

Prominence of the Vaiśvāmitramaṇḍala as the Third Family Book of the Ṛgvedasamhitā : A Note

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ABSTRACT

The Ṛgvedasamhitā is the earliest scripture of the Vedic literature, which is contained with ten Maṇḍalas, i.e. Books. According to the Ṛgvedic contents, the maṇḍalas from 2nd to 7th are homogeneous in character and generally based on an ascending order in the number of hymns, which is known as the Vamśamaṇḍalas or Kulamaṇḍalas or Family Books. The third maṇḍala of the Ṛgvedasamhitā is called the Vaiśvāmitramaṇḍala, as because ṛṣi Viśvāmitra is the predominant seer and the other seers are belonging to his family. This research paper is a general study on the uniformity and significance of this Vaiśvāmitramaṇḍala, one of the important Family Books of the Ṛgvedasamhitā

Keywords

family books, homogeneous, Ṛgvedasamhitā, vaiśvāmitramaṇḍala, vamśamaṇḍalas.

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Introduction

The traditional wisdom of Indian society is clearly reflected in the Vedic literature, the imperative contribution by Aryan civilization of ancient India. Among the various literary works of the Vedic era, the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* is the first and foremost compilation. The mantras or ṛks have many scientific and theosophical knowledge of the Universe, which are revealed by the seers or the ṛṣis, who have realized the intuitive knowledge. The Ṛgvedic ṛṣis have a great importance to get the appropriate knowledge about the Ṛgvedic hymns or Ṛkmantras. The ṛṣis or seers of the Ṛkmantras have the capacity to visualize an object with scientific thoughts and views. Again, without the knowledge of the ṛṣis we cannot get the intention or meaning of a particular *mantra*. To get proper knowledge about the significance and importance of the ancient Ṛgvedic ṛṣis and their thoughtful concepts, we have to study on the Kulamaṇḍalas, the earliest and core part of the entire *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. Many scholars both eastern and western have already evaluated the various aspects of the Vedic ṛṣis. But still, some queries are come to the mind about the principle and common thoughts of the six Kulamaṇḍalas and their ṛṣis, have to investigate and find out.

Basically, the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* or *Rgveda* is the collections of the Ṛkmantras, i.e. eulogical verses used to praise the god revealed by the ancient ṛṣis (*ṛcyate stūyate yayā sā ṛk/ tādr̥śīnāmṛcam samūha eva ṛgvedaḥ*).¹ The *Ṛgveda* represents the ancient Indian history of the Vedic socio-cultural activities and then life-style. Traditionally, the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* holds the first position amongst the four Vedas, viz. the *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. It carries the records and documents about the history of human race; so that the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* has been credited as the oldest literary monument of the Indo-European languages. In his work 'Origin and Development of Religion', the western scholar F. Max Müller states that 'One thing is certain, namely that there is nothing more primitive than the hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, whether in India or the whole Aryan World. Being Aryan in language and

thought the *Ṛgveda* is the most ancient of our books'.² There are 1028 hymns (including the eleven Khilasūktas) in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. The contents of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* divided into two ways, viz. *Aṣṭaka* and *Maṇḍala*. One into *Aṣṭaka—Adhyāya—Varga* and the other into *Maṇḍala—Anuvāka—Sūkta*. According to the *Aṣṭaka* division, the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* consists of eight *Aṣṭakas*, sixty four *Adhyāyas* and two thousand six *Vargas*. Again, according to the *Maṇḍala* division, it consists of ten maṇḍalas, eighty five *Anuvākas* and one thousand seventeen *Sūktas*. Of these two divisions, the former is considered as mechanical and the later, *Maṇḍala* division is regarded as most popular applied in the Vedic sacrificial performances. Each *maṇḍala* contains so many mantras, which are devoted to a particular *sūkta* (hymn) in praise of the ritual deities like Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Uṣas, etc. Because of this division into maṇḍalas, etc., this *Ṛgveda* is known as the *Daśatayī* and also known as the *Bahavṛc* as for many ṛcas occur therein.

The authorship of the various hymns is attributed to the great seers or ṛṣis like Madhucchandā, Ṛṭsamada, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Atri, Bharadvāja, Vasiṣṭha, etc. After an examination of the maṇḍalas and the hymns of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, it is found that, of these ten maṇḍalas, 2nd to 7th maṇḍalas are of one family of seers and have homogeneous character; so this portion is called Vamśamaṇḍalas or Kulamaṇḍalas, i.e. Family Books. The ṛṣis of these six maṇḍalas are viz., Ṛṭsamada, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Atri, Bharadvāja and Vasiṣṭha respectively and their descendants. The eighth *maṇḍala* contains the hymns, which have been composed by two different families, i.e. Kāṇva and Āngirasas. The ninth *maṇḍala* consists of hymns in praise of one god, i.e. Soma-Pavamāna. The hymns of first and tenth Maṇḍalas having equal number of hymns 191 contain miscellaneous contents composed by seers belonging to different families.

It is remarkable that, the subject-matter of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* may chiefly be divided into three classes, viz. Religious hymns, Philosophical hymns and Secular hymns. The major portion of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* is covered with the Religious hymns, in where many hymns are

dedicated to the deities, viz. Indra, Agni, Soma, etc., prominently. On the other hand, Aśvins, Maruts, Sūrya, Varuṇa, Ṛbhu, etc., are also praised by the Ṛgvedic ṛṣis for their prosperity. Again, the mysterious creation theory of the Universe is depicted in the Philosophical hymns. Under these hymns the *Puruṣasūkta* (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, X.90), the *Hiraṇyagarbhasūkta* (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, X.121), the *Nāsadiyasūkta* (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, X.129), etc., are famous. In case of the Secular hymns, the divinities are not specially addressed as the god. The Dialogue hymns, the *Dānastuti*, the marriage hymn of Soma and Sūryā (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, X.85), the Frog-songs (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, VII.103), the funeral-songs, the riddles, etc., are these types of hymns of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*.

Objectives

The aims and objectives of this research paper is to understand the significance and peculiarity of the *Vaiśvāmitramanḍala*, as one of the important portions among the Family Books of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. Along with, it is focused to know about the predominant seer of this third book chapter of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*.

Methodology

The methodology used in this present paper is descriptive, comparative and analytical. The data are collected mainly from primary and secondary sources.

The Third Family Book Vaiśvāmitramanḍala

The Family Books are great compilations of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, which have some importance in the Vedic literature and tradition. As per the *manḍala* division, the ten *manḍalas* of the *Daśatayī*, i.e. the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* have some special arrangement in respect to the hymns or the *manḍalas*. The word *Vamśamanḍala* indicates the basic idea and significance of the Family Books of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. In Sanskrit, *Kula* or *Vamśa* means the family or the same clan. So, as the seers of the each *manḍala* from 2nd to 7th of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* are belonged to same family; this group is classified into one entitled, i.e. the Family Books or *Vamśamanḍalas*, which have some uniform characteristics. Again, these six books, i.e. *manḍalas* from 2nd to 7th are considered as the nucleus or central part of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, while the *manḍalas* 1st, 8th, 9th and 10th have some different principles. It is notable that, each of the Family Books has the relation with a *ṛṣi* or common family members of the *mantradraṣṭā ṛṣis*.

The *ṛṣis* or seers of these Family Books have maintained some special homogeneity in the compilation of their *sūktas*. Again, some significant hymns both religious and secular are noticed in the *Kulamanḍalas*. Thus, the earliest and distinguished portions of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, the six Family Books have carried the Vedic thoughts and knowledge revealed by the great ancient *ṛṣis* of the Vedic age in India. Through the deep meditation and the visual-eye-view, the *ṛṣis* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* have revealed the mantras and *sūktas*. That is why, these *ṛṣis* are called the seers of a *mantra* (*mantradraṣṭā*), not the composer. Again the word

ṛṣi is derived from the root $\sqrt{drś}$, meaning to see or to observe.³

There are so many significances of the Family Books have been observed. As because of their homogeneous character, these *manḍalas* are connected with each other having lots of similarities. An interesting point is that, these *Kulamanḍalas* (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, II-VII) have followed a uniformity regarding the arrangement of their *sūktas*. Again, there are a few mantras of these Family Books have provided the concept of the Universal value and eternal peace of the entire world. In the Family Books, various types of hymns are noticed, which indicate about the intellectual and supreme thoughts of the ancient Ṛgvedic seers. The six *Kulamanḍalas* (II-VII) of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* are well known as, viz. *Gāṛtsamada Manḍala*, *Vaiśvāmitra Manḍala*, *Vāmadevya Manḍala*, *Ātreya Manḍala*, *Bhāradvāja Manḍala* and *Vasiṣṭha Manḍala* respectively. These Family Books are named in respect of the prominent *ṛṣi* of that particular *manḍala* and the other *ṛṣis* are belonged to the families of them. Thus, the *ṛṣis* of these Family Books, i.e. second to seventh *manḍalas* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* are *Gṛtsamada*, *Viśvāmitra*, *Vāmadeva*, *Atri*, *Bhāradvāja* and *Vasiṣṭha* respectively and their descendants. Although each *manḍala* of the Family Books of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* is belongs to a common *ṛṣi* family, but there is a definite sequence of the hymns in each *manḍala* itself. Thus, as a rule, the first group of hymns in each *manḍala* is addressed to god Agni; the second to Indra and the rest to miscellaneous deities. Indeed, the *Āprī* hymns are also noticed in the *Agnisūktas* of these *Kulamanḍalas*. In the Family Books, i.e. from 2nd to 7th *manḍalas* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, there are four *Āprīsūktas*, viz. II.3, III.4, V.5 and VII.2.

Besides the gods Agni and Indra, a few other common deities are also eulogized in the Family Books, e.g. *Viśvadevās*, *Aśvins*, and *Savitṛ*, etc. Along with the other hymns some remarkable mantras and *sūktas* are observed in these six *manḍalas*, viz. *Gāyatrīmantra* (III.62.10), *Sajanīyasūkta* (II.2), Dialogue hymns (III.33), Frog song or *Maṇḍukasūkta* (VII.103), *Mahāmṛtyuñjayamantra* (VII.59.12), *Dānastuti* (VI.27.8, VII.18.22-25), etc. Though some special gods are eulogized by the seers of each *manḍala* of the Family Books, but, in the beginning of the every Family Book, the hymns of gods Agni and Indra must be represented. The *Viśvāmitra-Nadī-Sainvāda* is another important Dialogue type of secular hymn. The *Gāyatrīmantra* is revealed by *ṛṣi* *Viśvāmitra*.

It is also remarkable that, the arrangement of these *Kulamanḍalas* is based on an ascending order in the number of hymns. The numbers of hymns of these Family Books are seen to be increased, but it is not applicable in the case of the fourth and the sixth *manḍalas* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. The *Vaiśvāmitramanḍala* has the smallest and the seventh has the greatest number of the Ṛgvedic hymns or *sūktas*. The Family Books of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* have some interesting and unique arrangement order, which give us the information about the ancient hymns and *ṛṣis* of the Vedic literature. To get the proper meaning of the *ṛkmantras* it is important to observe the uniform arrangements and salient features of the Ṛgvedic text.

And thus, these special and similar *manḍalas* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* have been included under one class of the

Ṛgvedic maṇḍalas. The group of maṇḍalas has covered a wide range of the entire *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, which means, among the ten maṇḍalas, the six maṇḍalas are of same classification. It is also interestingly noticeable that, the six Family Books are observed according to a systematic order in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. That is why; this group of hymns has carried the significance of the oldest literary monument, the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*.

Among the ten maṇḍalas, the mantras of the third maṇḍala of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* are traditionally attributed to the *mantradraṣṭārṣi* Viśvāmītra. There are total sixty two hymns in this third book, one of the six Kulamaṇḍalas (II-VII) of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. The all hymns of this Family Book are related to *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra. So that, third maṇḍala, one of the oldest core maṇḍalas of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* is called the *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala*. In this context, the great commentator Sāyaṇācārya⁴ states that Viśvāmītra is the seer of the third maṇḍala of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. It means that the third book of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* is ascribed to *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra who is known to be the son of Gāthi. In the *Bṛhaddevatā* also, Viśvāmītra is referred as the son of Gāthi.⁵

The word 'Vaiśvāmītra' denotes the all other *ṛṣis* belong to his family and among them *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra is the prominent one. The great seer Viśvāmītra has been frequently honored from the Vedic age to later Classical literature of India. He has contributed a lot to the Indian cultural heritage, which have played a significant role in later Vedic period. There are many later legends and myths are found related to *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra. Regarding the famous legend of Śunaḥśepaḥ described in the *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa*,⁶ *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra plays an important role.

It is to be noted that *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra adopted Śunaḥśepa, who was given by the gods and later he is known as Devarātra. In the epic tradition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, so many references about *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra have been taken place. The *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa*⁷ and the *Nirukta*⁸ describe Viśvāmītra as a friend of the entire world. From the derivative meaning of the term *viśvāmītra*, the significant character of *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra is also observed in the Ṛgvedic hymns.

Out of the sixty two hymns of this third Family Book of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra has himself revealed more than forty hymns. And the rest hymns of this maṇḍala have been seen by the Vaiśvāmītra *ṛṣis*, viz. Ṛṣabho Vaiśvāmītra, utkila Kātya, Kato Vaiśvāmītra, Gāthi Kauśika, Devaśravā-Devarātaśca-Bhāratau, Kuśika Aiṣṛathi, Prajāpati Vaiśvāmītra, Ghora Āṅgiraśa, etc. At the very first of this *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala*, the god Agni is praised in the twenty nine hymns, while god Indra in twenty three sūktas. Here, the *ṛṣis* have revealed the hymns mostly of god Agni and Indra; only a few hymns are recited to praise the other gods, viz. Viśvadevā, Aśvinau, Mitra, Ṛbhū, Uṣā, etc. Again, almost all the Vedic metres or chandas, e.g. *Triṣṭup*, *Jagatī*, *Anuṣṭup*, *Bṛhatī*, *Uṣṇik*, *Gāyatrī*, *Virāt*, etc. are used by the seers of this *Vaiśvāmītrakulamaṇḍala* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. According to the Ṛgvedic arrangement, this third maṇḍala contains both religious and secular hymns of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. This *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala* plays a prominent and significant role among the six Kulamaṇḍalas. A few hymns and mantras of this great book indicate the socio-cultural tradition of the Vedic age which influence can

be observed in the Indian society. An Āprīsūkta (III.4) and a Dialogue hymn (III.33) have been found in this third maṇḍala of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. The *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala* starts with the Agnisūkta,⁹ which is revealed by Gāthino Viśvāmītra. It contains eighteen mantras having *Triṣṭup* metre.

In this *mantra*, *ṛṣi* prays to Agni for the prosperity and strength of sacrificial performances. The Āprīsūktas¹⁰ of this third Family Book have eleven mantras and *Triṣṭup* chandas. This Āprīsūkta refers to the sacrificial performances of the Vaiśvāmītra family. This is the second Āprīsūkta of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* and here, the god Agni is praised in the form of god Tanunapāt.

Ṛṣi Viśvāmītra and the Vaiśvāmītra *ṛṣis* have also revealed many Indrasūktas after the Agni hymns. Regarding the Indrasūktas, a dialogue hymn, i.e. Saṁvādasūkta,¹¹ the one kind of secular hymn of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* is attached. In simple word, the secular hymns are related to the worldly things; they are not religious in character. Without referring any determine deity, the *ṛṣis* express the subject-matter related to the worldly things as god. The Dialogue hymns, the Didactic hymns, the Funeral songs, the Philosophical hymns, the Marriage hymns, the Dānastuti, the Riddles, etc. are included into the secular hymns of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. Among these, the dialogue hymn named as *Vaiśvāmītra-nadī-saṁvādasūkta* (III.33) occupies a prominent place in the *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala* of the Family Books.¹² In this hymn it is noticed that, the two rivers Vipāt and Śutudrī have given the answer in reply to *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra's prayer. There are thirteen mantras having *Triṣṭup* and *Anuṣṭup* metres. Again, respectively *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra and the two rivers are considered as the *mantradraṣṭārṣi* and gods of this dialogue hymn. Here, through this *mantra* and the whole *sūkta*, *ṛṣi* has prayed the two rivers Vipāt and Śutudrī and request to over cross them. The god Indra is addressed in the sixth and seventh mantras of this hymn. There are some poetical beauty has been observed in this hymn. Again, it is interestingly noted that *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra mentioned himself as the son of Kuśika in a *mantra* of this hymn. It means that, *ṛṣi* Kuśika was the ancestor of *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra.¹³ In this *mantra*, the words *kuśikasya sūnuh* signifies the meaning that *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra is the son of Kuśika. In the hymn III.53 of this maṇḍala, *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra describes that he was the priest of king Sudāsa, who had performed the horse-sacrifice. And *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra has given detail information about his patron Sudāsa in this hymn. Again, the four mantras of the fifty third hymn of this third Family Book are considered as the *Vasiṣṭhodveṣinaḥ*.

The most notable contribution of the third maṇḍala or the *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala* of the Family Books is the *Gāyatrīmantra* or *Sāvitrīmantra* revealed by *ṛṣi* Viśvāmītra himself. The tenth mantras of the hymn sixty second, the last hymn of third maṇḍala, i.e. III.62.10, are famous as the great *Gāyatrīmantra*. The deity of this *mantra* is Savitā and metre is *Gāyatrī*. The god Savitṛ is the other form of god Sūrya, which is the source of all energy. And so, this revealed *mantra* is named according to the deity and the metre. As the god Savitṛ is eulogized here, so it is called the *Sāvitrīmantra*. This *mantra* contains of twenty four syllables having *tripāda*, i.e. three parts. In the *Veda*, this *Brahmagāyatrīmantra* is traditionally considered as to be the holiest *mantra* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. Before

pronouncing this *mantra*, the seven extra words called Vyāhrtis, viz. *bhūh, bhūvah, svaḥ, mahah, janah, tapah, satyam* are to be recited with the due pronunciation of *Om* preceding it.¹⁴ In the beginning of the *Upanayana* ceremony, this holy *mantra* should be taught from the guru to get the *dvijatva*, according to Vedic tradition. The great *Gāyatrīmantra*¹⁵ has very significant role in the Indian culture heritage.

List Of The Ṛṣis Of The Vaiśvāmītra Maṇḍala

Name of Ṛṣis	Sūktas	Total sūktas
Viśvāmītro Gāthinaḥ	III.1-12, 24-30, 32-35, 36 (1-9, 11), 37, 39-53, 57-61, 62 (1-15)	46
Ṛṣabho Vaiśvāmītra	III. 13-14	2
Utkīlaḥ Kātya	III.15-16	2
Kato Vaiśvāmītra	III.17-18	2
Gāthī Kauśika	III.19-22	4
Deśravā Devavātaśca Bhāratau	III.23	1
Kuśika Aiśrathi	III.31	1
Ghora Āṅgīrasa	III.36.10	1 ṛks
Prajāpatir Vaiśvāmītro or Vācyo/Prajāpatirvācyo	III.38,54,55,56	4
Vaiśvāmītra or Jamadagni	III.62.16-18	3 ṛks
		Total sūktas = 62

All together ten ṛṣis have revealed the mantras of the third *Kulamaṇḍala* called the *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. The prominent ṛṣi Viśvāmītra has revealed the 46 hymns. Then, Vaiśvāmītra ṛṣis have seen the rest hymns of this *maṇḍala*. It is notable that, only one and four mantras are revealed by ṛṣi Ghora Āṅgīrasa and ṛṣi Jamadagniḥ Vaiśvāmītra respectively. Thus, total 62 hymns of the third *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* are found.

Salient Features Of The Third Maṇḍala Of The Family Book

a. In the Family Books, it is seen that the mantradraṣṭṛṣis are belonged to homogeneous family. The third *maṇḍala* of the *Kulamaṇḍalas* is revealed by ṛṣi Viśvāmītra and the ṛṣis belong to his family. There are total ten ṛṣis of this *maṇḍala* have seen the different hymns. Among them, Viśvāmītra Gāthī, Ṛṣabha, Utkīla, Kata, Devarāta, Gāthī Kauśika and Prajāpati are directly belonged to the Vaiśvāmītra family; and Kuśika Aiśrathi is the predecessor of ṛṣi Viśvāmītra. Thus, the ṛṣis of this third *maṇḍala* are allied to one family and the entire Family Book is called the *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala*.

b. It is observed that, the seers of the Family Books have used to compile the different hymns of gods following an interesting serial order. In the first twenty nine hymns of the *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala*, the ṛṣis have prayed to god Agni (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, III.1-29). Among them, the fourth hymn is the Āpī hymn (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, III.4) of this Family Book,

which is seen by Viśvāmītra, the prominent ṛṣi of the third *Kulamaṇḍala*. Again, the hymns to Agni Vaiśvānara, Yupastuti, Indrāgni, Viśvedeva, etc. are also noticed here. Ṛṣi Viśvāmītra has revealed total eighteen hymns of the Agnisūktas of this *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*.

The Indra sūktas of third *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* have recited by ṛṣi Viśvāmītra and the ṛṣis belong to his family (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, III.30-53). There are twenty four hymns seen in this Family Book to praise the god Indra. Among the Indra sūktas the famous *Samvādasūkta*, i.e. Dialogue hymn of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, entitled as the *Viśvāmītra-Nadī-samvādasūkta* (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, III.3) is seen by ṛṣi Viśvāmītra in the third Family Book of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*.

Besides the gods Agni and Indra the ṛṣis of the Family Books have also pleaded to a few common gods. Among them, gods Viśvedevās (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, III.20, 54-57), Savitā (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, III.62, 10-12) and Aśvinau (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, III.58), etc., are noticeable, as these gods are praised by the ṛṣis of the *Kulamaṇḍalas* in the each six *maṇḍala* after the gods Agni and Indra sūktas.

c. As per the arrangement of the Family Books it may be noted that, the every following *maṇḍalas* have the lower numbers of hymns than the preceding *maṇḍalas* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. However, in a few cases, this normal arrangement of the hymns in the *Kulamaṇḍalas* is seemed to be exceptional. In general order, the hymns of the Family Books have been presumed to be formed this special and noteworthy arrangement. But, the *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala* have a large number of hymns than the fourth *maṇḍala* of ṛṣi Vāmadeva.

Maṇḍalas	No. of Sūktas	No. of Rks
2 nd <i>maṇḍala</i>	43	429
3 rd <i>maṇḍala</i>	62	617
4 th <i>maṇḍala</i>	58	589

In this context, the ancient *Ṛgvedic* commentator Mādhava said that, “although the third *maṇḍala* by Viśvāmītra is longer than the fourth *maṇḍala* by Vāmadeva; it is placed before the later, as it contains the famous *Gāyatrīmantra*. But, Viśvāmītra does not supersede Grtsamada, the seer of the second *maṇḍala*, in so far as the later, Viśvāmītra, was originally a Kṣatriya, and through the grace of Indra became a *Brāhmaṇa*, endowed with ‘poetic vision’.”¹⁶ The 62 hymns of the third *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* are seen by the ṛṣis of Vaiśvāmītra family.

Therefore, from the above discussion on the arrangements of the *Kulamaṇḍalas* we have understood that though the numbers of hymns of the third and fourth *maṇḍalas* are not following the rule of the ascension, but according to the Vedic tradition this uniform significance of the Family Books has been accepted. In simple word, the ṛṣis of the Family Books have revealed the Vedic hymns of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* and followed the ascending arrangement order of the hymns.

Conclusion

The *Ṛgvedasamhitā* is prominent Vedic scripture which hymns are seemed to be the historical document of the

Indian thought and philosophy. The Ṛgvedic text has two arrangements, viz. *Aṣṭaka* and *Maṇḍala* in the Vedic literature. According to the *maṇḍala* division, among ten, the six *maṇḍalas* are recognized as the Family Books (*Ṛgvedasamhitā*, II-VII). These particular six Family-Books have some special characteristics in their arrangement and common salient feature. The ṛṣis of these six *maṇḍalas* are homogeneous in character; it means that, the ṛṣis of each *maṇḍala* are belonged to the same family and the hymns have also some uniformity. So, these six *maṇḍalas* are called together the Family Books of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. Indeed, the family background of the mantradrāṣṭārṣis of the Ṛgvedic hymns is also noticed in the six Family Books, the core portion of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. The ṛṣis of the Vedic period are the seers of the truth-knowledge and they discovered many scientific and authentic ideas; because of which the Vedic-philosophy significantly attracts all the intellectual mankind. As the earliest Vedic tradition, the six Family Books of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* are the source of entire Vedic literature and culture.

It is remarkable that, these six Family Books of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* have so many important points to be recognized as the significant and salient feature of them. The third *maṇḍala* is recognized as one of the important Family Book of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. Ṛṣis Vaiśvāmītras have revealed so many hymns depicting their visual concepts with significant principle. The *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* has fulfilled all the characteristics of the uniformity and significant features of the Family Books.

This research paper is a general study on the salient features and the eminence of the third *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* as one of the Family Books. Indeed, using the simple words from heart would like to highlight only the distinguish points of the *Vaiśvāmītramaṇḍala* as one of the Family Books of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* have been explained here in a very understandable manner.

References

- [1] Vide., Tripathi, Brahmananda. (2009). Vaidikavānmayasyetiḥāsa. Varanasi : Chowkhamba Surabharati Prakasan. p. 85.
- [2] Vide., Sarmah, Thanewar. (2007). Sanskrit Sahityar Itivritta. Guwahati : Chandra Prakashan. p. 5. cf., ṛṣirdarśanāt/ Nirukta, 2.3.11.
- [3] cf., vaiśvāmītre ṛṣīye pañcānuvākāḥ/ asya maṇḍaladrāṣṭā viśvāmītra ṛṣiḥ/ Sāyaṇabhāṣya on Ṛgvedasamhitā, III.1.
- [4] cf., praśāsya gām yastapasābhyagachad brahmaṛṣitāmekāsatam ca putrān/ sa gāthiputrastu jagād sūktam somasya metyāgneyaṁ yatpare ca // Bṛhaddevatā, 4.95.

- [5] cf., tadetatparaṛkṣatām gātham śaunaḥśepamākhyānam/ Aitareyabrāhmaṇa, 7.3.
- [6] cf., tadu vaiśvāmītram viśvasya ha vai mitram viśvāmītra āsa// Aitareyabrāhmaṇa, 6.4.
- [7] cf., viśvāmītraḥ sarvāmītraḥ / Nirukta, 2.24.
- [8] cf., somasya mā tavasaṁ vakṣyagne vahniṁ cakārtha vidathe yajadhyai/ deva acchā dīdyad yuñj adriṁ śmāye agne tanvaṁ juṣasva// Ṛgvedasamhitā, III.1.1.
- [9] cf., samitsamit sumanā bodhyame śucāśucā sumatiṁ rāsi vasvaḥ /
- [10] ā deva devān yajathāya vakṣhi sakhā sakhīn tsumanā yakṣyagne // Ibid., III.4.1.
- [11] Ibid., III.3.1-13.
- [12] cf., pra parvatānāmuśatī upasthādaśvai iva viṣite hāsamāne/ gāveva śubhre mātārā rihāṇe vipāṭchutudrī payasā javete // Ibid., III.33.1.
- [13] cf., ramadhvam me vacase somyāya ṛtāvārīrupa muhurtamevaiḥ / pra sindhumachā bṛhatī manīṣā'vasyurahve kuśikasya sūnuḥ // Ibid., III.33.5.
- [14] Vide., Rahurkar, V.G. (1964). The Seers of the Ṛgveda. Poona : University of Poona. p.36.
- [15] cf., tat saviturvareṇyaṁ bhargo devasya dhīmahi/ dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt // Ṛgvedasamhitā, III.62.10.
- [16] Vide., Radhakrishnan, S. (Ed.), (1958). The Cultural Heritage of India (Vol.I). Culcutta : The Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture. p. 200.

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- [1] Malaviya, Sudhakar (Ed.). 1996. Aitareyabrāhmaṇa with the commentary 'Vedārthaprakāśa' of Sāyaṇācārya. (Vols.I-II). Varanasi : Tara Book Agency.
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- [3] Sarup, Lakshman (Ed.). 2015. Naighaṅṭusamanvitam Niruktam (5th ed.). Delhi : Motilal Banarasidass.
- [4] Sonatakke, N.S. (Ed.). 1933, 1936, 1941, 1946, 1951. Ṛgvedasamhitā with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya (Vols. I-V). Poona : Vaidika Saṁśodhan Maṇḍala.