TIME IDENTIFIED WITH
RITUAL DETAILS
CHAPTER XIV

TIME IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

INTRODUCTION

Time and ritual are so inseparable that to the vedic thinkers they really are one and the same. There are many instances to show the identity between time and ritual.

YEAR IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

Year is identical with a particular sacrifice. The Puruṣamedha sacrifice is metaphorically described as the year. Its different parts have been identified with the seasons and thereby with the year. For example the first day of Puruṣamedha is identical with the spring season, the second day with summer, the third with the rainy season and autumn, the fourth day with winter and the fifth day with the dewy season (ŚB XIII.6.1.10). The year is identified with Agniṣṭoma (AB IV.12 ; JB II.304). The Sautrāmaṇi sacrifice is said to be the year, for 'year is all' and therefore one who performs Sautrāmaṇi obtains all (ŚB XII.8.2.36). The year is identified with the Cāturmāsya sacrifices (MS I.10.7 ; ŚB XIII.2.5.2 ; GB II.1.26). In ŚB (XIII.2.5.2) it is further said that in the Aśvamedha sacrifice, animal
sacrifice is offered to the same deities to which offerings are made in Cāturmāsyā sacrifices, since Cāturmāsyā sacrifices are identical with the year and thereby does one obtain the year.

**Year is identified with a particular rite.** The year is identified with the Pravargya rite because year is everything and the Pravargya rite too is everything (ŚB XIV.3.2.22). The Mahāvrata rite too is identified with the year (TMB XXI.15.2). The year is said to represent the Prāṇthya Śaḍaha rite (JB II.304). In TB (III.11.10.2ff) the Naciketa fire-altar is metaphorically described to be identical with the year. The fire in the fire-pan is identified with the year (*saṁvatsaro vā eṣa agniḥ*, TS V.6.9.2). Also the fire to be piled is the year (*saṁvatsaro'gniścityah*, TS V.6.7.3). The fire-altar is identical with the year (KpKS XXXI.18). In ŚB (VIII.5.4.7) it is said that since the fire-altar is the year and by means of the soil coverings of the layers it is divided, therefore the first four layers are the four seasons. After the Stomabhāgas are laid down, is the loose soil thrown thereon. That is the fifth layer and is identified with the fifth season. Here an attempt is made to incorporate time in vedic ritual. In the piling of the fire-altar, the sixth layer is the year according to TS (V.6.10.3). Here the mortar is the seasons, there are six layers, i.e. six sets of mortar, they make up twelve. Since the year has twelve months, verily does the sacrificer find support in the year. According to MS (III.4.8), Prajāpati built the fire-altar. This is metaphorically described with the terminology of the time-elements. Thus here too the fire-altar is identified with the year and its various parts are identified with the different
seasons. For example, Prajāpati built the front part with the help of spring, the right side with the summer, the left with the rainy season, the tail with autumn and the central part with winter. The fire resting on the seasons is the year, the head is the spring, the tail is the rainy season, the left side is the autumn, the middle is the winter, the first layers are the first half-months, the mortar is the second half-months, the bricks are the days and nights. This is the fire resting on the seasons and he who knows thus, for him the seasons go in order and he finds support, so says TS (V.7.6.5f) (cp. TB III.10.4.1f). In ŚB (X.5.4.10) the fire-altar is said to be the year, the nights are its enclosing stones for there are three hundred and sixty enclosing stones and there are three hundred and sixty nights in a year, the three hundred and sixty days are the three hundred and sixty Yajuṣmatī bricks and the thirty-six bricks which are over (i.e. more, for there are seven hundred and fifty-six Yajuṣmatī bricks) are the thirteenth month, the body (of the year and the altar) comprises the half-months, the months (there being twenty-four half-months and twelve months in a year). According to TS (V.6.7.3), MS (III.3.3) and KpKS (XXXI.18) the days and nights are the bricks. In ŚB (VIII.3.3.11) it is said that the first ten Prāṇabhṛt bricks are identical with the moon and the moon is the year and the living beings. Here thereby is established the connection of the year with the Prāṇabhṛt bricks. The Season bricks are identified with the year (saṁvatsaṁ vā rtavyāḥ, ŚB VII.4.2.29, VII.4.2.37, VIII.6.1.4). There it is further said that only the Seasonal bricks need be laid for the Seasonal bricks are the year and this built-up-fire-altar is
the year (ŚB IX.5.1.59). Year is the Vaiśvānara fire (MS I.8.6; ŚB VI.2.1.36).

Year is identified with a body and its parts with the various body parts. There are instances where the year is identified with a body and the different rites that take place in a year-long-sacrificial-session are identified with the various parts of that body. The Viṣuvat day which is in the middle of the year-long-sacrificial-session of the Gavāmayana is said to be the body or the trunk of the year and on both sides of it (i.e. before and after) are the two halves of the year (TMB IV.7.1). The formula beginning with the words 'pavasva vācaḥ' is said to be used as the first verse in the Bahiṣpavamāna Stotra on the Caturvriṇśa day in a sacrificial session. This formula is said to be the mouth of the year and when this formula is used one takes hold of the year from the mouth, as it were (TMB IV.2.17). Also in ŚaṅB (XIX.8) it is said that the beginning of the year is the Caturvriṇśa day. According to ŚaṅB (III.12.31) the nine-day rite is the womb of the year and the nine days are the image of the year.

Year is identified with certain time-periods. Thus in ŚaṅB (XXV.15) it is said that the performer of the Viśvajit session has to observe certain vows for one year. According to Kauśītaki however one should observe the vows only for twelve nights because one year is identical with twelve nights. Some Sāman chanters make the Caturvriṇśa day have all the Stomas. Thereby the six-day period is obtained and by the six-day period is the year obtained. Thus year is said to be the six-day period (ŚaṅB XIX.10).
Year is identified with the things used or done in sacrifice. There are instances to show that the things used or done in a sacrifice are identical with the year. Śāṅkha (VII.10) says that Soma, the king is the year. The sacrificer is the year (saṁvatsaro yajamānah) says ŚB (XI.2.7.32). Also JB (III.4) equates the Grhapati with the year. Year is identified with the Hotṛ (Śāṅkha XXIX.8). In GB (II.1.17) the Brahman priest is said to be the year. Further he is said to be the image of the year (sa hi saṁvatsarasya pratimā). MS (IV.8.10) identifies the year with the sacrificial hall. The head of the sacrificial post is identified with the year (Śāṅkha IV.4.18). According to Śāṅkha (III.1.21) the Sāman is the year (saṁvatsaraḥ sāma). A seventeen-fold Stoma sung in a Soma sacrifice is said to be the year (TMB VI.2.2). The year is identical with Bṛhatī metre (ŚB VI.4.2.10). In the consecration of the sacrificer, the Adhvaryu anoints the sacrificer in the middle of the Pārtha oblations, for the Pārtha oblations are the year. He thus places him in the middle of the year (ŚB IX.3.4.18). So also in the course of the Rājasūya sacrifice are the Pārtha oblations offered. Here too the year is identified with the Pārtha oblations and thereby does one enter into the middle of the year and also becomes difficult to remove (for the enemy) (MS IV.4.5).

SEASONS IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

The seasons are identified with the six Upasads (ṛtavah upasadah, ŚB X.2.5.7). The seasons are also identical with the Prštīyas (ṛtavah prṣṭhyah, ŚB XII.2.2.1). The Prṣṭha Stotras (ŚB XIII.3.2.1) as well as the Prṣṭha
Sāmans are identified with the seasons (*ṛtavo vai prṣṭhāṇi*, JB II.108, II.109, II.162, II.314, II.318). The body of the sacrificial post is identical with the seasons (ṢaB IV.4.18).

The seasons are identical with the performers in a sacrifice too. By performing the Seasonal sacrifices the sacrificer becomes a season incarnate (ŚB II.6.3.1). ŚB (XI.2.7.2, XII.8.2.29) says that the seasons are the officiating priests (*ṛtavo vā ṛtvijah*). ŚB (XI.2.7.32) while declaring that the seasons officiate for the sacrificer says that the Aṅgīdhra priest represents the spring, the Adhvarya represents summer, the Udgātṛ represents rainy season, the Brahmān priest is the autumn season and the Hotṛ is the winter. The seasons are identified with the different days of the Puruṣamedha sacrifice. Thus the first day is identified with spring, summer is the second day, the third day is rainy season and autumn, the winter is the fourth day and the fifth day is the dewy season (ŚB XIII.6.1.10, see also ŚB XIII.6.1.11).

The seasons are identical with the Vaiśvānara fire (ŚB VI.2.1.36). The five layers of the fire-altar stand for the five seasons, the fire-altar being the year (ŚB VI.3.1.25). The seasons are identified with the six sets of Ṛtavyā bricks. The Madhu and Mādhava bricks go together and represent the two months of spring. The two months of summer are represented by the Śukra and Śuci bricks. The Nabha and Nabhasya bricks together stand for the two months of the rainy season. Iṣa and Urja bricks are the two months of autumn. The two months of winter are the Sahas and Sahasya bricks. The Tapas and Tapasya bricks together represent the two months of the cool
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season (TS IV.4.11.a-f). Thus the time is mystically included in the ritual. In the Soma sacrifice twelve Season-cups (*rtu grahas*) are drawn. These Season-cups are the seasons as it were (TS VI.5.3.1).

In the Aśvamedha sacrifice too, time is mystically included in ritual. In it the seasons are said to be the limbs of the sacrificial horse (TS V.7.25). Here the Adhvaryu utters the formulae in which he says, "... with the spring season as oblation I consecrate thee... with the summer season as oblation I consecrate thee... with the rainy season... with the autumn season... with the winter and cool seasons..." (TS VII.1.18.1f). Here the seasons represent the oblation material too. According to MS (I.8.6) the seasons are represented by the fuel sticks and according to KpKS (IV.6) the seasons are the big embers. In the Māruta offerings which form a part of the Agnicayana rite the first sacrificial bread which is the seasons is offered. It is baked on seven potsherds for there are seven seasons (ŚB IX.3.1.19). Here too the seasons are represented in the form of the oblation material which is the sacrificial bread. In the Cāturmāsya sacrifices offerings are made to the Vājins (steeds). The seasons are Vājins. Thus with the offerings to the Vājins, the seasons are pleased (ŚāṅB V.2 ; GB II.1.20). The seasons are identical with the fore-offerings (*rtava vai prayājāh, ŚāṅB III.4 ; TS I.6.11.5 ; ŚB I.3.2.8*). ŚāṅB(I.4) says that both the fore-offerings (*prayājas*) and the after-offerings (*anuyājas*) are the seasons and the Adhvaryu by offering the fore and after offerings gathers Agni from the seasons (who are implied to have caught him). The Svāhā-call is indeed what the winter is among the seasons says ŚB (I.5.4.5) (*hemanto vā rtūnāṁ svāhākāraḥ*). Here the Svāhā-call is identified
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with the winter as both indicate the end; the Svāhā-call indicates the end of a sacrifice and the winter indicates the end of the seasons and thereby the year. ŚāṅB (XIV.5) tells of the seasons as being identified with the Pururuc. Also ŚāṅB (XXIX.6) identifies the seasons with the Udubrahmīya hymn. The six Stotriyā verses which are over the Āstācatvārīrīṣa Stoma are called the seasons according to ŚāṅB (XXVI.7). The Hotrakas are said to be the seasons (ŚāṅB XXIX.8). The six seasons are said to be the six Vibhūtis (*yāḥ śad vibhūtaya rtavaḥ te*, JUB I.21.1). The Sāman which is sung at the time of the Avabhṛtha bath is in Aticchandās metre. The second part of this Sāman is identical with the seasons (ṢaḍB III.1.22). Different seasons are identified with the different aspects of the Sāman. The year is the Sāman. The spring is its *hiṅkāra*, therefore the animals come together in the spring continually uttering *hiṅ*. The summer is the *prastāva*. The *prastāva* is indistinct, the summer is indistinct among the seasons. The rainy season is the *udgītha*. The rainy season sings up (*ud*+ root *gai*) as it were. The autumn is the *pratihāra*. Verily in autumn most herbs ripen. The winter is the *nidhana*. In winter creatures are put to an end (*nidhanakṛtaḥ*) as it were. These two ends of the Sāman combine together its two ends being the winter and spring (JUB I.35.2ff.; cp. ŚaḍB III.1.23).

Specific stages in the ritual are identified with the different seasons. Thus for example, for one whose Gharma (-pot) used in the Pravargya rite is broken there is an expiatory rite. In it a pot is made and placed on the fire. When it is placed on fire, then it represents spring, when it is burning hot
then it is summer and when it is flowing over then it is the rainy season (ŚB XIV.3.2.22).

MONTHS IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

The months too are metaphorically described as the sacrificial details. The months are said to be the oblations and verily sacrifice is offered at the end of the months of him who knows this and all that is done in the months comes to be gained, secured and won for him (ŚB XI.2.7.3). Also the months are said to be identical with fuel (KpKS IV.6). MS (I.8.6) identifies the months with the gross embers. The months are identified with the draughts (of liquor) (māsā bhakṣāḥ, ŚB XII.8.2.29). The months are said to be the Yāvas (TS V.3.4.5). Also the twelve days in the twelve-day rite are metaphorically described to be identical with the twelve months (JB III.386). In case there are twelve Upasad days, there being twelve months, then the Upasads are said to be identical with the months (ŚB X.2.5.6). The months are also identified with the joints of the sacrificial horse in the Aśvamedha sacrifice according to TS (V.7.25). At the time of the Avabhṛtha bath, the Sāman which is sung is in Aticchandhas metre. The first part of this Sāman is identical with the months.

HALF-MONTHS IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

The half-months are identified with the oblation vessels (ŚB XI.2.7.4). The half-months are said to be the small embers (MS I.8.6; KpKS
In the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice too are the half-months incorporated. The half-months are represented by the twenty-four Stotras and Śastras in it (AB III.39). Since a half-month consists of fifteen days the fifteen-fold Stoma is said to be the half-month (TMB VI.2.2). The half-months are identical with Ayāvas (TS V.3.4.5). If there are twenty-four Upasad days there being twenty-four half-months, then the half-months are the Upasads indeed thus says ŚB (X.2.5.5f). The half-months are said to be the joints of the sacrificial horse in the Aśvamedha sacrifice (TS V.7.25). At the time of the Avabhṛtha bath a Sāman in Aticchandas metre is sung. Of it the prelude is identical with the half-months (ŚaḍB III.1.22).

**DAYS AND NIGHTS IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS**

Often days and nights are identified with various ritual details. In the Agnihotra rite the days and nights are identified with the fire in which oblation is made and also with the oblation itself. Thus ŚāṅB (II.8) says that the night offers itself in the day and the day in the night. In the Agnicayana rite the days and night are represented by the bricks used for the building of the fire-altar (TS III.4.10.1f ; ŚB IX.1.2.18, X.1.1.2f). In TS (V.7.1.2f) it is further said that while piling the fire-altar the white horse is the form of day and the black horse is the form of night ; the bricks are the form of day and the mortar of night. Therefore when about to put down the bricks one should stroke the white horse and when about to put the mortar, the black horse. Verily with the days and nights is the fire-altar then piled.
As a part of the Agnicayana rite the Adhvaryu holds the fire kept in the fire-pan by means of two (straw) pads. These two pads are said to be the day and night and the fire in the pan stands for the sun. The Adhvaryu thus takes hold of the sun by means of the day and night (ŚB VI.7.1.25). Also, sand is scattered in the course of the Agnicayana rite. Some part of this sand is white and some of it is black. The days and nights are symbolically represented by this sand, the day being the white part and the night the dark part. Further this sand is said to be endless and represents the endless days and nights (ŚB VII.3.1.38f). TS (VI.1.1.7f) says that at the time of the Dīkṣā as a part of the Soma sacrifice, the Adhvaryu purifies the sacrificer with two stalks of Darbha grass. The days and nights are said to be this Darbha grass, thus the sacrificer is purified by the days and nights. The days and nights are metaphorically described to be the black antelope skin. Here the day is represented by the white part of that skin and the night by the black part of that skin (JB II.62, III.358). The days and nights are identified with the fuel (idhma) of the sacrifice (KpKS IV.5). According to MS (I.8.6) and KpKS (IV.6) the days and nights are identical with the expiring embers. In the Darśapūrṇamāsa sacrifices the days and nights are represented by the two attendents. The two attendents are those who prepare or serve the food, the Pariveṣṭri. According to Śāyaṇa they stand for the pair of fire-tongs (dhrṣṭi) (ŚB XI.2.7.5). In the Pravargya rite the day and nights are identical with the two Rauhiṇa (-sacrificial breads) which are offered in the morning and evening (ŚB XIV.2.1.3). In the Agnicayana rite at the time of the Vājaprasaviya libations, the milk of a black cow having a white calf is used.
These symbolise the day and night and thereby are the days and nights obtained (TS V.4.9.3). In the Aśvamedha sacrifice are used the two Mahimans. One Mahiman cup is said to be born before the birth of the horse. This represents the day. The other Mahiman cup is said to be born after the birth of the horse. This represents the night (TS VII.5.25.2).

All the cups have two formulae, an Invitatory formula and an Offering formula. The day and night are identified with these formulae (ŚB XII.8.2.35). The days and nights are the Upasads indeed according to ŚB (X.2.5.4). In the Upasad rite certain verses are recited which symbolise the day and night. For example: "This kindling stick of mine, O Agni" (ṚV II.6.1-3) is said in the afternoon, that is the symbol of the night, for it is said that in the evening they sit around the fire kindled as it were. Also on the second day in the forenoon is recited, "This kindling stick of mine, O Agni" that is the symbol of the day, for it is said, "This day is kindled as it were by the yonder sun" (ŚānB VIII.8). Thus here the time is identified with ritual details through the verses. JB (I.188) says that day and night are a form of the Nārmedha Śāman, for this Śāman belongs to Indra and Agni and also Indra is day and Agni is night. The day and night are the two Stobhas according to JUB (I.21.5). The Viṣṇu-strides are the day and night and the Vātsapra rite also stands for the day and night says ŚB (VI.7.4.10). But further ŚB (VI.7.4.12) declares the day alone to be represented by the Viṣṇu-strides and the night alone by the Vātsapra rite.

The Go and Āyus sacrifices represent the day and night and when Go and Āyus are inverted then the day and night too are inverted towards each
other (ŚāṅB XXVI.2). Day and night are identical with the Atirātra sacrifice as it is performed in the day and night (ŚāṅB XVII.5). At the time of the Avabhṛtha bath a Sāman in the Aticchandhas metre is sung. Of it, the hiṁ-sound is identical with day and night (ŚaṭB III.1.22).

PARTICULAR DAY IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

A particular day is also at times identified with ritual details. According to ŚaṭB (III.1.22) the Pratihāra and finale, of the Sāman which is sung at the time of the Avabhṛtha bath and is in Aticchandhas metre, are identical with the days of the full moon and the days of the new moon respectively. The Aṣṭakā day is identified with the fire-pan (ukhā) since this ukhā is eight-fold (i.e. the bottom part, the two side parts, the horizontal belt or rim and the four upright bands. These make eight.) (ŚB VI.2.2.23). Also this day is identified with the upadrava of the Sāman which is sung at the time of the Avabhṛtha bath and is in Aticchandhas metre (ŚaṭB III.1.22).

SUN IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

The sun is a very important determining factor of the time. Therefore the identifications of the ritual details with the sun also deserve mention. The sun is identified with the Agnihotra rite (sūryo'gnihotram, ŚB II.3.1.2). The sun is said to be the Pravargya rite (ŚB X.2.5.7, XIV.1.3.4-6). The sun is said to be identical with the Aśvamedha sacrifice (eṣa vā aśvamadhaḥ ya eṣa tapati, ŚB X.6.5.8).
In the description of the Agnihotra rite the sun is identified with the fire in which oblation is made and also with the oblation itself. Thus ŚānB (II.8) says that when the sun rises Agni (fire) offers himself in the sun and the sun while setting offers himself in Agni.

In the Darśapūrṇamāsa sacrifices, eleven kindling verses are recited. The sun is identified with the sixth kindling verse (ŚB XI.2.7.6).

The sun is mystically incorporated in the rite of piling of the fire-altar. In it the Adhvaryu lays Agni on the gold plate. This gold plate is said to be the yonder sun (ŚB VII.4.1.17). Also in the Uktam (song of praise), 'uk' is said to be the sun and 'ham' the moon, for by the moon the sun rises (ŚB X.6.2.9).

**MOON IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS**

The moon too is a determinant of time and is also identified with various ritual details. Moon is identical with the Aśvamedha sacrifice (ŚB XI.2.5.1). In the rite of piling of the bricks of the fire-altar the Prāṇabhṛt bricks are placed. Of them the first ten Prāṇabhṛts are identical with the moon. Also the moon is identified with the year and living beings. Thus is here the connection established between the Prāṇabhṛt bricks and the year (ŚB VIII.3.3.11). In the same rite while placing the Stoma bricks, a brick is placed with the formula 'Bhāntah Paṅcadaśah' (The bright one, the fifteen-fold). The Adhvaryu thereby places the fifteen-versed Stoma for it waxes during fifteen days and wanes during fifteen days. Thereby is the moon
included in this rite (ŚB VIII.4.1.10). Of the eleven kindling verses used in the Darśapūrṇamāsa sacrifices, the moon is identical with the seventh kindling verse according to ŚB (XI.2.7.6).

ASTERISMS IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

The asterisms are identified with the fire-altar-building rite (ŚB X.5.4.8). In this rite are placed some bricks named after the asterisms (TS IV.4.10.1ff). These Nakṣatra bricks are said to be lights of the sky and through these bricks the sacrificer gains them (TS V.4.1.3). Thus time is mystically included in the ritual.

MISCELLANEOUS TIME FACTORS IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

The two libations offered in the Agnihotra rite form a duad. This duad is identical with the past and future, with today and tomorrow (ŚB II.3.1.24). Also the Rathantara Sāman is identified with today and the past and the Bṛhat Sāman with tomorrow and the future (TS III.1.7.2ff).

LIFE-SPAN IDENTIFIED WITH RITUAL DETAILS

The life-span is also a part of the time-factors. According to JūB (IV.2.1ff) the life of man is identical with the sacrifice. It further says that the twenty-four years of a man's life are identified with the morning pressing
because the morning pressing is connected with the Gāyatrī metre which has twenty-four syllables. The next forty-four years are identified with the midday pressing as the midday pressing is connected with the Triṣṭubh metre and has forty-four syllables. Similarly the next forty-eight years are identified with the third pressing. This third pressing is connected to the Jagatī metre consisting of forty-eight syllables. As a part of the Soma sacrifice the Aṁśu cup is drawn. After it is drawn, the Adhvaryu breaths over gold measuring hundred Kṛṣṇalas in weight. Explaining this TS (VI.6.10.2) says that since gold is immortality and breath is life, thus verily with life he quickens immortality.

The different time elements are said to be identical with the different parts of the body of the sacrificial horse used in the Aśvamedha sacrifice. According to TS (VII.5.25.1) dawn is identified with the head of the horse, the sun with its eye, the moon with its ear, the day and night with its winking, the half-months with its joints, the months with its joinings, the seasons with its limbs, the year with its trunk and the asterisms with its form. ŚB (X.6.4.1) too mentions the above details and adds a few to this list. It says that the days and nights are its feet, the rising sun is the forepart of its body and the setting sun is its hindpart.

CONCLUSION
The various time factors are identified with ritual details. In some cases it is the sacrifice as a whole that is identified with the time elements and in some other cases it is the particular aspect of the sacrifice which is identified with the time units.

The different time factors like the year, seasons, months, half-months, days and nights, particular days, sun, moon, asterisms, past, future, today, tomorrow, life-span of man, etc. are thus incorporated in vedic ritual through this principle of identity.