HEAT IN THE RIG VEDA
AND ATHARVA VEDA

A General Survey
With Particular Attention to Some
Aspects and Problems

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"Tapas" in the RV.

"Just to those, O Yama, may he go to those ancient, Rta-cherishing, Rta-possessing, Rta-fostering, tapas-possessing Fathers."

E. TAPAS AS A CREATIVE POWER.

In verse 5 of the same hymn and elsewhere tapas appears as a Creative Power:

1. RV. X, 154, 5:
   (c) ḫṣīn tāpasyo yama
   (d) tapojnā āpi gachatā

   "To the tapas-possessing Rṣis, O Yama, who were born of tapas, to them also may he go."

2. RV. X, 183, 1 (to Putrakāma):
   (a) āpasyaṁ tvā mānasā cēkitānaṁ
   (b) tāpaso jātāṁ tāpaso vibhūtam

   "I see you (Putrakāma) concentrating your mind, born from tapas, developed from tapas."

Putrakāma is "desire for offspring" temporarily personified into a god for the purposes of this hymn.

3. RV. X, 169, 2:
   (a) yāḥ sārūpaḥ vīrūpaḥ ēkarūpaḥ
   (b) yāsāṁ agnir īṣṭyā rāmāṇi veda
   (c) yā āṅgirasas tāpasehā ca kṛūs
   (d) tābhyaḥ parjanya māhi śärma yacha

   "The like-colored, vari-colored, one-colored (cows) whose names Agni knows by means of the ritual, whom the Angirases fashioned by tapas here, from these does Parjanya obtain great protection."

In his note on (b), Geldner (HOS) says: "the names of the cows played a role in the ritual (see TBr. 3, 2, 3, 7, Hillebrandt, Neumann-dopfer, 12)."

In this verse the cows are being honored in somewhat the same way as Putrakāma in Section 2 above.

In the two following verses, tapas has become not only a completely abstract entity, but also a great creative, primeval power.

4. RV. X, 129, 3:
   (a) tāma āsti tāmasā gūhām ēgra
   (b) 'praketāṁ salīlāṁ sārvam ā idām
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(c) tucchánākbhū āpihitam yād āsit
(d) tāpasas tām mahindjāyataikam

"There was darkness hidden by darkness at the beginning. This all was an unillumined flood. The force which was hidden by a shell was born through the power of its own heat." 7

A similar verse is:

5. RV. X, 190, 1:
(a) īrām ca satyām cābhīddhāt
(b) tāpasā 'dhy ajāyata
(c) tāto rātry ajāyata
(d) tātah samudro arnavāh

"Both Universal Order and Truth were produced from incandescent heat. From that (heat) night was born. And from that (heat) the billowing ocean (was born)."

6. RV. X, 167, 1. This verse is discussed in detail in the Chapter XXVII on Indra and Heat.

7 The translation is taken from that of Brown, "The Rigvedic Equivalent for Hell," p. 80.