

since the vernal equinox coincided with 'Krittika' n Tauri, which heads the Hindu system of stars, about 2300 B. C. But these linear mentions might have been brought by the later Aryan immigrants from Mesopotamia or received through commercial communication from the same source, either by the Vedic merchants or the Phœnicians.

It is well known that the Brahmana period was contemporaneous with the great Kurushketra war (Kura-Pandava war). And according to the Hindu tradition. Kali Yuga commenced with the "war" and the Hindu astronomers, calculate that 1921 is five thousand and twenty-one years after Kali Yuga commenced. This they try to sustain by two assertions. One of them is the statement of Arya-Bhatta and Baraha-Mihira, in his celebrated Brihat-sanhita, quoting the famous ancient astronomer Garga which says :—"The Munis (Shaptarishis) were in Magha when king Yudhistira ruled the earth. And 2526 when added to Shaka-kala is the date of that king".\* But this is contradicted by the Vishnu Purana in which Parashara says : (last section of part IV). "From the birth of king Parikshita (grandson of Arjuna) up to the installation of king Nanda,† it is to be known that 1065 years have passed." This really means that the Mahabharata war took place about 1500 to 1400 B. C.

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\* Asanmaghashu munayah shashati prithivim Yudhisthire Nripatau ; Shad dvika panchadwiyutah Shakakala tasya rajnasheha.

† The founder of the Nanda dynasty in Magadha, by the usurper Maha-padma Nanda, son of Maha-nandin by a Sudra woman took place about 371 B. C.

The other is the astronomical argument, based on passages in the Mahabharata, as the following, which is described as evil omens by Vyasa, who failing to persuade Dhritarastra in stopping the preparation of war by his son Dhurjodhana, sees their fate thus in the sky. "There is a comet standing over Pushaya. Among the Maghas Mars is retrograde and Jupiter is in Shravana. Saturn is standing over the Bhaga-nakshatra and Venus shines over the Purbavadrapada. The white planet stands over Jyestha. Both the sun and the moon oppress Rohini. The evil planet stands between Chitra and Svati. The red planet making counter-retrograde from retrograde, stands over Shravana, the Rashi of Brahma. Jupiter and Saturn stand near Vishaka. The sun and the moon were eclipsed together on the 13th. I have seen Amavashya on the 14th day, but never on the thirteenth." It is really futile to waste time over absurd observation as the eclipse of the sun and the moon at the same time, retrograde movements of the stars, and as Rashis could not be introduced in Indian Astronomy before the contact with the Greeks which was about 327 B. C. this has only to be regarded as interpolation into the main body of the Mahabharata, by poets of later ages, with vivid imagination and fancies.

The position of the asterisms (nakshatras), even the minor planets are not mentioned in the Rig-veda except the names of two stars in the tenth Mandala which is the latest addition of the Rik-samhita. However in the Atharvaveda in the nineteenth chapter, there is a list of stars and praising hymn for each of them. But the Atharvan was not regarded as a Veda even in the Buddhistic period, where usually Tri-veda (Tri-veda=three

vedas) is mentioned. In the prose parts of the Brahmanas, especially of the Yajur-veda they are often mentioned and in the Sutra period at the time of the great grammarian Panini (about 5th century B. C.) the names of the stars are common. In one of the Brahmanas it is mentioned that Prajapati the lord of created beings fell in love with his own daughter and she fleeing from him in the form of a doe he pursued her as a stag and was only deterred from his incestuous chase by being shot with an arrow by the angry and indignant gods. And the whole story is illustrated in the sky—the innocent and lovely Rohini (Aldebaran), which means both *ruddy* and *sheer-deer*, the infamous Prajapati (Orion = Mrigashira = stag's head) in full career after her, but laid sprawling by the three jointed arrow (the belt of the Orion) shot from the hand of the near avenger (Sirius) which is even now to be seen sticking in his body.

The principal astronomers of India have been Aryabhatta in the 5th century A. D., Varaha-Mihira in the 6th, Brahmagupta in the 7th and Bhaskara in the 12th century A. D. Bhaskara composed the famous astronomical work *Shidhanta-Shiromony* or as it is better known by the title of *Surya-Shidhanta*.

According to Hindu astronomy, there is a *kalpa* (æon) of 4, 320, 000, 000 years and the *mahayuga* (great age) of 4, 320, 000 years, with its subdivisions of which the *kali-yuga* (the iron-age), the last section of the *great age* is computed to have commenced on February 18, 3102 B. C. at sunrise on the meridian of Ujjaini. And according to its teaching, all the planets and all their apsides and nodes, entered upon their motion of revolution together, at the commencement of the æon, from a

starting point Asvini (Piscium) and that they all revolve a given number of times in the æon, so that at the close they will come again to a universal conjunction at the same point in the heavens. According to Surya-shidhanta, a general conjunction of the planets at this point recurs at the end of every 1,080,000 years. So each has its defined number of circuits in the æon. But in their calculations, it is infinitesimally small. Thus according to four different treatises since the beginning of the æon the revolutions of Jupiter's apsis have been only 407, 390, 378, and 448 respectively.

However with tolerable accuracy the Hindu astronomy has been able to calculate the position of the planets and predict the solar and the lunar eclipses. Their calculations are based on epicycles and the table of sines, that is, the relation of the diameter to circumference is 1 : 3.14136 and the equivalence of the square of the hypotenuse to the sum of the squares of the two legs in a right-angled triangle. This is a time-honoured method. The Babylonians used it and the Greeks learnt it from them and it was known to them as the system of Ptolemy. But it is not certain whether the Hindus learnt it directly from Babylonia with the astrological lore or through the intermediary of Greece. However it seems unquestionable that some Greek terminologies have crept into the Hindu system of astronomy as *lipta* the second of an arc from Gr. *lepto* the twenty-fourth part of the day, as *hora* from Gr. *Ora* and the centre of an epicycle of a planetary body as *kendra* from Gr. *kedron*. Besides, the Hindu astronomy suffered from defective observation, as will be shown by the following table prepared by the celebrated Sanscritist W. D. Whitney.



Positions and errors of Positions of the junction stars of asterisms :—

No.	Name	LONGITUDE, A. D. 560.			LATITUDE			Star compared.
		Hindu	True	Error	Hindu	True	Error	
1.	Kritika	39° 8'	39° 58'	-0° 50'	4° 44' N	4° 1' N	+0° 43'	Taury Alcyone
2.	Rohini	48° 9'	49° 45'	-1° 36'	4° 49' S	5° 30' S	+0° 41'	(a) Aldebaran
3.	Mrgashira	61° 3'	63° 40'	-2° 37'	9° 49' S	13° 25' S	+3° 36'	(g) Orinis.
4.	Adra	65° 50'	68° 43'	-2° 53'	8° 53' N	16° 4' S	+7° 11'	(a) Orinis.
5.	Punarvasu	92° 52'	93° 14'	-0° 22'	6° 0' N	6° 39' N	-0° 39'	(b) Gemin. Pollux.
6.	Pushya	106° 0'	108° 42'	-2° 42'	0° 0' N	0° 4' N	-0° 4'	(d) Cancri.
7.	Aslesha	109° 59'	112° 20'	-2° 21'	6° 56' S	11° 8' S	+4° 12'	(e) Hydræ.
8.	Magha	129° 9'	129° 49'	-0° 49'	0° 0' S	0° 27' N	-0° 27'	(a) Leonis, Regulus.
9.	P. Phalguni	139° 58'	141° 15'	-1° 17'	11° 19' N	14° 19' N	-3° 0'	(d) Leonis.
10.	U. Phalguni	150° 10'	151° 37'	-1° 27'	12° 5' N	12° 17' N	-0° 12'	(b) Leonis.
11.	Hasta	174° 22'	173° 27'	+0° 55'	10° 6' S	12° 10' S	+2° 4'	(d) Corvi.
12.	Chitra	180° 48'	183° 49'	-3° 1'	1° 50' S	2° 2' S	+0° 52'	(a) Virginis.
13.	Svati	183° 2'	184° 12'	-1° 10'	33° 50' N	30° 57' N	+2° 53'	(a) Bootis.
14.	Vishaka	213° 31'	211° 0'	+2° 31'	1° 25' S	1° 48' S	+0° 23'	(i) Libræ.
15.	Anuradha	224° 44'	222° 34'	+2° 10'	2° 52' S	1° 57' S	-0° 55'	(d) Scorpionis.
16.	Jyestha	230° 7'	229° 44'	+0° 23'	3° 50' S	4° 31' S	+0° 41'	(a) Scorpionis.
17.	Mula	242° 52'	244° 33'	-1° 41'	8° 48' S	13° 44' S	+4° 56'	(f) Scorpionis.
18.	P-Ashara	554° 39'	554° 32'	+0° 7'	5° 28' S	6° 25' S	+0° 57'	(d) Sagittari.
19.	U-Ashara	260° 23'	262° 21'	-1° 58'	4° 59' S	3° 24' S	-1° 25'	(s) Sagittari.
20.	Abhijit	264° 10'	265° 15'	-1° 5'	59° 58' N	61° 46' N	-1° 48'	(a) Lyre, Vega.
21.	Shravana	282° 29'	281° 41'	+0° 48'	29° 54' N	29° 19' N	+0° 35'	(a) Aquilæ.
22.	Shravishta	296° 5'	296° 19'	-0° 14'	35° 33' N	31° 57' N	+3° 36'	(b) Delphini.
23.	Satabhisha	319° 50'	321° 33'	-1° 43'	0° 28' S	0° 23' S	-0° 5'	(f) Aquarii.
24.	P-Bhadrapada	334° 25'	333° 27'	+0° 58'	22° 30' N	19° 25' N	+3° 5'	(a) Pegasi.
25.	U-Bhadrapada	347° 16'	349° 8'	-1° 52'	24° 1' N	25° 41' N	-1° 40'	(g) Peg. a Andron
26.	Rebati	359° 50'	359° 50'	0° 0'	0° 0' N	0° 13' S	+0° 13'	(a) Piscium.
27.	Asvini	11° 59'	13° 56'	-1° 57'	9° 11' N	8° 28' N	+0° 43'	(b) Arietis.
28.	Bharani	24° 35'	26° 54'	-2° 19'	11° 6' N	11° 17' N	-0° 11'	(a) Mu.æ.

From this it is apparent that it is very hard to fix any definite date in Indian history before the Buddhistic period. Before that time there is no monumental record on which we can base unchallengeable data. However from comparative philology, we can to a certain extent conjecture and guess, but necessarily, it has to be confined to vague hypothesis and beyond this at least for the present it cannot go any farther.

We know that in the fourth century 'B. C. under the Nanda dynasty lived the celebrated Vedic exponents as Saunaka, Katyana, Asvalyana and others whose works we still possess. In the Buddhistic Suttas we find the *Trivedas* repeatedly mentioned and the Vedic institution venerable with age and traditions. Buddhism itself was a protest movement against Vedic professions which degenerated with age into meaningless ceremonies and rituals and that necessarily must have taken centuries after the Vedas were fixed when the Vedic tongue deteriorated into Pali. The distinguished philologist and grammarian Panini lived in the fifth century B. C. and wrote his well-known *Astadhya* when the archaic and fluidic Vedic language was no longer spoken and was crystallized into standardized Sanscrit. And we find in his *Astadhya* that already there were treatises on the phonetics against any corruption of that sacred literature, they were numbered and counted according to their divisions and chapters, and how many hymns each chapter contained and how many words each hymn. Thus the *Rig-veda* was commuted to contain 1017 hymns, 110 'valakhilas', 153, 826, words, 432, 000 syllables. The etymologist Yaska lived between the fifth and seventh

century B. C.\* and 'the numerous exemplary quotations occurring in the Nirukta conclusively show that he knew the Rig-veda, the Sama-veda, the Atharva-veda, the Yajur-veda, and their pada-pathas, the Taittiriya Samhita, the Maitruyani Samhita, the Kathaka Samhita, the Aitareya Brahmana, the Gopatha Brahmana, the Kausitaki Brahmana, the Satyepatha Brnhmana, the Pratisakhyaas and some of the Upanishadas'.

This indicates that Yaska lived almost in the Sutra period, when the Brahmanas were already compiled and from the Rig-Vedic to the Sutra period, it must have necessitated in the minimum one thousand years. And from the structure of its language and the tenor of its contents, it is easily discernible that the Rig-Veda is a collection of hymns of different ages. For in the tenth Mandala we find that the Aryas had reached the Ganges and caste was in a formative stage as is evidenced by the Purusha-sutram. As the first stream of Arya immigrants to the Shapta-shindu was of a nomadic pastoral people, haughty and exclusive, believing and worshipping the same gods, speaking the same language, hating intensely the Dasyus, whom they exterminated or drove beyond the Vindyas and whose land they appropriated, the formation of caste must have needed a few centuries to abate this hate and to make intermarriage between the conquerors and the conquered possible, especially when they brought with them their wives and daughters. This gives us a latitude between three to five centuries. So it is probable that the Rig-Veda was fixed between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries B. C.

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\* Laksman Sarup : The Nighantu and the Nirukta, p. 54

When did they begin to compose the hymns or rather when did they begin to reach Sapta-shindavas? This is more uncertain. However we find in the Rig-Veda, the epithet Asura given to Indra, (I. 3. 10) to Agni (I. 3. 7), to Varuna etc. We find also the golden *mana* mentioned (VIII. 67. 2).\*

We know that Ashur was the patron deity of the Assyrians when they conquered Babylonia in the 14th century B. C.—the title Ashur was given to the southern gods, Marduk and Nebo, meaning lord or leader. Mina or Mana was the Babylonian coin as well as measure.

The nearest kinsfolk of the Aryas, the Iranians had also as their national god Ahura-Mazda, possibly a corrupted form of the Babylonian god, whom they, after the Assyrian conquest, designated as Ashura Marduk. The Iranians lacking sibilant in their tongue, *Ashura* could be easily converted into their language into *Ahura*. And Ashura-Mazda had also the same function as the Marduk. Ashura Marduk and Ashura-Mazda were both solar deities, almost equivalent to vedic Varuna or Greek Uranos or Ouranos, the god of the sky. Marduk is addressed as the “shining one”, “the resplendent heavens” and he also like Ahura-Mazda receives the attributes of other gods, as the supreme ruler of all creation and gods. Here is a striking hymn to Ashura Marduk :—

“I pay homage to thy name, O Marduk,  
the strong one of the gods,  
The ruler of heaven and earth,  
Glorious being, who alone is supreme,

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\* *A no bhara vyanjanam gam asvam abhyanjanam sachamana hiranyaya.*

Thou possessest the power of Anu, the power of Enlil,  
the power of Ea—rulership and majesty,  
Thou art in control of all wisdom, perfect in strength,  
Circumspect counsellor, lofty ruler, powerful and mighty,  
Whose rule Anu praised as a preparation for the conflict.  
In heaven thou art supreme, on earth thou rulest,  
wise counsellor,  
Founder of all settlements, who holds the ends of  
the starry heavens in his grasp.”\*

And compare this with the utterance of Ahura-Mazda in Zend Avesta, where he says :—

"I maintain that sky, there above, shining and seen afar and encompassing the earth all around. It looks like a palace that stands built of a heavenly substance, firmly established, with ends that lie afar, shining in its body of ruby over the three-thirds (of the earth); it is like a garment inlaid with stars, made of a heavenly substance, that Mazda puts on, along with Mithra and Rashnu and Spenta-Armaiti, and on no side can the eye perceive the end of it". Yast XIII. 4.

Who else could he be but Marduk or Varuna, who puts on the dress of the far-encompassing sky inlaid with stars and in Yasna I. II, we find the more convincing proof, where *the resplendent Sun, him of the rapid steeds, the eye of Ahura-Mazda* is mentioned as his distinct attribute? And in a bas relief of Persepolis, Ahura Mazda is represented, as hovering in the air, on a solar disk with radiating streamers, holding in his right hand something like an open lotus flower.† In the Assyrian

\* Craig : Assyrian-Babylonian Religious Texts, p. 29-31.

† Coste et Flandin: *Perse Ancienne*, Pl. 156. Lenormant, Vol. V. p. 485.

sculptures Assur is also represented as floating in the air, on a solar disc with radiating streamers, exactly like Ahura Mazda, only the appearance of Assur is more martial and instead of holding a lotus in his hand, he holds bow and arrow, as befitting the patron deity of the warlike people like the Assyrians.\*

But the god Ashur did not become prominent as to command respect before 2100 B. C., if not much later, as the thorough German excavation at Assur has shown. In the Tell el-Amarna finding the Cassite king of Babylon reproaches Amenophis IV. with recognising Ashur-uballit as an independent king of Assyria. As Assyria was a vassal state of Babylon, it indicates that in the fifteenth century B. C. she was gaining in power as to be able to assert her independence.† In the latter part of the century, the Cassite ruler Karaindash was compelled to make a treaty with the Assyrian king Ashur-rimnishesu to respect the boundary as fixed between them. But the scale was soon turned and Assyria herself assumed the role of aggressor. And this was brought about through the marriage of the Assyrian princess Muballiat-Sherua, the daughter of Ashur-uballit (1380-1350 B. C.) with Karakhardash, the Babylonian king. This unholy alliance enraged the public sentiment to such an extent that they murdered the offspring of this marriage. This gave the pretext to the Assyrian king Ashur-uballit to attack Babylonia to avenge the murder of the grandson. Thus commenced the Assyrian empire and the portrait of Ashur appeared

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\* Botta and Flandin : Les monumens de Nineve, Vol. II. Pl. 158.

† Knudtzon : Die. El-Amarna = tafeln.

on the top of Assyrian standards and was carried along on military expeditions and borne in the midst of the fray to symbolise the presence of the patron deity. After the supremacy of Assyria, Ashur gradually absorbed the attributes of other gods and even the epithet Ashur meaning *lord* or *leading* was given to the ancient Babylonian deities.

From this it is evident that the Aryas in Iran and Shapta-shindhavas could not borrow the epithet Ashura to their gods before 2100 B. C.

In the Rig-veda in the earlier collection of hymns, Asura is a noble appellation to the gods; but later on it is an infamous designation of the Dasyus. This can only be explained on the theory that a second Aryan immigration came from the northern Euphrates valley in the Arrat region and as they hated the Assyrians which we have shown in the Mitanni-Hittite treaty tablet, they attributed the god of their enemies *Ashur* as an evil demon to the new enemies *Dasyus* they were confronted with in the land of their adoption. And they had not much difficulty in coming. The ancient world was not so restricted in its communication as it is supposed. Babylonians had a sea-going fleet in 2300 B. C. (The Code of Hammurabi). Egypt had a splendid fleet in the Red Sea under queen Hatasu (about 1530 B. C.) and in the bas-reliefs of the temple of Ammon at Tell el-Bahiri near Thebes, those magnificent sea-vessels were depicted marvellously, with crews and masts and with minute details and they can be still seen there at the present day.

Even in the Rig-Veda, I. 116. 3-5, we find that Bhujyu was rescued from a ship-wreck by a hundred-

oared vessel, thus clearly indicating that the sea voyage was known in the Vedic time. In the Baveru Jataka\* it is mentioned that Hindu merchants exported peapocks to Baveru. And Baveru has been identified with Babylon.†

In a Hittite inscription have been recently found the Sanskrit odd numerals from one to seven in the forms of *aika*, *tiera*, *pansa* and *satta* in close vicinity to the cuneiform signs of these numerals by wedge count and in a composition with the word *virtana* which in Sanskrit means horse.‡ It is true that the Hittite language is not clearly Indo-Aryan, but that the people were proto-Aryan is unmistakeably proven by their national gods as Mitra, Varuna, Indra.§ Emil Farrer thinks that the proto-Aryans crossed the Caucasus from the border-land of the Caspian sea and entered into the Hittite land about 2500 B. C. And their language by absorption was a synthesis of eight speeches, Summerian, Akkadian, primitive Aryan, Harian, Proto-Hittite, Luvian and Pataic.||

These Aryans who came from Mesopotamia possibly also brought with them the idea of *Dig-vijay* the conquest of four regions, for we find Naram-sin about 3750 B. C. took up the title of "the king of four regions" after

\* Fausboll : Jatakas, Vol. III. p. 126

† Babylonian and Oriental Record, Vol. III. p. 7.

‡ Jensen : Sitzungsber. der preuss. Akad. 1919, P. 367 ; Sommer : Hethitisches : Boghaskoi-Studien, 4 Heft, 111 Stuck, 1 Lieferung 1, p. 2.

§ Higo Uinckler : Mittheilungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft. No. 35 ; Carl J. S. Marstrander : Caractere Indo-Europeen de la Langue Hittite. Christiania, 1919.

|| Emil Farrer : Die acht Sprachen der Boghaskoi-Inscriben : Sitzungber. der preuss. Akad. 1918, p. 1036



bringing under his control Akkad, Subartu, Elam and Amurru which lay in south, north, east, and west respectively.

From the foregoing observations it can be reasonably inferred that the first batch of the Aryas reached Shapta-shindavas about 2500 B. C. and they were in constant communication with their kinsmen in Bactria and Iran or rather the whole territory between the Oxus and the Indus was settled by the Aryas, displacing the native Turanian population. The next body of the Aryas came through the sea-route and possibly landed at Darikapuri or Duravati which was then on the sea-shore.\* They were the empire makers. They built up powerful dynasties in the Madhya-desa. It is one of their princes of the Bharata tribe under the leadership of Rama who made a military excursion or rather a raid in southern India extending up to Lanka about 1500 B. C. and with the assistance of some local chiefs as Shugriva and Bivishana subdued the rest, thus spreading over India the Aryan culture and institutions. The third band of Aryans, led by the Pandavas about 1250 B. C. descended on the plains from the high mountain passes and in the sanguinary struggle for supremacy defeated the Kaurava rulers at Kurushketra.

The enervating climate, excessive fertility and wealth of the Gangetic plains and chiefly the Buddhistic influences which induced the Khatriya youths to give up their defensive weapons and to put on the peaceful yellow robe and enter into monstaries, where celibacy was enjoined, and the military profession was regarded unpious

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\* Sea-faring merchants mentioned in the Santi Parva, Ch 169.

and sinful, made India helpless against any foreign invasion. And from the northern gate began to pour fourth the deluge of foreign hordes. Firstly came the Yavanas (the Ionians), whose contact exerted the only beneficent influence India ever received from any foreign invasion. But the martial strength of India was not yet sapped of its vitality ; roused by the shock, she soon drove the invader out of the country.

Then about 150 B. C. came the terrible Sakas. It was a mixed race of Turki, Tartar, Mongol and Iranian tribes. According to the Chinese chronicle about the second century B. C. Yueh-chi a Turki tribe attacked by a Mongol tribe Wu-san migrated southwards and overran the peaceful kingdom of Tohai, Tochari, or Asoi of Strabo, a peace-loving pious Buddhist community, inhabiting what is now known as Khotan Daria speaking an Indo-Aryan tongue *Arshi* and using Kharosthi as their alphabet. They soon extended their domination over Parthia and Bactria. They were known then to the Chinese as Sai-wang, which means the same thing as the Sanscrit Suka-muranda, that is Saka lords. Within a few years Afghanistan and northern India came under their control and they established satrapies at Taksha-sila, Mathura and in Kathiwar. They were succeeded by a Bactrian clan Kue-shuang, known in Indian history as Kushana, of which Kanishka was a famous Buddhist ruler. The Kushan empire was vast and extensive. It included the whole Central Asian plateau. A Parthian clan also came after them and they are known as Pahlavas.

But as soon as the softening influence of Buddhism was acting on them and they identified their destiny with that

of India and gradually became absorbed in the populace, then came a greater scourge, the invasion of the Scythians. They overran eastern Europe as well as the whole central and western Asia. They were ferocious nomads living on horse back, wearing skin-dress out of the frayed skins of their fallen enemies and making drinking cups out of their skulls, and all their savage barbarities have been minutely described by Herodotus in his fourth book. It is also corroborated by a few passages of Hippocrates in his celebrated book *Peri æron. gdaton, topon* (17-23).

Who were these vicious Scythians? It has been as yet an ethnological mystery. All that we know is that they lived a nomadic life on the Russian steppes bordering the Caspian. We also know there have been great displacements and migrations, exterminations as well as absorptions of races in central and western Asia. Races are all mixed. Of course no pure race could be found, but here it is more confounded. The Scythians spoke an Iranian-Ugrian dialect and they caused rapine, carnage and destruction where-ever they went. They were not fit for a settled, civilized progressive life. Perhaps the Scythians were a mixture of Mongol, Tartar, Slavish, Ural-altic, Median and Iranian tribes. They were also known as *White Huns*. About 495 A. D. these rapacious hordes reached India. It is a general impression that Buddhism was rooted out of India by fanatical Brahmanism. It is far from truth. There has not been any religious war. The fact is that Mahirgula, a Scythian overlord in northern India, took it as his amusement to pillage and spoliation of the monasteries, massacre of the monks and the brutality and violation of the Bhikshunis (nuns). Thus Buddhism

was driven out of India. And the infuriated, but helpless populace felt the necessity of the re-organisation of the Khatriyas to rid the country of these foreign monsters. And under the leadership of the Brahmins this was achieved. A confederacy led by Narsingha-Gupta of Magadha and Jasho-dharman of Central India defeated Mihirgula and took him prisoner. He was sent out of India and his brother seized his throne at Sakala. The king of Cashmir invited him to be his guest, but by treachery dethroned him and obtained again the possession of the whole kingdom of Gandhara. And India was free from any foreign invasion for a few centuries and the Hindu social organisation was still strong enough to absorb and assimilate these foreign barbaric tribes into her body politic. When during this respite, India was healing and recovering from her old wound and by the industry of her masses and the extraordinary fertility of her soil, there was peace and prosperity every where and art, literature and science were blooming, then a blighting curse poured from the north-western flood-gate which lay open—an irresistible deluge of frenzied, fanatical, vain, haughty and arrogant central Asian savage Mohamedan hordes of Tartar, Mongol, Turkish, Iranian and Afghan tribes. This time it was of no avail. These diabolically fiendish, bigoted fanatics could not be so easily humanised before their wild savage blood became slowly modified in the intercourse for centuries with the Hindus. So India lay prostrate, faint, bleeding at her conqueror's feet. After nearly a millennium she is giving signs of her revival.

From this it is evident that the population of India is

mixed as in every other country and its nationality is the synthesis of all races. It is the source of racial vitality. Inbreeding is a degenerative process. It is distinctly seen among the infusoria. In a few generations through fission which is its natural process of reproduction, it degenerates into senile decadence; but sexual conjugation speedily rejuvenates it. So with the races. As the contact of the positive and the negative currents of electricity generate lightning flash, so in the amphimixis of racial germ-plasms, genius is born. America is the melting pot of all races and its tremendous nervous vitality and initiative is well recognised. The splendour of the Babylonian civilisation was due to the mixture of the Akkadian and Sumerian races with the Semites. The brilliancy of the Greek intellect was due to the mixing of the Aryans with the Pelasgians. Even so with the modern races.

The English people is composed of the ethnic stocks of the Iberians, Celts, Jutes, Angles, Saxons, Danes, Normans and Nordic races.

In the blood of the French course the following ethnic elements :—Aquitaniens, Iberians, Silures, Basques, Vascons, Suets, Libici, Srdonians, Conqueraniens, Bituriges, Arvernes, Pictons, Cambolectes, Agenisises, Andegades, Carnutes, Venets, Curiosolites, Osismiens, Abricantuens, Auleries, Lexoviens, Lingones, Helvètes, Vandales, Alains, Taifales, Agathyrse, Ruthenes, Poles, Venedes, Belgians, Cimbres, Visigoths, Francs, Burgondes, Saxons, Germans, Sueves, Phœnicians, Saracens, Jews, Etruscans, Pelasgians, Avars, Cumans, Etc.

Italian population is no less mixed. The autochthonous population Sicanes and Liburnes were pure negroes. And

they were conquered by Pelasgians with their numerous subdivisions, the Messapinians, the Peucetion, Oinotres, the Opisques, the Iapyges and the Apulian. The Etruscans who inhabited the central part of Italy were in every probability the northern branch of the Pelasgians. Then came the Longobards, the Byzantins, the Gauls, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Goths, Vandals, Scythians, the Germans, Spainards, the Normans, the Jews, the Slavs, the Saracens, etc.

The provincial types of the Indian Population can be classified as the following if that designation is permissible. For if the Punjabi is more robust, tall, martial and has fairer complexion than the Marhatta or the Bengalee, it can be explained on the principle that living in an arid, salubrious climate, where the struggle for existence is very severe, it has naturally developed characteristics of vigour, and resistance. And though she has borne the brunt of the invader's first onrush yet she is more or less Indo-Aryan in type. The reason may be that the majority of the invaders have been Aryans and others could bring very few women with them over difficult mountain passes and desert waste to perpetuate a type and they were simply submerged in the masses. The Punjabi group comprises of the Cashmerians, Rajputs and Jats. Some anthropologists believe that the Jats, if not the Rajputs, have Scythian blood in them, for they are of predatory instinct and of ferocious nature. But they possess the distinct Aryan features, dolicho-cephalic head, tall delicate frame, leptorrhine nose, fine oval face, especially in the upper stratum, where there has not been admixture of the Bhil blood.

The Hindustanee type is met in the Jamuna-Gangetic

basin (madhya-desa), Oudh, and Behar (Maghadha). It is a mixture of the second class of Aryans, that migrated from Mesopotamia, settled and developed in the Madhya-desa powerful kingdoms and extended the Aryan power and influence in the South (Daskhina-desa) under the leadership of the Bharata clan, with the autochthonous Dravidians. The Aryan blood predominates in the upper classes and is very much attenuated in the lower.

The Gujrati is a mixture of the Aryan that landed at Dvaravati (in Kathiwar) with the Dravidian and slightly with the Scythian. We know that Toramana (490-515 A. D.) son of Lakhan Udayaditya, the Scythian chief (the Chinese name Laelih) who wrested the northern Indian kingdom from the Kushans and established his capital at Sakala, founded a powerful kingdom in Gujrat and Rajputana. In Sind there is more Dravidian blood and a slight touch of the sea-faring Semitic Arab.

The Marhattas, the Kunvis and the Kurgs are regarded as Scytho-Dravidian. We know very little how the Scythian wave of invasion spent itself. Perhaps as marauding horsemen they spread their seed broadcast, but was before long engulfed in the immensity of the population without leaving any distinct trace. Their guerilla-fighting spirit, contending nature, sourish temper, obstinacy and self-sufficient egoism are regarded by some as sure indications of their Scythian origin. But these are simply psychological traits, quite independent of any racial descent. And the Marhattas (Maharastras) are devoted Hindus, earnest Sanscrit scholars and have a passionate love of the country, which speaks of a deeper Aryan tradition, if not of the blood.

The Dravida (the southern India) is chiefly inhabited

by the Dravidian population, having a slight strain of Aryan blood in the upper classes and in the lower of the aboriginal population, known as Veddas in Ceylon, Pariahs in the south, Kols, Bhils, Santals and various other designations in different parts of the country.

Bengal has perhaps the most mixed population of any other part of India. The upper classes, Brahmins, Kayasthas and Baidyas are principally Dravidian with Mongoloid (Tibeto-Burman) admixture and with slight trace of the Aryan blood in them. The lower stratum of the society consists of the admixture of the Dravidian with the Kolarian.

In this wonderful variety and richness lies the tenacious vitality and the unique power of assimilation and resistance to foreign encroachment and the historic continuity of her consciousness. If the Rajputs and the Marhattas are really of Scythian descent, nothing is more needed to express its triumphant mechanism. For they have been and are the most staunch and militant Hindus. In the darkest period of India's history, threatened by an ever-victorious, terrible, cruel and remorseless foe of savage Central Asian hordes, against odds, they fought and fought bravely and never gave up to fight for the integrity of their faith and the liberty of their country.

From time immemorial the whole of Bharata-Bharsa including Tambrapana (Ceylon) has been regarded as a sacred land, undivided and indivisible and it has been always a geographic, ethnic, economic, religio-social entity. The Hindu kingdoms might have fought each other for supremacy, but they never wanted to fight for anything outside the country, nor did they confine



their subjects to the compressed limitation of their states, or fostered narrow provincial patriotism. The interest of the whole of India has been the special concern of all Hindu legislators, prophets and reformers, and not only a particular section of it. The heart of India has ever been vibrant to the achievement and success of any of its component parts and has rejoiced and prided it as its own. The intellectual centres like Banarasi, Pataliputra, Champak, Nalanda, Takshasila, Ujjani attracted the students alike from every part of India. The Hindu religion moreover prescribed pilgrimages to every part of India as a system of general education and love of the land. India to them was the living goddess-mother; her head crowned by the majestic tiara of the Himalayan silvery crest; her feet washed by the limpid waters of the ocean; she extends her arms over the whole continent as a blessing for her children.

The Vayu Purana (104. 79-82) compares the country as a god:—"He (Vyasa) found Mathura, where Bhagaban Hari himself incarnated in their lotus-like hearts; Kasi resembling Maya (illusion) in the receptacle between the eye-brows; Kanchi in the organ of generation; Avanti in the navel; Dvarika in the throat; Pryaga in the chin; the rivers Ganga and Jamuna on their left and right; the Sarasvati herself in the middle; Gaya in the face; the good place Praphosa between the jaw and the neck; the hermitage of Badari in the the aperture in the crown of the head; the Pithas Pandu-Vardhana and Nepala in the two eyes; the Pitha called Pura-Nagari on the forehead; Mathura Pitha in the neck; Kanchi Pitha in the loin; Jalhendu Pitha

on the breast ; Bhrigu Pitha in the ear ; and Auddhyu in the nostril. Brahma was the aperture of the crown of the head, Siva in the parting of the hair, Sakti in the end of the tongue, Vishnu in the heart, Surya in the eyes and Buddha was attached to the shadow."

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### III.

#### MYTHS.

According to the Sumerian legend, in the beginning of time, a watery chaos alone existed, *Mummu Tiamat, the chaos of the deep*. Out of this primeval chaos, first spring up the divinities Lakhmu and Lakhamu, the meaning of which is not yet understood. Then appeared An-sar and Ki sar, the upper and the lower firmament. Then came Anu, a solar deity who later became the god of the entire heaven. Enlil starting as a storm-god, became later god of the earth. Ea became the god of the *watery deep* and the aquatic element in general. These three gods, representing the heaven, the earth and the water ruled the universe and were supreme over the lower gods and spirits known as Annunaki and Igigi. They appointed Marra-Dugga or Merodach ( Marduk ) the sun-god, the first-born of Ea, to bring order out of chaos and transferred to him their right of universal rule. It seems that Marduk was a late comer and re-placed the ancient gods. However as the legend goes, Marduk the god of light fought with the monster Tiamat who ruled over chaos and darkness and slew him after a heroic battle. Out of his skin the visible heaven was made for the habitation of Anu, Enlil and Ea. And under the lordship of Ea the rough sea became law-abiding and navigation became possible. In the heavens sumptuous mansions were built for the Sun, the moon, stars and planets so that they become bound by fixed laws and thus regulate the calendar and determine the year. Then vegetables, birds, fish,

reptiles and animals were created and lastly man to rule over them all. And out of the rib of man, woman was made to keep him content.

Though no temptation-story has yet been found among the Babylonian tablets, yet a Babylonian cylinder has been brought to light, in which persons are pictured under a serpent near by.\* And the Sumerians represented Tiamat, as a monstrous dragon, the serpent of the sea, the serpent of darkness, the wicked serpent and the mighty and strong serpent †

The deluge story is very ancient. The gods brought it about to punish man for his unthankfulness to the gods. Their anger was appeased at the appeal of the mother-goddess who was sorely grieved at the loss of her children. The older tablets are partially damaged. But the entire eleventh tablet of the Gilgamesh epic is devoted to it and the composition of which is not less old than 4000 years, and it follows thus :—

“Gilgamesh speaks to him, to Utnapishtim, the far removed : ‘I gaze at thee, Utnapishtim ! Thy appearance is not different. As I am, so art thou. Thou art completely ready for the fray.....thou hast placed upon thee. (Tell me) how thou didst enter into the assembly of the gods and secure life’.”

“I will reveal to thee, Gilgamesh, a secret story, and the decision of the gods I will tell thee. The city Shuruppak, a city thou knowest, (the one that) lies on the Euphrates, that city was old, and the gods thereof induced the great gods to bring a cyclone over it ; it

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\* Paul Carus : The history of the Devil, P. 35.

† Ibid. P. 34.

was planned (?) by their father Anu, (by) their counsellor, the warrior Enlil, (by) their herald Ninib, (by) their leader Rn-nugi. The lord of the brilliant vision, Ea was with them."

He repeated their decision to the reed-hut, where Utnapishtim dwelt. The primitive civilisation did not advance yet farther than reed-cottages.

'Reed-hut, reed-hut, wall, wall, Reed hut hear ! Wall, give ear ! O man of Shuruppak, son of Ubara-Tutu, Break up the house, build a ship, Abandon your property, seek life ! Throw aside your possession and preserve life ! Bring into the ship seed of all living things ! The ship that thou shalt built, let its dimensions be measured, (so that) its breadth and length be made to correspond. On a level with the deep, provide it with a covering (deck)."

"I understood and spoke to Ea, my lord : (The command) of my lord which thou hast commanded and I have understood (it), I will carry out. (But what) shall I answer the city, the people and the elders ? Ea opened his mouth and spoke : Spoke to me his servant. '(As answer) thus speak to them : (Know that) Enlil has conceived hatred towards me, so that I can no longer dwell (in your city). (On) Enlil's territory I dare no longer set my face. Therefore I go to the *deep* to dwell with Ea, my lord. (Catch of) bird, catch of fish, and.....rich crops."

.....Undecipherably damaged here.....

"On the fifth day, I designed its outline. According to the plan (?), the walls were to be ten Gar high. Correspondingly, ten Gar (120 cubits) the measure of its width. I determined upon its shape (and) drew it. I

weighted it six-fold. I divided (the superstructure ?) into seven parts. Its interior I divided into nine parts. Water-plugs I constructed in the interior. I selected a pole and added accessories. Six Sar of asphalt I poured on the outer wall. Three Sar of pitch (I poured) on the inner wall. Three Sar the workmen carried away in their baskets. Of oil, the boatmen secreted two Sar of oil."

"All that I had loaded on her. • All that I had of silver I loaded on her. All that I had of gold I loaded on her. All that I had of living beings I loaded on her. I brought to the ship all my family and household ; Cattle of the field, beasts of the field, all the workmen I brought on board."

"Shamash had fixed me time, 'when the rulers of darkness (?) at evening time were to cause a terrific rain-storm step into the ship and close the door !' The fixed time approached, when the rulers of darkness (?) at evening time to cause a terrific rain-storm. I recognised the symptoms of (such) a day, a day for the appearance of which I was in terror. I entered the ship and closed the door. To steer the ship, to Puzur-Kurgal, the boatman, I entrusted the palace (boat) together its cargo. As morning dawned, there arose on the firmament of heaven black clouds, Adad thundered therein ; Nabu and Lugab marched in advance, Ira tears out the ship's pole. Ninib marches commanding the attack, the Anunnali lift torches, illuminating the land with their sheen, Adad's roar reaches to heaven, all light is changed into darkness.

.....  
One day the hurricane raged.....storming furiously.....  
coming like combat over men. Brother sees ~~not~~ brother.  
Those in heaven do not know one another. The gods

are terrified at the cyclone, they flee and mount to the heaven of Anu; the gods crouch like dogs in an enclosure. Ishtar cries aloud like one in birth throes, the mistress of the gods howls aloud: 'That day be turned to clay (cursed with destruction) when I in the assembly of the gods decreed evil; That I should have decreed evil in the assembly of the gods! For the destruction of my people should have ordered a combat! Did I bring forth my people, that like fish they should fill the sea?' All the Anunnaki weep with her. The gods sit down, depressed and weeping. Their lips are closed..... Six days and nights the storm, cyclone (and) hurricane continued to sweep over the land. When the seventh day approached, the hurricane and cyclone ceased the combat, after having fought like warriors (?). The sea grew quiet, the evil storm abated, the cyclone was restrained. I looked at the day and the roar had quieted down. And all mankind had turned to clay. Like an enclosure.... had become. I opened a window and light fell on my face, I bowed down and sat down and wept, tears flowed over my face. I looked in all directions of the sea. At a distance of twelve an island appeared. At mount Nisir the ship stood still. Mount Nisir took hold of the ship so that it could not move. One day, two days, Mount Nisir (salvation) took hold of the ship, etc. Three days, four days, Mount Nisir took hold of the ship, etc. Five days, six days, Mount Nisir, etc. When the seventh day arrived, I sent forth a dove letting it free. The dove went hither and thither; not finding a resting place, it came back. I sent forth a raven, letting it free. The raven went and saw the decrease of the waters. It ate, croaked (?) but did not

turn back. Then I let all out to the four regions and brought an offering I brought a sacrifice on the mountain top. Seven and seven, *adagur* jars I arranged. Beneath them I strewed reeds, cedar wood and myrtle. The gods smelled the odor. The gods smelled the sweet odor. The gods like the flies gathered around the sacrifice.

As soon as the mistress of the gods arrived, she raised on high the large necklace (?) which Anu had made according to his art. 'Ye gods, as surely as will not forget these precious stones at my neck, so I will remember these days—never to forget them. Let the gods come to the sacrifice, but let Enlil not come to the sacrifice. Because without reflection he brought on the cyclone, and decreed destruction for my people.' As soon as Enlil arrived, he saw the ship and was enraged. Filled with anger at Igigi. 'Who now has escaped with life? No man was to survive this destruction!' Ninib opened his mouth and spoke, spoke to the warrior Enlil, 'Who except Ea can plan any affair? Ea indeed knows every order.' Ea opened his mouth and spoke, spoke to the warrior Enlil: 'Thou art the leader (and) warrior of the gods. But why didst thou without reflection, bring on the cyclone? On the sinner impose his sin, on the evil-doer impose his evil, but be merciful not to root out completely, be considerate not (to destroy altogether)! Instead of bringing on a cyclone, lions might have come and diminished mankind. Instead of bringing on a cyclone, jackals might have come and diminished mankind. Instead of bringing on a cyclone, famine might have come and overwhelmed the land. Instead of bringing on a cyclone, Ira (pestilence) might have come and destroyed the land. I did not reveal the



oracle of the great gods, I sent Atrakhasis a dream and he understood the oracle of the god. Now take counsel for him.'

Enlil mounted the ship, took hold of my hand and led me up, led me up and caused my wife to kneel at my side, touched our foreheads, stepped between us (and) blessed us. 'Hitherto Utnapishtim was a man; Now Utnapishtim and his wife shall be on level with the gods. Utnapishtim shall dwell in the distance, at the confluence of streams.' Then they took me and settled me at the confluence of streams.'\*

It is true that man living in the post-glacial period was menaced by the overwhelming floods and so from the race-memory, it has entered into the legend of almost all races in one form or other. However it is evident that the Biblical narration of creation and deluge is almost a literal translation from the Sumerian legend. The Hindu version seems to be from the same origin. The earliest version of it is found in the Satyapatha Brahmana, where it is related that Manu, son of Vivasvat, found when bathing, a small fish which begged to be tended and in return promised to save him in the coming flood. The fish grew and grew and became so large that it had to be carried to the sea, where it revealed to Manu the time of the flood and bade him build a ship for his safety. 'When the flood came, Manu went on board. The grateful fish towed the ship in tempestuous sea to the summit of the northern mountain, where it bade Manu to bind the ship to a tree. When the

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\* Rendered into English by Morris Jastrow in his *Civilisation of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 445-452 from the German translation, Ungnad-Grassman : Das Gilgamesh-Epos.

water retreated, he descended the mountain and made a sacrifice to the gods. In a year, the goddess of fertility appeared and thus commenced the human race. In the Mahabharata, the gap is filled, Manu embarks with seven rishis and takes with him all kinds of seed. Manu also seems to be a generic name. Menes was the founder of the Egyptian and Cretan dynasties. According to Tacitus the Old Teutons had a deity as Manus, from which *Manusha* was derived standing latter for man. In Sanscrit both *Manava* and *Manushya* are derived from Manu and standing for mankind.

Enlil was virtually a storm-god. Enlil in Sumerian means "lord of the storm." His temple at Nippur is known as E-Kur, "Mountain House" and he is often addressed as the *great mountain*. Perhaps he was brought by the Ammorites ousting Ninib who became the *son of Enlil, offspring of Ekur*, or the storm came from the mountain region. And may be he stood for the river-embankments, which were essential for the agricultural development of the low-lands. There are many hymns ascribed to him, denoting his characteristics as the following :—

"Lord of the lands,  
Lord of the true word,  
Enlil, father of Sumer,  
Shepherd of the dark-headed people,  
Seeing through his own bower.  
Strong guide of (his) people,  
Causing multitude to dwell together."

"The word which rages in the heavens above,  
The word (thunder ?) which causes the earth below  
to quake  
The word which strikes terror among the Anunnaki."



on the land, throw his decision, who seizes the demon Ti'u and drives him back to his place. Merciful one, granting life, bringing the dead to life, who controls right and justice, destroying evil (?) Whose active weapon destroys all enemies."\*

As a solar deity, Ninib was very dominant. For he absorbed Ningirsu, the patron solar-god of Lagash and his consort Bau also became identified with Gula, the consort of Ninib. But as the French proverb goes that the appetite grows with eating, so Ninib overtakes one solar deity after another, Zamama of Kish and Urash of Dilbat. But the Akkadian Shamash of Sippar proved too strong for him. And his temple E-Babbar (resplendent house) remained very popular for centuries. He is addressed thus :—

"O lord, illuminator of the darkness, opening the face  
(of heaven ?)

Merciful god, raising the humble, protecting the weak ;  
For thy light the great gods wait,  
All the Anunnaki look for thy appearance,  
All tongues dost thou direct as a single being.  
With raised heads they look expectantly towards the  
sunlight ;

Thou art the light for the remotest bound of heaven,  
The banner for the wide earth art thou ;  
All mankind look upon thee with joy."†

"O Shamash, on thy entrance into the heavens,  
May the resplendent bolts of the heaven greet thee,

\* Jensen : *Kosmologie der Babylonier*, P. 470. Ninib destroys the demons of disease, and in that sense he brings the dead to life.

† Rawlinson, IV. Pl. 19.



sacrifices for the gods, founder of cities, Guide of the sources, opener of fountains, Lord of lands, king of heaven and earth, granting prosperity, God without whom in the depth the fate of mankind is not determined. Thou lookest on the inhabitants of the wicked and destroyest their power. What god in heaven or earth is like to thee ? Supreme art thou over all gods ; Among the gods thy counsel prevails ; Thou art superior to Ea, the father who produced thee.”\*

Marduk even absorbs the thunder and the storm god Adad or Raman and uses his lightning fork, as an instrument (trident) in his conflict with Tiamat †

“Who can escape thy gaze ?

Thy word (the roar of thy thunder) is a great

net stretching over heaven and earth ;

It encloses the sea and the sea is stirred up,

It encloses the marsh and the marsh groans,

It encloses the billows of the Euphrates.

The word of Marduk troubles the river bed (?)

Lord, thou art supreme, who is like unto thee ?

Marduk, among all the great gods thou art supreme.”\*

The following hymn illustrates the power and monotheistic conception centered in Marduk, as he began to absorb the traits of other gods :—

Ea is the Marduk of Canals ;

Ninib is the Marduk of strength ;

\* Scheil : Une Saison de fouilles à Sippar, P. 97.

† Layard : Monuments of Nineveh. Vol. II. Pl. 5. Morris Jastrow : *Aspects of religious belief and practice in Babylonia and Assyria*, P. 92. Pl. 15, Fig. 1.

‡ Morris Jastrow : *The Civilisation of Babylonia and Assyria*. P. 214.

Nergel is the Marduk of war ;  
 Zamana is the Marduk of battle ;  
 Enlil is the Marduk of sovereignty and control ;  
 Nebo is the Marduk of possession ;  
 Sin is the Marduk of illumination of night ;  
 Shamsh is the Marduk of judgments ;  
 Adad is the Marduk of rain ;  
 Tishpak is the Marduk of host ;  
 Gal is the Marduk of strength ;  
 Shukamunu is the Marduk of the harvest.\*

The courts were generally located in the temples of Marduk, for he absorbed the function of the god Shamash and a hymn to him makes him the heavenly judge :—

The progeny of those who deal unjustly will not prosper.  
 What their mouth utters in thy presence  
 Thou wilt destroy, what issues from their mouth thou  
 wilt dissipate  
 Thou knowest their transgressions, the plan of the wicked  
 thou rejectest.  
 All whoever they be are in thy care ;  
 Thou directest their suit, those imprisoned thou dost  
 release ;  
 Thou hearest, O Shamash, petition, prayer and imploration.  
 He who takes no bribe, who cares for the oppressed  
 Is favoured by Shamash—his life shall be prolonged.†

Nabu or Nebo was regarded as the son of Marduk. But there are reasons to believe that he was a rival god of

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\* Cuneiform Texts. xxiv, Pl. 50. Tishpak and Gal are foreign Elamite deities and Shukamunu, Cassite).

† Morris Jastrow: Aspects of religious belief in Babylonia, P. 112.







"To Ashur, the king of the totality of the gods, his  
 own creation, father of the gods,  
 Whose power is unfolded in the deep, king of heaven  
 and earth,  
 Lord of all gods, controller of the Igigi and Anunnaki,  
 Creator of the heaven of Anu and of the world below,  
 creator of mankind,  
 Dwelling in the resplendent heavens,\* Enlil of the gods,  
 determiner of fates,  
 Dwelling in E-sharra in Ashur for his lord,  
 Sennacherib, king of Assyria has made an image of  
 Ashur."\*

Of course it goes without saying that as every man had a wife or as the popular saying goes that every lad has his lassie, so every god had his consort, though they often lacked individual distinction and shone only in the reflected glory of their husbands. Anu had as his consort Antum (simply feminine derivative of Anu in Sumerian language); Ea had Dam-kina (the faithful spouse); Enlil, Ninlil (the lady of the storm); Ninib, Gula (the great one); Ningirsu, Bau; Nergal, Laz; Shamash, Ah; Marduk, Sarpanit (the great lady); Adad, Shala (the lady); Nebo, Tashmit (obedience) and Ashur's consort was addressed differently as Ninlil, Belit or Ishtar. She appears under various names, such as Nana, Innanna, Nina, Anunit, Nini, Irnini. But all these names mean the same thing *the lady* as the Akkadian Belit or the Assyrian Ishtar, the feminine of Ashur, meaning *leader*. The name Ishtar is really a generic term for goddess, for we find its plural *ishtarati* meaning goddesses. Ishtar is the only

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\* Craig. Assyrian and Babylonian religious Texts' I, Pl. 83.

goddess whether as the consort of all-powerful Marduk of the south, or Ashur of the north is not a mere shadow of her husband. In all the great centres Ishtar had her magnificent temples, bearing such designations as E-anna (heavenly house), at Erech, E-makh (great house) in Babylon, E-mash-mash (house of offering) in Nineveh. She was called *light of heaven and earth, the shining torch of heaven* perhaps because she was astrologically identified with the planet Venus. However from the beginning of the Babylonian conception of religion, she has been always regarded as the great mother-goddess and so worshipped everywhere in one form or the other. As Anunit, the consort of Anu, she symbolised the goddess-earth. The heavenly father Anu embraced her and deposited in her bosom the seed to be fertilized and fecundated and life sprang up in luxuriant growth of vegetation. By her intimacy with the water-god Ea, she presides over streams and canals. Becoming the mistress of the storm-god Enlil, she is a *controller of the clouds, a raging storm devastating heaven and earth*, whose voice *thunders over all the universe*. Being the consort of Marduk in turn she receives the characteristics of the great patron deity of Babylon. In an ancient hymn attached to a song of praise to Hammurabi (2200 B. C.) Ishtar is described as a deity who furnishes aid *in war and battle*. In many votive offerings, she is called '*the warlike Ishtar, the martial lady of victory, girded for the fray*.' Especially in association with the war-lord Ashur, reflecting the martial qualities of the Assyrians, she puts on a terrible sanguinary appearance with a quiver and an arrow. The following is a fine specimen of invocation of the great goddess :—

"I pray to thee, mistress of mistresses, goddess of goddesses,  
 Ishtar, queen of all inhabitants, guide of mankind,  
 Irnini praised be thou, greatest among the Igigi  
 Powerful art thou, ruler art thou, exalted is thy name,  
 Thou art the light of heaven and earth, mighty daughter  
 of Sin,  
 Thou directest the weapons, arrangest the battle array,  
 Thou givest commands, decked with the crown of  
 rulership,  
 O lady, resplendent is thy greatness, supreme over all gods.

.....  
 Where is thy name not ? Where is thy command not ?  
 Where are images of thee not made ? Where are thy  
 shrines not erected ?  
 Where art thou not great ? Where not supreme ?  
 Anu, Enlil and Ea have raised thee to mighty rulership  
 among the gods,  
 Have raised thee aloft and exalted thy station among all  
 the Igigi.  
 At the mention of thy name, heaven and earth quake,  
 The gods tremble, the Anunnaki quake.  
 To thy awe-inspiring name mankind gives heed,  
 Great and exalted art thou !  
 All dark-headed ones, living beings, mankind pay  
 homage to thy power."\*

In sculpture the most famous representation of Ishtar as the goddess of war is carved on a rock in the mountain of Batir (Zagros range), erected by Anu-banini, king of Lulubu, in commemoration of his victories and he represents himself putting his one foot on a prostrate

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\* King : Seven tablets of creation ; Vol. P. 222.

enemy, for the blessing of the goddess Inninna who armed with armour and helmet, bristling with quiver and arrows, puts her one foot on the fallen foe, drags another with her left hand by a chain hooked to the nose and extends her right hand as a blessing to the king.\* Ishtar as the mother-goddess, holding with her right hand in her bosom a baby who sucks her right breast while she places her left hand foldingly on the other breast has been found at Telloh and now in the Louvre (Catalogue, P. 356) and a similar figure has been obtained in Babylon.† Ishatar as the goddess of love, representing a nude figure with the accentuation of the feminine charms have been found throughout Mesopotamia and many of them are now in the Louvre and she also frequently appears so on seal-cylinders.‡

However it was not as a terrible grim Amazon (warrior-goddess) or as gracious mother-goddess, she was so popular, but as the charming and seductive goddess of love and generation. She was the passional force and the fertilising principle of nature. Passion, the bio-tropic impulse, is the motive and love (sexual union) is the cause of all origin and growth of life. So she was called *kadishtu* (the sacred prostitute) and her priestesses and votaries practised it in her honour, as Herodotus (I. 199)

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\* De-Morgan : *Mission Scientifique in Perse*, Vol. IV, Pl. 10. De Morgan et Schi I : *Le Recueil de Travaux*, Vol. XII. P. 100-106. Morris Jastrow : *The civilisation of Babylonia and Assyria*, Pl. 29. .

† Heuzey : *Figurines Antiques*, Pl. 2 : De Sarzec - Decouvertes, P. 254 ; M. Jastrow : cit.

‡ Heuzey : *Origines Orientales de l' Art*, P. II ; Ward : *Seal Cylinders of Western Asia*, Chap. 26.

mentions it as the Babylonian custom which prevailed as late as the third century B. C.

All the divinities of the Babylonian pantheon had their animal carriers. It is graphically inscribed in a rock-relief at Malatia in the Anti-Taurus range, showing seven deities mounted on animals that represent their symbols. The head of the procession is formed by Ashur on two animals one of which is the dragon, transferred to him from Enlil and Marduk, followed by his consort Ishtar of Neneveh on the lion, Sin the moon-god on the winged bull, Enlil or Marduk on the dragon, Shamash on a horse, Adad on a bull, Adad on a bull and holding the lightning fork in his hand and lastly another Ishtar on a lion, presumably, the Ishatar of Arbela.\* However the god Ashur is invariably followed by bulls and occasionally he holds in his hand a coiled serpent which was transferred to him from Marduk.†

The Sumerians divided the year into twelve months and each month was assigned to some god or gods. Thus the first month was dedicated to Anu and Enlil, the second to Ea, the third to Sin, the fourth to Ninib, the fifth to Ningishzida, the sixth to Ishtar, the seventh to Shamash, the eighth to Marduk, the ninth to Negal, the tenth to Nebo, the eleventh to Adad, the twelfth to Sibiti (Ashur).

Temple edifice was always located in Chaldea in the centre of the city, near the palace. It was the pulsating

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\* Layard : Monuments of Nineveh, Vol. I. Pl. 65 ; Place : Ninve et l' Assrie, Pl. 45 ; Luschan : Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli. P. 23 ; M. Jastrow ; Aspects of religious belief and practice in Babylonia and Assyria, Pl. 17.

† Botta et Flandin : Les Monuments de Ninive, Vol. II. Pl. 158.

centre of public life. Here round the enclosure which separated the inner sanctuary containing the deity on a raised pedestal, to which only the priests and the king had access and the courtyard thronged by the lay worshippers and pilgrims, who could only peep standing at the sacred image through the opening of the gate, here they laid their offerings, made their prayers and received the blessings of the priests. Grouped around it were the private apartments of the Barus (priests), the school, the quarters for apprentices, the tablet room (library), quarters for the tribunals, archive rooms, offices of the notaries and the scribes, workshop and booths for the manufacture of temple utensils, fabrics and votive offerings, store rooms for the various needs of this immense religious household, general office for the transaction of the temple business and the stalls for animals. The most striking feature of the temple structure was its Ziggurat (the mountain peak or stage tower). It consisted of several storeys, built one over the other, the upper storey in each case set back behind the lower in order to leave a terrace all around to provide space for the pilgrims to rest and to observe the panorama of the surrounding country and for the broad ascending stairs from storey to storey. Some had symmetrical stairs for ascent and descent. Some like the great temple at Ur had only three stages, others again seven—always one of the three sacred numbers, three corresponding to the divine triad; five to the five planets; seven to the five planets, the sun and the moon. On the top of it was the astronomical observatory and a small shrine of the deity which was accessible to all the pilgrims and its circumambulation was a necessary fulfilment of the pilgrimage. It was

regarded as the link between the heaven and the earth. It was the sacred mountain abode of the gods. The principal temples have been found by recent excavations in the following localities: "Abu Shahrain (Eridu); Mugheir (Ur); Senkera (Larsa); Warka (Erech); Tello (Eninnu); Birs Nimrud (Borsippa); Babil (Babylon); Nippur (Niffer); El Ohemir (Kish); Abu Happara (Sippara). Though of these Ziggurats, those at Warka, Nippur, and Tello are much older, the Temple of Borsippa at Birs Nimrud is in better preservation, having been restored by Nebuchadnezzar (604-561 B. C.). and may be taken as a typical example. The ground storey was 272 ft square and 45 ft high. The upper storeys or stages receded back, one behind the other so as to leave terrace and space for stairs all around. Although it is not possible to trace more than four storeys, it is known from a description on a cylinder found on the site that there were seven storeys, dedicated to the planets, each coloured with the special tint prescribed. The total height was about 160 ft and on the top was a shrine dedicated to the god Tebo."\*

"The ornamentation of the edifice was chiefly by means of colour. The seven stages represented the seven spheres, in which moved, according to ancient Chaldean astronomy, the seven planets. To each planet, fancy, partly grounding itself on fact, had from of old assigned a peculiar tint or hue. The Sun (Shamash) was golden; the Moon (Sin or Nannar) silver; the distant Saturn (Adar), almost beyond the region of light, was black; Jupiter (Marduk) was orange; the fiery Mars (Nergal)

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\* Encyclo. Brit. II. P. 374.



was red ; Venus (Ishtar) was pale yellow ; Mercury (Nebo or Nabu whose shrine stood on the top stage), deep blue. The seven stages of the tower gave a visible embodiment to these fancies. The basement stage assigned to Saturn, was blackened by means of a coating of bitumen spread over the face of the masonry ; the second stage assigned to Jupiter, obtained the appropriate orange colour by means of a facing of burnt bricks of that hue ; the third stage, that of Mars, was made blood-red by the use of half-burnt bricks formed of bright red clay ; the fourth stage assigned to the Sun, appears to have been actually covered with thin plates of gold ; the fifth, the stage of Venus, received a pale yellow tint from the employment of bricks of that hue ; the sixth, the sphere of Mercury, was given an azure tint by vitrification, the whole stage having been subjected to an intense heat after it was erected, whereby the bricks composing it were converted into a mass of blue slag ; the seventh stage, that of the moon, was probably like the fourth, coated with actual plates of metal. Thus the building rose up in stripe of yellow, the yellow being followed by the blue. Above this the glowing silvery summit melted into the bright sheen of the sky."\*

It was a very ancient custom in Sumer and which continued in force till the overthrow of the Babylonian empire, of devoting daughters of nobility to the temple service. Kings set the example. There were various

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\* Zenside A. Ragosin : *The Story of Chaldea*, P. 282. The passage is quoted from George Rawlinson : *Five Monarchies*, Vol. III. P. 380.

classes for them, from the high priestesses to mere apprentices who kept the sanctuary in order and did other duties. They were generally designated as *entu* (woman of a deity). They could not enter into regular marriage. For they were *kadishtu* (holy woman or sacred prostitute) and they were dedicated to the service of the gods. However they should not be confounded with the *zermashitu* who were regular public prostitutes, though their calling was not so degraded as it is to-day.\*

The most popular religious festival was the New year's celebration. It was regarded in Lagash as the union-time of the sun-god Ningirsu with his consort Bau, the goddess mother-earth, the male and the female principles of nature and from their congress issued the new life pulsating throughout the earth in the joyous spring time. And the people gave themselves up with utter abandon after their gods. In Babylon where Marduk absorbed so many complex traits of various gods and headed the pantheon, the ceremony was more elaborate and magnificent. The gods are brought in solemn procession to pay their homage in common with the populace to their over-lord enthroned in E-sagila. Nebu comes from Borsippa to bring tribute to his father and acts as the secretary of the gods in the *sacred chamber of fates* where for ten days the assembled gods decide the destiny of mankind for the coming year. But in Babylon as the spring time was the most arduous season for tilling and sowing and agriculture being the

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\* Frank : Studien zur Babylonischen Religion, P. 47-50 ; Dhorme : La fille de Nabonide, Revue d'Assriologie, Vol. XI. 105-117 ; Zimmern : Shurpu Series, Tablet V—VI, 145—147 ; M. Jastrow : The civilisation of Babylonia and Assyria, P. 308.

basic foundation of prosperity and well-being and ten days' abstention from labour being too much, the vernal festival was curtailed and it was renewed after the harvesting was done with general merriment, and it really became the national institution. These two festivals fell on the Vernal and the Autumnal Equinoxes which fall generally about March 21 and September 22. However though the harvest festival was really of popular rejoicing and merriment and in every sense of far more significance, the official calender year was calculated from the *vernal equinox*.\*

Shiva is essentially a Dravidian god. He entered late into the Brahmanic pantheon, of which he is almost now the supreme head and has become Maha-deva (the great god.). In the Rig-veda there is no mention of Shiva, except Rudra the terrible thunder-god, the father of Marutas (storms). The name of Shiva with Rudra has been associated only in the Puranic Period. Of course in the Yajur he is represented as a destructive deity, god of thieves and criminals and in the Atharva he is transformed into Girisha, Tamra, Aruna, Babru from the dark-blue colour of the clouds; for the same reason he is also called Nilakantha (blue-necked), Kapardhin (long-haired), Pasupati (protector of animals), Sankara (benefactor) and Shiva (the beneficent). In the Satyapatha Brahmana II. 6. 2. 9, there is an association of Rudra with Ambika in the following manner. "This is thy share, O Rudra, graciously accept it with thy sister Ambika." In the

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\* Weidner : *Alter und Bedeutung der Babylonischen Astronomie und Astrallehre*, P. 31; M. Jastrow : *Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, Vol. II. P. 462; M. Jastrow : *The Civilisation of Babylonia and Assyria*, P. 279.

same book, (Satyapatha Brahmana II. 4. 4. 6) one Daksa Parvati is also mentioned performing a great sacrifice. In the Kena Upanishad a learned female scholar Uma Himavati explains to Indra the nature of Brahman. In the Mandaka Upanishad of the Atharvaveda, Kali, Karali Manojava, Sulohita, Sudhumarvarna, Sphulangini and Biasvarupi are mentioned as the seven tongues of Agni, with which Rudra is identified. In the Puranas they become his consorts and Shiva becomes positively identified with Rudra and is also called Bala-natha (Lord Bal).

This only indicates the gradually encroaching influence of the *Dasyus* over the religious conception of the *Arya* conquerors. But the fundamental fact remains that Shiva was called Lord Bal, the epithet given to Marduk, that he had the same emblem trident (trisol); that he is symbolised by *phallus* (lingam) like Baal (Marduk); that like him he has a consort who has three aspects, the terrible war-goddess Kali, the mother-goddess Durga (Uma) and the goddess of love and generation Shakti; that Durga has the same animal carrier *lion* as Ishtar; that both of them had bull as their carrier; that the new year and the festivities commenced and continued for ten days at the same vernal and autumnal equinox; that the *gopuram* and *ziggurat* are very similar in structure and the *devadasis* (temple maids) remind one unmistakably of the Sumerian *entu* (the woman of the deity). All these cannot be mere coincidences. As we have tried to show that the Dravidian has racial affinity with the Sumero-Akkadian race or perhaps belonging to a kindred stock from which both have originated and inheriting alike the ancestral legends and myths and which they have developed to their full extent in their respective countries after their separation, this

marvellous likeness of the religious institutions leads to the same conclusion.

In the proto-Aryan legend, the vedic *Dyaush-pitar* (Haven, the father), the Avestan Ahura Mazda, the Greek Zeus-Pater and the Latin Dies-Piter, Jupiter and later Deus, is the same. The Dyaush is the luminous sky, the glistening ether. He is the architect of the universe (Visvakarman), the parent of all things (janita), the broad earth-goddess (Prithivi) being the mother of his children. The pair is called the Dyava-Prithivi, and with Dyaush is always associated the epithet Asura. The Zend-Avestan Ahura Mazda can be also easily traced as a sky-god. The words Avesta and Zend though of late origin can be the same Sanscrit words, *avasthita* or *avasthana* meaning settled, but used in Iran as settled text and Zend from Sanscrit *khandi* which is the name of a vedic metre, like Latin *scandere* derived perhaps from moving the feet while singing, as *pada* or *padapankti* is used for verse as the Greek *poes*. Ahura of course is the same as Asura and it is easily explained by the fact that the Iranians lacked the sibilant *s*. Mazda may be the abbreviation of Marduk or perhaps a variant of Sk. *medha* meaning sacrifice, knowledge or thinking. Thus Ahura Mazda might mean Ashura Marduk or lordly knowledge (omniscient lord). However as a sky-god he is unmistakable. He lives in the celestial region of *varena* which is vedic Varuna and "He is white, bright, seen afar and his body is the greatest and the fairest of all bodies; he has the sun for his eye, the rivers above for his spouses, the fire of lightning for his son; he wears the heaven as a star-spangled garment, he puts on the hard stone of heaven, he is the hardest of all. He dwells in the infinite luminous space and the infinite

luminous space is his place, his body. In the time of Herodotus the Persians while invoking Ahuramazda, the creator of earth and heaven, still knew who he was and called the whole vault of the sky Zeus, that is to say, called it the supreme god.\* The only difference between the Vedic Dyaus and the Greek Zeus is that Zeus is rather too much of a profligate god and Ouranos (Varuna) is wedded to Gaia (Prithivi) instead of himself. But this difference is only apparent. If Demeter (Devamatar) be but viewed as Gaia, the mother of all living beings, then Ouranos is but an imaginary creation as an embodiment of the visible sky.

Varuna is the covering of the heaven over the earth—the firmament. Varuna is derived from the Sk root *vri*=to cover. He *'enfolds the heavens and measures out the earth and marks her uttermost bounds,'* (where the sky and the earth seem to meet). 'He covers the worlds as with a robe with all the creatures thereof and their dwellings. He has encompassed the nights around; he has by his wisdom established the dawns; he visibly encompasses all things.' (R. V. VIII. 41). Besides the *two worlds* (rodasi, Heaven and Earth) which are invariably monopolised by the first divine couple, the intermediate space, the air-region (antariksha, the Avestan Vouru-Kasha) needed an embodied ruler. For that is an important middle kingdom. Here the celestial kine graze (the clouds gather); here the sun-god, the moon-god, the dawn-goddesses run their diurnal race on magnificent

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\* James Darmesteter: The Zend-Avesta, lviii; Yast XIII. 1. 2—4; Yasna LVIII. 8; LVII. 22; Bundahis. 1. 7; Herodotus, 1.131.

chariots with tireless, swift and brilliant steed. If anywhere god is needed, here he is of utmost importance. For he has to fix the tracks of the gods and keep away the fiends (Ahi and Vriti) from laying hand on the kine. There is nothing strange in regarding the clouds as the kine. The primitive Aryans, accustomed to cows, their favourite animal, and knowing that the milk coming from the udder of the cows not only quenches the thirst, but is also nourishing, regarded the rain falling from the sky as the milk of the celestial kine to quench the thirst and to feed the thirsty and hungry Earth. And as among themselves there was cattle-stealing, so they thought in the Antariksha too there must be cattle thieves whom they called enemies (Ahi, Vriti) and as all the clouds did not bring rain, so they naturally thought that those Cloud-kine must have been stolen by the fiends and they needed a god to chase the intruders away and to deliver the kine to bring rain. So Varuna was an important god and headed the pantheon, putting his father Dyaus (the bright, ethereal sky) into a subordinate position of oblivion.

"Varuna laid out the sun's path and sent the waters coursing to the sea. (VII. 87). The stars are up there, that are seen at night, where do they hide in the day? But Varuna's ordinances are immutable and the moon goes shining brightly through the night. (1.24). He who knows the path of the birds as they fly through the ample space and on the sea the ships". (1. 25).

The immutable ordinances of Varuna are the *Rita*, Lat. *Artus* the cosmic order that regulates the course of the sun, the moon and the stars, the alternation of day and night and seasons. From this high position, it is easily

imaginable that physical Varuna was slowly transformed into a spiritual god and a moral judge. There are numerous hymns to that effect. Vasistha prays : "Absolve us from the sins of our fathers and forgive those which we committed ourselves. Release Vasistha like a calf from the rope. It was not our will—it was seduction, an intoxicating drink, passion, dice and thoughtlessness." (VII. 86). Varuna has the epithet of *Asura*. And he is usually invoked with his brother *Mitra* (friend), sons of *Aditi* (the infinite space). Both of them often lose their identity and merge into one. But *Mitra* is the light of the day. With his bright rays of the morning he calls the people to do their duties with friendly greetings. While *Varuna* is the firmament of the night and the stars are his spies (I. 25) to watch the deeds of the mortals when the heaven and the earth seem to be in closer touch. Thus *Ouranos* feeling the close touch of *Gaia* (earth) fell in love with her and *Eros* (*Kama*) was awakened in him. However the sun is the eye of both *Mitra* and *Varuna*.

The Iranians lost the original track of the Aryan myth of *Varuna* and they simply made the abode of *Ahura Mazda* in *Varena* (*Ram Yast*, II. 9) and there is hardly any difference in characteristics between the Vedic *Varuna*, Avestan *Ahura Mazda* and the Greek *Ouranos*. And the Iranians being more intolerant than the Aryas, they made *Ahura Mazda* the creator of *Mithras*, though they were twin-brothers originally (*Mithra-Varuna*) is clearly discernible through the *Zend-Avesta*. *Ahura Mazda* says : "Verily when I created *Mithra*, the lord of wide pastures (*Voru-Kasha* for the grazing of the celestial kine) O *Spitama*, I created him worthy of sacrifice, as



worth of prayer as myself, Ahura Mazda." Mihir Yast, I. 1. And the entire Mihir Yast (praise of Mihir=the sun) is devoted to Mithra in which Mithra is regarded as the co-equal of Ahura, for we repeatedly find such utterances: "We sacrifice unto Mithra and Ahura, the two great imperishable holy gods." (XXV, 145). But the Avestan Mithra was a more powerful and complex deity than the simple, benign, almost impersonal god like the Vedic Mithra. And he absorbed much of the martial qualities like Indra and he almost supplanted Ahura Mazda and virtually became the national deity.

Aditi (unbounded) is the infinity of space and eternity of time, or the visible endless expanse beyond the clouds and the sky, in contrast with *diti* (bound=the earth). Aditi became the mother of the bright sky gods, Varuna, Mitra and Aryaman and four other Adityas whose names are not definitely mentioned in the Rig-veda. Bhaga is found in some hymns as the fourth Aditya and the eighth Aditya was Martanda and being of shapeless form, differing from his brothers seven Adityas, he was thrown out by Aditi from the company of the gods. Martanda seems to resemble the Egyptian golden ape which has neither hands nor feet. The name of Daksha is also associated with Aditi and the gods are called *dakshapitar* (fathers of strength, the mighty). It is possible that Aditi sprang from Daksha or Daksha sprung from Aditi who also owed the existence to Bhu (Being) and the conclusion was reached that 'Non-being and being are in the higher heaven, in the birth-place of Daksha, in the lap of Aditi'. In the Avestan, Adityas are called seven Amesha-Spentas (Bountiful immortals) who dwell in the Garo-nmana (Endless Light)

with Ahura Mazda who is nothing but the Iranian Ashura Varuna as we have shown. However with the development and theological classification of Mazdeism Amesha-Spentas became mere deified abstractions, Vohu-mano (good thought : Vedic *sumati*), Asha Vahista (excellent holiness ; Vedic Rita), Khshathra vairya (perfect sovereignty : Sk. Kshatra-virya), Spenta Armaiti (divine piety : Vedic Aramati), Haurvatat and Ameritat (health and immortality).

Agni was a very sacred and friendly god of the Aryans. For Agni among all gods dwells with man as his companion and friend in the capacity of *domestic fire*—"the immortal among the mortals" No wonder the Vedic Rishi sang : "*Dyaush pitah, Prithivi matar adhrug, Agne bhratar...*" (Father Heaven, guileless mother Earth, brother Agni, be gracious unto us) and Agni was called *Agnivaishvanara* (Agni belongs to all men). We can easily imagine how primitive man in a chilly shivering shower, terrified by the thunderclaps, saw to his surprise and astonishment the old, dry stump of a tree suddenly catching fire and bringing him a comfortable sense of well-being in its warm glow. Not only that, nuts and some animals that might have been roasted by being caught in the fire tasted so much better and when after repeated attempts, lasting for centuries, if not thousands of years, he learnt at last how to keep fire by adding fuel to it and to make it afresh when extinguished by an accident—either by friction of dry sticks or stones—it was a great achievement for civilisation. By fire forests were easily cleared and the land was made suitable for agriculture. Metallic ores were melted in it and instruments were forged for martial and peaceful purposes.

Clays were baked in it into bricks, and fire was the creator of cities as the old Sumerian hymn naively expresses. But more than that. Fire cooked food and by softening the fibres through cooking, many food-stuffs that were before inedible became nutritious palatable dishes and by the domestic fireside radiating warmth, glow and comforts, it really domesticated man. Fire is essentially the builder of civilisation. As behind every natural phenomenon, the primitive mind could not but presuppose an animating spirit and a deity, it is natural therefore that favour should have been invoked of such a beneficent god.

According to the Vedic legend, the finder of Agni is Matarishvan which is but another name for lightning, and he is said to have brought it *from heaven* 8, *from the gods, very far away* and he gave it to the Bhrigu the Atharvan (the keeper of fire=firepriest, from Sk. *athare*=flame) who drew Agni forth by friction and gave it to Manu for safe-keeping. Angiras another Vedic Rishi family is also mentioned as having first kindled Agni. But the identity of Agni with lightning is very close and Indra the god of thunder and Agni the god of fire are merged into one: "I extol the greatness of that showerer of rain whom men celebrate as the slayer of Vrita: the Agni Vaisvanara slew the stealer of waters." As the lightning in the rains (clouds) Agni was also named Apam-Napat (son of the waters). And it was believed there was Agni in water as well as in plant. Agni descended into the earth with the rain and entered into the plant as a sap. Thus dry sticks could generate fire by friction, having the Agni principle in them. And in all sacrifices this time-honoured way of friction of two

dried sticks of the Asvatha tree was used to get the spark to make the holy flame. Sacrifice was regarded auspicious, for the smoke of fire was supposed to ascend to the gods as a messenger for the mortals : "O Agni, thou from whom as a new-born male, undying flames proceed, the brilliant smoke-god goes towards the sky, for as messenger thou art sent to the gods." (VIII. 3).

The Iranians worshipped fire as *Ātar*, derived from Vedic *Athare*=flame and their priests were called *Athravans* (keepers of fire) *Apat-Napot* is also mentioned as a fire-god : "We sacrifice unto *Apam Napot*, the swift-horsed, the high and shining lord who has many wives (tongues of flame)."

Among the western Aryans, Agni was worshipped as Hellenic *Hestia* and the Latin *Vesta*, as the sacred guardian of every home. Fire was kept kindled in the inmost part of every dwelling as the holiest of holies and at every sacrifice to Zeus and other deities, *Hestia* (goddess of fire) is to preside and to receive the first invocation and the first share. According to the Hellenic myth fire was introduced by Argive *Phoroneus*, who may be none else but the Vedic fire-god *Bhuranyu* from which the Greek *pur* and the Teutonic *feur* have been derived.

*Soma* was the god of drinking. The entire ninth Mandala is devoted to its most sacred and solemn rites. All peoples more or less ancient and modern have indulged in some kind of spirituous liquor for reckless and undaunted courage in battles and for relaxation when excessively tired and fatigued or to silence the moral qualms in its pleasant narcosis or to drown the cares and anxieties in the seductive bowl of an intoxicating drink. Such a varied effect of

alcohol they could not but ascribe to a mighty god. It was to the Aryan, the elixir of life, joy in health, strength in weakness, medicine in sickness and rejuvenescence in old age. And they thought, that the gods were so powerful, immortal and ever-youthful, because they partook in large quantity of this divine nectar which was the main food of the gods. And the pious souls after their death would ascend to that region where there is divine Soma (Moon) and partaking of it, would be immortal and like gods. In the Iranian scriptures, we see the clear distinction between the earthly yellow or golden Haoma (Soma) which is the king of all healing plants (Bundahis, 58. 10) and the white Haoma or Gaokerena which grows in Vourukasha (antariksha) and which is the ambrosia of the gods and by the drinking of which man on the day of resurrection will become immortal. (Bundahis, 42. 12 : 59 : 4). In the Vedic legend, it is the falcon who brought down the Soma plants and 'whilst coming down from the heaven the plants said : He will never suffer any wound, the mortal whom we touch.' (X. 97. 17).

Soma was possibly Eleusine Coracana, which is commonly known as *Ragi*, the ordinary millet used in the Hymalayan districts for making *Marua*, an intoxicating beverage. Milk was added to it to attenuate its acrid, astringent taste and to facilitate fermentation. Soma was often called *fiery liquid* and Agni was identified with Soma and it is due to the fiery effect of the drink. However god Soma was regarded as the personification of the moon and was married to the sun-maiden Surya. The moon had the reputation to exert a benificent influence on plant growth ; may be, because of its soothing,

silvery rays and the Soma being the king of the healing plants, it is natural that the god Soma should be identified with the moon. The following hymns are explicit on this point :—

“Through the Law (Rita) the earth stands firm, the heavens and the sun, through the Law the Adityas stand, and Soma stands in the sky……Soma is placed in the midst of these stars. When they crush the plant, he who drinks, regards it as Soma. Of whom the priests regard as Soma no one drinks. Protected by those who shelter thee and preserved by thy guardians, thou Soma hearest the sounds of crushing-stones (for squeezing the juice from the plants) ; but no earthly being tastes thee.” (X. 85).

“Where there is eternal light, in the world where the sun is placed, in that immortal, imperishable world, place me, O Soma ! Where the Vivasvat (Yama) reigns as king, where the secret place of the heaven is, where these mighty waters are, there make me immortal ! Where life is free, in the third heaven of heavens, where the worlds are radiant, there make me immortal ! Where wishes and desires are (fulfilled) where the bowl of the bright Soma is, where there is food and rejoicing, there make me immortal ! Where is happiness and delight, where joy and pleasure reside, where the desires of our desires are attained, there make me immortal.” (IX. 113).

Asvins are the Soma libations to Agni. They are often represented in the Vedic hymns as riding on a golden chariot of two fiery horses. They are invariably twins, perhaps one is the offering of the libation and the other is the flame it causes. Their names are derived from *asva*, because the horses were known for their speed

and agility and it was supposed that the deity of the flames of the Agni would come riding at top-speed at the prayer of the votaries to cause the spark and the tongues of flame to shoot up. From the two aspects of the Soma libation and the spark and the flame it caused, the Asvins were also represented as the evening and morning stars as the volatilized sparks. But they were the divine physicians *Bhishaj* per excellence and attended the child-birth (VI. 50. 7.) of the suffering mothers. They 'make the blind see; the lame walk' (I. 112. 8). Asvins rendered the virility of Ghosha's husband Visvaka and made an artificial iron leg for Vispala which he lost in battle.

"You are the blessing of those that grow old at home and comfort to those who last longer; it is you, O Nasatya, the people call, the healers of the blind, the sick and the wounded. You have made young again old Chyavana as a (old) chariot is repaired to move; and it is you who have lifted up Tugra's son from the water." (X. 39. 3-4)

But Asvins were *Bhishajas*, only metaphorically in the Vedic terminology. Old Chyabana is nothing but the dying fire (Agni) of the morning kept at the sacrificial altar and the fresh offering of the Soma makes the fire bright, ardent and glowing again with flames, which the Vedic Rishis regarded as rejuvenation. Ghosha is the name of the tongue of fire and the impotent Visvaka is the dying fire, which by a fresh morning libation of the Soma offering, is made to shoot up into a bright, sparkling fire, which is interpreted as the restoration of his virility. The ancients did not regard fire as a natural phenomenon. It was to them the greatest and the most potent of gods, full of life, motility and activity. When

the morning fire was lacking energy and motion, they thought that the presiding deity lost his leg at night, in fighting the battles with the enemy of men and gods. And by Soma offering, the fire blazes forth, which means that he has got a new leg, or he could not move, that is the fire can not spread. Tugra's (ardent) son Bhujyu (shining) is rescued from water, which really meant that out of the liquid libation of Soma, which drenched the altar, by the spark (Asvins) fire sprang up into life.

The Greeks worshipped Soma as Dionysus who introduced the cultivation of wine into Greece and was called the father of civilisation.

The ancient Greeks used to offer in their sacrifices, the fermented liquor known as *metha*, *Sk. Madhu* to blaze forth the flame, (Odyssey, XII. 362; Eschyle: Agamemon, 88-94), the Romans, wine, oil and grains (Virgile; Eneide, VI. 254; Ovide; Fastes II. 651-653) as the Hindus now principally use clarified butter (ghritam). But among the Greeks Asvins were designated as *Dioskoyroi* and among the Romans as Castor and Pollux as the guardian deities of the mariners and these deities according to the legend originated from an equine.

Yama and Yima are twin brother and sister, children of Vivasvat. And Yama is the evening twilight or the sinking sun and Yima the night. As it was supposed that life originated in the east, so in the west lay the land of the dead, the Elysian fields to which the sun hastened every evening and was reborn again every morning. As Yama was the first of the mortals, so he was the first to die and thus: "Yama is said to have crossed, to have shown the many, to have first known the path on which our fathers crossed over."



And he gathered the departed souls (pitris) in the Yamasadanam, over whom he ruled. Yamasadanam was perhaps the region of the moon where drinking the Soma the Pitris became immortal. The dying sun of the evening and the new-born sun of the morning, sleep, dream and the re-awakening from it refreshed and vitalised, probably suggested the idea of the immortality of the soul. Death was regarded but a more durable and prolonged sleep. So "death is Yama's wise messenger." Saramaya, the children of Sarama, the four-eyed dogs were sent to protect the guests in their long journey on the celestial track.

The Avestan Yima, the son of Vivanghat was the first mortal and ruler of man and animal. (Fargard, II. 2) But his kingdom was like that of the Vedic Yama filled with supernatural persons (Fravashis = Pitris). (Farg. XIX). And 'the four-eyed dogs (Sag-did) watch at the head of the Chinvat bridge which leads from this to the next world and with his barking drives away the fiend (Drug) from the souls of the holy ones, lest he should drag them to hell.'\*

This undue sanctity of the dog is perhaps due to the fact that it was the first domesticated animal. The dog was also regarded with great reverence by the ancient Egyptians and Chaldeans. We can easily imagine how the ancestor of the dog, the wolf, followed the hunting expeditions of the primitive man and whatever man left as worthless meat, the wolves feasted on them and they also frequented the neighbourhood of the cave-dwellings of the primitive man to get the remnant of the meat,

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\* J. Darmesteter : The Zend-Avesta LXXXVII.

carcasses and bones, which were regarded unfit for human consumption and were therefore necessarily thrown outside. Thus intimacy was formed between the wolf and the man and the wolf found that man was his friend. However it is possible that in an angry mood, a man killed a she-wolf with puppies, but thinking that the puppies might be nice play-things for his children, he spared them and brought them home. And the puppies returned this kindness with gratitude, affection and watchfulness for the interest of their master. They accompanied him in his chase, drove away any marauder from his cave-dwelling and watched it at night when he was asleep and they were of useful service to him in thousand other ways. Thus grew friendship between man and the dog which has lasted even to-day.

Vayu or Vata, though a modest god of gentle breeze, son of Dyaus (Heaven), the Greek Pan and the Latin Favonius, was however regarded with great respect by the Vedic Rishis, for when the gods were invited to the Soma feast, his was the first drink by right. (X. 168).

And in the Avestan he seems to have held a very prominent position. For we find the entire Ram Yast is devoted to him and even Ahura Mazda prayed to him, thus proving that Vayu was an older god than Ahura :—

“To this Vayu do we sacrifice, this Vayu do we invoke, for this house, for the master of this house and for the man here who is offering here libations and gifts. To this excellent god do we sacrifice, that he may accept our meat and our prayers and grant us in return to crush our enemy at one stroke. To him did the Maker Ahura Mazda offer up a sacrifice in the Airyana Væjah,

on a golden throne, under golden beams and a golden canopy, with bundles of *baresma* and offerings of full-boiling (milk). He begged of him a boon, saying : 'Grant me this, O Vayu ! who dost work highly, that I might smite the creation of Angra Mainyu, and that no body may smite this creation of the Good Spirit !' Vayu who works highly, granted him that boon, as the maker Ahura Mazda did pursue it. We sacrifice to holy Vayu : we sacrifice to Vayu, who works highly."\*

Surya (the sun) is the son of Dyaus (Sky) and the *eye of Mitra and Varuna*. And his golden chariot traverses the dustless path of the heaven, drawn by seven swift, glistening, winged mares (Harits). As Varuna is the judge and Surya being his eye, he observes everything and the Rishis try to bribe him as to report them sinless.

"The god's bright face has arisen, the eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni ; Surya fills heaven, earth and atmosphere, the breath of life of all that stands and moves.....  
.....The beautiful golden Harits, the bright ones, hailed by songs of joy, they mount to the highest heaven and in one day their course encircles heaven and earth.....  
And when he unharnesses the mares, the veil of darkness spreads over all things." (I. 115).

"The god who knows all beings rises aloft, drawn by his rays, that he Surya, may behold all things. Straightway like thieves, the stars with their brightness slink away before the all-seeing god. His rays are visible to all mankind, blazing like flames. All conspicuous on thy rapid course thou createst light, illuminating the whole

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\* Ram Yast, I. 1-5.

firmament. Thou risest for the race of gods and for that of men, that all may behold thy light. With that same glance wherewith all may behold thy light. With that same glance wherewith Varuna, the illuminator, surveys the busy race of men. Thou O Surya, searchest the sky and the wide space, making the days and spying out all creatures. Seven mares bear thee on, O far-seeing Surya, in thy chariot, god of the flaming locks. Surya has harnessed the seven Harits, daughters of the car, self-yoked. Gazing out of the darkness up at the highest light, we have reached Surya, a god among the gods." (I. 50. 1-9)

"If thou, O Surya, at thy rising will report us truly sinless to Varuna and Mitra, we will sing thy praise." (VII. 60).

As the Sun in the dry season in the Shapta-shindavas was cruel, pitiless and destructive, they worshipped as Savitar, the generating and the vivifying influence of the solar energy. Thus Savitar became *vishvarupa* (having all forms) and consequently the *Prajapati* (Lord of all beings). The most sacred hymn, the essence of the Vedas, the holy *Gyatri* has been dedicated to Savitar, which even to-day countless millions of Brahmins recite every morning and evening with the rising and the setting sun :

"He who hastens hither through the dark aerial space, who lays to rest whatever mortal is, or immortal, god Savitar on his golden chariot comes towards us, surveying all creatures." (I. 35.2)

"With golden hand comes hastening Savitar the god, pursuing busily his work betwixt heaven and earth ; he drives away oppression, leads Surya forth, through the dark realm of air he hastens up to heaven." (I. 35. 9)

"The god his mighty hands, his arms, outstretches in heaven above, and all things obey him; to his commands the waters are attentive and even the rushing wind subsides before him. Driving his steeds, now he removes the harness and bids the wanderer rest him from his journey; he checks the serpent-smiter's eager onset; at Savitar's command the kindly night comes. The weaver rolls her growing web together and in the midst the workman leaves his labours; the god arises and divides the time (night from day)—god Savitar appears never-resting. In every place where the mortals have their dwelling, the house-fire far and wide sheds forth its radiance, the mother gives her son the fairest portion, because the god has given him the desire to eat. Now he returns who has gone forth for profit; for home the longing wanderer's heart is yearning and each, his task half-finished, homeward journeys; this is the heavenly inciter's ordinance." (II. 38. 2-7).

"Tvashtar Savitar, the god of many forms (vishvarupa), has produced and nourished all creatures and all these beings are his own." (III. 55. 19).

"Whatever offence we may have committed against the race of gods, through feebleness of understanding or through violence after the manner men—against gods and also against men—in spite of all, O Savitar, take from us the sin." (IV. 55. 3).

"We meditate on the desirable light of the divine Savitri who influences our pious rites; or: Of Savitar, the heavenly, that longed for glory may we win and may himself inspire our prayers." (Tat Savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhio o nah prāchodyat. The Gyatri, III. 62. 10).

In the Avestan the Khorshed Yast is devoted 'unto the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun' and his identity has been often merged with Mitra.

Among the western Aryans, Surya was called Swarog by the ancient Slavs\* and Helos by the Greeks. The lovely, glistening golden-winged Aarits became Charis in Iliad and Gratia (Graces) among the Latins.

Usha the Dawn-goddess, the daughter of the Sky (Dyaus) was a great favourite of the Vedic Rishis (sages). The fresh delicate, roseate tint of her colour, the wide-expanding golden curls of her hair, her bright, joyous face and smiles, her modesty, yet her seductive, inviting look, her grace and her charms were very pleasant to them and some of the best hymns of the Rig-Veda are dedicated to her. And the Vedic sages are never tired of watching her golden chariot followed by her admirer Surya who in mad pursuit advances towards her with his swift steeds. The delicate and frail Usha, though not unwilling, yet feels coy lest the fiery passionate touch of her ardent lover scorches her and she hurries along over the golden path in the dustless aerial region. And one Rishi advises her to speed faster or Surya may clasp her in his fiery arms of glowing ardor and mark her with the brand of a thief or a slave (V. 79. 9). However Surya follows her with the untiring enthusiasm of a young lover. At last after a long day's journey they meet and the whole western sky radiates with the crimson glow in the joy of their mutual embrace. But only for a few brief moments. In the intoxication of their youthful love, they forget their weapons and the cruel fiend Darkness comes and

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\* Ralston : Songs of the Russian People, P. 85.

engulfs them. Yama in his kindness takes them to his abode (the moon) and refreshes them with the divine nectar, the Soma-drink, and they become rejuvenated. And every day they play again and again the same lover's game, mindless of the past.

Usha also as the goddess of the dawn of the day, is the mother of the gods, giver of joys, gifts and riches :

"Rise ! Our life, our breath has come back ! The darkness is gone, the light approaches ! Usha has opened a path for Surya to travel ; we have reached the point where our days are lengthened. The priest, the poet, celebrating the brightening Usha, arises with the web of his hymn ; shine therefore, magnificent Usha, on him who praises thee... Mother of the gods ! manifestation of Aditi banner of the sacrifice, mighty Usha, shine forth ! Arise ! Lend a gracious ear to our prayer, giver of all boons !" (I. 113. 16-20).

"She shines upon us like a young wife, rousing every living being to go to his work. The fire had to be kindled by men ; she brought out light by striking down darkness. She rose up spreading far and wide and moving towards every one she grew in brightness, wearing her brilliant garment. The mother of the cows (celestial), the leader of the dogs, she shone gold-coloured, lovely to behold. She the fortunate, who brings the eye (the sun) of the god, who leads the white and lovely steed (of the sun), the Dawn was seen revealed by her rays, with brilliant treasures she follows every one. Thou art a blessing when thou art near, drive far away the unfriendly ; make the pastures wide, give us safety. Remove the haters, bring treasures. Raise up wealth to the worshipper, thou mighty Dawn. Shine for us thy best rays, thou bright Dawn,

thou who lengthenest our life, thou the love of all, who givest us food, who givest us wealth in cows, horses and chariots." (VII. 77)

"Usha follow the track of the Dawns that are past and is the first of the unnumbered Dawns that are to come.....How great is the interval that lies between the Dawns that have arisen and those which are yet to arise ? Usha yearns lovingly after the former Dawns and gladly goes on shining with the others (that are to come). Those mortals are gone who saw the earliest Usha dawn ; we shall gaze upon her now ; and the men are coming who are to behold her on future morns.....Perpetually in the former days did the divine Usha dawn ; and now to-day the radiant goddess beams upon this world : undecaying, immortal." (I. 113. 8-13).

But Usha is but one of the names of the lovely Dawn-goddess. She is also called Ahana and Dyotana .

"Ahana comes near to every house, she who makes every day to be known. Dyotana (the dawn), the active maiden, comes back for evermore ; she enjoys always the first of all goods." (I. 123. 4).

To the western Aryans Ahana became Athene and Dyotana, Daphane and they resemble very closely the Usha characteristics. Like Usha, who is not mentioned as having any mother, but to have sprung from the head of Dyns (murddhadivah), the East, the forehead of the sky, Athene also springs from the forehead of Zeus (the sky-god). And as Usha is followed and loved by Surya, Daphane is also similarly loved by Phoibos. And Usha also had the reputation for truth and wisdom like Athene :

"Usha endowed with truth, who art the sister of



Bhava, the sister of Varuna, be thou hymned first of the gods." (11. 8. 10).

However in an arid climate like that of Shapta-shindhavas, especially for an agricultural community like the Aryas, the bright sky (Dyaus), the star-spangled firmament (Varuna), the intoxicating drinks and the dreamful, silvery beams of the moon (Scma), the unclouded fiery sun (Surya) and the radiant, smiling, almost playful dawns (Usha:) are not of so much importance as the rain and plenty of rain for the welfare of the cattle and the crops. So the monsoon god (Indra) subjugated all these ancient deities. For however visionary might have been the Aryans, they were a practical people and their success in life, as the history of the world has shown, lay in the fact, that at the right moment they had been always able to subordinate all other objects to that supreme end in view. We find that the very Rishis who were so fond of admiring the pretty Usha, in exalted ecstasy praised Indra for smashing her golden chariot, which in plain vulgar language means that the people were tired of looking at another bright morning, heralding a rainless day, when they were anxiously watching the sky for the clouds and they were extremely delighted when they saw a sudden monsoon cloud spreading over the morning eastern sky. Rain meant for them, as it does to-day in the Punjab, a luxuriant crop, a rich harvest, plenty for men and cattle, and a prosperous year, and lack of it dearth, destitution and misery for the community at large. No wonder the Vedic poet was loud in his ungallant praise when he saw the signs of rain in the sky :

"This heroic task also, this manly deed, O Indra !

thou didst perform, that thou didst smite the woman who planned mischief, the daughter of the Sky (Dyaus) : this Usha who was exalting herself, thou didst strike her down. Usha fell in terror in her shattered car when the mighty one felled it to the ground. There it lay, broken utterly, while she herself fled far away." (IV. 30).

But all clouds do not necessarily bring rain. And in their childlike mind they supposed that the cloud-kine were stolen and hidden by the enemies like the hiding thief Vritra, the strangling snake Ahi (Azi Dahakathe biting snake in the Avestan) and the marauder Pani. Monsoon is usually accompanied by tempestuous thunder showers. In the rambling of the thunder, they hear the war-drums of the gods and in the stormy winds the assistance of fleet Maruts the children of Prishni and terrible Rudra (the stormy sky) and then mighty Indra with his irresistible lightning-spear pierces the sneak Ahi in his den and kills the draught fiend Vritra and Indra is praised therefore as Vitrahan (slayer of vritra) and in the Avestan Mithra who absorbed the traits of Indra he is also known as Verethraghna. When Indra has accomplished this great deed for the benefit of mankind, then the bountiful celestial kine (clouds) bestow their milk in rain-showers on the parched and thirsty Prithivi (earth) who with rapturous heart drinks it, praising the glory of Indra.

Thus Indra became the head of the Vedic pantheon, brushing aside the other ancient gods. The Ārya bard reflecting the sentiment of the people rightly said : "Great is thy prowess, Indra, we are thine ; satisfy Maghavan the desire of thy worshipper. The vast

heaven has acknowledged thy might." And Parjanya, the rain aspect of Indra (the monsoon-god) is praised thus :—

"Sing unto the strong with these songs, laud Parjanya, with praise worship him. Loud bellows the Bull ; he lays down the seed and fruit in the herbs. He cleaves the trees asunder, he slays the demons (Rakshasas) ; all living creatures fear the wearer of the mighty bolt. Even the sinless tremble before him, the giver of rain, for Parjanya, thundering slays the evil-doers. As a driver urges his horses with his whip, he makes the rainy messengers appear. From far arises the roar of the lion when Parjanya makes the cloud full of rain. The winds rage, the lightnings shoot through the air, the herbs sprout forth from the ground, the heavens overflow, refreshment is borne to all creatures when Parjanya blesses the earth with rain. Thou Parjanya, shield us well, by whose doing the earth is shaken, by whose doing the hoofed herd is supported, by whose doing herbs of all kind sprout forth.....O come to us with the thunder-cloud, pouring down the waters, Ahura, our father ! Roar, thunder, give fruit, fly round us with thy chariot that is filled with water. Pull strongly the downward-bent, well-fastened water-skin ; may the heights and the valleys be made even. Lift up the great barrel, pour down ; loosened may the streams rush forward. Drench heaven and earth, give good drink to the kine." (V. 83. 19).

Truly the Rig-veda is the priceless inexhaustible store-house, nay the fountain-head of the ancient Aryan myths. The Iranians were influenced more or less by their powerful neighbours the Babylonians and the Assyrians. Greece came in too intimate relation with the Phoenicians and Egyptians whose superior culture, hoary

with ages was necessarily stamped on the Hellenic mind and thus they lost track of their own traditions. The Vedic Aryas alone, almost secluded from the entire world by impregnable mountain barrier except through two or three difficult and dangerous passes and the treacherous unlimited expanse of the ocean, proud and deeply religious-minded, kept and transmitted their ancient traditions in their pristine simplicity as the most precious inheritance of the race.

There was a time and it was not long ago when it was believed that God or gods created man for his enjoyment of this earth. It is fast dawning on the thinking people that gods are rather creations of man to explain the natural phenomena which he otherwise could not explain. God in the final analysis is supposed to be the refuge of weakness, credulity and ignorance. In the name of God and religion (injunction of the god) much crime has been and is being committed in the world. Yet on the whole it has exerted a tremendously uplifting and beneficent influence. When moral conscience has not been fully developed, when the sense of right and wrong is only co-relative with religious formulas, the fear of the anger of the god and the salvation of the soul have restrained man from the commitment of many vicious and corrosive acts and have gradually trained him to the nobler conception of duty and honour, slowly attenuating and modifying the crude inheritance of brutal instincts. Religion has been the greatest progressive school of man. But for it society would have been torn into pieces by mutually destructive acts. Civil Law is but of recent growth and though at present divorced from religion, its root is deeply embedded and its foundation laid in,

or rather it is a slow accumulation of, the religious code of ethics. Moreover Civil Law is only operative in a very insignificant part of the world's population and even there unsupported by the religious conscience and but for the fear of the masses of the population, the society would be irretrievably engulfed in crime-waves which the operation of the Civil Law could hardly check. Religion is society's natural strongest rampart, an auto-defensive mechanism for self-protection, and a great integrating and uplifting force. When therefore narrow-minded fanatical bigots, whose ignorance is equal to their audacity, in the frenzy of monomania, try to supplant beautiful primitive nature myths, which they call polytheism by crude anthropomorphism which in their vanity they call monothiesm and regard it superior, that is, when they try to substitute one natural inspiring superstition with one worse, beunmbing and artificial superstition, however honest may be their motive, unconsciously they do the society a great harm. God or gods are the reflex and the barometer of racial genius, intelligence and power of organisation. It is simply an unconscious adaptation of the racial intelligence to the cosmic laws. With knowledge and understanding of natural phenomena, the kingdom of gods retires to far and father distance. What is needed for reform and progress, is not the opinion but the spread of knowledge, and in the meantime to have patience and to have reverential respect for the honest faith of others. It should not be rudely shaken. For mind can not be in a vacuum state. Mind wants to know things and to explain everything. Before knowledge can give the key to unlock the mysteries of existence, the mind has to be filled with one superstition or the other. For the word

of god or the miracles of deities can explain every thing which otherwise rationally can not be understood, and can answer any question, thus to tranquilize the inquisitive mind. In true faith therefore, however crude it might appear to others, lies the vital germ of progress of the individual, his real consolation and his happiness. It is a crime to take it and to give nothing better in its place, as it is his most sacred possession, and priceless treasure.

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## IV.

### THE HINDI LANGUAGES.

The language spoken by the aborigines of India, the first settlers of the country, is agglutinative in speech and is known as Kolarian or Munda language. It is not spoken in its purity anywhere at present in India. It is mixed more or less in the Indo-Gangetic basin with the Indo-Aryan words and in the South with the Dravida vocabularies. However there are nearly three millions of people in the Santhal Parganas and Central India who are computed in the Census report to speak Kherwari or the Santali language. There is an ancient tribe Savara (about 16000) who live on the border of Orissa and Madras who speak a mixed Telugu language. The Gond language which is spoken by nearly a million people is a mixture of the Dravidian and the Aryan speeches on the substratum of the Kolarian

The two principal Dravidian languages are Tamil and Telugu. They are spoken by nearly 60 millions of people.

The Tamil or *Aṭṭa* is spoken all over Southern India, extending over to Northern Ceylon. It has a very rich and extensive ancient literature. Its literary language is called *Shen* (perfect) and the spoken language *Kodum* (rude). It is spoken by nearly 47 millions of people. Malayalam, spoken on the Malabar coast by 7 millions of people and Kanarese spoken in Mysore and in the Ghat by about 12 millions of people are its principal