ORIGINAL SANSKRIT TEXTS
ON THE
ORIGIN AND HISTORY
OF
THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,
THEIR RELIGION AND INSTITUTIONS.

COLLECTED, TRANSLATED, AND ILLUSTRATED

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

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

1. Na esaat daat na esaat tadattat naitet rajat na vyomare parva yati 
   kim evaavan kuch kasya karmame anmika kim esaat yaksah gahiram |

2. Na mrityur esaat amriha na tarhi na tarhih anahat esaat pratekatah |
   ami esaatah svakshayah tad esha tamah sa maya na para sa kincanandah |

3. Tamaat daat tamast gaham agre apratekast samash samam 
   yad esaat tapasas tad mahat 'yajatahakam |
   tushyaena abhuh aparihasth yad daat tapasas tad mahat 'yajatahakam |

4. Kamaas tad agri samavrattatadah manasa ratah prakramah yad darsi |
   asta kundhun asati nivadane krida prabhya kanyo manasth |

5. (=Vay. Suh. xxxiii. 74). Tratakho sitato raamir esaat adaah evaai |
   esaaat uvasi evaai darsi vai dhoo han mahamancha nasb svaksh avastat |
   pratyahi parastat |

6. Ko adhah veda kah the pra vekhat kuch aajaat |
   kusha yath viharyitai |

7. Yukt viharyitai yatah bahubhau yadi va dhatta yati dha na |
   yah astakshiyath paham parvam sa eva veda yadi va na veda |

"There was then neither nonentity nor entity: there was no 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 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. 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] 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. 6. Who knows, who here can declare, whence has sprung, whence, this creation? The gods are subsequent 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 Taarthiya Brāhmaṇa (=so also the explanation of verse 4, in commentary on Taarth. Aṣāya. p. 142) in which the hymn is

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203 Compare B.V. l. 164, 6, “What was that One in the form of the unborn which supported these six worlds?" (=evo taatamahā brahmaḥ niśravakā gajyā vīpya kira api eva vram). In Vikāra, x. 3, it is said: cha yataḥ prakāsata cābhuhvi samādhih ca ca ca 
   sāyānāt parah prakāṣāntaḥ |

204 In the M. Bh. Sāntpi. 682 ff., it is said that from the other "was produced water, like another darkness in darkness; and from the foam of the water was produced the wind" (=tatah sūryat vartamah tāmasāpyaraṇām tāmaḥ | tāmaḥ ca sāttapuṣṭād uddhārūnām viśrutāt).

205 Professor Aufrecht has suggested to me that the word raiśmay in certain instances may have here the sense of threat, or cord, and not of ray.

206 This receive any illustration from B.V. l. 169, 2 (quoted above, p. 21), which speaks of the "thought (manas) of the father" (Dyuma), and of the "mighty independent power (mahā saevi) of the mother" (Dyuma)?

207 Compare x. 74, 2, 3, quoted above, p. 49, and x. 97, 1, where certain plants are said to be anterior to the gods, by three yugas (pāṇi oṣadiḥ pūrṇāḥ jātāḥ devabhyaṃ śrirūpaṃ purū).
repeated (ii. 8, 2, 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: Yaddi pravartayitah prashna uktaravartih śa ca utpramāṇād tādādāra tadasa trīb api mānātām | nāmāntaravartih śa ca utpramāṇād pratyayā vā yatagāt "sat"-kāha ma ukhya ma ravedya-dharmānām tānyam "asad" ity ukhya | tadbhayam nātāt | hita kācaḥ eva tadatārah sat | ca ca vijñāna-dvāvuḥ na satag āyātā brahmanām satva na aṣṭāḥ śaktiḥ na aṣṭāḥ nātāt. "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,' 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 Śatap. Br. x. 5, 3, 1: na eva vai idam agro tad tad| tad eva tao idam agro na eva sat| tao ha ta sat manas eva | 2. Tasmad eva rishiṁ bhayanukāto "na asad asad no sad asad tadānām" iit | na idam sad manas na eva asat | 3. Tad idam manas svaṁ āśraṁ avirbhaktah naarsabhātam murtītam | tad ātmanam amāvāsaḥ | tad aṁśā ca tukṣya | tad prātāchāraḥ | tad uṣṭḥāravādah sahāraya apanāya aṁśām arām manomayaṁ manasaṁśca iṣṭādi | "In the beginning this [universe] was not either, as it were, nonexistent, nor as it were, existent. In the

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 rishis (in the verse before us), 'There was then neither nonentity nor entity;' for mind was, as it were, neither entity nor nonentity. 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 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, 8), that in the beginning nonentity was the source of entity: "In the earliest age of the gods entity sprung from nonentity; in the first age of the gods entity sprung 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 exist without 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." The Taittiriya Upanishad also (Bibliotheca Indica, p. 99) quotes a verse to the effect: "This was at first nonentity. From that sprung entity" (asad vai idam agro asat | tato vai sad aṣṭā). The author of the Chhandogya Upanishad probably alludes to some of these texts when he says (vi. 2, 1 if. Bibl. Ind. p. 387 l.): Sad eva somaṁ idam agro sat cakā eva adityavam | tad ha as cuh "asad eva

257 The Taitt. Avas. i. 11, 1 (Bibl. Ind. p. 84), ascribes the development of existence from nonexistence to the seven rishis, etc. (naṁ ca agro sat cakā eva adityavam | tad ha as cuh "asad eva

258 These Vedāṅga terms name and form occur (as observed in the Section on Yama, p. 300) in the Atharva-veda, x. 3, 13: "Who placed in him (Puruśa) name, magnitude, and form?" and in vi. 7, 1: "In the remain of the sacrifice (nāḥkāta) name and form, in the remain of the sacrifice the world, is comprehended." The original texts will be found further on in the subsections on Puruśa and Uchihātṛa. See Śatap. Br. x. 5, 3, 1 ff., to be quoted below, in the subsection on Brahma.
The first movement in the process of creation as conceived in the hymn (R.V. x. 129) is this: the One in the beginning breathed calmly, self-sustained, is developed by the power of tapas, by its own inherent heat (as Professor Müller explains, Anc. Sanak. Lit. p. 561), or by rigorous and intense abstraction (as Professor Roth understands the word; see his Lexicon, s. v.).\footnote{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 Aṣṭap. Br. xi. 6, 8, 1 (quoted in the 3rd vol. of this work, p. 6), Pratapprat, who is described as being the universe, is said to have desired (bhrāmaya) to propagate himself, and to have striven and practised rigorous abstraction (tapas tātpayata). And in the same Brāhmaṇa, xiii. 7, 1, 1 (cited in the 4th vol. of this work, p. 285), the self-existent Brahma himself is similarly related to have practised tapas, and when he found that this did not confer infinity, to have offered himself in sacrifice. The gods are said also to have attained heaven and their divine character by tapas (see above, p. 14, and the 4th vol. of this work, pp. 30, 21, 24, and 288). Compare also the Taitt. Up. ii. 6, 6, where it is said: Sa tapo tātpayata | as tapas tapaścāh idān evam sarvaṁ avyajita yad idāṁ kiccha | “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, Sāthaka 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 janmanām vaṃcayaḥ | ‘gamyā jahamayamānām tapas’ iti dvāraḥ prabhavat bhūmāni cācārrhārāh cāhāya ca cāhāya ca cāhāya ca cāhāya ca). It is true that all those passages from the Brāhmaṇa are of a later date than the hymn, like 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 (pārvaśeṣāmya vatsya jhāntaḥ tapasya evad). and in x. 53, 2, 3, where Manyu (wrath personified) is besought to protect, or to ally enemies, along with tapas, (tapasya saujakāḥ ācārya devākṣāḥ tapas guḍati). This view of the word is also supported by Taitt. Br. iii. 12, 5, 1: “Let us worship with an oblation that first-born god, by whom this entire universe which exists is surrounded (poomāhām)—the self-existent Brahma, which is the highest tapas. He is son, father, mother. Tapas was produced as the first object’ (gandhāni n’itam purnahitaṁ yud ati prahamaya devam kṣatriya vihama | samyakābhābrah pramāne tapo yāti) | as eva puruṣa sa pūt sa maṅga | tapo ha yaham pramāne sāmākṣarāḥ). In the Mahābhārata, Sātvatipāra, 16936, Prajapati is said to have created living beings by tapas, after having entered on religious observances, or austerities (rājitaḥ). Tapas is also mentioned as the source from which creatures were produced, A.V. xiii. 1, 10. Compare Bhāgavata Purāṇa, ii. 9, 6, 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. 8: ‘yena devāḥ eva bhūvadhān kṣanti kṣanti suvritram amśitaṁ nālakṣayā | yena guṇaṁ suhkaṁ suhkaṁ suhkaṁ lokāṁ pharmaṇaṁ svastām tapasya suhakaṁ’ | ‘May we, renowned, attain to the world of righteousness by that ceremony of offering boiled milk, by tapas, whereby the

the first-born of our ceremonial, and is both a bull and a cow.” In A.V. xi. 7, 3, 8 is said that the uśhākṣāya (remains of the sacrifice) is both oon and eva (masculine)-\footnote{See English trans. p. 101, which I have not followed.}
to desire (Kama) which immediately took possession of the One, and is described as the first germ of mind, and the earliest link 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, 6, connects tapas with heat: "The Brahma-ketin, born before Brahma, dwelling (or clothed) in heat, smears through tapas" (piteru Bihrana prakrti-khetroni). 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 karmas in A.V. xi. 3, 2, and is said to have been produced from it (ibid. v. 6).

81 The commentator on the Taitt. Br. ii. 8, 9, 6 (p. 926 of Calcutta edition, in Bibl. Ind.) says: karmesi sesa-yona-khetroni, samadhi-khetroni, etc., and these are the same as "khamaymey arysam gopurah" (also, khamaymey arya-vyabhichar) in Yajurveda, etc., and, with the same emphasis on the desirability of the desire, the same commentaries and commentaries. In passages of the Brahma-ketan and Upanishads (as those quoted in the last note), we are told that the first step in the creation was that Prajapat or Brahma desired something. In his remarks on the passage of the Taittirya Upanishad, quoted in the last note, Sankara 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 was 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, as those who desire which possess the characteristics of truth and knowledge (or true knowledge), and from being a part of himself, are perfectly pure (karmayogavat samadhi-deti, avishakthiya kamah cetah sa moitragrih yathay nirajvanakritas khamaymey tam iti samadhi-janah khamaymey arsya-khetroni khetroni, etc. (also, khamaymey arsya-khetroni, khetroni, etc.) in the Brahma-ketan, khetroni, etc.) in which the true nature of the ksetra is the ksetra-nishCk. I shall deal with the first of these, as a duty, and of his correspondence with the Greek "Eros", as one of the first principles of creation.
“There are certain persons who contumeliously reject and propound different theories of creation by their own reason. Thus the followers of Kapila and Gautama, etc., consider atoms to be the ultimate cause of the world. Kapila and others say that an independent and unconscious Pradhana is the cause. The Madhyamikas declare that the world rose out of a void, etc. The Lokayatikas 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 produce, 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 arises, 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.443

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, being quiescent, was moved to activity, I add another passage from the Taittirīyā Brāhmaṇa, ii, 2, 9, 1, with some of the commentator’s remarks. The text of the Brāhmaṇa runs thus: 444 “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, adhyātana). 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, 8, it signifies heat rather than rigorous abstraction.)

Ibid. ii, 2, 9, 10: Astuto ‘dhi mano ‘vriyata | manah Prajāpati aṣṭijita | Prajāpatiḥ prajā ṣṭijita | “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 Taittirīyā, see above, p. 359): ‘This was originally nonexistent. From it existence was produced.’ Here, by the word ‘nonexistent,’ a state of void (or absolute nothingness), 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 Vajasaneyaṇas repeat the text: ‘This was then undeveloped; let it be developed through name and form.’ Earth, the waters, etc., are

443 Similar perplexity is elsewhere expressed on other subjects by the authors of the hymns. See the 3rd vol. of this Work, pp. 279 ff.
444 The words of the original will be found in the 1st vol. of this work, pp. 27 ff.
PURUSHA

Purusa-sva-dhārmakāraḥ sahāsa-rāgaḥ sahāsa-rajasah | sa āstamī visvato vīśvaṁ atiḥ-āṃśikādayaṁ ātāmakaṁ |

1. Sahāsāra-bhātāḥ Purusah sahāsa-rāgāḥ sahāsa-rajasah | sa āstamī visvato vīśvaṁ atiḥ-āṃśikādayaṁ ātāmakaṁ |

2. Purusah sahāsa-rāgaḥ sahāsa-rajasah yad bhātāḥ yac ca bhājanam | uṣṭātātśrāvaṇāya yad amṛtātikāhā |

3. Eṣaṁ ānya mahāṁ ati jyotāyā ca Purusah | pāda 'aya visēt

Translations of this hymn (which is also given with slight variations in Vāj. 8, 13, 116, 13, 117, 13, 118, and A.V. 19, 6, and 7, 6, 4) will be found in Mr. Colebrooke's Māndū. 1. 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 Burnett's Bhāgavata Purāṇa, vol. i. pp. cxxx. ff. (where see the notes); and (into German) in Professor Weber's Ind. Stoff. ix. 6 ff. I have now endeavoured to supply some further illustrations of the ideas in the hymn. I have passed over several obstructions on which I have been unable to throw any light. The first two verses are given in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, iii. 14, 15, where the commentary may be consulted.