CHAPTER III
MAJOR GODS OF ANTARIKSASTHANA

NATURALISTIC INTERPRETATIONS

INDRA

Indra is the favourite national God of the Vedic Indians. Vedic Mythology is clearly dominated by the personality of Indra. The largest number of suktas about 250 out of 1028 is exclusively devoted to the glorification of this god. Besides the Suktas, there are several others, wherein Indra is honoured together with the other Gods.

In the middle region Indra is dominant, pervading the air (RV.I.51.2). In the Naighantuka (V.4) Indra’s position is among the Gods of the air and in the triad Agni, Indra or Vāyu, Surya he is the representative of the air. The significance of his character is however sufficiently clear. Primarily he is the thunder God, the conquest of the demons of drought or darkness and the consequent liberation of the waters or the winning of light forming his mythological essence. Secondarily Indra is the God of battle, who took the side of the Aryans in the conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants of India.

Indra’s physical features has diverse manifestations; sometimes as the ruddy brightness of the Sun (RV.X.112.3) and he can assume many different forms at his own will (RV.III.42.4; 53.8; VI.47.18). Thus he had a body, a head, arms and hands (RV.II.16.2; VIII.85.3). His belly is often referred to in relation to his powers of drinking Soma. Indra’s lips are described in correlation to the attributes of susīpra or śiprin, ‘fair-lipped’; being almost peculiar to him. Indra’s combat weapon is the thunderbolt (Vajra) and is his
characteristic weapon and is the regular mythological name of the lightning stroke and often described as āyasa or metallic (RV.I.52.8), but sometimes as golden (RV.I.57.2), tawny (RV.III.44.1; X.96.3) or bright (RV.III.44.5). It is four-angled (RV.IV.22.2), hundred-angled (RV.IV.17.10), hundred-jointed (RV.VIII.6.6) and thousand-pointed (RV.I.80.12). It is sharp (RV.VII.18.18). It is spoken of as a stone (asiman) or rock (parvata: VII.104.19). The bolt in Indra's hand is compared with the sun in the sky (RV.VIII.59.2). Epithets derived from or compounded with Vajra, some of which are very frequent, are almost entirely limited to Indra. The terms exclusively applied to Indra are: Vajrabhrī, 'bearing the bolt', vajrivat, 'armed with the bolt' and vajradaksīna, 'holding the bolt in his right hand'.

Sometime Indra is considered to be armed with a bow and arrows (RV.VIII.45.4; 66.11; X.103.2,3). The latter are golden, hundred-pointed and winged with a thousand feathers (RV.VIII.66.7,11). 'AiikuSa'- a hook for bestowing wealth is also carried by Indra (RV.VIII.17.10; AV.VI.82.3); alternatively he uses it as a weapon (RV.X.44.9).

Indra is borne on a car which is golden (RV.VI.29.2) and is said to be swifter than thought (RV.X.112.2). The epithet 'car-fighter' (ratheśṭhā) is exclusively appropriated to Indra.

Though the Gods in general has a fondness for Soma (RV.VIII.2.18; 58.11), Indra is preeminently addicted to it (RV.I.104.9). Indra even stole soma to drink it (RV.III.48.4; VIII.4.4). He is the one soma-drinker among Gods and men (RV.VIII.2.4), only Vāyu, his companion, approaching near

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1. RV.VIII.2.4:

indra it somapa eka indra sutapa visvāyuḥ |
antardevān martyrāṁścha ||

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him in this respect. It is his favourite nutriment (RV.VIII.4.12). The frequent epithet ‘Soma-drinker’ (Soma-pā, Soma-pāvan) is characteristic of him, being otherwise applied a few times to Agni and Brhaspati when associated with Indra, and once besides to Vāyu alone. Soma is sometimes said to stimulate Indra to perform great cosmic actions such as supporting earth and sky or spreading out the earth (II.15.2). However, Soma characteristically exhilarates him to execute his war like deeds, the slaughter of the dragon or Vṛtra (RV.II.15.1; 19.2; VI.47.1, 2) or the conquest of foes (RV.VI.27; VII.22.2; VIII.81.6).

The Purusa hymn depicts Indra and Agni to have sprung from the mouth of the world-giant (RV.X.90.13). Indra is associated with several other Gods. His prime friends and allies are the Maruts, who in a huge number of passages are described as assisting him in his war like exploits. His attachment with these deities is so intimate that the epithet marutvat, ‘accompanied by the Maruts’, though sometimes applied to other Gods, is characteristic of Indra, this epithet, as well as marudgana ‘attended by the Marut host’, being sufficient to designate him (RV.V.42.6; IX.65.10).

Indra is more often coupled as a dual divinity with Agni than with any other God. Indra is in three or four passages more or less distinctly identified with Sūrya. The epithet Savitṛ (RV.II.30.1) is awarded to Indra in one passage. Indra is further often coupled with Varuṇa and Vāyu, however less frequently with Soma, Brhaspati, Pūṣan and Vishnu. The latter is a faithful friend of Indra and sometimes attends him in his conflict with the demons.

2. RV. X.90.13 :
   chandramā manaso jātāśchakṣoḥ sūryo ajāyata
   mukhāḍindraschāgniścḥa prāṇādvāyurajayata

Śāyana’s Commentary on RV. X.90.13 :
   praṇātan manasah sakāśat chandramāḥ jātah
   chakṣoḥ cha chakṣusah suryah api ajāyata
   asya mukhāḍindra śchāgniścḥa devavatpanno
   asya prāṇādvāyurajāyata
Indra’s greatness and power are louded in the most unstinted terms. He has no parallel among those born or to be born (RV.IV.18.1). Indra alone is king of the whole world (RV.III.46.2).

He is the king of dynamic things and of men (RV.V.30.5). He is the leader of human races and divine (RV.III.34.2). He is several times called a universal monarch (RV.IV.19.2) and still oftener a self-dependent sovereign (RV.III.46.1). Indra has several characteristic attributes expressive of power. Śakra ‘mighty’ applies to Indra about forty times and only about 5 times to other Gods. Sacīvat, ‘possessed of might’ describes Indra some fifteen times and other deities only twice.

In the Rig Veda the epithet Śacīpati, ‘lord of might’ occurring eleven times, belongs to Indra with one exception only (RV.VII.67.5). Indra is pleonastically invoked as ‘mighty lord of might’ (śacīpatē śacīnām). The very frequent attribute śatākratu, ‘having a hundred powers’ occurring some sixty times in the Rig Veda is with two exceptions entirely limited to Indra.

In the great majority of instances satpati ‘strong lord’ is appropriated to Indra. Indra’s strength and valour are also described with various other epithets. He is strong (tava), nimble (nṛtu), victorious (tura), heroic (śūra), of unbounded force (RV.I.11.4; 102.6), of irresistible might (RV.I.84.2). Indra is clothed in might like the elephant and bears weapons like the fearful lion (RV.IV.16.14). He is also young, and unaging (ajara), as well as ancient (pūrva).

3. RV.IV.19.2:

| avāṣṛjanta jivrayo na devā bhuvah samrājindra satyayonih ||
| ahannahim parisāyānamarnāh pra varanirarado visvadhēnāh ||

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Exhilarated by Soma and generally escorted by the Maruts he enters upon the fray with the chief demon of drought, most frequently called by the name of Vṛtra, the obstructor and also very often styled ‘ahi’ the ‘Serpent’ or ‘Dragon’. The conflict is terrible. Heaven and earth tremble with fear when Indra strikes Vṛtra with his bolt (RV.I.80.11; II.11.9, 10; VI.17.9). He slew the dragon hidden in the waters and obstructing the waters and the sky (RV.II.11.5) and smote Vṛtra, who enclosed the waters like a tree with the bolt (RV.II.14.2). Thus ‘conquering in the waters’ (apsujit) is his exclusive attribute. Having slain Vṛtra, he opened the orifice of the waters which had been closed (I.32.11). His bolts are dispersed over ninety rivers (I.80.8). In the Rig Veda the context of the conflict between Indra and Vṛtra and the consequent release of the waters are numerous and frequent.

The clouds often become the fortresses (puraḥ) of the aerial demons as is enunciated in the mythical imagery of the thunderstorm. They are spoken of as ninety, ninety-nine or a hundred in number (RV.II.14.6; 19.6; VIII.17.14; 87.6). These fortresses are moving (RV.VIII.1.28), autumnal (RV.I.130.7; 131.4; 174.2; VI.20.10), made of metal (RV.II.20.8) or stone (RV.IV.30.20). Indra shatters them (RV.I.51.5) and so the epithet ‘fort-shatterer’, purbhid is peculiar to him. In one verse (RV.X.111.10) he is spoken of as a fort-shatterer and lover of waters at the same time.

4. RV.X.111.10:

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sadhriçhih sindhumusätrirvayanta sanäjjäya áritah purbhidäsaññ |
astamä te pärthivä vasünyañme jagmuñ sunrtä indra pürivih ||
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Sayana’s Commentary on RV.X.111.10:

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sahäncanäh sahagamanäh sindhumä samudramañ bhartäram äyan ágachchhan | usatiriva yathä
kämayamänäh striyah svapatimabhiágachchhantä tadvä | järäh satrunäm járayitä pürbhit indrañ sanät
chirädeva äsam apäm antäh prerakatvena svämi bhavati | he indra asme asmäkah svabhütañ
pärthivä pärthivän vāsuni dhanavatprinayitani havïmsi pürivih vahvayah sunrtäh vācchah
stutilaksananächa te tvådyåm astäm grhaññ a jagmuñ ágachchchhantu | yadvä asmadâyäh stutayañe
graham gachchchhantu | asmäkah grham tvådyäñi pärthivän dhanäñyabhiágachchhantu ||
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Stressing the significance of the Vṛtra-myth the chief and specific epithet of Indra is Vṛtrahan, ‘Vṛtra-slayer’. It is applied about seventy times to him in the Rig Veda. Though Indra is sometimes expressly stated to have slain Vṛtra by his own might alone (RV.I.165.8; VII.21.6; X.138.6); other deities are often associated with him in the conflict. Although the main conflict of Indra is with Vṛtra yet he is attributed to have conflicted with several minor demons such as Urana, Viśvarūpa, Arbuda etc. Sometimes Indra is described as destroying demons in general.

When Indra blew the dragon from the air the sun shone forth (RV.VIII.3.20); it also appears as Indra’s weapon, for he conflagrates the demon with the rays of the sun (RV.VIII.12.9). Without any reference to the Vṛtra fight, Indra is said to find the light (RV.III.34.4; VIII.15.5;X.43.4) in the darkness (RV.I.108.8; IV.16.4). Indra is the generator of the sun (RV.III.49.4). He placed the sun, the brilliant light in the sky (VIII.12.30). Indra produces the dawn as well as the sun (RV.II.12.7; 21.4;III.31.15;32.8;49.4). He has created the dawns and the sun to shine with brilliance (RV.III.44.2). He has opened the darkness with the dawn and the sun (RV.I.62.5).

Indra’s activity in the thunderstorm is frequently more directly expressed. Hence he is said to have created the lightnings of heaven (RV.II.13.7) and to have directed the action of the waters downwards (RV.II.17.5).

5. RV.III.49.4:

dhartā divo rajasasprpta urdhvo ratho na vāyurvasubhirnityutvān |
ksapām vastā janitā sūryasya vibhakā bhāgam dhīśaneva vājain ||

Sāyana’s Commentary RV.III.49.4:
tathā ksapām vastā rátrimāchchhādayan sūryasya jagatprakāsakasyādyityasya janitā janayitā bhāgam bhajaniyam vājam karmaphalarūpam annam vibhhaktā sadhu vibhāgakartā bhavati |

6. RV.III.44.2:

haryannusasamarchayah sūryam haryannarochayah |
vīdāmschikītvān haryasva vardhasa indra viśvā abhi śriyāh ||
He is the generator of heaven and earth (RV.VIII.36.4; VI.47.4). The separation and supporting of heaven and earth are sometimes described as the result of Indra’s victory over a demon (RV.V.29.4) who held them together (RV.VIII.6.17). When he was born for the Vṛtra fight, Indra spread out the earth and fixed the sky (RV.VIII.78.5).

Indra, the wielder of the thunderbolt, who destroys the aerial demons in battle, is constantly invoked by warriors (RV.IV.24.3). As the mighty God of battle he is more frequently called upon than any other deity as the helper of the Aryans in their conflicts with earthly enemies. He protects the Aryan colour and subjects the black skin (RV.III.34.9; I.130.8). He dispersed 50000 of the black-race and rent their citadels (IV.16.13). He subjected the Dasyus to the Aryans (RV.VI.18.3) and gave land to the Aryans (IV.26.2). Other deities like the Asvins (RV.I.117.21), Agni(RV.VIII.92.1) or the Gods in general (RV.VI.21.11) are seldom referred to as the protectors of the Aryas. Indra characteristically is referred to as one compassionate helper (RV.I.84.19; VIII.55.13; 69.1), as the deliverer and advocate of his worshippers (RV.VIII.85.20), as their strength (RV.VII.31.5) and as a wall of defense (RV.VIII.69.7). His friend is never slain or conquered. Indra is very often called the friend of his worshippers, sometimes even a brother (RV.III.53.5), a father (RV.IV.17.17; X.48.1) or father and mother in one (RV.VIII.87.11).

He was also the friend of the father in the olden time (RV.VI.21.8; VII.33.4) and the epithet ‘Kaushika’ which he once receives (RV.I.10.11) implies that he specifically favoured the family of the ‘Kushikas’. Indra does not desire the friendship of him who offers no libations (RV.X.42.4). However he bestows goods and wealth on the pious man (RV.II.19.4; 22.3; VII.27.3). All men share his benefits (RV.VIII.54.7). Both his hands are full
of riches (RV.VII.37.3). One entire hymn specifically (RV.X.47) dwells on the manifold wealth which Indra bestows. Cows and horses are the goods which Indra, like other Gods, is most often asked to bestow (RV.I.16.9; 101.4) and it is primarily to him that the epithet gopati ‘lord of cows’ is applied. His combats often receives the name gavisti ‘literally’ ‘desire of cows’ (RV.VIII.24.5) and his gifts are considered the consequence of his victories (RV.IV.17.10,11). His liberality is so characteristic that the very frequent attribute maghavan ‘bountiful’ is almost entirely monopolized by him in the Rig Veda. The epithet Vasupati ‘lord of wealth’ is also predominantly applicable to Indra.

Regarded as a whole the attributes of Indra are chiefly those of physical superiority and of dominion over the physical world. Energetic action is characteristic of him, Indra is a universal monarch, not as the applier of eternal laws of the universe, nor as a moral ruler, but as an irresistible warrior whose mighty arm wins victory, whose inexhaustible liberality bestows the highest goods on mankind and who delighting in the exhilaration of magnificent Soma sacrifices, confers rich rewards on the hosts of priests officiating in his worship.

VĀYU

Both the physical phenomenon and its concomitant divine personification are expressed by each of the two names of wind Vāyu and Vāta. However Vāyu is primarily the God and Vāta the element. Vāyu is solemnized in one complete hymn besides parts of others and in about half a dozen conjointly with Indra. Vāta is worshipped in a couple of short hymns (168 and 186) at the end of the tenth book of the Rig Veda. At times the names of both occur within the same verse (RV.VI.50.12;X.92.13). The
difference between the two is exemplified by the fact that Vāyu alone as a God is associated with Indra, the two deities then being frequently worshipped as Indra Vāyu. The ancient native interpreters, regarded Vāyu and Indra as very intimate that either of them might represent the deities of the atmospheric region in the Vedic Triad (Nir.7,5). Vāta on the contrary being seldom personified is only associated with Parjanya whose attachment with the thunderstorm is much more vivid than that of Indra.

According to the Puruṣa hymn Vāyu is said to have originated from the breath of the world-giant (X.90.13). Vāyu is rarely linked with the Maruts. At one time he is said to have generated them from the wombs of heaven (I.134.4) and to be accompanied by them (I.142.12) as well as by Pūṣan and the Viśvedevas. He is once spoken of as the son-in-law of Tvaṣṭr (VIII.26.21,22), though his wife’s name is not mentioned.

Vāyu’s personal attributes are rather indefinite. He is beautiful and with Indra is spoken of as touching the sky, quick as thought and a thousand eyed (I.23.2,3). In one instance he is said to possess roaring velocity (X.100.2). Vāyu possesses a shining car drawn by a team or by a pair of red (rohitā) or ruddy (arunā) steeds. His team comprises of 99 (IV.48.4), 100 or even 1000 (IV.46.3) horses yoked according to his will. The attribute ‘niyutvat’ ‘drawn by a team’, is present in reference to Vāyu or his car, being otherwise used only once or twice in each situation with reference to Indra, Agni, Pūṣan or the Maruts. Vāyu’s car in which Indra is his companion (IV.46.2; 48.2; VII.91.5) bears a golden seat and is in contact with the sky (IV.46.4).

7. Nirukta 7.5:

| tisra eva devatā iti nairuktaḥ | agnih prthivisthanah         |
| vāyuvendro vāntarikṣasthanah | sūryo dyusthanah            |

8. RV.X.90.13:

| chandramā manaso jājaschakṣoh sūryo ajāyata |
| mukhādindraschāgniśca prāṇādvāyurajāyata |
Like the other Gods, Vāyu is fond of Soma to which he is invited to come with his teams and the first draught of which he obtains as his share also in company with Indra (I.135.4) for he is the swiftest of the Gods SB (Satapatha Brāhmaṇa 13,1.2.7)⁹.

In the Rig Veda he has also been designated as a protector of Soma (X.85.5)¹⁰ and has been given the characteristic epithet Sucipā, ‘drinking the clear (Soma draught)’, an epithet which Indra once shares with him. He is also on one occasion linked with the ‘nectar-yielding’ (Sabardughā) cow (I.134.4). Vāyu grants fame, offspring, wealth in steeds, oxen and gold (VII.90.2, 6). He dispenses foes (IV.48.2) and is invoked for protection by the weak (I.134.5).

Vāta, as the common name of wind is solemnized in a more complete manner. His name is often associated with the root vā, to blow, from which it is obtained. One of the hymns devoted to his praise (X.168) narrates him as shattering everything and thundering, his din presses on, he goes along whirling up the dust of the earth, he wonders in the air on his paths and he does not rest even a day. Being early in origin he is a friend of the waters, however his birth place is unknown. This deity wanders where he lists. One hears his roaring but his form one does not visualize (I.164.44). He is the breath of the Gods (VII.87.2; X.92.13) and is invoked with oblations.

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9. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa 13.1.2.7 :
   English Translation 13.1.2.7 :
   ‘I sprinkle thee, acceptable to Vayu’,- for Vayu is the swiftest of gods; it is speed he bestows on it. whence the horse is the swiftest of animals.

10. RV.X.85. 5 :
    yattvā deva prapivanti tata ā pyayase punah |
    vāyuh somasya raksita samānāmī māsa ākṛtih ||
Vāta, like Rudra also wafts, healing and prolongs life because he is the treasure of immortality in his house (X.186). This healing power of wind undoubtedly denotes his purifying character. The activity of wind is chiefly mentioned in connection with the thunderstorm (IV.17.12; V.83.4; X.168.1,2). Blasts of wind being coincident with the appearance of lightings and preceding the reappearance of the Sun, Vāta is spoken of as creating ruddy lights (X.168.1) and of making the dawns to shine (I.134.3). The swiftness of wind often affords a comparison to the speed of the Gods (IV.17.12; V.41.3; IX.97.52) or of mythical steeds (I.163.11; IV.38.3). Its noise is also frequently mentioned (IV.22.4; VIII.91.3; X.168.1, 4).

RUDRA

A study of the Vedic literature as a whole brings out a very striking fact about the God Rudra. It will appear from that study that there are, as it were, two distinct Rudras represented in that literature – one in the Rig Veda and the other in the post Rig Vedic literature. In the Rigveda Rudra is a heavenly God, while in the post Rig vedic literature he is regarded as being essentially earthly. In the former, Rudra’s hosts are generally represented to be the Maruts, while in the latter Rudra’s companions are different evil spirits and fearful beings. Just as the Rig Vedic Rudra and the post Rig Vedic Rudra may be said to constitute two distinct personalities, the Rig Vedic Rudra himself is represented as possessing, so to say, a double personality. He is considered to be a particularly fierce God (RV.II.33.9\textsuperscript{11}, 11; X.126.5), harmful like a terrible

\textsuperscript{11} RV.II.33.9:

\begin{verbatim}
sthirehirangaih pururupa ugro vakhruh sukrebhih pipise hiranyaih
isanadasya bhuvanasya bhurer na va u yo sadrudasuryam
\end{verbatim}

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beast (II.33.11), unassailable and unsurpassed in might (RV. I.114.4; II.33.3, 10; VII.46.1; X.92.5). Rudra is called as the ruddy boar of the heaven (I.114.5) or the great asura of the heaven (II.1.6). A reference has been made about Rudra’s death-inflicting missiles (II.33.10). As a matter of fact, concern for Rudra’s terrible shafts and deprecation of his wrath accompanied by ill will are the ruling sentiments of a quite a large number of passages in the Rig Veda relating to Rudra (II.33.4-6; 15). Often he is implored not to slay or injure men and cattle (I.114.7-8; VI.28.7; VII.46.2-4); but to preserve the worshippers and their property unharmed (II.33.3, 6). Rudra’s very name is frightening (II.33.8).

In the post Rig Vedic literature, Rudra’s malevolence and wrathfulness are often referred to and much deprecated. But Rudra is not exclusively malevolent and maleficent. He is also represented as possessing certain positively beneficent traits. He is said to bestow blessings on his worshippers (I.114.1.2; II.33.6) and generally takes care of man and beast (I.43.6). He is a mighty helper and a liberal giver.

Vedic Rudra possesses a distinct individuality. One important indication of this is to be seen in the remarkably life-like description of his appearance and dress given in the Vedic literature. Rudra is brown (babhru: RV. II.33.5) or red in complexion. He arranges his hair in a peculiar manner (Kapardin: RV. I.114.1, 5) and wears a multi-form necklace (niska) as his special ornament (RV. II.33.10). He is blue-necked and blue-tufted; his belly is black and his back red. He is described as being clothed in a skin. These descriptions of Rudra’s unique physical features and dress no doubt tend sharply to isolate him from the other Vedic Gods.
Among all the Gods in the Rig Veda Rudra is most closely associated with the Maruts. Besides the Maruts, Rudra seems to have some affinity to Agni. In a particular passage of Rig Veda (RV.II.1.6)\textsuperscript{12}, for instance, Rudra is included among the several deities identified with Agni. It is observed that three specific classes of beings are principally mentioned as being the followers of Rudra, namely, the Rudras, the Maruts and the Rudraganas, corresponding to the three distinct stages in the evolution of his character and personality. The Maruts are often characterized in the Rig Veda as rudrah, or rudrasah (RV.I.39.4,7;64.3; 85.2; 100.5; 101.7; 166.2;II.34.9,13; VIII.7.12;X.64. 8;92.6).They are Rudra’s sons (RV.I.64.2\textsuperscript{12}; VI.66.11) or Rudra’s maryas, (RV.VII.56.1). Rudra is correspondingly represented as maruvan (RV.I.114.11\textsuperscript{14}; II.33.6) or as the father of the Maruts (RV.I.114.6;V.60.5). An impression is therefore likely to be produced that the Rudras and the Maruts are essentially identical. However there are also other passages in the Rig Veda (RV.II.31.1, 3; VIII.13.28; 54.3; X.66.4) wherein the Rudras and the Maruts are mentioned as two distinct classes of beings. The characterization of the Maruts as Rudras, therefore, seems to have been only incidental and perhaps intended to serve some specific objective.

12. RV.II.1.6 :
    tvamgne tvasta vidhate suviryami tava glavo mitramahaj sajatyan
    tvam'asuhem'a'rarise svasvyami tvaminaram sardho asi puruvasu

13. RV.I.64.2 :
    te jajfire diya rsvasa uksano rudrasya maryas asurarepasah
    pavakasah suchayah surya iva satvano na drapsino ghoravarpasah

14. RV.I.114.11 :
    avochama namo asma avasvavah srnotu no havami rudro marutman
    tanno mitro varuno mabhantamadithi sindhu prthivi uta dyau
In the Veda one of the most common views regarding Rudra is that he is a storm – God. The heavenly character of Rudra is established through the following references: Rudra is divaḥ asurāḥ (RV.II.1.6;VIII.20.17) or the red hog of the heaven (RV.I.114.5). He showers his arrows from heaven (RV.VII.46.3). In X.92.9, Rudra is said to descend to the earth from heaven. It has been further pointed out that this God of the heaven wields a thunderbolt in his hand (RV.II.33.3). Elsewhere Rudra’s weapon is said to have been didyut (RV.VII.46.3)\textsuperscript{15}, which word is understood in the sense of Vidyut, gleaming bolt or lightning.

According to the naturalistic interpretation of the Vedic mythology, the Martuts are considered to be the divinities connected with the phenomenon of storm. Rudra is the father of the Maruts (RV.I.114.6,9;II.33.1) and must, therefore be assumed to be definitely connected with storm. Rudra is, indeed represented in the Rigveda as a God of red lightning.

Besides thus being organically linked with heaven, the lightning and the Maruts, who are the storm Gods, Rudra is described as making the streams flow over the earth (RV.X.92.5). In a different context (RV.V.58.7), Rudra’s sons are said to make rain of their sweat.

The epithet, midhvas, which is derived from the root mih (to shower), and which is usually applied in the Rigveda to a rain-bringing storm-god, is applied also to Rudra (RV.I.114.3), thus confirming his character as such a God. The dual character of Rudra, namely frightful and destructive on the one hand and kindly and beneficent on the other, can be best explained on the assumption that he is a storm-God. For, while Rudra’s gleaming bolt (Vidyut)

\textsuperscript{15} RV.VII.46.3 :

yā te didyudavaśṛṣṭa divasparī kṣmayā charati pari sā vṛṇaktu nāḥ
sahasram te svapivāta bhesajā mā nastiokesu tanayeṣu rīraśāḥ ||
might spell distress and destruction, the rains which he brings prove to be a veritable boon to humanity. Apart from the obvious efficacy of waters in relation to fertilization etc special stress seems to have been put on their peculiar medicinal properties, particularly in so far as these waters are produced by Rudra. Rudra is the physician of Physicians (RV.II.33.4) and is endowed with exceptional healing powers (RV.II.33.4,7). He is the master of numerous choice remedies (RV.I.114.5; II.33.12; V.42.11; VII.46.3). The medicinal potency of waters is fully recognized in the Rigveda. The medicinal remedies subsist within waters (apsu antar visvāni bheṣajā) is described in I.23.20. The epithet jalāṣabheṣaja is exclusively attributed to Rudra (I.43.4; VIII.29.5). The word jalāṣabheṣaja means ‘one whose medicinal remedies consists of waters’. The close connection between the waters and Rudra is thus well established. Rudra, in the form of the leader of the Maruts is the water-causing God and hence medicinally very potent.

It is of prime importance to note, in this context that in other passages, waters as medicines are correlated with Maruts (V.53.14) and the medicinal remedies are said to come down from the sky (X.59.9). Rudra’s healing powers are also referred in the post-vedic literature (AV.II.27.6) but meagerly than his frightful and destructive nature. This double personality of Rudra – as a maleficent demon and a beneficent physician has been considered a special feature by Rig Vedic poets of this God.

16. RV.II.33.4 :

\[
mā tvā rudra chukrūdhāṁ namobhirṁ duṣṭūti vṛṣabha mā sahūti ||
unno virāṁ arpayā bheṣajabhirbhīṣaktamāṁ tvā bhīṣajāṁ śnomi ||
\]

Sāvāna’s commentary on RV.II.33.4 :

he rudra tvā tvāṁ bhīṣajāṁ chikitsābhijñānāṁ madhye bhīṣaktamāṁ atiṣayena bhāṣajyasya kartāram śnomi;

17.(i) RV.VIII.29.5 :

tigmameko vibharti hasta āyudhāṁ sūchirugro jalāṣabheṣajah ||

(ii) RV.I.43.4 :

gāthapatim medhapatim rūdram jalāṣabheṣajāṁ tachchhāniyoḥ sumnamimāhe ||
With a view to supporting the storm-God theory extensive reference is further made to the facts that the wind is described as Rudra’s arrow and that in the Satarudriya. Rudra is personified as the lord of rains, clouds, lightings and winds. Hopkins thinks that Rudra’s descriptions as a God of blue neck and red belly is also suggestive of cloud and lightning. Some of the sponsors of the storm-God theory have attempted to derive the word, Rudra, from the root rud (to roar). Rudra according to them is, therefore, the roaring and thundering storm-God.

Hillebrandt, based on several references in Vedic literature, tries to establish that Rudra in reality is a form of Agni (AV.VII.87.1; XIX.55.5). Rudra is in fact, fire in its terrible form. He seeks to correlate this character of Rudra with three other principal features of the Rudra mythology as represented in the Veda, namely Rudra’s two dimensional nature as creator and destroyer, his intimacy with autumn and his ‘redness’ as indicated by the name Rudra.

According to that scholar, Rudra does not represent normal domestic or ritualistic fire, but that he is the god of the tropical heat before rains. The season, Sarad, particularly its beginning, being the period when the incidence of disease is the highest, is therefore, regarded as Rudra’s season. It is preceded by the summer when the heat and the burning wind scorch the earth and torture men and cattle. At this time the Sun is located on the tropic of cancer and hence Rudra’s quarter is considered to be in the north.

In the Rigveda, greater stress is laid on Rudra’s association with death and this horrifying aspect is indicative of his critical personality and character. It is evident from Rig Veda references that Rudra’s bolt (RV.II.33.3) is definitely not the thunderbolt, but must be interpreted merely as the personification of sickness and death. Rudra’s Sāyakas (RV.II.33.10)
denote the gleaming bolt, considered an arrow of his bow and are death-inflicting arrows shot by Rudra, the conveyer of diseases and death. In RV.I.114.10, Rudra’s missiles are openly characterized as ‘cow slaying’ and ‘man slaying’. The commonest prayer to Rudra is that he should not slay or injure the worshippers and parents, children, men and animals like cattle, horses etc. (RV.I.114.7-8). Rudra is often implored to spare the worshipper, his family and his property (RV.II.33.1; VI.28.7; VII.46.2-4). From another stand-point, Rudra is invoked to prostrate ‘others’ with his fatal shafts (RV.II.33.11, 14). In IV.3.6 Rudra is himself is directly called nrhan, the slayer of men.

Etymologically the word, Rudra is derived from the root rud, which means ‘to howl’ or ‘to cry’. The word Rudra suggests that Rudra was essentially a red God. He is described as being arusa (RV.I.114.5), babhru (RV.II.33.5).

Yāśka has gone a step further and connected the word Rudra etymologically with the two roots, Ru (roar) and dru (speed forth). Sāyaṇa while commenting on Rig Veda I.114.1 derives the word in as many as six divergent ways. But none of these etymologies can, however, be regarded as adequately bringing out the essential character of Rudra. In this context Pischel must be said to have hit the mark by proposing that the word, Rudra, is to be derived from a hypothetical lost root, rud, which must have meant ‘to be ruddy or red’. One aspect of Rudra’s original complex personality, namely his character as a God of death, seems to have been particularly emphasized in the Veda. According to the primitive way of thought, death is always associated with the red colour. The name ‘red one’, would, therefore, appear to be most appropriate for the Vedic God of death, Rudra. This redness of Rudra is confirmed by several other epithets both in the Rig Veda and post –

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Vedic literature. In the Veda Rudra is designated as Tryambaka (RV.VII.59.12). Tryambaka represents Rudra as connected with three mothers. The creation-mother, Amba and the creation-God. It is significant that the name Tryambaka is preserved in connection with an ancient fertility-rite.

MARUT

Maruts are prominent deities in Rig Veda, thirty three hymns being dedicated to them alone, seven at least to them conjointly with Indra, and one each to them with Agni and Pusan. The Maruts comprise a troop, gana or sardhas (RV.I.37.1,5) of deities stated only in the plural. Their number is thrice sixty (RV.VIII.85.8) or thrice seven (RV.I.133.6; AV 13.1.13). Often their births are referred to (RV.V.57.5). They are the sons of Rudra being also often called Rudras (RV.I.39.4) and sometimes Rudriyas (RV.I.3.87; II.34.10) and of Prsni (RV.II.34.2; V.52.16; 60.5; VI.66.3); often also receiving the epithet prsnimātaraḥ, ‘having Prśni for their mother’ (RV.I.23.10; AV.V.21.11). The cow Prśni (RV.V.52.16) or simply a cow is their mother (RV.VIII.83.1) and they bear the epithet gomātaraḥ, ‘having a cow for their mother’ (RV.I.85.3; VIII.20.8).

18. RV.VII.59.12 :

\[ \text{tryamvakaṁ yajāmahe sugandhim puṣtvardhanaṁ} \]
\[ \text{uvārumkāvya vandhanāṁvṛty ormuksīya māṃśat} \]

19. RV.I.23.10

\[ \text{visvāndevān havāmahe marutāḥ somapitaye} \]
\[ \text{ugrā hi prsnimātaraḥ} \]

Śāyāna’s Commentary on RV.I.23.10 :

\[ \text{te cha marutāḥ ugrāḥ sāturbhirasahyavalāḥ prsnimātaraḥ prśheḥ nānāvarṇayuktāyā bhūmeḥ putrāḥ} \]

20. RV.I.85.3

\[ \text{gomataro yachchhubbhayante añjihistanāsū subhrā dadhire virukmataḥ} \]
\[ \text{vādhante visvamabhīmātinamapa vartmānvesāmanu riyate ghṛtāṁ} \]
This cow presumably represents the mottled storm-cloud and the burning cows having distended udders with whom they come (RV.II.34.5) can hardly refer to anything but the clouds ionized with rain and lightning. Taking birth with Prśni the Maruts are compared with fires. (RV.VI.66.1,3). They are also conceived as being born from the laughter of lightning (RV.I.23.12). Agni is considered to have fashioned or begotten them (RV.VI.3.8; I.71.8). Vāyu is once said to have engendered them in the wombs of heaven (RV.I.134.4) and once they are called the sons of heaven (RV.X.77.2), being also referred to as the heroes (Virah) of heavens (RV.I.64.4;122.1;V.54.10) or as the males (maryāḥ) of heaven (RV.III.54.13;V.59.6). Once they are said to have the ocean for their mother, sindhumātaraḥ (RV.X.78.6). In other context they are said to be self-born (RV.I.168.2;V.87.2).

They are brothers among whom none is eldest or youngest (RV.V.59.6;60.5), for they are of same ages (RV.I.165.1). They have grown together (RV.V.56.5;VII.58.1) and are of similar mind (RV.VIII.20.1,21). They have common birth place (RV.V.53.3) and the same abode (RV.I.165.1; VII.56.1). They are spoken of as having grown on earth, in air and heaven (RV.V.55.7) or as residing in the three heavens (RV.V.60.6). Once they have been narrated as dwelling in the mountains (RV.VIII.83.12).

They are associated with the goddess Indrāṇī, who is their friend (RV.X.86.9) and with Sarasvatī (RV.VII.96.2). They are however most intimate with the goddess Rodasi, who is described as standing with them in their enjoyment bringing car (RV.V.56.8) or just standing beside them (RV.VI.66.6). Hence she seems to have been regarded as their bride (like Sūryā as the bride of the Āśvins). Therefore the Maruts owe the epithet
bhadrajanayah, 'having a beautiful wife' (RV.V.61.4)\textsuperscript{21} and their comparison with bridegrooms (RV.V.60.4) or youthful wooers (RV.X.78.6).

The brilliance of the Maruts is constantly referred to. They are golden, of sun-like illumination, like blessings fires, of ruddy aspect (RV.VI.66.2; VII.59.11; VIII.7.7). They shine like tongues of fire. They have the form or the brilliance of Agni (RV.X.84.1; III.26.5), with whom they are compared in brightness (RV.X.78.2). They are like fires (RV.II.34.1) or kindled fires (RV.VI.66.2) and are expressly called fires (RV.III.26.4). They shine in the mountains (RV.VIII.7.1). They are self-luminous (RV.I.37.2), an epithet applied singularly to them. Often they are referred as shining and brilliant (RV.I.165.12).

They are particularly often associated with lightning, Vidyut (RV.V.54.2,3,11; I.64.5). The lightnings smile down on earth when the Maruts shed their ghee (RV.I.168.8; V.52.6). They are like lightnings shining with rain (RV.VII.56.13). Lightning is so characteristic of them that all the five compounds of Vidyut in the Rig Veda are connected with the Maruts.

They hold lightnings in their hands (RV.VIII.7.25; V.54.11), they delight in lightnings and cast a stone (RV.V.54.3) Their lances (ṛṣṭi) are often mentioned, and that these represent the lightning is shown by their epithet rṣṭividyut, 'lightning-speared' (RV.I.168.5; V.52.13\textsuperscript{22}) The Maruts ride on cars gleaming with lightning (RV.I.88.1; III.54.13), these are of golden colour (RV.V.57.1), having wheels of gold or fellies (RV.I.64.11; 88.5), which are fortified with fitted weapons (RV.V.57.6).

\textsuperscript{21} RV.V.61.4
parā virāśa etana maryāśo bhadrājanayah |
agnitapo yathāsatha ||

\textsuperscript{22} RV.V.52.13
ye rṣvā rṣṭividyutah kavayah santi vedhasah |
tamrṣe mārutam gāṇam nāmasya rāmayā girā ||

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Ruddy or tawny coursers draw forward their cars (RV.I.88.2; V.57.4), they have golden feet (RV.VIII.7.27) and are swift as thought. These coursers are spotted, as is apparent from the epithet prsadasva, ‘having spotted steeds’ which occurs many times and pin-pointedly connected with the Maruts. They are also described as having yoked the winds as steeds to their pole (RV.V.58.7).

The Maruts are great as the sky (RV.V.57.4), they surpass heaven and earth (RV.X.77.3), are immeasurable in greatness (RV.V.58.2) and no other can reach the limit of their might (RV.I.167.9). The Maruts are young (RV.I.64.2; 165.2; V.42.15) and unaging (RV.I.64.3). They are divine (asura), vigorous, impetuous, without soil (RV.I.64.2, 12) and dustless (RV.VI.66.2). They are fierce (RV.I.19.4), irascible (RV.VII.56.8), terrible (RV.V.56.2, 3; VII.58.2), of terrible aspect (RV.V.56.2), of fearful form (RV.I.19.5; 64.2) and are fierce like wild beasts (RV.II.34.1). They are playful like children or calves (RV.I.166.2; VII.56.16; X.78.6). They seem to be like black-backed swans (RV.VII.59.7). They are iron-tusked boars (RV.I.88.5); they are like lions (RV.I.64.8).

The noise which they make is referred to often (RV.I.169.7) and is expressly designated as thunder (RV.I.23.11), but it is also the roaring of the winds (RV.VII.56.3). They speed like boisterous winds (RV.X.78.3) and whirl up dust (RV.I.64.12). They come with the winds (RV.VIII.7.3, 4, 17) and take them as their steeds (RV.V.58.7).

One of the prime functions of the Maruts is to shed rain. They are clothed with rain (RV.V.57.4). They rise from the oceans and shed rain (RV.I.38.9). They cover the eye of the sun with rain (RV.V.59.5). They spread darkness with the cloud when they shower rain (RV.I.38.9). They
sprinkle mists when they speed with winds (RV.VIII.7.4). They cause the heavenly pail (RV.V.53.6; 59.8) and the streams of the mountains to pour (RV.V.59.7). When they hurry on, the waters flow (RV.V.58.6). A terrestrial river receives its name, Marudvṛddhā, ‘swelled by the Maruts’ (RV.X.75.5) from this action.

The Maruts raise waters from sea to sky and precipitate them from the sky upon the earth (AV.4.27.4). The waters so showered are exclusively associated with the thunderstorm. Relating to their character as rain shedders, the Maruts receive the epithets purudrapsāḥ (RV.V.57.5) or drapsināḥ (RV.I.64.2) ‘abounding in drops’ and the frequent sudānavaḥ ‘dripping well’. They also avert heat (RV.V.54.1). However they also remove darkness (RV.VII.56.20), produce light (RV.I.86.10) and prepare a path for the sun (RV.VIII.7.8).

They are also said to have measured out the air (RV.V.55.2), stretched out the terrestrial regions as well as the bright realms of heaven and held apart the two worlds (RV.VIII.83.9,11).

Undoubtedly in allusion to the sound of the wind, the Maruts on several occasions are called singers (RV.V.52.1;60.8;VII.35.9). They are the singers of heaven (RV.V.57.5). Though their song must primarily have represented the sound of the winds, it is also conceived as a hymn of praise (RV.III.14.4). Hence they are addressed as priests when in Indra’s company (RV.V.29.3) and are compared with priests (RV.X.78.1). Like the other Gods they are several times also spoken of as drinkers of soma (RV.II.36.2;VIII.83.9-12).

23. RV.V.57.5

purudrapsā añjivantah sudanavastvesamārāñjanavārañvadhasāḥ
sujātāso januśā ruknavaksasāvī divārākā amṛtaṁ nāma bhejire
Being identified with the phenomena of the thunderstorm, Maruts are naturally intimate associates of Indra, appearing as his friend and allies in innumerable passages. They increase his strength and prowess (RV.III.35.9;VI.17.11) with their prayers, hymns and songs (RV.I.165.11). They generally assist Indra in the Vṛtra battles (RV.VIII.65.2, 3;X.113.3). With them Indra gains the light (RV.III.65.4). In fact Indra accomplishes all his celestial exploits in their company (RV.I.100.;101;165;X.65). Sometimes the Maruts appear more independent in these exploits.

Maruts occasionally exhibit malevolent traits when not in the company of Indra. They then to some extent participate in the maleficent nature of their father Rudra. They are implored to avoid the lightning from their worshippers nor to let their ill-will reach them (RV.VII.56.9), and are besought to avert their arrow and the stone which they hurl (RV.I.172.2), their lightning (RV.VII.57.4), and their cow and man-slaying bolt (RV.VII.56.17). Evil can come from them (RV.I.39.8), their anger is deprecated (RV.I.171.1;VII.58.5) and they are said to have the wrath of the serpent (RV.I.64.8,9). Like their father Rudra, the Maruts are supplicated to bring healing remedies, which abide in the Sindhu, the Asikñi, the seas and the mountains (RV.VIII.20.23-26) and once they are associated with Rudra in the possession of pure, salutary and beneficent remedies (RV.II.33.13). The remedies appear to be the waters, because the Maruts bestow medicines by showering rains (RV.V.53.14). Like Agni, on several occasions they are considered to be pure or purifying, pāvaka (RV.VII.56.12)\(^2\).

\(^2\) RV.VII.56.12:

\[ \text{sūchī vo navāyā marutaṃ sūchināṃ sūchiniḥ hīnomyadhvarāni sūchibhyāḥ |}
\[ \text{ṛtena satyamṛtasāpa āyañcīhuchihjāmnānah sūchayaḥ pāvakāḥ |} \]

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In the Rig-Veda Maruts are considered as storm-Gods because they engage with lightning, thunder, wind and rain as well as the different traits mentioned above.

The lion’s-share of hymns are dedicated to the Maruts in the Rig Veda thereby highlighting their significance in the spiritual evolution of the individual aspirant and the humanity at large.

PARJANYA

Parjanya plays a very subordinate part among the deities of the Rigveda being celebrated in only three hymns while the name is stated less than thirty times. His praises are also sung in one hymn of the Atharvaveda (RV.IV.15), which however, chiefly comprises of verses from the Rig Veda.

The word Parjanya have the appellative sense of ‘rain –cloud’. This same water ascends and descends day by day, the rain clouds quicken the earth, the fires quicken heaven (RV.I.164.51)25. The Maruts even during the day cause darkness by the water-carrying rain-cloud, when they inundate the earth (I.3.89); they poured out the pail of heaven, they discharge the rain cloud through the two worlds, the rain pervades the dry places (RV.V.53.6). Brhaspati is besought to cause the cloud to rain and to send the rain-charged (vrstimantam) cloud (RV.X.98.1,8). Soma flows ‘like the rain-charged cloud’ (RV.IX.2.9) and the drops of Soma speed like the rains of the cloud (RV.IX.22.2)26.

25. RV.I.164.51 :

samānmetaduḍakaṁchaityava chaḥabhiḥ |
bhūmriṁ parjanyā jinvantī divaṁ jinvantyaagnayāḥ ||

26. RV. IX.22.2 :

ete vātā ivoravaḥ parjanyasyeva vrṣṭayāḥ |
agniriva bhramā vrṣṭiḥ ||
In these passages Parjanya is explained as megha or cloud. Parjanya is also used to explain Dyaus in VS. 12.6 and stanayitnu, ‘thunder’ in SB 14.5.5.10. In most passages, the word Parjanya clearly denotes the personification which presides over the rain-cloud commonly retaining the attributes belonging to the phenomena. He then takes the form of an udder, a pail (kośa) or water-skin (dṛti) (RV.V.83.8,9). He is a roaring bull with swift-flowing drops, who places his seed in the plants as a germ (RV.V.83.1\(^27\); AV.4.15.1).

Sometimes Parjanya is like a barren cow, sometimes he is productive, disposing of his body according to his wish (RV.VII.101.3). The shedding of rain is his most prominent characteristic. He flies around with a watery car and loosens and draws downwards the water-skin (RV.V.83.7).

Like a charioteer urging on his horses, he displays his rainy messengers, when he showers rain water, the lion’s roar resounds from a far, with thunder he comes shedding rain water as divine father (RV.V.83.3,6). He is asked earnestly for rains and is implored to withhold rain after shedding it (RV.V.83.10). Several times he is said to thunder (RV.V.83). With thunder he brings down trees, demons, evil-doers; the whole world is frightened of his mighty weapon of thunder (RV.V.83.2). He and vata are the wielders of mighty thunder (RV.X.66.10)\(^28\). Parjanya is also accompanied by lightning though less frequently than with thunder. The winds blow forth, the lightnings fall, when Parjanya quickens the earth with his seed (V.83.4). In the aerial ocean Parjanya thunders with lightning (AV.19.30.1). He also appears to be

\(^{27}\) RV. V.83.1 :
achchhā vada tavasaṇi girbhārbhīḥ stuḥi parjanyāṁ namasa vivāsa ||
kanikradvṛṣabho jiradāṇu reto dadhatyosadhisu garbham ||

\(^{28}\) RV. X.66.10 :
dhartāro diva ṛhavaḥ suhastā vaiṇāparjanyā mahisasya tanyatoḥ ||
āpa oṣadhiḥ pra tirantu no giro bhago rātitvājino yantu me havam ||
meant, in a hymn of the Rig Veda, to the Viśvedevas, by the God who thunders and roars, saturated with water and clouds, who with lightning excites the two worlds, besprinkling them (RV.V.42.14).

As the shedder of rain Parjanya is naturally in a special degree the producer and nourisher of vegetation. When he quickens the earth with his seed, the plants spring up; in his activity are plants of every form; he has yielded plants for nourishment (RV.V.83.4,5,10; VI.52.6). He is the fructifier and increaser of plants, protected by the God they bear good fruit (RV.VII.101.1,5).

Reeds and grass are produced by his action (RV.VII.102.1). Parjanya places the germ not only in plants but in cows, mares and women (RV.VII.102.2) and is invoked to bestow fertility (RV.V.83.7). He is considered the bull that impregnates everything, in him is the soul of what moves and stands (RV.VII.101.6). He is also described as a self-dependent sovereign, who rules over the whole world, in whom all beings and the three heavens are established, and in whom the three-fold waters flow (RV.VII.101.2,4,5). Due to his generative activity Parjanya several times receives the epithet of father (RV.VII.101.3; IX.82.3). He is once called ‘our divine father’ (RV.V.83.6).

29. RV. VII.102.2:
   yo garbhamosadhīnāṁ gavāṁ kṛṣṇyavatāṁ |
   parjanyah puruśīnāṁ ||

30. RV. VII.101.6:
   sa retodhā vrṣabhah śāvātināṁ tasminnātmā jagatastasthuṣaśca ||

31. RV. V.83.6:
   dīvo no vrṣṭim maruto raridvaram pra pinvata vrṣṇo aśvasya dhīrāḥ |
   arvānetena stanayitnunehyapo niśińchannasūraḥ pita naḥ ||

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His wife by implication is the earth (RV.V.83.4; VII.101.3). Parjanya himself is said to produce a calf Vatsam, the germ of plants (RV.VII.101.1) who denotes probably lightning. Soma may, however, be meant for his father is once (RV.IX.82.3) considered to be Parjanya, and he is spoken of as 'increased by Parjanya' (RV.IX.113.3)\(^\text{32}\).

Parjanya is associated with various other deities. His connection is closest with Vāta, who with the single exception of Agni in one passage, is the only god forming a dual divinity with him. The Maruts are also a few occasions invoked with Parjanya (RV.V.63.6; 83.5). Agni is celebrated with him in a couple of verses of one hymn (RV.VI.52.6,16). Indra has much in common with the ‘rainy’ Parjanya, being compared with him in this respect (RV.VIII.6.1). The two gods have in fact much the same natural basis.

\[^{32}\text{RV. IX.113.3 :}
\]

\[\text{parjanyavrddhami mahisa tam sūryasya duhitabhara} \]

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SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATIONS

INDRA

Indra in spiritual interpretation is the only force behind the multiplicity of the Gods of the Vedic pantheon. In Rigveda III.53.8 it is found that Indra becomes repeatedly manifested in various forms practicing delusions with respect to his own peculiar person, i.e. he is the only one who has become each and everyone. That oneself is the root cause of the Vedantists. In the Purusa-sukta we find that Purusa is the root cause of what has been created and what is to be created it. Here we get the reflection of what has been stated earlier in Rigveda III.53.8.

The epithet of Vṛtra when taken into consideration in its spiritual aspect states that to reach to the ultimate there is the obstruction of Vṛtra. This Vṛtra is the āvaraṇa-sakti which is equivalent to the concept of māyā of the Vedantins. To remove this obstruction the strength or vigour is necessary. In the spiritual interpretation of this vigour is ojas and the god is Indra.

In Nirukta we find whatever vigorous is there the god is Indra. When the obstruction is pierced the Parama-jyoti or supreme light is achieved. The Aitareya Upanisad, Kousitaki Upaniṣad specially has highlighted these spiritual interpretations of Indra.

33. RV. RV.III.53.8:

rūpaṁ rūpaṁ maghayā vobhavīti māyāḥ krnvāṁstanvarī pari svāṁ |
triyaddivā pari mūḥūrtamāṅgatsvairmantrairupūtpā rtāvā ||

Sayana's Commentary on RV. RV.III.53.8:

maghāva dhanavānindrah rūpamrūpaṁ yadyadṛupam kāmayate tattadṛupam vobhaṇīti bhrām
prapnoti | tattadṛupatmako bhavati | tatra kāranamuchyate |
mayāḥ anekarūpagramhaśaśamarthiyopetāḥ krnvaṇāḥ krvāṇaḥ svāṁ tvaṁ tanvaṁ svākiyāṁ tanūṁ |
svāmāchharirirnāvadvaidhāni sārīrāni nirminite |
yadvā svāṁ tanūṁ naśvādharūpānaṇopetām karoti |
tathā cha mantravarnah-'indro māyāhiḥ pururūpaḥ'(R.Sam.V1.47.18)iti ||

34. Aitareya Upanisad 1/3/13-14:

sa etameva purusam brahma tatamamapasyadidadamarāśamīti ||
tasmīdandronaḥ nāma, idandro ha vai nāma |
tamidandronaḥ santamindra ityāchaksate parakṣena, parokṣapriyāḥ iva hi devāḥ ||
In the Kauśitaki and Aitareya Upaniṣad Indra is mainly Prajñā and Prāṇa. The last one is Prajñānarāṁ Brahma. This concept of Brahma in samhitā text it is Indra. In the Brāhmaṇas he is Prajāpati. In Upanishads it is Puruṣa and spiritually all are prajñānas. Indra is prajñāna which states that Indra is knowledge par-excellence.

VAYU

The spiritual interpretation of Vāyu is said to be Prāṇa by which we always inhale the power of living, without air we cannot survive for a little time. Air is like a ocean life where human beings like fishes take the vitality of life. In the depth of ocean of air we are roaming. Air outside our body is the same as inside our body. The vitality of life lies in me and that vitality also lies in others. The same vitality is reserved for the entire human world connected with the air of the whole world. Thus the deep and direct connection with the air of the antariksa makes us feel the vitality of the soul with the vitality of the universe. The unity of the soul of the jiva is extended to the vitality of the universal soul. That is the realization of Brahman by the jiva. The risis who are established in Brahman announce that the air by which we live is nectar. Oh! Vayu, you are the Brahman whom we visualize directly.

35. Kausitaki Upanisad 3,1,2,8:

satyam hindrah! Sa hovācha | māmeva vijānihi |
etadevāharh manusyāya hitatamani manye ||

36. Aitareya Upanisad 3.1.3:

esa brahma, esa indrah, esa prajapatiḥ, ete sarve devaḥ, imāni cha pañcha mahābhūtānīprthivi
vāyurākṣaś apr jyotimśiṣyetañi |
We announce that you are the visible Brahman. This Vāyu as the vitality of our life spreads through respiration from the early age down to the present age occupies a system of meditation in our life\textsuperscript{37}.

In the vedic wisdom the elevation from the stage of earth to the stage of middle state i.e. antariksasthana, it means the elevation of consciousness from earth to mid-region. The earth of Agni mixes up with its burning flames to the region of Vāyu.

The air in the Nighantu 17.17 in the list of gods is called Matarīśvā. Yāska has placed Vāyu in the mid-region gods. They are serially placed as Vāta, Vayu, Marudgana and Matarīśvā. This term Matarīśvā is a very old and great name for Vāyu.

Vāyu is mixed with Prāṇa that is why Vāyu is born of vital life. The Vāyu has taken the strength of Prāṇa etc (RV.X.90.13\textsuperscript{38}; T.A.2.7.1\textsuperscript{39})

In the churning of fire on the sacrificial altar Vāyu is required and the sages call it great air leading fire to heaven. The sage Vaśiṣṭha says that the air discloses the duty of the dawn which dances in the light of dawn. This shows the life-breathe flows in colourful way in the heaven through air. The great Purusa’s luster burns in the air that shows the pure sense of self realization is brought to the sage by the air.

\textsuperscript{37}Chhandagyopanisad 4.3.1 :
\begin{align*}
& vāyur vāva sanvargah, yadā vā agnir udvāyati \\
& vāyum evāpyeti, yadā surov'dstam eti vāyuṁ evāpyetī,
& yadā chandro' stam eti vāyuṁ evāpyetī |
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{38}RV.X.90.13 :
\begin{align*}
& prānād vāyur ajāyata ||
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{39}Taittirīya-aranyaka 2.7.1 :
\begin{align*}
& prānopāsanayā prānarupino vāyubhāvam prapanna ityarthāḥ ||
\end{align*}
In the mid-region although air moves in the high oblivion of emptiness still in the mid-region there is a god who is our life-god called Prāṇa-devātā. In this god Prajñā i.e. wisdom and vitality of life mixes together and the air moves in a very easy movement. In the philosophy of Patanjali we inhale this air by the process of Prānāyāma. In the Veda this air is defined as ‘Nireka’ and through this air the wisdom is expressed at ease, so it is called ‘śveta’ and ‘darśata’. The entire sphere of air in the wavy ocean of life’s breathe is the respiration of the world-god (AV.2.20)⁴⁰.

Vāyu in the language of Vasīṣṭha is ‘śveta niyutān abhiśri’ i.e. he is white, the shelter of niyutas and their founder. Niyut means one who is connected with the life. This life moves in our veins inside the body (RV.I.98.1⁴¹;RV.I.167.2⁴²;N:5.28⁴³).

Niyut is therefore the passage of the vital life-force. The vital life moves upwards inside the body. The upward movement of air results in leading to perfection. The world becomes beautiful by floods of life. The highest sky also becomes full of pure sacrificial fire. Our sensuous-organs become purified by this light.

The vāyu is connected with Indra, Marutgana, Bhaga, Pūsan, Vishnu, Mitra-varuṇa, and Varuṇa.

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40. Atharvaveda-śounaka-saṁhitā 2.20 Sukta :
   vayo yat te tapah harah . arehīh…….tejas tena taṁ atejasām
   kṛnu yo asmān dveṣṭi yam vayaṁ dviṣmaḥ ||
41.RV.I.98.1 :
   vaisvānarah rājā hi kam bhuvanānāṁ abhiśrīḥ ||
42.RV.I.167.2 :
   aha yād esāṁ niyutāṁ paramāṁ samudraṁ chīd dhanayanta pāre ||
43.Nirukta 5.28 :
   vāyuṣṭa niyutvān ||
   niyutvāni niyutoṣyaśvāḥ ||
   niyuto niyamanād va niyojanād vā ||
In spiritual interpretations Rudra is a combination of vitality of life and its decomposition. Rudra is the combination of good and bad. He is a god of fearful form. Rudra in the RK samhitā is worshipped as a Virāta-purusa, in the Yajus-samhitā he is one Rudra, in the Śounaka-samhitā Rudra is called Brātya and he is also called Satpati of the universe. The inner-meaning of Rudra is Prāṇa and as a god he is Rudra i.e. a fearful God. In the Sanhitā Rudra is called a combination of eleven Rudras. In the Brāhmaṇas, in the philosophic eye Rudra is called a combination of ten prāṇas and their presiding deity is the Ātmā or the soul. In the RK sanhitā Rudra is called Marutvān i.e. Rudra is called the father of the Maruts. Rudra is sometimes called conscious life and in one place of the RK sanhitā he is called the boar of the heaven. The word Boar is the symbol of Prāṇa, the vitality of life. Rudra symbolizes the strength of life as boar of heaven. In the language of the Upanishads the worship of the Rudra is the worship of main prāṇa i.e. mukhya prāṇa. It is the worship of the main flow of life, in the Vedic meditative worship. There is another current of worship in the Vedas which is called worship of wisdom. So Rudra is a combination of Prāṇa and Prajñā. Prajñā symbolizes Rudra-shiva and Prajñā symbolizes Vishnu. In the Yajurveda and in the Atharvaveda we get Rudra as the pauranic-shiva. In the Brāhmaṇas we get Vishnu as Nārāyana. In this way the two streams of worship Shiva and Nārāyana is spreaded all over India. Worship of Vishnu-Bhāgavata and Rudra-shiva, these two forces of religion are based on the Itihāsā-purāṇa as its origin. Worship of Vishnu is the worship of Āditya who is a golden puruṣa adorns the central position in the Āditya-maṇḍala and the worship of Rudra is spiritually the worship of Vāyu-who is not visible but whose speed is felt.
In the Aryan-wisdom the one side deals with light, life and joy of which Vishnu is the fore-runner god and the other side of Aryan thought is darkness, death and sorrow of which Rudra is the fore-runner god. So in the morning we see the growth of life and in the evening we see the frustration of life.

The sages pray oh! Rudra do not kill us. This hero Rudra drinks the poison of life and becomes Nilagrivā. This Rudra has two aspects—fearful and fear free. Rudra is Shiva in one hand who pierces the cloudy sky and makes the sky clear. He brings the flood of light from the heaven down to this earth.

In the Rik-sāṁhitā the relation of gods with worshippers is not the relation of fear but of love, but Rudra is feared by rishis for his fearful appearance as disease and death. Disease is of this earth and death belongs to the earth beyond. Rudra is young, his form is fixed. His golden light vibrates in his whiteness. He is Susīptra—well formed beard; he has mounted hair on head. In his hand he takes shaft and arrow. These two things are his two companions—life and death. Sometimes Rudra is as white as the sun and sometimes he assumes the golden luster of the universal gods.

Rudra appears to be Brahma who has vast, wisdom and truth. His characteristics resemble the characteristics of Brahman. He dwells in himself, so he is called ‘svadhāvān’, he is called ‘Satpati’ who is the lord of all which he has in this world. Rudra is also called ‘Prachetā’, he is like the consciousness of ocean. His consciousness is given to us.

Sat, chit and ānanda are the three characteristics of the god. Rudra has also these characteristics. The power of Rudra is melted in the flood of life in which there is wisdom and vitality of life. In one hand he has anger and on the other is death. His munificence is many, hence he is called ‘bhuridātā’. He is fearful as well as kind-hearted, he gives us nectar of life from one hand and
gives poison by another hand. He is the lord of heaven and earth. The Maruts are called sons of Rudra. His power is called rodasi. The sun god gives the power of Rudra as boon to different gods. Shama is called Shiva and 'yoh' is called 'yośā' meaning youthful lady who is the wife of shiva called 'Umā haimavatī'. Shiva and Shakti meet together in great pleasure which results in creation i.e. two power Shiva and Shakti when united remain one but when they want to create this world that one becomes two and creation starts. In the Puruṣa-sūkta of the Rigveda Rudra is called Prāṇa, hence in later literature Rudra is called the lord of all living beings i.e. paśupati.

In the Vājasaneyī-mādhyanandina-saṁhitā (16.51) Rudra is called Kṛttivāśaḥ, kṛttī means the skin of animals, the spotted skin that Shiva wears resembles the broad canopy of the sky full of stars which is the universal form of Shiva.

Rudra is called sahasrākṣa who looks by thousand eyes. It is the symbol of universal feature of Shiva. He thus becomes the lord of all beings, lord of all forms, lord of the earth, lord of everything.

In the Atharvaveda the word Mahādeva is Rudra who has attained the universal feature as Brahman as Kathopaniṣad says īśavāsyamidāṁ sarvāṁ. Hence Mahadeva attains greatness amongst all gods. He is also called 'Nilalohita' because 'lohitā' means blood feud in the world and 'Nīlā' means the peace of death. Agni is also called Rudra according to Yāska. Agni is the lightning flashes of the mid-region and as a thunderbolt he is called Rudra. The Rudras construe a class of eleven Rudras amongst which ten are life-breaths and one is the soul.

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44. Vājasaneyī-mādhyanandina-saṁhitā (16.51):

midhustama śivatama śivo nah suṁanā bhava |
aparame vṛkṣe āyuṭdham midhāya kṛttim vaśāna āchara, pinākaṁ vibhrada āgahi ||
In the Taittiriya-sāṁhitā the autumn is called Ambikā, the sister of Rudra. From spring to the rainy season the luster of the sun improves and from autumn it degenerates as if autumn pushes the life-breathe to the darkness of death. Rudra out of jealousy uses Ambikā as a medium to destroy life. It is the dangerous side of Rudra. The Prajāpati is the god of creation and Rudra is the god of deluge.

**MARUT**

The Maruts are the primary Gods of the Vedic Aryans who have worshipped them in thirty suktas. The Vāmadevas, the Goutamas and the Atris worshipped them individually and unitedly. Just as life exists in the middle part of the body similarly the Maruts who are considered to be the world life stand in the mid region of the physical world. From that mid region the consciousness of the self is spreaded every where, so Maruts are at the centre of all Gods which are like vital breathe. From that region the Maruts take us to the peak of the sky to make us conceive the Brahman. The Maruts are like Rudras, they are the Gods of storms. But that storm is the storm of light, the flashes of lights that are spreaded out throughout the Universe. These lights make a halo in the sky which is called Bhanu. This Bhānu burns like the sun in the sky. The Maruts do not burn separately, but they burn like clusters, hence there is no difference between them. They are like one light coming from heaven. In the solar system the Maruts give us light making us to feel all embracing greatness of the solar consciousness.
In the language of the Upaniṣad the Maruts are like Indra who are called wisdom of life. The Maruts give us a clear conception of the equity of soul. The Maruts are seven in triad (SB.9/3/1/25)\(^45\).

The seven refers to the seven rays of the sun who gives way to the wavy path for the Maruts. In the Upaniṣads these seven rays are the expanded life streams of human beings from the heart (Koušitaki Upanisad 4.18-19)\(^46\).

The Maruts though remain in the mid region still they supersede their boundary and spread themselves in the vast mid-region, in the vast heavenly sky. They spread themselves at the centre of life as light and curves of the rivers (RV.V.52.7)\(^47\).

The Maruts earn their wisdom and prowess from the heaven – that is why they are connected with the heaven. They come to this earth in the rumbling of clouds, in the flashes of lightning, in the flow of rains. The Maruts therefore give fertility to earth which is so long barren. They are like bridges between the heaven and the earth, they inject consciousness into inert things by building bridges of life. They are called Prśimātaraḥ because they move in the great world of heaven, Prśni means great, they are also called Sindhu mātarah as they move in the mid-region where Sindhu is the flow of

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\(^45\) Satapatha Brāhmana 9/3/1/25:

sapta-sapta hi māruta ganāḥ |

**Translation in English:**

That Vaisvānara (cake), doubtless, is yonder sun and the Maruts (cakes) are those rays They are of seven potsherds each, for the troops of the Maruts consist of seven each.

\(^46\) RV.V.52.7:

ye vāvṛdhanta pārthivā ya urāvantarikṣa ā |

vṛjane vā nadināṁ sadhasthe vā maho divah ||

**Sayana’s Commentary on RV.V.52.7:**

ye marutah pārthivah prthvisamvaddhāḥ santiḥ vavṛdhanta vardhante |

ye cha uroj mahati antarikṣe cha vavṛdhanta |

nadināṁ nadanavatiniṁ vṛjane vā vale vavṛdhanta |

mahah mahataḥ divah dyulokasya sadhasthe sahasthāne cha vavṛdhanta ||

\(^47\) RV.X.78.6:

grāvano na surayah sindhumātarah adardūśao adrayo na viśvahā |

sisulā na krilayaḥ sumaturo mahāgramo na yāmannota tvīṣā ||
The characteristic feature of the God Maruts are two mainly (i) ghora (fearful) (ii) kānta (beautiful). As they are the gods of storms they during storm take the Ghora-form, or Ugra or Ghoravarpā or Chandamurti and when storm becomes quite normal they like clear sky become quite calm. These two forms of Rudra and Shiva found in our gods, in the sky of storm Rudra appears and in the sky when everything is clear Shiva comes to appear in his calm-form. The Vedic Rudra and Shiva having mixed up in the Maruts and in our conception of Shiva lies Maruts at the root. Thus Ghora and Kānta are two forms of Shiva.

48. Kausutaki Upanisad 4.18-19 :

hitā nāma hṛdayasya nādyo, hṛdayāt purītataṁ abhipratanvanti |
| tad yat hā sahasradhā keśo vipātaavāday vyah piṅgalasyānimna tīṣṭhanti śuklasya kṛṣṇasya pitasya
lohitasya t āsū tadā bhavat,
yadā sūptaḥ svapnaṁ na kaṁchana paśyathiḥāmin prāṇa evaikadhā bhavati. 

49. Vājasaneyi-mādhyandinasaṁhitā 17/76 :
sudevo asi varuna yasya te sapta sindhavah arnaksaranti kākudamā suṁmaṁ suṣirāṁ i va
The Maruts give a divine motion to the activities of intelligence illumined by the light and strength of Indra, the Lord of the divine mind. Hence they are called as the brothers of Indra i.e. Indrajyeśṭha in RV I.23.8 and Marutvamān Indra in RV.I.23.7. This aspect of aiding the work of Indra, the divine mind gives the appellation, thought-Gods. Their functions are not confined to the control and origination of thoughts. As the Maruts have been as thought-Gods, it is appropriate to delineate the distinction between thoughts and mind in the psychology of the sages of the Vedic periods and the later periods. Mind is an instrument of formation, of organization and action and it is in these functions that it achieves its full value and real usefulness. The mind collects the information given by the five senses and the information stored in the memory about earlier sense contacts.

Thoughts are mental entities formed and released by the mind. A thought released by a person joins together with similar thoughts released by others and they form a group or a folk like the flock of birds. A flock of birds in the Rig Veda is symbolic expression of the Maruts (RV.I.37.9). They travel together, acquire more and more power and finally return to the originators with their powers augmented by the power of the kindred thoughts. Mind organizes the thoughts, analyzes the situation and takes appropriate action. The action may be on the physical plane like travel from one place to another or the action may be on the mental plane like preferring one intellectual viewpoint to another. When the mind makes up its decision, it gives the appropriate instruction to the organs of action to carry out the task and at the same time the mind releases the relevant thought when it has formed.

Mountain in the Veda specifies the heavy crust of materialism in whose womb lies the true knowledge symbolized by the cows. The Maruts along with Agni and Indra break down the tamas and the mountain of ignorance in
man and allow the beneficent streams of higher consciousness to purify all the 
organs of the being and elevate them to a higher level of consciousness. 
Borne by spotted deer, with revealing weapons of speech the Maruts are self-
luminous (RV.1.37.2) and the former that is the spotted deer are the vehicles 
of Marut. Their triple hues denote the physical, vital and mental. Often the 
deer are described as red (RV.1.39.6) which signifies the principle of life-
forces of action and enjoyment.

Maruts have so intense powers that they create the rasa of life even in 
the physical sapless, inert, physical body. This power is personified in the 
Rigveda as ‘causing windless rain in the desert’ (RV I.3.87). Just as the 
desert is a barren piece of land so is the body of the beginner aspirant is inert. 
Maruts pour the nectarous essence on the desert like body of the aspirant and 
it becomes supple and pliant.

Maruts denote the progressing illumination of human mentality, until 
from the first obscure movements of mind which only just emerge out of the 
darkness of the subconscient, they are transformed into an image of luminous 
consciousness. Twilight, half-lit or turned into misleading reflections they 
surmount these deficiencies and put on divine brilliance.

The Maruts are energies of the mentality, energies which make for 
knowledge. They carry with them the sweetness of the ananda as their eternal 
offspring and play out their play, brilliant in the activities of knowledge. The 
Maruts play a very important role in the shaping of the spiritual life of the 
beginning aspirant.