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## VIII.

*On the VÉDAS, or SACRED WRITINGS of the  
Hindus.*

BY H. T. COLEBROOKE, ESQ.

**I**N the early progress of researches into *Indian* literature, it was doubted, whether the *Védas* were extant; or, if portions of them were still preserved, whether any person, however learned in other respects, might be capable of understanding their obsolete dialect. It was believed too, that, if a *Bráhmaṇa* really possessed the *Indian* scriptures, his religious prejudices would nevertheless prevent his imparting the holy knowledge to any, but a regenerate *Hindu*. These notions, supported by popular tales, were cherished long after the *Védas* had been communicated to DA'RA' SHUCOH; and parts of them translated into the *Persian* language, by him, or for his use\*. The doubts were not finally abandoned, until Colonel POLIER obtained from *Jeyepúr* a transcript of what purported to be a complete copy of the *Védas*, and which he deposited in the *British* Museum. About the same time, Sir ROBERT CHAMBERS collected, at *Benares*, numerous fragments of the *Indian* scripture: General MARTINE, at a later period, obtained copies of some parts of it: and Sir WILLIAM JONES was successful in procuring valuable portions of the *Védas*, and in translating several cu-

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\* EXTRACTS have also been translated into the *Hindi* language: but it does not appear, upon what occasion this version into the vulgar dialect was made.

The tenth chapter closes with a hymn to night; and the eleventh begins with two hymns relative to the creation of the world. Another, on this subject was translated in a former essay\*: it is the last hymn, but one, in the *Rigvéda*; and the author of it is AG'HAMARSHAN'A (a son of MAD'HUCH'HANDAS), from whom it takes the name by which it is generally cited. The other hymns, of which a version is here subjoined, are not ascribed to any ascertained author. PRAJA'PATI, surnamed *Paramésht'hi*, and his son YAJNYA, are stated as the original speakers. But, of these names, one is a title of the primeval spirit; and the other seems to allude to the allegorical immolation of *Brahmá*.

I. 'Then was there no entity, nor nonentity; no world, nor sky, nor ought above it: nothing, any where, in the happiness of any one, involving or involved: nor water, deep and dangerous. Death was not; nor then was immortality: nor distinction of day or night. But THAT † breathed without afflation, single with (*Swad'há*) her who is sustained within him. Other than him, nothing existed, [which] since [has been]. Darkness there was; [for] this universe was enveloped with darkness, and was undistinguishable [like fluids mixed in] waters: but that mass, which was covered by the husk, was [at length] produced by the power

\* *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. V. p. 361.

† The pronoun (*tad*), thus emphatically used, is understood to intend the supreme being according to the doctrines of the *Védánta*. When manifested by creation, he is the entity (*sat*); while forms, being mere illusion, are nonentity (*asat*). The whole of this hymn is expounded according to the received doctrines of the Indian theology, or *Védánta*. Darkness and desire (*Tamas* and *Cáma*) bear a distant resemblance to the Chaos and Eros of HESIOD. Theog. v. 116.

of contemplation. First desire was formed in his mind: and that became the original productive seed; which the wise, recognising it by the intellect in their hearts, distinguish, in nonentity, as the bond of entity.'

'Did the luminous ray of these [creative acts] expand in the middle? or above? or below? That productive seed, at once, became providence [or sentient souls], and matter [or the elements]: she, who is sustained within himself\*, was inferior; and he, who heeds, was superior.'

'Who knows exactly, and who shall in this world declare, whence and why this creation took place? The gods are subsequent to the production of this world: then who can know whence it proceeded? or whence this varied world arose? or whether it uphold [itself], or not? He, who, in the highest heaven, is the ruler of this universe, does indeed know; but not another can possess that knowledge.'

II. 'That victim, who was wove with threads on every side, and stretched by the labors of a hundred and one gods, the fathers, who wove and framed and placed the warp and woof, do worship. The [first] male spreads and encompasses this [web]; and displays it in this world and in heaven: these rays [of the creator] assembled at the altar, and prepared the holy strains, and the threads of the warp.'

'What was the size of that divine victim, whom all the gods sacrificed? What was his form? what

\* So *Swad'há* is expounded: and the commentator makes it equivalent to *Máyá*, or the world of ideas.

A HISTORY  
OF  
ANCIENT SANSKRIT LITERATURE

SO FAR AS IT ILLUSTRATES

THE PRIMITIVE RELIGION OF THE BRAHMANS.

BY MAX MÜLLER, M.A.

Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford;  
Correspondant de l'Institut Impérial de France; Foreign Member of the Royal Bavarian Academy;  
Honorary Member of the Royal Society of Literature; Corresponding Member of the Asiatic Society of  
Bengal, and of the American Oriental Society; Member of the Asiatic Society of Paris, and of  
the Oriental Society of Germany; and Taylorian Professor in the University of Oxford.

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still fluid state. They next appear as appellatives, not yet as proper names; they are organic, not yet broken and smoothed down. Nor can we compare that earlier, lower, and more savage phase of thought which we find in the Veda, with what we know of really barbarous tribes, such as the Negroes of Africa or the Indians of America. For, however inferior to the Greeks of Homer and the Jews of Moses, the Aryas of the Seven Rivers are far above those races, and had long crossed the bounds of an unconscious barbarism, when they worshipped Dyau and the other bright gods of nature.

Let us consider but a single point. We have accustomed ourselves to regard a belief in the unity of God as one of the last stages to which the Greek mind ascended from the depths of a polytheistic faith. The one unknown God was the final result which the pupils of Plato and Aristotle had arrived at when they came to listen to the strange teaching of St. Paul at Athens. But how can we tell that the course of thought was the same in India? By what right do we mark all hymns as modern in which the idea of one God breaks through the clouds of a polytheistic phraseology? The belief in a Supreme God, in a God above all gods, may in the abstract seem later than the belief in many gods. Yet let one poet but once perceive how he is drawn towards the Divine by the same feelings that draw him towards his father, let such a poet in his simple prayer but once utter, though it be thoughtlessly, the words, "My father," and the dreary desert through which philosophy marches step by step, is crossed at a single bound. We must not compare the Aryan and the Semitic races. Whereas the Semitic nations relapsed

from time to time into polytheism, the Aryans of India seem to have relapsed into Monotheism. In both cases these changes were not the result of a gradual and regular progress, but of individual impulses and peculiar influences. I do not think, therefore, that the mere occurrence of monotheistic ideas, and of other large philosophical conceptions, is sufficient to stamp any class of hymns as of modern date. A decided preponderance of such ideas, coupled with other indications in the character of the language, might make us hesitate before we used such as witnesses for the Chhandas period. But there is a monotheism that precedes the polytheism of the Veda, and even in the invocations of their innumerable gods the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of an idolatrous phraseology, like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds.

There is a hymn of peculiar interest in the tenth Mandala, full of ideas which to many would seem to necessitate the admission of a long antecedent period of philosophical thought. There we find the conception of a beginning of all things, and of a state previous even to all existence. "Nothing that is, was then," the poet says; and he adds, with a boldness matched only by the Eleatic thinkers of Greece, or by Hegel's philosophy, "even what is not ( $\tau\acute{o} \mu\eta \delta\epsilon$ ), did not exist then." He then proceeds to deny the existence of the sky and of the firmament, and yet, unable to bear the idea of an unlimited nothing, he exclaims, "What was it that hid or covered the existing?" Thus driven on, and asking two questions at once, with a rapidity of thought which the Greek and the Sanskrit languages only can follow, he says, "What was the refuge of what?" After this metaphysical flight,

the poet returns to the more substantive realities of thought, and, throwing out a doubt, he continues, "Was water the deep abyss, the chaos, which swallowed everything?" Then his mind, turning away from nature, dwells upon man and the problem of human life. "There was no death," he says, and, with a logic which perhaps has never been equalled, he subjoins, "therefore was there nothing immortal." Death, to his mind, becomes the proof of immortality. One more negation, and he has done. "There was no space, no life, and lastly, there was no time, no difference between day and night, no solar torch by which morning might have been told from evening." All these ideas lie imbedded in the simple words, "Na rātryā ahna āsit praketaḥ." Now follows his first assertion: "That One," he says, and he uses no other epithet or qualification—"That One breathed breathless by itself: other than it nothing since has been." This expression, "it breathed breathless" seems to me one of the happiest attempts at making language reflect the colourless abstractions of the mind. "That One," the poet says, "breathed, and lived; it enjoyed more than mere existence; yet its life was not dependent on anything else, as our life depends on the air which we breathe. It breathed breathless." Language blushes at such expressions, but her blush is a blush of triumph.

After this the poet plunges into imagery. "Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled in gloom profound, as ocean without light." No one has ever found a truer expression of the Infinite, breathing and heaving within itself, than the ocean in a dark night, without a star, without a torch. It would have been easy to fill out the picture, and a modern

writer would have filled it out. The true poet, however, says but a single word, and, at his spell, pictures arise within our own mind, full of a reality beyond the reach of any art.

But now this One had to be represented as growing—as entering into reality—and here again nature must supply a similitude to the poet. As yet, the real world existed only as a germ, hidden in a husky shell; now, the poet represents the one substance as borne into life by its own innate heat. The beginning of the world was conceived like the spring of nature; one miracle was explained by another. But, even then, this Being, or this nature, as conceived by the poet, was only an unconscious substance, without will and without change. The question how there was generation in nature, was still unanswered. Another miracle had to be appealed to, in order to explain the conscious act of creation: this miracle was Love, as perceived in the heart of men. "Then first came love upon it," the poet continues, and he defines love, not only as a natural, but as a mental impulse. Though he cannot say what love is, yet he knows that all will recognise what he means by love,—a power which arises from the unsearchable depths of our nature,—making us feel our own incompleteness, and drawing us, half-conscious, half-unconscious, towards that far off and desired something, through which alone our life seems to become a reality. This is the analogy which was wanted to explain the life of nature, which he knew was more than mere existence. The One Being which the poet had postulated was neither self-sufficient nor dead: a desire fell upon it,—a spring of life, manifested in growth of every kind. After the manifestation of this desire or will, all

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previous existence seemed to be unreal, a mere nothing as compared with the fullness of genuine life. A substance without this life, without that infinite desire of production and reproduction, could hardly be said to exist. It was a bare abstract conception. Here, then, the poet imagines he has discovered the secret of creation, — the transition of the nothing into the something, — the change of the abstract into the concrete. Love was to him the beginning of real reality, and he appeals to the wise of old, who discovered in love, "the bond between created things and uncreated." What follows is more difficult to understand. We hardly know into what new sphere of thought the poet enters. The growth of nature has commenced, but where was it? Did the piercing ray of light come from below, or from above? This is the question which the poet asks, but to which he returns no answer, for he proceeds at once to describe the presence of male and female powers, nor is it likely that what follows, "svadhâ avastât, prayatiḥ parastât," is meant as an answer to the preceding inquiry. The figure which represents the creation as a ray entering the realm of darkness from the realm of light, occurs again at a much later time in the system of Manichaeism<sup>1</sup>, but like all attempts at clothing transcendental ideas in the imagery of human thought, it fails to convey any tangible or intelligible impression. This our poet also seems to have felt, for he exclaims "Who indeed knows? Who proclaimed it here, whence, whence this creation was produced? The gods were later than its production, therefore who knows whence it came?" And now a

new thought dawns in the mind of the Rishi, a thought for which we were not prepared, and which apparently contradicts the whole train of argument or meditation that preceded. Whereas hitherto the problem of existence was conceived as a mere evolution of one substance, postulated by human reasoning, the poet now speaks of an Adhyaksha, an overseer, a contemplator, who resides in the highest heavens. He, he says, knows it. And why? Because this creation came from him, whether he made it or not. The poet asserts the fact that this overseer is the source of creation, though he shrinks from determining the exact process, whether he created from himself, or from nothing, or from matter existing by itself. Here the poet might have stopped; but there are yet four more words of extreme perplexity which close the poem. They may be interpreted in two ways. They either mean "Or does he not know?" and this would be a question of defiance addressed to all who might doubt his former assertion; or they mean "Or he knows not," and this would be a confession of doubt on the part of the poet, startling perhaps after the firm assertion of his belief in this one overseer and creator, yet not irreconcilable with that spirit of timidity displayed in the words, "whether he made it himself or not," which shrinks from asserting anything on a point where human reason, left to herself, can only guess and hope, and, if it venture on words, say in last resort, "Behold, we know not anything."

I subjoin a metrical translation of this hymn, which I owe to the kindness of a friend:—

<sup>1</sup> Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, iii. p. 409.

"Nor aught nor naught existed ; yon bright sky  
 Was not, nor heaven's broad woof outstretched above.  
 What covered all? what sheltered? what concealed?  
 Was it the water's fathomless abyss?  
 There was not death — hence was there naught immortal,  
 There was no confine betwixt day and night;  
 The only One breathed breathless in itself,  
 Other than it there nothing since has been.  
 Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled  
 In gloom profound,—an ocean without light.—  
 The germ that still lay covered in the husk  
 Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.  
 Then first came Love upon it, the new spring  
 Of mind—yea, poets in their hearts discerned,  
 Pondering, this bond between created things  
 And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth,  
 Piercing and all-pervading, or from heaven?  
 Then seeds were sown, and mighty power arose —  
 Nature below, and Power and Will above.  
 Who knows the secret? who proclaimed it here,  
 Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?—  
 The gods themselves came later into being.—  
 Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?—  
 He from whom all this great creation came.  
 Whether his will created or was mute,  
 The Most High seer that is in highest heaven,  
 He knows it,—or perchance e'en He knows not.

Many of the thoughts expressed in this hymn will, to most readers, appear to proceed rather from a school of mystic philosophers than from a simple and primitive clan of shepherds and colonists. Meditations on the mysteries of creation are generally considered a luxury which no society can indulge in before ample provision has been made for the lower cravings of human nature; such is no doubt the case in modern times. Philosophers arise after the security of a state has been established, after wealth has been acquired and accumulated in certain families,

after schools and universities have been founded, and a taste created for those literary pursuits which, even in the most advanced state of civilisation, must necessarily be confined to but a small portion of our ever-toiling community. Metaphysics, whether in the form of poetry or prose, are, and always have been, the privilege of a limited number of independent thinkers, and thoughts like those which we find in this ancient hymn, though clothed in a form of argument more in accordance with the requirements of our age, would fail to excite any interest except among the few who have learnt to delight in the speculations of a Plato, a Tauler, or a Coleridge. But it would be false to transfer our ideas to the early periods of oriental life. First of all, the merely physical wants of a people living in the rich plains of India were satisfied without great exertions. Secondly, such was the simplicity of their life, that nothing existed which could absorb the energies of the most highly gifted among them. Neither war, nor politics, nor arts, opened a field for the exercise of genius, and for the satisfaction of a legitimate ambition. Nor should it be forgotten that, in the natural course of human life, there is after all nothing that appeals with greater force to our deepest interests than the problem of our existence, of our beginning and our end, of our dependence on a Higher Power, and of our yearnings for a better life. With us these key-notes of human thought are drowned in the din of our busy society. Artificial interests have supplanted the natural desires of the human heart. Nor less should we forget how in these later ages most of us have learnt from the history of the past that our reason, in spite of her unextinguishable aspirations, consumes this life in a



# Rig-Veda Sanhita

*A Collection of*

**ANCIENT HINDU HYMNS  
OF THE RIG-VEDA**

**The Oldest Authority on the Religious and Social  
INSTITUTIONS OF THE HINDUS**

**Vol. VII**

**The Seventh & Eighth Ashtakas**

*TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SANSKRIT*

*By*

**H.H. WILSON, M.A., F.R.S.**

*Boden Professor of Sanskrit, in the University of Oxford*

*Edited By*

**W.F. WEBSTER, M.A.**

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9. May those who are our foes be driven off; may we through INDRA and AGNI destroy them; may the VASUS, the RUDRAS, and the ĀDITYAS make me the high-reaching, fierce, intelligent, supreme ruler.<sup>1</sup>

## ANUVĀKA XI.

## ADHYĀYA VII. CONTINUED.

## ŚUKTA I. (CXXIX.)

The deity is PARAMĀTMĀ, the author of the creation, preservation and dissolution of the various entities (*bhāvas*), these being the subjects treated of in the hymn; the *Rishi* is PARAMĀTMĀ, under his appellation PARAMESHTHIN.

Varga XVII.

1. The non-existent<sup>2</sup> was not, the existent was not; then the world was not, nor the firmament,

<sup>1</sup> See Yajur Veda, XXXIV. 46.

<sup>2</sup> To render this phraseology intelligible we must restrict the meanings of *sat* and *asat* ("ens" and "non-ens") to visible and invisible existence, or in Hindu cosmology to matter and spirit (*prakṛiti* and *puruṣa*), which in the Vaidik system would not, as in the *Sāṅkhya*, have a distinct existence, but would be blended and lost in the one invisible, immaterial, incomprehensible First Cause, or *Brahma*, in the intervals of creation. The language used in describing this is usually somewhat vague, but the notion is evidently that the First Cause was in the beginning undeveloped in its effects, and existed before either inactive matter or active spirit, considered as distinct; it is not intended to be said that no cause or origin, no Author of the universe, existed before creation, but that nothing else existed, neither matter nor spirit, and consequently that He created

nor that which is above (the firmament). How could there be any investing envelope,<sup>1</sup> and where? Of what (could there be) felicity?<sup>2</sup> How (could there be) the deep unfathomable water?<sup>3</sup>

2. Death was not nor at that period immortality, there was no indication of day or night; THAT ONE unbreathed upon breathed of his own strength,<sup>4</sup> other than THAT there was nothing else whatever.

3. There was darkness covered by darkness in the beginning, all this (world) was undistinguishable water; that empty united (world) which was covered by a mere nothing, was produced through the power of austerity.<sup>5</sup>

both: see the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, p. 12, where a similar passage is cited from the Veda, and this passage also is quoted by the commentator (*Ibid.* note 16): though it is not perhaps quite accurately explained.

<sup>1</sup> The Scholiast refers to the *Purāṇas* for an explanation, and accordingly see *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, p. 16, and note 25. Each element as created or developed is invested by its rudiment.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* of whom or of what living being could enjoyment, or fruition, whether of pain or pleasure, be predicated, there being no life?

<sup>3</sup> Sāyaṇa explains away another text, *idam agre salilam āsit* "this in the beginning was water," by saying that that referred to another period.

<sup>4</sup> Sāyaṇa takes *swadhā* as meaning *Māyā* or *Prakṛiti* (Illusion or Nature), the source of the world of phenomena. He understands *saha* "breathed along with *Māyā*."

<sup>5</sup> *Tapas* is said to mean not penance, but the contemplation of the things which were to be created.

4. In the beginning there was desire,<sup>1</sup> which was the first seed of mind; sages having meditated in their hearts have discovered by their wisdom the connexion of the existent with the non-existent.

5. Their ray<sup>2</sup> was stretched out, whether across, or below, or above;<sup>3</sup> (some) were shedders of seed, (others) were mighty; food was inferior, the eater was superior.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* in the mind of the Supreme Being.

<sup>2</sup> [This, according to Sāyana, refers to the suddenness of creation, which was developed in the twinkling of an eye, like the flash of the sun's ray. It was so quick, he continues, that it was doubtful whether the things in the central space (understood by the word "across") were created first, or those above or those below; in other words, creation took place simultaneously in all three portions of the universe. Sāyana tries to reconcile this with the received notion of creation in a series (*viz.* that from *ātmā* came the *ākāśa*, and from the *ākāśa* the wind, from the wind fire, etc.), by saying that this was the order in which things were created, but the development of the world was like a flash of lightning, so that the series could not be distinguished.]

<sup>3</sup> The word *tiraścinaḥ*, "across," perhaps refers to the *tiraksrotas*, "that in which the stream of life is horizontal," *i.e.* the animal world. The epithets in the second line of the verse are unusual and obscure; according to Sāyana, the meaning is that among the created objects some were living creatures, others were great, as the sky, etc., the former being the enjoyers (*bhoktāraḥ*), the latter the things to be enjoyed (*bhogyāḥ*), so the creation was distinguished as the food and the feeder. The verse occurs Yajush, XXXIII. 74, where Mahidhara gives it several different interpretations, none more intelligible than those of Sāyana.

6. Who really knows? who in this world may declare it? whence was this creation, whence was it engendered?<sup>1</sup> The gods (were) subsequent to the (world's) creation; so who knows whence it arose?

7. He from whom this creation arose, he may uphold it, or he may not (no one else can); he who is its superintendent in the highest heaven, he assuredly knows, or if he knows not (no one else does).<sup>2</sup>

#### SŪKTA II. (CXXX.)

The subject of the hymn is creation, therefore PRAJĀPATI is the deity; the *Rishi* is YAJÑA, the son of PRAJĀPATI, the metre of the first verse is *Jagati*, of the rest *Trishtubh*.

1. The sacrifice which is extended on every side Varga XVIII. by the threads (of created things) spread out by the worship of the gods for a hundred and one (years), these our progenitors, who have preceded us, weave it, weaving forwards, weaving backwards,<sup>3</sup> they worship (*Prajāpati*) when (the world) is woven.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* from what material cause, and from what creative cause, did it arise?

<sup>2</sup> Sāyana's commentary on this sūkta is very elaborate, but it is evidently influenced by the Vedāntism of a later period. Although, no doubt, of high antiquity, the hymn appears to be less of a primary than of secondary origin, being in fact a controversial composition levelled especially against the *Sāṅkhya* theory.

<sup>3</sup> By combining the superior and inferior weaving, that is,

**ORIGINAL SANSKRIT TEXTS**

ON THE

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

OF

**THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,**

**THEIR RELIGION AND INSTITUTIONS.**

COLLECTED, TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH,  
AND ILLUSTRATED BY REMARKS,

BY

**J. MUIR, D.C.L., LL.D.,**

LATE OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE.

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**PART FOURTH.**

COMPARISON OF THE VEDIC WITH THE LATER REPRESENTATIONS  
OF THE PRINCIPAL INDIAN DEITIES.



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sentations given of the most popular divinities became not only at variance with the characteristics ascribed to their prototypes in the Vedas, but even in some respects different from the descriptions which occur in the older Purāṇas themselves.

These successive mutations in Indian mythology need not occasion us any surprise, as they merely afford another exemplification of a process which may be remarked in the history of all nations which have given free scope to thought, to feeling, and to imagination, in matters of religion.

In carrying out the plan just sketched, I shall, first of all, quote the texts in the Vedic hymns which refer to the creation of the world, and to the god Hiranyagarbha or Prajāpati; these shall be succeeded (2) by passages from the Brāhmaṇas, and (3) by quotations from Menu, the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyaṇa, and the Purāṇas having reference to the same subjects.

I shall then proceed in a similar order with the various texts which relate to the gods Vishnu and Rudra, with occasional notices of any other Indian deities whose history it may appear desirable to illustrate.

## CHAPTER I.

TEXTS FROM THE VEDIC HYMNS, BRAHMANAS, AND PURANAS,  
ETC., RELATING TO THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE, AND  
TO THE GOD HIRANYAGARBHA, PRAJAPATI, OR BRAHMA.

SECT. I.—*Texts from the Rig-veda regarding the creation and  
Hiranyagarbha.*

SPECULATIONS ABOUT CREATION,—RIG-VEDA, x. 129.

R. V. x. 129, 1 ff.—*Na asad āsīd no sad āsīt tadānīm na āsīt rajo  
no vyoma paro yat | kim dvarivah kuha kasya śarmann ambhaḥ kim āsīt  
gahanaṁ gabhiram | 2. Na mṛityur āsīt amṛitaṁ na tarhi na rātryā  
ahna<sup>1</sup> āsīt praketaḥ | ānīd avātaṁ svadhayaḥ tad ekaṁ tasmād hānyaḥ  
na paraḥ kiñchanāsa | 3. Tama āsīt tamasā gūḥam agre<sup>2</sup> apraketaṁ  
salilaṁ sarvaṁ ā idam | tucchhyena ābhv apihitaṁ yad āsīt tapasaḥ tad  
mahinā 'jāyataikam | 4. Kāmas<sup>3</sup> tad agre samavaritātādhi manaso retaḥ  
prathamam yad āsīt | sato bandhum asati niravindan hṛidi pratishyā  
kavayo manishā | 5. (Vāj. S. xxxiii. 74) Tīraskīno vitato rasmiṣ oshām*

<sup>1</sup> The Vishnu Purāṇa, i. 2, 21 f., quotes (from some source which is not indicated) a verse which seems to be in some degree founded on the text before us and employs it in support of the Sāṅkhya doctrine of Pradhāna: *Veda-vāda-vido viprā niyatā Brahma-vādinah | paśhanti vai tam evārtham Pradhāna-pratipādakam | 22. Nāho na rātrir na nabho na bhūmir nāsīt tamo jyotir abhūd na vā 'nyat | śrotṛādī-buddhyānupalabhyam ekam prādhānikam Brahma pumāṁse tadāsit |* "Brahmans learned in the tenets of the Veda, firm assertors of its principles, repeat the following statement establishing the doctrine of Pradhāna: 22. 'There was neither day nor night, neither sky nor earth; there was neither darkness nor light, nor anything else. There was then the One, Brahmā in the form of Pradhāna, the Male, incomprehensible by the ear, or other senses, or by the intellect.'"

<sup>2</sup> These words are quoted by Kullūka or Manu, i. 6, of which passage this may be the germ.

<sup>3</sup> In the passages which I shall quote from the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, etc. further on, we shall see that the creative acts of Prajāpati are constantly said to have been preceded by desire: so 'kāmayata, "he desired," etc.

*adhaḥ svid āsit upari svid āsit | retodhā āsan mahimāna āsan svadhā acastāt prayatiḥ parastāt | 6. Ko ānga veda ka iha pravochat kuta ājātā kuta iyaṁ viṣiṣṭiḥ | arvāg devā asya visarjanena atha ko veda yata ābabhūva | 7. Iyaṁ viṣiṣṭir yata ābabhūva yadi vā dadhe yadi vā na | yo asyādhyazaḥ parame vyoman sa ānga veda yadi vā na veda |*

"There was then neither nonentity, nor entity; there was no atmosphere, nor sky beyond it. What covered [all?] where was the receptacle of each thing? was it water, the deep abyss? 2. Death was not then, nor immortality; there was no distinction of day or night: That One breathed calmly, with *svadhā* (nature); there was nothing different from It [that One] or beyond It. 3. Darkness there was; originally enveloped in darkness, this universe was undistinguishable water; the empty<sup>4</sup> [mass] which was concealed by a husk [or by nothingness] was produced, single, by the power of austerity (or heat). 4. Desire first arose in It, which was the first germ of mind. This the wise, seeking in their heart, have discovered by the intellect to be the bond between nonentity and entity. 5. The ray which shot across these things,—was it above, or was it below? There were productive energies, and mighty powers; Nature (*svadhā*) beneath, and Energy (*prayatiḥ*) above. 6. Who knows, who here can declare, whence has sprung, whence, this creation? The gods are subsequent to its formation; who then knows from what it arose? 7. From what source this creation arose and whether [any, one] created it or not,<sup>5</sup>—He who in the highest heaven is its ruler, He knows, or He does not know."

See Professor Müller's translation of this remarkable hymn, his enthusiastic appreciation of its merits, and his remarks in regard to its age, in his "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pp. 559-566; and Professor Goldstücker's observations on the same subject in his "Pāṇini," pp. 144 f.

VISVAKARMA, —RIG-VEDA, x. 81 AND 82.

R. V. x. 81, 1 ff. (=Vāj. S. 17, 17-23).—*Ya imā viśvā bhuvanāni juhvad riṣir hotā nyashidat pitā naḥ | sa āsihā draviṇam icchamāna*

<sup>4</sup> See Boehtlingk and Roth's Lexicon under the words *ābhu* and *tuchhya*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ob Einer sie schuf oder nicht.* Boehtlingk and Roth's Lexicon, under the root *dhā* (p. 903).

*prathamā-ahhā avarān diviśa | 2. Kiṁ svid āsit adhiṣṭhānam āram-bhaṇaṁ kathamat svid kathā 'sit | yato bhūmiṁ janayan Viśvakarmā vi dyām aurnod mahinā viśvachazāḥ | 3. (A. V. 13, 2, 26) Viśvataschazur uta viśvatomukho viśvatobāhur uta viśvataspāt | sam bāhubhyaṁ dhamati sam patatir dyāvā-bhūmī janayan deva okaḥ<sup>6</sup> | 4. Kiṁ svid vanasṭi ka u sa vṛiza āsa yato dyāvā-prithivī nishṭataxuh | manishino manasā prichhatedu tad yad adhyatishṭhad bhuvanāni dhārayan | 5. Yā te dhāmāni paramāni yā 'vamā yā madhyamā Viśvakarmann utomā | śizā sakhiḥyo haviṣi svadhāvaḥ svayaṁ yajasva tanvaṁ vridhānaḥ | 6. (=S. V. 2, 939.) Viśvakarman haviṣā vāvridhānaḥ svayaṁ yajasva prithivīm uta dyām<sup>7</sup> | muhyantu anyo abhito janāsa<sup>8</sup> | śāsmākam maghavā sūrir astu | 7. (=Vāj. S. 8, 45.) Vāchaspatiḥ Viśvakarmāṇam ūtaye manojuvasṭi vājo adya huvema | sa no viśvāni havanāni joshad viśvasambhūr avase sādhuakarmā |*

R. V. x. 82, 1 ff. (=Vāj. S. 17, 25-31).—*Chaxushas pitā manasā hi dhīro ghrītam<sup>9</sup> ene ajanad namnamāno | yadā id antā adadrihanta pūrvo ad id dyāvā-prithivī aprathetām | 2. Viśvakarmā vimanā ad viḥāyā dhātā vidhātā paramota samdrīk<sup>10</sup> | iśhām iśhāni sam iśhā madanti yatra sapta riṣin para ekam ākuḥ | 3. (=A. V. 2, 1, 3.) Yo naḥ pitā janitā yo vidhātā dhāmāni veda bhuvanāni viśvā | yo devānāṁ nāmadhā oka eva taṁ sampraśnam bhuvanā yanti anyā | 4. Te dyajanta draviṇaṁ sam asmai riṣayaḥ pūrvo jaritāro na bhūnd | asūrti sūrti rajasi nishatte ye bhūtāni samakriṇvann imāni | 5. Paro divā para onā prithivyā paro devebhīr asurair yad asti | kaṁ svid garbham prathamāṁ dadhre āpo yatra devāḥ samapasyanta viśve | 6. Tam id garbham prathamāṁ dadhre āpo yatra devāḥ samagachhanta viśve | ajasya nābhāv adhy ekam arpitāṁ yasmin viśvāni bhuvanāni tasthuḥ | 7. Na taṁ vidātha ya imā jajāna anyad yushmakam antaram babhūva | nihāreṇa prācṛitā jalpyā cha asutṛipa ukthasāsas charanti |*

R. V. x. 81, 1 ff.—"Our father, who, a rishi and a priest, celebrated a sacrifice, offering up all these worlds,—he earnestly desiring substance, veiling his earliest [form], entered into later [men]. 2. What

<sup>6</sup> The readings in the A. V. differ a good deal from those of the R. V.

<sup>7</sup> Instead of *prithivīm uta dyām* the S. V. reads *tanvām evā hi te*.

<sup>8</sup> Instead of *janāsaḥ* the Vāj. S. reads *sapatnāḥ*.

<sup>9</sup> Compare R. V. v. 83, 8.

<sup>10</sup> See R. V. iv. 1, 6, and iv. 6, 6, and Roth's Illustrations of Nirukta, x. 26, p. 141.

# ORIGINAL SANSKRIT TEXTS

ON THE  
ORIGIN AND HISTORY  
OF

THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,

7083 THEIR RELIGION AND INSTITUTIONS.

COLLECTED, TRANSLATED, AND ILLUSTRATED

BY  
J. MUIR, D.C.L., LL.D., PH.D.

VOLUME FIFTH.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO A KNOWLEDGE OF THE COSMOGONY, MYTHOLOGY, RELIGIOUS  
IDEAS, LIFE AND MANNERS, OF THE INDIANS IN THE VEDIC AGE.



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by the introduction of different names, and the ascription to them of various agencies, to explain the process of creation, forms a striking contrast to the sublime vagueness and sense of mystery which characterize the following composition (R.V. x. 129).<sup>600</sup>

(5) *Nonentity, Entity, and the One*, R.V. x. 129.

1. *Na asad āsīt no sad āsīt tadānīm nāsīt rajo no vyoma paro yat | kim āvarivāḥ kuha kasya śarmann ambhaḥ kim āsīt gahanam gabhiram |*  
 2. *Na mṛityur asīt amṛitam na tarhi na rātryāḥ ahnaḥ āsīt praketaḥ | anīd avātaṁ svadhayā tad ekaṁ tasmād ha anyad na paraḥ kinchandaś |*  
 3. *Tamaḥ āsīt tamasā gūḥam agre apraketaṁ salilam sarvam ā idam | tuchhyena ābhu apihitam yad āsīt tapasas tad mahinā 'jāyataikam |*  
 4. *Kāmas tad agre samavarttatādhi manaso retaḥ prathamam yad āsīt | sato bandhum asati niravindan hṛdi pratishya kavayo manishā |* 5  
 (=Vāj. Sanh. xxxiii. 74). *Tīraschitno vitato rasmir eṣām adhaḥ svid āsīt upari svid āsīt | rotadhāḥ āsan mahimānaḥ āsan svadhā evastāt prayatiḥ parastāt |* 6. *Ke addha veda kaḥ iha pra vochat kutaḥ ājātā kutaḥ iyaṁ vīśiṣṭiḥ | arvāg devāḥ aya vīśarjanema aīha ko veda yataḥ ābabhūva |* 7. *Iyaṁ vīśiṣṭir yataḥ ābabhūva yadi vā dadhe yadi vā na | yo asyādhyakṣaḥ paramo vyoman so aṅga veda yadi vā na veda |*

"1. There was then neither nonentity nor entity: there was no

<sup>600</sup> This hymn has been already translated by Mr. Colebrooke and Professor Müller, as well as in the 4th vol. of this Work, p. 4. I have now endeavoured to improve my own version, and otherwise to illustrate the sense of the hymn. The following is a metrical rendering of its contents:—

"Then there was neither Aught nor Nought, no air nor sky beyond.  
 What covered all? Where rested all? In watery gulf profound?  
 Nor death was then, nor deathlessness, nor change of night and day.  
 That One breathed calmly, self-sustained; nought else beyond It lay.  
 Gloom hid in gloom existed first—one sea, eluding view.  
 That One, a void in chaos wrapt, by inward fervour grew.  
 Within It first arose desire, the primal germ of mind,  
 Which nothing with existence links, as sages searching find.  
 The kindling ray that shot across the dark and drear abyss,—  
 Was it beneath? or high aloft? What bard can answer this?  
 There fecundating powers were found, and mighty forces strove,—  
 A self-supporting mass beneath, and energy above.  
 Who knows, who ever told, from whence this vast creation rose?  
 No gods had then been born,—who then can e'er the truth disclose?  
 Whence sprang this world, and whether framed by hand divine or no,—  
 It's lord in heaven alone can tell, if even he can show."

atmosphere, nor sky above. What enveloped [all]? Where, in the receptacle of what [was it contained]? Was it water, the profound abyss? 2. Death was not then, nor immortality: there was no distinction of day or night. That One<sup>601</sup> breathed calmly, self-supported; there was nothing different from, or above, it. 3. In the beginning darkness existed, enveloped in darkness. All this was undistinguishable water.<sup>602</sup> That One which lay void, and wrapped in nothingness, was developed by the power of fervour. 4. Desire first arose in It, which was the primal germ of mind; [and which] sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects entity with nonentity. 5. The ray [or cord]<sup>603</sup> which stretched across these [worlds], was it below or was it above? There were there impregnating powers and mighty forces, a self-supporting principle beneath, and energy aloft.<sup>604</sup> 6. Who knows, who here can declare, whence has sprung, whence, this creation? The gods are subsequent<sup>605</sup> to the development of this [universe]; who then knows whence it arose? 7. From what this creation arose, and whether [any one] made it or not,—he who in the highest heaven is its ruler, he verily knows, or [even] he does not know."

I am not in possession of Sāyana's commentary on this hymn; but the scholiast on the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa (see also the explanation of verse 4, in commentary on Taitt. Āraṇy. p. 142) in which the hymn is

<sup>601</sup> Compare R.V. i. 164, 6, "What was that One in the form of the unborn which supported these six worlds?" (*vi yas tastambha ehaḥ imā rajānī ayaśya rūpe kim api svid ekaṁ*). In Vākhilya, x. 2, it is said: *eka evāgnir bahudhā samiddaḥ ekaḥ sūryo vidvām anu prabhūtaḥ | ekaivoshāḥ sarvām idam vi bhāti ekaṁ vai idam vi babhūva sarvām* | "There is one Agni, kindled in many places; one mighty Sūrya who extends over all things; one Ushas who illuminates this entire world;—this one has been developed into the all."

<sup>602</sup> In the M. Bh. S'āntip. 6812 ff., it is said that from the æther "was produced water, like another darkness in darkness; and from the foam of the water was produced the wind" (*tataḥ salilam upannaṁ tamasivoparam tamah | tamach cha salilotpīḍād udatishṭhata mūrtaḥ*).

<sup>603</sup> Professor Aufrecht has suggested to me that the word *raśmi* may have here the sense of thread, or cord, and not of ray.

<sup>604</sup> Does this receive any illustration from R.V. i. 169, 2 (quoted above, p. 21), which speaks of the "thought (*manas*) of the father" (Dyaus), and of the "mighty independent power (*mahi svatavas*) of the mother" (Earth)?

<sup>605</sup> Compare x. 72, 2, 3, quoted above, p. 48, and x. 97, 1, where certain plants are said to be anterior to the gods, by three yugas (*yāḥ oshadhīḥ pūrvāḥ jālāḥ dvedbhyas triyugam purā*).

repeated (ii. 8, 9, 3 ff.), explains it in conformity with the philosophical ideas of a later period. From such sources we have no right in general to expect much light on the real meaning of the ancient Vedic poets. The commentator in question, who is obliged to find in the words of the infallible Veda a meaning consistent with the speculations believed to be orthodox in his own age, interprets the first verse as follows, in terms which, indeed, after all, may not be far from correctly expressing its general purport: *Yadā pūrvasṛiṣṭiḥ pralīna uttarasṛiṣṭiś cha na utpannā tadānīm sadasati dve api nābhātām | nānarūpatirīṣṭatvena spāṣṭapratīyamānām jagat "sat"-śabdena uchyate naraviśāṇādisamānām tūnyam "asad" ity uchyate | tadubhayaṁ nāsti | kintu kūchid avyaktāvasthā āstī | sā cha viśpāṣaṭvābhavād na sati jagad-utpādakatvena sabbhāvād nāpy asati |* "In the interval between the absorption of the previous, and the production of the subsequent, creation, there was neither entity nor nonentity. The world at the time when, by possessing both 'name' and 'form,'<sup>284</sup> it is clearly manifested, is designated by the word 'entity,' while a void which may be compared to such non-existing things as a 'man's horns,' etc., is called 'nonentity.' Neither of these states existed; but there was a certain unapparent condition, which, from the absence of distinctness, was not an 'entity,' while from its being the instrument of the world's production, it was not a 'nonentity.'"

A much older commentary on this verse, probably one of the oldest extant, is the following passage from the Satap. Br. x. 5, 3, 1: *na iva vai idam agre asad āsīd na iva sad āstī | āsīd iva vai idam agre na iva āstī | tad ha tad manaḥ eva āsa | 2. Tasmād etad ṛiṣiṇā 'bhyanūktam "na asad āsīd no sad āstī tadānīm" iti | na iva hi sad mano na iva asat | 3. Tad idam manaḥ sṛiṣṭam āvirabubhūṣhaḥ niruktataram mūr-tataram | tad ātmānam anvaśiḥṣat | tat tapo 'tapyata | tat prāmūrḥṣhat | tat śaṣṭrīmśataṁ sahasrāṇy apasyad ātmano 'gnīn arkān manomayān manaschītaḥ ityādi |* "In the beginning this [universe] was not either, as it were, nonexistent, nor, as it were, existent. In the

<sup>284</sup> These Vedāntic terms *name* and *form* occur (as observed in the Section on Yama, p. 309) in the Atharva-veda, x. 2, 12: "Who placed in him (Puruṣa) name, magnitude, and form?" and in xi. 7, 1: "In the remains of the sacrifice (*moḥhiṣṭa*) name and form, in the remains of the sacrifice the world, is comprehended." The original texts will be found further on in the subsections on Puruṣa and Uchhiṣṭa. See S'tap. Br. xi. 2, 3, 1 ff., to be quoted below, in the subsection on Brahma.

beginning this universe was, as it were, and was not, as it were. Then it was only that mind. Wherefore it has been declared by the ṛishi (in the verse before us), 'There was then neither nonentity nor entity;' for mind was, as it were, neither entity nor non-entity. 2. Then this mind, being developed, wished to become manifested, more revealed, more embodied. It sought after itself; it practised austere fervour. It swooned. It beheld 36,000 of its own fires, suns, formed of mind, placed by mind, etc." Mind then creates voice, voice creates breath, breath creates eye, eye creates ear, ear creates work (or ceremony), and work creates fire.

These ideas of entity and nonentity<sup>287</sup> seem to have been familiar to the later Vedic poets, as in R.V. x. 72 (noticed above, and translated in the section on Aditi, p. 48), we find it thus declared (verses 2, 3), that in the beginning nonentity was the source of entity: "In the earliest age of the gods entity sprang from nonentity; in the first age of the gods entity sprang from nonentity." In the A.V. x. 7, 10 (which will be quoted in the subsection on Skambha), it is said that both nonentity and entity<sup>288</sup> exist within the god Skambha; and in verse 25 of the same hymn: "Powerful indeed are those gods who sprang from nonentity. Men say that that nonentity is one, the highest, member of Skambha."<sup>289</sup> The Taittirīya Upanishad also (Bibliotheca Indica, p. 99) quotes a verse to the effect: "This was at first non-entity. From that sprang entity" (*asad vai idam agre āstī | tato vai sad ajāyata*).

The author of the Chhândogya Upanishad probably alludes to some of these texts when he says (vi. 2, 1 f. Bibl. Ind. p. 387 f.): *Sad eva somya idam agre āsīd ekam eva adītyam | tad ha eke āhur "asad eva*

<sup>287</sup> The Taitt. Arany. i. 11, 1 (Bibl. Ind. p. 84), ascribes the development of existence from nonexistence to the seven ṛishis, etc. (*asataḥ sad ye tatakshur ṛiṣayaḥ sapta ātīdī cha yat | sarve trayo Agastyā cha*).

<sup>288</sup> Another verse of the A.V. xvii. 1, 19, says: "Entity is founded (*pratīṣṭhitam*) on nonentity; what has become (*bhūta*) is founded on entity. What has become is based (*āhitam*) on what is to be, and what is to be is founded on what has become" (*astī sat pratīṣṭhitam astī bhūtam pratīṣṭhitam | bhūtam ha bhūto āhitam bhāvyam bhūto pratīṣṭhitam*).

<sup>289</sup> This phrase (see above, p. 61) is also applied to Agni in R.V. x. 5, 7, where it is said that that god, being "a thing both *asat*, nonexistent (*i.e.* unmanifested), and *sat*, existent (*i.e.* in a latent state, or in essence), in the highest heaven, in the creation of Dakṣa, and in the womb of Aditi (comp. R.V. x. 72, 4 f.), became in a former age

*idam agre āsīd ekam eva advīṭīyaṁ tasmād asataḥ saḥ jāyeta*" | 2. *Kaś tu khalu somya evaṁ syād iti ha uvācha katham asataḥ saḥ jāyeta iti | sat tv eva somya idam agre āsīd ekam eva advīṭīyam | tad aśikṣhata bahu syām prajāyeya iti* | "This, o fair youth, was in the beginning existent (or entity) (*sat*), one without a second. Now some say, 'This was in the beginning non-existent (or non-entity) (*asat*), one without a second; wherefore the existent must spring from the non-existent.' 2. But how, o fair youth, he proceeded, can it be so? How can the existent spring from the non-existent? But, o fair youth, this was in the beginning existent, one without a second. That [entity] thought, 'Let me multiply and be produced.'"<sup>440</sup>

There does not appear to be any discrepancy between the statement in R.V. x. 129, 1, "There was then neither nonentity nor entity," and the doctrine of the Chhândogya Upanishad, for in the second verse of the hymn, also, a being designated as the One is recognized as existing, which may be regarded as answering to the primal entity of the Upanishad; while the original non-existence of anything, whether non-entity or entity, asserted in the first verse, may merely signify, as the commentator on the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa explains, that there was as yet no distinct manifestation of the One. In like manner the A.V. x. 7. 10, 25 (quoted above), does not assert the absolute priority of non-entity, but affirms it to be embraced in, or a member of, the divine being designated as Skambha. The Chhândogya Upanishad has, however, a greater appearance of being at variance with itself, iii. 19, 1 (*asad evedam agre āsīt tat sad āsīt*), and with the Taittirīya Upanishad, as well as with verses 2 and 3 of the 72nd hymn of the tenth book of the R.V., above cited, which assert that entity sprang from nonentity. If these verses are to be taken literally and absolutely, we must suppose the poet to have conceived the different creative agents whom he names, Brahmanaspati, Uttānapad, Dakṣha, and Aditi, to have sprung out of nothing, or from each other, or to be secondary manifestations of the entity which was the first product of nonentity. If, however, with the commentators, we take "nonentity" to denote merely an undeveloped state, there will be no contradiction.

the first-born of our ceremonial, and is both a bull and a cow." In A.V. xi. 7, 8, it is said that the *uchhiṣṭha* (remains of the sacrifice) is both *śan* and *asan* (masculine).

<sup>440</sup> See English trans. p. 101, which I have not followed.

The first movement in the process of creation as conceived in the hymn (R.V. x. 129) is this: the One, which in the beginning breathed calmly, self-sustained, is developed by the power of *tapas*, by its own inherent heat (as Professor Müller explains, *Anc. Sansk. Lit.* p. 561), or by rigorous and intense abstraction (as Professor Roth understands the word; see his *Lexicon*, s.v.).<sup>441</sup> This development gave occasion

<sup>441</sup> Roth's interpretation is supported by a text in the A.V. x. 7, 38 (see further on in the subsection on Skambha), as well as by numerous passages in the Brāhmaṇas. Thus in S'atap. Br. xi. 5, 8, 1 (quoted in the 3rd vol. of this work, p. 4), Prajāpati, who is described as being the universe, is said to have desired (*akṣmayata*) to propagate himself, and to have striven and practised rigorous abstraction (*tapo 'tapyata*). And in the same Brāhmaṇa, xiii. 7, 1, 1 (cited in the 4th vol. of this work, p. 25), the self-existent Brahma himself is similarly related to have practised *tapas*, and when he found that that did not confer infinity, to have offered himself in sacrifice. The gods are also said to have attained heaven and their divine character by *tapas* (see above, p. 15, and the 4th vol. of this work, pp. 20, 21, 24, and 288). Compare also the Taitt. Up. ii. 6, where it is said: *Sa tapo 'tapyata | sa tapas taptvā idam sarvam aśrijata yad idam kincha* | "He (the supreme Soul) desired, 'Let me be multiplied and produced.' He performed *tapas*, and having done so, he created all this." In his commentary on this passage, S'ankara explains that, in conformity with another Vedic text, knowledge is called *tapas*, and that, as the supreme Soul has no unsatisfied desires, no other sense would be suitable; and that the phrase means "He reflected upon the construction, etc., of the world which was being created" (*tapas iti jñānam uchyaते | "yasya jñānamayaṁ tapaḥ" iti śruty-antarād ūpta-kāmatvāch cha itarasya asambhavaḥ eva | "sa tapo 'tapyata" tapas taptvān śrīyamāna-jagad-rachanādi-vishayam ālochanam akarod ātmā ity arthaḥ*). It is true that all these passages from the Brāhmaṇas are of a later date than the hymn, but the R.V. itself, x. 167, 1, says that Indra gained heaven by *tapas* (see above, p. 14), where the word can only mean rigorous abstraction. The word is also found in R.V. ix. 113, 2, where soma-juice is said to be poured out with hallowed words, truth, faith, and *tapas* (*ritarākṣena satyena śraddhayā tapasā sutāḥ*); and in x. 83, 2, 3, where Manyu (wrath personified) is besought to protect, or to slay enemies, along with *tapas*. (*tapasā aśijoshāḥ, or tapasā yujā*). This view of the word is also supported by Taitt. Br. iii. 12, 3, 1: "Let us worship with an oblation that first-born god, by whom this entire universe which exists is surrounded (*paribhūtam*)—the self-existent Brahma, which is the highest *tapas*. He is son, father, mother. *Tapas* was produced as the first object" (*yenedaṁ viśvam paribhūtam yad aśi prathamajam devaṁ havishā vidhema | svayambhu Brahma paramam tapo yat | sa eva putraḥ sa pitā sa mātā | tapo ha yakṣham prathamam sambhūvire*). In the Mahābhārata, S'āntiparva, 10836, Prajāpati is said to have created living beings by *tapas*, after having entered on religious observances, or austerities (*vrataṇi*). *Tapas* is also mentioned as the source from which creatures were produced, A.V. xiii. 1, 10. Compare Bhāgavata Purāṇa, ii. 9, 6, 7, 19, 23, and iii. 10, 4 ff. *Tapas* is connected with an oblation of boiled milk in a passage of the A.V. iv. 11, 6: *yama devāḥ svar āruruḥur hitevā śarīram amṛitasya nābhīm | tena goṣhma sukṛitasya lokam gharmanya vrataṇa tpaṣā yajāryavaḥ* | "May we, renowned, attain to the world of righteousness by that ceremony of offering boiled milk, by *tapas*, whereby the

to desire (Kāma) which immediately took possession of the One, and is described as the first germ of mind, and the earliest link<sup>64</sup> between nonentity and entity. The poet then goes on to speak of impregnating powers, and mighty forces, of receptive capacities, and active energies; but confesses himself unable to declare how the universe was produced. The gods themselves having come into existence at a later stage of creation, were not in a position to reveal to their worshippers the earlier part of the process of which they had not been witnesses. The

gods ascended to heaven, the centre of immortality, having left behind their body." But xi. 6, 5, connects *tapas* with heat: "The Brahmachārin, born before Brahma, dwelling (or clothed) in heat, arose through *tapas*" (*pūro jāto Brahmaṇo brahmachāri gharmaṁ vāsāno tapasodatiṣṭhaḥ*). In A.V. vii. 61, *tapas* is connected with Agni. In A.V. xvii. 1, 24, *tapas* means the heat of the sun. *Tapas* is mentioned along with *karma* in A.V. xi. 8, 2, and is said to have been produced from it (ibid. v. 6).

<sup>64</sup> The commentator on the Taitt. Br. ii. 8, 9, 5 (p. 928 of Calcutta edition, in Bibl. Ind.) says: *kāmasya sarva-vyavahāra-hetutvaṁ Vajasaneyinaḥ samāmananti atha khalo āhuḥ "kāmamayaḥ evāyam puruṣaḥ" iti | Vyāso 'pi smarati "kāma-bandhanam evodaṁ nānyad astīha bandhanam" iti | asmad-anubhave 'pi tatāḥ dṛṣyate | sarvo hi puruṣaḥ prathamam kinchit kāmāyitvā tadartham prayatmānaḥ sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ vā labhata* | "The Vajasaneyins record that desire is the cause of all action, and say: 'this Puruṣa is himself actuated by desire' (Bṛhadār. Up. p. 854). And Vyāsa too declares in his smṛiti, 'That which binds this world is desire; it has no other bond.' The same thing, too, is seen within our own observation; for it is only after a man has first desired something that he will strive after it, and so experience pleasure or pain." In numerous passages of the Brāhmaṇas and Upanishads (as in those quoted in the last note), we are told that the first step in the creation was that Prajāpati or Brahma "desired" (*akāmayata*). In his remarks on the passage of the Taittirīya Upanishad, quoted in the last note, S'ankara considers it necessary to explain that the supreme Soul is not subject to the dominion of desire, as if, like men, he had any wish unfulfilled, or were subject to the influence of any desirable objects external to himself, or were dependent on other things as instruments of attaining any such external objects; but on the contrary, is independent of all other things, and himself, with a view to the interests of living beings, originated his desires which possess the characteristics of truth and knowledge (or true knowledge), and from being a part of himself, are perfectly pure (*kāmayitṛtvād asmad-ādi-vaś anāptakāmaḥ chet | na | svāntaryūt | yathā 'nyān paravādīkṛtya kāmādi-doshāḥ pravarttayanti na tatāḥ Brahmaṇaḥ pravarttakāḥ kāmāḥ | katham tarhi satya-jñāna-lakṣaṇaḥ svātmabhūtatvād viuddhāḥ | na tair Brahma pravartiyate | teshām tu tat-pravartitakam Brahma prāṇi-karmapekṣahayā | tasmāt svāntaryāṁ kāmāṣu Brahmaṇaḥ | ato na anāptakāmanam Brahma sādhanāntarāpekṣahatvāc cha | kincha yathā 'nyeshām anātmabhūtāḥ dharmādi-nimittōpekṣāḥ kāmāḥ svātmāyatirikta-kārya-karṇa-sādhanāntarāpekṣāchha [-ās cha?] na tatāḥ Brahmaṇo nimittādy-apekṣahatvam*). I shall below treat further of Kāma, as a deity, and of his correspondence with the Greek *Epos*, as one of the first principles of creation.

very gods being at fault, no one on earth is able to say what was the origin of the world, and whether it had any creator or not. Even its ruler in the highest heaven may not be in possession of the great secret.

Such a confession of ignorance on the part of a Vedic rishi could not, however, be taken in its obvious and literal sense by those who held the Veda to have been derived from an omniscient and infallible source. And in consequence the commentator on the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa is obliged to explain it away in the following fashion:—

*Atra kochid āgamam upetahya eva-eva-buddhi-balād anyathā 'nyathā utprekhaṇte | tathā hi paramāṇavo mūlakāraṇam iti Kāṇḍa-Gautamaḍayo manyante | svatantram achetanam pradānaṁ jagato mūlakāraṇam iti Kapila-prabhṛitayaḥ | tūnyādito jagad-utpattir iti Mādhyamikāḥ | jagato kāraṇam eva nāsti scabdhāvataḥ eva avatiṣṭhate iti Lokāyatikāḥ | to sarve 'pi bhrāntāḥ eva | "ko addha veda" jagat-kāraṇam ko nāma puruṣaḥ sākṣhād avagacchati | anavagatya cha "kaḥ iha pravocchat" svayam adṛishṭvā ko nāma jagat-kāraṇam idṛig iti vaktum śaknoti | ko 'yam atra vaktavyānśaḥ iti chet | uchyate | iyaṁ vividhā eṣiṣṭiḥ "kutaḥ ājāta" ta(ka?) smād upādāna-kāraṇāt sarvataḥ utpannā punaropi kulo nimittād utpannā iti tad idam upādānaṁ nimittam cha vaktavyam tach cha vaktum asakyam | kuto 'taktir iti chet | uchyate | kim devāḥ etad brāyuḥ kuto 'nyaḥ kachid manusyaḥ | na tūvad devāḥ vaktum śaktāḥ to hy asya jagato vividhasṛiṣṭor "arvāg" eva vidyante na tu eṣiṣṭeḥ pūrvaṁ to santi | yadā devānām api idṛiṣṭi gatis tadānīm "yataḥ" jagad "ābaddhā" tat kāraṇam vaktum anyāḥ "ko" vā "veda" | devāḥ cha manusyaḥ cha eṣiṣṭeḥ prāg anavasthānād na tūvat pratyakṣheṇa paṭyanti tadānīm svayam eva abhātād nāpy anumātum śaktāḥ tad-yogayayor hetuḍṛiṣṭāntayor abhāvāt | tasmād atigambhīram idam paramārtha-tattvaṁ vaidika-samadhigamyam ity abhiprāyaḥ | . . . iyaṁ dṛiṣyamānā bhūta-bhautika-rūpā vividhā eṣiṣṭir yataḥ upādānakāraṇād "ābaddhā" sarvataḥ utpannā tad upādānakāraṇam yadi vā kinchit svarūpaṁ dhṛitvā 'vatiṣṭhate yadi vā tasya svarūpam eva nāsti tam imaṁ nirṇayaṁ yaḥ Paramatvarō 'ya jagato "dhyakṣaḥ" evāmi "so anga veda" sa eva veda yadi vā so 'pi na veda | ititṛiṣṭitayādi-laṅkika-vyavahāra-dṛiṣṭyā "so anga veda" ity uktam | yatra to asya sarvam ātmā eva abhāt kona kam paṭyed ityādi-sarva-vyavahārātīta-paramārtha-dṛiṣṭyā "yadi vā na veda" ity uktam | ato manusyaḍiṣhu tad-vodana-śankā 'pi dūrdṛpṭā |*

"There are certain persons who condemn revelation, and propound different theories of creation by their own reason. Thus the followers of Kanāda and Gautama, etc., consider atoms to be the ultimate cause of the world. Kapila and others say that an independent and unconscious Pradhāna is the cause. The Mādhyamikas declare that the world rose out of a void, etc. The Lokāyatikas say that the universe has no cause at all, but exists naturally. All these speculators are in error. Our hymn asks what mortal knows by actual observation the cause of the world? and not having himself had ocular proof, how can any one say it was so and so? The points to be declared are the material and instrumental causes of the universe, and these cannot be told. The reason of this impossibility is next set forth. Can the gods give the required information? Or, if not, how can any man? The gods cannot tell, for they did not precede, but are subsequent to, the creation. Since the gods are in this predicament, who else can know? The purport is, that as neither gods nor men existed before the creation, and cannot therefore have witnessed it, and as they are at the same time unable to conclude anything regarding it, from the absence of any adequate reason or illustrative instance, this great mystery can only be understood by those versed in the Vedas. . . . The last verse of the hymn declares that the ruler of the universe knows, or that even he does not know, from what material cause this visible world arose, and whether that material cause exists in any definite form or not. That is to say, the declaration that 'he knows' is made from the stand-point of that popular conception which distinguishes between the ruler of the universe and the creatures over whom he rules; while the proposition that 'he does not know' is asserted on the ground of that highest principle which, transcending all popular conceptions, affirms the identity of all things with the supreme Soul, which cannot see any other existence as distinct from itself. [The sense of this last clause is, that the supreme Soul can know nothing of any object being created external to itself, since no such object exists]. "*A fortiori*, the supposition that such beings as men could possess this knowledge is excluded."

It would, however, be absurd to imagine that the simple author of the hymn entertained any such transcendental notions as these. He makes no pretensions to infallibility, but honestly acknowledges the

perplexity which he felt in speculating on the great problem of the origin of the universe.<sup>443</sup>

As a further illustration, both of the more ancient and the later ideas of the Indians regarding the creation of the world, and the manner in which the supreme Spirit, previously quiescent, was moved to activity, I add another passage from the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, ii. 2, 9, 1, with some of the commentator's remarks. The text of the Brāhmaṇa runs thus:<sup>444</sup> "This [universe] was not originally anything. There was neither heaven, nor earth, nor atmosphere. That being nonexistent (*asat*), resolved, 'Let me be.' That became fervent (or practised rigorous abstraction, *atapyata*). From that fervour (or abstraction) smoke was produced. That became again fervent. From that fervour fire was produced. That became again fervent. From that fervour light was produced." And so on,—flame, rays, blazing, etc., being generated by a repetition of the same process. (It may perhaps be considered that the manner in which the word *tapas* is used in this passage is favourable to the idea that in R.V. x. 129, 3, it signifies heat rather than rigorous abstraction.)

Ibid. ii. 2, 9, 10: *Asato 'dhi mano 'arjyata | manas Prajāpatim arjyata | Prajāpatiḥ prajāḥ arjyata* | "From the nonexistent mind (*manas*) was created. Mind created Prajāpati. Prajāpati created offspring."

The commentator's explanation of the first part of this passage is in substance as follows: "Before the creation no portion existed of the world which we now see. Let such a state of nonexistence be supposed. It conceived the thought, 'Let me attain the condition of existence.' Accordingly, this state of things is distinctly asserted in the Upanishad (the Taittirīya, see above, p. 359): 'This was originally nonexistent. From it existence was produced.' Here, by the word 'nonexistent,' a state of void (or absolute nullity), like that expressed in the phrase 'a hare's horns,' is not intended; but simply a state in which name and form were not manifested. Hence the Vājasaneyins repeat the text: 'This was then undeveloped; let it be developed through name and form.' Earth, the waters, etc., are

<sup>443</sup> Similar perplexity is elsewhere expressed on other subjects by the authors of the hymns. See the 3rd vol. of this Work, pp. 279 f.

<sup>444</sup> The words of the original will be found in the 1st vol. of this work, pp. 27 f.

'name.' Hardness and fluidity, etc., are 'form.'" The words "undeveloped" and "developed" are then defined, and Manu, i. 5, is quoted in proof. The supposition that the passage before us can be intended to denote a void is next contravened by adducing the text of the Chhândogya Upanishad above quoted, where that theory is referred to and contradicted. "In the Aitareya Upanishad (at the beginning) it is declared: 'Soul alone was in the beginning this [universe]. Nothing else was active.' Hence the negation in our text, 'This [universe] was not originally anything,' refers to the world, consisting of name and form, framed by the Supreme Spirit, and is not to be understood absolutely. Designated by the word 'nonexistent' (*asad*), because devoid of name and form, but still (really) existing (*ast*), the principle [called] the Supreme Spirit, impelled by the works of the creatures absorbed in It, conceived a thought in the way of a reflection, 'Let me be manifested as existent in the shape of name and form.' As a man in a deep sleep awakes that he may enjoy the fruit of his works, so the thought of causing all living creatures to enjoy the fruit of their works arose in the Supreme Spirit. Possessed by such a thought, that principle [called] the Supreme Spirit, practised rigorous abstraction (*tapas*) as a means of creating name and form. Here *tapas* does not mean any such thing as the *kṛichhra* or *chândriyana* penances, or the like; but denotes consideration regarding the particular objects which were to be created. Wherefore writers of the Atharva-veda school record the text: 'He who is omniscient, all-understanding, whose *tapas* consists of knowledge.' From the fact that this *tapas* has nothing of the character of any penance, it may be properly regarded as denoting the reflection of a being who, though unembodied, is yet omnipotent," etc., etc. "From the supreme God, being such as has been described, in conformity with his volition, a certain smoke was produced," etc., etc.

(*Yad idam sīhāvara-jangama-rūpam bhālokādīrūpam cha jagad idanti dṛśyate tat kimapi spīṣṭeṣa pūrvam naiva asti | tat tādṛśam asad-rūpam eva carttāmānām syāt | asad-rūpātām prāpnuyām ity etādṛśam mano 'kuruta | tathā cha upanishadi pūrvam asad-rūpam pāśehāt sad-rūpatotpattis cha vispashṭam āmnāyate "asad vai idam agre asti tato vai sad ajūyate" iti | atra "asad"-śabdāna na kṛichhra-vishāyādi-samānām śūnyatvām vivakṣitām kiṁ tarhy anabhivyakta-nāma-rūpatām | ataḥ eva*

*Vājasaneyinaḥ samāmananti "tad ha idam tarhy avyākṛitam asti | tad nāma-rūpābhyām eva vyākṛiyeta" iti | dhūmir āpaḥ ityādikaṁ nāma kṛichhina-draṇḍikam rūpam | . . . Aitareyinas to adhiyate "ātmā vai idam ekaḥ eva agre āstīd na anyat kinchana mishad" iti | tasmād "naiva kinchana āstīd" ity ayaṁ nishedhaḥ Paramātma-nirmīta-nāma-rūpāt-maka-jagad-vishayo na tu kṛitena-vishayaḥ | nāma-rūpa-rahitatvenu "asad"-śabda-vāchyaṁ sad eva avasthitam Paramātma-tattvaṁ svātmāny antarhita-prāṇi-karmapravṛitam sad nāma-rūpākāreṇa āvirbhavayam iti paryālochana-rūpam mano 'kuruta | yathā gāḍha-nidrām prāptasya puruṣasya karma-phala-bhogaḥ prabodhaḥ utpadyate tathā sarvān prāṇināḥ eva-eva-karma-phalam bhōjayitum idṛśo vichāraḥ Paramātmanāḥ prādurbhūt | tathāvidha-vichāra-yuktaṁ tat Paramātma-tattva-rūpam nāma-rūpa-spīṣṭi-sādhana-rūpam tapo 'kuruta | na atra tapaḥ kṛichhra-chāndriyānādi-rūpam | kintu vrasṭasya-pādārtha-viśeṣa-vishayam paryālochanam | ataḥ eva Atharvaṇikāḥ āmananti "yaḥ sarvajnaḥ sarvavid yasya jñānamayaṁ tapaḥ" iti | kṛichhṛādi-rūpatvā-bhāvād atarirasya api sarva-śakti-yuktasya paryālochanam upaṇnam | . . . tādṛśāt tasmāt Paramēśvarāt eva-sankalpānusāreṇa kaśchid dhūmaḥ udapadyate |)*

#### (6) Puruṣha.

Another important, but in many places obscure, hymn of the Rig-veda, in which the unity of the Godhead is recognized, though in a pantheistic sense, is the 90th of the tenth book, the celebrated Puruṣa Sūkta,<sup>445</sup> which is as follows:

1. *Sahasraśtrehāḥ Puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt | sa dhūmīm viśvato vṛitvā aty atishṭhad dātāngulam |* 2. *Puruṣaḥ ovedaṁ sarvaṁ yad bhūtaṁ yach cha dhavyam | utāmṛitatvaseyōsāno yad annenātirohati |* 3. *Etāvān aya mahimā ato jyāyāmāḥ cha Puruṣaḥ | pādo 'ya viśvā*

<sup>445</sup> Translations of this hymn (which is also given with slight variations in Vāj. 8. 13, 1-16, and A.V. 19, 8, and 7, 5, 4) will be found in Mr. Colebrooke's Miscel. Ess. i. 167 (see also the note in p. 309 of the same volume), as also in the 1st vol. of this Work, 9 ff.; (into French) in the Preface to Burnouf's Bhāgavata Purāṇa, vol. i. pp. cxxi. ff. (where see the notes); and (into German) in Professor Weber's Ind. Stud. ix. 5 ff. I have now endeavoured to supply some further illustrations of the ideas in the hymn. I have passed over several obscurities on which I have been unable to throw any light. The first two verses are given in the S'vetāśvatara Upanishad, iii. 14, 15, where the commentary may be consulted.

# THE HYMNS OF THE RIGVEDA

*Translated With A Popular Commentary*

RALPH T.H. GRIFFITH

*Edited by*  
Prof. J. L. Shastri

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may we, unwounded, have brave heroes round us.

- 4 For me let them present all mine oblations, and let my mind's intention be accomplished.

May I be guiltless of the least transgression : and, all ye Gods, do ye combine to bless us.

- 5 Ye six divine Expanses, grant us freedom : here, all ye Gods, acquit yourselves like heroes.

Let us not lose our children or our bodies : let us not benefit the foe, King Soma !

- 6 Baffling the wrath of our opponents, Agni, guard us as our infallible Protector.

Let these thy foes turn back and seek their houses, and let their thought who watch at home be ruined.

- 7 Lord of the world, Creator of creators : the saviour God who overcomes the foeman.

May Gods, Brhaspati, both Aśvins shelter from ill this sacrifice and sacrificer.

- 8 Foodful, and much-invoked, at this our calling may the great Bull vouchsafe us wide protection.

Lord of Bay Coursers, Indra, bless our children : harm us not, give us not as prey to others.

- 9 Let those who are our foemen stay afar from us : with Indra and with Agni we will drive them off.

Vasus, Ādityas, Rudras have exalted me, made me far-reaching, mighty, thinker, sovran lord.

### HYMN CXXIX.

### Creation.

1. THEN was not non-existent nor existent : there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.

5 *Six divine Expanses* : the four cardinal points and upper and lower spaces ; or, according to Sāyaṇa, Heaven, Earth, Day, Night, Water, and Plants.

7 After *Creator of creators* Sāyaṇa supplies *taṁ devaṁ staumi*, 'that God I praise'. Indra or Savitar is intended.

8 *The great Bull* : Indra.

1 *Then* : in the beginning. *Non-existent* : *āsat* : that does not yet actually exist, but which has in itself the latent potentiality of existence. 'There was a certain unapparent condition,' says an Indian Commentator, which, from the absence of distinctness, was not an 'entity,' while from its being the instrument of the world's production, it was not a 'non-entity.'

What covered in, and where ? and what gave shelter ? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water ?

- 2 Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal : no sign was there, the day's and night's divider.

That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature : apart from it was nothing whatsoever.

- 3 Darkness there was : at first concealed in darkness this All was indiscriminated chaos.

All that existed then was void and formless : by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit.

- 4 Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit.

Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent.

- 5 Transversely was their severing line extended : what was above it then, and what below it ?

There were begetters, there were mighty forces, free action here and energy up yonder

- 6 Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation ?

The Gods are later than this world's pro-

2 *That One Thing* : the single primordial substance, the unit out of which the universe was developed. Cp. I. 164. 6 and 46.

3 *Warmth* : Prof. Wilson, following Sāyaṇa, translates *tāpasah* by 'austerity,' meaning the contemplation of the things that were to be created. M. Burnouf, in *La Science des Religions*, pp. 207ff., has shown how *warmth* was regarded by the Āryas as the principle explaining movement, life, and thought.

4 *Desire* : Kāma, Eros, or Love. *Sages* : ancient Ṛṣis.

5 *Line* : a line drawn by the ancient Ṛṣis to make a division between the upper world and the lower, and to bring duality out of unity. *Begetters* : the Fathers may be meant. *Free action* : the happiness of the Fathers. The stanza is obscure, and its connection with stanza 4 is not obvious. An intervening stanza may, perhaps, have been lost.

The hymn has been translated by Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, I. pp. 33, 34 ; by Dr. Muir, *O. S. Texts*, V. 356, 357 ; by the authors of the *Siebenzig Lieder*, and by Mr. Wallis, *Cosmology of the Rgveda*, pp. 59 ff. 'The latest of the many Commentators on this hymn are Professor Whitney in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. xi. p. cix, and Dr. Scherman, *Philosophische Hymnen aus der Rg-und-Atharva-veda Samhitā* 1887.'—Wallis. See Prof. Max Müller, *History of Ancient Literature*, pp. 559—563.



duction. Who knows then whence it first came into being ?

- 7 He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it,  
Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.

## HYMN CXXX.

Creation.

1. THE sacrifice drawn out with threads on every side, stretched by a hundred sacred ministers and one,—  
This do these Fathers weave who hitherward are come : they sit beside the warp and cry, Weave forth, weave back.
- 2 The Man extends it and the Man unbinds it : even to this vault of heaven hath he outspun it.  
These pegs are fastened to the seat of worship : they made the Sāma-hymns their weaving shuttles.
- 3 What were the rule, the order and the model ? What were the wooden fender and the butter ?  
What were the hymn, the chant, the recitation, when to the God all Deities paid worship ?
- 4 Closely was Gāyatrī conjoined with Agni, and closely Savitar combined with Uṣṇih. Brilliant with Ukthas, Soma joined Anuṣṭup : Brhaspati's voice by Brhatī was aided.
- 5 Virāj adhered to Varuṇa and Mitra : here Triṣṭup day by day was Indra's portion.  
Jagatī entered all the Gods together : so by this knowledge men were raised to Ṛsis.

As the subject of the hymn is creation typified and originated by the mysterious primeval sacrifice (cp. X. 90), Prajāpati the Creator is said by Sāyaṇa to be the deity. The Ṛsi is Yajña (Sacrifice) Prajāpati's son.

1 *The sacrifice : sargātmako yajñāḥ* : the sacrifice which constitutes creation.—Sāyaṇa. *A hundred and one* : meaning an indefinitely large number. *Fathers* : Sāyaṇa explains *pitṛaḥ* here by *pālakāḥ*, protectors, the Gods.

2 *The Man* : the first Man or Male; Puruṣa, Ādipuruṣa, Prajāpati, according to Sāyaṇa.

3 *Wooden fender* : the enclosing sticks placed round the sacrificial fire.

4 *Brilliant with Ukthas* : 'gladdening (us) through hymns (ukthas).—Muir. *Brhaspati's voice* : because his duty was to speak as Priest. According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, III. 13, Prajāpati 'alloted to the deities their (different) parts in the sacrifice and metres.'

5 *Day by day* : was Indra's portion of the mid-day (oblation).—Wilson.

- 6 So by this knowledge men were raised to Ṛsis, when ancient sacrifice sprang up, our Fathers.

With the mind's eye I think that I behold them who first performed this sacrificial worship.

- 7 They who were versed in ritual and metre, in hymns and rules, were the Seven Godlike Ṛsis.  
Viewing the path of those of old, the sages have taken up the reins like chariot-drivers.

## HYMN CXXXI.

Indra.

1. DRIVE all our enemies away, O Indra, the western, mighty Conqueror, and the eastern.  
Hero, drive off our northern foes and southern, that we in thy wide shelter may be joyful.
- 2 What then ? As men whose fields are full of barley reap the ripe corn removing it in order,  
So bring the food of those men, bring it hither, who went not to prepare the grass for worship.
- 3 Men come not with one horse at sacred seasons ; thus they obtain no honour in assemblies.  
Sages desiring herds of kine and horses strengthen the mighty Indra for his friendship.
- 4 Ye, Aśvins, Lords of Splendour, drank full draughts of grateful Soma juice,  
And aided Indra in his work with Namuci of Asura birth.

6 *I behold them* : or, according to Prof. Ludwig's interpretation :—'These with the eyes of mind, I think, beheld them.'

7 'The seven Ṛsis here are not the Aṅgirasas, but Bharadvāja, Kaśyapa, Gotama, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, and Jamadagni. The knowledge of the ritual is derived from the divine priests ; the sages or Ṛsis have followed them in sacrificing, and modern priests are only imitators of those who preceded them.'—Ludwig.

The hymn has been translated by Dr. Muir, *O. S. Texts*, III. pp. 278, 279 and by Prof. Whitney, *Notes to Colebrooke's Essay on the Vedas*, p. 114.

3 *With one horse* : it seems to have been considered undignified and disreputable for a wealthy man to come to the sacrifice in a one-horse car; but the precise meaning of the first line is somewhat uncertain.

4 Hillebrandt, *V. M.*, I. 146, and Eggeling, *Sacred Books of the East*, XLI. 135, interpret differently. The myth referred to in the following stanza has not been preserved. See Weber, *Ueber den Rājasūya*, pp. 95, 101.

# A VEDIC READER FOR STUDENTS

BY  
ARTHUR ANTHONY MACDONELL  
M.A., PH.D.

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CONTAINING THIRTY HYMNS OF THE RIGVEDA IN  
THE ORIGINAL SAMHITĀ AND PADA TEXTS, WITH  
TRANSLITERATION, TRANSLATION, EXPLANATORY  
NOTES, INTRODUCTION, VOCABULARY

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## PREFACE

THIS *Reader* is meant to be a companion volume to my *Vedic Grammar for Students*. It contains thirty hymns comprising just under 300 stanzas. These hymns have been taken exclusively from the Rigveda, not only because that Veda represents the earliest and most important phase of the sacred language and literature of India, but because the addition of specimens from the later Vedic literature with their divergences in speech and thought would tend to confuse the learner beginning the study of the oldest period. All the books of the Rigveda have been drawn upon except the ninth. The reason of this exception is that, though the whole of the ninth book practically consists of hymns addressed to Soma only, the hymn which in my opinion represents that deity best occurs in another (the eighth) book. All the most important metres are represented, though no specimens of the rare and complex strophic measures could be given because none of the hymns composed in them seemed to be suitable for the *Reader*. I have also considered literary merit as far as possible in making the selection. As regards subject-matter, each of the more important deities is represented by one hymn, Agni alone by two. There are besides a few hymns of a different type. One is concerned with social life (x. 34), one with magical ideas (vii. 103), two with cosmogony (x. 90. 129), and three with eschatology (x. 14. 15. 135). The selection thus forms a brief epitome of the Rigveda, the earliest monument of Indian thought. The arrangement of the hymns follows their order in the text of the Rigveda as shown, together with their respective deities and subjects, in the

6 yāvāyā vṛkīam vṛkam,  
yavāya stenām, ūrmie;  
āthā naḥ sutārā bhava.

Ward off the she-wolf and the  
wolf, ward off the thief, O Night;  
so be easy for us to pass.

yāvāyā: cs. of yu *separate*; this and other roots ending in ū, as well as in i, r, may take Guṇa or Vṛddhi in the cs. (168, 1 c), but the Padapāṭha invariably gives yavaya; the final vowel is metrically lengthened (in b it is long by position before st). vṛkyām: accent, p. 450, 2 b. āthā: final metrically lengthened (cp. p. 214).

७ उप मा पेपिशतमः

कृष्णं व्यक्तमस्थित ।

उष ऋणेव यातय ॥

उप । मा । पेपिशत । तमः ।

कृष्णम् । विऽअक्तम् । अस्थित ।

उषः । ऋणाऽइव । यातय ॥

7 ūpa mā pépiśat tāmāḥ,  
kṛṣṇām, viaktam asthita:  
Ūṣa ṛṇēva yātaya.

The darkness, thickly painting,  
black, palpable, has approached me:  
O Dawn, clear it off like debts.

ūpa asthita: 8. s. Ā. of root ao. of sthā *stand*. pépiśat: int. pr. pt. of piś *paint*, as if it were material. ūṣas: Dawn, as a counter-part of Night, is invoked to exact = remove the darkness from Rātri, as one exacts money owing. In hymns addressed to a particular deity, another who is cognate or in some way associated, is not infrequently introduced incidentally. yātaya: cs. of yat.

८ उप ते गा इवाकरं

वृणीष्व दुहितर्दिवः ।

रात्रि सोमं न जिग्युषे ॥

उप । ते । गाऽइव । आ । अकरम् ।

वृणीष्व । दुहितः । दिवः ।

रात्रि । सोमम् । न । जिग्युषे ॥

8 ūpa te gā ivākaram,  
vṛṇīṣvā, duhitar divaḥ,  
Rātri, stōmam ná jigyuṣe.

Like kine I have delivered up to  
thee a hymn—choose it O daughter  
of heaven, O Night—like a song of  
praise to a victor.

ūpa ā akaram (1. s. root ao. of kṛ): I have driven up for thee my song of praise, as a herdsman delivers up in the evening the cows which he has herded since the morning; cp. i. 114, 9, ūpa te stōmān

paśupā iva ākaram I have driven up songs of praise for thee like a herdsman. vṛṇīṣvā: 2. s. ipv. Ā. from vṛ *choose*. b is parenthetical. stōmam is to be supplied with ākaram. jigyuṣe: dat. of pf. pt. of ji *conquer* (157 b a).

## HYMN OF CREATION

In the following cosmogonic poem the origin of the world is explained as the evolution of the existent (sāt) from the non-existent (āsāt). Water thus came into being first; from it was evolved intelligence by heat. It is the starting-point of the natural philosophy which developed into the Sāṅkhya system.

x. 129. Metre: Triṣṭubh.

९ नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं

नासीद्भूतो नो व्योमा परो यत् ।

किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्

अथः किमासीद्ब्रह्मं गभीरम् ॥

न । असत् । आसीत् । नो इति । सत् ।

आसीत् । तदानीम् ।

न । आसीत् । रजः । नो इति । विऽओम् ।

परः । यत् ।

किम् । आ । अवरोवरिति । कुह । कस्य ।

शर्मन् ।

अथः । किम् । आसीत् । गह्वरम् । ग-

भीरम् ॥

1 nāsad āsīn, nō sād āsīt tadā-  
nīm;

nāsid rājo nō vīomā paró yāt.

kīm āvarīvaḥ? kūha? kāsya

śārmann?

āmbhaḥ kīm āsīd, gāhanam ga-

bhīrām?

There was not the non-existent  
nor the existent then; there was  
not the air nor the heaven which is  
beyond. What did it contain?  
Where? In whose protection?  
Was there water, unfathomable,  
profound?

Cf. ŚB. x. 5, 3, 1: nā\_jiva vā idām āgrēśsad āsīd nā\_jiva sād āsīt verily this (universe) was in the beginning neither non-existent nor existent as it were. tadānīm: before the creation. āsīt: the usual

form of the 3. s. ipf. of *as be*; the rarer form occurs in 3 b. *nó*: for *ná u* (24). *viomā*: the final vowel metrically lengthened (cp. p. 440, 4 B). *parás*: adv.; on the accent cp. note on ii. 85, 6 c. *ā avarivar*: 3. s. ipf. int. of *vṛ cover* (cp. 173, 3); what did it *cover up* = conceal or contain? *kūha*: where was it? *kāśya śárman*: who guarded it? *kím*: here as an inter. pol. (p. 225). *āmbhas*: cp. 3 b, and TS., *āpo vá idám āgre salilám āsit* *this (universe) in the beginning was the waters, the ocean.*

१ न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि । मृत्युः । आसीत् । अमृतम् । न । तर्हि ।  
 न रात्र्या अहं आसीत्प्रकेतः । न । रात्र्याः । अहः । आसीत् । प्रकेतः ।  
 आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं । आनीत् । अवातम् । स्वधया । तत् । एकम् ।  
 तस्माद्वात्यन्न परः किं चानसं ॥ तस्मात् । ह । अन्यत् । न । परः । किम् ।  
 चन । आस ॥

१ ná mṛtyúr āsīd, amṛtam ná tārhi. *There was not death nor immortality then. There was not the*  
*beacon of night, nor of day. That*  
*one breathed, windless, by its own*  
*power. Other than that there was*  
*not anything beyond.*  
*canāsa.*

*rātryās*: gen. of *rātrī* (p. 87). *āhnas*: gen. of *āhan* (91, 2). *ānīt*: 3. s. ipf. of *an breathe* (p. 143, 3 a). *tāsmād*: governed by *anyād* (p. 817, 3). *dha* for *ha*: 54. *anyán ná*: 33. *parás*: cp. note on 1 b. *āsa*: pf. of *as be* (135, 2).

३ तम आसीत्तमसा गूढमये । तमः । आसीत् । तमसा । गूढम् । अये ।  
 प्रकेतं सलिलं सर्वमा इदम् । अप्रकेतम् । सलिलम् । सर्वम् । आः ।  
 तुच्छिनाभ्यर्पितं यदासीत् । इदम् ।  
 तपसस्तन्महिना जायतेकम् ॥ तुच्छेन । आमु । अपिहितम् । यत् ।  
 आसीत् ।  
 तपसः । तत् । महिना । जायत । एकम् ॥

३ tāma āsīt tāmasā gūḥm āgre; *Darkness was in the beginning*  
*apraketām salilām sárvam ā hidden by darkness; indistinguish-*  
*idám. able, this all was water. That*  
*tuchyénābhū āpihitam yád āsīt, which, coming into being, was*  
*tāpasas tán mahinājāyataikam. covered with the void, that One*  
*arose through the power of heat.*

*gūḥm*: pp. of *guh hide* (69 c, cp. 3 b γ, p. 3 and 13). *ās*: 3. s. ipf. of *as be* (p. 142, 2 b); this form is also found twice (i. 85, 1. 7) alternating with *āsīt*. *b* is a Jagatī intruding in a Tristubh stanza (cp. p. 445, f. n. 7). *ābhū*: the meaning of this word is illustrated by *ā-babhūva* in 6 d and 7 a. *mahinā* = *mahimná* (90, 2, p. 69).

७ कामस्तदये समवर्तताधि । कामः । तत् । अये । सम । अवर्तत ।  
 मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् । अधि ।  
 सतो बन्धुमसति निर्विन्दन् । मनसः । रेतः । प्रथमम् । यत् । आसीत् ।  
 इदि प्रतीषा कवयो मनीषा ॥ सतः । बन्धुम् । असति । निः । अविन्दन् ।  
 इदि । प्रतिष्य । कवयः । मनीषा ॥

४ kāmas tād āgre sām avarta- *Desire in the beginning came*  
*tādhi, upon that, (desire) that was the*  
*mānaso rétaḥ prathamam yád first seed of mind. Sages seeking*  
*āsīt. in their hearts with wisdom found*  
*sató bāndhum āsati nīr avindan out the bond of the existent in the*  
*hr̥di pratiṣyā kavāyo manīṣā. non-existent.*

*ādhi sām avartata*: 3. s. ipf. *Ā*. of *vṛt turn*, with *sām come into being*; *ādhi upon* makes the verb transitive = *come upon, take possession of*. *tād that* = *tād ékam* in 2 c, the unevolved universe. One of the two prps. here is placed after the vb. (cp. 191 f, and p. 468, 20 A a). *yád*: referring to *kāmas* is attracted in gender to the predicate n. *rétas*. *satás*: they found the origin of the evolved world in the unevolved. *prati-ṣyā*: the gd. in *ya* has often a long final vowel (164, 1) which is always short in the Padapāṭha. *ma-nīṣā*: inst. of f. in *ā* (p. 77).

५ तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरेषाम् तिरश्चीनः । विततः । रश्मिः । एषाम् ।  
अधः सिंदासीऽदुपरि सिंदा- अधः । स्वित्र । आसीऽत् । उपरि । स्वित्र ।  
सीऽत् । आसीऽत् ।

रेतोधा आसन्नहिमान आसन् रेतोधाः । आसन् । महिमानः । आसन् ।  
स्वधा अवस्तात्यतिः परस्तात् स्वधा । अवस्तात् । प्रत्यतिः । परस्तात् ॥

5 tiraścīno vītaṭo raśmīr eṣām : Their cord was extended across :  
adhāḥ svid āsīḥ, upāri svid was there below or was there above?  
āsīḥt There were impregnators, there were  
retodhā āsan, mahimāna āsan; powers; there was energy below,  
svadhā avastāt, prāyatīḥ parās- there was impulse above.  
tāt.

raśmīḥ: the meaning of this word here is uncertain, but it may be an explanation of bāndhu in 4 c: the cord with which the sages (referred to by eṣām) in thought measured out the distance between the existent and non-existent, or between what was above and below; cp. viii. 25, 18, pári yó raśmīnā divó ántān mamé pṛthivyāḥ who with a cord has measured out the ends of heaven and earth; cp. also the expression sūtram vītatam (in AV. x. 8, 37) the extended string with reference to the earth. āsīt: accented because in an antithetical sentence (p. 463, 19 B β). The ī is prolated, and that syllable (and not ā) has the Udatta, as in the final syllable of a sentence in questions (Pāṇini viii. 2, 97); the second question upāri svid āsīḥt is quoted by Pāṇini (viii. 2, 102) as coming under this rule, but without accent. retodhās and mahimānas are contrasted as male and female cosmogonic principles, to which correspond respectively prāyatīḥ and svadhā. In TS. iv. 3, 11, 1, mention is made of tráyo mahimānaḥ connected with fertility. svadhā: this is one of the five examples of a N. f. in ā left uncontracted with a following vowel: it is probable that the editors of the Samhita text treated these forms as ending in āḥ, while the Padapāṭha gives them without Visarjanīya, doubtless owing to the greatly increasing prevalence of the nominatives in ā.

६ को अद्वा वेद क इह प्र वोचत् कः । अद्वा । वेद । कः । इह । प्र । वोचत् ।  
कुत आजाता कुत इयं विश्वष्टिः । कुतः । आजाता । कुतः । इयम् । वि  
अर्वाग्देवा अस्य विसर्जनेना- ऽवष्टिः ।  
था को वेद यत आबभूव अर्वाक् । देवाः । अस्य । विसर्जनेन ।  
अथ । कः । वेद । यतः । आबभूव ॥

6 kó addhā veda? ká ihá prá Who knows truly? Who shall  
vocat, here declare, whence it has been  
kúta ājātā, kúta iyám víśvṣṭiḥ? produced, whence is this creation?  
arvāg devā asyá visárjanena: By the creation of this (universe)  
áthā kó veda yáta ābabhúva? the gods (come) afterwards: who  
then knows whence it has arisen?

vocat: a ao. inj. of vac. kutás: b has one syllable too many (p. 441, 4 a). arvāk: the sense is that the gods, being part of the creation, are later than the period preceding the creation, and therefore can know nothing of the origin of the universe. áthā: with metrically lengthened final vowel (p. 440, 4; cp. 179, 1).

७ इयं विश्वष्टिर्यत आबभूव इयम् । विश्वष्टिः । यतः । आबभूव ।  
यदि वा दधे यदि वा न । यदि । वा । दधे । यदि । वा । न ।  
यो अस्त्रार्थवः परमे व्योमन् यः । अस्त्र । अर्धिऽव्यवः । परमे । वि  
सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥ ऽव्योमन् ।  
सः । अङ्ग । वेद । यदि । वा । न । वेद ॥

7 iyám víśvṣṭir yáta ābabhúva; Whence this creation has arisen;  
yádi vā dadhé yádi vā ná: whether he founded it or did not:  
yó asyādhyakṣaḥ paramé vío- he who in the highest heaven is its  
man surveyor, he only knows, or else he  
só āṅgá veda, yádi vā ná véda. knows not.

a and b are dependent on veda in d. asya: of this universe. b is defective by two syllables (p. 440, 4 a): possibly a metrical pause expressive of doubt may have been intended. vyōman: loc. (90, 2). véda: the accent is due to the formal influence of yádi (p. 246, 3 a).

# A NEW APPROACH TO THE VEDAS

AN ESSAY IN  
TRANSLATION AND EXEGESIS

BY  
ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY  
*ji*



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### III

#### THREE VEDIC HYMNS

The Vedas, as we possess them, embody a tradition of immemorial antiquity, already locally developed in characteristic idioms, but by no means original or exclusive to themselves : Veda antedates the Vedas. However, it is not so much intended here to stress this argument, as to point out that there is little or nothing in the metaphysics of the Upaniṣads that necessarily implies a "progress" with respect to the older Vedic books. The "three Vedas" are primarily concerned with "Works" (*karma*, *yajña*) and with "Genesis" (*bhāva-ṛtā*, *Bṛhad Devatā*, II, 120<sup>93</sup>; perhaps also *jāta vidyā*, *R̥g Veda*, X, 71, 11, and *Nirukta*, I, 8) : exegetical matter, such as appears abundantly in the Atharva Veda, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, and *nirukta* generally, is included amongst the Vedic liturgies only as it were by accident and incidentally. That the language of the Upaniṣads is less archaic than that of the three Vedas proves only a late publication of the traditional exegesis, but in no way proves, nor even suggests to those who recognize the consistency of one tradition in the Vedas and Upaniṣads, that the essential doctrines of the latter had not "always" been taught to those possessed of the necessary qualifications.<sup>94</sup> This would fully accord with the traditional interpretation of "Upaniṣad" as "secret doctrine" or "mystery," *rahasya*, without contradicting the traditional connotation "doctrine with respect to Brahman." In any case, the history of tradition, and the history of literature, are two different things ; and that is especially true in India,

#### THREE VEDIC HYMNS

where even at the present day it is felt that none but a living teacher can communicate ultimate truth.

Furthermore, that is an erroneous view which describes the "beginnings" of Indian "philosophy" as a process of "syncretic" thought, as a "tendency to see that all the angels are really One." On the contrary, Vedic "mythology" as we possess it represents an already "late" and sophisticated stage in the history of symbolism, an employment of increasingly diverse similitudes and images, and of new-found essential names and epithets, accompanied by a tendency towards a conception of these names as those of independent powers, so that a superficial aspect of polytheism is brought about, of the same sort as that which can be recognized in Christianity when it is said with respect to the Trinity, "We do not say *the only God*, for deity is common to several," St. Thomas, *Sum. Th.*, I, Q. 31, A. 2<sup>95</sup>. These elaborations may be regarded from some points of view as a progress in theological science, but from that point of view which takes into consideration that "the angels have fewer ideas and use less means than men," and holds that in a single seeing and in one idea "He" beholds himself and all things simultaneously, and accordingly that with the knowledge of That One "this entire universe becomes known," *Muṇḍaka Up.*, I, 1, 3, rather as a decline. In reality, the notion of a progress or decline is out of place, an absolute progress or decline being no more conceivable in metaphysics than in art : the thing known can only be in the knower according to the mode of the knower,<sup>96</sup> and that is why under changed conditions alternative-formulations (*paryāya*) necessarily present themselves ; each of these, in so far as it is "correct," and not in the measure of its complexity or simplicity, expressing one and the same truth. All that concerns the historian of style, rather than the expositor of the meaning of meanings, *paramārtha* : it is precisely with respect to that ultimate significance that *ya evam*



## A NEW APPROACH TO THE VEDAS

*vidvān* might have been said at any time, and not for the first time when the Upaniṣads were finally "published." A single illustration of this may be cited in the equivalence of Varuṇa, Brahmā-Prajāpati, Viśvakarma, and Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu, which can be demonstrated easily from many points of view (cf. *Yakṣas*, II, p. 36). That the Vedic *kavi*<sup>97</sup> was in fact *vidvān* is shown by such well-known assertions as that "The priests speak in divers ways of that which is but one: they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan . . ." *Rg Veda*, I, 164, 46; "Priests and singers make manifold the (Sun-) bird that is unique," *ibid.*, X, 114, 5; or when Aditi or Prajāpati are identified with all that is, *ibid.*, I, 89, 10, and X, 121. The ideas and often the actual locutions of the Upaniṣads are to be found in the Vedas, e.g., VI, 16, 35, *yastā vijānat*, equivalent to *ya evam vidvān*; and even more striking, V, 46, 1, *na asyāḥ vaśmi vimucaṁ na āvṛttam punaḥ, vidvān pathaḥ puraḥ' etā rju neśati*, "I covet neither deliverance nor a coming back again, may He that is waywise be my guide and lead me straight," where *punar āvṛttam* can hardly be otherwise understood than in the "later" literature.

A translation of the famous *bhāva vṛtta*, or "Creation hymn," *Rg Veda*, X, 129, now follows:

*Rg Veda*, X, 129

"Non-existence (*asat*) then was not, nor Existence (*sat*); neither Firmament (*rajas*), nor Empyrean (*vyoman*) there beyond:

What covered o'er all (*āvarīvar*) and where, or what was any resting-place (*śarman*)? What were the Waters (*ambhaḥ*)? Fathomless abyss (*gahanam gambhīram*). 1.

Then was neither death (*mṛtyu*) nor life (*amṛta*), nor any fetch (*praketa*) of night or day:

## THREE VEDIC HYMNS

That One breathed (*ānīt*) breathless (*avāta*) by intrinsic-power (*svadhā*), none other was, nor aught there-beyond. 2.

In the beginning (*agre*), Dark-Inert (*tamas*) was hid (*gūḥa*) by Dark-Inert (*tamas*). This all was fluid (*salila*), indeterminate (*apraketa*):

Void (*tucchi*) by void (*ābhu*) was overlaid (*apihita*): That One was born (*ajāyat*) by the all-might (*mahi*) of intension (*tapas*). 3.

In the beginning, Will (*kāma*) arose (*samavartat*) therein, the primal seed (*retas*) of Intellect (*manas*), that was the first:

Searching the heart (*hrd*) thoroughly by thought (*manīṣā*) wise-singers (*kavayaḥ*) found there the kin (*bandhu*) of Existence (*sat*) in the Non-existent (*asat*). 4.

What trace was stretched across below, and what above?

Seed (*retas*) was, Allmight (*mahimānaḥ*) was; Intrinsic-power (*svadhā*) below, Purpose (*prayati*) above. 5.

Who knows it aright? who can here set it forth? Whence was it born (*ājātā*), whence poured forth (*viṣṛtiḥ*)

These Angels (*devāḥ*) are from its pouring-forth (*visarjana*), whence then it came-to-be (*ābabhūva*), who knows?

Whence outpoured (*visṛtiḥ*) this came to be (*ābabhūva*), or whether one appointed (*dadhe*) it or not,

He who is Over-Eye (*adhyakṣa*) thereof in uttermost Empyrean (*vyoman*), he knows indeed, or knoweth not. 7.

That is what is called a "late" hymn: from our present point of view it suffices that it antedates the earliest Upaniṣads by some centuries. A likeness to Upaniṣadic texts generally, and to our *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, I, 2, 1, and *Maitri Up.*, V, 2, in particular will be noticed at a glance. This similarity is partly one of verbal identity (*agre, sat, asat, tamas, salila, tapas, kāma, retas, manas, hṛd, tad-eka, ānīt = prāṇiti, vāta = vāyu, avāta = nirvāta, viśṣṭi, viśarjana, etc.*), partly of verbal sense (*ambhaḥ, salila = āpah, tapasaḥ-mahi = tejas, svadhā = mātṛ, śakti, svabhāva*),<sup>98</sup> and partly of total statement. *Bandhu* (= *sajāta*) "kin" as of blood relationship, is an exceedingly well-found expression for the "opposite relation" of Existence to the Non-existent, God to Godhead, Essence to Nature<sup>99</sup>; as also in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, I, 1, 2. As for *rajas*, granted that no more is here directly implied than "firmament" or "space," and that the Sāṃkhya as a formulated system is of later publication,<sup>100</sup> it still remains significant that in our hymn (not to speak of other Vedic sources) we have a trinity of terms (*tamas, rajas, and tapasaḥ-mahi = tejas = sattva*)<sup>101</sup> employed in their correct factorial (*gaṇa*) senses to denote the principles of passivity, movement, and essentiality, "later" represented by the three *guṇas* more explicitly, and by the corresponding Trinity of Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Śiva. By the "primal seed of Intellect," I understand rather "intellectual virility," "creative intellect," than the *source* of Intellect: cf. *Rg Veda* X, 71, 2, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, I, 5, 7, and similar passages, where Intellect (*manas*) is the fecundating power that begets upon Utterance or Wisdom (*vāc*). *Amṛta*, in the second stanza, is not "immortality," but

simply life, continued existence, as in *Rg Veda*, VII, 57, 6, and equivalent to *dīrghamāyuh* in X, 85, 19; the sense is "neither birth nor death as yet were."

That "He breathes without air" (*avāta*, cf. later *nirvāṇa*, "despiration") is a profound and significant expression, implying all the correlative of motion without local movement, and the like, which may be properly enunciated of the First Principle, "for (only) where there is a duality, as it were" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, IV, 5, 15) could it be otherwise. The thought is taken up and further developed in several passages of the Upaniṣads, particularly the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, as quoted above, p. 46, *Kena Up.*, I, 8, "Know that as Brahman which breathes (*prāṇiti*) without breath (*na . . . prāṇena*) yet by whom breath (*prāṇa*) is breathed (*prāṇīyate*)", *Muṇḍaka Up.*, II, 1, 2, and 3, where That from which Intellect (*manas*) and Spiritus (*prāṇa*) are born (*jāyate*) is Itself imageless (*amūrtta*), un-intelligent (*amanassa*), de-spirited (*aprāṇa*), and *Taittirīya Up.*, II, 7, where That without which none might breathe (*prāṇīyāt*) is Self-less (*anātmya*), indiscriminate (*anirukta*), placeless (*anilayana*).

"By intrinsic power" (*svadhā*): cf. *Rg Veda*, IV, 13, 5, "by what intrinsic-power (*svadhā*) does he move?" and the answer in I, 144, 2, "When he (as Fire) dwelt diffused in the womb of the Waters (*apāmṛpasthe*), thence got he (*adhayat*) the intrinsic powers (*svadhāḥ*) whereby he proceeds (*īyate*)": the Waters, *nirguṇa*-Brahman, unconscious Godhead, being as explained above, the source of all omnipotence (*mahimānaḥ*) and facility (*kausalya*). Essence being impotent (*stari*) apart from nature; nature being power (*śakti*) and magic (*mātṛ*), means whereby anything is done.<sup>102</sup> Cf. *Bhagavad Gītā*, IV, 6, "I am born by my own power," where *ātma-māyayā* is clearly the same as *sva-dhayā*, cf. *māyayā* in *Rg Veda*, IX, 73, 5 and 9.

"That One" is clearly here not an existence, for

## A NEW APPROACH TO THE VEDAS

as we have seen, his mode is modeless, in that he breathes without breath: a similar conception is met with in *Rg Veda*, I, 164, 4, where That "which supports Him who is by way of being the first born embodiment," *prathamam jāya-mānam-asthanvantam . . . vibharti*, is itself "bodiless," or more literally, "boneless," *anasthā*, that is to say, "structureless." That "is not yet "Selfed" (*ātmanvī*)—"before creatures were, God was not God, albeit he was Godhead," Eckhart, I, 410. *Tamas* (as in *Maitri Up.*, V. 2), *apraketa sakila*, *gahanam gambhira*, etc., are all terms naturally designating the undifferentiated, unintelligible Godhead, "which is as though it were not," Eckhart, I, 381: *asat*, non-existent, *gūḷha*, hidden, there where "darkness reigns in the unknown known unity," Eckhart, I, 368, Cf. p. 6 and Note 21.

"What covered o'er?" That is, what and where was the world? *avarivar* being from *varī*, intensive reduplicated form of *vṛ*, "to cover," "veil." The world is thought of as veiling the ultimate reality, cf. *Rg Veda*, V, 19, 1, "state after state is generated, veil (*vavri*) from veil appears," hence also the prayer, *Maitri Up.*, VI, 35, with respect to the Sun, "That face do thou unveil (*apāvṛṇu*)" or "That door do thou open."

Our hymn is by no means necessarily an expression of scepticism: it is rather wonder than a wondering that is suggested. "Who knows" is no more "sceptical" than Kabir's *tāsukā soi santa jānai*, "who are the Comprehensors thereof?" or Blake's "Did he who made the lamb make thee?" "He knows or knows not," if understood to mean "he knows and knows not" would be sound theology. In the last stanza, alternative theories of "emanation" and of "creation by design" are propounded.<sup>103</sup> In any case, the very form of the various statements and questions proves that sound ontological speculation was by no means a new thing, for it is inconceivable that such questions had been correctly

## THREE VEDIC HYMNS

formulated just a week or year before this particular hymn was published.

Not only are the terms and implications of our hymn all formally correct (*pramiti*), they tally also in form and content with those of the Upaniṣads. Yet we are asked to believe that Vedic thought was "primitive"<sup>104</sup>—that the wise-singers of the Vedic hymns were able to express themselves in terms that have been universally employed elsewhere and otherwhen with a deep and known significance, and all without knowing what it was they said. It is as though it were argued that the law of gravity had been hit upon by lucky chance, long before anyone had consciously observed that heavy objects have a tendency to fall. Surely our faith in uniformity forbids us to imagine, what is outside the range of our experience, viz., that any sound formula, any clear statement of principles, could have been propounded by anyone who did not understand his own words.<sup>105</sup> It would be far easier to suppose that such a statement had been propounded in the past by those who knew what they were saying, and that it had since come to be repeated mechanically without understanding: but on the one hand, that would be to push the beginnings of wisdom too far back for the comfort of those who fondly believe that wisdom came into the world only in their own day, and on the other would need proof by some internal evidence of the presumed misunderstanding. I prefer to believe that wherever and whenever a proposition has been correctly and intelligibly stated (and that covers both verbal and visual symbolisms, both "scripture" and "art") the proposition was also understood. Problems of ontology are not so simple that they can be solved by "luck" or "inspiration": on the contrary there is no sort of work more arduous than "audition," and here a man has need of all the power of the pure intellect.

A version now follows of another hymn of creation, *Rg Veda*, X, 72:

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5. He by whom the sky was made strong and the earth made firm, by whom the heaven and the celestial vault were set in place, who measured out the regions in the atmosphere—to what god, etc.?

6. He whom the two roaring [armies], who have sought support with his help, look upon trembling in mind when the risen sun is shining—to what god, etc.?

*krāṇdasī*: cf. 6.25.4; 2.12.8. The two roaring (armies?) could conceivably be the armies of the Ādityas and the Dānavas or they might be any pair of armies in array against each other. Or the two Roarers might be Heaven and Earth, since the verb *krāṇ* is used of Dyaus and Parjanya, and in that case the dual would mean the Sky and the Other One (= Earth). The mythic allusion could then be to Indra's forceful separation of Heaven and Earth after he had drunk the soma before going to battle with Vṛtra. But this stanza seems to be a contradiction of 2.12.8, where a translation of *krāṇdasī* as "Heaven and Earth" seems impossible.

7. When the mighty waters came bearing the embryo (Sun) and giving birth to Agni, then the life spirit of the gods came into existence—to what god, etc.?

8. He who in his might looked upon the waters which bore ritual skill (*dakṣa*) and created the sacrifice, he who was the sole god over the gods—to what god, etc.?

9. May not he harm us, he who is the progenitor of the earth, he who with truth as his function created heaven and caused the bright and mighty waters to be born—to what god, etc.?

10. Prajāpati, other than you no one has encompassed all these creations. Whatever we desire when we invoke you, let that be ours! May we be lords of wealth!

**RV 10.125.** To Vāc as a hymn of self-praise (*ātmastuti*), a glorification of the Sacred Utterance. For Vāc cf. 10.71.

1. I travel with the Rudras and the Vasus, the Ādityas and the Viśve Devāḥ. Both Varuṇa and Mitra do I support, Indra and Agni, and the Aśvins.

2. I uphold the swelling Soma, Tvaṣṭṛ, Pūṣan, and Bhaga. I bestow wealth on the zealous patron of the sacrifice, who makes the oblation and presses the soma.

3. I am the queen, the confluence of wealth, the one with penetrating perception, the first of those who should be worshipped. Me have the gods distributed manifoldly, me who dwell in many homes, who have caused [the chants] to enter many places.

*tām mā devā vy ādadhuḥ purutrā*, cf. 10.71.3c.

*bhūry āveśāyantim*, cf. 10.81.1. Also note the expression *ā viś giras*, which occurs frequently.

4. Through me that one eats his food who really sees, who breathes, who hears [me as] that which is spoken. Though knowing it not, they dwell with me. Hear, you man of renown, I tell you what you must believe!

*yā im śṛṇōty uktām*, cf. 10.71.6c (note also 10.71.4).

5. Only I myself say this in which gods and men rejoice. Whomever I give my favor to, him I make powerful, a true knower of the mystical power, a ṛṣi, a successful sacrificer.

6. I stretch the bow for Rudra so that his arrow may reach the hater of religion and destroy him. I rouse the battle fury for the people. I have penetrated Heaven and Earth.

*aḥam dyāvāprthivī ā viveśa*, cf. 10.81.1.

7. On the brow of this universe I give birth to the father. My birthplace is in the waters, in the ocean. Thence I spread out over the worlds on all sides. I touch yonder sky with the crown of my head.

*tāto vi tiṣṭhe bhūvanānu viśvataḥ*, cf. 10.90.1.

8. I breathe like the wind supporting all the worlds. Beyond the sky, beyond this earth so great have I become by my might.

*paró divā parā enā*, cf. 10.82.5; 10.129.6.

*etāvati mahinā sām babhūva*, cf. 10.90.3a.

**RV 10.129.** To cosmogony.

1. There was not then either the Non-existent (*asat*) or the Existent (*sat*). There was no atmosphere nor heavenly vault beyond it. What covered all? Where? What was its protection? Was there a fathomless depth of the waters?

What covered all (*kīm āvarivaḥ*)? In the old myth it was Vṛtra: . . . *nēhā yó vo āvāvarit / ní śim vṛtrasya mārmaṇi vājram indro apipatat*, "he (Vṛtra) who covered you (waters)—Indra has hurled his vajra into Vṛtra's vitals" (RV 8.100.7).

2. There was neither death nor immortality

then. There was the sheen neither of day nor night. That One breathed (came to life), though uninspired by breath, by its own potentiality. Besides it nothing existed.

"neither death nor immortality"; cf. RV 10.72.9; AV 10.7.15.

"by its own potentiality"; cf. RV 10.72.1.

3. There was darkness hidden by darkness at the beginning. This all was an unilluminated flood. The force (with power of evolution) which was enclosed in emptiness (a shell), That One, was born through the power of its own (creative incubating) heat.

cf. RV 10.190.1.

*tuchyéna . . . ápihitam*. Possibly there is implied here the idea of a universe contained in an egg-shaped container or shell (cf. ChU 3.19, Maitri U 6.36, and the later expression *brahmāṇḍa*). The developing power (*ābhú*) is to put in it the *sat* and the *asat*, and in the *sat* will put the *rájas* and the *vyóman* (st. 1).

4. In the beginning desire came over That [One], which became the first seed of mind. The

sages by their pious insight in their heart (i.e., by introspection) found the relation of the Existent with the Non-existent.

In RV 10.72.1 the ṛṣis mystically perceive the cosmogonic process.

5. A line of demarcation was extended horizontally for them (the sages). What was below it, what above it? There were seed-depositors, there were powers; there was potentiality here below; there was emanation above.

6. Who is there who knows, who here (*ihá*) can tell whence was the origin, and whence this creation? The gods are this side of the creation. Who knows, then, whence it came into being?

In RV 10.72.6 the gods, as secondary creators, stir up the dust, as though in dancing; cf. Indra in RV 1.56.4 and 10.124.9, perhaps also RV 4.17.13 and 4.42.5.

7. This creation, whence it came into being, whether spontaneously or not—he who is its highest overseer in heaven, he surely knows, or perhaps he knows not.

## A MORPHOPHONEMIC PROBLEM IN THE SPOKEN TIBETAN OF LHASA

KUN CHANG and BETTY SHEFTS

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

THERE ARE IN THE SPOKEN TIBETAN of Lhasa compounds in which the first member ends in a nasal vowel, *ŋ*, or *m*.<sup>1</sup> Other alternants of these

<sup>1</sup> We gathered the data we cite during the course of our work on the N.D.E.A. Spoken Tibetan project at the University of Washington, 1960-63. Our informants, Mr. Nawang Nornang and Mrs. Lhadon Karsip, were both from Lhasa.

The phonemes and phoneme sequences we use in our transcription are: *q, qh, ŋ, ŋh, h; k, kh; c, ch, ṇ, ṇh, ṣ; t, th, r, rh; t, th, n, l, lh, s; ts, tsh; p, ph, m, mh; y, w; i, e, é, ε; A, a; ü, ö; u, o, ô, and ɔ*. Vowels are either oral or nasal, single or geminate. Syllables with single vowels not followed by *ŋ* or *m* have either high or low tone; syllables with geminate vowels or single vowels followed by *ŋ* or *m* have high, high-falling, low, or low-falling tones. In our *Manual of Spoken Tibetan* (University of Washington Press, 1964) we indicated nasalized vowels by a tilde over the vowel sign, and tones by an overline for high tone, an underline for low tone, and a grave accent for falling tone. The exigencies of printing make it necessary for us to adopt a new system here.

components regularly end in an oral vowel, *q*, or *p*. The second member of such compounds, when it occurs independently or as the first member of other compounds, has no nasal initial. In every compound in which it is the second member, however, it is preceded by a nasal vowel, *ŋ*, or *m*, depending on the phonological makeup of the first member. We analyze these occurrences of nasal vowels, *ŋ*, or *m* as belonging to two morphs, the oral features to the prior morph, the nasal feature to the latter. This latter morph is thus made up of a sequence of phonemes preceded by a phonemic feature, nasality.

Whenever *ŋ* occurs in these compounds, we have

In this article we indicate nasalized vowels by *N* following the vowel sign. We indicate the tones for a whole form by raised capitals following the form, with a hyphen separating the tone of one syllable from that of the following one. Abbreviations for the tones are: H, high; L, low; F, falling; 0, zero (minimal stress).

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

*Three Mystic Poets*, a study of W. B. Yeats, A. E.  
and Rabindranath Tagore

*The Call of the Vedas* (a collection of Vedic stanzas  
with English translation & commentary)

# Hymns from the Vedas

ORIGINAL TEXT AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE

With a Foreword by

DR. SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN



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परीत्य भूतानि परीत्य लोकान्परीत्य सर्वाः प्रदिशो दिशश्च ।  
उपस्थाय प्रथमजामृतस्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानमभि सं विवेश ॥ ११ ॥

परि द्यावापृथिवी सद्य इत्वा परि लोकान्परि दिशः परि स्वः ।  
ऋतस्य तन्तुं विततं विचृत्य तदपश्यत्तदभवत्तदासीत् ॥ १२ ॥

सदसस्पतिमद्भुतं प्रियमिन्द्रस्य काम्यम् । सन्नि मेधामयासिषं स्वाहा ॥ १३ ॥

यां मेधां देवगणाः पितरश्चोपासते । तया मामद्य मेधयाग्ने मेधाविनं कुरु स्वाहा ॥ १४ ॥

मेधां मे वरुणो ददातु मेधामग्निः प्रजापतिः ।  
मेधामिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च मेधां धाता ददातु मे स्वाहा ॥ १५ ॥

इदं मे ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं चोभे श्रियमश्नुताम् ।  
मयि देवा दधतु श्रियमुत्तमां तस्यै ते स्वाहा ॥ १६ ॥

(२)

ऋग्वेद । म. १०, सू. १२९ ।

७ प्रजापतिः परमेष्ठी । भाववृत्तम् । त्रिष्टुप् ।

नासदासीन्नो सदासीत् तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा परो यत् ।  
किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्नम्भः किमासीद्गहनं गभीरम् ॥ १ ॥

(Continued from p. 303)

He prays for the highest form of it. He gives a welcome to that. The word occurs in the last stanza of the Bhūmi Sūkta of the AV. (XII. 1.63), and of the *Bhagavad Gita* (18.78). [The word is prefixed to names in modern India, meaning 'the illustrious'. It also means 'grace' (See AV. XII. 1.63) and in that sense the prefix will mean, 'the gracious' as in 'Śrī Krishna'.]

(2). St. 1 line 1 : The ultimate is beyond the antithesis of positive and negative concepts.

Having encompassed all creatures, encompassed all worlds,  
encompassed all the regions and directions,  
and approached the First-born of Eternal Order,  
he with the Self entered into the Self. (11)

And going swiftly round the heaven and earth,  
around the worlds, around the quarters, around the sky,  
and lengthening out the wide-spread thread of Order,  
he saw That, he became That, he was That. (12)

The wonderful Lord of the Assembly,  
dear to Indra, lovable, who  
bestows wisdom, has been approached by me. Hail ! (13)

The talent that Devas and Fathers esteem,  
with that talent, Agni, endow me today. (14)

May Varuṇa give me talent,  
may Agni and Prajāpati give it ;  
May Indra and Vāyu grant me talent,  
and Dhātṛi grant it to me. Hail ! (15)

Let both the spiritual and the political man  
possess the lustre that I seek.  
May the Devas give me the noblest lustre.  
To thee, that lustre, Hail ! (16)

## (2) THE HYMN OF CREATION

RIGVEDA X. 129

Metre : Tristubh

Rishi : Prajāpati Parameshthīn

There was neither existence nor non-existence then,  
Neither the world nor the sky that lies beyond it ;  
What lay enveloped? and where? and who gave it protection?  
Was water there, deep and unfathomable? (1)

St. 11 : Having manifested himself in the creation, the Divine Being was absorbed in Himself.

St. 12 : *lengthening ... Order* : establishing the all embracing Rīta, moral and cosmic Law, *He saw ... That* — the manifested Deity became the Absolute again.

St. 13 : *Lord ... Assembly* — Agni, presiding over the ritual.

St. 14 : *talent — medhā*. This is a prayer at the close of the ritual.

St. 16 : *Lustre — Śrī*. It is the brilliance possessed by the enlightened man. The Priest of the ritual passes it on to the men who are either spiritual or secular in their vocation.

(Continued on p. 302)



न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्ना आसीत् प्रकृतः ।  
आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किं चनास ॥ २ ॥

तम आसीत् तमसा गूळहमग्रेऽप्रकृतं सलिलं सर्वमा इदम् ।  
तुच्छधेनाभ्वपिहितं यदासीत् तपसस्तन्महिनाजायतैकम् ॥ ३ ॥

कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।  
सतो बन्धुमसति निरविन्दन् हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयो मनीषा ॥ ४ ॥

तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरेषामधः स्विदासीद्दुपरि स्विदासीत् ।  
रेतोधा आसन् महिमान आसन् त्वधा अवस्तात् प्रयतिः परस्तात् ॥ ५ ॥

को अद्धा वेद क इह प्र वोचत् कुत आजाता कुत इयं विसृष्टिः ।  
अर्वाग्देवा अस्य विसर्जनेनाऽथा को वेद यत आबभूव ॥ ६ ॥

इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।  
यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन् त्सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥ ७ ॥

(Continued from p. 305)

In the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad*, Gārgi, plying the sage Yājñavalkya with questions wants to know the origin of the Ultimate Being himself. The sage warns her: 'Gārgi, don't ask too much (mātiprākshih)' — III. 6.1. The idea has been presented in a legendary form in Buddhistic and Puranic literature. (See *The Call of the Vedas*, A. C. Bose, Serial No. 91, Note).

There was no death then, nor immortality,  
nor of night or day was there any sign.  
The ONE breathed airless by self-impulse ;  
other than THAT was nothing whatsoever. (2)

Darkness was concealed in darkness there,  
and all this was indiscriminate chaos ;  
That ONE which had been covered by the void  
through the might of Tapas was manifested. (3)

In the beginning there was desire,  
Which was the primal germ of the mind ;  
The sages searching in their hearts with wisdom  
found in non-existence the kin of existence. (4)

Their dividing line extended transversely.  
What was below it and what was above ?  
There was the seed-bearer, there were mighty forces ;  
impulse from below and forward movement beyond. (5)

Who, really, knows? who can here declare it —  
whence was it born and whence come this creation ?  
The Devas are later than this world's production ;  
Then, who knows from where it came into being? (6)

That from which this creation came into being,  
whether It had held it together or It had not,  
He who surveys it in the highest region,  
He, truly, knows it, or maybe He does not know ! (7)

St. 2 lines 3-4 : Here is found the basis for Vedantic monism.

St. 3 *Tapas* — spiritual fire. The manifestation of the Divine (in Creation) is a spiritual act.

St. 4 lines 1-2 : *desire* — *kāma*. Cf. "He, the Ātman, desired (*akāmayata*) : May I become many ; let me procreate myself. He performed Tapas. Having performed Tapas he created all this". — *Taittirīya Upanishad*, II. 6.

lines 3-4 : This is a special feature of Vedic thought — the finite and the infinite (similarly, the mortal and the immortal, the human and the divine) are not altogether exclusive of each other. (Here the mind works on a plane higher than the logical).

St. 5 : Creation is, to speak biologically, an interbreeding of the non-existent and the existent, the infinite and the finite.

St. 6 : The origin of creation is, after all, a mystery.

lines 3-4 : The Devas are the manifestations of the Absolute on the relative plane; they represent Divine splendour in the universe. See 'Birth of Devas', RV. X. 72, p. 267.

St. 7 : The Upanishad quoted above (Note on St. 4) simplifies the matter by saying that everything proceeded from the Ātman (and accepts monism). The Veda, however, does not do so. It leaves the question of the origin of creation open. (Contd. on p. 304)



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A RE-EXAMINATION OF ṚGVEDA X.129,  
THE NĀSADĪYA HYMN

WALTER H. MAURER  
*University of Hawaii*

*'This article is dedicated to the revered memory of Dr. W. Norman Brown, under whose inspiring tutelage its author first became acquainted with the tantalizing problems of the Veda.'*

This well-known hymn is here re-examined in the light of the extensive study that has been expended upon it by many scholars over the years. Each stanza is discussed and annotated in detail and a new, closely literal translation provided, which, it is hoped, reflects greater clarity and cohesiveness in the development of the ideas from one stanza to the other.

The Nāsadiya <sup>1</sup> Hymn, or Creation Hymn as it is often somewhat misleadingly called, belongs to a group of hymns, numbering under a dozen and almost entirely confined to the

\*The writing of this paper has been a gradual process involving several separate stages, in the course of which I have made many small modifications in my original views as first presented to the XXIXth International Congress of Orientalists, Paris, 1973, partly as a result of exchanges with colleagues and students, and partly in consequence of further reflection and study of my own. To all those whose views have contributed to the evolution of this paper from āsat to sāt, so to speak, I here express my profoundest gratitude.

1. This term Nāsadiya is derived, by the addition of the suffix -īya, from the first two words of the hymn, *nā āsad* (contracted into *nāsad* by vowel coalescence). A longer name, Nāsadāsiya, made similarly from the first three words, *nāsad āsīm* (minus the final consonant!), is occasionally seen (e.g. it is used by Ludwig and Deussen).

here, by omitting all mention of the agency, might imply either the kind of evolution which has been the principal subject of the hymn or some cosmic agency, not necessarily the overseer, however.<sup>43</sup>

At this point, in the interest of clarity, it may be well to repeat the English translation as a unit, unbroken by commentarial matter and without even the occasional parentheses to mark words that are supplied. For only in this way, when the poem is viewed as a whole, can the coherence and interrelationship, as they are developed from stanza to stanza, be appreciated.

1. Not existent was it nor non-existent was it at that time;  
there was not atmosphere nor the heavens which are beyond.  
What existed? Where? In whose care?  
Water was it? An abyss unfathomable?
2. Neither mortal was there nor immortal then;  
not of night, of day was there distinction:  
That alone breathed windless through inherent power.  
Other than That there was naught else.
3. Darkness it was, by darkness hidden in the beginning:  
an undistinguished sea was all this.  
The germ of all things which was enveloped in void,  
That alone through the power of brooding thought was  
born.
4. Upon That in the beginning arose desire,  
which was the first offshoot of that thought.  
This desire sages found out to be the link between  
the existent and the non-existent,  
after searching with the wisdom in their heart.
5. Straight across was extended their line of vision:  
was That below, was That above?  
Seedplacers there were, powers there were:  
potential energy below, impulse above.
6. Who, after all, knows? Who here will declare  
whence it arose, whence this world?  
Subsequent are the gods to the creation of this world.  
Who, then, knows whence it came into being?

43. Cf. Thieme, *Gedichte*, p. 67, who translates: '... ob sie getätigt worden ist (von einem Agens) oder ob nicht.'

7. This world — whence it came into being,  
whether it was made or whether not —  
He who is its overseer in the highest heavens  
surely knows — or perhaps He knows not!

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# Meditations through the R̥g Veda

FOUR-DIMENSIONAL MAN

*Antonio T. de Nicolás*



Shambhala  
BOULDER & LONDON

1978

(1976)

3. I am the queen, the gatherer of wealth,  
I know knowledge, the first to be sacrificed.  
The gods have scattered me to all places;  
I have many homes, (for) I have scattered the chants in many places
4. Through my power, he eats and sees,  
Breathes and hears, who hears me as *Vāc*.  
Even if they do not know, they dwell in me.  
In truth I speak: hear me, famous men.
5. Only I utter the word that brings joy to gods and men.  
The man I favor, to him I give my power;  
I make him like a god,  
The seer, a perfect sacrificer.
6. I stretch the bow for Rudra, so  
That his arrow may pierce wisdom's enemy.  
I rouse the battle fury for the people.  
I have pierced Heaven and Earth.
7. On the brow of the universe I give birth to the Father.  
My birthplace is in the waters, in the deep ocean.  
From there I spread out over the worlds on all sides.  
And with the height of my head I reach the sky above.
8. I breathe like the wind holding all the worlds.  
I am so powerful  
That I go beyond the heavens  
And beyond this broad earth.

### RG VEDA 10.127

#### HYMN TO NIGHT

1. Goddess Night, with all her twinkling eyes,  
To different points in splendor she comes.
2. Immortal, she broods over the high and low;  
The Goddess, with her gaze, lightens the dark.
3. In her trail, her sister Dawn follows,  
And with her the darkness vanishes.
4. Favor us, O Night, for we follow your pathways  
As birds their nest upon a tree.

5. The villagers, all that flies and walks  
Are closed in their homes. Even vultures ignore their prey.
6. O Ūrmyā (Night), fence off the wolf and its mate;  
Fence off the thief. Be easy for us to pass.
7. Bright she has come near me, the darkness subdued  
With light's promise. Dawn, cancel darkness like a debt.
8. Night, Child of Heaven, I have brought these songs to you  
Like cattle. Accept them as for a conqueror.

### RG VEDA 10.129

#### THE HYMN OF CREATION

1. Neither Existence nor Non-Existence was as yet,  
Neither the world nor the sky that lies beyond it;  
What was covered? and where? and who gave it protection?  
Was there water, deep and unfathomable?
2. Neither was there death, nor immortality,  
Nor any sign of night or day.  
The ONE breathed without air by self-impulse;  
Other than that was nothing whatsoever.
3. Darkness was concealed by darkness there,  
And all this was indiscriminate chaos;  
That ONE which had been covered by the void  
Through the heat of desire (*tapas*) was manifested.
4. In the beginning there was desire,  
Which was the primal germ of the mind;  
The sages searching in their own hearts with wisdom  
Found in non-existence the kin of existence.
5. Their dividing line extended transversely.  
What was below it and what above?  
There was the seed-bearer, there were mighty forces!  
Who therefore knows from where it did arise.
6. Who really knows? Who can here say  
When was it born and from where creation came?  
The gods are later than this world's creation;  
Therefore, who knows from where it came into existence?
7. That from which creation came into being,  
Whether it had held it together or it had not  
He who watches in the highest heaven  
He alone knows, unless . . . He does not know.

मन्त्रमञ्जरी



'ūrṇa kumbha

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with the collaboration of  
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we know that we do not know, which would then be mere pretending, but that we really do not know even if it is at all knowable by any possible knowledge. The hymn concludes with this query, this constitutive uncertainty which is of infinite magnitude, because we are all involved in it. To answer the query would amount to killing the very unfolding of reality. It is the openness of this interrogation which allows the universe to emerge and to exist.

### Nāsadiya Sūkta

RV X, 129

1. At first was neither Being nor Nonbeing.  
There was not air nor yet sky beyond.  
What was its wrapping? Where? In whose protection?  
Was Water there, unfathomable and deep?
2. There was no death then, nor yet deathlessness;  
of night or day there was not any sign.  
The One breathed without breath, by its own impulse.  
Other than that was nothing else at all.
3. Darkness was there, all wrapped around by darkness,  
and all was Water indiscriminate. Then  
that which was hidden by the Void, that One, emerging,  
stirring, through power of Ardor, came to be.
4. In the beginning Love arose,  
which was the primal germ cell of the mind.  
The Seers, searching in their hearts with wisdom,  
discovered the connection of Being in Nonbeing.
5. A crosswise line cut Being from Nonbeing.  
What was described above it, what below?  
Bearers of seed there were and mighty forces,  
thrust from below and forward move above.
6. Who really knows? Who can presume to tell it?  
Whence was it born? Whence issued this creation?  
Even the Gods came after its emergence.  
Then who can tell from whence it came to be?
7. That out of which creation has arisen,  
whether it held it firm or it did not,  
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,  
He surely knows—or maybe He does not!

1. SB X, 5, 3, 1-2 (§1 13) considers that *manas*, the mind, or rather the spirit, is the one and only thing that fulfills the condition of being neither existent nor nonexistent. The spirit is existent only in things, and things without the spirit are nonexistent.

Cf. §1 14.

Indian tradition has interpreted these first two mantras as voicing all the different perspectives under which the ultimate metaphysical problem can be envisaged. Cf. SU IV, 18 (§ 1 7); BG XIII, 12.

2. Own impulse: *svadhā*, the active principle, has been translated as "by its own energy" (Zaehner), "power" (Mascaro, Macdonell, Edgerton), "impulse" (Bose), "of itself" (Misch), "strength" (Raghavan), "will power" (Telang-Chaubey), "élan," "initiative" (Renou), "Eigengesetz" (Geldner), just to give an idea of different readings. Cf. the later idea of *śakti* or the divine power of the Godhead, always represented as the Goddess, spouse of the corresponding God.

The One: *tad ekam*. Cf. § VI 1, and also RV I, 164, 10; X, 82, 2; 6 (§ VII 12); AV VIII, 9, 25-26; IX, 9, 7; IsU 4 (§ VII 11).

Cf. other texts in §1 7.

3. For the primordial Waters, cf. §1 15 for further references.

Indiscriminate: *apraketa*, without a recognizable sign, undifferentiated, indistinguishable, unrecognizable, referring to the amorphous chaos, the unformed primordial Waters.

Water: *salila*, flood, surge, waves, the ocean, waters. The Greek word *pelagos* would perhaps render the idea of *salila*, the open sea without shores or boundaries, amorphous water, a kind of chaotic magma.

The Void: *ābhu*, or *abhu*, the primordial potency, capable of becoming everything.

Ardor: *tapas*, cf. §1 2.

4. Cf. AV XIX, 52, 1 (§ II 13), where it is translated somewhat differently.

5. "Bearers of seed" are considered to be the male forces and "mighty forces" the female principle. Cf. *dakṣa* and *aditi* as the masculine and feminine principles, respectively, in RV X, 72, 4 (§ VII 2).

6. Cf. KenU I, 1 (§ VI 3).

### Creative Fervor

### Tapas

2 *Tapas* or cosmic ardor, ascetic fire, arduous penance, concentration, which here amounts to an ontic condensation, is said in this last but one hymn of the Rg Veda to be the energy giving birth to cosmic order and to truth. The three major concepts of Indian wisdom and of Man's awareness are *tapas*, *ṛta*, and *satya*, ardor, order, and truth.

In the preceding hymn the universe is said to emerge out of or through ardor.<sup>12</sup> In this hymn (v. 1) the first result of the protocosmic energy is said to be the double principle underlying the whole of reality: on the one hand, order (the structure, the formal principle, the contexture of reality) and on the other, truth (the contents, the substance, the material principle, the concrete and crystallized reality itself). Owing to *ṛta*, this world is not a chaos, but a cosmos, not an anarchic mass, but an ordered and harmonious whole. Owing to *satya*, the world is not a haphazard place, an irresponsible game, or an inconsistent and purely fluid appearance. *Satya* is not primarily an epistemic truth but an ontic truthfulness, an ontological fullness, with content, weight, and reality, namely, being.

The *eka*, the One of the Hymn of the Origins, is still void and devoid of reality. No reality can emerge without these two princi-

12. Cf. RV X, 129, 4 (§ 1 1).



# THE RIG VEDA

*An Anthology*

---

ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT HYMNS,  
SELECTED, TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED  
BY WENDY DONIGER O'FLAHERTY



PENGUIN BOOKS

1981

This short hymn, though linguistically simple (with the exception of one or two troublesome nouns), is conceptually extremely provocative and has, indeed, provoked hundreds of complex commentaries among Indian theologians and Western scholars. In many ways, it is meant to puzzle and challenge, to raise unanswerable questions, to pile up paradoxes.

- 1 There was neither non-existence nor existence then; there was neither the realm of space nor the sky which is beyond. What stirred?<sup>1</sup> Where? In whose protection? Was there water, bottomlessly deep?
- 2 There was neither death nor immortality then. There was no distinguishing sign<sup>2</sup> of night nor of day. That one breathed, windless, by its own impulse. Other than that there was nothing beyond.
- 3 Darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning; with no distinguishing sign,<sup>2</sup> all this was water. The life force that was covered with emptiness, that one arose through the power of heat.<sup>3</sup>
- 4 Desire came upon that one in the beginning; that was the first seed of mind. Poets<sup>4</sup> seeking in their heart with wisdom found the bond of existence in non-existence.
- 5 Their cord<sup>5</sup> was extended across. Was there below? Was there above? There were seed-placers; there were powers.<sup>6</sup> There was impulse beneath; there was giving-forth above.
- 6 Who really knows? Who will here proclaim it? Whence was it produced? Whence is this creation? The gods came afterwards, with the creation of this universe.<sup>7</sup> Who then knows whence it has arisen?
- 7 Whence this creation has arisen – perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not – the one who looks down on it, in

the highest heaven, only he knows – or perhaps he does not know.

## NOTES

1. The verb is often used to describe the motion of breath. The verse implies that the action precedes the actor.
2. That is, the difference between night and day, light or darkness, or possibly sun and moon.
3. *Tapas* designates heat, in particular the heat generated by ritual activity and by physical mortification of the body.
4. *Kavi* designates a poet or saint.
5. Possibly a reference to the 'bond' mentioned in verse 4, or a kind of measuring cord by which the poets delimit – and hence create – the elements.
6. Through chiasmus, the verse contrasts male seed-placers, giving-forth, above, with female powers, impulse, below.
7. That is, the gods cannot be the source of creation since they came after it.

10.121 *The Unknown God, the Golden Embryo*

This creation hymn poses questions about an unnamed god (whom Max Müller first dubbed *Deus Ignotus*); later tradition (beginning with the subsequent appending of the final verse of this hymn, a verse that ends with a phrase used to conclude many other *Rig Veda* hymns) identified this god with *Prajāpati* and made the question in the refrain (who?) into an answer: 'Who' (*Ka*) is the name of the creator, a name explicitly said, in later texts, to have been given to *Prajāpati* by *Indra* (as agnostics are sometimes accused of praying 'to whom it may concern'). But the original force of the verse is speculative: since the creator preceded all the known gods,<sup>1</sup> creating them, who could he be? In verse 7, he seems to appear after the waters; in verse 9, the waters appear from him. They are born from one another, a common paradox.<sup>2</sup>

The creator in this hymn is called *Hiranyagarbha*, a truly pregnant term. It is a compound noun, whose first element

means 'gold' and whose second element means 'womb, seed, embryo, or child' in the *Rig Veda* and later comes to mean 'egg'; this latter meaning becomes prominent in the cosmogonic myth of the golden egg that separates, the two shells becoming sky and earth, while the yolk is the sun.<sup>3</sup> In the present hymn, the compound functions straightforwardly: the god *is* the golden embryo or seed. Later, it is glossed as a possessive compound: he is the god who (more anthropomorphically) *possesses* the golden seed or egg. *Sāyaṇa* suggests that the compound may be interpreted possessively even here, making it possible to include several levels of meaning at once – 'he in whose belly the golden seed or egg exists like an embryo'. This seed of fire is placed in the waters of the womb; it is also the embryo with which the waters become pregnant (v. 7). So, too, *Agni* is the child of the waters but also the god who spills his seed in the waters. These are interlocking rather than contradictory concepts; in the late Vedas, the father is specifically identified with the son. Furthermore, the egg is both a female image (that which is fertilized by seed and which contains the embryo that is like the yolk) and a male image (the testicles containing seed). Thus the range of meanings may be seen as a continuum of androgynous birth images: seed (male egg), womb (female egg), embryo, child.

- 1 In the beginning the Golden Embryo arose. Once he was born, he was the one lord of creation. He held in place the earth and this sky.<sup>4</sup> Who is the god whom we should worship with the oblation?
- 2 He who gives life, who gives strength, whose command all the gods, his own, obey; his shadow is immortality – and death.<sup>5</sup> Who is the god whom we should worship with the oblation?
- 3 He who by his greatness became the one king of the world that breathes and blinks, who rules over his two-footed and four-footed creatures – who is the god whom we should worship with the oblation?

# RGVEDA SAMHITA

## ऋग्वेद संहिता

*with*

English Translation  
by

Svami Satya Prakash Sarasvati  
and  
Satyakam Vidyalankar

**Volume XIII**

Book X, Hymns (87 – 191)

त्रयोदश भागः

दशमं मण्डलम् सूक्तानि (87 – 191)

Veda Pratishthana

New Delhi

1987

॥१२९॥ अग्ने म॒न्युं प्र॑ति॒नुद॑न्प॒रेषा॑म॒र्द्धो गो॒पाः परि॑ पाहि न॒स्त्वम् ।  
 प्र॒त्यञ्चो॑ यन्तु नि॒गुतः पुन॑स्तेऽ॒मैषां चित्तं॑ प्र॒बुधां वि नै॑शत् ॥६॥  
 धा॒ता धा॒तॄणां भुव॑नस्य यस्पति॒र्देवे॑ त्रा॒तारं॑मभिमातिषा॒हम् ।  
 इ॒मं य॒ज्ञम॒श्विनो॒भा बृ॒हस्पति॑र्दे॒वाः पा॑न्तु यज॒मानं न्यु॑र्यात् ॥७॥  
 उ॒रुव्य॑चा नो महिषः शर्म॑ यंसद॒स्मिन्हवे॑ पुरु॒हूतः पु॑रु॒क्षुः ।  
 स नः॑ प्र॒जायै॑ ह॒र्यश्च॑ सृ॒ष्टयेन्द्र॑ मा नो रीरिषो मा परा दाः ॥८॥  
 ये नः॑ स॒पत्ना अप॑ ते भ॒वन्त्विन्द्रा॑ग्निभ्या॒मव॑ बाधामहे तान् ।  
 वस॑वो रु॒द्रा आ॑दित्या उपरि॒स्पृशं॑ मो॒घं चेत्तार॑मधि॒राज॑म॒क्रन् ॥९॥

agne manyúm pratinudán páreshām ádabdbho gopáh pári  
 páhi nas tvám | pratyāñco yantu nigútaḥ púnas tè 'maí-  
 sham cittam prabúdhām ví neṣat || 6 || dhātá dhātrīṇām  
 bhuvanasya yás pátir devám trātáram abhimātishāhám |  
 imám yajñám aśvínobhá bṛihaspátir deváh pāntu yájama-  
 nam nyarthát || 7 || uruvyācā no mahisháh śarma yaṁsad  
 asmín háve puruhūtáh purukshúb | sá naḥ prajāyai haryaṣva  
 mṛīlayendra má no rīriṣo má pára dāḥ || 8 || yé naḥ sa-  
 pátnā ápa té bhavantv indrāgnībhyām áva bādhāmahe tán |  
 vásavo rudrá ādityā upariśprīṣam mogrām céttāram adhirā-  
 jān akran || 9 || 16 ||

Daśamo 'nuvākah.

[ अथैकादशोऽनुवाकः ॥ ]

( १२९. ) एकोनविंशदुत्तरशततमं सूक्तम्

(१-७) समर्चस्यास्य सूक्तस्य परमेष्ठी प्रजापतिक्रियः । भाववृत्तं देवता । त्रिष्टुप् छन्दः ॥

॥१३॥ नास॑दासी॒न्नो सदा॑सीत्तदानीं॒ नासी॒द्रजो॑ नो व्यो॒मा प॒रो यत् ।  
 किमा॑वरी॒वः कु॒ह कस्य॑ शर्म॒ज्ञम्भः॑ किमा॑सी॒द्रह॑नं गभी॒रम् ॥१॥

129.

Nasad āsīn nō sād āsīt tadānīm nāsīd rājo nō vyomā  
 paró yát | kīm āvarivaḥ kūha kāsya śarmann āmbhaḥ kīm  
 āsīd gāhanam gabhīrām || 1 ||

O fire-divine, an invincible protector as you are, may you de-  
 fend us, baffling the wrath of our opponents. Let these foes,  
 dejected, defeated, and frustrated go back to their homes. May  
 the shrewdness of my opponents be completely made ineffec-  
 tive. 6

He is the creator of creators, a protector of the universe, the  
 divine defender, and the destroyer of enemies; may the twin-  
 divines and the Lord of vast universe and the divine powers,  
 protect our selfless public deeds of service and save the accom-  
 plisher, the head of the family, from disappointment. 7

May the omnipresent (Lord), the mighty, invoked by many,  
 bless our noble public deeds and give protection; O resplendent  
 Lord, lord of vigour, be gracious to our offspring; harm us not;  
 desert us not. 8

Let those who are our foes be driven off; may we through the  
 blessings of resplendent Lord, and fire-divine destroy them;  
 may the Lord of wealth, our Lord of vitality, and all luminaries  
 make me vested with high authority, fierce and powerful, intel-  
 ligent, and invincible as a ruler. 9

129

Neither there was non-existent, nor the existent; nor there was  
 any realm or region. How could there be existing this  
 unfathomable profound plasma? 1

न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्ना आसीत्प्रकेतः ।  
 आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किं चनासं ॥२॥  
 तम आसीत्तमसा गूळहमग्रेऽप्रकेतं सलिलं सर्वमा इदम् ।  
 तुच्छेनाभ्वर्पितं यदासीत्तपस्तन्महिनाजायतैकम् ॥३॥  
 कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।  
 सतो बन्धुमसति निरविन्दन्हृदि प्रतीप्या क्वयो मनीषा ॥४॥  
 तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरैषामधः स्विदासीद्दुपरि स्विदासीत् ।  
 रेतोधा आसन्महिमानं आसन्स्वधा अवस्तात्प्रयतिः परस्तात् ॥५॥  
 को अद्धा वेद क इह प्र वोचत्कुत आजाता कुत इयं विष्टृष्टिः ।  
 अर्वाग्देवा अस्य विसर्जनेनाथा को वेद यत आबभूव ॥६॥  
 इयं विष्टृष्टिर्यत आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।  
 यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्त्सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥७॥

nā mṛityūr āsīd amṛitaṁ nā  
 tārhi nā rātryā āhna āsīt praketaḥ | ānid avātām svadhāyā  
 tād ékaṁ tasmād dhānyān nā parāḥ kīm canāsa ॥ 2 ॥ tāma  
 āsīt tāmasā gūḷhām āgre 'praketaṁ salilāṁ sārvaṁ ā idām |  
 tuchyēnābhv āpilitaṁ yād āsīt tāpasas tām mahinājāyatai-  
 kam ॥ 3 ॥ kāmas tād āgre sām avartatādhi mānaso rétah  
 prathamām yād āsīt | sató bāndhum āsati nīr avindan bridi  
 pratishyā kavāyo manishā ॥ 4 ॥ tiraścīno vitato raśmīr eśhām  
 adhāḥ svid āsīd upāri svid āsīst | retodhā āsan mahimāna  
 āsan svadhā avastāt prāyatīḥ parastāt ॥ 5 ॥ kó addhā veda  
 ká ihā prá vocat kúta ājātā kúta iyām vísṛishtīḥ | arvāg  
 devā asyā visárjanenāthā kó veda yāta ābabhūva ॥ 6 ॥ iyām  
 vísṛishtīr yāta ābabhūva yādi vā dadhé yādi vā ná | yó  
 aṣyādhyakshaḥ paramé vyòman só aṅgā veda yādi vā ná  
 véda ॥ 7 ॥ 17 ॥

Neither there was death nor at that period immortality. There was no indication of day or night. That breathless one breathed upon as if by its own automation. Apart from that one, there was nothing else whatever. <sup>2</sup>

Darkness there was; covered by darkness, a plasmic continuum, in which there was nothing distinguishable. And thence, an empty (world), united under a causal covering came out on account of the austere penance (of that Supreme one). <sup>3</sup>

In the beginning, there was the Divine Desire, which was the first seed of the Cosmic Mind. The sages, seeking in their hearts, have discovered by their wisdom the bond that operates between the existent (the manifested) and the non-existent (the unmanifested). <sup>4</sup>

Their controls (rays or reins) were stretched out, some transverse, some below and others above. Some of these were shedders of the seed and the others strong and superb — the inferior, the causal matter here, and the superior, the creator's effort there. <sup>5</sup>

Who really knows, who in this world can declare it, whence came out this (manifested) creation? Whence was it engendered? Whence will it end? Nature's bounties came out much later, and hence who knows whence this creation came into manifestation? <sup>6</sup>

He from whom this creation arose—verily He may uphold it or He may not (and then of course, none else can do so). The one who is the sovereign in this highest heaven, He assuredly knows, or even He knows not (and then none else would ever know the secrets). <sup>7</sup>

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**HYMN OF CREATION**  
(NĀSADĪYA SŪKTA, RĪGVEDA X.129)  
[ नासदीय-सूक्त व्याख्या ]

By  
**VASUDEVA S. AGRAWALA**  
*Professor*  
BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY



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## PREFACE

It is a joy for me to issue this edition of the Nāsadiya Sūkta, R̥gveda X. 129. In this Hymn of Creation we have the most sublime philosophical song in the history of the human race.

I am presenting here a fresh study of its contents. In my view its seven mantras present a consistent formulation of the metaphysical doctrine about cosmogony as known to the Vedic seers. Many other hymns of the R̥gveda present an elaboration of the theories embodied in this Sūkta.

The hymn is planned in three portions as follows :—

I. Mantras 1 and 2. These enumerate the various philosophical doctrines as they prevailed in the time of the R̥gveda, viz.,

- |                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) <i>Sad-Asad Vāda</i> ,      | (2) <i>Rajo-Vāda</i> ,     |
| (3) <i>Vyoma-Vāda</i> ,         | (4) <i>Parāvara-Vāda</i> , |
| (5) <i>Āvaraṇa-Vāda</i> ,       | (6) <i>Ambho-Vāda</i> ,    |
| (7) <i>Amṛita-Mṛityu-Vāda</i> , | (8) <i>Ahorātra-Vāda</i> . |

I have explained these in a succinct form.

II. Mantras 3, 4 and 5. These form the kernel of the author's views about creation. This portion bristles with a bunch of technical terms as *Ābhu*, *Tuchchhya*, *Salilam*, *Idam Sarvam*, *Manas*, *Kāma*, *Asat*, *Sat*, *Tiraścīna*, *Raśmi*, *Adhaḥ*, *Upaṛi*, *Retodhā*, *Mahimānaḥ*, *Prayati* and *Svadhā*. The statement is extremely compact but pregnant with the Sāṅkhya system in its origin or first formulation. For example, *Apraketa Salila* is *Avyakta Prakṛiti*; *Idam Sarvam* is the aggregate of the three *Gūṇas* by which the cosmos is produced. *Tamas* refers to the *Avyakta* state of *Prakṛiti* as it existed in its source which was the other *Tamas* or the Transcendent Puruṣa. *Ābhu* corresponds to the principle of *Mahat* or the Universal. *Tuchchhya* signifies the finite or the limited

principle of *Ahaṅkara* or individuated mind which is mentioned as *Manas* with its potent seed *Kāma*.

Then the seven original categories, i.e., *Mahat*, *Ahaṅkāra* and *Pañcabhūta* (*Mahadādi Viśeṣāntaḥ* of later times) are divided into two major classes, namely, *Asat* or the Prāṇic manifestation of *Mahat*, and *Ahaṅkāra* and *Sat* or *Pañcha*, *Tanmātras* with the five *Bhūtas* and ten senses. The visible cosmos is all *Sat*.

Mantra 5 repeats through various symbols the division of *Sat* and *Asat*. For example, *Upaṛi* relates to *Asat*, i. e. to the higher principle of *Prāṇa* or Divine Energy, and *Adhaḥ* to *Sat*, i.e. *Prakṛiti* or Matter. Similarly, *Prayati Parastāt* is mentioned as the higher principle and *Svadhā Avastāt* as the inferior principle of Matter. The *Retodhā* Gods are in the higher source and *Mahimānaḥ* Gods become operative in matter. *Mahimā* is the same as *Mahat* or the first category or emanate from *Tamas* or *Avyakta Prakṛiti*.

III. Mantras 6 and 7. These are couched in a special style which is often found in the R̥gveda, giving the doctrine not as a categorical statement but in the style of *Sampraśna* or Interrogation. The implication, however, is not negative but affirmative, e.g. *Kasmai devāya havishā vidhema* is not the query of preplexed ignorance, but an affirmation of the unknowable Hiraṇyagarbha, i. e. *Anirukta* Prajāpati whose symbol is 'Ka'. The same style is found in the two mantras. Mantra 6 in fact refers to the doctrine of the *Devas* (*Deva-Vidyā*) as the basis of creation. The whole of the R̥gveda ultimately lends itself into the hands of the Deva School of Philosophy (*Deva-Vāda*), which may be taken to be the ninth doctrine in addition to the eight enumerated in the first two mantras.

Mantra 7 refers to the *Adhyaksha* of *Viśiṣṭi* whom the R̥ishis knew as Brahman. The statement whether the Creator himself knows the mystery of creation is rooted in the height of intuitional experience. This mantra succinctly and in a covert manner refers to *Brahma-Vāda*, Doctrine of

*Brahma* as the highest basis of Vedic Philosophy from which other points of view originated.

Thus in the seven mantras of this Sūkta we find a complete statement of Vedic metaphysics which is the quintessence of the R̥gveda. I have published here a running commentary of my own on the main ideas of the Sūkta, and then added comments of modern scholars like Keith, Macdonell, Wilson and Coomaraswamy. I have also given the interpretation of ancient Indian writers, firstly from the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, secondly from Sāyaṇa's commentary on this Sūkta in the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa, and finally his lucid commentary in the R̥gveda Bhāṣya.

The Nāsadiya Sūkta is a blooming lotus comparable to a *Padma-kosha*. The seed of knowledge lies somewhere in its heart. It is saturated with the fragrance of thought that was in the intuition of the R̥ishis. One may repeat the hymn and breathe its aroma even now. The words are merely symbols which explode as thought advances to more subtle sheaths of Truth. 'This hymn is the finest effort of the imagination of the Vedic poet, and nothing else equals it.'

Banaras Hindu University  
1-6-1963 [गंगावतरण]

V. S. AGRAWALA.

## HYMN OF CREATION

### NĀSADIYA SŪKTA [ R̥gveda X. 129 ]

[ नासदीय-सूक्त, ऋग्वेद १०।१२९ ]

#### नासदीय सूक्त

१-७ प्रजापतिः परमेष्ठी । भाववृत्तम् । त्रिष्टुप् ।

नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा परो यत् ।  
किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्मभः किमासीद्गहनं गभीरम् ॥१॥  
न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्ना आसीत्प्रकेतः ।  
आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्वाग्यन्न परः किं चनास ॥२॥  
तम आसीत्तमसा गूह्यमग्नेऽप्रकेतं सलिलं सर्वमा इदम् ।  
तुच्छयेनाभवपिहितं यदासीत्तपस्तन्महिनाजायतैकम् ॥३॥  
कामस्तदग्ने समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।  
सतो बन्धुमसति निरविन्दन्हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयो मनीषा ॥४॥  
तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरेषामधः स्विदासीद्दुपरि स्विदासीत् ।  
रेतोधा आसन्महिमान आसन्त्स्वधा अवस्तात्प्रयतिः परस्तात् ॥५॥  
को अद्धा वेद क इह प्र वोचत्कुत आजाता कुत इयं विसृष्टिः ।  
अर्वाग्देवा अस्य विसर्जनेनाथा को वेद यत आबभूव ॥६॥  
इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।  
यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्तसो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥७॥