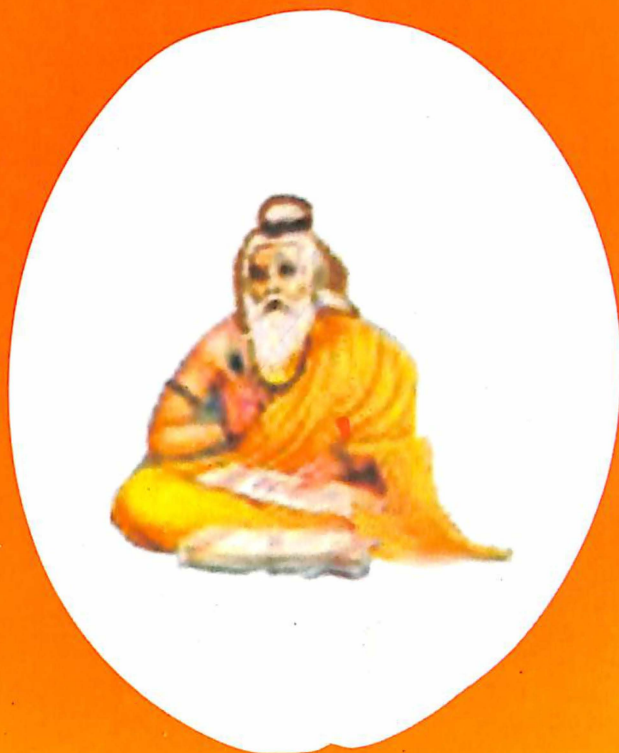


A Concise History of Vedic Literature



Bidyut Lata Ray

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The Vedic literature comprising of the four Vedas, the Samhitas, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas, the Upaniṣads and the Sūtras serves as the chief source of human knowledge in the most ancient period. It stands as the symbol of our rich cultural heritage. It provides us knowledge in diverse fields like language, literature, tradition, culture, history, sociology, geography, mythology, philosophy, religion, science and technology, phonetics, grammar, etc. Author, who has been teaching Sanskrit for last 27 years, has tried her best in this treatise to present a concise history of the Vedic literature from its inception to-date, in a more concrete and coherent manner. In the end, the significant works done on the history of Vedic and Sanskrit literature have been reviewed. The book can be used as a student's handbook in order to understand the subject within a short time.

RUTE

UDY

MLA

Contents : Introduction; The Ṛgveda; The Yajurveda. The Sāmaveda; The Atharvaveda; The Brāhmaṇas; The Āraṇyakas; The Upaniṣads; The Kalpasūtras; Supplementary Texts; The Vedic Schools; The Veda after the Vedic Period; Review of the works on Vedic Literature; Bibliography; Index.

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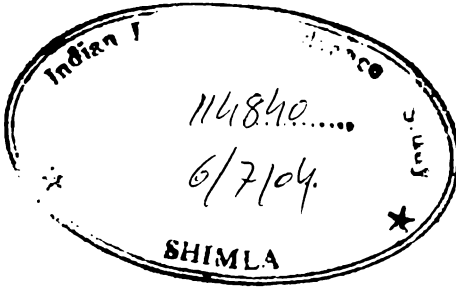
Bidyut Lata Ray

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PREFACE

The Vedic literature comprising of the four Vedas, the Samhitās, the Brāhmaṇas the Āraṇyakas, the Upaniṣads and the Sūtras serves as the chief source of human knowledge in the most ancient period. It stands as the symbol of our rich cultural heritage. It provides us knowledge in diverse fields like language, literature, tradition, culture, history, sociology, geography, geology, ecology, environment, mythology, philosophy, religion, science and technology, phonetics, grammar, music, linguistics and entertainment. Therefore, this vast field of knowledge have been attracting the attentions of the scholars, the readers, the practisers, the interpreters and the commentators from remote past to the present to explore and extract the wisdom underneath. In this respect, the commentaries of Śāyaṇa is widely acclaimed. With the advance of time, there is diffusion of knowledge. People tried to discover the rich cultural background of their primitive generations. So, writing the history of mankind, their cultural and religious structure, and the history of language and literature began. Works of erudite Vedic and Sanskrit scholars like Charles Wilkins, William Jones, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, Friedrich Schlegel, A. L. Chezy, Franz Bopp, Rudolph Roth, F. Max Müller, Thomas Aufrecht, Otto Bôthlingk, Albrecht Weber, Adolf Kaegi, A. Barth, H. Oldenberg, F. W. Hopkins, M. Bloomfield, W. Caland, V. Henry, A. A. Macdonell, M. Winternitz and Louis Renou came in the process. The contributions of Indian scholars are nonetheless significant. *History of Sanskrit literature* by C.V. Vaidya, *A Brief History of the Sanskrit Literature* (Vedic and Classical) by K. Sastri, *A History of the Samskrita Literature* by V. Varadachari, *A Handbook of Classical Sanskrit Literature* by U. V. Rao and many others were written to cast the progress of the ancient literature. *A History of Indian Literature*, volume

I, written by M. Winternitz covers the span of Vedic literature from the *Samhitās* to the *Vedārigas*. Louis Renou's *Vedic India* and Prof. J. Gonda's *Vedic Literature* provide the developments of the vedic literature in the realm of the elements. Moreover, *Vedic Bibliography* in 5 volumes, prepared by Prof. R. N. Dandekar has become invaluable assistance for understanding the literature.

Feeling that the works of Weber, Macdonell, Winternitz, Renou and other foreign scholars are not accessible to our students and readers interested in Vedic literature, many scholars have tried to recast the history of Vedic literature in simple language with expansive nature. One such is the monograph of Prof. Sukumari Bhattacharji published in two volumes under the caption *Literature in the Vedic Age*. This work provides a full account of the Vedic literature in the true tone of its contents and significance. Thus, it looks upon the Vedas not only as religious texts but also as literature.

My interactions with the students of Sanskrit for the last twenty seven years arose in me the insight to quest for the limitations of the average students. My observations reveal the real need of these beginners in Vedic studies. They want a history of the Vedic literature in concise and substantial form. Consequently, I have tried my best here in this small treatise to present the essence of the Vedic literature in a more concrete and coherent manner, coherence between the subject and the learner. I have no doubt benefited greatly from the previous works on the history of Vedic literature. Following their footprints, the only development made here is that a basic structure has been designed with essential elements of our most ancient literature. I hope this book can be used as a student's hand book in order to understand the subject within a short time. Further quest is always highly appreciated through the wide reception of any work by our learned readers. The present attempt is just a narrow line to the great way.

Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am really indebted to all of my previous authors and investigators whose learned works have shown me a path for undertaking such a minor project in designing the history of Vedic literature. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Louis Renou, a reputed scholar of Vedism whose treatise *Vedic India* has inspired me a lot to review the history of Vedic texts. I am also very much grateful to Prof. R. N. Dandekar and Prof. Sukumari Bhattacharji whose invaluable contributions *Vedic Bibliography* in 5 Volumes (Poona) and *Literature in the Vedic Age* in two volumes (Calcutta) respectively have paved the way for outlining the progress of the Vedic literature in a precise way. My indebtedness is also due to the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, for presenting me all the 5 Volumes of *Vedic Bibliography*, and to the Vishveshvarananda Vishva Bandhu Institute of Sanskrit and Indological Studies, Punjab University, Hoshiarpur, for publishing my paper on Vedic Studies in Vishveshvarananda Indological Journal. I must oblige to the editor of *Orissa Review*, Bhubaneswar, for including my article on Vedic studies in this periodical. The Secretariat, All-India Oriental Conference, Poona deserves my heartfelt thanks on bringing out the abstracts of my papers on Vedic Studies in the '*Summaries of Papers*'. I have greatly benefited from the works of Prof. Ram Gopal, who is an acknowledged authority on the Vedic language, literature and culture. I owe my indebtedness to him.

In many respects, I have got help and encouragements from several teachers, students, friends and well wishers. I am grateful to all of them.

Sweet compassion and congenial environment rendered by my husband and children in the family have provided suitable grounds for the growth of this work. My husband Dr. Sadasiva

Biswal's concrete suggestions and untiring efforts have helped this project to be completed. With their simplicity and cheerfulness, my loved ones Saumya, Shaunak and Shashwatee Swagatica have watched the progress of the work uninterruptedly and undisturbedly and thus encouraged me to go ahead of my study. With my sincere thanks, I owe my achievements to them.

I feel incompetent in acknowledging the role of my parents and in-laws who have constantly given me counsel and support in many ways through the years. Even their knowledge of the extent of my indebtedness to them is only approximate.

It is my great pleasure and fortune to associate with Mr. Shailesh Gupta of Kant Publications, Delhi who has extended his helping hand in publishing this monograph. I am highly obliged to him.

Bidyut Lata Ray

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INTRODUCTION

The Vedas are the primordial sources of human civilization and culture. Out of the four Vedas, namely, R̥g, Sāma, Yaju and Atharva, the earliest, specimen of Indian literature is the R̥gveda, an anthology of hymns in ten books, I-X. Evidently, Vedic literature is the most ancient literature which marks the beginning of Indian literature. It is also the first full-length religious and literary account of the Indo-European people. Being the earliest record of human civilization, the Vedas deal with various aspects of human life that come across or experienced by the Vedic people. It is quite encouraging to record here that copious branches of Vedic studies are now opened up by our readers, analysers, interpreters and the research scholars. Besides the history, tradition, culture, and literature, we find elaborate and lucid descriptions of the 'Creation'. Vedic Cosmology and cosmogony forward the genesis of the Universe, the earth, the water, the air and the life. The ecology and the environment depicted in the Vedas include all the natural provisions made for human existence. Vedic studies reveal mythology, religion, philosophy, science, technology, art, architecture, music, dance, society and polity et seq. Above all, matter (Pṛthivī), Energy (Agni) and life (Savitṛ) are conceptually extolled in the Vedic Sūktas. If the Veda depicts the very genesis of this creation and the accounts of the created ones, then what the Veda really is? The term 'Veda' means 'knowledge par excellence', that is sacred and all pervading. The Veda represents the religion that the Āryans brought with them into India and developed during ancient times on Indian soil. In fact the term refers to a series of texts of various contents and forms which are believed to be derived from a 'hearing' (Śruti), i.e., a revelation. Common beliefs go in favour of the term that the Vedic hymns have been emanated from Brahman. The human

authors of the Vedas were the Ṛṣis or inspired sages who could be able to receive the Vedic mantras by a direct 'Vision'. Now, our sacred duty is to know the history and developments of this literature.

The entire Vedic literature is comprised of the Saṁhitās, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas, the Upaniṣads and the Kalpasūtras. Finally, the Veda is concluded by Vedāṅgas, subsidiary works of exegesis and explanation. These are not part of the Veda in narrow sense. There are also some supplementary texts used in understanding the Vedic interpretations correctly.

The Saṁhitā or 'collections' generally in the form of verses, contain more specific hymns; prayers and ritual formulae. The Brāhmaṇas or 'Brāhmaṇic explanations' are the theological commentaries on the Saṁhitās. These are in prose-form. The Āraṇyakas are the 'forest-texts' which are read in isolation in the forest. That is the mystery (*rahasya*) here. The Upaniṣads are the commentaries adjoined to the Brāhmaṇas having a more esoteric character.

As there are four Vedas, there exist four Saṁhitās, viz. Ṛk, Yajuḥ, Sāma and Atharva. Ṛk Saṁhitā or Ṛgveda is the collection of the verses (ṛks) recited in the course of the sacrifices. The sacrificial formulae (yajus) collected, with or without commentary forms the Yajuḥ Saṁhitā or Yajurveda. Sāma Saṁhitā contains the melodies (saman). Finally, the magical formulae (atharvan) form the Atharva Saṁhitā or Atharvaveda. The Atharva was collected in a later date and hence *trayī vidyā* or triple science is commonly referred to mean three Saṁhitās, namely, ṛk, yajus and saman. These texts formed the foundation of vedism and were composed and preserved orally. They were only preserved in human memory and passed on exactly from generation to generation with meticulous care. Vedic people were trained like that in this discipline in order to transmit the mantras out and out without any lapses. According to A.L. Biruni (11th c.A.D.), the Veda was put in written form recently in Kashmir by Vasukra¹. Being the most ancient records of human civilisation, the Vedas are still carried in the memory of human beings until only the other day and this marks how great a value these manuscripts have.

The original extent of the Vedas is vast. Only a small fraction of the extensive Vedic literature existed in the pre-Vyāsa period

is now available to us. Actually, there were a number of Vedas (exceeding the present ones) present during the pre-Vyāsa period. This is understood from the dictum *anantā vai vedāḥ*, meaning the Vedas are endless. Credit goes to Vyāsa in editing the – then available Vedas into Ṛg, Yajur and Sāma sections in order to help the *hotṛ*, *adhvaryu* and *udgātr* priests in sacrifices. The Atharvaveda was a later addition. It did not enjoy the sanctity of the other Vedas even though the Brahmā of the sacrifices was considered to be conversant with this Veda. This might have been the fact that the contents of it are not in harmony with the objectives of the other Vedas. Thereafter, restrictions were imposed on the further growth of the Vedas and hence the Vedas codified by Vyāsa gained currency. These are now available to us in the form of Ṛg, Yajur and Sāma Vedas. This three-fold divisions of the Vedas is supported by the *Gāyatrī* mantra attributed to Viśvāmitra in the third maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda. It is mentioned that *Gāyatrī anena trayen iti gāyatrī*.

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THE ṚGVEDA

The Ṛgveda or "Veda of Verses" is the most ancient and most important text of Vedism. The Ṛgveda is divided into 10 maṇḍalas, 1028 sūktas (hymns) and 10552 ṛks (verses). As per another system of classification, the Ṛgveda is divided into eight parts (aṣṭakas) and each *aṣṭaka* with eight *adhyāyas* (chapters) and these in turn into groups of five verses (*varga*). The maṇḍalas are also divided in a mechanical way into "recitations" (*anuvāka*).

Following Bergaigne and Oldenberg, Louis Renou points out that the hymns and the verses are arranged in the Ṛgveda according to some precise rules¹. In maṇḍalas II to VII, the hymns are arranged by the names of the gods, with Agni at the head, followed by Indra. In maṇḍala IX, the arrangement is by metres. The arrangement of the hymns is in descending order of the number of verses. When several hymns have the same number of verses, they are arranged in descending order of the length of the metre; the order of the series in a maṇḍala is the descending order of the number of hymns in the series. The maṇḍalas II to VII are arranged according to their number of hymns. Maṇḍala I, VIII and X are governed by similar rules with some distinct features. Many interpolations have been traced with the application of the above rules. A more ancient model of the Saṁhitā has been reconstructed with the discovery of these rules. Hymns forming an artificial unity are separated to form smaller groups called *pragatha* (verse groups) or *tricha* (groups of the three ṛks). Certain interpolations have been recognised in the name of the *valakhilya*, a group of 11 hymns inserted in maṇḍala VIII. Such hymns form part of the *khila*, "supplements", series of verses which have not been included in the Saṁhitā due to either of the two following reasons. Firstly, they belonged to a different recension; and secondly, they were

composed or discovered after the codification. These interpolated verses, though set aside in the original texts, are more often attached to various parts of the Samhitā, upholding the same dignity as the Veda. In R̥gveda, we find the historical hymns, the cosmogonic hymns, and hymns in dialogue form and poetic form. The R̥gvedic hymn is not only a song in praise of a divinity. It is a composition cast in a certain style to please the audience. They give emphasis for benevolence. These songs of praise are sacred or profane symbolising the principal sources of Indian literary activity.

Date of the R̥gveda

R̥gveda being the oldest amongst the Vedas, its time of composition has attracted the attention of many scholars of history and Sanskrit through ages. Macdonell² describes that the R̥gveda is undoubtedly the oldest literary monument of the Indo-European language. But, he is at doubt about the exact date of composition of the hymns. With any approach to certainty, he says that the oldest of the manuscripts cannot be dated later than the thirteenth century B.C. On the basis of astronomy, it has been concluded by one Sanskrit scholar that the date of the oldest Vedic hymns is 3000 B.C. While another places them as far back as 6000 B.C. Tilak³ points out that the oldest period in the Āryan civilisation may be the pre-Orion (or Aditi) and its limit may be assigned roughly as 6000 to 4000 B.C. Max Muller⁴ has fixed the date of the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads at intervals of 200 years from 1200 B.C.

Since the Vedas don't narrate any of the epic stories of Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata, it is surely ascertained that the Vedas must be older than the great epics. According to Srikantha Sastry⁵, the Harappan culture is a development over the Vedic culture. The Harappan culture is noted to be of the age of some 2500 B.C. If the Indus Valley Civilisation owes its origin to the Vedic civilisation, then it is justified in assigning the date of the Vedas to seven or eight thousand B.C.

Murthy⁶ considers the period of the Vedas from geological point of view. He mentions that the present world exists between the fourth and the fifth glacial ages with the fourth interglacial period commencing from about 10,000 years ago. On this ground,

the origin and evolution of man in the Himalayan lap agrees with this age which can be well related to the period of early vedic era.

The Ṛgveda is now considered to have been composed between the thirteenth and tenth centuries B.C. although opinions vary on the upper and lower limits. The general scholarly opinion in India and abroad is that the period of composition of Ṛgveda was between c. 1200 and 1000 or 900 B.C.⁷.

The Relative Dates of the Hymns

Different dates have been assigned by the scholars for the composition of various parts of the Saṁhitā. Maṇḍala II to VII are linguistically the most ancient. They have a common system of arrangement of hymns. Each of them is attributed to the family of Gṛtsamada, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Atri, Bharadvāja and Vaśiṣṭha in order. It is usually considered that maṇḍala VIII goes together with II to VII. Its relations with IX are not so clear. Maṇḍala I consists of a first part (hymns 1-50) on the same plane as VIII and the second part of which is much more recent. There is unanimous opinion that maṇḍala X was composed at a later date. This character of maṇḍala X is confirmed by many kinds of indications of form and content.

There may be a long time gap between the period of composition of maṇḍala I and maṇḍala IX. A long period of time must have separated maṇḍala IX from X. But, it is sure that the date of composition of Saṁhitā is different from the date of incorporation in the Saṁhitā. The composition of the original texts of the Saṁhitā is no doubt a much earlier work.

Interpolations

Certain hymns have been added to the Saṁhitā later. These are interpolated hymns such as the Valakhilya, a group of 11 hymns inserted in maṇḍala VIII. They form part of the Khila (supplements), a series of verses which have not been admitted into the Saṁhitā at the beginning. Very often, these interpolations are found in different parts of the Saṁhitā bearing the same dignity as the Veda.

Types of Hymns

The hymns of the Ṛgveda are of different nature. Some are

historical. Some are cosmogonic. Some are cast in the form of dialogue and some are in poetic form. One can pick out the historical accounts narrated in certain hymns of mythical character. In VII.33, VII.18 and VI.27, we trace the rudiments of history. The apotheosis of the priest Vasiṣṭha is described in VII.33. The hymn VII.18 narrates the battle of the ten kings in detail. The victory of Abhichayamana and of Śrinjaya is referred to in VI.27.

In maṇḍala X, the panegyric addressed to creative gods takes the form of a cosmogony. Theory of the genesis of this universe has been described in many ways. One can extract the theme of the origin of this material world from the hymns. The hymn X.772 contains the fact relating to the origin of the gods, X.121 describes the world gleaned from the primordial sacrifice, X.82 narrates in more detail the genesis of the world deriving from the parts of the body of a primeval Man sacrificed by the gods, and finally X.90 and X.129 express these speculations (theory of the genesis of the Universe) in the most striking manner. According to Henry⁸, sometimes the cosmogonic theme is to be discerned in the form of riddles, and riddles with a naturalistic basis.

Maṇḍala X of the Rgveda contains the dialogues (*samvāda*), the most curious of the Vedic compositions. A literary form of the panegyric is reflected in the dialogues. Evidently, in IV.42 Indra and Varuṇa, eulogising themselves alternately seem to be disputing the pre-eminence. Geldner⁹, have regarded them as ballads. Schröder¹⁰ recognises them as cult dramas or mimes, the first indications of the Indian theatre. Charpentier¹¹ opines that they are as simple as epic recitation. Oldenberg¹² holds that the verses contain the dialogue. Such a type of mixed composition has been favoured at various stages of Indian literary history. The prose narrative, which was perhaps improvised, has been lost, and the verses alone exist.

For example, we can cite the dialogue between the ascetic Agastya and his wife Lopāmudrā in which the wife, wearied by her husband's prolonged continence, invites him to desist¹³. In X.95, we observe the theme of the union of the mortal and the goddess, related in the characters of the nymph Urvashī and the King Pururavas. A kind of satirical play between Indirā and a monkey Vṛṣakapi is a striking feature of the dialogue

hymns. The moving dialogue between the first man Yama and his sister Yami is presented in such a manner that the alternate stanzas are more closely linked than in the other dialogues. According to the descriptions, Yami invites her brother to commit incest for perpetuating their race, Yama does not agree to it. After pressing her request, Yami resigns herself. There are about twenty dialogue hymns in the Ṛgveda, which are named as ballad hymns by Oldenberg.¹⁴

The poetic form of the hymns of the Ṛgveda are illuminated from the unity made by a stanza. Successive stanzas may be connected by a "concatenation". We frequently observe sound associations and vowel harmonies. With the emphatic style, the dāṭas on ritualism are ornamental deliberations. The poet plays with the two meanings of the world as per his thinking on two parallel planes. The Ṛgvedic language is developed in such a way that it reflects mythico-ritualistic imagination. The rhetorical word-play of classical times is anticipated by the very structure of the hymns. The Ṛgveda attains the peak of the esoteric characters though almost all the Indian literature adheres one such behaviour.

The style is non-uniform. Tenth maṇḍala has its style. The hymns prayed for each god have their own charm and mannerism. Wüst opines that there is a history of the style of the Ṛgveda¹⁵. In spite of variations in the literary values of many hymns, we can trace some which have remarkable strength and originality of expression that the classical India never regained.

Subject-matter of the Ṛgveda

The Ṛgvedic hymns, though commonly mythological, deal with the subjects like nature, geology, geography, history, society and religions. Focussing the nature and the natural phenomena is the role of majority of the sūktas. Geological aspects of the Ṛgveda are gleaned from such sūktas. Some sūktas forward the geographical aspects of the Ṛgvedic period. The dynastic history of the solar and lunar kings is contained in a few. This enables us to trace the history of the kings of the Ṛgveda. Many sociological aspects like the game of dice, the song of the frogs, the marriage ceremony, conversation between separated lovers, importance of farming, protection of cows and other animals, holy act of dāna and healthy living are the Ṛgvedic materials.

Lastly religious discourse is the concern of the most of the *Ṛgvedic sūktas*.

The geological facts accounted in the Vedic hymns have much religious significance. The deities Indra, Agni, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Uṣas, Sandhyā, et seq. are manifested as the natural geological representatives. There are thirty-three deities prayed in the Vedas. They are the eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas, Indra and Prajāpati. The Vasus are Agni, Pṛthivī, Vāyu, Antarikṣa, Āditya, Dayu, Candramā and Nakṣtras; the Rudras are the ten Prāṇa Vāyus in the human body and Ātmā; and the Ādityas are the names of the twelve Zodiac Constellations of the Sun. However the treatment of all the deities in the Vedas are not uniform. The number of *sūktas* attributed to a deity differs from deity to deity. This can be more clear from the following table of the *Ṛgvedic Sūktas* devoted to a particular deity.

Ṛgvedic Deity	No. of Sūktas attributed to the Deity
Indra	More than 1/4 of the entire <i>Ṛgvedic Sūktas</i>
Agni	200
Soma	120
Viśvadevas	40
Varuṇa	12
Aśvins	More than 50
The Sun	40
Āpas	nearly 4
Pūṣan	nearly 8
Parjanya	nearly 3
Uṣas	20
Bṛhaspati	11
Rudra	nearly 3
Viṣṇu	about 6
Maruts	about 33
Savitṛ	11
Dyāvāpṛthivī	about 6
Mitra-Varuṇa	many

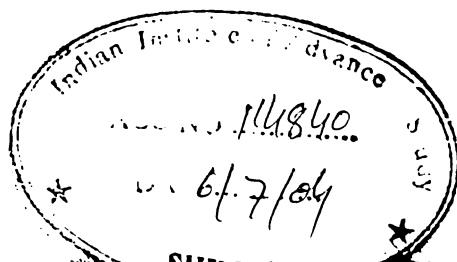
The relative significance of the geological agencies can be easily ascertained from the distribution of the sūktas mentioned above. The Vedas are not only the religious texts. There is ample scope to explore, the evidences pertaining to history, geography, sociology, geology, metaphysics, science, ecology and environment. Vedic cosmology and cosmogony are the most primitive exposition of the human knowledge about this creation and which has relevance to the present-day scientific understanding of the facts. There are a number of sūktas¹⁶ dealing with the profound aspects of creation of the universe and inquiring into the most fundamental aspects of nature. The type of the naturalistic poem is the hymn to Parjanya¹⁷ which depicts the tropical storm.

The funeral hymn of the R̥gveda¹⁸ is a type of the ritualistic poem, a prayer to death, which has taken its victim, to permit the soul to rest in peace.

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16. *R̥gveda*, X.90, 129, 192.3, 121.7, 72; VII.59.12, 103.1-9; VI.16.13.
17. *Ibid*, V.83.
18. *Ibid*, X.18.



THE YAJURVEDA

There are two divisions of the Yajurveda, namely the Black Yajurveda and the White Yajurveda. The Black Yajurveda is formed of four Samhitās of the Yajurveda out of five and the White Yajurveda has only one Samhitā. The Black Yajurveda is noted to have both prose and poetry in its mantras while the White Yajurveda is purely poetry. As the Yajurveda is primarily used in sacrifices, Sāyāṇa preferred this text first to comment on and then on the Ṛgveda. While the hotṛ (Ṛgveda) priest recited Ṛgveda verses and the Udgātṛ sang Sāmaveda songs, the Yajurveda priest actually performed the sacrifice and chanted some formulae during performance of his ritual.

According to the classification of Renou¹, the five Samhitās of Yajurveda are :

- (i) The Kāṭhaka Samhitā : It is the cārayaṇīya Kathā - Samhitā. It belongs to the broad Caraka School. The text is in five granthas (sections) and fifty-three sthānaka, representing the principal recession of the Kathā school.
- (ii) The Kapiṣṭhala Samhitā : It is another recension of the above school. It contains eight aṣṭakas and forty-eight adhyāyas.
- (iii) The Maitrāyaṇīya (or Kalāpa) Samhitā : It contains four kāṇḍas and fifty-four prapathakas. It is the only Yajurveda Brāhmaṇa mentioned by Yāska. This school has a text called the Haridrāvika which is known later.
- (iv) The Taittirīya Samhitā : This is ascribed to Āpastamba² who belongs to the Khāṇḍikīya school which is the best known recension. This Samhitā is divided into seven aṣṭakas (chapters), which contain forty-four praśnas (topics), that are again sub-divided into 651 anuvākas

with 2198 khaṇḍikās.

- (v) The Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā : It contains forty adhyāyas. It has two recensions, Kāṇva and Mādhyandina. This Saṁhitā is named after Yajñavalkya whose patronymic was Vājasaneyā. Sometimes, Yājñavalkya and Vājasaneyā are taken as two different śākhās of the White Yajurveda.

Besides above, there exists another Saṁhitā belonged to the Black Yajurveda. This is the Ātreya Saṁhitā which belongs to the broader division of Aukhīya, but, is a variant of the Taittirīya in all its components. It is divided into kāṇḍas, that are again sub-divided into praśnas composed of anuvākas. Another Saṁhitā named as 'Mānava'³ is also prevalent as the recension of Black Yajurveda. Kāṭhaka and Maitrayaṇī are closely allied, Kapiṣṭhala being only a variant of the Kāṭhaka. The Taittirīya is divided into Aukhīya and Khaṇḍikīya, and this Saṁhitā is most prevalent in South India. The different schools seem to have been grown in geographically different territories which accounts for much of their textual divergence. For instance, the Kāṇva tradition of the White Yajurveda is found in the South and the followers of Mādhyandina are more in the North India.

Date of the Yajurveda

The Saṁhitās of Yajurveda abound in mantras are borrowed from the Ṛgveda, often with considerable variations. The Yajurveda is placed sometimes after, sometimes before the Atharvaveda, before the Sāma, and in any case after the Ṛgveda. According to the chronology of its Saṁhitās, people generally admit that the White Yajurveda is younger than the Black. Certain linguistic characters show its connections with the Ṛgveda. It is difficult to ascertain the dates of the three principal texts of the Black Yajus.

The chronology forwarded by Kāṇḍānu-Karmaṇa may or may not have been based on facts. According to this, the tradition commenced with Vaiśampāyana (the legendary disciple of Vedavyāsa) and was transmitted to Yāska Paiṅgin (i.e., the son of Piṅga), Tittiri, Ukha and Ātreya in order by way of transmission from one to the next. It is evident that Yāska figures, in the guru-paramparā (teacher-pupil chain). From the detailed analysis of the grammatical usages, Keith has derived

that the Yajurveda text belongs to the same linguistic stage and chronological period of the R̥gveda. But, it is observed that a half or quarter of the verses of the R̥gveda is frequently quoted to indicate the full verse and which shows the link of Yajurveda with the R̥gveda text and thus, places the Yajurveda in the period somewhat later than the R̥gveda.

Schröder⁴ has argued that the Kāṭha, and above all the Maitrayaṇī, is the earliest on the basis of language and accentuation which are explicable in part as archaism. According to Keith, the three Samhitās of Black Yajurveda, *i.e.*, the Kāṭhaka, the Maitrāyaṇīya and the Taittirīya are contemporary to one another.

Tradition ascribes the compilation of the R̥gveda (and of the other Vedas) to Vyāsa while it attributes to Sakalya the origin of the padapāṭha (recitation by words). Such padapāṭha presents the text in isolated words neglecting the rulers of euphony. This padapāṭha differs from the Samhitāpāṭha (continuous recitation.) The padapāṭha, designed for scholastic and mnemonic purposes, has been preserved for the Taittirīya, the Maitrāyaṇī and the Vājasaneyī. Modern commentaries of Bhaṭṭabhāskara Miśra (12th c.A.D.) of Sāyaṇa (14th c.A.D.) on the Taittirīya and of Uvaṭa (period uncertain) and Mahidhara (16th c.A.D.) on the Vājasaneyī are of great importance to derive the relationship among the texts and their dates of composition.

Form and Character of the Yajurveda

The characteristic material of the Yajurveda is the Yajus. 'sacrificial formula'. It consists of phrases, ordinarily in prose, which are used as ritual instruments in invoking a divinity or in offering oblations. These invocations pave a way to give the cult object an esoteric name endowed with a sacred character. Oldenberg⁵ opines that the yajus narrate briefly their own deeds and urge the reciter to act, or urge another object to enter into connection with him. The effects realised by a rite and a prayer can be set forth by the yajus.

The Yajurveda contains some conventional syllables, the use of which was later developed by Tantrism. A few magical elements are traced here. Such elements are set forth in precise prose, with simple syntax, and an often fantastic vocabulary. According to Oldenberg⁶, the elementary rhetoric of these

passages utilises parallelism and alliteration. There are some prose commentary, some verses of the Rgvedic origin and also some rarer elements which are the vivid, archaic 'invocations' scattered among the prose.

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The Yajurveda depicts the sacrifices like the Aśvamedha (horse sacrifice), Agnicayana (pulling of the fire altar) and the Soma sacrifice. The more ancient parts of the yajus describe the full and new moon. The Yajurveda is the ritual Veda *par excellence*, the book of prayers, except that the verses taken from the Rgveda remain the preserve of the hotṛi. The collective sacrifices recorded in the Yajurveda with the ritual minutiae have impressed the Indian society in some way or other for over two millennia.

The Taittirīya Saṁhitā can be analysed to give a clear picture of the subject matter of the Yajurveda. The arrangements of the contents in the several kāṇḍas reveals that the descriptions of the sacrifices and rites are haphazard. They have been taken up, left off and resumed without any real purpose. There are mantras as well as prose Brāhmaṇas. The order of the mantras corresponds to the order of the ceremonials. The prose commentary follows the same order approximately.

Besides the sacrifices, the Yajurveda also treats of some rites relating to productive occupations like sowing⁷, and sometimes even of domestic rites and activities. Cooking is described in kāṇḍa IV⁸. The latter part of the Vājasaneyi contains some prayers which are unique in their character having no equivalent in the other Saṁhitās. Murthy⁹ points out that the Yajurveda bears some interesting features in Iṣṭividhāna and citi nirūpaṇa for expounding early mathematics and geometry. Rudra Camaka Praśna included in the fifth hymn of Vasorḍhārā is important from the geological point of view as it supplies metallurgical information. Minute ritual details play a very significant role in the entire Yajurveda. The Yajurveda witnesses the final emergence of the four castes with strictly defined and mutually exclusive rights and obligations. Folk-religion¹⁰ elements are also traced. Popular games and pastimes are also mentioned with mystic symbolisms and they are employed in sacrifices. Some natural phenomena are explained through

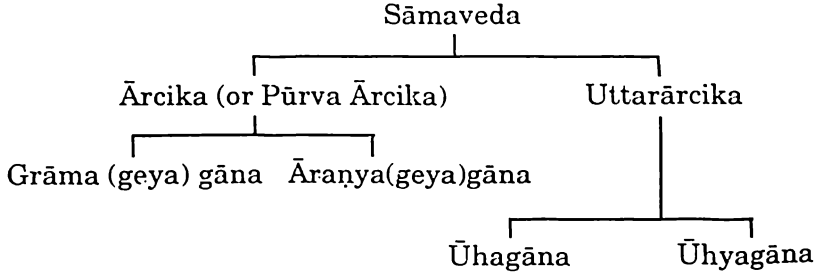
myths. Social customs, too, are given mythic explanations.

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1. Renou, L., *Vedic India*, Indological Book House, Delhi, 1971, p. 14.
2. Some opine that the connection of Āpastamba with the Taittirīya text is fictitious, as the author does not really exist before the Sūtra age.
3. Bhattacharji, S., *Literature in the Vedic Age*, Vol. 1, K.P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta, 1994, p. 196.
4. Renou, L., *Vedic India*, Indological Book House, Delhi, 1971, p. 15.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Taittirīya Saṁhitā, IV.2.6.
8. *Ibid.*, 6.9.1-4.
9. Murthy, S.R.N., *Vedic View of the Earth*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 1997, p. 35.
10. Taittirīya Saṁhitā, VI.6.4.3-4.

THE SĀMAVEDA

The Sāmaveda exists in three recensions, namely, Kauthuma, Rāṇāyaṇīya and Jaiminīya. The second one is similar to the former in respect of the Saṁhitā, and the last one contains larger collections of melodies than the Kauthuma. In comparison to Kauthuma, the verses of Jaiminīya are less numerous, differently arranged and subject to some sound changes. Existing six texts of the Sāmaveda are as under :



Pūrva Ārcika contains Āgneya kāṇḍa, Indra kāṇḍa, Pāvamāna kāṇḍa and Āraṇya kāṇḍa. The Uttarārcika is composed of the remaining hymns. Out of total 1875 mantras of the Sāmaveda, 1235 mantras constitute Ārcika or prayers and 640 mantras belong to Gāna or songs group, some of which are based on musical notes. Most of the verses of the Sāmaveda are borrowed from the Ṛgveda, mostly from books VIII and IX, and none from the later books. Some hymns drawn directly from the Ṛgveda read different in the Sāmaveda.

The Character

The hymns of the Sāmaveda are often found with variants of a verbal character. This was perhaps warranted by the musical transcription. Complex metres are used in the verses of the Sāmaveda. In the Ārcika, the verses are composed of isolated lines based on the principle of 'Sāmanas' or 'melodies'.

As per the opinion of the Hindus, these verses are the matrices or yoni of the melody. Metre-wise or divinity-wise arrangement of the verses is found. Such collections are useful to the pupils of music school. The Uttarārcika, on the other hand, is a practical manual of performing rituals. The text provides the ceremonial rites chronologically. The first line of this Ārcika gives the principle of performance learning the 'chanted complexes', stotras useful in the course of the sacrifice. It is characterised by the use of single tone. Thus, it is evident that the Sāmaveda is set to music and is intended to be sung. The present day music is derived from it. The text of the Sāmaveda proper was designed in such a manner that it became a handbook indexing on the performance of sacrificial rites by the priest and served as a training manual for the teachers of music school. The Ārcika gives the trainee music lessons, the Uttarārcika serves as the manual for the practical, ritual application for these songs. The mantras meant for singing are of two groups, namely, those which are to be sung in the villages and those which are meant to be sung in the forests. The Uttarārcika having two gāṇas are recited during performance of rites and sacrifices. The order of the ceremonial is followed here.

The Date of the Sāmaveda

There is no indication in the verses of the Sāmaveda to know their genesis. Only a few references to the Arctic home¹ are traced. The date of composition and compilation of the hymns of the Sāmaveda can be ascertained some way or rather from the Yajurveda and from the Parsee scriptures. As most of the verses of the Sāmaveda have been borrowed from the R̥gveda, scholars try to determine the age of the Sāmaveda with respect to the origin of the R̥gveda, *i.e.* the Sāmaveda originated in a period later than that of R̥gveda. Again, out of the two Ārcikas, the Uttarārcika was compiled later than the Purvārcika. On the other hand, since the hymns of the Sāmaveda are meant to be sung and bears musical notes, the age of the Sāmaveda can be fixed only by analysing the history and developments of the songs ever sung by man on earth. From the late palaeolithic times, singing by human beings persists. C.M. Bowra² has given a comprehensive treatment of the origin and development of the song in the primitive period. He has derived the conclusion that the song developed from dance on the one hand and from

speech on the other. The records of dance have been traced in the 24th century B.C.³ Songs, in some form or other must have been contemporary of dance. Later, Sāmanas were introduced to serve as a tool for achieving supernatural ends by singing songs. According to Bowra, the primitive songs not only aimed to generate the particular psychosomatic condition in men but also to induce a change in the supernatural powers around them. Evidently, the primitive song was no more than a prayer⁴. As this song could be able to change the state of mind of a man, it had magic potency through which it created sensational vibrations in supernatural objects. The religious use of the songs is the very recent. With the march of time and necessity of the situation of application of the song, its characteristics have been modified. Songs can be sung either in the lighter rhythms or in the brisker rhythms as the situation warrants. The Sāmanas were therefore derived from these sources.

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The Sāmaveda is very closely, connected with the Soma Sacrifice. Of the three significant sacrifices — Paśu, Soma and Iṣṭi — only Soma and Iṣṭi had Sāmanas chanted. The Sāmanas were of two kinds — one group addressed to Pavamāna Soma while the second group addressed to other gods. Ṛgveda IX has a direct connection with the Sāmaveda. Analysis of the Ārcika reveals the names of deities like Agni, Indra, Pavamāna Soma, Prajāpati, Varuṇa, Viśva Devāḥ and Anna (food). Except the last one, all the sections of the Uttarārcika mention Agni, Pavamāna Soma and Indra. Other deities figured are Uṣas, Aśvins, Mitrāvaruṇa, Āditya, Sarasvatī, Savitr, Dyāvāpṛthivī, Sūrya, Indrāgnī, Viśvakarman, Pūṣan, Marutaḥ, Indrāṇī, Viṣṇu, Vāyu, Bṛhaspati, Āpradevī, Iṣavaḥ, Aditi, et seq. Atmospheric gods and most solar gods are found absent. Generally the hymns of the Sāmaveda are devoted in addressing the major Ṛgvedic deities with Pavamāna Soma as the core. In the Sāmaveda, we find that the prayers are the usual ones for food, prosperity and security. Soma plant has been identified with the moon. It shows the astronomical knowledge of Indian seers at that time.

The conceptions of the Sāmaveda on evolution on the earth are unique as well as based on convictions. This Veda throws light on the Supreme Creator and his manifestations. All that

exists now and which may appear in the future are his manifestations⁵. Like the Yajurveda, this Veda holds the view that activity in the material world is only a transfer of ideas to matter. No activity or achievement is possible on earth or in heaven without prior thought or planning. Intelligence in activity creates only ideas and these formed the Creator's objective states. The Creator is the Ultimate. He is Puruṣa who bestows births of creatures first, unites with them, then the creation is manifested. Truly, the cosmos is his manifestations, rejoicing (or bestowing on us) animate and inanimate objects.⁶ The cosmos is born of activity who is united to it; the Puruṣa controls it from beyond.⁷

Mentions of Agni (the fire)⁸, Ṛta (the seasons)⁹, Pṛthivī (the earth)¹⁰, and Aruṇa (the Sun)¹¹ et seq. help us to draw a few points on the geological and geographical aspects of the world. The terms like Samudra (the ocean)¹², Bhuvana (the earth)¹³, and Bhārata (India)¹⁴ are traced in this Veda and these references form the geographical components of this material world.

Prayers, according to Sāmaveda, are the sole means to be resorted to by us. Through these prayers, this Veda extols the various universal deities for their varied activities in creating and maintaining all the living-beings to establish equilibrium in nature. All the creatures are equally treated by the Supreme Puruṣa, the Creator. The devotees pray for their safety, security and unimpaired life.

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3. Bhattacharji, S., *Literature in the Vedic Age*, Vol. 1, K.P. Bagchi & Co., Calcutta, 1984, p. 189 and fn. 46.
4. *Ibid*, p. 190 and fn. 47.
5. Sāmaveda, Āraṇya kāṇḍa, VI.3.4.5.
6. *Ibid.*, VI.3.4.4.
7. *Ibid.*, VI.3.4.7.

8. Sāmaveda, Uttarārcika, II.1.4.1-3.
9. *Ibid.*, II.1.7.2.
10. *Ibid.*, VI.2.19.1.
11. *Ibid.*, VI.3.3.1.
12. *Ibid.*, V.2.1.1.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, VI.2.2.3.

THE ATHARVAVEDA

The Atharvaveda is a later addition to the Vedic literature but not later compositions. It consists of 20 books or *kāṇḍas* having 731 hymns and 5987 verses. The modern subdivisions of the books are called *prapāṭhaka* (lectures), *anuvāka* (recitations) and *daśati* (decades). Books I-VIII are divided into 34 chapters (*anuvākas*), while book XVII has one *prapāṭhaka* only with seven *anuvākas*. Book XX has 9 *anuvākas*, the third of which has three *paryāya* (series) hymns. The first 18 books forming the Atharvaveda proper can be divided into three groups according to the number of verses they contain in a hymn. The first group comprising of books I-VII contain short hymns. Book I has hymns of 4 verses, book II of 5. On the whole, the books are arranged in ascending order of length except book VII, which consists of hymns of 1 verse. The second group comprising of books VIII-XII contain long hymns. The books are of about the same size, and the hymns are classified according to length. The third group comprising of XIII-XVIII contain hymns classified according to subject. These books, except XVIII, are arranged in descending order of length. The remaining two books XIX and XX are the supplements, the last one being a more recent supplement consisting almost entirely of extracts from the *R̥gveda*, and particularly from the 8th *maṇḍala*. Nearly 1200 mantras of 20th *kāṇḍa* (book) have been drawn directly from the *R̥gveda*.

The Recensions

The Atharvaveda has two recensions, one of the Śaunaka and the other of the Paippalāda (the Kashmirian recension). Whitney had discovered the Śaunaka long before D.M. Bhattacharya found the manuscripts of the Paippalāda in Orissa. In the old records, we find nine *śākhās* or recensions of

the Atharvaveda. These are Śaunaka, Tauda, Mauda, Paippalāda, Jājala, Jalada, Caraṇavāidyā, Brahmapada and Vedādarśa. However, of these, only two, Paippalāda and Śaunakīya exist with their respective texts. A large number of variations are marked when Paippalāda and Śaunakīya texts are composed. Such variants are of the nature of *Kāṇva* or *Mādhyandina* texts.¹ However, the *Saunakīya-Saṁhitā* of Atharvaveda is a pure and a fine editorial work. It has no parallel and hence it is commonly accepted one.

The Date

It is not meticulous to assign a date to the Atharvaveda as this is a later addition to the other three Vedas (*Veda trayī*). Though the collections were made later, and perhaps long after the Ṛgveda, the linguistic stratum is more recent. While the ritual is very primitive, the geographical and social conditions, like the myths and the speculations, demand a more advanced state.² Possibly, the collections gained the status of a Veda with modernisation. Archaeological excavations of India and their scientific analysis reveal that the period of the Atharvaveda is about 25th or 26th century B.C.³

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The *kāṇḍas* of the Atharvaveda can be categorised as per the subject matter they contain. But, such sub-divisions can not be assumed to be final, because there is much overlapping of the facts and the prayers. With flexibility, the books can be grouped subject-wise as follows :

- (i) charms for Long life (*āyusyāni*)
- (ii) prayers to cure disease and demonic possession (*bhai-ṣajyāni*)
- (iii) curses upon demons, sorcerers, enemies (*abhicārikāni* and *Kṛtyā-pratiharaṇāni*)
- (iv) charms of Love (*Srtikarmāṇi*)
- (v) charms to secure harmony, influence in the assembly et seq. (*sammanasyāni*)
- (vi) prayers relating to royalty (*rājakarmāṇi*)
- (vii) prayers relating to Brāhmaṇical power
- (viii) prayers to secure prosperity and freedom from danger

(pauṣiṭikāni)

- (ix) prayers in expiation of sin and defilement (prāyaścittāni)
- (x) cosmogonic and theosophic hymns
- (xi) ritualistic and general hymns
- (xii) prayers devoted to marriage and funeral rites, etc.
- (xiii) hymns dealing with herbs and medical science
- (xiv) the kuntāpa hymns

More specifically, the first thirteen books of the Atharvaveda deal with *abhicāra*, the 14th deals with mantras pertaining to marriage rites, the 15th consisting of eighteen hymns is known as the *Vrātyakāṇḍa* bearing the mantras of *Vrātya* goddess, the 16th deals with mantras to be recited to make oneself free from bad dreams, the 17th deals with mantras for prosperity and well-being, the 18th deals with mantras employed in *pitṛyajña*. the 19th deals with herbs and medical science and the 20th deals with the mantras to invoke the deity *Indra* as well as the *Kuntāpa* hymns. The 19th book has also some philosophical hymns. The *Kuntāpa* hymns of the book 20 contain verses depicting certain episodes of the cult, in particular the payment to the officiants. Book 20 is entirely a technical treatise for the use of the officiant *Brāhmins*.

The Atharvaveda is noted to be the foundation of the Indian medical science. Besides, it is the source of the science of Indian archery (*Dhanurveda*). The other notable aspects of this Veda are agriculture, environment, cosmogony, geology, geography, sociology, casteism, kingship, constitution, war and many domestic concerns. The most important point to record here that the first hymn of the Atharvaveda is entirely devoted to the earth, though the earth is depicted in the *Rgveda* in combination with *dyāvā*. The longest hymn in the 12th *kāṇḍa* of the Atharvaveda covers more than three-quarters of the book and is a hymn to Mother Earth. Descriptions of the terrestrial objects focuss on the astronomical aspects of this Veda. There are hymns on the aspects of time and on stars, though the stars were known by the time of the *Rgveda* as evident from the *Vedāṅgajyotiṣa* by *Lagadha*. The Atharvaveda delineates the life of the common man in the ancient Indian village community — the village farmer, craftsman and others who constituted the agriculturist

society of the time. It is, thus, the Veda of masses.

The other unique and significant aspect of the Atharvaveda is the 'tantra'. In the primitive age, the non-Āryans had their t̄āntric culture. Mainly, the non-Āryans were the tribal people who were living in the forests and in the hilly areas, and who were living on nature and natural products. Their chief deity of worship was the goddess who was being prayed for the safety living in the dense forests and for making oneself free from the demons and sorcerers. In the age of the purāṇas, these tribals were known as the Kirāta, Puṇḍra, Niṣāda and the Sabara. Following the non-Āryans, the Āryans practised this tantra vidyā. Since the applications and consequences of tantra vidyā are well discussed in the Atharvaveda, it is also named as the text of yantratāntra vidyā. In the later times, the Vedic Brāhmins, probably learnt this tantra vidyā and introduced the same in the Atharvaveda for their earning and benefit. On this ground, the Atharvaveda stands as the real proof of the union of Āryans and non-Āryans.⁴

The Nature and the Form

The Atharvaveda contains many passages in prose which is often condensed. But, a major portion of this Veda is in verses, though these verses are more complex in structure than the known rules of prosody. The language is definitely later than that of the R̥gveda. According to the opinion of Prof. Gonda⁵, alliteration is frequently observed in the style. Repetition and various associations with magical use are the stylistic representation of this Veda.

The Atharvaveda presents some peculiarities in its vocabulary. The language here shades off into arcane conundrums understandable by the Samans who can control the demons and the spirit that wander aimlessly in nature and influence their effects on weak points. The language and style of this Veda is completely different from those of the R̥gveda although stobhas of the Sāmaveda or the short spells of the Yajurveda appear quite close to them in spirit. Clarity and compactness is marked in case of the short prayers which carry the real intensity. As it is observed, the final verse presents the theme intended there in, and at the same time serves as the tool to unveil the allusions contained in the body of the hymn.

Linguistically, the Atharvaveda seems to be a composition of a later stage, i.e., more evolved stage than the R̥gveda. The prose and the verse in the Atharvaveda are so mixed that it is difficult to distinguish between them. Additions and interpolations are frequent and which largely affect the hymn. Sometimes, the union of the gnomic statements together is observed; and at times, this is done with additional, extraneous matter in order to form the sequence aimed at. There are some hymns here pertaining to magic, mystic and poetically gripping, which are exclusively and characteristically of the Atharvaveda.⁶

Thus, the Vedas contain all branches of human knowledge and understanding. Though the most ancient in style, language, nature and representation, they thrust upon the most developed strata of human mind and perceptions. The speculations are scientific and eternal. As everything was blended in one, there was no education except the Veda at that time. Facts relating to the earth and the earthly bodies, both living and non-living, are the significant aspects of the most of the R̥gvedic and some of the other Vedic literature. Since, there was no classification of knowledge into different disciplines, as is done today, all such informations were jumbled up and 'scattered throughout the Vedas in an incoherent fashion.

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THE BRĀHMAṆAS

The very name 'Brāhmaṇas' suggests that they are the 'interpretation of the Brahman' and at the same time 'compilation of accepted interpretations' by the Brahmins. The Brāhmaṇas deal with the sacred science and interpret the Brahman. These texts are primarily concerned with the rites for which they were meant. All the sacrificial needs, procedures and the results are exhibited by them. There are two contents, 'Vidhi' and 'Arthavāda' which have been distinguished on the basis of our tradition. The former subject includes the prescriptions and the latter explanations. The ritual is performed according to Vidhi and the rules of performance are followed as per the Arthavāda. Both the parts are the collections of theological statements caused due to scholastic differences, where some relate to descriptions of the rites and some to the stanzas of the Saṁhitās. As there are a number of rites of different nature evolving from the classification of the cult, there exists multiple texts called the Brāhmaṇas. The authors of these Brāhmaṇas belong to the ritualist school of Yāska who had maximum interest in the sacrifice.

According to the Vedas, we have the Brāhmaṇas, such as the Brāhmaṇas of the Ṛgveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda and the Atharvaveda, respectively. The Brāhmaṇas of the Ṛgveda are meant for use of the hotri, those of the Yajurveda for use of the adhvaryu, those of the Sāmaveda for the Udgātri and imitating the tradition, a Brāhmaṇa has been attached to the Atharvaveda. But it is observed that only the Brāhmaṇas of the Yajurveda intimately follow the ritual, being based upon Saṁhitās, while the Brāhmaṇas of the other three Vedas deviate from the sequence of their respective Saṁhitās. Therefore, Renou opines that the Brāhmaṇas were initially generated as the appendices to the liturgical parts of the Saṁhitās, but later

these were treated as independent texts.¹

The Brāhmaṇas are of different sizes. One or more Brāhmaṇas have been attached to each Saṁhitā. Most of them have been subjected to addition but not recomposition. Due to the availability of a great number of Brāhmaṇas, we have a good number of commentaries on them, among which a number are ascribed to Śāyaṇācārya. Such theological explanations are found in a more systematic form in the specific texts known as 'Mīmāṃsā', the true inheritor of the thought of the Brāhmaṇas.

The Brāhmaṇas of the Ṛgveda

There are two Brāhmaṇas attached to the Ṛgveda. These are the Aitareya and the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas. The latter one is also called the Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa. The Aitareya is divided into forty chapters (adhyāyas), sub-divided into eight pañcakas (or pañcikās, collection of five chapters). Traditionally, Mahīdāsa Aitareya is known as the author of this work. Originally, the whole of this Brāhmaṇa deals with the soma sacrifice. The other topics found mentioned here are the Agnihotra (the daily milk oblation in the fire) and the Rājasūya (royal coronation). According to Keith², this Brāhmaṇa was composed earlier than the Jaiminīya and the Śatapatha, and even earlier than the Brāhmaṇical sections of Taittirīya Saṁhitā.

Very recent parts of the Aitarey Brāhmaṇa contain the Brāhmaṇical exaltation. Grammar and etymology are the two distinct features of this Brāhmaṇa.

The Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa has 30 adhyāyas (chapters). It repeats the descriptions of the soma sacrifice. It was compiled in a period later than that of the Aitareya. It is more systematic than the Aitareya. It depicts Īśāna Mahādeva, a late-comer in the Vedic pantheon. The narrations given in these two Brāhmaṇas forward the presentation as harmonious and refined. However, they present the concrete and technical subjects of matter.

The Brāhmaṇas of the Yajurveda

The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa is the only Brāhmaṇa text of the Black Yajurveda. As a whole it is ascribed to Āpastamba. It combines Brāhmaṇa and Mantra. Supplements on the soma rites, on the Rājasūya, etc., and some expiatory practices are

contained in this Brāhmaṇa. It has three kāṇḍas having 8, 8 and 12 prapāṭhakas respectively. Its last three prapāṭhakas (in four sections) mention Kaṭha as the author.

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa belongs to the White Yajurveda. It is the most important and most extensive work in all this literature. As the name suggests, it is the "Brāhmaṇa of the hundred ways", *i.e.*, it contains at least hundred 'adhyāyas'. Like the Samhitā, this Brāhmaṇa has two recensions, namely, Kāṇva and Mādhyandina, the first one having 17 kāṇḍas and the second one having 14 kāṇḍas. It is probably the Mādhyandina recension which named it 'Śatapatha', because the 14 kāṇḍas of this recension have been splitted into 100 adhyāyas (chapters). The three additional sections of the Kāṇva recension are on Uddhārin, Vājapeya and Rājasūya sacrifices. In their earlier parts, the two recensions exhibit some significant verbal divergences. According to Caland, originally the two recensions were one and subsequently they became two by way of rearrangement. Eggeling points out that the first nine books of the Mādhyandina edition constitute a continuous commentary on the first 18 sections of the Vājasaneyi and these texts were compiled before the last five books adhering to some kind of additions. As is stated at the end of the 14th kāṇḍa of the Mādhyandina Brāhmaṇa, Yajñavalkya is the author of the whole of the Śatapatha. On the other hand, Śāṇḍilya's name is mentioned in the 6th to 9th kāṇḍas as the author of this Brāhmaṇa. Kāṇḍas 10th to 14th were supplemented later by Yajñavalkya, the most significant authority of the later Vedic age.

The Mādhyandina recension deals with the subjects like vegetable offerings, the rite of the full and new Moons, the soma sacrifice, the animal sacrifice, the Vājapeya and Rājasūya rites, the Agnicāyana, the Agnirahasya, the Aśvamedha, the Pravargya and the Upanayana rite, etc. The kāṇva edition begins with the Agnyadhana and the Agnihotra and thereby maintains the real sequence. The second part of the 14th kāṇḍa of Mādhyandina recension constitutes an Upaniṣad.

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa is more descriptive and illustrative than the other Brāhmaṇas. Adhering to the ritual theme, the elaborations have been multiplied with details. Ostensibly, the Śatapatha is the highest attainment of the Brāhmaṇa literature.

The Brāhmaṇas of the Sāmaveda

A number of Brāhmaṇa texts are associated with the Sāmaveda. Among these, the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa and the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa are the two major texts, while the minor ones are the Śaḍviṃśa, Sāmavidhāna, Ārṣeya, Devatādhyāya, Saṃhitopaniṣad, Vamśa and Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa. The other names prevalent are the Daivata Brāhmaṇa, Śātyāyana Brāhmaṇa, and Adbhūta Brāhmaṇa. The texts included in the series of minor Brāhmaṇas are called the Upabrāhmaṇas. Besides these, there are a few Upabrāhmaṇas which contain materials of varied nature having no relation with those of the main Brāhmaṇas. It is thus evident that the Sāmaveda is the richest in Brāhmaṇas.

The Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa is also known as the Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa or Prauḍha Brāhmaṇa. It contains 25 adhyāyas. It is a concise and technical treatise on the rites involving sāmans and on the nature of the sāmans. Winternitz opines that the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa is one of the older Brāhmaṇas characterized by some special features. From the contents, it appears that the collection and compilation of many myths and legends are the chief objectives of this Brāhmaṇa.

The Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa is a vast text with three kāṇḍas and is the product of the Jaiminīya School. It contains a number of legends not known elsewhere. Some of these legends have historical background. Many quotations from the Śātyāyana Brāhmaṇa are found in the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa. Since, the Śātyāyana Brāhmaṇa is not existing at present, it appears that the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa has assimilated most of its material. The Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa is much lengthier in comparison to the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa. It deals with the rites of soma sacrifices with some myths and legends while the Pañcaviṃśa adheres to the rites only. Linguistically, the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa is older than the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa. Rites like Mahāvraata and Gosava mentioned in the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa are not traced in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa. The style of the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa is prolix. Due to the presence of myths and legends in course of elaborations of the work, this Brāhmaṇa has become easier to follow. A supplement to this work is the Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa, which has an inclination towards a liturgical mysticism.

The Śaḍviṃśa Brāhmaṇa is clearly a continuation of the Pañcaviṃśa. It has six prapāṭhakas and forty-seven parts. Though its contents are somewhat miscellaneous, they are principally of magical nature. The magic Subrahmanya formula for the ekāha (one-day) rite is the significant topic of it. Śāyāna says that this Brāhmaṇa differs from the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa in subject matter. In certain sections, it also differs from the older Brāhmaṇas. But it maintains the general property of the Brāhmaṇas in presenting myths, etymology and philosophy. Giving an introduction to the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, Caland³ calls it a quasi-Brāhmaṇa which serves as an *anukramaṇī*, a mere list of the names of the Sāmans, occurring in the first two gānas. A new rite is introduced through myths of battles among gods and demons. Some myths are cosmogonic and etiological in character.

The Daivata Brāhmaṇa is a compilation of 51 short sūtras divided into two parts depending on the specific hymns, the gods prayed in these hymns and the metres of the hymns. Being a real supplement to the last book of the Śaḍviṃśa, the Adbhūta Brāhmaṇa is a continuation to the Daivata Brāhmaṇa. The Śatyāyana Brāhmaṇa, whose most of the material found mentioned in the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa, is not really existing at present.

The Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa, as the name indicates, prescribes the rules for the sāmans. It is a kind of treatise on magic. It is a very late addition and hardly deserves the quality of a Brāhmaṇa. Its contents resembles closely to the sūtras. Collections of expiatory practices embodied here propose the attitudes of the classical Dharmaśāstras. This Brāhmaṇa deals with the means of averting evils, demons and calamities of various kinds and securing material prosperity. Besides, it glorifies melody and enumerations very nicely. It draws the figure of Mother India at the end of the book and emphasises that the worship of this goddess leads to final liberation.

The Ārṣeya Brāhmaṇa is found in two recensions. It contains hardly more than a list of names of sāmans. The Devatādhyāya Brāhmaṇa contains only three chapters giving the deities of the sāmans and some other details. The Samhitopaniṣad Brāhmaṇa is divided into five chapters in which the fees (*dakṣ-ina*) for the teacher (*guru*) figures prominently. It f rwards the

treatment on the manner of reciting the verses meant for the *sāmans*. The benefits of chanting the *sāmans* are the chief objectives of its elaborations. The *Vaṁśa Brāhmaṇa* has only three *adhyāyas*. It is evident from its name that it contains the names of the *Sāmaveda* teachers. According to Renou, such a list extends over 60 generations.⁴ The *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa* or the *Mantra Brāhmaṇa* is the first part of an *Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* from which the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is resulted. Mantras of various roots have been collected and assimilated here for the use of the *Sāmaveda* schools. The principles of the *Pañcaviṁśa*, the *Kauthuma*, the *Ranayaṇīya* and the *Chāndogya* are similar to one another.⁵ In the opinion of Bhattacharji, the *Pañcaviṁśa*, the *Ṣaḍviṁśa* and the *Adbhūta Brāhmaṇa*, most probably formed the *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa* as the name *Chāndogya* is a generic term for all the *Sāmaveda* texts of a particular school.⁶

The Brāhmaṇas of the Atharvaveda

The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* is the only *Brāhmaṇa* of the *Atharvaveda*. It has two parts, one 'anterior' and the other 'posterior'. They seem to belong to the *Paippalada School*. The anterior *Brāhmaṇa* has five *prapāṭhakas* while the posterior *Brāhmaṇa* has six. Literal borrowings from the other *Brāhmaṇas* are more or less assembled in the second part. The first part depicts the cosmology, the mysteries relating to the new and full moon and that pertaining to the *satra*, the mystic significance of the *Pranava*, and the *Gāyatrī*, and the ritual feeding of the priests. It also focusses on prosody. The posterior *Brāhmaṇa* describes a few major sacrifices where the main objective is being the treatment of the duties and rights of the *brāhman* priest alongwith his position in the sacrifices.

In addition to the above *Brāhmaṇas* there existed a number of other *Brāhmaṇa* texts which are not available now. For example, there was a *Kaṭha Brāhmaṇa* which has been lost in course of time. The *Śatyāyana* is also another one for instance. In the opinion of B. Ghosh, quotations from unknown *Brāhmaṇas* are in the Vedic, philosophical and legal literature. Certain indications exhibit the prevalence of many other *Brāhmaṇas*. In this connection, Caland says that the *Kauśika Sūtra* anticipates a *Brāhmaṇa* distinct from the *Gopatha*. Ostensibly, there might be many other texts which are not found

now but some fragments of these have been traced in the form of manuscripts.

The Date

The period of composition of the Brāhmaṇa texts is still in illusion due to want of specific and concrete evidences. However, it is of course a period after that of the Saṁhitās. The range of this time can be ascertained by reference to earlier and later texts. On the basis of some references in different Brāhmaṇas, there relative age of occurrence can be derived. In this context, the geographical aspects of the Sāmaveda Brāhmaṇas place the text at a later date. The mention of idols in the Adbhūta Brāhmaṇa pushes the date of its composition down to a considerably later age. Linguistically, the Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa is older than the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa. Since the contents of the Gopatha are more similar to the sūtras, some scholars consider it later than even the Vaitāna Sūtra of the Atharvaveda. But, Caland and Keith hold that it is earlier than the Sūtra.⁷ Considering the form, quotations and borrowings, we can think of the relative chronology of the texts with some certainty. Thus, the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa was composed after the Taittirīya Saṁhitā. Then came Aitareya (old portions) which was succeeded by Kauṣītaki. Caland opines that the Jaiminiya came before the Pañcaviṁśa. The Śatapatha is, no doubt very recent, and its two recensions belong to the same period. But, Caland differs from this conclusion. According to him, the age of the Kāṇva is later than the Mādhyandina as there is influence of the latter on the former. As the Atharvaveda was very late occurrence in the canonical corpus, its only Brāhmaṇa, the Gopatha came at the end like the minor texts. From the contents, it is obvious that the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa is one of the earliest in the chronology of the Brāhmaṇas.

The Contents

Myths and legends outlined in the Vedas are found here in the Brāhmaṇas in order to focuss on the subject of religion and mythology of these texts. The myths form the *forte* of this literature. Most of these myths and legends have survived even to this day in one form or the other. The stories of the Brāhmaṇas are more explanatory and thus, the tools to understand the Vedas. The stories relating to the battles between the gods and

the *asuras* thrust upon moral values for all the ages to come. Some opine that these stories presuppose the stories of the epics and *purāṇas*. The story relating to *dama*, *dāna* and *dayā* is interesting one. Such stories, in due course of time, form a system of philosophy.

The language in which the *Brāhmaṇas* depict the myths is poetic. Local or personal legends, anecdotes about sages, practices, melodies, more or less distantly reflecting historical realities have formed the folklore in toto. The cultural history about the creation is quite interesting. The origin of the caste system is found in a crude form in the *Ṛgveda Samhitās*, but it attained maturity in the *Brāhmaṇic* age. There is mention of women, their duty in the sacrifice as well as in the household management.

The *Brāhmaṇic* literature deal with the attitude towards life in this world and in the other world. The notions about curse, *tapas*, cows, animals, trees prevalent during the period of the *Brāhmaṇas* have been reflected with a little less stress. How man was preoccupied by nature in the most ancient times has been well projected in the *Brāhmaṇic* literature. The idea about rains falling with the performance of *Yajña* has been described in a language which is literary and lucid. The genesis of the living world has been accounted interestingly in the *Brāhmaṇas*.

There are evidences of fasting and truth-telling in this literature. Truth has been equated with Godhood. Matters relating to sociology have also been discussed to some extent. It is mentioned that the people are held together by *satya*, *vāc*, *nāma* and *anna*. One can influence the society by his speech (*vāc*) and his name (personality). *Anna* (food) holds us together as well as our bodies, The institutions, habits and the customs discussed there in the *Brāhmaṇas* unveil the civilization prevailed during the period of the literature. All these subjects have been illustrated through the variety of sacrifices and rites mentioned in the *Brāhmaṇas*. Several beliefs regarding sins have been well reflected here. A sacrifice has both moral and historical aspects. At that time, the sacrifices were resorted to as and when needed for the benefit of the individual and the society. The soma sacrifice has been depicted with much importance. All matters connected with sacrifice, such as altar, priest, initiation, observance of the initiated, *agnihotra*, etc. are

dealt with. The most significant characteristic of the mythology of the Brāhmaṇas appears from the sacrifice with which the mythology is linked.

Myths are the soul of the Brāhmaṇas. With the aid of the myths, there is elaborate ritual complex which constitutes the most significant aspect of the religious life at this time. The whole of the Brāhmaṇa texts has been advanced with the growth of the myths. There are six types of myths, *viz.*, (i) theological; (ii) liturgical; (iii) social and ethical; (iv) cosmological and etiologial; (v) natural and (vi) metaphysical. In the opinion of J. Verenne⁸, the myths form a vital layer of the Vedic community's religious consciousness, but they are reflected for the first and last time in the Brāhmaṇs. Besides these, the other subjects of interest depicted in the Brāhmaṇas are the magic, the *vāc*, the history, the economy, the family, the women, the social customs, the cosmogony and etiology, the ethics and the society at large. The Brāhmaṇas have their own pantheon which is different from those in the Saṁhitās. As the source of history and geography, the Brāhmaṇas supersedes the Saṁhitās because the Saṁhitās hardly supply such informations. Both veiled and overt types of historical informations are gleaned from the Brāhmaṇa texts.

Cosmogonic legends attached to the Prajāpati cycle are traced in the Brāhmaṇas. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa adheres to the famous legend of the deluge which in a similar form, has been reflected later in the epic, but here the moral is based on liturgical rather than theistic. The essence of these texts lies in the doctrine of the sacrifices which are found in the form of discontinuous statements. The doctrine has been developed in such a manner as to approach the upaniṣadic character. The elements of mystical phonetics, grammar and etymology, etc. that contained in the Brāhmaṇa literature are of great importance, though for a long period they are inadequately appreciated. They are the real sources of Indian thought.

Two principal classes of subjects noticed in the Brāhmaṇas are *vidhi* (rules) and *arthavāda* (the explicatory section). This second category contains different kinds of minor literary genres like legends (*itihāsa*), traditional tales (*purāṇa*), ballads (*gāthā*), tales (*ākhyāna*), encomia (*nārāśaṁsī*) and dialogues (*vākovākya*). Ostensibly, the current of literary genres prevailed

at that time and could be accommodated by the tendency of the early prose form. The ritual rules (*vidhis*) have been established with sound growth by the genres employing popular literary forms. Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa⁹ forwards that the impure section of the Vedas took the shape of the *gāthās* and *nārāśamsīs* paving a way for the foundation of *genres* of type of ballads and encomia. Likewise, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa speaks of tales called the *pāriplava ākhyānas*¹⁰. During the *Aśvamedha* year these tales were recounted by the Hotṛ priest invited by the Adhvaryu. Such tales in the ancient society were value-based having high moral level, but unfortunately they are not all available to us now.

The Form and the Language

The prose literature in Sanskrit practically begins from the Brāhmaṇas, though the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda contain a few prose sections. This prose form of the Brāhmaṇa literature is illuminated from the nature of directives and explication of its contents. The presentation is precise and concise. The accent of this prose is marked in the most part. The style of composition is formulaic and can be easily distinguished from the Saṃhitās. Repetition of phrases, fixed epithets, repeated words in fixed syntactical positions et seq. are the characteristics of these formulae. The frequency of such repetition is so predominant that it serves as a repellent and creates monotony. The Brāhmaṇa texts have unique historical values and for this they attract the readers and the scholars.

There are some words in Aitareya Brāhmaṇa¹¹ like *rbhumate*, *vibhumate*, *vājavate*, *bṛhaspativate*, *viśvadevyavate* et seq. which have same prefix or suffix. They are mnemonic and incarnatory in effect. They approach the rhythmic prose.¹² In Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, a series of words are found repeated producing a sort of cadence.¹³ Likewise, the word '*loka*' is found occurring repeatedly in a play in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.¹⁴ Here, this word has two meanings, 'space' and 'world'. Similarly, the words '*ṛta*' and '*pakṣa*' occur with puns or semi-puns.¹⁵

Etymology is a curious specialization of the Brāhmaṇas. As the rituals are the primary concern of the Brāhmaṇa literature, etymology plays here an important role to favour the ritualistic narrations. In this context, the word '*udgītha*' in the Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa¹⁶ has been formed of the words like *ut* —

Āditya, gī — Agni and tha — the moon and thus is attributed to three deities. Etymology related to rituals has no objective of giving actual or even plausible derivations. It aims at justifying and explaining the ritual. There is no scientific basis of such etymological derivations as no such analysis of the etymology for the Brāhmaṇas is yet available. Such etymology or cryptic pseudological injunction has also the aim of strengthening some beliefs connected with a ritual and this has been fruitfully accomplished. In this perspective, Prof. J. Gonda's following opinion on these etymologies can make our conception more clear.

"For the authors of the Brāhmaṇas and the allied literature these etymologies were an important means of discovering the connections between the phenomena, explaining the origin of things and constructing arguments about, or theories of the significance of rites, life and universe and thereby acquire power to dominate the unseen powers."¹⁷

The grammar followed in the Brāhmaṇas seems to be pre-Pāṇinian. The words like *abhisampādati*, *ṛkṣāmayoḥ*, *jijyau*, *himsit*, *bheḥ et seq.* do not adhere to the rules of Pāṇinian grammar. Chronological and geographical advance of the Āryans are illuminated from the vocabulary of the Brāhmaṇas. These texts offer many passages of literary beauty. Euphonic combinations are frequent here. A few riddles are used in the Brāhmaṇas. In the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, the riddles are set by the gods before the demons in order to conquer over them¹⁸. Besides, there are a number of verses in the Brāhmaṇas. These verses are based on eternal truths and expressed in Anuṣṭubh as in the Śunaḥśepa legend in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa¹⁹. Many of the passages of real literary beauty are cast in verses (*gāthās*). These *gāthās* are mostly in Anuṣṭubh, though some are in Triṣṭubh. The presence of rhetoric in the Brāhmaṇas does not necessarily represent a poetic quality. Rhetoric is hardly used in the style and where it is introduced, it is meant for developing clarity, precision, ready comprehension and also for poetic effect. It is perhaps required to distinguish between the poetic and non-poetic use of the figures of speech in the Brāhmaṇas. Similies and metaphors are usually employed to annotate accurately and powerfully some elements of the ritual. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa projects the Vedic people's first articulated statement

about art in the form of somewhat cryptic passage.²⁰ According to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa²¹, 'art' is imitation and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa²², holds that the sages are the poets. Ostensibly, the contents of the Brāhmaṇas exhibit the myths, the rituals, the ethics, the metaphysics, the social ethos, the history, the geography and etymology and from these one can observe the compendium character of the Brāhmaṇas. The entire bulk of priestly lore is preserved here.

Reference

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3. Caland, W., *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, Calcutta, 1931, Introduction.
4. Renou, L., *Vedic India*, Indological Book House, Delhi, 1971, p. 28.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Bhattacharji, S., *Literature in the Vedic Age*, Vol. 2, K.P. Bagchi and Company, Calcutta, 1984, p. 7.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 42; cf. Verenne, J., *Mythes at Legends Extracts des Brāhmaṇas*, Paris, 1967.
9. *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, I 3.2.6.
10. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII 4.3.
11. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII 2.20
12. *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, V 1.3 and *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, III 11.4.28; 5.29-32; 12.2; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV 6.5 where the entire text is a play on the word 'graha'.
13. *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, Pūrvabhāga, I V.1 :
 "Sa bhūyo'srāmyad bhūyo'tapyad bhāya ātmānam samatapat"
Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, Uttarabhāga, III 5.3 :
 "Vicakṣaṇavatīm vācam bhāṣante Canasitavatīm Vicakṣ-
 ayanti"
14. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VI 2.2.28.
15. *Ibid*, IX 3.3.19.

16. Similarly Sāman has been derived from Sāma - *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, III 2.5.
17. Gonda, J., *Stylistic repetition in the Veda*, Amsterdam, 1959, p. 377.
18. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VI 33.
19. *Ibid*, VIII 13ff.
20. *Ibid*, VI 5 and 6.27.
21. *Ibid*, III 2.1.5.
22. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, I 4.2.8.

THE ĀRANYAKAS

Karmakāṇḍa and Jñānakāṇḍa are the two sections of the Vedic literature in a broad sense. The first section consists of the Samhitās and the Brāhmaṇas while the second one bears the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads. The first one is the section of work and the second one is the section of knowledge. The Āraṇyakas are the 'forest texts' which are kept away from the public and read in isolation in the forest. This is because they contain at least abstruse works having magical power.¹ According to Goldsticker, the work Āraṇyaka has been used by Pāṇini to mean a man who lives in the forest.² Kātyāyana in the 4th century B.C. first used Āraṇyaka in the sense of a forest text.³ Evidently, by the 4th century B.C. the Āraṇyakas were recognized as a separate treatise. For a long time, they were supposed as the books of the hermits. But, actually they are not of the kind. Most of them are composite works and contain mantra, Brāhmaṇa and even elements of sūtra.

We have four distinct Samhitās with their individual characteristics, while the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads overlap with one another. Again, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads constitute a literature of transition. The Āraṇyakas move towards the forest, search for knowledge and asceticism whereas the Upaniṣads are based on clear doctrines. Every Samhitā does not have Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads of its own, though each Samhitā has one or more separate Brāhmaṇas. There exist a few Brāhmaṇas which end in Āraṇyakas.

The Aitareya and the Śāṅkhāyana (Kauṣītaki) are the two Āraṇyakas attributed to the Ṛgvedic school. As per Śāyāṇa's analysis, the Aitareya contains five adhyāyas and the Kauṣītaki has fifteen adhyāyas. These are corresponding to the Brāhmaṇas of the same names. Keith⁴ points out that the

Aitareya is apparently the more ancient of the two, and the oldest part of the Aitareya is the first three lessons. A part of Śrautasūtra is actually identified with an Āraṇyaka.⁵

The school of the Yajurveda possesses Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, commented on by Śāyāṇa in 10 prapāṭhakas. It is the combination of verse and prose and is a continuation of the Samhitā and the Brāhmaṇa of the same name. Traditionally, a portion of it has been ascribed to the Kāṭha School. In the views of Renou, the fragments of another Āraṇyaka also owe their origin to the same school.⁶ The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa of White Yajurveda ends in an Āraṇyaka, which is completed by the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. Finally the Sāmaveda Samhitā itself contains the Āraṇyaka Samhitā and Āraṇyagāna. It is also observed that the Chāndogyopaniṣad as well as the Jaiminīyopaniṣad Brāhmaṇa begin from the same Samhitā.

Thus, three main and distinct Āraṇyakas, namely Aitareya, Kauṣītakī and Taittirīya are of significance though chants of some kinds or other bearing the nature of the Āraṇyaka have been distinguished.

The Contents

The Aitareya Āraṇyaka contains the mahāvrata prayers and the ritual verses (mahānāmni) composed in accordance with a grammatical symbolism. Its first and last adhyāyas (chapters) only depict the mahāvrata in a style purely Brāhmaṇical in nature. Śākkara and Mahānāmi verses connected with the ritual are included in chapter 4 which thus has Brāhmaṇical content. The Āraṇyaka proper is the characteristic of only chapters 2 and 3. Evidently, three of its five chapters are devoted to the descriptions of the rituals of the Brāhmaṇa tradition. The statements at the end of each chapter reveal that this Āraṇyaka owes its origin to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. The Mahāvrata rite reinterpreted in the Aitareya and Śāṅkhāyana serves as a bridge between ritual and knowledge epochs of the Vedic religion.

There is a gradual advancement towards abstraction from the Brāhmaṇas through the Āraṇyakas to the Upaniṣads. For instance, Aitareya Āraṇyaka⁷ uses the word '*prāṇa*' for trees, animals and human beings in an ascending order and treats the body and mind inseparably with an observation that the life principle indwells in both of them. Metaphysically, the body

and the mind have been given equal significance here. Latter comes the more abstract *ātman* of the Upaniṣads. Aitareya Āraṇyaka describes the heaven as a place where one becomes golden and immortal.⁸ Rebirth is mentioned in this Āraṇyaka⁹ and even in a prayer of it, third birth¹⁰ is told about. It has also been emphasized here that the sins of the *yajamāna* (one who arranges the rite to be instituted in one's house) can be wiped out by chanting rhythmic mantras.¹¹ Here, we smell an ethical overtone, apparently read in the ritual context.

The Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka adheres to oddity to a greater extent. Interior agnihotra has been exposed here as a substitute for the real rite. There is also exposition of magical or mystical formulae. Out of its 15 chapters, the first two are Brāhmaṇas and treat the mahāvratā. The significance of ritual has been described in chapter 3 in the form of a dialogue between Citra Gārgya and Śvetaketu. Chapter 4 deals with the most common theme through the expressions of Kauṣītaka, Paiṅgeya and Śuṣkabhṛṅgāra. The said commonest theme is the contest between *prāṇa* and the sense organs. Chapter 5 goes in expressing the dialogue between Pratardana and Indra, while chapter 6 includes that between Gārgya and Ajātaśatru. Chapter 7 has miscellaneous subjects; and 8-9 deal with the worship of *prāṇa*. In chapter 10, the spiritual agnihotra and in chapter 11, the installation of the gods in Puruṣa by Prajāpati have been depicted. Description of dreams and omens here in this chapter is an important aspect. For blessings and prosperity, one can perform the rites given in chapter 12. Procedures for attaining true knowledge through renunciation are laid down in chapter 13, whereas chapter 14 eulogizes the recitation of the Veda and condemns those who do not practise it. Chapter 15 mentions the names of a number of successive teachers. It is noteworthy to record here that the symptoms of a dying man have been discussed in the most part of this Āraṇyaka. Omenology, augury and portents, signs of imminent death, dreams and their interpretations have spoiled the very high-standard scientific approach of the subject. A new insight to the philosophical knowledge is present here. Hence, the awareness of the dichotomy of body and soul for physical facts and functions are scrupulously detached from the mental or spiritual. Such a metaphysical notion, however, is sometimes inextricably

connected with the popular superstitions prevalent at that time.

Various names of ancient and contemporary authorities are given in chapter 7 of the Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka. Such authorities are said to have established pseudo-sexual relationships between cosmic, social and metaphysical elements through prescribed formulas repeated continuously. Though the real validity of such conceptions is still in illusion, one can seek the metaphysical knowledge by the ardent search.

The Taittirīya Āraṇyaka has a fully different content with respect to other two Āraṇyakas. It contains a series of names, synonyms, classification of the natural phenomena, etc. and also focusses on subjects connected with Dharmasūtras. Innumerable number of prayers similar to the Saṁhitā are embodied here to appeal the gods for achieving better health, wealth and prosperity. The desire for children, victory and heaven is also expressed through these prayers.

By the time of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, the caste-system has already gained its social recognition. So, different rules for the three different castes have been laid down in this Āraṇyaka. An intimate link with the actual sacrificial rite has been maintained throughout the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. A significant role has been played by black, malevolent magic. In some part of chapter 4, we find the augury, omenology, diseases and dreams. The elements like demons and ogress figure prominently in perspective of popular religious beliefs. Mysticism has played an important part in the metaphysical statements of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. There are five sections of chapter 7 containing the physical, cosmic, academic, familial and philosophical materials where the last section deals with the achievement of higher knowledge and the cultivation of one's intellect. Chapter 10 extols the glory of the late god Nārāyaṇa followed by exaltation of Ṛudra. Moreover, the older Saṁhitā gods started enjoying cultic allegiance from this time.

The concept of time given in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka is somewhat different from that we have. According to it, the time is indivisible and eternal. There are four types of death mentioned in this Āraṇyaka.¹² These are the natural, the soma, the fire and the moon. Even after dying, a human-being is subjected to further death, being devoured by his own deeds.¹³

The two eschatological fates of the soul, viz., *devayāna* and *pitryāna* are mentioned in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka; the first leading to liberation and the second to rebirth.¹⁴ Herbert and Mauss commenting on the concept of another life say that the very notion of another life does not have its origin in the institution of sacrifice.¹⁵ The process of transition from the sacrificial to the non-sacrificial approach is the marked significance of the Āraṇyakas.

The knowledge, for the first time, was regarded with much respect in the Āraṇyakas and then in the Upaniṣads. Therefore, the name Jñānakāṇḍa is truly applicable to the literature consisting of the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads. The actual areas of knowledge spread over the Āraṇyaka texts are astronomy, physics, metallurgy, chemistry, geology, anatomy, physiology, psychology, philosophy, history, geography, a more systematized theology and liturgy, language, music and some other arts. During the time of the Āraṇyakas, knowledge became an essential quality for the Vedic people. This hankering for knowledge expanded to cosmogonic and etiologial search. For example, Taittirīya Āraṇyaka describes 'the earth as the wife, the sky as her husband and the Bṛhaspati and Rudra as the sons of this primordial couple'.¹⁶ Assigning value to knowledge, it has been said that the heaven can be attained only through knowledge (*prajñāna*). Here, knowledge, not deeds, is mentioned to lead oneself to heaven where one's desires are fulfilled and one becomes immortal. Obviously, the Āraṇyakas exhibit the literature of transition where new interpretations influence the old conceptions.

Esoterism of many brands were cultivated in the forests. So, in the forest texts we come across strict instructions given by the teachers to their disciples for not disclosing the secret doctrines to any one who is neither a disciple, nor has spent a full year with one's preceptor, nor to one likely to distort the knowledge.¹⁷ The Brāhmaṇas interpret the rituals in terms of a holistic conception of ritual symbolism whereas the Āraṇyakas transmit the messages for deep penetration of one's vision to the ritual performance and hence to retreat it in non-ritual cosmic or metaphysical symbolism.

The Date

The dates of the Āraṇyakas are still in illusion. But, they

fall to a period later than the great Brāhmaṇas because of the fact that the Āraṇyakas presuppose a selection from the Brāhmaṇas. As mentioned earlier, Kātyāyana in the 4th century B.C. had used the Āraṇyakas in the sense of forest texts to be read in isolation for maintaining the secrecy. As separate books, the Āraṇyakas gained their significance by the 4th century B.C. At the end of each section of the Aitareya Āraṇyaka, it is said "This is section....., Āraṇyaka no. of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa Āraṇyaka kāṇḍa". Evidently, the Aitareya Āraṇyaka is merely a sub-section (kāṇḍa) in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. Its lateness is perhaps attested by its acquaintance with the grammatical methods employed in imagery.¹⁸ On the other hand, the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka says that those who adopt the *sannyāsa yoga* after acquiring sufficient knowledge in Vedānta, liberate to the Brahman region after death.¹⁹ The passage is evidently quite a late composition. The emphasis of knowledge as a means to liberation is observed in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka X.63. As it seems the Aitareya Āraṇyaka belongs to a more ancient period than the other two Āraṇyakas.

The Form and the Language

In the form and language, the Aitareya Āraṇyaka is completely Brāhmaṇical although much of its formal aspects owe their origin to the period of the R̥gveda. Clearly, it falls to the period when the sacrificial religion flourished.²⁰ The general structure is to cite *mantras* relevant to a particular rite and then to explain the rite itself. Like the Brāhmaṇa tradition, the repetition of many words is commonly noticed. Uses of some new metres here and there are also traced.

Like the Aitareya Āraṇyaka, the Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka is typical in style and proceeds in the Brāhmaṇical way. There is repetition of long passages, formulaic in character. Various metres have been used in the verses while the prose part is not attractive. Mostly, the Pāṇinian grammar has been utilized here.

The Taittirīya Āraṇyaka largely uses the *anuṣṭubh* metre. At the end of each *adhyāya*, there are mnemonic summaries of the content. Some poetic images have been employed. However, the language resembles greatly to the Saṁhitās. Use of the forms like Brahman-madhum is not Pāṇinian way of presentation. Though the poetic forms of many passages came later in the

Upaniṣads, the Āraṇyakas anticipated the same much before. In this connection, the description of the seasons, *viz.*, *grīṣma*, *varṣā*, *śarat*, *hemanta* and *śīśira* is unique in presenting the natural beauty that appears during the time of each season.²¹ The Taittirīya Āraṇyaka shares stanzas in common with some Upaniṣads. Also, random quotations from different stanzas of different Ṛgveda hymns are juxtaposed, sometimes with minor changes. Thus, the Āraṇyakas are truly a literature of transition.

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THE UPANIṢAD

The word Upaniṣad has been variously treated by the ancient Indian commentators, but such explanations cannot be taken as accurate on the point of view of history or philology.¹ It seems that the word originally bears the meaning (knowledge received from a preceptor) 'while sitting near him'. The Upaniṣads are, in the old sense of the word, the Vedānta, the 'end of the Veda'. They represent the way of knowledge, the *jñānamārga* while the other Vedic texts deal with the way of action, the *karmamārga*. They are the works of scientific rather than religious purport. By way of different lessons, frequently cast in the form of dialogues or in the form of fables, aphorisms and puzzles, the Upaniṣads keep an eye to introduce the learner the final objectives of the sacred teaching and hence to establish a kind of metaritualism. Due to preservation of the magical aspect in the dialogues, the Upaniṣads might be defined as dialectic on a magical basis.²

Both the Vedic and non-Vedic Upaniṣads exist. But, the former ones are of our concern here. There are 14 Vedic Upaniṣads namely, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, the Chāndogya, the Aitareya, the Kauṣītaki, the Kena, the Taittirīya, the Íśa or Íśavāṣya, the Kaṭha or Kaṭhaka, the Śvetāśvatara, the Mahānārāyaṇīya, the Muṇḍaka, the Praśna, the Māṇḍūkya, and the Maitrī or Maitrāyaṇīya.

Belvalkar adds to this list the Vaṣkalamantra, a sort of hymn to Indra inspired by the *Rgveda*. Schröder³ describes this as the precursor of all the known Upaniṣadic literature. This short text, according to one school, is called the Chāgaleya, which narrates the relations of the soul and the body by the parable of the chariot. It is named as the Arśeya containing different opinions of the four theologians as regards to the definitions of

the *brahman*. As this short treatise consists of an allegory concerned with ritual, it is also called the Śaunaka⁴.

The Date

The Upaniṣads cannot be confidently assigned to a fixed period for their development. It is obvious that they were composed after the formation of the Brāhmaṇas. The problem of ascertaining the date of the Upaniṣads alludes to pre-Buddhist, Buddhist and post-Buddhist doctrines. According to some scholars, early Buddhism in many ways related with them. It is not very much clear that the doctrine of Buddha is contained in germ in the Upaniṣads. No Sūta has also referred to any Upaniṣad, and on the other hand no concrete proof or argument is available to place the Vedic Upaniṣads in a period later than Buddha's. Ancient Buddhism and the Upaniṣads derived from a common source of ideas which is not fully rested on Āryans. Oldenberg⁵ points out that the doctrines of the Upaniṣads are more archaic and less evolved and that the process of development was shorter in one case than in the other. Taking all points into consideration, scholars have suggested that the Upaniṣads belong to 5th century B.C. According to Renou, this date is reasonable. Bhattacharji says that the upper and lowest limits appear to be the 7th and 4th century B.C. This, in turn, suggests that there are pre-Buddhist and post-Buddhist Upaniṣads.⁶ As the Upaniṣads bathe in the same ambience as the Vedic literature, their date of composition appears, in many respects, to that very close to the Atharvaveda.

The Contents

On a broadline the Upaniṣads can be divided into two categories, *viz.*, Prose Upaniṣads and Metrical Upaniṣads. The earliest Upaniṣads are in prose, with some sententious verses and occasional lyrical passages. Such prose-form Upaniṣads are the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, the Chāndogya, the Aitareya, the Kauṣītaki, the Keṇa, the Taittirīya and the Íśavāśya. The second group consists of the Kaṭha, the Śvetāśvatara, the Mahānārāyaṇīya, the Muṇḍaka and the Praśna, the Māṇḍukya and the Maitrāyaṇīya. These metrical-form Upaniṣads are almost entirely in verse form and their connections with the Veda are not so intense. Let us now analyse the contents of each Upaniṣad separately and in a more concise manner.

The Prose-form Upaniṣads

(i) The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad is the oldest prose Upaniṣad. It is the longest and the most important. It is the Upaniṣad of the great Āraṇyaka and it belongs to the school of Śukla Yajurveda. It contains six adhyāyas, out of which three are preliminary Āraṇyaka chapters on the *pravargya* rite. Chapters II-IV contain the actual philosophical materials. Chapter I occupies itself with *prāṇa*, death and *puruṣa*; the superior value of *prāṇa* is established through a parable, as well as through cosmology. In chapter II, a dialogue between Gārgya and Ajātaśatru has been depicted. We find the mention of the renowned sages like Yājñavalkya and Dadhyāc Ātharvana here in this chapter. It also includes the famous dialogue between Yājñavalkya and his wife Maitreyī. Chapter III contains the dialogue between Yājñavalkya and some other philosophers of King Janaka's court. The dialogue between Janaka and Yājñavalkya is given in the next chapter. The subject matter of chapter V covers cosmology, eschatology and ethics. The last chapter has miscellaneous content adhering to metaphysical discourses by Pravahaṇa Jaibali on the five fires, superstitious instructions regarding rites for obtaining different kinds of sons; it ends with a genealogical list. It is observed that Book XIV of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa is included in the last part of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.

(ii) The Chāndogya Upaniṣad

The Chāndogya Upaniṣad denotes the Upaniṣad on the doctrines of the Chāndoga, singers of the Veda. It contains eight *prapāṭhakas* (chapters) and belongs to the Sāmaveda. Like Bṛhadāraṇyaka, the collections of material are imperfectly coordinated here. As regards to the form and content, this Upaniṣad resembles somewhat to the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The first two chapters of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad have long discourses on *sāman* mysticism. These two chapters are thoroughly Brāhmaṇical in nature and contain the liturgy and connected doctrines alongwith cosmological and metaphysical attributes. Chapter III depicts the sun as a great beehive; the world as a big chest and thus presents a symbolic myth. It describes the origin and worship of the sun. Chapter IV projects

a discourse by Satyakāma who instructs Raikva, Jābāla and Upakośala while chapter V contains Jaibali's narrations on eschatology which incidentally resembles intimately with the account of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. Cosmological views of six philosophers are presented here with Jaibali's synthesization at the end. Chapter VI begins the real metaphysical discourses which portrays the cardinal message of the Upaniṣads, i.e., *tat tvam asi* (that thou art). Teaching of esoteric lessons to Śvetaketu by his father Āruṇi (a renowned sage of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa) is included here in this chapter. It is interesting to note that Yājñavalkya, the teacher of the more mystic truths in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad was the pupil of Āruṇi. A dialogue between Nārada and Sanatkumāra mainly on the psychology of concentration, the philosophy of the illimitable (*Bhūman*) is included in chapter VII. Instruction on the means of attaining the Brahman-realization as well as on the nature of Brahman has been depicted in chapter VIII. Renou⁷ observes that the speculations on ātman-Brahman begin with chapter III and which then have been developed by the following chapters cast in dialogue form, and interspersed with didactic fables.

The two Upaniṣads, Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Chāndogya have many passages in common like the theory of sleep, that of the five fires and of the two ways, the dispute about precedence among the sense-organs, the elixir of power, *et seq.*

(iii) The Aitareya Upaniṣad

The Aitareya Upaniṣad is a Ṛgveda Upaniṣad having three chapters (*adhyāyas*). It is an equally old text. It depicts the creation of the world by the *ātman*, the triple birth of the *ātman*, and its pantheistic essence. More precisely it can be said that the first chapter eulogizes the creation from *ātman* through *Virāj* and the different elements of the creation for the first time. The correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm, a cardinal doctrine of the Upaniṣads has been set forth by this chapter. The second chapter is a short one. It describes the three births of man, namely, conception, natural birth and extension of one's self in the son. The last chapter deals with the nature of the soul that extends beyond the sense organs and its connection with intellect.

(iv) The Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad

The Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad is also a R̥gveda Upaniṣad. It consists of four chapters. The first chapter mentions the two paths, viz., the fathers and the gods. The second chapter contains various subjects ascribed to Kauṣītaki, Paiṅgya and Śuṣ-kabhṛṅgāra. Incidentally, we come across many contemporary social customs in the contents of this chapter. Chapter III mentions *prāṇa* as the first principle while last chapter repeats the Bālāki Ajātaśātru story already told in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The interpretation of dreams has been given here. On the whole, the Kauṣītaki treats of reincarnation and other original eschatological doctrines (the *paryāṅkavidyā*) and also the theory of breath and that of the *ātman*.

(v) The Kena Upaniṣad

This Upaniṣad belongs to Sāmaveda. It consists of four chapters of which the first two are in verse and deal with cosmology as well as with *ātman*. Here, the *ātman* is conceived as the indwelling spirit that impels the sense perceptions. The last two chapters are cast in prose-form, describing with a fine allegory that the gods themselves do not know the Brahman. Consequently, the text reveals the inscrutable character of Brahman. The gods fail to approach the Brahman. The text of the Kena exists as part of the Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa.

(vi) The Taittirīya Upaniṣad

The Taittirīya Upaniṣad belongs to Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. It forms sections seven to nine of the corresponding Āraṇyaka. Consequently, it consists of three chapters. It begins with a short section on phonetics and then deals with semi-mystic relationships in cosmic, astronomical, intellectual, physical and spiritual elements. It contains two esoteric statements by Trīṣaṅku. On the whole, the sections of the Taittirīya is divided into the "Vine of Instruction", precepts and prayers for the use of the student. The last chapter equates Brahman with various elements like food, the vital air, mind, knowledge and bliss, but rests solely on food. In the opinion of Renou, this Upaniṣad embodies in itself the "Vine of Felicity in Brahman", symbolical of the Brahman and the attainment of the Brahman by the path of felicity.⁸ The "Vine of Bhṛgu", a series of indentifications of various entities as mentioned above are the prime elements of

the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. It is observed that the fourth section of the last chapter is an Āraṇyaka and the fifth section of it is a Brāhmaṇa.

(viii) The Īśa or Īśavāṣya Upaniṣad

This Upaniṣad is the shortest of the Upaniṣads. It consists of only eighteen verses. It is the last section of the Saṁhitā of the White Yajus. This brief work throws light on the four strata (*pāhācha*) of life, teaches the inefficacy of works. It says — all that matters is to know the ātman, which is present in all essences and overcomes all differences. Thus, the Īśavāṣya Upaniṣad tends to reconcile between the dichotomy of works and knowledge on a loftier level of spiritual attainment and introduces the man of philosophical composure, the *sthitadhī* who later figures so prominently in the *Bhagavadgītā*. According to the views of Bucca, Īśopaniṣad belongs to the late documents of the Vedic literature whose language preludes to the classical Sanskrit. Really, the language of the Upaniṣads and that of the classical Sanskrit are very much alike. The upaniṣadic language is more similar to the classical Sanskrit than to the Vedic one. The Īśa is very short and clear. The thought is expressed in very simple and very dense texts which were handed down by rote.⁹

The Metrical Upaniṣads

These Upaniṣads are either entirely or almost entirely in verse form. They are based on metres. They are non-Vedic. They form the second group of the Upaniṣads having less closeness with Veda. The doctrine of the *ātman* is here intermingled with new ideas, popular versions of the Sāṁkhya, and illusions to Yoga practices. The concept of a personal god persists here. As regards to the language and prosody, these Upaniṣads have been imperfectly transmitted and subjected to alteration. As a result of which, they do not deserve to be classed as Vedic. They include the Kaṭha, the Śvetāśvatara, the Muṇḍaka, the Mahānārāyaṇa, the Praśna, the Māṇḍūkya and the Maitrāyaṇīya texts in the verse-form.

(i) The Kaṭha or Kaṭhaka Upaniṣad

The Kaṭha refers to one of the schools of the Black Yajurveda. It has two chapters. Actually, the original text is ended with the first chapter splitted into three sections. The second chapter,

however, contains an answer to a question raised in the first. Hence, it seems that the portions between the question and the answer were interpolated later on.

This Upaniṣad deals with the episode of Yama-Nachiketa, Yama (the god of death) teaching Nachiketa about the destiny of a person after life. The identity of *ātman-brahman*, and a series of attempts to state the nature of these entities have been depicted here in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad. The story of Nachiketa has been derived from a legend in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa and seems to refer to an initiation into the mysteries.

(ii) The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

The Śvetāśvatara belongs to the Black Yajurveda. It has six chapters exhibiting the characteristics of Rudra-Śiva. Barth¹⁰ opines that the Śvetāśvatara is a Śaiva Bhagavadgītā. According to Haur¹¹, the work has monotheistic approach in which the ideas of Sāṃkhya-Yoga have been mingled. The basic Sāṃkhya elements of puruṣa, prakṛti, the three guṇas are all present here. Creation is described as an evolution. Sāṃkhya approach to psychology and metaphysics are clearly observed here in this Upaniṣad.

(iii) The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

This Upaniṣad is attached to the Atharvaveda. It extols the 'high knowledge' of the Brahman, from which the world emanates. Here, the author partially distinguishes Brahman from the individual ātman. This work contains both the passages and the verses, which has closer relationships with ritual practices. Still, it adheres to mysticism to some extent. Like the Keṇa, Muṇḍaka betrays influence of Buddhism and also quite open śaivite learnings. The Muṇḍaka is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with the ritual, ethics and metaphysics. The second chapter depicts the ritual symbolism and carries it over to metaphysics through many symbolical representations of truth. The last chapter is more mystic and metaphysical in character and rests on the nature of Brahman. The modes for the attainment of Brahman for Supreme realization have been prescribed here.

(iv) The Mahānārāyaṇīya Upaniṣad

The Mahānārāyaṇīya or Br̥harinārāyaṇīya Upaniṣad of the

Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda is actually the tenth book of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. It consists of five chapters, all in verses. It is a very late addition to Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. It is composed of the hymns and verses taken from various Vedic texts, and didactic prose elements on ritual or on religious virtues. The metres used here are of late epic type. So, it is mainly the Anuṣṭubha. The metre employed here exhibits an irregular variety and also the mixed late Upajāti. This Upaniṣad is truly Brāhmaṇic in style. It describes Prajāpati as the creative principle and analyses his creation. It is based on the pantheon¹² of a later period. It adheres to the late epic-purāṇic theophanies which include Śiva, Sūrya, Viṣṇu and Kārttikeya alongwith the goddess Durgā under various names. Demons, gnomes and goblins are freely mentioned in this Upaniṣad. Doxologies addressed to various gods bear close resemblance to epic-purāṇic content, as also rituals belonging to a later period. The myths and legends of Mahānārāyaṇīya Upaniṣad are distinctly sectarian. It holds the Great Nārāyaṇa as the divinised form of the cosmic *ātman* and hence the name. The date of composition of Mahānārāyaṇīya Upaniṣad is probably the period between the fifth and the third century B.C. As its text reflects a Nārāyaṇīya cult, it belongs to a distinct school with a sectarian content.

(v) The Praśna Upaniṣad

The Praśna Upaniṣad has a relationship with the Atharvaveda. Its text is composed half in verse and half in prose form. The replies given by the sage Pippalāda to his six pupils shape the body of its content. These questions are : (a) Whence comes life?; (b) How many deities uphold the creature?; (c) From where the vital breath derives?; (d) What is the nature of dreams; (e) What is the meaning of the sacred syllable *Om*?; and (f) What are the sixteen parts which constitute man? The answers explain the philosophical nature of the creation and persistence of life on earth.

(vi) The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad

The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad is another Atharvaveda Upaniṣad. It contains twelve short sections. It is usually given a later date. It establishes the fundamental doctrine of the later Vedānta philosophy. The *brahman* under the symbol of the syllable *om* has been described here in short sentences, since

the entire work has been cast in prose form. According to Weber this Upaniṣad is directly attached to the Atharvaveda and is sectarian in nature. This is evident from the observation that *those Upaniṣads which are directly attached to the Atharvaveda are to some extent sectarian in their contents in which respect they reach down to the time of the Purāṇas.*¹³

(vii) The Maitrī or Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad

The Maitrī Upaniṣad belongs to the Black Yajurveda. It is cast in prose-form in the Brāhmaṇa style. It seems to be a work of later period. It is not lengthy. Being the latest of the Upaniṣads, it is complete in seven prapāthakas but the work clearly took its present shape through gradual accretions. It deals with material of miscellaneous nature in its sixth chapter which throws much light on the social and religious life of the period. Sāṃkhya and Yoga have been portrayed prominently along with the triad of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and their three *guṇas* and three different cosmic functions. It has discourses on the concept of the *bhūtātman*, the phenomenal self which works under cosmic illusion, *māyā*, and prescribes a path for its astronomical speculations, Sun worship, social morality, late practices like *haṭha-yoga* and the seven mystical sounds that a meditating man hears in the course of his yoga practices, etc. These facts are no doubt non-Upaniṣadic in nature with an admixture of elements of folk religion rising to the surface and gaining admittance in the official canon.¹⁴

This Upaniṣad is nothing but a series of lessons imparted by the sage Śakayanya to the prince Bṛhadratha on the origin of life and of consciousness. Buddhist influences have been discerned, perhaps wrongly, in it.¹⁵ The Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad contains innumerable interpolations which greatly mar the consistency of the text.¹⁶ According to Tsuji, this Upaniṣad exceptionally contains spurious doctrines most probably alluded to Buddhism.¹⁷

Authorship

Most of those who propounded the doctrines of the Upaniṣads are seers, ṛṣis whether they lived in forests, houses or in a palace — like King Janaka¹⁸. Though the names of the real authors of the Upaniṣads are still in illusion, we can draw some conclusions resting on the names of the seers mentioned in the

body of the texts and the genealogies portrayed therein.

Form and Language

The prose-form Upaniṣads contain the Brāhmanical prose sections and the verse-form Upaniṣads approach in their style to the ballads and epics. Both verse and prose are characterised by brevity and precision. Even in dialogues and narrative sections, we observe the stylistic structure.

Upaniṣads, in general, adhere to the repetitions of phrases, clauses and even whole sentences. Ostensibly, mnemonic aids in oral literature are commonly observed in these texts. Word-economy is maintained so profusely that the intended sense is sometimes missing. Thus, there is some uncertainty regarding the identity of the speaker of *sakemahi* in Kaṭha.¹⁹

Prose passages are divided into lengths which can be easily memorized. The grammar and the style of the prose is close to that of Patañjali in the second century B.C. The oral device seems apparent even in dialogues. Most Upaniṣads have no accent at all. Manywhere the question-answer style is predominant in the Upaniṣads. The questioner and the teacher tend to introduce to their pupils the final goal of the sacred teaching in order to establish a kind of metaritualism. Unlike earlier literature, here we observe the important role played by the eminent teachers.²⁰ The best example of this question-answer dialectical style is, however, the Praśna Upaniṣad which epitomizes the movement of metaphysical dialectics current between the eighth and fifth (or fourth) century B.C. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad repeats short introductory prose passages for emphasis before a series of esoteric verses.²¹ Many technical terms of later Indian metaphysics were introduced for the first time in the later Upaniṣads.

The Upaniṣads, though primarily contain metaphysical elements, offer much more than mere doctrines. They deal with many fanciful etymology, legends, episodes and anecdotes. They have reinterpreted the rites. The genealogy of teacher-pupil tradition has been well portrayed in the Upaniṣads. The society, its customs, practices, beliefs and values have been meticulously figured in them through the episodes, legends and the anecdotes they bear. Besides metaphysics, the elements discussed in the Upaniṣads are the family life, economic life, education, ethics,

the pantheon, the duties of Brahmins and Kṣatriyas, cosmology, etiology, cosmogony, new modes of worship and eschatology. Poetic form is the internal beauty of the Upaniṣads. The *gāthās* make these texts popular among the readers.

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THE KALPASŪTRAS

The Vedāṅgas followed the Upaniṣads and they became the landmark in the entire religious literature forming a gap with the literature of the previous age and maintaining noticeable continuity with the past. The first mention of the auxiliary system called Vedāṅgas is found in the Ṣaḍviṃśa Brāhmaṇa. Mainly, there are six types of Vedāṅgas, *viz.*, vyākaraṇa (grammar), chandas (prosody), nirukta (etymology), śikṣā (phonetics), jyotiṣa (astronomy) and kalpa. The common characteristic of all the works is their style.

Kalpa really means 'form' and Kalpasūtra stands for 'aphorisms on ritual'. Sūtra ordinarily means 'thread'. Diffuse and scattered precepts when succinctly systematized in a compact sentence is called sūtra in the same way as loose fibres are compressed into a thread. A sentence composed in a particular style characterized by utmost brevity and rigid systematization is called a sūtra. By extension of metaphor, a work consisting of such sūtras is also known as a sūtra in a larger sense.

Vedāṅga kalpa is divided into four sections, namely śrauta (sacrificial), gr̥hya (domestic), dharma (social) and the minor śulba (science of measurement). Obviously, there exist two major divisions of the Vedāṅgas : (a) religions which includes śrauta, gr̥hya and dharma; and (b) secular, consisting of śulba, śikṣā, chandas, vyākaraṇa, jyotiṣa and nirukta. Besides these, there are also ancillary text — prāyaścitta (expiatory), pariśiṣṭa (complementary), śrāddha, et seq. Among different types of sūtras composed during the sūtra period, the Kalpasūtras are probably the most significant ones in providing the cultural history of India. The Kalpasūtras are indispensable for the proper understanding of the Vedic Saṃhitās and the Brāhmaṇas. There is a fundamental difference between the Brāhmaṇas and the Kalpasūtras in regard to their aim and

scope. The Brāhmaṇas aim at explaining the significance of various acts in Vedic sacrifices and settling ritualistic doctrines, while the Kalpasūtras are mainly dealing with a succinct and systematic account of all the Vedic sacrifices and customs of their period.

Period of Composition

On the basis of their forms and the contents, the sūtras have been dated between 400 B.C. and 200 B.C. by the scholars. Indian scholars like Alteker and Kashikar think that the earliest date for the Śrautasūtras is 600 B.C. Renou, however placed the upper limit at 400 B.C. which seems a more likely date for the composition of the extant texts while 600 B.C. would be a likely date for the scrappy and rudimentary beginning of their composition.¹

The term *ayana* is attributed to the names of the schools with the writing of the sūtras. Consequently we have Āśvālāyana Sūtra, Baudhāyana Sūtra et seq. As per the view of Weber², we can draw a conclusion that the sūtra period was the time of established schools.

The sūtra period is post-Buddhist and belongs to an age when sacrificial religion had attained its climax. However, all attempts to assign the sūtras definite dates fail due to want of concrete proofs. Same huddles and illusions as surround all the Vedic literature come on the way of fixing their dates. According to some scholars, sūtras might have been composed side by side with Brāhmaṇas. Caland³ holds that Baudhāyana must have preceded the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. It is generally considered that a Śrauta Sūtra is a later work than the Brāhmaṇa from which it is due.

Internal evidences, borrowings, citations, et seq. provide relative chronology of the sūtras. Linguistic considerations also go in favour of forwarding the gradual process of development of the sūtra works. Generally, it is accepted that the domestic ritual is earlier than the public ritual. Truly, the Gṛhya Sūtras are later than the Śrauta Sūtras. The Gṛhya Sūtra tradition shows the influence of the Ṛgveda. It also contains traces of Atharvan atmosphere. On the other hand, it does not always comply with the strict demands of the schools. In the opinion of Oldenberg, the texts of the Gṛhya Sūtra are more recent and are related to

one another in a clearer way than those of the Śrauta Sūtras.¹

The Text and the Contents

The Kalpasūtras mainly deal with the kalpa, *i.e.*, ritual. They are devoted to Vedic sacrifices, household ceremonies and customary law. The knowledge of the Vedic Saṃhitās and the Brāhmaṇas of the respective schools are found reflected in the Kalpasūtras. Moreover, a number of sacrifices described in the Kalpasūtras are derived from the Brāhmaṇas. The principal objective of the Brāhmaṇas is to illustrate the significance and to formulate ritualistic doctrines, while the Kalpasūtras are chiefly aimed at providing us a succinct and systematic account of all the Vedic sacrifices and customs prevalent in the period of their formation. The texts of Kalpasūtras simply record the rituals and traditions current in their respective schools and do not give any explanation and rationale.⁵

All the Vedas possess their distinct Kalpasūtras. The number of the Kalpasūtras belonging to the Atharvaveda is the smallest. Only two sūtras, namely the Kauśikasūtra and the Vaitānasūtra are presently available belonging to this Veda. There are more than twenty extant Kalpasūtras of the Yajurveda. The Taittirīya Śākhā of this Veda alone contains seven Kalpasūtras though most of the other śākhās possess Kalpasūtra of their own. All the Kalpasūtras belonging to the Vedas are not seen now. Numerous such texts have been extinct during the passage of time. Only a few texts has come down to us to symbolise the rich cultural heritage of human civilization of the sūtra period.

As mentioned earlier, a complete corpus of the Kalpasūtras possesses the Śrauta, Gṛhya and Dharma Sūtras. The Śrautasūtras descibed great sacrifices known as Śrautayajñas already disussed in the Brāhmaṇas with a few exceptions.

The Gṛhyasūtra deals with household ceremonies, such as marriage and upanayana, and owe little to the Brāhmaṇas. The Gṛhyasūtras generally lean to the Saṃhitās of their respective schools in respect of their choice of the mantras meant for the performance of domestic ceremonies. But, it is observed that all the mantras contained in the Gṛhyasūtras are not found in the extant Saṃhitās.

The Dharmasūtras also owe allegiance to the Vedas in respect of their discussions on social usage and customary law. But,

they are not so close to the Veda of their Charaṇa as that of the Śrauta Sūtras. This is because of the fact that the precepts embodied in the Dharmasūtras were mostly founded upon social customs common to all the Charaṇas, and application of these precepts were generally not confined to the followers of a particular Charaṇa. However, in the matter of ritualistic observances, the Dharmasūtras are really inclined to follow the traditions of their own Charaṇa.

The Śulvasūtra form a part of the Kalpasūtras. These texts contain rules for the measurement and construction of fire-altars and sacrificial sheds et seq. It is marked that the Śulvasūtras are closely connected with the Śrautasūtras as the rules of the Śulvasūtras mostly adhere to great sacrifices contained in the Śrautasūtras.

In the beginning of Āryan culture, the religious, domestic and social practices had no separate identity in the literature. They were jumbled of each other with the advance of time, religion dominated the minds of the people and consequently they tried to preserve and systematize the religious practices of the Āryan community. This resulted in the formation of Śrautasūtras which bear the stamp of the Āryan character, of the public life of the Āryan people. As time passed on, the Āryan and non-Āryan culture mingled together in India owing to the interactions between the people of the two communities. Thus, there was a need to distinguish the culture and traditions of the two communities. This led to the foundation of Gṛhyasūtras which codified the rituals characteristic of the Āryan family. A third group of rules and customs emerged due to interaction between family and society. This gave rise to the Dharmasūtras where such rules and customs have been rightly codified. The origin and development of these sūtras gave birth to the Dharmasūtras or the Smṛti literature.

The Form and the Language

The language of the sūtras is cryptic and aphoristic. The passage of the Sūtras is fully unaccented with the same grammatical form like the Brāhmaṇas. The condensation is however greater in the earlier Sūtras than the later ones.⁶ This fact reveals that oral prose did not undergo any radical change in the course of six or seven hundred years. The language

generally belongs to the Upaniṣadic and the post-Upaniṣadic periods. The vocabulary agrees with that of the epics but much of it went out of that in classical Sanskrit. Most part of the Sūtra-text use the grammar of pre-Pāṇinian type.

Sūtra literature was also memorized. The exegesis was supplied orally by the teacher. Due to its dry and barren content, it was difficult to keep the literature in memory. Hence, this language had to shed everything it could possible dispense with, retaining only just as much as would make sense to people generally conversant with the subject matter, with oral exposition offered by the teacher.

The Sūtras had no myths such as enlivened the Brāhmaṇas, negligibly few rhetorical embellishments, and no poetry. Such a bare and bold literature was also composed by human beings, and which became unpopular due to want of awe and honour. According to some scholars, the Sūtras are the direct and most condensed work produced by India. They consist of short, chopped sentences composed almost entirely of substantives, abstract for choice.⁷ In order to know the end of a chapter, the last aphorism in the chapter or section has been repeated following the style of the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads.

The Sūtras of Various Schools

R̥gvedic Sūtras

There exist different schools which developed Sūtras of their own kind. The schools of Aśvalayana and Śāṅkhāyana had composed two Sūtras called Śrautasūtra and Gṛhyasūtra appears in two recensions, one of which is called Śambavya. The relations of these texts among themselves and to other texts still remain in dark. The Śāṅkhāyana texts are composite in nature.

Yajurvedic Sūtras

The Taittirīya School of the Black Yajurveda has no less than six kinds of Sūtras, namely Baudhāyana, Vādhūla, Bharadvāja, Āpastamba, Hiranyakeśin and Vaikhanasa.

- (a) The Baudhāyana is often accepted to be the most ancient of the six, and indeed of all this literature. The style of the Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra is close to that of the Brāhmaṇas and traditionally this text has been

described a *pravacana* or oral exposition. This school adheres to various types of sūtras.

- (b) The branch of Vādhūla resembles the Baudhāyana in style. Caland⁸ opines that Vādhūla is more ancient than the Baudhāyana. Only parts of the Śrautasūtra, Gṛhyasūtra and Śulvasūtra are now available. That part of the Śrautasūtra, in which sections of Brāhmaṇa are incorporated, has been preserved.
- (c) The Sūtras of Bharadvāja School contain an incomplete Śrautasūtra, a Gṛhyasūtra and a Pitrimedha.
- (d) Āpastamba School contains all the kinds of Sūtras and makes the complete set of the detailed manuals of this class of literature. The compilation is the most minute one.
- (e) Hiranyakeśin or Satyaśadha is similar to the last-mentioned.
- (f) Vaikhānasa comprises only three Sūtras, Śrautasūtra, Gṛhyasūtra and Dharmasūtra.

The last four constitute a group and represent the recent tradition. Particularly Hiranyakeśin is often similar to Āpastambha. Vārāha and Mānava have partly influenced Āpastamba. In the view of Caland,⁹ something has been received by it from the White Yajus. He also argued that Vaikhānasa, being quite recent, bears new material, probably in the Gṛhyasūtra, a work earlier to Śrautasūtra.¹⁰

Parts of the Śrautasūtra of the Kāṭhaka and the whole of the Gṛhyasūtra and the Śulvasūtra are found in the stream of other schools of the Yajus. These are sometimes named as Laugakṣi. For the Maitrayaṇīya we find the Śrautasūtra, the Gṛhyasūtra and the Śulvasūtra of the Mānava. There also exist a set of corresponding texts of the Vārāha which seem to be very similar to the preceding. A distinct Samhitā perhaps is not predicted yet, for which these texts have been derived. On one hand the White Yajus contains the Śrautasūtra of Kātyāyana alongwith a Pitrimedha and Śulvasūtra, and on the other it has the Pāraskara-Gṛhyasūtra which is also called Kāṭīya. Both the limbs in general follow the Madhyandina recension.

Sāmavedic Sūtras

For the school of Sāmaveda, it is noticed that the Śrautasūtra of Lātyāyana and the Gṛhyasūtra of Gobhila (with the corresponding Śraddhakalpa) belong to the Kauthuma. Caland opines that both the Ārśeyakalpa and Maśakakalpa with its supplement the Kṣudrasūtra have been derived from an ancient tradition.¹¹ The Ranayanīya branch has another text which is very much similar to the Lātyāyana and perhaps more recent. This is the Śrautasūtra of Drāhyāyaṇa.

Probably there was a special school of Gautama to which the Gṛhyasūtra of Khadira based on the Gobhila, the Pitrimedha of Gautama and the Dharmasūtra of the same name owe their origin. The Nidānasūtra of Patañjali has uncertain derivation. This text deals with the technical details of metres, the Saman and their grouping and the Sāmaveda rituals. Ostensibly, it adheres to material on grammar. Finally, the Jaiminiya school has fragments of a Śrautasūtra and a Gṛhyasūtra.

Atharvavedic Sūtras

The texts of the Atharvaveda is remarkably different from those of the other Vedas. The Vaitānasūtra is the Sūtra of the cult of three fires. It is not an ordinary Śrautasūtra. As per the opinion of Caland, it confines itself to the ritual on the Brahman and the allied incumbents during the public sacrificed.¹² Bloomfield holds that the work is later than the Kauśika and depends on it.¹³ This work is not a normal Gṛhyasūtra. Besides the domestic portions, it contains discourses on a Śrauta which summarises the narrations of the sacrifice performed at the suzygies, planetary conjunctions or oppositions and which includes the magical practices the expositin of which forms the main interest of the work.¹⁴ At the end of this work, there is a list of omens and portents with an addenda attached.

It is worth mentioning here that the compilation of prayers by the different schools for the use of their Gṛhyasūtras relates to these in a way similar to that of the Saṃhitās bear to the Śrautasūtras. Oldenberg¹⁵ says that a Mantrapāṭha (recitation of prayers) possessed by Āpastamba School seems to have existed before the Gṛhyasūtra. According to Winternitz¹⁶, it contains some remarkable archaic portions. Caland¹⁷ views that a similar relation persists between the Mantra Brāhmaṇa and

the Gṛhyasūtra of Gobhila, and between the Gṛhyasūtra of Vaikhānasa and Mantra Samhitā of that school, though the Mantra Samhitā is more recent than the Gṛhyasūtra.

Other Ritual Texts

The ritual literature also includes many other works in the form of pariśiṣṭa (addenda) which is cast in ślokas repeating a lot of details about the domestic cult. One among such texts is the Gṛhyasaṅgraha explaining the technical terms employed by Gobhila. The explanations given by this work is found valid for all the Gṛhya literature. Another work connected with Gobhila is the Karmapradīpa, meaning 'elucidation of works'. Again, Vārāha and Vaitāna are the two pariśiṣṭa to the Śrautasūtra. Above all, the most significant addendum is the pariśiṣṭa of the Atharvaveda, which provides valuable informations on rites, expiations, schools sacrificial instruments, and phonetics. In addition to these, such a treatise throws adequate light on divination and prescribes ways of averting the evil prophesied. In the view of Kohlbrugge¹⁸, the Adbhutasāgara is a commentary on this section of the work. We also come across the text on vidhāna (rules) which deals with the teaching of a sort of cult of contracts.¹⁹ Thus, we have the Sāmavidhāna and the Ṛgvidhāna. The former has been ranked as a Brāhmaṇa and the later ascribed to Śaunaka. The Ṛgvidhāna gives stress on each hymn of the Ṛgveda and speaks of the magical results obtained by reciting these verses.

There are also many other works existing which don't belong to Vedism due to their later date of compilation. These are prayoga (usages), paddhati (guides) and Kārikā (mnemonic verses). This literature, though little known, is important from a practical point of view. Very often this work illustrates a particular rite, marriage, funeral or sacrifice to the people.

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SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

Besides Sūtra and other ritual texts, the Vedāṅga has aspects like śikṣā (phonetics), Vyākaraṇa (grammar), nirukta (etymology), chandas (metrics) and jyotiṣa (astronomy). Among these, śikṣā includes the largest number of texts in it.

Śikṣā

The origin and development of phonetics in ancient India is evident from the śikṣā texts. The work śikṣā means lesson through which one can learn the method of pronunciation, of the vocal organs and physical effort involved in the production of phonemes. On the whole, the recitation of Vedic mantras cannot be achieved correctly without the aid of the lessons of phonetics.

Śikṣā are almost inextricably connected with Pratiśākhya which are practical manuals aiming to teach the technicalities of the padapāṭha, the saṃhitāpāṭha and also the karmapāṭha. Pratiśākhya contain definitions of technical terms, and rules in regard to quantity and vocal lengthening, tone, syllabication, doubling, and above all euphony (saṃdhi). In the broad sense, they also deal with grammar proper and metrics in addition to euphony. The texts of Pratiśākhya are of great interest for the linguists. They are the unparalleled documents on the pronunciation of Sanskrit. In the ancient times, they were used as the tools for the Vedic recitations. They were the practical instructions of the Vedic readers. They also help in the interpretation of the Vedas by confirming certain readings. Śikṣās modified in various schools is termed as Pratiśākhya. Technically Śikṣās are Vedāṅga; Pratiśākhya are not. But it is not possible to treat them separately.

Śikṣās of different schools are not available now. Śikṣās common to all schools are the Pāṇinīya, Sarvasammata and

Siddhānta. The most systematic of these works is the Vyāsa-śikṣā which is the only one to follow a Pratiśākhya intimately. The Śikṣāsaṃgraha is a late and comprehensive text.

The Pāṇinīya Śikṣā quotes other authorities like Vyāsa, Nārada, Śaunaka, etc. The Taittirīya Upaniṣad defines śikṣā as concerned with syllables, accent, length of vocables stress, chant and euphonic combination. These subjects are the inherent qualities of all śikṣās. The physical efforts involved in pronouncing sounds are the concerns of the śikṣā while the Pratiśākhya approach the subject from its audial aspect. In the early Vedic period, accent was decided by pitch but from the time of the Black Yajurveda, stress, accent became the norm and which continued down to the Upaniṣads.¹

There are some treatises on śikṣā attributed to the White Yajurveda. These texts are Keśava, Mādhyandiniya, Lomaśi (or Lomaśinīya) and Amoghanandinī. Of these, the Amoghanandinī has only 57 verses mainly on pronunciation, the Mādhyandiniya has 27 verses and the Keśava has only 9 verses. The Lomaśi, a work by Gargācārya contains 40 verses. The Taittirīya Saṃhitā has four texts on śikṣā, viz., the Bhāradvāja, Cārāyaṇīya, Āraṇya and Vyāsa. The Bhāradvāja consists of 133 verses and serves as a practical manual for the right and proper use of homonyms. The Cārāyaṇīya has ten chapters containing 335 verses pertaining to euphonic combinations, compounds, rules for recitation, accent, pauses, length of vocables, prosody, anaptyxis, etc. The Āraṇya is the narrowest in scope. It provides us the accent of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka and claims to draw upon nine other śikṣās. Most probably the earliest and the important śikṣā is the Vyāsa which is based on the Taittirīya Pratiśākhya and which has a wider ground than most other śikṣās.

The Atharvavedas has śikṣā texts like Māṇḍūkī, Vāsiṣṭha and Āpiśali. The Māṇḍūkī is a long treatise having 16 chapters and 184 verses. The Vāsiṣṭha is a very short text which merely throws light on duplication of syllables and anaptyxis. The Āpiśali is a prose work on the classification and proper pronunciation of the letters of the alphabet and the genesis of the notes.

The Nāradiya Śikṣā belongs to the Sāmaveda. It has two prapāṭhakas, each of which contains eight chapters. It has totally

140 verses and some prose passages. Its main aim is to impart instructions on music in accordance with the Sāmavedic regulations. Another śikṣā text is the Vyāsa belonging to the Sāmaveda. It is the longest and the most significant one. It deals with the topics pertaining to the technical terms, rules of accent, duplication, etc.

Some other śikṣā texts known are the Keśava, the Yājñavalkya and the Kātyāyana. The Keśava Śikṣā belongs to the White Yajurveda. It is a short work entirely devoted to rules of pronunciation. The Yājñavalkya Śikṣā is a very late work not earlier than the 5th century A.D. It covers the same ground as the Pāṇinīya. The Kātyāyana is a still later work. According to Verma², it must be earlier than the Yājñavalkya Śrautasūtra. Kielhorn³ thinks that comparatively recent śikṣā are fuller in scope and more fully developed than the Prātiśākhya. In relation to the Prātiśākhya, the śikṣā texts represent a stage of popularisation which, however, does not rule out certain pedantic refinements. The Vyāsa Śikṣā, the most systematic of these works, is the only one that follows a Prātiśākhya closely. Bhattacharji⁴, on the basis of the use of the term śikṣā in its singular form in the Taittiriya Āraṇyaka, opines that there was perhaps only one śikṣā at the beginning, which belongs to Pāṇini and which is the oldest text of Vedic phonetics. The Pāṇinīya Śikṣā was undergone many changes over a long time and from place to place.

The Prātiśākhya

The Prātiśākhya are the works later to the śikṣā texts by 4 to 3 centuries B.C. The latest Prātiśākhya probably fall in the 2nd century B.C. The tables of contents are almost the same for its śikṣās and Prātiśākhya with an exception that the former is concerned more with the nature of the articulation effort and the latter with the product i.e. the sound of the finished phonemes.

The most important is the Prātiśākhya of the R̥gveda, attributed rightly or wrongly to Śaunaka. It is a composite work in verse form which has correctly replaced the original prose. Śaunaka's R̥k Prātiśākhya contains 18 chapters. The contents are fairly exhaustive treatment of grammar together with rudiments of phonetics which is to earliest in the world. The

part devoted to metrics and the teaching in general are highly developed. The Taittirīya school possesses one Prātiśākhya which is the most technical and purest in form. The White Yajurveda Prātiśākhya by Kātyāyana has 8 chapters and 727 sūtras. This text deals with the correct pronunciation of the Sāmaveda language, rules of euphonic combinations and accents etc. Sarma⁵ points out that all the individual cases of peculiar phonetics or other changes are also evident. The Prātiśākhya lays down rules regarding the reconstruction of continuous combined text from the *pada* text. The White Yajurveda Prātiśākhya is more concerned with the phonetics peculiar to the White Yajurveda but has other irrelevant topics like the need for memorization⁶, or the recommendation of Vedic study⁷, musical notes⁸, or the peculiar mode of recitation of same ancient teachers and their followers. White Yajurveda Prātiśākhya prescribes that the alphabet contains 65 phonemes counting the different shades of pronunciation. The merits gleaned from its study are explained by a *phalaśruti* section at last.

There exist a number of Prātiśākhyas of the Sāmaveda. These are the Sāma Prātiśākhya, Pañcavidha or Puṣpasūtra and Ṛktantra. Out of the three texts, the Ṛktantra is more grammatical while the rests deal with the special technique of pronunciation needed for Sāmaveda recitation and chanting. These texts prescribe rules for the variants which throws light on the various Prātiśākhyas of the Sāmaveda.

The Atharvaveda had originally three Prātiśākhyas out of which one available to us now in the name of the Atharva Prātiśākhya, the other attributed to the Śaunaka and Śāyaṇa school named as the Caturadhyāya and the third one of the Paippalāda school is not found.⁹ Much difference is noticed between the Caturadhyāya and the Atharva Prātiśākhya. The Caturadhyāya Prātiśākhya throws light on an obscure language which contains specimens both earlier and later than the Ṛgveda and Yajurveda Samhitās. Its preoccupation with writing is another significance of this text.

The relative chronology of the Prātiśākhya texts is still in doubt. Most probably, those of the Ṛg and Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda would be that oldest, followed by those of the Śukla Yajurveda or the Sāmaveda. In the opinion of Surya Kanta, the Ṛktantra was composed in several strata¹⁰. There is no certainty in establishing

their relation with the grammar designed by Pāṇini. Liebhich claimed that the observations in the terminology of the Prātiśākhya, the relations between some of their sūtras and those of Pāṇini exhibit their dominance. Thieme has argued that Pāṇini is earlier and does not agree to accept that the Kātyāyana of the Vājasaneyi Prātiśākhya is identical with the author of the Varttika on the grammar of Pāṇini.¹¹

Evidently, the Prātiśākhya contains much in them, which are no doubt treasures of grammar in a superposing extent. Still, the Prātiśākhya is never called Vyākaraṇa because their real object is not to impart grammatical techniques of the language, but to explain the correct system of different Vedic schools.¹² Yet the prātiśākhya bears the clear tendency to presuppose the existence and practisation of grammar, and anticipate the separation of the two into distinct disciplines. Fluidity of the language is greatly marked in the Prātiśākhya in respect of large number of local variations in pronunciation, intonation, euphoric combinations and accent. With the evolution of grammar as a special subject, there developed rigid codification of the Prātiśākhya.

Vyākaraṇa

Numerous references of Vyākaraṇa are traced in the Vedāṅgas which owe their origin to the ancient authorities. But, we find only Pāṇini's Vedic grammar in use. The grammar of Pāṇini deals with the accent¹³ which is not prevalent in classical Sanskrit. Pāṇini explains the peculiar aspects of grammar where the Vedic language differs from the classical. Pāṇini's Vyākaraṇa belongs to the 4th century B.C. The approach and methodology of Pāṇini are unique and fully scientific. The Vedic section of Pāṇini's grammar is short. It embodies the same technical terms as the classical section and presupposes knowledge of the later. Clarity, precision and non-ambiguity are the characteristics of Pāṇini's work. His grammar resembles the style of the sūtra which sheds even a redundant syllable. He had treated the vocabulary of his time comprehensively, although there were abundant traces of borrowing into the old stock of vocabulary from prehistoric times. Such inheritance was mainly at the phonological and morphological levels but very rarely at the grammatical levels.¹⁴ Thus, while old morphology and phonology imbibed foreign influence, grammar retained fixed forms.

According to Burrow, Sanskrit came to its present status and shape with the tools of Pāṇini's grammar.¹⁵

Indian interest in the analytical approach to Śikṣā, Prātiśākhya, Vyākaraṇa and Nirukta was materialized in due course of time and then the spoken language differed to a small amount but to a recognizable extent from the language of the Vedic texts.¹⁶ Much of the contents of the śikṣās was given earlier in Prātiśākhayas, but the latter contained many rules not concerns of the reciter of the Vedic hymns. This led to the composition of the manuals (grammatical rules and forms) for the recitation of the verses correctly. Consequently, the Vedic hymns came to exist on both an intelligible and an easily memorable form. According to Kielhorn, the genesis of such tools became the need of the moment when the recitation of the Vedic hymns had become so artificial that it no longer was sufficiently accurately described by the comparatively simple rules of the Prātiśākhyas.¹⁷ Consequently, the quest for grammar in framing certain stable rules became inevitable. Due to the influence of foreign languages, Buddhism, Jainism, Austric and Dravidian, Vedic religion and language faced steady obsolescence. In this linguistic meddle, the priests, seers, grammarians, Vedic scholars tried their level best to preserve the cultural heritage of the Veda and faced many confrontations. Since the later Vedic stage, the spoken language had moved away from old Indo-Aryan and had fallen into disuse. Only the theories flexible to a great extent to adjust the variations in the language survived. A tendency towards maintaining uniformity is quite evident from the various Prātiśākhyas.

Nirukta

The world's first treatise on etymology is the *Nirukta* of Yāska. Nirukta means 'verbal explanation'. It is the Vedāṅga of etymology. It was compiled between 700 and 500 B.C. and most probably around 600 B.C. Renou holds that it is a commentary revised by Yāska from an earlier work, the *Naighaṇṭu* or *Naighaṇṭuka* which consists of lists of R̥gveda rare to any other source.¹⁸

The work Nirukta is divided into three sections and five chapters. First three chapters combinedly called the *Naighaṇṭu-uka Kāṇḍa* include synonyms, chapter four deals with

homonyms and bears the *Naigama* or *Aikapadika* which has discourses on the words obtained mostly from the later sections of the R̥gveda. About 600 verses from the R̥gveda have been quoted by Yāska. Chapter five called the *Daivata* treats the etymology of the names of Vedic deities. Out of the three chapters of *Naighaṇṭuka*, the first describes the physical elements like air, water, earth, etc.; the second chapter deals with man, his body, limbs, emotions, etc. and the third chapter deals mostly with some abstract concepts.

Nirukta explores the semantic aspects of etymology unlike the grammar (*Vyākaraṇa*) which deals with the structural and formal characteristics of etymology. The Brāhmaṇas and the R̥gveda itself adhere to etymology in some rudiment form. Belvalkar observes that the words are first arranged in large semantic groups, then comes a list of isolated words (*aikapadika*), taken from the recent parts of the Samhitā.¹⁹ At last, the divinities are enumerated in several series.

The work of Yāska is available in two recensions having 12 adhyāyas followed by two apocryphal adhyāya. Hence, the *Nirukta* is a series of etymological analyses of the words given in the *Nighaṇṭu*. Such analyses are accompanied by a sort of running gloss on the verses in which the words occur. Yāska, at start, tries to explain the meaning of the verb 'becoming' and thus begins with a significant grammatical discussion. He stresses on the modality of this verb and enumerates the four parts of discourse and their functions. He focusses on the possibility of the derivations of nouns from a verbal root and such an opinion lies in Yāska. But, Gargya upholds a more qualified view. He tries to discover whether mantras bear a meaning, that is to say, whether the magical significance of these mantras is or is not the only meaning of the sacred formulae. Śākaṭāyana, an earlier authority on the subject held that all nouns can be derived from verbal roots.

Though the analyses of etymology demand the knowledge of the *Nirukta*, these are hardly applicable values. Such discourses summaries the study of the language from the symbolical and mystical points of view, in which the creation of verbal associations has been discussed. However, the subject of studies in the *Nirukta* is no doubt a methodical effort to analyse words, and to lay down the rules governing the change, decay and

transposition of sounds. The *Nirukta* is the most ancient commentary of Vedic period in perspective of the interpretation of the hymns.

A degree of sophistication in Vedic studies is attested by Yāska who mentions different schools of Vedic thought, such as *yājñika* (ritualist), *vaiyākaraṇa* (grammarian), *naidāna* (metaphysicist), *aitihāsika* (historian), and finally, *nirukta* (etymologist). Thus, Yāska refers to seventeen authors chronologically, after which he comes. The data and format of his work remains undetermined as viewed by Durga and Skandasvāmin (Maheśvara) in particular.²⁰ The archaic style of Yāska's work forms surviving in the midst of continuous prose and the Vedic atmosphere. On the basis of the accustomed use of certain technical terms, many authors and indologists are inclined to place Yāska before Pāṇini, i.e., approximately in the 5th century B.C.²¹ However, priority is given to the grammarian by Thieme.²²

Yāska believes in the fact that mere grammatical rules are of little avail in tracing the origin of a word. Derivation of words in any case should not be away from the original meaning. The semantic associations frequently throw light on the possible root of the words. Hence, he always tries to link semantics in context to etymology. Yāska holds that the words are the most precise transparent and economical means of communication. Ostensibly, their claim lies in their superiority of gestures and a consistent analysis. He recognizes four parts of speech, namely, *nāman* (noun, pronoun and adjective), *ākhyāta* (verb), *upasarga* (prefix), and *nipāta* (indeclinables). He explores all these with remarkable thoroughness and scientific precision. He ascribes the origin of many words to the influence of dialects and regional linguistic characteristics. Above all, he had a strong and deep insight to the subject which dwindled over the roots in the derivation of the words. Thus, his contribution was so remarkable that the works of his predecessors hardly appeared.

The language of the *Nirukta* has exhibited the signs of the evolution of the Vedic metres (chandas). The spoken language differs largely from the metres.

Chandas

Ancient teachings have also been reflected as the Vedānga

on metres (chandas) which are the texts of comparatively later date. The *Chandasūtra* is the sūtra of Piṅgala on metres. This treatise exists in two slightly different recension, out of which one is attached to the Ṛgveda and the other to the Yajurveda. Though they adheres to only classical metres, still they are of recent origin. M. Ghosh²² dates the works as far back as the fifth century B.C. Sometimes the authoritative is given to Patañjali. The Vedic portion of this work treats the rules of prosody, expounds the metres of the gods, demons, *et. seq.* It is also claimed that the treatment is also applicable to the prose of the Veda. Analysis of seven normal metres and some complex or aberrant forms has been given in this treatise. We also find the discourses on metres in the Nidānasūtra in the Ṛg Prātiśākhya and in some other works. Like the Brāhmaṇas the Vedic hymns reflect the names and forms of the metres, the mysticism of the syllable and of the verse in a large scale.

Jyotiṣa

The Jyotiṣa-Vedāṅga or Vedāṅga-Jyotiṣa attributed to Lagadha was compiled in the earliest period when need was felt for a ritual calender to fix the proper timings for the sacrifices. In this context, observations of the celestial phenomena play an important role. The Jyotiṣa-Vedāṅga is a short and abstruse treatise preserved in two recensions, both in verse. The Ṛgveda recension contains 36 verse while the Yajurveda has 43. Both of these texts deal with the position of the sun and the moon at the solstices, the exact times of new and full moon, the position of the 27 lunar mansions and the rules for calculating these are laid down here. The Yajurveda and the Brāhmaṇas mention the position of the asterisms in respect of the observance of the sacrifices at right times. Ostensibly, this laid the foundation of astronomy which flourished well at a later period. Vedic astronomy also predict the rotation of seasons; so useful for the farmers, and the position of stars which influences navigation and maritime trade.

Morley²³ views that the introduction of the calendar, chronology and hieroglyphic writing modified significantly māyā religion in the direction of complexity and formalization. A religious philosophy took shape basing on the development of astronomy. The astronomical calendar is found very much useful to the hieratic class in China, Babylon and Egypt, because such

a calendar prescribes the exact timing for the liturgical rites. The cultivators of India also make use of such astronomical calendar in their yearly programme of farming. Actually, an astronomical calendar forecasts the weather of the entire future rains, calamities, cyclones, cold-wars and hot-waves etc. make them prepared accordingly.

Renou also observes the existence of an *Ātmājyotiṣa* of the *Atharvaveda* which in his view, is a short and recent work.²⁴ This treatise lays down the divisions of time, the names of the *nakṣatras* and the astrological facts which are barely necessary to have the concept of astronomy.

Other Allied Sūtras

A number of auxiliary texts were composed even after the main *Vedāṅga* treatises. The aim of such allied sūtras was to solve a few problems arose out of actual ritual practice and such problems were not covered by the earlier *Vedāṅgas*. These allied sūtras include the following :

- (i) The *Pitṛmedhasūtras*
- (ii) The *Śraddhakalpas*
- (iii) The *Parīśiṣṭas*
- (iv) The *Karmapradīpa*
- (v) The *Gṛhyasaṃgraha*
- (vi) The *Atharvapariśiṣṭa*
- (vii) The *Bṛhaddevatā*
- (viii) The *Ṛgvidhāna*
- (ix) The *Nidānasūtra*
- (x) The *Piṅgalachandaḥ Sūtra*

The *Pitṛmedhasūtras* were written by the sages, *Baudhāyana*, *Gautama* and *Hiraṇyakeśin*. The authoritative of the *Śraddhakalpas* went to *Śaunaka*, *Paippalāda*, *Kātyāyana* and *Mānava*. The composition of the *parīśiṣṭas* (supplements) is ascribed to *Āśvalāyana* and *Baudhāyana*. *Gobhila* had framed the *Karmapradīpa* and *Gobhilaputras* compiled the *Gṛhyasaṃgraha* and the *Atharvapariśiṣṭa*. The *Bṛhaddevatā*, a compendium of gods and myths was authored by *Śaunaka*, who also formulated the *Ṛgviddhāna* having mixed contents. This *Ṛgviddhāna* is a late composition.

With the evolution and upliftment of the metrical texts, Vedic prosody had grown in complexity through the ages. The two works, namely the Nidānasūtra and the Piṅgalachandaḥ Sūtra have been traced to deal with the subject. Some scholars ascribe the first ten Prapāṭhakas of these sūtras to Patañjali. The Prapāṭhakas belong to the Sāmaveda and treat primarily of Sāmaveda subjects like the uktha, stoma, gāna, *et seq.* Due to the peculiarity of the grammar, its language is interesting to some extent. Texts quoted in the Bṛhaddevatā as from the Nidānasūtra are, however, not present here. This text adheres to the Vedic metres in toto. The Piṅgalachandaḥ sūtra is found in two recensions, one belonging to the Ṛgveda and the other to the Sāmaveda. It is a late work. Its lateness is evident from its contents which include some post-Vedic metres (classical metres) alongwith the Vedic ones. The authoritative of this work is ascribed to the seer Piṅgala.

Anukramaṇīs

The continuance of the formation of the supplementary texts gave birth to several Anukramaṇīs or classified indices bearing the names of the seer, metre, god and details of the text division. Although these texts do not form the part of the Vedāṅga, they are inseparable from the auxiliary texts of the Vedas. Śaunaka compiled Ṛgveda Anukramaṇīs which are six in number. The Sarvānukramaṇī (general index), a more systematic work in prose was designed by Kātyāyana. This work is probably more recent. Mādhava places the Anukramaṇīs in 10th century A.D. which is not certain. He also wrote two in mnemonic verse. These texts comprising indices signify the very end of the Vedic tradition.

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THE VEDIC SCHOOLS

The Vedic literature went on several amendments with additions, omissions, borrowings and transfers of material from one text to the other basing on different points of doubt. So, Barth¹ opined that whenever a doubt persisted in the performance of a single ritual work, modification by a group of teachers suggested. Consequently, fresh codification of the facts and rules in the texts or text warranted. This tradition came down to Sūtras from the Vedas. This, in turn brought out innumerable differences in the elements of the texts. We observe that at least in the Yajus, there are profound differences, the early history of which is still in illusion. But, codification has taken a strict form in the R̥gveda, where nevertheless adventitious elements have found a way in. As it is evident now, small divergences have been incorporated in course of time in Samhitā texts. These differences between one Samhitā to another made differences between one Brāhmaṇa to another and so on. The tradition continued thus and finally, the differences are marked with the Sūtras works. At bottom, the true schools are the schools of Sūtra, in which special practices were established. Specific principles and procedures were laid down in the Sūtras for true and proper recitation of the mantras and yajus. According to Knauer, the history of the Vedic schools is the history of the ritual formulae.²

Really, it is difficult to know exactly what a Vedic school may have been. Its relationship with a given text has not been meticulously characterized. In which way the branch (śākhā) became detached from the trunk is yet determined. As the Vedic literature is replete with copious denominations, Müller thinks that originally the Samhitā texts were anything more than a matter of 'oral copies'.³ The Indian commentaries rightly distinguish the śākhās of different Samhitās and the cāraṇa or

'courses' which were differentiated one from another only by the Sūtras, or at most by the Brāhmaṇas. In principle, a school is designated by the name of the founder, and this name in the plural refers in general to the adepts of the school.

The purāṇas and the inscriptions adhere to the facts related to the schools. Particularly Ānanda Samhitā of the Vaikhānasa and the Cāraṇavyūha have exposed the Vedic schools to some extent. These two texts were composed at the end of the Vedic era. The later one belongs to the class of pariśiṣṭa (appendix).

The Schools of the Ṛgveda

The Ṛgveda text as evident from the Cāraṇavyūha had five different recensions belonging to as many schools. The entire text was found in two major recensions, namely Śākala and Vāṣkala. Śāyana, in his commentary to the Ṛgveda, says that 1127 Vedic schools exist in toto. Renou points out that the Ṛgveda had 5 or 21 schools in accordance with the most prevalent traditions. The Vāṣkala recension, called an upaśruti, is quoted many times in the Brāhmaṇas. It contained many more hymns and was more closely connected with the Bṛhaddevatā. Though this recension is no longer extant, we gather information regarding this text from Anquetil Du Perron's Oupnek'hat of 1656 A.D. The Śākala recension, which is available at present, belongs to the Śaiśireya branch of the Śākala school. The extant Śākala recension follows the maṇḍala division, quotations and references from the Ṛgveda and thus adheres to it. The ten maṇḍalas of Ṛgveda, however, do not belong to the same period of composition. At least three distinct stages of development are observed. In the first stage maṇḍalas II-VII are formed. These texts are known as the 'family books' because they are composed by certain poet families, viz. Gṛtsamada, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva. Atri, Bharadvāja and Vaśiṣṭha. Some opine for the five consecutive generations of the composers instead of six as mentioned. The second stage comprises maṇḍala VIII composed mainly by the poets of the Kāṇva family, and the second part of maṇḍala I (specifically hymns 51-191) which is arranged on the same plan as book VIII. The composers of book I, part I and book VIII also belong to this family and more than half of the hymns of book I, part I are composed by three poets. According to Bloomfield, the authors are traditional rather

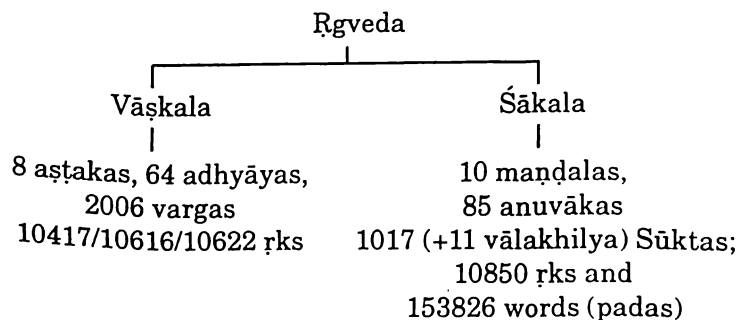
than historical. Their names are echoes from an olden semi-mythic times. Many hymns of the Pragātha collection of Kāṇva and the numerous Kāṇvids are most certainly late clap-trap.⁴ At the end of the second stage, part II of book I to book VIII were composed. In the third stage, book IX named as Soma maṇḍala was framed. Book X and the first part of book I (hymns 1-50) were compiled and added to the Saṁhitā much later. At least a gap of two centuries is marked between these later compositions and the original corpus.⁵ Dr. Rahurkar opines that only 78 authors out of 151 authors given in book X are authentic, while the other names are fictitious.⁶ Some hymns have more than one author. One example of which is IX.66. In some others, authorship is wholly mechanical depending on the person addressing the god and varying from verse to verse as in dialogue hymns. Manyu (anger) is the author of X.83 and a snake, Arbuda, of X.94.

Some women authors were also there who flourished with flying colours and composed some hymns of the Ṛgveda. Lopāmudrā was the author of I.179; Apālā Maitreyī of VIII.91; Yamī of X.10; Vasukra's wife of X.28; Kākṣīvatī Ghoṣa of X.30-40; Sūryā of X.85; Urvaśī of X.95; Vāc, daughter of Ambhr̥ṇa of X.125; Brahmajāyā of X.139; Yamī, daughter of Vivasvat of X.145; Indrāṇī of X.145; Śraddhā Kāmāyanī of X.151 and Paulomī Śacī of X.159. Rahurkar holds that many of these instances are not real as some names are spuriously drawn from the accepted convention that the thing or person spoken about is the deity and the speaker of that particular passage is the seer. Consequently, authors vary in the dialogue hymns according to who speaks and to whom. In addition to this, we observe that only parts of given hymns are attributed to the women-composers.⁶

It is very much interesting to note that the generations of the Vedic priests exhibit a curious phenomenon. In this we can cite the views of Arnold who says that Vedic poets were creating a poetic tradition in which "we find all signs of a genuine historical development, that is, of united efforts in which a whole society of men have taken part, from father to son and holding up an ideal which has led each in turn to seek rather to enrich his successors than grasp at his own immediate enjoyment."⁷ The important observation is that the adequate patronage given

to their work in the then society had certainly enriched the art of the creative work done by the priests, bards and poets of the primitive society.

We can have a focussed view of the two major schools of the R̥gveda as follows :



The later Vedic literature has two schools, namely the Aitareya and the Kausitaki for R̥gveda Brāhmaṇa, Aranyaka and Upaniṣad; and the schools of Śrautasūtra and Gṛhyasūtra are Aśvālayān and Śāṅkhāyān respectively.

The Schools of the Yajurveda

The Yajurveda is available in two recensions, namely Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda and Śukla Yajurveda. The Kṛṣṇa or Black Yajurveda has four schools, *viz.* Kathaka, Kapiśthala, Maitrāyaṇī and Taittirīya. The Śukla or White Yajurveda has only one school called Vājasaneyi having two constituents like Mādhyamdina and Kāṇva. Similarly, the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda Brāhmaṇa as well as the Āraṇyaka belong to two schools each, namely Kāṭha and Taittirīya. Kāṭha is fragmentary in nature. The Śukla Yajurveda Brāhmaṇa and Āraṇyaka has one school each in the name of Bṛhad and Śatapatha respectively and each one consists of two recensions. The Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda Upaniṣad has three schools, *viz.* Kāṭha, Maitri and the other having Taittirīya, Śvetāśvatara (or Mantra) and Mahānārāyaṇa. The Śukla Yajurveda Upaniṣad has the school of Bṛhadāraṇyaka (two recensions) Īśa or Īśavāṣ-ya (two recensions). The Śrautasūtra schools of the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda are the one of Yajña and Kāṭhaka; the one of Mānava and Vārāha; and the other of Baudhāyana, Vādhula, Bhāradvāja, Āpastamba, Hirenyakeśin or Satyāśadha and Vikhānasa; while Kātyāyana is the only one school known for the Śrautasūtra of the Śukla Yajurveda. The Gṛhyasūtra schools

of the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda are Kāṭhaka or Laugakṣi, the one of Mānava and Vārāha, and the other of Baudhāyana, Vādhula, Bhāradvāja, Āpastamba, Hiranyakeśin and Vikhānasa. The Śukla Yajurveda Gṛhyasūtra school is the Parāskara or Katiya. There is doubt in the existence of a school like Mānava for the Dharmasūtra of the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. But, the other school concerned with it is the group of Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, Hiranyakeśin and Vaikhānasa. The only school known for the Dharmasūtra of Śukla Yajurveda is the Śaṅkhalikhita. The names of the seers attributed to the schools of the Śulvasūtra of the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda are Laugakṣi, Mānava, Vārāha, Baudhāyana, Vādhula, Āpastamba and Hiranyakeśin. The last four belong to the same school. We have only one school Kātyāyana for the Śulvasūtra of the Śukla Yajurveda. There were Pratiśākhya schools for the two Yajurvedas. The name Taittirīya is alluded to the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda Pratiśākhya while Vājasaneyi to the Pratiśākhya of the Śukla Yajurveda. According to Renou⁸ the Yajurveda has totally 86 or 101 schools as per the tradition, where 15 of the Śukla Yajurveda are taken into consideration or are not.

The Schools of the Sāmaveda

Traditionally, the Sāmaveda had 1000 recensions. But, only three of them are now available to us. These are the Jaiminīya, Kauthuma and Rāṇayaniya. The school of the Nagas or Naigeyas belongs to the Kauthuma branch (śākhā), some verses of which have been preserved in two Anukramaṇīs. One of these indices arranges them according to the names of the seers who have composed the verses and the other according to the gods invoked. The word Kauthuma may be an early variant in Pronunciation of Kausuma. In this connection, the later allied Sāmaveda texts like Kusumasūtra or Puṣpasūtra or Phullasūtra may be referred to. Jaiminīya is also known as Talavakara. This recension consists of Sāmanas (melodies) larger in number than those of the Kauthuma. The verses in the Jaiminīya are differently arranged, and subject to some sound changes.

The schools of the Sāmaveda Brahmana are Pañcaviṁśa or Tandyamaha and Śadvīṁśa forming one group, while the other containing Jaiminīya and Śatyayana. The Āraṇyaka recensions of the Sāmaveda are Āraṇyaka Samhitā, Āraṇyaka gāna and Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brahmana. The two Upaniṣadic texts of

this Veda are Chāndogya and Keṇa. The sūtra texts of the Sāmaveda consists of Śrautasūtras, Gṛhyasūtras and Dharmasūtras. The first contains the recensions of Latyayana, Drahyanyana, Maśaka or Arśeya-Kalpa and Jaiminiya. The recensions of the second are Gobhila, Khadira, Drahyanyana and Jaiminiya. Only one recension in the name of Gautama is available for the Dharmasūtra. No recension is yet discovered for the Śulvasūtra. The Pratiśākhya of the Sāmaveda are Riktantra, Sāmatantra, Puṣpasūtra and Pañcavidha.

The Schools of the Atharvaveda

The most prevalent traditions record nine schools of the Atharvaveda. Only texts of the two schools are left, one of the Śaunaka and the other of the Paippalāda. As viewed from the names of the authors mentioned in the hymns, the Atharvaveda has a host of poet-seers. The more often mentioned poets are Atharvan, Bhṛgu and Aṅgiras. Late epic-purāṇic names refer to Budha and Ajamīdha⁹ and Nārāyaṇa¹⁰. Prajāpati and Yama are also the seers of many hymns of this Veda. The Atharvaveda Brāhmaṇa belongs to Gopatha school. Another important author, Brahman, appears in connection with the Atharvaveda later, i.e., after this Veda was included in the corpus of the Saṁhitās and its priest was called *brahman*. No school is traced for the Āraṇyaka of the Atharvaveda, if at all there exist some Āraṇyaka texts of this Veda. Some schools are mentioned for the Upaniṣads of the Atharvaveda. These are Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Praśna, etc. Vaitāna, Kauśika and Pathinasi are the sage-names ascribed to the Atharva Vedic Śrautasūtra, Gṛhyasūtra and Dharmasūtra respectively. Two recensions are available for the Atharva Pratiśākhya. The Kauśikasūtra of the Atharvaveda is attributed to the Kṣatriya sages like Viśvāmitra and Kauśika. Ancient texts mention nine śākhās or recensions of the text, viz. Śaunaka, Tauda, Mauda, Paippalāda, Jājala, Jalada, Caraṇavaidya, Brahmaveda and Vedādarśa.

The Geographical Background of the Vedic Schools

The geographical situation, through which the Vedic schools have grown, is uncertain as yet. Still some geographical backgrounds are being ascribed to the compositions of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas from time to time. The places of genesis of the Ṛgveda and the Atharvavedic schools are still in dark. The

Kauthuma of the Sāmaveda is ascribed to Gujarat, the Rāṇāyaṇīya to Maharashtra, and the Jaiminīya is currently in Kerala, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. Presently Kauthuma is prevalent in Bengal and in the parts of Uttar Pradesh. The Rāṇāyaṇīya is current in Mathura. The different schools of the Yajurveda seem to have grown in geographically different territories which are responsible for their textual divergence. The Taittirīya closely related to Āpastamba and Baudhāyana flourished in the South, *i.e.*, in the Madhyadeśa (U.P., M.P., Rajasthan and north Gujarat). The Vājasaneyī branch belongs to the north-east and the east (Videha). The Kāṭha and the Kapiṣṭhale belong to Kashmir and Punjab. The Maitrāyaṇīya branch was located mainly in the west coast, in Gujarat and in the land between the Vindhya range and Narmada river. Among the other branches of the Taittirīya, Vadhula spread in Malabar, Vaikhānasa in Coromandal, the others most probably were confined to the north, the Hiranyakeśin flourished on the Ganges, and Bharadvāja on the Yamuna. As observed by Bhandarkar,¹¹ specific conclusions can not be drawn on the regional distribution of the Vedic schools as those are hardly based on concrete evidences and hence confused with the modern discourses.

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THE VEDA AFTER THE VEDIC PERIOD

The literature after the Vedic age is impregnated with Vedic reminiscences. After the composition of the four Vedas, the literature grew with the texts of Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, Upaniṣads and the Sūtras which continued to bear the inherent qualities of the Vedas. The Vedāṅgas or Sūtras as they are called are six in number : Śikṣā (phonetics), Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Chandas (prosody), Jyotiṣa (astronomy), Niurkta (etymology) and Kalpa. This last one was developed with its four components, viz., Śrauta (liturgy for collective sacrifice), Gṛhya (familial, domestic rites), Dharma (social), and Śulva (geometry for altars, etc.). The whole of the Sanskrit literature developed after the Vedic period witnessed the formation of the indices, Smṛti, Purāṇa, Tantras and Stotras which adhered to the structure of Vedism. Upaniṣads and Dharmasūtras continued to be produced down to the Middle Ages. These texts have provided religious and literary inspiration down to our own day, as to Tagore. The Sūtra literature has furnished the model for the basic texts in most technical subjects. The emergence of grammar was based on Vedic reflections. Among the philosophical doctrines, the two Mimāṃsā texts comment directly on the Vedic thought, and the Karma Mimāṃsā in particular is in origin nothing but an explanation of the ritual. Early Buddhism developed the doctrine of the Upaniṣads or a similar line of thought. Many commentaries have been written down to the modern era. Even, a revival of Vedism has been observed with the movement of the Ārya Samāja. Though nationalistic in action, it is strictly evolved with Vedic thoughts. Indian theosophy parallel to the Western has turned the Vedic texts in the direction of a new esotericism.

Though the Sūtras ostensibly codify and congeal Vedic religion, non-Vedic gods and ritual practices figure quite

prominently in them. Thus, they signify the end of the Vedic tradition. Smṛti and Purāṇic literature followed the stream of composition and these texts, though employs Vedic mantras, is truly non-Vedic in its ritual character. Numerous new gods and goddesses, with images and temples, pilgrimages, vows, sects with temple-priests ushered in a totally non-Vedic religion. The public rituals remained in use for some time and subsequently the domestic rites were taken over into the Hindu syncretism. This resulted in splitting up to the temple-priests or the worshippers into sections like Śrauta and Smārta. The Śrauta or performers of the public rituals are today extremely few, while the Smārta, who maintain the rituals based on Smṛti, together with adherence to the cult of the Five Gods, are still a very large number. From an antiquarian point of view, we should distinguish among the Yajñika, the Vaidika and the Śrotrīya. First group performs the sacrifices and the second knows by heart their Veda, together with the associated texts. The third group, *i.e.* the Śrotrīya are specialists in the Śrautasūtra.¹

With the march of time, the life of the Āryans changed in many aspects. Mixing of the Āryans with the non-Āryans brought about so many changes in the community life. The family and the social unit witnessed economic, political and social modifications which, in turn, resulted in the religious continuum. An eclectic proto-Purāṇic religion incorporating many elements of non-Vedic and non-Āryan popular beliefs and practices developed from the earlier Vedic religion of simple sacrifices. The progress of Indian life is reflected profusely in the vast bulk of Vedic literature which stands as the primordial record of our civilization and culture. Consequently, the history and development of the society is totally figured in these ancient texts.

The age of classical Sanskrit literature came after the period of the Vedic literature. Numerous texts of Smṛti, Purāṇa, Tantra, Stotra, Vyākaraṇa, etc. developed and in which Vedic reminiscences are noticed. The Smṛti literature includes the schools of Vasiṣṭha, Vaiṣṇava, Auśanasa, Harita, Manu, Bharadvāja, Yājñavalkya, Śaṅkhalikhita, Aṅgirās, Āpastamba, Atri, Bṛhaspati, Bṛhadyama, Dakṣa, Devala, Gobhila, Likhita, Laghvāśvalāyana, Laghu-Śaṅkha, Laghu-Śātātapa, Laghu-Vyāsa, Laghu-Viṣṇu, Nārada, Prajāpati,

Śātātapa, Śaṅkha, Saṁvarta, Br̥ddha-hārīta, Br̥ddha-Śātātapa, and Yama, etc.² The Purāṇas like Brahma (?), Viṣṇudharmottara, etc. adhere to the reflections of the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda, while Agnī of the Śukla Yajurveda. The Sāmavedic reflections are traced in Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa. The Purāṇic religion though at times employs Vedic mantras is frankly non-vedic in its ritual character.

The period of the inscriptions betrays the beginning of the classical style. This was the period of a series of foreign invasions and trade, of the Gāndhāra and Mathurā schools of art, of Buddhism slowly changing from Hīnayāna to Mahāyāna. A vast literature came up in this process. The compositions of the Māhābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahāvāstu and the Lalitavistara and the works of Vātsyāyana, Patañjali, Aśvaghoṣa and Bhāsa were materialised in this age. Ostensibly, this was the proto-Purāṇic age and in the very next period the Purāṇas came into existence. But the two epics were the real precursors of the Purāṇas. Above all, the Purāṇic tradition has in view a unique Veda, divided into four by the teaching imparted by Vyāsa to his four disciples, and then the schools came into being through the transmission of the successors of these disciples.³

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REVIEW OF THE WORKS ON VEDIC LITERATURE

The four Vedas, Samhitās, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas, the Upaniṣads, the Sūtras contain vast area of our tradition, culture, religion, philosophy, mythology, geography, history, language, literature, geology, earth-science, astronomy, astrology, Āyurveda (science of healing by use of medicinal plants), basic science and technology, mathematics, games and sports, warfare, education, liturgy, etymology, grammar, exegesis, theory of the creation, pantheon rites, sacrifices and what not. The society figured in the Vedic literature provides much about the life and the people of the most ancient period. The Veda are the only records of Indian literature and this fact alone makes them invaluable. They are also the first full document of the religious and cultural thoughts and practices of the Indo-Europeans and thus attract many scholars from time to time to explore their underneath quality and culture.

Henry Thomas Colebrooke was the first author to take an interest in Vedic texts. His essay 'On the Vedas' (1805) is a landmark in the history of the Vedic literature. It was the first reliable study on the sacred books of ancient India. The inception of the Indological studies in Germany began with the composition of Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808). He also wrote the famous essay *Über den gegenwertigen Zustand der Indischen Philologie* (1819). Franz Bopp translated some sections of the Vedas in German (1827). *Versuch einer Literatur der Sanskrit-Sprache* (1830) of Friedrich Adelung refer to more than 350 Sanskrit texts and hence has historical importance as well as Indological significance. Rudolph Roth wrote *Zur Literatur und Geschichte des Weda* (1846) which was the first history of Vedic literature. F. Max Müller had edited the *Rgveda* between 1849 and 1875. A complete edition of the *Rgveda* was brought out by Thomas

Aufrecht between 1861 and 1863. Christian Lassen's work *Indische Alterthumskunde* in four volumes appeared between 1843 and 1862. This was the treasure of all available Indological knowledge to the period. The monumental seven-volume Lexicon *Sanskrit Wörterbuch* was prepared by Rudolph Roth and Otto Böthlingk and which was published by the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts and Science in the year 1852 and 1875 in two parts. Albrecht Weber's notable work on the history of Indian literature entitled *Akademische Vorlesungen Über indische Literaturgeschichte* came out in 1852 and the second edition of it was published in 1876. Adolf Kaegi's *Der Rgveda* came to light in 1886 in Boston. The two earlier works on the history of Vedic literature in French are *La Religion Vedique* (3 Vols., Paris, 1878-83) of A. Bergaigne and *Religions of India* (translated into English in 1882) of A. Barth. Other Vedic studies include F. Hardy's *Die Vedisch Brahmanische Periode* (Münster, 1893), H. Oldenberg's *Die Religion des Veda* (Berlin, 1894), F.W. Hopkins' *The Religions of India* (Boston, 1895), E. Lechman's *Die Inder* (Tübingen, 1906), M. Bloomfield's *The Religion of the Veda* (New York and London, 1908). A number of works were also published focussing mainly the religious aspects of the Vedas. In this context, the significant contributions are *Vedische Mythologie*, 3 Vols. (Breslau, 1891-1903) of A. Hillebrandt and his *Ritualliteratur* (Strassbourg, 1897), *Die Lehre der Upanishaden* (Göttingen, 1915) of H. Oldenberg, *Altindischer Ahnenkult* (Leien, 1893) of W. Caland and his *Die Altindischen Todten und Bestattungsgebräuche* (Amsterdam, 1896), *L'agnistoma*, 2 Vols. (Paris, 1906) of W. Caland and V. Henry, and *Vedic Mythology* (1897) of A.A. Macdonell.

Max Müller's *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (London, 1860) was one of the earliest comprehensive works on Vedic literature. The other works followed are *Indiens Literature und Kultur* (Leipzig, 1889) of Ludwig Von Schröder; *Literary History of India* (London, 1898) of R.W. Frazer; *History of Sanskrit Literature* (London, 1900) of A.A. Macdonell; *Die Literatur des alten Indiens* (Stuttgart, 1903) of H. Oldenberg; *Les Litteratures de l'Inde* (Paris, 1904) of V. Henry; and *Geschichte der Indischen Literatur*, 3 parts (Leipzig, 1908) of Winternitz.

The contents of various sections of the Vedic literature are

out and out accounted in Weber's treatment, while Winternitz's work provides the interpretations in more detail. After him, the monographs published are *Die Literaturen Indiens* (Potsdam, 1930) of H. Von Glasenapp; *History of Sanskrit Literature*, Vol. I, Śruti Period (Poona, 1930) of C.V. Vaidya; *A History of Indian Literature from Vedic Times to the Present Day* (New York, 1931) of H.H. Gowen; and *A Brief History of Sanskrit Literature, Vedic and Classical* (Calcutta, 1933) of Kokileswar Sastri.

P. Thieme's work *Der Fremdling im R̥gveda* came in 1938. Louis Renou's *Littérature Sanskrite* was published in 1946, and his *Vedic India* in 1947. The contribution of J. Chaine and R. Grousset on Vedic literature appeared in *Litterature Religieuse* (Paris) in the year 1949. H.W. Bailey wrote the section on Ancient Indian Literature in the *Literatures of the East* edited by E.B. Caelde (London, 1953). In the mean while *Studies on the Sāmaveda* (Amsterdam, 1951) of B. Faddegon was published. V. Pisani's work *Storia delle litterature antiche dell' India* came to light from Milan in 1955. In the year 1956, Sampurnanand's *The Atharvaveda, Vṛātya-Khaṇḍa* was released from Madras. G.K. Pillai's *Vedic History set in Chronology* was published from Kitabistan in 1959. In the same year, L. Ram Gopal wrote *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*. V. Varadachari's *A History of the Sanskrit Literature* was published from Allahabad in 1960 while V. Raghavan authored *Vedic Chanting, Music, Dance and Drama* in the same year. Next year, V. Raghavan's contribution on Vedic literature appeared in *Sanskrit Literature* (Publication Division, New Delhi). U.V. Rao's work *A Handbook of Classical Sanskrit Literature* was also released in 1961. A.B. Whitney's *The Atharvaveda Prātiśākhya* was published by Chowkhamba in the year 1962. Motilal Banarsidass brought out A.C. Banerjee's monograph *Studies in the Brāhmaṇas* in 1963. Surveying the contributions of the Western scholars, R.N. Dandekar's work *Vedic Religion and Mythology* came out from Poona in 1964. *Gedichte aus dem R̥gveda* (Stuttgart, 1964) was brought out in the same year. L. Renou's *The Destiny of the Vedas in India* came to light in 1965, the same year also saw the publication of Jules Block's *Indo-Aryan from the Vedas to Modern Times*. Next year Walter Ruben's contribution on Vedic literature appeared in the *Lexikon der Welt Literatur*. In 1967, E.V. Arnold's *Vedic Metre*, J. Verenne's *Le Veda le tresor spirituel de l'humanite* and

Myths et légendes extraits des Brāhmaṇas were published. A. Venkatasubbiah's work *Vedic Studies*, Vol. 2 came to light in 1968. In that year, F. Anton's *Altindische Weisheit und Poesie* was published from Leipzig. G.V. Devasthali's monograph *Religion and Mythology of the Brāhmaṇas* was also released by the University of Poona in the same year. *Die Hymnen des R̥gveda* (Wiesbaden, 1968) edited by O. Harrassowitz came in the line. G.U. Thite's contribution *Elevation of the Sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇas* found a place in R.N. Dandekar Felicitation Volume published in 1969. *Vedic Forms and Paṇini* written by S.D. Laddu appeared in R. Dravid Felicitation volume (1971). *The recensions of Śukla Yajurveda* of C.L. Prabhakar (Archiv Orientalni, 40, 1972) added substantially to the Vedic studies. S. Murty's *A Study of important Brāhmaṇas* (Mysore) and J. Milier's *The Vedas, Harmony, Meditation and Fulfilment* (London) came to light in 1974. J. Gonda's work *Vedic Literature* was published in 1975. S.A. Dange wrote *Cultural Sources from the Veda* which came out from Bombay in 1977. *Sāmvedic Chant* of H. Wayne was published in the same year from London. S. Varma's paper on *Vedic Stylistics* appeared in *Visvesvaranand Indological Volume XV. part II* in that year. Ostensibly, the literature is replete with copious such Vedic studies which open up the conceptions and the speculations underneath the Vedas and Vedāṅgas.

Recently Vedic studies crave new and fresh approaches to the objectivity of the Vedas. Many scholars have contributed books, monographs and articles which provide us meticulous ideas on the Vedic literature. In this connection, *Vedic Bibliography*, 5 Vols., compiled by R.N. Dandekar and published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona from 1986 to 1993 are of great help. Sukumari Bhattacharji's *Literature in the Vedic Age*, 2 Vols., came out from Calcutta in 1984. S.V. Ganapati edited *Sāmaveda* which was published by Motilal Banarsidass first in 1982 and then reprinted in 1992. Marta Vannucci's work *Ecological Readings in the Veda* was published in 1994 by D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd. In 1997, the works on Vedic studies came to light are *Vedic View of the Earth*, of S.R.N. Murthy; *The Vedic Language and Exegesis* of Ram Gopal, *Indra and Other Vedic Deities* of Uma Chakravarty and *Society in the Atharvaveda* of B.S. Kharade. *Studies in Sanskrit*,

Indology and Culture of B.L. Ray released in 1998 by Classical Publishing Company, has added a little to our knowledge on Vedic material. *Facets of Vedic Studies* edited by B.L. Ray and published by Kaveri Books, Delhi, in the year 2000 deals with various aspects of Vedic knowledge. Very recently Om Publications of New Delhi has released *Vedic Vision* of B.L. Ray. This small treatise adheres to new insights on Vedic ideas, interpretations and speculations. Many more treatises on the Vedas, Vedic Samhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, Upaniṣads and the Sūtras are coming up day by day in interpreting the Vedic texts in a true tone of the conceptions rendered by the Vedic seers.

Thus, the Vedic literature is not observed now as only a literature of primitive age, but it is understood widely to focuss on the various aspects of human life and living in perspective of scientific and natural resources available to mankind. The very concept of life, matter, energy, cosmology, space and time, and the theory of the creation of the Universe laid down there in the Vedic hymns go a long way in analysing the whole of the Vedic literature. Now, it is a good sign that the scholars are interested to treat the Vedas from diverse fields.

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