



## **Mind, Intention, and Well-being: A Psychological Analysis of the Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam**

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### **Abstract:**

In this article examines the human mind and its influence on well-being have been important topics for a long time in mental health issues. Both ancient philosophers and modern psychologists have studied this issue and tried to solve this with the help of hymns. The Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam, found in the Yajurveda (Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā 34), describes the mind (manas) as the center of thought, intention (saṅkalpa), and conscious action. It presents an important understanding of how the mind works. The study examines the Sūktam from a psychological perspective and how it affects human mental health. It aims to connect and comparison its teachings with contemporary psychological concepts. This research is navigating through the textual examination and comparison with related perspectives of ancient Sūktam and modern psychology. It discusses the mind's dynamic and extensive nature, its role in shaping action in our daily life, and the significance of cultivating positive and disciplined intentions. These concepts are critically correlated with modern psychological constructs such as cognitive processing,



attentional control, emotional regulation, and mindfulness. The research finds that the Sūktam offers a comprehensive understanding of mental life that unifies cognitive, emotional, and ethical dimensions of human experience. Its insights are similar to some principles found in contemporary therapy and can contribute to psychological well-being.

**Key Words:** manas, Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam, Vedic psychology, mindfulness, cognitive restructuring, positive psychology, intention, well-being.

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## Introduction:

The relationship between the mind, intentionality, and psychological well-being has occupied philosophers, theologians, and scientists for millennia. The systematic study of the mind emerged as a formal discipline in the late nineteenth century in the Western tradition after it effected in the world. This institutionalization in the Western tradition, ancient cultures had developed rich, nuanced models of mental life. The account of *manas* (mind) contained in the Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam which have a six-verse hymn preserved in the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (34.1–6) of the Śukla Yajurveda.<sup>1</sup> The term *Śiva Saṅkalpa* is a compound of two very important Sanskrit words: *śiva* which means auspicious, benevolent, or conducive to well-being. The word *saṅkalpa* means resolve, intention, or mental determination. At the heart of the hymn is the idea of Śiva Saṅkalpa that the mind be endowed with auspicious, wholesome intention. The hymn's aspiration is not only meant for worship. It also serves as a guide for developing positive thinking and purposeful action. The Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam has received comparatively little attention in the literature of psychology. It has discussed on ritualistic way to develop mental wellbeing. Indological scholarship has explored its linguistic and ritualistic dimensions which help for mental

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<sup>1</sup>The *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* is one of the two principal recensions of the Śukla Yajurveda. The Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam appears as hymn 34. See Ralph T. H. Griffith, *The Texts of the White Yajurveda* (Benares: E. J. Lazarus, 1899), 257–260.



health.<sup>2</sup> The Vedāntins have interpreted it philosophically.<sup>3</sup> Although the hymn has been studied in different ways, a detailed psychological interpretation based on contemporary psychology is still lacking. This paper present study aims to fill this gap.

The study proceeds through four interconnected stages which are connects to historical context to mental health discourse. First, it situates the Sūktam within its textual and historical context. Second, it undertakes a verse-by-verse analysis of the Sūktam, drawing out the psychological themes embedded in each stanza. Third, it correlates these themes with modern psychological constructs. Finally, it proposes that the Sūktam constitutes an integrative model of mental functioning with genuine implications for contemporary mental health discourse.

## Textual and Historical Background

### The Yajurveda and the Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā

There are four vedas R̥gveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. The Yajurveda is one of the four canonical Vedic collections (*saṃhitās*). It is primarily a liturgical text, providing mantras and prose formulas for sacrificial rituals. The Yajurveda survives in two major forms, the Black and the White Yajurveda. The Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā is the text associated with the White Yajurveda which is the main discussion in this paper. The Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam occurs as the thirty-fourth chapter of this collection.<sup>4</sup> Although the surrounding text mainly deals with rituals, this hymn is different because of its introspective and reflective quality. The verses focus on

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<sup>2</sup>Jan Gonda, *The Vision of the Vedic Poets* (The Hague: Mouton, 1963), 45–78, provides a foundational account of *manas* in Vedic literature.

<sup>3</sup>Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *The Rig Veda: An Anthology* (London: Penguin Books, 1981), 15–18. The term *manas* appears in the R̥gveda with cognitive, volitional, and affective resonances.

<sup>4</sup>Patrick Olivelle, *Upaniṣads* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), liii–lvii.



understanding the mind and its capacities. Each one concludes with a wish for a mind directed toward noble intentions which may effect in our mental wellbeing.

### The Concept of Manas in Vedic Thought

The Sanskrit term *manas* (mind) derives from the ‘root man’. It means to think, to perceive, or to understand.<sup>5</sup> These are the capabilities of mind which can think, perceive and understand of something. *Mana* is not reducible to cognition alone in the early Vedic literature. It encompasses the full range of inner mental activity. The perception, memory, imagination, deliberation, and volitional act of mind which engagements with the world. It is distinguished from *buddhi* (intellect or discriminative understanding), *ahaṁkāra* (ego or the sense of self), and *citta* (the aggregate mental field), a fourfold scheme later systematized in classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophy.<sup>6</sup> In the Ṛgveda, *manas* is already represented as dynamic, active, and morally inflected that is different from Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophy. The Upaniṣads develop this understanding further in a different way of manas or mind. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad states that a person is shaped by their desires, their will arises from those desires, and their actions follow their will. The Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam may be seen as an expansion of this metaphysical teaching. According to the hymn, good intentions lead to better actions and experiences.

### Structure and Refrain of the Sūktam

The Sūktam has six verses that follow a similar structure. Each one finishes with the same recurring line. It is *tan me manaḥ śiva saṅkalpam astu*—"May that mind of mine be of auspicious resolve." This pattern of repetition is not simply a way to memorize the verses. It describes the process of shaping the mind through repeated intention. Similar to a repeated affirmation, the

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<sup>5</sup>A. A. Macdonell, *A Vedic Grammar for Students* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), 230–235, discusses the grammatical range of the root *man-* and its derivatives.

<sup>6</sup>Franklin Edgerton, "The Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga," *American Journal of Philology* 45, no. 1 (1924): 1–46.



refrain directs the mind toward a specific focus and helps develop concentration. It is helping to our mental health. The hymn presents various aspects of the mind's functioning and connects them with the cultivation of good intention. It describes mental experience through different levels, including thought, time, ethics, and the larger universe. It is also the aspiration of auspicious intention, creating a layered portrait of mental functioning across cognitive, temporal, moral, and larger universe.<sup>7</sup>

### Verse-by-Verses Psychological Analysis

#### Verse 1: The Wandering Mind and the Locus of Cognition

The opening verse introduces the mind as something that journeys *dūram*. It explains that the mind can move beyond physical limits even when the body does not move. It describes the mind's return to the divine at the time of ritual offering. Mind returns to offer itself to the gods at the moment of sacrifice.<sup>8</sup> The image is of a mind that naturally wanders, ranging across vast psychic distances. It is capable of being recalled and oriented toward a sacred purpose. According to Griffith's rendering, the verse reflects the restless activity of the mind. Modern psychological research has examined this same feature of human thought. William James famously characterized the stream of consciousness as perpetually flowing and never static.<sup>9</sup> It means that the mind is not stable or motionless; it is always moving from one thought, idea, or object to another. Modern attention research confirms that the mind wanders involuntarily for a significant portion of waking

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<sup>7</sup>Dutta Swami Dayananda Saraswati, *Introduction to Vedanta* (Coimbatore: Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, 1989), 112–118.

<sup>8</sup>Griffith, *Texts of the White Yajurveda*, 257. Verse 1: "Tat me manah śiva saṅkalpamastu." The translation rendered here follows Griffith with minor adjustments for psychological precision.

<sup>9</sup>William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (New York: Henry Holt, 1890), 1:403–404. James's discussion of the "stream of consciousness" offers a productive parallel to Vedic descriptions of the mind's restless movement.



life. It is often at the cost of present-moment awareness and emotional well-being. It is describing the wandering nature of the mind. The Sūktam presents an idea that agrees with modern psychological understanding. The wish for śiva saṅkalpa represents the practice of focusing and managing attention which is important for wellbeing. It can constitute an early articulation of intentional attentional control. The practice of reciting this verse may itself function as an attentional anchor, drawing the wandering mind back toward wholesome orientation.<sup>10</sup>

### Verse 2: The Mind Across States of Consciousness

The second verse is very important which describes the mind as ranging among the departed (*pretān*), the living, and all beings.<sup>11</sup> This characterization of mind points toward the mind's capacity to move across different registers of experience that are across time (past, present), across states (waking, dreaming, deep sleep), and across the boundary between the living and the dead. In its traversal of these liminal spaces, the mind is presented as the site of a continuous, undivided awareness. This verse anticipates several important constructs from a psychological standpoint. Carl Jung's notion of the collective unconscious is a layer of psychic life shared across individuals and generations. It resonates with the hymn's description of a mind that extends beyond personal boundaries.<sup>12</sup> Freud's topographic distinction between the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious also parallels the Sūktam's mapping of mental activity across visible and invisible

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<sup>10</sup>Michael Posner and Mary K. Rothbart, "Researching the Foundations of Education," *Developmental Neuropsychology* 24, no. 2–3 (2007): 313–369.

<sup>11</sup>Griffith, *Texts of the White Yajurveda*, 257. Verse 2 describes the mind as dwelling among the departed (*pretān*) yet coursing through living beings.

<sup>12</sup>Carl G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Collected Works, vol. 8 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 325–455, on the collective unconscious.



domains.<sup>13</sup> This verse shows the importance of bringing all mental experiences together, including past memories and future thoughts, into a balanced and positive state of mind.

### Verse 3: The Mind as the Swiftest of the Swift

This is the most psychologically evocative verse. The third stanza describes the mind as the fastest of all moving things, even faster than light. It guides the body and senses like a charioteer controlling horses with reins.<sup>14</sup> This verse foregrounds two themes of enduring psychological significance. One is the speed and preconscious automaticity of mental processing, and the second is the executive function of the mind in directing behavior. The charioteer metaphor recurs in the *Kāthopaniṣad* among the most celebrated in Indian philosophical literature, where the Self is the lord of the chariot. The body is the chariot. The intellect is the charioteer. And the mind is the reins.<sup>15</sup> The Sūktam's usage here grants the mind itself the role of the reins. It is the mediating instrument through which intention translates into action. Modern cognitive psychology distinguishes between fast, automatic System 1 processes and slower, deliberate System 2 reasoning.<sup>16</sup> The Sūktam describes the mind as having great speed and freedom, but also as something that can be controlled and shaped through proper intention. Modern neuropsychology describes executive functioning as skills like planning, self-control, flexible thinking, and memory.

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<sup>13</sup>Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1955), 588–609. Freud's topographic and later structural models echo the Sūktam's multi-layered account of mental operations.

<sup>14</sup>Griffith, *Texts of the White Yajurveda*, 258. Verse 3 speaks of the mind as the swiftest among the fleet, guiding the senses like the reins of a chariot.

<sup>15</sup>Kāthopaniṣad II.3.3: "Know the Self as lord of the chariot, the body as the chariot itself, know intellect as the charioteer, and mind as the reins." See Olivelle, *Upaniṣads*, 240.

<sup>16</sup>Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 3–30, on dual-process cognition.



These ideas connect with the Sūktam's view of the mind as the guide of purposeful action.<sup>17</sup> The aspiration for *śiva saṅkalpa* is an aspiration for the healthy development of executive capacities oriented toward prosocial and virtuous ends.

#### Verse 4: The Mind as Sacrificial Fire and Seat of Wisdom

This verse has four identifies the mind with Agni, the sacred sacrificial fire, declaring it the light of wisdom carried by the great sages and the invisible ṛṣis.<sup>18</sup> Here the hymn moves from the cognitive and volitional to the ethical and spiritual consciousness. The mind is not merely an instrument of processing and action but it is the very vessel of wisdom (*jñāna*) and moral discernment. The sacrificial context is significant in Vedic thought. The ritual act of sacrifice involves the alignment of individual intention with cosmic order (*ṛta*). *Rta* is the laws of cosmic order. The mind offers itself in sacrifice is the mind purified of self-interested motivation and oriented toward a larger good. This has striking resonances with what contemporary psychology calls prosocial motivation and moral identity. Research on moral psychology suggests that individuals whose self-concept is organized around ethical values are more consistently oriented toward virtuous action.<sup>19</sup> The identification of the mind with sacrificial fire also invokes the transformative function of disciplined mental practice. It is the fire purifies matter. This disciplined intention purifies the mind.<sup>20</sup> The connection to mindfulness-based approaches is direct. It

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<sup>17</sup>Roy F. Baumeister and E. J. Masicampo, "Conscious Thought Is for Facilitating Social and Cultural Interactions: How Mental Simulations Serve the Animal-Culture Interface," *Psychological Review* 117, no. 4 (2010): 945–971.

<sup>18</sup>Griffith, *Texts of the White Yajurveda*, 258. Verse 4 identifies the mind with Agni, the sacrificial fire, and associates it with wisdom embodied in the sages.

<sup>19</sup>Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3–32.

<sup>20</sup>Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 45–100, on sacrifice as mental discipline.



practices such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) explicitly invoke attentional discipline as a means of transforming habitual patterns of reactivity into more intentional, values-based modes of engagement.<sup>21</sup>

### Verse 5: The Mind as Container of Immortal Light

The fifth verse speaks of the mind as that in which all knowledge is held. This mind is the immortal light by which the sacrifice is conducted.<sup>22</sup> This characterization of the mind is the seat of an immortal, luminous awareness anticipates the Upaniṣadic concept of *ātman*. The inner self that is ultimately identical with *brahman*, universal consciousness. Psychologically, the verse is best read as pointing to the integrative function of the mind. This is a capacity to hold together past learning, present perception, and future possibility within a coherent experiential whole. Barbara Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions offers a productive parallel.<sup>23</sup> According to this framework, this positived emotional states is characterized precisely by the kind of openness and expansiveness associated with the "immortal light". The individual's momentary thought-action repertoire and build lasting psychological resources. The Sūktam's aspiration for *śiva saṅkalpa* is functionally equivalent to cultivating the positive emotional orientation that, on Fredrickson's account, sustains flourishing. The quality of mental orientation is causally connected to well-being which is luminous, open, and well-intentioned.

### Verse 6: The Eternal Mind Encompassing Time

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<sup>21</sup>Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1990), 1–14.

<sup>22</sup>Griffith, *Texts of the White Yajurveda*, 259. Verse 5 describes the mind as holding immortal light, the knowledge by which the sacrifice is performed.

<sup>23</sup>Barbara L. Fredrickson, "The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology: The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions," *American Psychologist* 56, no. 3 (2001): 218–226.



The sixth and final verse describes the mind as swifter than the eye, encompassing past, present, and future, and as the ground of all understanding.<sup>24</sup> The mind's connection with time makes it a special human capacity. It allows people to reflect on past events, live in the present, and think about future possibilities. The aspiration is that such a mind be endowed with auspicious resolve. This temporal comprehensiveness corresponds to what psychologists call mental time travel. This is the capacity to re-experience the past and pre-experience the future through imagination. This capacity is both the source of distinctively human cognitive power and a vector for psychological suffering. This mental time travel is the rumination about the past and anxiety about the future are among the most common features of psychological distress. The final verse has importance for psychology because it encourages the development of śiva saṅkalpa over time. It suggests using the imagination in a positive way by replacing harmful thoughts with balanced and constructive thinking.<sup>25</sup>

## Psychological Correlations

### Saṅkalpa and Cognitive Restructuring

The concept of *saṅkalpa* is the purposive of mental resolve. It is among the most psychologically fertile in the Sūktam. *Saṅkalpa* denotes the primordial act of intentional thought in classical Indian thought. *Saṅkalpa* precedes all volitional behavior. It is not merely a wish but a structured mental commitment. It is a cognitive-volitional act that shapes subsequent processing and behavior which help mental wellbeing. This idea is connected with schema activation, where old mental patterns affect the way we think. It also relates to cognitive restructuring, which helps change negative thoughts. According to Aaron Beck's theory, emotional disorders are caused by

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<sup>24</sup>Griffith, *Texts of the White Yajurveda*, 259–260. Verse 6 extols the mind as eternal, moving faster than the eye and encompassing past, present, and future.

<sup>25</sup>Aaron T. Beck, *Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders* (New York: International Universities Press, 1976), 47–102.



negative and unhelpful thinking patterns. Treatment focuses on recognizing these patterns and replacing them with healthier thoughts. Therapy works by changing harmful beliefs into more balanced and adaptive ones. The Sūktam's practice of repeatedly affirming auspicious resolve may be understood as a proto-cognitive restructuring technique. These techniques are used by regularly and ritually orienting the mind toward *śiva saṅkalpa*. The practitioner seeks to establish a benevolent mental schema as the default mode of engagement with experience. The repetition of the refrain across all six verses enacts this restructuring through linguistic and attentional repetition, consistent with modern behavioral principles of habit formation.<sup>26</sup>

### Attentional Control and Mindfulness

Contemporary mindfulness research has established attentional control as a central mechanism through which contemplative practice produces psychological benefit for human mental health.<sup>27</sup> Mindfulness teaches people to keep their attention on present experiences with openness and without criticism. This approach appears in both Buddhism and Kabat-Zinn's secular mindfulness program. This practice needs a deliberate control of attention, similar to the mental discipline developed in the Sūktam. The Sūktam functions as a mindfulness-adjacent practice in several respects. First, reciting the hymn requires continuous and focused attention. This practice (*dhāraṇā*) trains the mind to remain directed toward a particular purpose. Second, the verses reflect on how the mind works and create self-awareness. This helps people watch their mental activity without becoming completely influenced by it.<sup>28</sup> Third, the aspiration for *śiva saṅkalpa* constitutes a positive intentional set that frames the practice within a values-based orientation. This consistent

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<sup>26</sup>Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997), 1–35.

<sup>27</sup>Kirk Warren Brown and Richard M. Ryan, "The Benefits of Being Present: Mindfulness and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, no. 4 (2003): 822–848.

<sup>28</sup>Shauna L. Shapiro, Roger R. Walsh, and Willoughby B. Britton, "An Analysis of Recent Meditation Research and Suggestions for Future Directions," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 3 (2003): 303–310.



is with the acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) emphasis on psychological flexibility guided by personally meaningful values.

### Emotional Regulation

According to James Gross's theory, people can manage emotions by reinterpreting situations in a different way. This process is called cognitive reappraisal which is the most effective and psychologically adaptive strategies for managing emotional experience.<sup>29</sup> The practice of śiva saṅkalpa involves changing the way the mind understands experiences. It is a conscious process that influences how a person thinks and responds. The repeated refrain of the Sūktam comes after acknowledging the mind's natural tendencies. It accepts the mind's wandering and changing nature without rejecting it. It highlights the ability to recognize thoughts and feelings while maintaining some distance from them. The text does not deny the reality of the mind's complex operations but invites the practitioner to relate to them from the aspiration of auspicious intention. This is structurally identical to the mindfulness-based emotional regulation technique of observing mental events without reactivity before consciously choosing a response.<sup>30</sup>

### Śiva Saṅkalpa and Positive Psychology

The positive psychology movement, started by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, changed the way people looked at psychology. It focused not only on problems but also on how people can live better and happier lives.<sup>31</sup> Seligman's PERMA model identifies positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment as constitutive

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<sup>29</sup>James J. Gross, "Emotion Regulation: Affective, Cognitive, and Social Consequences," *Psychophysiology* 39, no. 3 (2002): 281–291.

<sup>30</sup>Roy F. Baumeister and Todd F. Heatherton, "Self-Regulation Failure: An Overview," *Psychological Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1996): 1–15.

<sup>31</sup>Martin E. P. Seligman, *Flourishing: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 9–30.



dimensions of flourishing. Through the idea of śiva saṅkalpa, the Sūktam presents the goal of creating a mind filled with good intentions. This idea connects with different dimensions of human well-being. The concept of śiva highlights qualities like goodness and well-being. This relates to positive psychology's view that good character helps people grow and flourish. According to Christopher Peterson and Seligman, human strengths can be understood through six major virtues, including wisdom, courage, kindness, fairness, balance, and spiritual values. The Sūktam's ideal of an auspiciously intentioned mind that encompasses wisdom (verses 4–5), regulates action (verse 3), integrates temporal experience (verse 6), and reaches beyond personal boundaries (verse 2) maps productively onto several of these strength categories, particularly wisdom, transcendence, and self-regulation.<sup>32</sup>

## **Discussion: Toward an Integrative Model**

### **The Sūktam as Holistic Psychology**

The Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam is a psychological document which is refusal to fragment the mind into discrete, independent faculties. The modern psychology has often treated cognition, emotion, motivation, and moral agency as separable domains requiring separate theoretical frameworks and clinical interventions. The Sūktam presents the mind as a unified, multilayered whole. The nature of mind (*manas*) includes movement and awareness, spontaneity and reflection. These different sides of the mind are united by the desire for a beneficial intention. This holistic orientation anticipates what contemporary scholars such as Ken Wilber and Brant Cortright have called integral psychology. This integral psychology is an approach that seeks to honor and integrate the insights of multiple psychological traditions, Western and Eastern, scientific and

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<sup>32</sup>Sonja Lyubomirsky, Kennon M. Sheldon, and David Schkade, "Pursuing Happiness: The Architecture of Sustainable Change," *Review of General Psychology* 9, no. 2 (2005): 111–131.



contemplative.<sup>33</sup> The Sūktam offers a specifically Vedic instantiation of this integrative impulse, grounding it not in abstract theory. It is offers in a ritual-contemplative practice whose psychological efficacy may be understood in modern terms.<sup>34</sup>

### Vedic Psychology and Modern Mental Health

The relevance of the Sūktam's insights to contemporary mental health discourse operates at several levels. At the level of clinical practice suggests a role for structured contemplative recitation as a complement to existing cognitive-behavioral and mindfulness-based interventions. The deliberate cultivation of *śiva saṅkalpa* hymn's emphasis on intentional mental orientation which is helpful for being mental health. The regular practice of reciting the Sūktam with attentiveness to its meaning may function as a culturally grounded self-regulatory practice. It is also for populations for whom Vedic traditions carry cultural and spiritual significance.<sup>35</sup> At the level of theory, the Sūktam challenges the implicit individualism of much Western psychological theory. The Sūktam presents the mind as connected with different aspects of life and experience. It includes relationships with others, memories of the past, and awareness of the present. This idea relates to psychological views that see the mind as shaped through connection and experience.<sup>36</sup> Abraham Maslow's hierarchy culminating in self-actualization and peak experiences—states of

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<sup>33</sup>Brant Cortright, *Integral Psychology: Yoga, Growth, and Opening the Heart* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 1–46.

<sup>34</sup>Ken Wilber, *Integral Psychology: Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy* (Boston: Shambhala, 2000), 1–30.

<sup>35</sup>Subhash Kak, "The Vedic Conception of Mind," *Indian Journal of History of Science* 34, no. 1 (1999): 1–14.

<sup>36</sup>Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1975), 17–42, on convergences between Eastern philosophy and modern science.



expanded awareness, unity, and profound well-being—also resonates with the Sūktam's vision of a mind luminously oriented toward the auspicious.<sup>37</sup>

### Methodological Reflections

Any comparative enterprise between ancient textual traditions and modern scientific psychology carries methodological risks because both have different method of experiment. The greatest challenge is the risk of anachronism. Modern ideas may be applied to ancient texts in ways that change their original meaning and context. The Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam was composed within a Vedic sacrificial world-view whose metaphysical and cosmological assumptions differ fundamentally from those of modern psychology. This paper has sought to examine these risks by maintaining a clear distinction between textual analysis and psychological correlation. The argument is not that the authors of the Sūktam discovered modern psychology before its time. Their ideas were developed within their own historical and philosophical background. However, some similarities can be found between their understanding of the mind and modern psychological concepts. Interdisciplinary inquiry is itself a methodological practice consistent with the spirit of comparative philosophy and the emerging field of contemplative science.

### Conclusion

The Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam stands as a remarkable document in the history of psychological thought which are very important in our contemporary world. The hymn was created within the setting of Vedic ritual, but it speaks about the common human experience of the mind. It presents a deep understanding of the nature of the mind and its connection with well-being. The Sūktam presents the nature of the mind through six carefully composed verses. It describes the mind's movement, its connection with different experiences, its role in guiding actions, and its growth

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<sup>37</sup>Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd ed. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968), 71–96, on self-actualization and peak experiences.



toward wisdom. All these ideas support the main aspiration for a mind filled with good and positive intention. This study has demonstrated that these themes are not merely of historical or philological interest but carry genuine psychological significance which help being mental wellbeing. The concept of *śiva saṅkalpa* anticipates cognitive restructuring, mindfulness-based attentional training. It is also emotional regulation through reappraisal with in human being, and the positive psychology emphasis on cultivating character strengths and prosocial motivations. The Sūktam presents the mind as a whole that includes thinking, emotions, intentions, and moral values. This broad understanding of the mind is similar to ideas that modern psychology is still developing and solving many health issues. The implications extend beyond academic comparison. At a time when mental health issues are becoming a major concern around the world, traditional approaches to well-being have gained importance. These cultural perspectives are not only interesting to study but can also be useful in real life. For the many millions whose lives are shaped by the Vedic tradition, the Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam offers a resource for psychological reflection and cultivation that is continuous with their deepest cultural and spiritual heritage. For psychologists and mental health professionals, this encourages learning from the valuable ideas found in non-Western traditions. It supports the development of a broader understanding of the human mind and well-being.

Further research is needed on several fronts which are important for future generation mental health issues. First, it involves studying how reciting the Sūktam as a form of contemplation affects the mind and psychological well-being. Second, it includes a detailed study of the word saṅkalpa and related terms across Vedic texts to understand their original meanings. Third, it requires comparing the Sūktam with global traditions to place it within the wider history of psychological thought. The present study is offered as a modest but earnest contribution to this larger and vitally important interdisciplinary project.



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