CHAPTER TWO

COSMOGONIC SPECULATIONS
IN VEDIC SAṂHITĀ-Ś
In Hinduism, there are a vast number of theories having diverse nature, regarding the creation of the world. The primary enquiry about the Hindu views on cosmogony should be started from the Vedic literature which comprises of the vast collection of the Veda-s, the Brāhmaṇa texts, the Aranyakas and the Upaniṣads. The period of composition of this extant literature is often debated furiously among the scholars. But, the generally accepted view places Ṛgveda in the period of second millennium BCE and the other Veda-s and later Vedic literature in the first millennium BCE.¹ The thoughts of the ancient seers even before the formation of the systematic philosophical theories, signify their serious approach towards the wonders and mysteries of the world. However, the thoughts recorded in these texts are in no sense developed all of a sudden. It must have taken very many years for the development of each conception, and every minute change in all fields of society like culture and religion are deeply reflected in them. It would be hardly possible to make a complete study of the cosmogonic thoughts found scattered throughout the extensive Vedic literature. However, what is attempted in this chapter is to gather and make a possible analysis of the views about the origin of the universe embodied in the Vedic literature.

I. Pre-Vedic Conceptions on Cosmogony

The reconstruction of the religious ideas of the pre-Vedic period is a complicated task due to the absence of enough resources. As any literary source belonging to this period is conspicuously absent, the reconstruction of the pre-Vedic ideas is generally carried out by the scholars relying upon the archaeological evidences. Although what the pre-Vedic people thought about

¹ Romila Thapar, The History of Early India: From the Origins to A.D. 1300, pp.109-110.
the world and its origin cannot be reconstructed from such sources, they have offered enough clues to make out a vague sketch of their religious ideas.

History dates back the human settlements in Indian subcontinent to the pre-historic period. A prominent feature of ancient cultures is the affinity towards the worship of mother goddess. Historical and archeological evidences suggest that, this cult dates back to the Paleolithic period in which the society was of food-gatherers. In the Neolithic period when the hunter-gathering transformed into agriculture, it prevailed to exist with more influence in the society. As E. O. James suggests, “with the transition from food-gathering to food-production the female principle continued to predominate in the mysterious processes of birth and generation.” The belief in the mother goddess, as suggested above is most prominent in the agricultural societies than in the pastoral groups. The latter were more patriarchal in nature and showed a belief in the male sky-god. Thus, the maternal principle, which was the symbol of generation as well as life producing force, began to be worshipped as the earth goddess.

As far as the ancient Indian society is considered, akin to the other primitive societies there existed the cult of mother goddess. Several rock paintings depicting male and female figures and the triangle shaped stones in particular are interpreted as decisive evidence of the fertility cults with which the pre-historic culture seems to be familiar. The Indus Valley Civilization which is otherwise known by the name Harappan Civilization represents the existence of the first urbanised societies in the Indian subcontinent and

---

pervades a vast period of time from about the late fourth millennium BCE to
the middle of the first century BCE. Many seals found at the Indus valley sites
are indicative of the religious behaviour of the people among which the seal of
three faced male figure surrounded by animals is the most significant. This is
generally identified by the scholars as the prototype of the later god Siva or
Paśupati. Numerous seals in the form of male and female generative organs
also are available there. Even though scholars often contend among
themselves regarding the interpretation of these figures, their bearing of some
sort of religious significance is to be warranted.

The Harappan society is considered as food producing and in the
agricultural societies the goddess was undoubtedly associated with fertility
and the principle of motherhood. What can be concluded is the pre-Vedic
people had a belief in mother goddess and fertility rites. But this conclusion
does not satisfy the present quest about their cosmogonic beliefs. Nothing is
known exactly of their world view and their ideas regarding the origin of the
universe. Yet, if they had such thinking, it would surely fall in line with the
above stated beliefs.

II. Cosmogonic Speculations of Ṛgveda

Being the earliest extant literature, the oldest myths about creation in
Hinduism can be traced back to the Ṛgveda. The Ṛgvedic seers using various
formulas tried to answer the question of how and by whom the world came
into existence. Rather than forming a definite or single system as an answer,
they formed a bunch of ideas which are often contradictory, at the same time

---

6 A classification made by Romila Thapar about the period of Harappan civilization is as follows:
Pre-Harappan (starting in the late fourth millennium and continuing to 2600 BC), the Mature
Harappan (from c. 2600 to 1900 BC) and the Late Harappan (to c. 1750 BC). See Romila Thapar,
dependent on each other. Owing to the incompatibility of the theories of origin met with in the Vedic literature, particularly in *Ṛgveda* and in Brāhmaṇa texts, an attempt to a firm systematization of these diverse thoughts will be futile. This study, however promotes a flexible schematization of the thoughts related with the cosmogonies and the creator referred to in the Vedic literature.

**Views of Vedic Religion**

In the beginnings of the study of religion, the gods were generally regarded as the personification of natural processes. Following this trend, the multitude of Vedic deities in the initial stages were generally interpreted as the deification of nature forces and these nature gods were characterized, at least in some cases, by anthropomorphomorphic features though the degree of anthropomorphism varies. It is the European scholars who are the pioneers in the field of Vedic studies. Hermann Oldenberg sees, the Vedic deities as “nature-deities”\(^8\) and “the plurality of the Vedic gods rests, to a great extend, indeed to the maximum extend, upon the plurality of the nature-beings and other substrata of mythological form underlying them.”\(^9\) A. A. Macdonell, in line with this way of interpretation, observes that this characteristic of the Vedic gods being “nearer to the physical phenomena which they represent, than the gods of any other Indo-European people” leads to the “indefiniteness and lack of individuality.”\(^10\) Later, in the studies of A. B. Keith also, the same view is shared.\(^11\)

---

These deities, though often invoked by the hymns separately ascribed to each of them, were also identified or praised with other deities of the Vedic pantheon also. Most of the deities shared same epithets and same duties albeit the difference in certain specific qualities and actions and this is marked out as one of the basic natures of the Vedic religion. Thus the creation of the universe was an important duty that was charged to various deities individually or many of the deities together of the Vedic age, and they all bore the epithet of creator. The Vedic epiphany, therefore, put forward a mass of creator deities who created, supported and established the heaven and earth. The spreading out of the world and the measuring of it, the production of sun etc. also were described in the Veda-s as done by several deities individually.

**Ṛgvedic Cosmology**

The concept of three worlds i.e. heaven, firmament and also the earth was the basis of the world view of all ancient civilizations. The people of the Vedic period also shared this view of tripartite universe. The terms dyāvā or div, antarikṣa\(^{12}\) and prthivī are mainly used as the suggestive of heaven, air or atmosphere and earth respectively.\(^{13}\) A fourfold division of the universe with the nāka (vault) as a separate entity is also available in other Saṃhitā-s.\(^{14}\) As an extension of this tripartite division each of the three domains is further subdivided, forming three earths, three atmospheres and three heavens.\(^{15}\) Albeit the threefold division of the world, heaven and earth in the Vedic ages were conceived as constituting the idea of the whole world and they were presented as two bowls\(^{16}\) turned towards each other and as two wheels at the

---

\(^{12}\) The word āpah is used as a synonym for antarikṣa in Ṛgveda, III.13.4, VI.52.15, X.88.2.


\(^{15}\) Ṛgveda, III.55.20.
two ends of an axle. While presenting as a dual conception of couples both are described as dual divinities and it forms one of the favourite subjects of Vedic mythology. In such cases, they are signified by the names like rodasi, ksono, dyavaprthivi etc.

Origins of Vedic Cosmogony

As far as cosmogony is considered, there seems no serious speculation in the beginning of the Rgvedic age. The problems regarding the origin of the world, says Hermann Oldenberg, “for the poets of the Rgveda, did not stand in the foreground.” As revealed by the nature of the Vedic poetry, glorification and praising of gods were the chief aims of that period. But it should be kept in mind that the Vedic people were curious enough to pierce into the mystery behind the nature. In a passage addressed to heaven and earth, a salutation is given to the creator as “He was a clever workman in the world who produced this heaven and earth, and fixed the two regions of air in the beamless space.” Here the name of the creator remains unmentioned. There exists an attempt in the Rgvedic hymns to envisage the condition before the origin of the heaven and the earth also. The poet also wants to know about the ‘one’ who supported these six regions of the air in the form of the

---

17 Ibid., X.89.4.
19 The Vedic religion is variously defined by the scholars. The peculiar type of Vedic epiphany was named by Max Muller as Kathenotheism (worship of one god after another) or Henotheism (worship of single gods) which he explained as the "worship of single gods, each occupying for a time a supreme position." See, Friedrich Max Muller, India: What can it Teach Us?, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2000, p.133. Against to this view, says A. A. Macdonell that the Vedic deities are not portrayed ‘as independent of all the rest’ and that Henotheism is “an appearance rather than reality.” To refer to the views of Macdonell fully in this regard, see A. A. Macdonell, Op.cit., p.16 f.
20 से इति स्वयम् भूतपूर्वसर्वाद्वितीयं ज्ञात।
उष्णे गंधे सुधी सुधिया अद्वितीय रहित: श्रवण समर्पत॥ Rgveda, IV.56.3.
22 परो विद्या पर एवं प्रविष्टया परो देवोभासस्माय विन्दु। Rgveda, X.82.5.a.
Unborn.” As the nature itself reveals, there must be some reason or force behind everything and the Vedic thought tried to comprehend this problem by conceiving a primaeval principle as the source of the world. This concept was sometimes spoken using the word ‘aja’ i.e. unborn and the main functions attributed to it are creating, supporting or measuring the universe. The word ‘ekam’ also seems refer to the same concept. Elsewhere in Ṛgveda, the poet seeks how the sun stands firm in the sky without falling down and to where the stars disappear in the day. He wants to know about the forest and the tree with which the universe is fashioned and how the heaven and earth are produced. These questions led to the imagination of various creator gods and the serious cosmogonic thoughts of the later period.

The origin of the world became a major topic of probe in this period and there emerged various conceptions regarding it in connection with the rising religious trends. The views expressed were of sometimes mythical and also philosophical. One trend of the cosmogonic views regarded a deity as responsible for the process which in the extreme identified the deity with the world. On the other hand, some hymns rather questioned the identity of a ‘created’ universe. The simple form of belief of the Vedic people developed naturally on one hand to a more complex system governed by the idea of sacrifice and on the other to the enquiry about the ultimate reality of truth of

---

23. अर्थात् भ्रष्टकीर्तितुसिद्धवर्धितं कवित्वं पुष्करामि विद्वाने म न विद्वान्।
24. अर्जुन न श्री दानारु रूपिकिते तरस्तिस्य सा मन्नीं: समने। मवद, 1.64.6।
25. अर्जुन न श्री दानारु रूपिकिते तरस्तिस्य सा मन्नीं: समने। मवद, 1.67.5।
26. स सम नम न: व: समायान निवन्दयं समने। मवद, VIII.41.10.b etc।
27. आत्माध्यायं तत्त्वं लं तत्त्वातत्त्वं तत्त्वात्त्वं पर: किं चनागस। मवद, X.129.2.b।
28. अनन्तत् अनन्तं। कथायं न्यदुहुतानंदं पहातं न।
29. कथायं न्यदुहुतानं। कथायं न्यदुहुतानं। कथायं न्यदुहुतानं। कथायं न्यदुहुतानं। कथायं न्यदुहुतानं। कथायं न्यदुहुतानं। कथायं न्यदुहुतानं।
30. The pantheistic idea could be traced out from the Vedic hymns X.90; I.89:10; X.121.8,10 etc. See Atharvaveda, X.7.14, 25 also.
31. Ṛgveda, X.129.
the universe. The monotheistic tendencies and the serious philosophic thoughts are the results of the development of the latter.\textsuperscript{32} The myths in this developed stage sometimes appear tangled with speculation and one can hardly separate them.

\textbf{Nature of Rgvedic Cosmogony}

It is well established by the scholars on Vedic mythology that, regarding the origin of the universe the Veda-s neither follow a distinct view nor present a consistent theory. A number of diverse speculations are met with in this regard and these are always difficult to distinguish. The ideas of the ordinary people and the Vedic seers and also both mythical and philosophical conceptions are blended together in the Vedic poetry. In this regard, the classification suggested by A. A. Macdonell seems to have been followed by later scholars. He has rightly pointed out,

\begin{quote}
“… the cosmogonic mythology of \textit{Rgveda} fluctuates between two theories, which are not mutually exclusive, but may be found combined in the same verse. The one regards the universe as the result of mechanical production, the work of the carpenter’s and joiner’s skill; the other represents it as the result of natural generation.”\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

The act of measuring and establishing the world by various gods of the Vedic pantheon can be connected with the former view. As to the latter thought, various creative agencies like the universal parentage, the agent god Tvaṣṭṛ, and most significantly the abstract creator gods like Viśvakarman, Hirānyagarbha and Prajāpati are applied. Owing to the inter-connectedness of the Rgvedic notions there occur some conceptions extending beyond the two-fold classification. Thus the Puruṣasūkta (\textit{Rgveda}, X.90) explains the origin of the world in terms of primordial sacrifice as different from


manufacture or generation. There are two hymns in *Rgveda* which look the creation of the world as an evolution from ‘asat’.\(^{34}\) A variant of this very idea of evolution could be found in the Rgvedic hymn X.190, where ṛta, satya and tapas are mentioned cosmogenically inter-connected. In the conceptions available from the later portions of Rgvedic poetry, philosophy seems to have subdued mythology though the latter is not fully vanished away.\(^{35}\)

A significant attempt to make a classification of the Rgvedic cosmogony has been undertaken by S. N. Dasgupta also.\(^{36}\) In this task, he follows the path what Macdonell has shown. Thus, he classifies the Rgvedic cosmogony into two as mythological and philosophical. Following Macdonell, Dasgupta also considers the concept of mechanical production and natural generation as the two currents of mythological cosmogony. The hymns with cosmogonic importance which are explained by Macdonell as philosophical are accepted by Dasgupta also. The only difference is that the Puruṣasūkta was considered in a mythological point of view by the former scholar while the latter brings it under the title of philosophical aspects. But this is not a matter of serious dispute as the two trends are found united in the very hymn.

As to the classification of the Ancient Indian cosmogenies in general N. N. Bhattachrya opines that it

“...may be divided into three categories: those beginning with the material principles like water, earth, fire, ether etc.; those beginning with the abstract principles like chaos, time, night, desire, non-being, etc.; and those beginning with the divine principles like Prajāpati, Brahma, Viśvakarman etc.” He continues, “...of these three categories, the first is probably the most primitive. It appears that the conception of a divine

---


principle as the creator of the universe mars the latest stage in
the development of cosmogonic ideas, though not in all cases.”

Bhattacharya considers these three as slowly progressing.

A critical study of the earliest records of human wisdom is expected to
unravel the endeavouer of Vedic people on the quest of the origin of the
world. The great barrier, unfortunately, is the intricacies in classification and
strict arrangement of ideas under distinct labels. Any of the categorization
suggested by the scholars in this field does not adhere to the recommended
pattern. As already suggested, numerous are the theories articulated in
Ṛgveda in connection with the origin of the world. It is possible to classify
these speculations under two distinct but interdependent titles of divine and
material cosmogony. Both of them have no independent status of their own
and their mutual reliance will be revealed as the study progresses.

i. Divine Cosmogony

It is already suggested that, almost all the gods of the Vedic pantheon
were connected with the process of creation of the world. But they may not
be creators in the real meaning of the word and the concept of creation was
always limited to the acts like production of heaven and earth, measuring of
earth or establishing the sun in the sky. These simple thoughts were later
supplemented especially in the 10th Maṇḍala of Ṛgveda with the idea of more
serious creator gods or creation hymns which are rich both in mythological
and philosophical aspects. The following paragraphs are meant to unearth
various ideas dispersed throughout Ṛgvedic hymns in relation with the
generation of the universe from various creative agencies.

---

37 N. N. Bhattacharya, *History of Indian Cosmogonical Ideas*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi,
1971, p.2.
a) Cosmogony as Primary Act of Creator/s

A perusal of the Vedic creation accounts would reveal two different stages in the process of creation. These two stages as mentioned by F. B. J. Kuiper are ‘the first creation’ and then ‘the creation of the dual cosmos.’ The emergence of earth from the primaeval waters comprises the first stage on which the mythology of the Brâhmaṇa-s pay much interest and the process of ordering the universe represents the second stage of the ordered dual cosmos. Both of these stages as the Vedic mythology perceives, can happen with or without the help of a supreme agent. Among these two stages, the first creation of the universe by various deities is designated here as the primary action while the implications dealing with the ordering of it are treated under the title of secondary action. The following discussion focuses on the divergent thoughts about the creation of the universe in the real sense.

Universal Parentage of Heaven and Earth

The idea of parentage was common in the Vedic age and the paternity attributed to both the heaven and earth is related by the scholars to the idea of local parentage. Thus, these two, both individually and together are addressed as the originator. Heaven and earth are separately addressed as Pitr and Mātr. The pair of heaven and earth enjoys the attribute of two fathers (Pitarā) or two mothers (Mātārā). The word janitrī also seems to indicate the pair of heaven and earth. Almost all deities of Ṛgveda and sometimes men also are said to have originated from these universal parents.

---

40 Ṛgveda, I.89.4; I.90.7; I.160.2; VI.70.6.
41 *Ibid.*, I.159.2; VII.53.2.
42 *Ibid.*, I.159.3.
The heaven and earth together are called devaputra44 i.e. they whose sons are gods. They are also considered as the protectors of the worlds.45 In the hymns, the heaven is sometimes praised as a bull46 and earth as a cow.47

Even though the universal parentage of the heaven and earth was accepted by the Vedic poets, there also arouse some doubts regarding this concept. There are passages which seek the origin of these parents.48 Thus it is natural that the heaven and earth are described as created by the other deities also.49 Almost all deities of the Vedic pantheon like Indra,50 Varuna,51 Mitra,52 Tvaṣṭṛ,53 Dhātṛ,54 Soma,55 Puṣan,56 Savitṛ,57 Viṣvakarman,58 and Hiranyagarbha59 are mentioned as the creators or the supporters of heaven and earth.

Aditi and Dakṣa as Creative Couples

The pair of Aditi and Dakṣa seems to convey the concept of parentage as the couple of heaven and earth in some passages. The latter, however is the most powerful among the feminine abstractions of deities and is generally interpreted as the personification of unboundedness.60 Likewise, Dakṣa is

---

44 Ibid., I.159.1; VII.53.1; IV.56.2.
46 Heaven is considered as a bull rich in seed (हुमन सुरुतसम्य) in Rgveda, I.160.3. cf. Ibid., V.3.65 also.
47 Ibid., I.160.3. In Ibid., I.159.2 both heaven and earth are considered as rich in seed.
48 Rgveda, I.185.1; X.31.7.
49 Ibid., I.159.3; 160.4.
50 Ibid., VI.30.5; VIII.36.4.
51 Ibid., VI.70.1; VII.86.1.
52 भिन्न देवधर पुरुषाकृति ग्राम। Ibid., III.59.1.
53 य इति द्वारावृक्ष्यो नित्यस्य सूर्यप्रकाशस्वाभाविक विषया।
    तथा होठरिः शिवेष्ठ देवेण्यम् देवेण्यम् त्वेन्त्वदत्तिष्ठा प्रका विषयन।। Ibid., X.110.9.
54 सूर्यक्षेत्रम् धातु यथा पुरुषाकृत्त्वम्।
    दिव्यं य हृदयो च प्रकाशस्वाभिः सूर्युः।। Ibid., X.190.3.
55 Ibid., VI.72.2; IX.87.2.
56 Ibid., II.40.1.
57 Ibid., X.149.1. Savitṛ is also said to have measured out the earth regions in Ibid., V.81.3.
58 Ibid., X.81.2-4.
59 Ibid., X.121.5.
suggested as the personification of strength, intelligence etc. These two, sometimes represent the personification of a particular abstract quality or sometimes they are clearly mentioned as adjective. Thus the attributes attached with the Vedic deities like sons of Dakṣa and sons of Aditi may also have meant the qualities like strength and freedom respectively possessed by them. The Adityas in general and Mitrā-Varuṇa in particular are called as the sons of Dakṣa. Elsewhere Dakṣa is mentioned as an Aditya and there Aditi seems to be his mother.

Even though there is no individual hymn ascribed to Aditi in Rgveda, she bears relation with the conceptions regarding cosmogony especially in the later portions of Rgveda. The chief characteristic of this deity is motherhood. She is portrayed as the mother of Adityas like Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, and also of the whole gods. Her invocation in Rgveda, X.63.2 along with waters and earth as one of the sources of origination of deities underlines her creative power. The hymn is as follows:

\[
\text{विश्वा हि वो नमस्सानि कन्या नामानि देवा उल यज्ञियानि च।।}
\text{ये स्थ जाता अरिते स्वरतः ये पृथिवियास्ते म इह श्रुता हवम्।।}
\]

(“For worthy of obeisance, Gods, are all your names, worthy of adoration and of sacrifice. Ye who were born from waters, and from Aditi, and from the earth, do ye here listen to my call.”)
She is identified with cow,\textsuperscript{72} earth,\textsuperscript{73} and sky\textsuperscript{74} and also portrayed as differentiated from both earth and sky.\textsuperscript{75} Elsewhere, the pantheistic interpretation of Aditi is seen as:

\begin{quote}
अदितीं न दितिरः नरिक्षम्य द्वितीयामीत्वम् स पिता स पुत्रः।
विष्णुश्च देवा अदितिः पञ्चजन्मा अदित्मतमतिभवित्वम्॥\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

(“Aditi is the heaven, Aditi is mid-air, Aditi is the Mother and the Sire and Son. Aditi is all Gods, Aditi five-classed men, Aditi all that hath been born and shall be born.”).\textsuperscript{77}

This appears as an identification of the all inclusive nature of Aditi. Aditi is often invoked with other prominent gods like Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni also.\textsuperscript{78}

In the cosmogonic hymn X.72 of \textit{Ṛgveda}, Aditi is referred to as the world-mother having generated Dakṣa and the Deva-s and at the same time being born from Dakṣa. \textit{Ṛgveda} in its mythological language, says:

\begin{quote}
देवानां युगं प्रवर्णमेवसतः सद्यायत्।
तदाशा अन्वयायत्तं तदुत्तानपद्यायति।
भूज्म उत्तानपद्यो भुवं अशा अन्यायत्।
अदित्वं अन्यायतं दक्षाद्विविदितं: परं।
अदितिकृष्णिन्द्र दक्ष या दुर्बिदितं तथ।।
ती देवा अन्वयायतं भ्रक्त अमृतविनयवः।\textsuperscript{79}
\end{quote}

(“In the first age of the gods the existent sprang from the non-existent. Thereafter the different regions sprang forth from Uttānāpād. The earth sprang from Uttānāpād; from the earth sprang the regions. Daksha sprang from Aditi, and Aditi [came] forth from Daksha. For Aditi was produced, she who is thy

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Ṛgveda}, I.153.3; X.11.1.
\textsuperscript{73} महता महादेवं पृथ्वी-निपातम् स धन्यं नाम महादेवं पृथ्विभिर्भूतं देवं येक्रमतमयम्। \textit{Ibid}, I.72.9 b.
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Ibid}, I.89.10; X.63.3. In the latter hymn the word Aditi can be taken either as an adjective of sky (infinite sky) or as identified with it. See J. Muir, \textit{Original Sanskrit Texts on the Origin and History of the People of India, Their Religion and Institutions: Selected, Translated, and Illustrated}, Vol.V, Trubner & Co., 60, Paternoster Row, London, 1870, pp.39-40.
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Ibid}, X.63.10.
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Ibid}, I.89.10. Here, Aditi seems to represent a masculine concept also.
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Ṛgveda}, I.89.4; X.63.9-10; X.65.1.
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Ṛgveda}, X.72.3-5.
daughter, Daksha. After her the gods came into being, blessed, sharers in immortality.”  

This paradoxical concept of reciprocal birth which appears to be beyond the boundaries of reason is a general conception of the Vedic thought. Albeit this peculiar nature of Dakṣa’s birth from Aditi, the possible female counterpart of Dakṣa, nothing is said about his birth or nature. The solitary cosmogonic function attributed to Dakṣa made him to be ranked among the prominent creator deities of the Vedic period. From the above hymns it is evident that the pair of Aditi and Dakṣa sometimes considered as denoting the Vedic idea of universal parentage and more than that Aditi herself has been expressed a prominent female principle of cosmogony. As observed by A. A. Macdonell, the motherhood concept maintained earlier by Aditi was supplied with cosmogonic implications in the later ages of Rgvedic thought. A different view is upheld by N. N Bhattacharya. He considers the hymns like X.72 of Rgveda where Aditi is once mentioned as born from Dakṣa, as representing the decline of this female creator god developed by the primitive matriarchal and pastoral Vedic society.

---

80 Translation by Ralph T. H. Griffith, *Op. cit.*, Vol.II, p.524. Another two hymns of the same Maṇḍala (Rgveda, X.5.7 and 64.5) also mention Aditi and Dakṣa together. In the former hymn, it is said that asat and sat existed in Aditi’s womb, in Dakṣa’s birth place. “असतं सतं परमेः व्याप्तम् दक्षस्य जन्मस्वरूपोऽसि ”

81 For Jeanine Miller, Dakṣa “figures in the cosmogonic hymns as that divine primeval impulse, that creative energy which, at the beginning of the aeons, brought about the first step in manifestation by differentiating from Aditi, the infinitude space.” See Jeanine Miller, *Op. cit.*, p.76. The identification of Dakṣa with the creator Prajāpāti available in Śatapathabrāhmaṇa (II.4.4.2) underlines his role in creation.


83 Macdonell observes that the cosmogonic as well as theogonic affinity of this concept is due to the indefiniteness of the name. See A. A. Macdonell, *Op. cit.*, p.121. Refer to Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, VII.4.2.7 where Aditi is etymologically related with Earth. ‘Aditi is earth as earth gives (vdad) everything’.

Mechanical Production

A major character of the Vedic religion was that there existed a very flexible sphere of duties among the Vedic deities. No clear distinction of duties was maintained among the deities by the Vedic seers and when a particular act was considered it was performed by most of them. Creatorship to some extent was attributed to all deities of the Vedic pantheon. It is interesting that the deities though considered as creators, were not always considered as self-born or existing from the origin of the universe. They were said to have born after the creation of the world verily from the sky and earth or from the primaeval waters. The Rgvedic hymn X.63.2 clearly speaks about the origin of gods from Aditi, from waters and from earth while so many hymns clearly deny the immortality of the deities by origin. The famous hymn Násadiyasûkta makes them born after the creation of the universe. Again in many passages, they are declared as the offspring of heaven and earth, Uṣas, Aditi, Soma, and even of the cows. As mentioned earlier, the act of measuring or stretching the world was a pivotal concept as far as Vedic cosmogony is considered. Many of the Vedic deities were frequently charged with the duty of measuring or supporting of the world. More precisely saying, the connection of the deities with world was more or less determined by the act of supporting and measuring in the earlier hymns of Rgveda. The image of world as a creation in the original sense is more effectively presented in the later Maṇḍala-s of Rgveda compared to the earlier

---

85 Rgveda, X.97.1 a gives information about the plants that existed three ages before gods. (नावं वृक्षं त्र्यं ज्ञातं देवमयानवृक्षं) Ibid., X.72.2 also refers to the ages before gods. The same idea is present in Vājasaneyisamhitā, XII.75 a. also. They are invoked as mothers in Ibid., XII.78.
86 Rgveda, IV.54.2; VI.7.4; IX.106.8; X.167.1.
87 Ibid., X.129.6.
88 Ibid., I.159.1.IV.56.2.
89 Ibid., I.113.19.
90 Ibid., II.27.1; X.72.5.
91 Ibid., IX.42.4; 86.10.
92 Ibid., VI.50.11.
portions and particularly in the Brāhmaṇa texts. Thus the same act of extending the world or the supporting of heaven was charged verily to the deities like Indra, Varuṇa or Viṣṇu.

The Divine Artificers

Connected with the building metaphor, a bulk of deities is found in Ṛgveda who have formed the world with their creative skill. The abstract deified concepts like Tvaṣṭṛ, Viśvakarman etc. are the major architectural gods connected with this metaphor of building. What to be noted here is that these gods are generally charged with the dual function of architect as well as creator. Thus the god Tvaṣṭṛ is generally the skilled craftsman among the Vedic pantheon. The various hymns qualify him in different ways, such as the maker of Indra’s bolt, the axe of Brahmaṇaspati and of the cup with which the gods used to drink Soma. However, his creative agency is extended beyond such external crafts as several Rgvedic hymns make him adorned with procreative functions also. It is Tvaṣṭṛ who gives shape to the germ in the womb and this position of Tvaṣṭṛ as the maker of both human and animal forms (rūpa) is maintained in the Brāhmaṇa texts and also in the Upaniṣad-s. As the giver of the procreant vigour in human beings, Tvaṣṭṛ is invoked for the production of strong progeny also. Moreover, he is the creator of the world and is the begetter of heaven and earth, the waters, the

96 *Ibid.*, I.161.5; III.35.5.
97 *Ibid.*, I.188.9; X.10.5; X.110.9.
98 *Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa*, I.4.7.1; *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, XI.4.3.3.
99 *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, VI.4.2. Here, beside Tvaṣṭṛ, Viṣṇu, Prajāpati and Dhātṛ also are connected with impregnation. cf. Ṛgveda X.104.1 where the same concept appears.
100 Ṛgveda, III.4.9.
102 *Vājasaneyīsaṁhitā*, 29.9.
Bṛgu-s and also of Agni. Like Tvaṣṭṛ, the Rbhu-s also are invoked because of their skill to fashion the two worlds.\footnote{103}  

The process of the deity who manufactures the world is sometimes compared to a smith’s work in the Rgvedic poetry\footnote{104} and elsewhere,\footnote{105} a deity named Brahmaṇaspati is said to have blown forth the gods like a blacksmith. Reference may be made to the iron axe of Brahmaṇaspati which Tvaṣṭṛ sharpened for him,\footnote{106} yet no creative activity seems to have ascribed to the axe. Another deity found in Rgveda who falls in the same line of thought is Viśvakarman, the great architect of the universe, to whom the creation of heaven and earth is ascribed. In a hymn ascribed to him, a doubt is raised as;

\begin{quote}
किं रिवदारिकाल्यामर्वर्णं करत्मक्ष्वत कावासीत्
यतो भूमि जनयत्व विष्कम्बिः वि द्यनेयोमहिना विष्कम्बकः।
\end{quote}

("What was the place whereon he took his station? What was it that supported him? How was it? Whence Viśvakarman, seeing all, producing the earth, with mighty power disclosed the heavens.")\footnote{107}  

By posing the query how did he fashion the world (Rgveda, X.81.4), Viśvakarman was placed in the position of an artificer god. Rather than this image of the artificer god, the tendencies of a monotheistic creator god are more prominent in Viśvakarman. It is to be noted here that there was a tendency in the Rgvedic period to view the creation of the universe as a carpenter’s or artificer’s work. N. N. Bhattacharya considers the concept of Viśvakarman as the development of this idea.\footnote{109} As the abstract creator he needs to be considered along with Hiranyagarbha and Prajāpati, and will be treated in detail later in this study.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[103] *Rgveda*, IV.34.9.
\item[104] Ibid., IV.2.27.
\item[105] Ibid., X.72.2.
\item[106] Ibid., X.53.9.
\item[107] Ibid., X.81.2.
\end{footnotes}
Abstract Creator Gods

It has already been stated that the Rgvedic cosmogony, in the earlier stage, conceived the process of creation as organization. Thus, with the exception of the abstract creators of the later Rgvedic period, to which particular type of creation was ascribed, the duty was most commonly of supporting, measuring, ordering etc. But, the hymns invoke these gods as creators also and sometimes conceive them as alluded with the qualities of a supreme creator also. Thus, Indra is said to have created (janayan) the sun, sky and the dawn\textsuperscript{110} and also the lightening of the sky.\textsuperscript{111} Heaven and earth are produced and established by him.\textsuperscript{112} His creative activity also includes the making of asat to sat.\textsuperscript{113} One passage of Rgveda praises the ability of Indra to appear in various forms.\textsuperscript{114} Indra’s dominance in the universe is suggested by the epithet ‘king of the whole world.’\textsuperscript{115} Varuṇa, the ethical god\textsuperscript{116} in Rgveda has strong relation with the world and worldly events. He is the king of the whole world\textsuperscript{117} and possesses the epithets like rājan,\textsuperscript{118} saṁrāj,\textsuperscript{119} and svarāj.\textsuperscript{120} The scholars consider Varuṇa as representing the affinity to morality and monotheistic tendency of Vedic India.\textsuperscript{121} His all embracing

\begin{enumerate}
\item[Rgveda, VI.30.5; I.32.4.]
\item[Ibid, II.13.7.]
\item[Ibid., III.30.5; VI.17.7; VIII.6.5; X.29.6.]
\item[अन्यद्वारा कविता (रूप) में सूत्र सन्तुष्टि (क्रिया) विशेष रूप से: Ibid., VI.24.5 a.]
\item[Ibid., VI.47.18.]
\item[Ibid., III.46.2.]
\item[H. D. Griswold from the prominence given to Varuṇa in the seventh Mandala of Rgveda infers that the priest family of Vasiṣṭha was very specially the guardian of Varuṇa worship during the pre-Vedic or Vedic age. See, H. D. Griswold, The Religion of the Rgveda, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1971, p.112. For Macdonell, the anthropomorphism of Varuṇa’s personality is more fully developed on the moral than the physical side. A. A. Macdonell, Op.cit., p.23.]
\item[Rgveda, V.85.3.]
\item[Ibid., I.24.7; I.137; I.139.2 etc.]
\item[Ibid., VIII.82.1;V.85.1.]
\item[Ibid., II.20.1.]
\end{enumerate}
nature\textsuperscript{122} is well established from the concept that the three heavens and the three earths are vested in him.\textsuperscript{123}

Viṣṇu, the famous measurer god of \textit{Ṛgveda} is also the sustainer of heaven, earth and all beings.\textsuperscript{124} Elsewhere he is invoked as the protector of the embryos\textsuperscript{125} and also as the promoter of conception.\textsuperscript{126} The creatorship of Sūrya, Uṣas and Agni is also attributed to Viṣṇu and Indra.\textsuperscript{127} Both of them have created the air and spread out the spaces\textsuperscript{128} and together are responsible for the creation of the sun, the dawn and the fire.\textsuperscript{129} Among the two wind gods Vāyu\textsuperscript{130} and Vāta\textsuperscript{131} the latter bears more importance as far as cosmogony is concerned. Vāta is considered as the Atman of gods and the \textit{first-born} of rta. Uṣas is also invoked as the mother of gods\textsuperscript{132} and as the generator of sun, sacrifice and Agni.\textsuperscript{133} Bṛhaspati is said to have released the cows from Vala and he found out light, the Uṣas and Agni.\textsuperscript{134} Savitr\textsuperscript{135} is the lord of all who moves and is stationary and Pūṣan is the protector of the world.\textsuperscript{136} Sometimes a cosmic significance is attributed to vāc. Thus it is thought as spreading over all and holding together all existence.\textsuperscript{137} The functions ascribed to these gods in connection with the supporting and measuring of the worlds is already described.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Ṛgveda}, VIII.41.3-7.
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}, VII.87.5.
\textsuperscript{124} या उत्तरा पूर्वोत्तरा क्रियाएँ द्वारा भूतनाथि विभा। \textit{Ibid.}, I.154.4 b.
\textsuperscript{125} अत्यन्त यों प्रस्तान: क्षेत्रात श्रेणि विविधेण विषणुनिश्चिततयाचिन्म। \textit{Ibid.}, VII.36.9 a.
\textsuperscript{126} विविधप्रकार वसपातु वायुः पुषपणिविविधाः। \textit{Ibid.}, X.184.1 a.
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Ibid.}, VII.99.4.
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Ibid.}, VI.69.5.
\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.}, VII.79.4.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid.}, IV.46.
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Ibid.}, X.168; X.186.
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Ibid.}, I.113.19.
\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Ibid.}, VII.78.3.
\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Ibid.}, X.68.4-9.
\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Ibid.}, IV.53.6.
\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Ibid.}, X.17.3.
\textsuperscript{137} आहं युक्ते पितास्य मूर्त्ति यह वाचिरपथवः: समुद्रे। अभावं वा इस प्रकाशप्रकारं भूतनाथि विभा। पर्वते विरूपे परं पुत्रं पृथिवियतात्व रहस्यं प्रजन्य नस्यम्य। \textit{Ibid.}, X.125.7-8.
Apart from the above mentioned nature-gods, scholars distinguish two kinds of gods namely agent gods and creator gods who fall in the category of abstract gods. Gods like Tvaṣṭṛ and Dhātṛ fall in the first category. The nomenclature ‘functional gods’ used by A. B. Keith makes clear that the names of these gods are self explanatory for they indicate the function of these deities. Dhātṛ also is another agent to whom the creatorship is ascribed. The Rgvedic hymn X.190 mentions him as the creator of heaven, earth, air, sun and moon. The name is also used in Rgveda as an epithet of other gods and also in the post-Vedic literature as a synonym of Brahman or Prajāpati.

As far the creator gods of Rgveda is considered, first reference must be made to Viśvakarman. The hymns X.81 and X.82 of Rgveda are completely devoted to Viśvakarman who is described as having eyes, face, arms and feet on every side. As the name indicates he is the producer of the heaven and earth. After the production he threw them away with his hands and wings. He is called Dhātṛ and Vidhātṛ which mean the creator and disposer respectively. The architectural character of the god is explicit in the question asked by the poet about the wood and tree out of which the universe was fashioned (Rgveda, X.81.4). The world is conceived here in the image of a house and the material production of the ‘world house’ was carried out using the wood as its material. In the hymns addressed to Viśvakarman, in addition to the function of creator and architect, he owes the image of a primaeval divine sacrificer also. The very first verse of the hymn X.81 itself reveals the

140 सूर्याचार्यसि भाषा इत्यादिबलमक्ल्यत।
धिर्व च पूर्वजसि चूजतन्त्वस्मि यस्य।। Rgveda, X.190.3.
141 विधानामाहुनस्यायं विधानावलम्बनस्यायं।
स सारण्यां संस्मार्थिति सं पत्र्याचार्यम्यांभावनन्दनाय येष एकः।। Rgveda, X.81.3. Here, his hands are compared with wings.
142 विधानाम विनिः अविश्वासं भाषा विधानासं परमेश्वरम सद्युः।
तेषांभावामास्ति सृष्टि भद्याति वया सत्यानां पर एकमाहे॥ Ibid., X.82.2.
latter concept. He is said to have produced the two worlds which were submerged in ghee. The former usage of the term was as an epithet and it was applied to Indra and Śūrya. Viśvakarman as the creator god is strictly the derivation of the end of the Rgvedic period and it finds its expression only in the book X of Rgveda. The later Samhitās and Brāhmaṇa texts make this god identical with Prajāpati and his glorious position as creator has not been maintained in the later literature where he appears as the architect of gods.

Next to this god, there comes Prajāpati, which etymologically means the lord of creatures. Among the four hymns of Rgveda where he appears as a distinct deity with functions related to creation, the hymn X.121 is completely devoted to him. It is as follows:

हिरण्यमभे समस्तं भुतस्य जाते पल्लेक आसीन।
स दायधर पृथिवी दामुस्में कस्मे देवाय हिन्दशा विषेम॥
य आम्हादा वल्लदा यस्य विन्दु उपास्ते प्रणिष्यं यस्य देव॥

यस्य छायापूर्वेण यस्य मुनः कस्मे देवाय हिन्दशा विषेम॥

य: प्रणातो निरंभिततो महिषे इद्राजा जगातो वभु।

य ईशे अर्थ द्विपद्रकुमद: कस्मे देवाय हिन्दशा विषेम॥

यस्में हिन्दवन्तो महिषा यस्य समुद्र रस्या सहार्णा:।

स्येमें: प्रदिशो यस्य बाहु कस्मे देवाय हिन्दशा विषेम।॥

यें दीर्घश्च पृथिवी व दुःखा येंन र्व: स्तोभमें येंन नातः।

यो अन्तरिक्षे रजनीम विमान: कस्मे देवाय हिन्दशा विषेम।॥

यं क्रन्द्सी अवस्त तस्मातो अपूर्वािक्षेत यन्तरारम्यो नामने।

\[143\] य इति विष्ठा भूतकान्त बृहस्पति मंडितुस्म वेदादित्त विद्यान्।

स आङ्गिता ब्रह्माण्डलं नात्माय भूतस्य जुराय।

या तं धमानी भरतश्व यन्त्रम सर्वान्त्र प्रसवार्यतेः।

शिक्षा संविन्यो हिन्दशा स्वयं स्यात्म कृपान्।

विषेण्ठेंगु हिन्दशा वाक्पुः स्यात्म कृपान्त्युपदवीमुग्धम्।

मुहान्तब्रह्मणां अधिकारं जनात्म ज्ञातवें दुर्लभतः॥

... Ibd., X.81.1-6. The phrase स्यात्म कृपान्त्युपदवी in X.81.5 indicates a sacrifice performed by himself or to himself.

\[144\] चैवरुः विस्तारित दिः शौद्देन वैद्यमानं अवक्षेत्रमां।

यर्देन अंतः वृद्धिं पूर्व आर्यित्वावर्गाय अवक्षेत्रमां। Ibd., X.82.1.

\[145\] Rgveda, VIII.87.2.

\[146\] Ibd., X.170.4.


\[148\] Vājasaneyīsaṁhitā, 12.61.

\[149\] Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, VIII.2.1.10; Aitareyabrāhmaṇa, IV.22.

\[150\] Rgveda, X.121; 85.43; 169.4; 184.1.
1. Hiranyagarbha arose in the beginning; born, he was the one lord of things existing. He established the earth and this sky: to what god shall we offer our oblation? 2. He who gives breath; who gives strength, whose command all, [even] the gods, reverence, whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death-to what god shall we offer our oblation? 3. Who by his might became the sole king of the breathing and winking world, who is the lord of this two-footed and four-footed [creation],-to what god, etc.? 4. Whose greatness these snowy mountains, and the sea with the Rasā [river], declare,-of whom these regions, of whom they are the arms,-to what god, etc. 5. By whom the sky is fiery, and the earth fixed, by whom the firmament and the heaven were established, who in the atmosphere is the measurer of the aerial space;-to what god, etc.? 6. To whom two contending armies, sustained by his succour, looked up, trembling in mind; over whom the risen sun shines,-to what god, etc.? 7. When the great waters pervaded the universe, containing an embryo, and generating fire, thence arose the one spirit (asu) of the gods,-to what god, etc.? 8. He who through his greatness beheld the waters which contained power, and generated sacrifice, who was the one god above the gods,-to what god, etc.? 9. May he not injure us, he who is the generator of the earth, who, ruling by fixed ordinances, produced the heavens, who produced the great and brilliant waters!-to what god, etc.? 10. Prajāpati, no other than thou is lord over all these created things: may we obtain that, through desire of which we have invoked thee; may we become masters of riches."

An interesting feature of this hymn is the interrogative style in which it is compiled and the question to which deity the oblation is to be given is repeated throughout there and the answer is given in the last verse as

It is noteworthy to refer to the opinion of Oldenberg that the answer ‘Prajaṇapati,’ who is the main hero of the creation stories of the Brāhmaṇa texts, given in the last verse to the question repeated in the whole hymn is a later addition. The questioning verse कस्मे देवाय हविषा विषेम is interpreted by the scholars variously. The word ‘ka’ on one hand is thought as a separate deity and as expressing the freedom of Vedic people’s thought on the other. Anyhow, identity of the name Prajaṇapati in Rgveda both as an epithet and as an abstract deity cannot be denied. As an epithet, the name is applied to Savitṛ and Soma. His dignity as the donor of offspring along with the gods Viṣṇu, Tvaṣṭṛ and Dhātṛ, is clear from the hymn X.184 of Rgveda. His affinity with sacrifice is also available from the present hymn (verse 8 and the ending lines of each hymn) though it is not explicit as in the case of Viśvakarman. This procreative power and the philosophical aspect (connected with sacrifice) in the god Prajaṇapati may have helped him to attain a higher position as the lord of creatures. Prajaṇapati occupies a ‘cosmological and pantheistic’ significance in the later Maṇḍala-s of Rgveda and the ethical side of Varuṇa became less important.

b) Creation as Secondary Action

As far as Rgvedic mythology is considered, at least in the case of the earlier hymns (hymns of the Family Books), more concentration is seen on the latter stage of cosmogony, i.e. the secondary level of ordering, organising or
establishing etc.\textsuperscript{159} The word creation is applicable to these functions only in an indirect sense.\textsuperscript{160} It is all about the ordered functioning or arrangement of the world from its original chaotic irregularity by the proper establishment of the universe with its constituting divisions like heaven, earth and the intermediate region, the luminaries, the measuring of the regions, and also with the establishment of the seasons, months, days, nights, the worship and the holly word.\textsuperscript{161}

**Creative Separation of the Monadic Pair**

Ordering always presupposes an orderless or chaotic state of undifferentiated unity and this is verily treated in the Vedic hymns. Elsewhere, \textit{Ṛgveda} speaks of such a primordial state of darkness signified by the absence of the heaven and earth and also of day and night. The hymn follows as:

\begin{verbatim}
नासदासीरा सदासौत् तदानीं नासीद्रवं नो व्योमा परो यत्।
किमावरीव: कुह कस्य शर्मण्म: किमासीद्रवं नामीरम्॥
न मुनिपरसीद्रवं न तत्ति न रात्या अहेन आसीतु प्रकरत:।
आनेद्वालस सक्षमा तदेकं तत्समान्यश्च पर: किं चनास॥
तम आसीतु तमसा मुनिपरसीद्रवं प्रकरते सविंत्य सब्वमा इदम्।\textsuperscript{162}
\end{verbatim}

Speculation about the condition prior to the heaven and earth also is seen as “परो दिव्य पर एवंय न्याय परो देवैरितुर्मरैदिष्टि।”\textsuperscript{163} (“That which is earlier than the earth and heaven, before the Asuras and Gods had being.”)\textsuperscript{164} The absence of heaven and earth seems to signify either their actual non existence or their undivided state.\textsuperscript{165} The latter, obviously, is one of the favourite subjects of the

\textsuperscript{160} F. B. J. Kuiper, \textit{Op.cit.}, p.11.
\textsuperscript{161} तैरे दिव्य पर एवंय न्याय परो देवैयुर्मरैदि। \textit{Ṛgveda}, VII.66.11.
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Ibid.}, X.129.1,2 and 3.a. The English translation of the hymn is given in pp. 53-54 of this Chapter.
\textsuperscript{163} \textit{Ibid.}, X.82.5.a.
\textsuperscript{165} The latter, according to Kuiper, is the first stage of Rgvedic cosmogony which speculates an already existed world of chaos. See F. B. J. Kuiper, \textit{Op.cit.}, p.10.
early Vedic mythology that considers the pair of heaven and earth as once united. This view is expressed in Śatapathabrāhmaṇa as समन्तिकामिन ह या इमेङ्ग्रे लोका: आसु इन्द्र्मृश्या हेव शोरास.¹⁶⁶ (at the beginning these worlds were well-nigh contiguous to one another: at that time one could touch the sky).¹⁶⁷ The parentage of heaven and earth thus rests on the notion that when this pair united, it caused the creation of the world and even gods. An interesting description on the marriage between earth and heaven is found in Aitareyabrāhmaṇa. It says:

“इन्हीं वे लोको सहास्त्राम् ती छोटाम् नाबर्ष न समन्तलो पन्चनाना न समन्तला। ती देवा: समन्तवत्ता संजयातेन देवविवाहो व्यवहाराम्।...”¹⁶⁸

(“These two worlds (heaven and earth) were (once) joined. (Subsequently) they separated. (After their separation) there fell neither rain, nor was there sunshine. The five classes of beings (gods, men, &c.) then did not keep peace with one another. (Thereupon) the gods brought about a reconciliation of both these worlds. Both contracted with one another a marriage, according to the rites observed by the gods ...”)[¹⁶⁹]

Thus it can be assumed that, in connection with the creation of the universe both the union and separation of these couples are equally significant in the Vedic mythology.

The Vedic cosmology, as explained earlier, is tripartite, consisting of the regions of earth, heaven and atmosphere. This order, says Rgveda, is the result of an outside action of a deity that separated the initially united pair

---

¹⁶⁶ Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, 1.4.1.22 ff.
¹⁶⁷ Translation by Julius Eggeling, Śatapathabrāhmaṇa: Sanskrit Text with English Translation, Notes, Introduction and Index, Edited by Jeet Ram Bhatt, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, 2009, Vol.I, p.66. The passage goes on saying that "the gods desired, 'How could these worlds of ours become farther apart from one another? How could there be more space for us?' They breathed through them (the worlds) with these three syllables (forming the word) 'vitaye' and these worlds became far apart from one another." cf. Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa, I.1.3.2, Aitareyabrāhmaṇa, V.2.3 etc.
¹⁶⁸ Aitareyabrāhmaṇa, IV.27. It is said there that heaven is wedded to earth in the form of rain and earth is wedded to heaven in the form of smoke.
of heaven and earth. Several Ṛgvedic hymns\textsuperscript{170} say that these dual divinities lied in close embrace in the beginning, forming a monadic pair. Being one is the state of undifferentiated and it was Indra who forcibly separated this united pair into constituent parts and made this ordered world.\textsuperscript{171} The act of separation is sometimes ascribed to other gods like Sūrya,\textsuperscript{172} Aśvins\textsuperscript{173} and so on.\textsuperscript{174} The motifs like propping up of the heaven and earth with pillars and spreading of these two etc. are in fact various fractions of this cosmogonic act of separation. And holding apart of the united pairs and the above said acts were generally ascribed to Indra in particular and other gods of the Vedic pantheon in general.

\section*{Making the Chaos into Cosmos}

Making the chaos into cosmos was the primary duty of a group of gods who individually or with the assistance of other gods completed the process. The prominent gods connected with the act of organizing the universe are Indra, Varuṇa, and Viṣṇu.\textsuperscript{175} Among the gods, who considered the activity of organization of the universe as one of their chief works, Indra figures at the top. A main act attributed to Indra is the stretching out the heaven and earth which were once united.\textsuperscript{176} The heaven and earth, here are said to have been held united by a demon\textsuperscript{177} and the victory over him by Indra\textsuperscript{178} led to their

\par

\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Ṛgveda}, I.159.4; I.185.5; III.38.3; III.55.20; X.89.13.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., V.31.6; X.113.5.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., I.160.4.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., IV.34.9.
\textsuperscript{174} In the hymn IV.56.1 of \textit{Ṛgveda}, a bull is conceived as holding the heaven and earth apart. cf. \textit{Ibid.}, X.31.8.
\textsuperscript{175} Refer to \textit{Ibid.}, X.68.11, VII.76.4 etc. where the Pitṛs are charged with such creative functions.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., V.29.4; VIII.6.17.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., VIII.6.17.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., V.29.4.
Indra is also said to have established the quivering earth and cut the wings of mountains and settled them.

The famous myth of the battle between Indra and Vṛtra appears repeatedly in the hymns of *Ṛgveda*. One of them runs as:

इद्रयस्य न वीरांमि प्र वोर्यं यानि चक्कार प्रकरमानि वश्री।
अहऽधिमन्यपतत्रं प्र वक्षणा अभिमन्त् पवलानु।।...
अहऽ् कुमलन्तं वयसामिद्रो वश्रेण महता यथे।
रक्तन्याय्यों वृक्षाणास्मवः विवुक्षणादिः: सयत उपपुः पृविवः:...।

(I will declare the manly deeds of Indra, the first that he achieved, the Thunder-weilder. He slew the Dragon, then disclosed the waters and cleft the channels of the mountain torrents...Indra with his own great and deadly thunder smote into pieces Vṛtra, worst of Vṛtras. As trunks of trees, what time the axe hath felled them, low on the earth so lies the prostrate Dragon...)

Vṛtra is repeatedly mentioned in these hymns as ahi i.e. serpent who lies on the mountain or on the waters. Indra defeated Vṛtra by shattering in to pieces using the bolt forged by Tvaṣṭṛ. By slaying Vṛtra, Indra is said to have released the imprisoned waters, won the cows and Soma. It also is to be noted that, by the killing of Vṛtra, Indra is described to have generated the sun, heaven and the dawn.

यदृढःहनु प्रदत्तामहीतामादििनामामिनामपि
आति सुवं जनयोंति श्रामुष्णां सत्वपीि शन्ति न किला विक्षसेऽ।

("When, Indra, thou hadst slain the dragon's firstborn, and overcome the charms of the enchanters, Then, giving life to Sun...

179 This is explained by Keith as ‘the appearance of light separating heaven and earth which were coupled together by darkness’. A. B. Keith, *Op.cit.*, p.132.
180 *Ṛgveda*, II.12.2; IV.54.5; X.44.8.
183 *Ṛgveda*, I.32.1.2.
185 *Ibid.*, I.32.5,7; 61.10; 80.5; II.11.5; X.89.7.
186 *Ibid.*, I.32.2,11; 57.6; 103.2; IV.19.8.
and Dawn and Heaven, thou foundest not one foe to stand against thee.") 189

The general explanation of the Indra-Vṛtra myth considers the battle as an ‘atmospheric drama’ 190 between the god of thunder-storm and the demon of drought which resulted in the bringing down of water as rain to earth. The traditional reading of this was supplied with more explanations by the Vedic scholars like Oldenberg and Hillebrandt. Oldenberg considers this battle as the freeing of earthly waters from earthly mountains 191 while Hillebrandt was fond of explaining the war as the antithesis between summer sun and winter cold. 192 But in mythology, the creation of light, sun etc. was generally considered as the very first act of creator after the world formation and striking feature is that almost all the hymns which deal with the above myth speak that Indra made the sun to rise just after the slaying of the demon. Based on this principle this myth was interpreted cosmogonically by Norman Brown. 193 Following him, Vedic scholars like F. B. J. Kuiper also hold the view that this central myth of Ṛgvedic poetry, in fact, refers to a creation story and it represents the second stage of the cosmogony i.e. the ordering of the cosmos. 194

The creative activity of Varuṇa has become the subject of various hymns though he seems to be poor in mythological perspective. 195 One of the hymns praises Varuṇa as:

---
189 Translation by Ralph T. H. Griffith, Op.cit., Vol.I, p.46. See also, Ṛgveda, I.51.4; I.52.8; VIII.89.1-3. etc.
194 Kuiper adds that this myth as well as the hymns of the Family Books (II-VII) was primarily connected to the New Year ceremony. F. B. J. Kuiper, Op.cit., pp.94-98.
"Wise, verily, are creatures through his greatness who stayed ever, spacious heaven and earth asunder; Who urged the high and mighty sky to motion, the Star of old, and spread the earth before him."\(^{197}\)

It is also said that

"Varuṇa cut a pathway out for Sūrya, and led the watery floods of rivers onward. The Mares, as in a race, speed on in order. He made great channels for the days to follow."\(^{198}\) And, "In the tree−tops the air he hath extended, put milk in kine and vigorous speed in horses, Set intellect in hearts, fire in the waters, Sūrya in heaven and Soma on the mountain."\(^{199}\)

In short, he ordered the whole world and the inviolable nature of his laws\(^{200}\) make him most ethical among the Vedic gods. Varuṇa appears in the hymns along with Mitra\(^{201}\) and Indra\(^{202}\) also. Mitra created the day and Varuṇa the night.\(^{203}\) The physical order of the world ṛta is controlled by these gods. The natural phenomena like the rising up of sun and falling of rain are happening due to the power of Mitra and Varuṇa. They are responsible for the dawn also. The natural law ṛta is made subject to Varuṇa and it holds the earth and sky apart.\(^{204}\) The heaven and earth are either supported by these two gods or by

---

\(^{196}\) *Ṛgveda*, VII.86.1.


\(^{201}\) *Ibid.*, I.23.4-6;

\(^{202}\) *Ibid.*, VII.81,82,83,84 etc.

\(^{203}\) *Atharvaveda*, XIII.3.13; *Taittirīyasamhitā*, VI.4.83. The Vedic hymn VIII.41.3 describes Varuṇa as holding night in his arms. The later Vedic texts have upheld constant connection between Varuṇa and night. Louis Renou opines that this connection is a later development and no other Vedic passage except this hymn bears such an identification. See, F. B. J. Kuiper, *Op.cit.*, p.94.

\(^{204}\) *Ṛgveda*, VI.70.1.b.
Varuṇa. It is Varuṇa who regulates the pathways of moon and stars and controls the seasons.205

ii. Conceptualizing Cosmogony in Mythico-Philosophical Realm

The later phases of Rgveda supply more serious concepts of cosmogony. New mythological motifs began to appear or were incorporated into the existing thoughts. Serious philosophical notions also were made use of to unravel the mystery of cosmogony. The following portions penetrates into the role played by these abstract philosophical ideas as well as the mythological motifs in the formation of later cosmogonical concepts.

The Metaphor of World Building

The Ṛgvedic poets in various hymns do refer to the world by using the image of a building. Although it has been a notion that does appear throughout the whole Rgveda there can be noticed some differences in the later phase. This idea necessarily presupposes an artificer and also a material out of which the building is to be formed. Thus, in the hymn of Viśvakarman (Rgveda, X.81.4), vana206 and vṛkṣa are conceived as materials for world building. The query that appears in the hymn किं स्विद्रन्ते क उ स वृक्ष आस वतो द्यावापथिभी निर्मित्तु: (“What was the tree, what wood in sooth produced it, from which they fashioned out the earth and heaven?”)207 is mentioned there in a previous hymn also.208 As the world was conceived as a building, the god or gods in general were told as holding the heaven and earth firm by supporting it. Various actions like measuring, spreading of earth and fixing it, the images

205 Ibid., I.25.8; VII.66.11.
206 In addition to the meaning wood or forest, the word vana seems to refer to cloud also in Ibid., X.28.8. See, H. W. Wallis, Op.cit., p.17 (note.1). Refer to Rgveda, I.24.7 where vana is related with Varuṇa.
208 Rgveda, X.31.7.
like rafters of the world etc. are used throughout the Vedic poetry. Analysing these H. W. Wallis enumerates the different stages of world formation gleaned through the delineation of the Vedic poets where the building metaphor is used. He writes,

“...the felling of the trees for wood and the measuring of the sight; next, the fixing of the main-posts in the four corners supported by leaning buttresses, and of the two door-posts in the front; and lastly, the covering in of the whole with cross beams, rafters, laths and some kind of mud or thatch to fill up the crevices.”

As the material for the making of the world building, the act of measuring also is frequently referred to in *Ṛgveda* in connection with various deities like Indra, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu and so on. This very aspect was frequently indicated by using the words vimame, sumite, viyomame, vimīmāya etc. all of which are derived from the root ‘mā’ – ‘to measure’. Thus it is said that Indra has measured out (vimame) the intermediate region antarikṣa and supported (astabhna) the sky. In another passage heaven and earth are said to have been measured by his greatness and skill respectively. The spreading out of earth is also attributed to him. With his power māyā, Varuṇa has measured out the earth with sun as the measure. He is said to be aware of the extent of the earth. The same function is also ascribed

---

210 य: पारंपरिक हिंदुस्थानी राष्ट्रीय संस्कृत संस्कृत अर्थात्। *Ṛgveda*, V.81.3.
214 य: शुद्धिविद्यमानविशेषतः य: पारंपरिक हिंदुस्थानी अर्थात्।

The act of measuring usually starts from the east. *Ibid.*, II.15.3.
217 *Ibid.*, VIII.42.3.
to Sun,\textsuperscript{220} Indrā-Varuṇa,\textsuperscript{221} Agni\textsuperscript{222} etc. Viṣṇu is another important figure in connection with the act of measuring. He is praised as holding the whole universe.\textsuperscript{223} With Indra, he creates the wide air and spreads out the spaces\textsuperscript{224} and the act of measuring the earthly spaces is also performed by this god.\textsuperscript{225} Like other gods, Savitṛ also is said to have measured out the earthly spaces.\textsuperscript{226}

The act of supporting the heaven and earth is verily alluded to Indra,\textsuperscript{227} Soma,\textsuperscript{228} Agni,\textsuperscript{229} Mitra,\textsuperscript{230} Varuṇa,\textsuperscript{231} Mitrā-Varuṇa,\textsuperscript{232} Sūrya,\textsuperscript{233} Rbhu-s,\textsuperscript{234} Savitṛ\textsuperscript{235} etc. The image of the doors finds its expression in many hymns such as I.113.4; IV.51.2 and IX.5.5 of \textit{Ṛgveda}. In connection with this, fixing of air in the vana-s\textsuperscript{236} and in the frame of heaven and earth\textsuperscript{237} etc. are also met with.\textsuperscript{238} Fixing of earth with bands\textsuperscript{239} and pegs\textsuperscript{240} also are found in some passages.

**Origin of the Universe from the Golden Egg**

The Vedic seers sometimes speculated the beginnings of the world in terms of a cosmic egg. This very idea of the origin of the world from the...

\textsuperscript{220} \textit{Ibid.}, IV.54.8.
\textsuperscript{221} \textit{Ibid.}, IV.42.3.
\textsuperscript{222} \textit{Ibid.}, III.6.5; VI.8.3; VII.5.4.
\textsuperscript{224} \textit{Ṛgveda}, VI.69.5.
\textsuperscript{225} \textit{Ibid.}, I.154.1; VI.49.13.
\textsuperscript{226} \textit{Ibid.}, V.81.3.
\textsuperscript{227} \textit{Ibid.}, II.15.2; II.17.2.5; II.27.8; III.30.9.
\textsuperscript{228} \textit{Ibid.}, IX.74.2; IX.87.2; IX.86.29.
\textsuperscript{229} \textit{Ibid.}, I.67.3; II.11.5; III.5.10; IV.6.2.
\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Ibid.}, III.59.1.
\textsuperscript{231} \textit{Ibid.}, VI.70.1; VIII.41.10; VIII.42.1; VII.99.2.
\textsuperscript{232} \textit{Ibid.}, V.62.3.
\textsuperscript{233} \textit{Ibid.}, I.160.4.
\textsuperscript{234} \textit{Ibid.}, X.66.10.
\textsuperscript{235} \textit{Ibid.}, IV.54.4; X.149.1.
\textsuperscript{236} कन्यकृच्छि तस्मिन स्तन 'अन्तन' \textit{Ibid.}, V.85.2.
\textsuperscript{237} किंतु किंतु जन्मभवनं र्माणकन्या संस्कृतियो 'विद्व आलास कहं'। \textit{Ibid.}, I.56.5.
\textsuperscript{238} Fixing of the sky (\textit{Ibid.}, X.149.1; II.15.2) and air (\textit{Ibid.}, IV.56.3) are done in the rafter-less space also.
\textsuperscript{239} Savitṛ in \textit{Ibid.}, X.149.1.
\textsuperscript{240} Viṣṇu in \textit{Ibid.}, VII.99.3.
cosmic egg which is one of the most popular cosmogonic theme of the mythology of the Brāhmaṇa-s and Purāṇa-s is contained in the hymn X.121 of Rgveda, in the germinal form. Here, the image of the golden egg in an abstracted form of primordial germ is met with, from which the origin of the universe is imagined. The hymn begins by mentioning the name Hiranyagarbha which literally means golden-germ who, in the last verse seems to have been identified with Prajāpati. Hiranyagarbha is postulated here as the highest principle, to whom all attributes of divinity are applied. He is said to have arouse in the very beginning as the one lord of all existing who is responsible for the whole processes of the world and whom even the gods obey. Special attention must be paid on the seventh and eighth verses of the hymn which deal with the very concept of embryo of waters in particular.

The creation is viewed as a sacrifice here, as the waters after receiving the productive energy (Dakṣa) is viewed as generating sacrifice (Rgveda, X.121.8). The germ of the later concept of the Supreme god as the embryo of waters and his constant identification with Agni is explicit here (Rgveda, X.121.7). The concept of primordial germ is referred to in another hymn in connection with Viśvakarman (Rgveda, X.82.5,6) where it is elucidated that the germ of waters rested in the navel of the Unborn (Aja). This notion of

241 In Rgveda, Savitṛ bears the epithets like Hiranyākṣa (I.35.8) Hiranyapāṇi (I.22.5; I.35.9), Hiranyahasta (I.35.10) and Hiranyajihva (VI.71.3).
242 For English translation, see p.35 of this Chapter.
243 As to H. W. Wallis, both hymns (Rgveda, X.121.7,8 and X.82.5,6) are based on the conception of the sun as the first-born of the world and the prototype of subsequent generation. See, H. W. Wallis, Op.cit., p.85.
the primordial germ was later developed to the cosmic egg of the mythology of the Brāhmaṇa texts. The title Hiranyagarbha which is used here as identical with Prajāpati was found as a distinct deity in the later Saṁhitā-s and also the name was frequently considered as denoting the later concept of Brahmā.

Creative Primordial Sacrifice

Sacrifice was deemed by the Ṛṣi-s as a powerful process which can make amazing results in their lives. So they were fond of offering sacrifices to various deities. Corresponding to this earthly form of sacrifice, the seers conceived a divine sacrifice as a cosmogonic principle which in turn resulted in the creation of the universe. Thus a primordial sacrifice was thought of as the genesis of all things, in which an archetypal Puruṣa or man was immolated, as a result of which this world in present form came into being. The one and only hymn of Ṛgveda which explicitly conceives creation as a sacrifice is the Puruṣasūkta (Ṛgveda, X.90) where Puruṣa is the mythical victim of the creative sacrifice. In addition to the famous Puruṣa hymn of the tenth Mandala, there occur some other indirect references to this concept of creative sacrifice. Even though these passages refer to the cosmic sacrifice they don’t establish clear connection between the act of creation and sacrifice.

The concept of cosmogony which imagines a creative sacrifice as the cause of the world neither tends to the idea of a manufactured world nor conceives the universe’s origin as a natural generation whereas it appears as a separate view. The reciprocals of death and life are typified here in a peculiar manner, i.e. the latter as the result of the former. The hymn explains generally
about the origin of the universe with its constituent parts like sky, earth etc. and in particular about the origin of four castes which forms the striking feature of the whole hymn. Though the main idea of creative sacrifice is apparently very primitive, the presence of many later ideas in it denies the antiquity of the hymn. The hymn presents Puruṣa as a cosmic giant with whom the gods performed the sacrifice. Puruṣa is imagined there as having thousand heads, thousand eyes and thousand feet and is identified with the whole universe. “The unity of the Godhead in the pantheistic sense” is expressed in the beginning verses of the hymn as,

```
(1. Puruṣa has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet. On every side enveloping the earth, he transcended [it] by a space of ten fingers. 2. Purusha himself is this whole [universe], whatever has been, and whatever shall be. He is also the lord of immortality, since through food he expands. 3. Such is his greatness; and Puruṣa is superior, to this. All existing things are a quarter of him, and that which is immortal in the sky is three quarters of him. 4. With three quarters Puruṣa mounted upwards. A quarter of him again was produced here below. He then became diffused everywhere among things animate and inanimate. 5. From him Viraj was born, and from Viraj, Puruṣa.
```

As soon as born he extended beyond the earth, both behind and before. 6. When the gods offered up Purusha as a sacrifice, the spring was its clarified butter, summer its fuel, and autumn the accompanying oblation. 7. This victim, Purusha born in the beginning, they immolated on the sacrificial grass; with him as their offering, the gods, Sādhyas, and Rishis sacrificed. 8. From that universal oblation were produced curds and clarified butter. He (Purusha) formed those aerial creatures, and the animals, both wild and tame. 9. From that universal sacrifice sprang the hymns called Rīch and Śāman, the metres, and the Yajush. 10. From it were produced horses, and all animals with two rows of teeth, cows, goats, and sheep. 11. When they divided Purusha, into how many parts did they distribute him? What was his mouth? "What were his arms? What were called his thighs and feet? 12. The Brāhman was his mouth; the Rājanya became his arms; the Vaiśya was his thighs; the Śūdra sprang from his feet. 13. The moon was produced from, his soul; the sun from his eye; Indra and Agni from his mouth; and Vāyu from his breath. 14. From his navel came the atmosphere; from his head arose the sky; from his feet came the earth; from his ear the four quarters: so they formed the worlds. 15. When the gods, in performing their sacrifice, bound Purusha as a victim, there were seven pieces of wood laid for him round the fire, and thrice seven pieces of fuel employed. 16. "With sacrifice the gods worshipped the Sacrifice. These were the first institutions. These great beings attained to the heaven where the gods, the ancient Sādhyas, reside." 249

The body of Puruṣa, when sacrificed, is supposed to have served as the material for the whole world. Thus, it is speculated in the hymn that when the gods performed the creative sacrifice with him as the sacrificial victim, moon was originated from his mind, from his eye the sun, Indra and Agni sprang from his mouth and wind from his breath. The air, sky, earth and earth regions took their origin from his navel, head, feet and ear respectively. The creation of the four classes also happened from his various organs as from his mouth the Brāhmaṇa, arms the Rājanya, thighs the Vaiśya and from his feet the Śūdra took birth. 250 Besides all things in the universe including animals, the three Veda-s and the metres also owe their origin to this cosmic sacrifice. Thus, as opined by Jeanine Miller, "the primeval spirit, instead of remaining

---

250 cf. *Taittirīyasamhitā*, VII.1.1.4; *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, XII.7.3.12, *Brhadāranyakopaniṣad*, I.4.11 etc.
one, homogeneous whole, was fragmented into many forms pervaded by the one life, its own life breath.”

There is a reciprocal origin of the Virāj from Puruṣa and he in turn is born out of Virāj. The deities are said to have performed the sacrifice where the various seasons were substituted for the sacrificial components.

The hymn 130 of the same Maṇḍala of Ṛgveda adds to the details of the cosmic sacrifice mentioned in the previous hymn. The hymn is as follows:

"1. The sacrifice drawn out with threads on every side, stretched by a hundred sacred ministers and one, This do these Fathers weave who hitherward are come: they sit beside the warp and cry, Weave forth, weave back. 2. The Man extends it and the Man unbinds it: even to this vault of heaven hath he outspun, it. These pegs are fastened to the seat of worship: they made the Sama–hymns their weaving shuttles. 3. What were the rule, the order and the model? What were the wooden fender and the butter? What were the hymn, the chant, the recitation, when to the God all Deities paid worship? 4. Closely was Gayatri conjoined with Agni, and closely Savitar combined with Usníh. Brilliant with Utkhas, Soma joined Anustupa: Brhaspati’s voice by Brhati was

---

252 Ṛgveda, X.159.3 presents Virāj as feminine. See Ṛgveda, IX.96.18, and X. 130, 5 etc. also. Virāj is the wife of Puruṣa in Brhadāraṇyakopanisād, IV.2.3.
253 This reminds of the birth of Aditi and Dākṣa described in Ṛgveda, X.72.4-5. cf. Atharvaveda, XIII. 4.29 and so on, where the reciprocal origins of gods is described.
254 The hymn does not speak sufficiently about the origin of these gods and seasons alike. It seems both existed before the cosmic sacrifice which itself was the cause of world creation.
aided. 5. Viraj adhered to Varuna and Mitra: here Tristup day by
day was Indra’s portion. Jagati entered all the Gods together: so
by this knowledge men were raised to Rsis. 6. So by this
knowledge men were raised to Rsis, 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 Rsis. Viewing the path of those of old, the sages
have taken up the reins like chariot−drivers.”

The very first verse of the hymn seems to assign the creative sacrifice
metaphorically to the act of weaving. The whole picture of weaving and
unbinding the sacrificial threads that envelop the universe becomes complete
only with the image of the man (verse 2) who stretches and twists the
threads.

In the later mythology, Puruṣa enjoys identification with other creator
gods like Prajāpati who is the Puruṣa of the Brāhmaṇa texts and Brahmag. The sacrifice is also identified with Prajāpati as he created it in his own
image. The passage XIV.3.2.1 of Śatapathabrāhmaṇa says that it is the soul
of everything including the gods. A further development of the concept of
Puruṣa is marked by a stage when it was coupled with Nārāyaṇa as Puruṣa−

---

256 cf. Atharvaveda, X.42-44.
257 The Pumān mentioned in the verse 2 is generally identified with Puruṣa.
either as the gods scarified to the Supreme god or as they sacrificed him up.
258 For a detailed study of the Puruṣasūkta and other hymns which deal with the same idea, refer
to M. Sundar Raj, Rgvedic Studies, Part VII, International Society for the Investigation of Ancient
Civilizations, Madras, 1986. He opines that the stretching out of the thread and untwisting of
threads, stated in the Verse 2, is an assonance symbol for ‘breathing in’ and ‘breathing out.’
The word mayūkha, means both ‘peg’ as well as ‘ray of light or Agni.’ Ibid., p.23.
259 Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, II.1.6.1; Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa, 3.9.22.1.
260 Chāndogyopaniṣad, I.7.5.
261 Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, XI.1.8.2.
Nārāyaṇa who performs the sacrifice according to the instruction of Prajāpati.262

**Universe as the Evolution**

In the two hymns of the tenth Maṇḍala of Ṛgveda (X.72; X.129) the concept of the evolution of the world is evident. Even though the two hymns convey the same idea of the evolution of sat from, a differentiation is made by mentioning a supreme agent in the former hymn.

("1. Let us celebrate with exultation the births of the gods, in chanted hymns, [every one of us], who may behold them in [this] later age.  2. Brahmanaspati shaped all these [beings] like a blacksmith. In the earliest age of the gods, the existent sprang from the non-existent.  3. In the first age of the gods the existent sprang forth from Uttānapād.  4. The earth sprang from Uttānapād; from the earth sprang the regions. Daksha sprang from Aditi, and Aditi [came] forth from Daksha.  5. For Aditi was produced, she who is thy daughter, Daksha. After her the gods came into being, blessed, sharers in immortality.  6. When, gods, ye moved, strongly agitated, on that water, there a violent dust issued forth from you, as from dancers.  7. When ye, gods, like devotees [or strenuous men], replenished the worlds, then ye disclosed the sun which had been hidden in the ocean.  8. Of the eight sons who were horn from the body of Aditi, she approached the gods with seven, but cast away [the eighth] Mārttāṇḍa [the sun].  9. With seven sons [only] Aditi approached the former generation of gods. Again, for birth as well as for death she disclosed Mārttāṇḍa.")264

---

263 *Ṛgveda*, X.72.
It is said there that Brahmaṇaṣpati like a blacksmith forged together these worlds. In fact, in this particular hymn three different accounts of world formation are met with. First is the creation of the world by Brahmaṇaṣpati, then the evolution of the universe from asat and at last a special story of the dancing gods who with the dust caused by their dance, gave birth to the world. Whatever may be the details, it is obvious that the central theme of the passage concentrates on the production of existent from non-existent. After this the earth and earth regions were born from Uttānapād. From Aditi, Dakṣa was born and vice versa. Then eight sons were born to Aditi among whom the eighth was brought by Aditi to born and die. There are three stages which can be easily distinguished from here. As Macdonell infers, the three stages are the formation of the world, of the gods and of the sun. One of the most interesting themes of the hymn is the strong dance-like movement of the gods which caused tremendous dust. As the hymn says it was the result of this particular process the sun emerged out of water.

The second hymn of Nāṣadīyasūkta (Ṛgveda, X.129), deals explicitly with the unsolvable riddle of the origin of universe in terms of pure philosophical reasoning using the same conceptions of asat and sat and finally discloses the connection of being in non-being. The hymn is cited here;

265 As to the observation of H. W. Wallis, the verses 2, 6 and 7 of the hymn which constitute the first and last accounts are interpolations. H. W. Wallis, Op.cit., 42-43.
["1. There was then neither non entity 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 undistinguishing 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 non-entity. 5. The ray [or cord] which stretched across these [worlds], was it below or was it above? There were the 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."].

The hymn, as it appears, starts with an ‘intuitive vision of the whole’ and tries to unravel the primordial condition before the origin of the universe. The very first verse of the hymn reflects a time determined the absence of existence and non existence. The occurrence of the opposite entities of death-immortality and day-night also is negated. Darkness was covered by darkness and there was undistinguished water everywhere. The primordial chaotic state which is common in all ancient cosmogonies is

---

268 Translation by J. Muir, Op.cit., Vol.IV, pp.4-5. The hymn is repeated in *Taittiriya-brâhmaṇa*, Il.8.9.3 etc. See, the passages of *Satapathârâmaṇa* X.5.3.1 etc. also which say that नैव वे इसमें असदायाहृते नैव सदायाहृते. आसतमष्टवं इसमें नैव आसतमष्टवं. तदृह तदृह मन एव अम. सममधएव धारणामयुक्ते नासतमष्टवं तत्तातीतमनुष्ठि. नैव हि सत् मनो नैववसति... Thus, according to this passage, in the beginning, there existed Mind which was neither existent nor non-existent.


270 This primordial darkness as observed by Kuiper is an attempt of the poets to express what could not properly be expressed in words. See F. B. J. Kuiper, Op.cit., p.10.
traceable from these lines. The concept of existence and non existence was thought of cosmogonic importance in the Ṛgvedic age even prior to this hymn. Thus in X.72.2-3 of Ṛgveda, it is mentioned that the existence sprang from non existence.²⁷¹ Albeit the hymn denies the existence of everything whether as asat or sat, the ‘One’²⁷² mentioned in the second verse must be taken to have existed²⁷³ as a somewhat highest principle.²⁷⁴ This One, developed by the tapas²⁷⁵ breathed calmly as a first creative movement or agitation as a result of which arouse kāma, the germ of mind.²⁷⁶ There follows the most impregnated verse of the hymn which speaks of a line stretched across to present a division of upper and lower worlds. The hymn speaks of the impregnating powers and mighty forces, a self-supporting principle beneath, and active energy above. The stretching of the line across, as H. W. Wallis says, is suggestive of the process of dividing heaven above and earth below. The wise (kavayaḥ) stretched line across and the poet doubts what was above and what was below. He affirms that there were generators (retodhāḥ) and mighty forces (mahimānāḥ). There existed svadhā (free action or enjoyment of the fathers) below and prayati (sacrifice of gods) above.²⁷⁷ This progressive speculation ends in the confession that the puzzle of the origin of

²⁷¹ cf. Ṛgveda, Vi. 24.5; X.5.7; Atharvaveda, X.7.10.; Taittiriyāranyaka, I.11.1 etc. to find such treatments on asat and sat. These two play much importance in the cosmogonic conceptions of Upaniṣad-s mainly in Brhadāranyaka and Chāndogya.
²⁷² See Ṛgveda, I.164.6, where it is suspected that what was that ‘one’ (ekam) in the form of the unborn (Aja) which supported these six worlds.
²⁷⁵ It seems obscure who performed the tapas. As Max Muller explains, the One was developed by the tapas by its own inherent heat and according to Roth, by rigorous and intense abstraction. These two views are mentioned by Muir. See J. Muir, Op.cit., Vol.V, p.361.
²⁷⁶ As per the translation of Muir, kāma is the earliest bond between entity and non entity. H. W. Wallis, however, is fond of interpreting the fourth verse as the wise find the relationship or parentage of the existent in non-existent. See, H. W. Wallis, Op.cit., p.61. Macdonell considers this Prajāpati as an anthropomorphic representation of the desire i.e. the seed of mind spoken in Ṛgveda X.129. A A. Macdonell, Op.cit., p.14.
the universe remains unsolved even by its ruler in the highest heaven. The 
hymn elucidates the world creation as an evolution in terms of philosophical 
speculation as opposite to the view of a ‘created’ universe. Nothing is to be 
argued against the late antiquity of the hymn. The universe took birth 
‘through a series of mysterious gradual processes’ originated as a result of the 
kāma or creative desire of the One thing.

**R̄ta: The Cosmic Order**

Sometimes, *Rgveda* presents cosmogonic abstractions related with 
socio-ethical notions. Conception of cosmic order as one of the archetypal 
ideas connected with universal origin is met with in the Vedic hymns clothed 
with philosophical speculation. This conception of the world-order was 
illustrated in the R̄gvedic poetry using the word ṛta. The very term ṛta, 
although has been used in different senses, the important meaning in which it 
is mentioned is cosmic order. The cosmic order, in the vision of the Vedic 
poets, was not conceived as a solitary phenomenon. Rather, it was the 
universal principle that holds together the world and gods, and it stands in 
connection with the orderly establishment of the world and the worldly 
happenings including ritual. “In the transcendental sense,” says Jeanine 
Miller, “ṛta may be taken as a kind of blue print according to which all the 
world will be made manifest.” As the source of the cosmic harmony, this 
principle was naturally speculated in connection with cosmogony. Such a 
speculation obviously rules out the general evolutionary approach towards 
Vedic religion which attributes it the so called primitive colour.

---

278 The gods are conceived as originated after the world creation in *Rgveda*, X.72.2, 3, and X. 97.1. In the latter hymn, certain plants are said to be anterior to the gods, by three Yuga-s.
Ṛta in *Ṛgveda* is generally connected with the gods and its significance is expressed in various ways. Even the heaven and earth are said to have dwelled in close union in the womb of ṛta.\(^{281}\) It is by the song, born of ṛta that the Sun shines forth.\(^{282}\) The cosmogonic importance of this abstract concept is fully developed in a short hymn of three stanzas in *Ṛgveda*, X.190 which according to Wallis, ‘enumerates the progressive stages in the growth of the world.’\(^{283}\) Here, like ṛta, satya also is connected with the ethical cosmogony. Owing to its involvement in the orderly manifested universe,\(^{284}\) ṛta is conceived as the first generated together with satya from tapas. Thus, the hymn asserts tapas as the beginning of all.

\[\text{ॐ तत्र ततो राह्यामितिः सत्यसत्यं श्रीत्रत्वम्} \]
\[\text{ततो राह्यामितिः समुद्रस्य अर्थबर्धनं} \]
\[\text{अहात्रात सत्यसत्यं श्रीत्रत्वम् }\]
\[\text{ततो राह्यामितिः समुद्रस्य अर्थबर्धनं} \]
\[\text{सत्यसत्यं श्रीत्रत्वम् }\]
\[\text{धृति धृतिः सन्ततिरूपम् तथा} \]
\[\text{धृति धृतिः सन्ततिरूपम् तथा} \]

(“1. FROM Fervour kindled to its height Eternal Law and Truth were born: Thence was the Night produced, and thence the billowy flood of sea arose. 2. From that same billowy flood of sea the Year was afterwards produced, Ordainer of the days nights, Lord over all who close the eye. 3. Dhatar, the great Creator, then formed in due order Sun and Moon. He formed in order Heaven and Earth, the regions of the air, and light.”\(^{285}\)

The cosmic order (ṛta), the truth (satya), the night and the primæval ocean are said to have originated from the creative fervour. Then, from the watery flood, year, day and night came into existence. With the rise of the new monotheistic deities, especially of Brahman,\(^{286}\) the concept of cosmic order gradually vanished away, as the world order itself was considered as a

---

281 *Ṛgveda*, X.65.8.
283 H.W. Wallis, *Op.cit.*, p.96. In his opinion, it is the only him in which the origin of the world is viewed as a gradual process.
284 “Owing to ṛta, this world is not a chaos, but a cosmos, not an anarchic mass, but an ordered and harmonious whole.” Raimundo Panikkar, *Op.cit.*, p.59.
part of the all governing ‘supreme principle’. The scattered or solitary references about ṛta and also about satya in the Upaniṣad-s point to the period of decline of one major invention of Vedic philosophy.

**Water as the Primordial Substratum**

The notion of the cosmic waters as the primordial element that existed from the beginning as uncreated is pre-eminent in the cosmogonic theories of *Rgveda*. No other element gets such a treatment in the Rgvedic mythology and that is why N. N. Bhattacharya maintains the view that “instead of the five elements of later philosophy, the *Rgveda* postulates only water as the primordial element or matter from which others gradually evolved”\(^{287}\)

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, from the evidences available from the Vedic sources differentiates a distinct type of cosmology namely ‘water cosmology’\(^{288}\) as existed even in the pre-historic times. This archaic speculation, in the words of Coomaraswamy,

“... conceives of certain powers of abundance who direct, or at least symbolize or represent the operations of life as it wells upward from its source in the waters, and of a supreme deity, Varuṇa; but in itself, it can scarcely be regarded as a theology, for it does not originally conceive of a personal consciousness underlying the creation of the world.”\(^{289}\)

The realm of this particular cosmology is very vast as it is expected and it is extended and verily modified from time to time through various literatures of different periods.

The roots of this pagan idea are clearly visible in the Rgvedic hymns itself where the waters are invoked as mothers\(^{290}\) having purifying

---

290 आचार्य अनन्तर्विद्वे अवस्थारताम् कुलेत्तमर्गाय पंचारथसंयम् एव।। *Rgveda*, I.23.16.
आचार्य अनन्तर्विद्वे शून्यप्यक्तः लोकेत्तमर्गाय पंचारथेनादृश्च रूपः।। *Ibid.*, X.17.10 a.
power and even as the primordial substance which existed in the beginning. They are sometimes connected with a creative principle as in the hymn X.129 of Ṛgveda. Even the creator god is conceived as born in the womb of waters. They are invoked as having begotten Agni and Savitṛ. The embryo of the waters is a motif found in Ṛgveda. It is said to have engendered by Apām Napāt. This dogma of generative waters continued in the other Saṁhitā-s and later literature and provides with much more invocations to the motherly waters either for food, good health or sometimes for progeny.

As an extension of this speculation, various gods mainly Soma and Agni are often conceived as the foetus of waters. What deserves special notice is the cosmic importance paid to the plants by parsing them as born three ages before the gods. Even these cosmic plants are said to have sprung out from the waters.

Of the Vedic deities associated with water cosmology, Varuṇa who by his very nature falls in this group, possesses a significant role. In the cosmogonic concepts related to water, the image of the tree of life springing from a navel is prominent. Famous is the mythological figure of Purāṇic Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu who rests upon the waters giving birth to Brahmā from his

---

291 ya aśāsā hya uṣṇe: Śrīma uṣṇe kaścin śrayeṣa katu ya yā: śvetya. \( \text{*Ibid.}, VII.49.2. \)
292 tām aśāsāsa laksā gūḍhaṃdāvākṛta śānta śvetya idante. \( \text{Ibid.}, X.129.3 \ a. \)
293 \( \text{Ibid.}, X.82.5; X.121.7. \)
294 \( \text{Ibid.}, III.9.1; X.2.7; X.91.6. \)
295 \( \text{Ibid.}, X.149.2. \)
296 \( \text{Ibid.}, II.35.13. \)
297 \( \text{Taittirīyasaṁhitā}, V.7.5.3. \)
298 \( \text{Taittirīyasaṁhitā}, V.6.1; \text{Atharvaveda}, XII.1.8. \)
299 \( \text{Taittirīyasaṁhitā}, V.7.5.3. \)
300 \( \text{Taittirīyasaṁhitā}, V.6.1; \text{Atharvaveda}, VIII.2.14,15; \text{Śatapathabṛāhmaṇa}, VI.1.4.3; I.8.3.15 etc. \)
301 \( \text{Taittirīyasaṁhitā}, IV.2.6. \)
The germ of this archetype is found mentioned in the Samhītās in relation with Varuṇa. Reference may be made to the Rgvedic passage I.24.7 where a peculiar image of inverted tree seems connected with Varuṇa.

"Varuna, King, of hallowed might, sustaineth erect the Tree's stem in the baseless region. Its rays, whose root is high above, stream downward. Deep may they sink within us, and be hidden."

Interestingly a great Yakṣa is mentioned in Atharvaveda, X.7.38 as;

"A great monster (Yakṣa) in the midst of creation strode in penance on the back of the sea, in it are set whatever gods there are like the branches of a tree round about the trunk."

It is to be noted here that Varuṇa is called yakṣa in Rgveda, VII.88.6. The motif of the origin of all beings from the creator as branches of him is found also associated with the Vedic Āpām Napāt. Even though this motif in the first stage of its development is devoid of the so called theology; the picture is different in the Purānic literature. There, the metaphysical importance given to the primordial waters was completely taken over by the personal creator and the change was precisely theological.

Numerous are the motifs used in connection with this particular concept and it could be summed up that

---

304 Rgveda, II.35.8; V.2.8. The term Napāt means both ‘offspring of’ and ‘navel of.’ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Op.cit., p.2, note 1. Reference may be made to Taittirīya Samhitā, IV.6.2 and Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, V.7.1.9 also for the use of the cosmogonic significance of navel. In the former, it is said that in the navel of the Aja, the whole world rests.
305 A detailed study of this very image and its transformations in later periods will be discussed in the chapter ‘Purānic Cosmogony’.
“... from the primeval Waters arose the Plants, from Plants all other beings, in particular the gods, men and cattle. Rasa, as an essence of the Waters, or as sap in trees, is variously identified with soma, amṛta, semen, milk, rain, honey mead (madhu) and liquor (surā); there is a cycle in which the vital energy passes from heaven through the waters, plants, cattle and typically virile or productive animals, and man, thence ultimately returning to the waters.”

At the mythological level, the creation presumes a creator who rests upon the waters and a cosmic tree which springs from his navel. This idea is based on the presupposition that, every realm of life in this world is founded on the waters.

**Sexual Symbolism in Relation to Creation in Rgveda**

The duality of feminine and masculine principles which is a fundamental conception related to the idea of creation is widely mentioned in the Rgvedic hymns. The idea of parentage in terms of a world father and mother who produce the deities, the worlds and its inhabitants is the mythological application of the sexual dualism and it is fulfilled by the Vedic seers while conceiving dyāvāprśthivī or the heaven-earth and also the Aditi-Dakṣa as the primaeval parents. The primaevil twins of Rgveda (X.10) Yama and Yamī who are the producers of human race are a part of the Vedic sexual dualism. In this dialogue hymn, Yamī’s sexual approach is denied by Yama saying that they are not supposed to engage in such a relation as they are born as brother and sister. This myth conveys the archetype of cosmogonic incest which has a parallel in the Avesta and suggested by the

---

308 Sukumari Bhattacharji presumes that the hymn belongs to a period when the social taboo on incest was gradually descending on the practice, yet the ritual lingered in the public memory. See, Sukumari Bhattacharji, *The Indian Theogony*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1970, p.95.
scholars as going back to Indo-Iranian period.\textsuperscript{309} The myth of the incest of a father with his daughter who are presupposed to be heaven and earth respectively, is found in some \textit{Rgvedic} hymns.\textsuperscript{310} Later, this myth was transferred to Prajāpati probably due to his increased productivity. His incest with his daughter Uṣas or heaven is treated in the \textit{Saṁhitā-s} and \textit{Brāhmaṇa} texts several times.\textsuperscript{311} The primaeval couples are sometimes treated as androgynous in ancient mythologies and the \textit{Yama-Yamī} episode of \textit{Rgveda} is interpreted as dealing with such a bisexual concept of the creator parents also.\textsuperscript{312} Significant is the \textit{Upaniṣadic} creation myth where Ātman, the creator divides his own body and gives birth to a husband and wife from his body parts.\textsuperscript{313}

In the Vedic mythologies related to creation, when the creator is conceived as masculine, a feminine aspect also is treated. The feminine part is generally played by the waters (āpaḥ). Thus the Puruṣa does have Virā\textsuperscript{314} and Prajāpati does have waters (āpaḥ) or vāc as reciprocal creative forces. Sometimes, earth, dawn etc. also become the counterpart of the creator. A clear treatment of the sexual dualism is met with in the idea of universal parentage in terms of the couples of heaven-earth and Dakṣa-Aditi. Kāma, the abstraction of desire is an importance concept in connection with sexual symbolism of \textit{Rgveda}. The cosmogonic aspect of this notion is clear from the verse of the hymn \textit{Rgveda}, \textit{X.129}, where it is conceived as the seed of mind that evolved in the ‘one’ which arouse in the beginning. The later Vedic mythology often compares sacrifice with sexual intercourse. The germ of this

\textsuperscript{310} \textit{Rgveda}, I.7.15; X.61.5-7.
\textsuperscript{312} Sukumari Bhattacharji, \textit{Op.cit.}, pp.93-94. The author considers Indian mythological pairs Ilā-Ilā, and also the \textit{ardhanāśvara} form of Siva as the continuation of such an application.
\textsuperscript{313} \textit{Brhadāranyakopaniṣad}, 1.4.4.1 etc.
\textsuperscript{314} \textit{Rgveda}, X.90.5.
concept also can be traced in *Ṛgveda*. While describing the generation of Agni using fire sticks, the upper and lower sticks are compared to male and female organs respectively.\(^\text{315}\) The same simile is used in connection with the making of Soma to describe the pounding and receiving portions of the pressing apparatus.\(^\text{316}\)

### III. Origin of The Universe in Other Saṃhitā-ś

As regard to the concepts of theology and cosmogony depicted in the later Saṃhitā-ś, the views shared by *Atharvaveda* deserve special mention not because only of its mythological importance next to *Ṛgveda* but also of the new deified principles appearing in it. The queries about the creator of the world are met with in *Atharvaveda* also.

> "Who saw it first in process of birth, as the boneless one bears (bhr) him that has bones? where forsooth the earth’s life (asu), blood, soul." who shall go to ask that of him who knows."\(^\text{318}\)

The speculations celebrated in *Ṛgveda* in connection with cosmogony are repeated in *Atharvaveda* also. Thus the Ṛgvedic deities like Prajāpati, Puruṣa etc. are frequently eulogized as creators.\(^\text{319}\) And also, the cosmogonic speculations like kāma,\(^\text{320}\) kāla\(^\text{321}\) etc. are repeated in this Saṃhitā also. It is interesting to trace out the journey of the concept of Brahmanā before it acquired its fullest expression in the impersonal form in the Upaniṣadic

\(^{315}\) उनन्तावामव भर चिकित्धात स्वाध: प्रवीता वृणिम जजनाः।
अर्थात् उन्त ब्रह्म भए जस्य जनानुमाणीदानिति || *Ṛgveda*, III.29.2.

\(^{316}\) यदि वहनायणम कृतम्। अनुक्रमस्यामामाधिष्ठिति जनानुमाणीदानिति || *Ṛgveda*, I.28.2.

\(^{317}\) *Atharvaveda*, IX.9.4.


\(^{319}\) *Atharvaveda*, X.7.7; X.8.13; X.2 etc.

\(^{320}\) कालभर नान्तािश्य सेव आयो। निर्तो न मनः।
तत्त्ववल्लक्ष्यायः विभयों गहताः से काम नम इत्यूर्वामामी || *Atharvaveda*, IX.2.19.

\(^{321}\) *Ibid.*, XIX.53; XIX.54.
literature. In *Atharvaveda* B.322 Brahman appears as the supreme deity and it is described there that from toil and fervour he took birth. One of the main deities whom *Atharvaveda* newly presents as creator is Skambha which literally means support. He, as his name suggests, is the supporter of heaven and earth. He shares the features of Puruṣa. Like the branches of tree, the gods are said to be the parts of his body. Thus he is the same with the universe. The abstract conception of breath (Prāṇa) is another cosmogonic principle found in *Atharvaveda*. The whole universe is supported by and subjected to this concept and it enjoys identification with the Vedic deities including Prajāpati. Elsewhere, Rohita is described as the creator of heaven and earth and is identified with Prajāpati and time. The creative bull is a peculiarity of the Atharvavedic conceptions of cosmogony. In one verse of the Samhitā, the bull is said to have established the heaven, earth and atmosphere including the other regions. Elsewhere, heaven is called as father and earth as mother of the creatures. Sacrifice is conceived in the hymn IX.10.14 as the navel of all existence.

As it is observed, some of the hymns of *Ṛgveda* show the assimilation of all things in this universe to sacrifice. The glory of sacrifice could be identified mostly in the hymns of Puruṣasūkta. This concept of sacrifice remains unchanged in the *Yajurveda* also. In the Yajurvedic cosmogonic hymns, the centrality is given to Prajāpati. The hymns like XIV.28-31 of *Vājasaneyisaṁhitā*
picturise the creation of gods, different creatures, the creation of human beings etc. as happened from the stotra-s recited in the yajña. The ritual cosmogony of Yajurveda continues in the Brāhmaṇa texts. Some other cosmogonic thoughts of Yajurveda will be dealt with in the following chapter. Hymns of Sāmaveda are cosmogonically less important as compared to Rgveda.

The above analysis, clearly shows that the Vedic Samhitā-s exhibit numerous conceptions of cosmogony. Almost all deities deal with certain functions in the creation of the world. The existence of the primaeval water appears a part of basic belief. The creative functions ascribed to cow, plant etc. signify the initial level of Vedic cosmogony. The world-egg myth in the germinal form is present in the early Vedic stage itself but has its development in the later literature. The world is sometimes created by artificer gods or otherwise evolved from non-existence. It is also thought as having originated from the sacrifice of Puruṣa. The abstract notions regarding cosmogony do appear in the later stages. In the Vedic age cosmogonical thoughts, to a great extend, are centred around the male gods, albeit feminine principles are rarely seen scattered therein.