Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION

CONCEPTION OF GOD ARISING IN THE VEDIC LITERATURE

The Vedas, the most sacred knowledge, propagate different phases of religious thought. There, the sublime, grand, beautiful and useful aspects of nature are personified and deified. The deities presiding over the diverse phenomena of nature are worshipped. They are regarded as supernatural and superhuman spirits akin to human spirits. Gods are not natural phenomena, but they are pervasive supernatural entities, which govern the phenomena of nature. The gods are wise, invincible, merciful, mighty, omniscient, righteous, pervasive, truthful and benevolent. They are easily propitiated by hymns, oblations, prayers, offerings and sacrifices. Gods give worldly prosperity, wisdom, moral qualities, victory, wealth, long-life, progeny and happiness to the devotees.

The early Vedic religion starts with nature-worship possessing anthropomorphic overtones. It is believed that the mantras which form the first section of the Vedas are portions where the praises of the gods were sung. Like all ancient people, the Vedic Indians were also extremely extrovert in their worship of nature. The beauty and sublimity of the phenomena of nature awoke in them a consciousness of rare power and thereby they were overwhelmed.
The ancient Indians were, no doubt, naive as they did not possess tools of explanations. But they had an intensely inquisitive mind. Hence, they tried to read natural phenomena in terms of and in the language of their own behaviour. These nature-spirits are referred to as devas, meaning the ‘shining one’. Whatever was so dazzling that one could not look upon it and understand, it became a deva, a shining one, to the Vedic Indian.¹ One important characteristic of the Vedic deities is that the individual gods are often invoked as the highest. On the other hand, the Vedas have definitely stated that the manifested gods are only an aspect of the Ultimate Being. The Rgveda says ‘the one Being is called by many names by the sages as they speak of him Agni, Indra, Yama and Mātariśvan’.² In yet another hymn it is categorically stated that the wise poets with their words shape the one Being in many ways.³ Conceiving them as many in one, the Vedic poets easily identify one god with another. As they identify them all with one divine Essence, so also they identify one god with all other gods. Thus all the gods and goddess are identified with Agni in the Rgveda which states that Agni is Varuṇa at the birth, when kindled Agni becomes Mitra, in him all gods are centred. He is Indra to the worshipper.⁴

1. devo dānādvā dipanādvā dyotanādvā ...... .Nir., 7.15
2. indraṁ mitraṁ varaṇamagnimāhuratho divyaiḥ sa supraṇo garutmanā / 
   ekaṁ sadvipra vahudhā vadantyagniṁ yamaṁ mātariśvānamāhuh //
   R.V., 1.164.46
3. supraṇa viprāḥ kavayo vacobhirekaṁ santaṁ bahudhā kalpayanti/
   Ibid., 10.114.5
4. tvamagne varuṇa jāyase yat tvarī mitro bhavasi yat samiddhāḥ / 
   tve viśve sahasasputra devāstvamindro dāsuṣe martyāya //
   Ibid., 5.3.1
In the philosophical hymns of the Vedas, the origin of the gods is mostly connected with the element of water. In the *Atharvaveda*, gods are said to have arisen from the non-existent. According to one cosmogonic hymn, they were born after the creation of the universe. In one passage of the *Rgveda* a triple origin, apparently corresponding to the triple division of the universe is ascribed to the gods, when they are said to have been ‘born from Aditi, from the waters, from the earth’.

Yāska, the author of the *Nirukta*, states that previous writers of the school to which he himself also belonged, i.e. the Nairuktas reduced the deities mentioned in the Vedas to three, viz. ‘Agni whose place is on the earth, Vāyu or Indra, whose place is in the air, and Sūrya, whose place is in the sky’. They asserted that these deities received many appellations in consequence of their greatness or of the diversity of their functions, as the names of Hotṛ, Adhvaryu, Brahman, Udgāṭ, are applied to one and the same person.

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5. Ibid., 10.121; 10.129
6. br̥hanto nāme te devā ye’s sataḥ pari jajñire / 
   ekaṁ tadaṅga skambhasyāsadahuh paro janāḥ //  A.V., 10.7.25
7. ko adhā veda ka iha pra vocat kuta ājāta kuta iyaṁ visṛṣṭīḥ / 
   arvāgdevā asya visarjanena’ thā ko veda ābahhūva//
   R.V., 10.129.6
8. viśvā hi vo namasyāni vandyā nāmāni devā uta yajñiyāni vah / 
   ye stha jātā aditerabhdyaspari ye pṛthivyāsta ma iha śrutā havam //
   Ibid., 10.63.2
9. tiśraḥ eva devatāḥ – iti nairuktāḥ/ agniḥ pṛthivistānah vāyurvā indro vā 
   antarikṣasthānah, sūryro dyusthānah/  Nir., 7.2.5
10. tāsāṁ māhābhāgyāt ekākasyāḥ api bahūni nāmadheyāni bhavanti/ api vā, 
    karmapṛthaktvāt/yathā hotā, adhvaryuḥ, brahmā, udgāṭa iti, api ekasya 
    sataḥ/  Ibid., 7.2.5
In another context of *Nirukta*, Yāska declares that owing to the greatness of the deity, the soul is celebrated as if it were many. The different gods are separate members of the one soul. However, sometimes the gods are invoked and worshipped in groups. Sometimes three, four or more gods are invoked. Sometimes all gods (*višvedevāḥ*) are worshipped together, who are implicitly believed to be partial aspects of one supreme god.

To classify and enumerate the Vedic Gods according to their importance is not possible. There is no dependable measuring rod to determine their relative importance or greatness. Vedic scholars have classified all the deities into those who occupy the celestial regions, those who occupy the atmosphere and those who belong to the terrestrial regions. Of these deities, the importance of some of the gods has been discussed in brief. The choice of these deities is either because they form the source ideas for later development in Hindu theology or because of their prominence in the Vedic mythology itself.

Agni is the deity whose physical background is fire. He is one of the most prominent figures in the *Rgveda*. Although the name indicates ordinary fire, still, Agni is primarily important as the personification of the sacrificial fire. Such a fire is the central object in any sacrifice without which it could not be performed. Agni is said to have a tawny beard, flame-coloured hair and burning jaws with shining golden teeth. Many mythological stories are found about the origin of Agni. The most important characteristic of Agni is the function

11. *māhābhāgyāt devatāyāḥ ekaḥ ātmā bahudhā stūyate/
    ekasya ātmanaḥ anye devāḥ pratyāṅgāni bhavanti/*

*Ibid., 7.2.4*
of Agni in sacrifices. Agni was brought into closer contact with man because of this daily sacrifice. The people were struck by the tremendous capacity of fire to consume anything and everything that was thrown into it. They must have wondered about the status of such an object. So, promptly they decided that fire was no doubt a deity who was specifically meant to mediate between man and other gods. He not only brings the gods to the sacrificial altar, but also takes the sacrificial offerings to them after first burning and consuming it by himself. Thus, he is appointed not only by man, but also by the gods to be the carrier of the sacrifices, hence his name is havirvāt.

Indra is the next important deity of the Rgveda. He is an atmospheric god. This deity is shrouded in varying mythological imageries. But for all that, he is also a nature god. The demons of drought and destruction are conquered by Indra, the god of thunder, and consequently, the god of rain. He was also worshipped as the god of battle who helped the Aryans to conquer their enemies. The conditions of drought, the gathering of clouds and the roar of thunder,
which mostly precede the deluging rain, are all portrayed vividly by
the Vedic poet when he describes the war between Indra and Vṛtrāsura,
the demon who obstructed the flow of waters.¹⁶ Many are the deeds
attributed to Indra and all of them speak of him as the warrior god
who is forever helping the Aryans to conquer and settle down. Thus,
out of very humble beginning, Indra rose to be the lord of all the
deities. He becomes king by his valiant deeds,¹⁷ and he is close to
man as a brother or a father.¹⁸

Varuṇa is a celestial god. The power of Varuṇa is so great, his
knowledge so vast, that nothing can escape them. He is omniscient¹⁹
and knows everything that happens in the universe. He is the maintainer
of law and order in the cosmos.²⁰ The most important characteristic
of Varuṇa which is important for later Hinduism, is that he is the
guardian of rta.²¹ This word means both cosmic law as well as truth

16. ahīṁ yad vṛtramapo vavrivāraḥsa hannyaḥviśuṇā sacānaḥ/
    Ibid., 6.20.2
17. indraḥ kṣitīnāmasi mānuṣānāṁ viśāṁ daivināmata pūrvayāvā/
    indro vṛtramavipṛchodhanītiḥ pra māyānāmāminād varṣaṇītiḥ //
    Ibid., 3.34.2-3
18. para yāhi māghavannā ca yāhīndra bhātarubhayātā te artham /
    yatrā rathasya bhūtāḥ nīdhānam vīmocanāṁ vājino rāsabhasya //
    Ibid., 3.53.5
19. veda yo vināṁ padamantrarikṣena patatām/ veda nāvah samudriyāḥ//
    veda māso dhṛtavrato dvādaśa praṇāvataḥ/ veda ya upajāyate//
    veda vātasya vartani muroṣṣvasya bhūtāḥ/ veda ye adhyāsate//
    Ibid., 1.25.7-9
20. tena viśvasya bhuvaṇasya rājā/    Ibid., 5.85.3
21. ātena mitrāvaruṇāvṛtā vṛdhāvṛtasprā/    Ibid., 1.2.8
and moral order. He is said to be not only the natural governor of the physical universe but also of the moral law. This idea, *ṛta*, is said to be the root-concept of a later and more developed idea of Hinduism, namely *Dharm*ā.

Rudra is a minor deity in the *Rgveda*. He is described as a malevolent god, quick to anger and to strike.\(^{22}\) Even the other gods are said to be afraid of him.\(^{23}\) But this god is not always described as a frightful one. He is terrible yet compassionate. The physical basis of Rudra is that he is a storm-god. Just as storms, though fearful, bring about the god of the people, so also, Rudra strikes so as to heal. Rudra is sometimes qualified as the auspicious ‘Śiva’.\(^{24}\) Thus, in later Hinduism, the name of Rudra dropped out leaving ‘Śiva’ alone. This is the beginning of the idea that all opposites must meet and must be transcended, which is a predominant part of later Upaniśadic thought. In the *Atharvaveda*, Rudra had always become the ‘Lord of the cattle’ Paśupati,\(^{25}\) a name by which Śiva is worshipped even today.

Viṣṇu is a solar god who is also referred to in the *Rgveda*. He is minor god here. The most important physical characteristic of this god is his motion or movement. In a number of contexts he is said to be a god who takes three steps.\(^{26}\) Classical writers interpret the three

\(^{22}\) prau rudrēṇa yayinā yanti sindhavastiro mahimaramatiṁ dadhanvire/
Ibid., 10.92.5

\(^{23}\) tasmād deva abibhayuryadai no ’yair na hiṁsyāditi/ Ś.B., 9.1.1.1

\(^{24}\) yā te rudra śivā tanuḥ śivā viśvāhā bheṣajī/ V.S., 16.49

\(^{25}\) bhavāśāravou mṛḍataṁ mabhī yātaṁ bhūtapati paśupati namo vām/
A.V., 11.2.1

\(^{26}\) idam visnurvi cakrame tredhā ni dadhe padam/ R.V., 1.22.17
steps to mean either the rising, culminating and the setting of the sun or the three divisions of the universe which the sun traverses.

It is neither possible nor desirable to enumerate and describe all the natural deities of the early Vedic times. What is most important to notice here is the creation of these deities, on an experimental basis, by the Vedic Indians.

**RISE OF THE MONOTHEISTIC IDEA IN THE VEDIC PANTHEON**

The very tendency to raise the importance of the sacrificial ritual above the presiding deity caused the Vedic Indian to pause to assess his gods. Thus, we find this agonised refrain in the hymn Prajāpati- ‘What god with our oblations shall we worship?’28 He added ‘They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni and he is heaven-nobly-winged Garutmān. To what is one, sages give many a title. They call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.’29

These statements clearly indicate that the early Vedic Pantheon did not satisfy the enquiring mind of the ancient Indians. Hence, the minds slowly drifted towards a monotheistic conception of godhead. Various methods were used while searching for such a monotheistic answer. One process was to lump all the previous gods together, drawing the common elements into a conceptualised god. Another

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27. viṣṇoḥ dhūliyukte pādasthane idāṁ sarvāṁ jagat samyagantar bhūra...sejamṛk yāskenaiva vyakhātā...viṣṇustridhā nidhatte padaṁ tṛṭhābhūtaḥ...prthivyāmantarikṣe diviṭi śākapūṇih (Nīr., 12.18-19)/ Śāyaṇa, Ibid.
28. kasmāi devāya haviṣā vidhema/ R.V., 1.164.46
29. Ibid., 1.164.46
was to create new gods on a functional basis. Thus we have Viśvakarman, the maker of all things; Prajāpati the lord of all creatures; Brahmaṇaṇaspati, the lord of Supreme Power and lastly the cosmic man, Puruṣa. The most important of all is the concept of Puruṣa, the cosmic man, who may be considered as equivalent not only to the material cause of the universe, but also as the equation sought between the universe and god. It is evident that people of that period were over obsessed with the cause of the universe. Yet, at the same time, the act of creation was always thought of as an act of sacrifice. It is necessary to stress here that although these abstract gods were conceived separately, yet their separateness was never in the forefront, but always in the background. It is somehow the idea of one creator that was attracting these Vedic Indians rather than a plurality of cause, as indicated by these various conceptions.

The monotheistic idea is that among the multitude of gods any one is treated as the supreme god for the time being when he is worshipped. Thus, in the Agni hymn, it is stated that ‘O Agni, thou art mighty Indra, the wide-ruling Viṣṇu, the king Varuṇa, the wondrous Mitra, Aryaman, the lord of beings. Thou art Rudra, the Maruts, the wind, and Pūṣan. Thou art Savitṛ, a bestower of treasures, Bhaga, the lord of wealth, Ṛbhu, Aditi, Bhārati, Iḍa and Sarasvatī. Here, Agni

30. tamagna indro viṣavaḥ satāmasi tvāṁ viṣṇururugāyo namasyāḥ/ tvāṁ brahmā rayivid brahmaṇaṇaspati tvāṁ vidhartaḥ sacase purandhyā/ tvamgne rājā varuno dhṛtvrata stvaṁ mitro bhavasi dasma īdyah/ tamaryamā satpatirthasya sambhujariṁ tvamāṁśo vidathe deva bhājayūḥ/ tvamajne tvaṣṭā vidhate suvīraṁ tava gnāvo mitramaṁ sajātyam/ tvamāśuḥhemā rariṣe svaśvyaṁ tvāṁ naram sardhe asī purīvasuḥ/ Ibid., 2.1.3-5
is identified with many gods, and treated as superior to them.

Hiranyagarbha or Prajapati, Visvakarman and Purusa gradually take the place of one supreme god. Hiranyagarbha is Prajapati, the lord of all creatures. He arose in the beginning. He established the earth and heaven. He is the sole king of the entire universe. He rules over the mountains, the seas, and the rivers. He governs men and beasts. His commands are followed by other gods. He alone is the god above all gods. He may claim the rank of one supreme god.31 It is found that the monotheistic idea is most clearly manifested in the passages of the Rgveda. It has stated that all things in this world are the manifestation of one all-pervading principle – ‘Aditi is the sky, Aditi is the air, Aditi is the mother and father and son. Aditi is all the gods and the five classes of man. Aditi is whatever has been born. Aditi is whatever shall be born.’32

Yaska in his Nirukta clearly states that all the gods though differently named and represented, are in one reality – ‘They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and (he is) the celestial, well-winged Garutmat. Sages name variously that which is but one: they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.’33

31. Ibid., 10.121.1-10
32. aditidyauraditirantarikṣa maditirmātā sapitā sa putraḥ/
    viśve devā aditiḥ pāśca janā aditirjātamaditirjanitvam//    Ibid., 1.89.10
33. Nir., 7.18.
THE GOD PRAJĀPATI: HIS PROMINENCE

Prajāpati is extolled as one of the prominent gods in the Vedic literature as a creator and sustainer of this universe. He is recognized as a distinct god mainly in the Brāhmaṇa literature. In the Epic-Purāṇic literature the deity has come to be designated as Brahmā and thus Prajāpati, whose position Brahmā usurps in the post-Vedic period is highly acclaimed as a supreme god.

According to Yāska, Prajāpati is the deity of the middle region, (madhyasthānādevatā). Yāska, in his Nirukta, has given the etymological meaning of the term ‘Prajāpati’ as the protector or supporter of the creatures. Here the root is pā or pāl (to protect) and it is added to the normal stem prajā to form the term Prajāpati. In the list of Nighantu, there is a number of gods, who collectively share the personality of Prajāpati as the creator or the protector of the creatures. The terms relating to these gods are explained by Yāska thus, Viśvakarman, the maker of all; Dhātṛ, the creator of all; Brahmaṇaspati, the protector or supporter of brahman (Here, the word ‘brahman’ means food or wealth – ‘brahma annam dhanam vā’ – Durgācāryavṛtti – Nir.,10.12); Bṛhaspati, the protector or supporter of the great (Here, the term ‘bṛhat’ means world or water

34. Ibid., 10.42
35. prajāpatiḥ prajānāṁ pātā vā pālayitā vā/ Ibid, 10.42
36. Nighantu, 5.4
37. viśvakarma sarvakāya kartā/ Nir., 10.25
38. dhātā sarvāya vidhātā/ Ibid, 11.10
39. brahmaṇaspatiḥ brahmanah pātā vā pālayitā vā/ Ibid, 10.12
40. bṛhaspatiḥ bṛhatah pātā vā pālayitā vā/ Ibid, 10.11
— 'brhataḥ mahato 'śya jagataḥ, udakasya vā' — Durgācāryavṛtti, Nir., 10.11); Kṣetrasya Pati, the protector or supporter of the dwelling place; 41 Vāstospati, the lord or protector of the house; 42 Vācaspati, the lord or protector of speech; 43 Parjanya, the best progenitor; 44 Yama, the governor 45 and Mitra, the preserver from destruction. 46

The Brhaddevatā of Śaunaka mentions the eight different names of Prajāpati. 47 These are Brahmaṇaspati, Sadasaspati, Prajāpati, Satpati, Ka, Kāma, Iḷaspati and Vācaspati. Six of these names of Prajāpati end in 'pati' (the word 'pati' is explained by Durgācārya thus – 'patiri tī pāteḥ pālayatervā datīḥ ditvāṭṭilopah', Nir., 10.11). In this context the Brhaddevatā also mentions that, in the Rgveda, there is only one stanza as address to ‘Ka’ (R.V., 1.24.1.), to Brahmaṇaspati, several hymns are addressed, to Prajāpati, there is one hymn (R.V., 10.121.) and to Sadasaspati, three stanzas of a hymn are addressed (R.V., 1.18.6-8). The same book also categorically states that all the names of the deities belong to Prajāpati, because he is the source of all. 48

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41. kṣetrasya patih/ kṣetraṁ kṣiyaternivāsakarmanah/
tasya pātaḥ vā pālayitā vā/ 
Ibid, 10.14
42. vāstospatih/ vāsturvasaternivāsakarmanah/
tasya pātaḥ vā pālayitā vā/ 
Ibid, 10.16
43. vācaspatirvācaḥ pātaḥ vā pālayitā vā/ 
Ibid, 10.17
44. parjanyaḥ paro janayitā vā/ 
Ibid, 10.10
45. yamo yacchafīti sataḥ/ 
Ibid, 10.19
46. mitraḥ pramītaḥ/ trāyate/ 
Ibid, 10.21
47. Brhaddevatā, 3.69-71
48. sarvānyeva tu sarvāsāṁ devatānāṁ praṇāpyatiḥ/ 
Ibid, 3.72
Later on, in the Brāhmaṇa literature, these different epithets of Prajāpati as affirmed by Yāska as well as Saunaka, are found to be used profusely. According to the Brāhmaṇas, Prajāpati is Vācaspati, he is Viśvakarman, and he is Savitṛ. Ka is another appellation of Prajāpati. He is also stated as Dhatṛ, Agni, Vāyu, Vāc, etc.

According to the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, the word Prajāpati means productiveness. The Gopatha Brāhmaṇa also explains the term Prajāpati as the creator and the protector of the progeny. The Vājasaneyī Purāṇa also explains the term as the protector of the creatures.

Sāyaṇa, in his commentary, explains the term Prajāpati as the protector of the creatures by his own powers. In his commentary on the Vājasaneyī Samhitā, Mahādhara also explains the term as protector and generator. Saṅkarācārya construes the term Prajāpati as the protector of the subjects.
In the *Rgveda*, Prajāpati is invoked as a distinct deity only in a few passages. In the earlier part of the *Rgveda*, Prajāpati is used as an appellation of Savitṛ, Agni and Indra. In one passage of the *Rgveda*, Prajāpati occurs as an epithet of Savitṛ, the Sun god\(^{63}\) and in another passage as an epithet of Soma.\(^{64}\) In one passage, the sage Prajāpati seems to have been meant.\(^{65}\) Prajāpati is besought along with Viṣṇu, Tvastṛ and Dhātṛ to grant offspring to the devotees.\(^{66}\) Elsewhere, god Prajāpati is invoked to bestow abundant progeny.\(^{67}\)

In a hymn of the *Rgveda* (R.V., 10.121), Prajāpati is invoked as the creator of the heaven and earth, of the waters and of all that lives. He is described as the sole king of the entire universe and the god above all gods. In this hymn, the deity is directly named as Hiraṇyagarbha, yet, the hymn ends with a prayer to Prajāpati.\(^{68}\)

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63. divo dhartā bhuvanasya prajāpatiḥ piśāṅgarāṁ drāpiṁ prati muficato kaviḥ/vicaksanah prathayannāprīnamuravajjjanat savitā sunamanukthyanam //
   R.V., 4.53.2

64. tvastāramagrajāṁ gapāṁ puroyāvānamā hube/
   indurindro vṛśā hariḥ pavamānaḥ prajāpati //
   Ibid, 9.5.9

65. prajāpatatirmahyametā rarāṇo viśvaidevaḥ pitreḥ sanvidānaḥ/
   śivāḥ satīrūpa no goṣṭhamākastāsāṁ vayaṁ prajayā sadema/
   Ibid, 10.169.4

66. viṣṇuryoniṁ kalpayatu tvāstā rupāṇi piṁśatu /
   ā sificatu prajāpatiḥdhatā garbhaṁ dadhātu te //
   Ibid, 10.184.1

67. ā naḥ prajāṁ janayatu prajāpatirājarasāya samanakatvaramā/
   adurāṅgalīḥ patilokāṁ viśva śaṁ no bhava dvipade śaṁ catuṣpade/
   Ibid, 1085.43

68. prajāpatē na tvadetanyanyo viśva jātāni pari tā babhuva /
   yat kāmaste juhumastnno astu vayaṁ syāma patayo rayinam //
   Ibid, 10.121.10
Hiranyagarbha is Prajāpati. Sāyaṇa, in his commentary firmly states that, Hiranyagarbha is nothing but Prajāpati – ‘hiranyagarbhaḥ hiranyagarbhaḥ hiraṇmayasyāṇḍasya garbhabhūtaḥ prajāpatirhiranyagarbhaḥ tathā ca taittirīyakam – ‘prajāpatirvai hiranyagarbhaḥ prajāpatanurūpātavya’ iti.’⁶⁹ The Śatapatha Brähmaṇa also supports this statement.⁷⁰ It is worth noting in this context that Hiranyagarbha has become an appellation of Brahmā in the later period.⁷¹ The word ‘Ka’ used in the hymn in the refrain ‘kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema’ also became an appellation of Prajāpati, later on, in the entire Vedic and the Purāṇic texts. While discussing the word ‘Ka’, Durgācārya, the commentator of Nirukta, expresses the view that Prajāpati is regarded as Ka, because he is the means of desires – “prajāpatirvai kaḥ/ sa kasmātkaḥ kamanaḥ vā kāmināṁ kāmyeṣvartheṣu sādhanam/ ‘prajāpatirakāmaya’ iti bahukāmatvātkaḥ prajāpatih”⁷².

The word Prajāpati also occurs in the list of Nighaṇṭu in the sense of sacrifice.⁷³ Entire Brähmaṇa literature supports this and remarks that Prajāpati is the sacrifice.⁷⁴ As Prajāpati is non-different from sacrifice, he desires offering in his own self – ‘prajāpatiḥ ātmani svaśarīre eva āhutidrayāṁ sampādayitumicchāṁ kṛtavān.’⁷⁵

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⁶⁹. Sāyaṇabhāṣya, Ibid.
⁷⁰. prajāpatirvai hiranyagarbhaḥ S.B., 6.2.2.5
⁷¹. agre hiranyagarbhaḥ sa prādurbhūtascauturmukhaḥ/V.P., 6.36
⁷². Durgācāryavṛtti, Nir., 10.22
⁷³. Nighaṇṭu, 3.17
⁷⁴. prajāpatiryajjhaḥ A.B., 2.17; S.B., 1.1.1.13; G.B., 2.3.8; T.B., 3.2.3.1; J.B., 2.70
⁷⁵. Sāyaṇabhāṣya, S.B., 2.2.4.4
In the ‘Puruṣa sūkta’ of the Rgveda (R.V., 10.90), the supreme spirit is conceived of as the person or man (puruṣa) born in the beginning, and consisting of ‘what so ever had been and what so ever shall be.’ The hymn may be analysed in two parts – in the first part of the hymn describes the deity, Puruṣa and its second part presents the self-sacrifice by Puruṣa from which the whole creation, comprising of the four Vedas, four castes, all animals of both wild and domestic variety, the gods of the Vedic pantheon like the Sun, the Moon, Vāyu (the wind), Indra, Agni, the welkin region, the firmament, the earth and also the directions or quarters, i.e. the space sprang. The creation of the visible and invisible universe is represented as originating from an ‘all-offered’ sacrifice (yajñā) in which the Puruṣa himself forms the offering material (havīṣ) or the victim. J.Eggeling observes in this regard, ‘Prajāpati, who here takes the place of the Puruṣa, the world-man, or all-embracing personality is offered up anew in every sacrifice; and inasmuch as the very dismemberment of the Lord of creatures, which took place at the archetypal sacrifice, was in itself the creation of the universe, so every sacrifice is also a repetition of that first creative act.’\textsuperscript{76} The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa also reiterates that this Puruṣa became Prajāpati.\textsuperscript{77} Agni is created by Prajāpati and he subsequently restores Prajāpati by giving up his own body (the fire-altar) to build up a new dismembered Lord of creatures.\textsuperscript{78} Thus

\textsuperscript{77} sa eṣa puruṣaḥ prajāpatirabhavat/ Ś.B., 6.1.1.5
\textsuperscript{78} sa eṣa pitā putrah/ yadeṣo’gnimasṛjata tenaiṣo’gneḥ pitā yadetamagnih̄......
Ibid, 6.1.2.26-28
in the aspect of creation, a prototype of Epic-Purāṇic Brahmā may be found in Puruṣa of the Vedic pantheon, as in Epic-Purāṇic conception Brahmā is the author of these creations. It is also interesting to note that Puruṣa becomes an appellation of Brahmā in the Purāṇa period.  

Prajāpati is invoked in the Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā as the god before whom nothing was born, who pervaded all the worlds. The vastness of Prajāpati is also noted in the Taittirīya Saṁhitā, where it is stated that Prajāpati created the fire, then he attained supremacy. Prajāpati is also described as unlimited. In the Atharvaveda, he is closely connected with the generative powers and gift of progeny. Here, he is said to have formed thirty-three worlds and is identified with praṇa.

In the entire Brāhmaṇa literature, Prajāpati is referred to as the creator, supporter or preserver of this world and all beings. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Prajāpati is said to be alone in the beginning.

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79. sa vai śarīrī prathamaḥ sa vai puruṣa ucyate/ Mārk. P., 42.64
80. yasmāj jātāṁ na purā kiṁ ca nava ya ābabhūva bhuvanāṇi viśvā/ prajāpatiḥ prajayā saṁraraṇa striṁi jyotiṁsi sacate sa śoḍaśī/ V.S., 32.5
81. prajāpatirvā etāṁ jyaiṣṭhyakāmo nyadhata tato vai sa jyaiṣṭhyamacchat/ T.S., 5.7.6.6
82. aparimitalḥ prajāpatiḥ/ Ibid., 1.7.3.2
83. puṁsi vai reto bhavati tat striyāmanu śicyate/ tad vai putrasya vedanaṁ tat prajāpatirabrvit// A.V., 6.11.2
84. etasmād vā odonāt trayatraṁśataṁ lokāṇ nirmīṁ prajāpatiḥ/ Ibid., 11.5.3
85. prāṇo virāt prāṇo deśṭri prāṇaṁ sarva upāsate/ prāṇo ha sūryaṁcandramāḥ prāṇamāḥuḥ prajāpatim// Ibid., 11.6.12
86. prajāpatirha vā idamagra eka evāsa/ Ś.B., 2.2.4.1
He is referred to as the supporter of the universe. Prajāpati is identified with the sacrifice. Prajāpati is presented as creating the earth, the firmament and the sky by uttering bhūḥ, bhuvah and svah respectively. Having assumed the form of a Tortoise Prajāpati created the living beings. In the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, it is stated that Prajāpati assumed the form of a Boar and lifted up the earth which remained plunged in water. Thus, some of the incarnations of Viṣṇu are found as being shared by Prajāpati. The Vāyu Purāṇa further proceeds to describe the Boar incarnation of Brahmā for the purpose of lifting the earth from water.

The Upaniṣadic literature describes Prajāpati as the creator of the universe. The Aitareya Upaniṣad identifies Prajāpati as Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. Prajāpati is Saguna Brahman, identified with the whole creation; as well as he is the Nirguna

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87. prajāpatītvai bharataḥ sa hīdaṁ sarvaṁ bibharti/ Ibid., 6.8.1.14
88. esa vai pratyakṣaṁ yajñyo-yatprajāpatiḥ/ Ibid., 4.3.4.3
89. sa bhūriti vyāharatseyamprthivyabhavat, bhuvam iti taddamantarikṣama-bhavat, svariti sā'sou dyourabhavat/ Ibid., 11.1.6.3
90. sa yat kūrmo nama etadvai rūpaṁ kṛtvā prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjata/ Ibid., 7.5.1.5
91. prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjata/ tāsāmannamupākṣiyat/ tābhhyassūdamupa prābhinat/ tato vai tāsāmannarī nākṣiyyata/ tasya sūdassarībhāro bhavati/ nāsyā grhe’nmarī kṣīyate/ āpō va idamgre salilamāsīt/ tena prajāpatirasrāmyata/ T.B., 1.1.3.5
92. jalakrīḍāsu ruciram vāraḥam rūpamasmaraṁ/ V.P., 6.11
93. prajāpatirviśvaṁk hiranyagarbhah/ Mai.U., 7.7
94. esa brahmaṁśa indra esa prajāpatiḥ/ A.U., 5.3
95. śarīre prajāpatiḥ/ K.U., 4.2
Brahman, the unmanifest reality, one without the second. Prajāpati is identified with Saṁvatsara, Māsa, Ahorātra and the Food in the Praśna Upaniṣad. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad discloses that Prajāpati is the creator of the Trayaṇīvidyā and Oṃkāra.

The supremacy of Prajāpati is also stated in an important passage of the Nirukta in connection with those hymns in which no deity is indicated. In this regard, with reference to the ritualists (yājñīkaḥ), the Nirukta opines that those hymns in which no deity is indicated are dedicated to Prajāpati.

In the Sūtra literature, Prajāpati is often identified with Brahmā. The Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra has ascribed the several appellations to Brahmā, viz. Brahmā, Prajāpati, Caturmukha, Parameśṭhin, Hiranyagarbha and Svayambhūva. The Govila Grhyasūtra introduces Brahmā as one of the ten dikpālas while describing the rites connected with the construction of a house. It mentions that ten offerings, i.e. balis are to be offered to the regents of ten quarters or diśas, viz. Indra in

96. (a) aniruktah prajapatiḥ/ Chā.U. 2.22.1
    (b) prajapatiṁ vṛkṣe yāh/ Mai.U., 2.3
97. saṁvatsaro vai prajpatiḥ,. . . . māso vai prajapatiḥ . . . . ahorātro vai
    prajapatiḥ, annam vai prajapatiḥ/ Pra.U., 1.9-14
98. prajapati lokān bhyata patte bhyayo bhitapte bhyastrayi
    vidyāśaṁprāśavattāmaṁabhyatapattasya abhitaptāyā/ Chā.U., 2.23.2
99. tadye nādiṣṭhadevatāṁ man tras-teṣā devatoparikṣā/ yad devatāḥ sa yajñova
    yajñāri giri nava tad devatāḥ bhavanti/ atha anyatra yajñāḥ prajāpatayāḥ iti
    yājñīkaḥ/ Nir., 7.4
100. prajapatiṁ brahmā/ Ā.G.S., 3.4.1
101. om visvāṁ devaṁ starpa-yāṁ/ sādhyaṁ starpa-yāṁ/ brahmaṁ/ starpa-yāṁ
    prajapatiṁ starpa-yāṁ/ caturmukhaṁ starpa-yāṁ/ parameśṭhināṁ starpa-yāṁ/
    hiranyagarbhāṁ starpa-yāṁ/ svayambhūvaṁ
    starpa-yāṁ/ brahmaṁ-ṛṣadīṁ starpa-yāṁ/ Bd.D.S., 2.5.9.5
east, Vāyu in the south-east, Yama in the south, Piṭṛs in the south-west, Varuṇa in the west, Mahārājā in the north-west, Soma in north, Mahendra in the north-east, Vāsuki in the downwards and Brahma upwards in the sky. In the Āpastamba Dharmasūtra, the concept of Brahmā is introduced probably as that of a deity who is the master for control of mind and of meditation. It states that, 'the wise man who sees all creatures in the Self and meditates upon the reality is never bewildered; he who sees the Self everywhere shines in heaven being identified with or merged with Brahmā.'

The Purāṇas extol Brahmā, primarily a creator god as the first member of the Hindu Triad. The functions of the creation, those are ascribed to Prajāpati in the Vedic literature, are attributed to Brahmā in the post-Vedic literature. In the Vāyu Purāṇa, it is stated that he is called Brahmā because he is big and he expands his existence.

In the Purāṇas there are a number of epithets for Brahmā of which Prajāpati is one of them. Brahmā as Kāryabrahmā created this universe, the living and non-living beings. Therefore, he is their Lord (pati) and he is designated as Prajāpati (Lord of progeny –

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102. indrāyetipurastād vāyuva ityavāntaradesa yamāyeti dakṣinataḥ pitṛbhyā ityavāntaradesa varuṇāyeti paścānmahārāye tyavāntaradesa somāyeyuttarato mahendraḥvyavāntaradesa vāsukasya ityadhastādūrdhva namo brahmaḥa iti divi / Gv.G.S., 4.7.36.

103. ātman paśyān sarvabhuṭāni na muhyecintayankvacit / ātmānāṁ caiva sarvatra yah paśyet sa vai brahmā nākapṛṣṭhe tiṣṭhati // Āp.D.S., 1.8.23

104. bṛhatvādbrṛṁhanatvāc ca bhāvānāṁ sallāṭrayat / yasmādbrṛṁhayate bhāvān brahmā tena nirucyat // V.P. 1.4.29

105. ye tannāmasahasreṇa stavantyarkaṁ prajāpate/ Br.P., 31.28
Thus, Brahmā is known as Prajāpati, who is celebrated in the Vedic period as the creator of this world. In the Purāṇa literature, the mind-born sons of Brahmā are also collectively regarded as Prajāpatis. Because, Brahmā wanted that his sons should generate their offspring for the expansion of the world. The Vāyu Purāṇa expresses this idea in a simple verse:

\[ \text{lokasya santānakarāstairimā vardhitāḥ prajāḥ /} \]
\[ \text{prajāpatya ityevaṁ paṭhyante brahmaṇāḥ sutāḥ //} \]

The Vedic appellation of Prajāpati, viz. Ka is well mentioned in the Purāṇas. The epithets of Brahmā such as Hiranyagarbha, Puruṣa, Aja, Prathama, Svayambhū etc., remind us of the greatness of Prajāpati depicted in the Vedas. Prajāpati, whose legacy Brahmā takes in the later period is never said to have more than one face. But one of the most important traits of the mythology of god Brahmā in the Purāṇas is in his having four faces. The concept of god having more than one face more or less is common in the Vedic Mythology. Agni is said to have four faces and Bṛhaspati seven. According to the Kurma Purāṇa, Brahmā got four heads by looking in all quarters.

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106. V.P., 2.4.48
107. kṣetra kṣetrajyajñanadakte catvācca kaḥ śmrtaḥ/ ......
yasmāt puryanaśete ca tasmāt puruṣa ucyate/
notpāditavat pūrvavat svayambhūriti cocyate// V.P., 1.4. 41-45
108. sa jihvā caturnik raṇjate vasāno varuṇo yatamantarim / R.V., 5.48.5.
109. bṛhaspatiḥ prathamari ḫayamāno maho jyotiṣaḥ paramevyoman/
saptasyastuvijāto raveṇa vi saptaraśmiradhamattamāṁsi// Ibid., 4.50.4
110. tato me sahasotpannaḥ prasādo mumpurīngavāḥ/
caturmukastato jāto brahmā lokapitāmahāḥ// K.P., 1.2.5.
Bhāgavata Purāṇa also delineates the same story. Iconographical description of god Brahmā shows that his image should be prepared with four heads, seated on a swan or lotus. In his left hand, he should have a water jar (kamandalu) or a ladle (sruva) in his right hand. To his back side, a jar of ghee is to be placed and also the four Vedas; to his left side should be Sāvitri and to his right Sarasvatī. In his front should be placed the sages. As a purely Vedic deity, god Brahmā has the characters of brahma-carin, a custodian of Vedic knowledge. The various aspects of the image of Brahmā can be properly endorsed with the Vedic material evidences.

In the Mahābhārata, Brahmā is the personal form of the impersonal Brahman who is all-existent. The Ādiparvan and the Sāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata present the concept of cosmology and define Brahmā’s position therein. The concept of Brahmā in connection with cosmology has been introduced in the Ādiparvan. It states that, in the beginning this universe was devoid of light and brightness and enveloped in a dense darkness; there came into existence a large immutable egg which contains the seed of life of all beings. Into that great transcendental egg which was the cause of the whole creation, enters the impersonal Supreme Being who is eternal, mysterious, beyond perception and who is both existent and non-

111. tasyāṁ sa cāṁbhoruhakarṇikayamavasthitokamapāyaṁānaṁ/ parikramaṁ vyomnivīrṭtanetraścatavari lebhe’nudisaṁmukhāṁ// Bhg. P., 3.8.16

112. brahmā kamaṇḍaludharah kartavyah sa caturmukhah/........ kārtikeyaṁ pravakṣyāṁ taruṇādityasaprabham// M.P., 250. 40-45
existent. From that form comes out Brahmā, the grand father who is
the chief Prajāpati, spiritual guide of the gods, steadfast and who is
known as ‘Ka’, i.e. Prajāpati and Parameśṭhin.\textsuperscript{113} The \textit{Mahābhārata},
thus, presents in a very easy and popular way the relation between
the impersonal Brahman and the Personal Brahmā, i.e. the impersonal
Brahman enters into the egg and comes out of the egg as concrete
personal god, Brahmā. Brahmā is identified with the Vedic deities
Ka, Prajāpati and Parameśṭhin. This passage of the \textit{Ādiparvan} of the
\textit{Mahābhārata} has an implicit reference to the \textit{Ṛgvedic ‘Nāsadiya’}
(Ṛ.V., 10.129) and ‘\textit{Hiranyagarbha’} (Ṛ.V., 10.121) hymns and also
to the ‘\textit{Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa’} (11.1.6.1.) where the egg episode has
been referred to. And in the \textit{Chāndogya Upaniṣad} (3.19.1.) also
cosmology has been described with reference to the mundane egg.

The \textit{Śāntiparvan} of the \textit{Mahābhārata} also presents a similar
concept of the cosmology and introduces Brahmā as the first creator
(ādikarta). Termed as Prajāpati, Brahmā is the first creator of beings,
the firm and the movable. Thereupon he creates the devas, rṣis and
mankind, the worlds, the rivers, the oceans, the four quarters of the

\begin{quote}
\begin{footnotesize}
\text{Mbh., \textit{Adiparvan}, 1. 29-32}
\end{footnotesize}
\end{quote}
heavens, the rocks, the trees etc.  

In the Vanaparvan of the Mahābhārata, three aspects of Prajāpati have been described. Prajāpati in the form of Brahmā creates, in the form of Puruṣa (i.e. Viṣṇu) he protects and in the aspect of Rudra he destroys. The Śāntiparvan also introduces Prajāpati as assuming the form of golden swan and enclosing the three worlds. This swan form of Prajāpati may help in developing Brahmā’s iconographic features with swan as his vehicle or vāhana in the subsequent period.

The Rāmāyana presents the theory of creation and the concept of Brahmā as the lord of people and the creator of the worlds. It states that, in the very beginning, it was water only, in which the earth was formed. Thence arose Brahmā, the self-existent with all other deities. He, then, became a Boar, raised up the earth, and created the whole world with the saints, his sons. Brahmā eternal and perpetually undecaying, sprang from the ether; from him was descended Marīci, the son of Marīci was Kaśyapa, from Kaśyapa sprang Vivasvat, and

114. adikartā sa bhūtānāṁ taṁ evāvuh prajāpatim/
    sa vai sṛjati bhūtāni sthāvarāṇi carāṇi ca //
    tataḥ sa sṛjati brahmā devarṣipītṝmaṇavam/
    lokāṁ nadiḥ samudrāṇic ca disāḥ sāiḷān vanaspatin //
    Ibid., Śāntiparvan. 182. 5-6

115. sṛjate brahmamūrtistu rakṣte pauruṣī tanuḥ /
    raudrī bhāvena samayettrisrō’vasthāḥ prajāpateḥ //
    Ibid., Vanaparvan, 226.45

116. harīso bhūtvātha sauvarnastvajo nityaḥ prajāpatiḥ /
    sa vai paryeti lokāṁstrinatha sādhyānupāgamat//
    Ibid., Śāntiparvan, 188.3
Manu is declared to be born as Vivasvat’s son. He (Manu) was formerly the Prajāpati.\(^{117}\)

In an another context of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Brahmā is referred to as the creator of the universe, chief of the knower of the Vedas, the chief of the wise men and chief of the gods.\(^{118}\)

In the *Manusmṛti* Brahmā has been introduced as a complete deified god, responsible for creation, who was born first by himself and who is identified with Prajāpati of the Brāhmaṇas and Puruṣa of the *Rgveda*. Here, Brahmā has been presented thus, ‘He (the self-existent) having felt desire and willing to create various living beings from his own body, first created the waters and threw into them a seed. That seed became a golden egg of lustre equal to the sun; in it he himself was born as Brahmā, the progenitor of the world.\(^{119}\) The concept of Brahmā in *Manusmṛti* as the progenitor of the whole

\(^{117}\) imāṁ lokasamutpaṭṭaṁ lokanātha nibodha me/ sarvaṁ salilaṁevaṁit prthivi tatra nirmiṁ// tataḥ samavabhad brahmaṁ svayambhūrdaiṁtahiḥ saha/ sa varāhastato bhūtvā projjhāra vasuinhdhāram// asṛjaca jagat sarvaṁ saha putraṁ kṛtāṁbhāḥ// ākāśaprabhavo brahmaṁ śāśvato nitya avyayah//

tatmaṁmariciḥ sarṣajñajñe maricēḥ kaṣyapāḥ sutah/ vivasvān kaṣyapaṁjñajñe manuvivaṁsvaṁ svayam/ sa tu prajāpataḥ pūrvaṁkṣvākustu manoḥ sutah//

\(^{118}\) abruvarṇstrīdaṁsaśreṣṭhā rāghavam prāṇijalīṁ sthitam /
kartā sarvasya lokasya śreṣṭhojñānavidāṁ vibhuh //

\(^{119}\) so’bhidyāya sarirat svāt sisṛksurvividhāḥ prajāḥ/
apa eva sasajjādau tasu vijamaṁśrjat //
taṇḍamabhavaddhaimañī sahasrāṁsūsamaprabham/
tasmin jajñīc svayaṁ brahmā sarvalokapitāmahāḥ// Man.S., 1.8-9
creation can be compared with the ideas of all-creating Brahman of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa introduces Brahman as the original source of all things—‘in the beginning Brahman was all this. He created gods; he placed them in this world’. The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa presents the same idea where it is stated—‘let us worship with an oblation the first born god, by whom this entire universe is surrounded—the self-existent Brahman, which is the highest tapas. He is the son, father, and mother.’

The Purānic Encyclopaedia explains the word Prajāpatīs as the creators of the world. With a view to making creation easy, Brahmā, at first, created twenty-one Prajāpatīs. They are Brahmā, Rudra, Manu, Dakṣa, Bhṛgu, Dharma, Tapa, Yama, Marīci, Aṅgiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasiṣṭha, Parameśṭhin, Sūrya, Candra, Kardama, Krodha and Vikṛta. It is to be noted that the number of these Prajāpatīs differs from one Purāṇa to another. According to the Vāyu Purāṇa, these Prajāpatīs are—Marīci, Kratu, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, and Vasiṣṭha. The Matsya Purāṇa assigns them to be ten; and in the Gurūda Purāṇa they form a galaxy of twenty-two.

120. brahma vai idam agrē āsīt/ tad devān asṛjata/ tad devān srṣṭvā eṣu lokesu vyarohayad/ Ś.B., 11.2.3.1
121. yenedaṁ viśvaṁ paribhūtaṁ yad asti prathamajāṁ devaṁ haviṣā vidhema/ svayambhū brahma paramaṁ tapo yat/ sa eva putraḥ sa pitā sa mātā/ T.B., 3.12.3.1
122. Vettam Mani, Purānic Encyclopaedia, p.147
123. V.P., 1.4.44-47
124. M.P., 3.6-8
125. G.P., 1.5.2-3
According to the *Harivaṁśa* there are thirteen Prajāpatis, which are enumerated as follows:

\[
\text{atmārthe cāsrjatputrānllokakartṛnpitāmahāḥ/}
\]
\[
\text{viśve prajānāṁ patayo yebhyo lokā viniḥsṛtāḥ/}
\]
\[
\text{viśveśaṁ prathamaṁ nāma mahātapasamātmajam/}
\]
\[
\text{sarvāśramatamaṁ puṇyaṁ nāmnā dharmaḥ sa śṛṣṭavān/}
\]
\[
\text{dakṣaṁ maricimatriṇca pulastyam pulahaṁ kratum/}
\]
\[
\text{vasiṣṭhaṁ goutamaṇcaiva bhṛgumaṇgirasam manum/}
\]
\[
\text{atharvabhūtā ityete khyātā brahmasmaharṣayaḥ/}
\]
\[
\text{trayodaśasutānāṁ tu ye vaṁśa vai maharṣiṇām/}^{126}
\]

The *Mahābhārata* also enumerates the name of twenty-one Prajāpatis –

\[
\text{brahmā syāṇurmanurdaṁkṣo bhṛgurdharmastathā yamaḥ/}
\]
\[
\text{maricirāṅgirātrībhya pulasya pulahaḥ kratuḥ/}
\]
\[
\text{vasiṣṭhaḥ paramesṭhī ca vivasvān soma eva ca/}
\]
\[
\text{kardamaṇcāpi yah prokta krodho 'rvāka kṛita eva ca/}
\]
\[
\text{ekavimśatirūtpannā te prajāpatayāḥ smṛtaḥ/}^{127}
\]

The *Amarakośa* explains the word Prajāpati as an epithet of Brahmā. Here, twenty names of Brahmā have been mentioned.\(^{128}\) The *Śabdakalpadruma* also discusses the meaning of Prajāpati elaborately.

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128. brahmā'ṁabhūḥ surajyeṣṭhaḥ parameṣṭhī pitāmahāḥ/
    hiranyagarbhō lokeśaḥ svayambhūscaturānanah/
    dhātā'ṁbjayonirdruhiṇo virifičiḥ kamalāsanah/
    sraṣṭā prajāpatirvedhā vidhātā viśvārṣaṇādhīḥ/ *Amarakośa*, 1.6-7
The ten Prajāpatis as noted by the Śabdaṅkalpadruma are as follows:

daśa prajāpatayo yathā/ maricimatryaṅgirasou pulastyāṁ
pulahāṁ kratum / pracetasaṁ vaśisṭhaṁ ca bhṛguṁ
nāradameva ca[I]

One of the exceptional meanings of the term Prajāpati as furnished in the Śabdaṅkalpadruma is – 'svanāma khyātakīaviśeṣaśca'. It refers to the butterfly, the scientific term of which is ‘Lepidoptera’.

Thus, in the Vedic and the Purāṇic terminology, Prajāpati is the god above all other gods.

\[\text{References:}\]

130. Ibid.