

**VEDIC INFLUENCE ON THE SUN-WORSHIP
IN THE PURĀṆAS : A STUDY**

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**Submitted by
MITALI GOSWAMI
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Professor Manjula Devi, M.A., Ph.D.

Professor
Department of Sanskrit,
Gauhati University,
Guwahati - 781014
Assam, India



Residence:

136, Gauhati University Campus
Guwahati-781014, Assam, India
e-mail: manjuladevi275@gmail.com
Phone:(0361)2572176
+ 917002457034

This is to certify that Mitali Goswami has carried out her research work for her thesis entitled **VEDIC INFLUENCE ON THE SUN-WORSHIP IN THE PURĀṆAS: A STUDY** under my supervision. She has fulfilled all the requirements laid down in the regulations for Ph.D. Degree of the Gauhati University.

The thesis is the result of her own investigation and neither the thesis as a whole nor any part of it was submitted to any other University of India for any research degree.

Date 11.2.19

Place: Gauhati University

Manjula Devi
(Manjula Devi)

Professor Manjula Devi
Department of Sanskrit
Gauhati University
Guwahati - 781014

DECLARATION OF CANDIDATE

I, Mitali Goswami, Research Scholar, Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University, solemnly declare that this Thesis is the result of my own Research work, except the part, where due acknowledgements has been made.

The thesis entitled “**VEDIC INFLUENCE ON THE SUN-WORSHIP IN THE PURĀṆAS: A STUDY**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Arts, in Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University, has not been submitted previously in part or foil to this or any other University for any degree, diploma or other similar title.

Date: 11.2.19

Place: Gauhati University

Mitali Goswami
(Mitali Goswami)

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Date: 11.2.19

Place: Gauhati University

Mitali Goswami
(Mitali Goswami)

PREFACE

An inborn curiosity towards the most concrete and powerful phenomena of the nature has been breathed in the mind of an individual, right from the time of the growth of the human civilisation. The great impact of the Sun is observed by the masses of the people from very early period. Due to the importance of the Sun, the Vedic Āryans deified and personified the force of the nature, that consists of heat and light, and worshipped as deity praising different aspects.

In the Purāṇas, the tradition of Vedic Sun-worship was given a priority and it has been transformed into the sectarian worship of the deity with the inclusion of some advanced mode of worship; many of them are derived from the Vedic culture and some of them are borrowed from the Magian cult. The significant innovation of the Sun-worship in the Purāṇas is the installation of the images of the Sun in the temples. A number of modes and methods of worshipping the Sun-god developed in the Purāṇic period.

The tradition of worshipping the Sun is prevalent in our present society also. Among the Hindus, the tradition of observing Agnihotra sacrifice and the Sandhyā, etc., is frequently observed. I was greatly influenced by the study of some Vedic hymns related to the Sun-god during my Post-graduate studies. Due to eagerness, I had turned over the pages of some of the prominent Purāṇas with a view to finding out materials about the worship of the Sun-god. A keen interest had developed in me to make a comprehensive study on the worship of the Sun, in both the Vedic and the Purāṇic period. Thus, a modest attempt has been made to prepare a thesis on the topic entitled ‘Vedic Influence on the Sun-Worship in the Purāṇas: A Study,’ for the degree of Ph.D. of the Gauhati University.

The earlier scholars have contributed a lot towards the Sun-worship in ancient India. But, a comprehensive study on the topic is still lacking. Here, in the thesis, a humble attempt has been made to find out the Vedic influence on the Sun-worship in the Purāṇas. The present study involves the Vedic scriptures as a whole, and some Mahāpuāṇas are brought under the purview of the study, along with one of the Upapurāṇas, called the *Sāmbapurāṇa*, which is considered as the milestone in the field of Purāṇic Sun-cult. The materials are elaborated and analyzed through a comparative study of the various relevant texts.

The present work comprises six chapters in it. The first chapter deals with the concept of Vedic God and Vedic religion with a note on the Vedic literature. The following chapter discusses, in detail, the salient traits of the Solar divinities along with the mode and method of worshipping the deities in the Vedic period. The third chapter of the work deals with the general characteristics of the Purāṇic religion, showing the influence of the Vedic tradition on it. The fourth chapter contains an extensive study of the Purāṇic Sun-worship, which is fully influenced by the Vedic tradition of worshipping the Sun. In the fifth chapter, the rituals relating to the Sun-worship, discussed in the Purāṇas, have been undertaken. The sixth chapter contains a concluding remark, based on the findings of the preceding chapters.

It is the result of my academic pursuit for the last six years under the guidance of my revered preceptor, Prof. Manjula Devi. I shall feel amply rewarded if the work could raise some interest to the readers.

Date: 11.2.19

Place: Gauhati University

Mitali Goswami
(Mitali Goswami)

ABBREVIATIONS

Books

AĀ.	—	<i>Aitareyāraṇyakam</i>
AB.	—	<i>Aitareyabrāhmaṇam</i>
Agni P.	—	<i>Agnipurāṇam</i>
AK.	—	<i>Amarakosaḥ</i>
Artha.	—	<i>Arthaśāstram</i>
Aṣṭā.	—	<i>Aṣṭādhyāyī</i>
AV.	—	<i>Atharvavedasamhitā</i>
Āp. DS.	—	<i>Āpastambadharmasūtram</i>
Āp. GS.	—	<i>Āpastambagr̥hyasūtram</i>
Āp. ŚS.	—	<i>Āpastambaśrautasūtram</i>
Āś. GS.	—	<i>Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtram</i>
Āś. ŚS.	—	<i>Āśvalāyanaśrautasūtram</i>
Bau. DS.	—	<i>Baudhāyanadharmasūtram</i>
Bau. GS.	—	<i>Baudhāyanagr̥hyasūtram</i>
BD.	—	<i>Bṛhaddevatā</i>
Bh.S.	—	<i>Bhaktisūtram</i>
Bhavi. P.	—	<i>Bhaviṣyapurāṇam</i>
Bhā. P.	—	<i>Bhāgavatapurāṇam</i>
Bṛ. Ā.	—	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyakam</i>
Bṛ. U.	—	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad</i>
Br. Vai. P.	—	<i>Brahmavaivartapurāṇam</i>
Brahma P.	—	<i>Brahmapurāṇam</i>
Brahmāṇḍa P.	—	<i>Brahmāṇḍapurāṇam</i>
Chā. U.	—	<i>Chāndogyopaniṣad</i>
Devī Bhā. P.	—	<i>Devībhāgavatapurāṇam</i>
GB.	—	<i>Gopathabrāhmaṇam</i>
GDS.	—	<i>Gautamadharmasūtram</i>
GGŚ.	—	<i>Gobhilagr̥hyasūtram</i>
Garuḍa P.	—	<i>Garuḍapurāṇam</i>
HGS.	—	<i>Hiraṇyakeśigr̥hyasūtram</i>

JU.	—	<i>Jaiminīyopaniṣad</i>
KB.	—	<i>Kauṣītakibrāhmaṇam</i>
KGS	—	<i>Khadiragr̥hyasūtram</i>
Kath.	—	<i>Kathopaniṣad</i>
KU.	—	<i>Kauṣītataki Upaniṣad</i>
Kā. P.	—	<i>Kālikāpurāṇam</i>
Kāt. ŚS.	—	<i>Kātyāyanaśrautasūtram</i>
Kū. P.	—	<i>Kūrmapurāṇam</i>
Liṅga P.	—	<i>Liṅgapurāṇam</i>
Mahā.	—	<i>Mahābhāṣyam</i>
Maitrī U.	—	<i>Maitryopaniṣad</i>
Mat. P.	—	<i>Matsyapurāṇam</i>
Mān. GS.	—	<i>Mānavagr̥hyasūtram</i>
Mār. P.	—	<i>Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇam</i>
Mbh.	—	<i>Mahābhāratam</i>
MS.	—	<i>Manusmṛtiḥ</i>
Nā. P.	—	<i>Nāradīyapurāṇam</i>
Nir.	—	<i>Niruktam</i>
Padma P.	—	<i>Padmapurāṇam</i>
PB.	—	<i>Pañcaviṃśabrāhmaṇam</i>
PGS.	—	<i>Pāraskaragr̥hyasūtram</i>
Praśna U.	—	<i>Praśnopaniṣad</i>
PŚ.	—	<i>Pāṇinīyaśikṣā</i>
Rāmā.	—	<i>Rāmāyaṇam</i>
ṚV.	—	<i>Ṛgvedasamhitā</i>
Sk. P.	—	<i>Skandapurāṇam</i>
SP.	—	<i>Sāmbapurāṇam</i>
SV	—	<i>Sāmavedasamhitā</i>
Śabda.	—	<i>Śabdakalpadruma</i>
Śān. GS.	—	<i>Śāṅkhyāyanagr̥hyasūtram</i>
Śān. ŚS.	—	<i>Śāṅkhyāyanaśrautasūtram</i>
ŚB.	—	<i>Śatapathabrāhmaṇam</i>
ŚMG.	—	<i>Śrīmadbhāgavadgītā</i>
Śvet. U.	—	<i>Śvetāśvetaropaniṣad</i>

TĀ.	—	<i>Taittirīyāranyakam</i>
Tāṇḍya B.	—	<i>Tāṇḍyamahābrāhmaṇam</i>
TB.	—	<i>Taittirīyabrāhmaṇam</i>
TS.	—	<i>Taittirīyasaṁhitā</i>
Varā. P.	—	<i>Varāhapurāṇam</i>
Vāca.	—	<i>Vācaspatyam</i>
Vā. P.	—	<i>Vāyupurāṇam</i>
Vāma. P.	—	<i>Vāmanapurāṇam</i>
Vi. Dh. P.	—	<i>Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇam</i>
Viṣ. P.	—	<i>Viṣṇupurāṇam</i>
VS.	—	<i>Vājasaneyisaṁhitā</i>
YS.	—	<i>Yājñavalkyasmṛtiḥ</i>

GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

cf.	—	Compare
ed.	—	Edited
edn.	—	Edition
e.g.	—	As for example
fn.	—	Footnote
Ibid.	—	Ibidem, in the same place
i.e.	—	That is
Op. cit.	—	Opera citato, in the work already cited
p.	—	Page
pp.	—	Pages
trans.	—	Translated, Translation
Vide.	—	See
viz.	—	Namely
Vol.	—	Volume
Vols.	—	Volumes

TRANSLITERATION SCHEME

Vowels			Consonants					
अ	A	a	क	KA	ka	द	DA	da
आ	Ā	ā	ख	KHA	kha	ध	DHA	dha
इ	I	i	ग	GA	ga	न	NA	na
ई	Ī	ī	घ	GHA	gha	प	PA	pa
उ	U	u	ङ	ṄA	ṅa	फ	PHA	pha
ऊ	Ū	ū	च	CA	ca	ब	BA	ba
ऋ	Ṛ	ṛ	छ	CHA	cha	भ	BHA	bha
ॠ	Ṝ	ṝ	ज	JA	ja	म	MA	ma
ऌ	Ḍ	ḍ	झ	JHA	jha	य	YA	ya
ए	E	e	ञ	ṆA	ṇa	र	RA	Ra
ऐ	AI	ai	ट	ṬA	ṭa	ल	LA	La
ओ	O	o	ठ	ṬHA	ṭha	व	VA	va
औ	AU	au	ड	ḌA	ḍa	श	ŚA	śa
			ढ	ḌHA	ḍha	ष	ṢA	ṣa
अं	AM̐	am̐	ण	ṆA	ṇa	स	SA	sa
अः	AḤ	aḥ	त	TA	ta	ह	HA	ha
Elided अ	‘		थ	THA	tha	क्ष	KṢ	kṣ

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CHAPTER-I

VEDIC CONCEPT OF GOD AND RELIGION

Veda, the Storehouse of Knowledge:

The term *veda*, derived from root *vid*, to know with the suffix *ghañ*, literally means knowledge: *vidantyebhiḥ dharmabrahmaṇī kriyājñānamayaṁ brahma vā iti vedah*¹ The term is derived from root *vid*, that bears the meaning, *vid (jñāne)*, to know, *vid (vicāraṇe)*, to think about, *vid (sattāyām)*, to exist, *vid (lābhe)*, to obtain, *vid* to feel, to declare, to dwell.² Ācārya Dayānanda Sarasvatī has opined that the scriptures by which man can attain true knowledge, by the study of which one becomes learned, which helps man in acquiring knowledge or sets man to think about knowledge are the Vedas.³ In the very beginning of his commentary on the *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa*, Sāyaṇācārya has defined *veda* as the book which reveals the knowledge of supernatural method for the achievement of the desired objects and avoidance of the undesirable: *iṣṭaprāptyaṇiṣṭaparihārayoralaukikamupāyaṁ yo grantho vedayati sa vedah*⁴ The knowledge, which cannot be attained by perception and inference, that knowledge can only be attained by the Vedas.⁵

The term *veda* primarily stands for the knowledge and secondarily for the vast body of ancient Indian literature. It is the collective designation of the entire sacred

¹ Sarma, Giridhar & Sarma, Paramesvarananda (ed.), *Vaiyākaraṇasiddhāntakaumudī*, part III, p.399

² cf., *sattāyām vidyate jñāne vetti vinte vicāraṇe/ vindate vindati prāptau śyanlukśnamśeṣvidarṁ kramāt// Ibid.*

³ cf., *vidanti, jānanti, vidyante bhavanti, vindati vindate labhante, vindate vicārayanti sarve manuṣyāḥ sarvāḥ satyavidyā yairyeṣu vā tathā vidvāmsaśca bhavanti te vedāḥ// Saraswati, Sampurnananda (ed.), Rgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā, p.35*

⁴ *Aitareyabrāhmaṇabhāṣyabhūmikā, p. 1*

⁵ cf., *pratyakṣeṇānumityā vā yastūpāyo na budhyate/ enaṁ vidanti vedena tasmādvedasya vedatā// TS., Bhāṣyakāropodghātaḥ, p. 2*

literature of ancient India, or on the other hand, it is the specific name used for the single book belonging to that particular class. Thus, *Veda* stands for the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, the *Yajurvedasamhitā*, the *Sāmavedasamhitā* and the *Atharvavedasamhitā*, and all the literary documents, e.g. the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas, the Upaniṣads are designated as the Vedas and the vast body of allied literature linked to it, i.e. Vedāṅgas.

Different terms are used for the Vedas on later date. They are called *Śruti*⁶ as the entire text was composed, remembered and handed down from one generation to the other, by means of oral tradition. They are called *Āmnāya*⁷ which is derived from root *mnā* with the prefix *ā*, meaning to ponder, to meditate upon. Vedas are the works, to be studied or remembered, or to be learnt with deep attention. They are called *Trayīvidyā* or *Trayī*.⁸ Vedic Samhitās are four in number, but, the mantras thereof, are threefold and therefore the term *trayī* is commonly used to signify the four Samhitās. The *Atharvaveda* is a late addition to the Vedas. The Vedas are called *Chandas*, due to their metrical character. Several times in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, Pāṇini has used the term *chandas* for the Vedas.⁹ The term *svādhyāya* also stands for the Vedas.¹⁰ The Vedic texts were regularly studied by the Vedic students and householders during their daily observances of Pañcamahāyajñas, and therefore, they are called *Svādhyāya*. Besides

⁶ cf., śrutistu vedo vijñeyo.../ MS., 2.10

⁷ TS., *Bhāṣyakāropodghātaḥ*, p.7

⁸ cf., trayī vai vidyā ṛco yajumṣi sāmāni/ ŚB., 1.1.4.3; 4.6.7.1

⁹ cf., vibhāṣā chandasi/ Aṣṭā., 1.2.36
chandasi punarvasvrekavacanam/ Ibid., 1.2.61
ṣaṣṭhīyuktaśchandasi vā/ Ibid., 1.4.9

¹⁰ cf., yathoktaviṣayādisadbhāvamabhipretya 'svādhyāyo'dhyetavyaḥ' ityadhyayanam vidhīyate/ TS., *Bhāṣyakāropodghātaḥ*, p. 3
svādhyāyam śrāvayet pitrye.../ MS., 3.232

these, the two terms, viz. *Āgama* and *Nigama* are also used for the Vedas while they are used as the sourcebook of all subsequent religious literature.¹¹

As the pertinent source of knowledge and the root of all the branches of science, the Vedas deal with different aspects of ancient India, i.e. socio-cultural, economic, religious, political, geographical, etc. The precious heritage of ancient India is enshrined in the Vedic texts.

The whole Vedic literature is broadly divided into two groups, i.e. the *Mantra* and the *Brāhmaṇa*. Āpastamba cites in his *Śrautasūtra*, *mantrabrāhmaṇayorvedanāmadheyam*¹² Due to their nature of application, mantras come under the class exoteric or *karmakāṇḍa*, and the philosophical speculations of the Upaniṣads, etc., under the class esoteric or *jñānakāṇḍa*.¹³

The Mantras or the metrical portion, also called the *Samhitās* are the collection of hymns, prayers, benedictions, sacrificial formulae, etc. As they are visualized with the inner vision of the Ṛṣis, i.e. the Vedic seers,¹⁴ they are called mantras.¹⁵ Due to their divine origin, mantras are called *apauruṣeya*, i.e. not man-made.¹⁶

The *Samhitās* are four in number, viz. the *Ṛksamhitā*, the *Yajussamhitā*, the *Sāmasamhitā* and the *Atharvasamhitā*. The *Ṛksamhitā* is the collection of laudatory verses and these are the means to praise the gods: *ṛcyate stūyate anena devaḥ iti*

¹¹ cf., buddhivṛddhikarāṇyāśu dhanyāni ca hitāni ca/ nityam śāstrānyavekṣeta nigamānścaiva vaidikān// Ibid., 4.19

pratyakṣaṇcānumānaṇca śāstraṇca vividhāgamam/ trayam suviditam kāryam dharmaśuddhimabhīpsatā// Ibid.,12.105

¹² Āś. ŚS., 24.1.31

¹³ Vide, Sharma, S.N., *A History of Vedic Literature*, p.3

¹⁴ cf., tadyadenāmstapasyamānān brahmasvayambhavyānarṣat ta ṛṣayo'bhavaṁstadṛṣṇāmṛṣitvamiti vijñāyate/ Nir., 2.11

¹⁵ cf., mantrā mananāt/ Ibid.,7.12

¹⁶ cf., ...tasmāt nāsti vedasya pauruṣeyatvam/ *Rgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*

ṛgvedaḥ/ The *Yajussamhitā* is the collection of sacrificial formulae, comprising the *Taittirīyasamhitā* or *Kṛṣṇayajurveda* and the *Vājasaneyisamhitā* or *Śuklayajurveda*. The *Sāmasamhitā* is the collection of sacrificial chants. In the *Sāmavedabhāṣyabhūmikā*, the Ṛkmantras are mentioned as the cause and base of the Sāmans.¹⁷ The *Atharvasamhitā* bears no direct relation with the sacrifices and they are the collection of magical incantations, i.e. the black and white magic. The Mantras or Samhitās form the first stage of development in the field of Vedic literature. Jaimini has cited the very characteristics of all the three Samhitās by saying: *teṣāmr̥gyatrārthavaśena pādavyavasthā/ gītiṣu sāmākhyā/ śeṣe yajusśabdaḥ*!¹⁸ The Ṛkmantras are those composed in metrical forms with a sense, complete in them. The mantras, those are sung, are called *Sāman* and the rest is called *Yajus*. The *Atharvavedasamhitā* having many verses from the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* bears the characteristics of that text.

The Brāhmaṇas are the prose texts, dealing with the theological matters, i.e. observations on sacrifice, mystical significance of various sacrificial rites, etc. They are the running commentaries of the sacrifices. The very characteristics of such texts become clear by the observation of Sir M. Monier-Williams. In his dictionary, the Brāhmaṇas are mentioned as the portion of the *Veda* that is distinct from its *Mantra* and *Upaniṣad* portion, containing the rules for the employment of the mantras or hymns at various sacrifices with detailed explanation of their origin and meaning and numerous old legends.¹⁹ Sāyaṇācārya divides it into two parts— *vidhi*, i.e. rules and directions for rites, and *arthavāda*, i.e. explanatory remarks. In his introduction to the

¹⁷ cf., *gīyamānasya sāmna āśrayabhūtā ṛcaḥ sāmavede samāmnāyante/ Sāmavedabhāṣyabhūmikā*

¹⁸ *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, 2.1.36-37

¹⁹ Vide, Monier-Williams, M.(ed.), *The Sanskrit English Dictionary*, under *brāhmaṇa*, p.741

Aitareyabrāhmaṇa, Martin Haug differentiates the *Mantra* and the *Brāhmaṇa* by saying that mantras are the part containing the sacred prayers, the invocations of the different deities, and the sacred verses for chanting at the sacrifices, the sacrificial formulas, blessings and curses pronounced by the priest, which is the production of thinking. But on the other hand, *Brāhmaṇas* are that part of the *Veda* containing speculations on the meaning of the mantras, which give precepts for their application, relate stories of their origin in connection with the sacrificial rites and explain the secret meaning of the later.²⁰

The *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads* also form part of the *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Āraṇyakas* are the forest treatises. As they were to be read in the forests, in contradistinction to the regular *Brāhmaṇas*, that were meant to be read in the settlement, they are called *Āraṇyakas*. The forest dwellers, who retired from the active family life, for them, these texts were revealed. These texts were meant to be studied in the forests: *araṇyādhyayanādetadāraṇyakamitūryate/ araṇye tadadhīyētetyevaṃ vākyaṃ pracakṣate/*²¹

The *Upaniṣads* are the concluding part of the Vedic literature and as such they are called the *Vedānta*. They mainly discuss the sublime nature of Brahman and lead one to the highest and ultimate goal of the *Veda*, i.e. the doctrine of Self and Supreme Brahman. Śaṅkarācārya gives the derivation of the term *upaniṣad* in the introduction to the *Kāṭhakopaniṣad* thus: *saderdhātorviśaraṇagatyavasādanārthasyopanipūrvasya kvippratyaṃyāntasya rūpamidamupaniṣaditi*²² With a view to attain the secret doctrine, the group of pupils sat near the teacher in *Upaniṣadic* era. The *Upaniṣad* is termed as

²⁰ Vide, Haug, Martin, *The Aitareya Brāhmaṇam of the R̥gveda*, Vol. I, Introduction, pp. ix-x

²¹ Sāyaṇācārya on TĀ., 1.1.6

²² Kath.

rahasyam, i.e. secret, by the Indians. Paul Deussen mentions Upaniṣad as secret sign, secret word, secret import, secret formula, secret knowledge, secret meaning and secret instruction.²³ They convey the messages to loose the bondage of the world and enable the pupil to attain the Self or destroy the ignorance completely who is responsible for the deluding appearance of the infinite Self as the finite embodied creatures.²⁴

Each of the four Vedas has their own Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. The vast Vedic literature comprises all these including a class of auxiliary texts, i.e. the Vedāṅgas. The Vedāṅgas are regarded as the limbs of the Vedapuruṣa. In the *Mahābhāṣya*, it is cited, *brāhmaṇena niṣkāraṇo dharmah ṣaḍaṅgo vedo'dhyeyo jñeyaśca*²⁵ The Vedāṅgas are six in number, viz. *Śikṣā* (phonetics), *Kalpa* (ceremonials), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *Chandas* (metre) and *Jyotiṣa* (astronomy). The importance of these treatises is noted in the *Pāṇinīyaśikṣā* thus: *candaḥ pādau tu vedasya hastau kalpo'tha paṭhyate/ jyotiṣāmayanāṁ cakṣurniruktaṁ śrotramucyate// śikṣā ghrāṇaṁ tu vedasya mukhaṁ vyākaraṇaṁ smṛtam/ tasmāt sāṅgamadhītyaitat brahmaloke mahīyate*²⁶

The Vedic texts are the best creation of the Āryan inhabitants of India, which represents the Āryan civilization. The origin of all the sciences, philosophy, religion, culture, etc., is traced back to the Vedic texts and for that, the Vedic age is regarded as the best in the history of India. Among all the Vedas, the *Ṛgveda* is considered as enormously old by the scholars, as because, they had observed the reflection of the Indo-European mental life in the text, more than the Indian.²⁷ In *Ṛgvedic* period, the

²³ Vide, Deussen, Paul, *The Philosophy of the Upanishad*, pp.12-13

²⁴ Vide, Swami Nikhilananda, *The Upanishads*, Vol. I, p. 11

²⁵ Mahā., *Paśpasāhnikam*, p. 6

²⁶ PŚ., 41-42

²⁷ Vide, Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, p. 68

Āryan civilization was located in the land of Pañca-janas in the Punjab and expanded towards the east region, that bordered by the rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī. But in the later date, the civilization was shifted from the Indus Valley to the Gangatic Plain,²⁸ The references of the eastward movement of the Āryans from the Saptasindhu are well mentioned in the pages of the *Veda*. The *Ṛgvedasamhitā* narrates the episode of Viśvāmitra, who with a view to performing the Vedic rituals wanted to cross the confluence of Vipāt and Śutudrī, presently called Vipāśā and Śatadru along with his followers.²⁹ Again, another reference is found in the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, that is more concrete than that of the *Viśvāmitra-nadī-samvāda*, where description is found how king Videgha Māthava with the sacrificial fire and his *Purohita*, Gotama Raghunandana came to the bank of the river Sadānīrā, i.e. Gaṇḍakī and following the direction of the sacrificial fire, crossed the river and placed a new settlement, named as Videha, after the name of the king.³⁰

The socio-religious set up of the Āryan invaders were manifested in the Vedic texts. The people belonging to that particular period, i.e. the Vedic period is known as the Vedic Āryans. Sir M. Monier-Williams holds that, the term *ārya* means the respectable or honourable or faithful inhabitant of Āryāvarta; one who is faithful to the religion of his country; of the race that immigrated from central Asia into Āryāvarta.³¹

Sacrifices or ritualistic activities cover a major part of the lives of the Vedic Āryans. The inhabitants of that society were simple enough, who amazed to see the sublime, grand, beautiful and useful aspect of the nature having divine powers. Nature was a never-ending puzzle to them, which possess power and sublimity. They

²⁸ Basu, Jogiraj, *India of the Age of the Brāhmaṇas*, pp. 1-2

²⁹ ṚV., 3.33

³⁰ ŚB., 1.4.1.10-17

³¹ Vide, Monier-Williams, M.(ed.), *Op. cit.*, under *ārya*, p. 152

comprehended the true significance of the natural phenomena so intensely and deified them as deities, and started to worship them. The Vedic Āryans worshipped the fire blazing on the hearth or on the altar, the shining Sun, the glowing dawn, etc. They were active and optimistic who prayed their gods for granting long lives, worldly prosperities and brave sons.³²

The Concept of Religion:

The term religion has very wide scope. It is very difficult to give a specific meaning of the term and hard to determine its nature and definition. To find out the origin of the term religion, different observations have been made. The *Oxford English Dictionary* points out the Latin word *religare*, i.e. to bind together, as the origin of the term. In the book *Divine Institutes* also the term *religare* is used as the origin of the religion.³³ Lactantius has derived *religio* from *religare*, to bind or hold back. According to him, men are tied to god and bound to him by the bond of piety, and from that, religion has itself shaped out.³⁴ As it has the divine power of binding the men and god, it is named as religion. But as the term directs the power, the use of *religare* for religion is quite doubtful. Another Latin word, *religere*, i.e. to excite or to rehearse, is also regarded as the origin of the term.³⁵ Cicero has used the term *relegere*, i.e. to gather up again, to take up, to consider, to ponder, as the origin of the term and this etymology is supported by the great scholar Max Müller too.³⁶ It is unanimously admitted by both the ancient and modern scholars that the term religion is derived from

³² cf., agninā rayimaśnavatpoṣameva dive dive/ yaśasaṁ vīravattamam// ṚV., 1.1.3
sa no vṛṣannamum carum satrādāvannapā vṛdhi/ asmabhyamapratīṣkutaḥ// Ibid., 1.7.6

³³ Vide, Max Müller, F., *Natural Religion*, p.83

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Mohapatra, A.R., *Philosophy of Religion: An Approach to World Religions*, p.3

³⁶ Vide, Max Müller, F., *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 11

religio, that is descendant either form *religare* as well as *religere*. Both the original forms used for religion convey the similar senses; the sense of unity and harmony. Cicero, in his work *Da Natura deorum* (2.28.72) has hold the term *religio* for religion and remarked, “Those who carefully took in hand all things pertaining to the worship of the gods, were called religiosi,” i.e. religious.³⁷

The term religion stands as the bond between the mankind and the society. The process of religion has two sides, i.e. an inner side and an outer side. From the inner point of view, it is a state of belief and feeling, an inward spiritual disposition. But from the outer, it is an expression of the subjective disposition in appropriate acts. Both these two aspects are essential to form a religion. The faith, reverence, etc., of the people towards a supernatural power beyond himself is the inner aspect of religion and act of worshipping and service, etc., in respect of that particular power is the outer aspect of religion.³⁸

Different Views Regarding Religion:

Both the Western and Indian scholars have given their concern regarding the religion. As the Western scholars have great belief in theism, their views are mostly influenced by it. James has opined religion as the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.³⁹ Again, the great scholar Galloway holds religion as man’s faith in a power beyond himself. The power he has mentioned is the supreme power that helps man to fulfil the emotional needs giving the stability of life.

³⁷ Vide, Max Müller, F., *Natural Religion*, pp.83-84

³⁸ Vide, Galloway, G., *The Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 85-86

³⁹ Vide, James, W., *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p.32

According to him, man expresses religion in the acts of worship and service.⁴⁰ Another Western scholar Flint considers religion as the highest possible form that is theistic one.⁴¹ Patrick has mentioned it as the consciousness of the practical relation of the people to an invisible spiritual order.⁴² Kant has mentioned that whenever people look upon all their moral duties as divine commands then their religion constituted of.⁴³ Alexander defines it as the faith in deity.⁴⁴ Of these, the definitions made by James and Galloway about religion look like more reliable than that of Flint and others as they possess both the inner and outer senses of religion. The Indian scholars have also tried their best to define religion. Among different scholars, Swami Vivekananda has viewed religion as the manifestation of the divinity already in man. He has said, “Religions manifest themselves not only according to race and geographical position, but according to individual powers. In one man, religion is manifesting itself as intense activity as work. In another, it is manifesting itself as intense devotion, in yet another, as mysticism in others as philosophy, and so forth.”⁴⁵ According to him, the Aryan and Semitic races are the two great sources of all religion.⁴⁶ S. Radhakrishnan has remarked in this regard thus: “Religion has been identified with feelings, emotion and sentiment, instinct, cult and ritual, perception, belief and faith and these views are right in what they affirm, though wrong in what they deny.”⁴⁷

Religion mainly comprises three parts; firstly, philosophy of religion, secondly, the mythology, and thirdly, the ritual. Without the philosophy, religion can not be

⁴⁰ Vide, Galloway, G., Op. cit., p.184

⁴¹ Vide, Flint, R., *Theism, Being the Baird Lecture for 1876*, p.54

⁴² Vide, Patrick, G.T.W., *Introduction to Philosophy*, p.367

⁴³ Vide, Max Müller, F., *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, p.15

⁴⁴ Vide, Alexander, S., *Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. II, p.3

⁴⁵ Vide, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. IV, p.180

⁴⁶ Vide, *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 150

⁴⁷ Vide, Radhakrishnan, S., *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 87

survived. It presents the whole scope of religion setting forth the basic principle of it; the goal, and the means to achieve it. In the second place, mythology consisting of legends relating to the lives of men or of supernatural beings and so forth makes the philosophy concrete. And, lastly, the ritual is more concrete than that of the earlier two. It is made up of forms and ceremonies, physical attitudes, etc. With these three parts, a standard religion is formed in any race of the world.

Origin and Evolution of Religion:

According to Hopkins, one inspired religion was prevalent in ancient India from where all the other religions were decadent.⁴⁸ The view of Hopkins almost resembles the view of the *Veda*: *yajñena yajñamayajanta devāstāni dharmāṇi prathamānyāsan/ te ha nākaṁ mahimānaḥ sacanta yatra pūrve sādhyāḥ santi devāḥ*/⁴⁹ The Vedic verse reveals the origin of the religion by saying that the gods introduced religion on earth through the performance of a divine ritual of creation. Among different theories related to its origin, two theories are regarded as earlier—firstly, the theory of divine origin; secondly, the theory of human origin.⁵⁰ According to the first theory, i.e. divine origin, god is the ultimate source of religion and religion is revealed by means of divinity only. But according to the human origin, *viveka*, i.e. the human consideration or judgment is the ultimate cause of the origin of religion. Religion, as it is regarded as the result of the divine revelation, but the forms and contents of it cannot be occurred with the participation of human mind.⁵¹ Thus, though these two theories differ from each other, but in origin, they are contemporary to each other.

⁴⁸ Hopkins, E. Washburn., *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, p. 2

⁴⁹ RV.,10.90.16

⁵⁰ Vide, Prasad, G., *The Fountain-Head of Religion*, Introduction, pp. xix-xxii

⁵¹ Vide, Radhakrishnan, S., *Religion and Culture*, p. 25

The principal theories deal with the origin and evolution of religion:

Animism: The theory of animism involves the names of E. B. Tylor and Herbert Spencer. This theory is based on the belief of primitive man that what was active was alive and that, being alive, all animate and inanimate objects, i.e. an object, animal or material had same sort of spirit what man feels within himself. Tylor has defined this theory as belief in spiritual beings and mentioned as the earliest form of religion.⁵² The primitive man believed that whatever man dreamt in his sleep and whatever he was used to do in his dream etc. were nothing but the result of his spirit. Spirit is independent and recognized in various objects including animals and men. After death, the spirit never dies, but sustains and in course of time transformed to the god endowing with the supernatural power. That is why people make offerings to the spirits of his ancestors. Spencer has accepted this ancestor worship as the root of all the religions.⁵³

Naturalism or Animatism: The name of the great scholar Max Müller is associated with the theory of naturalism or animatism. According to him, religion is the outcome of naturalism. According to this theory, religion sprang from the spontaneous emotional reactions of wonder, awe and fear, evoked in man by different natural phenomena like the sun, the moon, the lightning, the thunder, etc. Indeed, the primitive man felt that consciousness or life existed behind all the powerful activities of nature. Various attributes were given to these entities and showed reverences. Thus, the personified and defied phenomena of nature, in course of time, transformed into the nature gods with the evolution of human mind. Max Müller has defined religion as the trust that has grown in the mind and heart of man by the order and wisdom of nature and more

⁵² Vide, Tylor, E.B., *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, p.100

⁵³ Vide, Spencer, H.L., *The Principles of Sociology*, Vol. I, p. 411

particularly by those regularly recurring events, i.e. the return of the seasons, the law of cause and effect.⁵⁴ He has referred to the natural religion as the Physical Religion and regarded it as the first phase of development which has two other phases—something not merely human, or very soon, something superhuman that discovered at a very early time in parents and ancestors, particularly after they had departed this life.⁵⁵ As the large number of German Scholar associated with this theory, the theory is known as the German theory too.

Theory of Magic: Sir J. G. Frazer has developed one of the theories relating to the origin of religion. According to this theory, religion is regarded as the child of magic. The primitive man tried their best to control the nature by means of magical powers, i.e. sacrifices, magical rites, etc. Frazer asserted religion as born from such rites.⁵⁶ But, in course of time, people came to know that magical powers did not provide desired results all the time. Consequently, the belief in the unseen being that possessing power had grown in the minds of the people. The primitive man sought the favour of such powerful being and offered offerings and prayer to satisfy him. Thus, the idea of god and religious practices were born in the theology.

Totemism: The name of Emile Durkheim is highly associated with the theory of totemism. According to this theory, totemism is the earliest form of religion. Durkheim explained the point of view that religion is pre-eminently social in nature. It originated in the group ritual, especially in the communal ritual. Indeed, totemism is a social cult, in where a social group itself believes in a being friendly in nature or in close kingship to a particular animal or plant or some other object which is called totem of that social

⁵⁴ Vide, Max Müller, F., *India What can it Teach us*, p. 179

⁵⁵ Vide, Max Müller, F., *Physical Religion*, pp. 1-3

⁵⁶ Vide, Frazer, J.G., *The Golden Bough*, p.15

group. The totem, the symbol of the group as well as the totemic force becomes the god of the community revered by the primitive men. The name of the totem comes from some convenient animal living near by. It is respected as sacred or tabooed, but not regarded as deities.⁵⁷ The collective representation of the human group showed reverence towards the taboo things becomes religious belief in course of time. And such belief towards the sacred power or totemic force becomes a moral power for the primitive man. The people practised different rites and rituals and offered sacrifices towards their totem, made them united. Durkheim holds such totemic cult as the constituent of the elementary forms of all the religious practices.⁵⁸

All the afore-mentioned theories deal with the origin of religion. Besides these, there are also found some other theories, like the theory of fetishism, theory of group spirit, etc., dealing with the religion, but not with its origin. It is too difficult to find out one of the single theories as the origin of it. Two or more characteristics like animism, animatism, etc., are found in a particular society of ancient date at a single time. Again, some of the characteristics have been more prominent in one society than that of the others. Among different theories of it, animism and animatism were observed almost in all the societies of early date. Therefore, we find among the savages the worship of stones, hills, plants, trees, flowers, rivers, air, wind, the sky, fire, the clouds, the sun, the moon, the animals and birds and so on. Indeed, the primitive people worshipped the powers they feared and sought to possess those in themselves.⁵⁹ The animistic belief enlightened the people to venerate the animals as because of their living power. The spirit found inside the animals is believed as akin to the spirit of the human beings. As a

⁵⁷ Vide, Rivers, W.H.R., *The History of Melanesian Society*, Vol. II, p. 75

⁵⁸ Vide, Durkheim, E., *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, p. 337

⁵⁹ Vide, Hopkins, E. Washburn., *Op.cit.*, p.13

result of such belief, different ancient societies accepted different animals like bull, goat, cow, etc., as their worshipping power and different totem were accepted.

Classification of Religion:

Galloway in his work has broadly divided the religion into three groups⁶⁰—

- i. Tribal Religion
- ii. National Religion and
- iii. Universal Religion

The tribal religion represents the religion of the tribe. All the members of the primitive group appear in this division. The ethical ideas have not developed in tribal religion, but it stands as the cause of spiritual religion. Tylor has mentioned “Savage animism is almost devoid of that ethical element which to the educated modern mind is the mainspring of practical religion.”⁶¹ The national religion is wider than that of the tribal religion. It involves a widening of man’s mental horizon and the rise of a larger and more complex social order brings about a distinct advance in the personal consciousness.⁶² An individual achieves progress in individuality and knowledge through the interaction with other selves within a wider social system in national religion. It involves the ethical development and religious consciousness. In the national religion, the organized worship of the gods, the national spirit and ideals find expression. As a citizen the individual shares the worship in national religion. The universal religion is something peculiar than that of the earlier two. In this religion, appeals are made to men than the spirit, without distinction of class or race. The

⁶⁰ Vide, Galloway, G., Op. cit., pp. 88-147

⁶¹ Vide, Tylor, B. Edward, Op. cit, Vol. II, p.360

⁶² Vide, Galloway, G. Op.cit. p. 109

salvation or redemption that it offers is open to all. Again, the object of worship is one and the method of divine service everywhere the same.⁶³

Besides these, taking consideration into different theories, dealing with its origin and evolution, religion can be categorized into the following groups—

- i. Primal Religion
- ii. Naturalistic Religion
- iii. Humanistic Religion
- iv. Spiritual Religion

The primal religion is characterized by the theory of animism, spiritism, fetishism, manaism or ancestor worship and totemism. The belief of the primitive people influenced by their surrounding environment, that was full with superstition, magic, fear, illusion, etc., gave birth to the primal religion.

The naturalistic religion believes in worshipping the object of nature or the powers of nature. The mother nature occupies prominent place in this religion. Different objects of nature, i.e., the sun, the moon, wind, etc., occupy specific place in the nature worship. Though the primal religion and naturalistic religion look alike, but indeed they are different from each other. The naturalistic religion is the developed form of the primal religion. The objects of worship in the primal religion are vague and indistinct in character, but the objects of worship in naturalistic religion are endowed with names and varieties of attributes and activities. Both the worshipper and worshipped objects have maintained close relationship in the naturalistic religion. The gods in the naturalistic religion are endowed with the ethical principles with the

⁶³ Vide, Ibid., p.138

development of human intelligence in a higher social order of a civilized life. Again, the natural elements have been elevated to a spiritual level in the naturalistic religion which in the primal religion was only the sources of reverential fear of dread. Galloway determines the possibility that due to the increasing complexity of human behaviour and activities in changed social atmosphere, developed the tendency to multiply the number of gods, each god with specific function to perform.⁶⁴ Thus, the polytheistic system developed from the practice of nature worship of primal society.

The humanistic religion believes in the worship of man having ethical values. The humanistic religion has two phases. According to one, god is believed to incarnate in human form, i.e. the avatāras. Again, in another, due to the good qualities, man is exalted to the position of god and worshipped. The divine qualities are attributed to the man. Gautama Buddha is the character, who was revered and worshipped like the god due to the extraordinary divine qualities.

The spiritual religion mainly comprises the belief of man in spirits and a world beyond. According to it, god is the greatest entity, who is self-born, universal, omnipresent, omnipotent and infinite. He is beyond this world. In this religion, belief in god becomes an inner quality of man and the insight becomes wider. The ritualistic belief of people ended with it. As a result, this religion becomes the universal one that has the power to bind all the people irrespective of their nationality, colour of the skin and all the other factors, those generally tend to division. The instances of spiritual religion are Islamic Religion, Christianity, etc. The spiritual organizations *Ram Krishna Mission*, *Satsanga Vihar*, *Prajapita Brahmakumari Iswariya Viswavidyalaya*, etc., also convey the messages of spiritualism in today's society.

⁶⁴ Vide, Ibid., p.117

The Concept of Religion in the Vedas:

The term *dharma* is used in Sanskrit for religion. It is derived from root *dhṛñ*, *dhāraṇe*, meaning to support, or *dhṛñ*, *avasthāne*, meaning to take a position. Among the lexicographers, Sir M. Monier-William has defined *dharma* as ‘that which is established or firm, steadfast, decree, statue, ordinance, law; usage, practice, customary observance or prescribed conduct, duty; right, justice, virtue, morality, religion, religious merit, good work.’⁶⁵ According to the *Amarakośa*, *dharma* is used for ritualistic performance that is sacred, blissful, virtuous and full of offerings: *syāddharmamastriyām puṇyaśreyasī sukṛtaṁ vṛṣaḥ*⁶⁶ In the *Śabdakalpadruma*, the term is found both in masculine and neuter gender and gives the meaning of good fortune, i.e. *śubhādr̥ṣṭam*.⁶⁷ Thus, the term *dharma* is used in different senses, the concept of which is too wide. It includes in it religion, deity, sacrifice, religious ordinances, moral order, fixed principle or rules of conduct, duty, virtue, etc.

From the etymological point of view, the term *dharma* gives the meaning of supporter or sustainer or upholder. Those who support or sustain or protect all are the *dharma* in the Vedas. Different gods are called as *dharma* in the Vedic texts as they protect or support or sustain the ritual or the individual. Agni, the fire god is called *dharma* as he protects, supports and accomplishes the ritual.⁶⁸ Sūrya, the Sun-god is called *dharma*, i.e. *dharmandivah*⁶⁹ as he is the supporter of the heaven, his own

⁶⁵ Monier-Williams, M.(ed.), Op cit., under *dharma*, p. 510

⁶⁶ AK., 1.4.24

⁶⁷ Śabda., Vol. II, p.783

⁶⁸ cf., *imamañjaspāmubhaye akṛṇvata dharmāṇamagniṁ vidathasya sādhanam/ aktuṁ na yahvamuśasaḥ purohitaṁ tanūnapātamaruśasys niṁsate// RV., 10.92.2*

⁶⁹ Ibid., 10.170.2

region. Besides this, Sūrya sustains the entire creation with the life-giving aspect.⁷⁰ For each and every means to survive, the creatures are dependant upon the rays of the sun. Vāyu, the god of wind, is also mentioned as the *dharma* in the Vedas due to his character of sustainer: *tvaṁ viśvasmādbhuvanātpāsi dharmāṅsūryātpāsi dharmāṅā*⁷¹ Vāyu gives lives to all living beings. Indra is also mentioned as the sustainer and the ruler in the Vedas: *varāya te pātraṁ dharmāṅe tanā yajño mantrō brahmadyotaṁ vacaḥ*⁷² He is the prominent deity in the Vedic pantheon, glorified with the rain-giving aspect. Without the rain no corn can grow, no lives can survive. In this way, for different divinities, the term *dharma* is used in the Vedic texts.

The term *dharma* is applied for the sacrifices in the Vedas. Sacrifice is regarded as one of the principal parts of the Vedic religion. The lives of the Vedic Āryans are encompassed with it. It offers the people pollution free environment and stands as the source of all that cause rain, purify all vegetation and herbs, and produce cereals that bestow longevity of lives.⁷³ As the sacrifices are, so fruitful for the creatures, the term *dharma* is rightly used for *yajña* in the Vedas in the sense of sustainer.⁷⁴ The very first *yajña* that was performed by the gods is described as the very first means of sustenance. Again, the same is called as Puruṣa or Prajāpati, the lord and protector of all beings. The Vedic rituals, performed following the ritual of creation, have become the means of support and protection of the creatures as well as the unification with the gods and

⁷⁰ cf., *yā indra prasvastvāsā garbhamacakriran/ pari dharme va sūryan/ Ibid., 8.6.20*
eṣa dharmo yo eṣa tapatyēṣa hīdaṁ sarvaṁ dhārayati/ ŚB., 14.2.2.29

⁷¹ *RV., 1.134.5*

⁷² *Ibid., 10.50.6*

Also Vide, *Ibid., 1.55.3; AB., 8.12*

⁷³ cf., *annādbhavanti bhūtāni parjanya dānna sambhavaḥ/ yajñādbhavati parjjanyo yajñāḥ*
karmasamudbhavaḥ// ŚMG., 3.14

⁷⁴ cf., *yajñena yajñamayajanta devaḥ tāni dharmāni prathamānyāsan/ RV., 1.164.50*

regarded as the *dharmā*.⁷⁵ In this way, several times in the Vedic literature, *yajña* is mentioned as the *dharmā* and used as the upholder or sustainer or protector.⁷⁶

Besides these, the term *dharmā* is used in same contexts, in the sense of religious ordinances or rites,⁷⁷ somewhere as the fixed principles or rules of conduct,⁷⁸ somewhere as custom,⁷⁹ somewhere as virtue⁸⁰ and somewhere as inherent nature or quality.⁸¹ *Dharmā* is mentioned as equivalent to *satya* in the Vedas: ...*yo vai sa dharmāḥ satyaṁ vai tat; tasmāt satyaṁ vadantam āhuḥ, dharmāṁ vadaṭīti...*⁸² In the *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa*, the whole body of religious institutions is treated as the *dharmā*.⁸³ Besides this, *dharmā* is also used in the Vedic texts to denote the merit acquired by the performance of religious rites.⁸⁴ *Dharmā* directs the duty.⁸⁵ In the *Śrīmadbhāgavadgītā*,

⁷⁵ cf., ṛtena ṛtaṁ dharuṇaṁ dhārayanta yajñasya śāke parame vyoman/ divo dharmandharuṇe seduṣo nṛjātairajātān abhi ye nanakṣuḥ// Ibid., 5.15.2

pipartu mā tadṛtasya pravācanaṁ devānāṁ yanmanuṣyā amanmahi/ viśvā idusrāḥ spaludeti sūryaḥ svastyagnim samidhānamīmahe// Ibid., 10.35.8

⁷⁶ cf., vaiśvānarāya pṛthupājase vipo ratnā vidhanta dharuṇeṣu gātave/ agnirhi devān amṛto duvasyatyathā dharmāni sanatā dūduṣat// Ibid., 3.3.1

viśāṁ rājānamadbhutamadhyakṣaṁ dharmānāmimam/agnimīde sa u śravat// Ibid., 8.43.24

⁷⁷ cf., trīṇi padā vi cakrame viṣṇurgopā adābhyah/ ato dharmāni dhārayan// Ibid., 1.22.18
samidhānaḥ sahasrajidagne dharmāni puṣyasi/ devānāṁ dūta ukthyah// Ibid. 5.26.6

⁷⁸ cf., gṛtavatī bhuvanānāmabhiśriyovī pṛthvī madhudughe supeśasā/dyāvāpṛthivī varuṇasya dharmānā viṣkabhite ajare bhūrietasā// Ibid., 6.70.1

⁷⁹ cf., iyaṁ nārī patilokaṁ vṛṇānā ni padyata upa tvā martya pretam/ dharmāṁ purāṇamanupālayantī tasyai prajāṁ draviṇaṁ ceha dhehi// AV. 18.3.1

⁸⁰ cf., anaptamapsu duṣṭaraṁ somaṁ pavitra ā sṛja/punihīndrāya pātave// RV., 9.16.3

⁸¹ cf., pavamāna dhiyā hito' bhi yonim kanikradat/dharmānā vāyumā viśa// Ibid., 9.25.2
pavasva devāyusaḡindram gacchatu te madaḥ/ vāyumā roha dharmānā// Ibid., 63.22

⁸² Bṛ.U., 1.4.14

⁸³ cf., dharmasya goptājanīti... abhimantrayeta/ AB., 7.17

⁸⁴ cf., ṛtaṁ satyaṁ tapo rāṣṭraṁ śramo dharmāśca karma ca/ bhūtaṁ bhaviṣyaducchiṣṭe vīryaṁ lakṣmīrbalaṁ bale// AV., 9.7.17

⁸⁵ Chā. U., 2.23.1

and in different Smṛtis, the term *dharmā* is used in the sense of duties.⁸⁶ Thus, *dharmā* is found in the Vedas, in different senses, those direct to a positive and benevolent mental power.

In wider sense, *dharmā* denotes religion and involves in it different ordinances those to be strictly followed by the people according to their tribes or castes. The Vedic religion was ritualistic in nature. It finds expression with the mantras and ritualistic activities. With the ritualistic performances, the divinities were tried to please. The priests took an active part in the whole activities of the sacrifices. Each of them performed his own specific duties and stood as the mediator between the gods and the devotees. An invisible bond is created between the worshiper and worshipped. Frequently in the Vedas, the deities are mentioned as the father, brother or the son or friend of the worshippers from whom they asked and gain food or bountiful gifts, glory, brave son or victory over the enemies, etc., and so on and so forth.⁸⁷ Indeed, a nearest and close relationship is tried to develop between the worshippers and worshipped. Thus, in the Vedic religion developed the idea of brotherhood with the involvement of group activities like sacrifices, prayers etc. The principal sacrifices in the Vedic religion can not be performed alone. It involves the performances of group of people, i.e. generally the sacrificer, priests and others.

The Vedic religion is optimistic in nature. In Vedic religion, the worshippers worshipped the deities for all the positive things such as good health, long life,

⁸⁶ cf., ...svadharme nidhanam śreyaḥ.../ ŚMG., 3.35
bhagavan sarvavarṇānām yathāvadānupūrvaśaḥ/antaraprabhavāṇāṅca dharmān no vaktumarhasi//
MS., 1.2

athātaḥ sāmāyācārikān dharmānvyākhyāsyāmaḥ/ Āp. DS., 1.1.1
⁸⁷ cf., sa naḥ piteva sūnave'gne sūpāyano bhava/ sacasvā naḥ svastaye// RV., 1.1.9
divo na sargo asaḥgramahnām rājā na mitraṁ pra mināti dhīraḥ/ piturna putraḥ kratubhīryatāna ā
pavasva viśe asyā ajītim// Ibid. 9.97.30

prosperity, offspring, victory over the enemies etc.⁸⁸ All such expectations of the devotees towards the supreme power lead to the optimism.

The Vedic religion is the best example of naturalistic religion. Some aspects of the primal belief are found in it. The worship of nature, i.e. the worship of sun, the moon, the earth, the rivers, the dawn, the wind, the storm, the fire, the cow, etc., came from the animistic belief of the primitive man. According to it, there is a soul in each and everything in nature. Such ideas gave rise to the ancestor worship in the Vedic time.⁸⁹ According to spiritism, each and everything in the world possess a soul or spirit of independent nature. Again, different fetishes are found there in the Vedic period that introduces fetishism. Fetishism is a belief which considers a fetish as the object of worship, i.e. a stone, a piece of metal like gold, a wheel, wood, or even a separated part of human body that possess spirit within, along with the divine and mysterious powers of temporary nature. The wheel, the representative of the sun,⁹⁰ the bull, the representative of Parjanya,⁹¹ etc., are the worshipping fetishes found in the Vedic age. In this way, different aspects of the primal religion are found more or less in the Vedic religion. As a result of such elements, the Vedic religion inherits a flavor of magic. It is worthy to note that the religion and magic have always been found intermingled, more or less, in Vedic religious practices.

⁸⁸ cf., agninā rayimaśnavatpoṣameva divedive/ yaśasaṁ vīravattamam// Ibid., 1.1.3
taṁ tvā vājeṣu vājināṁ vājayāmaḥ śatakrato/ dhanānāmindra sātaye// Ibid.,1.4.9
arvāñco adyā bhavatā yajatrā ā vo hārdi bhayamāno vyayeyam/ trādhvaṁ no devā nijuro vṛkasya
trādhvaṁ kartādavapado yajatrā// Ibid.,2.29.6

⁸⁹ Vide, Galloway, G., Op. cit., pp. 90-98

⁹⁰ cf., muṣāya sūryaṁ kave cakramīśāna ojaś/ vaha śuṣṇāya vadhaṁ kutsaṁ bātasyāśvaiḥ// RV.,
1.175.4

⁹¹ cf., tisro vācaḥ pra vada jyotiragrā yā etadruhre madhudoghamūdhaḥ/ sa vatsaṁ
kṛṇvanganrbhamaṣadhīnām sadyo jāto vṛṣabho roravīti// Ibid. 7.101.1
sa retodhā vṛṣabhaḥ śaśvatīnām tasminnātmā jagatatasthuṣaśca/ Ibid. 7.101.6

An important point observed in the naturalistic religion is the tendency towards the unification of worship that developed with the development of better bonding among the people in the society. For this, a divine and universal principle is formed. *Ṛta*, found in the Vedic literature, is such principle of law that working behind the natural, moral and religious order of the world binds all the things together. In the Vedic religion, the idea of unification becomes more distinct with the introduction of the verse *indram mitraṃ varuṇamagnimāhuratho divyaḥ sa suparṇo garutmān/ ekaṃ sad viprāḥ bahudhā vadantyaḥ yamaṃ mātariśvānamāhuḥ*,⁹² that conveys the meaning of one single Divine Being becoming one with all creations. Though the religion of the *Veda* is polytheistic one where a large number of deities are worshipped, but in nature, it is monotheistic one. For example, in a passage, the golden germ Hiranyagarbha is mentioned as the supreme deity, who is mentioned as alone and above of all: *yaḥ deveṣu adhi devaḥ ekaḥ āsīt*⁹³

The fear, dread, splendour etc. of the primitive man towards the powerful natural phenomena, had given birth the religious faith inside the mind of the Āryan people. With the development of human emotions, related to the faith and devotion, the concept of god was shaped out and it was fully developed with the realization of divine within.

The Concept of God in the Light of the Vedas:

The term *deva* is used in the Vedas for the divine concept. The term is well defined by Sāyaṇācārya, in his commentary of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* as *dānādiguṇayukta*,⁹⁴ i.e. one, that is endowed with the qualities of making gifts, etc.

⁹² RV., 1.164.46

⁹³ Ibid.,10.121

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1.1.1

Besides this, in the commentary of the same text, he has used the term *dīpyamānaḥ*,⁹⁵ *dyotamānaḥ*,⁹⁶ etc., to convey the meaning the shining one. Yāskācārya, in the *Nirukta*, gives the etymological meaning of the term *deva* as *devo dānādvā dīpanādvā dyotanādvā dyusthāno bhavatītivā*⁹⁷ According to him, *deva* is called so as because of making gifts to the earthly beings or for being brilliant or radiant, or because he belongs primarily to the heavenly sphere.⁹⁸ The etymological meaning holds the term *deva* can be derived from the root *dā*, *dīp* or *dyut*. Patañjali, the great grammarian, has derived the term *deva* from root *div*, to shine. Those, who shine with the heavenly qualities and deeds of supremacy, are regarded as deities.⁹⁹ *Deva* or god is called *devatā* also: *yo devaḥ sā devatā*¹⁰⁰

Almost all the great scholars like Max Müller, Keith, Macdonell, Winternitz, Griswold, etc., have unanimously accepted that the gods are nothing but the defied and personified phenomena of nature. Yāskācārya has etymologized the term on the basis of such natural observation. The great commentator Sāyaṇācārya, Skandaswāmi, etc., have followed and made extensive use of naturalistic interpretations of Yāskācārya and show their awareness towards it. Both Yāskācārya and Sāyaṇācārya have pointed out the myth of Indra's fight against Vṛtra, which is, in reality, a depiction of natural phenomena, i.e. the thunder and the cloud. Vṛtra represents here the cloud: *tat ko vṛtraḥ? megha iti nairuktāḥ, tvāṣṭro'sura ityaitihāsikāḥ apām ca jyotiṣaśca*

⁹⁵ Ibid., 19.6

⁹⁶ Ibid, 2.38.1

⁹⁷ Nir.,7.15

⁹⁸ Sarup, L. (ed.), *The Nighantu and the Nirukta*, part II, p. 121

⁹⁹ cf., *diveraiśvarya karmaṇo devaḥ/ Mahā. 5.1.59*

¹⁰⁰ Nir., 7.15

*miśrībhāvākarmāṇo varṣakarma jāyate, tatropamārthena yuddhavarṇā bhavanti*¹⁰¹ As a result of the fight of Indra and Vṛtra, the rain befalls.

The term *deva* is used in the sense of bright that is derived from root *div*, to shine and all the shining phenomena of nature are called *deva*.¹⁰² All the divine powers of nature are called by the term *deva*.¹⁰³ In this stage, the etymological meaning of the term degraded. Finally, the concept of the term *deva* has become expanded and in a more liberal sense the term was applied to other natural phenomena like earth,¹⁰⁴ wind¹⁰⁵ water,¹⁰⁶ night,¹⁰⁷ etc.

The gods are mentioned as arisen from the non-existence in the Vedas.¹⁰⁸ In the *Nāsadiyasūkta* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, they are cited as born after the creation of the universe.¹⁰⁹ They are mentioned as *daivyajana*, i.e. the divine clan.¹¹⁰ They reside in the Heaven. They are said to be the children of Heaven and Earth, i.e. *devaputre*¹¹¹ that means they, whose sons are the gods. In a number of hymns, the deities are stated to

¹⁰¹ cf., Nir., 2.16

Also vide, ayam indraḥ vajreṇa sampādito yo mahān vadhaḥ tena vajreṇa vṛtrataram atīśayena lokānām āvarakam andhakārarūpam.../ Sāyaṇācārya on RV., 1.32.5

¹⁰² cf., yo nākasyādhi rocane divi devāsa āsate/ marudbhiragna ā gahi// RV., 1.19.6
udu śya devaḥ savitā savāya// Ibid., 2.38.1

¹⁰³ Ibid., 1.1.2

¹⁰⁴ cf., devī devebhīryajate yajatrairaminatī tasyaturukṣamāṇe/ ṛtāvarī adguhā devaputre yajñasya netrī śucayadbhirarkaiḥ// Ibid., 4.56.2

¹⁰⁵ cf., ye maho rajaso vidurviśve devāso adguhā// Ibid., 1.19.3

¹⁰⁶ cf., śam no devīrabhiṣṭaya āpo bhavantu pītaye/ śam yorabhisravantu naḥ// Ibid., 10.9.4

¹⁰⁷ cf., rātrī vyakhyadāyatī purutrā devyakṣabhiḥ/ viśvā adhi śriyo' dhitaḥ// Ibid., 10.127.1

¹⁰⁸ cf., bṛhanto nāma te devā ye'sataḥ pari jajñire/ekam tadaṅgam skambhasyāsādāhuḥ puro janāḥ// AV., 10.7.25

¹⁰⁹ cf., ko addhā veda ka iha pra vocatkuta ājātā kuta iyaṁ viśṛṣṭiḥ/arvāgdevā asya visarjanenāthā ko veda yata ābabhūva// RV., 10.129.6

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 7.53.2

¹¹¹ cf., atapyamāne avasāvanti anu śyāma rodasī devaputre/ ubhe devānāmubhayebhirahnām dyāvā rakṣatām pṛthivī no abhvāt// Ibid., 1.185.4

devī devebhīryajate yajatrairaminatī tasyaturukṣamāṇe/ ṛtāvarī adruhā devaputre yajñasya netrī śucayadbhirarkaiḥ// Ibid., 4.56.2

have been born from the Heaven and Earth.¹¹² The terms *pitārā*, *mātarā*, etc., are used in the Vedas to distinguish their universal parenthood.¹¹³ They are cited as *pūrvaje pitrā* and *pitārā pūrvajā* means the primeval parents.¹¹⁴ Thus, being the descendants of Dyaus, the divinities are called as divine and all the natural phenomena within the sphere of heaven and earth are regarded as their children.¹¹⁵ These divinities possess equal naturalness and equal powers.

The term *deva* or *devatā* includes in it all kinds of divinities, viz. the higher gods with great functional importance and the abstract deities with lesser power or prowess. The *Rgvedasamhita* and other Vedic texts contain the worship of the higher gods such as Sūrya, Agni, Indra, Vāyu, Rudra, Uṣas, Ādityas, Maruts, the Aśvins, etc., the deities, comparatively of lesser importance, such as Vivasvat, Trita Āptya, etc., the semi-divine deities Vāstospati, Mātariśvan etc. Besides these, the abstract ideas, like faith, i.e. *śraddhā*, charity, i.e. *dakṣiṇā*, anger, i.e. *manyu*, knowledge, i.e. *jñāna*, speech, i.e. *vāk* etc. have occupied places of worship as deities in the Vedas. In this way, under the sphere of the term *deva*, both the concrete and abstract ideas have come. Different diseases, medicinal plants and creepers, different human organs, etc., have also found a place of worship occupying the form of god in the Vedic pantheon. Thus in the Vedas, both the truly divine as well as the non-divine objects like *dundubhi*,¹¹⁶

¹¹² Ibid., 1.159, 1.160, 1.185; 4.56; 6.70; 7.53

¹¹³ cf., te sūnavaḥ svapasah sudaṁsaso mahī jajñurmātarā pūrvacittaye/ Ibid., 1.159.3
pra pūrvaje pitārā navyasībhīrgīviḥ kṛṇuddhvaṁ sadane ṛtasya/ ā no dyāvāpṛthivī daivyena janena
yātaṁ mahi vā varūtham// Ibid., 7.53.2

¹¹⁴ cf., Ibid.

parikṣitā pitārā pūrvajāvarī ṛtasya yonā kṣayataḥ samokasā/ dyāvāpṛthivī varuṇāya savrate
ghṛtavatpayo mahiṣāya pinvataḥ// Ibid., 10.65.8

¹¹⁵ Griswold, H.D., *Religion of the R̥gveda*, pp. 101-102

¹¹⁶ RV., 6.47.29,30

dyuta,¹¹⁷ etc., have occupied the places of importance as deities and worshipped by the common people.

Number and Classification of the Vedic Gods:

Yāskācārya has given the classification of the deities, in his famous work *Nirukta*, referring the views of his predecessors: *tisra eva devatā iti nairuktāḥ agniḥ pṛthivīsthāno vāyurvandro vāntarikṣasthānaḥ sūryo dyusthānastāsām mādhyasthānastāsām mahābhāgyādekaikasyā api bahūni nāmadheyāni bhavanti vā karmaprthaktvādyathā hotādhvaryurbrahmodgātetyapyekasya sato'pi vā pṛthageva syuḥ/ pṛthagghī stutayo bhavanti tathābhīdhānāni*¹¹⁸ According to the expounders of the Vedas, there is triple classification of the divinities. Agni, the Fire god represents the terrestrial class of deities that dwell in the earth; Vāyu or Indra represents the atmospheric region and the gods dwelling in the atmosphere appears as atmospheric or aerial deities. Sūrya, the Sun-god dwells in the celestial region and he represents the entire divinities of that region, who is called the celestial god. As it is seen that the title Hotṛ, Adhvaryu, Brahman and Udgātṛ are applied to a single person due to different application of particular sacrificial office, and the single deity also is glorified with different appellations due to the greatness and diversity of the functions. The triple classification of the Vedic deities is viewed by Śaunaka also in the *Brhaddevatā*, where he states: *agnirasminnathendrastu madhyato vāyureva ca/ sūryo divīti vijñeyāstisra eveda devatāḥ*¹¹⁹ In the *Rgvedasamhitā*, the same classification of the Vedic deities is made. The gods, who are eleven in the sky, eleven on earth and eleven dwellers in the

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 10.34

¹¹⁸ Nir., 7.5

¹¹⁹ BD., 1.69

atmosphere, are called to the sacrifice to take their offerings.¹²⁰ There are also found some other Ṛgvedic passages, those stands in support of this.¹²¹ The *Atharvaveda* also divides the gods into triple classification: *ye devā diviṣado antarikṣasadaśca ye ye ceme bhūmyāmadhi*.¹²²

In the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, the deities Sūrya, Vāyu and Agni are directly mentioned as the representative of the three regions and invoked for bestowing protection from the calamities of man from the three regions: *sūryo no divaspātu vāto'ntarikṣāt/ agnirnaḥ pāṛthivebhyaḥ*/¹²³ In this way, in the Vedic texts, the three divinities Agni, Vāyu or Indra and Sūrya representing the three worlds are cited as the supreme divinities. The other divinities are regarded as the result of them.

The three supreme deities appear in different forms due to the supereminence or the divisions of action. Durgācārya in his commentary on the relevant passage of the *Nirukta* has clarified it by, *tāsāmeva tisṛṇāmagnyādīnā mähābhāgyādaiśvaryayogenaikātmānamanekadhā vikurvatīnāmeikaikasyām prativikāraṁ jātavedo vaiśvānaro varuṇo rudro'svināvūṣā ityeṣamādīni bahuni nāmadheyāni bhavanti pratishānaṁ svaprakṛtyabhedādaikātmayavadevaikatvaṁ na jahāti sā sā devateti/ api vā karmaprthaktvāt/ api vaivaṁ vikaraṇadharmitvādabhinnaprakṛtīnām bahunāmatā/ api vā svam svamātmānamavikurvatīnāmevānekakarmayogātpṛthakkarmahetuko nāmadheyalābhaḥ syāt*/¹²⁴ The different qualities and functions of Fire-god or Agni gave birth to different

¹²⁰ cf., *ye devāso divyekādaśa stha pṛthivyāmadhyekādaśa stha/ apsuḥṣito mahinaikādaśa stha te devāso yajñamimajuṣadhvam// ṚV., 1.139.11*

¹²¹ cf., *ye trimśati trayasparō devāso barhirāsadan/ vidannaha dvitāsanān// Ibid., 8.28.1*
iti stutāso asathā risādaso ye stha trayaśca trimśacca/ manordevā yajñiyāsaḥ// Ibid., 8.30.2

¹²² AV., 10.9.12

¹²³ RV., 10.158.1

¹²⁴ Durgācārya on Nir., 7.5

appellations like Jātavedas, Vaiśvānara, Tanūnapāt, etc. Vāyu is worshipped as Indra, Rudra, Mātariśvan, etc., due to its various activities and appellations. Mitra, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, Pūṣan, Āditya, Bhaga etc. are the appellations of the Sun-god. The different divinities in the Vedic pantheon represent different aspects of the three primary deities and manifest before the universe with individuality.

A large number of gods have been eulogized in the Vedas,¹²⁵ and generally, the number of gods is enumerated as thirty-three;¹²⁶ of which, eleven are considered as terrestrial, eleven are as aerial or atmospheric and eleven are regarded as celestial. Sāyaṇācārya in his commentary on the relevant passage of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, clearly states that although the representative gods of the three worlds are three in number, but due to their greatness or varied manifestations they number as thirty three.¹²⁷ The thirty-three gods, frequently mentioned in the Vedas, become double in the *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa*. There they are divided as *Somapā* and *Asomapā* deities. The *Somapā* deities are mentioned as thirty-three while the *Asomapā* are again mentioned as thirty three. The group of *Somapā* deities in the particular *Brāhmaṇa* are consisted of eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas, Prajāpati and Vaṣaṭkāra and *Asomapā* gods are eleven Prayājas, eleven Anuyājas and eleven Upayājas: *tryastimśat vai devāḥ somapāstrayastimśadasomapā/ aṣṭau vasava ekādaśa rudrā dvādaśādityāḥ prajāpatiśca vaṣaṭkāraśca ete devāḥ somapāḥ/ ekādaśa prayājā ekādaśānuyājyā*

¹²⁵ cf., bhiraṅne saratham yāhyarvān nānāratham vā vibhavo hyaśvāḥ/ patnīvatastrimśataṁ trīmśca devānanuṣvadamā vaha mādayasva// ṚV. 3.6.9

trīṇi śatā trī sahasrānyagnim trīmśacca devā nava cāsaparyan/ aukṣanghṛtairastrīṇanbarhiraśmā ādidhotāram nyasādayanta// Ibid.3.9.9

viśvairdevaistribhirekādaśairihādbhirmarudbhīrbhṛgubhiḥ sacābhuvā/ ajośasā uśasā sūryeṇa ca somam pibatamaśvinā// Ibid.8.35.3

¹²⁶ Ibid., 1.34.11; 1.45.2

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1.139.11

*ekādaśopayājā ete'somapāḥ paśubhājanāḥ*¹²⁸ The thirty three number of *Somapā* gods mentioned in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* include Indra in the list instead of Vaṣaṭkāra.¹²⁹ Again, in the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, there is an addition and number of the *Somapā* deities is mentioned as thirty-four. The *Somapā* deities of the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* are eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas, Dyaus and Pṛthivī and Prajāpati.¹³⁰ Here the place of Indra or Vaṣaṭkāra is replaced with the inclusion of two deities Dyaus and Pṛthivī. The same *Brāhmaṇa* contains another passage where the deities are enumerated as thirty-three and both the Indra and Prajāpati are substituted for Dyaus and Pṛthivī: *te ekastrimśadindraścaiva prajāpatiśca trayastimśad*¹³¹

Moreover, in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, the number of the deities is mentioned as three thousand three hundred thirty-three in two contexts.¹³² Thus, different numbers of deities are mentioned in the text. The *Atharvavedasamhitā* admits the three-fold classification according to the abode of the deities and mentions six thousand three hundred thirty-three numbers of demi-gods, i.e. Gandharvas only which is sufficient to indicate a large number of divinities in the Vedic pantheon.¹³³

Besides these, another classification is found made by Mahīdhara on the *Vājasaneyisamhitā* where he divides the deities on the basis of their works and birth,

¹²⁸ AB., 2.18

¹²⁹ cf., *trayastimśattveva devā iti/ katame te trayastimśadityaṣṭau vasava ekādaśa rudrā dvādaśādityāsta ekastrimśadindraścaiva prajāpatiśca trayastimśāviti/ Bṛ. U.,3.9.2*

¹³⁰ cf., *aṣṭau vasavaḥ ekādaśa rudrāḥ dvādaśādityāḥ/ ime eva dyāvapṛthivī trayastimśyau/ trayastimśadvai devāḥ/ prajāpatiścatustrimśaḥ/ ŚB., 4.5.7.2*

¹³¹ Ibid., 11.6.3.5

¹³² cf., *tṛiṇi śatā tṛi sahasrāṇyagnim trimśacca devā nava cāsaparyan/ ṚV., 3.9.9*

¹³³ cf., *brahmacāriṇaṃ pitaro devajanāḥ pṛthag devā anusamyanti sarve/ gandharvā enamanvāyan trayastimśat triśatāḥ ṣaṣṣahasrāḥ sarvāntsa/ devāmstapasā piparti// AV.,11.5.2*

i.e. *karmadeva*, ‘work gods’ and *ājānadevāḥ*, i.e. ‘gods by birth.’ Those deities are called *karmadevas*, who had attained the position of deities by their eminent works and *ājānadevas* were the deities produced at the beginning of the creation: *agre prathamam martyasya manuṣyasya satastasya puruṣamedhayājinaḥ ājānadevatvaṁ mukhyaṁ devatvaṁ sūryarūpeṇa/ dvividhā devāḥ karmadevā ājānadevāśca/ karmaṇotkrṣṭena devatvaṁ prāptāḥ karmadevāḥ/ sṛṣṭyādāvutpannā ājānadevāḥ*¹³⁴ Yāskācārya also mentions about this classification of the Vedic deities in his *Nirukta*.¹³⁵

Besides these, some renowned Vedic scholars like Griswold and others have tried their best to classify the deities according to their greatness, gender, etc. In the Vedic texts, the Vedic gods are spoken of as great and small, young and old.¹³⁶ But contradiction occurs among the deities as because two leading deities of two fields for which possess supreme powers above the other divinities of that field forwhy it becomes harder to classify the deities on the basis of their greatness. For example, Indra is mentioned as the mighty warrior or Śatakratu having unbounded force¹³⁷ while Varuṇa is the supreme moral ruler.¹³⁸ It becomes difficult here to find out who is greater one between the two. Both of them are the greatest among the others of their own communities. Such contradiction finds an end with the observation made in the passage, ‘None of you is small or young; you are all great.’¹³⁹ Furthermore, on the basis

¹³⁴ Mahīdhara on VS., 31.17

¹³⁵ cf., ekasyātmano’nye devāḥ pratyāṅgāni bhavanti/ ...karmajanmāna/ ātmajanmānaḥ ātmaivaiṣām ratho bhavatyātmāśva ātmāyudhamātmeṣava ātmā sarvaṁ devasya devasya...// Nir., 7.4

¹³⁶ cf., namo mahadbhyo namo arbhakebhyo namo yuvabhyo nama āśinebhyah/ RV., 1.27.13

¹³⁷ cf., purām bhinduryuvā kaviramitaujā ajāyata/Indro viśvasya karmaṇo dhartā vajrī puruṣtutaḥ// Ibid.,1.11.4

¹³⁸ cf., kimāga āsa varuṇa jyeṣṭham yatstotāram jighāmsasi sakhāyam/prā tanme voco dūḍabha svadhāvo’va tvānenā namasā tura iyām// Ibid., 7.86.4

¹³⁹ cf., nahi vo astyrbhako devāso na kumārakah/ viśve satomahānta it// Ibid., 8.30.1

of the numerical figures or frequency of citation of the names of the deities, the deities can be arranged into five groups—

i. Indra, Agni, Soma; ii. Aśvins, Māruts, Varuṇa; iii. Uṣas, Savitr, Bṛhaspati, Sūrya, Pūṣan; iv. Vāyu, Dyāvapṛthivī, Viṣṇu, Rudra and v. Yama, Parjanya.¹⁴⁰

The deities are again classified according to their gender, i.e. male divinities, called as the gods and the female deities called as the goddesses. Again, the goddesses can be classified as follows—the goddesses having a natural basis like Pṛthivī (earth), Uṣas(dawn), Vāc(speech), Rātri (night), Sarasvatī (the river) etc., Some goddesses are the personifications of some abstract ideas like ila (Nourishment), Dhiṣaṇā (Abundance), etc., and finally, those deities are also worshipped as goddesses in the Vedic pantheon, who are the wives of gods, i.e. Agnāyī (wife of Agni), Indrānī (wife of Indra), Varuṇānī (wife of Varuṇa), etc., and so on and so forth.

Besides these, there are some dual divinities in the Vedic pantheon. The dual divinities represent that class of deities where a pair of gods is worshipped conjugally and they look like a one single god. Indeed the dual divinities are the smallest group of gods. Dyāvapṛthivī, Mitrāvaruṇau, Indrāgnī, Indrā-varuṇau, Indravāyū, Indrāviṣṇū, Naktosāṣā and Aśvinā are the dual deities. There are some group of gods like the Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, Maruts, the semi divine Angirasas, the lower deities like Ṛbhus, Apsaras and Gandharvas and finally Viśvedevāḥ, i.e. the all gods. All the deities belonging to one single group possess almost same characteristic features but differ from only in some point of view. For example, all the Ādityas are the children of Aditi and they possess almost same characteristics, but vary only in case of their aspects. Besides these, there are special agricultural deities, such as Kṣetrapatiḥ, lord of the

¹⁴⁰ Vide, Macdonell, A.A., *Vedic Mythology*, p. 20

field, Urvarā, the deity of the plough land etc. Again a classification can be made among the deities due to certain great functions they share in groups. Parjanya, Varuṇa, Indra, Dyaus, Rudras and the Maruts all participate in the work of rain giving and can be called the rain giving gods; Indra, Trita Aptya, Agni etc. can be called the lightning gods; Rudra and the Maruts, Varuṇa, Soma, the Aśvins, Vāta and the water, etc., are the physician gods.

In this way, in the Vedic pantheon, different classifications of the divinities are made. But of these, the triple classification, done by the ancient scholars on the basis of the regions of the deities is regarded as the most authentic one. From the philosophical point of view also, the matter is looked forth and observation is made that the three primary deities are also the three manifestations only of the one supreme godhead. One verse says *indram mitram varuṇamagnimāhuratho divyaḥ sa suparṇo garutmān/ ekaṁ sadviprā bahudhā vadantyagnim yamaṁ mātariśvānamāhuḥ*¹⁴¹ In another hymn of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, the last pada of each verse goes *mahaddevānāmasuratvamekaṁ*¹⁴² which is sufficient to prove the oneness of the divinities. All such implications direct plurality of the divinities behind a single life yielding power and that is none but the one Supreme Soul.¹⁴³ The single Supreme Soul manifests itself as various forms and these forms are regarded as the individual limbs of that single Soul: *ekasyātmano'nye devāḥ pratyāṅgāni bhavanti*¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ ṚV., 1.164.46

ekaṁ santarṁ bahudhā kalpayanti .../ Ibid.,10.114.5

¹⁴² Ibid., 3.55

¹⁴³ cf., tasyātmā bahudhā hi saḥ/ BD., 4.143

ekaṁ vā idaṁ hi babhūva sarvam/ Ibid., 8.58.2

māhābhāgyāddevatāyā eka ātmā bahudhā stūyate/ Nir., 7.4

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Characteristics of the Vedic Gods:

The divinities in the Vedic pantheon are the representative of different powerful phenomena of the nature. They are endowed with the divine qualities like brilliance, power, wisdom, beauty, righteousness, holiness, omniscience, omnipotence, mercy, etc. Although they commonly share such qualities; yet, all the qualities are not found in them in same measure. For example, Usas, the ‘Lady Dawn’ possess more beauty than that of the knowledge and strength; Varuna, the moral god has more morality, Indra, the warrior god has more strength than that of the others. Again, the deity, representative of a particular department endowed with the special knowledge and power adequate to the task. For example, the priestly god Agni is well-endowed with knowledge and the epithet *jātavedas*, i.e. knowing all generations is added to him.

An effort is made here to summarize some common characteristics of the Vedic deities—

i. Devas, the Shining Heavenly Beings:

Devas are the shining celestial clan. As they are mentioned as the heavenly being, their permanent abode is in the sky. It is clearly observed that the celestial gods such as Dyaus, Varuṇa, Mitra, Sūrya, Savitṛ, etc., and the atmospheric divinities like Indra, Mātariśvan, etc., take their abode in the heaven; but terrestrial divinities such as Agni, Soma, etc., are not seen taking their dwelling in the heaven. Indeed they are the deities of the terrestrial region, but having heavenly origin. They are descendent towards the earth.¹⁴⁵ The deified water and rivers are descend towards the earth in the

¹⁴⁵ cf., *ānyaṃ divo mātariśvā jabhārāmathnādanyaṃ pari śyeno adreḥ/ agniṣomā brahmaṇā vāvṛdhānoruṃ yajñāya cakrathuru lokam// RV., 1.93.6*
uccā te jātamandhaso divi śadbhūmyā dade/ ugraṃ śarma mahi śravaḥ// Ibid., 9.61.10

form of rain. The deified river Sarasvatī has been described as flowing from the celestial ocean.¹⁴⁶

ii. Indefiniteness of Outline and Lack of Individuality:

The Vedic gods possess some common characteristics due to which it is difficult to identify a single deity with a single attribute. The deities of the same domain share almost the same characteristic features. For example, the deities Dawn, Sun, Fire, etc., possess the common features of being luminous, dispelling darkness, appearing in the morning, etc., Due to the absence of distinctiveness, it becomes harder to find out individuality in a single deity and it becomes too hard when several deities spring from different aspects of the one and the same phenomenon. Mitra, Pūṣan, Viṣṇu etc. all are the Sun-gods. But they are individual gods representing different aspects of the god Sūrya. The Sun-god, in his friendly aspect is called Mitra.¹⁴⁷ Pūṣan is the preserver of all beings: *bhuvanasya gopā ityeṣa hi sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ gopāyitā*¹⁴⁸ The Sun-god, representative of the sunbeam is called Viṣṇu, the god of wide space.¹⁴⁹ All these are the individual deities, but it is difficult to find out them as because they look like the same, they possess almost the same characteristics.

iii. Deities, the Entity with the Beginning:

The Vedic gods are mentioned as the personified and defied form of the phenomena of nature. Though the powerful natural phenomena are worshipped as deities in the Vedas, they are not manifested as beginningless entities. Commonly, all the Vedic deities are mentioned as the children of the father Dyaus and mother Pṛthivī.

¹⁴⁶ cf., ā no divo bṛhataḥ parvatādā sarasvatī yajatā gantu yajñam/ havam devī jujuṣāṇā ghṛtācī śagmām no vācamuśatī śṛṇotu// Ibid., 5.43.11

¹⁴⁷ cf., mitrasya priyatamasya nṛṇām/ Ibid., 7.62.4

¹⁴⁸ Nir., 7.9

¹⁴⁹ cf., atha yad viṣito bhavati tad viṣṇurbhavati/ Ibid., 12.18

Conjugally they are worshipped and the term *devaputre*,¹⁵⁰ is used for Heaven and Earth. Sāyaṇācārya interprets the term as *devāḥ putrāḥ yayoste*, i.e., ‘whose sons are gods.’¹⁵¹ They are worshipped to come to the sacrifice along with their children who constitute the heavenly clan.¹⁵²

Besides this, in the Vedic texts, several references are found where some other divinities are mentioned as the father or mother of the Vedic divinities. For example, Uṣas, the dawn is mentioned as the mother of the deities,¹⁵³ Brahmaṇaspati is mentioned as the father.¹⁵⁴ Again, the deity Soma is mentioned as the father and skillful generator of the gods.¹⁵⁵ He is also called the generator of Heaven, Earth, Agni, Sūrya, Indra and Viṣṇu: *janitā divo janitā pṛthiyāḥ janitāgnerjanitā sūryasya janitendrasya janitota viṣṇoḥ*¹⁵⁶ The deities are also said as the offspring of Aditi: *tām devā anvajāyanta*¹⁵⁷ In the *Atharvaveda*, they are mentioned as born from Ucchiṣṭa, the remnants of oblation.¹⁵⁸ Again once, they are mentioned as born after the creation of universe¹⁵⁹ and once from that of the ocean along with all the creatures.¹⁶⁰

iv. Deities, the Immortal Being and Possessor of Cosmic *Prāṇa*:

The deities are the immortal being. The references are found in the Vedic texts of the birth of the Vedic deities; but no references are found of their death. They are

¹⁵⁰ cf., *te ciddhi pūrve kavayo gr̥nantaḥ puro mahī dadhire devaputre/ ṚV., 7.53.1*

¹⁵¹ Sāyaṇācārya, *Ibid.*

¹⁵² cf., *pra pūrvaje pitarā nabyasībhīrgīrbhīḥ kṛṇudhvarīm sadane ṛtasya/ ā no dyāvāpṛthivī daivyena janena yātām mahi vām varūtham// ṚV., 7.53.2*

¹⁵³ cf., *mātā devāṇām/ Ibid., 1.113.19*

¹⁵⁴ cf., *devānām yaḥ pitaram/ Ibid., 2.26.3*

¹⁵⁵ cf., *pitā devānām janitā sudakṣo/ Ibid., 9.87.2*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid., 9.96.5*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid., 10.72.5*

¹⁵⁸ cf., *ucchiṣṭājjajñire sarve divi devā diviśritāḥ/ AV., 11.7.23*

¹⁵⁹ cf., *avāgdevā asya visarjanenāthā ko vedayata ābabhūva/ ṚV., 10.129.6*

¹⁶⁰ cf., *ayam vai samudro yo'yaṁ pavate/ etasmād vai samudrāt sarve devāḥ sarvāni bhūtāni samuddravanti/ ŚB., 14.2.2.2*

said as *amṛta*,¹⁶¹ i.e. immortal and *ajara*,¹⁶² i.e., unaging. Sāyaṇācārya interprets the two terms as *amṛtāḥ amaraṇadharmāṇaḥ*¹⁶³ and *ajaraḥ jarārahito'yam*/¹⁶⁴ In the relevant context in the Vedic texts, Savitṛ is said as the bestower of immortality to the divinities.¹⁶⁵ Savitṛ bestows immortality to the Ṛbhus also.¹⁶⁶ Once, Agni is also mentioned to confer immortality to the gods: *tvām viśve amṛta jāyamānam śiśum na devāḥ abhi sam navante/ tava kratubhiramṛtatvam āyana vaiśvānara yat pitrorādideḥ*/¹⁶⁷

From the passages quoted above, it becomes clear that the Vedic gods are not primarily immortal, but they have attained immortality by means of some other ways, e.g. drinking soma etc. The *Atharvaveda* says gods have overcome death by continence and austere fervour: *brahmacaryeṇa tapasā devā mṛtyumapāghnanta*/¹⁶⁸ The *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* narrates the process of overcoming death by the gods: *tadagnāvamṛtamadadhuh/ sarveṣām u haiṣa daivānāmātmā yadagniḥ/ taghadagnāvamṛtamadadhuh tadātmannamṛtamadadhata/ tato devāḥ amṛtā abhavan*/¹⁶⁹ Besides these, they are called as *asura* in general.¹⁷⁰ The term *asu* is used in the Vedas to denote *prāṇa*, i.e. the vital breath.¹⁷¹ The deities are called *asura* as because they are the possessor of the cosmic *prāṇa* which they bestow towards the earthly beings.

¹⁶¹ cf., te'smabhyaṁ śarma yaṁsannamṛtā martyebhyaḥ/bādhamānā apa dviṣaḥ/ Ibid., 1.90.3

¹⁶² cf., ā svamadma yuvamāno'jarastrṣvaviṣyannataseṣu tiṣṭhat/ Ibid., 1.58.2

¹⁶³ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 1.90.3

¹⁶⁴ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 1.58.2

¹⁶⁵ cf., devebhyo hi prathamam yajñiyebhyo'mṛtatvam suvasi bhāgamuttamam/ ṚV.,4.54.2 VS., 33.54

¹⁶⁶ cf., tat savitā vo amṛtatvamāsuvat/ ṚV., 1.110.3

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 6.7.4

¹⁶⁸ AV.,11.5.19

¹⁶⁹ ŚB., 9.5.1.7

¹⁷⁰ cf., mahaddevānāmasurattvamekam/ ṚV., 3.55.1-22

¹⁷¹ cf., prāṇo vā'suḥ/ ŚB., 6.6.2.6

tasyā etasyai vācaḥ prāṇā evāsuḥ/ eṣu hīdam sarvamasūteti/ JU., 1.40.7

v. Generosity:

The Vedic deities are worshipped due to their benevolence in the Vedic pantheon. They are worshipped to bestow various kinds of wealth and offspring to the devotees. For example, in the *Rgvedasamhitā*, Agni is worshipped for bestowing prosperity and wealth: *agninā rayimaśnavatpoṣameva dive dive/ yaśasaṁ vīravattamam*¹⁷² Again, the divine doors, i.e. divyadvāras are worshipped as they are the possessor of virtuous progeny.¹⁷³ The powerful deities with their power rescue their devotees from distress, protect from foes by slaying.¹⁷⁴ All of them are the great giver.¹⁷⁵ They give their devotees everything according to their wish.

vi. Deities and the *Ṛta*:

The Vedic deities are mentioned as the upholder of law or order called *Ṛta*. The term *ṛta* found in the Vedic religion covers three senses, viz. cosmic order, ritualistic order and moral law and order.¹⁷⁶ All the Vedic deities are mentioned as born of *Ṛta*, i.e. *ṛtajā*¹⁷⁷ or protector of *Ṛta*, i.e. *ṛtapā* or *ṛtasya gopā*,¹⁷⁸ increaser of *Ṛta*, i.e.

¹⁷² ṚV., 1.1.3

¹⁷³ cf., vi śrayantāmurviyā hūyamānā dvāro devīḥ supṛāyaṇā namobhiḥ/ vyacasvatīrvi prathantāmajuryā varṇaṁ punānā yaśasaṁ suvīram// Ibid., 2.3.5

¹⁷⁴ cf., triṇi padā vicakrame viṣṇurgopā adābhyah/ ato dharmāṇi dhārayan// Ibid., 1.22.18

¹⁷⁵ cf., indra tubhyaminmaghavannabhūma vayanā dātre harivo mā vi venah/ nakirāpirdadṛṣe martyatrā kimaṅga radhracodanaṁ tvāhuḥ// Ibid., 6.44.10

saṁ trī pavitrā vitatānyeṣyanvekaṁ dhāvasi pūyamānah/ asi bhago asi dātrasya dātāsi maghavā maghavadbhya indro// Ibid., 9.97.55

¹⁷⁶ Keith, A.B., Op cit, Part-I, p.83

Also vide, Griswold, H.D., Op cit, p. 24

¹⁷⁷ cf., agne trī te vājina trī śadhasthā tistraste jihvā ṛtajāta pūrvīḥ/ tisra u te tanvo devavātāstābhiraṇā pāhi giro aprayucchan// ṚV. 3.20.2

¹⁷⁸ cf., sa pitryānyāyudhāni vidvānindreṣita āptyo abhyayudhyatr/ trīśīrṣāṇaṁ saptaraśmiriḥ jaghanvāntvāṣṭrasya cinnīḥ sasṛje trito gāḥ// Ibid., 10.8.5

*ṛtāvṛdha*¹⁷⁹ and so on. Again, the term *ṛta* stands for the moral order which includes truthfulness, righteousness, ethical values etc. The Vedic gods are worshipped due to their truthfulness and morality. Righteousness and morality are characterized to them. All of them are true and not deceitful.¹⁸⁰ Among all the Vedic gods, Varuṇa is mentioned as the supreme power of morality. He is mentioned as the chief upholder of moral law. He is worshipped to loose the sinner from sin: *pr̥cche tadeno varuṇa didṛkṣūpo cikituṣo vip̥rccham/ samānamim kavayaścidāhurayam ha tubhyam varuṇo hr̥ṇīte//*¹⁸¹

vii. Hostility:

The character of hostility is very common among the Vedic gods. All the deities are mentioned as adapt in war-craft. They fight against their enemies prove their supremacy. Sometimes they prove their excellency killing their kith and kin also. For example, Indra is mentioned as the slayer of his progenitor: *kiyatvidindro adhyeti mātuḥ kiyatpiturjanituryo jajāna/ yo asya śusmaṁ muhukairiya vāto na jutaḥ stanayādbhirabhraiḥ*¹⁸² He is hardly mentioned as the violator of the integrity of the heaven.

viii. Reciprocal nature:

The Vedic deities are reciprocal by nature. They maintain close relationship with each other. Some of the deities are mentioned as born from each other. Yāskācārya states in the *Nirukta* thus: *itaretarajanmāno bhavanti/ itaretaraprakṛtayah*.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ cf., *ṛtena mitrāvaruṇāvṛtāvṛdhāvṛtāspr̥śā/kratuṁ bṛhantamāsāthe//* Ibid., 1.2.8

ṛtena yāvṛtāvṛdhāvṛtasya jyotiṣaspatī/ tā mitrāvaruṇā huve// Ibid., 1.23.5

¹⁸⁰ BD., 3.199

¹⁸¹ RV., 7.86.2

¹⁸² Ibid., 4.17.12

¹⁸³ Nir., 7.4

Sometimes, they are, found to be prototypes of each other. The same is interpreted by Durgācārya with the instance of Sūrya and Agni, Aditi and Dakṣa. The deities Sūrya and Agni, Aditi and Dakṣa are often described as being born from each other: *devānām “tvagneḥ sūryo’jāyata” “eṣa prātaḥ prasuvati” iti ha vijñāyate, tasmātsūryasyāgniḥ prakṛtiḥ sūryāccāgniḥ sāyaṁ jāyate, tasmādagneḥ sūryaḥ prakṛtiḥ/ aditerdakṣo dakṣāccādītiriti*¹⁸⁴

ix. The Vedic Gods are Identical with the Supreme Soul:

The Vedic deities are *Ātmajanmānaḥ*,¹⁸⁵ i.e. produced from one supreme soul. Different elements, living or non-living are indeed belong to one supreme soul. Yāskācārya states in the *Nirukta* that all the living and non-living beings, e.g. the chariot, horse, weapon, arrow, etc., belonging to the gods are identical with the Supreme Soul, which is the all in all of all the gods.¹⁸⁶ Again he has mentioned that so-called non-deities are deities, in reality, for being identical to the Soul. The Supreme godhead manifests himself in various elements of nature who occupy the form of gods. The same is viewed by Śaunaka also in his *Bṛhaddevatā*.¹⁸⁷

x. Mutual Relationship and Interdependence:

The Vedic deities maintain close connection with each other. They are linked with each other due to their different activities and interdependence. For example, Indra

¹⁸⁴ Durgācārya on Nir.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ cf., ātmaivaiṣāṁ ratho bhavati, ātmā aśvaḥ, ātmā’yudha ātmeṣava ātmā sarvaṁ devasya devasya/ Nir., 7.5

¹⁸⁷ cf., pṛthakpurastādye tūktā lokādīpatayastrayaḥ/ teṣāmātmaiva tatsarvaṁ yadyambhaktiḥ prakīrtyate//tejastvaevāyudhaṁ prādur vāhanaṁ caiva yasya yat/ imāmaindrīm ca divyām ca vācamevaṁ pṛthak stutām// BD., 1.73,74

is mentioned as the drinker of Soma with the tongue of Agni¹⁸⁸ and he serves all the deities by slaying Vṛtra and giving freedom to them: *yudhendro mahṇā varivaścakāra devebhyaḥ satpatiścarsaṇiprāḥ/ vivasvtaḥ sadane asya tāni viprā ukthebhiḥ kavayo grṇanti*¹⁸⁹ Agni serves all the deities standing as the messenger.¹⁹⁰ Again, the Ṛbhus have fabricated the car of Indra, Tvaṣṭṛ has fashioned out the bolt.¹⁹¹ Tvaṣṭṛ again is mentioned as being sharpening the metal axe of Bṛhaspati.¹⁹² Thus, the Vedic deities are living together with harmony and mutual helpfulness. They are dependent to each other in their day to day activities.

References are found in the Vedic texts of mutual interchanges of services of the Vedic gods. Some attributes are commonly used by two or more deities. For example, the slaying of Vṛtra which is generally ascribed to Indra is also found in case of Agni and the Aśvins.¹⁹³ The killing of Bala and releasing of cows are once credited to Indra,¹⁹⁴ once to the Aśvins.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁸ cf., yāñ ābhajo maruta indra some ye tvāmavardhannabhavanganaste/ tebhiretañ sajoṣā vāvaśāno'gneḥ piba jihvayā somamindra// indra piba svadhayā citsutasyāgnervā pāhi jihvayā yajatra/ advaryorvā prayatañ śakra hastāddhoturvā yajñam haviṣo juṣasva// ṚV., 3.35.9,10

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 3.34.7

¹⁹⁰ cf., iha tvam sūno sahaso no adya jāto jātāñ ubhayāñ antaragne/ dūta īyase yuyujāna ṛṣva ṛjumuṣkānvṛṣaṇaḥ śukrāmśca// Ibid., 4.2.2
veradhvarasya dūtyāni vidvānubhe antā rodasī sañcikitvān/ dūta īyase pradiva urāṇo viduṣtaro diva ārodhanāni// Ibid., 4.7.8

¹⁹¹ cf., anavaste rathamaśvāya takṣantvaṣṭā vajrañ puruhūta dyumantam/brahmāṇa indrañ mahayanto arkairavardhayannahaye hantavā u// Ibid., 5.31.4

¹⁹² cf., tvaṣṭā māyā vadapasāmapastamo bibhratpātrā devapānāni śantamā/ śiṣīte nūnam paraśurñ svāyasañ yena vṛścādetaśo brahmaṇaspatiḥ// Ibid., 10.53.9

¹⁹³ cf., tvamagne aditirdeva dāśuṣe tvam hotrā bhārati vardhase girā/ tvamilā śatahimāsi dakṣase tvam vṛtrahā vasupate sarasvatī// Ibid., 2.1.11

uta bhrubanta jantava udagni vṛtrahā jani/ Ibid., 1.74.3

ā vām vipra ihāvase'hvatstomebhiraśvinā/ariprā vṛtrahantamā tā no bhūtam mayobhuvā// Ibid., 8.8.9

¹⁹⁴ cf., avartayatsūryo na cakrañ bhinadvalamindro angirasvān// Ibid., 2.11.20

adhvaryavo yo dṛbhīkañ jaghāna yo gā udājadapa hi valaṃ vaḥ/ tasmā etamantarikṣe na vātamindrañ somairorṇuta jūrna vastraiḥ//Ibid., 2.14.3

¹⁹⁵ cf., yābhiraṅgiro manasā niranyatho'grañ gacchatho vivare goarṇasaḥ/ yābhirmanuñ sūramiṣā samāvatañ tābhīrū su ūtibhiraśvinā gatam// Ibid., 1.112.18

A specific deity is mentioned as presiding over a particular area of nature, but some functions of nature such as pouring rain, etc., are indeed the result of mutual help of each other. Sometimes, different deities are attributed for a single activity. Griswold remarks in this regard, every department of nature and of life is brought under the control of some deity. All the deities function as a unity. The unity of the divine activity is not the unity of an individual will as in monotheism, but the unity formed by the collective will of a clan, the clan of the devas. The multiplicity of the Vedic gods reflects the multitudinous aspects of nature and of life, and the unity of which, on the whole, pervades the diverse activities of the gods reflects, in like manner, the unity of nature, the fact that the universe is a cosmo, an ordered whole.¹⁹⁶

xi. Anthropomorphic and Non-Anthropomorphic Nature:

The natural phenomena were worshipped with the human forms and figures. Human organs like head, face, arms, hands, feet, shoulders, etc. are ascribed to them.¹⁹⁷ They are related to each other as mother, father, sister, friend etc. and human deeds like war, marriage and so on, are linked to them.¹⁹⁸ Some of them are mentioned as wearing garments, e.g. Uṣas. Again, the deities are described as moving in the luminous cars, drawn by different animals and birds like steeds, goats, deer etc.¹⁹⁹

The deities perform different human activities. For example, Agni is described as a priest.²⁰⁰ The Aśvins are described as physicians of gods who ward off death from

¹⁹⁶ Griswold, H.D., Op. cit, p. 107

¹⁹⁷ cf., ṛṣvā ta indra sthavirasya bāhū/ ṚV.,6.47.8
yatsaṅgrbhñā maghavanakāśirittai/ Ibid., 3.30.5

¹⁹⁸ cf., addhīndra piba ca prasthitasrya/ Ibid., 10.116.7
āśrutkarna śrudhi havam/ Ibid., 1.10.9

¹⁹⁹ cf., uṣo devamartyā vi bhāhi candrarathā sūnṛtā īrayantī/ Ibid., 3.61.2
dvābhyām haribhyāmindra yāhi/ Ibid., 2.18.4

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 1.1.1

the worshippers.²⁰¹ The anthropomorphic as well as non-anthropomorphic characteristic of the Vedic deities are well observed by Yāskācārya in the *Niukta*: *athākāracintanam devānām/ puruṣavidhā syurityekam/ cetanāvadbhiḥ stutayo bhavanti/ tathābhīdhānāni/ athāpi puruṣavidhikairamgaiḥ samstūyante/ athāpi puruṣavidhikairdravyasamyogaiḥ/ athāpi puruṣavidhikaiḥ karmabhiḥ/ apuruṣavidhāḥ syurityaparam/ api tu yaddṛśyate'puruṣavidham tat/ yathāgnirvāyurādityaḥ pṛthivī candramā iti*²⁰² According to some, the deities are anthropomorphic for their panegyrics as well as their appellations are like those of sentient beings. Again, according to some others, the deities are not anthropomorphic as because whatever is seen of them is non anthropomorphic. The fire, the air, the sun, the earth, the moon etc. are worshipped as gods do not possess any human form. These gods are praised like sentient beings as having anthropomorphic limbs or as associated with anthropomorphic objects and action. But by this they cannot be proved with anthropomorphism. The insentient objects are also praised in the same way in the Vedic texts.

xii. Theriomorphic Character:

The Vedic deities are theriomorphic in nature. Sometimes they are designated as animals, sometimes as birds. Mostly in case of the Vedic deities, like, Agni, Parjanya, Indra and the Aśvins, the theriomorphic shape is imposed. Agni is often mentioned as bull or cow: *agnirhanaḥ prathamajā ṛtasyapūrva āyuni vṛṣabhaśca dhenuḥ*²⁰³ Parjanya is also mentioned as the bull in the Vedic texts.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ cf., svāhākṛtaḥ śucirdeveṣu yajño yo aśvinoścamaso devayānaḥ/ tamu viśve amṛtāso juṣānā gandharvasya pratyāsnā rihanti/ AV., 7.5.3

²⁰² Nir., 7.6,7

²⁰³ RV., 10.5.7

²⁰⁴ cf., accā vada tavasam gṛbhirābhiḥ stuhi parjanyaṁ namasā vivāsa/ kanikradadvṛṣabho jīradānū reto dadhātyośadhīṣu garbham//Ibid., 5.83.1

Thus, in the Vedic religion numerous divinities are worshipped who are the possessors of aforementioned characteristics. Besides these, they possess some specific characteristics due to which they can be recognized as an individual deity having individual character and form. The religion of the Veda is ritualistic in nature. It finds expression with the mantras and the ritualistic performances offered by the Vedic people towards the deities are indeed the deified and personified form of phenomena of nature.

Review of Literature:

A review of the works, both ancient and modern, those have contributed a lot, towards the field of the study of the Purāṇic Sun-worship on the light of the Vedas, has been furnished below-

The Vedic texts occupy a specific place in the field of Indian religious history. They are considered as the best source of socio-cultural records of ancient India. The *Ṛgvedasamhitā* contains several data, relating to the Sun-worship in ancient Vedic period. Many scholars have prepared their commentaries on the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* and it has been published several times by different Editors. The *Mādhavīyavedārthaprakāśa* by Sāyaṇācārya is the best commentary written on the text. It is very helpful for the proper understanding of the content of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*. Along with the interpretation of the Vedic terms, Sāyaṇācārya has added here the grammatical peculiarities, etymological derivations and so on. Among different editions of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, one is the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya, edited in five volumes, which is published by Vaidika Saṁśodhana Maṇḍala, in 1972. Besides this, the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, along with the commentaries of Skandasvāmin, Udgītha, Veṅkaṭamādhava and Mudgala is edited by Visvabandhu Shastri and published by the

Vishveshvarananda Vedic Research Institute, Hoshiarpur, in seven volumes.²⁰⁵ Again, the English translation of the *R̥gvedasamhitā*, in two volumes, under the title *Hymns of the Rigveda* is prepared by R.T.H. Griffith, that is published in the year 1889-1890 from Benares: E.J. Lazarus and Company. Without the help of these works, the study relating to the worship of the Sun-god in the Vedic period cannot be completed. Again, the *Atharvavedasamhitā*, along with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya is published in four volumes by the Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi, in the year 1989, which is edited by Shankar Pandurang Pandit. The *Taittirīyasamhitā*, along with the commentaries of Bhaṭṭabhāskara and Sāyaṇācārya is edited by T.N. Dharmadhikari, which is published in three volumes by Vaidika Saṁśodhana Maṇḍala, in 1985. The great scholars Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara have made their commentaries on the *Vājasaneyisamhitā*. J.L. Shastri has edited the work and Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, has published it in 1971. All these Samhitās contain references to the Sun-worship, in the Vedic period. The *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa*, along with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya is published in two volumes, by Tara Book Agency, Varanasi, in the year 1980-83. The work contains great discussion on the worship of the deity in different sacrificial works. Again, the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* is published by the Nag Publishers, Delhi, along with the commentaries of Sāyaṇācārya and Harisvāmin, in five volumes, which is edited by S. Sarma. The work remains as the abundant source of the Vedic Sun-worship, containing discussion on the salient traits of the Sun-god. Furthermore, there are several Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads, those contain data relating to the Sun-worship during the Vedic period. *The Principal Upaniṣads* is the great Upaniṣadic text, which is edited with introduction, text, translation and notes by S. Radhakrishnan and published by Harper Collins Publishers, in the year 2011. In this work, the translations of eighteen

²⁰⁵ Vide, Modak, B.R., *Makers of Indian Literature: Sāyaṇa*, p.33

principal Upaniṣads are found along with their origin texts in transliterated form. The Gṛhyasūtras contribute a lot towards the study of the Sun worship. They contain the references to the worship of the Sun-god, in different rites and rituals, in the Vedic period. Almost all the Gṛhya texts are published along with their commentaries, those have been prepared by the renowned scholars. The *Āpastambagr̥hyasūtra* is published along with the commentary of Haradatta Miśra and Sudarśana, which is edited by U.C. Pandeya and published by Choukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, in 2015. The *Ṛgvedīya Gṛhyasūtra* is another work that includes the two Ṛgvedic Gṛhyasūtras, viz. the *Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra*, the *Śāṅkhyāyanagr̥hyasūtra* or the *Kauṣṭhikagr̥hyasūtra*. The work is edited by Amarkumar Chattopadhyaya and published by Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Kolkata, in the year 2001. The *Pāraskaragr̥hyasūtra* is another important *Gṛhyasūtra*, which is edited by Gopalshastri Nene, along with the commentaries of Harihara, Gadādhara and Jayarāma, and published by Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series office, Benaras, in the year 1925. The Gṛhyasūtras are translated into English by H. Oldenburg and this monumental work is edited by F. Max Müller in two volumes, under Sacred Books of the East Series, under the title *The Gṛhyasūtras*, and published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

The Purāṇas are regarded as next to the Vedas. They contain references, relating to the worship of the Sun. The Purāṇas are published several times by different scholars. The *Agnipurāṇa* is edited by Pancanana Tarkaratna and it is published by Nababharat Publishers, Calcutta, in the year 1389. Another edition of the work is published by Chowkhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi, along with the Hindi commentary, made by Acarya Sivaprasad Dwivedi. The *Agnimahāpurāṇa* is again published by the Nag Publishers, Delhi in the year 1955. The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, along with the commentary *Śrīmadbhāgavatabhāvārthadīpikā* by Śrīdharasvāmin is edited by

J.L. Shastri, and is published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi in 1983. The *Brahmapurāṇa* is published by Nag Publisher in the year 2007. Again, the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* is edited by J.L. Shastri and published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, in the year 1973. The *Matsyapurāṇa* is published in two volumes along with the English translation by H.H. Wilson. The introductory note of the work is precious one that deals with the Purāṇic literature as a whole. The work is published by Nag Publishers, Delhi, in 1983. The earliest edition of *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* is published by Nababharat Publishers, Calcutta, which is edited by Pancanana Tarkaratna, in the year 1390. The Nababharata Publishers, Calcutta also has published the *Padmapurāṇa* in all the khaṇḍas, which are edited by Pancanana Tarkaratna. The *Bhaviṣyamahāpurāṇa* and the *Sāmbapurāṇa* are the great works, dealing with the worship of the Sun-god. The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇam* is published in three parts by Nag Publishers, Delhi, which is edited by R.N. Sharma. The *Sāmbapurāṇa* is edited by V.C. Srivastava, along with the text and translation, and published by Parimal Publications, Delhi, in 2013. Almost all the Purāṇas are published and presently available, those help the reader in the study of the Sun-worship in the Purāṇic period.

Among the modern works, *Sun-Worship in Ancient India*, authored by Lalita Prasad Pandey is regarded as one of the valuable works. The work contains chapters on Sun-Worship in India, in Pre-Vedic age, Vedic age and the post-Vedic age. It contains discussion on the Sun-worship in Śunga period, Gupta period, etc. There is also found about the centres of Sun-worship in India. The work is published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, in the year 1968. Another work, under the same title *Sun-Worship in Ancient India*, authored by V.C. Srivastava is published by Indological Publications, Allahabad, in 1972. Among the works, relating to the Sun-worship, this work is regarded as important one. The work is written into seven chapters. *Sun Cult in*

Prācyadeśa, History, Religion & Iconography, written by Bijoy Kumar Sarkar is another work directly related to the Sun-cult, which is published by Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi, in the year 2010. This is a noted work written on the Sun-worship in India, especially in Bengal. The work contains six chapters. *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, written by Arthur Berridale Keith, in two volumes, is regarded as one of the best works in the field of ancient Indian religious history, which is originally published in the year 1925, and again published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, in the year 2007. The work specially deals with the religion and philosophy of the Vedic literature. The work contains discussion on different Vedic deities, including the solar gods. *The Religion of the Veda* by Hermann Oldenberg is a famous work, published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, in the year 1988. The work contains discussion on Vedic religion and deities. *Vedic Mythology*, authored by A. A. Macdonell is one of the prominent works, dealing with the specific characters of the Vedic gods. The work is published in the year 1897. The work, in seven chapters, contains various data regarding the solar divinities. *Treatment of Nature in the R̥gveda*, authored by Braj Bihari Chaubey is one of the famous works, dealing with the treatment of nature in the R̥gvedic text. The work is published by Vaidik Sahitya Sadan, Hoshiarpur, in 1970. *Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs* by R.C. Hazra, is the monumental work in the field of Purāṇic religion, which is published by the Unniversity of Dacca, in the year 1936. *Studies in the Upapurāṇas* is another famous work by R.C. Hazra which is published in two volumes by Sanskrit College, Calcutta. The first volume of it contains discussion on the *Saura* and *Vaiṣṇava* Upapurāṇas. This work stands as the best source of study for the topic Sun worship in Purāṇic period.

Methodology, Scope and Aim of the Study:

The Purāṇic Sun-worship is highly influenced by the Vedic Sun-worship which is dealt with exhaustively in this work. In the present study, the descriptive and analytical methods have been adopted. From the primary and secondary sources, the materials have been collected. After that, they are carefully and systematically analysed and constructively synthesised.

From a keen observation, it can be stated that the Purāṇic Sun-cult bears direct influence of the Vedic Sun-worship. Though the scholars have already contributed a lot on the various aspects of the Vedic and Purāṇic Sun-god, yet a comparative study on the Vedic and Purāṇic Sun-god is still lacking.

The main objective of the study is to find out the Vedic influence on the Sun-worship in the Purāṇic sun cult. With this purpose, the Vedic hymns and passages and the Purāṇic verses, relating to the Sun-god have been studied in-depth. They are thoroughly studied out and after analysing all the data, the Vedic influence on the Sun-worship on the Purāṇas is traced out. Besides this, the concept of religion in the Vedas and the characteristic features of the Purāṇic religion are also discussed here. The thesis has been concluded with a chapter, consisting of an overall observation on the findings of the chapters, along with a concluding remark.

CHAPTER-II

SALIENT TRAITS OF THE SOLAR DIVINITIES IN THE VEDA

Solar worship has been described as the real religion of India,¹ which is observed by A.S. Geden and thus, it becomes clear that from very early period, the worship of the Sun-god was prevalent in India. Due to the benevolent aspect of it, the Sun is worshipped as deity. The importance of this natural force is well noted by Kātyāyana in the *Sarvānukramaṇī*: *ekaiva vā mahānātmā devatā tat sūrya ityācakṣate*² There is one great god and he is called as Sūrya. In the *Bṛhaddevatā*, Śaunaka directs the Sun as the very soul of all other gods.³ In the Ṛgvedic passage *indram mitram varuṇamagnim...*,⁴ it is clearly stated that Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni—all these are the names of one and the same divine being, the one Supreme Spirit under various manifestations. Sāyaṇācārya, while interpreting the relevant passage states that the respective Divine Being is the Āditya itself: *amumevādityamekameva vastutaḥ...medhāvino...bahudhā vadanti*⁵ In the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, the Sun-god is worshipped as the symbol of Brahman.⁶

Sūrya is the direct personification of the atmospheric Sun.⁷ It is the most clearly conceived and defined form of the solar divinities. Śaṅkarācārya says, *tvamantarikṣe'jasraṁ carasi udayāstamayābhyām*⁸ With the rising and setting, the Sun

¹ Geden, A.S., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (ed.), Vol. XII, p.83

² *Sarvānukramaṇī*, 2.14.20

³ *BD.*, 1.61-65; 68-69

⁴ *ṚV.*, 1.164.46

⁵ Sāyaṇācārya, *Ibid.*

⁶ cf., *ādityaṁ brahmetypāste/ Chā.U.*, 3.19.4

⁷ cf., *tvamantarikṣe carasi sūryaḥ/Praśna U.*, 2.9

⁸ Śāṅkara, *Ibid.*

creates the day and night. Being the creator of the day and night, it provides heat and light towards the whole universe and gives food and vegetation to all the creatures. Different aspects and positions of the Sun have given rise to independent Sun-gods in the Vedic literature and thus a group of solar divinities is formed.

The rising, mounting and setting are the three important aspects of the Sun. In his stimulative aspect, Sūrya is worshipped under the name Savitṛ, cf. *savitā sarvasya prasavitā*.⁹ Varuṇa is the nocturnal Sun.¹⁰ Mitra is regarded as the Sun-god of the day.¹¹ In his friendly aspect, he is called Mitra.¹² Being Mitra, he preserves the whole universe from destruction.¹³ Again, Sūrya is Viṣṇu, the god of wide space, representing the sun-beam in the sky.¹⁴ Sūrya is called Pūṣan, nourishing the whole world with its abundance of rays.¹⁵ Again, besides these, Sūrya is invoked in the Vedic literature under the names Bhaga, Vivasvat, the Aśvins, Aryaman, Parjanya, etc. In this way, several names are found used for the Sun-god and a common group of Āditya is formed. Here follows a discussion on the salient traits of the prominent solar divinities in the *Veda*.

Sūrya:

The God of Atmosphere:

Sūrya is the most concrete of the solar deities that represents the simplest and most direct form. The bright orb of the Sun is praised highly in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*.¹⁶ In his luminous form, Sūrya is compared to the golden disc or ornament that shines in the

⁹ Nir., 10.31

¹⁰ cf., *astaṁ gacchan sūrya eva varuṇa ityācakṣate/ Sāyaṇācārya on RV., 7.87.1*

¹¹ cf., *aharabhimāninaṁ devaṁ mitraṁ vā ahariti śruteḥ/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 1.89.3*

¹² cf., *mitrasya priyatamasya nṛṇām/ RV., 7.62.4*

¹³ cf., *mitraḥ pramīteḥ/ trāyate/ Nir., 10.21*

¹⁴ cf., *atha yad viṣito bhavati tad viṣṇurbhavati/ Ibid., 12.18*

¹⁵ cf., *atha yad raśmipoṣaṁ puṣyati tat pūṣā bhavati/ Ibid., 12.16*

¹⁶ cf., *udu tyaddarśataṁ vapurdiva eti pratihvare/ yadīmāśurvahati deva etaśo viśvasmai cakṣase aram// RV., 7.66.14*

sky: *ṛtasya śuci darśatamanīkaṃ rukmo na diva uditā vyadyaut*¹⁷ Sāyaṇācārya interprets the passage thus: *uditā uditau sūryasyodaye sati uditam tattejah divaḥ antarikṣasya rukmo na bhūṣaṇamiva vyadyaut vidyotate prakāśate*¹⁸

The atmospheric aspect of Sūrya is well-delineated in the Vedas.¹⁹ Sūrya shines in the firmament and enlightens the whole universe. He is called *śukra* for his brightness.²⁰ The rising, the mounting and the setting of Sūrya is frequently referred to in the Vedic literature.²¹ Sūrya is the god with scorching heat and light.²² The moon and all the planets of the sky borrow their light away from the Sun and shine in the sky. For such Sūrya is called *jyotiṣkr̥t*.²³ The moon is called *Āditya* for taking its light away from the Sun.²⁴ It reflects the sunlight, falling on it and becomes visible to all: *tasmādenayoḥ sadṛśayoḥ satornatarām candramā bhāti/ āttā hyasya bhāḥ*²⁵ The *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* also, points out that the moon is born of the Sun: *ādityād vai candramā jāyate*²⁶ Sāyaṇācārya gives the interpretation of the relevant passage thus: *yā tithāvamāvāsyāmāditye praviṣṭaścandramāḥ śuklapakṣapratipadyādityājjāyate*²⁷

¹⁷ Ibid., 6.51.1

¹⁸ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

¹⁹ cf., *tanmitrasya varuṇasyābhicakṣe sūryo rūpaṃ kṛṇute dyorupasthe/ ṚV., 1.115.5*
utpurastātsūrya eti viśvadr̥ṣṭo adṛṣṭahā/ Ibid., 1.191.8

satyenottabhitā bhūmiḥ sūryenottabhitā dyouḥ/ Ibid., 10.85.1

²⁰ cf., *taccakṣurdevahitam śukramuccarat/ Ibid., 7.66.16*

śukro'si bhrājo'si svarasi jyotirasi/ AV., 2.11.5

²¹ cf., *vaiśvānarasya sumatau syāma rājā hi kaṃ bhuvanāmamiśrīḥ/ ito jāto viśvamidaṃ vi caṣṭe vaiśvānaro yatate sūryeṇa// ṚV., 1.98.1*

tatsūryasya devatvaṃ tanmahitvaṃ madhyā kartorvitataṃ saṃ jabhāra/ yadedayukta haritaḥ sadhasthādādr̥trī vāsastanute simasmai// Ibid., 1.115.4

Also vide. Ibid., 1.108.12; AV., 1.29.5; 7.13.1; KU., 2.7

²² cf., *eṣa vai sūryo ya eṣa tapati/ ŚB., 2.6.3.8*

²³ cf., *taraṇirviśvadarśato jyotiṣkr̥dasi sūrya/ ṚV., 1.50.4*

²⁴ cf., *...tadyadādatta, tasmādityaḥ/ ŚB., 11.8.3.11*

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ AB., 45.5

²⁷ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

Sūrya creates the days and nights with its rising and setting.²⁸ The Vedic seer observes that the Sun, as if, wears the dirty clothes at the night and in the morning he wears the clean clothes: *dve dradhasī satatī vasta ekaḥ keśī viśvā bhuvanāni vidvān/ tirodhāyaityasitaṁ vasānaḥ śukramā date anuhāya jāyai*²⁹ Sāyaṇācārya is more clear in interpreting the passage who states, i.e. *kīdrśa eka ādityaḥ, keśī keśasamānaraśmiyukto viśvā bhuvanāni vidvānsarvālokānsvaraśmibhiḥ prakāśayamānaḥ/ uktayorvastrayormadhye rātrirūpaṁ vastraṁ malinamahorūpaṁ tu śukram/ yadā rātrirūpamasitaṁ vastraṁ vasāno vartate tadā svātmarūpaṁ tirodhāya gacchati/ atha jāyai jīrṇāyā raviḥ paścādanuhāya tadasitaṁ vastraṁ parityajya śuklamahorūpaṁ śvetaṁ vastramādatte*³⁰ Here, the day and night are compared to the clothes with white and black colour, i.e. clean and dirty respectively. Sūrya wears both these types of clothes accordingly while actively participating in the process of the creation of the days and nights. In the *Gopathabrāhmaṇa*, the course of the earth around the Sun is referred to as the cause of day and night, but not the rising and setting of the Sun.³¹ He is extolled as the cause for the days and nights.³² In the *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* also, it is stated that the Sun never sets nor rises. He appears to have

²⁸ cf., vi dyāmeṣi rajaspṛthvahā mimāno aktubhiḥ/ paśyanjanmāni sūrya// RV., 1.50.7

²⁹ TS., 3.2.2.2

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ cf., sa vā eṣa na kadācanāstameti nodayati/ tad yadenaṁ purastāt udayatīti manyate rātraiseva tadantaṁ gatvā// GB., 2.4.10

³² cf., idaṁ vapurnivacanaṁ janāśaścaranti yannadyastasthurāpaḥ/ dve yadīm bibhṛto māturanye iheha jāte yamyā sabandhū// Ibid., 5.47.5

śukram te anyadyajataṁ te anyadviṣurūpe ahanī dyaurivāsī/ viśvā hi māyā avasi svadhāvo bhadrā te pūṣanniha rātirastu// Ibid., 6.58.1

... he pūṣan tvadīyamanyadekaṁ rūpaṁ śukram nirmalaṁ divasasyotpādaksm/ tvadīyamanyadekaṁ rūpaṁ yajataṁ kevalaṁ yajanīyaṁ na prakāśakaṁ rātrerutpādakam/ ata eva viṣurūpe viṣamarūpe ahanī ahaśca rātriśca bhavataḥ/ ahorātrayornirmāṇe sūrya eva kartā.../ Sāyaṇācārya on AV., 11.6.21

set when night befalls. Again, in the morning, one regards the Sun to have risen, as if, he creates the day, and at that time the other part remains in darkness.³³

As soon as Sūrya rises, it illuminates the whole world with its light.³⁴ In the Vedic texts, Sūrya is worshipped as the highest light.³⁵ In the Upaniṣads, he is called as the lord of light.³⁶ Sūrya is worshipped as the light and the light is called as the Sun: *sūryo jyotirjyotiḥ sūryaḥ*.³⁷ He is acclaimed as *viśvajyoti*.³⁸ In the *Vājasaneyisaṃhitā* also, Sūrya is eulogized to bestow the all-pervading light.³⁹ It is poetically conceived that all the constellations depart with the night like the thieves at the rising of the Sun.⁴⁰ Several times in the Vedas, the dark-dispelling traits of Sūrya is mentioned. The darkness is imagined as the skin over the firmament and Sūrya is invoked to throw it out over the water.⁴¹ The obscure sunlight during the eclipse of the Sun is mythically described in the Vedas. Svarbhānu, a demon is said to have eclipsed the Sun with

³³ cf., sa vā eṣa na kadācānastameti nodeti iti/ taṃ yadastameti manyante'ḥna eva tadantamitvā'thā'tmāṇaṃ viparyasyate rātrīmevāvastātukurute'haḥ parastāt iti... sa vā eṣa na kadācana nimrocati// AB., 14.6

³⁴ cf., taraṇirviśvadarśato jyotiṣkṛdasi sūrya/ viśvamā bhāsi rocanam// ṚV., 1.50.4
yena sūrya jyotiṣā bādhaso jagacca viśvamudiyarṣi bhānunā... Ibid. 10.37.4
Also vide, Ibid., 1.62.5; 1.112.13; 1.115.4; 1.123.12; 1.124.8; 4.13.4; TS., 1.4.31,39

³⁵ cf., sūryamaganma jyotiruttamam/ Chā. U., 3.17.7
deveṣu madhye sūryaṃ devaṃ sūryarūpeṇa vartamānamagnisaṅbaddhamevottamaṃ jyotiraganma prāptāsmā/ TS., 4.1.7

³⁶ ...jyotiṣāṃ patiḥ/ Praśna U., 2.9

³⁷ VS., 6.9

³⁸ ŚB., 8.7.1.15,16,17,22

³⁹ ...viśvamjyotiryaccha/ VS., 15.58

⁴⁰ cf., apa tye tyāyavo yathā nakṣatrā yanyaktubhiḥ/ ṚV., 1.50.2

⁴¹ cf., vahiṣṭhebhīrviharanyāsi tantumavavyayannasitaṃ deva vasma/ davidhvato raśmayāḥ sūryasya carnevāvādhustamo apsva'ntaḥ// Ibid., 4.13.4

darkness while Atri restores the light of the Sun.⁴² Again, the defeat of Sūrya by Indra is also narrated as alluding to an eclipse in the Vedas.⁴³

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, Sūrya is invoked as that supreme power, which is capable of destroying the ignorance with his light. Sūrya is invoked to unveil the face of Satya Brahman by spreading his rays that is covered with the veil of ignorance.⁴⁴

In the Vedic literature, Sūrya is mentioned as moving on a car with one steed, i.e. *etaśa*,⁴⁵ or seven mares called *haritaḥ*,⁴⁶ or seven horses, i.e. *aśva*,⁴⁷ or with indefinite number of steeds.⁴⁸ His horses are commonly called *ketavaḥ*,⁴⁹ i.e. the rays of the Sun. Sāyaṇācārya has clearly stated that *saptaharitaḥ* are simply his rays: *sapta saptasamkhyakāḥ haritaḥ aśvāḥ rasaharaṇaśīlā raśmayo vā*⁵⁰ The living beings on the earth are completely dependent on these rays. Even after death also, as stated in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, the sunrays lead man to *Brahmaloka*: *ā bharata śikṣataṁ vajrabāhu asmā indrāgnī avataṁ śacībhiḥ/ ime nu te raśmayāḥ sūryasya yebhiḥ sapitvaṁ pitaro*

⁴² cf., yattvā sūrya svarbhānustamasavidhyadāsuraḥ/akṣetravidyathā mugdho bhuvanānyadīdhayuḥ// svarbhānoradha yadindra māyā avo divo vartamānā avāhan/gūlhaṁ sūryaṁ tamasāpavratena turīyeṇa brahmaṇāvindadatriḥ// Ibid., 5.40.5

⁴³ cf., eva svena bhāgadheyenopadhāvatiṁ sa evainaṁ varuṇapāśānmuñcati kṛṣṇa ekasitipādbhavati vāruṇo hyeṣa devatayā samṛdhyai suvarbhānurāsuraḥ sūryaṁ tamasā'vidhyattasmai devāḥ prāyaścittimaicchantasyaṁ yatprathamam tamo'pāghnantsā kṛṣṇā'virabhavadyaddvitīyaṁ sā phalgunī yattrīyaṁ sā valakṣī yadadhyasthādapākṛntantsā'virvasā/ TS., 2.1.2.2 svarbhānurha vā'suraḥ/ sūryaṁ tamasā vivyādha.../ ŚB., 5.3.2.2

⁴⁴ cf., hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasyāpihitaṁ mukham/ tat tvaṁ pūṣan apavṛṇu satya-dharmāya drṣṭaye// Bṛ. U., 5.15.1,2

⁴⁵ cf., etaśo vahati dhūrṣu yuktaḥ/ ṚV., 7.63.2

⁴⁶ cf., sapta svasāraḥ suvitāya sūrya vahanti harito rathe/ Ibid., 7.66.15

⁴⁷ cf., sapta yuñjati rathamekacakro aśvo vahati saptanāmā/ Ibid., 1.164.2

⁴⁸ cf., ahaṁ sūryasya pari yāmyāśubhiḥ paitaśebhirvahamāna ojasā/ Ibid., 10.49.7

⁴⁹ cf., ketavaḥ prajñāpakāḥ sūryāśvāḥ yadvā sūryaraśmayāḥ/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 1.50.1

⁵⁰ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

na āsan//⁵¹ Though Indrāgnī is the deity worshipped in the verse in point, yet Indra and Agni are none other than Sūrya. Sāyaṇācārya in his interpretation of the relevant passage states thus: *sūryātmana indrasya yebhiḥ raśmibhiḥ yaiḥ arcibhiḥ asmākam pītarah pūrvapurushāḥ sapitvaṁ sahaprāptavyaṁ sthānaṁ brahmalokamagacchan/ arcirādimārgena hi brahmalokamupāsakā gacchanti... tasmāt sūryasya raśmīnām stavanenendrāgnyorubhayārapi stutiḥ siddhā*⁵²

Sūrya, the Soul of Universe:

Sūrya is eulogized in the Vedas as the soul of the whole universe: *sūrya ātmā jagatastasthuśaśca*⁵³ Sāyaṇācārya interprets the passage: *sthāvarajaṅgamātmakasya sarvasya prāṇijātasya jīvātmā/ udite hi sūrye mṛtaprāyaṁ sarvaṁ jagat punaścetanayuktaṁ sadupalabhyate/ tathā ca śrūyate- 'yo'sau tapannudeti sa sarveṣāṁ bhūtānām prāṇādāyodeti' (TĀ. 1.14.1)/ He is the inner soul of all moveable and immoveable things. Rising in the sky, it stimulates the entire living beings. It is stated in the *Taittirīyāranyaka* (1.14.1) that as soon as he rises he bestows life on each creature. For the life-giving power, he is called *prāṇa*.⁵⁴ Thus, the Sun stands as the stimulator of the world. The darkness of the earth is driven away with its light and the activities of every moving object are quickened by it.⁵⁵ As Sun covers the whole universe with his rays, he is rightly called as *lokamprāṇa*.⁵⁶*

⁵¹ ṚV., 1.109.7

⁵² Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

⁵³ ṚV., 1.115.1; TS., 2.4.13.1

⁵⁴ cf., udyannu khalu vā ādityaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni prāṇayati tasmādenaṁ prāṇa ityācakṣate/ AB., 25.6

⁵⁵ cf., yena sūrya jyotiṣā bādhase tamo jagacca viśvamudiyarṣi bhānunā/ ṚV., 10.37.4

⁵⁶ ŚB., 8.7.2.1

Sūrya is the great preserver: *viśvasya sthāturjagataśca gopā*,⁵⁷ which is amplified by Sāyaṇācārya thus: *viśvasya sarvasya sthātuḥ sthāvarasya jagataḥ jaṅgamasya ca gopā gopāyitā*⁵⁸ As Sūrya sustains the whole universe, he is rightly called Prajāpati.⁵⁹ In the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, Sūrya is mentioned as both the sustainer and the protector of the world: *eṣa vai sūryo ya eṣa tapatyēṣa vā idaṁ sarvamabhogopāyati sādhunā tvadasādhunā tvadeṣa idaṁ sarvaṁ vidadhāti*⁶⁰

Sūrya absorbs the water and releases it down towards the earth,⁶¹ and the relevant passage is thoroughly explained by Sāyaṇācārya thus: *ayamādityaḥ suyantubhiḥ sugamanaiḥ sarvaśāsaiḥ sarvasya śāsakaiḥ abhīśubhiḥ raśmibhiḥ krivikartā nāmāni nāmakānyudakāni pravaṇe nimne bhūpradeśe muṣāyati muṣnāti ādatte*⁶² Waters from the earth are sucked up by the Sun. The water, sucked by the Sun, descends to the earth in the form of fertilizing rains mixing with the moisture in the heaven.⁶³ From the rain, corns abundantly grow and creatures receive their food. He is called *samudra* as he moistens the whole earth with rain water.⁶⁴ Thus, he discharges his duty as the sustainer of the whole universe.

⁵⁷ ṚV., 7.60.2

⁵⁸ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

⁵⁹ cf., ...divo dhartā bhuvanasya prajāpati/ ṚV., 4.53.3

⁶⁰ ŚB., 2.6.3.8

⁶¹ cf., pra va ete suyo yāmaniṣṭaye nīcīramuṣmai yamyā ṛtāvṛdhaḥ/ suyantubhiḥ sarvaśāsairabhīśubhiḥ krivirnāmāni pravaṇe muṣāyati// ṚV., 5.44.4

⁶² Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

⁶³ cf., kṛṣṇaṁ nibhānaṁ harayaḥ suparṇā apo vasānā divamutpatanti/ ta āvavṛtrantsadanādrṭasyādīdghṛtena pṛthivī vyudyate// ṚV., 1.164.47

⁶⁴ cf., ādityo vṛṣṭyā jagadādrī kurvan samudra ucyate/ Mahīdhara on VS., 15.6.3

Sūrya, the Time:

With its rising and setting, Sūrya creates the day and night and determines the time.⁶⁵ In the Vedas, Sūrya is compared to a horse that drives the year or *saṁvatsara* in the form of one-wheeled chariot: *sapta yuñjati rathamekacakrameko aśvo vahati saptanāmā/ trinābhi cakramajaramanarvaṁ yatremā viśvā bhuvanāni tasyuḥ*⁶⁶ The one wheeled-chariot mentioned in the verse is *saṁvatsara*, i.e. the year; single horse is the Sun, seven are his rays. The three naves of the wheel are the three seasons: rainy, winter and summer.⁶⁷ Again, the one wheeled-chariot is mentioned with the twelve spokes, i.e. *dvādaśāra*.⁶⁸ By these twelve spokes, twelve months of the year are interpreted which form a complete year.⁶⁹ Again, the twelve-spoked wheel is mentioned as the generator of the seven hundred and twenty offspring.⁷⁰ These offspring are indeed the days and nights of the year, i.e. three hundred-sixty days and three hundred-sixty nights.⁷¹ Sūrya is identified with *saṁvatsara* in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* thus: *eṣa ha vā aśvamedho ya eṣa tapati tasya saṁvatsara ātmā*⁷² i.e. the Sun that gives forth heat is the horse sacrifice, his body is the year. The *saṁvatsara* or the solar year is divided into two halves, i.e. *uttarāyaṇa* and the

⁶⁵ cf., *kālādhīnatvāt sarvasya sthiteḥ/ Sāyaṇācārya on RV., 1.164.2*

⁶⁶ *RV., 1.164.2*

⁶⁷ *Vide, trinābhi cakram/ tisro nābhisthānīyāḥ sandhyāḥ sambaddhā vā traya ṛtavo yasya tattādr̥sam/ ke te/ gr̥ṣmavar̥ṣāhemantākhyāḥ/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *cf., dvādaśāraṁ nahi tajjarāya varvarti cakram pari dyāmṛtasya/ ā putrā agne mithunāso atra sapta śatāni viṁśatiśca tastuḥ// RV., 1.164.11*

⁶⁹ *Vide, dvādaśāraṁ dvādaśasamkhyākameṣādirāśyātmakaiḥ māsātmakairvā araiḥ rathāṅgāvayavairyuktam/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *cf., pañcapādaṁ pitaraṁ dvādaśākṛtīm diva āhuḥ pare ardhe puriṣiṇam/ atheme anya upare vicakṣaṇam saptacakre śadara āhurarpitam// RV., 1.164.12*

⁷¹ *cf., ṣaṣṭiśca ha vai trīṇi ca śatāni saṁvatsarasayāhāni/ ŚB., 9.1.1.43*

sapta ca vai śatāni viṁśatiśca saṁvatsarasayāhorātrāḥ sa eṣo'haṣsamānaḥ/ AĀ., 3.2.1

saṁvatsarasayāpyahāni rātrayaśca militvā viṁśatyadhikasamkhyayā gaṇyante/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

⁷² *Br. U., 1.2.7*

dakṣiṇāyana. When the Sun turns north from the winter solstice that is called *uttarāyana* and the opposite movement, i.e., the movement of the Sun from the summer solstice to south is called *dakṣiṇāyana*.⁷³ In yet another verse of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, Sūrya's wheel is described as constituting five spokes.⁷⁴ The five spokes of the wheel of the chariot of the Sun indicates the five seasons.⁷⁵

Sūrya, as the creator of seasons is mentioned several times in the Vedas.⁷⁶ The *Vājasaneyisamhitā* gives the names of the six seasons, viz., spring, summer, rainy, autumn, early winter and winter.⁷⁷ The passage also indicates the respective characteristics of the seasons, such as heat, cold, dryness, etc.⁷⁸ All these characteristics of the season are due to the special position of the earth in relation to the Sun during the earth's revolution.

Sūrya, the Healer:

In the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, Sūrya is worshipped to remove sickness, diseases, etc., of the body with his rays.⁷⁹ The life- yielding aspects of the sunrays are mentioned in the interpretation of Sāyaṇācārya thus: *kīdrśo raśmiḥ/ gabhīravepāḥ gambhīrakampanaḥ/ raśme prakampanam calanam kenāpi draṣṭumaśakyamityarthaḥ/*

⁷³ KB., 25.3.1-32

⁷⁴ cf., pañcāre cakre parivartamāne tasminnā tasyurbhuvanāni viśvā/ ṚV., 1.164.13

⁷⁵ cf., pañcāre pañcarturūpaiḥ arairyukte cakre saṁvatsarātmake/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

⁷⁶ cf., ādityastveva sarvaṛtavah/ ŚB., 2.2.3.9;

Also vide, VS., 2.32

⁷⁷ cf. namo vaḥ pitaro rasāya nemā vaḥ pitarah śośāya namo vaḥ pitaro jīvāya namo vaḥ pitarah svadhāyai namo vaḥ pitaro ghorāya namo vaḥ pitaro manyave/ namo vaḥ pitarah pitaro namo vo grhānnaḥ pitaro datta sato vaḥ pitaro deṣmaitadvah pitaro vāsa ādhatta// Ibid., 2.32

⁷⁸ cf., manyuḥ krodhaḥ/ krodha iva hi śiśira ośadhīrdahati/ Uvaṭa, Ibid.

⁷⁹ cf., tenāsmadviśvāmanirāmanāhutimapāmivāmapa duṣvapnyam suva/ ṚV., 10.37.4 apāmivā bādhate veti sūryam/ Ibid., 1.35.9;

ivām rogādibādhām apa bādhate samyak nirākaroti/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

*asuraḥ sarveṣāṃ prāṇadaḥ*⁸⁰ In the *Taittirīyāraṇyaka* also, the life-giving power of the sunrays is fully observed,⁸¹ and the deity is worshipped. Sūrya is entreated to cure the heart diseases and jaundice.⁸² The yellowness of eyes, skin, teeth and nail, which are the symptoms of jaundice are taken away to the parrots and other yellow-coloured birds, or trees as soon as the Sun rises.⁸³

The rays of the Sun contain the power to fight with the worms, for which, in the *Atharvaveda*, he is worshipped to smite the worms.⁸⁴ Again, Sūrya is prayed for curing the sting or Yakṣman along with the headache, head ailment, earache, anaemia, limb-splitting, etc.,⁸⁵ cough,⁸⁶ skin-diseases, etc.⁸⁷ Sūrya is also worshipped to take away the venomous affect of the body caused by the snakebite.⁸⁸ He is mentioned as the destroyer of poison too: *sūrye viṣamā sajamī dṛti surāvato gr̥he/ so cinnu no marāti no vayan̄ marāmāre asya yojanam̄ hariṣṭhā madhu tvā madhulā cakāra*/⁸⁹ Sūrya is

⁸⁰ Sāyaṇācārya on RV., 1.35.7

⁸¹ cf., sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ prāṇānādāyodeti/ TA., 1.14.1

⁸² cf., udyannadya mitramaha ārohannuttarām̄ divam/ hṛdrogam̄ mama sūrya harimāṇam̄ ca nāśaya// RV., 1.50.11
anu sūryamudayatām̄ hṛdyoto harimā ca te/ go rohitasya varṇena tena tvā pari dadhmasi// AV., 1.22.1

⁸³ cf., śukeṣu me harimāṇam̄ ropanākāsu dadhmasi/ atho hāridraveṣu me harimāṇam̄ ni dadhmasi// RV., 1.50.12; AV., 1.22.4

⁸⁴ cf., udayannādityaḥ krimin hantu nimrocān hantu raśmibhiḥ/ AV., 2.32.1

⁸⁵ cf., tāsu tvāntarjaryā dadhāmi pra yakṣma etu nirṛtiḥ parācaiḥ/ evāham̄ tvām̄ kṣetriyānnirṛtyā jāmiśamsād druho muñcāmi varuṇasya pāśāt/anāgasam̄ brahmaṇā tvā kṛṇomi śive te dyāvāpṛthivī ubhe stām// Ibid., 2.10.5

Also vide, Ibid., 9.8

⁸⁶ cf., muñca śīrṣaktyā uta kāsa enam̄ paruṣparurāviveśā yo asya/ yo abhṛjā vātajā yaśca śuśmo vanaspatīntsatatām̄ parvatānśca// Ibid., 1.12.3

⁸⁷ cf., apacitāḥ pra patata suparṇo vasateriva/ sūryaḥ kṛṇotu bheṣajam̄ candramā vo'pocchatu//Ibid., 6.83.1

⁸⁸ cf., devā aduḥ sūryo adād dyaurodāt pṛthivyadāt/ tisraḥ sarasvatīraduḥ sacittā viṣadūṣaṇam// Ibid., 6.100.1

⁸⁹ cf., sūrye viṣamā sajamī dṛtiṃ surāvato gr̥he/so cinnu na marāti no vayan̄ marāmāre/asya yojanam̄ hariṣṭhā madhu tvā madhulā cakāra// RV., 1.191.10

worshipped to convert *viṣa*, treated as the *viṣavidyā*, the science of poison, to antidotes with the help of sun-rays, which as a result becomes *madhulā*, i.e., *madhuvidyā*, accomplished by the science of ambrosia.⁹⁰ In the *Atharvaveda*, Sūrya is invoked for longevity along with many other gods.⁹¹

Sūrya is also worshipped for removing the evil dreams,⁹² and evil-spirits.⁹³ Thus, he is depicted as the healer of mental diseases, who bestows peace and prosperity.⁹⁴

Sūrya, the Lord of Morality:

Sūrya is worshipped in the Vedas as the observer of all the divine and mortal beings. In the Vedas, Sūrya is often called the eye of the gods like Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, etc.⁹⁵ He is worshipped to guard his devotees against distress and blemishes: *adyā devā uditā sūryasya niramhasaḥ pipṛtā niravadyāt*.⁹⁶ Sāyaṇācārya interprets the relevant passage thus: *yuyamasmān amhasaḥ pāpāt niṣpipṛta niṣkṛṣya palāyata*.⁹⁷ In the *Taittirīyasamhitā* also, Sūrya is eulogized to protect his devotees from the evil.⁹⁸ The

⁹⁰ cf., he *viṣa tvām madhu amṛtaṁ cakāra/ viṣasya viṣabhāvaṁ dūre'panodya amṛticakāreti/ eṣaiva madhudātṛī nirviṣikartṛī madhuvidyā/ yadetadādityasya viṣayojanaṁ tena ca amṛtikaraṇaṁ yadasti eṣā madhuvidyā/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.*

⁹¹ cf., *pārthivasya rathe devā bhagasya tanvo bale/ āyuṣyamaṣmā agni, sūryo varca ā dhād bṛhaspati// AV., 2.29.1*

⁹² cf. ... *tenāsmadviśvāmanirāmanāhutimapāmīvāmapa duṣṣvapnyam suva// RV., 10.37.4*

⁹³ cf., ... *adṛṣṭāntsarvāñjambhayattsarvāśca yātudhānya// Ibid., 1.191.8*

⁹⁴ cf., *viśāhā tvā sumanasah sucakṣasaḥ prajāvanto anamīvā anāgasah/udyantaṁ tvā mitramaho divedive jyogjīvāḥ prati paśyema sūrya// Ibid., 10.37.7*

⁹⁵ cf., *cakṣurmitrasya varuṇasyāgneḥ / Ibid., 1.115.1*

⁹⁶ *Ibid., 1.115.6*

⁹⁷ *Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.*

⁹⁸ cf., ... *sūryastvā purastvātpātu kasyāśridabhiśastyā vītihoṭraṁ tvā kave dyumantaṁ samidhīmahyagne bṛhantamadhvare viśo yantre stho vasunām rudrāṇāmādityānām sadasi sīda juhūrūpabhṛddhruvā'si.../ TS., 1.1.11*

Upaniṣads and the Sūtras also enjoin the Sun-worship to release his worshippers from sin and distress.⁹⁹ *Ṛtāja*, i.e. born of truth, an attributive to Sūrya also indicates Sūrya's command over the morality.¹⁰⁰

Sūrya, the Supreme Reality:

In the Upaniṣads, Sūrya is identified with the Supreme Reality, i.e. the Brahman: *āditye brahmetyādeśaḥ*,¹⁰¹ *sūrya brahmetyupāste*.¹⁰² The worshippers are advised to worship the Brahman, meditating him on the Sun as the Sun is the symbol of Brahman.¹⁰³ In the *Maitryopaniṣad*, Sūrya is identified with *Aum*, i.e. *Praṇava* and the relevant text enjoins that one should meditate on the Sun as *aum* and get united to it.¹⁰⁴

In the Upaniṣadic doctrine, the Brahman represents the formless part. He is described as the formless form of Brahman that is known as the *puruṣa: etasya yataḥ etasya tasyaiṣa raso ya eṣa etasmin maṇḍale puruṣaḥ, tasya hyeṣa rasaḥ*.¹⁰⁵ This Brahman is the light and that light is called the Sun.¹⁰⁶ Thus, due to the all-pervading power of Sūrya, he is identified with Brahman, the Supreme Reality.

⁹⁹ cf., . . .udayantam ādityam upatiṣṭhate yajñopavītaṁ kṛtvodakam ānīya triḥ prasicyodapātraṁ vargo'si pāpmānaṁ me vṛndhīti.../ KU., 2.7

atha manthasya 'tatsaviturvṛṇīmahe, tatsavituvareṇyam' iti pūrve ca/ 'adabdham mana' iti ādhikārikāḥ śāntayastataḥ/ ityāhnikam/ athothānakāle'pakṛṣya pāpam/ nityāṁ śāntim kṛtvā/ 'uditaḥ śukriyam dadha' iti ādityam īkṣante// Śān. GS., 6.4.8-13

¹⁰⁰ cf., . . .nṛṣadvarasadṛtasadvomasadabjā gojā ṛtajā adrijā ṛtam// ṚV., 4.40.5

¹⁰¹ Chā. U., 3.19.1

¹⁰² Ibid., 3.19.4

¹⁰³ cf., sa ya etam evaṁ vidvān ādityam brahmetyupāste'bhyāso ha yadenam sādhaso ghoṣā ā ca gaccheyurūpa ca nimrederanimreḍeran// Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ cf., evaṁ hyādityād vā ādityam aum ityevam dhyāyāt ātmānaṁ yuñjītetī/ Maitrī U., 6.3

¹⁰⁵ cf., asau vā āditya eṣa puruṣaḥ/ ŚB. 7.5.2.27

¹⁰⁶ cf., yad amūrtaṁ tatsatyam tad brahma tajjyotiḥ sa ādityaḥ/Maitrī U., 6.3

Savitṛ

The God of Atmosphere:

The stimulative aspect of the Sun is represented by the form Savitṛ in the Vedic literature. Though there is contradiction among the scholars regarding the abstraction of the deity, yet Savitṛ cannot be a mere abstract deity as because anthropomorphism of his personality is well cited in the Vedas who is called *hiranyākṣah*,¹⁰⁷ i.e. golden-eyed, *hiranyapāṇi*,¹⁰⁸ i.e. gold-handed, etc.

The golden deity Savitṛ is mentioned in the Vedas as the supporter of the sky, i.e. *divo dhartā*.¹⁰⁹ Sāyaṇācārya interprets the term *divo dhartā* in the relevant passages as *divaḥ dyulokasya dhartā dhārakah*¹¹⁰ or *divaḥ dyulokasya dhartā dhārayitā avasthāpayitā vā*¹¹¹ Savitṛ supports the sky with his stimulative rays. He is referred to in the *Ṛgvedasāmhita* as the supporter of the whole world: *na pramiye saviturdaivyasya tadyathā viśvam bhuvanam dhārayiṣyati*¹¹² Savitṛ diffuses his rays preceded by Uṣas,¹¹³ impels Sūrya,¹¹⁴ and impels the car of the Aśvins.¹¹⁵ Sāyaṇācārya has interpreted the identification of the two divinities, Savitṛ and Sūrya by saying that

¹⁰⁷ ṚV., 1.35.8; VS., 34.24

¹⁰⁸ ṚV., 1.22.5; 35.9; AV., 3.21.8; 7.15.2

¹⁰⁹ cf., *divo dhartā bhuvanasya prajāpatiḥ piśaṅgam drāpiṃ prati muñcate kaviḥ/vicakṣaṇaḥ prathayannapṛṇannurvajjjanatsavitā sumnamukthyam*// ṚV., 4.53.2
gāvaiḥ grāmaṃ yūdhirivāśvānvāśreva vatsam sumanā duhānā/ patiriva jāyāmaḥ no nyetu dhartā divaḥ savitā viśvavārah//Ibid., 10.149.4

¹¹⁰ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 4.53.2

¹¹¹ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 10.149.4

¹¹² ṚV., 4.54.4

¹¹³ cf., *vyāñjate divo antevaktūnviśo na yuktā uśaso yatante/ sam te gāvastama ā vartayanti jyotiryacchati saviteva bāhū*// Ibid., 7.79.2

¹¹⁴ cf., *hiranyapāṇiḥ savitā vicarṣaṇirubhe dyāvāpṛthivī antarīyate/ apāmivām bādgate veti sūryamaḥ kṛṣṇena rajasā dyāmṛṇoti*// Ibid., 1.35.9

¹¹⁵ cf., *yuvorhi pūrvaṃ savitośaso rathmṛtāya citraṃ dhṛtavantamiṣyati*// Ibid., 1.34.10

though they are same as regards their divinity, but they are different in their forms and one may go to the other, cf., *yadyapisavitṛsūryayorekadēvatātṽam tathāpi mūrttibhedena ganṭṛgantavyabhāvaḥ*.¹¹⁶ In the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, they are said as identical,¹¹⁷ in the Upaniṣads by means of Savitṛ prayer, the worship of the Sun is ordained.¹¹⁸

The atmospheric character of Savitṛ becomes clear with his portrayal in the Vedas as the illuminator of the three regions, viz. the air, heaven and earth.¹¹⁹ The brightness of the deity illumines the eight points of the earth, along with three desert regions and the seven rivers.¹²⁰ Sāyaṇācārya in his commentary on the respective passage has pointed out the eight points of the earth and the three desert and seven rivers thus: *pr̥thivyāḥ sambandhinīḥ aṣṭau kakubhaḥ prācyādyāścatasro diśa āgneyyādyāścatasro vidiśa ityevamaṣṭau diśaḥ vyakhyat savitā prakāśitavān/ tathā yojanā prāṇinaḥ svasvabhogena yojayitṛn dhanva antarikṣopalakṣitān trī trisamkhyākān pr̥thivyādilokān sapta sindhūn gaṅgādinadīḥ samudrānvā savitā vyakhyat*¹²¹ Besides this, Savitṛ conveys the departed spirit to the righteous.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 1.35.9

¹¹⁷ cf., *savitā vai devānām prasavitā prasavitā vai kṣattā tasmātsāvitṛ bhavatyetadvā'asyaikāmratnam yatḥkṣattā tasma'etaitena sūyate tām svamanapakramaṇam kurute.../ ŚB., 5.3.1.7*

¹¹⁸ cf., *tat savitur vareṇyam ityasau vā ādityaḥ savitā sa vā evam pravaraṇīya ātmakāmenetyāhurbrahmavādino'tha bhargo devasya dhīmahīti, savitā vai devas tato yo'sya bhargākhyas tam cintayāmītyāhur brahmavādino'tha dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt iti.../ Maitrī. U. 6.7*

¹¹⁹ cf., *tisro dyāvaḥ saviturdvā upasthān ekā yamasya bhuvane virāṣāt /āṇim na rathyāmṛtādhi tasthuriha bravītu ya u tacciketat// ṚV., 1.35.6*

¹²⁰ cf., *aṣṭau vyakhyatkakubhaḥ pr̥thivyāstrī dhanva yojanā sapta sindhūn/ Ibid., 1.35.8*

¹²¹ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

¹²² cf., *āyurviśvāyuh parim pāsati tvā pūṣā tvām pātu prapathe purastāt/ yatrāsate sukrto yatra te yayūstatra tvā devaḥ savitā dadhātu// ṚV., 10.17.4*

Savitṛ is mentioned as the rays of the Sun in the Vedas.¹²³ He stretches out his light continually from the east, shining with the rays of the Sun, cf., *sūryaraśmirharikeśaḥ purastātsavitā jyotirudyānajasram*¹²⁴ Thus, he gives light and disperses darkness from the world.¹²⁵ He is mentioned in the Vedas as the highest light: *idaṁ śreṣṭhaṁ jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ*.¹²⁶ He is worshipped to bring the light.¹²⁷ His paths in the firmament are said as dustless and easy to traverse.¹²⁸ By two radiant steeds or by two or more brown, white-footed horses, his car is drawn in the sky.¹²⁹ Observing all the creatures, he moves on a downward and upward path and arouses the mortal and immortal.¹³⁰

Savitṛ, the Stimulator:

Savitṛ removes the darkness and diffusing the light enlightens the whole world to indulge in their respective duties. In the Vedas, he is mentioned as the enlightener of men, i.e. *savitāraṁ nṛcakṣam*.¹³¹ Sāyaṇācārya gives the interpretation of the term

¹²³ cf., āprā dyāvāpṛthivī antarikṣam vi sūryo raśmibhiścekitānaḥ// Ibid., 4.14.2

uta yāsi savitastrīṇi rocanota sūryasya raśmibhiḥ samucyasi/ Ibid., 5.81.4

¹²⁴ Ibid., 10.139.1

¹²⁵ cf., abhīvṛtam kṛśanairviśvarūpaṁ hiraṇyaśamyam yajato bṛhantam/ āsthādratham savitā citrabhānuḥ kṛṣṇā rajāṁsi taviṣīm dadhānaḥ// Ibid., 1.35.4

āprā rajāṁsi divyāni pārthivā ślokaṁ devaḥ kṛṇute svāya dharme/pra bāhū asrāksavitā savīmani niveśayanprasuvannaktubhirjagat// Ibid., 4.53.3

¹²⁶ Ibid., 1.113.1

¹²⁷ cf., urdhvā yasyāmatirbhā adidyutat savīmani/ hiraṇyapāṇiramimīta sukratuḥ kṛpāt svah// AV., 7.14.2; ŚB., 3.3.2.12

¹²⁸ cf., ye te panthāḥ savitaḥ pūrvyāso'reṇavaḥ sukṛtā antarikṣe/ RV., 1.35.11

¹²⁹ cf., ā devo yātu savitā suratno'ntarikṣaprā vhamāno aśvaiḥ/ Ibid., 7.45.1

¹³⁰ cf., ā kṛṣṇena rajasā vartamāno niveśayannamṛtam martyam ca/hiraṇyayena savitā rathenā devo yāti bhuvanāni paśyan//yāti devaḥ pravatā yātyuvdatā yāti śubhrābhyām yajato haribhyām/ā devo yāti savitā parāvato'pa viśvā dūrītā bādhamānaḥ// Ibid., 1.35.2,3

¹³¹ Ibid., 1.22.7

nṛcakṣam thus: *nṛcakṣam manuṣyāṇām prakāśakāriṇam*¹³² For the generation of the people, Savitṛ comes to the world along with the rays of the day.¹³³ Savitṛ is mentioned in the Vedas as the stimulator: *savitā prasavānām adhipatiḥ sa māvatu*¹³⁴ He is the lord of stimulation. The *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* directs the same as *savitā vai prasavānāmīše*.¹³⁵ Again, the deity is worshipped as the stimulator of the human intellect.¹³⁶ The worshippers meditate upon him with a view to achieving the highest light.¹³⁷ As soon as he rises, he inspires and flourishes all acts. Savitṛ is mentioned as the progenitor of the gods, and that is why, all the desires produced by Savitṛ prosper in man: *savitā vai devānām prasavitā, tathā hyāsā ete savitṛprasūtā eva sarve kāmāḥ samṛdhayante*¹³⁸

The term *savitṛ* is derived from root *su*, that indicates the nature of the deity as the generator or impellor in the Vedas. Each and everything is under the control of Savitṛ, who governs this universe with its light: *eṣa vai savitā—ya eṣa tapati*¹³⁹ In the commentary of the relevant passage, Sāyaṇācārya interpretes *eṣa vai khalu savitā sa ca sūrya eti- prakarṣaparakāśādīnā jagannirvāhaṁ kurvan sarvadā sañcarati*¹⁴⁰

¹³² Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

¹³³ cf., *udu ṣya devaḥ savitā savāya śaśvattamaṁ tadapā vahnirasthāt/ nūnaṁ devebhyo vi hi dhāti ratnamathābhajadvītihotraṁ svastau// RV., 2.38.1; 7.4*

¹³⁴ AV., 5.24.1

¹³⁵ AB., 1.16

¹³⁶ cf., *tatsaviturvareṇyaṁ bhargo devasya dhīmahi/ dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt// RV., 3.62.10*

¹³⁷ cf., ... *tat tasya devasya savitūḥ sarvāntaryāmitayā prerakasya jagatsraṣṭuḥ parameśvarasya vareṇyaṁ sarvaiḥ upāsthatayā jñeyatayā ca sambhajanīyaṁ bhargāḥ avidyātkāryayorbharjanādbhagaḥ svayamjyotiḥ parabrahmātmakam tejaḥ dhīmahi vayan dhyāyāmaḥ/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.*

¹³⁸ ŚB., 2.3.4.39

¹³⁹ Ibid., 5.3.1.7

¹⁴⁰ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

Again, he is mentioned in the Vedas as the incentive force, so communicative to produce motion suddenly, i.e. impellor.¹⁴¹ Savitṛ motivates everyone including the gods.¹⁴² He has fastened the heaven and the earth; has fastened the illimitable space or hasten the cloud that moistens.¹⁴³

As Savitṛ is well connected with the sacrifice, he is invoked to vivify the worshipper.¹⁴⁴ The lord of instigation,¹⁴⁵ Savitṛ is worshipped in the *Śrauta* sacrifices for instigation.¹⁴⁶ Sāyaṇācārya has well-interpreted the instigative aspect of him thus: *yo'yaṁ savitā devaḥ sa eva prasavānām karmasvanujñānamīśe svāmī bhavati*¹⁴⁷ In the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, Savitṛ is mentioned as the progenitor of the gods, and that is why, all the desires produced by Savitṛ, prosper in man: *savitā vai devānām prasavitā, tathā hyāsā ete savitṛprasūtā eva sarve kāmāḥ samṛdhyante*¹⁴⁸

In this way, the stimulative aspect of Savitṛ is frequently delineated along with its power of generation, impulsion and instigation.

¹⁴¹ TS., 1.1.1; 1.1.4; 1.1.6; 1.2.6; 1.7.7; 4.1.1; 4.1.3

¹⁴² cf., *yuktvāya manasā devān suvaryato dhiyā divam/ brhājyotiḥ kariṣyatassavitā prasuvāti tān// Śvet. U. 2.3*

¹⁴³ cf., Sarup, L.(ed.), *The Nighantu and the Nirukta, Part-II*, p.164

¹⁴⁴ cf., *yadadya sūra udite'nagā mitro aryamā/ suvāti savitā bhagaḥ// RV., 7.66.4*

¹⁴⁵ cf., *savitā vai prasavānāmīśe savitṛ prasūtā evainān/ AB., 1.16*

¹⁴⁶ cf., ...*yatsāvitreṇa jāpēna prasauti savitā vai prasavitā karmaṇa eva prasavāya/ KB., 1.4.14*
āthiyena ha vāi devā dvīpadaśca catuṣpadaśca paśūnāpnotyāsanne haviṣyāthīye'gnīm manthanti...
abhi tvā devasavitariti sāvitrīm prathamāmanvāha savitṛ prasūtātāyai savitrprasūtasya ha vai na
kācana ṛṣṭirbhavatyariṣṭyai ... sarvasyā'ptyai// Ibid., 1.8.1

Also vide, PB., 1.8.1; 16.5,6; 24.15.2,3; ŚB., 3.5.3.10,12; 3.5.4.4 and so on

¹⁴⁷ AB., 1.16

¹⁴⁸ ŚB., 2.3.4.39

Savitṛ, the Preserver:

In the Vedic literature, Savitṛ is called as the preserver of the world: *divo dhartā bhuvanasya prajāpatiḥ*.¹⁴⁹ In the Brāhmaṇas, he is referred to as identical with Prajāpati.¹⁵⁰ It is stated that, Prajāpati being Savitṛ, created all the living beings.¹⁵¹ He is invoked as the supreme god and creator of the world. Savitṛ regulates all the moveable and immoveable things.¹⁵² He gives immortality to the deities and lengthens the life of men.¹⁵³ The *Nirukta* states him as the protector.¹⁵⁴ While interpreting a Ṛgvedic verse, *devastvaṣṭa savitā*, etc., Durgācārya has clarified the preservative aspects of Savitṛ by saying *tvaṣṭā devo madhyamaḥ savitā sarvasya bhūtagrāmasya prasavitā utpādayitodakasampradānadvāreṇa/ kimutpādayitaiva/ netucyate/ pupoṣa prajāḥ puṣṇāti rasānutpādya/ na kevalam puṣṇāti/ kim tarhi/ purudhā jajāneti/ bahudhā cainā janayati vardhayati/ kena punarasau janayati puṣṇāti vardhayati ca/ yata āha/ imā ca viśvā bhuvanānyasya/ imāni viśvāni bhuvanāni udakāni asya yataḥ svatāyām vartante tasmājjanayati puṣṇāti vardhayati ca*¹⁵⁵

Again, Savitṛ is mentioned as the preserver of the rain water, i.e. *apām napāt* in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*.¹⁵⁶ Sāyaṇācārya in his interpretation, gives the meaning of the term *apām napāt* as *apām napātam jalasya ca pālakam/ santāpena śoṣakamityarthaḥ*¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁹ ṚV., 4.53.2; KB., 2.21.4

¹⁵⁰ ŚB., 12.3.5.1

¹⁵¹ cf., *prajāpatiḥ savitā bhūtvā prajā asṛjat/ TB.*, 1.6.4.1

¹⁵² cf., *bṛhatsumnaḥ prasavitā niveśano jagataḥ sthāturubhayasya yo vaśī/sa no devaḥ savitā śarma yacchatvasme kṣayāya trivarūthamamhasaḥ/ ṚV.*, 4.53.6

¹⁵³ cf., *devebhyo hi prathamam yajñiyebhyo'mṛtatvam subasi bhāgamuttamam/ ādiddāmānam savitarvyūrnuṣe'nūcīnā jīvitā mānuṣebhyaḥ/ Ibid.*, 4.54.2

¹⁵⁴ cf. *devastvaṣṭa savitā sarvarūpaḥ poṣati prajā rasānupradānena/ bahudhā cemā janayati/ imāni ca sarvāni bhūtānyudakānyasya/ Nir.*, 10.34

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ cf., *apām napātamavase savitāramupa stuhi/ tasya vratānyaśmasi/ ṚV.*, 1.22.6

¹⁵⁷ cf., *apām napātam jalasya na pālakam/ santāpena śoṣakamityarthaḥ/ Sāyaṇācārya on ṚV.*, 1.22.6

Because, Savitṛ, who belongs to the middle region causes the rain water to come down by evaporating the water body of the earth with its heat. The water and wind follow his order.¹⁵⁸ He leads the water,¹⁵⁹ and leads the other gods also.¹⁶⁰ As soon as Savitṛ appears in the world, the offering of oblations, invocations, etc., towards the other divinities start.¹⁶¹

Savitṛ is mentioned in the Vedas as the ruler, who rules over the wide world, i.e. *dhṛtavrata*.¹⁶² He is called the *satyadharmā*, i.e. observer of divine truth.¹⁶³

Savitṛ, the Healer:

In the Vedas, Savitṛ is mentioned as the healer of mental and physical disorder. He removes the evil dreams.¹⁶⁴ In his interpretation on the respective passage Sāyaṇācārya directs the meaning of the term *duṣvapnya* as *duḥsvapnyam duḥsvapnam duḥsvapnavadduḥkhakaram dāridryam*¹⁶⁵ He drives away the evil spirits and sorcerers.¹⁶⁶ Savitṛ stands as the remover of diseases.¹⁶⁷ He is worshipped to make men sinless.¹⁶⁸

¹⁵⁸ cf., āpaścidasya vrata ā nimṛgā ayaṁ cidvāto ramate pariḥman// ṚV., 2.38.2

¹⁵⁹ cf., devo'nayatsavitā supāṇistasya vyaṁ prasave yāma ūrvīḥ// Ibid., 3.33.6

¹⁶⁰ cf., yasya prayāṇamanvanya idyayurdevā devasya mahimānamojasā/Ibid., 5.81.3

¹⁶¹ cf., anya it devāḥ anye'pyagnyādayaḥ yasya devasya dyotamānasya savituḥ prayāṇamanu yayuḥ gacchanti prāpnuvanti/ kim/ mahimānam mahattvaṁ/ saviturudayābhāve agnihotrādyanisṭpattesteṣāṁ haviḥstutyādyabhāvāt/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

¹⁶² cf., adābhyo bhuvanāni pracākaśadvratāni devaḥ savitābhi rakṣate/ prāsrāgbāhū bhuvanasya prajābhyo dhṛtavrato maho ajmasya rājati// ṚV., 4.53.4

¹⁶³ cf., tripañcāśaḥ krīlati vrāta eṣāṁ devaiva savitā satyadharmā/ Ibid., 10.34.8

devaiva savitā satyadharmendro na tasthau samare dhanānām/ Ibid., 10.139.3

¹⁶⁴ cf., adyā no deva savitaḥ prajāvatsāvīḥ saubhagam/ parā duḥsvapnyam suva// Ibid., 5.82.4

¹⁶⁵ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ cf., hiraṇyahasto asuraḥ sunīthaḥ sumṛlīkaḥ svavāñ yātvarvāñ/ apasedhatrakṣaso yātudhānānasthāddevaḥ pratidoṣaḥ grṇānaḥ// ṚV., 1.35.10

śaṁ no bhavantu vājino haveṣu devatātā mitadravaḥ svarkāḥ/ jambhayanto'him vṛkaṁ rakṣāmsi sanemyasmadyuyavannamīvāḥ// Ibid., 7.38.7

¹⁶⁷ cf., hiraṇyapāṇiḥ savitā vicarṣaṇirubhe dyāvāpṛthivī antarīyate/ apāmīvāṁ bād hate veti sūryamabhi kṛṣṇena rajasā dyāmṛṇoti// Ibid., 1.35.9

¹⁶⁸ cf., deveṣu ca savitarmānuṣeṣu ca tvaṁ no atra suvatādanāgasah// Ibid., 4.54.3

Also vide, Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

Savitṛ, the Bestower of Wisdom and Intelligence

Savitṛ is praised in the *Gāyatrīmantra*. Not only in the Saṁhitās, but in the Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, Upaniṣads and Sūtras also, the application of *Gāyatrīmantra* is mentioned. In the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, in a single verse only the invocation occurs.¹⁶⁹ But, in the other Saṁhitās, the application of it occurs more than once, which signifies that more importance is attached to *Gāyatrīmantra* on later date.¹⁷⁰ The *Gāyatrīmantra* contains the notion that solar light is the symbol of ultimate knowledge and reality.¹⁷¹ Savitṛ is worshipped along with the other gods in the Agnihotra sacrifice,¹⁷² and *aṣṭakapāla* offerings.¹⁷³ He is the divine object of meditation.¹⁷⁴ For wisdom and intelligence the deity is prayed in the Vedas.¹⁷⁵

Mitra:

Mitra, the Friend of the People:

The Sun-god, in his friendly aspect is called Mitra. As the deity is closely associated with Varuṇa, only a single hymn of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* is devoted to the

¹⁶⁹ cf., ṚV., 3.62.10

¹⁷⁰ VS., 3.35; 22.9; TS., 1.5.6.4; 4.1.11.1; ŚB., 2.3.4.39; 13.6.2.9; GB., 1.1.34-36; TA., 1.11.2; Bṛ.U., 6.3.11; Śvet. U., 4.18; Āś.ŚS., 7.6.6; 8.1.18; Āp.GS., 4.10.9-12

¹⁷¹ cf., yaḥ savitā devaḥ naḥ asmākaṁ dhiyaḥ karmāṇi dharmādiviṣayā vā buddhīḥ pracodayāt prerayet tat tasya devasya savitūḥ sarvāntaryāmitayā prerakasya jagatsraṣṭuḥ parameśvarasya vareṇyaṁ sarvaiḥ upāsyatayā jñepatayā ca sambhajanīyaṁ bhargaḥ avidyātatkāryayorbharjanādbhargaḥ svayamjyotiḥ parabrahmātmakaṁ tejaḥ dhīmahi vyaṁ dhyāyāmaḥ/ Sāyaṇācārya on ṚV., 3.62.10

¹⁷² VS., 3.35

¹⁷³ TS., 4.1.11.1

¹⁷⁴ cf., bhagaṁ dhiyaṁ vājayantaḥ puramdhiṁ narāśaṁso grāspatirno avyāḥ/ āye vāmasya saṁgathe rayīṇāṁ priyā devasya savitūḥ syāma// ṚV., 2.38.10

¹⁷⁵ cf., devaṁ naraḥ savitāraṁ viprā yajñaiḥ suvṛktibhiḥ/ namasyanti dhiyeṣitāḥ// Ibid., 3.62.12
yuñjate mana uta yuñjate dhiyo viprā viprasya bṛhato vipaścitaḥ// vi hotrā dadhe vayunāvideka inmahī devasya savitūḥ pariṣṭutīḥ/ Ibid., 5.81.1,2

deity.¹⁷⁶ Mitra is mentioned as the friend of the people in the Vedic mythology: *mitrasya priyatamasya nriṇām*¹⁷⁷ Sāyaṇācārya, in his commentary derives the term as *mitraṁ pramītestrāyakamaharabhimāninaṁ devam/ maitraṁ vā ahaḥ* (TB., 1.7.10.1) *iti śruteḥ*¹⁷⁸ Again, Yāskācārya interprets the term as *mitraḥ pramīteḥ/ trāyate/ samminvāno dravatīti vā/ medayatervā*¹⁷⁹ Mitra is so called because he preserves the whole universe from destruction or because he runs measuring things together. He is worshipped in the Vedas to bring men together: *janam ca mitro yatati bruvāṇaḥ*¹⁸⁰ In his commentary on the respective passage, Sāyaṇācārya states thus: *bruvāṇaḥ asmābhiḥ stūyamānaḥ mitraḥ ca janam sarvaṁ prāṇijātam yatati yātayati pravartayati/ tathā ca śrūyate-mitro janānyātayati bruvāṇaḥ* (RV., 3.59.1)¹⁸¹ He is regarded as the great supporter of the race of the man.¹⁸² Mitra sustains the beings with his rain-giving aspects and thus, he stands as the friend of the people.¹⁸³ He gives food, wealth and happiness to his devotees and protects them being a friend.¹⁸⁴ Besides this, he makes his worshippers free from the sin, distress and diseases.¹⁸⁵ He is invoked as

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 3.59

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 7.62.4

¹⁷⁸ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 1.89.3

¹⁷⁹ Nir., 10.21

¹⁸⁰ RV., 7.36.2; Also vide, Ibid., 3.59.5

¹⁸¹ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 7.36.2

¹⁸² cf., *mitrasya carṣaṇīdhṛto'vo devasya sāsani/ dyumnaṁ citraśravastamam// RV., 3.59.6*

¹⁸³ cf., *bruvāṇaḥ stūyamānaḥ śabdaṁ kurvāṇo vā mitraḥ/ prakarṣeṇa sarvaimīyate jñāyate tathā sarvān vṛṣṭipradānena trāyate iti vā mitraḥ sūryaḥ/ janān karṣakādijanān yātayati/ kṛṣyādikarmasu prayatnaṁ kārayati/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 3.59.1*

¹⁸⁴ cf., *pra sa mitra marto astu prayasvānyasta āditya śikṣati vratena/ na hanyate na jīyate tvoto nainamaṁho aśnotyantito na dūrāt// RV., 3.59.2*

mitrasya carṣaṇīdhṛto'vo devasya mānani/ dyumnaṁ citraśravastamam// Ibid., 3.59.6

¹⁸⁵ cf., *anamīvāsa idyāa madanto mitrajñavo varimannā pṛthivyāḥ/ ādityasya vratamupakṣiyanto vyaṁ mitrasya sumatau syāma// Ibid., 3.59.3*

ugrāniṣṭanivāraṇe'tyantam tīkṣṇau tā tau yuvām no'smānāgasah pāpānmuñcatam muktam kurutam// Sāyaṇācārya on ŚB., 4.7.15.3

manve vām mitrāvarunāvṛtāvṛdhau sacetasau druhvaṇo yau nudethe/ pra satyāvānamavatho bhareṣu tau no muñcatamāṁhasah// AV., 4.29.1

the creator as well as the sustainer.¹⁸⁶ As the deity lightens the entire world with his light, he is well delineated as the king: *mitraḥ sūryaḥ namasyaḥ sarvairnamaskaraṇīyaḥ suśevaḥ śobhanasukhaḥ/ sukhena sevyā ityārthaḥ/ rājā sarvasya jagataḥ prakāśapradānena svāmī sukṣatraḥ/ kṣatraśabdena balamucyate śobhanabalopetaḥ vedhāḥ sarvasya jagato vidhātā*¹⁸⁷ Again, in the *Taittirīyasamhitā*, he is mentioned as the god of concord and agreement: *samayakāmo mitram*¹⁸⁸

Mitra, the Sun-god of the Day:

Mitra is the supporter of the heaven and earth in the Vedas.¹⁸⁹ He is worshipped in the Vedas as the Sun-god of the day.¹⁹⁰ Sāyaṇācārya states in his interpretation of a Ṛgvedic passage: *aharabhimāninaṁ devaṁ mitraṁ vā ahariti śruteḥ*¹⁹¹ Mitra is regarded as the presiding deity of the day. He uncovers the objects in the morning that is covered by Varuṇa in the night.¹⁹²

Mitrāvaruṇau, Presiding Deity of the Day and Night:

Mitra and Varuṇa are worshipped jointly in the Vedas. In the *Taittirīyasamhitā*, Mitra and Varuṇa are invoked as the presiding deity of the day and night: *ahorātre vai mitrāvaruṇo*.¹⁹³ Again in another context, *mitraḥ aharabhimānī devatā varuṇaḥ rātryābhimānī/ maitraṁ vā ahaḥ vāruṇī rātriḥ*¹⁹⁴ The close association of Mitra and Varuṇa as the deity of the day and night are prominently expressed in the Vedic texts.

¹⁸⁶ cf., *ayaṁ mitro namasthaḥ suśevo rājā sukṣatro ajaṇiṣṭa vedhāḥ/ Ibid.*, 3.59.4

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ TS., 2.1.8.4

¹⁸⁹ cf., *mitro dādihāra pṛthivīmuta dyām/ ṚV.*, 3.59.1

abhi yo mahinā divaṁ mitro babhūva saprathāḥ/ abhi śravobhiḥ pṛthivīm/ Ibid., 3.59.7

¹⁹⁰ cf., *maitraṁ vā ahar/ TS.*, 2.1.7.4; *TB.*, 2.1.10.1

¹⁹¹ Sāyaṇācārya on *ṚV.*, 1.89.3

¹⁹² cf., *iṭasya te vi cṛtāmyapinaddhamaporṇavan/ varuṇena samubjitāṁ mitrḥ prātarvyubjatu//AV.*, 9.3.18

¹⁹³ TS., 2.4.10.1

¹⁹⁴ TB., 1.7.10.1

But it is observed, in a Ṛgvedic verse both the deities are invoked and invited after the rising of the Sun.¹⁹⁵ They are worshipped jointly as the leader of the water.¹⁹⁶ They protect the rain water and shower it towards the earth for the welfare of his devotees.¹⁹⁷ They are jointly invoked as the lord of the sea, i.e. *sindhupati*.¹⁹⁸

Pūṣan:

Pūṣan, the Lord of Entire World:

Pūṣan, in his luminous form is well mentioned in the Vedic mythology.¹⁹⁹ His solar character becomes very clear with the use of the epithet, *āghriṇi*,²⁰⁰ i.e. glowing. Pūṣan is mentioned in the Vedas as the lord of prosperity. In the *Nirukta*, it is cited: *atha yadraśmipoṣaṁ puṣyati tatpūṣā bhavati*/²⁰¹ Yāskācārya clearly states that Pūṣan is the preserver of all beings.²⁰² He looks upon all the creatures and protects them.²⁰³ Pūṣan is mentioned in the Vedic texts as the dweller of the heaven.²⁰⁴ He is mentioned as the messenger of the Sun in the aerial ocean and the best charioteer that drives downwards the golden rays (wheels) of the Sun.²⁰⁵ By his rays, Pūṣan indeed preserves

¹⁹⁵ cf., prati vām sūra udite mitraṁ grṇiṣe varuṇam/ aryamaṇam riśādasam// ṚV., 7.66.7

¹⁹⁶ cf., varuṇomitra aryamā yūyamṛtasya rathyāḥ/ Ibid., 7.66.12

¹⁹⁷ cf., ṛtasya gopāvadhī tiṣṭhatho ratham satyadharmānā parame vyomani/ yamatra mitrāvaruṇāvatho yuvaṁ tasmai vṛṣṭirmadhumatpinvate divaḥ// Ibid., 5.63.1

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 7.64.2

¹⁹⁹ cf., śukraṁ te anyadyajataṁ te anyadvīṣurūpe ahanī dyaurivāsi/ viśvā hi māyā/ Ibid., 6.58.1

²⁰⁰ cf., ā pūṣaṅcitrabarhiṣamāghṛṇe dharuṇam divaḥ/ Ibid., 1.23.13

na hi tvā pūṣannatimanya āghṛṇe na te sakhyamapahnuve/ Ibid., 1.138.4

Also vide, Ibid., 6.48.16; 6.53.3,8,9; 6.55.1,3

²⁰¹ Nir., 12.16

²⁰² cf., bhuvanasya gopā ityeṣa hi sarveṣāṁ bhūtānām gopāyitā ādityaḥ/ Ibid., 7.9

²⁰³ cf., yo viśvābhi vipāsyati bhuvanā saṁ ca paśyati/ sa naḥ pūṣāvitā bhuvat// ṚV., 3.62.9

²⁰⁴ cf., divyanyaḥ sadanaṁ cakra uccā pṛthivyāmanyō adhyantarikṣe/ Ibid., 2.40.4

²⁰⁵ cf., utādaḥ paruṣe gavi sūraścakraṁ hiraṇyayam/ nyairayadrathītamaḥ// Ibid., 6.56.3

all. He manifests the entire world with his light.²⁰⁶ He is mentioned as the producer and the protector of the cattle.²⁰⁷ Again, six seasons are stated to be created by him.²⁰⁸ Sāyaṇācārya states thus: *uto api ca saḥ pūṣā mahyaṁ yajamānāya indubhiḥ yāghatubhiḥ somaiḥ yuktān ṣaṭ vasantādīn ṛtūn anuseṣidhat anukrameṇa punaḥ punarnayan vartate iti śeṣaḥ*²⁰⁹ He bestows the wealth.²¹⁰ By such deeds, he stands as the lord not only of the entire firmament and also of the whole world.

Pūṣan, the Pastoral Deity:

Pūṣan is the deity related to the cattle.²¹¹ He is called *paśupā*, the protector of the cattle in the Veda.²¹² He is mentioned as the son of the cloud,²¹³ and the brother of rain, i.e. Indra.²¹⁴ He is mentioned as the associate of Soma, i.e. Somāpūṣaṇā,²¹⁵ Bhaga,²¹⁶ and Viṣṇu.²¹⁷ He is worshipped in the Vedas for bestowing the rain²¹⁸ as well as to move the solar chariot.²¹⁹ The solar rays and the rain are the essential part of the

²⁰⁶ cf., śukraṁ te anyadyajataṁ te anyadvīṣurūpe ahani dyaurivāsi/ viśvā hi māyā asi svadhāvo bhadrā te pūṣanniha rātīrastu// Ibid., 6.58.1

²⁰⁷ cf., pūṣā gā anvetu naḥ pūṣā rakṣatvarvataḥ/ Ibid., 6.54.5
pūṣannanu pra gā ihi yajamānasya sunvataḥ/ Ibid., 6.54.6
Also vide, Ibid., 6.54.10; 56.5; 58.2; TB., 1.7.2.4

²⁰⁸ cf., uto sa mahyamindubhiḥ ṣadyuktān anuseṣidhat/ gobhiryavaṁ na carḥṣat// RV., 1.23.15

²⁰⁹ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

²¹⁰ cf., viśvā hi māyā avasi svadhāvo bhadrā te pūṣanniha rātīrastu/ RV., 6.58.1

²¹¹ Ibid., 6.54.5,6,10; 58.2; TB., 1.7.2.4

²¹² RV., 6.58.2

²¹³ cf., saṁ pūṣannadhvanastira vyaṁho vimuco napāt/ sakṣvā deva pra ṇasparaḥ// Ibid., 1.42.1

²¹⁴ cf., māturdidhiṣumabravaṁ svasurjāraḥ śṛṇotu naḥ/ bhrātendrasya sakhā mama// Ibid., 6.55.5

²¹⁵ Ibid., 2.40

²¹⁶ cf., pūṣā bhago vandyāsaḥ/ Ibid., 1.90.4

²¹⁷ cf., pra pūṣaṇaṁ viṣṇumagnim puraṇdhim savitāramoṣadhīḥ parvatāśca/ Ibid., 6.21.9
indram viṣṇuṁ pūṣaṇaṁ brahmaṇaspatimādityāndyāvāpṛthivī apaḥ svaḥ/ Ibid., 7.44.1

²¹⁸ cf., sa veda suṣtutīnāmindurna pūṣā vṛṣā/ abhi spuraḥ prūṣāyati vrajaṁ na ā prūṣāyati// Ibid., 10.26.4

²¹⁹ cf., utādaḥ paruṣe gavi sūraścakraṁ hiraṇyayam/ nyairadrathītamaḥ//Ibid., 6.56.3

agronomy. The car of Pūṣan is mentioned as drawn by goat, i.e. *ajāśva*, instead of horse.²²⁰ Sāyaṇācārya interpretes the term *ajāśva* thus: *ajāśchāgā evāśvā aśvakāryāpannā yasya tādrśa pūṣan*/²²¹ All the above symbolizes the pastoral character of the deity. Again, the deity takes gruel as his food and so he is called *karambhin* or *karambhāt* in the Vedas.²²²

Pūṣan, the Deity of the Marriage Ceremonial:

Pūṣan is the deity related to the marriage ceremonial. He is mentioned as the husband of Sūryā in the marriage hymn of the *Ṛgveda*.²²³ He is besought to take the bride's hand and lead her away and to bless her in her conjugal relation.²²⁴ He is worshipped for giving the share of maidens to his devotees.²²⁵ He is worshipped in the Vedas as the wooer of his mother, i.e. the Rātrī, *māturdidhiṣum*²²⁶ and the lover of his sister, i.e. Uṣas, *svasūryo jāra*/²²⁷

Pūṣan, the Knower of the Paths:

Pūṣan is regarded as the knower of the path in the Vedas, and so he is invoked to manifest the hidden goods.²²⁸ It is believed that the lost and hidden king Soma has

²²⁰ cf., *rāyo dhārāsyaḡhr̥ṇe vaso rāśirajāśva/ Ibid., 6,55,3*

²²¹ Sāyaṇācārya on *ṚV.*, 6.55.3

²²² cf., *ya enamādideśati karambhāditi pūṣanam/ ṚV.*, 6.56.1

karambhāt karambhāṇām ḡhṛtamiśrāṇām yavasaktūnām attā/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

²²³ cf., *yadaśvinā pṛcchamānāvayātām tricakreṇa vahatuṃ sūryāyāḡ/ viśve devā anu tadvāmajānan putraḡ pitarāvavṛṇīta pūṣā/ ṚV.*, 10.85.14

²²⁴ cf., *pūṣā tveto nayatu hastagr̥hyāśvinā tā pra vhatām rathena/ ḡrhān gaccha ḡrhapatnī yathāso vaśinī tvaṃ vidathamā vadāsi/ Ibid.*, 10.85.26

²²⁵ cf., *avitā no ajāśvaḡ pūṣā yāmaniyāmani/ ā bhakṣatkanyāsu naḡ/ Ibid.*, 9.67.10

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.55.5

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.55.4

²²⁸ cf., *tveṣam śargho na mārutam tuviṣvaṇyanarvāṇam pūṣanam sam yathā śatā/ sam sahasrā kārīṣaccarṣanibhya āñ āvirgūlhā vasū karatsurvedā no vasū karat/ Ibid.*, 6.48.15

been found by the grace of Pūṣan.²²⁹ In the Vedic texts, it is stated that the deity is offered oblation whenever something gets lost: *sampūṣanviduṣā iti naṣṭamadhiḡigamiṣan mūlho vā*²³⁰ Besides this, the verses for Pūṣan are recited when cows are driven to pasture.²³¹

Pūṣan is regarded as the protector or guardian of the paths in the Vedas. He is called *pāthaspatha* in the Vedic mythology.²³² He is invoked to protect from harm on his path: *pūṣantava vrate vyaṃ na riṣyema kadā cana/ stotārasta iha smasi*²³³ He is begged to grant an auspicious path, i.e. *dadātu punaḡ pūṣā pathyām yā svasti*,²³⁴ and worshipped to remove dangers, the wolf and the way-layers from the paths.²³⁵ With the view to protect, Pūṣan follows the cattle.²³⁶ He saves them from injury, brings them home unhurt and drives back the lost to their destinations.²³⁷ He is begged to disperse foes and make the path good enough to lead to good pasture.²³⁸

²²⁹ cf., *pūṣā rājānamāghrṇirapagūlham guhā hitam/ avindaccitrabarhiṣam// Ibid., 1.23.14*
. . . *somasya drapsamavṇṇīta pūṣā/ TS., 3.3.9.1*

²³⁰ *Āś. GS., 3.7.9*

²³¹ cf., *...pūṣā gā anvetu na iti gāḡ pratiṣṭhamānā anumantrayet.../ Śāñ. GS., 3.9.1*

²³² *RV., 6.49.8*

²³³ *Ibid., 6.54.9*

²³⁴ *Ibid., 10.59.7*

²³⁵ cf., *saṃ pūṣannadhvanastira vyaṃho vimuco napāt/ Ibid., 1.42.1*

apa tyaṃ paripanthinaṃ muṣṭivāṇaṃ huraścitam/ dūramadhi sruteraja// Ibid., 1.42.3

²³⁶ cf., *Ibid., 6.54.5,6,10; 58.2*

²³⁷ cf., *mākirṇeśanmākīm riṣanmākīm saṃ śāri kevaṭe/ athāriṣṭābhira gahi// Ibid., 6.54.7*

²³⁸ cf. *ati naḡ saścato naya sugā naḡ supathā kṛṇu/pūṣanniha kratuṃ vidadḡ// abhi sūyavasaṃ naya na navajvāro addhvane/ pūṣanniha kratuṃ vidadḡ// Ibid., 1.42.7,8*

Viṣṇu

Viṣṇu, the Deity with Three Strides:

Viṣṇu is regarded as the solar deity. The Sun-god, representative of the sunbeam is called Viṣṇu in the Vedas. Viṣṇu is the god of wide space.²³⁹ The *Nirukta* states, *atha yad viṣito bhavati tad viṣṇurbhavati/ viṣṇurviśatervā/ vyaśnotervā*,²⁴⁰ i.e. that, which is set free becomes Viṣṇu. The term *viṣṇu* is derived from the root *viś* to pervade or from *vy-aś* to interpenetrate.

Several times in the Vedas, he is mentioned with his three strides.²⁴¹ The strides of Viṣṇu are nothing but the elemental rays, which are also mentioned in connection to Sūrya also.²⁴² These rays give heat and rain and crops, by means of what the whole world sustains. Viṣṇu is described as traversing the earth or terrestrial spaces with his three steps.²⁴³ His two steps are visible to men, but the third or the highest step is mentioned as beyond the flight of birds or mortal ken: *dve idasya kramaṇesvardrśo'bhikhyāya marto bhūraṇyati/ tṛtīyamasya nakirā dadharṣati vayaścana patayantaḥ patatṛiṇaḥ*/²⁴⁴ With the first two strides, Viṣṇu traverses the earth and the firmament. But with the third, he has attained the utmost limit of

²³⁹ cf. *dve indrasya kramaṇe svardrśo'bhikhyāya martyo bhuraṇyati/ tṛtīyamasya nakirā dadharṣati vayaścana patayantaḥ patatṛiṇaḥ*// *Ibid.*, 1.155.5

viṣṇuṁ stomāsaḥ purudasmamarkā bhagasyeva kāriṇo yāmani gman/ urukramaḥ kakuho yasya pūrvīrna madhanti yuvatayo janitrīḥ// *Ibid.*, 3.54.14

²⁴⁰ *Nir.*, 12.18

²⁴¹ cf., *yasya tripūrṇā madhunā padānyakṣīramānā svadhayā madanti/ ya u tridhātu pṛthivīmuta dyāmeko dyādḥāra bhūvanāni viśvā*// *RV.*, 1.154.4

²⁴² cf., *catvāra in bibhrati kṣemayanto daśa garbhaṁ carase dhāpayante/ tridhātavaḥ paramā asya gāvo dirāscaranti pari sadyo antān*// *Ibid.*, 5.47.4

²⁴³ cf., *yaḥ pāṛthivāni tribhiridvigāmabhiruru kramiṣtorugāyāya jīvase*/ *Ibid.*, 1.155.4

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.155.5

magnitude and upheld the vast and beautiful heaven.²⁴⁵ The highest step of Viṣṇu is regarded as his ultimate abode. He is called *giriṣṭhā*, *girikṣit*, etc., which mean dwelling in the highest position.²⁴⁶ Sāyaṇācārya, in his commentary on the respective passages interpret the two terms thus: *giriṣṭhā giristhāyī giriḥ parvataḥ samudgīrṇo bhavati parvavān parvataḥ parva punaḥ pṛṇāteḥ pṛṇātervā iti*, and *girikṣite vāci girivadunnatapradeśe vā tiṣṭhate*/ Viṣṇu, in his heavenly form is conceived as an eye fixed on the heaven.²⁴⁷

According to some scholars, these three steps of Viṣṇu are nothing but the three positions of the Sun in the sky, i.e. the Sun in his rising, in his culminating and in his setting.²⁴⁸ But according to some others like Śākapūni, etc., the three steps represent the course of the solar deity through the three divisions of universe.²⁴⁹ The Brāhmaṇas also mention Viṣṇu with his three strides, i.e. one in earth, one in air and the other in the heaven that is recognized as the Sun, the goal, and the safe refuge of the refugee.²⁵⁰ The myth of Viṣṇu as a dwarf that recovered the earth for the gods from Asuras by three strides is familiar in the Vedic literature.²⁵¹

²⁴⁵ cf., *paro mātrayā tanvā vṛdhāna na te mahitvamanvaśnūvanti/ubhe te vidma rajasī pṛthivyā viṣṇo deva tvaṁ paramasya vitse//na te viṣṇo jāyamāno na jāto deva mahimnaḥ paramantamāpa/ udastabhñā nākamṛṣvaṁ bṛhantaṁ dādhartha prācīm kakubhaṁ pṛthivyāḥ// Ibid., 7.99.1,2*

²⁴⁶ cf., *pra tadviṣṇuḥ stavate vīryeṇa mṛgo na bhīmaḥ kucaro giriṣṭhāḥ/ Ibid., 1.154.2*
pra viṣṇave śūṣametu manma girikṣita urugāyāya vṛṣṇe/ Ibid., 1.154.3

²⁴⁷ cf., *tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ/ divīva cakṣurātataṁ// Ibid., 1.22.20*

²⁴⁸ cf., *idaṁ viṣṇurvi cakrame tredhā ni dadhe padaṁ/ samūlhamasva pāṅsure// yadidaṁ kiṁ ca tadvikramate viṣṇuḥ/ tridhā nidhatte padaṁ/ pṛthivyāmantarikṣe divīti śākapuṇiḥ/ samārohaṇe viṣṇupade gayaśirasītsaurṇavābhaḥ/... Nir., 12.19*

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ ŚB., 1.9.3.9-15; TB., 3.1.2.7

²⁵¹ TS., 2.1.3.1; TB., 1.6.1.5; ŚB., 1.2.5.5

Viṣṇu, the Deity of the Motion:

Besides the three strides, Viṣṇu is mentioned as the deity of motion in the Vedas. The epithets *urugāya*, wide-going,²⁵² *urukrama*, wide-striding,²⁵³ etc., and the forms like *vikramaṇe*,²⁵⁴ *vicakrame*,²⁵⁵ etc., are used for the deity in the Vedas. Viṣṇu is referred to as the variegated stone found in the midst of the heaven that takes strides.²⁵⁶ With light he has fastened the world.²⁵⁷ Setting in motion like a circular wheel, Viṣṇu causes ninety and four periodical revolutions: *caturbhiḥ sākāṁ navatiṁ ca nāmabhiścakraṁ na vṛttaṁ vyatīravīvipat/ bṛhaccharīro vimimāna ṛkvabhīryuvākumāraḥ pratyetāhavam//*²⁵⁸ Here Viṣṇu is defined as identical with the time comprising ninety-four periods including the year, two solstices, five seasons, twelve months, twenty-four half months, thirty days, eight watches, and twelve zodiacal signs. Indeed, Viṣṇu regulates the time with his motion.

Viṣṇu as the Creator:

Viṣṇu is mentioned as the generative force in the Vedas. He is regarded as the protector of the embryos²⁵⁹ and jointly invoked with other deities to promote conception.²⁶⁰ In the Khilasūktas, once he is worshipped for the placement of a male child in the mother's womb and in another, it is prayed for a male child with Viṣṇu's

²⁵² cf., *yo askabhāyaduttaram sadhasthaṁ vicakramāṇastredhorugāyah/ ṚV., 1.154.1*

yaḥ pāṛthivāni tribhiridvigāmabhiruru kramiṣṭorugāyāya jīvase/ Ibid., 1.155.4

²⁵³ cf., *urukramasya sa hi bandhurithā viṣṇoḥ pade parame maddhva utsaḥ/ Ibid., 1.154.5*

²⁵⁴ cf., *yasyoruṣu triṣu vikramaṇeṣvadhikṣiyanti bhuvanāni viśvā// Ibid., 1.154.2*

²⁵⁵ cf., *madhye divo nihitaḥ pṛsniraśmā vi vakrame rajasaspātyantau// Ibid., 5.47.3*

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ cf., *vyastabhñā rodasī viṣṇavete dādhartha pṛthivīrmābhato mayūkhaiḥ// Ibid., 7.99.3*

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 1.155.6

²⁵⁹ cf., ... *etvacchā viṣṇuṁ niṣiktapānavobhiḥ/ Ibid., 7.36.9*

²⁶⁰ cf., *viṣṇuryoniṁ kalpayatu tvaṣṭā rūpāni pīmśatu/ā siñcatu prajāpatirdhātā garbhaṁ dadhātu te// Ibid., 10.184.1*

most beautiful form.²⁶¹ He is cited as the producer of Sūrya, Uṣas and Agni in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*.²⁶²

Viṣṇu is connected with the cosmogonic boar in the Vedas. The *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* mentions the boar having the name Emūṣa, who raised up the earth from the water.²⁶³ The *Taittirīyasamhitā* and the *Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa* hold that the boar is prajāpati here.²⁶⁴

Viṣṇu and the Sacrifice:

Viṣṇu is identified with the sacrifice in the Vedas.²⁶⁵ He is mentioned as the germ of the sacrifice: *tamu stotāraḥ pūrvyaṃ yathā vida ṛtasya garbhaṃ januṣā pipartana*.²⁶⁶ In his interpretation on the respective passage Sāyaṇācārya states thus: *he stotāraḥ tamu tameva viṣṇuṃ pūrvyaṃ pūrvyārham anādisamsiddham ṛtasya garbha yajñasya garbhabhūtaṃ yajñātmanotpannamityarthaḥ*/²⁶⁷ He is worshipped to come to the institutor of the rite and assist the celebration of the sacrifice.²⁶⁸ In the

²⁶¹ Vide, Macdonell, A.A., *Vedic Mythology*, p. 40

²⁶² cf., *urum yajñāya cakrathuru lokam janayantā sūryamuṣāsamagnim/ dāsasya cidvṛṣāsiprasya māyā jaghnathrnarā pṛtanājyeṣu// ṚV., 7.99.4*

²⁶³ ŚB., 14.1.2.11

²⁶⁴ cf., *āpo vā idamagre salilamāsittasminprajāpatirvāyurbhūtvā'caratsa imāmapaśyattām varāho bhūtvā'harattām viśvakarmā bhūtvā... iti so'bravīt/ TS., 7.1.5.1*

... yasminnidamadhiṣṭhatīti/ sa varāho rūpaṃ kṛtvopa nyamajjat/ TB., 1.1.3.6

²⁶⁵ cf., *yajño devebhyo nilāyata viṣṇu rūpaṃ kṛtvā sa pṛthivīm prāviśat.../ TS., 6.2.4.2*

vāmano ha viṣṇurāpta/ taddevā na jihīdire mahadvai no'hurye no yajñasammitamahuriti/ ŚB., 1.2.5.5

²⁶⁶ ṚV., 1.156.3

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ cf., *ā yo vivāya sacathāya daivya indrāya viṣṇuḥ sukṛte sukṛttaraḥ/ vedhā ajinvattṛṣadhastha āryamṛtasya bhāge yajamānamābhajat// Ibid., 1.156.5*

Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, both Viṣṇu and sacrifice are mentioned as identical.²⁶⁹ Lord Viṣṇu had obtained the three regions with his three strides. With the first step, he gained the earth, with the second, the aerial expanse, and with the last step, he gained the sky.²⁷⁰ The sacrifice also possesses the same parvading power, and thus, both of them stand as identical. Again, Viṣṇu is worshipped to bestow heat on the sacrifice.²⁷¹

Vivasvat:

Vivasvat, the Rising Sun:

The term *vivasvat*, derived from *vi+vas*, etymologically gives the meaning shining forth. The shining aspect of the Sun-god is called Vivasvat indeed. Vivasvat is the rising Sun. In the Vedic texts, in connection with Agni and Uṣas, the term *vivasvat* is used,²⁷² which is found in the sense of brilliant. In the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, it is clearly stated that Vivasvat is Āditya and it illumines the day and night.²⁷³

Vivasvat, A Form of the Sun-god:

Vivasvat is mentioned as the ancestor of the human race as well as the deities. In the Vedic texts, the deities are spoken of as the offspring of Vivasvat: *parāvato ye didhiṣanta āpyam manuprītāso janimā vivasvataḥ*²⁷⁴ Particularly, the Aśvins, Yama,

²⁶⁹ cf., *yajño vai viṣṇuḥ*/ ŚB., 1.1.2.13

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ cf., *viṣṇuryunaktu bahudhā tapāmsyasmin yajñe suyujah svāhā*// AV., 5.26.7

²⁷² cf., *vivasvatā cakṣasā dyāmapaśca devā agniṁ dhārayandraviṇodām*/ ṚV., 1.96.2

amūraḥ kaviraditirvivasvāntsusāmsanmitro atithiḥ śivo naḥ/ citrabhānuruṣasām bhātyagre'pām garbhaḥ prasva ā viveśa// Ibid., 7.9.3

²⁷³ cf., *asau vā ādityo vivasvān eṣa hyahorātre vivaste*// ŚB., 10.5.2.4

²⁷⁴ ṚV., 10.63.1

etc., are clearly stated to be born of Vivasvat in the Vedas.²⁷⁵ Again, Agni is said to be produced from his parents, i.e. the fire-sticks and the Vivasvat.²⁷⁶ In the Vedic texts, men are directly stated to be the progeny of Vivasvat Āditya.²⁷⁷

The Ādityas:

Sūrya is called as Āditya in the Vedic texts.²⁷⁸ In the *Nirukta*, Yāskācārya etymologizes the term alternatively as *aditeḥ putram*,²⁷⁹ i.e. the son of Aditi. The Ādityas are the sons of Aditi.²⁸⁰ They are worshipped in a group in the Vedic literature due to their adherence to some common traits. In the *Taittirīyasamhitā*, the episode of begetting the children by Aditi is mentioned.²⁸¹ At first, Aditi had begot four children, and then, again she had got Mārtaṇḍa, and then, the Vivasvat.

Divergent views are found regarding the names and numbers of the Ādityas. They are somewhere mentioned as six,²⁸² viz, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Dakṣa

²⁷⁵ cf., aṅgīrobhirā gahi yajñīyebhīryama vairūpairiḥa mādayasva/ vivasvantaṁ huve yaḥ pitā te'smin yajñe barhiṣyā niṣadya// Ibid., 10.14.5

apāgūhannamṛtāṁ martyebhyaḥ kṛtvī savarṇāmadadurvivasvate/ utāśvināvabharadyattadāsīdajahādu dvā mithunā saraṇyūḥ// Ibid., 10.17.2

²⁷⁶ cf., asaṁmṛṣṭo jāyase mātroh śucirmandraḥ kavirudatiṣṭho vivasvataḥ/ ghr̥tena tvāvardhayannagna āhuta dhūmaste keturabhavaddivi śrītaḥ// Ibid., 5.11.3

²⁷⁷ cf., ...asmākaṁ bhogāya bhavāditi tato vivasvānādityo'jāyata tasya vā iyaṁ prajā yanmanuṣyāstāsveka evardho yo yajate sa devānāṁ bhogāya bhavati devā vai yajñāt/ TS., 6.5.6.2

²⁷⁸ cf., sūryamāditeyam/ RV., 10.88.11

Also vide, Śāṅ GS., 2.3, 3.8.7; GGS., 2.10.27

²⁷⁹ Nir., 2.13

²⁸⁰ cf. aṣṭau putrāso aditerye jātāstanvaspari/ devāṅ upa praitasaptabhiḥ parā mārtaṇḍamāsyat// RV., 10.72.8

²⁸¹ cf., aditīḥ putrakāmā... tasyai catvāra ādityā ajāyanta... vyṛddhamāṇdamajāyata sā'dityebhya eva... vivasvānādityo'jāyata.../ TS.,6.5.6.1,2

²⁸² cf., imā gira ādityebhyo ghr̥tasnūḥ sanādrājabhyo juhvā juhomi/ śṛṇotu mitro aryamā bhago nastuvijāto varuṇo dakṣo amśaḥ// Ibid., 2.27.1

and Amśa; somewhere as seven²⁸³ with the inclusion of Sūrya or somewhere as eight²⁸⁴ with the Mārtaṇḍa as Aditi brought him after presenting the seven to the gods.²⁸⁵ But the list of *Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa* is quite different from that of the *Ṛgveda* where Dhātṛ, Indra and Vivasvat are mentioned as Āditya instead of Dakṣa, Sūrya and Mārtaṇḍa.²⁸⁶ The *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* and some other texts have viewed Ādityas as twelve, identical with the twelve months of the year.²⁸⁷

Some traits are very common among the Ādityas. They are the solar divinities and they are closely connected with the celestial light.²⁸⁸ In luminary form, they are worshipped.²⁸⁹ The Ādityas keep collected the rain in the heaven in the form of cloud so that they shower the rain in the rainy season.²⁹⁰ The *Nirukta* states *ādityaḥ kasmāt/ ādatte rasān/ ādatte bhāsam jyotiṣām/ ādīpto bhāseti vā/ aditeḥ putra iti vā*, i.e. From what (root) is *āditya* derived? He takes the fluids, he takes (i.e. eclipses) the light of the luminaries, or he blazes with lustre, or he is the son of Aditi.²⁹¹ Taking the fluids from the earth, Ādityas again shower it for the growth of the corn or help in the process of

²⁸³ cf., *sapta diśo nānāsūryāḥ sapta hotāra ṛtvijaḥ/ devā ādityā ye sapta tebhiḥ somābhi rakṣa na indrāyendro pari srava// Ibid., 9.114.3*

²⁸⁴ Vide. *Ibid., 10.72.8, AV., 8.9.21; TB., 1.1.9.1*

²⁸⁵ cf., *saptabhiḥ putrairaditirupa praitpūrvaṇi yugam/prajāyai mṛtyave tvatpunarmārtāṇḍamābharat// ṚV., 10.72.9*

²⁸⁶ *TB., 1.1.9.1-3*

²⁸⁷ cf., *vyācam mithunaṁ samabhavatsa dvādaśa drapsāngarbhyabhavatte dvādaśādityā'srjyanta tāndivyupādadhāt/ ŚB., 6.1.2.8*

ādityaevaikaviṁśasyāyatanam dvādaśamāsāḥ.../ PB., 10.1.10 S

²⁸⁸ Vide, *Srivastava, V.C., Sun-worship in Ancient India, p.116*

²⁸⁹ cf., *imaṁ stomaṁ sakravato me adya mitro aryamā varuṇo jupanta/ ādityāsaḥ śucayo dhārapūtā avṛjinā anavadyā ariṣṭāḥ/ ṚV., 2.27.2*

²⁹⁰ cf., *dhārayanta ādityāso jagatsthā devā viśvasya bhuvanasya gopāḥ/ dīrghādhiyo rakṣamāṇā asuryamṛtvānaścayamānā ṛṇāni// Ibid., 2.27.4*

²⁹¹ *Sarup, L., Op cit., p. 29*

generation. The Ādityas are regarded as the upholders of all the moveable and immoveable things and protectors of the universe: *dhārayanta ādityāso jagatsthā devā viśvasya bhuvanasya gopāḥ*²⁹² They are mentioned as *bhūryakṣāḥ* for their nature of beholding the innermost of the people and distinguishing capacity of single and double-minded one.²⁹³ They are the punisher of the sin,²⁹⁴ as well as forgiver too.²⁹⁵ They hate the falsehood.²⁹⁶ They are mentioned as the friends of the noble worshippers like the birds who protect their young, spreading the wings over.²⁹⁷ The Ādityas dismiss the sickness and distress of the devotees.²⁹⁸ Sāyaṇācārya states in the commentary of the relevant passage that the Ādityas remove the illness, enemy, sin, etc., of the devotees: *ādityāḥ amīvām rogam apa sedhata/ asatto'pagamayata/ sridham cāpasedhakam śatruṃ ca apa sedhata/ durmatim asmākam duḥkhasya mantāram ca apa sedhata/ api ca he ādityāsaḥ ādityāḥ naḥ asmān amhasaḥ pāpāt yuyotama pṛthakkruta*²⁹⁹

²⁹² RV., 2.27.4

²⁹³ cf., ta ādityāsa uravo gabhīrā adabdhāso dipsanto bhūryakṣāḥ/ antaḥ paśyanti vṛjinota sādhu sarvaṃ rājabhyaḥ paramā cidanti// Ibid., 2.27.3

pākatrā sthana devā hr̥tsu jānītha martyam/ upa dvayum cādvayum ca vasavaḥ// Ibid., 8.18.15

²⁹⁴ cf., mitrastanno varuṇo māmahanta śarma tokāya tanayāya gopāḥ/mā vo bhujemānyajātamenō mā tatkarma vasavo yaccayaddhve// Ibid., 7.53.2

²⁹⁵ cf., adite mitra varuṇota mṛla yadvo vayan cakṛmā kaścidāgaḥ/urvaśyāmbhayan jyotirindra mā no dīrghā abhi naśantamisrāḥ// Ibid., 2.27.14

pra va eko mimaya bhūryāgo yanmā piteva kitavaṃ śaśāsa/āre pāśā āre aghāni devā mā mādhi putre vimiva grabhīṣṭa// Ibid., 2.29.5

²⁹⁶ cf., ime cetāro anṛtasya bhūrermitro aryamā varuṇo hi santi/ ima ṛtasya vāvṛdhurdurone śagmāsaḥ putrāḥ aditeradabdhāḥ// Ibid., 7.60.5

²⁹⁷ cf., vidā devā ādhānāmādityāso apākṛtim/ paksā vayo yathopari vyasme śarma yacchatānehaso va ūtayaḥ suūtayo va ūtayaḥ// Ibid., 8.47.2

²⁹⁸ cf., apāmīvāmapa sridhamapa sedhata durmatim/ ādityāso yuyotanā no amhasaḥ// Ibid., 8.18.10

²⁹⁹ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

Partial discussion on the salient traits of the solar divinities under the group of Ādityas is given below, which are not discussed earlier:

Mitra:

The different traits of Mitra as a solar divinity are already narrated in the preceding contexts.

Aryaman:

Frequently in the Vedic texts, Aryaman is worshipped along with the other deities. The friendly aspect of Aryaman, referred to in the Vedic texts,³⁰⁰ resembles the Sun-god Mitra. He is worshipped in connection with the marriage ceremony in the Vedic texts.³⁰¹ In the *Tāṇḍyamahābrāhmaṇa*, it is clearly stated that Aryaman takes the *devayāna* path, i.e. the path that lead to the gods: *yamāhuraryamnaḥ panthā ityeṣavāva devayāna panthāḥ*³⁰² Sāyaṇācārya interpretes the respective passage and states it clearly that Aryaman is Āditya, so he takes the path that leads to the region of the gods.³⁰³ The path of Aryaman is ruddy one and that is why the deity also looks redish.³⁰⁴ The red-coloured Sun of the morning sky is called Aryaman in the Vedic mythology.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁰ cf., aryamyam varuṇa mitryam vā sakhāyam vā sadamidbhrātaram vā/veśam vā nityam varuṇāraṇam vā yatsimāgaścakṛmā śisrathastat// ṚV., 5,85.7

vaṣaṭ te pūṣannasminsūtāvaryamā hotā kṛṇotu vedhāḥ/ sisratām nāryataprajātā vi parvāni jihatām sūtavā u// AV., 1.11.1

³⁰¹ cf., tvamaryamā bhavasi yatkanīnām nāma svadhāvanguhyam vibharṣi/ añjanti mitram sudhitam na gobhiryaddampatī samanasā kṛṇoṣi// ṚV., 5.3.2

somajūṣtam brahmajūṣtamaryamṇā sambhṛtam bhagam/ dhātuardevasya satyena kṛṇomi pativedanam// AV., 2.36.2

³⁰² Tāṇḍya B., 25.12.3

³⁰³ cf., yadi aryamnaḥ ādityamūrttibhedasya panthā aryamityāhuḥ/ sa eṣa eva khalu devayānaḥ panthāḥ/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

³⁰⁴ cf., tasmādeṣo'ruṇatama iva diva upadrśe'ruṇatama iva hi panthāḥ/ Tāṇḍya B., 25.12.5

³⁰⁵ cf., devayānamārgasyārcirādityarūpatvātena gatopyaryamā aruṇatamo divi drśyate prātaḥkālīna ādityoryamā so'ruṇatamo bhavati/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

Bhaga:

Bhaga is one of the solar divinities closely connected with Savitr.³⁰⁶ He is worshipped in his aspect of prosperity. Bhaga means wealth. The deity is addressd as Vidhartṛ, i.e. the supporter of all, and worshipped to bestow wealth.³⁰⁷ Yāskācārya in the *Nirukta* states that his time is prior to sunrise.³⁰⁸ In the *Atharvaveda*, he is invoked as the early Sun overpowering Uṣas.³⁰⁹ Bhaga, i.e. fortune approaches the men likewise the Sun that approaches men with his rising: *janam bhago gacchati/ iti vā vijñāyate/ janam gacchatyāditya udayena*³¹⁰

Varuṇa:

Varuṇa, the son of Aditi, mentioned with the shining robe and golden mantle,³¹¹ represents the solar character of the deity. The term *varuṇa* is derived from the root *vr̥*, to cover. Varuṇa seems to represent the luminous encompassing sky.³¹² But Sāyaṇācārya states that Varuṇa is the setting Sun: *astam gacchan sūrya eva varuṇa ityucyate*³¹³ The car of Varuṇa is described as shining like the Sun.³¹⁴ He is called sun-eyed,³¹⁵ thousand-eyed,³¹⁶ farsighted,³¹⁷ etc., in the Vedic texts. As his rays go

³⁰⁶ Vide, Macdonell, A.A., Op cit., p.45

³⁰⁷ cf., prātarjitaṁ bhagamugraṁ huvema vayanṁ putramaditeryo vidhartā/ ādhraścidyam manyamānasturaścīdrājā cidyam bhagam bhakṣītyāha// ṚV., 7.41.2

³⁰⁸ cf., bhago vyākhyātaḥ/ tasya kālaḥ prāgutsarpanāt/ Nir., 12.13

³⁰⁹ cf., samaddhvarāyoṣaso namanta dadhikrāveva śucaye padāya/arvācīnam vasuvidam bhagam me rathamivāśvā vājina ā vahantu// AV., 3.16.6

³¹⁰ Nir., 12.13

³¹¹ cf., bibhradradrāpim hiraṇyayanṁ varuṇo vasta nirṇijam/ pari spaśo ni śedire// ṚV., 1.25.13

³¹² Vide, Keith, A. B., The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads, Part-I, pp. 96-98

³¹³ Sāyaṇācārya on ṚV., 7.87.1

³¹⁴ cf., ratho vām mitrāvaruṇā dīrghāpsāḥ syūmagabhastih sūro nādyout/ ṚV., 1.122.15

³¹⁵ cf., bahavaḥ sūracakṣaso'gnijihvāḥ ṛtāvṛdhaḥ/ Ibid., 7.66.10

³¹⁶ cf., ā caṣṭa āsām pātho nadīnām varuṇa ugraḥ sahasracakṣāḥ/ Ibid., 7.34.10

³¹⁷ cf., kadā kṣatraśriyam naramā varuṇam karāmahe/ mṛlikāyorucakṣasam// Ibid., 1.25.5

everywhere, Varuṇa protects all the beings and abode of all the beings with the rays.³¹⁸ He is mentioned as the lord of order and light in the Vedas.³¹⁹ The omniscient Varuṇa observes the truth and falsehood of the people: *rājā varuṇo yāti madhye satyānrte avapaśyañjanānām*³²⁰ Being the moral governor, he punishes the people according to their deeds.³²¹ It is believed that he binds the sinners with his fetters (*pāśa*).³²² His abode is mentioned as golden that is situated in the heaven.³²³

Dakṣa:

In the Vedic texts, Dakṣa, along with Aditi, is regarded as universal parent³²⁴ that represent the luminous sky. But, again in another context in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, Dakṣa is invoked as the son of Aditi.³²⁵ Aditi gave birth to Dakṣa; and again, Dakṣa gave birth to Aditi. After that, the entire gods take their birth. In his *Nirukta*, Yāskācārya clearing the doubts regarding the birth of these two deities states: *aditirdākṣāyaṇī/... tatkathamupapadyate/ samānajanmānau syātāmiti/ api vā devadharmeṇetaretarajanmānau syātām/ itaretaraprakṛtī*³²⁶ According to it, the two

³¹⁸ cf., yo dhītā manuṣyānām paśavo gāiva rakṣati nabhantāmanyake same/ Ibid., 8.41.1

³¹⁹ cf., ṛtena yāvṛtvāvr̥dhāvṛtasya jyotiṣaspatī/ tā mitrāvaruṇā huve// Ibid., 1.23.5

³²⁰ Ibid., 7.49.3

³²¹ cf., pṛcche tadeno varuṇo didṛkṣūpo emi cikitūṣo vipṛccham/ samānaminme kavayaścidāhurayam ha tubhyam varuṇo hr̥ṇīte// kimāga āsa varuṇa jyeṣṭham yatsrotāram jighāmsasi sakhāyam/pra tanme voco dulabha svadhāvo'va tvānenā namasā tura iyām// Ibid., 7.86.3,4

³²² cf., uduttamam varuṇa pāśamasmadavādhamam vi madhyamam śrathāya/ Ibid., 1.24.15

uduttamam mumugdhi no vi pāśam madhyamam cṛta/ avādhamāni jīvase// Ibid., 1.25.21

³²³ cf., adarśi gātururave varīyāsī panthā ṛtasya samayamsta raśmibhiścakṣurbhagasya raśmibhiḥ/ dyukṣam mitrasya sādnamaryamṇo varuṇasya ca// Ibid., 1.136.2

³²⁴ cf., asacca sacca parame vyomandakṣasya janmannaditerupasthe/ Ibid., 10.5.7

³²⁵ cf., aditerdakṣojāyata dakṣādvaditih pari// aditirhyajaniṣṭa dakṣa yā duhitā tava/ tām devā anvajāyanta bhadra amṛta bandhavaḥ// Ibid., 10.72.4,5

³²⁶ Nir., 11.23

deities might have had the same origin, or in accordance with the nature of gods, they might have been born from each other, or they might have derived their characteristics from each other. The *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* describes him as Prajāpati, the creator.³²⁷ In the beginning of the creation, Prajāpati Dakṣa, being desirous of offspring, sacrificed with the sacrifice, which is called Dākṣāyaṇa sacrifice.

Amśa:

The solar god Amśa has less importance among the Vedic deities. He is almost synonymous with Bhaga which expresses the meaning concrete sense of share, portion and that of apportioner.³²⁸

Sūrya:

The salient traits of Sūrya are already narrated in the preceding pages.

Mārtanḍa :

Mārtanḍa is said as born from a dead egg that was thrown away by Aditi.³²⁹ The birth episode of Mārtanḍa is stated more clearly by Sāyaṇācārya in his interpretation on the respective passage: *atha prajāyāi prāṇināmutpattaye mṛtyave teṣāṃ maraṇāya mārtanḍam mṛtāt vyṛddhādaṇḍājītam mārtanḍanāmānam sūryam punaḥ ābharat āharat*³³⁰ He is regarded as the eighth Āditya.³³¹ Macdonnell, in his *Vedic Mythology*, mentions him as the representative of the setting Sun.³³²

³²⁷ cf., prajāpatirha vā'etenāgre yajñeneje/ prajākāmo bahuḥ prajāyā paśrubhiḥ syā śriyam jñeyam yaśaḥ syāmannādaḥ syāmiti/ ŚB., 2.4.4.2

³²⁸ Vide, Macdonell, A.A., Op cit., p.46

³²⁹ cf., saptabhiḥ putrairaditirupa praitpūrvyam yugam/ prajāyāi mṛtyave tvatpunarmārtanḍamābharat// RV., 10.72.9

³³⁰ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

³³¹ cf., aṣṭamaṃ putram mārtanḍam sūryam/ Ibid., 10.72.8

³³² Vide, Macdonell, A.A., Op cit., p. 44

Some Other Divinities that Come Under the Solar Family:

The Aśvins:

The Aśvins, the twin deities,³³³ occupy a specific place among the deities of light. Sāyaṇācārya, in his interpretation on the respective passage clearly narrates the episode of the Aśvins' birth, according to which the twin deities were born of Vivsvat and Saraṇyū: *uta api ca sāsvarūpiṇī saranyūstadā aśvināvabharat/ svodare garbhabhūtau dhāritavatī/ yat yadā tat jāyāpatibhyāmasvarūpātmanā sambhogakāle retaḥ patitam āsīt tadāśvinau janayāmāsetyarthāḥ*/³³⁴ Yāskācārya, in his *Nirukta* mentions that among the Aśvins, one is the son of night and the other is the son of dawn.³³⁵ They are invoked conjointly, and their time of appearance and functions are identical. As the deities of the morning twilight, they dispel darkness and the evil spirits.³³⁶ The *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* mentions the Aśvins as red white in colour³³⁷ that directs their connection with the morning Sun. The Aśvins are called *rudravartanī*,³³⁸ i.e. red-pathed, *hiraṇyavartanī*, i.e. golden-pathed. The car of the Aśvins is sunlike or golden,³³⁹ having thousand rays³⁴⁰ or ornaments.³⁴¹ It signifies the solar character of the

³³³ cf., *utāśvināvabharadyattadāsīdajahādu dvā mithunā saranyūḥ/ RV., 10.17.2*

³³⁴ Sāyaṇācārya, *Ibid.*

³³⁵ cf., *tayoḥ samānakālayoḥ samānakarmaṇoḥ samstutaprāyayorasamstavenaiṣo'rdharco bhavati/ vāsātyo anyā ucyate/ uṣaḥ putrastvanya iti/ Nir., 12.2*

³³⁶ cf., *vapuṁṣi jātā mithunā sacete tamohanā tapuṣo buddhna etā/ RV., 3.39.3*

brahma jinvatamuta jinvataṁ dhiyo hataṁ rakṣāmsi sedhatamamīvāḥ/ sajoṣasā uṣasā sūryeṇa ca somān sunvato aśvinā// Ibid., 8.35.16

³³⁷ cf., *śyeta āśvino bhavati/ śyetāviva hyaśvināva.../ ŚB., 5.5.4.1*

³³⁸ *RV., 1.3.3*

³³⁹ cf., *hiraṇyayena purubhū rathenemaṁ yajñān nāsatyopa yātam/ Ibid., 4.44.4*

ā nūnaṁ yātamaśvinā rathena sūryatvacā/ bhujī hiraṇyapeśasā kavī gambhīracetasā// Ibid., 8.8.2

³⁴⁰ cf., *ā vā ratham purumāyaṁ manojvaṁ jīrāśvaṁ yajñīyaṁ jīvase huve/ sahasraketuṁ vaninaṁ śatadvasuṁ śruṣṭivānaṁ varivodhāmabhi prayāḥ// Ibid., 1.119.1*

³⁴¹ cf., *ataḥ sahasranirṇijā rathenā yātamaśvinā// Ibid., 8.8.11,14*

deities. The Aśvins are connected with marriage, production and love.³⁴² They are worshipped to bring lovers together. They are regarded as the divine physicians in the Vedic texts.³⁴³

Vena:

Due to the solar nature, Vena is regarded as the solar god in the Vedic literature. The first *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* contains the reference of the deity,³⁴⁴ and in the last *maṇḍala* of the same he is depicted as a full-fledged Sun-god.³⁴⁵ In the *Taittirīyasamhitā*³⁴⁶ and in the *Atharvavedasamhitā*³⁴⁷ also, he is invoked as the Sun-god. In the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, he is more concrete than that of the *Atharvavedasamhitā* and the *Taittirīyasamhitā*. Vena is mentioned as manifested with the eyes of the Sun: *sūryasya cakṣasā tejasā paśyan prakāśamāno venah*³⁴⁸ The solar origin of the deity becomes clear with the words *venaścodayatprśnigarbhā, jyotirjarāyu, sūryasya śiśum*, etc.³⁴⁹ The deity is mentioned as staying in the highest heaven.³⁵⁰ He is identified with the Sun and mentioned as the strong-winged bird in the sky.³⁵¹

³⁴² cf., garbham dhehi sinīvāli garbham dhehi sarasvati/ garbham te asvinau devāvā dhattām puṣkarasrajā// Ibid., 10.184.2

³⁴³ cf., yābhiḥ pakthamavatho yābhiradhriḡum yābhibrabhrum vijoṣasam/ tābhirno makṣū tūyamaśvinā gataṁ bhiṣajyataṁ yadāturam// Ibid., 8.22.10
aśvinau vai devānām bhiṣajau/AB., 1.18

³⁴⁴ cf., yajñairatharvā prathamah prathstate tataḥ sūryo vratapā vena ājani/ ṚV., 1.83.5

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 10.123

³⁴⁶ TS., 4.2.8

³⁴⁷ AV., 2.1

³⁴⁸ Sāyaṇācārya on ṚV., 10.123.8

³⁴⁹ ṚV., 10.123.1

³⁵⁰ cf., apsarā jāramupasiṣmiyāṇā yoṣā bibharti parame vyoman/ caratpriyasya yoniṣu priyah santsīdatpakṣe hiraṇyaye sa venah// Ibid.,10.123.5

³⁵¹ cf., nāke suparnamupa yatpatantaṁ hṛdā venanto abhyacakṣata tvā/ hiraṇyapakṣam varuṇasya dūtaṁ samasya yonau śakunaṁ bhuraṇyum// Ibid.,10.123.6

Vena shines on the summit of the water in the heavens: *samudrādūrmimudiyarti*³⁵² Sāyaṅcārya has stated *sindhūm syandanaśīlam jalasamūham adhi asthuḥ adhitiṣṭhanti*³⁵³ Vena produces rain from the water and with it he nourishes the whole universe: *vr̥ṣṭipradānādinā sarvasya jagataḥ poṣakam*³⁵⁴ His rain-giving aspect is well cited in the Vedic texts.³⁵⁵

Vena is mentioned as the primary cause of the things, the father of the universe and the friend of the cosmic order in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*.³⁵⁶

Rohita:

The term *rohita* that signifies the ‘red one,’ is used as an epithet of the Sun-god in the earlier Vedas.³⁵⁷ He is mentioned as the red horse. Somewhere, Rohita is called as the horse of Agni,³⁵⁸ somewhere as the horse of the gods: *ete vai devāśvāḥ*.³⁵⁹ But in the later Vedas, especially in the *Atharvavedasamhitā*, Rohita achieves the form of independent god.³⁶⁰ At the very outset of the Atharvavedic hymn, dedicated to him, he is mentioned as the deity: *rohitaḥ kaścid devaḥ/ udyana yaḥ sūryastadātmaka iti*

³⁵² Ibid., 10.123.2

³⁵³ Ibid., 10.123.4

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 10.123.6

³⁵⁵ cf., *samudrādūrmimudiyarti veno nabhojāḥ pṛṣṭham haryatasya darśi/ Ibid., 10.123.2*
urdhvo gandharvo adhi nāke asthāpratyañcitrā bibhradasyāyudhāni/ Ibid., 10.123.7

³⁵⁶ cf., *yo naḥ pitā janitā yo vidhātā dhāmani veda bhuvanāni viśvā/ yo devānām nāmadhā eka eva taṁ saṁpraśnam bhuvanā yantyanā// Ibid., 10.82.3*

³⁵⁷ cf., *rohitā lohitavarṇau/ rohita ityagneraśvasya ‘rohito’ gneḥ’ iti darśanāt/ Sāyaṅcārya on ṚV., 1.94.10*
rohitā rohitavarṇāvaśvau/ Ibid., 1.134.3
Also vide, Ibid., 2.10.2; 3.6.6

³⁵⁸ ṚV., 1.94.10

³⁵⁹ TS., 1.7.4.3

³⁶⁰ Vide, Macdonell, A.A., Op.cit., p. 115

*jñeyam*³⁶¹ The rising Sun is called as Rohita. He is mentioned as identical with Sūrya: *itaḥ paśyanti rocanam divi sūryam vipaścitam*³⁶² By means of the horses of Surya, he moves on.³⁶³

Rohita is the generator of the universe.³⁶⁴ He generated the heaven and earth.³⁶⁵ He made firm the heaven and the earth and established the sky.³⁶⁶ He generated all the forms.³⁶⁷ In the *Atharvavedasamhitā*, Rohita is mentioned as the generator of the sacrifice: *rohito yajñasya janitā mukham ca*,³⁶⁸ and, called as the mouth of it. He is mentioned as the great sacrificer.³⁶⁹ Rain befalls as the result of sacrifice performed by him and everything is sustained due to the rain and heat. He stands as the measurer of the day and night.³⁷⁰

The derivation of the term *rohita* goes as *ruho ruroha pruruho ruroha dyāvāpṛthivībhyaṃ ruroheti rohitaḥ*³⁷¹ He is mentioned as *sarvā ruroha ruhaḥ*.³⁷² At the end of the generations, he stood aloft upon the firmament.³⁷³ Rohita illumines the

³⁶¹ AV., 13.1

³⁶² Ibid., 13.1.39

³⁶³ cf., *sūryasyāśvā harayaḥ ketumantaḥ sadā vahantyamṛtāḥ sukham ratham*/ Ibid., 13.1.24

³⁶⁴ cf., *yo rohitob viśvamideṣaḥ jajāna*/ Ibid., 13.1.1

³⁶⁵ cf., *rohito dyāvāpṛthivī jajāna*/ Ibid., 13.1.6

³⁶⁶ cf., *rohito dyāvāpṛthivī adṛmhat tena sva svabhitaṃ tena nākaḥ*/ Ibid., 13.1.7

³⁶⁷ cf., *rohito adhi nāke asthād viśvā rūpāṇi janayan yuvā kaviḥ*/ Ibid., 13.1.11

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 13.1.13

³⁶⁹ cf., *vedim bhūmim kalpayitvā divam kṛtvā dakṣiṇām/ ghraṃsam tadagniṃ kṛtvā cakāra viśvamātmanvad varṣeṇājyena rohitaḥ*// Ibid., 13.1.52

³⁷⁰ cf., *divam ca sūrya pṛthivīm ca devīmahorātre vimimāno yadeṣi*/ Ibid., 13.2.5

³⁷¹ cf., *ruho ruroha rohita ā ruroha*/ Ibid., 13.1.4

³⁷² Ibid., 13.1.26

³⁷³ cf., *urdhvo rohito adhi nāke asthād*/ Ibid., 13.1.11

darkness of the sky with his light.³⁷⁴ He gives his rays towards the earth and the ocean also.³⁷⁵ Thus, moving every corner, he measures out the spaces.

Sun-worship in Theriomorphic, Fetishistic and Symbolic Forms:

Likewise in the anthropomorphic forms, the Sun-god is also worshipped in theriomorphic, fetishistic and symbolic forms; but in support of that no adequate evidences can be found. It becomes clear from the viewpoints of the scholars that Sun-worship was rather prominent in anthropomorphic forms than that of the theriomorphic and others during the Vedic period.³⁷⁶

The Aśvins seem to have appeared in the form of horses,³⁷⁷ while Aja Ekapāt as the goat with one foot.³⁷⁸ The divine force Sūrya has been described as the horse,³⁷⁹ the eagle³⁸⁰ or a particular bird called Suparṇa Garutmat,³⁸¹ and the bull³⁸²

Besides these identifications of the Sun-god, there are various animal fetishes linked to the solar deities.

The Horse:

Frequently in the Vedas, as the symbol of the Sun-god, the horse is used. For example, the sacrificial steed is believed to be fashioned out of the Sun: *sūrādaśvam*

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 13.2.2

³⁷⁵ cf., rohito raśmibhirbhūmim samudramanu saṁ carat/ Ibid., 13.2.40

³⁷⁶ Vide, Keith, A.B., Op cit., Part-I, p. 62

Macdonell, A.A., Op cit., p.148

³⁷⁷ cf., aśvairāśvināvityaurṇavābhaḥ/ Nir., 12.1

³⁷⁸ cf., pāvīravī tanyaturekapādajo divo dhartā sindhurāpaḥ samudriyaḥ/ RV., 10.65.13

³⁷⁹ cf., gandharvo asya raśanāmagr̥bhñātsūrādaśvaṁ vasavo nirataṣṭa/ Ibid., 1.163.2

³⁸⁰ cf., ā sūryo yātu saptāśvaḥ kṣetraṁ yadasyorviyā dīrghayāthe/ raghuḥ śyenaḥ patayadandho acchā yuvā kavirdīdayadgoṣu gacchan// Ibid., 5.45.9

³⁸¹ cf., ukṣā samudro aruṣaḥ suparṇaḥ pūrvasya yonim piturā viveśa/ Ibid., 5.47.3

³⁸² cf., āyaṁ gauḥ pṛṣṇirakramīdasadanmātaraṁ puraḥ/ pitaraṁ ca prayantsvaḥ// Ibid., 10.189.1

vasavo nirtaṣṭa,³⁸³ a white steed is believed to be the leader of the dawn: *śvetam nayantī sudṛṣṭikamaśvam*/³⁸⁴ The close association of the Sun with the horse becomes clear with the use of the term *ketava*, i.e. the seven horses, etc., and others that draw the Sun-god.³⁸⁵ The term *ketava* is interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as *ketavaḥ prajñāpakāḥ sūryāśvāḥ yadvā sūryaraśmayāḥ*/³⁸⁶ The horses of the Sun are directly worshipped in the Vedas.³⁸⁷ As the symbol of the Sun, the horse is employed in different Vedic rituals like Aśvamedha, Ṣoḍaśin, etc.³⁸⁸ At the time of establishment and re-establishment of the fires in the rituals, a horse is employed and that is the symbol of the Sun-god.³⁸⁹ All these indicate the horse's employment as the animal fetish during the Vedic period.

Dadhikrā:

Dadhikrā is one of the divine steeds deified in the Vedic texts.³⁹⁰ The term is used as a synonym of horse in the *Nighaṇṭu*.³⁹¹ He is one of the fetishes of Sūrya. The fetish Dadhikrā is the representative of the swift moving luminary Sūrya that reflects

³⁸³ Ibid., 1.163.2

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 7.77.3

³⁸⁵ cf., *udu tyam jātavedasaṁ devaṁ vahanti ketavaḥ*/ Ibid., 1.50.1

sapta tvā harīto rathe vahanti deva sūrya/ Ibid., 1.50.8

Also vide, Ibid., 1.50.9; 1.115.3

³⁸⁶ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 1.50.1

³⁸⁷ cf., *ā sūryo yātu saptāśvaḥ kṣetraṁ yadasyorviyā dīrghayāthe*/ RV., 5.45.9

ayukta sapta haritaḥ sadhasthādya ī vahanti sūryam ghṛtācīḥ/ Ibid., 7.60.3

Also vide, TS., 5.6.4.1; AV., 13.3.18

³⁸⁸ cf., AB., 8.20

...sūrye ṣoḍaśinaḥ stotramupākarotyetasminvai loka.../ TS., 6.6.11.6

³⁸⁹ Vide, Keith, A.B., Op cit., Part- II, p.316

³⁹⁰ RV., 4.38-40; 7.44

³⁹¹ Nighaṇṭu, 1.14

the warlike aspect, i.e. the swiftness of the Sun.³⁹² Sāyaṇācārya interpretes the term as *dadhadanyam dhārayan krāmatīti dadhikrāḥ/ tametannāmakam devam*³⁹³ The swiftness of the Sun becomes clear with his application as the first steed at the head of the chariot,³⁹⁴ identification with the eagle and the swan.³⁹⁵ His speed is compared to the wind.³⁹⁶

Tārksya :

Tārksya is another divine steed closely associated with Dadhikrā. Indeed, Tārksya is the representative of the Sun-god. He is the son of Tṛkṣa, i.e. Suparṇa Garutmat.³⁹⁷ There are two hymns in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, in where, the deity Tārksya is invoked.³⁹⁸ He is described as the impeller of mighty steeds, vanquisher of the chariots, swift and speeding to battle.³⁹⁹ The epithet *ariṣṭanemi* is associated with the deity.⁴⁰⁰ Sāyaṇācārya, in his interpretation, states the meaning of the term thus: *ariṣṭanemiḥ/ nemiḥ iti āyudhanāma/ ariṣṭo'himsito nemiryasya/ yadvā rathacakrasya dhārā nemiḥ/ yatsambandhino rathasya nemirna himsyate so'riṣṭanemiḥ*⁴⁰¹ Tārksya is invoked to prosper his devotees with uninjured fellies.

³⁹² cf., uta vājinaṃ puruniṣpidhvānaṃ dadhikrāsu dadathurviśvakṛṣṭim/ ṚV., 4.38.2

āśum dadhikrām tamu na ṣṭavāma divasprthivyā uta carkirām/ Ibid.,4. 39.1

³⁹³ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 4.38.2

³⁹⁴ cf., dadhikrāvā prathamō vājyarvāgre rathānām bhavati prajānan/ ṚV., 7.44.4

³⁹⁵ cf., uta smainaṃ vastramathim na tāyumanu krośanti kṣitayo bhareṣu/nicāyamānaṃ jasurim na śyenaṃ śravaścācchā paśumacca yūtham// Ibid., 4.38.5

³⁹⁶ cf., paḍbhirgṛdhyantaṃ medhayum na sūraṃ rathaturam vātamiva dhrajantam/ Ibid., 4.38.3

³⁹⁷ cf., tārksyam tṛkṣaputraṃ suparṇam/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 10.178.1

³⁹⁸ ṚV., 1.89; 10.178

³⁹⁹ cf., tvamū ṣu vājinaṃ devajūtaṃ sahāvānaṃ tarutāraṃ rathānām/ ariṣṭanemim pṛtanājamāmsu svastaye tārksyamihā huvema// Ibid.,10.178.1

⁴⁰⁰ cf., svasti nastārksyo ariṣṭanemiḥ svasti no bṛhaspatirdadhātu// Ibid.,1.89.6

⁴⁰¹ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 1.89.6

Paidva:

Paidva is one of the mythical steeds that had the name, as because, it was related to king Pedu: *paidvah/ pedoḥ sambandhī*⁴⁰² The Aśvins are said to have brought it to king Pedu.⁴⁰³ He is mentioned as white in colour, conqueror of combatants, invincible in war by arrows, seeking heaven worthy of fame, likewise Indra.⁴⁰⁴ He is again mentioned as the dragon-slayer.⁴⁰⁵ Paidva is always used as the symbol of the Sun in the Vedic texts.⁴⁰⁶

Etaśa:

For the horses of the Sun, the term etaśa is used in the Vedic texts.⁴⁰⁷ In singular, the term signifies either the Sun horse,⁴⁰⁸ or the wheel of the Sun.⁴⁰⁹ The bright form of the Sun or the wheel of the Sun is brought by the god Etaśa towards the earth.⁴¹⁰ Etaśa is one of the chief representatives of the Sun that brings light towards the earth.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰² Ibid., 1.116.6

⁴⁰³ cf., *yamaśvinā dadathuḥ śvetamaśvamaghāśvāya śaśvaditsvasti/ tadvā dātraṁ mahi kīrtenyaṁ bhūtpaidvo vājī sadamiddhavyo aryaḥ*// ṚV., 1. 116.6

yuvaṁ cyavānaṁ jaraso'mumuktaṁ ni pedave ūhathurāśumaśvam/ Ibid., 7.71.5

⁴⁰⁴ cf., *yuvaṁ pedave puruvāramaśvinā sprdhām śvetaṁ tarutāraṁ duvasyathaḥ/ śaryairabhidyurṁ pṛtanāsu duṣṭaraṁ carḥṭyamindramiva carṣaṇīśaham*// Ibid., 1.119.10

⁴⁰⁵ cf., *purū varpāmsyaśvinā dadhānā ni pedave ūhathurāśumaśvam/msasrasām vājīnamapratītamahihanaṁ śravasyaṁ tarutram*// Ibid., 1.117.9

⁴⁰⁶ Vide, Keith, A.B., Op cit., Part-I, p. 191

⁴⁰⁷ cf., *sa sūrya prati puro na udgā ebhiḥ stomebhiretaśebhirevaiḥ*/ ṚV. 7.62.2

ahaṁ sūryasya pari yāmyāsubhiḥ praitaśebhirvahamāna ojasā/ Ibid., 10.49.7

⁴⁰⁸ cf., *etaśa iti sūryāśvasyākhyā/ Sāyaṇācārya*, Ibid., 1.121.13

⁴⁰⁹ cf., *etaśaśca rathasya cakram bharat prāvahat*/ Ibid., 1.121.13

⁴¹⁰ cf., *udu tyaddarśataṁ vapurdiva eti pratihvare/ yadīmāśurvahati deva etaśo viśvasmai cakṣase aram*// ṚV., 7.66.14

⁴¹¹ cf., *etaśena tvā sūryo devatām gamayatu*/ TS., 1.6.4.6

The Bull:

The bull is another animal fetish of the Sun-god. In the Vedic mythology, the solar divinities Sūrya, Rohita, etc., have been described as the bull.⁴¹² The description of the bull as a ruler of thirty days clearly points out the solar character. A white bullock is offered as the fee for god Savitṛ, the Sun-god.⁴¹³ Besides these, in many rites the bull is employed as the symbol of the Sun.⁴¹⁴ It represents the procreative potency of the Sun-god.⁴¹⁵

The Goat:

The goat is another symbol of the Sun-god. The pastoral deity Pūṣan is closely associated with the goat,⁴¹⁶ that achieves the divinity in the form of the Aja Ekapāt, the one-footed goat.⁴¹⁷ The Aja Ekapāt is regarded as the Sun-god by Durgācārya in the *Nirukta*. Commenting on the relevant passage, he states, '*aja ekapāt' iti vaktavyam/ sa punarayamādityo nityam 'ajano' gamanaḥ/ 'ekaḥ' ca 'pādo brahmaṇaḥ/ vijñāyate hi 'agniḥ pādo vāyuh pāda ādityaḥ pādo diśaḥ pādaḥ'* (Chā. Upa. 3/18/2)/ '*ekena pādena pātīti vā'/ saevamidaṁ jagadekenāṁśenānupraviśya pāti rakṣati svāṣakāle prāṇātmanā'nnam pacan/ ajanaścetyaja ekapāt/ 'ekena pādena pivatīti vā'*

⁴¹² cf., āyaṁ gauḥ pṛsnirakramīdasadanmātaram purah/ Ibid., 10.189.1

ārohañchukro bṛhatīratandro dve rūpe kṛṇute rocamānaḥ/ citraścikitvān mahiṣo vātamāyā yāvato lokānabhi yadvibhāti// AV., 13.2.42

Also vide, TS., 1.5.3.1; ŚB., 2.1.4.29

⁴¹³ ŚB., 5.3.1.7

⁴¹⁴ AV., 4.38; 5.7; 6.31

⁴¹⁵ Vide, Srivastava, V.C., Op cit., p. 155

⁴¹⁶ Vide, Macdonell, A.A., Op cit., p.35

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p.73

*ekenāmśenodakam sarvasmājjagataḥ pibatyajanaścetyaja ekapāt/ atha 'vā'/ ajano gamaṇaḥ 'eko'sya pāda iti' aja ekapāt*⁴¹⁸

The *Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa* states him as having risen out in the sky pointing out the solar character of the deity.⁴¹⁹

The Bird:

Bird is one of the animal fetishes employed for the Sun-god. Frequently in the Vedic literature, Sūrya is compared to the bird,⁴²⁰ as because of the swiftness of its speed. Though he is mentioned as an eagle, or a swan, or a falcon, etc., in the Vedic literature but a particular bird Suparṇa Garutmat or simply Suparṇa is closely associated with him.⁴²¹ Suparṇa probably was a mythical bird associated with the Viṣṇu. Thus, the birds in general and Suparṇa in particular are employed as the symbol of the Sun-god.

The Wheel:

Wheel is one of the material objects used as the symbol of the Sun that represents both the shape and motion of it.⁴²² In the Vedic literature, the wheel is frequently mentioned.⁴²³ In different Vedic rituals and sacrifices like Vājapeya, etc.,

⁴¹⁸ Durgācārya on Nir.,12.28

⁴¹⁹ cf., ... āntarikṣamaruhadagam dyām/ tam sūryam devamajamekapādam/ proṣṭhapadāso anuyanti sarve/ TB.,3.1.2.8

⁴²⁰ cf., ukṣā samudro aruṣaḥ suparṇaḥ pūrvasya yoniṃ piturā viveṣa/ ṚV., 5.47.3
pataṅgo vācam manasā bibharti tām gandharvo'vadagarbhe antaḥ/ Ibid., 10.177.2

⁴²¹ Macdonell, A.A. Op cit., p. 152

⁴²² Ibid., p.155

⁴²³ cf., muṣāya sūryam kave cakramīśāna ojasā/ ṚV., 1.175.4
tvā yujā ni khidatsūryasyendraścakram sahasā sadya indo/ Ibid., 4.28.2
Also vide, Ibid., 4.30.4; 5.29.10; AV., 13.3.18

wheel is employed as the Sun symbol.⁴²⁴ The god Viṣṇu, who is none other than the Sun-god is identified with the wheel.⁴²⁵

The Golden Disc:

The golden disc or a disc or plate of gold is employed as the Sun symbol in the Vedic rituals.⁴²⁶ The term *rukma* is used for the Sun in the Vedic texts.⁴²⁷ The term *rukma* is interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as bright⁴²⁸ and thus the Sun-god is regarded as the ornament of the sky. Due to the shining nature and round shape of the gold disc or plate, it may be regarded as the symbol of the god of light, i.e. Sūrya.

The Lotus:

The Lotus is one of the fetishes that is employed to symbolize the Sun-god. This symbol is used in the Vedic rituals to show the fertility aspect of the deity. In different rituals, a Lotus leaf is placed in the first layer in the centre as the symbol of the Sun-god.⁴²⁹ The Lotus wreath with the twelve flowers⁴³⁰ may signify the twelve months of the year. The association of Lotus and the Sun is well mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*.

⁴²⁴ Keith, A.B., Op cit., Part-I, p. 67; Part-II, p, 340

⁴²⁵ cf., caturbhiḥ sākam navatiṁ ca nāmabhiścakram na vṛttauṁ vyaṭiravīvipat/ bṛhaccharīro vimimāna ṛkka bhiryuvākumāraḥ pratyetyāhavam// ṚV.,1.155.6

⁴²⁶ cf., brahma jajñānam prathamam purastādvī śrīmattaḥ suruco vena āva/ VS., 13.3

Also vide, TS., 4.2.8; AB., 7.12; PB. 18.9.9; ŚB. 3.5.1.20; 3.9.2.9; 5.2.1.21; 5.4.1.13; 7.4.1.10; 12.4.4.6; Āp.ŚS. 16.22.3; Kāt.ŚS.17.74

⁴²⁷ cf., divo rukma urucakṣā udeti/ ṚV., 7.63.4

⁴²⁸ cf., ayaṁ sūryaḥ rukmaḥ rocamānaḥ.../ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid., 7.63.4

⁴²⁹ cf., apām pṛṣṭhamasi yoniragneḥ samudramabhitaḥ pinvamānam/ vardhamāno mahān ā ca puṣkare divo mātrayā varimṇā prathasva/ VS.13.2

⁴³⁰ PB.,18.9.6-8

Sun-god and the Image-Worship:

Though the image worship was not prominent in the Vedic period, yet it is evident to think that it was prevalent in ancient India. For example, the citation about the hands, limbs, mouth, etc., of different divinities carries out the mind of the people towards the image worship. Again, in the Agnicayana sacrifice a gold man⁴³¹ is placed along with the gold plate and the Lotus leaf. This gold man as the representative of the Sun-god is a very prominent concept of the Upaniṣads: *ya eṣo'ntarāditye hiraṇyamayaḥ puruṣo drśyate*⁴³² The concept of the Sun-god as the supreme power is well established in the Ṛgvedic period and in the *Hiraṇyagarbhasūkta* he is mentioned as the creator.⁴³³ The Lotus leaf represents the generative aspect of the Sun-god and the gold plate represents the solar orb that upholds the whole universe. The gold man of the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* represents the man in the solar orb.⁴³⁴ The text also directs the way how to make the image of the gold man.⁴³⁵ All these, presupposes the conception of the image worship of the Sun-god in the Vedic period.

Different Rituals and the Sun-Worship:

The worship of the Sun-god under different names and forms occupy a specific place in almost all the rituals of the Vedic period. Due to its importance, the deity was worshipped in many rituals. Observing the movement of the Sun, marriage and different ceremonies are performed.

⁴³¹ cf., *hiraṇyagarbhaḥ samavartatāgre bhūtasya jātaḥ patireka āsīt/ VS.*, 13.4

Also vide, *Āp.ŚS.*, 16.22.3; *Kāt.ŚS.*17.75

⁴³² *Chā. U.*, 1.6.6

⁴³³ *ṚV.*, 10.121.6

⁴³⁴ *Sāyaṇācārya* on *ŚB.*, 7.4.1.17

⁴³⁵ *ŚB.*, 7.4.1.15

The Marriage Ceremony:

Marriage, i.e., the vivāha is the ceremony that is regarded as the pivot of all the household ceremonies. The householder enters into the Gārhashtyāśrama by holding the hands of the wife through the marriage ceremony. The procreation of progeny and the attainment of spiritual merit through mutual co-operation were regarded as the chief purposes of Āryan marriages.⁴³⁶

The appropriate time for seizing the hands of a girl by the householder is prescribed in the Gṛhyasūtras. The *Śāṅkhyāyanagrhyasūtra* states that during the northern course of the Sun, in the time of increasing moon, on an auspicious day, the householder shall seize the hand of a girl.⁴³⁷ The same is noted in the *Pāraskaragrhyasūtra* also.⁴³⁸ This time is also preferable for the tonsure, initiation, etc.⁴³⁹ The *Āśvalāyanagrhyasūtra* states thus: *udagayana āpūryamāṇapakṣe kalyāṇe nakṣatre colakarmopanayanagodāna vivāhāḥ*⁴⁴⁰

In the marriage ceremony, Aryaman, a form of the solar god, regarded as the guardian of the unmarried girls, is prayed to release the bride and give her to the bridegroom.⁴⁴¹ Pūṣan is prayed to lead the bride to the groom: *sā naḥ pūṣā śivatamāairaya sā na ūrū uśatī vihara/ yasyāmuśanta praharāma śepam yasyāmu*

⁴³⁶ cf., Ram Gopal, India of Vedic Kalpasūtras, p. 204

⁴³⁷ Śāṅ GS., 1.5.5

⁴³⁸ cf., udagayana āpūryamāṇapakṣe puṇyāhe kumāryāḥ pāṇim gṛhṇīyāt// PGS., 1.4.5

⁴³⁹ Āś.GS., 1.4.1

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ cf., aryamaṇam na devam kanyā agnimayakṣata/ sa imām devo'ryamā preto muñcātu nāmutaḥ svāhā/ Ibid., 1.7.13

tāñjuhota sarṭhahatenea tiṣṭhatī aryamaṇam devam kanyā"agnimayakṣata/ sano aryamā devaḥ preto muñcātu mā pateḥ svāhā// PGS.1.6.2

*kāmā bahavo nivīṣṭyā iti*⁴⁴² By the *Abhyātāna* formula, Indra, Yama, Mitra, Savitṛ, Sūrya, Viṣṇu are worshipped for the protection of the bride and the bridegroom.⁴⁴³ The *Abhyātāna* is one kind of special oblations. At wedding, the fried grains are poured at the joined hands of the bride by bride's brother: *vadhvañjalāvupastūrya bhrātā bhrātṛsthāno vā dvirlājānāvapati*⁴⁴⁴ After that, the bride makes sacrifices towards the god Aryaman, Varuṇa, Pūṣan, Bhaga, etc.⁴⁴⁵ Both the bride and bridegroom revolve round the fire for seven times with the mantras, those sacred to Viṣṇu.⁴⁴⁶ Again, before going to the house of the bridegroom, the relatives of bride's family make the girl sit down behind the fire, where the bridegroom offers *Ājya* oblation to Agni, to Soma, to Prajāpati, to Mitra, to Varuṇa, to Indra, to Indrānī, to the Gandharvas, to Bhaga, to Pūṣan, to Tvaṣṭṛ, to Bṛhaspati, wishing happy married life to the newly married couple.⁴⁴⁷ The husband tries to appease his wife with god Sūrya. At the time of

⁴⁴² PGS., 1.4.16

Also vide, *tām naḥ pūṣaṅchivatamāmerayasva yasyām bījaṁ manuṣyā vapanti yā na ūrū usatī visrayātai yasyāmuśantaḥ praharema śepam/* HGS., 1.6.20.2

⁴⁴³ cf., *agnirbhūtānāmadhipatiḥ samāvativindro jyeṣṭhānām yamaḥ pṛthivyā vāyurantarikṣasya sūryo divāścandramā nakṣatrāṇām bṛhaspatirbrahmaṇo mitraḥ satyānām varuṇo'pām samudraḥ srotyānāmannarthasāmṛjyānāmadhipati tanmāvatu soma oṣadhīnāmsavitā prasavānām rudraḥ paśunām tvaṣṭā rūpānām viṣṇuḥ parvatānām maruto gaṇānāmadhipatayaste māvantu pitarah pitāmahāḥ parevare tatāstatāmahāḥ/...* PGS., 1.5.10

⁴⁴⁴ Āś.GS., 1.7.8

⁴⁴⁵ cf., *aryamaṇam nu devaṁ kanyā agnimayakṣata... varuṇam nu devaṁ kanyā agnimayakṣata... pūṣaṇam nu devaṁ kanyā agnimayakṣata/ sa imām devaḥ pūṣā preto muñcātu nāmutaḥ svāhetyavicchindatyāñjalim sruceva juhuyāt/* Āś.GS., 1.7.8

... *avicchindatyāñjalimiyam nāryyupabrūte'ryamaṇam nu devapūṣaṇamityuttarayorhute patiryathetaṁ parivrajya pradakṣiṇamagnimpariṇayati.../* GGS., 2.2.6-10

⁴⁴⁶ cf., *ekamiṣe viṣṇustvānvetu/ dve ūrje viṣṇustvānvetu/ trīṇi vratāya viṣṇustvānvetu/ catvāri māyobhavāya viṣṇustvānvetu/ pañca paśubhyo viṣṇustvānvetu/ ṣaḍrāyaspoṣāya viṣṇustvānvetu/ sapta saptabhyo hotrābhyo viṣṇustvānvetu/ iti/* HGS., 1.5.21.1

⁴⁴⁷ Sāñ.GS., 1.11.4

mounting on the chariot for the journey to the new home, the solar deity Pūṣan is worshipped, due to the prosperous aspect of him.⁴⁴⁸ The *Hiranyakeśigṛhyasūtra* refers that the first one oblation of all the morning oblations, given by the bridegroom in the morning period for three days after marriage is devoted only to Sūrya.⁴⁴⁹ On the fourth day, towards the morning, the husband offers oblations of cooked food towards Sūrya, along with other divinities like Agni, Vāyu, etc., for expiation.⁴⁵⁰ He worships the deities to drive away all the evils from his wife. He desires protection from the substance that dwells in the bride which may bring death to her husband, causes sonlessness to her, destruction of the cattle, etc.⁴⁵¹ Viṣṇu is worshipped to make ready the womb of the bride for conception.⁴⁵²

The Rites Related to the Childbirth:

According to the *Sāṅkhyāyanagrhyasūtra*, it is believed that, the deity Savitr has shaped the male child in the womb of the mother.⁴⁵³ But, in the *Hiranyakeśigṛhyasūtra*, Tvaṣṭṛ is invoked to give the shape of the child: ... *tvaṣṭā*

⁴⁴⁸ cf., prayāṇa upapadyamāne “pūṣā tveto nayatu hastagrhya” iti yānamārohayet/ Āś.GS., 1.8.1

⁴⁴⁹ cf., nityaṁ sāyaṁ prātarvrīhibhiryavairvā hastenaite āhutī juhoti/ agnaye svāhā/ prajāpataye svāhā/ iti/ saurīm pūrvām prātareke samāmananti// HGS., 1.7.23.9

⁴⁵⁰ cf., agnimupasamādhāya prāyaścittājyāhutīrjuhotyagne prāyaścitta iti caturagneḥ sthāne vāyucandrasūryāḥ samasya pañcamīm bahuvadūdyāhuterāhuteḥ sruvasampātamudapātre’vanayettanaināmsakeśanakhāmabhyajya hāsayitvā plāvayanti// GGS., 2.5.2-6 agne prāyaścitte tvaṁ devānām prāyaścittirasi brāhmaṇastvā nāthakāma upadhāvāmi yā’syai patighnī tanūstāmasyai nāśaya svāhā/ vāyo prāyaścitte tvaṁ devānām... sūryaprāyaścitte... PGS., 1.11.2

Also vide, HGS., 1.7.24.1; Sāṅ.GS.1.18.2

⁴⁵¹ Sāṅ.GS., 1.18.3

⁴⁵² cf., dakṣiṇena pāṇinopasthamabhimṛśedviṣṇuryoniṁ kalpayatvityetarccāgarbhandhehisinīvāli/ GGS, 2.5.9

viṣṇuryoniṁ kalpayatu ...// HGS., 1.7.25.1

Also vide, KGS., 1.4.15;

⁴⁵³ Sāṅ.GS., 1.19.6

*rūpāṇi pīm̐satu...*⁴⁵⁴ In the beginning of the third month of the pregnancy, the Pūṁsavana ceremony is performed with a view to securing son: *tr̥t̥iyasya garbhamāsasyādisadeśe pūṁsavanasya kālah*⁴⁵⁵ Mitra and Varuṇa are worshipped for a male child.⁴⁵⁶ Again, in Sīmantonayana ceremony, Dhātṛ, the creator, who disposes offspring and wealth, is worshipped to give further life, son and safety, along with Varuṇa.⁴⁵⁷

After the birth of a child, the Jātakarman ritual is performed, in which Savitṛ is worshipped for the long life of the son.⁴⁵⁸ On the twelfth day, after the birth of the child or in the third or fourth month, the Niṣkramaṇasaṁskāra is performed.⁴⁵⁹ On that specific day, the child is first taken out of the house and the father makes the child look at the Sun with the utterance of the *mantra: taccakṣurdevahitaṁ*, etc.⁴⁶⁰ The ceremony of showing of the Sun to the child is called Ādityadarśana. The *Mānavagṛhyasūtra*

⁴⁵⁴ HGS., 1.7.25.1

⁴⁵⁵ GGS., 2.6.1

⁴⁵⁶ cf., ...patiravasthāya dakṣiṇena pāṇinā dakṣiṇamaṁsamanvavamṛṣyānantarhitaṁ nābhideśamabhimṛṣetpimāṁsau mitrāvaruṇāvityetayarccātha yathārtham// Ibid., 2.6.2-4

⁴⁵⁷ cf., jātarūpeṇa vādāya kumārasya mukhe juhōti medhām te mitrāvaruṇāvityetayarcā sadasampatimadbhutamiti ca/ Ibid., 1.7.21

prathamagarbhāyāścaturthe māsyāpūryamāṇapakṣe purāye nakṣatregnimupasādhāya vyāhṛtiparyantaṁ kṛtvā dhātā dadātu no rayim/ HGS., 2.1.1.2

⁴⁵⁸ cf., kumāraṁ jātaṁ purā'nyairālabhātsarpirmadhunī hiraṇyanikāṣaṁ hiraṇyena prāśayet/ “ pr ate dadāmi madhuno ghṛtasya vedaṁ savitrā prasūtaṁ maghonām āyusmāngupto devatābhiḥ śataṁ jīva śarado loke asmin” iti// Āś.GS., 1.15.1

⁴⁵⁹ cf., caturthe māsi niṣkrmaṇikā// sūryamudīkṣayati taccakṣuriti// PGS., 1.17.5.6

jananājjayotsne tr̥t̥īye tr̥t̥īyāyām prātaḥ snāpya kumāramastamite śāntāsu dikṣu pitā candramasamupatiṣṭhet prāñjaliḥ/ KGS., 2.3.1

⁴⁶⁰ cf., taccakṣurdevahitaṁ purastācchukramuccarat/ paśyema śaradaḥ śataṁ jīvema śaradaḥ śataṁ śṛṇuyāma śaradaḥ śataṁ prabravāma śaradaḥ śatamadīnāḥ syāma śaradaḥ śataṁ bhūyaśca śaradaḥ śatāt// VS., 36.24

directs that, in it, a *sthālīpāka* is prepared and sacrificed to the Sun.⁴⁶¹ With a *mantra*, the father shows the Sun to the son: *udutyam jātavedasamityetayopasthāyādityābhimukham darśayet namaste astu bhagavanśataraśme tamonuda jahi me deva daurbhāgyam saubhāgyena mām samyojayasva iti*⁴⁶² In the sixth month, after the childbirth, the Annaprāśana ceremony is performed.⁴⁶³ This is the ceremony of feeding the child for the first time. In the Annaprāśana, at the time of feeding the child, Varuṇa, Aditi, etc., are worshipped with oblation wishing the protection of the child.⁴⁶⁴ After one year or three year, the tonsure ceremony of the child is performed.⁴⁶⁵ In this, the razor is worshipped before cutting the hair.⁴⁶⁶ The adhering *mantra* of this ritual explains that the razor used for the purpose is the razor, used by the solar deities, Savitṛ, Dhātṛ and Bṛhaspati for cutting the hair of Varuṇa and Indra respectively.⁴⁶⁷ All they are the solar divinities and connected with the Cuḍākaraṇa ritual of an individual.

The Initiation Ceremony:

In the Upanayana or the initiation, mainly the deity Savitṛ is worshipped. With the initiation, the child steps into the new life of a student, where his object is to acquire

⁴⁶¹ cf., caturthe māsi payasi sthālīpākaṁ śrapayitvā tasya juhoti/ ādityaḥ śukra udagātpurastāddhamśaḥ śuciśadyadedenamiti sūryasya juhoti/ Mān. GS., 1.19.2,3

⁴⁶² Mān.GS., 1.19.4

⁴⁶³ cf., ṣaṣṭhe māse'nnaprāśanam/ PGS., 1.19.1

⁴⁶⁴ Sān.GS., 1.27.7

⁴⁶⁵ cf., tṛtīye varṣe cūḍākarma/ HGS.,2.1.6.1
tṛtīye varṣe caulam/ KGS., 2.3.16

⁴⁶⁶ cf., svadhite mainam himsīḥ / iti kṣureṇābhinidadhāti/ Ibid., 2.1.6.8

⁴⁶⁷ cf., yenāvapatsavitā kṣureṇa somasya rājño varuṇasya keśān tena brāhmaṇo vapatvāyūṣmānayaṁ jaradaṣṭirastu yena pūṣā bṛhaspaterindrasya cāyūṣe'vapat tena te vapāmyāyūṣe dīrghāyutvāya jīvase.../ Mān.GS., 1.21.6

more knowledge, health, strength, celibacy and etiquette. Invoking the solar deities Savitṛ, Pūṣan, the Aśvins, etc., the teacher takes the responsibility of the students. He recites the *mantra: tatsaviturvṛṇīmahe*, i.e. that we choose of Savitṛ, in devotion of the deity, filling his own palms and those of the pupil with water.⁴⁶⁸ Then from the hollow of his hands, he makes the water flow down on the palm of the hands of the pupil. Then having poured the water over his hands, he, with his own hand takes hold of the pupil's hand together with the utterance of the *mantra: devasya tvā savituh prasave'svinorbāhubhyām pūṣṇo hastābhyām hastam grhṇāmyasau iti tasya pāṇinā pāṇim saṅguṣṭham grhṇīyāta*⁴⁶⁹ The teacher takes the responsibility of the student by the impulse of the god Savitṛ, with the arms of the two Aśvins and with the hands of Pūṣan.⁴⁷⁰ The student is asked to look at the Sun and the teacher murmurs few words in invocation of Savitṛ. He worships the deity for the protection of the student.⁴⁷¹ From that time, the teacher is regarded as the father of the *brahmacārin*. The teacher is called Ācārya as because he gives the knowledge of *dharma* to the *brahmacārin*: *yasmāddharmānācinoti sa ācāryaḥ*//⁴⁷² With a formula 'Move in the Sun's course' he makes his turn round from left to right.⁴⁷³ Sūrya, along with the deities Agni and Indra, is invoked to bestow insight, offspring and splendour on the *brahmacārin*.⁴⁷⁴ Bhaga,

⁴⁶⁸ Āś.GS., 1.20.4

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.; GGS., 2.10.26

⁴⁷⁰ Āś.GS., 1.20.4

⁴⁷¹ cf., ādityamīkṣayet/ deva savitareṣa te brahmacārī taṁ gopāya sa māmṛtetyācāryaḥ// Ibid., 1.20.6

⁴⁷² Āp.DS., 1.1.1.14

⁴⁷³ cf., utsṛjyāpo devasya ta iti dakṣiṇottarābhyām hastābhyāmañjaliṁ grhṇīyādācāryaḥ// sūryasyeti' pradakṣiṇamāvartayet// KGS., 2.4.13,14

Also vide, Śān.GS., 1.3.2

⁴⁷⁴ cf., ... mayi medhām mayi prajāṁ mayi sūryo bhrājo dadhātu yatte agne tejastenāha tejasvī bhūāsam...//Āś.GS.,1.21.4

Pūṣan, Aryaman, Mitra, etc., are also worshipped for long life, blessed offspring, strength, insight, etc., on the *brahmacārin*.⁴⁷⁵ Both the teacher and the pupil recite Sāvitrī after that.⁴⁷⁶ After one year of the studentship the teacher teaches the Savitr to the student.⁴⁷⁷ First of all, it is recited foot-wise, then hemistich-wise and last of all in full.⁴⁷⁸ The teacher advises the student to recite the *Gāyatrīmantra*, step by step, so that he becomes aware of his duties and performs them with an utter devotion so that the god may bestow intellectual strength on him and he would be self-confident. The Vedic study is opened by the *Sāvitrī*.⁴⁷⁹ With the rising of the Sun, it starts with,⁴⁸⁰ and, at the ending of the studentship the Sun-god is also worshipped.⁴⁸¹

Among different vratas, the Ādityavrata is one that the *brahmacārin* has to follow during his study in the preceptor's house.⁴⁸² The other vratas are Godānikābda, Araṇyasamhitā, Jyeṣṭhasāmikā.⁴⁸³ They, who undergo the Ādityavrata wear one garment; they allow nothing to be between themselves and the Sun, except trees and

⁴⁷⁵ cf., athainam paridadāti/ parīmamindra brahmaṇe mahe śrotrāya dadhmasi/ athainam jarimā ṇajjayokśrotre adhijāgarat/ iti brāhmaṇam/ parīmamindra brahmaṇe mahe rāṣṭrāya dadhmasi/ athainam...// HGS, 1.1.4.8

medhām me devaḥ savitā ādadhātu medhām me devī sarasvatī ādadhātu medhāmasvinau devāvādhattām puṣkarasrajāviti/ PGS, 2.4.8

Also vide, Sāh.GS., 2.3.1

⁴⁷⁶ cf., ... ityupasthāya jānvācyopasaṅgrhya brūyādadhīhi bhoḥ sāvitrīm bho anubrūhīti// tasya vāsasā pāṇibhyām ca pāṇī saṅgrhya sāvitrīmanvāhab paccho'rdharcarṣaḥ sarvām/ Āś.GS., 1.21.4,5

⁴⁷⁷ Sāh.GS., 2.5.12

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.5.10-12

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 2.5.1

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 2.9.10

⁴⁸¹ cf., vedarthaṁ samāpya snāyāt...uduttamamiti mekhalāmunmucya daṇḍam nidhāya vāso'nyatparidhāyādityamupatiṣṭhate// PGS., 2.6.1,15

⁴⁸² cf., teṣusāyamprātarudakomasparśanamādityavratantunacarantyeke/ GGS., 3.1.30

⁴⁸³ cf., godānavratikādityavrataupaniṣadajyeṣṭhasāmikāssamvatsarāḥ/ KGS., 2.5.17; GGS., 3.1.28

roofs of the houses: *ye carantyekavāsaso bhavantyādityañjanāntardadhate'nyatra vṛkṣaśaraṇābhyām nāpo'bhyavayan-tyūdardhvaṃ jānubhyāmaguruprayuktāḥ*⁴⁸⁴ Satyavrata Sāmaśramī states in the commentary of the relevant passage thus: *ye tu caranti careyuḥ, te ekavāsasaḥ uttarīyahīnāḥ bhavanti bhaveyuḥ tāvatkālamiti teṣāṃ prati prathamopadeśaḥ/ ca punaḥ' vṛkṣaśaraṇābhyām anyatra 'ādityaṃ na antardadhe' vṛkṣacchāyām gr̥he ca bhavatyevādityāntardhānaṃ tato'nyatra ādityāntardhānāya chatrādikaṃ na vyavahareyuriti dviṭīyaḥ*⁴⁸⁵ Most probably the sunbath-therapy of present day is similar, in some points of view, to this *vrata*; though it has no direct connection with the Vedic studies and fasts, etc. It is used as the remedy for curing some diseases, and regarded as the great sources of Vitamin D, for the entire body. Again, the students have to perform the Vaiśvadeva sacrifice, in which the oblation is made on the name of solar deity Viṣṇu. The other divinities Indra, Yama, Varuṇa, Āditya, Pūṣan, Dhātṛ, etc., are worshipped there. In this sacrifice, Sūrya is worshipped in his luminary form, i.e., in the form of a disc of the Sun.⁴⁸⁶

Again, Savitr, Mitra, Varuṇa and Pūṣan are worshipped to protect the worshipper's house and the *brahmacārin* also during his living in the house of teacher or at the time of setting out for a journey.⁴⁸⁷ In the Upākarma ceremony, i.e. the ceremony by which, the annual course of study is opened, in the Utsarjana, Samāvartana, etc., also the solar divinities Savitr, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, etc., are worshipped for the protection and fulfilment of all the needs.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ GGS., 3.1.31; KGS., 2.5.18; Sān.GS., 2.11

⁴⁸⁵ Satyavrata Sāmaśramī on GGS., 3.1.31

⁴⁸⁶ Sān.GS, 2.14.7,8

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 2.18.3

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 4.5.12; 4.6.4; 4.9.3

After returning from preceptor's house the *snātaka* is served by *arghya* reception in his home. According to the *Pāraskaragr̥hyasūtra*, *arghya* reception is due to six persons, viz., to a teacher, to an officiating priest, to the father-in-law, to the king, to a friend and to a *snātaka*.⁴⁸⁹ Here, the guest is worshipped giving the position of the Sun-god: *varṣmo'smi samānānamudyatāmiva sūryaḥ*⁴⁹⁰ Having the seat, the guest himself declares that he is the highest one among the people, as the Sun among the thunderbolts, etc.⁴⁹¹ The guest is served vividly with different mantras sacred to Mitra, Savitr̥, etc., in the *arghya* reception.⁴⁹²

Other Rites:

It is observed that in a number of *Gr̥hya* rites, the Sun-god is worshipped. The time of the Vedic *Śrauta* rituals are generally determined by the rising and setting of the Sun: *prāgastamayodayābhyām prāduṣkr̥tya// astamite homaḥ//udite cānudite vā*⁴⁹³ For different activities, connected with the rituals, time is uttered mostly by saying sunset or sunrise.⁴⁹⁴ The time for cooking of *brahmaudana* for the *anupravacanīya* sacrifice is determined as after the sunset.⁴⁹⁵ The *brahmaudana* implies the boiled rice, with which the Brāhmaṇas are to be fed. Nārāyaṇa, on the commentary of the respective passage narrates *brahmabhya odano brahmaudanaḥ/ brahmaśabdo brāhmaṇavācakaḥ/ tena brāhmaṇabhोजनाम् vidhāsyamānamata eva carorbhavati*⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁸⁹ cf., ṣaḍarghyā bhavantyācārya ṛtvigvaivāhyo rājā priyaḥ snātaka iti/ PGS., 1.3.1

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 1.3.8

⁴⁹¹ cf., imaṁ tamabhitiṣṭhāmi yo mā kaścābhidāsātītyenamabhupaviśati// Ibid.

⁴⁹² cf., mitrasya tveti madhuparkaṁ pratīkṣate// devasya tveti pratigr̥hṇāti// Ibid., 1.3.16,17

⁴⁹³ KGS., 1.5.7-9

⁴⁹⁴ cf., astamite camasadarvyāvādāya śūrpañcātipraṇītasayārdhaṁ vrajati// GGS., 3.7.11

⁴⁹⁵ Āś.GS., 1.22.10

⁴⁹⁶ Nārāyaṇa on Ibid.

Again, the significance of the term *anupravacanīya* becomes clear with the commentary of Rudraskanda on *Khadiragr̥hysūtra: pravacanāt paścāt kriyata ityanupravacanīyahomah!*⁴⁹⁷

A ritual for strewing the Kuśa round the fire altar is valid for all the ceremonies in which oblations are made towards the solar divinities.⁴⁹⁸ It is believed that these grasses belong to Viṣṇu.⁴⁹⁹ Both, the deity Viṣṇu and grasses cover a large area. Most probably this is the reason for linking the grasses to Viṣṇu. Again, at the time of dipping the Kuśas (two strainers) into the ājyas, Savitṛ is uttered to purify it with the rays of the Sun: *savituṣṭvā prasava utpunāmyacchidreṇa pavitreṇa vasoḥ sūryasya raśmibhiḥ!*⁵⁰⁰ The sunrays are regarded as the uninjured purifier. The water in the *śruva* spoon is also purified by the impulse of Savitṛ.⁵⁰¹ The sacrificer holding the Kuśa blades with the left hand and *śruva* in the right, mentions his hands as the hands of Viṣṇu and offers *ājya* oblations to Agni, Soma, Pūṣan, etc., in different directions.⁵⁰²

Being a householder, the sacrificer worships the sacred domestic fire regularly and performs the five great sacrifices. He worships the fire in the morning as well as in the evening with the oblation of barley or rice, sesamum, etc.⁵⁰³ The performer sacrifices in the evening worshipping the Agni and in the morning worshipping the

⁴⁹⁷ Rudraskanda on KGS., 2.5.34

⁴⁹⁸ cf., *sampūyotpunātyudagagr̥bhyāmpavitrābhyāmaṅguṣṭhābhyāñcopakaniṣṭhikābhyāñcāṅgulibhyāmab hisaṅgr̥hya prākṣāstrirutpunāti devastvāsavitotpunātvacchidreṇapavitreṇa vasoḥ sūryasya raśmibhiriti sakṛdyajuṣāṃ dvistūṣṇīm/* GGS., 1.7.25

⁴⁹⁹ Śāñ.GS., 1.8.16

⁵⁰⁰ Āś.GS., 1.3.3

Also vide, Śāñ.GS., 1.8.21, , GGS, 1.7.25

⁵⁰¹ Śāñ.GS., 1.8.24

⁵⁰² Ibid., 1.9.3-5

⁵⁰³ Āp.GS., 3.7.19; Āś.GS., 1.9.7

Sun: *agnaye svāhā iti sāyam juhuyāt sūryāya svāhā iti prātastūṣṇīm dviṭīye ubhayatra*/⁵⁰⁴ Different Gr̥hyasūtras contain the chapters on the Pañcamahāyajñas. According to the *Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra*, if the performer offers oblations over the fire, that is called Devayajña, i.e. the sacrifice to the gods; if he makes *bali* offerings that is the sacrifice to the Beings; if he makes *pinḍa* offerings to the fathers, that is the sacrifice to the Pitṛs; if he studies the Vedic texts, that is the sacrifice to Brahman; if he gives to men, that is the sacrifice to men: *tadyadagnau juhoti sa devayajño yadbalim karoti sa bhūtayajño yatpitṛbhyo dadāti sa pitṛyajño yatsvādhyāyamadhīyate sa brahmayajño yanmanuṣyebhyo dadāti sa manuṣyayajña iti*/⁵⁰⁵ In Devayajña, with the word *svāhā*, he offers the offerings to the divinities Indra, Yama, Varuṇa, etc.⁵⁰⁶

Seasonal Ceremonies:

Again, different periodical sacrifices are performed by the householder. The Śravaṇā ceremony is performed on the full moon day of Śrāvaṇa. Here Sūrya is worshipped as serpent.⁵⁰⁷ As Śrāvaṇa is rainy season, in this, oblation is mainly made to Viṣṇu and other deities like Varuṇa, etc.⁵⁰⁸ At Āgrahāyanī, the full moon day of Mārgaśīrṣa, Pratyāvarohaṇa ceremony is celebrated. Here Parjanya is worshipped.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁴ Āś. GS., 1.9.8

⁵⁰⁵ Āś.GS., 3.1.3

⁵⁰⁶ Āś.GS., 1.2.1-9; Śān.GS., 1.2.5

⁵⁰⁷ cf., āgneyapāṇḍupārthivānām sarpāṇāmadhipate'vanenikṣva śvetavāyavāntarikṣāṇām sarpāṇāmadhipate'vanenikṣvābhībūḥ sauryadivyānām sarpāṇāmadhipatevanenikṣveti// PGS., 2.14.12

⁵⁰⁸ cf., divyānām sarpāṇāmadhipatirikṣatām, divyāḥ sarpā ikṣantām, ādarśenekṣayati/ Śān.GS., 4.15.12 apaśvetapadājahi pūrveṇa cāpareṇa ca/ sapta ca vāruṇirimāḥ prajāḥ sarvāśca rājabāndhavaiḥ svāhā/ ...sthālīpākasya juhoti viṣṇave śravaṇāya śrāvaṇyai paurṇamāsyai varṣābhyaśceti// PGS., 2.14.4-6

⁵⁰⁹ cf. upodutiṣṭhanti udāyusā svāyusotparjanyaṣya vṛṣṭyā pṛthivyāḥ saptadhāmabhiriti// Ibid., 3.2.14

Savitṛ is also worshipped in the ritual along with Mitra and others.⁵¹⁰ On the full moon day of Prauṣṭhapāda, the sacrifice is made to Indra, and the *ajya* oblations are made to Indra, Indrāgnī, etc.⁵¹¹ On the full moon day of Āśvayuga, the offerings of Prṣātakas, i.e., a mixture of curds and butter,⁵¹² are made towards Indra, Indranī, the two Aśvins, the full moon of Āśvayuga, and to the autumn: *āśvayujyām prṣātakāḥ// pāyasamaindraṁ śrapayitvā dadhimadhughṛtamiśraṁ juhotīndrāyendrānyā aśvibhyāmāśvayujyai paurṇamāsyai śarade ceti//*⁵¹³ The cows are besprinkled at the time of returning home by reciting the Sāmavedic *mantra*: *ā no mitrā varuṇā*, etc.⁵¹⁴

A rite is performed in an auspicious day or under the Nakṣatra Jyeṣṭhā before ploughing. This rite is performed in adoration to Indra as Indra is the lord of plough.⁵¹⁵ To Indra, to Parjanya, to two Aśvins, etc., the worshipper offers oblations. After the ploughing, *Ājya* oblations are offered to Indra and Sītā, the wife of Indra, performing the Sītāyajña. By these the worshipper wishes the full growth of his crops.⁵¹⁶

The Śunāsīrīya is an agricultural rite, related to ploughing. It is performed at any time after the Śākamedha, in a period of four months. The special offering at Śunāsīrīya consists of a cake on twelve potsherds for Śunāsīrau or for Indra Śunāsīra,

⁵¹⁰ Śāh.GS., 4.18.3

⁵¹¹ cf., prauṣṭhapadyāmindrayajñāḥ// pāyasamaindraṁ śrapayitvā'pūpāmścāpūpaiḥ
stīrtvā'jyabhāgāviṣṭvā'jyāhutīrjuhotīndrāyendrānyā ajāyaikapade'hirbudhnyāya
prauṣṭhapadābhyāśceti// PGS., 2.15.1,2

⁵¹² Śāh.GS., 4.16.3

⁵¹³ PGS., 2.16.1,2

⁵¹⁴ SV., 1.220; KGS., 3.3.4

⁵¹⁵ cf., atha yavānāmetamutyam madhunā samyutam/ yavartha sarasvatyā adhivanāya cakṣuḥ indra
āsītsīrapatiḥ śatakratuḥ kīnāśā āsanmarutahā sudānava iti// PGS., 3.1.6

⁵¹⁶ cf., puṇyāhe lāṅgalayojanam jyeṣṭhā vendradaivatyam// indraṁ parjanyaśvinau maruta
udalākāśyapaṁ svātikārīmsītāmanumatim ca dadhnā taṇḍulairgandhairakṣatairīṣṭvā'naḍhuo
madhughṛte prāśayet// sīrāyuñjantīti yojayet// Ibid., 2.13.1-3

fresh milk or barley gruel for Vāyu, and a cake of one potsherd for Sūrya, in addition to the offerings of Cāturmāsya.⁵¹⁷

At the time of building the house on the ground, some rituals are performed. At the time of establishing the pillar, pouring water into it, the sacrificer utters the name of Varuṇa and Mitra.⁵¹⁸ Getting the consent of Brāhmaṇa, he enters into the house offering oblations to Indra, Bṛhaspati, etc.⁵¹⁹ He touches the wall and the post with their eastern, southern, western and northern juncture,⁵²⁰ and going out of the house worships the quarter of the horizon, with the mantra, 'May Ketā and Suketā protect me from the east.' Here, Agni and Sūrya are called as Ketā and Suketā, respectively.⁵²¹ At the time of consecration of a garden, establishing the sacred fire, a mess of cooked food is prepared and sacrifices are performed towards Viṣṇu, Indra, etc., with the formulas- To Viṣṇu *svāhā!* To Indra and Agni *svāhā!* To Viśvakarmā *svāhā!* etc.⁵²²

There are some other ceremonies, related to the solar divinities, which are performed for the attainment of special wishes. One, who is desirous of the enjoyment of riches is advised to worship Sūrya, the desirous of rich in wealth is advised to look at

⁵¹⁷ Vide, Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, p.541

⁵¹⁸ cf., athāsminnapa āsecayet/ aitu rājā varuṇo revatīvirasminsthāne tiṣṭhatu modamānaḥ/ irām vahantau ghr̥tamokṣamāṇā mitreṇa sākaṁ saha sañviśantviti// Āś.GS., 2.9.5
śālām kārayiṣyannudagayana āpūryamāṇapakṣe rohiṇyām triṣu cottareṣvagnimupasamādhāya vyāhṛtiparyantaṁ kṛtvā juhōti/ imām me varuṇa/ tattvā yāmi/... HGS., 1.8.27.1

⁵¹⁹ cf., sthālīpākasya juhōti/ agnimindram bṛhaspatim viśvāndevānupahvaye sarasvatīm ca vājīm ca vāstu me datta vājinaḥ svāhā/... PGS., 3.4.8

⁵²⁰ Ibid., 3.4.10-13

⁵²¹ cf., niṣkama diśa upatiṣṭhate/ ketā ca mā suketā ca purastādgopāyetāmityagnirvai ketādityaḥ suketā tau prapadye tābhyām namo'stu tau mā purastādgopāyetāmīti// Ibid., 3.4.14

⁵²² Śāñ.GS., 5.3.3

him.⁵²³ Again, the desirous of stock of horses and elephants is advised to sacrifice fried grain to the Sun.⁵²⁴ Sun-god is worshipped for wealth and safety too.⁵²⁵ In the context of expiation also, Sūrya in the form of Savitṛ is worshipped uttering the syllable Om, the Mahāvyaḥṛtis, etc.⁵²⁶

The Procedure of Worshipping the Sun-god:

Generally, the Vedic worship consists of the recitation of the hymns and the offerings through the sacrificial institution, and accordingly the Sun-god is also worshipped with these methods.

The hymns recited for the deities are either the prayer, or the praise. The whole Vedic texts consist of the praise and the prayers towards different divinities. The solar divinities are somewhere worshipped with the prayer,⁵²⁷ and somewhere, with the praise.⁵²⁸ Different hymns devoted to the Sun-god are found in the Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, in the Śrautasūtras and the Gṛhyasūtras. There are some mantras, which are not to be recited, but to be murmured. The murmuring of the mantras is called *japa*. The *utsarga* ceremony contains the reference of murmuring in favour of the Sun-god—*sauryāṇi japitvā*.⁵²⁹ Here and there in the Gṛhyasūtras, the references of *japa* in connection with the Sun-god are scattered.

⁵²³ cf., prathamayā''dityamupatiṣṭhedbhogakāmo'rthapatau prekṣamāṇe//KGS., 4.1.13

⁵²⁴ cf., tṛtīyayā candramasi tilataṇḍulān kṣudrapaśusvastayanakāmaḥ/ Ibid., 4.1.15,16
tṛtīyayā candramasi tilataṇḍulān kṣudrapaśusvastayana kāmaḥ/ GGS., 4.5.32

⁵²⁵ cf., caturthyā''dityamupasthāya gurumarthamabhyttiṣṭhet// KGS., 4.1.16
caturthyādityamupasthāyārthān prapadyeta svastyarthavānāgacchati/ GGS., 4.5.33

⁵²⁶ Śāñ.GS., 6.3.12; 7.68.9

⁵²⁷ RV. 1.50.11,12,13; 7.68;7.70

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 1.115

⁵²⁹ Śāñ.GS., 6.6.4

The procedure of the Sun-worship becomes clear by the study of the *Sandhyopāsanā*, or *Sandhyā* or *Sandhyāvandanā* and its constituents viz. *japa*,⁵³⁰ i.e. the muttering of the Gāyatrī, the *arghya*,⁵³¹ the *ācamana*,⁵³² i.e. cleansing the mouth, the *prāṇāyāma*,⁵³³ the inhalation and exhalation of the air, the *mārjana*,⁵³⁴ the *aghamarṣana*⁵³⁵ and the *upasthāna*.⁵³⁶ The student performs *Sandhyopāsanā* twice in a day; once in the morning and other in the evening. The Gṛhyasūtras contains the references of *japa* while the Dharmasūtras contain the references of *ācamana*, *prāṇāyāma* etc. The *Sandhyā* is regarded as the ideal worship for every twice-born householder and the whole procedure of *Sandhyā* is included in the general worship of the deity.

⁵³⁰ cf., ojo'sīti japitvā kaste yunaktīti yojayitvoṃ bhūrbhuvāḥ svastatsaviturityaṣṭau kṛtvāḥ prayuṅkta ityāmnātāḥ kāmā ādevo yātīti triṣṭubhaḥ rājanyasya yuñjata iti jagatiṃ vaiśasya/ Mān.GS., 1.2.3
āpaḥ punantu pṛthivīm pṛthivī pūtā punātu mām/ punantu brahmaṇaspatirbrahmapūtā punātu mām/ yaducchiṣṭamabhojyaṃ yadvā duṣcaritaṃ mama/ sarvaṃ punantu māmāpo'satām ca pratigrahaṃ svāheti// Bau.DS.,2.5.8.11

⁵³¹ cf., śrotriyasya tu pādyamarghyamannaviśeṣāṃśca prakarayet// GDS., 5.32

⁵³² cf., āsīnastirīcāmeddhṛdayaṅgamābhiradbhiḥ/ Āp.DS.,1.5.16
śucau deśa āsīno dakṣiṇaṃ bāhuṃ jānvantarā kṛtvā yajñopavītyāmaṇibandhanātpāṇī prakṣālya vāgyato hṛdayaspr̥ṣastriścaturvā'pa ācāmet// dviḥ parimṛjyate// pādaū cābhyukṣet// khāni copaspr̥secchīrṣaṇyāni// mūrdhani ca dadyāt/ suptvā bhuktvā kṣutvā ca punaḥ// GDS., 1.35-40

⁵³³ cf., prāṇāyāmāstrayaḥ pañcadaśamātrāḥ/ GDS.,1.55
savyāhṛtikām sapraṇavām gāyatrīm śirasā saha/ triḥ paṭhedāyataprāṇaḥ prāṇāyāmāssa ucyate// savyāhṛtikāssapraṇavāḥ prāṇāyāmāstu ṣoḍaśa/ api bhrūṇahanam māsātpunantayaharahardhṛtāḥ// Bau.DS.,4.1.30

⁵³⁴ Ibid., 2.4.2

⁵³⁵ cf., athātaḥ pavitrātipavitrasyāghamarṣanasya kalpaṃ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ/ tīrthaṃ gatvā snātaḥ śucivāsā udakānte sthaṇḍilamuddhṛtyāsakṛlktinnena vāsasā sakṛtpūrṇena pāṇinā'dityābhimukho'ghamarṣanaṃ svādyāyamdhīyita/ prātaśśataṃ madhyāhne śatamaparāhṇe śatamaparimitaṃ vā/ uditeṣu nakṣatreṣu prasṛtapāvakaṃ prāśnīyāt/ jñānakṛtebhyo'jñānakṛtebhyas copapātakebhyaḥ saptarātrātpramucyate/... Ibid., 3.5.1-7

⁵³⁶ cf., vāruṇībhyām rātrimupatiṣṭhata imaṃ me varuṇa tattvā yāmīti dvābhyām//Ibid., 2.4.11

Again, the Sun-god is worshipped with offerings. Offerings are either the oblations or the libations. Oblations are the clarified butter that are poured on fire and the libations are the Soma juice that is sprinkled over the fire or the ground or sometimes on the sacred grass strewed on the floor. The Vedic texts contain the references of the oblation of the clarified butter towards the solar divinities, viz. Mitra, Viṣṇu, to the Aśvins, Ādityas, etc.⁵³⁷ Again, there are references of the libation to the Aśvins on the Kuśa grass,⁵³⁸ Mitra over the fire,⁵³⁹ etc. the *Taittirīyasamhitā* contains the references of the oblations and the libations towards the Āditya,⁵⁴⁰ Sūrya,⁵⁴¹ Pūṣan,⁵⁴² Savitṛ and the Aśvins.⁵⁴³

The two methods of salutation and the meditation are also ordained for the deities Sūrya⁵⁴⁴ and Savitṛ⁵⁴⁵. As the horses of the Sun-god are regarded to be the object

⁵³⁷ cf., pīpāya dhenuraditīrtāya janāya mitrāvaruṇā havirde/ ṚV., 1.153.3

bhavā mitro na śevyo ghṛtāsutirvibhūtadyumna evayā u saprathāḥ/ adhā te viṣṇo viduṣā cidarghyaḥ
stomo yajñaśca rādhyo haviṣmatā// Ibid., 1.156.1

Also vide, Ibid., 2.27.1; 3.59.1; 6.51.1; 10.108.1; TS. 2.6.8

⁵³⁸ cf., dasrā yuvākavaḥ sutā nāsatyā vṛktavarhiṣaḥ/ ā yātam rudravartanī//ṚV., 1.3.3

trirno aśvinā yajatā divedive pari tridhātu pṛthivīmaśāyatam/ tisro nāsatyā rathyā parāvata ātmeva
vātaḥ svasarāṇi gacchatam//Ibid., 1.34.7

Also vide, Ibid., 1.47.4; 1.116.1; 1.117.1

⁵³⁹ cf., pra sa mitra marto astu prayasvānyasta āditya śikṣati vratena/ na hanyate na jīyate tvoto
nainamamho aśnotyantito na dūrāt// Ibid., 3.59.2

⁵⁴⁰ TS., 1.8.7

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 1.8.2

⁵⁴² Ibid., 1.8.8

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 1.8.8

⁵⁴⁴ cf., pataṅgamaktamasurasya māyayā hṛdā paśyanti manasā vipāścitaḥ/ samudre antaḥ kavayo vi
cakṣate marīcīnām padamicchanti vedhasaḥ// ṚV., 10.177.1

⁵⁴⁵ cf., na yasyendro varuṇo na mitro vratamaryamā na minanti rudraḥ/ nārātayastamidam svasti huve
devam savitāram namobhiḥ//bhagam dhiyam vājayantaḥ puramdhiṃ narāśamso grāspatirno avyāḥ/
āye vāmasya samgathe rayīnām priyā devasya savitūḥ syāma// Ibid., 2.38.9,10

Also vide, Ibid., 3.62.10; 4.1.11; 5.82.8

of reverence, they are saluted—*bhadrā aśvā haritaḥ sūryasya citrā etagvā anumādyāsaḥ/ namasyanto diva ā pṛṣṭhamasthuḥ pari dyāvāpṛthivī yanti sadyaḥ/*⁵⁴⁶

The Upaniṣadic literature contains the references of the meditation of the Sun. It is advised in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* that, one should meditate on the sevenfold *sāman* in the Sun. The Sun-god is the *sāma*, as because, he is always the same.⁵⁴⁷

The *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* directs that the recitation of the hymns should be in accordance with the movement of the Sun.⁵⁴⁸ According to the types of the heat, the tone of the utterance of the mantras get changed, i.e. gentle tone in the morning due to the gentle heat, stronger tone in the midday due to the stronger heat. Different times are prescribed in different texts, for the worship of the Sun-god. In some contexts two times of worship is mentioned for the deity,⁵⁴⁹ i.e. the morning and the evening, somewhere as three,⁵⁵⁰ i.e. the morning, the noon and the evening and somewhere as seven connected with the seven different times of the day, i.e. pre-sunrise, post rise, the cow gathering, the midday, the past mid day, past afternoon and the post sun set, thinking the god as the symbol of Brahman.⁵⁵¹

Thus, the importance of the deity Sūrya is delineated in the Vedic texts. Sūrya is indeed the deified form of the atmospheric Sun. Among the salient traits of the deity,

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.,1.115.3

⁵⁴⁷ cf., atha ādityaṁ saptavidhaṁ sāmopāsītā, sarvadā samastena sāma, mām pratīti sarveṇa samastena sāma/ Chā. U., 2.9.1

bṛhadratho vai nāma rājā... vairāgyam upeto'raṇyam nirjagāma/ sa tatra paramaṁ tapa āsthāyādityam udīkṣamāṇa ūrdhvaḥustīṣṭhati.../ Maitrī U., 1.2

⁵⁴⁸ AB.,3.44

⁵⁴⁹ KB., 2.2;2.8

⁵⁵⁰ cf., ... udyantamādityamupatiṣṭhate... etayaivāvṛtā madhye santamudbhargo'si pāpmānām ma udvṛndhīti, etayaivāvṛtāstam yantaṁ samvargo'si pāpmānam me samvṛndhīti.../ KU., 2.7

⁵⁵¹ Chā.U., 2.9.8

the most important is that, being the creator of the day and night, he provides heat and light towards the whole universe, and stands as the ultimate cause of the food and nutrition. Besides the Sun, the traits of the other solar deities are also eulogised in the Vedas. Due to their importance, they are worshipped with great devotion in the Vedic pantheon.

CHAPTER-III
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PURĀNIC
RELIGION AND ITS LINK WITH THE
VEDIC TRADITION

Purāṇic Literature:

The Purāṇic literature occupies a specific place in the field of Indian literature. Purāṇas represent a class of religious literature, and stands as an abundant source for the Indian religion, rightly called as Hinduism.¹ In the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, they are mentioned as one of the fourteen branches of knowledge, i.e. vidyāsthānas, and sources of *dharma*.² The Purāṇas are mythological in character having didactic contents, in which are collected ancient tradition of the creation, the deeds of the gods, heroes, saints and ancient ancestors of the human race, the beginning of the famous royal families, etc.³

The term *purāṇa* means ancient one.⁴ In the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, in the sense of ancient, the term is used.⁵ The deity Soma is called *purāṇa* in the relevant verse. According to the *Vācaspatyam*, two meanings, *purābhavam* and *purā nīyate* are conveyed by the term,⁶ i.e. those, who remained in the past and dealt with the past are

¹ Vide, Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, p.517

² cf., purāṇanyāyamīmāṃsādharmasāstrāṅgamiśritāḥ/vedāḥ sthānāni vidyānām dharmasya ca caturdaśa// YS., 1.3

³ Vide, Winternitz, M., Op. cit., Vol. I, p.520

⁴ cf., purā purvasmin kāle bhava/ Śabda., Vol. IV, p.190
purāṇyā purā kṛtayā.../ Sāyaṇācārya on ṚV., 9.99.4

⁵ cf., ... purāṇyā purā kṛtayā/ Ibid., 9.99.4

⁶ Vāca., Vol. V, p. 4369

called as Purāṇas. Yāskācārya in his *Nirukta* opines, *purāṇam kasmāt?purā navam bhavatīti*⁷ Purāṇas are the new creation though old indeed. They are the old narratives or ancient legends having didactic contents. Different Purāṇas also have given the meaning of the term. According to the *Matsyapurāṇa*, *Purāṇa* means *purātanakalpa*,⁸ as it deals with the history of the ancient period. The *Vāyupurāṇa* states, *yasmāt purā hyanatīdam purāṇam tena tat smṛtam*,⁹ i.e. as it lived in the past or breathed in the ancient times, it is called *purāṇa*. According to the *Padmapurāṇa*, *purāṇa* means the follower of the tradition: *purāparamparāmvakti purāṇam tena vai smṛtam*¹⁰

The Purāṇas along with the Itihāsas are regarded as the fifth *Veda* due to their close connection with the Vedic texts.¹¹ In the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, they are placed in the same relationship to the *Atharvaveda*, where the northern rays of the Sun-god, i.e. the hymns of the *Atharvaveda* are mentioned as the northern honey-cells, and Itihāsas and Purāṇas are mentioned as the flowers.¹² In the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, in the context of *pāriplava*, among other matters the Hotṛ priest is directed to narrate some Purāṇas, as they are the Vedas.¹³ In the *Sāṅkhyāyanaśrautasūtra*¹⁴ and the

⁷ Nir., 3.19

⁸ Mat.P., 53.72.

⁹ Vā.P., 1.203

¹⁰ Padma P., 1.2.54

¹¹ cf., ṛgvedaṁ bhagavo'dhyemi yajurvedaṁ sāmavedamātharvaṇaṁ caturthamitihāsapurāṇaṁ pañcamaṁ vedānāṁ vedaṁ.../ Chā.U., 7.1.2

ṛgvedo yajurvedaḥ sāmaveda ātharvaṇścaturtha itihāsapurāṇaḥ pañcama vedānāṁ vedaḥ/ Ibid., 7.1.4

¹² cf., atha ye'syodañco raśmayastā evāsyodīcyo madhunādyo'tharvāṅgirasa eva madhukṛtaḥ itihāsapurāṇaṁ puṣpam tā amṛtā'paḥ/ Ibid., 3.4.1

¹³ cf., athāṣṭame'han/... matsyāśca matsyahanaścopasametā bhavanti/ tānupadiśatītihāso vedaḥ soyamiti kañciditihāsamācakaṣṭa/ atha navame'han/... tānupadiśati purāṇaṁ vedaḥ soyamiti kiñcitpurāṇamācakaṣṭa/ ŚB., 13.4.3.12-13

¹⁴ Śāñ. ŚS,16.2.27

*Āśvalāyanaśrautasūtra*¹⁵ also, Purāṇas are mentioned as the Vedas. The Purāṇas are the very soul of the Vedas. They possess a general approach and they are easier than that of the Vedas. They are the ultimate source of the Vedic tradition, for the people who are unable to have it.

The Purāṇas have sacred origin. They are mentioned as originated from the residue of the sacrifice along with the Ṛcs, the Sāmans, the metres and the Yajus mantras.¹⁶ In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, they are mentioned as born from the breath of the Mahad Bhūta: ...mahato bhūtasya niśvāsitaṁ etayad ṛgvedo yajurvedaḥ sāmavedo'tharvāṅgirasa itihāsaḥ purāṇaṁ... /¹⁷ Different Purāṇas, such as the *Matsyapurāṇa*,¹⁸ the *Vāyupurāṇa*,¹⁹ the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*,²⁰ the *Liṅgapurāṇa*,²¹ the *Nāradīyapurāṇa*,²² the *Padmapurāṇa*,²³ etc., refer to that there was only one *Purāṇa* in origin, that taught of by Brahmā, and from that the other Purāṇas were shaped out on the later date.

Eighteen Purāṇas have been enumerated, which were handed down traditionally.²⁴ The Purāṇic literature consists of eighteen Mahāpurāṇas and more than a hundred Upapurāṇas, along with a large number of treatises belonging to one or other of these works. The list of the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas found almost in all the Purāṇas are, *Brāhma*, *Pādma*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Śaiva* or *Vāyavīya*, *Bhāgavata*, *Nāradīya*, *Mārkaṇḍeya*,

¹⁵ Āś. ŚS., 10.7.1

¹⁶ cf., ṛcaḥ sāmāni chandāmsi purāṇaṁ yajuṣā saha/ ucchiṣṭāj jajñire.../ AV., 11.7.24

¹⁷ Bṛ. Ā., 2.4.10

¹⁸ Mat. P., 53.3-11

¹⁹ Vā. P., 1.60-61

²⁰ Brahmāṇḍa P., 1.1.40-41

²¹ Liṅga.P., 1.2.2

²² Nā.P., 1.92.22-26

²³ Padma P., 5.1.45-52

²⁴ Mat.P., 53.11; Mār.P., 134.7-11; Viṣ.P., 3.6.21-23 and so on.

Āgneya, Bhaviṣya, Brahmavaivarta, Laiṅga, Vārāha, Skānda, Vāmana, Kaurma, Mātsya, Gāruḍa and *Brahmāṇḍa*.²⁵ The *Matsya*, the *Agni* and the *Nārādīyapurāṇa* mention the *Vāyupurāṇa* among the eighteen Purāṇas in their list, while the *Viṣṇu*, the *Mārkaṇḍeya*, the *Kūrma*, the *Padma*, the *Liṅga*, the *Bhāgavata* and the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* mention the *Śaivapurāṇa*, substituting the *Vāyupurāṇa*.²⁶ In his commentary on the *Mitākṣarā* on the *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti*, Bālaṁbhaṭṭa has mentioned that the *Vāyavīyapurāṇa* is also called the *Śaivapurāṇa*.²⁷ Al-beruni, in his work on India that was composed in 1030 A.D., cites the common names of the Purāṇas, those found in the other lists of the Mahāpurāṇas. Besides this, he has given another list of the Purāṇas that he had come to know from some other sources, which contains the names of some Upapurāṇas, along with the Mahāpurāṇas. The list contains the names of *Ādi, Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vāmana, Vāyu, Nanda, Skanda, Āditya, Soma, Sāmba, Brahmāṇḍa, Mārkaṇḍeya, Tārksya*, i.e. *Garuḍa, Viṣṇu, Brahma* and *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*.²⁸ Here in this list, the names of some Mahāpurāṇas are omitted and some Upapurāṇas are included. The *Devībhāgavata* contains a verse containing the first letter of all the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas, which goes as *madvayaṁ bhadvayaṁ caiva batrayaṁ vacatuṣṭayam / anāpaliṅgakūskāni purāṇāni pṛthak pṛthak*.²⁹ The enumeration of the ślokas of the Mahāpurāṇas shows that almost a total of four lakh of verses are found in the Mahāpurāṇas.³⁰

²⁵ Bhā.P., 12.7.23,24, Viṣ.P., 3.6.19-24 and so on.

²⁶ Agni P., 272.4,5, Mat.P., 53.18,19; Mār.P., 134.8; Viṣ.P., 3.6.19 and so on

²⁷ YS., 1.3

²⁸ Vide, Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. V, Part-II, p. 831

²⁹ Devī Bhā.P., 1.3.2

³⁰ Vide, Kane, P.V., Op. cit., Vol. V, Part-II, pp. 831-832

According to the *Matsyapurāṇa*, the Upapurāṇas are the sub-sections, i.e. upabhedas of the eighteen principal Purāṇas.³¹ They are different from the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas; but closely connected to them and known as originated from them. The *Kūrmapurāṇa* mentions them as the summaries or abridgements of the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas, those come out from the sages, after listening to the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas from Vyāsa, who is regarded as the propounder of it: *anyānyupapurāṇāni munibhiḥ kathitāni tu/ aṣṭādaśapurāṇāni śrutvā saṁkṣepato dvijāḥ*/³²

It is very difficult to draw a line in between the two classes of the Mahāpurāṇas and the Upapurāṇas, due to their close connectivity. In the *Amarakośa*, the term *purāṇa* is distinguished as *purāṇam pañcalakṣaṇam*,³³ i.e., ‘What has five signs or characteristics,’ but the term *upapurāṇa* does not occur in it. Again, the list of the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas, that is found in the different Mahāpurāṇas prove the earlier origin of the *Mahāpurāṇa* class; but no list of Upapurāṇas is introduced in the major Purāṇas. Besides this, in a large number of cases the Upapurāṇas themselves furnish them as the *Purāṇa*, not the *Upapurāṇa*; even, sometimes, claim to be superior to the major Purāṇas.³⁴

Different Purāṇas speak of *Purāṇa* as *pañcalakṣaṇa: sargaśca pratisargaśca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca/ vaṁśānucaritam caiva purāṇam pañcalakṣaṇam*/³⁵ The pañcalakṣaṇas of the Purāṇas are *sarga*, “creation,” *pratisarga*, “re-creation,” *vaṁśa*, “genealogies of gods, kings and sages,” *manvantarāṇi*, “cosmic cycle or the Manu-periods of time” and *vaṁśānucarita*, “the history of the royal dynasties and of the

³¹ cf., upabhedān pravakṣyāmi loke ye sampratiṣṭhitāḥ/ Mat.P., 53.58

³² Kū.P., 1.1.16

³³ AK.,1.6.5

³⁴ Vide, Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, Vol. I, p. 16

³⁵ Kū.P.,1.1.12; Mār.P., 134.13,14; Varā.P., 2.4; Vā.P., 4.10,11 and so on

families of sages,” i.e. the early and later dynasties, whose origin is traced back to the Sun (solar dynasty) and the moon (lunar dynasty). The same definition with little variation occurs in the *Matsyapurāṇa* and some others.³⁶ But, besides these five, the Purāṇas handed down to us contain much more characteristics. The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*³⁷ mentions ten topics to be discussed in the Purāṇas, viz. *sarga*, *visarga*, i.e. dissolution, creation after destruction, *vṛtti*, i.e. modes of subsistence that occur naturally or prescribed by *śāstra* for all men, *rakṣā*, i.e. protection by the avatāras, destroying those, who hate the Vedas, *antarāṇi*, i.e. manvantaras, *vaṁśa*, *vaṁśānucarita*, *saṁsthā*, i.e. four kinds of *laya*, *hetu*, i.e. the cause of creation, *apāśraya*, i.e. the refuse of individual souls, i.e. *Brahma*. The *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* makes a significant remark in this regard that the Upapurāṇas possess five characteristics whereas the Mahāpurāṇas possess the ten.³⁸ It mentions the ten characteristics thus: *sṛṣṭi*, *visṛṣṭi*, *sthiti*, *pālana*, *karmavāsanā*, *manuvārtā*, *pralaya varṇana*, *mokṣa nirūpaṇa*, *harikīrtana* and *devakīrtana*. But, the observation on the extant Upapurāṇas show that very few of the works belonging to the Purāṇic literature, only follow the norms ordained for them. Besides the five-fold characteristics, the Upapurāṇas deal with the local cults and fulfil the need of different sects than the Mahāpurāṇas.³⁹

³⁶ cf., pañcāṅgāni purāṇeṣu ākhyānakamiti smṛtam/ sargaśca pratisargaśca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca/ vaṁśānucaritaṁ caiva purāṇaṁ pañcalakṣaṇam// Mat.P., 53.65

sargasya pratisargasya vaṁśamanvantarāṇi ca/ sarveṣveteṣu kathyante vaṁśānucaritaṁ ca yat// Viṣ.P., 3.6.24

³⁷ cf., sargo'syātha visargaśca vṛtti-rakṣāntarāṇi ca/ vaṁśo vaṁśānucaritaṁ saṁsthā heturapāśrayaḥ// daśabhirlakṣaṇairyuktaṁ purāṇaṁ tadvido viduḥ/ kecitpañcavidhaṁ brhman mahad-alpa vyavasthayaḥ// Bhā.P., 12.7.9,10

³⁸ Br.Vai.P., 4.131.6-10

³⁹ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op cit., Vol. I, p. 25

The Purāṇas give the *purāṇalakṣaṇa* with the verse *ākhyānaiścopākhyānairgāthābhiḥ kalpaśuddhibhiḥ/ purāṇasamhitām cakre purāṇārthaviśāradaḥ*⁴⁰ According to it, Vyāsa, the compiler, to accomplish the purpose of the Purāṇas compiled a *Purāṇa Samhitā*, consisting of *ākhyāna*, *upākhyāna*, *gāthā* and *kalpaśuddhi*. These four are regarded as the four elements of the Purāṇas that constitute the body of it. *Ākhyāna* signifies the Purāṇic stories. The historical and legendary tradition of the Purāṇas is maintained by it. It is mentioned in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* that *ākhyāna*, i.e. the religious manuals, along with the Vedāṅgas, institutes of Manu and other lawgivers, traditional scriptures, poem, etc., form the body of the mighty Viṣṇu, assuming the form of the sound: *vedāṅgāni samastāni manvādigaditāni ca/ śāstrāṇyaśeṣāṇyā-khyānānyunuvākāśca ye kvacit/ kāvyālāpāśca ye kecit gītakānyakhilāni ca/ śabdāmūrttidharasyaitad vapurviṣṇomahātmanaḥ*⁴¹ In the Purāṇas, the *ākhyāna* of Kuvalayāśva,⁴² Prahlāda,⁴³ etc., are found. The upākhyānas maintain close connectivity with the ākhyānas. Sir Monier Monier-Williams gives the meaning of the term as a subordinate tale story.⁴⁴ Gāthās are the metrical composition found in the Purāṇas. The ancient popular songs are called as *gāthā*. They are dedicated to some particular divinities. For example, in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, it is stated that the divine Ṛṣis utter the greatness of the *Gayātīrtha* by the mouth of Pitṛs. The Pitṛs, desiring to participate in the *śrāddha* at *Gayā* mentions the *Pitṛtīrtha* of *Gayā* as best of all the holy places, and Pitāmaha, the god of gods remaining there bestows welfare to all: *pitṛtīrtham gayā nāma sarvatīrthavaram śubham/ yatrā"ste devadeveśaḥ*

⁴⁰ Vā.P., 60.21; Viṣ. P., 3.6.15

⁴¹ Viṣ.P., 1.22.83,84

⁴² Mār.P., 18

⁴³ Mat.P., 47

⁴⁴ Vide, Monier-Williams, M.(ed.), *The Sanskrit English Dictionary*, under *upākhyāna*, p. 212

svayameva pitāmahāḥ// tatraiṣā pitṛbhirgītā gāthā bhāgamabhīpsubhiḥ//⁴⁵

Kalpaśuddhi is the last element found in the Purāṇic texts. All the Purāṇic texts contain the account of the period. And such periodic account is called as *kalpaśuddhi*. In the Purāṇas, *Brahmakalpa*, *Vārāhakaḥkalpa*, etc., are found.⁴⁶

On the basis of their contents, Purāṇas are classified into several groups, viz. the encyclopaedic, including the *Agnipurāṇa*, the *Garuḍapurāṇa* and the *Nārādīyapurāṇa*; some primarily deal with the tīrthas such as the *Padmapurāṇa*, the *Skandapurāṇa*, the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*; the sectarian, including the *Liṅgapurāṇa*, the *Vāmanapurāṇa* and the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*; and the historical, such as the *Vāyupurāṇa*, the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, etc.⁴⁷

Again, according to the three qualities, viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the Mahāpurāṇas are classified into three divisions; viz. *Sāttvika* or Viṣṇuite, *Rājasika* or dedicated to Brahmā and *Tāmasika*, dedicated to lord Śiva.⁴⁸ The *Viṣṇu*, the *Nārādīya*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Garuḍa*, the *Padma* and the *Vārāha* are the Sāttvikapurāṇas while the *Brahma*, the *Brahmāṇḍa*, the *Brahmavaivarta*, the *Mārkaṇḍeya*, the *Bhaviṣya*, the *Vāmana* are the Rājasikapurāṇas and the *Matsya*, the *Kūrma*, the *Liṅga*, the *Śiva*, the *Skanda* and the *Agnipurāṇa* are the Tāmasikapurāṇas.

Pre-Purāṇic Religious Systems Prevalent in India:

Prior to the Purāṇic religion, different religious movements took place in ancient India due to the invasion of the foreign invaders, having indigenous religious system and the local inhabitants of the region possessing individual religious belief. Due to their relationship to the Vedic tradition they can be classified into the Vedic,

⁴⁵ Mat.P., 22.4,5

⁴⁶ Ibid. 53

⁴⁷ Kane, P.V., Op. cit., Vol. V, Part-II, p. 842

⁴⁸ Garuḍa P., 1.223.17-20; Padma P., 6.263.81-84

comprising the *Śrauta* and the *Smārta* tradition; the anti-Vedic that includes the Jainism, the Ājīvakism and the Buddhism; the semi-Vedic consisting of the Vaiṣṇavism, the Śaivism and the Bhāgavatism; and non-Vedic, i.e. the Śāktism and the Tāntricism.⁴⁹ Besides these, in some religious systems there are found elements of two or more religious sects. Such religions are composite in nature. The Purāṇic religion is also a composite religion where the Vedic tradition of sacrificial religion, the semi-Vedic tradition of Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and other unorthodox cults and the non-Vedic tradition of Śāktism and Tāntricism are intermingled.

i. The Vedic Religious System:

The orthodox religion of ancient India is broadly divided under three heads: Vedism, Brāhmaṇism and the Hinduism.⁵⁰ The Vedism and the Brāhmaṇism were the two stages of the sacrificial religion, while the Hinduism is the representation of the *Smārta* and Epic-Purāṇic religion. A great discussion on the Vedic religion is presented in the earlier chapter. Here, the Brāhmaṇical religion is discussed concisely. The Vedic religion was the ritualistic religion of the Āryans, where the natural forces were worshipped as the deities with the prayer and the sacrifices, followed with the offerings of food, meat, Soma, etc. The Brāhmaṇical religion was formulated following the Vedic tradition. It comprised the *Śrauta* and the *Smārta* elements. In the Brāhmaṇas, the simplest form of worshipping of the deities in the Samhitās became more expanded, and it became the religion of the masses of the people. The rules of the castes and the stages were strictly followed in the Brāhmaṇical religion. The Brāhmaṇas were given the highest place of honour in the society and regarded as the highest commanding authority among the entire Āryans as they appeared from the mouth of the

⁴⁹ Vide, Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, p.193

⁵⁰ Vide, Goyal, S.R., *A Religious History of Ancient India*, Vol. II, p.2

Vedapuruṣa.⁵¹ The other classes, viz. the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras stood next to them. Among different duties they had to perform, their first and the foremost duty was the performing of the sacrifices, showing reverence towards the divinities. Such performances were done following the Vedas, i.e. *Śruti* and for that, they were called *Śrauta*. But gradually, in course of time, sections of thinkers occurred in the society, who questioned over the existence of the deity,⁵² regarded sacrifice as futile.⁵³ Such thinking contributed a lot to the growth and development of different religious thought, against the Brāhmaṇism. The elaborate system of sacrifice, which had been evolved and consolidated during the Brāhmaṇa period, which had come to be recognised almost as the hallmark of Vedic religious practice, became well-nigh extinct during the Upaniṣadic period. The profound philosophical speculations of the Upaniṣads have given way to a new ethical code. Thus, it is observed that long before the time of Manu, *Śrauta* rites became obsolete and finally, it was replaced with the tradition called *Smārta*.⁵⁴

ii. Anti-Vedic Religious System:

The *Mahāvagga*,⁵⁵ belonging to the *Suttanipāta* mentions sixty-three different philosophical schools, those probably of non- Brāhmaṇical in character, existed at the time of Gautama Buddha. In the Jaina literature also, passages are found containing a larger amount of unorthodox doctrines.⁵⁶ These evidences are sufficient to prove the

⁵¹ cf., brāhmaṇo'sya mukhamāsīdbāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtaḥ/ ūrū tadasya yadvaiśyaḥ padbhyām śūdro ajāyata// ṚV., 10.90.12

⁵² Ibid., 10.121

⁵³ Vide, Goyal, S.R., Op. cit., Vol. II, p.2

⁵⁴ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op.cit., p. 194

⁵⁵ Max Müller, F., *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol.10, p. 93

⁵⁶ Radhakrishnan, S. (ed.), *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, p.150

existence of other unorthodox religious system in India, prior to the Purāṇic religion. The Jainism, propounded by Mahāvīra, the Ājīvakism by Gosāla Maṅkhaliputta and the Buddhism by Gautama Buddha were the well known anti-Vedic religious systems, prevalent in ancient India.

Jainism: Among the anti-Vedic religious teachers, Vardhamāna Mahāvīra was one, who is regarded as the propounder of Jainism. Mahāvīra was born in a suburb of Vaiśālī, the capital of the famous republican clan of the *Licchavis*. He had practised severe austerity and became the founder or rather the reformer of the Jaina church.⁵⁷ According to the Jaina tradition, there were twenty-three tīrthaṅkaras, i.e. prophets before Mahāvīra.⁵⁸ Professor Jacobi holds Pārśvanātha, the twenty-third tīrthaṅkara as the propounder of Jainism.⁵⁹ But, no adequate evidences, in support of this view can be obtained. History ascribes Pārśvanātha with another religious sect, known as *Nirgrantha*.⁶⁰ Mahāvīra was immediately preceded by Pārśvanātha. He belonged to the same religious sect; but later on, he had given rise to his own religious sect by his own personality.

The four great vows of Jainism, viz. not to injure life, to be truthful, not to steal and to possess no property were imparted by Pārśvanātha, where Mahāvīra added a fifth one, i.e. chastity.⁶¹ The Jainas were against to the Brāhmaṇical tradition. They did not recognise the Vedas as authoritative though they had a little faith in caste distinction and in the Brāhmaṇical rites and duties. As for example, Mahāvīra valued most the fourth stages of life and recommended it to his followers. Besides this, the

⁵⁷ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p.194

⁵⁸ Vide, Bhattacharyya, H.(ed.), *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, p.36

⁵⁹ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p.194

⁶⁰ Vide, Bhattacharyya, H.(ed.), Op. cit., Vol. IV, p.37

⁶¹ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p. 195

Jainas believed in the individual eternal soul and regarded austerity as the essential means of salvation. Unlike the Upaniṣads, they believed each individual soul as eternal and there was no scope of integration in between the individual soul and the ultimate soul.⁶²

The observations made by the two teachers, Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra, were almost same; but they varied in some points of views. Pārśvanātha allowed his disciple to wear an upper and under garments where Mahāvīra ordained the rule that obliged the ascetic to be completely naked.⁶³

Ājīvakas: Gosāla Mañkhaliputta formed another religious system conflicting against the Jainism. He was the great rival of Mahāvīra who lived with him for six years practising austerities. Due to a dispute, they were separated and Gosāla Mañkhaliputta set up a new religious system whose followers were called as the Ājīvakas.⁶⁴ Gosāla made Śrāvastī his head quarters and shifted there.

The teachings of the Ājīvakism resembled much more with the Mahāvīra. But Gosāla was not very strict about the moral matters like that of Mahāvīra. It is impossible to determine the spread and popularity of this religious system due to insufficient evidences. A scrappy account about the Ājīvakas was only found in the Jaina works where the authors attacked Gosāla with their words. It proves the powerful existence of the sect of Ājīvakas in the region that stood as an obstacle to the spread of Jaina religious system. From some inscriptional evidences, it is seen that the sect of the Ājīvakas continued during the reign of Aśoka and his successors.⁶⁵

⁶² Vide, Bhattacharyya, H.(ed.), Op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 39

⁶³ Vide, Max Müller, Op. cit., Vol. 10, p.154

⁶⁴ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p. 196

⁶⁵ Vide, Ibid.

Buddhism: Under the royal patronage of the great kings Aśoka, Kaniṣka and Harṣavardhana, the Buddhism had flourished out all over India. Gautama Buddha had formulated the religious system called Buddhism that was contemporary to the Jainas and Ājīvakas. Buddhism was not really a revolt against the caste, but against the sacrificial system, against the *Veda* and its authority was to show the way to salvation. As Buddha laid sole stress on the moral effort, non-violence, truth, etc., which had been already integrated to the Hinduism, the religion of Buddha may be regarded as the reformation in Hinduism.⁶⁶

The Buddhism included in it the traditions, belief and spiritual practices based on the teachings of Buddha. In the first sermon in the deer-park, near Banaras, Buddha preached that one who renounced the world should shun two extremes, viz. the pursuit of pleasure and the practice of useless austerities, which led to wisdom and salvation. He had expounded the four noble truths, rightly called as *catvāri āryasatyāni*, viz. *duḥkha*, i.e. suffering, *duḥkha-samudaya*, i.e. cause of suffering, *duḥkha-nirodha*, i.e. the suppression of suffering and *duḥkha-nirodhagāminī paṭipadā*, i.e. the way that leads to the suppression of suffering. As a way to suppress the suffering, Buddha had mentioned the eight-fold paths, i.e. *aṣṭāṅgiko mārgaḥ*, viz. right views, right thoughts or aspirations, right speech, right actions, right living, right exertion, right recollection and right meditation. These eight-fold paths lead the people to a virtuous life.⁶⁷ The Buddhism insisted on five śīlas, which were prohibition of injury to and destruction of life, of theft, of sexual impurity, of falsehood and of intoxicating liquors. Besides these, five more precepts were added for the Buddhist priests, viz. prohibition of eating at forbidden hours, of attending worldly amusements such as dancing, song, music and

⁶⁶ Vide, Kane, P.V., Op. cit., Vol. V, Part-II, p. 939

⁶⁷ Vide, Ibid., Vol. V, Part-II, pp. 939-940

shows, of the use of unguents and ornaments, of the use of a large or ornamented couch and of the receiving of gold and silver.⁶⁸

The Buddhism is broadly divided into two branches; one is Hīnayāna and the other is Mahāyāna. The ultimate goal of the Hīnayāna is the cessation of kleśas, i.e. destructive mental states including ignorance, attachment and aversion and the attainment of the sublime state of *nirvāṇa* practising the *aṣṭamārga*. The *Mahāyāna* aspires to the Buddhism by means of the *bodddhisattva* path, i.e. remaining in the cycle of rebirth.⁶⁹ Though the Buddhism maintained a little connection with the Hinduism, but did not acknowledge any personal god or Supreme god, neither *bhakti* nor the metaphysical and abstract knowledge of god. A highly developed ethical life was regarded as the sole means of attaining salvation in the Buddhism.

iii. Semi-Vedic Religious System:

There arose some other religious movements in ancient India, which were, not fully Vedic or not non-Vedic or anti-Vedic; but they were semi-Vedic. The Bhāgavatism, Vaiṣṇavism and the Śaivism were the prominent semi-Vedic religious systems prevalent in ancient India. The earliest records of these systems were found in the great epic *Mahābhārata*. As the *Mahābhārata* is a work exploring the ideas and belief of its author in the Vedas and the rules of castes and āśramas, the influences of the same are also seen in the systems.

Bhāgavatism: The Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva is regarded as the founder of the *Bhāgavata* religion. The existence of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, as a founder of a religious sect was doubted as because the scholars hold Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva as not a human being, but a popular deity,

⁶⁸ Vide, Ibid., Vol. V, Part-II, p. 943

⁶⁹ Vide, Ibid.

belonging to the solar family or a vegetation deity or a tribal deity. But there is no scope of such doubt as it has been proved by the researches that the Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva of Mathurā was a human teacher belonging to the republican Kṣatriya clan, known as Sātvatas or Vṛṣṇis, a branch of the Yādava tribe who was popular in the age of the Brāhmaṇas.⁷⁰

The Bhāgavatism substituted a personal god Hari, in place of the abstract idea of the Brahman. He was believed to be beyond the ken of logic or argument. Only by means of whole hearted devotion or *bhakti*, he could be apprehended. The *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Śāntiparvan* and the *Bhagavadgītā* were regarded as the source of *bhakti* cult. In the *Nārāyaṇīya* section, Hari is mentioned as worshipped by King Uparicara Vasu according to the sāttvata rules that were proclaimed by the sun.⁷¹

In the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*, the revelation of god to man is mentioned as the highest boon granted by him to man.⁷² Meditation is mentioned as the way to achieving the deity.⁷³ In the *Śāntiparvan*, Sāttvata and Pañcarātra are identified thus: *kāmyanaimittikā rājan yajñiyāḥ paramakriyāḥ/ sarvāḥ sāttvatamāsthāya vidhiṃ cakre samāhitāḥ/ pāñcarātravido mukhyāstasya gehe mahātmanaḥ/ prāyaṇaṃ bhagavatproktaṃ bhujjate vāgrabhojanam//*⁷⁴ The Bhāgavatism is also called Nārāyaṇīya or Ekāntika, as well as, Sāttvata or Pāñcarātra.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Vide, Bhattacharyya, H.(ed.), Op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 37

⁷¹ Vide, Kane, P.V., Op. cit., Vol. V, Part-II, p. 953

⁷² cf., *antarikṣagataḥ ko'yaṃ tapasā siddhimāgataḥ/ adhaḥ kāyordhvavakraśca netraiḥ samativāhyate// tataḥ paramadharmātmā triṣu lokeṣu viśrutaḥ/ bhāskaraṃ samudīkṣaṇca prānbhukho bhāgyato agamat/ śabdenākāśamakhilāṃ pūrayanniva sarvaśaḥ// Mbh., 12.340.16,17*

⁷³ Ibid., 12.340.19

⁷⁴ Ibid., 12.335.24,25

⁷⁵ Vide, Bhattacharyya, H.(ed.), Op. cit., Vol. IV, p.146

In the Bhāgavatism, an irreverent attitude towards the *varṇāśramadharmā* and the Brāhmaṇas was observed. The casteless tradition of Bhāgavatism was seen when the casteless foreigners were mentioned as admitted into the *Bhāgavata* fold. The foreigners accepted Vaiṣṇavism.⁷⁶ They were mentioned as sinners,⁷⁷ or mlecchas⁷⁸ or abrahmaṇya.⁷⁹ It is observed that, the common people were warned not to disclose the contents of the holy books to these casteless people.⁸⁰

Vaiṣṇavism: In the Vaiṣṇavism, Viṣṇu was regarded as the supreme divinity. The follower of this religion was called Vaiṣṇavas. The most important development of the system was the growth of the Pāñcarātra Saṁhitās. The Pāñcarātra Saṁhitās contained the complete exposition of the faiths, beliefs, and practices of the Vaiṣṇavas. The *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*⁸¹ was regarded as the earliest document of the Pāñcarātras. In the *Mahābhārata*, the seven Citra Śikhaṇḍin Ṛṣis were mentioned as the narrator of a *śāstra* along with the four Vedas containing one lakh of verses to direct the people both in activity and inactivity.⁸² The scripture composed by the Citra Śikhaṇḍin Ṛṣis was regarded as the forerunner of the *Pañcarātra Saṁhitā*.⁸³ The *Mahābhārata* itself admits that Pāñcarātra system was different from the Vedas and the

⁷⁶ cf., kirātahūṇāndhrapulindrapukvasābhīrasuhmā yavanāḥ khaśādayaḥ/ ye'nye ca pāpā yadyupāśrayāśrayāḥ śudh yanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ// Bhā. P., 2.4.18

⁷⁷ Ibid., 2.4.18; 2.7.46

⁷⁸ Viṣ. P., 5.38.28

⁷⁹ Ibid., 4.24.18

⁸⁰ Vāma. P., 103.69-70

⁸¹ Mbh., 12.335-351

⁸² cf., loka tantrasya kṛtsnasya yasmād dharmāḥ pravartate/... Ibid., 12. 335.39
loka dharmam anuttamam/ Ibid., 12. 335.29

⁸³ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p.198

Vedic tradition.⁸⁴ In the early Saṁhitās of this sect, the influence of the Vedas and the *varṇāśramadharmā*, etc., were seen hardly, which had decreased with the development of time in later date.

Śaivism: Śaivism was another semi-Vedic religious system prevalent in ancient India. Lord Śiva was regarded as the supreme deity in the Śaivism. This religious tradition did not recognise the *Veda* as authoritative and it had only a little place for the *varṇāśramadharmā* in early date. The irreverent character of Śaivism was seen in the dialogue between Dakṣa and Śiva in the *Mahābhārata* where Śiva is mentioned as the founder of the Pāśupata system, which was mostly contradictory to the rules of *varṇāśramadharmā*: *apūrvam sarvatobhadram viśvatomukham avyayam/ abhair dasārdha-samyuktaṁ gūḍham aprājñāninditam// varṇāśramakṛtairdharmairviparītaṁ kvacit samam/ gatām tairadhyavasitam atyāśramam idaṁ vratam// mayā pāśupatam dakṣa śubham utpāditam purā*⁸⁵ The Pāśupatas remained naked or used only a piece of rag called *kaupīna*.⁸⁶ The casteless foreigners were admitted into this fold and Śūdras and women were also allowed to have *dīkṣā* and worship lord Śiva. Different inscriptional records are sufficient to throw light on the worship of Lord Śiva among different tribes in ancient India. The dynasties like Śaka, Kuśāna, etc., those reigned over India from the 1st century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D., were either Śivaites or Buddhists.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ cf., *yūyam hi bhāvitā yajñaiḥ sarvayajñeṣu mānavaiḥ/ māṁ tato bhāvayiṣyadhvameṣā vo bhāvanā mama// ityartham nirmitā vedā yajñāścausadhibih saha/ ebhiḥ samyakprayuktairhiḥ prīyante devatāḥ// Mbh., 12. 349. 64,65*

⁸⁵ *Ibid., 12.284.121-124*

⁸⁶ *Kū.P., 1.33.8; 2.37.100*

⁸⁷ *Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p. 202*

Though the two sects, the Vaiṣṇavism and the Śaivism are non- Brāhmaṇical in character, yet among the early worshippers of these two sects there were some, who, believed the Vedas as authoritative and had great attraction towards the *varṇāśramadharmā* and the rules of Smṛtis. They were called as *Smārta* Vaiṣṇavas and *Smārta* Śaivas.

Besides the religions, called the Bhāgavatism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, there was also another one that inculcated the worship of Brahmā. No enough evidences of this sect are found in the earlier records. But, later on, in the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* and the *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* of *Padmapurāṇa*, a little about the Brāhma sect is found. This sect attached great importance to asceticism.

Non-Vedic Religious System:

There are found some other religious systems those are fully non-Vedic in character. Śaktism, Tāntricism, etc., are the non-Vedic religious system, prevalent in ancient India.

Śaktism: Śakti, the consort of Śiva is worshipped in Śaktism. It was the non-Vedic religious movement that grew and developed, prior to the Purāṇas. The term *śakti* represents the female divinity in general, and energising power of some divinity in particular.⁸⁸

Śaktism is based on the Sāṃkhya philosophy that believes the spirit or Puruṣa as inactive and Prakṛti as productive. Prakṛti is regarded as the ultimate material cause in Śaktism.⁸⁹ The Śakti makes the god active and effective. The worship of Śakti is accompanied with sacrifices of animals and occasionally of human beings. Besides this,

⁸⁸ Vide, Goyal, S.R, Op. cit., Vol. II, p.281

⁸⁹ Vide, Bhattacharyya, H.(ed.), Op. cit., Vol. IV, p.52

the *cakra pūja*, i.e. the circle worship is performed where an equal number of men and women sit round in a circle uttering mystic mantras, partaking *pañcatattva*, consisting of five elements, viz. wine, meat, fish, parched grain and sex.⁹⁰

Tantricism: Tantricism stood as an obstacle to the Brāhmaṇical religion. The proper time of its rising cannot be ascertained. It is purely non-Vedic in character. The ideas and practices of Tantricism are inclined towards the Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, Śaktism, etc. They are associated with the worship of Śiva or Śakti, etc., with different mūdrās, mantras, maṇḍalas, the five makāras, viz. *madya*, *māṃsa*, *matsya*, *mudrā* and *maithuna*, i.e. sexual intercourse, the *dakṣiṇamārga* and the *Vāmamārga* and magical practices for acquiring supernatural powers.⁹¹ According to some scholars, *Tantra* is magical, superstitious and obscene, whereas the others consider it as scientific and profoundly spiritual.⁹² The main topics dealt with in the Tantras are ascertainment of *mantra*, installation of deities, tīrthas, duties of the different āśramas, support of Brāhmaṇas, maintenance of other creatures, yantras, theogonic speculations, location of heavenly bodies, traditional history, vratas, cleanliness and uncleanness, delineation of hells, etc. These contents are classified into four padas, viz. *jñāna*, *yoga*, *kriyā* and *caryā*. *Jñāna* involves the philosophical and occult doctrines, *yoga* involves meditation to acquire magical powers, *kriyā* involves activities connected with temple building and idol-worship and *caryā* involves observances, rites, etc.⁹³

Instead of the mantras, the Tāntric mode of worship gives importance to the yantras that are the diagrams of symbolic interpretation of the body of the deity along

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Vide, Kane, P.V., Op. cit., Vol. V, Part-II, p. 1031

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Vide, Goyal, S.R., Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 389

⁹³ Ibid., p. 397

with his *bījamantra* drawn on paper or metal plate, or inscribed, or painted on a precious stone, *mudrās* and *nyāsas*. *Mudrās* are the special position of fingers and movements of hands while the *nyāsas* are the placement of different parts of the divine body on the different parts of one's own body by touching them with finger tips and the palm.

In its early date it did not recognise the *varṇāśramadharmā* and had not believed Veda as authoritative, but later on, such ideas also entered into it in little amount.

Religion of the Purāṇas:

With the downfall of the Buddhism and declination of the Jainism, the Vedic faith with sectarianism was reconciled and as a result of that, Purāṇic religion formed out with a strong position. As the Purāṇic religion preceded the Buddhism, Jainism or other anti-Vedic religious systems, non-Vedic systems like Tāntricism, Śaktism, etc. and the Vedic ideas of Brāhmaṇism, Bhāgavatism, the elements of all these, are found in the Purāṇic religion in a wholesome way. The Purāṇas, along with its five or ten characteristics, contain chapters on *varṇāśramadharmā*, *ācāra*, *śrāddha*, *prāyaścitta*, *dāna*, *pūjā*, *vrata*, *tīrthas*, *pūrtadharmā*, *pratiṣṭhā*, *dīkṣā*, *utsarga*, etc., and the glories of various deities, and thus contain the *Smṛti* codes or conduct.⁹⁴ They are mentioned along with the Dharmaśāstras and regarded as authoritative works on *dharma*.⁹⁵ But, gradually, the position of the Purāṇas as the Dharmaśāstras degraded and it turned into important codes of Hindu rites and customs by including chapters on different matters. With the growth of the sectarianism, along with the Vedic and *Smārta* matters, the

⁹⁴ Vide. Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p.5

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.6

Purāṇic texts contain some new ideas relating to *bhakti*, *pūjā*, *avatāra*, *vrata*, pilgrimage, etc. The Vedic and Brāhmanical tradition, those regarded as authoritative and divinely ordained have contributed a lot towards the development of the Purāṇic religion.

The religion of the *Veda* was reinstalled in the Purāṇas with some changes and additions fulfilling the demand of the changing time. The Vedic concept of *dharma* was very wide and in different senses, the term was used in the Vedas. But in the Purāṇas, the term *dharma* was generally used to denote religious practices and social customs. The *varṇāśramadharmā* was reinstalled in the Purāṇas. The Buddhists, the Jainas and some other pre-Purāṇic religious systems accepted the complete renunciation, i.e. *sannyāsa*, as the only way to attain the final emancipation. Unlike it, the Purāṇas accepted the four stages of life and prescribed the performances of the duties that ordained by the Smṛtis to follow in different stages of life, to reach to the stage of *sannyāsa*.⁹⁶ Besides this, continuing the Vedic tradition, they highly appreciated the *Gārhasthyāśrama*. The householder is mentioned as the source of the other three stages and known as the only means to attain *dharma* in the Purāṇas.⁹⁷ The manes are only pleased with the *śrāddha* that is performed by the person who is loyal to the duties of the stages of life and have acquired knowledge.⁹⁸ Seven acts are prescribed by the Purāṇas for man, viz. celibacy, penance, sacrifice, begetting children, funeral sacrifices, acquirement of learning, and making gifts of food throughout the whole life.⁹⁹ In the Vedic period, the Śūdras and the women had no right in the sacrificial performances.

⁹⁶ Devī Bhā. P., 1.18,19; Mār.P., 95

⁹⁷ Kū.P., 1.2.51,52

⁹⁸ Mat.P., 144.61; Vā.P., 56.68

⁹⁹ Mat.P., 141.61,62; Vā. P., 56.69-71

But the Jainas and the Buddhas had given greater freedom and facilities to them.¹⁰⁰ As an influence of it, in the Purāṇas, references are found of Śūdra's becoming the king by dint of the observation of vows and worship, e.g. Buddhadvādaśīvrata.¹⁰¹ King Nṛga, who was a Śūdra in his previous birth, performed this *vrata* and became the king in his next birth. To popularise the participation of women in religious matters, the Purāṇas have contained chapters on chaste and devoted wife.¹⁰² A wife is mentioned as the potent cause of righteousness, wealth and love among men, and in particular, one who forsakes her, has indeed abandoned righteousness. A wifeless man is not appreciated in the Purāṇas.¹⁰³

Due to the growth and development of the sectarianism, most of the deities of the Vedic period went to the backdrop and five deities, viz. Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā (Śakti), Sūrya and Gaṇeśa were worshipped as the prominent deities in the Purāṇas. They were called as *Pañcadeva*. The worship of the deities had given rise to independent cult, such as Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, Śaktism, the Solar-cult and the cult of Gaṇeśa, centering round the worship of the individual deities, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā or Śakti, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa, respectively. The Purāṇic religion is the sectarian religion where the personal gods were worshipped instead of the Vedic Brāhmaṇical community worship. The thirty-three numbers of the Vedic deities were transformed into thirty-three crores of gods in the Purāṇic religion.¹⁰⁴ Some of the Vedic concept relating to the deities, remained unchanged in the Purāṇas too, e.g. the twelve months of the year are said as symbolic

¹⁰⁰ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op cit., p.231

¹⁰¹ Varā. P., 47.20

¹⁰² Mār. P., 16.14

¹⁰³ Ibid., 71.9-11

¹⁰⁴ Vide, Goyal, S.R., Op. cit., Vol. II, p.73, fn.1

of the twelve Ādityas in the Purāṇas likewise the Vedas.¹⁰⁵ But in course of time, Āditya, who included both Indra and Viṣṇu, lost his importance; of Indra and Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu remained and in course of time, had given rise to Vaiṣṇavism. In the same way, the Vedic Prajāpati assimilated into Brahmā, the creator in the Purāṇas.¹⁰⁶

The three deities, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva or Maheśa, are connected in the Purāṇas, to the three cosmic principles, viz. creation, preservation and destruction. The three guṇas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas were mentioned as associated with them: *rajo brahmā tamo rudro viṣṇuḥ sattvaṃ jagatpatiḥ/ etā eva trayo devā eta eva trayo guṇāḥ*/¹⁰⁷ In the character of Brahmā, the Supreme Being creates mankind, then possessing an excess of goodness, he becomes Viṣṇu and protects them righteously; then associated with the Tamas, assuming the form of Rudra, dissolves the whole universe.¹⁰⁸ Besides the major sectarian gods, Purāṇas also introduce many minor gods, viz. Kārtikeya,¹⁰⁹ Kuvera,¹¹⁰ etc. Some local gods also occurred in the Purāṇic pantheon, like the village deities,¹¹¹ deities in the cremation ground,¹¹² etc. Thus, in the Purāṇas, thirty-three crores of deities occur, but, the oneness of the deity is understood with the passage of time, where the three principal forms of creation are worshipped as the manifestation of a single deity: *ekā mūrtistrayo bhāgā brahmāviṣṇumaheśvarāḥ*.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ Bhā.P., 12.11.32-46

¹⁰⁶ Vā.P., 1.5.40-45

¹⁰⁷ Mār.P., 43.18

¹⁰⁸ cf., *brahmatve sa prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā tataḥ sattvātirekavān/ viṣṇutvametya dharmeṇa kurute paripālanam// tatastamogaṇodrikto rudratve cākhilam jagat/ upasamhṛtya vai śete trailokyam triguṇo'guṇaḥ*// Ibid., 43.14,15

¹⁰⁹ Mat.P., 5.27; 53.61

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 67.15; Vi. P., 5.36.12

¹¹¹ Brahmāṇḍa P., 3.22.27

¹¹² Bhā.P., 4.1.34; Vā. P., 96.182

¹¹³ Mat.P., 3.16

In the Purāṇic religion, the elements of all kinds, from the primitive to advanced were found, e.g. ancestor worship found in *śrāddha*, Piṇḍapitṛyajña,¹¹⁴ spirit worship in the reference of Dākinīs, Sākinīs, Piścāsas,¹¹⁵ etc., worship of the Mother goddess observed in the reference of Pṛthivī,¹¹⁶ Aditi,¹¹⁷ Durgā,¹¹⁸ Kālī¹¹⁹ and Ambikā,¹²⁰ worship of the cultural heroes in the worship of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa,¹²¹ Pradyumna,¹²² Aniruddha,¹²³ Sāmba,¹²⁴ Vāmana,¹²⁵ tree worship in the worship of Bilva,¹²⁶ Tulasī,¹²⁷ etc., stone-worship in the worship of Śālagrāma, the stone-emblem of Viṣṇu, and Śivaliṅga.¹²⁸

Twofold devotees occurred in the Purāṇic period —firstly, the extreme sectarians, who confined their devotion and worship almost exclusively to their sectarian deity like Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti, etc., and secondly, the general followers of the Brāhmaṇical religion, those revered and worshipped all the deities though specially attached to a sectarian deity following some of the important Vedic rituals and

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 16.21; 17.4

¹¹⁵ Bhā.P., 10.6.27-29; 63.10,11

¹¹⁶ Mat.P., 10.1,35; 166.6; Vā. P., 42.78-81; 50.2-4

¹¹⁷ Bhā.P., 9.1.10; 6.6.25; Mat.P., 172.5; 179.15; 253.27

¹¹⁸ Bhā.P., 10.2.11; Mat.P., 93.16; 260.55-66

¹¹⁹ Brahmāṇḍa.P., 4.7.72; 44.59; Mat.P., 13.32; 172.19

¹²⁰ Bhā. P., 3.12.13; Mat.P., 58.26

¹²¹ Bhā. P., 10.8.14,19; Vā.P., 1.148

¹²² Bhā.P., 1.10.29; Vi.P., 4.15.37

¹²³ Mat.P., 47.23; 93.51

¹²⁴ Bhā.P., 1.10.29

¹²⁵ Ibid., 1.3.19; 2.7.17,18; Mat.P., 47.42-46, Viṣ.P., 3.1.42

¹²⁶ Mat.P., 13.31

¹²⁷ Bhā.P., 1.19.6; 5.3.6

¹²⁸ Mat.P., 13,33

practices. The Smārtas prescribed the regular worship of the five gods. Besides this, the rest of the Hindu pantheon was also freely worshipped.¹²⁹

In the Vedic period, emphasis was laid on the sacrificial activities or *karmakāṇḍa*, while in the Purāṇas, *bhakti* occupied the place of importance. *Bhakti* is one of the components of the Purāṇic religion. Sāṅḍilya, in his *Bhaktisūtra* defines *bhakti* as *sā parānuraktirīśvare*¹³⁰ The derivative meaning of it can be interpreted into two ways: firstly, the highest form of *bhakti* is affection fixed on god or secondly, *bhakti* is the highest affection fixed on god.¹³¹ *Prapatti*, i.e. the self-surrender is connected to it. The two terms *dhyāna* and *upāsana* are used as synonym of the term.¹³² Though the term *bhakti* occurs several times in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*,¹³³ but the great scholar D.C. Sircar holds it as an un-Āryan concept that gradually adopted by the mixed Ārya-non-Āryan population of the country, which cannot be a prominent feature of the Vedic religion as the Vedic religion was dominated by that of the sacrificial cult.¹³⁴

Bhakti is classified into several divisions. In the *Padmapurāṇa*,¹³⁵ the different divisions of *bhakti* are mentioned as, *laukikī bhakti* related to the common people, *vaidikī bhakti*, laid down by the Vedas, and *ādhyātmikī bhakti*, i.e. philosophical, or as *mānasī bhakti*, i.e. mental, *vācīkī bhakti*, i.e., verbal and *kāyīkī bhakti*, that is done with the body, such as fasts and vratas.¹³⁶ The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* classifies it into *sāttvikī*

¹²⁹ Radhakrishnan, S., Op.cit., Vol. I, p. 49

¹³⁰ Bh.S., 1.1.2

¹³¹ Vide, Kane, P.V., Op.cit, Vol. V, Part-II, p. 959

¹³² Vide, Ibid., Vol. V, Part-II, p. 960

¹³³ ṚV., 1.127.5, 8.27.11

¹³⁴ Vide, Goyal, S.R., Op. cit., Vol. II, p.91

¹³⁵ Padma P., 5.15.165-168

¹³⁶ Ibid., 5.15.165-168

bhakti, *rājasī bhakti* and *tāmasī bhakti*,¹³⁷ and into *uttamā* (best), *madhyamā* (middle) and *kañiṣṭha* (inferior).¹³⁸ The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* mentions that *bhakti* is of ninefolds, viz. *śravana* (hearing about Viṣṇu), *kīrtana* (repetition of the name of the deity), *smaraṇa* (remembering him), *pādasevana* (worshipping the feet of the image of Viṣṇu), *arcana* (offering *pūjā*), *vandana* (bowing or paying homage), *dāśya* (treating oneself as the slave of the deity), *sakhya* (treating him as a friend) and *ātmanivedana* (surrendering one's soul to him).¹³⁹ A devotee practising anyone of these can achieve the god.

Of the three *mārgas* that lead to the salvation or the final emancipation, viz. the *karmamārga*, the *bhaktimārga* and the *jñānamārga*, the *bhaktimārga* is referred to as the best *mārga*. In the *bhaktimārga*, the *bhakta* or devotee resigns himself to god's grace. In the *Śrīmadbhagavadgīta*, the supreme soul Lord Kṛṣṇa himself states *bhakti* as the best *mārga* for achieving him.¹⁴⁰ The devotees, who dedicate all their actions to god and regarding him as their highest goal, worship him, meditating on him with devotion towards none beside the deity, and whose minds are always placed on the Lord and without delaying, the Lord deliver them from the ocean of *samsāra* and death.¹⁴¹ The *karmamārga* leads to the salvation by means of the sacrificial performances, while the *jñānamārga* leads to the Brahman with the *brāhmīsthiti*, i.e. the state of identifying one with Brahman.¹⁴² *Bhakti* establishes a personal relationship in between the god and devotees. As a result of such relationship, miraculous element

¹³⁷ Bhā.P., 3.29.7-10

¹³⁸ Ibid., 3.34.38-41

¹³⁹ Ibid., 7.5.23,24

¹⁴⁰ ŚMG., 12

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 12.6,7

¹⁴² Ibid., 2.72

becomes prominent. The episode of Prahlāda, found in the Purāṇas, is the best example of it.¹⁴³ Pleased with the *bhakti* of the devotees, the Supreme Soul grants them the desired boons and protect them from every danger. The *japa*, *dhyāna*, *tīrthayātrās*, *dāna*, *pāṭha*, i.e. recitation, and *śravaṇa*, i.e. hearing of the sacred books were regarded as the act of devotion in the Purāṇas. The *Brahmapurāṇa* refers to that men, even after having committed many sins under the influence of error or delusion, do not go to hell, if they worship Hari, the remover of all sins. Those who always remember Janārdana, though they may be quietly of roguery, after their death, reach to the happy world of Viṣṇu. Even a man, habituated to flying into extreme rage, also reciting the name of Hari, attains *mukti* as his fault destroys at the grace of the Lord: *kṛtvāpi bahusāḥ pāpam narā mohasamanvitāḥ/ na yānti narakam natvā sarvapāpaharam harim/ śāvyenāpi narā nityam ye smaranti janārdanam/ tepi yānti tanum tyaktvā viṣṇulokamanāmayam// atyantakrodhasakto'pi kadācitkīrtayeddharim/ sopi doṣakṣayānmuktim labheccedipatiryathā//*¹⁴⁴ Again, both the *Vāmanapurāṇa* and *Padmapurāṇa* admit that, the same merit of visiting of all *tīrthas* and holy shrines are secured with the repetition of the names of Viṣṇu.¹⁴⁵

Besides the *bhakti*, another new addition in the Purāṇic religion is the introduction of the *avatāras* of the deities. The depiction of different *avatāras* is one of the specific characteristic of the religion. The term *avatāra* is derived from root *tr*, that along with the prefix *ava* gives the meaning descending or descent and applied to the gods, who assumed the form of a human being or even of an animal or birds and continued to live in that form up to the fulfilment of the purpose for which he had

¹⁴³ Viṣ.P., 17-20

¹⁴⁴ Brahma P., 2.16.87-89

¹⁴⁵ cf., *prthivyām yāni tīrthāni puṇyānyāyatanāni ca/ tāni sarvāṇyavāpnoti viṣṇornāmakīrtanāt//* Padma P., 6.245.85; Vāma. P., 94.63

assumed the form.¹⁴⁶ In the *Durgāsaptasatī* of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, the mother goddess declares that whenever trouble will arise, caused by the Dānavas, at each such time she will accomplish the foes' destruction incarnating her.¹⁴⁷ Whenever virtue declines and evil flourishes the divine entity incarnates him or her in human form or in the form of other creatures for the protection of holiness. The incarnations of the deities are mentioned as the re-installer of *dharma* and the performance of sacrifices: *jajñe punaḥ punarviṣṇuryajñe ca śithile prabhuḥ/ kartum dharmavyavasthānamadharmasya ca nāśanam*;¹⁴⁸ i.e. when sacrifices grew rare, Lord Viṣṇu was born again and again to establish *dharma*, destroying *adharmā*. The sectarian deities, i.e. fully personal and anthropomorphic gods and their incarnations were the object of *bhakti* in the Purāṇic religion.

The Purāṇic texts refer to different avatāras. Though variations are there in different Purāṇas regarding their names and forms, but ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are commonly mentioned in different Purāṇas.¹⁴⁹ The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, in one place, mentions twenty-two avatāras of Viṣṇu. They are: Brahmā, Vārāha, Nārada, Naranārāyaṇa, Kapila, Dattātreya, Yajñāvatāra, Ṛṣabhadeva, Pṛthu, Matsya, Kūrma, Dhanvantari, Mohinī, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Parāśara, Rāma, Balabhadra, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki.¹⁵⁰ Again, in another place, it mentions twenty-three avatāras including Hayagrīva.¹⁵¹ Sixteen avatāras, viz. Matsya, Kūrma, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Balabhadra, Varāha, Rāma, Buddha, Kalki, Haṁsa, Dattā, Kumāra i.e.

¹⁴⁶ Kane, P.V., Op. Cit., Vol. V, Part-II, p. 992

¹⁴⁷ cf., *itthaṁ yadā yadā bādhā dānavoṭthā bhaviṣyati/ tadā tadāvatīryāhaṁ kariṣyāmyarisamkṣayam//* Mār.P., 88.51

¹⁴⁸ Vā.P., 98.69

¹⁴⁹ Mat.P., 285.6,7; Varā.P., 4.2; 48.17-22; 55.36,37 and so on.

¹⁵⁰ Bhā. P., 1.3.1-25

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 2.7.11

Nārada, Rṣabha, Vyāsa are also mentioned in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and along with Hayagrīva also, the avatāras are mentioned in the same *Purāṇa*. Again the *Vāyupurāṇa* mentions twenty-eight avatāras of Lord Śiva.¹⁵²

There are references of amśāvatāras or kalāvatāras in the Purāṇas. In the *Durgāsaptasatī*, the supreme mother is mentioned as helped by the different amśāvatāras, those indeed are the different manifestations of the deity. In the Purāṇic religious history, the doctrine of *avatāra*, occupied a specific place. One of the principal aims of any religion, to bring unity in the society, in against to the diversity, was partially fulfilled by such *avatāravāda*. The use of image and temples are common in their worship.

With the rise and development of *bhakti*, in the Purāṇic religion developed the idea of *pūjā*. The *Paurāṇikapūjā* was different from that of the Vedic *yajña*. The mode and method of both the rituals were different. Instead of twelve or sixteen priests, the *pūjā* was performed by only one priest; sometimes with one or two assistants. Sixteen upacāras, viz. *āvāhana*, *āsana*, *pādya*, *arghya*, *ācamana*, *snāna*, *vastra*, *yajñopavīta*, *anulepana* or *gandha*, *puṣpa*, *dhūpa*, *dīpa*, *naivedya*, *tāmbūla*, *dakṣiṇā* and *pradakṣiṇa* were used there in the *pūjā*. The offering of *puṣpa*, *gandha*, *dhūpa*, *dīpa* and *naivedya* were unknown in the Vedic period.¹⁵³ They were the later innovations in the age of the Purāṇas.¹⁵⁴ The concept of *upācāra* was of Vedic origin, as the term *upācāra* is used in the sense of ‘honour’ or ‘mode of showing honour’ in the Vedic texts.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Vā.P., 23

¹⁵³ Vide. Kane, P.V., Op. cit., Vol. V, Part-I, p.35

¹⁵⁴ Goyal, S.R., Op. cit., Vol. II, p.117

¹⁵⁵ ŚB.,1.1.1.11

The Purāṇic religion introduced the worship of images of different deities. J.N. Banerjea holds that *pratimā* and *sandrś* as used for symbolic representation of divinities, those were not associated with particular cults, but in course of time acquired the significance of *arcā*, i.e. the object of regular worship.¹⁵⁶ Pāṇini in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* uses two terms *pratimā* and *pratikṛti* probably for images of gods.¹⁵⁷ The Vedic scholars like Max Müller, Wilson, Macdonell, etc., had remarked that the Āryans knew no image worship or temple, as it was the religion of the yajñas. But in against to it, Bollensen and a group of scholars have pointed out that in the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, gods were often described as *divo naras* or *naras* and mentioned was made of their *vapuḥ*, *tanu*, *rūpa*, etc., that presupposes the image worship in the Vedic period.¹⁵⁸ Again, several Ṛgvedic passages refer to the images of gods and in a passage, reference is made of the kartā of Indra (RV., 4.17.4). Again the term *vṛttāni* is found, used in the plural form for the Vṛtta, the foe of Indra in several passages, which may also indicate the various images of Vṛtta. The Vedic gods were supposed to have two types of bodies: abstract and finite. Images were regarded as the temporary finite resting place of the abstract body. In a passage in the *Atharvaveda* (AV., 7.31), the deity was worshipped by his worshippers to enter into the concrete body with his real body.¹⁵⁹ J.N. Banerjea has denied the matter and remarks that there was no place for image-worship in early Vedic religion.¹⁶⁰ According to him, the anthropomorphic interpretation of the deities cannot be the proof of image worship of the deities, as even Yāska, in the discussion of the form of gods, clearly states them as *apauruṣavidhāḥ*.

¹⁵⁶ Goyal, S.R., Op. cit., Vol. II, p.128

¹⁵⁷ Aṣṭā., 5.3.96; 5.3.99

¹⁵⁸ Vide, Banerjea, J.N., *Development of Hindu Iconography*, pp.48-49

¹⁵⁹ Vide, Ibid., p.50-51

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p.73

Again, in the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtras also, yajñas are described in detail and there is no mention of the *arcā* and no record of temples or images worship.¹⁶¹

Vratas occupied a specific place in the Purāṇic religion. The term *vrata* is used in the sense of religious undertaking or vow in which one has to observe certain restrictions about food or one's general behaviour.¹⁶² Apte has mentioned that a *vrata* comprehends several items such as *snāna*, the morning prayer, *sandhyā*, *saṅkalpa*, *homa*, *pūjā* of the deity or deities in whose honour, or for securing whose favour, the *vrata* is undertaken, *upavāsa*, feeding of Brāhmaṇas, maiden or married women or the poor or helpless (according to the nature of the *vrata*), gifts (of cows, money, apparel, sweetmeats) and the observance of certain rules of conduct during the period of *vrata*.¹⁶³ The matter becomes more clear with the observations of R.C. Hazra, according to whom, the main component parts of a *vrata* are generally selection of a proper *tithi*, determination of taking the vow, lying on the ground, bath, appointment of Brāhmaṇas as priest, muttering (*japa*), offering oblations to the fire (*homa*), fasting, abstinence (especially from food), making gifts, feeding Brāhmaṇas, keeping awake during the night and listening to tales, i.e. *ākhyānaśravaṇa*.¹⁶⁴ On certain *tithi*, week day, month or other period, a *vrata* is observed for securing some desired object by the worship of a deity, usually accompanied by restrictions as to food and behaviour.¹⁶⁵ Ordaining the rules of *vrata* the *Agnipurāṇa* states that one who undertakes a *vrata* must always take a bath everyday, should subsist on a limited quantity of food, should worship and honour his *guru*, gods and Brāhmaṇas and should avoid *kṣāra*, i.e. saline,

¹⁶¹ Vide. Goyal, S.R., Vol. II, pp.129,130

¹⁶² Mbh., 12.35.39; 13.103.34

¹⁶³ Vide, Kane, P.V., Op. cit., Vol. V, Part-I, p.31

¹⁶⁴ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op.cit., p.240

¹⁶⁵ Vide, Kane, P.V., Op. cit., Vol. V, Part-I, p. 28

kṣaudra, i.e. species of honey, *lavaṇa*, i.e. salt, *madhu*, i.e. honey and *māmsa*, i.e. meat: *nityasnāyī mitāhāro gurudevadvijārcakah/ kṣāramkṣaudram ca lavaṇam madhumāmsāni varjayet*¹⁶⁶ The Purāṇic texts tried their best to popularise the vows. The *Matsyapurāṇa* prescribes the observance of vows without any discrimination.¹⁶⁷ The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* states that, the vows along with the upavāsas and niyamas, are the boats to cross the deep ocean of hells.¹⁶⁸ The vows are closely associated with the dānas. They are offered observing the vows or vratas, on occasion of funeral ceremonies, etc.

The Purāṇas glorify the greatness of gifts with the sayings that *dānam ekam kalau yuge*,¹⁶⁹ *dānadharmāt paro dharmo bhūtānām neha vidyate*,¹⁷⁰ etc. The making of gift is the only pity in the Kali age. The creatures have no other piety on earth than that of the *dāna*. By making gifts, one occupies health, wealth, a beautiful wife and children on earth and after death attains *Brahmaloka*, *Viṣṇuloka*, etc.¹⁷¹ The person, who never donates, becomes unable to get those things in the next world.¹⁷² The Purāṇic texts were familiar with the great varieties of gifts. Along with the land, gold, silver, etc., Purāṇas mention about the gift of artificial cow, made of paddy, raw sugar (*guḍa*), sesamum, water, ghee, etc., of hillock, made of gold, silver, gems, salts, sesamum, ghee, sugar, cotton, etc.; of tulāpuruṣa, kalpapurūṣa, pādapa, kāmadhenu, horse, universe, earth, horse and chariot, elephant and chariot, five ploughs, kalpalatā,

¹⁶⁶ Agni P., 175.12

¹⁶⁷ Mat.P., 70.32

¹⁶⁸ Bhavi.P., 4.7.1

¹⁶⁹ Kū.P., 1.28.17; Vā. P., 68.8

¹⁷⁰ Kū.P., 2,26.56

¹⁷¹ Mat.P., 206.30

¹⁷² Padma P., 1.31.124

cows, etc., all made of gold; and so forth.¹⁷³ The references are found in the Purāṇas of the process of making the *guḍadhenudāna*, i.e. the gift of a cow made of raw sugar,¹⁷⁴ the *dhānyācaladāna*, i.e. the gift of a hillock made of paddy,¹⁷⁵ etc. Among different dānas, the gift of food and the gifts to the Brāhmaṇas are regarded as the best. The distribution of the food, particularly offered to the learned Brāhmaṇas is highly praised in the Purāṇas: *sarveṣāmeva dānānāmannaṁ śreṣṭhamudāhṛtam/...prāṇā hyannaṁ manuṣyāṇām tasmājjantuḥ prajāyate// anne pratiṣṭhitā lokāstasmādannaṁ praśasyate/...annasya hi pradānena svargamāpnoti mānavaḥ/...nyāyenāvāptamannaṁ tu harṣa samanvitaḥ/ dvijebhyo vedavṛddhebhyo datvā pāpātpramucyate*¹⁷⁶ Among all gifts, the gift of food is superior to all; food is the life of men and from food all beings spring forth. The world is dependent on it and by the gift of food, man secures heaven. It makes the man free from sin also when given to the Brāhmaṇas, deeply learned in the Vedas. The Purāṇas deal with the occasion of making the gifts according to which the great gifts should be made on the days of the *Ayana*, *Viṣuvan*, *Vyatipāta*, *Dinakṣaya*, *Yugādi* and *Manvantaras*, on *Samkrānti*, *Vaidhṛti*, *Caturdaśī*, *Aṣṭamī*, *Śuklapañcadaśī*, *Parvan* days, *Dvādaśī*, etc.¹⁷⁷ According to their qualities or conditions, different kinds of recipients of gifts are introduced in the Purāṇas, e.g. *Śrotriya* (versed in Śruti), *Kulīna* (of high lineage), *Vinīta* (well disciplined), *Vratastha* (observing a vow), *Tapasvin* (practicing penance), etc.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p.247

¹⁷⁴ Mat.P., 82.3-10

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 83.12-26

¹⁷⁶ Brahma P., 218.10-13,22-23

¹⁷⁷ Mat.P., 274.19-23

¹⁷⁸ Kū.P., 2.26.11, 14; Mat.P., 72.35; 97.15; Varā. P., 50.15,16

Purāṇic Religion and Its Link to the Vedic Tradition:

The Vedas and the Purāṇas are closely related to each other. The Purāṇas regard the Vedas as the source of *dharma*, and the sacrifices, etc., those ordained by the *Śruti*, and the *Smṛiti* are also called the *dharma*.¹⁷⁹ But, the *dharma*, that are dealt with in other texts are only the shadow of it.¹⁸⁰ In earlier period, the Purāṇas were regarded as inferior, in comparison to the Vedas; but in course of time, the position of the Purāṇas were upgraded, and it became the soul of *dharma*, while the *Śruti* and the *Smṛiti* became the eyes of it.¹⁸¹ The sacredness of the Purāṇas are well established when it is referred to that the reading of the Purāṇas or listening to a recitation of the Purāṇas destroys all types of sin.¹⁸²

The Purāṇic religion is highly influenced by the Vedic tradition. The prevalence of the Vedic sacrifices in the Purāṇic period can be proved with its narration in several Purāṇas. The *Agnipurāṇa* mentions that the Ṛc, Yajus and Sāmans are created for the accomplishment of the sacrifices: *ṛco yajumsi sāmāni nirmame yajñasiddhaye*¹⁸³ Again, in the *Matsyapurāṇa*, Śakra says Bali about the gods' partaking of their shares in the sacrifices on the authority of the Vedas.¹⁸⁴ The Purāṇas glorify the sacrifices too much that the Vena's destruction at the hands of his subjects is shown as the result of

¹⁷⁹ Kū.P., 1.12.251,252

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 1.16.115-117; Devī Bhā. P.,7.39.16

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 11.1.21-23

¹⁸² cf., sarvapāpaharam puṇyam pavitraṁ ca yaśasvi ca/ brahmā dadau śāstramidaṁ purāṇaṁ mātarīśvane// Vā. P., 103.58
purāṇasamhitā ceyam tava bhūpa mayoditā/ sarvapāpaharā nityamārogya śrīphalaprada// Mat.P., 290.20

¹⁸³ Agni P., 17.13

¹⁸⁴ cf., yajñabhāgabhujo devā vedaprāmānyato'suraḥ/ Mat.P.,246.14

the evil- deed, done by Vena, with banning of sacrificial performances in the kingdom.¹⁸⁵

The Purāṇas treat the Vedas as authoritative and enjoin the employment of many Vedic mantras in many rites. For example, following the Vedic tradition, the Purāṇas prescribe *homa* oblation towards the nine planets with the employment of nine Vedic mantras.¹⁸⁶ Again, the *homa* is prescribed when inauspicious birds or animals cry near the house or enter into it: *mṛgapakṣivikāreṣu kuryāddhomam sadakṣiṇam*¹⁸⁷ Five Brāhmaṇas should be engaged in a *japa*¹⁸⁸ for muttering *devāḥ kapota*, etc.¹⁸⁹ The whole procedure of establishment of images of gods or the *liṅga* involve several Vedic mantras.¹⁹⁰ In the purification of the image, four Vedic mantras are employed.¹⁹¹ Again, two mantras¹⁹² are applied at the time of placing of a jar, full of water, near the head of the bed on which the image is to be placed. The *Agnipurāṇa*, in the procedure of building a temple, prescribes the recital of different Vedic mantras.¹⁹³ Along with the Vedic mantras, the *Paurāṇika* mantras are also applied in religious rites. The Viśvedevaḥ are invited to come to the *śrāddha* with the employment of the *Ṛkmantra* that is interpreted by Griffith as O Viśvedevaḥ, come hitherward, hear my invocation, seat yourselves upon this sacred grass.¹⁹⁴ Along with the *mantra*, the *Paurāṇikamantra*,

¹⁸⁵ Viṣ.P., 1.13

¹⁸⁶ Mat.P., 93

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 237.13

¹⁸⁸ cf., *devāḥ kapota iti vā japtavyāḥ pañcabhirdvijaiḥ*/ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ ṚV., 10.165.1-5

¹⁹⁰ Mat.P., 265

¹⁹¹ ṚV., 7.49.1,2,3; 10.9.1

¹⁹² VS., 12.35; TS.,4.2.32

¹⁹³ ṚV., 10.9.1-3, 10; 10.9.4; VS., 4.36 and so on

¹⁹⁴ Griffith on ṚV., 2.41.13

āgacchantu mahābhāgā is also applied.¹⁹⁵ The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* prescribes one hundred and eighty-four *Paurāṇika* verses along with the Vedic mantras in the procedure of coronation.¹⁹⁶

The doctrine of the *bhakti* perhaps originates following the Vedic tradition, about the loving faith in god. In a R̥gvedic passage, the devotee worships the god with the words ‘In perfect unison, all yearning hymns of mine that find the light of heaven have sung forth Indra’s praise; as wives embrace their lords, the comely bridegrooms, so they compass Maghavan about that he may help.’¹⁹⁷ Again, the *sakhyabhakti* is observed when under the purview of friendship, the deity, to fulfil the longing of Horse, himself becomes a horse: *dūṇāśam sakhyam tava gaurasi vīra gavyate/ asvo asvāyate bhava//*¹⁹⁸

The Vedic texts were familiar with the word *vrata*, but it was not *niyama* in the Vedas like the Purāṇas. *Niyama* means the observance of the strict restrictive rules. The *Agnipurāṇa* states the *vrata* or vow as the restrictive rule enjoined by the Śāstras.¹⁹⁹ The *vratas* are always associated with the *homa* and *pūjā*. The method of *homa*, etc., that is performed along with the *vratas* are similar to the Vedic sacrifices. The *Kalyāṇinīvrata*,²⁰⁰ *Ādityaśayanavrata*,²⁰¹ etc., possess most of the elements from the Vedas.

¹⁹⁵ cf., *āgacchantu mahābhāgā viśvadevāḥ mahābalāḥ/ ye yatra vihitāḥ śrāddhe sāvadhānā bhavantu te//*
Garuḍa P., 1.218.7

¹⁹⁶ Vi.Dh.P., 2.21

¹⁹⁷ Griffith on R̥V., 10.43.1

¹⁹⁸ R̥V., 6.45.26

¹⁹⁹ Agni P., 175.2

²⁰⁰ Mat.P., 69

²⁰¹ Ibid., 55.18

Right from the time of the Vedas, a tradition of *dāna* is maintained in religious circumstances. References are found of extracting the highest amount of the priestly fees from their clients by the Vedic priests.²⁰² The act of making gifts was looked upon as religious in the Vedas but the Vedic texts were not familiar with the great variety of gifts like that of the Purāṇas. the Dānastutis of the *Ṛgvedasamhitā* and others mention only of the simple gifts of the land, gold, silver, cows, horses, houses, clothes, food, drink, etc.²⁰³ But, in the Purāṇas, such simple form of gifts were transformed into the gifts of artificial cows made of paddy, raw sugar (*guḍa*), sesamum, etc. Again, the glorification of the gift of *anna* as the *śreṣṭhadāna* in the Purāṇic age is indeed the continuation of the Vedic tradition of making the gift of *anna*. The Vedas praise the gift of food and mentions it as the highest offering.²⁰⁴

The Purāṇas discuss almost all the topics those are discussed in the Vedas. Besides the sacrifices, *japa*, *homa*, *dāna*, *vratas*, etc., they contain the discussions on *ahiṃsa*,²⁰⁵ *pūrtadharmā*,²⁰⁶ etc., which, in origin the repetition of the Vedic tradition. The *pūrtadharmā* involves in it works of public utility, charity, social service and the relief of the poor and the distressed. In the Vedas, the word *iṣṭāpūrta* occurs.²⁰⁷ In the *Ṛgvedasamhitā*, the terms *iṣṭa*²⁰⁸ and *pūrta*²⁰⁹ occur separately; of which *iṣṭa* means sacrifice and *pūrta* directs the works such as digging a well or tank, etc. The Purāṇas

²⁰² Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p.247

²⁰³ ṚV., 4.15.7; 5.30.15; 5.36.6; 6.45.31;6.47.23,24;

²⁰⁴ annam śritāni bhūtāni annam prāṇamiti śrutiḥ/ tasmādannaṃ pradātavyamannaṃ hi paramam haviḥ/
Bau. DS., 2.3.68

²⁰⁵ Liṅga P.,8.8,9; Mat.P., 52.8-11, Vāma.P., 14.1,2,

²⁰⁶ Agni P., 209.2.3

²⁰⁷ Chā. U., 5.10.3; Praśna U., 1.9

²⁰⁸ ṚV., 10.11.2

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 6.16.18; 8.46.21

also deal with such topics following the Vedic order. In the *Mārkaṇḍeyaprāṇa*, the very characteristics of *iṣṭāpūrta* is cited as, *agnihotraṁ tapaḥ satyaṁ vedānāṁ caiva sādhanam/ ātithyaṁ vaiśvadevaṁ ca iṣṭamityabhidhīyate// vāpīkūpataḍḍāgāni devatāyatanāni ca/ annapradānamarthibhyaḥ pūrtamityabhidhīyate//*²¹⁰ Here, in this verse, both the *iṣṭa* and *pūrta* are distinguished—maintaining the sacred fires, tapas, truthfulness, study of the *Veda*, hospitality and Vaiśvadeva are called *iṣṭa* and digging of wells and tanks, and building of temples, distribution of food to the needy people are *pūrtas*.

In the Purāṇas, instead of the sacrifices, emphasis is laid on the greatness of pilgrimages, sacred bath, etc. According to the Purāṇas, the sacrificial rites with inanimate things, i.e. fuel-sticks, flowers and Kuśa-grass always produce inanimate results.²¹¹ The *Padmapurāṇa* contains a verse that extols the greatness of pilgrimage and sacred bath by saying that merely going to the Gaṅgā or by taking a sacred bath in the Phalgu river, one secures the merit of performance of Aśvamedha.²¹² Besides this, the pilgrimage, vratas, etc. are prescribed as because they are advantageous for the poor.²¹³

Non- Vedic Elements in the Purāṇic Religion:

As the Purāṇic religion is a composite religion, besides the Vedic elements, in the Purāṇas, elements of Śaivism, Śaktism, Tantricism, etc., are found. The influence of Tantricism in the Purāṇas can be apprehended with the references of worshipping the

²¹⁰ Mār. P., 16.123,124

²¹¹ cf., *avidyāntargatairyajñakarmabhirna prayojanam/ mama hiṁsātmakairasti niḡamoktairacetanañ// samitpuṣpakuśaprāyayaiḥ sādhanairyadyacetanañ// kriyate tattathā bhāvi kāryaṁ kāraṇavannṛṇām/* Ibid., 1.2.13.59,60

²¹² Padma P., 1.38.2

²¹³ Mat.P., 99.17,18; 112.12-15

gods and of Viṣṇu in *Vaidikī*, *Tāntrikī* or *Miśra* mode of worship: *vaidikastāntriko miśro viṣṇorvai trividho makhaḥ/ trayāṅāmīpsitenaikavidhinā harimarcayet*²¹⁴ Of these, the first and the third are prescribed for the three higher varṇas, and the *Tāntrikī* for the Śūdras. References are found of *Tāntrikī Dīkṣā* also in the Purāṇas.²¹⁵ Again, *Mantra-nyāsa*,²¹⁶ the drawing of coloured lotuses or circle during worship or observance of vows, consecration,²¹⁷ etc. prove the existence of *Tāntrika* elements in the Purāṇic religion. The method of bath without which no one can take participation in any religious performances is indeed full of Tāntric practices.²¹⁸ Furthermore, the *Agnipurāṇa* contains a list of articles required for *Vaśīkaraṇa*.²¹⁹ The growth of sectarianism is one of the special features in the Purāṇic religion. The Vaiṣṇavism, Śaktism, etc., are developed into individual cult in the Purāṇic period. The direct influence of these are found in the *Vaiṣṇava*, *Śaiva* and *Śākta* Purāṇas

Growth of the Purāṇic Texts for Propitiating the Sun-god:

The Sun-god is worshipped under different names and forms in the Vedic and the Purāṇic texts. Due to his greatness, the deity was worshipped as a prominent deity in the Vedas. But the Sun-worship as a cult and sect became established only in the Epic-Purāṇic age.²²⁰ From numerous evidences, it becomes clear that the worshipping of the Sun-god is an ancient tradition. The Vedic literature contains its proof. But it cannot be denied that an indigenous school of Sun worshipper might be there in India

²¹⁴ Agni P., 372.34

²¹⁵ Bhā.P., 11.11.37

²¹⁶ Mat.P., 266.29,30

²¹⁷ Ibid., 58.21,22; 62.16-19

²¹⁸ Vide, Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., p.219

²¹⁹ Agni P., 123.28-34

²²⁰ Goyal, S.R., Op. cit., Vol. II, p.330

from the pre-Vedic times.²²¹ Again, there had been a foreign tradition of Sun-worship too, i.e. the Magian tradition, quite popular in the society from 1st century A.D. onwards.²²² During the post-Vedic period, prior to the Purāṇas, an indigenous Sun- sect was prevalent in India that found its expression in the Epics. The Sun-sect called the Sauras was very familiar in the *Mahābhārata*: *sahasrānucarān saurāṅsahasraṁ cāṣṭa cāparān*/²²³ It refers to thousand and eight others present there in the camp of the Pāṇḍus, who were the worshippers of the Sun. The *Mahābhārata* mentions about a secret *Veda* of the Sun that was taught to Arvāvasu.²²⁴ It can be inferred from the reference that the Sauras developed a *Veda* of their own that was different from the traditional Vedas. Again in the *Mahābhārata*, a hymn dedicated towards the Sun-god possessing hundred and eight names of the deity is found.²²⁵ According to it, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Skanda, Yama, etc., all are the names of the Sun. Sun-god is mentioned as the highest god, the lord of Manus and Manvantars in the work.²²⁶ The Epic *Rāmāyaṇa* contains the *Ādityahṛdayamantra*,²²⁷ that is devoted to the sun. The Sun-god has been identified, with all the great divinities and mentioned as the lord of even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.²²⁸ He is worshipped as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of all creatures.²²⁹

²²¹ Vide, Srivastava, V.C., *Sun-worship in Ancient India*, p. 204

²²² Banerjea, J.N., Op. cit, p.433

²²³ Mbh., 7.82.16

²²⁴ cf., rahasyavedaṁ kṛtavān sūryasya dvijottamaḥ/ Ibid, 3.138.18

²²⁵ Ibid, 3.3.16-28

²²⁶ cf., dṛśvarāṇām tvamīśvaraḥ/ Ibid, 3.3.56

²²⁷ Rāmā., 6.105

²²⁸ cf., *brahmeśānacuteśāya sūrāyādityavarcase*/ Ibid, 6.105.19

²²⁹ Ibid, 6.105.22

Not only among the Āryans, but among the non-Āryan tribes also, the indigenous tradition of Sun-worship was prevalent. The Magas of the Śākadvīpa, mentioned earlier, are the best example of it. In the *Mahābhārata*, the reference of Magas, the fire Sun worshipping priests are found.²³⁰ They are mentioned along with the other three tribes of Śākadvīpa in the *Mahābhārata*. Besides this, the Siddhas, the Cāraṇas, the Gandharvas, the Yakṣas, the Guhyakas, the Nāgas, the Asuras and the Rākṣasas are mentioned in the text those adored the Sun.²³¹

In the Purāṇas, the worship of the deity has given rise to independent cult, called the Sun-cult, one of the five cardinal cults of Paurāṇika Hinduism. Both the Mahāpurāṇas and the Upapurāṇas contain the eulogy of the Sun-god. But especially, it was the *Sāmbapurāṇa* that principally dealt with the cult of the Sun. R.C. Hazra in his work *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, enumerates the chapters and extracts, which deal with the method and praise of the Sun-worship.²³² He has given also the names of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, the *Brahmapurāṇa*, the *Skandapurāṇa*, the *Varāhapurāṇa*, the *Matsyapurāṇa*, the *Agnipurāṇa*, the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, the *Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa*, the *Kālikāpurāṇa* and so on. Besides this, the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* contains chapters in praise of the Sun-god along with some stories of the Sun. Again, references are found in the Purāṇic texts, and in some other works relating to the cult whose present existence cannot be traced out.

The *Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa* refers to the *Mārtaṇḍapurāṇa*.²³³ It was one of the Saurapurāṇas that dealt with the *sauravrata*. But the text is not available to us. Again, the *Ādityapurāṇa* was one of the earliest and most popular Upapurāṇas that dealt with

²³⁰ Ibid, 6.2.36

²³¹ Mbh., 3.3.29,40

²³² Vide, Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, Vol. I, p. 29

²³³ Bhavi.P., 4.121.1,2

the sun-cult.²³⁴ The name of the *Purāṇa* occurs in the list of the major *Purāṇas*, given by Alberuni also which he had prepared on the basis of his knowledge of the names of the *Purāṇas* from different sources.²³⁵ He had made the translations of some verses of the *Ādityapurāṇa* also, those are used by several *Nibandhas*, *Smṛtis*, etc., on the later date. These verses are devoted to the worship of the Sun. The *Skandapurāṇa*²³⁶ and the *Matsyapurāṇa*²³⁷ contain the name of this *Purāṇa*. Besides this, the name of the *Ādityapurāṇa* occurs in the list of the eighteen minor *Purāṇas* that has been presented by the *Devībhāgavata*.²³⁸ According to it, the *Ādityapurāṇa* is a very extensive work.²³⁹ The *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* mentions that the *Ādityapurāṇa* elaborately describes Gāyatrī's appearance, colour, etc.²⁴⁰ Besides these, different *vratas* related to the Sun-cult, viz. *Putra-saptamīvrata*, *āṣāḍa-śuklā-saptamīvrata*, etc., were discussed in it.²⁴¹ It is difficult to find out whether the *Ādityapurāṇa* was sectarian or non-sectarian *Purāṇa*, as it exhibits non-sectarian character dealing with Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā, etc., also along with the Sun-cult. Dealing with the matter, R.C. Hazra opines ' We do not know definitely to which sect the *Ādityapurāṇa* originally belonged or whether it was a non-sectarian work.' In the comparatively early *nibandhas* there is a large number of extracts, quoted from the *Ādityapurāṇa* in which the worship of the Sun has been prescribed, on the other hand, Viṣṇu worship is recommended and praised in some of its verses.²⁴²

²³⁴ Vide, Hazra, R.C. Op. cit., Vol. II, p.491

²³⁵ Kane, P.V., Op. cit., Vol. V, Part-II, pp. 831-832

²³⁶ Sk.P., 7.1.2-79,83

²³⁷ Mat.P., 53.59-63

²³⁸ Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., Vol. II, p.491

²³⁹ Devī Bhā.P., 1.3.15

²⁴⁰ Brahmāṇḍa P., 3.2.31

²⁴¹ Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., Vol. II, 495-499

²⁴² Ibid., p.494

The *Bhāskarāhva* is another minor *Purāṇa* that propitiates the Sun-worship. Raghunandana has given the name of this *Purāṇa* in a list of the *Upapurāṇas* that he had derived from the *Kaurmapurāṇa*.²⁴³

One of the famous *Purāṇas*, related to the Sun cult is the *Saurapurāṇa*. Though the very name of the *Purāṇa* suggests the solar character of the *Purāṇa*, but it deals mainly with the Śiva and his glories. R.C. Hazra has made a significant remark in this regard that, besides the present *Saurapurāṇa*, which is a Śaiva work, there was an earlier *Saura Purāṇa* which is now lost.²⁴⁴ Indeed, it is difficult to determine that all these minor *Purāṇas* were all together different works of one and the same work was called by different authors by different names.²⁴⁵ With his keen observation, R.C. Hazra holds both the *Saura* and *Mārtaṇḍa* as different *Purāṇas* as because there is no similarity in between the *vratas* discussed in both the two works.²⁴⁶

Besides these, there is another minor *Purāṇa*, deals with the Sun-cult. It is named as *Uttara Saura*. Only the reference of this *Purāṇa* is found.²⁴⁷

The *Saura dharma* dealing with the Sun-worship, is another minor *Purāṇa* that propitiates the Sun-cult. The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* narrates the solar character of this *Purāṇa*.²⁴⁸ Some passages of this *Purāṇa* are quoted in different *Smṛtis*.

The *Sāmbapurāṇa* is the great work dealing with Sun worship. It is one of the minor *Purāṇas* that contains the chapters on the development of solar worship to the independent cult of worshipping the deity. The *Sāmbapurāṇa* gives the information

²⁴³ Ibid., p.491

²⁴⁴ Vide, Ibid., p.511

²⁴⁵ Pandey, Lalita Prasad, *Sun-Worship in Ancient India*, p. 153

²⁴⁶ Hazra, R.C., Op. cit., Vol. II, p.390

²⁴⁷ Vide, Pandey, Lalita Prasad, Op. cit., p. 154

²⁴⁸ Bhavi P., 1.1.4-8; 76-89

about the modes of worship of the deity,²⁴⁹ about the making of the image of the deity,²⁵⁰ about the construction of the temples,²⁵¹ bringing of the Magas for worshipping the Sun-god,²⁵² etc. As a whole, the overall development of Sun-cult is discussed in the *Sāmbapurāṇa*.

According to the *Sāmbapurāṇa*, Sāmba, the son of Kṛṣṇa, was cursed by Kṛṣṇa to become an ugly leper. Sāmba appeased Nārada, who advised to worship the Sun-god to get rid of his disease. Sāmba went to the great river Candrabhāgā and then to Mithravana and worshipping the deity there, he got cured. Sāmba established a city called Sāmbapura in the Mithravana on the bank of the river Chandrabhāgā.²⁵³ He was advised to establish a Sun-image on the bank of the river by the Sun-god. But an image of the deity was found in the river itself. Sāmba erected a temple and at the advice of Nārada and Sun, brought eighteen families of the Magas from the Śākadvīpa. The scholars generally identify the Sāmbapura with Multān.²⁵⁴

The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* is another *Purāṇa* that deals with the Sun-cult. This *Purāṇa* is closely associated with the *Sāmbapurāṇa*, in its content and narration. It also gives an account of the origin of the cult,²⁵⁵ the solar deity and his associates,²⁵⁶ the mode of worship,²⁵⁷ the solar priests²⁵⁸ and the solar festivals.²⁵⁹

²⁴⁹ Sāmba P., 36,37,42

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 29

²⁵¹ Ibid., 16, 29

²⁵² Ibid., 27

²⁵³ Ibid., 3

²⁵⁴ Vide, Pandey, Lalita Prasad, Op. cit., p.155

²⁵⁵ Bhavi. P., 1.70,72,73

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 1.79

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 1.52, 205, 206

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 1.139

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 1.50,55

Thus, the worship of the Sun-god is transformed into the indigenous cult of worshipping the Sun in the period of the Purānas. With the sectarianism, in the Purānas, has developed some new ideas like, worship of image of the deity, worshipping of the deity constructing temples. Along with these, different festivals, vrata culture, etc., have entered into the sphere of Sun-worship in the Purānas.

CHAPTER-IV
VEDIC INFLUENCE ON THE SUN-WORSHIP
IN THE PURĀṆAS

Eulogy of the Sun-god in the Purāṇas:

Sūrya is indeed a natural phenomenon that is deified as deity in the Purāṇas following the Vedic tradition. Due to his immense power, the deity is eulogized with great importance right from Vedic times. The Vedic texts were familiar with the eulogy of the deity with different traits. But in the Purāṇas, some other modes of worshipping the deity were developed, and along with the recitation of the mantras dedicated to the Sun, these modes of worship also have introduced. The deity is worshipped as one of the five prominent deities in the Purāṇas.

The Sun-god is worshipped as a sectarian deity in the Purāṇas. The worship of the Sun in the Purāṇic period has given rise to independent cult called the Saura-cult. The glimpses of the sectarianism relating to the Saura-cult can be observed in the two Epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. The *Rāmāyaṇa* informs about a region on the mountain Cakravān, where, Viśvakarmā installed a *cakra*, i.e. the Sun-god having one thousand spokes, i.e. the thousand rays of the deity: *caturbhāge samudrasya cakravānnāma parvataḥ/ tatra cakrasahasrāraṁ nirmitaṁ viśvakarmaṇā*¹ The Viśvedevas, Maruts, Vasus and other gods worshipped the Sun-god there,² and the hill was always blessed with the grace of the Sun.³ Again, a reference is found in the

¹ Rāmā., 4.42.27

² cf., ādityamupatiṣṭanti taiśca sūryābhipūjitaḥ/ Ibid.,4.42.42

³ cf., ādityena prasannena śailo dattavaraḥ purā//tenaivamuktaḥ śailendraḥ sarva eva tadāśrayāḥ/ matprasādādbhaviṣyanti divā rātrau ca kāñcanāḥ// Ibid., 4.42.38,39

Rāmāyaṇa about the ascetic Sun-worshippers, those resided near the river Mandākinī, who adored the deity with arms upwards.⁴ The *Mahābhārata* has referred to the thousand and eight numbers of the Sun-worshippers met with in the camp of the Pāṇḍus.⁵

Due to his prominence as an atmospheric deity, the Sun-god has been worshipped right from the Vedic age. The numerous aspects of the deity have given rise to independent forms of the Sun, e.g. Sūrya, Savitr, Mitra, Varuṇa, Dakṣa, etc., in the Vedic pantheon. Of these, Mitra, Varuṇa, Dakṣa, etc., have constituted a special class of gods, called the Ādityas. The *Ṛgvedasamhitā* primarily mentions the six Ādityas,⁶ viz. Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Dakṣa and Amśa, which have developed elsewhere as eight,⁷ and finally have numbered as the twelve Ādityas, and have been identified as the twelve months of the year.⁸ They are called Ādityas, as because they are born from the Aditi, the divine mother: *ādityaḥ eva tāvat kasmāt āditya ucyate...aditeḥ putra iti vā/ aditirdevamātā tasyāḥ putraḥ/ so'yamāditeyaḥ sannāditya ityucyate*⁹ The tradition of worshipping the Sun-god in his various forms is maintained in the Epic and the Purāṇic period. The different epithets and characteristics

⁴ cf., ādityamupatiṣṭhante niyamādūrdhvaḥavaḥ/ Ibid., 2.95.7

⁵ cf., sahasrānucarān saurān sahasraṁ cāṣṭa cāparān/ Mbh., 7.82.16

⁶ cf., imā gira ādityebhyo ghr̥tasnūḥ sanādrājabhyo juhvā juhomi/ śṛṇotu mitro aryamā bhago nastuvijāto varuṇo dakṣo amśaḥ// ṚV., 2.27.1

⁷ cf., aṣṭau putrāso aditerya jātāstanvaspari/ Ibid., 10.72.8
aṣṭayoniraditiraṣṭaputrā.../ AV., 8.9.21

⁸ cf., ādityaevaikavimśatyāyatanaṁ dvādaśamāsāḥ...// PB., 10.1.10;
vyācaṁ mithunaṁ samabhavatsa dvādaśa drapsāngarbhyaḥbhavatte dvādaśādityā'sṛjyanta
tāndivypādadhāt/ ŚB., 6.1.2.8

Also vide, Ibid., 2.6.3.5,8; Śān.GS., 2.14.8

⁹ Durgācārya on Nir., 2.13

of the deity have given rise in the post-Vedic period different forms of the Sun.¹⁰ In the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāma was advised by the sage Agastya to worship and satisfy the Sun-god with the recitation of the *Ādityahṛdaya*.¹¹ The *Ādityahṛdaya* is mentioned as the old mystery, i.e. *guhyaṃ sanātanam*, by which the enemies can be conquered in the battlefield.¹² In the hymn, the Sun-god is eulogized with his various names, e.g. Āditya, Savitr̥, Sūrya, Khaga, Pūṣan, Bhānu, Divākara, Haridaśva, Saptasapti, Śambhū, Tvaṣṭṛ, Mārtaṇḍa, Amśumān, Hiraṇyagarbha, Śísira, Tapanā, Ahaskara, Ravi, Agnigarbha, Kavi, etc.¹³ Again, in the *Mahābhārata*, one hundred and eight names of the Sun-god are specified.¹⁴ They are, Sūrya, Aryaman, Bhaga, Tvaṣṭṛ, Pūṣan, Arka, Savitr̥, Ravi, Aja, Kāla, Mr̥tyu, Kha, Śukra, Budha, Prabhākara, Indra, Vivasvat, Soma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Skanda, Tejasāmpati, Dharmadhvaṇa, etc. All these hundred and eight names of the Sun direct different aspects and activities of the deity. The tradition of worshipping the deity in his one hundred and eight names is continued up to the Purāṇas,¹⁵ and moreover, somewhere in the Purāṇic texts, they are mentioned as more than thousand.¹⁶

Along with such development, gradually, the Vedic approach of worshipping the Sun-god also has become changed. The *Rāmāyaṇa* refers to the *Sandhyopāsanā*, in worship of the deity.¹⁷ In the *Mahābhārata*, along with the invocations or hymns or the mantras, the deity is worshipped with the offerings of *arghya*, flower-garlands and

¹⁰ Mbh., 7.82.16

¹¹ Rāmā., 6.105.2,3

¹² Ibid., 6.105.4

¹³ Ibid., 6.105.10-15

¹⁴ Mbh., 3.3.18-28

¹⁵ Sk.P., 1.2.43.18-30

¹⁶ Brahma P., 31

¹⁷ Rāmā., 2.64.34

scents and with vows and fasts, and ascetic penances of various kinds. The mighty king Saṁvaraṇa worshipping Sūrya with all these articles achieved his daughter Tapatī, as the reward of his devotion.¹⁸ All these modes of worshipping the Sun-god have fully developed in the Purāṇic period, and in the Purāṇas, the deity is found worshipped as an independent deity with different modes and appellations.

Purāṇic Sūrya, the Atmospheric Deity:

The connection of the Sun with the atmosphere is highly appreciated in the Purāṇas. He is eulogized in the Purāṇic texts as the ball of the fire that is placed in the sky.¹⁹ The worship of the Sun-god as the fire-ball can be traced in the Vedas.²⁰ The *Brhaddevatā* states that the Sun-god divides him into the three forms of the fire and establishes in the three regions.²¹ Due to the connection of the Sun-god with the sky, the deity is cited with the epithets, *ambarastha*,²² *ambarasaṅśrita*,²³ etc., in the Purāṇic texts. He is the very form of the sky: *vyāpī tvameva bhagavangaganasvarūpam*/²⁴ The luminous aspect of the deity is very prominent. He is mentioned as luminous that can be gazed upon because of the circle of the splendour.²⁵ The deity is eulogized as the

¹⁸ Mbh., 1.173

¹⁹ cf., *yathaiiva vyomni tvāṁ vahnipiṇḍopamamahamapaśyaṁ.../ Viṣ.P., 4.13.9*
vahnistvameva jalaśoṣaṇataḥ pṛthivyāḥ sṛṣṭim karoṣi/ Mār.P., 103.9

²⁰ RV., 1.95.3

²¹ cf., *etadbhūteṣu lokeṣu agnibhūtaṁ sthitaṁ tridhā/BD., 1.64*

²² Mār.P., 104.34

²³ Ibid., 104.32

²⁴ Ibid., 103.9

²⁵ cf., *sūryācandramasordivye maṇḍale bhāsvare khage/jalatejomaye śukle vṛttakumbhanibhe śubhe//*
Mat.P., 128.38

yasyaikabhāsvaram rūpaṁ prabhāmaṇḍaladurdr̥sam/ dvitīyamaindavaṁ saumyaṁ ca no
bhāsvānprasīdatu// Mār.P., 109.73

white shining solar orb in the Purāṇas.²⁶ It is indeed the Vedic continuation of worshipping the deity in the form of the bright orb of the Sun.²⁷ The Vedic viewers have given importance on this aspect and rightly mentioned him as the *rukma*, i.e. the golden disc in the sky.²⁸

The Sun is the ultimate source of light. The body of the deity consists of the rays of the light.²⁹ The bright character of the deity is fully vibrant in the Purāṇic mythology: *bhāsvantamādyam paramam parebhyah*/³⁰ He is uttered as *param jyotih*,³¹ *viśvāśrayam jyotih*,³² etc., in the Purāṇas. The worship of the deity as the source of light is indeed the continuation of the Vedic tradition. In the Vedas also the deity is eulogized as the *viśvājyotih*,³³ *jyotiṣām jyotih*,³⁴ etc. Again, he is frequently called *śukra* in the Vedas, due to his bright appearance; while in the Purāṇas due to the same aspect, he is called *prabhākara*.³⁵ With his light, the Sun-god makes everything around him visible.³⁶ As he penetrates the earth and the entire atmosphere,³⁷ he is rightly called as the eye of the entire world: *jagaccakṣuḥ*,³⁸ *lokasamastacakṣuḥ*,³⁹ etc. The idea of

²⁶ cf., *bhumeryojanalakṣam tu vasiṣṭha ravimaṇḍalam/raverlakṣeṇa candraśca lakṣānnākṣatraminduta/ Agni P.*, 120.6

²⁷ ṚV., 7.66.14

²⁸ Ibid., 6.51.1

²⁹ cf., *mayukhasahasravapu/ Mār.P.*, 107.6

³⁰ Ibid., 103.7

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 102.22

³³ ŚB., 8.7.1.15

³⁴ ṚV., 10.170.3

³⁵ Mār.P., 109.68

³⁶ cf., *divi sthitañca deveśam dyotayantam samantatah/ Ibid.*, 109.63

³⁷ cf., *yanmadhyagato bhagavānṣtapatāmpatistapana ātapena trilokīm pratapatyabhāsayatyātmabhāsā .../ Bhā.P.*, 5.21.3

raviṇā bhāṣitā pṛthvī yāvattāvannabho matam /Agni P., 120.5

³⁸ Padma P., 1.77.30; Sk.P., 4.1.49.35

³⁹ Mār.P., 107.5

worshipping the Sun-god as the eye of the universe originated in the Vedic thought, *sūryo bhūtasyaikam cakṣuḥ*⁴⁰ Moreover, in the Vedas, the Sun-god is called as the eye of the Mitra and the Varuṇa.⁴¹ Indeed, with the mention of the Mitra and the Varuṇa, the whole universe is meant. Commenting on the relevant passage on the *Vājasaneyisaṃhitā*, Mahīdhara quotes: *mitrasya varuṇasya cakṣase sarvajagato draṣṭe; mītrāvaruṇaśabdena sarvaṃ jagallakṣyate*⁴² As he dispels the darkness⁴³ and lightens the whole world with his light, he is known by the epithet *jagatpradīpa*, i.e. the lamp of entire world.⁴⁴

The Sun-god is eulogized as the lord of the atmosphere and the chief of the planetary system in the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*: *devadānavayakṣāṇām grahāṇām jyotiṣāmapi tejasābhyadhikam devam*⁴⁵ He creates the stars, planets and the moon: *ityevaṃ maṇḍalam śuklam bhāsvaram lokasañjñitam// nakṣatragrahasomānām pratiṣṭhā yonireva ca/ candrarakṣagrahāḥ sarve vijñeyāḥ sūryasambhavāḥ*⁴⁶ Indeed, the stars, planets and the moon take their light from the Sun and thus the deity stands as the creator of them. For this aspect, the deity is called as the *jyotiṣkr̥t* in the Vedas.⁴⁷ As the moon borrows his light from the Sun, the Sun is considered as the soul of the moon and called as the *somātman* in the Purāṇas.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ AV., 13.1.45

⁴¹ VS., 4.35

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Mār.P., 110.3

⁴⁴ Ibid., 107.11

⁴⁵ Ibid., 109.62

⁴⁶ Mat.P., 128.27,28

⁴⁷ RV., 1.50.4

⁴⁸ Mār.P., 104.26

With his rising and the setting the Sun-god creates the day and the night.⁴⁹ As he creates the day he is called *divākara* in the Purāṇas.⁵⁰ Indeed, there is no rising and the setting of the Sun. It depends upon on its visibility. When Sūrya becomes visible to the people, it is regarded as the day; when he disappears from the visibility, that is called the night.⁵¹ In the Vedas also Sun-god is depicted as the maker of the day and the night.⁵² A class of divine personages, those are of the size of a thumb, called as the Bālakhilya seers are believed to lead him surrounding from the sunrise to the sunset.⁵³

The Sun-god is always mentioned with the car that is drawn by the seven steeds. These seven horses are frequently mentioned in the Purāṇas.⁵⁴ They represent the seven types of the rays of the Sun.⁵⁵ These seven rays are named as Suṣumna, Harikeśa, Viśvakarmā, Viśvaśravā, Saṁyadvasu, Arvāvasu and Svaraka.⁵⁶ Again, somewhere these rays are mentioned as the seven metres of the Veda.⁵⁷ Indeed, the glorification of

⁴⁹ cf., ahorātravyavasthākāraṇaṁ bhagavānraviḥ/ Viṣ.P, 2.8.11

prākāśyaṁ ca tathauṣṇyaṁ ca sauryāgneye tu tejasī/ parasparānupraveśādāyyāyete divānīsam// Mat. P.,128.12

⁵⁰ Mat.P., 97.11, Mār.P., 104.34

⁵¹ yairatra dṛṣyate bhāsvān sa teṣāmudayaḥ smṛtaḥ/ tirobhāvañca yatraiti tatraivastamanaṁ raveḥ// Viṣ. P., 2.8.14

⁵² GB., 2.4.10

⁵³ cf., tathā bālakhilyā ṛṣayo'ṅguṣṭaparvamātrāḥ ṣaṣṭisahasrāṇi purataḥ sūryaṁ sūktavākāya niyuktāḥ saṁstuvanti// Bhā.P.,5.21.17

⁵⁴ cf., saptaturaṅgamāya/ Mat.P., 97.16

hayāśca sapta/ Viṣ. P., 2.8.7

samajavasaptasaptaye/ Mār. P., 107.2

⁵⁵ Liṅga P., 60.20, 21; Brahmāṇḍa P., 2.24.66-68

⁵⁶ cf., suṣumno harikeśaśca viśvakarmā tathaiva ca/ viśvaśravāḥ punaścānyaḥ saṁyadvasurataparaḥ/ arvāvasuritikhyātaḥ svarakaḥ saptakīrtitāḥ/ Kū.P, 1.41.3,4

⁵⁷ cf., gāyatrī sa bṛhatyuṣṇig jagatī triṣṭubeva ca/ anuṣṭup paṅktirityuktāśchandānsi harayo rave// Viṣ. P., 2.8.7

... ravirathayugo yatra hayāśchandonāmānaḥ saptāruṇayojitā vahanti devamādityam// Bhā.P., 5.21.15

the Sun-god with the seven horses in the Purāṇas, is the continuation of the Vedic tradition of worshipping the deity with seven horses, which is already discussed in the second chapter under the subhead *Sūrya: The God of Atmosphere*. The nomenclature of the rays and the identification of the rays with the seven Vedic meters is indeed the later development in the Puraṇic Sun-cult. Again, the rays of the Sun are eulogized due to their great disease-curing power.⁵⁸ The Sun-rays are always considered as the remover of the sickness, diseases, sins, etc., in the Vedic texts.⁵⁹ By the rays, Sūrya nourishes the earth, the moon and other stars also.⁶⁰

Sūrya, the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer:

The Purāṇic Sūrya is delineated as the ultimate cause of everything, i.e. *sarvabhūtātmā*.⁶¹ He is the creator and the destroyer of the world.⁶² He is mentioned in the Purāṇas as the cause of the creation, dissolution and permanence, i.e. *sṛṣṭisamhārasthithetoh*.⁶³ Three worlds are created by him.⁶⁴ Again, he has created the mountains and the rivers.⁶⁵ He is mentioned as the cause of the heat, rain, cold and

⁵⁸ Padma P., 1.77.17-29; 78. 44-47

⁵⁹ cf., tenāsmadviśvāmanirāmanāhutimapāmivāmapa duṣvapnyam suva/ ṚV., 10.37.4

apāmivā bādhatē veti sūryam/ Ibid., 1.35.9;

īvām rogādibādham apa bādhatē samyak nirākaroti/ Sāyaṇācārya, Ibid.

⁶⁰ cf., sūryaraśmiḥ suṣumṇo yastarpitastena candramāḥ/ kṛṣṇapakṣe'maraiḥ śāsvat pīyate vai sudhāmayah// Viṣ. P., 2.11.22

nakṣatragrahasomānām pratiṣṭhāyonireva ca/ candraḥkṣagrahāḥ sarve vijñeyāḥ sūryasambhavāḥ// Mat.P.,128.28

⁶¹ Padma P., 1.77.31; Mat.P., 97.11

⁶² Bhavi.P., 1.48.22

⁶³ Mār.P., 100.2

⁶⁴ cf., ajāya lokatrayakāraṇāya bhūtātmane gopataye vṛṣāya/ Ibid., 104.4

⁶⁵ Bhavi.P., 1.48.24

flood.⁶⁶ All the creatures, i.e. the movable and the immovable, the animate or the inanimate are created from the Sun. For all these aspects, Sūrya is worshipped as the soul of the whole universe and of whole created beings, e.g. *deva*, *tiryak*, *manuṣya*, *sarīṣṛpa*, *vīrudha*, etc.⁶⁷ The idea of worshipping the Sun-god as the soul of universe is indeed influenced by the Vedic thought: *sūrya ātmā jagatastasthūṣaśca*/⁶⁸. In the Vedas, the deity is worshipped as the soul of the universe, who directly causes the creation, survival of the created beings and the destruction of all.

The whole universe depends upon the Sun because of his power of generation.⁶⁹ The Sun absorbs the water by his bright rays: *tejobhiḥ sarvalokebhyaḥ ādatte raśmibhirjalam*/⁷⁰ He absorbs it from the earth for eight months and in another four months again pours it to the earth in the form of the rain. Due to this aspect, he is mentioned in the Purāṇas, as the robber of the waters, i.e. *vāritaskara*.⁷¹ The corns grow from the rain and the whole universe subsists on it. Thus, being the creator of the rain, Sūrya stands as the cause of the food and the vegetation for the entire earth.⁷² He is rightly called as the nectar for the vivification of plants: *yadrūpaṁ jīvanāyaikaṁ vīrudhāmamṛtātmakam*/⁷³ Again, the connection of the Sun-god with the breath is mentioned in the Purāṇas. Without Sūrya no one can breathe and without the breath no one can survive in the world: *āprāṇāḥ prāṇinaḥ sarva āpaḥ śuṣyanti tejasā/ na*

⁶⁶ cf., so'yaṁ saptagaṇaḥ sūryamaṇḍale munisattama/ himoṣṇa-vārivṛṣṭinām hetutve samayaṁ gataḥ// Viṣ P., 2.10.21

⁶⁷ cf., devatiryāṇmanuṣyāṇām sarīṣṛpasavīrudhām/ sarvajīvanikāyānām sūrya ātmā dṛgīśvaraḥ// Bhā. P.,5.20.46

⁶⁸ RV., 1.115.1

⁶⁹ Brahmāṇḍa P., 2.22.25; Mār. P., 101.20-22; Viṣ P,2.9.8-18

⁷⁰ Mat.P., 125.31

⁷¹ Mār.P., 102.8

⁷² Bhavi.P., 1.53.6

⁷³ Mār.P., 104.26

cāmbhasā vinā sṛṣṭirviśvasyāsya bhaviṣyati//⁷⁴ The same idea originated in the Vedas where the Sun-god itself is called as the vitality: *asau vā ādityaḥ prāṇaḥ prāṇamevainānutsṛjati*//⁷⁵

Thus, Sūrya survives the whole universe with his rays and heat. He warms, matures, protects the universe and turns it into ashes: *tapasi pacasi viśvaṁ pāsi bhasmīkaroṣi*//⁷⁶ The delineation of the Sun as the power of generation in the Purāṇas is indeed the replication of the Vedic tradition of worshipping the Sun as the generative force in the Vedas.

Sūrya, the Time:

Sūrya is mentioned as the soul of the time in the Purāṇas, i.e. *kālātman*.⁷⁷ As soon as the Sun rises and becomes visible to all, it is called the day and as it sets, night befalls. In the *Matsyapurāṇa*, a beautiful narration of it is found: *udite tu punaḥ sūrye ūṣmāgnestu samāviśat/ pādena tejasaścāgnestasmāt santapate divā// prākāśyaṁ ca tathauṣṇyaṁ ca sauryāgneye tu tejasī/ parasparānupraveśādāpyāyete divāniśam*//⁷⁸ Sūrya is eulogized as the cause of the day and night who possesses the celestial fire in his body. With his rising, a fourth of the heat of that fire enters into the earth; and as a result of that, heat is also created in the day time along with the lustre. Again, at sunset, the day enters into the water and brightness and shine are observed in the water during the night.⁷⁹ Thus, Sūrya stands as the divider of the day and night and determines the

⁷⁴ Ibid., 103.3

⁷⁵ TS., 5.5.2.5

⁷⁶ Mār. P., 104.26

⁷⁷ Mat.P., 97.11

⁷⁸ Ibid., 128.11,12

⁷⁹ cf., *tasmāt tāmṛā bhavantyāpo divārātripraveśanāt/ astam gate punaḥ sūrye aho vai praviśatyapaḥ*// Ibid., 128.14

time. The Sun as the creator of the day and night is frequently mentioned in the Vedas,⁸⁰ and from such idea of the Vedas, has developed the idea of worshipping the Sun-god as the creator of the day and night in the Purāṇas.

Again, in the Purāṇas, the Sun-god is observed as the creator of the direction: *udayāstamābhyām ca smṛte pūrvāpare tu vai*⁸¹ The direction, in which the Sun rises, is called the east and the part opposite to it, where he sets, is called the west. Besides this, *muhūrta, ayana, saṁkrānti*, etc., are the divisions of time, created by the Sun with its movement.⁸² All these ideas of worshipping the deity as the creator of *muhūrta, ayana*, etc., originated in the Vedas which is already dealt with in detail in the second chapter under the subhead ‘*Sūrya, The Time*’.

The Sun is eulogized as the creator of the seasons in the Purāṇas. Frequently in the Vedas, he is called as the creator of it. The *Vājasaneyisaṁhitā* refers the name of the six seasons along with its different characters, e.g. cold, heat, etc.⁸³ Following the same, the Sun-god is worshipped in the Purāṇas, for his different nature of creating excessive cold or heat, etc.: *yacca rūpaṁ tavātītaṁ himotsargādīśītalam*⁸⁴ Again, the twelve months of the year are identified with the twelve Ādityas in the Purāṇas.⁸⁵ The identification of the Ādityas with the twelve months is indeed the continuation of the Vedic tradition of worshipping the deity connecting with the twelve months of the year.⁸⁶ The various parts of the Sun along with his chariot are regarded as the various

⁸⁰ ṚV., 1.50.7; 5.47.5; 6.58.1; TS., 3.2.2.2, AV., 11.6.21

⁸¹ Mat.P., 124.36

⁸² Brahmāṇḍa P., 2.24.60; 2.24.113-116; Bhā.P., 5.22.5-9; Viṣ. P., 2.8.64-67

⁸³ VS., 2.32

⁸⁴ Mār.P., 101.23

⁸⁵ Varā.P., 20.4,5; Sk.P., 7.101.60,61

⁸⁶ ŚB., 6.1.2.8; PB., 10.1.10 S

parts of the year.⁸⁷ For example, the day is regarded as the naves of the wheel of the chariot of the Sun-god; the years and six seasons are regarded as the spokes of the wheel and its peripheries respectively.

The Ādityas:

The twelve aspects of the Sun-god are worshipped in twelve different forms in the Purāṇas. As they are the children of Aditi, they are called the Ādityas: *aditiḥ kāśyapājjajñe ādityāndvādaśaiva hi*⁸⁸ Right from the time of the Vedas the Ādityas are worshipped as the children of Aditi. It is believed that with his twelve forms, the Sun roams in the twelve months and by the movement he lightens the universe.⁸⁹ It is cited in the Purāṇas that the twelve Ādityas take their place in the heaven inside the solar orb.⁹⁰ Different Purāṇas give the names of Ādityas in different ways. The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* mentions the twelve Ādityas as Indra, Dhātṛ, Bhaga, Tvaṣṭṛ, Mitra, Varuṇa, Yama, Vivasvat, Savitṛ, Pūṣan, Amśumat and Viṣṇu.⁹¹ The *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* has almost given the same list, but mentions the name of Amśu instead of Yama. Again, in the list of the twelve Ādityas in the *Matsyapurāṇa*, the names of Dhanada, Parjanya, Ravi are included in place of Yama, Vivasvat and Amśumat.⁹²

The Purāṇas give the list of twelve Ādityas, associating them with the twelve months of the year. According to it, Indra is responsible for the Āśvina, Dhātṛ for the Kārtika, Parjanya for the Śrāvaṇa, Pūṣan for the Pauṣa, Tvaṣṭṛ for the Phālguna, Aryaman for the Vaiśākha, Bhaga for the Māgha, Vivasvat for the Jyeṣṭha, Amśu for

⁸⁷ Mat.P., 125.43,44

⁸⁸ Ibid., 171.55

⁸⁹ Agni P., 19.1-5; Bhā.P., 6.6.39; Viṣ. P., 2.10.3-17

⁹⁰ Bhā.P., 6.6.39; Mat.P., 171.55-57; Viṣ. P., 1.15.130-133

⁹¹ Bhā. P., 12.11.30-45

⁹² Mat.P., 171.56

the Āṣādha, Viṣṇu for the Caitra, Varuṇa for the Prauṣṭha and Mitra for the Mārḡaśīrṣa.⁹³ The depiction of the twelve Ādityas in the form of the twelve months can be traced its origin in the Vedas.

Sūrya, the Ultimate Reality:

The Sun-god is eulogized as the eternal soul in the Vedas, i.e. *viśvātman*.⁹⁴ He is mentioned as the *paraḥ puruṣaḥ* which symbolizes the Supreme Soul.⁹⁵ The worshipper, meditating upon him, desires final emancipation.⁹⁶ In the Vedic texts, the meditation on the Sun is delineated as the best means of achieve the Brahman.⁹⁷ The same idea of meditation on Brahman is repeated in the Purāṇas in his worship. As he is the very means of attaining the Brahman, the Ultimate Truth, he is mentioned in the Purāṇas as the destroyer of darkness and sin.⁹⁸

The soul of the Sun is Vedic, i.e. *vedātman*, He abides in the Vedas: *vedasansthitaḥ* and the Self that consists of with the Vedic knowledge.⁹⁹ As he is consisted of the Vedic knowledge, he is regarded as the eternal. The same idea is delineated in the other Purāṇas and in the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, the deity is mentioned as composed of Ṛc hymns, repository of Yajus and origin of the Sāman hymns: *ya ṛimayo yo yajuṣām nidhānam sāmnam ca yo yoniracintyaśaktiḥ/ trayīmayaḥ stūlatayārdhamātrā parasvarūpo guṇapārayogyaḥ*.¹⁰⁰ He is the lord of all, i.e.

⁹³ Bhavi. P., 1. 74.8; Sk.P., 7.10.62-66

⁹⁴ Mat.P., 97.16

⁹⁵ Mār.P., 99.20

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Chā. U., 3.19.4; Maitrī U., 6.3

⁹⁸ cf., *kṣaṇamudayācalamaulimaṇiḥ suraṇamahitahito jagataḥ/ tvamu mayūkhasahasravapurjagati vibhāsi tamāmsi nudan// Ibid., 104.6*

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 100.6

sarveśvara.¹⁰¹ Due to his different forms, the deity is called *viśvarupa*.¹⁰² Again, he is called *yogīśvara* as because he is the lord of Yogins.¹⁰³

The Depiction of Sūrya in the Anthropomorphic Form:

In the early Purāṇas, Sūrya is depicted in human form also. The legends of Satrājī, ¹⁰⁴ Aditi, ¹⁰⁵ Yājñavalkya ¹⁰⁶ and Rājyavardhana ¹⁰⁷ are very significant in this regard. Requested by the worshippers, Sūrya, the nature deity appears before them in human form.

Again, the family of Sūrya is narrated in the Purāṇic texts.¹⁰⁸ The Sun is cited as the son of Aditi in the Purāṇas; Samjñā and Chāyā are the two wives of him. The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* holds Vaivasvata Manu, Yama and Yamī as the offspring of Samjñā, and Śanaīscara, Sāvarni Manu and Tapatī as the offspring of Chāyā.¹⁰⁹ The Purāṇic legend shows that Samjñā, the daughter of Tvaṣṭṛ was married to Sun and gave birth to three children. But after that being unable to bear the lustre of the Sun left the figure in her place and started austerities in a dark forest taking the form of a mare. The Sun-god

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 100.10

¹⁰² Bhavi.P., 1. 67.18

¹⁰³ Mār.P., 106.65

¹⁰⁴ cf., āsītsatrājītaḥ sūryo bhaktasya paramaḥ sakhā/ prītastasmai maṇim prādātsūryastuṣṭaḥ
syamantakam// Bhā.P., 10.56.3

¹⁰⁵ cf., aditerapi pitratvaṁ sametya ravinandana/ eṣa viṣṇuriti khyāta indrasyāvarajo vibhuḥ/ Mat.P.,
172.5

¹⁰⁶ cf., ityevamādibhistena stūyamānaḥ stavai raviḥ/ vājirūpadharaḥ prāha vriyatāmiti vācchitam// Viṣ.
P., 3.5.25

¹⁰⁷ cf., tataḥ sa maṇḍalādudyannijabimbamaprabhaḥ/ avatīrya dadau tebhyo durdr̥ṣo darśanam raviḥ//
Mār. P., 106.76

¹⁰⁸ Bhā. P., 6.6.40-43; Mat. P., 11.34-38; Viṣ.P., 3.2;

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 3.2.2,4

also went to the forest following her and taking the form of a horse stayed there, and as a result of their union, the Aśvinīkumāras and Revanta were born.¹¹⁰

Thus, in the Purāṇas, the Sun-god is eulogized with his anthropomorphic character. In the Vedas, the connection of the deities with the other deities is commonly observed. References are found in the Vedic texts about the family members of the deity. Aditi is worshipped as the mother of the Sun along with the gods.¹¹¹ Uṣas, the dawn, is his wife,¹¹² the Aśvins are the twin sons.¹¹³ Again, Yama, the shower of the path of many is mentioned as the son of Vivasvat, the Sun. In the *Nirukta*, Yāska mentions an old legend, stating the birth of the Aśvins, according to which Saraṇyu, the daughter of Trāṣṭrī bore twins, Yama and Yamī to Vivasvat, the Sun.¹¹⁴ It shows that the marriage of the Sun-god Vivasvat to Saṁjñā in the Purāṇic period,¹¹⁵ is indeed the renovation of the Vedic tradition.

Mode of Worship:

In the Vedic period, the Sun was praised and worshipped, as a prominent deity. But Sun-worship as a cult and sect becomes established only in the Epic- Purāṇic age. In the Purāṇas, the deity is worshipped both in the *maṇḍala* form and the form of an image. The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* contains the reference of worshipping the deity in his *maṇḍala* form.¹¹⁶ Rājyavardhana, in the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, worships the deity in the

¹¹⁰ Mat.P., 52; Mār.P., 80, 83; Viṣ.P.,3.2

¹¹¹ Nir., 4.22

¹¹² Ibid., 12.7

¹¹³ Ibid., 12.1

¹¹⁴ Nir., 12.10

¹¹⁵ Bhavi. P., 1.47, 79

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 1.131.26

form of an orb.¹¹⁷ The *Sāmbapurāṇa* has pointed out that, in early period, the image of the Sun did not exist. In his circular form, just as the disk of the Sun in the sky, the deity was worshipped: *na purā pratimā hyāsīt pūjyate maṇḍale raviḥ / yathaitān maṇḍalam vyomni sthīyate savitustadā // evameva purā bhaktaiḥ pūjyate maṇḍalākṛtiḥ/...*¹¹⁸ The worshipping of the deity, in the *maṇḍala* form, originated in the Vedic period. He was worshipped in a circle or its orb in the Vedas.¹¹⁹ In the commentary of the *Āpastambadharmasūtra*, Haradatta refers to the worship of Āditya by drawing a *maṇḍala* on the ground: *drāviḍāḥkanyāmeṣasthe savitaryādityapūjāmācaranti bhūmau maṇḍalamālikhya...*¹²⁰ But, worshipping the deity in his human form, started after Viśvakarmā made the image of the Sun, as stated in the *Sāmbapurāṇa*: *...yataḥ prabhṛti capyeṣā nirmitā viśvakarmaṇā // sarvalokahitārthāya sūryasya puruṣākṛtiḥ/*¹²¹

The worship of the Sun-god in human form was the later development in the Sun-cult in the Purāṇic period. He was worshipped in the form of the *maṇḍala* in the Vedas. In the Purāṇas, the same idea of worshipping the deity transforms to the worship of the Sun in the human form

The Gāyatrī or the *Sandhyopāsanā* is one of the modes of worshipping the deity in the Purāṇic period. Indeed, the worship of the deity with the recitation of *Gāyatrīmantra* is the continuation of the Vedic mode of worshipping the Sun. The *mantra* uttered in the *Sandhyopāsanā* goes as follows: *tatsaviturvareṇyam bhargo*

¹¹⁷ Mār.P., 109.76

¹¹⁸ SP., 29.2,3

¹¹⁹ RV., 7.66.14

¹²⁰ Haradatta on Āp. DS., 2.11.29.16

¹²¹ SP., 29.3,4

devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt, which is composed in the Gāyatrī metre.¹²² The *praṇava*, i.e. the *om* and the three vyāhrtis, viz. *bhūh*, *bhuvah* and *svah* are additionally put in the beginning of the *mantra*.¹²³ Again some mantras, e.g. *bhāskarāya vidmahe sahasraraśmaye dhīmahi / tanno sūryah pracodayāt*,¹²⁴ found in the Purāṇas, are modelled on the *Āditya Gāyatrī*, found in the *Taittirīyāraṇyaka*.¹²⁵ The Sun-god always has been invoked to impel human intellect with the utterance of it.

In the Purāṇic texts, the Gāyatrī is deified in the form of goddess Gāyatrī. The *Liṅgapurāṇa* utters the glory of the goddess Gāyatrī and refers her as the means to attain Brahman.¹²⁶ In the *Padmapurāṇa* also, the deity is invoked by Rudra.¹²⁷ The deity is found in the anthropomorphic form in the Purāṇas. She is described as having a fair, slim body with two hands holding the horns of a deer, i.e. *eṇaśṛṅga* in one and a Lotus in the other. She is mentioned as wearing silken garment with an upper red cloth and wearing a garland on her breast and having earrings.¹²⁸ The representation of the Gāyatrī in anthropomorphic form is not the continuation of the Vedic tradition, but it is regarded as the innovation in the field of Purāṇic Sun-cult.

The *Nārādīyapurāṇa* advises the chanting of the Gāyatrī *mantra* at least for twenty-eight times.¹²⁹ Again, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, prescribing the Gāyatrī mentions that

¹²² RV., 3.62.10

¹²³ Vide, Goyal, S. R., *A Religious History of Ancient India*, Vol. II, p. 329

¹²⁴ Padma P., 1.76.11

¹²⁵ cf., bhāskarāya vidmahe mahādyutikarāya dhīmahi tanna ādityah pracodayāt/ TĀ., 10.1

¹²⁶ Liṅga P., 23.50-57

¹²⁷ Padma P., 1.17

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Nā. P., 66

nobody should neglect the Sandhyopāsānā, if anyone does that, he would be the murderer of the deity: *sa hanti Sūryam sandhyayā nopāstim kurute tu yah!*¹³⁰

In different symbols, Sūrya is worshipped in the Purāṇas. The deity is worshipped in the form of the wheel or disc.¹³¹ Indeed, the worship of the deity in the form of wheel or disc originates in the Vedas.¹³² In the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, a disc of gold is placed on the Sun as the representative of the deity.¹³³

Again, the worship of the deity in the Purāṇas in the form of the Lotus is the continuation of the Vedic tradition of worshipping the deity on Lotus.¹³⁴ The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* contains the reference of worshipping the deity on an eight-petalled Lotus flower that is drawn on the ground.¹³⁵ The *Brahmapurāṇa* also refers to the worship of the Sun-god on an eight-petalled Lotus flower.¹³⁶ Due to the life giving aspect of the Sun, the deity may be worshipped in that form. It is cited in the *R̥gvedasamhitā* that the honey from the heavenly wheel is dripped into the Lotus-*abhyāramidadrayo niṣkitam puṣkare madhu avatasya visarjane.*¹³⁷ Again, as the Lotus flower blooms during the day time when the Sun shines, the deity may be worshipped in the form of the Lotus flower from the Vedic to the Purāṇic period.

Horse is another Sun-symbol that has been used in the Purāṇas to worship the deity. In the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, reference is found of worshipping the deity in the form of a horse: *ityeramādivistena stūyamānaḥ stavai raviḥ / vājirūpadharaḥ prāha vriyatāmiti*

¹³⁰ Viṣ.P., 2.8.53

¹³¹ Mār. P., 106. 76

¹³² ṚV., 1.175.4; 4.28.2; 30.4; 5.29.10

¹³³ ŚB., 7.4.1.10

¹³⁴ VS., 13.2; TS., 4.2.8

¹³⁵ Vi.Dh.P., 169

¹³⁶ Brahmāṇḍa P., 28.23

¹³⁷ ṚV., 8.72.11

vāñchitam /¹³⁸ The deity appeared in front of Yājñavalkya in that form eulogized by him. It is indeed the Vedic continuation of worshipping the deity in the form of horse. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, the horse is employed as the Sun.¹³⁹ Again in the Ṣoḍasīn sacrifice also, a horse is placed in the hands of the priest that is regarded as the symbol of the Sun.¹⁴⁰ Thus, Sūrya is worshipped in the Purāṇas as the horse, the origin of which can be traced back to the Vedas. Due to the strength and swiftness, the Sun-god might be worshipped in the Vedas and the Purāṇas in the form of the horse.

The *Sāmbapurāṇa* mentions about the Magas, the priest of the Sun. It was Sāmba, who brought them from Śākadvīpa.¹⁴¹ The Magas were the great follower of the Sun-cult, who helped a lot in the growth and development of the Sun-cult in the Purāṇic Period. The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* records that the Magas were the descendants of Persian Magis.¹⁴² They wore the sacred waist girdle called *avyaṅga*, i.e. the Persian *aiviyaonghen*. They were the followers of the *Saura* cult.¹⁴³ The Magas were the masters of the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas.¹⁴⁴ They had four Vedas of their own, viz. Veda, Viśvamada, Vidvadvañhi and Rasa which were in contrary to the four Vedas of the Brāhmaṇas, viz, Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda and Atharvaveda. As the Magas were against of the Vedic tradition, in contrary to the Brāhmaṇas, they worshipped the slough of a snake while the garland is worshipped by the Brāhmaṇas.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ Viṣ.P., 3.5.25

¹³⁹ cf., eṣa ha vā aśramedho ya eṣa tapati tasya saṁvatsara ātmā / Bṛ. U., 1.2.7

¹⁴⁰ AB., 8.20

¹⁴¹ SP., 26

¹⁴² Bhandarkar, R.G., *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, pp. 153-154

¹⁴³ Bhavi.P., 1.140.55-61

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 1.140.62

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 1.140.39-45

Both the *Sāmbapurāṇa* and the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* contain the account narrating the origin of the Magas. According to the episode found in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, Nikṣubhā, the daughter of Sujihvā, a *Śākadvīpī* Brāhmaṇa of the Mihira *gotra* gave birth to a son Jaraśabda or Jaraśasta by name through the Sun-god. Nikṣubhā, the beautiful lady, when was sporting herself in the fire the Sun-god saw her and fell in love. Then entering into the fire, the Sun became the son of the fire and by her he got a son.¹⁴⁶ The Jaraśabda-Jaraśasta was the son of the Sun by Nikṣubhā. This Jaraśabda-Jaraśasta was regarded as the ancestor of the Magas who worshipped the Sun-god. The Magas were regarded as fire-born and as belonging to the Agnijāti: *agnijātyā magāḥ proktāḥ somajātyā dvijātayah / bhojakādityajātyā hi divyāste parikīrtitāḥ* //¹⁴⁷ The Bhojakas are called as the Magas.¹⁴⁸ Besides this, the Bhojakas are called as the Yājakas.¹⁴⁹ They are mentioned in the Purāṇas as a set of Brāhmaṇas, those were employed as the installer and the consecrator of the images of the deity.¹⁵⁰ They are called as Magas, because they meditate on the syllable *ma*, that is regarded as the symbol for the Sun: *makāro bhagavāndevo bhāskaraḥ parikīrtitaḥ/ makāradhyānayogācca magā hyete prakīrtitaḥ*//¹⁵¹ In the Purāṇas, the Bhojakas are spoken of as the relatives of the Magas; sometimes, the daughter of Magas are mentioned as married to the Bhojakas,¹⁵² or sometimes, the Magas are known as the Bhojakas as because they are born of the daughter of the Bhojakas.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 1.139.33-43

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 1.139.44

¹⁴⁸ SP., 27.3

¹⁴⁹ SP., 27

¹⁵⁰ Bhavi. P., 1.117, 135, 140, 144, 145, 146, 147

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 1.144.25

¹⁵² Ibid., 1.140.9

¹⁵³ Ibid., 1.140.35

The identification of the Bhojakas with the Magas is quite doubtful. The Magas were mentioned as the Sun-worshipping priests, those were brought by Sāmba to worship the deity after installing the image of the Sun-god that was found by Sāmba during his bath in the Candrabhāga river. The scholars consider them as the fire-worshipping Magis of Persia, who after arriving into India discovered a much more developed form of Sun-worship and as it was akin to their own faith, they adopted it as their means of livelihood. They started their working as the priests of the Sun-temples and wherever they went tried their best to popularise the Sun-worship.¹⁵⁴ The Bhojakas are also mentioned as the priest of the Sun-god in a large number of inscriptions. After a careful study, R. C. Hazra records that the Bhojakas were another group of Persian fire worshippers, who entered into India after following the Magas.¹⁵⁵ But the manner and customs of the Magas were different to a great extent from those of the members of the Vedic fold.

The Sun-god was worshipped in the Purāṇic period either in the form of an image or in the form of an orb. By means of invocation or the mantras, the deity was worshipped.¹⁵⁶ Five types of mudrās, i.e. the holes, were made through the fingers, to see the solar orb, such as Añjali, Dhenukā, etc.¹⁵⁷ The orb of the deity was drawn on the ground, and the devotees worshipped the deity there thrice in a day; morning, noon and evening.¹⁵⁸ The worshipping of the deity with his orb on the ground is the continuation of Vedic tradition of worshipping the deity in the form of an orb. It was the new innovation of non-Vedic tradition in the field of Purāṇic Sun-cult.

¹⁵⁴ Vide, Pandey, Lalita Prasad, *Sun worship in Ancient India*, p.167

¹⁵⁵ Vide, Hazra, R. C., *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, Vol. I, pp. 97- 98

¹⁵⁶ Bhavi.P., 1. 206

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 1.48

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 1.48, 52, 205

The images of the deity were worshipped with flowers, scents, red Sandal paste, clothes, covers, water, *dhūpa*, *aguru*, *guggula*, *karpūra*, *naivedya*, *akṣata*, lamps, honey, milk, etc.¹⁵⁹ Besides these, the *Padmapurāṇa* mentions the worshipping of the deity with *mudrā*, *japa*, *namaskāra*, etc.: *tattvato gurupadiṣṭena vidhi / diṣṭena tattvataḥ / pūjayedbhaktāḥdrakta puṣpaiśca kadalyādiphalaiḥ śubhaiḥ / pūjayedyo raviṃ nitya sa yāti bhāskarālayam / puṣpaṃ datvā jalaṃ deyaṃ jalānte ca vilepanam / pradīpānte ca naivedyaṃ tato vāri nivedayet / tato jāpyaṃ stutiṃ mudrāṃ namaskāraṃ tu kārayet / añjaliḥ prathamā mudrā dvitīyā dhenukā smṛtā // ...*¹⁶⁰

References are found in the Purāṇas of worshipping the deity with *arghya*¹⁶¹ along with the observance of fasts,¹⁶² vows,¹⁶³ donation of gifts,¹⁶⁴ etc. The *Brahmapurāṇa* mentions about the donation of umbrella, flags, *vitāna*, *patākā* and *cāmara*, etc., to the Sun.¹⁶⁵ Worshipping the deity with the *arghya*, donation of gifts, etc., is definitely the continuation of the Vedic tradition. The Vedic texts were familiar with the *arghya*, *dāna*, etc; but unfamiliar with the tradition of fasts, vows, etc., though somewhere they were mentioned to denote some other senses.

The Purāṇic texts direct the worshipping of the Sun-god along with his family.¹⁶⁶ *Samjñā*, *Chāyā*, *Tvāṣṭrī*, *Prabhā*, *Rājñī*, *Nikṣubhā* and *Ṛṥhvī* are the consorts of the deity. Of these, *Rājñī*, *Samjñā*, *Tvāṣṭrī* and *Prabhā* are spoken of as one and the same one, where *Chāyā*, *Nikṣubhā* and *Ṛṥhvī* are identified as one: *rājñī samjñā ca*

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 1.51.31, 32; Padma P., 1.76.12-15;

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 76.12-15

¹⁶¹ Mār.P., 106.60, 61;107.26; Viṣ.P., 3.5.14

¹⁶² Varā. P., 1.130.7

¹⁶³ Mat P., 74

¹⁶⁴ Brahmāṇḍa. P., 29.58

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Mat.P., 11; Bhavi.P., 1. 79.47

*dyaustvāṣṭrī prabhā saiva vibhāvryate / tasyāstu yā tanucchāyā nikṣubhā sa mahimayī*¹⁶⁷ Sārjñā and Chāyā are regarded as the representative of the Dyauḥ and Pṛthvī respectively.¹⁶⁸ The Nikṣubhāvratā is observed in honour of Nikṣubhā in the Purāṇas, making the image of the deity.¹⁶⁹ The Aśvinīkumāra, the divine doctor, Revanta, Śani, Sāvārṇī, Manu and Yama are the sons of the Sun as described in the Purāṇic texts, and Tapatī and Yamunā are mentioned as his daughters. Again, references are found of worshipping the grahas, that are related to the Sun.¹⁷⁰ The attendants of the deity are mentioned as Daṇḍa, Piṅgala, Śrauta, two Kalmāṣa birds, i.e. Yama and Garuḍa respectively, Jāṇḍa, Kāma, Kubera, Vināyaka, Hara and Kārtikeya.¹⁷¹ Several figures, belonging to the solar family are seen worshipped along with the image of the deity in the iconographic forms. The worship of the deity along with his family is the continuation of the Vedic tradition of worshipping the Sun.

Different Purāṇas contain the references of the worshipping of the Sun-god with the Tāntric mode of worship of the Sun.¹⁷² In Tāntric Sun-worship, some Tāntric diagrams are drawn and the deity is worshipped with some mantras like, *om ghṛṇi sūrya ādityaḥ*, etc. The *Nārādīyapurāṇa* mentions the worship of the deity along with his wives and other planets on the diagram.¹⁷³ *Aṅganyāsa* is another mode of worshipping the deity. In *Aṅganyāsa*, certain parts of the body are to be touched with the utterance of the certain names of the Sun-god.¹⁷⁴ Besides these, some Tāntric

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 1.79.18

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 1.79.4

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 1.166.4

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 1.206

¹⁷¹ SP., 16

¹⁷² Agni P., 73; Garuḍa P., 61; Nā.P., 69

¹⁷³ Nā.P., 69.25-36

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 69.7-24

hymns are used in the Sun-worship.¹⁷⁵ The *Sāmbapurāṇa* mentions that the Sun is worshipped with small diagrams of an eight-petalled Lotus applying mantras;¹⁷⁶ and *Aṣṭapuṣpikā* worship¹⁷⁷ and a large *maṇḍala* called the *Samvatsara*.¹⁷⁸

Iconographic Traces of Sūrya in the Purāṇas:

The Purāṇic records and archeological findings related to the Sun-worship throw light on the development of Sun-cult during the days of the Purāṇas. It was Viśvakarmā who had made the image of the deity for the first time.¹⁷⁹ Prior to it the Sun-god was worshipped by his devotees in the form of an orb. The form of the deity was circular, just as there is the disc of the Sun in the sky.¹⁸⁰

The iconographic features of the deity are well delineated in the Purāṇic texts. The image of the Sun is made either seated in the chariot or on the Lotus and holding a Lotus: *padmasthaṁ vāhanasthaṁ vā padmahasthaṁ prakalpayet*.¹⁸¹ In the image, the deity is seen holding a Lotus in one hand and the other hand is raised in the posture of giving blessings.¹⁸² He is made as beautiful-eyed deity, i.e. *sulocana*.¹⁸³ A different kind of coronet that beams red is placed on the head of the Sun.¹⁸⁴ The deity is well decorated with ornaments, and both his hands, those lifted to the shoulders hold two

¹⁷⁵ Padma P., 1.76

¹⁷⁶ SP., 53

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 54

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 55

¹⁷⁹ cf., *yataḥ prabhṛti cāpyevaṁ nirmitā viśvakarmanā/ sarvalokahitārthāya sūryasya puruṣākṛtiḥ/ Ibid., 29.3*

¹⁸⁰ cf., *na purā pratimāhyāsī pūjyate maṇḍale raviḥ/ yathaitanmaṇḍalaṁ vyomni sthīyate savitustadā// Ibid., 29.2*

¹⁸¹ Mat.P., 261.8

¹⁸² Ibid., 94.1

¹⁸³ Ibid., 261.1

¹⁸⁴ *mukuṭena vicitreṇa padmagarbhasamaprabham/ Ibid., 261.2*

blue Lotuses. The body of the deity is covered with a coat, i.e. *colaka* or sometimes it is painted with two pieces of garments, i.e. *vastrayugmasamopetam*.¹⁸⁵

In his image, the deity is shown as seated in a chariot with seven horses and one *cakra*.¹⁸⁶ The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* mentions that the seven horses of the chariot of the Sun are the representative of the seven Vedic metres, viz. Gāyatrī, Uṣṇik, Anuṣṭup, Bṛhatī, Pañkti, Triṣṭup, Jagatī.¹⁸⁷ Aruṇa is the charioteer of the deity who is resplendent like the Lotus leaves and in his both sides, with long necks, and well-decked horses are found. The seven horses yoked to the chariot of the Sun should be tied together with the string of the serpent.¹⁸⁸ Holding the reins with his hands, the deity sustains the entire universe.¹⁸⁹

On the two sides of the deity, Daṇḍī and Piṅgala should be placed as attendants along with their swords.¹⁹⁰ In other texts, Daṇḍī is represented with holding a staff in his hand while Piṅgala is represented as holding pen in his right hand and ink-pot in the left.¹⁹¹ But, in the *Matsyapurāṇa*, they are said to be holding daggers and a new attendant named Dhātṛ is introduced holding a pen in his hand: *lekhanīkṛtahastam ca pārśve dhātāramavyayam*.¹⁹² The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* mentions that Daṇḍī is to be placed on the left side of the Sun-image that is of handsome features like that of the Sun, and Piṅgala should be placed on the right side that is of tawny colour. He is shown

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 261.4

¹⁸⁶ Mat.P., 261.4

¹⁸⁷ Vi.Dh.P., 3.67.12

¹⁸⁸ Mat. P., 261.8

¹⁸⁹ Vi.Dh.P., 3.67.4

¹⁹⁰ Mat.P., 261.5

¹⁹¹ Vide, Agrawala, V.S., *Matsya Purāṇa- A Study*, p.361

¹⁹² Mat.P., 261,6

holding a pen and paper in his hand.¹⁹³ The Sun-god is shown with his hands on their heads.

The *Agnipurāṇa* mentions two types of the Sun images. Firstly, it should be made as riding on a chariot of one wheel and seven horses holding two Lotuses, inkstand, pen and a staff with his right hand. Piṅgala, the attendant and gatekeeper of the Sun should be placed on the left side of the image of the deity with the mace in his hand. The deity should have female attendants bearing chowries and the pale looking consorts by his side. Again, secondly, the image of the Sun should be made as riding on a horse alone.¹⁹⁴

The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* also gives some iconographic data relating to the Sun-cult. According to it, the image of the Sun-god is regarded as auspicious one. It should be of *sindu* colour. There are four arms of the deity in the image and it is well ornamented. The body of the deity is covered with armour and he possesses the girdle called as *aviyaṅga*. In his both hands, the rays of the deity should be shown. The deity with his hands holds the garlands of flowers. Besides Daṇḍī and Piṅgala on the left side of the image of the Sun, a lion should be placed, that is regarded as the representative of *Dharma*. The four sons of the Sun-god Revanta, Yama and the two Manus are placed on his sides. The four queens Rājñī, Rikṣubhā (Nikṣubhā), Chāyā and Suvarcasā are placed on the sides of Sun image. As the deity is regarded as supreme among the planets, the image of the Sun should be made as surrounded with the planets.¹⁹⁵

The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* mentions the icon of the Sun where the deity is found riding in a golden chariot having seven horses those regarded as the seven Vedic

¹⁹³ Vi.Dh.P., 3.67.7

¹⁹⁴ Agni P., 51.1-3

¹⁹⁵ Vi.Dh.P., 3.67

metres.¹⁹⁶ The charioteer Aruṇa should be placed in the front, Rājñī and Niṣubhā should be placed on the left and right side respectively.¹⁹⁷ Sometimes, the other wives of the deity are also placed on. The sons of the deity the Aśvinīkumāras are carved on his either sides. The two attendants of him, Piṅgala and Daṇḍa are placed on the right and left sides of the deity respectively.¹⁹⁸

The Purāṇas direct seven types of images of the deity, i.e. *arcā*. They are divided on the basis of the material with which the images of the deity are made of. They are *Kāñcanī*, *Rājatī*, *Tāmrī*, *Pārthivī*, *Śailajā*, *Vārksī* and *Ālekhyā*: *kāñcanī rājatī tāmrī pārthivī śailajā tathā/ vārksī vālekhyā gāyanti mūrtisthānāni sapta vai*.¹⁹⁹ The image of the deity, made of gold, is called *Kāñcanī*, the silver-made image is called *Rājatī*, the image made of copper is called as *Tāmrī*, the image made of earth is *Pārthivī*, *Śailajā* is the stone-made image, *Vārksī* is the image made of tree, i.e. wood and *Ālekhyā* is the image that is made drawing on paper or portrait. The images are named differently according to its size. The Sun images should be of one cubit, or of two cubits, or of three cubits or three and half cubits: *ekahastā dvihastā ca trihastā vā pramāṇataḥ/ tathā sārđhatrihastā vā savituḥ pratimā śubhā*.²⁰⁰ The one cubit image is called *Saumyā*, two cubits is *Dhānyadā*, three cubits is *Sarvakāmapradā*, i.e. fulfiller of all desires and three and half cubit is called as *Kṣemakārikā*. Again, the image that is fine from all the sides, front, middle and downward is called *Gāndharvī*.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Bhavi.P., 1. 50.16-19

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 1.76.9-13; 136.50

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 1.76

¹⁹⁹ SP., 30.2

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 31.1,2

²⁰¹ cf., *agre madhye ca mūle ca pratimā sarvataḥ śubhā/ gāndharvī sā tu vijñeyā bahudhānyadhanāvahā//*
Ibid.,31. 5

The measurement of the different parts of the body of the image of the Sun-god is discussed in the Purāṇas. The *Sāmbapurāṇa*²⁰² states that the length of the foot of the image of the Sun-god is fourteen aṅgulas while the Aṅguṣṭhas should be of three. The *pradeśinī* part should be of the same size of the Aṅguṣṭhas. Again, the fingers of the leg of the image should be carved lesser in size according to the proportion. The ankles of the image should be of four Aṅgulas.

The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* deals with the iconography of the other gods in general and the Sun-god in particular. According to it, the image of the Sun-god should be in proportion to the door of the sanctum. It should be lower by one-eighth than the door. The *piṇḍikā* should be the three-fifth of the door. The length of the image should be of eighty-four aṅgulas of which the head should be of twelve aṅgulas; the chin, forehead and the nose respectively of one third of the face. The ears should be of the same size of the nose. The eyes of the image should be of two aṅgulas each. The length and height of the forehead should be equal. The distance between the neck and nose and the distance between the mouth and heart are equal. The navel of the image should be of the size of the mouth. The lower part of the image should be made carved. Again the breadth of the chest should be of the size of the head. The waist should be of its half. The thighs and hands should be of equal size. The feet should be of four aṅgulas and it should be below the ankles. The breadth of it should be six aṅgulas, toe being the three aṅgulas and *pradeśinī* should be of the same size. The remaining fingers should be of comparatively smaller in size.²⁰³

The Purāṇas deal with the merits that are to be obtained by different types of images, according to its materials. The image of wood gives glory, age, victory,

²⁰² Ibid., 31.6-14

²⁰³ Bhavi.P., 1. 132

strength, fame; image of clay is beneficial to the entire subjects. The golden image gives nutrition, the silver image gives fame. Again, the copper image is helpful in multiplication of the subjects and the stone image gives landed property to its worshippers. The images of iron or glass or any other metal are never appreciated. They are regarded as harmful or inauspicious.²⁰⁴

Temples and Pilgrimages for Worshipping the Sun-god in the Purāṇas:

The Purāṇic texts contain detailed discussion of installation of the Sun image in the temple. The image of the deity would be installed with the great show off on an auspicious day and at an auspicious place in the centre of the city: *puramadhyam samāśritya kuryādāyatanam raveḥ*²⁰⁵ Prior to installation, it should be sprinkled with pure water that is brought from many rivers, from all the parts of the country.²⁰⁶ The *Agnipurāṇa* prescribes the installation of the image of the Sun-god with the utterance of sacred mantras devoted to the deity.²⁰⁷ The *Purāṇa* glorifies the building of a temple, saying that a person who builds a temple is always blessed. Even if one merely thinks of building a temple, the sins of hundred lives are forgiven.²⁰⁸ The bliss of all kinds of sacrifices, pilgrimage, sacred bath, etc., is only obtained by establishing a temple: *phalam yann"pyate yajñairdhāma kṛtvā tadāpyate/ devāgāre kṛte sarvatīrthasnānaphalam labhet*/²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 1.133

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 1.130.41

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 1.133

²⁰⁷ Agni P., 99.1-5

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 38.1,2

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 38.6

The *Sāmbapurāṇa* gives a detailed discussion of the arrangement of a temple dedicated to the Sun-god.²¹⁰ The temple should be established after proper examination of the ground: *ādau bhūmiṃ parīkṣet kuryāddevagrhaṃ tataḥ*²¹¹ The Sun-god should be consecrated in the *garbhagrha*, i.e. the main sanctum of the temple. A door should be there on the eastern part and a bathroom of the Sun-god should be erected there in the southern part. A room should be constructed there for the Agnihotra or *Havana* in the northern part of the temple. The deities Śambhu along with Mātṛkās, Brahmā and Viṣṇu are to be installed in the shrines in the south, west and northern parts respectively: *uduṃmukhaṃ bhavacchambhormātrīṇāṃ ca grhottamam/ brahmā paścimataḥ sthāpyo viṣṇuruttaratastathā*//²¹² In front of the Sun image, the place of two Mahāśvetās should be made. The two Aśvins should be installed outside at the door of the shrine and they are to be worshipped there. The attendants of the Sun-god should be also placed on the temple. Rājña and Tosā, i.e. the Kārtikeya and the Hari respectively should be consecrated in the second shrine; two Kalmāṣa birds, viz. Pretādhipa and Garuḍa should be consecrated in the third shrine. Jaṇḍaka, who is Citragupta and the Māṭhara, who is Yamarāja should be placed in the southern direction. Besides these, in the western, Prāpnuyān, the ocean and Ūkṣatās, should be placed and in the north Kubera and Soma should be kept and to the north of Kubera and Soma, should be placed Revanta and Vināyaka.²¹³ Two maṇḍalas should be made on the ground to offer *arghya* to the Sun-god in the morning and evening hour.²¹⁴ The *Sāmbapurāṇa* mentions

²¹⁰ SP., 29

²¹¹ Ibid., 29.7

²¹² Ibid., 29.15,16

²¹³ Ibid.,29.17-21

²¹⁴ cf., arghāya maṇḍale dve vai kārye savyāpasavyayoh/ dadyādudayavelāyāmardhaṃ sūryāya dakṣiṇe//
Ibid., 29.22

about a banner, i.e. *dhvaja* of the Sun with the representation of *vyoma* on it.²¹⁵ The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* specifies that the metal gold is to be used in the *dhvaja*.²¹⁶ In honour of the Sun-god, the *dhvaja* is to be erected and they are called as *dharmadhvaja* on account of the figure *dharma* on the banner.²¹⁷

The Magas and the Bhojakas are considered as the Sun-worshipping priests associated with the installation and worship of the Sun image. Following the advice of Nārada, Sāmba had brought them to the region from the Śākadvīpa.²¹⁸ The Śākadvīpa is situated far from Jambudvīpa on the other side of salt-ocean and it is said to be surrounded with the sea of milk: *...lavaṇodātparepārekṣīrodenasamāvṛtam/ jambudvīpātparamyasmācchākadvīp itī smṛtam...//*²¹⁹ One day Sāmba, the son of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Jāmbavantī, went to take his bath in the river Candrabhāgā, where he found a glowing image that is brought by the current of the river. The image had been carved by Viśvakarman. Sāmba installed the image on the bank of the river. As because all the Brāhmaṇas did not accept the offering of the gifts of the temple, Sāmba was advised by Nārada to go to Gauramukha, a priest of Ugrasena, who again advised Sāmba to bring Magas who had the right to accept the gifts presented to the temples of gods and to perform their worship: *tasyādḥikāo devānne devatānāñca pūjane*²²⁰ In the *Sāmbapurāṇa*, the image of the deity itself advises Sāmba to bring the Maga worshippers from Śākadvīpa to worship him.²²¹ Thus advised by Nārada and Sūrya,

²¹⁵ cf., *ravervyoma smṛtaṁ dhvaje/ Ibid.*, 33.8

²¹⁶ Bhavi. P., 1.138.45

²¹⁷ Ibid., 1.138.37

²¹⁸ Ibid., 1.139

²¹⁹ Ibid., 1.139. 72-73

²²⁰ Ibid., 1.139.28

²²¹ cf., *vijñāpte tvayyaśeṣeṇa pratimā tamuvāca ha/ na योग्याḥ paricaryāyām jambudvīpe mamānagha// mama pūjāparā kṛtvā śākadvīpāhānaya/ lavaṇodātpare pāre kṣīrodena samāvṛtam// SP.*, 26.27,28

Sāmba went to Śākadvīpa and brought the Magas from there. These Bhojakas are referred to in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* as the installer and consecrator of the Sun images.²²²

The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* mentions about some important Sun temples. Vaśiṣṭha, the priest of Ikṣvāku dynasty had a Sun-temple that was constructed on the bank of the river Sarayū,²²³ where he regularly worshipped the deity. By worshipping the Sun-god there on the month of Kārtika with the utterance of the names of the deity and lighting the light, people achieve everything; the merit of all the sacrifices, glory equal to the Sun-god and even the Sūryaloka. There is another Sun temple, constructed by the son of Priyavrata, the king of Śākadvīpa, in his territory. He had installed a golden image of the deity there.²²⁴ To worship the deity, the Bhojakas had been appointed. Besides these, the other temples of the Sun-god mentioned in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* are the temples in Prayāga, Puṣkara, Kurukṣetra, Naimiṣa, Pṛthudaka, Kaśāvarta, Candrabhāgā, Soṇa, Gokarṇa, Brahmāvarta, Kuśāvarta, Bilvaka, Nīlaparvata (hin Nīlagiri), Gaṅgādvāra, Gaṅgāsāgara, Mitravana, Cakratīrtha and Rāmatīrtha.²²⁵ Among all the temples of the Sun-god, the temple of the Sāmbapura is regarded as the first abode of the Sun-god.²²⁶ The other major temples, devoted to the Sun-worship are the temples of Indravana, Muṇḍīra and Kālapriya.²²⁷

The Purāṇas also mention about different Sun-temples located in different places. The *Garuḍapurāṇa* informs about three images of the Sun, established by Sāmba after relieving from his diseases. One of the images, he had established on the

²²² Bhavi P., 1.117, 135,140, 144, 145, 146, 147

²²³ Ibid.,1.118.19,20

²²⁴ Ibid., 1.117.8-10

²²⁵ Ibid., 1.55

²²⁶ Ibid., 1.72.7

²²⁷ Ibid., 1.72. 4-7

Udayācala, another at Kālapriya, to the south of Yamunā, and the third one he established at Mulasthāna, i.e. the present Multan.²²⁸ The *Purāṇa* also mentions that the devotee obtains greatest advantage, worshipping the rising Sun on the Udayācala, the midday Sun at Kālapriya and the setting Sun at Mulasthāna. It indicates the location of Udayācala in the east region, Kālapriya in the centre and Mulasthāna in the west part.

The *Vāyupurāṇa* mentions about Vāḍāditya, one of the forms of the Sun-god. The image of the Vāḍāditya was installed by Vāyu in the city of Vāyupura. The deity is regarded as endowed with great prowess. He bestows everything to his devotees and fulfils all the desires: *vāḍādityaśca deveśaḥ sthāpito vāyunā tadā/ kāmadaḥ sarvadaḥ sūryo prabhurīśaḥ pratāpavān/*²²⁹

The *Brahmapurāṇa* mentions that to the south of the Bhāratavarṣa, in one of the shores of the great ocean, there is located the land named Oṅdra and Utkala. In the Utkala, i.e. the Sūryakṣetra, the image of the Sun-god known as Koṇāditya is installed.²³⁰ The image of the deity is mentioned as auspicious, with the sight of which all sins of man is destroyed. The temple is surrounded with sand and trees. The best time for propitiating the deity is considered as the sunrise. The devotee, worshipping the deity according to the prescribed rites becomes free from the sins that acquired in the seven births.

The *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* refers to many centres of the Sun-worship. According to it, Kāmarūpa is one of the places where the worship of the Sun-god was prevalent from very early period. The old King Rājyavardhana, propitiating the Sun-god here in

²²⁸ Garuḍa P., 23.6

²²⁹ Vā.P., 59.120

²³⁰ Brahmāṇḍa P., 28.53,54

the region, regained his youth.²³¹ The *Kālikāpurāṇa* mentions two important places of Sun-worship. It refers to the holy place called Ravikṣetra that is located on a hill called Tattva to the west of the river Trisrotā.²³² The Ravikṣetra is now identified as the Śrī Sūrya mountain of the district in Goalpara, where the twelve identical figures, i.e. the twelve Ādityas, in the form of Lotus-petal are found arranged around the figure of Kāśyapa. The Citraśaila is another place of Sun-worship in the region where the Sun-god is worshipped along with the nine planets.²³³ The Citraśaila is presently known as Navagraha hill in Guwahati, Assam.

The Sun-god is worshipped in the form of Lolārka in the Purāṇas. But the episode of Lolārka is found in variant ways in different Purāṇas.²³⁴ According to the *Vāmanapurāṇa*, the deity achieved the form lolling between Varuṇa and the river Asī, due to some quarrels with the Asuras.²³⁵ He was restored to his place Lolārka, that in probably the Lolārka Kuṇḍa, near Badaini, in the district of Vārāṇasī. The Sun-god is worshipped there along with the other Brāhmaṇical deities. Again, according to the *Skandapurāṇa*, due to his eagerness, i.e. *lola*, the Sun-god acquired the name Lolārka.²³⁶ The temple of Lolārka is located in the southern direction of Kāśī at the confluence of Asi with Gaṅgā. Among all the holy tīrthas of the place, the Lolārka is considered as the first and foremost and other tīrthas are regarded as subsidiaries to it, those watered by its holy water.²³⁷ Due to the greatness of the deity, the inhabitants of Kāśī achieve and preserve good. The annual pilgrimage to the place on the seventh

²³¹ Mār.P., 111

²³² Kā. P., 78.41,42

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Bhā.P., 7.18; Vāma. P., 76.41

²³⁵ Agrawala, V.S., *Vāmana Purāṇa-A Study*, p. 34

²³⁶ Sk.P., 4.1.46.48

²³⁷ Ibid., 4.1.46.59

lunar day in the month of Māgaśīrṣa, or on the sixth day that falls on a Sunday makes man free from all types of sin. All the sins committed by man during the whole year are destroyed with the visit of Lolārka on the sixth lunar day that falls on Sunday.²³⁸ The holy bath at the confluence of Asi and Gaṅgā, by propitiating the Pitṛs and the deities along with the performance of *śrāddha* on that place, one becomes free to the indebtedness to the Pitṛs.²³⁹ With the holy dip at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Asi on the seventh day in the bright half of Māgha called Rathasaptamī, one becomes free from the sins incurred in the course of seven births.²⁴⁰ Again, if anyone takes a visit to Lolārka on every Sunday observing the vows of cleanliness, he becomes free from all the miseries in the world. Along with the miseries, the people get rid of all the skin-diseases, e.g. Pāma, Dadru or Vicarcikā, worshipping the Sun-god in the form of Lolārka located in the Vārāṇasī.²⁴¹

The Sun-god has divided himself into twelve forms in the city of Kāśī to destroy all the sins of his devotees.²⁴² These twelve forms of the Sun-god are, Lolārka, Uttarārka, Sāmbāditya, Drupadāditya, Mayūkhāditya, Khakholkāditya, Aruṇāditya, Vṛddhāditya, Keśavāditya, Vimalāditya, Gaṅgāditya and Yamāditya. The twelve shrines dedicated to the worship of these forms of the Sun are located in Kāśī.

The Sun-god is worshipped in the form of Uttarārka.²⁴³ The image of the Sun-god Uttarārka is installed on the Arkakuṇḍa, in the north side of the Viśveśvara temple in Vārāṇasī. The deity Uttarārka dispels the miseries of the people and flourishes the

²³⁸ Ibid., 4.1.46.50

²³⁹ Ibid., 4.1.46.52

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 4.1.46.55

²⁴¹ Ibid., 4.1.46.57

²⁴² Ibid., 4.1.46.44

²⁴³ Ibid., 4.1.47.1

good people. The Arkakuṇḍa is also known as Bakariā Kuṇḍa. The annual pilgrimage of the lord Uttarārka should be performed on a Sunday in the month of Puṣyā, which bestows all the benefits of Kāśī.²⁴⁴

A small shrine of Sāmbāditya is found near Sūryakuṇḍa, near Godaulia. Sāmba, the son of Kṛṣṇa, worshipping the deity at the city of the Viśveśvara, i.e. Vārāṇasī got rid of leprosy.²⁴⁵ Due to the redemption and purity of the place, all the great sins committed by the people are removed, and all the diseases are cured at Vārāṇasī, if no remedy has been seen for, even by the sages.²⁴⁶ The deity Sāmbāditya, the dispeller of all ailments, bestows all the riches to his devotees there, making them free from evil and illness. No disease can afflict the devotee: if he takes a holy dip in Sāmbakuṇḍa, early at dawn on a Sunday and worships the deity Sāmbāditya. Widowhood never hits the woman if she worships the Sun-god in the form of Sāmba. The barren woman gives birth to a son, endowed with pure handsome features.²⁴⁷ In the month of Madhu, i.e. Caitra, on a Sunday, the annual pilgrimage and festivities take place at Vārāṇasī. After taking the holy bath in the Sāmbakuṇḍa, and worshipping the deity with Aśoka flowers according to the injunctions, the devotee becomes free from grief and all the sins he has committed throughout the year.²⁴⁸

The temple of the deity Draupadāditya is located under a tree on the west side of the Viśvanātha temple. The Sun-god occupying this form bestows supernatural powers to his devotees.²⁴⁹ Viśveśara had given a boon to Draupadāditya, satisfied with

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 4.1.47.57

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 4.1.48.39

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 4.1.48.41

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 4.1.48.49

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 4.1.48.54

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 4.1.48.58

his penance, that if a man visits Viśveśvara after worshipping the Sun in the form of Draupadāditya, he becomes free from the darkness of his miseries with the rays of the Sun.²⁵⁰ Due to this boon, the Sun-god dispels forever the sins of the creatures those stationed at Kāśī.

The temple of Mayūkhāditya is located there inside the Maṅgalā Devī temple.²⁵¹ The deity had achieved the name Mayūkhāditya as because at the time of his performance of penance only the rays of the deity were seen, not the body.²⁵² The Sun-god called Mayūkhāditya had installed a great *liṅga* named Gabhastīśvara and Gaurī, named as Mangala. The *liṅga* gives all siddhis to the devotees.²⁵³ A person taking his holy bath in Pañcanada with the adoration of Gabhastīśvara, becomes rid of all his sins and becomes free from the cycle of rebirth. Propitiating the Sun-god there, people becomes free from sickness. If a person visits Mayūkhāditya on Sunday, no one will incur poverty.²⁵⁴

The image of the deity Khakholka is at present in the Kāmeśvara temple in Vārāṇasī.²⁵⁵ The Sun-god called Khakholkāditya destroys all the ailments. By unethical way, Vinatā, the mother of Garuḍa, was defeated by Kadru. Garuḍa released his mother from the slavery. After that, both Vinatā and Garuḍa had gone to Vārāṇasī to perform severe penance. Garuḍa installed there a *liṅga* of Śambhu and Vinatā installed the splendid one Khakholka, one of the forms of Āditya. The deity Khakholkāditya appeared in front of Vinatā and blessed her to become free from various sins, providing

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 4.1.49.17

²⁵¹ Ibid., 4.1.49.2

²⁵² Ibid., 4.1.49.93

²⁵³ Ibid., 4.1.49.78

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 4.1.49.95

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 4.1.50.9

her the knowledge of Śiva. The deity was also named as Vinatāditya after her name.²⁵⁶ Khalkholkāditya is believed to have destroyed the various sins of the resident of Kāśī.

The idol of Aruṇāditya is installed in Vārāṇasī to the north of the Mahādeva temple. Vinatā was cursed by her own son Aruṇa, who was born unfledged, due to the excessive eagerness of her under which she broke open the egg prematurely. Inquired by Vinatā, Aruṇa told her the way to get release from the curse. After that, he flew unto the sacred place called Ānandakānana at Vārāṇasī and performed penance there. He propitiated the Sun-god and the deity became known as Aruṇāditya after his name. The people, who worship the deity there in Vārāṇasī will have nothing to fear from anywhere.²⁵⁷ The worshippers become free from misery, poverty and sins. They become free from all ailments, no evil phenomena will attack them and no fire of grief can burn them.²⁵⁸

The image of the Sun-god in the form of Vṛddhāditya is installed towards the south of Viśālākṣī in Vārāṇasī.²⁵⁹ The image carries all auspicious characteristics and was intended to bestow auspiciousness. The people attained supernatural powers propitiating the Sun-god in Vārāṇasī in the form of Vṛddhāditya. He destroys old age, wretchedness and ailments.²⁶⁰ A man would attain the desired benefit, by bowing down to Vṛddhāditya at Vārāṇasī on a Sunday.²⁶¹

The crystal *liṅga* of Lord Maheśvara made by the Sun was placed and worshipped to the north of Ādikeśvara in Vārāṇasī. It is known as Keśavāditya. The

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 4.1.50.149

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 4.2.51.21

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.2.51.22

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 4.2.51.29

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 4.2.51.41

²⁶¹ Ibid., 4.2.51.43

Sun-god is known as Keśavāditya, attaining the spiritual knowledge, after associating with Keśava.²⁶² The deity destroys the darkness of the devotees and bestows them everything according to their desires.²⁶³ By propitiating Keśavāditya, at Vārāṇasī, a man acquires highest wisdom whereby he attains salvation too. People performing the ritualistic offerings of water to one's predecessors in the holy *tīrtha* called Pādodaka at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Vārāṇasī and visiting Keśavāditya, become liberated from inherited sins.²⁶⁴ Again, on the Rathasaptamī day, the seventh day of the bright half of Māgha, that falls on a Sunday, the devotee taking a bath early in the morning in the Pādodakatīrtha in front of Ādikeśvara, observing silence and worshipping Keśavāditya becomes free from the sins incurred in the course of seventh birth.²⁶⁵ The seven types of sins are—i. sins, committed in the current birth; ii. sins, acquired in the previous birth; iii. mental sins; iv. verbal sins; v. physical sins; vi. known sins and vii. unknown sins. The holy bath at Keśavāditya on the *saptamī* of Makara destroys the seven types of sins.

The temple of Vimalāditya, one of the forms of the Sun-god is placed on the beautiful forest of Harikeśvara in Vārāṇasī. As the Kṣatriya Vimala became free from the leprosy worshipping the Sun-god there in Vārāṇasī, people, visiting the deity there, becomes free from the foul disease of leprosy.²⁶⁶ The deity Vimalāditya is always regarded as the bestower of the boons on devotees and dispels all ailments and sins.

To the south of Viśveśvara in Vārāṇasī, the deity Gaṅgāditya is installed. By seeing Gaṅgāditya a man attains purity. Gaṅgā when arrived with Bhagīratha, leading

²⁶² Ibid., 4.2.51.44

²⁶³ Ibid., 4.2.51.73

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 4.2.51.75

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 4.2.51.76,77

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 4.2.51.99

her, the Sun-god placed himself there in order to eulogise Gaṅgā. The person who propitiates Gaṅgāditya in Vārāṇasī, never attains wretchedness at any place nor falls ill.²⁶⁷

The Āditya that was installed by Yama to the west of Yameśa and to the east of Vīreśa is known as Yamāditya. Yamāditya removes the torture that arises from Yama.²⁶⁸ The devotee, worshipping Yameśa and Yamāditya and taking a holy dip in Yamatīrtha never sees the world of Yama.²⁶⁹ Taking a bath in Yamatīrtha on Tuesday that falls on the fourteenth lunar day and a visit to Yameśvara makes man free from all sins.²⁷⁰ Again the performer performing libation and offerings of balls of rice in Yamatīrtha on the fourteenth day on a Tuesday with Bharāṇī constellation becomes free from indebtedness to Pitṛs. One becomes free from indebtedness to the Pitṛs by performing *śrāddha* in Yamatīrtha, adoring Yameśvara and bowing down to Yamāditya.

Yājñavalkya had installed twelve Sun-gods at different places in the Hātakeśvarakṣetra.²⁷¹ He had installed a Sun-god called Śaṅkhāditya. The temple of the deity is known as Śaṅkhatīrtha. Śaṅkha had also resorted to a water tank, known as Śaṅkhakuṇḍa, near to the temple and performed his penance there. A person taking his holy bath there at sunrise on the eighth lunar day in the bright half in the month of Vaiśākha that falls on a Sunday, becomes free from all types of leprosy and becomes brilliant like the Sun.²⁷² The deity fulfils all the desires of his worshippers and destructs

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 4.2.51.104

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 4.2.51.109

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 4.2.51.110

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 4.2.51.107

²⁷¹ Ibid., 6.209.43

²⁷² Ibid., 6.209.44,45

their sins. In the Hātakeśvara, the image of the Ratnāditya, one of the forms of the Sun-god was installed by the King Ratnākṣa. It destructs all sins of his worshippers. Without using any implement of digging, Viśvāmitra dug up a pit on the ground in Hātakeśvara with his own hands. He meditated and brought the river Jāhnavī from Pātāla there.²⁷³ All the sins of people destruct with the holy ablution into it. Later on King Ratnākṣa being freed from his diseases of leprosy worshipping the Sun-god there, installed the image of the deity. In the bright half of the Māgha that falls on a Sunday bowing down to Divākara there, a man becomes rid of leprous ailments and sins. To the north-western side of it a water tank was created by Dhanvantari. With the holy bath into it man becomes free from all ailments. The devotee taking a holy bath there and visiting the deity on the Saptamī day in conjunction with a Sunday, shall be relieved of sins and go to the world of the Sun.²⁷⁴ The image of the Mārtaṇḍa was installed by Viśvāmitra in the Hātakeśvara. The deity destructs all the leprous ailments. On the seventh lunar day in the bright half of the month of Vaiśākha, that falls on a Sunday and constellation Pitradaivatya, the deity was worshipped by his devotee with hundred and eight circumambulations to become free from leprosy.²⁷⁵ Sāmba, to get rid of his leprosy worshipped the Sun-god called Sāmbāditya after bathing in the auspicious water of Sindhu. He started slowly towards the holy spots beginning with the Puṣkara worshipping lord Puṣkarasvāmin. Sāmba took his holy bath there in the meritorious waters of the *kuṇḍa* and offered libation to the Piṭṛs and Devas. On a Sunday, coinciding with Saptamī, he went to the temple of Kuharasvāmī, and worshipped the deity offering fruits and one hundred and eight circumambulations, repeating the

²⁷³ Ibid., 6.212.9

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 6.212.54

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.213

Sūryagāyatrī.²⁷⁶ The temple of Bakulārka, i.e. the lord of the forest grove, is placed on the west of the idol of Śambhu in the Ravikṣetra.²⁷⁷ A *kuṇḍa* occurred there with the hind leg of the horse, i.e. the disguised form of the Sun.²⁷⁸ Both the temple and the *kuṇḍa* are located in the Dharmāraṇya, in the northern Kurukṣetra. If a man takes his holy bath in the Ravikuṇḍa, he becomes free from sins, never afflicted with sickness, leprosy, etc.²⁷⁹ The manes become redeemed if fallen in great hells, with the bath to it.²⁸⁰ Taking the bath on the seventh lunar day in conjunction with Sunday, or at the time of lunar and solar eclipses, a bath in Ravikuṇḍa makes the people free from the cycle of rebirth.²⁸¹ The holy dip in the Ravikuṇḍa, on the day of the transit of the Sun, on *Vyatīpāta*, on *Vaidhṛta*, on the full moon day, on the new moon day, or on the fourteenth day of the dark and bright half of a month gives the benefit of ten million sacrifices to the devotees.²⁸²

Besides the temples, there are some centres of pilgrimage mentioned in the *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* of the *Skandapurāṇa*. The *Dvādaśāditya* is one of them, situated near *Somakuṇḍa*.²⁸³ The holy bath that is taken there on Sunday, *Saptamī* and *Samkrānti* is regarded as very auspicious, and people visited the place seeking blessings of the Sun-god. There is a *tīrtha* called *Arkatīrtha*, situated to the west to *Markaṭatīrtha*, on the bank of the river *Narmadā* in *Tripuri*.²⁸⁴ King *Gandharvarāja* is said to have been cured of his leprosy by worshipping the Sun-god. The *tīrtha* is also known as *Bhāskaratīrtha*.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 6.213. 108

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 3.2.13.1

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 3.2.13.51

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 3.2.13.53

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 3.2.13.59

²⁸¹ Ibid., 3.2.13.60

²⁸² Ibid., 3.2.13.62

²⁸³ Ibid., 2.2.7

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 5.3.9

Besides this, there is another *tīrtha* known as Sūryākṣatīrtha.²⁸⁵ The temple of the Ādityeśvara is situated to the north of the river Narmadā.²⁸⁶ It is considered as the great pilgrimage of Hindu, that is praised as better than even Kurukṣetra, Prayāga, Naimiṣa, Puṣkara, Kāśī and Kedāra. At the time of solar eclipse, people coming from different parts take their holy bath there and make different gifts. It is also known as Arkatīrtha and Sūryatīrtha.²⁸⁷

The Candrādityatīrtha is another centre of pilgrimage, which was installed by two Rākṣasas, the Caṇḍa and the Muṇḍa on the bank of the river Narmadā.²⁸⁸ In the *Avantīkhaṇḍa* under the *Revākhaṇḍa*, a temple is mentioned, dedicated to the Sun-god Narāditya or Naradīpa which was built in Ujjayinī. The temple was known for its glory.²⁸⁹ The Narāditya temple is at present near the Kālabhairava temple in Ujjayinī. There is a *tīrtha* of Dvādaśārka which is situated on the south bank of the river Kṣīprā.²⁹⁰ The Sun-god was believed to be taken the human form in Prabhāsakṣetra and therefore it is also regarded as the place of pilgrimage.²⁹¹ The place Prabhāsakṣetra is at Saurāṣṭra and also known as the Arkasthala. There is a Sūryakṣetra at the confluence of the rivers Brāhmī, Hiranya and the sea.²⁹² Besides these, the shrines of the Sun-gods, Gopāditya,²⁹³ Sagarāditya,²⁹⁴ Nagarāditya,²⁹⁵ Nandāditya,²⁹⁶ etc., were installed on the

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 5.26.13,14

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 5.93

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 5, 93

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 5.106

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 5.3.43,44,47

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 5.1.83.50-53

²⁹¹ Ibid., 7.11

²⁹² Ibid., 7.14

²⁹³ Ibid., 7.124

²⁹⁴ Ibid. 7.124

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 7.230

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 7.242

bank of the river Māheśvarī in the Prabhāsakṣetra by the Gopīs of Kṛṣṇa, Sagara, Janaka and Nanda respectively. Viśvāmitra installed the temple of the Sun-god Bālāditya by name at the distance of four krośas from Agastyāśrama and it became the centre of pilgrimage.²⁹⁷ Besides these, the Prabhāsakṣetra refers to the shrine of the Sun-god Balukasvāmī,²⁹⁸ Uttarārka,²⁹⁹ Kṣemāditya,³⁰⁰ Durgāditya,³⁰¹ etc. The image of the Sun-god, called Citrāditya was installed by Citra, one of the sons of Mitra.³⁰² The *strotra* devoted to the deity contains the names of all the important images of the Sun-god, placed on different parts of India. All total sixty-three images of the Sun-god are mentioned along with its places in the specified *strotra* found in the *Prabhāsakhaṇḍa* of the *Skandapurāṇa*.

Thus, the Purāṇas glorify the building of a temple. They contain huge information relating to the different Sun-temples located in different parts of India. The Purāṇic texts narrate some legendary episodes connected with the origin of such temples. The Sun-god was worshipped under different names in the temples, appearing before his devotees, occupying different forms. Besides the temples, there were some centres of pilgrimage mentioned in the Purāṇic texts. With a view to getting relief from different diseases or sins or to fulfil different desires, the devotees went to the pilgrimage and took their sacred baths on different months and different constellations. His worship as the remover of diseases and reliever of sins is very much prominent in

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 7.266

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 7.282

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 7.283

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 7.284

³⁰¹ Ibid., 7.289

³⁰² Ibid., 7.133

the Vedas,³⁰³ and it has a direct impact on the Sun-worship in the pilgrimage and temples in Purāṇas.

Thus, the Purāṇic literature stands as the great source of ancient Indian history containing information in it, relating to the religion, culture, geography, etc., of ancient India. From the study, it becomes clear that the Sun-worship in the Purāṇic period which is developed into the sectarianism is indeed fully influenced by the Vedic mode of worship of the Sun.

³⁰³ RV., 1.50.10

CHAPTER-V
RITUALS RELATED TO THE SUN-WORSHIP
IN THE PURĀṆAS

The idea of sectarianism is fully developed in the Purāṇic religion from the simplest mode of worshipping the Sun-god as a deified form of the nature in the Vedic pantheon. The worship of the deity has given rise to different ritualistic performances. The term ritual defines a sequence of activities, including gesture, words, etc., practised among a particular class of people or place. It involves all the worship, rites and sacraments, purificatory rites and different organized actions of common people. The rituals in the Purāṇic period find its expression with numerous vratas, pūjās, festivals, etc., related to the particular deity or cult. Along with the vratas and pūjās, etc., there are found the sacrificial and household ceremonies and customary laws, etc., those closely follow the Vedas. For every householder, the worship of the Sun is prescribed as daily obligations in the Purāṇas that involves the *ācamana*, *arghya* of water and recitation of a hymn invoking the Sun-god under various names such as Vivasvat, Bhāskara, Savitr, Viṣṇu, etc.¹

The Sacrifices Related to the Sun-god Dealt with in the Purāṇas:

The Purāṇic texts do not have thoroughly dealt with the rites and customs of any Vedic sacrifices. But they refer to the performance of the sacrifices following the Vedic order. The sacrifices devoted to the Sun-worship, mentioned here and there in the Purāṇas, are briefly noted here—

¹ Viṣ P., 3.11.39,40

The Purāṇas contain the references of the performance of the Agnihotra.² The householders are directed to perform it.³ In Agnihotra, in the morning period, the oblation of milk is given in honour to the Sun, and, after that to Prajāpati. Again, in the evening, Agni and Prajāpati are worshipped. The *Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra* contains the reference of worshipping the Sun in the morning sacrifice.⁴ The performer of Agnihotra, consuming purified eatables, only once in a day performs *homa*.⁵ The Agnihotra is personified as one of the sons of deity Savitṛ by his wife in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*: *pr̥śnistu patnī savituh̥ sāvitrīm̥ vyāhṛtīm̥ trayīm̥/ agnihotraṁ paśuṁ somaṁ cāturmāsyaṁ mahāmakhān/*⁶ Sāvitrī, Vyāhṛti, Trayī, Agnihotra, Paśu, Soma, etc., are mentioned in the relevant context as the offspring of Savitā and Pṛśni.

The Mitravarūṇayoriṣṭi was performed in the Purāṇic period, in worship of the two Vedic solar deities, Mitra and Varuṇa.⁷ With a view to achieving progeny, the worshipper worships Mitra and Varuṇa, the two forms of the Sun-god, offering a sacrifice.⁸ With a view to achieving son, Manu performed the Mitrāvaruṇa sacrifice: *iṣṭiśca mitrāvaruṇayormmanu putrakāmaścakāra*⁹ But due to the occurrences of some irregularities in the performance, a daughter Ilā was born, as a result of the sacrifice.

The Saṁskāras, Referred to in the Purāṇas:

The Saṁskāras are the religious purificatory rites and ceremonies; those are associated with the individual, from the moment, when he was conceived in the womb

² Bhā.P., 5.7.5; Mat.P., 25.34;107.16

³ cf., *vaitānikena vidhinā agnihotrādinā yajed*// Bhā.P., 7.14.16

⁴ cf., ...“sūryāya svāhā” *iti prātastūṣṇīm̥ dvitīye ubhayatra/* Aś.GS., 1.9.8

⁵ cf., *hutvāgnīm̥ vidhivatsamyakpavitṛikṛtabhojanā/ agnihotrakrameṇaiva sā suṣvāpa mahāvratā*// Mat.P., 50.18

⁶ Bhā.P., 6.18.1

⁷ Vā.P., 85.6,7

⁸ Bhā.P., 9.1.13

⁹ Viṣ.P., 4.1.6

up to the cremation for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect so that he may become a full-fledged member of the community.¹⁰ The Dharmasūtras contain a great deal on the topic. According to Gautama, there are all total forty Saṃskāras.¹¹ Among all the Saṃskāras, the following are regarded as very prominent, e.g. Garbhādhāna, Puṃsavana, Sīmantonayana, Jātakarmana, Nāmakaraṇa, Niṣkarmaṇa, Annaprāśana, Cūḍākaraṇa, Upanayana and Vivāha.

The Niṣkarmaṇa is one of the Saṃskāras, in which the Sun-god is propitiated. According to the Gṛhyasūtras, the procedure of the ritual consisted in taking the child out by the father and making it look at the Sun with the recitation of the particular verse *sūryamudīkṣayati taccakṣuriti*/¹² Different texts have given different times for the performance of the Niṣkarmaṇa. The Purāṇas contain the reference of the performance of it.¹³ According to the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, the Niṣkarmaṇa should be performed on the twelfth day or on the fourth month after the child-birth.¹⁴ The Gṛhyasūtras mention about the performance of the ritual by the father and the mother, while in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, reference is found of taking the child out by the solicitous nurse.¹⁵ On the respective day of its performance, a square portion of the courtyard is plastered with cowdung and clay from where the Sun-god could be seen. The sign of the Svastikā is to be made thereon and rice-grains are to be scattered by the mother of the child. After decorating it well, he or she is taken outside the home. The family deity of the house is worshipped with the instrumental music along with the guardians of the

¹⁰ Vide, Pandey, Raj Bali., *Hindu Saṃskāras*, p.27

¹¹ GDS., 1.8.14-22

¹² PGS., 1.17.5,6

¹³ Bhavi.P.; Vi.Dh.P.

¹⁴ Bhavi.P., 1.3

¹⁵ Vide, Pandey, Raj Bali., Op.cit., p.148, fn.7

eight directions, the Sun, the Moon, Vāsudeva and the sky. The father of the child worships the deities for the protection of the child.¹⁶ After that, the child is taken to the temple and after bowing to the deity and achieving the blessings of the Brāhmaṇas, he or she was taken out of the temple to the lap of the maternal uncle and brought to the home.

Again, the Upanayana is one of the important Saṁskāras, in which, Sāvitrī is worshipped. The Purāṇas contain the references to it.¹⁷ The worship of the Gāyatrī or Sandhyā is indeed, the worship of the Sun. The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* says that at the time of acquiring the *yajñopavīta*, Gāyatrī becomes the mother of individual, and Ācārya becomes the father.¹⁸

The Vratas Observed and the Sun-worship:

The fasting, resorting to severe penances, etc., in honour of respective gods was not observed in an organized scale in the days of the Vedas and the Epics. They have developed on an organized scale as a part of a religious faith, indeed in the Purāṇas. The references to sacrificial oblations towards the Sun-god are occasionally met with in the earlier Purāṇas, like the *Matsyapurāṇa*,¹⁹ the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*,²⁰ etc. Again, the rituals like, the *japa*, the *arghya*, the *ācamana*, etc., have Vedic survivals. Besides these, the later Vedic elements, like *bhakti*, *pūjā*, etc., are also found here and there in the Purāṇic Sun-worship.

¹⁶ Vide, *Ibid.*, p.149, fn.9

¹⁷ *Bhavi.P.*,1.3; *Agni P.*, 215; *Padma P.*, 1.16

¹⁸ *Bhavi.P.*, 1.4

¹⁹ cf., *kīrtayetsūryadevatyaṁ saptarcaṁ ca ghṛtāhutīḥ/ Mat.P.*, 68.17

²⁰ cf., *Mār.P.*, 106.61

Several times, in the Purāṇas, the deity is worshipped in the form of Lotus which indeed is the continuation of the Vedic tradition of worshipping the Sun. The worship of the Sun in general is prescribed on Sunday by drawing a twelve-petalled Lotus with red Sandal in the forepart of which the horses of Sūrya should be inscribed.²¹ It is said that one who observes these rituals and keeps up this *vrata* for a year, becomes free from all sins and goes to the solar region fanned by the *cāmara*.²²

The solar vows, discussed in detail in the *Matsyapurāṇa* are, Kalyānasaptamī, Viśokasaptamī, Phalāsaptamī, Śarkarasaptamī, Kamalāsaptamī, Mandārasaptamī and Śubhasaptamī.²³ The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* also mentions of forty-two solar vratas, of which Śakasaptamī, Rathāsaptamī, Sarṣapasaptamī, Vijayasaptamī, Nandākhyasaptamī, Saptasaptamī, Mārīcisaptamī, etc., are very famous. Besides these, the different Purāṇas mention the vratas called Ārogyasaptamī,²⁴ Dvādaśādityavrata,²⁵ etc.

A brief note on some of the vratas related to the Sun-worship in the Purāṇas along with their procedures is presented below—

Aparājītāsaptamī: The Sun-god is worshipped on the seventh day of the bright fortnight on the month of the Bhādrapada and this day is called as Aparājītāsaptamī or simply Aparājītā. The reference of its observation is found in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*.²⁶ By the observance of this *vrata*, the worshipper becomes free from all types of the great sins, and achieves victory in the war. On the fourth day, the worshipper should remain

²¹ Ibid., 97.5,8

²² cf., ityanena vidhinā samācaredabdamekamiha yastu mānavaḥ/ so'dhirohati vinaṣṭakalmaṣaḥ sūryadhāma dhutacāmarāvaliḥ// Mat.P., 97.17

²³ Ibid., 74-80

²⁴ Varā.P., 62

²⁵ Vi.Dh.P., 3.182

²⁶ Bhavi.P., 1.98

ekabhakta, i.e. having his meal once a day, on the fifth-day, he should remain *nakta*, i.e. having his meal at night, and fast on the sixth. On the seventh, he should worship the Sun-god with the Karavīra flower, Sandal, incense made of Guggula, *apūpa*, etc. The deity should be worshipped with different materials in each group of three months.

Arkasaptamī: The Arkasaptamīvrata is performed for two years. It is started on a Sunday in the period of Uttarāyaṇa of any bright fortnight. The deity Sun is worshipped with it. On the fifth day, the worshipper observes *ekabhakta*, on the sixth day *nakta*, and observes fast on the seventh day and *pāraṇā* on the eighth. During the days of its observance, he should drink from a cup made of the leaves of Arka plants.

Arkasampuṭasaptamī: On the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Phālguna, the Sun-god Divākara is worshipped with the Arkasampuṭasaptamīvrata. The *vrata* lasts for a year. The worshipper should worship Bhānu on the daytime and at night, he should stay without sleep and worship the deity with the recitation of the *Sauragāyatrī* devoted to the Sun: *bhāskarāya vidmahe sahasraraśmim dhīmahi/ tannaḥ sūryaḥ pracodayāt/* The Brāhmaṇas should fed with *apūpa*, milk, curd, etc. The Arka tree should be worshipped with the recitation of the *mantra*, *aum khalkholkāya namaḥ* and after taking the bath the devotee should worship the Sun-god with the Arka flower. He should recite a mantra dedicated to the deity without touching his teeth with the tongue. With the observance of this *vrata* the worshipper becomes free from leprosy, sin, etc.²⁷

Ādityavāranaktavrata: The Ādityavāranaktavrata is observed on the Sunday remaining *nakta*. If it falls on the Hastā constellation, the worshipper should remain *ekabhakta* on Saturday: *yadā hastena saṃyuktamādityasya ca vāsaram/ tadā śanidine*

²⁷ Bhavi.P., 1.210

*kuryādekabhaktam vimatsarah*²⁸ After feeding the Brāhmaṇas on the Sunday night, he draws a twelve-petalled Lotus on the ground with red Sandalwood paste and one by one, the Sun-gods are placed thereon. After that, arghyas are offered to the flowers with Tila, Sandal, red flower, etc., with the recitation of *mantra: kālātmā sarvabhūtātmā*, etc.²⁹ The *vrata* lasts for a year. The worshipper observing this *vrata* becomes free from all sins and goes to the region of the Sun after death.

Ādityaśayana: The Ādityaśayanavrata is observed on the seventh day with a Sunday and Hastā constellation, or when there is *saṁkrānti* of the Sun on the seventh with the Sunday. Here, the image of the goddess Umā and Lord Śiva are worshipped and salutation is offered to the Sun, identifying his various limbs starting from the feet along with the constellation from Hastā onwards: *haste ca sūryāya namo'stu pādāvarkāya citrāya ca gulphadeśam/ svātīṣu jaṅghe puruṣottamāya/ dhātre viśākhāsu ca jānudeśam...*³⁰ The worshipper also salutes different weapons of the deity. If someone owing to poor health or otherwise, unable to observe the fast on the specific day, he may take his meals at night abstaining from oil, flesh, green vegetables and salt and eating moderately. On the Punarvasu asterism, he should put some rice along with *ghṛta* in a vessel of Fig leaves and putting some gold on it, gives it to the Brāhmaṇa. Again, at the end of the *vrata* he should have to make various gifts along with the milching cow.³¹ After that the worshipper prays the Sun-god. The worshipper never becomes bereft of their sons and other dear ones if he observes this *vrata*. He attains

²⁸ Mat.P., 97.4

²⁹ Ibid., 97.11,12

³⁰ Ibid., 55.7-17

³¹ cf., ityevam dvija naktāni kṛtvā dadyātpunarvasau/ śāleyataṇḍulaprasthamaudumbaramaye ghṛtm// saṁsthāpya pātre viprāya sahiranyam nivedayet/ saptame vastraygmaṁ ca pārāṇe tvadhikam bhavet// Ibid., 55.18,19

divine felicity and becomes free from all disease, grief and sufferings.³² The *Padmapurāṇa* also refers to this *vrata* elaborately.³³

Ānandasaphalasaptamī or **Anantaphalasaptamī**: The Ānandasaphalasaptamī or Anantaphalasaptamī falls on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Bhādrapada. The *vrata* lasts for a year. The deity Sun is worshipped with flower, incense, etc. After offering gifts to the Brāhmaṇas, the observer of the *vrata* should take his meal at night remaining silent. He should remember and utter the name of the deity in each and every movement up to one year.³⁴

Ārogyasaptamī: The Ārogyasaptamīvrata starts on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Mārgaśīrṣa. It lasts for a year and fast is observed on each Saptamī, in respect of the Sun, with the utterance of the names Āditya, Bhāskara, Ravi, Bhānu, Sūrya, etc. By the observance of it, the worshipper secures health and wealth and becomes free from all the sins.³⁵

Avyāṅgasaptamī: The Avyāṅgasaptamīvrata is observed in every year on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Śrāvaṇa. On this particular day, the Sun-god is worshipped with flowers and incense and *Avyāṅga* should be offered. The *Avyāṅga* is a hollow strip made of fine white cotton thread that resembles to a serpent's slough. It is of one hundred and twenty-two, or one hundred and twenty, or one hundred and eight fingerbreadths long. The reference to this *vrata* is found in the

³² cf., na bandhuputreṇa dhanairviyuktaḥ patnībhirānandakaraḥ surāṇām/ nābhyeti rogaṁ na ca śokaduḥkhaṁ yā vā'tha nārī kurute'tibhakyā// idaṁ vasiṣṭhena purā'rjunena kṛtaṁ kubereṇa puraṅdareṇa// Ibid., 55.31,32

³³ Padma P., 5.24.64-96

³⁴ Bhavi.P., 1.110.1-8

³⁵ Varā.P., 62.1-5

*Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*³⁶ along with the legend of *Avyāṅgotpatti*.³⁷ The *vrata* lasts for a year and at the end, the Brāhmaṇas should be fed and offered fee, according to the capability of the worshipper. This *Avyāṅgākhyavrata* is also referred to in the *Nārādīyapurāṇa*,³⁸ where it is said that if the *tithi* conjoins to Hastā constellation, it becomes more fruitful, and all the sins of the worshipper is destroyed by it: *yadi ceddhastayukteyam tadā syātpāpanāśinī*³⁹

Ādityamaṇḍalavidhi: The Sun-god is worshipped with the Ādityamaṇḍalavidhi. The reference to it is found in the *Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa*.⁴⁰ A circle is made on the ground with red Sandalwood paste of Saffron. The *apūpa* that is made with white wheat or barley flour mixed with jaggery and ghee of cow milk is placed thereon and Sūrya is worshipped there with red flower. After worshipping the deity the *maṇḍala* should be gifted to the Brāhmaṇas along with raktavastras and fee with the citation of a particular *mantra*. By its observance people achieves kingship and heaven after death.

Ubhayasaptamīvrata: The Ubhayasaptamīvrata starts on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Pauṣa and is observed for one year in each *pakṣa* worshipping the Sun. The worshipper worships the deity taking the food prepared from rice and wheat at night, along with the milk and with the observance of three Sandhyās on the particular day.⁴¹ Again, according to another context, it begins on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa and lasts for a year. In every month the Sun-god is worshipped uttering his different names.⁴²

³⁶ Bhavi.P., 1.111

³⁷ Ibid., 1.142.1-29

³⁸ Nā.P., 1.116.29-31

³⁹ Ibid., 1.116.31

⁴⁰ Bhavi.P., 4. 44

⁴¹ Ibid., 1.165.1-45

⁴² Ibid., 4. 47.1-25

Kamalasaptamīvrata: The Kamalasaptamīvrata starts on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Caitra and lasts for a year. Lord Divākara is worshipped by it. On the specific day of its observance, the worshipper completing his morning bath with water mixed with white mustard, makes a golden Lotus and places it in a golden vessel, full of Sesamum. After that, covering the Lotus with a pair of clothes, he worships the Sun-god there, with incense, flowers, etc., and utterance of the words, *namaḥ kamalahastāya namaste viśvadhāriṇe/ divākara namastubhyaṃ prabhākara namo'stute*⁴³ On the evening hour, a cow is gifted to a Brāhmaṇa, ornamented with *vastra*, *mālya* and *alaṃkāra*, etc., along with a vessel full of water.⁴⁴ On the next day, food is given to the Brāhmaṇas. The worshipper should observe this *vrata* on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in each month, following the same rituals. As the merit of it, he achieves inexhaustible money and the region of the Sun after his death. The Kamalasaptamīvrata is also referred to in the *Padmapurāṇa*⁴⁵ and the *Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa*.⁴⁶

Kalyānasaptamīvrata: The Kalyānasaptamīvrata is observed on the seventh day in the conjunction of bright fortnight and Sunday: *yadā tu śuklasaptamyāmādityasya dinam bhavet/ sātu kalyāṇinīnāmā vijayāca nigadyate*⁴⁷ This *vrata* is also known by the name Vijayā. The Kalyānasaptamīvrata lasts for a year. On the particular day of its observance, the worshipper bathes with cow's milk in the morning and after that, wearing white garments, i.e. *śuklavastra*, makes a circle or eight-petalled Lotus with

⁴³ Mat.P., 77.3,4

⁴⁴ cf., *viprāya dadyātsampūjya vastramālyavibhūṣaṇaiḥ/ śaktyācakapilāmdadyādalaṃkrtyavidhānataḥ// Ibid., 77.5*

⁴⁵ Padma P., 5.21.281-290

⁴⁶ Bhavi. P., 4.50.1-11

⁴⁷ Mat.P., 72.5

akṣatacūrṇa. After that, moving towards the east, one by one, worships the Sun-god with different names, e.g. Tapana, Mārtaṇḍa, Divākara, Vidhātṛ, Varuṇa, Bhāskara, Vikartana, Ravi, in the direction of East, Agni, South, Naiṛta, West, Vāyu, North and Iṣāna, respectively. At the end *tilapātra* and gold are offered to the Brāhmaṇa. On the thirteenth month, thirteen cows are gifted decorating with clothes and ornaments.⁴⁸

Kīrtivrata: The Kīrtivrata is a *saṁvatsaravrata* that lasts for a year. The worshipper worships Aśvattha tree, the Sun-god and the Ganges: *aśvattham bhāskaram gaṅgām praṇamyaiakatra vāgyataḥ*⁴⁹ He stays in one place restraining his senses, takes food only once in the noon for a year. At the end of the *vrata*, he honours a Brāhmaṇa and his wife, with the gifts of three cows and a golden tree. The *Matsyapurāṇa* refers to this *vrata* saying that it yields fame and land to the observer: *...etatkīrtivrataṁ nāma bhūtikīrtiphalapradam*⁵⁰

Guṇāvāptivrata: The Guṇāvāptivrata begins on the first day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Phālguna. It is a one year-*vrata*. Though lord Śiva is worshipped prominently, but the images of Āditya, Agni, Varuṇa and the moon are also worshipped during the days. The first two forms are the fierce form and the last two are the mild forms of Śiva. The worshipper bathes with different substances in each of the four days and subsists on the milk. On the fourth day of the worship, *homa* is done with wheat, Sesame, corn and barley.⁵¹

Gomayādisaptamīvrata: The Gomayādisaptamīvrata begins on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Caitra. It should be continued for twelve months with the observance of the *vrata* on each seventh day of the bright fortnight. The Sun-god is

⁴⁸ Ibid., 72; Padma P., 1.21.216-235; Bhavi. P., 4.48,1-16

⁴⁹ Mat.P., 101.23

⁵⁰ Ibid., 101.24

⁵¹ Vi.Dh.P., 3.137.1-13

worshipped under different names in every month, with the Lotus, incense, Sandal, Guggula, etc., and, the same objects should be offered to the honourable Brāhmaṇas, along with a fee. Again, the worshipper should subsist on the *gomaya* (cow dung), *yāvaka*, or fallen leaves, or milk, or on grains, achieved by the alms. By observing this *vrata* one achieves the merit of great sacrifices and achieves great place in the region of the Sun.⁵²

Cakṣurvrata: The Cakṣurvrata is also called as the Netravrata. The second day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Caitra is observed as the Cakṣurvrata, in which the twin deities, the Aśvins are worshipped. The Aśvins are regarded as the divine physicians, popularly identified with the Sun and the moon. It lasts for a year or twelve years. The performer subsists on curd and ghee on the specific day of its observance and worships the respective deities. Observing it for a year, the worshipper attains good observing and for twelve years becomes the king.⁵³

Candrovrata: The Candrovrata falls on the new moon day and lasts for a year. The images of the Sun and the moon are worshipped on two Lotuses in it.⁵⁴ According to another reference of the same *Purāṇa*, only the moon is worshipped by the Candrovrata on the full moon day, started in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa along with the fasting in devotion of the deity which yields great benefits towards the worshipper.⁵⁵ The *Matsyapurāṇa* refers to this *vrata* and prescribes the gift of golden image to the Brāhmaṇas, at the end of the *vrata*.⁵⁶

⁵² Bhavi.P., 1.209

⁵³ Vi.Dh.P., 3.130.1-7

⁵⁴ Ibid., 3.191.1-5

⁵⁵ cf., mārgaśīrṣādathārabhya candramaṇḍala ke narah/ sopavāsastu sampūjya paundrīkaphalaṁ labhet// kṛtvā vrataṁ vatsarametadiṣṭaṁ prāpnoti lokaṁ sa niśākarasya/ Ibid., 3.194.1,2

⁵⁶ cf., cāndrāyaṇaṁ ca yaḥ kuryādhaīmaṁ candraṁ nivedayet/ candravratamidaṁ proktaṁ candralokaphalapradaṁ// Mat.P., 101.75

Citrabhānupadadvayavrata: This Ayanavrata lasts from the beginning to the end of the Uttarāyaṇa. On the day of its starting, the image of the Sun-god should be bathed with ghee and milk and after decorating with the *vastra*, *anulepana*, etc., to be worshipped. The Brāhmaṇas should be satisfied with food and gifts. After the performance of all these, for the whole period, the deity Citrabhānu is worshipped with the prayer, japa, and with the utterance of the words, *paramātmamayam brahma citrabhānumayam param/ yamante saṁsmariṣyāmi sa me bhānuḥ parā gatiḥ!*⁵⁷ At the ending of the *vrata*, the Brāhmaṇas are to be fed. The worshipper becomes free from all the sins by grace of this *vrata*.

Trigatisaptamī: The Trigatisaptamī begins on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Phālguna and lasts for a year. The Sun-god is worshipped under the three names Haṁsa, the Āśvins and Bhāskara. The whole year of the twelve months is divided into three divisions of four months. From Phālguna to Jyeṣṭha, Sūrya is worshipped as Haṁsa, from Āṣāḍa to Aśvina as Mārtaṇḍa, and Kārtika to Māgha as Bhāskara. By the observance of this *vrata*, the worshipper secures earthly lordship, over lordship of the earth and pleasures of the Indraloka and residence of the Sūryaloka.⁵⁸

Triprāptisaptamīvrata: The Triprāptisaptamīvrata falls on the seventh day of the dark fortnight in the month of the Mārgaśīrṣa in conjunction with the Hastā constellation. It is a one-year *vrata*. The Sun-god is worshipped with incense, *naivedya*, gifts, etc. In every month, the performer should offer gifts of different things such as ghee, paddy, barley, gold etc. The performer himself subsists on corn and partake every month cow's

⁵⁷ Bhavi.P., 1.107.17

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1.104

urine, water, etc. With a view to achieving birth in a good family, for health and wealth the worshipper observes this *vrata*.⁵⁹

Dvādaśādityavrata: The Dvādaśādityavrata begins on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa. It is also called the Kāmadevavrata. The worshipper worships the twelve forms of Adityas, viz. Dhātṛ, Mitra, Aryaman, Pūṣan, Śakra, Varuṇa, Bhaga, Tvaṣṭṛ, Vivasvat, Savitṛ with this *vrata*.⁶⁰

Dhāmavrata: The Dhāmavrata is observed on the full moon day of the month of Phālguna in devotion to the Sun. The worshipper observes fast for three days and donates a beautiful house at the end of the *vrata*: *trirātroṣito dadyāt phālgunyām bhavanam śubham/ ādityalokamāpnoti dhāmavratamidam smṛtam//*⁶¹ The reference to this Dvādaśādityavrata is also found in the *Garuḍapurāṇa*. According to it, observing this *vrata* on the month of Kārtika, the worshipper reaches to the world of the Sun by grace of it.⁶²

Nandāsaptamī: The Nandāsaptamīvrata is observed for the first time on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa. The *vrata* lasts for a year. The Sun-god is worshipped in his different forms, Viṣṇu, Bhaga and Dhātṛ in the three periods of four months with different flowers, *naivedya* and *dhūpa*. He remains *ekabhakta* on the fifth day, *nakta* on the sixth and observes fast on the seventh day and

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1.112.10-16

⁶⁰ cf., dhātā mitroryamā pūṣā śakreṣo varuṇo bhagaḥ/ tvaṣṭā vivasvānsavitā viṣṇurdvādaśakastathā// pūjayeddvādaśādityāñchuklapakṣe hyupoṣitaḥ/ mārgaśīrṣādathārabhya gandhamālyānnasampadā// Vi.Dh.P., 3.182.1-3

⁶¹ Mat.P., 101.79

⁶² cf., trirātroṣito dadyātkārtikyām bhavanam śubham/ sūryalokamavāpnoti dhāmavratamidam subham// Garuḍa P., 1.137.3

worships the Sun. The *vrata* gives its observer the ultimate pleasure in this world and also in the world of the Sun, after his death.⁶³

Nāmasaptamīvrata or Rahasyasaptamīvrata: The Nāmasaptamīvrata or the Rahasyasaptamīvrata is observed on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Caitra. The worshipper worships the Sun-god for a year under different names like, Dhātṛ, Aryaman, etc., in every month; and on the particular day of its observance, should feed on Bhojakas with ghee and donation to be made of red clothes. There are too many restrictions ordained for the worshipper. He should not touch oil, should not wear dark blue garments, should not bathe with Āmalaka fruits, avoid quarrels, not to gamble, not to shed tears, etc., on the day of its observance.⁶⁴

Nikṣubhārkasaptamīvrata: This *vrata* starts on the sixth or the seventh day or on the *samkrānti* day or on the Sunday. It lasts for a year. The images of the Sun-god and his wife Nikṣubhā are made of gold or silver or wood, and should be bathed with ghee decorating with incense, garlands and clothes, should be placed on the temple. After that, it should be worshipped with the observance of fast and performance of the *homa*. The devotees of the Sun-god should be offered white clothes and they are to be fed. It is believed that the performer of this *vrata* secures the desired object and goes to the region of the Sun as a reward of the *vrata*. The woman achieves the son of good quality and lives happily with her husband in their domestic relationship.⁶⁵

Pāpanāśinisaptamī: The seventh day of the bright fortnight on the month of the Phālguna, the Sun-god is worshipped with the observance of fast. On the eighth day, after rising at the early morning, taking the bath the worshipper worships the Sun-god

⁶³ Bhavi.P., 1.100.1-16

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1.65.1-7,19-34

⁶⁵ Ibid., 1.166.1-18

and offers the fee to the Brāhmaṇas. After that, he takes *haviṣyāṇna*. The Sun-god is worshipped following the same rituals on the following three months, i.e. on the month of Caitra, Vaiśākha and Jyeṣṭha, with the offering of the red Karavīra flower. These Saptamīs are regarded as very pious. The worshipper becomes free from all the sins by its observance and goes to the *devaloka*.⁶⁶

Putrasaptamīvrata: The Putrasaptamīvrata is observed on the seventh day in the month of the Mārgaśīrṣa, both in the bright and the dark fortnight. It is a one-year *vrata*. On the sixth day of the observance of the *vrata*, fast is observed in devotion to the Sun-god and *homa* is performed. By it, the worshipper secures son, wealth, fame and health. Again, on the month of Bhādrapada also, both in bright and dark fortnight, this *vrata* is observed, which involves the *saṅkalpa* on the sixth day and fast on the seventh. Lord Viṣṇu is worshipped with the Gopāla mantras and *homa* is done with the Sesame. At the end of the year a pair of dark cows is donated with a view to securing son and freedom from all sins.⁶⁷

Puṣpadvīṭya: The Puṣpadvīṭyāvratā starts on the second day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Kārtika and is observed for a year. The Aśvins are worshipped with it. The performer should subsist on flowers fit for divine worship on the day and at the end donates flowers made of gold along with a cow. The worshipper achieves beauty with the observance of this *vrata*, and enjoys happiness along with his wife and sons.⁶⁸

Phalaṣaṣṭhīvrata: The Phalaṣaṣṭhīvrata begins with the observance of niyamas on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of Mārgaśīrṣa. On the sixth day, a golden Lotus is prepared along with a golden fruit. On that day at midday, he should place the Lotus

⁶⁶ Ibid., 106.4-14

⁶⁷ Varā.P., 63.1-7

⁶⁸ Bhavi.P., 1.19.81-89

and the fruit with sugar on a vessel of clay or copper, and offer worship to the Sun with the flowers and observe fast for the day. On the seventh day, all these should be donated with the words: 'May the Sun be pleased with me.' One fruit he should give up till the next fifth of the dark half. This should be repeated for a year. In each month on the seventh day, one of the twelve names of the Sun are to be repeated. The performer with the performance of it, becomes free from all the sins and is honoured in the world of the Sun.⁶⁹

Phalasaptamīvrata: The reference of the Phalasaptamīvrata is found in the Purāṇas, in worship of the Sun.⁷⁰ On the seventh day of the bright fortnight of the Bhādrapada, fast is observed and the deity Sun is worshipped. On the morning period of eighth day, the Sun-god is worshipped and donation is made towards the Brāhmaṇas with the coconut and Mātuluṅga fruits, etc., and the *mantra mārtaṇḍa prīyatām* is uttered. After that the observer eats one small fruit with the *mantra: sarve bhavantu saphalā mama kāmāḥ samantataḥ!* The worshipper may take only fruits to his heart's content but nothing else. It should be done for a year. The *vrata* endows the worshipper with sons and grandsons.⁷¹

According to another reference, on the fourth, fifth and sixth day of the bright fortnight of the Bhādrapada, the performer should respectively observe *ayācīta*, *ekabhakta* and fast, and worship the Sun with incense. He should sleep at night in front of the altar, on which the image of Sun is placed. On the seventh day, after worshipping the Sun, he should offer *naivedya* of fruits, feed Brāhmaṇas and takes food or cooked flour of rice, or wheat mixed with ghee and jaggery, etc. It should be carried on up to

⁶⁹ Ibid.,4.39.1-12

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1.64; 215; Mat.P.,76; Padma P., 5.21

⁷¹ Bhavi.P.,1.215.24-27

one year. At the end of the observance, if capable, the worshipper should donate golden fruits, a cow with calf, and so on.⁷²

Again, it is found that on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of Mārgaśīrṣa, the observer observes niyamas, on sixth, he observes fast, donate a golden Lotus and a fruit with sugar with the utterance of the *mantra*. He should give up one kind of fruit from that day to the fifth day of dark fortnight. The worshipper continues the same for a year uttering different names of the Sun in each month. At the end of the year, he honours a Brāhmaṇa along with his wife with clothes, jar, sugar, golden Lotus and fruit. As a reward of it, the performer becomes free from sins and goes to the region of the Sun.⁷³

Mandārasaptamīvrata: The Mandārasaptamīvrata is observed on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa. On the fifth day, the worshipper should take the light meal, on the sixth day, fast is observed and at night *mandāra* flowers is offered to the deity. On the seventh day, Brāhmaṇas are made to partake of eight Mandāra flowers. A golden image of the Sun-god is made with a Lotus in his hand and places it in a copper vessel containing Sesamum. An eight-petalled Lotus is made on the ground and the Sun-god is worshipped offering one Mandāra flower on each petal. The image of the male Puruṣa is placed on the pericarp of the Lotus, and the image should be put on the white cloth and offering eatables, flowers and fruits the *mantra sarvātmane namaḥ* is uttered. After it, all these should be offered to a Brāhmaṇa. The *vrata* lasts for a year. The worshipper becomes free from the sins with its observance and all his desires become fulfilled.⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid., 1.64.36-61

⁷³ Mat.P., 76; Padma P., 5.21.249-262

⁷⁴ Padma P., 5.21.292-306; Mat. P., 79.1-15

Mandāraṣaṣṭhīvrata: The Mandāraṣaṣṭhīvrata falls on the sixth day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Mārgaśīrṣa. On the fifth day, the performer takes light meal; on the sixth, he fasts and makes a prayer to the Mandāra tree. Next day, he should apply saffron to copper vessels with dark Sesame and worship the Sun under different names with Mandāra flowers in the eight directions, from the east, and worships Hari. The *vrata* lasts for a year and each month, on the seventh day of the bright fortnight, the same procedure is done.⁷⁵

Marīcasaptamīvrata: On the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Caitra, the Sun-god is worshipped with the observance of Marīcasaptamīvrata. The worshipper feeds Brāhmaṇas and makes them partake of hundred peppers with the utterance of the *mantra*, *aum khalkhalkāya svāhā*, etc. As the performer observes this *vrata*, he never undergoes separation from his nearest and dearest ones and becomes free from all the diseases.⁷⁶

Mahāsaptamīvrata: The Mahāsaptamīvrata is observed on the seventh day on the bright fortnight in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa. On the fifth day, the worshipper should remain *ekabhakta*, on the sixth *nakta* and on the seventh, the fast should be observed. The Sun-god is worshipped with the Karavīra flowers and red Sandal wood paste. It lasts for one year and the whole year is divided into three groups of four months from Māgha. In each division of four months, flowers of different colour are offered, along with different naivedyas and different dhūpas. At the end of the *vrata*, a chariot made of gold is to be given as the gift.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Bhavi. P.,4. 40.1-15

⁷⁶ Ibid., 1.214.40-47

⁷⁷ Ibid., 1.51.1-16

Mārtaṇḍasaptamīvrata: It begins on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Pauṣa: *pauṣe māse site pakṣe saptamyām samupoṣitaḥ// samyakpūjyam mārtaṇḍam mārtaṇḍa iti vai japet*⁷⁸ Fast is observed on the respective day and the Sun-god is worshipped with the muttering of the word mārtaṇḍa. The fee should be offered to the Brāhmaṇas according to his capability. Again, on the next day, the Sun-god is worshipped under the name Ravi. Thus the *vrata* last for a year and as the reward of it, the worshipper attains desired objects.⁷⁹

Yajñasaptamī: On the *Śuklasaptamīthi*, where there is an eclipse and specially when there is a *Samkrānti*, the performer eats *haviṣya* for one time and bow to Varuṇa. He should lie down on a bed of *Darbha* grass on the ground on that particular day. Next day, in the beginning and end, he should sacrifice to Varuṇa. On the *Śuklasaptamī* of Māgha, the sacrifice is addressed to Varuṇa, on Phālguna to Sūrya, on Caitra to Amśuman and so on till Pauṣa. At the end of the year, a golden chariot is made of, to which the seven horses of the Sun-god are yoked, and at the midst of the chariot, a golden image of the deity is placed on, surrounded by twelve Brāhmaṇas, who represent the twelve names of the Sun in the twelve months. The chariot along with a cow is to be presented to the Ācārya. In case of poor man, copper chariot should be made of.⁸⁰

Raktasaptamīvrata: The Raktasaptamīvrata falls on the seventh day of the dark fortnight in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa. Fast is observed on the particular day and the Sun-god is worshipped with red Lotuses, or in an image of the Sun-god with white flowers and red Sandalwood paste, and with the round cake of pulse and *kṛsara*, i.e.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1.109.2,3

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1.109.1-13

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1.50.1-42

dish of rice, peas and spices: ...*sopavāsastu saptamyām kamale pūjayedravim// ārcāyām vā sthale vāpi śuklaiḥ puṣpairyathāvidhi/ candanena tu raktena vaṭakaiḥ kṛsareṇa ca*//⁸¹ At the end of the *vrata*, a pair of red garments are to be donated.

Rathasaptamīvrata: On the seventh day of the white fortnight, in the month of the Mārgaśīrṣa, the Rathasaptamīvrata is observed, in devotion of the Sun-god. On the sixth day, at night, *saṅkalpa* is made and on the seventh day, fast is observed. The performer prepares a golden or silver car with horses and charioteer and recites a hymn to the Sun. At midday, he should place that car in a *maṇḍapa*, surrounded by cloth. The car is worshipped with saffron, flowers, and an image of the Sun-god is placed on it. Both the Sun-god and the car are worshipped together along with the charioteer. The worshipper addressing the Sun in his mantras, states his desires. At night *jāgara* is done with songs and music. The performer should not close his eyes at night. Next day after bath, he makes gifts and donates the car to the *Guru*.⁸²

Rathāṅkasaptamīvrata: On the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, the Rathāṅkasaptamīvrata is observed. On the sixth day, fast is observed and Sun-god is propitiated with incense, flowers, etc. The worshipper sleeps before the Sun-image that day. On seventh day, the Sun-god is worshipped and Brāhmaṇas are given a splendid meal. The same procedure should be carried on in all months and at the end of the year a car procession is arranged in devotion of the Sun.⁸³

Varuṇavrata: The Varuṇavrata is observed with a view to securing *Varuṇaloka*. This *vrata* is observed from the beginning of Bhādrapada to the full moon thereof. It is believed that if a man standing a whole night in water donates a cow in the next

⁸¹ Vi.Dh.P., 3.170.2

⁸² Bhavi.P., 1.51.1-16

⁸³ Ibid., 1.59.1-26

morning, he secures *Varuṇaloka* by the grace of the deity: *niśi kṛtvā jale vāsam prabhāte goprado bhavet/ vāruṇam lokamāpnoti varuṇavratamucyate//*⁸⁴ At the end of the *vrata*, *jaladhenu* is donated together with umbrella, Sandals and two garments.

Vijayāsaptamīvrata: The Vijayāsaptamīvrata is observed on the seventh day of the bright fortnight with Sunday. On the respective day, fast is observed and Sun-god is worshipped with the repetition of one thousand names. The *vrata* lasts for a year. As a reward of the *vrata*, the performer becomes free from all the diseases and sins.⁸⁵ According to another reference, the Vijayāsaptamīvrata is observed on seven saptamīs by fasting and forgoing wheat, *Māṣa*, *Yava*, etc.: *...abhyañjanāñjalatilāmśca vivarjayedyah tasyeṣitam bhavati saptasu saptamīṣu*⁸⁶ The worshipper achieves money, sons, etc., observing this *vrata*.

Viśokaṣaṣṭhīvrata: The Viśokaṣaṣṭhīvrata is observed on the sixth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Māgha. On the fifth day, the worshipper bathes with black Sesame and partake food made up of rice and Sesame. Then on the sixth day, he makes a golden Lotus and worships it as Sun with the red Karavīra flowers and two red garments. The worshipper prays for freedom from sorrow. After that, he should drink cow's urine and sleeps. On the seventh day, donation is made to the *Guru* and Brāhmaṇas. After that he takes food without oil and salt. He should observe silence and listen to the *Purāṇa* works.⁸⁷

Viśokasaptamīvrata: The Viśokasaptamīvrata is observed on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Māgha. On the sixth day, the worshipper, after brushing his teeth and rubbing black Sesamum on his body, takes bath and observes fast for the

⁸⁴ Mat.P., 101.74; Vi.Dh.P., 3.195.1-3

⁸⁵ Bhavi. P., 4.43.1-30

⁸⁶ Garuḍa P., 1.130.8

⁸⁷ Bhavi.P., 4.38.1-7

whole day. At night, again brushing his teeth, he takes *kṣarā* pudding that is prepared with rice, Sesamum and milk, with ghee. On the seventh day morning, after taking the bath and finishing his prayer he worships the Lotus, made of gold with the words *arkāya namaḥ*, etc.⁸⁸ The Brāhmaṇas are offered food in a vessel containing raw sugar and the golden Lotus is gifted to a Brāhmaṇa along with a pair of red clothes. The *vrata* lasts for a year. At the end of it, a pitcher of water along with golden Lotus should be given away along with bedstead, milch cow, etc.⁸⁹

Viṣṇutrimūrtivrata: The three forms of lord Viṣṇu, viz. the Vāyu, the Moon and the Sun are worshipped on the third day of bright fortnight of Jyeṣṭha. The *vrata* starts with the observance of a fast and lasts for a year. The three forms of Lord Viṣṇu, the Vāyu, the Moon and the Sun, protect all the three worlds. They are also present inside the human bodies in the form of *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha*. On the respective day in the month of Jyeṣṭha, in early morning the Sun-god is worshipped, Vāyu is worshipped at midday with *homa* and with Yavas and Sesame and at sunset, the Moon is worshipped in the water.⁹⁰

Viṣṇuvrata: The Purāṇic texts refer to a *vrata*, Viṣṇuvrata by name.⁹¹ According to some other references, Lord Viṣṇu is worshipped in it; but according to the *Viṣṇudharottaraṇa*, different groups constituting of four forms of deities, are worshipped during the observance of the *vrata*. Lord Hari appears in each and every group. One of the groups is constituted of Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Haya and Haṁsa. Again, another group of deities is consisted of Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra and Viṣṇu. Each in the

⁸⁸ Mat.P.,75.3

⁸⁹ cf., *vratānte kalaśam dadyātsuvarṇakamalānvitam/ śayyām sopaskarām dadyātkapilām ca payasvinīm*// Ibid., 75.9

⁹⁰ Vi.Dh.P., 3.136.1-26

⁹¹ Agni P., 17.15-20; Mat.P., 101.37, Vi.Dh.P., 3.151.1-8

groups, the first two forms are of the Sādhyas and the later two forms are of the Siddhas. The Viṣṇuvrata lasts for a year.⁹²

Śarkarāsaptamīvrata: On the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of the Caitra, the worshipper bathes in the morning, with water, mixed with white Sesame. After that, he draws a Lotus and pericarp with saffron on an altar and offers on it *dhūpa* and flowers with the utterance of the words *namḥ savitre*, etc.⁹³ After that, he places a jar containing a gold piece, covers it with a plate containing sugar, and offers worship with the utterance of *paurāṇikamantra*. After that he drinks *pañcagavya* and lies on the ground near the jar and recites inaudibly *saura* hymns.⁹⁴ On the eighth day, he donates all the above materials and feed Brāhmaṇas with sugar, ghee and *pāyasa* and himself partakes of food without salt and oil. The *vrata* lasts for a year and every month, the worshipper follows the same procedure. At the ending of the year, he donates a furnished bedstead with sugar and the gold, a cow and a house according to his capacity, and a golden Lotus made with, one to thousand niṣkas. It is believed that this *vrata* removes the sorrow and confers sons, long life, health, etc., to its observer.⁹⁵

Śākasaptamīvrata: The Śākasaptamīvrata begins on the bright fortnight in the month of the Kārtika and lasts for a year. The whole year is divided into three periods of four months. On the fifth day of each bright fortnight, the worshipper remains *ekabhakta*, on the sixth day *nakta*, and on the seventh, observes fasts. He should feed the Brāhmaṇas with well spiced vegetables and should himself eat at night on the seventh day. The Śākasaptamīvrata lasts for a year. The Sun-god is worshipped in each period of four

⁹² Vi.Dh.P., 3.151.1-8

⁹³ Mat.P., 77.3

⁹⁴ RV., 1.50

⁹⁵ Mat. P., 77.1-17; Padma P., 5.21.263-279; Bhavi. P., 4.49.1-18

months, with different flowers, like Agasti, fragrant flowers and Karavīra, with different unguents, e.g. Saffron, white Sandalwood, red Sandalwood, respectively, dhūpas, Aparājītā, Aguru and Guggula and *naivedya*, *pāyasa*, jaggery cake, boiled rice grains, respectively. At the end of the year, the dinner should be offered to the Brāhmaṇa and Purāṇas should be listened, read by the reader.⁹⁶

Śubhasaptamīvrata: The deity Aryaman is worshipped with Śubhasaptamīvrata. On the seventh day of the bright fortnight of Āśvina, the cow named Kapilā is worshipped. The worshipper donates a *prastha* of Sesame contained in a copper vessel and a golden bull with garments, flowers and jaggery with the utterance of the words, *aryamā prītayāmiti*⁹⁷ For a complete year, the worshipper does the same in every month in devotion of the Sun.⁹⁸

Saptasaptamīkalpavrata: The Saptasaptamīkalpavrata is to be undertaken on a Sunday in bright fortnight after the Sun starts on his northward passage and on a constellation with male name. It lasts for a year. The worshipper should observe celibacy and subsist on *nakta* on all the seven saptamīs called Arkasampūṭa, Marica, Nimba, Phala, Anodanā, Vijayā, Kāmikī. He observes *ekabhakta* on the fifth day and avoids sexual intercourse on the sixth day, and give up honey and meat on that *tithi*. After writing the seven names on leaves, he should cast them in an unused jar and should ask a child.⁹⁹

Sarvāptisaptamīvrata: The Sarvāptisaptamīvrata is observed on the seventh day of the dark fortnight of Māgha and lasts for a year. The Sarvāptisaptamīvrata is devoted to the

⁹⁶ Bhvi.P., 1.47.47-72

⁹⁷ Mat.P., 80.5

⁹⁸ Mat.P., 80.1-14; Padma P., 5.21.307-321; Bhavi. P., 4.51.1-14

⁹⁹ Bhavi. P., 1.208.2-32

Sun-god. By the observance of this *vrata*, all the wishes of the worshippers become fulfilled. The whole year is divided into two periods of six months. In the first six months, the Sesame is to be used at bath, and dinner is taken. The names with which the Sun-god is to be invoked in the six months from the Mārgaśīrṣa are, Mārtaṇḍa, Arka, Citrabhānu, Vibhāvasu, Bhaga and Haṁsa. In the second period of the six months, *pañcagavya* is used at bath and meals. The performer takes the names of the Sun-god and eats at night excluding oil and salt.¹⁰⁰

Sarṣapasaptamīvrata: On seven Saptamī tithis, the performer, sitting facing the Sun, should place *pañcagavya* or other liquids on his palm and one to seven mustard grains, in order, on first Saptamī, second Saptamī upto the seventh.¹⁰¹ After that, he should look at it, brings to his mind some desired object and should take the Mustard seed with water at once, without allowing the teeth to touch with. A *mantra* is also uttered: *siddhārthakastvaṁ hi loke sarvatra śrūyase yathā/ tathā māmapī siddhārthamarthataḥ kurutām raviḥ*¹⁰² The mustard is called *siddhārtha*, and therefore, this *vrata* is also called as the Siddhārthsaptamīvrata. After that, the *homa* and *japa* should be performed in devotion of the Sun. All the desires of the worshipper fulfil thereby with the observance of this *vrata*.

Siddhārthakādisaptamīvrata: The Siddhārthakādisaptamīvrata is observed on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Māgha or Mārgaśīrṣa, or any seventh *tithi* of any month in case of the person who is ill. The worshipper, brushing the teeth before the sunrise, with the twigs of certain trees, and observes the vow of Siddhārthakādisaptamī. Different twigs are used for different Saptamī. Again, each of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 1.108.1-12

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 1.68.32-35

¹⁰² Ibid., 1.68.36

the twigs fulfils different purposes. e.g. Madhūka gives sons, Arjuna makes fortune firm, Nimba confers prosperity, Aśvattha gives fame. The first Saptamī is observed with Mustard grain, second with Arka buds, third with Marīca, fourth with Nimba, fifth and sixth with fruits and seventh with food, excluding boiled rice. *japa*, *homa*, etc., are to be performed and the Sun-god is worshipped. The worshipper sleeps before the image of the Sun and recites *Gāyatrīmantra*. The rewards of worshipping the Sun with various flowers are mentioned. Fame is achieved with the Lotuses, removal of all leprosy with Mandāra, success with Agastya, etc. The Brāhmaṇas should be offered the dinner and gifts to be given of coloured garments, scents, flowers, *haviṣya*, food, cow, etc.¹⁰³

Sūryavrata: The Sun-god is worshipped with the observance of the Sūryavrata. The worshipper, on a Sunday in the month of Caitra, worships the Sun-god with cakes, mixed with jaggery and salt, after shaving his head. He observes *nakta* on the particular day and observes fast in devotion of the Sun on the sixth day of bright fortnight of the month. On the seventh day, the worshipper worships the Sun-god, making an altar with whitish clay and drawing there an eight-petalled Lotus with coloured powders. The image of the deity is placed on the pericarp, and drawn there in the eight quarters, from the eastern petal, certain demi-gods, goddesses and sages. After that, *homa* is performed with one hundred and eight āhutis of ghee to the Sun, and eight āhutis to each of them. This *vrata* lasts for a year. At the end of the *vrata* gift of a cow and gold is to be offered. The worshipper achieves the region of the Sun-god by observing this *vrata*.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 1.193.2-21; 194.1-25; 197.1-10

Sauravrata: The Sauravrata is observed with the observance of fast on the seventh *tithi*. The *vrata* lasts for a year, and the Sun-god is worshipped with it. At the end of the *vrata*, the devotee donates a golden Lotus, cows along with a jar full of food, according to his capability. It leads the worshipper to Sūryaloka: *yaścopavāsī saptamyām samānte haimapañkajam/ gāśca vai śaktito dadyāddhemānnaḥṣaṣṭasamīyutāḥ/ etat sauravratam nāma sūryalokaphalapradam//*¹⁰⁴

The Festivals Related to the Worship of Sun:

Different festivals are celebrated in honour of the Sun-god. It is difficult to find out the minute difference in between the two aspects, viz. vratas and festivals. P.V. Kane, in this regard, opines that it is difficult to draw a strict line between vratas and utsavas; what are called utsavas have also an element of religious rites and conversely, many vratas have some element of being a festival.¹⁰⁵ Some festivals are recorded in the Purāṇas are discussed here—

Rathayātrā: The Rathayātrā is one of the festivals associated with the Sun-worship. The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* contains a great deliberation on this festival. As the part of the celebration, the chariot of the Sun-god is moved forward in a procession. The image of the Sun-god is placed on the chariot and the horses, fully decorated with cāmara, garland and kuṁkuma, etc.,¹⁰⁶ by three hundred and sixteen devotees and Brāhmaṇas, who are observing the fast.¹⁰⁷ The two wives of the deity, viz. Rājñī and

¹⁰⁴ Mat.P., 101.63

¹⁰⁵ Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmasāstra*, Vol. V, Part-I, p.57

¹⁰⁶ cf., tasminrathavareṣṭhekalpitesumanorame/ āropyapratimāmyatnādyojayedvājinaḥśubhān// harillakṣaṇasampannānsumukhānvaśavartinah/ kuṁkume nasamālabdhāmścāmarasragvibhūṣitān// Bhavi.P., 1.55.62,63

¹⁰⁷ cf., upavāsasthitairviprairdivyairbhaumaiścasuvrataḥ/ trimśadbhiḥṣoḍaśairvāpipratimām bhāskarasyatu// Ibid., 1.55.76

Nikṣubhā should be placed on the right and the left side of the Sun-god, respectively.¹⁰⁸ The Sun-god is honoured with fully decorated umbrella and *danḍa*, made of gold. A figure of Garuḍa is also placed behind the main image of the Sun.¹⁰⁹ The chariots of the other members of the solar family are also moved forward along with the main chariot of the deity. The procession passes along the main roads of the city with pomp and show, along with the continuous beating of the drums and sounding of conch and other musical instruments.¹¹⁰ All the procedures of the festival is followed with fasts, gifts and donation in honour of the Sun-god.¹¹¹

Makarasamkrānti: The Makarasamkrānti is one of the festivals celebrated in honour of the Sun. A bath is obligatory in Makarasamkrānti. Special gifts are made on the specific day. The transition of the Sun from one month to the other is called the *Samkrānti* day. On Makarasamkrānti day, the Sun-god enters into Capricorn. This *Samkrānti* day is regarded as very pious. Festivals are celebrated in different parts, all over the India, taking the holy bath in devotion of the Sun, specially in the Gaṅgā.

Thus, in the Purāṇic texts, references are found of observances of different sacrifices, rituals, vratas and festivals, in devotion of the Sun-god. The immense power of the deity is well observed by the Purāṇic people and they propitiated the deity giving prominent place among the other deities of the Vedic pantheon.

¹⁰⁸ cf., ... rājñīcanikṣubhārudrabhāryetasyamahātmanah//
śanairāropayedrudraubhayohpārśvayorathe/ nikṣubhāmdakṣiṇepārśverājñīncāpyuttaretathā// Ibid.,
1.55.77,78

¹⁰⁹ cf., garuḍamprṣṭhataścāsyavalgamānamprakalpayet/ Ibid., 1.55.80

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 1.55,44-47

¹¹¹ Ibid., 1.50.20,21

CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION

The present work entitled ‘**Vedic Influence on the Sun-Worship in the Purāṇas—A Study**’ deals with an analytical and comparative study on the worship of the Sun-god as revealed in the Vedas and the Purāṇas. The Sun-god is considered as one of the prominent deities in the Vedic pantheon. The great impact of the Sun-god on the universe is marked by the Vedic seers and he is appreciated as the soul of the entire world: *ekaiva vā mahānātmā devatā tat sūrya ityācakṣate. (Sarvānukramaṇī, 2.14.20)*

The Sun-god is worshipped with different names and epithets in the Vedas, Epics and the Purāṇas. Different aspects of the deity have given rise to independent forms of the god. The Sun-god, representative of the sun-beam, is called Viṣṇu, the god of wide space: *atha yad viṣito bhavati tad viṣṇurbhavati (Nir., 12.18)*. Again, Pūṣan, a form of the Sun is the god of prosperity: ... *atha yadras̄mipoṣaṁ puṣyati tatpūṣā bhavati (Nir., 12.16.)*. The preservative aspect of the deity is revealed by the form Mitra: *mitraḥ pramīteḥ trāyate (Nir., 10.21)*. The multiple names and forms for one single deity occur due to the fact that different aspects of the Sun-god were worshipped in different period and positions of the day, giving rise to independent forms. The Sun-god is called Āditya in the Vedas and the Purāṇas, as he is the son of Kāśyapa and Aditi (RV., 10.88.11). Along with Sūrya, Mitra, Varuṇa, Bhaga, Aryaman, Amśa, etc., are jointly invoked under the name Ādityas, both in the Vedas and the Purāṇas. Their names and numbers are quite uncertain. In the Vedas, generally they are enumerated as twelve, identified with the twelve months of the year, which continued up to the Purāṇas identifying the forms with the twelve months of the year.

The Sun-god is delineated as the ultimate source of light and heat, who, with immense power, bestows life on earth. He is the generative force of the universe. He stands as the remover of the diseases and the sins, and he is invoked, due to its power of magic and medicine. He is identified with the Supreme Brahman, in the Vedas and the Purāṇas. The worshippers, meditating on him, are united with Ultimate Truth or Reality.

Various Vedic contexts contain references to the *Sūryadarśana*, *Sūryanamaskāra*, *Sandhyopāsanā*, etc., in honour of the Sun-god. In the Purāṇas, the Vedic tradition of Sun-worship was given priority and it has been transformed into the Sun-cult with minor changes and additions. The significant innovation in the Sun-worship in the Purāṇas is the installation of the images of the Sun in the temples. A number of modes and methods of worshipping the Sun-god is developed in the Purāṇic period.

The present study involves the Vedic scriptures as a whole, but only some relative Mahāpuāṇas are brought under the purview of the study, along with one of the minor Purāṇas, called the *Sāmbapurāṇa*, which is considered as the milestone in the field of Purāṇic Sun-cult. The materials are elaborated and analyzed through a comparative study of the various relevant texts.

The study comprises six chapters. The **Introductory Chapter** is captioned as **Vedic Concept of God and Religion**, which deals with the Vedic concept of god and religion, in particular, after a careful study on the origin and evolution of religion. At the very outset, the chapter contains a brief discussion on the Vedic literature, which is regarded as the pertinent source of socio-religious history of ancient India. The origin of the term religion is traced in the chapter, which is derived from the Latin word

religare or *religere*, that convey the similar sense, i.e. the sense of unity or harmony, as the outcome of the binding of the man to the god, or the man with the society, with the bond of piety, or any kind of rehearse, through which the unity or harmony can be maintained. The process of religion has two sides, i.e. the inner and the outer. From the inner point of view, it is the state of belief and feeling towards the supernatural power, and from the outer, it is the expression of subjective disposition, in the form of worship and service. The chapter contains some remarkable views regarding the religion that have been given by different renowned scholars from different parts of the world.

It is observed that here are two primary theories, relating to the origin of the religion, one is the theory of divine origin and the other is the theory of human origin. The theory of divine origin implies the god as the ultimate source of religion while the theory of human origin entails the human consideration or judgment as the ultimate cause. The theories, Animism, Naturalism or Animatism, Magic, Totemism are thoroughly discussed.

The religion is broadly divided into three groups, viz. the Tribal Religion, the National Religion and the Universal Religion. Again, according to the different theories, relating to the origin and evolution of it, religion can be categorized into the following groups: Primal Religion, Naturalistic Religion, Humanistic Religion and the Spiritual Religion. The Primal Religion comprises the Animism, Spiritism, Fetishism, Manaism or Ancestor worship and Totemism. The Naturalistic Religion involves the worship of the object of nature or the power of nature. The Humanistic and Spiritual Religion deal with the worship of the human and the spirits, beyond the world, respectively.

Then, the chapter discusses, in detail, the Vedic concept of religion. The term *dharma* is used in Sanskrit for religion, which is derived from root *dhrñ*, *dhāraṇe*, meaning to support, or *dhrñ*, *avasthāne*, meaning to take a position. In different senses, the term *dharma* is used in the Vedas. It includes in it religion, duty, sacrifice, religious ordinance, moral order, fixed principles, or rules of conduct, virtue, etc. From the etymological point of view, the term gives the meaning of supporter, or sustainer, or upholder. Different gods are invoked as the protector, or the supporter, or the sustainer of the rituals and the individuals in the Vedic texts, which is rightly called as the *dharma*. The sacrifices are also called *dharma*, from sustaining the earth, causing the rain, purifying the entire vegetation and herbs and producing cereals for livelihood.

The Vedic religion is the naturalistic religion, which is ritualistic in nature. With the application of the mantras and the ritualistic activities, the divine powers are propitiated, so that they bestow the desired objects to the devotees along with the showers of blessings. A nearest and close relationship, in between the worshipper and the worshipped, are tried to be developed. The idea of unification of the deities in the Vedic pantheon is distinctly observed in the Vedic mantra: *ekam sad viprāḥ bahudhā vadantyaḥniṃ yamaṃ mātariśvānamāhuḥ*! The Vedic religion is the monotheistic one, though, in its first sight, it appears like the polytheistic one with the enumeration of a large number of gods.

According to the etymology, the term *deva* is derived from the root *dā*, *dīp* or *dyut*. Due to the shining character, heavenly qualities and deeds of supremacy, the powerful aspects of the nature are regarded as the gods in the Vedic religion. The greatness and diversity of functions of a single deity has given rise to a large number of

divinities in the Vedic pantheon. The common characteristic features of the Vedic deities are also highlighted in the present chapter.

The **Second Chapter** is entitled **Salient Traits of the Solar Divinities in the Veda**. First of all, the chapter contains the detailed deliberation on the importance of the deity Sūrya, which is indeed the deified form of the atmospheric Sun. He is the most concrete form of the Solar divinities. Being the creator of the day and night, the deity provides heat and light towards the whole universe and stands as the ultimate cause of the food and nutrition. Sūrya is eulogized as the soul of universe. The immense power of the deity finds expression in the eulogy of the deity as the healer, remover of sin, evil dreams, etc. He is worshipped as the lord of the morality as well as the Ultimate Reality in the Vedic texts.

Thereafter, the chapter deals with the salient traits of the other Solar divinities, viz. Savitṛ, Mitra, Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, Vivasvat and the Ādityas, along with Vena and Rohita. The stimulative aspect of the Sun is represented by the form Savitṛ in the Vedas. The deity Savitṛ is connected with the *Gāyatrīmantra*. The *Gāyatrīmantra* contains the notion that solar light is the symbol of ultimate knowledge and reality. Again, Mitra delineates the friendly aspect of the Sun. Pūṣan is the lord of prosperity as well as the pastoral deity. Thus, after delineating the salient traits of different solar gods, the chapter discusses the Sun-worship in the theriomorphic, fetishistic and symbolic forms. Different fetishes are identified as the Sun in the Vedic pantheon, e.g. horse, *Dadhikrā*, *Tārṣya*, *Aja*, bird, lotus, etc.

Different rituals in the Vedic pantheon involve the worship of the Sun under different names and forms. The predominance of the Sun-worship is seen in the *Grhya* rituals like the Vivāha, Niṣkramaṇa, Upanayana, etc., along with the *Śrauta* rituals like

Agnihotra, and so on. The deity was worshipped in the Vedas, mainly with the prayer and praise. The best means of worshipping the deity was the recital of Gāyatrī or Sandhyopāsana.

The **Third Chapter** of the work is entitled **General Characteristics of the Purāṇic Religion and Its Links with the Vedic Tradition**. At the very outset, the chapter deals with the meaning of the term *purāṇa*, its content and the characteristic features, and its close connectivity with the Vedas, chiefly with the Dharmaśāstras, the fivefold or the tenfold characteristics of the Purāṇic texts, and the threefold divisions of the Purāṇas according to the guṇas. The chapter also takes an overview on the Pre-Purāṇic religious systems which influence the religion of the Purāṇas.

The Purāṇic religion is fully influenced by the Vedas. With the downfall of the Buddhism and the declination of the Jainism, the Vedic faith with sectarianism was installed. Due to the growth and development of the sectarianism, most of the deities of the Vedic pantheon went to the backdrop, and five deities, viz. Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā (Śakti), Sūrya and Gaṇeśa were worshipped as the prominent deities in the Purāṇas. The worship of the personal gods, instead of the Vedic Brāhmaṇical community worship, is the new innovation in the field of the Purāṇic religion. The Purāṇic religion introduces some new ideas like *bhakti*, *avatāras*, *image-worship*, *pūjā*, *vrata*, *tīrtha*, etc., those are indeed innovated from the various Vedic religious practices.

The last part of the chapter contains a note on the growth of the Purāṇic texts, for propitiating the Sun. Though the Sun-god was worshipped in the Vedic period, yet the Sun-worship as cult and sect was established only in the Epic-Purāṇic age. In the growth of the Purāṇic Sun-cult, there was the influence of the Magian Sun-worshipper, who belonged to the Śākadvīpa. Numerous Purāṇic texts were composed in devotion of

the deity, but only some of them are available now. They are the pertinent source of the Purāṇic Sun-cult, dealing with the Sun-worship, Sun temples, vrata-culture, etc.

The **Fourth Chapter** of the thesis captioned **The Vedic Influence on the Sun-Worship in the Purāṇas**. At the very outset, it deals with the Saura-cult, the glimpses of which have been observed in the contents of the great Epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. The chapter discusses, in detail, the eulogy of the Sun-god in the Purāṇas. Following the Vedic tradition, the deity is worshipped in the Purāṇas, due to his atmospheric aspect, power of creation or preservation, etc. He is identified with the Supreme Brahman. The twelve aspects of the deity are worshipped in twelve different forms in the Purāṇas under the title Āditya, which is derived from the Vedas. The anthropomorphic character of the deity is very prominent in the Purāṇas, which is influenced by the Vedas. As the deity fulfils the desires of his worshipper, he is worshipped with different modes of worship.

Viśvakarmā had made the image of the Sun for the first time. Prior to it, the deity was worshipped in his *maṇḍala* form. He is worshipped with the Gāyatrī or the Sandhyopāsanā. Again, the worship of the deity in his symbolic form is well described in the Purāṇic texts, as well as the Vedas. The lotus, horse, etc., are the symbols of the sun, which are profusely used in the worship of the deity. Different temples were built for his propitiation. The images of the deity were worshipped with flowers, scents, red sandal paste, clothes, water, *dhūpa*, *aguru*, *guggula*, *karpūra*, *naivedya*, *akṣata*, lamps, honey, milk, etc. Besides these, he was worshipped with the *mudrā*, *japa*, *namaskāra*, along with the *arghya*, observance of fasts, vows and so on and so forth. King Sāmba had brought the Magian priest from the Śākadvīpa to worship the sun, who occupied a prime role in the growth and development of the Purāṇic Sun-cult.

The iconographic features of the deity are recorded in the Purāṇic texts. The chapter contains discussion on the iconographic representation of the Sun along with the assistants and family members. Seven types of images of the Sun-god are found in the Purāṇas, They are Kāñcanī, Rājatī, Tāmṛī, Pārthivī, Śailajā, Vārksī and Ālekhyā. All those images are divided on the basis of the material with which they are made of. The chapter contains a great deliberation on the size of the image of the deity. The procedure of installation of the Sun-image in the temples is also described.

The Purāṇas glorify the building of a temple. They contain huge information relating to the different Sun-temples located in different parts of India. The Purāṇic texts narrate some legendary episodes connected with the origin of such temples. The Sun-god was worshipped under different names in the temples, appearing before his devotees, occupying different forms. Besides the temples, there were some centres of pilgrimage mentioned in the Purāṇic texts. With a view to getting relief from different diseases or sins or to fulfil different desires the devotees went to the pilgrimage and took their sacred baths on different months and different constellations. His worship as the remover of diseases and reliever of sins is very much prominent in the Vedas and it has a direct impact on the Sun-worship in the pilgrimage and temples in Purāṇas.

The **Fifth Chapter** of the work entitled **Rituals Related to the Sun-Worship in the Purāṇas**. This chapter, first of all, deals with some sacrifices and saṁskāras, where the Sun-god is worshipped with great devotion right from the time of the Vedas. After that, it contains a long deliberation on different vratas, like, Kalyānasaptamī, Phalasaptamī, etc., narrating the rules and regulations to be performed during its observance. Besides this, the chapter contains discussion on some festivals related to the Sun.

The **Sixth Chapter** of the work presents an overall summary and conclusion of the study. After reviewing the earlier chapters, it can be concluded that, due to the beneficial impact, the Sun-god is worshipped by the people right from the time of the Vedas. The tradition of worshipping the deity is continued, following the Vedic order which involves in it, the practices of Sandhyā, offerings of oblations, etc. Again, the idea of *vrata* or austerities, etc., is developed among the people which indeed has developed on an organized scale, as a part and parcel of the Sun-cult , essentially in the Purāṇas. There is not a single reference of worshipping the deity, constructing some image, in the Vedic religion. It is the later development in the period of the Purāṇas which is practiced by the religious people in the present society also. With the development of the image-worship, there develops the effort of construction of the temples, in devotion of the Sun. From a keen observation, it can be deduced that the Purāṇic Sun-cult bears the direct influence of the Vedic Sun-worship. In the Vedic period the deity was worshipped as one of the simplest forms of the nature, which transforms into the sectarian worship of the Sun constituting the Sun-cult in the Purāṇas.

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