THE
HYMNS OF THE RGVEDA

Translated With A Popular Commentary

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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 accom-
plished.
May I be guiltless of the least transgres-
sion: 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, Brahaspati, both Asvins shelter
from ill this sacrifice and sacrifice.

8 Foodful, and much-invoked, at this our
calling may the great Bull vouchsafe us
wide protection.
Lord of Bay Coursers, Indra, bless our chil-
dren: harm us not, give us not as prey
to others.

9 Let those who are our foesmen stay afar
from us: with Indra and with Agni we
will drive them off.
Vasus, Adityas, 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 Sāyana,
Heaven, Earth, Day, Night, Water, and Plants.

7 After Creator of creators Sāyana supplies tām devān
stānmi, ’that God I praise’. Indra or Savitar is intended.

8 The great Bull: Indra.

1 Then: in the beginning. Non-existent: drat: 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, unfatho-
med 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 form-
less: 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 exten-
ded: 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 Sāyana, translates
tdpaññ 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 Ayas as the principle explaining
movement, life, and thought.

4 Desire: Kāma, Eros, or Love. Sages: ancient Rṣis.

5 Line: a line drawn by the ancient Rṣis 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
stanzas obscure, and its connection with stanza 4 is
not obvious. An intervening stana may, perhaps, have
been lost.

The hymn has been translated by Colebrooke, Miscel-
cellaneous Essays, I. pp. 33, 34; by Dr. Muir, O. S.
Texts, V. 356, 357; by the authors of the Siehenzic Lieder,
and by Mr. Wallis, Cosmology of the Rigveda, 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 Rig-und-Atharva-veda
Samhitā 1887,—Wallis. See Prof. Max Müller, History
of Ancient Literature, pp. 559—563.
6 So by this knowledge men were raised to Ṛṣis, 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 Ṛṣis.
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, behold them.’

7 ‘The seven Ṛṣis here are not the Aṅgiras, but Bharadvāja, Kaśyapa, Gotama, Atri, Vasishtha, Viśvamitra, and Jamadagni. The knowledge of the ritual is derived from the divine priests; the sages or Ṛṣis 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 indisputable 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.