

RIG-VEDA SANHITÁ.

A COLLECTION OF
ANCIENT HINDU HYMNS,
CONSTITUTING
PART OF THE
SEVENTH AND THE EIGHTH ASHTAKA,
OF THE
RIG-VEDA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SANSKRIT,

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

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OF THE RIG-VEDA**

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

Vol. VII

The Seventh & Eighth Ashtakas

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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.¹

ANUVĀKA XI.

ADHYĀYA VII. CONTINUED.

ŚUKTA I. (CXXIX.)

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

Varga XVII. 1. The non-existent² was not, the existent was not; then the world was not, nor the firmament,

¹ See Yajur Veda, XXXIV. 46.

² 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,¹ and where? Of what (could there be) felicity?² How (could there be) the deep unfathomable water?³

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,⁴ 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.⁵

both: see the *Vishṇu Purāna*, 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.

¹ The Scholiast refers to the *Purānas* for an explanation, and accordingly see *Vishṇu Purāna*, p. 16, and note 25. Each element as created or developed is invested by its rudiment.

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

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

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

⁵ *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,¹ 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 ray² was stretched out, whether across, or below, or above; ³ (some) were shedders of seed, (others) were mighty; food was inferior, the eater was superior.

¹ *i.e.* in the mind of the Supreme Being.

² [This, according to Sáyana, 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. Sáyana tries to reconcile this with the received notion of creation in a series (*viz.* that from *átmá* came the *ákáṣa*, and from the *ákáṣa* 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.]

³ The word *tiraṣchīnaḥ*, "across," perhaps refers to the *tiraṣrotas*, "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 Sáyana, 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 Mahídharma gives it several different interpretations, none more intelligible than those of Sáyana.

6. Who really knows? who in this world may declare it? whence was this creation, whence was it engendered? ¹ 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).²

SÚKTA II. (CXXX.)

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

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,³ they worship (*Prajāpati*) when (the world) is woven.

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

² Sáyana'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.

³ By combining the superior and inferior weaving, that is,