

THE
HYMNS OF THE RIGVEDA

Translated With A Popular Commentary

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may we, unwounded, have brave heroes round us.

4 For me let them present all mine oblations, and let my mind's intention be accomplished.

May I be guiltless of the least transgression : and, all ye Gods, do ye combine to bless us.

5 Ye six divine Expanses, grant us freedom : here, all ye Gods, acquit yourselves like heroes.

Let us not lose our children or our bodies : let us not benefit the foe, King Soma !

6 Baffling the wrath of our opponents, Agni, guard us as our infallible Protector.

Let these thy foes turn back and seek their houses, and let their thought who watch at home be ruined.

7 Lord of the world, Creator of creators : the saviour God who overcomes the foeman.

May Gods, Brhaspati, both Asvins shelter from ill this sacrifice and sacrificer.

8 Foodful, and much-invoked, at this our calling may the great Bull vouchsafe us wide protection.

Lord of Bay Coursers, Indra, bless our children : harm us not, give us not as prey to others.

9 Let those who are our foemen stay afar from us : with Indra and with Agni we will drive them off.

Vasus, Adityas, Rudras have exalted me, made me far-reaching, mighty, thinker, sovran lord.

HYMN CXXIX.

Creation.

1. THEN was not non-existent nor existent : there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.

5 Six divine Expanses : the four cardinal points and upper and lower spaces ; or, according to Sāyaṇa, Heaven, Earth, Day, Night, Water, and Plants.

7 After Creator of creators Sāyaṇa supplies *tam devaṁ staumi*, 'that God I praise'. Indra or Savitar is intended.

8 The great Bull : Indra.

1 Then : in the beginning. Non-existent : *ásat* : that does not yet actually exist, but which has in itself the latent potentiality of existence. 'There was a certain unapparent condition,' says an Indian Commentator, which, from the absence of distinctness, was not an 'entity,' while from its being the instrument of the world's production, it was not a 'non-entity.'

What covered in, and where ? and what gave shelter ? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water ?

2 Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal : no sign was there, the day's and night's divider.

That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature : apart from it was nothing whatsoever.

3 Darkness there was : at first concealed in darkness this All was indiscriminated chaos.

All that existed then was void and formless : by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit.

4 Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit.

Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent.

5 Transversely was their severing line extended : what was above it then, and what below it ?

There were begetters, there were mighty forces, free action here and energy up yonder

6 Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation ?

The Gods are later than this world's pro-

2 *That One Thing* : the single primordial substance, the unit out of which the universe was developed. Cp. I. 164. 6 and 46.

3 *Warmth* : Prof. Wilson, following Sāyaṇa, translates *tāpasah* by 'austerity,' meaning the contemplation of the things that were to be created. M. Burnouf, in *La Science des Religions*, pp. 207ff., has shown how *warmth* was regarded by the Āryas as the principle explaining movement, life, and thought.

4 *Desire* : Kāma, Eros, or Love. *Sages* : ancient Ṛṣis.

5 *Line* : a line drawn by the ancient Ṛṣis to make a division between the upper world and the lower, and to bring duality out of unity. *Begetters* : the Fathers may be meant. *Free action* : the happiness of the Fathers. The stanza is obscure, and its connection with stanza 4 is not obvious. An intervening stanza may, perhaps, have been lost.

The hymn has been translated by Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, I. pp. 33, 34; by Dr. Muir, *O. S. Texts*, V. 356, 357; by the authors of the *Siebenzig Lieder*, and by Mr. Wallis, *Cosmology of the Rgveda*, pp. 59 ff. 'The latest of the many Commentators on this hymn are Professor Whitney in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. xi. p. cix, and Dr. Scherman, *Philosophische Hymnen aus der Rg-und-Atharva-veda Saṁhitā* 1887.'—Wallis. See Prof. Max Müller, *History of Ancient Literature*, pp. 559—563.

duction. Who knows then whence it first came into being ?

- 7 He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it, Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.

HYMN CXXX.

Creation.

1. THE sacrifice drawn out with threads on every side, stretched by a hundred sacred ministers and one,—

This do these Fathers weave who hitherward are come : they sit beside the warp and cry, Weave forth, weave back.

- 2 The Man extends it and the Man unbinds it : even to this vault of heaven hath he outspun it.

These pegs are fastened to the seat of worship : they made the Sāma-hymns their weaving shuttles.

- 3 What were the rule, the order and the model ? What were the wooden fender and the butter ?

What were the hymn, the chant, the recitation, when to the God all Deities paid worship ?

- 4 Closely was Gāyatrī conjoined with Agni, and closely Savitar combined with Uṣṇih. Brilliant with Ukthas, Soma joined Anuṣṭup : Bṛhaspati's voice by Bṛhatī was aided.

- 5 Virāj adhered to Varuṇa and Mitra : here Triṣṭup day by day was Indra's portion.

Jagatī entered all the Gods together : so by this knowledge men were raised to R̥ṣis.

As the subject of the hymn is creation typified and originated by the mysterious primeval sacrifice (cp. X. 90), Prajāpati the Creator is said by Sāyaṇa to be the deity. The R̥ṣi is Yajña (Sacrifice) Prajāpati's son.

1 *The sacrifice : sargātmako yajñāḥ* : the sacrifice which constitutes creation.—Sāyaṇa. *A hundred and one* : meaning an indefinitely large number. *Fathers* : Sāyaṇa explains *pitṛaḥ* here by *pālakāḥ*, protectors, the Gods.

2 *The Man* : the first Man or Male; Puruṣa, Ādipuruṣa, Prajāpati, according to Sāyaṇa.

3 *Wooden fender* : the enclosing sticks placed round the sacrificial fire.

4 *Brilliant with Ukthas* : 'gladdening (us) through hymns (*ukthas*).—Muir. *Bṛhaspati's voice* : because his duty was to speak as Priest. According to the *Āitareya Brāhmaṇa*, III. 13, Prajāpati 'alloted to the deities their (different) parts in the sacrifice and metres.'

5 *Day by day* : was Indra's portion of the mid-day (oblation).—Wilson.

- 6 So by this knowledge men were raised to R̥ṣis, when ancient sacrifice sprang up, our Fathers.

With the mind's eye I think that I behold them who first performed this sacrificial worship.

- 7 They who were versed in ritual and metre, in hymns and rules, were the Seven Godlike R̥ṣis.

Viewing the path of those of old, the sages have taken up the reins like chariot-drivers.

HYMN CXXXI.

Indra.

1. DRIVE all our enemies away, O Indra, the western, mighty Conqueror, and the eastern.

Hero, drive off our northern foes and southern, that we in thy wide shelter may be joyful.

- 2 What then ? As men whose fields are full of barley reap the ripe corn removing it in order,

So bring the food of those men, bring it hither, who went not to prepare the grass for worship.

- 3 Men come not with one horse at sacred seasons ; thus they obtain no honour in assemblies.

Sages desiring herds of kine and horses strengthen the mighty Indra for his friendship.

- 4 Ye, Aśvins, Lords of Splendour, drank full draughts of grateful Soma juice, And aided Indra in his work with Namuci of Asura birth.

6 *I behold them* : or, according to Prof. Ludwig's interpretation :—'These with the eyes of mind, I think, beheld them.'

7 'The seven R̥ṣis here are not the Āngirases, but Bharadvāja, Kaśyapa, Gotama, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, and Jamadagni. The knowledge of the ritual is derived from the divine priests ; the sages or R̥ṣis have followed them in sacrificing, and modern priests are only imitators of those who preceded them.'—Ludwig.

The hymn has been translated by Dr. Muir, *O. S. Texts*, III. pp. 278, 279 and by Prof. Whitney, *Notes to Colebrooke's Essay on the Vedas*, p. 114.

3 *With one horse* : it seems to have been considered undignified and disreputable for a wealthy man to come to the sacrifice in a one-horse car ; but the precise meaning of the first line is somewhat uncertain.

4 Hillebrandt, *V. M.*, I. 146, and Eggeling, *Sacred Books of the East*, XLI. 135, interpret differently. The myth referred to in the following stanza has not been preserved. See Weber, *Ueber den R̥ajasūya*, pp. 95, 101.