CHAPTER 5
LATER SAMHITA

Social Conditions

Family life

Before the period of the Brāhmaṇas the term kula symbolized, a system of individual families under the headship of the father or elder brother. As distinguished from gotra of saints to mean the undivided family living under one roof.

The story of the sale of Śunaśeṣa in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII.12-18) suggests that the son was under the absolute control of the father, but the story may also reflect the father’s heartless treatment of his son. The very fact of the inclusion of such a story in the Brāhmaṇa indicates that such incidents were uncommon and therefore novel enough to be included in the Brāhmaṇa. The relationship between a father and his son was one of great love and respect. They expressed their emotions physically too, the kissing of a grown up son on the forehead, as a token of love, is a custom found in Śāṅkhyaṇa Āranyaka. The father as a rule did not arrange the marriage of his son or daughter. The relationship between father and son was one of great affection. Adoption was resorted to, not only in the absence of naturally begotten children, but also to secure the addition of specially qualified members to the family, as in Viśvāmitra’s adoption of Śunaśeṣa.

Certain special terms show that it was considered improper for younger brother or sister to marry before their elder ones. The brother and his wife played the
parts of guardians of the sister in the absence of the father. Quarreling between the brothers is mentioned. The family was sometimes large enough to include the great-grandfathers as well as the great grandsons. Among relations are mentioned the wife’s brother, the sister’s son, the cousin (*bhrātrivya*), the maternal Uncle, etc.

A householder was supposed to be hospitable to the roaming mendicants, offer them food and a place to stay at night and thus seek their blessing from them. An entire hymn in *Atharvaveda* is devoted to the praise of hospitality (IX.6), and the *Aitareya Āranyaka* also lays stress on it. The guest offering is an integral part of the daily ritual of the household.

**The Caste System**

‘*Varna*’ referred to ‘caste’ and not to colour which is the literal meaning of the word. The system of caste, whose beginning may be traced in the broad fourfold classification of society in the *Rgvedic* age, developed during this period in various directions. Many causes contributed to the rise of sub-castes and other caste-divisions. Occupations became more or less hereditary; as example we may cite the chariot makers, the smiths, the leather workers, and the carpenters. The peculiar family constitution or the *gotra* tradition, whereby exogamy as well as endogamy regulated marriage connections, and whereby a man should normally marry a woman of equal birth, i.e. within his caste, but not of the same gens or within the *gotra*, was another factor in the development of complications and distinctions in the caste system. The original race-feeling or the contrast which the *Ārya Varna* (*vedic Āryans*) felt between themselves and the *dasyu varna* (aborigines), and which was sought to be
mitigated by the incorporation of the conquered population in to the framework of Āryan society by admitting them into the fourth class on caste, left its mark in the shape of the rule of hypergamy, whereby an Āryan could marry a Śūdra wife but the Śūdra never an Āryan wife. This same rule was also gradually applied in marriages between the three Āryan classes, and while a Brāhmaṇa would normally marry a Kṣatriya or a vaiśya girl, the male of a lower class could not ordinarily marry a girl of a higher class. This peculiar feeling as to mixed marriages is fundamental to all caste divisions, and may be looked upon as the third factor in caste elaboration during this age.

It was the third caste group, that of the Vaiśya, which by virtue of its occupations came 'into the closest touch with the fourth caste group, that of the Śūdra. The latter was continually receiving accretions from varying conquered aboriginal population and could not therefore keep up its cultural purity to the Āryan level. There arose, therefore, the necessity of clearly distinguishing the Āryan vaiśya from the Śūdra who was a doubtful Āryan. Evidence of this precaution is seen in the variants of caste names for the last two groups, namely as Ārya a Śūdra, found in some passages in the Taittiriya, Kathaka, Vājasaneyi and Atharvaveda Samhitās.

Along with their functions and duties, the privileges and status of the four castes were being differentiated minutely in the religious and social spheres. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa prescribes varying sizes of funeral mounds for the four castes. Different degrees of politeness are noticed in the modes of address prescribed for the four castes.
The Śūdra class was naturally the hardest hit in these invidious distinctions, but the texts are not consistent in the position they assign to it. The story of Satyakāma Jābāla and Janasruti point to the fact that the dogma of a Śūdra as not being worthy of being addressed by a consecrated person was not rigid dogma and the knowledge of the Upaniṣads was imparted to him. The Śūdra could not milk the cow for the Agnihotra-milk according to the Kathaka samhitā, but the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa gives the Śūdra a place in the Soma sacrifice, and the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa prescribes formulae for establishing the sacrificial fire for the Rahukara who also was a Śūdra. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, however, lays down the most reactionary doctrine. It describes the Śūdra as Yathā kāma vadhya (fit to be beaten with impunity), who could be expelled at will and who is always the servant of the other. It is also declared that the Śūdra has no right of property as against the Rājanya, especially the king. How far these extreme views were actually followed in practice is difficult to say.

The Vaiśya class was engaged in agriculture, pastoral pursuits, industry, and trade, and paid tribute to the king and the nobles in return for protection. A late passage in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa gives rather a low estimate of the Vaisya in relation with reference to the Kṣatriya, when it says that, “he is to be lived on by another and to be oppressed at will”. Although things may not have been as bad as this, there is no doubt that the position of the Vaiśya was steadily deteriorating in this age.

The Kṣatriya class was composed of the King’s relations, his nobility, his retainers and other chiefs of petty states. They fought to protect the country and maintain peace. They received revenue in kind from the people or the
masses (mainly Vaiśya) during war. For their normal or peace time subsistence some of them were probably granted villages, because the Gramaṇi seems to have been more often a nominee of the king rather than a popularly elected officer, and probably the post was hereditary in such cases. Others had their lands cultivated by tenants. In war, the people, who fought along with them, helped.

While it is generally recognized that the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya have undoubted precedence over the Vaiśya and Śūdra, there is not the same unanimity in respect of the relative position of the first two. The more common view is that the Brāhmaṇa is superior to the King, as recorded in the Vājasaneyi samhitā and the Śatapatha, Aitareya and Pañchavimśa Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇa is dependent on the king and takes a lower seat by his side, but is superior to the king. A Kṣatriya can never get along without a Brāhmaṇa while a Brāhmaṇa can, the power of the Kṣatriya is derived from the Brāhmaṇa. On the other hand, the Kathaka samhitā says that the Kṣatriya is superior to the Brāhmaṇa, while the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa rates the Brāhmaṇa rather low, describing him as a receiver, a drinker and as liable to be removed at will. Though this is not the common view of the age it explains some facts very satisfactorily: the fact, for example, that many kings were seers of hymns and sacrificers, and some of them were even instructors of Brāhmaṇas in the Brahmanical lore.

Brāhmaṇas are contrasted with the members of the three other castes as the privileged eaters of the oblation. According to some scholars the Brāhmaṇas were divided into two classes- the Purohitas of the kings, who guided their employers by their counsel, and the ordinary village priests, who led quiet lives. Any one of the ordinary priests could come into contact with the king
when they were engaged in some great festival and could be selected for the post of Purohita, if found pre-eminent and distinguished for his learning. The post remained hereditary. Only if the son was as well qualified as the father. Imprecations against royal oppressors of Brāhmaṇas in the Atharvaveda and the statement therein that kings that persecute the Brāhmaṇas do not prosper, suggest on the one hand that the persecution of Brāhmaṇas was not unknown, and on the other, the gradual consolidation of the prestige of the priesthood. Even though a passage in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. (VII. 29. 4) exalts the Rājanya above the Brāhmaṇa whom (it says) the former can control, the references to the vaisya only, as the subjects of the king (Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa), suggest that the Brāhmaṇa class received preferential treatment and enjoyed certain privileges and exemptions denied to the other caste-groups. The greed and cunning of the Brāhmaṇas and many prerogatives claimed by them are reflected in the Atharvaveda and other texts, but this may not be a true picture of the class as a whole. There can be hardly any doubt that many of them deserved the highest position in society by their character and intellect.

The most glaring evil of the caste-system, namely the doctrine of the impurity communicated by the touch or contact of lower castes (known as “untouchability” today), had not yet reared its ugly head. Restrictions on inter-dining are known, but not on the basis of caste. Great importance is attached to purity of descent in the saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas, but there are instances of Brāhmaṇas of impure descent such as Kavasha, Vatsa, and Satyakāma Jābāla. On the whole it is quite clear that caste had not yet become a rigid system, and none of the three factors which definitely characterize it today, viz., prohibition of inter-dining and inter-marriage, and determination by hereditary descent, was yet established on a secure basis.
Position of Women

The *Atharva veda* is not considered by scholars and historians as the most important *veda*; in order of importance it comes after the *Rgveda*, with the *Rgveda* being the most important.

The *Atharva veda* is named after *Atharvan*, the first priest who produced *Agni* by attrition, brought fire from heaven, gave it to *Soma* and offered a prayer, and thus by inauguration of sacrifice, established communion between gods and men.

Professor Griffith gives a graphic description of a home as it can be gathered from the *Atharva Veda*, and this description throws light on the condition of women in those times. It appears that women did not have the place of respect and understanding as they had in the *Rgvedic* period.

"We hear the benedictine charm pronounced over the expectant mother before her child is born, and in due time when the first two teeth are cut. We attend the solemn ceremony in which the youth is invested with his *tonga virilis*, the new garment, whose assumption signifies his recognition as an adult member of the family with new responsibilities and new duties to perform. As his fancy turns to thoughts of love, we hear him murmuring the charm which shall seal every eye but hers in his beloved's house and enables him to visit her without detection or suspicion. We follow him in his formal and somewhat unromantic wooing of the bride, through a friend who acts as matchmaker; we see the nuptial procession and the bride's introduction to her new home. The benediction on the bridegroom, and the epithalamium
pronounced over the wedded pair. The young husband is an agriculturist, and supervises the work going on his fields. He prays to Indra, Pushan and the Genii of agriculture, to bless his labours, his wealth, family and riches, he desires to build a new house on a large scale. Once the house is ready the mistress of the house brings forth the well filled pitcher, all present are regaled with the stream of molten butter blended with nectar, like this the householder takes the possession of the house with fire and water, the most important necessities of life.”

This was a sketch of the life of an agriculturist in the Atharvavedic period. An ordinary middle class man devoted to the family and to attain the goal he attempted to please the gods in the manner, which suited him, not by performing costly sacrifices or ceremonies, but by humble offering which he could perform himself. This describes the general life of an ordinary man, but the life of ordinary women is not so degraded, even before her birth she is unwelcome. The birth of a daughter is distinctly deprecated and there were prayers and ceremonies to prevent it. There are hymns to prevent the birth of a daughter and ensure the birth of a son.

“Prajāpati, Anumati, Sinivali, hath shaped; may he put elsewhere womanbirth, but may he put here a male.”

The twenty third hymn of the third book, describes a charm against sterility and of assuring the birth of male children. The eleventh hymn of the sixth book again gives a prayer for the birth of a son and deprecates the birth of a daughter, the sixth hymn of the eighth book is an incantation for the protection of a pregnant woman from evil spirits so that they might not turn a male child into a female one.
Marriage was desirable and even imperative for a girl. Prayers in the form of incantations were in vogue for securing a good husband. The state of unmarried girls was not encouraging, they were supposed to be formally married to Yama, the king of the nether worlds.

"Let this girl O king, be taken down to thee as bride, O Yama; be she bound in her mother's house, in her brother's as well as in her father's."³

"She is thy housekeeper, O king; we commit her to thee. She shall sit along with the fathers, until the covering in of her head."⁴

No restriction on the age of the marriage was imposed. The evidences of mutual love between young unmarried people disproves the evidences of child marriages. The rudiments of two kinds of marriages that came into existence later on, — the Brāhma and the Gāndharva- can be found here. The fifth hymn of the fourth book records an incantation to put to sleep the whole household when the lover visited his beloved. Elsewhere we find several references to the love of a youth for a maiden, and his attempts to win her by charms and incantations.

The fourteenth book embodies the rituals of a wedding, and it can be seen as the rudiments of the Brāhma type of marriage. The bride has no say in the choice of her life partner. The parents settle the marriage with the help of friends. The bridegroom comes to the house of the bride, and after the formal ceremony takes her along with him to his house, where his relatives welcome her.
In spite of the many differences, the kernel of the ritual of marriage in both the 
Rgveda and the Atharvaveda is the same.

The idea that a brotherless maiden led a frivolous and hence immoral life has been gathered from the seventeenth hymn of the first book. Sāmana is referred to here too as a favorite festival. To be agreeable at Sāmana is one of the qualifications of a maiden for getting married. The system of giving dowry was prevalent; the value of a wife was enhanced by the amount of dowry that she brought to her husband.

"By this actual oblation let this man be filled up again: the wife that they have brought to him, let him grow superior to her by essence."  

"The eyes of us two (be) of honey-aspect; our faces are as smooth as balm; put thou me within thy heart; may our mind verily be together."

"I bridle thee with my Manu born garment; that thou mayest be wholly mine, mayest not make mention of other women."

Though these two hymns have been adopted in the marriage rituals of later times, here any ritual does not accompany them. They appear merely as oaths to be taken by husband and wife.

Though the birth of a daughter was not welcome, though the status of unmarried girl was pitiable, though she had no say in choosing her own life partner, the life of a married woman was enviable. She was the mistress of her husbands house and held the position of supreme respect. Husband and wife con-
stituted one unit in society, and the duties of each towards the other can be inferred from the nuptial hymn. On marriage a wife was given the supreme place in the household of her husband. She was at the helm of affairs, and participator in the sacrifice performed by her husband. She was his helper in the path of virtue.

Information regarding the legal position between husband and wife is meager. From nuptial hymn it appears that the husband was the absolute master of the wife, and appropriated the dowry as well as the earnings of his wife. The ideal of womanhood was to be good and affectionate to her husband. There are prayers and incantations, which are found in earlier books, for restoring concord between man and his wife.

"Having superiors, intentful, be ye not divided, accomplishing together, moving on with joint labour; come higher speaking what is agreeable to one and another; I make you united, like minded."  

Though a wife led a very happy life, she was always afraid of loosing the prime position in her husband's life, she feared, the presence of a rival, as the society was permissive and polygamy was widely prevalent. There are entire hymns devoted to witchcraft in which a wife tries to get rid of her rival by uttering verses holding a plant. She addresses the plant, chanting verses in which she asserts her superiority over her rival, as though by mere ceremony she could get rid of her obstacle.

References to widowhood are to be found in only one of the later books dealing with funeral ceremonies. There are two hymns referring to the practice of
widowburnig (sati). In the Rgvedic period the widows led quite a comfortable life, as the widows were allowed to remarry. But the situation during the Atharvavedic period was different, the widows were expected to die with their deceased husbands. During this period the general way of disposal of the dead was cremation and not burial.

"I saw the young woman being led, being led about, alive for the dead; as she was enclosed with blind darkness, then I led her offward from in front."

In the above passage it is clear that burning of wives along with their dead husbands was a practice of the Atharva-Vedic cult, and it became almost extinct, and was observed only as a show. This is based on the belief in the continuity of existence of the soul of a man after death, where, it was thought, he needed the things which he enjoyed in his earthly life. This practice is found amongst all primitive tribes, who either put into the grave or burned with the body all the things dear to the dead.

Elsewhere we find distinct reference to the remarriage of women.

"whoever having gained a former husband, then gains another later one, if they shall give a goat with five rice dishes, they shall not be separated."

"Her later husband comes to have the same world with his remarried spouse, who gives a goat with five rice dishes, with the light of sacrificial gifts."

But the society was tolerant in spirit. The acceptance of even the sons of a maiden in society reflects the recognition of the marriage ritual as a social institution. Courtesans were given quite a respectable position in the society.
The extent of freedom allowed in society can be surmised from some of the hymns meant ‘to win the woman’

“As a creeper has completely embraced the trees so do thou embrace me, want thou the body of me, the feet, the eyes....let the eyes lusting for me dry up with love.””12

“I make thee cling to my arm, cling to my heart, that thou mayest be in my power.””13

This gives us a unique picture. It has something in common with the Rgveda, but set in a different background. The Atharvaveda is set in a period prior to the Rgvedic times and it is reflected in the primitive atmosphere of the setting. On the other hand the fact of a few hymns from the Rgveda being incorporated in the Atharvaveda does not empathize with this view.

**Women in the Brāhmaṇs**

In the history of Indian religious literature, the Brāhmaṇs are placed next to the Vedas, though chronologically some of them are regarded as being prior to the Atharvaveda. The probable dates of these scriptures can be conjectured only from internal evidence. Though scholars are divided in their opinion as to the relative dates of the Brāhmaṇas, it has been agreed by all that roughly speaking they come down to 600 B.C.

The Brāhmaṇas are mainly concerned with the ritualistic side of the sacrifice. As the period was marked by the growth of rituals, the position assigned to
women in the great sacrifices deserves attention. During this period, religion and social life were so intermingled that one could not be distinguished from the other. Life expressed itself to a great extent through religious ceremonial.

It is here that the need of women for religious and social welfare first begins to take a definite shape. The eschatological belief that the spirits of the dead would wander as restless ghosts on earth or sink down to hell in default of the offerings due to them had gained firm root in the land and all religious ceremonies entered round this essential provision for bliss in the next world. In all the great sacrifices a certain part of the ritual was performed for the birth of a son who could continue the cult of worshiping the spirits of ancestors. Hence it was thought that one could secure good in the other world only through the oblations offered by a son.

The father pays a debt to his son and gains immortality when he beholds the face of a son living who was born to him.....the son is a boat of salvation. As the sons were sought to provide for the future, daughters came to be looked upon as encumbrances and, however inconsistent it may appear, ceremonies were performed with the special object of avoiding the birth of a daughter. The eagerness for a son kept away all thoughts that the race might become extinct. In the new and full moon sacrifices of the Taittirīya saṃhitā, a ritual is especially instituted for avoiding the birth of a daughter. The Mantra portion of this book has been considered by scholars to be prior to the Atharvaveda, while others do not empathize with this view.

In the narrative of Narada and Harishchandra mentioned in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa the utility of a son is explained with the remarks-
"A wife is a comrade, a daughter is a misery.  
And a son a light in the highest heaven."\textsuperscript{14}

The exposure of female children was one of the means by which daughters could be got rid of. In the course of the Soma Sacrifice there are certain rituals in which the female child is left behind and the male is taken up.

"They go to the final bath; they deposit the pots, but lift up (the vessels) for Vayu; therefore they deposit a daughter on birth, a son they lift up."\textsuperscript{15}

This is referred to in the Maitrayani \textit{saṁhitā} and the Kathaka \textit{saṁhitā}, Zimmer and Delbruck support the existence of the exposure of female children, and whereas Bothlingk dissents on the ground that the custom meant only the disposal of a daughter in marriage.

A daughter's place in a family is inferior to that of a married woman, a sister's place is next to the wife of the man. The Agnimaruta \textit{Shastra} thus explains: "He celebrates the wives of the gods after Agni, the lord of the house; therefore the wife sits behind the Garhapatya. They say 'let him celebrate raka first; a sister has the first drink'. Therefore a sister though of the same womb lives as inferior to a wife, though of a different womb."\textsuperscript{16}

As in the \textit{Rgveda} so in the great rituals of the Brahmanical texts, the role of an indispensable helpmate of man at the sacrifice was given to the wife. During the greater part of the rituals she was a silent partner, but whenever ceremonies occur for bringing about the birth of a son or for conferring blessings on
the progeny, she had to play an active part. Though this was generally observed at the sacrifices, we come across discussions in which the necessity of a wife participating at a ritual is doubted. ‘Should a man without a wife offer the Agnihotra or should he not offer it?’ ‘He should offer,’ they say: ‘if he were not to offer, he would be the mockery of a man.’ ‘What is a mock man?’ they ask. ‘One who suffers neither to gods, nor to the fathers, nor to men. Therefore, even if one has no wife, he should offer the Agnihotra.’ A verse is quoted in support of it: Even one who has no wife, and drink no Soma, should sacrifice in the Sautramani sacrifice to free thyself from debt to father and mother. In accord with this command is this rule of scripture.

The next point to be looked into is whether a widower is allowed to offer Agnihotra. They say, ‘why does a man without a wife offer at command the Agnihotra?’ ‘If one has commenced (the sacrifice) and the wife dies or disappears, how does he offer the Agnihotra?’ ‘The wife is faith, the sacrificer the Truth: faith and truth are the highest pair; by faith and truth as a pair he conquers the world of heaven.’

The idea that the woman is impure when with child, and anything, especially food, associated with her is contaminated and hence has to be purified is mentioned here. This idea that women are impure at certain stages is to be seen in the Zoroastrian scriptures as also in the Hebrew and the notion of purification is to be met with in the Atharvaveda, where entire hymns are devoted to the subject. ‘If one who has established the fires should eat the food of a woman with child, what is the penance here?’ A ritual is prescribed for purification.
Women are forbidden to go to the assembly. This is mentioned both in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa and Maitrāyaṇī saṁhitā. The same idea is referred to in the Atharvaveda. The Maitrāyaṇī saṁhitā places women on par with dice and drink, and describes her as one of the major evils in human society. She is described to be untruth in human society and is connected with Nirriti.

Nirriti is the presiding deity of the Atharvaveda and spells are often pronounced to get rid of her influence. Taittiriya saṁhitā and Šatapatha Brāhmaṇa rank her as inferior even to a bad man. Polygamy was quite common and we come across four names used for wife of a king in some of the Brāhmaṇas. Of these, Mahishi is distinctly referred to as the chief wife, the partner in the sacrifices. The use of the word patni in the singular shows that only one wife, the mahishi could take part in the religious ceremonies. Parivirkti is the name by which a wife is referred to, who has no child, vivatā is the favorite wife and palagali is daughter of the court official.

In the families of kings, the chief queen played an important part in the great sacrificial feasts which were performed with great pomp and under the supervision of numerous priests. She had to be present from the beginning to the end of the sacrifice and had had to take part in all the preparations.

In the Aśwamedha as well as in the Rājasūya sacrifices the wife was considered as indispensable for performing the ceremonies. In the Brāhmaṇas it is different; the horse is anointed and then killed; all the partakers in the sacrifice then walk round its body nine times, saying prayers. All the consorts of the king along with their train of attendants take part in it. A part of the ceremony is specially meant for the chief queen, who is made to lie down beside the dead animal. The rest of the ceremony, meant for the birth of a heroic son is
symbolical and more in the form of an incantation than a sacrifice. The covering of the queen and the dead animal with a cloth and the uttering of verses by priests in ambiguous language is associated with the practice of charms of the Atharvaveda.

Another sacrifice in which a wife had to play an important part is the Varuṇapraghāsa. Here there is a ceremony in which the fidelity of the wife to her husband is questioned. In course of her confession, she had to place pieces of straw on the ground denoting the number of her lovers. She is allowed to participate in the ceremony only after the confession. The presence of the wife is considered essential at the Vājapeya sacrifice. The sacrificer has to come with his wife to the place of the ritual. One of the rituals of the sacrifice was that the sacrificer along with his wife mount the chariot wheel, which is placed on the top of a long pole. The chariot symbolized the sun. The sacrificer, after dressing his wife with a garment of holy grass, comes to the ladder placed at the post. ‘Come wife, let us go up to the sky.’ As the wife is considered to be half of the husband and a man is imperfect without a wife, the sacrificer lends his wife along with himself to the highest heavenly bliss, symbolized by the chariot.

In these two ceremonies the placing of grass to denote lovers and the avoidance of evil and the realization of the bliss of heaven through the climbing of the chariot wheel are typical of the atmosphere of the Atharvaveda.

The fact that women played the role of a teacher is referred to by the Vedic index as occurring in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa and the Kauśitaki Brāhmaṇa. In both these places a maiden is said to be possessed by a Gandharva. As
Gandharva represented a spirit and anyone possessed by a spirit is credited with superhuman power, the words coming from such a person are taken as authoritative. But it is doubted if this can be claimed as a general custom.

In Brāhmaṇa the son of a slave woman was denied the privilege of a Brāhmaṇa, whereas in the Upaniṣads such a boy was admitted to the status of a Brāhmaṇa.

**Education**

With the development and elaboration of the institution of the sacrifice and the growth of a vast literature connected with it, the problem of the preservation of this literature became very acute, particularly because during the age under discussion the whole of it (the samhitās and Brāhmaṇas, including the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads appended to them) was looked upon as Śruti or revealed literature. The Vedic literature must therefore have formed the chief subject of instruction and the vital part of education. Naturally, then, the process of imparting the knowledge of the sacred hymnology and sacrificial ritual must have become more and more systematized during this age. Literary education was transmitted only orally, i.e. by word of mouth from teacher to pupil. We find an echo of this system in the famous frog-hymn of the Rgveda. The Vedic Indians very probably knew the art of writing, but that it played no part in the educational system of ancient India is accepted by all.

The Atharvaveda (XI. 5) refers to a brahmachārin (Vedic student) gathering sacred fuel for fire-worship and bringing alms (begged from door to door) to the teacher. There are also prayers in the Atharvaveda for liturgical employ-
ment at the ceremony of Initiation (Upanayana). Svadhyaya or the daily portion or lesson of Vedic study is referred to in the saḿhitās of the Yajurveda. In the Kathaka saḿhitā, a rite for the benefit of one who, though not a Brāhmaṇa, has recited or studied the vidyā, is mentioned and the well known fact that Kṣatriya kings like Janaka were not only keen students of the Vedas, but also great philosophers renders it almost certain that members of the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya castes received the sacrament of the Upanayana and went through part (at least) of the period of studentship, although normally the Kṣatriya would study the art of war. A Brahmachārin was expected to study Veda, serve the teacher, and practice chastity. The fairly detailed description of the Upanayana as a sacrament (saṁskāra) in the Šatapatha Br. (XI. 3. 3. 1-7) includes all the essential features of the same sacrament and life of studentship which are treated at length in the Gṛhya-sūtras, such as: (1) the formal acceptance of the pupil by the teacher at the request of the farmer; (2) the entrusting of the pupil to the care of certain deities; (3) the vows and duties to be discharged by the pupil while residing at the house of the guru, such as: putting fuel on the fire, sipping water, and begging alms; (4) the dress of the pupil consisting of the ajña, the girdle, etc. The description of young Āṅgirasa teaching his elders, in the Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇas, (XIII. 3. 23-4), and the stories of Nabhanediśtha and Bharadvaja in the Aitareya and Taittirīya Brāhmaṇas, give us a vivid picture of the educational system of those days, with its insistence on truthfulness observance of duty (dharma), devotion to the ācāryas or guru (preceptor) and to one’s parents, hospitality, faith, and generosity. The Taittirīya Āranyaka even anticipates some minute directions of the type given in the Gṛhya-sūtras such as: the pupil should not run while it is raining, nor urinate in water, nor bathe naked, etc.
Women probably took part in the intellectual life of the society, but we have no such definite reference in the later saṃhitā and Brāhmaṇa texts as we get in the Upaniṣads. From the Taittiriya saṃhitā (VI. 1. 6. 5), the Maitrāyaṇi saṃhitā (III. 7. 3) and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, we know that women were taught to dance and to sing, which appear to be recognized feminine accomplishments.

Among subjects of study figured arithmetic, grammar, and prosody (Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa.) Language was obviously an important subject of study, since Northerners are mentioned as experts in language and grammar.

There was then no system of state education. The Brāhmaṇa teachers taught students of the three higher castes at their own houses, the gurukula system giving them free board and lodging. In return, the pupils served the teacher and gave him fees (guru-dakṣinā) at the completion of their education. That the education in this Home University was not merely literary, but also included physical and moral training, is seen from the hard daily routine of the pupil and the code of moral conduct prescribed for him, while residing with the teacher. The pupil got the training to lead a rigorous disciplined life after the completion of studies, the way of life reflected the inner Dharma of the individual.

The existence of Vedic schools in this age, that is, even before the establishment of Sūtra-caraṇas, is clear evidence that even in these early times, centres of Vedic learning presided over by a celebrated Vedic teacher were scat-
tered all over the country. The Sāma veda Sūtras refer to Brāhmaṇa - caraṇas (schools) and as many as fifteen caraṇas of the Vājasaneyiṇś are known, including the Kāṇva and Mādhyāndina ones that have survived. The only saṃhitā - caraṇas known are those of the Bāśkalas and Śākalas for the Rgveda saṃhitā. The separate saṃhitā - and Brāhmaṇa - caraṇas originated owing to a difference in the texts of the saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇa respectively. Whatever we might think of Max Muller’s theory of the origin of saṃhitā - and Brāhmaṇa - caraṇas, it is important to note that numerous Vedic schools existed all over the country. The example of the assembly of the learned in the court of Janaka shows that debates (philosophical and literary) were often held under royal auspices.

Science in the Atharva Veda

Concept of Time

There are no regional or historic eras mentioned in the Veda. The Veda gives a universal idea of time. The time therefore in ancient India was measured according to relative positions of various celestial bodies in the sky. Āryans kept a regular calendar of time from the beginning of the universe. Their calendar depended not on the birth or death of a person or on the occasion or coronation of the king, but they recorded the occasions of great events, by recording the relative positions of various planets and stars. The sky was the dial of the universal clock for them. Veda advises to divide and subdivide time as year and months and there are several hymns, which mention subdivision of time. One of them is from Atharva veda (IV-35-4) which describes the subdivision of a year:-

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“Yasmān mansa nirmitas, trinśad arañh asmvatsaro
yasmān nirmito dvādaś ārañh, ahorātra yam pariyanti”

The year is described as a revolving wheel:-

(samvatsara) the cyclic year (nirmito) is constituted of (dvādaśa arañh māsa) twelve months, in each of which (pariyanti) revolve (trinśad) thirty (ahorātra) days and nights.

In simple words it means that this wheel or a cycle of a year revolves and consists of 12 months, each of thirty days, as subdivisions. The point to note is that Veda divides the year into twelve months and not into ten, as was conceived in the west in early times to which two more months, January and August were added later when their calculations were not found adequate. In another hymn, the month is divided first into two (pakṣas) halves fortnights or phases of a month, depending on the two phases of moon, the bright half (Śhukla pakṣa) and the dark half or the (kṛṣṇa pakṣa).

But, prominently there is no mention of weeks, in the Vedic subdivision of a month. It appears that the concept of the week started according to Bible that God worked for 6 days in the creation of the universe and rested on the seventh day, making seven days a period of time. This division of time was accepted and practised, dividing the month into 4 weeks, thus making a month of 28 days, which later on was modified into different numbers as 28, 30 and 31 days, completing 365 days in a year. The Vedic year consisted of 12 * 30 of 360 days while the modern year is calculated to be of 365 days.
The *Atharva Veda* mentions even the duration of a cosmic day through the following hymn.

"Śatam te ayatum ha ayanan dve yuge
triṇi catvāri kṣṇaḥ"

(ayutum te shatam) hundred times ten thousand and add (yuge) to it the digits (dve) two, (triṇi) three and (catvāri) four (kṣṇaḥ) to make 4,32,00,00,000 (ayanan) years of time. It clearly mentions that the cosmic day consists of 4,32,00,00,000 years and the same period for the cosmic night. The age of the cosmos is said to be 100 years, which will come to 8,64,00,00,00,000 years more than 8.5 trillion years.

Later on the ancient sages subdivided time to even the fraction of time taken by the wink of an eye which they named a *Truti* and taking this as the unit of time, they calculated the time taken by various planets, stars and galaxies (*ākāśa gaṅgā*) accurate to a fraction of a seconds.

Based on their most accurate time calculations, they could prepare a thousand year *Pañcāṅgā* (calendar) mentioning the names of various planets, stars, their exact positions to the fraction of a second.

**PRĀNA** (energy force):

The *Atharva Veda* mentions: -

"Prāṇāya namo yasya sarvam idam vaše, yo bhūotah
sarvasya īśvaro, yasmin sarvam pratiṣṭham"

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It mentions, that \((\text{nama})\) we should learn and properly make use of \((\text{prāṇa})\) various forms of forces, because \((\text{sarvam})\) everything functions by their effects. \((\text{yo})\) They \((\text{iśvarah})\) govern what \((\text{bhūtāni})\) is created and \((\text{yat pratiṣṭham})\) is established \((\text{sarvam idam})\) in whole of cosmos.

Again in the next hymn it explains that these forces function in four fields:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{"Namaste prāṇa krandāya,} \\
\text{Namaste stanayitnave,} \\
\text{Namaste prāṇa vidyute,} \\
\text{Namaste prāṇa varṣate "}^{20}
\end{align*}
\]

\((\text{Namaste})\) thoroughly learn about it and properly apply \((\text{prāṇa})\) these forces for beneficial use in the fields of:

1) \((\text{Krandaye})\) all kinds of motion, rotation, revolutions and all activities on all scales and dimensions called mechanics.

2) \((\text{Stanayitnave})\) generating various kinds of sounds with all pitches and resonance.

3) \((\text{Vidyute})\) electrical fields like heat and light, and magnetization etc.

4) \((\text{Varṣate})\) in all kinds of chemical processes causing compounding, synthesis etc. like the formation of water in rain.

Through this hymn the Veda explains that energy force performs and can be made use for generating various motions like rotations and revolutions; to produce sounds, heat and light and to bring about all kinds of chemical proc-
esses and compounds like the formation of water. Veda collectively demonstrates how the interaction and transformation of energy into these four forms in the description of clouds and rain. The clouds move in from the seas, up to countries from far and near carried by air pressure. This represents motions. There is the lightening and thunder, expressing energy force as light and sound and lastly as Varsā i.e. rain water.

Water is a chemical compound, consisting of two gases, hydrogen and oxygen which combine together under the energy force of electric charge. Water therefore is an example of compound formation under energy force. Water represents all chemical compounds occurring in the world, whether they are physical, chemical or biological in nature.

Through this single hymn, Veda has shown that (prāna) energy, with great potential, performs all processes and actions in the universe. It is under the energy forces that the universe functions. These forces govern and control bodies in all dimensions. Regarding motions-Veda lays more stress on the constant rotatory motions called in Veda, Ṛtam. The very seed of galaxies, stars, was laid by this primary and all pervading rotating motion- starting as nebulae. Veda also repeatedly mentions that creation did not start at the stage of aja, monopole, but started after developing a duality (bāhu bhīyām) like two arms or poles – a kinetic and other static, North and South or positive and negative poles, which the Veda calls man and woman.
Science in the Sāma Veda

Sun rays and Waves

The Sāma Veda describes its composition in the following manner:

1) “Tri asmai sapta dhenvo dduhrire......” 21

2) “Ayam Tri sapta dduhāan......”22

3) “ Te manvata prathamam nāma gonām tri –sapta
pargam nāma jānan.”23

In all these hymns, it is stated (tri sapta) that three sets of seven rays are (duduhāna) milked out or are propagated in all directions. These hymns clearly indicate that there are three sets of seven rays:

‘VIBGYOR’ (violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red) is visible as in rainbow or refraction of white light by a prism. Only of middle set of white ray. Scientists do recognize rays beyond the red on one side and violet on the other side of these seven rays and name them as ultraviolet and infrared rays, but they do not mention their numbers. They also characterise them as having short and long wavelengths only. Veda mentions that there are seven rays beyond the red and other seven beyond the violet (three set of seven) and it is only the middle set the white light, which our eyes can see, the other two sets being invisible.
Thus the Veda informs, us that there are three sets of seven rays and not one set. Each set moves in the core of the other set as layers. The shortest the inner most layer and infrared the outermost layer.

The other difference is how these rays travel. It is usually taught in Physics that light rays travel in waves which are demonstrated as waves with zenith and ebb (up and down) as water waves when a stone is thrown in a pool of water. But the Veda states:

"Ye vāme rochane divo vā sūrasya rāṃisu
Yeṣām apsu sadaskṛtam tebhyaḥ sarpebhya namah" ²⁴

These (rāṃisu) rays, (ye) which (rochane divi) irradiate in space (vā) or (sūrasya) function in various processes of synthesis, caused by agents like sun.(vamsī) They have extreme speed and (teṣām) they are or can be (sadaskṛtam) made to work or create for all beneficial results. (Tebhya) These rays go coiling like (sarpebhya) snakes. In a special way as rotating or coiling.

It states that the mode of propagation of rays is not by up and down motion as waves but they travel by rotation or by spiral motion like a screw.

According to Veda, there are three cores (or layers) of rays. Each set is of seven rays, (k Śūdra) shortest and fastest rays, moving in the central most core. The next set of seven rays is the middle layer, which only is visible and lastly a layer of seven long rays, which are slower than other ones. So in the longitudinal section of the ray, it will be pointing, at the tip and becoming thicker and broader behind like a screw. The first rays, which, therefore, reach
our earth, are the central, fastest and shortest invisible very activating rays. This set has been pronounced in Veda, Uṣā enervating, actinic, stimulating bundle of rays, which are advocated to be, made use of in the early morning, for various useful purposes.

The Veda names light rays as Rṣis, which means, that not only each set, but also each component of each set, rotates in its propagation, like a screw. So each ray travels not as waves as conceived today but by fast rotating motions. This is another fundamental difference in the conception of propagation of light rays.

**Mathematics in the Yajur Veda**

In whatever literary or scientific works that survived from, the havoc created by the foreign invasions, specially the Muslims, who were mostly illiterates, who burnt huge libraries which contained sea of knowledge, we are still able to find how much ancient India had achieved in various fields of science. Mathematics was no exception; the following hymn attests this:

```
" ima ma agna iṣṭaka dhenvah santu
eka, ca daśa ca, daśa ca śatam ca,
Śatam ca sahasram ca, shahasram ca ayutam cā
Ayutam ca, niyutam ca, niyitam ca, prayutam ca
    Arbudam ca, nyarbudam ca
Nyarbudam ca, samudramś ca
Madhyam ca, antaś ca, parārādhaś ca
Eta me agna iṣṭaka dhenavaḥ santu
    Amutra amusmil loke "
```

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This single hymn, the way it is worded teaches firstly, counting from unit to trillion. Secondly counting to (dāśha) ten, it introduces the count of zero in mathematics. Thirdly it gives a table of ten and most important is that it makes 10 as the base in calculations. This base 10 is the principle working in decimal. India introduced system of 10 and decimal system in mathematics, which has helped in highest calculations. Computers are based on this system of ten and are performing amazing calculations today.

Working on this system of 10 and its multiples. Our sages developed very helpful and easy formulae for calculations.

We had great mathematicians like Varāha mihirācāryas and Bhāskarācāryas, who were not only great mathematicians but also great astronomers. Bhaskara's 'Lelawate' dealt on advance math like Trigonometry etc.

The ancient Āryans were well acquainted with Binomial theorem and well versed in Algebra, which they called ‘bija ganita’. They were well-versed in geometry and trigonometry.\textsuperscript{25}

Surprisingly those sūtras work on the principle of ten and its multiples. We happen to possess a few of them and cannot help but present one or two of them and show how they function:-
Multiplication

The sūtra is

“akhilam navatah caraṇam daśatah ānuropyena”[^26]

For example

a) 89 * 94 in these two numbers the base is 100. Find out how much each differs from 100. 89 is less by 11 and 94 by 6. Reduce 11 from the number 94, it id 83 or 6 from 89 which is 83. So 83 is the base, and add after it the product of the numbers which were short, that is 6 * 11 = 66 answer is 8366.

b) Take 788 * 792. The base is 800. 788 is less from 800 by 12 and 792 by 8. 788 – 8 or 792 – 12 gives (common) 780 figure, 800 is 8 times 100, so to get the answer, multiply 780 * 8 = 6240 and put next to it the product of 8 * 12 = 96.

Answer of 788 * 792 = 6,24,096.

c) 625 * 611

In this case let the base be 600.25 and 11 are excess of 600 in these figures. Because they are more so we add in this case as much as they are excess; so it shall become 625 + 11 = 636. As base 600 is 6 times 100, so the answer is 636 * 6 + (11 * 25) or 3816. Add 275 (25*11)

Answer is 625 * 611 = 3,81,875.(digit 2 of 275 is added to 6 of 3816)
“Finding Square”
The sūtra is:-

“yāad enam tāvad ena kṛtya vargam niyojayet”

It means, further take out as much it is less than the base of 10, 100 etc., and put next to this the square of the short number. It gives the square.
Example

a) 8 8 is less by 2 from base 10. Take out another 2 from 8 equals 6 and put square of 2 = 4 next to it.
Answer is 64.
b) 92 it is less by 8 from base 100, removing further 8 from 92 it equals 84, putting square of 8 = 64
Answer is 8,464.
c) 889 it is short by 11 from 900, the base. So 889 − 11 = 878, 900 is 9 times 100. So multiply 878 * 9 = 7902 and putting 11 = 121.
Answer is 79,0321.
d) 512 Base 500. 12 is excess, so add 12 to 512=524. 500 is 5 times 100. So multiply 524 * 5 = 2620 and put 12 = 144.
Answer is 2,62,144.
It is evident how various such formulas work the principle of base 10 and its multiples, and how easy and quick are the results.

Mr. Thacob when he was working on Śulba sūtras, wrote thus:-

“These śulba sūtras, as we have stated before, dated from the 8th century, before Christ.”

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The geometrical Theorem that square of the hypotenuse is equal to the square of the other two sides of a rectangular triangle is ascribed by Greeks to Pythagoras, but it was in India centuries before and Pythagoras undoubtedly learnt this rule from India”.

They also knew the value of \( \pi \).

The old monumental and beautiful ancient temples could not be built far back if they had no knowledge of all branches of mathematics, like algebra, geometry \( (jyāmīti) \), trigonometry and calculus etc.

Formerly, people in the west, represented their digits by lines as in Roman style, but the Arabs after learning the digits from India, they taught the Greeks these digits. Because they had learnt the digits from India they called these digits ‘hindura’.

One can thus infer that India was the teacher of mathematics to the world.

**Technology in the Yajur Veda**

**Military Science**

Technological suggestions are so profusely mentioned in Veda that they are mentioned here only as references. Chapter XXX of Yajur Veda, mentions various technical professions like:-
(Rathakāra) coach and vehicle Engineers (takṣaka) technicians in various branches, developers. (kaulāla) smiths (karmāra) designer and manufactures of various china, ceramics (manikāra) jewelers, (hiranyakāra) goldsmith etc. (īṣukāra) manufacturer of archery (dhanuṣakāra) propellers of various missiles, (jyākāra) specialist of manufacturing very powerful and strong springs, shock absorbers, elastics etc.

Chapter XVI of Yajur again describes various military specialists and special instruments of war. It mentions various fighting contrivances and experts as (tvisetnata, pathenam) experts of making high fast roads (syayo)- tents and other shelter management (uccaiḥ ghoṣaya) loud and magnified sound contrivances, (sahasrakṣa) thousand times magnifying instruments. (Satadhanvane) contrivance of throwing hundreds of bullets and arrows at a time, (bilmīne) experts in caves tunnel making or underground developers (kavachine) manufacturers of strong armour (varuthine) steel plates coverings and protecting agents, (avatya) high way developers, (sarasya kopaya) designer and maker of lakes and ponds and wells. (vidyutaya) electricians (varṣaya) generator of showers, sprayers etc. (vrajab) and (goṣṭhaya) in charge of stables (pathirakṣa) repairers and guards of highway roads etc.. The chapter mentions many other war implements.

Present day impression of the word dhanu and iṣu is that the Āryanṣ fought only with bows and arrows. Iṣu means anything that goes with a great speed and force, it does not mean only an arrow. A bullet is iṣu because it also has these attributes. Dhanu does not only mean a bow. The word meaning of dhanu is any contrivance on which some thing dhā sustained held
and when released, it throws off, with a great force. A bow also does this, but a spring holding trigger of a gun or a machine-gun also does the same work.

In Yajur Veda there are very many manies (usually understood to mean jewels) like Śhaṅkha maṇi, phala maṇi, Varuṇa darbha, Astra maṇi which are supposed to be very powerful war implements. It requires further exploration to understand their real construction and action.

In former times, they differentiated between Śastra and Astra. Śastras were conventional war implements, like swords, axes, arrows, (bhusṇdis) guns,(Śataghnī) cannons called in common language topa. This word also is derived from the root tupa hinsayām which means causing violent killings or destruction etc.

Astra

Astras were constructed and used by mantras, which means made after great scientific and technical research work. Some are the Agni bāna, Vāyu bāṇa, Rawdrāstra, Prājapatyāstra, Varuṇāstra etc. They functioned by aid of scientific apparatuses and highly sophisticated contrivances. They were just like modern Ballistic missiles, atom and hydrogen or neutron bombs etc. they were extremely destructive. The Āryans therefore did not use them but the non-Āryans like the Asuras of Laṅka did.
Veda suggests the missiles, which would kill thousands at a time. It also mentions the manufacture of war vehicles, which has a very powerful and fast fire thrower of firing contrivance.

"Dhūmāgnim para adṛśam" 29

"Make your army and self invisible to your enemy, under cover of thick fumes."

Amusement and Entertainment

Music, both vocal and instrumental, and dance continue to be among the amusements of this age. The Sāma veda is a standing monument to the wonderful skill and originality of the ancients in the science of vocal music. Several professional musicians are known, and the variety of instrumental music in vogue can be inferred from the types of musicians enumerated, such as lute-players, flute-players, conch-blowers, drummers, etc. Among the musical instruments known are the aghati (cymbal) to accompany dance (Rgveda and Atharvaveda), drums, flutes, and lutes of various types, and the harp or lyre with a hundred strings (vana). Many other instruments, of which we cannot form an exact idea, are also named.

The Sailusha, included in the list of victims at the Puruṣaamedha in the Vājasaneyi samhitā, probably means an "actor" or "dancer." There is a theory that a precursor of the later classical drama existed in this period, support being lent to this view by the supposed reference to the Naṭa- Sūtras in Pāṇini.
How deeply racing (especially chariot-racing) had entered into the popular scheme of entertainment is seen from its ritual transformation into a ceremony, which, by sympathetic magic, secures the success of the sacrificer. The essential part of the Vājapeya ceremony is a chariot-race, in which the sacrificer is made victorious. Horseracing was a favorite amusement. A semi-circular course and prizes for such a race are mentioned in the Atharvaveda. A formal race is also a feature of the Rājasūya ritual. The game dice was another popular amusement. The number of dice, the method of dice playing, and the names of the throws are all described in detail in the various texts of this period. A ritual game of dice is played at the Agnyādhaya and the Rājasūya ceremonies. So gambling is probably sought to be restricted by elevating racing and dice playing to the rank of religious ceremonies. It is interesting to note that a vamśa-nartin, “pole-dancer” or “acrobat,” is mentioned in the Yajurveda.

**Food and Drink**

Various eatables are mentioned in the texts of this period. The *apupa* is a cake mixed with *ghi* (clarified butter) or made of rice or barley; *odana* is a mess, generally of grain cooked with milk. Special varieties are those made with water, milk curds or *ghi*, and beans, sesame or meat, and named appropriately, such as “tilaudana,” etc. Porridge made of grain, barley or sesame unhusked, slightly parched and kneaded is called *Karambha*. Rice cooked with milk and with beans is mentioned in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and the Vājasaneyī samhitā. Friend grains of rice were known. Barley-gruel (*yavagu*) and decoctions of other grains are also referred to.
Meat eating seems to be fairly common, as in the Rgvedic age. The Satapatha Brahmaṇa prescribes the killing of a great ox or goat in honour of a guest. Generally meat was eaten on the occasion of some ceremony or other, but such ceremonies were performed almost every day. Its use is forbidden during the observance of a vow. It appears that the killing of cows gradually came into disfavour. The normal meat-diet consisted of the flesh of the sheep, the goat and the ox, the usual sacrificial victims. What man ate, he offered to the gods.

Among the chief products of milk may be mentioned clotted curds (āmiḳṣa), sour milk (dadhi), fresh butter (nava-nita), pāyasya or curds consisting of a mixture of sour milk and hot or cold fresh milk, butter, mixed with sour milk (prishad-ajya), phanta, creamy butter or the first clotted lumps produced by churning, and finally vājina, a mixture of hot fresh milk with sour milk. This formidable list of milk-products and their mixtures shows the great popularity of milk as a drink.

Sūra, an intoxicating spirituous liquor already known in the Rgvedic age, is often mentioned. Though tolerated as an ordinary drink (the drink of the people in the sahā), it is often condemned like dicing and meat eating (Atharvaveda, VI. 70. 1). The Sautramani sacrifice is of the nature of an expiation or penance for an indulgence in surā. The method of its preparation cannot be ascertained. Probably it was prepared from fermented grains and plants. It was stored in skins. The Yajurveda samhitās mention a beverage called masara, which appears to have been a mixture of rice and Śyāmaka with grass and parched barley, etc. Madhu primarily means “sweet” as an adjective, and so denotes any sweet food or drink such as the Soma or milk.
The sense “honey,” though known in the *Rgveda*, is only now its most definite sense, and there are taboos against its use by students and women under certain circumstances.

Already in the *Brāhmaṇa* period, the *Soma* plant was difficult to obtain, and so substitutes were being allowed. For example, the *panchavimśa Brāhmaṇa* (IX. 5. 3) suggests that if *putika*, a substitute for the *Soma*, cannot be procured, *arjunani* may be used as a substitute for the *Soma*. In the *Yajurveda*, the plant was sometimes subjected to the technical process of *āpyāyana* (causing to swell) by being steeped in water, thus increasing its yield of juice. These few details, culled from the texts of our period, supplement the almost exhaustive description of the preparation of the *Soma*, which can be gathered from the *Rgveda* (ante, p. 378).

**Dress and Decoration**

*Urṇa- Sūtra* (woolen thread) is repeatedly mentioned in the later *samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*, but *urṇa* denoted not merely sheep’s wool but probably goat’s hair also. Clothes were generally woven of sheep’s wool. The fondness of the Vedic people for ornamental or embroidered garments was as keen as in later periods. The dress in this period seems to have consisted of three garments—an under-garment (*nivi*), a garment proper (*vāsas*), and an over-garment (*adhvāsas*), like a mantle or cloak. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* describes the set of sacrificial garments as consisting of a silk under garment (*tarpya*), a garment of undyed wool, an over-garment and a turban (*uṣṇīṣa*). The turban was worn by men as well as by women. A royal headgear or turban is worn at the *Rājasūya* and *Vājapeya* ceremonies by the king. The turban of the *Vrātya* is referred to.
The “sandal” or “shoe” was made of boar-skin (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.). The combination of danḍopānaha (“staff and sandals”) is mentioned in the Kauśitaki Brāhmaṇa. Skins were used as clothing. The frequent use of the variant terms for “warp” and “woof” shows the great development of the art of weaving garments.

The pra-ghata or closely woven ends of a cloth to which is attached the trimming, fringe, or border of a garment (daśā) is mentioned. The Śāṅkhya-yana Āraṇyaka (XI. 4) refers to a garment of (dyed with?) saffron. But uncoloured woolen garments are also mentioned (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.). From the manner of wearing the sacred thread outside, can be inferred the manner of wearing the over-garment which probably passed over the left shoulder and under the right arm. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (XI. 5. 1. 1) has an interesting legend to explain why man alone wears clothes. So none but the ascetics could go naked.

The Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa mentions an article called Sthagara, probably an ornament made of a fragrant substance. Salali, the quill of the porcupine, is used now for parting the hair and anointing the eyes. The Śāṅkha or conch-shell is used as an amulet (Athravaveda). The late Śadvimśa Brāhmaṇa (V. 6) mentions the pearl (muktā). A jewel (maṇī) strung on a thread was worn round the neck as an amulet. The pra-kāśa, an ornament of metal or a metal mirror, is often mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas. The pra-varta in the Atharvaveda (XV. 2. 5, 9, etc.) probably means an ear-ring. A niśka of silver (an ornament worn round the neck) as worn by the Vṛāyas is mentioned in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa.
Knowledge of Medicine

The inclusion of a physician in the list of victims at the Puruṣaamedha in the Vājasaneyī samhītā (XXX. 10) and Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa (III. 4. 4. 1) shows that the profession of the physician had already become well established. But whereas the profession was held in high esteem in the Rgveda—the Āśvins being called “physicians”—a dislike for it seems to have developed in this age, because in some samhītā and Brāhmaṇa texts of the Yajurveda, the Āśvins are looked down upon because as physicians they have to mix too freely with men. From the Atharvaveda one can say that although their treatment of diseases is somewhat primitive, consisting as it does of the use of herbs in combination with spells and of water—remedies Indo-European in character—their knowledge of pathology is anything but elementary. The Atharvaveda enumerates quite a large variety of diseases and the demons supposed to cause them. Takman (a kind of fever) is the subject of five hymns of the Atharvaveda and is also often mentioned elsewhere. But it is in the Atharvaveda that its symptoms are described in detail (ante, p. 418). Consumption, scrofula, dysentery, boils, swellings, convulsions, ulcers, rheumatism, headache, jaundice, cramps, eye-diseases, senility, fractures and wounds, bites of snakes and other harmful insects, poison in general, lunacy, and leprosy are the diseases mentioned in the Atharvaveda. The use of sandbags to stop bleeding is interesting. The practice of dissecting animals at the sacrifice was of a great help in furthering the knowledge of anatomy which was developed to an appreciable extent. Finally we may note an interesting remark in the Śāṅkhyaāyana Brāhmaṇa, that “sickness is particularly prevalent at the junction of the seasons”—a very accurate observation indeed.
ATHARVAVEDA

RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION

Atharva Veda Samhitā is a collection of mantra-s, which is as sacred as the other three Samhitā, Rg, Yajus and Sāma. It is divided into 20 books or kāṇḍas, having a total of 730 hymns or suktas or a total of 5,987 verses or mantra-s. Most of the mantra-s ismetrical. About 80 hymns are in prose. About a hundred suktas have only one or two verses. They are all revealed to the descendants or disciples of the lineage of the seers, Atharvan and Angiras. There is about twenty percent overlap between the Rg Veda Samhitā and Atharva Veda Samhitā. (About 1,200 mantra-s). The sākhās, meaning branches or recessions, of the Atharvaveda have two roots and each of these have nine recensions which comprise on the one hand, Paippāla, Danta, etc. and on the other, Paippalāda, Taudayana, etc. However, of these, only two, Paippalāda and Śaunakiya, with their respective texts remain. Besides the Brāhmaṇa, Srauta and Grhyasūtra texts, to this Veda belongs the supplementary Kalpa-Sūtra texts, Śanti, Nakṣatra and Angirasa. More than thirty Upaniṣads are attached to it but no Āranyaka text. It is the Śaunakiya-Samhitā of the Atharvaveda, which is seen as displaying fine editorial work. It is divided into 20 kanda-s or books with 731 hymns containing about 6000 verses. The books are arranged subject wise as follows: (1) charms to cure diseases and possession by demons (bhaisajyani), (2) prayers for the long life and health (āyuṣyani), (3) imprecations against demons, sorcerers and enemies (abhicarikani and kṛyta- pratihāraṇāni), (4) charms pertaining to women (strikarmani), (5) charms to secure harmony, influence in the assembly and the like (sammanasyani), (6) charms pertaining to royalty (rājakarmani),
(7) prayers and imprecations in the interest of Brāhmaṇas, (8) charms to secure prosperity and freedom from danger (pauṣṭikāṇi), (9) charms in expiation of sin and defilement (prāyaścittāṇi), (10) cosmogonic and theosophic hymns, (11) ritualistic and general hymns, (12) the books dealing with individual themes like marriage, funeral rites, etc., (13) the twentieth book and (14) the Kuntapa hymns.

The oldest name of the Atharvaveda in Vedic literature is Atharvangirasaḥ, which is “the Atharvans and the Angirasaḥ.” The two words denote two different species of magic formulae: Atharvans is “holy magic bringing happiness” and Angiras is “hostile or black magic.” The former includes among others formulae for the healing of diseases, while the latter includes curses against enemies, rivals, malicious magicians, etc. These two kinds of magic formulae then form the chief contents of the Atharvaveda, but these ancient magic songs which were originally popular poetry appear in the Samhitā in a Brāhmanised form because of the priestly outlook of the compilers, which betrays itself in the similes and epithets. The gods are the same as in the Rgveda—Agni, Indra, etc. But their characters have become quite colorless, all being invoked as “demon-destroyers”, and their natural basis is utterly forgotten.

Above all, the principal aim of the Atharvaveda is to appease (the demons), to bless (friends), and to curse, and as such it did not find much favour with the priesthood, who excluded it from the sacred triad—the threefold religious doctrine. This was, however, a later development. At their origin, magic and cult both have an identical aim—the control of the transcendental world. They have this essential unity of purpose. There soon comes a time, however, when
the priest who pays homage to the gods parts company with the magician who
is in league with the demons. It is a remarkable fact, however, that in spite of
this aversion to the Veda of magic, the ritual texts which describes the great
sacrifices do incorporate exorcism-formulas (expelling an evil spirit), a magi-
cal rites whereby the priest can destroy “the enemy whom he hates and who
hates him.”

There are hymns of a philosophical import in the Atharvaveda though they are
inspired more by practical considerations than by a longing for the Ultimate
Reality. The hymns definitely presuppose a high level of metaphysical thought.
There is some exaggeration in the opinion of Winternitz, that there is in these
hymns more of the mystery-mongering so characteristic of the magician than
the search for truth that distinguishes a philosopher, and that they do not rep-
resent even a transitional stage between the creative thought of the philo-
sophical hymns of the Rgveda and the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. The idea
of a supreme God like Prajāpati, as the creator and preserver of the Universe,
and that of an impersonal creative principle (which form the two chief doct-
trines of the Upaniṣads ), and some technical terms such as “Brāhman,”
“tapas,” “asai,” are met with in the Atharvaveda. The conception of Rudra-
Śiva in the Atharvaveda certainly represents a transitional stage between the
conception of Rudra in the Rgveda and the systematic philosophy of Saivism
in the Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad.

Modern Scholars

In the modern age our scholars have hardly solved the problem relating to
subordination or ignoring of the Atharvaveda among the Vedic tests. For many
centuries, the *Atharvaveda* has remained shrouded in darkness due to lack of understanding and also a general apathy towards it. However, he who is eager to know the life history and culture of the Vedic society cannot do without reopening the glorious pages of the *Atharvaveda. Samhitā*. Dr. R. N. Dandekar described the *Atharvaveda* aptly as the Veda of the masses.

"*Atharvaveda as furnishing an almost complete picture of the ordinary life of the Vedic Hindus.***"\(^1\)

"*It reveals the religion practised by the common people with a view to achieving very many trivial objects of life as well as getting rid of multifarious real and imaginary calamities.***"\(^2\)

**Significance of the *Atharvaveda***

An attempt is made to point out the importance and significance of the *Atharvaveda*. It is such a vast subject that it will not be possible for us to discuss all aspects of this Veda, but we would like to focus our attention only on those aspects, which are closely associated with our objective.

Originally the *Atharvaveda* is supposed to have existed in nine recensions: *Paippalāda, Tauda, Śaunaka, Jajala, Jalada, Brāhmavada, Devandarsa, Mauda and Caranavaidya*. However now only two recensions have come down to us, viz. *Śaunaka and Paippalāda*. The *Śaunaka* recension is available to us. The *Paippalāda* recension is full of all sorts of textual blunders; it is not accented, it is less correctly preserved, and contains more portions in prose. Even the *Śaunaka* tradition is not as authentic as that of the *Ṛgveda*. 

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Adherents of the Śaunaka tradition are found in Gujarat and Maharashtra whereas that of the Paippalāda in Orissa.

The Rgveda, Yajurveda, and Sāmaveda are mentioned together as the ‘triple Veda’ (vedatrayi). Vedic religion is first and foremost a liturgy, and only secondarily a mythological or speculative system. These three Vedas conform to ancient hieraticism, whereas the Atharvaveda is not entirely acceptable to this hierocracy. Even the present day brāhmīns regard these Atharvavedins inferior to themselves; they do not dine with them.

“\'Atharvavedas tu tryatmaka
eva tatra hi rco yajumṣi samaniti
trīṇyāpi santi tena Brāhmaṇtvam
kriyamanam trayya kṛtam bhavati.’”

The Sitopanisad also includes the Atharvaveda in the Trayi. This clearly indicates that there were some people who had equal regard for Atharvaveda. The Atharvanic ritual or ancillary works enumerate their own Veda among other sacred texts. The Atharvavedins lay more stress on the number four. The followers of the triple Veda, will reach the highest heaven, whereas the Atharvans and Angirases go beyond the great world of the Brähman. The Atharvaveda provides fruit in this world and also in the other world (aihikamuskaphala), whereas the other three Vedas provide fruit only in the other world (amuskaphala).

Atharvan is associated with sant and bheṣaja aspect, whereas Angiras with that of the ‘terrible’ or ‘sinister’ aspect. There is another name Bhṛgyaṇgirasaḥ
of this Veda, the Bhīgus—belonging to an ancient family of sages—are sometimes magnified above others. This Veda is also popularly known as the Brāhmaṇa. The word Brāhman also meant originally the magical power of which one could exert influence over others. Atharvaveda is called Brāhmaṇa because it teaches Brāhmaṇavidya. The Brāhmaṇa is a fourth Veda, it embraces all and includes the ‘triple Veda’ as well. The Brāhman (priest) is a theologian par excellence who knows everything.

Primarily a collection meant for domestic use and for the performance of magical rites, and as a hymnary with an esoteric cosmogony, the Atharvaveda either minimizes the importance of gods or leaves them altogether out of form. The divinities have become merely decorative in function and are non-entities; the part they play is sometimes ludicrous. The Atharvaveda is quite distinct from the other Vedas, and its contents are basically meant for esoteric purposes in the rites of śāntika, paувṣṭika and abhicāra practices, and not for hieratic employment in the Srauta rituals.

We have magical and sacrificial rites side by side in the Atharvaveda. The sacrifice is possessed of magical power, which is the Brāhman. Finally Brāhman is the sacrifice and everything in the universe. There is religious magic or magical religion depending upon the portions of the religious and magical ideas in the rites. According to the Angirasakalpa we can have a tenfold division of Athavanic rites, viz. Rites to appease or avert evil (śāntika), those that are to promote welfare (paувषṭika), those that are to bring others into subjection through charms (vasa), those that are to hinder or paralyse (stambhana), those that are to be wilder (mohana), those that are to bring about hatred (dvesana), those that are to eradicate (uccāṭana), those that are
to kill (māraṇa), those that are to seduce (ākarṣaṇa), those that are to scare away (vidravana). These magical rites give fruit in this world and also in the world beyond.

The religion of the Atharvaveda is aimed at securing a full, prosperous and happy life in this world and also in the next world. Mere verbal similarity is enough to connect the magical object with the desired effect or result. In Atharvaveda the verbal form rohati is employed in a charm to bring sovereignty to the king, the plant apamarga is employed for warding off evil effects and beings. The Atharvanic magic religion can be practised with or without a priest. For example love-charms can be practised without a priest. An Atharvanic priest’s entry into a village would ward off all evil spirits. By terminating the witchcraft of one’s opponents one could attain a full span of life. Atharvanic magic is both offensive and defensive in nature, depending upon the employment. There is not much of a rigid division between Atharvana and Angirasa spells. Through sava – offerings enjoyment of sexual pleasure with women can be attained here and also in heaven. The Vrātyas were originally outside the fold of the Āryans, but in the Atharvaveda they were not only admitted into the main fold but were also made righteous and were given the status of highest divinity. In the Atharvaveda magic and religion existed side by side.

We do find some distinct mythological traits in the Atharvaveda. The sages Bhrigu, Atharvan and Angiras were produced by Brāhmaṇ through penance. Then there were born ten Atharvans, and ten Angirasas. Thus this Veda produced by Brāhmaṇ through penance became superior to the other Vedas. The R̥gvedic deities such as Indra, Agni, the Sun, the Moon, the waters, and
Atharvanic deities such as plants, herbs, amulets etc., possess tremendous power for the benefit of mankind. Plants are to the Vedic mind the offspring and the essence of waters, the embodiment of their curative properties. The Atharvavedas refers to a medicinal plant (nitatnal) as a goddess.

The so-called medicinal charms (bheṣaja, bheṣajyāni) are to cure diseases and exorcise demons. There are many charms against fever and related disease, against jaundice, headache, cough, excessive discharges from the body, constipation and retention of urine, dropsy, leprosy, scrofulous sores, wounds, poison, ophthalmic diseases, sexual incapacity, poisoning and insanity.

The Atharvaveda considers Kāma as the Creator and mighty Lord. The ideal marriage results in mutual love between husband and wife. For commanding or arousing woman’s love magical charms are applied. For winning a bride the priest employs certain charms. The Atharvavedas forms the basis of classification of men as hare, bull and horse. The basis of Kāmasūtra is found in Atharvaveda.

The Atharvaveda provides a good deal of information on statecraft and kingship. The king is vested with sovereignty, and thus he becomes worthy of respect. The exiled king is reinstated as king through the recitation of mantras and performance of the Sautramani sacrifice by the priests.

The Atharvaveda is quite comprehensive in nature. This Veda is the basis of many later classical sciences like the Āyurveda, Kāmaśāstra, Daṇḍaniti (Arthaśāstra) etc. In the Atharvaveda there is a renewed appeal to domestic forces and rites, whose power is restricted in the Rgveda. This Veda repre-
sents the religion of the masses as against that of highly institutionalized classes. It is true that magic like private cult-practice finds its way into the public ceremonies. In the *Atharvaveda* Vedism has become debased to the level of popular socio-religious beliefs and crude witchcraft. In this *Veda* we also get some traces of the arbitrary linguistic signs and secret or veiled language of the *Tantra*. The *Atharvaveda* is rightly called the fourth *Veda*. For the knowledge of practical religion and magic the *Atharvaveda* is of great importance, and it complements the one-sided picture of the *Rgveda*. Many of the *Atharvanic mantra-s* could be very efficacious if employed properly by the proper person. The *Atharvan* priest was a physician par excellence.

**Popular Beliefs and Practices, Superstitions and Magical rites**

**Description of Spirits**

Male and female demons and spirits of various kinds are supposed to be roving about with the object of causing harm to people. A demon is believed to devour the embryo in the womb. *Artins* are supposed to be devourers living in caves. Coming out on a new moon night they cause harm to cows, horses and heroes. *Nihsala, Dhisana, Ekavadya, Magundi, Karsapha, Visapha, Viskandha, Kabava* are the names of certain demons and goblins among whom there are both males and females. *Viskandhas* are believed to be 101 in number. *Karsapha* and *Visapha* are born of Heaven and Earth. *Arayi* is a class of female demons living in the lower world. *Ārayas* are supposed to attack in dreams after assuming the forms of brother or father.
Fire and water in magical rites

Two things, required most urgently in magical rites, are fire and water. The sacrifices, performed for gain or harm are offered to fire. In destroying the enemy and disturbing him certain articles e.g. husk, the inner leaf of a *Palāśa* tree are consigned to fire. *Kravyada* (carnivorous) fire is used in certain magical rites. This fire magically kindled, was designed to cause consumption and other fatal diseases to the enemy or to kill him. Lead, *masa* cereal, *ghee* black sheep, dry cane, *tila*, wood etc are offered to this fire. This fire is kept always burning at the funeral sites. If not properly extinguished, it enters the house, the cowsheds and does a lot of harm. This fire is supposed to manifest the demons, and various other evil spirits. Fire, pleased by sacrifices connected with *abhicara*, is supposed to depute, for the benefit of the sacrificer, a female oppressive demon, having teeth to destroy evil forces, and thus protects the sacrificer.

Initiation to magical rites.

Consecrated water, sometimes called *Udavarja*, appears to have been used against the enemy. Certain *mantra-s* and consecrated water were also believed to revive a man about to die or to render a man free from disease.

The performer of magical rites appears to have undergone regular initiation. The initiated person had to wear a girdle. When consecrated, the girdle becomes powerful and imparts great power to the person wearing it.
Dreams, remedies against bad dreams

The people of this age appear to take dreams very seriously. Bad dreams are supposed to forebode a coming danger or even death. These are supposed to be the offspring of such female deities as Grahi, Nirrti, Abhuti, and Nirbhuti Parabhūti etc. According to some, a part of the 16th Kanda has to be repeatedly recited before going to bed at night; this is supposed to avert evil dreams. Water consecrated with certain mantra-s, is also supposed to destroy bad dreams. The recitation of the Atharvaveda is believed to divert bad dreams to undesirable persons.

"We know, O Sleep, thy birth, thou art the son of the divine women-folk, the instrument of Yama (death)! Thou art the ender, thou art death! Thus do we know thee, O Sleep: do thou, O Sleep, protect us from evil dreams!"

"As one pays off a sixteenth, an eighth, or an (entire) debt, thus do we transfer every evil dream upon our enemy."

Magic in Agriculture

It is not surprising that, in a society where belief in supernatural forces was so common, mantra-s and prayers should be used for ensuring safety in agricultural operations and the security of the crops. Agriculture, was indeed the principal means of livelihood. Hence we find prayers for the prevention of drought, mischievous insects etc in short, all that impedes the growth of grain. Prayers are also found for timely rainfall and favorable climate. There are rites
related to almost every agricultural operation, e.g. ploughing, sowing seeds, harvesting, security of crops against rats, locusts, worms etc., caring for sick cows, ensuring the birth of good calves, protection of the cow pen. We also find amulets to be tied to cattle.

The wearing of an amulet, made of munja (grass), and the drinking of muddy water are prescribed as remedies against certain diseases, e.g. fever, involuntary passing of urine, stool. For preventing the flow of blood, the spot of the wound is to be consecrated with a stick having five joints. Cow’s horn, called visanika, consecrated with mantra-s, is regarded as a great curative in cases of excessive hemorrhage.

Many drugs are supposed to be effective only when consecrated by mantra-s. For example, in connection with the joining of bones with bones, flesh with flesh and marrow with marrow, the creeper, called Rohini also called Arundhati and Lākṣa, is to be used after consecrating it with mantra-s. The Visanika, as stated above, is to be rendered potent by mantra-s. It appears that magical mantra-s make obstructed urine flow. Aggressive witchcraft is referred to in such expressions as Kṛtya Angirasaḥ and Praticino Angirasaḥ etc.

Priest as possessor of supernatural powers

The priest was supposed to possess supernatural powers, and it appears that many diseases were supposed to be cured by the healing touch of the priest. Some diseases were supposed to be caused as a result of sin, and Vata was invoked for healing the same. The blessings and the mantra-s, uttered by the priest, were also supposed to have marvelous healing effects. The priest’s
assurance to the patient that he is going to take away the malady, was on assurance that appears to have gone a long way in boosting the morale of the patient. This is something like faith-cure or cure by exerting will-power. The disease, called jalodara, commonly known as udari (accumulation of water within the belly, which is swollen) was supposed to be caused as a result of the transgression of the laws of god Varuṇa. A superstitious practice for curing this disease was as follows: the herbs concerned were taken near water the severed heads of a sheep and a dog were thrown into water and finally human hair was tied on a bamboo top along with an old shoe.

**Magical rites for victory in war**

Magical rites were performed even for the purpose of victory in war. The weapons of war were consecrated with mantra-s. It was believed that, by this act, the weapons were made more potent. Atharvaveda mentions the practice of wearing a tailsman of the Aśvattha tree grown with the Khadira tree. This armour, soaked in Ingudi oil, was supposed to act as fetters to the enemy. It was placed on the vital part of the chest of an effigy of the enemy, made of Kuśa grass. The process was believed to ensure the destruction of the enemy.

**Magic in politics: Kings**

It is interesting to note that even politics and statecraft were not unmixed with magical rites. Certain rites are prescribed to ensure loyalty among the subjects, the acquisition of a vast kingdom, sovereignty etc. The Śāstras dealing with politics and statecraft, point out the dangers besetting the life of a king at every step. Injury might be caused in various ways to the king in his bedcham-
ber, at dinner etc., so, protective measures were prescribed. In the *Atharvaveda* we find that, before the king’s entry into the bedroom, the priest is found to make an image of Rātri (Night) and make offerings to various deities; this was believed to ensure the personal protection of the king. Similar rites appear to have been performed before the king’s entrance into a new city. Some other amulets for the king were also prescribed. These were supposed to destroy enemies and to cause prosperity to the kingdom. Such amulets are as follows: made from *parṇa* or *Palāśa*, one named *abhivartamani*, one made of gold. In every case, the amulet was, of course, consecrated by *mantra*-s. In fact, *mantra*-s were supposed to impart extraordinary powers to amulets. It may be argued that what was done in the palace or in connection with the king does not belong to folklore. But, that popular beliefs creep into the royal household is evidenced by such practices. That is why the above customs have been included in folklore.

**Magic in delivery case**

*Mantra*-s and magical rites appear to have been resorted to even for ensuring the safe delivery of children. Evil spirits were supposed to devour or kill the fetus. The remedy was supposed to lie in tying white or yellow oil-seeds in the border of the lower garment of the pregnant woman. It appears that, by a *mantra*, certain kinds of fever, particularly those caused by exposure, were asked to go to frogs. Frogs, living in water, were perhaps believed to cause fever resulting from cold.

The process of curing jaundice is amusing. The priest was supposed to transfer this disease to the sun, the parrot and certain other birds. The priest used to
cover the body of the patient with the red leather of a cow or bull so that the patient might regain his former appearance of complexion.

It appears that offerings were respectively made to a red bull born at a time when the weather was cloudy with lightning and flashes or stormy wind. This was done to rid a man of fever, headache and cold resulting from exposure to rain; these diseases were supposed to be caused by bulls described above.

Snake bite and its cure

Fear of snakebite appears to have been widespread. This is but natural in an age in which the people were mainly agricultural and pastoral. Magical rites and formula were designed both for preventing snakebite and for curing people of its dangerous effects. The *Atharvaveda* was used with a view to shutting the mouth of the snake for good so that it could never bite anybody. With mantra-s the teeth, jaws and tongue of serpents could be crushed. These were supposed to be divine beings so that they could be appeased with salutations. The virulence of their poison was believed to be mitigated by the proper mention of their names, class and gotra. Magical rites were also believed to render them important and poisonous. The recitation of sūktas was believed to render beds, houses and fields free from serpents. A line was also drawn with a view to keeping off the serpents beyond the line. It also describes a magical practice designed to deprive the serpents of their poison and to transfer the poison, affecting a person, to the snake that had bitten him. We find that the following things were supposed to burn a snake to death: darbha grass, horse-tail, the tail of some uncouth animal and a seat on a chariot. The person, counteracting the effect of snakebite, was believed, with the help of mantra-s, to draw out
the poison and to wash it off in the river; thereafter the snake concerned was supposed to die. It was thought that the poison would return to the very snake, which bit a person, if it were killed.

"With my eye do I slay thy eye, with poison do I slay thy poison. O serpent, die, do not live; back upon thee shall thy poison turn!"6

"O kairâta, speckled one, upatrinya (grass-dweller?), brown one, listen to me; ye black repulsive reptiles, (listen to me)! Do not stand upon the ground of my friend; cease with your poison and make it known (to people?)!"7

**Baldness and its cure**

Some effects, connected with the Sami tree, were supposed to cause loss of hair. For preventing the loss of hair one had to pray to the Sami tree.

"O ye wealthy, irresistible (plants), ye do generously bestow benefits. And ye strengthen the hair, and, moreover, promote its increase."8

"As a goddess upon the goddess earth thou wast born, O plant! We dig thee up, O nitatni, that thou mayest strengthen (the growth) of the hair."9

**Miscellaneous beliefs and practices**

A son might be obtained through the grace of the departed ancestors invoked at the offering for the dead. The offerer's wife to ensure the birth of a son may eat a lump of food offered to them. In Nriti Karman, grain is offered to the
goddess of misfortune with the recitation of the specific mantra-s while having tied a hook to the left leg of a raven and a rice-cake to the hook, the priest causes the bird to fly never to return; this is done with the recitation. Then he puts on a blue dress covered with a red one and having wrapped round it a white cloth as a turban he recites. Next he brings down the turban with a hook, and throws it into water along with the hook with his left hand. The red raiment and the dark one are cast into water while reciting.

A mental attitude which deprecated the birth of a daughter reflects a strong desire for a male child. The curious custom of women dancing around the funeral pyre with disheveled hair and lamenting while beating their breasts, as a sign of mourning. There was the practice of marking the cattle, and a charm for protecting the cattle against worms. It is interesting to note that the practice of naming the cattle was also prevalent. God Rudra was supposed to slay cows. There is also a prayer to Him for sparing the animals. The Wind-god was believed to be with the cattle when they were away from home.

Certain practices, in connection with the cure of some diseases are interesting. The frog was used in the treatment of fever. Yellow birds appear to have been useful in curing jaundice. To nullify the effects of poison the insects, called Paidva, was used. The fever was transferred to frogs. Jaundice could be driven away to yellow birds. For the cure of certain eye-diseases, amulets, made of oil seed plants, were soaked in mustard oil.
Ideas and practices relating to marriage

In the *Atharvavedic* society, the marriage of the younger brother and sister before the elder brother and sister respectively is supposed to be a sin, which has to be atoned for. The marriage of the younger brother before the elder taints both with sin which, in the form of fetters, is cast into the foam of water, it thus vanishes. The sin of untruth is atoned by washing the mouth for three years. Willful abortion is a source of great sin. The gravest of sins is adultery with *Brāhmaṇa's* wife as also the theft of his cow. Non-repayment of debt was supposed to be extremely sinful, so much so that the gates of heaven were supposed to have been closed to one dying in debt. By carrying fire around one can remove the evil brought about by an ominous bird. It is curious that, according to the *Atharvaveda* sin can be transferred into a person, independently of his volition, by an extraneous source like an infectious disease. For example, the bird of *Nirṛti*, bearing sin, can transmit it to a person. The laments of women over the dead in the house is supposed to cause sin. Sin could transfer to a person from his father or other relatives. Sometimes prayers are offered for redeeming one from sin.

A few interesting practices are noted. One is to recite certain *mantra*-s if the bridal car needs repair and to ward off evil when the procession passes past a huge tree. On reaching the house, the bride takes on her lap a *brāhmins* boy; this is supposed to ensure the birth of a male child.

"Through this oblation, that causes prosperity, may this man flourish anew; may he excel the wife that they have brought to him with his sap!"\(^{10}\)
"May he excel in strength, excel in royalty! May this couple be inexhaustible in wealth that bestows thousand fold lustre!"\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{Birth of a girl:}

It is noted that generally all the people expect a boy from a pregnant woman. The \textit{Atharvaveda} is no exception to it. A deep desire to have a boy is invoked in the hymns of the \textit{Atharvaveda}, The \textit{Atharvaveda} seer Brāhma says:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Pumamsam putram janaya tam pumananu jayatam}
\textit{Bhavasi putranam mata jatanam janayasca yan.}\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Please give birth to a male child and then the boys should be born from you one after the another. You would be the mother of the us who have taken birth and of those who have to take birth from you.

\textbf{Science in \textit{Atharvaveda}}

The term \textit{Rasāyana}, which is taken as the equivalent of chemistry in the modern sense, has been employed in the \textit{Atharvaveda} to mean the science of medicine that puts off old age and cures diseases. \textit{Rasa} is identified as water (sap). Water was the most important of chemicals and had a unique place in curative medicine. It contains medicine, it is immortalizing. Even herbs are medicinal because of the water content.

Gold is identified with light and is a symbol of the sun, and of purity and immortality. Figurines of gold were employed in the rituals for the removal of
evil spirits. It was the practice to put gold in the mouth, nostrils, eyes and ears of the dead, a practice prevalent even to day. Gold was used as an amulet, as also silver, copper and lead. It was the belief that materials used as amulets could transmit, by their living force, to the wearer, by contact, the properties associated with them. Lead symbolized the head of a demon. It had the capacity to ward off evil. The performer of a sacrifice had a silver discus under his left foot as a charm against death and a gold one under his right foot to protect him against lightning.

Reference is found to bronze, tin and (with some doubt) iron. The Vedic period is also supposed to be the beginning of the Iron Age in India. It would appear that from a material angle and from the modern standpoint, the Vedic period was not one of great progress in chemical science, as compared to the period preceding it, in as much as not many materials of chemical interest came into human ken and use during the period. The era does however mark a beginning with regard to the science of Āyurveda, which some people regard even as subsidiary to the Vedas. The Atharvaveda even though a mine of oṣadhi, is one covered with a vast jungle of demonology and spiritcraft. It required the hands of a Caraka and a Śuśruta to clear it up and unearth its valuable contents and to put them to use for their intrinsic merits. The science of Āyurveda was to attain its stature a 1000 years after the Vedic times.

A Comparative account of folk elements in Atharvaveda and Rgveda

A bulk of the Atharvaveda comprises Rgveda hymns. But, we breathe a considerably different atmosphere in the Atharvaveda. In short we can say that, while the Rgveda is priestly, the Atharvaveda is popular. We shall briefly
institute a comparison between the two Samhitās from the point of view of the folk elements revealed in them. While the hymns of the Rgveda are generally pure and simple prayers, those of the Atharvaveda are in many cases, used as charms or spells for both defensive and offensive purposes.

**Priest in Rgveda and Atharvaveda**

In the Rgveda, the priest was engaged mainly in the performance of sacrifices. In very few cases, the Rgveda associates the priest with magic. In the Atharvaveda, the priest was also a master of magical rites. He was so powerful that even his touch was regarded as a healing balm to the diseased. He could control the favourable and hostile forces with charms and spells. In the Atharvaveda, the Brāhman priest was so important that Soma was supposed to have given him the right of first mating with every woman. His cow was very sacred. He alone was considered to be the fittest person to take charge of a cow that gives birth to calves.

**Black magic more prominent in Atharvaveda than in Rgveda**

Black magic, designed to cause harm and even death to others, was not prominent in the Rgveda; whereas in the Atharvaveda it became a part and parcel of life. We find such magic practised by all classes of people, the agriculturist, the industrialist, the householder and even the King.
Asura in Rgveda and Atharvaveda

While Asura stands for gods in the earlier parts of the Rgveda., this term was used in Atharvaveda to denote demons, the enemies of gods.

"Do ye well offer within the fire this oblation with ghee, that destroys the spook! Do thou, O Agni, burn from afar against the Rakshas, (but) our houses thou shalt not consume!" 13

Atharvaveda and Āyurveda

The Atharvaveda. devotes considerable space and importance to the healing of diseases by means of charms and drugs. This laid the foundation of the future Indian medical science Āyurveda. Thus, it makes an advance upon the Rgveda.

Atharvaveda and Upaniṣads

In philosophical ideas it marks an advance upon the Rgveda., and to a great extent, paves the way for the Upaniṣadic ideas chiefly relating to Brāhmaṇ, Ātman, the other worlds, transmigration of soul, doctrine of Karman etc.

Apsaras more prominent in Atharvaveda

The Apsarases were more prominent in the Atharvaveda than in the Rgveda, their habitat and characteristics show considerable divergence from those in the earlier Samhitā. They were water nymphs of the celestial region in the
Rgveda, in the Atharvaveda, their sphere of activity has extended to the terrestrial region. Besides water, they were also supposed to reside in trees, particularly the nyagrodha (banyan) and aśvattha (fig tree) in which they played on lutes and cymbals. Along with their consorts, the Gandharvas, they were petitioned to be favorable to a wedding party passing by their sylvan abodes. The additional traits of Apsarases in the Atharvaveda were that they like dice, and bring luck at dice play. From the Atharvaveda we learn that the nymphs cause mental disorder and that magic could be employed to counteract their influence. In the Rgveda, apya yosa (lady of water) is stated to be the wife of the Gandharva; apya yosa probably denotes Apsaras (lit. one who moves about in the waters). In the Atharvaveda, Apsaras are unequivocally called wives of Gandharvas, their relationship with the latter has assumed the nature of a formula. While the Rgveda. mentions the name of only Urvaśī as a nymph, the Atharvaveda mentions the names; Ugrajit, Ugrampasya, Rastrabhṛt.

Position of Brāhmaṇaṣ
do

In comparison with the Rgveda, the Atharvaveda reveals a more exalted position of the Brāhmaṇaṣ. As stated above, the priest in the Atharvaveda had a far greater capacity for healing diseases and for performing magical rites. His very touch had a magic effect. Unlike the Rgveda, the Atharvaveda looks upon the theft of a Brāhman’s cow or adultery with a Brāhman’s wife as the gravest of sins. In this respect, the Atharvaveda appears to foreshadow the Smṛti injunctions, which attach greater importance to the possessions of a Brāhmaṇa. The king who opposed Brāhmaṇaṣ, has been condemned in the Atharvaveda. The several rights and privileges, enjoyed by Brāhmaṇaṣ are stated in several passages of Atharvaveda.
Satidāha

Satidāha is taken by some to hint at the practice of burning the widow with the body of her husband; at the same time it appears to indicate that the relatives tried to prevent her from self-immolation. The passages, however, do not throw clear light on the matter. There is nothing in the Atharvaveda to substantiate the prevalence of this practice. Such a custom may have been prevalent, but it was abolished by Brāhmaṇas and was replaced by placing the widow in the charge of her brother or some other relative of the dead.
Sāma Veda

Religious Condition

Introduction

“tasmādricah sāma yajūṃshi
dikṣhā yajñāśca sarve kratavo dakshināścha,
samvatsarashca yajamānashca lokāḥ
somo yatra pavate yatra sūryaḥ.”

“From Him are the hymns of the RgVeda,- the Sāma and the Yajur, initiation, and all sacrifices and works of sacrifice, and dues given, the year and the giver of the sacrifice and the worlds, on which the moon shines and the sun.”

The Sāma Veda contains the melodies or music for the chants used from the Rgveda for the sacrifices; almost all of its written verses are traceable to the Rgveda, mostly the eighth and ninth books and most of them are dedicated to Indra, Agni, or Soma. These are considered the origin of Indian music and probably stimulated great artistry to make the sacrifices worthwhile to their patrons who supported the priests. The Sāma Veda helped to train the musicians and functioned as a hymnal for the religious rites. The priests were specializing in different parts of the sacrifices as professional musicians. Historians hold the Viṣṇupurāṇa as the most authentic among the eighteen puranas. According to the Viṣṇupurāṇa, kandarṣi Jaimini, disciple of maharṣi VedaVyāsa, studied the Sāmaveda and divided it into two parts. Jaimini taught one part to his son Sumanthu and the other part to his grandson Sukarma.
The word Sāma means pleasant, dear or benign words. Song is also known as Sāma. The Sāma finds mention after the Rg and Yajur in a majority of vedic scriptures. But one particular mantra in Rgveda cites the Sāma even before the Rgveda. Therefore, it would be a futile endeavour to determine the chronological order of the Vedas. Infact, all the Vedas are independent and eternal.

Indra in becoming the Angiras, becomes Marutwan, possessed of or companioned by the Maruts, and these Maruts, luminous and violent gods of the storm and the lightning, uniting in themselves the vehement power of Vayu, the Wind, the Breath, the Lord of Life and the force of Agni, the Seer-Will, are therefore seers who do the work by the knowledge, kavyo vidmaná apasah, as well as battling forces who by the power of the heavenly breath and the heavenly lightning overthrow the established things, the artificial obstructions, kritrimâni rodhâmsi, in which the sons of Darkness have entrenched themselves, and aid Indra to overcome Vritra and the Dasyus. They seem to be in the esoteric Veda the Life-Powers that support by their nervous or vital energies the action of the thought in the attempt of the mortal consciousness to grow or expand itself into the immortality of the Truth and Bliss. In any case, they also are described as acting with the qualities of the Angiras (angirasvat). O young and seers and powers of the sacrifice, Maruts, come uttering the word to the high place (or desirable plane of earth or the hill, adhi sânu prishneh, which is probably the sense of varasyám), powers increasing, rightly moving (on the path, gátu) like the Angiras, give joy even to that which is not illumined (acitraṁ, that which has not received the varied light of the dawn, the night of our ordinary darkness). We see here the same characteristics of the Angiras action, the eternal youth and force of Agni (agne yavishtha), the possession and utterance of the Word, the seerhood, the doing of the work of sacrifice,
the right movement on the great path which leads as we shall see to the world of the Truth, to the vast and luminous bliss. The Maruts are even said to be as it were

"Angirases with their Sāma hymns, they who take all forms," vishvarūpā angiraso na sāmabhīḥ."²

"tatrāparā ṛgvedo yajurvedah
sāmavedo 'harvavedah Śikṣā
kalpo vyākaranam niruktam
chando jyotiṣamiti,
atha parā yayā
tadakṣaramadhigamyate."³

"Of which the lower, the Ṛgveda and the Yajur-veda, and the Sāma -veda and the Atharva-veda, chanting, ritual, grammar, etymological interpretation, and prosody and astronomy. And then the higher by which is known the Immutable."

In a sacrifice, the Hotā recites the mantras to summon the gods. This activity is known as Houtra. The sage who conducts the various activities of Homa in a sacrifice is called ‘Adhvaryu’. The activity of Adhvaryu is known as “Adhvaryava”. The Udgatā is the one who sings the Sāma to please the gods. His activity is known as “Oudgātra”.

No clear instructions about singing procedure of the Sāma veda are available. Persistent recitation of ‘Om’ lends it a kind of divine tune. The greatness and importance of ‘Om’ is described in great detail in Sāmaveda. The
Chandogopanishad, that belongs to Sāmaveda, has ‘om’ as its prime subject. Even Lord Sri Krishna favours Sāmaveda - “Vedānāṁ Sāmavedosmi” (Bhagavadgeeta).

“In living beings, the Godhead tells Arjuna, I am consciousness by which they are aware of themselves and their surroundings. I am mind among the senses, mind by which they receive the impressions of objects and react upon them. I am man’s qualities of mind and character and body and action; I am glory and speech and memory and intelligence and steadfastness and forgiveness, the energy of the energetic and the strength of the mighty. I am resolution and perseverance and victory, I am the sattvic quality of the good, I am the gambling of the cunning; I am the mastery and power of all who rule and tame and vanquish and the policy of all who succeed and conquer; I am the silence of things secret, the knowledge of the knower, the logic of those who debate. I am the letter A among letters, the dual among compounds, the sacred syllable Om among words, the Gayatri among metres, the Sāma-veda among the Vedas and the great Sāma among the Sāma mantras. I am Time the head of all reckoning to those who reckon and measure. I am spiritual knowledge among the many philosophies, arts and sciences. I am all the powers of the human being and all the energies of the universe and its creatures.”

Significance of Sāmaveda

The Rgveda stands for jnāna, expounding the qualities and characteristics of Padārtha or the subject matter. The Yajur veda advises us to apply the fundamental knowledge for us individually and for society applied knowledge. The
Sāma veda is lyric; it satisfies our aesthetical and emotional instinct. The Sāma verses glorify the Lord supreme, addressed particularly to Agni and Indra.

Man is a rational being; he needs familiarity with his surroundings; he, in other words, is inquisitive of knowledge, and the Rgveda meets this requirement of his life; and hence the Rgveda is given the first priority. Having familiarized himself with the surroundings, he interacts with them and tries to utilize his knowledge for the individual and social good. He endeavors, and this motivation he gets from the yajurveda, which thus occupies the second place in the list of the Vedas. The jnāna and Karma (knowledge and effort), supported by the theistic love towards the Creator, leads to progress and prosperity, and finally to happiness, satisfaction, joy and peace. This aspect is promoted by the Sāma veda, and hence it has the third position. And the conservation and preservation of all that has been acquired and attained is the inspiration derived from the Atharvaveda Thus Dayānanda Sarasvatī justifies the documentation of the divine knowledge in the four samhitās:

- Rg Jnāna Fundamental knowledge
- Yajur Karma Applied knowledge
- Sāma Upāsanā Aesthetics
- Atharva Vijñāna Perfection

Music in the Sāmaveda

The history of sacred music goes back to the Vedic ages when music must have begun, The Sāman, has its own metrical system, its rules for chanting and singing.
The rṣis of the first ages are said to have ‘heard’ the Veda. The primordial sound Om is the divine word through which, all things have been made.

One has given birth to two, two to three, and three to all the numbers. The original sound first produces its dual the octave, then a third the fifth from which all other sounds came. Among the innumerable sounds which were produced, five principal ones were selected -adequate to represent the world we live in. In this way the scale of five, the audava must have been formed corresponding to the five directions, five elements. Leaving aside this theory we will take up only the five main divisions to which two auxiliary ones were added which completed the scale. These again corresponded to the seven celestial planets. It was only the seven-stringed lyre, which symbolized the beauty or harmony of the spheres. Music can be thus said to constitute a direct tie between the movements of the universe and the movements of our soul.

In the Chandogya and other Upanisads, in spite of the strong tendency to add a mystical touch to everything, it says that, ‘in chanting of the Vedas, the deeply significant and supernatural Om is articulated, What is Om? It is the all-pervading, all-essential all-absorbing, and the all-sacred. Rk is the essence of speech. Sāma is the prana (Breath). Rk and Sāma make a mithuna.

The Sāman chant

The Vedic hymns are the living and authentic example of the world’s most ancient and sacred literature. These Vedic hymns are composed in chandas or the Vedic meters, in which every syllable forms a unit of articulation normally amounting to a unit of time. A hymn is chanted according to the need of the
occasion. The same stanza may at times be sung to one or two different melodies, then again the same melody be used for various stanzas. Hence it is often necessary to model, to enlarge, to modify the rks in correspondence with the Sāman; and the creation of that staubhika form developed a technical literature, which serves the purposes of modeling the rks.

Before coming to the Sāma-veda, it is necessary to know the mode of recitation of other Vedas, especially the Rgveda. The Sāma-veda borrowed largely from the Rgveda, which we have seen in the beginning of the chapter. The text of the Rgveda has been elongated and altered so to suit the mode of chanting. A hymn is chanted according to the need of the occasion. In a developed recitation, the arcika form was employed. A slightly more elaborate way was the gathika style, which used two musical notes. The better known Vedic chant of today employs three notes, and represents the ancient samika style. Arcika is the most ancient.

The Rgveda is recited to three tones. The accent was originally a mark of musical pitch and became a mark of stress only later on. It is monotonous and always keeps on the normal level or pitch of the voice. The udātta and anudātta are the raised and not-raised sounds, and refer to those of the speaking voice. It cannot be correctly said whether these terms may have any reference to music. A third tone is the ‘svarita’, which, in the Rgveda seems to be above the udātta. It is also said to be a falling accent of a dependent nature, marking the transition from an accented to a toneless syllable. It always follows the udātta. Further, the first part of the svarita, sounding higher than the udātta, it can be called an ornamented udātta falling to an indefinite pitch below it. The indefinite pitch is called pracaya. Before the rise from the pracaya to the
svarita or the udātta, the voice is a little lowered (the sannatara or the anudātta -tara) which, obviously is below the anudātta. This is the original theory of recitation, but is very much modified in practice. A point worthy of note herein is that the pracaya, lower in pitch to the svarita, is marked the same note as udātta and not as anudātta. In some instances, the svarita sometimes remains a single note mā or is graced from gā to mā. There seems to be also another rule that when more than one anudātta precedes an udātta, all but the last are sounded lower.

Recitation of the Vedic hymns was a collective affair and to preserve unity accurate pronunciation and a uniform style of delivery was essential. This formed the samika style employing udātta, high or sublime, anudātta, low or subdued, and svarita. The connotation of the terms udātta, anudātta and svarita has been a matter giving rise to great confusion, since they are used differently in different contexts and different subjects, such as Vedic chant, Sāma-gana. It is no wonder that we come across indiscriminate use of these three terms while discussing this subject. Vedic compositions are always in one or other Vedic metre, which is a measure with four equal feet each having a fixed number of syllables. Each syllable forms one unit or minimum of the measure. It is no wonder that in spite of the different chandas, all chants sound alike, no matter in what chanda they were composed. The tone and rhythm of the Vedic chants are of the essential and not of the formal type.

Next in succession to the Vedic chant is the tradition of the Sāma-gana, the singing of the Sāma-veda. This form of recitation is an advance over the samika form. Sāma-gana is a later and more evolved type of recitation and as considered by some, contains in embryo the essentials of Indian Music.
The body of the hymn is divided into two sections Uttaraścika and the Pūrvāścika. These are arranged internally according to their metres and stobhas. It is believed that only twenty percent is borrowed from the Ṛg-veda. Such borrowings are called Yoni. A further distinction is between those that have only one melody and the one with many melodies (eka-sami or bahu-sami). It would seem from this that Sāman is music, not music and words, or words for music. The rhythm is determined by the words that decide where it will be appropriate to draw breath.

The Sāma -veda has no separate text of its own. The text of Ṛg-veda itself forms its text. It differs from the Ṛg-veda in its purpose. The Ṛg-veda supplies the literary meaning, the Yajur-veda the ritual to be observed simultaneously, and the Sāma -veda the musical representation in a sacrifice. There was a division of duties in a sacrifice and those who did the part of Sāma singing, came to be known as Sāmagas. In ancient times there were many types of Sāma -singing but, at present, all but three have become extinct. These three are : Kauthuma, Rāṇāyaniya, and Jaiminiya. The latter two are almost extinct, and the Kauthuma School is limited to a dozen families or so in the whole of India.

Om

There are seven divisions of the Sāman chanted during the yajña. At the outset, the udgātr, and pratiḥartṛ are all expected to say Om as they all participate in the chant. The first bhaktī or division is Om. The second bhaktī is the prastara. This is sung by the prastara. Thirdly comes the part in which the udgātr says Om. The udgātr then proceeds with the udgitha. The pratiḥartṛ-
bhakti is the fifth. The pratihatṛ recites this. The upadrava-bhakti is the next. This is sung by the udgatṛ. Lastly comes the nidhana. This bhakti is sung by all the three i.e., prastotṛ, udgātṛ, and pratihatṛ.

While singing the Sāman, the singer intents his musical tunes with the help of his five fingers of the right hand.

(1) Ist finger-the thumb stands to denote the first note to be sung.
(2) 2nd finger-next to the thumb, denotes the 2nd note lower than the first.
(3) 3rd finger-the middle finger denotes the third note lower than the second.
(4) 4th finger-this denotes the fourth note of the Sāman.
(5) The last denotes the 5th note of the Sāman.

**Sāmavedic Variations**

Very often a verse is repeated in all the four samhitās, or in three or in one. The idea is that the verse is to be recited in three or two different modes as the case may be. Often on account of the variation of svaras or accents, the meaning may also change. Only in such cases, a verse may have one meaning in a particular Veda, and a different meaning, in another. When a research was made of the mantras in the Sāmaveda were borrowed from the Rgveda in order to set them to the tune of music 106 of them were found, among them a few are produced here.

Some of the variations might have occurred due to musical exigencies, but most of them have occurred due to articulatory factors such as slip of tongue, etc. Following variations can be detected on comparing the Rgvedic passages with the corresponding passages of the Sāmaveda.
1. pra stomā yanti agnaye RV. 8.103.6.
pra stomā yantu agnaye SV. 44

2. maruto brahmaṇaspatim devān RV. 8.27.1
maruto brahmaṇaspati devā SV. 48

3. naro agnim RV. 8.71.14
narojgniḥ SV. 49

4. aryamā prātaryāvāno adhvaram RV. 1.44.13
aryamā prātaryādbhiradhvare SV. 50

5. agnim devān acchā na majmanā RV. 8.103.2
agnim deva indro na majmana SV. 51

6. samidanya īlāte RV. 1.36.1
samidanya indhate SV. 59

7. saṁveśane tānva ṣcāruredhi RV. 10.56.1
saṁveśanas tavne 3 cāruredhi SV. 65

8. aranyorhastacyuti RV. 7.1.1
aranyorhastacyctāṁ MSV. 72

9. dhāyi sa te vayaṁsi RV. 10.46.1
dhāyi su te vayaṁsi SV. 77

10. sisrate nākamacchā RV. 5.1.1
sasrate nākamacchā SV. 73

11. pra samrājo asurasya prāśastim puṁsaḥ
krṣṭināmanumādyasya
indrasyeva pra tava saṁskṛtāni
vande dārum vandamāno vivakmi RV. 7.6.1.
pra samrājamosurasya prāśastam puṁsaḥ
krṣṭināmādyasya
indrasyeva pra tava saṁskṛtāni

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vanda dvārā vandamānā vivaśtu SV. 78.
12. garbhaiva sudhīto garbhiniṣu RV. 3.29.2
garbha ivetsubhṛto garbhiṇibhiḥ SV. 79
13. jajñānah saptamātāro vedhām-ciket yat. RV. 9.102.4
   jajñānah saptamātṛbhirmēhām-ciketādā SV. 101
14. dadāśa havyadātibhiḥ RV. 8.23.15.
   dadāśa havyadātaye SV. 104.
15. somānaṁ svaraṇaṁ kṛnuhi RV 1.18.1
    somānaṁ svaraṇaṁ kṛnuhi SV. 139
16. indra paraśca na RV. 1.8.5
    indraḥ paraśca no SV. 166
17. varivasyā mahāmaha RV. 8.46.10
    varivasyā mahanām SV. 186
18. mandantu stomāḥ RV. 8.64.1
    mandantu somāḥ SV. 194
19. mitraḥ pāntyadruha RV. 8.46.4
    mitras pantyadbuha SV. 206
20. sādhu kṛṇvamantamavase RV. 8.32.10
    sādhuḥ kṛṇvamantamavase SV. 217
21. kāsthā ajmeśvatnata RV. 1.37.10
    kāsthā yajñēsvatnata SV. 221
22. agor arir āciketa RV.8.2.U
    nāgor yir ā ciketa SV. 225
23. idanuttā carṣaṇidhṛta RV. 8.90.5
    ipurvanuttaścarṣaṇi dhṛtiḥ SV. 248
24. vrṣajūṭirnojyṛtaḥ RV. 8.33.10
    vrṣajūṭirnojvītā SV. 263
25. havya indraḥ bhūṣatu
   vrtrahan rcisamaḥ RV. 8.90.1
   havyamindrambhūṣata
   vrtrahā rcisama SV. 269
26. pṛtanānāṁ jyeṣṭho RV. 8.60.1
   pṛtanānāṁ jyeṣṭhaṁ SV. 273
27. tugrayā vṛdham RV. 8.99.7
   tugrayā vṛdham SV. 283
28. šulkāya deyāṁ RV. 8.1.5
   šulkāya diyase SV. 291
29. yasya cākarn RV. 10.148.1
   yasya konā SV. 316
30. śavasaścakān RV. 7.27.1
   śrvaśca kāma SV.318
31. nṛmanā adhatta RV . 96.13
   nṛmanā adhadrah SV. 323
32. akṣeneva cakṣriya RV, 10.89.4
   akṣeneva cakriyau SV. 339
33. ocitsakhāyaṁ sakhyā vṛtyāṁ tirah
   purū cidarṇavam jaganvān
   piturnapātāmā vedhā
   adhi kṣami pratarāṁ didhyānaḥ RV. 10.10.1
   ā tvā sakhāyaḥ sakhyā vivṛtu tirah
   purū cidarṇavam jagamyāḥ
   pituranapātāmā dadhitā vedhā
   asmkṣyate pratarāṁ didyānah SV 340
34. jagmayej paścādadhvane nare RV. 6.42.1
jagmaye Ėpaścādadhvanenaraḥ SV. 352
35. śaciṣṭham viśvacarṣaṇim RV. 6.44.4
    saciṣṭham viśvavedasam SV. 357
36. kratvā varisṭham vara āmurim RV. 8.97.10
    kratve vare sthanayāmūrim SV. 370
37. dṛḍhaṁ cinnmayiṣṭhavaḥ RV. 8.20.1
    dṛḍhaṁ cīdyamayiṣṭhavaḥ SV. 401
38. dhārā sutasya rocate RV. 9.111.
    dhārā prṣṭhasya rocate SV. 464
39. ṛtasya yonimasādaṃ RV. 9.64.22
    arkasya yonimasādaṃ SV. 472
40. suvāno yāti kavikrato RV. 9.9.1
    svānairyāti kavikratuḥ SV. 476
41. nayanti ārmayaḥ RV. 9.33.1
    nayanta ārmayaḥ SV. 478
42. svarvidah RV. 9.107.14
    madacyutaḥ SV. 518
43. devayurnah RV. 9.97.4
    deva induḥ SV 535
44. kāraṃ bibhratpuruspraham RV. 9.14.1
    kāruṃ bibhratpuruspraham SV. 486
45. manotā pratham maniṣi RV. 9.91.1
    manotā prathamā maniṣā SV. 543
46. ēukraṃ vayantya asūrya nirṇijam RV. 9.99.1
    ēukrā viyantya surāya nirṇje SV. 551
47. suvānasyāṇḍhaso marto na vṛta RV. 9.101.13
    suvānāyadhahso marto na varaḥ SV. 553
48. vi ca naṣasna iṣo arā tayoṛya naṣsanto RV. 9.79.1
   vicidaśnāṇā iṣayo arātayorjyorṇḥaḥ SV. 555
49. payasā na dhenavah RV. 9.77.1
   payasā ca dhenavah SV. 556
50. deva devayuḥ RV. 9.108.9
   deva devayum SV. 570
51. vṛṣabhaṁ dīvo duhuḥ RV. 9.108.11
   vṛṣabhaṁ dīvo dMiwms SV. 581
52. daivyā pavamāṇa janīmāṇi amṛtattvāya
    ghoṣayah RV. 9.108.3
    daivyam pavamāṇa janīmaṇi amṛtattvāya
    ghoṣayan SV. 582
53. ya.usrīyā apya RV. 9.108.6
    ya.usrīyā api yā SV. 585
54. divaḥ kaviḥ RV. 9.64.30
    divaḥ kave SV. 656
55. made suśipram RVJi.66.2
    madeṣu śipram SV. 687
56. yonimayohatam druṇā RV. 9.1
    yonimayo hate drōne sadhasthamāsadat SV. 689
57. yajñanm hinvantya adribhiḥ RV, 9.101.3
    yajñāyasantaravrāyaḥ SV. 698
58. mamattu somyam RZI.3.51.11
    mamattu somya SV.737
59. somā arṣanta viṣṇve RV. 9.33.3
    somā arṣantu viṣṇve SV. 764
60. pavesva viśvamejaya RV. 9.62.26
pavasva viśvacarṣaṇe SV. 775

61. tubhyāṁ dhāvanti sindhavaḥ RV. 9.62.27
    tubhyāṁ dhāvanti dhenaṇaḥ SV. 776

62. nadayanneti-pracetayanneti RV. 9.97.13
    nadayannesi-pracodayannesi SV. 805

63. namayanvādhasnaiḥ RV.9.97.155
    namayan vadhasmum SV. 807

64. tadimaheū - ukthā RV. 8.99.2
    tamimaheūukthya SV. 813

65. tanā kṛṇvanto arvate RV. 9.62.2
    tmanā kṛṇvanto arvataḥ SV. 830

66. somaḥ sutaḥ pūyate ājyamānaḥ RV. 9.97.35
    somaḥ sutaḥ r cyate pūyamānaḥ SV. 859

67. pr̥ṣṭim divaḥ RV. 9.39.2
    vr̥ṣṭim divaḥ SV. 899

68. dhruve sadasi sidati RV. 9.40.2
    dbruve sadasi sidatu SV. 925

69. janāya juśto adruḥ RV. 9.9.3
    janāya juśto adruhe SV. 937

70. ritimapo jinvi RV. 9.108.10
    ritimapo jinvan SV. 1012

71 pr̥ṣṭhesverayāyim RV. 9.102.3
    pr̥ṣṭhesvairayadayim SV. 1015

72. ayaṁ devebhyo madhumattamaḥ RV. 9.105.3
    ayaṁ devebhyo madhumattaraḥ SV. 1100

73. sāsastarpalamānmanyamacchāmādastam RV. 9.97.8
    sasas trpalāvagnumacchāmādastam SV. 1117
74. saṁvaranesvakramu RV. 9.86.17
   saṁvasanesvakramu SV. 1153
   dhināmantah sabardughāḥ
   hinvāno mānuṣā yugā RV. 9.12.7
   dhenāmaitaḥ sabardughāṃ hinvāno
   mānuṣā yujā SV. 1202

The Sāma Vedic Gods

Indra occupies the highest position; Viṣu, the younger brother of Indra, and; Agni, the god of fire; Mitra the sun; Vāyu the Wind; the Sun has several names: Viṣṇu, Varuṇa, puṣan; Āditya etc; Varuṇa, god of oceans, yama, the god of death; the Aśvin the twins. Aditi, Sarasvati and Anumati or yamunā are the female divinities. Yamunā; the waters, the wife of Agni.

Priests

Six priests and a seventh the Yajamana, constitute the participants in the Soma sacrifice: hotā, who chants the hymns of the Rk; Udgātā, who sings the verses of the Sāma; Potā, who prepared the materials for oblations; Nestā or Kartā, who pours, butters, etc.into the sacred fire. The Brahmā or Upadīsta, who supervise, and directs all the ceremonies. The Rakṣa, who with a vajraor palāśa wood, stands at the door.
Sāmaveda and Ritual

The sacrificial rituals are of three categories: (I) Agnihotra, (ii) Īsti and (iii) the Soma-sacrifice of Soma-yagña. In the vedic rituals the first two places of importance is assigned to the Rgveda and the Yajur veda only while the Sāma veda is ranked in the status three. And hence the Sāma veda is ranked after Rgveda and the Yajur veda.

Rgveda > Yajur veda > Sāma veda

Mythology

There is more of mythology, than the history, attached to the traditions of the Sāma veda. After the divine revelations of the Vedas, thousands of years must have passed before the Samhitikarana of the Vedic texts took their formal or final shape: Centuries must have been passed between the age of the divine revelation and the Samhiikarana. The use of the Vedic verses in rituals, ceremonies, yajñas etc. belong to a still later period. In the long years of these traditions, grew and evolved the specialized schools of the Vedas.

School Sāma Veda

The tradition says that the reputed seer Veda Vyāsa for the first time instructed another great seer Jaimini into the secrets of the Sāma veda. Of course, this is a myth if this Veda Vyāsa were the same as the author of the Uttara Mimāmsa. Then the knowledge passed from father to son successively.

Veda Vyāsa -> Jaimini -> Sumantu -> sudhanva -> su karma

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YAJURVEDA

Introduction

"brahma vå idam agra åsît,  
tad åtmånam evåvet,  
aham brahmåsìmi iti;  
tasmåt tat sarvam abhavat."\(^1\)

Sacrifice

The outer symbol of an inner work, an inner interchange between the gods and men. Man gives what he has, the gods gives in return the house of power, the herbs of light, the heroes of strength, winning for him victory in the battle. Knowingly or unknowingly the whole process of the universe is in its very nature a sacrifice. Self-fulfilment by self-immolation, to grow by giving is the universal law. All the powers and potentialities of the human life are offered, in the symbol of a sacrifice. By offering whatever he possesses inwardly or outwardly a man grew and got enriched.

Symbolism

Agni is the symbol of aspiration and purifier. Agni is the leader of the sacrifice and protects it in the great journey against the powers of darkness. Go and Aśva, the Cow and the Horse, symbolize Light and Force the object desired from the sacrifice. For, if the cows and horses were lost by the Āryāns and recovered for them by the gods; Indra is the lord and giver and indeed himself
the Cow and Horse, an indication that these are indeed not physical cattle. If these elements of wealth were sought by the sacrifice, they are the symbols of spiritual riches, so also must be its other elements which are always associated with them, sons, men, gold, treasure, etc. It was apparent, therefore, that the two chief fruits of the Vedic sacrifice, wealth of cows and wealth of horses, were symbolic of richness of mental illumination and abundance of vital energy. To recover this lost wealth the sacrifice has to be performed. Angirasas and Brhaspati have to chant the true word, the mantra; Saramā the heavenly hound has to find out the cows in the cave of the Panis; Indra strong with the Soma wine and the Angirasas, the seers, his companions, have to follow the track, enter the cave or violently break open the strong places of the hill, defeat the Panis and drive upward the delivered herds. The whole process of the universe is in its very nature a sacrifice, voluntary or involuntary.

Varuna

Varuna represents vastness, infinite wideness, and limitlessness. The Truth that the Veda worship is infinite, it is spaceless and timeless and yet is all Space and Time. This truth cannot be possessed without the widest wideness in our consciousness and in our being. In narrowness and in divisions, truth cannot be caught, and it escapes from all limitations, from all angularities. The seeker of the Vedic knowledge is therefore asked to break all narrowness, all divisions, all oppositions, and all conflicts. He has to learn to comprehend and to contain all, all without limits. He has to grow in the wideness of Varuna, worship him and be as wide as he is. Varuna answers the seekers, helps them and liberates them into the wide spaces of infinite being and prepares him to perceive all the infinities of the Supreme Light. The consciousness of man is
broken by the mighty invasion of Varuna, and Varuna is fulfilled in man, who ceases to be mere mental and consents to be supramental.

Mitra

Mitra the lord of Harmony is also to be fulfilled. The seeker must learn the secret of relations, know the threads that bind each to all and all to each. He must learn to be the friend of all creatures, of all men, of all gods. With the wideness of Varuna, he must combine the harmony of Mitra; wideness and relationships are both to be mastered. The Supramental Light is wideness but not empty of contents or relations. Hence the necessity of the union of Varuna and Mitra. And the seeker must serve these two gods, fulfill them, embody them and grow into their image.

Aryaman

But even this is not enough. In all human endeavors, there is the stress and strain of effort. There is a struggle, and it is through struggle, through intense effort, that the narrowness is overpassed, that the conflicts are resolved, wideness is achieved, and harmony is established. One must have therefore the capacity for the highest effort, the intense tapasya, a perfect mastery over all that needs to be done. Aryaman is the god of this mastery. Through him the highest effort is accomplished. He is total endurance. Without this endurance, we are like the unbaked pot, which would break at the touch of the Supreme Light. It will not be able to hold the nectar of immortality. The vessel, our instrument, our body, our entire being, has to be baked, has to be made ready, baked fully by the heat and austerity of Aryaman. He has to be worshipped, he
has to be possessed, and he has to be fulfilled. He prepares us, along with Varuna and Mitra, for the possession of Supreme Light.

*Bhaga*

But there is still *Bhaga* to be fulfilled. The Supreme Light is joy and we must learn not only the intensest effort but also the highest degree of enjoyment. We know ordinarily the enjoyment of pleasure of the vital and the physical. Even at the lower level the intense pleasure becomes an excitement and our balance is lost. We are not able to bear the pressure of enjoyment. Not many know the enjoyment of thought and of perception and of intuition, of beauty, of love of ecstasy. All these enjoyments are to be known, experienced, possessed and fulfilled. But there are higher and still higher enjoyments. The Supreme Reality itself is a Supreme enjoyment. *Bhaga* represents this Supreme enjoyment. He is the god who presides over enjoyments, who is the eternal aspect of the joy of the Divine. He is to be approached, and in unity with Varuna, Mitra and Aryaman, he has to be embodied.

*Savitri*

In his upward journey, the seeker then proceeds to *Savitri*, the lord of the Supreme Light, the sun in which, 'all gods unyoke their horses', the supreme in which gods cease to be *entities* and become *His Aspects*.

This marks the victory of the Āryān seeker. He is now in the very home of the gods (*swede dhame*). This is the home of the Truth, the Right and the Vast (*satyam, ritam, brihat*). This is the supramental Truth Consciousness (*sat-Chit*). It is
that by which reality expresses itself, and in which expression, even the idea expressed is the concrete body of the Truth itself. The Vedic seers seem to speak of primary faculties of the ‘Truth consciousness’ soul: they are Sight and Hearing the direct operations of an inherent knowledge describable as Truth-Vision and Truth-audition. It is these operations which are reflected from far off in our human mentality by the faculties of revelation and inspiration. This Truth consciousness is comprehensive, knows all, because it is all. It knows all in its universality and also in every detail of particularity. Light is here one with Force, the vibrations of knowledge with the rhythm of the will and both are one, perfectly and without seeking, groping or effort, with the assured result.

It is in this consciousness that is contained the honey, the nectar of delight. It is this honey (*madhu*) which is packed in the chariot of the *Aświns*. The *Aświns*, the divine twins are the physicians of the gods who heal by the pouring of this nectar. It is this honey, *soma*, that is drunk by the gods and it is this *soma* drunk by the human seeker that gives to them immortality (*amritam*).

It is the richness of ancient Indian thought that our Vedic seers could pray to *Varun, Mitra, Aryaman* and *Bhaga*. *Aryaman* and *bhaga* may on a cursory look appear to be contradictory to each other. One is the god for *tapasya* and the other the god of enjoyment. To seek both to manifest may appear paradoxical, but it is the vastness of Indian thought that it could synthesize these two seemingly opposite ideals. To harmonize them by manifesting them in a single individual, to do the *tapas* with enjoyment for wideness and harmony. The ideal of *tapas* and beauty, the asksis and enjoyment, the whole idea itself is so intriguing and so captivating. To enjoy the *tapasya*, and to do *tapas* for
bhog, the figure of siva automatically springs in the mind, a tapasvi indulged in the beauty of dance, performing the tandav with such exquisite grace, to shake the entire worlds with the intensity of the dance.

**Soma**

The symbolic meaning of Soma is divine Ānanda, The Bliss, from which, the existence of Man or the Mental Being is drawn. Ānanda is retained as rasa, the essence, in the plants and growths of the earth-nature, and among these growths the mystic Soma-Plant symbolises that element behind all sense-activities and their enjoyments, which yields the divine essence. It has to be distilled and purified and intensified until it has grown luminous, full of radiance, full of swiftness, full of energy. Little of it can make him capable of the supreme experience.

The symbolic meaning of Soma-wine was the physical symbol of the amṛta, the immortalizing delight of the divine ecstasy won by the sacrifice, offered to the gods and drunk by men.

**Yajña**

Yajña is god, so whatever man does for the god is also called Yajña. The material sacrifice of action is only one form of Yajña. With or without our knowledge we are always offering our works to the god. Every action is therefore, an offering to Him. The Yajur Veda prescribes the ways and means of conducting Yajña, which are performed with various objectives.
The Āryā is he who offers sacrifice, finds the sacred word of illumination, desires the Gods and increases them and is increased by them into the largeness of the true existence; he is the warrior of the light and the traveller to the Truth. For all these are epithets of Agni as the hotri, the priest of the sacrifice, he who performs the offering. The object of the sacrifice is to win the higher or divine being and possess with it and make subject to its law and truth the lower or human existence.

The principal features of sacrifice are the kindling of the divine flame, the offering of the ghṛta and the Soma wine and the chanting of the sacred word.

“For a hundred autumns may we see,
for a hundred autumns may we live,
for a hundred autumns may we know,
for a hundred autumns may we rise,
for a hundred autumns may we flourish,
for a hundred autumns may we be,
for a hundred autumns may we become,
and even more than a hundred autumns!”

“You are Energy, give me energy;
you are Courage, give me courage;
you are Strength, give me strength;
you are Vigor, give me vigor;
you are Zeal, give me zeal;
you are Victory, give me victory." 

The Significance of Sacrifice

Ceremonial sacrifice is one of the means of gaining children, wealth, and enjoyment; to bring down the bounty of rain from heaven and to maintain the prosperity and continuity of the race. Life is a continual transaction between the gods and men in which man offers ceremonial gifts to the gods from the gifts they have bestowed on him and in return is enriched, protected, fostered.

The Vedas represent the record of the direct vision of the inspired sages and seers of India, arising from their spiritual experience. The seers are described as those who saw in the flashes of their intuition the hymns (mantras). The traditional view about the Veda affirms its eternity and its self-existent nature. Sankara treats the samhita portion of the Vedas as having secondary importance while the upanisadic portion is of major significance. Ramanuja and Madhava regard the entire Veda as authoritative. They do not regard the samhita portion as secondary and as only dealing with karmakanda and devatas. They do not agree to the view that it is devoid of any philosophical content. They do not admit that there is any break in the upanisadic thought, from the earlier portions.

As a contrast to these views, it is possible to study development of a philosophical system in the Vedas. One such attempt is the monistic view. If we adopt this line of interpretation we see different stages and a development of them in the Vedas. In all we have six different stages. The first stage dis-
closes the concepts of different deities presented after the human model. Each is in charge of a particular phenomenon of Nature, e.g., Agni Varuna and Indra. The second stage is the conception of virat-Puruṣa described in the Puruṣa-sūkta. He has thousand heads, feet, hands, etc. He is represented as the creator of all. The third way in which the ultimate reality is described is based on the principle of immanence. This is not pantheism, for God is not exhausted in the equation to the world. He is transcendent also. God minus the world is still God and not zero. It is God in all and not all in God. The fourth describes the deities as abstract divinities, as protector, creator etc. In the fifth, the conception of the ultimate reality is equated with a moral principal that is inviolate. The sixth stage is based on the celebrated Nasadiya-sūkta, which dimly anticipates the central conception of the Absolute or Brāhmaṇ of Advaita-Vedanta.

Prayer for Well-Being

"1. I take refuge in the Word as the Rgveda,
in the Mind as the Yajur Veda,
in the Breath as the Sāma Veda.
I rely on sight and on hearing.
In me is the power of speech full of vigor.
I inhale and exhale deeply.

2. Whatever defect I have in my sight,
in my heart or mind,
may God amend!
May he, the Protector of the world, bless us!"
3. What succor will he bring us, our wonderful Friend, 
   whoever prospers in his ventures? 
   With what most powerful aid will he support us?

6. You are the Protector of us who are your friends 
   and sing your praises. 
   Come to our help with a hundred aids.

7. O Strong One, what help are you going to bring us? 
   What do you give to those who sing your praise?

10. May the wind fan us with blissful breezes! 
    May the Sun warm us with delightful rays! 
    May the rain come to us with a pleasant roar!"^4

Religious Thought

"Tad evāgnis tad ādityas tad vāyus tad ī candramāh 
Tad eva śukraṁ tad brahma ta āpaḥ sa prajāpatiḥ"^5

The idea expressed here in the Yajur Veda has a distinct affinity with that of 
the well-known Rgvedic saying "Ekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā Vadanti" The 
Yajurveda is a great book of Divine revelation, a revelation that is unique and 
unparalleled in the history of human experience, for the Vedic seer is here 
assured of immortality because of such revelation. Moreover the following 
lines of the Yajurveda are indeed remarkable:-

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“Venas tat paśyan nihitaṁ guhasad yatra viśvaṁ bhavatyekanikaṁ
Tasminn idam sam ca vi caiti sarvaṁ sa otaḥ protas ca vidhu praśu”

“Vena beholds That Being, hidden in mystery, in whom all find one single
home; in That all this unites; from that all issues forth; He, omnipresent, is
warp and woof in created things.”

The Yajurveda has been neglected and its importance undermined as it is felt
to be merely ritualistic or being concerned with spells and charms alone. It is
indeed deplorable that it has been neglected by great thinkers and scholars
alike.

The most significant mantra of the Yajurveda is pregnant with high Philo-
sophical thought of Vedanta; runs as follows:-

“hiraṇmayena patrana satyasyapihiam mukham
Yo savaditye puruṣāḥ so savahāṁ
Om kham Brahma” 7

“The face of the truth is covered with a golden lid. The puruṣa who is in the
sun, I am He; Om, the supreme Brahma.”

Prominent and meaningful Suktis

“nāham manye suvedeti
no na vedeti veda ca
yo nas tad veda tad veda
no na vedeti veda ca.” 8

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"yasyamatamasyamatam
matamyasyanavedasaḥ
aviṇātaṁ vijānatāṁ
vijnatamavijanatam."

"Bhadram karṇeṣihī śṛṇuyāma"
May we always hear auspicious and benign words.

"Saotah protaścha vibhooh praajāsu"
That all pervading supreme lord is present in every being.

"Śam naḥ kuru praṇābhyaḥ"
O Lord! Grant prosperity to our children.

"Mā gṛḍhaḥ kasyasvidhanam"
Do not covet others’ wealth.

"Mitrasya caḳṣuṣā samikṣāmahe"
May we see everyone with a friendly gaze.

"Vayam raṣṭre jāgryāma purohitah"
May we be circumspect leaders in our country.

"Tasmin ha tasthanbhuvanāni viṣvā"
The whole universe rests on/in that supreme Lord.

"Ahamanrutāt satyamupaimi"
Avoiding dishonesty I follow the truth.

"Bhūyai jāgaraṇaṁ abhūyai svapanaṁ"
Being awake (knowledge) bestows prosperity, and sleep (lethargy) is the root cause for poverty.
“Kurvanveha karmāṇi jījivechhatam samāḥ”\textsuperscript{19}
Man should aspire to live for hundred years leading an active life.

“Ṛtasya pathā preta”\textsuperscript{20}
Walk the path of truth.

“Asmākaṁ santvāśīṣaḥ satyāḥ”\textsuperscript{21}
May our benedictions come true.

“Adīnāḥ syāma Śaradaḥ satam”\textsuperscript{22}
May we live for hundred years without suffering poverty.

“Tanme manah Śivasankalpamastu”\textsuperscript{23}
May my mind contemplate lofty thoughts.

The Mystic Ritual

The \textit{Yajur Veda} seen by the outer vision is the \textit{Veda} of rituals. On an esoteric level, it sets forth a \textit{yogic} practice for purifying the mind and awakening the inner consciousness. Its deities are the same as in the \textit{Rg-Veda}. The purpose of the ritual is to put together and recreate within us the Cosmic Man or \textit{Indra}. The ritual is to recreate the universe within our own psyche and thereby unite the individual with the universal. Its series of sacrifices culminate in the \textit{ĀtmaYajña} or the self-sacrifice wherein the ego is offered up to the Divine. The Self-sacrifice wins all the worlds and gains the greatest gift of immortality.

\textit{Yajur Veda saṁhitā} is the second of the four \textit{Veda saṁhitās}. Verses from it are recited at various steps of the rituals or \textit{Yajña}. The physical ritual is only one aspect of \textit{Yajña}. \textit{Yajur Veda saṁhitā} does not give any details for performing the rituals. The use of its verses in rituals is only one aspect of \textit{Yajur Veda saṁhitā}.
First of all the Yajurveda endorses the sharing of all the Vedic knowledge among all persons, thus Brāhmaṇas of that age were clearly open-minded. The common idea that Vedic knowledge was circulated only in a small coterie of Brāhmaṇas is absolutely wrong.

The second idea is that the sages of the Yajurveda did not draw a hard line between the material and the spiritual realm. For example take the realm of mathematics, specifically the field of numbers. There is one complete hymn in [krṣṇa Yajur Veda, 7.2.11] where numbers as large as ten raised to the power of eleven, i.e., one hundred thousand million is mentioned. The idea is that every aspect of manifestation comes from the Divine and every number in this vast set of numbers reflects one particular aspect of the Divine.

The third feature of the Yajurveda is its mature idea of God. It believes in a single Divine power which guides and protects all the entities in the universe from human to animal till the stone. The God rudra is not only the lord of all the so-called law abiding citizens but also the lord of the robbers and thieves; He is not only the protector of animals, but also the lord of the hunters who kill the animals. He is LORD in the true sense of the word, everybody could seek his protection and feel safe and secure, and not dread to be in his presence. It is such a beautiful concept of god, which makes one love the lord and not fear him.

By instituting more elaborate sacrifices for their wealthy patrons, the priests could grow both inwardly and outwardly. The famous horse sacrifice was not celebrated often but was performed by a king to show his lordship over potential adversaries who were invited to acknowledge his overlordship in the ritual.
The parts of the horse symbolize different aspects of the universe so that tremendous power is symbolized. The complicated and obscure rituals were presided over by the priests. The three symbols of the lotus leaf, the frog (for rain), and the golden man (for the sun) representing the Āryān dominance over the land, waters and the natural powers that sustain agriculture.
BRAMAHMANA
ĀRYANAKA

RELIGIOUS CONDITION

Introduction

The Brāhmaṇa texts, together with the prose parts of the Atharvaveda and the Yajurveda, are perhaps the only prose work of ancient period. According to Max Muller "the only genuine prose works which the Sanskrit, as a popular language, has produced." Broadly speaking, the language of the Brāhmaṇa is homogeneous. At the same time, however, every one of the older Brāhmaṇa texts has its own minute linguistic peculiarities. Pāṇini’s grammar offers a unique criterion by which to judge them. It cannot be proved that Pāṇini was acquainted with the Saṁhitā or the Brāhmaṇa of the White Yajurveda, though he certainly knew all the other Saṁhitā -texts known to us, as well as the Aitareya- Brāhmaṇa. Now, to explain this curious fact it cannot be reasonably argued as is often done that though the White Yajurveda was considerably older, yet Pāṇini had no personal knowledge of it for the good reason that it was produced in eastern India; for Pāṇini certainly knew the Taittiriya-Saṁhitā, a product of the south, and the Maitrayani- Saṁhitā, a product of the west, though he himself was at home in the north. His apparent ignorance of the White Yajurveda therefore must be regarded as a proof of the latter’s comparatively late origin. But it also proves that for a composite picture of the language of the Brāhmaṇa one may confidently appeal to Pāṇini. For details, however, which prove the older Brāhmaṇa to be much older than Pāṇini, special studies are necessary.
In the use of the tenses of the past the *Brāhmaṇa* show much more precision than the *Ṛgveda*. The aorist is rarely used in them outside of direct speech, and in narration the tense of the past used in the *Brāhmaṇa* is normally the imperfect, but not often also the perfect. The perfects with a heavy reduplication have regularly a present meaning, but other perfects are used as often or oftener also in narrative past, and the frequency of this narrative perfect is rightly regarded as a sign of comparative lateness of the texts concerned. *Pāṇini's* rules about the tenses of the past are not applicable to *Brāhmaṇa* prose, but it is curious to note that of the few narrative perfects occurring in the *Brāhmaṇa* -portions of the *Taittiriya-Saṁhitā* not a single one has been used to relate personal experience—so that in this respect at least they are fully in accord with *Pāṇinean* grammar. The periphrastic perfect with kri- as auxiliary, of which the earliest occurrence in the *Atharvaveda* has been noted above, is fairly common in the *Brāhmaṇa*, but that with as- is extremely rare, and no form with *bhu* can be quoted at all. In this respect, too, the language of the *Brāhmaṇa* is in essential agreement with *Pāṇini* who permits only kri-, though already *Katyayana* and *Patañjali* twisted the meaning of the relevant *Sūtra* of *Pāṇini* so as to include also *bhu*- and as-. On the whole, the language of the *Brāhmaṇa* is more precise in expression than that of the Mantra-texts, and as a living and forceful form of speech it is infinitely superior to the monstrous prose of the classical writers.

**Sacrifice**

The *Somā*-sacrifices, was gradually developing by the side of the cult of the domestic rites. It was so elaborately developed and systematized during the period that the *Sāma* *veda* and *Yajurveda saṁhitās* have been compiled solely
for these Grand Sacrifices. A regular science of sacrifice has now been evolved and forms the sole topic of the Brāhmaṇa texts. Three sacred fires instead of one were necessary for these Grand Sacrifices, and altars for these were erected on a vast sacrificial place set up according to rules and to the accompaniment of an elaborate ritual. A formidable array of priests, divided into four groups headed by four chief priests, was required for the correct performance of the extremely complicated ritual and elaborate ceremonial which were the sine qua non of the Grand Sacrifices. The Yajamāna (sacrificer) had practically nothing to do but to give liberal fees to these priests. These Grand Sacrifices were called "Śrauta" or "Based on Śruti," in the sense that the description of their theory and practice was also embodied in the Śruti literature, i.e. the Brāhmaṇa, whereas the domestic (Gṛhya) sacrifices were called Smārta (based on Smṛti or "memory") in the sense, that they are described only in the Gṛhya-Sūtras.

The age of the Brāhmaṇa represented by them is an age of forms, concerned more with the externals of religion than its spirit. Mechanical sacerdotalism is the religion now; symbolic significance is attached to even the minutiae of ceremonies that are purely external. Every prayer that accompanies a rite asks for some worldly gain.

Gods

As the sacrifice is the only power that counts and could bend even the gods to the will of the sacrificer, the old gods are not of much consequence now. As a result some of the minor deities of the Rgveda have either disappeared or exist in name only. Prajāpati (as "Lord of creatures") is the main subject of theo-
sophical speculation in the Brāhmaṇa, but he is not “a god of the people” as Rudra is. This is indicated by the number of litanies addressed to the latter in the Yajurvedic samhitās, and the attention devoted to him in the Aitareya, Kauṣitaki and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. Rudra as Bhūtapani is a dread figure, who - we are told in Aitareya Brāhmaṇa - usurped the dominion of Prajāpati over cattle, when the latter committed incest with his daughter. He appears at the sacrifice in black raiment and claims the sacrificial victim. This Rudra is in all probability not merely a development of the Rgvedic Rudra, but an adaptation of him by amalgamation with a popular god, an aboriginal god of vegetation, closely connected with pastoral life. He is thus the “great god” (mahādeva) and has already received the appellation “Śiva” (the “Auspicious One”) which later became his chief name. Next to Rudra comes Viṣṇu, constantly identified with the all-important sacrifice and therefore rising to a high position. Probably he was prominent enough to claim the undivided allegiance of some localities while Rudra was worshipped in others. Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu are brought into relation in the Taittirīya Āranyaka. In other respects, there is little change in the Rgvedic pantheon. Gandharvas, Apsarās, Nāgas, etc are raised to a semi-divine rank. Snake-worship (borrowed probably from the aborigines) and the mechanical motive of the “Devasura” battles makes their appearance now. Monotheism is being advocated. Such an evolution of meaning was possible because, in this age, the divine origin and authority of the Vedas is accepted without question. In the Puruṣa - sūkta (RV, X. 90) the act of creation is treated as a sacrifice completely offered (sarva-hui) from which the three Vedas arose. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (XI. 5. 8. 1) version of this doctrine is that the Self-existent breathed out the Vedas. The so-called authors of the Vedas are just inspired seers (ṛṣis) to whom the divine revelation was communicated. The doctrine that sabda or “articulate sound” is eternal has

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thus an important correlation to the fact that the Vedas were transmitted by
word of mouth, from teacher to pupil in unbroken succession through untold
generations. The Vedic tradition, considered sacred and infallible, must nec-
essarily embody the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. But the
early Vedic texts are not always consistent. This later enabled the votaries of
the most diverse doctrines to quote texts from the Vedas in their support, and
although philosophy became scholastic as a result, one advantage was that a
reliable basis—the unfailing intuition of the most ancient inspired seers—was
available to the Indian thinkers. In the Aitiriya Āranyaka, Yajñavalkya ex-
plains to Vidagdha about the presence of thirty three gods, others are but
manifestations of them. The eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras and the twelve
Ādityas- along with Indra and Prajāpati make thirty-three. The Fire, the earth,
the air, the sky, the sun, heaven, the moon and the stars are the eight Vasus; for
in them this entire universe is placed (vasavaḥ). Therefore they are called
Vasus. The ten organs in the human body, with the mind as the eleventh when
depart from this mortal body, they make one’s relatives weep. Because they
make them weep (rud), therefore they are called Rudras. The twelve months
in the year are the Ādityas, because they move along carrying (ādadānah) all
this with them; therefore they are called Adityas. The thunderclap is Indra and
the sacrifice is Prajāpati. Yajñavalkya elsewhere explains - The six gods are
Fire, the earth, the air, the sky, the sun and heaven; for these six comprise all
those. The three gods are these three worlds, because all those gods are com-
prised in these three. The two gods, Matter and the vital breath (prāṇa). The
air that blows is also considered as a god. This is a reminder to the posterity
about the way a sage visualized the presence of gods and participated in his
own growth; the vision was to see nature as manifestation of the Divine. His
entire life was a sacrifice to the Divine, an offering to the Nature, each and
every act of his was consecrated to the Divine.

Right from the time of birth to his death he remembered and consecrated himself to the Divine. The prayer of the dying man as shown below elaborates this view as mentioned in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

"The door (real nature) of the truth (Satya Brahman) is covered by a golden disc. Open it, O Nourisher! Remove it so that I who have been worshipping the truth may behold it.

O Nourisher! O lone Traveller of the sky! O Controller! O Sun!
O Offspring of Prajāpati! Gather your rays. Withdraw your light. I would see through your grace that form of yours which is the most benign. I am indeed He, that Puruṣa who dwells in the sun. I am immortal.
Now when my body falls may my breath return to the all—pervading Prāṇa! May this body, reduced to ashes, return to the earth!
Oṃ O Fire, who art the symbol Oṃ, O god of deliberations, remember, remember all that I have done.
O Fire, lead us by the good path towards the enjoyment of the fruit of our action. You know, O god, all our deeds. Destroy our sin of deceit. We offer by words repeated salutations to you."

Rebirth

Many stories depicted in the Brāhmaṇa reveal that the idea of life after death was accepted in the Brāhmaṇa Age, though there may not be very definite and absolute theories about it. And we find that every being on this earth has to go after his death by one or the other of the two paths viz. Devayana and
pitrāṇa. The theory of the two paths with all its various stations had not yet been fully formulated. But the day, the bright half of the month, and the uttarāṇa are often stated to be sacred to the Devas (or sometimes to represent them) while the pītrs are said to be represented by afternoon, the dark half of the month, and the dakṣiṇāṇa. It is also stated that those who go by the pitrāṇa reach the moon and then return to this world again and again; while those who go by the devaṇa reach the sun and pass beyond him; and then become immortal never to be born again. The story of Śvetaketu and Aruṇa quoted below illustrates the above idea:

“Śvetaketu, the grandson of Aruṇa, came to the assembly of the Panchalas. He approached Pravahana, the son of Jivala, who was being waited upon by his courtiers. As soon as the king saw him, he said:
"Is it you, boy?" He replied: "Yes, Sir."
Then the king asked: "Have you been taught by your father?" "Yes," he replied.
The king said: "Do you know how people, after departing from this life, proceed on different paths?" "No," he replied.
"Do you know how they return to this world?" "No," he replied.
"Do you know why the other world is never filled up even though so many people go there again and again?" "No," he replied.
"Do you know after how many offerings of oblations the water (the liquid oblation) becomes endowed with a human voice, rises up and speaks?"
"No," he replied.
"Do you know the means of access to the path leading to the gods or to that leading to the Manes, that is to say, through what deeds men attain the path leading to the gods or that leading to the Manes? We have heard the
following words of the Mantra: 'I have heard of the two paths for men, one leading to the Manes and the other to the gods. Going along them they (departed souls) are united with their destination. They (the paths) lie between the father (heaven) and the mother (earth).'

Śvetaketu said: "I do not know even one of these."

Then the king invited him to stay. But the boy, disregarding the invitation, hurried away. He went to his father and said: "Did you not tell me before that you had fully instructed me?"

"What then, my intelligent child?"

"That fellow of a Kṣatriya asked me five questions and I did not know one of them."

"What were they?"

"These," said Śvetaketu and he recited them.

The father said: "My child, believe me, whatever I myself knew, I told you. But come, let us go there and live as religious students (brahmachirins)."

"You may go, Sir," the son replied.

Then Gautama went to where King Pravahana, the son of Jivala, was giving audience. The king offered him a seat, ordered water for him and made him the reverential offering. Then he said: "Revered Gautama, we will give you a boon."

"Parjanya (the god of rain), O Gautama, is the fire, the year is its fuel, the clouds its smoke, lightning its flame, the thunderbolt its cinders, the rumbling its sparks. In this fire the gods offer King Moon as libation. Out of that offering rain is produced.

"This world, O Gautama, is the fire, the earth is its fuel, fire its smoke, the night its flame, the moon its cinders, the stars its sparks. In this fire the gods offer rain as libation. Out of that offering food is produced.
“Woman, O Gautama, is the fire, her sexual organ is the fuel, the hairs the smoke, the vulva the flame, sexual intercourse the cinders, enjoyment the sparks. In this fire the gods offer semen as libation. Out of this offering a man is born. He lives as long as he is to live. Then, when he dies, “Those even among householders who know this, as described and those too who, living in the forest, meditate with faith upon the Satya Brahman (Hiranyakarbhna), reach the deity identified with flame, from him the deity of the day, from him the deity of) the fortnight in which the moon waxes, from him the deities of the six months during which the sun travels northward, from them the deity identified with the world of the gods (devaloka), from him the sun, from the sun the deity of lightning. Then a being created from the mind of Hiranyakarbhna comes and leads them to the worlds of Brahmin. In those worlds of Brahma they become exalted and live for many years. They no more return to this world.”

This story not only tells us about the eternal existence of the being (in the last paragraph). But the reason of quoting the entire story is to emphasize the fact that those who were the true seekers did not hesitate to learn from anybody, disregarding the so called caste the sage went up to the king to receive the knowledge, whereas son of the same rsi refused to accept the invitation of the king. It is smallness of a mind to reject the knowledge based on the source.

The chief means to gain all these ends was, of course, sacrifice in all varieties and details; and in conjunction with sacrifice several religious ideas and practices came to the fore-front. Thus there cropped up practices like upavāsa, satya, tapas of several kinds, prokṣaṇa, paryagnikarana, and so on; ideas of the sacredness of several trees like aśvattha, udumbara, nyagrodha, khadira,
palāśa, etc., or of several animals such as go, vrṣabha, aśva, aja, avi, kūma, etc.; or of other things such as ājya, āp, payas, survarṇa, etc. There also arose several other beliefs regarding great and small, going on a journey and returning home, secrecy about one’s name, facing a particular direction and avoiding another, avoiding the gaze of some persons, avoiding parāṇna, the idea of debts, or of saptapadi and several others which appear to have sprung up in the Brāhmaṇa Age. Even the ideas of exorcism and witchcraft seem to have sprung up in it.

**The concept of mokṣa**

The idea that knowledge and holy work are the means to mokṣa and that after mokṣa one may return for instruction, if one wills, and the various kinds of mukti also are traceable in this age. One can’t therefore, but be struck by the great resemblance these ideas have with those in the epics and puranas which, one may say, represent only a highly exuberant growth of all this.

Religion and mythology go always hand in hand; and every religion, or rather religion at every stage has a corresponding stage in its development of mythology. Thus, for example, we in India have the Rgvedic mythology, the Brāhmaṇa Mythology, and the Epic and puranic mythology corresponding to what we may call the Rgvedic religion, the Brāhmaṇa Religion, and the epic and Puranic religion. Having thus studied the sacrifice and the other religious-mythology of the Brāhmaṇa and see how it compares with that of the Rgvedic on the one hand and that of the epics and the puranas on the other.
Religion and Mythology

The most prominent characteristic of the mythology of the Brāhmaṇa appears to be its connection with sacrifice. Everything (including the deities) is connected with sacrifice directly or otherwise. In fact it has been laid down as an accepted principle in the Brāhmaṇa that any one that is excluded from (i.e. not associated with) sacrifice is doomed. In keeping with this principle of the Brāhmaṇa we find that all the deities of the Brahmanical Pantheon are variously related to sacrifice. Thus in general we have already seen that the gods established the sacrifice, practised it continually replenished it when it was exhausted, tried to protect it against human error by explaining to them their mistakes and thus removing their misunderstanding. We have also seen that they attained among other gains immortality and heaven through sacrifice.

The description of heaven in the Rgvedic is only elaborated in the other samhitās and Brāhmaṇas. The essentials are the same. The Atharvaveda tells us how the dead man is conducted upwards by the Maruts with gentle breezes fanning him until he recovers his complete body and meets the Fathers who reside in the company of Yama. The Šatapatha, the Jaiminiya and Kauśitaki Brāhmaṇas add their own touches to this horrid picture of hell. The two paths—one of the Devas and the other of the Pitris, as they have been already foreshadowed in the Rgvedic. The theory of metempsychosis does not appear to have been very clearly formulated in the Brāhmaṇas, though the doctrine that the agony of death is to be endured not once but repeatedly as one may die repeated deaths in the next world, prepares us for the very important part that the theory plays in the Brāhmaṇas where the conception of repeated deaths is merely transferred from the next world to the present. The
idea of reward and punishment, after death, in exact correspondence to the
good and bad deeds of a person in this life, has gained a firm hold in this
period. The attainment of immortality and the company of the gods in heaven—
a highly ennobled form of earthly life perpetuated in surroundings of bliss—is
the deeply cherished aim.

This is a considerable advance over the view of the *Rgveda*. There, immor-
ality in the abodes of the blessed—the region of milk and honey—is assured to
knowledge and virtue, whereas not much thought is given to the fate of the
sinner who is apparently condemned to the complete obliteration of his per-
sonal existence. Now, however, the wicked are described as being born again
in the next world (along with the good) suffering the punishment that their
misdeeds bring upon them. That “man is the architect of his own fate” be-
comes a perfect truth according to this theory. And the supreme merit of philo-
sophical thought in this period is the development of the doctrine that reward
and punishment are not eternal. This is but a logical development. How could
the limited good or evil that men can do in the brief span of a single life on
earth bring on endless pleasure or pain in the next world? Hence follows the
theory that penance and atonement can purify and absolve the soul from guilt
and exhaust the period of suffering. The *Brāhmaṇa* doctrine, that “*Whatever
food a man consumes in this world in return consumes him in the next world
is but the transfer from the physical to the moral plane of the law that action
and reaction are equal and opposite.*”⁴ Similarly, the enjoyment of the re-
wards, which is in exact measure to the good deeds performed, must some
time come to an end. Thus there is the prospect of rebirth again for both the
pious and the wicked. So arises the wonderful conception of a beginningless
and endless circuit of birth and death; the so-called samsara or “bondage of

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life and death,” culminating in that unique conception of ultimate happiness that is much higher than that of a life in heaven. It is a conception of freedom from samsara, which is the true moksha (release) or absolution. First Desire and its fulfillment complete a vicious circle, and the only escape from it is desirelessness induced by true knowledge. This, however, is the main doctrine of the Upaniṣads and is only adumbrated in this period. For example, when the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa asks the seeker for truth to meditate upon the Self, made up of intelligence and endowed with a body of spirit, a form of light, and an ethereal nature, the doctrine has a speculative but none the less ritual background. Similarly, the building of the fire-altar is symbolical of the reconstruction of the Universe, in the shape of Prajapati. If we now bear in mind the two sets of mystical equations; (1) Prajapati = Agni = divine counter-part of the human sacrificer; and (2) Prajapati = Time = Death (in the final analysis), we can understand that the human sacrificer becomes Death (in a mystic sense) and thus raises himself above death to everlasting bliss. In this process the true nature of Prajapati and of the sacrificer is revealed as Intelligence. This same doctrine reappears in another form in the Brāhmaṇa.

Central Teaching

That life is a duty and a responsibility is the central ethical teaching of the Brāhmaṇas. Man is born with certain r̥nas or debts, which he must discharge in his life. He has a debt to pay to the gods, to the rishi, to the manes, to men, and to the lower creatures. And he discharges these debts, if he worships the gods, studies the Veda, performs funeral ceremonies, is hospitable to guests, and offers oblations to the bhutas. Thus, there is no lack of high moral sense and noble sentiments. Selflessness must characterize all our actions. The
Brāhmaṇas have a remarkable sacrifice—the Sarvamedha—wherein everything is to be sacrificed to attain the freedom of the spirit. Prayer and good works constitute godliness, which is the first requisite of a good life. Truthfulness in utterance and action is the foundation of moral life. There are hints in the Brāhmaṇas that excessive ritualism were bringing on a reaction. For example, knowledge rather than sacrificial gifts or asceticism is valued in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (X. 5. 4. 16), although asceticism is also held up as a great ideal elsewhere (Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa, III. 12. 3). The theory that confession-implying repentance somewhat mitigates the guilt is seen in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. Inner purity was insisted on, as much as external purity. Truth, performance of dharma (duty) respect for parents, love of fellow-beings, and abstinence from theft, adultery, and murder were the sine qua non of a good life.

The Āranyaka

Introduction

This study was dealt only with socio-religious conditions in the Āranyaka period. The Āranyaka texts are themselves virtually an admission that the correct performance of a compulsory ritual, that had developed into enormous proportions in the Brāhmaṇa period, could not be expected from all, young and old, from residents of villages and towns as well as from those who resided in the forest. There were again some parts of the sacrificial lore, which were of an occult and mystical nature and which could be imparted to the initiated only in the privacy of the forest. The Āranyakas do not lay down rules for the performance of sacrifices, nor do they comment on the ceremo-
nial in the Brāhmaṇa style. They are mainly devoted to an exposition of the mysticism and symbolism of the sacrifice. Meditation, rather than performance, is the spirit of their teaching, and they naturally substitute a simpler ceremonial for the complicated one of the Brāhmaṇas. We cannot definitely say whether the theory of the Āśrams was deliberately formulated by Brahmanism with a view to accommodate the new doctrines that were raising their heads against the older canon of the Brāhmaṇas and the philosophy of the sacrifice. But it must be admitted that the Āranyakas or “Forest-texts” came in exceedingly handy, as ideally suitable Vedic texts for the daily study of the forest-hermits, as distinguished, on the one hand, from the student and householder who could do justice to the cult of the Vedic sacrifice set forth in the Brāhmaṇas, and on the other, from the ascetic who could dedicate the rest of his life to the contemplation of Brahma.

The Āranyakas rendered important service when they stressed the efficacy of the inner or mental sacrifice as distinguished from the outer or formal sacrifice, consisting of oblations of rice, barley or milk. They thus helped to bridge the gulf between the “way of works” (karmamārga), which was the sole concern of the Brāhmaṇas, and the “way of knowledge” (jñāna-mārga) which the Upaniṣads advocated. The Āranyakas further lay down Upāsanās (or courses of meditation) upon certain symbols and austerities for the realization of the Absolute, which by now had superseded the “heaven” of the Brāhmaṇa works, as the highest goal of the devout. These symbols form the link between the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads as they are borrowed from the sacrifices. Finally the compromise between the two “ways” of karma and jñāna was consummated when karma was made subsidiary to, and a preparatory stage for, jñāna in the Āranyakas.
The Āranyakas “Forest-texts”, the concluding portions or appendices to, the Brāhmaṇas are so called (it is generally supposed) because their contents are of so secret and uncanny a nature that they would spell danger if taught to the uninitiated, and had therefore to be learnt in the forest and not in the village. They are concerned neither with the performance nor with any explanation of the sacrifice, but with its mysticism and symbolism. They form a natural transition to the Upaniṣads, the oldest of which are either included in or appended to the Āranyakas, the line of demarcation being not always easy to draw. The Āranyakas, and Upaniṣads by themselves, and not the system of philosophy based on them, were originally called “Vedānta” (literally, the concluding portions of the Veda)—a title applicable to them in more senses than one as follows:—

1. From the point of view of relative literary chronology, they stand at the end of the Veda.
2. As the most obscure and mystical of the Śruti works, they were naturally taught to the pupil towards the close of the period of his apprenticeship with his Guru, by the time a student is mature and is able to appreciate the true importance.
3. They formed the end of the daily Vedic-recital.

As component (and concluding) parts of the Brāhmaṇas, the Āranyakas (and some Upaniṣads) are found attached to as many Sākhās (Vedic schools) as the Brāhmaṇas belong to the Aitareya Āranyaka is appended to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa of the Rgveda. It consists of five books which are looked upon and designated as five separate Āranyakas.
The first deals with the *Soma* sacrifice from the ritualistic point of view. The second is intermixed with theosophical speculations on *Prāṇa* and *Puruṣa*, and is *Upaniṣadic* in character, the last four chapters actually forming the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*. The third book contains allegorical and mystical meanings of the *samhitā*, *Pada*, and *Krama* texts (*Pāṭhas*). The last two books contain miscellaneous matter, such as *Mahānāmi* verses and details about the *Niśkaivalya Śāstra*, to be recited in the *Mahāvrata*, and are attributed to Āśvalāyana and Śaunaka—two *Sūtra* authors. The *Sankhayaṇa* or *Kauśitaki Āranyaka* is the concluding portion of the *Kauśitaki Brāhmaṇa* of the *Ṛgveda* and is almost identical with the *Aitareya Āranyaka* in its contents. It consists of fifteen chapters of which 3 to 6 constitute the long and important *Kauśitaki Upaniṣad*. In the Black *Yajurveda*, the *Taittiriya Āranyaka* is only a continuation of the *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*. It consists of ten chapters or *prapātha-kas* (commonly called *Aranas*), 7 to 9 constituting the important *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*. The tenth chapter called *Mahānārājaṇa Upaniṣad* is a very late addition to the Āranyaka. In the White *Yajurveda* the fourteenth book of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is in name only an Āranyaka—the *Brihadāranyaka*—the last six chapters of which constitute the celebrated *Upaniṣad* of that name and is the major part of the so-called Āranyaka.⁵

It is not necessary to discuss here the contents of the Āranyakas, as the principal ideas contained in them will be dealt with in the chapter on religion and philosophy.