CHAPTER II

FEMALE DEITIES IN THE RIGVEDA
FEMALE DEITIES IN THE RGVEDA

The Rgveda, being the oldest and most important among the four Vedas, is taken up first, for the present studies. This chapter will bring to light the conception of different Female Deities, as furnished by the Rgveda. The names of the different deities have already been mentioned in the introduction.

The Concept of Usas

Usas, the Dawn, holds the most significant position among the deities of the Vedic Pantheon. Her place is the highest in the galaxy of all the female deities in the Rgveda on account of the number of hymns and verses addressed to her. She stands on the equal level of some of the male deities e.g. Sūrya, Āśvins and her position is superior of many of them. Twenty hymns are addressed to Usas alone in the Rgveda and her reference is available in more than three hundred hymns.

The word Usas is derived from the root /us da he with the suffix Asi by the aphorism Usah Kit. Thus the word

1. Siddhānta Kaumudi, 646
Usas, according to the interpretation 'Oṣati Andhakaramiti Usas', means one who turns the darkness i.e. remover of the darkness because her appearance derive away the darkness immediately. Indirectly, it means the "bringer of light". This rendering of the word Usas coincides with that of the Halāyudhakosa also. The derivation of the word Usas, according to the Vācaspatyam, is also similar, but there it has been taken in two genders, Neuter and Feminine i.e. Usas and Usā respectively. It derives the Neuter form in the above manner, and the feminine one by adding the suffixes 'Ka' and 'Tap' to us. The etymological explanation by Yāska in the Nirukta means Usas is the time after night. Grammatically, it can be explained from the root 'Vas' giving the meaning "in whom reside the luminous objects".

The word Usas and other Languages

While making the comparative study of the word Usas in the group of Indo-European languages, we come across the following words:

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<td>Sanskrit</td>
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<td>Avesta</td>
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<td>Lithuanian</td>
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4. 'বূঢ় নিবাস' | বিদানকৃতী | Root no. 1942.
In these languages it is derived probably from the root awes to shine.

The deification of the phenomena of the Dawn is found among all the separate I.E. peoples and a common name is also available. In the I.E. period this deification was very indefinite and elementary. For, excepting the vedic goddess of dawn in whom the vedic poet personifies dawns in general, practically in all the branches of I.E. group the deity denotes merely the sunrise and heralds the beginning of the spring or the dawn which commences the spring. Thus we conclude that the concept of Usas of the Rgveda, the most beautiful poetic creation of the Rgvedic age, is an independent Indian development. Very little of it goes back to the United I.E. period. There is a complete unanimity regarding this view among the scholars of Indology. This opinion has been implicitly expressed by Mandonell, Schröder and Wilke.

Usas and Other Deities

In the Rgveda, Usas has different relation with different gods. Being the daughter of Heaven, sister of Bhaga and Varuna i.e. of god Savitri, the bride and beloved

5. i. Schröder, AR, p.39a; ii. Feist, Kultur, p.345x261.
9. Rgveda Samhita, I.123.5.
of the Sun and also the mother of Sun, she attains all the forms of a woman in the Rgveda. The sun follows her in a similar way as a husband follows his wife. The sun appears after her. This fact inspires the Vedic seer to imagine that she gives birth to the Sun. Thus she attains the most respectable status of a mother. She is also the younger sister of night (perhaps because appearing after her) and some hymns are dedicated to both of them together. She is often connected with the Asvins, being their associate (because the Asvins too appear after midnight) and friend, she is called to awaken them. She is also associated with Agni as on her arrival the fire is kindled in each and every house. Indra is said to have created or lighted up Usas. Sometimes he assumes a hostile attitude towards her and crushes her chariot with thunderbolt. His hostile attitude towards her may be seen when the clouds cover her. Soma is also related to her in the sense that he made the Dawn bright at the time of her birth. Finally, Brahma is the discoverer of Usas.

10. Rgveda, I.92.1; I.113.2.
12. Ibid, II.12.7; II.21.43.
13. Ibid, II.15.6; IV.30.9.
15. Ibid, X.62.5.
The functions of Usas

It is obvious from her name that her most important function is to give light and remove darkness. As she comes first of all, she is said to be one who gives rise to sacrifices and other actions of all the beings. Everybody wakes up and performs the sacrifices for different gods at her appearance. All sorts of actions wake up. Bipeds and quadrupeds engage themselves in their respective tasks of daily life. She wakes up before the whole of the sleeping world. As her light reaches all places, she has been regarded as a daily visitor to every house, and possessed of great brilliance. She is the first one to accept oblations, through her entrance into each and every house. She does not destroy the place of true sacrifice but day by day she illumines the sacrifices. She awakens the sleeping being and brings to light all the paths to be trodden by them. At night, each and every entity of the universe comes under covering of darkness and one sees nothing without the help of some kind of light. When she appears in the morning, each and everything becomes visible. She comes in the eastern direction and then moves gradually to the West. She follows the path of Āditya i.e. the Sun. It does not mean that the sun comes prior to Usas. As a matter of fact, Usas goes by that path which is to be traversed by the Sun. This idea has been described following Usas in the way a
husband follows his wife.

Like many other gods she comes in a broad and beautiful Chariot, drawn mostly by auspicious horses of purple complexion and sometimes of white colour. Thus she appears in a dignified, royal and gay manner. Sometimes the number of her chariots go even upto hundred. When she comes, she traverses the whole of firmament. At one place it is stated that she moves in cohesion with the rays of the Sun and at another, her shining through the rays of Sun is mentioned. Her Chariot is not visible. She comes daily at the same time and is never late and lazy. Along with her, other gods also come, because at dawn the sacrifices are performed for various gods and they are all supposed to be present at that time. It leads us to conclude that the gods come with her. Her arrival is know to us through her lustre on rays, by which she brings light to the entire Universe.

She is worshipped for some specific purpose. In the vedic cult the deities representing the natural phenomenon were worshipped and invoked along with the

16. Rv. Samhita, I.115.2. दूरां देवीदिगुगलं रोप्याः संवास मेघं न योक्तं य-पालितमन्त्यादि।
20. Ibid, I.49.4.
offering of sacrificial oblations. It was supposed to yield their desired objects in the form of wealth, sons, cattle etc. According to this ritualistic trend of the Vedic period, Usas is also invoked for the same purpose. She is praised as the wealthy one so that she may bestow wealth and prosperity on her aspirants. This wealth is not considered simply in the form of money, but also in the form of food, sons, cattle etc. Her wealth is auspicious. She is protectress of all the beings from the evil spirits and enemies. Generally, the evil spirits exert their mal-influence during the night but on her arrival in the morning all the spirits and evil forces are warded off. It is distinctly stated in the Rigveda,

The day begins with her appearance, hence she is approached for all the things needed during the day. She brings happiness. Her appearance puts life and activity in the whole of the universe. She is asked to shine more brightly, because the more brightly she shines, the more clearly do things become visible. A queer and interesting idea, we find in the case of Usas, is that the dawn present at a particular time is esteemed superior to the past and future dawns. For example, Na tātte anya uṣaso nasante.

22. Rv., I.123.11.
It suffices to believe that the Vedic people were more concerned with their present happiness. A similar idea we find again in the Rv. IV.51.4

The reference to many Dawns

The Rgveda, we find many times the mention of many Dawns as

रविः विश्वास उपसः दुर्लभतानुमुला लोकः स्वरतोऽवरोद्धत

Rv.Samhitā, IV,51.2.

These Dawns have bright and similar forms. They are undecaying and cannot be distinguished being alike. The question arises, what does the plurality of Dawns mean? Does it mean that many Dawns shine at the same time? The answer is in the negative. In case this idea was predominant in the mind of the Vedic seer, it would have been definitely available in most of the verses. In the absence of such a fact the answer is sought in the following two ways:-

Firstly, the poet is probably referring to the Dawns of the past, present and future collectively. He invokes the past Dawns so that they may also be helpful in his present happiness. The future Dawns are praised for the future happiness. And the present Dawns are approached for the present happiness. When we offer offerings to the manes (of our ancestors) who do not play any role in our
present life, we simply do our duty towards them so that they may not get angry with us. Likewise we pay our present elders in orders to have their blessings to be happy. The riddle of future dawns may be solved with the example of people worshipping the gods with the purpose of acquiring future happiness. Similar is the interpretation of the dawns of the past, the present and the future.

There are three types of Usas in Atharvaveda 8.9.13.14

"पून: पुनर्जयमाना पुराणी समाने कर्मभिम शुभम्यानात ।
रक्तक्षेल द्रुत्वृत्तिः आभिभामाना मर्त्य देवी जर्यत्यायः।।
अ००८.१०२.१०"

Secondly, the plurality may mean respect towards the deity Usas. In order to show respect towards someone, plural is preferred. Usa takes birth again and again.

Beauty of Dawn Hymns

The Hymns in the praise of Dawn, represent the most beautiful poetry of the Vedic seers. In these hymns, we find different similes and the picture, in which the coming of the Dawn has been depicted, in a very enchanting one. While reading such stanzas, we are so much absorbed in the poetic charm and imagination that we feel as if we are reading a book of modern poetry. How she ascends her chariot?

23 E.8. R.V.I. 92.2; I.113.2-4
How is she dressed? How gracefully does she move on and go round the firmament? All these descriptions captivate the mind. Sometimes such descriptions present the picture of a bride dressed in bright clothes and moving gradually and gracefully. The following examples of similes will suffice to prove this idea:

When Uças appears in the eastern direction, she is compared to a beautiful maiden coming out after taking her bath. She shines near the sun like a young damsel and appears as splendid as a young wife near her husband. Thus Uças looks attractive near the sun. She proceeds wearing shining and brilliant is lovely to look at.

Professor A.A. Macdonell states, "Uças is the most graceful creation of Vedic poetry and there is no charming figure in the descriptive religious lyrics of any other literature. The brightness of her form has not been obscured by priestly speculation nor has the imagery as a rule been marred by references to the sacrifices. Ruskin gives a beautiful description of Uças in these words, "There is no solemnity so deep to a rightly thinking creatures as that of the dawn". According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan the boundless dawn from which flash forth every morning light and life becomes the goddess Uças, the Greek

24. RV. Samhita, V.80.5; VII.77.1.
25. Ibid, I.92.2; I.113/2-4.
Eos, the brilliant maid of morning loved by the Asvins, and the Sun, but vanishing before the latter as he tries to embrace her with his golden rays. She is the lustre of the eyes of the gods. Though she is so beautiful, so lustrous holding such a high position, giving light to all, yet she is modest. She does not transgress the lustre of her husband i.e. Sun. She sets open the two gates of heaven with light. The two gates here are the western and eastern directions. She comes from the eastern direction and goes by the western direction. Thus she makes these two as first and second gate respectively. Like a dancing girl, she assumes the beautiful forms and like a barber, she drives away the darkness from the Universe. As a cow shows the place of the origin of milk at the time of milking, and goes to her pen quickly, in the same way, going of her own accord to the eastern direction, she gives light to the entire universe. During the sacrifices, as the priests

27. Dr.S.Radakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol.I, pp.81-82.
29. अनंतःवत्तति वक्ते मुश्किलापनों वहाँ श्रीमुं आदिनाम ।
ज्योतिःशिवस्मे पुरवनाथ हृदयां गायि न भुने कुण्यात साक्तिमः।
ancient the stake with oblation, in the same way she discloses her form in the sky. She has beautiful limbs on account of various lights. Usas looks like laughing by her own clear light. She spreads in the entire universe within a winkling of time like the flowing water. As she appears daily for a particular period, on the one hand she is believed to be born again and again. Hence everyday she is newly born. On the other hand she is ancient because her first appearance was in very ancient times, perhaps since the beginning of the universe. She decreases the span of life of the mortal beings, as a hunter does in connection with the birds by cutting their wings. She is the best adorable light of all the illuminaries. The stars illumine themselves but not others. The light of the moon is certainly pleasing but not capable of illumining everything fully. The light of the sun illumines everything but is not pleasing and one cannot behold towards the orb of the sun. The light of the Dawn pleases and illumines the universe clearly. Moreover, she illumines herself as well as others. Her function is accomplished when the whole of the Universe attains light and she goes away. As she removes darkness and brings the Universe to light, the poet imagines as if she has vomitted

out the Universe which was formerly eaten up by her sister, the night. She follows the path of the dawns who were in ancient times and she is the foremost one among the dawns who are to come in future.

The Epithets of Usas

The epithets of Usas range more than any other female deity. Among her many epithets sixteen are enumerated and regarded as names of the goddess in the Nighantu.

"Vibhēvarī"  "Brilliant one"
"Śūnarī"  "The youthfully vital or the good leader"
"Bhāsvatī"  "Shining one"
"Odatī"  "Sprinkling or refreshing one"
"Citrāmāghā"  "Granting wonderful gifts"
"arjunī"  "The ruddy white one"
"Vājini"  "Possessing vāja; strength or food"
"Vājinīvati"  "Possessing what is related to vāja" i.e. possessing food, strength, or swift horses;
"Sumnāvarī"  "Bringing favour, or kind, benevolent".
Besides these there are others too as Maghoni, Daksinā, Eṭapā, Prātiči and some others. All these epithets do not occur with the same frequency. Most of these epithets emphasise on her brightness and golden-hued appearance.

The Epithet Daksinā and its Meanings

To start with the epithet Daksinā, the generally accepted and appropriate interpretation of the word is one who is clever. But some scholars like Bergaigne and Bloomfield interpret in a different way. Bloomfield, who has discussed the point at some length in connection with the meaning of the word Daksinā as an epithet of Usas, tries to fit in the meaning (as he prefers to call it) 'baksheesh' because he attempts to point out that all the Usas hymns, which are believed to be particularly poetical by a number of scholars, are really sacrificial in character. He interprets the word

33. M.Bloomfield, the Religion of the Veda, p.69.
us as applied to Usas with the following words:

"Usas is the patroness of sacrifice; she is herself the sacrificial fee, because she ushers in or heralds the sacrificial day. He does not approve of the approximate meaning as an honorific adjective of Usas as imagined by Max Müller nor that of A. Bergaigne who says, "the dawn is the gift of heaven bestowed upon pious men as recompense for their piety, because he believes it to be "round about, unnecessary an un-vedic" and because he feels that A. Bergaigne transports too many of the events in the earthly life of the vedic Aryans to heaven. But as an epithet of Usas, it cannot be understood as meaning salary. Usas cannot be the fee or the salary of the priest, the sacrificial fee is always given by the sacrificer to the priest while the dawn cannot be given to the priest". The idea of A. Bergaigne that 'Usas is a gift of heaven to pious man' cannot be accepted. Usas is not only the gift for pious men but for all and as a matter of fact, all the natural things are gifts not only dawn. Thus here Dakṣinā means something else. Max Müller interprets the word Dakṣinā as right, dexter, evidently from the word Daksa meaning strength, the right hand being the strong or clever hand. The word also means southern. It

34. M. Bloomfield, The Religion of the Veda, p. 72.
35. Max Müller, The Vedas, pp. 63-66
further means the cow, the strong cow which has calves and gives milk (Daksinah Gavsh-Iatyayana VIII.5) and as such a cow was the most primitive payment, it may well have become the regular name for the fee, due to the priest. She has been represented in this form in one entire hymn of the Rgveda, but whatever prominent place might have been assigned to this Daksina, it cannot stand in the sense of a liberal goddess unless the word is interpreted as the right hand. However, apart from the meaning of Daksinā, the invocation of Usas in this form does not at all mean salary or sacrificial fee. Even in the later treatises, we find this word in the sense of clever. In the Ramayana, Sita has been addressed as Daksinā. Moreover, how could Usas be the salary of the sacrifice when she is herself invoked to come to the sacrifice and accept the oblations. K.B.Potdar also does not agree with the view of Bloomfield, while discussing the evolution of the meaning of the word Daksinā.

The Epithet Vajini

Usas has often been called Vajini. Sayana translates it by 'possessed of food' and at some places he gives its alternative meaning as 'Jaiyanti Vajam' or 'con-
Max Muller puts forward the following interpretation of the word Vajini:

"Vāj, connected with Vegee, vigeo, Vigil, wacker, is one of the many difficult words in the Veda, the general meaning of which may be guessed, but in many places cannot yet be determined with certainty...."

The Bohtlingk and Roth Lexicon translated this word as swiftness, race, prize of race, gain, treasure (acc. to the commentators, usually, food, also oblation), race horse e.t.c. The difficulty of determining one meaning among all these meanings sends back a scholar to the original source. I would like to start with the meanings of strength, strife, contest, race, whether friendly or warlike, then to proceed to what is won in a race or in war, viz., booty, treasure, and lastly to take vājah in the more general sense of acquisitions and goods bestowed as gifts. The transition of meaning from vāja, booty, to vāja, wealth in general finds an analogy in German 'Kriegen', 'to obtain' also in 'Gewinnen', and A.S. Wilkinson, to strive, to fight, to obtain.

Peterson takes it in the sense of "rich in blessings".

40. Peterson, Translation of Vedic Hymns, Notes to III.61.1.
41. Ibid, Notes to III.61.2.
The epithet Sunrtah.

Sunrta, another name of the Dawn is more difficult to explain. Sunrta, in the sense of true, seems to have been formed in a mistaken analogy to Anrta—untrue, and to have originally meant untrue, sincere and finally gentle agreeable. As applied to the Dawn it would have meant true, kind, auspicious. Sayana takes it as meaning:

a. "Sunrtah priyasaṭyārūpā vāc īrasyanti uccāvrayanti" Sayanabhasya
b. "Sunrtāh, vānmaṇeṣu ṣaṣu pakṣimāpyāstamānī. vacamsi īrasyanti prāsrayanti utkādayantī"

The Epithet Ahanā

The Nirukta gives its meanings as Dyotana.

Max Müller gives the adjoining philological note, "it has long been known that day is not connected with dies, as was formerly supposed, but that the roots of Goth, dos, day, can only have been dāh, or dhah with double aspirate, to burn, to shine. The less of an initial 'D' is no doubt quite irregular, though it can be matched by Goth, tagr., Gr dakhā, tear, which in Sanskrit appears

42. Max Müller, India, what can it teach us? p.66.
44. Ibid, I.113.12.
45. Yāsaka, Nirukta, Ahana Dyotana, I.8.11.
as Asru, instead of dasru. I pointed out long ago, and I have never seen any valid reason to retract it, that in the Greek daphne, Laurel Tree.

Comparison between Usas and Lakṣmī.

K. Shembavelkar, in his learned article entitled "the Metamorphosis of Usas" states that the Vedic Usas has been transformed into Lakṣmī in later Mythology. The goddess Śrī (the goddess of splendour and Wealth) or Lakṣmī, in her earlier phase possesses certain attributes which clearly argue a period of transition; some of them disclose her identity with Usas, while others are of a novel type. The Dawn, the natural phenomenon, slowly lost her divinity; but her radiance, the very essence of her life and form came to be deified and venerated as Śrī. Though in the Ṛṣi Śānti, we do not find the mention of Śrī but in the Śrī Sukta, which is a "Khila Sukta" of the Rgveda, and undoubtedly the oldest of that class, first reference so far is traceable. In her early form, we perceive many attributes which usually characterise the lustre of the Dawn. Thus, if the rays of Usas are said to be "Candra" (Delightful) in the Rgveda (I.48.9), Śrī Herself is described as "Candra" in the first verse of "Śrī Sukta". Both are golden in comple-

46. Max Müller, India, What can it teach us? p.63
48. चुंबने विरपमयो लक्ष्मी जालेवाद भमा बहु। Śrī Sukta, I. Khila Sukta to the 5th Mandala of Rgveda
xion, and both shower gifts on the suppliant devotees. Again, Usas has been called "Subhra" or "Arjuni" whereas Laksmi is described as clad in milk-white. In this way the relation of the two deities in the Rgveda is a patent fact, while in the Sukta, it is only a reminiscence (Tavasaha Jatvedi Laksmi mahanagaminim—Sri Sukta cf. Rv. I.125.1) the sisterhood of Alakami and Laksmi may fairly be traced back up to that of night and Dawn. Lastly, the epithet 'Gandhavara' (unfolders of fragrance), as belonging to Sri suggests the aromatic Dawn, while her association with the day-lotuses which bloom at day-break confirms it. The episode of Samudra-manthana, the relation with Bhrgu and Laksmi's union with Visnu as that of the Dawn with the sun prove this. That Visnu is the sun at the meridian is a conclusion of Yaska who identifies all the Adityas with the solar deity. Subsequently, when we behold the goddess taking refuge with Visnu, the highest and most popular god of later mythology, we immediately realize the anticipation in the Rgveda, where the morning Sun is described as

49. Rv.Samhita, I.49.3.

50. सूर्यसिद्धं कर्पाकृति कस्मति सुधाकर-चमकेऽदय शोभे
Rv.Samhita, Sri Sukta.8.

chasing Usas, the rosy Dawn in the words of a vedic poet, disappears only to rise again.

The comparative study of the characteristics and epithets of Sri in the Srisukta as well as in the later literature, with the attributes of Usas in the Rgveda clearly indicates that Sri contains only a few characteristics and epithets of Usas. She does not represent only beauty or wealth. Her most important characteristic is that she gives light. It is only on her arrival that the whole of the universe engages in work and is brought to light. But in the case of Sri, it is not the case. Even without Sri people are engaged in their daily duties. The coming of Usas is the signal for the whole of the universe to begin the task. The goddess Usas comes every morning and after sometime goes away. This is her routine. This is not the same in the case of Sri. If she comes once, she will stay for some period, and her coming and going is not very frequent, it is not her routine. Moreover, the time of Sri is not certain, no one knows when she will come and when she will go away. But the time of Usas is certain.
Non-Validity of the Biological Theory of Ugas.

The study of the biological theory in connection with the appearance of the Dawn will be interesting. According to this theory, Ugas makes her appearance with the first breath of the infant. The darkness ruling the foetal life is dispersed as soon as the foetus is born alive. The vital centre ruling the cardio-respiratory activity in human beings is located in the medula oblangata. It is automatic in its action and has the power of sending and receiving efferent and afferent impulses along the nerve-fibres which are spontaneously yoked to it like a car on which she rides as the foetus is born. The appearance of this dawn in early life causes later on the Sun the consciousness to rise. Since every breath taken shortens the period of life, she is, therefore said to waste away the lives of mortals. The Rigveda speaks of the other dawns also as her sisters living at the same time without discord. These sister-dawns denote the periods which elapse before the organs of sense educate themselves to respond consciously to afferent connections with the cortical layer of the brain in order to gain knowledge of the surrounding objects. Their common residence shows that the centre of these dawns too, are located in the region of the sky, i.e. the medula oblangata.

The theory shows marvellous imagination of the writer as well as great effort on his part. They way Usas has been compared to a namely born infant; the comparison of a nerve fibre with a chariot on which Usas ascends and such other comparisons depict the genius of the writer. But due to certain grounds, the theory cannot be accepted. Firstly, while reading the hymns on Usas in the Rgveda, we come across these notions. There are many dawns. Those dawns come dily and are old. They instigate the voices, they lead men and last but not least they shine as well as illuminate. There are many other sounding characteristics and epithets of Usas. Now if we compare these epithets and characteristics of Usas with the coming of the infant, we find that at certain points they coincide but for the most part they do not hold good. The favourable points have been given above, but the weak points cannot be neglected which overcome the former. In the Vedic hymns we find that the prayers or worship of various deities is for the practical purpose. By practical purpose, we mean that they worship and invoke not because of their greatness, but the chief motive is for the sake of their own welfare, for the welfare of family and cattle etc. Obviously it indicates that through worship they demand something in return. Their very purpose in doing this is that they want them to be helpful, to bestow over them wealth, children and other things according to their needs. But we cannot agree to the suggestion that
the vedic seers had the idea of the birth of the child in their mind while approaching her through prayers. Usas has nowhere been compared with the infant, in spite of her comparison with others. For example, in the Rigveda she has been called as a newly wedded girl, at another place she has been compared to a beautiful lady, who has just taken her bath, but she has never been compared to a newly-born infant in the Rigveda Samhita. Further, the main function of Usas is to give light to the universe covered with the thick layers of darkness. On the other hand, the coming of infant does not give light, though it makes the house more lively. Further, before the arrival of an infant, the house is not full of darkness. Usas leads all beings towards their respective works and instigates voices but this is not done by the infant.

**Usas as a young Girl.**

According to Jayadeva Sharma, the hymns addressed to Usas have been translated in connection with the young girls. He considers the dawns as young girls and at some places translates as the Vedic speech. Thus as

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54. *Rv. Samhita*, VII. 90.3; VI. 75.5.
55. Ibid. V. 80.5.
56. *Jay Deva Sharma, Rigveda Samhita Bhashya*
the dawns are shining, darkness-removing, active, full of riches and they awaken the human beings, in the same way the girls are adorned with ornaments, are active and full of riches. They remove the inactivity in the house, and awaken the householders to perform their duties. The sun has been understood as a husband with the young maidens. Inspite of the interesting ideas in his commentary, Jaideva Sharma lacks in the crucial reasoning of the modern mind. In the case of simple epithets like Sukta etc. he stands steadily, but in most of the places his meanings are far-fetched. Translating the third line of a stanza 'pīrē yānti punarayanti' he states that they should go with their husbands and come back to the house of their parents. As a matter of fact the parents always pray for their daughters to live with their husbands happily but they never wish that their daughters should come back to them. At some places he splits a word in a very interesting manner viz. Suryāya. The word Sūrya in dative singular simply means 'for the sun'. But he splits it as a suriya-āya, to become learned. This example clearly indicates that his explanations are not authoritative and dependable.

57. Rv. Śr̥ṣṭiśā, I.123.12.
Another way of interpreting the Vedas has been adopted by K.V. Thadani when he explains them in the light of scientific interpretation. Discussing the word Usas, he considers the dawn as the meeting time of morning and night, or of light and darkness, the former referring to Purusa and the latter to Prakriti. Out of the four great creative energies of life, Heart, Buddhi, Mind, and Ether, Buddhi alone is devoid of duality and the rest being super-electric, electric, and magnetic, are characterised by positive and negative aspects. The north and south seeking magnetic poles may be regarded as the meeting places of Purusa and Prakriti. Thus Usas stands for these three energies viz., Heart, Mind, and Ether.

The angle of philosophical analysis is adopted by Shri Thadani to explain various personalities in the Vedas. He resolves the word Usas into three aspects i.e. three aspects into U, S, S, and out of these three aspects the first represents Purushaic Ether, the second Mind, and the third Energy of the Heart. This symbolic concept of the three aspects of Prakrti is present in one composite unit of the word Usas, and what was conceived, as separate in

the three is expressed as one in the goddess of the union of darkness and light.

Usas representing the creative energy of purusa along with prakrti within the circumference, is described in the Vedas as the lady of light and the maker of light, light, amid all light the fairest; born refulgent-white out of darkness; the light that lies in darkness; uncovering the mighty gloom; passing self-luminous through the waters; and during night with her arget lustre manifests herself through the shades of darkness. Thus in Usas the night and light do not clash.

The above explanation is rather a complicated one. From the point of simplicity of the Rgvedic hymns, this explanation seems vague. If the seers of the Vedas had in vision this kind of explanation, they would not have accepted this complicated path instead of a direct one. Shri Thadani interprets Usas as representing Heart, Mind and Ether. How does she represent these? There are no convincing arguments. He follows the method of letter-analysis which is rather his own creation. Mostly the

59. Rv. Samhita, 1.4-8.1, Light refers to purusa and darkness to Prakrti.
60. Ibid, 1.48.8.
61. Ibid, 1.113.1.
62. Ibid, 1.123.9.
63. Ibid, VII.76.4.
Rgvedic hymns are religious and secular in character, i.e., they are religious in the sense that one comes across in the Rgvedic hymns the praises and adorations of the powers of nature regarded as deities and secular in the sense that in return of their praises they ask for the worldly happiness and objects. In view of the theory of Shri Thandani we cannot explain the very motive of fulfilling the desires through the adoration of the deities of the vedic cult.

Dr. Fateh Singh, on the basis of the study of the Rgveda Samhita IV.51.6 declares that 'Purāṇi' or 'Yuvati Purāṇi' in connection with the concept of Usas means that unmanifested ray of the Agniṣṭoma which appears from Vijñāyāmaya and coming to Manomaya manifests itself into dawns of various forms. She is brought by Kātarīśvan from Heaven. Further he adds that she is the same Purandhi from whom appear dawns spreading the wonderful and new webs of clothes in the form of rays and it is the wind who awakens her. She is the same first dawn, who is called the mother of Indra and Soma and the daughter of Prajāpati. Just as Geyatri has two forms i.e. Kadru and Suparni (similarly) Usas has also two forms i.e. Usas and Mātri. Both are born as one composite unit. It is true they have different forms but in fact they are one. Jyotiṣamājyotih, this expression indicates that being united and even-minded they spread in the whole of the Universe. Finally he identifies Usas with Suryā, because 65. Dr. Fateh Singh, Vaidika Darśana, p.162.
she is the same Usas who is brought from the sun for Vāyu-kanu. Thus the twin gods Asvins are supposed to bring her.

This view of the above author looks somewhat confused. He has not explained fully the ideas lying behind these statements. When he states that Usas is Sūryā, he remains silent to interpret other phenomena found in the Rgveda in connection with Usas. Moreover he has not explained in what way Usas and Ratri could be the two forms of Usas and what the concept of this later Usas is. These questions haunt the mind of a reader regarding the above mentioned explanation of Usas. It would have been definitely more in threatening if these thoughts had been put with a more clear vision and more convincing arguments.

Hillebrandt has put forward the theory that the Dawn celebrated in the Rgveda is the first dawn of the new year. He identifies dawn with the Ekastaka, which falls in the dark half of the month Magha and is connected with the Manes. This theory is also arbitrary and is not unanimously accepted. In the Rgveda there is no mention of the dawn of new year and there is no textual evidence wherefrom we can infer this. We repeatedly come across the mention of daily dawn and we have several such descriptions and ideas in the Rgveda in our support.

66. Dr. Fateh Singh, Vaidike Darsana, p. 162.
67. Hillebrandt, A Vedic Mythology II, 38 F.
Haridatta Sastri is of opinion that Usas is also Sun goddess. If he means by the term the wife of Sun in a descriptive way, there is no objection. On the other hand if he regards it as the goddess Sūryā of the Rgveda, in that case we have to differ in face of the fact. Sūryā and Uṣas are the two different female deities of the Ṛgveda. Sūryā is not the wife of Sun god but she is his daughter. It will be clear when we deal with the goddess Sūryā further in this Chapter. Moreover, Uṣas is not the sun goddess but she is the goddess of the time before sunrise.

Thus we see that throughout the conception of dawn there runs the multiplicity of different trends on one side and the unity of the goddess on the other. The poet is here and there inclined to treat each dawn as a separate entity but this tendency is crossed over by the unity of substance of the deity. She is, of course, the Aurora of Rome and the Eos of Greece, but the parallelism is no proof of an I.E.Cult. The Teutonic Ostara and the lettish-using representing the worship of the young sun in the spring may be compared with the dance of the Sun on Easter day in German and Slav Mythology.


69. Ṛgveda Sāṁhitā, Usas’s Dance Ex.29.2.

The comparative study denotes that Usas of the Rgveda and Fortuna of Latin have a close similarity in the broader sense. This has been clearly brought out by Ghate in the Introduction to the 'Lectures on Rgveda' in the following way:

"She is called Agriya, the first who comes at the head of all the other gods, who brings, indeed, precious gifts namely light and life, and who is, therefore, invoked first at every morning prayer. The same dawn is also called the daughter of Dyaus (Zeus), 'dīhitā divah' and in other places, she is like 'Fors' represented as the mother of the gods. There are in fact, few praises bestowed in the veda on Usas, the Dawn, which cannot be transferred to Fortune, thus showing her to have been originally, like Usas, the bright light of each day, worshipped from the earliest days. Thus in the concept of Forms, Fortuna we cannot but recognize a reflex of the goddess of the Dawn who brings everything, who in her lap has good and evil gifts. Attempting to trace Fors or Fortuna, (derived from ferre) to some Sanskrit root, we have hr "to bring", as the most analogous one. And Fors is quite analogous to harti (fert) Derivatives from hr (Hrni, Haryati) are often used of Usas; thus Haryat (adj. beautiful longed for) is one of the common epithets used of the Dawn.

To conclude I suppose, on the basis of the study of the hymns of Usas, that she is the deity of the time between the end of night and rise of Sun. According to B.G.Tilaka the Dawns mentioned in the Vedas point out the dawns of Polar regions.

Another striking feature, we gather through the study of the hymns of Dawn, is that she reflects the destruction of ignorance and the appearance of knowledge. When the Vedic seer states about the approaching of the dawn, he means the appearance of the light of knowledge and the destruction of the darkness. Like night, ignorance is the cause of inactivity, evil actions and thoughts. Through the light of knowledge all seen perspectives immediately vanish and the worshipper is endowed with wealth and happiness. This outlook is further supported by the fact that she was found out by Brhaspati, the god of learning. She is the cause of knowledge and her arrival, putting the ignorance, the source of all miseries and troubles to end, brings happiness with ever increasing promotion.

The Concept of Aditi

The goddess Aditi occupies a very important place among the female deities of the Rgveda. Though we do not

72. B.G.Tilaka, Article Home in the Vedas.
find any separate hymn addressed to her alone in the whole of the Rgveda, yet her mention is available in many places along with other deities. The only reason for this attitude seems to be that either she, being the mother goddess, is related to each and every god and goddess and so the vedic seer did not feel the necessity of assigning separate hymns to her, or that there is no particular phenomenon which has been represented by her because she is related to each and everything; so the vedic seer did not think proper to sing separate hymns in her favour.

The derivation and meaning of the word Aditi, according to the Sabdārtha-cintāmāni is as follows:

"Bhuvi, Devāmatr, Paṛvattyaś, Punarvasūnāksatra
Akhande, Ditibhīṃa Aditi. Najnodajnoditiriti Ṛakṣyānokter Diti, Pratyyāntovā, Adnādīditīryān. The Ḥalāyudhokosā also gives the same meaning of Aditi- Aditi (Ditibhīṃa Aditiḥ, Najno Detro Ditirīṭi, Ṛakṣyānokterditīpratyyāntovā, Adnādāditīrya) Daksaprāja-Patikanya, Kasyapapapnti Devāmatr, Bhūmi, Akhande", Both these lexicographical authorities give the meaning of the word Aditi in the sense of the earth, mother of the gods, imperishable, that which is different from Diti, the daughter of Dakṣa. Sāyenā cārya, the celebrated Sanskrit commentator on the vedas while translating the hymns addressed to Aditi, takes in certain places Aditi as Devāmatr, in other places where the reference to Aditi comes in the verses written in praise
of some other gods he gives generally two meanings:  

i. taking Aditi as meaning Adina or Adinah,  

ii. as Devamatr.

He states "May the horse which is Adinah or may Aditi make us sinless". In some places he interprets it in the sense of the Earth. In the Nighantu, the word Aditi is given as a synonym of Prthivi, the earth; of Vāc, the speech; of Gān the cow and in the dual of Dyava Prthivyau i.e. Heaven and Earth. In the Nirukta (II.2.2) she is defined as the highly mother of the gods Adina devamata. She is placed at the head of the female divinities of the intermediate region in the Nirukta. She is the ideal mother like East of the Egyptians and Themis of the Greeks. The word 'Aditi' literally means unbinding, freedom, boundlessness and is derived from the word Diti 'binding' from the root द (da) to bind. Dr. Radhakrishnan's conception of Aditi is as follows:-  

'Aditi' literally means 'unbound' or 'unlimited', it seems to be a name for the Invisible the infinitive which surrounds us on all sides and also stands for the endless expanse beyond the earth, the clouds and the sky. It is in 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 Samkhya Philosophy. It corresponds to Anaximander’s Infinite. In the lexicon of Bohtlingk and Roth, the word Aditi is taken (in addition to the other senses which are also assigned) to signify the infinite boundlessness of heaven in opposition to the finiteness of the earth, and the space. This significance is considered to be personified in the goddess Aditi. In his illustrations of the Mirukta, Prof. Roth had understood the word to mean ‘inviolability, imperishableness’ and when personified as a goddess, to denote eternity, her sons the Adityas being the sons of eternity, and the solar and luminous gods varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga etc. being pre-eminently the eternal deities, as light was regarded as the immaterial and eternal principle. The etymology of the word Aditi, found in the Vacaspatysar, is ‘Stri Ka Diyata Khandyate Vrhatvat ‘do’ Ktic. Fateh Singh in his Vedic Etymology gives the following derivation of Aditi—the supreme being in his destruction aspect literally the devourer of all this from ad to eat the Prthivi in its creative aspect lit. The giver of all this idam + de ‘to give’). This Nighantu gives Aditi as one of the Synonyms

4. Dr. S. Radha Krishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I; p. 32.
5. Bohtlingk and Roth, St. Petersburg Lexicon, p. 150 f.
6. Stri Na Diyate Khandyate Vrhatvat Do-Ktic Han Tatpurusa.
of Prthivi, vāk and Gau. The derivation from ad meaning only to eat seems reasonable because Heaven and Earth obviously give us food (anna).

Aditi and Other Deities.

The main relation of Aditi with other deities is that she is the mother of all gods. She is the mother of Mitra and Varuna, Aryaman, the Rudras, the Ādityas, Indra, the kings and other gods. In one place, in the Ṛgveda she has been referred to as the sister of the Ādityas and as the daughter of the vāsu "Śvasa Ādityanam Duhitā vasūnām. In Vedic literature also like Righantu and Mrukta Aditi is called Prithivi.

8. Ṛgveda Samhitā, VII, 25.3; 10.36.3; X.132.6.
10. Satpath Brahman 10,6,5.5 Brihadāraṇīyoparishad I,25.
Just as Usas has been invoked as the bride, the mother and the sister of the Sun, similarly Aditi has been represented as the mother and the sister of the Adityas. Furthermore, she is spoken of as the mother and daughter of Daksha. This is perhaps due to the fact that the Vedic poet wanted to ascribe all the important aspects of womanhood to the most adorable of the goddesses in order to be looked after carefully.

Aditi, the Protectress from Sin.

No special natural phenomenon has been represented by Aditi. The Vedic deities mostly represent a particular aspect of Nature. For example, Usas represents the time before the Sun-rise and Agni represents the fire. But this is not correct in the case of Aditi. According to Prof. A.A. Macdonell, "Motherhood is the essential and most characteristic trait of this divinity personifying a pure abstraction." She is an abstract deity. It is obvious from her name that she is the goddess who unbinds or who makes us free from different calamities. She is invoked to destroy the sins of the worshippers, "Anāgastnani No Aditi Hṛṇu Śatrani no Ashinā Vamēni Haviśān." In the Rigveda we find the deity Varuna as the god of morality but he is often invoked to make the worshipper sinless.

10. A.A. Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, p. 120.
11. Rigveda Samhitā, I.162.22.
Likewise Aditi also occupies her place in this field. The
worshipper adores Aditi to free himself from the sins
committed towards Varuna. This he expects in return for
his sacrificial actions dedicated to Aditi. She is also
invoked for the protection of cattle, men and children.
Her sons, the Adityas, are adored to achieve freedom
and guiltlessness. Varuna is the chief of Adityas. He is
the foremost of her sons. Both of these are invoked to bestow
the release of sins. As a child runs to its mother for
security at the time of distress and danger, in the same
way, the vedic Aryan runs to the Universal mother. There
are many references in the Rgveda, where we find that she
is spoken of as protecting men from distress and danger
(Nihas), and as granting complete welfare or safety. Aditi's
trait is not only to make us free, but also to give us
certain other things, she is invoked for light which she
gives. The light of Aditi is imperishable and unwaning
(Awadhram Jyotih) and Ugas is called her radiant face.
On one side Aditi gives us light, on the other she is
described as bright and luminous. She is invoked at
morning, noon and sunset. She is the adorable one. She is
asked to come and to shower happiness on the worshipper.
Aditi is desired by many. She is invoked to come with her

12. Rgveda Samhita, VIII.18.6-7.
13. Ibid, X.100; I.94.15.
15. Ibid,VII,82.10.
sons. In one verse, she has been indirectly praised through the praise of her sons. It is stated, "your sons, the gods Mitra etc. know how to remove the demons", she gives great happiness to the worshipper. Her greatness is due to the fact that she is the mother of the gods. Aditi has also been called fire. She is the shining heaven; she is the firmament; she is the place between Heaven and Earth; she is the mother of the Universe. She is the father in the sense of Creator. She is the son born of mother and father; all the gods and the five tribes are Aditi and the whole creation is Aditi. This idea is clearly depicted in the following verse, "Aditih, Dayau Aditi Rantariksam Aditirneta Sā pita putrah visvedeva Aditih 18 Pancejanē Aditir Jātma Aditir Janitram".

Aditi is also invoked for the desired wealth, pure, celestial and eternal gifts, which are secured and unlimited. (Ancho Dēramadeternervoni have Svavardavodhānī Yamasvat) . She is truthful and great. Benfey, in his translation of the hymn 1.24. of the Rgveda, treats Aditi as a proper and explains it as denoting 'Sinlessness.' Muir, in his Original Sanskrit Texts, writes, "A consideration of these passages, where Aditi is supplicated for forgiveness of sin, might lead us to suppose that she was regarded as the

18. Ibid.I.89.10.
19. Ibid.I.185.3.
20. Orient and Occident, 1.33.
great power which wields the forces of the Universe, and controls the destinies of men by moral laws; and the idea derives some support from her connection with Varuna, whose bonds are so often referred to as afflicting sinners. But this supposition is weakened by the fact that many other gods are in some way positioned for pardon, as Savitri and other deities like the sun, Dawn, Heaven, Earth and Agni. He adds that sometimes Aditi's position is subordinate. Though, as we have seen, Aditi is regarded as the mother of some of the principal Vedic deities, she is yet, in other texts, represented as playing a subordinate part. Thus in VII.38.4 Rgveda, she is mentioned as celebrating the praises of Savitri along with her sons Varuna, Mitra and Aryaman, and welcoming his aid and in VIII.12.4, she is declared to have produced a hymn to Indra. But in fact, the praise by a high personality of the subordinate one does not lead to the former's subordination.

Diverse opinions about the Concept of Aditi

Now the question arises who is this abstract deity, the goddess mother who frees the worshippers from sins? What does she represent? The answer is in the form of diverse opinions on this point. Sayana interprets it in

22. Ibid.
the sense of earth, Cow, goddess, mother and also explains Aditi as the adjective of the gods or goddesses, invoked in that particular verse as we have marked above. Benfey remarks in the notes of the translation of X.60.4 Ṛgveda, "the conception of this goddess is still dark". M.Ad. Regvier remarks "Aditi is the name of a divinity, a personification of All, the mother of the gods". In his essay On the Highest gods of the Aryan Nations, Prof. Roth says, Aditi, Eternity, or the Eternal, is the element which sustains and is sustained by the Ādityas. This conception, owing to the character of what it embraces, had not in the Vedas been carried out into a definite personification, though the beginnings of such are not wanting. This eternal and inviolable principle, in which the Ādityas live, and which constitutes their essence, is the celestial light. In a note on the Ṛgveda 1.166.12, Prof. Max Müller says "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, visible by the named eye, the endless expanse beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky. He further remarks

that if we keep this original conception of Aditi clearly before us, the various forms which Aditi assumes, even in the hymns of the vedas, will not be seen incoherent.

Wallis and Oldenberg regard Aditi as personifying freedom, Fiechel, Hardy and Colinel take it to mean Prthvi, the earth, or the conterpart of Dyaus, the sky. In the Rgveda itself, she has been identified with Earth. Like the earth she is extensive (Prthvi Vitasthe) and spacious greater than the great (Mahata-Mahadbhih), far pervading (uruvyc) and mother(Mata). In Nighantu, Aditi has been mentioned among the synonyms of the earth and in the dual as equivalent to Heaven and Earth. Inspite of these trends, we find her in the Rgveda separately mentioned and as distinct from both Heaven and Earth. In the following passages of the Rgveda, we find Aditi as mentioned separately from the Earth and Heaven:

"I invoke Indra, Agni, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth and sky etc."

Rv.V.46,3.

27. Wallis, Cosmology of the Rgveda, p.45.ff.
29. Fiechel, Vedische Studien, 2.p.86.
30. Hardy, Vedic and Brahmistic Periods, P.94.
32. Rgveda Samhita, I.72.9.
33. Ibid, V.46.6.
34. Ibid, I.72.9.
Tai?no Mitro Varuno manahamaditi? Sinda?h Prthivi
puhini? ut na: II
"Mai? Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Ocean, Earth and Heaven
Gladden us"

Rv. I.97.58.

"Heaven and Earth, the wise and holy, protect us",
and "May Aditi the mother of Mitra and the opulent
varuna, preserve us from every calamity".

Rv. X. 36.2-3.

In Rv. X. 63.10. We find the most clear distinction
of all, "We invoke the excellent protectress the Earth,
the faultless Heaven, the sheltering and guiding Aditi;
let us ascend for our well-being the divine bark, well-
rowed from imperfection, which never leaks". On the basis
of these facts we can definitely conclude that Aditi is
not Earth.

In the verse "Aditirdyauaditi-rantarik?am". Aditi
has been identified with Heaven. But the same verses which
refute the identification of Aditi with Earth, also apply
here. In the above verse, it is only to show the greatness

35. Rgveda Sa?hita, I.89.10-
Prof. Muir says, "Perhaps Aditi may best be regarded as a personification of Universal, all embracing Nature or Being, with which she is, in fact, identified in the following remarkable verse. She is the source and substance of all things celestial and intermediate, divine and human, present and future. Aditi is the sky, aditi is the air (or intermediate firmament); and so on; and at the end of his view (Aditi may be a personification of Universal Nature) he says "If we should understand the father and mother whom the suppliant is anxious to behold, as meaning Heaven and Earth, it would become still more probable that Aditi is to be understood as meaning "Nature".

W. Norman Brown in his article 'The Sanctity of the Cow in Hinduism' says about the conception of Aditi that Aditi is a personification of pure abstraction. Her name means boundlessness, freedom, expansion. Aditi is the spirit or attitude or force of change which at the beginning of things led to creation and as such stands in contrast to the spirit or altitude or quality of conservatism or restraint which would have prevented creation. In the creation myth the forces leading to or

inducing change and creation are personified as her sons (Aditeh Putrah) and called Adityas that is, promoters of expansion, in contrast to the Danava Vrtra, who stood for binding or non-expansion and is called son of Danu (Restraint). In the later Rgveda Aditi receives a certain amount of personality as a personification of the cosmic generality as in 1.39.16 Rgveda. Since her name means freeing, she acquires a moral function and is conceived as freeing from sin.

In a few passages, Aditi is identified with a cow, and in the ritual a ceremonial cow is commonly addressed as Aditi. This notion occurs in the later Vedic Texts. This is because the cow, to the Hindu mind, typifies motherhood by providing nourishing milk, curds and butter. Both represent boundless plenty and hence the expression

- "अग्नि अग्नि अदिति वाद्यिता"

W. Norman Brown in his above mentioned article states, "An other important feminine figure of the Veda who is frequently called a cow is Aditi. She is called a milch cow (Dhanu) who issues full streams (of blessings) for pious folk who make the oblation. In the same ceremony, her name (Aditi) is used as an epithet of that cow whose daughters are the milk sought by the masculine element.

38. Rgveda Samhita, VIII. 101. 15.
39. Ibid, I. 153. 3.
Soma. Again, in another passage dealing with the soma ceremony (Rgveda 9.96.15) Aditi is said to pour out milk (Rajo na dudham aditer isiram). In a different sort of context (Rv. 10.11.1) Aditi has an active undeceivable bull as her son, who milks from her the streams of heaven's milk for another bull (Vṛddha Vṛddha dudhār dōkaśa Payānsi yavo Adilerādhyā). In the performance of the vedic ritual she is symbolized by a cow as is also the personified sacrificial food, consisting of the cow's products, milk, butter, and called Ila or Ida.

Prof. Ludwig compares Aditi with the Greek Σύνέργεια (Dynamics) and Daksā with Ενέργεια (Energy).

The Biological Theory about the concept of Aditi

W.G. Rele in his book entitled 'vedic gods' explains the biological interpretation of the concept of Aditi. According to him the wide expanse of the goddess is suggestive. The biological theory of the goddess means the phenomenon which controls the surface of heaven and earth through the sprouts springing up from it. They are called Ādityas. The centres of all our conscious motor

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40. A. B. Keith, the Religion and Philosophy of the Veda, pp. 200, 270.
activities of the physical organs of senses as well as the movements of head, trunk, arms and legs are located in a particular area on the surface of the brain which is known as the rolandic area. It executes the movements of the head, trunk, limbs and the physical organs of sense (the ears, eyes, nose and tongue) according to the stimulus it receives from these parts. In the absence of any sensory stimulus from without the centres receive from Daksa (thought) their energy to send efferent impulses Daksa is, therefore, called the daughter of Aditi and it is the stimulation of these centres by afferent impulses from the organs of sense that produce thought of desire. Aditi is thus both daughter and mother of Daksa by reciprocal generation. The seven sons with whom Aditi started to meet the gods are the seven conscious motor centres in the rolandic area of the brain. They are the centres for the movements of head, trunk, limbs, eyes, nostrils, ears and tongue etc.

The difficulty in accepting this theory is the same as we had noticed in connection with the biological theory for Usas. There is no need for restoring to this metaphorical method to explain the biological functions. The Vedic seer could do it in a simple and direct way. The main idea was the adoration of the different gods

42. V.G.Rele, Vedic gods, pp.105-9.
and goddesses in order to fulfill their wishes and not to give biological explanations under the name of gods and goddesses.

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The view of Hillebrandt and Roth is partly similar. Hillebrandt's conception of Aditi is of the eternal principle underlying the celestial light, which urges that she is essentially connected with light and the highest heaven, and explains her as the light of the day in its imperishable aspects. His approach agrees in substance with that of Colinet. According to Colinet, she is the light of the sky. Thus she becomes a sort of feminine form of Dyus. To a certain extent, this view has some similarity with the renounced French scholar of the vedic lore professor He suggests that the goddess is a development from the phrase Dyus Aditi, supplying the gods with milk as the boundless sky. He puts more stress on the imperishable nature of the light and not on the boundless space of the sky.

According to Prof. A. A. Macdonell the Adityas are here and there called the sons of Aditi. On the basis of this fact he suggests that just as Savasi is found in the

44. Colinet, Translations, 9th Oriental Congress, I. 396. 410.
Egveda itself as the name of Indra's mother, arising from the phrase son of strength savas, applied to Indra is the most strong one, so Aditi was conjured up from a phrase meaning sons of freedom or rather perhaps guiltlessness. The personification would then by a most natural and simple process be invested with her leading characteristics as the mother of the Adityas. She would be brought into conjunction with heaven and earth, the Universal parents, while she would retain her special connection with the idea of freedom. In that case Aditya would be a term produced and applied to Mitra, Varuna, and the other gods after Aditi had been created, and the original gods, who were called sons of freedom or guiltlessness, would probably be Mitra and Varuna.

On the basis of these facts we may conclude that the goddess Aditi is not a cow, but wherever she has been mentioned together with the cow, both of them have simply been compared. Just as in figurative speech we say 'sah vrkodarah which literally means, 'He is Bhima but in fact it means He is like Bhima i.e. he resembles Bhima because he has a big stomach like that of Bhima'. In the same way where Aditi is called cow there it means that she is as beneficent as the cow or vice versa. Just as the cow gives milk and other things, in the same way Aditi pours her blessings and many other gifts on the worshipper. The second view which identifies
Earth or Heaven with Aditi is also not acceptable as we have already observed in our discussion. Both of them are limited to their particular regions. The Earth includes only the region below and the Heaven the region above. But Aditi is not limited to any of these spheres. As visualised from some of the verses in her praise, she includes each and everything.

Then what is Aditi? The various views expressed by Muir, Maxmuller and Brown seem to be very close, but if we make a deeper scrutiny of the text of the Rgveda where she has been referred to, it will be obvious that Aditi of the Rgveda is the same as Ātman of Upaniṣads. In the Upaniṣads Ātman has been called each and every thing and she is the principle behind the whole universe. Similar is the case with Aditi. In the Upaniṣads, it is far more developed and there it forms the soul of the Upaniṣads, but the concept of Aditi is scattered in the Rgveda and is not much developed. In the Upaniṣads, Ātman is the sole reality. The same we find to some extent in the Rgveda for Aditi. But in the Rgveda certain other gods also occupy a prominent place. Therefore, the concept of Aditi does not become much obvious. In the Upaniṣads, the realisation of the Ātman is the main point, whereas in the Rgveda the attainment of happiness. Aditi is indestructible like the Ātman. She frees men from sins etc. and gives them happiness and in the Upaniṣads it is said that a man who realizes Ātman becomes free of sins and attains happiness. The verse 1.29.10 of the Rgveda
identifies completely the Ātman of Upaniṣads with Aditi. Just as the realization of Ātman makes us morally good, in the same way the worship of Aditi frees us from sins, the question may arise that in the case of Ātman, there is no request for gifts etc. i.e. for worldly things, but in the case of Aditi, it is there. It may be explained that the viewpoints in two different periods might differ. In the Upaniṣads, the viewpoint was to attain knowledge and to be free from bondage where as in the Rgveda the main purpose of the worshipper was to get worldly happiness. Thus it seems quite natural that the later was influenced by the prevalent thoughts of that period.

Prthivi is the goddess

The goddess Prthivi

Earth is another goddess in the Rgveda who shares the status of a Universal mother in the Vedas and perhaps this is her most important attribute. Prthivi is the goddess of one Sukta in Rgveda 5.84.

1. Rgveda Samhita and Sayan Bhasya 5.84.
She has been called by different names and the most prevalent among them is Prthivi. Wilke, however, puts the concept of earth as mother, even before that of the sky in his work devotes three times as much space to it. He considers that the concept of the mother Earth as the source of all earthly plants, animals and human lives, is the oldest and the most important.²

This comparatively closely relationship of the Earth is well preserved in the Mori legend mentioned by Tylor. He says "when Tane Nābūta, father of forests, said to his five great bretheren, let the sky become as a stranger to us, but the earth remain close to us as our nursing mother". Further, he remarks that the idea of the Earth as a mother is more simple and obvious and undoubtedly more common in the world in comparison to the idea of Heaven as a Father. Due to this activity she becomes the goddess of death because she receives within herself everything that is dead, e.g. the withered flower, dead human beings and animals. Both of these conception are natural and may have existed in the most primitive times, as they require practically no abstract thinking.

2. Wilke, Die Religion der Indogermanen, p. 97.
Philologically, however, the connection of words for earth in the different Indo-European languages is not quite apparent. We have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Word</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>Ksas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avesta</td>
<td>Zəa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Persian</td>
<td>Zami</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>xqúv</td>
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<td>Latin</td>
<td>Lunnes</td>
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<td>Lithuanian</td>
<td>Zeme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Slavonic</td>
<td>Zemljan</td>
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The derivation of all these words is uncertain. An old Anglo Saxon Stanza, rendered into English, is given here for the comparative study.

Hail to thee, O Earth! the Mother of men,
May thou be fruitful in god's embrace.
Yielding food, for the use of men.

There is a close similarity of this idea in the Rgveda. It is true that in the Rgveda the prayer is not only addressed to the Earth but both to the Heaven and Earth. The English rendering of the Rgvedic Mantra is as follows:

5. Rgveda Samhita, VI.70.2.
follows:

"Ye Regents of this world, parents of gods aid with favour pour unto us the seed that benefits men and make food increase plenteously for us".

Similar thoughts are expressed by the Greek and the Latin poets. For example, we read in the Homeric hymns "I will sing of the Earth, the Universal mother, the spouse of the starry Quranos, who feeds all creatures that are on the ground.

The meaning of the word पृथ्वी is 'the broad one'. In the ऋग्वेद साहित्य, 2.15.2, we find allusion to this etymology when it is said that Indra upheld the Earth (पृथ्वी) and spread it out (पप्रथत) The तैत्तिरिया साहित्य (1.1.5) and the तैत्तिरिया ब्राह्मणा (1.13.5) in describing the origin of Earth, derive the word पृथ्वी from the root प्रथ (to extend) because she is extended, प्रक्ष्यये + सिव + प्रतिह धर्मसास + नियम by गुडगुडरादीह्यस्क + बत्तिया. Sayana also derives it in the same manner. The same idea is expressed in the निरुक्ता. The idea of पृथ्वी, as something spread out naturally, comes from its extensiveness which is obvious to the human vision.

7. Panini-Astadvayi, IV.1.150.
8. Ibid IV.1.41.
The Earth and the Heaven

The most remarkable fact, with regard to earth in the Rgveda, is that in most of the hymns, she has been invoked along with Heaven. They have been designated as the universal parents. Thus she becomes the consort of Heaven. They are not only regarded as the parents of human beings but also of the gods. It is obvious from the study of the various passages where they are designated by the epithet devaputra meaning having gods for their sons. Likewise it is said in the Rgveda Samhita, VII.97.8 that the divine worlds (Heaven and Earth), the parents of the gods, have augmented Brhaspati by their power. Further in the Rgveda Samhita X.2.7, they are described as having the conjunction with the waters, and Tvastr, the begotten Agni. In various passages they are said to have sustained all creatures. Muir says that it is not in ancient Indian mythology alone that Heaven and Earth are regarded as being universal parents. It is observed by the French author K. Alber Reville that the marriage of Heaven and Earth forms the foundation of a hundred mythologies. According to theogony of Hesiod the first thing, that arose out of chaos, was the broad bosomed Earth, the firm abode of all things. Among the Homeric hymns also the earth has been called as the Universal

10. Rgveda Samhita, I.106.3; I.1.159.1; I.185.4; IV.56.2; VI.17.7, VII.53.1; X.11.9.
12. K. Alber Reville, Essais de Critique Religieuse, p. 383
mother. Thus we see that the idea of earth as Mother and Heaven as father is found in many other countries too.

In the Rgveda, many epithets have been used for them collectively as uruvyacasa, Mahini(I.160.2 Sw.) Üryi (Sw.I.185.7) Bahule, Duryente, Ēabhīre (Jv.66.3) Chrtaveti (VI.60.1) Madhughe (VI.70.1) Shuriretasa(VI.70.1) Payasveti (VI.70.2) Ajare (VI.70.1) Ṛtvirdhā, Prayatī(IV.56.2) Precetasa, Adruha, Bhûridhāra (VI.70.2).

In the Ígveda Samhita, II.40.1, Soma and Pūṣan are mentioned as the creators of Earth. Perhaps it means that both of them protect her by their different functions. She is invoked to give shelter to the worshippers and she is also requested to sprinkle the sacrificial place.

Indra supported the earth and made her firm. This idea is often repeated in the Rgveda Samhita viz. II.17.5; II.15.2. The idea underlying these passages is that Indra, being the lord of rains, makes the earth through the rains to give out different kinds of plants etc. which make her stay more steady. She is of auspicious birth (Ígveda Samhita I.160.1). Though Heaven and Earth have been invoked together several times the Rgvedic seer he has not failed to remark the separate individual characteristic of both of them. Thus in the Rgveda I.160.2 it is said that they are separated from each other. The sun has been called as the son of Heaven and Earth because he moves in the middle of both of them. In the Ígveda
Samhita I.160.3, it has been said that the sun has created the Heaven and Earth. Obviously it is contradictory statement. In the Rgveda we often come across such controversial remarks. But if we go a little deeper to the bottom of the meaning of creating Heaven and Earth, we can understand that the light of the Sun illumines the whole world including Heaven and Earth. In this sense the sun brings them into light and thus gives new life. Hence the sun is the creator of the Heaven and Earth. Moreover, she is invoked for food, strength and offspring. She, together with Heaven, is always engaged in doing good to others. She is always young in the form of the growth of different kinds of plantations, mountains etc. She is the support of the world, creator of rains and crops for the happiness of gods and men. She has many forms. At one place she is high in the form of mountains, at another low. Somewhere she is sandy, somewhere rocky and somewhere watery. She is immovable and has no feet. As the parents bring up their child with affection and care, in the same way she behaves in the company of Heaven.

The only hymn, in the Rgveda Samhita where Prthivi has alone been invoked, is V.84. She bears the burden of mountains. She is firm. She possesses the vegetables, the trees and other plants. The waters of the rains fell upon her. At one place, her divine and human representations

13. Rgveda Samhita, I.185.2.
have been combined. The great earth pleases the visible earth with great waters. She is vicārini (the mindful one), Mahāti (the great one) Susanye (the welfare-bestowing one), she protects the sacrificers from jaws of death. She is possessed of water. The importance of worshipping her has been also stressed. He, who offers oblations to her, gets his desires fulfilled. He obtains sons and grandsons. The Heaven and Earth are covered with Ghrta. They pour out water on Prthivi in the form of rivers, Oceans etc. Moreover, the surface of the earth contains water and Heaven contains water in the form of clouds. They increase on account of Ghrta. She is wide and expensive. She is Madhusruta, the bringer of water or we can say the bringer of sweetness to life because in fact the life gets its charm from the different things on earth. She fills our life with Kadhu from all sides. She has been requested to make the path free from obstacles and also to protect the Aditya i.e. Sun, who is like her own son. Though Earth has been mostly regarded as the mate of the Heaven, yet in the Rgveda Samhita I.159.4, we come across some strange relation of the two. She has been called as the sister of Heaven. We do not know how this idea occurred to the mind of the vedic seer when it was already established that she was the spouse of Heaven. This problem, however, remains unsolved. Similar

15. Ibid, X.18.10.
is the case with many other Vedic deities. It is probably because both the Heaven and Earth are of the same origin. It is true that the prayers and praises of the Earth mostly contain ideas similar to those we find in connection with other deities. The most striking feature of the Earth is her constant connection with Heaven. In her case, we do not come across beautiful description like those of Usas, but still she attracts due to her motherly affections. Though she is not endowed with knowledge like the goddess of speech, yet she is of great help to the sacrificers by producing food for them. She does not solely dominate the whole of the universe like Aditi, but she spreads over the universe in the company of the heaven. Visnu is said to have gone round this earth variously with seven Dhastras (means) (1.22.16) The fire is said to have supported the earth and Agni resides in the Earth (1.73.3).

Earth as a Cow

Like Aditi, earth has also been called a cow in the Rigveda (Rigveda Samhita, I.41.5; X.133.7). It is simply meant to compare the concept of Earth with that of the Cow. As a cow gives milk, the source of various objects, similarly earth brings out different kinds of objects.

Fertile Earth

Earth has also been worshipped in the form of fertile earth. In the Rigveda Samhita, the description

16. Rigveda Samhita, I.164.8-10.
of the fertile earth is available in an elegant way.

**Heaven and Earth as representing Ether.**

N.V. Thadani, during his discussions on the concept of Heaven and Earth, states that Dvāras and Prthvī represent the twofold character of Ether. This two-fold character of ether refers to the magnetic energy with its north and south seeking poles. This means that we have now two centrosomes corresponding to the said Heaven and Earth in place of one and they are magnetic. One has a south seeking and another a north seeking pole, corresponding to the purusirc and Prakṛtic aspects of ether. The centrosome now divides into two halves and each develops on opposite polarity, north seeking and south seeking. The nuclear membrane disappears and the two centrosomes are seen at the polar ends of the cell. In the philosophical terminology we find the senses of knowledge and action associated with the two-fold character of Earth. They are parents of the world. This means that the cell multiplies. The worlds are born under the action of the centro-some when it becomes magnetic and divides into two. This is actually what happens. The cell multiplies when the two centrosomes become magnetic and act on the cell at its two polar ends.

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We have already observed in similar explanations in the case of other deities given by the same author. The explanations are complicated and also rather difficult to follow. In connection with the present deity also the robe of this new approach does not fit in well in the light of the divine perspective of the duty. It is also difficult to make a comprehensive comparative study on the basis of the theory of centrosomes and cells. In the beginning, the above author says that Heaven and Earth are ether. But there is no need of such a statement because it is an admitted fact that ether is present in the atmosphere. Further, Shri N.V. Thadani has not explained how the characteristics of Earth and the attributes of Heaven and Earth will be explained in his approach. He does not give a full explanation but simply interprets the names Heaven and Earth. Consequently we cannot accept this theory as a perfect one till it is substantiated by more concrete reasons and arguments.

**Earth as Prakṛti of Saṃkhya.**

Another interpretation of Earth and Heaven is that the germs of the later Saṃkhya system of Indian Philosophy dealing with Puruṣa and Prakṛti are available in the vedic concept of Heaven and Earth. The Saṃkhya, also called the Philosophy of dualistic realism, traces the whole course of the world to the interplay of two ultimate realities viz. Prakṛti and Puruṣa. On the one hand we have Prakṛti which is regarded as the ultimate.
cause of all the objects of the world including the human physical forms. On the other, the Samkhya admits another ultimate principle viz Purusa. The more presence of Purusa is sufficient to move Prakrti to act. The epitome of Samkhya system is erected on these two fundamental foundations. In the Rgveda Samhita we find a close similarity to this system of Indian Philosophy. It seems quite likely that the idea of Prakrti and Purusa might have been adopted by the propounder of Samkhya from the concept of Earth and Heaven of the Rgveda. As Prakrti and Purusa of the Samkhya system cause the creation being its principle components, similar are the functions of the Heaven and Earth. The Prakrti of the Samkhya system plays the active part whereas the Purusa gives her the incentive to work. Likewise the earth does the active work i.e. the creation takes place on her and the Heaven helps her in doing so by sending rains, light and so on. The comparison clearly indicates that the concept of Purusa and Prakrti has its origin in the concept of Heaven and Earth of the Rgveda Samhita.

Though the position of the earth is very high yet sometimes it is lowered when other gods are

13. 

Rgveda Samhita, Iverskura.
poised. For example in Rgveda 1.52.11, while praising the strength of Indra, the vedic seer says that if this huge earth increases ten times more then the strength of Indra can be better judged. It means that the strength of Indra is as great as the strength of earth increased ten times more.

The Goddess Ratri

We have seen in the Rgveda that not only the bright aspects of nature have been worshipped as divinities, but also the dark aspects. It shows that the vedic seers took things in an optimistic way. To the above category of deities belongs Ratri. Ratri belongs to the female deities of the category of Usas. If Usas represents Dawn, Ratri governs the night. Both of these deities have been worshipped together in some hymns. This also shows that the vedic seers took the things in an optimistic way. Generally, the night has been regarded as among the dark aspect of nature as during night many evil things take place. But in the Rgveda, she has been assigned the place of a goddess and has been worshipped with the same idea. There is only one hymn in the Rgveda samhita, (X.127) solely addressed to her. At other places, she has been invoked along with other deities like Usas and Day.
The derivation of the word Rātri according to vacaspatyaṃ is from the root $\sqrt{Rā}$ with affix Trip. The Nirukta gives the meaning of the word Rātri as to exhilarate the natural creatures and to cause others to stop their work and to make them strong. It may be derived from the root ṛ to give, because the dew is given away during this period. Rājināman yuttarāni bhājanam karmaṇaya hitāni dhunkaroti jātikā Syādetākarmanā nṛ gātithyati.

In the Indo-European group of languages, the following words are found for night:

- Gothic: Nahta
- Old High German: Naht
- Anglo Saxon: Night
- Latin: Nox, noctis
- Greek: νυσυνκτός
- Lithuanian: Naktis
- Lett: Naktis
- Old Slavonic: Noshti
- Sanskrit: Nakti (chiefly in compounds)

The derivation of the words is however uncertain.

1. Uğadikośa IV.67.
She is beautiful like her sister Dawn and sits on the sacrificial grass. She has been called beautiful on account of the star-spangled sky. The night and dawn appear to embrace each other. Like Upas, she is born again and again. She is shining. She is the instigator of the movables and so she is invoked to instigate the chariot. She is requested to come to the sacrifice. She looks with the help of bright luminaries in many places and she bears the splendour of all. She is immortal, bright and covers the whole firmament with darkness. First she brings darkness and later on removes it by the light of illuminaries. It is night who makes Upas to appear (Rgveda Samhita, X.127.3). This is the time of rest for all the beings. She is requested for protection against wild beasts and thieves. She has been referred to as the daughter of Heaven. Sayana also interprets the statement as the daughter of the sun. She is staying in Heaven. She is great. She is sitting on the sacrificial altar. She is like the wish-fulfilling cow. Though the Dawn and Night are sisters yet they destroy the form of each other. This is the thought of the vedic seer because both of them are not seen at the same time and when the one comes the other goes away. But at the

same time they are also embracing each other. Like Dawn, she is also a child being born again and again. Though night has been called as the sister of goddess Usas, yet her place is not as high as that of her sister. The poet has not a clear and vivid impression in the mind about Rātri. Usas has been associated with so many gods and epithets, but this is not in her case. The Vedic seer simply worships her for the sake of protection at night. It is perhaps because of her belonging to the passive aspect of nature. Her time is of stillness, inactivity the rest and there are no sacrifices to be performed at that time.

**Tilaka’s Theory of Long Night.**

B.G. Tilaka is of the opinion that the Vedic Dawns were longer once and as the Dawns were long, so the nights were also long. According to him, the year is made up of three parts:

**First Part of the Year.**

Long continuous night occurring at the time of the winter solstice lasting for a period greater than twenty-four hours and less than xis months, according to the latitude of place.

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Second Part of the Year.

One continuous day to match, occurring at the time of the summer Solstice.

Third part of the Year.

A succession of ordinary days and nights during the rest of the year or a day and a night together never exceeding a period of twenty four hours.

Further, Tilaka states: "The Asvins are the predecessors of the Dawn and are seen in the Eastern Horizon as patches of butterlike condensed lights. The night sacrificers had to keep a patient and tiresome vigil, waiting for their appearance. When they appeared at last, the sacrificers felt a relief, as their appearance marked the beginning of the end of the dark and oppressive night. This idea has been expressed in RV 1.183.6 and 1.184.6, where the sacrificers address the Asvins saying that it is through their kindness that they are able to cross the borders of darkness, and they, therefore, invoke them to come along the path of the gods. The same sentiment has been differently expressed in the Rigveda Samhita, VII-76.2, where the Vedic bards say, 'The Devayana path has been visible to me.....' The banner of the Dawn has appeared in the East.

Tilaka, however, says that all these evidences point to Arctic conditions and to Uttarayana when the sun moves

to the Northern hemisphere, and the Dawn is visible in the horizon after the end of the long night.

As regards the above theory, one thing to be pointed out is that Ratri has not been tested in the light of a deity but only as an atmospheric phenomenon. Its insertion here is to study the concept of Ratri held by the above Author. As to the arguments put forward by the above author to support his theory, one hesitates to accept him. We find no reference to the long night in the Rigveda. So the theory of Tilaka needs no further discussion. Moreover, the rise of the Dawn in the East is entirely inconsistent with Arctic conditions in as much as neither the Dawn nor the sun, according to Tilaka's own rendering, ever rises in the East in the Arctic region, but they have their first appearance in the South. If, as Tilaka says, night had been the long night of six months, how could the nights of full moon, of fourth day and so on, be distinguished. They could be distinguished only if there was something to separate them or there was something in between them and that was the day. Thus on these grounds it is not possible to accept the theory put forward by Tilaka.

Kali as the Prototype of Night.

In the Vedic Darsana Dr. Fateh Singh, referring to Khila Suktas connected with the Rigveda Samhita, X.117, says that the description of night which is found in the Rigveda reveals the fact that the concept of the later
Jagadamba Mahakali is based on night.

As against the above hypothesis we have to say that being not sure about the genuity of the Khila Suktas, it is not justified to form any kind of theory on their basis.

**The Concept of Sarasvati**

Another goddess, who deserves a high place in the list of female deities, is Sarasvati, worshipped in the Rveda in two forms.

7. Dr. Peth Singh, Vedic Darśana, p. 164.
1. as the river
2. as the goddess of speech and learning.

There are other rivers who have been treated as divinity in the Rgveda e.g. Vipasa, satudri etc. but the honour given to her is the greatest. In some verses she has been conceived only as a river goddess and in some as the goddess of learning and in some as both. Though there are not many hymns and verses dedicated to her, yet it does not lower her status. She is the most important among the intellectual deifications and has been invoked for learning. In the vedic Mythology Hillebrandt says, Sarasvati in the Rgveda has three significations:-

1. Name des Flusses in Arachosien
2. Name des Flusses in Kādhyadesa

There is a great controversy among the scholars over Sarasvatī. The name is identical with that of the Avestan River Saranuaiti in Afghanistan and it may have been the latter which was first lauded as the Sarasvatī. But Roth, Grassman, Ludwig and Zimmer are of the opinion that in Rv. Sarasvatī usually and originally meant a mighty stream, probably the Indus (Sarasvatī being the sacred and sindhu being the secular name) but it
Occasionally designates the small stream in Madhyadesa, to which both its name and its character were in later times transferred. Max Müller identifies it with the small river Sarasvatī, which with Drāsadvati formed the boundaries of the sacred region Brahmavarta and which loses herself in the sands of the desert, but in vedic times reached the sea. A.B. Keith says

"In the Rgveda, in Sarasvatī we need not see anything more than a river goddess somewhat strongly anthropomorphized in certain details who inspires players of devotion. But in the Brahmanas she is connected with speech, perhaps because of vedic culture. She is the goddess of eloquence and wife of Brahman". From the above statement it is learnt that Sarasvatī is only the river goddess in Vedas and not of speech. But a careful study of the verses and hymns of sarasvatī in the Rgveda will bring to light the fact that there is something more which she represents.

The derivation of Sarasvatī vide vacaspatyam is

\[ \text{Sr gatau + Asun suffix + Matup} \]

giving the sense 'Sarasvati Jalani sanyasyak' and then 'K' of Matup changes to 'Y'.

1. A.B. Keith, the Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas, pp. 172-174.
2. Sidhanta Kaumudi, Route nos. 935, 1099.
3. Unadi Kosah, "Servadhatubhyasun". 4.188.
It is called so because it contains waters. In the sense of speech and learning it can be derived from Sr. in the sense that which moves on.

The etymology given by Nirukta is sarahityadaknam, Sartha tad vati. The names of vak are fifty seven. The word vak is derived from the root vac. In the vedas sarasvati is used as 'river' or 'deity'. In Amarakosa the following synonyms of sarasvati have been given

श्राय ्ते ्त ्त्राय ्तमाणी नीचि ्ति ्वाण िरी सरसवती ॥

Kshirasayamin, Commentator on Amarkosha Says :-

"Sarah Prasaranam aryaḥ Sarasvati"

Thus these two commentators understand by Sarasvati, the one who spreads forth and the spreading is both of water and learning sayana takes it as,

सरसवती सरसवती वार्ता केषत

IX.67.32,Rgveda Sabhita Sayana Bhasya


5. बा ्नामायुगरसाविषत्यावधस्थः राजः परमामारः।

Sarasvati as a River

As nowadays Gange is worshipped in India Sarasvati was worshipped in the same way in Vedic period. She is made of Ayes i.e. iron. It is perhaps to show the greatness of her strength. She is flooded with waters. She is widespread and obstructs all other waters by her greatness. She moves on driving away all the obstacles as does the Charioteer. He, who performs sacrifice on her bank or for her sake, is blessed by her with different kinds of objects as is known from the episode of Nahusa's sacrifice. It is said that king Nahusa performed a sacrifice for Sarasvati, as a result of which he was blessed with enough milk and ghee for thousands of years by her.

She was the only one who saw through the request of king Nahusa. The worshipper requests her to listen to their prayers so that he may get in return the desired objects. Her wealth is auspicious and even the gods who deserve worship approach her for their own good. Here the sense may be that the sacrifices are performed on her banks and in those sacrifices various gods are invoked to have their share of offerings. Thus the poet imagines that they approach her for their own purpose. She is the best among her river friends. She is of bright colour. She is mighty (asurya). She must be invoked with faultless prayers. She is the best of the rivers (Madítara).

P.S. Deshmukh remarks, "It is probable that the original personification was based on the river in Afghanistan,

7. Rgveda Samhitā, VII.95.1
but later, when the personification was slightly advanced, and its terrestrial counterpart was forgotten, Sarasvati was considered to be a goddess representing a mighty stream.

Sarasvati as Goddess of Learning and Speech.

The second aspect of Sarasvati is the intellectual aspect. For that Brähmana who studies the Vedic hymns, who recites the hymn in praise of Pavamana, goddess Sarasvati herself squeezes the soma and pours out Ghee and milk which are the means of sacrifice. She makes such a man the knower of scriptures. She is the foremost goddess (devītāma). She is the best of the mothers (Ambītāma). She is the friend of the Maruts. As Maruts are supposed to be residing in the mid regions, so she is their friend by residing at the same place. Speech is also said to be residing in the middle region (Madhyāsthamānaḥ). She stays in heaven in the form of goddess and on earth in the form of speech. She is Akṣara i.e. whose path is not censured. She is also Veṣānīvaṇī i.e. possessed of food or strength. As the goddess was moves on in her chariot, in the same way Sarasvati approaches the sacrificial place in a chariot accompanied by her father (the Almighty one). She enjoys herself by the food in the form of oblations. When she is perfectly satisfied, she

8. Rgveda Samhitā, II.4.1.6
9. Ibid, VI.96.3
is begged of to bestow enough wealth on her sacrificers any in return. But this wealth should not cause any kind of harm or disease. She is pavara, who purifies us. She purifies in both the ways by water as well as by knowledge. She is the protectress of brave ones.

In the Rigveda Saṃhitā I.3-12 her two forms are distinctly shown. In the form of a river she lets flow much water and in the form of goddess of speech and learing, she brings light the intellect of good and intelligent people. She is Subhaga, the fortunate one. Many kinds of foods reside in her. She is the drinker of soma and is requested to bestow sons. She destroys the enemies and conquers them too. Here not only the enemies in human forms but enemy in the sense of ignorance is also meant. When ignorance is removed, the biggest enemy is conquered. She sharpens our intellect.

Some of the scholars completely deny the fact that she is also the river goddess. Mahershi Dayananda interprets that Sarasvati figures as one of the hundred names of god enumerated in the first chapter of the Satyarth Prakasa. While discussing marriage, he interprets sarasvati as wife. In the Rigveda, VII.9.5. Swami Dayananda translates Sarasvati as Instructive speech. Pt. Satavalekar agrees with Rishi Dayananda and translates sarasvati as knowledge and learing. He regards sarasvati as the Susumna artery.
Pt. Pāli Ratna says that Sarasvatī is that artery which brings knowledge. In this way, these scholars are silent about the river aspect of Sarasvatī.

As a matter of fact those who regard Sarasvatī only as a goddess of learning and speech are not doing full justice to her. They ignore her one aspect in the form of a river deit. We have already observed that both the aspects of Sarasvatī have been clearly represented in the Ṛgveda Samhitā.

Sarasvatī is often invoked in the company of Ila and Bharatī. The poet invokes the three goddesses to come and sit on the vast sacrificial altar.

The birth of Ila is regarded only next to Agni, when it is said that the gods made Agni the chief of Army in the form of human being. Then they made the daughter of Manu i.e. Ila, the instructor of religion. But in her case we find contradiction when Agni is called the son of Ila.

Her hands are smeared with ghee (Chṛṭenaste)

11. Ṛj. Samhitā, X. 70.8.
12. Ibid, I. 31.11.
13. Ibid. III. 2 9.3.
Sayana translates Ila in the following three ways:

1. Ila Bhumih yūthaśya gosāmghasya nīrātmātīḥ
2. Ila gorūpadhāna mānēḥ putriḥ
3. yūthaśya marudgānasya nīrātmātīḥ madhyāniki vēk

At some places we also accept the meaning of Ila, as the one deifying the sacrificial oblation.

Dr. Pateh Singh derives Ila from 'ad' to 'eat' on the basis of Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, I.8.1.12.

Thus Ila seems to be closely connected with the sacrifice and her most prevalent concept seems to be that of deifying the sacrificial food or oblation. Gonda says that Īḍa is the daughter of manu and produced from his offerings, this goddess was in Vedic times the representative of the offering of milk and butter.

According to N.V.Thandani the three goddesses in connection with Indra referred to the three aspects of nature, Heart or super-electric energy (Sarasvati), Mind Energy (Īḍa) and Ether (Bhrṣṭi).

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15. Dr. Pateh Singh, Vedic Etymology, p.87.
16. J. Gonda, Epithets in the Rgveda, p.185.
Abstract Deities.

In the Rgveda Sāṁhitā and the later Vedas, we find not only the deities connected with the different aspects of nature or atmosphere, but also abstract notions personified as deities. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan puts this as follows:

"When thought advanced from the material to the spiritual, from the physical to the personal, it was easy to conceive of abstract deities. Most of such deities occur in the last book of the Rgveda."

Aditi, whose concept has been dealt with in this chapter is also an abstract deity as she represents freedom and boundlessness. She makes others free. This abstractness after being given a divine form was raised to one of the highest female deities in the Vedic pantheon. Besides, we also come across certain other notions personified as deities or rather regarded like deities. This signifies the fact that the Vedic sages did not ignore the importance of abstract notions which also had a part in their life. The important ones among this kind of female deities are Śraddhā, Niyāti, Aromati (devotion, piety) and Anumati (favour of gods). Not many hymns and verses are dedicated to them, but in a few verses and short descriptions, they tell us a lot about them.

1. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p. 89.
The concept of Sraddhā.

The derivation of the word Sraddhā according to vacaspatyam is Srat + dha + An suffix. It gives the idea of respect, purity and faith in the words of teachers and vedas. Dr. Fateh Singh says about Sraddhā, "Faith, confidence, from Sraddhā (to confide, to put faith into)."
The root Sraddhā to confide might itself have originality, come from Sīras and dha, the action of faith being somewhat identical with putting one's hand (physically as well as mentally) into the object of faith. The vedas seem to derive the word from Srat which may be equated by Greek Credence.

One hymn of about five verses is dedicated to her in the whole of the Rgveda. Though this does not presuppose her important position in the Rgveda yet her treatment as a deity in the Rgveda is of great significance to the vedic student as it throws light on the fact that abstractness was no hindrance to get the position of a deity. In the above mentioned hymn of Sraddhā the first verse does not treat her as a deity but simply as faith, as it is said that Garhapatya fire is

2. Dr. Fateh Singh, Vedic Etymology, p.223.
ignited by Sraddha i.e. out of faith or confidence.
Further, she has been requested to give the desired
to the sacrificer and also to his relatives.
The gods, human beings and the sacrificers praise and worship
sraddha, That is the reason why a person, who possesses
faith, attains wealth. The goddess Sraddha is praised in
the morning, evening, afternoon, at the time of twilight.
She is also requested to inspire more faith and confidence
in the worshipper. That is all, we find about her in the
Rgveda Sambhita. But even in this short invocation, she has
been praised a lot. The poet not only worships her for
faith but for other objects also as is the case with other
deities. But one noteworthy point to be seen here is that
there is no poetic description. She is invoked plainly
without any exaggerations or figuratives.

Besides Sraddha, there are some minor abstract female
deities as Asunáti, Asuníti, Sunáta etc.

Asunáti is the goddess who gives life she is prayed
to grant long life to the worshippers so that they may owe
the sun for a long time. She is also prayed to prosper
the body by the offerings of ghee.

5. Ibid, X.59.5.6.
6. Ibid, I.40.3; X.141.2.
Sunrta is the truthful speech. Sarasvati has been identified with Sunrta.

The Concept of Kirrti

Kirrti is the goddess of four Mantras in Rgveda. She is described in three types:

1. तिक्त: देष्ट्राय निन्तोलियंपासी दीर्घंकुटो निषिद्धे जानिन्ति वदन्यः।
   तास्या निन्तिकु: क्योऽनिन्दानं परेषु या गुह्येषु क्षेषु ॥

Kirrti, rather, a prominent figure in the Atharvaveda Samhita, also belongs to the category of abstractness given a divine status. She belongs to the darker aspect. Formerly, we came across the deities belonging to the favourable aspect but here we deal with a deity of harmful aspect. She is the deity of sin or immoral acts. Sayana says, Kirrti Pāda-devatā. The derivation of the word Kirrti is हि + र + giving the sense to go thoroughly into, to pierce through and through. So the meaning of Kirrti will be to pierce through or crush riches or morality. Dr. Fateh Singh gives the following explanation of Kirrti:

"Kirrti is another word that may be mentioned in support of Kirrti, obviously appears to be the negative of Rūḥi which is probably another from of Rūmam.

2. Sayana Bhāṣya, Rgveda, X.59.1."
Thus it would mean cessation or negation of meaning; hence issueless wife is called possessed of Nirrti, as she has nothing to continue her becoming. But, if ‘N’ in Nirrti, is not to be taken to be a negative particle, it may have been excessive becoming (Nih Sexsena Rthih) which may also mean Death or difficulty. Again he says that Nirrith means Prthivi specially as a symbol of mobile state of vak or sakti derived from ‘Mi’ plus ‘R’.

As regards the above explanations we can liberally agree with the first view. But the second view of dragging Nirrti to the sense of Prthivi does not appeal to the mind because earth does not harm us. Nirrti is generally connected with the dark side. Nowhere in the Rgveda Samhita, Earth is represented to harm the beings. Nirrti would be rather an Anista Devata. As a fact, there is nothing much about her in the Rgveda Samhita and in the Atharvaveda Samhita she has been more often mentioned. Thus the Rgveda Samhita proved a seedling for the growth of her concept in Atharvaveda. The attitude of the vedic seer towards her is negative. To other deities he offers oblations so that they may come to his sacrifice to grant different desired objects, but she is offered oblations to go away to a far off place. In the Rgveda Samhita X.59.1 she is requested in a very humble manner. She is praised, offered oblations, given her due share in the sacrifice as a bribe to be away from them, so that she may do no harm to them.
It is obvious that Nirrti is not given a positive favourable treatment. The vedic seer is apprehensive of some kind of Aniṣṭa from her and so he tries his best to drive her away. In order to be safe, he offers his prayers to her.

Thus she is 'harmless personified' or 'personified' divine status.

Generally, all the manifestations of evil in the Rgveda are left without epithetical attributes. But Nirrti is an exception to it. Gonda is also of the same opinion and remarks:-

"Nirrti, the goddess of Destruction and Disorder, whose names is in Rgveda Saṁhitā I.38.6. accompanied by durhana which is a substantive for 'harm, mischief' rather than an adjective is in X.36.2. styled durvidatra (ill-disposed, envious "Monier williams") which is used to typify X.63.12 the inimical behaviour of the injurious or malicious, wicked person. In the above stanza X.36.2. Heaven and Earth who act according to law and norm are invoked to protect man and to avert abuse of power on the part of Nirrti. Thus in order to seek protection many other deities are invoked to keep Nirrti away.

4. J. Gonda, Epithets in the Rgveda, p. 131.
Dvaro Devi

Dvaro Devi (Rv.V.6.5, X.110.5), the female deity governing the house-door is very rarely mentioned in the vedas. She has been invoked to make the entrance of the householder and the gods auspicious and free from obstacles. Sometimes many Dvaro Devis are referred to as in the Rv.IX.5.5 They are golden. They are worshipped in the company of Soma and arise in the various directions. Though of very rare occurrence, this deity is important from the point of studying the thought of tutelary deities the vedas.

The wives of the Gods

Until now we have studied only the female deities in the form of a natural phenomenon as Usas, Ratri etc. or as abstract ones like Braddha and Aditi. Besides, there is another category of female deities. They are the wives of the different gods. When the male deities and also some of the female deities were duly honoured, it was deemed necessary to pay their respects to the wives of gods. These wives of the gods, in the form of female deities, have not been highly lauded, but they are just mentioned with a few invocations and praises. Some of them from their very names appear to be the wives of respective gods as Indrani is the wife of Indra, Varunani (I.22.12), the wife of Varuna, Agniyali (I.22.12), the wife of Agni.
The characteristics of other female deities of this category could only be known after a thorough textual study. Example of Surya may be given in this connection. From her name she appears to be the wife of Surya but in fact, she is the wife of soma or Asvins. There are not many hymns dedicated to them. Another deity of this category is Aranyani, who from her very name appears to be the wife of Aranya, but in fact, she is the goddess by herself. As a matter of fact, even other female deities have their spouses e.g. Usas as the wife of Surya, Prthivi as the wife of Dyaus. The deities like Indrani etc. do not seem to be independent deifications whereas the deities like Usas are independent.

Varunāṇi

The word Varunāṇi occurs only a couple of times in the Rgveda Samhita. The name has been derived from Vṛ + Uvan affix by the aphorism Kr vrdaribhya Uven + Ānuk by the aphorism Indravaruṇa......+His.

No description, no epithet and no function of the above deity has been mentioned in the Rgveda, only her name, in the company of other female deities, is available where the welfare from them has been sought by the vedic seers. She is the wife of Varuṇa.

1. Upadikosa, III, 53.
Sūryā

From her name it appears, that Sūryā is related to the Sun. Sometimes she is called the sister of the Sun and sometimes the daughter of the sun. The derivation of the word according to vaśasatyam is sr + Kyap + Tap. In her case also, we do not find any epithet or function attributed to her. Her main attribute is that she is the wife of the Asvins, who won her in a contest. Her marriage with the Asvins has been emphasized in most of the places. In one place, it is said that she climbed the chariot of the Asvins of her own accord. She has been invoked in scattered hymns and verses. No separate hymn is addressed specially to her. In the Rgveda Samhita, X.85, most of the verses are assigned only to Sūryā. Here she has been mentioned as the wife of Soma. Her chariot has also been mentioned, which is made of Kinsuka and Salvali trees. There is no aspect of nature represented by her as is clear in the case of other female deities. Her greatness lies in indirectly magnifying the position of those with whom she is attached. This is clear from the verses addressed to Asvins and Soma. Here it is said that Sūryā chose them and ascended their chariot. Thus

2. Rgveda Samhita, VIII.29.5; I.34.5.
4. Ibid, I.34.5; I.116.17; I.117.13.
5. Ibid, X.85.
it adds to their greatness that they were chosen by her and they had the daughter of the Sun as their wife. In the Rgveda Samhitā, V.73.5, it is said that the horses of the enemies move near them because of Sūryā. According to the derivation of Sūryā given by Vacaspatyam, she is the wife of Sun. In the Rgveda Samhita, X.1.6, it is said that the daughter of Sun purifies the Soma Juice. Here Śāyana takes 'Suryasya Duhitā' as Sraddhā. But if we take 'Suryasya Duhitā' as meaning Surya, it will appear more appropriate instead of Sraddhā, as Sūryā being the spouse of Soma, can be taken as purifying Soma Juice. In I.64.2, it is said that the lustre of the Maruts was like that of Sūryā. Thus on account of her connection with Asvins and Soma who are connected with Night, it seems quite reasonable that Surya also belonged to the luminary deities.

Indrāni- Her conception.

In the Rgveda Samhitā IV.46.7-8 and I.22.12, the wives of the gods have been collectively addressed. They have been requested to protect the worshippers and bless them with brave sons and food. They are also begged of, for shelter and have been invited to attend the sacrifice to accept their share of oblation. Indrāni is the wife of Indra. The word Indrāni has been derived from the root ṛḍi + Radhī by the aphorism Ṛjendragravajra vipraṇubracubraksu rakhurabhadrograbherabhelasukrasuklagauravaneharaalah°+ Anuka by “Indra varuna-6. Unadisutra, II.29.”
It, Rgveda Samhita X.159, Indrani speaks to us about herself. She considers herself very happy and lucky as she has attained her husband. She knows each and everything. She is the foremost one like the head on the body. She is very clever and she makes her husband to use sweet words for her inspite of his being angry. She makes him to act according to her wishes, though there are other co-wives. Her sons destroy the enemies. Her daughter is exceedingly charming. Moreover, she is winner among her co-wives. That is the reason why husband praises her very much. She asks the worshippers and priests and gods to arrange for her husband the best oblation consisting of splendid food, with which he may accomplish his duties well. She destroys the foes and attains victory. As a result she is without a foe. She has attained more lustre and wealth than her co-wives. There is nothing which shows her divinity except that she is the most honoured wife of Indra and that she surpasses all others. The greatness of Indrani lies in the greatness of Indra. She does not represent any particular aspect of nature and her individuality is completely mingled with her husband. The idea of such hymns seems to be that as Indra is a great god, his wife has been lauded revealing her greatness through her own words. It also throws light
light on the position of the principal wife in the house and the practice of polygamy at the time of the Vedas.

From the above hymn of Indrani it is obvious that she is the wife of Indra when he is represented in the form of Śūrya and the light of Śūrya has been observed as Indrani. In the first verse, X.159, she says that the sun has risen and so her fortune, as she has attained her husband. She overcomes all the co-wives who are in the form of various lights. Being the light herself she naturally knows each and everything. She is above all like the head of the body. Her sons the rays are the destroyers of enemies in the form of darkness. Her daughter Śūryā is very charming. This is a very strong point in favour of fact that Indrāni is the light of Śūryā.

This view becomes more strengthened when the identification of the concept of Indra with Śūrya is found. Indra has been identified with Śūrya directly or indirectly. In one verse Indra himself says, "I become Manu, I become Śūryā". "Aham Manurabha-vam Suryasca" (Rv. IV.26.1) Again, he is directly mentioned as Śūryā: →

7. Rgveda Sāmhitā, X.159.2, Aham Ketuh:
Savitr as an epithet has been used for Indra:


Satapatha Brahmana too identifies Indra with Surya:

Satapatha Brahmana, I. 6. 4. 13.

Thus the above arguments prove obviously that Indrani is the light of the sun personified.

The Goddess Aranyani

Aranyani is the goddess of a full Sukta in Rg. Samhita which is given below originally.

The Goddess Aranyani

Aranyani is the Goddess Aranyani the light of the sun personified.
The goddess Aranyani governs the forests. She is their protectress. The word Aranyani is derived from Aranyt + Anuk by "Indra Varunabhavasarvarudrambhuvah...ranyayavayavanatulā caryānamāṇuk + nīṣ. and then by Himaranyayormahattve. According to vacaspatyam its derivation is Strī Aryate sese vayasyatra Rānye vane, Nahadarnyam nīp Ānuk ca'. The Nirukta gives the etymology in this way: Aranyanyaranyasya patnyaranyamaparnam bhavati graṃdaramanam bhavatīti Aranyāṇīt yenaṃmantryate'. As the vedic seers have deified most of the natural phenomena so the deity of forests is Aranyāṇī.

In the Rgveda Samhitā the hymn X.146. is devoted to her. In the first verse of this hymn, the poet asks her why she is moving in the forests and why she does not come to the village and reside there. In this hymn of Aranyāṇī, we don't find any direct praise to the deity. The poet has lauded the forests and indirectly the deity has been adored. As the come in the village eat grass, in the same way the deer eat the grass here. The listen to the different voices of the birds and animals and get frightened. Eating different kinds of fruits one can freely move about in the forest.

1. Yaska, Nirukta, IX.29.30.
animals, birds and fruits, one can also have the pleasure of many pleasant fragrances as the musk of the deer. Thus she is full of Fragrance. She is Akrāvalī i.e. the vegetation coming out without any artificial means. She is the mother of deer and other animals. When the different birds make particular noises, it appears as if the singer is singing a song and the goddess Arapyārī is being worshipped. In the evening it appears as if she gives away the Šakti. The sense as explained by Sāyana is that as the people in the morning with their Šakti to collect wood and in the evening go back with the same. She does not kill anyone. The travellers are killed only when they happen to fall to bears or thieves.

Now the question arises why the deity of the forest has been presented as a feminine one. The answer is available in the last verse of the above mentioned hymn. Where she is said to be "Akrāvalī mātaram..." the mother of the deer and other animals. This solemnly aspect represents more delicacy and affection. She fond all these with great care, takes care of the travellers and gives them food and shelter to take rest. Thus the main feature of her concept is to be benevolent like a mother.

2. Rigveda Samhitā, X.146.
The concept of the deity Vāk

We have dealt with the female deities who are great either by their position, or by the number of hymns addressed to them, or on account of representing some specific aspect. Now we deal with a female deity of the Rgveda who is very important from the point of view of her attributes. She herself establishes her own greatness. The most important hymn in her honour is found in the tenth Mandala of Rgveda; she is again lauded in a few verses in the Rgveda. Some scholars call Rv.X.125 hymn as vāk sūkta and some call it as Devī Sūkta. Śaṅkara calls the deity of the hymn as vāk.

She calls herself as Rāṣṭri. Whomever she likes she makes him the best of all, she makes him as pious man, she makes him a seer of great penance, and she bestows wisdom on him (yam kāmayā tam tam ugram kṛpomā tam brahmaṇam tam bīsim tam sumedham). It is only through her power that people take food, breathe, see and hear. This shows that without her nothing can be done. Thus she establishes herself as the supreme authority.

1. Rgveda Samhita, X.125.
2. Ibid., X.125.3. Aham Rāṣṭri.
3. Ibid., X.125.5.
4. Ibid., X.125.4.

Mayā so ammanatī Yo vipāśyati yaḥ prāṇīti ya
Im Śrīprabhukram!
She also punishes the offenders and wrong doors.

Those who do not respect her and disregard her, are destroyed. She also helps in destroying the enemies of good and pious men. She bestows wealth on the pious sacrificer who offers oblations of sacrificial food and some juice to her. She desires that her sayings should be faithfully considered which are beneficial to men. It is she who creates battles and strifes among people. Thus the above account establishes her as the sole ruler of the universe. Both the good and dark sides are controlled by her.

**Her supremacy over Gods**

She is not only the ruler of the beings but also of gods. She moves in the company of Rudras, Varuna, Ādityas and Viṣvedevas. She bears up Mitra-Varuna, Asvins and Indra-Soma. Thus she rules the great and most important gods of the Vedic pantheon. She also bears up Pūṣāpa, Bhaga as Tvāṣṭṛ and Agni. She is found in different forms in different beings. She has entered Heaven and Earth.

She is the creator of the father, the heaven (the top of this universe. The Heaven or Dyaus is generally called as the father of the universe in the

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5. **Aṃantvo maṃ ta uṣa kṣiyantī śrūchi śruta arddhivam ta vadāmi ।।** Rv.X.125.4.

Rv.X.125.4.
vedas. Then she describes the cause of her birth in the great lord who is all intelligence. (Aham suvepitaram asya mūrdhan mana yonih Apsu Antah Samudre). But Peterson differs and says, "I set my Father over all the world, my seat is in the waters in the sea". He gives the literal translation, but in fact here literal translation would not help us and we have to observe the text along with other factors. We find the similar contradiction in the case of Aditi and Dakṣa, or viraj and Puruṣa, or Heaven and Earth. They are creators of each other (as for example, Aditi of Dakṣa and Dakṣa of Aditi). But here the contradiction is in the sense that on the one hand she calls herself as the ruler of each and everything and also the creator of Heaven while on the other hand she tells us her cause of birth in the lord, which is all intelligence.

This shows that such a practice was quite common in those days and these thoughts later on gave to the rise of different schools of Philosophy which believe in duality and Purānic and Tantrik conception of Śakti.

7. Peterson,Hymns from the Rgveda X.125.7.
   Bombay Sanskrit series no.XXXVI.p.333.
It is further stated that after her birth she enters in the beings in different forms. She enters in the beings according to her own will like the blowing of the wind for the purpose of creation (Aham vātā iva pravāmi 8 Arabhamānā bhuvanāni viśva). Thus her greatness, her glory and her supremacy is beyond earth, and heaven.

The study of this Devī or Vaikunthā reveals the fact that her conception in the vedas is very important from the point of view of later philosophical and religious ideas. This aspect will be dealt with in detail in the fifth chapter of the present thesis.