

प्रणवविचार

Praṇava Vicāra

translated by Detlef Eichler and Peter Freund

Synopsis:

In the beginning of the recitation of Yajurveda the experts in Vedic knowledge utter “hariḥ om” with udātta accent and 4 mātrās of om.

According to the opinion of others, the word “hari” is not uttered, because “om” is such an excellent and auspicious word, Brahman itself, that it does not require another word uttered before it.

The author of Praṇava Vicāra refutes this opinion by quoting a Śikṣā which says that “hari” should be spoken before “om.”

Other objections to the correctness of “hariḥ om”:

1. Objection to the udātta of the “i” of “hari” because in the Vedic texts the “i” of “hari” is svarita.
2. Objection to the udātta of “om” because in the mantras, “om tad brahma,” etc., the “o” is svarita.
3. Objection to the 4 mātrās of om because in the mantras, “om bhūḥ, om bhuva,” etc., “om” has 2 mātrās only.
4. Objection to the visarga of “hariḥ” because according to sandhi rules the visarga should be replaced by repha (“r”).

The author of Praṇava Vicāra refutes all these objections by quoting verses from Śikṣās which prove the correctness of “hariḥ om” uttered with udātta accent and 4 mātrās of “om” in the beginning of the recitation of Yajurveda.

ओम् लोके यजुर्वेदाध्ययनारम्भकाले वेदस्वरूप-

लक्षणज्ञाशिष्टाः १

1. The teachings of the experts regarding the special invocatory expression suitable to the dignity and stature of Veda that is uttered at the beginning of the recitation of Yajurveda in public.

हरिः ओम्

इत्येकमात्राकाल अकार इकारसहिताभ्यामुदात्तस्वर-
युताभ्यां हकाररेफाभ्यामर्धमात्रा काल विसर्जनीयेन च
सहितं हरिशब्दमात्रिका वत्सानुसृति संज्ञिकविवृत्ति-
विरामेण सहचतुर्मात्राकालोदात्तस्वरसहितमोम्कारं
चोच्चार्यानन्तरं वेदाध्ययनारम्भं कुर्वन्ति २

2. [That special invocatory expression is] “Háriḥ Óm.”

In the beginning of the recitation of Yajurveda the experts in Vedic knowledge utter “Háriḥ Óm,” with udātta accent and 4 mātrāṣ of om. The duration in mātrās of the word “Háriḥ” is h (1/2), a (1), r (1/2), i (1), and ḥ (1); the hiatus “vatsānusṛti” (1 mātrā), and om (4 mātrās).

अत्र केचिच्चतुर्मात्राकालोदात्तस्वरविशिष्टोम्कारोच्चारण-
मात्रमेवालं न तु हरि शब्दोच्चारणमिति वदन्ति ।

ओम्कारस्योत्कृष्टत्वात् ।

3a. Instead of “Hariḥ Om,” some teachers speak “om” only, because of the excellence of “om.”

ओम्कारश्चाथ शब्दश्च द्वावेतौ ब्रह्मणः पुरा

कण्ठं भित्त्वा विनिर्यातौ तस्मान्माङ्गलिकावुभाविति

3b. The word “om” and the word “atha” emanated from the throat of Brahmā at the beginning of the creation, and therefore, both are considered auspicious.

ओंकारस्य मङ्गलवाचकत्वात्

3c. Because of the auspiciousness of “om.”

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्मेति¹

3d. Om is said to be the one-syllabled Brahman.

ब्रह्मप्रतिपादकत्वाच्च

3e. Because of expressing in speech the inexpressible Brahman.

ओम्कारः स्वर्गद्वारम्

3f. The letter “om” is the door of heaven.

तस्माद्ब्रह्माद्ध्येष्यमाण

3g. Because of the letter “om” being the solicitation of Brahman.

एतदादिप्रतिपद्येतेति धर्मशास्त्रविधेश्च

3h. And because of its use being enjoined by the law books (dharma śāstras).

ओंकारस्योत्कृष्टत्वमिति चेन्मैवम् ।

3i. With all these arguments supporting the excellence of “om,” some teachers maintain that this letter “om” (alone) should be spoken at the beginning of recitation, but it is not correct to recite “om” (alone) in this way.

ओम्कारस्योत्कृष्टत्वे सत्यपिपूर्वं हरिशब्दोच्चारणाभावे

दोषः प्रसज्यते ।

3j. In spite of the excellence of “om” a fault occurs if one does not speak the word “hari” before “om.”

अध्यायस्य मुखे चान्ते भूत्वा विद्वानतन्द्रितः

संरक्षणाय वेदानां हरिं प्रणवमुच्चरेत्

3k. At the beginning and end of the Vedic recitation, the wise who are alert to what is correct and proper speak “hari” and “om” in order to protect the Vedas. (Sarvasaṁmata Śikṣā 210-211.)

1 Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā 8.13.

आदावनुक्ते स्रवति तस्य चान्ते विशीर्यते

3l. If it is not spoken out at the beginning the recitation fails; if it is left out at the end, it is ruined. (Sarvasammata Śikṣā 212.)

आद्यन्तौ पुटितोकारौ स्यातामङ्गानि तस्य तत्

इत्यादि शीक्षा वचनबाहुल्यादवश्यं विसर्जनीय सहित

हरिशब्दपूर्वकोकारोच्चारणं कर्तव्यं अत्रान्यः कश्चिदाक्षेप

उच्यते ओंकारात्पूर्वस्य हरीति प्रातिपदिकत्वात्परस्य

विसर्जनीयस्य रेफमेतेष्वतिसूत्रेण रेफप्राप्तेः ३

3m. According to the ancient Śikṣā texts, these two words should be routinely pronounced together at the beginning of recitation: The word “hari” with visarga is pronounced before the syllable “om.”

हरिरन्यस्यां भवति स्वधावान् ²

हरिरसि हारियोजन इत्यादि ³

4a. [In these mantras the second syllable of “hari” is svarita.]

स्थलेषु स्थितस्य हरिशब्दस्य स्वरितान्तत्वदर्शनाच्च ४

4. And because of seeing in the texts that the end of hari is marked with the svarita.

ओन्तद् ब्रह्म

ओन्तद्वायुरिति ⁴

2 Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 2.7.12.2; Ṛg Veda 1.95.1

3 Taittirīya Saṁhitā 1.4.28

4 ओन्तद् ब्रह्म । ओन्तद्वायुः । ओन्तदात्मा । ओन्तत्सर्वम् । ओन्तत्पुरोर्नमः । Taittirīya Āraṇyaka 10.68.1: Chapter 10 is the

5a. [In these mantras om is svarita.]

आदि स्थलेषु स्थितस्योकारस्य स्वरितत्वदर्शनाच्च

हरिरोमित्यनिष्टरूपप्रसंगः स्यात् ५

5. And because of seeing that “om” in the texts is marked with the svarita, “harir om” would be the case of a wrong form.

किञ्च ओम् भूः । ओम् भुव इत्यादि स्थलेषु

स्थितस्योकारस्य द्विमात्राकाल दर्शनादस्य

प्रारम्भकोकारस्य चतुर्मात्राकालत्वं कथमिति

नायमाक्षेपः ६

6. Because of seeing that “om” in *om bhūh* | *om bhuva* etc. has two mātrās only why has “om” in the beginning four mātrās?

हरिप्रणवयोर्मध्ये स्थितस्य विसर्जनीयस्य

रेफप्राप्तिरस्तीति यदुक्तम् । तदयुक्तम् ।

7a. It might be expected that the visarga placed between “hari” and “om” is transformed into repha (r); that is not the case.

प्रश्नानुवाकाद्यारम्भे सविसर्गोच्चको हरिः ।⁵

7b. In the beginning of a praśna and anuvāka, “hari” is spoken with visarga and udātta.

न सन्धिः प्रणवस्यादौ विरामे स्वरितो भवेत् ७

5 Śambhu Śikṣā:

praśnānuvākādyārambhe savisargoccaro hariḥ
sasandhiḥ praṇavasyādi virāme svarito bhavet

Veda Śikṣā:

ārambhe hariśabdaś ca savisargaścaro bhavet
na sandhiḥ praṇavasyādaḥ virāme svarito bhavet 1

7c. There is no sandhi (transformation) applied at the start of “om.”

प्लुतानां प्रगृहाणां च तथा वर्णक्रमस्य च

हरिप्रणवयोर्मध्ये सन्धिर्न स्यात्कदाचनेति ⁶

8a. Pluta and protracted vowels, the letters in the varṇakrama recitation and the visarga in the middle of “hari” and “om” are exempt from sandhi.

शीक्षायां विशेषविधेर्हरिप्रणवयोर्मध्ये स्थितस्य

विसर्जनीयस्य रेफमेतेष्विति सूत्रोक्तरेफरूपसन्धिर्न

प्रसरति ८

8b. Because of this special rule taught in the Śikṣā texts, the transformation into repha (r) of the visarga between “hari” and “om” does not take place.

किञ्च । हरिरन्यस्यां भवति स्वधावान् । हरिरसि

हारियोजन इत्यादिस्थलेषु स्थितस्य हरि शब्दवत्

हरिः ओमित्यत्रापि स्थितस्य हरिशब्दस्य यत्

स्वरितान्तत्वमुक्तं तदप्यसाधु । प्रश्नानुवाकाद्यारम्भे

सविसर्गोच्चको हरिः । न सन्धिः प्रणवस्यादौ विरामे

स्वरितो भवेदिति शीक्षा वचनात्

प्रश्नानुवाकाद्यारम्भकालोक्तहरिशब्दः सोदात्त एव ९

9. In the examples cited, “harir anyasyām bhavati svadhāvān,” “harir asi,” and “hāriyोजना,” the final syllable of “hari” is spoken with svarita accent. To speak in this way “hariḥ om” with “hari” receiving final svarita is not correct. There is no sandhi (transformation) applied at the start of “om”: Thus it is stated in the Śikṣā texts. In the beginning of a praśna and anuvāka

6 Compare Ātreya Śikṣā 123.1: *haripraṇavamadhya 'pi sandhir na syāt pluteṣu ca.*

“hari” is spoken with visarga and udātta always.

किञ्च । ओम्भूः । ओम्भुव इत्यादि स्थलेषु
स्थितोकारवदस्य प्रारम्भकोकारस्य चतुर्मात्राकालत्वं
नेति यदुक्तं तदप्यसंगतमेव ।

10a. To pronounce “om” with four mātrās, for example in the expressions “om bhūh” and “om bhuva” is not correct.

प्रारम्भकश्चतुर्मात्रो वेदस्थः स्यात्तदर्धकः ।

10b. “Om” at the beginning of recitation has 4 mātrās. “Om” occurring in the Vedic text has half that length. (Sarvasaṁmata Śikṣā 214)

अध्यायान्त्योऽनुवाकान्त्यः कर्माद्यश्च त्रिमात्रिक इति

10c. The “om” at the end of recitation and at the end of an anuvāka, as also at the beginning of a yagya performance has three mātrās. Thus it is laid down: (Sarvasaṁmata Śikṣā 215)

वचनात्प्रश्नानुवाकाद्यारम्भकालोक्तस्योकारस्य चतुर्मात्रा
कालत्वं सिद्धम् १०

10d. Thus it has been demonstrated that the syllable “om” spoken at the beginning of a praśna or anuvāka has four mātra duration.

किञ्च । औन्तद् ब्रह्म । औन्तद्वायुरित्यादिस्थलेषु
स्थितोकारवदस्य प्रारम्भकोकारस्य यत्स्वरितत्वमुक्तं
तदप्यसमञ्जसम् ।

11a. “Om” in the expressions “on tad brahma” and “on tad vāyur” is spoken with svarita accent; however, to speak the “om” at the start of recitation with svarita accent is not correct.

यजुः प्रणव उच्चः स्यात् स्वराः स्युस्त्वो तदादिषडिति

11b. The “om” in Yajurveda is udātta. It is svarita in the expressions “om

tad” etc. Thus it is laid down. (Sarvasaṁmata Śikṣā 213)

वचनादो तदादिषडोकारव्यतिरिक्तस्थले यजुर्वेदे
प्रणवः सोदात्त एव । प्रणवस्य स्वरितत्वं तु ओं
तद्ब्रह्मेत्यनुवाकविषयमिति विवेकः ११

11c. “Om” in the expression om̐ tat, etc., is a special case: at the start of recitation of the Veda, “om” is always pronounced udātta. “Om” is pronounced svarita in expressions “om̐ tad brahmā,” etc., occurring in the middle of an anuvāka. That is the distinction.

तस्माद्यजुर्वेदाध्ययनारम्भकाले हरिः ओमिति
पूर्वोक्तशिष्टसंप्रदाय एव प्रमाणमिति राद्धान्तः १२

12. Therefore, in the beginning of the recitation of Yajurveda, “hariḥ om” is uttered. This is the teaching handed down by tradition since ancient times, and it is fully justified: This is the demonstrated conclusion.

हरिः ओम्

केवलः स्वरयुक्तश्च मात्रिकासहितस्तथा
सांगश्च सारभूतश्च पञ्चवर्णक्रमान्विदुः⁷

प्राकृता वैकृता चैव स्वरभक्ती उभे मते

वैकृता स्वरभक्तिस्तु स्वर्यते पूर्वमुच्चरेत् १३

13. The syllable “om” by itself and in combination has been examined, and similarly the duration of all parts of the expression, “hariḥ om.” Referring to the teachings of Śikṣā by the wise seers of ancient times, the precise letter by letter pronunciation has been examined as well as the critical

⁷ Ātreya Śikṣā 13.2-14.1

kevalaḥ svarasaṁyukto mātrikāśahitas tathā 13

sāṅgaśca varṇasāraś ca pañcavarṇakramān viduḥ

importance of beginning every recitation with “hariḥ om”.

Correct pronunciation and also the deviations from correct practice have been examined, as well as the peculiar absence of sandhi which effects both the accent and duration. It is wrong to make the intervening visarga into a repha (r), its pronunciation as a visarga preserves the correct pronunciation of all three syllables as udātta.

[इति प्रणवविचारः समाप्तम्]

End of Praṇava Vicāra

Parallel passages from Ātreya Śikṣā and Sarvasaṁmata Śikṣā

Ātreya Śikṣā

prārambhakoṁkārādi sandhiniṣedhaḥ

ādau prārambhakoṁkāre tv akāraḥ pādamātrikaḥ

sa tripādadvimātra syād ukāro mas tu mātrikaḥ 121

=> “a” 1/4 mātrā; “u” 2 3/4 mātrās; “m” 1 mātrā [Total 4 mātrās]

adhyāyānte 'nuvākānte makāras tv ardhāmātrikaḥ

varṇakramaprapāṭheṣu svarātkāraparādadhāḥ 122

haripraṇavamadhye 'pi sandhir na syāt pluteṣu ca

Sārvasaṁmata Śikṣā

vedasyopakrame vidvānavasāne'pyatandritaḥ [210]

uccaretpraṇavaṁ brahmarakṣāyai chandasāṁ sphuṭam 66 [211]

ādāv anukte sravati parastāc ca viśīryate [212]

yajuḥ praṇava uccaḥ syāt svārāḥ syus tv om tadādiṣu 67 [213]

prārambhakaś caturmātro vedasthaḥ syāt tadardhakaḥ [214]

adhyāyāntyo 'nuvākāntyo karmād yaś ca trimātrikaḥ 68 [215]

prārambhād yaḥ kramān nādo mātrānudvyaṇumātrikaḥ [216]

vedastha praṇave tu syāt samakāre dvimātratā 69 [218]

