legend of Angirasa Rishis, to be able to define their relations to other groups of Rishis: Bhrigus, Vasishthas, Atris, etc.
   - To understand the relation between Devayana and Pitriyana in the Vedic Vision
   - To define the role of the Dawn and the Sun in relation to the Nether Cave of the Dasyus
   - To be able to discuss the role of the Dasyus in the Vedic Creation
   - To be able to define the divine adversaries: Vritra, Vala, Panis, Dasyus, Danavas, etc. in the Veda, and to discuss these issues in the terms of the modern psychology

5. **Myths of Creation: Nasadiya sukta, Heaven & Earth, Hiranya Garbha** (10 days)
   - To understand the symbolism of Nasadiya Suktam, to be able to see the two stages of Vedic Creation in this hymn and to discuss about it
   - To understand the symbol of the Two Oceans and the seven rivers
   - To be able to describe the Vedic Creation in terms of Purusha Sacrifice, and to discuss the similarities and differences of the Myth of Purusha in the Rig Veda 10.90 and Aitareya Upanishad
   - To understand the Adhidaiva approach to knowledge and its relation to Adhyatma and Adhibhuta in the light of Purusha Sacrifice

6. **Assimilation & Assessment** (10 days)
Course 2

The Vedic Myths of Creation and the Concept of Sacrifice (6 Credits)

1. Myths of Creation: Purusha Sukta, Visvakarman (10 days)
   - To understand the Myth of Heaven and Earth and its relation to the Myth of Hiranya Garbha, their common features and differences in the Vedic Vision
   - To understand the symbolism of Visvakarman and its relation with Prajapati and Brahma Svayambhu in the Post Vedic Literature

2. Agni and the Concept of the Sacrifice (10 days)
   - To understand the symbolism of Vedic Agni and his relation with the Dawn and the Night
   - To understand the ritualistic and symbolic relations of Agni, Vayu and Surya in the Vedic Sacrifice
   - To define the role of Agni as a Priest of the Vedic Sacrifice: Purohita, Ritvik, Hotar
   - To describe the symbolic journey of Agni to Heaven and back to Earth, as it is suggested in the structure of the RV 1.1

3. Hymns to the Mystic Fire (10 days)
   - To understand the symbolic relations of Agni with men, and those who are born in the material body; and the relation of Agni to mankind in general
   - To be able to explain the relation of Agni with his Mother, and why she does not want to deliver him too soon to his Father, (RV.5.2.1-2)
   - To understand the relations of Agni with Angirasa Rishis, and Brihaspati
   - To define the role of Agni in the Vedic Creation as a Priest of the Sacrifice, his relations with other Gods: Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Vishnu, Indra, Rudra, Soma.

4. The conception of Speech in the Vedic Literature (10 days)
   - To understand the relations of Vak and Artha, the concept of Mantra and Brahman in the Veda
   - To explain the concept of Svadhyaya in the Veda and its ritualistic implications
   - To be able to describe the Myth of Indra and Brihaspati from Mahabhashya of Patanjali in depth of its significance
   - To understand the post Vedic theories of Language by Patanjali and Bhartrihari
   - To explain the connection of the Theory of Sphota to the Tantric Kashmirian Traditions
5. **The five Myths of Immortality** (10 days)
   - To understand the Story of Savitri in the terms of Vedic symbolism
   - To be able to render the story in all details as it was rendered in the Mahabharata, relating it with the profound symbolism given by Sri Aurobindo
   - To understand and to be able to discuss the significance of the Four Boons in the Story
   - To be able to explain the difference between the Vedic Yama and the Lord of Death in Sri Aurobindo's Savitri

6. **Assimilation & Assessment** (10 days)

**Course 3**

**Research Practicum/Seminar/Project Work** (4 Credits)

- Project Outline (10 days)
- First Draft of Research Paper (30 days)
- Final Submission of Research Paper (15 days)