

ARTICLE IV.

EARLY RELIGION OF THE HINDUS.

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FIRST PART OF SECOND PAPER.¹

THE Rig-Veda contains over one thousand hymns. If tradition be ignored, they may be grouped under about one hundred and twenty-five different heads. These groups, however, will differ widely from one another, and over half of them will contain but a single hymn. Of these single hymns, twenty, or about one-fourth, have to do with two or more subjects; and, of the twenty, fifteen have subjects which appear elsewhere in the collection, either singly or in other combinations. For example, there is a single hymn to 'Savitṛ-and-Pūṣan'; but there are about a dozen to each of them separately, and the latter also occurs in other combinations. Furthermore, there are three

¹SYMBOLS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES.

- AB. Abel Bergaigne, *La Religion Védique*. Paris, 1878-83.
 AJP. *American Journal of Philology*. Baltimore.
 B. A. Barth, *The Religions of India*. Authorized Translation by J. Wood. Boston, 1882.
 CB. Chr. Bartholomae, *Handbuch der Altiranischen Dialekte*. Leipzig, 1883.
 D. S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. New York, 1891.
 EB. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Ninth Edition. New York.
 EH. E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*. Boston, 1895.
 G. Hermann Grassmann, *Rig-Veda*. Leipzig, 1876-77.
 J. F. B. Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*. London, 1896.
 JAOS. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. New Haven.
 JHS. *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. London.

or four hymns to single deities whose praise is sung in other hymns in connection with other deities, and there are a number of instances in which the subject of a single hymn appears at least once elsewhere in the Rik; so that the entire Veda contains less than fifty hymns which can fairly be said to stand alone. Their importance varies. Some have been thought to be secular,¹ and less than one-

- JR. J. Rhys, *The Hibbert Lectures*, 1886. London, 1888.
 K. Adolf Kaegi, *The Rigveda*. Translated by R. Arrowsmith. Boston, 1886.
 KB. K. Brugmann, *Comparative Grammar of the Indo-Germanic Languages*, Vol. i. Translated by J. Wright. New York, 1888.
 MM. F. Max Müller, *India: What Can It Teach Us?* New York, 1883.
 MM2. F. Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*. London, 1892.
 MM3. F. Max Müller, *Physical Religion*. London, 1891.
 O. H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*. Berlin, 1894.
 PAOS. *Proceedings of the American Oriental Society*. New Haven.
 SBE. *Sacred Books of the East*. Edited by F. Max Müller. Oxford.
 S&J. Schrader and Jevons, *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*. London, 1890.
 T. C. P. Tiele, *Outlines of the History of Religion*. Translated by J. E. Carpenter. Fifth Edition. London, 1892.
 T&M. Tsountas and Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age*. Boston, 1897.
 VH. V. Henry, *A Short Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*. Authorized Translation by R. T. Elliott. New York, 1890.
 W. W. D. Whitney, *A Sanskrit Grammar*. Boston, 1891.

¹This is to be doubted. The "Frog-hymn," vii. 103, thought to be humorous (K., pp. 81-82, and EH., pp. 14, 100-101), belongs by tradition to Parjanya and is a rain-charm (K., note 342 end, and M. Bloomfield, in JAOS., xvii., 1896, pp. 173-179); the "Dice-song," x. 34 (K., pp. 83-84, and MM3., pp. 77-79), from its closing stanza (14), has the appearance of being a charm against gambling; and it is likely that the other "secular" hymns are of a similar nature,—they are mostly late,—although the application, as in the case of ix. 112 (MM3., pp. 76-77), may not always be clear. The Rik is a 'collection,' and the authors of its hymns were probably widely separated in both time and space. While it is not surprising, therefore, that it should include, besides hymns to gods of various kinds,—great gods, inferior gods, local gods, half forgotten gods, and gods just coming into popular favor,—other hymns whose connection with religion is not clear; the indications all seem to show that its poetry was, without exception, regarded by the collectors as sacred, and that none of it was ever looked upon as mere literature.

third of them can be regarded as referring to deities at all.

Quite a number of hymns have for their subject a compound, known as a *dvaṁdva*, 'pair, couple.'¹ In these hymns, two deities are treated as forming a sort of unit; though, with few exceptions, each word is in the dual and retains its own accent.² Examples are: *Indrāgni*, *Mitrāvārunā*, and *Dyāvaprthivī*.³ The last is of peculiar interest.⁴ The compound means, 'Sky-and-Earth'; and, while there are nine hymns addressed to them conjointly, not a single hymn appears to 'Sky' (*Dyo*, *Dyu*, or *Div*)⁵ alone, and but one is found to 'Earth' (*Prthivī*). The words mean, 'Bright-one' and 'Broad-one' respectively; but they are also used, even in the *Rik*, in the purely physical sense. Whatever may have been the standing of 'Earth,' there can be no question that 'Sky' was a deity of some sort, even in Indo-European times; for *Dyo* (Nom. *Dyāus*) appears in Greek as *Zeús*, in Old High German as *Zio*, and in Anglo-Saxon as *Tiu*,⁶ whence comes English *Tues-day*. But he was also called 'Father Sky'; for beside *Dyāus pitā*, appear *Zeús πατήρ* and, Latin, *Diespiter* and *Jupiter*, the latter having been originally a Vocative like *Zeū πάτερ*.⁷ The *devas*, then, were probably regarded as the children of *Div*.⁸ But what did the Aryans think of 'Bright-one'? Was he a supreme sky-god of some sort, or simply a supposed father of all things? Men of all races have asked where nature came from, and the supposition that the sky was the father of all is not a strange one for such an age.⁹

¹ See first paragraph. ² *W.*, §§ 81, 87, and 1255.

³ See *K.*, note 114. ⁴ See *EH.*, pp. 58-61. ⁵ *W.*, § 361, d.

⁶ *S&J.*, p. 414. *KB.*, §§ 493 and 611. *K.*, note 112, a and b.

⁷ *S&J.*, p. 419. *KB.*, §§ 135, 612, and 647,6. *VH.*, § 197, note 3, and § 213.

⁸ *Deva-s* is the same word as Latin *deus*. *S&J.*, p. 419. *KB.*, §§ 170 and 368.

⁹ Cf. *Lucretius*, ii. 991-998 and v. 783-820. Also *SBE.*, iv., p. 20, footnote 4. The authors cited under *SBE.* are as follows:—i., Max Müller;

But other Indo-European deities are known; for Sanskrit Usas, 'Brightening-one, Dawn,' is Latin Aurora and Homeric 'Ἥώς,'¹ and the word has also survived in English East and East-er. So Sūrya, 'Gleaning-one, Sun,' is Latin Sol and Homeric 'Ἥλιος.'² Other equations have been made;³ but these are sufficient to show their character. In addition to such evidence, the languages of the family contain certain related words which must have had a more or less clearly defined religious sense.⁴ The Indo-Europeans, then, had a religion. Its deities were natural phenomena,⁵ and the religion itself may be called a sort of animistic supernaturalism amounting, possibly, to a form of polydaimonism. This is all that the facts warrant at present, although it leaves much unexplained. It is worthy of note that, although the idea of "Mother Earth" is familiar enough to Indo-Germanic⁶ languages, no common expression for it occurs anywhere. It may be that the need of a common mother of all was not felt until after the dispersion;⁷ but it seems more likely that such a being had not yet attained to sufficient importance⁸ to have a settled name and a fixed place among the deities.

There are many things in Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit literature, which lend color to the assumption that the Indo-Europeans had at some time passed through a stage of

iv. and xxiii., J. Darmesteter; xii. and xxvi., J. Eggeling; xxv., G. Bühler; xxxi., L. H. Mills; and xlii., M. Bloomfield.

¹S&J., p. 414. KB., §§ 97, 5, and 603. VH., § 124. W., §§ 236 and 1208, a.

²S&J., *l. c.* KB., § 268. W., § 53, b.

³See S&J., *l. c.*; and K., notes 95, 121, 132, 136, 139, 145, 147, 149, and 241.

⁴S&J., pp. 415-416. ⁵*L. c.*, p. 418.

⁶A better word, in this connection, than Indo-European, since it gives the two extremes.

⁷S&J., pp. 419-420.

⁸*Cf. L. c.*, pp. 375-392; and SBE., xxv., pp. 196, 329, 333, and 353.

totemism,¹ but, even if the assumption is true, totemism had apparently ceased to be a vital force in their religion long before the Aryans entered the Pañjāb. Among the native tribes, however, now surviving in Northern India, plant totems are still to be found;² and it is not impossible that contact with these peoples may have tended to revive earlier totemistic beliefs, or possibly to have introduced new ones among the folk; for the earliest period shows few traces of the later animal worship.³

Whether the strong metaphors of the Vedas and—as a secondary product—the marvelous identification of things not even related, which occurs in such profusion in the Brāhmaṇas, can be said to be connected in any way with the language of totemism or not; the poet-sages of the Rik seem to have known little or nothing of totemism as such, and they can hardly have understood the apparent survivals from such a stage in any but the most general way. The supposition that tribes found in the land included plants and animals⁴ among their objects of worship and that the Brahmans borrowed certain ideas from the native races which gave promise of increasing their power, seems far more reasonable. At a later day, they adopted enough from Buddhism to enable them to meet and overthrow it,⁵

¹ See A. B. Cook, in JHS., xiv., 1894, pp. 81-169 (cf., however, T&M., pp. 294-315); O., pp. 68-87; and SBE., xxvi., pp. 9, 13-14, 179, etc. Cf. also J., pp. 117, 125-126, and 208-209.

² J., pp. 207, 210, 213, and 317. ³ See B., pp. 264-267.

⁴ Cf. B., preface, p. xix.

⁵ Cf. T., pp. 143-155. The readiness of Brahmanism to absorb the cult of other religions (cf. B., pp. 163, 168, and 204) makes it probable that Semitic ideas were early assimilated to some extent, since the Sanskrit alphabet was probably borrowed from Semitic sources. See W., § 2. In any case, the past history of Brahmanism shows that the Hindus can never be christianized through the medium of their own sacred writings: the leopard and the kid might indeed lie down together; but the kid would be inside. If the Brāhma-Samāj accepts the teachings of Christ, the patient takes the medicine after he has first rewritten the prescription and got rid of the doctor. See EH., pp. 515-523.

and the same propensity appears in their attitude toward Christianity: they say that Christ was a Mahâtma, 'Great-soul, Sage,' and it is not unlikely that they may end by making him, as they did Buddha, an "incarnation of Viṣṇu."¹ The Indian doctrine of the transmigration of souls may, therefore, have originated by borrowing.²

The totemist thinks that he rejoins his totem after death,³ and the Brahmans may have found in this a valuable suggestion. Evil men, especially those who do injury to Brahmans, will be reborn—so they came to teach—as some plant or animal,⁴—the good (ceremonially) attain to mokṣa, 'deliverance,'⁵—and the doom is made to correspond to the guilt. That there were such borrowings from other races can hardly be doubted, and traces of them can be detected here and there. Snake-worship, which first appears in the Atharva-Veda, probably had such an origin,⁶ and the modern Hindu housewife still worships the serpent that may chance to take up its abode in the thatch of the roof.

In any case, the only Indo-European objects of worship which can be surely established, are certain natural phenomena.⁷ That there were genuine religious elements in the belief of the Aryan peoples, however, is clear; for the scattered tribes made progress in many directions, including their ideas of deity. This has not been the case in any part of the world where superstition has held continual sway; for superstition is the deadly foe of progress, while the attitude of mind accompanying worship and faith is distinctly favorable to mental growth.

That there may be genuine faith and worship among the

¹ It is not utterly impossible that they have already done so once. See B., pp. 217-224, and E.H., pp. 428-433 and 469.

² Cf. J., pp. 314-318. ³ *L. c.*, p. 314.

⁴ See SBE., xxv., pp. 495-501. ⁵ See *L. c.*, pp. 501-508.

⁶ Cf. E.H., pp. 154, 376, 527, 533, 536, and 539. ⁷ Cf. S&J., p. 414.

heathen can hardly be disputed, since what is credulity in one man may be faith in another: it all depends upon the personal point of view. The conviction, however, that the worship of the Aryans was genuine is no warrant for ignoring the real nature of the objects worshiped; and, since the Vedic system of beliefs must have been developed more or less directly from its original Indo-European prototype, care should be taken lest enthusiasm over their form lead to an undue exaltation of the sense of the Vedic hymns. There is a difference in the form and content of words which ought not to be ignored. There are passages in the Rik which resemble certain parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, and yet to compare the two is to read into the Sanskrit much more than it really contains. To read the physicist's meaning into the illiterate man's use of the word "sun" is absurd, and yet to compare a Vedic hymn with a passage of Scripture is practically, in most cases, to do that very thing.¹ In the wildest flights of their imagination, the Hindu Ṛṣis never dreamed of such a being as the Hebrew Jehovah:² what they did finally arrive at, was the conviction that there must have been a first cause, a single agent, from whom the universe came;³ but, at this stage, their religion was becoming a sort of monotheistic pantheism, the culmination of which was reached in the later philosophical works, where 'Self' (Ātman), or 'Real' (Sat), is "God"; and the ultimate aim of the righteous man⁴ is

¹ To most readers, it not only puts into the Sanskrit the original Hebrew conception, but the modern interpretation of that conception. "When you acquire a new language, you acquire a new brain," figuratively speaking: is it any wonder, then, that the standpoint changes with religion? Cf., for example, Hindu ideas of bhakti, 'resignation, devotion, piety' (B., pp. 224-233), with the teachings of Christianity.

² Making due allowance for the anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament. See D., p. 114; but see also p. 133.

³ See K., pp. 87-91; and SBE., xlii., pp. 214-217 and 224-225. Cf. *Ib.*, xxv., pp. 2-18.

⁴ I.e., the man who faithfully keeps the precepts of the ceremonial law.

re-absorption into 'Real,' there to lose his identity, just as juice gathered from distant trees by the bees becomes simply honey and no part of it can tell whence it came.¹ In the last analysis, this "God" of the Vedānta, 'End-of-the-Veda,' is not much more than a deification of the Life Principle combined with the idea of the indestructibility of matter;² though, like all other theosophic speculations, it can hardly be pinned down to anything quite so definite.³

Again, the use to which the hymns are put in the native ritual is often a surprising revelation of their probable nature; and it not infrequently occurs that the content of a hymn, as indicated by its use, is not what its form would lead a casual observer to even suspect; indeed, in some instances, the profoundest scholars seem to have been deceived in this matter,⁴ although it is, of course, possible that a hymn which was composed for a legitimate pur-

¹ Chāndogya-Upaniṣad, vi. 9. See SBE., i., p. 101. With this 'deliverance,' cf. the Nirvāṇa of the Buddhists and that of the Jains. EB., article, "Jains." EH., pp. 286, 319-323, and 336. See also *l. c.*, pp. 426-428. Cf. also MM., Lect. vii., pp. 265-275.

² Cf. SBE., i., pp. 104-105. ³ Cf. B., pp. 71-75.

⁴ Such a case was that of the "Frog-hymn" already mentioned. Another example is Atharva-Veda, i. 14, which was three times translated as a marriage hymn, and obtained considerable admiration in this guise. In the Kāuṅika-Sūtra, however, which contains the ritual of the Atharva-Veda, no reference is made to it in the wedding ceremonies; but it is cited among the rites for women in such a connection that it appears to have been used as an incantation of a girl against her rival. There are also some indications that it was originally part of a funeral service. M. Bloomfield, in AJP., vii., Dec., 1886, pp. 473-476. In this connection, it may be mentioned that Atharva-Veda, iv. 16 (trans., K., pp. 65-66, and SBE., xlii., pp. 88-89), which has been said to give "expression to the divine omniscience more forcibly than any other hymn of the Vedic literature" (K., p. 64), is not treated with due respect in the Kāuṅika: its first stanza is cited in the witchcraft practices, and its third in the book of omens and portents. It is not referred to elsewhere in the Sūtra. See JAOS., xiv., 1890, Introduction, pp. lxvii. and lxviii., and pp. 139, 278, and 401; or SBE., xlii., pp. 389-393. It is possibly significant that, while Durgā is given a thousand different forms in the sacred literature (B., pp.

pose, or in a spirit of true worship, could be appropriated to other uses.¹ The truth is that the facts demand caution.

They should not, however, be allowed to lead too far in the other direction; for there is too much that appears to breathe a noble spirit to make it reasonable to suppose that it is all priestly mummery.² It is doubtless true that the Brahmans, as a class, were utilitarian and, in that sense, "practical"; but altruism does not yet rule the world, and the Hindus were intensely human.³ When the Vedas had taken their final shape, and possibly before that time, it is also probable that the Atharva-Veda represented the views of the masses more accurately than the Rik; for, while the few reach the higher level, the many simply follow the prevailing tendency.⁴ Even the Israelites repeatedly fell into idolatry, and in times of prosperity men are prone to forget God. All the evidence must be carefully weighed and sifted before the final verdict is pronounced; but the present indications are that the early days of struggle and conquest were characterized, in large measure, by a genuine religious spirit which inclined men to prayer and praise. Gradually, however, prayer itself came to be looked upon as a power (it was ultimately deified as the all-pervading spirit of the universe, the divine essence);⁵ so that, in the Atharva-Veda,⁶ *bráhmān*, 'prayer, devotion,' came to mean, 'spell, charm, enchantment'; and the priest who was master of the Vedas was supposed to have

165 and 199), she receives ninety million in a witchcraft practice (AJP., x., July, 1889, pp. 181-182), whose rites are based on those of her worship (*durgāpūjā*).

¹ See SBE., xlii., *Introd.*, pp. lxxii.-lxxiii., and pp. 254, 310, 372, 389, 412, and 496; and B., p. 6, footnote 1.

² Cf. B., pp. 32-34.

³ Cf. M. Bloomfield, in JAOS., xvii., 1896, pp. 176-177.

⁴ Cf. EH., pp. 156-159.

⁵ B., pp. 81-82. EH., pp. 221-241. T., pp. 125-126.

⁶ Called the Veda of the princely classes. SBE., xlii., *Introd.*, p. xxv.

the gods in his power.¹ The marked lowering in the tone of the religious literature, of which this is a sufficient example, may be taken as one of the clear indications that priestly self-seeking, superstition, and degrading influences were at work among the people.² When the Brahmans at length classed themselves as *devas*, *mānuṣya-devās*, 'human-gods,'³ the idea of the heavenly *devas* was distinctly lowered, and the gods soon became like the Greek *θεοί*.⁴

But, to return to the deities, there are indications that the ancestors of the Greeks and those of the Hindus were among the last to separate in Indo-European times;⁵ and, in spite of the phonetic difficulties,⁶ *Varuṇa*, 'Enveloping-one, Heaven,' is probably *Ὀὐρανός*.⁷ Whether the word is Indo-Germanic, or not, cannot be told from the available data; but if the conception was not a limited one, it soon

¹ K., pp. 4, 5, and 32, and note 110. Cf. SBE., xlii., *Intro.*, p. lxxi.

² Cf. B., pp. 43-63; and EH., pp. 151-160, and 524-525.

³ SBE., xii., pp. 309 and 374; *ib.*, xxvi., p. 341; etc.

⁴ It is hardly to be supposed that the intrigues of Indra or those of *Zets* are survivals from a savage state, except in the sense that the germs of the stories may go back to a time when there was a notion that gods (*daemons*) are above restraint, or when such offenses were not recognized in their true light. The developed myths are probably the marks of a degenerate age when men sought an excuse for wrongdoing. This would account for the fact that many deeds of Indra, barely mentioned in the hymns, are given in detail in later writings. With a clearer view of morality, such acts would ultimately begin to be condemned, exactly as they were; indeed, for one offense, Indra himself was actually cursed by a *muni*, 'holy-man, hermit,' and his release from the curse gave him his thousand eyes, i.e., the stars. *Kathā-Sarit-Sāgara* ('Ocean-of-the-Streams-of-Story'), xvii. 137. (Translated by C. H. Tawney. Calcutta, 1880-84.) The spirit which prompted these myths is not yet dead, even in civilized countries; and it is quite unnecessary to refer them back to a savage age, a solution which creates more difficulties than it removes. In the case of Indra, it is also clearly impossible, except by transference, even if the story is old enough to be known to the *Ṣatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, where he is invoked as the lover of *Ahalyā*. See SBE., xxvi., p. 81.

⁵ S&J., pp. 130-131, 225-228, 410, and 414.

⁶ *L. c.*, 130 and 412.

⁷ K., note 241. It is supported by *urvarā*: *ἄρουρα*. MM3., p. 161.

disappeared from the other branches of the family. Among the Greeks, later on, the idea arose that 'Sky' was the descendant of 'Heaven,' and the ruling *Zeus* became the grandson of *Oûpanós*. The Indo-Iranians, on the other hand, exalted Varuṇa, while Dyāus was allowed to fall somewhat into neglect.

The Indo-Iranian period still contains much that is problematical. Certain things may be regarded as sufficiently well established to be assigned to this period; but that does not make them Indo-European.¹ Among the Indo-Iranians, Varuṇa—for it will be convenient to keep the Sanskrit form of the word—received the epithet 'living' (Sanskrit *asura*), probably in some such sense as 'unchanging, immortal' (it is not used of mere physical life and sometimes implies wisdom); and, in Zend, this epithet, acquiring a sense of 'Master' or 'Lord,' crowded out the original word, which, however, remained in use in the physical sense. Ahura Mazda, 'Wise Lord,' is, therefore, the Avestan equivalent of Varuṇa.²

In the earlier portions of the Rik, *asura* is applied to the highest gods;³ but in the late hymns and in the Brāhmaṇas, it has come to mean 'demon.' Popular etymology soon made it into *a-sura*, 'non-god,' and developed out of that a new word, *sura*, 'god.' In the Avesta, on the other hand, *daéva* was appropriated to mean 'demon.' While no religious schism can be inferred from these facts, it would be a strange thing, judging from what has taken place in the rest of the world, if two religions, coming from the same source and having so many things in common, could exist so near together and not become more or less hostile. If, as now seems probable, the Gāthās—the earliest portions of the Avesta—are of about the same age

¹ S&J., p. 414.

² SBE., iv., *Introd.*, p. lviii. O., pp. 29-30.

³ SBE., *l. c.*, p. lxxx. EB., article, "Zoroaster."

as the late hymns of the Rik,¹ and if it is fair to infer that the Daëva-party of Iran was tending in the same general direction as the Vedic worshippers;² there can hardly be any question that the history of the two words was influenced, in both languages, by the hostility natural to the situation.³ Again, if such a feeling did arise, it can be readily understood why Indra, who is distinctly a Hindu creation (Iranian tradition knows nothing of him),⁴ should be mentioned among the demons in the Avesta.⁵ To be sure, the Avestan Verethraghna has been compared to Indra;⁶ but the comparison will hardly hold.⁷ Verethraghna has no real Vedic equivalent, although he has some of the features of Agni, 'Fire,' in his character as the 'cloud-born' lightning which descended to earth;⁸ for the sacred fire, with which he came to be identified, seems to have

¹ SBE., xxxi., Introd., p. xxxvii. The Vedas grew up in the region lying to the south of the Hindu Kush and extending eastward, while the Avesta developed in the country which reaches toward the north and west from the same range of mountains. SBE., xxxi., Introd., pp. xxviii.-xxxiii. See EH., pp. 70 and 170-172.

² Cf. SBE., *l. c.*, p. xix., and EH., pp. 10-11.

³ Opposed is SBE., iv., Introd., p. lxxx. Cf., however, *l. c.*, p. 102, footnote 1; *ib.*, xxxi., Introd., pp. xix.-xxi., xxxiii., and xxxvi.; EH., p. 186; and EB., *l. c.* See also O., pp. 162-166.

⁴ SBE., iv., Introd., p. lxxx.

⁵ Cf., however, K., note 142.

⁶ SBE., *l. c.*, pp. lxiv. and lxxx. O., pp. 29, 75, and 134.

⁷ The Vedic epithet, *vṛtrahan*, is not confined to Indra, and its Zend equivalent, *verethrajan*, clearly means 'victorious.' Cf. SBE., xxxi., p. 337, footnote 2. Moreover, although Verethraghna is the best armed of the gods (SBE., xxxiii., pp. 232, 233, etc.), and kills the foe with a single stroke (*l. c.*, p. 137), he really has little in common with Indra: for he is constantly referred to as "made by Ahura" (*l. c.*, pp. 6, 10, 15, 17, etc.); and, as the "blow of victory" (*ib.*, xxxi., p. 337), or the "genius of Victory" (*ib.*, iv., Introd., p. lxiv.), he is identified with the sacred fire which is supposed to kill hosts of fiends, and is, therefore, still faithfully maintained wherever there are Parsis (*l. c.*, pp. lxxxix.-xc.).

⁸ K., p. 35. Cf. M. Bloomfield, in JAOS., xvi., 1894, pp. 14, 17, 18, and 23-24.

been regarded both as the source of all other fires¹ and as the earthly representative of the heavenly fire. But Avestan Ātar, 'Fire' (cf. Ath a r-van, Ath a r-va-Veda), seems also to refer to the lightning,² and, like Agni, he too is a 'son of the waters,' i.e., is born of the rain-clouds.³ In some of his functions, Ātar corresponds to Agni as a terrestrial god;⁴ but he also performs Indra's feat of conquering 'Serpent' (Sanskrit Ahi).⁵

In both the Rik and the Avesta, however, there is another god who slays the demon Ahi. In the Rik, he is called Trita (once, i. 158, 5, Trāitana), 'Third'; and he is occasionally spoken of as ā p t y a, 'dwelling-in-the-waters.'⁶ In the Avesta, he has become Thraētaona Āthwya.⁷ Again, both sacred writings contain a number of passages, not to mention an entire hymn addressed to him in the Rik,⁸ referring to Apām Napāt, 'Son of the Waters,' without further designation by name. These two deities, then, must

¹ It was supposed to be made up of one thousand and one fires of sixteen different classes. SBE., iv., p. 113, footnote 1.

² See SBE., iv., Introd., p. lxii.

³ SBE., xxiii., p. 299. R-V., i. 143, 1; iii. 9, 1; etc.

⁴ SBE., xxxi., p. 80, § 4.

⁵ SBE., iv., Introd., pp. lxii.-lxiii.; and *ib.*, xxiii., pp. 297-299. On the other hand, Agni and Indra are often associated (there are at least eleven hymns in the Rik addressed to Indrāgni), and the epithet, vṛtrahan, is applied to them conjointly (i. 108, 3; iii. 12, 4; vii. 93, 1 and 4; etc.); but it is also used of Agni alone (i. 74, 3; iii. 20, 4; vi. 16, 19; etc.), and this use of the epithet—it occurs even in the oldest hymns—cannot be explained by a supposed mixing of the types of gods. See O., pp. 98-101, and MM3., pp. 325-326.

⁶ See K., note 112, d; AB., ii., pp. 326-330; E. D. Perry, in JAOS., xi., 1885, pp. 142-146; and O., pp. 143-144. Trita is passing off the stage in the Rik, and in the Atharvan has become "the scapegoat of the gods." K., p. 33; and M. Bloomfield, in AJP., xvii., Dec., 1896, pp. 430-437.

⁷ In Fargard xx. 2, of the Avesta, Thrita appears, as the first healer, and in one other passage, Yasna ix. 10, he is called the son of Āthwya. These are probably mere developments of the same original idea. See SBE., iv., Introd., p. lxiii. and p. 219; *ib.*, xxxi., p. 233; and CB., p. 178, § 10.

⁸ ii. 35. Stanza 15 is a late addition.

at least go back to Indo-Iranian times, if they are not still older. Apām Napāt¹ can be clearly traced to the lightning;² and it seems extremely likely that Trita also was but a name for one of its manifestations. It is not improbable that the lightning was originally thought of as three gods,³ or, possibly, as a threefold god; somewhat as Agni was later regarded as threefold,⁴ or as the highest god of the Avesta was regarded as sevenfold,⁵ a conception which appears in the Rik as the seven Ādityas. The seventh Āditya has never been identified,⁶ and it is conceivable that the third god of lightning was called simply 'Third,'⁷ because no definite name suggested itself. Where we see different forms of lightning, they would come to see different gods; and Trita may well have been the rain-producing thunderbolt which rends the clouds and does not descend to earth, while 'Fire,' Ātar or Agni,—in both the Avesta and the Rik sometimes called 'son of the waters' (Sanskrit apām napāt),—probably referred to the blinding flash, with which the fire-producing stroke of the lightning is attended. If Agni meant 'Agile-one,'⁸ as is supposed, it would,

¹ Regarded by some as identical with *Neptunus* and *Ποσειδών*. See E. W. Fay, in *AJP.*, xvii., Apr., 1896, pp. 1-29.

² *SBE.*, xxiii., p. 6, footnote 1.

³ Three was a sacred number; and the blinding flash, the forked lightning of the clouds, and the bolt which descends to earth, must have been noticed very early.

⁴ See *EH.*, pp. 105 and 107.

⁵ *SBE.*, iv., *Introd.*, pp. lix.-lx. See also *ib.*, xxxi., *Introd.*, p. xviii.

⁶ *K.*, notes 226-227.

⁷ 'First' and 'Second' are later developments.

⁸ Both words were probably to be found in Indo-Iranian, although neither seems to have been fixed in its use. Agni must be Indo-Germanic; for it is the same as Latin *ignis*, 'fire.' Whether Trita and Apām Napāt are to be referred to the same early period, as some believe, may be questioned; but it in no way affects the possibility that the Indo-Europeans may have applied the term, 'Agile-one,' to both the fire and the flash of lightning which caused it. If they did not actually worship them, they were at least inspired with sufficient awe to pave the way for the Indo-Iranian worship of fire and lightning.

on that basis, be an exceedingly fitting name. Seen at a distance, the stroke would become the descending bolt, Apām Napāt,¹ frequently called "the tall lord," or, more suggestively still, "the swift-horsed, the tall and shining lord," in the Avesta.²

As to the demon Ahi, 'Straitening-one, Confining-one, Serpent,'³ he was, originally, probably nothing more than the crest of the approaching thunderstorm, looked upon as a gigantic snake threatening to take away the light of heaven. Any one who has watched the phenomenon under conditions such as probably prevailed in the region to the north and west of the Hindu Kush, where the idea seems to have originated, can readily understand something of the thoughts and feelings of the highly imaginative people who could not guess the real nature of what was taking place. Such a cloud crest in a country of violent thunderstorms—West Turkestan and Bokhara still retain that feature in spite of the fact that they have now become quite arid—is certainly suggestive, to a strong imagination, of a huge serpent writhing across the sky; and it is not to be wondered at that the idea arose. That the Avesta has preserved the notion in its original form seems also likely, since the sudden darkness produced by the approaching storm, accompanied as it is by a threatening blackness of the heavens, is an awe-inspiring sight. Everywhere, beyond the crest, the sky is dark; and Ahi, i.e., the

¹ Apām Napāt and Ātar are mentioned side by side in the Avesta as distinct divinities (SBE., xxiii., pp. 5-6, 14, 36, 38, etc.), and it is by no means certain that a pā ū n a p ā t always means Agni in the Rik; in fact, two distinct gods seem to be clearly recognized. See vi. 13, 3, and x. 8, 5. Cf. also i. 122 and 186; vi. 52; vii. 34 and 35; and x. 30 and 92.

² Otherwise "lofty," "brilliant," "glittering-one," etc. SBE., *l. c.*; and *ib.*, xxxi., pp. 197, 204, 219, 319, 326; etc. But see AB., ii., pp. 17-19 and 36-37.

³ A h i-s is the same word as Zend Azhi-s, Lat. *anguis*, and Greek ἄχις. KB., §§ 429, c, and 433, a.

'Serpent' *κατ' ἔξοχόν*, the 'Dragon-of-the-sky,' seems bent on the destruction of the heavenly light.¹ Men will be left to perish in darkness, unless he is driven away. Some such feeling is only natural to a nature-worshiping people. The idea that 'Serpent' is keeping back the rain must be secondary,² resulting, probably, from some such conditions as those which prevail in the Pañjāb, where that side of the myth became prominent.

In the Rik, a slight variation from the original form of the myth seems to have taken place, since it is Indra who drives back the dragon and restores the light to men.³ When he battles with Ahi, he used the thunderbolt as a weapon,⁴ and it seems clear that a new conception has taken place concerning the "strife of the elements." The favorite Vedic name for the sky-dragon is *Vṛtra*, 'Covering-one, Restraining-one,' and he is often identified with Ahi.⁵ But

¹ Cf. SBE., xxiii., pp. 297-299. ² Cf. SBE., iv., *Introd.*, p. lxiii.

³ *L. c.*, p. lxiv. K., p. 40.

⁴ R-V., iv. 22, 5. The best translation for ordinary purposes is to be found in G. See K., note 116.

⁵ Although *Vṛtra* has disappeared from Mazdeism (the Zend equivalent, *Verethra*, signifies 'victory,' SBE., xxxi., p. 337, footnote 2), there are still some traces of him left: for *verethra-taurvan* means 'subduing-the-fiend' (CB., p. 184, § 9); and, although the accepted meaning of *Verethra-ghna* is 'Blow-of-victory,' the etymological meaning, '*Vṛtra-killing*,' is still indicated by the destruction of fiends supposed to be wrought by the sacred fire of the Parsis, a function shared, to some extent, by Agni. R-V., x. 87. K., p. 36. SBE., xlii., p. 475. See also *ib.*, xxiii., p. 141, footnote 3. Again, since the word must have been an adjective originally (-ghna, 'smiting, killing,' is employed to form adjective compounds in Sanskrit), it seems likely that Mazdeism developed a new god out of an epithet of the lightning. The ruin wrought by lightning would lead to the idea that 'Fire,' i.e., the bright flash accompanying the stroke, was the 'fiend-smiter' (cf. Agni *vṛtrahan*, R-V., i. 59, 6, etc., and *Ātar* as the conqueror of *Azhi Dahāka*, i.e., Ahi, SBE., xxiii., pp. 297-299); but the same ruin must also have speedily suggested the idea of a blow. In the meantime, the adjective, '*Vṛtra-killing*,' by a very common process, had probably come to be used as a noun, '*Vṛtra-smiting-one*'; and, when the demon *Vṛtra* had been forgotten, *Verethra-*

there are other similar demons of the sky in the Vedas, especially *Çuṣṇa*, 'Drying-one, Parching-one,' a personification of the heat of the dry season. He too is slain by Indra's thunderbolt,¹ which simply means that it is cooler after a thunderstorm, i.e., the change of temperature is the real basis of the myth. This is an excellent example of the way in which the Hindus—they do it yet—at once conjure up a god or demon, or both, whenever they are at a loss to explain anything that may occur.²

ghna, who "wears the glory made by Mazda" (SBE., iv., p. 215), became, first, the lightning-stroke; then, the sacred fire, the fiend-smiting earthly representative of the heavenly fire (cf. *l. c.*, Introd., pp. lxi. and lxiv.); and, finally, 'Blow-of-victory,' since *verethra* had come to mean 'victory.' That this was his origin is rendered all the more probable from the fact that a still later god of lightning was developed in the Avesta. See *l. c.*, pp. lxxiii. and lxxiv. That he is represented as, or is likened to, various animals, etc. (see SBE., xxiii., pp. 231-248), is not surprising; for the Vedas, including the prose writings, also abound in similar language. When the highly figurative expressions are sifted down, they usually return, as the basis for the imagery, some simple ordinary fact of the physical world; and that is the thing to be looked for. See M. Bloomfield, in *JAOS.*, xvi., 1894, pp. 23-24; and in *AJP.*, xvii., Dec., 1896, pp. 399-408. If the seer makes a liberal use of hyperbole and represents his gods as appearing in different forms, he is simply taxing his imagination, in genuine oriental fashion, to do justice to his subject. Transferred to a western tongue, the figures of an oriental language are apt to be taken too seriously, and are often given a meaning which the native users would fail to comprehend, somewhat as, 'Can you, perhaps, tell?' acquires in English a degree of politeness foreign to the German original. In much of this imagery, the ethnologist is prone to discover a "survival" from a totemistic age; but human nature is still something of an enigma. Results that have a general similarity it will undoubtedly always give: Mongolian, Hottentot, Red Indian, and Caucasian are similar; for they are all human, and even science is coming to believe in the single origin of man (*J.*, p. 7); but the diversity is quite as marked as the similarity; and it is within the bounds of possibility that these figures are related to totemism only in so far as both may have originated from the same fundamental peculiarity of the human mind.

¹ R-V., i. 33, 12.

² The demons of Mazdeism are more conspicuous; but they were probably not more numerous than those of Vedism. Cf. O., pp. 262-273; AB.,

But other deities are common to the Rik and the Avesta, and it may be well to consider them in the light of both. Closely associated with Varuṇa, are Mitra, 'Friendly-one, Friend,' and Aryaman,¹ 'Faithful-one, True-friend.' Neither deity is sharply defined in the Rik, although the Avestan Mithra and Airyaman both became distinctly individualized.² As a rule, the two are invoked in company with Varuṇa—there is a single hymn to Mitra in the Rik—and old formulas still surviving in the Avesta³ show that Mitra and Varuṇa must have been very early associated in this way. With Varuṇa, they comprise the chief Ādityas, 'Sons of Aditi';⁴ but Varuṇa is the important one.⁵ He it is that punishes the transgressors of his laws with dropsy;⁶ and, in his worship and that of the other Ādityas, appear, for the most part, those features of the Vedic beliefs

ii., pp. 196-224 and 298-366; and E. D. Perry, in JAOS., xi., 1885, pp. 199-205. In the beliefs of the later Vedic worshippers, demons there were in abundance. To their agency, diseases were often attributed, as they still are, in India. There seems, in fact, to be no "boundary line between disease and demonology in the Atharvan." See SBE., xlii., pp. 273, 280, 339, 393, and 406; and cf. B., p. 41, and O., pp. 59-63. The spells and incantations of this Veda—there are also spells in the Rik—are largely intended to combat these agencies. Cf. O., pp. 8, 17-22, etc. Also K., pp. 85-86 and notes 361-362. Such spells are not recognized as witchcraft, unless employed for an evil purpose; and the Brahman might use them to slay his foes! *Mānava-Dharma-Āśāstra* ('Manu's-Law-Book'), xi. 33. See SBE., xxv., p. 436. See also *ib.*, xlii., *Introd.*, pp. lxii., and lxxvii. The present Hindu practice of attempting to scare away the "cholera goddess" by placing a dog with spots on his forehead at each of the four corners of the town is probably very old; for the 'four-eyed dog' (see SBE., xlii., pp. 68, 318, and 404) figures also in Mazdeism as a terror to fiends. See *ib.*, iv., *Introd.*, p. lxxxvi. and p. 97.

¹ This word has survived in Celtic. K., note 37.

² SBE., l. c., pp. lx-lxi., and pp. 229-230.

³ L. c., p. lxi.

⁴ 'Boundless-one' (space?). K., p. 59 and note 225. EH., pp. 72-73. AB., iii., pp. 88-98. O., pp. 203-207.

⁵ K., pp. 58-71 and notes 226-261. B., pp. 16-20. EH., pp. 61-72. AB., iii., pp. 98-149. O., pp. 185-203.

⁶ K., note 255. SBE., xlii., pp. 241 and 273. O., pp. 292-298.

which almost seem to indicate an ethical religion.¹ Although he ultimately became a mere god of the waters, in his earlier character he was praised, in connection with Mitra, in such strains as:—

‘Of you two gods, the eye so bright, Varuṇa,
The sun with far-extended beams, up rises;
Whose steady gaze beholds all earthly creatures:
He has observed the mood among the mortals.
From the broad earth, from high and mighty heaven,
Ye have sent forth, O Mitra and Varuṇa,
In field and house, ye drop-distilling powers,
Your spies; the skulking sleeplessly observing.
No fools, ye Mighty, of you two these demons,
In whom is seen no lustre neither glitter,
All follow up the evil deeds of mortals;
Not for the fool the secrets are of you two.’ vii. 61, 1, 3, 5.

But it should not be forgotten that the real point referred to, is the fact that the light of the sun reveals everything to the eye: there is no deep spiritual significance in the stanzas: they all start from the physical side;² and, while there may be said to be an idea of supernatural beings involved, they are simply abstractions from the commonplace facts of the physical world.³

¹ K., pp. 60-61 and 67. T., p. 117. B., pp. 33-34. But see O., pp. 284-292.

² It may still be said of the more devoted of the early worshipers that they appear to have earnestly desired to “seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.”

³ Cf. B., pp. 7-9, and K., pp. 27-32. It is possible that Varuṇa was at first the starry heavens, or, more probably, the dull leaden sky of a settled rain (he came to include both, see EH., p. 67, and cf. JR., pp. 115-116, and K., note 241),—the dark night sky seems like something enveloping the earth, as does also the rain-cloud,—while Mitra may have been the bright heaven by day, looked upon as friendly to men, although it seems likely that the word was at first merely an appellation used with Varuṇa to indicate the day sky. Cf. E. W. Fay, in AJP., xv., Dec., 1894, p. 430, footnote 2. But see O., pp. 48-51. Aryaman may have been the unchanging blue depth beyond, the ‘Faithful-one.’ He was especially invoked at weddings, probably with some such feeling as appears in the familiar, “Blessed is the bride that the sun shines on.”

The intoxicating drink Soma (Zend Haoma) was worshiped as a god by both the Vedists and the Magi; and, although it is the chief object of sacrifice in the older portions of the Rik and gives strength to the gods to vanquish the demons, it too probably went back to Indo-Iranian times as a deity. That it became a god, or daimon, is natural enough, since its intoxicating effects would inevitably be attributed to some supernatural agency. The combination of the two functions would present no more difficulty to the Indo-Iranians than the assumption that 'Sun' was a god as well as the eye of Mitrāvaruṇā did to the Hindus. As there were different manifestations of Agni, so there were of Soma.¹ In both the Avesta and the Rik, an earthly and a heavenly Soma is recognized. The divine personality of Soma differs considerably in the two. In the Rik, it is first associated with the sun and then with the moon, with which it finally came to be identified. In the Avesta, it is associated with neither. The Vedic personality is unusually vague and shadowy;² the Avestan does not differ

¹SBE., iv., Introd., p. lxix. *Ib.*, xxvi., Introd., pp. xi.-xxvii. K., pp. 72-73 and notes 288-297. EH., pp. 112-126. B., pp. 10-11. O., pp. 175-185 and 599-612. AB., i., pp. 148-225.

²Language often fails in the effort to convey a thought which is foreign to the habit of mind of its users, and it is no easy task to so present the facts in these matters that no wrong impression will be conveyed. The "two Somas" are inextricably confused in the hymns to the drink-god, and any effort to determine whether the plant or the moon is meant, is useless. There was but one Soma in the mind of the worshiper, hard as it is for the trained modern mind to understand the loose and incongruous conception. The drink-god was manifested in the Soma-plant which grew on the mountains, in the fermented juice of the plant, in the rain,—the rain enlivened the plants as Soma did gods and men,—and finally in the moon (see EH., p. 125), or in the sun according to AB., i., pp. 155, 174, etc. The wide differences of opinion, which, from the very nature of the case, must continue to exist concerning details, can only be hinted at in such a paper as this. The most available authorities are cited, however, with considerable fullness. It may perhaps be mentioned in this connection that the theory of animism has been discredited, on the ground that even animals know the difference between ani-

materially from that of the other gods. Both writings assign magic powers to Soma, and make him the friend, protector, and inspirer of men; the giver of life, health, and immortality; and the source of heroic deeds.

Once started, the fancy of the Indo-Iranians seems to have found godlike beings in many other things, such as piety,¹ prayer,² the waters,³ the trees,⁴ and the wind;⁵ but some of these appear to have actually reached back to Indo-European days.⁶ The fixed order of the world was called Rta⁷ (Zend Asha), 'Right'; the dead went to the abode of Yama⁸ (Zend Yima), their king by virtue of his having been the first of mortals,—so the Vedas put it, the Avesta differs somewhat; and ancestors departed became also objects of worship.⁹

mate and inanimate things. See MM3., pp. 128-131 and 309. While this is true, it must be remembered that the human imagination is not located in the sense of smell. A single sniff would dispel any fear which a hideous idol had inspired in a dog; but its human worshiper does not make its acquaintance, or that of any other awe-inspiring object, in that way.

¹ Vedic Aramati. SBE., iv., Introd., pp. lxix.-lxx. AB., i., pp. 320-321.

² SBE., *l. c.*, p. lxix. *Ib.*, xxxi., pp. 312-313. AB., i., pp. 287, 293-295, 308, etc.

³ SBE., iv., Introd., p. lxxxix. *Ib.*, xxiii., pp. 8 and 16. R-V., x. 30. EH., pp. 48, 107, etc.

⁴ Worshiped in the Atharvan. EH., p. 154, footnote 6. SBE., xxiii., p. 173.

⁵ The wind will be considered below in connection with Indra.

⁶ The water nymphs and the sacred groves of classical times go to show that the roots at least of these beliefs reach back to the primeval period. The thunder, too, seems to have been regarded with reverence quite as early. SBE., iv., Introd., p. lxxviii. Cf. AB., i., pp. 251-252.

⁷ SBE., iv., Introd., pp. lxx. and lxxiv. K., p. 28 and notes 92 and 94. O., pp. 195-202.

⁸ SBE., *l. c.*, p. lxxv. EH., pp. 128-135. B., pp. 22-23. AB., i., pp. 85-94. E. W. Hopkins, in PAOS., May, 1891, pp. xciv.-xcv.

⁹ SBE., *l. c.*, p. lxxiv. This worship of the departed is regarded by some as the source of religion. It is indeed very old (cf. T&M., pp. 148-150, 295, and 310-313); but the most that can be safely said, is that it may have been one of the sources of some religions, and, possibly, the

With these and other deities, such as 'Sun' and 'Dawn,' which afterward disappeared from Mazdeism,¹ the early Aryans entered the valley of the Kābul and pushed on into the Pañjāb. Somewhere in this region a division seems to have taken place. The Sarasvatī (Iranian Harahvaiti), whose headwaters were near those of the Kābul is certainly known to the Avesta as well as to the Rik; and it appears probable that the Sindhu (Indus, Iranian Hindu) was also known to the Iranians, although the name is of such a nature—it means 'Stream'—that certainty is impossible. The word does not seem to occur in the Avesta except in the expression 'Seven Rivers,' which is supposed by some to mean the Pañjāb. It is also possible that the Vitastā, which was the first branch of the Indus to the east, is to be identified with the Iranian Vītañuhaiti; and it may be that some of the tribes, discouraged by the severe heat of the Pañjāb and the hostility of their neighbors, both Aryan and native, at length turned back, and, retracing their steps, sought a new home to the west.² In some such way the Iranians parted from the Hindus, who, discouraged neither by the climate nor the hostile natives, pushed steadily on to the east.³

chief source of certain others. Even this is doubtful, however. MM2., pp. 117, 127, 128, and 285. J., pp. 13, 55, 187-199, 225, 301-302, and 323-324.

¹ They probably belonged among the deities of the Daēva-party which was finally overthrown by the adherents of Ahura Mazda.

² There can be little doubt but that the Indo-Iranian period extended into the early Vedic one: it did not end abruptly. When Varuṇa had reached the summit of his glory, Mazdeism seems to have branched off from Vedism (cf. EH., pp. 30-33, 126, and 171-172); but, lofty as its conceptions were,—they improved upon the highest ideals of Vedism,—it too was hopelessly crippled by a load of superstition.

³ [It was found best to divide the paper at this point.—EDS.]