VEDIC VRTRA

A Study and a Suggested Interpretation

by

Ajoy Kumar Lahiri

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The Australian National University.

April 1971
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<td>From restrainer, protector &amp; saviour by the coverer, that is, Vṛtra</td>
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</table>
madhyat

Agniṣṭoma ekāha

Ekāṣṭaka

have been the simple beginning

they art indeed our

susñaya

Brāhmaṇas (their) great helps[1]

Begazköy

sahasas pate

Kutsa

render it with Muir

(this affliction)

downstream

Sāmaveda

Brāhmaṇas

associated

Bhujyu

III.53.11, VII.25.5; see also our

chap. IV, pp.180-31

somo nā

Please adō:
Gaastra, Dieuke, Das Gopatha

Brāhmaṇa. Leiden 1919. E. J. Brill

Saṣāvimsa

Trench

Latin

Harmondsworth
Please add: Leiden 1965. E.J. Brill

Carl Winter

Please add: Anchor Books
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Bibliography
This study offers an analysis, as complete as possible, of the problem of Vṛtra in Vedic literature. We believe that any study of such a topic should start with an analysis of the name of the principal character or characters. Accordingly our chapter II involves a detailed analysis of the word Vṛtra, which was coined from vṛ, which is traceable to I-E *uer. In the next three chapters we have endeavoured to analyse the character of Vṛtra. While going through the Vedas one witnesses a gradual evolution of Vṛtra’s character. In the RV he is a demon obstructing the vegetal life of the world, or a personification of human enemies creating obstructions. In the later Vedas Vṛtra becomes identified with the unpurified soma stalks. The killing of Vṛtra becomes tantamount to killing the soma stalks, thereby purging them of their impurity and thus making them perfect and fit to be offered to the gods. This, in short, is the biography of the demon Vṛtra in the Vedas.

The evolutionary emphasis of our thesis is clearly discernable. It could not be otherwise. While the RV definitely gives us a picture of a warring people, the later Vedas, beginning with the Yajurveda, definitely reflect a more sedentary life. This sedentary life gave scope to the people, especially to the priestly class, to develop their rituals to an enormous extent, perhaps unsurpassed anywhere in the world. In accepting this evolution, vis-à-vis our theme, we of course do not deny that ossified ideas and concepts might persist in later texts. In order to solve this problem, we had to rely on the original sources and try to understand the spirit of the texts. This has resulted in our distinguishing the saga of Vṛtra of the RV from the myth of Vṛtra of the later Vedas. A myth, we believe, becomes a saga, when it attaches itself to definite historical facts. We have developed these ideas in our chapter VI.
The richness of our source material clearly shows the dominance of the Vṛtra saga or myth in the religious life of the Vedic people. This richness has also resulted in a profusion of quotations for which we ask the reader's indulgence.

This thesis involves translation of a large number of passages from the Vedic literature. These have been included owing to our dissatisfaction with many of the existing translations, especially of the RV, though acknowledgements are made to various translators in the footnotes, whenever we have borrowed ideas from them. The translation of some of the verses is extremely tentative, while we have not translated some expressions at all, because we believe that the proper import of these expressions is lost to us. Indeed, a complete translation in English, even of the RV alone, with critical and exegetical commentaries, is still a desideratum.

The range of this thesis includes the Vedic Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas, though references are made to the Śrauta literature, especially the Āpastamba- and Māṇavaśrautasūtras.

We must mention here some technical details. Brackets are mainly used for our additions to translations of original Sanskrit texts. This is done to clarify the translation or to show the god to whom the verse in question is addressed. In so far as Rgvedic quotations are concerned, we have mostly quoted the Saṁhitāpātha, though in some places, especially in the second chapter, we have quoted the Padapātha in order to show the different forms of the root vr. In place of [m] indicating the pure nasal anusvāra, we have used ū. In place of the German even when quoting from the writings of German scholars like Grassmann or Geldner, in order to obviate the difficulty of typing.

It is now my very pleasant duty to acknowledge indebtedness to various individuals for suggestions, criticisms and assistance in translation. I
would like to thank my late-lamented friend Mr Igor Larsen of the C.S.I.R.O. of the Government of Australia. I am very much indebted to Miss Mary Hutchinson of the Department of Asian Civilizations, Australian National University, for assistance in translation. For initial encouragement I am greatly beholden to Professor Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya of the Visvabharati, Santiniketan. At various stages of this thesis, I have received suggestions from my colleagues of the Department of Asian Civilizations. Among them I would like to thank especially Messrs B.J. Terwiel and Ian Proudfoot, and Dr James A. Santucci, now of the California State College, Fullerton, Cal.

By far my greatest debt of gratitude is owed to Professor A.L. Basham. He has supervised my work and given me invaluable inspiration and help all through the writing of the thesis.

My thanks are also due to the Menzies Library of the Australian National University, especially the staff members of the reference desk who have given me unstinted help in procuring various materials for my research.

I am very much indebted to the Australian National University for awarding me a scholarship which enabled me to write my thesis. I am also indebted to my wife for much encouragement and for financial assistance.
## ABBREVIATIONS

### Original Sanskrit Texts

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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
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<tr>
<td>AŚS</td>
<td>Āpastamba Śrautasūtra</td>
</tr>
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<td>AV</td>
<td>Atharvaveda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>Gopatha Brāhmaṇa</td>
</tr>
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<td>KB</td>
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<td>RV</td>
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<td>ŚB</td>
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<td>ŚB</td>
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### Books, Journals etc.

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<td>AMKT</td>
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<td>AO</td>
<td>Acta Orientalia.</td>
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<td>ARC</td>
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<td>The Atharvaveda and the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, Bloomfield.</td>
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<td>Brahman</td>
<td>Notes on Brahman, Gonda.</td>
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<td>BRV</td>
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<td>CHI</td>
<td>Cambridge History of India, Rapson, editor.</td>
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<td>s.f.</td>
<td>Substantive feminine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>s.m.</td>
<td>Substantive masculine.</td>
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<td>v.a.</td>
<td>Active verb.</td>
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CHAPTER I

A Survey of the Views of Earlier Scholars

A Some Miscellaneous Views

The problem of Vṛtra is one that has concerned scholars since the time of Yāska, who was the earliest commentator on the RV whose work has survived. The Indra-Vṛtra conflict has been interpreted as a symbolic struggle between the forces of darkness and those of the light; or as symbolising the piercing of the cloud (Vṛtra) by Indra (the god of vegetation par excellence) and the consequent coming of the rains; or as reflecting a picture of the tremendous struggle of the Aryans against the pre-Aryans of India; or as a myth of creation; or as a ritual fight between the godly life-giving powers and the demons who stand for destruction and chaos.

Early Indian interpreters are in favour of a naturalistic interpretation. In the Nighantu, the word Vṛtra occurs in a list of thirty words signifying "cloud", or in a list of words signifying "wealth". The word, Ahi, also signifies, according to the writer of the Nighantu, either "cloud" or "water".

Yāska seems to derive the word from vr (to cover), vṛt (to roll) or vṛdh (to grow). In an earlier passage Yāska quotes the views of two

---

1 I.10.
2 II.10.
3 I.10.
4 I.12.
5 Nirukta, II.17: tadvṛtroṛṇotervā vartatervā vardhatervā, yadavṛatvat eva vṛtrasya vṛtratvā, iti vijñāyate. yadavṛatvat tadu vṛtrasya vṛtratvā, iti vijñāyate. yadavardhat tadu vṛtrasya vṛtratvā, iti vijñāyate.
schools of Vedic interpretation, those of the Nairuktas, according to whom Vṛtra means cloud, and those of the Aitihasikas, according to whom Vṛtra is an Asura and the son of Tvasṭr. There is, however, some evidence which shows that Yāska is in favour of interpreting the myth as symbolising the piercing of the water-withholding demon and consequent flowing of the waters. Thus Yāska remarks, "By expanding his body, he obstructed the currents (of the waters)" or "vrtrahānam" is described by Yāska as "meghahanam".

Sāyāna puts forward several varieties of interpretation with regard to the Indra-Vṛtra conflict. In some instances he interprets it in terms of the phenomenon of thunderstorm, characterised by the piercing of the rain cloud and the consequent coming of the rains. For example, Sāyāna remarks, "Vṛtra is a cloud, because he covers the sky", "He covers, envelops the sky, thus he is Vṛtra the cloud", "the enveloper of rain water", "Vṛtra, the Asura, the giver of water or the cloud", "Vṛtra,

5 contd
"Vṛtra covers or rolls or increases. Since he covered up, hence the Vṛtrahood of Vṛtra. Thus it is known. Because he rolled, hence the Vṛtrahood of Vṛtra. Thus it is known. Because he grew, hence the Vṛtrahood of Vṛtra. Thus it is known."

6 Ibid., II. 16.
7 Ibid., II. 16.
8 Ibid., VII. 23.
9 vṛṇotyākāśāmiti vṛtro meghaḥ, on II. 11. 9; II. 14. 2; III. 33. 6. etc.
10 vṛṇotyācchādayati nabha iti vṛtro meghaḥ, on III. 30. 8.
11 vṛṣṭyudakasyāvarakam, on I. 85. 9.
12 vṛtramasaṇā yadvodakasya dātāraṇ meghaḥ vā, on V. 32. 1.
the enveloper of water, the cloud";¹³  Indra's epithet vrtrahānam, is explained by Sāyaṇa as "the killer of the cloud obstructor".¹⁴ In some passages, Sāyaṇa describes Vṛtra as "the enveloper, the Asura".¹⁵ Curiously enough, Sāyaṇa also describes Vṛtra or Vṛtras as an enemy and from his description it is clear that by the term śatru in these passages he means earthly enemy: thus, Indra is requested to obliterate Vṛtra, who is described by the commentator as śatru, "Kill or obliterate Vṛtra, the enemy";¹⁶ Vṛtras are described as "the envelopers, the enemies",¹⁷ and the term vrtratūram is once explained as "an act of violence against the enemies".¹⁸ The commentator also identifies Vṛtra with the Rākṣasas and pāpa or evil: "Vṛtras, the enveloping Rākṣasas, or evils",¹⁹ or "All the Vṛtras, the Rākṣasas in the form of evils".²⁰ Sāyaṇa also describes Vṛtras as "evils in the form of envelopers".²¹ The commentator is also aware of the fact that the Vṛtra myth may also bear a ritualistic significance in some passages of the RV, for example, on I. 93. 5, Sāyaṇa quotes from the TB (III. 2. 5, 1) and relates the myth that after Vṛtra's death his body fell on the rivers, whereby the waters became impure.

¹³ vrtram apāmāvarakaṁ megham, on X. 113. 8.
¹⁴ vrtrahānāṁ āvarakasya meghasya hantāram, on I. 59. 6.
¹⁵ āvarakamasūram, on VIII. 2. 32; VIII. 3. 19.
¹⁶ vrtraṁ śatrum hata nāsāyata, on I. 23. 9.
¹⁷ āvarakaṇi śatrujātāni, on VIII. 15. 3.
¹⁸ śatrūpām hiṁsakam, on X. 48. 8.
¹⁹ vrtraṇi āvarakaṇi rakṣānsi pāpāṇi vā, on VIII. 29. 4.
²⁰ sarvāni vrtraṇi pāparūpāṇi rakṣānsi, on IX. 109. 14.
²¹ vrtra āvarakaṇi pāpāṇi, on IV. 41. 2.
Agni and Soma freed the waters from that impurity. Or, on IV. 18. 7. Sāyaṇa relates the myth of the Brāhmaṇas according to which Indra committed sin, for he killed Vṛtra who was a brāhmaṇa, and Aditi asked whether the waters would take upon themselves the sin of such a heinous crime. We will not anticipate here our views about the ritualistic significance of the Indra-Vṛtra myth, but suffice it to say that, excepting Kuiper and Buschardt, all modern scholars have neglected this aspect of the mythology and, as a result, most of them half-heartedly attempt to explain away this important aspect of Indian religion. Sāyaṇa also explains Vṛtra in a cosmic sense as deeply enveloping the worlds in darkness; or Vṛtra is described as enveloping the three worlds.

F. Max Müller put forward several interpretations with regard to the Indra-Vṛtra myth. Indra was the Jupiter Pluvius of the Veda who fought against the powers of darkness, of night and of winter and especially against the robbers of the rain cloud. Once he styled Vṛtra or Vṛtras as the evil spirits in the Veda. He identified Vṛtra or Ahi with Azhi Dahāka of the Avesta and Orthros, Echis, Ophis, Echion of Greek mythology, or with Drakon, dragon or P̣ython who was killed by Apollo, or with Āgā and Oegir or Uoki, Ecke or Eckbart of medieval Germanic epic poetry.

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22a For Kuiper's interpretation, see infra, p.26 ff..
22 For Buschardt's ritualistic interpretation, see infra, p.27 ff..
23 vṛtrataram atiśayena lokānām āvarakam andhakārarūpam, on I. 32. 5.
24 vṛtram trayāṇām lokānāmāvarītāramasuram, Sāyaṇa on I. 52. 2.
25 Max Müller, Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religions of India, p.279.
In another place he remarked, "Let us remember then that in the Veda Vritra represents the darkness, whether of the thunderstorm or of the night ..." who was defeated "by the gods of light and of the morning". G.W. Cox discerned in the myth the "physical struggle between light and darkness as exhibited in the alternations of day and night". Indra, the bright god of heaven, triumphed over "the demon of night and darkness", who shut up the rain clouds. Vytra also came to signify any enemy.

In place of Max Müller's Comparative Mythology, A. Lang proposed a new method of mythological interpretation, that of Comparative Anthropology, which "studies the development of law out of custom; the development of weapons from the stick or stone to the latest repeating rifle; the development of society from the horde to the nation". It also studies "the evolution of ideas, from the savage to the barbarous, and thence to the civilised stage". After thus enunciating his new method, Lang discussed the myth of the water-swallower.

According to the Iroquois, once long ago the earth was arid and not fertile, because a gigantic frog had swallowed up all the waters. A hero Ioskeha killed this frog and released the waters in streams and lakes. Similar myths, with varying details, are to be found among the Australian aborigines and the Andaman islanders.

30 Cox, ibid., p.536.
31 Cox, ibid., p.537.
33 Lang, ibid., p.28.
34 Lang, ibid., p.39 ff.
Lang thought that Vṛtra was "rather the robber-guardian than the swallower of the waters", but Indra is comparable to the Iroquois Ioskeha who released the waters. This fight for waters between Indra and Vṛtra is of course nobler than the version found among the Iroquois or the Andaman islanders. But a savage element is also to be found in this myth. The theriomorphic representation of Vṛtra (as a snake) and Indra (as a hawk or ram) must be the remnants of the savage past of the Vedic Aryans. The Vedic "improvement and transfiguration, so to speak, of a myth at bottom the same is due to the superior culture, not to the peculiar race, of the Vedic people ...".

According to A. Bergaigne, Vṛtra is the enveloper of the waters. But Vṛtra can also refer to real human enemies, and in this connection Bergaigne referred to the expression "Ārya and Dāsa" Vṛtras in various passages of the Rigveda. But more often the description of Vṛtra suggests the appearance of a mythical demon. Indra kills Vṛtra, and this results in the release of the waters, the appearance of the dawn, and the rising of the sun in the sky. Referring to Indra's winning of the cows, Bergaigne remarked, "Si le butin de ces combats consiste souvent en vaches, ...".

35 Lang, ibid., p.42.
36 Lang, ibid., vol.II, p.147 ff.
37 Lang, ibid., vol.I, p.43.
39 Bergaigne, ibid., p.198.
40 Bergaigne, ibid., p.199.
41 Bergaigne, ibid., p.199 ff.
c'est que la vache est, comme on sait, dans la mythologie védique, la représentation consacrée des aurores et des eaux". 42

Bergaigne compared Varuṇa with the Greek god Ouranos, both meaning heaven. 43 The verb व, from which both Varuṇa and Ouranos have been derived, conveys the idea that heaven embraces and holds all the gifts which are coveted by men, like the waters and light. The heaven contains them even if it does not give them to human beings; for example, it imprisons the light during the night and the waters during the dry periods. This aspect of the heaven-god brings him near to Vṛtra which name was also coined from व.

Referring to the indigenous Indian tradition, Bergaigne pointed out that the commentator on the TS I. 8. 16. 1, refers to the enveloping nature of Varuṇa - "that which envelops like darkness". 44 Bergaigne quoted Sāyaṇa’s opinion on RV I. 89. 3, and translated it thus: "Il enveloppe, c'est-à-dire il emprisonne les méchants dans ses lacets." 45 Here Bergaigne found confirmation of his view that Varuṇa envelops, imprisons or retains.

Bergaigne drew our attention to RV VII. 82. 6 which he translated thus: "L'un a vaincu l'assaillant étranger, l'autre, avec une troupe peu nombreuse, enveloppe une troupe nombreuse." 46 He remarked that the use of the verb pra-vṛnoti in this passage is deliberate, alluding to the etymology of the name Varuṇa.

42 Bergaigne, ibid., p.200.
44 Bergaigne, ibid., p.113.
45 Bergaigne, ibid., p.114.
46 Bergaigne, ibid., p.113.
Bergaigne also referred to RV VIII. 58. 12 which he translated thus: "Tu es un grand dieu, Ô Varuṇa; par ta bouche coulent les sept rivières, comme par un canal profond." 47 Bergaigne remarked that this flow of waters from the mouth of Varuṇa shows that they were first of all enclosed in him and retained by him. In the same sense he interpreted RV V. 85. 6 which he translated thus: "Nul ne peut rien contre cette grande magie du dieu très-habile: les rivières rapides, versant en lui seul leurs eaux comme dans une mer, ne peuvent le remplir." 48 He pointed out that Varuṇa is styled a sea and characteristically a hidden sea in RV VIII. 41. 8. That Varuṇa also engulfed the sea is evident from RV IX. 73. 3 which he translated thus: "Le grand Varuṇa a caché la mer; les habiles seuls ont su la ressaisir dans les réservoirs." 49 Thus a being who has kept the waters enclosed in himself, is from a naturalistic point of view identical with Vṛtra who also envelops the waters. But Varuṇa's role in the natural order should be distinguished from his role in the religious order where he is the father of the Soma and the guardian of the law. The references to Varuṇa's spies, his dykes and his noose recall his semi-demoniacal character in the natural order and his role of avenging divinity in the religious order.

Referring to Indra's rivalry with Varuṇa in RV IV. 42 and X. 124, Bergaigne remarked that the Āditya group of gods, especially the foremost of the Ādityas, Varuṇa, was opposed to the warrior god Indra. 50

47 Bergaigne, ibid., p.128.
48 Bergaigne, ibid., p.128.
49 Bergaigne, ibid., p.128.
50 Bergaigne, ibid., p.139.
antagonism between Varuna and Indra is probably symbolical of a conflict between an older cult common among all the Indo-Europeans (Varuna) and an exclusively Indian cult (Indra). Varuna, the guardian of the waters, Soma and Agni, receives, according to Bergaigne, the name Vṛtra in RV X. 124 again and again. Indra dethrones this Varuna, whose difference from Vṛtra is only nominal in this hymn. The information that "Varuṇa released the waters without using violence", or "Varuṇa released the waters without himself using violence" in RV X. 124. 7, led Bergaigne to believe that "Varuṇa cannot pour out waters without using violence as if the waters are in his power, and they cannot be in his power without him being suspect of withholding them in times of dryness, like Vṛtra himself".

L. Renou thought that a god, when "forced to yield his position to a newer god, or who is relegated to the rôle of a father, is apt to become baleful". This happened in the case of Varuṇa vis-à-vis Indra and thus Varuṇa became "alarmingly liable to assume the aspect of Vṛtra". V.M. Apte thought that Vṛtra is the demon of darkness and Indra is god of light. The waters, whose release is simultaneous with the appearance of the sun, are not ordinary rain waters but cosmic waters of the celestial sea.

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51 Bergaigne, ibid., p.142.
52 Bergaigne, ibid., p.149; see Norman Brown's interpretation of the hymn in JAOS, vol.39, p.100 ff. ("Proselyting the Asuras").
53 Renou, Religions of Ancient India, p.20.
54 Renou, ibid., p.20.
According to V.A. Gadgil, the Indra-Vṛtra conflict represents the eternal conflict between Tejas and Tamas.  

N. Yamunacharya thought it represents the conflict between good and evil.  

B.G. Tilak found in the myth a reference to climatic conditions in the Arctic region. According to him, Indra is the sun god; his victory means the overpowering of the demon of darkness who dominates the Arctic region for a considerable period of the year.  

F. Singh found in the victory of Indra over Vṛtra a reference to the destruction of the wintry night with its enveloping darkness in the Arctic region, as also the release of water from the rain-laden clouds.  

R. Shamasastya identified Indra with the sun and Vṛtra, with the eclipse demon.  

H.A. Shah attempted an astronomical interpretation. According to him, Vṛtra-Ahi-Hydra represents the regent of the serpent god Aślesā. Indra is the regent god of the sun. Indra's fight with Vṛtra puts him at the summer solstice point and also at the autumnal equinox.

58 Tilak, Arctic Home in the Veda, p.233 ff.
60 Shamasastya, "Vedic Gods", in B.C. Law Volume, part I, p.277 ff; and "Test of the Vedic Eclipse-cycle" in A volume of Studies in Indology presented to Prof. P.V. Kane, p.428 ff.
P.C. Sengupta thought that Indra was the god of the summer solstice. Indra became *Maghavan*, when the sun at summer solstice reached the *Magha* constellation. According to his calculations, this happened in 4170 B.C. He went on to identify *Aślesa* with Ahi and thought that Ahi means the clouds which are seen in the sky from the rising of *Aślesa* which withholds rain till the rising of *Magha*. 62

H.D. Griswold thought that Vṛtra "is anything which obstructs the waters, whether drought demon in the case of heavenly waters or mountain barriers or snow in the case of the earthly waters". 63

According to A. Hillebrandt, Vṛtra is the winter giant, the glacier which winter cold holds fast. With the advent of spring, Indra, the sun god, slays Vṛtra, the winter demon, and releases the waters. 64

H. Oldenberg thought that in the Vedic age the poets conceived the deeds of Indra as the letting forth from mountains on earth of terrestrial streams, though in the earlier pre-Vedic period the myth might have signified the thunderstorm and the falling of the rain. But for the singers of the RV, Indra was the splitter of earthly mountains and the freer of earthly rivers. 65

K. Chaṭṭopādhyāya found in the myth a reference to the yearly release of rain waters or rivers. Following H. Brunhofer's suggestion, he placed the seven rivers released by Indra in Semirechinsk in Russian Turkestan,

64 Hillebrandt, Vedische Mythologie, vol.II, p.154 ff; see also infra, Ch.III,p.128ff.
65 Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, p.133 ff.
watered by the *Ili, Lepsa, Karatal, Baskan, Aksu, Sarkan* and *Biyen* which flow into the lake Balkash. The Semirechinsk region satisfies the various data philologists have posited for the original homeland of the Indo-Europeans.  

Böhtlingk-Roth, Ragozin, Perry, Lanman, Barnett, Muir, Hopkins, Glasenapp, Monier-Williams, von Schroeder, interpret the myth as symbolising the piercing of the clouds and the consequent coming of the rains.

J. Frazer remarked, "The cloud-dragon has swallowed the waters and keeps them shut up in the black coils of his sinuous body; the god cleaves the monster's belly with his thunderbolt, and the imprisoned waters escape, in the form of dripping rain and rushing stream".

J.L. Weston, in course of an investigation on the significance of the Grail heroes, Gawain and Perceval, found great correspondence between

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68 Ragozin, *Vedic India*, p.191 ff.
69 Perry, "Indra in the Rig-veda", in *JAOS*, vol.11, p.117 ff.
73 Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, p.91 ff.
74 Glasenapp, *Der Hinduismus*, pp.24-5 and 115.
these heroes and Indra and concluded that in a tropical country like India such a myth must have had a vegetative significance, that is, the restoration of the rivers to their channels, the "Freeing of the Waters".\footnote{Weston, \textit{From Ritual to Romance}, p.25 ff.}

On the other hand, some scholars did not accept this naturalistic interpretation and believed that the Indra-Vṛtra myth reflects a picture of the tremendous struggle which the Aryans had to wage against the pre-Aryans of India.

R. Ojha thought that the pre-Aryans were serpent-worshipping Dravidians. He remarked, "It is well known that in ancient days a war between two peoples was represented as a war between their gods. Perhaps that was the case here as well and these myths preserve the faint memory of the defeat of the ancient serpent-worshipping people."\footnote{Ojha, "The Indra-Vṛtra War and the Serpent People", in \textit{JBORS}, vol.XXVII, pt.I, p.61.}

K. Rønnow thought that the Indra-Vṛtra conflict represents the tension between the Deva- and Asura-cults of the immigrant Aryans and the Nāga-cults of the native peoples.\footnote{Rønnow, "Vedic Krīvi", in \textit{AO}, vol.XVI, p.161 ff.; see infra, Ch.IV, p.168 ff..}

D.D. Kosambi thought that the slaughter of Vṛtra refers to the bursting of the prehistoric dams constructed by the pre-Aryans and the consequent release of waters.\footnote{Kosambi, \textit{An Introduction to the Study of Indian History}, p.70; see also the author's "Origin of Brahmin Gotras", in \textit{JBBRAS}, vol.26, p.21 ff.; specially pp.49-50; and \textit{The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India}, pp.79-80.}
At one time Buddha Prakash thought that Vṛtra represents the Oratūrae and Varetatae, two Indian tribes mentioned by Megasthenes. In a later publication, however, he does not refer to this identification, though he still holds that the Indra-Vṛtra conflict refers "to the wars, which the Aryans proclaimed against the priest kings of the Punjab". Ultimately the Aryan and non-Aryan cultures coalesced and through the influence of Vṛtra the Vedas were written.

R.N. Dandekar accepts the view of Benveniste and Renou that the fundamental idea conveyed by the two cognate words, Vṛtra in the RV and Vṛṣtra in the Avesta, is preserved in the Avesta alone. These two words are derived from the root var, to resist, and from this is coined the neuter substantive Vṛtra, which signifies 'resistance'. Dandekar goes on to argue that Indra was originally a human hero and later on was elevated to the status of the national war god of the Vedic Aryans and this conferred a new meaning on the Vṛtra-Vṛtrahan concept. These abstractions were thus given a concrete basis. The historical hero Indra defeated a number of human foes resisting the onward march of the Aryans and these human foes were ultimately styled Vṛtra.

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83 Prakash, Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab, p.54.
84 Prakash, ibid., p.63 ff.
A.A. Macdonell first accepted the vegetative significance of the Indra-Vṛtra conflict, but remarked later that the plural Vṛtras may refer to human enemies as well as to celestial fiends.

A.B. Keith thought while Vṛtra is primarily the encompasser of waters, the plural Vṛtras may refer to terrestrial foes.

M. Winternitz considered Vṛtra primarily to be the obstructor of the waters and secondarily to embody the black aborigines of India.

P.S. Deshmukh thought that Vṛtra's most heinous act is his imprisoning the waters and it is by slaying Vṛtra that Indra lets loose the waters or the rivers which were imprisoned. But due to constant invocations of gods to come to the aid of the worshippers and destroy the terrestrial foes, there has been a curious interchange of terms between the enemies of gods and those of men. Thus the words Dāsa or Dasyu, which are designations of terrestrial foes, come to denote aerial fiends, while Vṛtras come to signify the enemies of the Aryans.


87 Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, p. 159.


89 Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature, p. 72 ff.


91 Deshmukh, ibid., pp. 311 and 314.
G. Dumézil\textsuperscript{92} takes Vṛtrahan-VṛQragna to be the representative Indo-Iranian god of victory, as also "avant tout le dieu de l'initiation militaire."\textsuperscript{93} The Indra-Vṛtra conflict "est essentiellement celui du dieu assaillant, offensif, mobile, - et de "quelque chose" de

\textsuperscript{92} Dumézil's views should be judged in the background of his well-known "Tripartite ideology" which he thought to be prevalent among the Indo-Europeans. On the basis of the Vedic evidences on the caste system, he came to the conclusion that, like the three classes in the human society, there was also a threefold division among the gods for the administration of the universe. The first class of gods is concerned with "L'administration à la fois mystérieuse et régulière du monde" (Dumézil, Les Dieux Des Indo-Europeens, p.7), the typical representative of this class being Mitra, "dont le nom signifie le Contrat, et aussi l'Ami, est rassurant, bienveillant, protecteur des actes et rapports honnêtes et régîs, ennemi de la violence" (ibid., p.12), and Varuṇa who is "violente et guerrière" (ibid., p.12); thus Mitra and Varuṇa represent 'the benign and terrible aspects of sovereignty respectively. The second class is concerned with "Le jeu de la vigueur physique, de la force, principalement mais non uniquement guerrière" (ibid., p.7), the typical representative of this class being Indra whose forte is physical force: "les mouvements, les services, les nécessités de la Force brute qui, appliquée à la bataille, produit victoire, butin, puissance. Ce champion vorace, armé de la foudre, tue les démons, sauve l'univers" (ibid., p.12). The third class is concerned with "La fécondité, avec beaucoup de conséquences et de résonances, telles que la prospérité, la santé, la longue vie, la tranquillité, la volupté, le "nombre"." (ibid., p.7), the typical representative of this class being the Āśvin, Sarasvatī etc.


\textsuperscript{93} Dumézil, Mythes et Dieux des Germains, p.97.
réistant, de lourd, de passif." Referring to the myth of the three-headed monster, Dumézil points out that both are the sons or much more the works of the carpenter god Tvaṣṭr. When Indra cannot cut off the head of the monster, he seeks the help of the carpenter god and in this reference Dumézil finds "la trace, matérielle en quelque sorte, du caractère "mannequin" of the three-headed monster. Dumézil goes on to conclude "Tout cela laisse entrevoir des scénarios préhistorique où un Tricéphalos, ou un Monstre-Résistance, construits en planches, et parfaitement inerte, succombaient à l'offensive du jeune guerrier", who due to this feat, received the title Vṛtrahan with all the magical privileges of invulnerability etc..

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94 Dumézil, ibid., p.97.
95 Dumézil here refers to the Vedic Vṛtra and epic (Brahmanical?) three-headed monster.
96 Dumézil, ibid., p.98.
97 Dumézil, ibid., p.98.
B  Cosmogonic Interpretation

W. Norman Brown is in favour of a cosmogonic significance of the Indra-Vṛtra myth. According to him, the universe with all its constituent elements, at the beginning, was restrained within a hard cover, a shell, which, he thinks, was personified as a wicked withholding-demon named Vṛtra, the 'Encloser'. A natural force of creation also existed in the form of Varuṇa, but "the power of contraction or conservatism" was greater than that of "liberation and growth". Now, besides the enclosed waters, there was also Tvaṣṭr, the divine artificer, who created Heaven and Earth and of these two was born Indra who "split the covering" after which everything beneficial, including the sun, flowed forth. This was the creation. This apparent dichotomy between primeval chaos and creation is further emphasised when Brown dilates upon the conflict between the Ādityas, whom he takes to represent "expansion, release, progressivism, development, growth", and their opponents the Dānavaś who represent "bondage, restraint, conservatism, inertia". Brown speaks of two views with regard to the interpretation of this myth. According to the first, a divine hero slew a dragon and won the waters, and the sun and creation followed. According to the second and more sophisticated view,

100 Norman Brown, ibid., pp.97-8.
101 Norman Brown, ibid., p.98.
103 Norman Brown, ibid., p.24.
"the myth was a symbolic representation of Potentiality striving with Inertia and overcoming Inertia through the aid of Power or Energy existing in the universe, especially in the atmosphere ...". 104 But later on this cosmogonic myth was replaced by others and Brhaspati, Viśvakarman etc. take up the position of Indra as the creator. These later Vedic cosmogonic speculations are not a complete invention, but rather a transmutation of the Indra-Vṛtra myth. 105 In his later publications, Brown adheres to the same view. 106

M. Eliade attaches a symbolic-cosmogonic significance to the Indra-Vṛtra myth. The dragon, according to him, represents the formless, unmanifested chaos, which existed before creation. Vṛtra's confiscation of the waters may mean either that he was the master of all before the creation or that he kept the waters for himself and thereby left the world in drought.

Indra's hurling of the thunderbolt and the slaughter of the dragon symbolise the passage from the non-manifest to the manifest. 107

H. Lüders thought that the Indra-Vṛtra myth is the Vedic creation-myth. 108 The snake has engulfed the whole world including the waters, which are imprisoned in the rocks where the monster lies. Indra defeats the monster,

104 Norman Brown, ibid., p.24.
105 Norman Brown, "The Rigvedic Equivalent for Hell", in JAOS, vol.61, p.79; see also the author's previous article in JAOS, vol.85, p.24 ff.
107 Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return, pp.19-20; see also the author's Patterns in Comparative Religion, p.429, and Images and Symbols, pp.98-9, where he briefly touches upon the problem of Varuṇa-Vṛtra assimilation.
splits the rock and releases the waters. Indra makes earth expand, puts heaven above, frees the sun and the red morning. Lüders thought that the Vṛtra myth might have originally dealt only with the imprisonment of the waters, because we always find this feature in the foreground. The waters, according to Lüders, are both celestial and terrestrial.

J. Gonda is also in favour of a cosmogonic interpretation of the myth. He rejects the old naturalistic interpretation as narrow and one-sided. According to him, the Indra-Vṛtra conflict tells us of Genesis, "oder (besser) Weltordnungsmythos". After the death of Vṛtra, who is a robber, obstructor, encompasser, beleaguerer, devourer, the habitable world is no longer under obstruction and opposition. This victory is brought about by Indra, the god of victorious power and physical strength, the irresistible warrior. After the removal of the opposition, the separation of heaven and earth is brought about by spreading the air-space between them. The waters of life, which had formerly been obstructed by the demonic power, flow forth. The god also wins the sun, produces light and banishes darkness. Thus Indra's victory over Vṛtra leads to the restoration of the world and the life-giving powers.

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109 Lüders, ibid., p.195.
112 See also Gonda's Aspects of Early Vaisnavism, p.30; Loka (World and Heaven in the Veda), p.21.
Conclusions of E. Benveniste and L. Renou

E. Benveniste and L. Renou arrived at several conclusions which may have profound bearing for our study. Basically interested in the ancient Iranian and Indian literary evidence, Benveniste also took into consideration the Armenian, Scythian and Greek variants of the myth. According to them, the Avesta has one advantage over the Vedas in that in the former Vṛtragna is not involved in legendary transmutation, while "in India legendary material has been submitted to such learned elaboration, and the game of transposition and identification has been pushed to such lengths, that the original fundamental facts have been lost and the sum of the testimony is not enough to reveal the genesis of the myth" (pp.1-2). So they started with the Avesta in which the word Vṛtra retains the meaning "resistance" and is always in the neuter. Vṛtra in the Avesta is not personified. In the ṛV, on the other hand, "One witnesses the gradual coming into existence of Vṛtra" (p.178), Vṛtra acquires a distinct personality. Vṛtragna in the Avesta is the independent designation of a god, but in the Vedas it is absorbed by Indra. Hence the Vedic evidence on Vṛtra is secondary. In the Indo-Iranian myth, Vṛtragna, the god, is more important than the demon Vṛtra who is a creation of the Vedic poets. The Iranians, in making Vṛtragna into a god, "never meant to make divine the 'slaughter of enemies' as such, but only the victorious offensive" (p.180). Indra and Vṛtrahan are originally two different designations, but become identical in India alone. The view of B. Geiger, who tried to

113 Benveniste and Renou, Vṛtra et Vṛtragna (Étude de Mythologie Indo-Iranienne).
114 Benveniste wrote the introduction, the Iranian section (pp.1-90) and the conclusion (pp.177-99), while Renou wrote the Indian section (pp.91-175).
identify Aži Dähaka with the demon Vṛtra is rejected, because the victor over Aži Dähaka is not Vṛgragna but Graitauna. Moreover, unlike the Vedas, the Avesta does not allude to a combat between Vṛgragna and a monster (p.181).

Three themes are discernable in the Vedic myth: (1) the motif of the religious tradition - the exploits of the victorious god; (2) an epic motif - the battle of the hero against the monster; and (3) a mythical motif - the liberation of the waters (p.182).

The character of the victorious god is made clear by the Avestic evidence. Vṛgragna is a warrior god, "he who strikes down opposition" (p.183), or, "a warrior god who triumphs over all his enemies and whose support guarantees victory to combatants" (p.183). But in India, the word is used only as an epithet of Indra, though Renou discerned even in the RV many traces of its former independence (p.115 ff.). In the Avesta Vṛgragna is the offensive quality of gods like Hauma and of heroes like Graitauna or objects like weapons, formulas etc. In the Vedas Vṛtrahan is bracketed with Agni, Soma and the Aśvins and qualifies various nouns, mainly instruments of attack, like vājra, amśu, máda, etc. All this evidence would "unquestionably convey the reality of an Indo-Iranian type of god victorious in the offensive, a god preserved and even magnified in the Avesta, but a faded entity in the Vedic pantheon soon to be confused with Indra" (pp.183-4).

With regard to the second point, Benveniste and Renou rejected the view that a distant reflection of Vedic Indra is to be found in the Hittite Inara and that the Vedic Aryans borrowed the idea of Indra from the Hittites. The personification of Indra took place in Indo-Iranian. In India, the supreme hero takes upon himself the task of combatting the dragon,
but in the *Avesta* we are not sure if Indra was also a hero before becoming a colourless demon; but we are sure of the fact that the demon is not named *Vṛtra* in the *Avesta*. What is probable is that the Aryans inherited from their ancestors a legendary framework in which the name of the hero could vary as could that of the monster. In any case, it is no use looking for an Indo-Iranian prototype of *Vṛtra*, for "There is either none, or there are many of them. What counts is the general pattern of the episode, and here the Indian and Iranian mythologies agree. They differ in that Indra is at the same time god of war and victor over the monster, while in Iran the god and the hero remain apart" (p.187).

With regard to the third point, Benveniste and Renou thought that the freeing of the waters might have been associated with *Vṛtra*, but it was independent of the theme of the conflict between the hero and the dragon. In India the contact and confusion take place "through a play of formulas, to which the root *var* is central" (p.187). In the *Avesta* the slaying of the dragon, *Azi Dahaka*, by the hero *Qraitauna* remains separate from the theme of the liberation of the waters; this is brought about by the victory of the heavenly body *Tistriya* over *Apa* *Vṛta*, demon of drought.

Next, Benveniste and Renou discussed how confusion of the three themes took place in the Vedas and to what extent it was foreshadowed in the Indo-Iranian community.

After pointing out that the cult of the warrior god, *Vṛtrahan-VṛQragna*, is a survival from the common past, Benveniste and Renou argued that, when a hero victorious over a monster is placed beside such a god, "the exploit of the hero, because at the same time human and ennobling, can acquire such proportions that he will eclipse the divine figure and soon absorb him. That is the situation of Indra vis-à-vis *Vṛtrahan*" (p.189). According to
them, Indra was originally a human hero, evidence for which is to be found in the RV (p.189 ff). His victory over Vṛtra leads to his deification. After acquiring this new prestige, he attracts to himself the characteristics of Vṛtrahan and gradually supplants him as the warrior god. Vṛtrahan becomes an epithet of Indra. And from this Vṛtrahan a dragon is formed.

Benveniste and Renou held that the theme of the liberated waters was independent of the dragon fight, but "implied a fundamental idea near enough to the victory over the dragon to be able to be combined with it should occasion arise" (p.196). The intervention on the part of the god was necessary to break the obstacle, the barrage which is personified as the demon Vṛtra. Thus, "The god who freed the waters and the hero who vanquished the dragon formed a single type: the heroic god who freed the waters by vanquishing the dragon" (p.196).

According to Benveniste and Renou, the Vedic hymns originated after the separation of the Indians from the common Indo-Iranian stock. These are works which are "poetic in the full sense of the word, a recreation of a world of ideas, a transposition into cosmic symbols of local and concrete data, themes amplified to the point of including or giving rise to other stories, the whole subservient to a rich and elusive phraseology which operates through formulas or formulas in embryo" (p.199). Many factors might have helped this transformation, but we should not lose sight of one important factor, that is, the contact of the Aryans with the

115 True to this line of argument, they argued, "There is no need to look for an allusion to the unleashing of the storm. The liberated waters are exclusively terrestrial, as the poet has affirmed in a hundred ways. The scene of the combat is the mountains where the waters remain captive, and the stakes are the rivers" (p.191).
pre-Aryans of the Indus Valley. The latter had a developed civilization and presumably a developed mythology and the semi-barbaric Aryans might have been subject to its influence.
The Ritualistic Interpretation

F.B.J. Kuiper attaches a ritualistic-cosmogonic significance to the Indra-Vṛtra myth. Time, in primitive religion, is thought to by a cyclical process. It involves the conception that, at the start of every year, the whole cosmos reverts back to the state of undifferentiated chaos, to be revived and regenerated anew. Vṛtra is the power of resistance of this inert chaos, "which power is conceived as residing on the primordial hill that floats on the surface of the cosmic Waters". Indra slays Vṛtra, splits the hill; fire and water come out of it and join the gods. Indra separates heaven from earth "by which act a cosmic dualism of upper world and nether world (represented by Devas and Asuras-Dānava respectively) is constituted".

According to Kuiper, the reference to Indra's winning the sun in this connection can only refer to the winter solstice. He refers to the frequent prayers of the poets for deliverance from anxiety (āmhas). Now amhasaspati is the name of an intercalary month in VS 7, 30, 21, 31., and thus āmhas can only refer to the end of the year.

Kuiper, however, concedes that direct reference to such a new year ritual is not forthcoming from the Vedas, though, on the basis of the

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117 Kuiper, IIJ., vol.4, p.219.
118 Kuiper, ibid., p.218.
119 Kuiper, ibid., p.219.
120 Kuiper, ibid., p.221.
121 Kuiper, ibid., p.219.
evidence mentioned above, we may conclude "that some at least of the hymns to Indra concern the critical period of transition from the old to the new year", 122 when "men tried to assist Indra in his fight against Death and Darkness by their ritual". 123 Kuiper also hints at the possibility of humans impersonating Indra and re-enacting Indra's act of creation during this festival. The various races and contests in this connection may refer to ritual contests and not to actual wars. 124 Next Kuiper gives an account of the part played in the new year festival by Uṣas, whom he takes "to be in the first place the Dawn of New Year". 125

L. Buschardt's book 126 is an important contribution towards an understanding of the Indra-Vṛtra myth in particular and the Vedic religion in general. From the title of the book it is obvious that Buschardt primarily believed in the ritualistic significance of the Indra-Vṛtra myth. According to him, the dominant theme of the cultic drama in the Vedic Age was the fight between "the godly life-giving powers and the demons waiting to sow death and engulf the whole universe into a dark chaos" (p.8). In the cultic drama all the spiritual and worldly values are renewed (p.12); it must be repeated times without number and thereby the destructive forces will be destroyed (p.12). Indra is the personification of the power in the Vedic cult (p.20), the active one par excellence (p.21). The destructive powers have various names including Rakṣases and Asuras. Buschardt thought

122 Kuiper, ibid., p.221.
123 Kuiper, ibid., p.221.
124 Kuiper, ibid., p.222.
125 Kuiper, ibid., p.242.
126 Buschardt, Vṛtra (Det rituelle Dæmondrab i den vediske Somakult). For a review article by F.B.J. Kuiper, see Museum, vol.LII, col.198-200.
that the historical fight of the Aryans against the Dāsas and Dasyus might have contributed to the formation of these demonic beings (p.22).

Buschardt argued that the Vedic people thought the evil powers lurked in the corner of the sacrificial site and were liable to attack it. The demons were vital elements in the sacrifice and their activity was incorporated in its most holy activity. They must necessarily have admittance in the cult drama, play a role in it, if one wants to defeat them. This is the background of the Vṛtra figure. The starting point is the demonic or the demon as a cultic phenomenon, with roots in a particular ritual moment which forms the apotheosis of the cult drama in the eternal motif of the conflict between good and bad. This concept leads to a rich complex of legends which spin themselves in myths, which again give rise to further legends (p.30). In fact, it remains no longer an individual myth, but varied themes in a cycle of myth (p.31). Further, sacrifice enriches the myth-creating activity. Though its origin is purely psychological, it swells up to a cosmic significance. Of this mythic type, the Indra-Vṛtra is one (p.31). Vṛtra's evil character is stressed, as also the identification of Vṛtra with the enemies of the sacrificers in the Brāhmaṇical literature.

Buschardt drew our attention to the identification of Vṛtra with Viśvarūpa and traced the twofold development of the myth in the Brāhmaṇas:

(1) Indra had to vomit out the stolen soma and he became deprived of all his powers and ultimately was restored by the Aśvins and (2) Tvaṣṭṛ, from whose sacrifice Indra stole soma, desecrated the sacrifice and created the terrible demon Vṛtra (p.34). Buschardt explained the various ramifications in the Brāhmaṇas of the original Vṛtra myth, for example, Indra's sense of guilt after the killing of the Brāhmaṇa Vṛtra and how he shook off the evil of brahmahatyā (pp.36-7).
In Buschardt's opinion, the importance of the creation of Vṛtra in the cult lay in its overpowering effect; cultic-dramatic necessity demanded the presence of Vṛtra. Buschardt also sometimes leaned towards an aetiological explanation of the myth, for example, when he pointed out that Tvaṣṭṛ wrongly created Vṛtra, the intention being that a ritual, when wrongly performed, might lead to undesirable, often dire consequences (p.40). 127

Buschardt then gave a description of Vṛtra's head, jaws, eyes, skin, blood and his snorting and fuming (pp.45-7), and emphasised the dominating element, the snake concept, "The Aryan dragon motif" (p.48), and significantly remarked, "There are, however, traits, which one is tempted to apply to a four-legged sacrificial animal as the point of origin" (p.48). He connected the Vṛtra legend both with the sacrifice of the animal and with the drinking party. He thought that originally the sacrificial killing was the culminating point of the cult, but, in the Vedic age, the emphasis was laid on soma drinking part, thereby forcing the killing part to the background (p.48).

With the birth of Vṛtra, he spreads all over the world and engulfs everything valuable (p.50), even the place of sacrifice (p.52) and his possession of Agni and Soma, the most important of the cult gods, means that he has gained possession of the whole cult (p.55). This possession of everything by Vṛtra appears in the more poetic version of the RV as Vṛtra possessing the waters (p.56). Buschardt thought that the vegetative significance of the Indra-Vṛtra myth might be only a partial explanation of this complex cult motif (p.58). In the unchallenged rule of the demon,

127 For a similar interpretation, see Sylvain Lévi's *La Doctrine du Sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas*, pp.124-5.
everything faces darkness and destruction, and the time is ripe for the
greatest moment in the cult, the demon fight. The need is felt for a
powerful god and Indra is born (p.61). Then follows a detailed account
of the conflict (pp.62-84).

After the demon-killing, Indra feels himself to be guilty (p.84).
Buschardt thought that Vṛtra-slaying is not merely killing of a demon,
but it signifies the killing of Soma or the animal in the place of
sacrifice (p.85), and hence arises the guilt-feeling. In the cult-feast
one celebrates victory as also death, because this is what the guilt-element
actually means. And so one achieves a reconciliation, a restitution for
the committed killing (p.94).

After the killing of the demon, follow rebirth and regeneration in the
form of the flowing of waters (p.95 ff). The obtaining of the cows in this
context signifies the acquiring of the abundance of life, the highest thing
in life (p.98). To kill Vṛtra is to create and thus Indra creates the sun,
sky and dawn after the demon-killing (p.99). With regard to "castle
destruction", Buschardt remarked that it might refer to the destruction of
the fortified cities of the original population (p.100). Through the
demon-killing one feels oneself being recreated. It is said that it is the
birth of the god (of Indra presumably), but it is that of the humans as
well. So deeply have this recreation and renewal been felt that this moment
must stand as a new creation for human beings also (p.110). But even if
the demon is slain and there is regeneration, it must be repeated again and
again (p.112).

Buschardt identified Vṛtra with Soma on the basis of the Brahmanical
evidence (p.113 ff). The mountains which are Vṛtra's body are also identical
with the ones on which grow the soma plants (p.114). When the soma stalks
are crushed with a pressing stone, it is pressed with his own body and thus
not killed but made whole as soma, apart from being the stalks, also has
the mountains as his body since they are Vṛtra's body (p.115). Soma-Vṛtra
is also identical with the moon (p.117). The soma-juice must be in the
nature of a sacral drink which is offered to the gods and enjoyed by the
cult participants (p.119).

Buschardt thought that Vṛtra-killing and soma-pressing were one and
the same act (p.122 ff). Soma-pressing is nothing but Soma-killing
(pp.123-4). But killing signified making him "whole" and this is again
creation (p.124 ff).

Buschardt traced the origin of the vajra, the weapon with which Indra
kills Vṛtra, to the cultic implements, the pressing stone used to crush
the soma-stalks, or pestle. Sometimes, even Ḫyā (melted butter),
Sphya (spade of khadira wood), Abhri (spade), Xupa (posts in the
sacrificial site where the victim used to be bound), the waters etc. are
styled vajra (p.138 ff). It is not considered contradictory to call all
these different sacrificial implements vajra, because, as we know, the
demon-killing is referred to at different moments of the cult and consequently,
the cult instrument which happens to be decisive at that particular moment
is referred to as a vajra (p.141). vajra is the cult's demon killing
power as such, and Buschardt thought that the origin of vajra must be
traced to the pressing stones which play a dominant role in the central
moment of the cult, the pressing of the soma (p.142). Indra's noise at the
time of the demon killing is equated with the one made by the stones while

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129 Renou, ibid., p.170.
130 Renou, ibid., p.19.
131 Renou, ibid., p.129.
pressing the stalks (p.145). The vajra is the decisive weapon fighting on the side of mankind against the forces of darkness (p.151).

Buschardt then discussed the part played by waters in the dramatic ritual (p.151 ff). The waters swallowed by Vṛtra stand for everything blessed and fertile (p.152). In the Brāhmaṇas the waters become active participants in the demon killing (p.153). They are styled vajras (p.154). These are also used for anointing the various cultic implements (p.155). At the soma pressing water is poured over the soma stalks and hence they actually take part in the soma pressing, that is, Vṛtra-killing (p.156).

After the soma pressing, the identification of Vṛtra with soma ceases, but not immediately afterwards. The first soma drops contain both good and evil and by a ritualistic formula the powers are directed towards the good. The separation of soma and Vṛtra becomes complete with the purified soma on the one side, and the crushed lifeless demon on the other. This soma "clear flowing" fills up the gathering vessel (p.161). The crushed soma stalks are equal to the slain demon (p.162). These stalks are then got rid of in the waters (p.163).

Thus the conflict is over. One has experienced the violent appearance of the demon, taking possession of everything valuable and blissful, followed by the tense fight and the regeneration. Ultimately, Vṛtra is laid to rest with the last lifeless remains of the soma stalks. The conflict is over, but the demon is not dead for ever. A day will come when he will renew his strength, and the fight will be on again. For it is the primitive-antique experience that nothing is cured forever, life must ever be renewed, and the renewal takes place through battle with and victory over the evil forces of darkness, forces that may well be subdued but never destroyed (p.164).
Some Observations on the Views of Previous Scholars

Thus a vast secondary literature has grown around the Indra-Vṛtra myth. But these theories, as adumbrated above, are not only conflicting, but also contradictory. All the views are not acceptable to us, for example, the sweeping astronomical significance attached to the myth. It is sufficient to note that such an interpretation does not carry much weight and is not supported by any other evidence. Nor are we convinced by the argument of Chāṇḍopādhyāya in locating the place of the release of the seven rivers in Semirechinsk, for the simple fact that the theatre of activity of the Ṛgvedic Aryans was the north western regions and the Punjab which have been famous for their seven rivers from time immemorial. It would be logical for us to place the seven rivers within the geographical boundary of undivided India and not outside it.

We would like to emphasise another point here. A large number of scholars approach the problem as if it were capable of a single solution. It is this positivistic approach that leads some of them to claim finality and to say categorically that theirs is the only approach and others are wrong. But we are rather unsure whether it is safe to postulate one single theory and thereby explain the whole cycle of the Indra-Vṛtra myth.

Yet in the light of some passages of the Veda, it is likely that hardly one of the upholders of theories which we have noticed is altogether wrong. It would doubtless be rewarding for those who reject these single solutions of the Indra-Vṛtra myth to reread the works of the proponents of these theories and see whether or not at least a few of the evidence cited may be correct. Certainly in some hymns of the ṚV the Indra-Vṛtra saga is susceptible of a vegetative interpretation, while in other places Vṛtras do appear as human enemies. And our objection to the ritualistic interpretation is not based upon a disbelief in the possibility of the
ritualistic function of the myth. It is to the exclusive claims of this school that objection is to be raised.

Such is the general mood which this pragmatic approach has led us. It is better to be pragmatic than to be an over-enthusiastic proponent of a particular theory and thereby explain away such a complex problem.
CHAPTER II

Vṛtra - A Semantic Study

A The Vedic root vr and Indoeuropean *yer and its Derivatives in other Indoeuropean Languages

The substantive Vṛtra may have been coined from the root vr with the suffix tra, expressing the instrument or means of effecting the action conveyed by the root. According to Wackernagel-Debrunner, the suffix tra may be divided into two classes, barytone and oxytone. Vṛtrā according to him, falls in the latter category, meaning "Abwehr, Feindschaft(en), Feind(e)".

Compilers of Sanskrit dictionaries agree in deriving the name Vṛtra from the root vr (referred to by Böhtlingk-Roth, Cappeller and Thumb as var) which has a range of meanings connected with obstruction, covering or resisting. A second root vr, with the sense 'to choose', is not connected by any lexicographer with the word Vṛtra.

1 Wackernagel-Debrunner, Altindisches Grammatik, II, 2, p.701 ff.
2 Wackernagel-Debrunner, ibid., p.704.
3 According to Böhtlingk-Roth, Sanskrit Wörterbuch, vol.6, col.696 (see col. 1323 for Vṛtra), Vṛtra was coined from var, meaning "verhüllen, bedecken, umschließen, umringen; zurückhalten, gefangen halten; abhalten, hemmen, wehren".
C. Cappeller, Sanskrit Wörterbuch, p.384 (see p.422 for Vṛtra) under var noted the following meanings: "verhüllen, bedecken, schliessen, versperren, zurückhalten, abwehren".
Th. Benfey, A Sanskrit English Dictionary, p.886, noted two different categories of meaning under var or var. Under the first category, he noted the following: to screen, to cover, to surround, in the Mahābhārata; to conceal and to resist, in the Vedas. Under the second category he noted the following meanings: to select, to choose, to woo etc.
V.S. Apte, Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p.528, noted two different meanings under vr. Under the first category he noted the following: to choose, select, select as a boon, to choose in marriage, woo etc. Under the second category he noted the following: to cover, conceal, hide, screen, envelop; to surround, encompass; to ward off; keep away, restrain, check; to hinder, oppose, obstruct.
The connection of the word Vṛtra with the root vr is hardly sufficient in itself to give a clear impression of the connotations of the name among the early Vedic folk among whom it was current, and the efforts of the lexicographers to explain the word's implications amount to little more than vague approximations. Vṛtra and his activities gave rise to various complex thoughts in the minds of Vedic people, multifarious religious reactions giving rise to new formulas etc., which remain closed books to us.

Unless we take into consideration the full semantic content of the terms originating from I-E *₄er and determine its semasiological evolution, an understanding of the problem of Vṛtra would ever remain vague and approximate. In order to do this, we should turn to the evidence afforded by the various I-E languages.

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Stchoupak, Nitti and Renou, Dictionnaire Sanskrit-Français, p.688 (see p.690 for Vṛtra) noted the following under vr: couvrir, envelopper, entourer, cacher; obstruer, empêcher; interdire etc.. Under the second root vṛ, they noted the following: choisir, choisir comme, etc..

M. Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p.1007, derived Vṛtra from vṛi meaning to cover, screen, veil, conceal, hide, surround, obstruct, cover, keep back, check, prevent, hinder, etc.

According to A.A. Macdonell, A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary, p.294 (see p.296 for Vṛtra) vṛi means to cover, conceal, envelop, encompass, surround, close (door); restrain, check, ward off; obstruct (path), etc..

H. Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rigveda, col.1319 (see col.1334 ff. for Vṛtra) noted the following meanings under vṛ: eng umschliessen, einschliessen, gefangen halten; hemmen, aufhalten; fern halten; zurückhalten, hindern an; bedecken, verhüllen, etc..

A. Thumb, Handbuch des Sanskrit, vol.II, p.306 (see p.317 for Vṛtra) derived Vṛtra from var meaning "verhüllen, bedecken, umgeben; umschliessen".

C.R. Lanman, A Sanskrit Reader, p.249 (see p.251 for Vṛtra) derived Vṛtra from vr meaning to cover, enclose, encompass etc.

4 Here we accept the view of Pokorny that the term Vṛtra is ultimately to be traced to I-E *₄er, See Pokorny's Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, vol.I, pp.1160-2. This book is basically a replica of an earlier work by A. Walde, Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der Indogermanischen Sprachen (revised and edited by Pokorny), vol.1, pp.280-3.
We believe that the Vṛtra-Vṛtrahan concept with its central meaning of concealing, resisting etc., is closely related to the idea of defending and protecting. This relation is closely borne out in their respective cognates in other I-E languages and in the reconstruction of the I-E word-group. This reconstruction is given by J. Pokorny in his article on I-E *uṛ-, meaning "verschliessen, bedecken; schützen, retten, abwehren", and on *uṛ-, ueru-, uru-, meaning "verschliessen, bedecken, schützen, retten". According to Pokorny, the I-E derivative of the first is *uōrtom "'Tor'"; while the second has such derivatives as *uṛ-to- "'Gehege'", *uṛ-tro "'Schutz'" and *uṛ-ti- "'Einzäunung'". The recognition of the relationship between concealing-covering-hiding and defending-resisting-protecting even in the I-E period is of singular significance. In the following pages we shall examine the different cognate words in the various I-E languages.

We begin with the cognate words in the Lithuanian language for "... it is Lithuanian ... that has kept closest to the basic idiom reconstructed by Comparative Philology". In Lithuanian we have užveriu, užvėrti "'schliessen'"; atvėrti "'öffnen'". These also appear without prefix as veriu or vėrti "'auftun, öffnen'"; or vėriau "'auftun, öffnen'".

5 Pokorny, ibid., p.1160.
6 Pokorny, ibid., p.1160.
7 Pokorny, ibid., p.1160.
8 Pokorny, ibid., p.1160.
10 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1160.
11 Pokorny, ibid., p.1160.
13 Fraenkel, ibid., p.1229.
Beginning from this we have a host of other words which may ultimately be traceable to I-E *uer, such as vērīmas or vērīmas "öffnen oder Schliessen der Tür";14 priverti "to leave ajar, to half close".15 From closing to squeezing or tightly holding is another step and we have such words as veržti (v.a) "to squeeze, draw fast, draw tight, constrict, contract, constrain";16 veržtis (v.r) "to draw oneself tight";17 varžus (adj.) "taut, tight, strict";18 varžiai (adv.) "tightly, strictly".19 We may next turn to words connected with fencing or enclosing: tvora (s.f) "fence", "hedge";20 užtvaras (s.f) "fence";21 aptverti "to make a fence around", "to enclose";22 užtverti (v.a) "to fence up, to enclose with a hedge";23 užvaras (s.m) "fence surrounding a field".24 Words signifying enclosed place, door or gateway and watching or guarding are also forthcoming: padvaris (s.m) "courtyard";25 varžai "Tor, Tür";26 tarpvaris "opening of a gate";27

14 Fraenkel, ibid., p.1229.
16 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.319.
17 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.320.
18 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.317.
19 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.317.
20 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., pp.71 and 306.
21 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.312.
22 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., pp.195 and 64.
23 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.312.
24 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.312.
26 Pokorny, op. cit., p.1160; Pewtress and Gerikas, op. cit., p.317.
varta (s.f) "ward, watch, guard, custody"; 28 vartauti (v.n) "to be on guard". 29

With the idea of forcing, opening or impelling, we have such words as atvara (s.f) "opening", "vent"; 30 atviras (adj.) "open" or figuratively "bare-faced", "candid", "fair"; 31 atvirai (adv.) "candidly", "fairly", "plainly"; 32 atvara (s) "opening"; 33 atveržti (v.a) "to loosen"; 34 prievarta (s.f) "compulsion, coercion, force", " extortion"; 35 varas (s.m) "impelling force, impulse, compulsion, force, violence". 36

In the Lettic language we have aizvert "to close". 37 Substantives signifying door, bolt, etc., also fall in this category and we have such words as vartī "Tor, Tür"; 38 vārtēļi "Pforte, Tor"; 39 vārti "'Gestell zum Kleetrocknen"; 40 vartnieks "Pfortner". 41 For opening or forcing we have

28 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.317.
29 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.317.
30 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., pp.196 and 180.
31 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., pp.196, 16, 23 and 69.
32 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., pp.23, 69 and 124.
33 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.118.
34 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.107.
35 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., pp.69 and 260.
36 Pewtress and Gerikas, ibid., p.316.
37 C.D. Buck, A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages, pp.847.
38 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1160.
39 Fraenkel, op.cit., p.1204.
40 Fraenkel, ibid., p.1204.
41 Fraenkel, ibid., p.1204.
The Slavonic languages also preserve some words from I-E *uer. We have, in Church-Slavonic zatvoriti "to close, shut"; (za-)vreti "to close"; zavor and verěja "'Hebebaum'"; vrata "'Tor, Türe'". On the other hand, we have such words for opening as otvoriti "'öffnen'". In Serbo-Croat we have zatvoriti "to close, shut" and otvoriti "to open"; in Polish otworzyć "to open"; zawrzeć "to shut, close"; in Bohemian otevřiťi "to open"; zavřiťi "to shut, close".

In the Russian language we have some interesting words, and, as in some of the above languages, we note the development of meaning from shutting or closing to substantives signifying door or obstruction. For example,
zatvorit' "to close, shut"; 56 zavor '"gesperrter Durchgang'"; 57 voróta
"'Tor, Pforte'"; 58 verejá "'Torflügel'"; 59 zavor(a) "'Stangenzaun, Zaunöffnung, Durchfahrt'". 60 On the other hand, we have the Russian word otvoriť "to open". 61

In the Germanic language groups, excepting English, words originating from *uer and meaning covering or shutting are not forthcoming and in all probability are lost. But sufficient indications are available in the form of cognate words which may be related to the I-E *uer. To begin with Gothic we have warjan "'wehren'"; 62 primitive Nordic waru "'Steinkreis'"; 63 warei "'Behutsamkeit, List'". 64 In Icelandic we have verja (verb)
"'verteidigen, wehren, hindern'"; 65 vari "'Verteidiger'"; 66 verja (s.f)
"'Verteidigung, Verwahrung'"; 67 varna "'sich enthalten, vorenthalten'". 68

56 Buck, ibid., p.847.
57 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1160.
59 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1160.
61 Buck, op.cit., p.846.
63 Walde and Hofmann, Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, p.56.
64 P. Holthausen, Althochdeutsches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, p.384.
65 A. Jóhannesson, Isländisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, p.149.
66 Jóhannesson, ibid., p.149.
67 Jóhannesson, ibid., p.149.
68 Jóhannesson, ibid., p.149.
verna "'verteidigen'", 69 vor "'Steinbrücke auf beiden Seiten eines Landungsplatzes'" 70 oder "'Umhegung'". 71

In Old Saxon we have war "'gewahr, vorsichtig'"; 72 wara "'Schutz, Aufmerksamkeit'"; 73 wérian "'wehren, hindern, schützen'"; 74 wérian "'wehren, abschlagen, vorenthalten'". 75 From Anglo-Saxon we may quote the following:

warenian, warnian, wearnian, (a) "'to take heed, beware, be on guard (intran.)'" (b) "'to put on guard, to warn (trans.)'"; 76 warian (a) "'to beware (intran.)'" (b) "'to make ware (trans.)'", (c) "'to guard, hold'", (d) "'to ward off'", etc.; 77 waru (a) "'observance, keeping of a command'", (b) "'heed, care'", (c) "'care for the safety of others'", (d) "'safe keeping, custody, keeping from injury, guard'", (e) "'defence, protection against attack, guard'"; 78 mylenwaru "'A mill-dam'"; 79 wearn (a) "'a hindrance, obstacle, difficulty'", (b) "'a refusal'"; 80 wer (a) "'a weir, dam'" (b) "'used also of the waters

69 Jóhannesson, ibid., p.150.
70 Jóhannesson, ibid., p.150.
71 Feist, op.cit., p.551.
72 Holthausen, Altsächsisches Wörterbuch, p.83.
73 Holthausen, ibid., p.84.
74 Holthausen, ibid., p.86.
75 Holthausen, ibid., p.86.
77 Bosworth, ibid., p.1169.
78 Bosworth, ibid., p.1169.
79 Bosworth, ibid., p.703.
80 Bosworth, ibid., p.1178.
kept in the dam"; 81 werian (a) "to hinder, check, restrain!", (b) "to protect, guard from wrong or injury!" etc.. 82

Old and Middle High German preserve some words based on I-E *yey. In Old High German we have, for example, weren "verteidigen, schützen"; 83
werten, werren, werten, "verteidigen, wehren, hindern"; 84 werten, were
"Verteidigung, Schutzehr"; 85 bi-wreten, bi-werten, bi-weren "verteidigen, schützen, verhindern"; 86 wort der "Damm". 87 In Middle High German we have
werten "Wehr, Vertheidigung"; 88 we may quote compounds like Lantwer
"Vertheidigung des Landes"; "inbergriff der vertheidiger des landes"; 89
notwer "Nothwehr" etc.. From Frisian we may quote wara or waren "wahren,
waernahemen"; 91 warlas "wehrlos, ohne Obhut"; 92 wera "wehren, vertheidigen,
defendere"; 93 wira or were "Vertheidigung, Wehre". 94

81 Bosworth, ibid., p.1206.
82 Bosworth, ibid., p.1207.
83 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1161.
84 W. Braune and K. Helm, Althochdeutsches Lesebuch, p.249.
85 Braune and Helm, ibid., p.249.
86 Braune and Helm, ibid., p.249.
87 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1162.
89 Benecke, Müller and Zarncke, ibid., p.511.
90 Benecke, Müller and Zarncke, ibid., p.512.
92 W. Steller, Altfriesischen Grammatik, p.181.
93 von Richtofen, op.cit., p.1136.
94 von Richtofen, ibid., p.1139.
From the Celtic language groups we may quote Old Irish ferenn "'Gürtel'"; 95 fern "'Schild'"; 96 fertae (mid. Irish fert) "'Grabhügel (mit Steinen verschlossen)'"); 97 feronn "'field', prop. 'enclosed land'"; 98 middle Cymric gwerthyr "'Festung'"; 99 Old Irish Ériu, gen. Érenn, Cymric Iwerddon "'Irland'". 100

We get some interesting words from Latin as well, for example, co-operio "to cover wholly, to cover, cover over, overwhelm"; 101 co-operimentum "a covering"; 102 co-öperculum "a cover, lid"; 103 coöpertórium "a cover". 104 For opening or uncovering we have such words as aperio "'öffne, erschliesse, decke auf'". 105 In this connection, we may also quote Oscan veru "'portam'", 106 Umbrian verof-e "'in portam'". 107

95 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1161.
96 Walde-Pokorny, op.cit., p.282.
97 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1161.
99 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1161.
100 Pokorny, ibid., p.1161.
102 Lewis and Short, ibid., p.466.
103 Lewis and Short, ibid., p.466.
104 Lewis and Short, ibid., p.466.
105 Walde and Hofmann, op.cit., p.56.
106 Walde and Hofmann, ibid., p.56; Pokorny, op.cit., p.1160.
107 Walde and Hofmann, ibid., p.56; Pokorny, op.cit., p.1160.
Similarly we may note the following words in Greek: 


The Avesta has also preserved quite a number of words traceable to I-E *uer. We have ὑπνατι "il cache, enferme"; 119 ἱπάρ "'abri

108 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1161.
109 Pokorny, ibid., p.1161.
112 Frisk, ibid., p.569.
113 Boisacq, op.cit., p.285.
114 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1161.
115 Frisk, op.cit., p.569.
116 Frisk, op.cit., p.569.
117 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1161.
118 Pokorny, ibid., p.1161.
119 Benveniste and Renou, Vṛtra et Vṝegrāṇa, pp.5-6.
which possibly originated from I-E *quer: Hittite warressesta

120  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.6.
121  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.6.
122  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.6.
123  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.7.
124  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.8.
126  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.13.
127  We consider that after Benveniste's research into the nature and function of the Iranian god Vṛgänaga, Bartholomae's Altiranisches Wörterbuch needs revision, especially those sections where Bartholomae discussed the meaning of Vṛgänaga and other cognate words of the Avesta. In Benveniste's own language, "Le dieu Vṛgänaga incarne une force qui est bien, si l'on veut, la Victoire, mais non plus au sense où on l'entendait ni dans les limites qui la restreignaient: cette force est celle "qui brise la résistance", c'est-à-dire l'offensive victorieuse. C'était en effet une singularité, et déjà propre à faire douter de l'explication traditionnelle, que la qualité essentielle du dieu Vṛgänaga, celle qui distingue aussi les héros les plus valeureux, se réduisit à cette fonction timide et négative de "repousser l'attaque". " Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.28. Here Benveniste quoted disapprovingly of Bartholomae's translation of Vṛgänaga as "Schlangen, Zurückschlangen des Angriffs" (Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, col.1422).
128  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.183.
129  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.28.
130  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.9.
131  Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.29.
From the above survey, the following facts emerge:

(1) That words originating from I-E *yεr and meaning closing, covering and opening, uncovering, exist in Lithuanian, Lettic, Church-Slavonic, Serbo-Croatian, Polish, Bohemian, Russian and Latin.

(2) In the following languages words originating from *yεr and meaning covering or closing and uncovering or disclosing are missing: Gothic, Icelandic, Old Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, Frisian, Irish, Old High German, Middle High German, Greek, Hittite, Tocharian, Albanian and Ossetic, and Armenian. But here we emphasise the point that sufficient indications in the form of other cognate words do exist in these languages to enable us to postulate that they may have existed at the early stages of the evolution of these languages, but are now totally and irretrievably lost.

(3) That in the Avesta words exist originating from I-E *yεr and signifying covering, or blocking, but mainly in the sense of resistance or defense.

We would now proceed to discuss some of the cardinal meanings which occur in the word groups based upon I-E *yεr.

(1) The primary and basic meaning of I-E *yεr is to cover, close, obstruct etc.

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132 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1161.
133 Benveniste and Renou, op.cit., p.13.
134 Pokorny, op.cit., p.1162.
135 Walde and Pokorny, op.cit., p.283.
(2) By adding suitable prefixes to the words in group (1), exactly opposite words conveying the sense of uncovering, disclosing or opening were formed.

(3) From preventing or barring were formed words signifying instruments for barring or preventing, namely, (a) door, and (b) dam or weir.

(4) We also have a variety of words signifying care or caring, warning, guarding, etc..

(5) Lastly, we also have a host of words signifying defending, defence, etc..

In the next section we would discuss the Ṛgvedic evidence of the root vr, ultimately traceable to I-E *uér, and see whether the history of this root verb follows the same pattern adumbrated above, and thereby hope to gain greater perspicacity in our attempt to trace the biography of the demon Vytra.
The privations and difficulties which the Vedic Aryans had to face in a newly-conquered land, and the social and economic conditions of the migratory hordes must have led to the semasiological development of \( \text{vr} \), from which root was coined \( \text{Vṛtra} \), the obstructing-enveloping demon of the early Vedic period.

\( \text{Vṛtra} \)'s "water-withholding"\(^{137}\) nature is dwelt upon in various passages of the RV. Ahi, who is identified with \( \text{Vṛtra} \),\(^{138}\) is described as "hidden in the waters".\(^{139}\) \( \text{Vṛtra} \)'s description as "water withholding",\(^{140}\) or as one who "withheld"\(^{141}\) the waters has given rise to much poetic imagery.

The imprisonment of the waters or rivers is described in various ways by the Vedic poets. The rivers "are arrested all around",\(^{142}\) they are

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\(^{137}\) apó vavrīvamsam \( \text{vṛtram} \). RV,II, 14, 2; IV, 16, 7; VI, 20, 2; IX, 61, 22, Sāyaṇa has on II, 14, 2: apaḥ udakāni vavrīvamsam āṛtya sthitam \( \text{vṛtram} \). Grassmann, GRV, vol.I, p.21, translated the expression as "den Flut-verbager, den \( \text{Vṛtra} \)" (II, 14, 2); Grassman, ibid., p.122 "der die Wasser einschloss" (IV, 16, 7). Ludwig, LRV, vol.II, p.57, translated "den \( \text{Vṛtra}, der die waszer eingeschloszen" (II, 14, 2); Ludwig, ibid., p.92 "den \( \text{Vṛtra}, der die waszer eingeschloszen hielt" (IV, 16, 7). Geldner, GRV, vol.I, p.294, "den Wasser sperrenden \( \text{Vṛtra} \)" (II, 14, 2); ibid., p.435, "Den \( \text{Vṛtra}, der die Wasser eingeschlosssen hatte" (IV, 16, 7); Renou, EVP, vol.XVII, p.60, "\( \text{Vṛtra} \) qui avait recouvert les eaux" (II, 14, 2).

\(^{138}\) For example, RV, VI, 20, 2, runs thus: \( \text{ahīm yād vṛtram apó vavrīvamsam} \), "the dragon \( \text{Vṛtra} \), who withheld the waters".


\(^{140}\) apō \( \text{vṛtvī} \), RV, I, 52, 6.

\(^{141}\) āvāvarīt, ibid., VIII,100, 7.

\(^{142}\) vavrīvamsam pārī devīḥ, RV, III, 32, 6. Renou, EVP, vol.XVII, p.74, translated it as the demon who "bloqué tout autour les (eaux) divines".
"obstructed". Their description as "encompassed around by darkness" is interesting. It is possibly a figurative description of the dark rain clouds supposed to have been withheld by Vṛtra until Indra, as god of vegetation par excellence, lets them loose and thereby brings about the regeneration of the vegetable world. In a dialogue between the rivers and Viśvāmitra, the rivers declare that their quick flow is "not to be retarded".

We have two instances where the waters are described as withheld by the gods. We are told in X, 98 that Devāpi, though belonging to the Kṣatriya class, becomes the Hotṛ of his brother Śantanu. Verse 6 informs us that the waters are "surrounded by the gods" and Devāpi lets them loose. The main purpose of this hymn seems to be that the gods yield to the prayers and importunities of the Kṣatriya priest Devāpi and let loose the waters. In I, 164, 29, the milch-cow (i.e. the rain cloud) is described as being enclosed by the primitive Indo-European rain god Parjanya.

Vedic poets sought to express various ideas with the help of prefixes adjoined to the root vr. Indra is described as disclosing the food described

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143 vṛtān ... sīndhūn, ibid., IV, 19, 5 and IV, 42, 7. Ludwig, op.cit., vol.II, p.96, translated it as "die eingehemmten flüsze". In VI, 17, 12, we have, kṣodoc máhi vṛtām nadinām, "the great (and) obstructed stream of waters".

144 tamaśā pārīvṛtam, ibid., X, 113, 6.

145 na vārtave, ibid., III, 33, 4. As pointed out by Griffith in his translation of the RV, this hymn records the prayer of Viśvāmitra, the family priest of the Bharata king Sudās. Viśvāmitra here prays to the two rivers, Vipāś and Śutudrī, so that they may be fordable and Viśvāmitra may cross the rivers. This is an interesting relic of the eastward march of a batch of the Aryans.

146 āpo devēbhīr nivrītā, ibid., X, 98, 6.

147 yena gaūr abhīvṛtā. See Geldner's note on this passage. For a ritualistic interpretation of this and other hymns, see Lüders' Varūṇa, vol.II, p.362 ff.
as "concealed", or he is implored to unclose wealth described as "concealed". The Āśvins, who are associated with Sūryā as her husbands, and who as such must be associated with morning light, are recorded to have dispelled "the all-enclosing darkness", which is perhaps a figurative description of the breaking of the dawn. Agni is described as "covered with téjas" and he "drinks oblations in the form of soma (produced) from the earth". The description of the vājra lying "covered by waters", or as "covered with brightness", are understandable because of its association with rain clouds or its lightning flash. Agni, being led to the place of sacrifice, is compared to a chariot which is covered for a journey, or as Ludwig suggests "a covered wagon, whose driver one sees not". Agni is described as being "covered (by the flames) in the seat of gods", that is, the altar. Savitṛ, the morning sun, is depicted as mounting his chariot which is described as "decked with pearls". The sacrificial chariot is

148 pārīvṛtāḥ, ibid., I. 130. 3.
149 pārīvṛtam, ibid., VII. 27. 2.
150 tāma ā pārīvṛtam, ibid., IV. 45. 2.
151 āpīvṛtaḥ, ibid., X. 32. 8.
152 adhayān mātūr ādhāḥ (X. 32. 8). We have followed Sāyaṇa in translating this passage. Sāyaṇa has: āpīvṛtaḥ tejobhiḥ parīvṛtaḥ san mātuh pṛthivyāḥ ādhāḥ sārabhūtam somaḍikām haviḥ adhayat pibati.
153 udā vajrō abhīvṛtaḥ, ibid., VIII. 100. 9.
154 śukraīr abhīvṛtam, ibid., III. 44. 5.
155 rātho nā yōr abhīvṛtaḥ, ibid., X. 176. 3.
157 devāśya sādane pārīvṛtaḥ, ibid., I. 144. 2.
158 abhīvṛtam kṛśanaiḥ, ibid., I. 35. 4.
described as "wholly covered with cow's skin", possibly a strip of cow's leather. We are told that the Asvins help him who is "covered (protected) by your sacrifices like a woman covered by clothing". Dyāvaprthvī lay "encompassed" by ghee. If Śāyaṇa’s interpretation of this passage is accepted, then it would mean that both of them are surrounded by waters. In another passage we are told that Puruṣa "lay covering the entire earth". While describing the sacrificial horse, the poet says that it is "covered" with garment and trappings, before whom priests bring oblations. Among descriptions of gods, we are informed that Indra, Agni and the Maruts are "covered with tāvīśi" ("immense power" or "strength").

The gods of the Rgveda are primarily aid-givers and patrons of the people. In the hymns they are given various desirable attributes, so that, being satisfied with the prayers and sacrifices, they may bestow on the worshippers these desirable things. In a funeral hymn, earth is requested to cover the dead body as a mother wraps her child with her skirt. Soma
covers over all that is bare and gives medicine to all that is sick. The etymological meaning of Vrtra is made clear in III. 34. 3, where Indra is described as having "covered up" Vrtra, the demon enveloper. After Indra's Vrtra-killing, the rivers are asked to flow forth, because he who "covered" them is no longer there to hinder their flow.

From aiding and succouring to defending and protecting is but a small step and this seems to be the aim of the people when they implored their gods to protect them. Indra was undoubtedly the war god of the Vedic Aryans and in this capacity he was requested to defend them. Speaking of the immense power of Indra, the poets remark that "none restrains" him in the fight for cattle; none "prevents" him in war; the destroying enemies "cannot restrain" his left or right hand; neither days nor nights, nor months or autumns "check" his ējās; neither deep rivers nor surrounding hills can halt him; neither stubborn (men) nor festering obstructors check

168 abhū urṇoti, ibid., VIII. 79. 2.
169 avrṇot, ibid., III. 34. 3.
170 avāvarīt, ibid., VIII. 100. 7.
171 nākiṛ tva gośu vrṇvate, ibid., VII. 32. 16.
172 nākir yāṁ vrṇvate yudhī, ibid., VIII. 45. 21.
173 nā varante, ibid., VIII. 24. 5.
174 nā varanta, III. 32. 9.
175 Gonda (Ancient-Indian ojas, Latin *augos and the Indo-European nouns in -es/-os) thinks that ojas should be considered as "a 'Daseinsmacht', a potency, a 'power-substance'", (p.46).
176 nā tva gabhīrāḥ puruhūta sīndhur nāḍrayaḥ pāri śānto varanta, ibid., III. 32. 16.
177 nā várant, ibid., VIII. 66. 2.
him. In another verse Indra himself declares that none check him in war, nor the mountains (can halt him) in whatever he feels like doing. Enemies cannot restrain his horses when yoked for fight. He wards off many (enemies) with few (helpers). In another verse, king Trasadasyu, impersonating Īndrāvaruṇā, declares, "Never did the devas' power hinder me, the peerless". Agni was another protecting-succouring deity of the Aryans. With regard to his mighty power, the poet declares, the surrounding band of godless (beings) "cannot check" him. Rbhuṣan is described as "not to be restrained". About the Maruts, we are informed that neither mountains nor rivers check them. Soma is described as preventing assaults. About Brahmaṇaṇaṇapati, we are told that there is none to restrain him whom Brahmaṇaṇapati has taken for ally.

Coming to the instances of disclosing, discovering or unbarring, we get a host of descriptions which strengthen the view that, by the term Vṛtra, Vala, etc., Vedic seers wanted to refer to demonic beings who were supposed

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178 ná vārayante, ibid., X. 27. 5.
179 ná vṛṇvāte, ibid., I. 5. 4.
180 prā vṛṇoti, ibid., VII. 82. 6.
181 For this interesting suggestion, see Norman Brown's "King Trasadasyu as a Divine Incarnation", in Dr C. Kunhan Raja Presentation Volume, p. 38 ff.
182 nākīr mā daivyam sāho varāte āpratītam, RV, IV. 42. 6; Norman Brown, ibid., p. 42.
183 ná varante, RV, V. 2. 10.
184 ná varātave, ibid., VIII. 45. 29.
185 ná varanta, ibid., V. 55. 7.
186 pravrṇvāntaḥ, ibid., IX. 21. 2.
187 ná varātave, ibid., II. 25. 3.
to create various impediments to the realisation of a happy life. Indra is recorded to have disclosed 188 the waters; he uncovered 189 a cow-stall for the Āṅgirases. Once Indra is recorded to have uncovered 190 cow-stalls in the wild joy of soma. The Āṅgirases themselves opened up 191 a cow-stall. The Maruts disclosed 192 cows.

In the highly figurative language of the Vedic poets, the terms usrīyā may mean either morning light, daybreak, the reddish sun's rays or red cows. The gods, in performing their cosmogonic function of creating and supporting the world, are recorded to have thrown open the usrīyās which were previously obstructed. Thus Indra unbarred 193 the doors for the usrīyās, that is, the rays of morning light. We are told that the Āṅgirases threw open 194 the riddle of the usrīyās, that is, they restored the sun rays.

The term vraja may mean, depending upon the context, a cow-stall or a cloud. The gods are requested to open these vrajas supposed to have been blocked by the obstructing demons. Thus Indra is requested to open vraja 195 or vrajas. 196 Indra opened up 197 the vraja after killing Vṛtra.

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188 ápa vavāra, ibid., I. 32. 11.
189 ápa avṛṇoḥ, ibid., I. 51. 3.
190 ápa vavārtha, ibid., III. 43. 7.
191 ápa vran, ibid., V. 29. 12.
192 ápa gā avṛṇvata, ibid., III. 34. 1.
193 vī aúṛṇoḥ, ibid., VI. 17. 6.
194 yād usrīyānām ápa vār iva vrán, ibid., IV. 5. 8.
195 ápa vṛdhi, ibid., I. 10. 7.
196 ápa vṛdhi, ibid., IV. 31. 13.
197 ápa vam, ibid., X. 28. 7.
water torrents. He "unbarred the great mountain" and let the waters flow forth. Uṣas, the goddess of dawn, "unbarred the gateways of the firm mountain".

The opening of doors by gods to obtain various desirable things for mankind has singular relevance for our study. The sun god is recorded to have "opened the doors which (serve) the people". This is perhaps a figurative description of the beginning of a new day. Agni, the "granter of property", opens doors (of sacrifice). Soma is implored: "open the door of wealth to us". Vasiṣṭha is said to have opened the doors of Rta on the banks of the Sarasvatī. Rta here may mean sacrificial ritual. The significance of the passage would be then that Vasiṣṭha, the eponymous hero of a famous branch of seers, began to perform sacrificial rituals on the banks of the holy Sarasvatī.

tāmas means darkness, which, according to the imagination of the primitives, is infested by demonic beings who are always trying to impede the smooth flow of human life. The gods are totally opposed to darkness, they are Devas, shining celestial beings - "a superhuman and powerful being...

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205 mahāntam indra pārvatam ví yād vah, ibid., V. 32. 1.
206 ví dṛjḥasya duro ādṛer arunḥ, ibid., VII. 79. 4.
207 ví duro mānuṣīr devā āvah, ibid., V. 45. 1.
208 We follow here Gonda's (Epithets, p.95) translation of the word dravinodas. Renou (EVP, vol.XIII, p.70) translated the term as "Le Donneur de richesses".
209 ví ūrṇute, RV, VIII. 39. 6. We follow Renou here who translated the relevant line thus: "Agni ouvre les portes (du sacrifice)". Renou, vol.XIII, p.70.
210 ví no rāyé dúro vṛdhi, RV, IX. 45 3 and 64. 3.
211 vy āvah, ibid., VII. 95. 6.
who was able to help mankind by his own power”, as Linden defines the concept of Deva. As shining celestial beings, they used to uncover darkness and Agni, the god of fire, here plays an important part. He is said to have opened the doors of darkness or to uncover darkness. The god Soma, like Savitṛ, the celestial being of early morning, unbars treasure, and Soma dispelled darkness with light. Indra dispelled darkness from the patron's spirit and if Sāyana's interpretation of this verse is accepted, this darkness was due to the preponderance of Suṣṭa, a drought demon. Indra uncovered darkness, he is the killer of enveloping darkness, he uncovered darkness with light. In another place Indra is requested to uncover darkness, and fill the vision of the sacrificers, captive as they are in the nooses (of the world). The darkness in this passage may refer to the darkness of ignorance, the absence of knowledge, a favourite concept of later philosophers.

In the portrayal of the goddess of dawn, the physical basis of her character is never forgotten by the Vedic seers. She is resplendent, bright,
luminous, white, ruddy - the very opposite of darkness. 223 Being the goddess of dawn, Uṣas is variously described as uncovering or unbarring darkness. She uncovered 224 darkness, threw open the doors (of darkness), 225 uncovered darkness with light, 226 uncovered the black garment, 227 unbarred the door of the stable of darkness, 228 she uncovered unpleasant darkness and malignities; 229 she is recorded as waking up, unveiling 230 the ends of heaven. She is once recorded as having exposed 231 the path of men.

The gods were conceived of as protectors of mankind, their helpers. The relationship between the gods and their worshippers was one of mutual help and assistance. The people were dependent on the gods for assistance and favour, while the gods were dependent on the sacrifices offered by the patrons. To show this dependence of man on the gods, poets use various expressions. Indra, the god of power and might and the indefatigable helper of his patrons, is recorded to have uncovered 232 the heaped up wealth of

223 We refer to Gonda's Die Religionen Indiens, I, p.91 ff; and Macdonell's Vedic Mythology, p.46 ff. For Uṣas being the first dawn of the new year, see Hillebrandt's Vedische Mythologie, vol.I, p.27 ff. and Kuiper's "The Ancient Indian Verbal Contest", in IJd, vol.IV, p.223 ff.
224 ły uṣā āvar tāmaḥ, ibid., I. 92. 4.
225 vī duro na ṣvāh, ibid., I. 113. 4.
226 ły āvar jyotiṣa tāmaḥ, ibid., IV. 52. 6.
228 ṣvāh ӯ vṛjāṣya tāmaso dvārocchāntir avran, RV, IV. 51. 2.
229 āpa druḥas tāma āvar ājuṣṭam, ibid., VII. 75. 1.
230 ły ūrṇvatī, ibid., I. 92. 11.
231 vī ṣvāh, ibid., VII. 79. 1.
232 āpa āvṛppoh, ibid., VIII. 100. 6.
Pārāvata for Śarabha, one of his protégés. His liberality encompasses all. The poet declares that neither gods nor men restrain him, that is, his progress, who is in Indra's shelter. As a protector god he discovered light for the Ārya. Sāvitr discloses desirable boons, and Uśas is also described as disclosing boons. Agni is another god to whom people turned for help; he unbarred the door of wealth for his worshippers. The sacrificers fervently request: "Like a door unclose vāja which is well known".

Lastly, we would like to discuss some miscellaneous ideas concerning the phenomenon of 'opening' or 'unclosing' which is conveyed by the verb vr in its various forms. We have already noticed that Indra discovered cows or disclosed waters supposed to have been imprisoned by the obstructing demons. He is once said to have disclosed soma; he made his beautiful form uncovered, that is, he manifested himself on the place of sacrifice. Soma, the deified drink, disclosed heaven and earth as ""Der Einsetzer"".  

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233 ápā vṛtam, ibid., I. 57. 1.
234 nakir devā vārāyante nā mártāḥ, ibid., IV. 17. 19.
235 ápa avṛṇoḥ, ibid., II. 11. 18.
236 vy ūṛṇute, ibid., VI. 50. 8.
237 vy ūṛṇvatī, ibid., V. 80. 6.
238 ví auryot, ibid., I. 68. 10.
239 duró nā vājāṃ śrūtyā ápā vṛdhī, ibid., II. 2. 7.
240 ápa avṛṇot, ibid., III. 44. 5.
241 vy āvah, ibid., VI. 44. 8.
242 vy āvah, ibid., IX. 97. 38.
243 Gonda, DRI, vol. I, p. 26, translates the word Dhātā as ""Der Einsetzer"".
Bṛhaspati is said to have uncovered 244 the three (worlds). About Savitṛ, the vivifier par excellence, 245 the poet declares, "Then you open, 246 O Savitṛ, your gift (and allot) to the people their life span in the right order".

Thus, in so far as this sub-chapter is concerned, we may come to the following conclusions:—

(1) Ṛgvedic vr, which may have originated from I-E *uer, primarily means to cover, restrain, arrest, imprison, bar, prevent, hinder, obstruct, impede, check.

(2) By adding suitable prefixes, opposite verb forms like uncover, discover, unbar, etc., are formed.

(3) The idea of aiding or succouring by the Vedic gods is conveyed by vr and its various forms.

(4) The idea of defending or protecting is also conveyed by the same root verb in its various forms.

244 vy avaḥ, RV, X. 67. 4.
245 In the Nirukta, X. 31, Savitṛ is described as sarvasya prasavita, "The vivifier of all".
246 vi ṛgaśe, RV, IV. 54. 2. We have followed Geldner in translating this passage.
Substantives from Rgvedic vr

The demon Uraṇa appears just once in the RV. We are informed that Indra killed Uraṇa, and nothing much else is known about him. Sāyaṇa remarks: "Uraṇa, the Asura so named". Yāska comments on this word in his Nirukta.

While commenting on RV, VIII. 66. 8, vrkaś cid asya varaṇa urāmāthih, that is, "Even a wolf (which is) its obstructor, killing sheep", Yāska adds urāmāthih, "killing Uraṇa". Here Yāska identifies urā with Uraṇa which is not acceptable to us. Uraṇa and urā might have originated from vr, meaning a hindering or impeding demon and a sheep respectively, but to identify them is wrong.

urā means a sheep. It might originally have conveyed the idea of an animal covered with wool. It is hoped, in VIII. 34. 2, that the rattling of the soma pressing stones would bring Indra to the place of sacrifice. In the next verse we are told that the rim of the pressing stone shakes as a wolf shakes a sheep. This means: just as the sheep shakes when confronted by the wolf, the stones cause the soma to shake under their pressure.

Varasikha possibly refers to a human enemy. In a verse addressed to Indra, the poet declares: "Now has been made apparent your Indra-power, with which you killed the descendants of Varasikha; when by your rushing thunderbolt, by your mere vigorous noise you pierced the most powerful (of Varasikha's sons)". In the next verse we are informed that Indra killed Varasikha's

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247 RV, II. 14. 4.
248 Nirukta, V. 21.
249 atrā ví nemír ēṣām urām ná dhūnute vṛkaḥ
250 etāt tyāt ta indriyām aceti yena vadhīr varāśikhasya śeṣaḥ, vājraśya yāt te nihatasya śuṣmat svaṃc cid indra paramā dadāre, RV, VI. 27. 4.
251 Following Sāyaṇa, who has - paramah varaśikhasya prutāṇām madhye balādyūdhikyotenōtikṛṣṭāḥ kaścit putraḥ.
children for Abhyāvartin, son of Cayamāna. He destroyed the front of the army of the Vṛcīvatas and the rear fled for fear. The encounter took place on the Hariyūpīyā. Whatever we may think of the identification of Hariyūpīyā, the term Varaśikha is interesting. It is a compound of two terms, varā and ēkha. The former means widely expansive, swelling, the latter means a tuft of hair. Thus the compound may be translated as "one having a swelling tuft of hair"—obviously a description of a human enemy opposing the advance of the Aryans in India.

Vala figures as the chief associate of Vṛtra in the RV. In determining his character we should take into consideration the various descriptions and epithets of Vala. He is alātra- "not giving" or "not granting" or "miserly". This is an apt epithet of Vala, for he kept the cows for himself, he is svavrāti-, "one who has appropriated the rains for himself". He has gomāyam vāsū, "treasure consisting of cows"; he is gomatah, "rich

252 On the identification of Hariyūpīyā with Harappa, see Mortimer Wheeler's The Indus Civilization, pp.27–8; Buddha Prakash' Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab, p.22; and Rgveda and the Indus Valley Civilization, p.99; A.D. Pusalkar's "Aryan Settlements in India" in The Vedic Age, p.243; Bridget and Raymond Allchin's The Birth of Indian Civilization, p.155; D.D. Kosambi in his An Introduction to the Study of Indian History, p.81, identified Hariyūpīyā with Halīāb or Ariob, a tributary of the Kurram. See also Hillebrandt's Vedische Mythologie, vol.II, p.239, footnote 2.

253 RV, III, 30, 10. Grassmann, WZR (col.121), translated it as "nichts herausgebend". Geldner translated it as "Ohne zurückzufordern", while Ludwig, LRV, vol.2, p.68, left it untranslated. In his commentary, ibid., vol.5, p.64, he hesitatingly translated the word as "leicht beweglich". Renou, EVP, vol.XVII, p.69, translated it as "impossible à percer".

254 RV, I, 52, 5. Kuiper, "Svavṛṣṭi-", RS, I, 52, 5a, 14c", in IIJ, vol.IV, p.59 ff.; however, traces the word to a supposedly existing proto-Indo-Iranian noun *vṛṣti- "act", and translated it as "acting on his own accord".

255 RV, X, 62, 2,

256 Ibid., I, 11, 5.
in cows”; rakṣitāram dūghānām,257 "watcher of milch-cows”; gōvapus,258 "having the form or shape of a cow"; vrajō gōh259 i.e., "a cow-stall". In understanding Vala’s character what the poet says in VIII. 24. 30 is illuminating. He is describing the greatness of the gifts of Nārya, perhaps a non-Aryan chief. This verse may be translated thus: "When one would ask you, where is the sacrificer, O you ever active, (you would answer), 'This Vala has retired and descended on the gomati'”. This stanza is perhaps addressed to Uṣas. The second part of the verse is presumably the answer to be given by Uṣas to the question contained in the first half. The salient point made by the poet is that Vala’s (who is primarily an atmospheric demon) imprisoning of the cows (the clouds) was so famous that even a human being 

did to Vala. 260

Among some other descriptive epithets, we may mention the term phaligā.261 Indra, together with the Saraṇyus and Daśāgvas, burst open Vala

257
Ibid., X. 67. 6.
258
Ibid., X. 68. 9.
259
Ibid., III. 30. 10.
260
We should note here that, if our interpretation is correct, this is the first recorded case of a non-Aryan (na + Ārya) being converted to Aryan religion. Aryan seers were taking part in the religious ceremonies instituted by him, after which Nārya, perhaps a non-Aryan chief, bestowed munificent gifts on the priest who sang this hymn in commemoration of his gifts and liberality.
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described as a phalīga;\textsuperscript{262} or "He (Brhaspati) has by the nicely-singing, by the praising-group, burst open Vala, the phalīga".\textsuperscript{263} As pointed out by Macdonell, this word must bear a sense "closely allied to receptacle".\textsuperscript{264} Thus it means a receptacle or container of water, i.e., a rain cloud. The information that it is pierced open by Indra\textsuperscript{265} or broken open by Brhaspati\textsuperscript{266} lends colour to this view. We are informed of Vala's bila\textsuperscript{267} ("hole") rich in cows; or of his jāṣu,\textsuperscript{268} "prison", which was broken open by Brhaspati. His guhā\textsuperscript{269} ("cave") is referred to, where he imprisoned the cows and whence Indra drove them forth after destroying Vala. In his parīdhīn\textsuperscript{270} ("fences") Vala imprisoned the waters and Indra broke them and presumably released the waters. Indra's title acyutacyūt,\textsuperscript{271} "shaker of (things) immovable", is significant in this connection. Vala is here ácyuta, "immovable". This possibly refers to the rain cloud which seems almost immovable to the rain-hungry Vedic people, and by moving (that is, by bursting or unlocking) which Indra received the above epithet.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{262}RV, I. 62. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{263}Ibid., IV. 50. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{264}A.A. Macdonell, \textit{A Vedic Reader for Students}, p.87; \textit{Vedic Mythology}, p.159.
\item \textsuperscript{265}RV, I. 62. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{266}Ibid., IV. 50. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{267}Ibid., I. 11. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{268}Ibid., X. 68. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{269}Ibid., VIII. 14. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{270}Ibid., I. 52. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{271}Ibid., VI. 18. 5.
\end{itemize}
Vala is associated with tāmas, 272 which also suggests a dark rain cloud. In connection with the breaking open of Vala, Indra is said to have burst pārvatasya dhmitāni, 273 "the fastnesses of the mountain"; Indra removed rōdhami kṛtrīṃani, 274 "artificial barring". Indra loosened the dhāra, 275 "firmly fixed", that is, the cloud "firmly imprisoned" by Vala. Indra, being desirous of freeing the cows, which were "around the rock", pāri ādṛima, 276 broke open the "never-ruptured", ārugna-, 277 ridge of Vala and presumably let loose the waters.

From the above evidence we can draw the conclusion that Vala was a hindering and obstructing demon.

Hillebrandt had two interesting suggestions with regard to the Vala myth. Firstly, "Es kann sein, dass die Bezeichnung vala aus einem anderen Dialekt herübergangen ist und mit ihm auch die verhältnismässig grosse Anzahl seltener Worte, auf die wir in diesem Sagenkreise stossen (alātrīṇa, jásu, gōvapus, phaliga), wenn sie auch nicht alle ihm ausschliesslich angehören". 278 Secondly, "Ich möchte aber meinen, dass wir in VIII. 24. 30 mit Sāyaṇa an den Fluss Gomal denken können, an dessen Ufern Vala somit lokalisiert würde". 279
Vala is associated with śāmas, which also suggests a dark rain cloud. In connection with the breaking open of Vala, Indra is said to have burst pārvatasya dṛṣṭhitāni, "the fastnesses of the mountain"; Indra removed rōḍhāṃsi kṛtrīmāṇī, "artificial banning". Indra loosened the dṛihā, "firmly fixed", that is, the cloud "firmly imprisoned" by Vala. Indra, being desirous of freeing the cows, which were "around the rock", pārī ādrim, broke open the "never-ruptured", ārūgna, ridge of Vala and presumably let loose the waters.

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272 Ibid., II. 24. 3.
273 Ibid., II. 15. 8.
274 Ibid., II. 15. 8. Geldner translated the word as "künstlichen Welle".
275 Ibid., II. 24. 3.
276 Ibid., VI. 39. 2.
277 Ibid., VI. 39. 2.
279 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.238.
Hillebrandt unfortunately did not specify what he meant by "another dialect" in the above passage. With regard to his second hypothesis, it is a bit hazardous to base one's impression on Sāyana's interpretation alone, because he wrote his commentaries much later; though, it may be conceded that it is within the range of probability.

Lüders interpreted the Vala myth, like the Vṛtra myth, as a myth of creation. 280 According to Lüders, Vala and Vṛtra myths occur side by side as the priestly and the more popular form of the same saga: What in the Vala myth is the magical power of the Ṛta, appears in the Vṛtra myth as the hero power of Indra stimulated by the soma drinking. 281 Lüders also thought that these two myths mixed with and influenced one another. 282 By Ṛta in this context he meant "Das sakrale Lied, dessen magische Wirkung auf seinem Wahrheitsgehalt beruht". 283 Indra's part in the Vala myth is only secondary, while Bṛhaspati and Āṅgiras play the most important part in it. 284

While we would not like to anticipate our arguments with regard to the origin myths of the RV, we believe that it is only a partial explanation.

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281  Lüders, ibid., p.537.
282  Lüders pointed out that soma intoxication, mentioned in connection with the Vala myth is probably a borrowing from the Vṛtra myth (p.530); while the information that the Maruts sang songs of praise during the slaughter of Ahi (V. 30. 6), is clearly reminiscent of the part played by the Āṅgiras in the Vala myth (p.530).
284  Lüders, ibid., p.531.
The Vala and Vṛtra myths might have belonged to two myth cycles, though Lüders' opinion that the Vala myth belonged to the priestly while the Vṛtra myth to more popular circles is hardly acceptable to us, because there is no unanimously accepted criterion on the basis of which we can distinguish between the priestly and popular elements in the RV. What is probable is that these two groups of myths originated and developed among at least two priestly groups independently, though in course of time they came in contact with and influenced one another.

Vartṛ is another term which means 'a preventer, restrainer or obstructor'. While eulogising Indra, the poets declare that there is "no hinderer of your prowess"; or there is not "any preventer of your liberality"; or it is said of Brahmaṇaspati that he does not have any preventer or subduer in big or lesser fight. The Maruts also do not have any preventer or subduer, when they help the sacrificers in war for vāja.

From restrainer, obstructor or restrainer, we may come to words signifying objects with which to cover or hide or places where to hide and conceal.

ūrṇā means wool, with which to cover. We get the information that Indra "wears the Paruṣṣī as wool for pomp", that is, he possibly covers himself with the woolly, vapoury waves of the river. The Maruts are recorded to

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286 nā te vartā asti rādhasāḥ, ibid., VIII. 14. 4.
287 nāsya vartā, ibid., I. 40. 8.
288 nāsya vartā nā tarutā nāstī māruto yāṁ ávatha vājasātāu, ibid., VI. 66. 8.
289 śriyē pāruṣṣīmuṣāmāṅa ūrṇām, RV, IV. 22. 2.
"dress themselves in clothes of wool on the Paruṣṇī". 290 We have in these passages a possible reference to the abundance of sheep and wool on the banks of the Paruṣṇī. It is possible that, when the Aryans, in the course of their migration, came to the regions bordering the river, they were impressed by this abundance, poetical allusions to which are to be found in the above passages. ūrṇāvat means "provided with wool" or "woolly". In one place Agni is requested to sit on the "woolly womb" first, together with the gods. This "woolly womb" may refer to the altar covered with the barhis. The river Sindhu is styled "the young lady rich in wool", 292 which may also refer to the abundance of wool in the regions bordering the river. 293

290 utá sma tē pāruṣṇyāmūrṇa vasata śundhyāvah, ibid., V. 52. 9.
291 ūrṇāvantam ... yónim, ibid., VI. 15. 16.
292 ūrṇāvatī yuvatī, ibid., X. 75. 8.
293
We have evidence to show that sheep and their wool were quite well known among the people of the Indus valley. Actual skeletal remains of sheep and lambs have been noted by R.B. Seymour Sewell and B.S. Guha (Marshall, Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization, vol.II, p.649. This work is hereafter cited as MMI). They might have been domesticated by the people (Mackay, Further Excavations at Mohenjo-daro, vol.I, p.347, hereafter cited as FEM). Among Indus Valley pottery have been found figures of ram meant as playthings (Mackay, Chanhu-daro Excavations, p.50, 159). Perforated faience models of sheep might have been worn as amulets (Mackay, FEM, vol.I, pp.291, 302, 303 and 307). Mackay found a theriomorphic vase in the form of a couchant ram in Mohenjo-daro and thought that it might well have been used as an ink-pot (Mackay, FEM, vol.I, pp.188-9).

Wool or woollen garments were also known among the people. With regard to a clay model of a sheep, Mackay (FEM, vol.I, p.291) noted that it was especially interesting "in that an attempt was made to show its heavy fleece by means of carved lines". Mackay (MMI, vol.I, p.353), while describing a faience figure of a ram, wrote, "The fleece is indicated by wedge-shaped impressions made before the model was baked".

The ram must have been considered as a sacred animal. Among therianthropic beasts, Marshall (MMI, vol.I, p.66), noted one which is either "a human-faced goat or ram, or possibly a more composite creature still, part goat or ram, part bull and part man". This composite figure appears in a scene depicting a Tree Goddess and Marshall suggested that "it was a minor tutelary diety accompanying the votary into the presence of the goddess".

From the above evidence we may conclude that sheep and wool were familiar to the autochthones even before the advent of the Aryans in India.
While landing the gifts of Praskaṇva, the poet informs us that among his gifts were "a hundred woolly sheep".\textsuperscript{294} 

\textit{varatrā} means a strap, belt or thong. In a verse addressed to Kṣetrapati, the genius of arable lands and fields, we find, "May the strap be fastened firmly for luck".\textsuperscript{295} The strap was part of the harness fastening the oxen to the plough. In another hymn we have, "Make the buckets ready, fastened with the straps".\textsuperscript{296} This passage explains the preparation of a soma sacrifice, especially the drawing of soma with the help of buckets which should be securely fastened to the leather straps which formed their handles. In the next verse the sacrificer informs us that he is drawing soma from the soma-trough with the help of a bucket with a secure strap.\textsuperscript{297} In another verse we have the description of an apparently dead man and the priest is presumably trying to revive him. He says, "As men bind the yoke (of the chariot) with a strap\textsuperscript{298} for holding fast, similarly I hold your spirit for the continuation of your life and not for death, for your security".

\textit{vavrā} means a deep cavern, cavity or abyss. The Maruts have been described as "self-born like the caverns of the earth".\textsuperscript{299} In a verse aimed at the expulsion of the Rakṣases and other malevolent beings, Indra and Soma

\textsuperscript{294} \textit{satām īrṇāvatīnām}, \textit{RV}, VIII. 56. 3.
\textsuperscript{295} \textit{śunām vāratrā bādhyantām}, ibid., IV. 57. 4.
\textsuperscript{296} \textit{nir āhāvān kṛnotana sāṁ vāratrā dadhātana}, ibid., X. 101. 5. See Geldner's note on this passage.
\textsuperscript{297} \textit{suvaratrām}, ibid., X. 101. 6.
\textsuperscript{298} \textit{vārindrāyā}, ibid., X. 60. 8.
\textsuperscript{299} \textit{vavrāso nā jē svajāḥ}, ibid., I. 168. 2.
are requested to shove such miscreants "into the beginningless cavern, into the darkness". ³⁰⁰ In another place the sacrificer wishes the female fiend to sink "in the endless caverns". ³⁰¹ The meaning of this word is made further clear when we are informed that Indra exhibited his strength by pushing out the cows who were "in the cavern", ³⁰² or when the human fathers are recorded to have driven forth the cows who were huddled together "in the cavern". ³⁰³ Vṛtra is described as "the cavern" ³⁰⁴ where he concealed the waters. Trita's position "in the cavern" ³⁰⁵ may signify his position in the endless firmament or sky of unfathomable depth.

vavří means (a) bodily form or model, and (b) cover, covering or robe. In the former sense we have the word in a verse which speaks of Agni's appearance as Puṣan, a form of the sun god. The second line runs thus:

"He, born in the olden times, has halted in the space; wishing a bodily form, he knew (found) Puṣan's (bodily form)". ³⁰⁶ Speaking of Agni, the poet, in a philosophical mood, declares that only the outward form of the god is known, his "real bodily form is gathered (concealed) in the cavern". ³⁰⁷ In another place, after preparing the soma, the sacrificers ask the Āsvins "Where do

³⁰⁰ vavřé antár anārāmbhaṇo tāmāsi prá vidhyatam, ibid., VII. 104. 3. Norman Brown, JAOŚ, vol.61, p.77.
³⁰¹ vavřán anantān, ibid., VII. 104. 17.
³⁰² vavřé antāḥ, ibid., V. 31.13.
³⁰³ vavřé antāḥ, ibid., IV. 1.13.
³⁰⁴ vavřán, ibid., V. 32. 8.
³⁰⁵ vavřé antāḥ, ibid., X. 8. 7. See Macdonell's comment on the verse in JRAŚ, vol.25, p.428.
³⁰⁶ icchan vavřím avidat puṣanāsya, ibid., X. 5. 5.
³⁰⁷ prá vavvrér vavriś ciketa, ibid., V. 19. 1.
you intend to place your bodily form?"308 That is, as Geldner remarked, "Der Soma ist bei uns fertig, wo werdet ihr Aśvin erscheinen?"309 The meaning of the word is made clear in the well-known episode where the Aśvins, the heavenly physicians, "removed from old Cyavāna his bodily form, as a cloth (is taken away from a man)".310 That the word also means a cover or hiding place is made clear in a verse which describes the condition of the rivers which were stayed by the cover(er).311 that is, Vṛtra. In another place we have a description of the pressing of soma, where the poet remarks that when they are squeezed out they go over the strainer of sheep's wool, "while they leave their covering behind".312 S.S. Bhawe, commenting on the word, remarks that it refers "to the outer cover of the stalk, which contains the soma juice".313 When mixed with milk, soma is said to relinquish his covering.314

vāra means (a) tuft of hair at the tail of a horse; and (b) in the technical language of the ritualists, a soma strainer, perhaps of sheep's wool, through which soma used to filter and thereby become purified and fit to be drunk. In the first sense we have the word in a verse where Indra is

308 svām vavrīm kūha dhītsathah, ibid., I. 46. 9.
310 vavrīm prāmuĉcatam drāpimiva cyavānāt, RV, I. 116. 10.
311 nadyo vavrīnā hitāh, ibid., I. 54. 10.
312 hitvī vavrīm, ibid., IX. 69. 9. See S.S. Bhawe's comments on hitvī in The Soma-hymns of the Ṛgveda (A Fresh Interpretation), part III, p.159. Also Renou's comments on the hymn in EVP, vol.IX, p.79.
313 Bhawe, op.cit., p.159.
said to have changed himself into horse hair, when Vṛtra hit him. In another place Agni is compared to a horse having a tail. The term purúvāra, "having an ample tail", is interesting. We are told that the Aśvins provided Pedu, their protégé, with one such horse. This term is also applied to bulls in a verse where soma is compared with a bull "having an ample tail"; soma is also compared with a steed "having an ample tail". In the second sense, that is, as a soma strainer of sheep's wool, the word appears many times in the hymns of the ninth mandala. To quote some examples: soma is said to have "purified across the hairy strainer", or is said to have "entered the hairy strainer". The splashing of the beverage over the strainer is compared to "the onslaught (or thunder) of striking (warriors)". When soma goes through the filter, it is "like the rushing of a race-horse". Another verse informs us: "As horses, being urged on by their drivers, rush (for winning vāja), similarly the

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315 aśvyo vāro abhavaḥ, ibid., I. 32. 12. Paul Thieme (Gedichte aus dem Rig-veda, p.27) translates the words aśvyo vāro as "Pferdeschweif". See also his comments on the word in p.29.
316 āśvam na tvā vāravantam, RV, I. 27. 1. Grassmann translated the expression, vāravat, as "mit haarigem Schweife versehen" (WZR, col.1261).
317 yuvām pedāve puruvāram aśvinā sprūhām śvetām tārūtāram duvasyathah, ibid., I. 119. 10. On the various meanings of the root duvasy, see Grassmann, WZR, col.617.
318 vṛṣā puruvāraḥ, RV, IX. 93. 2.
319 hāriḥ ... puruvāraḥ, ibid., IX. 96. 24.
320 āti vāram āpāvīṣuḥ, ibid., IX. 60. 2. On āpāvīṣuḥ, see Bhawe, op.cit., part III, p.24.
321 yā īndur vāram āviṣat, ibid., IX. 38. 5. See Lüders, vol.1, p.203.
322 pāvamānaḥ saṁtānīḥ prāghnātām iva ... pāri vāram arṣati, ibid., IX. 69. 2. See Bhawe's comment on saṁtānīḥ in his translation of the Soma hymns, part III, p.154; Hillebrandt, op.cit., vol.1, pp.223-4, fn.3.
323 atyo nā krīlan pāri vāram arṣati, RV, IX. 86. 26.
soma juices rush to the hairy strainer (being urged by the priests), for winning vāja. Indeed, the composers of the ninth mandala become eloquent in describing the straining and purifying process of soma when it goes through the strainer. The godly one is requested to settle itself in the urn of the sacrificer after going through the hairy strainer. It is free from evil eyes when it goes for purification. It is "the prize-winning vāj, who is urged on by the lords in its course, the all-knowing master of thought"—thus the poet describes soma when it is being purified. It is described as "surging through the hairy strainer." Being squeezed out in a thousand streams over the strainer, soma flows through the hairy strainer. The strainer itself is described as "heavenly vats sending rain waters".

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24 átyā hiyānā ná hetībhīr āśgraṁ vājasātaye ví vāram ávyaṁ āśāvaḥ, ibid., IX. 13. 6. 25 pavāte áti vāram ávyaṁ áśāti kalāśaṁ devayūr naḥ, ibid., IX. 97. 4. 26 pávaṁānasya te ráso mádo rājann aducchunaḥ ví vāram ávyaṁ arṣati, ibid., IX. 61. 17. For a discussion of the meaning of the term aducchunaḥ, see Bhawe, op.cit., part III, p.36. 27 eṣā vāj hitó nṛbir viśvāvīn mānasas pātiḥ ávya vāram ví dhāvati, ibid., IX. 28. 1. 28 sōmah punanā ārmiṇāvyo vāraṁ ví dhāvati, ibid., IX. 106. 10. 29 pra suvānō aksāḥ sahāsradhāras tirāḥ pavītraṁ ví vāram ávyaṁ, ibid., IX. 109. 16. See Lüders, Varuna, vol. I, p.226. 30 divyaṁ kāsāso abhāravārṣāḥ, ibid., IX. 88. 6. Luders (op.cit., p.116), on the basis of this and some other verses of the Rgveda, comes to the conclusion that, "Für den vedischen Inder — oder mindestens für den vedischen Dichter — ist der Ausgangspunkt des Regens nicht die im Luftraum dahinziehende Wolke, sondern die Wasserflut im Himmel".
From a consideration of the above passages, it is quite clear that the strainer was an important sacrificial vessel in the soma sacrifice of the RV. It was made of sheep's wool.\textsuperscript{331}

From the negative aspect of covering, preventing or restraining, we may now come to the positive aspect of sheltering, protecting, or to words signifying freedom and ease – all derivable from \textit{vr}. The term \textit{urú} is very significant for our study and may bear the following shades of meaning:\textsuperscript{332}

1. Wide, vastly expansive, measuring much.
2. 'Expansive', also signifying a special quality of gods like Indra etc.
3. When applied in connection with roads or chariots, it means broad, capacious.
4. 'Expansive', as are the three strides of Viśnu.
5. Swift movement of the wind.
7. It also signifies non-oppressive, liberal, free or loose.
8. In the neuter, it refers to the wide spaces.
9. It is also used as an adverb.
10. It means far off, adverbially.
11. In the feminine (\textit{urvi}) it may refer to earth or earth and heaven.
12. It may also signify the six regions, the east, west, north, south, above and below.

\textsuperscript{331} ávyo vára, RV, IX. 6. 1; meṣyāḥ, ibid., IX. 8. 5.

\textsuperscript{332} We have closely followed Grassmann's Dictionary (\textit{WZR}, col. 262 ff.) in determining the different meanings of the term.
In the first sense we have: "Bṛbu stayed elevated over the Pañis, as the wide thicket on the Ganges". The poet is describing here the benevolence of Bṛbu, though he was one of the Pañis who were opposed to the Ṛgvedic Aryans. Bṛbu, who must have been a convert to Aryan religion, performed sacrifices, after which he must have satisfied the priests with rich presents and the priests, on their part, eulogised him. Indra pierces the mountain described as "broad (and) massive". This word is frequently associated with antārikṣa, and together they denote the vast space supposed to have been extended and propped up by various gods. We may quote the following examples:

I. 91. 22: "You (Soma) extended the wide space".

IV. 52. 7: "You (Uśas) spread heaven and the dear vast space with your rays".

III. 22. 2: "by which (vārcas) you (Agni) spread the wide space".

333 urūḥ kākoṣo nā gāṇgyāḥ, RV, VI. 45. 31. See Geldner's note on this passage.

334 This is another example of the amalgamation of the pre-Aryans with the Aryans.

335 mahām urūm, RV, I. 57. 6.

336 Gonda, Epithets, p.144: "the intermedial space between heaven and earth and the middle of the three spheres or regions of life".

337 tvām ā tatantha urū antārikṣam

338 ā dyām tanoṣi raśmībhīr antārikṣam urū priyām

339 vārcas may signify, according to Gonda, "a particular kind of energy, prestige and dignity" (OJAS, p.50), or it may denote "a power in the possession of the fire or given by that mighty divine being" (Gonda, ibid., p.50); "illuminating power", Epithets, p.145.

340 yēnāntārikṣam urvā tatāntha
VII. 98. 3: "You, Indra, spread the wide space".

urú is also associated with rājas which means space, expanse or extent.

King Trasadasyu, impersonating Indrāvaruṇā, declares that he fitted together by his might "These two wide, deep, well-constructed spaces". In another verse the poet, after remarking that he must have been a skilful artificer who produced the two world-halves, declares that he also "united the wide, deep, well-constructed spaces". Sarasvatī is said to have filled up "the earthly (space), the wide expanse (and) the atmosphere".

urú- is also associated with rodasī, which means the two worlds, the heaven and earth. In the following passages these two are associated:

VI. 67. 5: "As you (Mitra and Varuṇa) surround the spacious worlds".

VII. 18. 24: "Whose śravas (expands) between the two worlds".

341 ā indra paprātha urú antārikṣaṁ
343 urvī gābhīrē rājasi sumēke, RV, IV. 42. 3. See N. Brown, "King Trasadasyu as a Divine Incarnation", in Dr C. Kunhan Raja Presentation Volume, p.41.
344 urvī gābhīrē rājasi sumēke, ibid., IV. 56. 3.
345 apaprūṣī pārthivāṇy urū rájo antārikṣaṁ, ibid., VI. 61. 11. Hillebrandt, Lieder des Ṛgveda, p.73 translated uru rāja as "den weiten Himmel". This may be justified, because in the next verse there is a reference to Sarasvatī's three abodes (triṣadhāstāṁ).
346 pārī yād bhūtho rōdasi cid urvī
347 "'Glory'' or "'glorious deed''", see Gonda's OJAS, p.53.
348 yāsya śrávo rōdasi antār urvī
VII. 12. 1: "Who (Agni) shines magnificently between the two worlds".

ureru has formed compounds with various other terms. We may quote the following: ureru jraya- "moving in a wide course or extending over a wide space"; ureru kšatra- "wide dominion"; ureru bhūmi- "wide land"; ureru jyótiś- "far shining light"; ureru sphiram- "capacious belly"; ureru vyācas- "widely capacious"; ureruksiti- "spacious room"; uruloka- "wide space or room"; urucāka- "of wide vision"; urusāmsa- "declaring to (over) a distance, over a wide space"; urugayā- "wide-going, making strides over a wide area", which is pre-eminently an epithet of Viṣṇu, signifying the spatial extensiveness of "sunbeams" or "sunlight", or better still "the sun's energy", "because the pervading, omnipresent and fecundating stream of light and energy seems to fit in better with the character of the divinity".

ureru is a characteristic epithet of the gods in the RV. The Adityas are ureruvaḥ. The Maruts are described as "broad or vast as the heaven."
Indra is "broad, encompassing all around"; the horses of Indra are "vast" or "great". The fathers have also been styled as uravah. The gods are described as "vast, broad, expansive or great" because they are looked upon by the Vedic people as unlimited source of energy, power, happiness and welfare.

urú is associated with ádhvan, páṇthā, etc., which signify road, way or passage. We may quote the following:

VIII. 31. 11: "Smooth (or broad) be the path, for (procuring) luck".

X. 107. 1: "Spacious becomes the way of dákṣiṇā".

IX. 85. 4: "Make the way spacious for us, O Soma".

The two words, urú and pathas are sometimes associated and may signify the wide space, for example,

357 urúr úrvā abhītāh, ibid., II. 13. 7.
358 mahām urúm, ibid., II. 22. 1.
359 somapām urúm, ibid., III. 41. 5.
360 Ibid., VI. 21. 12.
361 Ibid., VI. 75. 9.
362 urú ádhvā svastāye. Appropriately this verse is addressed to Puṣan, "guardian of roads" (VM, p.35) and Bhaga, "dispenser, giver", "distributor of wealth" (VM, p.45).
363 urúḥ páṇthā dákṣiṇāyād arāṇi.
364 urúm no gātum krnu soma
I. 24. 8: "King Varuṇa has prepared a wide road for Sūrya". \[\text{365}\]

IV. 26. 5: "While bearing (soma) through the wide way (space), the thought-swift bird trembled and hurried". \[\text{366}\]

The expression, urú vikrāmaṇa, means "wide stride" and is applied especially to Viṣṇu. We have, for example, "In whose three strides all creatures find habitation". \[\text{367}\] These three strides of Viṣṇu, as Gonda has shown, may refer to the all-pervading and fructifying light and energy of the sun god. These are "indeed made for man in distress (RV, 6. 49. 13), in order to give him the earth as a dwelling-place, or to enable him to live (VI. 69. 6)", \[\text{368}\] or for "the annihilation of evil influences". \[\text{369}\] Indeed they are meant for making human life easy and safe. \[\text{370}\]

The wide advance of the wind is dwelt on in some passages of the RV.

In one passage the poet, while describing the all-knowing nature of Varuṇa,

\[\text{365}\] urúm hi rājā váruṇá cakāra sūryāya pánthām

\[\text{366}\] bharad yādi vír áto vévijānāḥ pathórüṇā mánojavā asarji

\[\text{367}\] yāsyo rúṣu trisú vikrāmaṇaḥ adhikṣiyánti bhúvanāṇi víśvā, ibid., I. 154. 2.

\[\text{368}\] Gonda, Viṣṇuism, p.57.

\[\text{369}\] Gonda, ibid., p.57.

\[\text{370}\] Kuiper, "The Three Strides of Viṣṇu", in Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown, p.137 ff, proposes a cosmological-ritualistic interpretation of the three strides of Viṣṇu. According to Kuiper, the main feature of the Ṛgvedic mythology, which is based on ritual regeneration of the cosmos, consists of a cosmic dichotomy. It centres upon the oppositions of Heaven-Earth, Day-Night, Devas-Asuras. In the mythical act of creation, Indra rivets the primordial hill, opens it and "props up" the sky; thereby the dual organisation (the heaven and earth) of cosmos is created. At this moment Viṣṇu "strides out". The first step corresponds to the nether world (which comprises the earth), the second to the upper world; but the third step is "not perceptible to the human eye, for it corresponds to the totality of the opposed moieties .... All that exists, is in the three steps, or in the third that represents them" (p.149). Again, if the primeval world is the thesis, Indra's creation is the antithesis and Viṣṇu's third step is the synthesis. In the act of creation Viṣṇu is connected with the pillar which supports the sky; Viṣṇu is the connecting link which forms part of both worlds.
The rapid soma streams, being purified in the strainer, are described as being "as broad as the winds".  

urú is associated with various desirable qualities or conditions of human life. It is connected with liberality or protection of the gods in the following passages:

VI. 47. 14: "The libations (of soma) are as manifold as (are your, i.e., Indra's) extensive gifts or acts of giving".  

V. 38. 1: "Ample is the gift of your extensive liberality, O Indra śatakrațu".  

I. 24. 9: "Let your (i.e. Varuṇa's) favour be extensive and deep".

IV. 25. 5: "Aditi would give wide protection for such a man (who presses soma juice for Indra)".

urú, when associated with loka, means "room", "sufficient room to live in, and freedom of action", "freedom, liberty". It is opposed to aṁḥas,

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371 vēda vātasya vartānīm urór ṣvāṣya bhātaḥ, RV, I. 25. 9.  
372 etē vātā ivorāvāḥ, ibid., IX. 22. 2.  
373 urū nā rāḍhaḥ sāvanaḥ purūṇi. On rāḍhas, see Gonda, OJAS, p.52.  
374 urōṣṭa indra rāḍhastō vibhvi rāṭīḥ śatakraṭo. Gonda defines krātu thus: "The faculty denoted by krātu- was rather one of these power-substances or Daseinsmächte which within some form of experience were supposed to be present in persons, objects and phenomena, and by virtue of which these are powerful, effective, influential." Epithets, p.37.  
375 urvi gābhīrā sūmatiṣṭe astu  
376 urū asmai āditiḥ sārma yamsat  
377 Gonda, Loka, p.18.  
378 Gonda, ibid., p.23.
which mean narrowness, oppression, anxiety and distress. Gonda has remarked that the Aryans tilled their soil in a very uneconomic way and they were often dislodged from their fields by later migrants. Hence they "eagerly longed for an opportunity to settle in a broad and fertile region where they would be free from narrowness and oppression in the various senses of the terms" and where they had free scope for their activities.

The uncertainties involved in living in a newly-conquered territory, the predatory and protracted wars against the autochthones - all these factors led to the semantic development of the term urú and its opposites in the RV.

Associated with kr, urú means "comfort, freedom, non-oppression". We may quote the following:

I. 36. 8: "They (the gods) killed Vṛtra (and) gained mastery over heaven and earth (and) the waters; they created freedom for living".

V. 64. 6: "Create (Indra) for us freedom for winning vāja, for wealth and well-being".

VI. 20. 5: "Indra created freedom for his charioteer (who was) sitting by his side".

urú in the neuter also signifies "the wide space", and the gods are recorded to have extended or filled it up. We may quote the following:

\[\text{Gonda, "The Vedic Concept of amhas", in IIJ, vol.1, p. 33 ff.}\]
\[\text{Gonda, Amhas, p.35.}\]
\[\text{ghnánto vṛtrām ataran rōdasī apā urú kṣāyāya cakrire}\]
\[\text{urú ṣo vājasātaye kṛtāṃ rāyē svastāye; Gonda, Viṣṇuism, 48, translates vāja as vigour.}\]
\[\text{urú ṣā sarāthāṃ sārathaye kar īndraḥ}\]
IV. 53. 2: "Having exceptional insight, (Savitr) had extended the wide space and filled (it) up".  

X. 127. 2: "Immortal, she (the goddess Rātrī) has filled up the space".  

As an adverb, urú appears, for example, in the following passages:

I. 121. 1: "When he (Indra) comes to the clanfolk of the home, he strides widely to the sacrifice".  

VIII. 25. 16: "Here this one (Agni) looks far and widely".  

The feminine form urvī denotes the spacious earth, or in the dual, both heaven and earth. In the first sense we have about Agni the following:

I. 146. 2: "He set his footsteps on the ridges of the wide (earth)".  

II. 4. 7: "He who has spread, burning, over the wide earth".  

In the second sense we have about Agni the following:

VI. 10. 4: "He who on his birth filled full both the worlds with his distant lustre".  

X. 88. 14: "Who has excelled even heaven and earth by his greatness".  

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384 vicakṣanāḥ prathāyann āpṛṇānurū 
385 a urú aprāḥ āmartya 
386 prá yát ānaḥ vísaḥ ā harmyásya uru kraṁsat adhvare 
387 ayam ēkah itthā purū uru cāṣte ví 
388 urvyūḥ padō ni dadhāti sānau 
389 sā yó vy āsthād abhi dākṣad urvīm 
390 a yāḥ paprāu jāyamāna urvī dūredṛśā bhāsā 
391 yó māhimnā pāribhūva urvī
urvi may also denote the six regions, namely, above, below, east, west, north and south. In this sense we have the following:

VI. 47. 3: "The prudent one (Soma) measured out the six wide (regions) besides which there is no other (region)". 392

X. 14. 16: "(Enraptured) by the (drink offered to him on the) trikadrukas, 393 the Great One (Yama) flies over the six regions". 394

X. 128. 5: "You goddesses, the six regions, create freedom for us". 395

vára(m) means wide expanse. In this sense we have the following:

III. 23. 4: "I place you on the expanse of earth". 396

III. 53. 11: "May the king (Sudās) kill Vṛtra in the east, west and north; then would he sacrifice on the expanse of earth". 397

vára is also used in the neuter in which case too it denotes wide expansion, space or wide room. Of the Āśvins we are told that, they "immediately on the rising of the morning light on the borders of the earth, seek to unite the wide spaces", 398 or they cross "many unmeasured spaces". 399

392
yām sāl urvīr amīṭa dhīro nā yābhya bhūvanaṁ kāc caṇāre

393
Trikadruka is the technical name of the first three days of the Abhiplava soma sacrifice. It comprised a Goṣṭoma, a Jyotiṣṭoma and an Ayuṣṭoma. See Hillebrandt, RL, p.156.

394
trikadrukebhīṁ patati sāl urvīr ēkam ēd bhāt

dēviḥ sāl urvīr urū naḥ krṇota

395
nī tvā dadhe vāre ā pṛthivyāḥ. This refers to the placing of fire on the altar.

396
rajab vṛtram jaṅghanat prāg āpāg údāg átāḥ yajāte vára ā pṛthivyāḥ. The priest Viśvāmitra is praying in this hymn for the success of his patron, king Sudās, see also infra, ch.IV, and Appendix B.

397
yā sadyāḥ uṣrā vi'ūṣi jmāḥ ántān yuyūṣataḥ pári urū váraṁsi, RV, VI. 62. 1.

398
purū váraṁsi ámitā, RV, VI. 62. 2.
Indra unbars "the expanses of the mountain", 400 \( \text{Bṛhaspati} \) laid out "the wide expanses". 401 The word \text{varasād} applied to Dadhikrāvan is interesting. 402 In a pantheistic hymn Dadhikrāvan is identified with all that is best.

Dadhikrāvan is possibly the morning sun 403 and this epithet may refer to his being placed, as the morning sun, in the wide room or expanse of space.

The term \text{varimāt} means spacious or wide. In a verse the sacrificer wishes: "As wide as this spacious, deep and whole earth is, so let this soma be for your drinking, Indra and Agni, till your soul be satiated". 404

\text{varimān(m)} means measuring much, wide extension. Indra's "extension" 405 is wider than heaven, or he is said to have created "the expanse of the earth". 406 Varuṇa measured out "the expanse of the earth". 407

\text{vāriman (n)} means wide extension or safety and freedom. Of Savitṛ it is said that what he creates with his beautiful finger "on the expanse of the earth" 408 is truth. In the second sense we have the word in a verse where the priest expresses his desire to be "in the benevolence of your

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400 \( \text{vāramsi pārvatasya, ibid., IV. 21. 8.} \)
401 \( \text{vāramsi, ibid., I. 190. 2.} \)
402 \( \text{Ibid., IV. 40. 5.} \)
403 \( \text{Macdonell, \textit{VM}, pp.148-9.} \)
404 \( \text{yāvat idām bhūvanam vīśvam āsti uruvyācā varimātā gabhīrām} \)
\( \text{tāvān ayām pātave somaḥ astu āram indrāṇi mānase yuvābhyyām,} \)
\( \text{RV, I. 108. 2.} \)
406 \( \text{varimānāṃ prthivyāḥ, RV, VI. 47. 4.} \)
407 \( \text{varimānāṃ prthivyāḥ, ibid., VIII. 42. 1.} \)
408 \( \text{prthivyāḥ vārimanāḥ, ibid., IV. 54. 4.} \)
(Aśvins') freedom", together with the rich patrons or institutors of the sacrifices.

Another interesting term for our consideration is várivas, which means space, freedom, peace, pleasure, and gods are requested to bestow these desirable conditions by removing various types of unwanted hindrances, difficulties and evils. Indra put away amhas for Sudās and created várivas for the Pūrus. Heaven and earth are requested to create freedom or peace for the sacrificers.

Sometimes this desirable condition is said to be brought about by fighting. Agni declares that he would create for the gods várivas. Agni is said to have created várivas for the gods through war, which is again attributed to Indra. Indra is implored to create "freedom and a good path or successful course" together with "width, room, free scope", after breaking

409 á vām sumné várimantsūrībhīḥ śyām, ibid., VI. 63. 11.
410 Sāyaṇa consistently translates the term as dhanam (on I. 63. 7; I. 102. 4; VI. 50. 3) or as asurairapahṛtam dhanam (I. 59. 5); Grassman, WZK, col. 1218-9; "freier Raum, d.h., Freiheit, Friede, Freude, Behaglichkeit"; Ludwig, LHR, vol.II, p.22, "vorteil" (I. 63. 7); "liebes" (IV. 24. 2) in vol.II, p.102; "freude" (I. 102. 4), vol.II, p.32; and "gefällig" (I. 59. 5), vol.I, p.288; Geldner, GRV, vol.I, p.76, "Freiheit" (I. 59. 5); "Befreiung" (I. 63. 7), vol.I, p.83; "Freie Bahn" (I. 102. 4), vol.I, p.122; "Ausweg" (VI. 18. 14), vol.II, p.116; "Freibahn" (VI. 44. 18), vol.II, p.139; Griffith, GTR, vol.I, p.87, "gain" (I. 63. 7); "comfort" (I. 59. 5), vol.I, p.81; "freedom" (III. 34. 7), vol.I, p.355. Oldenberg, OWH, part II (SBE, vol.XLVII), p.49, "wide space" (I. 59. 5). Renou, EVP, vol.XII, p.12, "vaste-domaine" (I. 59. 5); "libre-espace" (I. 63. 7), vol.XVII, p.27; "l'espace-libre" (III. 34. 7), vol.XVII, p.77. Gonda, Loka, p.19, "'room, width, space, free scope'".
411 RV, I. 63. 7. For Gonda's opinion on amhas, see IIJ, vol.4, p.33 ff.
412 mahās karatho várivah, ibid., VI. 50. 3.
413 Ibid., X. 52. 5.
414 Ibid., I. 59. 5.
415 Ibid., III. 34. 7.
the might of the enemies. 416 He creates várvas for the man who presses soma for him. 417 When soma is purified, he is requested to create várvas, 418 or he is requested to produce várvamśi when purified. 419 The rivers are also recorded as creating várvas. 420 The Áśvins and Soma are said to be "freedom-bringing" 421 and "best freedom-giver" 422 respectively. The king, who creates várvas for the protection-seeking Brahmaṇa, is favoured by the gods. 423 várvas is associated with wealth in a verse where Indra is requested to "create freedom for (our obtaining) wealth". 424 The creation or bestowing of várvas is associated with the destruction of malevolent beings like the Rakṣases and Vṛtra. Soma kills the Rakṣas, prevents the Arūtis and creates várvas. 425 Indra is requested to rejoice in the soma, wherewith he created várvas, and to conquer enemies. 426 Indra gave várvas to the oppressed heaven and to the people after slaying Ahi. 427

416 Ibid., I. 102. 4.
417 Ibid., IV. 24. 6.
418 Ibid., IX. 64. 14.
419 Ibid., IX. 97. 16.
420 Ibid., VII. 47. 4.
421 Ibid., I. 119. 1.
422 Ibid., IX. 1. 3.
423 Ibid., IV. 50. 9.
424 Ibid., VII. 27. 5.
425 Ibid., IX. 97. 10.
426 Ibid., X. 116. 3.
427 Ibid., VI. 18. 14.
He is once styled "the creator of várivas". Soma is "finder of várivas". The Ādityas are styled the "best finders of várivas". For a god to be styled "finder of várivas" or "creator of várivas" is not surprising. For such is a characteristic of primitive thought that the ancients used to invest their gods and goddesses with all sorts of desirable qualities with the fervent hope that they, being thus qualified, would bestow such desirable qualities or conditions on human beings.

The term várūtha means shelter, cover, screen or protection; and varūthyā means giving or affording shelter. These two terms are associated with various desirable qualities or conditions of human life. Both are associated with śárman, shelter: for instance in I. 58. 9, where Agni is implored to be the "protection" (várūtham) for the singer, and a "shelter" (śárma) for the liberal donors (of the sacrifice); in IV. 55. 4, Indra and Viṣṇu are requested to give "valiant shelter" and "mighty protection"; in RV. V. 46. 5, the sacrificers hope that Brhaspati, Puṣan, Varuṇa, Mitra and Aryaman will grant them "sheltering protection". These two terms, várūtha and varūthyā, are also associated with the well-being of the human body; for instance in I. 23. 21, where the waters are requested to teem with

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428 varivaskṛt, ibid., VIII. 16. 6.
429 varivovīt, ibid., IX. 37. 5, IX. 62. 9, IX. 96. 12, IX. 110, 11; also to Indra, in X. 38. 4.
430 varivovīttarā, ibid., I. 107. 1.
431 nṛvāt ... śárma
432 āmavad várūtham
433 śárma ... varūthyām
"protecting medicine"; Agni grants "protection for the body"; Indra is requested to grant protection to the wealthy donors so that "hail and hearty, they may attain a venerable old age". vārūtha and varūthya are also associated with the verb trā, which means "to rescue". Indra is implored to rescue the sacrificers with his "secure protections"; Agni is requested to be the "auspicious, shelter-affording rescuer". These two terms are also associated with ūtī, "help": in II. 34. 14, the sacrificers solicit the "great protection for aid" of the Maruts; in VIII. 47. 3, the worshippers request the Ādityas to spread their protection over the sacrificers as birds spread their wings and in the next line they declare, ""We (the eulogist, priestly poet, officiant) evoke or summon (by concentrating our thoughts, in addressing you, O gods) all means of protection"", and then remark, "Without blemish are your helps, goodly-assisting are your helps". varūthyā and chardīs (shelter or security) are associated, for example in VI. 67. 2, where the sacrificers request Mitra and Varuṇa to grant them their "non-vulnerable, protecting shelter". vārūtha is also associated with some miscellaneous ideas, like

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434 bhēṣaṇām vārūtham
435 tanve vārūtham, RV, I. 189. 6.
436 yacchā sūrībhyā upamāṁ vārūtham svābhūvo jaraṇāṁ aśnavanta, ibid., VII. 30. 4.
437 avṛkēbhīr vārūthaiḥ, ibid., VII. 19. 7.
438 trātā śivō bhavā varūthyaḥ, ibid., V. 24. 1.
439 vārūtham ūtāye
440 vīśvāni viśvavedasaḥ varūthyā manāmahe anehāsaḥ vaḥ ūtāyaḥ su utāyaḥ vaḥ ūtāyaḥ. For the translation of the first half, see Gonda, "The Indian Mantra", in Orients, vol.16, p.250.
441 adhṛṣṭāṁ chardīr yād vāṁ vārūthyām
non-injury, as in VII. 20, 8, where the prayer runs thus: "May we be uninjured in thy shelter";\textsuperscript{442} or with "wealth in the form of vāja".\textsuperscript{443} Indra's "maximum protection"\textsuperscript{444} in every undertaking is sought, as also his protection against the defiant ones.\textsuperscript{445}

From protection, sheltering and defending we come to discuss such terms as protector, shelterer or defender. This idea is conveyed by the term varūṭā (m). The Vedic gods are well-known for their protective function.

In a verse the sacrificer declares about Indra, "You are the mighty protector of the donor".\textsuperscript{446} Varūṭā is associated with trāṭī, rescuer. In IV. 55. 1 the poet asks, "Who amongst you, O Vasus, is the rescuer, who the protector, O Heaven and Earth".\textsuperscript{447} In another verse Indra is requested to be the "rescuer and protector" of his people when they are agitated, that is, prepared for battle.\textsuperscript{448} In I, 169, 1, Indra is said to be the protector from abandonment.\textsuperscript{449}

\begin{align*}
\text{\textsuperscript{442} vayāṃ te ... syāma varūthe āghnataḥ} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{443} vājaratnāḥ, RV, V. 49. 4.} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{444} jyēṣṭhe varūthe, ibid., II. 18. 8.} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{445} bhāvā varūthām maghavan maghōṇām yāt sam ájāsi śārdhataḥ, ibid., VII. 32. 7.} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{446} tvām ināḥ dāśuṣaḥ varūtaḥ, ibid., II. 20. 2.} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{447} kāḥ vaḥ trāṭā vasavaḥ kāḥ varūṭā dyāvābhūmī} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{448} adha sma te caraṣṭāyāḥ yāt ejān indra trāṭa utā bhava varūtāḥ, ibid., VI. 25. 7.} \\
\text{\textsuperscript{449} mahaś cid asi tyājaso varūtā} \\
\end{align*}

Gonda, "amhīs", III, 1, p.52, defines tyājas in the following manner: it denotes "the idea of "abandonment" in both senses: "the act of giving up, relinquishing, or forsaking" and "the state of being forsaken". Gonda further remarks, "In more or less 'primitive' communities isolation, attended with anxiety and insecurity is much dreaded and considered a very great evil, which when manifesting itself in a striking form could be thought of as a power". Renou, EVP, vol.XVII, p.48, defines tyājas as "mal-d'abandon".
Vārūtrī (f) was the goddess of protection. Her essentially protecting nature is obvious from the following evidence: in V. 41. 15, the worshipper declares: "Through her protections may Vārūtrī who is powerful (be our protectress)". In one verse the sacrificers wish: "May Vārūtrī favour us with her protection". We have some more examples: "May (Tvāṣṭr) grant us good shelter through Vārūtrīs", or "May Vārūtrī shelter us together with the Ekadhenus". Her help is sought together with that of Hotrā and Bhāratī and others.

The term vār occurs twice in the RV and conveys the sense of protection or protector. In one verse we read, "You are the protector of rta (you are) the seat (of rta)". This verse is addressed to Indra, the greatest of the protectors of the Aryan values of life. In another we read that, "the protection of the gods is great".

Lastly, we come to a discussion of the substantives signifying something with which to protect. vārman means a shield, a coat of mail. Its protective capacity is dwelt on in a verse where the poet, eulogising various weapons...
of war, wishes for the safety of the warrior by remarking, "May the
greatness (or power) of the shield help you through". 457 He covers the
vital parts (of the body of the warrior) with a shield. 458 In a funeral
hymn the dead body is addressed thus: "With the cows (that is, cow's flesh)
put an armour around yourself against Agni, cover yourself with fat and
grease". 459 Indra is "a broad shield" 460 with whom the sacrificer wants
to defend himself. In another verse the poet hopes, "May all the gods ruin
him" 461 (that is, the enemy of the worshippers), and immediately afterwards
declares, "The Brāhmaṇ is my inner armour". 462 The purport of this line
seems to be that since the poet, who is offering the worship on behalf of
his patrons, is fortified by Brāhmaṇ, the enemies cannot do any harm to
the patrons; instead they will be ruined. Soma surrounded by the woolly
strainer is compared to a shield on a chariot, 463 i.e., as the shield protects
the warrior on the chariot from enemy attack, similarly the strainer prevents
the purified soma juice from being mixed up with the dregs. Agni is said to
shield the man "who gives rewards (to the priests), from all sides as a
solidly-sewn coat of mail". 464 The term varmin means armed or protected with

457 sāḥ tvā vārmaṇaḥ mahimā pipartu, ibid., VI. 75. 1.
458 Ibid., VI. 75. 18.
459 agneḥ vārma pāri gōbhiḥ vyayasya sāṃ pra uruṣya pīvasā médasā ca, ibid.,
X. 16. 7.
460 vārma asi sapráthah, ibid., VII. 31. 6.
461 devāḥ tāṁ sārve dhūrvantu, ibid., VI. 75. 19.
462 brāhma vārma máma ántaram, ibid.
463 pāri syāḥ suvānāḥ avyāyam ráthe ná vārma avyata, ibid., IX. 98. 2.
464 tvām agne práyatadakṣiṇam náram vārma iva syūtām pāri pāsi viśvátaḥ,
ibid., I. 31. 15.
a shield. There is a reference to the destruction of thirty hundred
varmīṇaḥ belonging to the Vṛcivats; presumably these warriors were
destroyed by the Aryans. A warrior's countenance is likened to a storm
cloud "when the armed (one) proceeds in the womb of fight (in the thick of
battle)". Soma, compared with an armed soldier, is requested to break
the stable of cow and horse, which is surrounded (presumably by the demon
Vala).

Thus, on the basis of the above evidence, we may come to the following
conclusions:--

(1) The names of various demoniacal beings, like Uraṇa, Vala etc., as also
those of úra (sheep) and the human enemy Varasīkha must have originated
from the root vr.

(2) From the same root are derived several important words which signify
objects with which to cover or obstruct or places where to hide, conceal
or imprison.

(3) We also find some words derived from vr which signify aiding or
succouring by the Vedic gods.

(4) We have also some words meaning shelterer, protector or defender.

(5) Lastly we have those substantives which refer to arms with which to
protect or defend.

Combining the evidence of the last two sub-chapters, we may come to
the following general conclusions:--

465
Ibid., VI. 27. 6.

466
jīmūtasya iva bhavati prātikam yāt varmī yāti samādām upāsthe, ibid., VI.
75. 1. We have followed Sāyaṇa in translating jīmūtasya iva. Sāyaṇa has
jīmūtasyeva meghasyeva.

467
varmī iva dhṛṣṭo āruja, ibid., IX. 108. 6.
(a) Rgvedic \text{vr} primarily means to cover, obstruct, hinder, imprison etc. Some of the substantives from the root \text{vr} convey the sense of obstructing, hindering or imprisoning demoniacal beings; and at least in one case it forms part of the name (or descriptive appellation in our opinion) of a human enemy (\text{va}r\text{a} + \text{si}k\text{ha}, "one having a swelling tuft of hair"). Among substantives we also find names of objects with which to cover or restrain and places where to imprison or conceal.

(b) From obstructing, covering, opposite verb forms like discover, uncover or disclose etc. are formed by adding suitable prefixes to the root \text{vr}, while by the use of the negative particle \text{nā} (in \text{nā vartā}), the idea of a non-restrainer or non-preventer is formed.

(c) The idea of aiding or succouring is also conveyed by the root \text{vr} in its various forms. This positive aspect of sheltering, protecting or defending and freedom or ease finds its manifestation in such substantives as \text{vár\text{u}th\text{a}, urū, vára, varim\text{ā}t} etc. Among substantives are also those which mean shelterer, protector or defender. We should also include in this group substantives meaning arms with which to defend or protect.

Such is the history of \text{vr} in the RV. Interestingly enough, this tallies with the history of I-E *\text{yer} sketched above. This also confirms the view that the substantive Vṛtra should ultimately be traced to the I-E *\text{yer}.

It appears that the root \text{vr} primarily conveys the idea of covering, restraining, constricting or restraining; while substantives signifying exactly the opposite idea of space or spatial extension, breadthness, freedom or liberty etc., are also formed from the same root. It is rather peculiar that two diametrically opposite ideas should have been formed from the same root. But such is the history of the Rgvedic \text{vr}. It sounds contradictory to us but in the minds of archaic man such contradictions co-exist. This is clear from a consideration of the nature of Vṛtra. In the RV, Vṛtra
is evil; Vṛtra imprisons the waters and Indra, after killing Vṛtra, lets loose the waters and creates the world. In the later Vedas though Vṛtra continues to be an evil, still everything valuable, like Agni and Soma, comes out of Vṛtra when he is killed by Indra. The nature of Vṛtra will be discussed in the following chapters.

The nature of Vṛtra will be discussed in the following chapters. In the second chapter we may come to the conclusion that the term Vṛtra was coined from 1-2 ṛtra, which had the primary meaning of clothing, obscuring, obstructing or resisting. In the Avesta, Vṛtra means "blockage, obstruction, resistance," and Vṛūtra, "qui crée la résistance," as an independent designation of a god. But this "personification d'une force" of the Avesta completely loses its individuality and is absorbed by Indra, whereby Indra becomes Vṛūtrashan in the Vedic. A partial of the Vedic evidence alone would give us the false impression that the term Vṛūtrashan is gained from Vṛtra, the demon. It is as if Indra kills Vṛtra, the demonic power of resistance, and thus becomes Vṛūtrashan. But though in the Vedic we witness the gradual absorption of the qualities of Vṛūtrashan by Indra, the term Vṛtra itself retains its original sense of resistance, though not in its benign Avestic sense of resistance to enemies, but as a malevolent demonic power of resistance, as the obstructer or imprisoner of the waters without which life is impossible. In other words, Vṛtra becomes a demon obstructing the vegetal life in this world.

We shall discuss this vegetative significance of Vṛtra in this chapter.

There are sufficient indications to show that Vṛtra lay in the waters or rivers and thereby obstructed their flow. Many the Avestic poets describe his position.

1. Conze and Boyce, Vṛtra et Vṛūtra, p.46.
2. Conze and Boyce, ibid., p.76.
3. Conze and Boyce, ibid., p.76.
CHAPTER III.

The Vegetative Significance of Vṛtra

A Various descriptions of Vṛtra

On the basis of the evidence in the second chapter we may come to the conclusion that the term Vṛtra was coined from I-E *uer which had the primary meaning of closing, covering, obstructing or resisting. In the Avesta, Vṛtra means "blockage, obstruction, resistance";¹ and Vṛragna, ""qui brise la résistance"",² is an independent designation of a god. But this "personnification d'une force"³ of the Avesta completely loses its individuality and is absorbed by Indra, whereby Indra becomes Vṛtrahan in the Vedas. A perusal of the Vedic evidence alone would give us the false impression that the term Vṛtrahan is coined from Vṛtra, the demon. It is as if Indra kills Vṛtra, the demonic power of resistance, and thus becomes Vṛtrahan. But though in the Vedas we witness the gradual absorption of the qualities of Vṛtrahan by Indra, the term Vṛtra itself retains its original sense of resistance, though not in its benign Avestic sense of resistance to enemies, but as a malevolent demonic power of resistance, as the obstructor or imprisoner of the waters without which life is impossible. In other words, Vṛtra becomes a demon obstructing the vegetal life in this world. We shall discuss this vegetative significance of Vṛtra in this chapter.

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¹ Benveniste and Renou, Vṛtra et Vṛragna, p.6.
² Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.28.
³ Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.28.
I. 121. 11: Who "lay in the waters". 4

I. 52. 6: "Having obstructed the waters, (Vṛtra) lay at the bottom of space". 5

II. 11. 9: "Who lay upon the great river". 6

III. 32. 11: "Who lay around the stream". 7

IV. 17. 7: "Who lay against the course (of rivers)". 8

IV. 19. 3: "Who lay against the course of the seven (rivers)". 9

V. 30. 6: "Who lay upon the waters". 10

V. 32. 2: "Who lay stretched across (the waters)". 11

III. 32. 6: "Who lay (upon the waters)". 12

Vṛtra's association with tāmas (darkness) perhaps refers to his imprisoning the dark rain clouds. We may quote the following:—

V. 32. 6: "Who lay upon the waters". 10

The word sayānam, applied to Vṛtra in this verse is intriguing. Perhaps, as pointed out by Geldner, GRV, Vol.I, p.371, fn. 6c, it is used as an antithesis of cārta in the same verse, which refers to the killing of Vṛtra by Indra "mit der beweglichen Waffe", perhaps his vajra. If this interpretation is accepted then the word sayānam may refer to the beleaguring demon, who obstructed the waters and who seemed to be immobile to the Vedic people. Indra "by the mobile weapon" killed this "lying (and thus) immobile" demon and let the waters flow.
I. 54. 10: "Darkness prevailed, shaking the foundation of the waters; within Vṛtra's bowels the mountain (lay concealed)." 13

V. 31. 3: "By light (Indra) uncovered the surrounding darkness". 14

X. 113. 6: Vṛtra is "surrounded by darkness". 15

The condition of the waters in Vṛtra's possession is worth mentioning:

I. 32. 8: "Which (the waters) Vṛtra encompassed by his greatness". 16

IV. 19. 8: "The encompassed ... confined floods". 17

II. 11. 5: "The snake who locked up tightly the waters and heaven". 18

VIII. 6. 16: "Who lay tightly locking up the great waters". 19


14 ví jyótiṣā saṁvantvṛtvāt támo 'vaḥ

15 tāmāsā párīvrtaḥ

16 yās cid vṛtrō māhinā paryāṭiṣṭhat

17 pāriṣṭhitāḥ ... badadhānāḥ sīrāḥ. See also II. 11. 2 where we have mahīḥ pāriṣṭhitā ahina; VI. 17. 12, pāriṣṭhitam ... ūrmīm apām; VI. 72. 3, apāḥ pāriṣṭham; VII. 21. 3, apāḥ ... pāriṣṭhitā ahina.

18 apó dyām tāstabhvāṁsāṁ ... āhim

19 yāḥ ... mahīr apāḥ stābhuyāmaṇa āsayat
Among some other descriptions of the waters we should take into consideration the following: they are "obstructed";\(^{20}\) "the rivers are swallowed up by Ahi";\(^{21}\) they are those "whose master was the Dāsa (i.e. Vṛtra)";\(^{22}\) "whose custodian was Ahi".\(^{23}\) Vṛtra is described simply as "the encompasser",\(^{24}\) or "the encompasser of the rivers".\(^{25}\)

Some characteristic words are used by the Vedic poets to describe the Indra-Vṛtra conflict. We shall now examine these words and establish their proper significance in order to determine what light they throw on the problem.

The word pārvata ordinarily means a mountain or rock, but in the Indra-Vṛtra conflict it came to signify the rain-laden clouds withheld by Vṛtra. Indra opened these mountains and released the waters or streams:–

I. 32. 1: "(Indra) cut open the groins of the mountain".\(^{26}\)
I. 32. 2: "He (Indra) slew Ahi who lay on the mountain".\(^{27}\)
I. 51. 4: "You seized the moisture-laden wealth in the mountain".\(^{28}\)

\(^{20}\) nīrṇuddhāḥ, RV, I. 32. 11.
\(^{21}\) sīndhumṛ āhīnā jagrasānān, ibid., IV. 17. 1 (= X. 111. 9).
\(^{22}\) dāsāpatnīḥ, ibid., I. 32. 11 (= VIII. 96. 18).
\(^{23}\) āhigopaḥ, ibid., I. 32. 11.
\(^{24}\) parisādāḥ, ibid., III. 33. 7.
\(^{25}\) pāridhīm nadīnām, ibid., III. 33. 6.
\(^{26}\) prā vakṣānā abhinat pārvatānām
\(^{27}\) āhann āhīṃ pārvate śisriyānām
\(^{28}\) ādhārayaḥ pārvate dānumad vāsu. We have followed Lüders, op.cit., vol.I, p.183, who translated the line as: "Du packtest den aus Feuchtigkeit bestehenden Schatz in dem Berge". Renou, EVP, vol.XVII, p.15, translated it as: "Tu apportas la richesse humide dans la montagne".
I. 57, 6: "You, Indra, shattered in pieces this big broad mountain with your thunderbolt, O bearer of the thunderbolt".

V. 32. 1: "Opening the big mountain, You Indra, let flow the streams; you slew the dragon".

VI. 30. 5: "You broke the fastness of the mountain".

That by the term párvata the rain-laden cloud is referred to is apparent from the information about the Maruts "who swing the mountains over the flowing sea". The swinging of the mountains can only refer to the swinging and rolling movement of the storm clouds, which the poet ascribes to the Maruts. Even in later literature clouds are described as mountains or hills.

In this connection we may refer to the following phrases which appear in connection with the atmospheric drama of letting loose the waters:

IV. 21. 8: "The expanses of the mountain".

V. 59. 7: "The gushing torrents of the mountain".

VIII. 3. 19: "The keeping or holding of the mountain".

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29 tvāṁ tāṁ indra párvatam mahāṁ urūṁ vējreṇa vajriṁ parvaśāś cakartitha

30 mahāntam indra párvatam vi yād vaḥ

31 dhṛhāṁ aruṣaḥ párvatasya

32 ya iṅkḥāyanti párvatāṁ tirāḥ samudrāṁ ārpaṇāṁ, RV, I. 19. 7.

33 Gonda, Visnuiṣam, p. 76.

34 vāraṁsi párvatasya

35 párvatasya nabhānuṁ. The translation of nabhānuṁ is controversial.

Grassmann, WZR, col. 708, "Quell als der hervorbrechende, hervorquellende";


36 párvatasya gāḥ
The term, *girī*, ordinarily means a mountain or hill, but the Vedic poets use it to signify clouds:

IV. 17. 3: "He pierced the mountain". 37

VIII. 64. 5: "You broke open, for the sacrificers, the mountain, the hill, containing hundreds or thousands (of treasures)". 38

X. 89. 7: "He pierced the hill as a new pitcher". 39

The Maruts, "the deities of the winds in their aspect as bearing the storm clouds", 40 are associated with *girī* several times.

V. 56. 4: "You set, through your passage, the mountain, the hill, in motion". 41

VIII. 94. 12: "The band of Maruts, who stay in the hills". 42

The term, *ásman*, may mean a stone implement, like a hammer, the thunderbolt or the heaven conceived as the stony vault above. 43 In some passages of the RV, however, it refers to the rocks where Vṛtra concealed the cows (= waters):

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37 bhīnād girīm
38 tyām cit párvataṁ girīm śatāvantam sahasrīṇaṁ vi stotṛbhyo rurojitha
39 bibhēdā girīm návaminna kumbhāṁ
41 párvataṁ girīm prá cyāvayanti yāmabhīḥ
42 mārutaṁ ganāṁ girīṣṭāṁ. As storm gods bringing rains, hills (= rain clouds) were thought to be a suitable abode for them.
V. 30. 4: "You (Indra) even cleaved the rock with śávas". 44

VI. 43. 3: "In whose intoxication you (Indra) freed the cows, (who were) firmly (imprisoned) within the rock". 45

X. 139. 6: "He (Indra) opened the door of the rocky cow-stalls". 46

The term, ádri, means a rock, mountain or soma press-stone; in the symbolism of the RV, however, it signifies a cloud. Indra releases the waters by piercing the rocks:

IV. 16. 8: "As you, invoked by many, cleaved the rock". 47

X. 113. 4: "He pierced the rock (and) released the streams". 48

It should be mentioned, however, that the piercing of the ádri is more characteristic of the accounts of the strife between Bṛhaspati and Vala than of the Indra-Vṛtra conflict. This is apparent from the fact that the piercing of the ádri appears more often in connection with the destruction of Vala than in connection with the slaughter of Vṛtra. Thus with regard to the association of Vala and ádri, we have the following examples:

I. 62. 3: "Bṛhaspati split the rock (and) found the cows". 49

I. 71. 2: "The Āṅgirases broke the rock with a loud cry". 50

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44 áśmānaṁ cicchávasā didyutaḥ; śávas is translated by Gonda (OJAS, p.11) as "heroism".
45 yásya gá antár áśmāno máde dṛñhā avásṛjaḥ
46 āpūrpūdō úrō āśmāvrajanānām
47 apó yád ádriṁ puruhūta dárdaḥ; Geldner, op.cit., vol.1, p.436, fn.8a; Lüders, op.cit., vol.II, p.530, fn.2.
48 ávṛṣcad ádriṁ āva sasyādaḥ srjat
49 bṛhaspátir bhinád ádriṁ vidád gáḥ
50 ádriṁ rujann áṅgiraśo ráveṇa
IV. 3. 11: "By rṣa have they (the Āṅgiras) split the rock asunder".

But gradually this word also comes to be associated with the Indra-Vṛtra conflict.

The term, dṝḥā, means a closely constricted place or fastness where Vṛtra imprisons the cows (= clouds) and by piercing these fastnesses Indra releases the waters:-

III. 45. 2: "Indra broke open the fastnesses".

IV. 19. 4: "He burst the fastnesses open, exerting his ōjās".

VI. 17. 6: "You, with the Āṅgiras, opened the door for the cows, you (opened) the fastnesses, and sent forth the cows from the hole".

VI. 30. 5: "You broke open the fastness of the mountain".

The term, útsa, meaning well or fountain, is also used in connection with the Indra-Vṛtra conflict:-

V. 32. 1: "You pierced the fountain".

V. 32. 2: "You (released) the springs obstructed in their (proper) seasons".

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51 āsana bhidāntāh
52 dṝḥā cid ārujāh
53 dṝḥāny aubhnād uśāmāna ójaḥ. For ójas, see chapter II, fn.175.
54 aūṛṇor dúra usrīyābhyo ví dṝḥāh
55 dṝḥām arujāh pārvatasya
56 ádardar útsam
57 tvām útsān rṭubhir badbadhānān.
The last citation contains interesting information. We are told that Vṛtra obstructed the flow of waters in their proper seasons and Indra, after slaying the dragon, released them. This is the first direct reference to the fact that the Vedic Indians were dependent on the seasonal rains. It would be hazardous to say if it had any reference to agriculture, but it shows that even in those early days people realised the importance of the regularity of seasonal rains. There is possibly another allusion to it in verse 12 of the same hymn which runs thus: "I also hear that you respond in due season, in that you give rewards to the vīpras", i.e., Indra gives rich rewards to the sacrificers and their patrons in due season by killing the dragon and releasing the waters.

The term, khāṇī, is also relevant to our study:

II. 15. 3: "He (Indra) pierced the channels of the rivers with the thunderbolt". 59

IV. 28. 1: "He (Indra) opened the channels (of the waters), obstructed as they were". 60

The word mih 61 means mist and this is also associated with Vṛtra in his conflict with Indra. Thus Vṛtra is described as "covered in mist". 62

58 ēvaḥ hi tvām ṛtuthā yātāyantam maghā vīprēbhyo dádataṁ śṛṇómi. Norman Brown, JAOS, vol.88, p.206, translates vīpra as "an "inspired priest"".

59 vajreṇa khāṇī atrpan naṁnāṁ

60 āpāvṛṇod āpihiteva khāṇi

61 The cognate words of mih in other Indo-European languages have been pointed out by C.D. Buch, BSS, p.66. These are Greek ὀμίχλη, Lithuanian and Lettic migla, Ch.-Slavonic mīgla, Russian mīgla, Serbo-Croatian māgla. These were perhaps derived "from a root *meigh, perh. the same as in Ch.-Sl. mignēti 'blink', Lith. migti 'fall asleep' etc. with the development of 'mist, cloud' through the notion of 'dim'.

62 mihāṁ vāsāṇa, RV, II. 30. 3.
Moreover, "(Nothing helped him), neither mist nor hail, which he (Vṛtra) spread", when Indra went to fight with him.

Among some miscellaneous words used by the poets in describing the Indra-Vṛtra conflict, we may mention the following:-

- **apidhana** (covering), I. 51. 4: "You opened the coverings of the waters".
- **ūdhar** (udder), V. 32. 2: "O bearer of the thunderbolt, you made to flow the udder of the mountain".
- **ūrvā** (enclosure), VI. 17. 1: "Drink the soma, (and) being praised, O powerful Indra, may you split the cow-stall (enclosure of cows)".
- **phaligā** (receptacle), VIII. 32. 25: "Who cleaved the receptacle of waters and let the rivers flow downwards".
- **bīla** (hole), I. 32. 11: "The hole of the waters, which was obstructed, you uncovered after slaying Vṛtra".

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nā yām mīham ākirad dhrādūnim ca, ibid., I. 32. 13.


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B Associates of Vṛtra and their Activities

Just as Indra was associated in his demon-slaying activities with other gods, like the Maruts, Viṣṇu or Agni, similarly Vṛtra too was associated in his activities with lesser demons, like Arbuda, Suṣṇa etc.. Accordingly, we will discuss the activities of the associates of Vṛtra in this section.

Arbuda appears several times as an associate of Vṛtra. He is mentioned thrice together with Vṛtra and other demons. An examination of the following passages makes it clear that Arbuda too is a demon obstructing the smooth flow of vegetal life, after killing whom Indra released the waters:

II. 11. 20: "Strengthened by this pressed, intoxicating (soma drink) of Trita, he (Indra) scattered Arbuda". 71

II. 14. 4: "Who pushed Arbuda downwards". 72

VIII. 3. 19: "You forced out the cows of Arbuda, of the guileful animal, of the mountain". 73

VIII. 32. 3: "You pierced through the summit, the height of the big Arbuda". 74

VIII. 32. 26: "He pierced through Arbuda with ice". 75

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70 RV, VIII. 3. 19; VIII. 32. 26 and X. 67. 12.
71 asyā śuvānāsyas māndiṇās tritāsyas ny ārbudām vāvṛdhānō astāḥ. Here Indra's scattering of Arbuda may refer to the scattering of rain clouds. See Macdonell's comments on this verse in JRAS, vol.25, p.433.
72 yo ārbudam āva nīcē bābādhe
73 nīr ārbudasya mīgayasya māyīno niḥ pārvatasya gā ājah
74 ny ārbudasya viṣṭāpāṁ varṣāṇaṁ bṛhatāṁ tira
75 himēnāvidhyad ārbudam. Bergaigne, La Religion Védique, vol.II, p.222, remarked, "Le trait du vers VIII. 32. 26 "Indra a tué Arbuda par le froid" confirme l'interprétation naturaliste de la légende d'Arbuda".
X, 67. 12: "Indra cleaved with power the head of the great flood, of Arbuda". 76

We have reference to the demon Ahīśuva several times in the RV. The most interesting information about this demon appears in the following context: Indra, immediately after his birth, asked his mother, who were the mighty and strong against whom he would have to fight. She answered, "Ahīśuva, the son of Urṇavābha". 77 Vṛtra and ahīśuva are associated in the following passage: "He (Indra), roṣīma, 78 killed Vṛtra (and) Ahīśuva, the son of Urṇavābha". 79 In another passage Ahīśuva is substituted for Dānu: "Take upon yourself the strength by which, O hero, you pierced Vṛtra, the son of Urṇavābha, the son of Danu". 80 In another passage we have the following information: "Who (Indra), powerful god, slew Śrī binda, Anarśani, Pipru, the Dāsa Ahīśuva and let the waters flow", 81 which shows that the Dāsa Ahīśuva is conceived as a drought demon.

Vṛtra is styled Dānu or Dānava in the following passages:

76 indro mahnā mahatō arṇavāsyā ví mūrdhānām abhinād arbudāsya
77 RV, VIII. 77. 2.
79 āhan vṛtram roṣīma aurṇavābhām ahīśuvam, RV, VIII. 32. 26.
80 dhīṣvā śāvaha śūra yēna vṛtram avābhinād dānum aurṇavābhām, ibid., II. 11. 18.
81 yāḥ śrībindam anarśaniṁ pīrum dāsām ahīśuvam vādhiḍ ugra riṇāṁ apāḥ, ibid., VIII. 32. 2. On ugra, see Gonda, OJAS, p.13 ff.; Epithets, pp.71-4.
II. 11. 10: "He broke the magic of the guileful Dānava, after drinking the pressed soma".  

II. 12. 11: "Who slew the serpent, the Dānu (the son of Danu)".  

V. 29. 4: "Indra, making an enveloping movement, slew the entwining, hissing Dānava".  

V. 32. 1: "As you opened the big mountain, Indra, you let the streams flow; you struck down the Dānava".

Once Dānu appears as the mother of Vṛtra. The reference to seven Dānus X.120.6 is possibly a multiplication of the original single Dānu of the earlier portions of the RV. These two words, Dānu and Dānava, are connected, in all probability, with dū, to bind or restrain.  

They are thus the personification of the idea of bondage and imprisonment and therefore are apt descriptions of the water-withholding demon.

Pipru figures as an associate of Vṛtra in I. 103. 8 and of Sṛbinda, Anarśani and Ahīśuva in VIII. 32. 2. In the last verse, already quoted in connection with Aurṇavābha, Indra appears in his familiar role as the releaser of the waters. That Pipru was a drought demon is obvious from a consideration of the following evidence:—

VI. 20. 7: "With śāvas (power), You pierced through the firm castles of Pipru, who had the guileful nature of Ahi".  

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82 nī māyino dānavaśya māyā āpādayat papivānt sutāsya
83 yō āhīṃ jaghāṇa dānum
84 jīgaṛtim īndro apajārgurāṇaḥ práti śvasāntam āva dānavaṁ han
85 mahāntam īndra pārvatām ví yād vāḥ sṛjó ví dhārā āva dānavaṁ han
87 ví pīpīrāh āhīṃyasya dṛjhaḥ pūro vajrīni chāvasā nā dardaḥ; on śāvas, see Gonda, SOR, pp.50, 52; Epithets, p.121.
VI. 18. 8: "Indra twisted Pipru, Sambara and Susa, for the shaking, for the demolition of their fortresses".

With regard to Sambara, we should take into consideration the following passages:

I. 54. 4: "You (Indra) convulsed the high heaven's vault, you, daring, pierced through Sambara by yourself".

I. 59. 6: "As Vaisvanara Agni slew the Dasyu, he shook the fences and pierced through Sambara".

II. 24. 2: "Who bent down what was plaint with ojas (power), and with manyu he burst the Sambaras, Brahma Naspati broke through what was immovable, he penetrated into the mountain rich in wealth".

VII. 18. 20: "You, by yourself, smote down Sambara from the height (of the mountain)".

As regards the pur of the drought demons, we have already quoted VI. 18. 8, where Indra is recorded as shaking and demolishing their "fastnesses" or "cloud-castles". We should also consider in this connection I. 103. 8, which runs thus: "As you struck down Susa, Pipru, Kuyava, Vritra (and)

88 vrnæk píprum sambah súspam índraḥ puräm cyautnāya śayāthāya. This apparently means that Indra stirred up the clouds and caused them to fall to earth in the form of rain.

89 tvám divó bṛhatāḥ sānu kopayo 'va tmānā dhṛṣataḥ sambah sambah bhinat

90 vāśvānarō dāsyum agnír jaghanvā ādhunot kāṣṭhā āva sambah bhet. Geldner, op.cit., vol.1, p.76, translated kāṣṭhāḥ as "den Schranken".

91 Gonda, Epithets, p.235, translates the word as "bellicose fury".

92 yo nántvany ānaman ny ojasotādardar manyunā sambahāpi vī prācyāvayad acyutā brahmaṇas pātir a cāviśad vāsumantaṁ vī pārvatam

93 āva tmānā bṛhatāḥ sambah bhet
demolished the puras of Šambara, O Indra”.

The term, puras, in this instance must bear a vegetative significance, for in the previous passage we have the familiar description of Ahi slumbering (in the mountains), and of his being awakened by Indra with his thunderbolt.

Suṣṇa (from the root suṣ, to dry up, evaporate) is associated with Vṛtra in I. 103. 8. Suṣṇa has remarkable similarity with Vṛtra, as would be obvious from a consideration of the following evidence:

I. 51. 11: "The powerful one (Indra) released the waters, which are accustomed to moving, in a stream; he rent the firmly-fixed castles of Suṣṇa".

VIII. 1. 28: "You (Indra) shattered Suṣṇa's wandering castle with your weapons".

I. 54. 5: "When you (Indra) twisted the head of the snorting Suṣṇa".

VIII. 6. 14: "Against the Dasyu Suṣṇa you, Indra, hurled your unremitting thunderbolt".

Just as in his conflict with Vṛtra, Indra rent Vṛtra's castles and released the waters, he performed the same feats in his conflict against Suṣṇa. The "wandering castle" of Suṣṇa is highly significant. We contend that it has a clear reference to the rushing or moving cloud, which is supposed to be under the control of the drought demon Suṣṇa.

The expression, "snorting", in this passage, reminds us of svasāntaṁ dānavaṁ (V. 29. 4) applied to Ahi. The use of mūrdhāni in the locative is strange, but we can see no better meaning for this passage.

Like Vṛtra, Suṣṇa is described here as a Dasyu.
I. 121. 9: "When you, invoked by many, seizing Śuṣṭa with endless blows, encompassed him for Kutsa". 100

I. 121. 10: "Even the encompassing power of Śuṣṭa, which was well knit, you routed from heaven". 101

V. 32. 4: "The bearer of the thunderbolt slew Śuṣṭa, the vengeful spirit of the Dānava, as an attacking bull with the thunderbolt". 102

VI. 31. 3: "You fought, Indra, with Kutsa against the consuming Śuṣṭa, causing bad harvest". 103

Thus Vṛtra is associated in his activity with a number of drought demons. Their main activity is concerned with the imprisonment of rains or earthly rivers. Indra and various other gods are recorded to have killed these demons and brought about a regeneration of the vegetal world.

100 kūṭsāya yātra puruhūta vanvān chūṣṇam anantaḥ pariyāsi vaḍhaṁ. Indra is once recorded to have encompassed Vṛtra also (īndro vṛtram avṛṇot, III. 34. 3).

101 śuṣṭasya cit pārihitam yād ājō divās pāri sūgrathitaṁ tād ādāḥ


103 tvāṁ kūṭsenabhī śuṣṭam indrāśuṣṭam yudhā kūvavam. The epithet kūvava, "causing bad harvest", is an apt one of the drought demon Śuṣṭa, and applied to him also in II. 19. 6, IV. 16. 12 and in VII. 19. 2. The epithet aṣuṣa, "consuming, devouring, greedy", must have been coined, as Wackernagel-Debrunner, Altindisches Grammatik, II. 2, p. 491, pointed out, from the root aṣ, "to eat, consume". Thus the drought demon is conceived as devouring up the waters, the very sap of vegetal life. See also in this connection, Grassmann, WZR, col. 138; Mayrhofer, KEW, vol. I, p. 59.
The inevitable result of the Indra-Vṛtra conflict then is the release of the waters and rivers. Indeed, the release of the waters or rivers by Indra and various other gods is a dominant theme of the Ṛgvedic poetry. The question thus arises, what was the significance of the waters in the Ṛgvedic religion? This we will discuss in the next section.
The Waters in the Rgveda

The deification of waters or rivers is universal in primitive religion. That man in the pastoral and agricultural periods would be impressed with the desirability of winning the aid of the waters or their in-dwelling spirits is quite natural. In the RV, the deification of the rivers is fully accepted. As divinities, however, they seem to be rather insipid and the physical basis of the deification is very much in the minds of the poets.

In the RV, the waters are invoked together with practically all the great gods: with Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni etc. (VII. 34. 25); with celestial and terrestrial beings (V. 41. 14); with Heaven, Earth, Indra and the Maruts (X. 37. 6); with Earth, Heaven, Sun etc. (III. 54. 19); and with the Mountains, Trees, Heaven etc. (VII. 34. 23). Similarly, Sarasvatī, the river goddess par excellence of the RV, "the Jordan of India", is invoked together with Indra and Agni (VIII. 38. 10); Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra, Agni, Aryaman, Aditi etc. (VII. 39. 5); with Agni, Indra, Varuṇa etc. (V. 46. 2).

The waters are styled Devī, celestial or heavenly, in the following passages:

I. 23. 18: "I invoke the waters, the celestial, wherein our cows drink".

III. 34. 8: "The absolute victor, the desirable, the giver of sahas (power), who won the sun and the heavenly waters".

105 apó devīr āpa hvaye yātra gāvah píbanti naḥ
106 satrasahām vāreṇyam sahodāṃ saśavāmsam svar apāś ca devīḥ
VII. 49. 1: "Indra, the manly one, the bearer of the thunderbolt, dug out (their channels); may those divine waters help me here".107

Like the gods of the Vedic pantheon, the waters or rivers are styled 'great' or 'noble'. Thus the river Paruṣṇī is addressed as "the great river",108 or "the highest greatness of the rivers"109 is referred to. In another passage the sacrificers pray: "May the great and strengthening Sarasvatī, Sarayu and Sindhu, with their waves, approach, with their great help".110

The waters and rivers are styled mothers in the following passages:-

VIII. 96. 1: "The seven mothers, the waters, stopped for him (Indra); for the men they (became) easy to cross".111

X. 9. 2: "Let us partake of the most pleasant sap that you have; as mothers desirous (of bestowing affection)".112

X. 17. 10: "Let the waters, the mothers, purify us".113

We should note in this connection that the epithet, "the most motherly", is given to Sarasvatī114 and Vipās.115

107 śrindro ya vajrī vṛṣabhō rāśa-da ta āpo devīr ihā mām avantu
108 mahenādi, RV, VIII. 74. 15.
109 mahimānam uttāmām, ibid., X. 75. 1.
110 sārasvatī sarāyuḥ sīndhur ūrmībhir mahō mahīr āvasā yantu vākṣaṇīḥ, ibid., x. 64. 9.
111 āsmā āpo mātāraḥ sāptā tasthur nībhyaś tārāya sīndhavaḥ supārāḥ
112 yō vah sıvātamo rāsas tāsya bhājayatehā naḥ uṣatīr iva mātāraḥ
113 āpo āsmān mātāraḥ ūndhayantu
114 II. 41. 16.
115 Ibid., III. 33. 3.
The concept of the motherhood of waters is significant and perhaps arises from man's dependence on them. They are conceived as living entities, to be loved, praised and propitiated. By entering into relationship with them, they become beneficial to men and bring them rich rewards. It is with this end in view that Sarasvati is requested to rejoice "in our friendship and clan fellowship". 116

In general terms various blessings and aids are sought from the waters:

IV. 57. 3: "Agreeable (literally, possessing or containing honey) be the Plants, the Heaven and the waters; may mid-space be agreeable". 117

VII. 35. 8: "Auspicious be the rivers to us, auspicious be the waters". 118

VII. 47. 4: "Let these rivers give us free passage, you protect us always with your benediction". 119

X. 9. 1: "You waters are indeed refreshing; help us in (possessing) ūrj- ("vigour, strength, refreshment")". 120

The shelter of the waters or Sarasvati is referred to in the following verses:

IV. 54. 6: "May Indra, Heaven and Earth, and the Sindhu with the waters, (and) Aditi with the Adityas give us shelter". 122

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116 juṣásva naḥ sakhyā vēṣyā ca. RV, VI. 61. 14.
117 madhumatīr oṣadhīr dyāva ṣapo madhumānaḥ no bhavatv antāriksam
118 śam naḥ śindhavaḥ śam u santv ṣaphaḥ
119 te śindhavo vārivo dhātanaḥ no yuyām pāta svastibhiḥ sādā naḥ
120 Gonda, SOR, p.49 ff.; Epithets, p.84 ff..
121 ṣapo hī śṭhaḥ māyobhūvas tā na ūrjē dadḥātana
122 indro dyāvāprthivī śindhur abdhīr ādityair no āditih śārma yaṁsat
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116 jujāsva naḥ sakhyā vēṣyā ca. RV, VI. 61. 14.  
117 mādhumatīr oṣadhīr dyāva āpo mādhuman no bhavatv antārikṣam  
118 sām naḥ sindhavaḥ śām u santv āpaḥ  
119 tē sindhavo vārivo dhātanaḥ no yuyām pāta svastībhiḥ sādā naḥ  
120 Gonda, SOR, p.49 ff.; Epithets, p.84 ff.  
121 āpo hī śṭhā māyobhūvas tā na ūrjē dadhātana  
122 indro dyāvāprthivī sindhur abdhūr ādityāir no āditiḥ sārma yamsat
VII. 95. 5: "Placing us in your most beloved shelter, let us stay as under a sheltering tree".  

Sarasvatī is associated with the bringing of luck in human life:—

VI. 61. 14: "Sarasvatī, conduct us to luck".  

VII. 96. 3: "May the auspicious Sarasvatī bring us auspiciousness".

I. 89. 3: "May the bountiful Sarasvatī bestow luck on us".

The waters are also conceived as bringing various desirable things in human life. We hear of "desirable wealth" derived from waters; they are "disposers of desirable things"; "Sarasvatī gives desirable riches to the worshipper"; her breast is described as "bringer of wealth"; "finder of wealth or treasure" and "good bestower (of wealth)".

The rivers or waters are prayed to for heroic sons in the following passages:

III. 54. 13: "Sarasvatī, worthy of sacrifice, would listen.

Bring wealth along with hero (sons), you mighty one".

123 tāva śārkṣaṁ priyātame dādhanā úpa sthēyāma śaraṇāṁ nā vṛkṣām  
124 sarasvaty abhi no nesī vāsyah  
125 bhadrām īd bhadrā kṛṇavat sārāsватī  
126 sārāsватī naḥ subhāgā māyas karat  
127 kāmyam rādhaḥ, RV, II, 38. 11.  
128 īsāna vāryāṇām, ibid., X, 9. 5.  
129 sārāsватī dāsūše vāryam dāt, ibid., X, 17. 7.  
130 ratnadhaḥ, ibid., I, 164. 49.  
131 vāsuvīt, ibid.  
132 sudātraḥ, ibid.  
133 sārāsватī śiνaνaν yajñīyāso dhātā rayim sahāvīram turāsaḥ
VI. 50. 7: "You waters, friendly to men, bring your protection, for the benefit of son and progeny".  

X. 184. 2: "Settle the embryo, Sarasvatī".  

Sarasvatī is referred to as Vṛtraghnī (VI. 61. 7) and Pārāvataghnī- (VI. 61. 2). She is prayed to for destroying various types of human enemies in the following passages:-

II. 30. 8: "Sarasvatī, assist us, with the Maruts as your comrades, you boldly conquer the enemies".  

VI. 61. 3: "Sarasvatī, strike down the revilers of gods, the offspring of the whole guileful Brṣaya".  

VI. 61. 9: "She (helped us) over all enemies".  

VI. 61. 11: "May Sarasvatī protect us from the slanderer".

Thus, according to the Rgvedic seers, rivers and waters are beneficial beings to whom men turn for help, good luck and felicity in life. Indeed they are revatīs ("rich"), subhāgā- ("bountiful"), vajīnīvatī-.
("rich in vāja-"), vājebhir vājīnīvatī.143 ("rich in vāja- by the possession of vāja-").

The rivers are terrestrial, for various gods are recorded to have dug out their channels:

III. 33. 4: "They flow along the channel created by the god" (perhaps Indra).144

VI. 30. 3: "Today as always lasts your work (āpas) of the rivers, that you, Indra, dug their channel".145

VII. 47. 4: "For whom Indra dug the path".146

It should be mentioned, however, that sometimes the celestial origin of the waters or rivers is referred to:

V. 43. 11: "From high heaven, from the mountain, Sarasvatī, worthy of sacrifice, would come to our sacrifice".147

VI. 61. 11: "The terrestrial (space), the wide space, the aerial region she filled up".148

IX. 113. 8: "Where Vivasvat's son is the king, where the secret region of the heaven is, where those young waters are, there make me immortal".149

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143 RV, I. 3. 10 and VI. 61. 4 (an epithet of Sarasvatī).
144 anu yóniṁ devākṛtam cárantih
145 adyā cin nú cit tád ápo nadīnāṁ yád ābhyo árado gātum indra
146 yābhya índro áradad gātum
147 á no divó bṛhatāḥ pārvatād ā sārasyā tā yajatā gantu yajñām
148 āpaprūṣī pārthivāny urú rájo antārikṣam
149 yātra rájā vaivasvátō yātrāvarōdhanām divāḥ
yātrāmūr yahvatīr āpas tátra māmāṁtām kṛdhi
It is possibly to this attempt at finding a celestial counterpart that Sarasvatī's epithet, triṣadhāsthaḥ ("having three sources or abodes", VI. 61. 12) may be attributed.

The medicinal properties of the waters are referred to in various passages of the RV:

I. 23. 19: "In the waters is nectar, in the waters medicine". 150

I. 23. 20 (= X. 9. 6 = AV, I. 6. 2): "All medicines exist in the waters". 151

I. 23. 20 (= X. 9. 6): "The waters are all healing". 152

I. 23. 21 (= X. 9. 7): "Bestow on my body, O Waters, (your) protecting medicine, so that I may see the sun for long". 153

VI. 50. 7: "You are the motherly physicians". 154

VIII. 9. 5: "Whatever (medicine) you have provided in the waters, in the tree, in the herbs, you performer of many marvellous deeds, with that help me, O Aśvins". 155

X. 9. 5: "I request the waters for medicine". 156

150
apsvaṇantar amṛtām apsu bhēṣajām
151
apsū ... antār vīśvāni bhēṣajā
dḥa ca viśvābhēṣajīḥ

152
āpaḥ pṛṇīta bhēṣajām vārūtham tanve māma
jyok ca sūryam dṛṣe

153
yuyāṃ hī śṭhā bhīṣājo mātiṭamāḥ

154
See Gonda, Epithets, p. 116, for purudamsasa.

155
yad apsu yād vaṇaspātāu yād oṣadīśu purudamsasaḥ kṛtām
tenā māviṣṭām aśvinā

156
apō yācāmi bhēṣajām
X. 137. 6: "Truly, the waters are healing, the waters are expeller of malady. The waters cure all; may they procure you a remedy".

Purification by water is very common in ancient religions. In the RV this is indicated by various epithets of the river or rivers. Thus Sarasvatī is śucī- ("pure", VII. 95. 2), the waters are śucīm ariprām ("chaste and faultless", VII. 47. 1), śucayāḥ pāvakāḥ ("pure and undefiled", VII. 49. 2) and śatāpavitrāḥ ("with hundredfold purification", VII. 47. 3). They are efficacious in carrying away defilement and thereby making the sacrificer pure:-

I. 23. 22 (= X. 9. 8): "These waters remove away all, whatever blemish is in me; if I have been treacherous or have sworn falsely".

VII. 49. 1: "From the middle of the spring, they (the waters) flow, purifying, without resting and with the sea as their leader".

X. 17. 10: "The motherly waters will purify us, they will purify us with butter, like those who have been cleaned by butter;

158 Geldner, op.cit., vol.III, p.370, translated amīvacātaniḥ as "Die Krankheitvertreibenden".
161 idām āpaḥ prā vahata yāt kīṁ ca duritāṁ māyī yād vāhāṁ abhidudroha yad vā sepā utānṛtam
162 samudrājyeṣṭhāḥ salilāsya mādhyaṁ punāṁ yanty ániviśamānāḥ
because the goddesses take away all that is unclean, from them I come clean and purified".  

We have several references to soma being cleaned by the waters, for example:—

IX. 24. 1: "Being crushed, they (the unpurified soma stalks) are purified in the waters".  
IX. 109. 17: Soma "is purified by the waters".  

The waters are said to have aided Indra in his heroic activities:—

VIII. 15. 8: "The waters and mountains impel you (to perform heroic deeds)".  
X. 30. 4: "By which (that is, by the waters) Indra was strengthened for the heroic act".  

The waters are associated with the observance of vratā—promulgated by various gods:—

IX. 82. 5: "The waters follow your (that is, Soma's) ordinance".  
VII. 47. 3: "They (the waters) do not transgress the ordinance of Indra".

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163 aśpo asmāṇaḥ mātāraḥ sundhayantyu gṛhtēna no gṛhtapāvah punantu vīśvāṃ hī riprām pravāhanti devīr ud id ābhyāḥ sūcīr ā putā emi  
164 sṛṇānaḥ āpsu mṛṣṇaḥ  
165 adbhīr mṛṣṇānaḥ  
166 tvām āpāḥ pārvataḥ ca hinvire  
167 yābhīr āntrō vāvrdhé vīrṛyāya  
168 For vratā, see Ch.IV, fn.75.  
169 tāvā vratāṁ ānv āpāḥ sacante  
170  

tā́ āndrasya nā minanti vratāni
We should remember in this connection that the gods are the creators and watchers of the ordinance in the RV. The information, that they follow the ordinance of gods may, therefore, refer to their abiding in their courses which is ordained by the gods. For example, in II. 17. 5, we have the information that the "downward rushing of the waters he (Indra) ordained". 171

On the basis of the above evidence, we may conclude that the waters and rivers played an important part in the life of the Aryans. It is quite natural, therefore, that they sought for help from gods such as Indra, when they believed that the waters were imprisoned by Vṛtra, and the gods obliged them by freeing them.

171 adharacīṇam akṛṣṇod apām āpaḥ
Nature of the waters released by Indra and other gods

The waters released by Indra after the slaughter of the dragon Vṛtra might be either river or rain waters. We have the following evidence with regard to the release of the seven rivers\textsuperscript{172} by Indra:

I. 32. 12: "You released the seven rivers to flow".\textsuperscript{173}

II. 12. 3: "Who, after slaying Ahi, released the seven rivers".\textsuperscript{174}

II. 12. 12: "Who ... released the seven rivers to flow".\textsuperscript{175}

IV. 28. 1 (= X. 67. 12): "He slew Ahi (and) let flow the seven rivers".\textsuperscript{176}

The gods are recorded to have released the rivers (Sindhus):

IV. 42. 7: "You are known as the slayer of Vṛtras, you, Indra, released the rivers to flow".\textsuperscript{177}

I. 93. 5: "Both of you, Agni and Soma, have redeemed the tightly detained rivers from disgrace and infamy".\textsuperscript{178}

\textsuperscript{172} These seven rivers must refer to those of the Punjab region. They are the Indus, Vitastā (modern Jhelum), Asiknī (Chenab), Paruṣṇī (Ravi), Vipāsī (Beas) and Śūtudrī (Sutlej). There is some controversy with regard to the identification of the seventh river. Max Müller (HASL, p.12) thought it was Sarasvatī; according to Ludwig, Lassen and Whitney (as quoted by A.D. Pusalker in The Vedic Age, pp.243-4), it was Kubhā. We think, however, that the seventh river must have been Sarasvatī, because she is styled "the mother of the rivers, the seventh" in VII. 36. 6, which evidence seems to be conclusive. See, in this connection, M.A. Stein, "On Some River names in the Rigveda" in JRAS, 1917, pp.91-9; A.C. Woolner, "The Rigveda and the Punjab" in BSOAS, vol.6, pp.549-54.

\textsuperscript{173} āvāṣījāḥ sārtave saptā śīndhūn

\textsuperscript{174} yō hatvāhim āriṇāt saptā śīndhūn

\textsuperscript{175} yāḥ ... avāṣījat sārtave saptā śīndhūn

\textsuperscript{176} āhann āhim āriṇāt saptā śīndhūn (= X. 67. 12).

\textsuperscript{177} tvāṃ vṛtrāṇi śṛṇviṣe jaghávan tvām vṛtā āriṇā indra śīndhūn

\textsuperscript{178} yuvāṃ śīndhūmr abhisaster avadyād āgniḥsomāv āmuṇcatam gṛbhitān
II. 15. 6: "With his greatness, he released the river in the north". 179

IV. 17. 1: "After having slain Vṛtra with sāvas (might) you let loose the rivers swallowed up by Ahi". 180

IV. 18. 7: "My son released these rivers, after he killed Vṛtra with the great weapon". 181

IV. 19. 8: "Many a morning and autumn, he released the rivers after slaying Vṛtra". 182

IV. 22. 6: "Out of fear for you, O manly valiant, the rivers quickly rushed forth". 183

VIII. 96. 18: "You released the imprisoned rivers; you won the waters, whose master was the Dāsa". 184

VIII. 100. 12: "Let us (Indra and Viṣṇu) slay Vṛtra and free the rivers. Set free, let them flow on Indra's impulsion". 185

The gods are also recorded to have released the rivers (Nadīs):-

II. 19. 2: "As the refreshing rivers hastened (towards the sea), like birds to their nests". 186

179 sōdañcām śindhum ariṇān mahitvā
180 tvāṁ vṛtrāṁ sāvasā jaghanānt srjāḥ śindhūmr āhina jagrasānān. The last idea also appears in X. 111. 9.
181 mamaitān putrō māhata vadhēna vṛtrāṁ jāghanvāṁ arṣjad vī śindhūn
182 pūrvir uṣāsaḥ sarādaś ca gūrtā vṛtrāṁ jāghanvāṁ arṣjad vī śindhūn
183 ādhā ha tvād vrṣamaṇo bhiyānāḥ prā śindhāvo jávasā cakramanta
184 tvāṁ śindhūmr arṣjas tastabhānāṁ tvām apō ajayo dāsāpatniḥ
185 hānāva vṛtrāṁ riṇācāva śindhūn īndraśya yantu prasāve vīśṛṣṭāḥ
186 prá yād vāyo nā svāsārāny ācchā prāyāmśi ca nadināṁ cākravanta. The expression prāyamśi nadināṁ literally means "the refreshments of the rivers".
VI. 30, 3: "Today as always endures this work of rivers, that you, Indra, ploughed up their path".  

VI. 72, 3: "You (Indra and Soma) set the river floods in motion".

The waters were released so that they might flow to the sea:—

I. 32, 2: "The waters flowed quickly to the sea as lowing cows (go to their calves)".

II. 19, 3: "The mighty Indra, the slayer of Ahi, impelled the flood of waters to the sea".

VI. 17, 12: "The great (and) enclosed stream of the waters of the rivers, which was surrounded (by Vṛtra), you released (for flowing); you make them flow on their way, Indra, hurrying down to the sea".

VI. 30, 4: "You slew Ahi, who lay around the waters; you let loose the waters to flow to the sea".

VIII. 6, 13: "When his anger fumed, he smashed Vṛtra limb by limb (then) he sent the waters to the sea".

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187 adyā cin nú cit tād ápo nadínām yād ābhyo árado gātum indra
188 prāṁśy airayatām nadínām
189 For the Vedic Indians' knowledge of the sea, see Appendix A.
190 vāśrā iva dhenávah syándamána āñjaḥ samudrám áva jagmur ápaḥ
191 sa máhina índro árṇo apáṃ prārayad ahihácchā samudrám
192 a keśo do máhi vṛtām nadínām pārīśhitam āṣṛja úrmím apáṃ
tāsāmánu pravata indra pánthām prārdayo nīcīr apásah samudrám
193 áhann áhim pārīśayānām árṇo 'vāsṛjо apó ácchā samudrám
194 yād asya manyúr ádhvānidd ví vṛtrām pārvāsó rujān
apáḥ samudrám āirayat
VIII. 76. 3: "He released the waters to the sea".  

After slaying Ahi-Vṛtra, Indra is recorded to have made free the courses of rivers:-

II. 13. 5: "You, slayer of Ahi, made free the paths of the streams".  

III. 33. 7: "The waters flowed seeking their course".  

IV. 19. 2: "You ploughed out the all-feeding courses (of the rivers)".

Besides river water, rain water also must have been supposed to be engulfed by Vṛtra, for Indra is recorded to have released the waters so that they might flow on earth: "Indra broached the encompassed, confined floods, for flowing on earth".

That the waters released by Indra were in some cases rain is clear in the following passages where we have reference to their flowing downwards, that is, to the earth:-

II. 17. 5: "He ordained the downward rushing of the waters".  

VIII. 32. 25: "Who cleaved the receptacle of waters and let the streams flow downwards".

X. 133. 2: "You let flow the streams downwards; you slew Ahi".

195 srjánt śamudriyā apaḥ  
196 dhaūtinām ahihann āriṇak pathaḥ  
197 āyann āpō 'yanam ichāmānāḥ  
198 prā vartanir arado viśvādhenāḥ  
199 pāriṣṭhitā atṛpad badbadhānāḥ sīrāṅdram ērāvātava prāthivyā, RV, IV. 19. 8.  
200 See fn.171.  
201 yā udnāḥ phaligāḥ bhinān nyāk śindhūmr avāṣṛjat  
202 tvāṁ śindhūmr āvāṣṛjo 'dharāco āhann āhim
The waters then were ordinary rain or river waters supposed to have been released by Indra. We are, however, not in a position to attach any symbolic-cosmogonic significance\textsuperscript{203} to them in the manner done by Buschardt. He thought that the release of the waters symbolised "the return of life".\textsuperscript{204}

He attached primary importance to RV X. 104. 9, which runs thus:

\begin{quote}
apó mahi̱r abhisaster amuñcó 'jāgar āsv ādhi devā ēkaḥ

indra yāś tvām vṛtratūrye cakārtha tābhūr viśvāyūs
tanvāṃ pupuṣyāḥ
\end{quote}

Buschardt translated the passage thus: "You freed the great waters from damnation, as the sole god you kept watch over them, 0 Indra. By those which you \textbf{created} during the Vṛtra fight you shall be in the possession of all life forces (and by them you will) make your body to flourish".\textsuperscript{205}

Buschardt went on to remark, "In the last passage it is implied that to regain the waters from the demon is the same as to create them. This shows what one must understand by the creation which occurs in the cult: to defeat the demon, drive away the forces which ruin life, is the same as creating life, i.e., to confirm it in its entirety".\textsuperscript{206}

In our opinion the passage should be interpreted as follows: "You freed the great waters from disgrace; as the sole god, you kept watch over them, By them, which you, Indra, made (to flow to the earth) in the Vṛtra fight, you nourish (your) life (\textit{tanvāṃ} literally means 'body') perpetual". This is a simple passage which emphasises the importance of Indra's freeing the

\textsuperscript{203} The cosmogonic significance of the release of the waters is dealt with in the next section (E).

\textsuperscript{204} Buschardt, \textit{Vṛtra}, p.95.

\textsuperscript{205} Buschardt, ibid., p.97.

\textsuperscript{206} Buschardt, ibid., p.97.
waters from Vṛtra. Indra saved them from disgrace by freeing them and naturally this is looked upon as a grand accomplishment on the part of Indra. In the previous passage we have the information that Indra found ninety nine streams "for gods and men". Indra did not, at least in the passage under consideration, create the waters, he found them, he rediscovered them for gods and men. This was quite natural, for Vṛtra engulfed them and thereby had disgraced them and Indra released them and freed them from disgrace.

According to Hillebrandt, Vṛtra was the winter demon, and Indra the sun god. Indra killed Vṛtra, who withheld the waters in the form of ice giants, and let them flow in the spring. The waters released by Indra were the waters of the riverine system of the north-west of India.

Hillebrandt adduced the following reasons for his theory:

1. Hillebrandt thought that the season during which Vṛtra withheld the streams could not be the summer, because the glaciers of the mountains melt in summer and thus the streams are not dry but filled with water. Hence this season must be the winter season when Vṛtra withheld the waters. 207

2. Vṛtra never withheld the rains, nor ponds or lakes, but "die Ströme und speziell "die sieben Ströme". 208

3. Vṛtra's activity could not have taken place during the rainy season. If we try to show that Indra placed the sun in the sky after the destruction of Vṛtra, or take into consideration Vṛtra's epithet, svāvṛṣṭi, "so stünde diese Deutung so im Widerspruch mit allen anderen Stellen und mit der

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208 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.164.
tatsächlichen Bedeutung der Regenzeit, dass man auf sie nur vorübergehend verfallen kann".

(4) In some passages of the RV, Vṛtra is recorded as sleeping and Indra awakened him by his thunderbolt which "erinnert an den "Winterschlaf" der Natur".

(5) Among the associates of Vṛtra, Hillebrandt referred to Arbuda and quoted RV VIII. 32. 26, where we have himenāavidhyad ārbudam. Hillebrandt accepted Ludwig's translation of himena as ""mit Winterkälte"", which, according to Hillebrandt, shows that Arbuda was a demon of the winter season.

(6) Hillebrandt referred to Indra's winning the sun, which must have taken place during the time of the winter solstice. In this connection Hillebrandt referred to the two expressions, apām upāsthe ("in the womb of the waters") and tāmāsi and the flight of Agni (that is, the sun) in the waters. This flight of Agni in the waters must have taken place during the dark time of the year, characterised by short days. During the end of

209
Hillebrandt, ibid., p.164.

210
Hillebrandt, ibid., p.167.

211
Hillebrandt, ibid., p.182.

212
Hillebrandt, ibid., p.182 ff.

213
In his Vedische Mythologie, vol.I, pp.150-3, Hillebrandt discussed the significance of these two terms, apām upāsthe (RV, VI. 8. 4) and tāmāsi (RV, VI. 9. 7) where Agni was supposed to have stayed. Hillebrandt thought that the two terms in the above two verses are used as synonyms (p.152). The flight of Agni in the waters (Hillebrandt quoted here RV, I. 146. 4 and I. 117. 5; see his fn.2 in p.152) signifies the same thing. Agni in the waters is sought by the gods and thus Agni is the sacrificial fire, the Hotr, that is the sun. The disappearance of the sun in the waters is understandable in a tropical country with rainy season, but it is more likely "dass bei tamās sich eine Erinnerung an ältere Zeiten unter einem andern Himmel fortgeerbt hat und die Wintersonnenwende ursprünglich damit gemeint war" (p.153).
the year, the Manes found the light,214 drove the cows from the stalls and
Sūrya and Agni come back together with U̇sas, who is not the morning of any
day, but the morning of the new year.215 "Es ist das Ende des Pitṛyāṇa,
das ein Teil der der U̇sas gewidmeten Lieder begrüsst und auch die indische
Welt noch als Wiederkehr der Götterzeit ansieht".216 The death of Vṛtra,
who was a winter giant and was connected always with tamas and āpaḥ,
symbolised the passage from Pitṛyāṇa to Devyāṇa, that is, that from the
winter to summer. The gods, who cheered Indra because of his Vṛtra-slaughter,
did not do it because he chased away the dark rain time, for the Manes are
active during this time; they did it because it is the start of Devyāṇa and
the rebirth of the sun.217

214 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.183; see also ibid., vol.I, pp.32-5.
215 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.183; see also ibid., vol.I, p.28 ff.
217 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.184. Devyāṇa means "the path of the gods", while
Pitṛyāṇa means "the path of the Manes". The former in the RV refers to the
path by which the sacrifice of a man is born to the gods: antar vidvā
ādhvano devayāṇān atandro dutó abhavo havirvāt (I. 72. 7), "You (Agni) were
the unwearied herald, the bearer of the oblation, one who knows the way
frequented by the gods"; sugaṇ pathāḥ kṛṣṇui devayāṇān vāhā havānyā
sumanasyāmānāḥ (X. 51. 5), "Make the paths, which lead to the gods, easy;
carry the oblations of those who are friendly (i.e., who are inclined to
offer)". It also signifies the path by which gods come down to the earth,
especially to the place of sacrifice. Thus Āśvins are requested to come to the
place of sacrifice by the god-frequented paths (I, 183, 6 and III, 58,
5), or Vāja, R̄bhuśan and other gods are requested to do the same (IV, 37,
1), or Agni is requested to bring Aramati ("Der rechte Sinn, die gemässe
Gesinnung"; Gonda, Die Religionen Indiens, vol.I, p.98) to the place of
sacrifice by the god-frequented paths (V, 43. 6). The term Pitṛyāṇa occurs
just once in the RV in which Agni is implored to shine along the fathers' pathway, pāṇthāṃ anu pravidiyān pitṛyāṇāṁ dyumād agne samidhānō ví bhāhi (X.
2, 7). The conception that the soul goes to the gods by the Devyāṇa is of
later origin, at least not Ṛgvedic and perhaps Upaniṣadic. By the Pitṛyāṇa
the soul travels to the moon (in the Chandogya Upaniṣad, V. 10, 4, however,
the moon is common to both Devyāṇa and Pitṛyāṇa). But these details are
late. Nor are the two words associated in the Vedas with the idea of
transmigration which concept is also late. For a detailed discussion, see
Keith, RPCU (HOS, vol.32), p.570 ff., especially pp.575-6; P.V. Kane, History
With regard to Indra being a sun god, Hillebrandt adduced the following reasons:—

(1) Hillebrandt drew our attention to the freeing of the cows by Indra. These red cows are closely associated with Uśas who is not the dawn of any ordinary day but is symbolical of the new light from the winter night. Hillebrandt remarked that here we are dealing with "einem altererbten Bilde", according to which "Die Macht des Winters das Vieh in feste Ställe sperrete", and this anciently inherited picture "in anderem Klima in der Sage von der Befreiung der Rinder des Uśas sich forterhielt". Indra's conception started with the sun, and so his place as the freer of cows becomes understandable, even when his character as the sun god began to diminish. "Von dem Sonnengott, der mit erstarkender Kraft um die Jahreswende das Licht zurückführt, mochte die Sage, dass Indra den Felsenstall gesprengt und die Rinder befreit habe, ausgehen".

(2) In the AV (III. 10. 12) Ekaśṭaka, i.e. the new year's night, is said to be Indra's mother, which shows that Indra was the god of the summer time.

(3) Hillebrandt pointed out that the midday libation in the ritual belongs especially to Indra. With this libation, Indra, the sun god, is not only pushed to the zenith of the day, but also of the year, for the agniśțoma

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218 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.177.
219 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.177.
220 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.177.
221 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.177.
222 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.177. On Ekaśṭaka, see also vol.I, pp.29-30.
223 Hillebrandt, ibid., vol.II, p.188.
ekāha symbolises the whole year. The summer means the height of the reign of the sun god and significantly enough the Brāhmaṇas ascribe summer to Indra, though the ritual of inviting Indra during the midday libation is based upon Ṛgvedic tradition. 224

We are, however, not in a position to accept Hillebrandt's views for the following reasons:

(1) Hillebrandt attached special importance to the seven rivers which were supposed to have been withheld by Vṛtra. But, besides the seven rivers, Vṛtra also withheld the waters and that is why the motive of the freeing of the waters is always in the foreground - a fact which was all but ignored by Hillebrandt. As for the time when Vṛtra withheld the rivers (and waters), Hillebrandt's views are unacceptable to us. Anybody conversant with the climatic condition of India knows that it is summer, and not spring, which is characterised by the drying up of the rivers and absence of rain - when it may seem as if the whole of vegetal life is at a standstill. Thus, if we are at all to postulate a season when the waters or rivers were supposedly withheld by Vṛtra, we must opt for summer. The highly significant information contained in ṚV V. 32. 1 that Indra released "the springs obstructed in their (proper) seasons", escaped Hillebrandt's notice. This is a highly significant verse which shows that the Indians were dependent on seasonal rainfall even at such an early age. We contend that the imprisonment of the waters in this passage refers to a time when the whole earth seemed to be parched up; and in the Indian context this can only happen at the height of summer and the beginning of the rainy season.

(2) Vṛtra did withhold the rains, otherwise the epithet, svāvṛṣṭi ("one who appropriated the rain for himself", ṚV I. 52. 5 and 14) would not have

224 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.191; see also, vol.I, p.492 ff. .
been applied to Vṛtra at all. Hillebrandt's rejection of this important evidence is arbitrary.

(3) Admittedly in many passages of the RV Vṛtra is portrayed as sleeping in or around the waters. But it is not even indirectly hinted that, together with Vṛtra, the whole nature slept. The whole tenor of the description speaks of Vṛtra being a drought demon. The withheld waters seemed to be immobile or motionless, that is, they were not falling upon the earth in the form of fertilizing rain; or the river beds were dried up and so the poets remark that Vṛtra is sleeping surrounding them. This is nothing but simple poetic imagery twisted by Hillebrandt to represent the sleep of nature, which does not convince us.

(4) In our portrayal of the character of Arbuda, we have shown that he was one of those innumerable drought demons who obstructed the waters (especially in X, 67, 12). By killing him Indra released the waters. 225

(5) Hillebrandt's theory on Agni's (i.e., the sun's) flight in the waters is not convincing. There is no other convincing argument on the basis of which we can say that Agni required to be renewed specially at the winter solstice. It is rather extraordinary that such an important ritual of regeneration, according to Hillebrandt's view, left no other trace in other ritual.

(6) About Hillebrandt's view of the end of the Pitṛyāna and the beginning of the Devayāna, suffice it to say that the RV does not mention at all when the former ends and the latter begins. Moreover, these two concepts are not at all developed in the RV. 226

225
See supra, pp.11-2.

226
See fn.217 for Deva- and Pitṛyāna.
(7) The character of Uṣas as the new year's dawn is very artificially drawn. As Oldenberg remarked, "Wenn Lieder an die Morgenröte, wie so leicht verständlich, die Somafeier Agniṣṭoma eröffnen und für diese Feier der Frühling, die erste Jahreszeit, vorgeschrieben wird, ist es doch ein mehr als kühner Schluss, danach die Uṣashymnen als "Neujahrslieder" aufzufassen".228

(8) As regards Indra being originally a sun god, the theory is utterly unconvincing. Even if we accept that in the myth of the freeing of the cows we are dealing with an anciently inherited mythical motif, even if we accept that the Aryans came from a country where wintry conditions prevailed throughout the year, and thus the year became synonymous with winter, still they fail to convince us that Indra was the sun god of the Ṛgvedic age. There is no paucity of sun gods in the RV. What is the need of artificially creating another sun god in Indra?

(9) The ekāṭakā ceremony is definitely associated with the new year's night and Indra is her son. But that does not necessarily imply that Indra is a sun god in the RV.

(10) We need not attach much importance to the information that the midday libation belongs to Indra, for in this libation Indra is associated with the Maruts, who should also, if we accept Hillebrandt's theory, be regarded as the sun god, which is absurd. Moreover, there is no uniformity in the statement of the Brāhmaṇas. For example, we are also informed by SB, IV. 3. 5. 1 that "the midday libation (belongs) to the Rudras exclusively", who,

227 Kuiper, III, vol. IV, p.223 ff., has tried to support this theory of Hillebrandt with some new arguments and evidence.
228 Oldenberg, ORD, p.243, fn.1.
229 N.K. Dutt, Aryанизation of India, pp.17-8.
230 For the details of the ceremony, see Hillebrandt, RL, pp.6-7; and pp.94-6.
then, according to Hillebrandt's argument, should also be regarded as the sun god, which is again untenable.

Kosambi thought that the waters released by Indra must be those dammed up by the pre-Aryans and which they needed for their agriculture. Kosambi remarked, "... the pre Aryan method of agriculture depended upon natural floods and flooding the lands on the banks of smaller rivers by means of seasonal (RV, V. 32. 2) dams (without regular masonry) to obtain the fertilizing deposit of silt to be stirred by the harvest. The Aryans shattered this dam system, thereby ruining the agriculture of the region...". Kosambi referred to RV II. 15. 8, "He (Indra) removed the artificial barriers [of Vala]", which he thought, strengthened his theory that these waters were really dammed up by the pre-Aryans.

We are, however, not convinced by Kosambi's arguments. Firstly, the term ródhāmśi (II. 15. 8) may mean "barrings" or "preventings" and not "dams" or "ramparts". Secondly, it is not safe to build up a theory on the basis of a single piece of evidence.

We may thus conclude that the waters released by Indra refer to ordinary rain or river waters which were supposed to be imprisoned by the demonic power of resistance.

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Kosambi, An Introduction to the Study of Indian History, p.70.
Vṛtra-slaughter and Creation

There are clear references to Indra's cosmogonic acts after the slaughter of Vṛtra, in which Indra is variously recorded to have sundered the heaven and earth or propped up the two worlds. We may quote the following examples:-

V. 29. 4: "Then he propped both the worlds (and separated them) wide apart. Although he disguised himself, he struck the wild animal with terror". 232

V. 31. 6: "When you, the powerful, separated both the world-halves". 233

VII. 23. 3: "Indra with his greatness pushed asunder both the world-halves, as he slew the irrestrible Vṛtras". 234

VIII. 89. 5: "As you, the foremost, the richly-bestowing were born for Vṛtra-slaying, then you spread the earth and supported the heaven". 235

Among his cosmogonic acts after the Vṛtra-slaughter should be included his placing the sun in the sky:-

I. 32. 4: "You then produced the sun, heaven and the dawn". 236

I. 51. 4: "As you, Indra, killed Vṛtra with power, you raised the sun in heaven to be seen". 237

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232 ad rōdasī vitaram ví škabhāyat saṅvivyānāś cīd bhiyāse mrgām kaḥ
233 saktivo yād vibhāra rōdasī ubhē
dūḥiṣṭa syā rōdasī mahitvendrō vṛtrāṇy āpratī jāghanvān
234 vā jāyathā apūrvya māghavan vṛtrahātyāya
taḥ pṛthivīm aprathayas tād astabhīna utā dyām
235 āt sūryam janāyan dyām uśasam
236 vṛtram yād indra śāvasāvādhīr āhim ād īt sūryam divy ārohayo drṣē
II. 19. 3: "He produced the sun". 238

III. 39. 5: "It is true, Indra with the ten Daśagvas found the sun who abode in darkness". 239

Indra also created the dawn in the following passages:\-

II. 12. 7: "Who generated the sun and the dawn". 240

III. 31. 15: "Indra, shining together with the heroes, generated the sun (and) the dawn". 241

III. 32. 8: "He generated the sun and the dawn". 242

In our opinion, the release of the sun and the creation of the dawn and the separation of heaven and earth are secondary developments. The primary importance was attached to the release of the waters by Indra and that is why the motif of the release of the waters is always in the foreground in the Indra-Vṛtra conflict in the RV. We hold that the creation motif in the Indra-Vṛtra legend is a peculiarly Indian development, for it is not attributed to Tištrya, who is responsible for the release of the waters in the Avesta.

In the Avesta the star Tištrya fought against the demon of drought, Apaōša, 243 and released the waters, which "seems to be a refacimento of the old storm myths, which have been in so far renewed as the role of the hero

238 ajanayat sūryam
239 satyāṁ tād īndro daśābhīr daśagvaiḥ sūryāṁ viveda tāmasi kṣiyāntam
240 yāḥ sūryaṁ yā uṣāsām jajāna
241 īndro nībhīr ajanad dīdyānāḥ sākāṁ sūryam uṣāsam
242 jajāna sūryam uṣāsam
243 The older form of Apaōša is Apavṛta, which means "he who retains the waters". See M.J. Dresden's "Mythology of Ancient Iran" in Mythologies of the Ancient World ed. by S.N. Kramer, pp.353-4.
in the original myth has been transferred to a star". That Tistrya is associated with the rain would be clear from the following evidence:–

1. In the Tir Yast, Ahura Mazda declares in the beginning: "I will sacrifice unto the star, Tistrya, that gives the fields their share (of waters)". By field is presumably meant the arable land.

2. In various places of the Yast, Tistrya is styled "rain-producing".

3. The defeat of Apaoṣa resulted in the release of the waters, just as in the Indra-Vṛtra legend. Tistrya declares after defeating Apaoṣa: "Heil geschah, o ihr Länder, eure Wassergräben werden ungehindert anschwellen zu den Getreidefeldern, die reichlich Körner bringen, und zu den Weiden, die wenig Körner bringen, und zur Körperwelt".

4. The imprisonment of the waters was also attributed to the machinations of the Pairikās that Angra Manyus flung to stop all the rain-producing stars. But Tistrya defeated them too and the poet declares: "Then the wind blows the clouds forward, bearing the waters of fertility, so that the friendly showers spread wide over, they spread helpingly and friendly over the seven Karśvares".

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244 J. Darmesteter's translation of the Avesta in SBE, vol.XXIII, p.92. The Tir Yašt will be referred to as Yašt VIII henceforward.

245 Yašt VIII. 1.

246 Yašt VIII. 4, 39 and 45. In translating this passage we have followed Lommel's translation of the Tištar Yašt in Die Yasti's des Awesta, p.46 ff.. The translation also contains a good introduction to the whole subject.

247 Yašt VIII. 29. This is Lommel's translation of the relevant passage (ibid. p.53).

248 The Pairikās (= Pahlavi parīk = modern Persian perī) refer to a class of supernatural enchantresses. Their influence is exerted upon earth, water, cattle and vegetation. Ahriman employs them to bewitch stars in order to prevent rain. Meteoric showers are also attributed to them. For details see A.V. William Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, pp.104-5.

249 Yašt VIII. 40. Karśvares refers to the seven worlds of the Avestic mythology
Finally, we should take into consideration the evidence of another passage where the poet declares that with the rise of Tištrya "the waters flow down from the sea Vourukasa, mother like, friendly and healing".

Thus we conclude that in early Iranian mythology the released waters were ordinary rain water which was retained by various demons; and after killing these the star Tištrya let them loose, just as, in the RV, Indra released the waters after killing Vṛtra. The waters are described as "mother like, friendly and healing" - another instance of correspondence between the Indian and Avestic religion.

But this account becomes complicated if we take into consideration the evidence of the Bundahiš, which means "The Original Creation", a Pahlavi text. An account of the conflict between Tištar and Apāōš is to be found in this text as well. For a proper understanding of the myth we should take into consideration the context in which it appears.

From the very beginning, as the Bundahiš informs us, the good spirit, Aūharmazd was "supreme in omiscence and goodness", while the evil spirit

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249 contd
(SBE, vol.IV, p.l ix, fn.4). Compare the seven lokas of the Indian mythology. 250
Vourukasa may be the mythical ocean surrounding the world, or the atmospheric sea. Haug, Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis, pp.197-8.
251 Yasti VIII. 47.
254 Bundahiš, I. 2; West, SBE, vol.V, p.3. (The following quotations are from West's translation of the Bundahiš in SBE, vol.V).
Aharman steeped "in darkness, with backward understanding and desire for destruction, was in the abyss". Both of them produced their own creatures, but these creatures "remained three thousand years in a spiritual state, so that they were unthinking and unmoving, with intangible bodies". But then Aharman began his opposition to Ahūharmazd, for he knew that his power would last only for nine thousand years, according to a covenant agreed upon by the two, and that his evil power would be effective during the middle three thousand. But Ahūharmazd confounded him even during these years by uttering a sacred formula, while he created angels like Vohuman ("good thought or mind"), the sun, the moon, and stars like Tīstar. Aharman also created evil beings like Mitōkht ("falsehood") and Akōman ("evil thought or mind"). Then, at the end of the period, Aharman, together with the demons he produced, rushed upon the creation of Ahūharmazd. The demons carried on war against six classes of creation, the sky, water, earth, plants, animals, represented by the primeval ox, and mankind, represented by Gāyōmard. It is in this context that we are informed that

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255 Ibid., I. 3.
256 Ibid., I. 8.
257 Ibid., I. 17-20.
258 Ibid., I. 21. On the significance of sacred formula or words, see Gonda’s "The Indian Mantra" in ORIENS, vol.16, pp.244-97; on the Pahlavi formula see West, op.cit., p.8, fn.1.
259 Ibid., I. 23; On Vohuman, see Zaehner, op.cit., pp.46-50, 54.
260 Ibid., II. 1.
261 Ibid., II. 7.
262 Ibid., I. 24.
263 Ibid., III. 10-27; on Gāyōmard see Dresden, op.cit., pp.342-3.
the demon Apāoš was opposed to the star Tištar. At first Tištar was not successful. Then Aūharmazd gave him strength and power with which he overcame the demon. Thus far the account of Bundahiš agrees with that of the Tīr Yāšt. But they differ in important details.

We are informed that the star Tištar was in Cancer and had the characteristics of a producer of rain. He was converted into three forms, those of a man, a horse and a bull, and in "each form he produced rain ten days and nights", and "the noxious creatures on the earth being all killed by the rain, went into the holes of the earth". The wind spirit then stirred up the wind so that the waters might not be contaminated. But the waters were swept away to the borders of the earth and thus was the ocean founded. Now the noxious creatures remained in the earth and their venom and stench were mingled with the earth. Then Tištar went to the ocean in the form of a white horse with long hoofs "in order to carry that poison away from the earth". There he met Apāoš and in his second attempt defeated him. Then Tištar "seized upon the waters and made it rain most prodigiously". For ten days and nights it rained, and the venom of the noxious creatures mixed up with the waters and became salty. Then follows a description of how the wind restrained the waters "on various sides of the

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264 Bundahiš, VII. 1.
265 Ibid., VII. 2.
266 Ibid., VII. 4; West, op.cit., p.26.
267 Ibid., VII. 5; West, ibid., p.26.
268 Ibid., VII. 6; West, ibid., p.27.
269 Ibid., VII. 11; West, ibid., p.28.
270 Ibid., VII. 13.
earth", 271 and thus arose the three great seas, the twenty three small seas, the lakes and the rivers. 272

Thus the Bundahiš account is coated with a veneer of cosmology. In the original Avestic account, the defeat of the demon resulted in the release of fertilizing waters on the earth, while in the Bundahiš, it resulted in rainfall and ultimately in the formation of the seas, lakes and rivers. While in the older Avestic account the creation of the oceans etc, does not figure at all, in the later account of the Bundahiš the legend assumes a cosmogonic significance. Here we also should not lose sight of another factor - the importance of the waters in the two myths. In both myths, the release of the waters is in the foreground.

The Hittites also possessed a legend of the conflict between the weather god and the dragon Illuyankas: 273 "In the older version, the storm god is defeated by the dragon, Illuyankas. He appeals to the assembly of gods for help, and the goddess Inaras prepares a trap for the dragon. She fills many vessels with wine and various kinds of drinks, and invites a man named Hupasiyas to help her. He agrees to do so on condition that she will sleep with him. Accordingly she allows him to sleep with her; then she hides him near the dragon's lair, beautifies herself, and entices the dragon to come out with his children. They drink all the vessels dry, and are unable to return to their den. Then Hupasiyas comes out of his hiding-place, binds

271 Ibid., VII. 14.
272 Ibid., VII. 14-18.
the dragon with a rope, and the storm god comes out with the rest of the gods and kills the dragon Illuyankas". 274

This myth used to be recited at the annual Purulli 275 festival of the Hittites. It was celebrated, as we are informed by an inscription of Killas, 276 the priest of the high god of Nerik, only when the prayers for the fertility of the earth were duly answered by the god – when the earth again became fertile. That it was associated with rainfall is apparent from the opening line of the myth:–

"May the land thrive, increase!
May the land be blest with peace!" 277

Gaster comments on these lines thus: "That the reference is more particularly to rainfall is suggested by the precise parallelism of the phrase "the land thrives" (utne mai) and "rains occur" (heyus kisanta) in another Hittite text". 278

After killing the dragon, Inaras put the control of the subterranean waters in the hands of the reigning king of Nerik who was strong enough to wield it beneficiently.

An analysis of the above three myths reveals the following common points:–

274 Hooke, op.cit., p.98, thus summarises the myth.
275 Its earlier form was Vuruli, and in the Hattic language the word vur meant earth. The Purulli or Vuruli was "the festival of the Earth" – which is a seasonal celebration for regulating the subterranean waters and rainfall. See Gastner, op.cit., p.245.
276 Albrecht Goetze translated the inscription in ANET, pp.125-6.
277 Gaster, op.cit., p.256.
278 Gaster, op.cit., p.256, fn.1.
(1) The three systems had three heroes, Indra, Tištrya (Tištar) and the Hittite weather god, who were opposed to the activities of the demons, Ahi-Vytra, Apaoša (Apâos) and Illuyankas, respectively.

(2) The cause of the conflict is explicitly said to be the imprisonment of the life-giving waters in the Rgvedic and Avestic myths. Though this is not explicitly stated in the Hittite version, we can infer from indirect evidence, like the placing of the subterranean waters in the control of the king, that in the Hittite system too the demon was responsible at least for mismanaging the waters, if not for actually withholding them.

(3) The release of the waters is common in the Rgvedic and Avestic systems, while in the Hittite myth, though it is not directly referred to, we may infer it from the indirect reference quoted in (2).

We must not, however, overlook the following dissimilarities in the three systems:-

(1) In the Rgvedic myth, the hero god Indra is instrumental in bringing about the discomfiture of the demon; in the Avesta, this is attributed to the star Tištrya (Tištar); while in the Hittite myth, though the weather god slaughtered the demon, the goddess Inaras played a vital role in the story.

(2) The release of the waters was sometimes associated with the release of the sun and Ušas and with the separation of the heaven and earth in the Rgvedic myth and this must be a later Vedic accretion. In the earlier Avestic version of the myth the defeat of the demon led to the release of the waters, while in the later Pahlavi tradition it led to the formation of the seas, lakes and rivers. In the Hittite myth, however, the defeat of the demon was not associated with any cosmogonical features.

Despite these important variations in detail, we may say that the dominant idea of the slaughter of the dragon and the consequent release of the waters was Indo-European. In the course of the migration of the
Indo-European people, however, this fundamental Indo-European motif was embellished and transformed by subsidiary traits and motifs. In appropriating these secondary features, the myths possibly borrowed from a vast mass of floating tales. In connection with these secondary accretions we should take into consideration another more ancient story of the slaughter of the dragon, that is, that of Tiamat in the Babylonian Epic of Creation. We shall discuss it in the next section.

The Enuma Elish starts with a description of the protozoic condition of the cosmos. Nothing existed at that time excepting Apsu, the sweet water ocean and Tiamat, the salt water ocean. Then the gods were formed within them. The first pair, Lahmu and Lahamu, give birth to Anshar and Kishar. From them is born Anu, who begets N adamah, another name of Ea (Dun), the god of the earth and water. These younger gods disturb Apsu and Tiamat by their din and bustle. They take counsel with Mummu, the vixen of Apsu. Tiamat is reluctant to destroy "that which we have built", but Apsu and Mummu devise a plan to destroy the gods. When the plan is revealed to the gods, they become speechless, but Ea, the sagacious god, devises a

281 Enuma Elish ("When on high") are the opening words of the Babylonian Epic of Creation. For a full translation of the epic, see E.A. Speiser, "Akkadian Myths and Epics," in J.B. Pritchard's (ed.) Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, p. 36 ff. We have followed Speiser's translation in this section. This translation is reproduced up to line 122 of Tablet VI in W.J. Mannich and J.W. Sedlar's (ed.) The Origins of Civilization, p. 5 ff.

280 Anshar and Kishar mean "host of heaven" and "host of earth", or they were perhaps the male and female creative spirits. See S.H. Langdon's Semitic Mythology in Mythology of All Races, Vol. V, ed. by J.A. MacCulloch, p. 257.

282 Mannich and Sedlar, op.cit., p.6, fn.7.

283 Apsu and Tiamat were the first of the gods according to the epic.

284 Speiser, op.cit., p.61.
A Comparative Study of the Marduk-Tiamat Conflict of the Babylonian Enuma Eliš and the Indra-Vṛtra Struggle of the Rgveda

The Babylonian Enuma Eliš, 279 the Genesis Epic, has important parallels to the Indra-Vṛtra legend of the RV. Here we have the defeat of the dragon, Tiamat, by the god, Marduk, and this resulted in the creation of the world and heaven. We shall discuss the Babylonian creation epic in some detail and try to determine its bearing on the Indra-Vṛtra struggle.

The Enuma Eliš starts with a description of the protogenic condition of the cosmos. Nothing existed at that time excepting Apsu, the sweet water ocean and Tiamat, the salt water ocean. Then the gods were formed within them. The first pair, Lahmu and Lahamu, give birth to Anshar and Kishar. 280

From them is born Anu, who begets Nudimmud, another name of Ea (Enki), the god of the earth and water. 281 These younger gods 282 disturb Apsu and Tiamat by their din and bustle. They take counsel with Mummu, the vizier of Apsu. Tiamat is reluctant to destroy "that which we have built", 283 but Apsu and Mummu devise a plan to destroy the gods. When the plan is revealed to the gods, they become speechless, but Ea, the sagacious god, devises a

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281 Mcneill and Sedler, op.cit., p.6, fn.7.

282 Apsu and Tiamat were the first of the gods according to the epic.

283 Speiser, op.cit., p.61.
counter design against them. He makes Apsu sleep, then slays him and binds Mummu. He builds a new chamber for himself and names it "Apsu". In this sacred chamber Damkina, the wife of Ea, gives birth to Marduk. In the meantime, the associates of Tiamat reproach her for remaining idle when Apsu and Mummu were vanquished. Tiamat is incited to action, begets a multitude of monstrous beings and elevates Kingu, her first-born and also her husband, to be the commander-in-chief in their war against the gods.

When Ea comes to know Tiamat's design, he repairs to Anshar for counsel, who suggests that he deal with Tiamat as he dealt with Apsu and Mummu. But Ea is unsuccessful. Then Anu is requested to stand up to Tiamat and calm her down, but in this he too is unsuccessful. Then Anshar proposes that Marduk should be entrusted with the task. On his father's advice, Marduk accepts the task on condition that he be given full authority in the assembly (of gods) and proposes, "Neither recalled nor changed shall be the command of my lips".

Anshar then sends his vizier, Gaga, to Lahmu and Lahamu to inform them of the decision of the gods. Then the gods hold a grand feast and acknowledge the authority of Marduk.

Marduk is proclaimed king of the gods and he starts preparing himself for the great undertaking. His weapons are a bow and arrows, a mace and

284 We are not sure whether Ea is unsuccessful or he refuses to fight Tiamat, for the relevant line of the inscription at this point is lost. See Speiser, op.cit., p.63.
285 According to Thorkild Jacobson, the Mesopotamians conceived their relationships with the divinities by projecting their own political experience upon the sky. See Jacobson, "The Cosmos as a State" in Before Philosophy (originally published as The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, of H. and Mrs H.A. Frankford, John A. Wilson and Thorkild Jacobson), especially pp.140-1.
286 Speiser, op.cit., p.64.
lightning, and he fills his body with a blazing flame. He has a net, which is held at the four corners by the four winds, to enfold Tiamat. He also creates several winds. Then, mounting his storm-chariot, Marduk advances against Tiamat. He challenges her to single combat. He casts his net to enfold Tiamat who opens her mouth to swallow him. But Marduk drives in the evil wind which inflates Tiamat’s body and her mouth remains wide open. Then Marduk releases an arrow which tears her belly and splits her heart. The demon hosts, together with Kingu, are caught in the net while escaping. Marduk takes away from Kingu the Tablets of Fate and fastens them on his breast. Then Marduk splits the body of Tiamat in two: with one half of her body he creates the sky above the earth. He then builds Esharra, the abode of the gods, and makes Anu, Enlil and Ea occupy their places in it.

Marduk then performs various cosmogonic actions like fixing the course of the year and the order of the months by the moon's changes. The planet Jupiter (Nebiru) is placed in charge of the heavenly order.

His next important act is the creation of man. Kingu is thought to be responsible for inciting Tiamat and so he is slain and out of his blood man is created. Service of the gods becomes his function. The gods build a magnificent temple, Esagila, for Marduk. Then at the request of Anu, the fifty great names of Marduk are proclaimed.

287
"He brought forth Imhullu "the evil wind", the Whirlwind, the Hurricane, the Fourfold Wind, the Sevenfold Wind, the Cyclone, the Matchless Wind."
Speiser, ibid., p.66.

288
"It was Kingu who contrived the uprising, and made Tiamat rebel, and joined battle. They bound him, holding him before Ea. They imposed on him his guilt and severed his blood (vessels). Out of his blood they fashioned mankind."
Speiser, ibid., p.68.
Various interpretations of this myth are possible. It is likely though that the climatic condition and geographical location of the country was one of the most important factors in the formulation of the myth. Every spring the two rivers, Euphrates and Tigris, flood the Mesopotamia region and thereby the country reverts to the protogenic chaos before the creation until the god (that is, Marduk) fights these chaotic waters, dries up the land and brings back order into the world. Hence the Babylonian Genesis myths were couched in terms of a conflict with hostile powers personified as the Tiamat dragon.

In an interesting analysis of the Enuma Eliš, S.A. Pallis propounded a ritualistic-cultic interpretation of the myth. The recitation of the Enuma Eliš formed a part of the Babylonian new year festival known as the Akītu. It centres round two cult actions: (1) Marduk's death and (2) Marduk's triumphant procession to the temple of bit akītu where his triumph over evil powers is celebrated, which is followed by the act of creation, which, Pallis thought, is identical with the primitive determination of

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290 The Babylonian Akītu Festival.

291 Also known as Zagmuk. See Pallis, ibid., pp.12-3.

292 Pallis, ibid., p.249.
In the course of the festival, Marduk suddenly disappears. Zarpanitum, his wife, sends a messenger in search of Marduk towards the mountains, while others run about in the streets of Babylon for him. They go to a gate called bab ka-bu-rat where he is found dead, whereupon that (or he), who is responsible for Marduk's death is put to death in a series of symbolic acts. In the meantime, the news of his death is brought to Zarpanitum who starts crying in despair. Marduk's garments and belongings are brought to Bēlit-Uruk and various rites are performed, among which Enuma Eliš is recited in order to bring back strength to the departed. Zarpanitum wipes off the blood from his wounds with wool. On the eighth day of Nisan holy water is fetched to bring back Marduk to life. After various ceremonies he is resuscitated with the help of the waters.

Pallis believed that this whole cult was dramatically represented and associated with a given myth for its text. On the mutual relation between cult and myth, Pallis remarks, "There is no doubt that the cult was the original primary foundation, and that the myth was always the text, of somewhat later origin, corresponding to the cult, to be understood in its first beginnings as the description answering to the action, without any additions, explanations, or any interpretation, whatever". But as soon

293  "The determination of destiny is a positive creation of fruitfulness and plenty, peace and happiness, for the coming year". Pallis, ibid., p.196.

294  Pallis, ibid., p.252 ff.

295  For ritual interpretation of this cult marriage, see Pallis, ibid., p.197 ff.

296  Nisan was the first month of the year in Ancient Babylon.

297  Pallis, ibid., p.254.
as myth passes on to the urban civilization from its pastoral stage, it becomes elaborate and consciously artistic and various modes of explanation are inserted in the myth which, by then, has become partly unintelligible, and thus a cult myth becomes a cult legend. Thus, according to Pallis, the victory of Marduk over the demonic powers and the creation following it "is the determination of destiny", 298 which was the original idea and which, again, in the urban stage, is "replaced by the mechanical determination of destiny, this destiny being then written down on tablets at the assembly of the gods in some definite locality". 299 In this stage, the determination of destiny becomes "an independent ceremony of theological character". 300 This theological ceremony takes place in Esagila and is performed by Marduk aided by Nabu 301 who writes down his words on ""the tablets of destiny"" amid the assembly of the gods, which is clearly a new development of the urban stage. 302

According to the interpretation suggested by Pallis, the cultic act of the subjugation of hostile powers and creation of heaven and earth, fruitfulness and life for the coming year used to take place on the eighth day of Nisan. In all these cult dramas, the reigning king used to play the role of Marduk. 303

298
Pallis, ibid., p.246.

299
Pallis, ibid., p.246.

300
Pallis, ibid., p.296.

301
Nabu was the great god of Borsippa, a neighbouring town of Babylon. Nabu used to come to the city of Babylon in the month of Nisan, in a great procession to celebrate the Babylonian akītu.

302

303
Pallis, ibid., p.216 ff..
While describing the significance of the Marduk-Tiamat conflict, Fallis remarked that, in the pastoral stage man thought himself surrounded by different manas, each having its own special character determined by its "environment". Primitive man thought necessary to enter into communion with these manas, which used to take place only on religious occasions, when man identified himself with the manas surrounding him, like the sun, rain, the particular species of animal on which his life depended, etc. Then followed the culmination - the ritual creation of the conditions of life for the new year, the multiplication of the animals, sufficient rain etc. "The religious drama of the great annual festival is thus a repeated creation and arranging of the cosmos from the beginning".

This primitive ritualistic creation of the cosmos of the hunting stage underwent a change in the agricultural stage when anthropomorphism was introduced. To the tillers of the soil, the sun, rain, wind and storms were most important and their drama centred round "the alternation of the seasons, etc.". Hence in the drama we witness the death of the fertility god and his regeneration and the slaughter of the drought demons who

304 "It is a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shews itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses. This mana is not fixed in anything, and can be conveyed in almost anything; but spirits, whether disembodied souls or supernatural beings, have it and can impart it; and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it, though it may act through the medium of water, or a stone, or a bone" (p.119n). Or, it may also signify "a force altogether distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil, and which it is of the greatest advantage to possess or control" (p.118n). R.H. Codrington, The Melanesians, p.118 and 119 as quoted by R.R. Marett in ERE, vol.8, p.376; on mana, see E. Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (tran. by J.W. Swain), chapters VI and VII.

305 Fallis, op.cit., p.274 ff.

306 Fallis, ibid., p.274.

307 Fallis, ibid., p.294.
threatened fertility in its very essence. In this stage this was ritually enacted with the difference that men enacted the parts of gods, but the central idea of the creation of the cosmos still persisted. Fallis also noted that another important feature of this agricultural drama was the ritual coition of the god and goddess of fertility in the field, which is "of archetypal significance for the happiness, fertility, and prosperity of the whole agricultural community". 308

From the agricultural stage man passes on to the urban stage. In this stage the ceremonies become more and more elaborate, while the ceremony of the creation of the cosmos assumed a new theological garb. 309

The views of Fallis are interesting, but they are not acceptable in their entirety. The ritualistic interpretation of the Marduk-Tiamat myth as propounded by Fallis is only a partial explanation. The beginning of such a myth must have been simpler - when the mode of worship had not become complicated and organised in the form of rituals. We hold that at the beginning when the Sumerians settled in the Euphrates-Tigris river

308
Fallis, ibid., pp.294-5. Fallis styled it as "the Phallos cult".

309
See supra, p.151.

310
Fallis found three stages in the development of the myth, the hunting-pastoral, the agricultural and the urban, about which we are not quite sure. Moreover, we do not think that a highly complex myth, like the Marduk-Tiamat conflict, is susceptible of a single unitary explanation. For example, the manipulation of the priesthood and the gradual increase of the power of the Babylonian king must have been two of the important factors which brought about the development of the myth in later ages. Above all, Fallis failed to take into consideration the importance of the yearly flood of the two rivers in the life of the early Sumerians, which was the most important factor that brought about the origin of the myth.
valley, they were struck by the ferocity of the yearly river floods which threatened the life of the Sumerians and hence these were conceived as the destructive demons in the form of Tiamat, Kingu or Apsu, while the gods were conceived as the benign helpers of the mankind and who were bent upon destroying these demons and thereby bringing about order in the natural world. This must have been simple beginning of the myth. But gradually this simple form of the myth underwent a change and a cosmogonic veneer was given to it—when Tiamat came to symbolise primeval chaos and by killing her, and others of her sort, Marduk created the earth and heaven as also human beings.

Whatever might have been the different factors that led to the origin and development of the Babylonian myth, a comparative study of the Indra-Vṛtra saga of the RV and the Marduk-Tiamat conflict of the Enuma Eliš reveals the following common factors:

1. Both Vṛtra and Tiamat are very intimately associated with the waters.
2. The action of both Vṛtra and Tiamat leads to the extinction of vegetal life, as it were.

311 C. Leonard Woolley, Ur of the Chaldees, pp. 117-8, referred to the tradition that the Sumerians came from the east; and perhaps from a hilly country, because "People living in a mountainous land nearly always associate their religion with the outstanding natural features of that land and worship their gods on 'high places'" (p.118). Woolley found corroboration of it in the building of the Ziggurats ("The Hill of Heaven", or "the Mountain of God", pp.118-9), which might also have been built on raised platforms because of the periodic inundations. See also Woolley's The Sumerians, chap.1, p.1 ff., especially p.6 ff., where he discussed the arrival and early history of the Sumerians in the Mesopotamian region. L. Delaporte, Mesopotamia, The Babylonian and Assyrian Civilization in The History of Civilization series ed. by C.K. Ogden, p.20, remarked that the Sumerians came from the mountainous regions east of the Tigris. A. Moret and G. Davy, From Tribe to Empire in The History of Civilization series ed. by C.K. Ogden, p.200, thought that the Sumerians came from the tablelands of Iran. See also Gordon Child's New Light on the Most Ancient East, chap.VI, p.102 ff.

312 Though this is not directly stated in the Enuma Eliš, we believe it was so. Because, as we have pointed out before, it was the yearly flood of the two
Among the hosts of Tiamat, Kingu is the commander-in-chief, while Vṛtra is "the first-born of the dragons" (prathamajām āhīnām, RV, I. 32, 3 and 4); he is "the worst obstructor" (vṛtrām vṛtratāram, ibid., I. 32. 5). These two epithets point to Vṛtra being the chief of the evil beings.

At the outset of the conflict, the gods are afraid to face Tiamat and her hosts. Later Marduk is chosen by Anshar to lead them against Tiamat. In the RV, we are told how the gods, being terrified by Vṛtra, fled away. Indra is also chosen by the gods to fight against Vṛtra.

In the Enuma Eliš there is a description of a great banquet before Marduk's enthronement prior to his fight against Tiamat. In the course of this banquet, the gods are recorded to have taken an intoxicating drink, as a result of which they feel inspired. In the RV, soma is the intoxicating drink which Indra drinks before the slaughter of Vṛtra.

Marduk's parents are Ea and Damkina. In the epic the poet speaks contd

rivers that led to the inundation of the valley region as also to the extinction, as it were, of the vegetal life of the world.

When Anshar comes to know the designs of Tiamat and Kingu "[He smote his loins and] bit his lips". Even Anu turns back without a fight when he sees the plan of Tiamat. No god is capable enough to face her and her hosts (see Speiser, op.cit., pp.63-4).

"They ate festive bread, poured [the wine] They wetted their drinking-tubes with sweet intoxicant. As they drank the strong drink, [their] bodies swelled. They became very languid as their spirits rose."

Speiser, op.cit., p.66.
eloquently of the physical features and charm of Marduk. Like him, Indra is recorded as having been born. He is "golden-haired" (RV, X. 96. 5), "golden-bearded" (ibid., X. 23. 4), "golden-armed" (ibid., VII. 34. 4), "having beautiful lips" (ibid., I. 9. 3; III. 32. 3 etc.), he shakes his jaws after drinking soma (ibid., VIII. 76. 10), he has an enormous belly which is compared to a lake when he has drunk soma (ibid., III. 36. 8). Neither the earth nor heaven can be Indra's match (ibid., I. 55. 1); on being born he terrified the earth and heaven by his valour (ibid., I. 63. 1); when wrathful, even the heaven and earth cannot contain him (ibid., I. 10. 8); he places heaven on his head by his greatness (ibid., II. 17. 2).

It was natural for the ancients to portray their gods as physically great and perfect. This perhaps arose from two necessities: they were thought to be perfect and great because only a physically perfect and powerful god can fructify vegetal life; secondly, by their physical prowess

"Alluring was his figure, sparkling the lift
of his eyes.
Lordly was his gait, commanding from of old."

Speiser, op.cit., p.62. His other physical features are described thus:

"Perfect were his members beyond comprehension,
Unsuited for understanding, difficult to perceive.
Four were his eyes, four were his ears;
When he moved his lips, fire blazed forth.
Large were all four hearing organs,
And the eyes, in like number, scanned all things.
He was the loftiest of the gods, surpassing was his stature;
His members were enormous, he was exceedingly tall."

Speiser, ibid., p.62.

RV, III. 48. 1 and 2; IV. 18. 1-5. About Indra's parentage there is no uniform tradition. Thus Indra is said to have the same father as Agni (RV VI. 59. 2) who is said to be the son of Dyaus and Prthivi (ibid., III. 2. 2; III. 25. 1 etc.). His father is said to have fashioned the thunderbolt for him (ibid., II. 17. 6), which, as we know, is definitely attributed to Tvāṣṭr. Indra's mother is spoken of as being a cow (ibid., IV. 18. 10). His mother is said to be Niṣṭigrī (ibid., X. 101. 12). In the AV (III. 10. 12 and 15) Indra and Agni's mother is Ekaśṭakā. See in this connection W. Norman Brown's comments on Indra's parentage in JAOS, vol.62, p.92 ff.
they were expected to prevail over human as well as supernatural enemies.

(7) Marduk is made king of the gods by the gods themselves:

"O Marduk, thou art indeed an avenger.
We have granted thee kingship over the universe entire." 320

Similarly, in the RV, the former gods are said to have subordinated their power to Indra's divine glory and kingly dignity (VII. 21. 7). He is the king of the whole world (III. 46. 2); he is the leader of human races and divine (III. 34. 2); he is universal monarch (ibid., IV. 19. 2), a self-independent sovereign (ibid., III. 46. 1 etc.).

(8) Marduk's commands are unimpeachable and none can transgress them, 321 while, in the RV all the gods are said to have yielded to Indra in strength and wisdom (VIII. 62. 7). Even two of the greatest of the Vedic gods, Varuṇa and Sūrya, are subject to his command (I. 101. 3).

(9) About Marduk's weapons, we may note the following:

"He constructed a bow, marked it as his weapon,
Attached thereto the arrow, fixed its bow-cord.
He raised the mace, made his right hand grasp it;
Bow and quiver he hung at his side.
In front of him he set the lightning." 322

320 Speiser, op.cit., p.66.
321 "Thou, Marduk, are the most honored of the great gods,
Thy decree is unrivaled, thy word is Anu.
From this day unchangeable shall be thy pronouncement.
To raise or bring low - these shall be (in) thy hand.
Thy utterance shall be true, thy command shall be unimpeachable.
No one among the gods shall transgress thy bounds!"
Speiser, ibid., p.66.
322 Speiser, op.cit., p.66.
While, in the RV, the vajra\textsuperscript{323} (thunderbolt, i.e. lightning) is Indra's most famous weapon. Among some of Indra's epithets derived from vajra we may note: vajrī-, "bearer of the thunderbolt" (I. 57. 6; IV. 19. 1; V. 32. 2 etc.); vajrabāhu-, "holding the vajra in his arm" (I. 32. 15; I. 174. 5 etc.); vajradakṣiṇa-, "holding the vajra in his right hand" (I. 101. 1; X. 23. 1 etc.); vajrahasta-, "holding the vajra in the hand" (I. 173. 10; VI. 22. 5 etc.); vajrivat-, "armed with the vajra" (VI. 45. 18; VIII. 6. 33 etc.); vajrabhūt-, "bearing the vajra" (I. 100. 12; VI. 17. 2). Indra is also armed with bow and arrows (VIII. 45. 4; VIII. 77. 6 etc.). Marduk also "made a net to enfold Tiamat therein",\textsuperscript{324} while Indra too has a net with which to overwhelm foes (AV, VIII. 8. 5-8).

(10) In the Enuma Elīš, Marduk is recorded to have produced various types of winds which help him in his exploits against Tiamat.\textsuperscript{325} In the RV, Indra is associated in his exploits, with the storm gods, the Maruts, so that the epithets, marútavat-\textsuperscript{326} "accompanied by the Maruts", or marúdgaṇa-\textsuperscript{327} "attended by the Marut hosts", become characteristically Indra's. Indra is also associated with Vāyu and Vātā; he is recorded to have been victorious with Vāyu in places rich with cows;\textsuperscript{328} he slays Suṣṇa, an associate of Vṛtra, with the horses of Vātā.\textsuperscript{329}

\textsuperscript{323} For an interesting discussion with regard to the etymology of vajra and other related word groups and ideas, see Gonda's Viṣṇuism, p.32 ff., especially pp.43-4.
\textsuperscript{324} Speiser, op.cit., p.66.
\textsuperscript{325} See fn.287.
\textsuperscript{326} RV, I. 100. 1; III. 4. 6; III. 47. 1; III. 50. 1, etc..
\textsuperscript{327} Ibid., VI. 52. 11; VIII. 89. 2.
\textsuperscript{328} yā vāyūnā jáyatī gómātiṣu, ibid., IV. 21. 4.
\textsuperscript{329} váha sūṣṇāya vadhāṁ kútsam vātasyāśvaiḥ, ibid., I. 175. 4.
(11) Marduk is recorded to have fought Tiamat from his chariot. While, there are indications that Indra too fought from his chariot:—

III. 45. 2: "Rider in the chariot, Indra, at the call of the yellow (horses), broke open the fastnesses (of the mountains)".

VIII. 70. 1: "He who is the king of people, who moves with his chariots, the irresistible, the conqueror in all wars, who as the great Vṛtra-slayer is praised".

(12) Tiamat is an evil being. While challenging Tiamat in the fight, Marduk declares:—

"Against Anšar, king of the gods, thou seest evil; [Against] the gods, my fathers, thou hast confirmed thy wickedness".

In the Vedic literature too, Vṛtra becomes synonymous with evil. He is described as a "calumniator" (duhsāmsa-, RV, I. 23. 9), "mischievous" (pīvāru-, ibid., III. 30. 8). In the Brahmaṇas Vṛtra is evil.

(13) Marduk is a god of vegetation as is obvious from a consideration of the different names given to him in the Enuma Eliš:—

"He mounted the storm-chariot irresistible and terrifying. He harnessed (and) yoked to it a team-of-four, The Killer, the Relentless, the Trampler, the Swift."

Speiser, op.cit., p.66.

330 "He mounted the storm-chariot irresistible [and] terrifying.
He harnessed (and) yoked to it a team-of-four,
The Killer, the Relentless, the Trampler, the Swift."

331 sthātā ráthaśya háryor abhisvarā índro dṛśhā cid ārujāḥ

332 yó rāja carṣaṇīnām yātā ráthebhir ādhrigu vīśvāsām tarutā pītanānām jyeṣṭho yo vṛtraḥā grnē

333 Speiser, op.cit., p.67.

334 TS, V. 4. 5. 4; II. 1. 3. 4.
KB, I. 4; VIII. 2; XVIII. 10.
SB, VI. 2. 2. 19, etc.
(a) "Asaru, bestower of cultivation, who established water levels;
    Creator of grain and herbs, who causes [vegetation to sprout].".335

(b) "Enbilulugal,336 thirdly, they shall praise as Enbilulugal,
The irrigator of the plantations of the gods;
Lord of abundance, opulence, and of ample crops,
Who provides wealth, enriches all dwellings,
Who furnishes millet, causes barley to appear".337

(c) "Enbilululu is Hegal, who heaps up abundance for the people's consumption;
Who causes rich rains over the wide earth, provides vegetation".338

(d) "Gil, who stores up grain heaps - massive mounds -
Who brings forth barley and millet, furnishes the seed of the land".339

In the Vedas, Indra is the vegetation god par excellence.340 He releases the heavenly waters and earthly rivers which fructify the earth.

Being a rain-giver, vegetal growth also depends upon him:-

II. 13. 6: "You, who give nourishment and growth, who milked from the humid (ground) the dry and sweet (trees)".341

335 Speiser, op.cit., p.70.
336 A name of Marduk.
337 Speiser, op.cit., p.71.
338 Speiser, ibid., p.71.
339 Speiser, ibid., p.71.
340 For this aspect of Indra's character, see E.W. Hopkins' excellent article, entitled "Indra as God of Fertility", in JAOS, vol.36, pp.242-68.
341 yo bhójanam ca dáyase ca várddhanam ārdrād á súşkaṁ mádhumad dudóhitha
II. 13. 7: "You, who distributed the blooming and fruit-bearing (trees) on the field, according to dharman".  

III. 34. 10: "Indra gained the plants and days, gained trees and the air".  

In many passages of the RV, Indra is requested to give sons and wives to the worshippers. He is the giver of yáva (corn); the poets in one place declare, "This auspicious friend Indra dispenses (lit. milks) for us a multitude of horses, cows and corn, like a broad stream". The sacrificers pray to Indra: "May we overcome all evil indigence and hunger, O invoked by many, by cows and corn".

(14) Marduk is a god of war, besides being a god of vegetation:

(a) "Who destroys the wayward foes. Let us praise his prowess".  

(b) "Suhrim, who with the weapon roots out all enemies, Who frustrates their plans, scatters (them) to the winds; Who blots out all the wicked ones who tremble before him".

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342 yaḥ puṣpīṇiś ca prasvāś ca dhārmanā ādhi dāne vy āvānīr ādharayaḥ. The word dharman may be defined as behaviour according to law, regularity, harmony, the norm in natural and human world. See, in this connection, Gonda's Die Religionen Indiens, vol.I, p.34.

343 īndra ośadhīr āsanod āhāni vānaspāṭīr āsanod antārikṣam

344 IV. 41. 6; IV. 42. 9; VII. 84. 5, etc..

345 I. 51. 13; V. 31. 2.

346 I. 53. 2.

347 sa na īndraḥ śivāḥ sākhaśvavad gómad yávam urūdhāreva dohate, VIII. 93. 3.

348 gōbhīṣṭaṃmaṃmātiṃ durēvām yāvena kṣūdhāṃ puruhuta vīśvāṃ, X. 42. 10.

349 Speiser, op.cit., p.70.

350 Speiser, ibid., p.70.
(c) "Who roots out the enemies, destroys their progeny; who frustrates their doings, leaving nothing of them."

Similarly Indra is undoubtedly a god of war in the RV. "Men indeed invoke him in war" is a justifiable commentary on his character. A fighting people would naturally invoke the war god before all others; and the more numerous and stubborn and protracted the battles, the greater will be the dependence of the people on their war god. The Rgvedic people were a migrating one, occupying a new land and carrying on a ceaseless war against the autochthons. There are innumerable references to internecine war as well in the RV. It is quite natural, therefore, for the Vedic Aryans to conceive of a god of war, to place their implicit faith in his power of deliverance from various odds created by human enemies.

(15) In the war, "with his unsparing mace he (Marduk) crushed her (Tiamat's) skull", while Indra alone or together with the Maruts is said to have cleaved Vṛtra's head.

(16) After destroying Tiamat, Marduk created the heaven above the earth with one half of her body. In the RV, Indra is recorded to have separated the heaven and earth after the slaughter of Vṛtra.

351 Speiser, ibid., p.71.
352 IV. 24. 3; see also IV. 39. 5; X. 42. 4, etc.; see also our IVth Chapter.
353 Speiser, op.cit., p.67.
354 RV, VIII. 6. 6.
355 Ibid., VIII, 76. 2.
356 "He split her like a shellfish into two parts: Half of her he set up and ceiled it as the sky."
357 Speiser, op.cit., p.67.
358 See supra, Section E.
Thus, the Babylonian and the \textit{Rgvedic} myths of the conflict between the
dragon and hero god bear close resemblances. Hence arises the question of
mutual influence, if there be any, which is indeed a very vexed problem.

Many scholars have traced Babylonian influence on the Indian
civilization. J. Kennedy\textsuperscript{358} thought that "an active sea-trade sprang up
about 700 B.C. between Babylon and the East, and that India had an active
share in it".\textsuperscript{359} The Indian traders went to Babylon and "brought back to
their native land notions of writing and coinage which they had picked up
in the bazaars of Babylon".\textsuperscript{360} Kennedy also traced Babylonian influence
on Indian art.\textsuperscript{361}

N.D. Mironov found Sanskritic elements in the inscriptions of the
Near East.\textsuperscript{362}

W. Crooke found Babylonian influence on Indian culture with regard to
magical charms and formulae, introduction of brick masonry, the adoption of

\textsuperscript{358} Kennedy, "The Early Commerce of Babylon with India - 700-300 B.C.", in
\textit{JRAS}, 1898, pp.241-88.

\textsuperscript{359} Kennedy, ibid., p.242.

\textsuperscript{360} Kennedy, ibid., p.282.

\textsuperscript{361} Kennedy, ibid., p.282 ff. It should be mentioned here that Kennedy wrote
this article in 1898, when the remnants of the Indus civilization were not
discovered. Consequently, most of his conclusions would not be acceptable
to present-day scholars. On the relation between Mesopotamia and the Indus
Valley, see also H. Mode, \textit{Harappa Culture and the West}; S.N. Kramer, "Dilmun:
Quest for Paradise", in \textit{Antiquity}, \textit{vol.XXVII}, pp.111-5; "The Indus
Civilization and Dilmun, the Sumerian Paradise Land", in \textit{Expedition}, spring
1964, pp.44-52; W.N. Brown, "The Beginnings of Civilization in India", in
\textit{JAOS}, \textit{vol.59}, pp.32-44; C.J. Gadd, "Seals of the Ancient Indian Style found
E.J.H. Mackay, "Further Links between Ancient Sind, Sumer and Elsewhere",
Babylonian Period}, especially pp.159-66.

\textsuperscript{362} Mironov, "Aryan Vestiges in the Near East of the Second Millenary B.C.",
in \textit{Acta Orientalia}, \textit{vol.XI}, pp.140-217. A.B. Keith is, however, not
convinced by these linguistic equations; see Keith's article "Aryan Names
seven-day week etc. Crooke significantly remarked, "On the whole, the influence of Babylonian on Hindu culture seems to have been comparatively late, and the results of the intercourse of the two races have been so thoroughly assimilated that they are no longer visible on Indian soil".  

B.G. Tilak traced Babylonian influence on the Atharvanic snake charms as also in the name of a particular class of demons, namely, the Kimidins. V.S. Agrawala traced such words as taimāta, aligi, urugula, apsu, tābuva, helayaḥ-helayaḥ, jaruka and kāṛṣapana etc. to Babylonian influence. R.G. Harshe found large correspondence between Sanskrit and Assyrian names. Buddha Prakash traces the Sanskrit word kūpa to Babylonian kukupi, meaning a flask or leather vessel. K.C. Chatṭopādhyāya thought that the Indus Valley people maintained trade relations with Mesopotamia and these Indus traders might have introduced the Mesopotamian influence in the Atharvanic snake charms referred to by Tilak. 

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363 Crooke, "Hinduism", in ERE, vol.6, p.688.  
368 Supra, fn.364.
Varuṇa and Nāsatya, in the Boghaz Keui inscription hint at the cultural relations between West Asiatic nations and Indians.  

John Marshall contended that the depiction of Sumerian Eabani or Enkidu and his friend, the famous hero Gilgamesh, on some Indus seals show these ideas were borrowed by the Indians from Mesopotamia. Marshall also spoke of the resemblances of the Indus culture to the ancient Mesopotamian civilization, which show that a lively intercourse was going on between the two countries at the close of the fourth millennium B.C. Marshall also dwelt on the Indus seals found in Mesopotamia. Some other factors, for example, Indian potstone vases in Al-'Ubiad, the trefoil pattern on the robe of an Indus statuette resembling that of some Sumerian bulls, a toilet set identical in pattern with one found from Ur, etc., also prove that an active intercourse must have been going on between the Indus Valley people and early Babylon.

Mortimer Wheeler thinks that the Harappans maintained cultural relations with Mesopotamia. On the origin of the Harappa civilization, Wheeler remarks, "It is legitimate to affirm that the idea of civilization came to the land of the Indus from the land of the Twin Rivers".

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371 Marshall, ibid., p.102.
373 Wheeler, The Indus Civilization, p.79 ff. See also p.110 ff.
374 Wheeler, ibid., p.25.
Bridget and Raymond Allchin think that the Indus people maintained trade relations with ancient Mesopotamia. The sum total of the evidence forwarded by the above-mentioned scholars is formidable and no serious scholar would doubt the fact that the ancient Indians imbibed some ideas of civilization from the Babylonians at a formative stage of their history.

We believe that the ancient Indians were indebted to the Babylonians for another important idea, the cosmogonic activity of the hero god after the slaughter of the dragon.

We have already seen that cosmogonic myth became associated with the slaughter of the dragon at a later stage. The Indo-Europeans inherited the myth from their common primitive past. In course of their wanderings these people came under various influences. Consequently this common framework acquired different embellishments, local variations and colour, though the core of the myth, the defeat of the dragon by a great god, persisted.

In the case of the Indo-Iranians, however, a new inspiration was at work. A much more ancient civilization with a richly developed mythic lore influenced them and moulded this common framework of the myth. The Mesopotamian civilization must have been at least two thousand years old when the Indo-Europeans first entered the portals of history, when the tribes like the Hittites, the Mitannians and the Kassites, carved out independent principalities of their own in different parts of present West Asia, around the first half of the second millennium B.C.

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The Birth of Indian Civilization, pp.270-2.
The Indo-Iranians were the most easterly branch of the Indo-Europeans and in course of their migration towards the east they perhaps came to know the Babylonian myth of creation — the slaughter of the dragon by the great god who fashioned the world and heaven. There is a strong possibility that the fashioning of the heaven and earth or separating the heaven and earth and other cosmogonic activities of the god, which did not form part of the common Indo-European dragon-slaying legend, were added to it. It is not unlikely that the Indian merchants who visited Babylon from time to time might have been impressed by the resemblances between the Babylonian Epic of Creation and the Indra-Vṛtra saga; they must also have been impressed by the cosmogonic details of the Epic of Creation. From them these details perhaps percolated to the priestly class who added them to the Indra-Vṛtra saga. The motive for adding this element to the Indo-European legend is understandable. It was added by a priesthood, custodian of the sacred lore, who wanted to show the power and majesty of their patron gods to the people; to impress them, so that the people would take recourse to the gods in times of difficulty and would try to please the gods by performing the religious ceremonies invented and elaborated by a priesthood who wanted the people to be dependent on them.

Here we accept, as a working hypothesis, Gordon Childe's theory that the original habitat of the Indo-Europeans should be located in the Southern Russian Steppe region. See Childe's The Aryans, chap.VIII, p.183 ff.
CHAPTER IV

The Racial Significance of the Indra-Vṛtra Saga

A Vṛtra as the personification of human enemies creating obstruction

Our understanding of the Indra-Vṛtra saga will remain partially obscure if we do not take into consideration the evidence of those passages of the RV where Vṛtra or Vṛtras appear as thwarting the passage of some of the Aryan migrants in India. In this context Vṛtra is a personification of human enemies creating obstructions, thereby impeding the smooth flow of human life. The Aryans sought help from various gods such as Agni and the Maruts, but especially from Indra, the manifestation of vitality and creative energy, victorious power and physical strength, the irresistible warrior, against such inimical obstruction.

We are, however, not convinced by the arguments of those scholars who proposed a pre-Aryan affiliation for Vṛtra. Rönnow dwelt on the Indra-Vṛtra saga while discussing the original character of Trita Āptya. He thought that Trita’s primary character “eines Gebieters der Gewässer” is seldom mentioned in the Vedas, while in most places he appears as a warrior and dragon killer, and “Dies bedeutet, dass er schon im Veda eine im Erblassen begriffene Göttergestalt ist, und manches spricht für die Tatsache, dass der grosse Indra in vielen Stücken sein Nachfolger ist”.

1 Norman Brown remarks that Indra "is a personification of an abstraction, namely power". See his "Theories of Creation in the Rig Veda", in JAOS, vol.85, p.24; see also Gonda, DRI, vol.1, p.56.
2 Rönnow, Trita Āptya, p.7.
3 Rönnow, ibid., p.7.
Rönnow contended that the RV gives us a very one-sided picture of the religious life of the Aryans and it grew among that tribe which attached itself to Indra and other gods grouped around him, the so-called Devas. The conflict between them and the Asuras in the Vedas, especially in the later sacrificial literature, reflects the conflict between the worshippers of the Devas and those of the Asuras headed by Varuṇa. The latter were an earlier batch of the Aryan immigrants in India. The later immigrants were "reinen Barbaren unter einem barbarischen, unkomplizierten Kriegsgotte, dessen gerühmteste Beschäftigung darin bestand, dass er in den wilden Gebirgen, die sie verlassen hatten, Drachendämonen, die Verdämmer des Flusswasser, tötete, um demselben wieder freien Lauf zu geben".

The earlier batch of Aryan immigrants with Asura Varuṇa as their most important god met with the black autochthones whose religion was dominated by snake cults. The Varuṇa worshippers came in contact with these popular beliefs previous to the Indra worshippers, and were strongly influenced by them. Rönnow here postulated a "vorvedischen" reconstruction of the soma sacrifice and from this he deduced two conclusions: (1) The Indra-Deva worshippers took over an Asuric soma offering which they reworked in a Vedic direction, and (2) originally this was concerned with the snake gods. Varuṇa took over the function of these snake gods because, as Rönnow contended,

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4 Rönnow, ibid., p.8.
5 Rönnow, ibid., p.8.
6 Rönnow, ibid., p.8.
7 Rönnow, ibid., p.12.
8 Rönnow, ibid., p.13.
9 Rönnow, ibid., p.13.
the Asuric religion was of a peaceful missionary type, amalgamating with the local cults. These snake gods were the original possessors of soma which is not only an intoxicating cult drink, but also the essence of the waters, ensuring fertility, the cure of illness etc. But the confrontation between the Indra believers and the autochthones became more and more warlike, which is noticeable in the RV. The mastership of the waters is in the foreground here, especially in the Vṛtra fight as also in the fights with Śuṣṇa, Kuyava etc. The question is whether we should see in them demonic beings or human enemies. Rönnow contended that terms like Dāsa or Dasyu could refer to both types of enemies. He further remarked that the dark-skinned aboriginals were totemistic and the snake totem must have played an important role in their religion. So they were interchanged with their gods and named after them. If we carry Rönnow's arguments to their logical conclusion, then Vṛtra was presumably such a totemistic god and appeared as the demonic obstructor of the waters. Indra freed them and became their master.

It is very difficult to agree with all the views expressed by Rönnow. We do not deny that Indra might have been a "Nachfolger" of Trita Āptya, nor do we deny that the RV contains only a partial picture of the religious life of the people. But to say that it is a document of the Indra-worshippers alone is too speculative. Even the RV notes the existence of people who did

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10 Rönnow, ibid., p.15.
11 Rönnow, ibid., p.13.
13 See Ch.V., sections C and D.
not believe in Indra. Had the RV been such a document, the poets would surely have tried to suppress such a heresy.

We cannot accept Rönnow's view on the conflict between the Devas and the Asuras, for Indra, who is a Deva is also styled an Asura in the RV (I. 54. 3; 174. 1; III. 38. 4; VIII. 90. 6, etc.). There is not a single piece of evidence on the basis of which we can definitely say that the Varuna worshippers entered India first and then were followed by the Deva worshippers. Rönnow's contention that the pre-Aryan Indian religion was dominated by snake cults is too speculative and unless and until the Indus Valley seals are deciphered, any judgement on Indus religion will ever remain speculative.

We also cannot accept the view of Buddha Prakash that the Indra-Vṛtra conflict refers to the wars which the Vedic Aryans had to wage against the

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14 RV, II, 12. 5. See also IV, 23. 7; V, 2. 3; VIII, 70. 10; X, 27. 6; X, 48. 7; X, 86. 1.

non-Aryan priest-kings of the Punjab region. There is not even an indirect hint in the RV that the Vṛtras were either the priests or the kings of the non-Aryans.

The concept of Vṛtra was Indo-Iranian, though it underwent a transformation in India. From the idea of a god of "victorious offensive" (VṛGragna), originated the idea of Vṛtra, the arch-devil of the RV. The word became synonymous with everything evil. Vṛtra withholds the life-nourishing waters, the Sun, Soma and other beneficial substances, and lastly and very significantly it signifies the human enemy who obstructs.

While determining the significance of the Indra-Vṛtra saga, we must not fail to take into consideration the actual context in which the term Vṛtra appears. It is the context which decides the meaning of many terms in the RV. Indeed, words torn from their context may lead to untenable interpretations, to even diametrically opposite conclusions and ultimately to mythological confusions. Besides the evidence of Comparative Philology and Comparative Religion, this important factor should be borne in mind by the Vedic interpreters.

In some passages of the RV, Vṛtra appears clearly as an obstruction created by human enemies. In the following passages, Vṛtra and various enemies are juxtaposed:–

IV. 41. 2: "The mortal who has made Indra and Varuṇa his ally (and) won both the gods for friendship, feeding (them);

16 Buddha Prakash, Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab, p.54.
17 "... l'offensive victorieuse", Benveniste and Renou, op.cit., p.28.
he kills the Vṛtras and enemies in battle (and) becomes famous by (their great helps). 18

X, 116, 1: "Drink the soma for great power, O mightiest, drink for the slaying of Vṛtra". 19

The Rigvedic poets have a rich vocabulary for describing enemies, their audacity and daring, and Vṛtra is particularly associated with them in the following passages:-

I, 53, 6: "They made you intoxicated by this intoxicating drink, these manly valiant, these soma drinks, O ""lord of sat (the existing, beings, the correct)"")", as you, for the singer, for the sacrificer, knocked down ten thousand irresistible Vṛtras". 20

18 īndrā ha yó vāruṇā cakrā āpi devaú mártāḥ sakhyāya práyasvān sa hanti vṛtrā samithēgu śatrūn āvobhir vā mahādbhīḥ sā prá śṛṇve

That the worshippers were praying for help against human enemies is apparent from some of the information contained in this hymn. Thus in verse 4 we hear of dūrēvo vṛkātiḥ, "malignant murderers" and dabhētiḥ, "enemy", against whom Indra and Vārūṇa are requested to measure their dījas ("Daseinsmacht"). 19

pībā sómam mahāta īndriyāya pībā vṛtrāya hāntave śāvīṣṭha

The context clearly shows that this is a war hymn and the people were asking for Indra's help. In verse 3, the worshipper prays: "Let him be intoxicated, whereby you created freedom; let him be intoxicated, whereby you rend your enemies". In verse 4, Indra is styled arusahā, which is a controversial term. Grassmann, WZR, col.,108 translated the word as "die nicht glänzende, d.h. dunkle (Wolke) ... schlagend", which is not acceptable, because there is not a single reference to the clouds in the whole hymn, nor to the drought demons encompassing the clouds, Ludwig, op.cit., vol.II, p.264, "du des Aru9a tötter", while Geldner, op.cit., vol.III, p.341, "Tötter der Schwarzen". Sāyaṇa has arusahā śatravah, which is acceptable. In verse 5, the sacrificer requests to Indra: "Go towards the enemies and hack them to pieces". Thus Vṛtra, in the above passage, should be taken as personified human enemy.

20 Gonda, Epithets, p.78.

21 té tvā mádā amadan tāni vṛṣṇyā té sōmāso vṛtrahātyeṣu satpate yāt kārāve dáśa vṛtrāny apratī bariṣṇmate ni sahāsrāṇi bariṣṇah

In verse 4, the sacrificers pray to Indra: "May we, with Indra, with īndu (soma), rout the dáśyus, resisting the dveṣāsah (the enemies)". In verse 7, we are informed that Indra seeks out "the daring ones (dhrṣṇyya) in war after war".
VI. 33. 1: "Give that inspiration which is your strongest ojas ("Daseinsmacht") to us in excellent manner, you bull, superior, willing to give, who have obtained mastership of horses by being skilled on horses, who subdue the Vṛtras in the war, the enemies".  
VIII. 19. 20: "Stimulate the auspicious resolve in the Vṛtra fight, with which you triumphed in the war. Relax the (firm) resolves of the very defiant ones; may we win by your assistance".  
VIII. 90. 4: "You, benevolent one, the truthful, never subjugated, get the better of many Vṛtras".  
VIII. 99. 6: "All your enemies are killed by your anger, when you, Indra, overpower Vṛtra".

22 ya ojistha indra tam su no da mado vṛṣant svabhīṣṭīr dāsvān sauvasyam yō vanavat svāsvo vṛtā samātsu śāsahad amītrān
We are specifically informed here that Indra kills the Vṛtras, styled amītra, in the wars.

23 bhadrām mānaḥ kṛpuṣvā vṛtratūrye yēnā samātsu sāsahāḥ āva sthirā tanuḥi bhūri śārhdhatāṃ vanēmā te abhīṣṭibhiḥ
The "defiant ones" are obviously fighting against the sacrificers and this fight, significantly enough, is styled "the Vṛtra fight". Thus, Vṛtra, in the passage, should be taken to refer to an obstructing enemy.

24 tvam hi satyō mahāvann ānātato vṛtra bhūri ny rūjāse
In verse 1, Indra is described as "invokable in all wars" (vṛsvāsu hávya indra samātsu). The various cognomens of Indra in this hymn may also be taken into consideration, for example, "having supreme power" (paramajyāḥ, in verse 1); "son of power" (śāvaso putra-, in verse 2); "never subjugated" (ānānataḥ, in verse 4); "lord of power" (svasas pati-, in vocative in verse 5). These epithets are not fortuitous, they have a deeper significance. These were attributed to Indra, we believe, because the worshippers themselves wanted to participate in these same powers with which to struggle against various enemies.

25 visvās te spṛdhaḥ śnathayanta manyāve vṛtrām yād indra tūrvasi
In verse 5, Indra is said to be "superior to the attacks of all enemies" (prātūrtiśv abhi vṛsvā asi spṛdhaḥ), he is "avertor of curses" (āśātiḥa), which show that the worshippers were fighting against enemies.
VI. 16. 34: "May Agni joyfully seeking for (their) property, kill the Vṛtras". 26

I. 23. 9: "Slay Vṛtra, you goodly givers (of wealth), associated with powerful Indra; may not the calumniator master us". 27

IX. 23. 7: "When Indra drank of this intoxicating drink, he killed irresistible Vṛtras, and will kill them even further". 28

That Vṛtra was a personification of the enemies against whom the Aryans were waging war is obvious in the following instances where the sacrificers prayed for Indra's help against the Vṛtras in wars where hand-to-hand as also cavalry fighting took place:—

I. 8. 2: "With which (help) we can defend ourselves against the Vṛtras by fighting with clenched fists; protected by you (may we defend ourselves against the Vṛtras) by (riding on our) horse". 29

26
agnir vṛtraṇi jaṅghanad draviṇasyūr vipanyāyā
In verse 31, the sacrificers pray to Agni to rescue them from "the malignant mortal who sacrifices for our death" (yó no agne durēva ā márto vadhaṁyā dāśati); or in verse 32, Agni is requested to halt such an evil-doer (parī bādhasva duṣkrītam), "the mortal who intends to kill us" (márto yó no jāghamsati).

27
haṭā vṛtraṁ sudānava īndrēṇa sāhasā yujā
mā no duṣhāmsa īsata
The epithet, duḥsāmsa ("calumniator"), shows that Vṛtra in the above passage refers to the obstruction created by an earthly enemy.

28
asya pītvā mādānāṁ ēndro vṛtraṁ apratī
ejaghāna jaghānac ca nú
We have references to human enemies in this hymn, for example, in verse 3, the sacrificers request Soma: "O Pavamāna, bring us the possession of the miserly one" (ā pavamāna no bharāryō ādāśuso gāyam); or Soma is styled abhiśastipāh "who protects against curse (of enemies)" in verse 5.

29
nī yēna muṣṭihatyāyā nī vṛtra ruṇādāmahai
tvōtaśo ny ārvatā
We have some other references to enemies in this hymn, for example, "May we altogether conquer the opponents in the fight", in verse 3 (jāyema sām yudhi śpṛdhaḥ); or, "May we prevail against the assailants" in verse 4.
VI. 26. 2: "(People invoke) you, Indra, in the Vṛtra killing as the lord of sat, (and as one) who carries (them) over difficulties. The clenched-fist fighter, fighting for the cows, looks upon you (for help)."

The slaughter of Vṛtra resulted in the acquisition of vāja, which refers to a power-substance, the possession of which was considered desirable by the Vedic people. When Indra is implored to win vāja-, or win in vāja, it possibly signifies that the people believed that, by gaining vāja, Indra would be powerful enough to help his protégés in defeating Vṛtra, the personification of human enemies. In the following instances Vṛtra and vāja are associated and the contexts clearly bring out the proper import of these two concepts:

I. 4. 8: "Having drunk of that (soma), O you of a hundredfold effective mental power, you became a crusher

29 contd (sāsahyāma pṛtanyatāh).

The above verse (I. 8. 2) informs us of two modes of fighting, hand-to-hand and cavalry. On Vedic warfare, see S.D. Singh's Ancient Indian Warfare with special reference to the Vedic period.

30 Supra, fn.20.

31 On tarutra-, see Gonda, Epithets, p.77.

32 tvāṁ vṛtrēsv indra sātāpātim tārūtraṁ tvāṁ caṣṭe muṣṭihā gōṣu yūdhyan
The clenched-fist fighters, that is foot soldiers, must have played an important part in the warfare in the Vedic age. The charioteers, as Dr S.D. Singh (op.cit., pp.10-1) remarks, "stole the thunder" in the war, "nevertheless, the foot-soldier was still indispensable".

33 On vāja-, see Gonda, Vīṣṇuism, p.44 ff.

34 On śatākratu, see Gonda, Epithets, p.36 ff.
of the Vṛtras. You helped the possessor of vāja- in the fight for vāja-".  

III. 37. 6: "Be victorious in the (war for) vāja-, we pray to you, O you of a hundredfold effective mental power, for the slaughter of Vṛtra".  

In various passages of the RV, we have references to Ārya and Dāsa Vṛtras and we believe that the term, Vṛtras, in these passages refers to Aryan or non-Aryan enemies respectively; for instance:-  

VI. 22. 10: "Whereby you (Indra) made the Dāsa and Ārya Vṛtras swiftly running (in flight), O bearer of the thunderbolt".  

35  
asāyā pītvā śatakrate ghanō vṛtrānām abhavaḥ  
praṅo vājeṣu vājinam  
In prayer 5, we have reference to "our slanderers" (no nīdāḥ) who complained against the sacrificers "because you (that is, the sacrificers) make yourselves overjealous only for Indra" (dādhānā īndra īḍ duvah); which shows that the sacrificers were pitted against those who did not attach special importance to Indra as a god. It was against these people that Indra's "secundating energy and activity" (Gonda, Viṣṇuisma, p.47) are sought to be aroused "for the winning of wealth" in verse 9 (tāṃ tvā vājeṣu vājīnām vājāyāmāḥ śatakrate / dhanānām īndra sātaye).  

36  
vājeṣu sāsahīr bhava tvām īmahe śatakrate  
īndra vṛtrāya hāntave  
This hymn is replete with references to wars and warlike activities. In verse 1, Indra is turned towards the place of worship "for the Vṛtra-killing might" (vātr̥ahatāvya śavase) or "for (the might which brings) victory in war" (pratanaśāhavāya); Indra is also invoked "for winning vāja- ("vigour") in the wars" (bhāreṣu vājasātaye) in verse 5.  

37  
yāyā dāsāny āryāṇi vṛtrā kāro vajrint sutukā  
In verse 8 of the same hymn, Indra is requested to scorch the earth and the waters for those who hated Brahman; which, in the language of Gonda (Brahman, p.58), "is a more or less definite power ... which often, and specially in the most ancient texts, manifests itself as word, as ritual ... sacred or magical word, etc."; that is, those who were opposed to the Vedic religion. In verse 10, Indra is requested to grant "well being" (svastim), "for conquering the enemy" (sātrū-tūryava). This shows that the Dāsa and Ārya Vṛtras in the passage should be taken to refer to enemies, non-Aryan or Aryan respectively.
VI. 60. 6: "You (Indra and Agni) kill the Ārya Vṛtras, you, the lords of Sat, kill the Dāsa Vṛtras; you repulse all enemies."  

VI. 33. 3: "You killed, 0 hero Indra, both these opponents, the Dāsa and Ārya Vṛtras, like trees, with well-placed armour. You pierce (them) in the wars, 0 manliest of men." 

X. 69. 6: "You (Agni) won the wealth of the plains and of the mountain, you conquered the Dāsa and Ārya Vṛtras".  

It is perhaps with reference to these Ārya and Dāsa Vṛtras the poet speaks of "both types of Vṛtras" in the following passage:-  

VI. 19. 13: "May we have the upper hand over all enemies by means of these your friendships; 0 invoked by many. Killing both types of Vṛtras, 0 hero, may we carouse in great wealth, favoured by you". 

38 Supra, fn.20.  

39 hatō vṛtrāṇy āryā hatō dāsāni sātpati  
hatō viśvā āpa dvīṣah  
The enemies were presumably the Aryan and non-Aryan Vṛtras.  

40 tvām tā indrobhāyā amitrān dāsā vṛtrāṇy ārya ca sūra  
vādhīr vānēva sūdhitebhīr ātakair ā pṛtsū dārsī nṛpam nṛtama  
Significantly enough, in verse 1, Indra is recorded to have subdued "the Vṛtras in the war" and these Vṛtras are styled "enemies". See fn.22.  

41 sām ājryā parvātīyāvasūni dāsā vṛtrāṇy ārya jigetha  
In the second line of the verse, the sacrificers pray to Agni to overpower the assailants (tvām agne pṛtanāyūn abhī syah).  

42 vayām tā ebhīḥ puruhūta sakhyaīḥ sātroḥśatror uṭṭara īt syama  
Significantly, the identity of "both types of Vṛtras" is clear if we take into consideration the information contained in verse 8. The poet requests Indra to bestow on the sacrificers his valour (śuṣma), "with which may we overcome enemies in war (belonging to) kindred or foreign stock, by your aids" (yēna vāṁsāma pṛtanāsu śatrūn tavotībhīr utā jāmīr ajāmin).
We have several references to kings and peoples taking part in the slaughter of Vṛtra, and in these passages too Vṛtra should be treated as the obstructing human enemy:

V. 37. 4: "That king is not ruined in whom (i.e., whose kingdom) Indra drinks the sharp soma juice mixed with milk. He moves with his soldiers (in the battle, and) slays Vṛtra". 43

VI. 25. 1: "With those (helps) assist us greatly in the Vṛtra-killing and with these vigours (assist) us, O energetic one". 44

VII. 58. 4: "Helped by you, the great king slays Vṛtra". 45

VII. 32. 15: "Inspire the bounteous in the Vṛtra slaughters, who give loving wealth." 46

43  

We have clear reference here to the king moving with his army and immediately afterwards we are informed that he kills Vṛtra.

44  

We have other references to warlike activities in this hymn. In verse 2, Indra is requested to subjugate the Dāsa tribes for the Aryas; or, to enfeeble the powers of the foes belonging to kindred or foreign stock, in verse 3. These enemies are possibly referred to as "godless" (ādevīḥ) in verse 9.

45  

In the first line we have: "Helped by you, you Maruts, the inspired one wins a hundred (treasures)" (yuṣmōto vīpro marutaḥ śatasvī). These hundred treasures may refer to the wealth of the earthly enemy styled Vṛtra in the second line of the verse.

46  

That is, who offers rich sacrifices to gods like Indra and thereby increases the strength of the gods, who, in their turn, are expected to increase the strength of their votaries. This mutual dependence of the gods and their votaries was one of the fundamental principles of ancient Indian ritual. See Keith, RPVU, pt.I (HOS, vol.31), pp.243-52.

47  

In verse 11, Indra is requested to be the protector of the chariots and the heroes, obviously the partisans of the sacrificers. In verse 14 we have: "Trusting you, O Maghavan, the fighter tries to win vigour on the decisive day" (śraddhā īt te maghavan pārye divī vājī vājam siṣṇasati).
VII. 85. 3: "The one (Varuṇa) holds scattered peoples together, the other (Indra) kills irresistible Vṛtras". 48

VII. 92. 4: "Those pious men (aryāḥ) who delight Indra and Vāyu, friendly to the gods, who please (the gods); with such patrons (sūrībhīḥ), with the manly ones (nībhīḥ), may we remain, slaying Vṛtras and enemies in battle". 49

VIII. 21. 12: "May we, with the heroes, defeat Vṛtra and swell (in power)". 50

King Sudās was the greatest of the kings of the RV and in two significant verses, the seers implore Indra that with his help the king might defeat Vṛtra or Vṛtras:

III. 53. 11: "Stand aside, you Kuśikas, beware, release the horse of Sudās, for (the acquisition of) wealth. May the king defeat Vṛtra in the east, west and the north; then let him sacrifice on the best spot on earth". 51

48 kṛṣṭīr anyó dhārāyāti právikta vṛtraṇy anyó apratīnī hanti
For a proper explanation of this line, we should turn to verse 2 which may be translated thus: "(The men) contend verily in the invocation of gods, when arrows fly in the midst of (raised) banners. Indra and Varuṇa, strike the enemies with your missile into flight and scatter them" (spārdhānte vā u devahūye atra yēsu dhvajēṣu didyavanā pātanti // yuvām tā indrāvaruṇāv amitrāṃ hatām paraçaḥ śārvā viṣūcaḥ). This is an apt description of a battle.

49 yē vāyāva inḍramadānāsa ādevāso nitōṣanāso aryāḥ
ghnānto vṛtraṇi sūrībhīḥ śyāma sāsahvānso yudhā nībhīr amitrān
Here we should especially note that the two ideas, killing the Vṛtras and conquering enemies in war, are juxtaposed.

50 nībhīr vṛtraḥ hanyāma śuṣuṇyāma ca
For a proper appreciation of the true import of Vṛtra in the above passage, we should turn to verse 11 which may be translated thus: "Indeed, O manly one, may we, allied with you, answer back the man who is hissing against us (in anger); (may we win) in fight with people possessing cows" (tvāyā ha svid yuṣā vayam prāti śvasantām viṣabhā bruvaṃahi // samsthē jānāsyā gomataḥ.

51 úpa prēta kuśikās cetāyādhvam āsvam rāyē prá muṅcata sudāsāḥ
rāja vṛtraḥ janghanat prāg āpag ādag ātha yajūte vāra ā prthivyāḥ
The Kuśikas were a family of priests especially attached to the Bharatas to
VII. 25. 5: "These Kutsas have (sung) for the traveller on the yellow horse a stirring song, asking from Indra a victory sent by the gods. O hero, make the Vṛtras always easy to defeat. May we, conquerors of difficulties, win vāja ("vigour")". 52

For a proper understanding of the term Vṛtra in the above passages, we should take into consideration the early history of the family of Sudās in India. We have discussed this in Appendix B to which we draw the attention of our readers. From the evidence quoted therein as also from the above discussion, we conclude that the term Vṛtra signifies human enemies, either Aryan or non-Aryan, against whom the above-mentioned kings and peoples fought in order to bring about a smooth flow of human life.

51 contd which Sudās belonged. The most important member of the Kuśikas was Viśvāmitra. See in this connection, Macdonell, A History of Sanskrit Literature, p.156; VM, pp.62-3; Macdonell-Keith, VI, vol.I, pp.173-4; Muir, OST, vol.I, pt.first, p.82 ff.

52

kuṭsā ete haryaśvaya suṣgām īndre sāho devājūtam iyānaj satrā kṛdhi suhānā sūra vṛtrā vayām tārūtraḥ sanuyāma vājāṃ

Here the Kutsas must have been praying for Sudās, for in verse 3 the poet declares, "You (Indra) have a hundred helps for Sudās, O Śiprin ("having beautiful lips")" (satām te śipripple utāyāḥ sudāse). That the sacrificers are having trouble is obvious from their request to Indra to demolish "the weapon of the jealous mortal" (jahi vādhār vanusō mártasya), in the same verse.
In some passages of the RV Vṛtra and Dasyu are mentioned together; in some others, the term Dasyu appears as an epithet of Vṛtra or his associates like Śuṣṇa. In this section we shall discuss the proper significance of the concept Dasyu, apropos the Indra-Vṛtra problem.

The word Dasyu appears twice in a vegetative-cosmological context, once as an epithet of Vṛtra, and once of Śuṣṇa:—

II. 11. 18: "You (Indra) uncovered the light for the अर्यव: 0 Indra, the Dasyu was crushed on the left". 53

VIII. 6. 14: "You Indra clapped the durable thunderbolt on the Dasyu Śuṣṇa, then you, 0 manly one, become renowned as a bull". 54

In various passages of the RV, Vṛtra and Dasyu appear as opposed to the Aryans and the gods are recorded to have killed them:—

I. 63. 4: "Then, 0 Indra, you, as a friend, drove (away) Vṛtra, 0 bearer of the thunderbolt, with bull-like deeds, you slew (him); when you, hero, bull-hearted, rent the Dasyus in their abodes, in the far off (region), with effortless ease". 55

53 apāvṛṇor jyotīr āryavya ni śavyatāḥ sādā dāṣyur indra
The release of the waters is alluded to in verses 2, 5 and 9 of the hymn.

54 ni śuṣṇa indra dharṣasīṁ vājraṁ jaghantha dāṣyavi
vṛṣaḥ hy ugra śṛṇviṣe
From the context it is clear that the Dasyu Śuṣṇa in this passage is an inimical vegetative demon. Thus in the previous verse we are informed: "When his (Indra's) anger fumed, he smashed Vṛtra limb by limb, then he sent the waters to the ocean" (yād asya manyur ādhvanīd vi vṛtram paraśo rujān // apāḥ samudram aśrayat. On śṛṇviṣe, see George Cardona, "Rigvedic śṛṇviṣe" in Language, vol. 37, no. 3, part 1, July-Sept., 1961, pp. 338-41.

55 tvām ha tvād indra codīḥ sākhā vṛtram yād vajrin vṛṣakarmam udbhūnaḥ
tyādha śūra vṛṣamaṇāḥ parācay vi dāṣyur yonāv akṛto vṛthāsat
Śayaṇa has anayasena for vṛthāsat.
I. 78. 4: "You, the best Vṛtra killer, you who shake the Dasyus violently".

VI. 29. 6: "Thus he (Indra) is born with unequalled ojas ("Daseinsmacht"). May he kill many Vṛtras and Dasyus".

The nature of these Dasyus is clear from the fact that the seers seek to distinguish the Āryas from the Dasyus:

I. 103. 3: "Throw, clever one, the bearer of the thunderbolt, your missile at the Dasyu; increase, O Indra, the power and splendour of the Ārya (people)".

I. 117. 21: "Blowing away the Dasyu with the bakura, you created wide light for the Ārya (people)".

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56 tām u tvā vṛtrahāntamā yā dáṣyūr avadhūnuṣe
We have already remarked (supra, fn.24) that epithets given to gods are not haphazard conglomerations of ideas; they had deep significance for Vedic man. Here, for example, the epithet of Agni, "the best slayer of Vṛtra", signifies that Agni helped the worshippers in the slaughter of Vṛtra in the past. Now that the Aryans are having difficulties, the god is repeating his heroic action of destroying inimical beings like the Dasyus.

57 evā hi jātō ásāmaty-ojāḥ puru ca vṛtṛā hanati nī dáṣyūn
For the significance of ojas, see Gonda, Ojas, especially p.46 ff..

58 vidvān vājrin dáṣyaye hetīṁ asyāryaṁ sāho vardhaya dyumnam indra
Śaṇaṇa has añudham for hetim.

59 abhī dáṣyūṁ bākureṇā dhāṁantarū jyotiś cakrathur āryaya
It is very difficult to determine what is meant by the term bākura in this passage. Śaṇaṇa has bhāsamāno vajraḥ, "gleaming thunderbolt". Tāśka, Nirukta, VI. 25, remarks, "Bakura means one who gives light, or who inspires awe, or runs effulgent". Grassmann, WZR, col.897, "ein Blasinstrument für den Krieg"; Ludwig, LRV, vol.IV, p.36: "bakura musz irgend ein blasinstrument gewesen sein"; Geldner, GRY, vol.1, p.159, fn.21c, remarked, "bakura ist etwas, woraus ein Schlauch gefertigt wird. Der bākurā dīti (9.1.8), d.h. der aus Bakura gefertigte Schlauch, ist dort bildlicher Ausdruck für die Somapflanze". Renou, EVP, vol.XVI, p.18, refrained from commenting on the word. Sköld, The Nirukta, p.288, seems to accept Grassmann's "'Blasinstrument für den Krieg'".
II. 11. 19: "May we gain, while we overcome with your help all opponents, the Dasyus by the Arya (people)".  

III. 34. 9: "While killing the Dasyus, he helped the Arya colour".

I. 175. 3: "You are the winning hero, impel the chariot of the people; 0 overpowering one, burn the riteless Dasyu as a dish (is burnt) by blazing heat".

X. 49. 3: "I (Indra) am he who did not give an Aryan name to the Dasyu".

Indra and others helped individual Aryan heroes against the Dasyus:

II. 13. 9: "You tied up, without any cord, the Dasyus for Dabhīti".

II. 15. 9: "You sunk in deep sleep Cumuri and Dhuni; you slew the Dasyu (and) helped Dabhīti".

The expression "the chariot of the people" has a possible reference to the chariots in war. By "people" the poet is referring to the Aryan people supposed to have been descendents of Manu, the progenitor of mankind. Opposed to them are the Dasyus described as "riteless" in the above verse.

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IV. 38. 1: "You gave to the fertile land winner (Trasadasyu) an overwhelmingly powerful hammer for (subduing) the Dasyus". 66

X. 105. 11: "When you helped the son of Kutas in the Dasyu slaughter". 67

The Dasyus and defiant enemies are associated in the following passages:

VI. 23. 2: "Or when you fearless, while the resolved ones fear, defeat the defiant ones and the Dasyus, O Indra". 68

par la ruse, et qui doit profiter à un personnage dont le nom signifie "trompeur". Lastly, the lifting of Dabhiti in RV, II, 15, 4, was sought to be explained by Bergaigne by the identification of Dabhiti with the "lighted fire" in which Indra burnt the weapons of his army.

One may doubt Bergaigne's arguments. Dabhiti may be derived from dabh meaning to hurt, injure, destroy, and signify a hero who injures, hurts or destroys, and thus Dabhiti should not necessarily be connected with deceiving. Moreover, Bergaigne's connecting the so-called "trompeur" and "feu allume" is far-fetched. Instead, we maintain that the expression "sending to sleep" may simply mean that "Indra sent Cumuri and Dhuni to the sleep of death". See also in this connection, Oldenberg, ORD, p.154; Perry, JAOS, vol.11, p.211; Macdonell, VM, p.162; Keith, RPVU, pt.1 (HOS, vol.31), p.236.

This hymn is addressed to Dadhikraso Macdonell, VM, pp.148-9, derived the name from dadhi (curdled milk) and kr (to scatter), which alludes "to the dew or rime appearing at sunrise"; ultimately, he accepted Roth and Grassmann's opinion that Dadhikräs "represents in the form of a steed the circling ball of the sun". Ludwig, LRV, vol.IV, p.79, thinks that Dadhikravan was the actual and famous war horse of the king Trasadasyu. Geldner, GRV, vol.I, p.469, thought that "dadhikrā oder Dadhikravan war das Leibross des Königs Trasadasyu". We have taken kṣetrasam and urvarasam together and translated it as "to the fertile land winner". For ghanam, Sāyaṇa has āyuḥdam; Grassmann, HRV, vol.I, p.146, "den Feindetilger; WZR, col.421, (1) "Zermalmer, Vernichter", (2) "Keule" (3) "das Erschlagen"; Ludwig, op.cit., vol.I, p.89, took kṣetrasam ghanam together and translated it as "ackergewinnenden schläger"; Geldner, GRV, vol.I, p.469, "den Hammer".

ävo yād dasyuhātye kutsaputram

yād vā dākṣasya bibhyuṣo ābibhyad ārandhayaḥ ōrdhata indra dāsyūn
We have followed Geldner in translating the first idea of this line.

Geldner, op.cit., vol.II, p.122, translated, "oder als du selbst furchtlos, während der Entschlossene Furcht hatte ...".
VI. 24. 8: "When he is praised (by us), he (Indra) bends not to the tough, nor to the strong, nor to the defiant, who is driven by the Dasyu".

The Dasyus are associated with castles in the following passages:

II. 20. 8: "When they (the gods) laid the thunderbolt in his arms, he defeated the Dasyus and threw down the metal castles".

VIII. 98. 6: "You, Indra, are indeed the destroyer of many enduring castles, the killer of the Dasyus, the strengthener of Manu, the lord of heaven".

69

nā vīḻāve nāmāte nā sthirāya nā sārdhate dāsyuṭētāya stavan

The term pur, in the RV is susceptible of a dual interpretation. It may refer to the cloud castles where Vṛtra imprisons the water cows; or to the castle of the enemies which the Vedic gods destroy for their protégés. In determining the proper meaning of the word in any passage we should take into consideration the context in which it appears.

71

prāti yād āsyā vājram bāhvōr dhūr hatvī dāsyūn pūra āyasīr nī tārīt

The question, whether Ṛgvedic Aryans were familiar with iron or not, is a controversial one. S.D. Singh, "Iron in Ancient India", in JESHO, vol.V, pp.212-6, remarks, "We may not unreasonably conclude that though ayas in the Ṛgveda usually means copper or bronze, it may not invariably do so, especially in the later books" (p.215); D.D. Kosambi, "The Beginning of the Iron Age in India", in JESHO, vol.VI, pp.309-18, remarked, "Let it be agreed that Ṛgvedic references to ayas need not mean iron, as bronze could be indicated" (p.314). N.R. Banerjee, The Iron Age in India, ch.6, p.160, remarks, "It is possible, therefore, that ayas was used to cover both copper and iron to begin with, i.e., in the Ṛgveda, it would ipso facto imply that the iron was already known". A.L. Basham, "The Rise of Buddhism in its Historical Context", in Asian Studies, vol. IV, no.3, pp.395-411, thinks that iron was "unknown in the Ṛg Veda" (p.398).

72

tvām hi śāśvatām āndrā dārtā purām āsi
hantā dāsyor māno vṛdhāḥ pātir divāḥ

Here two ideas are mentioned side by side, the killing of the Dasyu and the strengthening of Manu, mankind. Here the poet seems to convey the idea that, as a champion of the interests of the human beings, Indra destroyed the Dasyus.
X. 47. 4: "Who kills the Dasyus, breaks the castles, truthful, 0 Indra; give us manifold and excellent (literally, bull-like) wealth".

X. 99. 7: "More manly than Nahus, the well born one has for us broken the castles in the slaughter of the Dasyus, worthy of being worshipped".

The religious antagonism between the Dasyus and Aryas is dwelt on in the RV. The Dasyus are avrata-, "one who disregards the fixed regulations of good behaviour and personal function". The term anyāvrata- is...
interesting and means he who follows "other or alien injunction, function, ordinance, practice or belief". This shows that the Dasyus too had their own religious traditions and ordinances, which were quite different from those practised by the Aryans.

Whatever might have been the exact nature of these alien practices, we can be sure that these were not characterised by sacrificial rituals, for the Dasyus are ayājān, 77 "without sacrifice"; ayājyūn, 78 "who do not sacrifice"; ayājvānam, 79 "not sacrificing"; avṛdhān, 80 "who do not increase (religious merits by sacrificing to the gods)"; āprṇataḥ, 81 "who do not please (the gods by sacrifice)". It is possibly because of the absence of sacrifice in their religion that they are described as akarma, 82 "without (religious) rites".

Another feature of the Dasyu religion was that they did not believe in the Devas (ādevayum). 83 It is because they did not believe in the Devas that they were described as aśraddhān, 84 "without faith (in the Devas). They were akratūṃ, 85 "who do not have any faith in the mental energy and power of the gods".

77 Ibid., VII. 6. 3; also traced by R.S. Sharma, Śūdras in Ancient India, p.10.
78 Ibid., VII. 6. 3.
79 Ibid., VIII. 70. 11.
80 Ibid., VII. 6. 3.
81 Ibid., V. 7. 10.
82 Ibid., X. 22. 8.
83 Ibid., VIII. 70. 11.
84 Ibid., VII. 6. 3. On śraddhā, see Gonda, DRI, pp.43 and 136.
85 Ibid., VII. 6. 3.
The epithet ámānusa-, 86 "non-human", given to the Dasyus, does not necessarily mean that they were not really human beings, but shows that the poets wanted to contrast them with the Manuṣa, the human being par excellence, a true and representative Aryan, or perhaps the descendants of Manu, the progenitor of mankind. Thus, various gods are recorded to have helped Manu or Manus against the Dasyus in the following passages:-

VIII. 50. 8: "With which (bay steeds) you (Indra) silenced (i.e. killed) the Dasyu for Manus". 87

VIII. 98. 6: "Slayer of the Dasyu, increaser (of the interest) of Manu". 88

IX. 92. 5: "He (Soma) helped Manu (and) created (a hostile) encounter for the Dasyu". 89

The epithet, mṛdhravāc-, 90 given to the Dasyus in V. 29. 10 and VII. 6. 3, may be translated as "hostile speaker". We are not in a position to rend it with Muir 91 as "the people of imperfect utterance", or "the imperfect speaking people"; for the same term is used to describe the Pūru king 92 in VII. 18. 13, who was manifestly an Aryan chief of the RV.

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86 Ibid., VIII. 70. 11; X. 22. 8.
87 yēbhir nī dáṣyum mánuṣo nighoṣāyaḥ
88 hantā dáṣyor mánor vṛdhāḥ
89 prāvan mánum dáṣyave kar abhīkam
90 Sāyāna has himsitavāgindriyān asurān (on V. 29. 10) and himsitavacaskān (VII. 6. 3) for mṛdhravāc-; Grassmann, WZR, col.1061, "schmahende (mrdhra) Reden (vāc) führend"; Ludwig, LRV, vol.I, p.413 (VII. 6. 3) and vol.II, p.109 (V. 29, 10), "die feindlich sprechenden"; Geldner, GRV, vol.II, p.26, "Missredenden" (V. 29. 10) and vol.II, p.186, "missredenden" (VII. 6. 3); Renou, EVP, vol.XIII, p.57, "à la parole barbare".
92 Vasiṣṭha is here describing how king Sudās, his patron, defeated the various kings in the course of the War of the Ten Kings, one of them being the Pūru king.
Certainly the Puru king's language could not have been imperfect to the Aryan seer. Or, could it refer to linguistic differences among the Aryans themselves?

Among other epithets of the Dasyus, we may mention vṛjīna- (III. 34. 6), "crooked"; grathīn- (VII. 6. 3), "false"; āsīva (I. 117. 3), "inauspicious". They are māyāvat- (IV. 16. 9), "crafty". The term anāsa- (V. 29. 10), "noseless", possibly points to the facial difference between the Dasyus and the Aryas.

The following references to the Dasyus being expelled from their homeland are significant and show the ousting of these people from their lands by the Aryans:

VII. 5. 6: "You, Agni, expelled the Dasyus from their homeland".

VII. 6. 3: "Further and further Agni drove out the Dasyus (from their homeland)".

VIII. 14. 15: "You Indra destroyed in various directions the settlements of those who do not press (soma)".

The wars against the Dasyus led to their defeat and resulted in the winning of the land by the Aryans, though this is again mixed up with

93 On māyā, see Gonda, "The Original Sense and Etymology of Skt. Māyā", in Four Studies in the Language of the Veda, pp.119-94.

94 tvām dāṣyur ēkaso āgaṇ ājaḥ. In an earlier verse (VII. 5. 3), we hear of the "black people" (viṣah asiknīḥ) who "left behind their food" (jāhatīr bhōjanāṇi) for fear of Agni, who destroyed their castles.

95 práprā tān dāṣyur agnīr vivāya. This is a conjectural interpretation which is justified by the second idea of the same line of the verse: "The easterly (Agni) made (i.e., sent) the non-sacrificing ones westerly" (i.e., towards the west), pūrvas cakārāparā āvajyūn. The idea seems to be that Agni forced these "non-sacrificing ones" to leave their homeland in the east and flee towards the west.

96 asunvām indra samsādām viṣūcin vy anāsaṇāḥ. The term asunvām "of those who do not press (soma)" is significant. This clearly shows that the religion of the Dasyus was not characterised by soma sacrifice. This contradicts Rönnow's "vorvedischen" reconstruction of the soma sacrifice, see supra, p.169.
cosmogonic tales of the winning of the waters, sun and cows, which, as we
have noted earlier, are also a characteristic feature of the Indra-Vṛtra
saga. We may note the following evidence with regard to the result of
the wars against the Dasyus:

I. 100. 18: "He (Indra), invoked by many, having killed the
Dasyus and Śimyus, laid them low on the earth with his missiles.
He, provided with the beautiful thunderbolt, won the land, won
the sun, won the waters, with his white friends". 97

V. 14. 4: "Agni shone forth after being born; killing the
Dasyus, with light (he obliterated) darkness. He found the
cows, the waters, the sun". 98

VI. 18. 3: "You (Indra) then subjugated the Dasyus, you alone
won the lands for the Ārya". 99

The three proper names, Dasyave Vṛka, Trasadasyu and Dasyave Sahas,
are interesting and can be translated as "wolf for the Dasyu", "one who
makes the Dasyu shudder", and "a power against the Dasyu", respectively.
It is difficult to determine whether the three are actual proper names or
descriptive epithets given to three Aryan heroes perpetuating their heroic
exploits against the Dasyus. Considering the tremendous antagonism between

97 dāsyūn chīmyūṁś ca puruhūtā ēvair hatvā pṛthivyāṁ śārvā nī barhīt
śanat kṣetram sākhībhīḥ śvītīyēbhīḥ śanat sūryaṁ śanād apāḥ śuvaṅraiḥ

98 On śvītīyēbhīḥ, Sāyana comments śvetavarnair ālaṁkāreṇa dīptāṅgaṁ.

99 agnīr jāto arocataṁ āluṁ dāsyūn ḥyōtiśā tāmaṁ
āvindad gā apāḥ svāḥ

tvāṁ ha nú tyād ādamāyo dāsyūr ēkaḥ kṛṣṭīr avanor āryāya
the Aryans and the Dasyus, we should perhaps be justified in taking the
three terms as epithets rather than proper names. 100

100

About the exploits of the three against the Dasyus, not much information
is forthcoming. Trasadasyu, the Pūru chief, had to struggle against the
Dasyus, as we know from IV. 38, 1, when Indra is recorded to have given a
powerful hammer to him for subduing the Dasyus (see supra, fn. 66,
for a translation and explanation of the relevant line). Dasyave Vṛka may
be a rṣi or a chief. In VIII, 55 and 56 his benevolence and gifts are
lauded. Among these gifts appear "a hundred Dāsas". It is likely that
Dasyave Vṛka acquired huge wealth after his successful wars against the
Dasyu-Dāsa people, after which he distributed enormous gifts to the seers,
who, in their turn, gratefully lauded him and gave him the honorific,
Dasyave Vṛka. Dasyave Sahas appears in I. 36, 18, where the sacrificers
request Agni to bring, among others, Dasyave Sahas. This hymn is full of
references to the Atrins ("the voracious ones", I. 36, 14), Rakṣas (I. 36,
15, the context shows that the Rakṣas in this passage should be taken to
refer to human enemies) and other types of earthly enemies (I. 36, 16)
against whom the sacrificers are struggling. The purport of the hymn is
that, just as in the past Dasyave Sahas became victorious against the Dasyus,
he would perform the same heroic exploits against the Atrins and the Rakṣas
etc., and save the sacrificers from a critical situation. Hence Agni is
requested to bring Dasyave Sahas. Though we do not deny that it may simply
mean, "courage to fight the Dasyu".
The Dāsas in the RV

Together with the Dasyus, the Dāsas also appear as antagonists of the Aryans. The term appears as an epithet of Vṛtra in a clearly vegetative context, for example, the waters obstructed by Vṛtra receive the epithet dāsāpatnīs,

"whose master is the Dāsa". In another passage, the word appears as an epithet of Ahi, where Ahi is recorded to have thought himself to be immortal.

In another passage, Srbinda, Anarśani, Pipru and the Dāsa Ahīśuva are recorded to be killed by Indra who released the waters.

But, besides being an epithet of Vṛtra, the Dāsas appear as enemies of the Aryans in a majority of cases in the RV. As with the Dasyus, the Rigvedic poets are meticulous in distinguishing the Aryans from the Dāsas and what is interesting, they sometimes employ the term, varṇa (colour), in this connection:

I. 104. 2: "May the gods make the fury of the Dāsa non-injurious; may they lead our people (lit. colour) to prosperity".

II. 12. 4: "By whom (Indra) all these movable (beings) were created, who brought the Dāsa colour into the darkness of subjection".

RV, I. 32. 11; V. 30. 5 and VIII. 96. 18. Significantly enough, in X. 43. 8, Indra is recorded to have made the Aryans the masters of the waters (yō aryāpatnīr ákrṇod imā apah). Lanman, A Sanskrit Reader, p.362.

See supra, chap. III, fn.81. We have followed Ludwig (op.cit., vol.II, p.54) in translating this passage; Ludwig translated the passage as follows: "von dem all disz bewegliche (vergängliche) geschaffen, der die Dānakaste in der unterwürfigkeit dunkel
X. 86. 19: "I (Indra) go (towards the sacrifice) viewing (the sacrificer), distinguishing between the Dāsa and Ārya".  

varṇa means colour and it was the bodily colour of the Dāsas which distinguished them from the Āryas. We have some significant references with regard to the colour of the Dāsas:-

II. 20. 7: "The Vṛtra-slayer Indra, the destroyer of castles, blasted the black breed of the Dāsas".  

VI. 47. 21: "He impelled, day after day, the darksome offspring, alike (in appearance), from their seat to another place".  

VIII. 73. 18: "(I am) afflicted by the black people; break, O audacious one (this application) like (you break) a castle".

That these Dāsa peoples were organised in communities is clear from the references to the viśas of the Dāsas against whom various Aryan gods, like Indra, were fighting, obviously on behalf of the Aryans:-

IV. 28. 4: "You, Indra, made the Dasyus lowest of all; you made the Dāsa communities honourless".

105 contd
brachte. Instead of Ludwig's "Dasakaste", we have preferred "Dāsa colour" for dāsam varṇam in the above passage.

ayam emi vicākaśad vicinvān dāsam āryam
In translating this line, we have borrowed several ideas from Sāyaṇa. Thus Sāyaṇa has ayam aham indrani emi yajfiam prati gacchami, and, vicākaśat pasyaṇ yajamanāna.

sā vṛtrahendrāḥ kṛṣṇāyonaṁ purāṇḍarō dāśir airayad ví

divēdive saḍśir anyām ārdham kṛṣṇā asedhat āpa sādmāno jāḥ
In the next line we have reference to Indra killing the Dāsas Varcin and Śambara.

pūrāṁ nā dhṛṣṭav ā ruja kṛṣṇāyā bādhita viśā

vīśvasmat simadhamaḥ indra dasyūṁ viśo dāśir akrṇor aprāṣastāḥ
This is an interesting passage. The Dasyus are here described as the communities or subjects or general masses of the people of the Dāsas. Do the Dāsas then refer to the ruling, perhaps the nobles among the Dasyu people?

R.S. Sharma, op.cit., p.9, remarks that while the policy of the Aryans
VI. 25. 2: "With these (helps) destroy all assaults, subjugate the Dāsa communities for the Ārya".  

X. 148. 2: "May you, hero Indra, born as a valiant warrior, prevail over the Dāsa communities with the sun".

Like the Dasyus, the Dāsas have their castles which various gods destroy for the Aryans:

I. 103. 3: "By nature possessing firmness, because he believes in his own strength, he (Indra) wandered around, breaking the Dāsa castles".

III. 12. 6: "Indra and Agni, you shook the ninety castles dominated by the Dāsas, together in one single venture".

110 contd

vis-a-vis the Dasyus was one of ruthless extermination, that, in the case of the Dāsas, was tempered with moderation. Is it possible that the Aryans deliberately followed a policy of moderation with regard to the Dāsas because they wanted the pre-Aryan ruling class to be won over to their side? We have a parallel to the viśo dāsīh of our passage in tṛtsunām viśaḥ (VII. 33. 6), a designation of the Bharatas. It may be translated as "the communities, subjects, or the general masses of the people of the Tṛtsus", that is of the Tṛtsu royal family. Illustrious kings, like Divodāsa and Śūdas, belonged to this family.

If our interpretation is correct, then it raises an interesting question, whether some sort of a social stratification existed even in pre-Aryan India? We cannot give a definite answer, unless and until the Indus Valley script is deciphered, though we contend that the reference to dasyun viśaḥ may serve as a significant pointer. For the archaeological material bearing on pre-Aryan social division, see M.S. Vats, Excavations at Harappa, p.63; Childe, New Light on the Most Ancient East, p.175; Wheeler, The Indus Civilization, p.34; Mackay, Early Indus Civilization, p.19; Bridget and Raymond Allchin, The Birth of Indian Civilization, pp.137 and 244.

We have followed Geldner, op.cit., vol.I, p.133, in translating this passage. He translated it as follows: "Von Natur einen Halt besitzend, indem er an seine Stärke glaubt, zog er umher, die däsischen Burgen brechend".

111 ābhir viśvā abhiyūdo viśucīr āryāya viśo 'va tārīr dāśīh

112 ṛṣvās tvām indra śūra jātō dāśīr viśaḥ sūryeṇa sahyāḥ

113 sā jātūbharmā śraddādāhāna ājāh pūro vibhindān acarad vī dāśīh

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114 ābhir viśvā abhīyūdo viśucīr āryāya viśo 'va tārīr dāśīh
VI. 20. 10: "While he rent the seven autumnal castles, their refuge, he killed the Dāsa (people), helping Purukutsa". 115

It was perhaps the wealth hoarded in these castles which attracted the Aryans; it is said to have been distributed among the Aryans by Indra:-

III. 34. 1: "Indra, the castle breaker, subdued the Dāsa with lightning, he found wealth, dividing (the wealth of) enemies". 116

VIII. 40. 6: "May we divide with Indra this (Dāsa's) hoarded wealth". 117

The information that the Dasas had "autumnal castles" is interesting. In I. 131. 4, Indra is said to have destroyed "autumnal castles" (pūro yad indra śāradīr avātīraḥ) and chastised those people "who do not sacrifice" (āyajyum). In I. 174. 2, Indra broke down the seven autumnal castles of the "hostile speakers" (mṛdhravācāḥ) and helped Purukutsa. Obviously, these forts also belonged to the Dasyu-Dasa people. The expression "autumnal castles" may signify the elevated regions on which these castles were built, for fear of recurring floods. Significantly enough, archaeologists pointed out that houses were built in the Indus Valley region on raised platforms because of recurrent Indus floods. See, in this connection, John Marshall, MMI, vol. I, pp. 1, 7, 19, 102-3, 190 and 265; Childe, op.cit., p. 186; Wheeler, op.cit., pp. 8, 37-8, 55-6, 64, 127-8; Bridget and Raymond Allchin, op.cit., p. 246, R.L. Raikes has recently propounded the view that, tectonic movements downstream led to the formation of mighty lakes and silting which might have brought about the downfall of the civilization; see his articles: "The Mohenjodaro Floods", in Antiquity, vol. XXXIX, pp. 196-203; "The End of the Ancient Cities of the Indus", in American Anthropologist, vol. 66, pp. 284-99; "Kalibangan: Death from Natural Causes", in Antiquity, vol. XLII, pp. 256-91; also G.F. Dales, "New Investigation at Mohenjodaro", in Archaeology, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 145-51; "The Decline of the Harappans", in Scientific American, vol. 214, no. 5, pp. 92-100; also W.A. Fairservis, Jr, "The Harappan Civilization – New Evidence and More Theory", in American Museum Novitates, no. 2055 (1961), pp. 1-35, especially pp. 27-30; also G.L. Possehl, "The Mohenjodaro Floods – A Reply", in American Anthropologist, vol. 69, no. 1, pp. 32-40. We agree that recurrent floods of the Indus led to the desertion of the Indus Valley cities, if not to their actual downfall.

115
saptā yāt pūraḥ śārma śāradīr dārd dhān dāsīḥ purukūṭsāya śīkṣan
The information that the Dāsas had "autumnal castles" is interesting. In I. 131. 4, Indra is said to have destroyed "autumnal castles" (pūro yad indra śāradīr avātīraḥ) and chastised those people "who do not sacrifice" (āyajyum). In I. 174. 2, Indra broke down the seven autumnal castles of the "hostile speakers" (mṛdhra-vācaḥ) and helped Purukutsa. Obviously, these forts also belonged to the Dasyu-Dasa people. The expression "autumnal castles" may signify the elevated regions on which these castles were built, for fear of recurring floods. Significantly enough, archaeologists pointed out that houses were built in the Indus Valley region on raised platforms because of recurrent Indus floods. See, in this connection, John Marshall, MMI, vol. I, pp. 1, 7, 19, 102-3, 190 and 265; Childe, op.cit., p. 186; Wheeler, op.cit., pp. 8, 37-8, 55-6, 64, 127-8; Bridget and Raymond Allchin, op.cit., p. 246, R.L. Raikes has recently propounded the view that, tectonic movements downstream led to the formation of mighty lakes and silting which might have brought about the downfall of the civilization; see his articles: "The Mohenjodaro Floods", in Antiquity, vol. XXXIX, pp. 196-203; "The End of the Ancient Cities of the Indus", in American Anthropologist, vol. 66, pp. 284-99; "Kalibangan: Death from Natural Causes", in Antiquity, vol. XLII, pp. 256-91; also G.F. Dales, "New Investigation at Mohenjodaro", in Archaeology, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 145-51; "The Decline of the Harappans", in Scientific American, vol. 214, no. 5, pp. 92-100; also W.A. Fairservis, Jr, "The Harappan Civilization – New Evidence and More Theory", in American Museum Novitates, no. 2055 (1961), pp. 1-35, especially pp. 27-30; also G.L. Possehl, "The Mohenjodaro Floods – A Reply", in American Anthropologist, vol. 69, no. 1, pp. 32-40. We agree that recurrent floods of the Indus led to the desertion of the Indus Valley cities, if not to their actual downfall.

116
īndraḥ pūrbdhād ātīrdu dāsām arkaīr vidādvasur dāyamāno vī śātrūn

117
vayām tád asya sānvṛtam vásv índreṣa vī bhajemahi
In the previous line, the sacrificers request Indra to destroy the ojas ("Daseinsmacht") of their Dāsa enemy.
We have references to several individual Dāsas who may have been their chiefs. Thus Indra severed the beloved head of the Dāsa Arśasāna. Indra crushed the head of the Dāsa Vyamsa with his weapon. Indra and Viṣṇu destroyed the "craft" of the Dāsa Vṛṣaśipra in the war. But these were rather insignificant compared to another Dāsa chief, Śambara, who was an enemy of Divodāsa.

Śambara must have been a chief of considerable importance, for we hear frequently of his castles, which are said to number ninety nine or a hundred. Śambara must have fought from these castles and his struggle against the Aryans must have been a protracted one, for we are informed that he was brought to bay in the fortieth autumn.

Śambara is sometimes mentioned together with the Dāsa Varcin, whose hundred thousand men are said to have been destroyed. Indra killed Varcin and Śambara in Udavraja. According to Sāyaṇa, Udavraja is the name of a particular locality (deśaviṃśa). Grassmann suggested the

118 ava priyām arśasānāsyā saḥvāṇ chiro bharad dāsāsyā svadhāvān RV, I I. 20. 6.
119 śiro dāsasya sāṃ piṇag vadhēna, ibid., IV. 18. 9.
120 dāsasya cid vṛṣaśiprasyā māyā jaghnāthur narā prtanājyesu, ibid., VII. 99. 4. Vṛṣaśipra might either be a proper name or the descriptive appellation of a Dāsa chief. In the latter case it may be translated "having cheeks like a bull".
121 Ibid., II. 19. 6; IV. 26. 3; VI. 47. 2.
122 Ibid., II. 14. 6; VI. 31. 4.
123 Ibid., II. 12. 11.
124 Ibid., II. 14. 6; VII. 99. 5.
125 áhan dāsā vṛṣabhō vasnayānt odāvraje varcīnām śāmbaram ca, RV, VI. 47. 21: "The manly (lit. bull-like) one slew the two bargaining Dāsas, Śambara and Varcin in Udavraja".
emended reading Udávrajā and translated the word as "die Flutversperrerr",126 which is rather arbitrary. Ludwig translated "am waszerverschlusze".127 Ludwig's translation may be etymologically unobjectionable, but we do not know why we should not accept Śāyaṇa's interpretation of the word as the name of a place, where the Aryans fought a battle against these two Dāsa chiefs.

We have frequent references to Śambara's residence in the mountains:—

I. 130. 7: "For Atithigva, the powerful one (Indra) brought down Śambara from the mountain".129

IV. 30. 14: "Also the Dāsa Śambara, the son of Kulitara, you struck down, Indra, from the high mountain".130

VI. 26. 5: "From the mountain you struck down the Dāsa Śambara; you helped Divodāsa with marvellous help".131

Śambara was thus a non-Aryan chief who resided in the hills and Udavraja, which was perhaps situated on a hill, was the place where he was finally defeated.

Religious differences between the Aryans and the Dāsas are alluded to in the following passages:—

126
127
128
Geldner, GRV, vol.II, p.146, fn.1, remarked that Udávraja is "Eine bestimmte Ortlichkeit".
129
atithigvāya sāmbaraṁ girēr ugró avābharat
130
utā dāsāṁ kaulitaram bṛhatāḥ pārvatād ādhi ávāhann indra sāmbaram
131
āva girēr dāsāṁ sāmbaraṁ han prāvo dīvadāsaṁ citrābhīr āti
V. 34. 6: "Exceedingly forceful in war, halting the chariot wheel, opponent of the non-pressers, strengthener of the pressers; Indra, the subduer of all, the terrible, the Arya, leads the Dāsa according to (his) pleasure".\(^{132}\)

VIII. 70. 10: "You, Indra, observing the principles of cosmic truth or order or ordered movement, satisfied your revilers (by your thunderbolt) for us. Cover (ourselves), you highly courageous, in (your) spacious (shelter); strike down the Dāsa with your weapons".\(^{133}\)

X. 38. 3: "Whatever, O much lauded Indra, godless Dāsa or Arya have us in view for war ...".\(^{134}\)

Significantly enough, there are references to rapprochements between the Aryans and the Dāsas even in the RV, when some of the Dāsa chiefs begin to appear in a favourable light. Thus even an Aryan seer records the hundred gifts of Dāsa Balbūtha and Tarukṣa.\(^{135}\) The term also came to

\(^{132}\) vitvāksanah śaṁrtau cakramāsajō 'sunvato yīṣuṇah sunvato vṛdhāḥ īndro viśvasya damitā vibhīṣano yathāvasām nayati dāsam āryaḥ

\(^{133}\) tvāṁ na indra ṭyatūs tvānide ni ṭrmpasi mādhye vasīṣya tuviṁrmnorvōr nī dāsam śiṁnatho háthaiḥ

The Dāsa must be the tvānidaḥ of the first line. Compare in this the expression devānīd in I. 152. 2; II. 23, 8 and VI. 61. 3. It is difficult to translate nīṛmpasi of the above verse. Grassmann, op.cit., vol.I, p.487, translated tvānido nī ṭrmpasi as, "den, der dich hasst, verzehrest du"; Ludwig, op.cit., vol.II, p.221, "die dir vorwürfe machen, die sättigst du"; Geldner, op.cit., vol.II, p.395, "du hast deine Schmäher satt". tvānido nī ṭrmpasi literally means, "You satisfied your revilers", but taken literally this does not make much sense. Hence is our conjecture that Indra satisfied his revilers by measuring his famous weapon against them, i.e., he killed them. The root ṭrp generally connotes fullness with food or drink. Probably its use here is ironic or euphemistic. Compare the English colloquial phrase "fed up".

\(^{134}\) yo no dāsa āryo vā puruṣṭutādeva indra yudhāye cīketati

\(^{135}\) satāṃ dāse balbūthe vípras tārūkṣa ā dade, RV, VIII. 46. 32. See also in this connection, our ch.II, fn. 260 and 334,
denote "a slave", at least in two passages of the RV which record the
gifts of Praskapya and Yadu-Turvasa.

136 Ibid., VIII. 56. 3.
137 Ibid., X. 62. 10. See also I. 92. 8, where the sacrificer prays for
dasápravarga-, which may be translated as "a band or multitude of servants".
D Conclusions

Thus, on the basis of the above evidence, we may reach the following conclusions:

(1) Vṛtra signifies obstructing human enemies. The creation of a masculine Vṛtra is a Vedic development, when attempts were made to personify the concept of "obstruction" as a demon Vṛtra. The expression dāsāṅy āryāṇi vṛtra should be translated as "the obstructing Dāsa or Arya enemies".

(2) The word Dasyu refers to inimical or hostile people who were totally opposed to the Aryan advance in India. The marked difference between the Aryan and Dasyu religion is to be especially noted. These Dasyus were defeated and expelled from their hearth and home and on the land thus occupied the Aryan tribes settled.

(3) The Dasas perhaps formed the ruling clan or nobility among the Dasyu people and, like the Dasyus, were opposed to the Aryans. Besides other factors, the black skin of the Dāsas was one of the criteria of difference between the Aryans and the Dāsas. Some of the Dāsa chiefs, for example Sambara, kept up a protracted resistance against the Aryans, but were ultimately defeated. Towards the end of the Rgvedic period, however, some of the Dāsa chiefs, like Balbūtha, began to embrace Aryan culture and religion and perhaps their followers were accepted as the menial class of the Vedic society.

In an interesting analysis of the Dasyu-Dāsa problem, Hillebrandt proposed a western origin for them. Hillebrandt identified the Dāsas with the Daher tribe mentioned by Greek historians. About the Dasyus, he referred to the Avestan Danyu (old Persian daḥyāus) which means 'a district

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or country' in ancient Iran; in this sense, it is applied to denote both Aryan and non-Aryan districts. Among the non-Aryan districts Hillebrandt mentions the Turanian, Sairimian, Dahian and Sainian districts in the Avesta. He was not in favour of the view that it was the designation of the pre-Aryans of India; it might refer to the non-Aryans of the Vedas, but by it we should also understand the non-Aryans of the west and the north-west. In this connection, Hillebrandt referred to the Brahuis who are related to the Dravidians, and held that the Arya-Dasyu conflict might refer to the struggle of the Aryans against such tribes.

The term, Dasyu (Danyu, Dāhyau) might have conveyed the idea of a country or a district in the time when the Indo-Iranians were living together either in the plains of the Oxus and Jaxartes or the Pamir plateau region. But we cannot say definitely why the Indian Aryans attached only the idea of a hostile enemy to the word in the RV, while it originally used to denote both Aryan and non-Aryan districts in the Avesta. It is not unlikely though that the Rgvedic Aryans wanted to distinguish themselves from the non-Aryans more sharply than did the ancient Persians, and thus deliberately refrained from referring to the Aryan-occupied districts by the term Dasyu. Ultimately, it came to denote a hostile enemy.

We accept Hillebrandt's identification of the Dāsas with the Daher in an emended form. It is quite likely that the Aryans in course of their migration towards India came in contact with the Daher tribe outside India. This Daher tribe might have left their homeland of the South Russian Steppe region under the pressure of the Aryans and perhaps settled in India as

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the leaders of the pre-Aryans. When the Aryans invaded India, they found the same people among the pre-Aryans of India. Gradually some of these Dāsa chiefs accepted the Aryan religion and their followers were incorporated within the Aryan society as the menial class.

Ojha compared the Babylonian, Indian, Egyptian, Greek and ancient Jewish tales of the slaying of a primeval dragon and considered them to be influenced by the pre-Aryan snake cult. The defeat of the dragon refers to the defeat of the serpent-worshipping people. The history of pre-Aryan India was the history of the Nāga people who were identified with the Dravidians. Śuṇḍa, Arbuda, Ahi, Vala etc. were Nāga chiefs. These snake-worshippers spread from the Mediterranean up to the Indus plains and beyond. Later on a synthesis took place between the Nāga and Aryan culture and the serpent gods were accepted by the latter, though the memory of the defeat of the Nāga people, their association with evil and darkness, lingered on in the old literature.

It is difficult to accept the theory of Ojha. Vṛtra was never a non-Aryan chief and is never described as such. Vṛtra in the RV is a conceptual term; it is not the designation of a human being. As we have remarked earlier, the Indo-Iranians, like other Indo-Europeans, inherited a legendary framework from their common past in which "obstruction, barring, preventing or impeding" was the central idea. The concept of a demon Vṛtra was an Indian development. Even in the RV, the concept of a masculine Vṛtra was gradually taking shape from its original neuter form.

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142
Benveniste and Renou, op.cit., p.178.
That the pre-Aryans were Nāga-worshipping Dravidians is very problematical. There is no unanimity as to whether the pre-Aryans were really Dravidians, though scholars are gradually veering to this conclusion. Even if we accept that the Dravidians were the most prominent among the pre-Aryans of India, we cannot accept that Ahi or Vṛtra was a non-Aryan word, because it goes against the evidence of comparative philology and semantics, which we have adduced in our second chapter. Moreover, the worship of the snake could never have been wholly non-Aryan, for the Aryans themselves worshipped Ahi Budhnya, "the dragon of the deep", perhaps the lightning form of Agni.

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Macdonell, VM, pp.72-3.
CHAPTER V

_Vrtra in the later Vedic Literature_

A. The Rgveda and the later Vedic Literature - A Survey of the view of earlier scholars with regard to the nature of Rgvedic poetry and sacrifice and the innovations introduced by later ritualists

With the later Vedic literature we enter into a strange atmosphere which is permeated by ritualism. We do not mean by this that ritualism did not also form part of the religious life of the Rgvedic people, but this ritualism is simpler than the one in the later Vedas. The main objective of the Brāhmaṇas is to relate the sacrificial songs and formulas to the rite. In order to achieve it, Rgvedic verses were quoted in a haphazard manner and little or no attention was paid to their contexts. Sagas and legends were twisted almost beyond recognition, while additions and alterations were made to them in order to achieve one single purpose - to justify the ritual under consideration.

A question of singular importance is whether the main rituals were already firmly fixed in the Rgvedic age or whether they gradually evolved in the later ages. Scholars have expressed divergent opinions with regard to this problem.

Max Müller remarked that even Saśa was aware that the hymns of the RV have an anomalous character, because he was brought up under a system of stiff liturgical religion and thus failed to find a coherent system in the Rgvedic hymns as compared to the Yajur- or Sāmaveda. Max Müller went

1 In later Vedic literature we include the Yajurveda, Samaveda, the Brāhmaṇas, the Aranyakas and the Upanişads. For the Atharvaveda, which has a peculiar character, see our Appendix D.

2 Max Müller, _A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature_, p.460.
on to remark, "Whenever we find in the ancient literature and theology of
the Brahmans anything that is contrary to their general rules, anything
that seems anomalous to them and is yet allowed to exist, we may be sure
that it contains some really historical elements, and that it was of too
solid a nature to receive the smooth polish of the Brahmanic system. It
is so with the Rig-veda-sanhita. It belongs to a period previous to the
complete ascendancy of the Brahmans". The collection of the Rgvedic hymns
took place at a time when the influence of the priestly class was being felt,
but Max Müller still claimed "for this collection a character not yet
exclusively ceremonial". While the sacredness of the poetry of the Šāma-
and Yajurvedas lies in its application to the solemn sacrifices, that of
the RV lies in its being handed down from a hoary antiquity. In another
context, Max Müller attributed the Rgvedic hymns "to a less practical age
than that of the Brāhmaṇa period; to an age, not entirely free from the
trammels of a ceremonial, yet not completely enslaved by a system of mere
formalities". Commenting on I. 194. 4, which describes the Dārśapūrṇamāsa,
Max Müller commented, "Passages like this do not necessitate the admission
of a full-grown ceremonial, they only point to its natural beginnings". In
another place Max Müller spoke of the simple sacrifices of an earlier
period, not yet trammelled by a bewildering system of ceremonies. On the

3 Max Müller, ibid., pp.460-1.
4 Max Müller, ibid., p.467.
5 Max Müller, ibid., p.468.
6 Max Müller, ibid., p.477.
7 Max Müller, ibid., p.491.
8 Max Müller, ibid., p.525.
the Uṣas hymn (VII. 77), Max Müller commented, "This hymn addressed to the Dawn is a fair specimen of the original simple poetry of the Veda. It has no reference to any special sacrifice, it contains no technical expressions ...".  

A. Weber thought that "The Samhitā of the Rik is purely a lyrical collection, comprising the store of song which the Hindūs brought with them from their ancient homes on the banks of the Indus". With regard to the later Brahmanical texts, Weber thought that "They all date from the period of the transition from Vedic civilization and culture to the Brahmanic mode of thought and social order". Weber thought that the origin of the songs of the RV dates from a primitive time, but the redaction of the Samhitā took place at a time when the Brahmanical hierarchy was fully fledged. With regard to the incorporation of Ēgvedic legends in the Ēgveda Brāhmaṇas, Weber significantly remarked, "We must indeed assume generally, with regard to many of these legends, that they had already gained a rounded, independent shape in tradition before they were incorporated into the Brāhmaṇa, and of this we have frequent evidence in the distinctly archaic character of their language, compared with that of the rest of the text".  

M. Winternitz quoted the extreme views of A. Kaegi, according to whom the main characteristic of the Ēgvedic poetry is "a simple outpouring of the

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9 Max Müller, ibid., p.552.
13 Weber, ibid., p.47.
heart", \(^{14}\) or who saw even in the inferior verses of the RV""a fresh breath of vigorous primeval poetry"; \(^{15}\) and of Oldenberg, according to whom Rgvedic poetry""could have arisen only in the exclusive circles of the priestly sacrificial experts".\(^ {16}\) Winternitz himself took a middle way between these two opposite views and pointed out that there are in the RV both earlier and later materials. While we cannot deny the possibility that a large number of hymns arose independently of all sacrificial ritual, "it is equally certain that very many portions of the Rgveda-Samhitā were from the first intended for nothing but sacrificial songs and litanies, and were glued together in a rather workmanlike fashion by priestly singers".\(^ {17}\) For example, Winternitz pointed out that the hymns dedicated to Agni "have been used as songs of sacrifice, many of them having only been composed for sacrificial purposes. Yet we find among these songs many plain, simple prayers, which, perhaps, are the works of priests, but certainly are the works of poets".\(^ {18}\)

A.A. Macdonell thought that the four Vedas were "the outcome of a creative and poetic age, in which hymns and prayers were composed chiefly to accompany the pressing and offering of the Soma juice or the oblation of


\(^{15}\) "Ein frischer Hauch urkraftiger naturwüchsiger Poesie", Kaegi, ibid., p.36; Winternitz, ibid., p.63.

\(^{16}\) "Eine Poesie dieser Art konnte nur in den abgeschlossenen Kreisen priesterlicher Opfertechniker entstehen". H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, p.4. Yet, on the hymns to Uṣas, Oldenberg remarked, "Von der Poesie der Morgenfrühe durchweht und frei von Beziehungen auf die mystische Spitzfindigkeit der sakrifikalen Technik haven diese Dichtungen einen Reiz, wie er den eigentlichen Opferliedern fehlt". (p.242); Winternitz, ibid., p.63.

\(^{17}\) Winternitz, ibid., p.64.

\(^{18}\) Winternitz, ibid., p.78.
melted butter (ghṛta) to the gods". In the period of the Brāhmaṇas, however, the priesthood busied themselves with the elaboration of the rituals, as a result of which we have a very complex ritualistic system unsurpassed anywhere in the world. Commenting on the nature of these two classes of literature, Macdonell remarked, "The Vedas are poetical in matter and form; the Brāhmaṇas are prosaic and written in prose. The thought of the Vedas is on the whole natural and concrete; that of the Brāhmaṇas artificial and abstract. The chief significance of the Vedas lies in their mythology; that of the Brāhmaṇas in their ritual". The nature of the poetry in the RV is sacrificial, though less elaborate and complex than that of the Brāhmaṇas.

A. Hillebrandt pointed out the important features of the Ṛgvedic sacrificial cult. Hillebrandt began by remarking, "Ein befriedigendes Bild des ältesten Rituals ist noch nicht zu geben". He noted that multiplicity of priestly function was known to the Ṛgvedic people. The designations of priests did not differ much in the later ages; the designation, Upavaktri, is however replaced by the Praśāstri or Maitrāvaruna in the later texts, while Grāvagrabha and Udagrabha disappear in later times. Though the

19 Macdonell, A History of Sanskrit Literature, p.28.
20 Macdonell, ibid., p.30.
21 Macdonell, ibid., p.32.
22 Macdonell, ibid., p.64.
24 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.11.
26 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.12.
division of the priestly function into Hotr, Udgātr and Adhvaryu is observable, yet a separate literature for the Adhvaryu is not yet discernable, which is significant. We may contend that the nature of the ritual in the period of the RV is transitional, belonging to a time when the sacrificial cult has not yet become as complicated as to necessitate a special literature for the Adhvaryus. No information is available with regard to the office of the Brahman, who, in later times, used to serve as the superintendent of the great sacrifices - which information is significant and shows that the cult has not yet become as complicated as to necessitate a special class of priests who would remedy the mistakes committed during the sacrifice. The object of the sacrifice is not to profit a community greater or bigger than a family, but to benefit the individual who wants for himself success, wealth, children, long life etc. The Dīkṣā ("consecration") of later times is unknown in the RV; but the word vrata ("gelübde") in VII, 103. 1 led Hillebrandt to suppose that, as in later times, the word has a special significance even in the RV and the vrata is taken at the beginning of a sacrifice and renounced at the end of it. Of the two vedis of later times, the RV knows only one, the uttaravedi. The RV knows

27 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.12.
28 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.13. Hillebrandt remarked here that the complexity of the ritual in the RV points towards the institution of the office of a Brahman - which view is not acceptable to us. We consider that the sacrificial ritual is not yet as complicated as to require the office of a Brahman in this sense. Moreover, the RV never mentions that the Brahman is a superintendent of the whole sacrificial ritual. See also, Macdonell-Keith, VI, vol.II, pp.77-8.
three fire places, but the name of only one, *garhapatya*, is mentioned. 32

As containers of the pressed soma juice, the *RV* knows both *graḥa* and *camu*, but the latter disappears in later times. 33 The manifold sacrifices of later times are not to be found in the *RV*. 34 Apart from soma we find in the *RV* honey and *surā* as independent sacrificial drinks. The use of the first one is quite in the background in later ritual. 35

A. B. Keith remarked, "The imperfection of the record of the *Ṛgveda* renders it necessary in any account of the Vedic ritual to deal with the ritual, as it stands in the later Samhitās and *Brāhmaṇas". 36 He concluded that, "Religion is in the constant process of change, and things recorded first in the later texts may be new inventions". 37 In another place, Keith significantly remarked that the Vedic priests "were given to reflection on the ritual, and to discussions of its meaning as is proved to the hilt by the *Brāhmaṇas*, and as a result we must regard the whole of the Vedic period as one of steady modification in detail of the rite". 38

H. D. Griswold was of the opinion that "the ritual of the *Brāhmaṇas* was clearly continuous with that of the *Ṛgveda". 39

H. Bloomfield thought that the *Ṛgvedic* mode of worshipping the great nature-gods is not so extensive, formal and rigid as the technical ritual

33 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.15.
34 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.15.
35 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.15.
37 Keith, ibid., p.256.
38 Keith, ibid., p.252.
of the *Yajurveda* or the *Brāhmaṇas*. Bloomfield held, "The Rig-Veda presupposes a tolerably elaborate and not uninteresting ritual", though it underwent a tremendous change in later times, when "the main object, namely, devotion to the gods, is lost sight of". In another place, Bloomfield remarked, "The Vedic hymns are not quite described even if we designate them as sacrificial poetry. It is a little more than that: I cannot express it better than by saying, it is the sacrifice – to the gods of course – treated poetically. In other words these poems are incidental to the sacrifice", and "In its essence the Rig-Veda is not liturgy but mythology".

Louis Renou regarded the RV as "a literary anthology, drawn from family traditions". Allusions to religious practices found in it are the poetic beginnings of cult practices, but they are not designed to directly accompany the ceremonies. He remarked, "It would be unjustifiable to assume that the period of the Rgveda ... was followed by a mechanistic and virtually atheistic period. It would be more accurate to say that we are henceforth moving on a different plane of thought".

Renou pointed out that the necessity of sixteen or seventeen priests in the sacrifice must be

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41 Bloomfield, *ibid.*, p.31.
42 Bloomfield, *ibid.*, p.64.
43 Bloomfield, *ibid.*, p.81.
44 For a further exposition of Renou's view, see D.R. Potdar, *Sacrifice in the Rgveda*, pp.9-11.
45 Renou, *Religions of Ancient India*, p.10.
a later development of the simpler form of practice in the \textit{RV}, where we have the names of only seven priests and a \textit{Yajamāna}.\footnote{Renou, ibid., p.33.} In another place Renou spoke of the evolutionary process of the Vedic sacrificial rituals.\footnote{Renou, ibid., p.40.}

D.R. Potdar spoke of the "freshness" of the poetical compositions of the \textit{RV}, because the hymns were not yet tagged on to the mechanical practice of the sacrifice.\footnote{Potdar, op.cit., pp.13, 36.} In composing the hymns the dominant thought in the mind of the \textit{Ṛgvedic} poets was not their employment in a particular ritual, but to propitiate a divinity.\footnote{Potdar, ibid., p.13.} In some of the hymns, the object of the poet was clearly their employment in a ritual; in others the motive of their sacrificial employment is not present at all.\footnote{Potdar, ibid., p.13.} The materials in the \textit{Brāhmaṇical} literature must have been separated from the \textit{Ṛgvedic} hymns by at least several centuries and thus it will be a chronological fallacy to draw inferences about the \textit{Ṛgvedic} sacrifice from the evidence of the \textit{Brāhmaṇa} literature.\footnote{Potdar, ibid., p.3.} In another place Potdar significantly observed, "What is true of the relationship of the \textit{Brāhmaṇa} literature on the one hand and the later Śrauta literature on the other, cannot necessarily be true about the hymns of the \textit{Ṛgveda} on the one hand and the \textit{Brāhmaṇa} literature on the other. Because, the divine origin of the Mantra and \textit{Brāhmaṇa} literature is a later conception, which compelled the later writers to abide by every single syllable of the
Srutis, while the authors of the Brāhmaṇas were not so bound by the wording of the Ṛgveda." 54

Our position with regard to the relationship between the sacrificial rituals of the ṚV and those of the later Vedas is quite clear. The ṚV is evidently a book of hymns composed to accompany the rituals which were simple in nature. Sacrifice formed the most important aspect of the religious life of the people, though we believe that cultic practices were not the be-all and end-all of life. We believe that the text gives only a partial picture of the life of the people, 55 the total picture of which is totally lost. We do not deny the fact that the ṚV contains much which is not specifically sacrificial, 56 though, at the same time, we maintain that sacrifice was considered as the very basis of the spiritual life of the people. A perusal of Hillebrandt's Ritual-Litteratur leaves no room for doubting the importance of the sacrificial cult in the life of the times.

At the same time we should remember the fact that the simple form of the sacrifice underwent a radical change in the later Vedic period beginning from the Yajurveda, which culminated in the redactions of the Brāhmaṇas, which may be considered as marking the climax of the Vedic sacrificial cult. During the Brahmanical epoch, sacrifice was reduced to a mechanical process. Sacrifice was believed to act as a blind force from which even the gods cannot escape. This force defining the relationship between man and the

54 Potdar, ibid., p.2.
55 Gonda, "Gifts", in Change and Continuity in Indian Religion, p.200, even goes to the extent of remarking that, "Neither the Ṛgveda nor the other parts of Vedic literature give us a complete idea of the spiritual life of ancient India ...". J.A.B. van Buitenen, The Pravargya, p.25.
divine was a system for whose ends "faith is only confidence in the virtue of the rites" and where good is nothing but "liturgical exactitude".

That sacrifice, as a means of propitiating the gods, did not become fixed in the period of the RV is obvious from the following evidence, where the poets still speak of creating hymns, and not sacrifices, for the gods:

I. 61. 4: "I join together the eulogy for him (Indra), as the charioteer (joins together) a chariot for his provision".

V. 2. 11: "As a prudent craftsman (fashions) a chariot, I, a vipra, fashioned this eulogy for you, 0 Tuvijāta ("born from power").

V. 29. 15: "Indra, enjoy the prayer now being prepared, (enjoy also the prayers) which we have created anew for you, 0 most powerful one".

Many examples of this type have led us to believe that the sacrificial cult reflected in the RV was a transitional one, when the inventive spirit of the priesthood was not bogged down by ritual speculation. It was a creative period, when new hymns were being composed and new sacrifices were added to the already existing corpus.

57 Sylvain Lévi, La Doctrine du Sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas, p.10.
58 Lévi, ibid., p.10.
60 etām te stōmaś tuvijāta vipra rāthām nā dhīraḥ svāpā atakṣam. Norman Brown, JAOS, vol.88, p.206, translates vipra as an "inspired priest".
61 Índra brāhma kriyāmāṇaḥ juṣasva yā te śaviṣṭha nāvyaḥ ākarma
62 RV, I. 27. 4; I. 38. 14; I. 61. 13; I. 82. 2; I. 109. 2; I. 171. 2; II. 17. 1; III. 62. 7; IV. 19. 11 (= IV. 20. 11; IV. 21. 11; IV. 22. 11; IV. 23. 11;
As against this we have a mechanical ritualistic formalism in the later Vedic literature. Thus, ritual is described as a path and we are specifically informed that none can deviate from the path lest dire consequences should befall him, in other words, the sacrifices should be performed strictly according to the norm, i.e., correctly. We may quote the following examples:-

TS. II. 2. 2.1: "To Agni, maker of paths, he should offer a cake on eight potsherds who being a sacrificer at full and new moon passes over the offering either at the new or full moon; he wanders from the path on a trackless way who being a sacrificer at new and full moon passes over the offering either at the new or the full moon; verily he has recourse to Agni with his own share; verily he leads him to the path from the trackless way". 63

KB. IV. 2: "Next as to the Abhyudita 64 sacrifice. He wanders from the path of the sacrifice at whose fast the moon is seen in the east. He offers to Agni .... (He offers) to Indra ....

62 contd
IV. 24. 11); VII. 26. 1; VII. 61. 6; VII. 93. 1; VIII. 74. 7; VIII. 95. 5; VIII. 51. 3; IX. 9. 8, etc.

63 Keith, VBYS, pt.I (HOS, vol.18), p.147. The title pathikṛt is significant. Agni is symbolical of the sacrifice itself. By sacrificing to Agni, the sacrificer hopes to come back to the path of sacrifice. In this connection we should take into consideration such statements as aṅgir vai vajñaḥ in MS. III. 6. 1; PB. XI. 5. 2; SB. III. 4. 3. 19; Agni is even devānām pathikṛt in MS. I. 8. 9; Agni is pathah kartā in KB. IV. 3; SB. XI. 1. 5. 6, etc.

64 Keith, KRB, p.365. The term abhyudita literally means "on rising". As pointed out by Keith, KRB, p.365, fn. IV. 2. 1 the term purastāt means "before new moon", "but the terminology of the Brāhmaṇa can hardly be so interpreted and the sense seems to be as above", i.e., purastāt should be taken to mean "in the east". See also KRB, p.357, fn.2.
(He offers) to Viṣṇu Śipiviṣṭa. In that he sacrifices to these deities (it is because he thinks) 'Let me not wander from the path of sacrifice'.

PB. XVI. 5, 11, 12: "They deviate from the (right) path", they say, 'Who apply (verses) brought together' (from different parts of the Veda and not forming in the tradition a whole). The last tristich is addressed to Pavamāna. By it they do not go forth from the (right) path.

The ritualists were constantly apprehensive lest they might be led astray from the course of the sacrifice by faults committed during the performance of the ritual. Hence we get constant allusions to such faults and the measures for remedying them:

Śipiviṣṭa is a controversial term. Gonda, Viṣṇuism, p.106, is the latest scholar to pronounce judgement on the word. He connects the word with śepa ("penis"), though with some hesitation. He translates Śipiviṣṭa as "contained in the penis", though he cannot find an unmistakable reference to a phallic character of Viṣṇu in this name. Despite Gonda's hesitation, if we accept his translation, then it may refer to the fertility aspect of Viṣṇu's character (see in this connection Gonda's Viṣṇuism, p.11 ff.). Does it anticipate the salagrama śilā in which form Viṣṇu is still worshipped in present day India? On salagrama, see Gonda, Viṣṇuism, pp.94-5; Kane, KHD, vol. II, pt. II, pp. 713-6.

Caland, CPB, p.434. This is a highly significant reference which alludes to the difference of opinion among various groups of ritual specialists with regard to Vedic hymns, vis-à-vis their application in the rituals. It shows, notwithstanding Caland's conjectural restoration, that there was a group of people in this age who objected to Vedic verses from different parts of the Vedas being quoted haphazardly and recited by the ritualists. Admittedly, the ritualists quoted verses haphazardly from the different parts of the Veda without caring for any continuity whatsoever. It could not be otherwise, for the ritualists of the later Vedic period were not interested in the Vedic hymns as such, but only in so far as they are applicable in the rituals. These ritualists were opposed by the purists who were interested in maintaining the continuity of the Vedic hymns. But the ritualists, with remarkable candour, sought to justify this method by addressing a tristich (RV, IX, 66, 10-12) to Pavamāna. They knew what they were doing was wrong, but they still sought a justification for it.
TS. VII. 3. 11: "May the fault in the sacrifice settle on him who hateth us,
Making his body godless, strengthless,
Distorted and inert;
May it rest with him who hateth us". 67

AB. III. 11: "Let us depart not from the way! he recites
before the hymn; he goes from the way who is confused at
the sacrifice. 'Not from the sacrifice with Soma, O Indra'
(he says); verily thus he falls not away from the sacrifice". 68

ŚB. I. 7. 3. 19: "Now here Bhāllebeya made the invitatary
formula (consist of) an anuṣṭubh verse, and the offering-formula
of a triṣṭubh verse, thinking 'I thus obtain (the benefits of)
both'. He fell from the cart, and in falling,broke his arm.
He reflected: 'This has befallen because of something or other
I have done'. He then bethought himself of this: '(It has
befallen) because of some violation, on my part, of the proper
course of the sacrifice'. Hence one must not violate the proper
course (of sacrificial performance); but let both (formulas) be
verses of the same metre, either both anuṣṭubh verses, or both
triṣṭubh verses". 69

A little fault, a mistake or a slight deviation in the performance
would bring dire consequences. Hence there is constant reference to making
the sacrifice perfect:-

69 Eggeling, SBE, vol.XII, p.206. We have standardised the system of
transliteration in this chapter in line with standard modern practice.
TS. VII. 1. 1: "This sacrifice is commensurate with man, and is perfect. Whatever desire a man has, he wins by it, for one wins all by that which is perfect". 70

AB. I. 17: "With the kindling-stick honour Agni' and 'Swell up; be there gathered for thee' are the invitatory verses of the two butter portions, referring to the guest reception and perfect in form; that in the sacrifice is perfect which is perfect in form, that rite which as it is being performed the verse describes". 71

KB. VIII. 4. 6: "He utters in praise appropriate (verses); what in the sacrifice is appropriate, that is perfect; verily (it serves) for the perfection of the sacrifice". 72

Thus sacrifice becomes a single reality. All phenomena of the universe are reflections of it. Even the gods are subject to it. Thus the gods are recorded to have obtained heaven by sacrifice. We may quote the following examples:—

TS. VII. 4. 2: "As are men, so were the gods in the beginning. They desired 'Let us strike off the misfortune, the evil of death, and reach the conclave of the gods'. They saw this twenty-four night (rite); they grasped it,


72 Keith, ibid., p.393. See also KB, III. 2, etc..
and sacrificed with it. Then they struck off the misfortune, the evil of death, and reached the conclave of the gods.  

PB. IX, 2, 9: "By means of the Agniṣṭoma the gods conquered this world; by means of the Ukthya, the intermediate region; by means of the Atirātra, yonder world."

AB. I, 9: "Having sacrificed with all the metres, the gods conquered the world of heaven."

73


74

The Agniṣṭoma is the simplest form of soma sacrifice. It is called Agniṣṭoma because of the fact that the last chant of the twelve which constitute it is the Agniṣṭoma Śāman, which is sung on RV. VI. 48. That is how Sāyana (on SB. V. 1. 3. 7) explains it. See Eggeling’s translation of the SB in SBE, vol.XLI, p.xiii ff.; Keith’s translation of the TS in HOS, vol.XVIII, p.cxv; Hillebrandt, RL, pp.124-34; Caland-Henry’s L’Agnistoma contains by far the most exhaustive account of the agniṣṭoma.


75

The Ukthya is a form of Agniṣṭoma. In the ordinary Agniṣṭoma there are twelve stotras (chants of praise) and twelve śastras (recited verses of praise). In the Ukthya form, however, the ritual is completed by the addition of three ukthya stotras and śastras, one for each of the Hotrakas.


76

The Atirātra is another form of Agniṣṭoma. It means an additional night performance of rituals. The ordinary Agniṣṭoma requires the killing of one victim, the Ukthya two (one extra victim, a he-goat for Indra-Agni), the Śodasāṁ three (one extra victim, besides the above two, viz., a ram to Indra), while the Atirātra requires a fourth victim (a he-goat to Sarasvatī). In the Atirātra, the Hotṛ and his three assistants have to recite three rounds of four stotras and four śastras each. This sacrifice is concluded by the sandhi (twilight) stotra, the Āsvina śastra and offering. See Hillebrandt, RL, p.138; Eggeling, SBE, vol.XXVI, p.397, fn.2; Kane, KHD, vol.II, pt.II, p.1205.

77

See also PB, II. 6, 2, where the gods are recorded to have gone to heaven by performing the visātuti, which means "the different modes of getting out of a tpsa the number of verses required for the laud" (Caland’s translation of the PB, p.19; Eggeling, SBE, vol.XXVI, pp.308-9, fn.2; Hillebrandt, RL, p.101); or by the prāṣāṇya atirātra (PB, IV. 2, 2), which is performed on the opening day of the year’s sacrifice, etc.

78

See also AB, I, 10; II. 1; V. 1; VI. 32, etc.
SB, I, 7, 3, 1: "By means of the sacrifice the gods ascended to heaven".

The all-embracing nature of the sacrifice is apparent from the fact that even the Śādhyas, a group of earlier gods, are recorded to have performed certain rituals and as a result to have gone to heaven. We hear of cows performing a sacrificial session for winning hoofs and horns. Even Prajāpāti, who became identified with the sacrificial rituals, is recorded to have seen the twelve-day rite, to have sacrificed with it and to have prospered thereafter. That everybody, even beasts and plants, should take part in the sacrifice is apparent from the following examples:-

SB, I, 5, 2, 4: "For, indeed, the creatures that are not allowed to take part in the sacrifice are forlorn; and therefore he (the sacrificer) makes those creatures here on earth that are not forlorn, take part in the sacrifice: behind the men are the beasts, and behind the gods are the birds, the plants, and the trees; and thus all that there exists is made to take part in the sacrifice".

SB, II, 3, 1, 19, 20: "Now what he offers up in the fire, that he offers to the gods; and thereby the gods are (admitted

79 PB, XXV, 8, 2. Lévi, SDB, pp.61-3, collected the materials on the Śādhyas gods. They were the most ancient of the gods. They too wanted to rise to heaven and achieved it through various sacrifices. They ended up by being forgotten.

80 AB, IV, 17, 1; see also PB, IV, 1, 1-2.

81 Consider, for example, statements like yajño vai prajāpatiḥ (MS, III, 6, 5); sa vai yajña eva prajāpatiḥ (SB, I, 7, 4, 4), prajāpatir vai yajñah (GB, II, 2, 18). For a detailed exposition of Prajāpāti's character, see Lévi, SDB, pp.13-35.

82 AB, IV, 23. On Prajāpāti performing various sacrifices, see PB, XXIV, 11, 2; KB, V, 3; SB, II, 5, 2, 1-3, etc.

83 Eggeling, SBE, vol.XII, p.139-40.
to the sacrifice). And what he wipes off (the spoons),
that he offers to the fathers and plants; and thereby the
fathers and plants are (admitted). And what he eats after
offering, that he offers to men; and thereby men are admitted
Verily, the creatures that are not allowed to take part in
the sacrifice are forlorn: to these creatures that are not
forlorn he thus offers a share at the opening of the sacrifice;
and thus beasts (cattle) are made to share in it along with
(men), since beasts are behind men". 84

With these complications in the rituals of the later Vedic period, the
significance of the Indra-Vṛtra saga also undergoes a tremendous change.

Earlier, in the period of the RV, the poets sought to convey the significance
of the various privations and difficulties in the life of the Aryans through
this saga; while in the later Vedas, it is given a peculiar twist, a peculiar
ritual veneer, as a result of which the significance of the Indra-Vṛtra
conflict also changes. We shall discuss this in the next section.

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84 Eggeling, SBE, vol.XII, p.333.
The identification of Soma and Vṛtra in the later Vedas

The most important information about the demon in the later Vedas is that Vṛtra is identical with Soma, the sacred sacrificial drink of the Vedic Aryans - an identification which is not hinted at in the RV and which we consider to be a new and later development.

The ritual process by which Soma is identified with Vṛtra is clearly discernable in the following passages:-

TS. VI. 4. 7: "The gods said to Vāyu, 'Let us slay Soma, the king'; he replied, 'Let me choose a boon; let your cups be drawn with mine first.' Therefore the cups are drawn with those for Indra and Vāyu first. They slew him; he became putrid; the gods could not endure him, they said to Vāyu, 'Make him palatable for us;' he replied, 'Let me choose a boon; let your vessels be said to have me as their deity.' Therefore, being of various deities, they are said to have Vāyu as their deity. Verily did Vāyu make him palatable for them". 86

This is hinted at by Hopkins, Religions of India, p.185; Buschardt, Vṛtra, p.113 ff., discussed this question, but we are not satisfied with his handling of the whole problem. Buschardt never cared to explain the technicalities of the Indian sacrificial ritual; he never explained the context in which the identification occurs. Buschardt also failed to recognise the chronological and ideological gap between the RV and the later Vedas.

86 This describes the Aindravāyavagraha of the morning soma pressing. This is one of the three Drivedatyagrahās drawn in favour of dual divinities, the other two being the Maitravarūṇa and that of the Aśvins. On the Aindravāyavagraha, see also TS. I. 4. 4; KS. IV. 2; XXVII. 3; MS. I. 3. 6; IV. 5. 8; VS. VII. 7. 8; KKS. III. 2; XLII. 3; SB. IV. 1. 3. 1-19; AB. II. 25-27; KB. XIII. 5-8; AŚŚ. XII. 14. 8. 9; MŚŚ. II. 3. 5. 4. On the Drivedatyagrahās, see Caland-Henry, L'Agni-Soma, pp.199-203; Hillebrandt, HL, p.130; see also TB. I. 5. 4. 2; II. 7. 13. 1.

In TS. VI. 4. 7 quoted above, the last sentence in the Text runs thus: ēbhyaḥ vāyur evāsvadāyat, which may be translated as, "Verily did Vāyu make him palatable for them (ēbhyah)". But Keith inexplicably translated the passage as,"Verily did Vāyu make him sweet for him(?)."
The accompanying ritual explains the different cups of soma juice to be offered to the gods. Vāyū is the god of wind and thus a purifier.

It may be said on the basis of this evidence that at the start of the soma drinking, a cup of soma is offered to this great purifier, who is expected to make the putrid smell of the first soma juice disappear, thereby making it palatable. That such a thought is in the mind of the priests is obvious from the next line which reads, "Therefore what becomes putrid they hang out in a windy place, for Vāyū is its purifier, its seasoner".

The mythic-ritualistic process by which soma pressing becomes identical with Vṛtra killing is apparent from the drawing of the cup of soma juice for Mitra. The priest here mixes milk with soma juice. To explain this mixture the ritualists narrate the following myth:

TS. VI. 4. 8: "The gods said to Mitra, 'Let us slay Soma, the king;' he replied, 'Not I; for I am friend of all;' they

We admit that in the above passage of the TS, Vṛtra is not mentioned. But the corresponding passage in the KKS. XLII. 3 runs thus: devā vai vāyum abruvāṁs tvayā mukhena vṛtram hanāmeti, "Indeed, the gods said to Vāyū, 'Let us slay Vṛtra with you in front!". The corresponding passage of the KS. XXVII. 3, repeats exactly the above lines. The parallel passages of the SB. IV. 1. 3. 1-10 inform us that Indra, after killing Vṛtra, became afraid. Then the gods requested Vāyū to find if Vṛtra was really dead. When Vāyū found that Vṛtra was dead, the gods rushed towards the dead Vṛtra (= purified soma) and seized the various cups. But then the dead Vṛtra stank in their nostrils. So Vāyū together with the gods blew through Vṛtra. After the second blowing the soma became palatable. Hence the vessels containing the soma juice are called Vāyava (Vāyū's vessel). Hence here also we find the killing of Vṛtra. The corresponding passage of the MS. IV. 5. 8 runs thus: devā vai somam ajīghōṣāstam nāsāknuvan hantum. vāyur hy asminn antaraśīt prāṇa, "The gods wanted to kill Soma, but could not kill him. Vāyū was the life-breath within him". It is thus quite obvious that, while in the TS and MS, we have reference to the killing of soma, the KS and KKS refer to the killing of Vṛtra, though the four texts are describing the same ritual and they belong to the same school of the Yajurveda. This difference may be due to the difference in tradition among the different priestly families.
answered, 'Still we will slay him;' he replied, 'Let me choose a boon; let them mix the soma for me with milk'. Therefore they mix with milk (the Soma) for Mitra and Varuna. From him cattle departed (saying), 'He that was a friend hath done a cruel deed;' a cruel deed as it were does he who sacrifices with Soma; from him cattle depart. In that he mixes with milk (the Soma) for Mitra and Varuna, he unites Mitra with cattle, and the sacrificer with cattle". 89

Thus the mixing of milk with soma juice is sought to be justified with the help of a myth. Besides, we should note the ethical tone of the myth. Because Mitra took part in the slaughter of Soma (= Vṛtra) he committed a sin. As a result cattle left him. But even if a crime is committed during the course of the ritual, there is easy expiation for it. By mixing milk with soma Mitra is united with cattle again. In the ritual, the priests provide the sacrificer (= Mitra) with cattle by this mixture. Thus a reconciliation takes place.

The Rgvedic idea of Indra becoming great after the slaughter of Vṛtra 90 persists in the later Vedas, but it is twisted to serve a ritual purpose. The name Mahendra, appears in connection with the drawing of the Māhendragraha. 91 We have several details with regard to this cup:

89 Keith, VBYS, pt.II (HOS, vol.19), p.334. On the Maitrāvaruṇa cup, see TS. I. 4. 5; KS. IV. 2; XXVII. 4; MS. I. 3. 7; IV. 5; 8; KKS. III. 2; XLII. 4; VS. VII. 9, 10; AB. II. 25-28; KB. XIII. 5-8; SB. IV. 1, 4, 1-10; ASS. XII. 14, 12; MŚŚ. II. 3. 5. 6; Hillebrandt, RL, p.130; HVM, vol.II, pp.52-4.

90 RV. III. 49. 1; IV. 19. 1; VIII. 12. 22, 23 etc.

91 TS. I. 4. 20, 21; VI. 5. 5. 3; VS. VII. 39, 40; KS. IV. 8; XXVIII. 3; MS. I. 3. 24, 25; IV. 6. 8; KKS. III. 6; XLIII. 3; SB. I. 6. 4. 21; II. 5. 4. 9; V. 1. 3. 4; V. 4. 4. 25; ASS. XIII. 8. 4; MŚŚ. II. 4. 6. 17; Caland-Henry, L'Agniṣṭoma, p.305; Hillebrandt, HVM, vol.II, p.188 ff., especially pp.190-1; Eggeling, SBE, XII, p.182, fn.2.
AB. III. 21: "Indra, after having killed Vṛtra (and) having won all victories, said to Prajāpati 'Let me be what thou art; let me be great.' Prajāpati replied, .... In that Indra became great, that is why Mahendra has his name. He having become great said to the deities, 'Assign me a choice portion', just as one desires here, who prospers, who attains pre-eminence, who becomes great.' The gods said to him 'Claim yourself what is to be for you.' He claimed this cup for Mahendra ...".

ŚB. IV. 3. 3. 17: "And again, why he draws the Mahendra cup. Before Vṛtra's slaughter he was indeed Indra; but when he had slain Vṛtra, he became the great Indra, just like one who has conquered all around, and becomes a great king: therefore he draws the Mahendra cup. And, moreover, he forsooth makes him great for the Vṛtra slaughter: therefore also he draws the Mahendra cup".

The last evidence is significant. Here we get two ideas: (a) Indra becomes great after the slaughter of Vṛtra, and (b) the priest makes Indra great for the slaughter of Vṛtra. The passage implies that the priest, by this ritual, strengthens Indra (= the sacrificer) for the slaughter of Vṛtra (= unpurified soma). The archetypal act of Indra's Vṛtra-killing is recounted, because the same is going to be repeated in the ritual arena. Thus is the strengthening of the sacrificer.

The Vṛtra-killing of the Maruts helped Indra in his fight against Vṛtra is also twisted to serve a ritual purpose, and this is apparent
from a consideration of the evidence on the drawing of the
Marutvatiyagraha:-

TS. VI. 5. 5: "Indra in conjunction with the Maruts slew Vṛtra at the midday pressing; in that (the cups) for the Maruts are drawn at the midday pressing, they are drawn for the sacrificer as slaying the Vṛtra. Of him, when he had slain Vṛtra, the seasons were confounded; with the season vessel he drew (the cups) for the Maruts; then indeed did he discern the seasons; in that (the cups) for the Maruts are drawn with the season-vessel (they serve) to reveal the seasons. (The cups) for the Maruts are a thunderbolt which the sacrificer hurls at his foe".

This describes the drawing of the Marut cups from the soma juice flowing through the filter. The drawing of the cups is equal to the Vṛtra slaughter. As the unpurified soma stalks (= Vṛtra) are pressed through the filter and the Marut cups are drawn therefrom, Vṛtra is said to be killed. Thus the ritual process of soma pressing is sought to be explained by the myth of the co-operation of Indra and the Maruts during the slaughter of Vṛtra. The confusion of the seasons is peculiar. It is possibly another myth explaining the drinking of the Marutvatiyagrahas in the seasonal vessels.

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The vessels with which the Rtu grahas are drawn. On the Rtu grahas see TS. I. 4. 14; VI. 5. 3; MS. I. 3. 16; IV. 6. 7; VS. VII. 30; KS. IV. 7; XXVIII. 2; KKS. III. 5; XLIII. 2; SB. IV. 3. 1, 3-20; AB. II. 29; KB. XIII. 9; AŚŚ. XII. 26. 8-27. 8; MŚŚ. II. 4. 2.1-16; Haug, HAB. vol. II, p.135, fn.12; Eggeling, SBE, vol. XXVI, p.319, fn.1.
By drinking the *Marutvatīyagrahās* in these vessels the possibility of confusion of the seasons is eliminated. These Marut cups are compared with a *vajra* with which to kill the foe of the sacrificer.

A further very clear example of the Soma-Vṛtra equation is to be had in the following passage of the PB:

PB. IX. 5. 7: "Indra slew Vṛtra. The soma which flowed out of his (Vṛtra's) nose, that became the brown-tufted arjunas; that which flowed out of his omentum, as it was cut out, became the red-tufted ones. The brown-tufted arjunas he should press (if no pūtīkas are obtainable); this indeed (viz., the brown colour) is the feature of the Brāhmīn; (in doing so) he actually presses the soma".

The motive for equating soma with Vṛtra is clearly discernable in this passage. This chapter mentions the various substitutes of soma, like pūtīkas and arjunas. When the Aryans began moving into the interior of India, soma, which used to grow on the mountains of the north-west, became gradually unobtainable, and thus various substitutes were prescribed. But these substitutes had to have a justification in the myth to be uttered in the course of the ritual. Hence we are informed that the arjuna plants are really the soma juice which came out from the nose of Vṛtra (= unpurified soma stalks passing through the filter) when he was slain by Indra.

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96 From *ŚB*. IV. 5. 10. 1-8, we learn that various substitutes of soma may be used. They are reddish-brown phālguna, śvenahṛta or ādāra plants or brown dūrvā, or yellow kuśa grass. *AB*. VII. 30, specifies that a king should have the fruit of the nyagrodha as a substitute of soma. On substitutes for soma, see Wasson's interesting discussion, op.cit., pp.96-8; Kane, *KHD*, vol.II, pt.II, pp.1202-3.
The identification of soma and Vṛtra appears in connection with a myth regarding the origin of the soma filter known as pavitra:—

ŚB. I. 1. 3. 5: "Him (Vṛtra) Indra slew. He being slain flowed forth stinking in all directions towards the water; for in every direction lies the ocean. And in consequence of this, some of the waters became disgusted, and, rising higher and higher, flowed over; whence (sprung) these grasses (of which the strainers are made); for they represent the water which was not putrified. With the other water, however, some matter has become mixed up, inasmuch as the putrid Vṛtra flowed into it. This he now removes from it by means of these two strainers".

In the ritual the unpurified soma stalks are first pressed and then mixed with the waters, described as the ocean in the above passage. But still the juice is not purified. It must go through the pavitra in order to be purified. With regard to the origin of this filter, the ritualists narrate the myth that, after Vṛtra's death (= after the soma stalks are pressed), he mixed up with and sullied the waters. But some of the waters rose high above Vṛtra (= pressed but unpurified soma). Therefore Vṛtra could not sully these waters and out of these pure waters was fashioned the pavitra. But the other waters got mixed up with Vṛtra and were impure. This impurity must be removed before being drunk. This is now done by the priest as the unpurified soma juice goes through the two pavitras. Thus soma becomes purified and fit to be drunk.

We have a similar type of myth which describes the origin of *darbha* grass and runs thus:

TS. VI. 1. 1: "Indra slew Vṛtra, he died upon the waters.
Of the waters what was fit for sacrifice, pure and divine,
went out of the waters, and became Darbha grass. In that he
purifies (the sacrificer) with bunches of Darbha grass, verily
he purifies him with the waters that are fit for sacrifice,
pure and divine". (= TB. III. 2. 5. 1, with slight variations).

The periodic death and regeneration of the moon must have led to the
development of the new- and full moon sacrifices in ancient India, in
the course of which Vṛtra becomes identified with the moon or soma.

Here we have a peculiar conglomeration of myths which may be defined as the
spoken part of the ritual, or that which is uttered in the course of a
particular ritual, which again may be defined as organised or stereotyped
worship.

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98 This is said during the consecration ceremony of the soma sacrifice, on
which see infra fn.117. We have a similar myth with regard to the origin
of the Vahantīs or the waters which are collected on the eve of the soma
pressing day and to be mixed with the soma. See TS. VI. 4. 2.

99 On which see Gonda's interesting article, "Soma, Amṛta and the Moon", in
Change and Continuity in Indian Religion, p.38 ff.; Eliade, "The Moon and
its Mystique", in Patterns in Comparative Religion, p.154 ff.

100 Hillebrandt, RL, p.111 ff.; Das Altindisches Neu- und Vollmondsopfer;
Keith, RPVU, pt.II (HOS, vol.32), pp.319-21; Kane, KHD, vol.II, pt.II,

101 For the identification of the moon and soma, see our Appendix C.

102 J.E. Harrison, Themis, p.328, defines the myth thus: "It is the spoken
correlative of the acted rite, the thing done, it is... as
contrasted with or rather as related to..."
On the mythic side we find that Indra, after hurling his thunderbolt at Vṛtra, thought himself to be weaker and went to the farthest distance. Agni among the deities, Hrīṇyāstaṭupa among the ṛṣis and Brhati among the metres, went searching for him. Agni found him and stayed with him as a guest. The gods said, "Our Vasu (i.e. Indra), who has gone to live away from us is this day dwelling together (ama ṣas, SB. I. 6. 4. 3) (with Agni)\textsuperscript{104}, and just as a human being prepares a rice dish or goat for his guest, similarly the sacrificer offers the rice cake on twelve potsherds for Agni and Indra.\textsuperscript{105} Thus this ritual in the course of the preliminary rites of the new moon sacrifice is sought to be justified with the help of a myth.

But Indra is not satisfied. Hence soma stalks are collected on the day of the Amāvasya, that is, the night before the new moon, when the moon is not seen and is supposed to enter into the plants and waters, thereby making them more pungent. This soma is then offered to Indra.\textsuperscript{106}

This also does not satisfy Indra. So he is offered an oblation of boiled milk, and an oblation of sweet and sour milk, and thus Indra becomes

\textsuperscript{103}SB. I. 6. 4. 1 ff.
\textsuperscript{104}Eggeling, SBE, vol.XII, p.176. Compare the different account of the origin of Amāvasya in TS. II. 5. 3: "Indra, after killing Vṛtra, went to a great distance thinking, 'I have sinned'. The gods wanted to invite him. Prajāpati said, 'He who first finds him will have the first share'. The Pitṛs found him; therefore an offering is made to the Pitṛs on the day before. He approached the new moon night; the gods met him (saying), 'Our treasure today at home dwells', for Indra is the treasure of the gods, and that is why the new moon night has its name (amāvasya), 'home dwelling'\textsuperscript{105}.
\textsuperscript{105}SB. I. 6. 4. 3.
\textsuperscript{106}Ibid., I. 6. 4. 5-6; see also SB. XI. 2. 5. 3; SB. IV. 6. 2. 3.
The climax of this mythic-ritualistic process is reached when we are informed that, "The full moon oblation, indeed, belongs to the Vṛtra-slayer, for by means of it Indra slew Vṛtra; and the new moon oblation also represents the slaying of Vṛtra, since they prepared that invigorating draught for him who had slain Vṛtra". This means that Vṛtra is slaughtered (= soma is pressed and purified) on the full moon day, as also on the new moon day, because the invigorating beverage of soma is prepared for him who has killed Vṛtra. This is clear from the following passage:

"Indeed, Vṛtra is none else than the moon; and while in the course of that night (of new moon) he is seen neither in the east nor in the west, then he (Indra) completely destroys him by means of that (new moon sacrifice), and leaves nothing remaining of him. And, indeed, he who knows this, overcomes all evil and leaves no remnant of evil". Here we get the idea that the disappearance of the moon from the sky on the night of the new moon is equal to the complete destruction of Vṛtra. The ritualists also impress upon the performer the importance of performing this ritual - that by performing it, the sacrificer would get rid of all evil.

A further development of the myth is witnessed when Indra is identified with the sun swallowing up the moon, who is again identified with Vṛtra:

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107 Ibid., I. 6. 4. 7-9. This mixing of sweet and sour milk is known as samnayya. On samnayya, see also TS. II. 5. 3 and 5; ŚB. I. 6. 2. 6; II. 4. 4. 20; Renou, VRV, p. 163, Haug, HAB, vol. II, p. 443, fn. 1; Kane, KHD, vol. II, pt. II, pp. 1017–8; Hillebrandt, RL, p. 111; ŚB, IV. 6. 3.

108 This is known as the ceremony of Ṛṣayana which refers to the strengthening or swelling of the soma. See TS. I. 2. 11; VI. 2. 2. 4–6; MS. I. 2. 7; III. 8. 2; KS. II. 8; XXIV. 9; KKS. II. 2; XXXVIII. 2; VS. V. 7; ŚB. I. 6. 4. 9; III. 4. 3. 12–18; AB. I. 26; Hillebrandt, HVM, vol. I, pp. 220–1, fn. 3, pp. 440–1; Renou, VRV, p. 28; GB. II. 2. 4.

109 ŚB. I. 6. 4. 12.

110 Ibid., I. 6. 4. 13.
"Now the one that blazes there (i.e., the sun) is indeed none else than Indra, and that moon is no other than Vṛtra. But the former is inimical to the latter, and due to this reason, though this one (i.e., the moon, Vṛtra) had previously (to the night of new moon) risen at a great distance from him (the sun, Indra), he now swims towards him and enters into his open mouth".  

Then again, "Having swallowed him, he (the sun) rises; and that (other) one is not visible either in the east or in the west. And indeed he who knows this, swallows his hateful enemy, and of him they say, 'Only he exists, his enemies do not exist'".

The identifications take place on two planes. In the sky the sun is identified with Indra, the moon with soma. But the moon again is Vṛtra. In the earthly sphere we already have the identification of soma with Vṛtra and again, soma is the moon. The common denominator is the moon-Vṛtra. Hence this moon-Vṛtra must be killed in order to be eaten up by the sun on the new moon day. That is why the moon is not seen on the night of the new moon. Again, the destruction of the moon is looked upon as the mythical prototype of the destruction of a human enemy.

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111 Ibid., I. 6. 4. 18.
112 SB. I. 6. 4. 19.
113 Admittedly, we do not find the sun specifically mentioned in the original text (SB. I. 6. 4. 18) which runs thus: tadvā 'esa evendraḥ ya esa tapatyathaiṣa eva vṛtro yac candramāḥ so 'ṣyaṣṣa brāṭṛvyajamneva tasmād yady api purā vidūram ivodito 'thaṣṣa etṣa rātrim upaiva nyāplavate so 'ṣya vyātītaṃpadyate.

We are here closely following the translation of Eggeling. But Eggeling himself must have followed Sāyaṇa, who has the following comments to make on the passage: tapann aditya evendrah paramaśīvayayogāt candrasya vṛtratvaṃ pratipāditam purā amāvasyātaḥ pūrvadivaśeṣayātantaṃ du'rāmudito 'pi athainām sūryākhyamindram praty anumāmāṃṣayādīvasam prati samīpe eva āgacchati atha indrasya vivṛtāṃ mukham prāpnoti.

Indra is identified with Sūrya in RY. VIII, 93, 1, 2 and 3 and styled a Vṛtra-killer in verse 4 of the same hymn. It is not unlikely that Sāyaṇa in this passage is depending upon the earlier Egyvedic tradition. Thus Sāyaṇa's interpretation and Eggeling's translation seem to be justified,
In the Daśāyana modification of the new- and full moon sacrifice, we are informed of the following: "And again when, at full moon, he offers the Agni-Soma (cake) on the first day, - it was by that (offering) that Indra killed Vṛtra; it was thereby he gained that supreme authority which he now wields: and so does he (the sacrificer) thereby (by the same offering) kill his evil malicious enemy and gain the authority".

This, translated into terms of ritual, is given as the reason why the sacrificer (identified with Indra) before the pressing of soma (identified with the killing of Vṛtra) should offer a cake to Agni and Soma. It was after Indra had offered a cake to Agni and Soma that he killed Vṛtra and became supreme. Hence if this procedure is followed then the sacrificer will kill his opponent and gain authority.

The death of Vṛtra has two aspects in Brāhmaṇa ritualism - those of extinction and regeneration. That soma pressing amounts to Vṛtra killing is apparent from the following instances:

TS. VI. 4. 4. 4: "When they press soma, they kill him".

TB. I. 3. 1. 2: "They (the gods) found soma. They killed him".

ŚB. IV. 1. 3. 4: "He (Vāyu) said, 'Vṛtra is slain'".

ŚB. XI. 1. 2. 1: "When they press out soma, they kill him".


115 ŚB. II. 4. 4. 15.

116 This idea is present in Buschardt, op. cit., p. 121 ff. See also Levy, SDB, p. 168, fn. 5. For the slaying of soma, see also TS. VI. 4. 7 and 8; ŚB. II. 2. 2. 1; IV. 1. 4. 8; KKS. XL. 4; TB. II. 2. 8. 1; ŚB. I. 7. 1; GB. II. 2. 4; II. 3. 17, etc.
But this death of Vṛtra is not total extinction. It is only the unpurified aspect of soma in the form of Vṛtra that is killed. But the soma aspect of the stalks survives in the form of pressed and perfected juice. That, while being killed as Vṛtra, the soma is perfected is apparent from the following instances:

AB. I, 26: "They say, 'A cruel deed do they do in the neighbourhood of Soma the king, in that they offer the ghee in his neighbourhood, for by ghee as a thunderbolt Indra slew Vṛtra', in that they make the king swell (saying), 'May every shoot of thine, 0 god Soma, swell for Indra who gets the main share; may Indra swell for thee; do you swell for Indra; make us as comrades to swell; with gain, with insight, prosperous may I attain the conclusion in the pressing of thee, 0 god Soma'; thus indeed they make swell whatever cruelty as it were they do in his neighbourhood; moreover they cause him to increase".

ŚB. III. 4. 3. 13: "'Indeed Soma was Vṛtra; his body is the same as the mountains and rocks; thereon grows that plant called Uśanā', thus said Śvetaketu Auddālakī; 'they bring it here and by means of the Dīksā, and the

The Dīksā means consecration of the sacrificer at the beginning of the soma sacrifice. TS. I. 2. 2; VI. 1. 2. 1-4; KS. II. 2. 3; XXIII. 2; KKS. I. 14. 15; XXXV. 8; MS. I. 2. 2; III. 6. 4. 5; VS. IV. 7-10; ŚB. III. 1. 4. 1-23; AB. I. 1-6; KB. VII. 1-4; Caland-Henry, L'Agnistoma, pp.17-9; Hillebrandt, RL, pp.125-6; Renou, VRV, pp.76-7; RVI, p.100; Gonda, DRI, p.151 ff.; "Dīksā" in Change and Continuity in Indian Religion, p.315 ff.; Keith, HPVU, pt.1 (HOS, vol.31), pp.300-3; Oldenberg, ORD, p.397 ff.; Lévi, SDB, p.102 ff.; Kane, KHD, vol.II, pt.II, pp.1135-40; see also Hubert and Mauss, Sacrifice, p.9 ff.; 20 ff.; see also Eliade, Birth and Rebirth, passim; "Mysteries and Spiritual Regeneration", in Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, p.193 ff.
Upasads, 118 by the Tănūnaptra, 119 and the Apyāyana, 120 they make it into soma".

ŚB. III. 9. 4. 2: "He then takes a press-stone. Now those press stones are of rock, and Soma is a god - for Soma was in the sky, Soma was Vṛtra; those mountains, those rocks are his body - he thus makes him perfect by (his own) body, makes him whole; hence they are of rock. Moreover, in pressing him they kill him; they kill him by means of that (stone, Soma's own body); he rises from thence, thus he lives; therefore the press-stones are of rock".

The Upasads mean sieges or homages. This ensemble of rites used to be solemnised at the end of the consecration and preceded the actual day of pressing. The rituals consist of three offerings of ghee to Agni, Soma and Viṣṇu, which are to be followed by a Homa (an act of oblation to the gods by offering clarified butter into the fire) and to be performed twice daily for three days. Hillebrandt, HVM, vol.I, p.304, fn.1, propounded the view that these might have reference to religious ceremonies performed during enemy attack, because these are characterised by their shortness, for example, the Anµyajas ("after-offerings") and Prayajas ("fore-offerings") are done away with. TS. I. 2. 11. 2; VI. 2. 3-4; MS. I. 2. 7; III. 8. 1. 2; KS. II. 8; XXIV. 10; XXV. 1; KKS. II. 3; XXXVIII. 3. 4; VS. V. 8; ĀB. III. 4. 4. 1-27; X. 2. 5. 1-16; etc.; AB. I. 23-26; KB. VIII. 8. 9; ĀB. II. 2. 7. 8; ASŚ. XI. 1-3; MŚŚ. II. 2. 1. 14-55; Hillebrandt, RL, p.127, Caland-Henry, L'Agnistoma, pp.67-70; Eggeling, SBE, vol.XXVI, p.105, fn.1; Renou, VRV, p.45; Keith, RPVU, pt.II (HOS, vol.32), p.327; Lévi, SDB, p.45 ff.; Kane, KHD, vol.II, pt.II, pp.1151-2.

The Tănūnaptra is a solemn ceremony in the course of which the sacrificer enters into a covenant with the priests each party thereby guaranteeing not to injure the other. As its mythic origin we are told that, when the gods were performing the Ātithya ("the guest reception of Soma") discord befell them. The Asura-Rakṣas took opportunity from this and entered between them. The gods realised this and laid down their bodies in the house of Varuṇa the king (ĀB. I. 24), and this is their bodily covenant. On the ritual side, the priests and the sacrificer pledge, by the Tănūnaptra, to abide by the covenant, TS. I. 2. 10. 2; VI. 2. 2; KS. II. 8; XXIV. 9; MS. III. 7. 10; I. 2. 7; KKS. II. 2; XXXVIII. 2; VS. V. 5; ŠB. III. 4. 2. 1-16; TB. II. 6. 18. 1; ĀB. II. 2. 2. 3; MŚŚ. II. 2. 1. 1-5; ASŚ. XI. 1. 1; Caland-Henry, L'Agnistoma, pp.61-2; Lévi, SDB, pp.73-6; Hillebrandt, RL, p.127; HVM, vol.I, p.304, fn.1; Gonda, DRI, p.152; Renou, VRV, p.70; Eggeling, SBE, vol.XXVI, p.93, fn.1; Haug, HAB, vol.II, pp.53-4, fn.21; Heesterman, ARC, p.191 ff. See fn.108.
The above instances clearly show that the death of soma is not ordinary death, but is ritual regeneration. The Vṛtra aspect of the god is killed, but in the soma aspect the god survives. This ritual regeneration is one of the most important aspects of the ancient Indian soma sacrifice.

The mixing of the waters with the soma stalks forms an important aspect of the purification of the soma juice, as we have already noticed in connection with the Apyāyana ceremony. They are mixed with the unpurified soma stalks so that they may swell and yield more juice. Here again we get the idea that the waters purify: "Ye divine waters, that go in front and first purify". It also clearly follows from this that the soma stalks were considered impure before being sprinkled with the waters. That is, they were still Vṛtra and by various ceremonies the impurity was sought to be removed and thus was soma made perfect and drinkable.

In the myth this mixing of the waters with the soma stalks is described in various ways. Sometimes the waters themselves are said to have killed Vṛtra:-

VS. VI. 34: "Auspicious are ye, conquerors of Vṛtra".

SB. III. 9. 4. 25: "For it was the waters that killed Vṛtra, and by virtue of that virility they flow".

In another place we are told that the waters taste the soma juice first because of a boon granted to them by Indra:-

121 See supra, p.232, fn.108.
122 TS. I. 1. 5. 1; Keith, VBYS, pt.I (HOS, vol.XVIII), p.5. See also KKS. I. 11; VS. I. 12, etc.
ŚB. III. 9. 4. 14, 15: "He then pours Nigrābhya\textsuperscript{123} waters on it (soma stalks). Now the waters, indeed, killed Vṛtra and by virtue of that virility they flow .... Now all this (universe), whatsoever there is, had submitted (themselves) to Indra, even he that blows yonder. Indra said, 'Indeed, all this (universe), whatsoever there is, has submitted unto me: you also submit to me'. They asked, 'What shall be our (reward) then'. (Indra answered), 'The first draught of king Soma shall be yours'. (They answered), 'So be it'. Thus they submitted to him; and they having submitted, he grasped them into (ni-grabh) his chest; and because he thus grasped them into his chest, therefore they are styled Nigrābhyaś. And in the same fashion does this sacrificer now grasp them into his chest; and this is their first draught of king Soma, in that he pours Nigrābhya water thereon".

Thus the waters accepted the superiority of Indra, after which he drew them to his chest, which is the origin of the Nigrābhya waters. Following this archetypal model, the sacrificer, who is enacting the part of Indra here, grasps the waters towards him and presumably pours them over the soma stalks. Thus the waters, the myth goes on, drink the first draught of the soma juice.

\textsuperscript{123}Nigrābhya is the technical name for the Vasati\v{r}i water in the Hotṛ's cup. The Vasati\v{r}i refers to the water collected on the eve of the actual soma pressing day, brought to the sacrificial place with sundry rites, and kept overnight at the house of the sacrificer. For Nigrābhya see TS, I. 4. 1. 2; III. 1. 8; VI. 4. 4. 2; KKS, II. 17; KS, III. 10; XXVII. 1; MS, I. 3. 2-4; VS, VI. 30-31; ŚB, III. 9. 4. 7. 20-25. On the Vasati\v{r}i, see TS, VI. 4. 2; VS, VI. 23-24; AB, II. 20; KR, XII. 1; Hillebrandt, RL, p.128; Eggeling, SBE, vol.XXVI, p.223, fn.3 and p.236, fn.2; Haug, HAB, vol.II, p.114, fn.4; Renou, VRV, p.83 and pp.134-5.
Thus by a mythic-ritualistic process Vṛtra is identified with soma. But the question remains, why did the ritualists make this identification? In order to understand this problem, we should take a perspective view of the whole of ancient Indian sacrificial ritual. The most fundamental characteristic of this ritual is the basic dichotomy between the forces of negation and those of regeneration. These forces of negation must be destroyed before regeneration is brought about.

This is apparent in the ancient soma rituals. The most sacred beverage, Soma, contained in himself the most heinous of the evil forces, Vṛtra. The unpurified soma stalks must be purified before it is drunk, i.e., the Vṛtra aspect must be got rid of before it is drinkable. Vṛtra must give way to Soma. This thought must have been predominant in the mind of the ritualists. It is not identification as such. Soma contained in itself the potential Vṛtra - the force of negation - which must be got rid of. Hence is the constant attempt of the ritualists to get rid of this dangerous potency, thereby to bring about regeneration.

Another question is, why did the ritualists identify Vṛtra with the moon?

Once the identification of soma with the moon is accepted, it is but a step further to identify the moon with Vṛtra. Like soma, the moon contains in itself the potentials of both negation and regeneration. The moon fades out to be reborn again. This is regeneration. This particular aspect must have suggested to the ancients the identification of the moon with Vṛtra. The gradual fading out of the moon is equal to the death of Vṛtra - the obliteration of the dangerous potential of negation, while the swelling of the moon is the gradual coming into being of the force of regeneration.
The dangerous potential of negation - the moon-Vṛtra - must give way to the force of regeneration - which is the fundamental concept of the ancient Indian soma rituals.
C  Indra, Vṛtra and Viśvarūpa Tvāṣṭra

An important development of the Vṛtra myth in the later Vedic literature is Vṛtra’s association with Viśvarūpa, son of Tvāṣṭr, the artificer god. For a proper understanding of this association we should go back to the RV, where Viśvarūpa appears as a rival of Trita. Our information of Viśvarūpa is contained in the three following verses of the RV:-

II. 11. 19: "For us you (Indra) subjugated Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvāṣṭr; for Trita (you subjugated Viśvarūpa), (for the sake) of friendship".  

X. 8. 8: "Knowing the weapon of his father, (and) being urged by Indra, Āptya fought against (Tvāṣṭra). Having killed the three-headed and seven-rayed (Tvāṣṭra), Trita released the cows of Tvāṣṭra".

X. 8. 9: "Indra, the lord of Sat, rent him who sought for much ojas (Daseinsmacht) and considered himself (powerful),


asmābhyaṃ tāt tvāṣṭrām viśvārūpam ārandhayah sākhyāsyā tvāṣṭrāya

In the previous verse there is a reference to Trita seeking weapons from his father Dyaus. See Macdonell, JRAS, vol.25, pp.428-9.

sā pītrāgy āyudhāni vidvān āndreṣita āptyo abhy ayudhyat triṣirṣaṅgam saptārasmiṁ jaghanvān tvāṣṭrāṣya cīn niḥ sasṛje tritō gāḥ

Gonda, Epithets, p.78.

See fn.175 of ch.II.
He smote the three heads of Tvaśṭra, the Viśvarūpa ("omniform"),
(and) seized (his) cows.\textsuperscript{130}

In striking similarity with the Indra-Vrtra or Brhaspati-Vala sagas,
we have the information here that Trita killed Tvaśṭra and released his
cows, which must stand for the waters.\textsuperscript{131} Thus here we have another saga
of the slaughter of a demon and the consequent release of the waters. But
this simple saga becomes complicated when in RV. X. 8. 9, we are informed
that Indra himself smote the three heads of the demon and seized his cows.

For a solution of this problem we should go back to the Avesta which contains
the fundamentals of the conflict between Thraetaona and Azhi Dahāka.

Thraetaona in the Avesta is known as Āthwya (Vedic Āptya). Thraetaona
"smote Azhi Dahāka, the three mouthed, the three headed, the six eyed, who
had a thousand senses, that most powerful, fiendish Druj, that demon baleful
to the world, the strongest Druj that Angra Mainya created against the

\textsuperscript{130} bhūrīd Īndra udīnākṣantam ójo ávāhinat sātpatir mányamān
   tvāśṭrasya cid viśvarūpasya gōnām acākrāṇās trīṇi sīrṣā pārā vark

\textsuperscript{131} The term gō ordinarily means a cow. But in the sagas of Indra-Vṛtra or
   Brhaspati-Vala, it signifies the waters which are supposed to be withheld
   by the obstructing demons. To quote some examples:—
   
   II. 12. 3: "Who (Indra) slaughtered Ahi, freed the seven rivers,
   and impelled the cows after the removal of Vala".
   V. 29. 3: "That indeed is the oblation which found the cows for
   man; he slaughtered Ahi after having drunk it".
   VI. 17. 5: "You, O Indra, pushed from its immovable seat the
   great rock which encompassed around the cows".
   VI. 43. 3: "In whose intoxication you (Indra) released the cows,
   the fastnesses (which were) within the rock".
   I. 32. 11: "Brhaspati cleaved the mountain and found the cows".

See also, I. 33. 10; I. 62. 3; II. 14. 3; II. 24. 3; III. 30. 10; VIII. 14.
8; VIII. 63. 3; IX. 87. 8; IX. 108. 6; X. 48. 2; X. 67. 3, 4, 6, etc.,
Thus in a large number of verses gō refers to the waters released by the
gods after the slaughter of the obstructing demons. See Macdonell, JRAS,
vol.25, p.429.

\textsuperscript{132} Thraetaona is supposed to be cognate to the Avestic Thrita. Macdonell,
VM, p.68; Keith, RPVU, pt.I (HOS, vol.31), p.134; Carnoy, "Iranian Mythology", in
The Mythology of All Races, vol.6, ed. by L.H. Gray and G.F. Moore, p.265.
material world, to destroy the world of the good principle. Like Trita of the RV, Athwya is intimately associated with the Avestic Haoma ceremony. While in the TS Trita is recorded to take possession of the old age of the sacrificers, Thrita in the Avesta is recorded to have received ten thousand healing plants that had been growing around the tree of eternal life, the white Hom or Gaikerena.

Yast. XIX. 37; Darmesteter, SBE, vol.XXIII, p.294; see also Yast. V, 34-35; ibid., IX, 13-15; ibid., XIV, 40; ibid., XV, 23-25; ibid., XVII, 33-35; ibid., Vendidad, Fargard I, 18. It is difficult to define the exact significance of the saga of Thraetaona and Azhi Dahaka. Darmesteter in his translation of the Avesta, SBE, vol.IV, p.lxiii, pointed out that in the Vendidad I, 18, the scene of the battle between the two is the four-cornered Varena which was "'the four-pointed Varuna', that is 'the four-sided Varuna' in the heavens". Thus, according to Darmesteter, the saga signifies the atmospheric drama in the storm. The equation of Varuna (Avestic Varena) with Oparvogo is not accepted these days (Keith, RPVU, pt.I, HOS, vol.31, p.100; Oldenberg, ORD, p.190, fn.2; Gonda, DRI, p.73). However, it may be noted here that Azhi corresponds with the Rigvedic Ahi, an appellation of Vrtra in RV, VI, 20, 2; X, 113. 3 and 8 etc. Carnoy in his "Iranian Mythology" (The Mythology of All Races, vol.6, edited by L.H. Gray and G.F. Moore, pp.265-7) also takes it to be an atmospheric drama.

Trita's maidens are recorded as preparing soma for Indra in IX, 32. 2 and IX, 38. 2. In another hymn Indra is said to enjoy soma in the company of Visnu and Trita Aptya, RV, VIII, 12. 16. In another hymn, IX, 34. 4 Trita purifies soma for Indra, Sayana, while commenting on some of the Rigvedic passages (for example, IX, 32. 2; IX, 38. 2; VIII, 12, 16), takes Trita to be a rsi. We should rather take him as the archetype of the soma pressing priests. See in this connection, Macdonell, JRAS, vol.25, pp.435-7; VM, pp.67-8; Ronnow, op.cit., p.23. That this tradition of the association of Trita and soma is based on an old tradition is apparent from the Hom Yast (SBE, vol.XXI, p.230 ff.) which contains a conversation between Zoroaster and Haoma. On being asked who was the first to prepare haoma in this world, Haoma answered that it was Vivahvant (cf. Rigvedic Manu Vivasvata, who, together with the seven priests, is recorded to be the first to offer sacrifice to the gods in X, 63, 7 and thus appears to be the archetype of the priests). The second to offer haoma was Athwya, for which Thraetaona was born in the Athwya clan. The third to offer haoma was Trita. Thus in the Avesta also we have an authentic tradition of the association of Thrita with haoma.


Vendidad, Fargard XX, 1-4; Darmesteter, SBE, vol.IV, pp.220-1.
The above concordances prove the popularity of Trita-Thrita and Thraētaona in Indian and Iranian literature. We contend that the dragon-slaying motif as contained in the Thraētaona-Azhi Dahāka saga is more primitive than the Indra-Vṛtra conflict of the RV, because, as we know from the research of Benveniste and Renou, Vṛṇra is not a dragon in the Avesta, while Azhi Dahāka certainly is one; again Indra is not a dragon killer in the Avesta, while Thraētaona is certainly one in it. Thus Thraētaona's function as a dragon killer is more primitive than Indra's. The question of Trita's killing Viśvarūpa, a dragon analogous to Azhi Dahāka, creates another problem here.

We contend that after the bifurcation of the Indo-Iranians, the authentic traditions about Thrita, and Thraētaona and Azhi Dahāka were lost to the Vedic Aryans. Thus Thrita, who is merely a god of healing in the Avesta, supplants Thraētaona as a dragon killer and himself becomes the killer of Viśvarūpa in the RV. Trita also assumes the title of Thraētaona, Ṭhywa (= Ṭ̄yta).

Thus, if our reasoning is accepted then we may discern the following stages in the evolution of Trita's character:-

137 Vṛtra et Vṛṇragarna, p.177: " ... il apparît que l'Iran ignore un démon Vṛṇra ...".

138 Indra himself is a demon in the Avesta. Vendīdād, Fargard X. 9; ibid., XIX. 43. We may also note in this connection that Thrita is also not the killer of Azhi Dahāka or any other dragon. But Trita in the RV becomes a dragon killer.

139 In determining the authenticity or otherwise of the Iranian and Indian evidence, we are following the methodology adopted by Benveniste and Renou in determining the nature of Vṛtra and Vṛṇragarna in the Indo-Iranian literature. Benveniste remarks, "Or, sous le rapport du vocabulaire comme au point de vue mythologique, il est acquis que l'Avesta nous introduit à un état moins évolué et que, s'il y a eu déviation, c'est du côté védique". (op.cit., pp.177-8).
Thrita (= Trita) is a benign god of healing in the Avesta and a preparer of haoma.

In the second stage Trita (= Thrita) supplants Thraētaona as a dragon killer and himself becomes the killer Viśvarūpa.

It follows then Trita's function as a dragon killer is more primitive than Indra's, because Indra is not a dragon killer in the Avesta, while Thrita (= Trita) is certainly one in it. This is more evident from the following examples where Indra is recorded to be acting like Trita in destroying the machinations of the dragons:—

I. 52. 5: "As Indra, the bearer of the thunderbolt, made valourous by the juice, cleft the barriers of Vala like Trita".¹⁴⁰

In this instance, Trita clearly appears as the archetypal model whose actions are recorded to be emulated by even a great god like Indra.

But in the third stage Indra gradually supplants Trita as a killer of the dragons, as he also supplants Vṛtrāagna of the Avesta.¹⁴¹ In the first instance we notice how Indra is gradually encroaching upon the function of Trita, when the former is said to have urged the latter to fight against the demon Viśvarūpa in RV. X. 8. 8.¹⁴² Next, from his position as a slayer of dragons, Trita is reduced to the position of a mere helper of Indra in his dragon-slaying exploits, or Indra releases the cows of Trita, as in the following instances:—

¹⁴¹ Benveniste and Renou, op.cit., p.178.
¹⁴² See supra, p.241.
II. 11. 20: "Strengthened by this pressed (and) intoxicating (soma) of Trita, he (Indra) scattered Arbuda".  

II. 11. 19: Translated above.  

X. 48. 2: "I, Indra, am the breast-guard of the Atharvan. I produced the cows from Ahi for Trita".  

In the next stage, Indra completely supplants Trita and himself appears as the killer of Viśvarūpa in X. 8. 9. The death of Viśvarūpa at the hands of Indra gives rise to immense ritualistic speculation, which shall be discussed in the next section.

143 asyā sūvānāsya mandīnas tritāsyas nyārbdhām vāvṛdhānā astāḥ
144 See supra, p.241.
145 ahām indro rōdho vākṣo āt̄havānas tritāya gā ajanayam āher ādhi
146 See supra, p.241.
Indra, Viśvarūpa Tvāṣṭra and Vṛtra in the later Vedas and the motive of ritual regeneration

We have already remarked that myths are the narrative part of rituals - it is to justify a ritual that recourse is taken to a myth. Just as the rituals are many, similarly a myth may take various forms, though the essential may remain the same. The Indra-Viśvarūpa myth takes various forms in the multifarious rituals of the later Vedas, though the kernel of the myth - the rivalry and struggle of the hero god with a dragon - remains the same.

A detailed exposition of the myth is available in the ŚB and this is narrated in the course of the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice. The myth runs as follows:

Tvāṣṭra had a three-headed, six-eyed and three-mouthed son named Viśvarūpa; one of his mouths was soma-drinking, one sura-drinking; and with the other mouth he used to devour all kinds of food. Indra hated him

The Sautrāmaṇī is prescribed for various occasions, like the Rājasūya and Darsapūrṇamāsesṭi. Scholars of Vedic religion agree that one of the objects of this sacrifice is the expiation of any excesses committed in the consumption of soma juice. On Sautrāmaṇī, see TS. I. 8. 21; TB. I. 8. 5-10, etc; VS. X. 31, 32; XIX. 1-9; KS. XII. 9, 10; XXXVII. 18; MS. II. 3, 8; III. 11. 7; KB. XVI. 10; ŚB. V. 5. 4. 1-35; XII. 7, 1 ff.; XII. 8. 1, 2, 3; XII. 9. 1, 2, 3; GB. II. 5. 6; MŚS. XIX. 1. 1-2. 10; XIX. 3. 6, 7; MŚS. V. 2. 4. 1-43; Hillebrandt, RL. pp.159-61; HVM, vol.1, pp.232-3; 483, 487-91; Oldenberg, ORD. p.504 ff.; Haug, HAB, vol.II, p.455, fn.13; Keith, VBYS, pt.I (HOS, vol.18), pp.cxxii-iii; RPVU, pt.II (HOS, vol.32), pp.352-4; Rönn, "Zur Erklärung des Pravargya, des Agnicayana und der Sautrāmaṇī", in Le Monde Oriental, vol.XXXII, p.113 ff., especially pp.153-73; Eggeling, SBE, vol.XLI, p.129, fn.1; ibid., vol.XLIV, pp.213-4, fn.2; Gonda, DRI, vol.1, p.173; Heesterman, ARC, pp.8, 109 ff., 147, 221; Kane, KHD, vol.II, pt.II, pp.1224-8.

TS, II. 5. 1 is more specific about the reason leading to the enmity between Indra and Tvāṣṭra. About Tvāṣṭra we are informed of the following: "He promised openly the share to the gods, secretly to the Asuras. Men promise openly the share to everyone; if they promise any one secretly, his share is indeed promised. Therefore Indra became apprehensive (imagining) 'Such an one is deflecting the sovereignty (from me)' . He took his bolt and cut
and cut off his head. From his soma-drinking mouth a hazel-cock of brown colour sprang forth, because soma is brown; from the spirit-drinking mouth a sparrow sprang forth and thus a sparrow talks as if stammering, for one who has drunk spirits, talks as if he stammered; from the other mouth a partridge of variegated colour sprang forth. At the death of his son, Tvaṣṭṛ became furious and excluded Indra from his soma sacrifice. Indra, however, drank whatever pure juice there was in the tub, but this drink began to hurt him and flow from all the openings of his body. To cure him on that occasion was instituted the iṣṭi known as the Sautrāmanī. Tvaṣṭṛ, on the other hand became furious and desecrated the sacrifice. Taking what soma juice was left in the vessel, he let it flow towards the fire saying, "Grow thou, having Indra for your enemy." Immediately it reached the fire, it became possessed of the fire, soma and "all the sciences, all honour, all nourishments, all auspiciousness and prosperity". And because he rolled (vṛt) onwards towards the fire, he came to be known as Vṛtra.

In the forenoon the gods offered him food, at midday the men, and in the

149 contd

off his head". Thus the real reason for Indra's anger is said to be Tvaṣṭṛ's duplicity, which brought about his death. We should note here the ethical tone of the myth, Dumézil, "Deux traits du monstre Tricéphale indo-iranien", in Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, vol.122, p.5 ff., after comparing the duplicity of Azhi Dahaka in the Avesta and in the account of Moses of Khorene, and that of Tvaṣṭṛ in the TS, remarks, "Le Tricéphale préhistorique devait déjà mettre en action, de quelque façon, l'opposition de la fausse sincérité proclamée et du chuchotement véridique" (p.11).

150

The origin of the hazel-cock, sparrow and partridge in this passage is one of those aetiological myths in the Brahmanical literature, explaining the origin and function of different beings in the society, or the origin and function of different social customs etc..

151

sarvā vidyāḥ sarvaṁ yaśaḥ sarvam annādyām sarvām śrīm, SB. I. 6. 3. 8.

152

Here is emphasised the etymological origin of Vṛtra (SB. I. 6. 3. 9): sa yad vartamānaḥ samabhavat. Tasmād vṛtro 'tha yad apāt samabhavat tasmād ahiḥ. On the validity or otherwise and the values of these types of etymological speculations, see Gonda, "The Etymologies in the Ancient Indian Brāhmaṇas", in History of Religion, vol. I , pp.61-86.
afternoon the fathers. While Indra was in pursuit of Vṛtra, he asked Agni and Soma to come over to his side. These two gods asked for a reward. Indra offered them the Agni-Soma cake on eleven potsherds. With Agni and Soma going over to Indra, "all the sciences, all honour, all nourishments, all auspiciousness and prosperity" went over to him and that is how Indra, by offering the Indra-Soma cake became what Indra now is. Vṛtra, on the other hand, shorn of his former glory, was struck by Indra and lay like a leather bottle drained of its contents. Indra rushed at him to kill him. But Vṛtra requested him: "Do not strike me. You are now what I (was before). Only cut me in two; but do not let me be annihilated". Indra did accordingly: from that part of the body which was of the Soma nature, he made the moon; and that which was demonic he made to enter these creatures as their belly; hence people say "Vṛtra was then an eater of food and Vṛtra is so now". For even now, when the moon waxes fuller, it fills itself out of the world, and whenever these people

153 What a different picture of Vṛtra we get here as compared with the RV! The idea of offering food to Vṛtra by the fathers and men, nay, even by the gods, would have been totally abhorrent to the Ṛgvedic poets.

154 The information that Agni and Soma were within Vṛtra implies that Vṛtra was in the possession of the whole cult.

155 This description seems to show that Vṛtra in this passage is identical with Soma.

156 This is a highly significant statement. It implies that Vṛtra, the force of negation in the cult and who was in the possession of the whole cult, was potential Indra. He could have become Indra, but this could not be, for the negative cannot be in the possession of the whole cult for long. The positive force of the cult (= Indra) must annihilate him and thereby possess the whole cult, and this is tantamount to regeneration in the cult.

157 SB. I. 6. 3. 17.

158 Here again we have the identification of Vṛtra with the moon.

159 SB. I. 6. 3. 17.
wish for food, they pay tribute to this Vṛtra, the belly. Whoever knows that Vṛtra as an eater of food, becomes himself an eater of food.

A careful analysis of the above myth leads us to the following conclusions:—

Viśvarūpa belonged to that category of ambiguous beings, like Vṛtra and the Asuras, whose creation was a cultic necessity. The forces of regeneration must be revived again and again, so that they may revive the life values. The latter must ritually fight against the negative forces of the cult to bring about regeneration. This is the raison d'être of the creation of demonic beings in the ancient Indian sacrificial rituals.

Viśvarūpa's drinking of soma and surā and eating other foods, by his three mouths, signifies that he was in the possession of the whole sacred cult. Thus, the holy act of sacrifice was in the possession of this ambiguous being who must be destroyed to bring about regeneration.

Indra is the positive force, or the force of ritual regeneration. He cut off the head of Viśvarūpa. When Tvaṣṭṛ became angry and excluded Indra from the cult, because he had killed Viśvarūpa, Indra forcibly drank the cult beverage and did something unwanted. 160 Tvaṣṭṛ created Vṛtra out of soma. 161 Vṛtra's taking possession of "all the sciences, all honour, all nourishments, all auspiciousness and prosperity" and Agni and Soma again signifies that the negative force got possession of the whole cult. Indra

160 This possibly means that none, not even Indra, could drink the soma juice without being invited. Thus, when in some passages, SB. XII. 8. 3. 1; KS. XII. 10; etc., Indra forcibly drank the soma juice, it did not suit him and he began to vomit it. Ultimately he was cured by the Sautrāmanī. For details see SB. V. 5. 4. 2-13, etc; see fn.147.
161 We have here the assimilation of soma with Vṛtra.
killed him, which means that the ritual came into the possession of the positive force and obviously this signifies regeneration.

The myth also occurs in connection with the Traidhātavīyeṣṭī in the TS and runs thus: Tvāṣṭṛ, his son having been slain by Indra, offered soma without inviting Indra who forcibly drank it. Tvāṣṭṛ took the remaining soma from the trough and poured it over the Aḥavaniya saying, "Hail! Wax great, Indra's foe!". This foe of Indra, Vṛtra, grew on all sides and enveloped the three worlds "and because he enveloped the three worlds, thus is the Vṛtrahood of Vṛtra". Tvaṣṭṛ and Indra were afraid of him. Viṣṇu then deposited himself in three places, a third on the earth, a third on the atmosphere and a third on the sky. By means of the third part of Viṣṇu on the earth Indra raised his thunderbolt with the help of Viṣṇu. Vṛtra asked Indra not to hurl it at him; instead he gave Indra his strength, which was accepted by Viṣṇu. Indra raised his thunderbolt with the help of the third part of Viṣṇu in the atmosphere. Vṛtra again requested him not to hurl it at

162 The Traidhātavīyeṣṭī is one of the Kāmya Iśṭāyuh or "optional sacrifices". These are to be performed for the fulfilment of specific desires. According to the Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra (XIII, 41-42), "One who desires to practise abhicāra ("witchcraft"), or one against whom abhicāra is being practised, or one who desires to perform a sacrifice, with a thousand (cows) as daksīṇā, or one who is performing a sacrifice with a thousand (cows) as daksīṇā, or one, who, after having announced, 'I shall perform a sacrifice!', does not perform a sacrifice, should perform a Traidhātavīyeṣṭī". TS. II. 4. 11; II. 4. 12; III. 2. 11; MS. II. 4. 3-5; IV. 12. 5; KS. XII. 3-4; SB. V. 5. 5, 1-6; XIII. 6. 2. 17; AŚS. XIX. 27. 15-21; MŚS. V. 2. 5, 1-18; Hillebrandt, RL, p.146; Eggeling, SHBE, vol.XII, p.97, fn.3; Śrautakośa, vol.I (Sanskrit section), pp.369-71; ibid., vol.I, pt.II (English section), pp.586-8; for a translation and exposition of the Kāmya animal sacrifices in the TB, see Dumont, "The Kāmya Animal Sacrifices in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa", in PAPS, vol.113, no.1, pp.34-66; Hubert and Mauss, Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function, p.14 ff.; Kane, KHD, vol.II, pt.II, pp.1107-8.

163 Āḥavaniya is one of the three fires necessary for the sacrificial rituals, the other two being the Gārhapatya and Daksīṇāgni.

164 sa imāllokan āvṛṇot yad imāllokan āvṛṇot tād vṛtrasya vṛtratvām
TS. II. 4. 12. 2.
him and again gave him his strength, which was accepted by Viṣṇu. Indra then raised his thunderbolt again with the help of the third part of Viṣṇu in the sky. Vṛtra again requested him not to hurl it at him. Instead they entered into a compact according to which Vṛtra entered Indra for his (Indra's) enjoyment. Thus Vṛtra is the belly; and we are told that hunger is man's enemy; he who knows this slays the enemy hunger. Thus Vṛtra gave power of enjoyment to Indra and this too was accepted by Viṣṇu. Then we are told, "In that thrice he gave and thrice he accepted, that is the reason of the threefold character of the three fold". Because Viṣṇu helped Indra against Vṛtra, the offering belongs to Indra and Viṣṇu.

The above myth-ritual complex leads us to the following conclusions:—

It explains the Traidhātavyeṣṭi. The Indra-Vṛtra myth was obviously recited when the actual ceremony was being solemnised.

We are informed that Viṣṇu helped Indra in his exploits against Vṛtra. Viṣṇu is the all-pervading creative energy of the sun god, while Indra is the power of regeneration par excellence of the ritual. These two forces co-operated and brought about the defeat of Vṛtra. Vṛtra, the negative force of the ritual, was in the possession of everything — he covered the whole world, i.e., Vṛtra was in the possession of the place where the ceremony was being solemnised. Thus Vṛtra must be annihilated, or, in this instance, neutralised, so that ritual regeneration may follow. This is brought to the fore when we are told that, "Whatever there is here he (Vṛtra) gave to him, the ṛcās, the sāmans, the yajuses", which seems to imply that these

165 Following Gonda, Viṣṇuism, especially pp.26, 30-1, etc.
166 In this myth Vṛtra was not totally destroyed, but he entered the belly of Indra in the form of his power of enjoyment. That is the negative force is assimilated by the positive force, which amounts to the neutralisation of the former.
were within Vṛtra. But these came into the possession of the two forces of regeneration and thus was brought about regeneration.

The same myth appears in a different form and context in TS. VI. 5. 1, which explains the Ukthya cup of soma offered to Indra and Viṣṇu. Indra, having raised his thunderbolt to hit Vṛtra, was requested by him not to do so and bestowed on him the Ukthya. Two more times Indra raised his thunderbolt to hit him and twice did Vṛtra request him not to do so and bestow on him the Ukthya. It was only after Vṛtra had conferred on Indra the Ukthya, that is when he was bereft of his magical power, which was the sacrifice itself, that Indra killed him. We are further told that, by drawing the Ukthya, the sacrificer appropriates the power and strength of his foe.

Here also we have the same pattern being repeated. The Ukthya is in Vṛtra and hence he must be killed, so that Indra may appropriate his power and strength. The myth is the archetypal pattern. In the cult the sacrificer, or probably the priest on his behalf, used to play the part of Indra and draw the cup, thereby divesting Vṛtra (= the sacrificer's enemy) of his strength and bringing about regeneration.

167 At the end of the morning pressing, soma is poured in the Ukthya cup from the Ukthya bowl in three portions and each having been offered, the remaining juice is drunk by the assistants of the Hotṛ, the Praśāstṛ, Brāhmaṇacchāṁsin and Acchāvāka. TS. I. 4. 12; VI. 5. 1; MS. I. 3. 14; IV. 6. 5; VS. VII. 22; KS. IV. 5; XXVII. 10; KKS, III. 4; ŚB. IV. 2. 3, 1ff.; AS. XII. 15. 11; MS. II. 3. 5. 10; Caland-Henry, L'Agniṣṭoma, p.167; Renou, VH, p.37; Eggeling, SBE, vol.XXVI, p.293, fn.2.

168 yajnó hi tāsya māyā 'sīt, TS. VI. 5. 1. 2.
The Indra-\(\text{V}r\text{tra}\) myth also appears in connection with the \(\text{R}\text{ajas\text{\-}}\text{uy\text{a}}\) ("king's inauguration") and runs thus:—

At the beginning of the \(\text{R}\text{ajas\text{\-}}\text{uy\text{a}}\) the king is expected to offer a \(\text{P}\text{urn\text{\-}}\text{ahuti}\). Then he offers a cake on eight potsherds to \(\text{Anum\text{a}\text{t}}\) and on the following day he offers a cake on eleven potsherds to \(\text{Agni and Vi\text{\-}}\text{\text{\-}}\text{nu}\). On the day following he offers a cake on eleven potsherds to \(\text{Agni and Soma}\), for, as we are told, by this offering \(\text{Indra killed V\text{\-}}\text{tra}\) and gained universal conquest. Similarly by offering this sacrifice the king also slays his enemy and gains victory. Then is performed the king's consecration, as the king declares, "May I be consecrated, when safety and security from evil-doers have been gained". Here also the death of \(\text{V\text{\-}}\text{tra}\) (\(=\) death of the king's enemy) amounts to the regeneration of the king.

The motive of regeneration then is one of the fundamental features of ancient Brahmanical myth-ritual complex. It was through these complex congeries that life was sought to be renewed. It is not unlikely that the myths were ceremonially enacted in the ritual arena. This resuscitation might occur at any time of the ritual and the myth had its relevance for that particular moment. But whatever may be the nature of the ritual, it was through these myths that life's values were eternally sought to be renewed.

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170 \(\text{SB}, \text{V. 2. 3. 1 ff.}\).

171 The "full-offering" is an oblation of a spoonful of clarified butter. Eggeling, \(\text{SBE}\), vol.XII, p.302, fn.2.
E Indra's fears, flights and guilt feeling

Indra killed Vṛtra and thereby life values were renewed. The myth should have ended here. But association with this myth is Indra's guilt feeling; he is sometimes afraid that he has not really killed Vṛtra; sometimes he even takes to flight. With regard to Indra's fear and flight we have the following:-

PB. XV. 11. 9: "Indra, having slain Vṛtra and imagining that he had not killed him, went to the remotest distance. He pushed apart the anuṣṭubh and crept into its middle portion. This indeed is Indra's dwelling. In safety does he offer sacrifice, in safety does he finish the sacrificial session, who, knowing this, chants on these verses". 172

172
The Agniṣṭoma is characterised by various grahas (cups of soma juice offered to the gods), śastras ("chants of praise") and stotras ("songs of praise"). An ordinary Agniṣṭoma has twelve śastras, chanted by the Hotṛ, and twelve śastras, sung by the Udgāṭ. Of the five śastras of the morning pressing, two (ajya- and prauga-) are to be uttered by the Hotṛ and the three others by the Maitravāraṇa, Brāhmaṇacāṁśin and Acchāvāka. The Udgāṭ correspondingly has the Bāhispavāvaṇānaṇotra and four dhuryas named ājyastotras. The midday pressing has two śastras of the Hotṛ (marutvatiya and niṣkevalya) and three others of the Hotraka. Correspondingly the Udgāṭ has five stotras, the mādhyāntinapavāvaṇānaṇotra and four others, the prsthastotras. The evening pressing contains two śastras, vaiśvadeva- and āgnimārūta-, uttered by the Hotṛ and two stotras, ārbaḥavaḥapavāmaṇa- and agniṣṭoma- or vajḥavajḥīya-, sung by the Udgāṭ.

The above myth occurs in course of the utterance of the ārbaḥavaḥapavāmaṇaṇotra on the tenth day of the twelve-day rite (the soma sacrifices may last for one day, known as theEkāha; if a soma sacrifice lasts for more than one day up to twelve days, it is a Dvādasāha; and a soma sacrifice lasting for more than twelve days has the name Sattra).

The myth in this instance justifies the utterance of the laud and on the other hand it shows that by taking refuge in these verses Indra felt safe, i.e., he felt revived. Similarly by uttering these verses the sacrificer safely completes his sacrifice, i.e., he is regenerated. For the details of the stotras and śastras, see Hillebrandt, RL, pp.99-100; Keith, VBYS, pt.I (HOS, vol.18), p.cxv. On the ārbaḥavaḥapavāmaṇaṇotra itself, see Eggeling, SBE, vol.XXVI, p.315, fn.1; also vol.XXVI, p.356, fn.3. See also AB, III. 15.
SB. VII. 4. 1. 13: "And, again, why he puts it on the lotus leaf. When Indra had smitten Vṛtra, he, imagining that he had not humbled him, entered the waters. He said (to the waters), "I am afraid: make a fastness for me". Now, they gathered upwards what essence of the waters there was and made it a fastness for him; and because they made (kar) a fastness (puṃ) for him, therefore it is pūṣkara; pūṣkara being what is mystically called pūṣkara, for the gods love the mystic". 173

Sometimes, Indra feels that he has committed a sin by the slaughter of the demon:-

TS. VI. 5. 5: "Indra having slain Vṛtra went to the remotest distance, imagining, 'I have committed a transgression'; he became yellow, (then) he saw these (cups) for the Maruts, to save himself; he drew them; indeed with the first he won expiration, with the second inspiration, himself with the third; (the cups) for the Maruts are drawn to save the self of the sacrificer". 174

TB. I. 6. 7. 4: "When Indra had killed Vṛtra, he went to the remotest distance, imagining, 'I have committed a transgression'". 175

173 This ceremony describes the building of the first layer of the fire altar (agnicayana). The ceremony involves the placing of a lotus leaf (puṣkara) in the centre of the altar site. This ceremony is sought to be justified by the narration of the archetypal Indra-Vṛtra myth. Presumably, Indra by taking refuge in the puṣkara was saved, i.e., revived. Hence, if this procedure is followed, the sacrificer too will be saved - this seems to be the purport of the above passage. On Indra's fear and flight, consider such passages as SB. I. 6. 4. 1-5; IV. 1. 3. 1-4; PB. XII. 5. 21, etc.

174 For the Marut cups, see pp.227-8.

175 This explains an oblation of cake to Marutaḥ Krīḍinaḥ in the course of the performance of the Sākamedha offerings. The Sākamedha is one of the three seasonal sacrifices, the other two being the Vaiśvadeva and Varunapraghasah. On the Sākamedha, see TS. I. 8. 4; TB. I. 6. 6. 7; KS. IX. 5; KKS. VIII. 8; MS. I. 10. 1. 2; VS. III. 49-50; KB. V. 5-10; SB. II. 5. 3. 2-4, 10; ASS. VIII. 11. 19-21; MSS. I. 7. 5-7; Hillebrandt, RL. pp.117-9; Eggeling, SBE,
In several instances Vṛtra is said to have bound Indra in sixteen coils and Indra got rid of this evil by various ritual devices:-

TS. II. 1. 4: "Indra slew Vṛtra; the slain Vṛtra bound him in sixteen coils; from the head of Vṛtra came out cows, they were (cows) of Videha; behind them came the bull, Indra saw it; he thought, 'He who shall offer him shall be freed from this evil'. He offered to Agni one with a black neck, to Indra a bull. Agni, being approached with his own share, burnt into sixteen pieces the coils of Vṛtra, and by (the offering) to Indra he bestowed power on himself. He who is seized by evil should offer (a beast) with a black neck to Agni, and a bull to Indra; verily Agni, being approached with his own share, burns away his evil, and by (the offering) to Indra he bestows power on himself, he is freed from the evil, he prospers".

PB. XIII. 5. 22: "Indra raised his thunderbolt against Vṛtra, but he encircled him in sixteen coils. He saw this padastobha

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This myth occurs in connection with the Kāmya animal sacrifice of ten bulls. It justifies the sacrifice of a bull each to Agni and Indra. By offering them Indra got rid of the evil, and by following this procedure the sacrificer would also get rid of the evil, i.e., he would be regenerated. On the nature of these special animal sacrifices, Schwab, Das altindisches Thieropfer, pp.xviii-xix, remarked: "Der Zweck, den der Opferer mit einem Thieropfer verfolgt, kann bei den Kāmyāḥ pāśavaḥ, die neben dem nitya zur Erfüllung der mannichfaltigsten Wünsche und zur Heilung oder Abwendung verschiedener Gebrechen empfohlen werden, nicht zweifelhaft sein". See also Dumont, "The Kāmya Animal Sacrifices in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa", in PAPS, vol.113, no.1, pp.34-66.
The stobhas refer to chanted interjection in a sāman. These could, for example, in the form of Hāu, Hāi, I, U, Hum. A padastobhāsāman may refer to one which has an interjection at each verse quarter. See Hillebrandt, RL, p.100; Renou, VRV, p.169; Hoogt, The Vedic Chant Studied in its Textual and Melodic Form, passim; Caland, CPB, p.326.

The details of the first part of the myth are already dealt with, see fn.149.

The slaying of a brāhmaṇa was considered to be a great sin in ancient Indian society, though the writers on law are not at all unanimous on its gravity. See Kane, KHD, vol.II, pt.I, pp.147-52.

This is an aetiological myth why one should not have sacrifice on a cleft ground, that is, it should be an even ground.
the menses; let us enjoy intercourse at will up to birth", which was
granted. They took a third of his guilt, which became a woman with soiled
garment. Hence one should not converse with such a woman nor sit with
her or eat with her, for she emits the colour of guilt.

This story undoubtedly contains quite a number of aetiological myths
explaining the origin of various religious and social customs. We are,
however, certain of one thing, namely, the regeneration of Indra. By
transferring his guilt of brahmahatyā he was regenerated, though the myth
is not specific about it.

In another instance, the guilt of the slaughter of Vṛtra was
transferred to Trita. The myth runs as follows: The Āptya deities used
to roam about with Indra. When Indra was intending to slay Viśvarūpa, they
knew of the god's intentions, "and straightway Trita slew him. Indra,

181 The women in their monthly courses were supposed to be impure in Indian
182 SB. I. 2. 3. 2.
183 The idea of transferring evil and impurities to Trita is as old as the RV. Thus the Ādityas are requested to bear away various evils to Trita Āptya
(RV, VIII. 47. 13-17). These evils are duṣkṛta- ("evil deed", VIII. 47. 13)
and duṣāvāpnya ("evil dream", VIII. 47. 14-17). This seems to be a Vedic
development, for this is not mentioned in the Avesta. In the AV, in a charm
to expel Grāhi, a notorious female fiend, she was said to have been transferred
by the gods to Trita who again transferred her to human beings (AV, VI. 113, 1).
assuredly, was free from that (sin), for he is a god.\textsuperscript{184} The Āptyas\textsuperscript{185} then passed on the guilt to those who would sacrifice without dākṣīṇa.\textsuperscript{186}

Sometimes Indra is portrayed as having lost his power and he is revived by various ritual devices:-

TS. II. 5. 3: "Indra, having slain Vṛtra, lost the gods and his power. He saw the (offering) to Agni on eight potsherds at the new moon, and the curds for Indra. He offered it, and by it he won the gods and his power".\textsuperscript{187}

PB. XVIII. 5. 2: "Indra had slain Vṛtra. His strength went asunder in every direction. The gods sought for him an expiation, but nothing satisfied him; it was only the strong soma (juice) that satisfied (and revived) him".

ŚB. V. 2. 3. 8: "Now when Indra killed Vṛtra, then power and strength left him, as if frightened. By this offering he again possessed himself of that power and strength. And in the same

\textsuperscript{184} This is Eggeling's translation of the relevant portion of ŚB. I. 2. 3. 2 in SBE, vol.XII. p.47. Thus Indra's guilt was boldly transferred to Trita, the logic being that Indra is a god and a god can do no wrong! The passage is rather obscure. Does the ritualist want to convey that Trita of the passage was not a god but a human being, or a divine ṛṣi, or an ordinary human ṛṣi?

\textsuperscript{185} This is confusing. In ŚB. I. 2. 3. 2, Trita is said to have killed Vṛtra and thus he is expected to bear the guilt of killing, but in this passage (I. 2. 3. 4), all the three Āptyas are held responsible for the killing. Trita is the original of the Āptyas and meant "the third". The two other Āptyas, Ekata and Dvita, must be later abstractions, suggested perhaps by the name Trita.


manner does this (sacrificer) by this offering possess himself of power and strength”.

What is the significance of Indra's hesitation, his guilt feeling, his flight? We should remember that the whole incident is taking place in the ritual arena, the axis mundi, the meeting point of the sacred and the profane. Everything in the ritual is sacred, because it is surcharged

This guilt feeling is also present in the rituals connected with the animal sacrifice. Thus, before slaying the victim, approval is sought of his relatives: "May its mother approve it, its father, its brother from the same womb, its comrade from the same flock" (he says); indeed, thereby they kill it, with the concurrence of its generators". AB. II. 6, see also ṢB. III. 7. 4. 5. In VS. XXIII. 16, we have the following:-

"No, here thou diest not, thou art not injured: only by fair paths to the gods thou goest. May Savitar the god in that world place thee where dwell the pious, whether they have journeyed".


We believe that the excuses and laudations for the victim arose from man's sense of guilt at destroying it. The victim is sacred, hence its slaughter is sacrilegious. Thus the most sacred part of the ritual contains a profane act, and hence the excuses and laudations. The sacrilegious act is expiated, the sacrificer is regenerated. See in this connection, Schwab, Das Altindisches Thieropfer, p.102 note; Hubert and Mauss, op.cit., pp.32-3.

In the peculiar ritual symbolism, the altar becomes identical with the whole world, as would be clear from the following:-

TS. II. 6. 4: "The earth is the size of the altar".
TS. VI. 2. 4: "All this earth is the altar".
AB. V. 28: "The altar (is) the earth".

ṢB. I. 2. 5. 1-7 explain how the gods won the entire earth (i.e. the altar) from the Asuras. The gods requested the Asuras to share the earth with the gods. The Asuras replied that they might have as much as Viṣṇu lies upon. The gods enclosed Viṣṇu on all sides by various metres. "Having thus enclosed him on all (three) sides and having placed Agni on the east side, they went on worshipping and toiling with it (or him, i.e. Viṣṇu, the sacrifice). By it they obtained (sam-vid) this entire earth; and because they obtained by it this entire (earth), therefore it (the sacrificial ground) is called vedi (the altar). For this reason they say 'As great as the altar is, so great is the earth'; for by it (the altar) they obtained this entire (earth)'.

Eggeling, SBE, vol.XII, p.60.

The altar is described as the nabhi, the navel, of the earth - the central spot of the earth:
with the sacred, including the demons. Hence the killing of the sacred involves a violation of the sacred and thus constitutes a crime, and being a crime, it must be expiated, and thus the man performing such a violation, may even a mighty god like Indra, must expiate it. According to our reckoning this again constitutes a regeneration. Indra feels guilty, but this guilt is expiated, and thus he is revived; Indra flees after the slaughter of Vṛtra, and takes refuge in various places and thus is revived; Indra is exhausted, and is revived again, which is regeneration.

Indeed, this motive of regeneration is the fundamental feature of ancient Indian sacrificial ritual. Through this process of revivification different life values are sought to be renewed. This may happen at any time of the ritual. These rituals of which the myths form the archetypes, were used to regenerate life, and knowledge of them endowed the sacrificial priest with power to confer life or renew life, health, wealth and fecundity.

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RV. III. 29. 4: "In Ṛṣa's place we place you (Agni), on the navel of the earth".
AV. VII. 62: "Being placed on the centre of the earth, he (Agni) shining resplendent ...".
ŚB. VI. 6. 3. 9: "That (place) where he (Agni) is now being kindled is indeed the navel of the earth".
VS. V. 17 describes the anointing of the two axle-pins of the carts bringing the soma, when it is said, "May you be glad here on the earth's summit". Eliade discusses the symbolism of the centre in several of his publications, for example, The Myth of the Eternal Return, p. 12 ff.; Images and Symbols, p. 41 ff.; The Sacred and Profane, p. 36 ff.; Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, p. 115. Here is witnessed the passage from the profane to the sacred. This centre is in contact with the celestial world, for the gods attained heaven from this place, as the Brahmanas inform us (ŚB. III. 1. 1. 1; IV. 2. 5. 5; X. 1. 2. 1-2 etc.). The place of sacrifice is "the meeting place of the gods", PB. I. 6. 7; Mahāvedī is described as "the ford of the gods", PB. I. 1. 7; "The vedi is indeed the world of the gods", ŚB. VIII. 6. 3. 6, etc. See in this connection, also Buschardt, op. cit., p. 10 ff.; Gonda, Loka, p. 12; Hubert and Mauss, op. cit., pp. 26-7; B. R. Sharma, "Symbolism of Fire-altar in the Vedas - A Study with Special Reference to Āpah", in ABORI, vol. XXXIII, pp. 189-96; T. Davidson, "Places (Sacred)", ERE, vol. 10, pp. 50-2.
CHAPTER VI

Vṛtra - A Suggested Interpretation

In venturing upon our quest, our aim was to sketch the biography of the arch-devil of the Vedic literature. In the last four chapters we have tried to compile this biography by quoting evidence from different branches of the Vedas. While surveying this story one witnesses a gradual evolution of the meaning of the substantive Vṛtra and of Vṛtra's personality.

Undoubtedly in any study of Vedic religion, whether it concerns a god or a demon, the first condition should be an exact analysis of the key word. We have tried to analyse the substantive Vṛtra in our chapter II.

We started our second chapter by accepting Walde's original suggestion that the Vedic root vṛ is ultimately to be traced to the I-E *uər, which primarily means to cover, close, obstruct etc. We have tried to trace the various cognate words originating from I-E *uər in the different branches of the I-E languages. From the negative aspect of covering, closing or objects with which to cover or conceal, we have also traced words which convey such positive ideas as caring, succouring or defending, or succourer and defender, or freedom, comfort and ease. Thus by a careful analysis of the cognate words we have tried to gain perspicacity in our understanding of the full connotations of I-E *uər to which the Vedic vṛ is to be traced. Vṛtra and quite a large number of cognate words are to be traced to the Vedic vṛ.

The demonisation of Vṛtra is clearly a creation of the Rgvedic Aryans. Among the Iranians the god VṛQragna was a benign god whose function was to repel resistance. The function and qualities of this god were gradually absorbed by Indra in the Vedic period and thus Indra became Vṛtrahan. It is from this epithet that the stuff which constitutes Vṛtra is formed.
Indra kills Vṛtra and this Vṛtra is demonised. This, as shown by Benveniste and Renou, is the origin of Vṛtra the demon.¹

The demon Vṛtra is thus a secondary development of the Vedic period. The word retained its original Indo-Iranian sense of resistance. Vṛtra in the Vedas covers, obstructs or resists. But what does he cover, obstruct or resist?

Vṛtra covers or obstructs the waters and thus resists their flow. Vṛtra lies on or around the waters, which are held back by him in what is sometimes conceived as a hill, or mountain or fastness. Vṛtra is conceived as having obstructed the fountains in their proper seasons. This evidence is of singular significance for our study and shows that even the Vedic people realised the importance of adequate seasonal rainfall, and were perhaps aware of the monsoons, even long before the time of Hippalus, the Greek sailor, who discovered how to use the south-west monsoon on the outward voyage to India.²

Besides the rains, Vṛtra also obstructs the course of the rivers, and especially the course of the seven rivers of the Punjab region. Vṛtra's association with certain other drought demons is also noteworthy.

Thus Vṛtra causes serious inconvenience by obstructing the motherly and life-giving waters. Indra in the Vedas earns the eternal gratitude of the Ṛgvedic seers by killing this obstructing monster and his associates thereby paving the way for a smooth flow of life.

¹ Benveniste and Renou, Vṛtra et Vṛṇṛagna, p.188 ff.
² Wilfred H. Schoff, The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, p.6, remarked "Then Hippalus, a venturesome navigator whose name deserved as much honor in Roman annals as that of Columbus in modern history, observed the periodic change of the Indian monsoon (doubtless long known to Arab and Hindu) ...". See also Kennedy, "The Early Commerce of Babylon with India", in JRAS, 1898, pp.272-3; Majumdar, "India and the Western World", in ed. Majumdar and Pusalker, Age of Imperial Unity, pp.620-1; Adhya, Early Indian Economics, pp.123-5.
In some examples, but not always, the release of the waters is associated with the placing of the sun in the sky, separating and propping up the two worlds and generating the sun and the dawn. We believe that these cosmogonic details are secondary accretions to the original motif of the release of the waters in the Vṛtra saga. The release of the waters after the slaughter of Vṛtra is primary and the waters released are clearly rain or river water.

In the corresponding Avestic saga of the release of the waters by Tištrya after the slaughter of Apaša, the freeing of the waters is not associated with any cosmogonic motif, though in the palpably later Bundahish account, the release of the waters led to the formation of the great and small seas, lakes and rivers. In the corresponding Hittite saga of the conflict between the weather god and the demon Illuyankas, the release of the waters is in the foreground.

It is obvious then that various cosmogonic motives were not associated with the original I-E saga of the slaughter of the dragon. Whence, then, did the ancient Indians get these cosmogonic details, which later on were associated with the saga of the slaughter of the dragon? Did they borrow them from another people or were they an independent development? We believe that the cosmogonic activities, which came to be associated with the exploits of the prototype hero, were borrowed by the Vedic Aryans from the more ancient myth of the conflict between Marduk and Tiamat. The details of creation may be different in the Vedas and the Babylonian Epic of Creation, but the fact remains that, while the slaughter of the dragon was not associated with cosmogonic activity in the I-E motif of the slaying of the dragon, it was certainly so with the sophisticated Babylonian myth with which the Aryans came into contact.

We also believe that the motive of creation was not associated with the original Sumerian motif of the slaughter of the dragon. When the Sumerians
first descended upon the Tigris-Euphrates plains, they were overawed by the ferocity of the river flood which seemed periodically to engulf the whole world as it were. This must have been the origin of the saga. Later on, however, the prototype hero is recorded to be fashioning the heaven and various stars in the heaven after killing the dragon. We consider this to be a secondary development of the Babylonian period. The Vedic Indians came in contact with this later and more sophisticated Babylonian version of the original Sumerian saga of the slaughter of the dragon and added the cosmogonic motives to their own saga.

In some passages of the RV, Vṛtra appears as a personification of human enemies creating obstructions. Vṛtra's association with human enemies, the references to Aryan and Dāsa Vṛtras and to people and kings taking part in the war against Vṛtra - all tend to show that, by the term Vṛtra, the Vedic seers wanted to refer to various earthly enemies, at least in some passages of the Rg- and Atharvaveda.

Much has been written about the nature and function of Indra. It will not perhaps be out of place here to discuss Indra's character as revealed through the saga of Vṛtra.

Benveniste and Renou emphasised the human nature of the hero Indra. The hero is born of humanity and remains of it, sharing the cares and weaknesses of man. Man finds in the hero his own virtues carried to a super-human extreme. The hero converts his dream into reality. The hero is deified only after an exceptional exploit, or an invention or an achievement. It is only after his death that the hero acquires a permanent right to his title. But the memory of his former condition remains strong.

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Benveniste and Renou, op.cit., p.189 ff.
The Vedic poets emphasise the human details of Indra's physical features. We have a vivid description of his body. He is a great eater, an insatiable drinker, excessively lascivious. He is enormously powerful - worthy to be the king among men. It is only after he kills Vṛtra that he is welcomed by the gods. Prajāpati did not create him spontaneously, he is devānām ānujāvarā-. 4 As far as Brahmanical orthodoxy is concerned, Indra takes the form of a usurper. A veiled reprobation seems to surround him. The Vedic authors have no fear in enumerating his misdeeds or stressing his exclusion from the soma sacrifice. Obviously, if warriors availed themselves of him, Brahmanical circles regarded him as an intruder, and the scepticism shown as to his divine qualities must reflect the rivalry of the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. Even throughout his main exploit, Indra remains in the sphere of the human. The liberated waters are exclusively terrestrial and the scene of the combat is the mountains where the waters are held captive and the stakes are the rivers.

Despite all the scholarship which Benveniste and Renou brought to bear upon their study of Vṛtra and Vṛgragna, we are not quite convinced by this part of their thesis. It is very difficult to believe that Indra was originally a human hero, and was later elevated to the divine rank because of his exploits against Vṛtra.

Indra must have been a god of considerable eminence even before the separation of the Indians and the Iranians. Because, the names of four gods, Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra and the Nāsatyas, already appear in the Bogazköy treaty concluded between the Hittite king Shubbiluliema and the Mitanni king Mattiuaaza about 1400 B.C. 5 The above four gods appear among others as witness

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4 Benveniste and Renou, ibid., p.191.
of the treaty. The linguistic evidence of this inscription shows that about this time there existed in the Cappadocia region "archaic Indo-Iranian speech-forms which are undoubtedly older than the oldest Avestan or Sanskrit known to us". 6 Thus Indra's godhood did not originally depend upon his exploits against Vṛtra. As pointed out by Thieme, Indra appears in this inscription in his capacity as the avenger of "the faithless breach of covenants". 7

We do not deny the fact that the human characteristics of Indra are dwelt upon more often than those of any other god by the Vedic poets. But to deduce from this that Indra was originally a human hero is to miss the fundamental spirit of Indian religion. The ancient Indians portrayed their favourite gods as if they were very near and dear to them, and imposed human characteristics upon them. We would like to style this feature the humanisation of the gods. By imposing these human characteristics it was perhaps intended to show that the gods too are fallible, so that they might take a lenient view of human culpability and pardon human fallibility. This brought the favourite gods near to their worshippers. This humanisation of the gods perhaps contains the germ of the later bhakti cult whose fundamental teachings involve intense personal attachment to one's favourite god and regarding one's own god as a member of the family.

Thus Indra was not a deified human hero, but the archetype of the ideal human hero. In this connection we should remember the circumstances that led to the development of Indra's character and personality in the RV. The

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Aryans were settling down in a new country. The privations and difficulties of this migratory people are reflected in the conception of their favourite god. We believe that the exploits of human heroes were superimposed on the character of Indra. The ancients wanted to see in Indra the fruition of their hopes and aspirations. The archetypal hero was expected to bring about ideal conditions for the Aryans by destroying their many supernatural and human enemies.

Thus if Vṛtra be the prototype of the obstructing and resisting devil, Indra is the prototype human hero destroying such a devil. If in Vṛtra are reflected the privations and difficulties of a people in a newly conquered territory, in Indra are enshrined the hopes and aspirations of such a people. If Vṛtra be the real, Indra is the ideal.

With the passage of time, however, the concept of Vṛtra and Vṛtrahan Indra undergoes a tremendous change. We have developed this theme in our chapter V. By the later Vedic period the Vedic Aryans had practically Aryanised the whole of northern India up to the present Patna region. From a migratory multitude they became a sedentary people. This change is also reflected in the religion of the period. More and more emphasis was placed on the correct performance of the rituals. The simple ritual of the earlier period was no longer there. Instead we are in a morass of ritualistic speculation unsurpassed anywhere in the history of ancient religion. With this change in the general tone of religion the saga of Vṛtra also undergoes a tremendous change. From the prototype human hero, Indra becomes the power of creating the positive form of the ritual - the force of solar energy.

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of the ritual. Vṛtra is also a power but a negative power of the ritual. At various moments of the ritual a necessity is felt for the renewal of life. At those moments is created the demon Vṛtra - the negative and evil force of the ritual. Immediately on being born, the devil engulfs everything - including Soma and Agni - in fact everything beneficial and essential of the ritual. This is an impossible situation and cannot be tolerated. Hence is felt the necessity of creating the positive force of the ritual - the force which will divest the negative force of its possessions and revive the whole ritual. Thus is created Indra - the supreme power of the ritual, who annihilates the negative potentiality and revives the ritual. By reviving the ritual, life itself is revived. This ritual dichotomy is the most fundamental feature of the ancient Indian sacrificial ritual.

Another important feature of the Vṛtra myth to which we have drawn the attention of our readers is the identification of soma and Vṛtra. The unpurified soma juice or stalks are considered to be Vṛtra or evil. Such unpurified soma cannot be offered to the gods. The profanity of the soma must be got rid of before being drunk. This is a fundamental feature of the rituals associated with the ancient Indian soma sacrifice.

Before concluding, we would like to discuss the significance of two terms which have been referred to in our thesis. These are myth and saga. What do we mean by them?

The myth is the thing said or uttered in the course of the ritual. Its efficacy lies in its being repeated again and again. The myth justifies the ritual being solemnised. By being repeated, the myth generates power, the life-giving power of the ritual. The tale of Vṛtra in the later Vedas is a

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9 Harrison, Themis, pp.217, 257, 327 ff.
myth. By repeating the archetypal myth of the slaughter of Vṛtra, life was expected to be regenerated and lived anew.

A tale becomes a saga when it is attached to some historical fact.10 The tale of Vṛtra in the RV should be understood in this sense. We have already pointed out that the tale of Vṛtra reflects the privations and difficulties of the Vedic Aryans in the initial stages of their settlement in India. Thus the tale of Vṛtra reflects a genuine historical situation.

In brief, we believe that the saga of Vṛtra in the early Vedic period reflects the privations and difficulties of the Aryans in India. The two evils endangering the life of the Vedic Aryans at this time were, firstly the extremely arid condition of the north, north-western and the Punjab regions of India, when it was thought that the demonic power of resistance had obstructed the flow of the rain or river waters; secondly, the incessant strife and conflict among the Aryan tribes themselves as also against the autochthones led to the demonisation of these types of enemies creating obstruction. Later, cosmogonic details were attached to the Vṛtra saga at a certain stage, and this, we believe, is a contribution of the Babylonians to Indian civilization. Lastly came the ritualistic explanation of the Vṛtra myth in the later Vedas. Vṛtra, the demonic negative force must be crushed by the positive force of the ritual, Indra, who, it was believed, by the annihilation of the negative potentiality, would bring about regeneration in the ritual and in the life of the world.

10 Harrison, ibid., p.334 ff.
APPENDIX A

samudrá in the RV

It is a debateable question whether the Rgvedic Aryans were familiar with the sea or not. Zimmer came to the conclusion that, "Gewiss ist, vedische Volkstämme sind nie Seefahrer gewesen, das Meer hat sie nie angezogen". According to Macdonell, "The ocean was probably known only from hearsay", though the scholar changed his opinion in a subsequent publication.

According to Hillebrandt, "Wir können nicht nachweisen, dass die Stämme des RV. damals bis zum Meere vorgedrungen waren oder an seiner Küste gesessen haben", but that they were aware of the ocean. By trade or war, through travellers or storytellers the message of the great ocean must have reached even the inhabitants of the Swat and Kabul region. They cannot have been a sea-faring people. While the reference to "the ship with a hundred rudders" in the story of Bhujyu should not be taken literally, it at least may refer to sea-going ships. The deification of Samudra is hardly discernable in its first beginning.

2 Macdonell, A History of Sanskrit Literature, p.144.
3 Macdonell-Keith, Vedic Index of Names and Subjects, vol.II, p.432 (with references to the writings of other scholars on the topic).
5 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.11.
7 Hillebrandt, ibid., p.16.
According to Lüders, by the word, *samudrā*, the Indian Ocean\(^8\) or perhaps
the Arabian sea\(^9\) is to be understood, for, as shown by Hillebrandt, the
Maruts are active during the passage of the south west monsoon from the
Indus delta to the foot of the Himalayas. It might also have referred to
the mythical world ocean, for realities are mixed up with mythical
conceptions in Indian thought.\(^{10}\) About the hundred-ruddeded ship in the
Bhyjyu story (I. 116. 5), Lüders remarked, "Wer auf Grund von V. 5 behauptet,
dass die ṛgvedischen Inder "hundertrudrige Galeeren" bauten, der muss auf
Grund von V. 3 und 4 auch annehmen, dass sie hundertfüssige Wagen
konstruierten und Luftschiffe modernsten Typs obendrein".\(^{11}\)

There are sufficient indications to show that the ṛgvedic people were
aware that the rivers flowed into the *samudrā*:-

III. 46. 4: "To Indra flow the pressed soma juices from
ancient times, as the floods (flow) to the *samudrā*.\(^{12}\)

VI. 19. 5: "In him run all paths that lead to wealth as the
rivers join the *samudrā*".\(^{13}\)

VIII. 3. 10: "This is your manly might, O Indra, with which you
let loose the great waters to (flow into) the *samudrā*.\(^{14}\)

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\(^9\) Lüders, ibid., p.106.
\(^10\) Lüders, ibid., p.106.
\(^11\) Lüders, ibid., pp.110-1.
\(^12\) īndraṁ somāsaḥ pradīvi sutāsaḥ samudrāṁ nā sravāta ā viśanti
\(^13\) sām jagmire pathyārāyō asmīṁ samudrē nā sīndhāvo yādāmenāḥ
\(^14\) yēnā samudrāṁ āṣṭjo mahīr apās tād indra vṛṣṇi te śāvah
VIII. 6. 4: "Before his (Indra's) anger all bow down, all people, as the rivers (flow) to the samudrá".  

VIII. 6. 35: "As rivers the samudrá, so our eulogies have strengthened Indra".  

VIII. 6. 44. 25: "Agni, to you, who held to the ordinance, go the brilliant songs of praise, as rivers go to the samudrá".  

IX. 88. 6: "When (the soma stalks are) pressed, they go swiftly to the pitcher, as the rivers (go) to the samudrá swiftly".

Even though the rivers empty themselves into the samudrá, the poet wonders, they do not fill it up: "That the glittering streams, though they discharge themselves (into the samudrá), do not fill up the samudrá with their waters".

There are some other significant pointers which enable us to postulate that the Ṛgvedic Aryans were aware of the samudrá. Thus we have reference to eastern and western samudras; or to upper and lower sea and the lower

15 sámasya manyáve víśo víśvā namanta kṛṣṭáyáḥ / samudráyéva síndhavaḥ  
16 índrama uktháni vāvṛdhuh samudrám Íva síndhavaḥ  
17 For dhṛtávratya, see Grassmann, WZR, col.693.  
18 ágne dhṛtávratáya te samudráyéva síndhavaḥ / gíro vásrásá ērate  
19 vṛthá samudrám síndhávo ná nícchí sutásō abhí kaláśam asprígran  
20 ékam yád udná ná prántyéntir Úśinácántir aványaḥ samudrám, RV, V. 85. 6.  
For a translation of, and comments on this verse, see Hillebrandt's Lieder des Ṛgveda, p.77; Lommel's Gedichte des Rig-veda, p.67; Lüder's Varuña, vol.I, p.104; Renou, EVP, vol.VII. p.19.  
21 ubhaú samudráv á kṣétí yáś ca púrvá utáparah, ibid., X. 136. 5. This is a rather intriguing verse. The geographical knowledge of the RV did not extend beyond the present U.P. region, for Gaṅgá, the most sacred river of the later ages, is mentioned just once in the RV (X. 75. 5). If we accept literally the value of the evidence under consideration, then we will have to concede that the Ṛgvedic Aryans were aware of the Bay of Bengal or the eastern part of the Indian ocean which is opposed to the geographical knowledge of the RV. Or, is the reference to an eastern sea only mythical,
sea must refer to an earthly sea. Besides, we have references to the swelling of the sea in the following passages:-

I. 8. 7: "Whose belly expands like the samudrā, when he has drunk most soma".

I. 11. 1: "All the hymns have magnified Indra (who has become) as vast as samudrā".

V. 78. 8: "As the samudrā swells".

IX. 64. 8: "Soma, you swell (like) the samudrā".

We have several references to wealth from the samudrā:-

I. 47. 6: "Procure wealth, coveted by many, for us from the samudrā or from heaven".

IX. 33. 6: "O Soma, (bring) wealth for us from the four samudrās, from all around".

X. 5. 1: "The one samudrā, holder of riches" — a description of Agni.

or did they get the idea of an eastern sea from the pre-Aryan wandering bards and story tellers? It may be mentioned in this connection that excavations at Pandu Rajar Dhibi have shown that there were metal-using semi-civilized people in the Ajay river valley regions. See Paresh Chandra Das Gupta, The Excavation at Pandu Rajar Dhibi.
I. 48. 3: "Like glory-seeking (sea-goers) on the samudra". 30
I. 56. 2: "Like profit-seeking (merchants) on their way to the samudra". 31

There are certain traditions in the RV, according to which various gods help their protégés in dangerous situations. One such tradition refers to the help given by the Āsvins when their protégé, Bhujyu, was abandoned in the samudra:—

I. 116. 3: "Tugra left behind Bhujyu in the watercloud, O Āsvins, like a dead man (leaves behind) his wealth. You removed him (Bhujyu) away in watertight ships, animated and floating through the air". 32

I. 116. 4: "You, Nāsatyas, removed Bhujyu with the birds, which travelled for more than three nights and three days; (you removed

30 samudrē na śrāvasyāvah. Geldner, GRY, vol. I, p. 59, fn. 3cd, remarked "Die Wagenfahrer werden mit ausfahrenden Schiffern verglichen. Ob samudrē prāgnant im Sinne des späteren samudravelāyam? Dann wäre der Parallelismus vollständig, denn die Flutzeit ist für den Seefahrer dasselbe, was für Wagenfahrer der Morgen, das Signal zur Ausfahrt". Lüders, Varuṇa, vol. I, pp. 107-8, did not accept Geldner's views, because it is doubtful whether a long ocean trip was known to the Aryans at that time. Moreover, according to Lüders, the ocean in the above passage refers to the heavenly ocean. Lüders remarked, "Ich möchte daher samudrē na sravasyāvah auf die Wagen beziehen, die in dem himmlischen Meere genau so auf den Beginn der Fahrt der Uṣas warten wie die Wagen der Menschen auf der Erde" (p. 108). We are, however, in favour of accepting Geldner's view. The passage would then mean that, just as the approach of dawn sets cars in motion, similarly it causes ships to move out to the open sea for seeking glory (i.e. wealth).

31 samudrām na saṃcārane saṃiṣyāvah

32 tūgro ha bhujyuṁ āsvinadameghē rayīm nā kāś cin mamṛṛā ṛvāhāḥ
tām ūnathur naubhir ātmanvaśībhīr antarikṣatprudbhīr apodakābbhiḥ
The expressions, udameghē and antarikṣatprudbhīḥ, show clearly that the whole incident is taking place in the atmosphere. The term nāũ definitely means a boat or a ship. But samudrā in this context refers to the atmospheric sea.
him) to the coast of the samudra, on the shore of the wet (ocean), with three chariots with a hundred feet and six horses".  

I. 116. 5: "There you performed your heroic deed, in the samudra, which is without fixed point, without firm ground, without grip, when you, Aśvins, removed home Bhujyu, who had climbed (into your) ship with a hundred oars".  

I. 117. 14: "You (Aśvins) removed Bhujyu from the samudra flood with the birds (and) with the white horses".  

I. 117. 15: "You removed him, you bull-like ones (or you manly ones), by a well harnessed chariot, which was as quick as thought".

tisraḥ keśapāḥ tirāḥ aḥāvatirajādbhir nāsatyaḥ bhujy-yardhupatangaiḥ samudrāṣya dhānvann ādṛāṣya pāre tribhiḥ rāthaiḥ satāpadbhiḥ sajaśvaiḥ
This verse continues the earlier tale. Hence, the samudra in this verse too refers to the atmospheric sea and does not refer to an actual sea. See in this connection, Bloomfield, "The Legend of Soma and the Eagle", in JAOS, vol.16, p.1 ff., especially pp.21-2.

anārāmbhanē tād avirayethām anāsthānē agrabhāne sāmundrē
yād aśvinā uḥathur bhujyum āstamā satārātrām nāvamātasthiyām
In continuing the tale, the poet informs us that Aśvins rescued Bhujyu in a ship with a hundred oars. This is important information and possibly shows that the Vedic Indians were familiar with big ships. A.L. Basham, "Notes on Seafaring in Ancient India", in Studies in Indian History and Culture, p.148, remarks, "Even allowing for some exaggeration, this verse seems to indicate that the Vedic Indians knew of quite large ships". But note Lüders' remark on p.273.

yuvaṁ bhujyum ārpaśo niḥ sāmundrād vībhūr uḥathur ṛjrebhir aśvaiḥ
It would be illogical for us to suggest here that by birds and white horses are meant ships having sails or masts, see M.L. Bhargava, The Geography of Vedic India, p.2.

nīṣ ṭām uḥathuḥ suyujā rāthēnā mānojāvasā vṛṣaṅā svasti
The information that Bhujyu was rescued with the help of a chariot would suggest that the poet is here describing the atmospheric sea rather than an actual sea.
I. 119. 4: "With the self-harnessed birds you came to the drifting Bhujyu (who was drifting in the samudrā), bringing him to his parents". 37

I. 182. 5: "You made in the streams for Tugra's son that animated and floating bird by which you removed (him) in godlike spirit. You flew in light flight out from the great flood". 38

I. 182. 6: "Four boats sent by the Aśvins, saved Tugra's son, who was pushed off in the waters and thrown in the gripless darkness". 39

VI. 62. 6: "You brought Bhujyu, the son of Tugra, out from the waters with (your) birds, out from the samudrā through the spaces, using dustless stretches of road, with the winged ones from the lap of the flood". 40

An analysis of the above evidence would show that Bhujyu, when he was left in the "water cloud" (I. 116. 3), was rescued by the Aśvins and was brought to the "coast of the samudrā" (I. 116. 4). The Aśvins performed their heroic deed in the samudrā, which is without fixed point, without firm ground and without grip (I. 116. 5). They rescued Bhujyu from the samudrā flood (I. 117. 14); or made "in the streams that animated and floating bird"
For rescuing him, Bhujyu was rescued by the birds (I. 116. 4; I. 117. 14; I. 119. 4; VI. 62. 6), or by the chariots (I. 116. 4; I. 117. 15), or by boats or ships (I. 116. 3; I. 116. 5; I. 182. 5; I. 182. 6), sent by the Aśvins, Bhujyu is also recorded to have been rescued "from the samudrá through the spaces" (VI. 62. 6). Thus the above evidence shows that the incident took place in the atmospheric sea.

But how could the Ṛgvedic Indians conceive of an atmospheric sea unless they were familiar with an actual sea?

It is certain that the main theatre of activity of the Ṛgvedic Aryans was the present Punjab and the north western province of undivided India. The coastal regions of India were unknown to them. It is not unlikely though that they might have heard of the existence of a great sea from the autochthones of India – perhaps from the merchants and travellers of the Indus valley, who used to frequent the western coasts of India; or, by samudrá perhaps was meant to refer to the delta of the Indus with which also the people of the Indus valley must have been familiar. It naturally follows then that the Ṛgvedic Aryans did not have direct or first-hand knowledge of the sea.

According to another tradition, Indra helped Turvasa and Yadu, perhaps the eponyms of the two tribes of the same name, across the samudrá: "When, O hero, capable of crossing the samudrá, you helped Turvasa and Yadu across (the samudrá) unhurt". 41 This does not help us much because we are not

41 prá yat samudrām āti sūra pārṣi pārāyā turvāsām yādūm svasti RV, I. 174. 9 (= VI. 20. 12).
In IV. 30. 17, Yadu and Turvāsa are described as non-swimmers (asnātārā) whom Indra helped across. We are not specifically informed whether Indra helped them to cross the sea or a river. In II. 15. 5, Indra is recorded to have stopped the great stream (mahim dhunim) in its course and helped the non-swimmers (asnātān), which perhaps refers to the same incident. In VI. 45. 1, Indra is recorded to have brought Turvāsa and Yadu from afar.
certain whether the word samudra in the above passage refers to the Arabian sea, or the Indian ocean or perhaps the massive collection of waters at the delta of the Indus.

Even if samudra refers to the Indian ocean or Arabian sea, we still believe that the Rigvedic Aryans had only a vague notion of it on the coastal regions of western India and that they had no direct or first-hand knowledge of the sea.

Thus the tradition that Turvasa and Yadu, the eponyms of the two tribes, were brought over the samudra by Indra, does not help us much in determining whether the Rigvedic Aryans really had a first-hand knowledge of the Indian ocean or not. See also I. 54. 6; V. 31. 8; VI. 20. 12.
APPENDIX B

Sudās, Vṛtra and the War of the Ten Kings

We have already noted that in two significant verses, the Kuśikas and Kutsas pray to Indra for the success of king Sudās against Vṛtra or Vṛtras.¹ For a proper understanding of the nature of Vṛtra in these passages, we should take into consideration the early history of the family of Sudās in India.

Sudās belonged to the Trtsu royal family of the Bharata tribe.² Under his leadership the Bharatas fought with the ten kings or tribes,³ Turvaśa,⁴

¹ RV. III. 53. 11; VII. 26. 5.
² The Bharatas were the most prominent of the Vedic tribes. It is from this term that the expression Bhāratavarśa, the designation of India in the Classical age, was coined. For a discussion of the history of the tribe, see Macdonell-Keith, VI, vol.II, pp.94-7; vol.I, pp.320-3; Keith, "The Age of the Rigveda", in ed. Rapson, CHI, especially pp.73-5; B.C. Law, Ancient Mid-Indian Kṣatriya Tribes, vol.I, pp.3-4; N.K. Dutt, The Aryanisation of India, pp.102-9.
³ It is difficult to determine whether Turvaśa, Yadu etc. refer to tribes or chieftains ruling over the tribes. For example, Turvaśa occurs in the singular together with Yadu in I. 36, 18, VI. 20, 12, VIII. 4, 7 and X. 49. 8; in the plural in I. 108. 8 and VIII. 4. 19. Yadu appears in a majority of cases in the singular, while in the plural form it occurs in I. 108. 8. Pūru appears in the singular in VII. 18, 13, VII. 8, 4, etc., and in the plural in I. 108. 8. Druhyu occurs in the singular in VII. 18, 12 and VIII. 10, 5; in the plural in VII. 18, 6 and 14. In the plural the terms perhaps refer to the whole people and in the singular they may refer to the kings ruling over the tribes. For the War of the Ten Kings, see RV, VII. 18. 1-25; VII. 33. 3-6; VII. 83. 1-8.
⁴ The Turvaśas were closely allied with the Yadus. These two tribes lived in the southern Punjab region and probably further south. Macdonell-Keith, op.cit., vol.I, pp.315-7; Keith, op.cit., p.73; Dutt, op.cit., pp.103-4.
Yadu, 6 Druhyu, 7 Pūru, 8 Anu and the Pakthas, 9 Bhālānases, 10 Alinas, 11 Sivas 12 and Viṣāṇīns, 13 as also the Matsyas, 14 Śīmyus, 15 Bṛgus 16 and

5

The reading Yadu in VII. 18. 6 is uncertain. We have accepted here Macdonell-Keith's reasoning and read Yadu instead of Yakṣu (VI, vol. I, p. 320, fn. 4). According to Macdonell-Keith, we should read here Yadu instead of Yakṣu, because Turvaśa is mentioned here, and Turvaśa-Yadu or Yadu-Turvaśa are frequently mentioned together in the RV (I. 36. 18; I. 54. 6; V. 31. 8; VI. 45. 1; VIII. 7. 18, etc.).

6

The Druhyus perhaps lived to the west of Ravi; Macdonell-Keith, ibid., vol. I, p. 385; Dutt, ibid., p. 103.

7

The Pūrus were settled on either side of the Sarasvatī. Macdonell-Keith, op. cit., vol. I, p. 327; Dutt, ibid., pp. 102–3; Law, op. cit., pp. 3–4.

8

The Anus lived on the Paruṣuṇī or Ravi. Macdonell-Keith, ibid., vol. I, p. 22; Keith, op. cit., p. 73; Dutt, ibid., p. 103.

9

The name Paktha reminds us of the modern Pakthūns living in present Afghanistan. Keith, ibid., p. 73.

10

The Bhalānases were possibly connected with the Bolan pass. Keith, ibid., p. 73.

11


12

The Śivas were perhaps settled near the Indus. H.C. Raychaudhuri, Political History of Ancient India, pp. 252–3, located the Siboi tribe mentioned by Megasthenes in the Shorkot region in the Jhang district below the junction of the Jhelum and the Chenab and thought that the Siboi of Megasthenes must be identical with the Śivas. See also Macdonell-Keith, ibid., vol. II, pp. 381–2.

13

The Viṣāṇīns were perhaps so called because of their horn-shaped helmets. They were located between the Krumu and the Gomati. See Pusalker, in ed. Majumdar and Pusalker, The Vedic Age, p. 247; Macdonell-Keith, ibid., vol. II, p. 313.

14


15

The Śīmyus were perhaps non-Aryans, because in I. 100. 18, they are associated with the Dasyus. See RV. I. 100. 18 ; Macdonell-Keith, op. cit., vol. II, p. 381.

16

the Vaikārṇas on the Paruṣṇī or Ravi. Sudās also defeated Bheda and the Ajas, Śigrus, and Yakṣus and Devaka and Śambra, on the Yamunā.

This great feat of Sudās created a lasting impression on the minds of the Vedic seers and is immortalised in the so-called War of the Ten Kings.

In the background of the above information, the above two verses in which the priests pray to Indra for the success of Sudās against Vṛtra or the Vṛtras become highly significant. We believe that after his accession, king Sudās wanted to ratify his claim to sovereignty by performing a great horse sacrifice in the course of which the horse was allowed to roam freely for a whole year. This free roaming of the sacrificial horse of Sudās was

17 RV, VII. 18, 11, contains the following information about the Vaikārṇas: "The king (Sudās) scattered the twentyone tribes of the two Vaikārṇas by (his) śravas ("heroic deed"), ekaṃ ca yon viṃśatīṃ ca śravasyā vaikarpayor jānaṃ rājā nyā āstāḥ. Zimmer, Altindisches Leben, p.103, conjectured that they refer to the joint Kuru-Krīvi people. See also Macdonell-Keith, ibid., vol.II, p.327.

18 According to some scholars the Ajas and Śigrus were totemistic tribes. Macdonell, VM, p.153 noted the Nāgas (snakes), Kaśyapa (tortoise), the Matsyas (fishes), the Ajas (goats), the Śigrus (horse-radishes), the Gotamas (oxen), the Vatsas (calves), the Sunakas (dogs), the Kauśikas (owls), etc., as totemistic tribes. Keith, RPVU, pt.II, pp.195-7, seemed sceptic about the survival of totemism in the Vedic age, because none of the above-mentioned families claimed their origin from the animals mentioned. Oldenberg, ORD, p.84, remarked, "Im allgemeinen macht das Fehlen überzeugender Spuren des Totemismus bei anderen indoeuropäischen Völkern sowie das von totemistischen Zügen freie Verwandtschaftssystem, das die arischen Inder mit jenen gemein haben, die Annahme eines hinter der vedischen Kultur liegenden totemistischen Hintergrundes wohl eher unwahrscheinlich". Indeed, it is very curious that none of the so-called totemistic tribes of Macdonell trace their origin from any animal whatsoever. Nor is there any reference to these tribes paying special reverence to their totem animals.

19 Gonda, Kingship, p.114, succinctly sums up the object of this sacrifice thus: "By roaming about freely it was on the one hand to spread its divine power over the whole country and on the other to extend the rule and power of its king, or rather to establish it, to ratify his claims on overlordship, and at the same time to re-establish it and to reinvigorate it intrinsically ... to enhance welfare and fertility all over the country and the other natural consequences of prosperous sovereignty".
halted by the above-mentioned tribes and kings. But Sudās defeated them in the inevitable war which followed and established his suzerainty.

The term Vṛtra, then, in the above context, would signify 'obstruction' or 'impediment' created by human enemies who wanted to retard the free passage of Sudās' horse, but who were ultimately defeated.

Further significant information with regard to this was contained in VII. 83. 1, which runs thus: "Defeat the Dāsa and Ārya Vṛtras and help Sudās with your aid, 0 Indra and Varuṇa". The Dāsas were the pre-Aryans of India and the Ārya Vṛtras perhaps refer to the five obstructing Aryan tribes or kings, the Turvasā, Yadu, Pūru, Druhyu and Anu, previously mentioned. It is likely that these five tribes formed the so-called Pañcajanāḥ of the RV, because they are mentioned together in RV I. 108. 8 which runs thus: "If you, Indra and Agni, are with the Yadus, Turvasās, Druhyus, Anus (or) the Pūrus, come here nevertheless, 0 you bulls, and drink of the pressed soma (juice)". This clearly shows that Indra and Agni were worshipped by the five Aryan tribes. It is quite likely that these "five people" were an earlier batch of Aryan migrants. When Sudās, the king of the Bharatas, obviously a later body of the Aryan migrants, released his horse for the horse sacrifice, these five peoples tried to retard the free passage of Sudās' horse. Hence the Ārya Vṛtras should refer to the five obstructing Aryan tribes. But who were the Dāsa Vṛtras? The Pakthas, Bhalanases, Ainas, Viṣṇuśins, Sivas, or the so-called totemistic tribes of

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20 dasā ca vṛtrā hatām āryāṇī ca sudāsam indrāvaruṇāvasā avatam
21 See our IVth Chap., Section C.
22 yād indrāgni yādusū turvāśeṣu yād druhyuṣyānuṣu pūrūṣu sthāh
   atah pari viṣanāvah hi yatam athā somasya pibatam sutasya
Macdonell, the Ajas and Sigrus? Some of them may have been non-Aryans, but we cannot pronounce any definite judgement on the question.

This picture of the War of the Ten Kings becomes rather complicated when the Pûrus, the implacable enemies of Sudās and his family priest, Vasiṣṭha, appear in a favourable light in VII. 19. 3, which runs thus:

"You (Indra), courageous one, helped Sudās boldly with all your help, whose offering is coveted; you helped Trasadasyu, son of Purukutsa, the Pûru, by the acquisition of land in the Vṛtra slaughter". 23

This bracketing of Sudās and the Pûru king, Trasadasyu, is peculiar. It seems probable to us that after the War of the Ten Kings, the two tribes, the Bharatas and Pûrus, established friendly relations, which ultimately led to their amalgamation in the Kuru people. 24 When the Bharatas and Pûrus came to a mutual understanding, the latter began to appear in a favourable light - the Vedic seers portrayed them as receiving favours from Aryan gods like Indra who helped Pûru king Trasadasyu in the acquisition of land after slaughtering obstructing human enemies.

23 tvāṁ dhṛṣṇo dhṛṣṭāṁ vītāhavyāṁ právo vīśvabhīḥ udībhāḥ sudāsām pré paúrukutsim trasadasyum ávah kṣetrasātā vṛtrahātyeṣu pūrum
We have followed Geldner, op.cit., vol.II, p.198, in translating Geldner translated it as "Dessen Opfer begehrt waren".

24 Macdonell-Keith, op.cit., vol.I, pp.167-8, accepted the theory propounded by Oldenberg (Buddha, pp.403, 404) with regard to the amalgamation of the two tribes in later times. Their arguments are as follows: (a) The Bharatas appear in the Brāhmaṇas as a great people of the past, while the later literature ignores them - which shows that they merged in some other tribe; (b) The Kurus ruled over the Bharata territory in later times; (c) The Bharatas appear as a variant of the Kuru-Pañcālas in a passage of the Vājasaneyi Samhitā (XI. 3. 3); (d) In a list of the great performers of the horse sacrifice, the names of a Kuru and two Bharata princes are mentioned without any indication of the people over which they reigned, while in other cases this information is specifically given. See also in this connection, Keith, op.cit., pp.74-5; Law, op.cit., pp.1-4; Dutt, op.cit., p.110, Pusalker, op.cit., p.246; for another opinion, see D.D. Kosambi, "The Vedic "Five Tribes"", in JAOS, vol.87, p.32 ff.
APPENDIX C

An examination of the view of Hillebrandt with regard to
the original connection of the sacred drink with the moon

Hillebrandt proposed an original connection of the sacred drink with
the moon,\(^1\) which failed to convince some scholars. Oldenberg\(^2\) pointed
out that even if we accept the fact that the heavenly origin of soma was
"uralt", still, in the main body of the \(RV\), traces of this seem either to
be completely absent or of secondary importance. Among the innumerable
fantasies which are built on the soma songs around the concept of the
deified drink, there are many which could point to the embodying of soma
in the moon, but such passages do not give clear evidence and others of a
different type lessen the credibility of the identification.\(^3\) Oldenberg
pointed out that very often Soma makes the sun rise and emits light like
the sun, he cleanses himself in heaven, looks down from heaven, chases away
darkness by light. Thus if we are to connect Soma with a heavenly body, it
is the sun to which it should be related.\(^4\) Oldenberg noted, however, that
in some places of the \(RV\), for example, the great marriage song of X. 85.,
Soma is definitely identical with the moon.

Oldenberg pointed out the different factors which might have led to
the identification of Soma and the moon:

\(^1\) Hillebrandt, \(HVM\), vol.I, p.193 ff
\(^2\) Oldenberg, \(ORD\), p.175 ff
\(^3\) Oldenberg, ibid., p.176
\(^4\) Oldenberg, ibid., p.176
(a) "Das der Soma ... gleich dem Monde ein himmlisches, lichtes, die Dunkelheit bekämpfendes Wesen ist". 5

(b) "Der Mond nimmt ab und wieder zu. So kennt das Ritual ein dem "Anschwellen" des Mondes paralleles "Anschwellen" der Somapflanzen, wenn die halb ausgepressten Stengel frisch befeuchtet werden". 6

(c) "Der Mond ist Beförderer des Pflanzenwuchses, Herr und Schutzpatron des Pflanzenreichs; der König aller Pflanzen aber ist als vornehmste und heiligste Pflanze der Soma". 7

(d) "Der rötlich helle, feurige Somatropfen fliesst ins Wasser, wie der helle, feurige Lichttropfen des Mondes in den Wolkenwassern schwimmt". 8

Macdonell, Keith 9 and Hopkins 10 rejected the theory of Hillebrandt. Gonda 12 also rejects the view that Soma is identical with the moon in the RV.

Lüders accepted the fact that in the marriage song (RV. X. 85) Soma appears as the moon, but significantly remarked that if Soma was the moon throughout the RV, it is extraordinary that this is never mentioned in the

5 Oldenberg, ibid., p.177.
6 Oldenberg, ibid., p.177.
7 Oldenberg, ibid., pp.177-8.
8 Oldenberg, ibid., p.178.
9 Macdonell, VM, p.113.
11 Hopkins, Religions of India, p.114 ff.
more than a thousand verses of the ninth book, which deal with Soma.  
Soma must have his origin in the pressed drink, because nobody would  
doubt that Soma is derived from su. The pressed drink is thus primary. 
Undoubtedly the Indo-Iranian people had pressed soma for their own use and  
ascribed a heavenly origin to the drink. This heavenly drink must have  
entered the earthly plants through rain. It is very difficult to decide  
how Soma came to be identified with the moon, which happened at the end of  
the Rgvedic period. It could well be that the idea that the moon is the  
food of the gods is an old one, though reference to it is to be found only  
in the Upanisads, for example in Chandogya Upaniṣad V. 10, 4: eṣa soma  
rājā. tad devānām annam. tām devā bhakṣayanti.  
Lüders went on to  
remark, "Hier ist also der Mond offenbar festes Essen, was auch zu der  
sichtbaren Gestalt besser passt. Dürfen wir annehmen, dass diese Sage  
zunächst selbständig bestand und dann später der Mond, die Götterspeise,  
mit dem Soma, dem Göttertrank, identifiziert würde?"  
Thus we are not in a position to accept Hillebrandt's theory. In view  
of the points raised by various scholars, especially Oldenberg and Lüders,  
we can reject the original lunar character of Soma. Had the moon been  
originally identical with Soma, this would surely have been mentioned in  
the Avesta. Hillebrandt argued that the identification of Soma and the  
moon was a popular belief to which priestly ritual only gave room.  

14 Lüders, ibid., p.700.  
15 Lüders, ibid., p.700.  
16 Lüders, ibid., p.701.  
17 Lüders, ibid., p.701.  
18 Hillebrandt, op.cit., p.306.
Hillebrandt here discussed RV. X. 85. 3 and 4, which may be translated thus:-

X. 85. 3: "One thinks to have drunk soma, when they crush the plant. Of him (soma), which the Brāhmaṇas know, no one ever tastes". 19

X. 85. 4: "O Soma, guarded by that which is meant to cover you, guarded by him who lives in the high (heaven?), you stand listening to the pressing stones. No earthly one eats you". 20

In this connection we should take into consideration the evidence of the Atharvaveda bearing on the identification of Soma and the moon:—

VII. 86. 3: "O stem of Soma, lord of the combatant, you are indeed not-deficient by name; make me, O first sight (darsā) not-deficient, both by progeny and wealth". 21

VIII. 1. 2: "Soma rich in rays". 22

XI. 6. 7: "May god Soma, whom they call the moon, release me (from distress)". 23

The word darsā in VII. 86. 3 clearly reminds us of the Darśapūrṇamāseṣṭī or the new and full moon sacrifice, in the course of which Soma is identified

19. somām manyate papivān yat saṃpiśsantā ōṣadhim somām yām brahmaṇo vidūr nā tasyāśnāti kāś canā
20. acchāvidhānair gupito bārhataiḥ soma rakṣitāḥ grāvṇām ic chṛṇvān tiṣṭhasi nā te aśnāti pārthivāḥ
21. somasyahṣāo yudham pate 'nūno nāma vā asi ānūnaṃ darsā mā kṛdhi prajāyā ca dhānena ca
22. Whitney, WAV, vol. I, p. 447, remarks, "The darśā is the slender crescent of the new moon when first visible, and here compared with one of the stems or sprouts from which the soma is pressed, and which swell up when wetted, as the crescent grows. The identification of the moon and soma underlines the comparison".
23. somo aṃśamān
24. somo mā devō muñcātu yāmāhūś candrāmā iti
with the moon. The epithet *əmsuman* has a clear reference to the moon. The last evidence (XI, 6, 7) is positively decisive.

There is, therefore, no doubt that the moon is identical with Soma in the AV. We believe that the identification of Soma and the moon began to gain ground among the ritualists towards the end of the Ṛgvedic period, and to which the above-quoted verses from the RV (X, 85, 3 and 4) bear testimony. We also believe that the priests had to give way to the demands of the ritualists and to accept the identification of the two. While the original lunar character of the Soma is thus not acceptable to us, we believe that the identification became widespread among the ritualists towards the end of the Ṛgvedic period.

24 See supra, Vth Chap., p.223 ff.
The Atharvaveda, apropos the Indra-Vṛtra conflict, does not add much
to the existing corpus of our knowledge. Besides repetitions from the RV, it has very few hymns bearing on our problem.

There are several references to the various parts of Vṛtra’s body in
the following passages:

VI. 134. 1: "Let this thunderbolt of the rta satisfy itself;
let it crush his kingdom and life. Let it crush the back of
his neck, tear apart its nape, as (did) Śacipati of Vṛtra".

VI. 135. 1: "When I eat, I make strength; thus do I take the
thunderbolt, cutting to pieces the shoulders of him yonder, as
Śacipati of Vṛtra".

1 Thus AV. I. 21. 1 = RV. X. 152. 2 (with one variation. Thus the RV. X. 152. 2 has viśāṃ paṭih instead of viśāṃ paṭih of AV. I. 21. 1). Again AV. I. 21. 3 = RV. X. 152. 3; similarly AV. IV. 32. 3 = RV. X. 83. 3; AV. XVIII. 1. 38 = RV. VIII. 24. 2; AV. XX. 11. 3 = RV. III. 34. 3; AV. XX. 7. 2 = RV. VIII. 93. 2; AV. XX. 11a 11 = RV. III. 30. 22 (= RV. III. 31. 22; III. 32. 17, etc.); AV. XX. 35. 6 = RV. I. 61. 6; AV. XX. 35. 10 = RV. I. 61. 10; AV. XX. 35. 12 = RV. I. 61. 12; AV. XX. 37. 4 = RV. VII. 39. 4; AV. XX. 41. 1 = RV. I. 84. 13; AV. XX. 77. 7 = RV. IV. 16. 7; AV. XX. 105. 2 = RV. VIII. 99. 6; AV. XX. 107. 3 = RV. VIII. 6. 6; and AV. XX. 47. 1 and XX. 137. 12 = RV. VIII. 93. 7.

2 ayaṁ vajras taparyatam ṛtasyāvāsyā rāṣṭrām āpa hantu jīvitām
ṛṣṭu grīvāḥ pra śrṣṭuṣṣṇiḥ vṛtrāsyeva śacipatiḥ
We have read ṛtasya with vajraḥ, and thus translated it as the thunderbolt of
the ṛta. ṛta here possibly stands for the sacrifice against the enemies. The
word jīvitām is also curious, but we cannot find a better meaning for it,
other than the above. Śacipati—may be translated as "lord of power". See
Gonda, SOR, p. 22.

3 yād aṣṭāṇi bālam kurva itthāṃ vajram ā dade
skandhān amuṣya śaṭayan vṛtrāsyeva śacipatiḥ
Whitney, WAV. vol. 1, p. 382.
XX. 128. 13: "You (Indra) cast asunder Rauhiṇa, and split Vṛtra's head".  

The saga of the conflict between Indra and Vṛtra is twisted by the writers of the AV to bring it in line with the magical religion of the text. We may quote the following:—

VI. 85. 3: "Just as Vṛtra checked these waters (while) flowing in all directions, similarly, by Agni Vaiśvānara, I check your yakṣma ("consumption")".  

VIII. 5. 3: "With this amulet Indra killed Vṛtra". 

IV. 10. 5: "The amulet born from the ocean, born from Vṛtra, making day—let it (the amulet) protect us on all sides from the missile, from the gods and Asuras".

That Vṛtra is the prototype of human enemies causing obstruction is alluded to in the following passages:—

4 tvām rauhiṇām vya 'syo vī vṛtrasyābhānac chīrāh
On vy-as, see Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, pp.1034-5. 

5 yaṭhā vṛtra ima āpas tāstāmbha viśvādhā yatīh
vā tē aṅgīnā yakṣmāṃ vaiśvānareṇa vārāye
Vaiśvānara may be translated as "related to him, who possesses the total amount of vital strength". Heesterman, ARC, pp.46-7. On yakṣma, see Shende, RPA, pp.31-3; FAR, p.368; Macdonell-Keith, VI., vol.II, pp.182-3. 

6 anēṇēndrō maṇīnā vṛtrām ahan
The poet is here describing the efficacy of the Srāktya amulet, the name of the amulet in the AV being maṇi. On this amulet see Bloomfield, SBE, vol.XLI, p.575; BAG, p.68; Shende, FAR, p.360; Karambelkar, The Atharvavedic Civilization, p.87 (on maṇi). 

7 samudraj jātō maṇīr vṛtrāj jātō divākaraḥ
sō asmāṃ sarvātāḥ pāṭu hetyā devāsūrębhyāḥ
Whitney, WAV, vol.I, p.162. The expression "The amulet ... born from Vṛtra" is rather obscure. The poet perhaps wants to emphasise here that, just as Vṛtra was powerful enough to check the waters, similarly this amulet is powerful enough to check the missiles of both the gods and Asuras and thus protect on all sides.
XI. 9. 23: "Let both Arbudi and Triśandhi pierce through our enemies, so that, O Indra sacīpati, slayer of Vṛtra, we may kill by thousands, of these enemies". 8

XII. 1. 37: "Abandoning the god-reviling Dasyus, the earth, choosing Indra and not Vṛtra, kept (herself) for Śakra, for the vigorous bull". 9

II. 5. 3: "The swiftly-dashing friend Indra, who, like a Yati, killed Vṛtra". 10

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8 arbudīśca triśandhiś cāmītrān no ví vidhyatām yāthaiśām indra vṛtrahan hānāma sacīpate 'mitrānām sahasraśāṃ Arbudi and Triśandhi are the dread "battle-demons" created by the Atharvanic poets as allies of Indra. Bloomfield suggested that the Ṛgvedic import of the saga of Arbuda was forgotten in this period and Arbuda becomes a serpent god in the AV. Triśandhi, according to Bloomfield, is the personification of the three-pointed bolt of Indra. Bloomfield, SBE, vol.XLI, p.631 ff.; BAG, p.75; Shende, FAR, pp.377-8; RPA, pp.94-6.

9 para dāśyūn dādatī devaipyūn índraṁ vṛṇānā pṛthivī nā vṛtrām sāraṇya dadhre vṛṣabhyā vṛṣpe The epithet "god reviling" shows that the Dasyus did not have any respect for the Aryan gods. Vṛtra is the prototype human enemy here; and the earth is recorded here to have chosen Indra and not Vṛtra. This, we presume, means that the goddess earth by choosing Indra, the prototype Aryan hero, helped the Aryans and not the Dasyus. For Śakra ("mighty"), see Gonda, Epithets, p.64 ff..

10 indraṁ turṣaṁ mitré vṛtrām yo jaghāna yatīr nā Who were the Yatis? In two passages of the RV (VIII. 3, 9; VIII. 6. 18) they are mentioned together with the Bhṛgus. In the first Indra is requested to help the sacrificers as he did the Bhṛgus, Yatis and Praskaṇva. In the second Indra is requested to listen to the prayers of the sacrificer like that of the Bhṛgus and Yatis. In X. 72, 7, the gods are recorded to have swelled the worlds like the Yatis. It is not unlikely that the Yatis were a group of ancient priests like the Bhṛgus. But in a large number of passages of the later Vedic literature (TS, II. 4. 9, 2; VI. 2. 7, 5; PB, VIII. 1. 4; XIII. 4. 16; AB, VII. 28, etc.), Indra is said to have given the Yatis over to the hyaenas. What is the cause of this animosity? Is it due to rivalries between different priestly families? Were they really, as Sāyaṇa (on AV. II. 5. 3) would have us believe, vedāntarthavicārasūnyāḥ parivrājaka, and thus were looked down upon by the orthodox priestly families? See in this connection, Macdonell, VM, p.140; Macdonell-Keith, VI, vol.II, p.185; Muir, OST, vol.V, p.49, fn.92.

In the passage under consideration, Indra, like a Yati, is recorded to have killed Vṛtra. The force of the comparison is, however, not obvious to us.
The cosmogonic idea that the fire and the sun were in Vṛtra is reflected in the following hymn:

III. 21. 1: "Those fires which are within the waters, which are in Vṛtra, which are in man, which are in the stones; and that (fire) which has entered the herbs, which (has entered) the forest trees, to these fires be this oblation presented".¹¹

Thus, in so far as the Indra–Vṛtra saga is concerned, we do not get any additional information other than that already contained in the RV. There are some attempts to bring it in line with the popular character of the AV,¹² but these are only half-hearted. It is not unlikely that the saga of Vṛtra was too well-established in the religion of the day to be changed, even during the time of the AV, though in other circles, beginning from the Yajurveda, it was completely twisted to serve the purpose of the ritual.

¹¹ yē āgnāyō apsva2ntār yē vrtrē yē pūruṣe yē āśmasu
yā āvivēśoṣadhīr yō vānaspatīṁs tēbhīyo agnibhiyo hūtāmastvetāt

The fire within Vṛtra refers to the sun which Indra placed in the sky after the slaughter of Vṛtra.

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