A VEDIC READER
FOR STUDENTS

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CONTAINING THIRTY HYMNS OF THE RIGVEDA IN
THE ORIGINAL SAMHITA 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. 108), 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
RATRI

6 yāvāyā vṛkām vṛkām,
  yāvāya stenām, ūrmie;
  áthā naḥ sūtāra bhava.

yāvāyā: ca. of yu separate; this and other roots ending in u, as well as in i, r, may take Gnaṇa or Vṛddhi in the ca. (168, 1 c), but the Padaṇḍa invariably gives yavaya; the final vowel is metrically lengthened (in b it is long by position before st). vṛkām: accent, p. 450, 2 b. áthā: final metrically lengthened (ep. p. 214).

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 (āsaat). 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 Sākhya system.

x. 129. Metro: Trishtubh.

1 nāsad āśāṁ, nó sād āśāt tadāṁañip;
  nāsid rājo nó viomā parā yāt.
  kīm āvarīvaḥ? kūha? kāṣya
  sārmāṇaḥ?
  āmbhaḥ kīm āśād, gāhanām gaa-
  bhīram?

Cf. ŚB. x. 5, 8, 1: nā _iva_ vi dāmā ādāśād āśād nā _iva_ sād āśāt verity this (universe) was in the beginning neither non-existent nor existent as it were. tadāṁañip: before the creation. āśāt: the usual
form of the 8. s. ipf. of as be; the rarer form occurs in 8 b. nó: for
ná u (24), víromá: the accent vowel metrically lengthened (ep.
p. 440, 4 B), parás: adv.; on the accent ep. note on ii. 55, 6 c.
ā avarivar: 8. s. ipf. int. of vr cover (ep. 178, 8); what did it cover
up = conceal or contain? kúha: where was it? kásya sárman: who
guarded it? kim: here as an inter. pel. (p. 228). ámbhas: ep. 3 b,
and TS., ápó va idám ágár salilám ásíṣ this (universe) in the
beginning was the waters, the ocean.

2 ná mṛtyúr áṣāt, amaṁ pá
ná rátrí áhna áṣít praketáh.
ánúd avástáṃ svadháyá tát
ékap.
táśmá dhányá ná párah kim
cañña.

rátríṣ: gen. of rátri (p. 87). áhnaś: gen. of áhan (91, 2).
ánít: 8. s. ipf. of an breathe (p. 148, 3 a). táśmáḥ: governed by
anyád (p. 817, 8), dha for ha: 54. anyán ná: 33. parás: ep.
note on 1 b. ása: pf. of as be (185, 2).

3 tathá śaṁśaṁ vàmá prájápatí
prasúkṣańdáś dvarasam.

4 kāmaś tád ágér sám avartá-
tádhi,
mánasa rétaḥ prathamáṃ yád
áṣīt.
sató bándhuh ásati nír avindah
hrdi praṅgāyā kávayo maṇiṣā.

ádhi sám avartata: 3. s. ipf. ā of vr turn, with sám come into
being; ádhi upon makes the verb transitive = come upon, take posses-
sion of. tád that = tád ékam in 2 c, the unevolved universe.
One of the two prps. here is placed after the vb. (ep. 191, f. and p. 468,
20 A a). yád: referring to kámas is attracted in gender to the predicate n.
rétas. satás: they found the origin of the evolved world in the unevolved.
prati-śyā: the gd. in ya has often a long
final vowel (164, 1) which is always short in the Padapātha. ma-
niṣā: inst. of f. in á (p. 77).
5 tiraścino vitato raśmīr eṣāṃ:  
Their cord was extended across:
adāh śvitaś āśīrāt, upārī śvitaś āśīrāt?  
was there below or was there above?
retoḍā āśan, mahimānā āśan;  
there were powers; there was energy below,
svadāh avāstāt, prāyatīth parāstāt.  
there was impulse above.

raśmis: 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 eṣāṃ) in thought measured out the distance between the existent and non-existent, or between what was above and below; cp. viii. 25, 18, pārī yā raśminā divō āntān mamāḥ pradhivyāh who with a cord has measured out the ends of heaven and earth; cp. also the expression sūtraṃ viśātam (in A.V. x. 8, 87) the extended string with reference to the earth. āśīrāt: accentuated because in an antithetical sentence (p. 463, 19 B β.). The 1 is prolated, and that syllable (and not ā) has the Udātta, as in the final syllable of a sentence in questions (Papini viii. 2, 97); the second question upārī śvitaś āśīrāt is quoted by Panini (viii. 2, 102) as coming under this rule, but without accent. retoḍās and mahimānās are contrasted as male and female cosmogonic principles, to which correspond respectively prāyatītis and svadāh. In Ts. iv. 3, 11, 1, mention is made of the tārya mahimānāḥ connected with fertility. svadāh: 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 Visarjanya, doubtless owing to the greatly increasing prevalence of the nominatives in ā.

6 kō addhā veda? kā ihā prá vocat,  
Who knows truly? Who shall here declare, whence it has been produced, whence is this creation?
kūta ājātā, kūta iyāṃ visārṣṭih?  
By the creation of this (universe) the gods (come) afterwards: who then knows whence it has arisen?

voćat: a ao. inj. of vno. kutās: 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. āthā: with metrically lengthened final vowel (p. 440, 4; cp. 179, 1).

7 iyāṃ visārṣṭaḥ yāta ababhūva;  
Whence this creation has arisen.

yādi vā dadhē yādi vā nā:  
whether he founded it or did not:
yādī vā vā yādī vā vā nā;  
whether or whether.

vāyuḥ yādī vā vā nā vā:  
we who in the highest heaven is its surveyor, he only knows, or else he knows not.

a and b are dependent on veda in d. asyas: 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. (96, 2). veda: the accent is due to the formal influence of yādi (p. 246, 3 a).