CHAPTER V

SARASVATI IN THE BRĀHMAṆĀS
Chapter - V

SARASVATĪ IN THE Bṛāhmanas

1. Vāk and her introduction:

The conception of speech has been put forward in the post-Vedic period on scientific basis. Syllable (aksara), word (śabda), sentence (vākya) and literature (sāhitya) and even nāda (dhvani), these all come under the scope of speech. Speech is known as Vāk, vānī and girā. In the Ṛgveda, Vāk denotes speech, while in later period, Vāk, vānī and girā are the words for it. There is divergence of opinion regarding its origin. According to one view, its origin is human and right from its origin, has been coming down from generation to generation. Contrary to it, one view regards it as a divine workmanship.¹ Speech evolves in the form of language. Linguists offer various theories about the origin of language, and according to one of these, language has been classified mainly into two groups: (i) Language as created ready-made by God; and (ii) Language as the result of evolution. The first view regards language as descended to human mind from the heaven as God's grace to human beings as distinguished from animals; but the second view refutes it and accepts the existence of language by

way of evolution. The viewpoint of our religious scriptures favours the first view, we will see it in the Rgveda and the Brahmaṇas.

(i) The Rgvedic account:

Various aspects of Sarasvatī, as portrayed in the Rgveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda, have been discussed in the previous chapters. In the Rgveda (X.71), Vāk herself comes forward to disclose her identity. In the first four of the eleven mantras of this Sūkta, there is the description of the creation of Vāk. In one of the mantras, it is said that Brhaspati is the first speech, and from him, there took origin other words for other objects, and these words, which are speech, are impelled by Sarasvatī herself:

"brhaspate prathamam vāco agraḥ yat prāiḥrat nāmadheyaḥ dadhanāḥ /
yad eṣāṁ īrṣṭham yad api praiḥrat āśīt prāṇā tad eṣāṁ nihitaṁ guhāviḥ
\[1\]

The obvious meaning here is that Brhaspati was the first to create Vāk; and Sarasvatī who is also Vāk is, thus, the creation of Brhaspati. In the second mantra, Vāk is said to have been created by wisemen:

"yatra dhirā manasā vacam akrat". \[2\] Another mantra reveals to us how speech was acquired for worldly use. There, it is mentioned that wisemen secured speech by dint of sacrifice. But the credit for her procurement does not go only to wisemen. It were the ṛṣis, who first procured speech and later on, transferred it to wisemen for its wide use:

1 R.V., X.71.1; see also Sāyana’s com. thereon.
2 Ibid., X.71.2.
"yajñena vācaḥ padāvīyam āyaṁ tām anu svindaṁ rṣiṣu praviṣṭām
  tām ābhṛtyā vy adadhuh purutrā tām sapta rebhā abhi sam navante ||"¹

By this Ṛgvedic account, it is evident that Vāk is divine, i.e., she has a divine origin. The rṣis brought her to wisemen and the latter, then, studied her in the form of knowledge, or Čeda, and she, was, thus, made for common man.² In the following mantra, there is the revealing of Vāk:

"uta tvah pasyaṁ na dadarsa vācere uta tvah śrṇvan na śrṇoty enaṁ
  uto tv asmai tanvem ? vi sasre jāye 've patya usati suvāsāh ||"³

(ii) The Brāhmanical account:

The Brāhmanas often speak of the divinity of Vāk. Her divinity is obvious enough as she is associated with gods. She gave birth to the Vedas and contains the entire universe within herself:

"vācā vai vedāh sandhiyante vācā chandēṃsi ... vācā sarvāni"⁴

Vāk is also described as mother and breath as her son:

"... vāg vai mātā prāṇah putrah"⁵

From this, we can deduce that Vāk is so powerful that she has all things within her and she is capable of producing the universe. But this universe cannot be taken as directly evolved from Vāk. In this respect, she is closely related to Prajāpati, who creates the universe.

¹ Ibid., X. 71.3.
² Cf., Wilson's note on ibid., X. 71.3.
³ Ibid., X. 71.4.
⁴ AA., III.1.6.
⁵ Ibid., III.1.6.
Bṛhaspati is the first to create Vāk and is also the lord of Vāk. From the following evidences, it is clear that Bṛhaspati and Prajāpati are identical in the capacity of her lords in connection with creation.

Bṛhaspati is supposed to be the lord of verses; and in the Upanisads, he is generally called Brahmā as presiding over the verses. Vācaspati, and is the lord of Vāk, or speech /is widely used in the Brāhmaṇas. This term is also a synonymous with Bṛhaspati, Brahmāspatī and Brahmā.

Vāk is sometimes identified with waters, the primeval principle for the creation of the universe. While desirous of creation, Prajāpati first of all created waters wherefrom other things were created. Vāk, thus, represents waters and is also the will of the Creator, as his will is considered as expressed in speech (Vāk).

Sometimes Vāk is identified with Prajāpati, Visvakarman, the whole world, and Indra. According to a legend about creation recorded in the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, Prajāpati, desirous of creation, created Vāk (speech) out of his mind and from her, he created waters. In this connection, a sexual association between them is maintained. In the Kāthaka-Upanishad, this point has been expressed as follows:

"Prajāpati was this universe. Vāch was a second to him. He associated sexually with her; she became pregnant; she departed from

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1 AB., V.25; SB., IV.1.1.9; V.1.1.16; TB., 1.3.5.1; III.12.5.1; TA., III.1.1., etc.
3 Ibid., p. 438.
him; she produced these creatures; she again entered into Prajāpati.\(^1\)

Prajāpati is the source of creation and Vāk, as one of the five elements for creation, stands for the greatness of Prajāpati.\(^2\)

2. **The legend of Vāk and the Gandharvas:**

In the Brāhmans, we have an interesting legend of Vāk and the Gandharvas. Before entering into the details of the legend, let us see what the Gandharvas stand for.

It is difficult to ascertain the nature and the character of the Gandharvas. They appear not only in the Brāhmans as early as the Rgveda, where they are mentioned both in singular\(^3\) and plural.\(^4\) They were deprived of the draught of the Soma as a punishment; for since they had allowed Visvāvasu to steal it.\(^5\) They seem to stand parallel to the Apsarases. The Apsarases are associated with waters of divine character (divyāh āpah). They are identified with the spirit of waters. Water is held to be their original abode. The "dominant trait in the character of the Apsarases, the original water-spirits, is their significant relation with āpah, the aerial waters, and consequently their sway over human mind, a later development to link mind with the deities connected with waters."\(^6\) Similarly, the Gandharvas are also associated with waters, who reside in the sky and know all the secrets of the firmament.

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3 RV., I.163.2; IX.83.4; 8512; X.10.4;85.40-41;123.4.7;139.5-6; 177.2.
4 *Ibid.*, IX.113.3.
and heaven. Because of their association with the sky, they are thought capable of generating waters from there.\(^1\) The association of the Gandharvas with divine waters brings them nearer to Vāk, wherefrom Prajāpati, being desirous of creation, generated waters.\(^2\) Thus, both Vāk and the Gandharvas generate waters and, therefore, are at this point similar in nature. Vāk, the Gandharvas and the Apsarases are related to each other. Vāk is held to be the mother of emotions, symbolised by the Gandharvas. She is also the creator of the Apsarases. "She is", as Danielou rightly observes, "the mother of the emotions, pictured as the Fragrances or the celestial musicians (gandharva). She gives birth to the uncreated potentialities, represented as celestial dancers, the water-symphs (apsaras)."\(^3\)

Gandharvas are described as having a great liking for fragrance. They are also said to guard the Soma and, sometimes, to have a monopoly over it. The Brāhmans point to their affiliation with the human embryo as well as to their ardent love for unmarried girls.\(^4\) In the post-Brāhmānic mythology, they have a differed position. They are represented as the excellent celestial musicians, playing on lute (vīnā). To them, the secrets of music are opened.\(^5\) Likewise, Sarasvatī is also represented, particularly in the mythology to hold vīnā in one of her hands and to produce song thereby.\(^6\) Through his musicāl instrument, a musician

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1 Alain Danielou, op.cit., p. 305.
3 Alain Danielou, op.cit., p. 260.
4 Ibid., p. 306.
5 Ibid., p. 306.
6 See infra., p. 176.
expresses his emotions and arouses the emotions of his audience. Sarasvatī, too, while playing on Vīnā, manifests emotions and, therefore, she is aptly held to be the mother of emotions. Music and emotions, thus, have close association. Emotions are represented by the Gandharvas, as they are devoted to music and are pictured as playing on Vīnā. Thus, Vāk (Sarasvatī) and the Gandharvas are closely related to each other.

The legend of Vāk and the Gandharvas, opens with the mention of the Soma. The same legend occurs, with a slight difference, in the Yajurveda, with particular reference to the Soma, Indra, Namuci, Sarasvatī and the Asvins. The Brāhmaṇas appear to have borrowed the theme therefrom, as is obvious from the statement that Indra's Soma was stolen and concealed in waters by the Gandharvas: "gandharvā ha vā indrasya somam apsu pratīyātī gopāyanti ta uha strikāmās te hā-su manāmī kurvate". But they are otherwise portrayed as guarding the Soma. There is much confusion about the theft of the Soma. Somehow it fell into the sole possession of the Gandharvas; and gods could get it back only through purchase. It is termed 'Somakraya', 'the purchase of the Soma'. The elaborate description of this legend occurs in the Aitareya and the Satapatha Brāhmaṇas.

1 Cf. RV., X.33-34; RV., X.131.4-5; see also Max Müller, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XLII, p. 328; J. Muir, op.cit., p. 94.
2 Śān. B., XII.3.
3 B.R. Sharma, op.cit., p. 60.
(1) The legend in the Altareya-Brähmana:

In the Brähmanas, Vāk turns into a woman of her own accord.

It is evident by the following observation. The Gandharvas are described as having a great longing for women. Vāk is the wife of gods. The Soma was with the Gandharvas, which added immensely to the anxiety of gods. Consequently, they along with seers thought out a plan to get the Soma back from the Gandharvas. Meanwhile, Vāk intervened and revealed that the Gandharvas were the lovers of women. She offered herself for assuming the form of a woman, and approached them for purchasing the Soma. The gods declined to accept it; for without her, they could not sustain themselves. Vāk promised them to come to them again after the end was accomplished. Gods accepted it. The Soma was, thus, purchased from the Gandharvas by Vāk:

‘soma vai rājā gandharvēśv āsāt tām devās ca ṛṣṇayas ca ’bhyadhēyaṇ katham āyam asmān soma rājā ’gacched iti sā vāg abhravit strīkāmā vai gandhāvā mayai ’va striyā bhūtāyā paṇadhvam iti ne ’ti devā abhravan katham vayam tvad xte syāme ’ti sā abhravit kr instruments ’va yarhi vāva vo mayā ’rtho bhvāvī tārhy eva vo ’ham punar āgantā ’smī ’ti tathe ’ti tayā mahānagnyā bhūtāyā somām rājānām akrīṇam’.1

The Soma was stolen by the Gandharva Viśvāvasu and guarded by the Gandharvas Svān and Bhrāji.2

1 AB., I.27.
2 Cf. ibid., I.27; and also com. of Sāyana thereon.
(11) **The legend in the Satapatha-Brähmana:**

In this Brähmana, the above legend has been put forth elaborately. The legend runs thus: The Soma was in the heaven. The gods are desirous of performing the Soma sacrifice on the earth. But it was not possible in the absence of the Soma. They, therefore, created two illusions, Suparnâ and Kadrû for bringing the Soma. Suparnâ and Kadrû quarrelled with each other, and the latter defeated the former. Consequently, Suparnâ had to fetch the Soma. For this purpose, she turned herself into metres; and of them, Gāyatrî, the goddess of metres, brought the Soma.¹

Gāyatrî, assuming the form of bird, flew to the heaven in order to bring the Soma.² While on her way back, the Gandharva Vîśvēvasu interrupted her and the Gandharvas robbed her of the Soma. The unexpected delay in Gāyatrî's bringing the Soma caused anxiety to the gods. They themselves thought that the sole reason of it should lie in the snatching away of the Soma by the Gandharvas.³ With no hopes for getting it, they thought it better to send someone again for fetching it. As the Gandharvas were fond of women, they decided to send Vâk to them in order to take the Soma back.⁴

There is a difference in the above two versions of the legend.

1 SB., III.2.4.1; and Sāyana's com. thereon.
2 Sāyana's com. on ibid., III.2.4.2; "suparṣayā mîrmtā 'gāyatrî' - chandodevâ tâpârûpasya".
3 Ibid., III. 2.4.2.
4 Ibid., III. 2.4.3.
According to the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, it is Vāk who took initiative. She revealed to gods the fact that the Gandharvas were fond of women and, therefore, offered herself for bringing the Soma from them. She assured gods to come back to them with the Soma. According to the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, gods already knew the nature of the Gandharvas that they were fond of women and they, therefore, sent her to them. She succeeds in getting the Soma from the Gandharvas; but, according to the version of the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, while she was returning with it, they persuaded her and asked gods to offer her to them in exchange of the Soma. The gods agreed on it with the condition that if Vāk wanted to come back to them, the Gandharvas should not force her to rejoin themselves against her will. Consequently, both gods and the Gandharvas began to woo her. The Gandharvas recited the Veda and gods played on a lute in order to win over her. Gods were victorious, and consequently, the Gandharvas had to lose the Soma as well as Vāk. In the classical literature, Vāk (as Sarasvatī) is held to be the patroness of arts and sciences, and is invoked as a Muse. Her association with arts and sciences goes back to the Brāhmaṇas where she is described to have been pleased by gods by playing on a lute, which shows that she had a great liking for music.

1 AB., I.27.
2 ŚB., III. 2.4.4.
3 Ibid., III. 2.4.5.
4 Ibid., III. 2.4.6-7.
5 John Dowson, op.cit., p. 284.
6 James Hastings, op.cit., p. 605.
3. Some important epithets of Sarasvatī:

In the Brāhmanas, there are only a few epithets ascribed to Sarasvatī. Of them, the following are worth noting:

(1) Vaiśāmbhalyā:

Of the Brāhmanas and the Āranyakas, only the Tafttirya-Brāhmaṇa uses this epithet only once. 1 Sayana in his Bhāṣya, explains it as:

\[ \text{visvāṃ prajānāṃ bharanāṃ posaṇaḥ visāṃbhalam tatkartaṃ kṣamā vaiśāmbhalyā tādṛśi...} \]

Accordingly, 'vaiśāmbhalyā' is one, who brings up the whole prajā. This is obviously a compound word from vaiśa  + bhalya. 'Vaiśa' seems to be from विसा, which has various meanings: "a man, who settles down on or occupies the soil, an agriculturist, a merchant, a man of the third or agricultural caste (vaisya, q.v.); a man in general; people." 2 Similarly, 'bhalya' seems to be the cognate of 'bharā' from bhṛ 'to bear' or 'to support'. 3 Vaiśāmbhalyā, in this context, seems to be a popular epithet of Sarasvatī ascribed in accordance to her nature. It points to Sarasvatī as a river. The Sarasvatī is so called; because it brings up through its nourishing waters the persons living upon agriculture or living in its neighbourhood. It is also called giver of food (vājinīvatī). 4

Before using these epithets, the passage speaks very highly of

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1 TB., II. 5.8.6.
2 Cf. his com. on ibid., II. 5.8.6.
3 Cf. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 941.
4 Cf. Vaman Shram Apte, op.cit., p. 809.
5 TB., II.5.8.6 (used in the vocative as 'vājinīvatī'); see also _supra_. pp. 69-71.
waters for their being medicine, as they were, for the world (vīvabheṣjīh). Then, the epithets 'vājinīvati' and 'vaisāmbhalyā', occur which present the Sarasvatī as possessed of (and, thus, providing) food and nourishment to the world. The honey-like sweet waters of the Sarasvatī river cause abundant milk in cows and vigour in horses. Sarasvatī in the capacity of Vāk is also the giver of nourishment or strength (puṣṭī), which includes cattle, etc. Sarasvatī, the river or the goddess, may be called 'vaisāmbhalyā' on account of bringing up or nourishing people through the nourishment or strength provided to the cattle.

(ii) Satyavāk:

In the Rgveda, Sarasvatī is described as 'codayitri sūnṛtānīm', 'impelling excellent (i.e., sweet and pleasing) and true speeches.' Similarly, in the Taittīrīya-Brāhmaṇa, she is called 'satyavāk', 'possessed of true speech'.

1 TB., II. 5.6.6.
2 Cf. Saṅgama's com. on ibid., II. 5.6.6, "he sarasvatī. madṛupe. te tvadīyāsv apsu yan madhu mādhuryam vidyate tathā gosv āśveg madhuram kāraṇa sambhāva vahanaśamarthaṃ ca yad vidyate he vājinīvati. annaśanṛddhāyukte. sarasvatī. ten sarveṣa me mukhāṃ angdhī vaktreṇ alankṛtam kuru".
3 See supra., pp. 110-112.
4 Cf. the sense of 'vājinīvati' as derived by Geldner from RV., VII. 96.3.
5 SB., III. 1.4.14, "... vāg vai sarasvatī vāgyajñāh sa 'syai "sā 'tmandevatā "dhītā bhavati vākapavāto vai pūṣā puṣṭīr vai pūṣā puṣṭīḥ paśaḥ paśāvah paśavo hi yajñaḥ te ..."
6 RV., I.3.11.
7 TB., II. 5.4.6., "... pra te māhe sarasvatī subhage vājinīvati satyavāce bhare matin. idam te havyam ghṛtavat sarasvatī. satyasvāce prabharemū hauḷaḥi ..."
Sri Mādhava explains its dative form 'satyavāce' as 'anṛtavākyar-ahitāyai'. This indicates that Sarasvati in the capacity of Vāk is all truth. Being free from falsehood, she is described in the Rigveda itself as illuminating holy thoughts: "cetaniḥ sumatiṁ".

(iii) Sumrāḍikā:

The epithet 'sumrāḍikā' occurring in the Taittiriya-Bṛahmaṇa and the Taittiriya-Āraṇyaka, has the same implication as 'mayobhū' used for Sarasvati in the Rigveda and interpreted by Śaṇāṇa as 'sukhotpāḍikā' and 'sukhasya bhāvayitri'.

This word occurs in dative form in the Taittiriya-Bṛahmaṇa as an adjective of Aditi: "adityai svāhā 'dityai mahyai svāhā 'dityai sumrāḍikāyai svāhā 'ty āha." Here, 'sumrāḍikā' means, 'liberal'. Aditi, the mother of gods, is naturally liberal towards her progeny. The term occurs several times in the Taittiriya-Āraṇyaka. Śaṇāṇa explains it as: 'sūṣṭhau sukhaḥetuḥ' and 'sūṣṭhau sukhakariḥ'. Sarasvati as Ṛgveda provides peace and prosperity and gives rich gifts to the people. Thus, she brings

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1 Taittiriya-Bṛahmaṇa, with the commentary of Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Misra, supplemented with Śaṇāṇa's Astaka II (Mysore, 1921), p. 246.
2 RV., I.3.11.
3 Iibd., I.3.9; V.5.8.
4 His com. on ibid., I.13.9.
5 His com. on ibid., V.5.8.
6 TB., III.8.11.2.
7 TĀ., I.1.3, 21.3, 31.6; IV.42.1.
8 His com. on ibid., I.1.3.
9 His com. on ibid., IV.42.1.
comfort and happiness to the people. It is this nature of Sarasvatī, which has been pointed out by Sāyaṇa in his interpretation of the word 'saṃṛḍikā' in the Taśṭṭirīya-Āraṇyaka. 'Saṃṛḍikā' may also mean 'having good soil (saṃṛd)', i.e., the land having good (fertile) soil. It should be borne in mind that the Taśṭṭirīya-Āraṇyaka describes Sarasvatī as the land with water: "sarasvatī saroyuktabhūmīripa ṣṭake". Sarasvatī as 'saṃṛḍikā' would, thus, be the land with good (fertile) soil. As the fertile land yields rich harvest and, thus, prosperity, Sarasvatī also provides prosperity. She has been requested to be 'śivā', providing meal and 'śantāmā', 'providing peace or subduing troubles and calamities'.

In addition to the above epithets, there are still others, 'subhāga', 'vājinīvatā', 'pāvākā', etc., which we have already discussed.

4. Sarasvatī and Sarasvān:

Much has been said about Sarasvān earlier and his relationship with Sarasvatī has been pointed out. His relationship with Sarasvatī is brought out by the terms Sarasvatīvān and Bhāratīvān used for him.

1 Cf. ibid., I.1.3, and Sāyaṇa's com. thereon.
2 Cf. ibid., IV.42.1, and Sāyaṇa's com. thereon, "... he sarasvatī tvam no 'smān prati śivā 'nukūlā śantāmā 'tisyena sarvopadra- vaśamanī saṃṛḍikā suṣṭha sukhakarī ca bhava".
3 TB., II. 5.4.6.
4 Ibid., II. 5.4.6; 8.6.
5 Ibid., II. 4.3.1.
6 Vide supra., pp. 61, 69-73.
7 Vide supra., pp. 91-94, 107-110.
According to the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, Sarasvān represents manas (mano vai sarasvān) and Sarasvatī, Vāk (vāk sarasvatī). It also speaks of two Sārasvatas as two fountains (sārasvatau tvā ’tsau). The identification of Sarasvān and Sarasvatī with manas and Vāk respectively has been asserted in another Kānda in clear terms: "... manas' caivā 'syāvāk ca "ghārau sarasvām' ca sarasvatī ca savīdyān manas' ca "va mevvāk ca "ghārau sarasvām' ca sarasvatī ce ’tí".2

Thus, manas and Vāk are brought into close relation with each other. To quote Sāyaṇa: "manas' cai ve ’tyādi. 'asya' yajnasarīrasya imau ‘āghārau' manovigrapau jañāteva. tau kramena 'sarasvām’ ca sarasvatī ca’ etad dvayātmaka bhavatah. adhyātmakaṃ tayor upāsanam āha. savidyād iti. mana manas' ca vāk ca sarasvatsarasvatīrūpāv ághārāv iti jñānīyād ity arthaḥ."3

The identification and relation of manas and Vāk may be understood differently. Mind (manas) is supposed to be equally filled with 'rasa' and 'bala' (rasabalaśaṃsātrāyavacchāna). During this state of equilibrium, everything is in tranquil state and hence no effect; but when there is any stress such as the desire for expression or an idea, it turns into breath and when the stress is acute, it turns into Vāk. Thus, even on this psychological ground, there is a close relationship between manas and Vāk, i.e., mind and speech,4 symbolically represented by Sarasvān and Sarasvatī.

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1 *ŚBH*, VII. 5.1.31.
2 Ibid., XI. 2.6.3.
3 His com. on *ibid.*, XI. 2.6.3.
In the Altareya-Brahmana, Sarasvān is described as Sarasvatīvān and Bhāratīvān and has been asked to accept the parivāpa, being poured in the sacrifice. Sarasvati has been invited repeatedly to the sacrifice and as Vāk has also been identified with it. As having Sarasvātī, i.e., Vāk or speech, Sarasvān is called Sarasvatīvān; and as having Bhāratī, i.e., prāna or breath, which sustains the body, he is described as Bhāratīvān.

5. Vāk and the problems concerning her in the Brāhmaṇas:

(i) The way through which Sarasvāti went to be identified with speech:

Originally a terrestrial river, the Sarasvāti was later on ascribed with divine character on account of the sanctity of its waters and was conceived as Vāk (speech) and then as the goddess of speech (Vāgeśvarī).

The pious waters of the Sarasvāti river infused life into the views of the people residing along its banks and this fresh life was the cause of the holy speech in the form of sacred hymns, which led them to identify the river with speech or conceive it as the goddess of speech.

The identification of the Sarasvāti river with Vāk is endorsed by the fact that Vāk is described to reside in the midst of Kuru-Pāncālas:

"tasmād atro 'ttarū hi vvāg vadati kurupaṅcālātā vvāg dhy. esā ..."
The Vāk, thus described, could only be the Sarasvatī river flowing in the Kuru-Paṇcāla region. Sarasvatī, or Vāk, is also connected with the Soma; and for this reason Sarasvatī is called 'aṃśumāti', full of the Soma. "... Soma, frightened by Vṛtra, fled to the Aṃśumāti, flowing in the Kurukṣetra region. He settled there and gods too settled there along with him. They used Soma, and thereby evolved Soma-sacrifices."²

The Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa informs us that waters of the Sarasvatī were used for consecration. It is also said that the consecration was done with speech, i.e., the Sarasvatī river. Sacrifices were performed on the banks of the Sarasvatī river and its blessings were prayed for their success. Then, the river was implored for the holy speech and was conceived as Vāk and furthermore as the goddess of speech.

From the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, we come to know that the mantras chanted in the sacrifice are taken to be Vāk and owing to the predominance of the chanting of the mantras, the sacrifice itself has been identified with Vāk.² On account of the constant recitation of the mantras in honour of gods associated with the sacrifice, the sacrifice itself was

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1 Supra., pp. 132-138.
2 Sūryakānta, op.cit., p. 115.
3 ŚB, V.3.4.3, 5.8.
4 Ibid., III. 1.4.9, 14, etc.
identified with gods. There is no distinction and, thus, the full identification is maintained, when consequently, the sacrifice (yajña) has been identified with Vāk.2

(ii) The cosmogonical Vāk legend in the Brāhmaṇas:

While discussing the various implications of 'saptasvasā'3 as an epithet of Sarasvatī, we have pointed out that this word also denotes, according to Sāyana and others, the seven-metres - Gāyatrī, etc. Of the seven metres, Gāyatrī, Trstup and Jagatī have special importance in connection with cosmology. There is a beautiful story about Gāyatrī. Gāyatrī is said to have eight syllables (akṣaras), which are the result of the kṣaraṇa vyāpāra done in eight times by Prajāpati, while he was desirous of creation. In the beginning, Prajāpati was alone. So he had a desire to reproduce himself. For this purpose, he practised penance; and by dint of it, waters were produced.4 Waters asked him about their use. He said, "you should be heated"; and as a result, they were heated and foam was produced out of them.5 Similarly, the foam was heated and the clay was produced.6 When clay was heated, sand was

1 Cf. Gop B., II.1.12, "sarvā devatā visūr yajño devatās caīva yajām ..."; TB., I. 3.4.5, "... ato prajāpatāv eva yajñam pratiṣṭhāpayati, prajāpatir hi vāk".
2 SB., III. 1.4.9, 14, etc.
3 Vide supra., pp. 49-51.
4 SB., VI. 1.3.1.
5 Ibid., VI. 1.3.2.
6 Ibid., VI. 1.3.3.
produced. Similarly from sand, there resulted pebble; from pebble, the stone; from stone, metal ore; and in the last, gold was produced. This is the kṣaraṇa-vyāpāra of Prajāpati and each of his vyāpāras or kṣaraṇas implies one aksara or syllable, obtained by Gāyatrī. Thus, his eight kṣaraṇa-vyāpāras imply eight aksaras or syllables of Gāyatrī. In this way the eight syllabled Gāyatrī came into existence.

Vāk has been held to have produced this universe. Gāyatrī, too, does the same work. She has played a vital role in the creation of the universe in association with Prajāpati. Sarasvati in her capacity of being 'triṣaḍhausthā', represents the three worlds, earth, firmament and heaven. Gāyatrī is also called 'tripadā' and the legend of the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa speaks of her as having been produced by Prajāpati. Prajāpati created the three worlds, the earth, space and the heaven, represented by the three padas of Gāyatrī. The metre Gāyatrī represents Sarasvati, who in her different capacities, represents different regions. Iḍā represents the earth; Sarasvatī the mid-region; and Bhāratī, the heaven.

In the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, Vāk is accepted as the progeny of Prajāpati. It is Prajāpati, who, in the later literature, has been

1 Ibid., VI. 1.3.4.
2 Ibid., VI. 1.3.5.
3 Ibid., VI. 1.3.6.
4 Cf. RV., VI. 61.12; see also supra, p. 52.
5 AB., XX.
6 See supra., pp. 88-90.
7 AB., XX.
identified with Brahmā, the Creator. The seed of this identification is available in the Aitareya-Brahmana,¹ where Gāyatrī is his kṣaraṇa and vyāhṛtis are bhūḥ, bhuvah and svāḥ, and these vyāhṛtis are identified with the three letters constituting OM, the very symbol of Brahma. The identification of Prajāpati with metres² is carried out in this way. The cosmogonical aspect of Vāk is more obvious, when metre has been identified with mind, and mind with Prajāpati. Metre is taken to represent various elements.³

Thus, there is a close affinity among Prajāpati, Vāk and metre. Prajāpati is the first unborn; and Vāk, the second after him. He has every control over Vāk for creation and it is probably for this reason that he is called Vācaspati, the Lord of speech.⁴ The epithets Ilāspati, Vācaspati and Brahmanaspati⁵ speak of his lordship over Vāk. Vāk is a vital force in creation, a fact apparent enough from the acceptance of metres as indriyas.⁶

(iii) The identification of Vāk with Sarasvatī:

It is only in the Brāhmaṇa literature that the identification of Vāk and Sarasvatī is asserted in clear and indubious terms. The following lines will show this identification in the various Brāhmaṇas.

¹ Ibid., XX.
² SB., VI. 2.1.30.
³ Cf., Satapatha-Brahmana, with the Hindi commentary Ratnadīpikā by Pt. Ganga Prasāda Upādhyāya, Vol.I (New Delhi, 1967), pp.113-114 (in reference to SB., VIII.5.2.6 and IV., XV.4.5).
⁴ Cf. SB., III. 1.3.22; V.1.1.16.
⁵ BD., III. 71.
⁶ Th., II. 6.18.1, 3, "... gāyatrī chanda indriyam ... uṣṇik chanda indriyam"; AB., II.6.18.3, "... triśṭup chanda indriyam ... jagati chanda the "indriyam".
(a) The Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa:

This Brāhmaṇa has greater number of references than others in this regard. In the consecration ceremony, the sprinkling of waters of the Sarasvati is thought as if it were done with speech (Vāk). This Brāhmaṇa further stresses that Sarasvati is speech and speech itself is sacrifice. Since Sarasvati is speech, Prajāpati is described to have strengthened himself and also to make her his progeny. In the Rgveda, we find Vāk as proclaiming herself to be the daughter of a rṣi, and, thus, she comes into the picture as a lady. We have no mention of the name of Sarasvati there; but Vāk can be none other than Sarasvati as Vāk and Vāk as the daughter of the rṣi is in all probability the speech sprung from his mouth. The Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, too, presents Sarasvati as a lady and she is the same as Vāk.

In the Yajurveda, Vāk is taken to be the controlling power of Sarasvati. In the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, Sarasvati is first taken to be Vāk and then Vāk to be her controlling power, probably discretion born of knowledge. Sarasvati or Vāk is also identified with mind (manas), the abode of all ideas before they are expressed through speech and heard by ears. Thus, in her latent form, speech is mind. Elsewhere:

1 Cf. ŚB., V.3.4.3; 5.8.
2 Ibid., III. 1.4.9, 14.
3 Ibid., III. 9.1.7.
4 RV., X.71.
5 ŚB., IV.2.5.14, 6.3.3.
6 YV., IX. 30.
7 ŚB., V. 2.2.13, 14.
8 Cf. ibid., XII. 9.1.13.
Sarasvān is identified with mind and Sarassvati with Vāk: "sāravstavau tvo 'tsau prāvatām iti mano vai sarasvān vāk sarasvaty etau." Thus, Sarassvāti and Sarassvān combinedly form the complete Vāk.

(b) The Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa:

The identification of Sarassvāti with Vāk is clearly asserted in the Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa in the statement that one who worships Sarassvāti, pleases Vāk; for Vāk is Sarassvāti: "atha yat sarassvatiṃ yajati, vāg vai sarassvati, vācna eva tena prīṇati".

(c) The Tāṇḍya-Mahābrāhmaṇa:

At the outset of this chapter, we have noted that post-Vedic conception of Vāk includes in Sarassvāti, the conception of varṇa, akṣara, pada, vākya and dhvani. Her identification with Vāk and also with dhvani exists in the Brāhmaṇas. Identifying Sarassvāti with Vāk, the Tāṇḍya-Brāhmaṇa states: "vāg vai sarassvāti vāg vai rūpam vai rūpam eva 'smāi tayā yunaktī". Here Sarassvāti is taken to be śabdātmikā Vāk, i.e., the speech in the form of sound (śabda or dhvani). The word 'rūpam' suggests the various forms of speech; and 'vairūpam' the object denoted by speech.

(d) The Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa:

In the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, Sarassvāti is said to be Vāk and then

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1 Ibid., VII.5.1.31; XI.2.4.9, 6.3.
2 Cop B., II.20.
3 See supra., p. 128.
4 Tā B., XVI. 5.16.
5 Cf. Śāyana on the above, "... vāk śabdātmikā hi sarassvāti. vairūpana ca viksaṁstutam".
6 AB., III. 37.
'pāvīravi', a term already used for Sarasvatī in the Ṛgveda. One who worships 'pāvīravi' invokes Sarasvatī, too, at the same time, because of her sanctifying nature, Sarasvatī, the goddess of speech, is called pāvīravi.

(e) The Aitareya-Āraṇyaka:

In the Ṛgveda, Sarasvatī is called 'dhiyāvasuh', and 'pāvākā'. The Aitareya-Brahmana, too, uses these terms; but it boldly presents them as the synonyms for Vāk, thus, confirming the identification of Sarasvatī with Vāk: "pāvākā naḥ sarasvatī yajñāṃ vaṣṭu dhiyāvasur iti vāg vai dhiyāvasuh".

(f) The Śāṅkhāyana-Brahmana:

This Brahmaṇa identifies Sarasvatī with speech and says that on the occasion of 'dārsapaurṇamāsika', one who worships Sarasvatī, pleases Vāk (speech); because Sarasvatī is Vāk: "yat sarasvatīm yajati vāg vai sarasvatī vācam eva tat prīṇaty atha".

(g) The Taṅtirya-Brahmana:

This Brahmaṇa also refers to Sarasvatī. In this Brahmaṇa, we also find the identification of Prajāpati who is, according to the Satapatha-Brahmana, possessed of prānas (breaths) and Vāk with the

1 See supra., pp. 58-60.
2 Cf. Śāṇāya on AB., III.37, "ye 'yaṁ vāgabhīmānāḥ sarasvatī' devatā saī 'va 'pāvasya' sādhanāsyā hetutvāt 'pāvīravi' tatpāthena 'vāci eva' devatāyām mantrarūpām 'vācam' sthāpayati".
3 RV., I.3.10; see supra., pp.42-43, 72-73.
4 AA., I.14.
5 ŚāB., V.2.
6 TB., I.3.4.5; III.8.11.2.
7 Cf. Satapatha-Brahmana with the Hindi-Vijnānabhaṣya, Part II, p.1353.
sacrifice and Vāk.\(^1\) As Vāk is the manifestation of prāṇas, Vāk, i.e., Sarasvatī - is considered superior to the prāṇas: "vāg vai sarasvatī. tasmāt prāṇāṁgam vāg uttamā".\(^2\)

In the classical literature, 'girā' (from 'gir', capable to assume a human voice)\(^3\) is taken to be one of the names of, or synonyms for Sarasvatī, she being understood as the spoken form of Vāk (speech). The identification of Sarasvatī with the human voice can be traced back to the Brāhmaṇas, where she has been expressly called 'jihvā', i.e., tongue,\(^4\) a physical organ of speech, and the word Vāc or Vāk is used for the human speech.\(^5\)

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1TB., I.3.4.5.
2Ibid., I.3.4.5.
3Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 289.
4ŚB., XII.9.1.14, "jihvā sarasvatī".
5Cf. TB., I.3.4.5.