

# Significance & the Apourusheyatvam (authorlessness) of the Vedas

Based on “Sri Vishnu Tattva Vinirnayam” a  
work of Sri Sri Madhvacharya

Presented by:  
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# The objective of this presentation

We have been told by elders, scholars, teachers and Mahans and Saints that Vedas are eternal and that they are “Apourusheya” ie., not authored by any human being(s). That they exist in space as sound waves and Vedic Seers have picked them through the power of their tapas and given them to us. And we who believe strongly in the vedic traditions have tremendous faith in these statements.

The aim of this presentation is to put forward a strong justification for this belief, as explained by Srimad Madhwacharya in a famous prakarana grantham called Vishnu Tattva Vinirnayam.

# The content of this presentation

In this famous and colossal work containing a few hundreds of slokas, Srimad Madhwacharya has expounded elaborately as to why the belief in the “Apourusheyatvam” of the Vedas is very apt. He commences his work stating that Paramatma can be understood only through Agamas. Then in order to build a strong foundation for his exposition, he first establishes the divine origin of the Vedas. This is taken up by him because his discussion about Vishnu Tattva will be based on Shruti Vakhyas. And in this journey he has addressed the question of “apourusheyatvam” of Vedas and their “eternality” in a very elaborate and systematic manner.

From this work, I have provided a few excerpts here.

# The challenge of this endeavour

Ever since I started going through a wonderful series of e-postings, posted on this subject (in 2012) by a very learned scholar Sri Jayakrishna Nelamangala, I got absorbed in this work of Srimad Acharya. His postings were very comprehensive as they were based on his study of the original work itself, the Teeka (commentary) of Sri Jayatirtharu and Tippanys of Sri Raghavendra Guru Rayaru and Sri Srinivasa Tirtharu. A few other materials (which I have listed in my acknowledgements in the end) helped me in my understanding of this subject.

Over the past one to one and a half years I had been intending to write this presentation, but each time I sat down to write I realized that my own grasp of the subject was not good enough. And I went back to studying it once more. Finally I could write this over the last couple of days of 2014 and the first couple of days of 2015.

# Acknowledgement

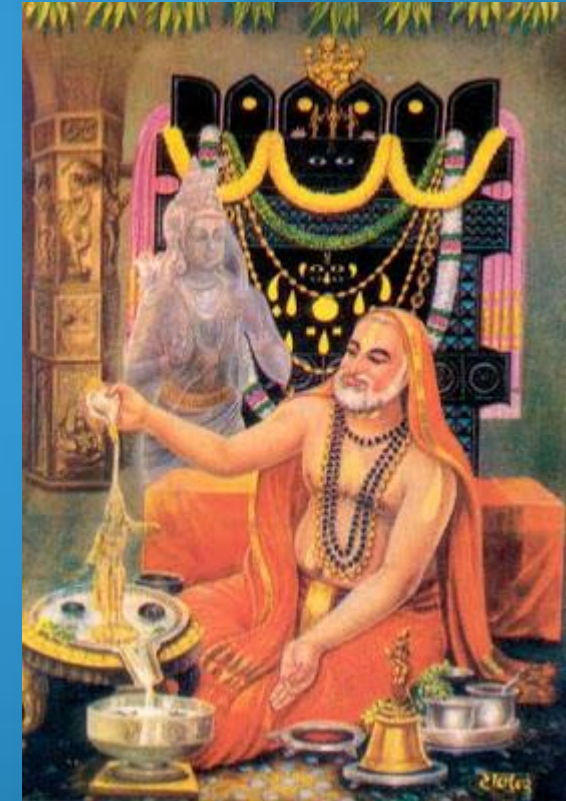
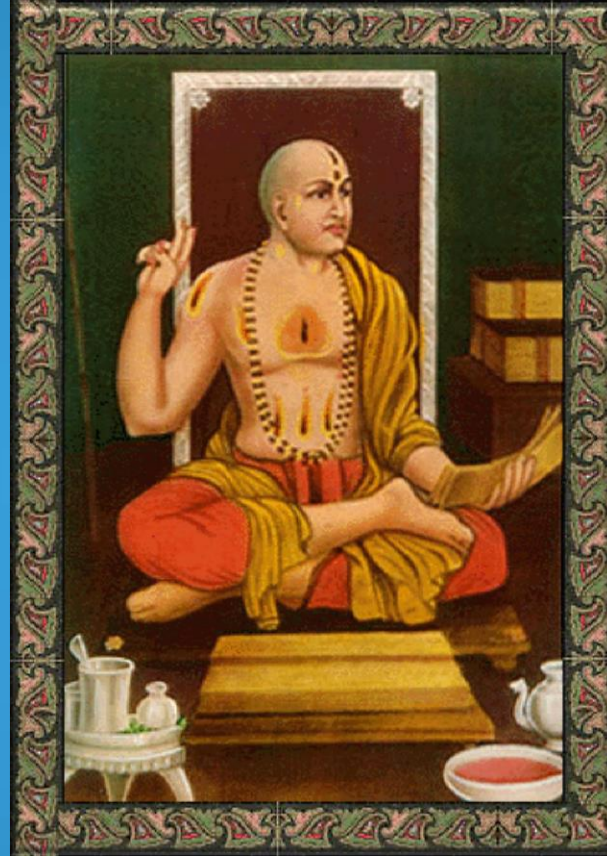
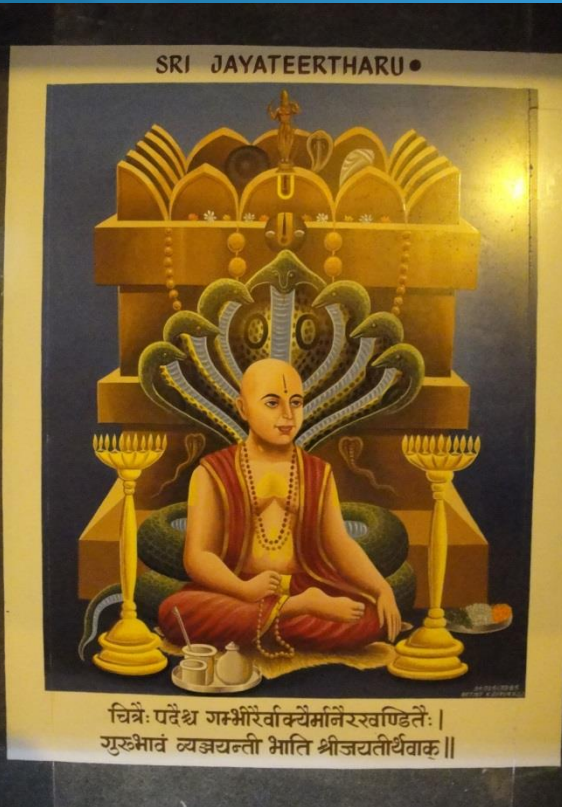
I sincerely owe a thanks to Sri Jayakrishna N. for the inspiration to study this work and for the detailed understanding I could gain from his postings. The other sources that I have referenced in the end of this presentation were the additional materials which helped my understanding.

In this presentation, the slokas & the translations (all in **white fonts**) are almost reproduced from the referenced sources, with some small changes done by me. My explanations in **green font** are based on my study.

It is a deep subject and that too from the work of a Divine Acharya Purusha. My presentation will be limited by my own humble level of grasp and if there are any errors there, they are undoubtedly mine and mine only.



# Acharya & Guru Vandanam



Dasoham

# Mangalacharana of Sri Vishnu Tattva Vinirnaya

sadAgamaika vijnyEyam samateeta ksharAksharam |  
nArAyaNam sadA vandE nirdOsha-ashEsha-sadguNam || 1 ||

Translation:

I incessantly bow to nArAyaNa ( nArAyaNam sadA vandE ) who is known in a special way (vijnyEyam) only from sadAgamAs (sadAgamaika ), who is Defectless (nirdOsha), who is Complete with All Auspicious Attributes (ashEsha-sadguNam ) and who is beyond jeevas and prakriti (samateeta kshara akshara).

Ref:

yasmAt ksharam atItO aham aksharAd api cottamah |  
ato asmi loke vede ca prathitah purushottamah || B.G.15.18





Udupi Sri Krishna



# Only through SadAgamas?

sadAgamaika vijnyEyam samateeta ksharAksharam |  
nArAyaNam sadA vandE nirdOsha-ashEsha-sadguNam || 1 ||

This sloka says that Paramatma can be known only through 'SadAgamas'. What are they? Look at the next sloka in the next slide.

# What are SadAgamas?

R^igAdyA bhArataM chaiva paJNcharAtramathAkhilam.h |  
mUlarAmAyaNaM chaiva purANaM chaitadAtmakam.h ||  
ye chAnuyAyinastveshhAM sarve te cha sadAgamAH |  
durAgamAstadanye ye tairna j~neyo janArdhanaH || 3 (A) ||

Translation:

The Brahmandapurana states: 'The right scriptures consist of the four Vedas beginning with the Rgveda, the Bharata, the whole of the Pancaratragama, the original Ramayana, the Puranas corroborating these and all other works that follow these. Texts other than these are bad testimonies and through the latter Janardhana cannot be known'.

**Good that SadAgamas will give a proper understanding of Brahman. But ..... just studying the SadAgamas will it lead one to a good understanding? Next slide please.**

# Steadfast dedication to Jignyasa (Seeking)

jneya etaissadAyuktairbhaktimad.hbhiH sunishhThitaiH |  
na cha kevalatarkeNa nAxajena na kenachit.h |  
kevalAgamavijneyo bhaktaireva na chAnyathA|| 3 (B) ||  
- iti brahmANDe |

Translation:

The Brahmandapurana continues: 'But through right scriptures he can be known, by those who are persistently devoted to their study, who are inspired by loving devotion to him and are well established in that devotion. He cannot be apprehended by mere reasoning or by sensuous perception and not by one devoid of the qualifications specified. He can be apprehended only through the scriptures and only by devotees. There is no other way'.

**Brahman can be understood only through Scriptures and that too only when studied with persistence and dedication.**



# Steadfast dedication to Jignyasa (Seeking)

AtmA vA arey draShTavyaH, shrotavyo mantavyo  
nididhyAsitavyaH...

- Brahadaranyaka upanishad

Meaning: Brahman (Paramatma) is to be realized. It has to be heard about, reflected upon and meditated upon.

“vAkyArtohi vicAra abhiyoga eva sphurati”

- Sri Jayatirtha (Sri Teekacharya) in his Teeka on Sri Vishnu Tattva  
Vinirnayam

Meaning: Veda vakyas flash their meaning (reveal themselves) only when there is steadfast and persistent inquiry into it.

Highlights the importance of devotion, dedication and steadfast  
pursuit



Sri Rama of Uttaradi Mutt

# Vedas the way to understand Brahman

na avEdavin manutEdam brihantam sarvAnubhoomAtmAnam  
sAmparAyE' iti taittareeya shrutihi | 4A |  
(tai.A. 3.12.9.17)

Translation:

The Taittiriya-sruti says: "No one who does not know the Vedas understands this great all-experiencing atman, understanding of whom is the way to liberation"

Thus says Taittiriya Aranyakam .....



# Vedas the way to understand Brahman

naishA tarkENa matirApanEyA prOkta anyEnaiva sujnyAnAya  
prEshTa' iti kaTashrutihi | 4B |  
(kaTha u. 1.2.9)

Translation:

The Katha-sruti says: "This knowledge is neither attainable nor refutable by reasoning.  
Only when it is imparted by a teacher it leads to direct realisation"

Thus says Katopanishad .....

# Vedas the way to understand Brahman

nEndriyANi nAnumAnam vEdA hyaivEnam vEdayanti  
tasmAdAhur vEdA iti  
iti pippalAda-shrutihi || 4C ||

Translation:

The Pippalada-sruti says: "Neither the senses nor inference lead to the knowing of this One. Only the Vedas do so and hence they are called "Vedas".

Thus says Pippalada Upanishad (Prashna  
Upanishad) .....

# Apourusheyatvam (authorlessness) of Vedas

na caitEshAM vacanAnAmEva aprAmANyam |  
apourushEyatvAt vEdasya |  
itihAsapurANaha pancamO vEdAnAm vEdaha'  
iti tad-griheetatvAt ca || 5 || (chA. u. 7.1.4)

Translation:

The texts quoted (the Upanishads & Puranas) cannot be considered untrue, for the Veda is not an authored composition and the other texts are admitted as authoritative by the Veda itself in the statement, 'Itihasa-purana is the fifth Veda as it forms the fifth in the series of Rk, Yajus, Saman and Atharvan'.





Sri Rama of Mantralaya Mutt

# Need for an Authorless Scripture

na cha 'apaurushheyaM vAkyameva nAsti', iti vAchyam.h |  
tadabhAve, sarvasamayAbhimata dharmAdyasiddheH || 6 ||

Translation:

It cannot be argued that there can be no text which is not a composition by some author, for, in the absence of such an impersonal authority, dharma etc., which are admitted by all schools of philosophy, go unproved.

**Explanation:**

**It is necessary for any religion that accepts the concepts of Dharma-Adharma to have an authorless scripture that acts as the authority for Dharma & Adharma.**

# Charuvaka School

yasya tau nAbhimatau, nAsau samayl -  
samayaprayojanAbhAvAt.h || 7 ||  
na cha tena lokopakAraH - dharmAdyabhAvajnAne  
parasparahiMsAdinA apakArasyaiva prApteH || 8 ||

Translation:

A thinker who does not admit dharma and adharma is not a philosopher, for, his position is devoid of the purpose, which all philosophy should subserve. He does not help the world since he promotes the understanding that there is no dharma or adharma. Violence will come to prevail in the world and thus he only injures the world.

Explanation:

The Charuvaka school accepts only what is visible and does not accept the invisible concepts of Dharma-Adharma, Paapa-Punya, Heaven-Hell etc. Since it does not provide a set of values for the society Srimad Acharya states that it is not a philosophy (religion) at all. It will only lead to a Free-for-all society that will result in violence.

# Other Schools of Philosophy

Srimad Acharya's point is that for this school (Charuvaka) there is no need for an authorless scripture. But, for other schools which accept the concepts of Dharma-Adharma, there is a need for an authorless scripture to act as the authority (pramANa).

# Why can't a human authored text be used as an authority?

na cha paurushheyaNa vAkyena tatsiddhiH |  
ajnAna vipralambhayoH prApteH || 11 ||

Translation:

Dharma and adharma cannot be determined by the personal injunctions of someone, for human beings are liable to ignorance and deceptiveness.

**Explanation:**

Here the limitations of an authored scripture (written by a human being) is described by Srimad Acharya. If an authored text is used as the authority (pramANa), such a scripture would reflect the author's ignorance and his/her own personal agenda.





Sri Rama of Udipi Palimaru Mutt

# Limitations of assuming an Omniscient author for Vedas

na cha tadarthatvena sarvaj~naH kalpyeta |  
anyatrAdR^ishhTasya sarvaj~natvasya kalpanaM  
tasyAVipralambhakatvakalpanaM  
tasya tatkR^itatvakalpanaM cheti kalpanAgauravaprApteH || 12 ||

Translation:

It would not be sound to postulate an omniscient person to obviate this liability to ignorance and deceptiveness and to make for the possibility of determining dharma and adharma, for, in that case results the flaw of excessive postulation.

Omniscience, not a matter of experience, has to be postulated, that the omniscient person is not deceptive is to be postulated and that he is the author of statements about dharma and adharma has to be postulated.

(Contd)

# Limitations of assuming an Omniscient author for Vedas

## EXPLANATION:

In order to get over the limitations of a text authored by a normal human being, it can be assumed to have been authored by an extraordinary Omniscient human being. Here Srimad Acharya points out the problems in making such an assumption. A number of assumptions have to be made viz., (1) that the author is an All-Knower (2) that he has no personal agenda of his own and (3) that if such a person had existed, an assumption that he did author the text. It leads to too many assumptions..



# Apourusheyatva – No need for assumptions

apaurushheyavAkyANglkAre na kiJNchitkalpyam.h || 13 ||

Translation:

But if the statements are admitted as not the composition of any person, there is nothing to be postulated.

**Explanation:**

**On the other hand, if an assumption is made that the scripture is authorless, such a lot of assumptions need not be made at all.**

# Apourusheyatvam – Self evident

apaurushheyatvaM cha svata eva siddham.h |  
vedakarturaprasiddheH || 14 ||

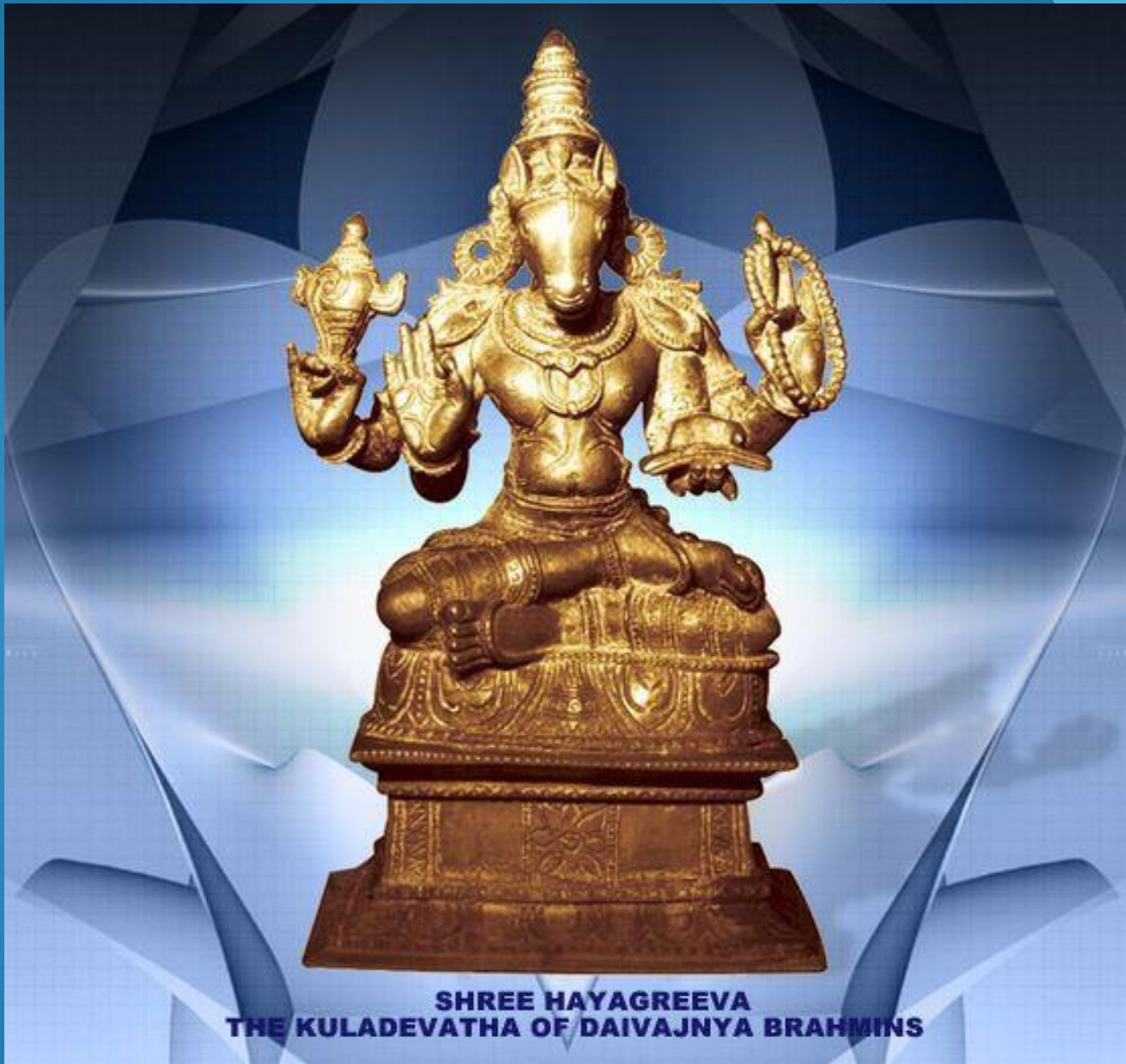
Translation:

That the Vedas are not compositions of any one is evident by itself, for the author of the Vedas is unascertained.

**Explanation:**

**Further, over such a long time, no author(s) for Vedas have been found. Hence it is self-evident that Vedas are not authored by any human being(s).**





**SHREE HAYAGREEVA  
THE KULADEVATHA OF DAIVAJNYA BRAHMINS**

**Sri Hayagriva – Deity at Sode Vadhiraja Mutt**

# Worldly sentences vs Veda vakhyas

na cha laukikavAkyavatsakartR^ikatvam.h |  
tasyAkartR^ikatvaprasiddhyabhAvAt.h || 17 ||

Translation:

On the analogy of worldly testimony, we cannot argue that the vedic testimony also must have some personal source, for in the case of the former there is no prevalent conception that it is authorless (i.e., there is not a single instance to prove its authorlessness)

**Explanation:**

**Worldly texts normally have an author. A parallel should not be drawn between Vedas and worldly texts to say that Vedas too must have an author. Because in the case of the worldly texts there is no concept of authorless texts.**

# Can anyone's writing be called Veda? Need for Parampara

na cha kenachit.h kR^itvA 'veda' ityuktaM vedasamam.h,  
paramparAbhAvAt.h || 18 ||

Translation:

If a statement were to be made by someone and were to be named 'Veda', it does not become equal to the Veda as there is no (continuous) tradition to that effect.

**Explanation:**

**Can anyone write a text and call it Veda? No. Not possible and not acceptable since Vedas have been learnt over a long tradition. They can be traced all the way back to the Seer. A text written by someone will not have a long unbroken line of tradition. The line will stop with the author of the text.**

# How about Vedic Seers?

na cha svayampratibhAtavedaiHdR^ishhTamavedavAkyam  
bhavati, paramparAsiddha vedavAkyAnusAritvAt.h |  
vedadrashhTR^INAM uktaguNavatvAchcha teshhAm.h || 19 ||

Translation:

The testimony that is intuited by those to whom the Vedas manifest themselves, cannot be other than 'Veda' for, what they intuit is one in import with the Veda (that portion of the Veda which is undisputed) and they do have the merits that are said to characterize the seers of the Veda

Explanation:

Someone can question that in the case of the particular Veda Mantra the tradition (of going to the source) stops with them. So they fail the test of 'Parampara'. No, says Srimad Acharya. He says that the Seers are special ones whose characteristics are defined in scriptures. And what they saw through 'intuition' is indeed Veda only.



# Who qualifies as a Vedic Seer?

uktaM cha brahmANDe |  
"viMshallaxaNato.anUnastapasvI bahuvedavit.h |  
veda ityeva yaM pashyet.h sa vedo jnAnadarshanAt.h" || 20 ||

Translation:

The following is said in the Brahmandapurana: 'If he, who does not have less than twenty out of the thirty two merits, who is given to penance, and who knows many Vedas, sees, by the power of his intuitive vision, any text as forming part of the Veda, it has to be admitted as such'.

**Explanation:**

**Here Srimad Acharya quotes from Brahmandapurana and defines the qualities of such a Seer.**





Sri Kaliyamardhana Krishna – Deity at Udupi  
Adamar Mutt

# Fallacy of Infinite Regress

prAmANyaM cha svata eva |  
anyathA.anavasthAnAt.h || 21 ||

Translation:

The validity of the Veda (as of all other sources of knowledge) is intrinsic. Otherwise the fallacy of infinite regress would result.

**Explanation:**

**Vedas (and any similar texts of the highest authority) cannot have another text that confirms their authority, because in that case there is no end to it. That is infinite regress.**

# Self evident to those whose thoughts are flawless

adushhTabuddhInAM svata eva  
siddhatvAchcha prAmANyasya || 23 ||

Translation:

To those whose thought is flawless the validity is self-established.

# Vedas are eternal

" vA`cA vi'rUpa` nitya'yA" (R^igveda 8.75.6) || 36 ||

The Sruti says: 'O sage, Virupa, praise him in eternal words.'

"nityayA.anityayA staumi brahma tatparamaM padam.h" iti || 37 ||

And in words both eternal and non-eternal I praise that Brahman, who is the final goal'

"shrutirvAva nityA anityA vAva smR^itayo yAshchAnyA vAchaH" iti  
paiN^gishrutiH || 38 ||

The Paingi-sruti says: 'The Srutis are eternal words and the smrtis and other speech constitute non-eternal words'

**Vedas are not only authorless but are also eternal, highlights this part of Srimad Acharya's work, with quotes from Vedas.**

# Vedas are Apourusheya (authorless) & Nitya (eternal)

"vijneyaM paramaM brahma j~nApika paramA shrutiH |  
anAdinityA sA tachcha vinA tAM na sa gamyate" || 39 ||  
- iti kAtyAyanashrutiH |

Translation:

The Katyayana-sruti says: 'The highest object of knowledge is Brahman and the highest source of knowledge is the Sruti. Sruti is unoriginated and eternal and even so is Brahman. Independent of Sruti he cannot be known.'



# Vedas are Apourusheya (authorless) & Nitya (eternal)

"sahasradhA mahimAnaH sahasraM yAvad.hbrahma vishhThitaM  
tAvatl vAk.h" |

"kash.h Chanda 'sAM` yoga`m.h A ve'da` dhlraH` ko  
dhiShNyA`m.h

prati` vAca'm.h papAda" (R^igveda 10.114.9) ityAdi cha || 40 ||

Translation:

It further says: 'Thousands are the glories of Brahman and they are individually thousand fold. The speech of the Veda is co-extensive with Brahman. What man of intelligence is there who can comprehend the significance of the Vedas and who is there, who comprehending it, can expound it ?'

These are only excerpts from this famous work of Srimad Acharya. But if this presentation conveys a broad overview of how Srimad Acharya establishes the apourusheyatvam of the Vedas I will feel my purpose in creating this brief document is served.

## Acknowledgements of References:

1. Sri Jayakrishna Nelamangala's e-postings in this subject
2. The book on Vishnu Tattva Nirnaya by Sri Raghavachar
3. The website of Sow.Harshala Rajesh
4. The book on Vishnu Tattva Nirnaya by Sri K.T.Pandurangi

# Dharma Brings Happiness



Jai SitaRam