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How to Live a Good Life? *Ārtha* in the *Ṛg-veda*

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to show the semantic range of the word *ārtha* in the *Ṛg-veda* on the basis of its usages, of analysis of its specific contexts (similes and epithets) and of its negation. The analysis shows a very wide semantic range of this word which includes not only the meaning of destination, purpose, occupation, task and benefit, but also the meaning of life and life-multiplying factors such as wealth, food, fertility, offspring. In its largest semantic range *ārtha* refers to the cosmos conceived as a dynamic whole. The analysis shows that in the *Ṛg-veda* *ārtha* is a general ontological and ethical notion and that the roots for its later understanding are already there.

To talk about *artha* is to talk about people's highest concerns. First of all it is to talk of people's aims and purposes. Although Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* advises Arjuna that he should act without thinking about the fruits of his action, the normal human attitude which guarantees effective action is to design purposes and a society could not exist if its members acted without purposes. Indian classical culture formulated the necessity of purposeful acting in the concept of four aims of human beings (*puruṣārtha*) according to which before one becomes liberated one should achieve other aims. One should consciously act according to one's knowledge about reality (Byrski 1985: 13; *Manu-smṛti* 12.37-38) and support the harmony of the world by obeying the norms defined by one's own individual situation (*sva-dharma*), by one's class and stage of life (*varṇāśrama-dharma*) and by the universal norms (*sādhāraṇa-dharma*) – thus one realizes the aim of *dharma*. One should support the order of society in a proper way and get fame, power and wealth – thus one realises the aim of *artha* (*Manu-smṛti* 12.36, 38; Dumont 1980: 303ff). Finally, one should support one's emotional integrity and develop interpersonal relations (especially the intimate relationship between man and woman).¹ Only when these aims are achieved,

¹ In this way I would understand Manu's explanation that shame (*lajjā*) characterises a quality of *tamas* and that *kāma* characterises *tamas* (12.35, 38): shame is the emotion which accompanies not only sins but also very

can one realise the fourth aim which is liberation (*mokṣa*). This necessity of aiming at cosmic, social and individual harmony is also expressed in the concept of three or four debts (*ṛṇa*) which one has to pay before attaining *mokṣa* (Malamoud 1996: 92-108). So to talk about *artha* is to talk not only about purposes but also about the norms which guide human beings in the realisation of their purposes. It is to talk about occupations which lead to achieving purposes and which are one's own tasks as well.

To talk about *artha* is to talk about value, too. Human beings have both the capability to cognize the world and to evaluate it according to a scale of values. This scale depends much on individual, personal experience and education; it also includes values shared by the members of the social and cultural environment. The purposes and tasks of human beings are evaluated positively from the personal point of view and from the social one. Finally, to talk about *artha* is to talk about personal benefits which come from the proper realisation of one's purposes and tasks and which improve one's life.

The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the meaning of the word *ártha* in the *Ṛg-veda* (RV). To do that I accept the principal assumptions of cognitive linguistics. Word meaning is understood here wider than in the traditional approach. It includes

“not only designating meaning (dictionary meaning), but also features which are referred to as cultural connotation, i.e. features which encode historical and cultural experiences of a speech community... a cognitive definition incorporates all features conventionalized in the process of the speaker's conceptualization of the world.”

(Bartmiński 2004)

Meaning thus understood is a coherent structure, motivated by the physical and cultural experience of a linguistic community (Tokarski 1990). It reflects its world-view and system of values (Bartmiński 1999; Bartmiński 2003; Tokarski 1992). To transform experience and construe meaning, human beings use mental strategies such as metonymy and metaphor. Metonymy is a mental strategy which gives access to the whole conceptual domain via its salient point (e.g. “head” is a salient point of “person”, Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 36ff). Metaphor is a mental strategy which allows humans to think about a conceptual domain in terms of another domain (e.g. we conceive “time” in terms of “money”, Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 8ff).

The reconstruction of meaning understood this way needs as much material as possible because all its aspects are not revealed in the most typical usages of the word (Bartmiński 2004). To fully understand a word is to evoke all its meanings highlighted in various contexts. In the first part of my paper I will analyse material which allows us to reconstruct the basic meaning of *ártha*, i.e. its designating meaning. In the second part I will analyse material which reveals more aspects of the meaning of *ártha* and the way the *Ṛg-vedic* poets conceived how it is to act in order to achieve one's purpose (cultural connotation

of *ártha*). In my opinion, only by taking into consideration the whole semantic range of *ártha* can one understand the reasons why *ártha* became such an important axiological notion in the later Indian tradition.

For the clarity of analysis in the translations of some stanzas of the RV the word *ártha* will be preserved in its original Sanskrit form. In the remaining cases my rendering of *ártha* highlights only one aspect of its meaning. The full reconstruction of the meaning of *ártha* in the stanzas is presented in commentaries.

Part I. The basic meaning of *ártha*

The basic meaning of *ártha* in the RV is a complex one, constituted by several semantic aspects mutually conditioned. In most contexts all of them are evoked. However, there are stanzas in which some semantic aspects are more distinct and these stanzas will serve as the material for the analysis.

I.1. Destination of movement

Lakoff and Johnson have shown that the way we conceptualise and categorise the world is embodied in and depends on our physical organism and the interreactions between it and the world:

“Our categories arise from the fact that we are neural beings, from the nature of our bodily capacities, from our experience interacting in the world, and from our evolved capacity for basic level categorisation.”

(Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 30)

The experiential basis for our reasoning about achieving purposes is movement through space and reaching destinations (metaphor: ACHIEVING A PURPOSE IS REACHING A DESTINATION, Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 190-192). In the RV this metaphoric conceptualisation reveals itself in that the word *ártha* expresses both ‘destination’ and ‘purpose’.

This meaning of destination is clear in 1.38.2:

[1] *kvà nūnām kád vo ártham gántā divó ná pṛthivyāḥ* | 1.38.2 ab

Now where? What is your destination? Go through the earth like through the sky!

The earth and the sky are the destination (*ártha*) of Indra’s journey:

[2] *pārā yāhi maghavann ā ca yāhīndra bhrātar ubhayātrā te ártham* | 3.53.5 ab

O Maghavan, go away and come [to us], O brother Indra – in both places your destination is!²

The rivers are released by Indra to flow to the ocean which is the destination (*ártha*) of their movement:

- [3] *tvám vṛthā nadyā indra sártave 'chā samudrám asṛjo ráthām̐ iva vājayatō
ráthām̐ iva |
itá ūtír ayuñjata samānám ártham ákṣitam |
dhenúr iva mánave viśvá-dohaso jánāya viśvá-dohasaḥ || 1.130.5*

O Indra, at [your] will you let free the rivers to flow to the ocean like the chariots striving for a booty, like the chariots... From there they yoked their helps for the common destination, the unfailing ocean, like the milch cows which milk all the milk for Manu, for the people [they milk] all the milk.³

Because the night in the RV is conceived as the state during which it is impossible not only to see and cognise (e.g. 4.16.4, 3.62.10), but even to move (e.g. 7.77.1), *ártha* in the descriptions of the morning, when human beings and animals are woken up by the solar gods, can be interpreted as the destination of their movement:

- [4] *nūnám jánāḥ sūryeṇa prásūtā áyann árthāni kṛṇāvann ápāmsi || 7.63.4 cd*

Now people, impelled by the sun, go to their destinations [and] do their works.⁴

Death in the RV was metaphorically conceptualised in terms of a journey to the yonder world,⁵ so the place where the dead persons go should not be the destination (*ártha*) of those who are alive:

- [5] *imám jīvēbhyaḥ paridhīm dadhāmi maśām nú gād áparo ártham etám |
10.18.4 ab*

I place this fence for those who are alive lest the next from them go to this destination.

² The rising sun is called *dūrē-arthas* (7.63.4 ab) to express that the destination of its daily journey is far away.

³ See RV 2.30.2, 6.32.5.

⁴ See RV 1.124.1, 1.113.6, 1.48.6.

⁵ Lakoff and Turner analyse English metaphors conceptualising death; one of them reveals similar thinking about death as in the RV: DEATH IS GOING TO A FINAL DESTINATION (Lakoff, Turner 1989: 7-8).

I.2. Purpose – something at which one aims

The meaning of the destination of a journey is extended to the meaning of purpose understood generally, as something at which one aims. This extension is easily activated in the stanzas which do not determine what exactly the destination of the journey is, i.e. they do not say where the subject of *ārtha* goes (3.53.5 [2]). Similarly, in the stanzas which describe creatures woken by the solar gods (7.63.4 [4], 1.113.6, 1.124.1) *ārtha* can be interpreted not particularly as the destination of their movement but as their purpose (and thus is interpreted by most scholars in their translations of 1.113.6, 1.124.1: Elizarenkova 1989; Geldner 1951, I; Renou 1957).

The meanings of the destination of a journey and of its purpose are evoked in 3.61.3 which describes the Dawn as going to the same *ārtha* (*samānām ārtham caraṇīyāmānā*). *Ārtha* means here the destination of the journey of the Dawn who everyday comes back to the world, but it also means her general purpose which is bringing back the light and waking up the creatures. The general meaning of purpose is clear in 1.10.2 which describes Indra as seeing or cognising his *ārtha* (*tād īndro ārtham cetati*): Indra sees or cognises the purpose at which he aims, which is killing Vṛtra and releasing the waters.⁶

The general meaning of purpose introduces the idea of value. In the RV value is assessed on the basis of what is good for human beings. Such an anthropocentric character of the evaluation of the world is a common human feature (Tokarski 1990). The purpose of Indra's and the Dawn's activity is good for human beings: it is good that Vṛtra is killed and rivers are released and it is good that the morning light everyday disperses the darkness of the night. Both acts are cosmogonic so in the context of the activity of Indra and the Dawn *ārtha* – on a more general plan – refers to the existence of the world. It seems obvious that such a purpose is desirable for human beings. Thus, in these contexts *ārtha* means purpose which is good and desirable and which is the existence of the world.⁷

In one stanza Soma is called the *ārtha* of the poets:

[6] *tvaṁ āchā carāmasi tād īd ārtham divé-dive* | 9.1.5 ab

Everyday we are going to you – to this very purpose!⁸

Here the general meaning of purpose is very clear, especially that *sóma* refers not only to the specific plant but also to its juice and to the exaltation which the juice caused with all its effects. The idea of value is present here, too – it is good and desirable to have Soma and to be exalted by it.

⁶ The meaning of purpose is also clear in *kūcid-arthín* (RV 4.7.6) qualifying Agni as the entity which goes wherever it wants.

⁷ Such a positive evaluation of the world is typical for the archaic systems of thinking, see Bartmiński 1988. That *ārtha* denotes a desirable purpose is expressed also in RV 7.1.23 where a subject of *ārtha* (*arthín*) is qualified as *prchāmāna*.

⁸ The same is expressed by the compound *tad-īd-ārtha* in RV 8.2.16.

I.3. Occupation – what one has to do to achieve purpose

The next semantic extension of *ártha* is ‘occupation’ – the activity thanks to which the purpose is achieved. This extension can be explained as motivated by the conviction that the purpose is fulfilled already when the action aiming at its fulfillment is performed.⁹ However, one could argue that this is the result of a metonymic conceptualisation which motivates the use of one word to express purpose and action leading to the achievement of a purpose.¹⁰

Most of the usages of *ártha* referring to purpose activate the meaning of occupation, too: the occupation of the Dawn is to bring light and to wake up the creatures, the occupation of Indra is to kill Vṛtra and release the rivers. Also the creatures are woken up by the solar gods to undertake their occupations (see especially 1.124.1, 1.113.6, 1.48.6).

The meaning of occupation can easily be activated in the stanza which describes Agni who does not want to undertake the function of the priest and oblation bearer (*hotrá*) and runs away because of fear of it:

- [7] *hotrād ahām varuṇa bībhyad āyaṁ néd evá mā yunājann átra devāḥ |*
tāsyā me tanvò bahudhā níviṣṭā etám ártham ná ciketāhám agnīḥ ||
 10.51.4

O Varuṇa, Being afraid to bear the oblations I run away so that the gods do not yoke me here! My bodies entered various places. I, Agni, do not think about this occupation.

The idea of good and desirable value is present here because if Agni did not accept the function, the sacrifice would be impossible and the gods and humans would die of hunger; this, in turn, would result in the destruction of the world. So *ártha* again refers to the existence of the world and its residents evaluated positively. The meaning of purpose can also be activated in this stanza but it is clearer in 10.51.6 which compares the brothers of Agni who achieved this purpose to a chariot-horse or a chariot-wheel on the road (*ártham etám rathívādhvānam ānv āvarīvuḥ*). This simile introduces the idea of a journey and evokes the basic meaning of *ártha* which is ‘destination’, too.

I.4. Task – occupation which one should do

The next meaning of *ártha* is ‘task’ – something that one is expected to do. It can be treated as an extension of the meaning of occupation evaluated positively. This meaning

⁹ This seems to be conveyed by *sadyó-artha* qualifying Agni in RV 1.60.1: Agni is the one who achieves his purpose immediately, as soon as he begins to act.

¹⁰ Metonymy ACTION FOR RESULT. A metonymy ACTION FOR AGENT motivates the qualification of *ártha* as *tarāṇi* (RV 3.11.3); usually *tarāṇi* qualifies the doer (RV 7.63.4: *divó rukmā urucákṣā úd eti dūrē-arthas tarāṇir bhrājamānaḥ*). See also 1.50.4, 1.112.4, 1.128.6, 7.32.9. A full list of Ṛg-vedic metonymies still awaits investigation. For an analysis of metonymies concerning action, see Radden, Kövecses 1999.

introduces the idea of norm. In many of the examples considered above *ártha* is to be understood also as the task. To bring the morning light and to wake up the creatures is the task of the Dawn, to kill *Vṛtra* and to release the waters is the task of Indra, to bear the oblations is the task of Agni. Similarly, the creatures are woken up by the Dawn not only to go and achieve their purposes but also to fulfill their tasks.

I.5. Benefit

If someone performs occupations to achieve purposes and undertakes tasks, one usually benefits from it. This is the next semantic extension of *ártha* which can be activated most easily when the subject of *ártha* is a sentient being: human (e.g. 10.18.4 [5]), divine (e.g. 3.53.5 [2], 10.51.4 [7]), or animal, see below, 4.6.10 [8], 10.127.5 [9]).

I.6. Ideas present in the meaning of *ártha*: value, norm and the individualising factor

In my analysis I use the term “idea” to denote the semantic aspects of *ártha* which as such cannot be treated as its meaning: *ártha* does not mean ‘value’ or ‘norm’ in the RV. They, however, disclose the way of thinking about the notions constitutive for it. Thus, *ártha* means ‘purpose’ and ‘occupation’ evaluated as good, when the idea of norm is activated, *ártha* means ‘task’, evaluated positively, too.

There is one more idea present in the semantic range of *ártha* which I would call an individualising factor. The activities and purposes of Indra, of Agni and of the solar gods described above are the activities and purposes which are characteristic of them and give them their identity. We could say that they constitute their essence: that feature without which they would not be themselves. Indra’s characteristic activity and purpose is to kill *Vṛtra* and release the waters and this is his essence. Agni’s characteristic activity and purpose is to bear the oblations and this is his essence. The characteristic activity and purpose of the solar gods is to bring morning light and wake up the creatures and this is their essence. This essence is expressed in the names and epithets of gods, like ‘Killer of *Vṛtra*’ (*Vṛtra-hán*), ‘Offerer’ (*Hótr*), ‘Impeller’ (*Savitṛ*). If the essence thus understood is called *ártha*, we can presume that the idea of the individualising factor is to be evoked within its semantic range.

The idea of the individualising factor can be activated in *ártha* forming the final member of the compound *samudrá́rtha* (7.49.2). Different kinds of water are enumerated in this stanza: ‘celestial’ (*divyā́*), ‘flowing’ (*srávanti*), ‘dug up’ (*khanútrimā*), natural (*svayam-jáḥi*) and those for which *ártha* is the ocean (*samudrá́rtha*). The basic meaning of *ártha* here is the destination of the movement of the rivers. But at the same time the very fact that they run to the ocean differentiates them from other kinds of water: we could say, it is their *ártha* which makes them to be themselves.

To evoke the idea of essence and the idea of task by one word *ártha* is to strengthen the idea of obligation present in the idea of task: if someone refuses to perform his task,

he is not only punished, but loses his identity or is destroyed. In this way ancient Indians thought about their tasks as defined by the *dharma* of particular *varṇas*: those who did not perform the tasks of their *varṇa* or performed tasks of other *varṇas* lost their identity and – as a result – ceased to exist as members of society. One could surmise that the Ṛg-vedic way of thinking about *ártha* founded one of the bases for later concepts of *varṇa* obligation.

Conclusion of Part I

The semantic range of *ártha* in the RV covers ‘destination’, ‘purpose’, ‘occupation’, ‘task’ and ‘benefit’. It conveys the idea of good and desirable value, of norm and of individualising factor (essence). Thus it covers all the conditions for the successful personal life and harmonious functioning of a society; a society should consist of members who have various purposes, who perform activities leading them to achieve purposes which are treated as their tasks and thanks to which their life improves. *Ártha* thus understood is the basis for the system of values and norms and for the possibility of social diversification. It has an ontological dimension which realises itself not only on the cosmic level (when *ártha* refers to the activities and purposes of the gods who act for the sake of the existence of the world) but also on the social level (when *ártha* refers to the activities of human beings which aim at the maintenance and development of society) and on the individual level (when *ártha* refers to the activity of a human being aiming at his existence and prosperity).

The meaning of *ártha* forms a structure the elements of which are mutually connected and conditioned. They are motivated by experience and conceptual metonymic and metaphoric operations. The comprehensive character of the meaning of *ártha* makes it very difficult to extract one semantic aspect in a particular stanza, in most cases at least two of them are highlighted.

Part II. Cultural connotation of *ártha*

In this part I will analyse the cultural connotation of *ártha* which reveals itself in epithets of *ártha* and its subjects, and in the negative noun *nyarthá*.

II.1. Similes and epithets of *ártha* and its subjects

II.1.a. Similes

I will analyse one simile in which *ártha* is used in the target of comparison and one in which *ártha* is used in the source of comparison.¹¹ In 1.130.5 ([3]) the rivers which

¹¹ I use the terms “source of comparison” and “target of comparison” after Israel, Harding, Tobin 2005: 126-127. For an analysis of the Ṛg-vedic simile, see Bergaigne 1933-1934; Jamison 1982; Pinault 2004.

flow to the ocean, their *ārtha*, are compared to the chariots running for the booty and to the cows yielding their milk to Manu.¹² Both similes highlight the positive value expressed by *ārtha*, because the booty and milk were desirable entities for the Aryans. These similes reveal the anthropocentric model of the cosmos because they imply that rivers flow to the ocean for the sake of human beings, as much as, for the sake of human beings, chariots run for the booty and cows give milk.

In the simile comparing the flames of fire to the eagle (*śyenā*) which attacks its prey *ārtha* is used in the source concept of comparison:

- [8] *yé ha tyé te sáhamānā ayāśas tveṣāso agne arcāyaś cáranti |*
śyenāso ná duvasanāso ārtham... || 4.6.10 ac

And your flames go, powerful, unweary, full of energy like the eagles
 which fly from far away at their aim...

In the context of the attack of the eagle *ārtha* refers to a real object of acquisition which is the prey killed by the eagle. This object is precious for the eagle, without it the eagle (and its nestlings) would die of hunger. It is worth noticing that the idea of hunger and attaining food is present also in the image of the flames of the fire (the target of comparison) which is stereotypically conceived as a hungry creature eating its fuel¹³ and *ārtha* in the source comparison refers to the fuel of the fire, too. The meaning of the object precious for the subject foreshadows the later meaning of *ārtha* which is wealth. On the other hand, the ontological dimension of *ārtha* is evoked here not only because this word refers to something living (in the case of the prey) but, first of all, because it refers to something feeding the subject, so prolonging its existence.

This simile activates the next experiential basis for the conceptualisation of *ārtha*, which is hunting. The feathers which are possessed by both the eagle and the arrow (*parṇā*, eagle: 4.27.4; arrow: 10.18.4) allow us to surmise that the *Ṛg*-vedic thinking about achieving a purpose was motivated by hunting understood more generally, as performed not only by eagles but by human beings too. In such a case the meaning of target (an entity at which one aims to hit) would be present within the semantic range of *ārtha*, too.

Among other meanings activated in 4.6.10 [8], the most evident is ‘destination’ and ‘benefit’. The idea of the individualising factor is also present here: an eagle would not be itself if it did not kill the prey, and, analogically, fire would not be itself if it did not burn its fuel.

It seems that the *Ṛg*-vedic stereotype¹⁴ of the eagle included the idea of hunting for a prey because the eagle is the only non-human creature which is called *arthín* in the RV:

¹² RV 10.143.1 compares Atri to a horse which runs to attain its destination.

¹³ See Macdonell 1897: 89.

¹⁴ I use the term “stereotype” to refer to a cognitive phenomenon which is the result of the process of organising knowledge about entities and which is necessary for understanding the world (Zinkin 2004: 3). In everyday reasoning the stereotype is taken for granted, without questioning it.

- [9] *ní grāmāso avikṣata ní padvānto ní pakṣīṇaḥ |*
ní śyenāśaś cid arthīṇaḥ || 10.127.5

The villages came to rest, the winged birds too and even the industrious eagles.¹⁵

This usage of *arthín* evokes the meaning of *ártha* which is ‘occupation’ and enriches it with an additional semantic aspect. On the one hand the eagle seems to attain its aim infallibly, once it perceives its prey, on the other hand, however, in fact it has to attack many times to finally get it; it also has to attack many prey in order to feed its nestlings. *Arthín* highlights in this context the meaning ‘industrious, hard-working’, the night is the time when the hard-working creatures can get rest.¹⁶ Other meanings of *ártha* evoked by *arthín* are ‘destination’, ‘purpose’ and ‘task’.

II.1.b. Epithets

Here I will analyse one epithet of the subject of *ártha* and one epithet of *ártha* itself. The subjects of *ártha* are qualified with the participle *ánavasyant*:

- [10] *yám sīm ákṛṇvan támase vipṛce dhruvákṣemā ánavasyanto ártham | 4.13.3ab*

[Him,] whom they made to dispell the darkness – their residence is stable, they do not untie [their] *ártha*.

The stanza describes people who are producing fire. The figurative meaning of *ánavasyanto ártham* is that they are concentrated upon this activity, they do not pause even for a moment and they do it all the time with the same effort. This is the right attitude when one has to produce fire with the help of sticks. *Ártha* refers here not only to the activity of kindling but also to its aim which is fire. Fire in the RV is conceived as a wild animal or a bird¹⁷ and this conceptualisation of fire makes the use of the verb *áva* $\sqrt{sā/si}$ - more consistent: fire as a wild animal can escape from the sticks (and it can hide away, which is described in 10.51.4 [7]), so it should be strongly tied. The dynamic character of *ártha* is also confirmed in other collocations of *áva* $\sqrt{sā/si}$ - which governs various nouns denoting dynamic entities.¹⁸ Such a use of *ártha* is close to its

¹⁵ See RV 8.27.12, 1.48.6. Other usages of *arthín* (1.105.2, 8.79.5, 10.26.8) do not reveal the way *ártha* was conceived. Thinking of achieving a purpose in terms of hunting is more universal, see Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 197

¹⁶ The sun in the RV was conceptualised as bird or eagle (Macdonell 1897: 31) and in my opinion this fact together with the stereotype of the eagle as the creature whose *ártha* is its prey motivates the following simile: “urge [them] to the second shore like the sun to [its] destination” (*préraya súro ártham ná pārām*, 10.29.5a).

¹⁷ Macdonell 1897: 89.

¹⁸ Streams (*ví*: 1.85.5, *kulyā* 5.83.8), horses (*áva*: 6.40.1, *áva*: 6.6.4, 1.104.1, *ví*: 3.33.1.), quick fire (*ví*: 6.12.5), creatures (*áva*: 1.32.15, 4.25.8). Tied are animals and birds (4.12.6, *úd*: 1.125.2, *prá*: 4.27.4).

use to refer to the prey of an eagle which can run away from the eagle and hide, too. The eagle could also be called *ánavasyann ártham* because it seems to be unwearied in its search for a prey.

The following stanza describes Indra, his *ártha* is qualified as *súdhita*:

[11] *ártham cid asya súdhitam yád étava ávartáyanti dāvāne* || 8.69.17 cd

His *ártha* is well placed in order that he will come [and] give [them gifts].

The first meaning of *ártha* in this stanza is ‘purpose’ (which is giving gifts): to realise this purpose Indra is turned back to the earth by the priests.

In the RV *súdhita* most often qualifies Agni. In some stanzas *súdhita* expresses its well-disposed attitude towards those who produced it (4.6.7, 5.3.2, 6.15.2). In some other stanzas it refers to the everyday production of fire (3.23.1, 4.6.3, 7.42.4). As has been said, to produce fire one needs concentration, patience and knowledge how to do it. If one does not have these qualities, the fire will not be ‘well-laid’ and it will not burn or it will go beyond the borders of its hearth and become dangerous. In one stanza Agni ‘well-laid’ is compared to an embryo (3.29.2), in another stanza the embryo itself is called *súdhita* (10.27.16). If the embryo is *súdhita*, it will not be miscarried, so it will not escape from its mother’s womb too early.¹⁹ If *ártha* is *súdhita* like well-laid fire or like a well-laid embryo, it follows that it will always remain within the range of the activity of its subject. Such an epithet of *ártha* again discloses its conceptualisation as something living, which can flee away. At the same time it tells us something about the mental state of the subject of *ártha*: the subject chooses it consciously and does not change his mind in aiming at it.²⁰ This attitude is again similar to the attitude of an eagle hunting for prey.

It is worth adding that in 1.166.6 *súdhita* qualifies strength (*barhāṇā*). This context allows us to think that *súdhita* as an epithet of *ártha* highlights its meaning of a target which is firmly placed so that it is easier to hit. The possibility of the use of the same epithet to denote target (*ártha*) and the strength which aims at the target (*barhāṇā*) is again motivated by metonymy ACTION FOR RESULT (see Note 10).

II.2. *Nyarthá*

In the last part of my analysis I will look at the negative *nyarthá*, used four times in the RV (Lubotsky 1997: 832).

¹⁹ In RV 10.27.14 the root *ví √sā/si* expresses miscarriage.

²⁰ A similar mental state is evoked in RV 6.32.5, which calls the rivers going to the ocean “not turning away from their *ártha*” (*ánapāvṛd ártham*).

II.2.a

- [12] *týúr ártham ná nyarthám páruṣṇīm āśús canéd abhipitvām jagāma |*
sudāsa índraḥ sutúkām amitrān árandhayan mānuṣe vādhi-vācaḥ ||
 7.18.9

They came to their false purpose like to the real one – to Paruṣṇi. Even the quick one did not come back home. At Mānuṣa Indra succumbed to Sudās his enemies who ran [away] swiftly, whose voice [was] that of a castrate.

Scholars interpret *ná* as a particle of comparison.²¹ Elizarenkova and Geldner translate *nyarthá* as “false destination/purpose”.²² The enemies of the Bhāratas came down to Paruṣṇi aiming at victory and they met just the opposite fate: all of them were killed. So *nyarthá* conveys here the meaning of death and such is the interpretation of Schmidt (in Erdosy 1995: 336): ‘doom’. We can surmise then that the meaning of *ártha* includes ‘life’, too. This will be confirmed in the following analysis of *nyarthá*.

II.2.b

- [13] *triṁśac-chataṁ varmīṇa indra sākām yavyāvatyām puru-hūta śravasyā |*
vṛcīvantah śarave pātyamānāḥ pātrā bhindānā nyarthāny āyan || 6.27.6

O Indra, evoked by many, one hundred and thirty armored Vṛcīvats, together, in search of fame, at Yavyāvati, succumbed to [your] arrow [and] breaking vessels, died.²³

In this stanza, one can interpret *nyarthá* as the negation of the meanings of *ártha* reconstructed above. If Vṛcīvats are without *ártha*, they are without destination: they do not know where to go, where to run away from Indra (this is Geldner’s interpretation). Because they lose the battle, they cannot lead the life of a harmonious society: they are without purpose, they cannot perform their occupations and tasks and they cannot benefit from them. What is more, they do not differ among themselves and their life is without value and norm.

The expression “breaking vessels” (*pātrā bhindānā*) opens more possibilities of interpretation of *nyarthá*. Geldner says: “*pātrā bhindānā* ist Luptopamā. Wie Wasserträger einen Felhgang tun, wenn sie unterwegs ihre Krüge zerbrechen.” But it seems that there is

²¹ Geldner asks: “Ist *ná* ‘nicht’ oder ‘wie’? Das Metrum spräche eher dafür, dass der erste Einschnitt vor *ná* fällt, also: zum Ziel, nicht zum falschen Ziel. Natürlich ironisch.”

²² Elizarenkova (1995: 195): “Oni prishli kak k celi k lozhnoj celi”; Geldner (1951,II: 196): “Sie kamen ans falsche Ziel als wäre es ihr rechtes Ziel.”

²³ Elizarenkova (1995: 124): “ushli v nebyte”; Geldner (1951,II: 126): “machten sie einen Fehlgang”.

something more in this. Two more stanzas in the RV evoke the idea of breaking vessels. In 7.104.21 Indra, who kills the *rakṣásas*, is compared to someone who breaks vessels and to an axe which cuts trees in order to express his total and cruel annihilation of the *rakṣásas*.²⁴ Taking into consideration this comparison, one can assume that “breaking vessels” (*pátra bhindāná*) in 6.27.6 [13] highlights the meaning of *nyarthāny āyan* which is ‘they died’. The fact that the Vṛcīvats themselves broke their vessels implies their suicide which could be caused by humiliation or lack of hope.

The next usage of *patrá* connects vessel with food and fertility:

- [14] *má no vadhīr indra má pára dā má naḥ priyā bhójanāni prá moṣṭhī |*
āṇḍā má no maghavañ chakra nūr bhen má naḥ pátra bhet sahá-jānuṣāṇi ||
 1.104.8

Do not kill us, O Indra, do not throw away, do not rob us of our dear food, do not break our eggs, O Maghavan, O Śakra, do not break our vessels with offspring.

This stanza gives more details revealing the conceptualization of vessel in the RV. The request to Indra that he should not deprive the poets of food brings to the mind of the recipient the crucial link between vessel and food: to have a vessel means to have a possibility to cook. Someone who deprives himself of vessels, deprives himself of the possibility to cook, becomes hungry and probably will die. So *nyarthāny āyan* can again be interpreted as “they died”.

A vessel as a condition for cooking can be interpreted as a precious property. To be without a vessel is to be poor and the meaning of *nyarthāny āyan* in 6.27.6 [13] can also be: ‘they became poor’. This meaning can be extended to the meaning of being totally deprived of everything, of being cleaned out, and foreshadows the later meaning of *ártha* which is ‘wealth’.

The stanza qualifies “vessels” (*pátra*) as being “with offspring” (*sahá-jānuṣāṇi*), which implies that *pátra* is also used in the stanza figuratively. Its figurative meaning is evoked by the word “eggs” (*āṇḍā*). *Āṇḍā* is used in the RV three more times to denote eggs of the enemies of Indra, conceived as snakes (of Śuṣṇa: 8.40.11, 8.40.10, and of Vala 10.67.8 (Lubotzky 1997: 246)). Breaking their eggs expresses killing their offspring. The phrase *patrá sahájānuṣāṇi* refers to the same idea of having offspring. In the case of males it probably also refers to the very capability of begetting offspring. A male whose “eggs” and “vessels with offspring” are broken is a man who does not have children not only because they are killed but also because he is sterile.

“Breaking vessels” (*pátra bhindāná*) in 6.27.6 [13] can be understood in the same way: the Vṛcīvats, deprived themselves of their offspring and the capability of begetting children. They transformed themselves from bulls (*vṛṣan*) into castrated oxes (*vádhrī*²⁵).

²⁴ In RV 1.175.3 killing the Dāsyu is compared to burning a vessel with flame.

²⁵ Enemies of Indra are often called *vádhrī*, see above RV 7.18.9 (example [12]), RV 1.32.7, 1.33.6, 2.25.3.

In such case *nyarthāny āyan* refers to this situation, too, and *ārtha* in *nyarthá* refers to the offspring and to the possibility of begetting it. To have offspring (heroic sons, *vīrā*) was one of the most important purposes of the Ṛg-vedic man who, deprived of it, was not only deprived of his prestige and power but also of his most important feature as a male; in this way he lost his basic individualising factor. Thus interpreted *ārtha* can also be understood as ‘use’ because a male who did not have offspring was useless from the point of view of society. It follows then that *nyarthāny āyan* could also mean ‘they became useless’.

Although in the RV such references of *ārtha* can be reconstructed only on the basis of the usage of its negative *nyarthá*, a similar way of thinking is attested in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad* 6.4.9-11, where *ārtha* metonymically means the organ which leads the male to have offspring, i.e. ‘penis’.²⁶ It is worth adding that in the Veda there was a close conceptual connection between semen and fire.²⁷ We have seen that in some contexts *ārtha* refers to fire or evokes its idea (4.6.10 [8], 8.69.17 [11]). So the usage of *ārtha* to denote the male organ which emits semen conceived as fire is even more rational: it evokes the idea of fire underlying its other usages.

To conclude, the meanings of *nyarthá* are as follows. First of all, they are the negation of the meanings presented in Part I: *nyarthá* means ‘lack of destination’, ‘lack of purpose’, ‘lack of benefit’, ‘lack of occupation’, ‘lack of task’. It also conveys the ideas of ‘lack of value, norm, use’ and finally, ‘lack of individualising factor’.

As the analysis of 6.27.6 [13] has shown, *nyarthá* also means ‘death’, as well as ‘poverty’, ‘hunger’ and ‘sterility’. It then follows that within the semantic range of *ārtha* ‘life’, ‘wealth’, ‘food’, ‘offspring’, ‘fertility’ and ‘use’ were present. Thus understood *ārtha* covered the conceptual range of life-giving factors and of the multiplication of life on both the social and individual levels.

II.2.c

[15] ná bhojá́ mamrur ná nyarthám̐ t̐yur ná riṣyanti ná vyathante ha bhojá́ḥ |
10.107.8 ab

The generous people do not die, they do not realise the false purpose,
they are not hurt, they do not tremble.²⁸

²⁶ Interestingly enough, a similar semantic range is covered by the Polish “interes”, which means ‘business, occupation, matter, affair’, but in slang it means ‘penis’.

²⁷ See e.g. *Mānava-śrāuta-sūtra* 1.5.2.4 (in Jamison 1996: 62). It can be seen in BU 6.4.5 when it quotes a verse which one should recite in case the semen is discharged and which identifies the semen with fire. Olivelle (1998: 530) in his commentary prefers the version *agnayas* which he interprets as vital functions. I think however that the whole context justifies the interpretation of fire as semen which one would like to have back.

²⁸ Elizarenkova (1999: 263): “Ne idut k lozhnoj celi”; Geldner (1957: 327): “Sie haben nie einen Fehlgang getan”.

All the meanings of *nyarthá* are relevant here. *Ná nyarthám t̥yur* means that the generous people realise their purposes, occupations and tasks together with their benefits (contrary to the enemies of the Bhāratas in 7.18.9 [12]). The proximity of ‘they do not die’ (*ná mamrur*) evokes the meaning of ‘death’ in *nyarthá*: *ná nyarthám t̥yur* means that the generous people “do not die” (before they reach the age of “hundred autumns”). According to the preceding and the following stanzas of the hymn, the sacrificial fee which the generous people pay to the priests (*dākṣiṇā*) gives them all kinds of wealth (cows, silver, gold) and thanks to the *dākṣiṇā* they have food and beautiful women. These two stanzas activate the meaning of ‘poverty’, ‘hunger’ and ‘sterility’ in *nyarthá*: the generous people are rich, have a lot of food and they are fertile. The idea of value present in *ārtha* allows us to understand that the life of the generous people is desirable and good. The idea of norm implies that the life of generous people is ordered in rules. The idea of the individualising factor implies that the generous people differ among themselves. The idea of use implies that they are useful for the society. So on the most general level the expression *ná nyarthám t̥yur* means that the generous people do not lead worthless and disorderly lives. One could say that they live a real life, life *par excellence*.

That the reality and authenticity of life is expressed by *ná nyarthám t̥yur* can be inferred on the basis of the opposition of *ārtha* and *nyarthá* in 7.18.9 [12], which is the opposition of true and false purpose. Using the *Ṛg*-vedic metaphoric conceptualisation we could say that this is opposition between the real purpose which is realised, and therefore exists for the person who aimed at it, and the unreal one which escaped from its subject as a prey escapes from an eagle or fire from between the sticks which kindle it.

In the RV what is real is identified with the cosmos called *ṛtá*. The conceptual links between *ārtha* and the idea of the cosmos are confirmed in that *ārtha* was used to refer to the cosmos (see I.2, I.3). They are betrayed by the etymology, too: *ārtha* comes from the same root $\sqrt{r}$ - ‘to go’ as *ṛtá*; in fact, in the RV the cosmos is conceived not as what really ‘exists’, but as what really ‘goes’.²⁹ The dynamic character of the cosmos is expressed by the fact that the meaning of *ārtha* comprehends the range of activity while *nyarthá* implies the lack of it, similarly as the lack of activity is included in the concept of death.

That *ārtha* in its most general use refers to the cosmos conceived as a dynamic whole in which the good life is possible can be inferred from its usage in the following stanza:

- [16] *prá t̥āry áyuh̄ pratarám nāvīya sthātāreva krátumatā ráthasya |*
ádha cyāvāna út tavīty ārtham parātarám sú nīrtir jihītām || 10.59.1

Let the life be prolonged once again like two [warriors] standing on the chariot [prolong the journey] thanks to the wise [driver]. Now Cyavāna brings about [his] task.³⁰ Let the destruction stay far away!

²⁹ Renou 1957: 20; Mayrhofer 1953.

³⁰ Elizarenkova (1999: 186): “spryavlyaetsya k svoim dyelom”; Geldner (1957: 223): “tüchtig zu seinem Geschäft”.

Cyavāna was rejuvenated by the Aśvins and his ability to bring about his *ártha* is his ability both to perform physical movement and to lead a good life the elements of which are enumerated in the remaining stanzas of the hymn, which express the request of the poet for wealth, food, fame, victory over enemies and long life.

The meaning of cosmos and life generally can be activated in *ártha* thanks to the fact that it is contrasted with *nīrti*. Cyavāna, rejuvenated by the Aśvins, is the embodiment of life and strength similarly as *nīrti* is the embodiment of death.³¹ In 1.94.2 the verb $\sqrt{tū}$ - expresses becoming strong which is contrasted with the possibility of falling into trouble, literally into “what is narrow” (*sá tūtāva nāinam aśnoty amhatīr*, 1.94.2). *Amhatī* is cognate to *ámhas*, the semantic range of which is similar to the semantic range of *nīrti*, i.e. it encompasses all the aspects of death and chaos. In the remaining four cases the verb $\sqrt{tū}$ - (Lubotzky 1997: 600) denotes strengthening a mental power (*krātu*, 4.40.4), a song or a prayer (*bráhmaṇ*, 2.20.5, *śámsa*, 2.20.7) or a singer (6.26.4). Such usage of $\sqrt{tū}$ - on the one hand implies that *ártha* refers here to the song sung by the rejuvenated Cyavāna. On the other hand, however, one can interpret *ártha* more globally, as the whole living and going cosmos which is urged on by the young and strong Cyavāna.³² This interpretation is consistent with the Ṛg-vedic way of thinking about the cosmos (*ṛtá*) in terms of a cow (see especially 1.164.41-42) of which the gods are cowherds (*gopá*, see e.g. 1.1.8, 1.163.5, 3.10.2, 9.73.8). I would argue that the intention of the poet was to imply that *ártha* in 10.59.1 [16] refers to the cosmos, which guarantees the realisation of all the valuable purposes asked for in the remaining stanzas and which itself is a living being opposed to the forces of death and chaos.

Nyarthá is used in the RV once again in the stanza which asks that the gods guard the sacrificer from it (*pāntu yájamānaṁ nyarthāt*, 10.128.7). In my opinion, *nyarthá* is used here in its most general meaning, which was reconstructed above: the sacrificer should be guarded from lack of destination and purpose, lack of occupations and tasks, lack of use and benefit, from poverty, hunger, sterility and death. Broadly speaking, he should be guarded from an empty life which is deprived of value and sense.³³

Conclusion

The full semantic range of *ártha* is reconstructed on the basis of its usages, of analysis of its specific contexts (similes and epithets) and of its negation. Analysis of the usages reveals the meaning of destination, purpose, occupation, task and benefit. *Ártha* thus understood conveys the idea of value, of norm and of individualising factor. Such a meaning of *ártha* encompasses the whole scenario³⁴ of achieving a purpose and reflects a holistic way of thinking characteristic of the RV.

³¹ *Nīrti* is conceived as a woman in the lap of whom the dead person is: 10.18.10, 10.95.14, 10.161.2.

³² In this way Elizarenkova interpretes $\sqrt{tū}$ - (Elizarenkova 1989: 259).

³³ Elizarenkova (1999: 285): “neudacha”; Geldner (1957: 358): “Misserfolg”.

³⁴ For scenario, see Lakoff 1987: 285-286, 397ff.

Analysis of the negation of *ārtha* reveals the meaning of life and life-multiplying factors, such as wealth, food, fertility, offspring and use, evaluated positively. In its largest semantic range *ārtha* refers to the cosmos conceived as a dynamic whole. Such a semantic range of *ārtha* shows that the *Ṛg*-vedic poets were able to create very general and abstract notions.

Analysis of specific contexts of *ārtha* shows that it was conceptualised as something living which can easily escape. The experiential basis for the conceptualisation of *ārtha* is going to a destination and hunting. This basis motivated the conceptual metaphors ACHIEVING A PURPOSE IS GOING TO A DESTINATION and ACHIEVING A PURPOSE IS HUNTING. Activation of this latter conceptual domain activates the meaning of target with its specific reference which is prey. Since it has been shown that in some contexts *ārtha* refers to fire or evokes its idea, one could surmise that the concept of producing fire also motivated the *Ṛg*-vedic thinking about achieving a purpose (metaphor ACHIEVING A PURPOSE IS PRODUCING FIRE). These experiential bases play an important role not only as factors motivating metaphoric thinking about *ārtha*. The images coming from the experiential bases enrich the poetic power of the descriptions and their ability to express various psychic qualities and emotions, such as perseverance, anxiety and excitement, which accompany aiming at a purpose and a sense of bitterness, disappointment and emptiness in case of failure. The tension felt during aiming at a purpose constitutes the sap of life without which life would be boring and empty³⁵.

The findings of both Parts complement each other and they show that the meaning of *ārtha* forms a rationally bounded structure. The conceptualisation of *ārtha* as something alive agrees with the meaning discovered in the analysis of *nyarthā*, which shows that the general semantic range of *ārtha* is life and life-multiplying factors. On the other hand, the meaning reconstructed in Part I can be treated as an extension of the meaning reconstructed in the analysis of *nyarthā*. First of all, life and its multiplication was the reason for going on a journey, especially for the battle-raid the concept of which motivated Aryan thinking to a considerable degree (Jurewicz 2001: 40-93). Life and its multiplication is the most important purpose of the occupations and tasks of human beings not only in the archaic society but also in the modern one: its acquisition is the greatest benefit. I think that because of that *ārtha* survived in later thought to denote one of the *puruṣārthas* which is multiplication of social life. It is also possible that the widest reference of *ārtha* which is the real being foreshadows the later usages of *ārtha* to denote the meaning of words understood as real objects.

³⁵ In the Veda to be alive was conceived in terms of being full of sap. In 7.103.2 the frogs before rain lie “like a dry gourd” (*dṛtīm nā śuśkamī*), Vṛtra killed by Indra lies contracted “like a gourd drunk out” (*dṛtīr nīspītaḥ*). I am tempted to think that the verse *vṛcīvantāḥ (...) pātra bhindānā nyarthāny āyan* (6.27.6) also evoked the idea of a game of dice. The game is evoked in the context of battle (*bhāre kṛtām ví cinuyāma śāsvat* 9.97.58, Indra *vicinótī/ví cinoti kṛtām* 10.42.9, 10.43.5). The defeat of the Vṛcīvats is expressed in terms of loss in game: they broke their vessels for dice and became poor (*nyarthāni āyan*). It is possible that the intention of the poet was to evoke in the mind of the recipients the participle form *vicinvāntāḥ* denoting the throwing of dice, phonetically close to *vṛcīvantāḥ*.

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