The concept of Viraj in the Vedas is very peculiar. It is one of the basic principles of the Vedic cosmology. Viraj literally means to shine very brilliantly. This term is derived from the root "Raj" to shine, with "Vi" as its prefix. Thus "Viraj" is that principle which shines very brilliantly. Therefore the term Viraj is used in the Rigveda for the sun, the moon and other luminous planets.

In the Rigveda Viraj is used in a very particular sense. There this term stands as a symbol of the universal nature or infinity. A cow also symbolises as the mother nature. In many Suktas of the Atharvaveda Viraj is described as a cow. In Atharva it is called as "Kamduha Dhenu", a cow, which gives milk whenever it is desired.

In this Viraj in the form of a cow is described as the basic principle of the cosmology. In the Atharvaveda eight hymns are devoted to describe this particular deity. In IX 10 of Atharvaveda Gauh and Virat are used as synonymous terms. Thus Virat is universal cow which is described as mother nature.

Universal Cow as Mother Nature-

The concept of cow, which is elaborated under the caption of
Gowpery, in the Rgveda, is pregnant with manifold meanings. The cow, calf, milk, butter, etc., all these terms which frequently occur in the Rgveda are very significant and contain very deep meanings. These terms construct the structure of the Rgvedic cosmology as explained in the Nasadiya Suka and Bhavavytta Suka of the Rgveda. These terms are actually the symbols for the elements of great significance in construction of the thoughts regarding cosmology.

The cow, in the Rgveda, is called by various names viz. Aditi, Visvarupa, Visvantya, Kavala, Viraj, Vasupatni etc. In the Asyavamiya Suka of Rsi Dirghatamas (Rg. 1. 164) a description giving the actual nature and form of this cow can be beheld. In this hymn Mantras 26-29, take up the description of this cow and thus these stanzas metaphorically disclose the mysteries hidden in. Therefore, the cow is described as the universal nature or motherhood which produces various things on the level of the universe and the individual. In the verse 26 of the hymn the poet says-

"I invoke the milch cow, so that the milker deft of hand, may milk her.

May Savitar give us the excellent Sava or stimulation: the boiler is made hot, that is what I proclaim."2

In this description, what is cow? What is her milk? Who is the milker? Who is her calf? Who is Savitar? What is the boiler? These are a few questions, which arise and are required to be answered clearly. It is hardly possible, may impossible to proceed further with these questions remaining.

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1. The Rgveda
2. The Rigveda
To have an answer of this question let us turn to the Atharvaveda. In this veda the twenty eight verses of Asya-Vamálya-Súkta of the Rigveda are collected under the title of Viraj. The viraj of Gauh is the deity of the Súkta. In another stanza of another hymn of the same veda, the poet enquires very surprisingly:

"Whence were those two born? Which half was that? Out of what world? Out of which earth? The two young of the viraj rose out of the sea (Salila), of those I ask thee by which of them was she milked."

The answer is given in the very next verse, where the poet says:

"He, who caused the sea resound with greatness, making the three fold lair as he lay."

The desire milking young of the Viraj, he made his bodies secret in the distance."

The cow is Kamadugha or desire milking she is mother of all and fulfills all the desire of her young ones. One can see in the Atharvaveda various terms used for her. In that veda she is called as Kevali, Ghrsti, Aditi, Māyā, Raśya, Prathamajā, Vaiśvā narasya Pratimā, Brhati, Sūryapatni, Janitri etc. There the Viraj or cow is described as the universal mother.
Universal Mother or Prakriti

In the vedic as well as the Puranic literature cow is synonymous with Prakriti. In Vayupurana the author has very clearly identified cow with Prakriti. This cow is yoni or the original source of this universe, she produces the universe. Actually cow represents the motherhood. A cow gives milk, when she delivers a calf. In absence of a calf one cannot milk her. The milk does not descend in her udders therefore the cow is regarded as a representation of motherhood. This motherhood is indestructible. This is to be protected. In the scriptures killing of mother is the greatest sin. One may shake off all the debts, but not of mother's. In Ramayana we read Rama as valuing mother even more than the heaven or swarga. In the vedic culture mother is placed on the highest level. There is nothing which may exceed the importance of the mother. Therefore cow which symbolises motherhood has got a unique place in the whole vedic literature and vedas. Cow also was regarded as unkillable in the vedic period. The punishment, which was given usually to a killer of a cow at that time, was death. The Rsi of Atharvaveda declares -

"O man, if you kill our cow, we will shoot you!"

This unkillability of the mother cow is denoted by the word "Aditi".

Etymologically the term 'Aditi' is derived from the root, "Do" meaning to cut, that thing which is liable to be cut, is called as Diti. Diti represents the sinful activities. In the puranas we learn
that Kasyapa had two wives Diti and Aditi, the former cherished sinful intentions and the latter virtuous intentions. These intentions caused the former deliver forth Daityas or demons, which were the results of evil motives, and the latter deliver forth the Adityas or the gods. The Daityas, because of their evil and sinful activities were always regarded as liable to be cut by the gods. Therefore they were called Daityas. This word also derived its origin from the root "De" opposite to it is Aditi or Aditya. Aditi is a term expressing a negative meaning, that thing which is not liable to be cut or killed, is Aditi. Therefore to show the unkillability of cow the vedic Rsis have called her as Aditi. Prakrti, being the mother of the universe, is also Aditi. Aditi is one of the most important gods of the Rgveda so many Suktas are devoted in her praise. She is placed on a very high rank. For Rsis everything, that exists in the world, was Aditi and Aditi only. Without any doubt one of them declares-

"Aditi is the heaven, Aditi is mid air, Aditi is the mother and sire and son.

Aditi is all gods, Aditi is five classed men, Aditi, all that hath been born and shall be born."

The description of Aditi leads us to think Aditi and Prakrti as identical. Griffith also commenting on Aditi holds Aditi as the Infinite or the infinite nature. This is as the same as the cow of Vayupurana. Aurobindo also holds Aditi as the mother cow. He remarks- "We see in the vedas, that Aditi the mother
of the gods is described both as the cow and as the general mother.... In more general aspect she is the source of all the cosmic forms of consciousness from the physical upwards."

Similarly Prakṛti is variously termed in the vedic literature as for instance -

Tamah, Jyesthāh, Ayyakta, Śvadā, Saṭṭva, Aja, Kṣetra, and Gauh all these words represent on the only matter Prakṛti. Let us examine how these terms have been used.

Tamah as Prakṛti -

This word is used for Prakṛti by Prajapati Paramesuhi, the author of Nāsadiyaṣūkta of the Rgveda, the verse reads -

"In the beginning everything was enveloped by Tamah"10

What is this Tamah? The answer is given by "Durgācārya" a commentator on "Nirukta" says he, the Sāṃkhya philosophers regard Tamah as Pradhāna, the material cause of the world. To support their stand they produce this verse-

Tamah prevailed in the beginning. Out of that Tamas, it was Kṣetrajña who appeared first.11

Before the universe came into existence, everything was covered by Tamas, everything was concealed by it, hence it was totally incomprehensible. There existed nothing but Salīlam only, apart from that there was nothing. Salīla here certainly does not stand for this gross water, where there was nothing as existent or non existent, how can one imagine the existence of the water at that
time? In fact it is an adjective of Tamas, which means that every thing was swallowed by the enveloping Tamas. Thus in the beginning there existed Tamas and Brahman. But Brahman was not enveloped by that; it was beyond the Tamas, therefore the Vajurveda describes it as brilliant as sunshine and beyond Tamas. The theory of Tamas is supported by Manu-smrta and Vayupurana. The author of Vayupurana says—

"In the state of equilibrium of the three gunas everything was Tamas."

"This existed in the shape of darkness unperceived, destitute of distinctive marks, unattainable by reasoning, unknowable, wholly immersed as it were in deep sleep."

The state of equilibrium is called Prakṛti. At that period Prakṛti remains in her original form, which is quite unperceivable. Moreover at that time there was no distinction of perceiver and the thing to be perceived. Prakṛti was the highest so she is termed as Jyeṣṭhā.

"At that period there existed the greatest among the bhutas." "What is this "Bhuvanasya jyestham"? To have an answer to this questions again we are to turn towards Nirukta, where the author says— "The greatest and the best among the Bhūtas is Atyakta" In the Purānas Atyakta and Pradhana are regarded as identical terms. In the Samkhya-philosophy also Atyakta is used as a synonyme of Pradhana or Prakṛti. In Śvetāsvatara-Upanisad Prakṛti is called as Mā."


"An ajā with red, white, black colours produces various Prajas. Another ajā enjoys her, while the third ajā leave away the already enjoyed of ajā. 18

In the Gita it is called as Kṣetra. This word is etymologically explained in Vayupurana as—

"It is destroyed (Kṣayaṁat) it is the cause of the things. Therefore it is called Kṣetra." 19

In Devalaṃrtī it is called as Vidhāna. In the Mahābhārata it is termed as Pradhāna. Pradhāna is satya or eternal, Prakṛti, the original source is satya or eternal and vikāra, the manifestation that appear from it, is Anṛta or subject to destruction. As a lamp lights up other so many lamps, so the prakṛti produces various lokas, but she being eternal is never destroyed. 20

The Theory of satya may also be traced in the Rgveda, the veda declares—

"By the severe Tapas a pair of Rta and Satya was revealed. 21

The Rta and satya mentioned in the stanza represent the supreme being and prakṛti respectively. Prakṛti is satya and the mother of all the universal mother or four mouthed cow (caturmukhī Gauh) sustains with her milk the Rṣis, the gods men and all other creatures.

"She is a bride who creates everything. All the mightiness is in her embryo." 22
In the Atharvaveda the universal cow or mother is called as Sataudanā. Sataudanā literally means hundred-fold rice-dishes or the oblations. Here each oblation represents a sacrifice. The universal cow with hundred-fold rice dishes or oblations feeds the various beings. It is the mother nature, which feeds its issues.

"The gods that are stationed in the sky and that are stationed in the atmosphere and those that are upon the earth, to them thou always feedst milk, butter also honey."23

Further she is invoked to give these things to the giver of the oblation with the help of her limbs. A complete Śūkta consisting of 27 verses of the Atharvaveda (X.9) describes the greatness of Sataudana Gauh, the deity of that particular Śūkta.

In the succeeding hymn of the abovementioned hymn cow is called as Vaśā meaning a loved cow, or a cow placed under one's control. In this hymn the poet pays his homage to her thus:

"Homage to the while being born, homage also to the while born to thy tail, (tuff), hoofs, form O inviolable one, be homage."24

Vaśā cow, in the Atharvaveda, is described as the greatest and the best. To her is bestowed Rte, Brahma and tapas,25 the gods and the human beings are fed upon her, therefore all this is Vaśā only.26

Vaśā is indeed a great one. Everything in the universe is produced by her. She is ignitri or the producer, the multicolours, that
we see in the things, are produced from and within her, therefore she also is of multicolours therefore she is also called as Prani or a spotted cow.

Regarding Prani we read a story in the Atharvaveda. Varuna had a cow, she being multicoloured she was called as Prani. Varuna gave away the cow to Atharva in exchange. After sometime Varuna wanted Atharva to return the cow, then there was a dialogue between Varuna and Atharva. The cow is described as spotted, milk well-milking and with constant calf. On seeing the Varuna's intention Atharva says -

"Having given, O Varuna, a spotted cow as sacrificial fee, thou hast with the mind intended rebestowed.

Replies Varuna.

"Not at pleasure am I a rebestower, for examination do I drive home this spotted cow. By what poesy now, O Atharvan art thou poet? By what that is produced art thou Jataveda?"

Again says Atharva:

"O Varuna, indeed I am a poet by poesy. I am Jataveda for I produce everything. No Aarya or Anarya can damage the course I maintain."

Lastly being satisfied with the Atharvan's scholarship and considering him a fit person to keep the cow Varuna says:

"Let not people call me ungenerous. I give thee back the spotted cow."
This story contains a deep theory. Prsni is also full of deep meaning as Viraj cow.

What is Prsni?

Varuna's Prsni also serves as a symbol for Prakriti. Prsni is said to be spotted or multicoloured, and Prakriti also being trigunatmika is called Sabata and produces multicoloured things, Prakriti as an aja is described as consisting of three colours, viz. white, red and black. She is called Amadugu Dhana, who milks at will.

The story of Varuna's Prsni and Atharva, as related above, discloses a metaphysical conception. When a child is born, he is completely innocent and knows nothing. In childhood he knows nothing about the things surrounding him. Only he knows how to suck his mother's breast. The mother also nourishes the babe very affectionately, but when a child is changed into a fully grown-up man and a sense of responsibility arises in him, then his elderly persons test his ability and fitness to see whether he is able to discharge the responsibility bestowed upon him. Similar is the case with this story too. Here in this story Varuna represents Brahma, cow represents the mother nature and Atharva, is Jñani. Only Jñānis or wisemen can know the mother nature. The mother nature nourishes the wisemen with her breasts, or the things she produces. Varuna is Brahma, who gives Prsni or the mother nature to Atharva, but afterwards desires to take the Prsni from Atharva, but being satisfied with the intelligence of Atharva, pr wisemen Varuna or Para-Brahma...
lets the Prsni or the cow live with Atharva forever. Thus the legend of Varuna and Atharva contains in itself a great metaphysical mystery.

In the Rgveda Varuna is regarded as the Lord of Rta. Rta which is moral order and this moral order or Rta controls and regulates the universe. So he only who knows and acts according to the moral order of Varuna enjoys the milk of this multicoloured cow or the multicoloured mother nature. It is but certain that one, who abides by the rules of mother nature or Prakrti) is every healthy and enjoys the world morally, but one, who goes against it, remains suffering from various ailments and for him the world possesses no charma. A follower of moral order of Varuna's commands is never a sinner, ailment is the greatest sin. There is no sin like sickness and there is no Virtue like good health. A good healthy person is a true follower of Varuna and he is Atharva.

Atharva also means a restrained life. One who leads a restrained life the mother nature nourishes him well. A restrained life leads towards a prosperous life and then every thing of the world is at his feet. Thus one, who is sinless and leads his life according to the moral order of Varuna, is set free by Varuna. Bondages of Varuna do not tie him. Varuna is always pleased with him who goes by right path and not by crooked path, and for him the Prsni or Varuna's cow milks everything.

Virāj as Father of Brahman.

Virāj, a symbol of the mother nature or Prakrti is the material cause of the creation. Prakrti is dynamic in nature.
therefore she is termed as Jagati. In this jagati or virat the
 gods enter and abide and then the men and the Rsis find pleased.
 Viraj is adhered to all the gods. She produces them. She is also
called as the father of Brahma. This statement of Atharvaveda
also carries a metaphysical meaning. Brahma is actually manifested
through the nature only. Brahma being nirakara or without form
cannot be manifested in absence of some concrete element. Prakrti
is the medium through which Brahma comes into manifestation. To
make this point more clear I may cite the instance of father,
mother and child. A man is manifested through a woman in the form
of a child. In Manusmrti we are told that it is the father, who
is reborn in the form a son. A male cannot be a father unless
and until the female does not deliver a child there a female can
be said to be the creator of the father. Here also Brahma is the
father, who gets manifested or is reborn through Prakrti. In
absence of Prakrti Brahma cannot be manifest. Therefore in the
Atharvaveda is called as the father of Brahma. This theory is
traceable in the Rgveda, there also Viraj is said as the creator of
Purusa of Brahma.

"Then was born the Viraj and from Viraj was born the Purusa."

In the Upanisad this procedure is described as re-entering of
Brahman into Prakrti." Brahma first created Prakrti and then
entered into her and after having entered became both this and that.
The Defined and Undefined, the Supported and Supportless, Knowledge
and Not-Knowledge, Reality and Unreality.
and then he got manifestation through her. Brahman is soul and Prakriti is body. Body is the only medium through which the existence of soul is confirmed. The motion in the body leads us to infer the existence of soul in the body, because we know that in absence of soul the body cannot move. In the same fashion the movement in the universe leads us to this conclusion that there is the Brahman who gives this movement to the universe.

When the movement starts the first revelation in the process of creation is of Virāj. This (Virāj) is she that first shone, among these other ones, she goes about having entered. When the Virāj is in the unmanifested form, all the yajñas are removed, but when she is manifested the sacrifices also start. In her course everything is produced, therefore the Virāj is in the highest firmament. Virāj is breathless, but gives breath to others and thus the Virāj comes to shine. Virāj touches everything and with her touch it starts breathing. Some see her and some see not. Virāj in the form of vital force alone existed in the beginning. It is the vital force which blows life in the organism with its touch. It is eternal, it is above death and decay, therefore it is called Aditi.

Virāj as Aditi -

The Western scholars hold this word to be very ambiguous. This is why, they fail to give the exact meaning of it. For Oldenburg Aditi is a personification of the idea of freedom from bondage. Etymologically he derives the word from the root "di" meaning to cut
or limit so he holds that the element, which is not diti or limited is Aditi. For "Aditi is infinite," remarks Dr. Aditi an ancient god or goddess is in reality the earliest name invented to express the infinite, not the Infinite as the result of a long process of abstract reasoning, but the visible Infinite, the endless expanse, beyond the earth, the clouds and beyond the sky." Maxmiller holds Aditi as an infinite expanse visible to the naked eye." Roth says Aditi, eternity or eternal is the element which sustains the Adityas and is sustained by them. The eternal and inviolable element in which the Adityas dwell and which forms their essence is the celestial light the Adityas the gods of this light do not therefore by any means coincide with any of the forms in which light is manifested in the universe. They are neither sun, nor moon, nor stars, nor dawn, but the eternal sustainers of this luminous life, which exists as it were behind all these phenomena." For Wilson- Aditi is evidently allegorical. Among the Indian scholars also this word received a great consideration, and they have very exactly interpreted this word. Aurobindo does not agree with the etymology of this word given by Oldenburg. For Oldenburg Aditi is derived from the root "di" with a prefix "a" which works as an indication of negation, thus which is not diti is Aditi, but for Aurobindo it is not a privative term. He observes "Not that the word Aditi is etymologically the privative of diti. The two terms derive from entirely different roots "ad" and diti." In any opinion Aurobindo's etymology may not be incorrect, but is far away from the exactness, for almost all the Indian scholars regard it a privative
Dr. Radhakrishnan's statement also furnishes a good support in this regard. He states- "Aditi literally means "unbound or unlimited". It seems to be a name for the invisible, the infinite which surrounds us on all sides and also stands for the endless expanse beyond the earth, the clouds and the sky. It is the immense substratum of all that is here and also beyond... Here we have the anticipation of a universal all-embracing all-producing nature itself. The immense potentiality or the Prakrti of the Sankhya philosophy. It corresponds to Anaximander's Infinite." 35

This definition of Aditi given by Dr. Radhakrishnan is very close to that of the Rgveda. Rgveda also holds Aditi as a symbol of Prakrti or mother nature or Viraj and Daksa of Purusa or the Supreme Being. We are told in the Rgveda,

"O Aditi to give birth to Daksa you serve Mitra and Varuna and then the Purusa is born with seven hotas." 36

At the time of the first creation Aditi serves Varuna the Brahman and being pregnant with communion she produces Daksa, Daksa is Purusa. Again Aditi having a form of female approaches Purusa and with the communion of both the next creation starts. In the Puranas also Aditi is said to be the wife of Daksa, who bore many children for him. In Taittiriya Samhita and Jaiminiya Brhamap Daksa is said to be Prana the vital force. 37

Aditi is Sarvajagadrupa, the whole universe is a form of Aditi or we may say that Aditi is transformed into the universe and this
Aditi of the Rgveda travels to Sāmkhya, where she is termed as Prakṛti. Devaraj चोजव व writes in his commentary on Nighantu—
"Aditi is Prakṛti in the metaphysical sense." Skanda Swamy also holds Aditi as Prakṛti and Brahma as her cause. Adiṣṭareya Aranyaka just as Rgveda regards everything as Aditi. In the Yajurveda Aditi is called as Vishnu's wife. In the later Purāṇas Dakṣa and Aditi or Puruṣa and Prakṛti are described as a couple or husband and wife. But in a stanza of the Rgveda Aditi is described as a daughter of Dakṣa. Here Dakṣa corresponds to Prajāpati whose daughter i.e. Aditi is wedded to Puruṣa. Here we may trace the seed of Sāmkhya Philosophy, which regards Puruṣa and Prakṛti as husband and wife. According to Sāmkhya Philosophy Prakṛti after enjoying communion with Puruṣa produces Mahat, Ahamkāra etc. These elements produced by Prakṛti are called as sons of Aditi in the Rgveda, where we are told as—

"Aditi delivers eight sons from her body."

Here the eight sons of Aditi respectively correspond to Mahat, Ahamkāra, five tattvās and the gross world of Sāmkhya. These elements are the basic principles of Sāmkhya philosophy.

This Aditi of the Rgveda and Prakṛti of Sāmkhya is self-existent. It is sustained by its own power. Its power comes from within, therefore in the Rgveda to reveal this quality of Aditi is used as term "Svadha." It is used.

Svadha as Prakṛti—

Svadha consists of two words Sva and dha, sva is a prefix and
and dhā is the root meaning to exist, thus Svadā literally means an element which is self-existent. In the Nāsadiya Sukta of the Rgveda "Svadā" is used in the sense of Prakṛti. Prakṛti is also self-existent as Svayambhū Prajāpati. Prajāpati is called Svayambhū for he exists by his own power, in the same fashion Prakṛti being sustained by her own power, is termed as Svadā.

In another verse of the Rgveda we are told regarding an immortal held by Svadha. The verse reads thus,

"The immortal held by Svadha, goes upward and downward with mortal entities. Both of these are cogoers, connected with each other evergoing. One of these is seen, while the other is not."

Here Svadha is recognised as an inherent strength by Griffith and intrinsic power by Gomarswamy. In fact Prakṛti is Svadā, she is the mother of all, or we may say that the motherhood is her breath. She is really a great one. All the gods abide and breathe in her, therefore she is called Viśvadēvi. She is a milch cow and her milk flows in thousand streams, therefore she is called- "Sahasradhāra Vāsā."

In the Purānas this cosmic cow is called as Trayīmayī. Thenu i.e. a cow with three gunas. The cow nourishes Rsis, Pitrās, Devas and men with her milk. Dr. V.S. Agrawal has explained these four in purely metaphysical sense, according to him Rsis, Pitrās, Devas and men reside in the human body. He observes-

"Clarifying these symbols we might say that the principle of
of mind is represented as Rṣis, that of life as Deva, that of matter as Pitṛs or the two parents which produce the body.\footnote{49}

Though they exist separately but collectively they come under a composite form. Thus this cow nourishes all the beings with her milk. Actually the affection of a cow towards her calf comes out in the form of milk. The milk appears in the breasts of a mother only because of the affection to her child. Thus milk also is a symbol of affection. Due to this affection the Kānadūgha Dhenu of Vīraṁ milks various things to nourish the whole universe.

A Puranic legend tells us that in the ancient time there was a king named Prthu, who loved his subjects as his own children. Once there had been a severe drought in his kingdom and the people almost reached the point of death. So one day the mother earth, in a form of a cow, approached him and he milked wealth from her, thenceforth the earth is called Prthivi. The great poet Kālidās also describes in his epic the cow as have been milked by Prthu. This basic idea of milking the cow is extensively explained in the Atharvaveda.

Vīraṁ verily was this universe in the beginning. She was called and milked by various creatures according to their own choice and they subsisted upon those things, they milked from her. "She ascended- she came to Āsuras. Āsuras called to her, O Illusion come, of her Vairocana, son of Prahlad was young (Vatsa). From her he milked illusion, that illusion the Āsuras subsist upon."

"She ascended- came to fathers, they called her, O Svadhā,
come, of her Antaka, son of Mrtyu milked from her, he milked Svadha. That Svadha the fathers subsist upon."

"She ascended and came to Manusya. Men called her Manu the son of Vivasvān was her vata, of her Prthu the son of Vena milked from her, he milked both cultivation and grain. Upon these two men subsist."

"She ascended to the Rsis. Brhaspati the son of Angiras milked her, from her he milked Brahma and Tapas, upon these two the Rsis subsist." She ascended to the gods. Savitā milked her, from her he milked ārja. Upon that the gods subsist.

From her Vasuruci Gandharva milked sweet odor, lastly she went to the serpents and Dhṛtarāṣṭra the son of Airāvata milked poison from her, upon that poison the serpents subsist.51

Viraj is a universal cow, which contains everything in her womb, and everyone milk her whatever he likes. Therefore in the Rgveda Viraj is called as Īdughā i.e. good for milking. This cow is invoked in a stanza of the Rgveda:

"I invoke the milch cow good for milking, so that the milker with god hands may milk her.

May Savitā give us goodliest sava i.e. stimulation, the boiler is hot, I proclaim it.52/

Viraj is Kāmadughā or wish fulfilling cow, Anybody, who is deft of hand, may milk her and get the things as likes.
Savitā gives the invoker the excellent sava. Savitā, as stated in the Brāhmaṇa, is Prāna and Manas and when Prāna and Manas meet together, produce Vāja. Vāja and vak are identical. When Prāna or soul meets Manas a sort of energy is produced, this energy instigates the bodily fire, the fire produces the wind in the body, and the wind strikes certain parts of the mouth and thus the speech is produced. This is the process of appearing of speech according to Panini. Taṇṭiriya Brāhmaṇa also states that speech is a product of Vāja (Vāga Prasavaḥ).

The word "gharma" of the verse is very significant. Gharma in Sanskrit means a boiler. Gharma is this human body, there is always fire burning in it, so it is always hot. The milk of cow symbolises the bodily energy, this energy is boiling in this boiler. Savitā or Prāna adds fuel in it, the act of breathing provokes the fire as a blacksmith blows the fire with the blower. The wind provokes the fire and the fire keeps the boiler hot, which consumes the energy. The energy is never exhausted, from one side it flows and from the otherside it is consumed. Savitā is the centre from where the energy flows. No sooner the flow of the energy will cease than the life also will come to an end. Savitā never lets the fire assimilate the whole energy. Therefore the life energy is termed as the excellent sava in the Rigveda. This energy after being consumed stimulates the man to work. So Griffith is right in calling sava as stimulation.

In the Brāhmaṇas Agni and Sūrya are called as gharma. These two gharmanas are always burning and consuming the energy of
the cosmos. Savita or Prajapati milks the Virāj the cow and fuels the boilers. When the milking of the Virāj would stop be stopped, in absence of the fuel there will be a total destruction. These two boilers of Agni and Surya are Devamithuna or pair gods and are inter-related.

Two gharma sources of heat (Agni and Aditya) spreading to the horizon have pervaded the three fold regions. In the abovementioned verse these two boilers are called gharma samanta. The god Savitā is constantly pouring soma in these gharma. Soma is the fuel, with which they burn. This is Savita's sava, which he milks from Virāj and pours in the boilers.

These boilers are (Abiddha) burning very brightly, but the heat coming out of these is divine, Savita is the creator of this divine heat. At first Savita placed the fire in these boilers and offered soma as its fuel and since then the fire is constantly burning. So long the boiler is hot and the soma is being poured in, the life would go on. This is the heat that sustains the human as well as the universal life. For the heat is life. In the same sense Agni, in the Rgveda, is called as Tanūnapat. Tanūnapat literally means a thing which does not let the body fall down. If the heat in the body is in balance, the actions of the body go on smoothly and comfortably, but if it is high or low in both cases it may endanger the human life. Similarly in the cosmos also the heat is an essential element to sustain the whole universe. The sun, from which the heat is generated, is called the soul of the
sentiate and insentiate world. In absence of the earth can remain. Agni or heat in general was the first element which was produced by Prajapati in the process of creation. The Suta, Brâhmaṇa tells us, "He toiled and generated Agni from his mouth. He thus generated him first of the gods and therefore he is called Agni. Agni is the same as Āgni. He being generated went forth. For of him, who goes first, they say he goes at the head (Agre) such is the origin and nature of that Agni. The Agni and Gharma are identical. In the Rgveda Agni is called Ajasra gharma an incessing heat or boiler. Agni verily declares—

I am jataveda Agni by birth, ghrta is my eye and Amrta is in my mouth. I am arka with three dhatus. I measure out the lokas. I am unceasing gharma and I am the oblation.

These two boilers are placed in the cosmos. Surya is placed in the heavens, which is fed on exhaustless fuel by some invisible hands, and the other gharma is in the human body, which is fed on the feet by Prâna. The fuel poured in these gharmanas, is ghrta or clarified butter or the milk of cow or Virâj, and they sustain the cosmos.

In the Rgveda the whole cosmos is said to be governed by the Vasus. Vasus are these gods who make the beings live in this world. Five gross elements or Butas, Manas, Prânas and Ātma are the eight vasus. In absence of these the life on the earth is impossible. These Vasus also seek power for their sustenance from the higher principle, that is Virâj. Therefore Virâj is named as Vasupatni, i.e. the protector of Vasus.
"She (Virāj) the guardian of the Vasus and all treasures, yearning for the calf, has come thither uttering an affectionate sound.

May this cow give her milk for the Asvinas. She is inviolable deathless cow. May she prosper for our great prosperity." 62

Virāj, in this verse, is described as Vasupatni or the guardian of the vasus. Giving an etymology of Vasu the author of Satapatha says, "As these bring manifestation of life in the matter, so these are called as Vasus." They are eight in number. On the level of individual they are Mind, Prāṇa, Apāna and Pānca bhūtās 64 and on the cosmic level they are Prthivi, Antarikṣa (mid-region), Agni (fire), Yud (heaven), Akāśa (space), Aditya (sun), Candragna (moon), and Naksatra (stars) 65. The word "Naksatra" used here, according to Dr. Agrawal, stands for Brahma and not for the stars.

"Naksatra is," says he, "a privative word. Kṣatra refers to death and decay, Brahma being beyond the death is Naksatra. These eight Vasus of the Rigveda have found a very extensive and significant place in the later Purāṇas. The Purānic Śiva is said as having Aṣṭāmūrti or eight idols. In Lingapurāṇa a yajamāna or the sacrificer is also included in Vasus. (The poet Kalidas also refers to Aṣṭāmūrti Śiva in his work "Raghuvasāna" 66). In the Rigveda these eight Vasus are referred to as eight sons of Aditi—the inviolable cow 67. The Aditi ēva is Astayonih, having eight sons in her womb. A Rigvedic legend tells us that Aditi gave birth to eight sons, but later on she threw away her eighth son—Mārtanda and with seven sons only she approached the gods, but afterwards to
These eight sons are the same elements which are referred to in the Sāmkhya system. These eight sons or Vāsus are guarded by Virāj.

The cow Virāj is very affectionate to her calf, she comes to her calf lowing and uttering the sound "Him." According to Dr. Agrawal, "Him" and "Hum" are two sounds symbolising the voice of deep love and chastisement and destruction respectively. "Himkāra" is Daivi or (divine) and "Humkāra" is Āsuri. The former is Saumya and the latter is ghora. When the mother cow is with deep love, she utters "himkāra," but when she desires to destroy the world, she utters "humkāra."

When Virāj is in deep love, her udders are full of milk, with which she nourishes the Asvina twins. Who are these Asvinā? In the human body these are prāṇa and āpāna or in-breath and out-breath. In the Rgveda they are called Nasatyās; they dwell in nāsa or the nostrils therefore they are called Nasatyā. These are physicians. In the Rgveda we read a story about the Asvina and Cyavana. Cyavana was very old, whom the Asvinā made young. Cyavana, in real is the state of old age. In the old age also, whose Asvinā or Prana and Apana are powerful, he works as a young. With Pranayama the Prana can be made energetic, and the powerful Prānas sustain the body in good state. It is metaphorically stated in the Rgveda through the legend of Cyavana. The cow gives her milk to these Asvina. Payas or milk is the same as Soma. Asvinā are called as Annāda and Soma as Annā (first).

Rgveda refers to them as "Devanām Bhisaṅau," the physicians of
the gods. The gods are the sense-organs. If there is something wrong with anyone of these sense-organs, Prāṇa rushes to that place and cures it. The modern physiology tells us that if any part of the human body is injured, at once the streams of blood flow towards the injured part and the cells contained in the blood begin to fight with the foreign germs, who wish to enter into the body through the wound. The flowing of blood to the injured part is not the action of the blood itself. It is Prāṇa, which forces the blood rushes to the injured part. This is the process of Prāṇa curing the diseased part of the body. There are very few chances of falling ill for a man, whose Prāṇa and Apana are very energetic. Therefore the Aśvinās are called "Devanām Bhisajām" in the Rgveda. In the cosmos the Aśvinās are Dyāvā, Prthivi—heaven and earth. In the Atharvaveda the twin are called as Skambha—the Pillars, on the whole cosmos is supported by these two pillars.

Aśvinās are generally described as wearing lotus garlands. Therefore they are called "Puska Vasraja Lubucutter. Agni is the lotus of earth and Aditya of heaven. These lotus garlanded twins are fed on the milk of Virāj. The inviolable cow gives her milk to Aśvināu and the milk is the immortal soma. Sūrya as calf—

Virāj—the universal cow has a calf, whom she nourishes with her milk. This calf of virāj or the universal cow is Sūrya. Sūrya is identified with life principle or Prāṇa. It is also identified
with Narayana in later Puranic legend.

According to the Rigveda the cosmos lay in the apaḥ or śilā, which was later on manifested by Purusa Prajāpati. In Satapatha also worked—

"Purusa Prajāpati desired and created āpaḥ. This apaḥ pervaded everything, so it is called āpaḥ." 74

This apaḥ is the same as Virāj. In Virāj Purusa Prajāpati deposited the seed and she was pregnant who later on delivered an egg.

"Energetic Prajāpati produced a garbha in the āpaḥ, and the garbha after being delivered sucks and the apaḥ lick the garbha." 75

"The garbha or Andān was sustained by āpaḥ, in which all the gods abide. This egg was placed in the navel of aja in which all the Bhuvanēs reside." 76

Remarks Satapatha also—

"In the beginning there existed āpaḥ. They desired how we shall be many, they laboured, they performed an act of penance. With the help of their penance there was produced a golden egg (Hiranmayāṇa)." 77

This golden egg was the first product of the creation says the Rigveda.

"Hiranmayāgarbha existed there in the beginning. It was the
guardian of all the creatures that came into existence later on. It sustained the dyu and Prthivi.°

The golden egg was in the form of Agni. Agni was the garbha which was delivered by apah.

Āpah were indeed the great and they pervaded the whole cosmos. They conceived and delivered Agni° In Ṭaittirīya Sāmhitā also we read about Agni as have been delivered by Āpah, and Agni as being of golden colour.

This golden egg is stated as Mārtanda in the Rgveda. Aditi as the Rgveda narrates, delivered eight sons. Among them the eighth child was Mārtanda. Aditi threw away this son, and Mārtanda fills up the cosmos with his light. This description of Mārtanda is verily a description of the surya or sun. In later Gāndhāra also Mārtanda is a synonym of surya. This Sūrya is a child of Aditi or a calf of the universal cow or Virāj.

Virāj cow has a deep love to her calf. "The cow lows for her blinking calf and licks his heed. She invites his mouth to her warm udders and she suckle her calf with milk."

Virāj cow kisses her calf in the head. The head is a symbol of dyu. From the head of Prajāpati dyu appeared and dyu is called an abode of the gods. There the head is regarded as the most valuable and significant portion of the body, similarly dyu also is the most important part of the cosmos. The head is the centre, from where the whole bodily activities are conducted and governed.
Thus Sūrya as the calf of Virāj always sucks her milk. Sūrya is the blinking calf, nights and days are his eyes, which close and open.

Nārāyaṇa as a Calf-

In the Purāṇas Nārāyaṇa is said to be a son of Aditi. This is also a metaphor, which reveals the same idea, expressed in the Rgveda.

According to the Purāṇas, Nārāyaṇa, the son of Aditi, made the milky ocean (Ksirasāgara) as his abode. The Purānic Nārāyaṇa also corresponds to the Sūrya of the Rgveda.

We read in Ṣatapatha-

The golden egg, after being delivered by Aditi, floated upon the apah for one year. After one year appeared Purusa from the egg. He was verily Prajāpati- Purusa. This Rgvedic Prajāpati has travelled all along the Purāṇas as Nārāyaṇa. As regards the etymology of Nārāyaṇa Vāyu-purāṇa furnishes us good information.

"The root "Nāra" means swiftness. At the stage of Ṛkṣarṇava, there was no swiftness in apah therefore they were called Narāh. And so says Manu -

"Apah are called Narāh and Apah are the sons of Narāh. Purusa is called Nārāyaṇa as he has made these apah as his abode." 84

Thus Nārāyaṇa also is a son of Virāj and corresponds to the
Rgvedic Śūrya. Among the names of Nārāyana Viṣṇu also is there. According to Amarakosa Viṣṇu is a synonym of Nārāyana and Viṣṇu is also a synonym of Śūrya. In the Rgveda Śūrya is invoked as Viṣṇu.

In the Rgveda (1.154.1-6) Viṣṇu is described as Śūrya.

Wilson, giving his notes on Rg. 1.12.17-21 remarks— "Thrice he (Viṣṇu) planted him steps (Tredha nidhade padam). According to Śākapūrṇih, it was on earth, in the firmament, in heaven. Thus identified, Viṣṇu with the sun, and his three paces with the rise-culmination and setting of that luminary.

The physical sun is actually an image of the great sun, as a son is an image of father. "The physical sun is indeed taken as the image of the truth sun, the centre of all knowledge and radiant power. It is the radiance issuing from the supreme source in which is massed all the creative movement of the uncreate and that is the ultimate root of all movements in the creation. Let that light motivate and energise our thought movements," says the Rsi...

The Śūrya is termed as apām napat. Sāyana interprets this word as "Apām na pālakah" who does not protect the water on the contrary dries it up, but in the Vedas the word napat usually means a son. Śūrya as apām napat is the son of waters. As regards the water, the waters suggest Kapaliṣṭhatri. The waters represent the universal creative energies, out of which the world gets fashioned, they are the inconscient waters. (Apraketaṁ salilam)
There is another term used in the Rgveda as an adjective of Vatsa or calf. The term is "Basakaya". Basakaya, according to Sayana, is Aditya, and Gopa is also a term used for Sūrya. Sayana also has interpreted Gopa as Sūrya. This doctrine of Vatsa is interpreted in the Rgveda under the caption of "Vatsavidya".

Creation as a Forceful Expulsion of the Mother Cow

As a child is a forceful expulsion of a mother, similarly cosmos is an expulsion of the mother nature. The whole cosmos was lying in her embryo, which she expelled out, and the universe came into existence. According to the Rgvedic conception Prajāpati encompassed the cow and expelled her to create the universe.

"He who has encompassed the cow, sneezes to expel her and the cow abiding in the clouds gently lows, she with her power of mind, created the mortal man, being a lightening she lifts the veil."

Who encompassed the cow? What is the meaning of sneezing? What is Dhāvasana? How did she create the mortal man from her power of mind? What is her veil? These are a few questions that arise in course of study of this verse.

Actually sneezing, Drasana, citta, vāvri these words are symbols and in these symbols great mysteries are hidden.

Sneezing is an act of forceful expulsion of the Prānic Air, which stands as a symbol of the creative act. This creative act is stated in various terminology. Inspired by a number of terms as follows:
"Mimāna (Measuring out Rg. X.121.5) samidhana (enkindling) jāgaraṇa (waking) Rocana (Flashing) Prāṇana (inspiration Rg. X. 189.2) Carana (Striding) Skambhana (supporting) Vīrāṇa (Propelling Rg. VI 69.8) Savana (impelling) Iksana (Vision) yojana (yoking) Manthana (churning) Āvartan, Vivartan, Parāvartana etc. some words symbolise the creative activities."91

In the beginning the Vīrāj was concealed in Prajāpati who later on for the cause of creation, expelled her out. We read in Aitareya Brahmaṇa- Prajāpati thought of cohabiting with his own daughter. He transformed her in a form of a she-deer and himself also took a form of a he-deer and then he had a connection with her.92 Everything was encompassed by Prajāpati in the beginning. Everything was in her womb. Then at the time of creation he first of all created Vīrāj. Then again he approached her daughter Vīrāj with a desire to create the cosmos.

Further describes the author of Aitareya Brahmaṇa. "After approaching his daughter Prajāpati could not control himself and the sperm had been poured forth from Prajāpati. The gods said- May this sperm of Prajāpati be not spoilt. This became Madhusūnam. Manuḍuṣṇa is the same as Manuṣa- the man."93

Thus Prajāpati first expelled out the Vīrāj and again approaching her he inserted his seed in her, and Vīrāj also expelled out the the martanda or the mortal egg i.e. the cosmos later on. Thus the universe is a result of forceful expulsion of Prajāpati and Vīrāj. This act of forceful expulsion is symbolised as sneezing of Vīrāj."94

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Prajapati is Svayambhu i.e. self-existent. Svayambhu is a state where Prajapati is confined to his own centre. In the form of Svayambhu he is alone, so as Svayambhu Prajapati cannot create anything. For creation two elements of opposite sex are essential, only male or only female cannot create anything. In the same way for the cosmic creation also two entities of opposite sex are required, and these entities are Prajapati and Viraj. These are also called as Prajapati and Parameshti. Prajapati and Parameshti are a couple who produce the whole universe. In the Rigveda this couple is called as bull and cow.

"Non-existent and existent (is Agni) in the supreme heaven, in the birthplace of Daksha and in the presence of Aditi. Agni is elder born to us. In the olden times he was the bull and the cow."93

In the Yajurveda also a word "Brahduksa" is there and according to Satapatha Brahmana Brahduksa is Prajapati.94 This Brahduksa is stated as sustaining the dyu and Prthivi.95 Cow is a daughter of this Uksa who places his sperm in her and resultanty the creation is delivered.96

The conception of encompassing the cow implies the theory of dualism. The act of encompassing requires dual principle, one who encompasses and the other who is encompassed. This theory of duality is represented by twofold Tamas of Nasadiya Suktas.

"Tamas was encompassed by Tamas in the beginning."(Tama asit tamass gulahtagre).
Here the tama, which has encompassed the other Tamas, is Prajāpati and the later tama is Prakṛti. At the time of creation the former tama expels out the later Tamas, and the later tama also expels out the cosmos. Thus in fact the cosmos is a result of forceful expulsion by Prajāpati and Virāj.

The Virāj created the mortals by the power of her mind. Here the poet has very deliberately used the word Citti. Citti or Manas is a place where the lust or desire resides. The desire is kāma, by this kāma the cow produces the mortals. Had kāma not been there, there would not have been the creation also. The desire of opposite sex is the root cause of the creation. Therefore Prajāpati created kāma first. It was the sperm of the mind. This is lust that attracts the opposite sexes to each other. This attraction causes the female deliver a babe. The babe of Virāj is mortal.

Cosmos the Milk of Virāj

It is but natural that along with the delivery the milk should appear in the mother's breasts, and the babe is fed upon the milk. Similarly for the nourishment of the mortals Virāj produced the milk. This milk of Virāj is this cosmos. Mother's milk is also purified. The milk is termed as Amṛta on drinking it the mortals also become immortals. Virāj purifies the creatures with her milk (पायते पायथिः). The milk is, in fact, the subtlest form of the energies of the parents. The milk appears in the breasts of a female only
then, when a male inserts his seed in her. This is actually the transformation of the energy of father. The father inserts his energy in female in the form of seed. In the same way Prajapati also inserts his energy in Virāj which is delivered later on by Virāj in the form of cosmos. Thus in real the cosmos is a form of the Supreme Being.

In Satapatha Brahmana Prajāpāti is said as having two fold forms, Avyakta and Vyakta or amūrta and mūrta. In his original form he is Avyakta or unmanifest and in the form of Virāj or cosmos he is vyakta or manifest. The "Purusa hymn" of the Rgveda extensively describes the manifest or cosmic form of Prajapāti. The Purusa, the subject deity of this hymn, is variously interpreted. For Colebrooke Purusa means an embodied spirit, Śāyana and Mahīdhaṇa (in Vajurveda) take it to be Virāj. According to Wilson this Virāj is an aggregate of all living beings. Here Wilson seem to be agreeing with the theory of Virāj as being a cow and the cosmos a result of forceful expulsion of Prajāpāti.

The form of Puruṣa, as presented in the Puruṣa Sūktō, is the universal form.

"He has eyes on all sides, he has mouths on all side, arms on all sides and feet on all sides.

With his arms and feet he shakes the whole cosmos and he alone creates the heaven and earth." 101

He is the best architect, who creates the cosmos as his own form. Therefore he is called as "trasta" in the Rgveda.
"I invoke the Lord with the universe as his form, who is the best architect. (tvāstā)"

He is called as Viśvarūpa Vṛṣabha—a bull with universal form.

It is God Indra, who manifests himself in the form of the universe. And thus is described the multiformed or cosmic-formed lord in the Rgveda.

Thus the Viśāj, described in the Rgveda is the cow, a symbol of mother nature or Pradhāna or Prakṛti of the later philosophy, her calf is Śūrya and the milk is cosmos. And this is Rgvedic Viśāj theory or Gṛ-vidyā. Through which the seers have disclosed a great mystery regarding the matter and cosmos.