



Introduction

There is a certain amount of controversy surrounding the exact history of the Veda, the most ancient of Hindu scripture, which was first translated into European languages in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At this time, it was the contention of the expanding scientific, philosophical and religious doctrines of western European culture, that these writings **simply could not be** more ancient than the classical roots of European civilisation. Whereas this hypothesis was strongly held by the expanding western educational regime, in recent times there has been cause to re-examine its claims.

In any event, although further references to this controversy are presented at the conclusion of this document, there is no doubt that these ancient Hindu scriptures are older than 1000BC. The word "*Veda*" is a Sanscrit word which means "*knowledge*" or "*wisdom*". There are in fact four Vedas: the **Rig Veda** or "Veda of Hymns", the **Sama-Veda** or the "Veda of Chants", the **Yajur-Veda** or the "Veda of sacrifice" and the **Artharva-Veda**, which is later in date than the earlier three.

Although the Vedas are the earliest of the Hindu scriptures, they are by no means the only body of writings to have originated from the ancient sub-continent of India. The [Katha Upanishad](#), is part of a large set of literature known as the Upanishads, and in the presentation of this you will find some interesting mappings between the science of the east and that of the west.

The reference work which I have used in the presentation of the following selection of verses from the Rig Veda is one from the "Everyman's Library" and entitled "*The Hindu Scriptures*". It is translated and edited by R.C. Zaehner as recently as 1966.

For a more in-depth research concerning the Rig Veda, I would recommend reviewing [Hymns to the Mystic Fire](#), an extensive publication in 1946 by Sri Aurobindo - in particular the introductory sections in which he outlines the *Doctrine of the Mystics*.

I wish all research students the optimum of courage and determination concerning the pursuance of their common goals, and have pleasure in presenting the following texts from the Rig Veda.

Peace,

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To Visvakarman [The "All-Maker"]

- [1] The seer, our father, sacrificing all these worlds,
 Sat on the high priest's throne:
 Pursuing wealth by [offering] prayer, he made away
 With what came first, entering into the latter things.
 - [2] What was the primal matter (*adhithana*)? What the beginning?
 How and what manner of thing was that from which
 The Maker of All, see-er of all, brought forth
 The earth, and by his might the heavens unfolded?
 - [3] His eyes on every side, on every side his face,
 On every side his arms, his feet on every side --
 With arms and wings he together forges
 Heaven and earth, begetting them, God, the One!
 - [4] What was the wood? What was the tree
 From which heaven and earth were fashioned forth?
 Ask, ask, ye wise in heart, on what did he rely
 That he should [thus] support [these] worlds?
 - [5] Teach us thy highest dwelling places (*dhama*), thy lowest too;
 [Teach us] these, thy midmost, Maker of All:
 Teach thy friends at the oblation, O thou, self-strong;
 Offer sacrifice thyself to make thy body grow!
 - [6] Maker of All, grown strong by the oblation,
 Offer heaven and earth in sacrifice thyself!
 Let others hither and thither, distracted, stray
 But for us let there be a bounteous patron here.
 - [7] Let us today invoke the Lord of Speech,
 Maker of All, inspirer of the mind,
 To help us at the [time of] sacrifice.
 Let him take pleasure in all our invocations,
 Bring us all blessing, working good to help us!
-

To Visvakarman

- [1] The father of the eye - for wise of mind is he -
 Begat these twain [heaven and earth] like sacrificial ghee,
 And they bowed to him [in worship].
 Not till the ancient bounds were firmly fixed
 Were heaven and earth extended.
- [2] Maker of All, exceeding wise, exceeding strong,
 Creator, Ordainer, highest Exemplar (*samdrs*):

Their sacrifices [or wishes] exult in nourishment
There where, they say, the One is - beyond the Seven Seers.

- [3] He is our father, he begat us,
[He] the Ordainer: dwellings (*dhama*) knows,
All worlds [he knows]: the gods he named,
[Himself] One only: other beings go to question him.
 - [4] As [now our] singers [give] of their abundance,
So did the ancient seerstogether offer him wealth:
After the sunless and the sunlit spaces
Had been set down, together they made these beings.
 - [5] Beyond the heavens, beyond this earth,
Beyond the gods, beyond the Asuras,
What was the first embryo the waters bore
To which all the gods bore witness?
 - [6] He [Visvakarman] was the first embryo the waters bore
In whom all gods together came,
The One implanted in the Unorn's navel
In which all the worlds abode.
 - [7] You will not find him who [all] these begat:
Some other things has stepped between you.
Blinded by fog and [ritual] mutterings
Wander the hymn-reciters, robbers of life!
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The Sacrifice of Primal Man

- [1] A thousand heads had [primal] Man,
A thousand eyes, a thousand feet:
Encompassing the earth on every side,
He exceeded it by ten fingers' [breadth].
- [2] [That] Man is this whole universe, -
What was and what is yet to be,
The Lord of immortality
Which he outgrows by [eating] food.
- **[3] This is the measure of his greatness,
But greater yet is [primal] Man:
All beings form a quarter of him,
Three-quarters are the immortal in heaven.**
- [4] With three-quarters Man rose up on high,
A quarter of him came to be again [down] here:
From this he spread in all directions,
Into all that eats and does not eat.
- [5] From him was Viraj born,
From Viraj Man again:
Once born, - behind, before,
He reached beyond the earth.

- [6] When with Man as their oblation
The gods performed their sacrifice,
Spring was the melted butter,
Summer the fuel, and the autumn the oblation.
- [7] Him they besprinkled on the sacrificial strew, -
[Primeval] Man, born in the beginning:
With him [their victim], gods, Sadhyas, seers
Performed the sacrifice.
- [8] From this sacrifice completely offered
The clotted ghee was gathered up:
From this he fashioned beasts and birds,
Creatures of the woods and creatures of the village.
- [9] From this sacrifice completely offered
Were born the Rig- and Sama-Vedas;
From this were born the metres,
From this was the Yajur-Veda born.
- [10] From this were horses born, all creatures
That have teeth in either jaw;
From this were cattle born,
From this sprang goats and sheep.
- [11] When they divided [primal] Man,
Into how many parts did they divide him?
What was his mouth? What his arms?
What are his thighs called? What his feet?
- [12] The Brahman was his moth,
The arms were made the Prince,
His thighs the common people,
And from his feet the serf was born.
- **[13] From his mind the moon was born,
And from his eye the sun,
And from his mouth Indra and the fire,
From his breath the wind was born.**
- [14] From his navel arose the atmosphere,
From his head the sky evolved,
From his feet the earth, and from his ear
The cardinal points of the compass:
So did they fashion forth these worlds.
- [15] Seven were his enclosing sticks
Thrice seven were made his fuel sticks,
When the gods, performing sacrifice,
Bound Man, [their sacrificial] beast.
- [16] With the sacrifice the gods
Made sacrifice to sacrifice:
These were the first religious rites (*Dharma*),
To the firmament these powers went up
Where dwelt the ancient Sadhya gods.