

**SEXUAL SYMBOLISM
FROM
' THE VEDIC RITUAL**

Other books by the same author :

Critiques on Sanskrit Dramas (Co-author, Dr. Smt. S.S. Dange), Moradabad, 1963

Legends in the Mahābhārata, Delhi, 1969

Pastoral Symbolism from the Ṛgveda, Poona Univ., 1970

Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification, Bombay Univ., 1971

Cultural Sources from the Veda, Bombay, 1977

Hindu Dharma āṇi Tattvajñāna (Marathi), Poona, 1973

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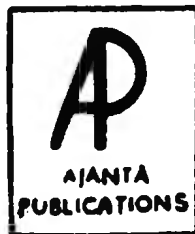
Project under preparation :

**A Motif-Index of the Purānas
(Under UGC aid)**

**SEXUAL SYMBOLISM
FROM
THE VEDIC RITUAL**

SADASHIV AMBADAS DANGE

1979



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BL
1205
.225

First Published 1979

Full Cloth: Rs. 70 \$ 14

Paper Cover: Rs. 40 \$ 8

Publishers:

Ajanta Publications (India)
Delhi-110007

Distributors:

Ajanta Books International
1-U.B., Jawahar Nagar, Bungalow Road,
Delhi-110007

Printed by

P.L. Printers, C-3/19, Rana Pratap Bagh, New Delhi-110007
at Print India, New Delhi-110064

Line Drawing in the text by G. Bhavsar

To

Saubhāgyavatī SINDHU

My Wife

who has been

my priya-śiṣyā

and

continues to be

a constant source

of

Inspiration

Preface

I AM glad to present to the critical reader and the inquisitive scholar this book of mine. This is the third book on this topic I published within the last decade, the first two being: *Pastoral Symbolism from the Rgveda* (University of Poona, 1970) and *Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification* (University of Bombay, 1971). These books have more or less the same topic put under investigation : The sexual imagery of the Vedic seers and the ritualists. The first of the three books comprises my lectures delivered at the University of Poona (1968), wherein I introduced the topic of sexual imagery in the Rgvedic *mantras*, as a charm for the gain of rain and the fructification of the land. While dealing with that topic I came across certain riddles in the hymns of the Rgveda; and they were riddles also for other scholars. On critical study I found out that the riddles in certain hymns were due to not exactly appreciating the sexual imagery of the seers. This was the impulse for the second effort of mine. I selected some problematic hymns for a closer study; and I must say, I was rewarded. Though it is not possible to say that all what I proposed would be accepted, my reward is that I could differ and, differ successfully, from some of our renowned scholars, whom I have always held in great respect. Having come to the conclusion that the Rgveda-hymns reflect certain lost rituals, in a number of cases, and also that sex and sexual imagery were at the base of the awkward looking expressions and whole hymns, I decided to probe the matter further and reassess these portions. Search was made in the texts of the later *samhitās*, to see if a continuous strain existed on the basis of which a methodology of

ritual-sex could be established. I have come to the conclusion that there had been a methodology; also that a thorough study of the method of sexual-coupling (*mithunīkaraṇa*) in the later Vedic texts helps understand the 'riddle' in certain of the hymns in the Ṛgveda. What was misrepresented as a social custom has, now, to be accepted as a ritual necessity; and the awkward sexual imagery was only a part of the ritual; never a social fact !

Aid from Folk-lore and Ethnology is taken to ascertain the findings arrived at by the comparison of the ritual-details in the Ṛgveda and the later Vedic texts. It has to be, now, accepted that the Vedic seers and the ritualists were not working in isolation. There was never a purely Vedic or Aryan ritual that flourished in grand isolation, unmindful of the surroundings. There are clear indications that the Vedic thinkers-cum-ritualists borrowed certain ritual-details from their neighbours, of a different faith, in times of acute need. Another finding is that we can connect some typical vows in the Purāṇas and the so-called 'erotic' sculptures of India with the Vedic concept and practice of *mithuna*, and ritual-sex.

The findings are before the readers. I shall be much obliged if these findings are put to a severe test; for there is no joy greater than to go nearer the TRUTH; and to have the feeling and realization that one has aided a discussion, on a right path, to reach nearer the TRUTH, is no less joy. Individual efforts are but step-stones for more inquisitive scholars to place their steps upon. And the satisfaction for one who arranges such step-stones is immense !

I am thankful to the publishers, Ajanta Publications, for bringing out the book in a short span of time.

My sense of gratitude for the scholars whose works I had the occasion to study closely while preparing this book, even though I differ from them at places, is deep.

Bombay, 14th January, 1979
(*Makara-saṅkrānti*)

Sadashiv A. Dange

At the Threshold

Ritual-sex for fertility and general weal has been known throughout the world. On the Indian stage religious sex culminated in the practices of the Tantric school—both of the Śāktas and the Mahāyāna Buddhists. Some of the Hindu festivals like *Holi* (the festival of fire that generally comes in the month of March, prior to the season when the fields are readied for the next year's fresh ploughing) and the one associated with the goddess Durgā (who is believed to be the emblem of the Mother-earth), coming roughly in the month of October, when the fields have already got face-lit with the sprouts that gaily dance in the clear atmosphere after the rains, and about the time of the festival called Daśaharā, are strongly coloured with sexual language in many parts of India. The festival of the goddess Kālī is marked with obscene songs (P. Thomas, *Kāmakalpa*, 13th ed., 1963, p.142), at the time of the Bharanī festival in Kerala; and in the region of Kashmir, the goddess Kāśmīrā is said to menstruate on the 5th of the bright half of the month of Phālguna, after which regular ploughing is to start (*Nilamata Purāna*, vv. 660—1). Later, on the dark 14th of the month of Caitra (which is called *Pisāca-caturdaśī*, 'the fourteenth of the ghosts') people are said to go round about the streets, dancing and singing gaily along with prostitutes (*Ibid*, v. 681). In the Āśvayuja festival, coming about the month of October, the ancient Kashmir is said to go gay uttering sexy expressions (*Ibid*, v. 499 *aślilāni vadadbhiḥ*). The 'Swing-festival' in the eastern part of India is also marked with similar activities which indicate the fructification of the earth. Along with these living traditions of festivals that have the strong tinge of sex, we have

the (so-called) 'erotic sculptures', with multiple *mithuna*-poses adorning the interior of sturdy caves and of the delicate walls of temples structured on plane ground! But, already in the centuries just prior to the Christian era people made terracotta *mithunas* which have the same motif, in certain cases as the sculptures in the 8th century onwards. Scholars who studied the 'erotic' sculptures, including Vidya Prakash (*Khajurāho*, 1967), Devangana Desai (*Erotic Sculptures of India*, 1975) and Richard Lennox and Harry Baines (*The Eye of Love in the Temple Sculpture of India*, London, 1976) etc., to mention a few, cast only a casual glance at the Vedic literature for parallel cases. But, they relied on second-hand sources of translation and stray papers written on this important subject. As a matter of fact, there appears to be a close relationship between the Vedic concept of ritual-sex and its varieties elsewhere. The *mithuna*-poses seen in the cave-temples and other places mentioned above do have a close similarity of concept and purpose with the Vedic *mithuna*. It is, hence, necessary to study thoroughly the Vedic concept of ritual-sex.

The Vedic seer's vision (*ṛṣi-darśana*) of the cosmos, and of the mutual relationship between the forces therein, was responsible for the rituals that are reflected in the hymns of the Ṛgveda (RV) and that obtain in the later Vedic literature. The RV has various sex-images; and the Brāhmaṇa texts that developed a veritable science of sacrifice record rituals where sex is prominent. The Ṛgvedic *ṛṣi* visualized that the main forces in the cosmos were the fire and the waters; and they, in themselves formed a *mithuna* (sex-pair). The principle of Fire at the three places—heaven, midregion and the earth—was the male; and the waters at these three places were the females. These two principles united at these levels, the result being the fructification of the 'females'. Along with the Fire-Waters couple, another one was seen; it was Heaven=Father and Earth=Mother. It was believed to be the duty of the main gods to bring these two into close sexual union for the gain of rain on the one hand, and the crops on the other. Their union was felt necessary also for the fructification of all female types on the earth. This union was brought about through imitative rituals on the plane of the sacrifice. The cosmic male had his anthropomorph and also

the zoo-morph. He was the 'seeder' of the woman that represented the earth or the waters on the plane of the ritual; and this relationship lasted only during the period of the sacrificial ritual. In certain cases, the female forces were represented by a public woman, specially selected for the ritual, which also speaks of and explains the importance of the prostitute in religious and auspicious functions. The Purāṇa-texts state that the sight of a prostitute was auspicious, though to touch her was not normally approved (*Brahmavaivarta P. II. 23.41*). In another variety, the wife of the sacrificer represented the earthly femininity, through whom the heavenly 'seed' was sought to be gained. In this process various objects came to be used as indicative of the divine male, such as the clarified butter, the fire, the horse, the apparatus called *gharma* (which was the jar for heating the milk that symbolized the solar fluid) and so on. The sacrificer's wife acted the ritual-woman for all these; and she had also her ritual-male in the priest called the Adhvaryu. She had symbolic union with all these at various rites; but the act of union was by the gaze. In line with these came the sacrificial beast, who was immolated, and thus silenced, to keep his divinity intact. More prominent of the beasts were the Virile Ape (*Vṛṣākapi*) and the horse, who got identified with important gods and had myths centred round them. The ritual sex between the virile monkey and the woman, called Indrāṇī in the ritual set-up and who also represented the earth, fell back even in the Vedic times, due, probably, to the difficulty in procuring the ape of the species (the creature seems to be like the abominable snow-man that has been eluding all efforts to catch him), along with his mate as the ritual required. The ritual of the horse-sacrifice, however, continued; but even here there appears to be a steady evolution from the times of the Ṛgveda to that of the later texts. In the earlier stages, as compared with the ritual as it occurs among other tribes, the horse was only ritually immolated and its parts were offered into the fire. The RV does not have any indication of a sex-ritual attached to it. The later texts, from the Atharvaveda (AV) onwards, show varieties and the symbolic copulation of the four types of queens with the silenced horse; in these varieties we have indications of the orgiastic sex and the supported sex, which

compare with the varieties in the sculptures. Though the ritual-coitus between the 'Indrāṇī'-woman and the virile ape (the sun-symbol) is not referred to in the later texts, suggesting its oblivion, its importance is clear from the oral charm wherein the *mantras* from the hymn of Vṛṣākapi were used to give the sacrificer a new body at the ritual-birth at the sacrifice. Even in the later period, the strongly sexy verses from this hymn (X.85.16, 17) were ordained to be recited at rituals meant to create fertility in a sterile woman, as is clear from the *Rgvidhāna*; and, Keśava, the commentator of the *Kauśika Sūtra*, mentions a sect of brahmins, called 'Vṛṣākapi Brāhmaṇa' who were employed to recite solar verses at a ritual connected with marriage, to render the bride 'fruitful'. Here we have an interesting case of the solar zoo-morph getting changed into an anthropomorph.

As the science of sacrifice developed varieties, it gave rise to various types of *mithunas*. Not only did the various utensils, ladles and other instruments formed sex-pairs, but even such things as milk-and-rice formed *mithuna*. The very Prajāpati was believed to comprise a *mithuna* in himself. This was the basis of the principle of bi-sexuality. Thus the fire, in itself, was bi-sexual : the god with the lustre was the male, and the flames were the females. The *mithuna* was not always of the objects of opposite sexes. What was needed was a pair of two mutually slightly variant things. Thus were formed also pairs where both were males. Also, a god (Varuṇa for example) was both a male and a female. In apparently homosexual pairs one of the parties was believed to be of the opposite sex for the purpose of the rite or for the moment of the thought. The concept, when extended to the ritual plane, made a *mithuna* of two priests possible. The Adhvaryu was the male, while the Neṣṭṛ priest was supposed to be the female, as the latter was always associated with the wives of the gods and also as it was his duty to usher in the wife of the sacrificer into the chamber. The Neṣṭṛ priest was the anthropomorph of the sacrificial fire also; hence, in the male aspect he stood for the fire-god, while in his female aspect he represented the wives of the gods (called *gnāh*). In certain cases the priests enacted the coupling of the beasts, one priest standing on his fours and the other standing

at his back slightly bending his knees. This symbolic 'copulation' was for the procreation of cattle.

A further phase of ritual sex and coupling (*mithunīkaraṇa*) was copulation between the sound *Om* or *Hum* or *Hiñ* on the one hand (all conceived as male) and the verse on the other. A verse or a *mantra* without the prefixing of such a sound was sterile. This is the source of the practice of starting a *mantra* with the mystic syllable *Om*, which is current even this day, though the significance is rarely comprehended ! The *Om* (*Hiñ*, *Hum*) was believed to fructify the verse (female), and this was conducive to the desired fruit, which would be lost in the absence of such 'copulation'. A yet further step was the 'marriage of the lauds', *sāma-vivāha*, in which the parties to be married were the Rathantara *sāman* (laud) and Bṛhat *sāman*. Actually this was the version of the *sāman*-school, which tried to substitute the marriage of humans symbolically called 'Menā' and 'Mena'. In essence, both these pairs represented Heaven and Earth in the '*Deva-vivāha*' (marriage of the gods). In certain cases, copulation was brought about between a verse and a prose-formula (*nivid*), the former being the woman and the latter the man. The method was unique. Two parts (*padas*, 'feet' or thighs) of the first half of the verse (in the Anuṣṭubh metre) were separated, and in the middle was inserted the *nivid*. This indicated a woman parting her thighs and having the man in the middle. Then the second half of the verse was recited at a stretch, without any break. This was conceived as the verse-woman tightening her grip over the *nivid*-man. The copulation was now complete. The result ? Progeny, prosperity and general weal ! A special device for making a laud a woman was conceived. A laud less by one verse in the multiples of ten was supposed to be the woman; for, the woman has the 'minus' organ; while a laud with one verse more was the man, as the man has his organ protruding. The woman-verse was called '*nyūna*' (or *ūna*), while the man-verse was called '*atirikta*.' The *nyūna* or the *ūna* indicated the cavity (woman-organ), wherein the *atirikta* (male)-verse was joined; for, it was believed and also clearly expressed that progeny comes from the *nyūna* (*ūna*). On the same analogy, a verse with

one letter less was believed to be a woman, and was particularly employed in the ritual for procreation as a sex-charm.

Though a full-fledged science of couple-formation is clearly seen from the texts of the Brāhmaṇas or the later *Samhitās*, the Ṛgvedic *mantras*, by their very nature, do not show the variety of the *mithunas*. But it has to be remembered that even at the period of the Ṛgveda, the seers were familiar with the concept and method of *mithuna*-formation. As a matter of fact, what the Brāhmaṇas and the other *Samhitās* show is only an extension of the already known method of *mithunīkaraṇa*. We have already referred to the hymn of Vṛṣākapi (the virile ape), where there is the *mithuna* of the woman Indrāṇī and the ape. Among other types of *mithuna* are that of Yama and Yamī, of the Father that is said to have run after his own daughter, of the ploughable field and the ritual-bull that is made to urinate in the midst of the field, and so on. In the last example (RV X.102) we have the woman called Mudgalānī, ploughing the field in a semi-nude condition ; and this ritual has parallels even today in many parts in India such as Maharashtra, Bihar and Andhra. Mudgalānī is said to be Indrasenā, and is the symbol of the field under the plough, the latter standing as the male. The word *āji* (which actually indicates the 'field') led scholars to interpret the hymn as embodying an actual fight by Mudgala. This interpretation could not solve the riddle of the hero Mudgala winning the battle against the thieves (as the tradition and also the scholars believe) with the help of a hammer and one bull. Fantastic interpretations like saying that the win was due to a special device of causing the bull to urinate in the war-field, so that he could be relieved of the tension, were given : and yet the puzzle remained. Even Bloomfield, whose interpretation was lauded by Keith as the final word on the riddle of the hymn, could not solve the puzzle of the urination of the bull (the point which Bloomfield never even touched !). The riddle persisted due to the fact that the scholars did not comprehend the *mithuna*-concept. Actually, the bull and the *āji* (the ploughable field, and not the field of battle) formed one *mithuna* ; the other is Mudgalānī=Indrasenā (the ritual-woman) and Indra=Bull. Mudgala is only the actual owner or husband ; and help is sought from the 'ritual-husband', the Bull=Indra. This is on par with the

ritual of Vṛṣākapi and that of the Horse-sacrifice, where also the actual husband seeks the help of the divine 'husband'—the ritual-mate—(the ape and the horse) for the gain of prosperity, a point which was never comprehended by Bloomfield and others : and without comprehending this point, which is the very pivot of the riddle of such rituals, one can never get to the theme of such ritual-hymns ! (I have fully studied these hymns, with a critical examination of the opinions of other scholars in an earlier book : *Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, University of Bombay Pbn., 1971 ; this book has been referred to at various places in the present study, as is quite natural).

Various interpretations were given for the relationship between Yama and Yamī (RV X. 10), even suggesting that the hymn reflected an actual custom of the marriage between a brother and his sister, and that the twins were the first brother-sister couple from whom came the human race. It was proposed, however, that the hymn speaks against this custom. This cannot be accepted ; and the interpretations uptitt now do not take into consideration the fact that the hymn has clear traces of a ritual and that the seer uses the hymn for ritual-sex of the type of incest. It has to be remembered that the twins do not unite at all : and the hymn has no indication of actual union of the incest type. Incest is only suggested ; and that too as a sex-charm. The seer presents the twins as the cosmic forces of Fire and Water, whose union was believed to cause rain. If the two were real brother and sister, why should there be the necessity of they being presented as the twins ? Why should the first couple be necessarily that of the twins ? Actually, Yamī was only the ritual-woman, like the 'Indrāṇī' of the ritual-hymn of the Virile Ape and the 'Subhadrā' of the Horse-sacrifice ; and this ritual-woman represented the cosmic aspect and the female controller of waters, who formed the *mithuna* with Fire in the orb of the sun in heaven and with the lightning-fire in the interior of the cloud. Yama represented the cosmic fire, the 'seeder' *par excellence*, an image already built up in the Ṛgveda. The incestuous language was an aspect of *parokṣatva* (supravisualism, another important principle worked out by the seers and ritualists of the early Vedic period) ; it was a sex-charm, an oral one

which replaced the actual act of any kind. The tradition of purely oral sex-charms replacing the original act is clear in the usage recorded by the *R̥gvidhāna* and by Keśava, which we have already noted above. Another example of such oral charm (and this time out of the context of sex) is the story of Śunaśśepa, where the memory of the replaced human sacrifice is sought to be retained in ritual. Such is the case with almost all holy stories enjoined to be told in a gathering on the occasion of rituals. In changed circumstances, such stories give the conceptual support, when the act is relinquished. In the case of Yama-Yamī, the actual was the experience of the fire and the water staying together in the same 'womb'—orb or cloud—and the release of the heavenly 'semen' (which the Vedic seers and later sacrificers readily understood as rain). This experience was ushered in at the plane of the ritual, as the 'brother-sister-copulation'.

The motif of incest is employed in yet other hymns, which embody a ritual. The case is that of the Father that is said to run lustily after his daughter, and the motif is seen in four hymns. Now, the Father is the Parjanya (the god of rain) or Heaven (sky) in the *R̥gvedic* seers' vision. The daughter in this myth is the earth; and this fact is sacrificially stated in one of the hymns (X.61). The point is that the earth is never seen to have taken her birth *from* the sky or Parjanya. This would show that the myth did not originate in Indian experience. As such, we have to search for some such source where the earth (or land) is *actually seen* to come out of some thing, and the latter again tries to envelop her, the act resulting in the produce from the earth. It is to be noted in this context that, in the case of inundation, land is actually seen to come out of the water that recedes after some time. When again the water swells up it runs into the land aiding the produce from 'her'. This is the case of the 'Lusty Father' running after his own daughter. This myth is met with at other places also. The interpretation of this myth in the traditional Vedic texts has it that the Father is the sky and the daughter the dawn. But, that goes directly against the specific mention in the RV that the daughter is the earth (X.61.5-7). Naturally the later Vedic tradition cannot be accepted. The motif of incest in this myth has

the basis of an actual experience, that of inundation ; it has to be compared with a similar myth from ancient Assyria. The probability that this myth was borrowed from Assyria cannot be denied. The hymns of RV that employ this myth are full of ritual-traces, some of which indicate the 'foetus' of waters in the mid-region. The employment of the motif of incest in this case gets associated, on the Vedic scene, with the gain of rain, and also general weal.

Another hymn that has pronounced sexual element, and also clear traces of ritual, is that of Urvaśi and Purūravas. The hymn has been a sort of a riddle; and scholars tried to explain it variously. D.D. Kosambi's theory of the immolation of the male partner after allowing him sex is based on the misunderstanding of certain key-words in the hymn, which the versatile author failed to compare with similar ones from RV. That such practices were known (take the example of the Aztecs, for that matter), is acceptable. But there is no clear proof in the hymn of Urvaśi to connect it with such practices. On the analogy of the ritual at the Vṛṣākapi-hymn and the Horse-sacrifice, where the divine mate (male) is ultimately immolated, it is possible to see here a similar ritual where the divine man was so treated with sex and was killed ultimately. However, the fate of Purūravas was not as bad as that, as is clear from the hymn. Among others who studied the hymn may be mentioned Wright, Goldman and earlier Andrew Lang; the last scholar who presented his studies of this hymn at the end of the last century saw in it the violation by the male of a condition sacred to women. None of these, however, touched the point of a ritual of sex that was an yearly affair. Closer examination of the hymn shows that the theme reverts to the gain of timely rain, through symbolic sex, with the woman representing Urvaśi, who was the cosmic force controlling water (*apyā*) on the holy plane of the sacrifice (*sukṛtasya yoni*), as the divine woman (*apyā*) was conjured to arrive at the ritual by the seer-sacrificer Purūravas.

An interesting ritual where the element of sex and the offerings of the body-parts of the sacrificial beast combined together is seen at the hymn of Vāmadeva. Here we have the reference to the cooking of the entrails of a dog, and the mention of the

'wife' being put to an 'unrespectable' position. There is no other mention of a similar ritual in the Vedic literature, and there seems to be no doubt that the seer had resorted to a ritual from the non-Vedic source. The ritual, however, was for the gain of rain. It is to be marked that the close association of a dog with the gain of rain obtains among the tribes that are settled on the Northern fringe of India; and in the *Avesta* we have a belief wherein the water goddess Ardivisur Anahita is associated with dogs and the dogs are associated with rain and water. Similar beliefs and rituals obtain from China and other countries. Out of the Vedic context we do have another mention of a similar ritual, when the sage Viśvāmitra is said to have cooked the ham of a dog in a famine, and the result was rain. This story obtains in the *Mahābhārata* (Śānti parva), where it is said that the sage obtained the ham for the pacification of his and family's hunger; but this is only outwardly true. The main motif of the story and the ritual underlying it was already lost. There is no mention of the 'wife' (except for the hungry wife and children) in the story of Viśvāmitra; but, in the hymn from RV the 'wife' is said to be in an 'unrespectable' position. Looking to other rituals from the Vedic period, and on the basis of the study of the concept of *mithunīkaraṇa* (sex-coupling) one has to accept that Vāmadeva uses here a unique *mithuna* : the wife of the sacrificer (or, a woman specifically appointed for the ritual) and the sacrificial beast (here dog). The position is the same as in the case of the Virile Ape-Indrāṇī and the Horse-Queen. Here the dog is the divine 'seeder' in the symbolic sex-ritual. The dog is ritually immolated, after the symbolic sex-act (or sexy dialogue), and his entrails (ham in the *Mahābhārata* story) are offered into the fire.

The thread of belief that runs throughout the rituals, or ritual-hymns, mentioned above is the gain of rain through the symbolic copulation of the heavenly 'seeder' and the earth-female (or the ritual-woman representing the earth); and even the make-belief marriage of Heaven and Earth, or of the lauds that represent them, ultimately reverts to the same aim. The theory of ritual-sex did not remain confined to the enclosure of the Vedic *karmakāṇḍa*. It influenced even the Upaniṣadic thinkers, who compared the human sex-act as only a furtherance of the

cosmic act of sex. This point is clear in the concept of the Five Fires (*Bṛhad. Up.* VI.2.9-14; also *Chānd. Up.* V.4-9); and the same old terminology of the Brāhmaṇa texts is used while speaking of the *Vāmadevya mithuna*: 'When the proposal (for sex-union) is made that is the *Hiñ* sound; when the desire is conveyed that is the *prastāva* (the prelude of a laud, i.e. the *sāman*); when one sleeps with the woman (his wife) that is the *udgītha* (loud utterance)...; this all is ordained in the *mithuna*; and this is enjoined by Vāmadeva; one who comprehends this, and acts accordingly, forms a *mithuna*; from a *mithuna* to (another) *mithuna* does he get created' (*Chānd. Up.* II.13.1-2).

The concept of sex-pairing (*mithuna*) continued; and we have it in a modified form in the Purāṇic literature, where we see votive gifts of *mithuna*-images. Various vows are mentioned, wherein a miniature cot and upon it a divine *mithuna* (Umā-Maheśvara or Lakṣmī-Viṣṇu) is ordained to be donated to a brahmin (cf. *Matsya P.* 60.41-43;61,27,32; *Vāmana P.* 1.17.23;). In certain rituals a Brāhmaṇa-couple is enjoined to be worshipped, seated on a cot (*Matsya P.* 80.20-21 etc.). This is said to be necessary so that the house-holder's married life be full of satisfaction and joy. Even at the funeral rites, a cot with a *mithuna* upon it is ordained to be donated (*Garuḍa P.* 2.50, where the *mithuna* is of Lakṣmī-Viṣṇu). And in the 'erotic' sculptures the cot figures in many cases, with an active coitus-pose upon it (I have made a separate study of the motif of 'cot-gift' in the Purāṇas and in the sculptures elsewhere). An interesting phase of the *mithuna* is to be found in the *Yava-yuma* figures from Nepal. The motif of the Śiva-Śakti embrace and that of the Ardhanārīśvara is already present in the Vedic ritual-philosophy of the copulation of Indra and Indrāṇī. It is said that the man in the right eye is Indra, and the man in the left eye is Indrāṇī; these two copulate in the chamber of the heart. The point to be noted is, that the *man* in the eye is himself the female Indrāṇī. This is the seed of the later concept of Ardhanārīśvara, and of the Yogic practices and the Tantric sex-practices.

The so-called 'erotic' sculptures of India are only a phase of the *mithuna* concept and the practice thereof, that has its roots in the Vedic period. This is not to say that other streams might

not have contributed to their development; but, there is no clear record of that as is the case with the Vedic record. In fact, it is not sound to call the *mithuna*-sculptures 'erotic'. Eroticism has the basis of sensuality; and the sculptures are devoid of it! The shade of complacency that marks the faces of the *mithunas* can never be mistaken for infatuation; and herein lies the inappropriateness of the term 'erotic'. The sculptures can be described only as *mithunas*, devoid of the tinge of eroticism, but with the complete holiness which the term *mithuna* had in the mind of the ancients. Moreover, eroticism in public is a contradiction in terms!

What has been said above will indicate that the tradition of the *mithuna* starts in the hoary Vedic period, or even prior to that period, and touches the *mithuna*-sculptures; and the element of sex in ritual is seen even today with mixtures from various sources. How about the relationship between the Vedic concept and practice of *mithuna* on the one hand and the sculptures on the other? True, there appears a great gap of time between the Vedic period and that of the sculptures. But, a few points have to be taken into account. The Vedic ritual centred round the altar, and there was no other 'temple' for the Vedic ritualists. By about 600 B.C. when the various *sūtras* came to be composed, some sorts of temples or 'divine abodes' are noticed. This marks a combination of two cultures, the Vedic altar-culture and the culture of the shrines, or the *devakula*. The fusion of the two shows an interesting development. By about the same period, 2nd century B.C., there appear terracotta figures of *mithunas*, which are more or less votive offerings and cannot be taken to be objects that adorned the house-hold walls. These continued to be made, alongside the practices of the Vedic altar-culture. With the prominent ritual-philosophy of the Vedic *mithunas*, there seems little doubt that the Vedic *mithunas* influenced the preparation of the *mithunas* in terracotta. The motif behind both these was the same—aid to fertility, fecundity and prosperity. Some of the motifs of the terracotta appear on the sculptures of the medieval and later medieval periods. The sanctity attached to the sculptures can hardly be doubted, as they are to be found in holy caves and temples. So is the case with the terracottas, though their exact surround-

ing is not easy to ascertain. But, if they were for votive offerings, (the probability we have noted above), there is no doubt about their being sanctified objects. When the Vedic *mithuna* thus crossed the precincts of the altar with a new and multiple impulse, varieties came in; and it is these that are indicated in the terracottas, and in the later sculptures. Though not enough terracotta-*mithunas* are found, the types that are available are enough to prove the relationship between them and the later sculpture, in principle. Actually *mithuna*-varieties are marked in the ritual-sex at the Horse-sacrifice as it appears in the texts. Scholars who wrote on the sculptures did not give attention to this point. Some said that the sculptures were meant to express the teaching of Vātsyāyana in the subject of erotic science. Actually, many of the sculptures belie the aphorisms of Vātsyāyana. The intricacies in certain of the sculptures cannot give coital satisfaction, which is the very aim of the treatise of Vātsyāyana, who calls his work 'Science of Desire' (*Kāmasāstra*), comparing it with the *Arthaśāstra* and the *Dharmaśāstra*, explaining all these terms (*Kāmasūtra* II.7-13). In certain sculptures we see figures with the heads of beasts, beasts copulating with humans and *vice versa*. But, this does not answer the *citra-rata* of Vātsyāyana. What Vātsyāyana mentions is the 'congress' *like* the beasts; not *with* the beasts !

The sculptures of this type answer more aptly the Vedic doctrine of 'sexual congress of the creatures' (*bhūtānām ca maithunam*). The orgiastic sex (cf. *gau-yūthika*) even in Vātsyāyana cannot be for private satisfaction. It appears to have been influenced by ritual-sex, where sex was never for full gratification but only symbolic. The ascetic-and-the-woman type of sculptures (*yogī-kanyā*) is found not only in the sculptures but also on temple-wall. It does not get explained through Vātsyāyana. The key to this motif appears to be in the Vedic tradition of sexy dialogue between the *brahmacārin* and the hetaera. The sculpture where, in an orgy, a girl (obviously a prostitute) is shown as holding in her mouth the organ of a man (or of a *yogī*) has an exact parallel in the abuse flung at the hetaera by the *brahmacārin* calling her "the polisher of the male-organ". This practice could not have been taught by

Vātsyāyana, who mentions it but debars it. Such sculptures cannot but be explained only on the ritual back-ground and, here we have a very sound record of the Vedic ritual tradition of the *MITHUNA* !

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Abbreviations

(References without the mention of the text, are from the Ṛgveda)

AV	—	Atharva Veda
Ai Ar.	—	Aitareya Āraṇyaka
Ai Br.	—	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
Āś Śr. Sū. (S.)	—	Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Āś. Gr. Sū. (S.)	—	Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra
Baud. Śr. Sū (S.)	—	Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Br.	—	Brāhmaṇa
Chānd. Up.	—	Chāndogya Upaniṣad
Chānd. Br.	—	Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa
Dh. S.	—	Dharma Sūtra
Gop. Br.	—	Gopatha Brāhmaṇa
Gr. S.	—	Gṛhyasūtra
Jai. Br.	—	Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa
Jai. Up. Br.	—	Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa
Kāth. Sam.	—	Kāthaka Samhitā
Kau. Br.	—	Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa
Laṭyāya. Śr. Sū.	—	Laṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Mb., Mah. Bh.	—	Mahābhārata
Mait. Sam.	—	Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā
Mānava Dh. Sū.	—	Mānava Dharma Sūtra
Pañca Br.	—	Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa
P.	—	Purāṇa
RV.	—	Ṛgveda
Ṛk. Prat.	—	Ṛk-prātiśākhya
Ṣaḍ. Br.	—	Ṣaḍviṃśa Brāhmaṇa
Śānk. Śr. Sū.	—	Śānkḥāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Śat. Br.	—	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
Ś.S.	—	Śrauta Sūtra
Taitt. Ār.	—	Taittiriya Āraṇyaka
Taitt. Br.	—	Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa
Taitt. Sam.	—	Taittiriya Samhitā
Up.	—	Upaniṣad
Vāj. Sam.	—	Vājasaneyi-Samhitā
Yājñ. Sm.	—	Yājñavalkya Smṛti

Myth, Ritual, and the Vedic Seer's Vision of the Cosmos

Various views have been propounded about the historicity or the element of reality in a myth ; and the antiquity of this discussion is vouched by scholars like Max Müller ; and before his times the French pastor Samuel Bochart and John Spencer the master of the Christian College Cambridge, in the seventeenth century, applied the method of folk-psychology to understand the truth in such mythical accounts. Max Müller quotes that, "accordidg to some, mythology is history changed into fable, and, according to others, fable changed into history".¹ Max Müller did not contribute to the theory of Grote that, "Mythology is the Past that was never present". He supports the theory of Plato about the '*hypnoia*', or the under-current of meaning in a myth, adding, however, that "mythology is only a dialect . . . an ancient form of language". By the end of the nineteenth century, Max Müller propounded the Naturo-etymological theory of the understanding of myths, and carried it to such an extreme that, he and his follower Cox were nicknamed "solarist" by other scholars, who studied mythology with a broader base. And Max Müller had not only to admit their criticism, but to express his emotions in "Truth is in no hurry".² These scholars represented the Ethno-psychological school ; and among them were Herbert Spencer, Tylor, Andrew Lang, the renowned J. G. Frazer, and others. The key to the understanding of the myths was *volker psychologie*, and the "anatomy of the mind", according to Frazer.³ These scholars took the lead from Robertson Smith, by the close of the Nineteenth century. Every myth, according to this line of thinking, has a germ of reality in human experience. G.L. Gomme, for

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example, states that, "every single item of folk-lore, every folk-tale, every tradition, every custom and superstition, has its origin in some definite fact . . . though the definite fact is not always traceable".⁴ When the original idea behind the myth is not traceable, especially in the case of somewhat awkward myths, various interpretations are sought to be given. To quote E.B. Tylor, "It was through sheer ignorance and neglect of of this direct knowledge, how and by what manner of men myths are usually made, that their simple philosophy has come to be buried under masses of commentators' rubbish";⁵ and Lang attests the opinion of Eusabius when he says, "In later days, when they became ashamed of the religious beliefs of their ancestors, they invented private and respectful interpretations, each to suit himself."⁶ What Eusabius and Lang say pertains to religious myths ; for, it is the religious myths that get the sacred halo ; the secular ones are, generally, given the status of folk-tales.

Much scientific study has been published during the last three decades on the subject of myth, ritual, religion and folk-lore; and scholars of myth and folk-lore have referred to myths in the Veda also, along with those from other sources.⁷ This will indicate that the Vedic myths cannot be fruitfully studied in seclusion. Among the fairly modern trends of the study of myths, the most dominant has been the one which sees in myths a close association with rituals. In fact, this thought showed itself at the beginning of the twentieth century itself ; and got strong support in Frazer. In the middle of this century, it gained more support in the writings of Raglan, Hocart and others. According to Raglan, for example, "A myth is nothing but the form of words associated with a rite . . . Myths and rituals are complementary. Ritual is magic drama to which myth is book of words, which often survives when the drama has ceased to be performed".⁸ Even this theory went to extremes and it was stressed by other scholars that the ritual-myth association is not to be taken as a rule, and that there are many types of myth which do not have any relation to ritual. Kirk, for example, while giving the various types of myth, shows that the ritual-myth motif forms only one of such types.⁹

Despite the observation of Kirk, who criticised the excessive

linkings of the ritual and myth on the part of Malinowski (*Myth in Primitive Psychology*, London, 1926) and of E.R. Leach, who said that myth "is the counterpart of ritual ; myth implies ritual, ritual implies myth; they are one and the same"¹⁰ (reminding us of Raglan), the close connection between ritual and myth, in the sphere of the Ṛgveda and the Vedic ritual tradition cannot be denied. Most of the myths in the Ṛgveda appear to be symbolic expressions for a ritual-drama; and, in this special context of the Ṛgveda, we may agree with Clyde Cluckhohn that, "Myth is a system of word-symbols, whereas ritual is a system of objects and act-symbols. Both are symbolic processes for dealing with the same type of situation in the affective mode".¹¹ To this we may add, that the Ṛgvedic seer does not present only a correlation of words to form a meaningful sentence; but he presents whole images—both the traditional ones and fresh ones—connecting them with the terrestrial ritual-setting, which he believes to be only the phase of the cosmic ritual, the Ṛta. Incest is one such image in the broader scheme of ritual-sex. The most prominent of such incestuous persons presented are the Father, who is said to unite with his own daughter, and the twin-sister Yamī who importunes her brother Yama for the 'act'. Both have ritual background and they cannot be taken to suggest an actual state of customs anywhere in the remote past, when the knowledge of relationship was already known. But there is another image in the RV (Ṛgveda), which did not get the status of a myth, nor formed a part of any plausible ritual. This is the image of the 'Child-husband' (*vr̥ṣā-sīśu*), a perfectly pastoral image grafted on the fire-flame and the fire-water complex, and more often the latter (cf. the concept of Apīm-napīt and Sarasvān). The Father-Daughter myth has far wider a realm of influence in the Hindu religious literature,¹² and has interesting parallels elsewhere.

The myth of Yama-Yamī is less circulated than that of the Father-Daughter myth, but it is unique in its own way, and also has the motif of incest. Whether all myths in the Ṛgveda or the Vedic literature have relationship with any ritual is a question that would need an independent study. In the present study attention has been focussed on certain prominent Ṛgvedic myths that have a clear association with the gain of rain, howso-

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ever subtle it may be, and on rituals—both having the motif of sex. All are set round the concept of *mithuna*, which is the very basis for the gain of rain and general prosperity. In the later literature this motif has been employed variously. In the pages to follow, the material is so arranged that the later ritual-texts, where the motif is more prominent, are touched first so as to have the full-fledged concept of sex-coupling; and then the myths in the Ṛgveda are presented, as it is then that the riddle of the awkward sexual relationship in them gets clear. However, the whole structure of the ritual-imagery is deeply rooted in the Vedic seers' vision of the working of the cosmic elements. Hence, it is necessary to fully understand the Ṛgvedic tradition reflected in such vision. This will enable us to appreciate also the interrelationship between the myth, the oral charm and the ritual. The tradition says that every hymn, or part of it has a unit about it. This unit comprises the following three items: i) The Ṛṣi (Seer); ii) The Deity; and iii) The Metre, with the *mantra*. As the first and the last of these are important, it is necessary to probe further.

The Ṛṣi :

The Ṛṣi is the composer of the hymn or the verse. The tradition has a definite connotation behind the word Ṛṣi. According to Yāska Ṛṣi is the one who “sees” (*Nir.* II. 12). Etymologically, this word has been derived from the root $\sqrt{rṣ}$, “to see” (*rṣir darśanāi*); but the Sanskrit language does not preserve this root in the sense of “seeing”. This was clear to Yāska himself, who gave an alternate explanation for this word, “to these that were practising penance did the self-expressed *brahman* approach of its own: hence did they become the Ṛṣi-s”. Here the root is the same ($\sqrt{rṣ}$); but the meaning has changed, from “seeing” to “approaching”. This second connotation of the root has been retained in the language, and the first is adjusted with the latter one by stating that the roots having the connotation of “seeing” have also that of “going”. The word Ṛṣi is used also in the plural in the sense of the Pleiades, the seven Ṛṣi-s well known to the student of the Hindu mythology (RV X.82.2;—109.1 etc). This identification of the seven stars in the Pleiades and the seven mythical sages was brought out partly

by the sameness of the numbers of the two cases, and partly by the similarity of sound between the word “*ṛṣi*” meaning “seer” and the word “*ṛkṣa*”, which in the *Rgveda* means both “seer” and “bear”, as suggested by Macdonell.¹³ Yāska connects the word *ṛkṣa* with the root $\sqrt{khyā}$ (*Nir.* III. 20), which itself has the sense of “seeing” (*ṛkṣāḥ udīrṇānīva khyāyante*), and the belief that the stars “see” is found in the *Rgveda* (IV.7.3). At another place, commenting on the word *sapta ṛṣi*, Yāska says that they are the seven rays (*Nir.* X. 26, *sapta ṛṣīnāni jyotīṣi*). This would indicate that the word had the connotation of illumination, which is also the quality of the eye. That illumination is present in the concept of this word is clear from the fact of there being such words as *ṛṣva* and *ṛṣu*, which have the same root. The word *ṛṣva* has the connotation of illumination, as is attested by a number of passages in the *Rgveda*. The word *ṛṣu*, occurs five times (always in the genitive plural); and, barring one place (I,127.10), where it is taken to indicate riches, it is rendered as connoting the same as *Ṛṣi*, or the sun-rays. This will show that the connotation behind the word in question is that of illumination, and not strictly that of gait. In other words, the word *ṛṣi* has the sense of Vision, or, more correctly, illuminated Vision. It denotes a person that has superhuman power—the power that could visualize the working of the cosmos, the behaviour of the deities and the capacity to usher in the gods for the welfare of humanity. It is on the basis of this firm conviction, that he can see through the intricate working of the cosmos, that he affirms his ultimate intimate relationship with the One Protector of the universe, the supreme “*gopāh*” (RV X. 97.8; I 164.31—X.177.3). He is capable of knowing the thousand-branched secret (*nīnyam*) of this universe (VII. 33.9). One of the best example of this attitude is to be found in the hymn of Dirghatamas (I.164). In a particular state of trance the seer affirms that he is face to face with the ultimate One, stating that he has actually seen It. The method of this trance was already hinted at by Yāska, who classified the verses in the RV in three different types, in one of which the seer gives out his personal experiences, suggesting his identification with the deity (*Nir.* VII. 2). Thus, for example, he says that it is he (the seer himself) who smashed the enemy-citadels in the form of Indra (IV. 26.3), or states that he became Manu and is the very sun (*Ibid* v 2). Another seer states that he gained

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the favour of Rta, and that he was born as the sun (VI. 6.10.) ; the seer stresses his close association with the Highest principle ; nay, even his relationship ! Thus he says, "This (superhuman sphere) is my navel ; here be my abode ; these gods be mine ; I am the "twice born" and also the "first-born" of Rta" (X.61.19). The seer is conscious to have established close relationship with the divine sphere, subtly suggesting that he is the son of the very Universal Order (Rta). This method of identifying himself with the divinity also supports the traditional belief that the seer takes the form of the deity or *vice versa* (cf. Sāyaṇa's introduction to RV II. 12 ; IV. 18 etc.).

The superhuman sphere that is referred to by the seer (cf X.61) is that of the sun or of heaven according to the tradition. It is important to note that the name of one seer is Nābhānediṣṭha ("one nearest to the navel"), though it is dark if this is the real name ! The historicity of such names is not always easy to ascertain. There seems to be no doubt, however, in the fact that this is a symbolic name, if we compare its Avestan counterpart Nabjnajdista. The tradition spins a tale from this name (*Ai. Br.* V.14 ; *Taitt.Sam.*III. 1.9.4) with which we are not concerned in the present context. The point to be noted is, that the seers think themselves, and the tradition believes them, to be possessing supernatural power. At another place the seer, whose name is said to be Vasukra, is said to be the son-in-law of Indra ; and his wife is said to be the daughter of Indra (X. 97.28). At yet another place the seer is himself said to be Agni, in a particular aspect of the divinity (X.97) ; and Indra, Indrāṇī and the virile ape—Vṛṣākapi—are said to be the seers at another place (X.86). The divine Speech is herself the seer at another place (X. 125). The belief clearly is that of complete identification of the seer and the deity on the one hand and, on the other, that the *mantras* are themselves the deities or the abode of the deities. This shows a method of double identification. The seer is identified with the deity ; and the *mantra*-aspect of Speech represents the psychic personality of the seer, he being himself divine. This assertion shows him to be a superman. The method is, then, as, follows :—

- (i) The seer visualizes the working of the cosmos ;
- (ii) He is conscious of the fact that he is the very divinity,

the knower of the working of the cosmos, and the one who is conversant with the Universal Order ;

- (iii) Being also one with the divine Speech, his control of the cosmic activity lies in the power of his *mantra* and the suitable ritual that he can work out, the ritual being invented by him or inherited or even adopted from a different tradition.

This shows that the confidence of the seer is the reason for earning the name "Seer", which indicates the mental faculty or the power of the mental eye (cf ; III. 38.6 *manasā jaganvān*). By this power of his, the seer acts as the semi-divine on the terrestrial plane. In this light some of the symbolic names hold meaning. Such, for example, are *dvi-bandhu*, ("double-kin"), *dvi-barhas* (having double power, ie. on the terrestrial as also on the heavenly plane), *deva-vān* (he with the gods) etc. It is with this confidence that the seer asserts that his *brahma* brings the gods for the help of the kings for whom they officiate (III. 53.12; VII, 33.4), the term *brahma* suggesting both the *mantra* and the suitable ritual, as we shall examine further. With this we come to study the terms *mantra* and *chandas* which constitute the potent force of the seer.

Mantra and the Chandas :

Mantra and the Chandas are the most potent aids of the Ṛṣi. They are the active aspects of Speech. The word *mantra* has the sense of contemplation ; and has connection with *manas* (mind). It indicates the inner force. Etymologically it indicates the instrument for the expression of the mental power (*man+tra*). Thus it is the mental power that is expressed, either metrically or in plain prose. The first is the case as far as the *Ṛgveda* is concerned, the other with the *Yajurveda*, the lore of sacrifice. Mantras are addressed not only to powerful gods, but also to apparently insignificant things, and to inanimate objects. The address to such inanimate objects is due to the belief that these objects are deities. The point to be noted in this connection is that the *mantra* is the mental support for the ritual. This is the reason why the *mantra* is called "*abhirūpa*" (*At. Br.* III. 5); and it was believed that the ritual becomes complete and fruitful if

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accompanied by the proper *ṛc* or the *yajus*, the first indicating the versified *mantra*, the latter being the prose formula (see Yāska, *Nir.* I.16). It has to be remembered that in its most original aspect, the sphere of the *mantra* is not the seclusion of the seer from the society ; it is not self-pacification. The aim of the *mantra* is the activation of the cosmos for the weal of the people ; it is the effective self-projection for a particular objective that could be materially realized. From this original idea came, as a later phase, the formal recitation of the *mantra* as a simple ritual-need.

The concept behind the word *chandas* is a bit different. Flatly, this word means the “metre” in which the *mantra* is composed. It is also suggested that this word indicated a magical formula. The etymological meaning of this word, as set in the tradition, is “to cover”; and it is also explained that the *chandas* is so called as it protects from death (*Jaim. Br.* II. 381). This gave rise to the belief that the gods entered the *chandas* to protect themselves from death (*Mait. Sam.* III. 2.3;-5.7). This belief is enshrined in the famous legend of the fetching of the liquid of immortality by the metres in the form of the birds.¹⁴ The concept of the metres being the very heavenly world is not very prominent in the *Ṛgveda* ; but it was sufficiently current among the Indo-Iranians, as can be seen from the Avestan belief of the “*garodemān*” or “*garonmān*” (“House of songs”), which was the heaven of Ahura Mazda.¹⁵ In the later Vedic tradition we have the concept of the Highest God being in the form of the metres (*chandomaya puruṣa*). The belief that the *chandas* defeated death was not an idle one ; it entered ritual ; and at the ritual of Initiation, even to-day, the *mantra* in the Gāyatrī *chandas* is to be taught to, and recited by, the initiate to indicate his new birth after the symbolic death at the ritual. When the Ṛṣi used the *chandas* he used it with the conviction that he has the instrument to annihilate death and all other evils, and to produce a miracle.

Ṛta, Ritual and Brahman :

We have noted earlier that the seer, Nābhānediṣṭha, says that he is the “first-born of Ṛta”; and, in this, he expresses the belief of the Vedic people about the status of the seer. This is no place

to discuss in detail the concept behind the important word *Rta*. But a few opinions are necessary to be noted. Etymologically the word would mean, "that which has gone", or "that which has been going on" (\sqrt{r} , "to go"). Hence, the word signifies the course of things. However, this principle is not to be confused with the principle of Destiny. In Destiny the idea is of the fixed Fate. In *Rta* the idea is of continuous course, an everlasting activity. The word *Rta* was understood as "Truth" by earlier scholars like Roth and Bergaigne. It was also supposed to mean the Universal Order. But this meaning was questioned by Lüders, who said that the Vedic people had no notion of the Universal Order, though it is the generally accepted sense of the word *Rta*. Lüders'¹⁶ contention was that the word *Rta* meant Truth—the Non-lie. According to him, the only translation of this word could be "wahrheit". It may, however, be added that, to understand the exact concept behind this word, it is necessary to take the "wahrheit" as connected with activity. The fact that *Rta* is understood in the tradition also as "sacrifice" shows that it could not be devoid of the idea of ritual and activity. Lüders further believed that *Rta* was like a magical spell—the exact formula uttered in the cult. This could be corroborated by such expressions in the *Rgveda* which indicate the sun to have risen by *Rta*. That *Rta* was conceived to mean only the Truth is not justified by such passages as say that both *Satya* and *Rta* have been produced from the flaring heat-principle (X.190.1).

It is to be noted that, at certain places, we have the idea of *Rta* being duplicate. It is said that by *Rta* is *Rta* controlled (IV.3.9). At another place it is said that *Rta* is concealed by *Rta* itself at the region where the horses of the sun get their release (V.62.1). In the latter case the idea seems to be that the solar orb is covered, or protected, by *Rta*. The horses of the sun are, clearly the sun-rays ; and, if the *Rta* is concealed by *Rta*, where the sun-rays get their release, it is clear that the concept of *Rta* is based here on the orb of the sun. In both the passages, there is the suggestion of the visible *Rta* and its invisible counterpart. This appears to be a case for the belief in the concept of the doubles. The *Rgveda* supports this hypothesis. Thus, Soma is said to be twofold : the one to be

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partaken of, the other known only to the Brāhmaṇas (X.85.3). We have the description of the One that shows its one aspect and conceals the other ; that which is visible is the portion of light (or fire), the non-visible being the waters that lie concealed ; both form one whole (X.27.24). One of the most famous, in this regard, is the image of the two birds that sit on the same branch (I.164.20). At another place in the same context, the One Immortal is said to be in company with the mortal, indicating that the immortal itself has the visible or a comprehensible form. The Ṛgvedic seer is alive to the realization that there is the One above the one that is seen ; for, he often asserts that there is the Other One above the one seen (X.31.8 ; -27.21). The same appears to be the notion when the seer says that there is the double Ṛta, the One controlling the other. One is the Ṛta that is expressed—the Sun, or the true speech, or even the right type of behaviour. The concealed, or the unexpressed, Ṛta is the controlling principle for all these.

The Vedic seer appears to distinguish between the Great Ṛta and the one that is practicable, when he speaks of the “*ṛtām bṛhat*” and the “*varṣiṣṭham ṛtam*” (I.75.5; III.56.2). The practical aspect of Ṛta is to be seen in the ritual in the *mantra*, *chandas* or the mystic utterance ; and the visible aspects of Ṛta are such deities as Agni and the sun. Though in a number of passages the word Ṛta occurs in the instrumental, indicating it to be a power to be used, it is not true to say¹⁷ that “almost always it is in the case other than the Nominative”. The case for the Nominative is the one we have seen above in the reference to the double Ṛta (IV.3.9; cf.V.-62.1). We have reference also to the most ancient Ṛta (I.105.4). Ṛta, then, was a cosmic power that could express itself in a variety of things : from a mere true expression to the elaborate ritual, both on the cosmic and the terrestrial level. The idea is of a perennial power that enlivens all faculties :—that of Perception, that of Will and that of Action. The seers speak of the abode of Ṛta (*ṛtasya sadanam*) from which come the most essential things. The *brahman* comes from this abode of Ṛta (VII.36.1), and Agni is said to reside in the womb of Ṛta, which is mystically called “*akṣara*”. It is this concept of the perennial power that is

behind the word Ṛta that gives the gods the epithet “*ṛta-van*”. Even the goddesses are “*ṛtavarī*”; but, interestingly, this term (in the feminine) is applied only to the rivers, Dawn and Heaven-and-Earth both conceived as females.

An important extension of the idea of the visible aspect of Ṛta is its association with the cosmic moisture and the resultant rain and water on the earth. The tradition is clear in understanding Ṛta as “water” (*Nir.* II.25); and Sāyaṇa renders the word so at various places. The most convincing support for this is where the *Ṛgveda* speaks of the Bull (sun or the cosmic fire) being anointed with Ṛta (IV.3.10), where Ṛta is sought to be identified with the “*payas*” (*páyasā pṛṣṭhyēna*). Being thus anointed, the Bull “milks the udder”, which suggests the showering of the rain-cloud. In a graphic description of the production of rain, the *Ṛgveda* says that the “birds” (sun-rays) don the waters they have evaporated; they fly to the heavenly plane; and thence do they return—“from the abode of Ṛta”—bringing with them the sustaining fluid (*ghṛta*), which they sprinkle upon the earth (I.164.47). Ṛta gets connected here with the gain of rain. We have seen above that the epithet “*ṛtavarī*” comes only for the Rivers, Dawn and Heaven-and-Earth. The association of water and moisture is clear in all these. With the idea of the seer being intimately connected with Ṛta, and being the “first-born of Ṛta”, is also associated the idea of his control over the cosmic moisture and the fire-principle that can fertilize it.

The relationship between Ṛta and Brahman is intimate; and the latter is said to have come from the abode of Ṛta (RV. VII. 36.1) The seer is often associated with the power of Brahman; in fact he is himself the embodiment of Brahman. As the sacrifice impels the gods for activity, so does Brahman, (II. 14.11; I.117.11;-124.13 etc.). Brahman is seen as the cosmic power, when it is said that it causes the sun to rise (V.40.6). On the terrestrial plane it is the Brahman of the seer that protects the kings for whom they sacrifice (V.33.3.4; III.53.12). The opinions of modern scholars about the meaning and implication of this important word differ widely. Some of the important meanings are : “holy power” (Roth and Böhtlingk), “a ritualistic formula, or a latent power, not unlike electricity, which is excited

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in us after the time of the performance of the holy ritual with the help of the usual utensils of worship and other paraphernalia" (Haug), "an absolute power in the whole nature" (Wackernagel, and partly Hillebrandt); the word is also taken as derived from the Indo-European $\sqrt{bhr̥g}$, suggesting growth or upward extension. According to some scholars (including Pischel, Sonderbolen, Strauss, Osthoff, and Oldenberg) Brahman is "a mysterious magic fluid, or potency, filling the whole world, and induced to make itself manifest in a given substance by the use of charms, incantations, and the scientific magical movement—a sort of "zauber fluidum par excellence."¹⁸ According to another view Brahman denoted the process of shaping or formulating poetry, that it is the mid-way process of the giving of a form in expression to some thought that arises in the mind (*Formierung dichterische gestaltung*).¹⁹

From the various opinions mentioned above the following can be said about Brahman :—(i) It is connected with expression ; (ii) this expression may be in the form of a poetic utterance, a magic word, or an object used to achieve some end ; (iii) it is something of a ritual ; (iv) it is inherent in the cosmos, and is the inner fluid. The consensus of the various opinions is that Brahman is a double power—dormant, yet prone to be expressed to achieve a particular end. This, probably, is one of the reasons why it is equated with R̥ta by Lüders (*op. cit. loc. cit.*). But R̥ta and Brahman have been mutually differentiated by the R̥gveda itself, when the latter is said to come from the seat of the former. This will show that Brahman is a stage next to R̥ta.

The traditional opinion regarding Brahman is that it is both the prayer and the ritual. It is defined as "*parivṛḍham karma*" (magnified ritual). Yāska renders it as "growing on all sides" (*Nir.* I.8). According to the tradition, it is, hence, the fusion of the ritual and the *mantra*. This is exactly the point : for, the tradition believes that the ritual without the appropriate *mantra* is as good (or bad) as dead ! This is corroborated by the fact that Brahman is said to be "performed" (*Jaim. Br.* I.125 *brahma akriyata*). This ritual-connotation of the term Brahma was already known to the R̥gveda which, at a number of places, connects it with the root of action (\sqrt{kr} , "to do" : VI 52.2 ; VII. 103.8 etc.). The view of Geldner,²⁰ that Brahman was some-

thing like an amulet, is not attested by any passage from the *Rgveda*. However, Brahman may include the amulet as an aid to ritual and the proper *mantra*. Oldenberg's opinion that it is the priestly act is partly acceptable ; but it must also be thought to be accompanied by the *mantra*. On studying the various places of the occurrences of the word Brahman, it seems that the concept behind it is too wide to be summed in one or two words. Under it come not only the *mantra* and the prayer, or the inner power ; it indicates the experience of wonder—a supernatural result. That it indicated the "vast spiritual power"²¹ is a later development. In the most original concept, the *mantra* that produced the wonderful super-human result was Brahman ; the act that created such a wonder was Brahman ; the wonder itself was Brahman. It is because of this wide connotation of the term Brahman, that the seer could say that he yoked the horses of the deity with Brahman ; that he impelled the gods to activity with Brahman ; that he protected the people with Brahman ; that the sun rose due to the power of Brahman and that the birth of the seer was due to the power of Brahman. The seer had his own *brahman*, by which he could perform wonders (III.53.12; VII. 33.4), where the meaning does not seem to be that of the simple prayer. That Brahman indicated something wonderful is clear from the fact that even the juice of Soma is called *brahman* (RV. Khila III.10.4 V3.4) ; and is referred to as *brahma-sava* (IX.67. 24 : milk is Brahman at VIII,89.7; Agni is *brahman* and the Sun the *subrahman*, *Ṣaḍ-Br*-I-i). In the later tradition the term *brahman* was used to indicate the three mystic utterances (*vyāhṛti*-s ; *Śat. Br.* II.1.40). It is not only the prayer (*Tait. Up.* I.8.1), but is also the synonym of the sacrifice.

The next step to be marked in the case of the word *brahman* is the concept of the personified *brahman*, unlike the *mantra* or the *chandas*. The person who could bring about anything supra-mortal came to be known as Brahman, or Brāhmaṇa.

Thus, the Ṛṣi was the one to whom the Ultimate was manifest ; he could wield his divine power by the instrument of his *chando-mantra*, ushered in the appropriate ritual. He had his own *brahman* ; and he was the Brahman. He was believed to be the super-man, who performed on the terrestrial plane and controlled the cosmos. The seer, in the origin, was the composer, chanter and also the divine sacrificer. The *Rgveda* clearly marks

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the two phases : that of the composer-chanter and the performer of the sacrifice. The seer, in many cases, is clearly the performer of the ritual-sacrifice, as is reflected in many a hymn. Later, however, these two functions came to be separated ; and in the age of the Brāhmaṇas there does not appear any fresh effort to “see” the *mantra*-s, or, in other words, to compose fresh *mantra*-s. The later priests used the *mantra*-s of the ancient seers, with the faith that their exact recitation will have the same effect as was contemplated by the original seer. Thus came the oral tradition to preserve the ancient *mantra*-s, taking care not to spoil the exact accent and even a mora. There is no reason to disbelieve that the process did not produce the same result as was contemplated by the ancient seer who activate^d the cosmos by his first effective effort, though it is often observed that, later, the same *mantra*-s came to be employed in various rituals on the basis of some external similarity of sound, or misunderstood meaning ! The latter was a stage of decadence, that of faithful imitation ; it also indicates the loss of the original environment and meaning of the mantras, though the point of faith cannot be gainsaid ! This stage sowed the seeds of divergence from the original sense and ritual, and in many cases, made the *mantras* obscure.

It is clear that even at the period of the *Ṛgveda* the seer taught the *mantras*, along with the ritual context, to the persons he thought fit and were interested in learning the lore. These learners, who were, thus, initiated in the lore, used them at the proper rituals to produce the required result (*Nir.* I.20). These veterans, who “saw” the mantras, and also those who learned them with their proper setting, were the chosen “friends of Speech” and also of one another ; they are said to fashion Speech by the faculty of their mind, in other words, controlling Speech with their Will ; for, the divine speech was an important aspect of the cosmos, whose secret the “seers” knew.

Speech :

The most original idea about speech comes from thunder in the mid-region. The tradition calls the thunder the prototype of speech-forms. The exact expression used is “*mādhyamikā*

vāk". What is audible on the terrestrial plane is an aspect of Speech that thunders in the mid-region. Beyond the mid-region, Speech is subtle. The sun is also said to be endowed with Speech, which is subtle. As the thunder brings with it rain, the mid-region Speech is conceived as the Cow that "milks". By an extension of the image, the cloud is also said to be the Cow that gives milk. The experience that rain comes from the mid-region gave rise to the notion that the mid-region is an ocean. The association of the thunder and the resultant rain worked to formulate the concept that the Speech itself fashions rain; that the thunder splutters into multitudes of sounds was seen as the norm for the various sounds on the terrestrial plane, understood or not understood. This would show that the thunder, for the Vedic seers, came to be the norm for all audible forms of speech. There are a number of passages to suggest that Speech was believed to be closely associated with the thunder-cloud. She is said to be "*abhriyā*" (I.168.8); and she is also said to be "waterful" and "flashful" (V.65.6). It is also said that when Indra smashed *Vṛtra* (a rain-myth), Speech was produced (VIII.100.11,12).

In a subtler concept of Speech she is associated with the sun and the cosmic fire-principle, which is called *Gandharva*. It is said that the 'Bird' (sun-fire complex image) holds Speech by his mind; the *Gandharva* expresses it in the womb; she is divine Speech, is the resplendent will, that the wise nurture at the abode of *Ṛta*, the whole imagery centering round the experience of the coming of rain, or the orb of the sun (X. 177.2). Speech is conceived, here, as the expression of the divine Will, and she is also an aspect of light—solar or of the Lightning. In the previous verse we have the concept of the Bird that has its double: (i) the supreme and not visible, and the other one (ii) that is its visible phase that traverses in the cosmic ocean (in the form of the sun). *Gandharva* is almost always associated with water in the *Ṛgveda* (X. 10.4; -139.4,6; cf. esp.—*apām gandharvaḥ* spoken of soma at IX.83.4). The sun is also the receptacle of the waters (I.23.17; *Taitt. Ār.* 18.1). The image transferred to the mid-region makes the lightning-fire the *Gandharva*. At both the places there is the association of the waters and the fire, the former being conceived as females, while the latter

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is the seeding male. The place where the association is "seen" is the "abode of Rta". Here is the key to the traditional meaning of Rta as water. The image of the Gandharva that "expresses" Speech in the womb explains the thunder from the cloud. This seems to be the starting point for the later belief that the Gandharvas were singers. The association of the Gandharva with Speech is also seen in the Brāhmaṇas where they were said to have given back Soma to the gods in exchange for Vāc (Speech); for, they were fond of women (*At.Br.I.* 27; *Taitt. Sam.* VI.1.6). The association of the Gandharva with the cosmic waters is already an Indo-Iranian belief; for the Gandharva is believed to stay in the cosmic ocean called *Vouru kash*, whence comes the rain (*Yast* V. 38).

The Vedic belief thus was that the whole cosmos is filled with the two elements of the fire and the waters; and the same belief is breathed out in the later texts when the Brāhmaṇas say, that there are only these two and there is no third (cf. *Śat.Br.I.* 6.3.24). These two are male and female; and have to copulate to ooze out the divine semen, rain. The seers' vision sees this relationship in various images; and the experience of this imagery and the expression thereof generate the various mythical accounts or myths. The myths in the RV occur as full-fledged myths in a very limited number of cases, as for example, the myth of the killing of Vṛtra. The purpose of the *mantras* of RV was not to disclose full-fledged myths; but there is no doubt that they divulge the under-current of mythical beliefs; and they are in a number of cases related to ritual. These ritual-reflections get supported from later Brāhmanic ritual, which act is a sort of a magnifying aid for them. The method of comparative mythology, together with comparative folk-lore, finally fixes the hymn-myths in their proper frames. Awkward-looking, and riddle-like mythical accounts, thus, get their proper social setting; and a whole tradition of beliefs get clear. In certain cases, the mythical accounts of the older RV-tradition get enacted with the sacred faith and belief of producing the desired result. It is here that the myth gets associated with ritual. A close study of the Vedic myths, as a whole, leads one to assert that myth, here, is not without ritual; for the texts are sacred and ritualistic in nature; and no account is without a ritual purpose. Many myths are,

thus, *arthavādas*. In this study, the sexual elements in some such myths, rituals and expressions are studied.

1. *Chips from a German Workshop* IV, London, 1907, p.157; for ref. to Grote, p.13
2. *Ibid.*, p.xiii.
3. *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, Vol. I, London, 1918, p.viii.
4. *Folk-lore as an Historical Science*, London, 1908, p.8.
5. *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I, London, 1903, Ind.Ed. p. 283.
6. Andrew Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, Vol.I, London, 1887, p. 42.
7. See for example A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Rel. ; Custom and Myth*, London, 1884; Donald Mackenzie, *Indian Myth and Legend*, London; G.S. Kirk, *Myth, Its Meaning and Function, in Ancient and other Cultures*, Cambridge Uni. Press, 1970, chapter on Indian myths.
8. *The Hero*, London, 1949, p.130.
9. *Op. Cit.*, p.252ff.
10. *Political Systems of High-land Burma*, London and Cambridge, 1954, p.13f.
11. "Myth and Ritual, a General Theory," *Harvard Theological Review*, xxv, 1942, pp.457-9; he quotes Durkheim's and Jane Harrison's view that myth is the legamenon, the thing said, and ritual the corresponding dromenon.
12. *Śat. Br.* I. 7.4.1. ff; *Ai. Br.* III. 33; the *Purāṇas* have used it amply; see *Śiva P.* (*Satī Khaṇḍa*) II.1.10;20.22ff; 5.32; in these accounts the Daughter is said to be Dawn, or the evening Twilight, and Prajāpati gives place to Brahmā; the motive further changes to Brahmā's release of semen on seeing Uma-Pārvatī at her marriage with Śiva, indicating the later Vedic motif of Rudra-Śiva shooting at Prajāpati; see also Vāmana P.53 56-59; also *Matsya P.*194.7; but, here the motif changes, as the later Vedic accounts suggest the Daughter to be the sister of Rudra and other gods, while in the *Purāṇic* account Umā is Śiva's wife. Here the account takes a further turn, and says that Brahmā gets sexually aroused on seeing even the wives of gods. This is obviously due to his inheriting the nature of Prajāpati, the all-creator god. The myth, at a later stage has Sarasvatī as the Daughter. Even the saint Kabir refers to it, in his Hindi poetry.
13. *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, London, 1928, p.109.
14. Dange, *Legends in the Mahābhārata*, Delhi, 1969, Ch.I.

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15. Haug M, *Essays on the Religion of the Parsees*, London, 1878, p.311.
16. *Varuna I*, p.14ff
17. Gulliman J.D., "Heraclitus and Iran", *History of Religions*, Uni. of Chicago, Vol. III-i (1968), pp.43ff
18. Belwalkar S K. *History of Indian Philosophy* Vol. II (The Creative Period), Poona, 1927, pp.346ff; later "Brahman, Baresman, Bright, Bhrāj", *PIOC*. IV, 1928, pp.1-9.
19. Thieme P., "Brahman", *ZDMG* 102, pp.91-129.
20. *Der Rigveda II* (HOS 34), on RV VII.33.5.
21. *Gonda J. see Notes on Brahman*, Utrecht, 1950 for full discussion.

Cosmosexualism

We have examined the Vedic belief in the power of the seer and the relationship between the Fire and Water, the two principal cosmic elements forming a copulative pair. In this chapter we probe the point further and examine a wider range of application of the same belief. We might do well to name the method 'Cosmosexualism'.

Various instances are to be found in the hymns of the *Rg-veda* (RV) and in the later ritual-traditions which show sexual images. Before we start to study this tendency it is necessary to remember the sex-ritual of the Horse-sacrifice, wherein the Sun-horse (or the symbol of Prajāpati) ritually united with the queen in the holy atmosphere of the sacrifice. The sex in it was the holy-sex. That ritual was, however, the climax of the Vedic imagination about sex in rituals based on symbolism that had been well rooted in tradition. There is sound ground to believe that this horse-queen ritual was preceded by similar rituals one of which being the ritual of the Monkey (Sun-symbol) and the famous Indrāṇī, who was identified with the wealth-producing Earth and was called Dhanañjayā.¹ Closely related to the ritual of the Horse-sacrifice is the concept of the Mahānagna and the Mahānagnī (the great naked couple) in the symbolic ritual sex-act for the fructification of the land. In the ritual of the marriage the bride was identified with the Earth in a fresh concept. . . the Apālā-Indrāṇī-Mahānagnī complex. In ritual-symbolism sex formed a part of the sacrifice, which was the *Sukṛtasya yoni*, where the mortals presented the cosmic sex-act, which was necessary for generating rain (symbolically called *retas*) and ensuring fertility.²

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Traces of sex-imagery are to be found in the hymns of the *Ṛgveda*; and not being clearly followed they made such hymns obscure. Efforts to see in such places actual customs or facts of history have miserably failed; for, in many cases the images used by the seer were not comprehended, and words used by him, even following a long tradition, were not critically tested. As an example we may take the word *pāti-vidya* (RV. X. 102. II; *Kāth. Sam.* VIII. 17.15; *Mait. Sam.* III. 8. 4.). This word was rendered merely as "husband" (Bloomfield)³, the wealth of the husband" (Geldner "Besitz den Gatten") or "the husband to be obtained" (Sāyaṇa) etc. The point to be noted is that the *pāti-vidya* has to be different from the *pāti*. The same appears to be the case with the word *jānyuḥ pātih* (RV. X. 10.3, the Yama-Yamī hymn). The word *jānyuḥ* has been understood as the genitive of the Feminine *jani* (like *pāti* or *sakhi* both Masculine) by Geldner and as the Nom. Sing. of the Masc. *janyu* by Sāyaṇa. It appears that these words cannot be taken flatly as they are; for, they present a sex-image, looking to the sexual setting of the hymns. A close study of such passages reveals that they form part of a method of sex-imagery; and it is necessary to analyse the same.

At the very outset it becomes clear that in the *ṚV* itself there is the motif of Cosmic sex-partnership. The conspicuous pair is that of Heaven and Earth (H.E.), the parents and they are sought to be ever made young, indicating their renewed sex-vigour (RV 1.20.4; 110.8; IV.33.3; 34.9; V. 35.5; 36.3; *yūvānā pītārā akrata* often spoken of the *Ṛbhus*). Their union causes the *retas* of the sky or the *payas*; and it symbolizes rain.

Closely allied with this concept of the uniting parents (*pītārā*) is that of the *mātarā*, where they sometimes indicate the two kindling sticks (*araṇi-s*) that produce the 'son' (fire) by mutual friction. But at times the image gets complex with the fresh-born 'son' roaring and uniting with the desiring flames that are seen as females (1.140.6). In a yet complex image we have Indra causing the *mātarā* (H-E) to unite for semen-enjoyment; and the result is that the 'son' (sacrificial fire) gets the Father's generative fluid (symbolically called *nāma√nam*, "to bend down" indicating the downward flow; Sāyaṇa) from the third heaven (1. 155. 3). Here the Father who emits the generative fluid is the

sun, or the archetype of all "seeders", who control all fluids; and on the visible cosmic plane he releases the rain in his aspect of Parjanya, who fructifies the earth by this *retas* of his. The complexity in this image comes from the fact of two gods combining to release the fluid. Of the two, Indra is directly connected with the release of the 'rivers' in the cosmos, indicating rain. He brings the parents to unite on the cosmic plane; and this act of his is aided by the sacrificial fire (son) on the terrestro-sacrificial plane. The belief is that it is the sacrifice on the earth that causes the mating of the 'parents.' This is suggested in other words, when Agni is said to make the *mātarā* ever new (III. 5.7 *dīdyānaḥ śúcir ṛṣvāḥ pāvakāḥ pūnaḥ punar mātārā nāvyaśī kaḥ*). This is on the terrestro-sacrificial plane; and on the cosmic plane it is the *vaidyuta agni*, whose cosmo-sacrificial flashes accompany the *retas* (rain) of the *mātarā* (H-E), indicating their renewed youth. The context shows that these *mātarā* are not the kindling sticks; they are the H-E; for in the previous verse Agni is directly connected with the sun and the earth (III. 5.5 *pāti priyām ripó ágram padām vēḥ, pāti yahvāḥ cáraṇam sūryasya*).

It would be, thus, seen that the twain—H-E—form the most natural cosmic *dampatī*. The symbolism unfolds yet another aspect with the image of two mothers—both the H and the E being conceived as females—connected to the one seeder, the sun. Here the sun is said to have two females, the sky and the earth. He is said to sit in the bosom and rub the upper one, and come towards the earth that is spread. The image is sexual as can be seen from the words (X. 27.13 *āsīna ūrdhvāmupāśi kṣīṇāti, nyaññuttānām ānv eti bhūmim*) *upāśi* and *uttānām*. This action of the sun (who is referred to as holding the essence by his head, indicating the orb), causes the foetus; and the child (*varsa*) of the one mother (earth) is said to be licked by the other that thunders (sky-female), and is the bellowing cow (v. 14). Here the simple image of the uniting cosmic parents glides into zoomorphism presenting the cow-bull image. The foetus of the two mothers is a concept that combines in itself the sacrificial fire generating the cloud-fire (*vaidyuta agni*). The father is the sun here; but the concept behind him is that of the cosmic "seeder," which also describes Parjanya at other places (III. 56.3=VII. 101.6) also Soma (IX.86.39). Plurality is attributed to *retodhāḥ*

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at certain places (X. 129.5 *retodhā āsan*), and gets associated with the sacred triplicity, mixed with zoo-morphism (V.69.2 *tráyas tasthur vṛṣabhāsas tisṛṇām dhiṣaṇānām retodhāḥ*). The three 'bulls' of the three females (*tisṛṇām*) are the three fires—or to be more certain, three phases of the supreme solar-fiery principle—the sun, the lightning-fire and the terrestro-sacrificial fire. They are the male principles that seed the 'mothers' at three regions respectively. (cf VII. 33.7). Over and above these seeders, also obtains the concept of the supreme seeder—the Bull that is the lover of many 'cows' (X.40.11 *priyá-usriyasya vṛṣabhāsya retināḥ*). This supreme *retin*, the seeder-bull, is the norm for the pasture, and impregnates the cows with his *retas*, himself being Indra (VI. 28.8; *Taitt. Br.* 2.8.8.12.; *Lāṭyā. Śr. Sū.* 3.3.4.; AV. IX.4.23). It is this supreme Bull that comes in the popular rituals of the *Śulagava* and *Vṛṣotsarga*, as Rudra. The concept is important, and occurs at various places with the shades slightly changing, but the motif never getting dim. The method is to speak of the sacrificial fire as the 'son' who unites the Bull and the Cow. The pair is also spoken of as the *vṛṣabha* and the *dhenu*, the latter word indicating a cow with the calf. Thus, Dīrghatamas (the seer of the *asya vāmitva*" I. 164) speaks, elsewhere, of the 'son' (identifying the sun and Agni, the former at the cosmic sacrifice and the latter at the terrestrial one) who causes the *vṛṣabha* and the *prśni-dhenu* to release the *retas* and the *payas* (rain). Here the supreme parents are shown in the zoo-morphic imagery. In the highest phase of this imagery the Bull and the Cow are merged into one; and this gives the concept of the One seeder—*vṛṣabha-dhenu* (III.38.7; X. 5.7), who is bi-sexual. The stages are as follows:—

I Regular image

Father	Mother
Bull	Cow
(triplicity)	(triplicity)
{ <i>Retin-Vṛṣabha</i> <i>Vṛṣabha-dhenu</i>	
(at the Earth, Mid-region and Heaven)	

II Converse image

<i>Retin-vṛṣabha</i>
<i>Vṛṣabha-dhenu</i>
(Bull—Cow)
Father Mother
Heaven Earth
Bull among Cows
Earthly

The H—E are caused to unite by the sacrifice (or the sacrificial fire, the 'son'); hence sacrifice is necessary. In a variant thought we have the 'son' who knows the *garbha* (foetus) of the Father the Creator, and generates the mid-region streams of rain (III.1.9;10).

Alongside this concept of the union of the Father and the Mother, ṚV has the concept of the waters being the females to be seeded by the male, who is Agni or Soma. The image becomes complex when this seeder is said to be also a *śiśu* (*child*). Thus he is imagined as the *śiśu-vṛṣan* (II.35.13 Agni and X.30.5 Soma). In the ritual set-up Agni has the ghee-streams as the females, and Soma has the waters called *vasatīvarī* as his females. In these females these gods enjoy themselves. Apart from the fact that the 'daughter of the sun' brings him from heaven, (IX. 1.6; 72.3;113.3), Soma is closely associated with the cosmic waters, which, being conceived as the females, are *vṛṣanyantī* (coveting the male) in respect of him. He plants his seed in them ritually; and cosmically, generates the rain showers—the *payas*. The Soma-ritual gets connected with the gain of rain in this way(cf. IX.49.1; 3;—he is also said to be '*apsāh*', "rain-gainer" IX. 65.20). Soma as the seeder-bull is the only god that gets the epithet *Sabardughā* (IX.12.7); and is the lord of the cosmic cow called *Sabardughā*. On the side of 'Agni, it is the heavenly aspect, the sun' that is called the male *Prśni*, the seeder of the *prśni*-s (cows) on various levels (the earth, the cow in the pasture and also the cloud-cow).

The relationship between the male seeder and the females is not abnormal in the images we have seen uptil now. But there is suggestion of abnormality in their relationship as the male is *śiśu* and also the seeder of the cosmic waters. The abnormality, however, is only apparent; and it goes if we take the etymological meaning of the words *śiśu* and *mātr*. The seers of the *Rgveda* present such apparently awkward images at various places, in the context of sex. Thus, we have the image of the "sisters" invoking their brother-husband, the sisters being the waters (cosmic; and, in the ritual, the *vasatīvarī* waters) and the male being Soma (IX.65.1 *hinvānti sūram ūsriyaḥ svasāro jāmayāḥ pátim*). The 'mothers' desire the *retas* of the Bull—their son—Soma who is expected to generate foetus in them that "desire

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the manly one" (*vṛṣaṇyantībhyah*), and "milk the essence" (IX. 19.4.5). It will be seen that the *mātaraḥ* are not actual mothers; but they are so called as they pervade ($\sqrt{mā}$). Soma is called *sānu* or *śīsu* respectively from the idea of impelling or generating ($\sqrt{sū}$ 'to impel' or "to generate") and from being ever new (\sqrt{so}). But even so, the fact is that the seer uses these words with full knowledge that he is playing and presenting such an image as would be seemingly awkward. These expressions with the image of sex are, obviously, suggested to indicate the flow of Soma, who is already thought to be the seeder. The point, then, is that such expressions were thought to impel rain or hasten the flow of Soma on the ritual-plane and the flow of the cosmic fluid (rain) on the cosmic plane. It is from this point of view that the Soma-imagery gives one of the most involved ideas; for the seer says, "I am a poet; father is the physician; mother the filler of the mill stone (*upala-prakṣinī*) etc;" and that is why Indu (the bright Soma-spot in the sky) should ooze out for Indra (IX.112.3); and in the next verse one of the images presented is that of the male organ desiring the "two hairy fissures" (IX.112.4, *śépo rómanvantau bhedau*), and then comes the invocation to Indu to ooze forth for Indra. The sudden employment of the sex-image is not casual; it appears to be with a purpose. And the purpose is to urge Soma to ooze. Sex proves to be a charm; and here, as at other places we have examined, it is a sympathetic charm for the gain of the divine fluid. We have yet another instance where the oozing of the juice of Soma is associated with sex-imagery. The pressing planks are said to be two thighs and, as the pressing stone gets activated the Soma-juice appears (I.28). Soma itself is said to be the *retas* of the divine horse (the sun), thus connecting the ritual juice with the cosmic (I. 164.35); and it is the Sun-horse that ritually imparts his seed to the queen in the Horse-sacrifice.

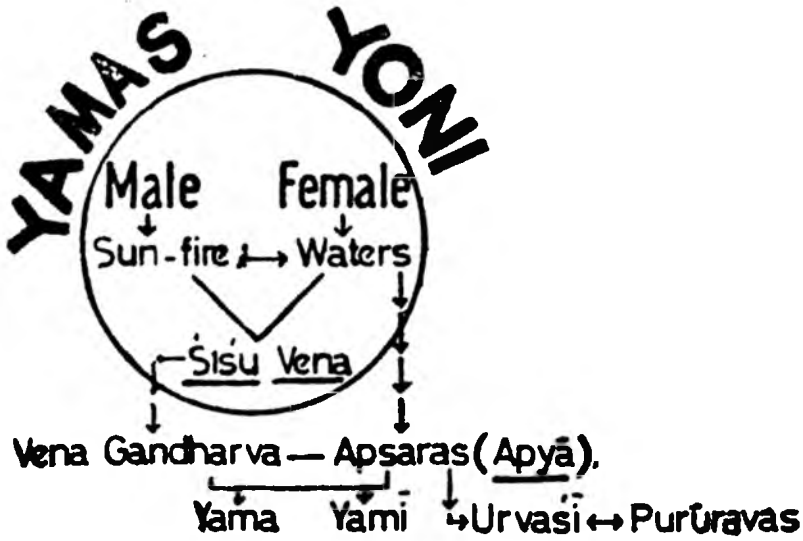
Another interesting concept is that of the *jāra*. The sun is said to be the *jāra* of the waters; and the image gets complicated when he is also referred to as *pitā* (1.46.4 *jāró apām piparti pápurih...pitā kúṭasya carṣañih*) The concept of the *jāra* is not that of the husband; it is that of the paramour. In spite of the etymological meaning of the word *jāra* (*jārayitā* acc. to *Sāyaṇa*)⁶ which has to be ultimately accepted, the fact is the use of the

word that has a definite sex-meaning. That the Vedic tradition used this word in its sexual connotation is clear from the fact that Indra is well known as the *jāra* of *Ahalyā* (whosoever she may be, *Jaim. Br.* II.79; *Ṣaḍv. Br.* I. 15 ft); and the *Ṛgveda* itself uses the word in this sense. Thus Vāyu, the general seeder, is said to arouse Purandhi as does a *jāra* (paramour) his sleeping mistress (I. 134.3, *jāra ā sasatīmīva*); and *jāra* comes as a standard of comparison in the same sexual meaning (VII. 76. 3). This leaves no doubt about the purposeful use of this word in the expression noted above, and also in similar others. As we have the *pitā-jāra* image about the sun, so is the cosmic Agni the *jāra* of the maidens and *pāti* of the married ladies, that would conceive;—he is here called Yama (I.66.4 *jārāḥ kanīnām pātir-jāinām*; cf. I.152. 4). The mention of Yama is interesting as he is the cosmic seeder as presented here, like Vāyu. This also indicates that the Yama in the notorious Yama-Yami hymn (X.10) is not, after all a real brother. Nor is his female-twin his real sister. With the cosmic fire, in the aspect of Yama, the concept seems to be of the supra-mortal husband, who is sure to bestow fructified womanhood. The image gets, seemingly awkward when Pūṣan is said to be the *jāra* of the sister and the husband of the mother (VI. 55, 4: ; 5). The image of the “sister’s paramour” is seen in the case of Agni, who as a *jāra* is said to follow his sister, the Dawn (X.3.3.). and though this *svasṛ* is *Svayam-sārīnī*, (etymologically, as Sāyaṇa explains) there is no doubt about the seer’s intentional word-play !

We have referred to the concept of the lord of the cosmic waters (females) : and also that of the *jāra* of the waters. The flight of imagination in the same direction has given one of the most exciting concepts, that of the Vena, (X. 123) who is the *jāra* of the *apsaras*, smiling with him at the highest region, *parame vyoman*. This Vena is described in various ways. He is the *śiśu*; and dwells at the confluence of the cosmic waters and the sun; he impels the waters in the cloud-cows (*prśni-garbhāḥ*). This Vena is the controller of all fluids; he is the Gandharva. Now the hymn has also some unique ideas :— Vena’s dwelling place is called *Yamasya yoni* (v.6); he is also the messenger of Varuṇa, thus using the already accepted association of Varuṇa with the waters, (RV. VIII, 69.12; IX 90.2;

also 1. 161.14). And he is the *jāra* of the smiling *apsaras* as we have noted above. With the conspicuous surroundings of the mid-region or the cosmic waters, this Vena is to be the male counterpart of the smiling *apsaras*; i.e. he is the mid-region fire, in one aspect; and, in the other, he is the solar fire that controls the sucked up waters that reside in the orb, which is *Yamasya yoni*; for it is here that the waters are controlled (\sqrt{yam} "to control"). In Vena, then, we have the mixture of the concepts of Yama and the sun, both being associated with waters. The sun is believed to be the receptacle of waters (1.23, 17; *Taitt. Ār.* 1.8.1); and he is the *apām garbha* (1. 164. 52). Yama in this context is not the god of death. He has to be compared with the Yama of the Yama-Yamī hymn, and with the Yama who is the *jāra* of the virgins (noted already). It is interesting to note that this couple of the *apsaras* and the Gandharva actually forms the background of the sex-language in the Yama-Yamī hymn.

We could note how the primary relationship between the Father and the Mother now changes to that between the *Gandharva* and the *Apsaras*. This couple is a later addition to the Vedic sex-imagery (barring a single reference to the *apsaras* in the seventh book, these two rarely occur in the family-books). But having been introduced, they dominated the field with the notion of sexual freedom. Their original advent was, however, in the context of the cosmic waters. *Urvaśī*, the *apsaras*, is said to be *apyā* (X. 95. 10) : the *apsaras* in the Yama-hymn is *apyā*, and we have one more place where the *Gandharva* has the *Gandharvī*, who is *apyā yoṣaṇā* (X. 11. 2). The concept of the *Gandharva*, controlling cosmic waters reaches a unique height when it is said that he is the supreme being whence flow all waters, and is considered as the *Āditya*, (RV I. 22. 14; IX. 85.12; X.123.6.). The sun (*Āditya*), as we have seen, is already the *apām garbha*, and is the Yama in his aspect of the *jāra* of all womanhood. The *Gandharva*, who is the *Āditya*, is only another aspect of the sun, controlling all sucked up waters in his orb (*Yamasya yoni*). The pattern that has developed might be put in the following diagram—



The concept of the *Gandharva* touches also Soma; and he is said to be *apām gandharva*, (IX. 86.36); he is protected by the *Gandharva* (IX. 83.4), the idea that developed into the *Somā-haraṇa* legend later on.⁴ *Gandharva* directly gets connected with the waters on the one hand, and, on the other, with the sun; for the waters see the *Gandharva*, and Indra sees the ends of the sun-orb around the waters (X. 139, 4; 5; 6). It will be seen that the *Gandharva* and the *Apsarases*, before becoming mythical personae, were the aspect of the sun and the solar waters; and the sun and the solar waters were the male and the females. As a reflected image, the *Gandharva* became the lord of the mid-region waters while the *Apsarases* the mid-region-females. It is in this later image that the seer speaks (X. 11. 2) of the “singing” (or “roaring”) *Gandharva* and the *apyā yoṣaṇā* (*Apsaras*), suggesting the thunder of the waterful cloud. In later mythology they became mythical singers!

What has been said up to now will show how the sex-symbolism has had a close association with the gain of rain, the parties having the sphere of the cosmic waters to act. In a curious, but not unexpected phase, this motif of sex and the release of waters gets associated with fight. The fight, however, is not the usual one with *Vṛtra* standing against Indra. Here the enemies of Indra are said to place forward their “women.” *Kuyava* has two women that bathe in “milk” (1. 104. 3 *kṣīreṇa*

snātaḥ kūyavasya yōṣe). He has also three women—Añjasī, Kuliṣ'ī and Vīrapatnī—that sustain him with water, fetching “milk” (I. 104.4 *páyo hinvāna udahir bharante*). The two *yōṣe* of Kuyava have a parallel in the *dhene* of Namuci, another enemy of Indra,⁵ who also employs women as his weapons (V. 30.9). In the case of Namuci, in the very next verse we have the favourite image of the “thundering cows” being released by the Bull (Indra) who signals them. Thus Namuci is helped by his women in withholding the cows, that would otherwise thunder (cloud-image); and Kuyava’s women take all “milk” and water for him, leaving the rest of the world devoid of it. This is why Indra shatters those devils! It is to be noted that these women are different from the cows that they keep concealed from others. Indra and the cows form one party, while the devils and their women the other. We have one more place where Indra is the Bull as against the one who causes his “women” to fight (X.27.10). The image may be put as follows :—

Indra	}	Namuci + “women” + <i>dhene</i> —control cows (I. 104. 3, 4)
	&	} Kuyava + three “women” + <i>yōṣe</i> —control ‘milk-water’ (V. 30.9.)
Cows	}	One + “women” (X.27.10)

In the last case, though the cows are not mentioned in the verse proper, they are mentioned in a previous verse as wandering with their cow-herd (v. 8); and in the last stretch of the hymn there is clear reference to the water-streams advancing (vv. 21-24). In the last image the one who wants to fight Indra with his “women” is, obviously, conceptually, the same as Namuci or Kuyava. Now the point is, who are these women, that steal the cows or hold all waters and the nourishing fluids (milk)? The reply to this question is suggested by Dīrghatamas in his famous hymn “*Asya Vāmasya*”, in an apparent riddle, when he says “women they be; them do the people call men !” (I.164.16). The whole hymn is a combination of various images and here the image is of something that can be both the male and the female principle. The reference to the sun in an earlier verse (v. 14), and to the *suparṇāḥ* later (v. 21), and the whole set of images, leave no doubt that here we have the description

of the sun; and, as Sayana rightly remarks, the "women" are the sun-rays. The hymn closes with the suggested reference to the sun being called *apām-garbha* (v. 52). Now his rays are generally referred to as *suparna* (masculine); but, the seer says that they are really women! What he says can be corroborated from the fact that the main seven rays of the sun are actually called "mares, the seven sisters" (VII. 66. 15 *saptá svásārah. . . haritah*; cf. also—60. 3; V. 29.5). The reason why the rays are called "women" appears to be, as Sāyana suggests, that they hold the waters in themselves. (Sāyana—*yoṣid-vad udaka-rūpa-garbha-dhāraṇāt stritvam eṣām rāsmiṇām aviṣṭa-liṅgatvāt strī-liṅgatā*). These "women" and those in the case of Namuci and Kuyava, or the one who fights Indra are the same. As they suck up all moistures, they appear hostile; and the one who controls them also turns hostile to mankind. He is the sun of the drought season, the terrible aspect of the benevolent normal sun. It is he who is now "Kuyava" and "Na-muci", indicating the non-release of the streams. Indra fights him, and smashes his "women." It will be good to note that the rays of the sun are called *ghṛtācī* (VII. 60.3; *ghṛta* is both water and ghee); and the waters being considered females, as has been amply observed above, the waters in the rays have made them women. Indra fights the oppressive sun and releases the waters from the clutches of these "women". The RV presents, at other places, the antagonism between Indra and the sun (IV. 17. 14; 28. 2; V. 29. 10; 31, 3 etc.).

From what has been detailed above it will be clear that to the Vedic people the cosmos was filled with two main elements—male and the female.⁶ The male principle was that of Fire, distributed in the three worlds; and corresponding to it was the element of the water that gets impregnated by the former. Here the Vedic seers had developed the concept of the cosmic *garbha*, which causes to rain the divine nourishing fluids on the earth. Again the earth is the female that receives this fluid and gets pregnant. This was the usual and the holy cosmic drama. The stage of the Vedic people presented in the RV is that of a settled pastoral people, depending on the "pregnancy" of the Earth Mother, caused by the *retas* of the Father, which was rain. They saw the whole universe arranged in

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holy sex-coupling. In fact that was the key to all production and the germination of rain. To activate the cosmic sex when the people needed, or to ensure that the cosmic couples would not fail them, they devised rituals in which sex was imitated in action or as an oral spell. It is here that cosmo-sexualism generated sacra-sexualism (if we were to put this way). The motif is seen in many hymns of the RV. A careful and a comparative study shows a common plan, according to which, with the ritual background being clear, the so-called divinities appear to be mortals turned divine to enact the holy sex, with seemingly awkward sex-relations, to ensure the weal of the society. The points common about the hymns are, roughly: (i) Ritual-indications; (ii) Sex-partners; (iii) Husband and Ritual-husband; (iv) Sex-indications; and (v) Result. Let us examine with a few examples:—

Hymn : X.61, that of Nābhānediṣṭha.

Ritual Indications

The hymn starts with the idea of the ritual called *Raudra brahma*, where the “performing parents” are the most important parties to the ritual. Seven priests are mentioned as performing the ritual, the high priest being Cyavāna. Cyavāna is said to have surrounded the altar with various things; and, in a symbolic expression, he is said to have sprinkled the “semen” which is compared with the “stream of water” (vv. 1-2 *kṣódo ná réta itá ūti siñcat*).

The Aśvins are invoked to arrive at the sacrifice and to accept the offerings (v.4 *be, aśvinā huve vām, vītám me yajñám*). The actions are being performed on the plane of the sacrifice, which is called *sukṛtasya yoni*; and the whole performance is said to be the *ṛtayukti* (v.10), which, in the tradition, is understood as the contrivance for water (*ṛta*) and also a sacrificial contrivance. This would leave no doubt that the ritual was for the gain of the heavenly fluid, the rains !

Sex-partners and sexual Indication

We have noted that the hymn, in the very opening verses, refers to the "performing parents" (*krāṇá pitārā*); but there is no indication of any actual sex-act. The "parents" were only for the purpose, and duration, of the ritual, and they represented the heaven and the earth, on the basis of a well-set plan of beliefs. But, the "parents" are represented as Father and Daughter (The implication of the relationship and symbolism in it has been discussed in a further chapter). The relationship, hence, is shown as incestuous (v. 6 *kāmam kṛṇvāné pitāri yuvatyām, manānág réto jahatur vi-yántā*).

The Father-Daughter relationship has, obviously, been presented with a purpose; for, the atmosphere of a ritual has a purpose, as we have noted above. That the Daughter is the earth is clear enough from the expression "Where the Father united with his daughter, Earth" (v.7 *pitā yát svām duhitāram adhi-ṣkán kṣmayā sañjagmāno ni ṣiñcat*).

The Father and the Daughter cannot be said to indicate an actual social relationship; and hence, there cannot be any speck of doubt about the relationship being restricted to the holy plane of the sacrifice. The Father here, without doubt, stands for Parjanya (cf. V. 83,6 *apó ni ṣiñcānn ásurah pitā naḥ*); and the Daughter is clearly the earth, which image is obvious in the expression in *kṣmayā sañjagmānaḥ* (uniting with the earth). Thus, here we have the ancient couple; but we very well see that the terminology used is suggestive of incest. Here comes the oft followed maxim of *parokṣa-priyatva* (fondness for *supra visualism*, if we coin a term), which, in plane terms, means symbolic expressionism. The seer, in cases, purposefully coins images that are out of the way, or are apparently unagreeable, the reason may be to stress an etymological explanation (as in Indhra-Indra) or a ritual necessity. It has been noted that in the case of sexual symbolism the reason for this methodology is the gain of rain and prosperity, on the basis of the belief that rain is a sex-act between the Great Parents (Heaven and Earth). This gets transferred to ritual-sex; and in this particular case, Cyavāna figures in a later legend as a curious sage in the wilderness to whom the king Śaryāti offers his daughter Sukanyā

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(*Śat. Br.* IV. 1.5.1 ff; *Jai. Br.* III. 120-128). Though the tale is a considerably changed account, there can be no doubt that the germ of the later account is in this passage of the RV. The whole picture that we get, hence, is that of ritual-sex, or offering of a girl to the priest at the sacrifice for the gain of rain. The point has to be compared with such customs where a mare and a girl are offered to the high priest⁷, or with such passages that inform of the offering of a young wife to the sage Kakṣivānt (RV 1.51.13) on the one hand, and, on the other, with those that speak of the sexual customs in the Mahāvratā.⁸

Result :

The result is what was desired. It is indicated by the words "milk of the cow sabardughā" (vv.11, 17, 19 *sabardūghāyāḥ pāya usriyāyāḥ* ; cf *sabardūm dhenūm duhādhyai* and *ṛtāsya dhenūr aduhaj jāyamānā* respectively) which is rain in the well set symbolism of the Rgvedic seers. The *ṛtayukti* was to this end; and this *ṛta-yukti* included sex at the sacrificial ritual. Other indications to the same effect are: "desirous of milking the (cows) that did not ooze out" (v. 10 *acyutā duduḥṣan*), "hastening the *retas* like desired wealth" (v.11 *rādhó na réta ṛtām it turāyan*), "the valliant one knew the consealed wealth of Śuṣṇa" (v.13 *vi śuṣṇasya sám-grathitam anarvā vidát*), all of which indicate the rain-gain; and the seer-priest Nābhānediṣṭha is himself said to be *deva-vān* (v.26), who is to advance along with the path of the "milk of the cow" (*Ibid, nūnām vy,ānhvaiti pāyasa usriyāyāḥ*). The epithet of the wonder-working seer-priest here is *deva vān*, which may be compared with the name of the sacrificer brother of Śantanu ; it is Devāpi (*deva-āpi*), who actually brings rain (RV X. 98.5 *devāpirdeva-sumatim cikitvān ; sa úttarasmād ádharam samudrām apó divyā asṛjad varṣyāabhī*). The word *deva*, thus, means rain in both the contexts (actually the hymn of Devāpi is termed "*varṣa-kāma-sūkta*", see *Nir.II.10*). In the hymn we have been discussing, it appears, the seer Nābhānediṣṭha is trying to work on the same lines as the seer Cyavāna, who must be of pretty ancient fame, and who, probably, used the sex-charm for the gain of rain. It is this tradition of Cyavāna that is recorded by the later Vedic texts that we have noted. The hymn

o Nābhānediṣṭha we have referred to is acclaimed as a sex-hymn; and the Vedic tradition is very clear on this point when it says, "The Nābhānediṣṭha is, indeed, the semen" (*Ai. Br. V. 14 reto vai nābhānediṣṭhaḥ* ; also cf. *Pañc. Br. XX.9.4ff* ; *Tait. Sam. III.1.9.4-6*) ; and it was necessary to recite this hymn, along with that of Vṛṣākapi, to cause the new sacrificial birth of the sacrificer (*Ai. Br. V.15*). The recitation of these hymns was also for the gain of cattle and prosperity (*Ibid*). with this now we come to the hymn of Vṛṣākapi.

Hymn : Vṛṣākapi. X.86

This has been supposed to be a greatly problematic hymn, and various interpretations have been suggested : however, we are not concerned with them in this study. we shall see how the hymn answers the points of analysis noted by us at the start of this aspect of study in the present chapter.

Ritual indications

We have the words *samhotra*, *samana* and *vedhā ṛtasya*. Thus, it said, "Formerly the gentle lady went to the *samhotra* and the *samana* (v.10)," where the words noted suggest the sacrificial rite. There is also the mention of the offering ; but the offering is rather interestingly mentioned. It is called *ápyam haviḥ*, that is said to go to the gods (v.12) *yásyedám ápyam haviḥ priyám devéṣu gáčhati*), which suggest that the offering is for gaining rain (cf. Agni called *ápyah* at I. 145.5 ; *ápyam apsú bhāgám* at II.38.7; *ápyā yōṣā*, who is the *Apsaras* at X.10.4 and at X.11.2; and *Urvasī* is *ápyā*, when she is compared to the lightning, or there the word *ápyā* may be construed with *kāmyāni*, "desires for "water"; at III.56.5 the rivers are called *ápyāḥ* ; in all these places the word *ápya* has the connotation of "relating to water"). This *havis* is said to be something wonderful (v.13 *kācit-karam*), conducive to produce something unique. As in the Horse-sacrifice it was customary to kill a beast to lead the horse to the dwelling of the gods (I.162.3 *eṣá chāgaḥ puró áśvena vājinā pūṣṇó bhāgó nīyate viśvādevyah*) at the Ṛgvedic times (and the custom continued further, with the difference that in the place of the goat a

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dog came), so here in the case of the virile monkey (Vṛṣākapi) a beast is killed X,86. v.18 *ayám indra vṛṣākapiḥ párasvantam hatám vidat*). Also, as in the case of the horse (in the Horse-sacrifice) all things associated with his sacrifice are desired to go with him to the divine abode (I.162.8,9,13-14 where the refrain is *tā te ápi devéṣv' astu*) so is the case with Vṛṣākapi (X.86.18). Especially to be marked are the knife, the cooking-pan, the basket and the ordinary pan (for the horse *mānsa-pacani, ukhā, caru* at I.163.13; for Vṛṣākapi cf. (v.18 *asim sūnām navam carum*). As the horse was sacrificed, so was Vṛṣākapi (v.18 may he get the *edhasya ana ācitam* which is the "piled up fire"); further Vṛṣākapi was invoked to arrive at the next occasion (v.21 *punar ehi vṛṣākape*), may be, after a year for the fresh ritual, that was an yearly occurrence.

Sex-partners and Sexual indications

The motif of sex is very prominent in this hymn; and, this is exactly the point that has puzzled the scholars. The hymn starts with the note that Indra is not potent. Vṛṣākapi and Indraṇī are presented indulging in a highly sexual dialogue (all of which are not necessary to mention here; but see vv 6 *su-bhasátarā su-yāśu-tarā*; v.7 *bhasánme*). The culmination of these dialogues is to be seen where actual coitus-position is described :

"Not he (Indra) is the potent lord whose *membrum virile* dangles between his thighs. He (Vṛṣākapi), indeed, is the lord (potent for sex) whose hairy one (*romaśam*) waxes as he takes the position" (v.16)

"Not he be the lord (potent for sex) whose hairy one waxes as he takes the position. He, indeed, is the lord (potent for sex) whose organ dangles between his thighs" (v.17).

Read in relation to the condition of Indra as the feeble one, as is shown in the very first verse, these two verses indicate the reversal of potency. This reversal makes Indra the potent lord, after drinking a potion from the body of Vṛṣākapi, who is ritually killed (cf. the speech of Indra after drinking the potion at v.19 esp. *pibāmi pākasútvanah*); and he who now lies with his mem-

ber dangling, is Vṛṣākāpi-the potent lord earstwhile ! After this he is offered into the fire, and a potion is prepared from his flesh.⁹ As in the Horse-sacrifice the woman (queen) and the horse represent the divine couple (cf. *krāṇā pitarā* we have referred to from the Nābhānediṣṭha hymn), so here Vṛṣākāpi and the female ritual-partner, called Indrāṇī, are mortals turned divine for the ritual. Indra here is on par with the king or the sacrificing clan-chief; and he too is not a person from the high heavens. He is a ritual-man operating on the plane of the ritual (cf. *sukṛtasya yonau*.) This ritual was long lost; and hence, it became obscure. But the mention of the *apyam havis* indicates that it was for the gain of rain. There is also another point. The reversal of the status of the impotent 'Indra' and the potent Vṛṣākāpi suggests that this ritual had another aspect; and this was the restoring of the potency of the husband (or ensuring it.) It was a case of ritually sacrificing a virile monkey and partaking its essence for imbibing his virility. In later times; it is yet preserved as a sex-charm in the Vedic ritual-tradition. This is what the *Rgvidhāna* has to say in this respect : "The hymn of the dialogue with Indrāṇī is to be employed at the bath of a woman who is sterile and who is prone to go astray due to her husband's impotence; in her case the two verses "not he be the potent . . ." etc. (i.e. the verses noted above from this hymn)" are to be recited. According to some, this rite is also enjoined in the case of the restoration of virility (*Rgvidhāna* III. 119-127). The 'paddhati' (com. of Keśava) on the *Kauśikasūtra* refers to a special type of Brāhmaṇas called Vṛṣākāpi (on 76.19) who cause the bride recite solar verses; *Vṛṣākāpi-brāhmanāḥ sūryam paṭhanti*).

Another detail in this connection is that a woman of the sort noted above was to be given bath with the verses called technically *āhanasyāḥ*, as well as the two verses from the hymn of Vṛṣākāpi noted above (*Ibid* v.126 *snāpayed āhanasyābhiḥ . . . sūktād upoddhared enām na seṣe iti dvyṛcam*). This reference to the *āhanasyā* verses is another point which shows the similarity of this ritual with that of the Horse-sacrifice; for the *āhanasyā* verses were also recited at the latter according to one tradition (cf. *Gopatha Br.* V.16; also *Ai. Br.* VI.36, *pavitram vai dadhikrā, idam vā ayam vy' āhanasyām vācam avādīt tad devaḥ pavitreṇa punīte*; the *āhana-* *syā* mantras are RV khila V.22; for their use at the

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Horse-sacrifice, *Śāṅk. Śr. S. XVI.4*; etc.). From the comparison between the ritual of Vṛṣākapi and that of the Horse-sacrifice it appears pretty sure that the former fell out of practice and was lost in the very early Vedic period, though its memory, as an effective charm for the gain of potency and weal never died out. The original ritual then gave place to the oral charm. In the original ritual it was necessary to procure a virile monkey and his female mate as is clear from the prayer to the Vṛṣākapyāi (X.86.13.).

Result

The discussion above has already in it the indications of the motif and result in the case of this ritual. The last verse, however clearly indicates that the main purpose was the fructification of the land; for it refers to Parśu Mānavī giving birth to twenty-one at a time (v.21 *párśur ha nāma mānavī sākām sasūva vlmśatim*) Parśu Mānavī is a symbolic expression for the altar on the one hand, and on the other for the earth. The female partner Indrāṇī is clearly a symbol for the land to be fructified; for, elsewhere Indrāṇī is said to be very specious, with her hips thirty *yojanas* in measure and having the steady Indra on her vulva (*Mait. Sam. III. 8.4; Kāṭhaka Sam. VIII. 17.62*). For this type of Indrāṇī, represented by the ritual woman, the rainer Indra has to be potent; and this is done by the *apyam havis*.

We now take up a hymn where the sex-partners are not human or clearly animate. But the human is significant in the fact that the last verse of it had been traditionally used in the Horse-sacrifice immediately after the verses known as the *āhanasyā*.

Hymn : *With the ploughing image* (misunderstood as indicating a Soma-ritual) X.101 :

Ritual-indications

The hymn starts with invocations to various gods, and Agni is being ordered to be kindled (*sam agnim indhvam*) ; the sacrifice

is desired to be led to the eastern direction in a traditional expression indicative of success (*prāñcam yajñám práñayatā sakhāyaḥ* vv1-2). Further on the gods are invoked to bless the sacrificial prayers (v.9 *a vo dhiyam yajñīyām varta útáye dévā devīm yajatām yajñīyām iha*).

Sex-partners and Sexual indications

Here the language of sex is relating to the ploughable field and the plough, or the seeds to be sown (v.3 *yunákta sirā vi yugā tanudhvam, kṛté yonau vapatehá bījam*). Further we have a typical sexual image of a male moving in between two of his wives transferred to the act of ploughing; this is when the bull is said to be moving in between the two yoke-poles and is described as “the one having two wives” (v.11 *ubhé dhúrau váhnir āpibdamāno, antár yóneva carati dvijāñḥ*). The last verse is a famous one and is used at various rituals suggestive of sexual potency and even in the marriage-ritual according to the tradition. The verse is : “Lift, O men ! lift up the *membrum virile*, that is the bestower of satisfaction; move it, dig up for the gain of wealth” (v.12 *káṛṇ naraḥ ka-prthám úd dādḥātana, codáyata khudáta vāja-sātaye*). This verse is attached to the *āhanasyā* verses, the implication of which we have already noted (RV khila v.22. 11 see also AV XX. 137.2). The expression *khudata* here may be compared with *mahataḥ sādhu khodanam* which comes in the context of the Mahānagnī and the Mahānagna, a unique couple indicative of the earth and the sun, or the ritual-woman and the Horse at the Horse-sacrifice (RV Khila v.22.5-10; *mahataḥ sādhu khodanam* is at v-10, and indicates the sexual dig of the divine horse). The use of this verse, with others indicative of ploughing at the marriage-rites may be seen from the Samskāra-paddhati (Anandashram, Poona, 1924, P. 130). This also explains the old belief that the woman and the field to be ploughed were thought to be on par, and also supports the fact that the ritual of marriage has indications of the ploughing rites.

Result

The use of some of the verses in rituals mentioned above would give the idea of the result. The expectation was that these would help weal and prosperity, which was the aim of the Horse-sacrifice, and would give progeny, which is the aim of marriage. The hymn has a mention of the fructification of the land as the motive, as is clear in the expression, "the thousand-streamed great Cow", which uses the well known symbol for the earth (v.9 *sahásra dhārā páyasā mahī gauh*).¹⁰

We take up another hymn now, that of Mudgala, which had been a problem and was taken to record a real fight. According to Bloomfield the hymn has a mythological bearing, and Keith endorses this view when he criticizes the historical interpretation of Pargiter. All this discussion does not form a part of this present study (and I have presented a fuller study of this hymn elsewhere; cf. *Vedic Concept of 'Field' . .*). Sticking to the points on which the earlier hymn have been analysed, we give below the nature of the motifs that it has.

Hymn : Mudgala-Mudgalānī (X.102)

Ritual-indications

Unlike the hymns noted above this hymn does not have any word that could at the outset suggest any sacrificial context. At no verse do we have any mention whatsoever of *yajña* or *kratu*; nor do we have the familiar words such as *samana*, *samhotra* or the like. On the contrary the hymn opens with the image of the *āji* and the improvised chariot (*rā'ham mithūkr'tam*), that is desired to be protected by Indra. This was the point which gave rise to the battle-theory as regards this riddlehymn. But if we view the whole hymn closely, it becomes clear that the whole image is that of a ritual. At the outset, rather out of tune with Vedic tradition, we have here the woman Mudgalānī said to become the charioteer (!). This, obviously, was used as support by the theory of battle. However, there is only one bull mentioned; and attention is focussed on this bull and

Mudgalānī. He is said to have drunk water; and the followers are said to have made a special effort to cause him to urinate, and that too in the middle of the *āji* (which is not the “battle-field”, but a ‘field’ of cultivation), whereby Mudgala is said to have gained thousandfold cattle (v.5). Another important detail is that, as the bull was made to run, his dung reached the female-driver, which does not have any meaning without the context of a charm of fertility. This has to be associated with the fact of the bull being made to urinate in the field. Both these are, hence, done on purpose, which is answered in the mention of the gain of cattle by Mudgala. The bull is said to be protected by Indra (v.7 *Indra ūd āvat pátim ághnyānām*), and his description as “the lord of the cows” (*patim aghnyānām*) fits, more than anything else, with the gain of cattle noted earlier. Just in the next verse there is the mention of the bull touching the cows (v. 8 *gāḥ paspaśānāḥ*), which, like the urination of the bull (purposefully done cf. v.5 *ámehayan vrsabhám madhya ājéḥ*), sounds like a purposeful act—and a ritual. Further, there is the mention of a log of wood yoked with the one bull: it is said to lie at the middle of the boundary (v. 9 *kāṣṭhāyā mádhya drughanám śáyānam*). There is no mention whatsoever that it was thrown against the enemy (earthly or cosmic or mythological). It is said that by this act, Mudgala gained thousands of cattle, as in the former verse (v.5 noted above; here, at v.9 we have the same expression, *śatavatsahasram gāvām múdgalah... jigāya*). These acts done on purpose clearly show that they formed part of a ritual for the gain of cattle. The whole is referred to as “auspicious gain” (v. 11 *sumāṅgálam sātám*). The bull and the log of wood yoked along with it are further contrasted. The former is given water to drink, while the other is simply placed on the boundary; and nobody is said to give it either water or grass (v. 10 *nāsmāi trīnam ná-údakam ā bharanti*). This shows that even the non-offering of water and grass to the log is a purposeful detail: and it has the same importance as the placing of it at the boundary. Both are for the gain of cattle. There is also a reference to the magical device (*kūṭa*) for the nullification of the evil forces (v.4).

Sex-partners and Sexual indications

The partners are Mudgala and Mudgalānī; but sex is not in relation to them. Actually there is no sex of the humans here, nor of humans turned divine on the plane of the ritual. But, of the human sex there is a very important indication, "The forsaken wife got, as if, the sham-husband (v.11 *pativdiam ānaḥ*); cf. Śāyaṇa, *patiś ca asau vidyaś ca*), she the one, now, getting fat (*pīpyānā*); he, as if, sprinkling with the water-apparatus (*kūca-kreneva siñcān*).” The image is, without doubt, sexual; but the actual parties are the bull that urinated in the field, which got fattened (with produce). The water-apparatus in the case of the field is in view of the bull in the actual ritual: but, it is ushered in to gain the bigger shower of rain, that is the *retas* of the cosmic Bull. The touch of the bull to the cows is another aspect of the same ritual, for their multiplication. The cosmo-sexual activity of the gain of the generative fluid from the Great Father by the Father-mother is enacted on the plane of ritual; and the party is zoomorphic, as is the case with the horse or the virile monkey. The other party, the female, is Mudgalānī, who is also called Indrasenā (v.2); and Indrasenā is one of the symbolic names used for the earth, which is called Indrānī (*Mait. Sam.* III.8.4; IV.12.1; *Tait. Br.* II.4.2.8 *senā ha nāma pṛthivī dhanāñjayā—indrānī devī* etc.). Hence, there remains no doubt that Mudgalānī stands for the earth to be fructified. May be, she was actually represented by a ritual-woman, specially employed for the ritual, like the woman (queen in later rituals) at the horse-sacrifice. However, she is out of the actual sex-act; and she is employed only to drive the bull yoking him to the chariot (!) which is also not a real one (*mithūkr̥tam* at v.1), but the ritual-plough so called !

Result

As already noted in the discussion in the lines above, this ritual was for the gain of multitudes of cattle and the rain-showers that would fructify the field. There is also another aspect. The yoking of the log of wood and its placement at the

boundary, probably of the village, was for the warding off the evil (v.10 *āre aghā*), which would thwart the desired gain. This point is seen also in the hymn of Vṛṣākapi, who he is said to be *pulvagha* (*pulu+agha*) and *janayopana* (X.86.22). In Vṛṣākapi there is 'the double motif, of the warder of the sin that would thwart fertility and also of the sexual-sacrifice for fructification. The latter is present in the Horse-sacrifice, the former in the log of wood at the hymn of Mudgala.¹¹

Hymn : Apālā (VIII.91)

Ritual-indications

Here again we do not have the usual reference to *yajña* etc. but if we judge from the importance of later ritual, we could not deny that the hymn was for ritual-purposes. The last verse of this hymn (v.7) has a long ritual tradition; and it has been used at the rite of marriage for the lustration of the bride (*Mānava Gr.* S.I.8.11; *Āpastambīya Mantra* Br. I.1.9; Laugākṣi-Gr.S 25-8). The earliest occurrence of this verse, outside RV, is at the AV (XIV.1.41), where also the context of marriage is clear. Another point is that at the AV there is mention of the bringing of water for the lustration of the bride, which exactly tallies with the first verse of this hymn (AV loc. cit.v.39 *vyukṣatkrūram ud aṅcantv, āpa āsyai brāhmanāḥ snapanīr harantu*; and the present hymn v.1 *kanyā vār avayati*, where the only difference is that the bride herself brings the water; this custom has many parallels which I have discussed in the other study, *Vedic Concept . . .*). Other references to ritual are in the fact that Indra is invoked to arrive and is offered *karambha* with *dhānā* and *apūpa*, which indicates a worship of Indra associated with the marriage-ritual or one subsequent to it (v.2). This detail tallies with the later ritual of *Indrāṇī-karma* at the marriage-ritual, where the bride becomes the aspect of *Indrāṇī*, the earth. The hymn itself strikes an identification between the ploughable field and the bride, both of which are placed on par in the act of fructification. This hymn, thus presents a parallelism between the act of fructification of the field by the cosmic fluid (Indra-sent rain) and of the bride through the offerings to Indra (vv.5 and 6, which we shall

quote under the next point).

Sex-partners and sexual indications

There are no partners as such who could be compared with those in the Horse-sacrifice or the ritual of Vṛṣākapi. But the indications of sex could be seen from the following invocations to Indra : "These three places do thou cause to grow, O Indra ! . . . the 'head of the stretched one' (*śiras tatasya*, indicating the organ of the husband, and not the bald head of the actual father of Apālā, as others say; see *Vedic Concept.* . . .), the 'field' (*urvarā*) and the womb of mine (cf. *idam ma upodare*) (v.5). And this field (*urvarā*), this body of mine (*tanvam mama*), and, indeed, the *śiras tatasya*" (v.6).

Result

Happy married life with sexual potency both in the bride and the bride-groom. The AV gives more details wherein Aśvins are invoked to sprinkle the bride with the heavenly generative fluid by which they sprinkled the genitals of Mahānagnī (*ghanī*); and further the bride is asked to be dear to her in-laws (op. cit. v. 36 ff). With the last verse in this hymn, the bride is washed by a stream of water that is let through the hole of a chariot-wheel, a yoke-wheel and through the hole of the wheel of a cart. While this is being done, a piece of gold is attached inside the hole. The AV also refers to this piece of gold, which shows that the custom is very old. The piece of gold represents the sun, and the water that flows through the hole is the sun-water, the generative water from the creative aspect of the sun (*Savitṛ*), which is rightly believed to ensure issues for the newly married couple by aiding the fecundity of the bride.¹ This is the cosmic drama played on the ritual-plane in the case of marriage, as in the case of other sacrificial rituals.

The hymns, analysed above, will give an idea of the common motif in them. There are other hymns in the R̥gveda that can be thus analysed; and the so called riddles in them could be solved with this method of the analysis of the cosmosexual element they have.

The instances discussed above show sex in two phases :— (i) Normal, as is seen in the case of F-M=H-E, the Bull-cow, the Gandharva-Apsaras (Gandharvī), or even the malevolent one and his “women”; and (ii) the apparently abnormal one (or, rather the supra-normal one) as between the “sister-brother”, “son-mother” (Pūṣan, Agni, Yama-Yamī) etc. There is also the concept of the general seeder (Yama—Cosmic Fire). We have noted earlier, and it has to be recalled as a firm belief, that these relationships suggest a word-play. In all cases the Vedic seer poses the pairs that appear awkward; but not so, etymologically. This he does on the typical conception of such words as *svast*, *pitṛ* etc. which indicate the cosmic elements and not humans. But, there is no doubt that he throws indications of an awkward sex-relationship. This he does on the belief that such an awkward-seeming sex-relationship would produce the desired result; for it is so only on the plane of the sacrifice, which is the *sukṛtasya yoni* or the *ṛtasya yoni*. Here he acts religiously on the principle that the humans or mortals, acting on the plane of the sacrifice are supra-mortals—nay, they are divine, acting for the good of humanity, or for a particular objective desired by the sacrificer or the seer-priest. This mode of thinking and behaviour is illustrated by the maxim *parokṣa-prjyā hi devāḥ* (the gods are fond of the un-common or supra-visual), which, in other words, means that the divines act by symbolism.

With the establishment of the sacrificial institution, the seer-priest or later the priest, came to be considered divine (*Śat.Br.II.2.4.6; Gopatha Br II.16.*) He became known as the *vipra* (cf. Nābhānediṣṭha, X.61.16, 23,24) and was equal to the very gods. Among the gifts of the sacrifices it became a custom to offer to the high priest a daughter or a maiden (I.126.3; VIII.46.33). The gift of *Vṛcayā* by the *Aśvins* to *Kakṣivant* (I 51.13) seems to be of this sort; and, in the sexual dialogue between one *Romaśā*, said to be the young wife of king *Bhāvayavya*, and the king (I.126.6;7) the probability is of the parties being a woman symbolically called *Romaśā*, “hairy”, to suggest her state of puberty and the seer-priest *Kakṣivant* himself participating in a sexual spell. The seer of the whole hymn, except for these last two verses is *Kakṣivant*; and this point has to be noted. At the sacrifice to *Apām-napāt* it

was customary to give away a maiden and a mare to the high priest as noted earlier. In all such gifts the idea seems to be to sexually pacify the priest, the act being believed to be conducive to the general good of the sacrificer on the lines we discussed above. From this point of view the priest becomes the divine ritual-husband and, if he actually marries the maiden, he becomes her rightful and regular husband. This actually gets to be the source of one of the various forms of marriage, called *daiva*. (Monu. III.28) The point to be noted is that of the Ritual-husband, or of the divine seeder. In the other three types of marriage accepted to be of a higher status (Brāhma, Ārṣa and Prājāpatya) also this motif is seen, in the fact that the bride is believed to have the Gandharva, Agni and Soma for her husband, prior to her becoming the wife of her mortal husband (X.85.40). The mortal marriage is, again, not only an earthly affair; for the whole back-stage is set with the marriage of Sūryā and Soma, the divine bride and bride-groom. Again the earthly marriage is performed on the plane of the sacrifice, thus connecting the mortal act with the divine plane through the medium of ritual. Moreover the bride has to be blessed by the sun-fluid, indicating the sun as the divine seeder. This is done by letting fall on the head of the bride, water from the hole of a yoke or of the chariot-wheel, to the inside of which a piece of gold is tied. This hole and the piece represent the sun; and the water is the sun-fluid by which the bride is lustrated. The sun here comes as the cosmic seeder prior to the mortal husband taking her for wife. This seeding is done against the background of sacrifice in the marriage-ritual, in the presence of the fire. This is the basis of all *samskāra-s*. which, hence, become divine though on the earthly plane.

Before we close the chapter it is necessary to touch the rite of the Horse-sacrifice, which has been the mark of great glory for prominent kings in ancient India. It is not necessary to fully dwell on the various aspects of the sacrifice in this study (as I have already discussed it in the book mentioned before in these pages); but the part that has reference to sex and fertility would serve the point of our present discussion. It is to be noted that the sacrificial killing of the horse and his being offered into the sacrificial fire is already the subject of two hymns in the RV (I. 162; 163); however, sex is not present in these hymns. The first of

the two hymns starts with the ritual-detail of the goat being killed as a fore-sacrifice to show to the horse the abode of Indra and Pūṣan (I.162.vv. 2-4). Then there is an indication of the purpose of sacrifice when the river-beds and the water-courses are desired to be filled as a result of this sacrifice (v. 5 *téna yaj-ñéna sv'árakṛtena sv' iṣṭéna vakṣānā á pṛnadhvam*; for the last part of the expression cf. III.32.12, which is Viśvāmitra's address to the rivers). Then, practically up to the end of the hymn, follows the allusion to the offering of the parts of the horse's body into the fire, and to the various utensils and the instrument for the cutting and offering of the parts; they are desired to accompany the horse to the abode of the gods, as we have referred to earlier while discussing the ritual of Vṛṣākapi. Then the horse is told that he is not actually going to die, though he is immolated for the sacrifice, that he is certainly going to the abode of the gods (v.21 *ná vá u etán mriyase ná riṣyasi, devān id eṣi pathibhiḥ sú-gebhiḥ*). There is a point that bears close similarity to the ritual of Vṛṣākapi. The horse is told that he is to be taken to the new divine abode in a chariot, which is drawn by spotted (or speckled) golden mares (*hárī te yūñjā pṛ'ṣatī abhūtām*). He is also said to be co-yoked with the ass (*úpāsthād vājī dhuri rāsabhasya*). This exactly tallies with the chariot for Vṛṣākapi, which is described as the chariot of fire (X.86.18 *édhasya ána ācitam*). The golden mares for the horse are obviously the flames of the sacrificial fire. The latter detail, that of the co-yoking with the ass, forms part of the ritual of the building of the Fire-altar (Agnicayana), where the mud for preparing the altar and the layers is to be fetched in a cart to which a horse and an ass are yoked (*Taitt. Sam. V.1.2*). The hymn ends with the desire that the horse should bestow wealth in cattle and progeny (v.22).

The second hymn is plain and shorter than the first. It also has no reference to sex; but it describes the horse in the cosmic setting. Sexual language and the sexual ritual of the queen (or a woman) comes in the later texts (*Vāj. Śam. XX.18; Śat. Br. XIII.2.8.3 ff; Tait. Sam. VII.4.19.1 ff; Mait. Sam. III.12.20 etc.*). It is not necessary to quote here all the *mantras* recited at the ritual; it will suffice to quote only one to give an idea of the nature of the *mantras*: "Do thou (O Horse) sprinkle upon the or-

gan (of the queen): apply the lubrication, O virile One, that is happiness to women." Then there are the *mantras* that suggest the 'action'. That the ritual of the sacrifice of the horse is very ancient and wide-spread is a fact that is pretty well known. It was prevalent among the Aryans, and is also seen among the Mongolians; it formed also a part of the funeral rites in the case of the Japanese kings. Among the Mongolian Buriats, in the vicinity of Lake Baikal, in Siberia, the horse-sacrifice was performed on the 2nd of August on a sacred hill supposed to be inhabited by gods. The horse to be sacrificed was bound, thrown upon his back, and the officiating priest cut open his breast and pulled out the pulsating heart. The flesh was cooked and devoured by the worshippers, and some portion of it was offered to the manes, along with the libations of the liquor called *tarasun*, distilled from sour milk. The prayer to the horse was as follows: "Create cattle in our enclosures; under our blanket create a son; send down rains from the high heavens to us; cause much grass to grow; create so much grain that our sickle cannot raise it, and so much grass that the scythe cannot cut it."¹³ This will show that the sacrifice of the horse was performed elsewhere also for the same purpose as that in the case of the Vedic sacrifice. But sex does not seem to be associated with the horse-sacrifice at other places as is the Vedic tradition. However, in the Gaulish rite, the head-man or the king ritually mates with the mare, which is just, opposite of the Vedic rite mentioned in the later texts. The killing of the horse at a special ritual, in all the cases mentioned above, is for fertility. We have referred to the custom among the Mongolian Buriats. In ancient Rome, like the Vedic people, the horse was the emblem of the sun-god; he was also believed to be the giver of bumper crop. In a ritual associated with him, on the 15th of October every year, there was held a chariot-race. The horse to the right of the yoke of the chariot that won the race was sacrificed; his head was cut; it was adorned with loaves of bread, and was hung on the top of the king's palace.¹⁴ Among the Celtic people fire was kindled on the scull and other bones of the horse sacrificially killed; and a man wearing the scull of a horse was led through that fire. The sacrificial horse represented all domesticated animals, including cattle. Another phase of the Roman horse-sacrifice was that the blood

of the horse sacrificed on the 15th of October was collected and was kept till the next April. This blood was then mixed with that of the calves freshly killed; the mixing of the blood was done by virgins; then the mixture was offered into the fire; and through the smoke that ensued, herds of cattle and domestic animals were led.¹⁵ A faint shade of sex may be seen in the fact that the mixing of the blood was done by the virgins. But beyond that there is no suggestion. We have to remember, however, that fertility-rites are often associated with sex, actually in the original phases and orally in later phases. Their absence in the later phases does not conclusively prove their absence in the earlier phases. The probability is the other way, i.e. the presence of sex in the earlier phases, and gradual loss of sex in the later ones. The mixing of the blood of the calves by the virgins is an indication from the earlier phases of the ritual; and, in yet earlier phases, sex might be expected. Thus according to a custom among the ancient Egyptians, the Apis bull was at once the god of fertility and an aspect of Osiris. He was kept, after being selected as the god, in the temple of Osiris for twentyfive years; and if he did not die within that limit, he was ceremonially killed by being thrown in the Nile.¹⁶ According to the custom, women showed up their genital organs before him for gaining fecundity.¹⁷ Sex and sacrificial killing is, thus, closely associated with ancient fertility rites. The Vedic horse-sacrifice retained it. The non-mention of sex at the *Ṛgveda*-level of the horse-sacrifice does not indicate its absence, especially when in all the prominent later texts it forms an important part thereof. At the *Ṛgveda*-level the sacrifice of this type presents an interesting point. We have noted the close similarity between the ritual of *Vṛṣākapi* and that at the horse sacrifice, as far as the sacrificial immolation is concerned. In the case of the Horse-sacrifice sex is present in the post-*Ṛgvedic* period, while, though the ritual of *Vṛṣākapi* is lost, it is retained in the *Ṛgveda* with full sexual implications. This would indicate that the ancient Vedic people, at the time of the the *Ṛgveda*, had two separate fertility rituals : one with the virile monkey and the other with the horse. The latter one was more in keeping with the general Aryan ritual of simple immolation of the horse, while the first one was a ritual with borrowed details, in which the monkey played the part. In all such cases

the beast, or any victim for that reason, represented the divine agent. As the Apis bull was to represent the god Osiris, so was the horse to represent the sun; and so was Vṛṣākapi the Zoomorph of the sun. Where the ritual of the monkey was borrowed from, if borrowed at all, is difficult to say; but the killing of the monkey in a fertility rite obtains.¹⁸ Another such ritual which is recorded in another hymn of the R̥gveda is that of the killing of a dog for rain and the offering of his entrails into the sacrificial fire. This is the principal motif in a hymn of the seer Vāmadeva (RV IV.18). That ritual also did not remain in the later Vedic tradition; and, in all probability, it was temporarily borrowed by Vāmadeva in times of acute scarcity when other traditional rituals did not result in the gain of the much desired rain. Some of the hymns and Brahmanic rituals were worked on the same mixture of sex and sacrifice. The scheme is as follows. The divine source of rain, Parjānya or the sun or Prajāpati as he appears in later texts, is believed to be the supreme male that has the power to fructify all feminine objects on the earth. The earth itself is the female to be fructified. The fructification of all the feminine things in the earth is to be periodically ensured by ritually enacting the sex-union of an actual female (may be the woman), who could be the wife of the sacrificer or a woman stipulated for the purpose. This gave rise to the concept of ritual-pairing, or the *mithuna*. The archetype of this *mithuna* was the pair of Heaven and Earth, who were the great parents. After sex, symbolically or actually, was enacted, the male who represented the divine Seeder was immolated and offered to the sacrificial fire, to preserve his divinity; and, in certain cases, the male was replaced by another one for the next season's offering and ritual.¹⁹

We have a fuller idea of how the concept of pairing or *mithuna* developed in the later Vedic period. In the pages to follow we shall study it, prior to taking up the study of some hymns from R̥gveda that work the motif of SACRIFICE and SEX.

NOTES

1. On this point see my book *Vedic Concept of the 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, University of Bombay, Pbcn., 1971, Ch.1.
2. *Ibid*; also my book *Pastoral Symbolism from the R̥gveda*, University of Poona, Pbcn., 1970.
3. ZDMG 48, pp.541-565; Geldner, *Der R̥gveda*, III, p.319.
4. See my book *Legends in the Mahābhārata*, Delhi, 1969, Ch.I; also Jarl Charpentier, *Die Suparnasage*, Uppsala, 1920.
5. For other opinions on this point see Bloomfield, JAOS XV, pp. 143-63.
6. Bergaigne, *Vedic Religion I*, (Eng. Tr., V.G. Paranjpe), Poona, 1969, Chs. II and III.
7. Keith, *Rel. and Phil. of the Veda and the Up.*, p.351. A point not noted by Keith is, however, to be noted. This gift was to be given to another priest, who did not officiate or take part in the sacrifice, for it was a *satra*; and in a *satra* all those who take part are both priests and the sacrificers. The last gift at this *satra* was to be given in respect of Agni Kāma; see *Pañc. Br.* XXXV.10.13-22.
8. Keith *Op. cit.—loc. cit.*, *Śat.Br.* IV.6.4.22ff; *Pañc.Br.* IV.10.2.
9. *Vedic Concept of Field* . . . p. 49ff; the earlier hymn and this one has been fully studied by me in the *Vedic Concept* . . . (see note 1 above)
10. *Ibid.*, pp.83-107.
11. *Ibid.*, pp.108-122.
12. *Ibid.*, p.77 for further discussion. The expression “make all these parts (i.e. including the ‘head of the *tata*’) *romaśa*.”, indicates that the “head of the *tata*” was not “the head of the father”, as has been understood by scholars. It has to be noted that the word *romaśā* cannot be indicative of the hair on the head; *roma* means “hair on the body” (excluding that on the head); and here, it indicates “pubic hair” and nothing else.
13. Donald Mackenzie, *Indian Myth and Legend*, London, p.90.
14. *Ibid.*, p.93.
15. *Ibid.*
16. D. Mackenzie, *Egyptian Myth and Legend*, London, p.70f.
17. *Ibid.*, also James Gomes and Gertrude Gomes, *Outer Space*, New York-London, 1964, p.249f.
18. Dange, *Vedic Concept* . . . ; p.59f; Major A. Playfair, *The Garos*, London, 1909, p.92. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, London, 1913, p.208.
19. We may compare a custom recorded in the *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* (Prakṛti Khanda, 64.96-104), according to which a man is to be consecrated for the goddess Durgā, he was to be made to roam freely for one year, at the end of which another was to be like-wise consecrated, and the old one was released (as in the case of the *vṛṣotsarga*) cf.v.104 *tañ ca varṣam bhrāmayitvā, bhṛtyadvāreṇa yatnataḥ varṣāntē ca samutsrjya Durgāyai nivedayet.*

Sex-Coupling in Sacrifice (Mithunikarana)

The seer-sacrificer's visualization of the Male and the Female elements in the cosmos gradually, but steadily, found its way in the rituals, where the peculiar relationship was sought to be transferred on to the sacred plane of the sacrifice. As the institution of sacrifice got more and more intricate with elaborate ritual-details, the belief and practice in a variety of sex-coupling gained ground. The old concept of the simple *mithuna* of Heaven and Earth, or Fire and the Waters, began now to be seen in various aspects.

The word *mithuna* occurs at various places in the *Rgveda*, and indicates a unit of both the masculine and the masculine-feminine sex. It has also the simple sense of "pair", as against that of the "sex-couple". Thus the Aśvins are said to form a pair = *mithuna* (*RV* X.40.12; also X.72.2, where Saraṇyū is said to have given birth to the *mithuna*). Sūrya and Vaiśvānara are said to form the wandering *mithuna* (X.88.11 *carīṣṇū mithunāu*). The word has also the sense of the *dampatī*, indicating Heaven and Earth (I.159.4 *jāmī sāyonī mithunā sāmokasā*). The *RV* testifies to the fact that, with the sense of the "pair", the word indicates various ingredients of the sacrifice such as the *havirdhāna* (I.83.3), a trait which is seen in the sacrificial ritual-symbolism of the later times, as will be shown further. The *RV* also speaks of the three *mithunas* (IV.45.1 *mithunās trāyaḥ*) which, according to Sāyaṇa are "eating, drinking and seating" (*khādana, pāna, āsana*), and where, if we accept Sāyaṇa, a *mithuna* is to be taken as comprising three items and not two. One feels, however, that the concept is of three pairs and not three singles forming a *mithuna*. The *RV* also has a *mithuna* in the ritual-formulae called

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the *yājyā* and the *puronuvākyā* (I.173.2, if we follow Sāyaṇa). Even the days and the nights, 720 in all, are said to form together half number of *mithunas*, in a year (I.164.11). There is also the usual sense of the “couple” at certain places, indicating the husband and the wife, performing the sacrifice (V.43.15; I.131.3; 83.3 etc.).

In the context of ritual, as is seen in the Brāhmaṇas, there is constant mention of the word *mithuna*, with the meaning of “sex-partners” ; and the belief behind the employment of this word appears to be clearly that of the charm for progeny and general affluence of the sacrificer. Various things used in the sacrificial setting are coupled as *mithuna*, and the wife of the sacrificer plays a very important and a symbolic part in the scheme of *mithunīkaraṇa*. A few instances would go well to support this. The very start of the *Darśapūrṇamāsa* (New-moon and Full-moon) sacrifices presents the idea of a *mithuna*. Waters are carried for sacrificial purposes, the ritual being technically called “*praṇayana*” and the waters “*praṇītā*”. As is common with the atmosphere of the sacrifice, all things are identified with, or are said to be the aspects of, the sacrifice; and, hence, the waters also are said to be the sacrifice itself (*Śat. Br. I.1.1.12*). After being fetched, the waters are placed to the north of the *Gārhapatya* fire-place, being carried from the north of the *Āhavanīya*. The reason given is that the fire is the male and the waters the females, and that these two form a *mithuna* for procreation. The position of the waters to the north of the fire is explained in the most naturalistic human relationship, that the wife sleeps to the north and the husband to the south (*Śat. Br. I.1.18 tā utsicya-uttareṇa gārhapatyaṃ sādāyati; yoṣā vā āpo vṛṣāgniḥ; grhā vai gārhapatyas tad grheṣv evaitan mithunaṃ prajānanam kriyate...tā uttareṇāhavanīyaṃ praṇayati; yoṣā vā āpaḥ vṛṣāgniḥ; mithunam evaitat prajānanam kriyate; evaṃ hi mithunam klptam; uttarato hi strī pumāmsam upa śete*). If the couple faced the east, the natural seating position of the wife, seated to the north of him, will be to his left; and the husband will be to her *dakṣiṇa*, which would indicate both the south and the right. The same is indicated in the expression “*upa śete*”, which needs no comment, especially in the face of the expression “*prajānanam*”. As the fire and the *praṇīta* waters formed the *mithuna* during the sacri-

fice they were not to be disturbed by going in between (*Ibid.*, I.1.1. 21—*nāntareṇa saṃ careyuh; na in mithunaṃ caryamāṇam antareṇa saṃ carān iti*).

The expression “accomplished is this as a *mithuna* for procreation (*mithunam evaitat prajananam kriyate*)” comes at a number of places in the ritual-context in the Vedic literature, and leaves no doubt about the fact, that an important aspect of the sacrificial ritual was symbolic holy sex. Thus, when the various ladies are being made ready, it is the coupling of them; for, it is said, “When, indeed, two clasp each other in a close embrace the semen is produced” (*Ibid.*, 22). The teachers of the Vedic sacrificial cult waft a sexual imagery even in the case of a casual detail. Speaking about the various ladles the *Śat Br.* says that first the *sruva* (masculine) is to be cleansed and then the various *sruv-s* (feminine). The reason given is eloquent of the mutual status of men and women at that time. It is explained that even if there are many women going in a group, only a man, though small in stature like a boy and unimpressive to look at, leads them (*Śat. Br.* I.3.1.9 *ya eva tāsvapi kumāraka iva pumān bhavati sa eva tatra prathamam eti anūcya itarāḥ*). As the waters and the fire formed a *mithuna*, so did the fire with the altar (*vedi*, fem). The *vedi* was the female partner of the sacrifice (*Yajña*). They together were believed to help enhance weal and prosperity. The *vedi* was so built that it represented the woman. There are various references to this effect; but the details in the following expression are suggestive : “Facing the fire the shoulders of the *vedi* does he elevate; for the *vedi* is the female, the fire the male; embracing the virile male does the female lie; this way, surely, the procreative *mithuna* is created” (*Ibid.*, I.2.5.16). As the *vedi* is the woman, she is profusely to be covered with the sacrificial grass, lest she be naked when the gods arrive, and in the presence of the learned priests (*Ibid.*, I.3.3.8).

The motif of *mithunīkaraṇa* is to be prominently seen even in the sphere of Speech. The practice of uttering the syllable OM before the start of a *mantra* is well-known; and it goes as far back as the Vedic period. The reason for this is given in the ritual context as follows : “The *Sāman* is not to be sung without the *hiṅ-kāra*;.....; with the *praṇava* does he accomplish the form

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of the Sāman” (*Śat, Br. I.3.5.15; cf. I.4.1.1*). Here the identification of the *hinkāra* and the *praṇava* is one aspect of the belief, the other being that of the *prāṇa* and the *praṇava* (OM). Further *praṇava* (OM) is said to be the male; and Speech, of which the *mantra* is an aspect, is said to be the female. They form the *mithuna*. This *mithuna* is to be formed prior to the *Sāmidhenī* verses are recited (*Ibid.*, *vāk vai prāṇasca mithunam; tad etat purastān mithunam kriyate sāmīdhenīnām; tasmād vai hinkṛtya anvāha*). Further it is said that *pra* and *ā* are to be prefixed to the *Sāmidhenī* verses, the reason being that with *pra* semen is released; and with *ā* progeny is born (*Ibid.*, I.4.1.6 *pra iti vai retah sicyate; ā iti prajāyate*).

Though the term *mithuna* does not always refer to human couples as such, the concept of anthropomorphism or zoomorphism is present in such couplings. The concept of such *mithuna*-formation (*mithunīkaraṇa*) evokes the idea of completeness and of welfare and prosperity.¹ That the motif of *mithuna* had a well-established and a wide application is clear from such expressions as “one who knows the *mithuna* of the *prayājas*” or “one who knows the *mithuna* of the cups” (*Taitt.Sam. II.6.1.4 yo vai prayājānām mithunam veda; VI.5.11.3 yo vai grahānām mithunam veda*). Ritual abounds in such *mithunas*. Thus, Soma is purchased with a cow, or with a pair of cow and bull, to form a *mithuna*. In the first case, the cow forms a *mithuna* with Soma; in the second, the cow forms it with the bull, which is the symbol for Soma (*Ibid. VI.1.10.2 esp. mithunābhyām krīṇāti mithunasya avarudhyai*). The colours of the sacrificial beasts are also said to form the *mithuna*. It is said, that a white beast should be sacrificed for Mitra, and for Varuṇa a black one (Mitra indicating the day, Varuṇa the night). This is to be done at the joint of water and the plants (*Ibid. II.1.9.3*). This suggests a double *mithuna*-motif. One of the colours, the other of the water and the plants. Soma is of two types : the one of a mixed type, the other of the pure, unmixed type. This itself is said to be the *mithuna* of Soma. The cups of Soma are of two types : made of wood and made of clay. This is the *mithuna* of the cups. One who knows this method of forming the *mithunas* is said to gain cattle (*Maitt. Sam. IV.6.3*); and for

the ritual of the Rājasūya, when waters from the river are to be collected, they are also of two types : those that are along the current, and those that are against it; likewise, those that are taken from the "husband of the waters" (sea). These two form the *mithuna* (*Ibid.*, IV.4.1). The explanation given is that by this *mithuna* of the waters, couples (*mithunas*) are formed in the country for prosperity (*Ibid.*).

At many rituals rice and milk are used to form the *pap*; and, along with the *mithuna* of milk and rice is knitted that of the two eyes (*Maitt. Sam.* II.1.7 *dhenvā vai ghṛtam payo 'naduhas taṇḍulāḥ; tan mithunam; mithunam caksuḥ*). This *mithuna* of rice and milk is said to be accomplished in a rite to restore eye-sight. The plan of the *mithuna* is as follows : cow's milk = ghee (female); rice = bull's semen (male). Even the deities are brought in here to form the *mithuna*. In this particular rite the deities are Agni and Viṣṇu.

The power to procreate is said to be gained, not only in one's own body but also in the case of the cattle, if a rite signifying coupling is gone through. Thus it is said, "He who does not get issues, or has barren cows, should wear a garment made of bark (*barāsīm paridhāya*) and sleep on the floor, drinking hot milk (*taptam piban*); for, by performing the heating rite (*tapo vai taptvā*, which has no sense of 'penance' here) did Prajāpati establish himself; and having formed a *mithuna* of himself (*mithunam kṛtvā*), multiplied himself with progeny and cattle (*Maitt. Sam.* I.9.6)." Likewise it is said that a person desirous of progeny should offer (immolate) a eunuch (animal ?) to Tvaṣṭṛ and the wives of the gods; for, Tvaṣṭṛ and the wives form a *mithuna*; from this *mithuna* does the sacrificer get procreated (afresh) with progeny and cattle (*Ibid.*, II.5.5). The immolation of the eunuch is, probably, to indicate the extinction of the lack of virility in the sacrificer. In the symbolism of the kindling of the fire, where the lower slab (*arāṇi*) of wood is said to be Urvaśī and the churning rod Purūravas, it is said that Urvaśī is only Speech and Purūravas is indicated by the word "asi" (thou art); this is the *mithuna*, and it is said to be formed in the breath (*Ibid.*, III.9.5). Even the Full-moon day and the New-moon day are said to form the *mithuna*. Each of these days is sub-divided into two. The first half of the Full-moon day (that starts on the previous

day) is called Anumati; the second half is called Rākā. In the case of the New-moon day the first half is called Sinivāli, the second Kūhū. Now, the two first parts and the two latter parts (of the New-and the Full-moon days) are said to form the *mithunas*. Likewise the growing half month and the decreasing half month form the *mithuna* (*Ibid.*, IV.3.5). The performance of the Full-and the New-moon day (*Darśa-pūrṇamāsa*) sacrifices, thus forming into *mithunas*, help the sacrificer to multiply with issues and cattle (*Ibid.*).

At various places the coupling is termed “*daivyaṃ mithunam*” (*cf.* for ex. *Taitt. Sam.* II.4.6.1). Even the gods are said to have been ignorant of this method of *mithunīkaraṇa*; but, when they knew it, they saw all prosperity in it (*Ibid.*, II.1.9.3).

It will be, thus, seen that the motif of the creation of progeny and weal through sacrificial coupling (*mithunīkaraṇa* as we now put it) is seen in the Vedic ritual at various places and various levels. Actual copulation is rarely seen, though its presence cannot be denied on seeing such rituals as at the *Mahāvratā*, where the *Māgadha* and the hetaera are said to actually have a sexual union (*Jai. Br.* II.405 *māgadham ca pumścalūm ca dakṣiṇe vedy 'ante mithunīkārāyanti—mithunatvāya prajānanāya*). This actual sex-union gives place to symbolic acts in many other rituals, one important such motif being that of “eyeing”, or what we may call the “eye-coits” (or, to coin a Sanskrit term, *dr̥ṣṭi-mithuna*), where the wife of the sacrificer is required to gaze at such objects as the *gharma*² (the sacrificial pot of particular form used for heating the sacrificial milk), the clarified butter or the Udgātṛ priest. Then there is also the “touch-symbolism” (we may term *sparśa-mithuna*), with which the “wife” is said to assure progeny. In these symbolic acts the “wife” is the sex-partner in the *mithuna*, the other party being any of these things mentioned above, or the Udgātṛ. Whether actual sex-practices at rituals (borrowed or indigerous) gave place to symbolic acts or whether it was the other way round, if we take into consideration the *Mahāvratā* and the Horse-sacrifice, is a different question. But there is no doubt that the human, as well as the zoo-human, couple actually was the state of affairs. The first is vouched by the *Jai. Br.*, noted above, while the Sacrifice of the horse is a case for the latter type. In the case of the Horse-

sacrifice the expression is “These we two, may we spread our four legs together”, spoken in respect of the queen and the silenced horse (i.e., ritually killed); and, further, the act is supported by such expressions as “*mithunasya avarudhyai*” and *mithunasya eva sarvatvāya*” (*Śat. Br.*; XII.2.8.5; 4.1.8). Though this is not seen in the case of other rituals involving the sacrificial beast, there is clear suggestion that the beast was considered to be the male counterpart in the *mithuna*, the wife of the sacrificer being the “woman”. The earliest of this sort of *mithuna* is to be seen in the ape *Vṛṣākapi* and the “woman” called *Indrāṇī* in the ritual symbolic set-up where the sacrificer is symbolically termed *Indra*, the weak one, wanting to gain strength. The motif is clear in the ritual-detail of applying water to the sacrificially killed beast. This is done by the “wife”, and is said to be for the symbolic re-birth of the silenced beast, as a dead beast was not to be offered to the gods. The exact words, however, indicate that the beast was being rejuvenated for the “wife” (*Śat. Br.* III.8.2.4 *tad enam etasyai yoṣāyai prajanayati; tasmāt patnī upa sprśati*; all such contexts show that the *yoṣā* is the same as the wife of the sacrificer, and the male is termed *vṛṣan*).

The concept of the *mithuna* brings us to another important point. It is that of the dual deities; and it is specifically mentioned that the dual forms a *mithuna* (*Ai. Br.* III.50 *dvandvāt mithunaṃ prajāyate*; cf. *Śat. Br.* IV.3.1.3 *dvandvam vai mithunaṃ prajananam*). This shows that for forming a *mithuna*, it was not that the partners be of mutually different sex. It is on this concept that the *mithunas* of even the male deities were formed; and the same was the idea underlying the dual-deities in the *Ṛgveda*. This is also the case where in one deity itself there is the idea of a *mithuna*. Thus, *Agni* is both a male and a female; the second is the case in respect of the juice of soma (called *retas*, cf. *RV* I.164.35) being poured into it. In the ritual context a priest, in himself, was believed to form a *mithuna*, if he was believed to have two deities in himself. Such, for example, was the case where *Agni* and *Indra* were believed to be present in the priest called *Acchāvāka*.

The concept of coupling (*mithunīkaraṇa*) was so well rooted in the Vedic ritual-tradition that we have the maxim of the six *mithunas*. According to the *Śat. Br.* there are six main *mithunas*

though the relationship is not exactly that of sex in all cases. The *mithunas* are as follows (*Śat. Br.* XI.3.3.1) :

(i) The sacrificer and his wife (*patnī*).

It is ordained that the fire-ritual should be with one's wife (*patnī-vaṭ agnihotram syāt*). This motif of being *patnī-vaṭ* marks also the *mithunas* of the gods.

(ii) The calf and the cow called Agnihotri.

This cow's milk is used in the *agnihotra* offering. It is ordained that the cow whose milk is to be used for the *agnihotra* offering should be having a male calf (*tasmād asya pumvatsā agnihotrī syāt*). It should be marked that here the *Mithuna* is not of the bull and the cow.

(iii) The fire-pan and the embers.

The pan is, obviously, the symbol of the female here, while the fire-embers suggest the male. The point is corroborated by the *ukhā* and the fire in another context.

(iv) The ladle called *sruva* and the one called *sruca*.

We have referred to this relationship earlier.

(v) The *Āhavanīya* fire and the fire-stick (*samidh*).

The first is the male, the other the female: and

(vi) The offering (female) and the *svāhākāra* (the utterance of the word *svāhā*); the latter is the male.

After enumerating the six *mithunas*, in the *Agnihotra*, the *ŚatBr.* ends in the usual strain, "With *mithuna* and *mithuna* (*mithunena mithunena*) does he get procreated with issues over and again—he who thus knows". The *mithuna* of the calf and the mother-cow reminds us of the concept of the *vṛṣa-śiśu* of the *RV*, who is at once the child and the seeding male of the cow (*RV* VII.95.3; II.35.13).

The words "procreative couple" (*mithunam prajananam*) are not expressly used in the context of the six *mithunas*; but the idea of a charm for progeny is clear in the expression "*mithunena prajāyate*". This will show that the sacrifice was, among other things, a charm for procreation and fertility, which was sought to be achieved by the employment of the *mithuna*-motif. It could be seen that the motif of *mithuna* was not restricted to the six mentioned above. There were many

more; and we shall further see another set, of four *mithunas*. As we have noted, the water and the fire formed a *mithuna*; and even the ladles did so. The whole idea was that the formation of *mithunas* is conducive to procreation and prosperity. Not only the ladles but even other things used in the sacrificial context formed *mithunas*. The *water-fire mithuna* entered the rite of marriage on the one hand; and, on the other, it was at the base of the gain of rain.³ On the sacrificial plane the following are additional *mithunas* : *śūrpa-agnihotravanī* (winnowing basket and the offering-ladle) the former the male the latter the female, *sphya-kapāla* (wooden sword and the potsherd, the former being the male), *śamyā-kṛṣṇājina* (yoke-pin made of the *Śamī* tree and black-antelope-skin, the latter being the male), *ulūkhala-musala* (mortar-pestle, the latter being the male), *dr̥ṣad-upala* (the lower flat grinding-stone and the upper-stone, the latter being the male). These are five in number; but they certainly are not all even together with the six mentioned above. The point to be stressed is that *mithuna* was the symbol for procreation, and the number of *mithunas* was not the criterion; it was enough to have two things to form a *mithuna*. Thus it is clearly stated that, “when, indeed, two firmly clasp each other, then is the semen produced; for, a unit of two is a procreative couple” (*Śat. Br. I.1.1.22 yadā vai dvau rārambhetē atha tad vīryam bhavati, dvandvam vai mithunam prajananam, mithunam eva etat prajananam kriyate*). It is this belief and principle that governs the formation of a number of couples. The following are a few more examples :

(i) Clarified butter and curds.

This is what is said about the *mithuna* : “This is the pair, the ghee and the curds; a pair is, indeed, the procreative couple” (*Śat Br. III.8.4.7*). The passage comes in the context of the beast for the gods Agni and Soma. An interesting detail in this connection may be noted. Here the oblation to the wives of the gods is also enjoined. For the purpose of sprinkling the liquid the tail of the immolated beast is used. The reason for the use of the tail (*jāghani*) is given thus : “Half of the genitals (*jaghana*) is the tail (*jāghani*); half of a woman’s genitals (or hips) is the *jaghana*; from half of a woman’s genital-part (*jaghanārdhāt*),

indeed, are the issues born." From the interior of the tail (*antarataḥ*) does he offer to the wives of the gods; from the interior of the woman, indeed, is the progeny born (*antarato vai yoṣāyai prajāḥ prajāyante*). From the outer side (the hairy part of the tail) does he cut the offering for the lord of the house, Agni; for, indeed, from the outside does the male copulate with the female, running (*Ibid.*, III.8.5.7). (The imagery, here, is that of the copulation of beasts.)

(ii) *Payasyā* and the *vājina*.

The material called *payasyā* is prepared from milk by putting curds into it when hot; the same preparation is also known as *āmikṣā* (Sāyaṇa on the passage referred to just further). The *payasyā* was believed to be the female (*yoṣā*), the male (*vr̥ṣan*) being the *vājina*, which is liquid of the curds. The text states that these two form the *mithuna*; and that from this *mithuna* of the *payasyā* and the *vājina* (semen) was produced the unlimited world (of nourishing liquids) (*Śat. Br.* II.5.1.16).

(iii) The jar called Mahāvira and the fire upon which it is kept.

The rite is that of Pravargya. It is said that the jar is the male organ, the milk the semen and the fire is the womb (female). The two handles of the jars are said to be testicles (*Ai. Br.* I.22 *etaḍ deva-mithunam yad gharmaḥ; sa yo gharmaḥ tac śiśnam, yau śaphau tau śaphau, ..., yat payas tad retaḥ; tad idam agnau deva-yonyām prajanane retaḥ sicyate, agnir vai deva-yoniḥ*). It is to be noted that Agni is said to be the womb (female), the point already hinted at above.

We have already noted how the milk and the rice-grains were believed to form a *mithuna*. In the ritual at the Full-and the New-moon day sacrifice, or the Soma-sacrifice, also such a preparation from milk and rice was necessary. This was called the *brahmaudana*, and it was to be partaken of by the priests. Also to it was added clarified butter when the rice was being boiled. About the whole preparation this was said, "That which is clarified butter is the milk of a woman; the rice-grains are the

particles of the male-body; this is the *mithuna*; with this *mithuna* alone does he (the priest) create him (the sacrificer) with cattle, and progeny for prosperity" (*At. Br. I.1*). In another context the sacrificial cake (*puroḍāśa*) and the clarified butter (*ājya*) are said to form a *mithuna*. The cake represents also the cattle. It is said that the cake is the womb and the clarified butter is the semen; that when he offers the clarified butter thereupon, it is in cake and the the womb itself that the semen is established (*Jai. Br. II.287*; also *Pañc. Br. XXI.10*).

Even the hair of the body of the sacrificial beast are conceived as forming the *mithuna* (*Śat. Br. V.1.3.9 śuklam caiva roma kṛṣṇāñ ca, dvandvam vai mithunam prajananam*). In the Rājasūya sacrifice there are seventeen beasts, and it is ordained that their hair should be both white and black for forming the procreative couple. There are, again, such *mithunas* as *vrata* and *dikṣā*, *satya* and *śraddhā*, *manas* and *vāk*. It is said that these *mithunas* are to be contemplated at the very start of the sacrifice (*Śat. Br. XII. 8.2.6* in the context of the Sautrāmaṇi, *vṛṣā vai vratam yaṣā dikṣā, vṛṣā satyam yoṣā śraddhā, vṛṣā manaḥ yoṣā vāk*; and there itself, *vṛṣā patnyai yajamānaḥ*). The forming of the *mithunas* was purposeful and was for the general weal, as we have noted already (cf. *Ibid. atho yajamāna evaitan mithunāni karoti prajātyai*). This with the belief that Prajāpati himself was "procreation" (*Ibid.*, 9 and 10), would make it clear that the sacrifice was identified with Prajāpati on the one hand; and, on the other, it was contemplated as having a sexual aspect, which was a prerequisite for weal, prosperity and procreation.

The concept of Mithuna and the Agnicayana :

One of the most important, and equally complex, rituals is that of Agnicayana, or "the Piling of the altar", in which the cosmos is sought to be symbolically constructed, Fire being the central source of creation. At this ritual at the base of the great altar a living tortoise was placed. The tortoise was the symbol of the sun and Prajāpati in one; and it was also indicated as the cosmic *prāṇa* (breath) principle. The explanation of the laying of the tortoise and near it the brick called *Āṣādhā* (obviously the female concept of the month of Āṣāḍha, indicating the various

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months to be copulating “women” of the sun-tortoise) is given as follows :

“Now, this tortoise; taking this form alone it is that Prajāpati created the progeny; that tortoise—he is, indeed, the very sun; he is laid to the south of the (brick) Āṣāḍhā; the virile male (*vr̥ṣā*), indeed, is the tortoise, the woman (*yoṣā*) is the Āṣāḍhā; to the south (or right, *dakṣiṇataḥ*) of the woman alone does the male lie. Prāṇa, indeed, is the tortoise, Speech the Āṣāḍhā; Prāṇa is the *vr̥ṣā* of Speech; Prāṇa is the *mithuna* (with Speech)” (*Śat. Br. VII. 5.1.5-7*).

In the same context are mentioned to be placed the two bricks called “semen-sprinklers” (*retaḥ-sicau*) (*Ibid.*, 35). These two indicate the sex-couple from their very name. Among other things to be placed in the layers of the altar there is the mortar and the dish called *ukhā* (used for placing the fire in). The *ukhā* is placed above, while the mortar is placed below; for, it is said, the *ukhā* is the stomach and the mortar the womb. To the right (or south) of these two is placed the pestle, as it is the male-organ. And, the male sleeps to the right of the woman (*Ibid.*, 38 *udaram ukhā yonir ulūkhalam, ...śiśnam musalam :... tad dakṣiṇata upa dadhāti; dakṣiṇata vai vr̥ṣā yoṣām upa śete*). It is to be noted that in the tradition of Vedic beliefs the mortar and the pestle form a couple; and to this, now, the *ukhā* is joined, as a female due to its shape and being the receptacle of the fire. Thus the pestle forms a *mithuna* with the *ukhā* and the mortar. On the *ukhā* offering of clarified butter is enjoined, which signifies the sprinkling of semen (*Ibid.*, 32; for *ukhā* in similar symbolism see also 26; also 5.2.2, where in another layer, in the *ukhā* the heads of the five animals, including that of a man, are placed, saying that thereby the animals are laid in their womb for further procreation). In another phase of the ritual of the *ukhā*, it is enjoined that the milk of a she-goat is dropped into it. It is said in this context, that the *ukhā* is woman (*yoṣā*); the milk is established in the woman (*Śat. Br. VI. 5.4.15 atho yoṣā vā ukhā, yoṣāyām tat payo dadhāti*). It is well known that the goat is the *zoo-morph* of Agni, and, here, the she-goat is only the female form of Agni⁴, who is, thus, suggested to be bi-sexual

Further it is said in the same context, that Agni is the virile male (*vr̥ṣā*) and the *ukhā* the “woman” (*yoṣā*) (VI. 6.2.8).

About the offering into the *ukhā* it is said that they are the various forms of Prajāpati, and, verily, the semen (*Ibid.*, X.4.1.1 *prajāpatim vi-srastam devā samaskurvan; tam ukhūyām yonau retobhūtam asiñcan, yonir vā ukhā*). And this is indeed, placing the very sacrificer into the *ukhā* (*Ibid.*). Thus the offerings placed into the *ukhā* are for the safe placement and re-birth of the sacrificer, who is only another form of Prajāpati=sacrifice. The *ukhā* is the *yonī*, i.e., the receptacle of the fire-principle in the three worlds (*Ibid.*, VI. 1.3.26). This is like placing the soma-juice (offering it) in the fire, so that the ‘god’ may be secure even after being ritually killed in pressing (*Ibid.*, XI. 1.2.2 *tam hatvā yajñam agnāv eva retobhūtam siñcati, agnir vai yonir yajñasya*). In a striking case of symbolism regarding the *ukhā*, milk and sand figure, the following is said. First sand is placed in the *ukhā*; and it is said that the sand is the semen :

“Now he places in her (*ukhā*) the milk; he places the semen (sand) first; ‘woman’, indeed, is the *ukhā*; hence when the woman takes in the semen (first), then does she hold milk; the sand is lower, the milk above; at the lower position (in the womb), indeed, is (placed) the semen; at the upper (in the breasts) is the milk” (*Śat. Br.* VII. 1.1.44).

The *ukhā*, being considered as the woman, is indicated to hold semen afresh for subsequent deliveries. Thus it is said that once the fire is placed in the *ukhā* she (!) is to be released; and sand is placed in her prior to the pouring of milk. This is placing fresh semen and gaining fresh milk (*Ibid.*, 42). At various places it is indicated that sand is the semen of Agni (*Śat. Br.* VII. 1.1.10; 12; 16; 41; semen is white, and so is sand VII. 3.1.11).

In the context of the *Agnicayana* fresh sets of *mithunas* on the cosmic level are presented. In all the male principles the presence of Prajāpati is seen; but a new symbol is ushered in here, in the word “*aśru*”, which indicates the cosmic fluid. The *mithunas* are four in number; and the expression common to all is “he became the *mithuna*”. They are as follows :

(i) Fire and Earth (female).

In this connection it is said, that Prajāpati thought. He formed a *mithuna* with the earth, himself being Fire. Then was produced an egg. The foetus (the solid of the egg) that was in the mid-region formed the air; and that which was the “*aśru*” became the birds. The fluid of the two halves became the rays. The (space between the) two halves of the egg (seen as the *kapāla*) became the mid-region (*antarikṣa*).

(ii) Vāyu and the Antarikṣa (female)=Wind and the Mid-region (female).

This *mithuna* produced an egg. The *aśru*, in this case, became the *prśni aśman* (=cloud, acc. to the Comm.).

(iii) The Sun and the Sky (female).

This *mithuna*, or rather (*dyauh*), produced an egg; then the *retas* (semen); and thence came the moon. The *aśru* that got dropped became the stars and the constellations; and the two halves became the minor quarters.

and (iv) Mind and Speech (female).

From this an egg got produced. There is no mention of the *aśru*, The progeny includes the eight Vasus, eleven Rudras and the All Gods (*viśve devāh*), (*Śat. Br. VI. 1.2.1-9*).

As we noted above, the *aśru* indicated in this symbolization the cosmic fertilizing fluid, and not so much the tear, restricted to an individual.

According to the Vedic tradition, both of ritual and belief, the fire was first kindled on the lotus-leaf (*RV VI.16.13*); and this corroborates the belief that it came out of the waters, of which the lotus-leaf is the solid symbol. In the rite of *Agnicayana* this is explained as follows: “Now he collects the fire (in the form of the lump of earth); womb, indeed, is the lotus-leaf; in the womb thereby does he sprinkle the semen (*Śat. Br. VI.4.1.7*). Earlier it is stated that this is done with the *sruva*-ladle; for the *sruva* is the *vr̥ṣā*. This is done with the utterance of the formula “*svāhā*” for *svāha* is the male (*vr̥ṣā*); and it is the male (*vr̥ṣā*) that sprinkles the semen (*Śat. Br. VI.3.3.18*).

The identification is, Fire=*sruya*=*svāhā*, all indicating the male in the *mithuna*, in which the female is the lotus-leaf. At another place the altar is said to be the female, the male being the lump of earth signifying Fire (*Ibid.*, VI.4.4.19), the actual words being, "Indeed, this is the womb; semen is the lump; covertly (*tiras*), indeed, is the semen planted. Of the form of the womb (vagina) is this (place of the altar) prepared; hence it is that with one's own wife does one like to unite covertly." The lump of earth (which represents the fire) is to be placed to the south, facing the north where the altar is. The reason given is as follows: "From south (=the right) to the north (=the left, which is where the wife sleeps) is the semen sprinkled" (*Ibid.*, VI.4.2.8). Sāyaṇa explains "as by the man sleeping on the right (*dakṣinataḥ sthitena*) semen is sprinkled (later) in the womb of the woman lying on the left (*vāmataḥ sthitāyāḥ striyā yonau retāḥ sicyate*)". Likewise is a *mithuna* formed between *Āhavanīya* fire and the *abhri* (spade made of wood), the latter being placed to the north (left) of the *Āhavanīya*; the *abhri* is the female (*Ibid.*, VI.3.1.30).

The *Agnicayana* has many such *mithunas* buried in its layers. It is not improbable that the position of the male and the female (both human) referred to in this context is suggestive of joint burial; for, in the actual coitus, the position is hardly of lying side by side, and is indicative of pre-coitus lying by. In this context reference may be made to the brick called *lokampṛṇā* (lit. the pervader of the world). This brick is said to form a *mithuna* with the fire-principle. The *lokampṛṇā* bricks are actually two in number; and they are further identified with the eyes. Likewise the golden image of the Man to be placed in the altar and representing the cosmic Man (the anthropomorph of the cosmic fire), is identified with Man in the right eye of the mortal man (or the sacrificer). It is said that the cosmic Man and the Man in the left eye form the *mithuna*. The passage is excellent and needs to be quoted:

"To the *lokampṛṇā* does the whole fire-principle accrue; of him (i.e., of the cosmic Man-fire) is the *mithuna* the Man that resides in the left eye. Half of one's own is what a *mithuna* is; when one is with the *mithuna*, then is one the whole.⁵ When one is the whole, that is conducive to fullness.

Hence are they two halves (for fullness). The pair (so conceived) is the procreative *mithuna*; hence, the *lokampṛnās* are laid in twos" (*Śat. Br. X .5.2.8*).

Out of the two Men—the cosmic and the one in the individual eye—none is said to be a female; hence, this *mithuna* has both males. Probably, one of them is conceived as also the female. We have already marked how the fire was conceived as a female also. This would mean that in a *mithuna* where both are apparently male, one of them is conceived as bi-sexual, or having also the feminine element for the purpose of the rite. A similar motif appears in the case of Indra, in the same context. Thus it is said, "He alone is Indra who is present in the right eye; and she (i.e., present in the left eye, Sāyaṇa) is Indrāṇī. For these two (did the gods make) the nose as the separating support" (*Ibid.*, 9); and further we are told, "Those two, indeed, form themselves into a *mithuna*, advancing to the space of the heart (*tau hrdayasya ākāśam praty avetya mithunībhavataḥ*); when they reach the climax of coitus (*mithunasya antam gachataḥ*), then this Man (in the right eye; mark the position to the right even here) sleeps; this is like at the human coitus, (where) reaching completion (the man) becomes, as if, without consciousness (*asamvidaiva bhavati*); likewise, indeed, is this. He (the man in the right eye) becomes, as if, without consciousness. Divine, indeed, is this *mithuna*; supreme this bliss" (*Ibid.*, 11).

The passage is important. It refers to the Man in the right eye as the male; and the one in the left eye as the female (Indrāṇī), while both were men in the previous passage in the same context. Their *mithuna* at the region of the heart, along with the supporting nose, indicates the state of contemplation and meditation (*yoga*). This shows how the motif of *mithuna* glides into the state of meditation, crossing that of sex. It also shows the influence of *yogic* concentration as early as this period, and, how ritual and contemplation blended together at places. Probably, this is the basis of the later sex-rituals in the sphere of the *Tantra* schools, the aim of which was to realize the highest Bliss through actual sex in secret sacred rituals.⁶ It has to be noted that the Vedic couple of Indra-Indrāṇī is us-

hered in here in this context. *Indrāṇī* does occur in the *RV* six times; but it is in the sexual setting that the occurrence is important. This is where she appears as the "woman" against the virile male, *Vṛṣākapi*, in a sexual dialogue mingled with ritual (X.86), the aim of which is the fructification of the field and the womanhood. There is hardly any other 'goddess' in the *RV* that has acquired this unique sexual importance. It is *Indrāṇī*, again, who is said to have her genital part (*jaghana*) thirty leagues spacious, which is indicative of her nature as the fructifiable earth, or the altar that symbolizes her (*Mait. Sam.*, III .8.4; *Kāṭhaka Sam.*, VIII.17 62). What has been suggested above about the the influence of meditation is corroborated by the fact that the same couple occurs in the *Bṛhad. Up.* (IV.2 3), where Indra is said to be the supreme soul: "The man in the right eye is called Indra; him, though *Indhra*, they call Indra impliedly (*parokṣa-rūpeṇa*); and, this Man, who is in the left eye, is the 'wife' of this Indra. Their meeting place is the region of the heart." The exact passage shows the bi-sexual nature of the Man in the left eye: "*athetad vāme akṣiṇi puruṣa-rūpam, eṣā patni*".

Another important *mithuna* in the context of the ritual of *Agnicayana* is that of the Apsarases. It is said that by forming the *mithuna*, the Apsarases become full (or whole), and sit in the heavenly world contemplated in this ritual. Likewise does the sacrificer sit in this mortal world, with progeny. In this context *Urvaśī* and the fore-layer are identified (*Śat.Br.*, VIII.6.1. 20,21).

The motif of *mithuna* touches the ritual of Soma also, for he is said to form the *mithuna* with the quarters (*Vāj. Sam.*, VI.36 where the quarters are said to run to him; and *Śat. Br.* III.9.4.21 *ābhir digbhir mithunena priyeṇa dhāmnā samsparśayati*). There is not the least doubt that like the churning of the fire from the two *araṇīs*, the pressing of the juice of Soma was believed to be a sex-act; and the *RV* clearly knew this belief (*RV.* I.28.2, 3; see *Veṅkaṭamādhava*). Further, in the purchase and the pressing of Soma there is covert indication of a *mithuna*. Already in the *RV* we have the "Daughter of the sun" who is said to charm Soma to arrive at the sacrifice (IX, 1-6; 72.3; 113.3). This "Daughter of the sun" is

the Gāyatrī-Sāvitrī in the later ritual-texts. In the ritual of the Brāhmaṇas she is represented as the cow called *Soma-krayinī* ("Purchaser of Soma"), who is also called Mahānagnī (*Ai. Br.*, 1. 27 *tayā mahānagnayā bhūtayā soman rājānam akrīṇan*). The *mithuua* of the Mahānagna-Mahānagnī is mentioned in the *Atharva V.* (XX.136,10 f) in the verses termed "*āhanasyāḥ*" (*RV Khila*, V.22.9).

Another interesting *mithuna* comes in the context of the Varuṇapraghāsa ritual of the Four-monthly sacrifice (Cātur-māsyā). In it a ram and an ewe, made of parched barley-flour (*karambha*) are used. Following the pattern noted above, the ram is placed in a vessel filled with the *payasyā* liquid to the right of the ewe placed in another vessel filled with the *payasyā* liquid. This is done to save the progeny from the bonds of Varuṇa (*Śat. Br.*, II. 5.2.17 ff). The point to be noted is that the two *payasyās* indicate the female and the male, one being called Vāruṇī and the other Māruta. The first is the female; and in it the figure of the ewe is merged. The second is the male, in which the figure of the lamb is merged. This indicates an interesting point we have already noted earlier. In this rite, predominantly meant for Varuṇa, the Maruts are conceived as the male counterpart of Vāruṇī; this also shows that Varuṇa is conceived as the female, which suggests his bi-sexual concept and is corroborated elsewhere (*Śat. Br.*, II.4.4.9 *etām rātrīm mitro varuṇe retaḥ siñcati*, which shows Mitra to be the male and Varuṇa the female). On the ritual-plane such *mithunas* are common (cf. *Śat. Br.*, IV.3.1.3 *dvau hi indrāgnī, dvandvam hi mithunam prajananam*); and this is seen even in the case of the priests. Thus, the Āgnīdhra is said to be the male, the Neṣṭṛ the woman (cf. *Ai. Br.*, VI.3 *neṣṭur upastha āsīno bhakṣayati, patnībhājanam vai neṣṭā*).

We have noted above the *mithunas* on the cosmic level in the ritual of *Agnicayana*. The *Śat. Br.* indicates elsewhere that non-personal *mithunas* revert to the cosmic concept of the Gandharva and the Apsarases. So it is said, "The *mithunas* of Prajāpati, getting loose, flew away taking the form of the Gandharvas-Apsarases. Taking the form of a chariot Prajāpati went round them; going round them, he absorbed them into himself and

made them part of himself". (IX.4.1.3). The various *mithunas* are as follows; both forming Prajāpati's person :

Prajāpati	
Gandharva	←——(Bi-sexual)——→ Apsarases
Fire (Agni)	Plants (<i>oṣadhayaḥ</i>)
Sun (Sūrya)	Rays (<i>marīcayaḥ</i>)
Moon (Candramas)	Asterisms (<i>nakṣatrāṇi</i>)
Sacrifice (Yajña)	Gifts (<i>dakṣiṇāḥ</i>)
Mind (Manas)	Metres (<i>ṛk sāmāni</i>)

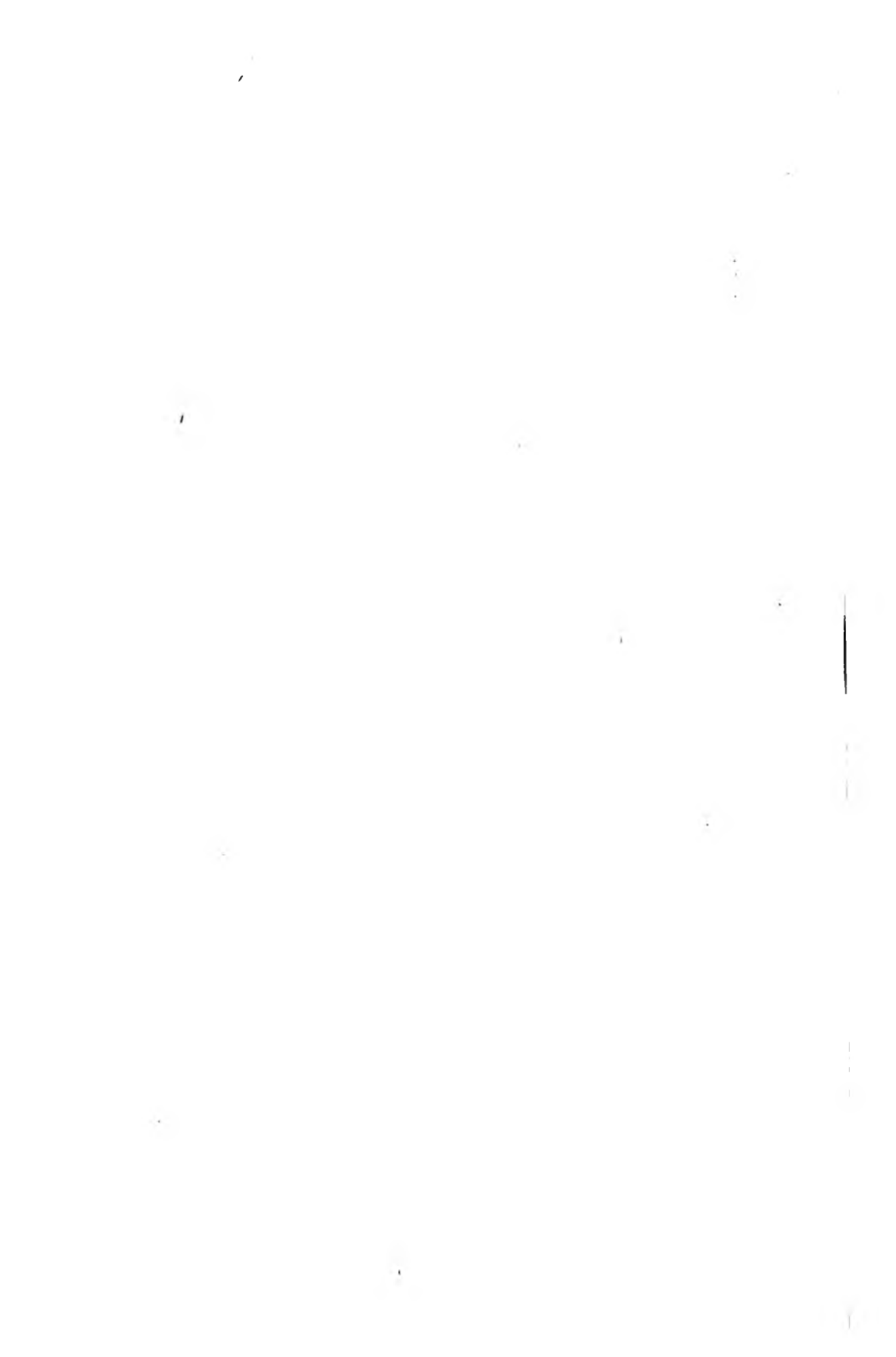
It will be seen that the Gandharva is always one, while the Apsarases are many. The myth of Prajāpati going round these *mithunas* in the form of a chariot is connected with the ritual at the Rāṣṭrabhṛt offerings, which are placed on the fore-part of the chariot. The chariot is said to be Āditya=Prajāpati, and by these offerings the sacrificer is said to multiply in wealth.

The concept of *mithuna* could, possibly, never be complete without the examination of the allied concept of *jāmi*. The word already occurs in the *RV*, and has been understood by Yāska as: (i) Something in excess, which also includes the sense of twins; for in the latter one is in excess; (ii) Foolish or of boyish appearance; and (iii) *a-jāmi* is some one of a different species (*Nir.*, IV.20). At another place Yāska explains the word as "that which has more or less the same or similar meaning in the same verse, the difference being slight", this meaning being allied to that of being in excess (*Ibid.*, X.16). Probably, we have to understand the difference as very significant. The ritual-texts refer to this word at a number of places with an additional shade of meaning to indicate dissimilarity to form *mithunas*; and in this process are included pairs of words apparently similar in meaning or form but with a slight difference. The same principle is applied by the *Jai.* and the *Pañc. Br.* to indicate *mantras*, considered as *jāmi* or *a-jāmi* in respect of each other. But only the mutually *a-jāmi* pair forms the right *mithuna* for procreation, for the multiplication of cattle. The *jāmi* types of verses are said to be of the same sex. Hence they cannot procreate. It is like two men or two women sleeping together (cf. *Jai. Br.* I.298 *amithunam*

tad a-prajanānam yaj jāmi, yathā pumāṃsau vā saha śayātāṃ striyau vā; kiṃ pumāṃsau saha śayānau pra-janayetām kim striyau, tau cen mithunīkartāram na labheyātām; atho yad eva a-jāmi tan mithunam, tat pra-janānam). The passage is important. It shows that *jāmi* indicates not only two males or two females, if we follow strictly the wording therein; it also indicates two such partners of different sexes, who cannot, or are forbidden by custom or tradition to sexually unite, the result being non-procreation ! It is in this sense that the brother and the sister are mutually *jāmi*, Yama and Yamī are *jāmi* in this sense. In a secondary sense the word *jāmi* means "sister", (X.10 it can also mean "brother"), but with the non-copulatory shade of meaning. Yama insists that the two are a *jāmi mithuna*; and hence should not perform the *a-jāmi* act (sexual copulation). Sacrifice being the very form of Prajāpati, who was multiplication in himself, it was necessary to form *a-jāmi* types of *mithuna*. And this was done in various aspects—offerings, verses, priests, deities and even the ladles and the utensils.

NOTES

1. See also J. Gouda, *The Dual Deities in the Religion of the Veda*, Amsterdam—London, 1974, p. 62.
2. See Ch. 4 *Infra* for details.
3. Dange, "The R̥gvedic Seer and the Fire-Water Complex" *J. U. Bombay, Arts*—No. 78, Vol. XLII, pp. 18-42.
4. It was customary to place the offering in the ear of a she-goat; see Śrauta Kośa, I-i, P. 182f; 36; cf. Mb., Śānti, 262.41 *ajō'gnir varuṇo meṣaḥ sūryo' śvaḥ*; for the fire-god symbolized as the sheep or goat in sculpture see R. C. Agrawal, at *J. Ind. Hist., Trivandrum*, Vol. XLIII-i, April 1965, p. 152f, and the plate.
5. For the wife as the half of one's self, see *Taitt. Sam.* VI.1.1.5; *Śat.Br.* V.2.1.10.
6. It is this germ that gets a wide expression in the (so-called) 'Erotic' sculptures of the later times; the point is further examined in Ch. 11 *infra*.



The 'Wife' and Her Divine Mates

As the sacrifice grew in importance as the most effective technique of controlling the cosmic elements, the priest's position got enhanced. The sacrificial plane got the status of the stage where the cosmic relationship came to be enacted. The sacrificer and his wife should have naturally become the enacting persons; but, with a unique height of imagination, it was the wife of the sacrificer who came to represent the terrestrial femininity, while the sacrificer, the *yajamāna*, came to be only a passive supporting partner. The actual male ritual-partner was represented by various things, all symbolizing the divine mate. While examining the concept of ritual-sex, or the divine coupling, one feels enthralled when one comes to examine the status of the sacrificer's wife (called "Wife" hereafter). At the outset, it is necessary to remember that the sacrificial persons are on a different footing for the duration of the sacrifice; and both the sacrificer and his wife ascend to the super-human or divine plane during the period (cf. *Śat. Br. III. 1.1.8 devān vā eṣa upāvartate yo dīkṣate; sa devānām eko bhavati*); and, as the wife is the "half" of man (*Śat. Br. V.2.1.10 ardho ha vā-eṣa ātmano yaj jāyā*), she also ascends to the divine plane. The general term used for her is *yoṣā*. She becomes the lower part of the very sacrifice (Ibid 1.3.1.12 *jaghanārdho vā-eṣa yajñasya yat patnī*). By another equation, she gets identified with Aditi, who is said to be the earth (*Ibid 15f*), and the girdle that she wears is said to be the girdle of Aditi (*Ibid adityai rāsnā-asi*). As against this *yoṣā* ("Wife") stand various things, and even the priests, as the coupling virile males (*vṛṣan*). Thus, the "Wife" does not remain the wife of the sacrificer; she

becomes the general "WIFE" (or the female partner) on the ritual-plane, standing for all females to be fructified through her. Various are the rituals wherein she figures in this key-role.

In the context of the Soma-sacrifice the "Wife" is brought into the assembly-hall by the Neṣṭṛ priest; and the ritual ordains that she is to look at the Udgātṛ priest. The *mantra* recited on her behalf at this time is as follows: "Thou art Prajāpati, the layer of the seed; plant your seed in me" (the *mantra* is from *Vāj. Sam.* VIII. 10). The reason for looking at the Udgātṛ is that he is the very Prajāpati, who forms the *mithuna* with the "Wife" (*Śat, Br.* IV. 4.3.18). Earlier in the same context we have reference to the Agnidh ("the fire-kindler") priest being the virile male, forming a *mithuna* with the "Wife" (*Ibid.*, 15 *vr̥ṣā vā-agnīd yoṣā patnī; mithunam etat pra-jananam kriyate*; cf. further 18 *prajāpatir vā-udgātā yoṣā patnī, mithunam etat pra-jananam kriyate*). This will indicate that the same "Wife" is made the sex-partner of the Udgātṛ in one place and of the Agnid(h) in the other. The sex-coupling in these places is oral; not actual. Nevertheless, we have here the instance of gaze-copulation. At times, the symbol becomes clearer. Thus, at the occasion of the Yajñāyajñīya laud (prepared on *RV* VI.48.1), the Gārhapatya fire figures as the partner of the "Wife". The ritual is as follows: At the back-side of the Gārhapatya fire-place, the "Wife" is to pour water along her thigh. The ritual is intended to pacify the Vaiśvānara fire. The "Wife" is ordained to uncover her thigh as up as possible; and this act is called "seed-releasing". The exact passage is as follows: "Along her thigh does the "Wife" pour out water; by this she, indeed, pacifies the Vaiśvanara; making her thigh naked, as if she pours out; for, it is by making her thigh naked does the wife take seed (of her husband). At her do they look for planting the semen. Thus does she get the progeny from Udgātṛ" (*Jai. Br.* I.173). Here the Udgātṛ is being identified with the Gārhapatya fire. In the *Pañc Br.* (VIII.7., 10) the same ritual occurs in the context of the Agniṣṭoma laud; and here a detail is added. The thigh is said to be the right one; for, it is is said, "from the right side the semen is emitted" (as the husband sleeps on the right side of the wife; the ex-

planation comes very often; cf. *Śat. Br.*, II.5.2.17 also I. 1.1.20: IV 4 3. 16). Further similarity to actual copulation is suggested by mixing with it the symbolism of the Hiñkāra: "At the sound of Hin they cause her to be looked at (by the Udgātṛ); for, after the sound Hin, the semen is emitted" (*Pañc. Br.* loc. cit. 13). The *Taitt. Sam.* adds (VI.5.8.6) "After the thigh is made bare cohabitation takes place; and children are born" (cf. *Kāṭhaka Sam.*, XXVI. 1.122). The symbolism of the right thigh and the importance of the Udgātṛ is seen also in the ritual of the kindling of the fire; for, the fire is kindled on his right thigh, and the Hin sound is uttered (*Pañc. Br.* XII. 12). The Hiñkāra brings a fresh point. It is the symbol of excitement in the sex-act; in addition, it is the symbol of the life-breath; and, hence, it produces new life in the form of the progeny (cf. *Śat. Br.* I.4.1.2.). The Hiñkāra is said to be Prajāpati (*Pañc. Br.* VI. 8.5), and it is also symbolic as the male in copulation with the verses (*Śat. Br.* 1. 4. 7.2 *tad etat purastāt mithunam pra-jananam kriyate sāmīdhenīnām, tasmād vai hiñkṛtya-anvāha*). The purpose of these various couplings is said to be weal and prosperity, along with progeny. The Hiñkāra forms the *mithuna* not only with the *sāmīdhenī* verses (i.e., those by which the fire is kindled); it forms *mithuna* also with the "Wife", *Śat Br.* IV. 2.2.10).

Among the priests, the Neṣṭṛ is associated with the "Wife" and the wives of the gods, though elsewhere even the Hotṛ priest is identified with the ṛc-female (*Śat. Br.* IV. 3.2.4. *prajāpatir vā-udgātā, yoṣā ṛg-hotā; sa etat prajāpatir udgātā ṛci hotari retaḥ siñcati*). There is an interesting reference to the Neṣṭṛ priest in the ritual of the *pātnīvata* cup of Soma (i.e. the cup meant for the god Tvaṣṭṛ and the wives of the gods). In this ritual the Āgnīdhra priest drinks Soma while sitting on the "hip" (*upasthe*) of the Neṣṭṛ priest: "He partakes, sitting on the hip of the Neṣṭṛ; the Neṣṭṛ is, indeed, the representative of the "Wife" (*patnī-bhājanam*)"¹ (*Ai. Br.* VI.3). The association of the wives of the gods and the fire is that of the "seeded" and the "seeder" respectively (*Ibid*). At the ritual of the Mahāvratā the Neṣṭṛ sits among the wives (*Jai. Br.* II. 406). It is also the duty of the Neṣṭṛ to bring the "Wife" to the sacrificial chamber, after which she has to look at the Udgātṛ priest,

as noted above. Here, the Neṣṭṛ is said to be the 'woman' the Āgnīdhra priest being the 'man'; and it is said that these two (though men) form the "procreative couple". The symbolism is explained thus: "The Āgnīdhra is the very fire, the Neṣṭṛ the woman" (*Śat. Br. IV. 3.3.17. agnir vā-eṣa nidānena yad āgnīdhrah, yoṣā neṣṭā; vṛṣā vā-agnīd, yoṣā neṣṭā; mithunam etat prajananam kriyate*). The ritual where the Āgnīdhra sits on the *upastha* of the Neṣṭṛ while drinking Soma is nothing else than the symbolic fructification of the "wife" (or the wives of the gods) by the fire. The equation is : Āgnīdhra—the Gārhapatya fire; for on the other hand, the Gārhapatya fire is said to plant semen in the wives of the gods (*Ai-Br. III. 37 atha patnīṣu reto dadhāti yad gārhapatyah*); and further it is said: "Through the Gārhapatya fire itself does he plant semen in the wives for procreation; rich in the procreation of the cattle does he become who knows this wise" (*Ibid*). This also proves that, for the welfare and growth of the cattle (or of the land through rain) it was necessary to cause the symbolic fructification of the "Wife" by the divine agent on the plane of the sacrifice. There seems no doubt about the fact that the representation of the "Wife" by the Neṣṭṛ or the hotṛ was a later phase; or it may be an alternate ritual to the one where the "Wife" actually must have figured, as in the case of the Horse-sacrifice. Another ritual in which the substitution lurks is that of the copulation of the Māgadha (man) with the courtesan (*Jai. Br. II,206 māgadham ca pūmścalūm ca dakṣiṇe vedy 'ante mithunīkārayanti*).

The status of the Neṣṭṛ priest is rather unique. In the *RV* the word *neṣṭṛ* comes only twice (I.15.3;11.5.5); and at both the places it comes for the fire. In the first place Agni, being addressed as *neṣṭṛ*, is said to lead the wives of the priest of that name in the Brahmanic sacrifice. Probably, this led to the identification of the Neṣṭṛ with the wives of the gods, as a group, and later with the "Wife". The word, thus, comes from fire-symbolism, and was developed into a bisexual concept. The ritual of hip-sitting, hence, denotes two aspects of the fire-god himself: one female, and the other male. The "Wife" gets identified with the female aspect of the fire. Naturally, she is the "Wife" of the sacrificial fire the Gārhapatya. This exactly tallies with what the texts say: "The lower half of the

sacrifice is the 'Wife' " (*Śat. Br.* I.3.1,12, referred to already).

It will be seen from what has been said above that the priest at the ritual represented the divine male—the counterpart of the "Wife" turned divine on the plane of the sacrifice. The same is the case with the Māgadha and the hetaera that "act" at the Mahāvratā. Sometimes, however, the male is represented by non-humans or even inanimate objects, with whom the "Wife" forms the *mithuna*. We have referred earlier to the gaze-ritual, wherein the "Wife" looked at the Udgātṛ. Now, she looks at the clarified butter, which is said to be the male; and the symbolism is explained as: "She looks at the clarified butter (*ājyam avekṣate*); woman is the "Wife", semen the clarified butter; this is the procreative couple that is formed" (*Śat. Br.* I.3.1.18). The identification of the clarified butter with the semen is one of the reasons why it is poured (like Soma which is also said to be semen) in the fire-altar (*yonī*), which is the woman. Some of the objects that are prescribed to be gazed at for purification are the clarified butter, the sun, gold, horse (the symbol for the sun) and the fire. Soma also is the "seed"; and in the ritual of the purchase of soma we have a double symbolism. Herein Soma represents both the male and the female. While the shoots of Soma are being purchased, a cow is to be given to the seller of Soma-shoots. The cow is, however, taken back by a ritual dramatising the success of the sacrificer and the defeat of the seller. The cow, which is said to be Speech, is both the cow and Soma; and she is ordained to be gazed at by the "Wife". In this way the "Wife" is said to form the *mithuna* with Soma (*Śat. Br.* III.3.1.11 *vṛṣā vai somah yoṣā patnī; eṣa vā-atra somo bhavati yat soma-kṛayanī; mithunam etāt pra-jananam kriyate*). There is a subtle detail about the gaze at the clarified butter which identifies it with the fire. It is ordained that, as soon as the "Wife" looks at the clarified butter, it is carried to the Āhavanīya fire-place, and is placed at it. This would show that the clarified butter is the fire from heaven, as the Āhavanīya fire is identified with the heavenly fire at many places. Thus the wife forms the *mithuna* with the fire itself in this ritual. The fire is [hot and dry, the clarified butter is liquid; hence it is called semen, like the Soma-juice.

We now come to another item in the method of symbolism. A bundle of grass, technically called *veda*, is used for the purpose of sweeping the altar (*vedi*); and here a *mithuna* is said to be formed, *veda* being the male and the *vedi* the female. (*Śat. Br.* I.9.1,21 *yoṣā vai vediḥ vṛṣā vedah; mithunatvāya vai vedah kriyate*; cf. also *Jai. Br.* III.8). The *veda* appears in a two-fold symbolism. In the first instance it is the male of the *vedi*, as noted above; and in the second case it is the male of the "Wife". This is so in the ritual of the loosening of the *veda* (*Śat. Br.* loc. cit. 22 *atha yat patnī vi sramsayati, yoṣā vai patnī vṛṣā vedah: mithunam etat pra-jajanam kriyate*). Thus, the "Wife" and the *vedi* get to be identified with each other, as both are the "women" of the *veda*. The *vedi* is quite often identified with the earth (for ex. *Śat. Br.* I.3.3.9; III.2.4.1). Earlier we saw that the "wife" was identified with Aditi. The equation is: *vedi*=Aditi=earth="Wife". In another symbolism, the *vedi*, conceived as female, is profusely covered with sacrificial grass; and the reason given is this: "Woman, indeed, is the *vedi*; round 'her' sit the gods and the Brāhmaṇas who are learned and of top-most rank (*śuśruvāmsaḥ anūcānāḥ*); he (the priest) makes her non-naked (*anagnām karoti*) as they are sitting round; for covering alone, hence, do they place the sacred grass" (*Ibid.* 8). The shape of the *vedi* is also such as corresponds to the woman. As the "Wife" and the *veda* form a *mithuna* there is further symbolism. The *veda* is placed on the lap of the "Wife", who invokes it to endow her with progeny (*Taitt Sam.* III.4.2.2.), and she is made to insert the tips of the *veda* in her navel-pit. Associated with the ritual of placing the tips in the navel-pit is that of spreading the grass-blades from the *veda* (after loosening it) in a straight line from the Gārhapatya fire to the Āhavanīya (*Taitt. Sam.* loc. cit.). This line indicates the line of progeny. The "Wife" addresses the *veda* as follows: "Thou art *veda* (from \sqrt{vid} , 'to gain'); bestow *vedas* (wealth) on me; you are satisfied; may I also be so satisfied with wealth and progeny." The spreading of the grass is done with the *mantra* "spreading the progeny-line etc. (*tantum tanvan...*)."

Subtly associated with the ritual of the *veda*, the "male", whose constituent grass is spread in a line as progeny, is the ritual of the *yoktra*, which is the girdle of the "Wife". It is

ordained that while girdling the "Wife", the *yoktra* should be so arranged that its knot should be in front, the noose up and the strap-ends down. Baudhāyana and Śāliki say that the noose be down, while Dīrghavātsya says that it be up and the strap-ends down. The reason given is that, "this way the progeny is born". This indicates that the binding of the *yoktra* corresponds to the probable position of the foetus in the womb. The *yoktra* is then released. and the grass from the *veda* spread between the two fires as noted above. According to the *Bhāradvaja Śr. S.* the *yoktra* is released when the *veda* is placed in the lap of the "Wife"; for, "thereby the 'Wife' gets a son." The "Wife" is to hold the *yoktra* in the cavity of her joined-up palms. In this condition the Hotṛ priest supports her palms from below with his left palm; and, with the right, he pours water on the *yoktra* with the *mantra* "may I not sprinkle off the progeny that comes along". The cavity of the palms of the "Wife" is, obviously, the symbol of the womb; the *yoktra* symbolizes the progeny, as is expressly stated; the water is the semen from the divine agent, who, in this case, is the hotṛ priest.

In the instance we have referred to above, water symbolizes semen from the divine source. In another ritual, connected with the New-and-full-Moon sacrifice (*Darśapūrṇamāsa*), after the "Wife" is girdled, she is to be lustrated at the back of the *Gārhapatya* fire. She is made to sit with the strainer held over her head; and through the strainer sacred water is poured over head.² As the streams of water come down she is required to sip therefrom (the ritual is called *apo-aśana*); and then she is required to address the *Gārhapatya* fire thus; "May I be full with progeny." There are other *mantras* having the same sense. The *Gārhapatya* fire, here, is the divine male forming the *mithuna* with the "wife". The stream of water indicates the semen.

We have referred to the gaze-motif earlier. Another interesting instance of this gaze-procreation is the ritual of the *pravargya gharma*, which represents the solar fructification.³ In it a vessel specially prepared and called *gharma* is used for heating milk (which is also called *gharma*) and it is placed in the fire; the fire is also called *gharma*. This vessel is one unit, but in appearance it looks as if three vessels are placed

one upon the other; and they indicate the three regions, heaven, the mid-region and the earthly region, with the element of fire therein. In ritual, the "Wife" is to look at the *gharma*, which is kept on the fire, and to address it as follows : "Being in the company of Tvaṣṭṛ may we serve you." The reason for this rite is thus explained : The *pravargya* is the virile male, the "Wife" the woman; they both form the sex-pair for procreation" (*Śat. Br. XIV. 1.32.15*).

In the example given above the *pravargya* or the *gharma* stands as the male. In an altogether different sort of ritual, we have the clarified butter and the axle-hole of the cart to complete the symbolism of sexual union. Thus, as the cart bringing the shoots of Soma enters the hall, the "Wife" takes a portion of clarified butter, sticking to the ladle after the offering into the fire, and applies it to the hole of the wheel into which the end of the axle is inserted. This place is called *santāpa* due to its getting heated due to the movement of the axle. It is now explained thus: "As the 'Wife' applies the clarified butter she performs a sex-act and accomplishes the progeny thereby. When, indeed, that (organ) of the male gets heated for the female, then is semen sprinkled; thence is the birth" (*Śat. Br. III. 5. 13, 14 atha yat patnī akṣasya santāpam upānakti prajānam eva tat kriyate; yadā vai striyai pumsaś ca santapyate, atha retaḥ sicyate, tat tataḥ prajāyate*). Though it is not stated specifically, the chariot, with the axle, stands for Soma which it carries; and the hole represents the "Wife". The clarified butter which the "wife" applies to it stands for semen.

Last, but certainly not the least, in this connection we take the ritual of the victim meant for the dual-deity Agni and Soma. After this victim is immolated, the "Wife" has to touch it with water. The water is the very life; and its touch is meant to restore the beast's life. Thus, with the restored life the victim goes to the gods. The point to be noted is that it is the "Wife" that brings about the restoration of the beast. Why? The explanation is as follows: As to the fact that the "Wife" touches; *yoṣā*, indeed, is the "Wife"; for *yoṣā* is the progeny procreated; him (i.e. the victim) does he (the priest) cause to be born for her; hence it is, that the *patnī* touches (*Śat. Br. III.8.2.4*). Now, the point is very important. The question is, "If the "Wife"

is the *yoṣā* (woman), who is her *vr̥ṣan* (virile male)? The sentence is, that for the *yoṣā* is the progeny procreated; it does not say that the beast is the progeny. Further it says, that for her is the beast to be caused to be re-born. This clearly shows that the *vr̥ṣā* is the beast himself; and it is his being re-born that helps the "Wife" get progeny. The *mithuna* is unique here. The "Wife" (the human) is the ritual-female; the male counterpart is the beast.

If we review the whole scheme of the *mithuna-s* we saw uptill now, we get at the following pattern:

<i>yoṣā</i> (The ritual female)	<i>Vr̥ṣā</i> (The ritual-male)
"Wife"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Priests=Gods; 2. Ritual-objects (<i>Ghṛta</i>, <i>gharma</i> Soma etc.); 3. Ritual-beast.

The motif of the immolated victim being the *vr̥ṣan* is seen further in such rituals as that of the *Vr̥ṣākapi*, which became obsolete in the later Vedic period itself, and the Horse-sacrifice where the virile horse was the *vr̥ṣan* of the queen that was the *yoṣā*, and represented the earth.

It will be only proper in this chapter to deal with the wives of the gods and their part in ritual. The ritual they are connected with most prominently is the *patnī-samyāja*, wherein the gods are invoked to arrive at the sacrifice with their wives. The reason given is that thereby a *mithuna* is formed. This will be clear from the following gloss on the ritual :

"The wives of the gods are caused to be offered to; for, from the sacrifice is the progeny born; and, being born from the sacrifice, they are born from coupling (*mithuna*); and, being born from the coupling, they are ultimately born from the sacrifice itself." (*Śat. Br.* I.9.2.5).

The comment on this portion by the scholiast is interesting. It is this : "At this time, when the wives of the gods are caused to be offered to, there is the 'procreating couple' formed". This is

the sacrificial coupling (*ādhiyājñīkam mithunam*, according to the term suggested by him), which represents the procreative faculty of Prajāpati himself. The *Śat. Br.* further informs that the gods obtained three "wife-offerings" (*parni-samyājān*) to the back side of the altar (*paścāt*; earlier the term used is *jaghanārdhe*) for, it is said that the back-half (*jaghanārdham*) is the very wife; thereby he accomplishes the very *mithuna* for procreation; following the *mithuna* of the gods is he born (afresh); by means of coupling after coupling does he get re-procreated, he who knows this" (*Śat. Br. XI.2.7.30* esp. *mithunena mithunena ha pra-jāyate*). On the analogy of this coupling of the gods, the sacrificer's wife would help more procreation by getting coupled with the various things we have noted earlier.

It is ordained that the offerings to the wives of the gods should be made behind a covering. Now, this indicates a social custom which is to be noted. The reason given is, that the gods are sitting around; and it is not proper for the women-folk to dine before them. It is further pointed out, that even the human women do not eat when the men are seeing (*Ibid.*, 12, esp. *tasmād imā mānuṣyāḥ striyas tira eva pumāmsō jighānsanti*).

In the same context the text gives the concept of four *mithunas* :

- (i) Clarified butter and the offerings, the former being the male and the latter the females; the other three have the wives of the gods as the common factor with the other male objects :
 - (ii) Soma and the wives of the gods;
 - (iii) Tvaṣṭṛ and the wives of the gods;
- and (iv) Agni Gārhapatya and the wives of the gods.

(*Śat. Br. I.9.2.6-13*)

The reason given is as follows : He offers to the wives of the gods; for, in the wives, in their genital organ (*patnīṣu vai yonau*), is semen sprinkled and established; thence does he get born (*Ibid.* 11). The same is also true about the cup of Soma called *pātnivata* (meant for the gods with the wives). Actually, the god is Tvaṣṭṛ; and this *mithuna* is formed for the multiplication of cattle (*Śat. Br. IV.4.2.9*). No separate cups are taken for the

wives of the gods as such; they are only associated with the cups for the god Tvaṣṭṛ, who is said to be *patnīvat* ("he along with the wives"). To indicate the cup meant for the wives, however, certain *mantras* are not recited when they are drawn, and there are also certain other indications. Thus, the cup for the wives is not taken with the verse technically known as the *puro-ṛc* (verse from the RV to be recited to mark the start). It is stated, that to recite the *puro-ṛc* is like creating the (male-organ and) semen in the wives; and semen is the distinction of the males, and not of women (*Ibid.* 11). Likewise it is said that while drawing the cup for the wives, the expression, "O Soma, of thee that art endowed with the *indriya*", should not be recited; for that would be the same as endowing the wives with semen. The words to be uttered are "with the *vīrya*" (*Ibid.* 12 *vīryavatā-ity eva-āha*; the *mantra*, *Vāj. Sam.* VIII.9). The differences between the offerings to the gods and to the wives are also mentioned by another method. The offerings to the wives are to be cast on the left to those of the gods; to the left, indeed, of man does the woman sleep (*Śat. Br.* IV.4.3.16). The actual words used are "to the south" in case of the gods, and "to the north (of the god's)" in the case of the wives, which indicates the custom of the wife sitting to the left of the husband, if both face the east. This is also the modern custom in many parts of India. (In the South, however, the position is reversed in certain cases).

The difference between the gods and the wives is suggested by another interesting detail in the ritual of offering the mixture of clarified butter and curds. Now, this in itself forms the *mithuna*, the clarified butter being the male and curds being the female (*Śat. Br.* III.8.4;7). This 'couple' of the material is to be offered to the gods and the wives of the gods. In this act the tail of the immolated beast is used (it is the goat's tail). There is difference maintained as regards the hairy outer part of this tale from the inner part. It is enjoined that the mixture is to be offered to the wives from the inner (non-hairy) side of the tail. To the gods it is to be offered from the outer (hairy) side. Why? The tail is known as the *jāghanī* (as it is in between the two *jaghanas*, i.e. buttocks). Progeny comes out from the inner portion of the female *antarato vai yoṣāyai prajāḥ prajāyante*); and from the outer side to the gods, because, from out

(above) does the male (beast) copulate with the female (cf. Ibid. III.8.5.7).⁴ If it be remembered that the goat is the zoo-morph of the fire-god⁵, it will be clear that even in the inner and the outer side of the *jāghanī* there is a *mithuna* formed; and this *mithuna* is of Agni in his female aspect and Agni in his male aspect. These two represent the wives of the gods and the gods respectively.

NOTES

1. Keith A.B. renders *patni-bhājana* as the representative of the wives, *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas Translated*, HOS, Cambridge, 1925, Tr. of the passage from the Ai. Br. noted above. But cf. *Śat. Br.* III. 4. 2. 15 *indra-bhājana*, and Sāyaṇa "*indra-sthāniyah*". This will show that the Neṣṭṛ priest is *patnī-sthāniya*, i.e. he takes the place of the "Wife". The *upastha* in his case cannot be "lap", as the word is usually translated. It has to indicate "hip",—the representation of the "wife's" genitals. See plate II.
2. The account of Apālā (RV VIII. 91) may be compared for the ritual-tradition: see Dange, *Vedic Concept of 'Field'* . . . pp. 73-82.
3. See Kashikar C.G., "Apropos the Pravargya", *Bulletin of CASS*, Uni. of Poona, 1973. For the gaze motif see Gonda J., *Eye and Gaze in the Veda*, North Holland Pbg. Company, Amsterdam-London, 1969.
4. Dandekar R.N. and Kashikar C.G., *Śrauta Kośa* (Eng. Tr.), Poona, 1958, p. 426 ff.
5. See Ch. 3, note 4.

The Marriage of Heaven and Earth

As we have noted rain or water was believed to be the nourishing fluid by the Vedic people; and the point is attested from many passages in the RV. But one of the most eloquent is the expression *apām retāmsi*, where it would mean “the fluids (*retāmsi* from \sqrt{ri} = “to flow” or “to move”) of the water”; but the employment of the word *retas* in this expression is an example of “word-play” which the Vedic seers very often indulged in. Parjanya is called *reto-dhas* (III.56.3); and we have also the concept of the “three-sprinklers of semen” (V.69.2; VII.33.7), who are the three fires at the three regions; the sun at the heavenly region, the lightning at the mid-region and the sacrificial fire or the fire in the terrestrial waters (*agni payasyān* at I.23.23), who are believed to fructify the waters (females) in the three worlds. The sun is said to be the arche-type of the seeders; he is the “seed-sprinkler” (X.40.11). The female counterpart in the case of these “sprinklers of the seed” is the earth in the most prominent image, of which the creepers, cows, and all females are phases. Parjanya has his female counterpart in the plants (V.85.1.8; VII.101.1; 102.2), while the sun has his females in the waters in the orb. In the case of the cloud the lightning fire has his waters that get fructified into rains. The cosmic fluid (rain) was the result of the sex-act; and, as a next step gave the concept of the ritual-couples, in ritual-persons, objects or even the verses, lauds or the *sāmans*. Such verses were the *āhanasyāḥ*, the utterance of which was believed to provide the semen for the symbolic re-birth of the sacrificer, or for the gain or restoration of fertility. In the same line fall also such expressions as *reto vai nābhāneṣṭhaḥ* or *mithunam vāmadevaḥ*, which refer to the

sāmans, that were considered to be a charm for procreation. On the basis of this sexual coupling developed the imagery of the marriage of various objects. Thus we have the following passage : “The waters were, indeed, the wives of the gods; they desired sex-union; after them did the wind-god (Vāyu) run, and copulated with them; they developed the foetus; to them did the gods say, ‘Release it now’; they released it—the Rathantara *sāman* on the first day;...the Bṛhat they released on the second day. In that was created the thunder of the rain-god (*parjanyaasya ghoso ’nvasrjyata*), hence, do they sound the drums at the recitation of the Bṛhat-*sāman*; thereby Parjanya becomes prone to release rain (Jai; Br. III.118; esp. last, *varṣukaḥ parjanya bhavati*). The point to be noted is that it is not the sounding of drums that is the only reason for the advent of the rains. It is mainly the formation of the sexual couples (*mithuna*) : Bṛhat-Rathantara *sāmans* is one couple; the other is Wind and Waters. We have noted earlier that the waters are the females at the three levels, and they are to be seeded by the three “seeders”, the fires. Here we have one more seeding principle, Vāyu. But, Vāyu is the aspect of fire in the mid-region (Nir. VII.2) along with Indra. Here we have another passage about the waters and their seeders : “Waters were, indeed, the wives of the gods; they desired sexual union (*tā mithunam alccanta*); they approached the gods Mitra and Varuṇa” (Jai. Br. I.140). This *mithuna* is brought in here to support the creation in cattle. At yet another place the waters are said to be approached by gods themselves (*tā devā upāyacchan*); they got the foetus, and produced the blue lotuses (Ibid II.200). Here the waters are obviously on the terrestrial plane, as the mention of the blue lotuses indicates. However, the concept of the formation of the foetus prior to and as a pre-requisite for the gain of rain is well developed in the Vedic people. The word *garbha* had two shades of meaning : i) the foetus; and ii) the one that causes the foetus. The one who causes the foetus is the fire; and this happens at three planes as noted earlier; and the ones to take the foetus are the waters, conceived as the females. In this sense has the expression about Vāyu, “he is the *garbha* of the world” (X.168.4 *bhuvanasya garbhah*) to be understood, where the idea is that the principle of wind is the impregnator of the cosmic forces.

The wind is, hence, able to fructify the mid-region also. Sāyaṇa (on RV I.88.1) echoes this belief when he quotes, "In the mid-region all is 'woman'; and Vāyu is the man that unites with all" (*sarvā strī madhyamasthānā pumān vāyuś ca sarvagah*); here the context is of rain. Allied to this, but far more common is the concept of the fire (Agni) being the *garbha* of the waters (cf. RV I.72.2; III.12,13). As the *garbha* of the waters he helps from the clouds, by creating foetuses in the watery vapours. He is the *garbha* in the sense of causing the formation of *garbha*. Likewise, the "Bird" (the sun) is the *apām garbha* ("garbha of the waters") that pacifies by the showers of rain (*vr̥ṣṭibhis tarpayan-tam*; see I.164.52). The concept of *garbha* is here directly connected with rain. Earlier in the same hymn (v.33) we have the riddle-like and startling expression, "here did the Father plant the foetus" (*atrā pitā duhitur garbham ā dhāt*). The image is of two well opened up saucers (*uttānayoś camvoḥ*), representing the sky and the earth, in the interior of which is the "foetus" placed. The idea is that the sky and the earth must separate and yet unite; the separation is to have a clear duality that is needed for the generating of the *garbha* (where there is no duality, the concept is of the bi-sexual deity, as we shall have occasion to see later). The motif of the separation and union of the earth and sky will soon be discussed. At another place, in an unmistakable and clear reference to rain-waters, we have the *garbhas* oozing out from the darkness of the clouds (X.73.2). The sacrifice is the means, and the sacrificial fire is the "son" that invigorates the Father (Heaven) to produce the *garbha* and sustain it (III.1.8;10).

The imagery of the formation of the foetus works on the beliefs of the two worlds copulating. This image is extended to other gods also, the earth, the plants or the waters being the woman. Thus, Indra knows the plants and causes the *garbha* in them (III.57.3). At the advents of the stormy Maruts (the wind-gods in a band) the earth bears the foetus, as a woman does at the union with her husband (V.58.7; cf. VI.66.3). About Parjanya we have already seen that he is the seeder who creates the *garbha* in all the female species. Soma causes the *foetus* in the water called Vasativarī by mixing with them at the ritual of placing the pressed out shoots of Soma in them for swelling and

re-pressing on the ritual-plane (IX.19.5); and, by this sympathetic action, causes the foetus in the mid-region waters; this helps form the clouds. The earth gets the fluid from the mid-region and becomes *garbharasā* for cultivation (I.164.8). The Maruts again and again (i.e. yearly) help the formation of the cosmic foetus, through the medium of the sacrifice (I.6.4 *punar garbhavtvam erire, dadhānā nāma yajñīyam*). In all the cases of the formation of the *garbha*, the stages were—the evaporation of the waters by the heat of the sun; and the formation of the cloud by the mid-region fire. This was set in the sacrificial environment; and it was believed that the sacrifice aided this process. The belief that it rains when the mid-region forms a *garbha* continued; and in the *Bṛhatsamhitā* Varāhamihira refers to various opinions regarding the formation of the foetus. According to one opinion the formation began in the month of Kārtika after the bright half (Bṛ. Sam. XXI.5 *kārtika-suklāntam atītya garbha-divasā syuḥt*). If the rains come after the period of eight months, i.e. about Āṣāḍha, the formation would require roughly the same time as that in the case of a woman.

The concept of the *garbha* prior to the coming of the rains is closely associated with that of the marriage. As we have noted above, the *garbha* is formed according to one image by the union between the fire and the waters. But, according to another, the union of the two great elements, Heaven and Earth, forms the basis for the rituals of rain. There was the belief that these two are to be got married. They are the ancient parents; and their marriage developed as the basis for the formation of other couples in the ritual-set-up. The belief that these two united to create rain, or were to be so united, is traced to the period, at least, as old as the RV. It is to be noted, however, that the relationship between these two is two-fold in the RV. They are in close embrace and are to be separated, which forms the exploit of many gods (II.12.2; X.89.4 etc); their marriage does not come clearly in the RV. They are said to be full of the nourishing fluid (I.159.2 *bhūri-retasā pitarā*); and Indra to said is lead these parents for the enjoyment of *retas* (I.155.3 *ni mātarā nayati retase bhuje*). About these two Agni is said to cause the “milk” of the “cow” and the “*sūkra* of the bull” (I.160.3), where the couple is pre-

sented zoomorphically. These references indicate the release of rain. The intimate relationship of the wife and husband between them is indicated when the earth is requested to send rain from her *abhra* (cloud), which actually is controlled by Heaven (V.84.3). The two myths, that of the separation of Heaven and Earth, and that of their union again for the formation of rain (heavenly semen), are presented generally exclusive of each other in the RV. In one place, however, there is fusion of these two motifs: They are said to be separated by the law of Varuṇa; and, in the same context, they are said to be "honey-milking", *madhudughe* a clear rain-symbol) and "gheeful" (*ghur̥tavati*, another rain-symbol, VI.70.1,2). This cannot be taken simply as an accidental description. The point marks a step further than the myth of the mere separation of these two elements. This also suggests that it is the union of the separated that is necessary for the release of the nourishing fluid, rain (*retas*). The myth of pure separation¹ is a light-myth, indicating that the close primeval embrace of the elements was due to darkness and non-distinctness of forms. As an extended clarification, it might indicate the advent of the first ray of the morning sun after the gloom of the night. This myth is like that of SHU, the light-god from ancient Egypt, separating his own children, Seb (male, here Earth) and Nut (female, Sky).² There is no indication of rain in this myth, as it is the myth of creation; and it suggests the first distinction of the two elements due to the first ray of light; but there is another myth regarding Heaven and Earth from New Zealand. The myth is twofold, and is as follows: Heaven and Earth, the parents, lie in a close embrace; and the gods get produced inside; they get suffocated, and devise a plan to separate the parents. Here this exploit is accomplished not by the god of light, but by the forest-god, represented by a tree. He plants his head (roots) on the belly of the mother (Earth) and stretches the father (Sky) by his feet (branches) up. These parents are still separated. The Father, being sorry, sometimes weeps; and the drops fall on the body of the mother (Earth) in the form of rain.³ Here, as in the Vedic myths, separation is needed for rain. But, in this myth rain is not semen which is the case in the Vedic myth. It will be seen that the myth of sepa-

ration and rain is later than that of mere separation; for, rain is an occasional phenomenon, while the gain of light from the sunrise is a daily one. The rain-gain and the union of the 'parents' in the Vedic tradition gave rise to another myth. It is the marriage of the earth (E) and heaven (H). This is enacted in rituals and forms the basis of many other ritual-couples (*mithunas*). We refer below to some accounts from the Brāhmaṇas.

According to one of the accounts as it occurs in the *Ai. Br.* (IV.27): "These two worlds were together; they separated; (now) it did not rain, nor anything fell. The five tribes were thus, in disharmony. The two (H-E) did the gods (then) bring together; they two, coming together, got married by this *deva-vivāha* (*tau sañ yantāv 'etam devavivāham vyavahetām*)". This *deva-vivāha* has two aspects: One is the performance of sacrifice, by which the smoke is received by the heavenly region and rain from there by the earth. The other aspect is the employment of proper ritual-chants (*sāmans*). It is said in the same context, that the yonder one is impelled (quickened) by this one (Earth) by the Rathantara *sāman*; and the yonder one impels this one by the Bṛhat *sāman*. Further, that yonder one is impelled by this one by the chant of Nodhas; and the yonder one impels this one by the Śyeta chant. It is also said that this one sends to the yonder one the smoke of the sacrificial fire, and that the yonder one sends her the "salt" (or saline earth, *ūṣān*); for salt is nourishment. It will be seen that salt or saline earth symbolizes rain here. The point seems to be that rain is sustaining, and so is salt. The equation is actually spelt out by the *Ai. Br.* (*Ibid*, *ūṣaḥ-poṣo Janmejyaka iti*, where the belief is supported from the reference to the dialogue with Janmejaya). However, the identification seems to have deeper implication. Salt here stands as the symbol of semen also, which is the symbol of rain well attested in the RV. Other symbols for rain like the tear, the sweat and urine are explained this way. Tear occurs as the cosmic fluid of generation (*Śat Br.* IV.1.2.1-9).⁴ Rain is the perspiration of the Maruts (RV V.58.7); and rain is also said to be the urine of the cosmic horse (the sun) (*Bṛhad. Up.* I.1); and when the RV-seer says that the Maruts lead the cloud for raining, he employs a very clear image, that of the urinating horse (1.64.6 *atyam na mihe vi nayanti vājinam*).

We have about the same account in the *Jai. Br.* (I.145); with slight difference: "These two worlds, being together, separated; nothing dropped from them two (i.e. no rains came); thereby the gods and the men began to perish; for, due to gifts from here (in the form of sacrificial offerings) do the gods get sustenance; and, by what is gifted from above (rain) do men live. They (Bṛhat and Rathantara *sāmans*) said that they would both perform the marriage by means of their "own bodies". The Śyeta *sāman* was the dear body of Rathantara, which was itself Agni. The laud of Nodhas⁵ was that of Bṛhat. With these two did they perform the marriage (of H and E). (The result was that) saline earth (salt, *uṣān*) did the other one send to this one; and this one sent the (sacrificial) smoke to the other one, from here. Rain itself did the other one (Heavenly region) send as gift for her (Earth) from there; (the actual word used is *sulka*, which is "bridalsurety,") and the *devayaṅana* (sacrificial ground) this one (Earth)for the yonder one (Heaven)." Here and in the passage from the *Ai. Br.* noted above, as these two are married, the words used are in the feminine gender (*asau amuṣyai*; and *ityam amuṣyai*); but that indicates only the ladies on both the sides; as in a human marriage; they do not indicate that the marriage was between two females, or, better, that the two worlds were here considered to be females. Actually, the upper world is conceived both as the woman and the man in the RV; and the word *rodasī*⁶ might indicate that. But, as a sexual couple the words in the feminine cannot be taken as they are. They are to be taken as Man and Woman, forming a couple. In these passages the place of the sacrifice, including the smoke and the offering causing it, stands for the earth (woman); rain and *uṣāh* stand for heaven (Man). There is a minute difference between these accounts, which may be noted. The *Ai. Br.* does not say that the other two *sāmans* (chants) are the "own bodies" of the Rathantara and the Bṛhat; in the passage from the *Jai. Br.* they are said to be the "own bodies" of the Rathantara and Bṛhat. But this is implied even in the *Ai. Br.*-passage. The common motif at both the places is that the marriage between the chants (or lauds) is representative of that of the two worlds. In the other two lauds being the own bodies of the earlier lauds, there is clear indication of

the method of substitution and also of innovation in the method of symbolizing the worlds. Here the marriage is for the gain of rain. It is clear that, with the ascendancy of the system of sacrificial details, the lauds came to be mentioned. Shorn of the lauds, the picture that remains is of a simple sacrifice where the smoke of the offerings is believed to generate rains. The point reverts to that of the belief in the peculiar relationship between the fire and the waters, noted earlier.⁷ And, if even the fire and the sacrificial aids are taken away (which amounts to ritual-aids) the plain belief is that of the copulating worlds. It would, thus, be clear that the passages referred to above show a mixture of two beliefs: i) Simple coupling which indicates, and acts as a charm for, the coupling of the two worlds—the PARENTS; and ii) coupling in the atmosphere of the fire-ritual. In the Vedic rites for rain both these got mixed; but there are rites from elsewhere wherein the two aspects are independent of each other. In the passages examined above the *sāmans* are caused to be married. Now, there is a very important reference to indicate a former couple that represented H and E. This is named the *mena-menā* couple. The *Jai Br.*, which heads the tradition of the *sāmans*, refers to the *mena-menā* couple and tries to devalue it. It says: “They caused the *mena* and the *menā* to be married; hence they (the others) say (rightly) that the *mena-menā* are not to be Married; it is, verily, the marriage of the Bṛhat and the Rathantara that he (the sacrificer or the priest) accomplishes (*Ibid. loc. cit.*, *menā-menām vāva te tad vyavahetām; tasmād āhur na menā-menam vyūhyam iti brhad-rathantarayoreva vaiṣa vivāham abh-yārohati*). The whole scheme of parallels may be given as under:

Rain-gain : scheme of coupling :

<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Heaven	Earth
Bṛhat- <i>sāman</i>	Rathantara- <i>sāman</i>
↓	↓
Naudhasa- <i>sāman</i>	Śyeta- <i>sāman</i>
Mena	Menā
Saline earth, salt semen, RAIN	Smoke, offerings through fire

The mention of the *mena-menā* couple is important in the history of the tradition of the ritual couple-formation. It is clear that it was an earlier type; or it may be, that when the *Jai. Br.* refers to it as a method to be discarded, it may be praising the laud-couple method as against the *mena-menā* one. Actually human-couples or mixed zoo-anthropomorphic couples did figure in fertility rites of the Vedic Aryans (cf. *Jai. Br.* II.425 “they cause the Māgadha and the prostitute to perform the sexual act at the southern end of the altar”, *dak-sine vedy 'ante mithunīkārāyanti* at the Mahāvratā; also the Horse-sacrifice). The word *menā* has a very ancient history; and the *RV* also mentions this word with a similar meaning. The word occurs six times in the *RV*; but the corresponding masculine form *mena* is not found in it. The word *menā* indicates a beautiful girl (cf. II.39.2 where it comes as the standard of comparison for the Aśvins), and an auspicious girl (I.95.6 in the dual, *ubhe bhadre joṣayete na mene*). The mention that the girls were auspicious is clear in the comparison with the Aśvins, and also in the fact of the earth and the sky being called *mene* (*Ibid* 62.7). In the rest of the places (three in all) the word comes in the singular; but only with Indra. At one place Indra is said to have himself become *menā* of one *Vṛṣaṇāśva* (I.51.13 *menābhavo vṛṣaṇāśvasya su-krto*). At another place the same is said about him (X.111.3 *āt menām kṛṇvann acyutaḥ*). In the last place there is a riddle-like expression. Indra is said to have made the *menā* of the horse the “mother” of the cow (1.121.2. *menām aśvasya pari mātaram goḥ*). Scholars take this exploit, generally following Sāyaṇa, as a sort of a wonder and believe that Indra produced a cow from the mare.⁸ The expression “the *menā* of the horse” (*aśvasya menām*) here and “the *menā* of *Vṛṣaṇāśva*” are similar; and it is clear that *Vṛṣaṇāśva* is not an historical figure; but simply “the virile horse” (according to the accent). This will show that in “the *menā* of *Vṛṣaṇāśva*” we have the indication of a mixed (zoo-anthropomorphic) couple that acted at a ritual; and, on the authority of the *Jai. Br.*, this couple must have represented the H-E couple for the gain of rain. And the same must have been the concept in the second expression, “the *menā* of the Horse”. In the latter context there is a clear

reference to the gain of rain, along with the motif of the separation of H and E (II.21.2 *stambhīd ha dyām dharuṇam pṛṣāyat*; see also Sāyaṇa). Though here there is no clear reference to the marriage of H and E, or of the *mena* and the *menā*, it is clear enough that the horse is the male counterpart of the *menā*. The concept is a mixed one. We are told that it is Indra who became the *menā*, suggesting the bi-sexual nature of Indra. Or, from another angle, the *menā* of the horse is an aspect of Indra in the ritual of rain. We may compare the rituals where a girl impersonates Indra: for example, the girl in the rain-forecasting ritual among the Behirs was believed to be possessed of Indra.⁹ Bi-sexual deities are not foreign to the Vedic rituals; and they are seen also elsewhere; we shall have occasion to examine the point later in a separate chapter. The exact ritual-example of the “*menā* of the Horse” is the Horse-sacrifice, where the *Mahiṣī* (*menā* according to this terminology) united with the *ṛsan-aśva* (virile horse; cf. the epithets of the horse, *Taitt. Sam.* VII.2 *ṛṣā vām aśvo reto dadhātu*; and *Vāj. Sam.* XXIII.18 *sam añjim cārayā ṛṣan*). The *RV* does not contain a full-fledged ritual of the Horse sacrifice, nor is it expected to contain it, being only a collection of the *mantras*; but it does have two whole hymns (I.162-3) about the sacrificial horse and the cooking of its flesh. The references to the “*menā* of the horse”, without any doubt whatsoever, have to be understood in relation to this sacrifice. There is a probability of the *menā* (and the *mena*) being some sort of dolls, to be ritually married; but it is very weak, and there is no proof for this practice. When the *Jai Br.* refers to the marriage of the *mena-menā* it obviously refers to the ancient Vedic practice, which probably the adherents of the Chāndogya school did not much opt for, as they wanted to stress the importance of the lauds. There is another interesting detail in the case of the marriage between the lauds. It is said that the marriage was to be accomplished at the *nidhana*, which is the end of the *sāman* (*Jai. Br. loc. cit.*). The *nidhana*, hence, was supposed to be the portion whereat the *sāmans* could unite. Now, at another place it is said that the *nidhana* is the very semen of the lauds (*Ibid* I.211 *tad u hovāca jānaśruteyaḥ, vīryam vā etat sāmno yan nidhanam*).

The marriage of the worlds was, thus, accomplished by various ways. Now, there is another interesting point to be noted in this connection, which has parallels elsewhere. The *Jai. Br.* rejoins in this respect the following: "The 'lord' is to be set away (op. cit. *sa īśvaraḥ parābhavitoḥ*)." That means, this symbolic ritual of marriage, or that of copulation, was to defeat(?) the "lord of rain". The word *īśvara* is not found in the older Vedic texts, though *īśāna* is there. The concept of *īśvara*, hence, is new and does not, probably, convey the god who is merciful (cf. also *Ibid*, I.140; II.237). In any case, here is the concept of a god who is not helpful; and he has to be defeated for the gain. We might compare the Gandharva Viśvāvasu, or Śuṣṇa (the rough aspect of the sun); and this defeat is due to the peculiar and sexual ritual. Belief obtains that the high god who controls rain has to be enraged to release rain. The concept in the present expression is not far from it. This probably explains also the incestuous relationship between Yama and Yamī, or the Father and the Daughter. In all such cases the names are symbolic and hold good only in the ritual set-up.

The motif of the copulation of the two worlds is seen prominently in the ritual of Agnicayana, (the piling of the altar); and the purpose is the gain of rain. In one of the layers there two bricks, called *retaḥ-sicau* ("sprinklers of semen") are laid. These bricks are identified with the two worlds, Heaven and Earth, giving the idea that the two worlds sprinkle the semen (rain). Actually this is what is said, "these worlds sprinkle the semen" (cf. the *RV*, where they are said to be *bhūriretasā* noted earlier). The point is further explained in the following way: "From this world does he send the *retas* (semen) in the form of the sacrificial smoke; that becomes rain (in the yonder world) there (*ito vā-ayam retaḥ siñcati dhūmam, sa amutra vṛṣṭir bhavati*); that one sends that (rain) thence (*Śat. Br. VII. 4.2.22*). The thought that underlies the whole description is the sexual union of the two worlds. In another context we have the same motif. The context is the placing of the *paridhi-s* (sticks that form the protective boundary) round the sacrificial fire. The text enjoins that the priest should place one of the *paridhi-s* with the following *mantra*: "May Heaven and

Earth have a common 'desire';...Go to the speckled (horses) of the Maruts (the clouds); becoming a young cow go to heaven; thence carry rain to us; for indeed, when Heaven and Earth have common 'desire' (*sam-jānāte*) it rains (*Śat Br.* 1.8.312). The *paridhi-s* were believed to be aspects of the sacrificial fire itself; they were the brothers of the fire.¹⁰ Now, when the *Paridhi* goes to Heaven, in the form of a cow (*vrśā*) there is the suggestion of a coupling with the upper fire, who, then, becomes the bull. Thus the *paridhi*-fire and the upper fire (in the mid-region as is clear from the mention of the Maruts) form the couple, and release rain. The *Jai. Br.* connects the *paridhis* with rain directly. Thus it is said: "When the water sprinkled on the *paridhi-s* falls out, it is established; for, water is semen, this one (Earth) is the womb. This way, in the womb alone is the semen established; (and) from there (Heaven) is semen (rain) sprinkled down; and here the plants are created" (I.53). Here the *Jai. Br.* works on the set identification of the fire-altar (*vedi*) and the earth; and, in the sprinkling of the *vedi*, the earth is sprinkled by the heavenly semen (rain).¹¹

The principle of the formation of the couple is seen also in the verses called *viṣṭuti* ("Special prayer", lit.). The *viṣṭuti* is formed by grouping three verses, or parts of verses, each beginning with the sound *hiñ* or *huñ*. As we shall see in the chapter of the lauds and the coupling, the *hiñ* (or *huñ*) sound and the verse forms a *mithuna*, the *hiñ* or *huñ* being the male. Here, this *mithuna* is closely associated with the idea of the gain of rain. It is said that he who practices the *viṣṭutis* does not die a premature death, and for him rains come timely. It is also said that the three verses (or parts of verses) that go to form the unit of a *viṣṭuti* represent the three worlds. The *hiñ* (or *huñ*) sound unites them (*Pañc. Br.* II.2.2;3.5). The union of the worlds (here three) has to be taken to bring rain, though it is not specifically mentioned in this passage. The *Jai. Br.* associates various chants (*stobha-s*) with rain. It says that chants with dissimilar beginning should be united; for they form the couple which is productive (*ajāmi mithuna*, as against a *jāmi mithuna*; see chapter 3; *jāmi* is mutually similar, like two individuals of the same sex=non-productive; it is the

ajāmi couple, the dissimilar ones, that procreates). After suggesting the formation of the *hiñ* (or *huñ*) with the verse (into a *viṣṭuti*) the text says further: "That one (heaven=*hiñ/huñ*) is Bhaga; this one (Earth) is Bhid. (That) one is the man; this one is the woman; when the yonder (that) one sprinkles (*varṣati*, "rains down"), this one brings forth.

When, indeed, the man sprinkles semen in the woman, does she bring forth" (*Jai. Br.* I.330). The couple Bhaga-Bhid (H-E) is, indeed, symbolic; for the latter has the sense of the "split" (or the "slit") which indicates the woman; and may be compared with the symbolism in the couple of the chants having "one less" (woman, suggesting the minus member) and "one more" (suggesting the member in excess, i.e. the male organ) as we shall note further in the chapter on the lauds. The efficacy of the various combinations of the lauds forming couples, or even singly, is clear in such expressions as: "Once the rains receded from this world; by means of the Cyāvāna laud the gods caused it to fall" (*Pañc. Br.* XIII. 5,12). The Cyāvāna laud is made by the singer Cyavāna or by another singer on the *ṛc* (*RgVedic Verse*) by Cyavāna.

Various symbolic sounds in the ritual atmosphere were believed to cause it to rain. Thus it is said; "With the utterance "O *Śrāvaya*" (let us hear) the gods created the wind; it advanced; with '*astu śrauṣaṣ*' (may it be heard), the clouds began to float; with *yaja* (offer) the lightning (sparkled); with '*ye yajāmahe*' (we who sacrifice) the thunder roared; (and) with the utterance '*vaṣaṣ*', they caused it to rain" (*Śat. Br.* I. 5.2.4). The sexual imagery, including the bi-sexual (cf. *menā*=Indra) is seen vividly in the case of the Subrahmaṇyā laud and the Subrahmaṇya priest, the former being considered as the woman and the latter the man. The Subrahmaṇya laud (*nigada*) is said to have destroyed the Asuras and the Rākṣasas by the creation of rain, itself becoming the wonder in three genders. It is said that when the gods were performing the sacrifice, the Asuras and the demons destroyed it: the gods called out loudly, "Brahma-Om; Subrahma Om." At this call the sun (Āditya) became Parjanya, the god of rain, and, transforming himself into a cloud, rushed to the aid of the gods. He killed the demons and the Asuras by the lightning and the showers of

rain. Now, the Subrahmaṇya formula and the priest of that name are said to have all the three genders; "Thus it is said, that the Subrahmaṇya is the woman, the man (feminine-masculine) and the neuter. As Parjanya advances becoming a cloud, thereby he is the man; as with the rain-shower and the thunder, thereby woman; and as with the lightning, thereby the neuter"; (*Śadv. Br.*) 1.2). The point is that the sun himself came to the help of the gods when the words "Subrahmaṇya Om" were uttered. This would indicate that Subrahma is the name of the sun; and, in another aspect, it is the name of cloud, symbolically. Rain is, thus, considered as the Brahman; and, when it does not flow, it is sealed in the sun and the cloud. Another point is that the Subrahma=Sun=Cloud deity is not only bi-sexual, but also tri-sexual. The imagery reverts to the concept of Indra being the *menā*, though he is himself masculine. Thus, the general belief of the release of rain being due to the formation of a sexual couple persists. It is the result of a union of the male-female elements; and this may be two different entities coming to unite, or one entity itself splitting to form a sexual duality.

NOTES

1. For a study, A. Seidenberg, "The Separation of the Sky and the Earth at Creation", *Folklore*, London 70, 1959, pp. 477-82.
2. R.T. Rundle Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1959, p. 48 f.
3. Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth*, I, London, 1984, p. 46; J. Macmillan Brown, *Maori and Polynesia*, London, 1907; A.L. Kroeber and T.T. Waterman, *Source-book in Anthropology*, New York, 1931, p. 444 ff. The names of the parents are Rangi (Sky) and Papa (Earth). See also *Folk-tales of All Nations*, Ed. F.H. Lee, New York, 1946.
4. *Mait. Sam.* IV. 6.3 ; cf. *Śat. Br.* IV. 2.1.11 for the eye as the source of rains and of corn. ; R. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
5. Nodhas is the seer of RV I. 53.—64 ; VIII. 88 ; IX. 93 ; here the laud on RV VIII. 88.1 is meant. The *Śyeta Sāman* is on RV VIII. 49.1.
6. The word is the dual of the fem. ; etymologically it means, "the crying one". RV I. 10.8,—167.5 etc. etc.

7. Among the Zuni it was customary to smoke the pipe; see *Encl. R.E.*, XI, p. 632, VIII, p. 505.
8. For example Geldner, "female animal" for *menā*. Macdonell-Keith: *Vedic Index*, take *Vṛṣaṇāśva* as a real person.
9. Ch. 2.
10. *Śat. Br.* I. 2.3.1-2; *Taitt. Br.* III. 2.8. 10-11.
11. For the *vedi* as the earth, *Śat. Br.* I. 1.2.5.9; *Taitt. Br.* I. 6.1.5 etc.

Sexual Coupling and Speech-symbolism

We have noted earlier how the motif of sex-pairing is used in the Vedic ritual-tradition with a view to promoting prosperity and weal. The method of coupling is extended also to the various forms of Speech, from single symbolic letters to whole verses and the lauds (*sāmans*). We have referred to the coupling of the Rathantara and the Bṛhat *sāmans*, and their aspects—the later *sāmans*, the Śyeta and the Naudhasa. In this chapter we shall examine more examples of this sort where the letters also have been employed for the formation of couples.

To begin with, let us take the example of the verses called *prayājas*, that are used at the time of the offering. It is said that the *prayāja-s* were originally *pra-jaya-s*, “Givers of success”; by them did the gods get success (*Śat. Br.* I.5.3.3.). The *prayājas*, in the Brāhmanic sacrificial set-up correspond to the deities of the Āprī hymns of the RV¹; and they are associated with the five seasons (*Ibid.* 9-14). Now, the fourth *prayāja* verse refers to the deity *barhi* (sacred grass). The ritual is, that the sacrificial grass is offered into the fire; but, prior to this, clarified butter is poured on the grass. The explanation is as follows: “The sacrificial grass stands for the progeny, (cf. the line of sacrificial grass in the chapter on “Sacrificer’s wife”; ch. 4) and the clarified butter is the semen; by means of this semen being sprinkled the progeny gets along, being born successively (*Ibid.* 16). In the same context we have the concept of the *mithuna*. While reciting the *prayāja-s* the words *vyantu* and *vyetu* (both meaning “may expend” or “may envelop”) are ordained to be uttered; and it is said that the word *vyantu* indicates the woman, (due to its being plural), while *vyetu*

the man (Ibid. 15 *vyantv 'iti vai yoṣā, vetv 'iti vṛṣā; mithunam evaitat prajananam kriyate*). The belief at the back of the singular being the male and the plural the woman is based on the practice that a man can marry many women; but a woman can have only one man (cf. Com. Sāyaṇa). This example indicates how single words could form *mithuna*.

Chanting the *mantra-s* was believed to be equal to releasing semen. The Ṛc and the Yajus are said to form the semen that is believed to fall into the sacrificial fire when a formula is chanted (*Jai. Br. II.23 tad etad ṛgretasam yajū-retasam brahmaṇi yonau reto dadhāti; agnāveva tad āhutibhir abhi juhvato yanti*). The sacrificial ritual necessitates the new birth of the sacrificer: and this is brought about by the muttering of various verses without any sound, but only with the movement of the lips; for, it is said that this is for releasing semen, "as semen is released in silence (*upāmsu*)." At various places verses to Prajāpati are uttered in silence, i.e. in the *upāmsu* way; for it indicates the actual sex act (*Ai. Br. II.38, upāmsu japati, upāmsu vai retasaḥ siktih*). There are some interesting details in the *Ai. Br.* in this respect. Now, even the *upāmsu* muttering forms a *mithuna* with the loud invocation (*āhāva*). It is further said that when these two modes of utterances are, thus, coupled a coupling takes place between the Adhvaryu priest and the Hotṛ. Here, the Hotṛ represents the male and the Adhvaryu the female, if we accept the scholiast Sāyaṇa (at another place the status is just the reverse; generally, the Adhvaryu is the male in the coupling of the priests).² The ritual that follows is interesting. One of the priests (Adhvaryu acc. to Sāyaṇa) sits on his fours, i.e. touching the ground with his hands and feet; then there is the *upāmsu* muttering, followed by the *āhāva* type ending in the utterance *śomsau-OM'*, by another priest (see plate I). Here the Adhvaryu and the other priest, who form the *mithuna* of the *upāmsu* and the *āhāva*, form a *mithuna* between themselves. The reason given is this: Prior to the *āhāva* they enact the beasts in copulation, while at the *āhāva* they become humans; for the beasts release semen being at the back of the copulative partner, while among the human it is done being face to face, in a normal sex-act between the two of the opposite sex (Ibid. *tat prāñcam catuṣpady āsinam*

abhyāhvayate; tasmāt prāṅco bhūtvā catuṣpado retaḥ siñcanti; samyag dvipād bhavati, tasmāt samyañco bhūtvā dvipado retaḥ siñcanti). By another method of symbolism, in both types of utterances (i.e. *upāmsū* and *āhāva*), the breath represents semen, while the verse (which is the aspect of Speech) represents the female (Ibid. *Prāṅco vā-āyuh; prāṅco retaḥ, vāg yoniḥ; yonim tad upasandhāya retaḥ siñcati*),

For bringing about the sacrificial birth of the sacrificer verses are uttered in trios, as they are believed to be the device for the release of semen (*Jai. Br. I.231 retaḥ-siktir eva pūrvast-rivrt*); Certain verses are termed *retasyāḥ*, like the *ahānasyāḥ*. By the utterance of the *retasyā* verses the mind is said to be impelled, and by the verses in the Gāyatrī metre the life-breath (*prāṇa*); by those in the Triṣṭubh metre the eye or the faculty of vision (*cakṣus*), by those in the Jagatī the ear and by those in Anuṣṭubh the faculty of speech is said to be impelled (*Jai. Br. I.253*). Thus, when the Udgātṛ priest sings the chant called the Bahiṣpavamāna he causes the sacrificer to be freshly released into the sacrificial birth in the form of semen (*Ibid*). At a further place in the *Jai. Br.* it is stated that the sacrificer has two births. The first birth is from the copulation of his mother and father (a human birth); the second is in the sacrifice, by the sacrifice itself. The second birth is for the divine world of the sacrifice, where the Udgātṛ priest is said to be the very Prajāpati; he is also Tvaṣṭṛ, the sprinkler of semen and the formulator of various forms. For the complete and virile birth a mere recitation of the verses is not sufficient; for, it is said, if a mere verse from the RV is recited, without the formation of the proper *sāman* (chant or laud), only the bones of the sacrificer will be formed, not flesh; if the *sāman* (laud) is chanted, without the *ṛc*, only the flesh will be formed, not the bones. Hence does he sing the *ṛc* covered with the *sāman* (*ṛcam sāmnā-abhiliptām gāyati*); thus, he gets born with the flesh, bones and hair (*Jai. Br. I.259*). As the sacrificer is sprinkled as semen (*retas*) in the form of the laud, so is he said to be released in the form of semen, that is the juice of Soma pressed out sacrificially (Ibid. cf. *yad havirdhāne gravabhiḥ somam rājānam abhi-sunvanti yajamānam eva tad retaḥ kurvanti*). There is another symbolism presented by the *Śat. Br.*: "The gods re-

fashioned Prajāpati who was disjointed. This they did by placing him in the *ukhā* (fire-pan), in the form of fire-semen (this refers to the placing of sand in the fire-pan); for the *ukhā* is, indeed, the womb. Likewise did the sacrificer place himself in the fire-pan being semen (X.4.1.1,2). There itself Prajāpati is said to be composed of metres, lauds, life-breath and deities (VI. 1.3.26). Thus, Prajāpati is the very sacrifice, on the one hand; and, on the other, he is identified with the sacrificer. They both are semen, on the one hand; and, on the other, they are composed of the lauds and metres. Semen also is twofold: i) Lauds, and metres; and ii) The liquid-offering, may be Soma, or the clarified butter. The three *anu-yājas* (after-verses) are said to be the three male organs of the sacrificer (*Śat. Br. XI.1.2.2 trīṇi śiśnāni ta eva trayo anu-yājāḥ*). If the *anu-yājas* are the male organs, the chants or lauds that are formed upon them are semen; the idea may be compared with that of the *pra-yājas* noted earlier (cf. the tale of Sumitra Kautsa and Dīrghajihvi mentioned at the close of the chapter).

As the *anu-yājas* are said to be the male-organs, so is said about the *sruva* type of ladle, with which the liquid offering is poured into the fire: it is the male among the ladles. The clarified butter is identified with semen; it is poured by means of the *sruva*; hence the *sruva* is the male (*Śat. Br. VI.3.3.18 atho reto vā-ājyam; reta evaitat siñcati sruvena; vṛṣā vai retah siñcati, svāhākārah; vṛṣā vai retah siñcati*). Along with the pouring of the "semen" (clarified butter) with the *sruva* there is the utterance *svāhā*, which ends the act of the offering. It will be seen (see quotation noted above) that the word *svāhā* is associated with the act of offering, and now, the utterance *svāhā* itself is said to be the male organ. This method of symbolizing the particular word as the male organ or semen is noted at a number of places. Thus, it is said that by the *vaṣaṭ* utterance the oblation is poured into the fire, as if it were semen, which indicates the utterance to be the male organ (*Śat. Br. 1.5.2.11*). In this act also there is the *mithuna* of the words *āśrāvaṇa* and *praty-āśrāvaṇa* (both indicating hearing); but the *āśrāvaṇa* utterance is done mutely, while the other loudly; they form a *mithuna*. The technical term used in this context

is *sam-pradāya*, which means “giving of the *ādeśa* or the order”; it has two aspects: i) *ā śṛṇu*, “Hear us”; and ii) *astu tathā*, “May it be so.” When these two are uttered there is a *mithuna* formed, this generates the release of semen; for, it is said, the speech itself is semen (Ibid., I.5.2.7). We also get the following arrangement: The *anuvākya* verses (those that are recited at the end of the rite) are said to be Heaven or Sky; the *yājyā* verses (recited at the actual offering) are Earth; but they both are women. They have the male in the *Vaṣaṭ* utterance. The *Vaṣaṭ* utterance is identified with the sun; thus the pairing of the *Vaṣaṭ* and the *yājyā-anuvākya* constitute the cosmic couple. Thus, we put the coupling in a diagram:

Male-*Vaṣaṭ* (Sun) copulates with Females $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Anuvākya (Sky)} \\ \text{Yājyā (Earth)} \end{array} \right.$

The cosmic image of the two women, (Sky and Earth) being the sex-partners of the sun is already indicated by the RV (X.27.13, the hymn of Vasukra). The *Śat. Br.* further adds in this context, that *Vaṣaṭ* is the sun who copulates with the Sky-woman at the sun-rise, and with the Earth-woman at the sun-set (I.7.2. 11 *tad va eṣa eva vaṣaṭ-kāraḥ ya eṣa tapati; sa ud yann eva amum adhidravati, astam yann imām adhidravati*). The concept of the *Vaṣaṭ* being the sun compares with the one according to which the sun has his own sound (*Chānd. Up.* I.5.1, where the sun is said to be the *udgītha* and the *Omkāra*; the same *Up.* gives the etymology of the world *sūrya as svaran eti iti*). The origin of this concept is to be seen probably in the RV where the sun is called *sva* (indicating both gait and sound) at a number of places (for ex. I.129.1). The concept behind the relationship between the *yājyā-anuvākya* and the *Vaṣaṭ* will be clear from the following ritual-direction,: “Reciting the *anuvākya* and following with the *yājyā* (*anudrutya*, which word indicates the sexual following at a number of places), does he utter after them (*paścāt*; lit. “from the back”); for, covering from the backside alone does the virile male copulate with the female (*Śat. Br.* 1.7.2. 12; the image is zoomorphic).

Like the *Vaṣaṭ* and the *Āhāva* the *Hiñ* sound is also said to be the male; and it has been associated with the verses to form the *mithuna*. The *Hiñ* (or the *Hiñkāra*) is also said to be the breath and rightly so; for, without breath this sound cannot

be produced. The Hiñ and the verses called Sāmidhenī form the *mithuna* (*Śat. Br.* 1.4.1.2; cf. also *Pañc. Br.* VI.8.5). The Hiñ sound is also the male in respect of the wife of the sacrificer. In the context of the Agniṣṭoma laud, a priest causes the wife of the sacrificer to look at the Udgātṛ priest at the utterance of the Hiñ sound; and it is said that this is for impregnation and procreation; for with the Hiñ sound the semen is released (*Pañc. Br.* VIII. 7.13). This symbolism is acted also at the churning of the sacrificial fire (*Ibid.*, XII.13). By a further symbolism it is stated that the Hiñ has to accompany the laud; and a short myth is told about the efficacy of the Hiñ sound. Formerly the lauds were devoid of the Hiñ sound; the gods found the Hiñkāra in the cow (Speech-symbol); Agni meditated upon the cow, and thought he should have copulation with her (*Śat. Br.* II.2.4.12). This indicates that the Hiñ was first observed in the lowing of the cow, and that all aspects of Speech, such as the verses, metres, lauds and chants, etc., came to be born at the sacrifice where Agni (Fire) was the chief god.

The next step in the method of coupling is the formation of the lauds themselves (as different from those between the Hiñ, Vaṣaṭ or Āhāva on the one hand and the verses on the other). For this purpose some lauds were considered to be males and some others females. We have noted how the Bṛhat was the male and the Rathantara the female (cf. *Jai. Br.* II.407 *pumso vā etad rūpam yad bṛhat, striyai rathantaram*); and this is said to be the divine couple (*Ai. Br.* V.21 *devānām vā etan mithunam yad bṛhad-rathantare*) The practice was ancient and the development varied; even the hymns were said to form couples (*Ai. Br.* V-19 *mithunāni sūktāni śamasyante traīṣṭubhāni ca jāgatāni ca*). We have also the *mithuna* of the Bṛhatsāma and the one from the Jagatī metre (*Jai. Br.* III. 261). It is said that for the *sāman* from the Gāyatrī metre, the semen is the Rathantara. This would show that a *sāman* could be the female in one couple, while, at another couple, it could be the male. We have seen how the Rathantara was the female in relation to the Bṛhat. Some times two verses (*rc-s*) in the same laud formed the couple (*Jai. Br.* III. 70). Even in one verse itself a couple is formed; and in such cases particular words form the couple. Thus, the part of the verse *pávasva váco agriyáh sóma citrábhir ūtibhiḥ*

(RV IX 62. 25 ab "Ooze with your bright favours, O Soma, towards our prayers") is said to contain a couple; it is this way: The word *pavasva* ("Ooze") is the male; the word that indicates Speech (i.e. *vāc* in *vāco agriyaḥ*) is the female. "O Soma" is the male; "Bright" (*citrā* in *citrābhiḥ*) is the female (*Pañc. Br.* IV.2. 18). It will be seen that, in the second couple, Soma could have been taken to form couple with "favour" (*ūti*, fem.); but its adjective "bright" (*citrā*, fem.) is taken for the couple. The reason is with Soma; for, Soma is said to be bright. Sometimes, when there is the group of three, two are taken to form the couple; and the third is said to be the offspring. Thus, in the case of the Trikadruga, which indicates the three days of a particular sacrifice and also three lauds to be sung on these days, the last two are said to form the couple, while the first one is the offspring. The names of the three days=lauds, are Light (*Jyotiḥ*), "Cow" (*Gauḥ*) and "Life" (*Ayuḥ*). The cow copulated with the "Life"; and "Light" was born from this union (*Pañc. Br.* XVI. 1 ff; the same in *Jai. Br.* II. 166;439).

We have noted above how in the verse, or part thereof, certain words are selected on the basis of the gender they indicate to form the *mithuna*. Another example may be given before we go to a unique couple-formation. Thus, in the case of the verse *tām im hinvaty āgrúvaḥ* (RV IX.1.8), the word *tām*, indicative of Soma is taken as the male, and '*agrúvaḥ* ("the young active women") is taken as indicative of the females ((*Jai. Br.* II.9). Now, in the case of lauds that contain whole verses the total number of verses in a particular laud are the criterion to decide the gender of the particular laud. For this the metre *Virāj* is taken as the norm. It contains ten letters in one *pāda* (hemistich). Thus, ten is the normal number. Now, if the laud is to indicate the female, nine verses are grouped together; if it is to be the male, then eleven are grouped together. The idea is that the male laud, like the male, has one limb (penis) extra, while the female laud, like the female, has not only the limb less in comparison with the man; it is actually minus, due to the cavity. This is done in the calculations of tens. Thus, the *Goṣṭoma* consists of 15 *stotriya* ("praise"—) verses, in the *Bahiṣpavamāna* rite; 36 in the four *Ājyaśāstras*; 85 in the *Mādh-yandina* (Soma-) pressing-rite; and 105 in the third pressing;

thus, in all 241, which is 1 more than that of the letters in the Virāj in all applications (=240). Hence, the Goṣṭoma is the male laud, or technically the '*atirikta*' (one in which some thing remains as extra; here one more). The Āyusṭoma has respectively $9+60+85+105=259$ verses; hence, it is the "minus" (technically *nyūna*) laud; for it is one less than the multiple of ten. Sometimes it is called *ūna* also. This method is seen in almost all the Brāhmaṇic texts. The norm for the formation of the plus-minus couples is, as said above, the Virāj metre; but the verses of the Virāj that are taken as the norm are not always 240. To be judged as the male or the female, it is enough if the particular laud has more or less than the decimal or any formation thereof. Thus, in the case of the Aupasada laud there are 202 total verses; and there the measure of the Virāj is 200 verses. Now, as the Aupasada laud has here two verses more it is the male laud. The next laud has two verses less than 200; hence these two form the couple (*Pañc. Br. XIX. 3.9*). The couple of the days also could be formed on the basis of the verses recited on each day. On the first day three verses exceeded the Virāj formula; on the second two less than the decimal formula were recited; the first day became the male, the second the female; they two formed the *mithuna*. How? By a new calculation. The first day's three extra verses indicated two testicles plus the virile member; the two less on the second day indicated the lack of the testicles rather than the penis. It is said: "Of man it is the form what the day is; of woman the night; this, that is the excess (=protruding) he places in the night's "less", for copulation. Now, the two verses that remain (after the fixation of the one in the "less" of the night), they are the testicles that are in excess (or, that remain out at copulation); these two (lauds), the Bṛhat and the Rathantara, carry the sacrifice" (*Jai. Ba. II. 434*). The point is, that when the male laud has one in excess, the one represents the penis; when there are three in excess, they are one penis and two testicles. It will be noted that the remaining ones, though said to be the testicles, form a couple in themselves; and they are the same old couple—Bṛhad Rathantara. We have earlier seen that the masculinity of a laud is not fixed; for the laud Rathantara is both the female and also the male at

times. The fact that the penis lets out semen because of the movement of the testicles was enough to make one of the testicles the female and the other the male; and the same imagery was applied to the two remaining lauds, one of them (Rathan-tara) being the female in normal identification (for the Rathan-tara being the male against the Gāyatrī-female cf. *Jai. Br.* III. 261.); and even the Bṛhat (which is said to be the male, as noted above and earlier) is said to have two breasts, being a female (*Ibid.*, III. 325, where even the Virāj is said to be having twelve breasts). This will show that the lauds were supposed to be bi-sexual. As we have noted earlier, even Prajāpati is bi-sexual (also cf. *Pañc. Br.* XIII.11.8 where the laud ending with the word the *madhuścyut* and the other ending with the *ghṛtaścyut* are ordained to be recited; for they form the breasts of Prajāpati). We have already seen the case of the Subrahmaṇya. The motif of the Plus-minus (*nyūna-atirikta*) is met at many places. Thus it is said :

“In the *nyūna* indeed the *atirikta* do they place, for copulation; for procreation. If they praise with more verses (in one), in the later praise they should praise with equal verses less. In the *atirikta* do they place the *nyūna* or in the *nyūna* the *atirikta*, for copulative pairing (*Jai. Br.* I.356).

or,

“Of this (sacrifice) there are the triple lauds: fifteen, seventeen and twentyone, which are the procreative *mithuna*-s. It is the *ūna* in the case of one and *atirikta* in the case of the other. From the *mithuna* that is formed of the *ūna* and the *atirikta* are born progeny and cattle” (*Ibid.*, II.95).

It will be seen that the concept and the formation of the *ūna* (= *nyūna*) and the *atirikta* is closely associated with the gain of progeny. The *ūna* (female-symbolism) is actually associated with the womb of procreation (*Ṣaḍ. Br.* I.3.17,18 *ūnād iva hi prajāḥ prajāyante*: this sentence is oft-repeated). This concept is extended further in the actual employment of the verses having inherently a letter less than the usual structure. Thus, a verse

in the Gāyatrī metre having one letter (=syllable) less is said to be the *ūnākṣarā*. Such verses (actually the part wherein the required number 8 is not found) are employed in ritual-recitation. Here are a few examples:

(i) RV IX.11.1: Here the first part has the regular number of letters, i.e. 8—, *úpāsmāi gāyatā naraḥ* (with the *sandhi upa+asmai*); the second has 7, *pávamānāyendave* (here the *sandhi* is to be split (as *pávamānāya+indave*) to have 8 letters; thus, with the normal *sandhi*, the letters being seven only, this is a case of *ūnākṣarā*).

(ii) RV IX.64.28: The first two parts are deficient by one letter each:

dávidyutatayā ṛcā, paristóbhantayā kṛpā.

To restore the normal number 8 they have to be read as: *davidyutat (i) yā ṛcā*; and *paristobhant (i) yā kṛpā*. This, then, is the *nyūna* verse in the Gāyatrī metre.

(iii) RV VI. 16.11^c has only 7 letters: *bṛhác chocā yaviṣṭhya*.

To make 8 it is to be read as *bṛhác chocā yaviṣṭh (i) ya*.

Examples can easily be multiplied (for ex., cf. RV IX.61.11. where the first two parts are *ūna* by one letter each). The letter to be supplied in these cases is the vowel. In many cases the letter to be supplied is in view of the *sandhi* called *kṣaipra* (requiring *i* or *u* to be inserted). In some other cases the *sandhi* called the *praśliṣṭa* is to be separated (*a+i; a+u*, the latter vowel short or long), as in the case of the the first example given above. At certain places there is a double deficiency; as for example *divi śád bhūmyādade* (IX.61.10^b), one has to read *bhūmi-ā dade*, i.e. restoring the original vowels (*i+ā*), which is one *nyūna*; and there itself the original aspirate (*visarga*) of the word *bhūmiḥ* (i.e. *ḥ*) has to be neglected. The deficiency, however, is to be taken as of one letter only; or the *visarga* (aspirate) and the *anusvāra* (nasalization) is to be understood as part of the letter (vowel) only and not separate (*Ṛk-prāt.* I.24).

In certain cases, however, there is no point of *sandhi*; and there is no question of a vowel to be supplied for the total number of letters in the metre. There is a genuine defect of there being a letter less. Thus, in the following verse, in the Gāyatrī metre:

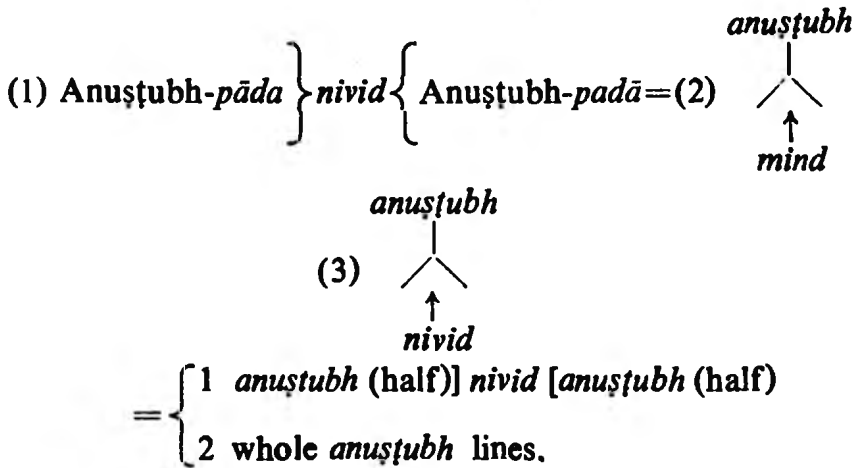
abhī su nah sákhinām avitā jaritrñām śatám bhavāsyūtibhiḥ (RV IV.31.3), all parts are defective. The deficiency differs from part to part. In the last part there is the *kṣaipra* type of *sandhi*; and the letter *i* (in the place of *y* with the hiatus) would solve the difficulty, and resolve the point of *nyūnatva*: *sakhā bhavāsi-ūtibhiḥ*. In the first two parts there is no point of *sandhi*. At the best, the existing vowel can be lengthened by adding a similar vowel: Thus, *abhī(ī)*, or *su(ū)*, or *sakhī (ī) nām*, or *sakhinā (ā)m*. Actually the real cases of *nyūna (ūna)* may be those, where there is genuine defect of being less by one. Incidentally, the Gāyatrī with all the three parts being short by one (i.e. having only seven instead of eight letters) is called *pāda-nicṛt* (*Anukr.* IV.4 *trayaḥ sapṭakaḥ pāda-nicṛt*)

The concept of the *ūna* or *nyūna*, which may be rendered as “deficient” is not only that of something less; it is, as we have just noted above, that of a slit, or a hole or an opening. This will be clear from such expressions as, “from the *ūna* alone it is that the breath and the bodily gas is released” (*Ṣaḍ Br.* 1.3.20 *ūnādiva hi prānāpānav’uc carataḥ*). This will indicate that *ūna*, in this case, indicates the nasal cavity (breathing organ) and the one that releases the *ventris crepitus*. It is also said that the Yajñāyajñīya laud (RV VI. 48.1; on this *ṛc* the *sāman* is fashioned; the verse starts with *yajñāyajñā vo agnaye*) is for the release of the life-breaths (Ibid 21); this is because in the third half hemistich there are only 11 letters in the place of twelve that are expected (the metre is Satobṛhatī); and this is the indication of the cavity (*nyūnatva*). It is because of this peculiarity (of being *nyūna*) that the laud is selected for being recited at the ritual-breathing. In the context of the *mithuna*, such verses are taken to indicate the female; and the implication is obvious. We have referred above to the word *retasyā* in relation to certain verses. The word is also taken to indicate the fresh bride (Com. on *Ṣaḍ Br.* II.1 *retasyā prathamā vadhūḥ*). The *sāman*

is the male in such cases; and there is no special *atirikta* type of a laud.

In addition to this division of *nyūna* and *atirikta* lauds, there obtains that of the lauds ending in even and uneven number of verses, the former denoting the male and the latter the female (*Jai. Br. II. 108 tasya ubhe stomā bhavanti, ayujaś ca yugmāntaś ca; tad vai divyam mithunam pra-junanam yad ubhe stomāḥ; cf. Pañc. Br. XX.11.9*). These two are said to be Bṛhad and the Rathantara. This becomes clear in the formation of the Hotra lauds. It is said: The morning pressing corresponds to the Gāyatrī laud (comprising nine verses); nine being the *nyūna* are (recited) for the morning pressing; he recites ten for the noon-session (mid-day), for the semen sprinkled in the *nyūna* reaches the "middle" of the woman; (*madhye striyai*) and becomes steady there (*sthaviṣṭham bhavati*); he recites nine, the *nyūna*, in the third pressing; for, indeed, from the *nyūna* is the progeny born" (*Ar. Br. VI.9*).³ Here, the number 9 (which is said to be the *nyūna*) denotes the female organ. The number 10 denotes the male organ and the semen, and the *nyūna* indicated by the last pressing, stands for the vagina again, through which the progeny is born. The pattern is: 9+10+9. In the coupling of the lauds, the norm is often said to be the Bṛhad-Rathantara. We have already noted this point, which suggests the formation of new lauds and their coupling in various ways. Very often do we have the statement: "Of the gods is the *mithuna* that is Bṛhad and the Rathantara; with the *mithuna* of the gods does he form another *mithuna* for progeny" (*Ai. Br. V.22*). Not only is the progeny of cattle believed to get increased by the formation of such *mithunas*; even the new body of the sacrificer is created on the plane of the ritual by such *mithunas*. Thus, the lauds Vṛṣākapa (from the hymn of Vṛṣākapi, RV X.86), Nābhānediṣṭha (RV X.61) Vālakhilya (VIII.49-59) and the Evayāmāruta (V.87) are ordained to be sung to give the new body to the sacrificer; and this is in addition to the gain of cattle and progeny (*Ai. Br. V. 15; VI.30; Pañc. Br. XX.9.4; Taitt. Sam. III. 1.9.4-6*). Such a combination of lauds is termed '*Deva-śilpāni*' (*Ai. Br. XXX.1*). Another very interesting method of copulation is where a verse is split up; and into its two parts another

portion is infixed. Thus, in connection with the *ājya-śastra* (praise of the fire with the clarified butter), a verse in the Anuṣṭubh metre is split, separating the two *pāda-s* (feet) of four letters each, and a *nivid* (a prose *mantra*) is inserted. The whole formation, now, will be:



The explanation is that this is like a woman separating her thighs at copulation; at the last foot he joins the Anuṣṭubh; this is like the woman joining her thighs after the insertion of male-organ (Sāyaṇa on *Ai. Br.* II.35).

The ritual-use of the various metres, lauds or the verses with sex-imagery serves as a psychological support to procreation in progeny and cattle which is one of the most important aims of the Vedic ritual. The basis of this motif of *mithuna* of the lauds and verses is the copulation of Speech and Mind. This is seen at various places. Thus, it is said that Mind and Speech lead the sacrifice; the same concept is carried further to the details: "He sprinkles (upon the cake to be offered) with the *sruva* ladle, what he sprinkles by Mind; for, the virile male is the *sruva* and virile male, indeed, is Mind. With the *sruc* ladle does he sprinkle it; woman, indeed, is Speech; woman, indeed, is the *sruc*" (*Śat. Br.* I.4.4.1). The sexual association of Mind and Speech is also seen in the context of the *yajus-mantra* called *puraścaraṇa*. These *yajus-mantras* are called by the term *upaniṣad*; but are called *purāścaraṇa* because they are said to have enhanced the gait (*puraś+carāṇa*) of the sacrifice (=Viṣṇu). In this context Speech is identified with the *ṛc* and Mind with the

sāman (Śat. Br. IV.6.7.4.5). The point is that Speech alone cannot procreate without the aid of Mind, ie. thought and imagination; likewise Mind cannot procreate without the help of Speech. This is brought out in a very fine discourse named Ahambhadra (The dispute as to, "I am laudable"), which depicts the dispute between Speech and Mind (Śat. Br. I.4.5.9-12). When the *puraścaraṇa* formulae are being recited, it is ordained that none should peep through the crevice or a side-opening; one may, however, come at the door proper. The reason given is as follows : The copulation of the *ṛc* and *sāman* (both together now symbolizing the Speech-female) with the *yajus* (the Mind-man) takes place privately in the assembly hall of the sacrifice; if this act is seen by anybody it becomes fruitless. Hence do the husband and wife run away if they are seen (by some one) in the act of copulation; they two, thus, cause sin in the onlookers. Hence, to him who sees the (above) ritual in the assembly-hall one should say 'See not'; for, it is as if seeing the couple in union. (One may see) by the door proper (*kāmaṃ dvāreṇa*); for, the door is, indeed, made by the gods (*deva-kṛtam hi dvāram*) (Śat. Br. loc. cit. 9)

It is clear from what has been referred to above, that the sacrificial chamber was believed to be the place for sexual union between Mind and Speech (ie. their aspects). There is another symbol by which the *yajus* in action, is shown. It is that of the hall itself (*saṅdo-maṅḍapa*), as Śāyaṇa rightly says (on *Ibid.*, 8). The hall (*saṅdo-maṅḍapa*) is propped on the pole made from the Audumbara tree; and this is done with the utterance of the *yajus* (*Ibid.*, *yajuṣā audambaram uc chrayanti*). However, in the very next breath it is said that the virile *sāman* unites with the *ṛc* in the hall; and from this union Indra is said to have been born, and is seen in the form of the sun shining in the sky (*Ibid.* 11 *tad vā etadvṛṣā sāma yoṣām ṛcam sadasy 'adhyeti; tasmān mithunād indro jātaḥ...indra iti hy 'etam ācakṣate ya eṣa tapati*). Further it is said that Soma is the virile male. He unites with the waters (Vasativarīs) in the *havirdhāna* hall ("where the offerings are kept"). From this (latter) copulation the moon is born. He, the moon, is the food of him that shines (ie. the sun).⁴ Further it is said that from the union of the *ṛc* and the *sāman* he (the reciting priest) causes the sacrificer to be

born; and, from the union of Soma and the waters, he causes food to be created for him (ie., for the sacrificer) (*Ibid.* 12).

We have noted that the copulating lauds were closely associated with Prajāpati himself, who was the sacrifice itself. To probe the point a bit further will be interesting. We have hinted that even single words were taken to form a couple. Thus, there is a couple from the part of the verse, "Him, indeed, impel the dashing girls" (RV IX 1.8 *tām im hinvaty 'agrīvaḥ*). Here the gloss is, " 'Him' is, indeed, the aspect of Man; 'dashing girls' of woman; being both (in one) was Prajāpati born...He, in himself, becomes the *mithuna-s*" (*Jai. Br.* II.9). This is the case with the couples in the form of lauds, verses or the forms of speech. The same is the line of thought in the cases of other couples; and, we have had occasion to see how even the cosmic forces form the couples, and are said to be the aspects of Prajāpati residing in him. Elsewhere (as we have noted earlier in this chapter), Prajāpati is said to have the breasts in the form of lauds having the words *ghṛtaścut* and *madhuścut* (*Pañc. Br.* XIII.11.8). It is also said that these two lauds, the breasts of Prajāpati, here, were "milked" by Indra (*Jai. Br.* I.225). These instances indicate the belief in bisexualism in the case of the deities which is closely connected with the general weal and prosperity, the *vṛṣabha-dhenu* (Agni at RV III.38.7 and X.5.7) and the *mithuna* Sarasvant-Sarasvatī (RV VII.95,96) being examples from the older fold. The latter is mentioned also later (*Jai. Br.* II.185=197). Here we have restricted ourselves to the couples about the lauds. We may note a detail from the context of the Subrahmaṇya, about the trisexuality which we have already had a glimpse from the *Ṣaḍ. Br.* Elsewhere it is said, "why about him (ie., the Subrahmaṇya priest) is said that he is as if "woman", being "man" ? It should be said that Subrahmaṇya (the woman) is Speech" (*Ai. Br.* VI.3); thus the priest combines in himself the priesthood (manly aspect) and Speech. Now, it was customary to drive a bull, in this ritual, as fee for this priest. Why?—"The bull is the virile male; Subrahmaṇya is the woman (female); that is the *mithuna*." (*Ibid.*) Here the gift of a bull is symbolic in two ways : Firstly, he is the male counterpart of the Speech-cow; and secondly, as the zoo-morph of the priest himself. The priest is, then, the Bull-Cow in one, a bi-

sexual unit, representing Speech, with all formations, the male and the female lauds. The Bull-Cow symbol of Speech (as different from that of Agni, noted above) appears as early as the RV in the imagery of Dīrghatamas in the famous hymn “*asya vāmīya*” (I.164.29); and the tradition knows it as a set example of bisexuality; for, it is here that Yāska puts his finger when he mentions the *devatā ubhaya-liṅgā* (*Nir.* II.8, where the verse is quoted).

We have seen that the lauds were believed to be the organs of generation. This concept helps solve the riddle in certain awkward-looking accounts. One of such accounts may be taken for example. The *Jai. Br.* (I.161) tells us that there was once a woman from the Asura clan, named Dīrghajihvī (“The long-tongued”). She always tasted the Juices of Soma that were pressed at the sacrifice even before the gods, and spoilt them. Indra tried hard to grasp her, but was unsuccessful. He thought to himself, there may be no Soma-sacrificer left, as this Dīrghajihvī pollutes Soma everywhere. Now, there was Sumitra, the son of the Kutsa, who was handsome. Indra requested him to manage the Asura-woman, as the women are eager to talk with the handsome. Sumitra went to her and said he would have her for ‘union’. Said she, “You have only one organ, and I have them at every limb of mine (the word used is *muṣkā*, Pl.); it (the act) may not be (complete).” Sumitra then came back to Indra who made him endowed with many organs (ie. at every limb). Then he went back to the woman and had union with her, and won her, subduing her. There is little doubt that the account is for praising the lauds of Kautsa Sumitra on the analogy, *sāman*=Organ (cf. *Śat. Br.* XI.1.2.2 quoted earlier); and the context appears to be that of the pressing of Soma.⁵

NOTES

1. For a detailed study of the Āpri hymns, Potdar, K. R., J.U. Bombay, 1945,46, Arts No; also his *Sacrifice in the Ṛgveda*, Bombay, 1953.
2. Cf. *Śat. Br.* IV.3.2.4 *prajāpatir vā udgātā, yoṣā ṛg-hotā ; sa etat prajāpatir udgātā ṛci hotari retaḥ sīñcati*. Probably, Sāyaṇa relies on the tradition which makes the deities and the priests also bisexual, for the ritual; so a priest could represent either the male or the female !

3. Keith A. B., *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas Translated*, p. 20b, renders the word *nyūna* as "small" at all places, which is rather inadequate. Gonda renders *nyūna—atirikta* as "deficient and redundant" *The Duel Deities*, p. 64. This is also not apt. The point is of the body-structure.
4. The identification of Indra with the sun and of Soma with the moon is found at other places also, with a point added; it is of Vṛtra being identified with Soma and the moon; cf. *Śat. Br.* I.6.4.12 (Mādhyandina); also IV.2.1.1ff; 5.5.7; *Taitt. Sam.* V.4.10 etc. *Jai. Br.* 9.8; II.232; etc.

If presented in the form of a diagram the identification will be as follows :

<i>Sadomaṇḍapa</i>	<i>Havirdhāna-maṇḍapa</i>
<i>sāman-ṛc (mithuna)</i>	<i>Soma-waters (mithuna)</i>
i. Indra—sun	i. (Vṛtra)—Moon
ii. Sacrificer (i—ii)	ii. Food (i—ii)

5. It is however difficult to identify the Āsurī woman. At another place Indra is depicted as in love with another Asura woman, Vilesterīgā. Does the Sumitra episode indicate the difficulty of Soma being obtained, or, having been obtained, difficult to get oozed? Is this a charm for the juices to ooze forth? The creeper or the stalk of Soma is conceived as a woman, but there is no word to indicate that 'she' was identified with the Asura woman; cf. RV II.13.1.

The Incestuous Twin-sister

In this chapter we examine the motif of incest used by the R̥gvedic seer. The parties involved in the ritual that is reflected in the hymn (X.10) are presented as brother and sister; and they are twins. The Twins, Yama and Yamī, are the chief figures of the hymn. Like other problematic hymns in the RV the hymn of the sex-twins has been a problem; and various scholars have studied it,¹ some trying to group this hymn along with that of Saranyū (X.17) and that of Purūravas (X.95)². The latter of these hymns we are going to study further in a separate chapter. The hymn under discussion has been deeply rooted in the Vedic tradition; and its nature is far from being secular. As a matter of fact, it has been pointed out, and rightly so, by Norman Brown that there is nothing in the RV that can be legitimately called secular.³ As such, it is not correct to see in this hymn so much of a social abnormality (even if it be taken to a very remote time), as it is to investigate the probability of a religious zeal; and this zeal must necessarily be corroborated by similar motifs from the Vedic tradition.

The hypothesis that the twins (Yama-Yamī) formed the first human couple, whence came the whole race of the humans⁴, has been rightly challenged by Max Müller and been discarded.⁵ Though Yama is said to be the first mortal to die (AV XVIII. 3.13), there is no mention of Yamī, which forbids her being taken as the first woman counterpart of the first man. On the earlier Iranian side also this does not get any support, though in the later Iranian texts we have allusion to it.⁶ The Yima-Yimeh motif of the later Iranians cannot be compared with that of Indra-Indrāṇī⁷; for Indrāṇī is already known to the early Vedic

texts, and occurs in the RV (II.32.8; V.46.8). The old method of identifying Yama-Yamī with the natural elements⁸, without going into the details of symbols, has failed to unfold the mystery of the sexual element that is so predominant in the hymn. In the study of this hymn by Goldman, who groups it with the other two noted above, it has been suggested that it underlines the motif of the relationship between the mortal seer and the immortal woman (Speech); that Yama is the mortal seer and Yamī the divine woman, their union being impossible.⁹ The hypothesis is weak; and the words on which it is based are unhelpful. Goldman has proposed, as a parallel to the relationship mentioned above, the close relationship between the words *sakhī* and *manas*; but it has to be pointed out that these words do not always come to indicate the seer and Speech in the RV. The suggestion that *manas* is the organ of the seer to unite with Speech is not supported from the passage from the *Asyavāmiya* (RV I.164.8), which is cited for support. The passage is as follows :

“The Mother (*mātā*) united with the Father (*pitaram*) in the Rta; she, with determined thought (*dhīti*=*dhiyā*) (and) mind, united. She, being desirous of copulating (*bibhatsūh*; for similar use see X.124.8,9; the word comes nowhere else), and being given a slit, became full of the foetus-fluid (*gārbha-rasā*). The bearers of the offerings came along with prayers”.

The verse does not support the union of the Mātā and the *manas*; it is the Father that forms the *mithuna* with her (to use the terminology with which we are familiar). *Manas* does not come here as the male, or the male organ ! On the contrary, it has the sense of the mental faculty, and has been used to balance the earlier word *dhīti*. As we have seen earlier, *manas* and Speech did form the *mithuna* in the later rituals; but here it is the Father and the Mother, and the Mother is not Speech. Even in the next verse the same image of the Mother is presented; and there is a reference to the foetus that stands in the far off region (v.9 *yuktā mātāsī ddhuri dākṣiṇāyā ātiṣṭhad gārbho vṛjanīṣv 'antāh*), which, without doubt, is mid-region. The next verse (v.10) also carries the same image further, and presents the three

Mothers and three Fathers (indicative of the three *mithunas* in the three regions; cf. VII.33.7 etc.) working on the well known concept of the three seeders. Naturally the symbolism here is not of Speech and Mind, but of the earth and the cosmic waters (females) being fructified by the cosmic Father. If the Mother indicates Speech in this case, what about the expression that refers to the slit and the foetus-fluid, which is not common with Speech? As has been rightly pointed out by Geldner¹⁰ and Sāyaṇa¹¹, the Mother is the earth, the female counterpart of Heaven or Parjanya. Here we have the cosmic parents as a *mithuna*, and not Speech and the *manas*. In fact there is hardly any place in the RV where the word *mātr*, or any other word indicative of mother, comes in relation to Vāc.¹² It is also not correct to say, as Goldman says, that “*manas* is a term which is frequently juxtaposed with Vāc”; for, except at two places, Vāc hardly comes along with *manas* (the two places are X.71.2 and X.177.2). At the former *mānasā vācam akrata* does not indicate the word *manas* to connote the organ of the seer; it simply indicates the creation of Speech with the help of the mind; at the latter place, where the *patāṅga* (the sun-bird) is said to hold Vāc with his mind (*patāṅgó vācam mānasā bibhrati*), the image of the ‘organ’ is totally absent. Vāc denotes, at various places, the speech of Parjanya, the thunder, which is the *mādhyamikā vāc* (“The mid-region speech”) of the tradition (VII.101.1; VIII.100.11 etc.), where the context of rain is a marked one; and at other places (V.63.6; IX.62.25) Vāc is said to be *irāvati*, being uttered by Parjanya, and is associated with Soma. Even if at the *Śat.Br.* (I.2.6.9), as at other places, procreation is indicated through the union of the *manas* of Parjapati and Vāc, all such cases of coupling cannot be taken to be only those of Vāc and Manas. As we have amply seen, Vāc and Manas form only one of the various *mithunas*. Hence, the hypothesis of the union of the seer and Speech is hopelessly lame. The point to be noted is this: Why should the seer-Speech relationship (if at all it may be accepted to be present at such hymns as noted above) be expressed in terms of sex-relationships that are illicit? Why should the seer think it necessary to paint the divine woman (Speech) as the sister (Yamī in our hymn) trying to have sexual relationship with her brother (Yama=seer)? Why should it be

necessary for the seer to be a brother in such a sex-tangle?—Yes, even granting that the sex is impossible? Hence, such an hypothesis does not help, and the riddle persists. The solution of the apparent riddle of the illicit sex is the crux of the hymn, and warrants the hymn to be studied afresh in the light of similar expressions and images from the Vedic tradition. Before we do that, a general survey of the hymn is necessary, pointing out symbolic words.

The hymn starts with the speech of Yamī who says that she would turn her *sakhā* (here, brother Yama) to her; for, the “establisher of the Order” (*vedhāḥ*) has established the “grandchild of the Father” (*pitúr nāpātam ādadhīta*). The *vedhāḥ* is said to have arrived after traversing the ocean (of the mid-region, *tiráḥ purū cid arṇavām jaganvān*, v.1). The *sakhā* does not appreciate the “friendship” (*sakhyam*) which Yamī has in mind; and the reason given is that, in this *sakhya*, the one that is *sá-lakṣmā* (“having a similar mark”) becomes *viśurūpā* (“of a different form”). We shall discuss the exact implication of this phrase later on. But Yamī tells Yama that the immortal ones (gods) desire a son (?) from the one mortal (v.3 *usānti ghā té amṛtāsa etād ekasya cit tyajāsam mārtyasya*); and, hence, Yama should unite with her sexually, as does a husband (v.3 *jānyuh pātis tanvām ā vivīśyāḥ*; and v.7 *jayá-iva pátye tanvām riricyām*). Yama does not accept this; and she implores upon him to do as she desires; for, says she, he being her own brother, she should not remain without her desire fulfilled (v.11). Yama says that they are brother and sister, as the Gandharva and the water-nymph are their source (v.4 *gandharvó apsv 'ápyā ca yóṣā sā no nābhiḥ paramám jāmi tát nau*); but, on this Yamī says, “even in the *garbha* our generator, the multiformed Savitṛ (the sun-god), made us *dampatī* (the couple)” (v.5). She says that the earth and heaven, all know this relationship of theirs. Yama does not, however, yield; and the hymn ends with a note of unfulfilled sex-act.

It will be seen that Yama-Yamī are not actually husband and wife, they are presented as brother and sister, and Yamī wants the sex-act *as between a husband and the wife*. This shatters the basis of the theory of their being the first couple to produce mankind.

The plea for sex-union forwarded by Yamī appears to be that the gods want the *tyajás*, indicating that she is in for the queer act as a divine duty; and yet she further says that she is smitten by desire (V.11 *kāma-mūtā*). That the plea of the divine duty is stronger is indicated by the fact, that it comes as a reply to the objection of Yama, who says that the gods are watching (v.2). To this constant cautiousness of Yama Yamī's reply is that they two are made for each other; they are *sábandhū* (v.9). Yama says that they could not unite as they are born from the same source (v.4); but Yamī's rejoinder is, they are *damaptī* from the very womb (*garbha*); and the god who made the twain the *dampatī* is none else than the sun—Savitṛ, whose laws are not to be transgressed (v.5 *ná kir asya prá-minanti vratāni*). Thus, the plan of the seer in presenting the divine desire to bring them together is clear. The lusty words of Yamī are to be set in this plan, and are in themselves, unimportant. It is to be particularly noted that Yama nowhere questions the plea of the divine desire put forward by Yamī. His only objection is about the union between the sister and the brother. This also shows that sex-union is necessary as the divine plan, the only point according to Yama being that the brother-sister relationship is rather awkward! Equally forceful is the plea and desire of Yamī, that they are sex-partners from the very *garbha*. It is against this background that the gods are said to desire the *tyajás*, which is so closely associated with the sex-union. As the word is important it is necessary to study it closely.

The word *tyajás* (with the same accent i.e. on the second vowel) occurs nowhere else in the RV; and has been understood variously by scholars: e.g. "progeny" (Griffith) or "legitimate heir" (Geldner, "Leibeserben"). It is also proposed that the word does not agree with its counterpart with a different accent (*tyájas*), and the opinion deserves note (Oldenberg, *Noten*). It seems obvious that the rendering "progeny" or "offspring" is suggested by the motif of sex-union; and it is this place that gave currency to the hypothesis of Yama and Yamī forming the first human couple, the words *tyajasam martyasya* are thought of as giving support to the hypothesis. However, it is doubtful if the word *martyasya* has anything to do with Yama; for, there is hardly any other place in the RV where Yama is referred to

as *martya*, while the word often indicates the mortal sacrifice.¹³ As such, even here there is the same probability; and *martya* could be the mortal sacrificer for whom the *tyajas* is desired, in the context of the sexual motif. The other *tyajas* (with accent on the first vowel) occurs in the RV about ten times; and the sense is that of "power". Thus the god is said to protect the sacrificer with his *tyajas* (VI.3.1). Indra is said to have *mahi tyajas* among the gods (X.144.6); he is also *tyajasah varūtā* (I.169.1).¹⁴ If *tyajas* is power, the word *tyajasam* in our hymn would indicate "the one having power" or "powerful" (with the shift in accent). It is to be noted in this connection that *tyaja* comes as the second member of a compound (and the only case in the RV indicating an epithet) describing Agni (VIII.60.16 *su-tyajam*; for the accent see Pān.VI.2.117). We may not, then, be wrong in understanding the *tyajas*, whom the gods desire for the mortal, to be the sacrificial fire (the Gen. in *martyasya* standing for the dative as is usually the case in Vedic speech). The word thus gets connected with the fire-symbolism, of which the earlier expression (V.1 *pitúr nāpātam ā dadhīta vedhāḥ*) is only a reflection. The "grand-son-of-the-Father" is, then, the same as the *tyajās*. Though the word *napāt* is seen as the second member in a number of compounds, the word *pitúr nāpāt* is unique. Now, it is to be noted that the word *napāt* does not mean "grand son" as a rule; and "grand-son-of the father" (Geldner, Griffith) makes no sense, though we have used the rendering above tentatively. It is to be marked that the word *pitṛ* is often symbolic of the sun or Parjanya; and this point we have already made clear. *Pitúr nāpāt* has been coined by the seer of this hymn, in all probability, as a symbolic name of the sacrificial fire. The RV supports it. Thus, Agni is, elsewhere, said to be knowing the "udder of the *pitṛ*" (RV III.1.9 *pitúś cid-ūdhar januṣā viveda*); he is also said to hold the foetus of the 'Father' and the 'progenitor' (*Ibid* V.10 *pitúś ca garbham janitúś ca babhre*). The "udder of the Father" without doubt, is the cloud; for, in the next half of the same verse Agni is said to release the streams from this udder (*vy 'asya dhārā asrjat*); and in the same hymn further Agni is said to be "the foetus of the waters" (*apām gárbhah*; cf. v.12 *apām gárbho nṛtamo yahvó agníḥ*; and v.13 *apām gárbham darśatám óśadhīnām*=I.164.52).

The idea works on the usual belief that it is the sacrificial fire that causes the *garbha* in the cloud and remains there in his new form.

Our hymn speaks of the *vedhāḥ* as having established the *pitur napāt* on the earth by means of his well designed thoughts (v.1 *pitúrnapātam ā dadhīta vedhā adhi kṣami pratarām dīdhyānaḥ*), where the words *adhi kṣami* indicate the terrestrial plane, and *ā dadhīta* would indicate the ritual of the establishing of the sacred fire (cf. the rite of *agnyādhāna*). It has also to be noted that the expression in the first half of the very first verse (*tiráḥ purú cid arṇavám jaganyān*), suggesting the journey through the "ocean", describes the *vedhas* rather than Yama or Yami¹⁶; and the ocean is that of the mid-region. The *vedhas*, as he has actually performed the ritual of establishing the fire (*pitur napāt*) appears to be a real person; and, in concept, comes close to Nābhānediṣṭha (X.61 *vedhāḥ...vipraḥ*), and may also be compared with Indrāṇī, who is described as *vedhā ṛtāsya* (X.86.10), in the hymn of Vṛṣākapi. The advent of the *vedhas* of our hymn, through the ocean (of the mid-region) has a direct parallel in the birth of Purūravas as the latter is said to have been attended by the gods' wives (*gnāḥ*) and the resounding rivers of the mid-region (X.95.7-9). This association with the mid-region is also seen in the hymn of Nābhānediṣṭha, where the *vedhā vipra* is said to have traversed the mid-region waters, having his own bridge (X.61.16 *apás ca vípraś tarati svá-setuḥ*); and, further, he is said to be extolled by the waters (Ibid V.26 *grṇānó adbhīḥ*). Purūravas is, elsewhere, said to be *su-kṛt* (RV I.31.4 *purúrāvase sukṛte su-kṛttarah*) a term suggesting that he was known as a sacrificer in the ancient Vedic days. What is to be noted is, that the association with the mid-region in the case of the mortal is believed to be necessary to suggest divinity in him. In other words, this was the method to suggest his wonderful powers. Thus, we can say in the present context that the *vedhāḥ* who comes after traversing the *arṇava* (mid-region ocean) is a person of micraculous powers, who would work wonders at the terrestrial plane (*adhi kṣami*), with his mental activity (*pratarām dīdhyānaḥ*) indicating the use of *mantras* and by the establishment of the sacred fire, the latter also having close association with the cosmic Father (the sun or Parjanya). Parjanya is the controller

of rain, and the sun is already the *apām gārbha* (I.164.52). This will show the hymn to enshrine a ritual for something connected with the mid-region. The sex in it has to be examined against this ritual-background. Another indication of the ritual is seen in the words *subhadrām samvidam* (V.14). This makes it very clear that the hymn employs sex on the plane of the ritual; and it is to be aligned with the hymns of Vṛṣākapi, Nābhānediṣṭha and such others as have the same motif of ritual sex.

The next important point is the relationship between Yama and Yamī. One thing that is now pretty clear is, that they cannot be real brother and sister. The motif, in this respect, compares with the myth of the Father running after his Daughter (X.61.5-10), where also sex between forbidden degrees is presented by the seer. It also compares with such rituals, where sex is apparently abnormal; this is the case with the Horse-sacrifice and the ritual at the hymn of Vṛṣākapi (X.86). In these cases, mentioned above, the sex-act is indicated to be resulting in the oozing of the generative fluid (cf. X.61.7; also for the same myth I.71.5; X.86.13,16-17 do not refer to the fluid, but the act is clearly stated; at the Horse-sacrifice the fluid is suggested in the usual word *retodhāḥ*, and the verses are very frank). At the Father-Daughter presentation the Daughter is the earth (X.61.7 *kṣmayā sañjagmānāḥ*); at the Indrāṇi-Vṛṣākapi presentation Indrāṇi is the same as the earth, as we have already noted; and at the Horse-sacrifice the queen or the woman is the representation of the earth. In the present case the seer has a slightly different presentation, though the motif is the same, together with the general plan. Here the act is not suggested to be complete; nay, it is just desired by one of the parties. The act is replaced by a strongly sexual dialogue. As is already noted, all such cases are on the supra-mortal plane; and the mortals act on the divine plane of the sacrifice (*sukṛtasya yoni*), to represent the cosmic or the elemental relationship. It is here that we understand the implication of the suggestion that both Yama and Yamī are said to be the son and the daughter of the Gandharva and the "Water dame" (v.4 *gandharvó apsv 'āpyā ca yōṣā*). The exact purpose of sex is not clear from our hymn, taken solitarily; but, if we look at the arrangement of the hymns, we get a clear clue. The preceding and the following

hymns have rain as the motif. The preceding hymn has the waters as the deity, and they are invoked to flow (X.9.4 *ápo-abhí sravantu nah*); and at the end of the hymn we have the mixed deity Agni *payasvant* (v.9 *páyasvān agna ā gahi*). The hymn that follows the Yama-Yamī hymn is a hymn to Agni; but Agni there is the one who “milks” the essence of heaven (X.11.1 *vṛṣā vṛṣṇe duduhē dóhasā dīváḥ páyāmsi*), and, in the very next verse, there is the same detail as is found in the hymn under discussion. Here there is the mention of the *gandharva* and the *ápyā yoṣā*, that form the cosmic *mithuna*; there the *gandharvī*, who is said to be the *ápyā yoṣañā* (“water dame”)—talking or thundering (*rapot*) has her male in the *nada* (X.11.2 *rāpad gandharvīr ápyā ca yoṣañā nadásya nādē pári pātu me mánaḥ*). The word is symbolic of the roaring cloud, the bull and also of the male organ (cf. I.32.8; II.34.3; VIII.69.2; and esp. I.179.4); and the *nada* (“roarer” \sqrt{nad}) and the *yoṣañā* that “talks” in this hymn form the mid-region *mithuna*. They are the thundering fire and the cloud-waters. Yamī is not mentioned anywhere else in the RV; but Yama has a definite association with the cosmic waters, the solar ones and those in the cloud, as we have seen earlier. This will show that the concept of Yama goes beyond that of the brother of Yamī. Apart from his funerary importance, Yama has important cosmic status. Yama is said to have known Agni when the latter hid himself in the waters and the herbs (X.114.10). As an aspect of the cosmic fire he is said to be the paramour (*jāra*) of the maidens and the “husband (*pāti*) of the (married) women” (I.66.4 the word *pāti*, having the double sense of the husband and the protector). The highest world is seen by one seer in the abode of Yama (I.35.6). Combining all these aspects the picture of Yama that we get is, that he represents the cosmic fire-principle (as Yāska has pointed out, *Nir.* X.20-21). He is the general seeder who fructifies all womanhood. But, we have to see how Yama comes to be associated with waters, which would justify the point in our hymn which connects him with the *gandharva* and the *ápyā yoṣā*. For this we have to note the concept of Vena, who is said to reside at the confluence of the solar fire and the solar waters. There Vena is said to be the messenger—bird of Varuṇa in the domain of Yama (X.123.6 *yamásyā yónau śakunám bhuraṇyum*). At another place

in the RV Yama comes as an epithet of the sun (I.83.5), where Vena also comes, supporting the concept of the cosmic fire in relation to Yama. This gives Yama the status of the controller of the cosmic waters. And, as waters are conceived as the cosmic females, desiring the fire-principle, it is clear that Yamī represents this female principle. In this sense Yama and Yamī are said to stay in the same *garbha*, which makes them brother and sister and also the seeder and the seeded. This is the key to the apparent riddle of the sexual language between the “brother” and the “sister” ! This will show that the relationship of brother and sister in this hymn is only in make-belief; and the twins are only sex-partners in the setting of ritual that enacts the cosmic forces, to fructify the heavenly waters to result in the release of rain.

In this connection we have to consider another expression, which is *jányuḥ páti*. Yamī addresses Yama as *jányuḥ pati* (v.3 *jányuḥ pátiḥ tanvám ā vivíśyāḥ*). The word *pati* is simple; but the word *jányuḥ* is to be noted. This word has been rendered in two ways by scholars. In one way it has been taken as the masculine Nom. Sing. relating to *pati*, the meaning being “the procreative husband”.¹⁶ In the other way it has been taken as the Gen. Sing. of *jani*¹⁷ (indicating Yamī), and would mean “the husband of the *jani* (Yamī)”. It has to be remembered, however, that the form *jányuḥ* being taken as the Gen. Sing. presents difficulties; and there is no other support for it, as Oldenberg (*Noten*) has rightly pointed out. Moreover, Yamī asks Yama to unite with her “as a husband” (v.7), and does *not* suggest that he should be *real* husband. Nowhere in the hymn do we have any suggestion, whatsoever, of their becoming actual husband and wife. This would mean, that here the *pati* is on a different footing than the normal husband, whatever the exact implication of the word *jányuḥ* be. The main sex-strain of the hymn is of cohabitation, and not of actual marriage (cf. v.7 *tanvám riricyām*; and v.11 *tanvā me tanvám sám piprgdhi*, which stress bodily contact; these expressions do not go well with the proposal of normal marriage; cf. also the word *kāma-mūtā* at v.11; also v.7 whole); and when Yama tells her to have another *pati* (v.10) he clearly draws a contrast between *pati* and *jányuḥ pati*. Actually *jányuḥ patiḥ* corresponds to the general

nature of Yama as the *patir janinām* and *jārah kaninām*, as we have already seen. Another thing to be noted in this connection is, that there appears to be a regular practice, vouched by the RV, to use such strange-looking terms. Another such term is *niṣṭigryah pūtra* (X.101.12) used for Indra, in a verse which formed a part of the sexy mantras called *āhanayāḥ*, (RV khila V.22) and joined to those to be uttered at the Horse-sacrifice.¹⁸ This expression has been generally understood as “the-son-of-an unknown-woman”, At the Horse-sacrifice, where it was used according to one tradition, it indicated the horse at the ritual, who is different from the actual husband, the sacrificer king. Another such term is *pati-vidya* (X.102.11; *Mait. Sam.* III.8.4 etc.), and must mean some one different from the actual husband.¹⁹ The case of *jānyuh pātih* is the same; and it is utmost probable that it indicated the male partner in a ritual.

We now come to another word in the hymn. It is *āhanás*, and comes as an address by Yama and Yamī to each other, or at least Yamī is thus addressed to by Yama (X.10.6,8). As the word is important it is necessary to study it closely. The word occurs six times in the RV; and in the later texts it does not occur as it is; but connects readily with the word *āhanasyāḥ* which is the name of the sexual *mantras*, as we have noted before. *Āhanás* comes in the RV in three different contexts. We note them below :

I. Yama-Yamī contexts :

- (i) X.10.6 “What O *āhanas* ! you say ?”
- (ii) 8 “With one different from me do unite, O *āhanas* !”

II. Soma-context :

- (i) X.125.2 “I support Soma, the *āhanás*” says Speech.
- (ii) IX.75.5 “These your intoxicating juices, of you the *āhanás*, O Soma”
- (iii) II.13.1 “she (the creeper of Soma), the *āhanás*, became milk-ful” (in generating the juice).

III. Parjanya (or Indra)-context :

V.42.13 “He, the *āhanás*, creating various forms in the womb of the daughter (the earth).

The word *āhanás*, at the places mentioned above, has been rendered as “strong”, “robust” and “wanton”. Sāyaṇa renders it as having the sense of “destroying” at almost all places. A careful examination, however, indicates that there is something more in it, which has not been noticed hitherto. In the context of the dialogue between Yama and Yamī, the word has to be taken as having a sexual bearing. If taken to refer to Yamī, she may be understood as wanton (or voluptuous, as Geldner renders, “zudringliche”, which may also indicate sexually forward), in desiring sex with (her own brother) Yama. If, on the other hand, Yama is to have the epithet, it could be interpreted as Yamī addressing him thus as she desires his “manly” contact and he denies. Otherwise, there is no point in her calling him “wanton” simply because he declines her desire. Again, if Yama and Yamī are wanton, in the ordinary sense of the word, what about Indra and Parjanya? If Soma is *āhanás* due to the “strong” (stürmische) and intoxicating drink at one place, according to Geldner (on X.125.5), and, at another, (II.13.1) “voluptuous” (üppige), there is hardly anything to suggest that concept about Parjanya (or Tvaṣṭṛ, as Geldner alternately suggests; at V.42.13 the case is different). Sāyaṇa takes the etymological meaning at all places, connecting it with \sqrt{han} , “to kill”, or “to destroy”. Soma is *āhanás* as the god kills the enemies. Yama is *āhanás*, according to Yamī, as he destroys the tradition (of following the desire of the gods, who made them natural *dampatī* in the very womb). For Yama, Yamī is *āhanás* as she harms the established moral tradition. All these interpretations lead us nowhere, and there is nothing that is common at all the occurrences of the word *āhanás* with other scholars. This is because all these interpretations are short of the mark, as they do not take into consideration the cognate of the word *āhanás*, which is *āhanasyāḥ* and which has a clear ritual tradition.

The belief about the verses called *āhanasyāḥ* is, that they are not only full of sex but also that they accomplish the sex-act; in other words, they are an oral sex-charm. The tradition need

not be denied as a rightful help, as the motif of sex that the verses embody is present in the word *āhanás*; and the scholars who render it as “wanton” or “lusty” accept it. The Ai. Br. (VI.10), for example, says that by the recitation of the *āhanasyā* verses semen is sprinkled (*āhanasyād vai retaḥ sicyate*). This is why such verses were recited to complete the sex-act at the Horse-sacrifice, by *symbolizing* the release of the semen of the horse, which would be impossible in the case of the ritually silenced (killed) horse. If we follow the ritual concept of *āhanasyāḥ*, we would be perfectly justified in saying that the term *āhanás* would imply “a party to the sex-act” on the plane of the ritual. Ṣaḍguruśiṣya, commenting on the passage from the Ai. Br. noted above, says, “*āhanás* is the stroke; conducive to it is (what is *āhanasyāḥ*), indeed, the sex-union” (*āghata āhanas tatra sadhur yan maithunam hi tat*). This would indicate that, according to Ṣaḍguruśiṣya, *āhanás* is the sex-stroke. In short, the word indicates sexual potency; and an individual who is denoted by the term *āhanás* would be supposed to be sexually potent. In other words, the god is referred to as *āhanás* as he is believed to be the cosmic Seeder. The *āhanás* female will be the one ready to take the “seed”, or the one who is desirous to copulate with the male. The bi-sexual symbolism of Soma makes the point very clear :

“The rainy season is his (Soma’s) mother; being born of her, he soon entered the waters, in whose midst he grows. Then did she (the Soma-creeper), the *āhanás*, become fattened with milk. The sweet fluid of the stalk is the first that deserves praise.”

(RV II.13.1).

The points are :

- (i) Soma comes to the earth through rain;
- (ii) Then he “enters” (copulates) with the creeper;
- (iii) At this background the creeper is the *āhanás*;
- (iv) Then she gets fattened with the milky juice;
- (v) Fructification of the creeper by Soma is a sex-act.

Parjanya (or Indra), being *āhanás* as he creates various forms in the womb (*vakṣanāsu*) of the daughter (=earth), is another aspect of the cosmic seeder (V.42.13 *yá āhanā duhitur vakṣanāsu rūpā mināndh*). Though Sāyaṇa understands here the image to be of the rain-god filling the "river-beds" with water, he shifts from his general rendering of the word *āhanás*; for, though he renders it as "stricker" (*āhantā*), he further glosses it as the "seeder" (*āhanāḥ āhantā sektā*), resorting to the sexual imagery. Geldner sees at this place a reference to the famous incest of the Father with his daughter²⁰; and he is convincing, because the passage has the "Daughter" (*duhitṛ*), whose *vakṣanāḥ* (womb, or sides) the *āhanás* Parjanya fills (cf. the other passage for the Father and the Daughter X.61.7 *pitā yat svām duhitāram adhi-ṣkán*; I.71.5 *svāyām devó duhitāri tvīṣim dhāt*; III.31.1 *pitā yātra duhituḥ sékam ṛñján*...). The Daughter is the earth; and the various forms are the multiple vegetation. As the Father-Daughter complex presents the idea of an incest, but only apparently, so is the case with Yamī and Yama. Yama and Yamī are *āhanás*, not simply because they are presented as sex-partners but also because they have a part to play in the generative process of the universe. As the terms Father and Daughter are only a guise for the duration of the process, or the ritual, so is also true of the terms Brother and Sister. Some other terms are *mātur didhiṣu* and *svásur jārā* (for Pūṣan, VI.5.5.5), "the seeder husband of the Mother", "The paramour of the Sister". This is the method of *Parokṣarva* !

On close examination it appears that the root *han* (from which we have the word *āhanás*) conveyed to the Vedic people's mind the idea of the sex-act, in addition to the usual meaning of a stroke. In the advent of rain, two phases are quite clear : i) The thunder-stroke of the lightning; and (ii) The oozing of the fluid from the cloud. On this basis Parjanya is *āhanás*. It is this cosmic stroke-fluid motif that gives the name *āhanás* to the gods as we have seen. With this motif of the cosmic stroke-fluid is closely associated the concept of the cosmic sex-act resulting in the fluid of fructification, Rain ! In rituals, the stroke-fluid-sex motif, thus, comes as the charm for rain, in one of its aspects. Yama and Yamī are presented by the seer with

this idea; and their association with the Gandharva and the Apsaras (the *apyā*) is an additional indication to this effect.

We now come to another expression in relation to Yama and Yamī, connected with a variant phase of their relationship. Yama accepts that he is an intimate "friend" of Yamī; and yet he does not approve of the friendship Yamī has in mind (v.2 *ná te sákhā sakhyám vaṣṭy 'état*). This relationship is in addition to that of the brother-sister relationship. It is pertinent to note that the term *sakhā* or *sakhya* indicates the close association at the sacrificial assembly, at various places in the RV (for ex. X.71.2 *á.ā sákhāyah sakhyāni jānate*; and v.3 there, where *yajña* is mentioned; VIII.100.5 where the *śiśumantaḥ sákhāyah* are the sacrificers, *śiśu* being the sacrificial fire; also X.40.7;—42.4 etc.); In certain places *sakhya* gets a tinge of sex. Thus in the case of the Father-Daughter complex we have repeated reference to the *sakhya* of the "maiden" (X.61. 10;-11 *kanāyāḥ sákhyaṃ*). This will show the development of the concept of a special *sakhya* on the plane of the sacrifice, and the various parties (the priests and also the partners, as we have pointed out) were the *sakhas* of one another. They being of one mind, being the helpmates of one another in the ritual, are called *samanasaḥ sakhāyah* (X.101.1). The *sakhya* in our hymn, with the other indications of the ritual already noted, comes on the same status. This will amply prove that Yama and Yamī are ritual-partners, being represented by their mortal agents. Here holds good the expression "the one having the same mark becomes (or "may become" with the injunctive use of the verb) of a different form" (X.10.2 which is the same passage that speaks of the *sakhya*). The words *sá-lakṣmā* and *viśu-rūpā* used for Yamī, have to be carefully examined. Oldenberg (*Noten*) understands the expression to mean "The sister becomes the wife". Geldner (*Der Rigveda*) renders as, "The one related with blood becomes a stranger"; and, in the foot-note, suggests that the word *lakṣman*, which signifies the distinguishing mark in the case of the beasts, should indicate here *gotra*; and, hence, Yamī being the *sa-lakṣmā* (of the same *gotra* as that of Yama being his sister) becomes (or, we may suggest, wants to become) as if of another *gotra* to suit her sex-act with Yama (Ibid., Tr. and note to the v. in question). Sāyaṇa's rendering is simply that Yamī is *sá-lakṣmā*

by virtue of her birth, but *viṣu-rūpā* as she has a different form being the sister (*salakṣmā samāna-yoniva-lekṣerā viṣu-rūpā bhaginitvād viṣama-rūpā bhāvāti bhavati*). Sāyaṇa's suggestion need not be paid much heed to, as it does not add anything special to the already existing relationship between Yama and Yamī. About Geldner's suggestion it may be pointed out that the *gotra*-relationship holds good in human relationship; and the relationship between the twins of our hymn is on a supraterritorial level, where human relations do not apply. We have made this point amply clear. Actually the words *salakṣmā* and *viṣu-rūpā* occur elsewhere (as Oldenberg and Geldner rightly point out); and there also the context is symbolic. Thus, it was customary to mark the cattle on an auspicious day; but it does not appear to be so much to indicate mastery over them (as the *Vedic Index*, under *lakṣman*, suggests), as it was for their multiplication. The expression there is about the same as we have in our hymn (*Tait. Sam.* I.3.10.1 *viṣu-rūpā yat sa-lakṣmāṇo bhavātha*); but, in view of the cattle, *viṣu-rūpāḥ* indicates them to be of different forms and colours, and *sa-lakṣmaṇaḥ* indicates that the same mark was given for all belonging to a particular person or fold. But there is more than this. According to the *Mait. Sam.* (IV.2.9) these marks were given on the Revatī asterism, the reason being, obviously, that thus they will multiply, Revatī itself suggesting wealth. Various were the marks, and they were generally put on the ear. This is clear from such epithets as *karkari-karṇyaḥ* (*jar-eared*), *dātra-karṇyaḥ* (*sickle-eared*), *sihūnā-karṇyaḥ* (*goad-eared*) or *cchidra-karṇyaḥ* (*hole-eared*). It has to be noted, in this context, that according to the AV a *mithuna* was to be the auspicious mark. It was believed to be put by the Aśvins, whose nature as the helpmates in sexual union is well set; and it was done with a view to growth in the progeny of the cattle (AV VI.141.2 *lōhitena svādhitinā mithunām kārṇayoḥ kṛdhi, ākartāmaśvīnā lakṣma tādastu prajāyā bahu*). The word *mithuna* indicates here the figure of a man and a woman, as Sāyaṇa rightly comments (*strī-pumsa-lakṣṇam cihnam*).

We have noted already that the motif of Gandharva and the Apsaras, the water-dame (*apyā*) from our hymn is seen also in the next one (X, 11. 2), where in the first verse, there is a

reference to the milking of heaven (indicative of rain). Now, the expression *sá-lakṣmā yad viṣu-rūpā bhavāti* comes in a hymn that follows the next (X.12.6). The point to be noted is that the hymn itself is said to have Agni as the deity; and in the verse proper, which is noted above, Yama is also mentioned. Agni is invoked, there, to protect one who considers the name of Yama as *su-mantu*, though the name of the immortal one is *durmantu* (*durmantu'dsya amṛtasya nāma*) at the time when the *sá-lakṣmā* becomes *viṣu-rūpā*. The mention of Yama and the symbolic expression in the Yama-Yamī hymn shows a close connection between these hymns; and, if we take into consideration the *Gandharva-Apsaras* motif, which persists in the hymn that comes in the middle of these two (X.11), we might not be wrong in taking for granted that the three, and even the previous one that has the motif on the *payasvān agni* ("Fire-with-water"), formed one unit for ritual purpose, though all the four have lost their ritual context later on. As it is, the hymn of Yama Yamī ends rather abruptly, Yama portrayed as asking Yamī to seek somebody else for the auspicious *samvid*. The whole heat of Yamī's argument seems to have lost; and there is no verdict on the straightforwardness of Yama. The verse from the hymn next to the next (noted above) has a direct mention of Yama, and actually praises Yama. The expression "at the time when the *sá-lakṣmā* becomes *viṣu-rūpā*" (*sá-lakṣmā yad viṣu-rūpā bhavāti*) in this verse is the exact description of Yamī in the speech of Yama (X.10.2). Is it probable that this verse originally formed the last verse of the Yama-Yamī hymn, and was since misplaced? It may also be noted in this connection that there is no commentary of Sāyaṇa on this verse, which shows that even in the hymn where it is found now, it was a stranger. If it did form the last verse of the Yama-Yamī hymn, the implication would be that by the acceptance of the desire of Yamī, at last, Yama might lose his name (*durmantu**nāma*). But, yet he remains a good name (*yamāsya yó manāvate sumāntu*). This would suggest the ultimate symbolic mating of Yama-Yamī in the ritual, as the case is with the *Vṛṣākapi*, and the *Nābhānediṣṭha* hymns and the Horse-sacrifice. It may, perhaps, be profitable to note that such union is the pattern of the three hymns mentioned above. In the hymn

next to ours there is the *mithuna* of the *nada* and the *Apsaras*, and further there is the image of the mating parents being roused by Agni (X.11.6 *ud īraya pitārā jārā á bhágam*), the motif that is common in the RV (I.20.4;-110.8;IV.33.3;-34.9; V.35.5;-36.3). The hymn ends with the thought of Agni yoking his chariot which is "the impeller of *amṛta*" (which is a rain-symbol). The hymn next to this has again the mating parents: "May the parents be young again with honey" (X.12.4 *mádhvā no átra pitārā śiśitām*, where *madhu* signifies rain). This hymn ends with the same verse as X.11. Agni in these hymns is the mid-region fire, or his sacrificial form that activates the mid-region. The expression *amṛtasya nāma*, referred to above, comes only once more in the RV; and even there it refers to Agni (III.20.3). And in the same problematic verse noted above, the one whose name is *durmantu* is the *amṛta*. The meaning seems to be that the same (aspect) of Agni (*amṛta*) is difficult to comprehend, where the *sá-lakṣmā* might become *viṣu-rūpā*; but that, in reality, it is the same as that of Yama (as they are identical); and one who comprehends thus gains Agni's favour, as he knows that Agni and Yama are only two aspects of the same cosmic principle. Yamī appears to be *sa-lakṣmā*, as regards Yama, due to her being the female half in the cosmic arrangement (Fire-Water complex). She is *viṣu-rūpā* as she comes in the ritual-plane in the form a human of a different sex. Thus, finally, their being *sa-lakṣman* is equal to being the cosmic forces presented as brother and sister; their being *viṣu-rūpa* is due to their sex at the ritual. The word *yat* in the expression *sa-lakṣmā yat viṣu-rūpā etc.* has the sense of "when", and not "because". The expression, this way, would mean, "When (at the ritual) etc.". On the analogy of the *mithuna-lakṣmā* motif at the AV, the *sa-lakṣmā viṣu-rūpa* motif of our hymn appears to be for the timely and bumper rain; because both Yama and Yamī have direct relationship with the cosmic waters, and form the *mithuna*.

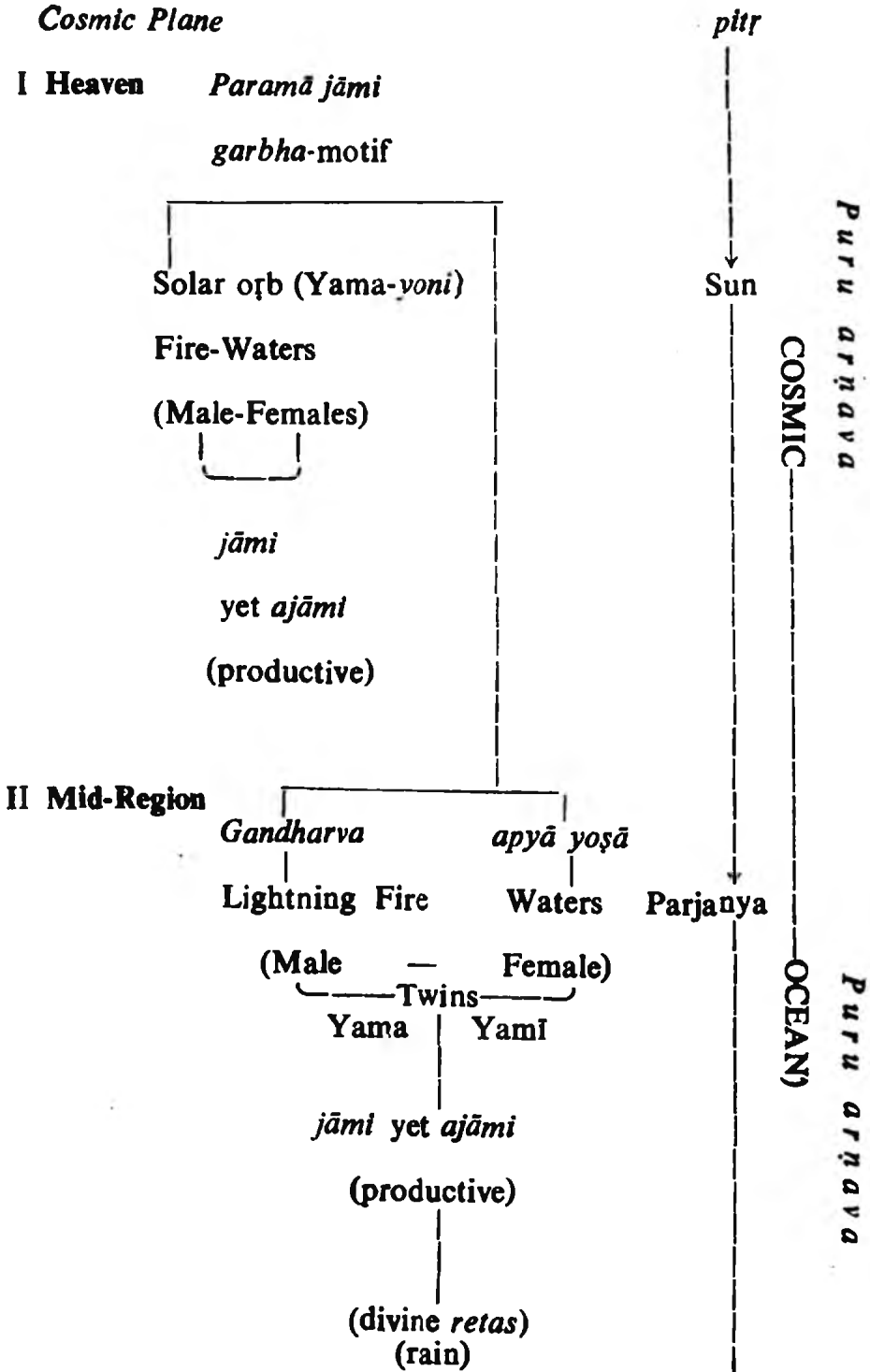
With this we come to the last point, the *jāmi-a-jāmi* motif. We have referred to this point earlier (Ch. 3). The words *jāmi* and *a-jāmi* occur at various places in the RV; and the word *a-jāmi* is generally taken to mean the stranger or the enemy, and *jāmi* as the brother, near relative or even sister.

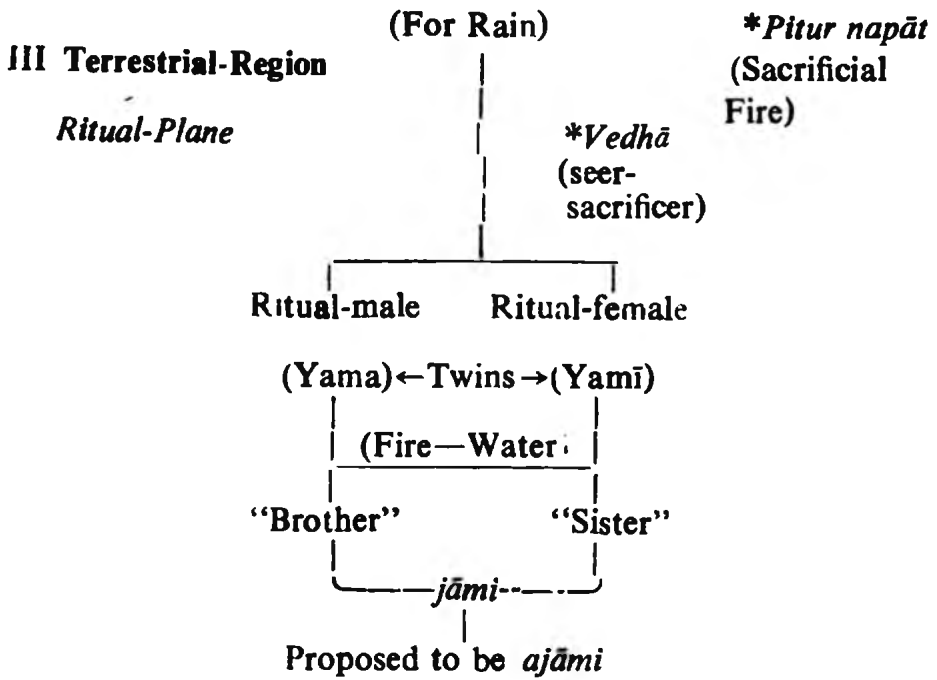
Here the Gandharva and the *apyā-yoṣā* are said to be very near *jāmi*; and the sense is of a close relation, or source. But the words *jāmi* and *a-jāmi* that come in our hymn have a special implication. Glossing on these words Yāska, giving other alternate meanings, suggests that (in *a-jāmi*) there is a pre-fix suggesting "a person of a different category" (Nir. IV.20 *jāmir atireka-nāma, bālīśasya vā, (a)-samāna-jātīyasya vā-upajanaḥ*). This would show that he takes the word *jāmi*, in the present context to indicate one who is of the same class or category, in other words, the *sa-lakṣmā*. But *a-jāmi* does not correspond to *viṣu-rūpa*. The *jāmi-ajāmi* relationship, in fact, goes beyond the concept of *samānajātīya* and *a-samānajātīya*. The expression, "there might come the ages when the *jāmis* would do the *ajāmi*", spoken by Yama to dissuade Yamī at the moment from her desire for him (v.10), indicates *ajāmi* to be an act which could be normal and acceptable. In other words, *ajāmi* could be the normal sex-relation; and those who are *ajāmi* could be the normal sex-partners. As Yama and Yamī are not normal sex-partners, they are *jāmis*, in relation to each other, or have the *jāmi* relationship; so says Yama. In the verse that just precedes, and which must be taken as said by Yama himself, Yama and Yamī are said to be *mithunā śabandhū* (which does not occur anywhere else), indicating again that they are *jāmi*; and, hence, sex between them cannot be normal. That is why he admonishes Yamī saying, "By heaven and by the earth (we) two are the near-related pair (*mithunā śabandhū*); (by this act) Yamī might bear the stigma of having acted the *ajāmi* with Yama" (v.9 *divā pṛthivyā mithunā śa-bandnū, yamīr yamāsya bibhṛyad ajāmi*). Or, if this be taken as said by Yamī, it would indicate her voluptuous confidence that, though they are the *śabandhū mithunā*, she would boldly bear the *ajāmi* relationship in respect of Yama. In essence, the hymn of Yama-Yamī presents a *jāmi mithuna* in an *a-jāmi* posture. This is the abnormal sex. If we give a little thought, we could see that the Horse-queen, or the Vṛṣākapi-Indrāṇi *mithuna* is equally an *a-jāmi mithuna* (beast-human). This shows a tradition of presenting *a-jāmi mithunas* in the ritual-setting for rain and fertility of all types. This concept developed further and is recorded by the *Jai. Br.* We have already noted it in an earlier

chapter (Ch. 3). The unique importance of the seer of this hymn, whosoever he may be (or has he taken Yama as the symbolic name as is the case with Nābhānediṣṭha ?), lies in the fact that he has created a new terminology in the vedic ritual-sexual tradition. The well set couple of the Father and the Daughter is given a new dimension here; and we have the Brother-sister *mithuna*. The F-D *mithuna* was known even in the earlier phase of the Ṛgvedic symbolism, as it occurs in one of the family hymns, that of the Viśvāmitras (III.31.1), who might be rightly credited with the introduction of this type of *mithuna*. It appears to be borrowed from the Viśvāmitras by Śakti (I.71.5), the son of Vasīṣṭha, which also proves the peculiar relationship between the two families.²¹ Nābhānediṣṭha follows the same (X.61.5-9); so does Dirghatamas I.164. But the seer of the Yama-Yamī hymn creates a new image. It is here for the first time that we have a clear *jāmi-ajāmi mithuna*. As the *Jai. Br.*, in the later period, states, a *jāmi mithuna* is non-productive; and it gives two males or two females as the example of this type of *mithuna*. The idea in our hymn is not of the *mithuna* of a homosexual nature, but, as we have stated above, that of an unauthorized or an abnormal one when it speaks of the *jāmi*. The plan of the hymn will be clear from the following diagram.

PLAN OF RV X.10

Yama-Yamī





The Vision : The sacrificer-seer sees that the cosmic elements are united in a close relationship: they stay in the same unit, which he calls “source” *paramā-jāmi* or *garbha*. This way they are Brother and Sister. They produce rain, which he knows as the *retas* from the tradition. He imagines that the B. and S. cohabit. This he gets enacted, symbolically or orally, on the ritual-plane.

NOTES

1. Roth, ZDMG. II, 118ff;-IV, 425; Spiegel, *Iranische Alterthumskunde* I, 527ff; Oldenberg, ZDMG. 39, p. 77 Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, Second Series, p. 510,521; Bergaigne, *La Religion Vedique*, Paris, 1963, p. 98f; Schroeder, *Mysterium and Mimus Im Rigveda*, Leipzig, 1908, p. 275ff.
2. Bergaigne, *op. cit.*; Goldman see note 9 below.
3. "Gambler's Lament" *Munshi Fel. Vol, Bhāratiya Vidyā*, XX-XXI
4. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, London, 1928, p. 118; he follows Roth; also his *Vedic Mythology*, under Yama.
5. *op. cit. loc. cit.*
6. Spiegel, *op. cit.*; Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, *loc. cit.*
7. Mayer, *Indogermanische Mythen* I p. 229, 232; Macdonell *Ved Mythology loc. cit.*
8. *Ibid*
9. Goldman, Robert, "Mortal Man and Importal Woman", *J. Or. Instt Baroda*, XVIII-iv, pp. 273-303.
10. *Der Rigveda*, III com. on the passage: "Die befruchtung der Mutter Erde druch den Vatter Himmel".
11. "mātā sarvasya nirmātrī pṛthivī, pītarām pālakam dyu-lokam"; and on *garbha-rasō*, "garbhe rasah auṣadhyādy 'utpādana-samartham udakam yasyah sā tādr̥ṣī".
12. There are only two places in the RV where the word *mātā* seems to indicate Speech; but there the word *Vāc* is absent. Thus, at V. 41.19 we read *yūthasya mātā*, and Sāyaṇa says (as an alternate rendering, *yad vā*), she might be the *mādhyamikā vāk*, thunder; at X.32-4 we again have *mātā* *yūthasya*; but, here Sāyaṇa renders the expression as, "mātā devatā-guṇānām niṣpādayitri stutiḥ". *Vāc* is not mentioned at both these places.
13. cf. I. 36.4;-16 41.6; III. 11.7; IV. 15.5; V. 4.10 and at many places.
14. Geldner renders it as "feindschaft" here and also at X. 19.6, IV. 43 4; I. 119.8 etc.; and at other places as "schuld", VIII. 47.7; see also VI. 61.10
15. Geldner takes it as for Yama; Sāyaṇa for Yamī; But he faces the difficulty of the gender, and yet renders the masculine as if it were the fem., "Jaganvān" = "gatavati yami",
16. Sāyaṇa compares the point with that of the Father-and-Daughter-incest, "janyur iti luptopamam etat janyur iva, yathā janayitā prajā-patīḥ patir bhūtvā sva-duhituḥ śarīra m sambhogenāviṣṭavān", which shows that he unnerstands *janyuh* as the procreator, cf. "janyur iva". See also Oldenberg, *Noten*.
17. Geldner, *Der Rigveda*; on this verse also his *Kommentar*, which Oldenberg refers to and questions.

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18. The first of these verses was used at the Horse-sacrifice, acc. to the Śāṅk. Ś.S. (XVI.4; then in a following verse, the reading is "aśvasyāveṣitam paśaḥ" v.5)
19. Cf. *Indrāṇi patyā su-jitam jigāya udamśena pati-vidye bibhed*, *Mait. Sam.* III. 8.4.; cf. also *indrāṇi devi subhagā su-patnī, ud amśena pati-vidye jigāya* *Tait. Br.* IV. 2.7-8, which shows *pasi-vidya* to be different from *pati*. For a full discussion on this point see Dange, *Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, where he criticises other opinions, including that of Bloomfield, as regards the hymn of Mudgalanī, PP. 108-122
20. *Der Rgveda* II, note to the verse "Die Tochter der Tvaṣṭṛ is das urweib, aus dem er die einzelhen Formen schafft. Die Schopfung behurt also aus einem Inzest". For the word *vakṣaṇa* see *The Vedic Index*; Pischel, *Vedische Studien* I, pp. 175-181. Velankar renders *vakṣaṇā*, at this place, as "udders"; Griffith, "bosom", following Ludwig
21. See Dange, "Sasarparī, a War-spell from the Rgveda" VII., *Hosiarpur*, Vol, V-i (March 1967) pp. 2532; also, for more elaborate discussion, his book, *Aśvatthāci Pāne* (Leaves of the Aśvattha Tree) Nagpur, 1974, pp. 202-217, where he states that the Vasiṣṭhas came later than the Viśvāmitras to have the favour of the Bharata king Sudās, and also borrowed four verses from the Āprī hymn of the Viśvāmitras.

The Lusty Father

We have examined the case of Yama-Yamī, and proposed that they formed the ritual-couple for the gain of rain. We have also observed the probability of an actual ritual in the very old days when this myth could have been an actuality in the ritual-tradition of the Veda, when at least the dialogue must have been a sex-charm; and, in the period yet ancient (it is not very easy to ascertain when) the symbolic ritual must have been enacted. We now come to another myth in the Vedic tradition, which has a much wider reference in the later literature, and in which the persons, here the Father and the Daughter, have been identified variously—from Sky-Constellation, Sky-Dawn to Sky-Earth; and in a yet later period, that of the Purāṇas, the Daughter came to be Umā-Gaurī, who is herself identified with the earth. Unlike the myth of the Brother-Sister (Yama-Yamī) noted above, and which occurs only in one hymn of the RV, this myth has four occurrences, or rather allusions, in the RV itself; and we shall examine them. Unlike the Yama-Yamī myth, however, this myth comes only in fragments; there is no dialogue; but the identification, in the RV at least, is very clear. At all places the Father-Daughter motif is clear, and it is carried on in the Purāṇas also. In these later accounts the Father becomes Brahmā, and the Daughter sometimes Umā and sometimes Gāyatrī. There is also a fusion of these two, when the account spins into that of the semen of Brahmā dropping down at the sight of Umā-Gaurī at the marriage of the latter with Śiva. Sometimes, the Daughter is Sarasvatī. The same motif is worked out in such narrations which state that Brahmā's semen fell out when he saw the wives of the gods. The semen of Brahmā, thus

became the symbol for further creation, the females changing their form. The Purāṇic version has the Śiva-Umā motif due to the old tale of Rudra shooting an arrow at the lusty Father, Prajāpati of the Brāhmaṇas, though the original RV-account has no Prajāpati, or even Rudra. (cf. *Brahma P.* 102.2 ff; *Śiva P.*, Śakti Khaṇḍa, II.1.10ff; 5.32; *Matsya P.* 194.7; *Vāmana P.* 28.57ff etc.).

The myth is alluded to at four places in the RV, as we noted. We take them one by one.

“When he (the sacrificer) offered the liquid offering to Heaven, the great Father (*mahé yát pitrá im rásam divé káh*), the ‘knowing’ (Father) rushed to the ‘attractive females’ (*áva tsarat prśanyáh*). At him did the archer shoot the dart; the God planted his seed (*tvīṣim dhāt*) in his own daughter (*sváyām duhitári*)”. (RV I.71.5).

The myth has a close association with ritual, as is clear from the fact that somebody pours the *rasa* for the Father, Heaven; and there should not be any doubt about the one who pours the *rasa* being the sacrificer, and the *rasa* being the offering, the fact accepted by all including the tradition. The Father is not said to die, or fall, at the dart; on the contrary, he completes the ‘act’, as it is mentioned after the shooting of the dart. There is also a play on the words *tvīṣim dhāt*, which indicate the male seed and also the spark. At a later verse in the same hymn, however, there is clear reference to the semen being sprinkled (v.8), along with the flare of the fire (cf. *ā yád iṣé nṛpátim téja ánaṣ śuci réto niṣīktam dyauḥ abhīke*), the whole image being of the flaring up of the sacrificial fire (after the offering of the *rasa* ref. to earlier) and the planting of the ‘seed’ by the Father. The equation, then, is :

Father’s semen = the spark in the dark;

and this coincides with the time of the ritual-offering. Who the archer is, is blank.

We, now, take another occurrence of the myth in the RV, and the details may be compared with the former one : X.61 :

At this place there appears to be a historical fact of a ritual, wherein the high priest is Cyavāna. The time of the ritual is indicated in the expression, "When the black one sat among the tawny cows" (V.4 *kṛṣṇā yād góṣv aruṇīṣu sīdat...vītām me yajñām*), which corresponds to the time indicated in the place mentioned above (I.71.1 *svásārah śyāvīm áruṣīm ajuṣran citrām ucchántīm uśásam ná gāvah*), which indicates the dawn, that just precedes the sun-rise, the image being "when the sisters (rays) fondled the dark-tawny one (=Dawn)."

The actual reference to the ritual is couched in a sexual image "Cyavāna measured (equipped) the altar with proper things" and "poured the 'semen' (or the fluid of sustenance, indicating juicy offerings like soma or clarified butter), for here-ward weal like a (or suggestive of) the torrent of water" (v.2 *cyāvānah sūdair amimīta védim; and kṣódo ná réta itá-ūti síñcat*). The point compares with the sacrificer offering the liquid to the Father at the earlier place (*rásam divé káh*), and with the mention of *retas* there (cf. I.71.8 *réto níṣiktam*, and mark the expression *su-ādhyám janayat sūdáyac ca*). The earlier place does not connect the 'semen' (*retas*) with any flow of water as such, though the identification of semen and water is a pet image of the Vedic seers, the most significant example being "the semen of waters" (*apām rétāmsi* at VIII.44.16; cf. X.64.14 which mentions the "profuse semen"—*puru rétāmsi*—of Heaven and Earth). The 'semen' in the altar is, thus, suggestive of, or symbolic of, the 'semen' in the cosmos, which is rain. It is on this background that, in the present context, the motif of the incest is ushered in. There is another similarity in these two places. In both there is mention of the birth of some one. In the latter Vāstoṣpati is said to be born (X.61.7), while at the former there is no mention of any special god, but he is indicated by the words "the young strong one of wonderful deeds" (I.71.8). There is no mention of the archer in this latter place; and even in the former there is no indication that the archer shot at the Father *because* he united with the Daughter. The account in the later texts i.e. the *Ai. Br.* and the *Śat. Br.* (3.33 and I.7.4.1 respectively¹), which speaks of the injury to the Father by Rudra who shot the arrow, is not supported by this myth of the RV. In the latter of the accounts noted above, actually

Vāstoṣpati (said to be Rudra in later accounts) is born of the union of the Father and the Daughter; and it is stretching too much to think that, as soon as he was born, Vāstoṣpati shot the arrow. The later accounts are, obviously, a fusion (or rather, confusion) of the archer in the previous account and Vāstoṣpati of the latter. May be it is an "apologistic" amendment of the later period. In the hymn of Nābhānediṣṭha (X.61), there is another detail, which requires close attention. Here, as the Father planted the semen, there is reference to some "strong manly one" who is said to have removed (or, supplanted) the semen and again caused it to grow or scatter (X.61.5° *nu nāryo āpauhat*, and *punas tad ā vrhati*). Here there is the image of the double-phased semen; and it may not be wrong to suppose, with what has been said earlier and what is to be said later, that in this image, there is the same semen = rain correspondence, as hinted above. The image of the double-phased semen continues in the next verse: "What was to be accomplished in the 'middle', when the Father had desire for the young (Daughter), they both released a little semen; it was sprinkled on the top-plane, 'the womb of righteous deeds' *sānau niṣiktam sukṛtāsya yōnau*" (v.6). The plane is that of the sacrifice, the middle plane being that of the mid-region (Sīyaṇa). This will indicate that the ritual-release of semen, actual or symbolic in the form of the sacrificial liquid, is suggested to be the sympathetic act for the release of the semen of the Father on the cosmic plane. The conjunction of ritual and the sex-act between the Father and the Daughter is carried in the next verse also, where there is one more point added. The myth identifies the Daughter with the earth, and it is said that "when the Father united with his own Daughter, the earth, he released the semen (v.7 *kṣmayā rétaḥ sañjagmāndh ni śīcat*); the skillful gods accomplished the *brahman* and created Vāstoṣpati". This will show that Vāstoṣpati and the "strong manly one" (*naryáḥ*) who is referred to earlier, are different. The first one transfers the semen and causes it to be scattered; the second one is born of the earth, and, probably, is the lord of the earthly regions. The examination of the word *narya* indicates the sacrificial fire in some symbolic places (I.40.3; X.95.10) or the sacrificer. This will also indicate that the dawn-image does not hold good here; and the

Daughter is the earth. The structure of the images of the hymn would, then, reveal, that the sacrificial fire, or the sacrificer, would transplant the ritual act of sex—symbolic or real—to the mid-region to arouse the heavenly Father to sprinkle semen (rain) on the earth. We, thus, have a ritual-couple (the *mithuna*) corresponding to (or representing) the cosmic couple. This is suggested in the expression *krāṇá pitárā* “performing parents”, at the very beginning of the hymn (V.1 c).

The myth, as the structure of X.61 shows, originally centred round the Heaven-Earth couple; and the kernel of the myth is the fructification of the earth with a sex-act (symbolic or actual). The popularity of the myth and its association with the sacrificial culture, with the brightening of the fire at the dawn (actually prior to the sun-rise) brought in Uṣas (the dawn) as the Daughter in the Vedic tradition.² But, the Daughter=Earth aspect was not forgotten, as will be seen from another occurrence. Even in the hymn we have been examining, later we have the gain of the “milk of the cow Sabardughā”, and the killing of Śuṣṇa (*Ibid*, vv.11.13.17); both these are rain-symbols; and moreover, the seer is described in terms indicative of his control over rain (*devá-vān* at V. 26; and *apás ca vípras tarati svá-setuḥ* at V.16). With this, now, we come to the next occurrence.

I.164—The seer Dirghatamas says :

“Heaven is my Father, Creator; my source (*nābhi*) is here; this great Earth is my mother—my close tie. In between the two great stretched vats is the ‘womb’; here did the Father deposit the foetus” (I.164.33).

The image is clear. Here we do not have the semen; but the foetus is said to be deposited in the mid-region (*átrā pitā duhitur gárbham ā-dhāt*), which is the ‘womb’ in between the earth and heaven. This shows that the motif is of transplantation, which corresponds to the image of the earlier place, that of Nābhāne-diṣṭha. Here, the Daughter is, obviously, Earth; yet, the formation of the foetus is said to be in the mid-region. In the image of Nābhāne-diṣṭha (X.61) the transplantation is accomplished

by the sacrificer or the sacrificial fire, while it is done here by the Father himself. The mention of the *garbha* is an important development; for, *garbha* is a prominent symbol for rain in the RV; and this is supported by the hymn (of Dīrghatamas) itself, which ends in the gain of rain, the sun being called *apām garbha* pacifying the world with rain (*vr̥ṣṭībhis tarpayantam*); *garbha* has persisted as the symbol for rain-formation in the classical period also, as we have noted earlier.

The Dīrghatamas-hymn presents the *brahmodya*—dialogue just after this verse, wherein it is said that this altar is the extreme end of the earth; this sacrifice is the navel of the world; this Soma is the semen of the ‘sprinkling Horse’ (*vr̥ṣṇor aśvasya retah*; cf. the *vr̥ṣaṇasva-menā* motif); the Brahmā priest is the highest realm of Speech” (v.35). This would indicate that the offering of Soma in the altar is, symbolically, the pouring of the Horse’s (sun’s) semen; and, connecting this with the earlier verse, this act is symbolic of planting the semen in the altar = earth (the Mother) to help form the foetus, which is then taken to this mid-region (womb) and sprinkled in the earth. This complex imagery was not fully understood by the later Brāhmaṇa-thinkers, who used this myth with a limited motive to explain the creation of the world from Prajāpati. But, in doing so, they understood the Daughter to be Dawn or Sky; they left the earth, as they concentrated particularly on the time of the offering rather than on the fructification of the earth. Even in the RV the Dawn-motif and the exploit of the Aṅgirasas in bringing the new morning sun-light appears closely associated with this myth at the very first place we have examined (I.71) and also at the Nābhānediṣṭha-hymn. But, in the latter of the two the gain of rain (‘milk of Sabardughā’) is given prominence and in Dīrghatamas, the last we have examined, the gain of rain is the motif.

There is another point. We have hinted earlier at the probability of a ritual wherein there was actual sex (i.e. at the hymn of Nābhānediṣṭha) in the reference to the Father and the Daughter performing on the ritual-plane (*krāṇā pitarā*). The seer’s reference to Cyavāna there is significant. It is he who sprinkles the “semen” for hereward weal; and there is a clear legend of Cyavāna and Sukanyā, though it is not clear if he was offered

the daughter by the king Śaryāta³ at some such ritual. The probability is great. But, the *brahmodya* that just follows the verse at the Dīrghatamas hymn has a clear and a very strong tradition of a sex-ritual, that at the Horse-sacrifice. (Āśv. Śr. S.X.9).

In the reference to the myth by Dīrghatamas there is no mention of the archer, like that at the hymn of Nābhānediṣṭha, and unlike the first reference in the hymn (I.71) of Parāśara, the son of Śakti. Now, we take up the last of the references in the RV; it is in the hymn of Viśvāmitra :

III.31 “Respecting the inspiring command of Ṛta, the knowing and directing (*śāsat*) *vahni* (=‘leader’) approached the offspring of the Daughter (*duhitúr naptýám gāt*), where the Father, directing the ‘flow’ (of semen), towards the Daughter, planted it with a passionate mind” (III.31.1).

The thought is carried on further :

“The body-born one (*tānvaḥ*) did not give the share to the sister, the co-born one (*jāmaye*); he made foetus the deposit (or surety) for the winder (*cakāra gárbbham sanitúr nidhānam*). When the two mothers gave birth to the *vanhi*, of the two accomplisners one was the performer; the other the gratifier” (v.2).

The verses have been much discussed, and there is divergence of opinions among scholars about the exact implication of the images thereof,⁴ the traditional interpretation bringing in the point of inheritance and suggesting that the ancestral share was not allowed to the daughter (*Jāmi* of our passage). The hymn, as is usual with the seers, is a complex of many images and fragments of myths. Thus, there is the reference to the Aṅgirasas and the shattering of Vala (vv.4 and 7), the Saramā-myth (v.6); there is reference to Indra and the killing of Śuṣṇa, the gain of the ancient “semen” and “milk” (v.10) the smashing of Vṛtra (v. 11) and the release of the shining waters by Indra (v. 16). For the complex of all these images, the myth of the Father and

the Daughter serves as the base, as it is placed in the very first verse. The images show two phases, which are : i) the gain of the fresh morning light (Vala and Saramā myths)⁵ and ii) the gain of rain. The structure is, more or less, similar to that in the hymn of Nābhānediṣṭha. The two 'mothers' that give birth to the *vanhi* ("leader") is an image of the churning of fire. The two accomplishers resemble the Father and the 'strong young one' of the Nābhānediṣṭha-hymn; but beyond this point every thing is dark; and we are not concerned with the unfolding of the whole picture in the present discussion.

What is pertinent is the motif of incest that enlivens all these places, and its sacredness. It seems pretty clear that the motif of incest goes beyond the phenomenon of the break of the dawn; and, as we have noted, the prominent imagery is of the gain of the 'semen' of Heaven for the fructification of Earth. Even in the last place, with its complex of myths, this is faintly suggested in the formation of the *garbha*, where one is the 'performer' and the other the 'gratifier' (cf. *anyāḥ kartā su-kṛtor anyā rñdhān*). If we follow the imagery from the other places, the image of the seer works out this way; and this in spite of the traditional interpretation, or even accepting it as far as the law of inheritance is concerned. The *jāmi* of the sacrificial fire is the altar and by implication and symbolism, the earth; and the earth is termed *jāmi* at other places (I. 159.4; 185.5). The winner is the sacrificer, who wants to inherit the gain; the sacrificial fire helps him by transplanting the semen (the offering) that forms the foetus (*garbha*) and keeping it safe in the mid-region, from which the sacrificer can get it (cf. the imagery of Nābhānediṣṭha, the exploit of the *narya*). It should also be remembered that the concept of the *garbha* is never without the association of fluid; and this is true even for the Vedic seers, vouched by their expression. As the formation of the *garbha* presupposes the sex-act, the stock myth of the Father and the Daughter is used as the base. The belief that it is the sacrificial offering that helps form the *garbha* of the mid-region is clear in the expression, "when the two mothers gave birth to the *vanhi*", who is the sacrificial fire, as it is he that carries the offering to form the *garbha* in the mid-region. He is one of the two (*su-kṛtor anyāḥ*), the other one being his counterpart in

the mid-region, the lightning fire—the one that gratifies by the showers. The myth of the incest, it seems, secondarily came to be associated with the birth of the sun; and, as the sun came after the dawn, thus being her son, the incest came to be associated with the sun-rise. This is not, however, true of all these places, and must be a very late idea. The motif came to indicate the sex-charm for fructification and also the time of the offering. In the present context, at this time the *vanhi* (fire who is the “leader” of the sacrifice), is said to go to the “grand daughter of the Daughter” (*duhitur naptiyam*; cf. Geldner), which is the offering, being the outcome of the corn produced from the earth, the Daughter. It is not improbable that the Father came to be identified with the sacrificer who pours the liquid in the altar, which is the representation of the earth in the Vedic ritual-tradition.⁶ But, this again is only a later stage of symbolism. That the original image centred round the liquid of nourishment (*semen*) and not the germ of light (Dawn-image) is clear from the mention of the words indicative of the liquid —“flow” (*sekam*, III.31.1), “juice” (*rasam*) in addition to *semen* (*retas*, both at I.71.4,8), Soma being the *semen* (I.164.35) and “semen, like a stream of water” (X.61.2), in addition to the normal “semen” (Ib.R.6,7). And the original meaning behind the symbolism of the myth was the seeding of the earth by the divine fluid.

It will be worthy to discuss here the question of the source of the myth, and about the seemingly awkward relationship between the parties. To say, taking help from etymology, that the earth is the *duhitr*, the Daughter, as she “milks” (from \sqrt{duh}) is to support the Earth-Daughter theory; and the “milk” can be understood as rain, also called *payas* (milk). But, the root noted above ill suits the context of *retas* (“semen”). Etymology is scarcely of any help here.

Actually this, or a similar, incest-motif obtains elsewhere. There is reason to believe that the R̥gvedic seers who employed the motif, the first among them being Viśvāmitra (it is in the book of his family which also shows the hoary antiquity of the myth) knew the relationship between the parties. Before we take up this point, we shall do well to examine similar myths

from other sources. But the expression "in his own daughter" (*svāyām duhitari*) has to be noted.

Here is a nursery tale from England; and it is current in Ireland, Scotland, Italy, France, Russia and Lithuania. According to it, a certain king having lost his wife and having mourned for her, suddenly has a desire to marry his own daughter. The daughter, knowing his intentions, and to ward off the difficult situation, asks him to prepare three dresses, one of the sky, the other that of the sun and yet another that of the moon. These are made; and yet the situation is unabated. Now, the king has an ass that produces gold and is very favourite of the king. The daughter asks her father to give her the skin of the ass. When she gets, she puts it on; and, smearing her face with soot, runs away. Gomme, who records this tale for analysis, comments that it is a product of a period when social and family relations were not known.⁷ In a kinless society, according to the belief, children were related only to the mother, as they were actually born from her; and the father was never believed to have any part in procreation. What Gomme says is corroborated from sources like the aboriginal Australians.⁸ It could be, that the tale was made and told by others who had developed family-relationship and saw with horror this peculiar way of life. It is tempting to interpret the ass producing gold as the nightly darkness preceding the sun-rise, and the daughter's putting on the ass-skin as indicative of her being the dusky evening. But, that apart, why did the awkward relationship come in the tale? Following Gomme, we might say that the tale marks two stages of a society itself; and the peculiar motif marks a change from kinlessness to the establishing of the new-born relationship with the father with the added knowledge of his part in procreation. Such cannot, however, be the case in the myth from the RV. The point to be remembered is that there is no sanctity to the nursery tale even with its currency. Hence, it does not come close in concept with our myth. The sanctity with which the myth is handled in the RV, and in the later tradition even granting the deviations, does not get a satisfactory explanation in the social basis. Let us, hence, go to another source.

In one of the Sumerian myths, Enki impregnates Nintu, who

is an aspect of Ninharsag (Nin=goddess+har=sag=of the mountain, or the earth), who gives birth to a daughter after nine days. Her name is Nin-mu. Enki has forbidden any one to walk in the marshes; but, this young daughter, Ninmu does walk once. Enki catches sight of her; and, crossing the river in a boat he comes to her and impregnates her too. She bears a daughter, Nin-kurra (which signifies a plant, grain or fruit). This girl also lurks once in the marshes and has the same fate at the hands of Enki. Her daughter is called Uttu. Thinking that this girl might have the same fate as the earlier ones, Nintu-Ninharsag herself intervenes and tells Uttu to require Enki to bring for her cucumbers, grapes and some fruit out of the desert. Enki does so after irrigating the desert. The girl Uttu, now, allows Enki to impregnate her.⁹

In this tale we have the father of Ninmu doing the same thing as the Father of our myth does with his Daughter. Enki goes steps further, and impregnates the daughter's daughter and also the latter's daughter on certain conditions, which are nothing but produces from land. Kirk, who examines this myth, rightly points out that here we have repeated incest in the following degrees to indicate the irrigation of the same land, which was formerly arid. His suggestion that Enki going in a boat indicates the water channel is understandable. At one stage, we have Nintu-Ninharsag removing Enki's seed from the womb of Uttu and planting it in herself; and in yet another variation, we have Nintu-Ninharsag placing Enki in her own vagina.¹⁰ The last relationship is perfectly natural and of normal sex; and we have a later Vedic parallel in Indrāṇī (identified as Pṛthivī-Dhanañjayā) holding the strong Indra in her vagina *Mait. Sam.* III.8.4=*Kāṭhaka Sam.* VIII.17.62). The incestuous relationship in this tale is based on the belief and actual experience of the *same* fluid nourishing the land and also the sprout that shoots from 'her'. That incest is a favourite faith associated with the process of agriculture is attested by many scholars who study folk-traditions; and, as Mackenzie¹¹ points out, one of the most striking images of the process is of the "son who is the husband of the Mother", a motif shifted from the pastoro-agricultural plane to the relationship between the waters (females) and the fire (male) by the Vedic seers (cf. the concept

of Apām-napāt and Sarasvant), where the waters are both the wives and mothers of the aspect of the fire, (II.35. VII.95, 96). The most original occurrence of this motif is to be found in ancient Egypt in the imagery about Osiris.¹² The Sumerian En-ki was primarily the god of waters of all sorts, as his name indicates. He was the lord of the sea, and bade the sun-god to send fresh water from the skies. Thus, he controlled the skies and the rain-water.¹³ In the Babylonian period this Sumerian god was adopted as Ea, and was made the "Lord of Heaven and Earth"; he was also the "Lugal-ida" (the king of the rivers). According to scholars Babylonia was occupied by the Sumerians in about 4000 B.C.,¹⁴ and we may, hence, believe that the myth noted above is as old as that.

A comparison of the En-ki myth with that of the Father in the myth under discussion shows a remarkable similarity. The detail of the transplantation of the semen in the En-ki myth, probably, indicates the system of re-planting the sprout from one spot of land to another, as is known in the case of rice-cultivation or in horticulture. The transfer of the semen in the Vedic myth, however, is associated with the depositing of the foetus in the mid-region; and, even, otherwise, the Vedic myth is a simple one, vouching only one seeding, which corresponds more to rain rather than irrigation and repeated planting. There are three stages in the Enki myth—Nintu—Ninharsag, Ninmu and Ninkurra—of incest prior to the gain of the fruits, after which comes Uttu with the same motif, allowed by the great grand-mother herself. The Vedic myth, at one place, indicates the third stage, but without the incest. This is where the word *nāptyam* is used. If we accept, with Geldner, that it indicates the female (accusative from *nāptī*¹⁵), we have the "grand-daughter of the Daughter", whom Agni "goes to" (*duhitur nāptyam gāt*); and, if we follow the same imagery, this "grand-daughter of the Daughter" (which is the metaphor on the offering) can be well understood: Thus, Earth > sprout (corn) > offering. In the terms of the system of coupling (*mīthunīkaraṇa*), which we have examined, we have here two couples: one Agni-offering and the other, the Father and the Daughter. That the Daughter is Earth is clear enough; and Nābhānediṣṭha has actually identified the two. The later tradition, as has been

stated earlier, missed the point of the earth-Daughter identification, probably, due to the fading away of the original implication of the myth and also due to the fact that the word *duhitṛ* comes in almost all places, barring only three, for the dawn in the RV, and the expression for the dawn is invariably *divo duhitṛ* ("Daughter of Heaven"), the other case common with the word *duhitṛ* being that of the daughter of the sun. But in no place in the hymns to Dawn there is even a suggestion of this myth. Earth, as *duhitṛ*, comes only at the hymn of Nābhānediṣṭha; and it is only here that she is associated with the Father, as the earth. At two places we have the "Mother and the Daughter" (III;55,12 *mātā ca yātra duhitā ca dhenū sabardughe*; and V. 47.1 *mahī mātā duhitur bodháyantī*); but it is not quite clear if the Daughter here is the earth or the sky (conceived as a female, on the imagery of the two mothers; cf. X, 27.14). The only other place where the earth is suggested to be the Daughter is where Indra or Parjanya, said to be the lusty one, is described as creating various forms in the womb of the Daughter (*duhitur vakṣanāsu*), as he showered (V.42.13); but here the Father, as such, is absent. Even so, Parjanya is called *pitā* at various places (V. 83.6; IX. 82.2) and procreates Soma at the navel of the earth (IX. 82.2); but here the Daughter is absent. This will indicate that the Father-Daughter imagery in sex is generally uncommon to the RV. Does it, then, mean that the peculiar imagery is a borrowed one? This seems probable if we take into account the close contact of the people speaking the Aryan language, or, for that matter, the Indo-Iranian language, with the people from Babylonia and Assyria who had a well established system of irrigation, and who had already assimilated the myths of the Sumerians.

The Father-Daughter imagery is perfect in the case of Heaven-Dawn, as the latter of the pair actually is *seen* to come from the former; but such is not the case with the Heaven-Earth pair. Yet the words like "Sprinkling", "flood" (*seka*) etc., which are integral parts of the myth ill-suit the Heaven-Dawn imagery, as noted earlier. And, as the Daughter in the present myth can be none else than the earth as we have seen, and there is no record of an experience to the effect of the earth coming out of the sky, the origin of the present myth has to be

searched somewhere else. The peculiar experience of the seedable earth coming out of the waters is to be had where there is inundation and the receding of the floods. It is this earth which comes above the receded flood that is the Daughter, the flood being the Father. In a subsequent imagery, the water in the canal becomes the Father that rushes to the Daughter (seedable earth). This is what happens in the myth of En-ki, as we have noted. In the RV this experience is indicated in the expression “*duhitur vakṣāṇāsu*”, where the implication is of the land to be irrigated looking to the word *vakṣāṇā* (from \sqrt{vah} =to carry) which indicates the water course, whether of a river or a canal (cf. III. 33.12, where the word comes in association with the rivers Vipāṭ and Śutudrī; cf. I. 162.5; III. 30.14). What seems to be the case is that this myth, which was the product of the experience of inundation and irrigational land, was transferred to the Aryan speaking people through contact with the Sumerian-Assyrian people. When this background was forgotten, the ritualist-interpretors in the days of the Brāhmaṇas could not account for the Father and the Daughter, and, following the common expression “Daughter of Heaven” used for the dawn in the RV they interpreted the partners as Heaven and Dawn, sometimes understanding the Daughter even as Sky. In the RV proper, however, the seers understood the Father as the impregnating Parjanya or the raining Sky (Heaven). In doing so, they adapted the myth to the new geographical circumstances, where heavy rain drenched the earth to make her ready for agriculture. But in this they maintained the original borrowed relationship, which was later apt to be confusing! The change of the Father from the inundating and fertilizing flow of water to the raining Heaven is deftly indicated in the image of the shooter (archer), which is understandable with the lightning shaft and is totally misfit with Heaven-Dawn imagery. Once this myth gained currency, due to its symbolization of fertility, it was included in the sacrificial set up and was, probably, used as a charm for good harvest and timely rain. Maybe, it was enshrined in the verses noted above, which were to be probably recited at the first offering of the fresh corn, as indicated by the expression “when the god went to the grand-

daughter of the Daughter” in the oldest mention of the myth in the RV (III. 31.1).

Before we close the discussion, a point may be added with a view to comparison. We have noted above the probability of the Assyrio-Sumerian myth, from the experience of irrigation, influencing the early Vedic symbolization of the fructification of the agricultural land, the “flow” being the common motif for semen and incest, the difference being the actual flow of a canal or inundation in the Assyrian myth and rain in the Vedic. It will be interesting to see that this difference is maintained in their rites for the fertility of women of these two regions. Thus, it was customary for the Assyrian girl to bathe in a river, or a canal, prior to the marriage-day to gain fertility.¹⁶ The same practice is observed in the case of barren women, while in the Vedic rites the water was showered upon the girl from above. This is clear in the case of Apālā, who is said to have carried water;¹⁷ and this custom is corroborated by the AV, which enjoins water to be carried from a stream for showering. In the Gṛhya tradition, such water was showered upon the bride through the hole of a wheel, indicative of the flow from the sun or Heaven. Actual bath in the flowing canal or river gives place to the shower in these rites, carrying the water home. The former is indicative of the irrigational motif, the latter of rain; in both the belief is that the woman and the field are on par. It will be worthwhile noting in this connection that the major “seeding” gods of Babylonia and Assyria, who were influenced by the Sumerian mythical concept, are the gods of flood and inundation, unlike the Vedic counterparts, who are rain-gods. The only counterpart of the Sumerian-Babylonian gods, Enki and Ea, on the Vedic side is Apām-*napāt*. The former have their station at the confluence of the rivers Tigris and the Euphrates, while Apām-*napāt* has his terrestrial place at the confluence of the Sarasvatī Dṛṣadvatī. Actually, Apām-*napāt* is an Indo-Iranian water deity;¹⁸ and, according to the Avesta, has his abode in the confluence of Tigris-Euphrates, on the earth. On the Vedic plane Apām-*napāt* has ceased to be the god of floods. And it is the Flood-god who can be the Father of Earth, his Daughter.

"THE MYTH OF THE LUSTY FATHER"

(Environmental analysis in hymns)

<i>Motifs</i>	RV.I.75.5,8	X.61.(1;2) 5-9	I.164.33;35	III.31.1;2
[1] Partners: F—D	<i>svāyām duhitari</i> [5]	<i>Svām duhitaram</i> [7] <i>pitari yuvatyām</i> [6]	<i>duhitur garbham</i> [33]	<i>duhituh sekam</i> [1]
[2] Time—[dawn]	<i>Svasārah śyāvīm aruṣim</i> <i>ajuṣran</i>	<i>Kṛṣṇā...gosvaruṣiṣu</i> <i>sīdat</i> [4]	—	—
[3] Ritual Symbol	[A] Offering. <i>Rasam dīve kaḥ</i> [5] [B] Semen. <i>reto niṣiktam</i> [8]	<i>Sūdair amimīta vedim</i> [2] [Cyavānaḥ] <i>Kṣodo na retah...</i> <i>sīcat</i> [2] <i>Kṛāṇā pitarā</i> [1] [Cyavana-sukanyā of later account]	Somaḥ <i>aśvasya retah</i> (35)	<i>vanhir duhitur</i> <i>naptyaṃ gāt.</i> <i>'sekam'</i>
[4] Ritual Partners	—		[Horse-Queen] Āśv.Ś.S. × 9	—
[5] A. Transplantation of seed	Agni—"dvibarhas" [6] (Agni produces yuvā- <i>nam su -ādhyam</i>)	<i>naryah...punas tad-ā</i> <i>vṛhati</i> [5] <i>Vāstoṣpati born</i> [7]	<i>pitā...ā dhāt</i> [33]	<i>anyah-kartā</i> <i>anya ṛndhan</i>
B. Mid-region	"dvibarhas"	<i>madhyā kartvam</i>	<i>uttānayoś camvoḥ</i> <i>yanir antar...</i> <i>garbham ā dhāt</i> [33]	<i>cakāra garbham</i>
6) Gain		milk of "Sabardughā" [11;17] <i>Suṣṇa defeated</i> [13] <i>apas tarati</i> [16]	<i>Vṛṣṭi</i> [52]	<i>apah</i> [16] Vṛtra smashed [11] <i>Suṣṇa</i> smashed [8] <i>saramā</i> [6] <i>sūdayad</i> <i>garbham</i> [7] Indra milks cow (11)

Rgvedic Mithuna—imagery, and the Myth of F. and D.

Incestuous Mithunas

(1) Brother-Sister

- (i) Yama × Yamī (X.10)
 (ii) Pūṣan × Sister (VI.55.4,5)
 “Svasa · jārah”

(2) Mother-Son

(Son=Husband)
 “vṛsa-śiṣu”

- (i) Pūsan × ‘Mother’ (VI.55.5)
 “mātur didhiṣuḥ”
 (ii) Apām napāt × Waters (II.35.13)
 (iii) Sarasvān × Waters (VII.95.3)
 (iv) Soma × Waters (IX.93.2)
 (vasatīvarī)

extra normal (7) Vṛsākapi × Indrāṇī etc. etc.

Normal Mithunas

- (1) Heaven × Earth (F—M)
 (2) Upper araṇī × Lower araṇī
 (3) Agni × Waters.
 (4) Agni × Flames.
 (5) Soma × Waters.
 (6) Purūravas × Urvaśī.

(3) FATHER—
 DAUGHTER

Main argument :

- (i) Heaven-Dawn, accor. to tradition (1) “Divo duhitṛ” (Dawn)=14 times.
 RV does not support-not even
 in one out of 41. (2) “Sūryasya” (Soma-myth)=11
 (ii) “āhanas” (V.42.13; Parjanya)
 indicates incest.; but not called (i) Aśvin-myth (I.116.17 etc.)
 “Father”. (ii) Soma-ritual (IX.72.3 etc.)
 (solar mantra)
 (iii) *seka, śikāṭ* e’c. indicate “flow”; (iii) “Sasarparī” (III.55 15)
 hence *Rain or Heaven that rains.*

DUHITṚ (RV, total=66)

For treatment on similar lines :

Dange : (1) *Pastoral Symbolism from the Rgveda*
Poona Univ. 1970.

(2) *Vedic Concept of 'Field' DIVINE
and the Fructification*
Bombay Univ. 1971.

(iv) But Rain is not *experienced* as giving birth to Earth-Daughter, nor is Heaven *seen* as producing Earth.

(v) Myth borrowed from experience of Inundation (F) producing land (D) after water recedes, and again "flowing" on "her" to fructify.

(vi) Sumerian origin; borrowing caused confusion of relationship; similar Sumerian myth compared.

(Full discussion—Dange "Sasar-pari"—a war-spell from the Rgveda" V. I. J. Hoshiarpur V- i, March, 1967)

(3) of Tvasṭṛ (X.17.1) = 1

(4) of "āhanas" (Indra, Parjanya)=1
V.42.13

(5) Ordinary sense—the rest.

NOTES

1. The *Ai. Br.* (III.33) makes a regular creation-myth out of this account, stating that the sperm of Prajāpati fell on the ground and produced a lake; for the lake from the semen see also *Matsya P.* 157.27ff. At the *Ai. Br.* Vāstospati is absent; but we have Bhūtavān (Rudra); the myth becomes a star-myth explaining the Mṛga-vyādha constellation; the Daughter is Rohinī. Another portion of the semen stays in the mid-region, and creates various gods. *Śat. Br.* (I.7.4.1ff) has the dart with the flesh of Prajāpati sticking to it.
2. *Ai. Br. loc. cit.*; *Śat. Br. loc. cit.* The Brāhmaṇa tradition does not refer to the earth-aspect; but the Purāṇic traditions brings in Umā and Gaurī in the place of the Daughter, thus indicating the earth.
3. For a full discussion see Dange, *Vedic Conception of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, "Virgin and the Divine Seed-layer".
4. The word *naptya* (*m*) has been taken to mean "son" by Yāska, Śāyaṇa and some modern scholars like Griffith and Velankar; Geldner takes it to mean "grand daughter" from *naptṛ* > *naptī* (fem.) > *nptyam* acc. Sing.; cf. *nptyaḥ* (fem. Pl. at I.50.9); thus Geldner is right; cf. Pāṇ. VI.1.106,107; cf. also *simhyam*, acc. sing. from *simhī* (RV VII.18.17).
5. See H. L. Hariappa, *Rgvedic Legends through the Ages'* Poona, 1953, where he deals with the Saramā myth.
6. *Śat. Br.* I.2.5.9; *Taitt. Sam.* I.3.1 etc. *yāvati vedis tāvati hi pṛthivī*.
7. *Folklore as an Historical Science*, London, 1908, p. 50.
8. Among the Arunta; thus, there are soul—groups called *churinga*; a secret *churinga*-name is bestowed upon a child shortly after birth; the attributes of a dead man are believed to reside in the *churinga*; it is the *churinga* that causes conception; Murdock, *Our Primitive Contemporaries*, 18th ed. 1957 (1934), New York, p. 32ff.
9. G. S. Kirk, *Myth, Its Meaning and Function in the Ancient and Other Cultures*, Cambridge Uni. Press, p. 31ff.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Myths of Babylonia and Assyria*, London, p. xxxvi; also Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, I, 1913, p. iii.
12. Rundle Clark R. T., *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1959, p. 100.
13. *Encl. Rel. E.*, II, p. 295.
14. *Ibid.*; also Kirk, *op. cit.*, p. 99; n.
15. Geldner compares here the myth of Iḍā and Manu, for which see also AV XIX. 39.8; also Hopkins, *Religions of India*, 1970 ed., p. 160.
16. *Encl. Rel. E.*, XII, p. 908; Masani, *Folk-lore of Wells*, Bombay, 1918, p. 66.
17. *Vedic Concept.*, pp. 73-82.
18. SBE, XXIII, p. 6, n. 6.

Dog's Entrails and the Unrespected 'Wife'

The title is rather intriguing; but the ritual that it hints at forms the theme of an important hymn from the RV, the seer of which is Vāmadeva. Like other hymns that have become riddles, this hymn presents certain seemingly awkward images. Among other things, we have here the unnatural birth of Indra, a reference to Indra throwing off the father taking him by the foot, the gods not being helpful to Indra, and, lastly, the cooking of the entrails of the dog. To add spice to the seemingly unusual broth, there is also the mention of a "wife" that was rendered "unrespectful". The hymn has been studied by various scholars¹; and, as has been usual with such hymns, it has been facing them as a riddle. The hymn is RV X. 18.

The hymn starts with a sort of a dialogue, where Indra is believed to have said that he would not come out of his mother's womb in the natural way (vv. 1-2)². Then, there is the usual reference to Indra drinking soma in the house of Tvaṣṭṛ. Indra is said to have remained in the womb of his mother for a thousand months and many years, which was believed to be a censurable act (v.4 *kīm śa ṛdhak kṛṇavat yam sahasram māśo jahāra śaradaś ca pūrvih*). This the mother of Indra thought to be un-commendable (*avadyam iva*), and concealed the foetus from others; but, at the proper time, grown considerably, Indra came out enveloping the regions with his lustre (v.4). The unusual birth is closely associated with the rush of the waters, which are presented as singing the glory of Indra, as they are set free; some dreaded witch, Kuṣavā by name, is said to have been ready to drown this new-born child; but, the kindly help of the water-streams saved Indra (vv.5-8).

Indra, being finally out of the mother's womb is compared to a fully grown bull that has been born of a cow that conceived for the first time (vv. 9, 10).³ The mother tells Indra that the gods are not at all favourable to him; and Indra seeks the help of Viṣṇu in killing Vṛtra which he readily gets (v. 11). Now, there is a sudden change in the mode of the hymn in the last two verses. The thought, here, is extremely puzzling as it is suggestive. This is the very heart of the whole hymn, and contains the reference to the act of dog-cooking. Herein we have a mixture of a ritual tinged with a peculiar reference to the "wife", as noted above. The verses are as below :

Who rendered your mother a widow ?

**Who did desire to smite you
Motionless or moving as you were ?
Which god to you was favourable,
When you killed the Father seizing him by the foot ? (v. 12)**

To these questions comes the answer in the following, and the last verse :

**In distress (*avartyā*) did I cook the entrails of the DOG
Among the gods found I not the favourer;
The "wife" I saw unrespected,
Indeed, for me did the hawk fetch "honey" (v. 13).**

As has been already stated, the hymn is in the form of a dialogue, though the exact persons who speak may be doubted in all cases. Here the clear reference to the cooking of the dog's entrails in the first person, "In distress did I cook the entrails of the dog" (*avartyā śūna āntrāṇi pece*) puts the verse on a different footing than the rest of the verses in the hymn.⁴ In the verses that precede we do not have a clear reference to any ritual as such. Another point is that here also we have the identification of the seer with the deity (Indra here), the motif that we have marked elsewhere. According to the well set method, the seer's references to the exploits performed by the deity, hence, are to be taken as his own to place him on a

supra-terrestrial plane, which is the plane of the ritual; or it is the terrestro-ritual plane. The hymn in question, thus, must be taken as presenting a complex of the mythical exploits of Indra (identified with himself by the seer) and the queer-looking ritual; and both these must be taken as having a close association. It is against this association that the whole texture of the hymn, and the seemingly unusual part thereof, has to be examined. The supernatural birth of Indra and his greed for soma is quite in tune with his general nature. This, together with the motif of Vṛtra-smashing, is from the traditional stock. The joyful singing of the waters at their release at the smashing of Vṛtra is also part of the old mythical detail. The help of Viṣṇu at the killing of Vṛtra, and the gain of rain has a close parallel elsewhere (RV VIII. 100. 12 *sakhe viṣṇo vītaram vī kramasva.....hanāva Vṛtram rinacāva sindhūn*); and there is nothing special about it. What is special is that the gods are positively said to be against Indra (v. 11 of our hymn *amī tvā jahati putra devaḥ*, where the last portion is *sakhe viṣṇo vītaram vī kramasva*). With the identification between Indra and Vāmadeva, the seer of the hymn, the expression that the gods are against Indra (or that they leave him) has to be understood as their being unfavourable to the seer himself. This detail has been corroborated from the last verse where the seer (=Indra ?) says, "Among the gods found I not that favourer." Now, in between Vāmadeva and Indra, in spite of their identification, there is a minute difference. The exploits mentioned earlier in the hymn, as to the birth and the smashing of Vṛtra, belong to Indra; but the ritual of the cooking of the entrails of the dog must belong to the seer. The tradition is clear on this point. Thus, the *Bṛhaddevatā* (IV. 126; 131), recording the contents of the hymn, states, that, when the seer Vāmadeva was cooking the entrails, Indra approached in the form of a hawk. There seems to be no reason why this tradition is to be set aside. The motif of Indra taking the form of the hawk, or being believed to be the hawk, is quite common in the Vedic tradition:⁵ and Vāmadeva himself says, at another place, that he became Indra who brought soma taking the form of the hawk (RV IV.26; 27), a myth accepted to symbolize the gain of rain.⁶ The part of the hymn in question, which refers to the gain of "honey", is,

obviously, the motive for the presentation of the Indra-Vṛtra fight in the earlier part of the hymn, which mixes it with the pet theme of the release of the waters. We may put it this way : The last verse indicates the result or the motive, while the earlier allusions to the fight and other exploits of Indra serve as an oral charm. Likewise, the ritual of entrail-cooking, together with the mention of the "wife", must be taken as having a close relationship with the same motive, viz. the gain of "honey".

The arrangement of the hymn will be as follows :

1. The motive : The gain of "honey".
2. The ritual : i) The cooking of the entrails; and
ii) The unrespectable posture of the "wife".
3. The oral charm :
 - i) The reference to the traditional motif of fight, and the release of the waters;
 - ii) The identification of the seer with Indra;
 - iii) Unique birth of Indra (=Vāmadeva, the seer) to heighten the status of the seer, turned divine to supervise or to perform the ritual.

The peculiar ritual and the eulogy by supernatural birth is necessitated by the peculiar occasion, which is termed *avarti* (v.13). The word *avarti* does not mean only "hunger", but also has the sense of "lack of subsistence", suggesting general famine (cf. RV I. 118.3=III.58.3, except for the first word; also V.76.2). It was the *avarti*, "general famine conditions"; and the usual gods were not helpful. They had no power to help cross over the general conditions of scarcity. The sense, without doubt, appears to be that the usual sacrifices and the traditional methods of propitiating the known gods were not fruitful. And, connecting the thought with that of the last verse, no rains fell (cf. the *madhu*), which would divert the *avarti*. Though Indra was invoked, along with Viṣṇu, an out-of-the-way ritual was necessary. The case resembles that of

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa, the a-Brāhmaṇa who came to the rescue by causing the Sarasvatī to be flooded, when other Brāhmaṇas were helpless.⁷ He performed the Aponaptrīya *brahma*. Though in that case, the deity was the usual one (Apām napāt), the performer was not the usual one; he was the a-Brāhmaṇa, who ultimately got the status of Brāhmaṇa. Here, in the hymn under study, the performer is the usual seer; but the help he takes is from a source which is not the usual one ! The source of help, in its being unusual, reminds us of the ritual at the hymn of Vṛṣākapi.

That the word *madhu* (v. 13) suggests rain will be clear from other references to the word. Even in the ritual-setting, honey and soma, mixed together, served as a charm for the gain of rains (RV X.30.3) where, further, the waters themselves are called "honeyed" (v. 4 *madhumatīr apah*). This is not merely a figurative description. More than that, it conveys the belief that waters, especially the rains, were symbolized by the term "honey". This is supported from such expressions as "the honeyed wave" (Ibid V. 8 *madhumantam ūrmīm*) used for rain, and "the milker of honey" (VII.101.1), used for Parjanya. Also, the cloud is called the "honey-streamed reservoir" (II.24.4). This will show that *madhu* in our hymn is symbolic for rain. To gain it, an out-of-the-way ritual was necessary due to the peculiar circumstances.

It has to be noted that the cooking of the entrails of the dog was not for the satisfaction of his own hunger on the part of the seer, nor was it for the need of his family. This is not even faintly indicated in the hymn. The word *jāyā*, which seems to have a deeper implication, does not answer the surmise of the actual wife of the seer being hungry, nor does it seem to be the reason for her being unrespected (least to say, disrespected). Along with the ritual of the entrails, the part of the "wife" appears to be closely associated with the ritual itself for the gain of the "honey" of the heavens. And from what has been said so far in the other chapters, and supported by the concept of *mithunīkaraṇa*, there appears the probability of a *mithuna* in the mind of the seer in using the word. The word *jāyā* suggests the *dampatī*, and here, the ritual-*dampatī*, which is equivalent to the ritual-*mithuna*.

However, the seer has not openly said who formed the sex-partner with the *jāyā*. The point will be examined further on in our discussion. At the moment we stick to the entrail-cooking. The point which is of utmost importance is, that only the cooking of the entrails is mentioned, and not eating of it, even if it be assumed that it was impossible to get flesh but only the entrails, that were not generally eaten. The point seems to be that it was not the flesh that Vāmadeva wanted; it was the entrails of the dog that he wanted. Before we examine this point further, we refer to a similar account. The Vedic literature does not have a similar account; but the Mahābhārata (Mb) records one, where there is, again, a seer (*ṛṣi*). He is not Vāmadeva; in fact, Vāmadeva does not come again in such an account anywhere else. The account in the Mahābhārata centres round the famous sage Viśvāmitra. As there is a close similarity between the two accounts, it is necessary to give the other account in brief.

According to the account as it occurs in the *Śānti parvan* (141), at the joint of the Tretā and the Dvāpara ages, which indicates a far distant period, there came on a great drought. For twelve years not a drop of water fell from the skies. The result was, that all the *varṇas* left their usual duties and rites, and began to wander for subsistence wherever they expected some hope. The seer Viśvāmitra also left his family and kids, and went on wandering. Once, as he was so wandering from place to place, he fell down unconscious. The place where he fell was in the vicinity of a *cāṇḍāla*'s house. Viśvāmitra slowly gained consciousness and saw there a fleshy ham of a dog. He decided to steal the ham, and waited for the owner of the house to go to sleep. After some time, thinking that the owner had gone to sleep, Viśvāmitra slowly moved towards the ham. The owner, in fact, was not asleep. He noticed some one moving towards the house and the ham in it, and accosted him. There ensued a dialogue, an interesting one, the low-born owner of the house teaching the seer the code of conduct, and the sage pleading his own case. The *cāṇḍāla* said, "The dog is inferior to the fox; and the lower portion (the ham) of the dog is still more inferior. How could a sage of your status, O Viśvāmitra! perform this act?" Viśvāmitra replied that Agni (the fire-god)

was his deity; and that his religion centred round the fire; the fire eats every thing; and so could he ! What mattered if he ate the ham of the dog ! The *cāṇḍāla* even asked him to take some other thing as alms (v.72 *bhikṣām anyām āhareti*). At the end, the *cāṇḍāla* allows the sage to take the ham. Now the sage takes it to his wife and children; but, it is to be particularly noted, that he does not cook it for his own family directly. He decides to perform a ritual, and prepares a *caru* (a preparation of rice or green gram), whereby he offers to the gods and the manes. But, here is a wonder. As soon as the *caru* is prepared, and offered to the gods, Indra sends rain, and all the quarters get joyous (vv.93-97 esp. v. 97 *etasminn eva kāle tu pravavaṛṣa sa vāsavaḥ*; *Brahma* P. 93.5-27 has this tale, with the "honey" motif, associated with the Madhutīrtha).

The point of interest in the account noted above is that the sage does not even taste the ham even though he was very hungry, so much so that he had actually fainted, (v.99 *anāsvādya ca tad haviḥ*) which belies the plea for the theft of the ham, that he was hungry. On the contrary, the ritual that he performed appears to have caused all people to rejoice (*Ibid, samanandayan prajāḥ sarvāḥ*). As such, the note, that being hungry Viśvāmitra wandered to get a ham of a dog is not quite reliable. Even the *Manusmṛti* (X.106-108), which speaks of the eating of the ham by Vāmadeva and Viśvāmitra only records it from hearsay. It is clear that at the period of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Manusmṛti* (both concurring) this account had already become a myth, and the socio-ritual fact in it was lost. The *Mb*, however, does not mention Vāmadeva in this respect. The account, if it is closely examined, shows that it is concocted; and it is woven round the original motif of the ritual to propitiate Indra and Agni for the gain of rain, which is mentioned at the end; it is for this purpose that the ham of the dog was necessary. It is to be noted that the sage insisted on taking the ham alone, though he was asked to take any other thing. If this is kept in mind, the whole approach to the account in the *Mb*, and also in the hymn under discussion, has to change. If we further compare the two units, i.e. the *Mb* and the hymn, we get more details. Though there is difference as regards the actual material cooked, the hymn having the entrails and the *Mb* the ham, in both the

animal is the same. The “honey” in the hymn gives place to actual rain in the account of the Mb. Another striking similarity, which becomes clear, is the fainting and then slow moving on the part of Viśvāmitra in the Mb—account on the one hand and, on the other, the expression “motionless or moving” in the hymn (*śayum...cārantam*), with Vāmadeva=Indra. Though in the hymn there is the mention of “killing the one motionless or moving” (v.12 *śayum kas tvām ajighāmsac carantam*), while in the Mb there is none, the motif of strife is the same. On the occasion of gaining the ham or at the ritual of cooking the entrails the motive is famine. In the account of the Mb the strife is enhanced by the actual wordy encounter between the sage and the *cāṇḍāla*. Both the accounts being so similar, there remains no riddle about the expression—“when you killed the Father, seizing him by the foot”, which occurs in our hymn. In the later account (that of the Mb) we have the ham of the dog which Viśvāmitra is said to obtain with the wordy duel; and we have here the foot, though of the Father! The expression is extremely tricky, and has already floated an unbelievable legend about Indra killing his *own father*, Tvaṣṭṛ, according to the tradition. The reference in an earlier verse (v.3) to Indra drinking soma at the house of Tvaṣṭṛ gave added wings to this uncanny legend. But it is not supported by any place in the Vedic literature. Though the Brāhmaṇa texts refer to the antagonism between Indra and Tvaṣṭṛ (*Śat. Br.* II.6.1.5 ff), there is no mention in such accounts to the effect that Indra seized him by the foot and killed him. Another important point is that the verse in question does not mention if the father was that of Indra, nor does the detail form part of the general mythology of Indra. As such, the tradition which speaks of the killing of *his father*, Tvaṣṭṛ, by Indra seizing him by the foot is unreliable; and so are the scholars that follow the tradition. Probably, the expression, “Who rendered your mother a widow?” and also the one that speaks of the seizing of the foot form a part of the ritual, which is clear in the last verse as we have noted. The expression “motionless or moving” might be taken to form part of the theft of soma on the part of Indra. But, these details do not occur at the theft of soma; on the contrary, they fit in well with the Viśvāmitra-legend, as we noted above.

Moreover, the point of the theft of soma does not arise at the end of the hymn. On the basis of vicinity these expressions need form part only of the ritual of the cooking of the entrails. These two verses, hence, must be taken as forming a unit. On comparison between the two accounts, there appears a great probability that, in both, there is a record of a ritual for the gain of rain, in which some portion of the dog was cooked and sacrificed. This was done on the basis of a belief that the dog was a rain-animal; also that the ritual had in it, as a part, a mimic fight for the gain of the dog or for some magical purpose. The lying motionless and moving indicate this; and later, it gave place to a wordy fight. The motif of fight is similar to that of the one for the gain of a round piece of cow-hide at the Mahāvratā⁸, or that at the purchase of soma. As in these two cases the low-caste man was defeated so was here the *cāṇḍāla* (Mb-account). The hymn has no reference to the seller or dealer, but there seems little doubt of his presence, on the analogy of the account from the Mb. In a compact hymn the absence of mention is only expected. Actually the construction of the hymn suggests that the account of Indra closes at verse 11, where there is reference to Indra not being helped by other gods; but there is also a clear reference to Viṣṇu helping him, though other gods might leave him ! And this is perfectly right and in accordance with the Vedic tradition. The last two verses (12,13) present a different note, where Indra does not figure. The expression "among the gods found not I the favourer" cannot be taken to be for Indra, in the face of the fact that Viṣṇu already helped him. They are, obviously, meant for the sacrificer (or the seer-sacrificer in the original plan), who does not get any help from the known gods. As such, the questions at v. 12 are to be taken as asked of the sacrificer himself. The Father is, then, not that of Indra, nor is he an *actual* father of the sacrificer. He is the *ritual-Father*. The Father is the representative of Parjanya, the one who would save all from the *avartī*; and, looking to the actual cooking of the entrails, the one who is killed could be none else than the dog. And, as a protector from the *avartī*, by his entrails being cooked as a means to get *madhu*, he alone is the Father. This may look rather queer; but, if we remember that the horse was believed

to be the *prāṇānām prāṇapati*, we would be able to appreciate the fact that here the motif of zoomorphism centres round the dog. And he is seen as the Father. There could be no doubt, that it is he who is killed by stretching the leg (or foot), which also tallies with the detail from the Mb. The motif of ritual-sacrifice is then the same as in the case of the horse at the Horse-sacrifice, the ritual of the virile ape (Vṛṣākapi) and also at the later ritual of the Śūlagava⁹, wherein the Rudra-bull was sacrificed. As the ritual at the Vṛṣākapi is rather queer, so is here that of the dog. This is so as both got lost. For that of the dog, however, we have the support of the Viśvāmitra legend from the Mb. The dog being the Father will also solve the riddle of the mother. She could not be the mother of Indra; for, his mother has already been referred to earlier in the mention of his birth. The mother in the first of the last two verses (i.e. at v.12), is the female that is juxtaposed against the Father; and she is the bitch. This would mean that a pair of dogs, one male and the other the female, were procured. We shall come to this point again later; but, it may be mentioned here that the Father and the Mother form the ritual-pair, the *mithuna*; and so does the couple of the dogs, the male of which is killed and his entrails cooked.

The Vedic tradition does not have another instance of the dog being ritually killed, as noted above, nor do we have any beliefs regarding the dog, except that he is associated with the god of death (X.14.10-12). Saramā¹⁰, the bitch of the gods that searches the lost cows of the gods (X.108), is no parallel here; for the motif is quite different, and there is no indication of any ritual. We do not have any other place in the Vedic religion to support the belief in the dog being a rain-animal. The question is, whence could Vāmadeva have got the idea of the dog-sacrifice and the cooking of the entrails? We have to hunt it elsewhere. Now, the *Avesta* does record the belief that the dog is a rain-animal. It speaks of the water-dog and the water-bitch; and it forbids the killing of these animals. There the direct association of the dog with water is found in the belief that, when a dog dies, his soul goes to the cosmic reservoir of water, or the source of water. On the cosmic plane the soul of the dead dog is believed to merge in the fountain

of the goddess of Water, Ardivisur.¹¹ The killing of a dog is connected with the lack of rain and loss of fertility. If a water-dog is killed, it is enjoined that for three days oblations are to be offered keeping the fire constantly kindled. This rite is called *Zanda Ravan* ("the rite of the Living Soul"); and this rite is believed to restore the life of the dog. The same rite is enjoined in the case of a dead man.¹² Here the association of the dog with rain and fertility is clear. The *Avesta*, however, does not record any practice of the sacrifice of the dog, obviously, because the religion of Zarathustra barred such bloody rituals. However, sacrifice of dogs obtain elsewhere in the vicinity. Thus, according to the Chinese custom, if the lack of rain threatened the locality with famine a big dog would be donned the clothes of a man and would be paraded through the streets of the town.¹³ But, it is not clear if he would be killed at the end of the parade. Among the Bahner of Indochina it is believed that the dog is under the direct control and protection of Bog Glaih, the god of thunder and rain.¹⁴ The tribes in central America believe that the dog is the earthly symbol of lightning, thunder and storm. He is also the god of rain, and of harvest.¹⁵ In another American tribe obtains the following ritual for rain : In the month of Pax (the middle of May) a dog is ritually sacrificed; and jars full of wine are emptied on the ground in imitation of rain.¹⁶ Among the Mandaris of Siam obtains a belief that the dog had a horn in bygone ages, but that it fell off in course of time. Such a "dog, horn" is used by them in rain-rituals, when water from it is sprinkled in imitation of rain.¹⁷ One of the most interesting beliefs obtains among the Aztecs of Mexico. Their thunder-god Tloloc, was offered the pulsating hearts of dogs that were ritually sacrificed for timely rain, along with those of men.¹⁸ Many more instances can be cited about the dog-water motif.

The information collected above will show that the belief about the dog being the rain-animal is widely found. It is found in the vicinity of the habitat of the Vedic and the Iranian people; and it is also found in countries far away. It seems quite probable that Vāmadeva borrowed it from some such source, when the familiar Vedic gods of rain did not respond to the set rituals for rain. This is the implication of the expression

that the gods were against, or that among the (known) gods no help was found. From which exact source it was borrowed is not clear, nor is that a very pertinent point. What is important is that it was borrowed by Vāmadeva and was later performed by a member of the family of the Viśvāmitras. It does not seem probable that the name of Viśvāmitra is associated with such a ritual, through confusion, in the place of Vāmadeva. What seems probable is that there were two separate occasions for the performance of this ritual, with a slight change in the details. There might have been yet other occasions, or might not have been. But these two remained in the tradition as they were associated with the names of two great seers of the Vedic tradition.

Now the point of the “wife”. The reference to the “wife” is that she has been unrespected. About the Mother we have noted that she, probably, formed the *mithuna* with the “Father”—dog. It must be noted that in this hymn there is no reference to the sex-act, or to active sex as we may put it. The suggestion of the *mithuna*, however, is without any doubt. We suggested above that, of the *mithuna*, the male is killed, and this is how the “Mother” becomes a widow. We have parallels in the Vedic literature to believe that zoomorphic *mithunas* were conceived, and the male was sacrificed as the divine beast of fertility. In this respect we again refer to the hymn of Vṛṣākapi, where the male Vṛṣākapi is killed and the female, Vṛṣākapāyī, is invoked to favour the partaking by Indra (=ritual-actor) of the essence of her mate the Vṛṣākapi :

“O Vṛṣākapāyī, O the one full of wealth ! O one endowed with sons and daughters-in-law ! May ‘Indra’ partake of the wonderful oblation prepared from your manly seeder” (X.86.13).

And, after this, there is the suggestion of the sex-act between ‘Indrāṇī’ (=ritual-woman) and Vṛṣākapi (vv.16-18). There we have two types of *mithuna*: the active one and the silent one, as far as the ritual is concerned. The active one is that of Vṛṣākapi and ‘Indrāṇī’, where Vṛṣākapi is the ritual-seeder. The silent one is the normal one of Vṛṣākapi and his mate Vṛṣākapāyī. Later we have the *mithuna* in the ritual of the

Śulagava, in one tradition. The Śulagava bull was called Mīḍhvan and the cow the Mīḍhuṣī, their offspring being called Jayanta. In this particular tradition the bull was not killed: but according to other *Gṛhya* traditions he was killed. The *mithuna* of the dog and the bitch comes on par with these, more with that of Vṛṣākapi and Vṛṣākapyī; but here the motif of active sex is absent. Now about the word *jāyā*. It must be noted, at the outset, that like the Father¹⁹, and the Mother, the word also has only a common application in the hymn. She is not the wife of some body definite; she is the common "wife", without any definite personal connotation. The word unrespected (*a-mahīyamānām*) does not indicate poverty, in the face of what we have discussed. With the awkwardness of the ritual, as it is out of the way, the non-respect of the *jāyā* is to be seen in the ritual itself. We suggest that she is the "wife" of the sacrificer, or a woman engaged for the duration of the sacrifice. But, beyond this the point is dark. We might simply put down the parallelogram :

RV X. 86	IV. 18	
1. Vṛṣākapi (Ape)	Dog (Father)	Both sacrificed
2. <i>apyam haviḥ</i> (offered for rain or water)	<i>antrāṇi</i> (entrails cooked) <i>madhu</i> =rain	
3. Vṛṣākapyī* (<i>mithuna</i>) with 1 above	Mother(* Bitch) (<i>mithuna</i>) with 1 above	Both widowed. Normal <i>mithuna</i> .

Now, there remains only the point of the *jāyā*. If we go a step further, we might not be unjustified in putting the next step as follows :

4. Indra (sacrificer)	Sacrificer (=Vāmadeva=Indra)
5. Indrāṇī (ritual-'wife')	<i>jāyā</i> (ritual-'wife')

(cf. *janyuḥ patih* at yama-yamī)

Hence,

*Ritual-mithuna**

Ape = Vṛṣākapi + Indrāṇī	Dog + <i>jāyā</i> (= ritual 'wife')
(* a/jāmi <i>mithuna</i> made a-jāmi in ritual).	

In both cases the "wife" may be the sacrificer's own; or, she might have been a woman appointed for the ritual. In the first case she would be like the queen in the Horse-sacrifice. It may be of some interest to note that, at the hymn of Vṛṣākapi, Indrāṇī (the ritual female partner of Vṛṣākapi, forming the ritual-*mithuna* with him) is characterised by the expression *mahīyate* (X.86.10), while here we have just the opposite expression, *a-mahīyamānām*; but the similarity in the method is remarkable. This gives sufficient reason to suspect the plan of the seer, that he has employed the word *jāyā* in the ritual of the cooking of the dog's entrails as a sex-charm for the *madhu* to be released from heaven. The *jāyā* was unrespected because she formed a ritual-*mithuna* with an unusual ritual-beast, the dog !

We have noted some beliefs regarding the sympathetic relationship between the dog and the thunder, with the resultant rain. Indications of this type of belief in sympathetic relationship are numerous in the religion of the Veda. It is this belief, for instance, that worked behind the roasting of a bull and causing his sap to fall into the fire in imitation of rain.²⁰ Another such belief obtains in the rite of the Sākamedha, which formed a part of the Cāturmāsya sacrifice, wherein the Agnīdhra priest was required to imitate the roar of the cloud.⁵¹ With the dog, probably, its barking was seen as the crackling thunder; and rituals in which the torture of a dog figured²², as imitative to gain rain, obtain. The idea seems to be that the yell of the dog would impel the thunder of the cloud-dog, resulting into rain. The entrails of the dog, or his ham, would, on the same analogy, suggest the elongated shaft of lightning. In China, along with the dragon, the dog is also associated with the thunder and rain; and in Japan the thunder and the lightning is represented by an elongated dog, with wings added to it.²³ Vāmadeva has already used the symbol of the hawk at another place (RV IV.26, 27); and here he accommodated the ritual of the dog in the Vedic context.

NOTES

1. In addition to the translations of Ludwig, Grasmann, Geldner, Velankar (*Rksūktaśatī*, Bombay, 1972), see Pischel, *Vedische Studien* II, pp. 41—54, Oldenberg, *Noten* I, ZDMG 39, 79; Bergaigne *La Religion Védique* III, p. 105 ff; Schroeder, *Myterium und Mimus im RgVeda* p. 326 ff.
2. This has been understood as the shooting out of the lightning from the side of the cloud; see Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, Chaukhamba ed. (Hindi), 1961, p. 105; cf the account of the birth of Māndhātṛ, Mb, Vana 126.27 ff.
3. Here the mother of Indra is called *gr̥ṣṭi*, and Indra is called by the matronym Gārṣṭeya elsewhere, RV X. 111.2; Gr̥ṣṭi is the cow that gave birth only to one calf, indicating her to be very young. However, Indra is presented as very grown. The method is common in folklore; cf. Lao Tse being seventy two year old at birth Donald Mackenzie, *Myths of China and Japan*, p. 298. Lao tse means "Old man."
4. Velankar, for instance, takes it as being said by Indra, and understands the word jāyā as Indra's mother, the wife of Indra's father Tvaṣṭṛ. The verse is attributed to Indra by Geldner also; by Ludwig Bergaigne, and Hillebrandt. Acc. to Griffith it is said by Vāmadeva.
5. *Jai Br.* I. 126; *Kāṭhaka Sam.* 37.14
6. Bloomfield M., *JAOs* 16
7. *Ai. Br.* II. 19; *Kau. Br.* XII. 3
8. *Śat Br.* III. 3.3.7; Tait. Sam. I.2.7; for Mahāvratā *Śat. Br.* IV. 6.4.2; Keith *Rel. Phil.* pp. 351—2.
9. Dange, *Pastoral Symbolism from the Rgveda*, Poona, 170, p. 45,51 ff; cf. RV III. 21.2; for Śulagava, Ram Gopal, *India of the Vedic Kalp-a-sūtras*, Delhi, 1859, p. 436 f.
10. RV X. 108; Hariappa H.L., *Rgvedic Legends through the Ages*, Poona, 1953.
11. Fargard, 13.51 ff; Darmesteter J., the Zend Avesta RBE. Vol. p. 164 ff.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Hastings J., *Encl. Rel. and Ethics* I, p. 513.
14. *Ibid*, p. 512
15. *Ibid*, III, p. 307b
16. *Ibid*, p. 309a
17. Buxton J. in *Man*, III-i (March 1968), p. 37
18. Mackenzie D., *Myths and Legends in Pre-Columbian America* p. 251.
19. We have noted that the father is not Tvaṣṭṛ. It may be noted that the word *pitṛ* does not at all come in connection with Tvaṣṭṛ in the RV. The motif of killing by taking by the foot comes also in the hymn of Vasukra; there the word *pitaram* is not to be found; and the one to be killed thus is more in the image of Vṛtra, and not Tvaṣṭṛ, see X. 27.4 where the words *kṣema ā sanīām ābhūm* indicate

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- his benevolent nature; and his being thrown away is indicated in *pratham kṣiṇām parvate pāda-grhya*, where *parvata* would suggest the cloud
20. Dange, *Pastoral Symbolism from the Rgveda*, pp. 45,51 ff.
 21. Āśv. Śr. S. II. 18 11—12.
 22. Mackenzie D., *Myths of China and Japan*, p. 246; acc. to Mackenzie the hill-tribes in India torture dogs so that the "Big Dog" may hear the yells and thunder, to give rains. Curiously, among these tribes the dog is associated with Indra, which is an interesting case of the Vedic god of rain being identified with the tribal rain-god. Among the Aztec paintings, in one case, we have the figure of the dog coming from the sky to the earth with fire-brands, a surest indication of the thunder and lightning; *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*
 23. D. Vesser, "On Tongu", *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. 36—ii, p. 25 ff.

The Fleeting Nymph and the 'Cane-Rod'

So much has been said about the mysterious couple Urvaśi and Purūravas¹, that it may hardly appear necessary to think afresh about them, their relationship and their nature. The fact, however, is that, though so much has been said, very little has been unfolded about their real nature and the portent of the hymn proper. There are no two opinions among scholars that the later accounts occurring in the Brāhmaṇa texts and the Purāṇas are unduly fleshed up from the skeleton of the Ṛgvedic hymn. They are, hence, not reliable as regards the original nature of the hymn, and of the two actors therein. Of the fairly recent scholars, Wright and Kosambi suggest the hymn to have human sacrifice as the main motif. Kosambi believes that it is a case of the husband being ritually sacrificed to the wife for fertility, upon the birth of a child. Goldman², studying the hymn as one of the group of three (as noted in an earlier chapter, that of Yama-Yamī), like Bergaigne, has tried to show the common motif of the "Mortal man and the Immortal woman and their unstable relationship, the mortal being the seer and the immortal the goddess speech. In the chapter on Yama and Yamī we have taken a review of this opinion, and have stated the difficulties in this hypothesis. According to another opinion, Urvaśi is the lightning and Purūravas the goat to be sacrificed at a sacrifice.³

The suggestion that Purūravas is the mortal male (seer) and Urvaśi the immortal woman is acceptable, as far as this hymn is considered. Actually there is clear indication in the hymn itself to that effect. Thus Purūravas is said to be *mṛtyu-bandhu* ("death-kin" v. 18 and the last one); and the expressions

maro amṛtāsu ni-sṛk (v. 9) and *amānuṣīṣu mānuṣo ni séve* (v.8) support it. As to the conjecture about the husband, or the goat, being sacrificed, it may be pointed out that this might have been augmented by the speech of Purūravas, that the *sudevā* shall fly to the highest heaven; he shall lie on the lap of Nirṛti; him shall the fierce wolves devour (v. 14). This also, obviously, led Goldman to believe the doom of the mortal Purūravas. Now, even accepting the hypothesis of the unstable union of the mortal seer and the immortal Speech, there are certain doubts that require solution. Firstly, if the female is immortal, and the goddess, how could it be that she says to her devotee, Purūravas, "Friendships with women (including herself) are the hearts of wolves" (v. 15)? This could belie her very nature as a divine power. Moreover, there is no support at all in the hymn to believe that Purūravas has to submit to this doom of death, or "accept his fate, the doom of all men" (Goldman, *op. cit.* p. 300). On the contrary, when he says that he shall fly to the highest abode (V. 14 *parāvataṃ paramām*) etc., Urvaśī thus speaks to him, "Die not, O Purūravas!" (v. 15). Even accepting the Speech-seer motif, what sound basis is there for believing that "the seer rejects the advances of the goddess of Speech on the ground that the union of the mortal and the immortal is improper?" Actually, it should be the other way round. In the case of both (Purūravas and Yama), it is difficult to see how the mortal would be pleased to reject the favours of the divine Speech, which he should be too willing to accept; and how the favours could mean the doom of death for him, if this death is just a natural course, as with other mortals! The most pertinent point is, where is the necessity of the dialogue between the two to be so much coloured with the sexual language which the hymn uses? On the contrary, such a theme would require sober language and serene requests. This point holds good in the case of the hymn of Yama-Yamī also. Yet another point to be noted is, that, Speech being only a power, and an abstract force, such sexual language will be hardly warranted in her case. The language warrants the involvement of real persons, and that too on the plane of the ritual as is the case with the Mahāvratā and the Horse-sacrifice; and this we have amply probed. We agree, with Goldman, that

Vāk Āmbhṛṇī proclaims that she could make any mortal a seer if she chooses (RV X.125.5) ; but the parallel is unsuitable here ; for in the very hymn of Vāk Āmbhṛṇī the motif of sex, which is so prominent here, is totally absent. The point is, why should Speech think of favouring the seer in so highly sexual notes, and the seer be equally afraid of this favour ! Again, how could we explain the twinship in the case of Yama-Yamī on the basis of the mortal-male-immortal-woman motif ? There are also other points which this interpretation does not even touch. For example, it does not provide an explanation for the expression that Purūravas was born for *dasyu-hatya* ("killing the Dasyus") that his birth was for a great fight (*mahe... raṇāya*). It is likely that the expression "turn the *aśru*" (vv. 12, 13), mistaken for "shedding the tears", gave the impression of the death of Purūravas ; but, as we shall see later (and have already seen earlier in the context of the cosmic *mithunas*, ch. III), the word *aśru* is symbolic of the cosmic generative fluid, and does not necessarily indicate the actual tear. The symbol *aśru* has not been noted by any of the scholars who studied the hymn. But, as the symbol is important, and has a Vedic tradition of the cosmic *mithuna*, it has to be taken note of. Interpretations without this, and such other symbols, cannot take us near to the heart of the seer who composed the hymn. Like the word *aśru*, *pitṛ* and *sūnuḥ* ("Father" and "Son") had already become symbolic to the Vedic seer-tradition, a point which we have noted in the study earlier. A keen and a minute study would reveal, that later traditional accounts of Urvaśī and Purūravas went on spinning awkwardly as the original symbols got blurred in the course of time. The later texts took only that portion which aided their purpose, leaving the more pertinent parts of the hymn. Before we take up a close and analytical study of the hymn it is necessary to place once again, the original verses from the hymn side by side with the first diversion as we note in the Brāhmaṇas. In doing so, the account from the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa will be taken first.

The *Śat. Br.* gives the account in short in the context of the churning of the fire, to eulogize the ritual of fire-kindling. It also takes certain verses from the RV to suit the context.

According to it (XI.5.1.1ff) Urvaśī married Purūravas and agreed to stay with him on the following conditions :

- (i) that he shall strike her with a 'cane-rod' thrice a day ;
- (ii) that he shall not sexually approach her without her consent ; and
- (iii) that she should not see him naked.

The Br. adds further that, the conditions laid down above were a norm of behaviour for the ladies.⁴ Then she stayed with him and got pregnant. Her kindreds, the Gandharvas, decided to take her back after some time. Now, Urvaśī had an ewe with two lambs tied to her cot (*avir dvy 'uranā śayana upa baddhā-sa*). Of these Gandharvas stole one. Urvaśī cried out, "They are carrying away my son, as if in an unvalorous condition—as if I be without protection." Again it happened ; and the second lamb was stolen by the Gandharvas. Urvaśī yelled as before. Purūravas comprehended this. Suddenly did he dart, naked, roaring, "How ? Unvalorous when I be here ? The lack of attentive protection, I being here ! (*katham nu tad avīram katham a-janam syād yatrā-ham syām*). Urvaśī's words are answered in these words of Purūravas (her words are *avīra bata me ajana iva putram haranti*). Now, as Purūravas darted out, naked, the Gandharvas generated the lightning ; and thus did Urvaśī see Purūravas—NAKED ! She saw him clearly, as if it were the day-time ! And away she went !! This, the Br. says, is the background of the hymn from the RV. According to it, Purūravas runs after her who got mixed up with her clan. The female friends of Urvaśī fled away, as Purūravas approached them, taking the form of water-birds. Ultimately, however, Urvaśī appeared before him in her own form. He entreated upon her to return ; and she refused. She, however, told him to arrive at the same spot after one full year, when she would be pleased to give him his son back, and also would sleep with him for one night. To this Purūravas agreed ; and he returned. One full year elapsed, and on came Purūravas to the spot. Urvaśī slept with him for that night ; and, in the next morning the Gandharvas gave him his son. But Purūravas asked them to make him also a Gandharva,

so that he could stay with Urvaśī further. The Gandharvas said that it was impossible for him to stay with them, as a Gandharva, with the same (mortal) body. They offered to him their special fire on a dish (fire-pan) and said, that, if he sacrificed with it for one year, he would be a Gandharva. While proceeding to his abode, however, Purūravas placed the fire in the forest and went to the town with the son only. When he came back to take the fire also, he noticed that it had already gone ! Purūravas went to the Gandharvas ; and, now that the old fire was lost, they asked him to prepare the lower *araṇī* (churn-slab) from the wood of the Aśvattha, and also the upper one (churn-rod) from the same ; for that was, they said, the way to become a Gandharva.

The account, as can be seen, extols the cult of fire ; but, it is, in itself, quite confused. The following doubts persist in one's mind, and the impression that one gets is that the account was the production of a half-digested former account, that was gathered from the hymn of the RV. :

- (i) Why should Urvaśī have an ewe with the two lambs at her cot ?
- (ii) What happened to the ewe when the lambs were stolen, and Urvaśī herself left, at the breach of her condition ?
- (iii) Why should Urvaśī call the lamb her son (*me putram haranti*) ? Was Urvaśī symbolised by the ewe by the Br. ?
- (iv) Why was Purūravas called after one full year, and that too for one night only, to have Urvaśī in bed (*samvat-sare tām im rātrim ā gachhatāt ; tan me ekām rātrim ante śayitāse*) ?
- (v) Why was Purūravas to get his son only after one year, since Urvaśī's departure (though he could have naturally been born earlier, as Urvaśī was already pregnant and would deliver the child earlier) ?
- (vi) Why should Purūravas leave the valuable fire obtained with great difficulty from the Gandharvas, outside the town, and proceed further only with the son ?
- (vii) What was the age of the son ? He is said to be *kumāra*, and not *śiśu* ; the latter would suit the child of one year ?

- (viii) What did Purūravas actually want—continued stay with Urvaśī by means of the fire-ritual taught by the Gandharvas or the son that is born at the last occasion? The account lays stress on his wanting to be a Gandharva as the account closes with the didactic note, that a person who sacrifices thus gets to be a Gandharva (*teneṣṭvā gandharvānām eko bhavati*), which signifies a definite type of fire-ritual, and which was given to Purūravas specially. Even Purūravas requests them to make him one amongst them (*yuṣmākam eko 'sāni*). It appears that this ritual was to be performed for one year, remaining outside the locality; hence did Purūravas keep the fire outside, and led the son alone to the locality. Anyway, the point is not quite clear in the account.
- (ix) Among other conditions (which may be understood), why should Urvaśī, a wife (?) ask her husband to strike her thrice a day?—with, specifically, the “cane-rod” !!

From a close examination of the account of the Br. the points that suggest themselves are :

- (i) The birth of the son is unimportant; the son was suggested from a word that was misunderstood from the hymn; or, that the son is none else than Agni himself, as Purūravas actually appears to exchange fire with the son. Moreover, there is also confusion about the son being the *śiśu* or the *kumāra*.
- (ii) Purūravas gains superhuman powers by a particular ritual.
- (iii) This ritual is closely associated with the next year's sexual union with Urvaśī, who is to meet him exactly after one year; this ritual is necessary for the gain of the status of a Gandharva.
- (iv) Purūravas remains naked, and Urvaśī departs, on the first separation, which implies taking into account the birth of the 'son' that even on that night he had sexual union with Urvaśī; and such union they would have again *after one full year*. This would indicate sex-union and the meeting of the two as having periodic value; in

other words, it would suggest a fixed ritual. This is clearly stated by the hymn when it presents Urvaśi as saying that she actually was with Purūravas last autumn for four nights (v. 16 *avasam rātrīḥ śarādaḥ cātasraḥ*), “partook of the clarified butter” and, hence, was moving about satisfied since.

- (v) The stealing of the lambs and the flash of the lightning appear to be suggested from some portion of the hymn that was not quite clear to the myth-maker of the Br.

The Br. says that the hymn had (originally) only fifteen verses, while the hymn, as it appears in the RV, has eighteen verses. It is difficult to say which verses were added to the original. Before we study the hymn proper, we give below a translation thereof, taking debatable passages for discussion later. We also indicate the speakers, as we think fit, leaving blank those verses for which the speakers are not quite sure.

1. Purūravas :

Harken (*mānasā tiṣṭha*) O venerable one (*ghore*);
May we indeed mix speech (may we converse);
These *mantras* of ours, if not uttered,
May not gladden us for the days to come.

2. Urvaśi :

What shall I do with this speech of yours !
Gone am I like the first of the dawns;
Get gone to your abode, Purūravas;
Difficult to attain I am, like the wind.

3. Purūravas :

The shaft darts not from the quiver for weal ;
The speed (or speedy one) is not the gainer,
Of a hundred thousand, and of cows ;
In the non-manly sacrifice (*a-vīre kratau*),
There is no lustre ;

Like the ewe, the thunderers express not the roar (*urā na māyum citayanta dhunayah*).⁵

4. *Urvaśi* :

Bestowing shining nourishment for the "Father-in-law"

When he desired O Dawn !, from the anti-chamber.
I resorted to the abode, as he (Purūravas) longed for.
Struck (pierced, *śnathitā*) with the cane-rod,
By day and by night.⁶

5. *Urvaśi* :

Thrice a day you pierced me with the cane-rod ;
You, indeed, filled me, unyielding though I was ;
At your bidding did I arrive, O Purūravas !
Of my body were you, then, the lord.

6. — —

Neither the *sajūrṇi* (old one), *śreṇi* (elongated), *sumne-āpi* (friend in the gain), *hrade-caḥṣu* (pool-eye), nor the *granthinī* (blocked one) got moving ;
Streamed not the speckled ones(*añjayah*),
Nor the tawny ones (*aruṇayah*);
Bellowed not the cows, that would have delivered
For prosperity.⁷

7. — —

As he was being born, the divine females assembled ;
Him, indeed, the self-roaring rivers welcomed ;
For the great battle (*mahe raṇāya*) O Purūravas !
For the *dasyu-hatya* did the gods nourish you.

8. *Purūravas* :

Towards the divine females, as they changed form,

Did the mortal advance ;
Away from me they fled, like the female-deer ;
Aye, like the chariot-pressed mares !

9. — —

Being amongst the divine females, as the mortal was
about to touch,
Mixing with the divine ones through sacrifices,
Like the water-birds did they adorn their bodies
Like the playful mares, biting their lips,
Time and again.

10. — —

Like the flying lightning did she shine,
She, the water-belle, (*apyā*), accomplishing my desires;
Lo, the manly performer (*apaḥ naryah*) was born ;
Urvaśi did further extend the life.
(*Pra-urvaśi tirata dīrgham āyuh*)

11. Urvaśi :

Thus were you born, Purūravas ! for *go pīthya*;
In me did you establish the lustre ;
Knowing (*viduṣī*) as I am I did advise you on that day
(*sasminn ahan*) ;
Have you heard me not ? Why speak as if not having
enjoyed ?

12 Purūravas :

When might the 'son', being born, desire the Father ?
Like an active performer (*cakran na*), might he,
The knowing one cause "turn the *aśru*" (*aśru vartayat*)?
Who would separate the like-minded couple ?
When, among the "Fathers-in-law" the fire might
shine ?

13. Urvaśi :

Promise I, he shall cause the *aśru*;
Like an active performer (*cakran na*) would he roar,
For the auspicious occasion (*ādhye śivāyat*);
That I shall send unto you, what be yours with us ;
Get gone home; me you shall not obtain, O mortal !⁸

14. Purūravas :

The *su-deva* might fly, being *anāvṛt* (*naked, an + ā + vṛt*)
To reach the highest region ;
He might sleep in the lap of Death (*nīrṛti*);
Him the fierce wolves might eat.

15. Urvaśi :

Die not Purūravas ! Fly not ;
May not the fierce wolves eat you ;
Friendships with women are naught ;
They be the hearts of fierce wolves !

16. Urvaśi (contd.)

When in a different form I wandered among the
mortals,
I dwelt for four nights in the autumn ;
Small portion of clarified butter did I partake per
day ;
Hence, indeed, do I wander, extremely satisfied.

17. Purūravas :

Enveloper of the mid-region,
Traverser of the world (*rajas*) (as she is),
Urvaśi I control, being myself the most shining one ;
May the gift of the sacrifice belong to you ;
Return ;
My heart seethes !

18. — —

Thus said unto you the gods, O Son-of-Ila ;
 "Though you be the death-kin(*mṛtyu-bandhuḥ*),
 To the gods shall your progeny sacrifice with offer-
 ings ;
 In heaven, will you enjoy !"

x

x

x

As we start analysing the hymn, the following points are to be noted :

- (i) Purūravas entreats upon Urvaśī to arrive for the reasons embedded in vv.2 and 3 ;
- (ii) Memories of the last association when Urvaśī stayed with Purūravas ;
- (iii) The extolment of the birth of Purūravas, suggesting his supra-mortal status and the powers he has ;
- (iv) Purūravas could advance to the abode of the divine damsels, who take the form of the water-birds ; this indicates his power to traverse the mid-region ;
- (v) Urvaśī could guide Purūravas ; and the latter, in his turn, could control her ; also Urvaśī could stay among the mortals in a different form (v.16 *yaḍ vīrūpā acaram martyeṣu*, which compares with *viṣu-rūpā* of the Yama-Yamī hymn) ;
- (vi) Her stay in the world of the mortals in a different form is accompanied by the clarified butter, which indicates ritual offering (though it may be fused with the symbol for the generative fluid) ;
- (vii) This stay was at the autumnal season, or was an yearly one (*śaradaḥ*).

The following points are common with the account of the Br. :

- (i) Purūravas is said to gain superhuman powers, in the Br. account due to the fire-ritual ; here he is already said to be born great, for great deeds.

- (ii) In the Br. account Purūravas is asked to come after one year ; his contact with Urvaśī would, thus, be exactly one year before. This would also mean that when she departed, she was not actually pregnant, though the Br. brings in that point and also, hence, ushers the son calling him *kumāra*, which is rather awkward, as we have noted.
- (iii) The nakedness of Purūravas is suggested here in the word (*an+ā+√vr+KVIP*), “uncovered” or “non-covering”.
- (iv) The ewe and the lambs in the Br. are suggested from *urā* in v.3 here, as we shall see further.
- (v) The *kumāra*, “son,” is suggested from the Son-Father motif in v.12 ; the return of the son is suggested from v.13
(*cf. pra tat te hinava yat te asmé*).

The most important point is the yearly meeting and the note of sexual union that occurs at both the accounts. The thing to be noted is that the Br. account retains a hazy memory of the ancient details, but indicates that they pertain to some fire-ritual yearly performed, and mixed up with the union of the two main parties. There is no other help beyond this. And, now we have only to thoroughly analyse the hymn itself for more details to cut through the mist of seeming confusion.

We start with gathering information from the hymn about the main actors of the hymn, and comparing it with what images we gather from the RV.

Purūravas :

About the hero we have the following information : As he was about to be born, the goddesses, or the divine women (*gnāḥ*) sat round him. He was also welcomed for the fight (*raṇa*) and for the destruction of the Dasyus (*dasyu-hatyāya*). Also at his birth the self-resounding rivers welcomed him (v.7 *sām asmin jāyamāne āsata gnāḥ, utā-īm avardhān nadyāḥ svā-gūrtāḥ*). The point is, which are the rivers, and why should they be joyous at the birth of Purūravas ? Now, a similar description appears

at the birth of Indra, in the hymn of Vāmadeva which has been a riddle of unique nature and a point which we have already noted in a separate chapter. There, at the birth of Indra the rivers are said to be tumultuously joyous : "Thinking it to be a censurable act (that Indra was in the womb for a thousand years, and would not come out in the natural way), his mother concealed him, who was in the height of lustre; by himself did he get up donning a new form and pervaded the earth and heaven. These (rivers) stream on with a loud tumult (at his birth)" (IV.18.5,6), and further, "Why do they (the roaring rivers) sing praises to him, taking his sin upon themselves (the sin of unnatural birth)" (Ibid V.7); and yet further, "Verily, did the waters sympathise with the child—Indra" (v.8). It has to be noted that the words *dasyu-hátya* and *jaññiṣe* (indicating "being born for the shattering of the Dasyus" (v.11 of our hymn) come only for Indra (I.51.6, and nowhere else), the god primarily of the mid-region, and the rainer, according to the Vedic tradition, which would indicate that the seer of the hymn under discussion is trying to identify Purūravas with Indra; and it is also clear, that the powers of the latter include the control over the mid-region and the release of rain. The rivers are, then, the cosmic waters that move in the mid-region and turn into rain on specific occasions (for *dasyu-hátya* and Indra see also I.103.4). What has been said above is supported by the fact that *dasyuh-hátya* is associated only with Indra. The thought of the birth of Purūravas extends to v.11 where also there is direct mention of his birth (in the second person) in *jaññiṣé go-pīthyāya*, where there is also the note of his association with the divine damsels; and these damsels, obviously, are from the mid-region. On the basis of the description of this unique birth of Purūravas, it is clear that the earlier birth of the "manly performer" is also that of Purūravas (V.10 *janīṣṭo apó naryaḥ sú-jātaḥ*), in view of his being referred to in the third person earlier (V.8 *amānuṣīṣu mānuṣo niṣéve* etc.). Let us now examine the expression *apó naryaḥ*, to fix the image the seer has in mind. The expression *apó naryaḥ* does not occur elsewhere; but there is not the least doubt, that here the seer is coining a new expression, on the analogy of a well set style in the RV. Elsewhere Agni is called *naryāpas*, (RV VIII.93.1) and Indra is referred to as the only *náry 'ápāmsi*

kartā (VIII.96.19), which has to be understood as *naryā apāmsi kartā* (“performer of the many manly deeds”), on the basis of the expression that obtains in the same hymn in a subsequent verse (v.21 *kṛṇvann apāmsi naryā purūṇi*). Likewise, Indra is said to wield his bolt “for many manly deeds” (I.85.9 *nary apāmsi kartave*). The expression, in all cases, comes only for Indra (cf. IV.19.10; VII.24.1 etc.). Though the word *narya* may be taken to mean “benevolent to mankind” (Sāyaṇa), it also has the sense of “manly”; and combining these two the word gives the sense of “manly deeds benevolent to mankind”. The word *naryaḥ* would indicate the agent, as would the word (*apās~apāḥ*), with the change of accent, both meaning “the performer of deeds that are beneficial to mankind” (or, “the powerful performer”). This, with the concept in *dasyuhātya*, gives the image of a powerful person who wields power over the mid-region forces. Purūravas was, then, a person who could control the mid-region, the *apyā* damsel (Urvaśī) and also the mid-region water-streams! The concept is the same as in *dvi-bandhu* or *dvi-barhas*, “the one who controls both the worlds” (cf. RV.X. 61.10; 17), who gains the “milk of the Sabardughā cow”. Probably this concept about Purūravas is the reason that urges the seer announce his birth with astonishment, as the expression *janiṣṭo* (*janiṣṭa+u*) indicates. And, precisely at this juncture in the hymn is Urvaśī mentioned for the first time, with the typical Ṛgvedic style of benediction *pra-urvaśī tirata dīrgham āyuh* (v.10; for the expression cf. VII.103.10; III.53.7). It is true that in the dialogue that precedes this verse there is indication of Urvaśī speaking; but the precise mention of the word Urvaśī first comes here. It should be noted that the birth of Purūravas does not take place at this moment; but here there is the recollection that the birth was great. Urvaśī is ushered in after the mention of the advances of Purūravas towards the mid-region damsels; and she comes as their mistress.

Urvaśī :

The following is said about Urvaśī in the present context :

- (i) She is *apyā*, which means that she has close association with the waters, or with the mid-region;

- (ii) She flies (or falls) like the lightning (v.10 *vidyut na yā patantī pavidyot*); this implies that she, herself, is not the lightning (as Karambelkar thinks);
- (iii) She fulfils the desire of Purūravas (v.10 *bharantī apyā kāmyāni*).
- (iv) She is of a benevolent nature (hence the expression *pra tirata dīrgham āyuh*); this precludes her being cruel and the earlier expression *ghore* (vocative) for her cannot be taken to give that sense. This also means that the statement about the women's hearts being that of the wolves is only a general statement; for, she cannot be taken to describe herself this way.
- (v) She is the traverser of the mid-region (*antarikṣ aprā*) and the measurer of the mid-region (*rajaso vimānī*, cf. v.17).

Some of the words that occur above need clarification. The expression *bharantī me apyā kāmyāni* can give two senses: (i) Urvaśī is *apyā* and fulfils my (Purūravas') desires; and (ii) Urvaśī fulfils my desires that are *apyā* (i.e., the desire that are pertaining to water (*apyā = apyāni*); for, *apyā* gets connected with the upper or the mid-region (cf. Sāyaṇa, *apa ity 'antarikṣa-nāma*). This may be compared with the *apyā yoṣā* of the Yama-Yamī hymn (X.10.4), which we have studied, and also with the *apyā yōṣaṇā*, of the subsequent hymn, who forms the mid-region *mithuna* with the Gandharva (X.11.2), and thunders (Ibid., v.1 *rapar*). It will be, thus, that the *apyā* Urvaśī and the controller Purūravas (the name signifies the thunder, *puru + rava*) form the *mithuna*. If Urvaśī is *apyā*, thus showing a clear association with water, Purūravas is praised by the cosmic rivers. This *mithuna*, thus, pertains to the gain of waters. As we have seen, the male is a mortal turned divine, while the woman is divine. They come together on the plane of the ritual, and become equal. From this point of view, the expression "born for *go-pithya*" has to be understood in the context of the gain of rain, waters, or the protection of the Cow (earth).

The other epithets of Urvaśī, viz. *antarikṣa-prā* and *rajaso vimānī* are equally instructive. Out of these two the first comes only for Indra, Soma and Savitṛ (RV I.51.2; IX.86.14 and

VII.45.1 respectively). The other is fairly common, but is prominent with the atmospheric fire, Soma and Vena, who is said to impel waters from the interior of the clouds (X.123.1; for others see III.26.7 fire; IX.62.14 Soma). The Vena, as we have seen, is the aspect of the Fire-in-the-waters. Urvaśī, sharing the two epithets with these deities, is, then, the female counterpart of these forces, or, in other words, she is the female aspect of the Fire-water complex. She is the female watery principle that holds the cosmic fire in herself. Lightning is only one of her aspects. Her attendants are the cosmic water-nymphs; and they are rightly compared with the water-birds (*ātayah*) and the mares, another symbol for the streams of waters (cf. VIII.87.1; X.5.2). Actually Urvaśī comes in four hymns in the RV and that is six times. Out of these six only twice we have the word *vidyut* (including our hymn); but even here once she is not *vidyut* itself; she is compared with *vidyut* (X.95.10); and at the other place (VII.33.11), the seer mixes the image of the lightning with that of Urvaśī, when he describes the ancient Vasiṣṭha to have been born from the lightning and from the mind of Urvaśī. Here two forces are mixed together to suggest the divinity of the first Viṣiṣṭha, and it is not that Urvaśī herself is the lightning. At the rest of the places, not only Urvaśī does not come with *vidyut* but also, *vidyut* is not mentioned at all (cf. hymn IV.2; V.41). The word *davidyot* in the present hymn (v.10) can hardly be taken to indicate the lightning, by itself; for, it occurs at various places, where there is no trace at all of Urvaśī or lightning. About the cruel nature, if we accept the hypothesis of the sacrifice of Purūravas to her, it has to be pointed out that even the benevolent Sarasvatī is said to be *ghorā* (VI.61.7); and the Āngirases are often described by that epithet. The epithet *ghorā* indicates her great cosmic powers, and mainly her nature as the water-controller. This is supported from another place in the RV where Urvaśī is described as being with the rivers (V.41.19^b *nadibhir urvaśī vā grṇātu*), where the rivers are indicated to be from the mid-region (*Ibid*^c *urvaśī vā bṛhad-divā*). We have also the concept of many Urvaśīs (IV.2.18 *martānām cid urvaśīr a-kṣpran*). These many Urvaśīs are, obviously, the many aspects of the water-belle, or of the one Urvaśī who controls the waters. In our hymn the

indication to this effect is to be found, in addition to the water-birds and the mares, in such words as *añjayaḥ* etc. (v.6)⁹, who are compared with the cows (a set symbol for the clouds) that did not low (*na anavanta*) indicating the absence of thunder—and there being no sign of the expected rain.

It will be only proper to discuss here the point of the son of Urvaśī. The Br. does not mention the name of this son; and says that Purūravas carried the *kumāra*. In the Mahābhārata he is called Āyu (Ādi, 75.24; Śānti, 166.74). We have already noted the doubtful implication of the word; and in the hymn, as such, there is no clear mention of the son and his name. Moreover, if Urvaśī is the immortal woman, it is not possible that a son would be born from her. In any case, he could not be actual; he could be only in concept. If he is taken to be real, he must be from her mortal representative. And from such words as *kratu* (v. 3;9), *sukṛtasya rātiḥ* (v. 17). *mantrāḥ* (v. 1), the four nights in the Autumn (v. 17). etc. which indicate the ritual, the son must be on the ritual plane. Now, the point is, how come Āyu in the later tradition? The reason appears to be in the passage of the hymn, where Urvaśī is mentioned along with the word *āyu* (v.10 *pra-urvaśī tirata dīrgham āyuḥ*). This obviously means that this word was misunderstood as indicating the son. But, as we have seen, this word means "life" in this context; and has nothing to do with the son. The word *āyu* (with the second vowel accented unlike here) comes elsewhere in the RV (I.162.1;V.41;2) in association with Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Rudra and Indra, who, barring the doubtful case of Varuṇa, are the gods of the mid-region. It also comes in connection with Urvaśī (IV.2.18 *ūparasya āyóḥ*, where we have the concept of many Urvasīs; V.41.19 *prabhṛthasya āyóḥ*). This will show that the word *āyu* is seen in two types in the RV, one with the accent on the first vowel, and the other with that on the second. Both occur with Urvaśī and with other nouns. The one that comes in the hymn under discussion has the accent on the first vowel, and, without doubt, means "life". This precludes the probability of *āyu* being the name of Urvaśī's son; and the tradition that speaks so, is doubtful. It will be rewarding to probe the point further. Urvaśī is said to impel the *upara āyu* (IV.2.18). The gods mentioned above are also associated

with the *upara āyu* (I.104.4). It is to be noted that at many places, in the RV, the word *upara* indicates the source of the heavenly fluid (X.27.20 where *upara* is the sun; X.94.5 has *úparasya niṣkṛtām, purú retó dadhire sūrya-śvítah*; the word *retas* is to be marked). The *prabhṛthá āyú* and the *úpara āyú* are concepts similar to each other. The word *prabhṛthá* indicates at some places the sacrifice (II.34.11; V.41.4;—33.5; VII.40.5) and by implication, the cosmic sacrifice. This will show that the case for the son of Urvaśī, in the R̥gvedic sources, is weak. The *āyú* associated with her is an aspect of sacrifice; and, in *úpara*, it is the cosmic sacrifice, or the cosmic fire.

If we follow the traditional maxim, that he who speaks is the seer, the case for Urvaśī as a seer is weak. The mortal Purūravas has to be the seer. In that case what has been attributed to Urvaśī is his own vision, or plan. That Purūravas was a seer-sacrificer is clear from the fact that he is said to be *sukṛt* (RV I.31.4). We must recall that Purūravas describes himself as on par with Indra and Agni (of the mid-region); and that he was born on purpose. He entreats upon Urvaśī to arrive, as she had done on the last occasion; and she also says that she had arrived on the last occasion in the Autumn. There seems to be a special reason for Purūravas to call the divine damsel. The reason is deftly suggested in the verses, in various symbolic terms. From this point of view v.3 has to be noted again. From it we gather the following details :

- (i) The arrow does not fly from the quiver for glory (*íṣur ná śriyá iṣudhèr asanā*).
- (ii) The speedy one does not gain the thousand and the cows (*go-śá śata-śá ná rámhīḥ*).
- (iii) The *kratu* is (hence) fruitless (*avīre krátou ví davidyutat ná*: was the *kratu* being *avīra* misunderstood as Purūravas not getting the son immediately ? *vīra* means also “son”). Anyway, the expression has to be closely examined.
- (iv) There is mention of the *urā* and the thunderers; but the word *na* poses a difficulty.

Let us take the whole hemistich:

*avīre krátau ví davidyutan ná
úrā ná māyúm citayanta dhúnayah.*

The word *na* is apt to give two senses: one of negation; and the other of comparison. Coming after the noun, it is natural to be expected to yield the sense of comparison. But this way, it is surely misleading; and we shall presently see that the sense of negation is in keeping with the spirit of the dialogue. It will be seen that the verse forms the reason for the request of Purūravas to Urvaśī to come; and to this Urvaśī replies that she was there already on the last occasion, when she brought wealth to the 'Father-in-law' (v.4 *vásu dádhātī svásurāya váyah*), and when Purūravas had been the lord of her body. After this there is again the statement of negation, that the various attendants did not move (the actual word being *ná sasruḥ*). In the same context we hear that the cows did not low for prosperity (*śriyé gávo na dhenávo anavanta*, where, looking to the general strain, we have to take *na* to give the sense of negation). This presents the following parallelogram:

<i>Plea of Purūravas</i>	
Verse 3 ———	———— Verse 6
1. <i>śriye (iṣur na śriyé...)</i>	1. <i>śriyé (gávo ná...)</i>
2. No movement of the shaft (<i>iṣur ná iṣudhér asanā</i>)	2. No movement of water-nymphs (<i>añjāyo 'ruṇayo ná sasruḥ</i>).
3. Thunderers did not show (<i>ná māyúm citayanta dhúnayah</i>)	3. Pregnant cows bellowed not (<i>gávo ná dhenávo 'navanta</i>)

The plea on the part of Purūravas is fairly similar; and in between these phases of the plea, Urvaśī is presented as speaking about her earlier stay, when she had brought wealth for the 'Father-in-law' and was 'struck' by Purūravas (v.4). This plea is immediately followed by the advances to the mid-region on the part of Purūravas (vv.7-9). The verses, probably, refer to the last experiences of Purūravas at the earlier advent of Urvaśī

from her abode of the mid-region, and his encounter with the water-belles—the attendants of Urvaśī. In later accounts, however, they were interpreted as Purūravas' plight after the speech of Purūravas to Urvaśī. That they record the earlier experiences in the scheme of the vision of the seer, is clear from the fact of the use of the past tense (including the Aorist, *ámānuṣīṣu mānuṣo niṣéve* at v.8; *tā ātáyo ná tanváḥ sumbhata*, v.9; *jániṣto apó náryaḥ*, v.10; *ásāsam tvā*, v.11). Even if they are taken as being after the fresh departure of Urvaśī, it is clear that they form a part of the plea for her to return. The plea of Purūravas shows the Urvaśī being *āpyā* could cause the 'cows' to below and the 'thunderers' to roar; she could also cause the females of the mid-region to 'flow'. This was the fulfilment of his desires; and he refers to this detail in his words, recording the last experience "fulfilling my desires" (v.10). The image of the "flowing damsels" has been worked by this seer on the basis of the cosmic waters or the rivers being the females, as we have already noted. We shall examine the image of the *dhúnayaḥ* (thunderers) shortly; but it may be pointed out, even at this moment, that the expression *ná māyúm citayanta* compares with *mímāti māyúm páyate páyobhiḥ* (said of the thundering cosmic cow that milks), from the hymn of Dīrghatamas (I.164.28) and with *mímāti māyúm dhvasanāv 'adhi śritā* (the thundering or bellowing Cow that sits in the cloud) at the same hymn (v.29). The Cow that bellows, in the hymn of Dīrghatamas, is also said to be frightening the mortals with her flashes (*cittibhiḥ*); and Purūravas uses the same image when he speaks of the *dhunayaḥ* as *na citayanta* both from \sqrt{cit} .

Now, about the word *dhúnayaḥ*. The word is familiar with the description of the Maruts (RV 1.64.5 ; V.60.7 ; VI.66.10 ; X.78.3 ; also cf. 1.87.3 ; V.87.3). The rivers in the midregion are termed *dhūni-matī* (RV I.174.9=VI.20.12). This will show that the *dhunayaḥ* in our hymn are the Maruts, who bring the streaming 'rivers' of rain. When they did not appear (or did not express themselves, *ná citayanta*); the 'cows' did not bellow, which means there were no thundering clouds. The whole scene is set in the mid-region theatre ; and the stage is negatively set. This was the *a-vīra krātu*. If, now, we examine the hemistich quoted earlier, the adjustment of *na* has to be as follows:

*avīre krátau ví davidyutat na úrá,
ná māyúm citayanta dhúnayah*

(The ewe did not flash due to, or in, the un-manly sacrifice, ie. as the sacrifice was not potent ; nor did the thunderers splash the roar).

The adjustment does not change the verse : it only takes *urā* in the next half to the first half as the subject of the verb there. This solves the riddle why *Urvaśi*, in the account of the Br. says that the lamb was her son. This also makes clear that *urā* was *Urvaśi* herself, symbolically. We have a parallel elsewhere in the RV where the ewe symbolizes a young woman. Thus the wife of *Bhāvayavya* says that she is "fully hairy like the ewe of the *Gandharvis*" (I.126.7. *sárvā-hám asmi romaśá gandhárīṇām tvā-(a) vikā*) ; and she is famous by her name *Romaśā* in the Vedic lore. *Sāyaṇa* explains this verse to mean that the woman is full of youth, "as one whose genitals (*avikā*) are fully hairy". It is not necessary to comment on what *Sāyaṇa* has said: but the point of the comparison is clear. There is further reason to believe that the seer suggests an identification between *Urvaśi* and the *urā*; for, both are described with the forms of the same root, practically: and we may not be wrong in suspecting the seer's desire for word play :

avīre krátau ví davidyutat ná úrá (v.3)
and *vidyút ná yā pátantī dávidyot* (*Urvaśi*, v.10)

The verbs *davidyutat* and *davidyot* are both from \sqrt{dyut} , "shine". (the meaning of *na* in the first verse is of negation ; that in the following is of similarity).

With her association with the mid-region and her control over the waters (cf. *āpyā* her epithet), did the seer use *urā* as the symbol for the water-ful cloud ? And does not the word *davidyutat*, which corresponds to *davidyot* suggest the flashes of the lightning ? The *urā* did not flash ; hence was the anxiety, which renders edge to the plea of the seer-sacrificer *Purūravas*.

The discussion uptill now would show that *Purūravas* wants *Urvaśi* to favour him by her return, so that the *kratu* which is

fruitless (ungenerative, *avīra*) should be generative, the 'arrow' should be the gainer of the desired 'cows', the thunderers should arrive on the scene and the 'cows' should bellow from their resort (the cloud) and milk the streams. His qualifications to be favoured by Urvaśī and to control her are clear from his divine birth and from his association with *gnāḥ* and the females of the mid-region.

Now we examine the hypothesis of the death, or sacrifice of Purūravas. Among other things, the main basis for this hypothesis are such words in the hymn as *parehy'stam* (*parā-ihī-āstam* v.13) and *punar astam parā-ihī*, (*punar astam parā-ihī*, v.2). According to Kosambi (*op. cit.* p.56) these words do not mean simply "go home", but indicate the departure to the heavenly world; and, in support of this rendering, he cites the funerary verse (RV X. 14.8). The verse, however, does not give the sense Kosambi expects from it. To quote the relevant portion: *hltvāyā-vadyām punar āstam ehi, sām gacchasva tanvā su-vārcāḥ*, At the outset, the comparison is ill-founded. In the Purūravas-hymn we have *astam parehi* and *punar astam parehi* where the word *parehi* (*parā+ihī*) indicates going back, while in the funerary verse the form is *ā+ihī*, "come back". This coming back of the soul of the dead one is to the terrestrial abode in a new form, leaving the censurable part of his life in the world beyond.¹⁰ The internal examination of the hymn of Purūravas also shows that the *asta* (abode) to which Purūravas is asked to return is his usual mortal home. It is the same *asta* to which Urvaśī had arrived on the earlier occasion where, she says, she was 'struck' with the cane-rod.¹¹ There is nothing to suggest that that *asta* is different from the one Purūravas is asked to return to by Urvaśī. As Urvaśī is the immortal woman and Purūravas the mortal seer, having divine powers, he reaches Urvaśī by his mental faculties; and his power of speech visualizes her. In asking her to return to his *asta* she means the abode from which he started the act of visualising her; and there is absolutely no case for the death of Purūravas; nor is there any support, whatsoever, for his being sacrificed.

There is hardly a case for the word Purūravas being understood as the sacrificial goat, in spite of the alluring etymology of the name (*puru+īava*, "much sound"), which is taken to

indicate the bleating of the sacrificial goat (Karambelkar) and which gets flimsy support from the *Nirukta* (X.46 *purūravā bahudhā rorūyate*), for the *Nirukta* cites the verse about the birth of Purūravas to explain this name, in which the word *gnāḥ* (divine damsels ; acc. to *Nirukta* they are waters, *gnā gamanād apah*) occurs. There is another epithet that has been misunderstood as suggesting the death of Purūravas. It is *mṛtyú-bandhu* (v.18 *yáthem etád bhávāsi mṛtyú-banduh*). This word has been taken to indicate the sacrifice of the husband Purūravas. But, the suggestion is superfluous. Now, there is a parallel, and the only one, to this word in *mṛtyú-bandhavaḥ* (RV VIII.18.22), which means only "mortals", and nothing else. This should make it quite clear that *mṛtyú-bandhu* in our hymn says nothing more than that Purūravas is only a mortal. And this is quite in keeping with his image built up by the seer (or we may add, now, that it is the image by Purūravas himself who is the seer). To understand that the goat is sacrificed here on the analogy of the Horse-sacrifice (Karambelkar) is impossible ; for the sacrificial horse is never said to be *mṛtyú-bandhu*. On the contrary, he is *devá-bandhu* (RV I.162.18 *vājino devá-bandhoḥ*; and earlier at v.7 *devānām puṣṭe cakṛmā subāndhum*). To suppose the sacrificial victim to be the death-kin (*mṛtyú-bandhu*) is against the very concept of sacrifice—Vedic or in any tradition in the world. Because, in the sacrifice (which is a divine dedication) the victim is never believed to die. Even in the case of the sacrificial horse, he is confidently told that he is not dying (I.162.21 *ná vā u etān mriyase ná riṣyasi devān id eṣi pathibhiḥ sugebhiḥ*, which makes him the *deva-bandhu* as seen above). Moreover, Mṛtyu never comes in the Vedic ritual lore as an auspicious deity, to whom a victim is sacrificed. Even in the funerary context where he comes, he is dreaded ; and his steps are desired to be wiped off, his path being different from that of the gods (X.18.1-4). There is one more point. Purūravas is given a boon, that he need delight in the *svarga* (v.18 *svargá u tvám ápi mādayāse*). This expression is not found elsewhere in the RV; but it may not indicate the abode after death ; for according to the ritual-tradition, the word *svarga* does not necessarily indicate the other world. It is used to indicate the plane of the sacrificial ritual. This will be clear from the fact that, in the

Horse-sacrifice, the sacrificial horse and the queen are said to cover themselves in the *svarga loka*, when they are actually covered by a piece of cloth in the symbolic coitus-rite (cf *Mait. Sam.* III.12.20 *svarge loka proruṇvātām*). Thus the *svarga* in which Purūravas is desired to be happy need not be the other world ; but the world of sacrifice. This is exactly supported by the fact that his progeny also is said to be continually sacrificing to the gods. This need not be in their being sacrificed as goats ! Even if we take the literal meaning of *svarga*, it would, at the most, indicate that, when he dies, Purūravas would attain heaven, and his progeny would continue the tradition of sacrifice. As we have suggested earlier, at another place Purūravas is referred as *su-kṛt* (RV I. 31.4). The epithet *su-kṛt* shows two phases in the RV. In one phase it comes for such wonder-workers as the Aṅgirasas (III.31.12), the divine seers, called *kavis* (III. 38.2) who may be Angirasas themselves and the Ṛbhūas (III. 60.3) who are acclaimed as the workers of wonders. In the other phase it comes for the mortals who are sacrificers ; and this is so at almost all the rest of the places, not covered by the first phase. This will strengthen our suggestion that the *su-kṛt* Purūravas was a sacrificer, who could work wonders, and falls in line with such others as Nābhānediṣṭha and Cyavāna. It needs to be stressed that the epithet *rājan* does not necessarily show that Purūravas was a king ; the epithet comes also for gods in the RV. Moreover he is said to be the *rāja* of the "body" of Urvaśī (v.5 *rājā me vīra tanvāḥ*) !

There is another word that deserves study. It is *su-deva*, which has been used for Purūravas (v. 14). Now, in all the occurrences of this word the sense seems to be of a gratified or gifted sacrificer, except for one place where it comes for Varuṇa (VIII. 69.12). Our hymn has a prominent sexual note, as has been accepted by the tradition and modern scholarship. Against this sexual background of the hymn, the epithet presents an interesting point. This word, as it occurs in the later book of the RV (ie. X), is apt to be compared with its occurrences in the *Atharva V* (AV). In the latter book it comes in the context of the many Mahānagnīs. "The Mahānagnī does the *sūdeva* press hard" (AV XX. 136.12 *sūdevas tvā mahānagnīr-vi-bādhatē*). Geldner is perfectly acceptable when he says that the word

sudeva is the product of the "erotic slang", and that it indicates the "erotischen termini technici".¹² Now, the point is, what is the relationship between Purūravas, the *sudeva*, and Urvaśī in this erotic setting? If we recollect the implication of the term Mahānagnī in the ritual-setting, which we have already done, as the woman that prominently figures in the verses called *āhanasyāh*, we get some definite help. The expression *súdevas tvā mahānagnīr vibādhate* exactly tallies with *mahān abhijñū bādhate* (AV loc. cit, v. 15 has *abhiktaḥ* for *abhijñū*; RV Khila V. 22.10) where the word *abhijñū* (one with Knees bent forward) indicates the position of coitus in the case of the male. Considering the erotic nature of our hymn, it becomes clear that the *sudeva* Purūravas has the same sort of sexual status with Urvaśī. And, as Mahānagnī indicated the earth and was the queen in the ritual of the Horse-sacrifice, Urvaśī must have her mortal representative, as a copulative woman-companion, of Purūravas, the seer himself or his representative. This would mean that Urvaśī and Purūravas actually formed the *mithuna* on the ritual-plane; and, in concept, the wonder-worker controlled and called the divine female on the plane of the ritual to fructify her; and thereby the heavenly fluid would ooze out in the form of rain, as the female was the water-belle (*āpyā*). That Urvaśī came on to the ritual-plane in a human form (ie. some woman represented her) is, most probably, indicated by the expression "I roamed among the mortals in a different form" (v. 16 *yād vi-rūpā ācaram mārtyeṣu*)¹³; and this was on the occasion of the Autumnal rite when she stayed for four nights, partaking of *ghṛta* (*Ibid, āvasam rātriḥ śarādaścātasrah; ghṛtāsya stokām sakṛd āhnā āśnām*). This clearly indicates the Autumnal ritual whereat Purūravas and Urvaśī (in human form) united, forming the *mithuna*. And the present advances of Purūravas, and the entire dialogue, is a part of a similar ritual, since lost. That the ritual must have been for the gain of rain is indicated also from the other place where Purūravas is said to be the *su-kṛt*; because, in the same verse, he is said to be equal to Manu, and it is said that Agni caused heaven to resound for both of them (I. 31.4 *dyām avāśayah*), indicating the thunder of the clouds. There is yet another minute point to be noted. We have seen above that Purūravas is called *sú-deva*, which tallies

with the *sudeva* of the Mahānagnī-concept. As a male counterpart of the Mahānagnī, the *su-deva* is the Mahānagna (The Great naked one). If *sudeva* is used in respect of Purūravas, it seems the same concept plays at the back of the word here also, which would mean Purūravas to be naked. And this is exactly the condition, why Urvaśī goes away from him ! At least, this is the case in the account of the Br. ; and, even in the hymn, it is indicated by the epithet *an-ā-vṛt* as we have noted earlier in this connection. The suggestion seems to be that 'nakedness' (symbolic sex) is restricted to ritual, and never afterwards.

The account in the Br. can be reconciled with that of RV this way :

*Purūravas, the wonderful seer-sacrificer, invented a ritual on the basis of the confirmed Vedic tradition of *mithuna*-rituals where sex played an important part. In this ritual the divine woman was invited and formed the sex-partner of the mortal, turned divine on the sacred plane. Both were represented by their mortal likes. The divine woman was the water-nymph Urvaśī, who would favour with the advent of rain. After the ritual she was supposed to return to her divine abode of the mid-region. It is not improbable that the first male to take part in this ritual was the seer himself. This ritual might have been performed twice a year, in the Autumn and in the Spring, or, without doubt, in the Autumn, if rains were delayed,¹⁴ and in the Spring with a desire to have good rains.*

The ritual sex is deftly indicated by the expression "struck with the cane-rod" (vv.4 and 5 *śnathitā vaitasēna* ; also *Nir.* III. 21), where the imagery of the copulative churning is used, which is common in the 'birth of Agni'. It will be interesting to note that the lightning-fire is called "the golden rod among the female waters", where for the rod the word *vetasaḥ* occurs (RV IV. 58.5 *hiraṇyāyo vetasó mādhyā āsām*). This also shows that Purūravas, who "churns" Urvaśī with the 'cane-rod', is described in the garb of the mid-region fire.

Now the point where Purūravas is said to fall in the lap of Nirṛti, or that he would go to the highest abode. These references

cannot be taken to indicate the actual flight to the abode of Death. The purpose that these may serve is to show the ardent desire to have her with him. The same is true of the wolves that might be expected to devour him.¹⁵ It is on this point that Urvaśī consoles him and reminds him of the last Autumn's stay, which reminds Purūravas of his control over her calling himself Vasiṣṭha (v. 17), again using the fire-image for himself (cf RV II. 9.1).¹⁶ The words "Return ; my heart seethes !" appear to be a word-play, in respect of his epithet Vasiṣṭha ("most shing one", a fire-symbol).

We now come to the darkest portions of the hymn ; and the two verses that have remained have to be examined very carefully (vv. 12, 13). The former is the question of Purūravas, and the latter the answer of Urvaśī. The following points are to be considered :

- (i) Who is the "son" and who is the "Father" ?
- (ii) What is the exact rendering and implication of *cakran na* and of *krandad ādhyè śivāyai* ? and
- (iii) What is meant by *aśru vartayat* ?

Now, we have seen that even in the account of the Br. there is confusion regarding the son of Purūravas. Again, a son from the divine woman cannot be a possibility ; and the divine woman staying with the mortals and going back, after bestowing a son to the mortal is only a make-belief. With the clear references to ritual, as we have amply noted, the "son" must be sacrificial and even symbolic. As we have seen, the words "son" and "Father" are commonly used for the fire and the god Parjanya in the RV. (For Parjanya as Father of cf. V.83.6 ; of Soma IX.82.3). About the word *sūnuḥ*. It may be noted that, in addition to the epithets *sāhasaḥ sūnuḥ*, *śavasasḥ sūnuḥ* and the like where the word *sūnuḥ* is adjoined to others, the word *sūnuḥ* comes only for Agni. We have noted already, that, in the complex imagery, Agni is said to hold the *garbha* of the Father and to gain the "udder of the Father" (RV III.1.9; 10), where the Father is the god Parjanya, or the sky. As an exception to the occurrence of the word *sūnuḥ* for Agni, at one place it comes for the sacrificer, for whom Agni is said to shine (RV III.1.12). This

will mean that the word *sūnú* indicated to the Vedic seers either the sacrificial fire or the sacrificer, in the symbolic language, the probability of the former being more.

About the second point. If we compare the expressions in the two verses we get some common things, Thus: *cakrann na* comes in both verses. Likewise v.12 has *aśru vartayat*, while v.13 has, in reply, *vartayate aśru*, where the idea is the same. But, at v.13 there is something more than *cakrann na*. It is *cakrann na krandad ādhye śivāyai*; and, in both, this expression is joined with *aśru*. It has to be pointed out that these expressions were totally misunderstood as suggesting weeping or expressing sorrow. Sāyaṇa renders *cakran* as “weeping” (*krandamānaḥ*), while in the next verse, in the face of *cakrann na krandat* he renders *cakran* as “shedding tears” (*rudan aśrūṇi vimuñcan*), and, fearing repetition, he leaves the word *krandat* unrendered. Surely, what special meaning can be had from this apparent repetition? (“shedding tears he will cry”?). We should certainly be on the right path if we establish finally that there is no repetition; for, in such a terse hymn, which is full of riddlingly complex ideas, it is difficult to believe the seer to resort to repetition. Now, it is also to be noted that the word *cakran* occurs nowhere else; and a close examination of the root *krand* shows that its forms are used in connection with deities alone, and never for a mortal. The sense is nowhere of weeping, or that of sorrow. On the other hand, the sense is of roar associating with the mid-region. Thus, the mid-region fire is associated with *krandanu* (VII.42.1 *prá krandanúr nabhanyásya vetu*), the meaning being, “May the roar of the thunderer go up” The root is favourite with the description of Parjanya (V.83.7;-58.6), for the thunderbolt of Indra (I.100.13); and *vāyu* is *krandad-iṣṭi* (X.100.2; the accent is due to the compound), which is his unique epithet, and comes nowhere else. Only Agni is *krandadaśva* = “roaring horse” (I.36.8;-173.3). This will show that the word *krandat* in our hymn also cannot be taken in the sense of weeping. According to Vedic symbolism, it has to be taken in the sense of the cosmic roar or the thunder. This also means that the seer uses word *aśru* in the cosmic setting, and not in the sense of the ordinary “tear”! This is solidly supported by the concept of the *aśru* in the chapter on the *mithunas* (*mithuna brāhmaṇa* at the Agnicayana

from the *Śat Br.*, we have noted in an earlier chapter). Now the word *cakran* has to be taken as from \sqrt{kr} "to perform" (reduplicated) meaning "an activating performer" (cf. X.61.1 *krānā pitarā*)¹⁷

We have seen the sense of the root-forms of \sqrt{krand} , and its occurrences with deities. We now fix our attention on a pas age about Agni :

"May the sacrificer (Agni) pervade the sacrificial assembly, going about its various chambers; may he fill the foetus for the earth, that is yearly (or Autumnal, *bhārad gārbham ā śarādaḥ pṛthivyāḥ*). May the horse (ie. Agni), being led, roar ; may the Cow—Speech—move about the two worlds, thunderingly" (RV I. 173.3).

The thought of the seer is clear, and in keeping with the ritual of the establishment of the sacrificial fire. The details of sequences are as follows: The fire-horse (a fond image of the Vedic ritual tradition) is established in his altar, and is being carried to other altars (the Āhavanīya and the Dakṣiṇa); the mid-region cow thunders (cloud—image); the *garbha* is laid in the earth (from the mid-region); this is done every year (or, in the Autumnal season). It is not only here that the concept of the *garbha* and rain occurs; and we have already seen the significance of the *garbha*-symbolism. But the point to be particularly noted is that the whole image is connected with \sqrt{krand} (Ibid *krāndad āśvaḥ, ruvād gauh*). The seer of the hymn under study adds to this image that of the *aśru*, apparently associating the "tear" with the "cry" (*krand*), but never losing sight of the mid-region. He works on the analogy of the body-fluid, and presents the fluid from the eye as the fertility-fluid. It is pertinent to remember, in this connection, that the eye-fluid was actually believed to be rain, and an aid to fructification. Thus, the sun is said to have his eye covered with *rajas* "water" (RV I.164.14 ; and *Nir. IV.9 udakam raja ucyate*). He is also believed to open his eye to emit the *rajas* (V.59.3); and it is also necessary to appreciate that when Indra shatters Vṛtra (a rain-symbol ; for, Vṛtra is said to control the rivers and the waters), the latter's attendants

are said to cry and weep (I.33.7 *tvam etān rudató jákṣataś cā-yodhayo rájasa indra páre*). The eye-fluid was, then, believed to be rain; but let us see an example that should leave no doubt about the eye being the source of rain. Thus, it is said that the left eye of Prajāpati got swollen; the drops that oozed therefrom were rain (cf. *Tait. Sam. IV. 6.3 tasya vai prajāpateḥ svoyam cakṣur aśvayat; tato ye stokā samāapadyanta tair idam varṣati*). This, with the concept of the *aśru* being the cosmic pervading fluid of generation (in the context of the *mithuna*-Br. at the rite of Agnicayana, Śat. Br. VI. 1.2.1-9) should make clear that the expressions *aśru vartayat* and *vartayate aśru* have to be taken in the sense of the release of rain, the background of which has already been prepared in the preceding verses. Purūravas asks Urvaśi whether the *aśru* (cosmic fluid) will be released; and Urvaśi replies that it would be, for she certainly controls the cosmic waters, being the *ápyā*. The construction of the forms *vartayat* and *vartayate* is causal; and the subject is *sūnuḥ*. The rendering will be: "When might the *sūnu* (Agni) desire the Father, being "born" (sacrificially kindled)? When might he cause (the Father Parjanya) to release the *aśru*." This was the worry of Purūravas. Urvaśi promises him that the Father would cause the release of the *aśru*. In this thought there is mixed the concept of the *mithuna*, called here *dampatī*, of Purūravas and Urvaśi, for the question asked is: "When the fire is kindled among the Fathers-in-law, who could separate the couple of like mind?" (same v.ie. 12). Here the *sūnu* and Agni are equated; and the sense seems to be that, when the sacrificial fire is kindled, the Father would release the cosmic fluid. The Father is he of the sacrificer Purūravas, but the Father-in-law of Urvaśi. The Fathers-in-law here and the Father-in-law at v.4 are the same concepts; both refer to the mid-region stage; for there is no mention anywhere of the actual Father of Purūravas, either in the hymn or in the account of the Br.¹⁶ (The Father-in-law here has to be compared with that of the wife of Vasukra; he is Indra there, cf. X.28.1 b *māma id áha śváśuro nā-jagāma*; in this place the suggestion of Sāyaṇa that the Father-in-law is Indra is correct; for there is mention here of the *dhānā* and the juice of Soma, which is unique with Indra in the RV). The whole sense, then, seems

to be that, when on the ritual-plane the *dampatī* (the performing couple, here Urvaśī and Purūravas—the *mithuna*——) necessarily meet, and the fire is kindled, the Father in the mid-region sends rain as a sympathetic act.

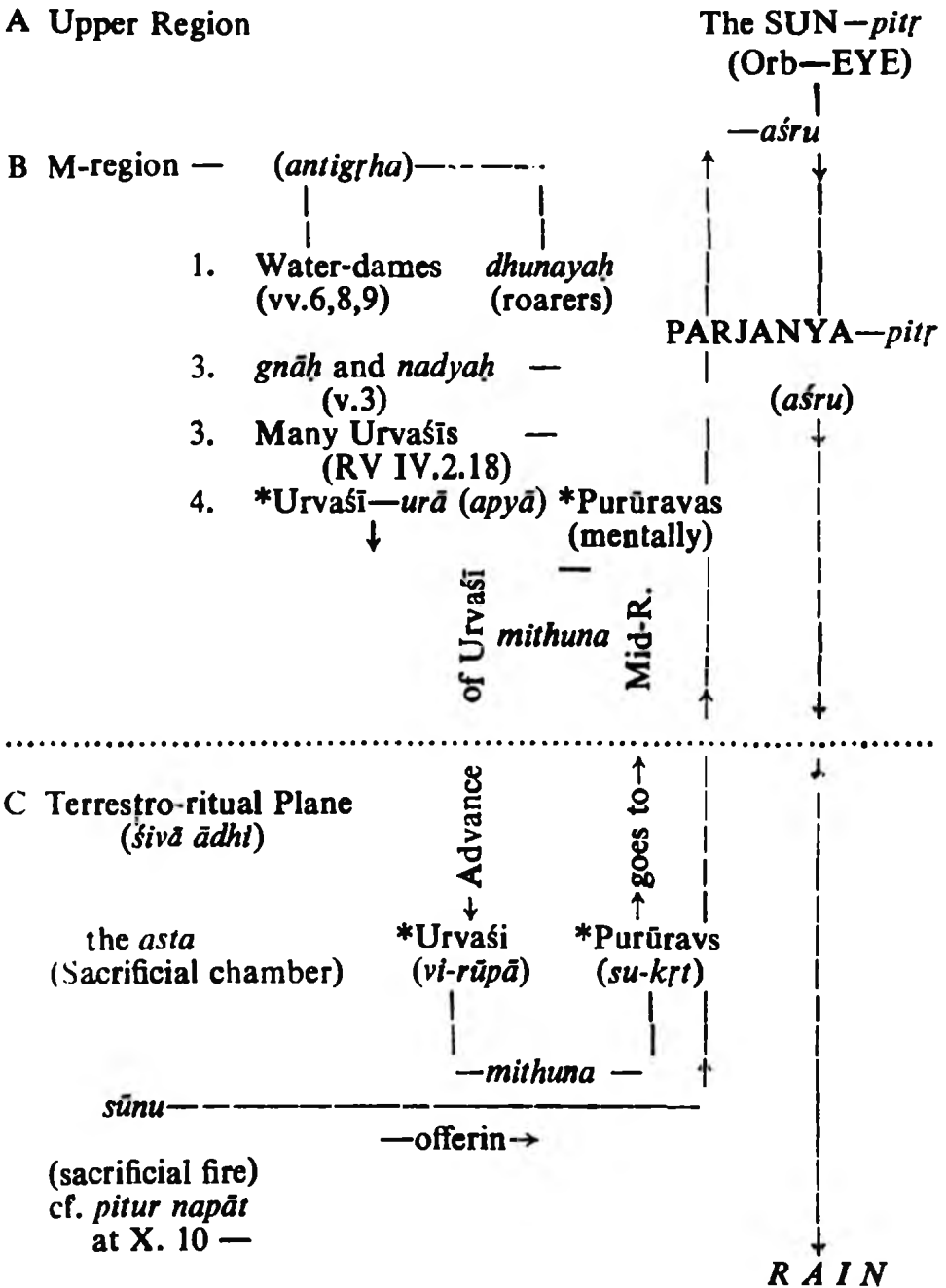
Only one point now remains to be cleared. There is the mention of Uṣas in the hymn (only once at v.4) in the vocative. There may seem to be no reason why Dawn should be mentioned at all. The point has to be compared with another such reference to her in a hymn that has the same motif, that of ritual and sex (X.61.4).¹⁹ The presence of Uṣas is not stated openly there. It is, however, clearly suggested by the expression, "When the dark cow sat among the tawny ones" (*kr̥ṣṇā yád góṣv 'aruṇīṣu sīdat*). There, as at the present case, the mention of Uṣas, probably hints at the time of the ritual, as the mention of the strokes by the cane-rod, having the double implication of the sex-act and that of the churning of the fire, comes immediately after. This is just before and intimately associated with the mention of the actual arrival of Urvaśī, on the last occasion, to the *asta* (abode) of Purūravas, which suggests the sacrificial chamber.

To summarize the whole vision of the seer:

The *kratu* is *avīra* ; but with the birth of the *sūnu* it would be the *śivā ādhi* (auspicious undertaking).²⁰ The *sūnu* is sure to be born; and this birth is the kindling of the sacrificial fire ; for the *sūnú* is the fire itself, symbolically suggested. As the *kratu* is, at the moment unfruitful, the cloud-cows do not bellow, nor do the thundering Maruts roar; and there is no possibility of the *aśru* from the heavens to be released. For the fruitfulness of the *ādhi*, and the release of the cosmic fluid, union with Urvaśī, on the plane of the ritual, is necessary ; for Urvaśī is the water-belle (*ápyā*). The union of this type is already known to take place yearly, when the sacrificial fire is kindled and the seer advances to the realm of the mid-region to activate the damsels there ; this is because he controls Urvaśī and she abides by his desires. Purūravas, the wonder-working seer-sacrificer, charms Urvaśī to come to the plane of the ritual ; for, they two form the ritual-*mithuna* having like minds. But Urvaśī being divine

by nature (the cosmic power) she comes to the ritual in a different form (*vi-rūpā*) ; and unites with Purūravas in her form of a mortal ritual-woman, either bodily (as in the Mahāvratā) or mentally or orally. The seer employs various images in his device, for he is the *su-kṛt*.

The following chart may be helpful to give the scheme of the hymn:



The fact that the *sīnu* is fused with the sacrificial fire is seen also in the Brahmanic ritual, where Urvaśī and Purūravas are identified with the lower and the upper *araṇī* respectively, giving 'birth' to the fire.

NOTES

1. Schroeder L.V. *Mysterium und Mimus im Rigveda*. Leipzig, 1908, Geldner, *Der Rigveda* HOS; *Vedische Studien* I, pp. 264ff; Kosambi DD., *Myth and Reality*, Bombay, 1962; Wright J.C., "Purūravas and Urvaśī", BSOAS, Vol. XXX. 1967, pp. 526-47 Goldman R.P., "Mortal Man and the Immortal Woman", *J. Or. Instt.* Baroda Vol. XVIII, No. 4, pp. 273-302.
2. See note 1 above; we have already examined the opinions of this scholar in an earlier chapter.
3. Karambelkar V.V. "Urvaśī and Purūravas", (Marathi). *Taruṇa Bhārata* Diwali Sp. Issue, 1960. The same arguments and material appear in the thesis (for Ph. D.) of his daughter (Dr.) Miss Usha Karambelkar, "Dialogues Hymns from the Rgveda" Nagpur Univ.), 1966.
4. On this point see Lang Andrew "Cupid Psyche and the Sun-frog" *Custom and Myth*, London, 1884, pp. 68-76 It should be noted that the point of the condition is inserted by the Br., and is not to be seen in the Rgvedic source.
5. In spite of the particle *na* coming after, I have preferred to take the sense to be of negative and not of comparison. In this I preferred to follow Sāyaṇa. Geldner takes *na* as showing comparison at a and d; but he finds it difficult to complete the sentence for want of the *upameya*. His rendering a "bandsmen" (Spielleute) is not happy. As we have said further, the word has association of the Maruts. Hence, his suggestion that the *dhunayah* are the Gandharvas, based on the account of the Br. cannot be accepted. "Die Spielleute verstanden es wie ein Schaf zu blöken" does not tally even with the Br. account; for there the lambs or the sheep are not said to bleat. Moreover, the word *māyu* comes only for the cows (RV VII. 103.2; I. 164.28, 29; and the other place is the present one.)
6. The Anukramaṇī attributes this verse to Urvaśī; Schroeder and Oldenberg to Purūravas. Geldner does not attribute it to anybody; but for *usah* (at d) he has "Lover" (Liehaber), which is unwarranted, in view of this word (with the same accent) coming as the voc. for Uṣas (RV I.48.4;9 etc). The implication will be clear in our

discussion further. The verbal form *nanakṣe* is both the 1st and the 3rd P. The form *cākan* (*yasmin cākan*) comes as the second and also the Third P. (I.33. 14; I174.5; X. 148.1). In the event of its being taken in the Second P., the expression may be taken as addressed to Purūravas.

7. Even here the use of the particle *na* is doubtful. I follow Sāyaṇa in his suggestion of contrastive explanation (*vyatireka dṛṣṭānta*).
8. The actual word is *mūrā* (voc.). Sāyaṇa renders it as *mūḍha*; Geldner as "fool" (Tor) following Sāyaṇa; but, at other places Sāyaṇa himself derives it from $\sqrt{mṛ}$. "to die" (X.87 *mūra-devān*; also *ibid* 14).
9. The *anjayaḥ* and *aruṇayaḥ* appear to be the epithets of the dawn elsewhere in the RV (cf. VII. 78.1; X. 15.7; also I.121.3; IV. 16;-2.16 etc.). Here, probably, they indicate the flashes of lightning, in respect of the "bellowing cows" that are mentioned just later in the verse.
10. It is surprising that Macdonell should have missed the sense in *ā-ihī* (*astamehī*); for he renders as "go back"; and, naturally, with this rendering he takes the *asta* to be of the dead ancestors. Geldner rightly renders "come to the house" (Komm weider ins Haus), thus taking the *asta* to be the house on the earth, where he is desired to arrive with a new body. However, he adds, in the note, that this return is at the manes-ceremony (Zur zeit der Mane opfer), *Der Rigveda* III, 1951, P. 144. It should be noted that the manes do not come "with a new body" which is clearly stated in the passage (*tanvā su-varcāḥ*). As a matter of fact, this should be taken as the first and the oldest reference to the belief in re-birth, which is so clear in *sam-gacchasva tanvā*. With which body is the dead to unite, when the one he had is left by the soul? This is why, probably, the custom of burial of the body, and of the bones in the event of cremation. The bone-jars were shaped as man and woman as the case might be; also to be noted is the fact, that in the jars in which the bones were placed clarified butter was poured with the mantra, *idam ta ātmanaḥ śarīram; ayam ta ātmā*. The jar was, then, the body; and the clarified butter was the soul; see Kashikar-Dandekar, *Śrauta koṣa*, Poona, I-ii, P. 1089. For burial in RV see VII. 89. *mṛṇmayam gṛham*.
11. This is a sex-symbol, the rod standing for the male organ. See Sāyaṇa and Yāska, *Nir.* III. 31. Geldner has "Rute" for *Vaitasa*, which means both the "rod" and the "penis".
12. *Vedische Studien* I, p.280 ff.
13. Goldman's suggestion that the word *Virūpā* shows inherent difference between the *rūpa* of Purūravas and of Urvaśī is understandable; but that Urvaśī is "merely apostrophising herself" is not agreeable (op.cit. p.281); Bergaigne is acceptable when he suggests that Urvaśī takes a different form for use on the earth (*La Religion Védique*, Paris, 1963, Vol. II, p.98 ff). We only add that her such form is at the plane of ritual;

for in another surrounding it is impossible to believe her to meet Purūravas.

14. It is to be noted in this connection that the seasons Spring and Autumn are mentioned in the RV elsewhere (X 90.6); and, according to our calculation, the Autumn (Śarad) and the Rainy season (Varṣā) are combined, and are together taken as one; see Śat.Br. XIII.6.1.10;11; see also the *Vedic Index* under *Rtu*.
15. The mention of the wolves (in *sālāvṛkānām hṛdayāni etā*) and the devouring by the unholy wolves seems to be a social custom. Here Purūravas says that his body may be devoured by the wolves. This is, probably, after his death. We have ground to believe that it was the custom among the ascetics (*yati*) to let the bodies be devoured by the wolves (*sālāvṛka*, or *vṛka*); cf. *Tait Sam* VI. 2.7.5 *indro yatīn sālāvṛkebhyaḥ prāyacchat*; also *Ai. Br.* VIII. 28 where the wolves are said to have eaten the ascetics at the southern part of the *uttaravedi*; also *Tāṇḍya M.Br.* VIII.1.4; XIII.4.17. For a similar custom among the Jain Tirthaṅkaras see Dr B. Deo, *History of Jain Monachism*. Poona, 1956, p.431, where he refers to the *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya*.
16. The expression is *upa-sikṣāmi vāsiṣṭhaḥ*; Geldner renders, "I entice her" (locke ich her)"; and for Vasiṣṭha he has "her lover" (ihr Liebster). These renderings are not supported by the RV. Vasiṣṭha is used for Agni; and $\sqrt{sikṣ}$ does not indicate the sense of alluring. I have followed Śāyaṇa here. I would take $\sqrt{sikṣ}$ as a reflected root from \sqrt{sak} as does Roth; see his *Lexicon*.
17. We have noted that Śāyaṇa takes the form *cakran* as from \sqrt{Krand} . Geldner follows him (Schreieder), and adds in the bracket "kind". Now, where is the propriety of comparing the new-born son ("geborene sohn" as he renders the expression *sūnuḥ . . . jātaḥ*) to a crying child? For, crying would just be natural for him. Likewise, there is no point in understanding the son to "drop tears like a crying child"; that would be only a confused and meaningless repetition, which the texture of the seer's plan would not admit. Oldenberg (*Noten*) suggests the form to be *cakrad*, changed to *cakran*, in view of the following *na*; but this is against the *padapāṭha*, which has clearly *cakran na*. There is no necessity to change the *padapāṭha*. Roth, quoted by Geldner, derives it from \sqrt{kr} , "to scatter"; but the sense is not supported from any other place. I stick to my suggestion of deriving it from \sqrt{kr} , "to perform", taking it as an irregular perfect.
18. The Mahābhārata makes him the son of Budha, the son of Ila; and also mentions his six sons; however, that is only mythical, Ādi, 75.18-19, and is suggested from *aila* at our hymn (v.18), which comes from *itā* sacrificial offering, a fire-symbol.
19. See Dange, *Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, pp. 123-153.
20. The word *ādhi* is likely to be misunderstood as "trouble", in respect of RV I. 105.7,8 and X.33.3. But what could be the *śivā ādhi*? Geldner.

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‘friendly sorrow’ (freundlichen Sorge) (der Mutter) is difficult to comprehend. I prefer Sāyaṇa, *ādhyāte vastuni*; but I add that this *vastu* is the ritual-plan.

21. The tradition of yearly sacrifice where Urvaśī arrived is recorded in the Brahma P. (151.3—27), where Purūravas is said to have performed sacrifice and Urvaśī arrived regularly.

Sex in Stone and the Vedic Mithuna

In this chapter we touch a rather delicate subject. Uptil now, in the earlier chapters, we saw that the Vedic ritual-scientists had systematically developed a method of ritual-coupling (*mithunīkaraṇa*). As the Vedic ritual centred round an improvised altar, or the house-hold fire, public presentation of the *mithunas* in idols or figurines was absent. Now, there appear certain types of *mithunas* in terracotta about the second century B.C. some of which are seen to tally with the so-called erotic sculptures in the cave-temples and with paintings that adorn the walls of certain holy places. Could there be any conceptual and thematic connection between the *mithunas* in the Vedic rituals and those that are referred to above ?

In this connection, a point has to be noted. As we have marked, sex in the Vedic ritual (or, for that matter in any religious setting) is devoid of the feeling which is known as 'erotic'. The latter has a tinge of sexual 'desire' and warrants privacy ; the former is a religious duty and is symbolic. In almost all sculptures of the sort named 'erotic' the expression is of complacency rather than infatuation. As such, it is wrong to call them 'erotic', or to see a cult of Desire in them.

The topic of erotic sculptures in India has attracted a number of scholars;¹ and, as early as 1925 there have been efforts to interpret the coitus-poses and other *mithuna*-motifs.² Though in sculpture, the distinct *mithuna* (couple)-posture appears from the 2nd century B.C. onwards, there is clear indication of a *mithuna* as early as the 3rd century B.C. on a Rupar seal, wherein we see a nude goddess with a male figure.³ The male figure is shown away from the nude goddess trying to offer her

something; but, in the left corner we see a man and a woman holding some object on a plate between them. Terracotta couples have been found in the second century B.C. from Mathura and Rajgir, and also from Tamluk and other places. In one instance, the terracotta-couple (which is from Chandraketugarh⁴ and may be placed about the 2nd Century B.C.) acutely resembles the couple from the Liṅgaraja temple,⁵ Bhuvaneśvara, 11th century A.D., wherein the full-sized man in the standing position takes to his middle a woman with thighs astride, her legs clasped round his waist, both being in the nude and "fixture" position. The position in the latter *mithuna* has been compared with the *avalambita rata*⁶ and, probably, rightly so; but it has to be noted that the terracotta *mithuna* is of an earlier period than the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana⁷, which is the first extant treatise to codify the erotic science. The same has to be noted in the case of a terracotta orgiastic group from the same place and of the same early period. In this figure, the female-partner of the central couple is in the *thighs-up* pose; there are two female figures by the side of the *mithuna*.⁸ In the later period, that is about the 12th century A.D. we have the revival of this motif, with the goddess or without her in certain cases. The point to be noted is, that the *vipārīta-rata* and the orgiastic group was known prior to the *Kāmasūtra*. In one terracotta *mithuna* from Tamluk⁹ about the same period (2nd ct. B.C.) we have a typical *mithuna*, in a chair. The nude man is reclining face upwards with legs stretched down in ease; and a woman, also nude, is sitting face to face upon, in his middle in a coital fixture, with thighs astride. This position is of the *puruṣāyīta* type, and is represented in the later period also as for example, in the Bellagavi sculpture¹⁰ in Shimoga district of the present Karnataka state (Tripurāntaka temple, about the 12th ct. A.D.). In an 'erotic' terracotta couple from Kauśāmbī we see something like a spacious chair; and the woman (nude) appears to be sitting on the lap of the man, a well known later motif. The period of the couple is about the same as other terracotta couples mentioned above. In the very first example we have noted above, we have something like a hut covered with leaves; and very likely, it represented a divine abode or a shrine. The floral motif is also seen in the last example noted;

and it may be compared with the one in the Śālabhañjkiā, East Gate Sanchi, wherein the tree-spirit appears as a nude damsel (1st ct. B.C.).¹² *Mithunas* with the floral motif, or associated with some sort of a depiction of leaves, are found from the 2nd century B.C. onwards (for ex. the Sudarśanā Yakṣi from Bharhut¹³ shows the lotus overhead, 2nd ct. B.C. ; the sculpture of an amorous couple and an attendant from Mathura, 1st-2nd ct. A.D. shows leaves overhead. From Mathura we have an interesting sculpture from this point of view, from the 2nd ct. A.D. In a presentation of a gate panel having two sides, joined by a horizontal slab inlaid with a lotus, on the top of one side is seen a couple. The man is seen slightly leaning over the woman, embracing her amorously ; his left hand is shown touching an inverted tumbler that stands covering a jar which is held by a nude woman that adorns the full height of the panel. The other part of the panel shows a nude woman, her right hand on her waist and the left hand holding something like a stick. On the top is seen the (same) couple, in a semi-embrace as if rousing in the morning.¹⁴ The jar appears to symbolize wine, while there is a bunch of mangoes in the right hand of the woman (the Yakṣi) ; these two, together, symbolize the advent of the Spring ; and the motif gets to be on par with the floral-leafy one. There is no doubt, hence, that all these mark the advent of the spring season and the creative faculty of the earth. The motif in the terracotta *mithunas* mentioned above and the *mithuna*-sculptures, hence, is the same ; and the psychology behind them should also be the same, which is the gain of prosperity. The difference is, that the terracottas seem to be for common use, while the sculptures were established by royal assistance. The former appear to be for votive offerings,¹⁵ for prosperity in general : and there is a probability of their being planted in the field for harvest, or offered to the goddess of bounty. Besides the *mithunas*, we get the terracotta figurines of the nude goddess identified as Śrī, or of the headless one said to be the "shameless woman."¹⁶ The cult of this goddess was fairly well distributed, as seen from the occurrence of figures at Bhita, Jhusi and Kauśāmbī in the Uttar Pradesh, Ter and Nevaśa in Maharashtra and Nāgrājunaḥḍā in the Andhra Pradesh, in early centuries of the Christian era. Though

the figure is headless, often a lotus is seen in the place of the head. Another headless woman found in Inamgaon, about fifty miles from Poona and to the east, is associated with the bull as her vehicle ;¹⁷ she may be compared with the nude goddess with a bull found at Vadgaon in Maharashtra and at Bhinmal in southern Rajasthan.¹⁸ It is probable that the bull comes as the zoomorphic male partner of the headless goddess, and not only as a vehicle. This type is assigned the 15th century B.C., while the single headless woman is assigned the period about 800 B.C. Though it is not easy to establish an evolutionary relationship between these two types, the point to remember is the prominent sexual tone of these figures. In the case of the single headless figure, the fertility aspect is clear, and her images are worshipped even today in some places. Barring this figure, the other female figures are shown along with their male partners, as is seen above, the male being a worshipper priest in certain cases (cf. the Rupa figure), or a zoomorph or the human cohabiting with the female. It is possible to make a difference between the human *mithua* on the one hand, and the goddess-human or the goddess-zoo *mithuna*, on the other. The latter appears to be the divine couple, the priest attaining divinity in rituals, while the former appears to be the votive *mithuna*, offered to the divinity, in the form of a nude goddess or another goddess of fertility.

The Mahānagnī :

Now, it is interesting to see if the Vedic people knew of any such goddess as the nude one noted above. It is difficult to give an exact copy of the goddess in the Vedic pantheon; but even granting the fact of the absence of idol-worship or terra-cotta offerings in the early Vedic period, the Vedic religion had developed the concept of the "Great naked woman", the Mahānagnī, as early as the period of the Atharvaveda (AV) some hymns from which are known to form part of the Khilahymns of the R̥gveda.¹⁹ At one place in the AV, Mahānagnī (another reading is Mahānaghni, but only at this place) is alluded to in the *mantras* in the context of marriage; and the gods Aśvins are invoked to protect the bride by their power by which

they got sprinkled the genitals of Mahānagnī (AV XIV. 1.36 *yēna mahānaghnyā jaghnam.....abhy aṣicyanta*). In the same context we have some ritual-detail ; for, along with the genitals of Mahānagnī, wine and the dice are also referred to have been sprinkled (Ibid *yena vā surā yena-akṣā abhhy aṣicyanta*). This will indicate that the sprinkling of the genitals of the Mahānagnī, together with the wine and the dice, probably formed some sort of a ritual ; and very probably, it was done for prosperity ; it is the ritual-belief of the propitiation of this naked goddess that further entered the ritual of marriage, as the charm for the happy married life for the bride.²⁰ However, the propitiation of Mahānagnī is not exclusively associated with marriage. It was a much wider practice, and was also associated with the ritual of marriage. The indication is to be found in another context, where we have some more details and a probable ritual. The *mantras* that refer to Mahānagnī are traditionally incorporated in those that are called *āhanasyāḥ* ; and this term has a peculiar connotation as we have noted earlier. They symbolize coitus, and their recitation was indicative of the completion of coitus, when actual coitus was substituted by a purely symbolic one.²¹ There is a slight difference between the *mantras* of the AV and those from the RV-Khila, but the theme is the same ; and we may note the most prominent features thereof : Mahānagnī is told that 'he' is roaring, being unsatisfied ; she should be easy, and lift her thighs (RV-Khila V.22.6, AV XX.836.5 with variant reading). Mahānagnī strides over the mortar and says, "As do they pound you, so do they mine" (RV Ib.7=AV Ib.6). Mahānagnī rinses the "cock" with the wooden peg (RV Ib.8^{ab}=AV Ib.1b. 10^{ab} *mahānagnī kṛkavākum śamyayā pari-dhāvati*) ; and now, the singer says that he does not know, "the beast carries the woman by the head" ! (AV Ib.10^{cd} *ayans na vidma, yo mṛgaḥ śiṛṣṇā harati dhāṇikām* ; RV 8^{cd} has it as, "This bamboo-stick (*tejanam*) we do not know, the woman (*dhāṇikā*) becomes 'endowed with the head' ? (*śiṛṣṇā bhavati dhāṇikā*). Mahānagnī says: "Well is the *membrum virile* entered" ; of the "tree having such fruit may we gain basket after basket (AV Ib. 9=RV Ib.5, with the difference that in RV at ab we have "the organ of the horse has entered").²² Then we have reference to the male partner of Mahānagnī, who is called Mahānagna. This is what is

said : "Mahānagnī runs after Mahānagna, who runs (or, 'rinses' Mahānagna who 'rinses' her, *dhāvantaṃ anu dhāvati*. where the sense seems to be twofold, including the sexual ; cf \sqrt{dhav} , *dha-vaḥ*)(and says), 'These his cows, protect them ; 'enjoy' me ; eat the 'moist one' (AV Ib. 11=RV Ib.9)", where the sense is clear, and the eating of the "moist one" is to be understood with "enjoy me" *yabha mām, addhy 'odanam*), the whole concept being of the sex-act as a charm for the protection of the cows. There are also other references to Mahānagnī in the AV, which do not occur in the RV-Khila : "The *sudeva* presses you, Mahānagnī !" (Ib. 12^a) ; and "The *a-deva* presses you, Mahānagnī !" (14^a) ; and at both the places we have, "The dig of the Great is great" (Ibid^b).²³ At RV and AV, in the same context, there is mention of the "Great *bilva*" and the "Great *udumbara*."

From what we have noted above, the following aspects of Mahānagnī become clear :

- (i) As a single goddess she is the norm for all feminine charm, and is included in the *mantras* to bless the bride ;
- (ii) It is probable that dice and wine are associated with her as ritual-objects ; but the point is not quite certain ;
- (iii) In the sphere of general fertility, as is indicated by the basket (actually "winnowing basket", *śūrpam śūrpam bhajemahi*, cf. the places noted above), she is associated with the sex-act ; and there too, the symbol is that of the mortar (*vanaspati*) and the pestle that pounds the grain in it. But there is no clear indication of the mortar being the symbol of a feminine deity in the Vedic ritual, though, among other things, the mortar-pestle form a *mithuna* ;²⁴
- (iv) Mahānagnī has her male counterpart in this aspect—Mahānagna ; he is described by the tree-symbol (cf. of the 'tree having such fruit,' *īḍṛkphalasya vṛkṣasya*), and is likened to the Bilva and the Udumbara trees ;²⁵ his copulation with Mahānagnī is conducive to the protection of the cows, and also of the field, his copulative 'dig' (*khodanam*) indicating the dig of plough;²⁶

- (v) Mahānagnī is said to be associated with some beast, who is said to carry her by his head ; but there is variant reading in the RV Khila, according to which it appears that there is an indication of some sort of a head-dress (*śīrṣṇā bhavati* at RV ; cf. variant at AV *śīrṣṇā harati dhāṇīkam* ; the meaning is dark) ;
- (vi) Along with the beast (AV Ib. 10^e *yo āmṛgaḥ sirṣṇā harati*), and the partner Mahanagna, she is said to have copulative relationship with *sudeva* and *a-deva*, the words being indicative of erotic sense (cf. RV X.95.14; and Geldner, *Der Rigveda*, III, p.280).

There is room to believe that here we have a multi-aspect personality of Mahānagnī. In the divine aspect she has the divine partner, Mahānagna ; in ritual, Mahānagna becomes, or is represented by, the *sudeva-adeva* on the one hand, and, on the other, the beast. In the former aspect there must be a human ; in the latter a ritual-beast, and it is here that the horse comes in the Horse-sacrifice ; for some of the *mantras* that precedes were actually sung at the Horse-sacrifice ; and, under this latter influence can be explained the reading in RV-Khila “the organ of the horse has entered” [*aśvasyāveśitam pasah*], which we do not have at the AV. The relationship between the “nude goddess” who has her partner [priest or the Zoomorphic] and the Vedic Mahānagnī cannot be exactly established. But the concept behind them is similar. Mahānagnī is undoubtedly the goddess of the procreative faculty ; and she is the divine woman par excellence who would give progeny and full womanhood on the one hand, and, on the other, would give bumper crops ; the latter is her aspect of the earth.²⁷ The former may be compared with the custom of applying sindur to the vagina of the “nude woman” and her worship by women for progeny. The concept of Mahānagnī developed in the latter Vedic period, for, as said above, there is no reference to her in RV proper. In her zoomorph she comes in the context of the purchase of the Soma-shoots, as the cow in the exchange of whom Soma-shoots are purchased, *Ai.Br.* I.27 *tayā mahānagnayā bhūtayā somam rājānam akṛīṇan*]. Here soma is said to be the bull, and Mahānagnī is

the cow ; they form a *mithuna*. (cf. the “nude goddess and the Bull”, from Bhinmal].

Altar-anthropomorphism :

Another important aspect of Mahānagnī, though it is not clearly stated, is the sacrificial altar (*vedi*). The Vedic altar was prepared roughly in the form of a woman, and her male was the fire.²⁸ The altar and the earth are mutually identified,²⁹ and, as the earth and Mahānagnī are on par, as noted above, it is very clear that the altar is Mahānagnī. The *vedi* is described as a young woman well-adorned, having four *kapardas* (dangling intertwined hair, a form of *veṇī*, the latter being flowing hair) and butter-faced, supervising the ritual (RV X. 114.3 *cātuṣkapardā yuvatīḥ supeṣā ghr̥tāpratīkā...*); and she is pictured to be attended by the sacrificer and his wife, the main ritual-*mithuna*, described in a typically sexual term (*vr̥ṣanā-vr̥ṣanau*, “the potent sprinklers”). In this connection it is interesting to pay attention to a terracotta-image found in an altar at Kauśāmbī. It has been identified with the goddess Sinīvālī,³⁰ the Vedic goddess connected with vegetation and fertility and described as having *kaparda* and head-ornaments (Vāj. Sam. XI. 56 *sinīvālī sukarpardā sukurīrā suopaśā*); but it has to be remembered that Sinīvālī is the deity of the first half of the New-moon-day, which is why she is associated with the moon. Hence, it is more proper to take the altar-figurine as the representation of the altar rather than of the Time-goddess-Sinīvālī. Incidentally, she may be compared with the goddess Pañcacūḍā, popular in various parts of India including Rupa, Mathura, Kauśāmbī, Tamluk, Chandraketugarh and so on, i.e. from the Punjab to Bengal. This figure, which has been assigned the 2nd ct. B.C.³¹, is to be differentiated from the altar-goddess in the fact that the latter is said to be all nude but for the sacrificial grass that is strewn to make her partially covered (at least) before the gods and the priests that sit round her.³² On the other hand, Pañcacūḍā is fully covered, though her sexual prominence is seen in her breasts and the hips. She has in her head-dress five āyudhas ; and it is difficult to identify them with the instruments, such as the *sphya* (wooden sword),

that adorn the *vedi* for ritual-use. Moreover, Pañcacūḍā does not have her male counterpart (or partner, better) as the *vedi* (who has the Fire-god); and, hence, she is out of scope for *mithuna*. Now, the question is, can we connect the terracotta-nude, and the terracotta *mithunas* that we have noted above, with the Vedic ritual tradition; and, if we can, how ?

Devakula :

A study of the period of the terracottas shows that they become prominent by about the 3rd ct. B.C., except for the “nude woman” and her prototype from 1200 B.C. Now, there is hardly any plausible proof to establish the making of idols in the Vedic period proper. But, even so, the RV-seers’ imagination had developed a sense of graphic description as is seen from that of the *vedi*, and there are other examples.³³ Along with this, the concept of *mithuna* was fully developed, one such example being that of Māhānagna-Mahānagnī, which is fully exploited later in ritual of the Horse-sacrifice. The presence of the *devakula* is first noticed by the end of the Brāhmaṇa period, and by the beginning of the Sūtra-period (600-200 B.C.)³⁴. The Vedic sacrifice, with its prominence to the fire, had no other *devakula*, but had a variety of *mithunas* : bi-sexual, heterosexual and of the same sex even the gods formed *mithunas* in themselves; the instruments and the utensils formed *mithunas*; the ingredients in the offerings formed *mithunas*; the sacrificer’s wife formed a *mithuna* with almost all masculine objects including the *gharma* vessel and the sacrificial beast (the most prominent being the Horse and its earlier type the virile monkey, the Vṛṣākapi), as we have noted. We have noted that Prajāpati himself was believed to be full of *mithunas*,³⁵ and Prajāpati being only the personification of the sacrifice, the body of the sacrifice was believed to comprise multi-*mithunas*. It is to be taken as a natural consequence, that when the *devakula* came to be accepted in the Vedic tradition these *mithunas* should be transferred to its various parts. The actual practice of ritual-copulation that was known in the Vedic tradition, now will take place before the *devatā* of the *devakula*; and should form a part of the “family” of the “god” (*deva-kula*).³⁶ In a changed cir-

cumstance, now, the actual coitus in the ritual might show a variation which is in the votive offering of *mithunas* in terracotta. It may be noted that by the period of the *devakula* the Vedic Aryans had already reached Bengal.³⁷

Varied Postures and Vedic Sex :

We have noted above that the terracotta *mithunas*, in various postures were found quite early, and that in certain cases they tally with those in the sculptures of quite a late period. As we shall see presently, the *mithunas* in various involved postures are presented on prominent places in the caves and temples, such as Karla, Kondana, Badami (ancient Vatapi), Pattadakal ("The stone of coronation" literally, as the Cālukyas used this place for this purpose), Aihole and other places. Various types of *mithunas* have been noted by scholars, such as man mating with animal, animal mating with a woman, animal mating with a man; two men mating with one woman, two women with one man; *viparīta rata* also called *puruṣāyita*; the oral congress: by man in the case of the woman (*cunnilingus*), by woman in the case of the man (*Fellatio*), by both mutually; the origiastic type and so on.³⁸ In certain types the copulating couple is being helped by others. Many of these postures are recorded by Vātsyāyana; and it is not unlikely that Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra* induced many poses; but the real purpose of depicting them cannot be said to be lessons in erotics. A lot of confusion exists about the main purpose of the *mithuna*-sculpture, some of the points being: (i) To protect the temples from thunder and lightning. But this does not explain the *mithunas* in well protected caves; (ii) To attract the common man to the house of God; (iii) To test the student prior to his entry into the realm of the divine etc.³⁹ But none of these have been accepted by all; and, moreover, the existence of the terracottas belie all these opinions. The votive offering of the terracottas (the probability of which we have noted) in a particular pose might itself have suggested a particular sex-posture in the *Kāmasūtras*, as is the case with the *puruṣāyita* position in one of the terracottas we have noted above. Or, conversely, the votive offerer might have thought of a pose that was typical and already known. At any

rate, the poses are prior to the period of Vātsyāyana ; and though others like Bābhravya and Dattaka, whom Vātsyāyana mentions,⁴⁰ might be taken as the teachers in this field, it is hardly probable that the votive offerer would have thought of showing his up-to-date and scientific knowledge in his offering. The point is that the treatise-writers might have themselves been indebted to the offerers, though the elaboration of the former on this subject helped the sculptures in the later period (10 ct. A.D.) achieve intricate designs. Fellatio, for example, was present in terracotta in the 2nd ct. B.C.,⁴¹ though in the 9th and the 11th century A.D. it developed sculptural varieties. It is not necessary to go into the details of this aspect, as we restrict ourselves to the Vedic period.

The main purpose of the enactment of the sex-act was the gain of fertility in the Vedic period, as is the case with many other tribes. The Brāhmaṇa texts, as has been noted, used this motif extensively : and the main strain was to form a procreative *mithuna* (*mithunam prajananam*, at various places). Two important types in this respect are : the symbolic coitus between an animal (horse and the monkey) and the woman, and between man and a woman. The first was seen in the Brāhmaṇic Horse-sacrifice (the monkey type being lost in the early Vedic period itself),⁴² and the other was practised in the Mahāvratā. In this connection it is interesting to note a few sculptures from Bellagavi from the Shimoga district of Karnataka.⁴³ In one of these we see, in a panel, a monkey ready to copulate with a woman ; he is half bent in position ; the legs of the woman, lying on her back, are flanked to his thigh ; the woman is lying on the stretched legs of another woman who is sitting and is holding her which is a case of supported coitus also ; this is in the left side of the panel. In the middle are seen a couple of women, one facing to her right to the *mithuna* in the left corner, the other (the face is semi-broken) has her left hand on her vagina ; to her left, and on the right corner of the panel, are two monkeys in a copulative posture, the front one (who is by the side of the woman) trying to take support of the woman (again the supported coitus (see Plate IV—A). This type is not seen at other sites, and seems to be peculiar to Bellagavi. The monkey motif, as such, is faintly seen elsewhere,⁴⁴ but this type is unique to this place.

Now, it is to be remembered that in the 1st ct.B.C. the Sātavāhanas ruled the southern region of India including Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra ; they claimed to be Brāhmaṇas ; Gautamīputra Sātakarṇī calls himself “the unique Brāhmaṇa” ; Śrī Sātakarṇī performed two Horse-sacrifices, defeated the Śuṅgas and ruled over Malva and other portions of North India.⁴⁵ In the wake of the practice of *mithuna* sculptures then gaining ground, it is only expected that the Sātavāhanas would give impetus to Vedic themes. The Bellagavi sculptures are said to be of the late medieval period ; but the point, probably, requires reconsideration ; or, at least, the older influence could not be denied. If this is accepted the guess is whether they indicate the scene of the Vṛṣākapi-Indrāṇī hymn (mating of the Monkey and the woman personifying Indrāṇī) ? The hymn has also the female monkey, Vṛṣākapāyī. Interestingly, in another sculpture from the same place we see a horse-like beast mating with a woman, who is lying on her back with legs folded. In a sculpture from Khajuraho (10th ct. A.D.) we see an aristocratic person (King ?) copulating with a mare (in an obvious reversal of the old theme).⁴⁶ In yet another sculpture from Bellagavi⁴⁷ we have a *puruṣāyīta* motif in the middle on a cot ; on the left is a standing intertwined human *mithuna* ; and on the right is a standing *mithuna*, the face of the man is blurred while that of the woman is of a mare (Plate IV—3.). In these sculptures there is no indication of the season, but in another one we have the indication of vegetation. In this sculpture we have the cot on which there is a regular copulation of the humans ; on the left a man is having a standing copulative pose with a woman who is standing with her back to him ; and in the middle we see a couple (*mithuna*) of rams, standing on fours and facing each other ; and between them there is a jackal, standing on his hind legs. At the two sides of this central ram-jackal depiction there are trees with flowers and plantain-trees.⁴⁸ At a sculpture from the Limboji Mātā temple (Delmel, Dist. Mehsana)⁴⁹ we have the horse-faced man standing in coitus with a woman in the left corner, while on the right is seen an ascetic in standing copulation with a woman. These scenes cannot be supported from Vāstsyāyana, who only mentions “mating *like* the animals,”⁵⁰ and the animals do not mate both on two legs standing like men. Inhe-

rent in such sculptures is the idea of symbolic (and not actual) copulation, as in the case with the Vedic the belief is that certain animals represent the divine virility (and generally, the sun). The monkey and the horse clearly figured in the Vedic rite. The horse-sacrifice was popular in practice and in legends. Writers on Erotics were, obviously, influenced by the ritual-sex and added more animals for *vaicitrya* (variety) in the *citra-rata*, as they termed it. The theme of the Horse-mare divinity is the oldest in the Indian zoomorphism paralleled only by that of Bull-cow. The Saranyū-Vivasvān myth is an example in this case, of which the latter aspect is the Hayagrīva-*viṣṇu* (horse-headed *Viṣṇu*) from. In an interesting legend in the *Skanda P.* (VI.81.11 ; 84.15, 19), a Brāhmaṇa girl who (unknowingly) sleeps on the bed of *Viṣṇu*, is cursed by Lakṣmī, in jealousy, to be born mare-faced ; but *Viṣṇu* pacifies Lakṣmī, and it is agreed that the mare-face will be only for one birth, and that in that birth when she is born with the mare-face she will be the sister of the Kṛṣṇa *avatāra* of *Viṣṇu*. As she is born thus, Kṛṣṇa and Balārāma take her to Brahmā, who restores her original form, and renames her as Subhadrā.⁵¹ It will be pertinent to note and appreciate, that Subhadrā comes as a symbolic name in the Horse-sacrifice as the female-mate of the Horse, whom the queen or the ritual-woman is portrayed as substituting or impersonating.⁵² The Subhadrā at the *Sk.P.* noted above is also the fertility-goddess.⁵³ Thus, the equation is : Subhadrā = fertility = mare. This compares also with the mare-king copulation. We may note that the worship of Subhadrā is enjoined in the month of Māgha, and on the 12th day, which comes at about the end of the year and is adjacent to the spring. It was also in the month of Phālguna (bright half) that the Horse-sacrifice was performed. Cases of animal-coitus, or mixed human-animal coitus in the sculpture need not be referred to the *citrarata* of the *Kāmasūtra* where the humans *act as animals*, but to the spring and fertility rituals such as Mahāvratā, where we have “copulation of creatures” (*Aiṣ.Ār V.1.5 bhūtānām ca mithunam*), where the word *bhūtānām* does not restrict it to one particular type of creatures, but to mixed copulation or purely human or purely animal, the whole idea being general fructification and fullness of coitus (cf. *prajananam* ; and *mithunasya sarvatvāya*).

One of the most conspicuous motifs in the so-called erotic sculptures is the "supported coitus", where the parties are shown as being helped by others. From this point, it is necessary to view the *mantras* and the acts at the Horse-sacrifice again. Apart from the fact that there are one hundred maidens of each of the four queens in the event of the sexual ritual of the horse and the queen, as is evinced from the ritual as it appears in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII.5.2.2ff), an earlier ritual shows a difference, as indicated from the RV-Khila, AV and the Vāj. Sam.: "When the priests in the 'playful mood' pressed the male organ and embraced from all sides the woman, she was visible (only) at the thighs (as a woman)..." (Vāj. Sam. XXIII.29 *yad devāso lalāmagum praviṣṭīminam āviṣuḥ* and Uvaṭa, *praviṣṭīminam, praveśya viṣṭabhya ca; āviṣuḥ, āliṅgana-cumbanādi-bhiḥ nigrhñīyuḥ nārīm*; see Plate III). This explains the second type of *gauyūthika* mentioned by Vātsyāyana as being current among the Bāhlikas (II.6.43) and some of the orgy-types in the sculptures. We have noted earlier that in the *mantras* (called *āhanasyāḥ* in the tradition), the mention of the horse is not uniform (see note 22); and this is supported from the passage noted just above; for it is rather impossible for the priests (! or, actually the men participating in the original folk-ritual) to clutch the ritual-woman when the horse (though ritually killed earlier) is also in the picture. In the *Brāhmaṇa* ritual, the horse and the queen are made to lie on a golden disc, and the priests are away chanting the *āhanasyāḥ*, which obviously shows a later version of the ritual. In the older version, originally a human couple acted, together with other men (cf. *devāsaḥ* plural, "the ritually divine men), the woman being, most probably, a prostitute (a common woman); and the horse came later. The other *mantras* also indicate the action on the part of the copulating man, rather than an un sentient animal. With this detail and the expression *bhūtānām maithunam* there should be no doubt that the seed of the orgiastic motif lies in the Vedic period and in the ritual (which had already drawn upon the then folk-tradition) of the Spring festival to which the horse was added at the Horse-sacrifice. In most of the orgiastic sculptures a cot with the copulating couple figures in a prominent place,⁵⁴ in the centre or in a corner. With the *mantra* noted above we have a clear

mention of the cot in the *mantras* at the Horse-sacrifice (Ibid 24, 25 *mātā ca te pitā ca te agram vṛkṣasya adhi-rohataḥ*, where *vṛkṣa* stands for the cot “made of wood”, according to the tradition). Now the cot could never suit the horse. The dialogues (with the sexy *mantras*) are between the priests and the queens and the other girls (who speak for the queens, and also with a girl who speaks for herself). This would mean that the main couple must have been human and different (though it was never shown later, and was indicated only through the *mantras*) from those who recite the *mantras* “your Father and your Mother rise onto the cot” etc. Now let us come to an important detail. The actual coitus position is as follows; (in addition to the one indicated in the *mahāmithuna*, we might say, on the cot) :

“Cause her to be poised aloft, as one carrying a heavy weight on the mountain; may her central part widen, as if winnowing (grain) in the cool wind” (Ibid 26).

The retort of the women to the priest is similar, but with the masculine usage. It has to be noted that this is the position in respect of only one of the queens. The position has coitus in view; and yet the *madhya* is to be raised as if one were lifting a heavy weight. This would mean that the man is standing, bending a little; and, in this position, has coitus-position. How could the woman be? Not lying on her back! She has to be raised in such a way that her *madhya* comes up to the organ of the man and she has to look like a winnowing basket throwing grain out. This could not be, unless she stands with back up with her buttocks to the man who holds the part, and supports her body with her hands and feet, all on the ground. This is the *dhainuka*⁵⁵ of the *Kāmasūtra*, which is different from the one noted above. That one was for the Parivṛktā queen; this one for the Vāvātā; hence the difference also, in the poses. This would indicate the zeal to show varieties, with the religious belief in profusion through variety leading to greater and varied procreation and prosperity. The *dhainuka*,⁵⁶ with the motif of attendance and the *saṅghāṭaka* is common in sculptures, where the element of ritual is indicated by male parties

having umbrellas.⁵⁷ These sculptures cannot be taken as indicating simply aristocratic sex-usage; they have to be taken as the revival of ancient motifs of holy ritual-sex; and the fact of their being depicted at temples and caves should leave no doubt about it. The Vedic examples noted above testify to the plurality in coitus. That this continued later is indicated by a practice in the Mahāvratā, where we read, “Those who perform the yearly coitus (*samvatsaram upayanti*) get devoid of *mithuna*; so the two (the Māgadha and the prostitute) sexually unite; thus, they all do not get devoid of *mithuna* (*Āpastamba Ś.S: XXI.19.6*). This is the continuation of the earlier rite where the two copulated (*Jai. Br. 405 māgadham ca pumps-calūm ca dakṣiṇe vedy 'ante mithunīkārayanti*, which might indicate the supported coitus; *kārayanti*, causal). The *sūtra*-passages subtly indicates the old Vedic general practice of multiple posing of coitus in ritual in the spring, and forbids it, allowing only the Māgadha and the courtesan.^{57a} Earlier, the *Kāṣhaka Sam. (XXXIV.5)* has the plural, “they perform the coitus” (*mithunam caranti*), which indicates the old tradition of plural and multiple coitus. There is an interesting indication; and, though nothing certainly can be said about the mode, we may note it. The Brahmācārīn at the Mahāvratā abuses the harlot: “Fie upon thee O Pumsāli, you ‘washer of the male-organ’ !” (*Drāhyāyana Ś.S. XI. 3.9 pumsāli, puruṣasya śiśna-prañejani*). May it be a bold step to suggest that here we have an indication of the *fellatio*, so common in sculptures? This motif was known also in the 2nd ct.B.C. (on the terracottas of Chandraketugarh), and later got popular in the 9th cent. A.D. and later. The point is, how could a woman “wash” the male-organ. Not in coitus proper. There is no indication of, and propriety of, water; and yet she “washes”. The surmise of “mouth-wash” cannot be avoided. The *Kāmasūtra* censured this practice, which indicates that it was prevalent in its time. As we have noted, the period of the *Sūtras* is from 600 to 200 B.C., which corresponds to the terracotta noted above. It is not improbable that the *Sūtra* period employed this practice in the Mahāvratā; but the erotic treatise, which copied others from the ritual, censured it.

The erotic sculptures innovated many things; but, the source

seems to be Vedic rituals, which were themselves influenced by folk-customs of sexy songs and rituals.

The Indian erotic sculptures show the innovation of many details that answer also the development of art. But the motif of sanctified sex goes to the Vedic period, with the simple *mithunas* formed from the various sacrificial ingredients accompanied by the ritual-coitus varieties. In the later period the *mithunas* adorned temple-gates and various other places, in a variety of poses, miniature and huge, the Śākta-cult also adding to the themes. Tāntric influence may not be denied; but, it should be borne in mind that Tāntric practices never allowed open depiction of coitus for fear of complete ruin.⁵⁸ Moreover, it has to be remembered that in hardly any sculpture do we have presentation of any other *ma-kāra* of the five, except *maithuna*; nor are there any notable Tāntric designs, though they were certainly known by the 10th century A.D. About the Śākta motif of close embrace, and the Ardhanārīśvara, which is seen from about the fourth century A.D.⁵⁹ or even slightly earlier, it may be pointed out that the motif imitates the Indra-Indrāṇī motif or, actually the 'Man-in-the-eye' motif (one of the men being the woman) that had already developed in the Brāhmaṇa period⁶⁰ as seen in an earlier chapter. This may be taken to be the germ of the Yogic concept of dualism in one unit,⁶¹ which, probably, lies at the back of the fellatio-cunnilingus motif in one unit, when transferred to the sphere of sex. The depiction of the *mithuna* in design, as different from the act in ritual, is already known from the AV and the other Vedic texts; and this was for the growth of the cattle. Mithunas of this type were carved out on the ears of the cows by means of a heated blade.⁶² These were not poses involving *maithuna*, for there is no evidence to that effect; but they may be compared with the simple *mithunas* that adorn shrines and even the orthodox Hinayāna Buddhistic caves, which only shows the popular belief in the efficacy of the *mithuna*-figures. We have, rather, an interesting reference to one god flanked by two goddesses in the RV, where it is said that Indra holds Heaven and Earth as the god Bhaga holds two auspicious girls.⁶³ Whether this indicates a pictorial design is not clearly attested, but it gives an idea of a variant *mithuna*, and has a subtle parallel in stone.⁶⁴

NOTES

1. Kanwar Lal, *The Cult of Desire*, Asia Press Delhi, 2nd ed., 1966; Vidya Prakash, *Khajuraho*, Taraporewala, Bombay, 1967; P. Thomas, *Kāmakalpa*, 23th ed., 1963; Same author, *Incredible India*, Taraporewala, Bombay, 1966; Rustam J. Mehta, *Koṅārḱ Sun Temple of Love*, Bombay, 1969; Philip Rowson, *Erotic Art of the East*, New York 1968; among others who make casual remarks, Mulk Raj Anand, "Plastic Situation", *Marg*, Bombay, Vol. XVIII-ii, March 1965, pp. 41ff; earlier the same author, "The Lesser Vehicle, The Greater Vehicle and the worshipper of many Gods" *Marg*, XVI-iii, June, 1963; Amita Ray, "Sculptures of Nagarjunkonda", *Marg*, XVIII-ii, March 1965; also Stella Kramrisch, *Unknown in India, Ritual Art in Tribe, and Village*, Philadelphia, 1968; Devangana Desai, *Erotic Sculptures of India*, Tata MacGraw-Hill, New Delhi, 1965; also Eliky Zannas and Jeannine Auboyer, *Khajuraho*, Mouton & Co., The Hague, 1960; Richard Lennox and Harry Baines *The Eye of Love*, London, 1976.
2. O. C. Gangoli, "The Mithuna in Indian Art", *Rupam* 1925; also "Soma notes on Mithuna in Indian Art", *Rupam*, 1926.
3. Devangana Desai, *op. cit.*, Plate 1.
4. *Ibid*, Pl. 10. A normal copulative position like this is rather impossible; and it is impossible to reach orgasm in this position; there should be no doubt, hence, of the pose being a ritual-pose, especially when it is seen first on the terracotta which appears to have votive value. Kanwar Lal thinks it to indicate the male of the 'horse' type and the woman to be of the 'deer' type, which is unnecessary.
5. Kanwar Lal, Pl. 61; for Khajuraho, where the pose is seen in the Jagadamba temple, see Vidya Prakash, *op. cit.*, Pl. 92; at the Modhera sun-temple the man is in a seating position.
6. Vidya Prakash, p. 179; cf. *Kāmasūtra* II.6.36.
7. 2nd ed. B. C., Dasgupta, S. N., *Hist. of Sanskrit. Lit.*, Calcutta, 1947, P. 645;758.
8. Devangana Desai, Pl. 7; for orgiastic, Pl. 73; very common.
9. D. Desai, Pl. 11; cf. the pose from the Modhera sun-temple, which, along with the *avalambita*, appears to be on par with, and a phase of the *puruṣāyita*; for, the initiative in both types is with the woman, who has to move.
10. Kanwar Lal, Pl. 41;
11. D. Desai, Pl. 12.
12. *Ibid*, Pl. 18; Kanwar Lal, Pl. 2.
13. Desai, Pl. 17; Kanwar Lal Pl. 1.
14. Kanwar Lal, Pl. 3.
15. D. H. Gordon, in *Antiquity*, 1937, XI, P. 74; Gordon speaks, however, about the terracotta *mithunas* from Taxila; Desai, p. 14.

16. H. D. Sankalia, "The Nude Goddess or 'the Shameless Woman' in Western Asia, India and South-Eastern Asia", *Aribus Asiae*, XXIII—2, 1960; for a brief criticism of his view on the Roman origin (P. 111 f.) see Dange, *Vedic Concept of 'Field' and the Divine Fructification*, Bombay, 1971, P. 4.
17. H. D. Sankalia, *Illustrated London News*, Aug., 1971, P. 42.
18. D. Desai, P. 12.
19. See Dange, *op.cit.* PP. 68-82.
20. Ibid. for dice-playing in Vedic ritual, see *Vedic Index*, under *akṣa*.
21. We may refer again to *Ai. Br.* VI. 10 *āhanasyād vai retah sicyate*.
22. The RV has *aśvasya āveśitam pasah*; but the AV does not have the word *aśvasya* at all. it has *svasāveśitam*, and has the *svastyāveśitam* along with others. The word *svasty 'āveśitam* would mean "entered; hail!" indicating auspiciousness. Probably, this is the original reading; this would also show that the horse was introduced at a later stage, or indicated a variant of this ritual.
23. We may compare the *saṅghāṭaka* type of Vātsyāyana, II.6.40, *miśrī-kṛtasadbhāvābhyām dvābhyām saha saṅghāṭakam ratam*; cf. also v. 41, *bahvībhiḥ ca saha gauyūthikam*, also 41,43, where one man and more than one women, or the reverse is indicated; this obviously, was with a common woman; for sculptures see Kanwar Lal Pl. 89, man flanked by two women; this is from Koṅārka; for a woman and two men see D. Desai, Pl. 149, where the woman is bending in the *dhainuka*, (like a cow) position, and a man stands on either side; D. Desai mis-spells as *goyūthika* at all places; the fact that these men have umbrellas show that it is not a natural pose, and indicates ritual holiness; see also Pl. 146; the ascetic figures do not indicate so much the Tāntric rites, as variation in the old motif of the ascetic and the courtesan, for which see Gonda J., "Ascetics and Courtesans", Adyar Lib. Bu., Jubilee Vol., XXV-1-4, 1961; Tāntrika practices could never be in the open, cf. *Paraśurāma Kalpasūtra*, I.12 *tair arcanam guptyā prakāṭyān nirayaḥ*; *Śaktisaṅgamatārā* XXXVI.24 *suguptam kaulikācāram anu-grhṇanti devatāḥ. . . nāśayanti prakāśanaiḥ*: For the instance of the prostitute motif in literature cf. *Nilamata* P. (6th-7th ct. A. D.), spring revelry V. 675-78 *pumścaltsahitair neyā krīḍā mārgeṣu sā niśā* cf. also *Kādambarī* ed. M. R. Kale, Delhi, 1968, P. 340 *vasanta-kṛīḍinā janena. . . vrddha dāstvivāha-prāptiviḍambanena* etc.
24. However, in ritual all things were deified; in that context even the mortar and the pestle become divine.
25. These trees were auspicious; and the sacrificial pole (*yūpa*) was prepared from the *bilva* (*bailvo yūpaḥ*, *Taitt. Sam.* II.1.8.1,2); for sanctity and other ritual—use see *Vedic Index*; *Bilva* came to be regarded as the tree of Laksmī, RV—Khillā II.6.6 *tava vṛkṣo 'atha bilvaḥ*; its fruits were believed to drive away distress and A-lakṣmī (Ibid); the Vāmana P. has *bilvo lakṣmyāḥ kare 'bhavat*; the *udumbara* also has fruits; and it was very auspicious in rituals; a pole from it was used

- as a support for the sacrificial pandal, *Sat. Br.* IV.6.78. etc.
26. Dange, *Vedic Concept*. . . pp. 90 ff.
 27. Cf. *Nīlamata P.* where the goddess Kaśmīrā (=Kaśmīra Country) is said to menstruate on the 5th of the bright half of Phālguna. Hence agriculture should start thereafter—vv. 660-61 *tataḥ prabhṛti Kaśmīrā ṛtusnātā dvijottamā garbham grhṇāti-ataḥ kāryaḥ kṛṣyārambhaḥ tataḥ param.*
 28. See ch. 3 *supra*
 29. *Sat. Br.* I.2.5.9; Taitt. Br. I.6.1.5 etc. earlier RV, I.164.34, 35.
 30. G. R. Sharma, *Excavations at Kauśāmbī* (1957-59) Instt. of Archaeology, Allahabad, 1960, P. 99, 106; D. Desai, *op. cit.* P. 13.
 31. D. Desai, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*; also Pl. 3.
 32. *Sat. Br.* I.3.3.8; see ch. 3. *supra*.
 33. Description of Uṣas and other gods.
 34. Kane P. V., *Hist. of Dharmasāstra* Vol. II-i, P. XI.
 35. *Sat. Br.* IX.4.1.3. see ch. 3 *supra*.
 36. The terracottas mentioned above have not been associated with any *deva-kula* (temple) as such; but, it is also difficult to find and confirm the *devakula* sites of the ancient period. The early *devakulas* appear to be part of the dwelling; for example, various *deva-sthānas* are mentioned in the *āśrama* of Agastya, *Rām. Aranya*, 12.17-21; these cannot be 'temples' with brick and of a lasting nature.
 37. *Baudhāyana Dh. S.* I.1.14; *Vedic Index*, under 'Vaṅga'.
 38. Vidya Prakash, *op. cit.* pp. 151ff; D. Desai, *op. cit.* pp. 8; 72-ff.
 39. For a brief notice of the motives, Vidya Prakash, *op. cit.*, P. 153ff; D. Desai, *op. cit.*, P. 84ff; for the point of test, Vidya Prakash, *op. cit. loc. cit.* The Vedic ritual of Vṛṣākapi was a fertility charm and evil-destroyer in one, see Dange, *Vedic Concept* Ch. III.
 40. I.1.10 *bābhavyaḥ pāñcālaḥ sam cikṣepa*; 11 *dattakaḥ pṛthak cakāra*; the tradition is from Nandī (when Śiva and Pārvati were in the *mahamatihuna* and he was placed at the gate) to Śvetaketu, the son of Uddalaka (Ibid, 8,9)—*aud dālaki*. The same name occurs in the Upaniṣads (*Kauṣītaki* I.1; *Bṛhadār.*VI.1.1) and in the *Śat. Br.* XI.2.7.12;—5.4.18; also *Kauṣītaki Br.* 26.4; he seems to be rather unorthodox as he allows the initiates to eat honey forbidden for them, *Sat. Br.* XI.5.4.18; acc. to one account he is said to have established the institution of marriage (Mahābh. I.122); Bābhavya is mentioned in the *Āit. Br.* (VII.1), and in the *Jai Up. Br.* (III.41.1.IV.17.1). This would indicate the association of these two with sacrificial ritual; and, if they are also the authorities on the Kāmāsāstra, it is not unlikely that ritual-sex would influence their aphorisms; however, their aphorisms regarding *Kāma* are not available.
 41. D. Desai, p. 75. Its condemnation by the *Kāmasūtra* (II.9.22 *tad etat tu na kāryam*; and earlier, 12 *karāvalambitam oṣṭhāyor upari vinyastam apavidhya mukham vidhunuyāt*; and 13 *oṣṭhābhyam avapīḍha*). It is interesting to note a ritual-abuse by the Brahmacārin to

- the prostitute, “*puruṣasya śiśna-prañejanī*” discussed later. The practice is known even later, *Yājñ. Sm.* II.293 *ayonau*, and *Vijñāneśvara mukhādaḥ*. The *Yājñ. Sm.* is about 4th ct. A. D.
42. Dange, *Vedic Concept*—pp. 16-20; 59ff; also by the same author, *Cultural Sources from the Veda*, Bharatiya V. B., Bombay, 1977, p. 87f.
 43. I am indebted to Prof. N. S. V. Rao, V. J. T. I., Bombay, for translating a Kanarese article on this topic, from *Karmavira*, Hubli, Weekly, 12-9-76.
 44. See Kanwar Lal, *op. cit.*, Pl. 28; Pl. 97; at both as a third party, rather mischievous.
 45. See Amita Ray, “Sculptures of Nagarjunakonda”, *Marg* XVIII-ii, March, 1965, pp. 15ff.
 46. Vidya Prakash, *op. cit.* Pl. 102; cf. the ancient Irish custom acc. to which the king entered into matrimonial relationship with the mare, J. Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View*, E. J. Brill, Amsterdam, 1961, p. 41.
 47. Kanwar Lal, *op. cit.* Pl. 41; D. Desai, Pl. 100; this is at the Tripurāntaka temple.
 48. Kanwar Lal, Pl. 44.
 49. *Ibid.*, Pl. 35.
 50. *Kāmasūtra*, II.6.37-41, which are termed *citra-rata*.
 51. *Skanda P.* VI.84.4ff; esp. 15 *eṣā subhadrā nāma vikhyātā*.
 52. It comes at the *Maitt. Sam.* III.12.20 *śasasty, śvakaḥ subhadrikām kāmṣilavāsiniṃ*; the *Taitt. Sam.* has *kāmṣilavāsini*, but no *Subhadrā*; the *Vāj Sam.* 23.18; the alternate is *subhagā*; the words indicate ritual—sanctity; cf. *Vedic Index*. Though the account is from Hāṭakeśvara, in Saurāṣṭra (Nāgarakhaṇḍa) the names get connected with the temple at Puri, which has the tradition of erotic figures; and there was regular contact between these and other places; cf. *Brahma P.* 43; 44: Story of Indradyumna, the king of Avantī, who went to the *muktida kṣetra* in Utkala (Puri) and performed the Horse-sacrifice; built a temple and installed the images of the gods mentioned above; cf. also *Skanda P.* II.2.6ff for about the same account.
 53. *Skanda P.* VI.84.18,19 : *yā nārī patinā tyaktā vandhyā vā...bhaviṣyati suputrāḍhyā subhagā vā sukhānvitā*.
 54. Kanwar Lal, Pl. 38; 44 109; D. Desai, Pl. 65; 77; 100 etc.
 55. The RV indicates certain curious poses in one place, where a young girl is involved; probably she is a ritual-gift, and is described as : *ā-gadhītā* and *parigadhītā*, which show two different poses, and Sāyana comments that in the first case the initiative is with the man, in the other it is with the woman; if so, is there an indication of the *puruṣāyita* here? The simile is to be noted; how held? *kaśīka iva*; *kaśīkā* is said to be ichneumon (female) or a cat (*Vedic Index*). If that be so, does it indicate the *citra-rata* of the beast-type?—the norm of which is the *dhainuka*! She is said to be *yāduri*, which is a sexy term, and

may be compared with *tādurī*, said of the female-frog that is invoked to release rain-waters (AV IV.15.14). The female-frog here may be compared, in concept, with the Egyptian Frog-goddess called 'Baubo' by M. A. Murray, "Female Figures" J. R. A. I., Vol. 64, 1934; the "Nude Goddess" mentioned above has the same posture; see D. Desai, *op. cit.* fig. on P. 12.

56. *Kāmasūtra* II.6.37; *gauyūthika* is "one with many"; with the *dhainuka* ie. a woman's buttocks to man, cf. RV—Khila, V.22.3. *yabhyamānā vinamyate*, "is curved (like a bamboo)."
57. This has been referred to above. see note 23.
- 57a. For old practices being given up cf. Śāṅkha Ś. S. XVII.6.1.2 *utsannam na kāryam*.
58. See note 23 above. Vidya Prakash suggests some of the poses to be Tantric (*op. cit.* P. 186); so does Kanwar Lal, though his approach is not studious (p. 89). D. Desai believes that Tantrism was one of the major factors in the case of the depiction of orgiastic *maithuna* (P. 145), and yet the depiction of sex, in her opinion, was not of the pure Tantrika nature; they were fake Tantric for worldly gain (p. 201).
59. Cf. Kālidāsa, *Raghuvamśa*, I.1 *vāgarthāviva samprktau...pārvatīpaameśvarau; Mālavikāgnimitram, (nāndī) I.1 kāntāsammīśra-dehaḥ*.
60. Śat. Br. X.5.2.8 *tasyetan mithunam yo 'yam savve akṣan puruṣaḥ; ardhm u ha etad ātmanaḥ yan mithunam...*; and 9 *sa eṣa eva indraḥ yo, yam dakṣine akṣan puruṣaḥ; atha iyam indrāṇī (yah savve) tau ha hṛdayasya akāśam pratyetya mithunībhavataḥ*.
61. This pose is not attested by the *Kāmasūtra*; we may compare the *yava-yuma* poses, where Śiva and Śakti are shown in close coitus, a furtherance of the *āliṅgana* pose (for example the Hevajra and the Śakti nude embrace; P. Thomas, *Incredible India*, Pl. 98); the idea comes close to the Chinese Yang-Yin complex, which was introduced by Wang Ch'ung by the 1st ct. A. D., and was represented in a figure (a circle divided by a reverse S-sign and the half figures now appearing like two tailed creatures, the face of one to the tail of the other, with a dot for the eye) by Chu Tun by the 11 ct. A. D. see *En. Rel. and Ethics* IV P. 140.
62. AV VI.141.2 *lohiteṇa svadhitiṇā mithunam karnayoḥ kṛdhi*.
63. RV I.62.7 *bhago na mene*; on this point see Dange, "Menā—eka Mithuna-saṅketa" (Marathi language), *Annual of the Vidarbha Samsodhana Maṇḍala*, 1976, Nagpur.
- The Vedic concept and belief in the making of the *mithuna* signs is seen in the later literature where we have them on the door-jamb; cf. Agni P. 104.30, where, along with the guards we have *mithunaiḥ pādarvaṅgābhiḥ śakhāśeṣaṇ vibhūṣayet*; this motif is very common in sculpture.
64. See note 23.

PLATE I



(ch. ५) प्राञ्चं चतुष्पादि-जासीनम् अभ्याह्वयते ।
तस्मान् प्राञ्चो भूत्वा चतुष्पादे रेतः विज्वन्ति । (ऐ. ४. ५. ३८)
cf. Dhainuka , of the Kāmasāstra

Line-sketch by—G. Bhavsar

PLATE II



(Ch. IV) नेष्टुरुपस्थ आसीनो भक्षयति, पत्नीभाजनं वै
मेष्टा, अग्निः पत्नीषु रेतो दधाति । (ऐत. ब्रा. ६.३)

Line-sketch by—G. Bhavsar

PLATE III



(Ch. XI) यदेवासो जनाम्सुं प्रविष्टीभिर्जमाविषुः। (Vāj. Sam. 23-29)
cf. Mahidhara & Uvaja
cf. The orgiastic Sculptures.

Line-sketch by—G. Bhavsar

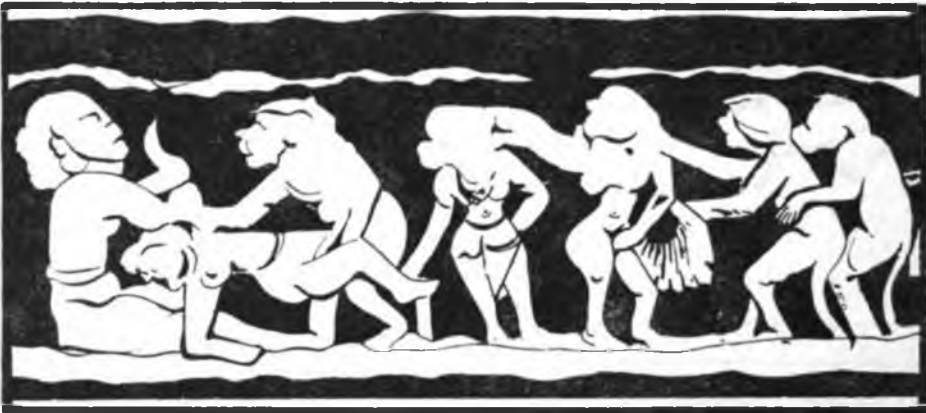
PLATE IV—A



From Tirupakesa temple Belgamvi.
cf. श्रुतानां च मैथुनम्. (एन.आर.५.१-६)

ॐ

PLATE IV—B



From Tirupakesa temple Belgamvi.
cf. श्रुतानां च मैथुनम्. (एन.आर.५.१-६)

ॐ

Line-sketch by—G. Bhavsar

PLATE V



Dhainuka ; ascetic-prostitute.(Khajuraho)
cf. पुरुषस्य शिश्ननिर्णोजनी (दास्या.मौ.सूत्र ५.३.१)(See middle)

Mark the act of the seated woman

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