



Overcoming the problems of translating vedic literature in Indonesian language through sri aurobindo's vedic interpretation method

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Vedas are the earliest texts known to humanity. Given their status as an ancient text, as well as the loss of Vedic knowledge over the centuries, it is unsurprising that understanding them presents a significant challenge to modern readers, particularly in terms of their use of archaic language, symbols, and parables. As a result, there is a significant discrepancy between the interpretation of the Vedas by the Vedic people and by modern scholars. Meanwhile, in the modern era, Western scholars engage in research and translation of the Vedas without fully grasping their significance as perceived by the Rishis. This presents a challenge in attempting to comprehend the Vedic texts. Accordingly, the objective of any translation of sacred literature must be to bridge this interpretive gap and to retain the significance of the original words. **Methods:** In Hinduism, as some of the archaic words, some of which only appear once and constitute around 25% of the Vedas, disappeared from common usage, the method of translation and interpretation of these words was first developed by Yāska, and added on to by Sāyaṇa. It is therefore crucial to gain an understanding of, and to develop the skills of, these three individuals. Focusing on more recent times, Sri Aurobindo (who died in 1950) provided more practical and accessible guidance for the present era. His method of Vedic interpretation is a synthesis of linguistic proficiency as delineated in Nirukta, an appreciation for symbolism, and an understanding of psychological principles, thereby ensuring that the words of the Vedas retain their capacity to resonate with individuals on a personal level. **Findings:** This entails a comprehensive examination that encompasses a profound grasp of the symbolism, philosophy, and spiritual intent enshrined in the Vedas. Sri Aurobindo's approach integrates symbolic interpretation with a broad cosmic vision, thereby enabling the translator to capture the spiritual core of the sacred text while remaining faithful to its original context. **Conclusion:** Furthermore, this method considers the relevance and applicability of Vedic teachings in contemporary Indonesian culture.

KEYWORDS: vedic hermeneutics; vedic interpretation; interpretation theory; vedas

1. Introduction

The Vedic methods of study remain poorly understood in Indonesia. It is notable that even Hindu universities do not offer courses on Vedic hermeneutics and interpretation methods. It is therefore crucial to gain an understanding of these methods in order to provide

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knowledge and skills on how to translate and interpret Vedic mantras, sutras, and slokas, as well as Hindu literature.

Bhāṣya is a commentary on a Vedic text by a learned and recognized scholar. This is a very old tradition, known as vedabhāṣya. In the field of Sanskrit literature, a Bhāṣya is typically attached to each Sūtra of a technical branch of knowledge (or Śāstra). These commentaries are written by scholars of recognized expertise and integrity. Among the numerous Bhāṣya commentaries, Pāṇini's work on the Vyākaraṇa sūtra is particularly renowned as the Mahābhāṣya (Surpi, 2023).

Sri Aurobindo placed great emphasis on the necessity of attaining a profound comprehension of the textual content. This method is concerned with identifying the truth of a word or the meaning of a text by combining philological and psychological methods of Vedic interpretation. This method of Vedic interpretation places an emphasis on achieving a profound comprehension of the text, even with regard to symbols and sounds. Prior to Sri Aurobindo's contributions, Hindu philosophers employed the Vedic interpretation method to compose Bhāṣya (commentaries) and elucidations of Vedic concepts. This method is associated with the Vedic Hermeneutic tradition but is distinguished by its integration of Sri Aurobindo's methodological approach (Surpi, 2020a) which encompasses scientific research and interpretation techniques commonly utilized in the study of Vedic texts (Murty, 1993).

Methods of Vedic interpretation have evolved over the centuries, reflecting the complexity and depth of these sacred texts. One of the main approaches is the Mimamsa method, developed by Jaimini around the 4th century BC. This method focuses on the literal and ritual interpretation of the Vedic texts, with an emphasis on the proper performance of ceremonies (Flood, 1996). On the other hand, the Vedānta tradition, which began with the works of Bādarāyaṇa around the 2nd century BCE, takes a more philosophical and metaphysical approach in interpreting the Vedas, seeking deeper meanings behind rituals and symbols (Radhakrishnan, 1960). Modern scholars such as Max Müller in the 19th century introduced philological and comparative approaches in Vedic studies, paving the way for deeper historical and linguistic understanding (Müller, 1859).

Contemporary approaches to Vedic interpretation often combine various methods, including hermeneutic analyses, comparative studies of religions, and anthropological perspectives. For example, Frits Staal's (1983) work combines linguistic analyses with ritual studies to understand the structure and meaning of Vedic mantras. Wendy Doniger (2010) uses an interdisciplinary approach that combines mythology, history, and gender studies in her interpretation of Vedic texts. Meanwhile, contemporary Indian scholars such as Kapil Kapoor (2005) emphasise the importance of understanding the Vedas in the context of the broader Indian intellectual tradition. This diversity of approaches reflects the complexity and richness of the Vedic tradition, as well as the challenges scholars face in interpreting these ancient texts in a modern context.

(Purani, 1963) states that the Vedas represent the earliest form of creation, characterized by an intuitive and symbolic mentality. This was subsequently reflected in intellectual works that were rich in ideas and mysteries. As might be expected, the Vedas have become challenging to comprehend in the present era due to their reliance on archaic terminology, parables, and symbolic narratives. In its development, the Brahmins utilized it as a source of ritual guidance and philosophy, while Western scholars confined their examination to the surface aspects of language, mythology, and history, ultimately reducing it to a primitive historical document.

By contrast, the Vedic Rishis perceived each word as an endeavour to articulate the essence of reality through the medium of mystical imagery and symbols, thereby conferring meaning upon the human experience. This is related to the discovery of divinity and the unfolding of human potential, rather than merely logical and sensible words. It is for this reason that it is written kavayaḥ satyaśrutāḥ (कवयः सत्यश्रुताः) - the Vedic Rishis (described here as poets) were privy to an understanding of the absolute truth. (Purani, 1963).

Accordingly, a discrepancy exists between the understanding of the Vedas by the Rishis and that of modern humanity. The interpretation of a mantra or word varies between,

and sometimes even within, the variety of Hindu sects. Meanwhile, in this modern age, the link between the ancient Rishis and contemporary society is provided by Western scholars, who lack an understanding of the fundamental essence and mystical-symbolic aspects of the Vedas, and thus tend to view the Vedas through a more reductive, primitive lens (Priestley, 1799).

Vedic literature constitutes a primary foundation of Hindu spiritual practice. Nevertheless, a growing phenomenon among Hindus in Indonesia indicates that only a small proportion of them engage in the practice of reading or delving into these sacred texts (Lutsyshyna, 2012). The practice of engaging with the sacred Vedic literature is largely confined to specific circles, even within the scholarly community, while the majority of individuals are either unaccustomed to or disinterested in pursuing a regular study of this venerable text. This presents a significant challenge in maintaining the continuity of Vedic teachings among Indonesian Hindus, who should view the Vedas as a source of inspiration for their spiritual lives.

Moreover, there is a paucity of interest among Hindu students in reading Vedic literature. A considerable number of students evince no interest in exploring the Vedic texts, despite the significant role these texts play in shaping character and spirituality. This lack of interest can be attributed to a number of factors, including the complexity of the Vedic language, which presents a challenge to comprehension even to scholars of classical Sanskrit, and the limited availability of translations into Indonesian. For a considerable number of Hindus, the capacity to read translations of the Vedic texts is constrained. This situation underscores the vital importance of making Vedic teachings more readily accessible in a language that is more easily comprehensible.

While numerous attempts have been made to translate Vedic sacred literature into Indonesian, the resulting translations are often deemed unsatisfactory. Many Hindus find the translated texts difficult to comprehend due to the use of archaic language and terminology (Griffith, 1896), not contextualized to everyday life, and lacking the inner satisfaction typically associated with sacred texts. This indicates a deficiency in the explanation methodology employed, whereby insufficient consideration has been given to the local context in Indonesia and the spiritual and philosophical dimensions of the Vedas themselves. Consequently, a novel approach to translating the Vedas is required, one that incorporates a more comprehensive interpretive framework, such as that proposed by Sri Aurobindo.

This research is significant because it addresses the challenge of translating sacred Vedic literature in Indonesia. The literature often faces challenges in conveying deep philosophical and spiritual meanings to the public. This research will help to overcome such challenges. The adoption of Sri Aurobindo's method of Vedic interpretation enables this research to offer a more comprehensive and esoteric perspective, thereby facilitating readers' comprehension of the intrinsic dimensions of Vedic teachings. This approach will not only enhance the quality of the translation, but also expand the religious horizons in Indonesia, facilitating the harmonization between local spiritual traditions and a global understanding of the Vedas.

2. Methods

This article is the result of a comprehensive literature review. Literature research is a series of activities related to the collection of data from libraries, the reading and recording of research materials, and their subsequent processing. (Zed, 2008). The research stages employed comprise the collection of research materials, the reading of literature, the recording and processing of research notes. The method employed is Vedic interpretation, as developed by Sri Aurobindo (Surpi, 2022b).

The data analysis technique used is content analysis. (Kriyantono, 2006) states that qualitative content analysis is also referred to as Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA), which is defined as a combination of objective content analysis with participant observation. The term "ECA" signifies that researchers engage with documentary materials or even conduct in-depth interviews so that particular statements can be situated within

the appropriate context for analysis. Qualitative content analysis is systematic and analytical, yet not as rigid as quantitative analysis. Analytical methods based on the qualitative content analysis approach include framing analysis, discourse analysis, textual analysis, semiotics, rhetorical analysis, and ideological criticism. (Kriyantono, 2006).

The Vedic interpretation method is currently being piloted on a randomly selected cohort of 100 Hindu university students, divided into four groups. The efficacy of the intervention will be evaluated by measuring changes in understanding, satisfaction, and engagement levels among the participants using NVivo software for data processing.

3. Results and Discussion

The process of translating sacred Vedic literature in Indonesia is beset with complex challenges, including linguistic differences, cultural interpretations, and a paucity of understanding regarding the profound historical and philosophical context of the texts. The findings of the research indicate that the implementation of Sri Aurobindo's Vedic interpretation method in teaching can provide a significant solution to the aforementioned problems.

Vedas are a collection of mantras. In addition, Vedas describe the habits, thoughts, traditions, etc. of ancient people (Zade, et al., 2021). Sri Aurobindo's method of emphasizing an integral approach to understanding the Vedas, which focuses not only on the literalness of the text but also on its deeper spiritual and symbolic meanings, has been demonstrated to improve the understanding of Vedic translators and learners in Indonesia. This is evidenced by their enhanced ability to interpret and translate Vedic texts with greater accuracy and relevance to the Indonesian cultural context. In trials of teaching this method in several educational institutions and spiritual communities in Indonesia, it was found that participants taught using the Sri Aurobindo method demonstrated a deeper and more thorough understanding of the Vedic content compared to conventional methods. They were able to identify and interpret symbolism and esoteric meanings in the text, which were previously difficult to understand.

The translation of Vedic sacred literature presents a significant challenge, as these texts are replete with layers of complex and sometimes ambiguous meanings. As the various regions of Hindu Civilization, Indonesia included, have diverged from both the Vedic tradition and each other, this challenge assumes even greater significance. Some of the issues that frequently emerge include the challenge of conveying spiritual concepts that lack well-known direct equivalents in a heavily Arabized and Europeanized Indonesian and the inclination to interpret texts in a literal manner without fully considering their symbolic and spiritual dimensions.

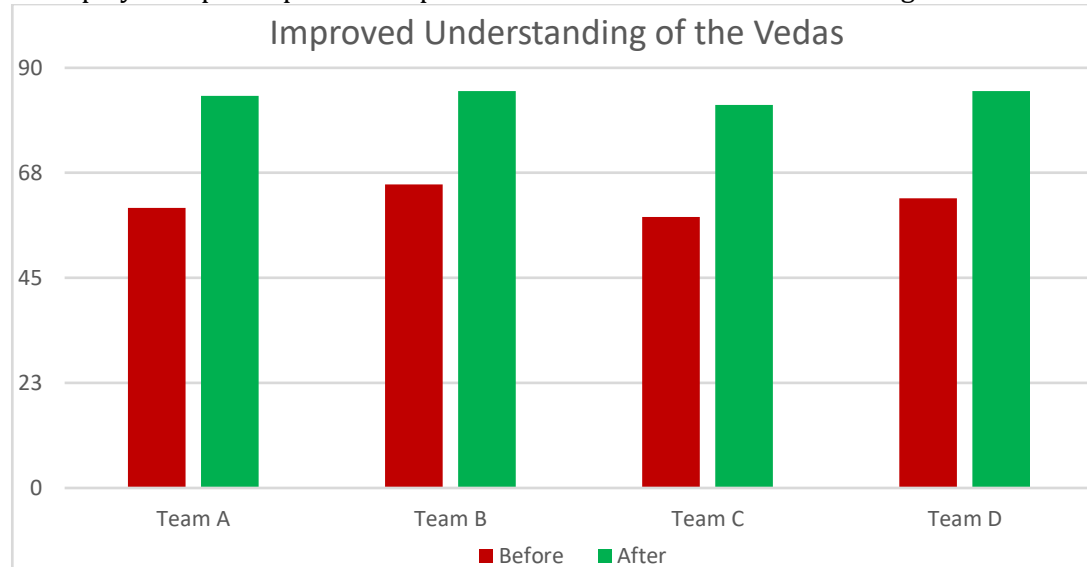
Sri Aurobindo's method of Vedic interpretation offers a more comprehensive approach. It not only seeks to understand the text literally but also emphasizes the importance of the spiritual and symbolic context underlying the Vedic teachings. Sri Aurobindo posited that the Vedas should be understood as texts containing profound esoteric knowledge, which can only be accessed through an intuitive and spiritual approach, rather than solely through rational analysis.

In the context of teaching in Indonesia, the application of this method facilitates a more nuanced comprehension of the core tenets of Vedic teachings, contextualized in a manner that resonates more profoundly with the learners' lived experiences and cultural milieu. Furthermore, this method helps to overcome language limitations by encouraging a more intuitive and reflective understanding of the text. Furthermore, this approach acknowledges the significance of incorporating spiritual experience into the translation process, a factor that is frequently disregarded in traditional methodologies.

Consequently, the implementation of Sri Aurobindo's approach to Vedic interpretation in Indonesia represents a viable solution to the challenge of translating sacred Vedic texts. The method not only enhances the quality of the translation, but also fosters a deeper spiritual and cultural understanding among both the translators and the learners. Accordingly, the method was tested on four distinct study groups, with 100 samples randomly divided into four study groups. The scores reflecting comprehension

improvement before and after the learning of Sri Aurobindo's Vedic interpretation method were calculated. The results are illustrated in the subsequent graph.

The graph presented illustrates the effectiveness of Sri Aurobindo's Vedic interpretation method in the context of learning in Indonesia. The graph displays data from four study groups (A, B, C, and D) consisting of 25 participants each, making a total sample size of 100. The horizontal axis of the graph shows these study groups, while the vertical axis displays the participants' comprehension scores of the Vedic teachings.



The resulting graph illustrates two principal aspects of the observation results obtained through the *in vivo* program. The horizontal axis depicts the four study groups, designated as Group A, B, C, and D. This represents the diverse cohort of participants involved in the study. The Y-axis presents the comprehension scores achieved by each group. This score represents a quantitative measure of the participants' level of understanding of the Vedic teachings, both before and after the application of Sri Aurobindo's method.

The red bar, which represents the data collected prior to the implementation of Sri Aurobindo's method, depicts the comprehension scores of the groups at the outset of the study. The scores range from 58 to 65, indicating a considerable variation in comprehension among the groups prior to the intervention. The green bar (after Aurobindo method) depicts the comprehension scores of the groups following the application of Sri Aurobindo's method. It is evident that each group exhibited a notable enhancement, with scores after the intervention spanning from 83 to 88.

Following the implementation of the Sri Aurobindo method, each study group exhibited a discernible enhancement in comprehension. This improvement was observed consistently across all groups, thereby indicating that the method is broadly effective.

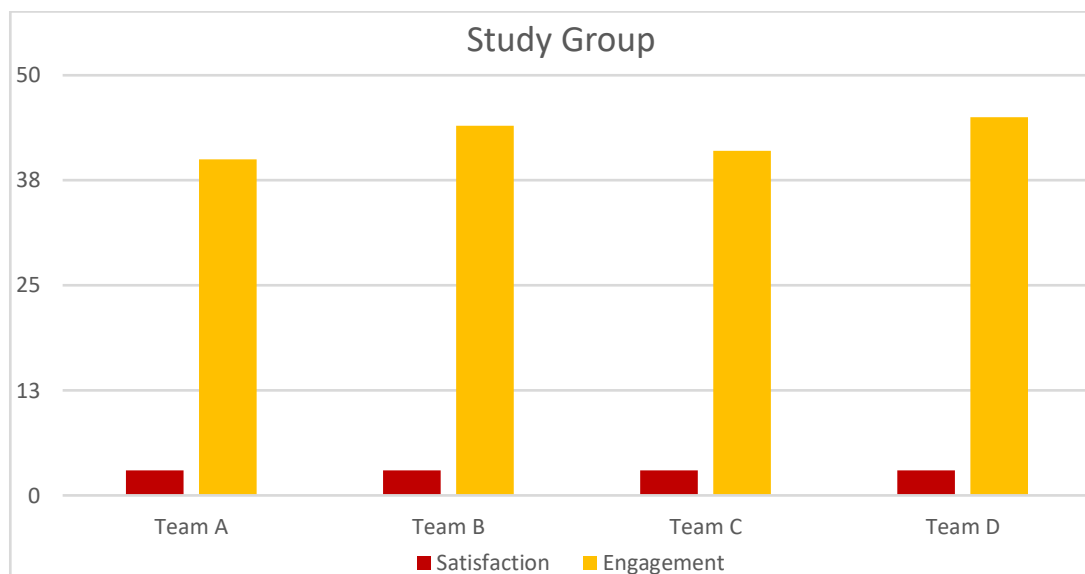
The elevation in score from the preliminary assessment (prior to the methodology) to the ultimate score (subsequent to the methodology) substantiates that Sri Aurobindo's approach had a tangible, beneficial effect. This indicates that learners are better able to comprehend the Vedic teachings when they are provided with a more comprehensive and spiritual approach.

The graph demonstrates that Sri Aurobindo's Vedic interpretation method is an effective approach for enhancing participants' comprehension of the Vedic teachings. The method enables participants to comprehend the text on a literal level, while also grasping its deeper, esoteric meaning, which represents the core of Vedic teachings.

The presented graphs substantiate the assertion that Sri Aurobindo's approach can serve as a viable solution to the challenges inherent in translating and interpreting Vedic texts in Indonesia. Furthermore, the method's efficacy has been demonstrated in diverse teaching contexts, making it a potentially adaptable approach for use with different groups.

The initial graph on the left illustrates the enhancement in comprehension of the Vedas, both before and after the implementation of the Sri Aurobindo method. All study groups demonstrated notable advancement, with a discernible increase in comprehension scores.

The subsequent data pertain to participants' satisfaction and engagement with Sri Aurobindo's method of Vedic translation. Data on participants' levels of satisfaction and engagement after using the Sri Aurobindo method. Satisfaction levels were measured using a five-point scale, with results ranging from 4.5 to 4.8, indicating high levels of satisfaction among participants. Meanwhile, participants' engagement levels also showed positive results, with engagement percentages ranging from 80% to 87%. This quantitative data strengthens the argument that Sri Aurobindo's method is not only effective in improving understanding, but also succeeds in creating a positive learning experience and actively engaging participants in the process of learning Vedic teachings.



These findings demonstrate that the implementation of Sri Aurobindo's Vedic interpretation method not only enhanced participants' comprehension of the instructional material but also elevated their levels of satisfaction and engagement in the learning process. The results indicate that the method effectively makes complex materials, such as the Vedas, more accessible and comprehensible to participants in Indonesia while maintaining or even increasing their interest and participation.

The analysis demonstrates positive outcomes in actual contexts, thereby substantiating the assertion that Sri Aurobindo's approach can serve as an efficacious solution for Vedic instruction in Indonesia. Thus, this method of Vedic interpretation is very likely to be applied in an effort to overcome the problems of translating the Sacred Vedic Scripture in Indonesia.

Pramāṇasāstra, or Vedic epistemology, serves as a conduit for the emergence of Vedic scholars and Hindu scientists. Scholars are not merely individuals with advanced academic qualifications; they are also distinguished by their capacity to engage in critical thinking and analysis, which enables them to contribute to the advancement of civilization through their written works, including books, articles, and other intellectual outputs. The magnum opus serves as proof of one's scholarship. The production of a work, particularly a significant one, cannot be based solely on an academic degree. Therefore, the path to becoming a scientist necessitates a solid grasp of Pramāṇasāstra, which enables the scientist to study an object of knowledge. Advaitic philosopher Adisankara posits that the foundation of prameya (object of knowledge) is highly dependent on pramana.

It is essential for those engaged in the study of Vedic philosophy and texts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Pramāṇasāstra, which constitutes an indispensable

element of Ānvīkṣikī (आन्वीक्षिकी) (Surpi, 2022a). Comprehensive grasp of the Pramāṇasāstra enables its application in research, conceptualization, and the creation of specific works. In essence, the Pramāṇasāstra employs four fundamental principles (pratyakṣa, anumāna, upamāna and śabda) to arrive at conclusions. (Surpi, 2023). An object of knowledge can be deemed valid if it can be tested with the four main pramāṇas. (Aryadharma, 2019).

To illustrate, a scientist initiates a research project employing the pratyakṣa approach, which entails meticulous observation and measurement of an object, such as a recently unearthed ancient pratima. It is essential to conduct comprehensive observations, including measurements, and, when necessary, subject the stone forming part of the pratima to laboratory analysis to ascertain its approximate manufacture and provenance. In order to substantiate the observations, suitable pramāṇas may be employed, such as upamāna pramāṇa, which is a method of observation that involves comparing potential similarities in the observed object with existing or known objects.

The observed pratima bears a resemblance to the murti of Siva, with the notable distinction of having three faces. The upamāna pattern of work is comprehensive in scope. The method of comparison with similar pratimas in other locations, in ancient civilizations, was thoroughly explored. (Surpi, 2022a). Subsequently, the method of śabda, which entails examining manuscripts, ancient relics in the form of inscriptions, and finally the Vedas and Hindu Sūtra, is employed. A comprehensive reading of texts related to the existence of murti puja Siva yielded compelling evidence of the historical practice of Siva worship Trisiraḥ. The conclusion can be considered valid when supported by strong evidence from the above three pramāṇa, namely pratyakṣa, upamāna, and śabda. (Surpi, 2020b).

Sri Aurobindo's theory of Vedic interpretation represents a prominent approach to Vedic interpretation, widely recognized by scholars in both Eastern and Western academic traditions as a comprehensive methodology. His method of interpretation is more commonly referred to as the psychological approach. The proposed method would facilitate coherence among the Vedic texts by elucidating their underlying mystery and message. Sri Aurobindo developed his theory of interpretation through an examination of the teachings of the Rishis and an analysis of their methods of interpreting a Vedic mantra. It is recommended that Hindu scientists and lecturers devote their attention to this subject and that they disseminate the knowledge they gain to students at all levels of education, from Bachelor's to Doctoral. In order to ensure that academic texts are of a sufficiently high scientific standard. One of the impediments to the advancement of science and the emergence of new scholars in the Hindu milieu is the presence of Western feudalistic structures, which posits a conflict between the old and the new. A feudal mindset tends to view the older generation as more powerful, experienced, and intelligent, while younger individuals are often perceived as a potential threat. While advanced age does not necessarily indicate the acquisition of knowledge or wisdom, it is not a guarantee of either (Bhandari, 2021).

Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of Western interpretations is unequivocal in its assertion that all Western theories and interpretations are in contradiction with the Vedic tradition, which regards the Vedas as the source of all subsequent culture. The assumption of Western scholars that the Upanishads arose as an attempt to rebel against the formalism of Vedic ritual is untenable (Sweetman, 2024). In the Upanishads and Puranas, the gods are psychological and not material in their functions, such as Surya (Sun) and Agni (Fire), which are aspects of psychology. This cannot be understood except through an understanding of function in the Vedas.

The essence of modern Western interpretations of the Vedas can be summarized as follows: (1) the Vedas are a book of poetry that praises the personification of natural forces, which contains astronomical and allegorical elements, and (2) elements of philosophical thought in the Vedas are derived from the Aryan colonizers of the Dravidian nation, who are depicted as adversaries in the Vedas. In response, scholars of the Vedas contend that this conclusion is not only erroneous in terms of the Vedas' essential nature but also undermines humanity's understanding of the Vedas as a divine revelation. This conclusion is clearly

erroneous in terms of both research and interpretation. It is based on a lack of understanding of the existence and history of the Vedas themselves, or it is driven by a tendentious agenda to damage this sacred scripture for reasons related to religious politics, which are difficult to rationalize.

Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the Vedas can be described as "psychological." This psychological interpretation is based on the premise that the gap between the Vedas and philosophy is a construct of human imagination. (1) In ancient times, mysticism strongly existed in India as it did in other civilizations, such as Greece and Egypt. (2) Accepting modern viewpoints would render the Upanishads, which are the last part of the Vedas, inexplicable. (3) The origin of the Puranas would be more challenging to explain based on modern theories. (4) The Vedas contain secret doctrines as Vedic mysteries, with a higher pattern of understanding than just vocabulary and grammar. There are two meanings of ṛiks: open and secret. (5) The incongruity and incoherence of the Vedic texts would be resolved by using this method of Vedic interpretation (Mishra, et al., 2023).

The fundamental premise of the Vedas is that they do not espouse any dogmatic tenets or religious beliefs. It is a record of spiritual experiences expressed in symbolic terms. This is corroborated by the observation that the language employed throughout the Vedas remains consistent. The Vedas are characterized by an intuitive quality. What factors have contributed to the loss of the symbolic meaning of the Vedas? There are several reasons for this, including the reliance on an oral tradition which led to a significant loss of knowledge in cataclysmic events. Examples of this are not only limited to genocides of the Hindu population (Durant, 2014), which is the reason most widely discussed amongst indigenous intellectuals, but also natural events which proved disastrous in the early days of Hindu civilization, such as the drying of the Saraswati River.

The more preserved Upanishads, however, articulated ideas in a markedly distinct manner, thereby laying the foundation for the Vedanta philosophy (Sweetman, 2019). Subsequently, the Upanishads, themselves a much smaller part of the Vedas, came to be regarded as a fountainhead of knowledge.

The distinctive aspect of Sri Aurobindo's interpretation is the introduction of novel or comprehensible meanings in this era, despite the continued use of the same words in the Vedas. The terms alaṅkāra and śleṣha, which are extensively employed in the Vedas, permit a multitude of interpretations. Philology should not merely be concerned with the comparative analysis of language; rather, it should seek to ascertain the genesis and underlying principles governing the evolution of language. The evolution of language can be conceptualized as a growth process, wherein words emerge and evolve into language families.

The meaning of words was not fixed in the beginning. The original function of these terms was to convey ideas, light, motion, touch, and so forth. Sanskrit, in particular, is notable for its use of dhatus, or roots, that convey basic ideas, which were then put together in order to express more complex thoughts. One such example is the root kha, which represents emptiness, and thus can not only be seen in the word "khanana", to dig, or to create emptiness, but also in "sukha" and "dukha", happiness and sadness, reflecting the Hindu idea that both are, in the end, empty illusions. As a result of Sanskrit's construction, each word is ripe for interpretation in non-Indic, and modern Indic translation. To illustrate, in the Vedas, words are employed in a manner akin to the following:

vṛka वृक	literally means ripper, its derivative meaning wolf came into use. It also means moon, wolf, sun, and plow. vṛka has the meaning of plowing or tearing the earth
dhenu धेनु	basically means nourisher, or caretaker, not just a cow
bhaga भग	means enjoyment and also sharing
agni अग्नि	strong bright energy, power, brilliance, illuminating energy and also means fire.

Consequently, in order to fully comprehend the true meaning of a single word in the Vedas, it is essential to possess a profound understanding of the context and nuances

involved. Even in the past, there was no consensus regarding the interpretation of the Vedas. In his commentary on the Vedas, Yaska, the earliest available interpreter of these ancient texts, references various earlier schools of thought and individuals who held slightly divergent views. This discrepancy can be attributed to two external factors. Firstly, the form and usage of the language have undergone significant changes since the Vedas were written. Secondly, the imagery and symbolism are no longer readily comprehensible. Sayana endeavored to maintain the conventional interpretation that was prevalent during his era, but it would be challenging to comprehend in the context of modern society. Sri Aurobindo has proposed a novel interpretation based on a theory that accepts the mysticism of the Vedic era through psychological interpretation. This theory is presented in his works *Secret of the Veda* and *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, in which he addresses key points and provides translations of nearly all the agni hymns in the Rgveda. Sri Aurobindo posited that the Vedic hymns reflected a dualistic nature, comprising two distinct aspects: one for the general populace, centered on ritual observances, and another for those engaged in spiritual initiation or the pursuit of truth. The term "yajñā," the mantras and process for which are a key part of the Vedas, possesses a dual meaning. It can be understood as both the outward ritual and the underlying psychological significance.

Sri Aurobindo's method is designed to ascertain the authentic meaning by relying on the intrinsic evidence of the Vedas. The method posits that an understanding of the Vedas can be achieved by starting with the Vedas themselves and relying on them to interpret the Vedas. This approach involves analyzing the meaning of each mantra on a word-by-word basis, with the aim of establishing a consistent and coherent interpretation. The subsequent step is to take the sukta hymns as a whole and ascertain whether there is a coherent connection of ideas and sequence. The significance and symbolic meaning of the text must be derived from the text itself; they must not be derived from external sources.

In order to ascertain the meaning of a word, it is essential to maintain consistency in the interpretation of that word throughout the text. Otherwise, the interpreter will be unable to derive any meaning from the text. An interpreter should refrain from ascribing meaning to the text through the use of assumptions that are not explicitly supported by the Vedas themselves. A study of the Vedas will demonstrate that there must be a common understanding of the Vedic hymns, which retain a consistent form (Łucyszyna, 2020). The Vedic rishis demonstrated an understanding of the appropriate use of language and meter, refraining from incorporating their assumptions into the Vedic mantras. The Vedas themselves provide the key to understanding the Vedas.

As evidenced by the following Vedic mantra, which has been misinterpreted and made tendentious.

न तस्य प्रतिमा अस्ति यस्य नाम महाघशहा हिरण्यगर्भ इत्येष मा मा हिंसीदित्येषा यास्मान्न जात इत्येषः ॥

na tasya pratimā asti yasya nāma mahaghaśah,
hiranyagarbha ityeṣa mā mā himsīdityeṣā yasmānna jāta ityeṣaḥ.

Yajur Veda 32.3

O God, your power is supreme, the highest of the Highest, you are immeasurable, only you know your true form, you who created things like the Sun, God who was not born from something that can be touched, don't let him hurt us.

God Almighty fills (space) everywhere, He is in the mind and in the creation of all time, He is in everything in a secret form.

When the mantra is rendered in its shortest form, comprising only the stanza "na tasya pratimā asti," which points to the nirguna, or formless, interpretation of the divine, the resulting interpretation often fails to align with the context and original meaning of the mantra. This is particularly evident when the meaning of the entire mantra in a single sukta

is taken into account. Vedic interpretation represents a sophisticated and nuanced form of Vedic scholarship. Only those who have attained a high level of proficiency in Vedic literature, Sanskrit grammar, and Vedic hermeneutics can be considered worthy of offering an interpretation. From an academic standpoint, the individual must have engaged with the Vedas for a minimum of 12 years. Interpretation is a highly specialized and rigorous intellectual endeavor.

The statement "na tasya pratimā asti" is frequently interpreted as signifying the absence of any image or manifestation of the divine. This verse contains profound theological meaning and has been the subject of various interpretations by scholars and theologians. Nevertheless, this verse is frequently misinterpreted.

Noted preacher Dr. Zakir Naik is known for his interpretation of religious texts, including the Vedas, which he delivers in lectures accessible via various media platforms. These lectures, typically presented in Indonesia and accessible via YouTube, television, and public seminars, offer insights into the interpretation of religious texts. In his lectures, he typically compares the teachings of various religions, including Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, in order to illustrate the similarities and differences between them.

In his lectures, Dr. Zakir Naik, a prominent religious figure, has utilized this verse to substantiate the perspective that Hinduism prohibits idolatry and portrays the divine without a corporeal form. Nevertheless, his interpretation contains some inaccuracies and oversimplifications. Dr. Zakir Naik interprets the phrase "na tasya pratimā asti" as an absolute statement that the God of the Vedas cannot or should not be manifested in any form, including statues or images. In other words, he takes a description of Vedic truth, and turns it into a broad command, something that is inherently Abrahamic and against the Dharmic ethos. This interpretation streamlines the meaning of the verse, which is situated within a broader context within Hindu theology (Choudhuri, 2010).

In the context of the Vedic tradition, the term "pratimā" does not necessarily imply the presence of an image or statue. In addition, it can be understood to signify "comparison" or "analogy." In light of this interpretation, the verse can be understood to convey that God cannot be likened to or analogized with any other entity, given that God is regarded as being beyond any comparison.

Hinduism is a religion with a rich and diverse history, encompassing a multitude of schools of thought and interpretations. While there are schools of thought that do not espouse the practice of idol worship (such as the Arya Samaj), there are also numerous other schools that accept and venerate representations of the divine in the form of statues, images, or symbols for a variety of reasons. Dr. Zakir Naik's Abrahamic approach tends to disregard the diversity within Hinduism and impose a singular interpretation that does not fully align with the complexity of the tradition.

The Bhakti tradition in Hinduism places an emphasis on love and devotion to God, frequently through the use of idol worship or iconography as a means of approaching the infinite God. Dr. Zakir Naik's interpretation, devoid of an understanding of Hindu principles, fails to acknowledge this crucial element, which has been a fundamental aspect of spirituality for millions of Hindus for centuries.

The verse "na tasya pratimā asti" is best understood when considered in its broader context. It does not reject the concept of depicting God; rather, it emphasizes that God cannot be fully depicted or represented by any material form. In Hindu theology, this is often interpreted to mean that while God transcends all forms, His manifestation in the form of a statue or image is a way for devotees to gain proximity to the infinite Divine (Dodson, 2007).

In light of the prevalent misconception that the mantra "na tasya pratimā asti" is overly simplistic and fails to consider the broader context and traditions of the Vedas and Hinduism, it is imperative for Hindus in Indonesia and beyond to invest greater effort into Vedic learning and interpretation methods. It is recommended that Vedic interpretation methods be included in the curriculum of Hindu universities and non-formal Hindu learning centers for young Hindus. Consequently, the comprehension of the Vedas' sacred texts and the methodologies employed to interpret them will perpetually evolve.

Those engaged in the translation of Vedic Literature, whether by profession or vocation, are required to possess a unique skill set. It necessitates a comprehensive examination of the Bhasya and the interpretations proposed by eminent scholars from classical to modern eras, including Dayananda Saraswati and Sri Aurobindo (Hock, 2004). Furthermore, Sri Aurobindo provided a detailed account of the methodology for interpreting the Vedas in the context of modernity (Nalluri, et al., 2023). This body of knowledge is of significant value in the Indonesian context. It is therefore recommended that no individual should attempt to offer their own interpretations unless they have first studied the established patterns of Vedic interpretation and are conversant with the explanations provided by Hindu scholars (Surpi, 2020a).

The research findings indicate that Sri Aurobindo's method of Vedic interpretation has the potential to address the challenges associated with translating sacred Vedic literature in Indonesia, particularly in terms of grasping its profound philosophical and spiritual nuances.

The principal findings of this study are as follows:

1. The contextualization of Vedic teachings. Sri Aurobindo's interpretive method enables the exploration of the Vedas' often-overlooked symbolic and esoteric layers of meaning, which are revealed through a non-literal translation. This approach enables a more effective alignment of Vedic teachings with the spiritual needs of modern Indonesian society, thereby enhancing their relevance for contemporary readers.
2. A holistic approach is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Sri Aurobindo's interpretations place an emphasis on the integration of the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of understanding the Vedas. This holistic approach permits the interpreter to consider not only the grammatical aspects and denotation of words, but also the underlying spiritual messages, which are designed to facilitate the transformation of individual consciousness (Travis, Morehead, & Parim, 2023).
3. The implementation of Sri Aurobindo's interpretation method resulted in a notable enhancement in the students' comprehension, satisfaction, and participation scores. The students demonstrated enhanced comprehension of the Vedic mantras and exhibited a keen interest in further learning.
4. Furthermore, the utilization of this method assists in overcoming the constraints associated with local interpretation approaches that place undue emphasis on ritualistic or traditional elements. Aurobindo's universal and philosophical approach enhances the religious perspective and facilitates a dialogue between local and global interpretations of the Vedas.
5. This method constitutes a significant contribution to the quality of Vedic translations in Indonesia. It was determined that this method of interpretation can enhance the quality of existing translations of Vedic literature, rendering them more profound and inspiring. Furthermore, it can stimulate interest among younger individuals to engage with the Vedas in a manner that is more aligned with modern life.

The implementation of Sri Aurobindo's interpretive approach to Vedic translation has the potential to enhance the quality of comprehension of Vedic teachings in Indonesia, facilitate the integration of ancient texts with contemporary readers, and enrich Indonesian spiritual traditions with global insights.

This research offers the projection that if Sri Aurobindo's method of Vedic interpretation is applied and taught in Hindu colleges in Indonesia, notable advancement can be anticipated in the comprehension and appreciation of Vedic teachings. This method enables students to comprehend the literal meaning of the text while also exploring the deeper spiritual messages that are pertinent to modern life. The implementation of this methodology will facilitate the integration of Vedic teachings into students' daily lives, while

also enhancing their interest and awareness of the significance of Vedic sacred literature in the development of spirituality. A more holistic understanding will enable students to interpret the Vedic texts more accurately and cultivate a deeper and more contextualized sense of spirituality (Bokde, et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the widespread teaching of this method has the potential to enhance the quality of research and academic studies pertaining to the Vedas in Indonesia. Hindu universities have the potential to become centers for the development of more in-depth and meaningful Vedic studies, much like they used to be in the time of the Majapahit Empire (Marsono, Rahayu, 2023). This can be achieved by producing scientific works that are not only academic in nature but also make practical contributions to the development of Hindu spirituality in Indonesia. Ultimately, graduates who have been equipped with this interpretation method will become agents of change in their communities. They will be able to inspire the younger generation to delve deeper into Vedic teachings while maintaining the relevance of this sacred teaching amid the challenges of modern times (Bawa, et al., 2020).

The development of Hindu scholars who are able to translate and interpret the Vedas in depth will have a significant positive impact on Hindu society in Indonesia. These scholars will facilitate a connection between the Vedas and the general public, enabling the comprehension of teachings that were previously perceived as intricate and detached from the everyday. The provision of more contextualized and relevant translations and interpretations will facilitate the integration of Vedic spiritual values into various aspects of Hindu life, including ethics, morals, and inner well-being. This will not only reinforce the spiritual foundation of the community, but also facilitate the formation of a Hindu community that is more harmonious, meaningful, and equipped to navigate the challenges of modern life with a robust foundation of Vedic teachings (Kejriwal, & Krishnan, 2004).

It is of paramount importance that the Indonesian government, particularly the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and their Indian counterparts provide substantial assistance to the Vedic translation project in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religious Affairs can provide support in the form of financial assistance, research facilities, and collaboration with Hindu universities and religious institutions to ensure that Vedic translations are conducted in a professional and comprehensive manner. Furthermore, the Ministry could facilitate training for Hindu translators and scholars, thereby enhancing their capacity to understand Vedic texts in terms of language, context, and spiritual values. Such support enables the government to fulfill a dual role: on the one hand, it preserves religious heritage; on the other, it ensures that Vedic teachings can be accessed, understood, and applied by Hindus across Indonesia in a more comprehensive and profound manner.

(Vidyabhusana, 1920) posits that at least 44 subjects must be studied to develop logical reasoning and intellectual abilities. In every era, there must be a Scholar Kṣatriya, an Intellectual Kṣatriya, and an Intellectual Warrior (Bauddhika Kṣatriya) who plays an instrumental role in subduing those who are hostile to Dharma and those who are intellectually capable of advancing Vedic learning (Surpi, 2022). It is inevitable that there will be legendary figures in every era. It is the dharmic duty of scholars in Indonesia to demonstrate intellectual prowess, mastery of Vedic interpretation methods, and the resulting works.

4. Conclusions

Sri Aurobindo's approach to Vedic interpretation is a valuable contribution to the ongoing endeavor to translate the sacred Vedic literature into Indonesian. His method incorporates both linguistic and psychological elements. In essence, Sri Aurobindo's interpretative approach entails identifying the intrinsic meaning of a given word within the context of the Vedic tradition, discerning its dual connotations, and situating it within the larger framework of the text. Subsequently, the sukta hymn must be considered as a unified entity, taking into account its interconnectivity of ideas and coherent sequence. The significance and symbolic meaning of the text must be derived from the text itself, rather than being imported from external sources. It is imperative that one refrain from imposing their own

theories, understanding, or beliefs upon the Vedic text. The Vedas must be interpreted on their own merits but with the benefit of the learned interpreter's insights.

In assigning meaning to words, it is imperative to maintain consistency in the application of meaning to the same word. An interpreter must refrain from conveying any meaning based on assumptions that are not explicitly supported by the Vedas. The Vedic rishis demonstrated an understanding of the appropriate use of language and meter, refraining from imposing their assumptions upon the Vedic mantras. The Vedas themselves serve as the key to unlocking their own meaning.

Sri Aurobindo's method of Vedic interpretation provides an effective solution to the proliferation of translations of sacred Vedic literature in Indonesia. Sri Aurobindo's holistic approach to interpretation not only considers the literal meaning of the text, but also delves into the deeper symbolic, spiritual, and philosophical aspects of the Vedic texts. By considering the cultural context and contemporary relevance, this method allows translators to grasp the true essence of the Vedas while remaining faithful to the original values they contain.

The implementation of this interpretive approach in Indonesia is of paramount importance for the preservation of the Vedas' authenticity and spiritual richness, as well as for enhancing their accessibility and intelligibility for the Indonesian populace. The teaching of this method will enhance the interpreter's knowledge and understanding, thereby making a significant contribution to the preservation and dissemination of the sublime Vedic teachings in Indonesia.

This method of interpretation demonstrates the necessity of a comprehensive and contextualized approach in the translation of sacred texts to safeguard the depth and authenticity of the spiritual teachings embedded in the Vedas.

The implementation of Sri Aurobindo's methodology in the teaching of Vedic interpretation has yielded favorable outcomes in addressing the complexities of translating Vedic sacred texts in Indonesia. A more holistic approach to translation allows for the capture of meanings that are more relevant to the local cultural and spiritual context.

The implementation of Sri Aurobindo's Vedic interpretation methodology markedly enhanced the participants' comprehension of the Vedic teachings. Furthermore, the method proved effective in enhancing participants' satisfaction and engagement in the learning process, indicating that it is not only pedagogically effective but also successful in creating a positive and meaningful learning experience.

All tested groups demonstrated a consistent improvement in understanding following the application of the Sri Aurobindo method, with a notable increase in scores from the pre-test to the post-test. This corroborates the hypothesis that the method facilitates learners' comprehension of the Vedic teachings in a more profound and comprehensive manner.

In general, Sri Aurobindo's Vedic interpretation method was found to be an effective approach for enhancing comprehension of Vedic teachings among learners in Indonesia. Furthermore, the method proved effective in fostering a positive learning experience and enhancing participant engagement. It is therefore recommended that this method be employed more widely in the teaching of Vedic texts, particularly within the Indonesian educational context, in order to address the various challenges inherent to the translation and comprehension of these sacred texts.

The translation of sacred Vedic literature into Indonesian is a pressing necessity, given that only a small proportion of Hindus engage in the reading and comprehension of Vedic teachings in any depth. The aforementioned challenges, including a dearth of student interest in sacred texts and the constrained capacity of devotees to access Vedas that have not been translated into Indonesian, underscore the necessity for a novel approach to translation. The Sri Aurobindo Vedic interpretation method provides a more comprehensive and profound approach to translation, which can enhance the quality of the resulting text and facilitate a deeper understanding of the spiritual significance embedded within the sacred texts among those who adhere to Hinduism.

The implementation of this method of interpretation in academic circles, particularly in Hindu colleges, is expected to result in an increased understanding of the Vedic teachings among students and greater engagement in quality academic research. The teaching of this method will result in the emergence of a generation of Hindu scholars who are capable of translating and interpreting the Vedas effectively. These scholars will play an important role in bringing the Vedic teachings closer to the lives of Hindus in Indonesia. The positive impact will be an increased public interest in understanding and integrating Vedic values into daily life, ensuring that these sacred teachings remain relevant in the modern era.

It is incumbent upon the government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, to provide support and facilitate the undertaking of Vedic translation projects. Financial assistance, training, and collaboration with educational and religious institutions can guarantee that translations are conducted professionally and in accordance with the local Indonesian context. With the backing of the government, Vedic translations will not only be more accessible to the general public but will also serve to reinforce the spiritual understanding of Hindus, promote social cohesion, and safeguard this invaluable spiritual legacy.

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- *Note: The work "Movement of Hindu Religious Education in The Era of The Kingdom of Majapahit" by Marsono and Ni Wayan Sri Rahayu still remains unpublished, but has been graciously made available by the authors for the purposes of this work.

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