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handicap tabs were often placed at the fore-edge, precisely as in some Western books, or as in a card-index. There are examples of butterfly binding in the Library of Congress, and a particularly fine specimen is preserved in the National Library of Peiping, giving the name of the binder and the day and year he completed his work, namely December 4, 1260. This type of binding remained in vogue until about the 14th century, probably because it allowed for a map or a drawing to be spread over the two halves of an opened volume instead of one half only. However, such a book could not be rebound without injury to the text, and for this and other reasons it gradually went out of use.

We come finally to the stitched book which we now see on the shelves of Chinese libraries. This is still a book with folded leaves, printed on one side of the paper only, but the folds all come to the fore-edge nearest the reader. What we have now is a reversal of the "butterfly binding," the free ends of the sheet being turned back toward the spine and bound there by the over-lap or whipstitch process. Such a book has no blank pages, and

allows for successive rebinding without injury to the text; and since no paste²³ is used, it is not easily subject to destruction by insects or worms. As in ancient times, five or ten such volumes are enclosed in a cloth or brocade portfolio called *han* 函 or *t'ao* 套. This portfolio, except for being rectangular, is clearly a survival of the ancient wrapper, *chih*, which also held five or ten scrolls in the manner already described.

This is the story, briefly told, of the transformation of the Chinese book as it developed, step by step, from the wooden or bamboo slip to the silk or paper scroll, from the scroll to the folded album, and from the album to the paged book of modern times. These are, in general, the materials and the forms on which the Chinese have recorded their observations, their hopes and fears and desires, over a period of at least three thousand years.

²³ In south China where, owing to the climate, damage by insects is more common, the pasteboard case was often discarded and the volumes were clamped between wooden boards (*chia-pan* 夾板) held together by heavy cords.

THE RIGVEDIC EQUIVALENT FOR HELL

W. NORMAN BROWN
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE Rig and Atharva Vedas contain abundant information about earth, atmosphere, and heaven, but passages referring to a hell or some equivalent for it are rare and not very specific or illuminating. In consequence, those who write on the religion or cosmology of the Veda have little to say about this topic, as one may quickly see by looking into the works of Oldenberg, Hillebrandt, Bergaigne, Wallis, Macdonell, Bloomfield, Kirfel, and Keith, and that little is non-committal.¹ Yet I believe that by piecing together bits of scattered information and pursuing more or less obscure clues, it is pos-

¹ For example, on the Rigvedic cosmos see W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder* (1920), pp. 3 ff.; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (1897), pp. 8 ff. On the Rigvedic conceptions of the underworld, see Kirfel, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff., and Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

The hymns AV. 5. 18 and 19 are sometimes thought to describe the punishments of the wicked in hell, but there is no statement in those hymns of the place in which the wicked are to reap the fruit of their wickedness.

sible to get a general idea about the nature of the Vedic Hell and its function, and to give it a place in the Vedic cosmos.

Much the most complete set of hints is contained in the hymn RV. 7. 104 (= AV. 8. 4), and that hymn is therefore offered here in a translation of my own, which does not depart radically from the usual renderings, but has a few individual characteristics that may be suggestive.

RIG VEDA 7. 104

1. O Indra-Soma, burn the demon; bear down on him; ye two bulls, thrust down those who prosper by (or, in) darkness.¹ Crush away the impious (*acitas*), scorch them, slay, push, become sharp [so as to put] down (*ní śiśitam*) the atrins (devourers).

¹ In RV. 5. 32. 6 Vṛtra "increases in darkness."

2. O Indra-Soma, let painful heat boil up, like a pot in a fire,¹ against him who plots evil against

pious and cheat them of the fruit of their good works. All these are specifically mentioned in RV. 7. 104, and they are cited elsewhere in the Veda.

These creatures go there because they operate with charms that are contrary to the *ṛta* (*ánṛtebhīr vácobhīh*, stanza 8). They use charms that are *asat* "dealing with the non-existent" and conflict with charms that deal with the *sat* "the existent" (*sác cásac ca vácasi pasṛdhāte*, stanza 12). He who speaks false charms—works black magic (*ásad vādantam*, stanza 13)—is slain by Soma; Agni smites him who makes the non-*ṛta* (*anṛta*) his god (stanza 14), the false worshipper (*múra-deva*, stanza 24).

Herein is the point of greatest significance in this whole discussion. The place of hell is contrasted with the ordered universe. This latter, consisting of the flat surface of the earth, the sky, and the arched vault of heaven, operates by the *ṛta*, the body of cosmic law. There live the gods and men; there is light, the waters, the sun, the stars, Aditi, in whose lap is the Vedic man's safety. But beneath the earth is a place where there is no *ṛta*; it is *anṛta*. There the gods do not go and order does not obtain. The sun is not there, that greatest single phenomenon of the whole cosmic order; there is no light, no heat, no fertilizing waters; to be there is to be in the lap of Nirṛtī "Destruction," the fate from which the Vedic man constantly implores the gods to save him. It is the place of non-existence (*asat*), "the non-existent," contrasted with the ordered universe where the *ṛta* runs, that is, the place of the *sat*, "the existent."³

The Vedic sage, then, thought of two opposites. There was life; there was death. There was the created, ordered, lighted world; there was the uncreated, unordered, unilluminated place of dissolution beneath it. The one was ruled by the gods; he loved it. The other was the place of destruction and the demons; he dreaded it. Aditi, personification of Benevolent Boundlessness, symbolized one; Nirṛtī, personification of Malevolence and Destruction, symbolized the other. The one he called *Sat*, the Existent; the other he called *Asat*, the Non-existent.

How did it happen that the two were separated? The Rigveda is not fully explicit, but it appears in its own way to make all clear. Those things which make up the existent universe—the sun, the waters—were at first held in restraint by *Vṛtra*.

³ Hence in the Veda *anṛta* and *asat* are synonyms opposed to *sat*, *satya*, *ṛta*.

The gods wished creation of the ordered universe, and those phenomena of nature which characterize the ordered universe were not unwilling to leave the great darkness of chaos to be created (cf. RV. 1. 32. 2). But *Vṛtra*, the demon, the withholder, had first to be slain. Indra, fortified by Soma and aided by the gods, including Agni and the Maruts, did slay the wicked serpent, thus opening the enclosing cave (RV. 1. 32. 11), and in some versions of the story he is said to have sacrificed him. In the oldest hymns it seems that immediately on the death of *Vṛtra* the waters and the sun came forth, and *ṛta*, "cosmic order," was established with *Varuṇa* as its controller. In the later versions of the *Brāhmaṇas* the sacrifice of *Vṛtra* brought about creation. In either case, however, we may fairly say that the myth taught that Indra converted the Non-existent into the Existent (*ásac ca sán múhur ācakrīr índrah*, RV. 6. 24. 5), that is, differentiated them. Thus chaos, by a dichotomy, became, on the one hand, the ordered universe of flat earth, atmosphere, and vaulted sky, and, on the other hand, the dark, cold place of dissolution lying below this universe.

The later history of Vedic thought produces a rival, or at least a refinement, of this idea. The myth of a personal demiurge did not satisfy all thinkers, and the philosophical speculations of India produced those who doubted Indra. They sought a more impersonal explanation of the differentiation between the Existent and the Non-existent. Yet their answer was for the most part not a complete invention but rather a transmutation of the Indra-*Vṛtra* myth to a higher plane. This answer appears in RV. 10. 129, with annotations in RV. 10. 72. If we look at RV. 10. 129, especially at the first four verses, I believe that we can see how concrete was the material with which the sages (*kavayah*) were dealing. They pose the question of what existed before the separation of the Existent from the Non-existent. At first, says the hymn, there was only the primordial chaos, covered over by something. What that something was the text does not say, evidently not wishing to name *Vṛtra*, who is clearly stated in RV. 8. 100. 7 to be that encloser.⁴ Yet in the third stanza the hymn states that there was only darkness hidden by darkness, thus echoing the ideas of the old *Vṛtra* myth. And, just as the personalized *Vṛtra* is rejected by this hymn, so too the personalized Indra

⁴ In RV. 3. 34. 3 it is stated that Indra enclosed the Encloser (*indro vṛtrám avṛnot*).

is left out of the picture, and we find an impersonal neuter first principle, in an egg-like shell, that hatches by the power of its own inner self-generated heat. This first principle, moved by desire, was responsible for creation, differentiating the Sat (Existent) from the Asat (Non-existent), and this fact the sages learned not from the instruction of the gods but by looking within their own hearts. Even the gods, says the hymn, could not reveal this mystery, for they were this side of creation. Only the philosopher could learn the truth, and he could learn it only by introspection.

It is worthwhile to view this whole hymn in relation to the points I have tried to make in this discussion, and I give here a translation.

RIG VEDA 10. 129

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

¹In the old myth it was Vṛtra: . . . *néhá yó vo ávāvarit / ní śim vṛtrāsya mārmaṇi vājram indro apīpatat*, "he who covered you (waters)—Indra has hurled his vajra into Vṛtra's vitals," RV. 8. 100. 7.

2. There was neither death nor immortality.¹ There was then the sheen neither of day nor night. That One breathed (= came to life), though uninspired by breath, by its own potentiality.² Besides it nothing existed.

¹ Cf. RV. 10. 72. 9, and AV. 10. 7. 15.

² Cf. RV. 10. 72. 1.

3. There was darkness hidden by darkness at the beginning. This all was an unilluminated flood. The force which was hidden by a shell was born through the power of its own heat.¹

¹ Cf. RV. 10. 190. 1.

4. In the beginning desire grew in 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.¹

¹ In RV. 10. 72. 1 the ṛṣis mystically perceive the cosmogonic process.

5. A line of demarcation was extended hori-

zontally for them. 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 (*iha*) can tell whence was the origin, and whence this creation? The gods are this side of the creation.¹ Who knows then whence it came into being?

¹ 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.

In RV. 10. 72. 3 the whole undifferentiated primordial chaos is called the Asat, and it is stated that the Sat came from the Asat (*devānām yugé prathamé 'sataḥ sād ajāyata*), and the Atharva Veda (17. 1. 19) says that the Sat is established on the Asat. In another mood the Atharva Veda (10. 7. 10) speaks of the universal framework Skambha as including both the Asat and the Sat as its parts, and from the Asat are born the great gods (AV. 10. 7. 25). Still again the Atharva Veda (4. 1. 1; 5. 6. 1) mentions *brahman* (neut.) as the source (*yoni*) of the Sat and the Asat.

It should be clear that what, for lack of a better term, I have called the Rigvedic equivalent of hell was in later times no hell at all, having lost its character as the abode of the demons. But it retained, for a while at least, its old name of Asat. The philosophers found in the conception of the Asat and the Sat, the non-existent and the existent, a dualism, which they resolved into a monism that comprised the undifferentiated primordial chaos. Sometimes they left this unnamed; sometimes they called it Asat; sometimes they gave it a new name, such as Skambha or Brahman. This last term finally prevailed, and as it prevailed it signified an idea vastly different from that of the dreaded Rigvedic Asat. Thinkers, having reflected upon hell, passed beyond it, and in passing beyond it turned their back upon heaven as well, to find their goal at last in the infinite Brahman which transcends both, whether the good or the evil.