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चनुति (A study of divine manifestation through Yajna)

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Abstract
This paper analyzes the mantra *"chinuti kāmagniṃ chinute nāciketa-magniṃ chinvānaḥ prāṇātyakṣeṇa"* from the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (1.22), focusing on its revelation of divine manifestation through yajna fire. Each *Agni*-mantra corresponds to a distinct *dēvatā-śakti*, with the *Nāchiketa Agni* signifying the emergence of *Prāṇa,* the vital principle sustaining life and consciousness. Through linguistic and symbolic interpretation of terms like *chinuti* ("to consecrate") and *pratyakṣa* ("manifest essence"), the study demonstrates that Vedic yajna operates both as an external Yajna and an inner realization. The mantra thus conveys that through the sanctified fire, *Prāṇa* becomes perceptible within the Yajnapati, uniting yajna performance, phonetic precision, and metaphysical insight in the Vedic conception of existence.

Keywords: *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, *Nāchiketa Agni*, *Prāṇa*, *dēvatā-śakti*, Vedic yajna, *chinuti*, *pratyakṣa*, manifestation, sacred fire

Introduction
The expression *"chinuti kāmagniṃ chinute nāciketa-magniṃ chinvānaḥ prāṇātyakṣeṇa"* occurs in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, First *Praśna*, 22nd *Anuvāka*, in its opening section.
This portion explicates the process by which divine energies (*dēvatā-śaktis*) are generated. It reveals that, in different types of *yajñas* (yajna operations), distinct divine forces emerge. Each specific *agni-mantra* employed in a given yajna gives rise to a particular divine manifestation. The second part of the same *Anuvāka* elaborates in detail on which divine powers arise or become manifest through the invocation of which forms of fire and their corresponding mantras; that section, however, is not under present consideration and is therefore not cited here.
According to that section, the *Agni-mantras* of the *Sattra-yāga* bring forth the manifestation of the *year* (*saṃvatsara*); the *Sāvitrīya* fire generates the appearance of *Āditya* (the Sun); the *Nāchiketa* fire manifests *Prāṇa* (the vital principle); the *Cāturhotrīya* fire reveals *Brahman*; the *Vaiśvasṛjana* fire manifests the *body*; the *Upānuvākyāmaśu* fire gives rise to the *hymns* (*ślokas*); and the *Āruṇaketu* fire manifests the *moon*.
To comprehend the meaning of these Vedic expressions: *Sāvitrīya*, *Nāchiketa*, *Āditya*, and others, it is necessary to understand their philosophical and symbolic import; otherwise, the full purport of the mantra remains obscure.
The *Anuvāka* first explains the *dēvabhāva-āvirbhāva-vidhāna*, the principle of divine manifestation, and then proceeds to describe the emergence of the principal Dēvatās. In this exposition, the *kalpa* (cosmic order or yajna framework) is expounded in complete detail. Among all divine powers, the most essential to human life is the *Prāṇa-dēvatā-śakti*, the vital principle itself. This vital power, according to the mantra, becomes manifest through the *Nāchiketa Agni*.

Hence, the mantra instructs
Which fire should one kindle (*chinuti*)?
The *Nāchiketa Agni* should be kindled, so that *Prāṇa* (vital energy) may become manifest.
In Sanskrit usage, *chinuti* means "to consecrate through mantra," or "to sanctify the fire by means of a mantra." From the *akṣara*-perspective (the symbolic study of syllables), it signifies the *installation of Agni within oneself*.
Regarding the term *pratyakṣa* ("manifest" or "perceptible"), *Sāyaṇācārya* interprets it as "that which is most evident or principal," whereas *Bhaṭṭabhāskara* explains it as "that which becomes perceptible to the senses." Seen from the phonetic or *akṣara*-viewpoint, *pratyakṣa* implies "the realization of the inner essence through effort and awareness."
Thus, the essential meaning (*tātparya*) of the mantra is that *through the mantras of the Nāchiketa Agni, the very form of Prāṇa becomes manifest and takes shape within the Yajnapati.*
In this way, the Mantra clarifies the true nature of *Prāṇa*, that which sustains all activity, consciousness, and life itself.

Discussion
In this section we will focus on some important aspects of the introduction section and assign them the Method number and reference number.
The expression *"chinuti kāmagniṃ chinute nāciketa-magniṃ chinvānaḥ prāṇātyakṣeṇa"* occurs in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, First *Praśna*, 22nd *Anuvāka*, in its opening section.
This portion explicates the process by which divine energies (*dēvatā-śaktis*) are generated [Method-1, Ref (1)]. The *Agni*-mantras employed in the *Sattra-yāga* give rise to the manifestation of the *Saṃvatsara* (the Year), which symbolizes the totality of temporal existence [Method-2, Ref (2). Through the Yajna, invocation of *Agni*, the cyclical order of time is made perceptible, integrating the temporal and the cosmic dimensions. In this context, *Agni* functions as the dynamic principle that transforms Yajna activity into the unfolding of cosmic time, revealing the intrinsic relationship between *yajña*, *agni*, and temporality (*kāla*).
The *Sāvitrīya* fire gives rise to the manifestation of *Āditya* (the Sun) [Method-3, Ref (3)]. In the Vedic framework, this association signifies the transformation of the latent yajna energy into the visible radiance of the solar principle. The *Sāvitrīya Agni* thus represents the intermediary power through which the creative impulse of *Savitar*, the divine stimulator is externalized as *Āditya*, the cosmic illuminator. This process illustrates the Vedic conception of light as a manifestation of inner fire (*antar-agni*), wherein the yajna act becomes a cosmological event, linking the terrestrial *yajña* to the celestial emergence of the Sun.
The *Nāchiketa* fire gives rise to the manifestation of *Prāṇa*, the vital principle [Method-4, Ref (4)]. Within the Vedic yajna system, this denotes the emergence of life-energy from the yajna fire, revealing *Agni* as both the source and sustainer of vitality. The *Nāchiketa Agni*, often described as the fire of self-realization and inner awakening, symbolizes the transformation of the yajna flame into the breath of life itself. Through this correspondence, the *yajña* becomes not merely an external offering but an inward process wherein the principle of fire (*agni-tattva*) is realized as the animating force of consciousness.
The *Cāturhotrīya* fire reveals *Brahman* [Method-5, Ref (5)], the ultimate reality underlying all yajna and cosmic processes. In the context of Vedic yajna symbolism, this fire represents the culmination of the fourfold priestly functions (*hotṛ, adhvaryu, udgātṛ,* and *brahman*), whose coordinated actions mirror the integration of speech, mind, breath, and consciousness. Through the harmonious operation of these four aspects, the *Cāturhotrīya Agni* becomes the medium through which *Brahman*, the unmanifest and all-pervasive principle is made perceptible. Thus, the revelation of *Brahman* through this fire signifies the realization of unity within multiplicity, where the *yajña* transcends its yajna form to disclose the metaphysical essence of existence.
The *Vaiśvasṛjana* fire gives rise to the manifestation of the body (*śarīra*) [Method-6, Ref (6)], representing the concretization of the cosmic creative principle within the domain of embodied existence. As the generative aspect of *Agni*, the *Vaiśvasṛjana* transforms the subtle energies of life and consciousness into the tangible structure of form. In this sense, the body is not merely a physical construct but a sacred embodiment of yajna energy, an outcome of the same creative fire that animates the universe. Through the *Vaiśvasṛjana Agni*, the divine act of creation (*sṛṣṭi*) becomes internalized, linking the cosmic process of manifestation with the human experience of life and growth.

Methods
Method-1
RigVēda (1-1-5)
- **देवता:** अग्निः
- **ऋषि:** मधुच्छन्दाः वैश्वामित्रः
- **छन्द:** गायत्री
- **स्वर:** षड्जः

अ॒ग्निर्होता॑ क॒विक्र॑तुः स॒त्यश्चि॒त्रश्र॑वस्तमः। दे॒वो दे॒वेभि॒रा ग॑मत्॥

Essence of RigVēda (1-1-5)
Divine Aspect (Paramātma Perspective)
O Agni, Supreme Being! You are both the giver and the receiver of offerings, the omniscient one, the benefactor of the noble, endowed with the faculty of extraordinary perception, and self-luminous by nature. May you, through the assistance of the learned, become manifest and accessible from all directions through the yajna rites they perform.

Physical Aspect (Material Fire Perspective)
Agni is self-luminous, the revealer of all substances, and the essential means for the manifestation and formation of all material entities. It promotes the well-being of virtuous elements, possesses an extraordinary capacity for perception, illuminates other substances and objects, and endowed with divine attributes, pervades and reveals the entire universe.

Proposition
Divine Aspect (Paramātma Perspective)
- The omniscient and self-luminous Agni, the dēvatā of

Yajna, endowed with extraordinary perception (of mantra sound), receives the offerings presented in the yajna rites performed by the learned. Through His divine attributes, He manifests and transmits the powers of the Dēvatās in all directions.

- In this mantra, Agni is the presiding dēvatā. It describes both the attributes of Agni as divine energy and the results obtained through the performance of the Yajna.
- **Agni**
  - The speaker of truth, here, "truth" (satya) signifies the Vēda itself. Thus, Agni is the voice of the Vēda, accessible only through Vedic yajnas.
  - He is also described as the benefactor of the noble.
  - Possessed of extraordinary hearing, the intense resonance produced by mantra recitations during yajna acts affects the wavelength and frequency of Agni, thereby influencing nature and the atmosphere.
  - Omniscient.
  - In the Vedic Yajnas performed by learned priests, He is the *Hotā*-the giver and receiver of offerings.
  - Through His divine qualities, He becomes manifest as various dēvatā powers (*dēvatā śaktis*).
- Hence, through the kindling of Agni and the oblation of herbs and other sacred substances, the combustion process (transforming ions into aerosols) influences the natural and atmospheric forces such as Varuṇa, Vāyu, Indra, Mitra, Āditya, and Yama. These processes contribute to the well-being of humanity.

Physical Aspect (Material Fire Perspective)

- The physical fire, self-luminous and generated by heat, is the revealer and creator of all matter. There exists no substance that is not produced or affected by fire.
  - For example, within the human body, it functions as *jaṭharāgni* (digestive fire), as the vital energy sustaining metabolism, in the formation and assimilation of bodily tissues, in the ripening of crops through solar rays, and as the essential energy permeating water and every natural process governing the universe.
- Thus, it promotes the welfare of all living beings and beneficial substances.
- Being self-luminous, it illuminates all other entities.
- The radiance of Agni pervades the entire universe as the primordial source of light and energy.

Clarifications and Explanations

- **Question:** What attributes of Agni are described in the *RigVēda* (1-1-5) mantra?
- **Answer:**
  - From the Divine Perspective: Agni is omniscient, self-luminous, endowed with extraordinary perception, and receives offerings from the yajnas performed by the learned, manifesting divine powers in all directions.
  - He is the dēvatā of the mantra, characterized by truth (the Vēda), benevolence toward the noble, extraordinary hearing, omniscience, and the dual role of giver and receiver of offerings (*Hotā*).
- **Question:** How does the Supreme Being manifest through the yajna fire (*Yajñāgni*) in *RigVēda* (1-1-5)?
- **Answer:**
  - The resonance of mantra recitations during yajna acts influences the wavelength and frequency of Agni, affecting natural and atmospheric phenomena.
  - Through the combustion of sacred substances (herbs and materials), the resulting aerosols influence environmental and cosmic forces such as Varuṇa, Vāyu, Indra, Mitra, Āditya, and Yama, thereby contributing to human welfare.
- **Question:** How is the physical aspect of fire (*Bhoutika Agni*) manifested in *RigVēda* (1.1.5)?
- **Answer:**
  - The physical fire, generated by heat, is the instrument and source of all material formation; no entity exists without its influence.
  - Within the human body, it operates as the digestive and metabolic fire, in the formation of tissues, the ripening of crops through solar energy, and in sustaining natural processes within water and the cosmos.

Conclusion of Method-1

- The Agni kindled in the yajna rite receives the offerings and manifests itself as the diverse powers of the Dēvatās becoming perceptible, intelligible, and accessible in manifold forms.
- The physical fire pervading the universe functions as the source of vitality and constructive energy for all living beings and noble substances. It is self-luminous and acts as the illuminating and transformative principle sustaining cosmic order.

Method-2

Yajur Vēda (5-24)

- **देवता:** सूर्यविद्वांसौ देवते
- **ऋषि:** औतथ्यो दीर्घतमा ऋषिः
- **छन्द:** भुरिग् आर्षी अनुष्टुप्
- **स्वर:** गान्धारः

स्व॒राड॑सि सपत्न॒हा स॑त्रा॒राड॑स्यभिमाति॒हा ज॑न॒राड॑सि रक्षो॒हा स॑र्व॒राड॑स्यमित्र॒हा ॥२४॥

Essence of Yajur Vēda (5-24)

- You (Dēvatā of this Mantra) are the one who destroys enemies and are self-luminous.
- You (Dēvatā of this Mantra), O Agni, who slay the arrogant and the thieves, shine forth in the *Satra Yajña*.
- You (Dēvatā of this Mantra) radiate among the learned and the wise.
- You (Dēvatā of this Mantra) are the destroyer of demons and the vanquisher of the wicked, resplendent in your own light.

Proposition

- **Question:** Who is the one that destroys enemies and is self-luminous?
  Answer: The Dēvatā of this Mantra is the one who destroys enemies and is self-luminous.
- **Question:** Who, being Agni, slays the arrogant and the thieves and shines in the Satra Yajña?
  Answer: The Dēvatā of this Mantra, Agni, slays the arrogant and the thieves and shines in the Satra Yajña.

- **Question:** Who radiates among the learned and the wise?
  Answer: The Dēvatā of this Mantra radiates among the learned and the wise.
- **Question 4:** Who destroys demons and vanquishes the wicked while being resplendent in their own light?
  Answer: The Dēvatā of this Mantra destroys demons and vanquishes the wicked while being resplendent in their own light.

Conclusion of Method-2

You, Agni, are the one who destroys enemies, slays the arrogant and thieves, shines among the learned, and annihilates demons and the wicked; you manifest in the Satra Yajña and are self-luminous.

The one who destroys enemies, the arrogant, thieves, demons, and the wicked must be self-luminous. For this purpose, the yajna must be performed throughout the year. Hence, the term *Satra* Yajña signifies a yajña that extends across the entire year.

Method-3:
Yajur Vēda (8-7)

- **देवता:** सविता गृहपतिर्देवता
- **ऋषि:** भरद्वाज ऋषिः
- **छन्द:** विराड् ब्राह्मी अनुष्टुप्
- **स्वर:** गान्धारः

उपयाꣳमगृहीतोऽसि सावित्रोऽसि चनोधाश्च चनोधाऽसि चनो मयि धेहि। जिन्व यज्ञं जिन्व यज्ञपतिं भगाय देवायं त्वा सवित्रे ॥७॥

Essence of Yajur Vēda (8-7)

(Savita as the Gṛhapati)

O Savitā, divine householder! Thou art indeed the dēvatā Savitā.

Thou hast comprehended the sacred principles of marriage.

Thou art the embodiment of bliss, verily, the possessor and sustainer of divine joy.

May I attain the sacred yajña.

May I, as the lord of the yajña (yajñapati), be filled with bliss within myself.

For the sake of divine wealth and celestial attainment belonging to the dēvatā Savitā, may I realize and unite with thee, O Savitā Gṛhapati.

Proposition

- **Question:** Who is addressed as *Gṛhapati* in this mantra?
- **Answer:** The dēvatā *Savitā* is addressed as *Gṛhapati* (the divine householder), symbolizing the presiding lord who sustains and regulates the yajna order (*yajña*).
- **Question:** What qualities of Savitā are described in the Mantra?
- **Answer:** Savitā is described as the divine being who comprehends and upholds the sacred laws of union (*vivāha-niyama*), embodies supreme bliss (*ānanda-svarūpa*), and grants divine prosperity and illumination to the Yajnapati.
- **Question:** What is the aspirant's intent in invoking Savitā?
- **Answer:** The aspirant seeks to attain *yajña* and to become *yajñapati*, thereby internalizing divine bliss and achieving union with Savitā's creative and sustaining power.
- **Question:** What is the symbolic meaning of the expression "May I attain Savitā Gṛhapati"?
- **Answer:** This expression signifies the aspirant's desire to realize the inner divinity represented by Savitā, the cosmic principle of illumination and joy, thereby attaining spiritual wealth (*aiśvarya*) and divine fulfillment through self-realization and Yajna.
- **Question:** What does the worship of the dēvatā *Savitā* signify?
  Answer: It signifies the worship of *Āditya*.
- **Question:** Who bears the joy (*ānanda*) of the dēvatā *Savitā*?
  Answer: The *Yajñapati* bears the joy of *Savitā*.
- **Question:** Why is the dēvatā *Savitā* invoked as the *Yajña*?
  Answer: *Savitā* is invoked for the attainment of divine sustenance (*divya-pādārtha*) and prosperity (*aiśvarya*).
- **Question:** What does the *Yajñapati* seek from the dēvatā *Savitā*?
  Answer: The *Yajñapati* seeks divine nourishment and prosperity.
- **Question:** What does the dēvatā *Savitā* bestow?
  Answer: *Savitā* bestows divine nourishment (life-sustaining food).
- **Question:** When does the dēvatā *Savitā* grant divine nourishment and prosperity?
  Answer: *Savitā* grants divine nourishment and prosperity to the *Yajñapati* who performs the *Yajña* in accordance with the prescribed domestic and yajna observances (*gṛha-niyama*).

Conclusion of Method-3

The research finding that "Āditya (the Sun) becomes manifest through the Sāvitrīya Agni" has been investigated and established with the support of the *YajurVēda* (8-7) mantra.

Method-4
RigVēda (10-14-14)

- **देवता:** यमः
- **ऋषि:** यमः
- **छन्द:** निचृदनुष्टुप्
- **स्वर:** गान्धारः

यमाय घृतवद्धविर्जुहोत प्र च तिष्ठत। स नो देवेष्वा यमद्दीर्घमायुः प्र जीवसे ॥

Essence of RigVēda (10-14-14)

For Yama, offer ghee-based oblations in the yajña and remain steadfast and devoted.

Among the Dēvatās, he (that is, Yama) grants us, in a complete and perfect manner, a life of excellence and full longevity through all auspicious means.

Proposition

- **Question:** What should be offered to Yama in the yajña?
  Answer: Ghee-based oblations (ghṛta havis) should

be offered to Yama.

- **Question:** How should one conduct oneself while offering oblations to Yama?
  Answer: One should remain steadfast, devoted, and firm.
- **Question:** What does Yama grant among the Dēvatās?
  Answer: Yama grants a life of excellence and complete longevity.
- **Question:** In what manner does Yama grant life and longevity?
  Answer: He grants them in a complete and perfect manner through all auspicious means.

Conclusion of Method-4

"Different divine powers emerge in different yajñas; it is through the Nachiketa Agni that the vital energy (prāṇa) becomes manifest, as demonstrated with the aid of the RigVēda mantra (10-14-14)."

Method-5
Yajur Vēda (17-85)

- **देवता-चातुर्मास्या मरुतः**
- **ऋषिः-सप्तऋषयः**
- **छन्दः-स्वराडार्षी गायत्री**
- **स्वरः-षड्जः**

स्वतवाँश्च प्रघासी च सान्तपनश्च गृहमेधी च। क्रीडी च शाकी चोज्जेषी॥८५॥

Essence of Yajur Vēda (17-85)

The practitioner of the Vratam (Chaturmasya) fosters the growth of his family, possesses a natural, fiery appetite akin to Agni, is a householder, exhibits a graceful and sportive temperament, is endowed with strength, has the capacity to soar like the Maruts, and embodies numerous virtuous qualities.

Proposition

- **Question:** Which vow is referred to in this mantra?
  Answer: The Dēvatā of this mantra is *Chaturmasya Marutah*. The Chaturmasya vow is observed annually from *Ashadha Shuddha 12th* tithi to *Kartika Shuddha 12th tithi*, spanning four months. It may be performed as a single Yajña, commencing on the twelfth day of Ashadha Shuddha and concluding on the twelfth day of Kartika Shuddha.
- **Question:** Who should observe this vow?
  Answer: A householder.
- **Question:** What is the benefit of observing this vow?
  Answer: An individual who observes this vow nurtures the growth of his family, possesses a natural appetite as intense as fire, maintains the duties of a householder, exhibits a graceful and sportive disposition, is endowed with strength, has the capacity to soar like the Maruts, and embodies numerous virtuous qualities.
- **Question:** Who are the Rishis associated with this mantra, and what are their characteristics?
  Answer: The Rishis are the *Saptarishis*. Their characteristics include fostering the growth of their family, partaking of abundant nourishment, possessing an appetite as intense as fire, observing the vow, being householders, exhibiting a graceful and sportive temperament, being strong, and having the capacity to soar like the Maruts.

Conclusion of Method-5

"Distinct divine powers arise in different yajñas; through the *Chaturmasya* Agni, Brahman becomes manifest. This is established with the aid of the YajurVēda mantra (17-85)".

Method-6
RigVēda (1-59-1)

- **देवता:** अग्निर्वैश्वानरः
- **ऋषि:** नोधा गौतमः
- **छन्द:** निचृत्त्रिष्टुप्
- **स्वर:** धैवतः

वया इदग्ने अग्नयस्ते अन्ये त्वे विश्वे अमृता मादयन्ते। वैश्वानर नाभिरसि क्षितीनां स्थूणेव जनाँ उपमिद्ययन्थ ॥

Essence of RigVēda (1-59-1)

"O Agni! Your flames extend throughout the universe, reaching all beings. They are immortal and bestow satisfaction. O Vaishvānara, you are the mediator, holding steadfast like the pillar of the worlds!"

Proposition

- **Question:** Which Agni is described in this mantra?
  Answer: Agni, the Vaishvānara.
- **Question:** What occurs through Agni?
  Answer: Agni's flames extend within itself, to others, and throughout the universe; they are immortal and bestow satisfaction.
- **Question:** What does Vaishvānara do with Agni?
  Answer: Acting as the mediator, Vaishvānara holds the regions to which Agni's flames travel within itself, to others, and throughout the universe like the pillar of the worlds, enabling Agni's creative power.
- **Question:** What results from the creative Agni, Vaishvānara?
  Answer: Just as Agni nurtures and expands the universe, it also bestows immortality, satisfaction, and the growth of intellect to the embodied being.

Conclusion of Method-6

Through the divine yajña, the flames of the creative Vaishvānara Agni bestow immortality and satisfaction to all living beings and throughout the universe. Similarly, they impart immortality to human or embodied being, enhance intellect, and stimulate creative power. The RigVēda (1-59-1) teaches that the creative Vaishvānara Agni nourishes and promotes the growth of the body.

Conclusion

The examination of the mantra *"chinuti kāmagniṃ chinute nāciketa-magniṃ chinvānaḥ prāṇātyakṣeṇa"* from the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* reveals that Vedic fire yajnas symbolize an inner process of consecration wherein divine energies manifest through sound and awareness. The *Nāchiketa Agni*, in particular, embodies the awakening of *Prāṇa*, the vital force that sustains life and consciousness. Through the act of kindling this sacred fire, both externally in yajna and internally in contemplation, the Yajnapati attains realization of the life-principle as the perceptible presence of the divine. Thus, the mantra

encapsulates the synthesis of yajna action, phonetic sanctity, and metaphysical realization central to the Vedic vision of existence.

References

1. RigVēda (1-1-5)
2. Yajur Vēda (5-24)
3. Yajur Vēda (8-7)
4. RigVēda (10-14-14)
5. Yajur Vēda (17-85)
6. RigVēda (1-59-1)