Chapter V
Religious Imports and Philosophical Implications of Yajña

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CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS IMPORTS AND PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF YAJÑA

The present chapter is intended to inquire into the philosophical implications of yajña. In pursuance of our thought in Chapter I we may proceed on the assumption that the concept of yajña has been a mould for Vedic thinkers to cast their ideas and experience of Process and Reality. In India philosophy, religion and life have had intimate relations, one to the other, indeed they formed an organic whole.

Different Views about Yajña or Sacrifice

In spite of the intimacy and integrity of the various departments of Aryan culture, it has been found, of late that there are, in the main, two contradictory opinions among scholars regarding the philosophical aspect of Yajña or sacrifice. Paul Deussen is of opinion that "the Upanisads are a kind of revolution against the institution of sacrifice". Macdonell asserts: "though the Upanisads generally form part of the Brāhmaṇas being a continuation of their speculative side (jñānakānda) they really represent a new new religion, which is in virtual opposition to the ritual or practical side (Karmakānda)". But B.K. Chattopādhyāya thinks that the

1 Paul Deussen, The Philosophy of the Upanisads, p. 21. He says "... the ātman doctrine (the Upanisads) was fundamentally opposed to the Vedic cult of the gods and the Brāhmaṇical system of Rituals ... " And again, on page 22 he writes: "The new doctrine (ātman doctrine) however, was further developed in a manner which altogether transcended the traditional cult, with which, indeed, it often found itself in open contradiction!"

Upanisads are not a reaction to what is preached by the Vedas. He believes that the Upanisads have confirmed the efficacy of sacrifices.\textsuperscript{3}

Let us examine these views without extraneous considerations. According to Macdonell there is no actual opposition between Upanisads and the rituals of the Brāhmaṇas but only a virtual opposition; and he agrees that these rituals are the practical side of the religion he deals with; where as Deussen sees a fundamental opposition between them.

It can be easily seen that in the Upanisads themselves there are several references on several occasions to the performance of sacrifice. For instance, in the Brhadāraṇya kopenisad, when Yājñavalkya was asked: which is Indra? which is Prajāpati? etc. . . ." Again the Upanisad says: "Now this self, verily, is the world of all beings. In so far as he makes offerings and sacrifices, he becomes the world of the gods. In so far as he learns (the Vedas) he becomes the world of the seers. In so far as he offers libations to the fathers and desires offspring, he becomes the world of the fathers . . ."\textsuperscript{4} According another passage "He desired, let this (body) of mine be fit for sacrifice and let me have a self (body) through this. There upon it became a horse, because it swelled, it has become fit for sacrifice (he thought). Therefore, the horse-sacrifice came to be known as asvamedha. He

\textsuperscript{3} B.K. Chattopādhyāya, The Teachings of the Upanisads (Calcutta: 1952), p.28. "... the Upanisads have confirmed the efficacy of Vedic sacrifices".

who knows it thus, verily, knows the āśva-medha. Letting it remain free, he reflected; and at the end of a year he offered it to himself (sacrificed him for himself). He gave up the (other) animals to the divinities. Therefore (man, priests) offer to Prajāpati the sanctified (horse) dedicated to all the gods. Verily, that (sun) which gives forth heat is the horse-sacrifice. His body is the year. This earthly fire is the arka and these worlds are his bodies. So these are two, the sacrificial fire (arka) and the horse-sacrifice. Yet again they are one divinity, even death. He (who knows this) overcomes repeated death, death cannot get hold of him, death becomes his body and he becomes one with these divinities".5

The Brhadāraṇyakopanisad presents a quotation regarding the sacrificial worship and its reward. Yājñavalkya, said Āśvata, how many (kinds of) ṛg verses will the hotr priest use today in this sacrifice? "Three". "Which are these three?" "The introductory verse, the verse accompanying the sacrifice, and the benedictory as the third". 'What does one win by these?' 'Whatever that is here that has breath'.6 Yājñavalkya gives similar answers to the questions regarding the verses the other priests use in the sacrifice. Again he says: the introductory hymn is the in-breath, the hymn is the in-breath, the hymn accompanying the sacrifice is the out-breath. The benedictory hymn is the diffused breath. "What does one win by these?" "By the introductory hymn one wins the world of the earth, by the accompanying hymn the world of the

5 BU 1.2.7
6 BU 3.1.7
atmosphere, by the benedictory hymn one wins the world of heaven etc."

In another place Yajñavalkya says that yama is the deity in this southern quarter. "On what is that yama supported?"
"On sacrifice" declared Yajñavalkya.

In fact Upanisads do not recommend a particular sacrifice for performance. They do not even try to create any disbelief in the Karmakanda. The Upanisads are of the view that the result of sacrifice or the fruit of sacrifice is neither ultimate nor everlasting. They are inclined towards the knowledge of Brahman, by which one can liberate oneself from Samsara etc.

So there is no point in arguing that "the Upanisads are fundamentally opposed to the Vedic cult of ritual", neither do we find any justification to believe that the Upanisads believe in the efficacy of sacrifices. In this connection it is relevant to note that the Bhagavad Gita summarises the middle path as follows: "Yajñō dānam tapascaiva pāvanāni manīsinām". Yajña, charity and tapas purify the man of knowledge; nothing more nothing less. But the fact remains that the idea of sacrifice is made use of in revealing or explaining some of the deep philosophical experiences of the Rais, besides its value as a form of worship.

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7 BU 3.1.10
8 BU 3.9.21
9 Similar references to yajna we find in BU 3.1.8; 1.5.2; 1.4.11; 6.2.9-16 1.3.1; 4.1.1; CU 1.10.6; 1.2.15; Mun. U.1.2.3; kath.U.1.1.1; Tu 1.9.1: 1.11.1. Kaus. Br U. 2.5
10 The meaning of the word Yajña has undergone great change in the course of history. For example, it is possible that, in the age prior to that of the Gītā, offering of animals as sacrifice was permissible. But there is not a trace of it in the sacrifice in the Gītā sense. In the Gītā continuous concentration on God is the king of sacrifices. The third chapter seems to show that sacrifice chiefly means body-labour for service. The third and the fourth chapters read together will give other meanings for sacrifice, but never animal sacrifice.
Worship is divisible into two parts, worship by words and worship by acts. Accordingly the worship of the Gods of the Rgveda can be divided into two parts, viz. prayer and sacrifice.\(^{11}\)

Sri Desmukh divides Rgvedic prayer again into two parts, ritualistic and non-ritualistic.\(^{12}\) He is of opinion that this division is not only possible but important, since it further makes it considerably easier to understand and appreciate both the religion and the poetry of the Rgveda. He gives the following explanation for the division:

"we must make clear what is meant by ritualistic and non-ritualistic prayers. By non-ritualistic prayers we mean those hymns of the Rgveda which show no definite connection with the performance of a sacrifice. It is probable a gift or an offering of food or a drink may have accompanied the recitation of this kind of prayer, but in this case, praising the powers of the divine being and asking him to grant some blessings constituted, the chief part, and the gift or the offering occupied a secondary place. In the case of ritualistic prayers, on the other hand, the case was reversed. It was a performance of the sacrifice and the offering that was all important, and the hymns were used only to invite the gods to come down to the sacrifice. For the sake of brevity we might use the term laments to denote (non-ritualistic prayer) the former class of hymn and invocations to denote the latter." \(^{13}\)

Desmukh continues: "Here the deity or deities invoked are not prayed either to come to the sacrifice, or to bring the other gods to it. Nor is it an invitation to the gods to sit

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\(^{12}\) Ibid

\(^{13}\) Ibid. For example, RV. X. 42 addressed to Indira; 1.50 and X. 37 to Surya; VIII. 47 to the Adityas; 1.154 to Viṣṇu; V. 83 to Pārījata; VI. 64 to Usas etc.
on the strewn kusa grass and to drink the pressed soma-juice, or to partake of the sacrifice.  

Besides asking for certain blessings, they contain nothing else. These invocations again are of two kinds. (1) those that invite a god or gods to come to the sacrifice, in company with the other gods and sitting on the straw to partake of the offering or drink the soma-juice; and (2) those that call on Agni, the divine messenger between gods and men, to bring the gods hither or to take the offered oblation to the Gods in heaven.

Sri Deshmukh opines that the importance of the non-ritualistic prayers, may have rapidly diminished owing to the growing importance of the sacrifice, and the whole body of hymns of the Rigveda may have been regarded as serving the purpose of only the sacrifice.

II Sacrifice

As a general treatment of Ṛgga or rituals was given earlier, here we shall attempt to find out its religious and philosophical implications.

According to Jaimini's conception the Veda must give one an idea which is not at all obtained by our experience on

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14 Ibid. "so far as the evidence of these very hymns goes, they are not meant to accompany the pressing of the Soma-juice or the offering of an oblation in the fire altar. The main constituents of these hymns are the praise of the mighty and mighty deeds of the God, exhortation to the hymn to go to the God; and asking for blessings in general, such as prosperity or increase of wealth."

15 RV 6.8 to the Asvins; 3.40 to Indra.
the material plane. On the basis of this Bhaṭṭa Kumaṇīḷa says:

Pratyakṣasenamamityāvā

Yastuṣyō na Vidyate

etam Vidantī Vedana

tasmaḥ Vedasya Vedatā 16

That is, the Vedas prescribe some means to get something beyond the ordinary. These means are called rituals. Mīmāṃsakās say: 'the rituals in their nature are momentary. The offering is momentary. By the offerings we have an āpūrva, a temporary or intermediary spiritual means which ultimately effect the results. 17 Sāṅkara refers to this āpūrva in his bhāṣya of Gītā 18 (Yajñāḥ āpūrvam).

According to Mīmāṃsakas yāga is offering something to the god. In another sense sacrificing something aiming at the god in the sacrificer's mind. "Devatoddēṣeṇa ādhyātyāgah"

Here there are three things, a 'dravya (matter), a 'devata' (object of offering) and actual offering. According to devatādhiṅkarana of Mīmāṃsā Sūtra, devatā comes to play in yāga only an unimportant role. As the mechanical action of yāga needs a devatā, from the point of view of sacrifice, it plays a secondary role only.

16 Quoted by Sāyana in his Rgveda Bhāṣya

17 Mīmāṃsa a Sūtra 2.1.1.2 Āpūrvādhiṅkaranabhāvārthah

Karmaśabdah tebhhyah kriyā pratiyate. Also 2.1.5 codana punarārāmbhesāḥ.

Pūrva mīmāṃsa Sūtras with the Bhāṣya of Sābara śvāmin (Varanasi: Varanasi Sanskrit Series, 1910)

18 Ibid. 3.14
Vedāntins, on the other hand, say that devatā is important in yāga, because he is the only sentient in the trio of yāga; he can do or undo anything. The mechanical action is intended for pleasing devatā only. So they claim an important place for devatā. This is the main dispute between Mīmāṃsakas and Vedāntins.

The cause and effect relation between the ritual and its reward is not known to us directly. According to Mīmāṃsakas the Veda means a scripture prescribing some means to get something which is not understood by physical laws. For instance, a man wants svaṁga or cattle or prosperity. He is in search of such things. The Veda prescribes for him a ritual. The Vedas say by performing such rituals one gets such and such reward. Another aim of the establishment of the sacrifice is the accumulation of merits. It is a fundamental Vedic idea that sacrifices and good works (īṣṭa-pūrta) are susceptible of being stored in the form of merits in the highest heaven. According to the Mundaka Upanisad for instance, the oblations and sacrifices accumulated in the "Sukṛtyā śloka" receive the sacrificer at his death and lead him to the word of Brahman. Moreover, in certain passages they are even described as forming a glorious body for the sacrificer in the next world.

19 There is a dispute between Mīmāṃsakas and Vedāntins of theistic school who accept the rituals. This dispute is referred to in Brahma Sutra, ch. 1. Phalamas Ucçapateh Jaiminīya atah eva.

Brahma Sutra with Senkara's Bhasya, ed. Harinarayan Apte (Poona: Anandasrama Sanskrit series, No. 21, 1903)

20 Mund U 1.2.6.
Difference of opinion as to the aim of sacrifice

A controversy between Mīmāṃsakas and Vedāntins have been going on for centuries about the aim of sacrifices. After many centuries it is Dayānada who made some bold attempts in the interpretation of the Vedas. He made new approaches. According to him rituals of Brāhmaṇas are meaningless bewildering and primitive. For him Agnihotra is commendable because it contributes to the purification of air and vegetables and directly promotes the well-being of all sentient creatures. The performance of Yajña and the resort to Tirthas (sacred places) are however, lifted from the realm of rituals to that of morals. For Yajña consists in showing respect to the wise and the learned, in the proper application of the principles of chemistry and the physical and mechanical sciences to the affairs of life and in the dissemination of knowledge and culture. And Tirthas are not the so-called sacred places on land or water to which pilgrims go. They are literally the means by which the ocean of misery is crossed. They consist in the practice of truthfulness in speech, in the acquisition of true knowledge, in cultivating the society of the wise, in the practice of the so-called yamas, in diffusion of knowledge and in the performance of similar good works. He is not prepared to connect the Brāhmaṇas with the Vedas. He interprets the mantras in his own way without depending on the Brāhmaṇas. According to him the Brāhmaṇas serve as a commentary of the Mantras.

21 Ṛgvedādibhasya and Satyārthasprakāsa
for giving full importance to the ritualistic aspect. As rituals are outmoded they may have some internal relation to Mantras. He gives new interpretation to old rituals. For instance, there is a passage in 'Satapatha Brāhmaṇa "Vidvāṃso ha vai devah". This means "devas are learned". As Dayananda is not prepared to approve the mythical interpretation of the Vedas, he rendered this in another way: "All learned people are devas". Dayananda never accepts any super-human devas. According to Dayananda the main aim of the Vedas is to help men in his material life in material wants without sacrificing the spiritual background.

Later Aurobindo comes to the scene of Vedic Research. He accepts the Vedas as they exist. But he dives deep in the Rgvedic Mantras, gives meanings to them on the basis of metaphysical thoughts. According to him words like Agni, Sūrya etc. have philosophical significance, the authoris of the mantras had a deep vision of the Infinite; words, phrases and ideas are used as symbols. For him there is no ritual in the Vedas without symbolic significance.

The great Bhāṣyakāra, Śeṣaṇa, takes the Vedas as one who strictly follows the tradition of rituals. He deals with them from the advaitic point of view. According to him ritualistic portions are intended only for the pleasing of devas by performing rituals. Once the mind becomes pure, the study of the Upanisad will be easier, with Sādhanacatustaya, and it may lead to Mokṣa.

The idea of being whether it is termed Ātman or Brahman or Prāṇa has the counterpart of Becoming.

23 Bhāṣya (of Śeṣaṇa) to RV. 1.164. 39

Sarvair Vedaik Khalu brahmādhiṣṭāmyate tantu

supanisadām purusaṃ prochāmi (SB. 14.6.9.17)

ityādiṣruteh namu Upanisadbhāgaṇāṃ tathāṣtu. itaresam

tu Katham brahmāvisayatvam iti ucyate yadyapi

itarabhāgaṇāṃ yagadivisayatvam tathāpi buddhiḥsuddhy

Utpadanaśāyam Vedanasādhanatvam brahmāvisayatvam

bhavisyati "Vedanuvacanena brāhmaṇah vividisanti"

BU 4.4.22. ityādiṣruteh

24 BU Commentary.

tametam vedanuvacanena brāhmaṇa vividisanti

yajñena dānena tapasā anāśakena.

(According to Śayana the major portions of the Veda comprises Karmākāṇḍa; Upanisadic portions are taken as Upāsana Kānda; only four vākyas are taken as jñānakānda. On the basis of this classification he made commentary of all the Vedas.)
As the human mind approaches the mystery of life and seeks to discover therein the piece of man two fundamental world views arise. An early and a universal human experience is the experience of the fact of change in the world, in other words there is a becoming. As mentioned earlier, the evolution of the universe is one aspect of its becoming. Strictly speaking becoming is not a mere evolution. Becoming is a coming into being, In the sense of evolution Taittirīya Upanisad says:

From this soul, verily space arose; from space, wind; from wind, fire; from fire, water; from water, the earth; from the earth, herbs; from herbs, food; from food, semen; from semen, the person. 25

The idea of the reverse process of becoming or the involution of the universe also comes as a corollary. Becoming is two-fold: one is coming from being, the other is a coming to being. For example, Taittirīya Aranyaka says: a pahataḥ atmanah ādevaḥ suvargam lokamāyan Brahmāma Sāyujuym rasayo gacchen. 26

Another passage says: "Brahmaṇa Sāyujuym sañcakatām āpnoti eteṣāṃeva devatānām sāyujuym sārstitam samānalaṅkataṃ āpnoti." 27

In the following places there is reference to becoming nature: In connection with cāturmaṣya yāga while discussing immortality the Brahmaṇa takes up the question whether the performer of the yāga dies or not. 28

25 Tu 2.1.
26 Ta 11.13
27 Ta 10.29
28 Tā 1.4.10
Cāturṃāśayājī Iyata na pramāvate iti. This is the answer: he never dies, he reaches rtu as follows: If the performer of the Cāturṃāśya yāga dies in vasantartu he becomes vasant, if he dies in grīṣma he becomes grīṣma, if he dies in varṣa he becomes varṣa; if he dies in sarad he becomes sarad; if he dies in hemante he becomes hemante; likewise he becomes that rtu in which rtu he dies, as the rtu is part of the year, through rtus he reaches saṃvatsara, and thus he becomes Prajāpati; Prajāpati is Saṃvatsara.

So the Cāturṃāśayājī enters the season; through the season he enters the year. As the year is Prajāpati he becomes Prajāpati.

In this journey of the soul in its upward movement reference to nature and time is mentioned. There is reference to day, pakṣa, Uttarayana, months, Saṃvatsara, Ṛṣita, sandra-mas, viḍyut etc. This idea of merging is illustrated in many ways in different texts. In another place we find becoming and reaching; it is said in connection with Pravṛdaya: talking about the results of Pravṛdaya performed in twelve days Brāhmaṇa supplies the following ideas: ... becoming savītrī he reaches all desires; (Bavitā bhūtvā ... tene kāmān eti) becoming agni

29 Jīvan va esa rtunapyeti
yadi vasantat pramāvate vasantō bhavati
yadi griṣme griṣmāh yadi varasassu varasāh
yadi sarādī sarādī yadi hemante hemantāh
Rturbhūtvā saṃvatsaram apyeti
Saṃvatsarah praṭjāpatih praṭjapātir āvā esaḥ

30 TA 5.12
he reaches devan (Agnir bhūtva prānaneti) becoming Āditya he reaches the rays of the sun; becoming cendraṃas he reaches the stars; becoming rūtas he reaches the saṃvatsara; becoming dhātr he becomes Śakvarisāman; becoming Erhaspati he reaches gayatri; becoming metre he reaches the three-fold world; becoming varuna he reaches virāj; becoming Indra he reaches trstup; becoming soma he reaches sutya day; Ultimately the performer is identified with Sūrya (which is the cosmic counterpart of the microcosmic principle ātman or prāna). 31

Worship does not consist solely in prayer or feeling or knowledge; it is action, an action by which quality is transcended and dissimilarity banished. This act contains within itself essentially, a sacrificial aspect, a death and becoming, a do-ing, Karman. For the Vedic poet religion is essentially worship, and worship means a dynamic Ontological two-way relationship of man with the divine. Karman implies action, not only in its etymological sense, but also in its intrinsic meaning, and, what is more, it implies an act of worship that is identified with sacrifice. Karma-marga is a way of sacrifice and of worship. In other words the higher vision the Vedic Rais offer as a goal for their own society and its members presupposes the empirical fact of the multiplicity of conceptual structures which account for such definite

31 The main point of this explanation is the becoming of the performer in many ways in Nature as nature. There is nothing supernatural about this. The special point to be noted here is that even chandas like Sakvari, gayatri etc. are deified; based on theological principles, Varuna is connected with Virāj which is a chandas with 12 letters; Indra is invariably connected with tristubh. Soma is connected with Stutya; somajuice plays an important part in stutyahas.

These quotations describe the becoming of the performer of Pravargya in Nature; everything referred to in these quotations is natural, in its essence.
experiences. The sacrifice of frame works integrates into larger awareness, in turn produces wider and more comprehensive frame works and wider view points. This vision which the Hindus offered to their society and its members is not only a goal for the mind but integrates the whole human sensorium into an activity which is not content with knowing: rather it is intent on becoming that which it knows.

In order to connect this material world with Pure Being so many efforts have been made by Vedic thinkers in their own way. These efforts are evident in their worship of gods, and in their conception.
UNION WITH GODS THROUGH THE SACRIFICE: THREE TYPES OF UNION

The quest for immortality is one of man's deepest instincts. And he thinks that immortality belongs to the gods. Thus a yearning to become a god springs up spontaneously within man. This is indicated in the following lines of the Rigveda:

We have drunk the soma and become immortal. We have attained the light, we have found the gods.32

Man can become immortal only if he is divinized, in other words, divinization amounts to immortality. Even at the earliest period of the Vedas we find a desire to become a deva. Further, as was shown earlier, the word deva means shining. But the shining, according to a material approach, may be physical brightness. From the religious point of view it is a faultless and pure state; from the philosophical point of view this shining nature refers to pure consciousness or knowledge. As Yājñavalkya says, in the context of a dialogue between himself and Janaka that the light that leads man ultimately is the light within; that is his soul of jñāna svarūpa.33 Only that helps others to shine. So the prayer for reaching devabhāva may not be inconsistent with Vedic thinking. In Aitareya Brāhmaṇa we find a reference to Sāyuja.34 The initiation into the sacrifice constitutes a new birth of men.35 The first birth

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32 RV 8.48.3
33 BU 4.3.1-6
34 AB. 2.8.6. Devatānām yajamānām sayujuym sarūpatam saloka-tām gamsyati.
35 Three births of man in his life on earth (SB. 11.2.1.1). According to Manusmriti (MS.2.196). Māturasreś dhijanānam dvitiyam maunjībandhane, Tritiyam yajnādikṣayām dvijasya 'sruticodanāt'.

proceeds from the mother; the second birth takes place at the
time of investiture with the holy thread and the third one at
the time of initiation into the sacrifice; these three births
relate to the twice born according to the Vedic injunction. A
man is not born in the true sense of the term till he performs
a sacrifice; he attains his real birth through the sacrifice.36
The sacrifice not only confers rewards here and hereafter but
also confers a new birth; a transfigured life upon the sacrifi-
cer. Through this symbolical birth the sacrificer shakes off
the worldly limitations and this transfigured life achieved by
holy rites enables him to achieve union with the gods of the
sacrifice, to attain the life divine. The sacrificer attains
union with the deities, attains the same form and the same world
of the deities invoked in the sacrifice.37 These three types of
union are termed śāvujya, sgrūpya and sālokya.

The union amounts to attainment of 'Devatva or deity-
hood or divinity in heaven whereas the emancipation or Moksa of
the Upanisads means complete absorption of the individual soul
into the impersonal supreme God head or All-soul. Explaining the
significance of the term ṛtu of oblation the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
observes: "Oblation of fire, oblation of butter and soma all
these oblations make one disembodied and immortal".38

Even the gods had to struggle for immortality, Sacrifice
is the way to immortality, because sacrifice is the one original
and originating act; for there is a rta, and order, whose dynamism

36 JB. (U) 3.14.8
37 AB. 2.8.6
38 AB. 2.7.4
is sacrifice, which transcends both man and gods and which can not be violated even by gods.

Taking a closer look at this view of the Brāhmaṇa we see how sacrifice is connected to the primordial being, Prajāpati. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa tells us that "Prajāpati is sacrifice". Prajāpati performed an act of self immolation, self sacrifice in order that creatures might come to be. Thus creation is regarded as the sacrifice of Prajāpati. This is the ontological despoliation of the supreme principle in order to bring into existence the intermediate order of things which consists of the cosmos. This intermediate order, being neither stable nor self existent, is by constitution transitory or in other words, dynamic. The creature is powerless in itself to sustain itself. It must attempt by means of sacrifice to recover its true status, to return to its source, retrieve its unity, that is, to become immortal, divinized.

The way and the truth of sacrifice

As we have seen, in the Vedic vision of life, knowledge of the Supreme self and union with it is the summum bonum of the Vedic ideal of life. The rise of human consciousness is undubbedly the most important phenomenon that has yet happened in the evolution of the whole universe. One of the most remarkable features of the Vedic vision is that it bears witness to this awakening. The discovery of this possibility of awakening will not be complete or fruitful unless a sure way to it is found out for all mankind. How can one make the people prepare themselves to achieve this highest good of union with the Supreme self?
This has been a difficult question for all great thinkers of all times. Let us hear Sankara in this connection. In his introduction to the commentary of Aitareya Aranyaka speaking about the character of the three component portions of the Upanisads he says:

There are three classes of men who want to acquire knowledge. The highest consists of those who have turned away from the world, whose minds are fixed on one subject and collected and who yearn to be free at once. For these a knowledge of Brahman is intended, as taught in the Aitareya Aranyaka. The middle class are those who wish to become gradually by attaining to the world of Hiranyagarbha. For them the knowledge and worship of Prāna (breath and life) is intended as explained in the Aitareya Aranyaka. The lowest class consists of those who do not care either for immediate or gradual freedom, but who desire nothing but offspring, cattle etc. For these the meditative worship of the Śaṁhitā is intended, as explained in the 3rd Aranyaka. They cling too strongly to the letter of the sacred text to be able to surrender it for a knowledge either of Prāna (life) or of Brahman.

The rise of human consciousness is an important phenomenon in the evolution of life in the whole universe. The most remarkable feature of the Vedic view of life is that it bears witness to this Awakening. For this purpose one simple technique won't be suitable for all people. The effectiveness of a particular technique depends upon the level of human growth and development. Intellectual intuition is not the privilege of all. Rational comprehension also is unwarranted. Even though

40 AA. II. 1-6
the spiritual apprehension of reality is a distant hope for the majority, certain rituals have been designed and prescribed by the Vedic masters with a view to assist its emergence. The Upanisads do this by developing the idea of that internal growth into truly mature human life which takes place only with the discovery of the ātman.

In his commentary on the Āranyaka Sankara finds accommodation for sacrifices in his scheme of life. Our first duty, he says, consists in performing sacrifices, such as are described in the first portion of the Veda, the Saṁhitā, Brāhmaṇa and, to a certain extent, in the Āranyakas also. Afterwards arises a desire for knowledge which cannot be satisfied except a man has first attained complete concentration of thought (ekāgrata). In order to acquire that concentration, the performance of certain upāsanas or meditations are enjoined:

This meditation or, (as it is sometimes translated), worship is of two kinds, either Brahmopāsana or Pratikopāsana. Brahmopāsana or meditation on Brahman consists in thinking of it as distinguished by certain qualities. Pratikopāsana or meditation on symbols consists in looking upon certain worldly objects as if they were Brahman in order thus to withdraw the mind from the too powerful influences of external objects.

These objects, thus lifted up into symbols of Brahman, are of two kinds, either connected with sacrifice or not. In our Upanisad we have to deal with the former class only, viz., with certain portions of the Mahāvṛata as described in the 1st Āranyaka. In order that the mind may not be entirely absorbed by the sacrifice it is lifted up during the performance from the consideration of these sacrificial objects to a meditation on higher objects, leading up at last to Brahman as Prāna or life. 41

41 cf. Maitrāyana Brāhmaṇa Upanisad 1st Prapāṭhaka tr. F. Max Muller, (Oxford: SBE Vol. 15, 1879) p.267
Sankara gives a clue that may assist and direct our inquiry into the nature and purpose of sacrifice; and understand the process and the possibility of "lifting the sacrificer's mind up during the performance from the consideration of these sacrificial objects, leading up at last to Brahman, or life".

As Sankara has mentioned above, the sacrificer is a pratikopasaka. For most people Brahman or Reality is quite unknown or incomprehensible. This fact is simply and humbly expressed by Dirghatamas in Rgveda:

"What thing I truly am I know not clearly; mysterious, fettered in my mind I wander when the first born of holy law approached me, then of this speech I first obtain a portion. Back, forward goes he, grasped by strength inherent, the immortal born the brother of the mortal ceaseless they move in opposite directions; men mark the one and fail to mark the other". 42

So since the reality is thus abstract and unknown the ritualists resorted to pratikopasa. It is here that we see profuse use of symbols. Instead of logical explanation symbols are employed to enter into communion with Reality. In order thus to withdraw the mind from the too powerful influence of external objects, an expansion of consciousness is expected of the sacrificer. In other words, they aim at the creation of a cosmic consciousness in the sacrificer, by awakening in him an insight into the nature and structure of Reality, by gradual Unfoldment of a unitive understanding of process and Reality).

42 RV. 1.64.37 and 38
In ordinary life, we are not aware of the unity of all things, but divide the world into separate objects and events. This division is of course, useful and necessary to cope with our everyday environment. But it is not a fundamental feature of reality. It is an abstraction devised by our discriminating and categorizing intellect. To believe that our abstract concepts of separate 'things' and 'events' are realities of nature is an illusion. The principal aim of Upāsana is to effect a condition of the mind wherein the basic unity of the world is experienced.

**Unity of conception of the Universal Principle.**

A careful study of the Vedic texts may compel us to take exception to the views (discussed at the beginning of this chapter) that assert a fundamental opposition between the Karmakāṇḍa and the jñānakāṇḍa. Their means may differ, but we find a unity in their object. It can be shown that the one Brahman, we may call it by any name—Sat, or Ātman etc. is the object of all rituals, Upāsana and Jhāna.

Here we must take note that the one is described finally as 'tāt' or 'sah'. Only common noun can help to understand the divinity completely. In Ṛgveda in Nasadiya Sūkya we find the word tāt.

ṣnīḍavātām svadhāvā tadekam etc.⁴³ Nasadāśīt Sūktam describes pre-evolution state, existed then; only premodal matter existed. That is denoted by the word tāt, without giving any particular name. In Sukla Yajurveda Sāhitā there is a section like this:

⁴³ RV. X.129
Here all gods with particular names are identified with the word 'tāt'. This repeated assertion and identification of the cosmic principle reminds us of the poet's awareness of an unbroken wholeness which denies the idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existing parts. Whether it is Sūrya or Vāyu or Agni or any other thing like that they can not be seen or described except as part of or in connection with the whole of which they are parts or aspects. The Vedic poet is constantly aware of the unifying thread in the cosmic web, the ultimate ground of all being. This is later reinforced by the Mundaka Upanishad. He on whom the sky, the earth, and the atmosphere are woven, and the wind, together with all life breaths, Him alone know as the one soul.45

In Rgveda itself, in a number of passages we find originally the ultimate reality is denoted by 'tāt'. Other names and forms are ideal (created by poets), that won't deter the unity of godhead, which is mentioned by the word tāt.

In Yajñā we come across names of so many gods, Agni, Indra, Sūrya etc. But according to Rgvedic tradition these are names and forms of that only on account of this, in Some Yaga, in the main day (i.e. in Sutvahās) the main oblation is offered in Savanamukha to God with name 'tāt' only; he is nei-

44 VY. 32.1
45 Mun.U. 2.2.5
ther Indra nor Agni nor Soma. The mantra uttered by the
Adhvaryu runs as follows:

Sārathamā sanskritirvāvavārah
Sa prathamo : varuno mitre agnih.
Sa prathamo brhaspatiscikitvām-
tasmāindraya sutam ājuhomi.46

He is the Visvakarma, he is the first Mitra, Varuna, Agni
he is the first intelligent Brhaspati. To such a god Indra
we offer the oblation. Here all gods are identified with
the word sah, a common noun.

So here we are given to understand, that the object
of rituals is only tat: but other names are ideal. The rich
imagination of the Vedic poet has created a vast number of gods
and goddesses who are essentially nothing but the creations of
the mind, they are mythical images representing the many faces
of reality, the tat. At the same time they are essential vehi-
cles to convey the doctrines of a philosophy rooted in mystical
experience. Again, Suparnnam viprāh kavya vacobhi / rekam
santam bahudhaś kalpayanti. i.e. the one is real, others are
creations of thinkers. Using different names they create the
one as Many. Any number of examples for the awareness of the
one are available in Vedic texts. Rgveda gives:

All beings they unite and separate.
They support the mighty gods but do not tremble.
The one is lord over all things, fixed or moving,
walking or flying – this whole multiform creation.

46 YV. 7. 14-15
From afar I perceive the Ancient one, the Father of mighty power, the generator, our connection, singing the praise of whom the gods, stationed on their own broad path way, go about their business. 47

Again,

Only one is the Fire, enkindled in numerous ways; only one is the Sun, pervading this whole universe; only one is the Dawn, illuminating all things,

In very birth, the one has become the whole world: 48

Taittirīya Āranyaka proclaims:

He who lives in us as our guide, who is one, and yet appears in many forms, in whom the hundred lights of heaven are one, in whom the Vedas are one, on whom the priests are one he is the spiritual atman within the person. 49 Apart from this in one yāga the Brahman which is said to be devoid of all attributes also become an object. This yāga is referred to by Āpastamba in his Kalpasūtra, the Yajñyapuruṣavākyya concerned finds place in Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa. 50 Here mantras of philosophical importance are taken as yajñapuruṣavākyya. The uṣadāsītsūkta, referred to above comes in this yāga as upahoma.

In the Upāsanakānda, the very same tāt, garbed in the name of Brahman Śat, Ātman becomes the object of Upāsana. When we come to the Jñānakānda māhāvākyas supply the very same Brahman,

47 RV 3. 54.8-9
48 RV 6. 58.2.
49 TA. 3.11.1
50 TB. 2.8.9
the object of knowledge. So either through the ritual or Upāsana or jñāna we are asked to be aware of That (tat). Thus we see that this unity is wonderfully maintained by the Vedas intact. Even in ritual we are constantly reminded of the basic oneness of the universe. It is part of the Yajña mood. The unity of all things and events is a recurring slogan through out the process of yajña. As we study the various aspects and forms of yajña we shall see that they express again and again, in different ways, the same insight - the unity and inter connectedness of things. Everything is seen as integrated parts of the whole.

Doctrine of the Unity of the world

In the famous Asvā Vāmasya Sukta of the Pīrghatanaś we find the poet connecting the yajña with the highest being. The poet asks:

I ask thee of earth's extremest limit, where is the centre of the world, I ask thee;
I ask thee of the stallion's seed prolific, I ask of highest heaven where speech abideth. 51

Answer,

This altar is the earth's extremest limit,
This sacrifice of ours is the world's centre.
This stallion's seed prolific is the soma;
This Brahman highest heaven where speech abideth. 52

A unifying touch of contemplative mind is pervading through the images of these lines. Each image of the first stanza provides a support for contemplation of what the poet considers significant speculative ultimates (extremest limits, navel, seed, highest heaven) but gives no indication of their

51 RV. 1.164.34
52 RV. 1.164.35
proper tenor. The answers given in the next verse reveal
that their tenor is the Yajña. Each image supports the contem-
lation of various aspects of the Yajña. The Brahman facilita-
tes the focussing of awareness on the deepest comprehension of
the transcendental meanings of the Yajña. In the first two
pades Yajña is experienced as simulacrum of cosmos, relating
yajña and cosmos not through abstract doctrine, but through
the more fluid terms of a unifying meditative image.

Asyavamiya Sūkta is full of riddles, allegories,
answered and unanswered questions. Keith says:

this hymn foreshadows the identity of the
sacrifice and the world; the seven priests
of the earth are paralleled by seven in
the heaven, the speech on the earth by
that in the heaven, there are also the
earthly and the heavenly metres, the
earthly pravargya rite and the rain from
heaven, the animal offering and the bull
sacrifice itself, and the navel of the
world, and the soma on earth and the sun
and rain. 53

Another hymn, the hymn of creation where the idea
of unity is more fully developed is referred to in Chapter III
Here we see the proclamation that "Purusa is this all, that
has been and that will be". The most important characteristic
of the world view implied in these lines is the awareness of
the unity and mutual interrelation of all things and events,
the experience of all phenomena in the world as manifestations
of a basic oneness. All things are seen as interdependent and
inseparable parts of this cosmic whole, the Purusa; as diffe-
rent manifestations of the same ultimate reality. The Upani-
sads constantly refer to this ultimate indivisible reality

53 A.B. Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and
which manifests itself in all things, and of which all things are parts. They call it Brahman.

But in the Brahmanas Prajāpati is the Supreme Lord.

He is the first born, Hiranyakarṣṭa; he creates the whole universe; he gives life, he commands, the gods obey; his shadow is death and immortality; he is lord of man and beast; of the mountain and the sea. Thus in the one God are summed up the duties of creator, of ruler and preserver of the universe.

In Rigveda Prajāpati is identified with the year. Hiranyakarṣṭa is expressly identified with Prajāpati.

In the later literature he is chiefly the designation of the personal Brahmā. Brahmā is traceable to Agni. From various passages it can be proved that Brahmā is Agni. This is the view of Satapatha Brāhmaṇa too. "Agniśveta Brahmā". Brahmā is Agni.

The unity of the world is further implied in the theories of world formation.

54 RV. 10.121
55 RV. 10.190
56 TS. 5.5.1.2
57 A.A. Macdonnell, Vedic Mythology (strasbourg: K.J. Trubner, 1897) p. 119
58 RV. 2. 1.2; 1.3; 4. 50.8; 7. 7.5
59 SB. 1.1.1.1 See Also Nirukta 2.12
Theories of World-Formation

The Vedic thinkers have tried to describe their idea of world formation in three ways; they can roughly speaking, be put under three heads, viz. (1) Pervasion, (2) evolution and (3) transformation. Of course all these are mixed up in the descriptions we get in the texts. For example, Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa says: "Yasmat na jāteḥ para nyostiyah āviveśa bhuvanāni viśva." The difficulty in understanding these theories lies in the fact that the cosmogonical thoughts of the Vedic poets are mingled with mythology, especially the Prajāpati legend. According to one view, three main trends of cosmogonical thought are evident in the early Veda. They are (1) beginning with a mythological figure (e.g. Prajāpati), (2) beginning with some material principle (e.g. Āpah or waters), and (3) beginning with some abstract principle (e.g. asat). It must, however, be conceded that the cosmogonical legends in the Vedas, by and large, tend to confirm the dictum that mythology is a kind of primitive metaphysics.

I. Pervasion

In the creation there is no second one like him who enters the whole universe. Rgveda says that 'Sūrya ātmā jagatastasthurasca.' Sūrya is the soul of all that moves and does not move. Viśvasanāyi Saṁhitā says: Samudrana Vyaaco dadhe Indram viśva avivṛdhan Samudra Vyaacāsaṃ.
To signify pervasion Rigveda gives the word 'Samudram' actual word for pervasion is Vyacah. Taittiriya Upanisad gives another account of creation. "Brahman desired" would that I could become many, let me procreate."

He practised tapas, he created the whole world, all that exists. Having created it, he penetrated within it. Having penetrated within it, he became both the actual and the beyond, both the manifest and the unmanifest, both the founded and the unfounded, both the conscious and the unconscious, both the real and the nonreal. The real became everything that exists here. That is what man calls the real. 64

2. Evolution:

Taittiriya Upanisad refers to creation of the world from asat. Asadve idamagre asit. Tato vai sadajyvata etc. (In the beginning was this asat. From that the existent was born). Evolution is also implied in the previous anuvaka (2.6) quoted above.

With reference to this aspect of (evolution) the formation of the world C. Kunham Raja says:

63 See also T.A. 3.2; BU. 5.5; TR.3.8. and TB.11.27

According to TB.2.2.7. Prajapati created beings; but after creation they mixed up among themselves. There was a confusion. The Prajapati wanted to divide them. But at that time nothing was there other than Prajapati. Then he converted himself into Rupa (shape); he entered the matter (pervaded); teasad ahuh rupam vai prajapatiriti (therefore, ancient people say) the shape itself is God. Then he wanted to give name to the things created. Then he himself converted into name and entered the matter. On account of this (in the past) people say that name itself is God (Prajapati). 64

64 TU. 2.6
The Rgveda refers to the two conditions in the world. There is a condition of movement and change and there is also a condition in which there is no movement and no change. They are known by such pairs of words like sthātus, caratam, jagatas-tasthusas and Amṛtam martyam.

There is an infinity and there is also a finite state with changes and movements. The unmoving, unchanging condition, where it is all still, where there is no diversification, is the basis for the changing and moving world with diversifications. The process is an eternal one, and it is continuous and simultaneous in the different parts forming the finite world.

But here the idea of creation is mixed up with that of pervasion; for the next sentence says: 'having created it, into it, he entered etc. . . . A similar account (somewhat confused account) is given in Rgveda. Here three stages of creation may be distinguished: first the world is produced, then the gods, and lastly the Sun. The theory of evolution is here still combined with that of creation. Scientifically speaking, there is no such thing as creation of the universe – it is manifestation. We can understand the significance of this as we follow the description of "creation" given in Rgveda.

In the omnipresent aspect 'that' enters in and pervades all things (anupraviśya). "tattaratvā tadeva anupraviśat"

C. Kunham Raja,


67 RV. 10.72.1

68 RV. 10.72.2 & 3

69 RV. 10.129 The word "creation" is not in the sense of making something out of nothing, but rather as making something shapely out of shapelessness.
Vajasaneyī Saṃhitā says:

Parītyabhyutāni parītye lokān parītye sarvāh
Pradīpoc diśāsca prajāpatih prathamajām Rtasya
ātmanātmānam abhisād viveṣa. 70

After going through all worlds, all beings, all
quarters, ultimately he found out, he himself came out as the
universe. It is repeated in Taittirīya Aranyakā.71 Vidhēya
lokān Vidhēya bhūtānī vidhēyasarvā Pradīpocdiśāsca prajāpatih
prathamajām Rtasya ātmā ātmānam abhisamviveṣa

Again, Parīdīsah prathivā sabhyah itvā parilokān
Parīdīsah parīṣah rtasya tantum vicītya
tadepaṣyat tadabhavat tadasīt.

The word rutasya tantu means the threads of creation
which is orderly one and followed by physical laws. He saw that,
he became that; at the end he was that; tadepaṣyat, tadabhavat,
tadasīt. 72

In Taittirīya Upanisad there is a typical description
of the idea of evolution which establishes the unity of creation.73
Tasmādva etasmādātmāna ākāsah sambhūtah ākāśādvyuh. Vayoragnih;
Agnerāpeh; Adhyah prthivih Prthivyā osadhayah Osadhībhyo annam.
Annātpurusah

"From that (which is) this Ātman, is space born; from ākāsa or space air is born; from air, fire; from fire, water, from water, earth; from earth, herbs; from herbs, food; from food, man." Macrocosmically this portion reads as the story of the elements and their manifestations from the Supreme; microcosmically it expresses how, in the individual, the five great sense-organs – the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue, and the nose – rose as though a separate creation from the Ātman.

3. Transformation and identification

This is clearly expressed in the well known Purusa Sūkta. 'Purusa eva idam sarvam. (Purusa is this all).

Svetāsvatara Upanisad speaks of the Author and the process of creation like this:

By whom the universe is ever encompassed, the knower, the Author of time, possessor of all qualities, omniscient ruled by him, the world of creation unfolds that which is regarded as earth, water, fire, air and space - when he has performed the work of creation he ceases. Then enters into union with Being by means of this Being; by one, two, three or eight categories, by time of the subtle qualities that appertain to the Ātman.

Here the categories are one, nature, two the manifest and the unmanifest, three, the three qualities of nature eight, perhaps the five sense organs, and three aspects of the inner organ (antah karana).

The Viśva-karma-sūkta refers to his Vibhutvam 'Sa otaḥprotasca vibhuh praśāsu.'

74 SV. 6. 2-3
The idea of unity involved in these theories of world formation is the corner stone of the philosophy of the yajna. A vigorous search for the first principle of the Universe is evidence in many passages of the Brāhmaṇas.

75 RV. 8.56.2 Vālakhilya 10.2
76 AV. 16.8; IV. 16.3
77 The noteworthy features of the Purusasūkta is that the process of formation of the world is dealt with as one of transformation from an Absolute, thought of as a person. In this poem there is a clear indication of active agents functioning in this process of this formation. The process is pictured as one similar to the process of conducting a ritual of worship by many persons in collaboration.
Keith says: In the Brāhmaṇas we find efforts made to arise to a principle above and beyond Prajāpati. The Upanisads exemplify the fulfilment of this effort. Maitri Upanisad proclaims: In the beginning this was Brahman, one and infinite ... Inconceivable is this supreme ātman, immeasurable, unborn, inscrutable, unthinkable ... For this it has been said:

He who dwells in the fire,
He who dwells in the heart
He who dwells in the sun
He is one. The man who knows this he verily attains the Oneness of the One. 79

In Satapatha a Brāhmaṇa the first thing is stated to be not being, then arises Prajāpati, who is the same as Purusa and then the Brahman, the holy science, the three-fold Veda with which he enters the waters as a creative principle. Thus sprang up the world egg, whence came forth first the Brahman itself, and then Prajāpati in the form of Agni. 80

But in Teittirīya Brāhmaṇa "the priority of the Brahman over Prajāpati is made absolute, not merely empirical; the first entity is not-being, the springs into life mind, i.e. the Brahman, and then Prajāpati. 81

In Satapatha Brāhmaṇa mind is identified with Brahman, with Prajāpati, and even with the first principle which is neither being nor not-being. 82 In another place vak (speech), is identi-

78 A. B. Keith, Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads, P. 443
79 Mait U VI. 17
80 SB. 6.1.1.2
81 TB. 2.2.9.
82 SB. 6.1.2.7; Also cf. SB 10.5.3. 1-2. 'manas', the mind is the one and only thing that fulfills the condition of being neither existent nor non-existent.
83 SB. 5. 1.3.11
fied with Viśvakarman, with the whole world, and with Indra.

Satapatha Brāhmaṇa identifies Prajāpati with sacrifice. Prajāpati sacrifices himself to the gods . . . and thus creates the universe. Further, some other passages identify Prajāpati with the year.

In Atharvaveda we find an effort to find a principle above Prajāpati which supports the whole universe. The poet asks: who is the Skambha on whom Prajāpati set up and firmly established all the worlds.

Who is that Skambha on whom as their foundation earth and firmament and sky are set; In whom as their appointed place rest Fire and Moon and Sun and Wind? . . . He in whose body are contained all three and thirty Deities? Towards whom does the rising Flame as fire? / Towards whom does the wind eagerly blow? / On whom do all the compass points converge?

Tell me of that support - who may he be?

Where do the half months and months together proceed in consultation with the year? Where do the seasons go, in groups or single? Tell me of that support - who may he be?

Toward whom run the sisters, day and night who look so different yet one summons answer? Toward whom do the waters with longing flow? Tell me of that support - who may he be?

The one on whom the lord of life leant for support when he propped up the world Tell me of that support - who may he be? etc.

Similarly the uccūṣṭa hymn also refers to the highest principle of the universe. It is said that the uccūṣṭa (or

84 SB. 1. 5.1.16; 1.6.3.5
85 SB. 1. 1.1.13; 1.5.2.17
86 AV 10.7
87 AV 10.1.7
the Residue of sacrifice) contains name and form and world: Indra and Agni and the whole universe are comprised therein... etc.

Here there is a "glorification of 'what is left over' not, as is normally believed, from the offering, but after all that is empirical has been abstracted from the universe". A.B. Keith does not take the hymn seriously and goes to the extent of saying that it is only 'a poor piece of theosophical juggling with words'. But those who are familiar with the Vedic tradition cannot fully agree with this statement. A perusal of the hymn makes it clear that the author is fully aware of the unity of the world, and the supposed "juggling with words" is a result of his enthusiasm to relate everything to that universal stuff and support.

According to Keith "a much more fruitful source of philosophy is to be found in the creation of the conception of the Brahman as a cosmic principle. But to him the origin of the meaning of Brahman is uncertain.

The very imperfection which is the cause of the existence of the world serves as the basis of all astrological forecasts and astronomical calculations. There is always a remainder. For nothing could continue if nothing were to remain. The place occupied by anything in the present, is in the residue of the past. The name of Vāstu, derived from Vāstū, 'a really existing thing', signified residence as well as residue c.f. SB. 1.7.5. 18-19

Keith here discusses the opinion of Duesen that "this idea can possibly be reconciled with the normal view by remembrance of the fact that Purusa in the sacrifice hymn is said to be only a quarter in the universe, the other three quarters being beyond it", and presents his conclusion that it is impossible to take this speculation seriously; according to Keith the Skambha hymn has no great claim to be more than a poor piece of theosophical juggling with words, save in so far as it seem to identify skambha with the Brahman, and as it served as a suggestion for the Mundaka Upanisad.

Ibid. p.450
The words Brahman and Ātman which are very popular in the Upanisads are not new to the Vedas; they take birth in the Vedas. More than hundred times the word Brahmā occurs in Ṛgveda; the word Brahman in the masculine gender is also used; than it means a person having Brahman. The meaning of the word is still in dispute. In Yajur Veda it occurs with philosophical significance used in ritual where Brahman itself is the object of worship.  

Brahman devāh, trayas trimat
Brahman ha viśva bhūtani navīva antasamāhitah

All gods become united in Brahman. Likewise in Brahman exist all beings.

There is another word Brahmāsantuṃ Brahmana Vardhayan-tah (Being Brahman it is developed with the help of Brahman).

Brahma devān na jñet. Brahma Viśvanidam jagat.  
An identification of the word with the unseen power is given in Taittirīya Samhita. Viśvanāsi Sarvāyuh.

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91 Mantra connected with Brahman which is already referred to by Brahmasūtra (Saṅga ca ubhaya amnath which defines that Brahman is the efficient cause and the material cause of the world) is used in a ritual where the well known Brahman is devata, to whom an Asabha is offered (Brahmana Asabham). Here the well known aśasāsīt sukta is used as Upāhāma.  
Prescription of this Yaga is found in Āpastamba Kaṇḍapātra Kaṃyapāsu yaga (Brahmanca caerum). Following this, in diverse nāsti of Tait. Kathaka (This is found Viśvaskarma Sūkta) Brahman is also taken as a deity of an isti. Brahman Vamaṃ Brahman Sa Vrksa aśīt yatad āyavaprithivī nista taksu maṁśino manasa prachet vībruvi vah Brahman adhyatistat bhuvanāni dhārayan.

92 TB 2.8

93 A.B. Keith is of opinion that Brahman denotes 'prayer and the mental attitude which induces prayer', Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, p.450
There is a trend within human thinking which leads to the assumption that nothing can come to be unless, somewhere and somehow, it already 'is', that nothing can be - come if it does not come from a Being; that all that happens is potentially already there. This hypothesis assumes that there is a sort of infinite reservoir of possibilities, an infinite Being, a God, a ground, ultimately responsible for all that is, for all change, for all becoming. The terms immutability, Being, God, creator, ground, origin, substance, Essence, and a score of other notions convey this world view; and philosophies both inside and outside India have developed it to the highest degrees of subtlety and "depth". In the beginning was Fullness, and from this Fullness everything came, that is, be came, and to it everything will return. This is the case with the word Ātman also.

The word Ātman occurs about twenty-two times in the Rigveda. It is used seven times in the sense of 'essence'. 

(Svarūpa bhūtah)\textsuperscript{94} twice\textsuperscript{95} in the sense of 'body' (deha) once\textsuperscript{96} in the sense of the intelligent principle (jetana), once\textsuperscript{97} to denote 'controller (dhāravita), twice\textsuperscript{98} in the sense of 'oneself' (svayam), once\textsuperscript{99} to denote 'breath' (prāna) and once\textsuperscript{100} the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{94} RV 1. 34.7; 115.1; 9. 2.10; 6.8; 10.97.11; 107.7; 168.4
  \item \textsuperscript{95} Ibid 1.62.20; 7.101.6
  \item \textsuperscript{96} RV 1.164.4
  \item \textsuperscript{97} RV 7.87.2
  \item \textsuperscript{98} RV 8.3.24; 9.65.3
  \item \textsuperscript{99} RV 10.16.3
  \item \textsuperscript{100} RV 1.73.2
\end{itemize}
'blissful soul'. In one place it denotes the 'essence' (सृष्टि) and in another place denotes the self. Yaska (in the Nirukta) interprets it to mean the 'soul'.

Some European scholars connect एतम with the German word 'athmen' and derive it from the root 'an' to breathe. Deussen thinks that the word must have originally meant 'this I' and derives it accordingly from the two pronominal roots. Winternitz remarks that "it is often used as a reflexive pronoun, and as a substantive denotes one's own person in contrast to the limbs, but most frequently the soul, the true 'self' in contrast to the body." Max Muller prefers to translate एतम by 'self', "that is the true essence of man, free, as yet, from all attributes." Keith seems to hold the view that 'breath' is the first meaning of एतम.

It is clear that the Upanishadic meaning of एतम, as the essence of the body, as the controller, is already familiar to the Ṛgvedic poets. The seer addressing Varuna says "अत्मोऽवतान" and sāyana interprets the line by saying that the wind

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101 RV 10. 92. 13
102 RV 10. 97. 4
103 M. Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature, p. 249; Max Miller Gifford Lectures, 1892, p. 249
104 A.B. Keith, Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanisads, p. 51
105 op. cit. p. 249
106 F. Max Muller Gifford Lectures, 1892, p. 249
107 The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads, p. 451
108 RV 7. 87. 2
(vātā) as directed by Varuna is the controller (Ātman) of all being. Hence it is not very difficult to conclude that some Upanisadic conceptions of Brahman and Ātman are to be found even in the Rgveda; it may be the survival of certain Ṛgvedic ideas about Brahman in the Upanisads. We cannot rule out the possibility of the Upanisads being the proceedings of the different philosophical discussions held under different auspices in diverse debating halls in ancient India. Since they are compilations from different sources the Upanisads represent no single view about Brahman or Ātman but a set of views held by different thinkers of repute in those times.

Keith refers to the view that Brahman is etymologically related to the Latin word 'flagre' and should mean fire. If this etymology be acceptable and Brahman in the Rgveda can also mean 'fire' we can see a survival of this meaning in the Brhadāranyakopanisad where Bālāki Gārgya gives one of the alternative definitions of Brahman as the 'person in fire' (agnau purusah). Similarly Max Müller refers to the word to mean 'speech or word'. In Brhadāranyakopanisad Jitvan sailimi

"... the Upanisads are not homogeneous products, cogently presenting a philosophic theory, but... are compilations from different sources recording the guesses at truth" of the early Indians. A single, well articulated system cannot be deduced from them".

110 BU 2.1.7

111 F. Max Muller, Gifford Lectures, p. 30

112 BU 4.1
expressed this view (of vāk), though Vaiśeṣika refuted this later. This may show that even at the time of the Upanisads the word was employed in different meanings by different thinkers.

This points out to another aspect of our study. There is no evidence to prove that Upanisadic speculation is purely of non-brahmanical origin. It is a vague guess which is unsupported by any kind of internal evidence.

Referring to certain portions of Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad and Chāṇḍogya Upanisad Keith says:

The fire, however, which composes the self of the individual, is essentially bound up with the power of thought. The cosmic Brahmā, on the other hand is fire (jyotis) in no metaphorical sense.

The identity of Ātman and Brahman is very clearly stated in many similar passages of the Upanisads. Chāṇḍogya Upanisad says: that serene one . . . is the Ātman (the soul). That is the immortal, the fearless. That is Brahman.

And again in Chāṇḍogya Upanisad this Brahman is identified with the sun. Explaining the meaning of a passage in Aitareya Brāhmaṇa Keith points out that "all comes from fire and is resolved into it again." This connection of the individual and the cosmic fire is established in Chāṇḍogya Upanisad where the doctrine of five fires is expounded. Another passage narrates

\[\text{BU 4.3.7}\]
\[\text{GU 3.14.2}\]
\[\text{GU 8.3.4}\]
\[\text{GU 3.19.1}\]
\[\text{AB 8.28}\]
\[\text{GU 3.15.7 and 5.3-8}\]
how the fire pervades the individual and the universe. The
rays of the sun bring fire into the heart of the individual
and at death the fire departs from him back to the sun whence
it came, or rather to the heaven of fire, which lies above the
earth and of which the sun and the moon are doors pierced in
it. It is suggested that this idea of this path of light
is older than the Upanisads, because it occurs in the Brhad-
Atharva Veda "knows the threads of which life is woven
and calls this knowledge the great Brāhmaṇa," that is, the
great secret of Brahman.

In our attempt to understand the process of evolution
of the concept of Brahman, Brāhmaṇas provide us with sufficient
evidence to show that they were fully conversant with the Upani-
adic concept referred to above. Though Prajāpati is at first
superior to Brahman (at the stage of creation of the world) he
is at last placed below Brahman as a metaphysical principle.
This conception of Brahman, we find in many other Vedic texts.

"The Brahman which exists of itself and which is regarded as
being the cause of the universe, in which it sacrifices itself."

119 CU 8. 6.1 ff
120 BU 4, 4.8. cf. CU 8. 6.1
121 AV 10. 8.37
122 TB 2. 8.3 8.10; AV 4.1; AB 1.19.1; KB 8.4;
TA 10.1.1; SB 11. 2.5.1; 13. 7.1.1. etc.
123 Here the parallelism of the world and the sacrifice is
referred to.
It is the ground of the continued existence of the universe, and the source into which on death things return.

Here we meet the idea that by correct sacrifice a man may reach the abode of Brahman or by study of the Veda one may get immortality.\textsuperscript{124} He is equated with Viśvakarman of the Rigveda.\textsuperscript{125} The identification of Brahman with the Ātman is found in several passages of the Brāhmaṇas themselves.\textsuperscript{126} For example, in Taittiriya the Brahman and the omnipresent Ātman are identified.\textsuperscript{127}

The development of the meaning of Ātman goes with the conception of the relation of the Ātman of the universe and the Ātman of the individual. It is interesting to note that the Vedic thinkers try to treat both the macrocosm side by side with the microcosm, wherever possible. And this technique is familiar to them even at the time of the Rigveda,\textsuperscript{128} where the cosmic Purusa is clearly allied to the individual man.

And ultimately perfect identity has been arrived at between Ātman of the individual and the Ātman of the universe. The series of identifications of macrocosm and microcosm proceed to "the abode of the Ātman in the heart, the heart in the man, the man in the immortal, and the immortal in the Brahman."\textsuperscript{129}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{124} SB 11. 4.4 5,6,9
\item \textsuperscript{125} TB 2. 8.9. 3-7
\item \textsuperscript{126} A.B. Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanisads, p.452.
\item \textsuperscript{127} TB 3. 12.9
\item \textsuperscript{128} RV 10.90
\item \textsuperscript{129} SB 10. 8.4.4
\end{itemize}
The inner self has been indentified with Prāna as sun represents the outer self. This brings to light the fact that in the analytical study of the self Prāna is an important principle. The words Prāna and life indicate the interiorization and ontologization of the one and the same experience. Prāna is real, and the limit of the actual. Brhadāranyakopanisad says: "vital energies are the real. He (Brahman) is the Real of the real".  

The number of vital airs is reckoned variously as two, three, five, seven, nine, twelve, thirteen, and so on. There are seven in the head and two below, the organs of reproduction and evacuation. The seven in the head are sometimes called seven seers, Rsis.

There is a cup with its mouth below and its bottom up In it is placed every form of glory On its rim sit seven seers Voice as an eighth is united with Brahman.

130 Maitrâyana Brâhma Upanisad, 6.1  
131 cf. "Sūrya is the soul of all that moves or stands still RV 1. 115. 1  
132 BU 2.1.20  
133 SB 6.4.2-5; 9.22.5.9.  
134 This is put in the allegorical language of BU 2.2. 1-4. Verily, he who knows the new-born infant with his housing, his covering, his post, and his rope, keeps off seven hostile relatives. 

Verily this infant is Breath (Prāna) in the middle. Its housing is this (body). Its covering is this (head). Its post is breath (Prāna). Its rope is food.

Seven imperishable beings stand near him to serve him. Thus there these red streaks in the eye . . .  

BU 2.2.3 is the quoted verse . . .
These vital airs are repeatedly called the gods, Devas. These are all natural powers and the typical of the point of view of Vedic religion. The multitude of Prānas, however, rest upon a single Prāna, which is sometimes, it would seem, sought to be identified with mind, but normally is called the mukhya prāna, the chief of the breath.

In Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa there is a legend of creation connected with the prānas. āsat vā idemegrā āsat. The question is then asked: What does this āsat imply? The answer is: reyo Vāva te gre āsat āsat. The Raiks, verily, it is they that the āsat was in the beginning. And the Raiks are then said to be identical with the Prānas. te (= prāna) iddāh saptā nṛṇē purusāna sarjanta. But they soon realized that they would not be able to generate with those seven separate persons. They, therefore, thought and etan saptā purusāna ekāh purusāna skurvan. The one person so formed out of the seven persons was Prajāpati. And thereafter, it was Prajāpati who took the lead in creating the universe. "From the not-being arose the seven Prānas in the shape of the seven seers; they were kindled up by the Prāna in the middle as Indra, whereupon they produced the seven Purusas, which again united themselves to one Purusa." 134

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa asserts the relationship of the Prāna as the principle of life in man and the cosmic Prāna, which is the wind. 135 Thus goes the comparison of macrocosm and

134 SB 6. 1.1.1
135 SB 10. 3.3.6
microcosm. Again Prāṇa is identified with Prajāpati and also Ātman.136 Chāndogyanpaniṣad explains137 this idea with reference to ādhibhūtika and ādhyatmika realms of experience. "Verily these two (the wind and the breath) are two snatchers—unto themselves; the wind among the gods, breath among the vital breaths." The theosophy of the Atharva Veda with its cosmopolitanism, however, accepts the Prāṇa readily as an expression of the universal, just as it accepts the Brahman, and as it sees in the Ātman the same essence as the meaning of the Universe.138

This importance of Prāṇa has been emphasised in various ways. Aitareya Āranyakā139 says that "All this is Prāṇa."

A story is told by Indra of himself. Indra said (to Viśvāmitra):

"Rei thou hast come to my delightful home (svarga) I grant thee a boon. Viśvāmitra said: May I know thee! Indra said: 'I am Prāṇa O Rei, thou art Prāṇa, all things are Prāṇa. For it is Prāṇa who shines as the sun, and I here pervade all regions under that form".

The Āranyakā calls eye, ear, mind, speech, and breath the mountain.141 They call it the mountain (giri) of Brahman.142

136 SB 4. 2. 3. 1; 11. 1. 1. 17. CU 4. 3
137 CU 4. 3
138 AV 11. 4. cf. TA. 3. 14
139 AA II. 3; Also see SBE Vol. 2. p. 218
140 Ibid. p. 219
141 Ibid. p. 213
142 Prāṇa is called the 'girih' because it is swallowed, or hidden by the other sense. (giranāt); here is a mere play of words, intended to show that Brahman under the form of Prāṇa or life is to be meditated on.
The sun and Prāṇa are identified, the one being the adhidaivatam, the other the adhyātmán representation. The former attracts the vision, the latter impels the body. Fist Khand of the second adhyāya of the second Ṛg-veda shows that the names of the seers of the Ṛg-veda can be deduced from prāṇa's actions.

The important and essential nature of Prāṇa is exemplified and elucidated later in Pṛṣṇopanisad too. The fifth mantra of the 2nd Pṛṣṇa says: As the fire Pṛṇa burns, as the sun, Pṛṇa shines, as the cloud Pṛṇa rains; as Indra, the Pṛṇa rules; it is the wind; it is the earth, it is the moon, Deva. It is both that which has 'form' and that which is formless. In short Pṛṇa is the truth behind all that have forms as well as that are formless. The gross elements - fire, water and earth; and the subtle elements - space and air are technically called moortas with form, and the subtle elements moortas - without form.

The connection of sacrifice with Pṛṇa as the highest principle.

Maitreyāna Brāhmaṇa Upanisad says that the sacrificer should meditate on the self; because 'thus only does the sacrificer become complete and faultless.' The Upanisad is emphatic on the point that the laying of the formerly described sacrificial fires is indeed the sacrifice of Brahman. But who is to be meditated on? The Upanisad asks; and gives the answer: "He who is called Prāṇa".

143 Mait Br. Up. 1.1. SBE. Vol.15
144 The performance of all the sacrifices, described in the Maitreyāna - Brāhmaṇa is to lead up to a knowledge of Brahman, by rendering a man fit for receiving the highest knowledge. See Menu 6.82: All that has been declared (above) depends on meditation; for he who is not proficient in the knowledge of the self reaps not the full reward of the performance of rites.
The concept of Prāna is very important in the concept of sacrifice in general; because, as we have seen, Prāna is placed in the lofty position in the Brāhmaṇas; nay, it is regarded as the highest deity. Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa gives a warning to the student not to think of or question about anything beyond Prāna lest his mind should go restless and chaotic.

Prānas are rais. Prāna is said to be dear (Priya) to all beings. The nostrils are called its paths. Prāna is very active (jāgara) in this universe. He is always vigilant, pervades and protects the universe.

According to Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa Prāna is Brahman and pāṇu too. Some also is Prāna. Prāna is Prajāpati of the seventeen constituent (Kalās). Satapatha Brāhmaṇa identified Prāna with Ātman.

When the senses merge into Prāna of the being they do not perceive. When the senses emerge out from Prāna, the being will be awake and active. But Prāna continues to function even during sleep. Prāna is Agni. But Agni should be meditated upon as āyus and not as prāna. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa gives the meaning of the word Prāna. It is called so because it controls

145 TB 3.10.9.5 JB 1.1
146 SB 7.2.1.5; also see TB 3.8.17.5
147 TB 2.3.9.5 JB 1.20; TB 2.6.4.4
148 TB 2.5.1.1
149 TB 3.28.3-9
150 Ibid 9.9.9.1 PB 9.9.1
151 SB 10.2.7.17
152 SB 10.2.6.6; 10.3.6; 14-15
153 SB 10.2.2.14
154 SB 10.3.6.14
and leads all other organs.\textsuperscript{155} As pointed out earlier, Prānas
denote the sense organs too. The number of Prānas are different-
ly stated in different contexts as five, seven, nine or ten.\textsuperscript{156}

**Symbolism of Yajñē**

It is well known that ritual literature is full of symbols and allegorical statements. Here is a simple one: In
Āpastamba 'Srāuta' Sūtra the Yajamaṇe mantra which is to be reci-
ted at the time of hotṛ pravara and Ādhyāvyu pravara varana, says:

\begin{quote}
O devah, O pitarah; I don't know who I am. Assuming that I am one with such nature I
perform this yāga, to whom I belong I never violate him, but the yāga is mine, the giving
is mine, other social beneficial action is mine, the suffering is mine, the home is mine. The Agni
is the seer here; Vāyu is subordinate here; Āditya is amukhyatṛ (seer), dvou pitṛ prthvi matṛ.
Prajāpati bandhu. So I perform this yāga for whom
I am keeping that nature”.\textsuperscript{157}
\end{quote}

Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa speaks of Agnihotra as Somavāga;
and extends it to cosmos. "The earth is sadas, the atmosphere
is 'Agniḍhriya', sky is 'navīrḍhana', divine waters (rain) are
waters for sprinkling, herbs are the sacred grass, trees are fuel
(idha), quarters are boundary 'darbhas' (Paridhi); Āditya is
yūpa and the Sacrificer is paśu. Sea (Samudra) is Avahṛta and
year (samvatsara) is that which takes the havis to devas”.\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{155} Arthur H. Swing, 'Hindu Conception of the functions of breath' (JAOS. 22, 1901)p.249. "... both organs and activities being
called Prajak.

\textsuperscript{156} Commenting on TB. 3.9.6.3. Sāyana says that nine Prānas are
the nine apertures of the body.

\textsuperscript{157} AP. S.S. 3.9.6

\textsuperscript{158} TB 2.1.5.1-2
Satapatha Brâhmana explains that the sacrificial ground is called Vedi because the gods obtained (sam-vig) the entire earth by encompassing the sacrifice on the four sides.\footnote{159}

The sacrificial ground or altar ground (Vedi) is a symbol of the earth; as large as is the Vedi so large is the earth.\footnote{160} It is interesting to note that the Vedic Revelation opens up reality not by means of concepts but by means of symbols. We need to be aware of symbols in order to enter into communion with reality. A concept relates to logical intelligibility and is expressed in the attributes that define a word. A symbol, when expressed in words, stands for all that the word reveals over and above the conceptual intelligibility, though the latter is not necessarily excluded. Moreover, a symbol allows for a much wider range of interpretation than does a concept. In the Vedas philosophy and poetry, speculation and art, Theory and praxis, are as yet unseparated.

The elements of the outer sacrifice in the Veda are used as symbols of the inner sacrifice and self offering.\footnote{161} This is justifiable by virtue of the identity that the Veda eventually establishes between the sacrificer and the sacrifice. This identification is based on several reasons. One of the reasons, in the words of Satanatha Brâhmana is this: "Now the sacrifice is the man the sacrifice is the man for the reason that the man spreads (performs) it; and that in being spread it is made exactly the same

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{159} SB 1.2.5.7
\item \footnote{160} RV 1.164.35; Madhyandina Samhita 13.62, SB 3. 7.2.1.
\item \footnote{161} Vedi = Prthivī RV 10.110.4; AB 1.5.28; TB 1.2.1.1;
\item SB 9. 4.2.3; 12.8.2.36.
\end{itemize}

extent as the man; this is the reason why the sacrifice is the man." \(^{162}\) Here it seems that it is assumed that the effect is some how pre-existent in the cause. Man could never perform the sacrifice without possessing it in one way or other. From the Vedic standpoint the performance of the sacrifice is not just an external performance; it is rather the externalization of something, which lies within. This is further exemplified by \textit{Satapatha Brāhmaṇa}. "For by his own mind he purposes to sacrifice and from his mind he impels it (the sacrifice) when he performs it." \(^{163}\) The sacrifice is something which has to be taken hold from the mind \(^{164}\) without first conveining the sacrificial fire within, it would be of little avail to kindle the external fire and pour in it the libations. In this connection the \textit{Satapatha Brāhmaṇa} says:

\begin{quote}
Being about to build \textit{Agni}, he takes him up into his own self . . . Now were he to build up \textit{Agni} without taking him up into his own self, he would beget man from man, mortal from mortal, one not free from sin from one not freed from sin; but when he builds up \textit{Agni} after taking him up into his own self, he causes \textit{Agni} to be born from \textit{Agni}; the immortal from the immortal, the sinless from the sinless, Having the sacrifice first of all within one is able to beget it without, and, being the father of the sacrifice, the sacrificer identifies himself by nature with it. \(^{165}\)
\end{quote}

\(^{162}\) \textit{SB 1.3.2.1.} See also \textit{SB 3.2.2.12}
\(^{163}\) \textit{SB 3.1.4.12}
\(^{164}\) \textit{SB 3.1.3.26}
\(^{165}\) \textit{SB 7.4.1.1}
What is valid in the case of men is no doubt equally valid in the case of the gods. Thus the Satapatha Brahmans speaking of Agni, the divine priest par excellence, tells us explicitly that all sacrifices are Agni, since all sacrifices are performed in him, the domestic sacrifices as well as others.¹⁶⁶ The daily Agnihotra is conceived as a big sacrifice conducted in the universe. The sacrificer himself is the pasu (the animal) who stands bound to Āditya.

Rgveda says that the performance of sacrifice is for attaining divine knowledge or winning of the light of God.¹⁶⁷ Regarding the Symbolic Nature of yasas Taittiriya Samhitā suggests that heart is the sacrificial post, anger is the animal and seven are the Prānas in the head, Prānas are Pasus (animals).¹⁶⁸ It may be pointed out that Pasupati of the Vedas is not the Puranic Pasupati, worshipped in Śiva temples, but as described in the Vedas, he is the father of Maruts, friend of Indra, and lord of bodily senses. Even the word Yajña does not imply any slaughter or injury to an animal, but means only worship of God for attaining, health, wealth and divine light.¹⁶⁹

In Agnihotra there is a reference to day-to-day activities identified with Yajña.¹⁷⁰

Vaca tvā hota prānena udgata
Caksusā Adhvaryūṇa manasaḥ brāhmaṇa
Srotrenā Āgni dhaṛa etatvā pāncabhī
deiva śirtvīghbhi Uddhatāmi

¹⁶⁶ SB 4.5.1.13
¹⁶⁷ RV 1.170.4; 1.84.18; 1.13.5.
¹⁶⁸ TS 5.2.6
¹⁶⁹ Refer RV. 6.9.3. and 4; 1.170-4; 7.48.3
Here human activities like speech, vital breath, eye, ear, manas are identified with hotr, udgātr. Adhvaryu, Brahman, Agnīdhra etc.  

This may be called the Adhyātma Agnihotra. There is an internal ritual corresponding to an external one; without external ritual there is no internal ritual.

Yajna considered in the three realms of experience

Our encounter with the universe is supposed to take place in three realms of experience; They are Adhyātma, the human, adhīdaiva the divine, and aḍhibhūta, the material. But instead of aḍhibhūta Satapatha Brāhmaṇa gives aḍhivajña; and explanations of yajna are given accordingly.

Sayana says: Cittisruk, movements of manas are taken as sacrificial vessel.

(citticcittasabdaḥbhyāṃ nirvikalpaka Savikalpaka bheda-janaśau
antahkaraṇavrittibhedau Vivakṣitaḥ)

By this we understand that the antahkaraṇavritti which produces nirvikalpaka-jñāna is called citti; the antahkaraṇa which produces citti is savikalpaka prāṇa. About vākpati... Vācaḥ pravartah kṣhetra - taḻvādiṣṭhēṇaṅgu Satyajyamana vāyu veyate even cittyādeyaḥ dasa sariragataḥ padārthavīcāreṇa

Sṛugādeyaḥ. daspadārthāḥ homanispādah Agni śabdadvayena

Aḥavaniyagārhapatyau Vivakṣitaḥ.

For example in SB 10.1.2.3. and in 10.2.6.14

Adhyātma explanation is given. 10.1.2.2. treats yajña in the adhīdaiva aspect. 10.1.2.6-17. gives aḍhivajña explanation. i.e. explanation based on the details of yajña. (Adhyātma is concerned with body. Here atman refers to body and bodily movements. Adhīdaiva explanation is based on devas eg. Agni, Vāyu, Aditya etc.

Approaching principles from the point of view of body, from the point of view of the world, from the point of view of devas is accepted by Vedic thinkers. Reference to the mutual relations of these aspects is a common place in Vedic literature.

But here we shall view the subject in two aspects only. Viz. seen and the unseen. The unseen (The Aat) is known through the seen (sat). The seen world is taken as the symbol or linga of the unseen. (See Mait Br. Upanisad 6.19). The rituals serve as a replica of the whole activities of the unseen, the Infinite which is a stage of the external cosmic drama, but artificial.
Caturhotr mantras of Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa gives valuable information regarding the symbolic nature of yajña. Taittiriya Kāthaka is of opinion that only from these mantras all yajñas are created.

"Caturhotrūḥḥyāḥ adhiṣṭhūṁ nirmītaḥ" As these mantras are connected with the Ṛtwik, of rituals and ritualistic fires, here is a simple reference to yāgas. Caturhotr, pāṇca hotṛ, saptahotṛ, navahotṛ, daśahotṛ etc. . . . are the technical terms given to parts and actions within the body.

**Anuvāka - I**
- Citti is śruk
- Cittam is ājyan
- Vāk is vedīḥ
- adhitam is barha
- vijñātam is hotṛ
- Vākapati is hotṛ
- Manas is Upavakṛ
- Prāna is havīṣ
- Saman is adhvaryu

**Anuvāka - II**
- Prthvī is hotṛ
dyō is Adhvaryu
- Madra is Agni
- Brhaspati is Upavakṛ

**Anuvāka - III**
- Agni is hotṛ
- Asvinau is Adh varyu
- Tvasta is Agni
- Mitra is Upavakta

**Anuvāka - IV**
- Sūrya is Caksus
- Vēta is Prāna
- Dyo is Protam
- Antarikaśa is Ātman
- Angaḥ is yajña
- Prthvī is sarīra
- Mahāhavīṣ is hotṛ
- Satyaṃ is Adhvaryu
- Acuta paśy Agni
- Acuta maṇā - Upavakṛ

173 Tī. 2.3.6
174 Tī. 3.5
In the 1st Anuvāka adhyātma view is given. In the 3rd Anuvāka we find Ādhidaivika interpretation of the ritual.

In the 4th Anuvāka there is a connection between Sūrya and Gaksus, Prāna and Vāyu, ṛgou and prsthabhṛga. The soul is identified with Antarikṣa, Āngīś āre identified with yajña and prthivī with Šarīra (body).

In Taṭṭirīya Kathaka 1st Kanda there is an address to the organs of the body. Agni me vāci śrītāh vak hrdaye hrdayam mayi ām aṃarte aṃrtam Brahmani.

Agni is in my speech; speech in my heart, heart in my body; body in immortality and immortality in Brahman. By successive identification of the various parts of the human body with the parts of the yajña and also with the various structures of the cosmos an attempt is made through yajña to establish some sort of a correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Aitareya Āranyaka makes this explicit just as there are those three lights in heaven, so there are these three lights in man. As there is in heaven the sun, so there is the eye in the head. As there is in the sky the lightning, so there is the heart in the body. As there is the fire in earth, so there is the seed in the member. Having thus represented the whole world as the self, Śakalya said: 'This is the symbol of the earth, this of the heaven'.

175 This relation between cosmic and micro cosmic principles is found referred to in the Funeral Hymn of the RV.

Sūryam caksur gamayatāt
Vatam praṇam anvavasījatāt
dīsaḥkrotram antarikṣam asūm

176 AA XII. 3.1.2
Sex and sacrifice

The relationship between yama and yami\(^{177}\) is an interesting case of sexual symbolism playing an important role in Vedic sacrificial system. It is suggested that the seer presents the twin as the cosmic forces of Fire and Water, whose union was believed to cause rain.\(^{176}\) Here yami was taken as the ritual woman; this ritual woman represented the cosmic aspect and the female controller of waters. She formed the mithuna with Fire in the orb of the sun in heaven and with the lightning fire in the interior of the cloud. Yama represented the cosmic fire, the seeder par excellence, the fire and the water staying together in the same 'womb' - orb or cloud; the release of the heavenly 'semen' (the rain). This experience was ushered in at the plane of the ritual, as the brother-sister-capulation.\(^{179}\)

Some of the hymns and Brāhmanic rituals were worked on the mixture of sex and sacrifice. The scheme is as follows: The divine source of rain, Parjanya or the sun or Prajāpati, as he appears in later texts, is believed to be the supreme male that has the power to fructify all feminine objects on the earth. The earth itself is the female to be fructified. The fructification of all the feminine things in the earth is to be periodically ensured by ritually enacting the sex-union of an actual female who could be the wife of the sacrificer or a woman stipulated for the

\(^{177}\) RV. X.10

\(^{178}\) S.A. Dange, *Sexual symbolism from the Vedic Ritual* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications (India), 1979) p.XV

\(^{179}\) Ibid. p.XVI
purpose. This may be the root of the concept of ritual pairing or the mithuna. The archetype of this mithuna was the pair of Heaven and Earth, who were the great parents. After sex (symbolically or actually) was enacted, the male who represented the divine seeder was immolated and offered to the sacrificial fire, to preserve his divinity.\textsuperscript{160}

Again, the structure of the fire altar is analogous to that of a woman. The Garhapatya, Daksina and Athavaniya are represented by the lower part of the trunk, the chest and the head respectively. Her generative organ is the Garhapatya or the earth, the field of fire; the chest being the centre of the respiratory system is the field of air Antariksha or Daksinagni; the head being the field of right and speech represents Athavaniya, the world of Aditya or heaven.

The analogy of the structure of the vajnasala of the orthodox priest and the physiology of the cosmos has been indicated in Chandogya Upanisad. Connecting the Universal Self and the individual self king Ayavatia Kaikya says:

Of the universal self the head is the good light, the eye is the universal form breath (air) is of varied courses, the body is the fuel, the bladder is wealth, the feet are the earth, the chest indeed is the sacrificial area, the hair is the sacred grass, the heart is the Garhapatya fire, the mind is the Anyaharya pacana fire (Daksinagni) and the mouth is the Athavaniya fire.\textsuperscript{181}

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid. p.47-48
\textsuperscript{181} CU 5.18.2
The identification of the yajmāna with the Supreme deity through his identification with the Yajna is a remarkable feature of the Vedic concept of Yajña. It may be a corollary of the Vedic view of man. In this view human beings, like all other life forms, are parts of an inseparable organic whole. Their intelligence, therefore, implies that the whole, too is intelligent. Human beings are seen as the living proof of cosmic intelligence; in us, the universe repeats over and over again its ability to produce forms through which it becomes consciously aware of itself. 'Yajmāna is verily the Yajna' says Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. The sacrificer is also indentified with Viśnu or the Supreme Deity in many places in Satapatha Brāhmaṇa sometimes sacrifice is identified with Prajāpati or Agni. Here the purpose of sacrifice is revealed as identification of the sacrificer with the presiding deity of the sacrifice. Through sacrifice the sacrificer attains the union with deity. It is stated that even the different gods attained their status of godhood through the performance of sacrifice. By worshipping yajña the gods became the gods they now are! Thus the sacrificer hopes to attain the status of the deity to whom the sacrifice is offered. As the deity is immortal, the sacrificer also attains immortality. Here the mental aspect of the yajamāna is important. The awakening and the enlargement of a cosmic awareness is to be achieved by the Bhāvana or imagination of the sacrificer. This Bhāvana is embodied in the accompanying mantra which

182 AB 1.5.2. Yajamāna vai Yajñah
183 SB 1.7.1.21; 1.9.3.9; 3.6.3.3
184 SB 1.5.2.6.
is the word par excellence. The word is the fundamental tool in
the performance of sacrifice. The word is used in the sacrifice
not merely as an accidental instrument, but as a necessary one.
It is the word that unites heaven and earth. The word is the
central mystery that is situated in the very core of reality,
the word is the soul, the vital of every being. The word is not
only speech, though constitutionelty connected with it; it is also
intelligibility, the principle of reason, the power of the intel-
lect, the rational structure of reality.\footnote{185} Offering oblations
in the sacrificial fire pit is the external form (homa) of the
sacrifice. But the contemplation accompanying this offering, the
mental aspect of the external act called 'Bhāvana' constitutes
yāga. The external oblations are physical visible ones whereas
the mental offerings are invisible psychical ones which go to con-
stitute the essence of sacrifice. "The yajāmāna attains immorta-
tility through the invisible mental offerings", says the Aitareya
Brāhmaṇa. For example, in the soma yāga, soma is the vehicle
of immortality, soma "is" immortality.\footnote{186} By drinking soma the
sacrificer thinks to attain immortality. The contemplative asser-
tions made while extracting the juice from the soma plant signify
the enlargement of awareness and cosmic vision expected of the
sacrificer. The poets Chant their hymns at the moment when Soma
leaps forth from the press. The wooden strainer stands for heaven,
the juice in liquid form is the rain; thus Soma is called lord of

\footnote{185} RV 1.164.34-35. The origin and place, the locus of the word
is prayer, the sacred formula. Metaphysics and linguistic
analysis meet in vāc.

\footnote{186} SB 9.5.1.8
the rivers and son of water. Elsewhere he is "a bull", and his
descent into the milky water of the vat is likened to the insemini-
ation of a herd of cows. Thus the whole cosmos is involved in
this very simple act of the extraction of the soma-juice.

Innumerable statements and assertions and identifica-
tions abound in later ritualistic as well as Upanisadic literature
aiming at stimulating and preparing that Aryan mind for a take off
into the infinity and integrity of the cosmos and for a diving
into the depth of individual existence weaving into its fabric
the thread of unitive understanding and meditative insight. Here
we shall consider a few more examples. Kaśyātaka Upanisad speaks
of the perpetual sacrifice of the self. According to Pratardana the matter of self-restraint (Sātvamana) is the "Inner
Agnihotra sacrifice". "As long as a person is speaking, he is
not able to breathe. Then he is sacrificing his prāna in speech.
As long as a person is breathing he is not able to speak. Then
he is sacrificing speech (vēc) in prāna. These two are unending,
immortale oblations; whether waking or sleeping, one is sacrificing
continuously, uninterruptedly. Now, whatever other oblations
there are, they are limited, for they consist of works (Karmameva).

Again Chāndogyopanisad refers to the mystical Agnihotra
sacrifice to the universal soul in one's own self.

"The first food which one may come to should be offered.
The first oblation he would offer he would offer with 'Hail to
the Prāna.' The Prāna is satisfied. The Prāna being satisfied
the eye is satisfied, the eye being satisfied the sun is satis-

187 Kaśa U 2.5
188 Knowing this very thing varily, indeed, the ancients did
not sacrifice the Agnihotra sacrifice.
fied. The sun being satisfied, the heaven is satisfied. The
heaven being satisfied, whatever the heaven and the sun rule
over is satisfied. Along with the satisfaction thereof, he is
satisfied with-offspring, with cattle, with food, with the glow
of health, and with eminence in sacred knowledge. Similarly
to all other Prānas. Here the cosmic process itself is taken as
a continuous Agnihotra. Chandogypenanisad considers a person's
entire life symbolically a soma-sacrifice. His first twenty-four
years are the morning soma-libation; the next forty-four years
are the mid-day libation; the next forty-eight years are the third
libation etc.

Though emphasis was laid on the details of rituals and
externals of religion Brāhmaṇa texts have given importance to
reverence and mental attitude essentially needed for the sacrifice.
Herein may be traced the beginnings of the Āranyaka philosophy
which underrates the value of external sacrifice and recommend
mental sacrifice in its place. External purity derived from
rituals and uttering of hymns is substituted by inner purity and
meditation. Aitareya Āranyaka put the question, - 'To what end
shall we repeat the vedas? to what purpose shall we sacrifice?
For, we sacrifice prāṇa in speech and speech in prāṇa?
Sankhāyana Āranyaka observes: - 'It is called spiritual Agnihotra.'
In that Agnihotra Prāṇa is the Ahavanīya, Apāṇa is the Gāhapatya;
Vyāna is Anyēhārīya. Mind is pascana, Manyu is smoke, worshiper is

169 CU 5.19.1
190 SB 11.6.2. 1-6 treats sexual intercourse as Agnihotra
191 CU 3.16
192 AA 3.2.6
193 SA 10.1
embers taken collectively, ‘Sraddha or faith is milk, speech is śānti (sacrificial fuel). Truth is the offering and wisdom, par excellence, is the soul’. 194 This description of spiritual and inner or mental Agnihotra derives home the fact that the external sacrifice underwent complete reorientation in the Ṛāṇyaka period being transformed into a sacrifice wholly mental and spiritual. Any number of examples are available to illustrate this point.

An interiorization of the idea of man's completeness is given in Brhadāranyakaopanisad like this:

It is completeness, however, is this: the mind is his self (ātman); speech is his wife; breath is his offspring; the eye is his human wealth, for he finds it with the eye; the ear is his divine wealth; for he finds it with the ear; the body (ātman) is his work, for he works with the body. Five fold, indeed, is the sacrifice; five fold is the victims, five fold is the man, whatever there is the whole universe is five fold. He attains all this, who knows thus. 195

Internalisation and externalisation (Information and entropy)

The effort of the individual (being) to maintain "its"
dynamic equilibrium involves a series of biophysical adjustments which constitute, in the language of the Vedic seers, a grand yajna. The necessary condition of all behaviour is a biological system in dynamic equilibrium or negative entropy. Dynamic equilibrium is a generalization covering the whole regulative mechanism of cells tissues, organs, systems and organisms. The behaviour of the cell in maintaining constant conditions is called "homeostasis", or the readjustive function.

194 SA 10.8
195 BU 1.4.17
cf. RV 9.92.2. The senses are called the seven Rsis; the sense perceptions are called oblations.
Disturbances of dynamic equilibrium can arise from stimulus fields located either internal or external to the peripheral wall of the cell or organism. Such stimulus fields produce "desire" or "maladjustment", "emotion", "motivation" or behaviour patterns; and a satisfactory reestablishment of constancy produces "readjustment" or "pleasure". All of this is rather common place, but it is the astonishingly universal characteristic of living things which forms the frame of yajña in the microcosm. The negative entropy or ordered constancy of physical quantities and its maintenance by problem solving behaviour are definitive of life itself. Negative entropy persists through growth, and though every other internal disturbance. And it persists through external disturbance as well. Internalisation and externalisation together constitute the field of life activities in dynamic equilibrium. The process of the Universe entering into the individual in the form of sense objects and the merging in and the communion of the individual with the universe through his movements, expressions, behaviour and breathing is clear to any keen observer of things. The whole human structure wanders about, ever seeking new experiences; at each experience, new impressions of the external world of objects are brought, as offerings, unto the prāna.

All that he sees or enjoys are but offerings brought to the altar of the Prāna of the self. All sounds heard are but oblations to the Prāna. All smells and touch are but hymns sung at the feet of the self within whatever he does is nothing but a glorious prāna Ĥūja. This universal process is conceived of as a grand yajña by the Vedic thinkers of India. For example, Maitreyān: Upanisad says that "self devours the objects by the five rays (the organs
of sense). This is corroborated by Mundaka Upanisad.

Sapta-prānah prabhavanti tasmat saptarccisasaṃdha
dsaptahomeḥ sapta ime lokā yesa caranti prānā
guhāseyā nihitās sapta sapta.

"From him come forth the seven life-breaths, the seven flames, their fuel, the seven oblations, these seven worlds in which move the life-breaths, seven and seven which dwell in the secret place (or the heart). Sankara explains the seven prāna as the seven organs of sense in the head, i.e. two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and the mouth. These are compared to the seven different sacrificial oblations. The perceptions produced by their activities are the flames of the sacrifice. The activities of the different senses are co-ordinated by the mind which is located in the heart.

This concept can be viewed as a corollary to their doctrine of correspondence and communion by which every functionality or specificity is impersonalised and immortalised. This idea is variously expressed in the terminology of the physics and physiology of the Upanisads especially in Chāndogya and Brhadāranyaka.

196 Mait. U 5.31
198 R.E. Hume, tr., The Thirteen Principal Upanisads (London: Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 1921) BU 3.2.1.
199 Ibid. BU 3.2.2-9
Also Refer: The favourite triad of the Ṛgveda and the symbolism of the three sacrificial Fires accordingly. Again, a progressive analysis of the universe up to the universal soul is seen in the instruction of Narada by Sanatkumara. CU 7.26.1
For example, Jaratkara's Arthabhaga questioned Yajnavalkya as to the number and the identity of grahas (apprehenders) and stigrahas (over-apprehenders). Yajnavalkya says that there are eight grahas and eight stigrahas; and explains them as follows: 'Breath (Prana) is a graha. It is seized by apana (out-breaths) as an stigraha, for by the out-breath one smells in odour. Speech is a graha. It is seized by name as an stigraha, for by speech one speaks names. The tongue is a graha. It is seized by taste as an stigraha, for by the tongue one knows tastes. The eye is a graha. It is seized by appearance as an stigraha, for by the eye one sees appearances. The ear is an apprehender. It is seized by a sound as an stigraha, for by the ear one hears sounds. The mind is a graha. It is seized by desire as an stigraha, for by the mind one desires desires. The skin is a graha. It is seized by touch as an stigraha, for by the skin one is made to know touches.

The depth of analysis and meditative insight of the sages in arriving at the root of creation and visualising it in the form of yajna are remarkable.

In the Vedic sense the whole universe is a formation and formulation of devas. As pointed out earlier, Yaaka classifies the abode of devas - the shining ones - into three: the earth, the atmosphere and the heaven. These realms correspond to the Prana, mind and vac respectively in the microcosm. Bhur, bhuva, swar the vyahritis of the Gayatri mantra are a clear indication of this classification and correspondence. The three fires of the sacrificial scheme viz. Garhapatya, Dakshinatya and Ahavaniya again correspond to earth, atmosphere and the heaven that in turn correspond to heart, mind and mouth in the microcosmic aspect.
origin of every being there is a sacrifice that has produced it. The texture of the universe is sacrifice. It is the act par excellence which produces all that is. Now this primordial act of sacrifice is a pure act devoid of any ontological attribute, positive or negative. It "is" neither being nor non-being. It "is" an act of which we can be aware only in the action itself and in connection with the "actor" or the "acted". But we can distinguish, not separate, four "moments"; the act, the action, the actor, and the acted (Krīvā, Karman, kartṛ, Kārya). The act is the sacrifice proper, the action is its inherent result, the actor is the agent (which is nothing other than the act acting) and the acted is another aspect of the action, namely, the concrete result of the act. All this is summed up in the single act, for the act as such includes everything else. In the context of sacrifice this fundamental intuition is expressed in terms of symbols.

Again the significance of somaṛṣa reveals an important symbolic aspect of sacrifice. 'Satapatha Brāhmaṇa speaks\(^{201}\) of Agni and Soma as brothers or brother and sister; Agni being elder. They are also represented as dyāva pṛthivi (heaven and earth), the two universal parents. Heaven is the symbol of Agni and earth that of Soma. They are compared to two inverted bowls. "Heaven is my father, the creator, the navel of immortality, this broad earth is my mother. They are recumbent, facing each other and mingle their two organs into one for the sake of generation. Thus the father deposits his seed in the distant mother."\(^{202}\)

\(^{201}\) SB 2. 1.6.19
\(^{202}\) RV 1.164.33
This doctrine of the two parents is fundamental to Vedic cosmogony. This line of thought is further developed in the Upanisads.

Praśnepanisad speaks of Agni as being Āditya or Prāna or the eater of food (annāde) and soma as being rāyi or food (annam). 203 Agni eats rāyi and gives Posa or nutrition. 204

Therefore Rigveda calls Agni veśāvesa devam the deity of veśā. 205

"In this light", says Dr. V.S. Agrawala, "all food that is eaten is soma, all the plants and animals are but forms of soma. They form as organic matter, the food of the veśāvārā fire within the body, which becomes hungry and cries for food like the newborn babe. It must be fed and after a time fed again, continuing the chain throughout life. This is what is implied in Indra or the central vital principle (madhyapraṇa) 206 or in modern terms the metabolic life-principle being kept alive with food or soma. 207

Mātrī Upanisad describes the nature and function of food in beings and states that soma is the food of gods. He who has the unmanifest as his mouth is called Fire, because of the saying. "The person, indeed, with the unmanifest as his mouth, enjoys the


Also YU 2.1. gives the meaning of the word 'annam' as follows: "Adyate ati ca bhūtāni tatmāt annam taduṣyate", "It eats and is eaten by beings. Therefore it is called annam".

204 RV 1.1.3
205 RV 1.1.1
206 SB 6.1.1.1
three qualities. 

Soma and Agni are stated to be awake all the time in the body, performing their functions. Agni's steed leads him from the left side of the body. Upwards refers to the aorta passage, soma juice is considered as nectar within the mortal body and Aorta is the whitish tube of nectar. Seven Soma rivers flow to Visvedevas for supplying them with Soma and Visvedevas are the lords of the senses.

So it is easily seen that each and every organism or rather every particle of matter, at every moment of its existence is either food or eater of food. This division of the phenomenal world into two broad categories and their union is the basic principle of Somayāga.

Moreover, the awareness of an anthropocosmic relation is fundamental in the Vedic treatment of man. For example, in the 3rd chapter of Praśnpanished we see, sun-eye-prāna, earth-apāna, ākāsa - apāna, vāyu - vyāna relations explicitly stated. As pointed out earlier, the effort of Vedic thinkers to find correspondence between and communion with, microcosm and macrocosm is reflected in their theory of sacrifice too.

208 Mait U. 6.10
209 RV 5.44.14
210 RV 3.6.1. Visvedevah; all the gods; Sankara interprets as "the senses and the vital powers which are subjects to the person within, who is their lord whom the worship by their uninterrupted activity.
The Concept of Purusa and his sacrifice:

It is customary in Vedic terminology to treat the cosmos as Purusa and the human body as his replica. This image is the pivot on which turns the whole concept of Yajña.

As a matter of fact they experienced the Many; but as a matter of truth they had the vision of the one Being. In the Purusaskātra of the Rgveda it is emphatically stated that "Purusa is this all that has been and that will be..." Here there is reference to two purusas, the sahasrasīra Purusa.211 The dāsāṅgula purusa is the individuated jīva, the manifested person standing on ten fingers of the feet. The cosmic Purusa sacrificed himself to create the universe. The whole process of creation is thus the result of a cosmic sacrifice. The mystery of life and creation is explained in the Veda by means of the myth of the sacrifice of Purusa. He dissipenses himself in order to let the world be. Creation is the sacrifice, the gift of Purusa (as prajāpati) in an act of self immolation.

It is said that "From him (Purusa) proceeds fire whose fuel is the sun; from the moon, the rain; herbs on the earth (nourished by them) the male fire pours seed in the female, thus are creatures produced from the person".212

211 SB 3.3.3.8

212 Ṛg 2.1.5.
"tasmad Agniṣamidho yasya Suryah
Somat Parjanya odahayaḥ prthivyah
yugm retas sincati yosītayam behvah
prajah purusat samprasūtah."
The creation of the world by Prajāpati, whose sacrifice as Purusa is the essence of Agnicayana vidyā (piling of the sacred fire). 213 Prajāpati is at the same time the sacrificer, the sacrifice (the victims), the one to whom the sacrifice is offered, and even the result of the sacrifice. The construction of the altar is a massive one composed of ten thousand and eight hundred bricks of various kinds. The altar assumes the shape of the huge bird with outstretched wings facing the east. There are several layers of bricks in the altar. Below the centre of the first layer a lotus leaf is placed on which rests a gold plate. An image of man made of solid lies on the gold plate. Three naturally perforated bricks are placed above the golden man in the first, third and fifth layers respectively. The lord of creation, Prajāpati is identified with the sacrifice which in its turn is identified with the sacrificer on the one hand and Agni the fire god on the other. The Purusa of the Purusa sūkta of the Rgveda has become the Prajāpati, Agni, fire - altar sacrifice and the sacrificer with one another is symbolically represented in the design of the fire-altar. Again, the altar is also a symbol of the universe in a miniature scale, the universe being a macrososm of the altar. Hence the fire-altar also symbolises the creation of the universe from the sacrifice. Prajāpati, the lord of creation is offered as a victim in the sacrifice and from his dismembered limbs spring forth the different objects of the universe, both the movable and the immovable, the sentient and the insen-

213 A.B. Keith, 'The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads. "The essence of the piling is clearly mystic; it has the purpose of carrying out in ritual form the essential act of the reconstruction of Prajāpati, whose sacrifice as purusa has resulted in the creation of the universe in all its parts." p.492
tient. As soon as the sacrifice is concluded it flies to heaven; hence the conclusion of the sacrifice is treated as its death. For the sake of creation the sacrifice is eternally renewed and Prajapati is eternally offered as the oblation in the sacrifice to perpetuate the existence of the universe. Prajapati created Agni and in this respect Prajapati is Agni's father but from another perspective Prajapati is also the son of Agni for the following reasons. When Prajapati's person is dissected to be offered as oblation in the sacrifice his spirit is released from the physical thralldom and Agni absorbs that fiery spirit in his own person. Hence when Prajapati is regenerated by the reconstruction of his dismembered limbs in the shape of the fire-altar Agni becomes his right hand. As Agni plays an important part in the regeneration of Prajapati Agni becomes his father also. The fire altar is the body of Agni through which the lord of creation is revived. The lotus leaf that is placed at the bottom of the fire-altar is symbolic of the cosmic waters and the womb wherefrom Agni Prajapati and the human sacrificer are to emerge. The gold plate over the lotus leaf represents the sun god and the gold image of a man lying on the gold plate symbolises the creator Prajapati, Agni, and the sacrificer jointly. The three perforated bricks placed in three layers symbolise the three worlds through which the gods Agni and Prajapati and the sacrificer will have to pass on their way to the fourth invisible world, viz.,

214 The beginnings of image worship may be traced in the creation of this symbolic gold image representing the two deities of Prajapati and Agni.
the world of the mortals. Prajāpati as the lord of creation is also the generator of time. The construction of the altar takes one year for its completion and the year is a fragmentary unit of time. Just as the fire altar is a microcosm of the universe, the year also is a microcosm of time. With the sacrifice Time is also eternally regenerated in the shape of the year connected with the creation of the altar. The year is symbolic also of birth. The conception of time has multifarious significance in the vision of life of the Vedic Era. Their religious mystery was based on a conception of time as cyclic, the birth of the cosmos was felt to be the key to the perpetuation of life expressed in the return of the sun, the seasons, and the germination of seed. Maitri Upanisad refers to two forms of Brahman, time and the timeless.

That which is prior to the sun is the timeless; it has no parts. That which begins with the sun, however, is time and this has parts. Now the form of this latter which has parts is the year. From this year, to be sure, are creatures produced; through the year, to be sure, they grow and in the year they disappear. The year, therefore, is assuredly the lord of creatures, is time, is food, is the abode of Brahman, is the self; as the saying goes:

It is time that cooks all created things in (the vast cauldren of) his great self. In what, however, is this same time cooked? He who knows this; knows the whole Vedas.

This embodied time is the royal ocean of creatures. In its stands he who is called Sāvitr, the impeller, from whom the moon, stars, planets, the year, and everything else is begotten.

In short, it (the conception of time) provided the sacred model of all regeneration; and repetition and renewal were of its essence. This in turn called for ritual re-enactment of the cosmo-

As is well known in the Brahmānaṣ Prajāpati is Śamvatsara; therefore a highly developed concept of time is implied in this conception of Agnicayana.

Mait U. 6.15.16
gony (generation of the cosmos) at each moment of crisis if the world was not to slip back from order into chaos. In India all Time was felt to be encompassed within the year; hence the supreme moment of crisis was the change over from the old to the new year. (The celebration of the New Year was associated with the harvest cycle. The feature common to every new year festival was that it was in some form a ritual re-enactment of the cosmic start when heaven and earth were separated, and our organized universe with its countless other dualisms - gods and demons fire and water, male and female, light and darkness, and so on were brought into being.)

The sacrificer besides expecting the full life of a hundred years, hopes that the piling of the altar will aid him to attain to the eternal and abiding happiness of the life to come. The Taittirīya Śāhātī is of the view that the result of the offering in the next world is to secure the sacrificer his self and his breath therein. Every creature after running its race of life will cease to exist according to the inexorable divine decree. The sacrificer, as the human representative of his divine counterpart Prajāpati ultimately passes away from this planet, i.e. to say, he himself becomes Death. Death ceases to exercise power over him and he is translated from this world of toils and turmoils to the blessed land of the immortals, the region of heavenly bliss. Released from the trammels of the body he becomes pure spirit and pure intellect and in that spiritual form he returns to the source of his being.

This ideal of continued existence has been 'transmuted by the wisdom of 'Śaṇḍilya 217 into a conception which seeks to
solve the question of the existence of the universe and of the individual, by finding in them both the expression of a single spiritual principle. This possibility of inducing a cosmic consciousness is there in the imports of the mantras concerned. This progressive expansion and unification of the known parts and aspects of Reality into an all comprehensive cosmic awareness is revealed in the description of Asva in the Chāndogya upanisad.

The dawn (Usā) is represented there as that Asva's head. "The sun is His eye, the wind is his breath; and the Vaiśvēnara Agni is his open mouth. The year (Saṅvatīsāra) is his body. The heavens, the antariksa and the earth constitute the Asvas back, belly and hoofs respectively. The directions and the intermediate directions are his respective sides. The seasons are his limbs, months and fortnight are his joints; days and nights are his feet. The constellations are said to be his bones and the sky, his flesh. The rivers are his arteries and the mountains are his liver and spleen. Vegetation is his hair. The rising sun is his front part and the setting sun is his hind part. Lightening is his yawning and thunder is his body-shaking. Rain is his urine and articulation is his speech. The day and the night are mentioned as his power. The ocean is his birth place".

Here in this conception of Asva the power of integrating and unifying poetic imagination is at work. These assertions and identifications of the known areas of the cosmos may however stimulate an awakening of insight into the true nature of the sacrificer and the experienced structure of the cosmos. This gradual and enriching enlargement of awareness is ennobling and enlightening, ultimately leading to a vision of Reality and unending happiness. As emphasised earlier, this awakening and enlargement of consciousness is perhaps an important aspect of Yajña.
The One and the Many; the implications of Purusa yajña

The Hymn of creation suggests that the Purusa sacrificed His own self; and out of His self-sacrifice the universe, the whole creation came into being. His self-immolation means the creation of the universe. This dismembered limbs of His slaughtered body gave birth to different objects of creation. Primal Purusa is the cause of creation through the medium of sacrifice. He was without a second before creation. Purusa who was one and undivided before the sacrifice became many afterwards. This fact underwent reorientation in the Upanisadic age and became one of the fundamental principles of Upanisadic philosophy. The truth is adumbrated in almost all the Upanisads that one supreme godhead, one ultimate principle has become many. The phenomena are the visible manifestation of that imperceptible noumenon or spirit which is the fountain head of all life and energy. "His one form has become every form". \(\text{(Nūpam nūpam Pratirūpe babhūva)}\)\(^{218}\) He resolved: 'I shall become many.' Thus one has become all. \(\text{Ekaṃ vai idam vibabhūva sarvam.}\)\(^{219}\) As the one has become Many, the essence of one pervades the many through and through. This one supreme principle is termed Brahman in the Upanisads. Men springs from Brahman, lives, moves and has his being by the grace of Brahman and returns to Brahman after

\(^{218}\) KU 2.2.9, 10; BU 2.5.10

\(^{219}\) CU 6.2.3. cf. BU 3.7.15.

He who dwelling in all things,
Yet is other than all things,
Whom all things do not know,
Whose body all things are,
who controls all things from within —
He is your soul, the inner controller, the immortal.
shuffling of this mortal coil; this basic doctrine of the
Upanisads is also applicable to the philosophy of sacrifice in
another form. From the primal cosmic sacrifice performed by
the Purusa man springs along with the universe from the body of
the Purusa. Thus he is born of the creator, the Primal Being.
He subsists on food and cattle which are also the products of
that sacrifice i.e., created of the purusa, hence man's existence
depends on the grace of the creator. He performed sacrifice to
propitiate the gods and achieves union with the gods through the
sacrifice. Every god in the Supreme God head is essence and is
worshipped as such. Hence the sacrificer attains union with the
creator of the universe. Thus he returns to the very source of
his being.

**Spiritual significance**

It is interesting to note that the unitive understanding
of the Rais is the warp and woof of the sacrifice of Purusa. This
is highly important in the context of a science-oriented world
view of an average modern man. As a consequence of the Carte-
sian division of man into body and mind, most individuals are
aware of themselves as isolated egos existing "inside" their bo-
dies. The mind has been separated from the body and given the
futile task of controlling it; thus causing an apparent conflict
between the conscious will and the involuntary instincts. Each
individual has been split up further into a large number of sepa-
rate compartments, according to his or her activities, talents,
feelings, beliefs etc. which are engaged, in endless conflicts
generating continuous metaphysical confusion and frustration.

This inner fragmentation mirrors our view of the world
"outside", which is seen as a multitude of separate objects and
events. The natural environment is treated as if it consisted of separate parts to be exploited by different interest groups. The fragmented view is further extended to society, which split into different nations, races, religious and political groups. The belief that all these fragments in ourselves, in our environment, and in our society - are really separate can be seen as the essential reason for the present series of social, ecological and cultural crises. It has alienated us from nature and from our fellow human beings; as a result of which our life in this planet has often become physically and mentally unhealthy. In contrast to the mechanistic world-view, the Vedic view of the world is "organic". For the Vedic poet all things and events perceived by the senses are interrelated, connected, and are but different aspects or manifestations of the same ultimate reality. Our tendency to divide the perceived world into individual and separate things and to experience ourselves as isolated egos in this world is seen as an illusion. It comes from our measuring and, categorizing mentality. It is called avidya or ignorance. It is remarkable that the Vedic view emphasizes the basic unity of the universe. The highest aim for their followers is to become aware of the unity and mutual interrelation of all things, to transcend the notion of an isolated individual self, and to identify themselves with the ultimate reality. The emergence of this awareness - known as enlightenment - is not only intellectual act, but is an experience which involves the whole person and is spiritual in its ultimate nature. The idea of sacrifice (or Purusa) makes this view intrinsically dynamic. The cosmos is seen as one inseparable reality - forever in motion, alive, organic, spiritual
and material at the same time. The order of this universe is not mathematical but sacrificial. This "sacrificial order" of the universe is revealed to the East through the concept of Yajna, and this is the "secret" we attempt to discover.

A spiritual life gives scope for total experience, full awareness of oneself as part and parcel of universal flux, and finally dissolving into it. Any and every act that draws one toward his fellow creatures, that stimulates expansion of one's consciousness be called a progressive act, and every act that illumines or causes to illumine the nature of consciousness and tend to have a full awareness of the unity of subject and object is a spiritual one. It is our humble opinion that the philosopher-poets of the Vedas have taken into account both these aspects of evolution when they conceived yajna and have endeavoured to bring into its domain not only the totality of human context but also the context of all the realms of existence both in the microcosm and in the macrocosm. The fact that the meaning given to the word yajna ranges all the way from the terrestrial to the celestial spheres of existence shows that their view was all-comprehensive though often abstract and obstructive to the ill-equipped wayfarer of our modern times. To recognize one's place in the world involves the acknowledgement of a fivefold link, a fivefold debt, not merely as a social obligation but as a constitutive bond of unity. We have come into existence by a "jumping outside", by a "movement" away from the undifferentiated whole, and it is sepctifically by "sacrifice" that we reintegrate ourselves into the total reality.
Formal Analysis

It can be seen that when any form, any name any world is created, it is always done on account of some formalization - some conceptual structure - imposed on the undifferentiated ground. The Rgvedic language of embodied law tried to account for the multiplicity of experience found in its own society by integrating both the multiplicity of experience around it and the formal structures which accounted for such a multiplicity. This gave us a model of integration based on the whole sensorium, the formal structures of the senses and the unity which holds among the elements of experience. The possibilities of a continuous creation and the reduction of creation of only certain formal possibilities created tension that was resolved by the Rgvedic seers through the activity of the sacrifice (yajña). The language of sacrifice resolved the above impasse of human experience by regathering the activity of formalization into one instant - moment of sheer power of unformalized experience, i.e., by returning the energy of the inquiry to the ground of all energy of creation, the Aṣāt, the ground of all perception. This accounts for the process of the formation of cosmic consciousness mentioned above. In the coincidence of both energies, new forms emerge, new power, new worlds, man's life is prolonged into eternity. These new creations however, could not emerge without the activity of the sacrifice, i.e.,

\[220\] In philosophical terms, we would say that perception as gathered through the sensorium is constantly or eternally an undifferentiated ground of a pluralism of possible forms, possible creations, possible worlds. In the sense that the Aṣāt is sheer potency, it can become anything, any object, any world.
the realization that formalization and action may be separated
and that ultimately it is action which transcends itself — be-
comes more efficacious — if formalizations are transcended through
the integrating activities which account for themselves and for
the new formalizations which make them possible. The dialectical
result of such an activity is wider and wider view points (un-
folding of cosmic consciousness) and the establishment of a Body
of law of practical reason.

In short, the language of embodied consciousness, the
language of sat is the dispersion of the sensorium and the con-
cept of sacrifice reveals how this disperson regathers itself
in the image of sacrifice.

Reminding the unseen through the seen by the process
of re-gathering the dispersed sensorium into efficient concep-
tual structures of experience and thus persuade the sacrificer
to reach the ultimate principle is the philosophical point in
yāga. 221 Because theoretically Brahman is unknowable. 222

The process by which Being spring to "Be" — in the beginning,
in the sense of an ontological principle — concerns not only our
own temporal origins, but also our profound inmost structure.
To know this process means to be involved ontologically in it.
One does not reach the "beginning" by riding back on a temporal
line but by piercing deep into a Being whose core is not made of
time. The dawn of human consciousness, its exteriorisations

221 Like Upanisads the Vedic mantras themselves have conceded
that the God is unseen, Refer BU 3.4.

222 cf. "yad vācā nabhyuditem yena vāgabhyudyate . . "
"Yen manasa na mamute . . "Kena Upanisad. 1.5, 6
into the manifold universe of discourse, the integration of the self with the entire universe and final dissolution into oneself to become aware of the self is the process involved in the re-gathering of the sensorium complex. To become aware of the self means to have lost any hankering after the small self (ahāmkāra) and its creations; and, being lost to one’s self, to discover, recover, be, the self (ātman). 223

For Aurobindo

The Sacrifice is the giving by man of what he possesses in his being to the Higher or divine nature and its fruit is the further enrichment of his manhood by the lavish bounty of the gods. The wealth thus gained constitutes a state of spiritual riches, prosperity felicity which is itself a power for the journey and a force of battle. For the sacrifice is a journey, a progression; the sacrifice itself travels led by Agni up the divine path to the gods and of this journey the ascent of the Angirasa fathers to the divine world of swar is the type. Their journey of the sacrifice is also a battle for it is opposed by panis, Vrtras and other powers of evil and falsehood, end of this warfare the conflict of Indra and the Angirases with the Panis is a principal episode 224

According to Aurobindo the Āryan is he who does the work of sacrifice, find the sacred word of illumination, desires the gods and increases them and is increased by them into the largeness of true existence; he is the warrior of the light and the traveller to the Truth. 225

223 SB 6.1.2. 12-13; TB 2.3.6.1. clothed in mythical language.
224 The secret of the Veda, p.234
225 Ibid., p. 236