

CLEMENS CAVALLIN

Sacrifice as Action and Actions as Sacrifices

The Role of Breath in the Internalisation of Sacrificial Action in the Vedic Brāhmaṇas

Introduction

Over the last hundred years different attempts have been made to explain why sacrifices have had such a prominent place within many religious traditions.¹ Such theories of sacrifice are sometimes part of a more general theory of (religious) rituals, or a theory of religion in general. In most cases, actual sacrifices are thus explained through recourse to their position within a more general category. The opposite is, however, sometimes the case, i.e. a theory of one sacrificial tradition is extended to cover all sacrifices, or even ritual in general. One example of the latter is Frits Staal's controversial theory of ritual, which is to a great extent based upon the analysis of Vedic sacrifices, both contemporary performances and those in several thousand-year-old manuals.² The Vedic material has been, and continues to be, a special platform for scholarly reflections on sacrificial rituals, mainly due to its great age and its detailed documentation of the actual performance of the rituals, but also due to the explicitness of the Vedic texts regarding both the function and meaning of the rituals.³

1 For articles in encyclopaedias that try to present an overview of sacrificial theories and the different aspects of sacrifice, see E. O. James' article from 1920 in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, and the article written by Joseph Henninger in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, published in 1987. For more recent developments, see Ivan Strenski's article "Between Theory and Speciality: Sacrifice in the 90s" (1996) and also John Milbank's "Stories of Sacrifice" (1996).

2 See Staal 1989 and for the debate provoked by Staal's theory, see e.g. Smith 1991 and Staal's reply 1993, and also Penner 1985, which refers to an article of Staal written before *Rules Without Meaning*, but expressing the same ideas; see further, the three articles in *Religion* 21 in 1991 by Allen Grapard, Burton Mack and Ivan Strenski, which were answered by Staal in the same volume.

3 The Vedic "texts" were not initially written but oral. They have been transmitted and preserved from teacher to pupil through generations until our times, although they were also written down at some time. It is not easy to say exactly when, due to the lack

One interesting feature of Vedic sacrificial theology is that it comes to conclusions implying the abandonment of the toilsome Vedic rituals. In this process within the Vedic corpus a system of esoteric correspondences established between ritual objects and entities outside of the ritual enclosure is crucial. The Vedic discussions of sacrifices are conducted mainly through references to this system of correspondences and a large number of the correspondences are forged between ritual and man, and more specifically the breaths of man (*prāṇāḥ*). There is thus an anthropocentric tendency in Vedic ritualistic thought, something which could explain the final abandonment of the "outer" aspects of sacrifice in preference for its "inner" aspects (MU 1.2.7–10; PU 1.9). This internalisation of sacrifice makes it also possible to consider non-ritual actions as equivalent to sacrifices (CU 2.13, 3.17; KU 2.5). Sacrifice can thus be transformed from being extremely ritualised to become an ingredient also present in other types of actions. In the Vedic corpus, the notions of breath fulfil a central function in such a transition from ritual to soteriology and ethics (BU 4.4.1–7). The aim of the following discussion is therefore to delineate some central issues that are important for the analysis of the references to breath in the Vedic correspondences. First of all, a working definition of ritual correspondence will be given and then a short discussion of the nature of the correspondences will follow. Thereafter, a general presentation of the different notions of breath and three different sorts of ritual internalisation will be made. The last section of the paper will concentrate on the relation between the breaths and the self (*ātman*), as this is expressed in a few textual passages. It is my hope that these discussions will provide a basis for a more comprehensive study of the role of the breaths in the internalisation of sacrifice in Vedic ritual theology.

Ritual correspondences

A ritual correspondence is here defined as a relation between two or more entities, which connects them in a way that makes it possible to influence one of them through the ritual manipulation of the other, or to explain e.g.

of old manuscripts. See Gonda 1975: 18. The Vedic discourses have been preserved with astonishing accuracy, despite their oral character – a feat that was accomplished mainly through special mnemonic techniques. We can therefore speak of "oral texts". That is, the fixation of discourse in human memory is in some respects similar to the encoding of discourse in a readable medium, a process described by Paul Ricoeur as follows: "...writing renders the text autonomous with respect to the intention of the author. What the text signifies no longer coincides with what the author meant..." (Ricoeur 1992: 139). However, the fixation of Vedic oral discourse is perhaps even more akin to the saving of a text file in the memory of a computer.

the use of one entity in terms of the other. A ritual correspondence cannot be known through normal cognition, but in order to discover it, one needs either a collection of special knowledge (i.e. *veda*), or a method for acquiring such knowledge.

The nature of the Vedic ritual correspondences has for some years been receiving renewed attention within Vedology.⁴ The focus of the research has been above all on the *brāhmaṇas*, but the continuity with the *upaniṣads* has also been studied by some scholars.⁵ The *brāhmaṇas*, which are voluminous prose texts, deal mostly with how the Vedic *śrauta* sacrifices should be performed, under what circumstances they are efficacious and what results can be achieved through them. Some other subjects are also dealt with in the *brāhmaṇas*, but the texts are focused on ritual performance and efficacy. The *brāhmaṇa* ritual discourses are conducted through formulaic lines of argument in which the correspondences often constitute the nodes of the argumentation structure. One example of this is the formula in Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa stating that through the use of the metre *virāj*, one increases the supplies of food.⁶ The formularised argumentation is, as demonstrated below, built up by three correspondences functioning as premises and one conclusion, stating the result.

Premise 1.	X is connected with the Virāj.	vairājaḥ (vai) X
Premise 2.	Virāj is food.	annaṃ virāṭ
Premise 3.	X is food.	annaṃ X
Conclusion	Thus by food he causes proper food to abound.	annaṇa tad annādyam samardhayati

As in the example above the ritual correspondences are often formulated in the form of simple nominal sentences, a feature which frequently makes their interpretation difficult. If we take a particular correspondence, for

4 They have formerly been labelled "identifications", which reflects an interpretation of them as expressing the identity of two objects. The notion of correspondence is intended to cover both identifications (in a strict sense) and more symbolic relations, for even identification does not abolish the difference in common sense between objects; the identity is part of a higher knowledge (cf. the higher and lower knowledge of *advaita* monism; see e.g. the discussion by Potter 1981: 62–73). For a previous use of the word "correspondence" in the *brāhmaṇa* context, see Bailey 1985: ch. 2; and Gonda, 1976: 96. For an example of the use of this concept when studying systems of thought outside of India, see Antoine Faivre's discussion of Western esotericism (Faivre 1994: 10f.).

5 See, e.g. Schayer 1927 for a study of the sense of "correspondence" (*magische Äquivalenzformel*) of the word *upaniṣad*.

6 Bernhard Weber-Brosamer (1988: 8–25) makes a distinction between *anna* as the food which is eaten and *annādyā* as the food which is owned by a person, i.e. the distinction between food and food-resources. He uses the words *Speise* and *Nahrungsmittel* (*Speisevorrat*). For the discussion of the basis of the correspondence between food and *virāj*, see Weber-Brosamer 1988: 93–110.

example that between the god *Bṛhaspati* and *brahman*, it is usually formulated as follows: *brahma vai bṛhaspatiḥ* (Cavallin 2002: 137f.). The sentence contains no verb, and the word *vai*, merely gives emphasis to the phrase. The interpretation of the sentence is therefore in a first stage dependent upon the acceptance or rejection of the notion of a "zero copula".⁷ One could, on the assumption that a copula has been elided, provide it in the translation, "*Bṛhaspati is Brahman*", which in English seems to indicate an interpretation of the correspondence as expressing complete identification. One could, however, also argue that another type of relation is intended, that the nominal phrase surely does not have a copula, but that this is not an example of ellipsis, and that the nominal construction under discussion therefore has its own semantics (cf. Benveniste 1950: 27). According to such a view, we could on the one hand consider the relation to be of another kind than strict identification, and thus make the alternative interpretation: "*Bṛhaspati and Brahman are united*". We could furthermore argue that the first noun in the nominal sentence in reality functions as an adjective, in parallel with alternating expressions.⁸ The interpretation would then be that "*Bṛhaspati is of a brahma nature*".

In the interpretation of the correspondences it is necessary to combine approaches from linguistics and religious studies. The view of the correspondences as expressing complete identifications has for example been united to theories of "primitive" mentality, according to which an object can be itself and another at the same time without any acute awareness of contradiction.⁹ More recent research has, however, been instead inclined to interpret the correspondences as expressions of relations between two or more discrete entities, a relation of, for example, similarity, or of a causal nature (Smith 1998 and Wezler 1996). Nevertheless, it is not necessary to see this as an either/or question, but one could envisage identification and

7 A copula is as Kees Hengeveld writes "semantically empty" (1992: 32). On that criterion, he differentiates between copula, semi-copula and pseudo-copula. An English example of semi-copula is the verb "become" which cannot be left out without changing the meaning of the sentence, i.e. the semi-copula confers "aspects of being" (Hengeveld 1992: 36). An example of pseudo-copula is the verb "seem", which signals not only an aspect of being, like the semi-copula, but also an action; i.e. the verb not only connects a non-verbal predicate to the subject, but functions as a predicate.

8 Foremost the use of *vr̥ddhi* forms, Cavallin 2002: 97.

9 Schayer 1925: 271; Lévy-Bruhl 1985: esp. 76, which introduces the law of participation: "...in the collective representations of primitive mentality, objects, beings, phenomena can be, though in a way incomprehensible to us, both themselves and something other than themselves". For a discussion (in Swedish) of the notion of "primitive" identification, see Olsson 1972: 72ff., and a summary in English, 171f. For a discussion of such expressions in the religion of the Nuer people (in Africa), see Evans-Pritchard 1956: 123ff.

predication as two poles of the semantics of the nominal sentence. There is also some evidence that there could have been a historical change in the Vedic conception of the correspondences, that is those in the form of nominal sentences, a change from predication (i.e. relation) to identification.¹⁰

The breaths in the ritual context

Klaus Mylius (1968, 1976) and Clemens Cavallin (2002) have shown by means of statistics that the so-called breaths (*prāṇa*) figure frequently in the *brāhmaṇa* correspondences.¹¹ There are, however, several levels at which references to breath can occur, and these levels are sometimes interconnected. The first distinction we have to make is that between the notions of breath in Vedic theology, and actual ritual breathing performed in Vedic sacrifices. An example of the latter use of breath is the ritual breathing performed during the two *soma* libations, *upāṃśu* and *antaryāma*, which are offered in the morning of the *soma*-pressing day.¹² During the first libation, a mantra referring to exhalation is murmured by the *hotṛ* (*prāṇam yacha svāhā...* "Support [restrain] exhalation; hail!"), after which he exhales, while during the second libation a mantra referring to inhalation is uttered (*apānaṃ yacha svāhā...* "Support [restrain] inhalation; hail!"), after which he inhales. Moreover, these two *soma* libations prompt us to make a further differentiation, namely that between breath terms figuring in the hymns and formulas of the ritual, and how these terms are utilized in the argumentations of Vedic theology. We thus get three levels at which references to breath can occur (see table 1 below), which correspond to three text categories, viz. ritual manual (*śrauta sūtra*), ritual formula (*saṃhitā*) and ritual theology (*brāhmaṇa*).

10 This conclusion is mainly based upon the directions of the correspondences, Cavallin 2002: 168.

11 The first such investigation was undertaken by Klaus Mylius, who in 1968 collected all the correspondences, which he named "Identifikationen", to the metres in the whole *ṛgvedic* corpus, and in 1976 he collected all the identifications (correspondences) in the Kauṣītaki *Brāhmaṇa*. To complement the work of Mylius, I undertook to collect all the correspondences in the Aitareya *Brāhmaṇa*, see Cavallin 2002. This made possible a comparison of the correspondence system in at least two *brāhmaṇas*. Comparison with other *brāhmaṇas* in the case of correspondences to the breaths was also made (Cavallin 2002: 183–214).

12 For the procedure of these libations see Caland 1906–07: 155–57, 160–62; Staal 1983, I: 601. For an analysis of the *brāhmaṇa* discourses on the relation between breath and these rituals, see Cavallin 2002: 190–92.

1. Ritual breathing (<i>śrauta sūtra</i>).
2. Breath terms in mantras (<i>saṃhitā</i>).
3. Breath in the theology of sacrifice (<i>brāhmaṇa</i>).

Table 1. The use of breath.

In the following, the focus will be, as previously indicated, on the breath terms of the third level.

We also have to consider the different meanings of the word for breath (*prāṇa*) and the breaths (*prāṇāḥ*). *Prāṇa* signifies both a special breath and the set of five breaths: *prāṇa* (exhalation), *apāna* (inhalation), *udāna* (inhalation, up-breathing), *vyāna* (breath between inhalation and exhalation, the air diffused in the body) and *samāna* (concentrated breath).¹³

The breaths could also have functions more akin to those in the later *āyurvedic* system, *viz.* as being operative in different parts of the body and connected with bodily activities such as excretion.¹⁴

Prāṇa (-āḥ) is, moreover, a term for the vital functions of the human person, such as breath (*prāṇa*), mind (*manas*), sight¹⁵ (*caḥṣus*), hearing (*śrotra*) and speech (*vāc*).¹⁶

Finally, *prāṇa* could mean breath in the sense of life, and consequently it can signify the human soul that animates the body.¹⁷

13 For a passage in which all five breaths are mentioned together, see ŚB 8.1.3.6. The translations of *prāṇa* as exhalation and *apāna* as inhalation are chosen here on the basis of Bodewitz's study (1986). Many of the older interpretations, however, reversed these functions; see e.g. Brown 1990 (reprint of an article from 1919), but also more recently this view has been adhered to by Zysk 1993, even though he considers the question as not finally decided. For a selection of scholarly works on *prāṇa* and *prāṇāḥ* see Zysk 1993: 198, footnote 1. My decision to interpret *prāṇa* as exhalation is primarily motivated by the analogy of forward motion that is of importance in the *brāhmaṇa* correspondences.

14 E.g. AiB 1.20.4. For a short summary of the *āyurveda* doctrine of the breaths, see Zysk 1993: 206–08.

15 Keith consistently translates *caḥṣus* as eye and *śrotra* as ear, but in this context they probably refer primarily to the senses (i.e. seeing and hearing) – as in the *upaniṣads*, which Olivelle pointed out in the introduction to his translation of the principal *upaniṣads*, (*The Early Upaniṣads* 1998: 22) – and thus not to the physical sense organs.

16 The number of vital functions varies in different contexts; KB 7.12.8, for example, mentions the number nine without, however, specifying the individual breaths. See also ŚB 1963, I: 19f., note 2.

17 The original meaning of *ātman*, according to Oldenberg 1915: 52ff, 1919: 86, was certainly breath. See also Keith 1925, II: 450ff. Nevertheless, Mayrhofer (1986: 165) rejects

The breaths and the internalisation of sacrifice

The breath or the breaths are the goal of many correspondences, which often means that the connection is made from a ritual entity to breath. This direction of the correspondences thus indicates that the breaths constitute the aim of the ritual activity. A typical example is the following passage from Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

ŚB 3.8.1.3. te vā eta ekādaśa prayājā bhavanti. daśa vā ime puruṣe prāṇā ātmaikādaśo yasminn ete prāṇāḥ pratiṣṭhitā etāvān vai puruṣas tad asya sarvam ātmānam āpyāyanti

Now there are here eleven fore-offerings; for here in man there are ten vital airs, and the eleventh is the self wherein those vital airs are contained; this is the whole man; thus they fill his whole self.¹⁸

Thus the efficacy of the Vedic sacrifices is not merely dependent upon knowledge of the correspondences, but also directed mainly toward the interior of the human person. This anthropocentric tendency of Vedic sacrificial theology links the question of sacrificial efficacy to the question of the foundation of the human person and to the question of the structure of its inner principles. We could therefore put the Vedic concentration of attention to the breaths into the context of what has been called the internalisation of sacrifice (see e.g. Zysk 1993: 202ff.). However, before continuing with this issue, we have to make a threefold distinction regarding internalisation.

1. The ritual is performed within the human body.
2. The ritual is performed mentally.
3. Intentionality and knowledge are considered as essential for ritual efficacy.

Table 2. Different forms of ritual internalisation.

the etymological connection with Germanic *atmen*. Bodewitz also downplays the connection between *ātman* and *prāṇa* (Bodewitz s.d.: 6). For a short discussion of *prāṇa* and *ātman* in the *saṃhitās* and *brāhmaṇas*, see Connolly 1992: 23–37. The connection between breath and soul is a nearly universal feature. For a comparative perspective focused upon the rabbinic literature, see Kosman 1988.

¹⁸ Edition by Albrecht Weber 1964 (reprint of the edition from 1849), translation by Eggeling 1963 (reprint of the first edition 1882–1900). Henceforth this edition and translation of ŚB will be used.

Firstly, sacrifices could thus be internalised through being performed materially within the body; an example of this is the *prāṇāgnihotra*, which is an offering of food into the breaths, i.e. the fires of the body, through the eating of the oblation.¹⁹ In this case, the offering is still performed, although not on a real fire on the sacrificial ground. In the second type of internalisation, the whole sacrificial drama is performed mentally, in the same sense as when a skier goes through the future skiing race mentally before its actual performance.²⁰ The third type of internalisation is brought about through knowledge and intentionality being accorded decisive importance for the outcome of the sacrificial act. It is primarily this third type of internalisation that is in consonance with the importance given in the *brāhmaṇas* to the knowledge of correspondences, and that also provides a partial explanation of the preponderance of the breaths in the correspondences. However, all three forms of internalisation work together to shift the emphasis from the "outer" aspects of sacrifice to its "inner" aspects.

It is, moreover, mainly the variant of internalisation in which the mental part of the ritual act is emphasised that has the capacity of constituting a bridge between the actual sacrificing of, for example, vegetables or animals, and a theory in which non-ritual actions are viewed as capable of being sacrifices. In the late Vedic context such a theory of actions begins to emerge and the Vedic corpus thus bears witness to a sacrificial tradition which comes up with a theory of action in general (*karman*) through an intense reflection on ritual action (*karman*). In this movement from a concentration on sacrifice to that of knowledge and action, which is manifested in the historical development from the Ṛgveda to the *upaniṣads*, the *brāhmaṇas* occupy an intermediate position both chronologically and as regards doctrine. It could therefore be important to analyse in more detail how the notion of breath, and the breaths, are used in the argumentations of the *brāhmaṇas*, and especially how they form part of the system of correspondences. One of the primary tasks in such a study would be to make an inventory of all the correspondences in the *brāhmaṇas* that involve the breaths. It is my hope that such an undertaking would provide a basis for more specialised studies of aspects of ritual internalisation in the Vedic context. One important question that ought to be dealt with is the relation between the breaths, or the vital powers, and the self, *ātman*.

19 For the proceedings of the *prāṇāgnihotra*, see Bodewitz 1973: 254–58.

20 For an example of a mental (*manasā* "by the mind") ritual performance, see ŚB 10.5.3.1–3.

The breaths and *ātman*

A recurrent theme in the *brāhmaṇas* is that the officiating priests instil breath, or the breaths, into the self (*ātman*) of the sacrificer, through a particular ritual (see e.g. AiB 2.21.4, *ātmany eva tad dhotā prāṇān pratidhāya*). The natural answer to the question of what the breaths refer to in such contexts seems to be that it is either the respiratory breaths, as exhalation and inhalation, or the so-called vital powers of man, which also comprise such principles as the senses. Thus the ritual often has as its goal the strengthening of the different principles of the self of the sacrificer. This tendency of internalisation furthermore makes it of fundamental importance how these vital powers come together to build up a unity, and if this unity is solely the sum of the different powers, or if it is something more, for example a substrate in which the powers inhere.

A passage touching upon this issue is AiB 2.26, which comments on the relation between the libations for the pairs of gods and the breaths. A correspondence is spelled out in the first line of the *khaṇḍa*, *te vā ete prāṇā eva yad dvidevatyāḥ*, "The libations for two deities are the breaths", and then the major gods of the Vedic pantheon are correlated with the different "breaths", through the libations directed to them: Indra with speech (*vāc*) Vāyu with breath (*prāṇa*), Mitra with sight (*cakṣus*), Varuṇa with the mind (*manas*), and the Aśvins with the self (*ātman*) and hearing (*śrotra*). In the following table, the pairs of gods are given in the left-hand column, while the corresponding vital powers are presented in the column to the right.

Gods	Vital power
Indra-Vāyu	Speech (<i>vāc</i>), breath (<i>prāṇa</i>)
Mitra-Varuṇa	Seeing (<i>cakṣus</i>), mind (<i>manas</i>)
the Aśvins	The hearing (<i>śrotra</i>) and the self (<i>ātman</i>)

Table 3. The correspondences between the pairs of gods and the breaths (AiB 2.26).

In this context, the breaths thus denote the vital powers of man, in which also, surprisingly, *ātman* is included, and the set of five powers is thereby extended to six. This is perhaps done because pairs cannot yield an odd number, but *ātman* is nevertheless considered here as one of the breaths.

A similar argumentation to that in AiB 2.26 is located in AiB 3.2 and 3.3. The first of these *khaṇḍas* describes the perfection of certain bodily functions that are possible to achieve through the *praiṅga* recitation, which is made up of seven parts directed to different gods, or pairs of gods.²¹ The second *khaṇḍa* describes how the *hotṛ* should manipulate the recitation of the *praiṅga śāstra*, if he desires to deprive the *yajamāna* of the corresponding bodily parts and functions. This is possible because, as the *brāhmaṇa* declares, the *praiṅga* is connected in a special way to the self (*ātman*).

AiB 3.2.3. tad dha vai yajamānasyādhyāmatamam ivoktham yat praṅgam

Now the *Pratūga* is in a way the hymn most related to the self of the sacrificer.²²

Thus, through making minor changes in a part of the recitation which is directed to a specific god, e.g. *Vāyu*, the *hotṛ* can take away the corresponding vital power from the *yajamāna*, which is, in this case, breath. In the table below, all the relevant correspondences in the *praiṅga* passage are presented.

God	Vital power
Vāyu ²³	Breath (<i>prāṇa</i>)
Indra-Vāyu	Exhalation and inhalation (<i>prāṇāpānau</i>)
Mitra-Varuṇa	Seeing (<i>cakṣus</i>)
the Aśvins	Hearing (<i>śrotra</i>)
Indra	Strength (<i>vīrya</i>)
the All-gods	the Limbs (<i>aṅga</i>)
Sarasvati ²⁴	Speech (<i>vāc</i>)

Table 4. The correspondences between the gods in the *praiṅga* recitation (AiB 3.2–3.3) and the vital powers.

In the former passage, only six vital powers were given, i.e. one to each god in every pair, but in this passage, eight vital powers are mentioned, which is due to the fact that the pairs of gods could either be looked upon as units, or analysed as conjunctions of separate deities (see Gonda 1976: 9). There are also some variants in the correspondences. For example, Indra is in the first passage connected to speech, but in the second passage to inhalation and strength. Besides the new power, (*vīrya*) strength, another new "vital power" is presented, *viz.* the limbs; something which indicates that the vital powers (*prāṇāḥ*), at least in this passage, do not make up a fixed category, but that all the powers relating to the functions of the body and the "soul" could be included. Moreover, *ātman* not only means "self", but could also signify the trunk of the body in distinction to the extremities, a meaning which could be of significance in this context (see e.g. AiB 4.23.5). This issue touches upon the potential tension in the *brāhmaṇas* between the vital powers more closely connected with the physical body, as for example the circulatory breaths, and those of a more "spiritual" nature, such as the mind (*manas*), but in the internalisation of sacrifice in the *brāhmaṇas*, both the mind and the breaths seem to be considered as being on the same level (cf. ŚB 3.2.2.13), something which is indicated by the *caturhotṛ* (*daśahotṛ*) formula:²⁵

AiB 5.25.3–12. teṣāṃ cittiḥ sruḡ āsī3t; cittam ājyam āsī3t; vāḡ vedir āsī3t; ādhītam barhir āsī3t; keto agnir āsī3t; vijñātam agnīd āsīt; prāṇo havir āsī3t; sāmādhvaryur āsī3t; vācaspatir hotāsī3t; mana upavaktāsī3t

Their offering spoon was thought. (Their) butter was intelligence. (Their) altar was speech. (Their) stew was learning. (Their) Agni was insight. (Their)

21 For the ritual context and a translation of the whole litany, see Caland 1906–07: 239–41.

22 The translation by Keith (1920) is as follows: "Now the Praūga is the most related to the self of the litanies for the sacrificer as it were." Haug (1863) translates it as: "The Pra-uga Shastra is, as it were, most intimately connected with the sacrificer."

23 It seems that Keith mistranslated 3.2.4 *yad vāyavyaṃ śamsati* as "In that he recites (a triplet) to Viṣṇu..." The god receiving the recitation is clearly not Viṣṇu but Vāyu, at least according to the editions of Aufrecht (1879), Haug (1863) and Satyavrata Sāmaśramī (1895–1906).

24 For an explanation of the reasons (esp. inspired thoughts, *dhi*) behind this correspondence, see Ludvik 2000.

25 AiB 5.25 is classified as a version of the *caturhotṛ* formula by Mylius (1993: 120–23), while the content of the formula is more akin to what is called the *daśahotṛ* formula (Mylius 1993: 130–33; Voegeli 2002: 50). The solution to the confusion seems to be terminological, i.e. *caturhotṛ* is a term for all the different hotṛ formulas, and at the same time a term for one of these, in the same vein as *prāṇa* in the case of the vital powers.

Agnīdh was knowledge. (Their) Oblation was breath. (Their) Adhvaryu was the sāman. (Their) Hotṛ was the Vācaspati. (Their) Upavakṛ was mind.²⁶

The union of *ātman* with its “powers” is furthermore intimately correlated to the Vedic sacrifice, which sometimes is characterised as a person, a ritually constructed twin of the sacrificer. The correspondence between man and sacrifice makes it possible for the ritual to be a creative force not only in the classification of the principles of the human person, but also in its very formation (see Smith 1998: 82–119). In the following passage, the connection between sacrifice and man is clearly expressed, and the relation between the vital powers and *ātman* is expressed being established (*pratiṣṭhitāḥ*) in *ātman*. The translator of Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Julius Eggeling, has chosen to translate *ātman* in this context as “body”.

ŚB 3.1.4.23. daśa pāṇyā aṅgulayo daśa pādyā daśa prāṇā ātmaikatriṃśo yasminn ete prāṇāḥ pratiṣṭhitā etāvān vai puruṣaḥ puruṣo yajñāḥ puruṣasaṃmito yajñāḥ

Now there are ten fingers, ten toes, ten vital airs, and the thirty-first is the body [*ātman*] wherein those vital airs are [established],²⁷ for this much constitutes man, and the sacrifice is a man, the sacrifice is of the same proportion as a man. (Cf. e.g. ŚB 1.3.2.1; AiB 1.28.30 and 3.31.3.)

In the *upaniṣads*, the relation between the self (*ātman*) and the vital powers is further elaborated, and the ontological dimension is more pronounced. One example from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, which constitutes the last part of Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, is given below:²⁸

BU 2.1.20. sa yathorṇavābhis tantunoccareḍ yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā vyuccaranty evam evāsmād ātmanaḥ sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti tasyopaniṣat satyasya satyam iti prāṇā vai satyaṃ teṣāṃ eṣa satyaṃ

As a spider sends forth its thread, and as tiny sparks spring forth from a fire, so indeed do all the vital functions (*prāṇa*), all the worlds, all the gods,

26 Words denoting mental entities are not easily translated, as is borne out by a comparison between the translation made by Keith (1920) of the formula in AiB 5.25, which is used in the quotation above, and the translation by Voegeli (2002) and Mylius (1993) of the *daśahotṛ* formula, as it is given in TĀ: *citti* = thought, intelligence, *der Gedanke*; *citta* = intelligence, thought, *das Gedachte*; *ādhīta* = learning, object of thought, *das Beabsichtigte*; *keta* = insight, will, *der Wille*; *vijñāta* = knowledge, (what is) known, *das Erkannte*.

27 Eggeling translates *pratiṣṭhitāḥ* as “contained”.

28 For a discussion of the relation between *ātman* and *prāṇa* in the *upaniṣads*, see Connolly 1992: 57–96.

and all beings spring from this self (*ātman*). Its hidden name (*upaniṣad*) is "The real behind the real", for the real consists of the vital functions, and the self is the real behind the vital functions.²⁹

Conclusion

We can thus conclude that the importance given to the breaths in the *brāhmaṇas* form part of an anthropocentric tendency, or rather a reflection on the nature of the self, a reflection inclined to give increasing attention and significance to the "inner" aspects of the sacrificial act. A possible outcome of such a process is that the "external" aspects of sacrifice can be dispensed with and, in a second step, even be considered harmful. Furthermore, the internalisation of sacrifice facilitates the emergence of a view of non-ritual actions as sacrifices. In this case, sacrifice ceases to be a ritual, but primarily signifies a mental attitude, an intention, which can give non-ritual actions the special efficacy of the highly ritualised sacrifices. In Vedic speculation, the so-called breaths constitute an important category in such a transition from ritual to knowledge and ethics. In order to be able to delineate more exactly the role of the breaths, a thorough inventory of their use in the Vedic correspondences is necessary.

A theoretical issue which seems to be essential for the analysis of the internalisation of sacrifice is the relation between the two conceptual pairs, inner–outer and mental–physical. The scholar has to be attentive toward the religious tradition under scrutiny, so that he does not fail to see the discrepancies between his own theory of the constitution of the human person and that which is expressed in the religious text. For not everything on the inside is mental.

Abbreviations

AiB	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
BU	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad
CU	Chāndogya Upaniṣad
KB	Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa
KU	Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad
MU	Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad
PU	Praśna Upaniṣad
ŚB	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
TĀ	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka

29 The Sanskrit text and the English translation are taken from *The Early Upaniṣads: Annotated Text and Translation*, 1998, trans. Patrick Olivelle.

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