

RV 10.90.12

The language of the *vedā* could appear very complex and it is suggested here that it might not capably respond to the later formed rules of the grammar, i.e, if it has to make any sense. At the same time, it is admitted that with and without those rules, the Veda could be read to have several meanings. But much more than that, this example taken from the *puruṣasūktam* would seem to suggest theories about the very origin of several terms of the later Sanskrit language itself. For the present the readers will pardon me for this seemingly linguistic adventure.

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद्बाहू राजन्यः कृतः।

ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥-(12)

Generally this verse is found translated approximately as below:

“The *brahmaṇā* was its mouth, the *kṣatriya* were the hands, the *vaiśyā* were the trunks and the *sūdrā* were the feet.” - or something in those veins.

Did the above make any sense at all? It did as a reference to the derogatory caste system. It also made some sense as the general attributes based on which the four castes were divided. Shall we then take it that the caste system was existing even during the Vedic period? That is difficult to answer or prove and as a matter of fact, that is not exactly the point of discussion here.

I propose to translate the above verse as below:

The face having come from the *brahma*, the hands having created and provided, from there the thick thighs in many ways emaciated, got divided, got colder and darker, and gradually and in stages got swelled up separately till nothing was born further.

And with a small change,

As very much expanding from that face, the hands having created and provided, from there the thick thighs in many ways emaciated, got divided, got colder and darker, and gradually and in stages got swelled up separately till nothing was born further.

The major argument to be noted in this kind of translation of the *ṛgveda* is that the text was not treated as a set of prayers and supplications to god,

but was approached with a strong conviction that it had to amount to be theories of significance. Since many had opined that the *puruṣasūktam* has a strong cosmological content, let me also join with them and confirm it to be so. In fact I for one have no doubt about its this content. But that is not to deny any other set of meanings and it is only to reiterate that the cosmological or *bhautika* meanings could act as a foundation for such other meanings.

The *ṛgveda* could be undoubtedly taken as seeking the very nature of *brahma*, the supreme godhead, and it is only in the matter of the basic delineation of the text that different opinions might surface. It could be said that this search for the nature of the supreme divinity turned the attention of the sages to the theories on the origin of the universe. It could be then further taken that these inquiries became very complex, naturally, due to the ideas building upon itself. Many approaches to fully comprehend the complex nature of the origin of this universe ensued and yet there indeed was a central scheme of things acceptable to all and not in conflict to one another. What was this central principle or set of notions of cosmological nature?

Very briefly put, this universe was proposed to have a shape of an approximate sphere, just like a watermelon. It perpetually resonated with whatever amplitude and frequency. Then obviously it should have an epicentre of all events and core area as such. The epicentre was named as the *viśvacakṣus*, from where all could be seen, nay supervised. The core area of unknown size is the capsule from which the universe was really born and was always referred to as the heaven. The heaven was at times referred as the *viśvatomukha*, (RV10.81.3) and the reference to “*mukha*” in the present verse implied the heaven, the first platform of creation. It was from the heaven that the process of creation started denoted by “*rā*” and “*janya*”. How did the creation progress from this heaven? Hot objects were instantly born along spiraling routes all around the heaven, darkness manifesting side by side. Not only that, the very three dimensionality was born then and there and spread to the very end of the universe. No one said that this universe is “*ananta*” (end-less) in a geometrical sense, but only said that it is immeasurably large. Those spiraling routes of creation were the “*bahū*”, the thick nature of which emaciated while progressed outwards. This universe progressively grew colder and darker as it swelled towards its outer limits. This general sketch of the scheme of things is never refuted by any of the

sages and by any of the hymns and verses. It appeared that there was indeed a consensus on the fact that the birth of the universe could be described from different perspectives and that contradictions in statement, however, would not be permitted.

The above cosmological narrative (admittedly based on the author's own conclusions) would serve the basis on which the verse will be examined further. The terms *rā* and *ja* and the conjunctive form of *rāja* not only denoted the phenomenon associated with the birth of the universe, these terms defined the very nature and functions of a king or a sovereignty. The terms *kṣatra* split into *kṣa* and *tra* strengthened the very premises of this assumption. The terms *kṣatriya* and *rāja* thus comes from the same cosmological source locale. The fields and the three dimensionality originated from the very place where the first of deliveries and *sr̥ṣṭi* ever happened.

A similar construct could be made with the other terms of this verse that also denoted the caste system. The question of which originated first, or did the nomenclatures appear later would be highly debatable issue better left to professional linguists and historians. Several conjunctive terms of the later Sanskrit language could be traced back to have a cosmological origin or sense. Terms, random selected, like *indrajāla*, *pratyakṣa*, *saumanasya* etc. would easily render themselves to a cosmological or *bhautika* sense; whatever way the grammarians of later times delineated the same. The list of such terms would be found not only large but extended to all disciplines.

The suggestion accrued from the foregoing discussion is that the basic language of Sanskrit amassed a huge vocabulary vide the Vedas and perpetuated the same. The general refrain that the Veda were born along with the universe could be perhaps modestly remodeled to mean that the language of Sanskrit got enriched by the Veda. It is for this as one of the reasons that it was stated earlier that the *bhautika* set of meanings could act as the foundation for the other meanings to form more accurately. At the same time such sociopolitical issues as posed by the terms like *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* throws challenges at the modern historians and linguists. Are we seeing in the Veda, a communion of several aspects and phenomena yet to be fully understood?

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